

Tales from the Blockade

This display is a collection of tales of blockade-running during the Civil War illustrated by postal artifacts. Many of these stand-alone stories would normally be considered outside the realm of a postal history exhibit, but taken together these tales provide the context for a deeper understanding of the artifacts as well as the subject.

Between 1861 and 1865 the Union Navy maintained a vigilant effort on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the Confederate States of America (CSA) designed to prevent the passage of trade goods, supplies, arms and even mail to and from the Confederacy. Ships that tried to evade the blockade, known as blockade-runners, were mostly special built, new steamers with small cargo capacity. They ran between Confederate ports and neutral ports including Nassau, Bahamas, and St. George's, Bermuda.

President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the blockade on April 19, 1861. To be legal, this required the effective closure of twelve major ports and some 3,500 miles of Confederate coastline. To this end, the Union commissioned 500 new ships. By the end of the war the Navy had captured 1,149 blockade-runners, and burned, ran aground, or destroyed a further 355. Cotton exports from the CSA were reduced from ten million bales in the three years prior to the war to just 500,000 bales during the blockade period.



Map showing location of the CSA ports (Wilmington and Charleston) and the neutral ports (St. George's and Nassau) referenced in this display.



Postal markings applied at Charleston and Wilmington to inbound blockade-run mail

Blockade-running could be a highly profitable enterprise. The outbound ships carried compact, high-value cargo such as cotton, turpentine or tobacco. Inbound vessels brought rifles, medicine, brandy, lingerie and coffee. It is estimated that two round trips a month, incurred \$80,000 in wages and expenses, and generated \$250,000 in revenue. If captured, the officers and crew of capturing blockade squadron ship divided the spoils after adjudication by a Prize Court. Mail was also important as the sole means of communication between the CSA and the world. Blockade-run mail often involved complex handling systems that took advantage of all available connections between CSA ports and the neutral ports thereby providing access to the US and Europe.

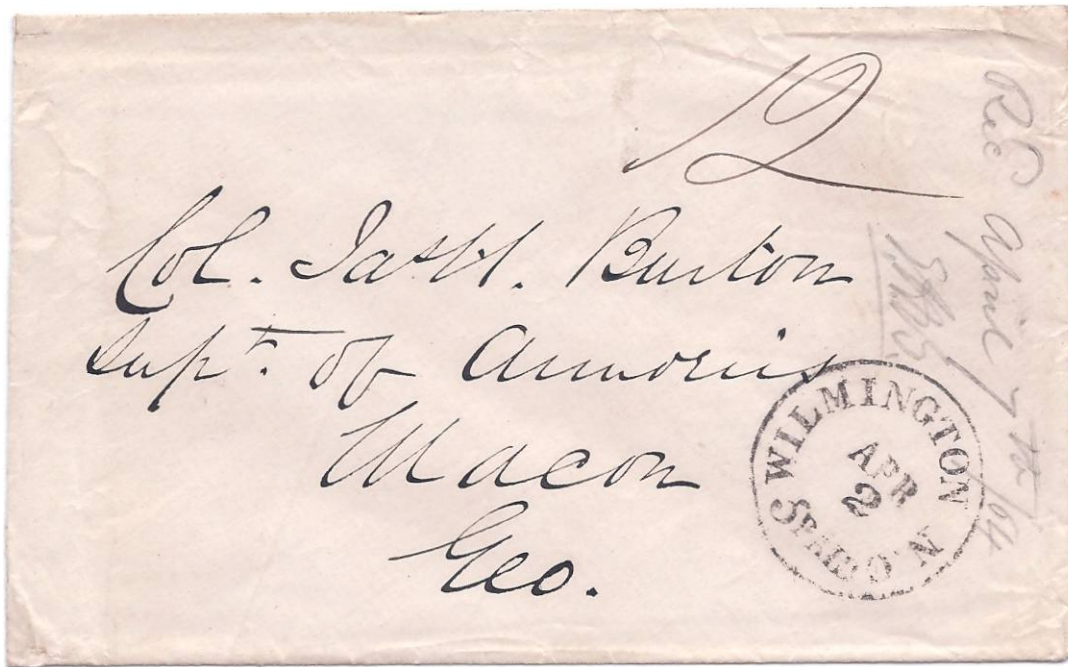
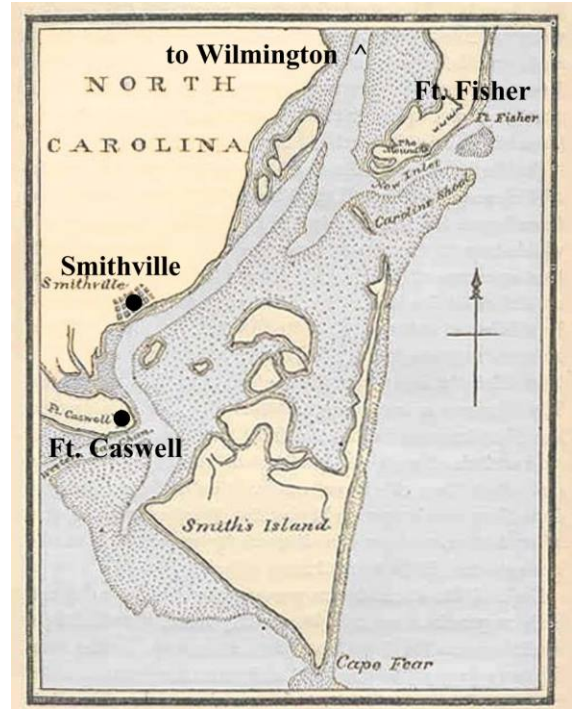
This display includes information about the specific ships that carried the mail where pertinent. The ship images have been drawn by Petr Merkulov based on the best available evidence and documentation.

Wilmington Harbor

Wilmington, North Carolina was the most active entry point for blockade-runners during the war. With Forts Fisher and Caswell, separated by fifty miles, protecting the two key inlets, the Federal blockading squadron had a difficult time covering the entire area.

