

William S.W. Ruschenberger:

A Study of an American Naval Officer in the Nineteenth Century

by

Jessica Rogers Kestler

November, 2017

Director of Thesis: Dr. M. Todd Bennett

Major Department: History

This thesis seeks to examine the life of William S.W. Ruschenberger, a nineteenth-century naval officer and add to existing scholarship on the subject of American diplomacy in the early nineteenth-century. The thesis includes three chapters and two appendices in an effort to ensure as much clarity on the subject as possible. In addition to a multitude of secondary sources, primary source-based research was available through Joyner Library's Special Collections at East Carolina University. This is a case study of a naval surgeon whose experience as surgeon and diplomat demonstrates the intentional expansionist efforts of the United States in the early nineteenth century, much earlier than emphasized in the initial historiography on the subject.



William S.W. Ruschenberger:  
A Study of an American Naval Officer in the Nineteenth Century

A Thesis

Presented To the Faculty of the Department of History

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts in History

by

Jessica Rogers Kestler

November, 2017

© Jessica Rogers Kestler, 2017

William S.W. Ruschenberger:  
A Study of an American Naval Officer in the Nineteenth Century

by

Jessica Rogers Kestler

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF  
THESIS: \_\_\_\_\_

(M. Todd Bennett, PhD)

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

(Wade Dudley, PhD)

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

(Angela Thompson, PhD)

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORY: \_\_\_\_\_

(Christopher Oakley, PhD)

DEAN OF THE  
GRADUATE SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Paul J. Gemperline, PhD

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Todd Bennett, and the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Wade Dudley and Dr. Angela Thompson. Without their constant guidance, assistance, and collective wisdom, this work would not be possible. I would also like to thank the administrative members of the History Department, Ms. Ingrid Meyer and Ms. Mia Thompson, both for assisting with my persistent emails, always bringing a bright and cheerful disposition to my day, or a vote of confidence when needed. A big thank-you to Ms. Olivia Thomas, who tirelessly proofread my chapters, allowed me to bounce ideas around out loud, offered feedback, and provided a space to vent. Your support means more than you will ever know.

To my parents. Mom and Dad, you have supported me in immeasurable ways my entire life. Without your constant and steadfast love and support, I would have foundered long ago. I will never be able to fully communicate the depths to which I am grateful to you and my brothers for always being with me. Thank-you.

Austin, I would not have made it to this point without you. You came when the seas were rough and helped navigate towards clear skies. Your unwavering support and confidence in me, even when I lacked it myself, made it possible to carry on. This thesis and this degree have been, to date, the most difficult endeavor I have tackled. I'm glad to say I made it through with your help.

Andrew, this is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

CHAPTER 1: RUSCHENBERGER & THE U.S. EXPANSIONIST MINDSET IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY..... 5

CHAPTER 2: NINETEENTH CENTURY MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE &  
RUSCHENBERGER’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE U.S. NAVY..... 16

CHAPTER 3: RUSCHENBERGER & NINETEENTH-CENTURY DIPLOMACY..... 31

CONCLUSION ..... 50

REFERENCES..... 53

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE..... 57

APPENDIX B: 1835 VOYAGE MAP & LEGEND ..... 58

## Introduction

Born on 4 September 1807 in Bridgeton, New Jersey, William Samuel Waithman Ruschenberger received his education in both New York and Philadelphia, the latter of which he would come to call home. In 1826, at the tender age of nineteen, Ruschenberger joined the U.S. Navy as a surgeon's mate. He spent his career in the Navy, rising to become a surgeon and earning some renown as a physician, naturalist, and author, as proven by the books he wrote and their success, along with this successful career before his retirement in 1869, though he continued to serve as a medical consultant for the Navy after his formal retirement.<sup>1</sup>

Ruschenberger's historical significance ranges well beyond that, however, as this thesis shows. Throughout his lengthy naval career, Ruschenberger travelled widely, sailing on several key missions, studying, acquiring knowledge about the wider world, and necessarily performing a broad range of medical and non-medical functions while at sea, diplomatic ones included. In that regard, then, his life story – which wove together naval and diplomatic, medical and scientific developments – exemplifies the complexity of America's outward push. By examining one person's seemingly microscopic biography, this thesis seeks to shed light on the macroscopic subject of nineteenth-century U.S. expansionism overseas. Given that medical influence and knowledge was coveted and respected, as chapter one outlines, a naval surgeon seemed the best lens through which to view this thesis' argument.

---

<sup>1</sup> Howard A. Kelly and Walter Burrage, *American Medical Biographies* (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Company, 1920), 1007.



This thesis adds to the work of diplomatic historians from William Appleman Williams to Emily Rosenberg to Frank Ninkovich, who argue that U.S. expansion overseas happened by design, not accident, and began much earlier in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Rosenberg's work proved particularly influential. She envisions an ideology of "liberal developmentalism," combining rhetoric of peace, prosperity, and democracy, as the driving force behind the promotion of "Americanization in the world in the name of modernization."<sup>3</sup> LaFeber is another important historian in this line of thinking. He argues that late nineteenth century expansion was a result of many years of deliberate effort, which was largely inspired by the United States' need for new markets.<sup>4</sup>

The thesis includes three chapters, each of which focuses on different topics of Ruschenberger's biography. The first traces nineteenth-century expansionism as well as the factors that propelled it forward. Normally, national leaders figure prominently in that story; but Ruschenberger headlines it here. A member of Philadelphia's gentry, Ruschenberger prized knowledge, including such subjects as foreign languages, fine arts, and natural sciences. The change in perspective serves to highlight the forces that drove people like him to go forth into the world, to explore, gain knowledge and, as a result, conquer the four corners of the globe on behalf of the United States, a rising power in the world.

The second chapter focuses on institutional and medical developments within the nineteenth century Navy. Several highlights marked Ruschenberger's forty-plus year career in the Navy. Beginning in 1826, for example, he toured aboard the frigate USS *Brandywine*, which

---

<sup>2</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Want, 1982), 20.; Frank Ninkovich, *The Global Republic: America's Inadvertent Rise to World Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 15-16.; Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1936), 482.

<sup>4</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963).

was named for the American Revolution's Battle of Brandywine. Though the frigate was built well after the American Revolution, the ship was used to transport the Marquis de Lafayette around the United States and then back home to France in the 1820s.<sup>5</sup> In 1835, he served as fleet surgeon aboard the USS *Peacock*, which circumnavigated the globe as part of an important diplomatic mission. Built as a warship during the War of 1812, the *Peacock* won a notable victory against the British warship HMS *Epervier* before serving time as a diplomatic vessel.<sup>6</sup> Throughout, Ruschenberger effected major changes in the administrative practices of the Navy as well as its medical corps. He was able to effect change in part because of his large network that included various educational boards on which he sat throughout his long career.

The third and final chapter turns to diplomacy. It focuses on the aforementioned voyage of the USS *Peacock*, sent on a secret diplomatic mission by then-president Andrew Jackson. The *Peacock*'s mission was straightforward, namely to open U.S. trade relations with various East Asian and Arabic countries. In practice, however, the ship's voyage was anything but simple. Outbreaks of disease and other mishaps prevented the *Peacock*'s crew from fulfilling their objectives, and Ruschenberger was called upon to perform diplomatic and other duties that exceeded his medical remit. This chapter uses Ruschenberger's experiences as a lens through which to examine nineteenth-century U.S. diplomatic practices and show the ways they necessarily evolved as the United States began to extend its reach outward.

Secondary scholarship on Ruschenberger is scarce.<sup>7</sup> In part for that reason, this thesis makes heavy use of the many journals Ruschenberger kept in addition to the books he wrote

---

<sup>5</sup> NavSource Naval History: Photographic History of the U.S. Navy "USS *Brandywine*" <http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/86/86297.htm> (accessed 16 September 2017).

<sup>6</sup> The Oregon Encyclopedia: "USS *Peacock*" [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/u.s.s.\\_peacock/#.WdFPYmhSziU](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/u.s.s._peacock/#.WdFPYmhSziU) (accessed 16 September 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Secondary sources on Ruschenberger are limited to an MA thesis by an East Carolina University student, an entry in a medical encyclopedia, and a brief mention in a book devoted to a broader topic: Samuel W. Belcher, "Dr.

about his sea duty tours.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, a portion of his letters and journals have been lost to time. They no longer exist, leaving an incomplete archival record of Ruschenberger's career. Secondary literature remedies this deficit wherever possible. Together, those materials provide a wealth of information about his opinions on how to improve the Navy, his thoughts on the foreign countries he visited, and his scientific and medical observations. This thesis uses them to examine, on a microscopic level, early nineteenth-century U.S. expansion writ large.

---

William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons in the Pre-Civil War U.S. Navy." (MA Thesis, East Carolina University, 2002); Howard A. Kelly and Walter Burrage, *American Medical Biographies* (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Company, 1920); Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts: America's Secret First Pivot toward Asia, 1832-37* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger; signed Holgazan "American Military Laws," *Southern and Western Literary Messenger*, vol. 12, issue 7, July 1846.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, "A Brief History of an Existing Controversy on the Subject of Assimilated Rank in the US Navy," Philadelphia: C. Sherman Printer, 1850.; William S.W. Ruschenberger; signed Holgazan, "Bureau of Naval Construction, & C. *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 11, issue 12, Dec. 1845.; William S.W Ruschenberger; signed Holgazan, "Education in the Navy" *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 16, issue 9, Sept. 1850.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific; Including Notices of Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru vol. 1*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1834.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838.; William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

## Chapter I: Ruschenberger & the U.S. Expansionist Mindset in the Nineteenth Century

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, William Ruschenberger lived in Philadelphia as a member of that city's gentry. Members of Philadelphia's gentry, as did many wealthy, educated elites elsewhere, prized the acquisition of knowledge, including of the natural world, medicine, and foreign peoples. This desire for knowledge drove many male members of the gentry, Ruschenberger included, into the armed forces, which offered opportunities to travel and explore the world.

For Ruschenberger, the U.S. Navy provided that outlet. Ruschenberger joined the Navy in 1826, and he first served as a surgeon's mate aboard the USS *Brandywine*, which sailed throughout South America from 1826 to 1829, stopping in Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru. Throughout his journey, Ruschenberger kept detailed journals in which he logged his observations. The topics included: the weather, events aboard the *Brandywine*, and the places the ship visited, including the local inhabitants, customs and lore, histories, medical practices, and, to a certain extent, botany and natural science. Ruschenberger repeated this behavior the second time he went to South America aboard the *Falmouth* from 1831-1834; though for that tour, he was a fully commissioned surgeon.<sup>1</sup> The difference in rank is attributed to Ruschenberger completing his medical education at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Medicine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Naval General Order, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629) Box 3, Folder g, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Ruschenberger's quest for knowledge via the military carried expansionist overtones. For the purposes of this chapter, expansionism is as historian Walter LaFeber defined it: U.S. expansion as a result of official attempts to find trade and investment opportunities in areas where the United States did not want to exert formal political control.<sup>2</sup> Though LaFeber focused on the latter part of the nineteenth century, his description applies to the earlier part as well.

Though Ruschenberger and his fellow elites may not have been consciously or actively working to further the expansionist goals of the United States, his scientific interests served that objective nevertheless. He observed, which led to recording and collecting – effectively possessing – foreign peoples and objects. Despite his intentions, as an amateur natural scientist, which were purely academic, there was an inescapable power differential between Ruschenberger and the people he encountered during his travels. As such, his scientific endeavors promoted the nation's expansionist agenda.

