

Two accounts of the launching of the USS Oneota – May 1864

THE LAUNCH OF THE ONEOTA.—At 3 o'clock P. M. of last Saturday, a second ocean monitor, the Oneota, twin sister of the Catawba, was launched into the Ohio River, from the Niles Works. Along the riverbank thousands of people were assembled to witness the spectacle, while on the boat several hundreds were gathered to participate in the excitement of the launch. At precisely three o'clock the last blocks were knocked away, and feeling its suddenly acquired freedom, the huge mass of thirteen hundred tons of wood and iron, done up in symmetrical form, slid rapidly along the ways, down into the turbid water of the swollen river, amid the excited shouts of the thousands of spectators. With the impetus gathered from its rapid flight along the ways, on which it had left a train of fire with its fierce friction, the Oneota glided rapidly down stream with colors flying, band playing and spectators huzzaing, until near the foot of Race street, when the anchor was dropped and the tug-boats were summoned. These, grappling alongside, succeeded, after some time, in getting the immense mass of floating iron back as far as Ludlow street, where they left her alongside of the Catawba, which is being completed there. It is probable that both of these vessels will be finished here, before being sent down to the ocean.

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The launch of the Oneota, Saturday afternoon, was witnessed by large assemblages of people, who lined the river shore and the boats for several squares below the building from whence the gunboat emerged. There were near 200 persons, many of them ladies, obtained standing room on her deck, and ran the risk of a ducking as she plunged into the river. But the launch was gracefully accomplished, only about one fourth of her length going under water, when she floated as steadily as a swan, running down below Vine street, six squares, before a couple of small steamers caught her and towed her back to shore. The Oneota is an exact mate of the Catawba, which we described at some length a few weeks ago. The two are now lying side by side below Deer Creek, where they will be completed as soon as possible.

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