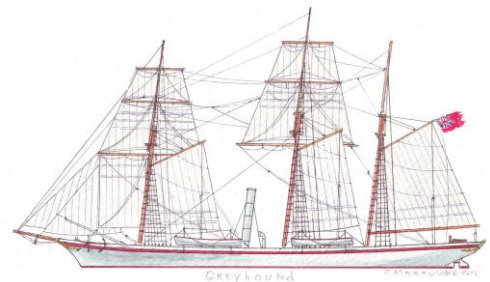
The blockade of Wilmington began on 14 July 1861. An outbreak of yellow fever in August 1862, precipitated by the arrival of blockade-runner *Kate* from Nassau, slowed traffic and resulted in quarantines. By November 1862 blockade-running traffic had resumed and continued until mid January 1865 when the harbor defenses were captured by the Federals.

The cover below is addressed to Colonel James H. Burton, Superintendent of the CSA Armories in Macon, Georgia.



29 March 1864 St. George's, Bermuda to Wilmington by blockade-runner *Greyhound* on its only trip
2 April 1864 arrived at Wilmington, manuscript 12¢ ship rate due

The *Greyhound*, a 201' iron hull single screw steamer
made only 1 blockade run before capture leaving port
10 May 1864 captured by USS *Connecticut* with famous female
CSA spy Belle Boyd onboard (she later married the USN officer)



Charleston Harbor

Charleston, South Carolina was particularly well suited as a port for blockade-running. It had the advantages of a deep-water anchorage and protected approaches even though navigation was difficult. More important, it was a major railway, commercial, and financial hub. Inbound goods could be rapidly distributed by rail to vital areas.

The blockade of Charleston began on 10 May 1861. After the July 1863 Federal campaign to take Morris Island, blockade-running slowed significantly. After the island fell into enemy hands on 18 September 1863, virtually all activity ceased due to CSA mining of the inlet. When those mines were removed in March 1864, blockade-running activity resumed using Beach Channel and continued until 17 February 1865.

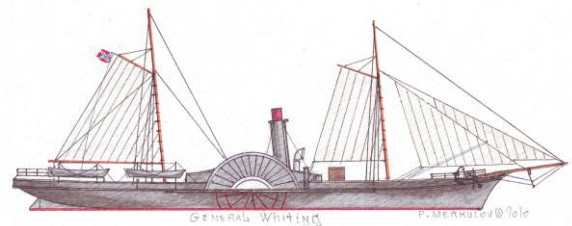


Per "Gen Whiting"



21 September 1864 Nassau, Bahamas to Charleston by blockade-runner *General Whiting*
26 September 1864 arrived at Charleston with Steam-Ship and pencil 12¢ ship rate due

The *General Whiting*, a 200' steamer
made 4 successful blockade runs
owned by Consolidated Steamship Company
survived the war

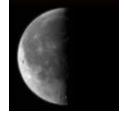


Once in a New Moon

The three to four day trip between the CSA ports and Nassau or St. George's was usually scheduled to take advantage of the darker nights near the occurrence of the new moon. This often resulted in clusters of ships departing together at nearly the same time. The blockading squadron's vigilance increased as well at these dates.

In addition to departing in near darkness, and to make the ships less easy to spot, they were generally painted a "lead" color and the steamers burned smoke-less anthracite coal.

Calendar of the Phases of the Moon for 1862



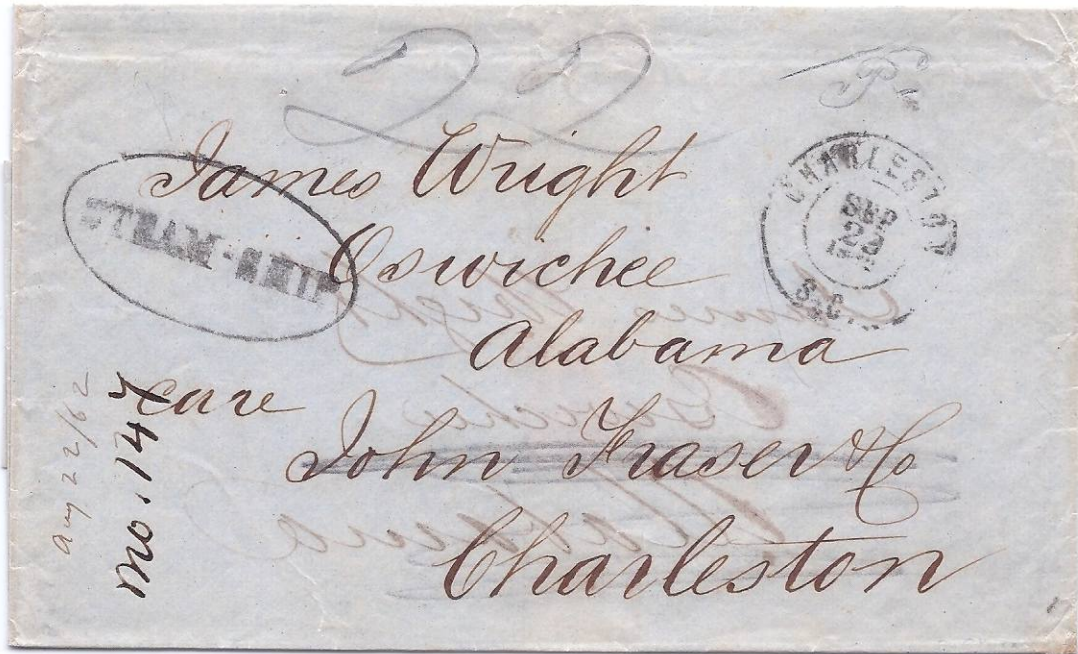
New Moon

First Quarter

Full Moon

Last Quarter

	Jan 7	Jan 16	Jan 23
Jan 30	Feb 6	Feb 14	Feb 21
Feb 28	Mar 8	Mar 16	Mar 22
Mar 30	Apr 7	Apr 14	Apr 21
Apr 28	May 7	May 13	May 20
May 28	Jun 5	Jun 12	Jun 19
Jun 27	Jul 4	Jul 11	Jul 18
Jul 26	Aug 3	Aug 9	Aug 17
Aug 25	Sep 1	Sep 8	Sep 16
Sep 23	Sep 30	Oct 7	Oct 15
Oct 23	Oct 29	Nov 6	Nov 14
Nov 21	Nov 28	Dec 6	Dec 14
Dec 21	Dec 27		



26 September 1862 Nassau, Bahamas to Charleston by blockade-runner *Kate*

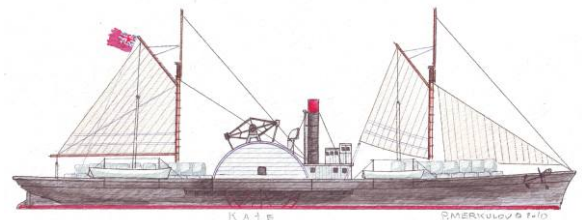
29 September 1862 arrived Charleston with Steam-Ship oval and 22¢ double ship rate due forwarded by John Fraser and Co., the ship owner, to Oswichee, Alabama

The *Kate* (I), a 165' wooden sidewheel steamer

made 20 successful blockade runs

owned by John Fraser & Co.