Although the connection may at first seem thin, a strong historical relationship existed between natural science and international power. As early as the sixteenth century, natural scientists and botanical researchers in the West became interested in non-European peoples and places. During this era, little was known about the true scientific and medical properties of plants and herbs. Obtaining knowledge about plants of the world became a hobby for those with means, especially in Great Britain, France, and Spain, with the English colonies, such as the soon-to-be United States following closely behind. Amassing vast personal or institutional collections of botanical and medical research emerged as a driving factor behind missionary travels and

---

<sup>2</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), viii.

expeditions.<sup>3</sup> One prominent group that went on such travels was the Moravian Society, a religious organization that was determined to be economically self-sufficient by means of its missionary work.<sup>4</sup>

Botany, especially during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, was a big science, and therefore a big business. Curators of botanical gardens, both in Europe and its colonies, collected rare and beautiful plants for study and global exchange. In fact, across Europe, it was widely accepted that knowledge of nature was the key to amassing national wealth and power. “Plant mercantilists” thus tightly controlled trade and influenced conquest and colonization in order to obtain these botanical items.<sup>5</sup>

Because it was big business, botany became yet another reason – in addition to realpolitik, economic growth, and the search for foreign markets – for the projection of military force into regions such as the East and West Indies. Discovering and controlling sources of valuable plants, such as *cinchona*, a tropical-weather plant found in South America and used for medicinal purposes, were dually important for state purposes.<sup>6</sup> Generally speaking, plants contributed to the political and economic expansion of Western European nations. From the standpoint of trade, European powers also coveted overseas sources of botanical and scientific knowledge largely due to the medicinal qualities these foreign plants held. The aforementioned *cinchona*, for example, was used as a muscle relaxant to abate shivering due to low body

---

<sup>3</sup> Michael T. Bravo, “Mission Gardens: Natural History and Global Expansion, 1720-1820,” *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, Edited by Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swain (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 51.

<sup>4</sup> Michael T. Bravo, “Mission Gardens,” *Colonial Botany*, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire*, 5.

temperatures and symptoms of malaria, one of the many diseases prominent during the Age of Exploration as Europeans came into contact with more tropical climates.<sup>7</sup>

When states were directly involved, botanical conflict sometimes grew to stretch across the globe. First Europeans and, later, Americans competed for ownership of nature. On one hand, Europeans agreed that, in theory, a global commons existed in which the natural resources outside Europe were thought to belong to all Europeans, an imperialist idea that led to expansion. On the other hand, during the eighteenth century, European governments and trading companies claimed exclusive rights to any and all territories containing valuable resources that they could hold militarily.<sup>8</sup>

In the West, only Europeans engaged in botanical competition prior to the nineteenth century. Starting in the early nineteenth century, however, the United States began to assert itself more and more in the global arena, hoping to be included as a global contender, both in government and private affairs. As will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, this assertion on the global scale made it possible for American military officers such as Ruschenberger to partake in botanical pursuits while abroad.

After Ruschenberger's appointment on 10 August, 1826, the Navy wasted no time in getting him started on his new life and career. He soon received assignment to the USS *Brandywine* for a sea duty tour to Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru. That tour lasted until 1829. During his tour aboard the *Brandywine*, Ruschenberger first visited South America, keeping journals in which he logged a variety of observations that pertained to life at sea. In addition to

---

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "The History of Malaria, an Ancient Disease," <https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/history/> (accessed 16 June, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire*, 45.

the ship and the habits of the sailors aboard it, Ruschenberger observed the natural world – he made notes about the sea and local plants, describing the landscape as “beautiful.”<sup>9</sup>

Ruschenberger benefited from this botanical work, in a sense. During one of his sea duty tours to South America, he visited and wrote about botanical gardens in Brazil. Established by Dom Leandro do Sacramento, the garden covered a surface of roughly four acres and was laid out in alleys and beds, which were, Ruschenberger wrote, “kept in fine order.”<sup>10</sup> He went into extensive detail, describing the various plants in the garden such as tea, flowers, trees, arrow-root, sago, cardamom, cinnamon cloves, bread-fruit, and variety of other spices. In his writings about this garden, he noted his admiration for its beauty, both as a scholar and as a tourist.<sup>11</sup>

When the *Brandywine* made port in Chile, he spent quite a bit of time going on walks, exploring and recording his thoughts about the local populace and ways of life. A rather intriguing fact was the way in which he framed his entries, with tones of interest and curiosity. Frequently, he would take walks to collect seashells or take notes about the various plant and animal life that surrounded him, though the latter was done more frequently on his second sea duty tour. In one entry, he recounted a two-day trip he took to the city of Valparaiso to call on other military members, attend parties, and enjoy the city’s social scene.<sup>12</sup> On several occasions, Ruschenberger recorded the food Latin America had to offer. He enjoyed pumpkins in particular, mentioning them in several entries and brooding over their lack of availability in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629) Box 2, Folder c, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

<sup>10</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific; Including Notices of Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1834), 48.

<sup>11</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

<sup>13</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.



During his stint in Valparaiso, Ruschenberger occupied himself with social calls and parties. In addition to this, Ruschenberger made note of ongoing political events. Ruschenberger wrote that men “connected with the revolution” were being sent to prison by a Captain Latham, an officer in the U.S. Army who was staying in Valparaiso.<sup>14</sup> Historians know the “revolution” to which Ruschenberger referred as the Chilean Civil War of 1829-1830. General Ramón Freire was in and out of the presidency between the years 1823-1830. Despite coming to power several times, Freire had trouble retaining his authority. There had been significant political unrest throughout Ruschenberger’s tenure in Chile, but no violence until December of 1829 with the Battle of Ochagavia.

The arrests Ruschenberger referenced were a result of Freire’s power grab in 1827, and also his subsequent attempt to keep his political enemies at bay and under control.<sup>15</sup> Though this civil war was relatively short, it is important given that American military officers were present during these bouts. Information and correspondence sent from Washington to the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Herman Allen, a U.S. diplomat in Chile, travelled slowly.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is difficult to determine if the U.S. government was aware of the political unrest of its southern neighbors and whether it had military forces present in the event they were needed.

Nevertheless, the events in Valparaiso must have interested Washington, for they touched upon the Monroe Doctrine, arguably the most significant U.S. foreign policy with regard to the Americas in force at the time. Given during the president’s annual message to Congress on December 2 1823, James Monroe’s doctrine warned European powers against interfering in the

---

<sup>14</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

<sup>15</sup> Simon Collier, *Ideas and Politics of Chilean Independence, 1808-1833* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1967), 325.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Historian: “A Guide to the United States’ History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Chile” <https://history.state.gov/countries/chile> (accessed 7 March, 2017).

Western Hemisphere. He advised that the United States would not tolerate further colonization or puppet monarchs.<sup>17</sup>

Historians debate the causes and effects of the Monroe Doctrine, which the United States could not fully enforce until the late nineteenth century. Though it has also been argued that the importance for the doctrine can best be understood in the context of domestic politics and the upcoming presidential campaign at the time, the effect the Monroe Doctrine had on foreign policy cannot be ignored.<sup>18</sup> There are differing opinions from historians, however. William R. Manning and Gale W. McGee, to name a few. Manning put forth evidence that foreign relations with South America were a much more prominent driving factor behind the doctrine's inception. Manning argues that the various nations of South America, more or less encouraged the United States to assist in preventing further European interference.<sup>19</sup> McGee's perspective is that the Monroe Doctrine was not a push towards isolationism, especially when put into context of the diplomatic conditions that produced it, meaning Latin American countries gaining their independence causing a domino effect of usurpation of European influence.<sup>20</sup>

Yet there is little doubt that the Monroe Doctrine quickly became a staple of U.S. foreign policy, exemplifying the expansionary zeal that characterized the American worldview of the 1820s, just as Ruschenberger arrived in Chile. After all, Monroe was the first president to send

---

<sup>17</sup> The American Presidency Project: James Monroe's Seventh Annual Message to Congress <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29465> (accessed 7 March, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Ernest R. May, *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> William R. Manning, et al. "Statements, Interpretations, and Applications of the Monroe Doctrine and of More or Less Allied Doctrines" *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1907-1917)* 8 (1914): 34-118.

<sup>20</sup> Gale W. McGee, "The Monroe Doctrine: A Stopgap Measure." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 38, no. 2 (1951): 233-50.

U.S. ambassadors to South American capitals, a tradition that his successor, John Quincy Adams, continued.<sup>21</sup>

Scholars have argued that race, particularly notions of white supremacy, as misguided as they were, helped drive U.S. expansion as well. In the United States, Manifest Destiny, a term coined in 1845, was based on the assumption that a racial hierarchy, with whites on the top and people of color at the bottom, existed among and governed relations between the races.<sup>22</sup> By imagining whites on top and people of color at the bottom, the hierarchy effectively rationalized expansion, justifying efforts by whites to control lands as exercises in “civilizing” or “uplifting” those lands’ non-white inhabitants. Though it has been traditionally argued that the United States did not purposefully acquire territory until the Spanish-American War in 1898, and was not focusing on expansion until the opportunity presented itself at that moment, expansion was in fact a habit practiced by the United States since its formation.<sup>23</sup> At least that is the view of scholars such as Reginald Horsman, who found that Anglo-Saxonism drove westward expansion and the subjugation of Indian nations.<sup>24</sup> This racialized aspect of imperialism would exert a strong influence on the U.S. occupation of Cuba in the wake of the Spanish-American War. These ideas, however, were common well before then, too.

Based on that scholarship, one might assume that Ruschenberger would approach native peoples from a standpoint of superiority with the idea of “civilizing” or otherwise controlling them foremost in his mind. In Ruschenberger’s case, that was true to some extent. In one section of his book, Ruschenberger wrote about the religious preferences of Chile and South America,

---

<sup>21</sup> Office of the Historian “A Guide to the United States’ History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Chile” <https://history.state.gov/countries/chile> (accessed 7 March, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man’s Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 198.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1936).

<sup>24</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 82.

comparing them to the United States and other countries: “It must not be forgotten, that the people of South America are Christians, and not heathen, nor idolaters, like the western Indians....”<sup>25</sup> It must be noted that, in this section though, Ruschenberger was not openly condescending, he was, at the very least, writing about his encounters with native peoples with a sense of superiority. His behaviors, based on his writings, mirror that of a tourist, a demeanor he again utilized in a later sea duty tour covered in chapter three. It also cannot go without saying that, though Ruschenberger was well-meaning in his academic pursuits and cultural observances, his being present as a military member still smacks of an expansionist mindset, especially given the power differential involved.

Despite this sense of superiority, Ruschenberger’s journal entries display an eagerness to learn about Chile, its history, culture, and its people. In one entry from December of 1826, he described going ashore in Valparaiso and remarked upon his “surprise at the cleanliness of the streets.”<sup>26</sup> To modern eyes, this appears to be a straightforward example of a condescending North American expressing surprise when the appearance of a locale in the developing world did not fit his preconception. In reality, however, it is just the opposite. An earthquake had devastated Chile in 1822, and Ruschenberger admired that Chileans had succeeded in rebuilding so quickly.<sup>27</sup>

This same entry featured a rather lengthy description of the South American’s practice of drinking *maté*, an herbal tea that is now commonly known as *yerba mate* or *chimarrão*, though Ruschenberger referred to it simply as tea. Ruschenberger described the tradition as such:

In houses where water is used a cauldron of coals is set in the center of the floor on which placed a tea kettle & the water hot. Those of the higher (?) are silver, others of earthenware... a small

---

<sup>25</sup> William Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 329.

<sup>26</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

<sup>27</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

quantity of leaves is poured boiling water then a quantity of (?) sugar is added...The taste of this beverage is not disagreeable & indeed many are fond of it after drinking it 2 or 3 times.<sup>28</sup>

The remainder of his journal entry treated local delicacies in much the same fashion. In celebration of the new year, he attended a number of “amusements going on in the city.” These amusements included cock fighting and a game that he described as being “similar to billiards.”<sup>29</sup>

Whether Ruschenberger was unique among his peers in terms of immersing himself in Chilean culture remains to be seen. Aside from cultural fascination, he also learned quite a bit from South Americans in terms of his medical career. He wrote a two-volume book about his travels and experiences to South America on his two separate sea duty stints. His purpose in relaying his experiences, he wrote in the introduction, was to make “my countrymen better acquainted with some of peculiarities of their southern neighbors.”<sup>30</sup>

Ruschenberger heaped praise in his two-volume work on Chilean hospitals, especially those in the capital city of Santiago. He wrote that, as in Spain, “the profession of medicine is lowly estimated in Chile, yet efforts have been made to elevate the standing of its members in society, with considerable success.”<sup>31</sup> He went into great detail about the Chilean development of a proper system of medical education that included a board of examiners, to examine the candidates for their practice, regardless of certificates or diplomas received from colleges or universities. He wrote that in order to standardize and professionalize the field, those practicing needed to be licensed by this newly established board of examiners, any self-practicing “apothecaries” were prohibited under threat of severe penalties.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

<sup>29</sup> 1826 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder c.

