

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS
PAMPHLET DESCRIBING M909

**Papers Pertaining to
Vessels of or Involved With
the Confederate States
of America
"Vessel Papers"**



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON: 1973

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War Department Collection of Confederate Records

Record Group 109

in the National Archives Building

PAPERS PERTAINING TO VESSELS OF OR INVOLVED
WITH THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA
"VESSEL PAPERS"

On the 32 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced an index volume and papers pertaining to vessels of or involved with the Confederate States of America, "Vessel Papers." The series consists of several thousand alphabetically arranged jacketed files, most, but not all, of which pertain to vessels that served the Confederate Government from 1861 to 1865. The "Vessel Papers" are a part of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109.

The "Vessel Papers"

Most of the original papers reproduced in this microfilm publication were created by the Confederate War and Treasury Departments. After the Civil War the records were among those of the Confederacy that came into U.S. War Department custody. A number of years later, the present series of "Vessel Papers" was assembled by the Archive Office and its successor, the Confederate Archives Division, in the War Department.

The Archive Office originated officially with a War Department order of July 21, 1865, which specified "That a Bureau be organized in the Adjutant General's Office for the collection, safekeeping, and publication of the Rebel Archives that have come into the possession of this Government." The office was officially designated as the "Archive Office of the War Department" by a subsequent issuance of August 23, 1865, and on August 19, 1867, it was officially rendered an integral part of the Adjutant General's Office. An order of July 24, 1880, directed that the Archive Office be merged into the War Records Office of the War Department, but a modification of August 10, 1880, placed it in the Record Division of the Office of the Secretary of War. The Archive Office, now designated the Confederate Archives Division, was once again placed under the Adjutant General's Office by an order of February 7, 1888, and remained there until transferred to the War Department Record and Pension Office by an order of May 15, 1894.

Custody by the War Department offices of the records comprising the "Vessel Papers" is indicated by stamps that appear on many of the documents. The most frequently used stamp is a large oval one reading "Record Division, Rebel Archives, War Department," apparently a designation used by the Archive Office. A variety of smaller oval stamps can also be found, including those reading "Office of Secretary of War, Record Division," "Adjutant General's Office, Confederate Archives Division," and "Confederate Archives." Occasionally the date appears on the stamp.

The "Vessel Papers" was one of several files created during the late 19th century to facilitate research in claims cases. Following the Civil War, Southern citizens filed claims seeking compensation for property losses allegedly inflicted by Union forces. The Treasury and Justice Departments, Southern Claims Commission, Court of Claims, and congressional claims committees were involved in processing these cases, and all, upon occasion, required documentary evidence based upon the Confederate records in War Department custody. If disloyalty of claimant could be established by documenting services performed for the Confederacy, the claim could then be disallowed at a great saving to the Government.

Many of the claims submitted were from Southern vessel owners or their heirs, and the Archive Office listed 66 such cases pending before the Southern Claims Commission in 1873. The "Vessel Papers" were assembled during the following decade to facilitate reference in these instances, and the present arrangement apparently was perfected before 1890. Subsequent additions, however, were made as late as the 20th century.

Content

The "Vessel Papers" relate to vessels involved in any way with the Confederate Government. Most of the files in the series are relatively small, containing few, and, in many instances, no original Confederate documents. Some files, however, do contain larger aggregations of papers, and a select list of these appears as appendix A to this publication. Most of the files pertain to privately owned shipping that carried passengers or freight for the Confederacy, but a number of the files also pertain to vessels of the Confederate States Navy or Government. Some files also pertain to non-Confederate shipping, including British and other foreign vessels that entered and departed from Confederate ports and Union merchant or naval vessels that either engaged in actions with Confederate ships or were captured by the Confederates. A few files do not pertain to specific vessels but to shipping companies and other miscellaneous subjects, and they are listed both in the accompanying index volume and in appendix B.