18 November 1862 ran aground



A Ferry Tale

One of the early prize court cases of the Civil War involved the steamer *Nuestra Senora de Regla* and the cover below which was presented as evidence of a legal seizure. The steamer was built in New York on behalf of a Spanish owned railway company in Cuba to be used as a ferry between port of Havana and the railroad terminus.

In November 1861 the steamer was forced for want of coal and poor weather to put into Port Royal, South Carolina (near Charleston). This after being allowed by the Blockade Squadron patrol to pass as a Spanish vessel. What happened next was described in the 21 December 1861 *New York Times*:

"After her entrance into Port Royal some suspicious circumstances induced Gen. SHERMAN to order a search to be instituted; when Major BEARD, the Provost Marshal, and Capt. SAXTON, Chief Quartermaster, discovered, (found in the cabin, and belonged to a party that slept there) hidden beneath the false bottom of a trunk, and in a carpet-bag under the pillow of the engineer, the mail for Havana, and other papers under the Consular seal. These were letters of credit from the Bank of Charleston on influential firms in Liverpool, and letters proposing the opening of business relations between rebel houses and merchants abroad." (emphasis added, parenthetical correction printed the following week)

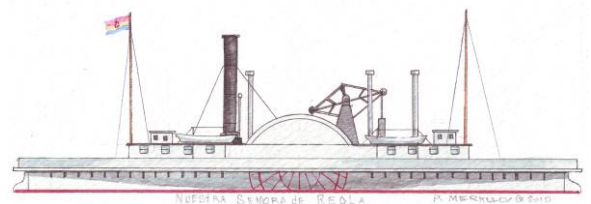
After several months of use by the US Navy, the ship was brought to New York and condemned in prize court. Henry H. Elliot, the commissioner, initialed the cover below as evidence in the case. Addressed to the Spanish Consul in Charleston, it is one of the very covers discovered in the false bottom trunk. On 20 June 1863, a decree of restitution was ordered as the court ruled that the seizure had been without cause.



Prize Court Cover

22 July 1861 Pendleton, SC to Emilio Puiz, Spanish Consul at Charleston
taken aboard *Nuestra Senora de Regla* by Puiz on his person leaving Charleston
29 November 1861 ship seized and cover used as evidence, red manuscript court docket of "HHE"

The *Nuestra Senora de Regla*, a 131' sidewheel steamer
illegally captured on 29 November 1861 at Port Royal, SC
owned by a Spanish owned railway company in Cuba
a rare seizure by the US Army rather than the Navy



The Eight Lives of the Syren

The folded letter below was carried by the steamer *Syren* on one of her thirty-three successful blockade-running trips, the most made by any blockade-runner during the Civil War. As the average number of successful runs by a blockade-runner during the war was only four, the record of the *Syren* is equivalent to the life span of eight "average" steamers. In second place for the number of successful blockade-running trips was the steamer *Alice* with a distant twenty-four runs.

The *Syren* was a sidewheel steamer built at Greenwich, Kent, England in 1863 and designed specifically for blockade running. She was owned by the Charleston Importing and Exporting Company. The *Syren* began her career rather late in the war with her 5 November 1863 maiden voyage from Nassau to Wilmington. Much of her success can be attributed to the daring captains and pilots who ignored many of the norms of blockade-running. Rather than leaving port only at the time of the new moon, she frequently departed at the quarter moons (see phases of the moon page) and often in poor weather. With these elements of surprise operating in her favor, slipping through the naval squadron guarding the harbors became easier. It is reported that the *Syren* at one point made three round trips to Charleston while the other blockade-runners, awaiting a new moon, never left port.

The letter below was carried on her third trip from Nassau to Wilmington. After the fall of Charleston the *Syren* was captured in port on 18 February 1865.



21 November 1863 Liverpool, via New York, to Nassau, Bahamas

13 December 1863 Nassau by blockade-runner *Syren* to Wilmington

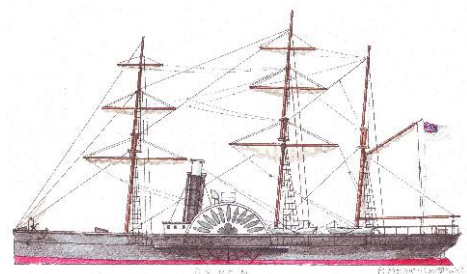
16 December 1863 arrived Wilmington with SHIP handstamp and 22¢ ship double rate due

The *Syren*, a 169' sidewheel steamer

made a record 33 successful runs

owned by Charleston Importing & Exporting Co.

18 February 1865 captured at Charleston after city evacuated



A Steamer Named Alice

Another of the extremely successful blockade-running steamers, with 24 successful runs, was the *Alice*. An iron-hulled, sidewheel steamer, she was built by Caird and Company in Greenock, Scotland in 1857 as the *Sirius*. She was purchased by the Importing & Exporting Company of South Carolina in 1863 for \$ 244,403 Confederate. She returned briefly to Scotland in 1864 for repairs.

Her success was undoubtedly due to the talents of her captains. An article appeared in a July 1863 issue of the *Nassau Advertiser* that praised her new commander as follows:

Capt. Egan, Commanding Steamship *Alice*:

DEAR SIR: The undersigned passengers on your ship from Charleston to this port, beg leave to express to you their admiration of your skill as commander, and your deportment as a gentleman to those who have the good fortune to travel with you.

