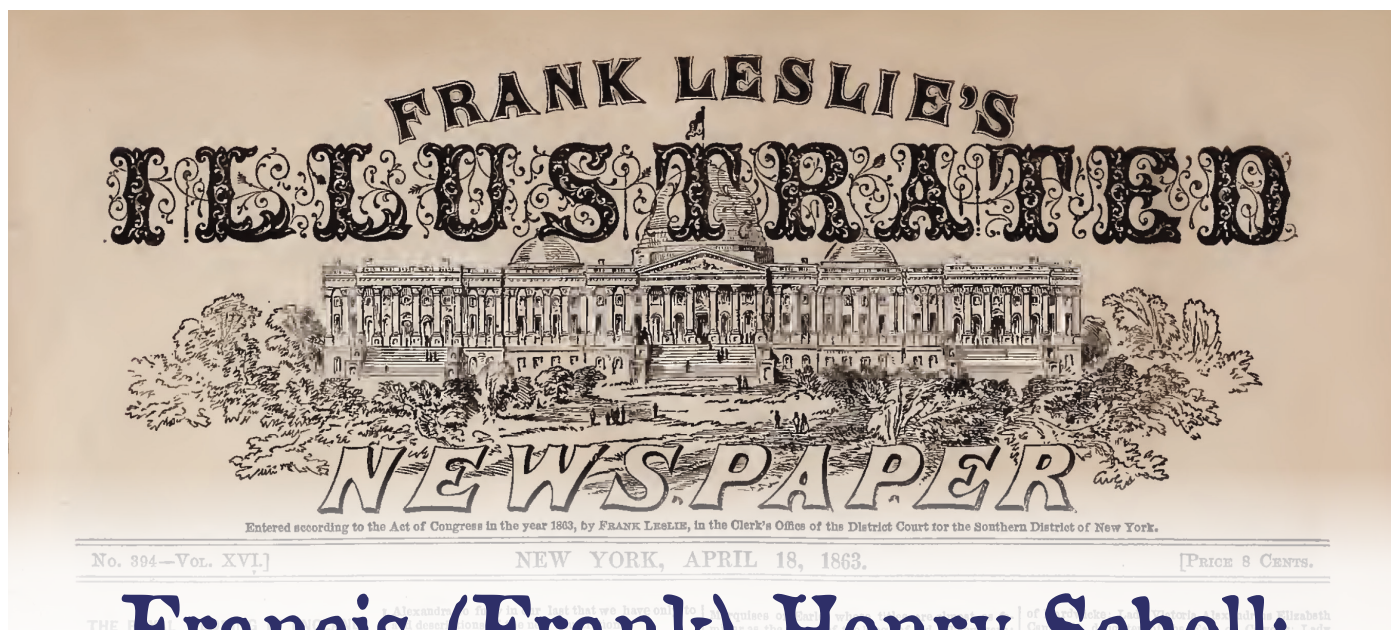


Naval Illustrators



Francis (Frank) Henry Schell: 'Special Artist' for Leslie's

By Gary McQuarrie

FRANCIS (FRANK) HENRY SCHELL (1830-1909) worked for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) (1861-1864) as a 'Special Artist' during the Civil War. *Leslie's* published 209 line engravings based on Schell's sketches and drawings, the second highest total for *Leslie's* and the fifth highest total for any identified 'Special Artist' among the illustrated newspapers during the war. Many of these line engravings based on his artwork were published in versions of *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, a 2-volume special edition pictorial history of the conflict containing *Leslie's* illustrations, as well as in other *Leslie's* special-edition pictorial publications about the war.

Schell was born September 12, 1830 in Philadelphia. He came from a large family, having six brothers (including a younger brother, Frederic B. Schell, who also became a 'Special Artist' for *Leslie's*) and a sister. In the 1850 U.S. census, Schell was listed as a lithographer. In the early 1850s, Schell worked with William H. Rease on

advertisements printed by Alphonse Brett and Thomas Sinclair and collaborated specifically with Rease as an artist and lithographer from approximately 1853 to at least 1855. He drew views of Philadelphia, as well as portraits that were printed by Wagner & McGuigan, Lithographers.

