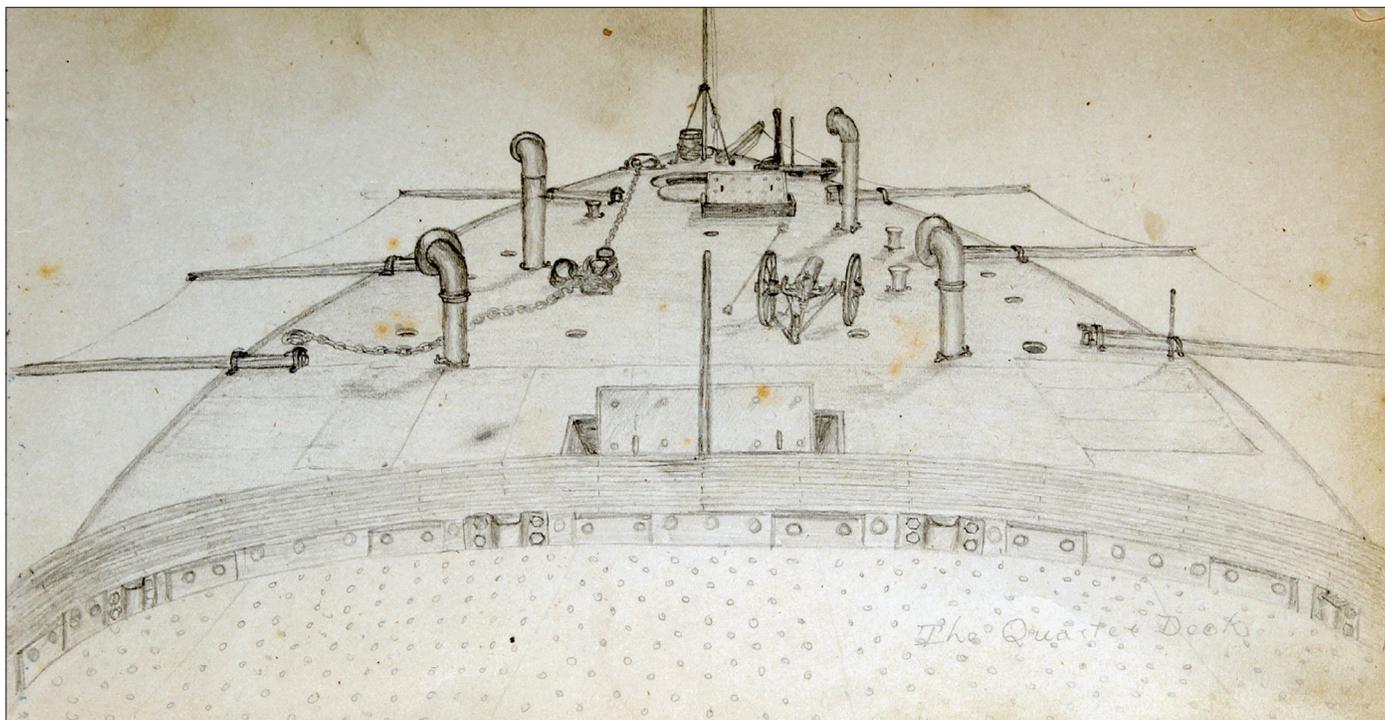


Naval Illustrators



The Quarter Deck [of USS *Nantucket*], July 10, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. Buckhout's rendering shows many accurate details, including the howitzer, though some aspects seem slightly out of visual perspective. The purpose of the deck booms is not fully known, but may have been there for torpedo or small boat boarder defensive purposes. Accession No. 75.53.13. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