At all times the navigation of the sea is one of peril; if so in time of peace, how much more so is it when you not only have to encounter its usual dangers, but also are in constant dread of an enemy, perhaps even more dangerous. A good navigator such as you have proved yourself, can escape the perils of the ocean by your skill in the profession, but that knowledge will prove of but little avail when the bullets and shot of the enemy are whizzing around the wheel, the management of which is to bring you safe in port -- therefore it is with sincere pleasure that we congratulate you on the safety of your ship, self, and the undersigned, on this your first trip in command of so fine a steamer.

THE PASSENGERS OF THE ALICE.

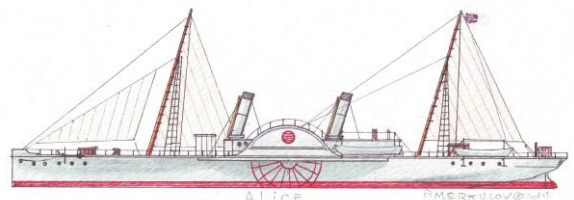
Captain Egan had recently replaced another famous captain of the *Alice*, James Carlin. An American steamboat captain and one of the first captains employed by the Importing and Exporting Company of South Carolina, he had the requisite experience to be both pilot and captain. In 1863 Carlin was sent by the firm to England to assist the company in constructing and outfitting additional blockade runners.

Forwarded
By
Saunders & Son,
Nassau



8 September 1863 Nassau, Bahamas to Wilmington by blockade-runner *Alice*
12 September 1863 arrived Wilmington Ship and manuscript 12¢ ship rate due

The *Alice*, a 177' iron hull sidewheel steamer
made 24 successful blockade runs
owned by Importing & Exporting Company of South Carolina
survived the war

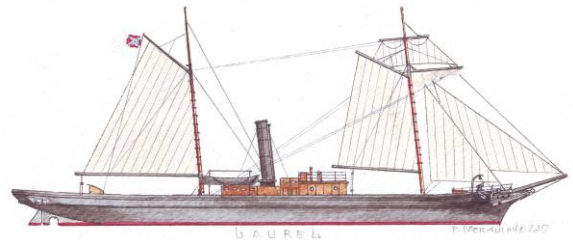


Maiden Voyage of the CSS Laurel

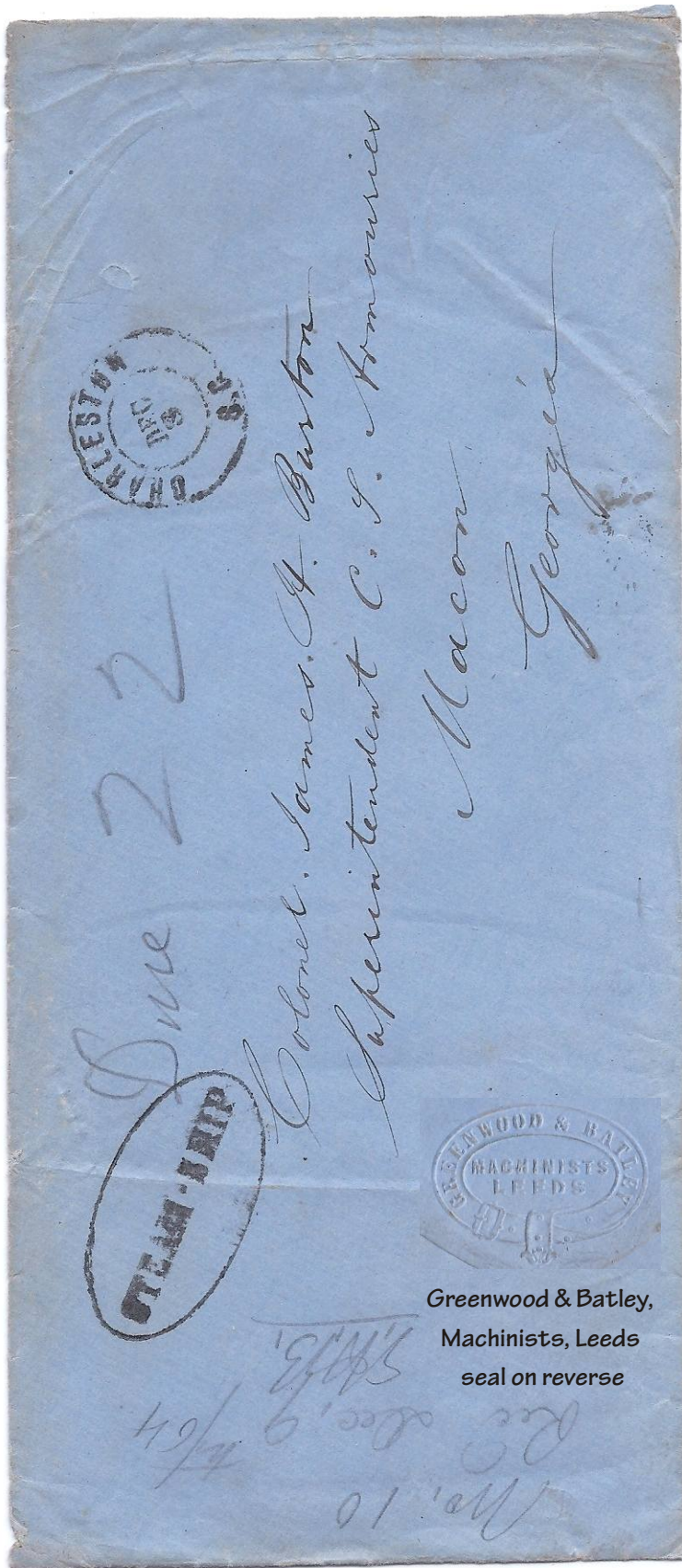
CSA Navy Commander James D. Bulloch bought the newly completed steamer *Laurel* in England on 4 October 1864 for the CSA Navy as part of a package deal with the *Sea King*. She departed Leeds on the 9th, under the command of Lt. John F. Ramsey, CSN carrying a larger than ordinary crew, and armaments, as well as the cover at left (from Greenwood & Batley, Machinists, Leeds dated 6 October 1864).