<sup>30</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 142.

<sup>32</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 142.

Ruschenberger mentioned that Chileans were beginning to encourage their children to be educated in “the healing art.” “It is to be regretted,” he continued, “that some similar plan cannot be adopted in the United States, to free the country from the numerous charlatans who tamper with the health and lives of citizens.”<sup>33</sup> This passage in Ruschenberger’s book is important for a variety of reasons. Foremost, it shows that he was aware of the pitiful state of medical education in the United States, an error he strove to correct throughout his career. Chile’s success in standardizing and professionalizing the practice of medicine apparently made a lasting impression on Ruschenberger, who spent much of his career attempting to implement such a system in the U.S. Navy.

The global climate in Ruschenberger’s day was one of possession, made possible by centuries of acquiring scientific knowledge to gain power, fortify trade, and expand borders. To be sure, U.S. expansionism resulted in part from economic pursuits. But the presence of U.S. Navy vessels such as the *Brandywine* near overseas sites of politics instability suggests that American expansion relied on hard, military powers as well. As for Ruschenberger personally, his early tours proved to be pivotal, both for his career as well as his legacy. From these sea duty tours, he derived the ideas and necessary experience that allowed him to make great strides in professionalizing the Navy, its medical corps especially. It was that work for which he would become renowned.

---

<sup>33</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific*, 142.

## **Chapter II: Nineteenth-Century Medical Knowledge & Ruschenberger's Contributions to the U.S. Navy**

Naval service held vast appeal for a young civilian interested in medicine such as William Ruschenberger. Life at sea attracted young men looking for adventure and travel far away from the familiarities and duties of their hometowns. But for aspiring physicians like Ruschenberger, signing up for service alleviated the need to establish a medical practice at home and the various stressors that came along with establishing professional credibility as a civilian. In addition, surgeons and medical doctors were invaluable members of any crew and enjoyed tremendous prestige aboard ships because only they were qualified to treat sailors who, for reasons that will be explained below, were prone not only to illnesses but also workplace accidents.

Ruschenberger's service from 1826 to 1869 spanned a tumultuous period, during which the Navy, as well as naval medicine, grew and developed no less rapidly than the United States as a whole. To better understand Ruschenberger, it is important to understand the changing environment in which he lived and worked, and to which he contributed. This chapter seeks to augment that understanding.

Ruschenberger's career path differed from that taken by most American sailors. The majority of aspiring naval officers entered the Navy as midshipmen, the first rung on the promotion ladder. Midshipmen were required to spend time aboard a ship to gain experience before taking an exam that would allow them to advance through their careers. This path was different from those in a more specialized field within the Navy, such as Ruschenberger. Doctors, pursers (the Navy's money personnel), chaplains, schoolmasters, and captain's clerks

were all considered to be in a specialized field; therefore, they were appointed to their positions by the Naval Board and were not part of the promotion ladder, as was the case for midshipmen. Ruschenberger's appointment was to the medical division.<sup>1</sup>

There were two positions in the medical division – surgeon's mate or surgeon – available to an aspiring naval physician such as Ruschenberger [See Appendix A].<sup>2</sup> Candidates with sufficient education could start at the higher rank, surgeon. Despite having some medical training, Ruschenberger did not yet meet that qualification. He would not earn his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department until 1830. Otherwise, no records survive indicating where or how Ruschenberger received his non-naval training. He thus entered the Navy at the rank of surgeon's mate.<sup>3</sup> From that rank, it was possible, after years of service and more medical education, to advance to surgeon.

Joining the Navy, not as midshipman, but as surgeon's mate did put Ruschenberger at something of a disadvantage. Namely, he did not have the maritime training necessary to familiarize himself with naval procedures and customs. Ruschenberger thus faced a steep learning curve as he attempted to accustom himself to his circumstances. Surgeons typically served aboard ships for three years or longer, practicing in less than ideal conditions. Life at sea was difficult, and transitioning to it proved challenging, especially to those men, like Ruschenberger, who had little maritime experience.

For medical crew members, cabins served a dual purpose. Due to the limited space available on ships, sick bays often included bunks for the attending medical officer, with no real separation between the two. This meant that medical officers were always on call if the need

---

<sup>1</sup> Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioning Certificate, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629) Box 3, Folder g, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.



arose.<sup>4</sup> Naval surgeons slept and worked in sick bays, already dark, cramped, and poorly ventilated enough, alongside the sailors they treated. Formal naval regulations did not standardize living quarters until after the War of 1812, and even then actual conditions tended to vary significantly.<sup>5</sup> Generally speaking, though, rules confined patients to sick bays if they required frequent observation. Oftentimes, a sailor would need to be kept under observation if his illness or ailments prevented him from carrying out his normal duties and routines, or was considered contagious, which was usually the case when an outbreak of sickness occurred aboard ship. Fevers were common symptoms of this.

Sick quarters typically had four or more hanging wooden platform beds with raised sides to prevent seamen from rolling out during heavy seas. In lieu of wooden platforms, it would not be unusual to have hammocks, or the occasional adult-sized crib on side rockers for those with the most serious of illnesses and wounds. Usually, a surgeon had access to a variety of botanical medicines, such as myrrh or, most unfortunately, the chemical element sulfur; and also surgical instruments, such as a variety of saws and drills for bone, small mallets, and binders to keep a patient in place (a more standardized surgical kit was available commercially by the 1840s). A small desk often sat shoehorned in the room as well.<sup>6</sup>

The duties surgeons performed varied depending upon circumstance. In peacetime, their routine duties included visiting ill or injured crewmembers, overseeing surgeon's mates, maintaining a log of patients and their ailments, and recording any deaths that occurred. They also kept a personal journal of their observations and experiences while aboard ship.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> J. Worth Estes, *Naval Surgeon: Life and Death at Sea in the Age of Sail* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications, 1998), 58.

<sup>5</sup> J. Worth Estes, *Naval Surgeon*, 59.

<sup>6</sup> J. Worth Estes, *Naval Surgeon*, 58.

<sup>7</sup> Zachary B. Friedenber, *Medicine Under Sail* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 18-21.

During wartime, surgeons' duties included all of the above, plus lengthy stretches of sea duty. Sea duty lengthened over the course of the nineteenth century. New classes of vessels deployed during the War of 1812 required more surgeons. Combined with an expanding fleet, that fact presented the Navy with a persistent personnel problem: the supply of available medical officers remained well below the number needed to properly staff the ships. Consequently, sea duties lengthened while shore duties shortened in duration.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, shore duty became highly coveted. Naval doctors preferred shore duty because it allowed them an opportunity to serve at duty stations that carried more social and professional standing. Naval doctors considered serving as a chief surgeon at a naval hospital far superior to serving as a ship's surgeon. This was largely because naval doctors had the opportunity to tend to a wider variety of patients, which would advance their skills as a practicing medical doctor as well as bolster their professional reputations within the medical realm. Shore duty did have a negative aspect: pay was lower.<sup>9</sup> Even so, physicians strongly preferred shore duty, suggesting that, for the most part, they thought of themselves as doctors first and sailors second.

Naval doctors enjoyed rather dynamic careers. They not only learned the ways of living at sea but also treated patients who were subject to work-related injuries such as a herniation from hauling sails or serious, sometimes fatal, falls from topmasts. Their seafaring patients were also unusually susceptible to the wide array of diseases common to the nineteenth century.

In part, this was because they encountered pathogens to which they were not immune as the ships on which they sailed traveled the far corners of the globe. Fevers, dysentery, cholera, and scurvy, among others, routinely plagued men while at sea, often with disastrous effects. It

---

<sup>8</sup> Brings, Hans A. "Navy Medicine Comes Ashore: Establishing the First Permanent U.S. Naval Hospitals," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 41, issue 3, July 1986, 257-292.

<sup>9</sup> Brings, Hans A. "Navy Medicine Comes Ashore," 257-292.

was not uncommon for these diseases to severely affect large numbers of crewmen, sometimes killing them outright.<sup>10</sup>

During the Age of Sail, scurvy was a prominent maritime disease. Though it was one that had been afflicting seamen for quite some time, it was not until the mid-1700s that Dr. James Lind, a surgeon of the Royal Navy, made the first controlled dietetic experiment on record proving that oranges and lemons were the best available cure for scurvy. Nevertheless, old habits died hard. In *Treatise of Scurvy*, his 1753 work in which he reported his findings, Lind attributed part of the disease's cause to the moisture of the sea air, which made the effects of scurvy more potent and fast-acting, especially for those who neglected exercise. As such, he recommended, in addition to citrus, fresh, dry air and also exercise as cures for scurvy and other diseases.<sup>11</sup> This idea of fresh, clean air as a "catch-all" remedy thus persisted well into nineteenth century, when Ruschenberger practiced.

Fevers and infections continued to plague sailors in the nineteenth century as well. According to Lind's *An Essay on the most Effectual Means of Preserving the Health of Seamen in the Royal Navy*, this was due in large part to the unsanitary conditions that prevailed, and the substandard meals served aboard most ships. Rules in force at the time limited seamen to one gallon of ale per day, ale that was often ladled from a barrel. Sailors typically ate one pound of ship's biscuit per day and two pounds of pork per week, both of which were often paired with fish, peas, butter, and cheese. Stored in dark cargo holds where mold and mildew easily formed, these rations often spoiled. Observers described ale as "sour and foul."<sup>12</sup> Worms and maggots

---

<sup>10</sup> Kevin Brown, *Poxed and Scurvied: The Story of Sickness and Health at Sea* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 51.

<sup>11</sup> "Treatise of the Scurvy: In Three Parts" Dr. James Lind, 1753, *The Health of Seamen*, 13.

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Brown, *Poxed and Scurvied*, 51.

often infested foodstuffs. Many bacteria-based illnesses such as E coli, salmonella, and listeria, to name a few, resulted, and they remained all too common during Ruschenberger's day.<sup>13</sup>

Poor food and drink were not the only threats to good health aboard ships. Rules prohibited men from relieving themselves outside the designated areas, or privies. Yet the unsanitary conditions that prevailed in these privies bred illness. Located in the bow and above water line, privies featured vents or slots cut near the deck level to allow ocean waves to wash out the area. Sailors swabbed the decks with vinegar to disinfect the ship. Too often, however, they swabbed poorly or irregularly, with the result that food and drinking water sometimes became contaminated, leading to an outbreak of disease such as E coli, salmonella, dysentery, or food poisoning.<sup>14</sup>

Another disease quite prominent during the nineteenth century, and one that would directly affect Ruschenberger on a sea duty tour in Asia, was cholera. The first major pandemic of cholera occurred in India in 1816, and by 1834 it spanned the globe, reaching North America.<sup>15</sup> The medical community now knows that cholera is contracted by ingesting water contaminated with the bacterium *vibrio cholerae*. The disease affects humans differently, depending on genetics, overall health, and amount of contaminated water ingested. Symptoms can go undetected for up to five days, and some people show no signs of disease. In other cases, however, cholera's effects can range from mild to severe to life threatening. Little of this was known in Ruschenberger's day, however, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for naval doctors like him to accurately diagnose much less cure cholera. At the time, for example,

---

<sup>13</sup> Kevin Brown, *Poxed and Scurvied*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin Brown, *Poxed and Scurvied*, 51.

<sup>15</sup> J.N. Hayes, *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 193.