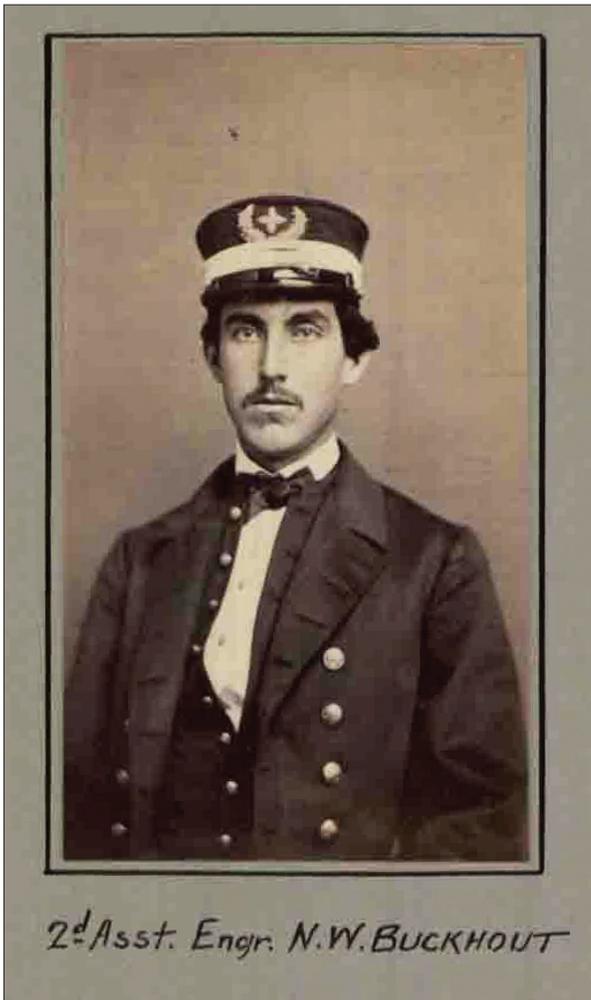
Nathan W. Buckhout, USN: Assistant Engineer-'Artist'

By Gary McQuarrie

NATHAN WHITE BUCKHOUT (1842-1866) was the oldest son of Abraham (Abram) and Margaret Ann (White) Buckhout. Nathan was born on May 16, 1842, in Oswego, New York.¹ His father was a familiar figure in Oswego, a well-established hat merchant who resided at a farm inside the city limits and also owned significant real estate within the city.² Nathan had three younger siblings: Sarah, born about 2 years after Nathan, but who died in 1847; William Armstrong, born in 1846, who became a well-known professor of horticulture and botany at Penn State College; and Anna, born in 1850.³

Nathan attended local Oswego high school and entered the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY) in the fall of 1860, graduating with a degree in civil engineering in 1862, and giving the salutatory oration at graduation.⁴

Buckhout was warranted as a third assistant engineer in the U.S. Navy on October 28, 1862.⁵ On November 3, the Navy Department ordered Buckhout to report immediately for duty on the monitor USS *Catskill*, with the young engineer arriving in New York and aboard the vessel by November 8, 1862.⁶ (Only months earlier,



Third Assistant Engineer Nathan W. Buckhout, USN. MOLLUS-Massachusetts Civil War Photograph Collection, Volume 119, p 6116. Though labeled “Second Assistant Engineer” in the Collection, his uniform is that of a third assistant engineer per his cap device and lack of shoulder straps, dating the photograph to late 1862 to mid-1864.

