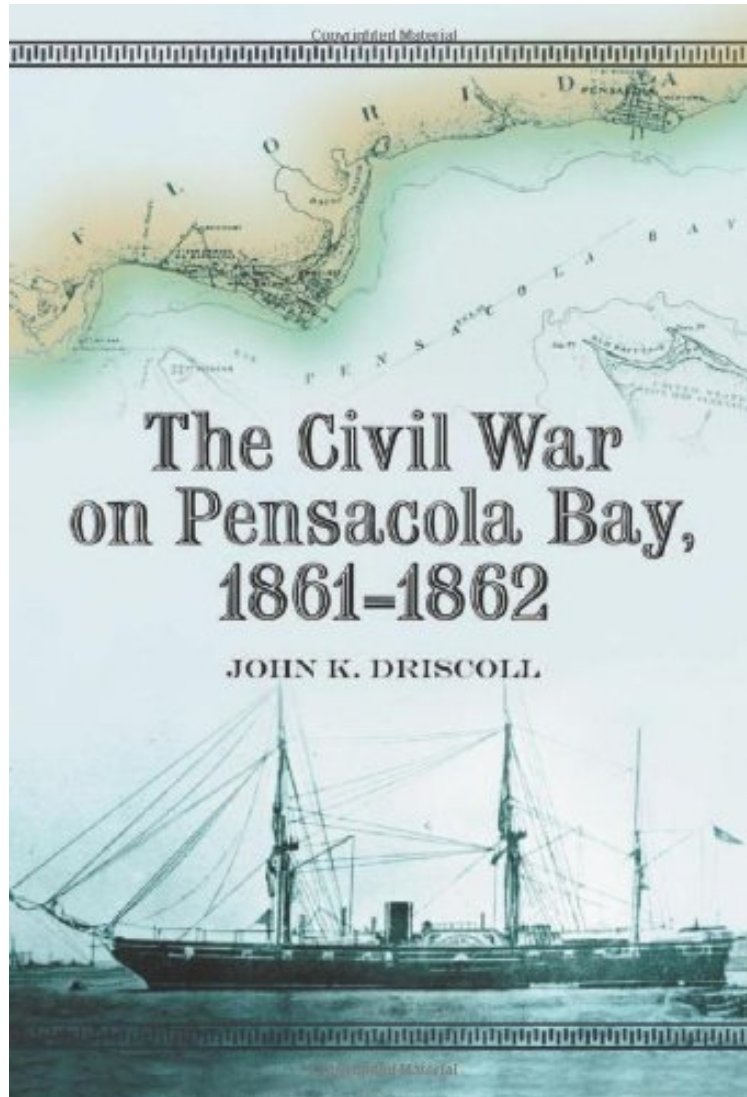


(Download pdf) Civil War on Pensacola Bay, 1861-1862

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John K. Driscoll

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John K. Driscoll : Civil War on Pensacola Bay, 1861-1862 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Civil War on Pensacola Bay, 1861-1862:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. PENSACOLA 1861, WHERE THE CIVIL WAR ALMOST STARTEDBy CTS 2631Everyone who reads about the American Civil War knows about Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina and how the opening shots of the Civil War were fired there by Confederate forces commanded by P.G.T. Beauregard at Union Major Robert Anderson's artillerymen manning the fort. But most people dont know that there was another fort in the seceded Southern states that both sides were willing to go to war over in 1861. Fort Pickens on Santa Rosa Island at Pensacola Bay, Florida was the other U.S. military installation that had a