The *Laurel* rendezvoused at Funchal, Madeira, with *Sea King*, about to be commissioned CSS *Shenandoah*. The *Laurel* supplied the new CSA cruiser with her commander, Lt. James I. Waddell, most of her crew as well as her armaments. After the transfer was complete, the *Laurel* departed for Tenerife and Nassau. After receiving updated orders at Nassau, Lt. Ramsey ran the blockade into Charleston arriving on 2 December.

Lt. Ramsey then reported to the Secretary of the Navy Mallory that he felt that the *Laurel* was inadequate for the intended Naval service. Transferred to Treasury Department her register was changed and she was consigned to Fraser, Trenholm & Co. and renamed *Confederate States*.



The *Laurel*, a 207' iron hull single screw steamer
made 1 successful blockade run as CSS vessel
owned by the CSA
renamed *Confederate States* and survived the war



Greenwood & Batley,
Machinists, Leeds
seal on reverse

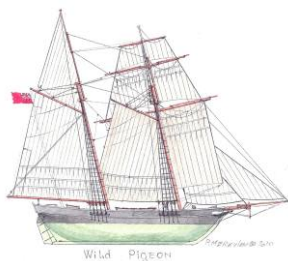
22 November 1864 Nassau, Bahamas to Charleston by blockade-runner *Laurel*
2 December 1864 arrived at Charleston with Steam-Ship and pencil 22¢ ship double rate due

Trading with the Enemy

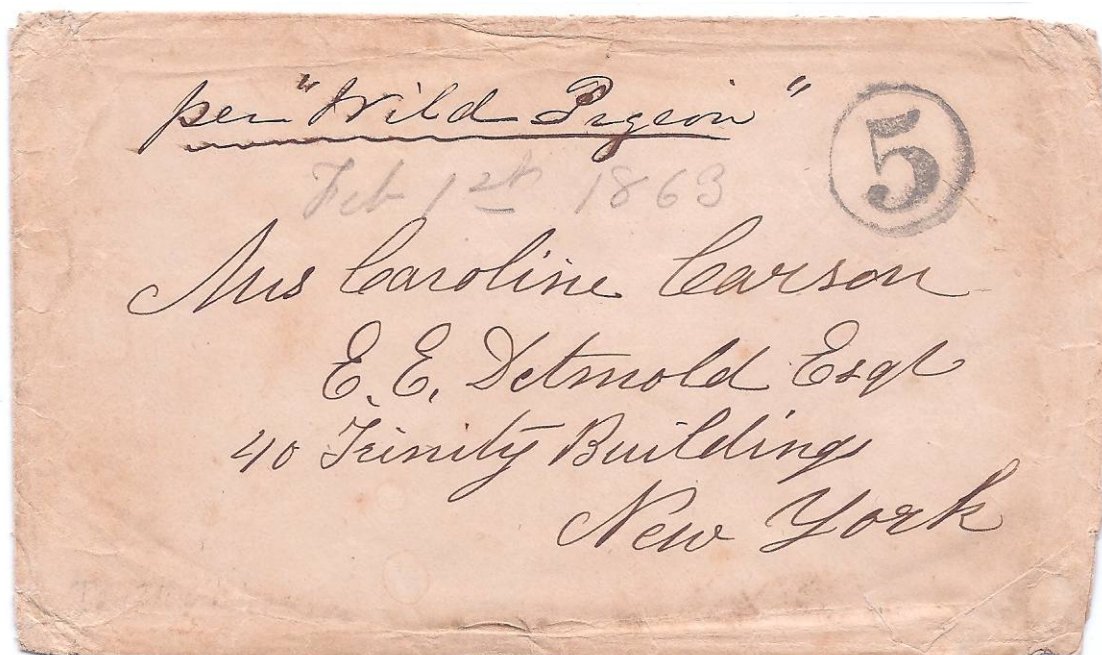
An article in the *Bahamas Herald* of September 12, 1863 exposed an illegal trade scheme that involved goods such as cotton and turpentine being exported from the CSA on blockade-runners to the Bahamas and being trans-shipped to the US. In the reverse direction, Colt revolvers, army shoes and blankets were exported from New York to Nassau and thence by blockade-runner to Charleston. The scheme included bribery payments of £500 per shipment made to custom-house officers at New York. One shipment from New York included 2,000 CSA velvet officer badges with the palmetto tree insignia of the state of South Carolina.

The article specifically identified the schooner *Wild Pigeon* as being employed on the Nassau to New York leg of this trade. The sloop yacht *Rosalie* was identified as having made seven trips on the Charleston to Nassau blockade-running leg and Captain William Ross Postell was indentified as her captain.

The cover below, addressed to the niece of Captain Postell, was carried on the schooner *Rosalie* on the Charleston to Nassau leg and then, as endorsed, on the *Wild Pigeon* for the Nassau to New York leg. The first leg is documented in a February 9, 1863 letter of addressee's father in Charleston that mentions: "I have written by William Ross (Postell) who in a yacht is about to run the blockade to Nassau. I enclosed your letter and handed to William on the 5th inst. He was ready to sail and was only waiting for a dark night and a high wind."



The *Wild Pigeon*



10 February 1863 Charleston to Nassau, Bahamas by blockade-runner *Rosalie*
28 February departed Nassau on *Wild Pigeon* which arrived at New York on March 9, 1863

The *Rosalie*, a small schooner yacht

made more than 7 blockade runs
ownership unknown (probably a Charleston firm)
seized by USS *Octorara* on run into Charleston on 16 March 1864