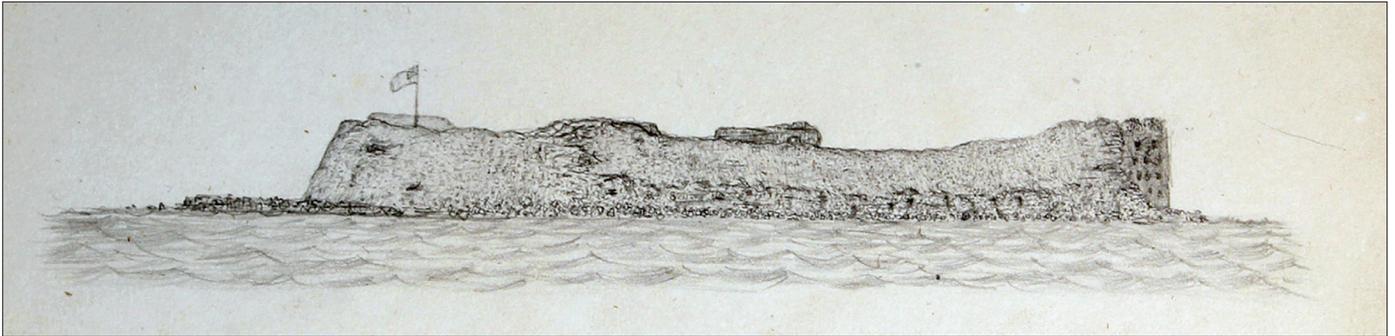
Robert F. Weir also joined the navy as a third assistant engineer and was assigned to the *Hartford*-class screw sloop-of-war USS *Richmond*—like Weir,⁷ Buckhout would produce lasting drawings of his naval experience during the war.) *Catskill*, a single-turret monitor, was launched December 16, 1862, at Greenpoint, New York, to be fitted out at the New York Navy Yard.⁸ On February 14, 1863, just before *Catskill* was commissioned, Buckhout was ordered to report to the commandant of the Boston Navy Yard for duty on the monitor USS *Nantucket*, arriving on board February 19.⁹ *Catskill* and *Nantucket* were commissioned within days of each other, and both monitors promptly assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.¹⁰

Nantucket arrived in Port Royal, South Carolina, on March 15, under tow by USS *Florida*.¹¹ On March 22, she was ordered to proceed to North Edisto, where she and the other ironclads were to receive iron plating of their magazines and shell rooms, and *Nantucket* and *Catskill* were to also receive bronze saddles for their XI-inch guns.¹² On April 5, the ironclads were towed back to Charleston, and *Nantucket* participated in the naval attack on Forts Sumter and Moultrie in Charleston Harbor on April 7, 1863.¹³ She was struck 51 times (the turret 18 times) and incurred other dents by shell fragments. Her deck plates were cut in a dozen places, but her machinery and steam boilers remained in good order. The monitor was repaired at Port Royal and in early July was ordered across the bar into the Stono River to accompany army forces as a diversion from the planned joint attack on Morris Island and Fort Wagner.¹⁴ By July 11, she returned to support army operations against Fort Wagner. *Nantucket* engaged

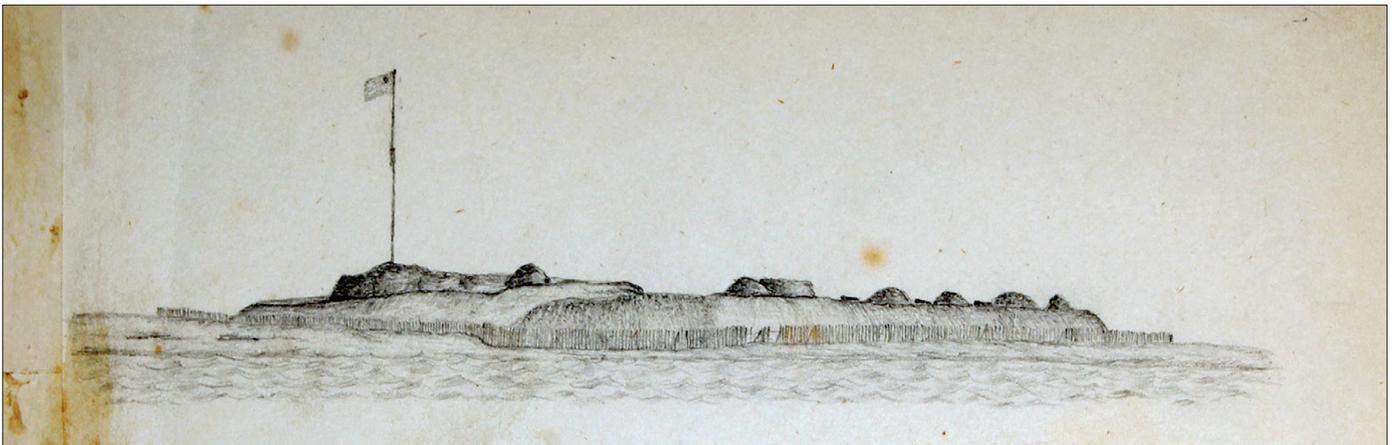


Entrance to Charleston Harbor, June 27, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. Accession No. 7553.5. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

