

U.S.S. Rhode Island
Steamship Eagle, during the Civil
War she served as U.S.S. Rhode
Island, 1861-67.

1863

U. S. Steamer Rhode Island - Flagship of the West India Squadron

Letter datelined aboard Rhode Island at Cape Haytien

U. S. Steam Sloop Juniata, Cape Haytien to Key West

U. S. Screw Gunboat Union, Key West to New York

Union, coming into N.Y., damaged pilot boat Moses H. Grinnell

Union. coming into N.Y.. later sank pilot boat James Funck



Nov 4th

U. S. Flag ship Rhode Island
Cape Haytien
Monday Sept. 28. 1863.

My dearest Harriet,

You see by the heading that the Admiral has transferred his flag to our vessel. I have not seen our vessel since she returned here. We have papers to the 23rd by her. Not very bad news, but might be better. Mrs. Williams has returned. I see too by a piece sent to Mr. Farguhar by ~~her~~ from a paper that our prize will be sold tomorrow Oct. 1. There are various reports that I am to change places with Dr. Shriver. I should regret to leave this ship; but I should go to a pleasant one.

1863

U. S. Steamer Rhode Island - Flagship of the West India Squadron

U. S. Steam Sloop Juniata, Cape Haytien to Key West

U. S. Screw Gunboat Union, Key West to New York.

Sept. 28 to Oct. 2, 1863. A letter from the surgeon of the U.S.S. Rhode Island written over several days while at Cape Haytien, Cuba. He notes that Admiral Lardner has transferred his flag to the Rhode Island, making her the flagship of the West India Squadron. He also says on Oct. 2nd that the U.S.S. Juniata was leaving on the 3rd for Key West and he was sending this letter by her. Juniata was assigned cruise in the West Indies convoying California-bound ships to safe waters. At Key West she transferred her mails to the U.S.S. Union.

Boston Shipping List: Arrived New York Oct. 16, Steamship Union, Gulf Squadron.

DISASTERS &c.

U.S. Steamer Union, at N.Y. 16th., when coming in by the hook, at 1 o'clock, ran into the pilot boat Moses H. Grinnell, No. 1, and cut her down forward about 5 feet, carried away the bowsprit and started the deck planks forward of the foremast; and at 3 o'clock she ran into the pilot boat James Funk, No. 22, cutting her down amidships, and sinking her immediately. The J.F. was towing down, and those on board had just time to launch a yawl when she disappeared. The Union had her stern partly carried away.

N.Y. Times, Mon. Oct. 19, 1863. The pilot-boat James Funk, No. 22, that was sunk on Friday morning in the Narrows by collision with the U.S. Steamship Union has been raised and towed to the City.



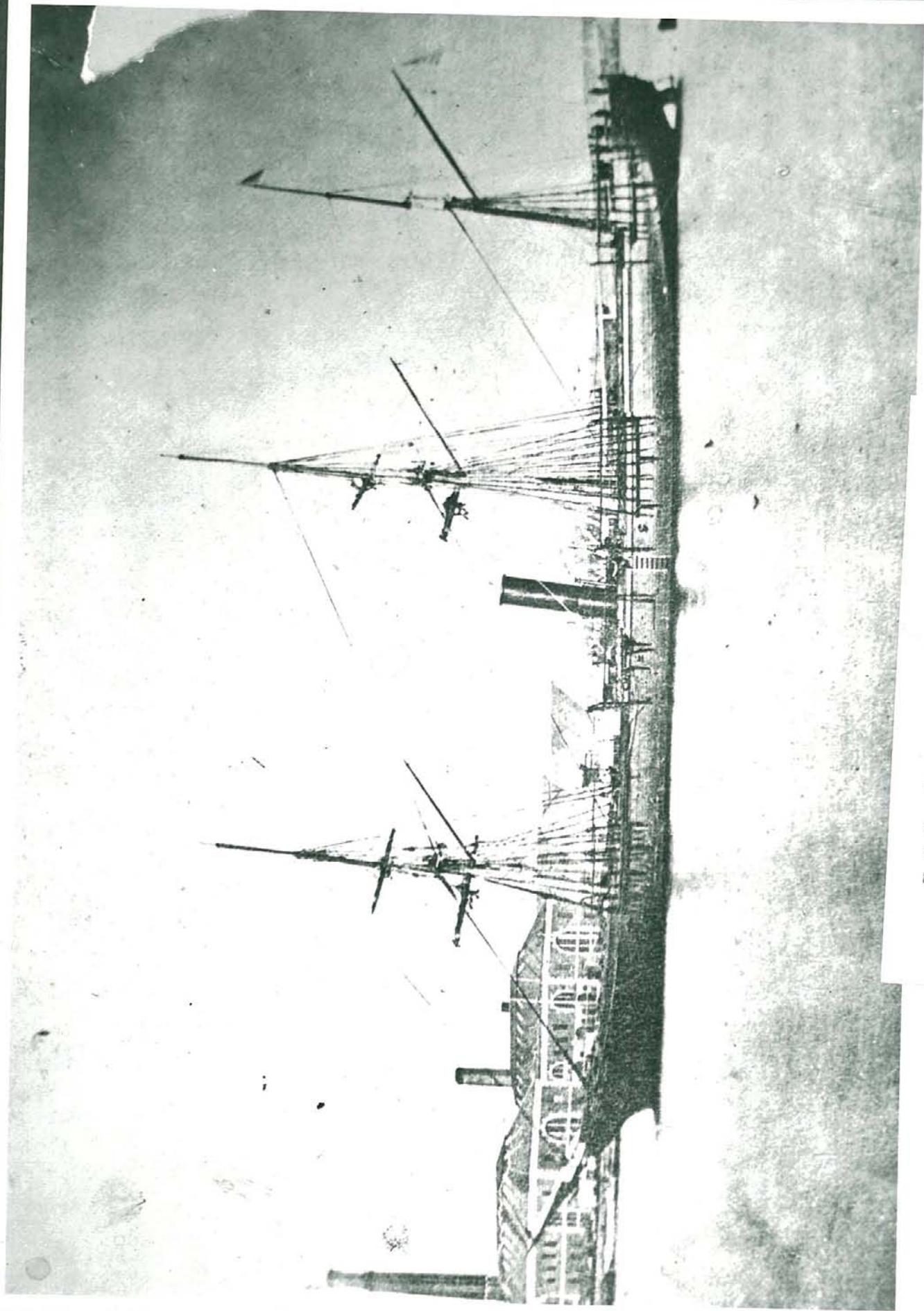
B. 2235

October 16, 1863. Letter put into the post at New York where it received the circular U.S. SHIP mark identifying it as coming from a United States Naval vessel. As such, it was subject to the Act of 1861, which allowed letters by U.S. servicemen to be transmitted without prepayment of postage, and that the 3¢ rate per ¼-oz. would be paid by the recipient.

October 17. "Received" handstamp at Boston. This is an elusive Boston postmark.



U.S.S. Union: 1861 May 16, Commissioned at Philadelphia
1861 May 28, Established blockade of Savannah, Ga.
1863 Jan 20, Recommissioned as supply steamer
for Gulf Squadrons.



U.S.S. Juniata (1862-1891)
Photographed in her configuration
of 1869-1872, at the Boston Navy
Yard.

1863

U. S. Steam Frigate Minnesota North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
Off Fortress Monroe

Minnesota was a wooden steam frigate, launched Dec. 1, 1855 at the Washington Navy Yard. She departed July 1, 1857 for the Orient, returning to Boston June 2, 1859, where she remained in ordinary until the Civil War.

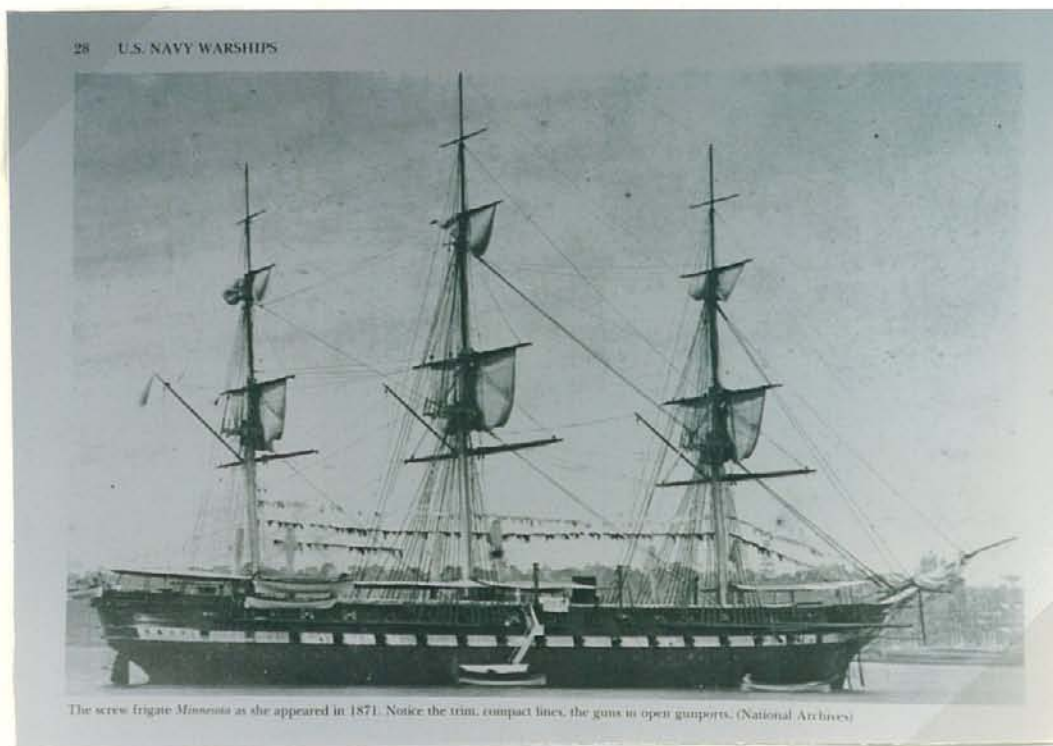
She was recommissioned May 2, 1861, and became flagship of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. She saw much action June through August of 1861. The addressee of the letter below, Captain Augustus Ludlow Case was detached to the Minnesota Sept. 21, 1861, and on January 6, 1863, became Captain of the fleet of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. For the next few years the Minnesota served as flagship of the N.A.B. Squadron.