Union garrison and the Confederate forces wanted it. The Union wanted to keep control of the fort to show that they did not recognize the new Confederate government as legitimate or its claims on Union property in the seceded states, and they wanted to maintain control of Pensacola Bay as a safe harbor to base Union Naval forces for blockading the Confederate Gulf coast. The Confederates already had captured the Pensacola Naval Yard, Fort Barrancas, the adjacent water battery, Fort McRee on Perdido Key across from Fort Pickens on the opposite side of the entrance channel to Pensacola Bay, and Barrancas Barracks, built to house the garrisons of the forts in peacetime. But the Southerners needed Fort Pickens to secure Pensacola Bay and enable them to use the great natural harbor in conjunction with the Naval Yard as a base for blockade runners and commerce raiders to aid the Confederate war effort. To this day U.S. Army Major Robert Anderson is recognized as an American hero for his actions at Fort Sumter, but hardly anybody has heard of First Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer who commanded the Union army forces at Fort Pickens. Like Anderson he refused to surrender the fort he was entrusted to hold by the U.S. government, but unlike Fort Sumter, he never did surrender his position. He held a fort designed for a garrison of more than 1,200 men for 93 days with fifty men of Company G, 1st U.S. Artillery and a detail of thirty sailors detached from the U.S. Navy ships offshore! In an amazing display of lack of cooperation between the Union army and navy, reinforcements for Fort Pickens had been living offshore aboard ships for 64 days within sight of Slemmer and his men who were in desperate need of additional manpower! This was because the Union naval commander, Captain Henry Adams, was following orders from a navy secretary (Isaac Toucey who left office under censure from Congress) and administration (President Buchanan) that were already out of office! Confederate forces at Pensacola were first commanded by former U.S. army engineer Colonel William C. Chase who did a fine job building the forts on Pensacola Bay but was not audacious enough to launch an all out attack to take Fort Pickens. Chase was followed by then Brigadier General Braxton Bragg. Bragg showed his abilities (outstanding administrator, organizer, and disciplinarian, perfect for inexperienced troops and formations) and unfortunately for the South, his faults (bad tempered, argumentative, over critical of subordinates, and blaming them for all failures) that later would greatly hinder his tenure as commander of the Army of Tennessee. The incompetence and lack of experience that the Lincoln administration suffered from at the beginning of the war did not help either. The U.S.S. Powhatan, one of the more powerful ships in the navy in 1861, was supposed to support the resupply and reinforcement of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, but at the same time was assigned to the relief expedition to Fort Pickens at Pensacola! This was because of lack of communications between President Lincoln, secretary of state William H. Seward, and navy secretary Gideon Welles. Powhatan sailed for Florida and was another reason the operation to save Major Anderson and Fort Sumter failed. This book is filled with interesting facts like this and is well worth reading. The stories of Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens are told at the same time so the reader can see how the events at both locations led to war and were seen by people both North and South. Other events at Pensacola 1861-1862 covered in the book are the Union commando raid by a combined navy/marine force that destroyed the Confederate commerce raider William P. Judah at the Pensacola Naval Yard September 14, 1861 (like something the navy SEALs would do today), the Battle of Santa Rosa Island October 9, 1861 (the author makes a pretty good argument that Confederate forces might have taken Fort Pickens if an effort like this had been made earlier in the year instead of the raid that led to this skirmish), the combined Union army/navy bombardment of Confederate Fort McRee November 22, 1861, and ends with the evacuation of Pensacola Bay in early 1862 after the military disasters at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee made the Confederate troops on the Gulf coast valuable reinforcements for trying to stop Grant at Shiloh. The book is well written, thoroughly researched as evidenced from the Bibliography, and richly illustrated with over seventy pictures and drawings of people, military camps, military installations, fortifications, and ships found in the text including some modern photos taken by the author. These also include the pictures taken in 1861 by New Orleans photographer J.D. Edwards of Confederate forces and fortifications at Pensacola Bay that is one of the larger single collections of photography from the Confederate side of the American Civil War. The book is well made and looks like a school textbook with its shiny cover. Really a nice volume. I have a few complaints about this book and that is why I gave it only four stars. First is the price, this is an expensive book for the number of pages. And the book does not have one decent map in the entire text! The map on the front cover did work as an aid for me to locate the town of Pensacola, the Naval Yard, and their position relative to the fortifications located on the Bay before the war though. And there is a period map from the Official Records that shows artillery ranges from Fort Pickens and the Union batteries on Santa Rosa Island to the Confederate forts and batteries on the mainland and Perdido Key. But these two maps are not enough for the reader to have a good mental picture of what is happening while reading this book. Also, a map for the Battle of Santa Rosa Island was really needed to understand a confusing Civil War night action! Next, I don't like the Notes section of the book. Instead of having an individual numbered note for a quote or sentence in a paragraph there is a note for the entire paragraph! So a note list a few sources and your wondering which source was used for which part of the paragraph? My last complaint is for a book this expensive there were quite a few typos. I recommend this book based on the writing and research. Entertaining and informative, it covers a part of the Civil War that has not been covered in a single volume until this time. I learned so much about the beginning of the conflict that I had never read about before, and also Civil War history in the Pensacola area in 1861-1862. (And I am from Florida!) Not perfect, but really

good.

In 1845, sparsely populated Florida had been admitted to the United States along with Iowa in an ill-fated attempt to keep the balance between slave and free states and ultimately avert the civil war that many felt was on the horizon. With the 1861 beginning of hostilities, Florida's Pensacola Bay area with its magnificent harbor, valuable navy yard and impressive fortifications became hotly contested by Union and Confederate forces. While Pensacola's lack of navigable rivers and limited rail access had kept it from developing into one of the country's major commercial centers, its location provided the perfect base for hostile strikes on nearby Mobile and New Orleans. Focusing on the town of Pensacola and the small residential villages of Warrington and Woolsey, this volume details the events which took place in and around Pensacola Bay immediately before and in the early months of the Civil War. It takes a look at the various people involved and how their personalities and attributes came into play and shaped the course of events. The work presents happenings from a contemporary viewpoint rather than how they were reported and retold at a later time. More than 70 period photographs and illustrations complete the depiction of events.

About the Author Retired administrator John K. Driscoll lives in Madison, Wisconsin. He is the author of *Rogue: A Biography of Civil War General Justus McKinstry* (2006).