

Admiral Theodorus Bailey

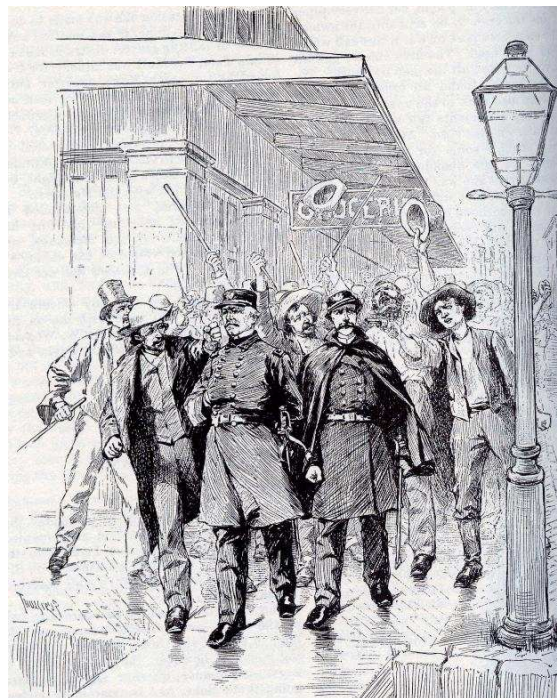
1805-1877

Theodorus Bailey was born in Chateaugay, New York, on April 12, 1805. After studying at Plattsburg Academy, he entered the US Navy in 1818, as a midshipman.



Before he was promoted to lieutenant in 1827, he served off the coast of Africa and in the Pacific Ocean. Bailey went on two naval world cruises, then commanded the storeship "Lexington," serving off the California coast during the Mexican War. By the time he completed a second tour in the Pacific, Bailey was promoted to captain. Ordered to Panama to protect Americans during the 1856 uprising, Bailey was commended for his effective and discreet work.

From May 2, 1861, he commanded the steamer, "Colorado," on blockade duty at Pensacola, Florida. There he helped in the effort against the city, and commanded the expedition that destroyed the "Judah," a Confederate privateer. Bailey was and took an active part in the capture of New Orleans. He placed in command of the first division of gunboats, thus being appointed second in command to Captain David G. Farragut. In 1862, he described the battle to the Secretary the Navy as: "a contest between iron hearts in wooden vessel and ironclads with iron beaks and the iron hearts won." Bailey was one of two men (*middle of the drawing at right*) sent New Orleans to demand the city's surrender, carried the news of victory to Washington.



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In November 1862, Bailey took command of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron (which included the Tampa Bay area), until spring of 1864. He finished out war commanding the Portsmouth Navy Yard (New Hampshire).

Commissioned a rear admiral on July 25, 1866, Bailey soon retired in poor health. Bailey died in Washington, D.C., on February 14, 1877.

OBITUARY

from *The N.Y. Times*, February 11, 1877, p. 6:

REAR ADMIRAL THEODORUS BAILEY.

Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey, of the United States Navy, died in Washington, yesterday, at the age of 72 years. He is the third Rear Admiral on the retired list who has died since Sunday last.

Admiral Bailey was born in Plattsburg, N.Y., in the year 1805. While living at his birth-place he witnessed the terrible naval conflict on Lake Champlain which resulted in a decisive victory for the American flag.

Impressed with what he had seen, he accepted as his pet hero Commodore Macdonough, the American commander in the battle, and his mind became fixed upon making the Navy the theatre of his life. In the year

1818, when he was only 13 years old, an appointment as Midshipman in the Navy was procured for him, and he immediately entered upon his duties. After nine years of service he was commissioned a Lieutenant. For two years thereafter he was on duty on the receiving-ship at the Brooklyn Navy-yard. A period of shore service, lasting several years, intervened before he was ordered to the sloop-of-war Vincennes, in which vessel he made a two years' cruise in the Pacific. From 1837 to 1843, his employments were various, and not of a nature to bring his name before the public. In the latter years he was ordered to the frigate Constellation, and made a cruise in East Indian waters, lasting three years. On returning to this country, after a short period of shore duty at the Brooklyn Navy-yard, he was given the command of the storeship Lexington.