Washington, D.C., 1863. Letter franked with 3¢ Issue of 1861, posted to Captain A. Ludlow Case, Fleet Captain, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, U.S. Ship Minnesota, off Fortress Monroe.

U.S. Steam Frigate Minnesota

Wooden steam frigate launched December 1, 1855. Minnesota, carrying William B. Reed, U.S. Minister to China, departed from Norfolk July 1, 1857, for the Orient. During her service with the East India Squadron she visited many of the principal ports of China and Japan before departing Hong Kong to bring Mr. Reed home with a newly negotiated Treaty of Commerce with China. Upon arrival in Boston June 2, 1859, Minnesota was decommissioned at the Boston Navy Yard and remained in ordinary until the outbreak of the Civil War.



1864-65

U. S. Steamship Nahant, iron-clad monitor blockading
off Charleston, S.C.

U. S. screw Steamer Massachusetts, transport steamer,
South Atlantic Blockading Squadron to Philadelphia



No. 41

U. S. S. Nahant
 Off Charleston S. C.
 Sunday, Dec. 4th 1864.

My darling wife:
 The forenoon of this day
 has been a busy time and has seemed little
 like the Sabbath morning. Last night the
 Donagut came in, having been delayed a long
 few very uncomfortable hours, and
 full much, resolved to exert myself by thinking
 I would like to have you comb my head
 this afternoon. I should enjoy it every so
 much. It would be real nice to lay my
 head in your lap & have your hands moving
 over my hair.

On the Donagut I met Paymaster
 Huntington, who has just been north &
 left Mr. & Mrs. Spaulding & Mr. & Mrs. Edmonds

1864 - 65

U. S. Steamship Nahant, iron-clad monitor, blockading off Charleston, S. C.

U. S. screw Steamer Massachusetts, transport steamer, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron to Philadelphia

December 4, 5 and 6, 1864. Letter datelined: U.S. Str. Nahant, off Charleston, S.C. Nahant was a 1875 ton iron-clad monitor, a "cheese on a raft", built by Harrison Loring, South Boston, Mass., commissioned 29 December 1862. She saw her first action 3 March 1863, in the Union bombardment of Fort McAllister.

On 7 April 1863 Nahant, along with 8 other monitors and other vessels, took part in the attempt to retake Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor. The attempt was unsuccessful and Nahant, in the thick of the fray, took 80 direct hits from guns on the half-dozen forts in the area manned by the Confederates. Only the monitor Keokuk took more hits, 90, and later sank. A contemporary account reads, "The Nahant has received thirty wounds, her turret has been jammed so that it will not turn, and her pilot-house is in such a rickety condition that every bolt in it flies about when it is struck, killing and wounding its tenants."

Nahant saw much action about Charleston and late in 1864, when this letter was written, was engaged in enforcing the blockade about Charleston and environs.

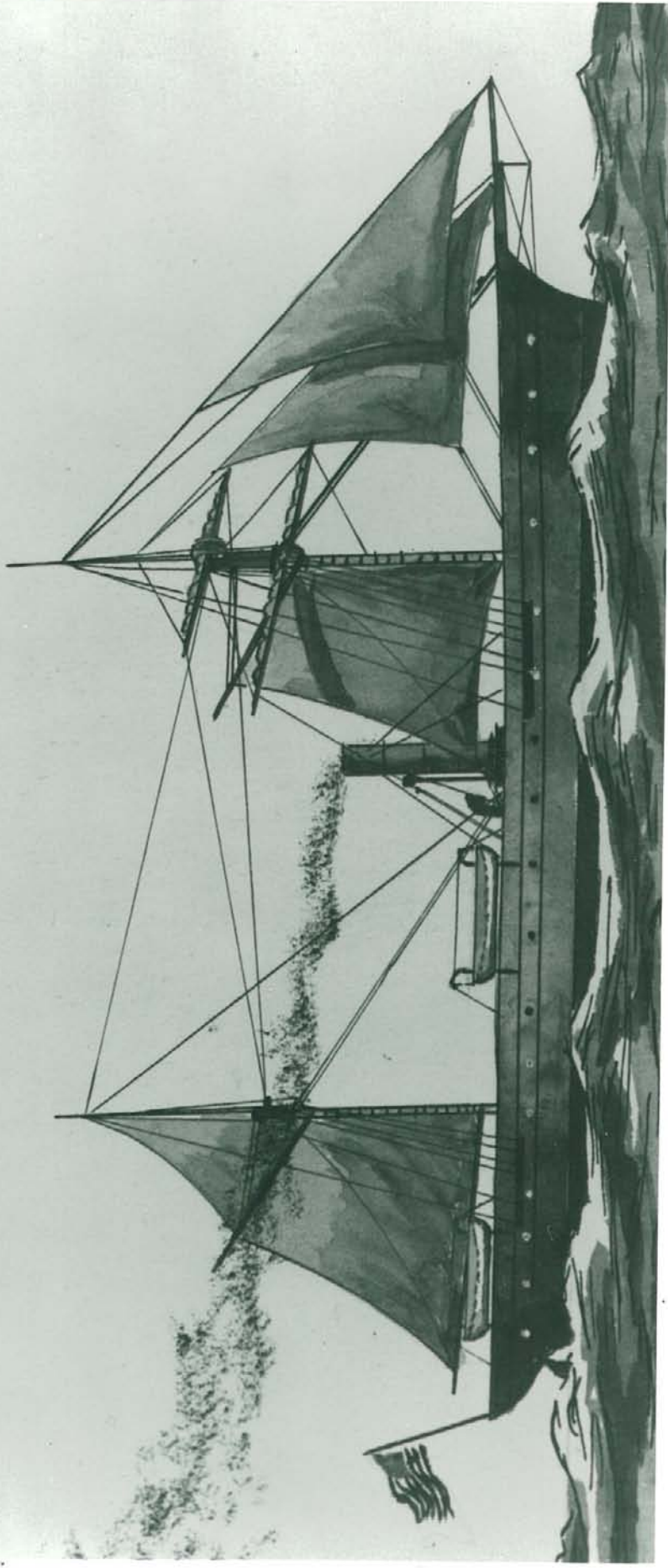


U. S. SHIP

Due 6

January 23, 1865. The U.S. screw Steamer Massachusetts was acting as a transport steamer. She had previously seen much action with the Gulf Blockading Squadron, was decommissioned early in 1862, and fitted out as a transport and supply ship, recommissioned again 16 April 1862, decommissioned 3 December and recommissioned 10 March 1863, serving the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron through the end of the war.

She brought the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron's mail, including this letter, into Philadelphia January 23, 1865, where the unpaid letter was marked "U.S. SHIP". The recipient was charged the ordinary letter First Class rate of 3¢ per 1/2-oz. any distance x 2 = 6¢ (double letter), Act of 1861 which allowed transmission of letters from service personnel without prepayment of postage and with no penalty.



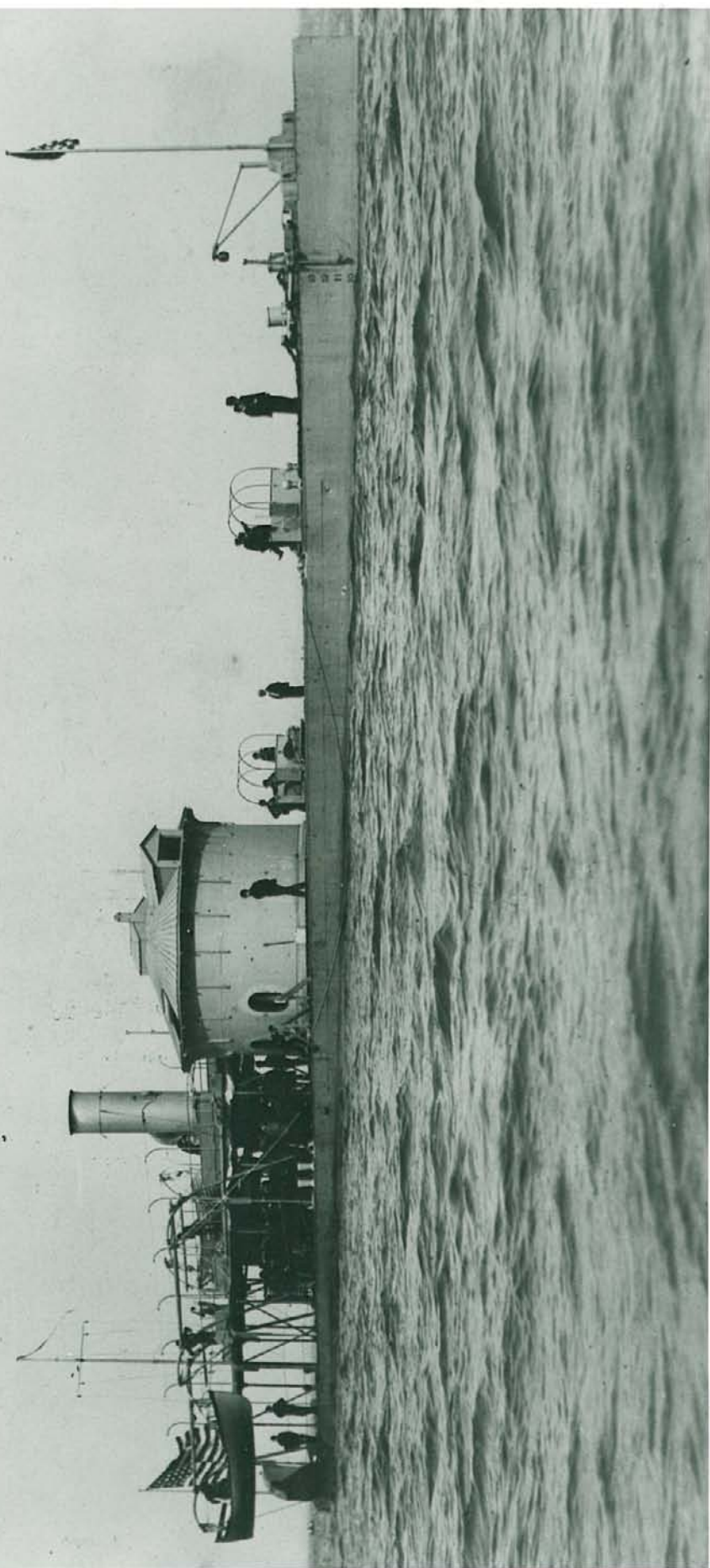
U.S.S. Massachusetts (1860-1892)