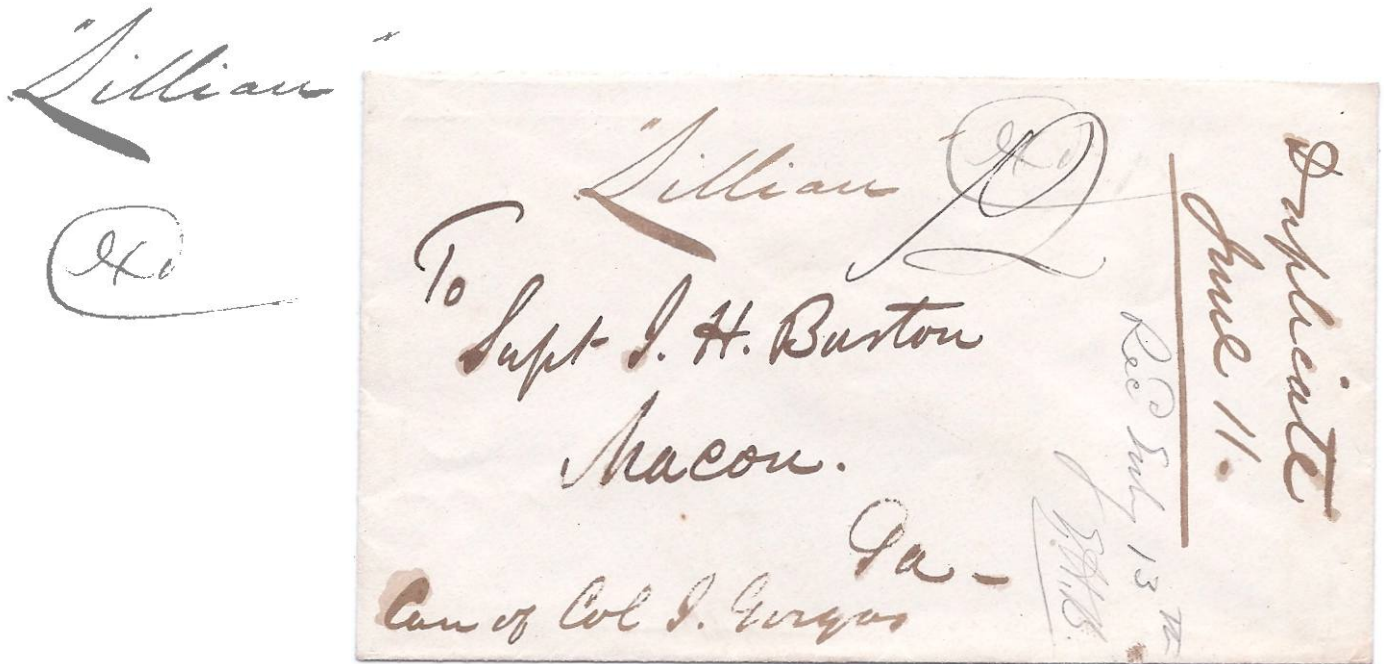


Running Under the Influence

The cover below was carried on the exceptionally well documented trip of the blockade-runner *Lilian*, also spelled *Lillian*, from Bermuda to Wilmington in June 1864. James M. Morgan, a passenger on the harrowing voyage devoted a chapter in his book "Recollections of A Rebel Reefer" to this trip.

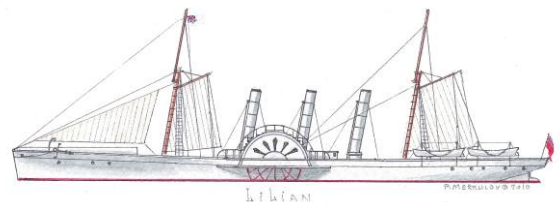
The steamer was carrying onboard several CS Naval personnel including Morgan and Lieutenant William P. A. Campbell. However, as a private ship, the duty of captain went to a Daniel Martin. As the *Lillian* approached Cape Fear River she was pursued by the USS *Shenandoah*. Due to an inept approach by Martin, who had already started drinking brandy, the slower sailing ship was able to gain on the *Lilian* by deploying full sail. After a projectile from the *Shenandoah* passed a few feet from Martin's position on the bridge "he came scampering down the ladder, screaming 'haul that flag down.' I will not have anymore lives sacrificed!" although nothing besides the paddleboxes had yet been touched. CSN Lt. Campbell took command immediately and commanded: "kill the first man who touches those flag halyards."

Campbell then changed course and managed to avoid further damage by edging-in to the shoals with the help of the approaching dark and the protection of Fort Fisher's guns. The *Lilian* arrived safely at Wilmington the following morning. Martin was "found in his berth dead drunk with an empty bottle of brandy beside him." The report of USN Captain Ridgely of the *Shenandoah* detailing the chase mentions that 140 shots were fired.



11 June 1864 Liverpool, via Halifax, to Bermuda under cover
2 July 1864 St. George's, Bermuda to Wilmington by blockade-runner *Lilian*
6 July 1864 arrived at Wilmington, manuscript examined ("exd") and 12¢ ship rate due

The *Lilian*, a 225' iron hull sidewheel steamer
made 5 blockade runs before capture on 24 August 1864
owned by the Importing and Exporting Co. of Georgia
captured by USS *Keystone State* and the USS *Gettysburg*



Forwarding Agent Sawyer & Menendez

The system of handling mail and goods inbound to the Confederacy by blockade-runners was dependant on the use of forwarding agents. A typical example, the cover below was sent enclosed in an outer envelope, addressed to Sawyer & Menendez, forwarding agents in Nassau, Bahamas. After carriage by British mails it was duly delivered to the firm in Nassau. Sawyer & Menendez discarded the original envelope and arranged for the carriage of the enclosed inner cover on a blockade-runner. In the case of this cover, after being handstamped with their cachet showing service, it was delivered to the purser of the *Ruby* that was soon departing Nassau for Charleston with goods and mails. Often agents would favor the ships owned or allied with the firm if one was scheduled to depart soon.

Upon arrival at Charleston a two cent fee was paid to the captain of the blockade-runner for each letter received. This was added to the regular CSA postage to destination. In this case the 10¢ postage was doubled because the cover was over one-half ounce, and the total of 22¢ collected as postage due.

The names Robert H. Sawyer and Ramos A. Menendez, as well as their firm name, appear many times in prize court records. These records reveal their modus operandi for shipping goods to and from the CSA. Typically duplicate sets of documents including ship ownership and bills of lading were prepared for a ship leaving Nassau on a run to the CSA. One, to present in case of seizure, stating that the ship was of Nassau registry and ownership and that the goods were destined for Baltimore. The second, stating the true information of a CSA destination. Several similar forwarding firms operated during the war in Nassau as well as other neutral ports.

