

# **The American Civil War: The Anaconda Plan**

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**September 2022**

**Civil War Philatelic Society, Inc.**

The pages have been numbered at the bottom for ease of reference

# THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR:

## THE ANACONDA PLAN

**Exhibit Focus and Structure:** This exhibit presents naval mail related to the Union blockade of Southern ports during the American Civil War, and explains the strategy developed by Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott to destroy the Southern economy by choking off imports and exports of materials critical to the Confederacy's war efforts. It is organized in six chapters as presented in the table to the right, with the start of each denoted by 

The sub-headers provide information about the ships and the captions explain the postal use as well as relevant historical information, such as battles fought and important engagements. Important information about postal rates and rules are highlighted in blue boxes.

Especially rare covers are framed in a Red Box. Items with a certificate from a recognized expertising organization are marked with "Cert."

**Historical Background:** The Union blockade was proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln on 19 April 1861, a week after the bombardment of Fort Sumter that marked the outbreak of the War. Proposed by Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, the "Anaconda Plan" emphasized a Union blockade of the Southern ports and called for control of the Mississippi River to cut the South in two.

A joint Union military-navy commission, known as the "Blockade Strategy Board," was formed to make plans for seizing major Southern ports to use as Union bases. It initially met in June 1861 in Washington DC under the leadership of Captain Samuel F. Du Pont. The blockade required the monitoring of 3,500 miles of Atlantic and Gulf coastline including 12 major ports, most notably New Orleans and Mobile.

The Union naval ships enforcing the blockade were divided into squadrons based on their area of operation, with two in the Atlantic and two in the Gulf of Mexico plus additional support along the Mississippi and other western rivers.

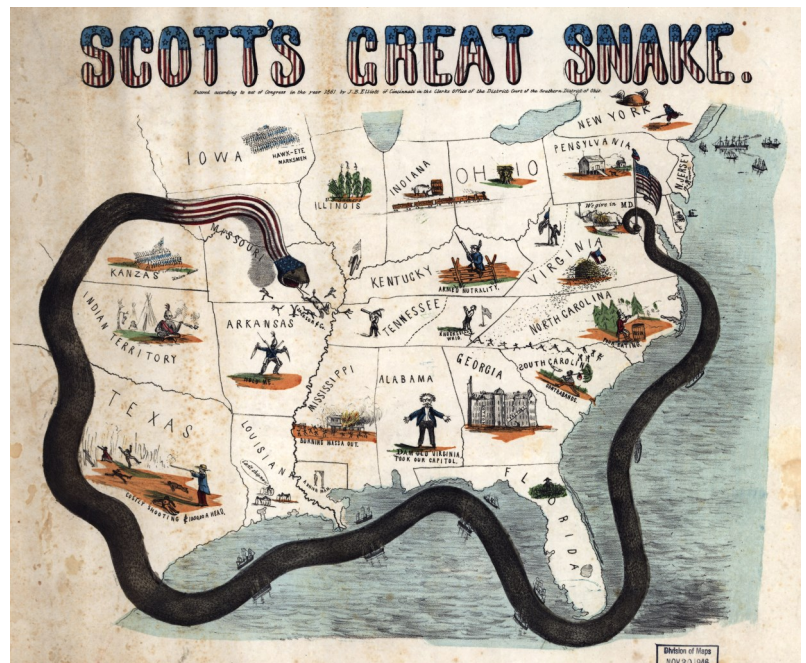
The Navy Department, under the leadership of Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, quickly moved to expand the fleet, and by the end of the war the Union Navy had grown to 671 ships, making it the largest in the world.

The blockade runners were operated by foreigners and based in neutral ports including Bermuda, the Bahamas and Havana. Ordinary freighters were too slow and visible to escape the Navy, so the runners were primarily high speed steamships built in Britain with low profiles and shallow draft. Outbound, a runner carried several hundred tons of high-value cargo such as cotton, turpentine or tobacco. Inbound trips carried rifles, medicine, liquor, clothing and coffee. Mail was also carried.

Captured ships and their cargoes were auctioned with proceeds split among the sailors. Approximately 1,500 runners were captured or destroyed during the War and the blockade served as a powerful weapon that devastated the South's economy.

### Exhibit Structure

- I. North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
- II. South Atlantic Blockading Squadron
- III. East Gulf Blockading Squadron
- IV. West Gulf Blockading Squadron
- V. Mississippi River Squadron
- VI. Prize Court



Cartoon map illustrating Gen. Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" plan to crush the Confederacy. The tail of the snake is wrapped around the flagpole at Washington D.C., with U.S. flag and liberty cap. Image from Wikipedia.





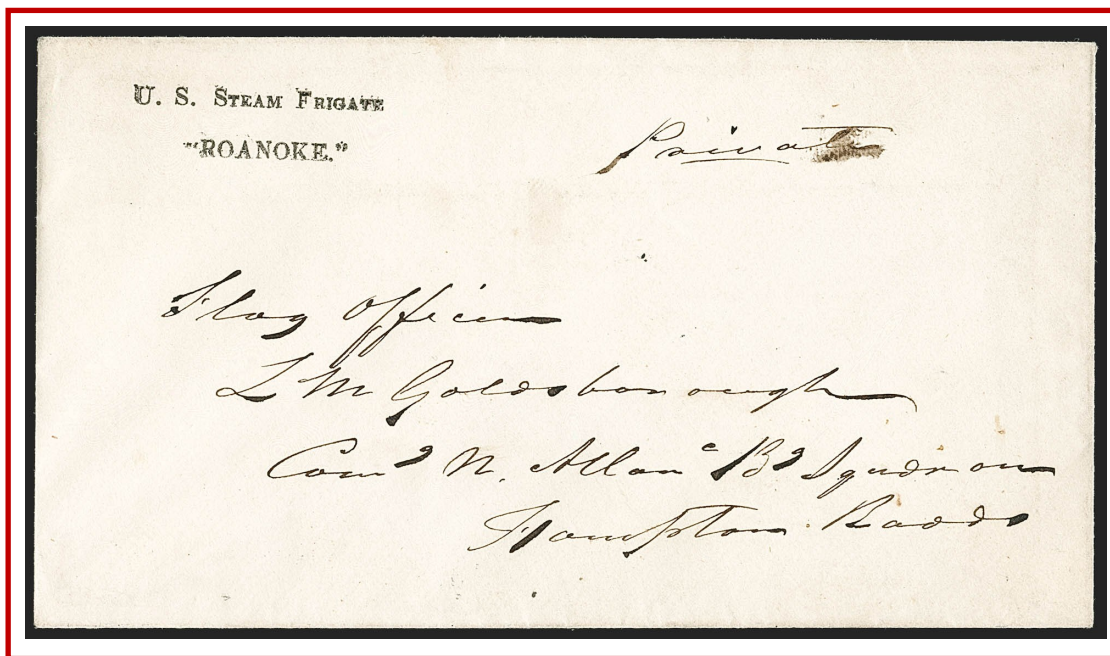
## NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

In the initial phase of the blockade, Union forces concentrated on the Atlantic Coast, and the Atlantic Blockading Squadron was formed in early May 1861 following President Lincoln's call for a blockade of all Southern ports on 19 April. It was initially commanded by Flag Officer Silas Stringham and headquartered at Hampton Roads, VA. On 29 October 1861, it was split into the North and South Squadrons, with the North initially commanded by Flag Officer Louis Goldsborough and tasked with coverage of Virginia and North Carolina with a range of operation from the Potomac River to Cape Fear.

Flag Officer Goldsborough

U.S. Steam Frigate *Roanoke*

U.S. Steam Frigate "*Roanoke*" two-line handstamp marking on cover addressed to Flag Officer Goldsborough at Hampton Roads, VA, endorsed "Private" with original enclosure containing two letters from husband and wife, both datelined "Boston Oct. 27th 1861." At the time this cover was sent, the *Roanoke* was assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

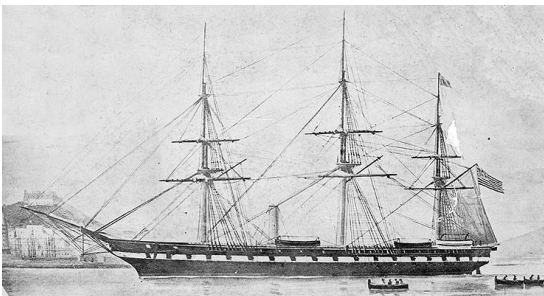


*One of two known examples of the U.S. Steam Frigate "Roanoke" handstamp marking.*

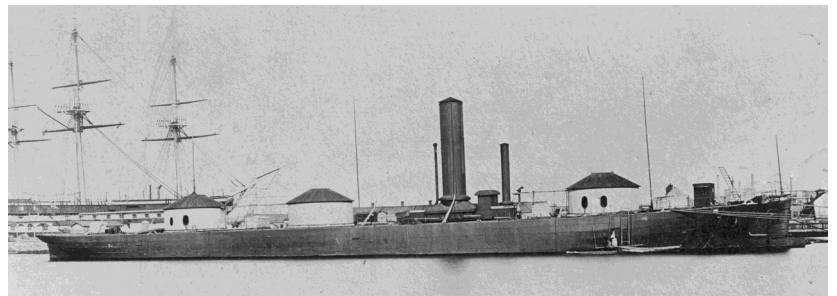
Flag Officer Goldsborough was given command of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron on 18 September 1861.

Cert.

The U.S.S. *Roanoke* was a wooden-hull Merrimack-class screw frigate built for the US Navy in the mid-1850s. She served as the flagship of the Home Squadron in the late 1850s (prior to the formation of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron in May 1861) and captured several Confederate ships at the start of the Civil War in 1861. She was converted into an iron-clad monitor during 1862-1863 and became the first ship in history to have more than two gun turrets. The weight of the turrets and armor left her heavy, creating excessive roll in turbulent water and a deep draft that prevented operation in shallow Confederate ports. As a result, she was relegated to harbor defense at Hampton Roads, VA, for the duration of the War.



The U.S.S. *Roanoke*, prior to its conversion to an iron-clad monitor



The U.S.S. *Roanoke*, after its conversion

# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Minnesota*

Flagship of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron



Patriotic cover with red and blue Lady Liberty and Flag design (Weiss 2328), endorsed "U.S. Flag Ship Minnesota," to Bellefonte PA and entering mails at Old Point Comfort VA, 31 July 1861, with "SHIP" and "3" cents due handstamps.

Commanded by Captain G.J. Van Brunt, the U.S.S. *Minnesota* was the flagship of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



The U.S.S. *Minnesota* was a wooden steam frigate in the United States Navy launched in 1855 and recommissioned on 2 May 1861, Captain G. J. Van Brunt in command, and became flagship of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron, commanded by Flag Officer Silas Stringham. She arrived at Hampton Roads, Virginia, on 13 May.



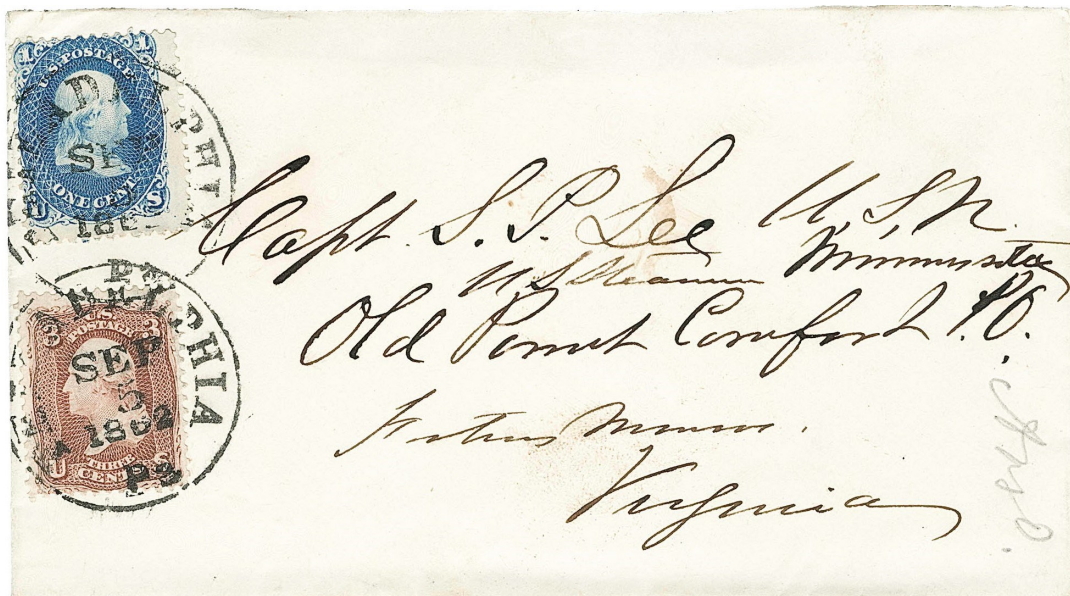
# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Minnesota*

Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee

The covers presented below are addressed to Samuel Phillips Lee, a cousin of Confederate General Robert E. Lee who remained loyal to the Union and famously said "When I find the word Virginia in my commission I will join the Confederacy." Each is addressed to Lee on board the U.S.S. *Minnesota* at Fortress Monroe at Old Point Comfort.

US 1¢ and 3¢ 1861  
tied by "Philadelphia  
Pa./Sep 5, 1862"  
circular datestamp  
paying postage and  
carrier fee to Captain  
Lee on the *Minnesota*  
at Fortress Monroe in  
Virginia.



US 1¢ and 3¢ 1861 tied  
by "Philadelphia Pa./Sep  
13, 1862" circular  
datestamp paying  
postage and carrier fee to  
"Acting R. Admiral" Lee,  
reflecting his **new**  
**command of the North**  
**Atlantic Blockading**  
**Squadron**, on the  
*Minnesota* at Fortress  
Monroe in Virginia.

Samuel Phillips Lee was an officer of the United States Navy. During the Civil War he took part in the New Orleans campaign before commanding the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, covering the coastlines and inland waters of Virginia and North Carolina, and finally the Mississippi River Squadron. As a cousin of Robert E. Lee, his refusal to join the Confederacy demonstrated the extent to which the war had divided families.





# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Fort Jackson*

U.S.S. *Chippewa*

“From U.S.S. Fr. Jackson” manuscript endorsement on cover to St. Louis MO with “Old Point Comfort VA/Jul 21” double-circle datestamp and “DUE 6” in circle handstamp.



U.S.S. *Fort Jackson* was a wooden side-wheel steamer commissioned 20 July 1863 and assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Towards the end of the War, in February 1865, she was transferred to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron where she took station off the Texas coast.



“Ship’s letter, Jno. W. Philip, U.S.S. ‘Chippewa’” manuscript endorsement on cover Warren CT with “Philadelphia PA/Jun 8, 1862” circular datestamp, “DUE 6” and “U.S. SHIP” (Milgram SH-11) straightline handstamps.

**Scarce use of the Philadelphia “U.S. SHIP” straightline handstamp on a stampless cover.**

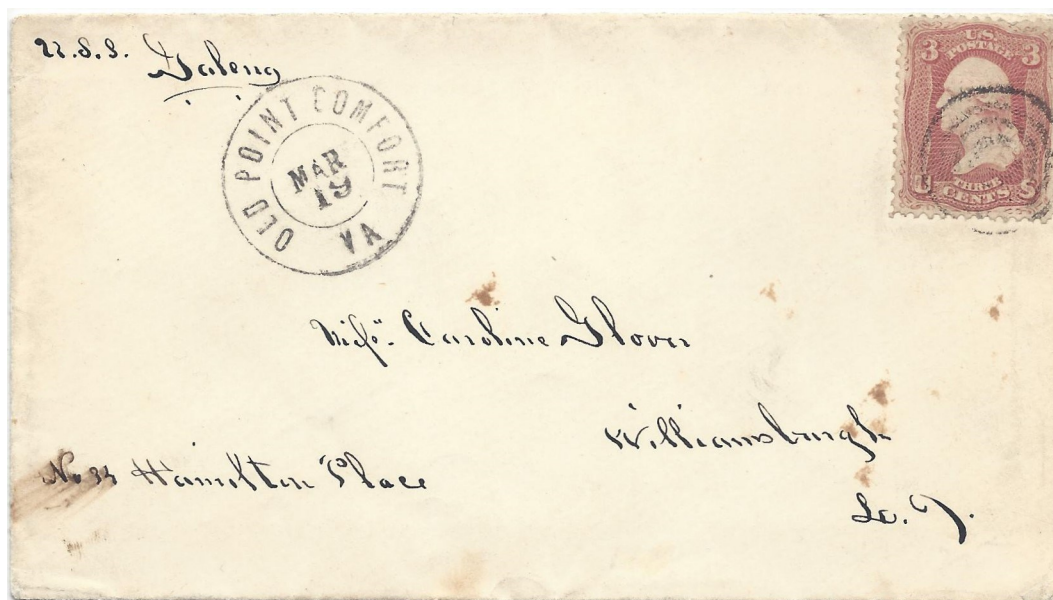
U.S.S. *Chippewa* was an Unadilla-class Gunboat that served in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron from December 1861 until ordered to search for Confederate raider, the C.S.S. *Florida*, which took her across the Atlantic to Spain and North Africa and to various ports in the West Indies. Upon return from this unsuccessful mission, she was reassigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and operated off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. The *Florida* was finally captured in the port of Bahia, Brazil on 3 October 1864.

Unpaid letters entering the Northern postal system from privates and non-commissioned officers were to be charged 3¢ if properly certified as a soldier’s letter by a commissioned officer. Postage for officers was 3¢ if pre-paid and 6¢ due if unpaid. Absence of certification resulted in these letters being marked Due 6.



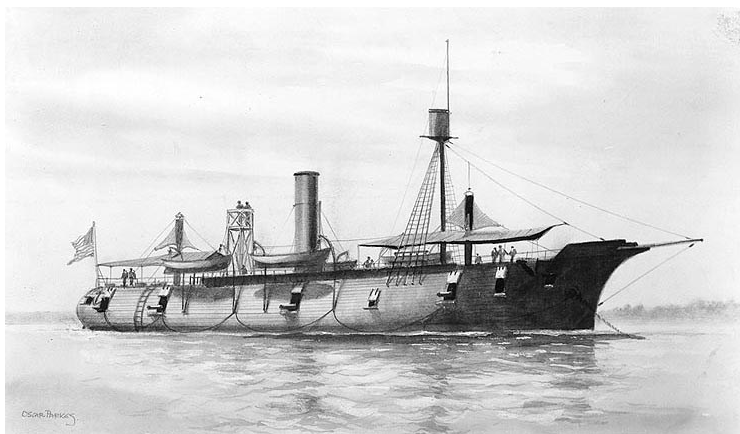
# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. Galena



"U.S.S. Galena" manuscript endorsement on cover to Williamsburg NY with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with "Old Point Comfort VA/Mar 19" double-circle datestamp.

Official Business cover addressed to "Capt. John Rogers, US Navy, Commanding Galena" at Hampton Roads with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Washington DC" double-circle datestamp.



The U.S.S. Galena was one of the first three ironclad steamers built by the Union during the Civil War. She was launched in Mystic, CT, on 14 February 1862 and towed to Fortress Monroe, arriving to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron on 24 April. Comdr. John Rogers took command on that day.

# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Calypso*

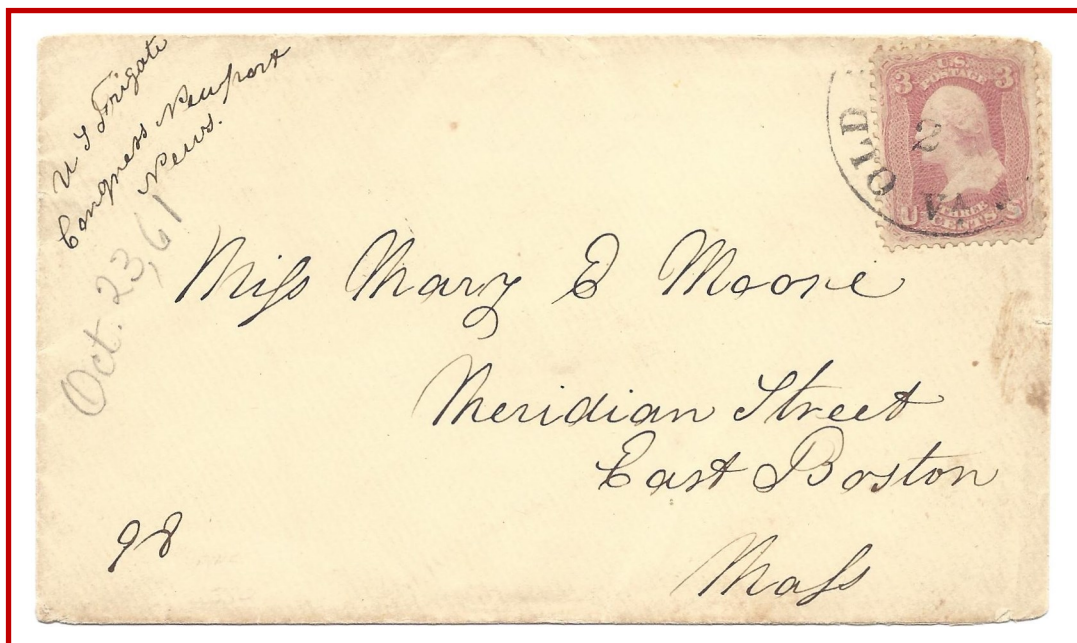
U.S.S. *Congress*

Cover addressed to  
"Surgeon of U.S.S.  
'Calypso', Hampton Roads,  
Va." at Hampton Roads  
VA, with US 3¢ 1861  
cancelled by fancy oval  
with matching "New York/  
Apr 4" cds and 2¢ Boyd's  
Local (oxidized, Scott  
20L18).

The use of the Boyd's local  
stamp is exceedingly  
uncommon on a ship  
cover.



U.S.S. *Calypso*, an armed steamer, was captured by the Union Navy on 11 June 1863 off Wilmington, NC, by U.S.S. *Florida*. She was purchased by the Navy from the prize court on 12 October, at which time she joined the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and served for 22 months, patrolling the Bahamas routes to Wilmington and the Chesapeake River.



From the U.S.S.  
*Congress*, with  
manuscript endorsement  
"U S Frigate Congress,  
Newport News," to East  
Boston MA with US 3¢  
1861 (Pink) tied by "Old  
Point Comfort/Oct  
2\_" (1861 ca. docketing)  
circular datestamp and  
Oct. 26 backstamp.

Cert.

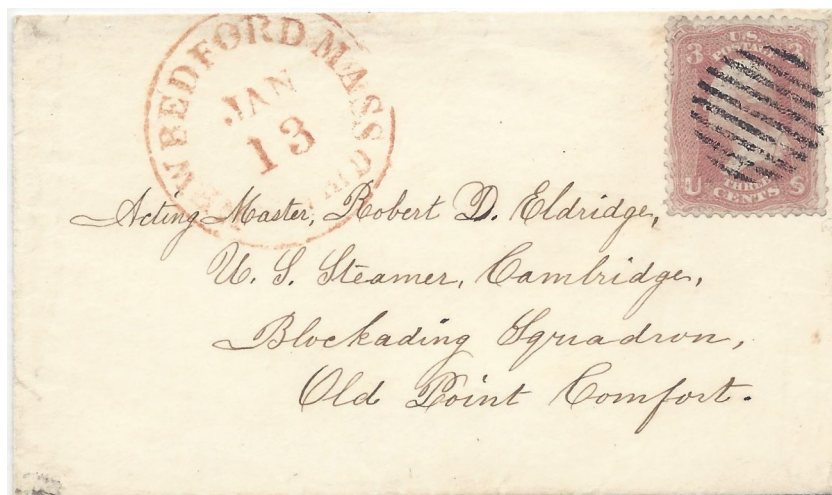
U.S.S. *Congress* was originally commissioned in May 1842, serving in the Mediterranean and South Atlantic. In September 1861, she joined the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. On 8 March 1862, *Congress* was anchored with five smaller ships as part of the Union blockade of Newport News, VA, and fell under attack by the Confederate ironclad C.S.S. *Virginia* (formerly the U.S.S. *Merrimack*). After exchanging broadsides with *Virginia*, she slipped her moorings and ran aground in shallow water. The ironclad and her consorts attacked from a distance and inflicted heavy damage, causing *Congress* to raise a white flag. Heavy shore batteries prevented *Virginia* from taking possession, so she instead fired red-hot cannonballs and incendiary that caused *Congress* to explode and burn to the water's edge. *Congress* sank to the stern and 120 crew were killed, including the commanding officer, Lt. Joseph B. Smith.



# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Cambridge*

U.S.S. *Brandywine*



Cover addressed to "Acting Master, Robert D. Eldridge" aboard the U.S. Steamer *Cambridge* at Old Point Comfort, with US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by circular grid with red-orange "New Bedford, Mass/Jan 13" circular datestamp.

U.S.S. *Cambridge*, an armed steamer, was outfitted as a gunboat and commissioned 29 August 1861. Assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron from 9 September 1861 until 5 October 1864, she patrolled the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina and later, following her reassignment to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron on 9 February 1865, South Carolina. She captured or destroyed 11 prizes during the War, some taken under the guns of Confederate shore batteries.

From the U.S.S. *Brandywine*, with original letter datelined April 28, 1863, to New York City with US 3¢ target cancel and with matching "Old Point Comfort VA/April 28" double-circle datestamp.