Built at Boston in 1860

1860-61: S.S. Massachusetts

1861-67: U.S.S. Massachusetts (acquired by Navy)

1867-92: S.S. Crescent City (sold civilian).



U.S.S. Nahant (1862-1904)
Photographed about 1898.
A monitor class steamship.
Fought at Ft. Sumpter, S.C.
and blockaded Charleston.

1865

U.S. sternwheel gunboat Moose

Serving with the Mississippi Squadron

This 189 ton wooden sternwheel gunboat was built at Cincinnati, Ohio as Florence Miller II in 1863. She was purchased by the U.S. Navy 20 May 1863 and renamed Moose. She was armed with six 24-pounders and was immediately assigned to the Mississippi Squadron to patrol the Ohio River from Louisville, Kentucky, upstream. She had an active war career, and as soon as 9 July 1863, she engaged a guerrilla band of 1500 at Twelve Mile Island, capturing or driving them back. On 19 July with Allegheny Belle she shelled confederates on Buffington Island.



Throughout the balance of 1863, Moose saw much action on the Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. Her shallow 5' draft made her ideal for this river service.

On 30 April 1865, shortly after this letter was written, Moose made a surprise attack on guerrillas crossing the Cumberland at Eddyville, Indiana, completely dispersing and demoralizing the party.



January 23, 1865. A letter paid at Meriden, Connecticut at the 3¢ rate by the Issue of 1861. It is addressed to Acting Assistant Paymaster James W. Clark at Smithland, Kentucky, a port on the Ohio River where Moose docked.

1822

U.S. Frigate Potomac

The Potomac was a frigate laid down by the Washington Navy Yard in August 1819, was launched March 1822. Fitting out was not completed until 1831.

On her first overseas cruise, Potomac departed New York August 19, 1831, for the Pacific Station via the Cape of Good Hope. On February 6, 1832, Potomac shelled the town of Quallah Batoo, Sumatra in punishment for the capture of the merchantman Friendship of Salem, Mass. and the massacre of her crew in February 1831. Potomac returned to Boston May 23, 1834.

The frigate next made cruises to Brazil, and patrolled in the West Indies, the Caribbean and the Gulf. She landed troops at Port Isabel, Texas on May 8, 1846, in support of General Taylor's army at the battle of Palo Alto.

During the Civil War she served in the West Gulf Blockade Squadron off Vera Cruz. She became the stores ship for the Squadron and remained at the Pensacola Navy Yard until 1867.



1835-36

U. S. Frigate Potomac, homeward bound from Port Mahon

October 24, 1835. A letter from the purser of the U.S.S. Potomac datelined at Port Mahon in the Balearic Islands, Spain. He notifies the Navy Agent at Boston to stop the allotment of Simon Tunney.



SHIP

February 17, 1836. Letter had been consigned to a U.S. Navy ship homebound from the U.S. base at Port Mahon. Feb. 17, the vessel arrived at the Navy Yard at Norfolk. The incoming mail was handed to the postmaster at Norfolk.

31mm. circle, serif letters, Va., red. 22 x 3.5mm SHIP.

Letter rated, Act of 1825, for a single letter over 400 miles, Norfolk to Boston, at 25¢ plus 2¢ Ship Letter fee, total 27¢ due (shown in faint red mss. "27".)

1841-42

U.S. Frigate Potomac

On the Brazil Station at Rio de Janeiro

This 1726 ton frigate was laid down at the Washington Navy Yard in August 1819, was launched March 1822. Fitting out was not completed until 1831. After a cruise on the Pacific Station and circumnavigating the world, she returned to Boston on May 23, 1834.

The frigate next made two cruises to the Brazil Station, protecting American interests in Latin America from October 20, 1834 to March 5, 1837 and from May 12, 1840 to July 31, 1842. The letter below was written during the latter tour of duty.



November 24, 1841. A letter from Augustus A. Adee to his wife Amelia at New York. It is endorsed: pr. Elizabeth Hall/for Baltimore. By this letter he refers her to the advantage of directing mail to him through the Naval Lyceum at Brooklyn, N.Y., a service for forwarding naval mail to servicemen overseas. Adee notes that "a vessel sails for Baltimore tomorrow" so that he knew that the bark Elizabeth Hall would depart from Rio on November 25.



SHIP

Shipping and Commercial List (N.Y.), Jan. 5, 1842. Arrived at Baltimore, Md. Jan. 1, 2: Barque Elizabeth Hall, Cobb...Rio de Janeiro.

Letter rated, Act of 1825, single letter, 150-400 miles at 18-3/4¢ + 2¢ Ship Letter charge = 20-3/4¢ due, shown in manuscript.

N.B.: At the time this letter was written Augustus A. Adee was Surgeon of the Fleet for the Squadron on the Coast of Brazil. On Feb. 21, 1842, Surgeon Adee returned home from the Brazils. He died at New York Feb. 22, 1844.

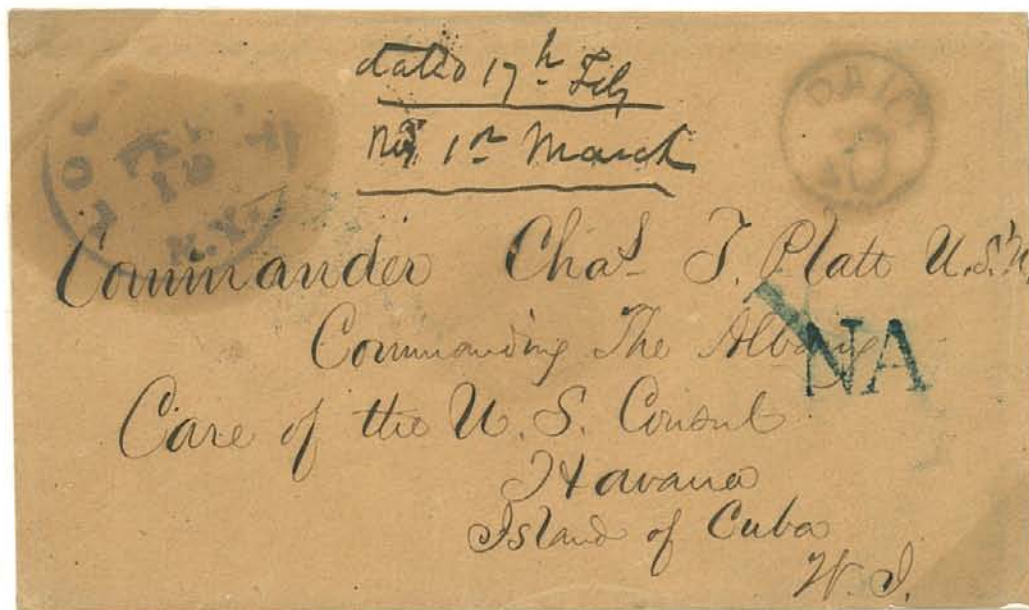
1852

U. S. Sloop-of-War Albany at Havana

U. S. Mail Steam Ship Co.: S. S. Georgia, N. Y. to Havana

U.S.S. Albany. (sloop) 1064 tons, 147'-11" x 38'-6", draft 17'. 13 knots; compl. 210; armament 4 8" smooth bores, 18 32-pdr. S.B. The first Albany, a first-class sloop-of-war, was launched 27 June 1846 by New York Navy Yard and commissioned 6 November 1846, Capt. S.L. Breese in command.

Albany sailed from New York 28 November 1846 to join the home squadron off the Mexican coast. She took part in the landings at Veracruz, Mexico (9 March 1847) and furnished men for the landing forces in the expedition against Tuxpan (18 April 1847) and Tobasco (16 June 1847). Except for short periods 1847, 1848 and 1852, Albany remained in the West Indies until 1854. She sailed from Aspinwall, Panama 29 September 1854, en route to New York and was never heard from again.



February 19, 1852. A letter posted to Commander Chas. T. Platt of the Albany while at Havana. It was paid at Lockport, N.Y. at the 10¢ Steamship Letter rate to Cuba.

Shipping & Commercial List, N.Y. VESSELS UP FOR FOREIGN PORTS, Havana: Steamer Georgia, Porter, 28 N.R., 2 P.M., 24th February, Howland & Aspinwall or M.O. Roberts.

