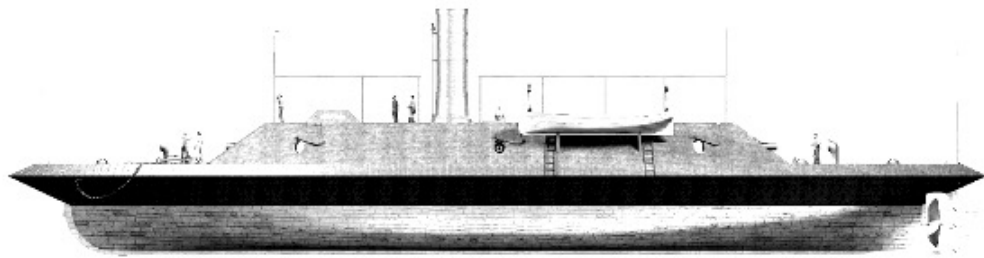


Exploratory Survey 2021 Update of Site 44CF 0799 Confederate Ironclad Steamram Richmond



The CSS Richmond was one of three ironclads of the James River Squadron, which was a Confederate naval force stationed in the James River at Drewry's and Chaffins Bluff, approximately 8 to 10 miles south of Richmond.

The Richmond was being built at the captured Federal naval yard at Norfolk at the same time the CSS Virginia was being completed and fought her battles against Federal forces in Hampton Roads. It had been hoped by Confederate Naval officials that Richmond would be completed in time to fight alongside Virginia against these forces however shortages of armor plate being made at the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond and manpower shortages delayed its completion until July, several months after the famous battle. Unlike Virginia, she was a flat-bottomed vessel, smaller in size and armament, designed for Virginia's inland waters.

Richmond was put into service in July 1862 though no record of a formal commissioning has been found to date. She was not a work of beauty like many of the frigates and sailing vessels of her day but was designed as a warship of brute force. There are varied documented sources of her length, but she was likely between 172 to 203 feet in length had an extreme width of 50 feet at midships and had a draft between 12 and 13 feet barely allowing her to pass the bars in the James.

Richmond was heavily armed though her gun compliment would vary over her existence. She was known to have carried 6.4- inch and 7-inch Brooke rifled guns, a 10" smoothbore, a 12-pounder howitzer and a very rare extended 6.4"- inch Brooke. She was likely carrying this gun when she was scuttled.

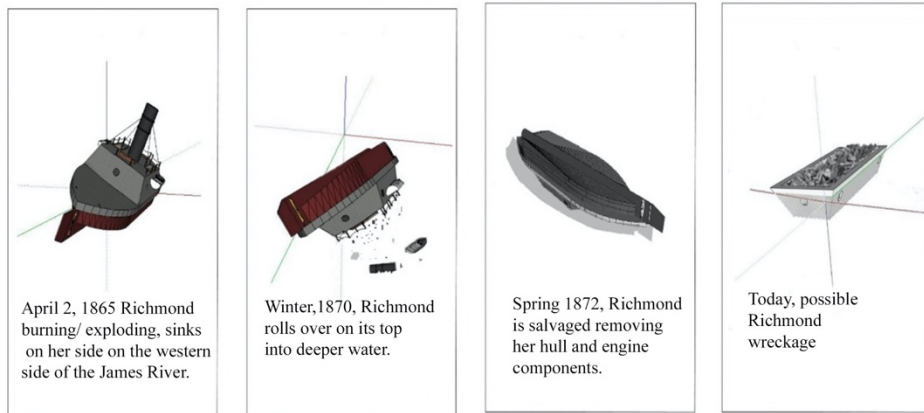
The vessel's propulsion system utilized an already old and weak steam engine from the Artic, a lighthouse ship, which had been captured at the Naval Yard in Norfolk. She was criticized for her slow speed though her speed of between 4-6 knots was generally about the same as other like vessels of her kind. Her armor was formidable for her time. Her casemate or "shield walls" sported 22 1/2" of wood standoff and three layers of rolled armor plate of totaling five inches which gave the walls a total standoff protection of 27 1/2". Standing against one of the Federal

navy's most formidable vessels, the Onondaga, firing 150-pound projectiles, she recorded only minor damage.