U.S.S. *Brandywine*, a wooden-hulled, three-masted frigate bearing 44 guns, was commissioned on 25 August 1825. Her initial task was to convey the Marquis de Lafayette back to France. When the War commenced, she had been laid up in ordinary for more than a decade but was recommissioned at the New York Navy Yard on 27 October 1861 and immediately set sail for Hampton Roads, VA. Housed over and converted to a storeship, the former warship supported the operations of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron for almost three years. She spent much of that time anchored near Fort Monroe and was later moved to Norfolk where she also assumed the role of receiving ship for the squadron. On 3 September 1864, a fire occurred in her paint locker and she sank at her moorings.

# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. *Connecticut*

The U.S.S. *Connecticut* was a side-wheel steamer, built in 1861 in New York City as the *Mississippi*. She was purchased by the Navy, converted to a warship commissioned U.S.S. *Connecticut*, and assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron in August 1861. Her first voyage was on 25 August 1861, where she delivered men and supplies to blockade ships along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts as far as Galveston, Texas. She later spent time assisting in the search for the Confederate cruiser C.S.S. *Nashville*, then returned to cargo duty, making five voyages similar to her first. She also captured four schooners with valuable cargo during this early period when this cover was posted.



***Rare use of a patriotic cover in combination with the stencil marking .***

From the U.S.S. *Connecticut*, red, white and blue flag and cannon patriotic cover with “Our Compromise” slogan (Weiss F-R-419), to Milwaukee, Wisconsin with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with matching “New-York/Feb 25” (1861) double-circle datestamp.

The back stenciled “Ship Connecticut/ A. B. Langworthy” (Milgram No. 282) to Connecticut’s Captain, A. B. Langworthy, Milwaukee, Wis., “Sheriff’s Office” A.B. Langworthy was an Acting Master’s Mate on *Connecticut*. The addressee, his brother, was a Captain in the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery.



The U.S.S. *Connecticut*, ca. 1863



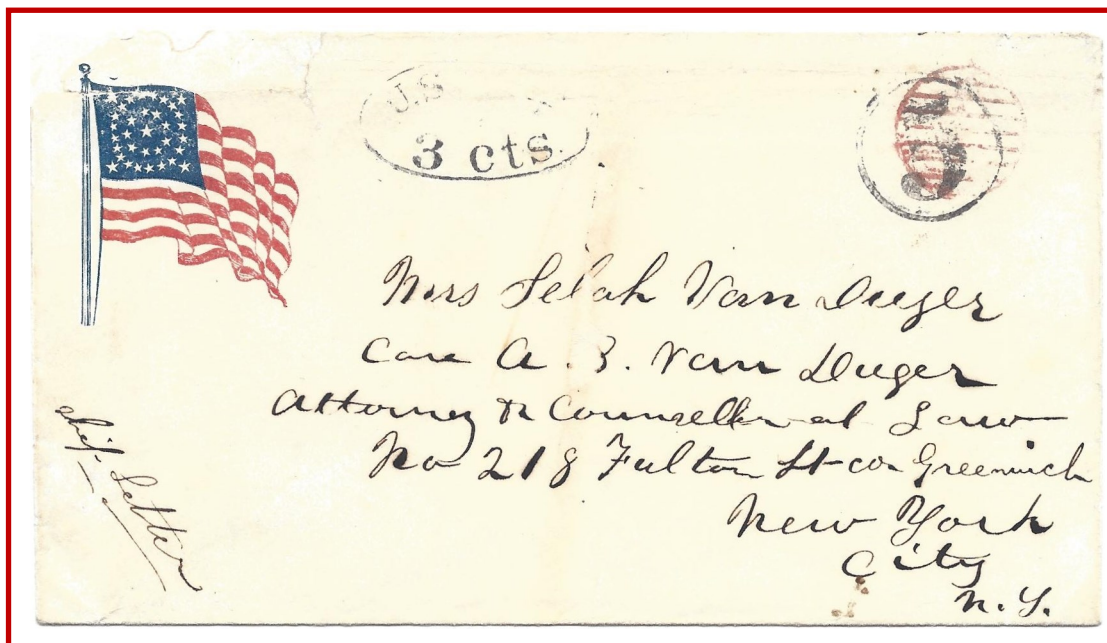
Copy of back at 65%



# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Commodore Hull*

U.S.S. *Commodore Perry*



Red and blue flag patriotic cover (Weiss F-R-151) from the U.S.S. *Commodore Hull*, endorsed "ship letter" to New York City initially postmarked "5" in circle (due 3¢ plus 2¢ ship fee) but nullified with a red grid and properly re-rated with an oval "U.S. SHIP/3 cts." (Milgram SH-14).

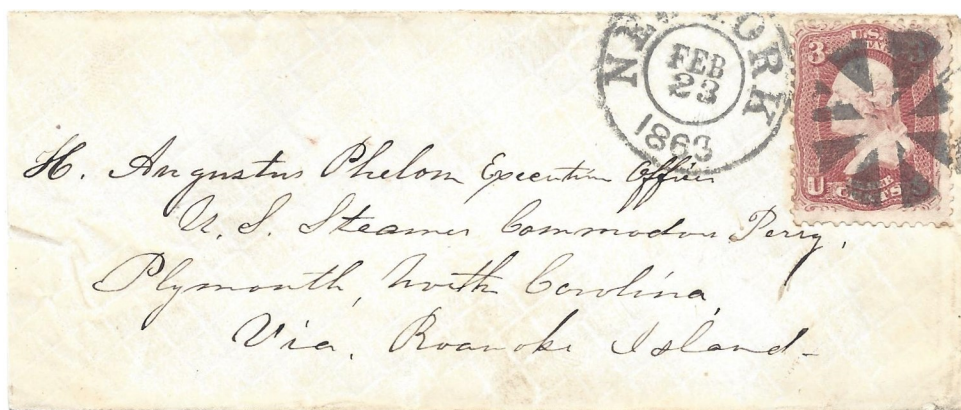
The initial 5¢ rating would apply had the cover been an incoming "ship letter" from a foreign origin.

***There are less than 5 known examples of the oval "U.S. SHIP/3 cts." handstamp.***



The U.S.S. *Commodore Hull* was originally a side-wheel ferryboat. She was purchased by the Navy in 1862, converted to a gunboat, and assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She served in the Carolina Sounds and was at the siege of Plymouth, NC.

Small lady's envelope addressed to "H. Augustus Phelan Executive Officer, U.S. Steamer *Commodore Perry*," at Plymouth, NC, with US 3¢ 1861 tied by circle of wedges cancel and "New-York/Feb 23, 1863" double-circle datestamp.



Like *Commodore Hull* above, *Commodore Perry* was a sidewheel ferryboat acquired by the Navy and refitted as a gunboat. She was commissioned in October 1861 and in January 1862 joined the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, where she took part, only a month later, in the capture of Roanoke Island, which was part of a long campaign through which the Navy secured key coastal ports. In October 1862, she participated in the failed Army-Navy attack on Franklin, VA. For service during this battle, four of her crewmen were awarded the Medal of Honor. Subsequently, she patrolled in Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds and connecting rivers, frequently exchanging fire with small detachments of Confederate troops ashore.

# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

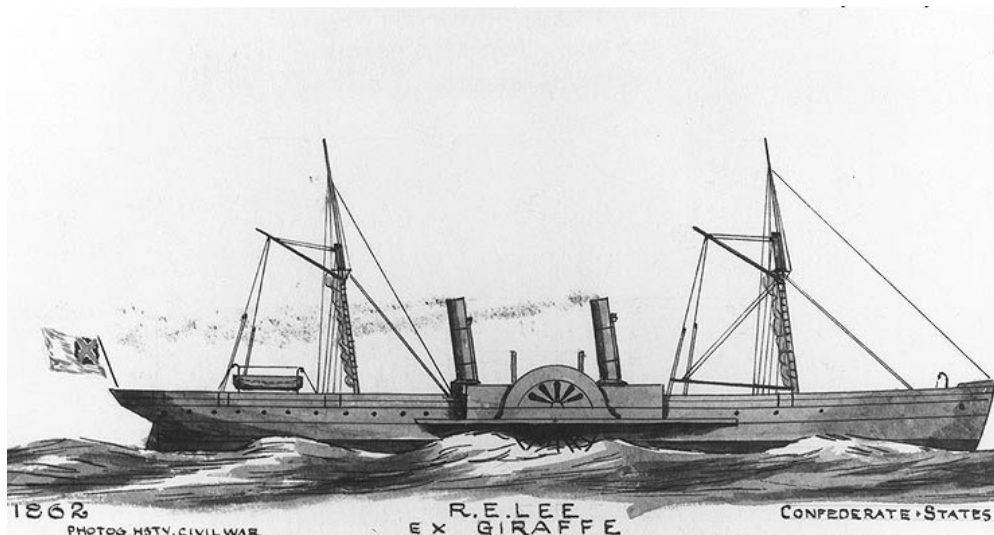
## U.S.S. *Fort Donelson*

The U.S.S. *Fort Donelson* was originally the British merchant steamer *Giraffe*, launched in May 1860 to serve as a blockade-runner. She was acquired by the Confederate Navy, renamed *Robert E. Lee*, and made her first voyage in January 1863 and established a near-legendary reputation as a blockade-runner, making 21 successful voyages in ten months. She was finally captured on her 22nd voyage in November 1863. She was then purchased by the Union Navy from a Boston Prize Court and, in June 1864, recommissioned U.S.S. *Fort Donelson*, joining the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron for the remainder of the war.



Cover addressed to "U.S.S. Fort Donelson, New Inlet off Fort Fisher, N.C.," with US 3¢ 1861 tied by cork cancel and postmarked with "Old Point Comfort, VA/Feb 23" (1865) double-circle datestamp, accompanied by original letter datelined "U.S.S. Newbern, Hampton Roads, 23 Feby 1865."

***Very scarce ship-to-ship letter.***



The C.S.S. *Robert E. Lee*, prior to its capture by the Union Navy and commissioning as U.S.S. *Fort Donelson*



# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

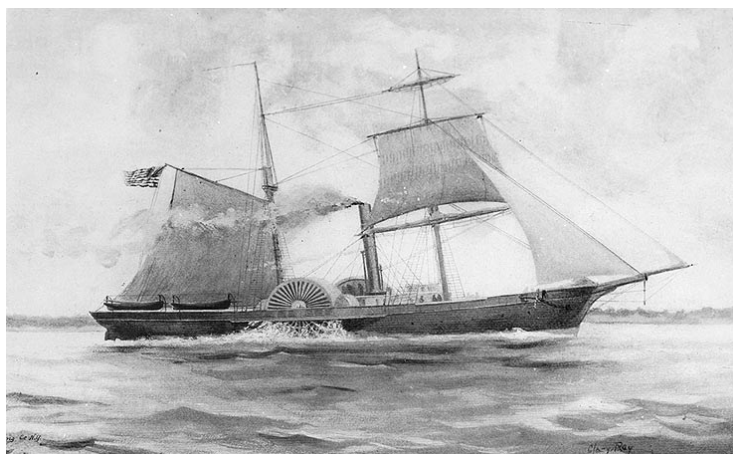
## U.S.S. *Harriet Lane*

The U.S.S. *Harriet Lane* was a converted side-wheel revenue cutter transferred to the Navy. With her complement of 100, she fired the first shot of the Naval War on 11 April 1861 off Charleston, South Carolina. She served as a mortar boat at New Orleans. On 1 January 1863, she was captured at Galveston Bay by the Confederacy, whereupon she was converted to mercantile service. Union forces recaptured her at the end of war.



Manuscript endorsement “From the U.S. Steamer *Harriet Lane*” on Lady Liberty and George Washington Shield patriotic cover with “The War for the Union” slogan (Weiss E-L 277), postmarked with “U.S. Ship/3 cts.” in circle handstamp (Milgram SH-15) to Philadelphia, PA.

There are less than 100 known covers bearing the circular “U.S. SHIP/3cts.” handstamp.

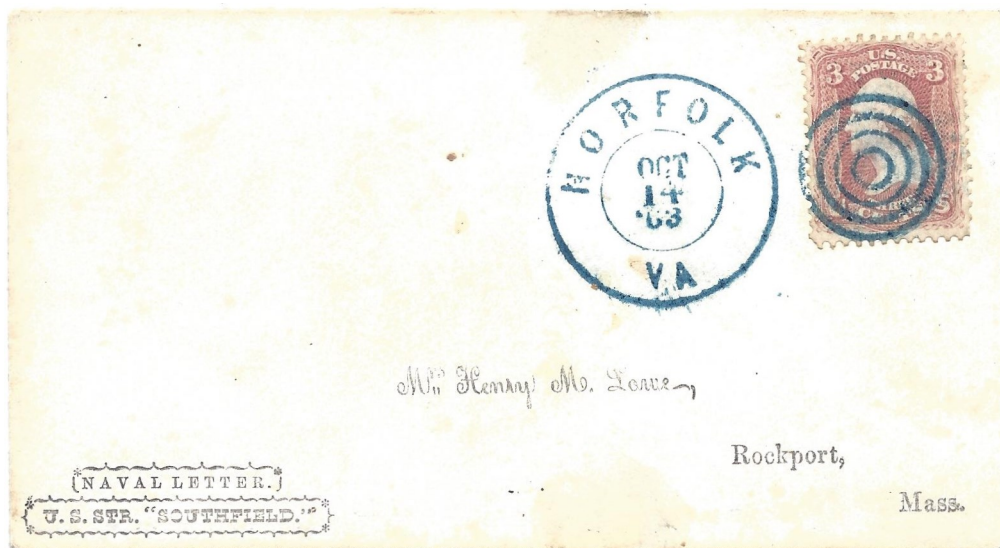


The U.S.S. *Harriet Lane*, ca. 1862

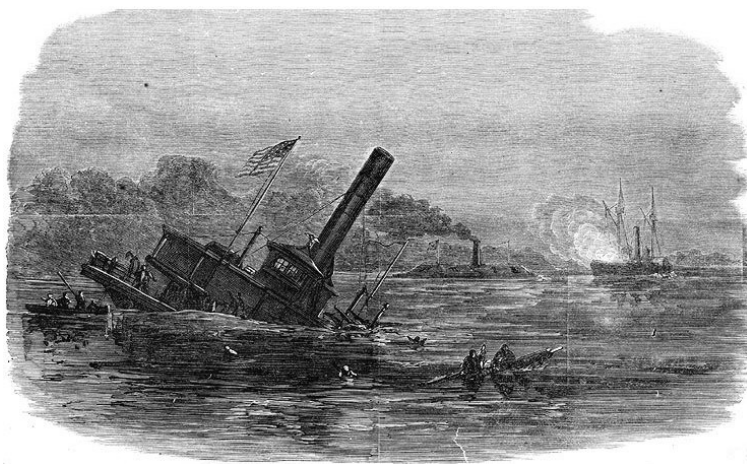
# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. *Southfield*

The U.S.S. *Southfield*, with a complement of 61, was a converted ferry purchased in 1861. She operated in the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds with the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She participated in the Battle of Roanoke Island in early 1862 and briefly served as Admiral Goldsborough's flag ship on February 6 as he directed the attack on Confederate defenses until Fort Bartow fell to the Union on 8 February. She participated in the Peninsula Campaign in June 1862, the Battle of Washington NC in March 1863, and the Battle of Plymouth in April 1864, where she was sunk by the C.S.S. *Albemarle*.



From the U.S.S. *Southfield*, cover with small printed endorsement "NAVAL LETTER, U. S. STR. 'SOUTHFIELD'" (Milgram 1291) and pre-printed address to "Mr. Henry M. Lowe, Rockport, Mass." with US 3¢ 1861 tied by blue "Norfolk, VA/Oct 14, 1863" double-circle datestamp.



U.S.S. *Southfield*, sinking after a battle with C.S.S. *Albemarle*

## U.S.S. *Southfield* at the Battle of Plymouth

In April 1864, intelligence indicated that the rebel ironclad ram, C.S.S. *Albemarle*, planned to descend the Roanoke River and attack Union warships. On 17 April, Confederate ground forces attacked Plymouth and, in anticipation of *Albemarle*'s arrival, U.S.S. *Southfield* and U.S.S. *Miami* were lashed together for mutual protection and firepower concentration. On 19 April, *Albemarle* arrived and *Miami* and *Southfield* steamed toward her. The three ships collided, with *Albemarle* scraping across *Miami*'s bow and smashing through *Southfield*'s starboard side and piercing her boiler. *Albemarle* remained entangled with *Southfield*, took on considerable water and was temporarily unable to fire her guns at the escaping *Miami*, which was able to cut loose and quickly steam away. *Albemarle* eventually pulled free from the wreck by backing her engines but, in sinking, *Southfield* was able to save her consort.

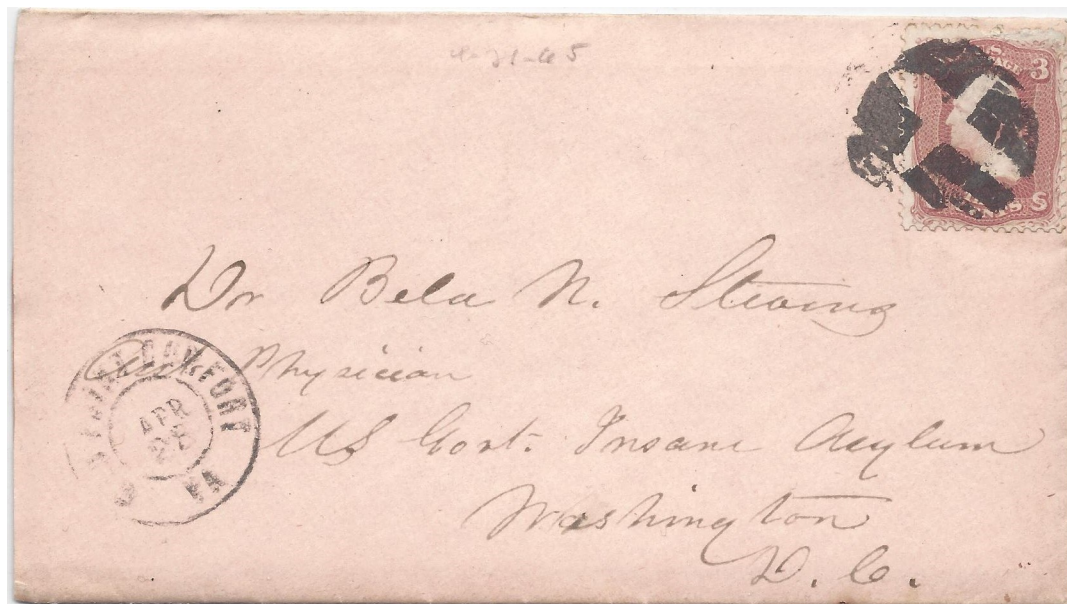


# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## James River Flotilla

## U.S.S. *Onondaga*/U.S.S. *Mahopac*

The James River Flotilla was a division of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron that operated on the James River, which was arguably as important as the Mississippi to the Confederacy. Using the James River and Kanawha Canal system, Confederate boats moved materials such as pig iron and coal from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and Piedmont regions to the capital in Richmond, which after the loss of Norfolk became the state's major port, naval base, and shipbuilding facility. South and east of Richmond the Flotilla saw significant combat, including actions between the Confederate and Union navies with the James River Flotilla being the Union's primary force.



From the U.S.S. *Onondaga*, with original letter datelined April 21, 1865, to a physician at the "US Govt. Insane Asylum, Washington D.C.," with US 3¢ 1861 tied by grid cancel and with matching "Old Point Comfort VA/April 28" double-circle datestamp.

U.S.S. *Onondaga*, an ironclad river monitor commissioned in 1864, spent her entire active career with the James River Flotilla covering the water approaches to the Confederate capital of Richmond, although her only notable engagement was the Battle of Trent's Reach in January 1865.

Cover addressed to "S.C. Van Tafsel Esq." aboard the U.S. Steamer *Mahopac* at Fortress Monroe, with US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by star handstamp with matching "Yonkers N.Y./Dec 9" (1864) double-circle datestamp.



U.S.S. *Mahopac*, an armored monitor, was commissioned 22 September 1864. She was assigned to the James River Flotilla of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She spent the majority of her service stationed on the James River and supported Union naval operations against Richmond and defended against sorties by the Confederate ironclads. She engaged Confederate artillery batteries and participated in both the first and second battles of Fort Fisher, defending the approaches to Wilmington, NC, in December 1864 through January 1865. *Mahopac* returned to the James River after the capture of Fort Fisher and remained there until Richmond fell to the Union in early April 1865.



# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## Potomac Flotilla

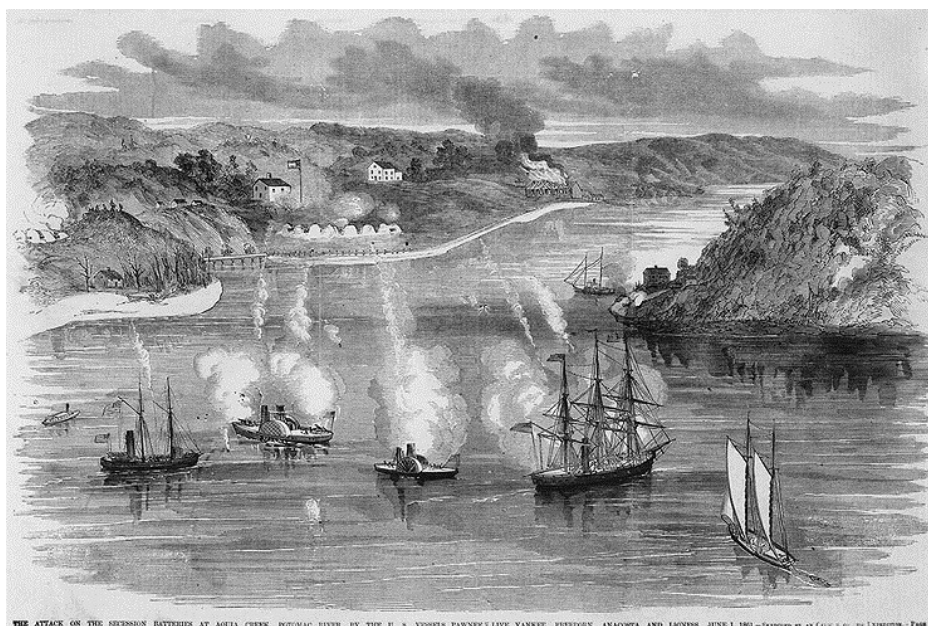
## U.S.S. *Currituck*

The Potomac Flotilla, or the Potomac Squadron, was a unit of the United States Navy and the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron created in the early days of the American Civil War to secure Union communications in the Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac River and their tributaries, and to disrupt Confederate communications and shipping in this area. The strength of the flotilla would be steadily increased until it hovered between fifteen and twenty-five vessels.



Cover addressed to "Mr. I. Cohen, Hospital Steward on the U.S.S. *Currituck*, [sic] Fort. Monroe, Old Point or Elsewhere" with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Washington DC/May 16, 1862" circular datestamp.

U.S.S. *Currituck* was a screw steamer launched in 1843 as the *Seneca*. She was purchased by the Navy in September 1861 and commissioned as the *Currituck* in February 1862. Her first assignment was to tow U.S.S. *Monitor* to Hampton Roads so that the revolutionary new ironclad could meet the threat of the Confederate ironclad, C.S.S. *Virginia* (formerly U.S.S. *Merrimack*). She spent the remainder of the war as part of the Potomac River Flotilla, convoying transports and hospital boats from Fredericksburg, VA, and also managing to take ten blockade-runners during the same period.



Attack on the Confederate Batteries at Aquia Creek by the Potomac Flotilla.



# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## Burnside's North Carolina Expedition

## 24th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment

The Burnside Expedition was a series of engagements fought along the North Carolina Coast between February and June 1862. The Expedition was part of General Scott's overall Anaconda Plan to close blockade-running ports inside the Outer Banks. The amphibious operation was carried out primarily by New England and North Carolina troops under Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, assisted by the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron under Captain Louis M. Goldsborough.



Adams Express Company/  
Burnside Expedition illustrated cover with four-horse caravan pulling a large wagon, to Bradford NH with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "New-York 1863" double-circle datestamp and segmented cork cancel.

"SOLDIERS  
LETTER/24th REGT.  
MASS. VOL./N.E.G."  
circular handstamp with  
"U.S. Ship 3 cts." in circle  
(Milgram SH-15) and  
"DUE 3" in circle  
handstamps to West  
Quincy MA.



It is unclear why this letter was marked "DUE 3" because it was properly certified as a soldier's letter and therefore would be due 3¢ as an unpaid letter from a soldier. The likelihood is that postmaster concluded it was overweight.

The 24th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment served with the Coast Division commanded by Maj. Gen. Burnside. In cooperation with the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, it participated in the amphibious assaults at the Battle of Roanoke Island and Battle of New Bern in February and March of 1862.