Most of the documents in the "Vessel Papers" are dated 1861-65. Frequently encountered are vouchers and voucher abstracts pertaining to the transportation of passengers or freight for the Confederate Government. The series also includes correspondence, papers pertaining to accounts, receipts, invoices, requisitions, claims, contracts and agreements, bills of lading, passenger and crew lists, shipping articles, muster rolls and payrolls, reports of persons and articles hired, insurance policies, ships' licenses, reports of the Second Auditor of the Confederate Treasury Department regarding vessel claims, accounts of proceedings in Confederate prize courts, decrees of condemnation and sale, and lists of foreign vessels entering and leaving Confederate

ports. In an atypical instance, the file for the cruiser C.S.S. *Alabama* includes original plans drafted by the Laird Company in Great Britain, which constructed the vessel.

Some of the documents in the "Vessel Papers" predate or postdate the Civil War. Most of the earlier items pertain to vessels operating before 1861, which later served the Confederacy or were captured by Confederate forces. Post-Civil War documents generally pertain to claims actions instituted from the 1870's to 1890's and include copies of congressional bills relating to vessel claims, House of Representatives and Senate documents, and research compilations by the Archive Office and the Confederate Archives Division.

Many of the files constituting the "Vessel Papers" contain references prepared by the Archive Office and the Confederate Archives Division. In some instances the information appears on the file jackets, but usually on cards placed within. There are some cross-references to the other files reproduced in this microfilm publication. More frequently, however, the references are to related series in Record Group 109, which are not reproduced here but are available in some instances as other National Archives microfilm publications. The citations include references to chaptered and numbered book records; letters received by the Confederate Secretary of War, the Adjutant and Inspector General, and the Quartermaster General; vouchers among the papers relating to citizens or business firms ("Citizens File"); payrolls for civilian and slave labor; letters received by military commands; returns of port collectors; military inspection reports; sequestration papers; and other series. There are also references to the published War and Navy Department compilations *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (1881-1901) and *The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies* (1894-1922). Frequently, files consist solely of reference cards (or jackets containing the information) and no original papers.

Arrangement and Indexing

The files constituting the "Vessel Papers" are arranged in rough alphabetical order by name of particular vessel or subject to which they pertain. Each file is preceded by an identifying jacket indicating the name and type of the vessel and the file number assigned by the War Department. The file numbers found on the jackets, papers, and index consist of a letter denoting the general alphabetical heading of the file followed by a number to indicate the relative sequence within that heading. Documents within files were numbered consecutively by the War Department, the numbers appearing as the third part of the file citation on individual papers.

Some aspects of arrangement present certain problems and should be noted. Occasional files pertain to more than one vessel, usually different vessels of the same name. The file jackets may not indicate this situation, as in some instances the clerks assembling the files were apparently unable to make such distinctions. More frequently, the identification of a vessel on the file jacket is inexact or incomplete. For example, a particular ship will be described simply as a steamer rather than as a private transport steamer or a blockade-running steamer. Lastly, all of the papers in this series relating to a particular vessel may not be located in the file specifically created for it. Many of the individual papers pertain to more than one vessel but could obviously be placed in only one file. Frequently, there are cross-references to such documents in other files. If a particular vessel underwent a name change, there may be files for it under each designation; e.g., the U.S.S. *Harriet Lane* (file H-15), later the C.S.S. *Lavinia* (file L-120).

The entries in the accompanying index volume are in alphabetical order and contain the same identifying information as the file jackets. In addition, vessels are frequently cross-indexed under a number of variations in the wording of their names. Occasionally, two file citations will follow a given vessel name, generally indicating different files pertaining to vessels of the same or similar name.

Related Records

Materials related to the "Vessel Papers" are found elsewhere in Record Group 109, and most of the pertinent series have been reproduced as National Archives microfilm publications. Another file assembled by the Archive Office and the Confederate Archives Division has been reproduced as M346, *Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms ("Citizens File")*. This series includes documents pertaining to some shipping companies, and files for their vessels may be found among the "Vessel Papers." There are also vouchers for various individuals who leased their vessels to the Confederate Government. Information pertaining to all of the types of vessels represented in the "Vessel Papers" has been microfilmed as M437, *Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-1865*; M474, *Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-1865*; and M469, *Letters Received by the Confederate Quartermaster General, 1861-1865*. Finding aids to the letters are available as M409, *Index to Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-1865*, and M410, *Index to Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General and the Confederate Quartermaster General, 1861-1865*. Of interest regarding the Confederate States Navy is M260, *Records Relating to Confederate Naval and Marine Personnel*.