At the outbreak of the Mexican war he was ordered, with the Lexington, to join the Pacific Squadron. The Mexican ports of California were then points of attack, and the Lexington took to the Pacific Coast several officers who were to join Fremont, when the gallant Pathfinder and his little force should finish their long and toilsome journey across the continent. Among those officers were Gens. William T. Sherman and Henry W. Halleck. On the way to San Francisco Lieut. Bailey put into the port of San Blas and captured the town. He afterward made his head-quarters at San Francisco, but frequently left there at the head of expeditions against places held by the Mexicans. All his enterprises were successful, and he was several times commended for his gallant and prudent conduct. While at San Francisco he assisted to establish there, and in other places, our form of civil government instead of the Mexican system.

When returning to the Atlantic coast in the Lexington, Lieut. Bailey visited Panama, and suppressed the riots which occurred there when the Darien Railway was completed. His actions while attached to the Pacific Squadron led to his promotion to be a Commander on March 6, 1849.

After several years of shore duty he was commissioned as a Captain on Dec. 15, 1855. During the years 1856 and 1857 he commanded the sloop-of-war St. Mary's. From the time of that service until the outbreak of the rebellion Capt. Bailey was not actively employed.

He was then given the command of the frigate Colorado, and assigned to the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron. Capt. Bailey's first service against the rebels was in the bombardment of the Confederate fortifications near Pensacola, Florida. In this engagement he displayed gallantry and much skill in the management of his vessel and her armament. He afterward blockaded the mouth of the Mississippi, and when Farragut's expedition arrived there, previous to the capture of New Orleans, he volunteered to take part in the conflict. His services were accepted and he became second in command to Farragut. The Colorado drew too much water to cross the bar, so he went aboard the Cayuga, and, in her, led the right of the attacking force, composed of the first division of gun-boats and the second division of ships, past Forts St. Philip and Jackson, sustaining and returning with interest their heavy fire. Having passed the forts, the Cayuga got into the midst of the rebel fleet of rams and gun-boats. She was far in advance of the other Union vessels, and it seemed as if she must be sunk or captured. This situation called for the display of all Capt. Bailey's courage and skill in the management of his vessel. He met the demand, and proved victorious in the face of tremendous odds. He beat off most of the gun-boats and captured several, and by skillful steering he prevented the rams from running his vessel down. After fighting an unequal battle for a long time, he was relieved by the arrival of supporting vessels. A few hours later Capt. Bailey anchored the Cayuga in front of the camp of a rebel regiment, and after firing grapeshot and canister for a time, compelled the entire force to surrender to him with all their equipments. It was to Capt. Bailey that New-Orleans was surrendered. He went ashore, accompanied only by a Midshipman, and passed directly to the City Hall, where he met Gen. Mansfield Lovell, the rebel commander, who surrendered his sword to him. Capt. Bailey then ordered the Stars and Stripes to be hoisted over the City Hall and other buildings, and on his way back to his ship had the pleasure of seeing the national banner again floating over the Crescent City. His bravery and professional skill evoked the highest praise from Admiral Farragut, who made him carry to Washington the dispatches announcing the capture of New-Orleans, which stated in glowing words the honorable part Capt. Bailey took in the conflicts and their culmination.

Capt. Bailey was, accordingly, made a Commodore on July 16, 1862. Although he was in poor health, he asked for active duty, and in the Fall of the same year was assigned to the command of the Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron. In this position, by his great energy and persistence, he stopped the running of the blockade on the Florida coast which had previously been indulged in almost with impunity by the operators from Nassau, N.P.

When the war closed Commodore Bailey became commandant of the Portsmouth Navy-yard, where he remained until 1867. While there, on July 25, 1866, he was commissioned a Rear Admiral. Three months later he retired from active service, having been on duty for 48 years and 10 months. Since his retirement he has resided in Washington, and has several times performed special duty there.