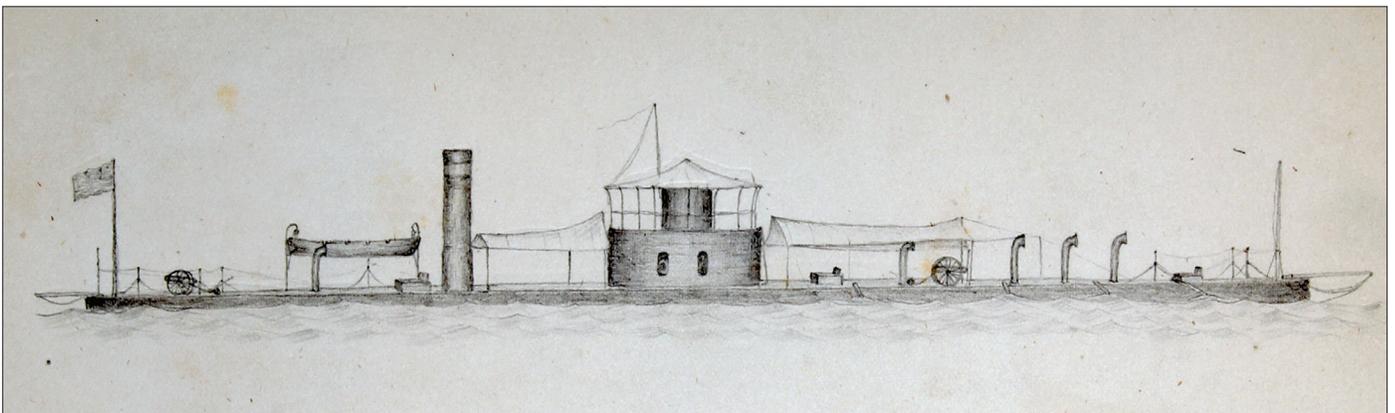
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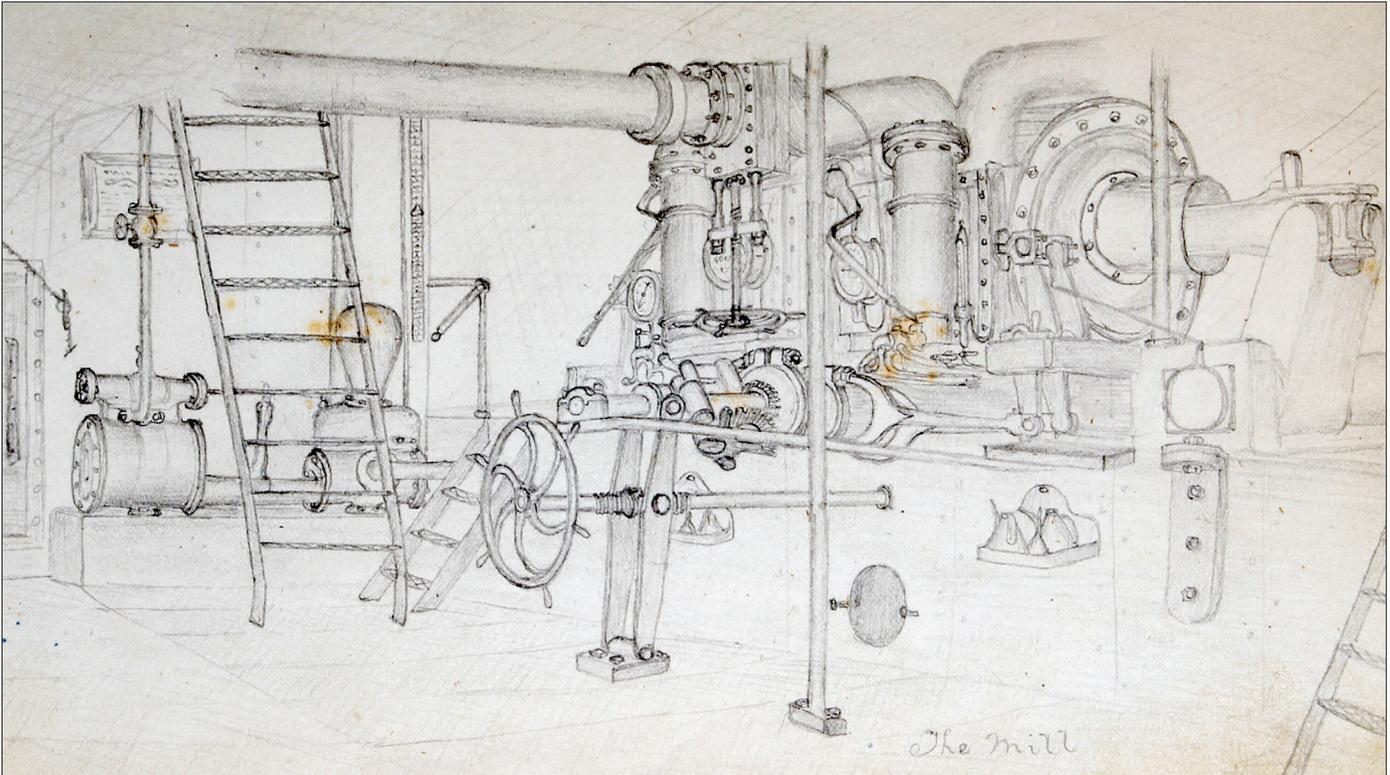
[Fort] Sumpter [sic], Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, July 6, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. Accession No. 75.53.1. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