Upon the fall of the Naval Yard back to Federal forces in May 1862 the Richmond's completed hull was towed up to Richmond and completed there in July 1862. Upon her destruction in April 1865 Richmond was the longest serving ironclad in the Confederate Navy and had served in several actions against Federal Army and Navy forces in the James River. Richmond met her demise in the early morning hours of April 2, 1865, being scuttled by her crew to deny her capture by Federal forces upon the imminent fall of Richmond City. The actual method of her scuttling remains a mystery to this day.

There is little known of the demise of the Richmond or of her sister vessels in the James River Squadron. Raphael Semmes, the Squadron's commander notes that the ironclads were set on fire, likely between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning of April 2, 1865. There are no firsthand descriptions of the scuttling and it appears that Admiral Semmes was not present.

Of the other of the Squadron's ironclads anchored at Drewry's Bluff, the Virginia II is known to have exploded which almost destroyed her. The Fredericksburg sank at anchor and was salvaged after the war. The Richmond, on patrol duty that night was for the most part forgotten. The team would later find evidence that she burned and at some point since that burning exploded and and /or suffered powerful destruction during salvage efforts in 1872. Her remains lie in approximately 38' of water in James River, 8 miles south of Richmond.



What is known is that she sank on her side and later, likely during the Great Flood of 1870, rolled over on her casemate's top. Within two years her casemate and perhaps part of her hull were buried upside down in the riverbed. In 1872 a salvager by the name of John Asserson, under contract to the Federal government, bought the Richmond for \$300 and removed the hull plus other parts of her wreckage to improve navigation safety on the James. At the time, the vessel's hull would have been exposed as she was lying in approximately 28' of water. After this salvage effort, the Richmond's remains slowly sank into the James River riverbed and into general historical obscurity.

In 1982 the National Underwater Marine Agency (NUMA), founded by Mr. Clive Cussler, in conjunction with Underwater Archaeological Joint Ventures (UAJV), a Virginia based archaeological research firm, conducted a survey to determine the location of the vessels of the James River Squadron in the James River. In 1993 and 1998 Dr. Gordon Watts, under contract between Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc. (TAR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers carried out more extensive remote sensing investigations and diver reconnaissance of identified targets located in the vicinity of Chaffin's and Drewry's Bluff denoting and recording the wreckage now being surveyed.

In 2010, Mike Nusbaum and several volunteers began environmental site surveys of the wreckage sites at Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluff. Since that time, with the addition Mr. Bill Waldrop a local professional diver, the focus of this survey has shifted to the wreckage site of the Richmond. In cooperation with several Federal, State- and privately-owned marine survey entities, numerous and varied scans have been conducted of site 44CF0744.



Mike Nusbaum
2010- Present



Bill Waldrop
2013- Present



Taft Kiser- Archaeologist of
Record 2014-2016



Dr. John Broadwater-
Archaeologist of Record
2017- Present

Our team is regularly comprised of four individuals. Mike Nusbaum and Bill Waldrop are the team's primary divers with over 101 years of diving experience between them. Our highly experienced archaeologists and mentors are Mr. Taft Kiser and Dr. John Broadwater, both known by this society. Without their expertise this project would surely have evolved into a crude and unruly chaos. It should also be noted that numerous other individuals from various agencies, private companies and other walks of life have been of invaluable assistance providing their time and resources to our project.

For a far more comprehensive review of the James River Survey teams efforts upon the C.S.S. Richmond, the reader is invited to visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wc> or to Google search "C.S.S. Richmond YouTube" to view a 43 minute video concerning the Richmond, it's history and efforts to survey its wreckage.