Ruschenberger, not knowing anything else to call it, could only describe cholera as “the disease.”<sup>16</sup>

Deaths at sea caused by typhus, influenza, dysentery, malaria, and yellow fever were also common. In 1909, it was discovered that body lice transmitted typhus, also known as ship or gaol fever, from person to person. During Ruschenberger’s time, however, doctors believed that bad smells caused typhus. As a prophylactic measure, they thus attempted to confine the offending odors to small spaces and then fumigate them with sulfur. It should therefore come as no surprise that typhus continued to be a problem for much of the nineteenth century, so much so that the Navy found it difficult to recruit enough men to offset those who fell sick to the illness. Only after 1889, when the Navy implemented a stricter hygiene regimen with the creation of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, did the prevalence of typhus lessen.<sup>17</sup>

U.S. Navy physicians needed the best possible training to effectively treat these many maladies. Yet, even by the standards of the day, their preparation level was poor. Britain’s Royal Navy set that standard. In addition to an oral exam that lasted roughly two hours, the British model also required proof of accreditation from the Royal Colleges of Surgeons from the London, Edinburgh, or Dublin locations.<sup>18</sup>

The British also had a high standard of medical education that prospective doctors had to meet, a standard that the U.S. Navy did not set until its first attempt in 1824 with the Board of Examination, and then again in 1842 with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery’s creation, both of which will be explained in depth later in the chapter. If a young man wanted to join the Royal Navy as a surgeon, he needed eighty-four months – that is, seven years -- of standardized

---

<sup>16</sup> World Health Organization, “Cholera.” <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs107/en/> (accessed 5 April, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Kevin Brown, *Poxed and Scurvied*, 70.

<sup>18</sup> David McLean, *Surgeons of the Fleet: The Royal Navy and its Medics from Trafalgar to Jutland* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 23.

education and experience. In addition, the British imposed a limit on budding naval surgeons (initially 26, but that age was changed to 24 in 1839), meaning that anyone with eyes on a medical career in the Royal Navy had to start at the age of 19, later 17, at the absolute latest. There was no room for late bloomers in the Royal Navy in the nineteenth century. Young men were also required to be unwed and provide outstanding testimonials as to their character.<sup>19</sup>

American practice fell well short of that standard, however, which is understandable given the extent to which the United States was underdeveloped at the time in comparison to the United Kingdom. No state or professional organization in existence set required standards for American medical schools. As a result, the quality of medical training varied widely depending on the educational institution in question, where it was located, and the standards that were set by the doctor under whom an aspiring physician apprenticed. Though some institutions, such as the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department (Ruschenberger's alma mater), did train highly qualified physicians, other schools had an uneven track record.

In fact, the term "medical school" was somewhat of a misnomer. On average, medical training in the United States amounted to just two years of study leading toward a degree. Academic terms lasted only from November to the beginning of March. The second year of study merely involved repeating courses taken during the first. Professors did not assign grades until 1850.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, actual practices often departed from regulations. On paper, schools usually required matriculating students to be at least twenty-one years of age. Schools also required students to complete courses in Latin and natural and experimental philosophy and then to pass their exams. Institutions then expected students to complete three years of apprenticeship, which

---

<sup>19</sup> David McLean, *Surgeons of the Fleet*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), 40-44.

entailed on the job training to supplement their studies. After completing these steps, medical students received a degree. That degree in turn acted as a medical license, something awarded by no state or other jurisdiction at the time.<sup>21</sup> In fact, it would not be until 1876, well after Ruschenberger's retirement, that the Association of American Medical Colleges was established, and began to enforce stricter standards.<sup>22</sup>

As Ruschenberger's resume shows, medical schools only loosely enforced the rules. They rarely upheld the Latin requirement. Exams were not difficult, especially since institutions paid professors only if their students passed. Schools rarely supervised apprenticeships. Finding a private practice or hospital at which to serve was usually the student's responsibility, and institutions rarely certified that apprentices fulfilled expectations. Whatever certifications that did exist were factually suspect.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, improving medical education proved to be quite difficult. No penalties existed for institutions that refused to meet certain requirements. The schools that did attempt to enforce, much less raise, standards risked losing students and the fees they paid to attend.<sup>24</sup>

It should come as no surprise, then, that doctors with a wide array of abilities entered the Navy. Medical professionals ranged from rigorously trained physicians to poorly trained "quacks."<sup>25</sup> In Ruschenberger's case, it is impossible to definitively determine the exact amount of medical training he had prior to becoming a certified doctor at the age of nineteen.<sup>26</sup> All that is known from the paucity of documentation available is that he had completed some medical

---

<sup>21</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 45.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Kaufman, *American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 165.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 89.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 43-44.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 40-45.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, 43.

training before being commissioned and receiving his degree from the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department in 1830 at the age of 22.<sup>27</sup>

To its credit, the Navy did attempt to raise standards in 1824 when the Naval Board of Examinations was established. This peer-appointed body oversaw the appointment and testing of all new officers, including those serving in specialized roles such as surgeons. At first, the board's requirements did not apply to surgeon's mates. Meaning that when Ruschenberger joined the Navy in 1826, he, like surgeon's mates who entered prior to the board's establishment, was not subject to rigorous examination. In 1828, however, Congress recognized the board and required all future naval doctors and surgeons to meet the board's standards.<sup>28</sup> With this, the board increased the credibility of naval surgeons, who were held to strict and enforceable standards of education in order to rise from surgeon's mate to surgeon, setting them apart from civilian doctors, who still worked in a largely unregulated field. The Navy had taken a major step toward improving medical care, one on which the service would build in the years to come.

Demands added after 1828 required new applicants to take an oral exam, which later became a written essay and exam, the subjects of which were varied, and often difficult. In addition, they had to dissect cadavers. If an individual was already a surgeon's mate prior to these 1828 changes, like Ruschenberger, that wanted to rise to the rank of surgeon, they not only had to appear before the Examination Board to take a test, but they also were required to have at least two years of surgeon's mate experience at sea.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Howard A. Kelly and Walter L. Burrage, "Ruschenberger, William Samuel Waithman" *American Medical Biographies*, (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Company, 1920), 1007.

<sup>28</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session: Report of the Secretary of the Navy, January 15 1828. [http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/USN/Navy/\(1828-01-12\)%20Naval%20Peace%20Estab%20164%20S.doc.36.pdf](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/USN/Navy/(1828-01-12)%20Naval%20Peace%20Estab%20164%20S.doc.36.pdf) (accessed 3 Feb. 2017).

<sup>29</sup> David McLean, *Surgeons of the Fleet*, 15.



Existing surgeon's mate exams were also considerably harder due to their accrued experience. Ruschenberger was nineteen and already educated as a doctor when he came before the Examination Board to take his test on 12 August 1826, prior to these administrative changes.<sup>30</sup> When he rose to the full rank of surgeon in the 1830s, he faced much more stringent testing and other requirements in order to advance.

In addition to the poor training of incoming members, the Navy's medical corps suffered from a lack of professionalism. This turned out to be the problem that Ruschenberger would do the most to combat during his career, especially in terms of improving continuing education for surgeons and establishing libraries on ships and at shore stations. Early in his career, medical texts – prime sources of medical knowledge – were exceedingly hard to come by for Navy doctors. As a rule, the Navy did not acquire published titles; nor did it require ships or shore stations to keep publications on hand and, as a result, few did. Accordingly, when a ship was at sea and contact with the outside world was negligible, doctors were left without ready access to information that could save lives.<sup>31</sup>

Some doctors did take it upon themselves to acquire, at their own expense, medical texts. Such independent action was admirable, but it did little to solve the wider problem. Published primarily in Europe, such texts were expensive and limited in number. Even when an American doctor could obtain one, he alone would have access to the publication on his ship or at his shore station. The end result was that most Navy doctors remained without access to important sources of knowledge that had the capacity to substantially improve medical care.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Commissioning Certificate, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 3, Folder g.

<sup>31</sup> Samuel W. Belcher, "Dr. William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons in the Pre-Civil War U.S. Navy." (MA Thesis, East Carolina University, 2002), 21.

<sup>32</sup> Samuel W. Belcher, "Dr. William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons," 21.

After his promotion to surgeon in the 1830s, Ruschenberger played an active role in remedying the professional problems within the medical corps. Ruschenberger, along with other prominent naval figures at the time, such as William P.C. Barton, a medical botanist, physician, professor, naval surgeon, and botanical illustrator, pressed the Navy to make regularly updated libraries available to all surgeons, whether on shore or at sea.<sup>33</sup> Medicine was an evolving science, they argued, and medical personnel had to be aware of the latest developments in order to ensure that sailors received the very best care.

After Barton took over the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in 1842, Ruschenberger sent him a long letter in which he outlined his plan to reform the medical corps by means of keeping surgeons up to date with circulating medical journals and periodicals. Barton replied, asking Ruschenberger for his recommended list of books that would create a foundation for medical knowledge for surgeons. Ruschenberger provided a list of recommended books and periodicals that would serve as a baseline for a new, higher professional standard. Ruschenberger's list included six books on physiology, twelve on surgery, three on chemistry, ten on general practice, one on topography, four on medical jurisprudence, seven on natural history, and one pathology reference work. He also listed six *materia medica*, that is, encyclopedia of materials used to prepare homeopathic medicines. This fifty-book list contained knowledge that Ruschenberger believed all doctors and surgeons should have at their fingertips.<sup>34</sup>

Ruschenberger's list also included a recommendation that all doctors be provided with the most up-to-date periodicals such as the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*.

Ruschenberger concluded, "I know of no one measure that seems to me better calculated to arouse the professional energies of the corps or contribute more towards its advancement and

---

<sup>33</sup> Ruschenberger to Barton, 23 September 1842, The William S.W. Ruschenberger Papers, Collection No. 629, Box 1, Folder c, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J.Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC.

<sup>34</sup> Ruschenberger to Barton, 23 September 1842, The William S.W. Ruschenberger Papers Box 1, Folder c.

honor (and consequently to the whole benefit of the Navy) than that of supplying its members with the most respectable periodicals of the day."<sup>35</sup>

Ruschenberger's professionalization efforts were not limited to correspondence with Barton. Fixing and standardizing education for budding naval officers was one of the first issues Ruschenberger addressed as his career became more administrative. This process became possible with the establishment of the aforementioned Board of Examinations, and continued with the institution of the Naval Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in 1842, an additional regulatory body to ensure ridged standards were in place and maintained. These entities were necessary to allow for Ruschenberger and others to effect change on a large-scale, as opposed to smaller more specific pockets within the Navy.<sup>36</sup>

In the fall of 1849, Ruschenberger received an appointment to a Naval Academy educational board, an appointment that gave him a formal mechanism to push for even greater professionalization.<sup>37</sup> The Academy was founded only four years earlier in response to an alleged mutiny led by midshipmen in 1842. The mutiny, which occurred aboard the USS *Somers*, resulted in the conviction and execution of three of the ship's midshipmen, one of whom was nineteen-year-old Philip Spencer, son of then-Secretary of War John C. Spencer. The event sparked a movement to better train and discipline midshipmen, which led to the establishment of the Naval Academy of Annapolis in 1845.<sup>38</sup>

In 1849, at the time of its creation, the school's educational board was charged with setting the academic standards for Annapolis. It recommended rigorous coursework in such subjects as geology, natural sciences, and languages, especially Latin. Ruschenberger

---

<sup>35</sup> Ruschenberger to Barton, 23 September 1842, The William S.W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 1, Folder c.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel W. Belcher, "Dr. William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons," 24.

<sup>37</sup> Samuel W. Belcher, "Dr. William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons," 23.

<sup>38</sup> Robert W. Love, Jr. *History of the U.S. Navy*, vol 1 (1775-1941)., (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 144.

spearheaded the effort to establish a curriculum in natural science, in which he became expert while sailing to South America as a surgeon's mate aboard the *Brandywine*. His reform efforts raised standards for all midshipmen, but these changes were especially beneficial for naval surgeons.

While serving on this board, Ruschenberger also wrote articles published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* that expressed his views on education in the Navy. In an 1850 piece, Ruschenberger praised the improved state of education for members of the Navy, especially since the founding of the Naval Academy. Furthermore, he argued that it was the U.S. government's duty to send educated men into the world. To do otherwise risked harming the country's reputation, he argued. Generally speaking, he came out in favor of a strict, formal, and standardized educational regimen for naval officers as a group, but naval surgeons in particular.<sup>39</sup>

Ruschenberger's stance with regard to education is unsurprising, given his placement on the Annapolis educational board to remedy the lack of standards in the Navy. In addition to this, Ruschenberger was, as previously mentioned, a member of the educated elite. Being a member of this elite entailed not only a strong baseline of knowledge, but also the active pursuit and fortification of knowledge. In addition to Ruschenberger's works about the Navy itself, he published articles related to his travels, observations, and botanical studies.<sup>40</sup> In other words, he set a high standard that he held himself accountable for as well.