In 1861, Schell was hired as a 'Special Artist' for *Leslie's*. He traveled to Baltimore to join General Benjamin Butler and the Army of the Potomac. After the situation in Baltimore was stabilized, he and most of the Army of the Potomac settled at Fortress Monroe on the James River. There, Schell became a recognizable figure—as a short, stocky man with a closely trimmed beard, he wore a loose white frock coat and a slack-brimmed hat, more typical of an art student. His first war-related drawings were published in the April 30, 1861 issue of *Leslie's* (Volume XI, No. 284, p 369, 376-377). Schell subsequently moved on to cover the Army of the Tennessee and recorded some of its early engagements

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with Confederate forces in Kentucky. Unlike most ‘Special Artists,’ Schell moved frequently and to different theaters of the war, returning east again in early 1862 to follow the Union campaign on the North Carolina coast, Burnside’s Expedition (*Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 328, p 241 [front page], p 245 [Fleet Arriving and Landing Troops at Roanoke Island], p 248-249 [Battle of Roanoke Island, Bayonet Charge of Ninth New York Volunteers], March 8, 1862; *Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 330 (Supplement with No. 329), p 273 [Loss of transport steamer *Pochahontas*], March 15, 1862; and *Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 331, p 289 [Zouaves], p 292-293 [Pamlico Sound], p 300 [Burning of the Rebel Gunboat *Curlew* in Croatan Sound], March 22, 1862). A major from the New York Volunteers Regiment wrote to Frank

Leslie with his observation of Schell at the charge of Hawkins’s Zouaves at Roanoke Island, North Carolina (*Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 329 (Double Number issue), p 258, March 15, 1862):

“...I noticed, and so did the whole of the Ninth regiment, Mr. Schell, your Artist, sitting on a log sketching under the hottest of fire from Fort Defiance. His nonchalance and coolness did as much towards inspiring our troops as the enthusiasm and bravery of any of the officers...”

Schell’s coverage of the Burnside Expedition continued (*Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 334 (Supplement with No. 333), p 340/349 [Fort Thompson, Landing of Troops at Slocum’s Creek near New Bern, Battle of New Bern],



The Banks Expedition—A Rebel Schooner Running into the U.S. Transport *Che-Kiang*, Off the Florida Reefs, on the Night of December 11, with the Intention of Sinking Her.—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, Mr. F.H. Schell. Line engraving published in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XV, No. 381, p 260, January 17, 1863. Immediately after running into the *Che-Kiang*, the crew of the schooner put off into a boat and rowed away with all expedition. The *Che-Kiang* continued on her way, reaching Ship Island in such a leaky condition that the troops had to be landed (p 258).



The Burnside Expedition—Landing of the National Troops on Roanoke Island, Under Cover of the Union Gunboats Delaware and Picket, Friday, February 7.— From a Sketch by Our Special Artist Accompanying the Expedition (Frank H. Schell). Line engraving published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XIII, No. 328, p 245, March 8, 1862.



Daring and Desperate Attack—Surprise and Capture of the U.S. Gunboat Harriet Lane by the Rebels Under Gen. Magruder, and Destruction of the Flagship Westfield, in Galveston Harbor, Texas, January 1. Line engraving, based on a sketch by Schell, published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XV, No. 382, p 280-281, January 24, 1863. NH 59142 courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command.

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April 5, 1862), ending at Fort Macon, Moorehead City and New Bern (*Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 337, p 388, April 26, 1862; *Leslie’s*, Volume XIII, No. 338 (Supplement with No. 337), p 409/416, April 26, 1862).

After North Carolina, Schell was assigned to join McClellan’s Army of the Potomac again and was at the Battle of Antietam. For a detailed personal accounting of Schell’s experiences of the battle as a pictorial artist and illustrations he drew, see: Frank H. Schell. *Sketching Under Fire at Antietam*. *McClure’s Magazine*, Volume 22, No. 4, p 418-429, February 1904.

In late 1862 through early 1863, Schell produced drawings for a number of illustrations, including many that were naval related, when he was with General Nathaniel Banks’s expedition to New Orleans (*Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 381, p 257, January 17, 1863); Baton

Rouge (*Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 381, p 260, p 264-265, January 17, 1863; *Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 382, p 284, p 288, January 24, 1863) and Bayou Teche, Louisiana (*Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 386, p 337, p 349, February 21, 1863); and Texas (Galveston [*Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 382, p 280-281, January 24, 1863; *Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 384, p 312, February 7, 1863]) and Sabine Pass [*Leslie’s*, Volume XV, No. 387, p 365, February 28, 1863]). He also was present when Rear-Admiral Farragut’s squadron ran the batteries at Port Hudson, Louisiana in mid-March (*Leslie’s*, Volume XVI, No. 394, p 53, p 60-61, April 18, 1863), and observed the destruction of the *Queen of the West* at Grand Lake, Louisiana (*Leslie’s*, Volume XVI, No. 399, p 132, May 23, 1863). A number of these naval illustrations are shown nearby. Schell apparently remained in theater for the rest of 1863, with illustrations published occasionally.



