

Museum Notes

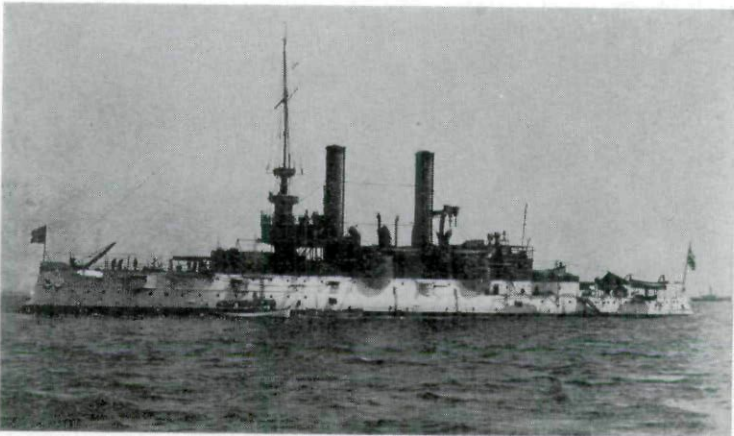
BY BEVERLY SHIFFER

The staff at the Historical Building has recently completed a new display of the battleship *Iowa II*. This was the first *sea-going* battleship to be built by the United States. All those preceding her were called *coast defense* battleships. The focal point of the display is a 42-inch scale model of the ship. The model was made for the Navy department as a "mock up" to help determine the final configurations of the equipment used on the battleship. A picture of the *Iowa* is also on display. The photograph has been enlarged to the exact size of the model, allowing the observer to make even the tiniest comparisons between the completed battleship and its famous miniature.

The battleship itself measured 362 feet, 6 inches, with a beam of 72 feet, 2 inches. Aboard the ship were seventeen boats, two of them steam pickets or launches. The ship's battery consisted of eight 8-inch breech loading rifles, four 12-inch breech loading rifles, six 4-inch rapid fire guns, twenty six-pounder rapid fire guns, four one-pounder rapid fire guns, four Colt automatic guns, and four torpedo tubes using "Howell" torpedoes. The six-pounder, one-pounder, and the Colt guns could be loaded into the boats for service on shore. She had 86 engines, 152 steam cylinders, four 25,000 candlepower search lights, 500 electric lights, and the entire ship was ventilated by fans driven by electric motors.

The contract for her construction was signed on February 11, 1893, and she was built by William Cramp & Sons Shipbuilding Company of Philadelphia, at a total cost of \$3,210,000. Her trial run of sixty-six miles was held on November 14, 1897. Proving sea-worthy, she was assigned to active duty off San Juan, P.R., as flagship of Admiral Sampson's squadron. Later she joined Commodore Schley's flying squadron off Cienfuegos, Cuba, and from May 28 to July 2, 1898, was assigned to blockade duty off Santiago de Cuba. On July 3, the *Iowa* was the first to sight approaching Spanish ships, and she fired the first shot in that famous battle of Santiago. Before the battle ended with the defeat of the Spanish Navy,

the *Iowa* had encountered every ship in the Spanish fleet. Her commander during this engagement was Rear-Admiral Robley D. Evans, known in American history as "Fighting Bob." When the Spanish ship, the *Viscaya*, ran aground, Rear-Admiral Evans sent boats to the rescue, and took on board Captain Eulate and 176 men of his crew as prisoners-of-war. Also taken as prisoners were Admiral Pascual Cervera, his son, and the officers and crew of the Spanish gunboats, the *Furor* and *Pluton*. When the battle was over, the *Iowa* returned with the victorious fleet to New York. After a thorough overhaul, she was again on her way. During the first World War, she was used as a training ship for recruits.



THE BATTLESHIP *Iowa II*

On March 31, 1919, she was placed out of commission, re-named the *Coast Guard Battleship # 4*, and was semi-retired from the Navy after almost twenty-five years of active service. In March of 1923, she was ruled obsolete; and the Navy Department, in a demonstration held to prove that a bomb dropped from an airplane could sink a battleship, used her for target practice sixty miles south of the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal. Bombs were dropped from the air onto her decks and two hundred 14-inch shells were fired from the battleship *Mississippi*; it required forty-three minutes of bom-

barding by gunners 18,000 yards away to finally heel over this ship. As she sank to the bottom of the sea, bands on the surrounding ships played "The Star-Spangled Banner" while the men on deck stood at attention in respect for this gallant ship.

There have been four ships named after the state of Iowa. The first was a post-Civil War wooden screw sloop launched in July of 1864. Originally named the *Ammonoosuc*, the sloop was renamed the *Iowa* on May 15, 1869. It was sold to a private concern (Hubbel & Porter of Syracuse) on September 27, 1883.

The battleship *U.S.S. Iowa III* was under construction in 1923, when the Arms Limitation Treaty was signed. She was ordered dismantled and was sold for scrap when she was only one-third complete.

The *U.S.S. Iowa IV* was launched on August 27, 1942, at the Navy yard in New York, and was fittingly christened by Mrs. Henry A. Wallace, wife of the then Vice-President of the United States. This ship was the first of the Navy's super 45,000-ton battleships to be built, and she served in World War II. Retired in 1958, the *Iowa IV* is in the mothball fleet at the Navy yard in Philadelphia.

The Library's Roving Reporter

BY LIDA L. GREENE

Hitching racks have given way to parking meters; tractors trundle along the streets instead of farm wagons; and for the young, Beatle records and football have replaced the singing school and autumn hayrides. There is, however, something about the smaller county seat towns of Iowa that is almost changeless. A block from the square there is still the Victorian house a doctor built for his bride; and an honest stone building not far away houses the picture of a canny Scot named Carnegie whose millions seeded the midwest with libraries. At a court house built in '73 or '89 or 1904, busy people will always take time to locate a land patent volume, a first marriage index, or go to the vault in the basement for 1855 tax records.

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