---

<sup>39</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger; signed Holgazan, "Education in the Navy" *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 16, issue 9, Sept. 1850, 521-529.

<sup>40</sup> William S.W Ruschenberger, signed Holgazan "American Military Laws," *Southern and Western Literary Messenger*, vol. 12, issue 7, July 1846.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, "A Brief History of an Existing Controversy on the Subject of Assimilated Rank in the US Navy." Philadelphia: C. Sherman Printer, 1850.; William S.W. Ruschenberger; signed Holgazan, "Bureau of Naval Construction, & C." *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 11, issue 12, Dec. 1845.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, signed Holgazan, "Education in the Navy" *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 16, issue 9, Sept. 1850.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, *Three Years in the Pacific; Including Notices of Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru* vol. 1. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1834.; William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838.

Ruschenberger entered a medical profession that lacked overall standards as well as accurate knowledge. Despite, or perhaps because of, his own lackluster preparation, he devoted a major portion of his professional career to correcting these deficiencies. His published writings and service on various administrative boards were the result of the first-hand experience he gained while on active sea duty during the early part of his career. While at sea, he also made strides on the world stage. This international experience gave Ruschenberger the credibility necessary to effect change within the Navy. It also provides a lens through which to view the evolution of U.S. naval and diplomatic affairs, as the United States slowly emerged as a major world power

### **Chapter III: Ruschenberger & Nineteenth-Century Diplomacy**

Ruschenberger's contributions did not stop with medicine, U.S. expansionism, and naval practices and procedures. This final chapter examines another aspect of Ruschenberger's work, namely the small but important part he played in U.S. diplomatic history.

As previously noted, Ruschenberger kept journals during his sea duty tours, and he went on to write books about his travels. In these works, it is apparent that he did so much more than act as an attending physician while at sea. Though he did not specifically perform a diplomatic function, Ruschenberger and other officers played key roles in the development of U.S. diplomacy. Often the officers, Ruschenberger included, met with the leaders of the various countries they visited, and were usually received as honored guests. The officers, in turn, treated their hosts with due respect and adhered to, or at the very least respected, local customs. Whether the officers' behavior with regard to foreign leaders helped influence the United States' diplomatic cause is uncertain. That said, Ruschenberger played a role in that diplomatic development, albeit it at a small scale. Through such actions, Ruschenberger contributed to the partial success of an 1835 naval voyage to East Asia and also a peninsula of Western Asia situated northeast of Africa, an area Ruschenberger, using an outdated term to modern perspective, he had identified in his writings as it was in his time as "Arabia."

Ruschenberger became a naval officer at a time when the United States was developing a distinct identity in the world, an identity that would drive U.S. expansion and have a profound effect on Ruschenberger's career.

When exactly an identifiable “American style” of foreign policy, to use Robert Dallek’s phrase, developed, is a matter of contention among historians.<sup>1</sup> As the introduction discussed, U.S. overseas extension occurred earlier and more forcefully than historians once understood. As scholars such as Emily S. Rosenberg, Frank Ninkovich, and William Appleman Williams have pointed out, economic and cultural forces, such as Manifest Destiny, drove the United States to expand, first domestically and then internationally, from the beginning of its history as a nation.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, one could argue that an “American style” dates from America’s Quasi-War with France, which occurred from 1798 to 1800. Although brief, the Quasi-War established precedents that had profound and direct consequences on the Navy that was created as a result, and that Ruschenberger would someday enter. The relations between the United States and other global powers via the Quasi-War and the War of 1812 created the diplomatic climate Ruschenberger entered that had direct consequences on his voyage aboard the *USS Peacock* in 1835. The actions of the British and French during these conflicts made the United States mistrustful of them; it comes as no surprise that, when the U.S. government launched its various diplomatic missions, they handled them with the utmost secrecy to prevent interference from these nations.<sup>3</sup> Though these diplomatic missions were for commercial purposes, the United States was working its expansionist angle from an economic perspective.

American expansion found in overseas pursuits had a direct influence on Ruschenberger’s career. As outlined in the first chapter, U.S. officials sent the American Navy to

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), xi.

<sup>2</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959), 18-20; Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Want, 1982), 20; Frank Ninkovich, *The Global Republic: America’s Inadvertent Rise to World Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 15-16.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts: America’s Secret First Pivot toward Asia, 1832-37* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 11.

different corners of the globe, to Chile, for example, where the Navy observed the Chilean Civil War and American military members assisted in arrests for the Chilean government. The U.S. government was beginning to have a global presence, both diplomatically and militarily, as proven by Ruschenberger's first sea duty tour aboard the *Brandywine* in Chile. By the Mexican-American War, U.S. expansion was well underway as a result from these experiences, and this gain in momentum towards an expansionist mindset had begun as early as the American Revolution.

By the early to mid-nineteenth century, the United States had its eye on a particular prize, one that Andrew Jackson sought to get via economics: Asia. National interest in gaining a foothold in the all-important, highly coveted economic hub of the Asian market increased greatly during nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> McCormick argues that the allure of the Pacific market helped drive U.S. expansion throughout the nineteenth century. American merchants excitedly anticipated a windfall of profits in sales to untold millions if they could gain a foothold in the Asian market.<sup>5</sup>

This push into Asia was not a result of unplanned, cultural forces, McCormick and others argue. Rather, several economic crises occurred over the course of the nineteenth century that drove American leaders to discover new ways to combat the nation's financial problems – such as overproduction.<sup>6</sup> Agricultural and industrial production outpaced domestic consumption, helping to cause periodic economic slumps. The solution, the market elite believed, was to dump much of the surplus on the Asian market, China specifically. But to “realize America's overriding ambition in the Pacific,” McCormick writes, the United States would have to find

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *A Short History of Financial Euphoria* (New York: The Whittle Books in assoc. with Penguin Books, 1990), 8-9.



stepping stones that led to “the penetration and ultimate domination of the fabled China market.”<sup>7</sup>

The Open Door Policy was a thing of the future; it did not come to fruition until 1899-1900 in a series of notes made by then Secretary of State, John Hay. These notes, Hay hoped, would secure international agreement to the U.S. policy of promoting equal opportunity for international trade and commerce in China. His efforts were largely ignored.<sup>8</sup> But the peculiar blend of anti-colonialism and economic imperialism that would one day take the United States into China was already apparent by the 1830s.<sup>9</sup> The world’s great powers were competing for the China trade. Great Britain dominated the market thanks largely to the East India Company. The United States sought to break in. Ten years before the United States had an ambassador in China, Edmund Quincy Roberts, an envoy of the U.S. government, sailed across the Pacific aboard the aforementioned USS *Peacock* in 1832 and again in 1835. Both times, Roberts sailed on a secret mission assigned to him by President Jackson to obtain formal trade relations with Cochinchina (present day Northern Vietnam), Siam (present day Thailand), and Muscat (present day capital of Oman) [See Appendix B].<sup>10</sup> More precisely, Roberts sought to regularize, rather than open, trade with the aforementioned countries under rules agreed upon by the leaders of the countries he visited. Jackson selected Roberts to head the missions because Roberts boasted experience, having participated in a trading voyage to the Indian Ocean from 1827-1828.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market*, 107.

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Historian: Milestones 1899-1913 “Secretary of State John Hay and the Open Door in China, 1899-1900” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/hay-and-china> (accessed 23 September, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market*, 128.

<sup>10</sup> The places Ruschenberger visited have since changed names. In order to ensure the most effective clarity, the names Ruschenberger used are the names used in this thesis. An appendix is provided at the end with the titles of countries and their modern-day counterparts, as well as a map outlining the tour during which these places were visited.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts: America’s Secret First Pivot toward Asia, 1832-37* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 11.

Roberts's mission was kept secret from the crew largely in order to forestall interference by the British, whose practices with regard to trade with Asia made it difficult, sometimes impossible, for other nations to engage. The fear was that, if the British caught wind of the United States attempting to negotiate these treaties, they would either interfere or prevent them from coming to fruition by making use of their more seasoned navy for intimidation, or more established diplomatic connections for legislative coercion.<sup>12</sup> Such secret missions were not unheard of at the time. Three years prior to Roberts' first diplomatic trip, Jackson launched a covert mission to Istanbul to solicit the Ottoman sultan's agreement to increase trade and to access the Black Sea for American merchantmen. This case differed, however, because of its secrecy from Congress in addition to the British.<sup>13</sup>

Though President Jackson set and approved Roberts' missions, Secretary of State Edward Livingston planned their details. Livingston strongly believed that the key to economic prosperity centered on negotiating trade agreements with the countries of East and West Asia.<sup>14</sup> Livingston gave Roberts letters signed by Jackson to present to the leaders of the aforementioned countries he visited. These letters expressed the desire of the United States to secure trade and requested the leaders to permit American ships into their harbors for such purposes. In effect, these letters acted as treaties.<sup>15</sup>

Roberts' first voyage in 1832 resulted in securing two trade treaties with the sultan of Muscat and the king of Siam. The U.S. Senate received and ratified both in early 1834. By June of that same year, Jackson commissioned Roberts again, this time to return to East and West

---

<sup>12</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 9.

Asia to exchange the ratified treaties and present their leaders with more to sign to further elucidate the terms for the trade agreements.<sup>16</sup>

None other than William Ruschenberger served on the 1835 mission as fleet surgeon. On 23 April, 1835, with Roberts and Ruschenberger aboard, the USS *Peacock* set sail. The *Peacock* made its way to its first port call in Rio de Janeiro before crossing the South Atlantic Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. All told, the *Peacock* spent roughly two and a half months crossing the Atlantic before making its way to Zanzibar through the Mozambique Channel [See Appendix B].

Throughout the voyage, Ruschenberger kept detailed notes in his journal, which would serve as the source material for his 1838 book that recounted the journey [See Appendix B]. In his journal, Ruschenberger made meticulous nautical observations and took careful note of the local cultures he encountered, as he had done ten years earlier while sailing aboard the *Brandywine* in South America. There does appear to be at least one key difference, however. Whereas Ruschenberger devoted a considerable amount of space to describing his many social activities aboard the *Brandywine*, he emphasized his professional duties aboard the *Peacock*.<sup>17</sup>

A variety of developments caused this shift. Following the 1826 voyage, Ruschenberger graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department, which resulted in his promotion to surgeon. He went on his second sea duty tour to South America from 1831 to 1834 with his new rank, and, while serving shore duty, he practiced privately, made house calls, and socialized with other educated elites, doctors, and officers in his spare time [See Appendix A].<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838), 11.

<sup>17</sup> 1835-1837 Journal, William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629), Box 2, Folder b, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

<sup>18</sup> Correspondence, 1830-1839. William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629), Box 1, Folder b, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

In short, Ruschenberger grew up, he matured. In between sea duty tours to South America and Asia, he had time to build his practice and reputation as a doctor, and, as noted in a previous chapter, he went on to play a great role in the professionalization of the naval corps itself. With his culmination of knowledge and experience, Ruschenberger became a fully realized member of the educated elite, a position that served him well during the 1835 voyage aboard the *Peacock*.

Upon the *Peacock*'s arrival in Zanzibar, Roberts attempted to meet with the Sultan of Muscat, who was reportedly staying there. Upon arriving, Ruschenberger noted,

When Mr. Roberts took leave of the Sultan, in 1833, he expected to be at Zanzibar on the return ship to the seas; but a much longer time having elapsed than had been anticipated, the royal visit was over, and his Highness had gone to Muscat in the strength of the Monsoon, leaving us no choice but to follow him.<sup>19</sup>

After attempting, unsuccessfully, to deliver the ratified treaties to the sultan in Zanzibar, the voyage continued on 8 September 1835 to find him in Muscat. Ruschenberger noted smooth sailing as the *Peacock* made its way up the African coast towards Muscat. He did note, however, that "in spite of...indications, we did not suspect ourselves to be near land...Our sense of security well nigh proved fatal to us all."<sup>20</sup> On 21 September, at two o'clock in the morning, the *Peacock* and its crew members were "roused from sleep by a horrid noise, caused by the ship's bottom grinding and tearing and leaping on a bed of coral rocks!"<sup>21</sup> Ruschenberger noted that at first amongst the chaos, no member of the crew knew where exactly the ship was geographically. As a result of the *Peacock* running aground, and in an attempt to get back into deeper water, the crew pumped about five thousand gallons, roughly two-thirds, of the ship's drinking water overboard. This endeavor yielded no results, and the crew had to wait until the tide came in to get back under way.