Many records pertaining to Confederate vessels are in the Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Record Group 45. Records of the Confederate States Navy include muster rolls and payrolls, logs, and account books for naval vessels. Other records relating to the Confederate Navy and blockade-running vessels are found in the "Subject File," including papers pertaining to the construction, design, repair, armament, and equipment of the ships, and to battles in which they participated. Records of the Union Navy also contain information relating to Confederate vessels. A number of series relate to various Confederate vessels captured by Union ships and subsequently the subject of prize cases. Records of the Union blockading squadrons, the ships of which frequently encountered Southern vessels, are available as M89, *Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy From Commanding Officers of Squadrons ("Squadron Letters")*, 1841-1886. Documents relating to Confederate vessels and the waters in which they operated are reproduced as M625, *Area File of the Naval Records Collection, 1775-1910* (areas 4-8).

Among the Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group 92, is a series of charters, bills of lading, claims papers, plans, and correspondence relating to vessels ("Vessel File"), 1834-1900. A number of the individual files pertain to Confederate vessels captured by U.S. forces or former U.S. vessels later captured or otherwise acquired by the Confederates. In some instances, as for example the U.S.S. *Harriet Lane*, which was captured by the Confederates, there is documentation in both the "Vessel Papers" in Record Group 109 and the "Vessel File" in Record Group 92.

These introductory remarks were written by Robert H. Gruber.

APPENDIX A
Select List of Larger Files Among the "Vessel Papers"

<u>File No.</u>	<u>Name of Vessel</u>	<u>Type or Service Performed</u>
A-3	<i>Admiral</i>	Private transport steamer
A-6	<i>Alabama</i>	Blockade-running steamer
A-11	<i>Alonzo Child</i>	Steamer captured by United States
A-21	<i>A. P. Hurt</i>	Private transport steamer
A-28	<i>A. G. Ross</i>	Private transport steamer
A-38	<i>A. W. Quarrier</i>	Private transport steamer seized by United States
A-42	<i>A. B. Thompson</i>	Captured prize vessel
A-72 1/2	<i>A. S. Lee</i>	Canalboat
B-8	<i>Beulah</i>	Private transport
B-28	<i>Banshee</i>	Blockade-running steamer
B-36	<i>B. K. Eaton</i> <i>Betsy Ames</i> <i>Elsinore</i>	Captured prize brigs
C-11	<i>Cherokee</i>	Private transport steamer
C-12	<i>Chester Ashley</i>	Private transport steamer
C-15	<i>Clipper</i>	Private transport steamer
C-18	<i>Commodore Farrand</i>	Private transport steamer
C-20	<i>Coquette</i>	Private transport steamer
C-35	<i>Curtis Peck</i>	C.S. naval steamer sunk as obstruction
C-70	<i>Charles T. Smythe</i> or <i>Sallie</i>	C.S. privateer schooner
C-225	<i>Cairo</i>	U.S. gunboat
C-253	<i>Charles LeGrande</i>	Canalboat
D-6	<i>Denbigh</i>	Blockade-running steamer
D-9	<i>Diana</i>	Private transport steamer
D-21	<i>Duke</i>	Private transport steamer
D-30	<i>Dixie</i>	C.S. privateer schooner
E-15	<i>Empire Parish</i>	Private transport steamer
F-1	<i>Fair Play</i>	C.S. transport, subsequently U.S. gunboat
F-6	<i>Florida</i>	C.S. blockade-running steamer
F-8	<i>Flirt</i>	Private transport steamer
G-7	<i>General Beauregard</i>	Private transport steamer and C.S. gunboat
G-21 1/2	<i>Earl Van Dorn</i>	C.S. gunboat
G-31	<i>Gross Fete</i>	Private transport steamer