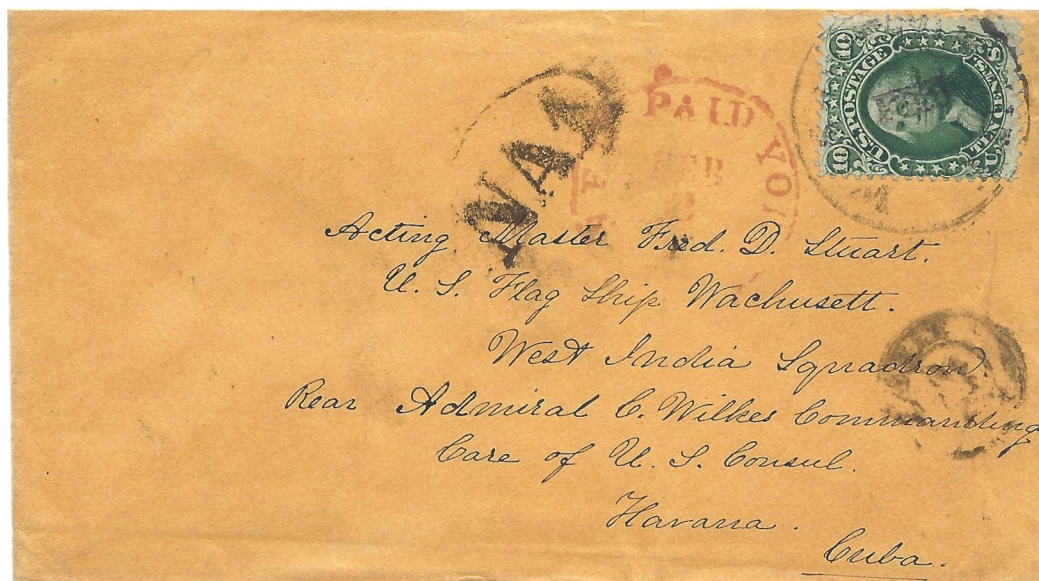


# NORTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. *Wachusett*

## West Indies "Flying Squadron"

U.S.S. *Wachusett*'s Navy service commenced on 10 March 1862 when the steam sloop-of-war was assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Outfitted as a gunboat, she arrived in Hampton Roads, Virginia, on 16 March and was deployed in the York and James Rivers, providing support to Major General George B. McClellan's Peninsular Campaign in the Spring of 1862. She remained in the York and James rivers through August and later served with the Potomac Flotilla as Commodore Charles Wilkes' flagship from 29 August to 7 September. On 8 September 1862, *Wachusett* was designated flagship of a special "Flying Squadron" of seven ships under Commodore Wilkes. This squadron was deployed in the West Indies with orders to search for the destructive and elusive Confederate commerce raiders C.S.S. *Alabama* and *Florida*. *Wachusett* captured several blockade runners over the following months and was returned to Boston for badly needed repairs. In late January 1864, she steamed for the Brazilian coast in pursuit of the Confederacy's "piratical cruisers," particularly *Alabama* and *Florida*. Many months passed tracking down fruitless leads as to the whereabouts of the two vessels. Finally, on 4 October, *Wachusett* sighted *Florida* entering the neutral Bahia Harbor, Brazil. On 7 October, under cover of early morning darkness in an illegal night attack, she steamed into the harbor with her complement of 123, rammed *Florida* on her starboard quarter, and after a brief exchange of cannon fire, was able to secure surrender and capture of the prize. *Wachusett* then towed *Florida* to sea and reached Hampton Roads, Virginia, on 11 November 1864.

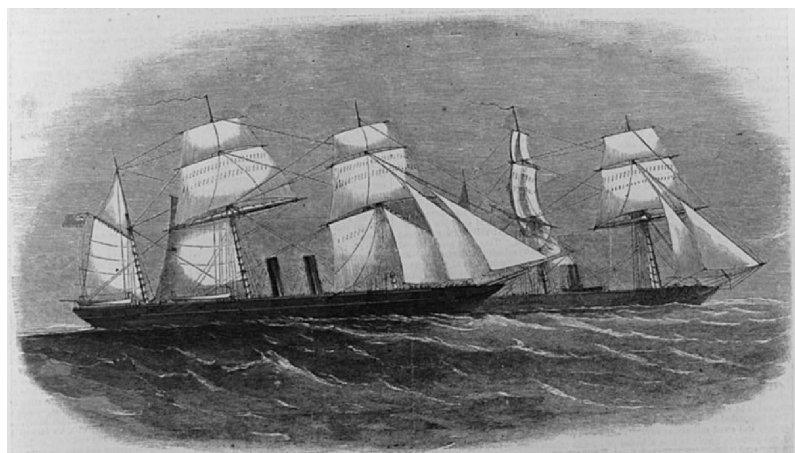


Cover addressed to "Acting Master Fred D. Stuart, U.S. Flag Ship *Wachusett*, West India Squadron, Rear Admiral C. Wilkes Commanding, Care of U.S. Consul, Havana, Cuba," US 10¢ 1861 (paying contract steamship rate) tied by town cancel with red "New York/Paid/Feb 2" (1863) circular datestamp and an oval "NA1" (1 real due) handstamp, backstamped Havana on February 10.

**Cover to U.S.S. *Wachusett* while serving as flagship of the West Indies Flying Squadron.**

U.S.S. *Wachusett* Commander Napoleon Collins was court martialed and convicted of violating the sovereign rights of Brazil due to his daring but illegal capture of C.S.S. *Florida* while moored in a neutral harbor. The verdict was set aside by US Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, and Collins eventually won fame and promotion.

*Florida* was one of the most successful Confederate raiders, capturing 37 prizes in her impressive career. Two of her prizes were absorbed into the Confederate States Navy as C.S.S. *Tacony* and C.S.S. *Clarence*, which in combination took 23 more prizes.



The capture of C.S.S. *Florida* by U.S.S. *Wachusett*, as illustrated in Harper's Weekly





## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

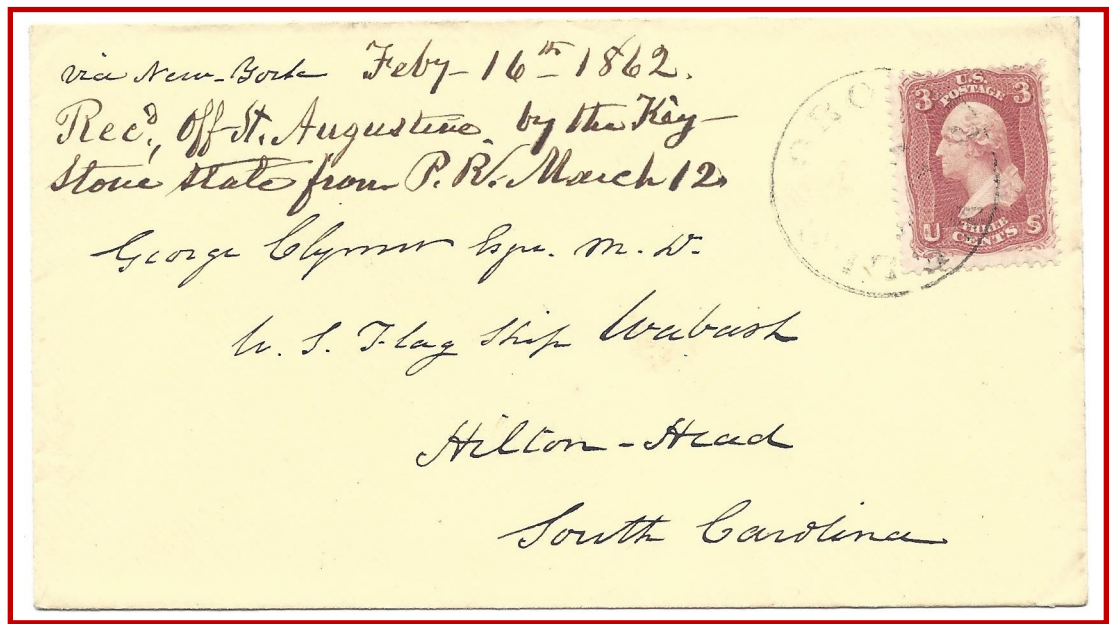
The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron was created when the Atlantic Blockading Squadron was split into two squadrons on 29 October 1861. It was primarily tasked with preventing Confederate ships from supplying troops and with supporting Union troops operating between Cape Henry in Virginia down to Key West in Florida. Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont initially assumed command, and was succeeded by Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren on 6 July 1863, who retained this position through 25 July 1865 when the North and South Squadrons were reunited at the conclusion of the War.

### U.S.S. *Wabash*

### Flagship of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron

The U.S.S. *Wabash* was a Colorado-class screw frigate and served as the flagship of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. *Wabash* was commanded by flag officer Samuel Francis Du Pont, who upon appointment led the largest fleet ever commanded by an American officer. *Wabash* spearheaded the assault on Port Royal and, in December 1864, she joined the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron for the two battles of Fort Fisher.

Cover addressed to  
"George Clymer Esqr.  
M.D., U.S. Flag Ship  
*Wabash*, Hilton-Head,  
South Carolina" with  
manuscript "via New  
York" and US 3¢ 1861  
tied by "Wellsboro,  
PA" (1862) circular  
datestamp. The cover is  
docketed "Recd. Off St.  
Augustine by the  
Keystone State from P.R.  
[Port Royal] March 12."



The cover is accompanied by the original 4½-page letter from William B. Shubrick Clymer, datelined Wellsboro, Feb 18, 1862, with the added half-sheet containing the following quote regarding Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy:

*"The only time I ever saw Jefferson Davis was in Ap. '46 in the Senate. You pointed him out to me. Crittenden called up a bill for cleaning obstructions at the mouth of Cumberland River." ... "Davis opposed the bill. Calhoun replied in favor of it. Davis answered & Calhoun rejoined. I thought Davis's Constitutional objections very frivolous. He seemed a dwarf in the hands of Calhoun. I have never thought much of Davis since."*

The well-known and extensive Clymer Correspondence documents the US Navy during the early and mid-nineteenth century, especially naval medicine, diplomacy, and rank. The bulk of the collection is housed in the Princeton University Library with very few examples being held in private hands.

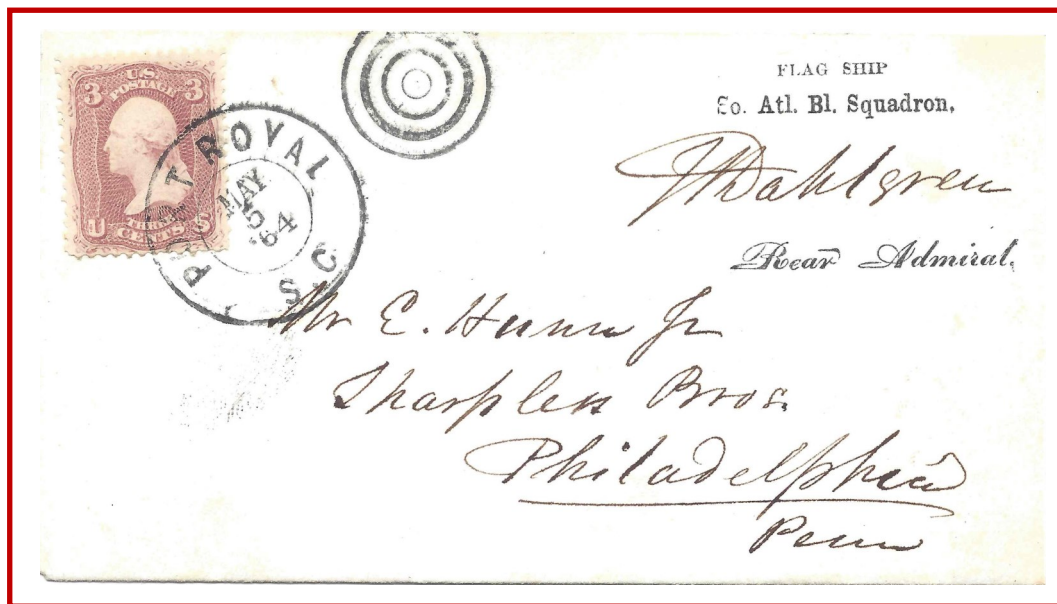
# SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

Rear Admiral Dahlgren

Flagship of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron

John A. Dahlgren, the “Father of American naval ordnance,” served as Commander of the Navy Yard at Washington, founded the ordnance department, and launched major advances in gunnery during the Civil War. Dahlgren devised a smoothbore howitzer, adaptable for many sizes of craft as well as shore installations. He then introduced a cast-iron muzzle-loading cannon with vastly increased range and accuracy, known as the Dahlgren gun, that became the Navy's standard armament.

In 1863, he succeeded Samuel du Pont and took command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron at the rank of Rear Admiral, and helped William Tecumseh Sherman secure Savannah, Georgia.

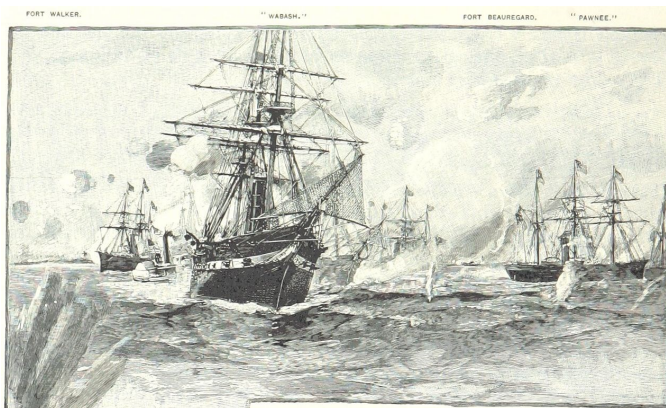


Cert.

“Flag Ship So. Atlantic Bl. Squadron, Rear Admiral” corner card cover to Philadelphia PA, US 3¢ 1861, entering the mails 5 May 1864 at Port Royal SC, signed by Admiral John A. Dahlgren.



Rear Admiral Dahlgren beside a 50-pounder Dahlgren, muzzle-loading cannon.



U.S.S. *Wabash*, in the foreground, with the Union fleet at Port Royal. She served as the initial flagship of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, later succeeded by U.S.S. *Philadelphia*.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

### U.S.S. *Philadelphia*

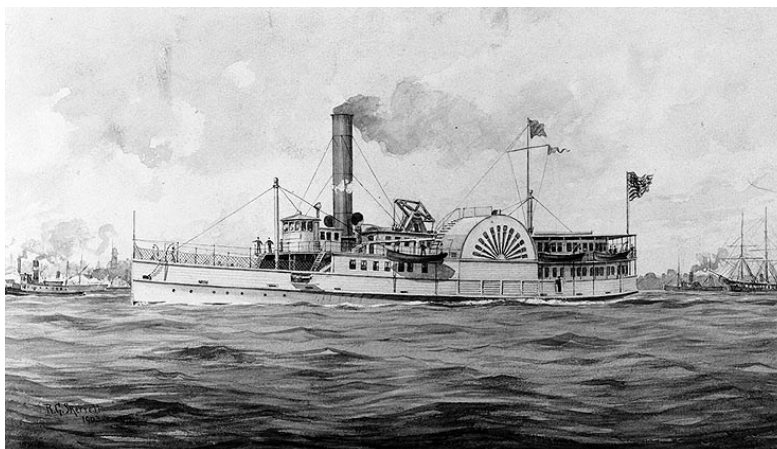
### Flagship of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron

U.S.S. *Philadelphia*, a side-wheel steamer, was a trading vessel with a complement of only 24 operating on the Upper Potomac until seized at the outbreak of the War and outfitted as a Naval ship. She operated on the Potomac River as a supply ship, ordinance transport ship and troop transport until transferred to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She was then transferred to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron where she served as its flagship under Rear Admiral Dahlgren from August 1863 through 1865. In 1863, she participated in the operations against Charleston.



From U.S.S. *Philadelphia*, with original four-page letter datelined "U.S. Ship Philadelphia, Sep 3" and signed "W.A. Wilson, U.S. Flag Steamer Philadelphia, Port Royal, S.C.," addressed to New York with US 3c 1861 cancelled by circular grid with matching "Phila. Pa./Sep 16, 1864" circular datestamp and straightline "U.S. SHIP" handstamp (Milgram SH-11).

In the letter, Wilson discusses promotional opportunity, pay and notes that Beaufort, S.C. is "the prettiest and nicest city I ever was in" but that the handsome houses and hotels are all deserted and "there is nobody there but (racist slur) and soldiers."



U.S.S. *Philadelphia* was operating as a trading vessel between Aquia Creek, Virginia and Washington, D.C. at the outbreak of the Civil War. Seized on 21 April 1861, in accordance with a Presidential order, she was ordered to the Washington Navy Yard, where she was fitted for naval service. She served as flagship of both the North and South Atlantic Blockading Squadrons. The cover presented here was posted while serving the southern squadron.

# SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

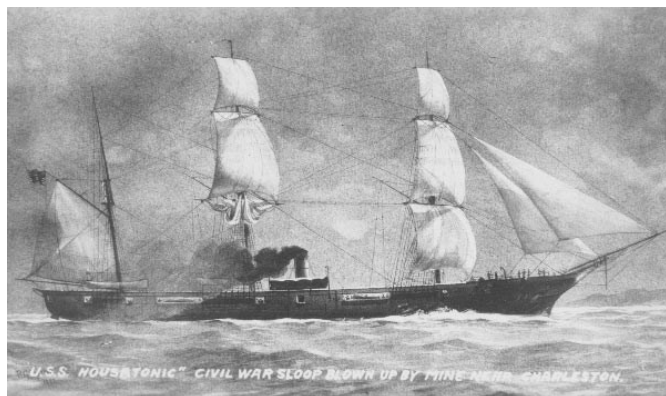
U.S.S. *Housatonic*

First Ship Sunk by Submarine

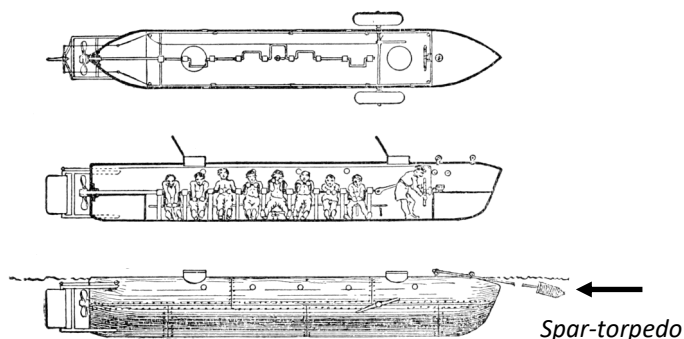
Printed "U.S.S. *Housatonic*" ship endorsement with US 3¢ 1861 pair tied by target cancel and "New-York/7 Oct." double-circle datestamp to Mrs. Mary E. Congdon at Williamsburg, Long Island.



The U.S.S. *Housatonic* was a wooden-hull, steam and sail powered screw sloop-of-war built for the US Navy in November 1861. Built at the Boston Navy Yard, she was commissioned on 29 August 1862 and sailed for Charleston, SC, arriving 19 September to join the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Over the following two years, *Housatonic* was credited with capturing or destroying several Confederate blockade runners, including the *Georgianna*, which was a major loss for the South. She also participated in shoreline bombardment and the landing of Union troops for raids on the outer defenses of Charleston. On 17 February 1864, she was sunk by a spar-torpedo launched by the Confederate submarine *H.L. Hunley*, marking history's first successful attack of a warship by submarine.



The U.S.S. *Housatonic*



Drawing of the *H.L. Hunley*

A spar-torpedo is a bomb placed at the end of a long pole, or spar, and attached to a boat. The weapon is deployed by ramming the spar into the enemy ship, at which time it either detonates automatically or can be lit by fuse. The *Hunley*, apparently wounded by its own weapon, did not survive the blast on the *Housatonic* and all eight members of the crew perished. Two officers and three men died on the *Housatonic*.



# SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. *Housatonic*

Two U.S.S. *Housatonic* covers from the Congdon correspondence, each franked with a US 3¢ 1861 pair with manuscript ship endorsement.



Stamps tied by "Philadelphia Pa./Aug 3, 1863" circular datestamp with matching "U.S. SHIP" straightline handstamp to Mrs. Joseph W. Congdon at Wickford RI.

Cert.

Stamps tied by segmented cork cancel, "Old Point Comfort Va. Feb. 17" (1864) double-circle datestamp, used the day the ship was sunk.



Manuscript "U.S.S. Canandaigua" endorsement, "Phila Pa. Sep. 17, 1864" duplex datestamp with "U.S. SHIP" handstamp, mailed by a survivor of the *Housatonic* sinking who was picked up by the *Canandaigua*.

Commencing in 1862, the "U.S. SHIP" straightline handstamp (Milgram SH-11) was used on ship mail during the Civil War at Philadelphia. It is normally found on covers prepaid with stamps and is rare on stampless covers, an example of which is presented in the prior chapter. It is believed that only Philadelphia used this straightline marking during the War and there are less than 100 known examples.



# SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *St. Louis*

U.S.S. *St. Lawrence*



“Naval Letter W.F. Stewart, 1st Lieut. USS *St. Louis*” manuscript endorsement on cover to Clyde NY with red “Boston Mass/Mar 15” (ca. 1862) double-circle datestamp, black “SHIP” and “Due 6 cts.” straightline handstamps.

Letter marked “Due 6 cts.” because it was sent unpaid by a commissioned officer.

In January 1861, *St. Louis* was ordered to Pensacola to stand guard during the turmoil that preceded the outbreak of the War. Following commencement of hostilities, she joined the massive blockade of southern ports. On 24 February 1862 she sailed for Cadiz, Spain and for the next two years criss-crossed the Atlantic and cruised the African coast, patrolling the areas around the Canary Islands and the Azores in search of Confederate commerce raiders. She returned to Port Royal, SC, on 26 November 1864 for service in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



“U.S. Ship ‘*St. Lawrence*’ Ship Letter” manuscript endorsement on cover to Dorchester County MD with “U.S. SHIP/3 cts.” (Milgram SH-15) circular handstamp.

U.S.S. *St. Lawrence* was initially assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and participated in the Battle of Hampton Rhodes on 8 March 1862. Subsequently, she served in the Potomac River to protect the Union capital from attack by sea, and was later assigned to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, arriving at Key West on 23 April 1862. She was appointed flag ship and served in this capacity until decommissioned on 7 May 1863 due to an outbreak of Yellow Fever. She was recommissioned on 5 August and assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

The “U.S. SHIP/3 cts.” circular handstamp and similar markings were used throughout the War on covers posted by Union Army or Navy units occupying points along the Confederate coastline and the key inland waterways. These letters were brought into Northern ports by Union military despatch steamers. The purpose of the markings was to indicate that the 2¢ ship letter fee was not due and to enable military personnel to send letters unpaid without penalty at a time when all mail was required to be prepaid.

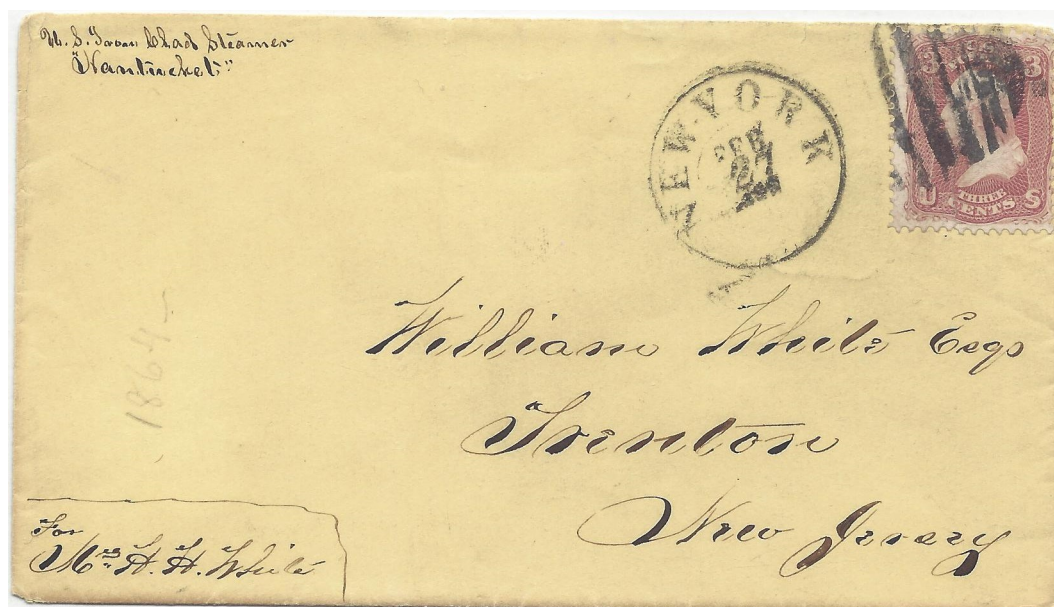


## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

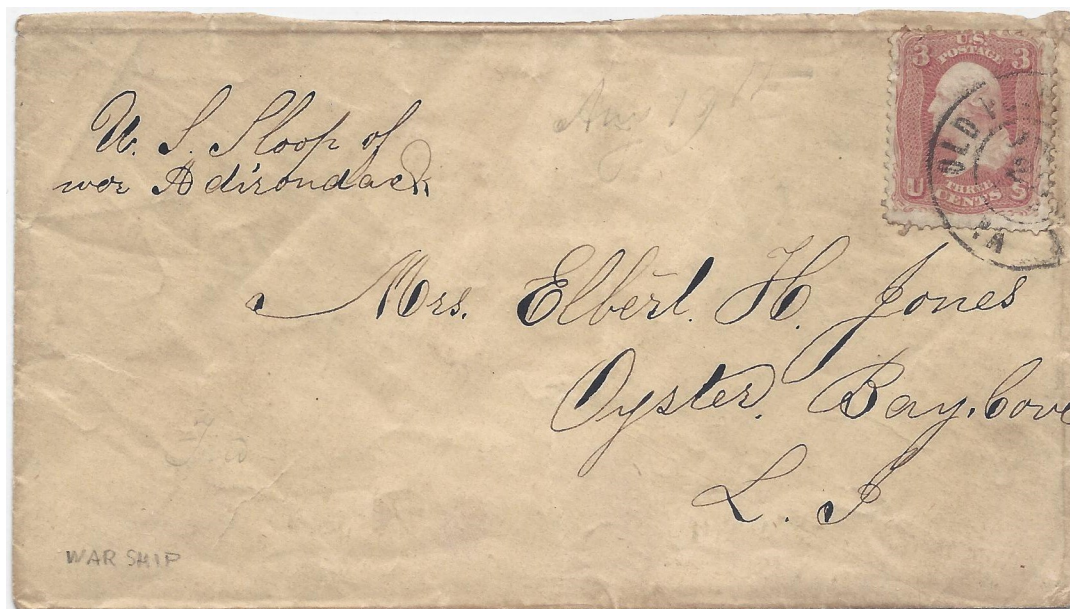
U.S.S. *Nantucket*

U.S.S. *Adirondack*

“U.S. Iron Clad Steamer  
Nantucket” manuscript  
endorsement on cover to  
Trenton NJ, with US 3¢  
1861 tied by grid with  
matching “New York/  
Feb 27, 1864” circular  
datestamp. Accompanied  
by original letter  
datelined Port Royal SC,  
Feb 27, 1864.