---

<sup>19</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 27.

<sup>20</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 54.

<sup>21</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 54.

The *Peacock* had run aground on the island of Mazeira, about ten miles off the coast of Mozambique, or “Happy Arabia,” as Ruschenberger put it.<sup>22</sup> Simply waiting for the tide to come in proved to be fruitless as well. Crewmembers of the *Peacock* pitched half of their guns into the sea to try and remedy the situation, a decision that made some crewmembers nervous, as there was “much to be dreaded from the Arab pirates, who have made this section of the coast their home...”<sup>23</sup> After much labor and toil, the crew of the *Peacock* finally dug the ship out, and set sail once more on 23 September, fifty-six hours after running aground. Once back underway, Ruschenberger commended the crew, both officers and enlisted, for their remarkable illustration of the advantage of discipline; noting that the crew did not show the slightest irregularity in the method of carrying out their duties, despite the opposite being expected under the circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

While the ship was aground, Roberts and a few crew members went ahead to continue towards Muscat in a cutter, a small single-masted sailing vessel. Roberts felt a sense of urgency to deliver the treaty. Plus, being besieged by pirates was an ever-present possibility. Ruschenberger was confident that the *Peacock*'s crew could defend themselves. The ship's commanding officer, Commodore Edmund P. Kennedy, took precautions nonetheless. Kennedy sent Roberts ahead, lest the envoy be subject to unnecessary risk in the event of a pirate attack. Roberts made it to Muscat safely within one week after the *Peacock* ran aground.<sup>25</sup>

Immediately upon arriving in Muscat, Roberts called on the sultan, Syed (though he is presently known as Said bin Sultan Al-Said), to deliver the treaty. The sultan received Roberts warmly and sent orders to immediately refill the *Peacock*'s artillery supplies once the vessel

---

<sup>22</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 56.

<sup>23</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 56.

<sup>24</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 61.

<sup>25</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 62.

made it to port. The sultan's kindness did not end there, however. Ruschenberger noted that, when the crew of the *Peacock* threw their guns overboard, they attached the armaments to buoys in hopes of recovering them at a later time. The sultan decided the *Peacock* would not have to spend unnecessary time retrieving them, and he sent couriers for the weapons and had them sent to the *Peacock* when the ship later made anchor at Bombay (present day Mumbai, India).<sup>26</sup>

This apparent kindness could be read as an indication of the sultan's eagerness to rid Muscat of the American interlopers without triggering hostilities with them. Given the treaty exchange, however, it most likely indicates his willingness to trade with the United States. In any event, Commodore Kennedy sent a letter to the sultan thanking him for his hospitality and showering him with compliments.<sup>27</sup>

Having secured one treaty, the *Peacock* left Muscat, arriving on 23 October 1835 in Bombay, where the USS *Enterprise* met it. As in Muscat and Zanzibar, Ruschenberger wrote extensively about his experiences in Bombay, devoting several chapters in his journal to the city's cultures and customs. He carefully described the architecture as well as the religious practices of the people he met. He wrote in terms of differences, meaning he noted the specifics that distinguished the people, plants, and animals from those he had encountered elsewhere. Unusual smells, for example, preoccupied him.<sup>28</sup>

As chapter one discussed, Ruschenberger was a relatively objective observer, given his privileged position in life as well as the time in which he lived. To be sure, he did not view the non-Europeans he encountered as his equals, and ethnocentrism peppered his journal entries. He wrote, for example, that the habits of Muscat's residents, most of whom practiced Islam, though there were pockets of Hinduism and Buddhism, would come as a culture shock to the average

---

<sup>26</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 64-65.

<sup>27</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 64-65.

<sup>28</sup> William S.W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 100-102

Christian, which Ruschenberger was. With that said, his writings are generally free of the obvious contempt or outright disdain that one might expect to find. Instead, Ruschenberger wrote as if he were a tourist, a world traveler sincerely fascinated by the people and places he visited. When he encountered someone or something unfamiliar, Ruschenberger typically did not recoil in disgust. Rather, he recorded it, as would a scientist, as a simple fact.

In one section of his book, he described his visit to a place he labeled a church while in Bombay. “It contains within its walls some pretty monuments, erected to the memories of individuals who have ended their days in India. Lines of punkas, or great fans, suspended from the ceiling, were moving to and fro to cool the worshipful and worshipping congregation, who sat in ornamented and cushioned pews...”<sup>29</sup> Though he noted that the sermon he observed was “so wretchedly delivered that we would not undergo a similar infliction...” he concluded his analysis with a more omniscient statement, “I observed nothing essentially different from what we are accustomed to see in churches of similar denomination in our own country.”<sup>30</sup>

In addition to diplomatic hurdles, Ruschenberger faced medical challenges aboard the *Peacock* in the form of disease. A cholera epidemic was sweeping much of Asia, Bombay included, at the time of the *Peacock*'s arrival.<sup>31</sup> Nineteenth century medical professionals did not fully understand cholera. Ruschenberger referred to it simply as “a singular disease,” one that was making its way through American vessels at an alarming rate.<sup>32</sup> Ruschenberger saw relatively few patients during the first week or so while the *Peacock* was anchored in Bombay. During the last week in port, however, sick calls skyrocketed. Each day, he treated dozens of patients, to which he described as men suffering from “various ailments,” and he attempted to

---

<sup>29</sup> William Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 117.

<sup>30</sup> William Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 118.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 143.

<sup>32</sup> William Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 105.

meet the high demand for his services by holding sick call every morning as well as twice in the afternoon.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the *Peacock* and accompanying *Enterprise* set sail on 4 December 1835, with their sights set on Colombo (present day city in Shri-Lanka). With no treaty to be delivered, they left shortly after making port. Before leaving, however, the *Peacock* replenished its depleted water supply. On 23 March 1836, the two vessels docked in Siam's harbor. The following day, despite beginning to feel ill, Roberts sent a message to the king of Siam to carry out his diplomatic duties,

To His Excellency the Chao P'haya Prah Klang...Edmund Roberts, Special Envoy from the United States of America, has the honor to inform your Excellency, that he has arrived off the bar of the Meinam, in the United States Ship Peacock...The Envoy begs leave to state, that he has brought back the treaty, which he had the honor to conclude between His Majesty of Siam and the United States of America...which was ratified on the part of his government...and which is now returned for the purpose of exchanging it for its counterpart in the possession of Siam, on its being duly ratified by His Majesty...as well as to the necessary certificate of ratification.<sup>34</sup>

Diplomatic historians know the text of Roberts' letter only because Ruschenberger recorded it in his journal. This is significant not only for reasons of historical posterity, but also because it indicates that Ruschenberger, although not officially charged with serving as a diplomat, performed, as did other officers aboard the *Peacock*, a quasi-diplomatic role on the 1835 mission. Ruschenberger served as the unofficial secretary of Roberts's mission, recording key details and establishing a reliable record not only for U.S. policymakers back in Washington, but for diplomatic historians today. Plus, he and his fellow officers met with the leaders of

---

<sup>33</sup> 1835-1837 Journal. William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder b.

<sup>34</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 258.



foreign countries to exchange pleasantries. In so doing, they helped to ensure a favorable opinion of the United States, thereby smoothing the negotiation process.

After sending the message on 24 March 1836, the two American crews waited for a reply to come from the king that did not arrive until 4 April 1836. Due to the length of their wait, the crew, desperately in need of more food supplies, resorted to living off salted meats. Simultaneously, Roberts and other crew members began to show similar symptoms of an unknown illness, none of which could be remedied until the arrival and subsequent fanfare of the king's recognition of the American vessels in port. Crewmembers were unable to leave the ship until given the king's permission, which would happen after he recognized them. As a result, those sick had to make do until the low supplies could be replenished.<sup>35</sup>

After an excruciatingly long series of formalities and etiquette, Roberts secured the second trade treaty with Siam and the *Peacock* and *Enterprise* left port by 20 April 1836. Ruschenberger noted in his journal that Roberts and all the officers came back on board, but some did so "unwell" or "seriously ill."<sup>36</sup> With Ruschenberger acting as fleet surgeon, it was ultimately his charge to see to all of them, though he did not tend to them alone, as surgeon's mates served on board both the *Peacock* and the *Enterprise*.

The next two port calls were to Turon Bay, anchoring in what Ruschenberger, in his writings, called "Cochin-China" (modern day Cochinchina), and later Macao (present day Macau, China) in May of 1836. While in Cochinchina, Roberts remained in the early stages of getting the next trade treaty ratified. When envoys came to call on him, however, he was "so much indisposed that he would not receive them, and they went away...not being permitted even

---

<sup>35</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 270.

<sup>36</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 347.

to go below the deck, to gratify their curiosity.”<sup>37</sup> The sickness that Ruschenberger observed extended beyond the *Peacock* and permeated the crews of both vessels. As Roberts had the worst case of it, Ruschenberger did not think the current stressors of the situation would allow for Roberts’ recovery and wrote of the imperative need to find a “place promising more speedy relief than was likely to be found among the Cochin-Chinese.”<sup>38</sup> As their hosts were incredibly insistent, Ruschenberger did not think Roberts would begin to recover if he were kept under the stressful circumstances.

Unfortunately, dealing with the Cochinchinese proved to be a cumbersome matter for Ruschenberger, as he and other officers were dispatched to meet with the emperor’s envoy in the bed-ridden Roberts’ stead. This was not an unusual charge for officers aboard naval vessels at the time. Officers were expected to conduct themselves as gentlemen in a leadership role in any given social or formal situation, whenever the need should arise, and this instance was an example of just such occasion.<sup>39</sup> Roberts was unable to fulfill his diplomatic duty.

Ruschenberger and other officers thus “filled in” in an attempt to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion; however, they were in a difficult position: only Roberts had the authority to complete the deal, and he was too ill to function. Ruschenberger and his colleagues struggled to explain the situation to their Cochinchinese hosts. Ruschenberger wrote, “He then asked why Mr. Roberts did not receive him in the morning while on board, and was replied to, that Mr. Roberts was very unwell...”<sup>40</sup> and concluded with,

I was fatigued by the slow pace of our intercourse, being obliged first to make my communications to Mr. Jacobs [a U.S. official who served in the area] in French, who translated them into Malay;

---

<sup>37</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 356.

<sup>38</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 356.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 222-224.

<sup>40</sup> William Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 359.

but, as the Cochin-Chinese interpreter spoke a different dialect from himself, and mingled with his Malay many Cochin-Chinese words, there was great difficulty possessing him of my precise meaning.<sup>41</sup>

They could only make the best of a bad situation and attempt to maintain friendly relations, not to offend their hosts, and lay favorable groundwork for future trade negotiations. Ruschenberger concluded the overall exchange with, “We shook hands, and I took leave impressed with the belief, that though a treaty might be effected, it would be at the expense of much time and patience...”<sup>42</sup>

Doing so proved difficult, however, due in part to linguistic and cultural barriers. Problems arose from the very beginning. Despite efforts by Ruschenberger and others to explain that Roberts was indisposed by illness, the Cochinchinese “Lakak,” or “high officer,” as Ruschenberger described him, insisted on meeting the chief American envoy.<sup>43</sup> Apparently misunderstanding the situation, the foreign official even went so far as to offer bribes to the officers of the *Peacock* and *Enterprise* in an attempt to complete the treaty. Ruschenberger repeated himself several times, explaining that only Roberts had negotiating powers but that he was too ill to engage in talks. As a practical matter, neither he nor his fellow officers possessed the appropriate language skills necessary to sign the treaty, he added. Ruschenberger could only offer to relay the information to Roberts for a possible future treaty since the *Peacock* and *Enterprise* were making preparations to set sail.<sup>44</sup>

Ruschenberger and the others returned to the *Peacock*, which hastily prepared to set sail. Ruschenberger did not note which officers had assisted him during this exchange. Nor did he

---

<sup>41</sup> William Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World*, 363.

