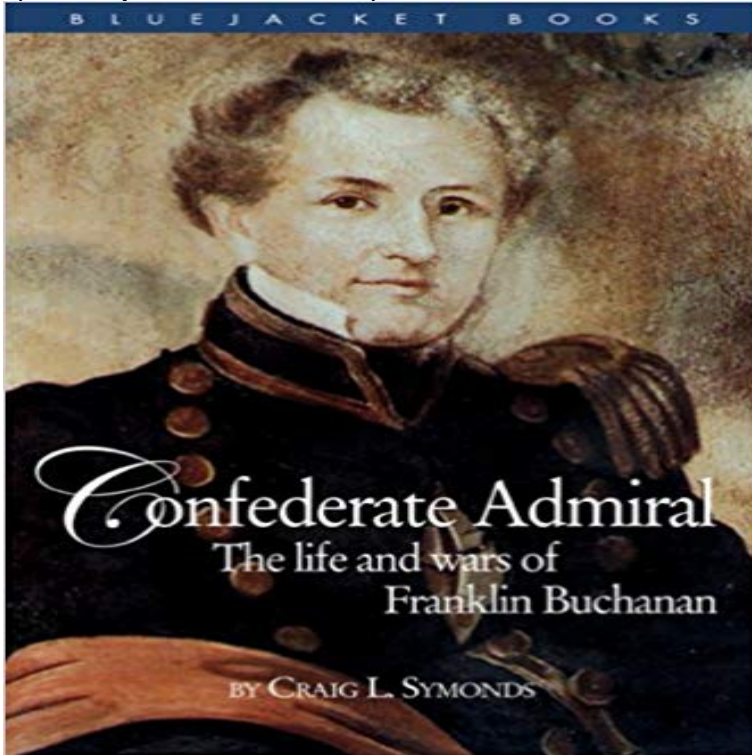


Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan (Bluejacket Books)



A leading historian of both the American Civil War and American naval history takes a fresh look at Franklin Buchanan, the U.S. Naval Academy's first superintendent who went on to become the Confederate Navy's first admiral. Buchanan's resignation from the U.S. Navy in April 1861 as the nation teetered on the brink of Civil War is one of the many dramatic episodes in this revealing biography. Convinced that his native state of Maryland was about to secede from the Union, Buchanan gave up his commission but, when Maryland did not secede, desperately tried to get it back. Unsuccessful, he eventually went South where, as the Confederacy's only full admiral, he helped mold Southern naval strategy and took command of both the Virginia (Merrimack) in the battle of Hampton Roads in 1861, and the Tennessee in the Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864 when Farragut damned the torpedoes. While Buchanan's Civil War experiences helped define the drama of the period, his fifty-year naval career illuminates the sweeping changes in the U.S. Navy of the antebellum years. This stimulating and authoritative biography chronicles Buchanan's life as a midshipman on the square-rigged sailing frigate Java and as a commander at the helm of the coal-burning side-wheel steamer Susquehanna. It examines his pivotal role in the establishment of the Naval Academy and his experiences as the first American to set foot in Japan and the first to command a U.S. Navy warship up the Yangtze River. More than a record of events in Buchanan's career, this biography helps readers understand Buchanan's character and appreciate the broader issues of politics, slavery, loyalty, and professionalism in the era of America's greatest national trauma.

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