U.S.S. *Nantucket*, a 1335-ton Passaic-class monitor, was built at Boston, MA, and commissioned in February 1863. Initially sent to join the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in the waters off Georgia and South Carolina, on 7 April 1863 she took part in a major naval attack on Fort Sumter. She was hit 51 times by Confederate gunfire in this effort, which both failed to silence the fort and demonstrated the limitations of monitor-type ironclads.



“U.S. Sloop of War  
Adirondack”  
manuscript  
endorsement on cover  
to Oyster Bay Cove NY,  
with US 3¢ 1861 tied  
by “Old Point Comfort  
VA” double-circle  
datestamp.

**A rare cover, *Adirondack* being in service for less than two months from her Commissioning on June 30, to her loss on August 23.**

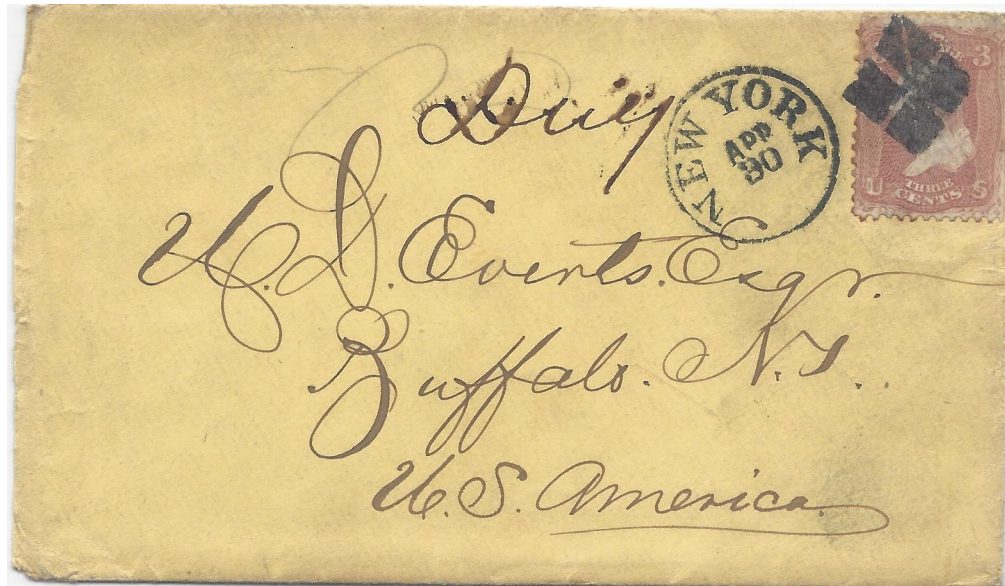
U.S.S. *Adirondack*, a screw-sloop of war, was built at the New York Navy Yard and commissioned in June 1862. With a complement of 160, she was originally slated for duty in the West Gulf Blockading Squadron but ordered to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron where she served until 23 August, when she struck a reef off the northeast point of Man-O-War Cay of the Little Bahama Bank group. The shock immediately disabled her engine, and daylong efforts by the ship's crew, with the aid of local wreckers, proved futile and she was eventually lost without any casualties.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Bienville*

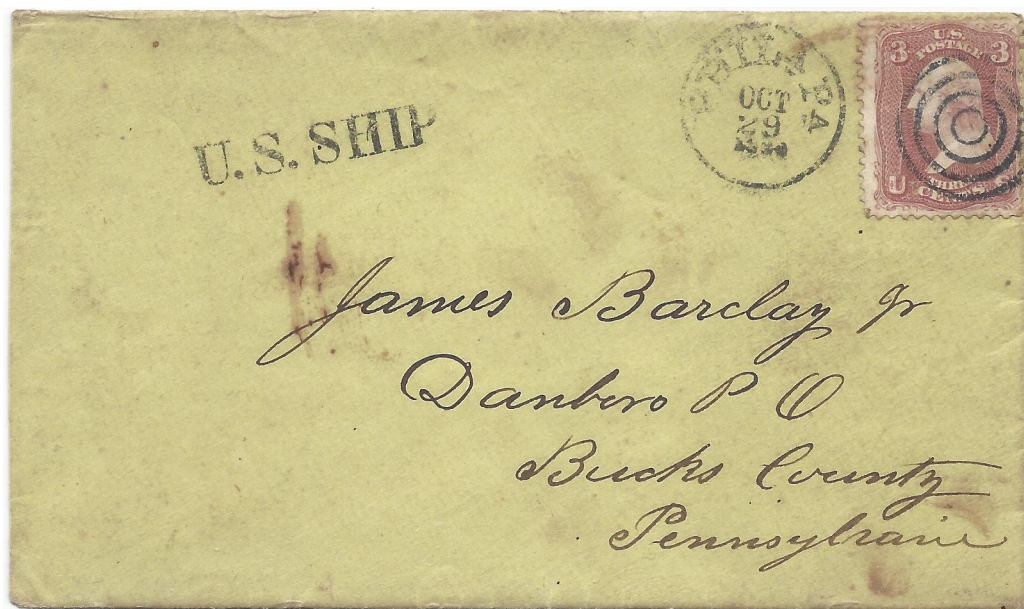
U.S.S. *Catskill*



From the U.S.S. *Bienville*, with original letter datelined April 23, 1866, to Buffalo NY with US 3¢ 1861 tied by segmented grid cancel with matching "New York/Apr 30" circular datestamp.

U.S.S. *Bienville*, a side-wheel steamer, was built in 1860 in New York and commissioned in October 1861. She was initially assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and participated in the capture of Port Royal, SC, on 7 November 1861. During 1863 -1865 she served in the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864.

From the U.S.S. *Catskill*, with original letter datelined October 24, 1864, to Danboro PA with US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by target with matching "Phila Pa/Oct 29, 1864" circular datestamp and "U.S. SHIP" straightline handstamp (Milgram SH-11).



U.S.S. *Catskill*, a single-turreted monitor, was built in New York and commissioned in February 1863. She initially reported for duty off Port Royal, SC, and operated on the blockade off Charleston for the majority of the War.



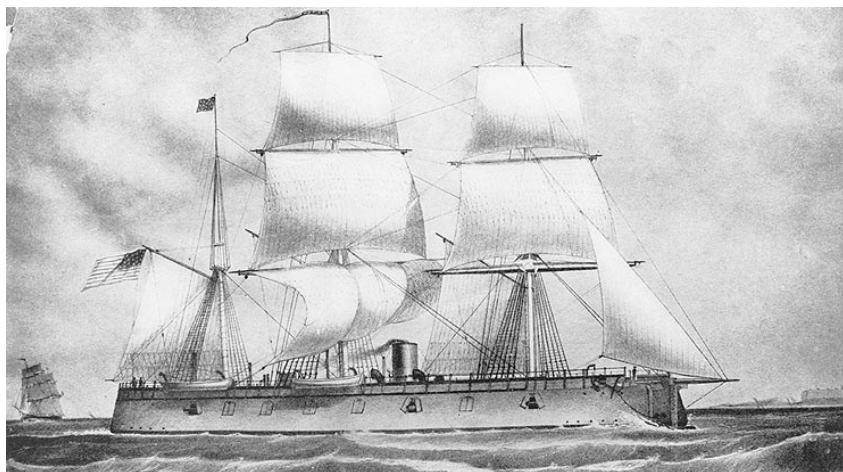
## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

### U.S.S. *New Ironsides*

U.S.S. *New Ironsides*, a wooden-hulled broadside ironclad, was commissioned 21 August 1862. She was assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and spent most of her service blockading the Confederate ports of Charleston, SC, and Wilmington, NC, in 1863 through 1865. *New Ironsides* bombarded the fortifications defending Charleston in 1863 during the First and Second Battles of Charleston Harbor. At the end of 1864 and the beginning of 1865 she bombarded the defenses of Wilmington in the First and Second Battles of Fort Fisher, where eight crewmen were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions. Although she was struck many times by Confederate shells, gunfire never significantly damaged the ship or injured the crew. Her only casualty in combat occurred when she was struck by a spar torpedo carried by the C.S.S. *David*. The attack was successful, but the damage was minor, and only one man later died of his wounds. The ship was destroyed by fire in 1865 after she was placed in reserve.



Cover addressed to "John B. Osborne" aboard the U.S.S. *New Ironsides* off Charleston S.C. with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with matching "Lynn Mass./Marc 22" circular datestamp.



U.S.S. *New Ironsides*.

An ironclad is a steam-propelled warship protected by iron or steel armor plates. Construction commenced in 1859 and these ships were very successful during the Civil War. The ironclad was developed as a result of the vulnerability of wooden warships to explosive or incendiary shells. The first clash between ironclads occurred at the Battle of Hampton Roads where the U.S.S. *Monitor* and C.S.S. *Virginia* fought for two days from March 8 – 9, 1862.

## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Isaac Smith*

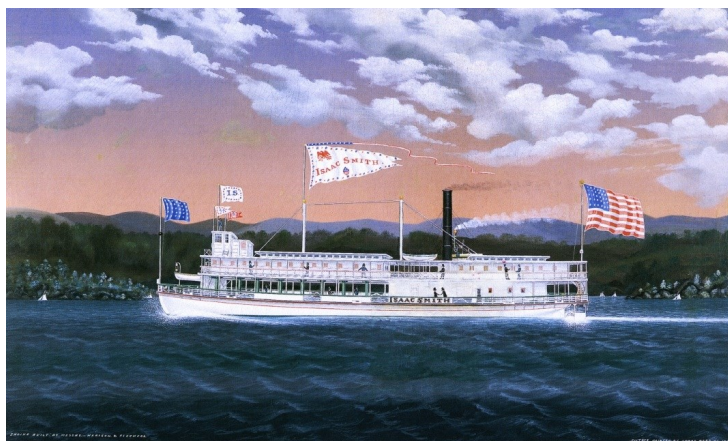
Confederate Navy

Pair of 5¢ Richmond Typograph tied on cover by "Richmond Va./Apr, 1862" circular datestamp and addressed to "Asst. Surgeon C. H. Morfit, C.S. Steamer *Stono*, C.S.N., Charleston S.C.", docketed "Recd Apl 21st 1863, E. Am".



Cert.

The Confederate Steamer *Stono*, formerly the U.S.S. *Isaac Smith*, was a screw steamer assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in the Fall of 1862. She was then assigned to operate in the Stono River, South Carolina. While on a reconnaissance mission on that river on 30 January 1863, she was caught by enemy shore batteries led by Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard and badly battered. With eight of her crew killed and 25 total casualties, the *Isaac Smith* surrendered, marking the only instance in the War in which a ship was captured solely by ground forces. She was subsequently taken into Confederate Navy service under the name C.S.S. *Stono*. On 5 June 1863, she was wrecked on the breakwaters near Fort Moultrie, SC while attempting to run the Charleston blockade.



The *Isaac Smith* in commercial service prior to removal of her upper deck and refitting for military duty.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

### U.S.S. *Acacia*

U.S.S. *Acacia* was a steam tugboat launched as the *Vicksburg* in September of 1863, then purchased by the Navy and commissioned as U.S.S. *Acacia* on 28 October of the same year. She served as part of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron for the remainder of the war, spending most of her time near Breach Inlet outside Charleston. Her greatest success was the capture of the *Julia*, an iron-hulled blockade-runner built in Scotland that had grounded and abandoned off Cape Romain, South Carolina.

From the U.S.S. *Acacia* to  
Terryville, CT, with  
manuscript endorsement  
"U.S.S. 'Acacia,' Off  
Charleston, S.C., 2-28-'65,"  
with US 3¢ 1861 tied by  
straightline "U.S. SHIP"  
handstamp with matching  
"Philadelphia, Pa./Mar 7,  
1865" circular datestamp  
and matching "DUE 6"  
straightline handstamp.



This letter must have been over half an ounce and therefore underpaid by 3¢, resulting in a double amount due.



Patriotic cover with red and blue flag and "Long May it Wave" slogan (Weiss 2975) addressed to "Dr. Lucian M. Rice" aboard the U.S.S. *Acacia* (sender of the cover presented above) off Charleston, with US 3¢ 1861 tied by six-pointed star in circle cancel with matching "Bristol, Con./Aug. 8, 1864" double-circle datestamp.

The covers presented here were sent to and from the U.S.S. *Acacia*'s surgeon, Dr. Lucian M. Rice.

## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Azalea*

U.S.S. *Mingoe*



From the U.S.S. *Azalea* to Wenham, MA, with manuscript endorsement "From U.S.S. Str. *Azalea*, Aug. 29th 1864," with US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by target with matching "Phila. Aug 26" circular datestamp and straightline "U.S. SHIP" handstamp.

U.S.S. *Azalea* was a steam tugboat purchased and armed in 1864 by the Navy. She served in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and, on 8 July 1864, along with the *Sweet Brier*, she captured the schooner *Pocahontas* with a cargo of cotton and tobacco. She received a 50 percent share of the prize money.



From the U.S.S. *Mingoe* with manuscript endorsement, to Williamsburgh in Long Island, NY, with US 3¢ 1861 tied by four-point star-in-circle cancel of new York City.

U.S.S. *Mingoe* was a double-ended, side-wheel, ironclad gunboat with a complement of 137. She joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron on 13 August 1864. Commissioned less than one year, she served blockade duty off Charleston and on the St. John's River. With her heavy guns and a very fast speed of 13 miles per hour, she was initially intended by the Union Navy for use as a bombardment gunboat, but she also served as an interceptor gunboat stationed off Confederate waterways to prevent their trading with foreign countries. In February 1865, she assisted William Tecumseh Sherman's Army in its advance up the James River.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Geranium*

U.S.S. *Sweet Brier*

Cover addressed to  
"George E. Norris, Act.  
3rd Asst. Engineer, U.S.  
Str. *Geranium*, Port  
Royal," with US 3¢ 1861  
tied by circular grid can-  
cel with matching  
"Chelsea, Mass./Mar  
10" circular datestamp.



U.S.S. *Geranium* was a converted tug gunboat with a complement of 39 to 45. She was commissioned in 1863 and joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She served as a picket, dispatch and light supply ship. She participated in operations on Bull's Bay and diversionary amphibious operations that hastened the evacuation of Charleston.



Cover addressed to "Mr.  
Martin V. B. Darling,  
Act. 2nd Asst Engineer,  
U.S.S. *Sweet Brier*, Port  
Royal, S.C." with US 3¢  
1861 tied by segmented  
grid with red  
"Providence, R.I./May  
30, 1864" double-circle  
datestamp.

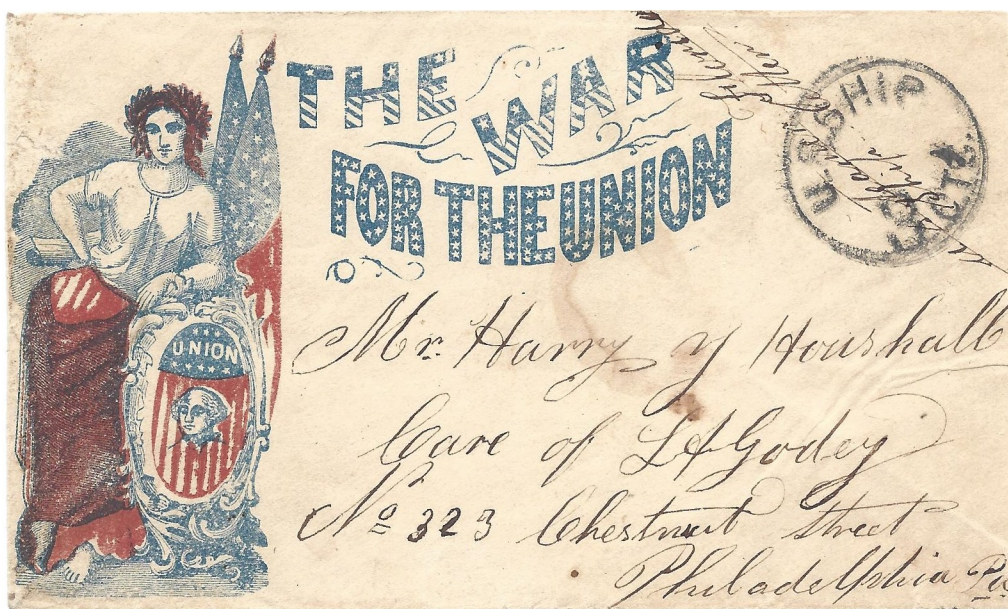
U.S.S. *Sweet Brier* was a screw tugboat with a complement of 37. She served in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron from her commissioning in 1864 until July 1865, primarily operating off Charleston, South Carolina. On 8 July, she captured blockade running schooner *Pocahontas* off Charleston laden with cotton. Due to her short service and small size, surviving covers from *Sweet Brier* are scarce.



## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Florida*

U.S.S. *Lodona*



From the U.S.S. *Florida*, Lady Liberty & George Washington Shield patriotic cover with "The War for the Union" (Weiss FP-GW 129, verse 2386), manuscript endorsement "U.S. Steamer Florida, Ship Letter" handstamped "U.S. SHIP/3cts." (Milgram SH-15) and sent to Philadelphia.

U.S.S. *Florida* was a side-wheel steamer acquired by the Navy in October 1861 and converted to a cruiser. She was assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and participated in the operations that took Port Royal and positions in northern Florida and Georgia. She was later assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, where she was successful in the capture or destruction of several blockade-runners.



From the U.S.S. *Lodona*, to Williamsburgh in Long Island, NY, with pair US 3¢ 1861 tied by "New-York/Oct 9" double-circle duplex cancels.

U.S.S. *Lodona* was a British screw steamer captured by the Navy while attempting to run the Union blockade in August 1862. She was acquired by the Navy the next month and commissioned in January 1863, joining the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



# SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. *Mercedita*

The U.S.S. *Mercedita* was a screw steamer gunboat commissioned 8 December 1861. Over the next four years, she served in numerous capacities, initially joining the Gulf Blockading Squadron where she destroyed Confederate batteries at St. Vincent Island, FL, and worked with U.S.S. *Sagamore* to capture *Apalachicola*. She then captured blockade runner *Bermuda*, a large and valuable ship, and schooners *Victoria* and *Ida*. In September 1862, she transferred to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and served on the blockade of Charleston until the end of January 1863. In April of that year she joined the West Indies Squadron to escort California steamers and later joined the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron operating in Beaufort, NC, for the remainder of 1864. She joined the West Gulf Squadron in March of 1865 and was then decommissioned and sold in late 1865. The cover presented below was posted on 15 December 1862 while she served in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



From U.S.S. *Mercedita* to Boston, MA, with manuscript “Due 3” and “New-York/Dec 15, 1862” double-circle datestamp. The “Due 3” marking indicates that this unpaid letter was treated as sent by a private or non-commissioned officer despite the absence of written certification as a soldier’s letter by a commissioned officer.

This illustrated cover with printed endorsement “Ship’s Letter, U.S.S. *Mercedita*” and a three-color Patriotic illustration of *Mercedita* flying the Colors and a “*Mercedita*” pennant, is one of three different styles of printed covers from *Mercedita* (reference Chronicle article, February 1989, by Richard Graham).

In addition to the patriotic nature and use of this cover as wartime propaganda, the printed legend served to facilitate to the ability of soldiers and marines to send mails collect, which was permitted by the Congressional Act of 21 January 1862. An announcement was made on 8 February 1862 that such letters had to bear the signature of the commanding officer or lieutenant of the ship and the legend “Naval Letter.” The *Mercedita* designs, which read “SHIP’S LETTER,” were likely printed before the announcement was widely distributed. Most known examples are from the early portion of the conflict.

## SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON

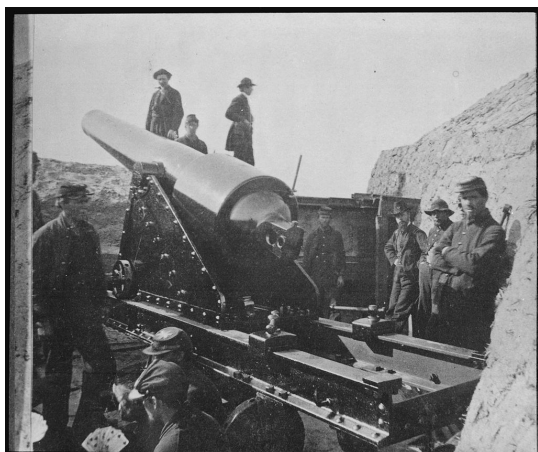
### U.S.S. *Flag*

U.S.S. *Flag* was a screw steamship purchased on 26 April 1861 at Philadelphia as *Phineas Sprague*. Following conversion to a heavily armed warship, she was renamed and commissioned on 28 May 1861. *Flag* reported for duty in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron at Charleston, South Carolina on 6 June 1861. Aside from periods in the North for repairs, she patrolled the coastal waters of the Carolinas until early 1865. *Flag* captured or shared in the capture of many blockade runners. On 24 November 1861, she joined *Seneca* and *Pocahontas* in taking possession of Tybee Island, evacuated previously by the rebels. Several days later, she drove several southern ships back into Fort Pulaski, from which they were attempting to sail. She participated in the capture of Fernandina, Florida in March 1862, and in the general engagement of the fleet with the forts in Charleston Harbor on 7 April 1863.



Cover addressed to “Mr. H.S. Robinson, asst. Engineer, U.S. Steamer *Flag*,” at Baltimore, MD, US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by circular grid with twin strikes “Clinton, Ms./May 13, 1862” circular datestamp.

When first armed, U.S.S. *Flag* had six 200-pounder Parrott rifles, and in 1863 she was re-armed with one 300-pounder, four 200-pounder, and two 30-pounder Parrott rifles.



A 200-pound Parrott rifle on Morris Island, South Carolina, 1865

The Parrott rifle was a muzzle-loading artillery weapon used extensively in the American Civil War. It was invented by Captain Robert Parrott, a West Point graduate, inventor and soldier, in 1860. Parrott rifles were manufactured in different sizes, with the smallest being a 10-pounder and the largest being a 300-pounder. These guns were extremely heavy, with the barrel alone of a 20-pounder weighing over 1,800 pounds. The larger guns had long range and were highly accurate, with a 100-pound Navy version of the Parrott achieving a range of 6,900 yards at an elevation of 25 degrees. The same gun could fire an 80-pound shell 7,810 yards at 30 degrees elevation. The largest Parrott rifles (100-pounder and up) were deployed on both ships and in coastal defense.





## EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

The Gulf Blockading Squadron was formed to patrol the waters from Key West to the Mexican border. The squadron was the largest in operation and was split into the East and West Gulf Blockading Squadrons in early 1862. The East Gulf Squadron was a relatively minor command and was assigned the Florida coast from east of Pensacola to Cape Canaveral. It was headquartered in Key West.

U.S.S. *St. Lawrence*

Flagship of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron



Cover addressed to "Fleet Surgeon Harner on board the U.S. Ship *St. Lawrence*, Key West Florida," with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Philadelphia, Pa./Mar 10, 1865" circular datestamp.



Destruction of the blockade runner *Petrel* by the U.S.S. *St. Lawrence*

On 28 June 1861, a lookout on *St. Lawrence* spotted a schooner flying British colors. A chase ensued and, approximately four hours later, as *St. Lawrence* was overtaking its target, the fleeing vessel ran up the Confederate flag and fired three shots. One passed through *St. Lawrence*'s mainsail and yard. *St. Lawrence* answered and hit the vessel twice, once in her bow. Survivors of the ship, which sank half an hour later, revealed she had been the Confederate privateer, *Petrel*, of Charleston, South Carolina. Boats from *St. Lawrence* rescued all but two of *Petrel*'s 38 crewmen and sent them north as prisoners in the steamer USS *Flag*.