The S.S. Georgia of the U.S. Mail Steamship Co. sailed as advertised for Havana on Feb. 24. Advertisements advised that passengers for New Orleans would be transferred to another steamship of the Line at Havana.



NA

March 1. Georgia arrived at Havana, backstamp. The letter was subject to a collect amount of one reale at Havana, the North American rate for a single letter.



1862

U. S. Frigate Potomac

1726 tons, 177'-10" x 46'-2", complement of 480, armament: eight 8" and 42 32 pounders. The Potomac was a frigate laid down by the Washington Navy Yard in August 1819, was launched March 1822. Fitting out was not completed until 1831.

On her first overseas cruise, Potomac departed N.Y. August 19, 1831, for the Pacific station via the Cape of Good Hope. On February 16, 1832, Potomac shelled the town of Quallah Batoo, Sumatra in punishment for the capture on merchantman Friendship of Salem, Mass. and the massacre of her crew in February 1831.

Her Civil War duty began when she departed N.Y. September 10, 1861, for the West Coast Gulf Blockade Squadron off Vera Cruz. She became the store ship for the squadron and remained at Pensacola Navy Yard as a receiving ship until 1867, when she was sent to Philadelphia.



June 16, 1862. 3¢ Issue of 1861 prepays the postage to Nathaniel F. Hamlin aboard the U.S.F. Potomac while she was a store ship at the Pensacola Navy Yard.



NH 85592 KN (COLOR)

USS SANTEE
Frigate
(1861-1912)

Artist: RADM J. W.
SCHMIDT, USN

Courtesy of the
Artist

US NAVAL HISTORICAL
CENTER PHOTOGRAPH

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1820-55

U. S. Frigate Santee

This sailing frigate rated at 44 guns, was laid down in 1820 at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, but, due to insufficient funds, she long remained uncompleted on the stocks. She was finally launched February 16, 1855, and commissioned June 9, 1861.

Santee departed Portsmouth on June 20, 1861 for the Gulf of Mexico, and shortly became active in capturing blockage runners, as well as capturing Confederate ships.

In January 1862, when the Union naval force in the Gulf of Mexico was divided into two squadrons, Santee was assigned to Flag Officer Farragut's new West Gulf Blockading Squadron, where she continued to blockade the Texas coast, primarily off Galveston until summer.



U.S.S. Santee. Painting
by RADM J.W. Schmidt, U.S.N.

1862

U.S. Frigate Santee

1726 tons, 175' x 45', complement 480, armament two 64 pounders, ten 8" shell guns, twenty 32-pdrs. 57 cwt., sixteen 32-pdrs. 33 cwt., 2 heavy 12-pdrs. She was of the Brandywine class.

This sailing frigate rated at 44 guns was laid down in 1820 at the Portsmouth, N.H. Navy Yard, but, due to insufficient funds, she long remained uncompleted on the stocks. She was finally launched February 16, 1855, and commissioned June 9, 1861.

Santee departed Portsmouth on June 20, 1861, for the Gulf of Mexico, and shortly on August 8 captured the blockade runner schooner C.P. Knapp, and on October 27, she took her second prize, Delta, off Galveston. In November she was engaged in a hand-to-hand battle and captured the chartered Confederate armed schooner look-out Royal Yacht. After a 5 or 6-mile chase on December 30, boats from Santee captured the 14-ton Confederate Garonne.

In January 1862, when the Union naval force in the Gulf of Mexico was divided into two squadrons, Santee was assigned to Flag officer Farragut's new West Gulf Blockading Squadron, where she continued to blockade the Texas coast, primarily off Galveston, until summer. Then, because scurvy had weakened the frigate's crew and the enlistments of many of her bluejackets had expired, the ship sailed north, reaching Boston on August 22 and was decommissioned on September 4, 1862.



An 1862 letter, endorsed: U.S. Frigate Santee/Galveston Texas, is paid by the 3¢ Issue of August 19, 1861. At this time Santee was in the West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

ca 1863

U. S. Side-wheel Gunboat Morse

Morse, a wooden side-wheel ferryboat built at New York in 1859, was purchased by the Navy at New York as Marion on November 7, 1861, and commissioned November 9. She was of 514 tons, 143' x 33', draft 8'6", armament two 9" guns.

This ex-ferryboat had a remarkable naval career. She was engaged in landings at Roanoke, Va. 7-8 Feb. 1862; engagement with enemy vessels, capture of Elizabeth City, N.C. and expedition to Edenton, 10-12 Feb. 1862. Reconnaissance to Winton, NC, Chowan River, 18-20 Feb. 1862. Capture of Newbern, NC, 13-14 Mar. 1862. Expeditions to West Point, Va., York River, 5-7 May; to White House, Va., York and Pamunkey rivers 23-30 June 1863, and up Pamunkey River, 8-13 Mar. 1864. Rappahannock River 1865.

She was decommissioned 21 May 1865. She was sold at public auction on 20 July to the East Boston Ferry Co and redocumented Lincoln. She was abandoned in 1885.



A cover docketed as from the U.S. Str. Morse. It was posted at Old Point Comfort, Va., most likely just before the Morse's forays up the York and Pamunkey rivers, 23-30 June 1863. 3¢ rate was paid by the Issue of 1861.

1863

U. S. Mortar Schooner Adolph Hugel

Adolph Hugel was a schooner built at Philadelphia in 1860 and purchased by the Navy there September 21, 1861. Her former name was retained by the Navy. She was converted to a mortar vessel and commissioned January 13, 1862. She was of 269 tons, 114' x 29' beam, draft 9'. Armament was one 13" mortar and two 32-pdr. smooth bores.

Assigned to the Mortar Flotilla, Mississippi Squadron, she reached the mouth of the Mississippi River March 17, 1862. She participated in the bombardment of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, La. and Vicksburg, Miss. Following repairs at Baltimore in August 1862, Adolph Hugel joined the Potomac Flotilla, where she was when this letter was written.



April 24, 1863. A letter posted at Castine, Maine addressed to: Mr. Edward Hackett On board the U.S. gard (sic) boat Adolph Hugel (sic).

3¢ domestic rate postage paid by the Issue of 1861.

1863

U. S. Barque Pursuit

600 tons, 144' x 34'-10" x 15'-1" depth, armament six 32-pounders. The Pursuit was purchased at New York 3 September 1861, was commissioned 17 December 1861, Acting Volunteer Lt. David Cate in command. Assigned to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, she operated off Florida with several cruises to Cuba during the course of the Civil War.

She captured her first prize, the schooner Anna Belle off Appalachicola 6 March 1862. In April she took the sloop La Fayette and the steamer Florida, both in St. Joseph's Bay near Pensacola and on 28 May she ran down the schooner Andromeda off the Cuban coast. On 23 June 1863 she captured the sloop Kate at the mouth of the Indian River and, at the end of December destroyed two salt works on St. Joseph's Bay.

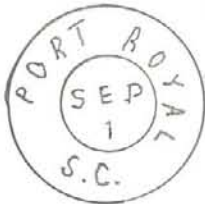


August 8, 1863. A letter posted at Holliston, Mass. addressed to Henri Batchelder aboard the U.S. Barque Pursuit at St. Joseph's Bay, Florida. It is entrusted to the care of the Naval Lyceum at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

September 1. Transit at Port Royal, South Carolina, from where the letter was forwarded to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron at St. Joseph's Bay.

September 17. The addressee could not be found, so the letter was returned to the writer. It was then charged 3¢ for the return postage.

December 16. Arrival backstamp at New York.



FORWARDED

CANNOT BE FOUND

Due 3

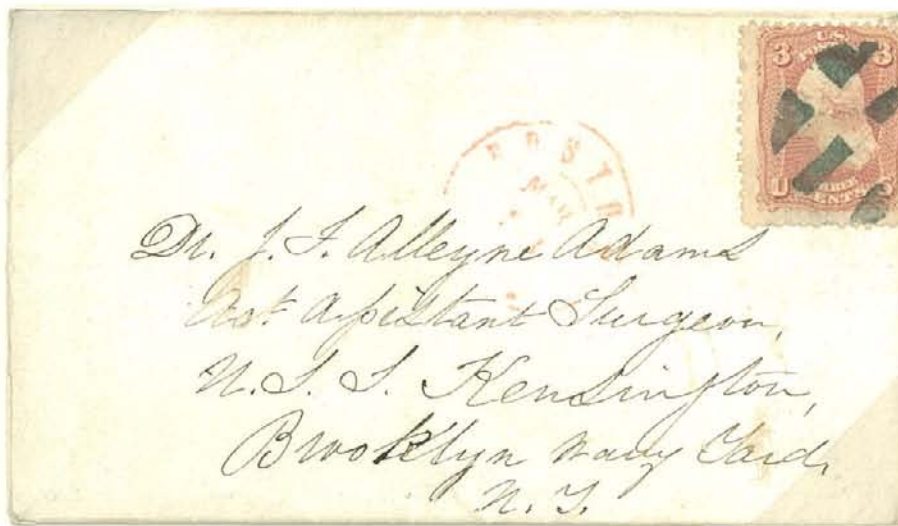


1864

U. S. S. Kensington at the Brooklyn Navy Yard

The second Kensington was a 1053 ton screw steamer built at Philadelphia by J.W. Lynn in 1858, and purchased by the Navy at Boston 27 January 1862, commissioned there on 15 February.

The wooden steamer departed Boston 24 February for the Gulf of Mexico, but heavy seas and engine trouble required her to stop at Charleston for repairs. The supple and water vessel resumed her voyage in April 1862 and joined the West Gulf Blockading Squadron 4 May. She had a very active career including ascending the Mississippi under fire, capturing blockade runners and Confederate vessels. Kensington moved to New Orleans 26 January 1863 and five months later set sail for New York for long needed repairs, where she was when this letter was written. She was back in fighting trim 1 August 1864, when she functioned as a supply vessel for ships of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.