**FORWARDED
BY
SAWYER & MENENDEZ
NASSAU.**



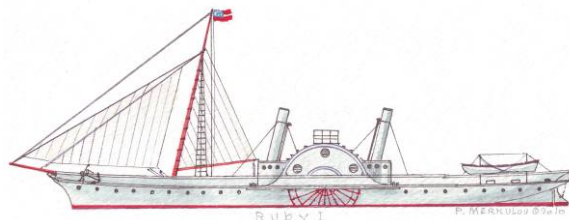
14 March 1863 Nassau, Bahamas to Charleston by blockade-runner *Ruby*
17 March 1863 arrived Charleston with Steam-Ship and manuscript 22¢ ship double rate due

The *Ruby* (I), a 177' iron hull sidewheel steamer

made 8 successful blockade runs

owned by Henderson & Co.

11 June 1863 destroyed near Charleston



Walker, Confederate Agent

The envelope below bears the "GFW" monogram seal of Georgiana F. Walker on the back flap. Georgiana was the wife of CSA Major Norman S. Walker. She arrived in St. George's on 24 March 1863 and remained there until June 1864 when she went to England to escape a yellow fever epidemic. The "Rose Hill" home shared by Major Walker, Georgiana, and a local commission merchant was a perennial open house for the supporters of the Confederacy.



St. George's Harbor, October 1862, by Edward James
CSA flagged blockade-runner at left

Major Walker played a key role for the Confederacy from the time of his arrival at St. George's Bermuda late in 1862 until the end of the war. He was not only the military agent who coordinated the delivery of armaments and military supplies to the South and cotton to England, he served as fiscal agent. Walker is mentioned several times in the diary of James H. Burton (several covers addressed to him are included in this display) including September 1863 entries which relate Walker's help in making arrangements for Edward James, a noted local artist and watercolorist, to make drawings for the design of a machine needed for boring rifle stocks to accommodate ramrods that Burton was ordering from Greenwood & Batley in England.



Monogram seal of
Georgiana F. Walker
on reverse flap



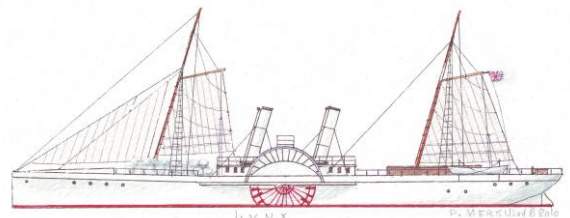
24 May 1864 St. George's, Bermuda to Wilmington by blockade-runner Lynx
29 May 1864 arrived Wilmington with manuscript 12¢ ship rate due

The Lynx, a 220' steel hull sidewheel steamer

made 9 successful blockade runs

owned by Fraser Trenholm & Co.

25 September 1864 destroyed trying to leave Wilmington



Governor Brown and the CSA Blockade of the Santee River

This cover and letter addressed to Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia exemplifies the ownership and political problems involved in blockade-running. A staunch believer in state rights, Gov. Brown even attempted to stop the CSA from taking Georgia troops out of the state to fight at the First Battle of Bull Run.

In 1863 Brown granted a charter, which gave priority to Georgian goods, to GB Lamar's Importing and Exporting Company of Georgia. Lamar then ordered six blockade-runners from England. In 1864 their shallow draft steamer *Little Ada* entered the Santee River, SC and commenced loading Georgian cotton. However, the CSA War Department demanded one-half of the cargo capacity for CSA owned cotton. Governor Brown and Lamar refused the request and the CSA sent an artillery battery and troops to keep the vessel from departing. The *Little Ada* remained blockaded in the river by both the Union Navy and the CSA troops for the next three months. Finally, in May 1864 Lamar and Brown conceded CSA cargo space and in June the *Little Ada* made it to Nassau with her mixed load of cotton which was sold for £8,016.

Forwarded
By
George Chambers & Co.
Nassau

Geo Chambers of Wilmington a Bill
of Lading for Cotton of Elm "Index"
shipped on A/A of C.S. and State of Geo.
and that the same has arrived at
agent at Bermuda

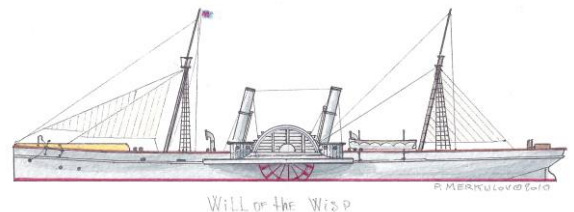


letter mentions receipt of
cotton per Schooner *Index*
shipped on account of the
CSA and State of Georgia

Will o' the Wisp

2 July 1864 London to Nassau, Forwarded by George Chambers & Co. embossed cachet
26 July 1864 Nassau, Bahamas to Wilmington by blockade-runner *Will of the Wisp*
30 July 1864 arrived Wilmington with manuscript 12¢ ship rate due

The *Will of the Wisp*, a 210' iron hull sidewheel steamer
made 12 successful blockade runs
owned by Anglo-Confederate Trading Co. until October 1864
2 February 1865 run aground and destroyed near Galveston



The French Connection

The letter below was originally sent from Georgia enclosed in an outer envelope which was addressed to the care of a forwarding agent in Nassau, Bahamas. It was sent from Wilmington on the blockade-runner *Will of the Wisp*. The forwarding agent discarded the outer envelope, and posted at the Nassau post office prepaying the 1 sh 3d rate for carriage by British mails to France.

The letter below is one of three reported outbound blockade covers that entered the British mails to be sent directly to France. Other examples exist that were sent to an additional forwarding agent in England and carried outside the mails.