U.S.S. *St. Lawrence* served with the Atlantic and South Atlantic Blockading Squadrons before joining the North Atlantic Blockading Squadrons where, while grounded, she was one of the ships to engage the ironclad C.S.S. *Virginia* at Hampton Roads on March 9. Her weapons were no match for *Virginia*'s armor and she was holed just above the waterline. *Virginia* retired for the day with the intent of destroying *St. Lawrence* in the morning, enabling her escape. In July 1862, she became the flagship of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron where she patrolled off the coast of Florida looking for blockade-runners operating between Cuba and the Gulf Coast. She continued in this capacity until an outbreak of Yellow Fever caused her to return north. In 1863, she was refit as an ordinance ship assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



## EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Ethan Allen*

U.S.S. *Richmond*

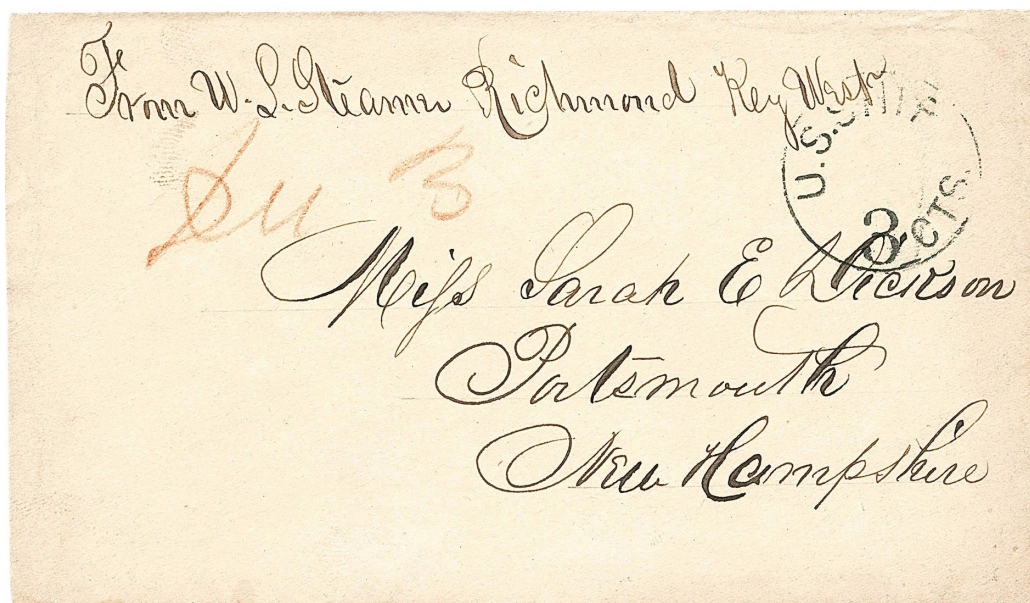


"From U.S. Barque Eathan Allen" manuscript endorsement on cover with "U.S. Ship 3 cts." in circle handstamp (Milgram SH-15) and red "Charlestown Mass." straightline handstamp to Charlestown.

The bark *Ethan Allen* patrolled the Gulf of Mexico from 1861 to 1863, capturing eight prizes and destroying extensive salt works along the Florida coast, thus hampering the Confederate war effort and civilian economy. Subsequently, she returned to Boston for repairs and joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron on 26 November 1863 and patrolled the Carolina coast for the next 18 months.

"From W. L. Steamer Richmond Key West" manuscript endorsement on cover with "U.S. Ship 3 cts." in circle handstamp (Milgram SH-15) and red crayon "Due 3" to Portsmouth NH.

The Due 3 marking likely indicated an overweight letter or conclusion by the postmaster that it was sent by an officer.



The steam sloop U.S.S. *Richmond* arrived at Key West on 2 September 1861 and joined the Gulf Blockading Squadron. She was later assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron where she patrolled the mouth of the Mississippi to maintain the blockade. In April 1862, she participated in the siege of New Orleans and helped take possession of military installations at Baton Rouge in May. She participated in both efforts to take Vicksburg, including the successful second attempt in July 1863, as well as the assault against Mobile Bay in August 1864.

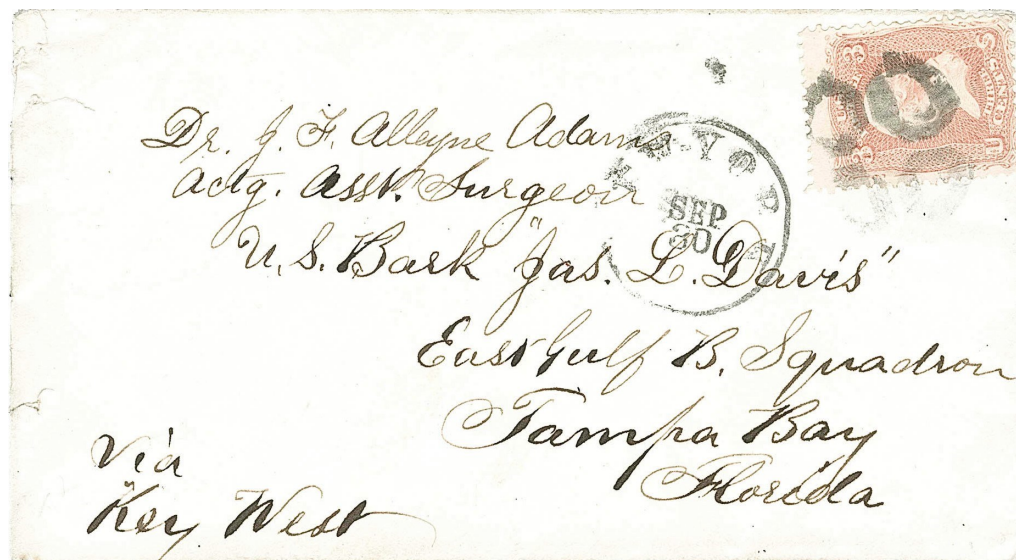


# EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *James L. Davis*

U.S.S. *R.R. Cuyler*

To surgeon on the "U.S. Bark *Jas. L. Davis*/East Gulf B. Squadron," with US 3¢ 1861 tied by fancy cork cancel with matching "New-York/Sep 30" (ca. 1864) circular datestamp.



The bark U.S.S. *James L. Davis* was commissioned 30 December 1861 and initially assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron but transferred to the East in February 1862. She performed blockade duty on the east and west coasts of Florida for the majority of her service but also served as a supply ship to other vessels in the squadron.



From "R.R. Cuyler" manuscript endorsement on cover with "U.S. SHIP 3 cts." in circle handstamp due marking (Milgram - SH 15) to New York City.

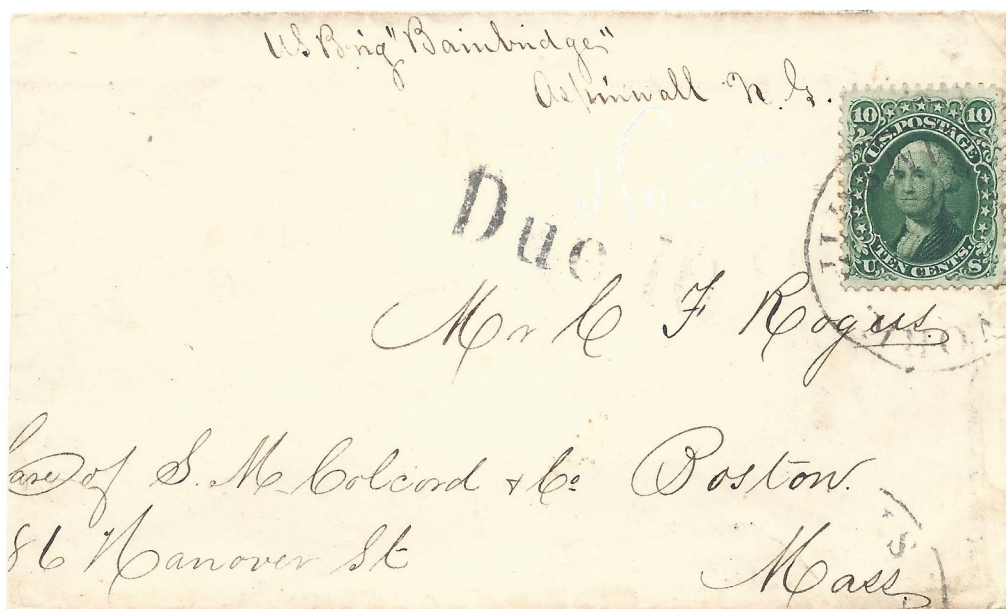
The gunboat U.S.S. *R.R. Cuyler* was initially assigned to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron and performed duty off Tampa FL. She later operated near and in the Mississippi and was stationed off Mobile Bay prior to being transferred to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron near the War's end.

## EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

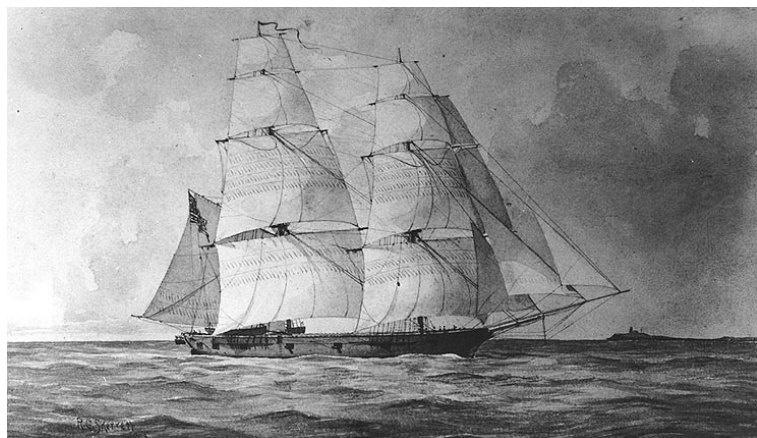
### U.S.S. *Bainbridge*

U.S.S. *Bainbridge* was launched on 26 April 1842 and commissioned on 16 December. She served until 9 November 1860, when she was placed out of commission. Recommissioned on 1 May 1861, she was assigned to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron and served in the Gulf of Mexico until June 1862. While in the area she captured two schooners and assisted in the capture of one steamer. On 3 August 1862, she joined the East Gulf Blockading Squadron at Key West, Florida. In September 1862, she was ordered to Aspinwall, Granadine Confederation (present day Panama) and, in November, a severe storm forced her to jettison all spars, sails, gun carriages, howitzers, shot, powder, provisions, and water. After extensive repairs she sailed for New York, arriving in May 1863. On August 21, 1863, while proceeding to her station with the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, she capsized off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. All but one member of the crew perished.

This cover dates between September 1862 and May 1863, while *Bainbridge* was on station at Aspinwall in present day Panama. The rate from Aspinwall to Boston was 20¢; the cover was therefore marked Due 10.



From the U.S.S. *Bainbridge* to Boston, MA, with manuscript endorsement "US Brig 'Bainbridge', Aspinwall N.G.", US 10¢ 1861 tied by a "N. YORK/ STEAMSHIP" circular datestamp (upside down) with a "Due 10" straightline handstamp.



U.S.S. *Bainbridge*

U.S.S. *Bainbridge* was a brig, a type of sailing vessel defined by its rig that included two masts that are both square-rigged. Brigs originated in the second half of the 18th century and were a common type of smaller merchant vessel or warship from then until the latter part of the 19th century.





## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

The West Gulf Blockading Squadron was tasked primarily with preventing Confederate ships from supplying troops and with supporting Union troops along the western half of the Gulf Coast, from the mouth of the Mississippi to the Rio Grande and south, beyond the border with Mexico. It was commanded by Flag Officer David Glasgow Farragut, who was the first rear admiral, vice admiral, and admiral in the United States Navy. Farragut is remembered for his order at the Battle of Mobile Bay: "Damn the torpedoes (naval mines blocking the path upstream), full speed ahead."

The blockade of Confederate ports on the Gulf of Mexico was less important than the Atlantic. This was because the ports were farther from the centers of blockade-running activity in Bermuda and Nassau and also because ships trying to reach them from the Atlantic Ocean would have to travel through the Florida Keys, which remained in Federal control throughout the war.

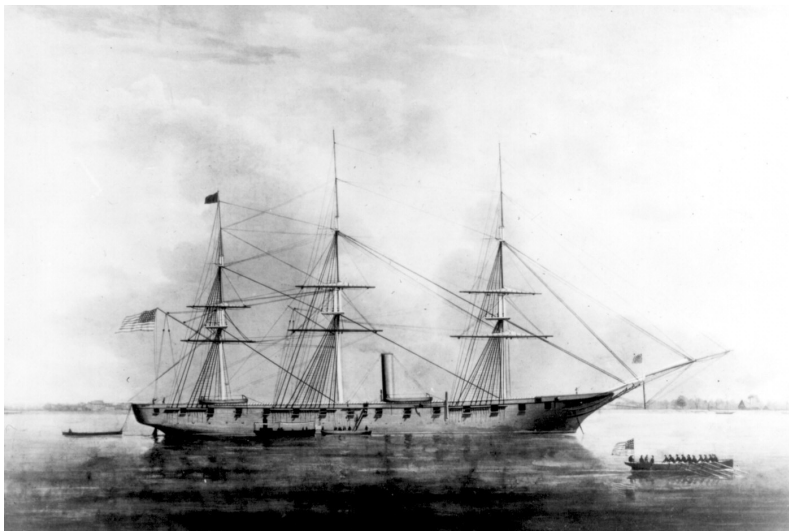
### U.S.S. *Hartford*

### Flagship of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron



The "SHIP" in lozenge handstamp was struck in New Orleans, with the postmaster initially marking the cover Due "S" and then realizing the proper rate for unpaid military mail was 3¢ (the 5¢ fee for unpaid letters was eliminated 1 April 1855 and the 2¢ fee for ship letters did not apply).

"From U.S.S. Hartford" manuscript endorsement on cover with "SHIP" in lozenge handstamp, numeral "3" handstamp struck over numeral "S", and "New Orleans, LA/June 3, 1862" double-circle datestamp to Montgomery County PA.



A painting of U.S.S. *Hartford*, a sloop-of-war steamer, by E. Arnold

The U.S.S. *Hartford* was the flagship of Flag Officer David G. Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

It served an instrumental role in the capture of New Orleans but was almost lost to fire when grounded during the battle for Fort St. Philip. Following the fall of New Orleans, Farragut proceeded upstream and forced the surrender of Baton Rouge and Natchez. *Hartford* subsequently participated in the Vicksburg Campaign and, most notably, led the fleet at the Battle of Mobile in August 1864. These efforts denied the Confederates desperately needed supplies to continue the war efforts.



## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

### Porter's Mortar Flotilla

### The Battle of Forts Jackson and St. Philip

The first objective in opening the Mississippi River to Union control was to capture New Orleans. Commander David Dixon Porter was assigned to organize a flotilla of twenty mortar boats to attack the forts defending the city from the south. The flotilla was a semi-autonomous part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron that was commanded by Porter's adoptive brother, Captain David G. Farragut.



"From U.S. Schr. William Bacon, Porter's Mortar Flotilla" manuscript endorsement on cover with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Old Port Comfort Va." double-circle datestamp to Medway MA.

The schooner *William Bacon* was assigned in 1862 to the mortar flotilla attached to Flag Officer David G. Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

*This is a very scarce naval endorsement.*

The Battle of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip began on 18 April 1862 and was the decisive battle for possession of New Orleans. Farragut decided to bypass the forts under the cover of darkness and constant bombardment on the night of April 24. His fleet successfully ran past the forts, making its way to New Orleans, and negotiated the surrender of the city on April 29. Porter's mortar fleet continued its bombardment, and both forts were surrendered on April 28.



The Battle of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, 24 April 1862. Fort Jackson at left and Fort St. Philip at right.

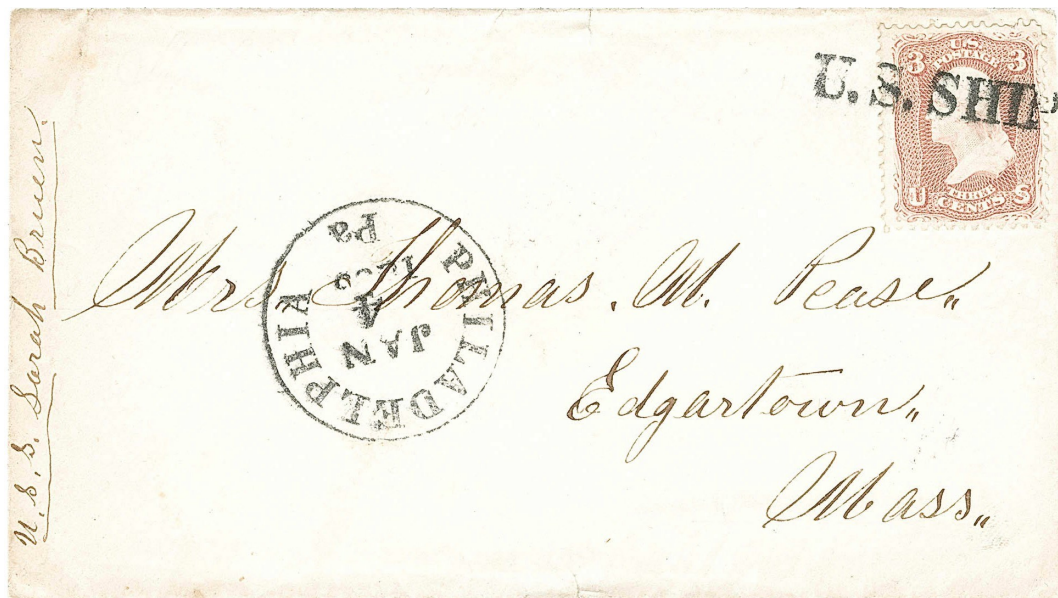


## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

Porter's Mortar Flotilla

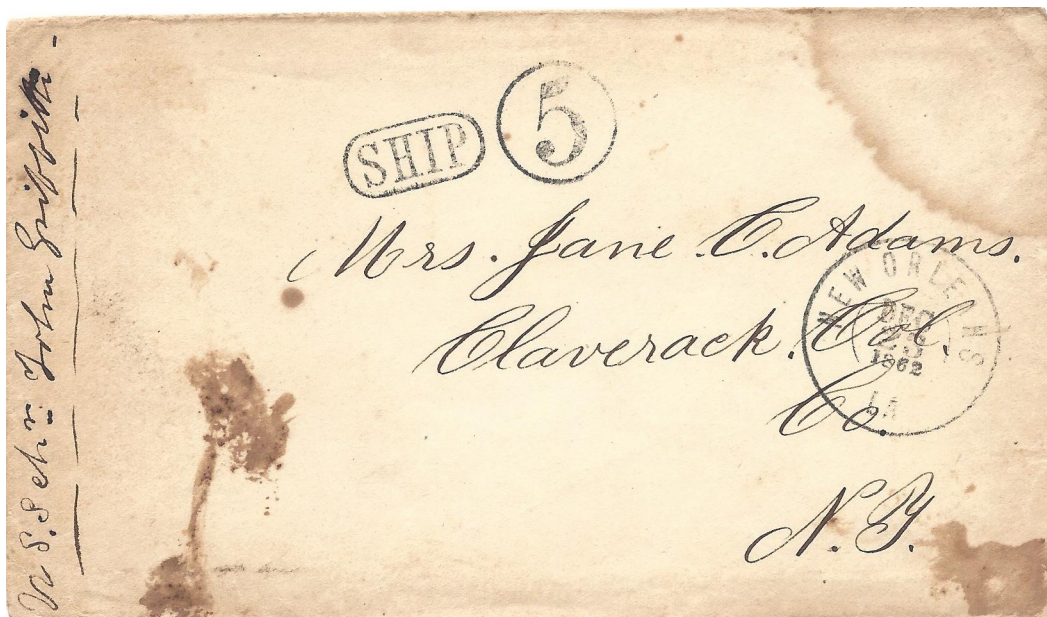
U.S.S. Sarah Bruen/ U.S.S. John Griffith

"U.S.S. Sarah Bruen"  
manuscript endorsement  
on cover with US 3¢  
1861 tied by "U.S. SHIP"  
straightline handstamp  
with matching  
"Philadelphia Pa./Jan 4,  
1863" circular datestamp  
to Edgartown MA.



The schooner U.S.S. Sarah Bruen was assigned in 1862 to the Comdr. David D. Porter's mortar flotilla and supported Farragut's attack on New Orleans. She remained in the West Gulf Blockading Squadron until the spring of 1864 when ordered to perform blockade duty inside Charleston Harbor.

"U.S.S. John Griffith"  
manuscript endorsement  
on cover with "SHIP" in  
lozenge and numeral "5" in  
circle handstamps with  
"New Orleans, LA/Dec 23,  
1862" double-circle  
datestamp to Claverack  
NY.



The Due "5" in circle  
handstamp was applied in  
error as the 5¢ fee for  
unpaid letters was  
eliminated 1 April 1855  
and military ship mail was  
permitted to be sent unpaid  
during the War at 3¢ if  
properly certified as a  
soldier's letter or 6¢ if sent  
by a commissioned officer.

Like her sister ship above, the schooner U.S.S. John Griffith was assigned to Porter's mortar flotilla and supported Farragut's attack on New Orleans. She remained in the West Gulf Blockading Squadron until the spring of 1864 when ordered to join the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

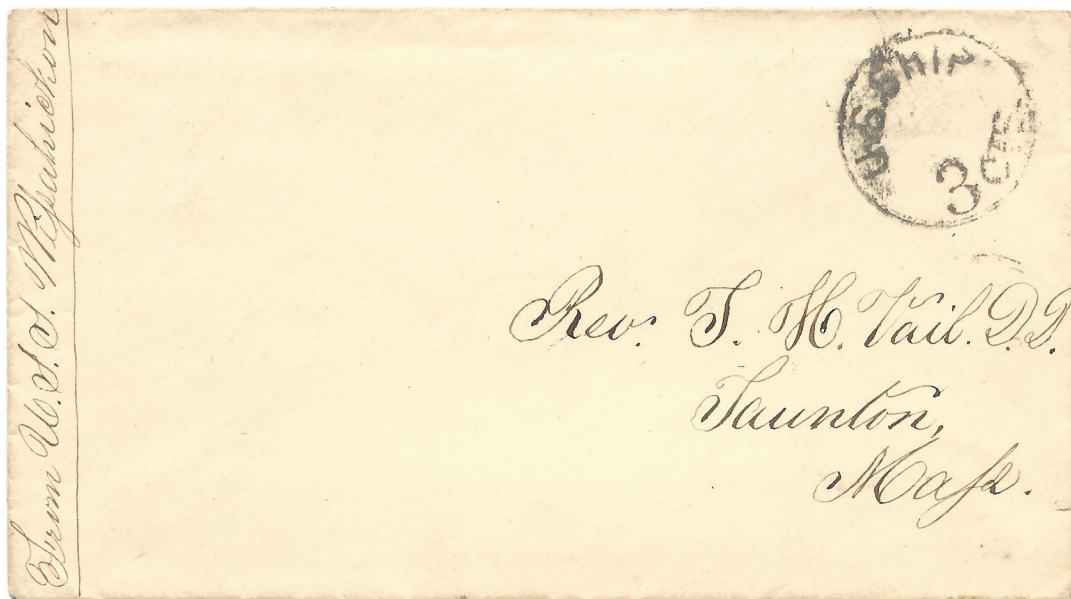
Porter's Mortar Flotilla

U.S.S. *Clifton*/U.S.S. *Wissahickon*



"U.S. Steamer Clifton Ship Letter" manuscript endorsement on cover with "U.S. Ship 3 cts." in circle handstamp (Milgram - SH 15) to Gloucester MA.

U.S.S. *Clifton* was a side-wheel ferry boat assigned in 1862 to the Comdr. David D. Porter's mortar flotilla. She participated in the attack on New Orleans, Vicksburg and the capture of Galveston TX. She was captured on 8 September 1863 by the Confederates and placed into service, but ran aground in March 1864 while attempting to run the blockade and burned to prevent re-capture by the Union navy.



"From U.S.S. Wissahickon" manuscript endorsement on cover with "U.S. Ship 3 cts." (Milgram - SH 15) in circle handstamp to Taunton MA.

U.S.S. *Wissahickon*, a screw gunboat, was initially assigned to Comdr. David D. Porter's mortar flotilla. She participated in the attack on New Orleans and Vicksburg. She returned to Philadelphia for repairs in August 1862 and was assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron near the Georgia coastline.