B. 992



B. 1020 (Type)

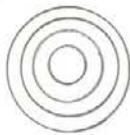
March 23, 1864. 3¢ Issue of 1861 (Sc. 65) pays the Act of 1858 rate per ½-oz., any distance up to 3000 miles.

1864

U. S. S. James L. Davis with the East Gulf Squadron, Key West

Sailing bark, 461 tons, 133' x 30'-7", complement 75, armament four 8" guns. James L. Davis was a wooded sailing vessel purchased at Philadelphia Sept. 29, 1861. She departed Philadelphia January 2, 1862, for the Gulf of Mexico and joined Flag Officer Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron Feb. 5, but was soon transferred to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron in exchange for Preble.

She had a varied career 1862 to 1864, capturing several blockade runners and later as a supply ship carrying stores and other provisions to the squadron. Early in 1865, she was ordered to Tampa Bay. When the letter below was written, James L. Davis, in July and August, participated in a series of successful boat expeditions which destroyed salt works, a large saw and grist mill, and a sugar mill belonging to Jefferson Davis. On September 1, 1864, she was ordered to St. Joseph's Bay.



DUE
6

August 25, 1864. A letter to Acting Asst. Surgeon J.F. Alleyne Adams aboard the U.S.S. James L. Davis paid at the 3¢ rate per ½-oz. of 1861, any distance. Letter was underpaid, so 6¢ was due at double the underpayment.

Most logical transport of this letter would have been by the steamer Thames, Arez, which sailed from New York on August 26 for Fortress Monroe, forwarding to Key West by a Naval vessel.

1864

U. S. S. Mohican. Steam sloop-of-war

1461 tons, 198'-9", draft 13', speed 10.5 knots, complement 160, armament two 11", 4 32-pounders. Laid down by Portsmouth Navy Yard, N.H. in August 1858; launched 15 Feb. 1859. She was first assigned to the African Squadron against pirates and slavers. She had many assignments during the Civil War until decommissioned on 9 July 1862. She was recommissioned 17 October 1862, and 5 days later was ordered to special service chasing the Confederate raiders Florida and Alabama, sailing immediately, the steamer cruised on station from Cape Verde Islands to the Cape of Good Hope operating off the coasts of Africa and South America into 1864. She returned to Philadelphia without contacting the elusive enemy 14 April 1864 and was decommissioned there two weeks later.



Letter posted unpaid most likely at Port Royal, S.C. as the U.S.S. Mohican was completing her special assignment, and Port Royal was a usual port for naval vessels returning from duty in the South Atlantic. The writer noted at lower left: Ships Letter/ U.S.S. Mohican.

March 19, 1864. Arrival postmark at Philadelphia. The Boston Shipping List, March 26, 1864, lists two Philadelphia arrivals, possible carriers of the letter:

Arrived March 19, Brig W.H. Bickmore, Port Royal, S.C.

Schooner A.H. Manchester, Nickerson, Port Royal, S.C.

Letter rated, Act of March 3, 1863, as a Ship Letter at double the letter rate. Here treated as a drop letter at 2¢ x 2 = 4¢ due. The large manuscript "4" restates the rate shown in the encircled "DUE/4".

1864

U. S. Steam Gunboat Sciota

The Sciota was one of the "90 day gunboats" rushed through construction at the beginning of the Civil War. She was laid down in the summer of 1861, at Philadelphia by Jacob Birley and J.P. Morris and Co., launched Oct. 15, commissioned Dec. 16. Armament one 20 pdr., two 20 prd. howitzers. 507 tons, 158' x 28' beam, depth 12', draft 7', complement 65.

The new screw gunboat was assigned to the Gulf Blockade Squadron and arrived at Ship Island, Mississippi Jan. 8, 1862. When the Gulf of Mexico naval jurisdiction was divided, Sciota was assigned to Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Sciota was a very active vessel in the siege for New Orleans as well as the Mississippi River campaign. She was involved with the action at Galveston Jan. 3, 1863, as well as many adventurous activities 1863-64 including the capture of several Confederate vessels. Her many naval operations are well worthy of review.

In January 1865, she steamed to Mobile Bay to help clear torpedoes from the waters there. On April 14, the day of President Lincoln's assassination, she struck a torpedo and sank off Mobile. Her commanding officer stated, "The explosion was terrible, breaking the beams of the spar deck, tearing open the waterways, ripping off starboard fore-channels and breaking foretopmast."



A patriotic envelope with the notation: Ship letter/ U.S. Gunboat Sciota.

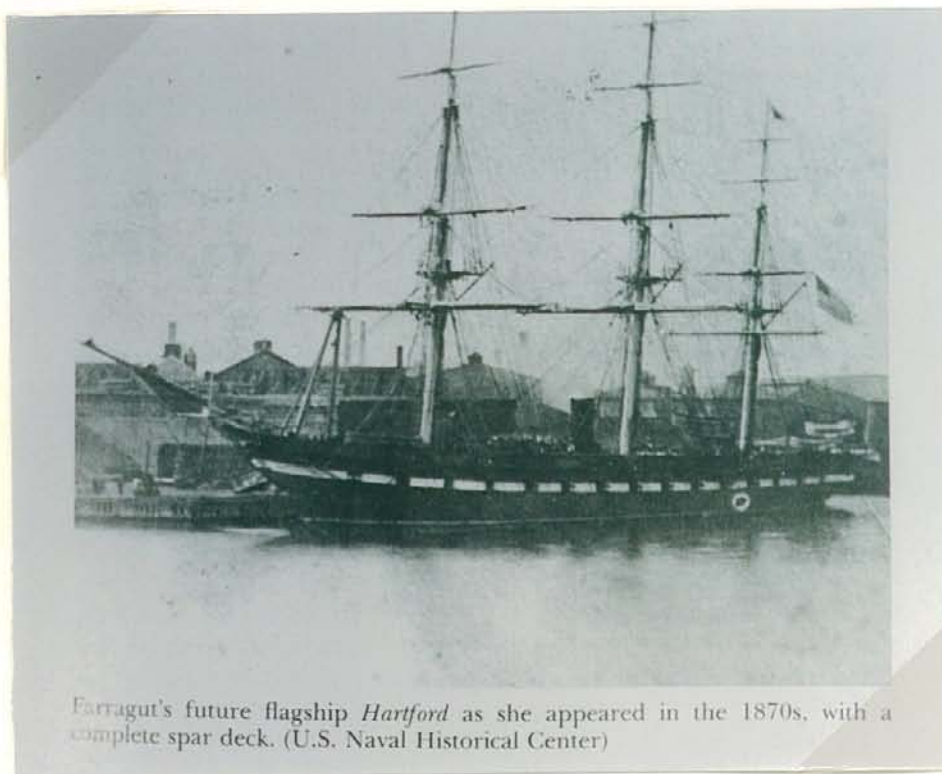
This letter was received at New York where the 3¢ domestic rate was due per the Act of 1861, "Letters by soldiers (sailors) in the service of the U.S. may be transmitted without prepayment of postage; postage to be paid by the recipient."

The U.S. SHIP notation shows that the letter was received from a U.S. Government vessel.

U.S. screw Sloop Hartford

Launched November 22, 1858, by the Boston Navy Yard, the 2900 ton screw sloop Hartford shortly sailed for the Far East carrying Flag Officer Cornelius K. Stribling, the newly appointed commander of the East India Squadron. Upon reaching the Orient, Hartford relieved Mississippi as flagship. She saw duty in the Far East until she was ordered home at the outbreak of the Civil War.

She had a distinguished career during the Civil War and became the flagship of Flag Officer David G. Farragut, the commander of the newly created West Gulf Blockading Squadron.



Farragut's future flagship *Hartford* as she appeared in the 1870s, with a complete spar deck. (U.S. Naval Historical Center)

1869

U. S. S. Sabine on a Midshipman Training Cruise
North German Lloyd: S. S. Weser II, N.Y. to Southampton

Sabine was a ship rigged sailing frigate, built at the New York Navy Yard. Her keel was laid in 1822, but she was not launched until February 3, 1855. Her first cruise took the frigate to Paraguay in October 1858, with an expeditionary force after that country's firing on U.S. Water Witch. During the Civil War she was actively employed along the east coast searching for Confederate raiders.

After the war, she served as a training ship at New London until 1868. During 1869 and 1870, she conducted midshipman training cruises to European and Mediterranean ports.



September 29, 1869. A letter to one of the midshipman trainees, Midmn. S.P. Comley care of the U.S. Despatch Agent B.F. Stevens, Covent Gardens, London. Postage at the 12¢ rate to Great Britain, effective Jan. 1, 1868 to Jan. 1, 1870, paid by the 12¢ Issue of 1869.

September 30. Transit stamp at New York. The S.S. Weser II of N.G.L. departed from N.Y. this date for Bremen via Southampton.

October 10. Weser arrived at Southampton, she proceeded on to arrive at Bremen October 12.

October 11. London, West Central Office, arrival backstamp. This letter was hand-stamped at B. F. Steven's office and held poste restante for Midshipman Comley.



1871-72

U.S. Sloop-of-War Plymouth at Ville Franche, France
North German Lloyd: S.S. Bremen, Southampton to New York

December 21, 1871. A letter dated at Ville Franche from junior officer Bartlett J. Cromwell vilifying the Plymouth's captain who, among other things, had failed to hold dances, even though other ships of the squadron such as Shenandoah, Brooklyn and Juaniata had already given one or two.

