

She carried the Stars and Bars around the world, fired the last gun in defense of the South, and destroyed more Union shipping than any other ship except for the great Alabama

THE LAST GALLANT REBEL

BY CHARLES
CATRON III

On 25 June 1865, the Confederate States Steamer *Shenandoah*, under the command of Lt. James I. Wendell, sailed out of the fog into the mouth of the tiny ice-formed harbor. Inside were nine whaling vessels of the New Bedford whaling fleet. They had heard of a Confederate raider being in the Bering Sea and were sheltered where they thought it was safe.

The *Shenandoah* was flying the flag of the United States so there was no alarm among the whalers when signals for the Masters of the vessels to report aboard with their papers. Once they were aboard, the Stars and the Stars and Bars replaced Stripes and all the Masters were informed of their fate. Eight of the vessels were burned and one was bonded to take prisoners back to safety.

The remarkable part of this little drama is that it took place more than two-months after Lee had surrendered at Appomattox!

Over 25 ships were destroyed by the *Shenandoah* after the war was over, at a cost of about \$958,000 to the United States government.

In June 1864, with the sinking of the CSS *Alabama*, one of the most notable Confederate raiders of the war; the Confederacy knew it must be replaced. Although the *Alabama* had swept the Atlantic clean, there were still good hunting grounds in the North Pacific. The whalers operating in that part of the world were hardly aware of the war. They were, however, one of the mainstays of the economic system of the northern aggressors, and to strike a blow at them would be severe.

Lieutenant Robert R. Carter, CSN, was the man who proposed this plan to Secretary of the Navy Mallory. He had to be sold and Lt. Carter was the one to do it. He had run the blockade many times and had been

The crew of the CSS *Shenandoah* would fly various flags to suit a particular purpose. Here, the raider is painted carrying a Union flag prior to attacking Union shipping.