Fort Wagner, Charleston, South Carolina, June 22, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. Accession No. 75.53.2. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



U.S. Ironclad Steam Monitor Battery *Nantucket*, July 20, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. *Nantucket* was a *Passaic*-class monitor. Buckhout served aboard *Nantucket* from February 1863 to approximately mid-1864. Accession No. 75.53.11. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



The Mill, July 15, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. This appears to be a very detailed rendering of the engine room of *Nantucket*, with the engine nicknamed "The Mill." A Whitworth steam pump is also visible behind the ladder—this pump was used for pumping feed water, bilge dewatering, firefighting, and as a general service pump. Accession No. 75.53.12. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

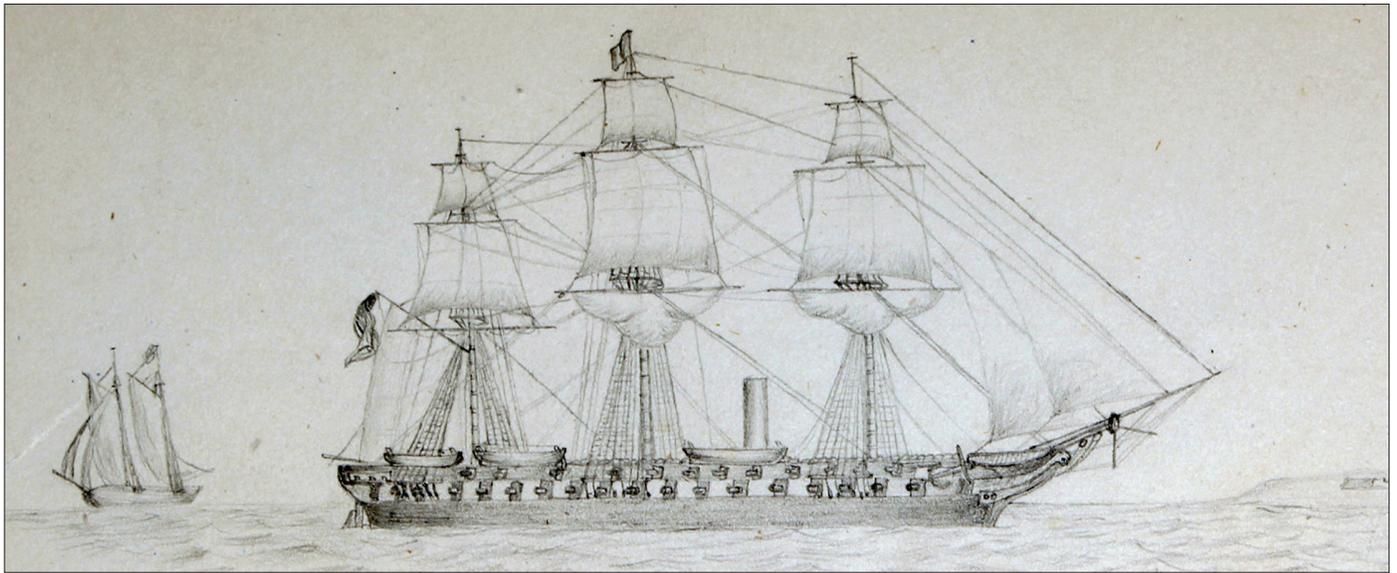
Fort Wagner multiple times (and Fort Gregg occasionally) during the period of July 16-24.¹⁵ On July 31, she was ordered to proceed to Wassaw Sound, Georgia.¹⁶ While on duty there, *Nantucket* oversaw the capture of the British steamer *Jupiter* by USS *Cimarron* on September 13.¹⁷ She remained on station at Wassaw Sound, but by December was again in Port Royal for repairs.¹⁸ Repairs continued into January, but she was back inside the Charleston Bar by April 1864.¹⁹ She challenged the forts again in May 1864 and remained on blockade duty at Charleston through the end of the war.

Buckhout served on *Nantucket* until July 21, 1864, when he was transferred to the steam frigate USS *Wabash*.²¹ On August 26, 1864, Buckhout wrote the Navy Department from *Wabash* (which had just returned from a cruise along the coast), acknowledging his promotion to second assistant engineer effective from March 15, 1864.²² *Wabash* departed her station on

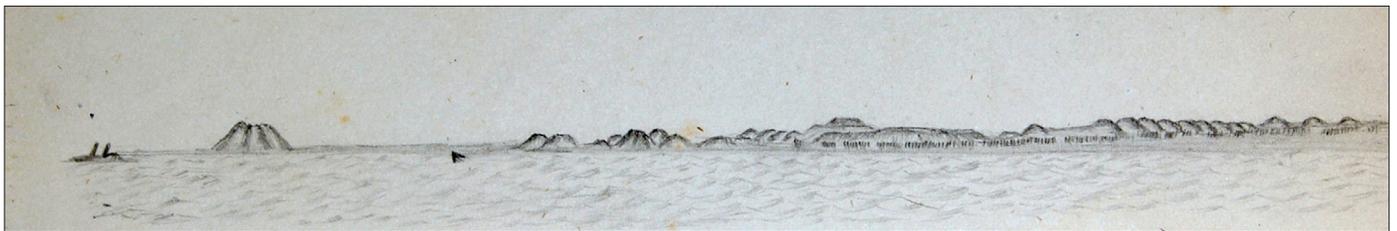
October 1 bound for Norfolk Navy Yard for an overhaul. En route, she grounded briefly on Frying Pan Shoals (off Cape Fear, North Carolina), suffering minor damage to her rudder.²³ Repairs and overhaul were completed by December 16, in time for the vessel to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron to participate in the first attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, on December 24 and 25, shelling mainly the Mound Battery.²⁴ She also participated in the second attack on January 15, 1865, with supporting gunfire and providing a land assault party of 141 sailors, marines, and officers.²⁵ On January 17, *Wabash* was ordered to Hampton Roads, and subsequently on January 25 to proceed to Boston Navy Yard.²⁶ She was decommissioned at Boston on February 14, 1865.²⁷

