



The New Yorker Who Was a Confederate Naval Commodore

Norman Dasinger, Jr., February 1, 2021

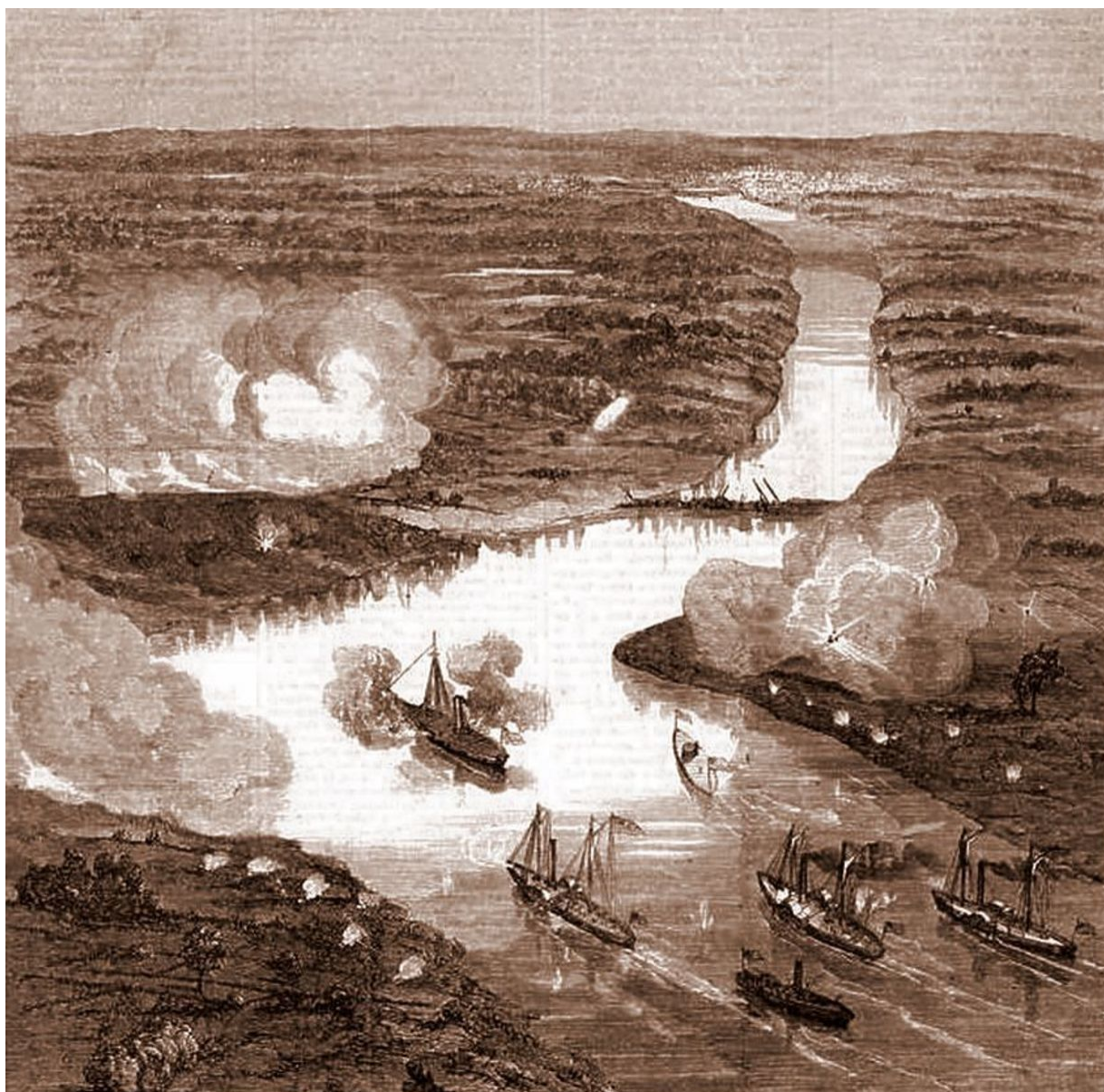
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Commodore Ebenezer Ferrand | Collections of the Alabama Department of Archives and History

Born in New York in 1803, Ebenezer “Eben” Farrand entered the United States Navy in 1823 and was advanced to commander in 1834. While in command of the United States Navy Yard at Pensacola, Florida, he resigned his commission January 1861 to join the armed forces of the Confederate States of America. In an unusual twist of fate, he was immediately ordered to demand the surrender of all United States forces stationed at Forts Barrancas and McRae at the Navy Yard in Pensacola. He wrote, “We have decided it is our duty to hold our position until such a force is brought against us to render it impossible to defend...” In other words, he resigned and then demanded the surrender of the installations he had just previously commanded!

Ordered to Drewry’s Bluff, Virginia, in the spring of 1862, Farrand was charged with building river defenses to prevent the United States Navy from advancing up the James River and possibly capturing the capital of the Confederacy. Fought May 15, 1862, the battle of Drewry’s Bluff was a resounding Confederate victory. Farrand saved the city of Richmond and was praised for his “gallantry and courage.”



Battle of Drewry's Bluff | public domain

Transferred to Selma, Alabama, he was given command of the Naval Foundry recently established there and built it into a large military industrial complex. He commanded the Confederate Naval forces in Mobile following the battle of Mobile Bay, in late August 1864. He surrendered himself and his command at Mobile on May 8, 1865.

After the war, he became an insurance salesman in Montgomery, Alabama, and owned a home and a hotel along the railroad in Attalla (Etowah County), Alabama. He died in 1873 and was eventually buried in the Attalla City Cemetery.

At the Centennial of the Civil War in 1961, the adopted hometown of the Commodore, the city of Attalla, built a memorial park in his honor. Today, that park still proudly exists, forever memorializing this New Yorker who fought for the Confederate Navy.



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