The Plymouth had departed from New York July 12, 1870, and steamed to the Mediterranean where Rear Admiral Bogg selected her as flagship of the European Station on September 21. She sailed for the coast of Africa February 17, 1872, thence headed home via the West Indies.



December 22. Letter to Philadelphia paid at 1fr.20 centimes by copies of the 40 cent. Republic Issue of 1870 and 80 cent. Empire Issue of 1868. This was the rate to the U.S. per 10 grams, effective Sept. 1, 1871 to July 31, 1874. Letter was posted at Nice, a city near Ville Franche. The stamps are cancelled by the large numerals "2656" of Nice.

December 23. Marseilles to Paris T.P.O. backstamp, day train (octagonal).

December 23. Paris Foreign (Etranger) Office transit backstamp.

December 25. Transit at London. U.S. was credited with 2¢ per ½-oz. per single letter under terms of the U.S.-British Convention of 7-24 November 1868 for mail forwarded through Britain.

December 26. S.S. Bremen of the North German Lloyd had sailed from Bremen December 23, touched at Southampton December 26, where this letter went aboard.

January 14, 1872. Bremen arrived at New York.

1872-73

U.S. Sloop-of-War Plymouth on the European Station
North German Lloyd: S.S. Deutschland, N.Y. to Southampton

The second Plymouth, a wooden-hulled, screw sloop-of-war, was laid down as Kenosha at the New York Navy Yard in 1867, completed in 1868; commissioned January 20, 1869.

Kenosha got underway eastward across the Atlantic Feb. 25, 1869. While on the European Station she was re-named Plymouth. Word of the change reached her at Ville France June 26. She sailed European, Levant and North African waters until January 1870, when she escorted the British steamer Monarch, carrying the remains of George Peabody, American merchant, financier and philanthropist, to the U.S. for burial.

After another stint in the European Station early in 1872, she again returned to European waters November 1, 1872. This letter was addressed to Lt. J.N. Hemphill, U.S.N. while she was at Portsmouth. This deployment lasted until the screw sloop sailed for home June 6, 1873.



December 24, 1872. A letter paid at the 6¢ U.S.-British rate of Jan. 1, 1870, by 3¢ stamped envelope and 3¢ Bank Note Issue of 1870 without grill.

December 27. Transit stamp at N.Y. S.S. Deutschland of the NGL departed from N.Y. Dec. 28 for Bremen via Southampton.

January 7. Deutschland arrived at Southampton, mail forwarded by rail to London where it was processed January 8.

This letter was addressed c/o B.F. Stevens, the despatch agent at London. He acted as a forwarding agent or poste restante for U.S. Naval vessels. Here letter was sent by courier to Portsmouth.



1877

U.S. Screw Sloop Hartford at Rio de Janeiro
HAMBURG-AMERICAN LINE: S.S. Gellert, N.Y. to Plymouth
ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET CO., R.M.S.P. Elbe, Southampton to Rio

This letter, posted at Macon, Georgia to Midshipman Wm. L. Benson aboard the U.S. Flagship Hartford at Rio de Janeiro, was grossly overpaid. The July 1875 rate to Brazil via England was 27¢ per ½-oz. This letter was paid at double that rate or 27¢ x 2 = 54¢ by a strip of 5 of the 10¢ brown Issue of 1873 and a pair of the 2¢ vermilion Issue of 1875. The sender did not realize that the rate to Brazil via England had been reduced to 21¢ on January 1, 1877, and further reduced to a pre-G.P.U. rate of 10¢ on July 1, 1877. This letter was overpaid 34¢ as it should have only been paid 10¢ x 2 = 20¢.



MACON
OCT
22
8PM
GA

MACON
OCT 23 1877

LONDON
N
PAID
NO 17

RIO DE JANEIRO
3
DEZ
77

October 23, 1877. Letter posted at Macon, Georgia.

N.Y. Times. Cleared N.Y. October 25: Gellert, (Ger.,) Barends, Plymouth, Cherbourg and Hamburg.

BY CABLE: PLYMOUTH, November 4. The Hamburg-American Line Gellert, Capt. Berends, from New-York October 25 for Hamburg arr. here to-day.

November 5. London PAID transit mark. Letter was forwarded with the "Brazils" mails to Southampton.

November 9. R.M.S.P. Elbe of the Royal Mail Line departed from Southampton.

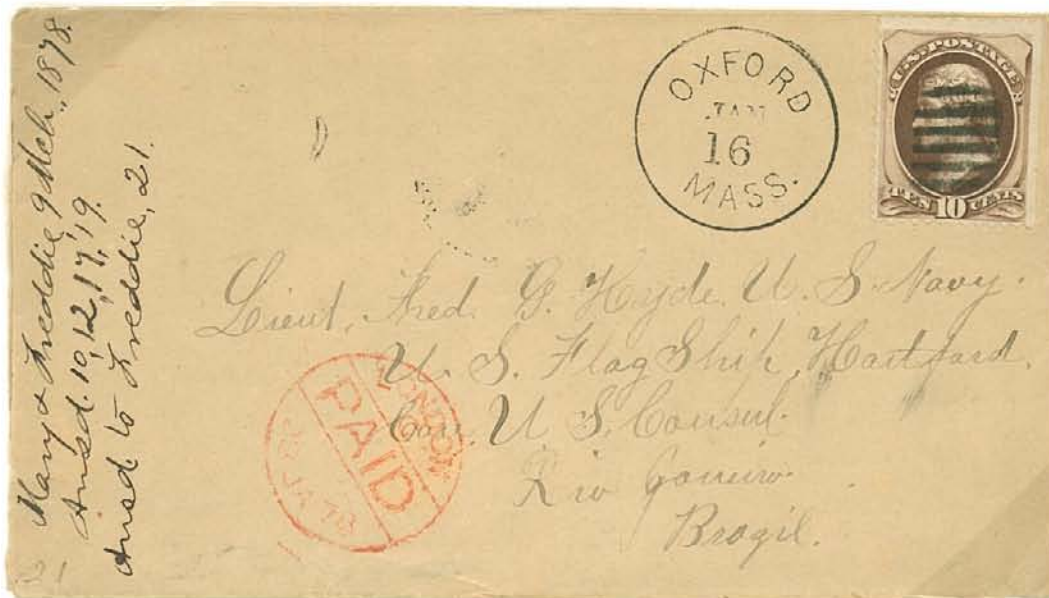
December 3. Rio de Janeiro arrival backstamp agrees with the recorded arrival date of Elbe at that port.

1878

U.S. Screw Sloop Hartford at Rio de Janeiro

HAMBURG-AMERICAN LINE: S.S. Herder, N.Y. to Plymouth, England

PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION CO.: S.S. Sorata, Liverpool to Rio



January 16, 1878. A letter addressed to Lieut. Fred Hyde, U.S. Navy, U.S. Flagship Hartford, Care U.S. Consul, Rio Janeiro, Brazil. Following the Hartford's return from the Asiatic Station in October 1875, she made a cruise to the Brazils in 1878.

Posted at Oxford, Mass. the 10¢ pre-U.P.U. Brazil rate was paid by the Issue of 1873. The 10¢ Brazil rate was effective July 1, 1877, which rate dropped to 5¢ when Brazil entered the U.P.U. April 1, 1879.

January 17. S.S. Herder of the Hamburg-American Line departed from New York.

N.Y. Times. BY CABLE: Plymouth, January 27. The Hamburg-American Line steam-ship Herder, Capt. Brandt, from New-York Jan. 17 for Hamburg arr. here to-day.

January 28. London transit stamp. Mail was forwarded to Liverpool.

February 6. The S.S. Sorata of the Liverpool, Valparaiso & Callao Line, a division of the Pacific Steam Navigation Co. departed from Liverpool for South America.

March 2. Sorata arrived at Rio de Janeiro, back-stamp. She went on to Montevideo, March 6 and Valparaiso, March 18.

1877

U. S. screw Sloop Hartford. On a cruize at Funchal, Madeira
WHITE STAR LINE, S.S. Baltic, N.Y. to Queenstown
COLONIAL MAIL LINE, R.M.S. Dunrobin Castle, Dartmouth to Madeira

Hartford was launched Nov. 22, 1858 at the Boston Navy Yard, 2900 tons, 225' x 44'. She sailed shortly for the Far East. She was called home at the outbreak of the Civil War, was outfitted as a war ship and became the flagship of Admiral David G. Farragut. She served in the capture of New Orleans as well as opening up the Mississippi River to the Union forces. She was refitted in Dec. 1864-July 1865, when she served as flagship of a newly-organized Asiatic Station Squadron until Aug. 1868, going out again, to return in Oct. 1875. When this letter was written to Lieut. Fred G. Hyde, the Hartford was on a cruize to the Madeiras.



October 19, 1877. Letter paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate at Squan Village, N.J. (now Manasquan.)

One of three possible vessels transported this letter from New York, all departing from that port on October 20:

S.S. Baltic for Liverpool via Queenstown, arr. Q.T. 10 AM, Oct. 29
S.S. City of Berlin for Liverpool, arrived 3 PM, Oct. 29
S.S. Donau for Bremen via Southampton, arrived So'ton Oct. 30.
We have arbitrarily assigned the transatlantic voyage to Baltic.

London Times, Nov. 3. DARTMOUTH, Nov. 2. Messrs. Donald Currie & Co.'s Royal Mail steamer Dunrobin Castle left this morning with mails and passengers for the Cape and Natal. Messages for the Cap. of Good Hope, Algoa Bay and Natal for transmission by this steamer from Madeira should be dispatched from England on or before the evening of the 5th.

Times, THURS. Nov. 8. The Royal Mail steamer Dunrobin Castle... arrived at Madeira on Tuesday evening (Nov. 6) at 9:30, all well, and after embarking telegrams proceeded for Capetown direct. ¶ Nov. 7. Docket notes letter received at Madeira this date.