The Capture of Galveston—The Blowing Up of the U.S. Gunboat *Westfield* (and Destruction of Commander Renshaw and His Boat’s Crew), While Aground on Pelican Island, Galveston Harbor, to Prevent Her Falling into the Hands of the Confederates, January 1. Line engraving, based on a sketch by Schell, published in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XV, No. 384, p 312, February 7, 1863.



The Lower Mississippi Fleet, Led by Admiral Farragut in the Flagship Hartford, Running the Port Hudson Batteries, Saturday Night, March 14—U.S.S. Mississippi on Fire and Aground—Crew Escaping.—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, F.H. Schell. Line engraving published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XVI, No. 394, p 60-61, April 18, 1863.



Destruction of the U.S. Steamer Mississippi, Saturday Night, March 14, in the Mississippi River, below Port Hudson—Explosion of the Magazine.—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, Mr. F. H. Schell. Line engraving published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XVI, No. 394, p 52, April 18, 1863.

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Destruction of the *Queen of the West* by the *Calhoun*, Grand Lake, LA.—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, F.H. Schell. Line engraving published in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, Volume XVI, No. 399, p 132, May 23, 1863.

By early 1864, Schell was assigned back to North Carolina, where his war illustrations were of New Bern (*Leslie’s*, Volume XVII, No. 439, p 365 [Capture of the Gunboat Underwriter], February 27, 1864; *Leslie’s*, Volume XVII, No. 440, p 372, March 5, 1864; *Leslie’s*, Volume XVII, No. 441, p 388, March 12, 1864) and Beaufort, North Carolina (*Leslie’s*, Volume XVII, No. 445, p 44, April 9, 1864). During the remainder of the year, he apparently traveled to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The December 3 issue of *Leslie’s* featured Schell’s illustration of Rear-Admiral David G. Farragut’s arrival in New York Harbor on December 13 on its cover. The January 7, 1865 issue continued a 2-page spread containing 11 illustrations by Schell that commemorated the naval advances and exploits of the war (p 248-249). During 1865, he was apparently back in Philadelphia and sketched scenes of the oil and

petroleum business in the oil regions of Pennsylvania’s for *Leslie’s* (Volume XIX, No. 484, p 252-253, January 7; No. 485, p 264-265, January 14; No. 486, p 273, 284, 285, January 21; No. 487, p 300, January 28; No. 489, p 324, February 11). It is not known why Schell withdrew from sketching the war as an active correspondent—it is possible that, with his frequent and distant travels to various war locations and theaters, he was growing weary of being away from his wife and young children.

After the Civil War in 1866, Schell became superintendent of *Leslie’s* art department. Soon after Thomas Matthew Hogan, a *Leslie’s* pictorial correspondent, completed a series of illustrations on the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in 1868, both Schell and Hogan left *Leslie’s* and began a long-term collaboration. Hogan, who was born in Ireland in 1843 and came to Brooklyn at the age of 7, began working at



The "Carondelet" and "Pittsburgh" Capturing the Confederate Batteries Below New Madrid. Line engraving, based on watercolor painting by Schell & Hogan after a sketch by Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, published in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, Editors. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, NY: The Century Company, 1887-1888), Volume I, p 446.



The Battle of Fort Pillow, May 10, 1862 (Looking North). Line engraving, based on watercolor painting by Schell & Hogan after a sketch by Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, published in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, Editors. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, NY: The Century Company, 1887-1888), Volume I, p 450.

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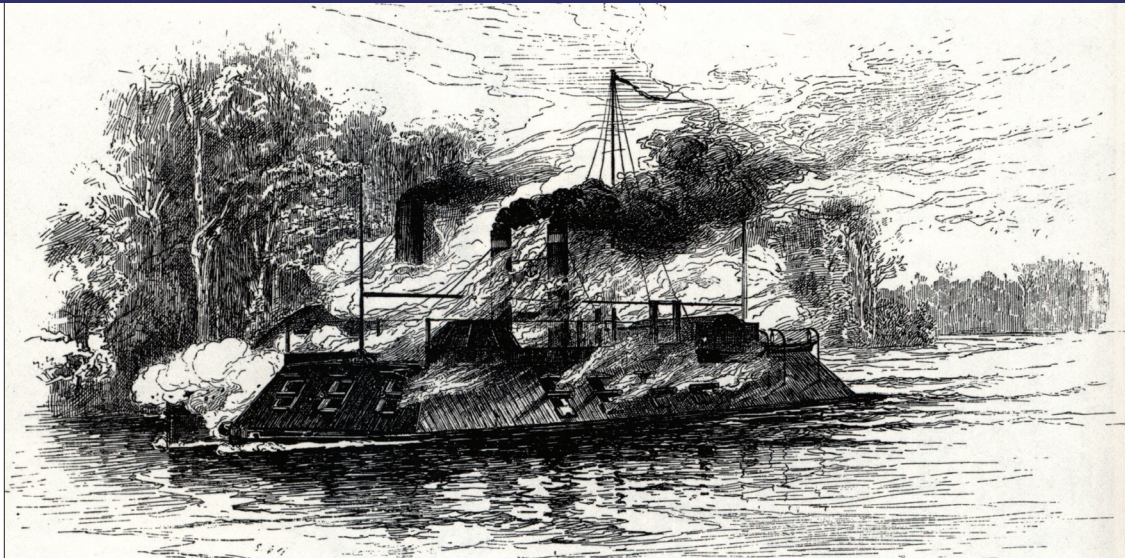
The Battle of Memphis, June 6, 1862 (Looking North), Retreat of the Confederate Fleet. Line engraving, based on watercolor painting by Schell & Hogan after a sketch by Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, published in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, Editors. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, NY: The Century Company, 1887-1888), Volume I, p 453.