Buckhout resigned from the navy on June 29, 1865.²⁸ He returned home and in the following winter was

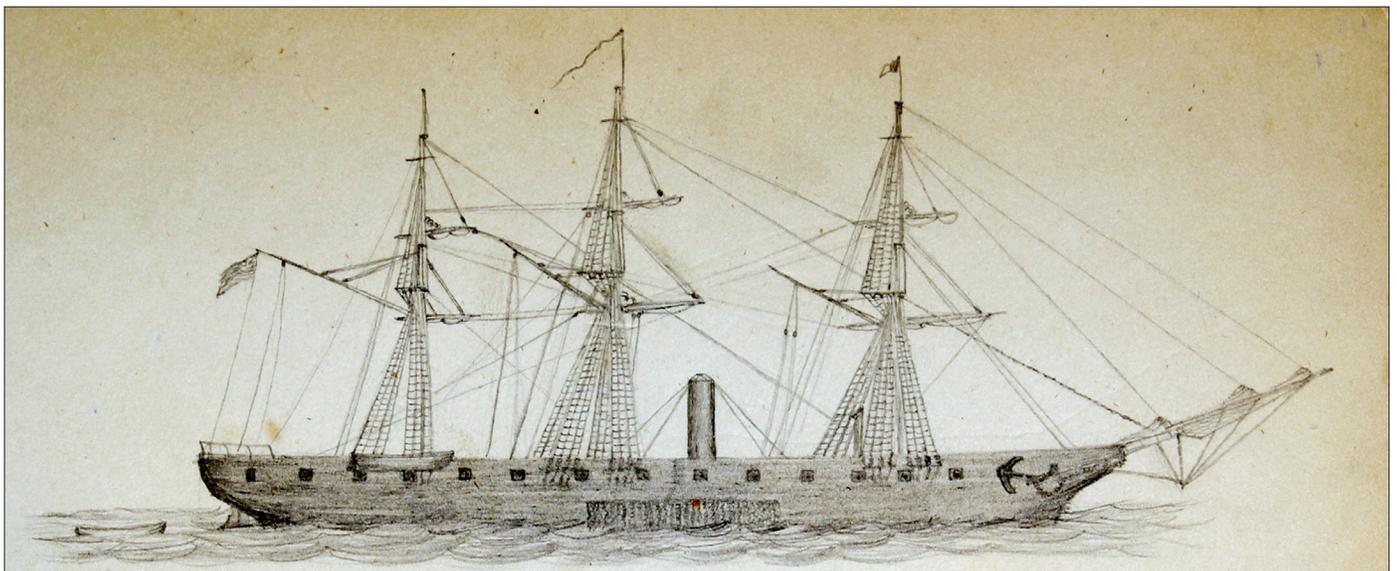
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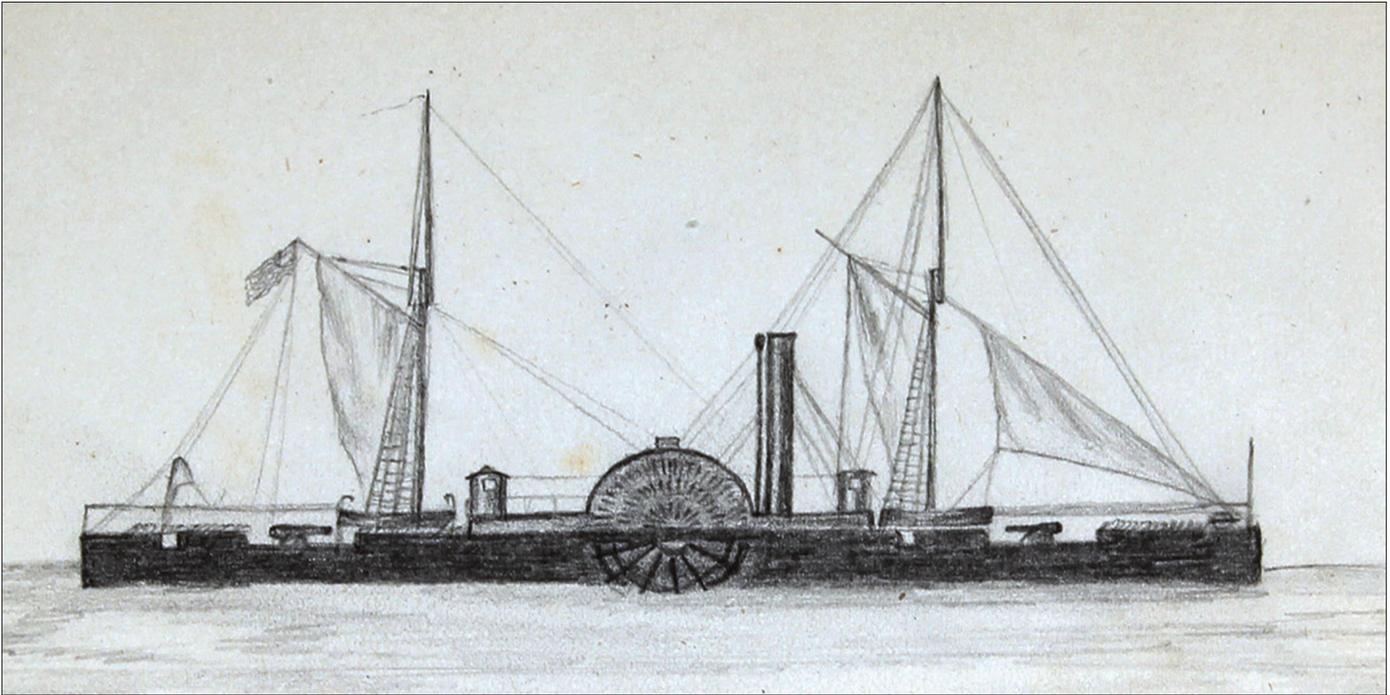
USS *Wabash*, 1864. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. *Wabash* was a *Merrimack*-class screw frigate. Buckhout served aboard *Wabash* from approximately mid-1864 until his resignation from the navy in June 1865. Accession No. 75.53.8. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