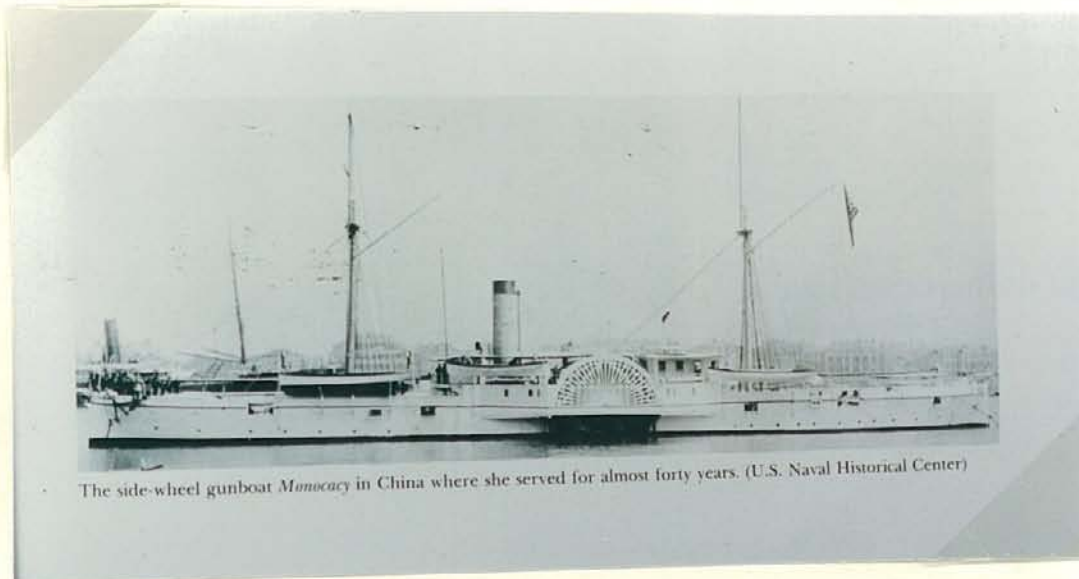
U. S. Sidewheel Gunboat Monocacy

Launched December 14, 1864 by A. & W. Denmead & Son, Baltimore; completed late in 1865; placed in service 1866. 1370 tons, 265' x 35'. draft 9' (mean), speed 11.2 knots, complement 159, armament 6 guns.

Assigned to the Asiatic Station, Monocacy remained there until 1903, a period of service so long that the light draft gunboat was given the nickname "Jinricksha of the Navy."

After patrol duty through 1867, Monocacy joined her squadron in representing the U.S. Government at the opening of the ports of Osaka and Hiogo, Japan on June 1, 1868. She saw various duty in the area including participation in the Korean "War" in 1871, where she was fired upon by a Korean fort. In the operation that followed, Monocacy lost 3 killed and 10 wounded.

For the last quarter of the 19th century, Monocacy cruised along the coasts of Japan, Korea and China, docking in Japan through the winter months.



The side-wheel gunboat *Monocacy* in China where she served for almost forty years. (U.S. Naval Historical Center)

1878

Nautical School Ship St. Mary's at Lisbon, Portugal

The St. Mary's was a sloop-of-war built in 1843-44 at the Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. This wooden ship was 958 tons, length 149'-3", beam 37'-4". Her first operation was with that of Commodore Robert Stockton, who was ordered south from Philadelphia with his squadron to reinforce that of Commodore David Conner in the Gulf of Mexico when tensions over Mexican-Texan-American territorial disputes heightened during the winter of 1845. She was very active during this operation, being transferred to Conner's squadron. The St. Mary's remained in the Gulf of Mexico through 1848. She had a varied career including service in the Pacific during the Civil War. On June 3, 1873, St. Mary's returned to Norfolk where she remained in ordinary until 1875, when she was transferred to the Public Nautical School at New York, she served as a school ship until 1908.



June 31 (sic,) 1878. A letter from a cadet aboard the St. Mary's at Lisbon, Portugal. He didn't think much of the shore leave at Lisbon.

July 1. Letter paid at Lisbon by a pair of the 25 reis Portugal Issue of 1870, perf. 14, paying the U.P.U. rate.

July 5. Transit mark at London.



July 16. New York arrival backstamp and Brooklyn arrival mark, same date.

Two possible steamships could have carried this letter transatlantic:

N.Y. Times: Arrived N.Y. July 16:

Steam-ship Bothnia, McMickan, Liverpool July 6 and Queenstown 7th to Charles G. Francklyn.

Steam-ship Wyoming, Br., Jones, Liverpool July 6 and Queenstown 7th to Williams & Guion.



1880

TRANSPACIFIC MAIL
PACIFIC MAIL STEAMSHIP CO.

S.S. City of Tokio

U.S.S. Monocacy at Yokohama

City of Tokio. Built by J. Roach & Son, Chester, Penn. 5079 tons, 408' x 47', single screw, 15 knots, compound engine, iron hull, four masts and two funnels. Launched May 13, 1874. Wrecked June 24, 1885, on Honshu, Japan.



March 9, 1880. A letter posted at Lowell, Mass., addressed to the wife of Paymaster Joseph Foster aboard the U.S.S. Monocacy at Yokohama, Japan. The Monocacy was a 1370 ton iron hulled sidewheel gunboat completed in 1865. Assigned to the Asiatic Station, Monocacy remained there until 1903, a period of service so long that the light-draft gunboat was given the nickname "Jinricksha of the Navy." During the last quarter of the 19th century she wintered at Japanese ports, here at Yokohama in 1880.



March 17. Transit backstamp at San Francisco.

Alta California. Cleared and sailed March 20, stmr. City of Tokio, Maury, Yokohama and Hong Kong, Williams Diamond & Co.



April 9. Arrival backstamp at Yokohama.



1880

U. S. S. Monocacy on the Asiatic Station
Occidental & Oriental Steamship Co. S. S. Oceanic
San Francisco to Yokohama



June 8, 1880. A double rated U.P.U. letter paid by two copies of the Issue of 1879 (Sc. 185). It was posted aboard the N.Y. & Chicago R.P.O., Eastern Division and endorsed: Via San Francisco.



June 14. Receiving and transit backstamp at San Francisco.

June 19. S.S. Oceanic of the O. & O. SS Co. departed from San Francisco for Hong Kong via Yokohama.

July 8. Oceanic arrived at Yokohama, backstamp agrees with the recorded arrival date. She went on to arrive at Hong Kong on July 16.

1893

U.S. Gunboat Monocacy at Shanghai



December 26, 1893. A letter posted at the Shanghai Local Post to the U.S.S. Monocacy while she was at Shanghai. Payment by the Issue of 1893 overprinted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first foreign settlement at Shanghai.



June 10, 1871. An early adventure of the Monocacy, this U.S. Navy photo shows her towing landing craft up the Han (Salee) River in Korea where troops made landings at Korean forts during the Korean "War" which took place in May-June 1871.

1882

U. S. S. Palos at Yokohama, Japan

Occidental & Oriental Steamship Co.: S. S. Gaelic, S. Francisco to Yokohama

Palos was built in 1865 by James Tetlow, Chelsea, Mass. as a 4th rate screw tug and was put into service as a yard tug at the Boston Navy Yard. Later she was converted to a gunboat and commissioned June 11, 1870.

Departing Boston June 20 for the Asiatic Station, Palos steamed across the Atlantic and through the Mediterranean, becoming the first American warship to transit the Suez Canal August 11-12, and arrived at Singapore, via Aden and Ceylon September 25. Following a brief stay at that port, the gunboat put out for Hong Kong and for the next 22 years operated on the China and Japan coasts and inland waters.



June 28, 1882. A letter to an officer aboard the U. S. S. Palos at Yokohama, Japan, paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate by a 2¢ Bank Note Issue of 1879 and 3¢ Issue of 1881.



July 6. San Francisco Foreign Department transit backstamp.

July 15. S. S. Gaelic of the O. & O. SS Co. departed from San Francisco for Hong Kong via Yokohama.

August 6. Gaelic arrived at Yokohama, backstamp. She went on to arrive at Hong Kong August 16.

1882

U. S. S. Palos at Yokohama, Japan

Occidental & Oriental Steamship Co., S. S. Belgic, S. Francisco to Yokohama

Palos took part in the "Corean War". In May 1871, the warship sailed from Shanghai to Nagasaki, Japan, and thence to Korea as part of the Asiatic Squadron under Rear Admiral John Rodgers carrying the U.S. Minister to China Francis Low on a diplomatic mission to the "Hermit Kingdom". While engaged in surveying the Salee River June 1, she was fired on by a Korean fort, two men from the squadron were wounded before return fire stopped the attack. Ten days later Palos and the gunboat Monocacy and a 650 man landing party captured the main Korean fort on June 10, and took four others the next day.



September 28, 1882. A letter to Passed Assistant Arthur Peterson, U.S.N. aboard the U.S.S. Palos at Yokohama, Japan. The 5¢ U.P.U. rate was paid at Philadelphia by the American Bank Note Co. Issue of 1879 and the 3¢ Issue of 1881.



October 5. San Francisco Foreign Department transit backstamp.

October 10. S.S. Belgic of the O. & O. SS Co. departed from San Francisco for Hong Kong via Yokohama.

November 1. Belgic arrived at Yokohama, backstamp. She went on to arrive at Hong Kong on November 9.