<u>File No.</u>	<u>Name of Vessel</u>	<u>Type or Service Performed</u>
G-37	<i>Giraffe</i>	Blockade-running steamer
G-39	<i>Glen</i>	Prize barque
G-68	<i>Georgia</i>	C.S. ironclad floating battery
H-12	<i>Henry J. King</i>	Private transport steamer
H-15	<i>Harriet Lane</i>	U.S. and later C.S. naval vessel
J-1	<i>Jackson</i>	Private transport steamer
J-35	<i>Jeff Davis</i>	Private river transport
J-48	<i>Jeff Davis</i>	C.S. privateer brig
J-49	<i>Joseph</i>	Captured prize brig
K-4	<i>Kate McLaurin</i>	Private transport steamer
L-11	<i>LeGrande</i>	Private transport steamer
L-18	<i>Little Cherokee</i>	Private transport steamer
L-23	<i>Logan</i>	C.S. transport steamer
L-35	<i>Lucy</i>	Blockade-running steamer
M-52	<i>Morgan</i>	C.S. revenue cutter
M-81	<i>Morning Light</i>	Captured U.S. vessel
M-87	<i>Malvern</i>	Canalboat
N-1	<i>Natchez</i>	C.S. gunboat
N-11	<i>North Carolina</i> <i>North Carolina</i>	C.S. gunboat Private transport steamer
P-6	<i>Paul Jones</i>	C.S. transport and store-ship
R-10	<i>Reindeer</i>	Private transport steamer
R-26	<i>R. B. Taney</i>	Private transport steamer
S-12	<i>Seaboard</i>	Private steamer used by C.S. Engineer Dept.
S-14	<i>Selma</i> <i>Selma</i>	C.S. gunboat Private transport steamer
S-15	<i>Senator No. 1</i> <i>Senator No. 2</i>	Private transport steamer Private transport steamer
S-18	<i>Southern Republic</i>	Private transport steamer
S-26	<i>St. Nicholas</i>	Private transport steamer
S-27	<i>St. Charles</i>	Private transport steamer
S-35	<i>Samuel Orr</i>	Captured U.S. transport steamer
T-10	<i>Twilight</i>	Private transport steamer

<u>File No.</u>	<u>Name of Vessel</u>	<u>Type or Service Performed</u>
V-5	<i>Virginia</i>	C.S. ironclad ram, formerly U.S.S. <i>Merrimac</i>
V-38	<i>Virginia</i> <i>Virginia</i>	Private transport steamer Private transport steamer
W-24	<i>W. W. Townes</i>	Private steamer used by C.S. Engineer Dept.
W-35	<i>William H. Webb</i>	C.S. gunboat

APPENDIX B

Files Containing Papers or References to
Subjects Other Than Individual Vessels

<u>File No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
A-7	Albemarle Steamboat Co., N.C.
A-241	Alabama Planters Steamboat Co. (one paper)
B-120	Blockade runners, partial listing in contemporary newspaper clipping
C-4	Cape Fear Steamboat Co., N.C.
C-60	Coosa River and Alabama Steamboat Co., Ala.
F-53	Florida Steam Packet Co. (one reference card)
F-72	Floating Dock or Charleston Drydock (one reference card)
J-212	James River steamboats, Va.
M-199	Miscellaneous, including a list of vessel cases pending before the Southern Claims Commission in 1873 with citations to claim numbers.
M-264	Montgomery Wharf, Ala.
N-77	C.S. Naval Rope Works (Rope Walk), Petersburg, Va. (two papers)
N-79	North Carolina Steamboat Co., Wilmington, N.C. (one paper)
O-1	Old Dominion Steamboat Co., Va.
O-56	Ocean Tow Boat Co., New Orleans, La. (one reference card)
P-27	Vessels burned in the Pamunkey River, Va. (one reference card)
S-80	Sullivan's Island Steamboat Co., Charleston, S.C. (one paper)
S-200	Southern Steamship Co., New Orleans, La. (two papers and one reference card)
V-33	Vessels, miscellaneous, including an 1863 published list of vessels transferred to British subjects
V-40	Virginia Towing Co. (several papers)

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