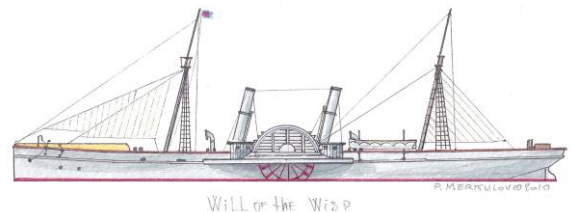
Routing

June 1864 Louisiana Creole, Georgia to Wilmington by CSA mails
28 June to Nassau by blockade-runner *Will of the Wisp*
4 July to New York per British Mail steamer *Corsica*
13 July to England per Cunard Line *Arabia*
25 July across the Channel to Calais, France
26 July arrived by rail at Cannes, France



28 June 1864 Wilmington to Nassau, Bahamas by blockade-runner *Will of the Wisp*
2 July 1864 arrived at Nassau, thence by British mails to France

The *Will of the Wisp*, a 210' iron hull sidewheel steamer
made 12 successful blockade runs
owned by Anglo-Confederate Trading Co. until October 1864
2 February 1865 run aground and destroyed near Galveston



An American in Italy

The cover below enclosed a letter from Major Joseph L. Locke, Chief Commissary Officer of Georgia living in Savannah to his wife Laura in Rome, Italy. Laura was the daughter of William Bulloch, US Senator from Georgia, and a cousin of James Dunwoody Bulloch, Confederate Naval Officer and their chief foreign agent in Great Britain. Her sister was Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, mother of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Laura and her husband traveled to Rome in August 1859 and it appears that she remained while her husband returned to Georgia. The docketing numbers she applied indicate the receipt of an average of one letter per month. Unfortunately, to make room for her extensive docketing, she removed five Bahamas stamps from the cover.

FORWARDED
BY
SAWYER & MENENDEZ
NASSAU.

Routing

29 August 1862 Savannah to Charleston under cover
26 September 1862 Charleston to Nassau by *Scotia*
27 October Bahamas to New York by Cunard Line *British Queen*
5 November to England by Cunard Line *Australasian*
17 November London to Calais, France
17 November departed Calais to Rome
20 November arrived Rome



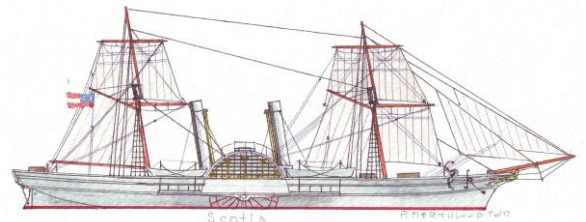
26 September 1862 Charleston to Nassau, Bahamas by blockade-runner *Scotia*
30 September 1862 arrived Nassau, Forwarded by Sawyer & Menendez
26 October prepaid British mails to Italy (stamps missing)

The *Scotia*, a 195' iron hull sidewheel steamer

made 2 successful blockade runs

owned by Leech, Harrison and Forwood Company

24 October 1862 captured by USS *Restless* near Charleston



A German in Texas

Albert Carl Moye, born in 1820 in Cassel, Germany, wrote the original letter that is enclosed in the cover below from Fort Brown, Texas on 1 December 1862. It is addressed to his sister who remained in Germany after Albert and his family emigrated to the Texas Republic in 1845. During the Civil War he was a Lieutenant and then Captain of Company B, 3rd Texas Infantry in the Confederate Army. His regiment spent most of the war stationed along the Mexican border.

To circumvent the risk of running the blockade, most mail originating in Texas was sent south across the Rio Grande River to Matamoras, Mexico for onward transmission to Europe. As a matter of marine law, the neutral port of Matamoras could not be blockaded. Similar in function to the forwarding agents operating in Nassau and Bermuda, Droege, Oetling & Company in Matamoras arranged the transfer of goods and mail to steamers operating to Europe. This was facilitated by having a sister office in Manchester, England.

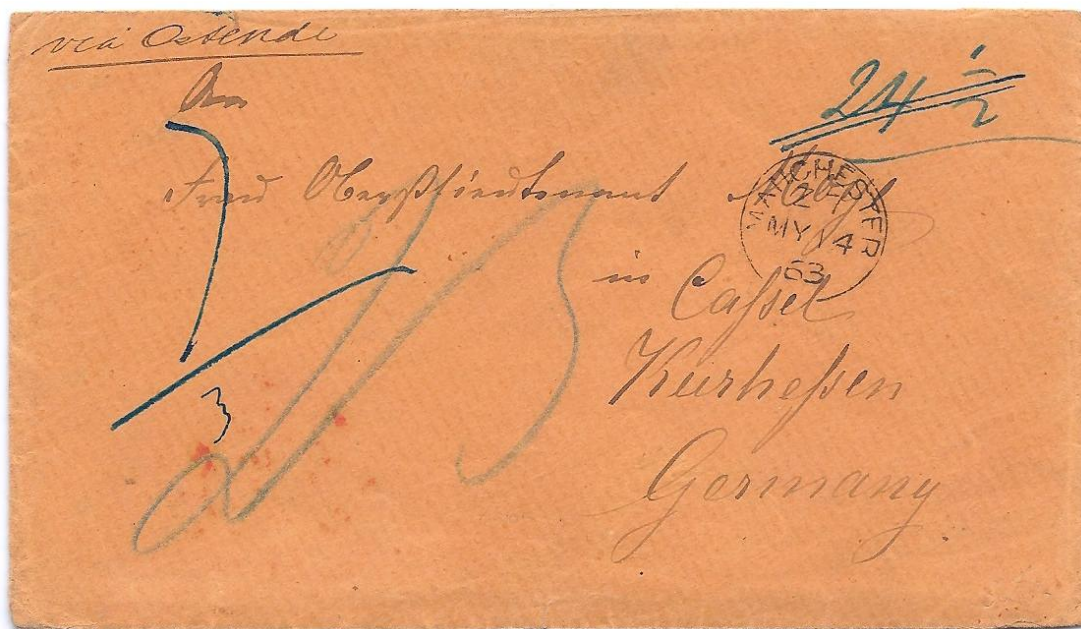
This cover was sent enclosed in another envelope to Matamoras and then by the forwarder in another package addressed to their Manchester office where it was placed in the mails to Germany.



Droege, Oetling cachet on reverse

Routing

1 December 1862 Fort Brown, Texas to Matamoras, Mexico
Across the Rio Grande to Droege, Oetling Co. in Matamoras
Matamoras under cover to Manchester, England
14 May 1863 Manchester, England to Ostende, Belgium
16 May arrived Cassel, Germany



1 December 1862 Fort Brown, Texas across the Rio Grande River to Mexico
Forwarded by Droege, Oetling & Co. Matamoros sent under cover to their Manchester, England office
14 May 1863 Manchester, England office and onward to Germany