



# The USS Cairo: History And Artifacts of a Civil War Gunboat

*Elizabeth Hoxie Joyner*

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On December 12, 1862, while patrolling Mississippi's Yazoo River, the ironclad USS *Cairo* struck a Confederate torpedo. Twelve minutes later, the gunboat slipped beneath the surface approximately eight miles north of Vicksburg, where it remained for exactly 102 years. When researchers raised it in 1964, they were amazed to find many of its compartments and artifacts perfectly intact, almost as if the sailors had intended that their ship serve as a time capsule. Today, the *Cairo* is a snapshot of life aboard a Union gunboat, and affords a well-preserved glimpse into the past. This is the first book dedicated entirely to the *Cairo* artifact collection. In over 160 photographs, it displays many of the warship's most interesting historical pieces, with descriptions, measurements and other pertinent information for each piece. Artifacts are organized according to use, with categories ranging from tobacco and smoking devices, personal effects and toiletries, and medical equipment to small arms and cannon. The work also offers background information on the *Cairo* and the everyday life of a sailor and a short description of the *Cairo*'s sinking and raising.

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