

Roll Alabama Roll

1. When the Alabama's keel was laid
Roll, Alabama, roll
It was laid in the yards of Jonathan Laird
O roll, Alabama, roll
2. It was laid in the yards of Jonathan Laird
Roll, Alabama, roll
It was laid in the town of Birkenhead
O roll, Alabama, roll
3. Down Mersey way she sailed then
Roll, Alabama, roll
Liverpool fitted her with guns and men
O roll, Alabama, roll
4. Down Mersey way she sailed forth
Roll, Alabama, roll
To destroy the commerce of the North
O roll, Alabama, roll
5. To Cherbourg harbour she sailed one day
Roll, Alabama, roll
To collect her share of the prize money.
O roll, Alabama, roll
6. And many a sailor saw his doom
Roll, Alabama, roll
When the Yankee Kearsarge hove in view
O roll, Alabama, roll
7. A shot from the forward pivot that day
Roll, Alabama, roll
Blew the Alabama's bows [stern] away
O roll, Alabama, roll
8. Off the three mile limit in sixty-four
Roll, Alabama, roll

The Alabama sank to the ocean floor
O roll, Alabama, roll.

Kimber's Men sing tjhis on Bandcamp at
<https://kimbersmen.bandcamp.com/track/roll-alabama-roll>

Swan Arcade' sing at <https://youtu.be/xlPtXpEeWFE>
accompanied by some lovely, uncredited, photos and
also displaying their lyrics.

Notes

A tack and sheet, short pull, sweating up, or possibly
halyard shanty ...

Richard Runciman **Terry**, 1921, *The Shanty Book*,
Sailor Shanties says it's a **foresheet** shanty

Capt W.B. **Whall**, 1913, *Ships, Sea songs and Shanties*,
says it is used as a last **short pull** for
sweating up.

Stan **Hugill**, 1994, *Shanties from the Seven Seas*:
This is another famous **tack and sheet** shanty. I learnt
much of my version from Paddy Griffiths, who told me it
was used mainly for hauling aft the foresheet after
reefing the foresail.

The Alabama was a wooden steam propeller, built in
1862. **Chris Ryall** gives her full specification at
<https://chrisryall.net/birkenhead/alabama.htm>

Commissioned on August 24, 1862, the CSS
[Confederate Steam Ship] **Alabama** was the
Confederacy's most effective weapon on the seas in the
[American] Civil War. She captured 65 Union vessels
and sank one warship, the USS Hatteras, on 11
January 1863. The Alabama was sunk by the USS [US
Steamship] the **Kearsarge** in the Battle of Cherbourg
on June 19, 1864.
[Encyclopedia of Alabama.](#)



Antonio **Jacobsen**,
(1850-1921)
*USS Kearsarge vs CSS
Alabama*, 1914
via [wikimedia commons](#)