



Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2018

Contact: Elizabeth Severs, 757/728-5326
elizabeth.severs@hamptonevb.com
Seamus McGrann, 757/727-6841
mmcgrann@hampton.gov

**Co-Author of ‘Our Little Monitor’ Presents Talk of Most Recent
Archaeological Findings and Late 19th Century Popular Culture Impact
of Famed Civil War Battleship**

Hampton, VA - Jonathan W. White, associate professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University, presents the most recent archaeological findings of the iconic Civil War Union battleship, the subject of a recent book co-authored with Anna Gibson Holloway, *Our Little Monitor*, as part of the Hampton History Museum’s Port Hampton Lecture series on Monday, July 2, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

On March 9, 1862, the USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* met in the Battle of Hampton Roads—the first time ironclad vessels would engage each other in combat. For four hours

-More-

1919 Commerce Drive, Suite 290 | Hampton, Virginia 23666
757.722.1222 | 800.487.8778 | fax 757.896.4600 | www.hamptonevb.com

Co-Author of ‘Our Little Monitor’ Presents Talk of Most Recent Archaeological Findings and Late 19th Century Popular Culture Impact of Famed Civil War Battleship- Page 2

the two ships pummeled one another as thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers and civilians watched from the shorelines. Although the battle ended in a draw, this engagement would change the nature of naval warfare by informing both vessel design and battle tactics. The “wooden walls” of navies around the world suddenly appeared far more vulnerable, and many political and military leaders initiated or accelerated their own ironclad-building programs.

Americans did not initially have much faith in the *Monitor*. Few believed that this strange little vessel could hold her own against the formidable Confederate ironclad *Virginia*, which had been built on the bones of the scuttled *USS Merrimack* in Portsmouth, Virginia. The *Virginia*, seemingly relentless and unstoppable, had ravaged the U.S. Navy in Hampton Roads on March 8, just before the *Monitor* arrived. Yet the following day, the “cheesebox on a raft” proved her Union mettle, becoming a national hero in her own right.

For the remainder of the Civil War the Union Navy used dozens of monitor-style vessels on inland waters as well as at sea. But there would always be only one first *Monitor*, and she became affectionately known to many throughout the nation as “Our Little *Monitor*.” Her loss off Cape Hatteras on December 31, 1862, was mourned as keenly in the press as the loss of 16 of her men that night.

Using the latest archaeological finds from the *USS Monitor* Center in Newport News, Virginia, as well as untapped archival material, Anna Gibson Holloway and Jonathan W. White bring “Our Little *Monitor*” to life once more in this beautifully illustrated volume. In addition to telling her story from conception in 1861 to sinking in 1862, as well as her

-More-

Co-Author of ‘Our Little Monitor’ Presents Talk of Most Recent Archaeological Findings and Late 19th Century Popular Culture Impact of Famed Civil War Battleship- Page 3

recent recovery and ongoing restoration, they explain how fighting in this new “machine” changed the experience of her crew and reveal how the *Monitor* became “the pet of the people”—a vessel celebrated in prints, tokens, and household bric-a-brac; a marketing tool; and a prominent feature in parades, Sanitary Fairs, and politics.

Jonathan W. White

Jonathan W. White is associate professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University and is the author of several books, including *Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman*, and *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln*, which was a finalist for both the Lincoln Prize and Jefferson Davis Prize, a “best book” in *Civil War Monitor*, and the winner of the Abraham Lincoln Institute’s 2015 book prize. He has published more than seventy-five articles, essays and reviews, and is the winner of the 2005 John T. Hubbell Prize for the best article in *Civil War History*, the 2010 Hay-Nicolay Dissertation Prize, and the 2012 Thomas Jefferson Prize for his *Guide to Research in Federal Judicial History* (2010). He is president of the Abraham Lincoln Institute, he serves on the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association and the Lincoln Forum, the Board of Advisors of the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia, and the Ford’s Theatre Advisory Council. His most recent books include *Lincoln on Law, Leadership and Life* (2015), *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War* (2017), and “*Our Little Monitor*”: *The Greatest Invention of the Civil War* (2018), which he co-authored with Anna Gibson Holloway. Check out his website at www.jonathanwhite.org/ or follow him on Twitter at [@CivilWarJon](https://twitter.com/CivilWarJon)

Hampton History Museum

Admission to the lecture is free for museum members, \$5.00 for non-members. The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757-727-1102 or visit www.HamptonHistoryMuseum.org.

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads

-More-

Co-Author of 'Our Little Monitor' Presents Talk of Most Recent Archaeological Findings and Late 19th Century Popular Culture Impact of Famed Civil War Battleship- Page 4

metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, harbor tours and cruises, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.

###

Photos attached:

**Our Little Monitor book cover, courtesy of the author
Jonathan W. White portrait, courtesy of the author**