<sup>42</sup> William Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 364.

<sup>43</sup> William Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 356.

<sup>44</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 360-364.

document the result, if any, with regard to the treaty. But Ruschenberger did record his thoughts on the way the difficult exchange might affect future interactions with Cochinchina. Clearly, Ruschenberger's hosts seemed highly offended by their inability to meet with Roberts. Yet Ruschenberger, frustrated, perhaps, by his own inability to communicate effectively, was uncharacteristically dismissive in his journal, writing that those aboard the *Peacock* and the *Enterprise* were not the first to find the representatives of Cochinchina "difficult." Other Westerners had found them so, too, and he speculated that the difficulties (rather than his own shortcomings) explained the reasons no Western nation had yet been able to secure a trade agreement with Cochinchina.<sup>45</sup>

On 22 May 1836, both vessels set sail from Cochinchina for their next destination, arriving in Macao on 27 May. Roberts appeared to recover somewhat. As a result, Ruschenberger behaved the way he had throughout the voyage, going on walks, exploring his surroundings, and making notes of his observations, leaving those ill in the care of another doctor, whom Ruschenberger described as capable, and the *Enterprise's* surgeon's mate.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, however, Roberts took a sudden turn for the worse; on 12 June 1836, he died. Several sailors, including Lieutenant Archibald S. Campbell, the commanding officer of the *Enterprise*, lost their lives to cholera as well. An inscription on Roberts' grave monument explained the cause of his death:

A long exposure in the climates of the East, actively engaged in the service of his country, proved too much for his age and constitution. He had been long out of health and at Bangkok, was attacked with the prevailing disease, which at first he neglected, through his desire to lose no time in discharging the duties which had brought him to Siam.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 365.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 175.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 372.

Based on that as well as Ruschenberger's writings, it seems that most believed that Roberts and the others contracted cholera while in Siam, as the symptoms began to show at that time. This, however, was not the case. Though the crew of the *Peacock* realized they were in a serious predicament when the ship ran aground in Mazeira in September 1835, they had no idea the degree to which their lives were in danger. The captain's decision to dump two-thirds of the ship's water supply overboard in an attempt to get the *Peacock* afloat, proved to be fatal, for when crewmembers subsequently refilled in Colombo, it is likely they unknowingly brought contaminated drinking water on board for the entire crew to use.

As previously stated, Ruschenberger, like most other medical professionals at the time, barely understood cholera. The contamination could have been from the water in Colombo, though it could have also been from contaminated food. With the current information available, it is impossible to know where the specific source of disease came from. Given those limitations, Ruschenberger did his best to ensure the health of the men afflicted. Upon arriving at Macao, he immediately "obtained a large house, in an airy situation, which was quickly converted into a hospital... [for use by] all of those officers and men whose situation was considered dangerous."<sup>48</sup> In other words, Ruschenberger treated patients according to the standard medical practice of his day, which held that fresh, untainted air was the best remedy for a variety of ailments, cholera included.

Ruschenberger's decision to leave Roberts in the care of another physician while he strolled the streets of Macao does not reflect well on Ruschenberger's ability as a medical professional, at least not to modern eyes. Though subject to speculation, it is doubtful that Ruschenberger would have left Roberts in another physician's care if he believed that Roberts'

---

<sup>48</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 370.

condition was critical. After all, Roberts appeared to be improving.<sup>49</sup> Besides, it is important to remember that, Ruschenberger, despite his high degree of intelligence and medical training, could not accurately diagnose or treat cholera. Medical science had not yet developed far enough. Cholera patients surviving the disease came down at the time, not to medicine, but to luck and genetics.

After the deaths of Roberts and the others, the voyages of the *Peacock* and *Enterprise* continued to the Bonin Isles and then, in September 1836, to Hawaii, then still an autonomous entity. The two ships spent the remaining thirteen months of the voyage traveling down the Pacific Coast of North and South America. Monterey, California, which was still part of Mexico at this point in time, was their first port call in early October 1836. The two vessels made various port calls farther south until they split up on 5 July 1837. The *Enterprise* remained with the Pacific Squadron in Callao, while the *Peacock* made its way home.<sup>50</sup>

Navigating down and around the tip of South America, the *Peacock* made another, brief stop in Rio de Janeiro on 23 August, only to sail again on 2 September, and arrived in Bahia, El Salvador on 15 September. This brief stop lasted only two days, and the ship departed to sail directly home. On 26 October 1837, the *Peacock* sailed into Hampton Roads, Virginia, after being gone for a year and a half.<sup>51</sup>

The voyages of the *Peacock* and the *Enterprise* involved trials and tribulations. Plagued by misfortune, their travels resulted in much hardship as well as loss of life. In terms of Roberts' diplomatic mission, he managed to negotiate two of four possible treaties. The *Peacock* did not return to the United States before the end of Andrew Jackson's second term, though he received word of the successful ratification of the treaties with Muscat and Siam. Despite not having

---

<sup>49</sup> 1835-1837 Journal. William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers, Box 2, Folder b.

<sup>50</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 548.

<sup>51</sup> William S. W. Ruschenberger, *Voyage Round the World*, 548.

access to the complete details of Roberts' mission, Jackson notified Congress that good progress was being made before his tenure in office ended in 1837. The *Peacock's* First Lieutenant, William Green, delivered the two ratified treaties several months after Martin Van Buren's inauguration.<sup>52</sup>

Ruschenberger, then, played a leading part in a mission that had lasting effects on American diplomacy. The voyage of the *Peacock* was among the earliest attempts to expand American influence beyond U.S. shores as well as grow the American economy by gaining a foothold in the hotly-contested China Market. Albeit small, these early steps proved to be pivotal, for they soon led to others, including Hawaii, where the United States made inroads starting as early as the 1840s.<sup>53</sup> Ruschenberger played a small but important role in these early trade missions. Diplomatic historians' awareness of them is due largely to the efforts of Ruschenberger, who kept detailed journals and wrote numerous books about these voyages.

In these journals and books, he shows that he did so much more than act as the attending physician to the crew of the *Peacock*. Though Edmund Roberts was charged with negotiating the treaties themselves, Ruschenberger and the other officers played key roles in their development. Oftentimes the officers, Ruschenberger included, accompanied Roberts while visiting the leaders of these various countries, and were treated as honored and highly esteemed guests. As noted earlier, it was common for the officers on board naval vessels to participate, at least in minor and more social ways, in diplomatic affairs.

Ruschenberger's job was not easy. In fact, his superiors in the Navy may well have selected him to serve aboard the *Peacock* precisely because he was so competent. Ruschenberger

---

<sup>52</sup> Andrew C.A. Jampoler, *Embassy to the Eastern Courts*, 189.

<sup>53</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 207.

was a consummate professional. Although he did not abstain from alcohol use, he disliked that many of his fellow officers drank excessively, a habit that he took to be a sign of their poor character. Ruschenberger practiced moderation, priding himself on behaving in public in a sober, dignified way, a manner befitting that of an officer in the U.S. Navy.<sup>54</sup> As a result of this assignment, he accrued invaluable experience, not only as a doctor and sailor, but as a diplomat as well.

Though Roberts headed the diplomatic mission, the officers of the *Peacock* and *Enterprise* behaved as officers were expected to behave, that is, as gentlemen. And as gentlemen, Ruschenberger and his colleagues attempted not to bully but charm their hosts, using their good manners to advance the interests of the United States. Their efforts did not always succeed. Yet they stand as early examples of the exercise of “soft power,” the force of attraction that would come to characterize the American style of diplomacy.<sup>55</sup> In sum, Ruschenberger may not have set out to do so. But he played a substantial role in the history of U.S. foreign relations.

---

<sup>54</sup> Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, 222.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).



## Conclusion

After his 1835 sea duty tour, William Ruschenberger remained in Philadelphia for the next eleven years, operating his own private medical practice until 1848, when he embarked on his final tour to East India. At that tour's conclusion, Ruschenberger joined an educational board for the newly created institution of Annapolis. He spent the remainder of his career on dry land, serving as the chief surgeon at the Boston Naval Yard during the Civil War. He retired from the Navy on 4 September 1869, at the age of 62, having cemented his legacy as a naval reformer [See Appendix A].

As this thesis has shown, William Ruschenberger was so much more than a naval officer, doctor, or quasi-diplomat. He was a Renaissance man. That is, a member of the educated elite, he sought to fully understand and improve the world around him.

Beginning his career at the age of nineteen in 1826, Ruschenberger, despite limited preparation, embarked on the first of many sea duty tours that shaped not only his career, but his character as well. Ruschenberger's first sea duty tour as a surgeon's mate on an 1826 trip to South America laid an important foundation on which he built his career. He then achieved two major milestones – obtaining his medical degree and receiving promotion to a full surgeon in the U.S. Navy – before his second sea duty tour to South America. His touring experience left Ruschenberger determined to professionalize the Navy, and also standardize procedures for incoming naval officers, be they on the promotion ladder or in specialty areas such as medicine. Partly due to his efforts, the Navy transformed, over time, into a more efficient institution, and Ruschenberger's modernization efforts rightly won him renown among his professional peers such as William P.C. Barton, as mentioned in chapter two.

Ruschenberger also made his mark on the world stage. His sea duty tours enabled him to experience as well as shape international affairs. Ruschenberger kept journals while at sea, which clearly indicate that his duties extended well beyond those of an attending physician. Though not officially designated as a diplomat, he and other officers performed diplomatic functions, for example by meeting with leaders of the various countries they visited. Trade relations and other high matters of state-to-state politics were often negotiated during these meetings, and in facilitating a friendly atmosphere, Ruschenberger and his fellow officers contributed to constructive talks.

Moreover, Ruschenberger, ever the Renaissance man, collected knowledge about the wider world while on sea duty. In Chile, for example, he took up scientific and botanical pursuits, practices scholars have identified as symptomatic of Western empire building. By sending American ships and sailors to ports around the world, those sea duty tours, which often lasted months if not years, helped spread the global reach of the United States. Similarly, the underlying diplomatic purpose of many those tours – to establish trade relations with states such as Siam and Muscat, for example – laid important groundwork for the expansion of U.S. power that would come later in the nineteenth century.

Regardless of whether or not he intended to do so, Ruschenberger thus played an important, if overlooked, role in United States expansion in the nineteenth century. As such, his life story provides a useful lens through which to reexamine U.S. diplomatic history. Traditionally, diplomatic historians argued that U.S. expansion began only with the country's involvement in the Spanish-American War. To be sure, U.S. expansion accelerated in 1898. But as Ruschenberger's biography shows, he and other ordinary Americans took a number of individual steps, however small, much earlier in the nineteenth century that, collectively, added

up to a broad-based assertion of national power and laid the groundwork for the “expansionist leap” of 1898 and beyond. As such, this thesis aligns with the work of more recent historians such as Walter LaFeber, Emily Rosenberg, and Thomas McCormick, who trace the beginnings of U.S. globalism as far back as the early national period

## REFERENCES

William S. W. Ruschenberger Papers (#629), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

### Primary

*The Health of Seamen: Selections from the Works of Dr. James Lind, Sir Gilbert Blane and Dr. Thomas Trotter*, edited by Christopher Lloyd. London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne and Co., LTD, 1965.

Ruschenberger, William S.W.; signed Holgazan "American Military Laws," *Southern and Western Literary Messenger*, vol. 12, issue 7, July 1846.

Ruschenberger, William S.W. *A Brief History of an Existing Controversy on the Subject of Assimilated Rank in the US Navy*. Philadelphia: C. Sherman Printer, 1850.

Ruschenberger, William S.W.; signed Holgazan, "Bureau of Naval Construction, & C." *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 11, issue 12, Dec. 1845.

Ruschenberger, William S.W.; signed Holgazan, "Education in the Navy" *Southern Literary Messenger*, vol. 16, issue 9, Sept. 1850.

Ruschenberger, William S.W. *Three Years in the Pacific; Including Notices of Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru* vol. 1. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1834.

Ruschenberger, William S.W. *A Voyage Round the World Including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam in 1835, 1836, and 1837*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838.