Crewmembers of U.S.S. *Wissahickon* by the ship's 11 in (280 mm) Dahlgren gun.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

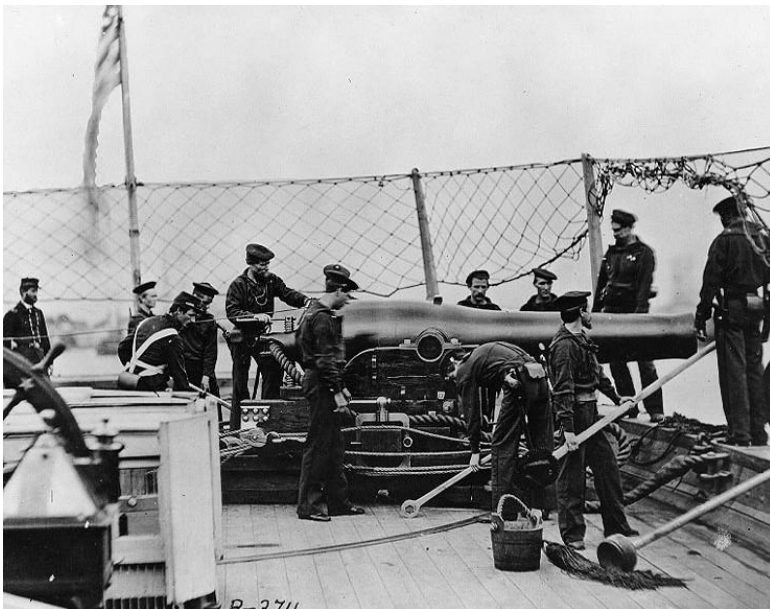
## Porter's Mortar Flotilla

## U.S.S. *Miami*

U.S.S. *Miami*, was a side-wheel gunboat with a complement of 134. On 5 February 1862, she was ordered to Ship Island, Mississippi for duty in Porter's Mortar Flotilla. *Miami* reached Ship Island on March 19 and then entered the Mississippi River to join Commander Porter's forces. She took part in the Battle of New Orleans and the investment of Vicksburg before transfer to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She was the flagship for the fleet at Roanoke Island and finished the war on the James River supporting General Grant's drive on Richmond.



Blue and red patriotic cover to Philadelphia with "BABY WAKER" slogan, flag and cannon from the U.S.S. *Miami* (Weiss F-R-400), with manuscript endorsement "From USS Gun Boat Miami", postmarked large blue crayon "3" and handstamped oblong-boxed "SHIP" & "3".



A 9" Dahlgren smoothbore cannon on the deck of U.S.S. *Miami*

The 9-inch Dahlgren cannon was manufactured between 1855 and 1864 and was the most popular and versatile of all Dahlgren shell guns. They served as broadside armament on larger ships and would typically be mounted on carriage. Smaller coastal blockade ships mounted the 9-inch cannon on pivot mounts. The gun required a crew of 16 and a powderman. It's overall length was 131 inches, it weighed 9,000 pounds, and it had a range of 3,450 yards at 15 degrees elevation.



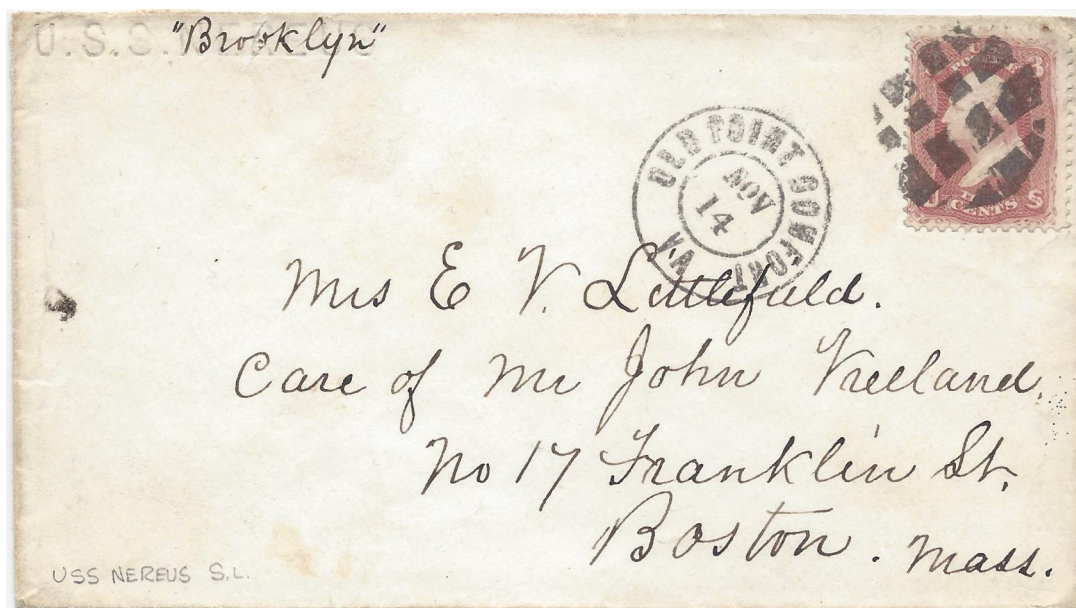
# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## Porter's Mortar Flotilla

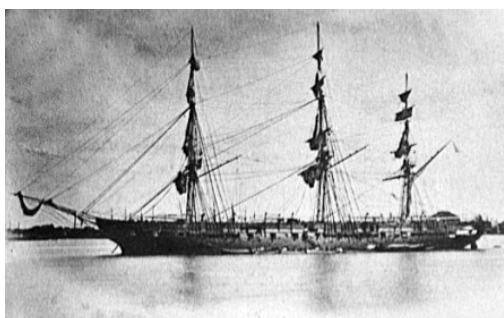
## U.S.S. Brooklyn

The U.S.S. *Brooklyn* was a screw sloop of war commissioned in January 1859. She was stationed at Hampton Roads, VA, at the outbreak of hostilities but was sent almost immediately to the Gulf coast to establish the blockade of Mississippi passes. *Brooklyn* provided support for Porter's mortar flotilla in the battle for Forts Jackson and St. Philip, where she engaged directly with the Confederate ironclad ram, *Manassas*, and suffered significant damage. On 5 August 1864, she played a major role in the Battle of Mobile Bay, where she suffered 54 casualties and 23 of her crew earned the Medal of Honor. She was then sent to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

"U.S.S. Brooklyn" manuscript endorsement, with "Brooklyn" written over "Nereus" in a straightline handstamp, on cover with US 3¢ 1861 tied by waffle grid with matching "Old Point Comfort VA/Nov 14" double-circle datestamp to Boston MA.



Cover addressed to "Asst. Eng. James Atkins, U.S.S. Sloop Brooklyn. Home Squadron" at the New York Naval Yard, with pair US 3¢ 1861 tied by circular grid cancels with matching "Augusta, ME/Nov 8, 1862" double-circle



U.S.S. Brooklyn

The covers presented here are from different correspondences, with the top being sent from *Brooklyn* and the bottom being delivered to the ship. The bottom cover is interestingly addressed to *Brooklyn* at the New York Navy Yard, care of Naval Lyceum. The Lyceum was founded in 1833 as a membership organization for officers and even included several US presidents. It published magazines, maintained a museum and, among other services, forwarded mail. When this cover was sent, *Brooklyn* was on duty off Mobile Bay in the Gulf of Mexico.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## Porter's Mortar Flotilla

U.S.S. *Mississippi*

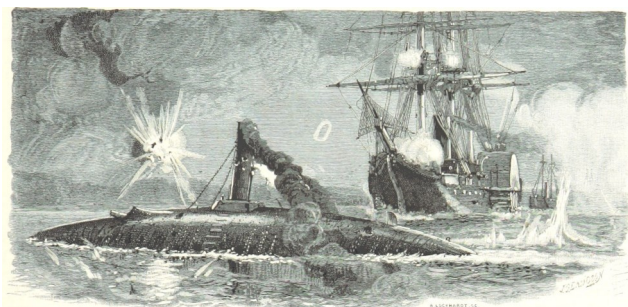
U.S.S. *Mississippi* was a side-wheel steamer commissioned in 1841. She was in ordinary - out of service - at the commencement of hostilities and reactivated when the Civil War became inevitable. She arrived off Key West, Florida, to institute the blockade on 8 June 1861, and five days later made her first capture, the schooner *Forest King*, bound with coffee from Rio de Janeiro to New Orleans, Louisiana. The following spring, she joined Farragut's squadron for the planned assault on New Orleans. After several attempts, on 7 April 1862, she and Pensacola successfully passed over the bar at Southwest Pass and became the heaviest ships ever to enter the Mississippi River. As Farragut brought his fleet up the river, *Mississippi* ran the Confederate ram *Manassas* ashore on 24 April 1862, destroying her with two mighty broadsides. One of *Mississippi's* sailors was awarded the Medal of Honor for his part in the battle. Following the battle, *Mississippi* left the river and remained off New Orleans for much of the next year. She was sunk on 14 March 1863 after becoming grounded near Port Hudson, Louisiana. Of the crew of 287, 64 perished.



From U.S.S. *Mississippi* with manuscript endorsement "From U S Frigate *Mississippi*," postmarked with "U.S. SHIP/3 cts." oval due handstamp (Milgram SH-14), to Abington, MA.

**There are less than 5 known examples of this oval U.S. Ship/3cts. marking.**

From U.S.S. *Mississippi* with manuscript endorsement "From U S Frigate *Mississippi*," Flag and "Long May It Wave" patriotic cover (Weiss F-R 87) postmarked with "New-York Ship Letter/ 5/ Jun 26" circular datestamp indicating carriage by a non-contract ship, to Abington, MA.



THE UNITED STATES STEAMER "MISSISSIPPI" ATTEMPTING TO RUN DOWN THE CONFEDERATE RAM "MANASSAS."

U.S.S. *Mississippi* attempts to ram C.S.S. *Manassas*

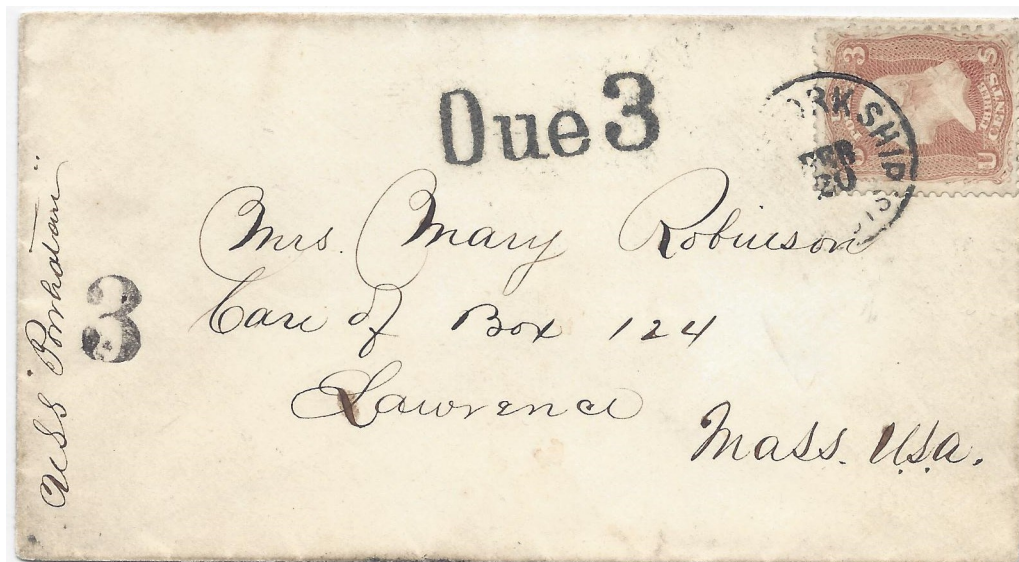
The covers presented here are from the same correspondence. Freeman Foster, Jr. was a sailor assigned to U.S.S. *Mississippi*. His letters to his wife, some of which are preserved in a special collection at Louisiana State University, describe the preparations for the Union assault on New Orleans, life on board the ship, and contact with contraband slaves attempting to flee the Confederacy.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

## U.S.S. Powhatan

The U.S.S. *Powhatan* was a side-wheel steam frigate commissioned in September 1852 and was one of the Union Navy's most powerful ships. At the outbreak of hostilities, she was assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and participated in the blockades of Mobile Bay and Southwest Pass of the Mississippi. She was later reassigned to operate off Charleston, SC, and concluded her War service in the Battle for Fort Fisher in Wilmington, NC, one of the Confederacy's last major Atlantic ports.



From U.S.S. *Powhatan* with "USS *Powhatan*" manuscript endorsement on cover with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "New York Ship/ Feb 20" circular datestamp with matching "Due 3" handstamp to Lawrence MA.

From U.S.S. *Powhatan*, with manuscript endorsement "From USS *Powhatan*", franked with a US 10¢ 1861 tied by "N. YORK/ STEAMSHIP" circular postmark without date.



U.S.S. *Powhatan*

The covers presented here are from the same correspondence. The undated postmark and use of the 10¢ 1861 on the lower cover implies that it was sent after the War's end, as *Powhatan* was reassigned to the South Pacific Squadron in late 1865. In October 1865, she served on escort duty to California via Cape Horn. *Powhatan* was the flagship of the South Pacific Squadron from 1866 until 1869, commanded by Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren. She finished her long career and was decommissioned and sold in June 1886.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Katahdin*

U.S.S. *Rachel Seaman*

Cover addressed to "Ensign George A. Wauner, Gunboat Katardin (sic), New Orleans, La." with US 3¢ 1861 tied by a five-point star-in-circle with matching "Duxbury, Mass./May 16" (1862) circular datestamp.



U.S.S. *Katahdin* was an Unadilla-class gunboat with a complement of 114. She passed the forts at New Orleans with Farragut and served on the lower Mississippi, later operating off the Texas coast. She was decommissioned in July 1865.



Red and blue patriotic cover to Philadelphia from the U.S.S. *Rachel Seaman* depicting George Washington on horseback with flag and "Imitate Him!" "Be a Patriot!" slogan (Weiss FP-GW 84 with an unlisted verse), manuscript endorsement "Naval letter, Gunboat R. Seaman, Q.A. Hooper, Comm", "U.S. SHIP/3cts." circle (Milgram SH-15).

This cover, which was signed by the commanding officer, is properly certified as a soldier's letter and therefore permitted to be sent unpaid as indicated by the circular "U.S. SHIP/3cts." handstamp.

The U.S.S. *Rachel Seaman* was a gunboat that briefly served in the Mississippi River Sound and the Mississippi passes. She also performed blockade duty off Mobile Bay, Alabama, later returning to the Texas coast where she spent the majority of her service.



## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Pensacola*

U.S.S. *Penguin*



From the U.S.S. *Pensacola* to West Day NY, accompanied by original letter datelined "USS *Pensacola*, March 9, Off New Orleans, Louisiana" with US 3¢ 1861 tied by fancy cancel and "New-York/ Mar 19 1864" double-circle datestamp.

U.S.S. *Pensacola* was a screw steamer commissioned in September 1861. She was assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and participated in the Battle of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, which protected New Orleans. On 26 April 1862, a landing party from *Pensacola* raised the Union flag over the mint in New Orleans after the fall of the great Confederate metropolis. For the next two years she patrolled the lower Mississippi and then returned to New York and was decommissioned in April 1864.

"From the US Steamer *Penguin*" manuscript endorsement on cover to New York City, accompanied by original letter datelined "New Orleans, Nov 4, 1863" with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with matching "New Orleans LA/Nov 4, 1863" double-circle datestamp.

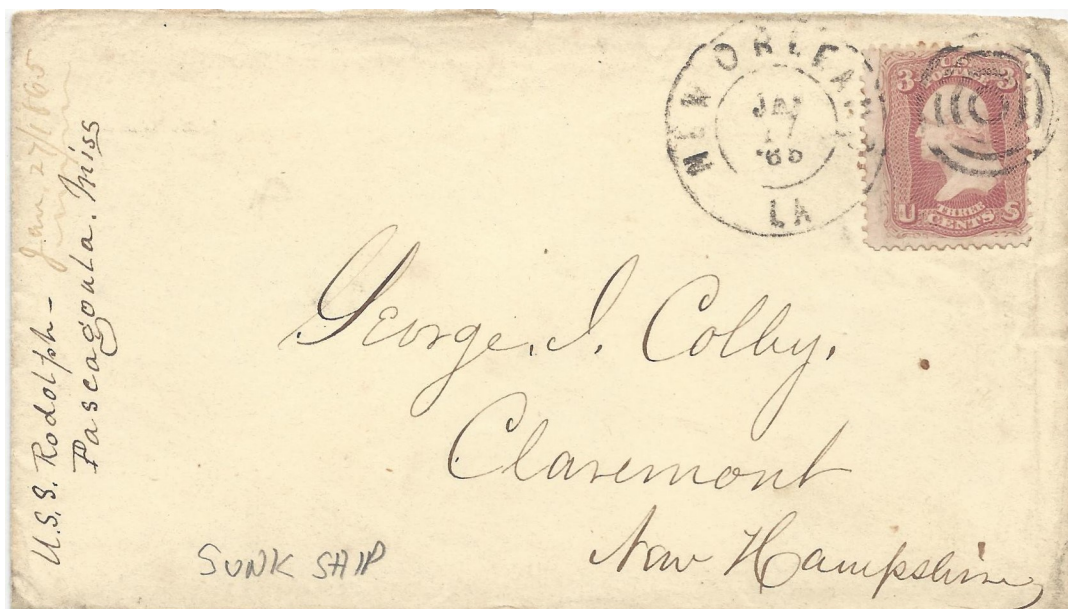


U.S.S. *Penguin* was a steamer commissioned in June 1861. She was initially assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and joined the Potomac Flotilla. She was then assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and in November participated in the captures of Forts Walker and Beauregard as well as the taking of Fernandina, FL, on 4 March 1862. Subsequently, she was assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, where this cover was posted, and patrolled the Texas coast for the duration of the War.



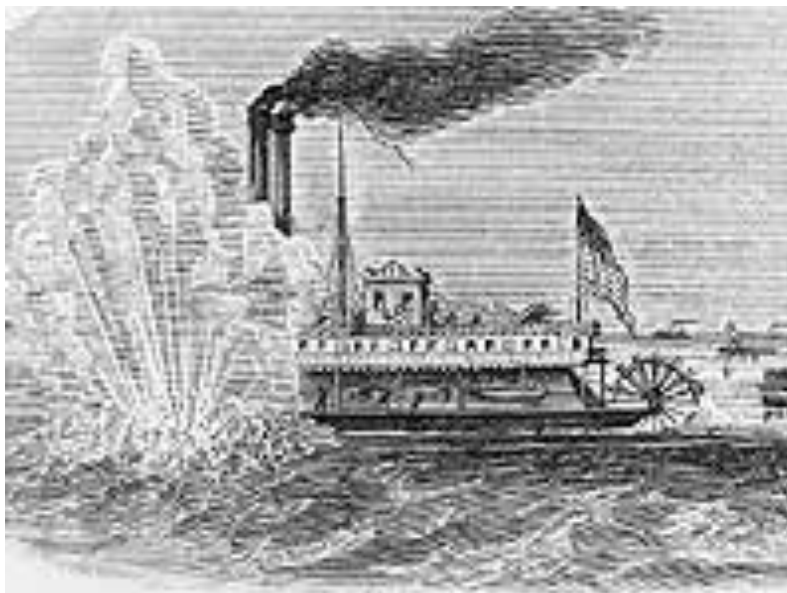
## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Rodolph*



“U.S.S. Rodolph - Pascagoula, Miss.” manuscript endorsement on cover to Claremont NH with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel and matching “New Orleans LA/Jan \_\_\_’65” double-circle datestamp.

U.S.S. *Rodolph* was a side-wheel steamer built in 1863 and originally assigned to the Mississippi River Squadron. However, the installation of “tin-clad” armor delayed her availability for active service. Commissioned in May 1864, she was transferred to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and operated primarily near Mobile Bay for the remainder of the War. Her most challenging task during the War was clearing “torpedoes” (i.e., mines) from captured Southern waters and on 1 April 1865 she struck a torpedo and sunk, killing four men and wounding 11 others.

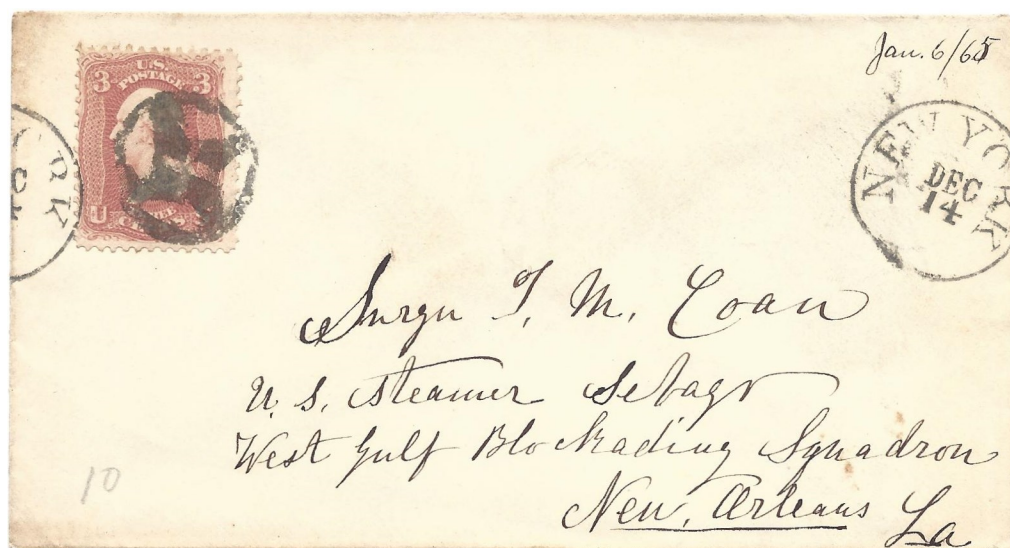


Drawing of U.S.S. *Rodolph* striking a mine.

# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

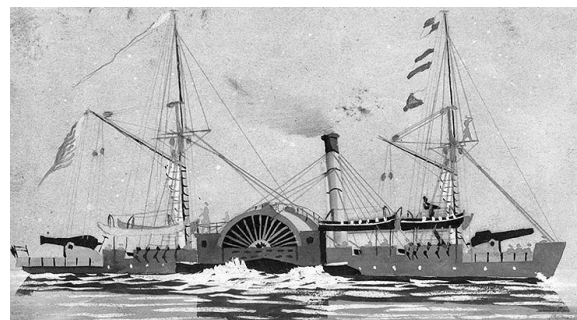
U.S.S. *Sebago*

U.S.S. *Kensington*



Cover addressed to "Surgn T.M. Coan M.D., U.S. Steamer *Sebago*, West Gulf Blockading Squadron, New Orleans, La.", US 3¢ 1861 tied by one of two strikes of a "New York/Dec 14" (1864) four-point star-in-circle duplex cancel, with docketing "Jan. 6/65".

U.S.S. *Sebago* was a side-wheel sloop, commissioned in 1862. She served with the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron before joining the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, where she supported the Peninsula campaign and participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay.



From the U.S.S. *Kensington*, with manuscript endorsement "Naval letter from U. S. Str. *Kensington*," US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with matching "New Orleans, LA/ Feb 20, 1863" double-circle datestamp to Milton Mills, NH, docketing as received Mar 5/63.



U.S.S. *Kensington* was a screw steamer that served from February 1862 to May 1865. With a complement of 72, she served as a water supply ship and resupplied Farragut at New Orleans, as well as to blockaders off Texas and Louisiana. She also served as a bombardment ship and took or participated in the taking of nine blockade-runners.



# WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Penobscot*

U.S.S. *Sciota*

From the U.S.S.  
*Penobscot* with  
manuscript endorsement  
"U.S. Gunboat *Penobscot*"  
to Philadelphia, US 3¢  
1861 tied by target cancel  
with matching "New  
Orleans, LA/May 17,  
1864" double-circle  
datestamp and "DUE/6"  
in circle handstamp.



U.S.S. *Penobscot* was an Unadilla-class gunboat. With a crew of 114, she was initially assigned to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron but in late 1863 she was transferred to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. She primarily operated along the Texas coast, including off Matagorda, Mexico, and Galveston Bay to as far as Aransas Pass.



Waving Flag with Liberty  
Cap patriotic cover with  
Everbell's Sons imprint  
(Weiss F-R 304 variety)  
with manuscript  
endorsement "Ship letter,  
US Gunboat *Sciota*,"  
straightline "SHIP" and  
"U.S. SHIP/3cts." in circle  
(Milgram SH-15)  
Handstamps.

The "SHIP" handstamp indicates this cover was initially rated as a non-contract ship letter, due 5¢, and then reclassified as a sailor's letter, due 3¢. The absence of proper certification by a commissioned officer means that it technically should have been rated due 5¢.

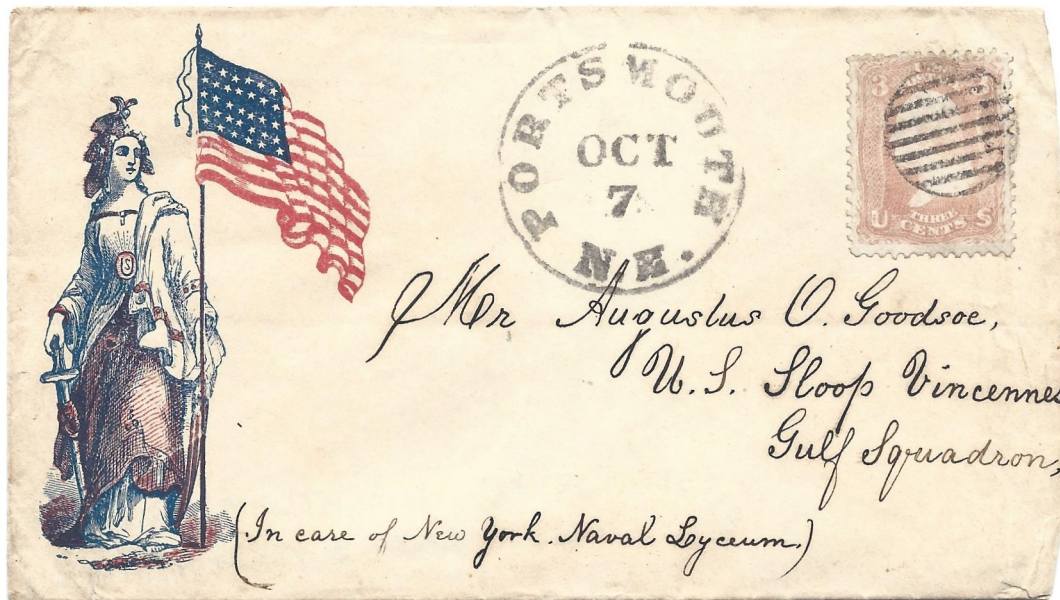
U.S.S. *Sciota* was an Unadilla-class gunboat. With a complement of 114, she served at New Orleans and took part in the lower Mississippi River operations. Afterwards she performed general blockade duties and had the infamous distinction of being sunk twice but successfully salvaged both times.



