

The Alabama

CSS Alabama was a screw sloop-of-war built for the Confederate States Navy at Birkenhead, England, in 1862 by John Laird Sons and Company. Alabama served as a successful commerce raider, attacking Union merchant and naval ships over the course of her two-year career, during which she never anchored in a Southern port. She was sunk in battle by the USS Kearsarge in June 1864 at the Battle of Cherbourg outside the port of Cherbourg, France. The year of The Alabama's demise is commonly modified in the last verse for poetic reasons.

When the Alabama's keel was laid
Roll Alabama roll
It was laid in the yard of Jonathon Laird.
Oh Roll Alabama roll

It was laid in the yard of Jonathon Laird
It was laid in the yard of Birkenhead.

Down Mersey way she sailed then
And Liverpool fitted her with guns and men.

Down Mersey way she sailed forth
To destroy the commerce of the north.

To Cherbourg port she sailed one day
To collect their dues in prize money.

There's many a sailor saw his doom
When the Kearsarge haul-ed into view.

A shot from the forward cannon that day
Shot the Alabama's bows away.

Off the three mile limit in '65
The Alabama went to her grave.