Fort Fisher, North Carolina, January 5, 1865. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. The drawing appears to show the sea face batteries from Battery Lamb (at left) to possibly the Columbiad and Cumberland Batteries (at right). Accession No. 75.53.3. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



USS *Brooklyn*. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. *Brooklyn* was a *Hartford*-class screw sloop. Buckhout would have observed *Brooklyn* during operations against Fort Fisher in December 1864 and January 1865. Accession No. 75.53.6. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.



USS *Iosco*. Pencil on paper drawing by Nathan W. Buckhout. *Iosco* was a Sassacus-class side-wheel gunboat. Buckhout would have observed *Iosco* in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron's actions against Fort Fisher in December 1864 and January 1865. Accession No. 75.53.7. Courtesy of United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

employed by a New York oil company to survey oil tracts in and around Burkesville, Kentucky. While there, Buckhout contracted and subsequently died of typhoid fever on June 26, 1866, cutting short the promising life of a skilled engineer.²⁹ His remains were returned to Oswego and were interred at Riverside Cemetery in that city.³⁰

Buckhout's drawings reflect an engineer's talent for observing and rendering details of Civil War vessels and their service locations. The drawings made during his Civil War naval service were kept and passed down through the family by his younger sister, Anna. The drawings (a total of 14, three not shown here) were donated to the U.S. Naval Academy Museum in 1975 by Henry Jewett Greeley (1915-1978), the grandson of Reverend Frank N. and Anna C. Greeley. Abram Buckhout, the successful hat merchant and landowner, must have felt immense pride for his two well-educated sons, and a deep sadness at the death of his firstborn, Nathan, at so young an age.

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