## WEST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

### U.S.S. Vincennes

U.S.S. *Vincennes* was a sloop-of-war that was recommissioned and brought into service in the Gulf Blockading Squadron at the start of the Civil War in April 1861. During the Battle of Head of Passes in the Mississippi on 12 October 1861, she was forced aground by the Confederate metal-sheathed ram C.S.S. *Manassas*. *Vincennes* was ordered abandoned and destroyed to prevent her capture, and her engineer lit a slow fuse to the ship's magazine while her men took refuge on other ships. However, the engineer cut the burning fuse and threw it overboard before the magazine could explode and, after the Confederate vessels withdrew early in the afternoon, *Vincennes* was refloated and escaped. On 4 October 1862, she assumed command of the blockade off Ship Island, Mississippi. Prior to her service in the Civil War, she served as flag ship for the Wilkes Expedition to Antarctica.



Lady Liberty & Flag patriotic cover (Weiss F-F 122) addressed to "Mr. Augustus O. Goodsoe, U.S. Sloop Vincennes, Gulf Squadron (In care of New York Naval Lyceum)", US 3¢ 1861 tied by circular grid cancel with matching "Portsmouth, NH/Oct 7" circular datestamp.



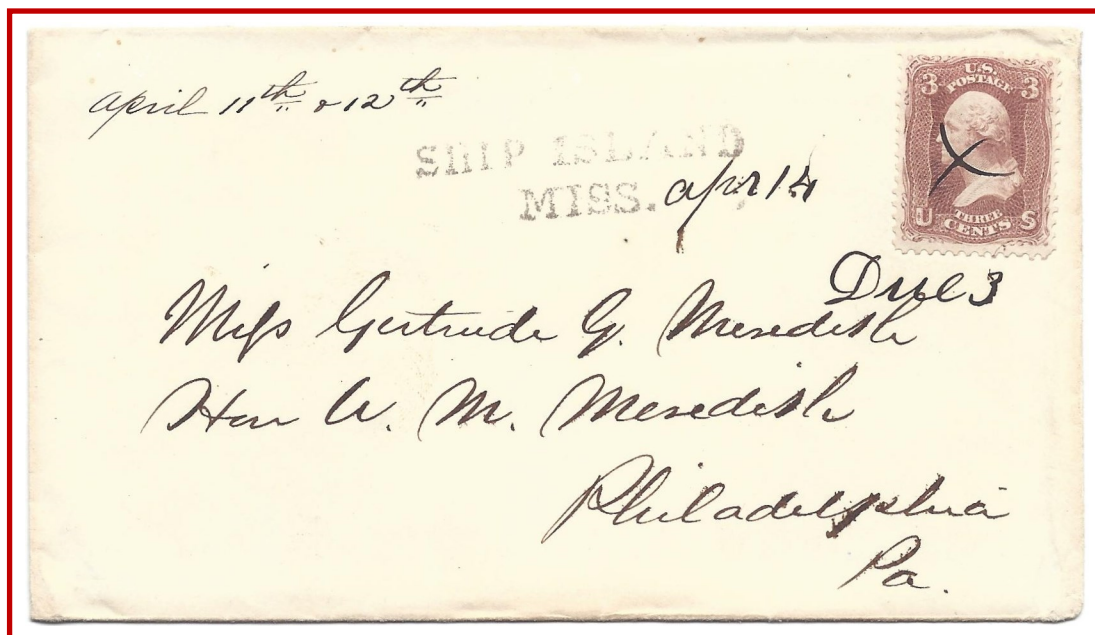
19th-century painting (based on a sketch by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, USN), depicting U.S.S. *Vincennes* in Disappointment Bay, Antarctica, circa January–February 1840.

Commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, the South Sea Surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Antarctic region sailed from Hampton Roads in August 1838 and made surveys along the South American coast before making a brief survey of Antarctica in early 1839. Entering into the South Pacific in August and September 1839, her cartographers drafted charts of that area that are still used today. U.S.S. *Vincennes* served as flagship for the expedition.



## Ship Island, Mississippi

Ship Island is a barrier island off the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. It contains less than two square miles of territory, but possesses an outstanding harbor, into which nineteen feet can be carried at low tide. Construction of a fort on the island began in 1859 and was underway when the Confederates took and named the uncompleted structure Fort Twiggs after Confederate General David E. Twiggs. The island was later used by the Confederacy to hold captured Union prisoners. On 9 July 1861, a twenty-minute cannon exchange between Confederates in Fort Twiggs and the screw steamer U.S.S. *Massachusetts* occurred, and the island was abandoned by the Confederates because it could not be adequately garrisoned. The U.S.S. *Massachusetts* returned and took possession of Ship Island in September 1861. In 1862, the partially completed fort was renamed Fort Massachusetts in honor of the Union warship that had seized the abandoned outpost, and construction continued throughout the duration of the War and thereafter. It became a valuable base from which to break up the traffic of the small Confederate vessels plying between Mobile and New Orleans through Mississippi Sound and as a staging ground for Naval activities.



From Ship Island, Mississippi to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by manuscript “x” with straightline “SHIP ISLAND/ MISS.” handstamp, manuscript “Apr 14” date and “Due 3” markings. The letter must have weighed more than a half ounce, thus incurring the extra 3¢ due.

The "SHIP ISLAND" straightline marking was used solely at Ship Island, first from 27 March to 29 April 1862 (87 covers recorded ) and again from 12 May 12 to 5 June 1862 (15 covers recorded).



Ship Island is located about sixty miles from New Orleans, about the same distance from the Northeast Pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River, forty miles from Mobile, and ninety miles from Fort Pickens. It lies between Horn Island at east and Cat Island at west, about five miles from each. On the Mississippi mainland, about ten to twelve miles to the north, are the towns of Biloxi, Pascagoula, and Gulfport, where Confederate gunboats and blockade runners hid.

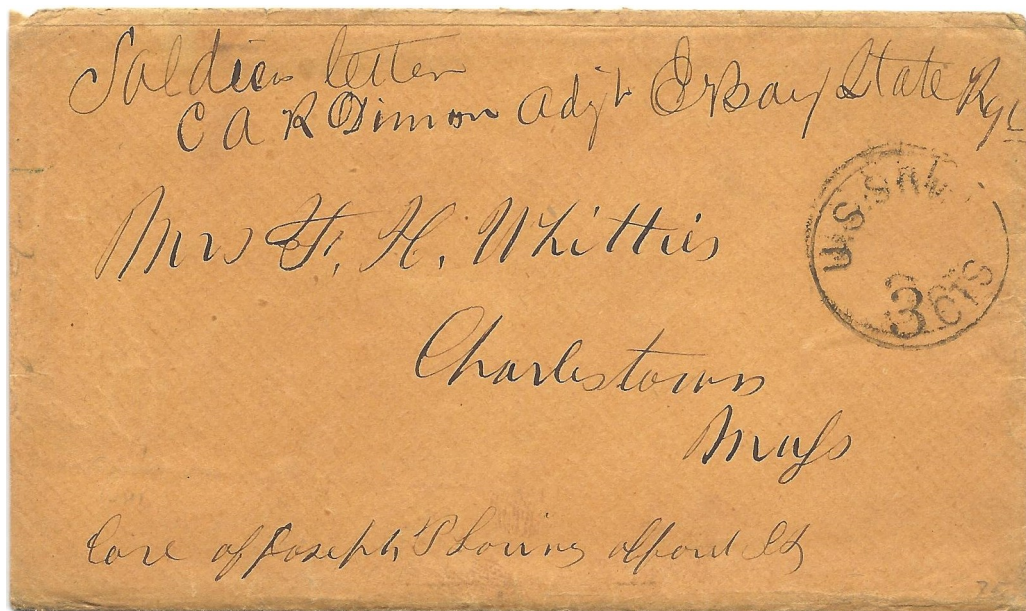
## Ship Island, Mississippi



Red and blue patriotic cover (Weiss F-R 205) from Ship Island, MS, to Brandon, VT, US 3¢ 1861 cancelled by circular grid with matching "Ship Island, Miss. May 30" (1862) circular date stamp with "May 28, 1862" docketing.

The Ship Island Postmaster, John Parker, received a Government circular date stamp in late April of 1862, but was soon ordered by his brother-in-law and commander of the occupying forces, General Benjamin Butler, to take over the Post Office in New Orleans. He took the Ship Island circular handstamp with him and used it in New Orleans until receiving a New Orleans device from the Post Office Department in Washington on or about June 2. The two-line handstamp continued in use on Ship Island for the convenience of the few soldiers remaining there. According to Richard Graham (Chronicle, May 1989), the 32 mm "SHIP ISLAND" balloon marking was used at Ship Island from 30 April until 10 May 1862 (16 covers recorded), at New Orleans from 13 May to 30 May (33 covers), and again at Ship Island from 5 June to 11 June 1862 (5 covers).

From Ship Island, MS,  
to Charlestown, MA,  
with manuscript  
"Soldiers letter, C A R  
Dimon Adjt E Bay State  
Rgt" endorsement and  
"U.S. SHIP/3cts."  
circular handstamp  
(Milgram SH-15).



The cover above is a properly endorsed soldier's letter and includes the original content, which is datelined "Ship Island Mississippi March 11th, 62" and discusses camp life and Major General Benjamin Butler, who directed the first Union expedition to Ship Island in December 1861. In May 1862, General Butler commanded the force that captured New Orleans after its occupation by the Navy following the Battle of Forts Jackson and St. Philip. During the occupation, he demonstrated both firmness and political subtlety. He devised a plan for relief of the poor, demanded oaths of allegiance from anyone who sought privilege from government, and confiscated weapons to mitigate violence.



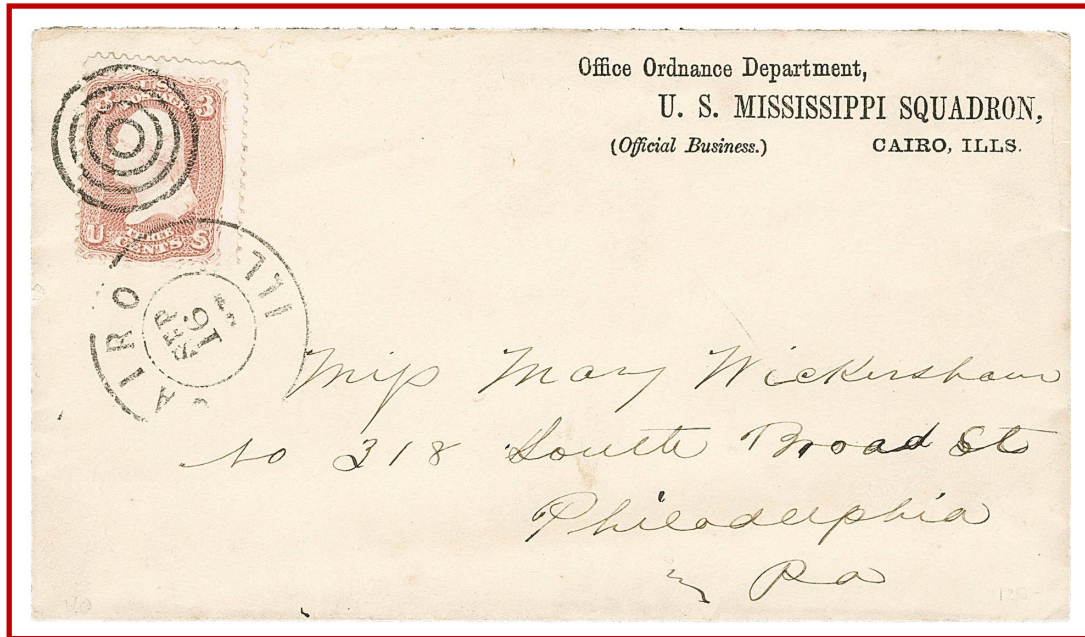


## MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

The Squadron was created on 16 May 1861 and operated on western rivers throughout the War. Although commanded by Naval officers, the squadron was formally controlled by the Army until 30 September 1862. Following the capture of Memphis control was transferred to the Navy. It was sometimes referred to as the Western Gunboat Flotilla or the Mississippi Flotilla.

### U.S. Mississippi Squadron

### Official Business



Cert.

"Office Ordnance Department, U.S. Mississippi Squadron, Cairo, Ills. (Official Business)" three-line imprint corner card cover to Philadelphia PA, US 3¢ 1861, tied by target cancel and "Cairo Ill./Sep. 16, 1864" double-circle datestamp.

The Squadron was initially commanded by John Rodgers, who was relieved by Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote. In conjunction with Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the District of Cairo, Foote led the flotilla in an assault of Fort Henry and subdued the fort before Grant's troops could take their positions. Foote also led the squadron in the attack on Fort Donelson as well as an attack on Island No. 10 on the Mississippi River. He was relieved by Charles H. Davis, who proceeded to take Fort Pillow on the Mississippi and participated in the Battle of Memphis. After the capture of Memphis the squadron was transferred to the control of the U.S. Navy. Davis aided Grant's unsuccessful first campaign against Vicksburg. He was relieved by Rear Admiral David D. Porter, who led the squadron at Arkansas Post and during the successful Vicksburg Campaign and siege of the city.

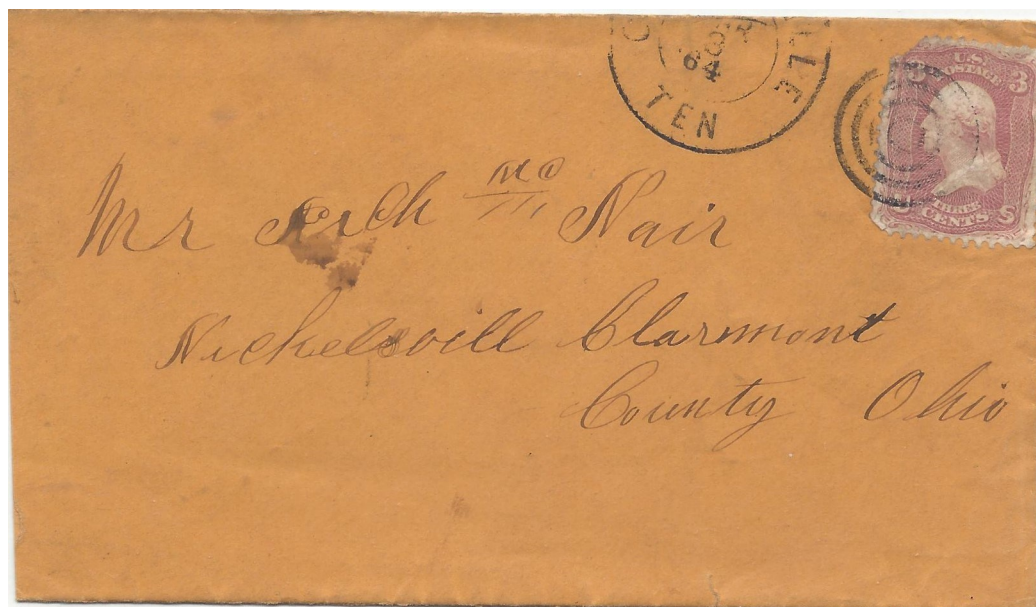


Vessels of the Mississippi River Squadron in Battle.



## MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

### U.S.S. *Reindeer*

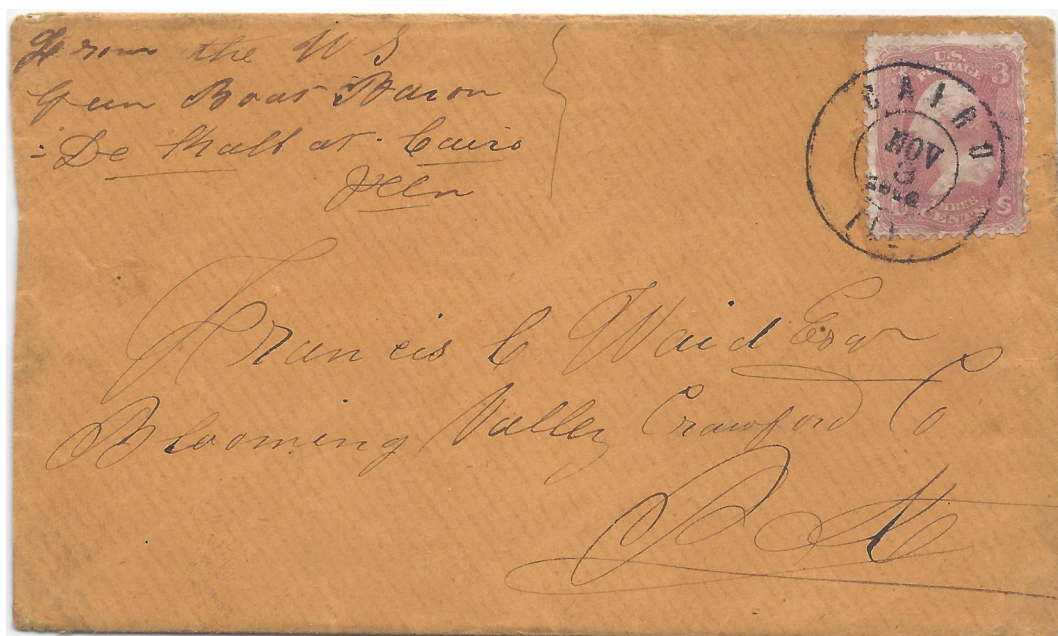


### U.S.S. *Baren De Kalb*

From the U.S.S. *Reindeer* to Ohio, accompanied by original letter datelined "US Gun Boat *Reindeer*, of(f) Clarkville Ten, Comblin (Cumberland) River Squadron, March 3, 64" with US 3¢ 1861 tied by target cancel with double-circle datestamp.

U.S.S. *Reindeer* was a stern-wheel gunboat built in 1863 and assigned to the Mississippi Squadron. Throughout the War, she operated on the Mississippi, Ohio and Cumberland Rivers as well as other inland waterways that meandered through the Confederacy. Control of these waterways gave the Union strategic lines of supply and communication and deprived the Confederacy of its centers of strength. This cover was sent while *Reindeer* operated as part of the Cumberland River Squadron in 1864 and is a rare use.

"From the US Gun Boat Baron De Kalb at Cairo Illn." manuscript endorsement on cover Blooming Valley PA with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Cairo Ill/Nov 3 1862" double-circle datestamp.



U.S.S. *Baron De Kalb* was an iron-clad, paddle-wheel gunboat built in 1861. She joined the Western Gunboat Flotilla in October 1861. Throughout her service, she operated on numerous rivers including the Tennessee, Cumberland, and White, participating in numerous important engagements. On 13 July 1863, she was sunk after striking a torpedo (i.e., mine) in the Yazoo River.



## MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

U.S.S. *Lexington*

U.S.S. *Mound City*

To the "U.S. Gunboat  
Lexington via Cairo  
Illinois" with US 3¢ 1861  
tied by target cancel with  
red "Providence RI/Jul  
14, 1862" double-circle  
datestamp and black  
Cairo, Ill. July 19 receiver  
backstamp.



U.S.S. *Lexington* was a sidewheel steamer that was converted into a gun boat. She joined the Western Gunboat Flotilla at Cairo IL on 12 August 1861. She initially operated on Western waterways near Kentucky, including the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, helping General Grant preserve this important state for the Union. Throughout the War, she also operated on the Mississippi, the White and the Red Rivers.



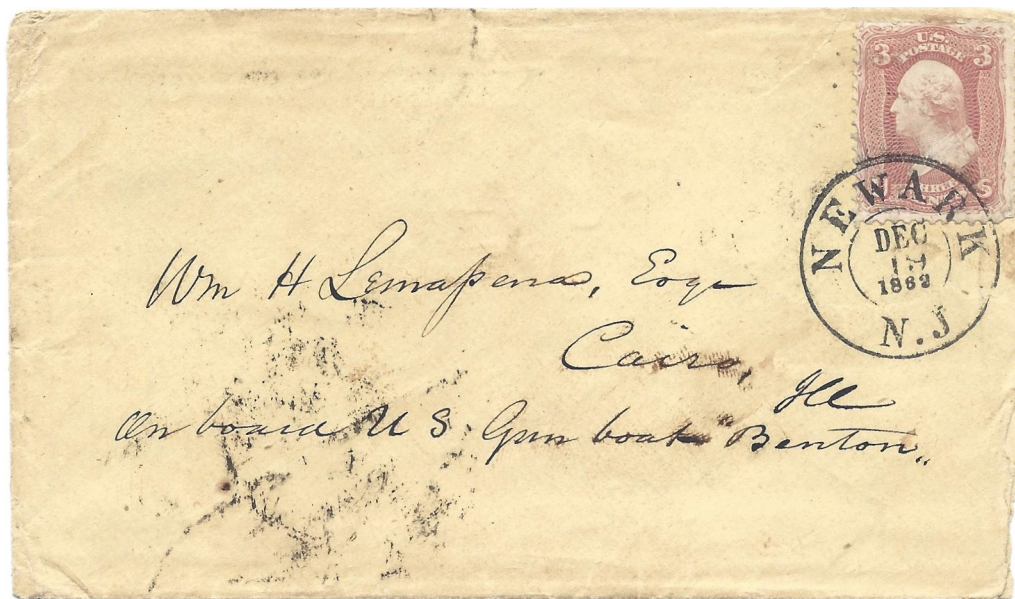
To the "Mound City  
Gunboat, Cairo Ill" with  
US 3¢ 1861 tied by blue  
target cancel and  
matching "Cincinnati,  
O/Apr 30" double-circle  
datestamp, with  
manuscript  
endorsement "In care of  
Capt. Kilty/  
commanding."

U.S.S. *Mound City* was an iron-clad screw steamer that joined the Western Gunboat Flotilla in 1862. She initially operated off Island No. 10, which was the key to control of the Mississippi, and took part in combat at Fort Pillow (the Battle of Plum Point Bend) on 10 May 1862, where she was sunk and later raised, and in an expedition on the White River in Arkansas. She later participated in the Vicksburg campaign, including the Steele's Bayou Expedition and the later bombardment of the batteries at Grand Gulf, Mississippi. Following the capture of Vicksburg and consequent opening of the Mississippi, she took part in the ill-fated Red River Expedition.

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

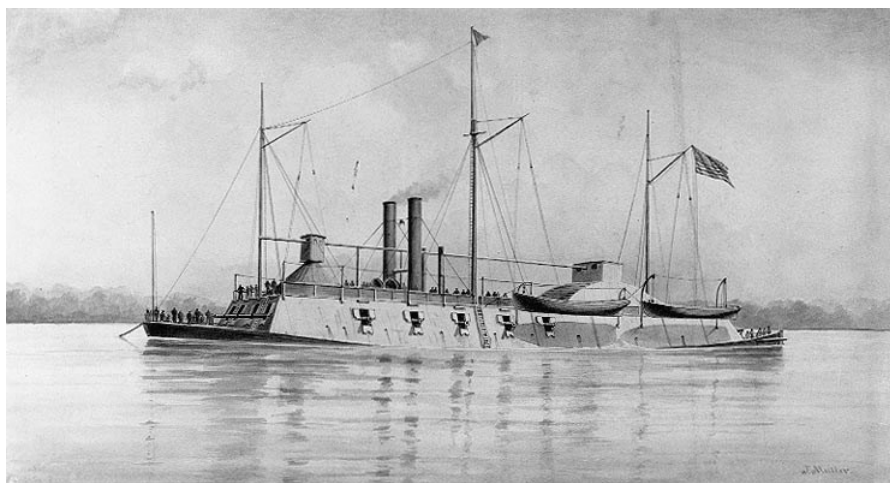
## U.S.S. *Benton*

Commissioned in February 1862, the U.S.S. *Benton* was an ironclad river gunboat. She was originally a center-wheel catamaran salvage "snagboat," Submarine No. 7. Following her conversion she joined Admiral Andrew Foote's Mississippi River Command.



Cover addressed to a crew member in Cairo, IL, with endorsement "On board U.S. Gunboat Benton," with US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Newark, N.J./Dec 19, 1862" double-circle datestamp.

*Benton's* initial engagement was as part of Admiral Andrew Foote's command, where she participated in the Battle of Island Number Ten in March and April 1862. On 10 May, she was present for the Battle of Plum Point Bend where a Confederate ram flotilla ambushed the fleet, sinking the *Cincinnati* and the *Mound City*. On June 6, *Benton* and the fleet, now supported by a flotilla of Union rams under the command of Colonel Charles Ellet, Jr. engaged the Confederate rams in the Battle of Memphis where the Confederate flotilla was destroyed. In October 1862, the fleet was transferred from Army to Navy command, and *Benton*



*Benton* served in the western theater from her commission in 1862 through the end of hostilities in 1865. She played a major role in numerous actions and engagements.

spent the remainder of the year patrolling the Yazoo River. She served at Vicksburg under Admiral David Porter in April 1863. On 10 March 1864, *Benton* led a large fleet up the Red River to aid the Army in subduing Shreveport, LA. By the end of the war in 1865, most of the action had been resolved in the western theater, and *Benton's* last significant action was to steam back up the Red River in June to take possession of C.S.S. *Missouri*, which had been captured.



# MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

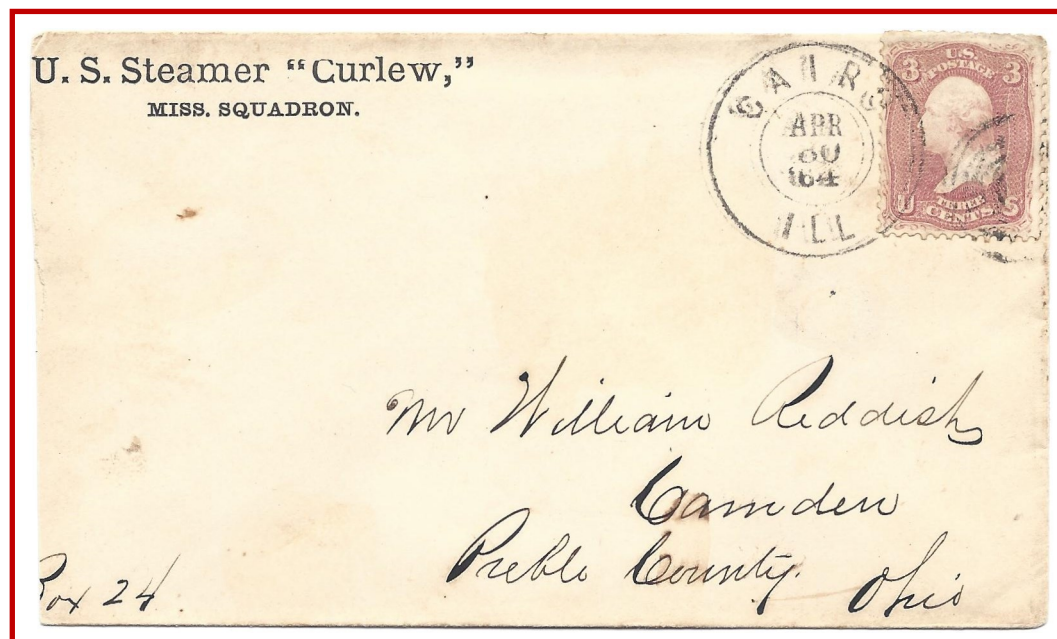
U.S.S. *Carondelet*

U.S.S. *Curlew*



Cover addressed to "Mr. Scott D. Jordan, Acting Ensign, U.S. Steamer. Carondelet, Miss. Squadron, via Cairo, Illinois," US 3¢ 1861 tied by circular grid cancel with matching "Portland, ME" double-circle dates-tamp and "DUE/6" in arc handstamp.

U.S.S. *Carondelet* was one of the seven ironclad Eads City-class gunboats. She saw action at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Island 10, White River, Memphis, Vicksburg and Red River.



Cover to Camden, OH, with printed endorsement "U.S. Steamer 'Curlew', Miss. Squadron" (Milgram 324), US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Cairo, Ill./Apr 30 '64" double circle duplex cancel with circular grid.

This cover with printed endorsement for the Mississippi Squadron was mailed from Cairo, at the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, which was an important supply base for the Mississippi River Squadron.

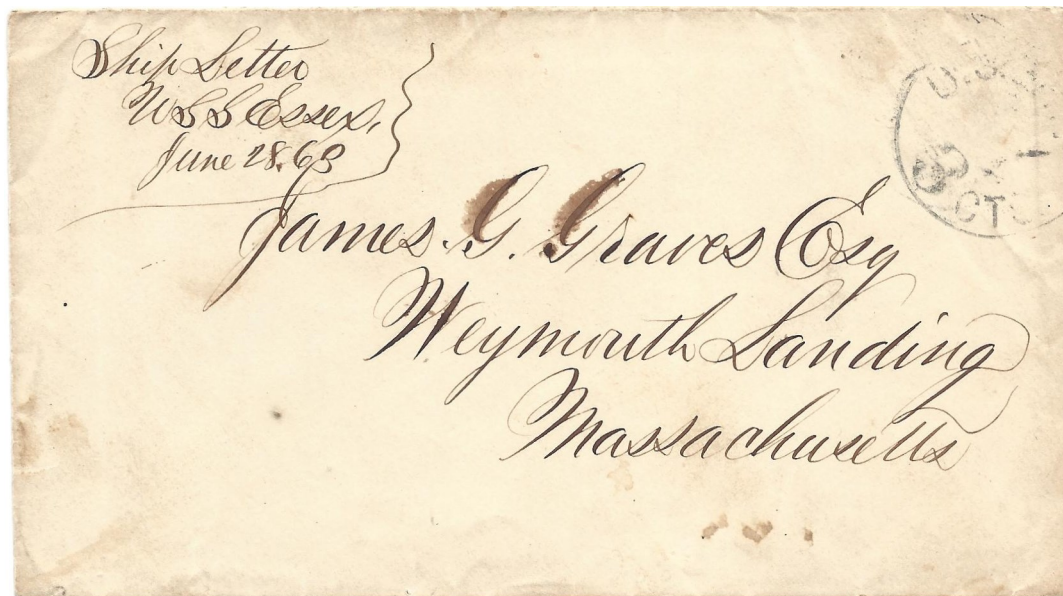
U.S.S. *Curlew* was a tinclad stern-wheel gunboat. Also known as Tinclad No. 12, she was launched as the *Florence* at Pittsburgh in early 1862 and purchased by the Navy in December 1862 and commissioned as *Curlew* in February 1863. She operated as part of the Mississippi River Flotilla on the Mississippi and her tributaries, her eight howitzers making her ideal for bombardment of Confederate positions.



# MISSISSIPPI RIVER SQUADRON

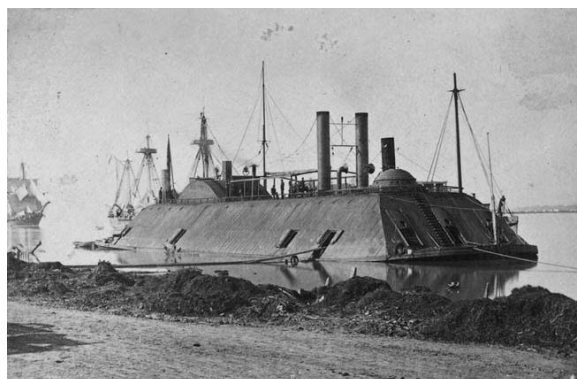
U.S.S. *Essex*

U.S.S. *Rover*



Cover to Weymouth Landing, MA, with manuscript endorsement "Ship Letter, USS Essex, June 28, 63" and handstamped with a partial "U.S. SHIP/3cts." in circle (Milgram SH-15).

U.S.S. *Essex* was an ironclad river gunboat launched as the *New Era* in 1856. In 1861, she was acquired by the Army and outfitted as a timberclad, initially joining General Foote's Western Gunboat Flotilla and taking part in a Cumberland River expedition. Soon afterwards, she was renamed U.S.S. *Essex* and refitted with iron armor. In February 1862, she took part in the attack on Fort Henry, TN. In October 1862, she was transferred from the Army to the Navy and took part in the capture of Fort Hudson and was part of the Red River Campaign.



Cover addressed to "Symmes E. Browne, Ensign, Gunboat Signal, Western Flotilla, Cairo, Ill." and redirected to "Hospital. Red. Rover," US 3¢ 1861 tied by "Cincinnati O./May 26" double-circle duplex grid (1863); backstamped with a large "RECEIVED/ \*CAIRO Ill\*", May 28, 1863 and docketed "Recd, Red Rover, June 14, 1863".



U.S.S. *Red Rover* was a side-wheel steamer that initially served the Confederate Navy. Following its capture by the Union, she was renamed and served as the Navy's first hospital ship and the first to have female nurses, thereby becoming the forerunner of the Navy Nurses Corps. She treated more than 2,400 patients while serving the Mississippi Squadron until the end of the War, and also provided medical supplies to Navy ships along the Western Rivers.





## PRIZE COURT

Captured ships and their cargoes were sold at auction and the proceeds split among the sailors. The amount garnered for a prize of war varied considerably, but in four years the total prize money accumulated to approximately \$25 million (about \$5.2 billion in 2020 dollars using a 3.5% inflation factor).

### Claim for Prize Money

Vessel *Annie*

*Special Return Discharge*

CLAIM  
FOR  
PRIZE MONEY  
OF  
*George Beller*  
*U.S.S. Alabama*

*Ready C.F.C.*

*Disch returned B.P.D.*

*[Signature]*

FILED BY  
SAMUEL V. NILES,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
*Sept 4, 1865*

From SAMUEL V. NILES,  
"Military and Naval Agency,"  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*George Beller* do solemnly swear  
that I am the identical *George Beller* who served by  
that name as a *Capt. of the U.S.S. Alabama* on board the United States *Steamer*  
*Alabama* from *June* 1864 to  
*August 23rd* 1864, and who is named in the Certificate of Discharge dated  
*August 23rd* 1864 signed by *Capt. Geo. Beller*  
which is herewith presented and surrendered (see Note).  
*I have no home and will live my claim*  
*made special that I may have money*  
*and for the service as per approp.*

I ALSO SOLEMNLY SWEAR that I am now *thirty* years of age;  
am a native of *New York* that I enlisted at  
*May* 1864 into the grade of *Seaman*  
day of *May* 1864 into the grade of *Seaman*  
that my ship's number was *1120* and that I performed  
duty on board of the *Alabama* named *Steamer Alabama*  
*during the time I was on the ser-*  
*vise*  
that during the time that I served on board the *Alabama*  
she captured the following prizes, viz: *Steamer Annie*

I ALSO SOLEMNLY SWEAR that I have not made any previous or other application for the prize money  
due me.

that I reside at *Washington D.C.* in the County of *Dist. of Columbia*  
and State of *D.C.* and am employed as a *Seaman*  
*Generally put at present out of em-*  
*ployment*

And for the purpose of procuring the amount due as above stated, I authorize the Navy Agent at Washington City  
to deliver the draft, check, or certificate of indebtedness, payable to my order, to SAMUEL V. NILES, of Washington  
City, who is authorized to present and prosecute my claim, and to receipt for me and in my name for the amount due.

*Charles Deane* *George Beller*  
*Richard [unclear]* *mon*  
(Claimant's Signature)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this *29th* day of *August* A. D.  
1865; and I certify that to my knowledge the statement of deponent in regard to his residence and employ-  
ment is true, my knowledge of deponent being derived from *his personal appearance*  
*and the duly authenticated documents and the an-*  
*deavor of competent witnesses*

and I also certify that the above named deponent appears to be about the age stated by him, that he is about  
*five* feet *three* inches high, of *dark* complexion, *thick*  
hair, and *blue* eyes.

*M. Friedman*  
*(imp. of Seely)*

Photocopy of inside panel  
detailing application. Image 50%

Prize Court Claim for prize money by Captain George Beller, senior officer on the U.S.S. Alabama, a Union blockading vessel that served the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Three US 5¢ revenue stamps are affixed as well as New York notary seals. He claims prizes made in October 1864 for the capture of the steamer *Annie*, which was seized at New Inlet, NC, and found to have contraband cargo of cotton, tobacco and turpentine. The application was filed by Samuel V. Niles, a prominent Washington DC attorney who represented claimants in trials for Prize Court spoils.



# PRIZE COURT

Claim for Prize Money

Vessels *Cheshire* and *Cargo*

person who served on board the United States ship *Augusta* as a *Private of Marines* from *Sept.* 1861 to *August* 1863 and who is named in the discharge dated *Aug. 22<sup>d</sup> 1863* and signed by *Thos. E. Reynolds* *Post.* which he affixed in their presence to this original receipt; that their knowledge of him was obtained

And they further depose that they have no interest in the claim of the said *Andrew Keck* for Prize Money.

Witness *John Treveling*  
Witness *Leesman*

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year above written, before me

(To be signed by the authenticating Officer,)

*L. L. Ottanger* Notary Public.

APPLICATION FOR  
**PRIZE MONEY.**

PERSON OUT OF SERVICE.

Name *Andrew Keck*

Rate *Private of Marines*

U.S.S. *Augusta*

*RECEIVED*  
FOURTH AUDITOR'S OFFICE  
TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
JUN 23 1869

GEO. W. MELVIN,  
175 SOUTH STREET,  
NEW-YORK.

*Discharge rec'd, June 23/69.*  
*J. A. B.*

Prize Court Claim for prize money by Andrew Keck, Private of Marines, U.S.S. *Augusta*, a 220 foot side-wheel steamer that served the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Two US 5¢ revenue stamps are affixed as well as notary seals and Blue oval handstamps of the Fourth Auditor's Office/Treasury Department/Jun 23, 1869. He claims prizes made in 1861 for the vessels *Cheshire* and *Cargo*.



# PRIZE COURT

## Claim for Prize Money

## Vessels *Cheshire* and Cargo

67,421

CLAIMANT

*John Kelly*

OF *Seaman*

*Augusta*

FORWARDED BY

CHARLES H. SWAN,

192 South St. New York.

*Filed Pd for Waterman*

*Not on to 235*

*May 8/09 -*

*Waterman*

*Recd May 3/04*

STATE OF NEW YORK—County of New York, ss.

On this *2d* day of *May*, 1864, before me, a Commissioner of Deeds, in and for the County aforesaid, duly qualified to administer oaths, personally appeared *W. W. Frozier* residing at *New York* and employed as *Seaman* and also *James Smith* residing at *New York* and employed as *Seaman*, who are known to me as credible witnesses, residing and employed as stated, and who, being duly sworn, depose and say: That they reside and are employed as aforesaid: that they have a personal knowledge of *John Kelly*, who signed the oath of identity in their presence; and that he is the identical person who served on board the United States ship *Augusta* as a *Seaman* from *August*, 1861 to *September 17th*, 1862 and who is named in the discharge dated *17 Sep*, 1862, and signed by *R. W. Meade, C. S. McDonough and W. G. Murey*, in *Philadelphia*, which he affixed in their presence to this oath of identity; that their knowledge of him was obtained by inquiry and investigation, *and from a Personal acquaintance*.

And they further depose that they have no interest in the claim of the said *John Kelly* for prize money.

Witnesses Sign here: *W. W. Frozier*  
*James Smith*

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year above written before me.

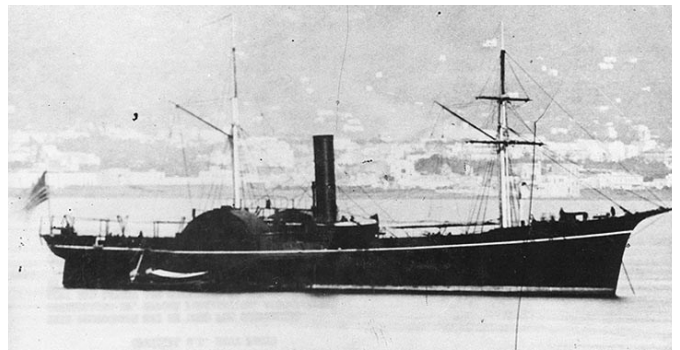
*Harold S. S. S. S.*  
*Notary Public*

To be acknowledged before a Justice of the Peace, a Commissioner of Deeds, Notary Public or Clerk of a Court.

Payable at the ARMY AND NAVY AGENT'S OFFICE, No. 192 South Street. Claims against the Government will be Collected and Paid here as at WASHINGTON.

CHARLES H. SWAN,  
Army and Navy Claim Agent,  
No. 192 South Street.

Photocopy of second page of inside panel detailing application. Image 45%



The U.S.S. *Augusta*

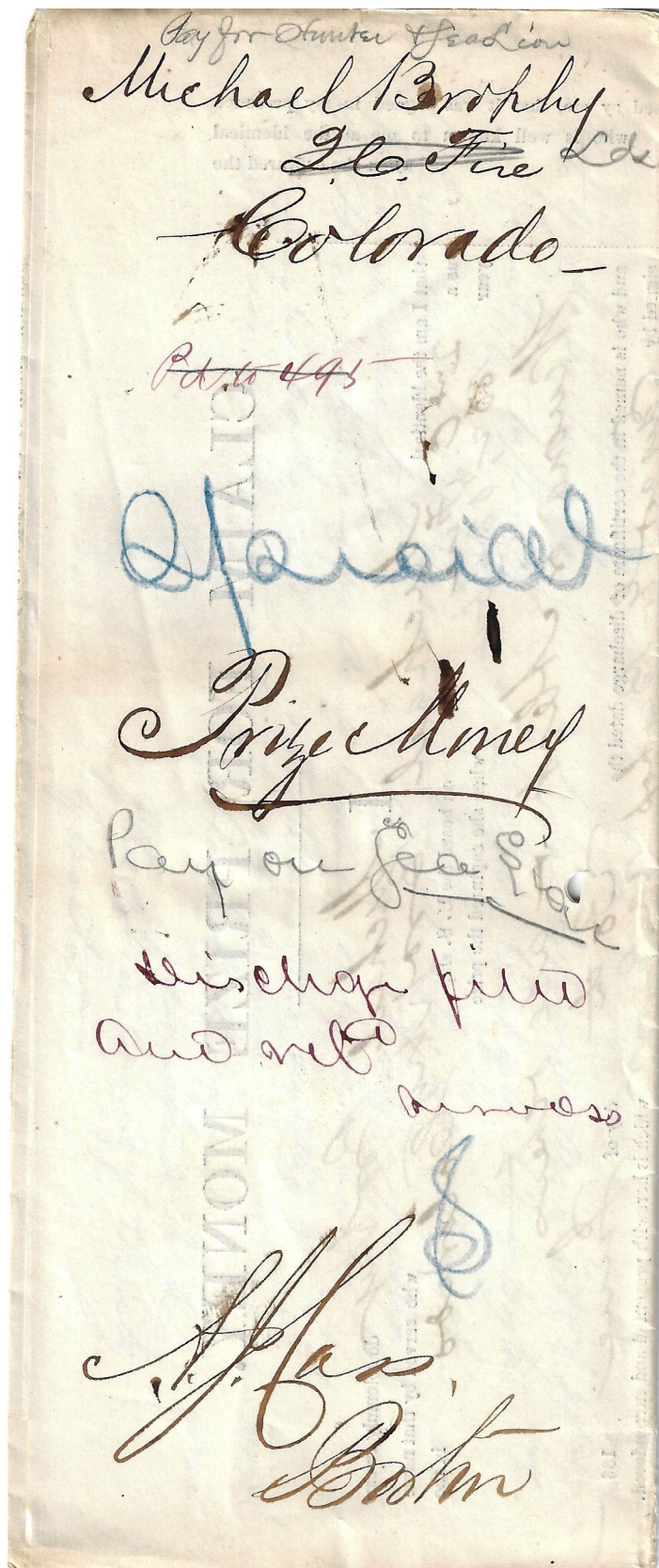
Prize Court Claim dated 2 May 1864 filed by John Kelly, Seaman, U.S.S. *Augusta*, who served from August 1861 through September 1862. Two US 5¢ revenue stamps are affixed as well as notary seals. Like the preceding page, Kelly claims prizes made in 1861 for the vessels *Cheshire* and others. While both documents are filed in the State of New York for the same prizes, they differ significantly in form.



# PRIZE COURT

## Claim for Prize Money

## Vessels Winnona and Others



**CLAIM FOR PRIZE MONEY.**

I, Michael Brophy, do solemnly swear that I am the identical Michael Brophy who served by that name on board the U. S. ship Colorado in the year 1862, 1863 & 1864, when she captured the prize Winnona or Alert & all others and who is named in the certificate of discharge dated the 30th day of June 1865 signed by Edward G. Bishop, Paymaster which is herewith presented and surrendered.

I also solemnly swear that I am now 21 years of age, am a native of Halifax, N.S.; that I enlisted at Boston on or about the day of July 1862, into the grade of Landman and my ship's number was 1862. I also declare that I have not made any previous application for the prize money now claimed by me; and further that I now reside at Boston, Mass. and am un-employed. I also declare that I am unable to find any commissioned or warrant officer of my said vessel.

Witness my hand and seal this 17th day of July 1865.

Edward G. Bishop Paymaster  
Francis Brown Witness

Michael Brophy

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
County of Suffolk

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 17th day of July 1865, and I certify that to my knowledge the statement of deponent in regard to his residence and employment is true, my knowledge of deponent being derived from Shipsmates now present.

And I also certify that the above-named deponent appears to be about the age stated by him; that he is about 5 feet 9 inches in height; of Light complexion, Dark hair, and Blue eyes.

Edward G. Bishop Justice of the Peace.

Also, at the same time personally appeared Francis Brown, residing at Boston and un-employed as Landman, who are known to me as credible witnesses, residing and employed as stated, and who, being duly sworn, depose and say, that they depose and are employed as aforesaid; that they have a personal knowledge of Michael Brophy, who signed the foregoing oath of identity.

Police Court of the City of Boston, July 17th 1865

Jacob Hornum Assistant Clerk  
of the Police Court of the City of Boston

I do hereby certify that Edward G. Bishop, before whom the within affidavits were taken was at the date thereof a Justice of the Peace within and for said County, duly authorized to administer oaths, and his attestations are entitled to credit. I believe his signature thereto to be genuine.

Jacob Hornum Assistant Clerk  
of the Police Court of the City of Boston

Photocopy of inside panel detailing application. Image 45%

The *Colorado* was a three-masted steam screw frigate commissioned in March 1858. During the War she initially served as the flagship for the Gulf Blockading Squadron. Because she was built for fighting at sea with a deep draft, she was unable to participate in the Battle of New Orleans, but she served in the blockading force off Mobile AL, later joining the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and participating in the bombardment and capture of Fort Fisher at Wilmington NC in January 1865.

Prize Court Claim for prize money by Michael Brophy, who served aboard the U.S.S. *Colorado* from 1862 through 1864. Three US 5¢ revenue stamps are affixed as well as notary seals and various affidavits related to the application, dated 17 July 1865 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



# PRIZE COURT

Claim for Prize Money

Vessels *Tennessee, Selma, Gaines, Florida, Ivanhoe, Ingoman* and others

242/64

No. ....

**ISAAC HACKETT,**  
Attorney and Claim Advocate,

OFFICE:  
221 Penn. Ave., opposite Willards' Hotel,  
**WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Respectfully referred to the Fourth Auditor of  
U. S. Treasury Department.

APPLICATION OF  
*John A. Sutton*  
late of the U. S. S. "*Brooklyn*"  
a *Seaman*

FOR PRIZE MONEY.  
"*Tennessee, Selma, & others*"  
*Mobile Bay, captured -*  
Filed *October 7* 1867

Certificate Payable by Paymaster at  
*New York City*

Respectfully, your obedient servant,  
*I. Hackett*

54 Nov 1/87

Application for Prize Money.  
PERSON OUT OF SERVICE.

I, *John A. Sutton*, do solemnly swear,  
that I am the identical *John A. Sutton*,  
who served by that name as a *Seaman*  
on board the United States Ship *Brooklyn* in the  
year 1864, when she captured the Prizes "*Tennessee, Selma, Gaines, Florida,*  
*Ivanhoe, Ingoman, 3 Schooners and Cargoes.*"

and who is named in the certificate of discharge, dated *September 11*  
1867, signed by *Paymaster George Munkat, U.S.N.* which was  
*received on 1st of Oct by 2d Paymaster*  
I also solemnly swear that I am now *about five*  
years of age, am a native of *Brooklyn, New York*,  
that I enlisted at *Brooklyn, New York* on  
or about the *1st* day of *April* 1864  
in the grade of *Seaman*, that  
my ship's number was *50*. I also solemnly swear that  
I have not made any previous assignment of, or application for, the prize money now claimed by me,  
and authorize **GEORGE W. HELVIN**, to collect the same.

and further, that I now reside at *New York City*  
and am employed as *Unemployed*  
(Signed by Claimant) *John A. Sutton*

Witness *Hugh Hamilton*  
Witness *Samuel Hollman*  
Sworn to and subscribed before me this *1st* day of *October*  
A. D. 1867, and I certify that to my knowledge, the statement of deponent in regard to his residence and  
employment is true, my knowledge of deponent being derived from *General Examination*

and I also certify that the above-named deponent appears to be about the age stated by him, that he  
is about *50* years of age, *5* feet *8* inches in height; of *Dark* complexion  
and *Dark* hair, and *Dark* eyes.

Notary Public

TO ESTABLISH IDENTITY.  
I Certify, that the signature to the foregoing Oath of Identity is witnessed by me; that it  
was signed in my presence by *John A. Sutton*, and that *John A. Sutton*  
who is well known to me as the identical person who served by that name on board the United States  
ship *Brooklyn* when she captured the

U. S. Navy.

Photocopy of inside panel  
detailing application. Image 45%

Prize Court Claim filed by John A. Sutton, Quarter Gunner and Seaman, who served aboard the U.S.S. *Brooklyn* in 1864. Two US 5¢ revenue stamps are affixed as well as notary seals and various affidavits related to the application, dated 1 October 1867 in the State of New York.