Frank Leslie’s publishing house when he was only 14. After leaving *Leslie’s*, both artists had studios in the Moffat Building, 335 Broadway, New York. Their ‘partnership,’ Schell & Hogan, would become very successful, providing illustrations and engravings to book publishers in Philadelphia, Boston, and throughout the country, acquiring a significant reputation. Their collaboration would continue until Hogan’s unexpected death from pneumonia at the age of 47 on April 6, 1890, after which Schell apparently continued what used to be their mutual work alone. Schell & Hogan, who often signed their work ‘S. & H.,’ together produced many wartime scenes rendered in pen and ink and in watercolors, including Civil War naval scenes based on the eyewitness sketches of the Union Navy’s Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, at least seven of which were included as line engravings in Century’s iconic 4-volume book set, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (some shown nearby). Schell was considered a master of drawing ships, and Hogan a master of drawing landscapes. Schell alone also produced pen-and-ink

drawings and watercolor paintings that were the basis for line engraving illustrations in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* and *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.

Schell married Martha Ann Carr (born in Canada in 1844). Together, they apparently had five children (Frank Cresson, Henry E., Samuel M., Mary, and Eve Gertrude), two of whom died at early ages (Henry E. at age 2 in 1861 and Eve Gertrude at 13 weeks in 1874). Their son, Frank Cresson Schell (1857-1942), became an artist and illustrator of note in his own right, and served as art editor for *Leslie’s Weekly* and the Philadelphia daily newspaper, the *North American*, during his career. Frank H. Schell died from pneumonia and senility on March 31, 1909 at the age of 78 while living with his son, Frank, in Germantown, Pennsylvania. He was buried at Odd Fellows Cemetery, where his wife was interred following her death in 1904.

The Becker Collection of Drawings of the American Civil War Era (Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts) contains 41 drawings made by Schell in Virginia,



The Confederate Ram “Arkansas,” Alongside the Union Gun-Boat “Carondelet.” Line engraving, based on pen-and-ink drawing by Schell & Hogan after a sketch by Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, published in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, Editors. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, NY: The Century Company, 1887-1888), Volume III, p 574.

Kentucky, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana between 1861 and 1863; the New York Public Library Digital Collections holds 30 of Schell’s drawings; and the Philadelphia History Museum holds an unspecified number of Schell’s drawings that are yet to be digitized for online access. Other of Schell’s drawings and watercolor paintings are in galleries, private collections, museums, or lost to history.

Schell was a prolific ‘Special Artist’ for *Leslie’s*, exceeded only slightly by William T. Crane in the total number of drawings published as line engravings in the illustrated newspaper. While Schell’s many drawings comprised a preponderance of army scenes, his wide and frequent travel afforded him the opportunity to observe and produce some significant naval illustrations, particularly on the Burnside Expedition, General Banks’s expedition to locations in Louisiana and Texas, and his travels up the Mississippi River with Farragut’s squadron. After the war ended, Schell continued to provide dramatic artwork of the conflict, in particular his collaboration with fellow *Leslie’s* ‘Special Artist’ Thomas Hogan to produce pen-and-ink drawings and watercolor paintings based on the sketches of naval engagements by Rear-Admiral Henry A. Walke, which were used for engraved illustrations for *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. The large number of

published line engravings based on Schell’s sketches, drawings, and watercolor paintings reflect the enduring detail and accuracy of his artwork.

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Gary McQuarrie is Managing Editor of *Civil War Navy—The Magazine* and resides in New Hope, PA.