20<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session: Report of the Secretary of the Navy, January 15 1828.  
[http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/USN/Navy/\(1828-01-12\)%20Naval%20Peace%20Estab%20164%20S.doc.36.pdf](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/USN/Navy/(1828-01-12)%20Naval%20Peace%20Estab%20164%20S.doc.36.pdf) (accessed 3 Feb. 2017).

### Secondary

The American Presidency Project: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/> (accessed 7 March, 2017).

- Belcher, Samuel W. "Dr. William S.W. Ruschenberger and Professionalism for Surgeons in the Pre-Civil War U.S. Navy." MA Thesis, East Carolina University, 2002.
- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957.
- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. New York: H. Holt & Co., 1936.
- Brings, Hans A. "Navy Medicine Comes Ashore: Establishing the First Permanent U.S. Naval Hospitals," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. 41, issue 3, July 1986.
- Brown, Kevin. *Poxed and Scurvied: The Story of Sickness and Health at Sea*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2011.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "The History of Malaria, an Ancient Disease," <https://www.cdc.gov/malaria/about/history/> (accessed 16 June, 2017).
- Collier, Simon. *Ideas and Politics of Chilean Independence, 1808-1833*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1967.
- Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*. Edited by Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Dallek, Robert. *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.
- Dangerfield, George. *The Awakening of American Nationalism: 1815-1828*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1965.
- Dudley, Wade G. *Splintering the Wooden Wall: The British Blockade of the United States, 1812-1815*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, 2003.
- Estes, J. Worth. *Naval Surgeon: Life and Death at Sea in the Age of Sail*. Canton, MA: Science History Publications, 1998.
- Friedenberg, Zachary B. *Medicine Under Sail*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002.
- Galbraith, John Kenneth. *A Short History of Financial Euphoria*. New York: The Whittle Books in assoc. with Penguin Books, 1990.
- Hayes, J.N. *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005.
- Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

- Jampoler, Andrew C.A. *Embassy to the Eastern Courts: America's Secret First Pivot toward Asia, 1832-37*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Kaufman, Martin. *American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976.
- Kelly, Howard A. and Walter L. Burrage. "Ruschenberger, William Samuel Waithman" *American Medical Biographies*. Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Company, 1920.
- LaFeber, Walter. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. London, Cornell University Press, 1963.
- Love, Robert W., Jr. *History of the U.S. Navy*, vol 1 (1775-1941). Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992.
- Manning, William R., James Morton Callahan, John H. Latané, Philip Brown, James L. Slayden, Joseph Wheless, and James Brown Scott. "Statements, Interpretations, and Applications of the Monroe Doctrine and of More or Less Allied Doctrines." *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1907-1917)* 8 (1914): 34-118.
- May, Ernest R. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975.
- McCormick, Thomas J. *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967.
- McGee, Gale W. "The Monroe Doctrine: A Stopgap Measure." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 38, no. 2 (1951): 233-50.
- McKee, Christopher. *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991.
- McLean, David. *Surgeons of the Fleet: The Royal Navy and its Medics from Trafalgar to Jutland*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010.
- NavSource Naval History: Photographic History of the U.S. Navy  
<http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/86/86297.htm> (accessed 16 September, 2017).
- Ninkovich, Frank. *The Global Republic: America's Inadvertent Rise to World Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

- Nye, Joseph S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
- Office of the Historian “A Guide to the United States’ History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Chile”  
<https://history.state.gov/countries/chile> (accessed 7 March, 2017).
- Office of the Historian: Milestones 1899-1913 “Secretary of State John Hay and the Open Door in China, 1899-1900” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/hay-and-china> (accessed 23 September, 2017).
- Office of the Historian: Milestones: 1801-1829 “War of 1812-1815,”  
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/war-of-1812> (accessed 29 March, 2017).
- The Oregon Encyclopedia: “USS *Peacock*”  
[https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/u.s.s.\\_peacock/#.WdFPYmhSzIU](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/u.s.s._peacock/#.WdFPYmhSzIU) (accessed 16 September, 2017).
- Palmer Michael A. *Stoddert’s War: Naval Operations during the Quasi-War with France, 1798-1801*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987.
- Rosenberg, Emily S. *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Want, 1982.
- Roth, Michael. *Issues of Westward Expansion*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Schiebinger, Londa. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Starr, Paul. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982.
- Taylor, Alan. *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.
- Turner, Fredrick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1921. Available via Project Gutenberg,  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm> (accessed 7 March, 2017).
- Williams, William Appleman. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959.

## Appendix A - Timeline

**1800**

- 1807: William Samuel Waithman Ruschenberger born, 4 September, Bridgeton, New Jersey.

**1810**

**1820**

- 1826: Ruschenberger becomes a Surgeon's Mate on 10 August at the age of 19.
- 1826-1829: Ruschenberger is aboard the *USS Brandywine* for a sea duty tour to Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru as a Surgeon's Mate at the age of 19-22.

**1830**

- 1830: Ruschenberger graduates from the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department at the age of 22.
- 1831: Ruschenberger is commissioned as a full surgeon for the United States Navy on 4 April at the age of 23.
- 1831-1834: Ruschenberger is aboard the *USS Falmouth* for a sea duty tour to Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru as a Surgeon at the age of 23-26.
- 1835-1837: Ruschenberger is aboard the *USS Peacock* for a sea duty tour to Muscat, Siam, and around the world as a Fleet Surgeon at the age of 27-29.

**1840**

- 1848-1849: Ruschenberger is aboard the *USS Plymouth* for a sea duty tour to East India as Fleet Surgeon at the age of 41-42.
- 1849: Ruschenberger is appointed to the Annapolis Educational Board in the fall at the age of 42.

**1850**

**1860**

- 1861-1865: Ruschenberger is Chief Surgeon at the Boston Naval Yard at the age of 54-58.
- 1865-1870: Ruschenberger is assigned to Special Duty at Philadelphia at the age of 56-61.
- 1869: Ruschenberger retires from the Navy on 4 September at the age of 62.

**1870**

- 1870-1882: Ruschenberger is President of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia at the age of 61-73.
- 1879-1883: Ruschenberger is also President of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia from the age of 70-74.

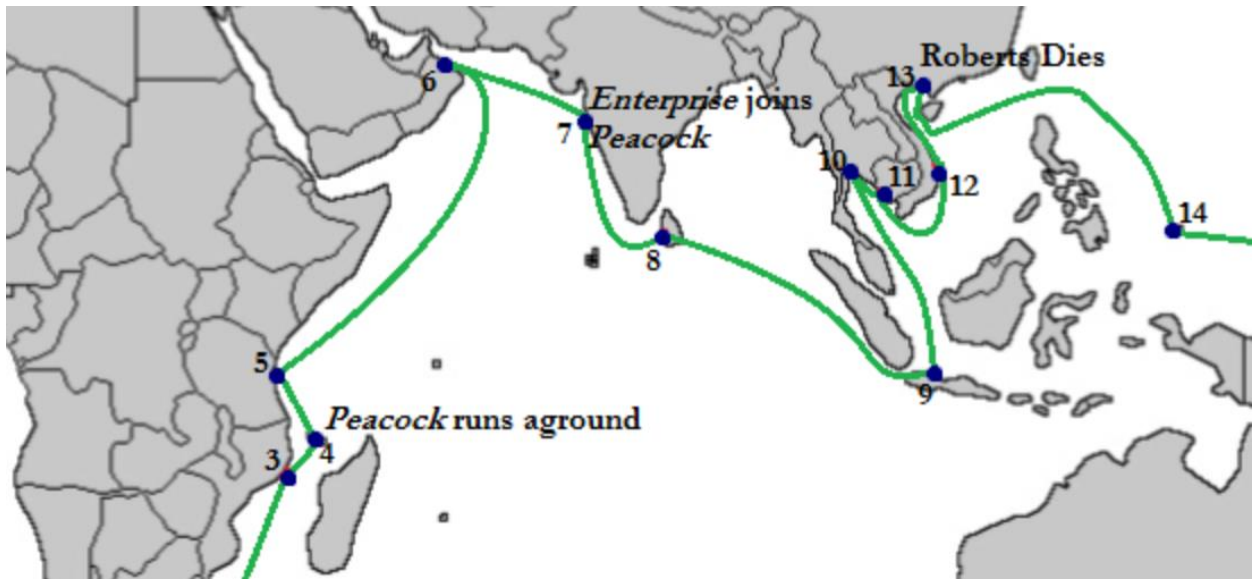
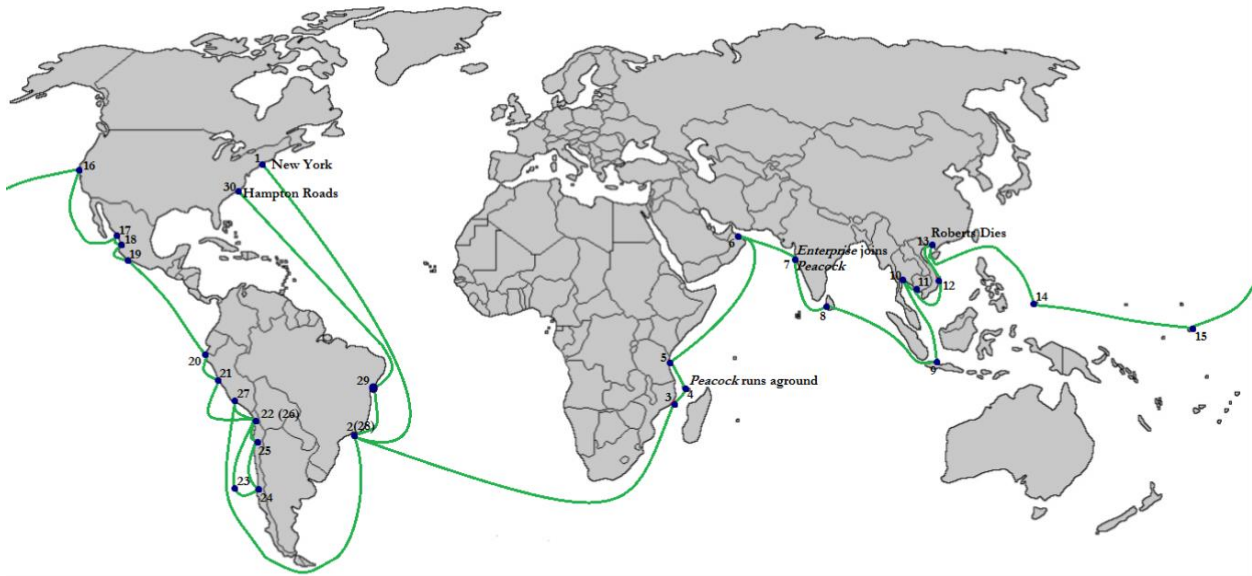
**1880**

**1890**

- 1895: Ruschenberger dies on 24 March in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the age of 83.



## Appendix B -1835 Voyage Map & Legend



- 1) New York
- 2) Rio de Janeiro across Atlantic through Cape of Good Hope & Mozambique Channel
- 3) Mozambique
- 4) Runs aground on Mazeira 9-21-1835
- 5) Zanzibar (Present Day Tanzania)
- 6) Muscat

- 7) Bombay (Now Mumbai) (joins Enterprise 10-22-1835)
- 8) Colombo (Present day city in Shri-Lanka) (refill on water supplies)
- 9) Batvia (Now Jakarta, Indonesia)
- 10) Siam (Now Thailand)
- 11) Turon Bay
- 12) Cochinchina (Present day southern region in Vietnam)
- 13) Macao (Roberts dies 6-12-1836) (Present Day Macau, China)
- 14) Bonin Isles
- 15) Honolulu
- 16) Monterey (Present day United States)
- 17) Mazatlán
- 18) San Blas
- 19) Acapulco
- 20) Payta
- 21) Huacho
- 22) Callo
- 23) Juan Fernandez
- 24) Valparais
- 25) Pisco,
- 26) Callo (Enterprise remains with Pacific Squadron 7-5-1837)
- 27) Huacho, down and around the tip of South America
- 28) Rio de Janeiro (7-25-1837)
- 29) Bahia
- 30) Hampton Roads, Virginia (11-2-1837)