1885-86

U.S. Screw Sloop-of-war Ossipee on the Asiatic Station
Occidental & Oriental Steamship Co.: S.S. Oceanic, S. Francisco to Yokohama

First Ossipee, a wooden sloop-of-war, launched 16 November 1861. 1240 tons, 207' x 38', complement 141, armament: 1 100-pdr. parrot rifle, 1 11" Dahlgren smooth bore, 3 30-pdr. Dahlgren rifle, 6 32-pdrs., 1 heavy 12-pdr. smooth bore, 1 12-pdr. rifle. She served in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron until May 1863 when she joined the West Gulf Blockading Squadron off Mobile. On that post she captured two blockade runners. She had a varied and active career during the Civil War and was decommissioned 3 July 1865. Recommissioned 27 Oct. 1866, she served in the North Pacific and returned to N.Y. to be decommissioned 30 November 1872. She was twice more de- and re- commissioned, finally 26 Jan. 1884, when she departed 30 April for the Far East via Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. She served on the Asiatic Station until February 1887. She was finally decommissioned at Norfolk 12 November 1889, sold there 25 March 1891.



December 28, 1885. A letter posted at Washington, D.C. to W. Sturtevant Moore, U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. "Ossipee" at Yokohama. The U.P.U. rate of 5¢ was paid by the embossed envelope, Issue of 1882.

January 3, 1886. San Francisco receiving backstamp.

January 9. S.S. Oceanic departed from San Francisco.

January 31. Oceanic arrived at Yokohama, backstamp. She went on to arrive at Hong Kong on February 7.

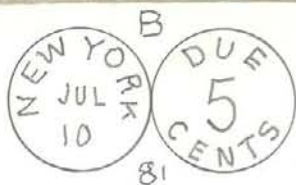
1881

U. S. S. Marion on South Atlantic Station

Marion, a sloop of war, 16 guns, was named after Francis Marion, a Revolutionary War general known as "the Swamp Fox" because of his crafty ways using guerrilla tactics.

The 566 ton Marion was launched at the Boston Navy Yard April 24, 1839. On November 10, 1839, she departed Boston on her first cruise to Brazil. After a varied career off the West Coast of Africa, she was in ordinary at Portsmouth, N.H. when the Civil War broke out. She saw much service in the war and in 1871 she was rebuilt as a third rate screw steamer, 1900 tons, 216' long.

Recommissioned January 12, 1876, she cruised on the European and South Atlantic stations until December 1882, when she returned to Portsmouth.



The origin of this cover is not indicated, although it is endorsed: Ships Letter. U.S.S. Marion. At this time she was on the South Atlantic Station and, based on New York vessel arrivals for July 10, 1881, the most logical conveyance is, as follows:

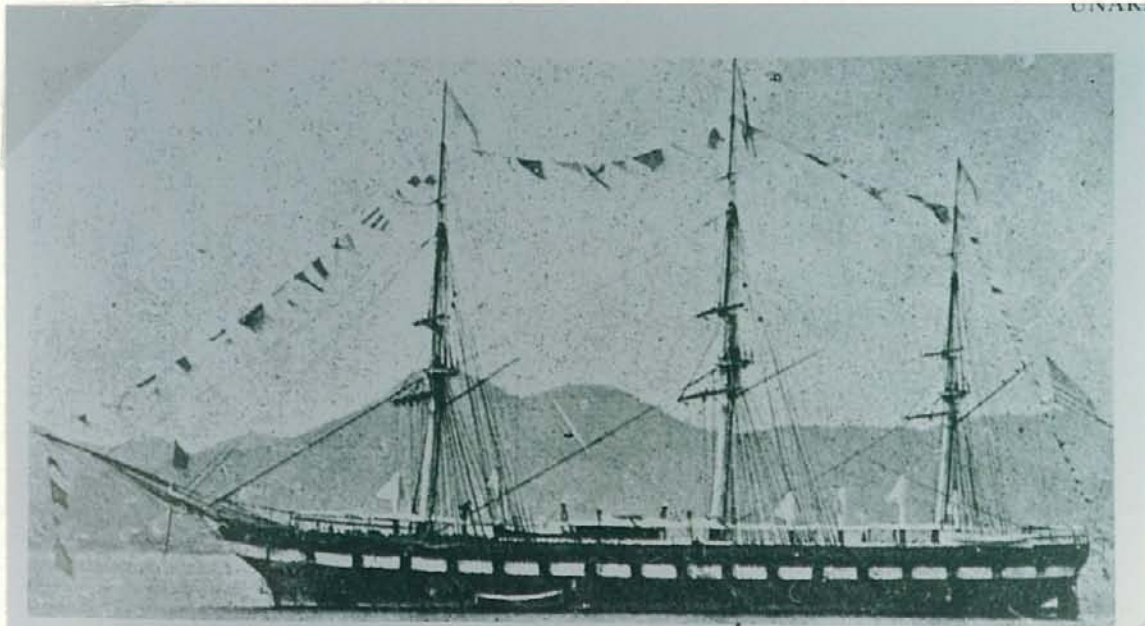
N.Y. Times. Arr. N.Y. July 10. Steam-ship Pascal, (Belg.,) Taylor, Buenos Ayres May 27, Montevideo June 5, Santos 11th, Rio Janeiro 16th and Bahia 22d. to Busk & Jevins.

The letter was rated at the 3¢ U.S. Domestic rate plus 2¢ for a Ship Letter charge = 5¢ due, shown both by the tangential circular handstamp and the precancelled 5¢ Postage Due stamp, Issue of 1879.

U. S. S. Lancaster

Screw steamer, sloop-of-war, launched October 20, 1858, at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. 2362 tons, 235'-8" x 46' beam, 10 knots, complement 367. Armament twenty-four 9" Dahlgren smooth bores, a 2" Dahlgren and two 30 pound parrott rifles. She departed from Delaware Bay July 27, 1859 for the Pacific, reaching Panama Bay December 6. She served as flagship of the Pacific Squadron until 1866.

After being decommissioned following the Civil War, she was recommissioned August 26, 1881, at the Portsmouth Navy Yard and on September 12 sailed for Europe. She became flagship of the European Squadron and during the following years cruised extensively in the Mediterranean, northern European waters and on the coast of Africa.



The screw sloop *Lancaster* dressed overall in 1866. (U.S. Naval Historical Center)

1883

U.S.S. Lancaster at Villefranche-sur-Mer, France
CUNARD LINE, R.M.S. Pavonia, Queenstown to New York

The screw steamer sloop-of-war Lancaster was launched October 25, 1858 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. She was immediately assigned to the Pacific Coast where she served until 1866, far from the main theaters of the Civil War. She returned to the Norfolk Navy Yard in March 1867, was decommissioned, but recommissioned on August 29, 1869. She served in South American and Cabbibeau waters, was decommissioned in 1875, and recommissioned in August 1881. At the time of the letter below she was flagship of the European Squadron and cruised extensively in the Mediterranean, northern European waters and on the coast of Africa.. She served a varied career, including being flagship of the Asiatic Squadron at Hong Kong until 1894.

The Lancaster was transferred to the Bureau of Public Health Service in March 1912. Her name was stricken from the Navy list on December 21, 1915.



December 12, 1883. Letter endorsed: U.S.S.S. Lancaster/ Ville Franche, paid at the 25 centimes U.P.U. rate by the French Issue of 1879. Circular date stamp is at Villefranche-sur-Mer on the Mediterranean Sea coast near Nice. This was the anchorage area for the Mediterranean Squadron.

December 14. Transit backstamp at the Paris Etranger (Foreign) office.

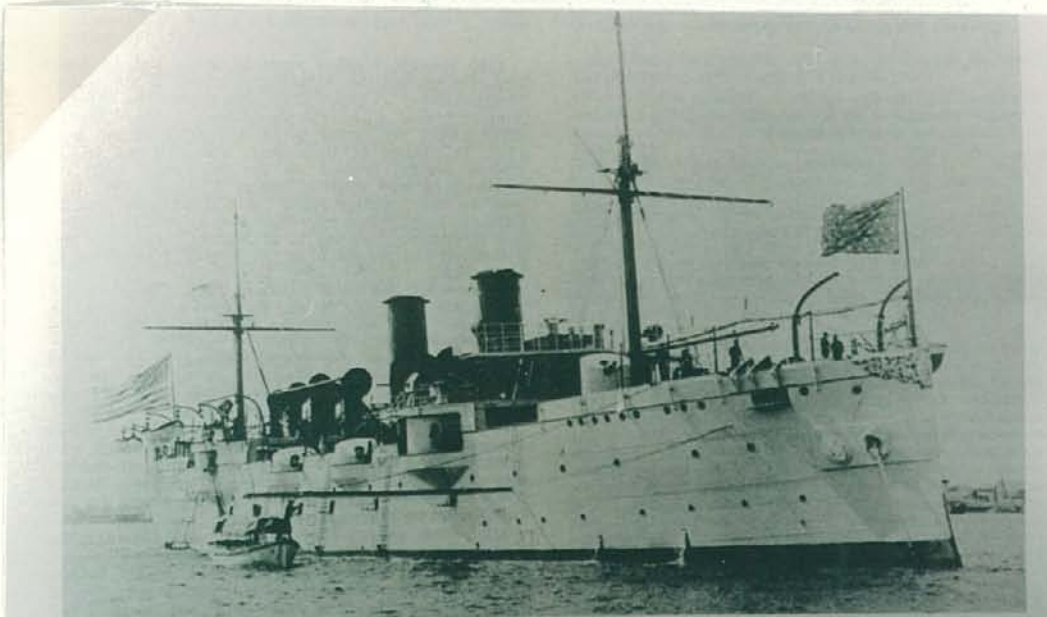
N.Y. Times. Arrived N.Y. Dec. 26. Steam-ship Pavonia, (Br.,) McNary, Liverpool Dec. 15 and Queenstown 16th to Vernen H. Brown & Co.

December 27. Philadelphia arrival backstamp.

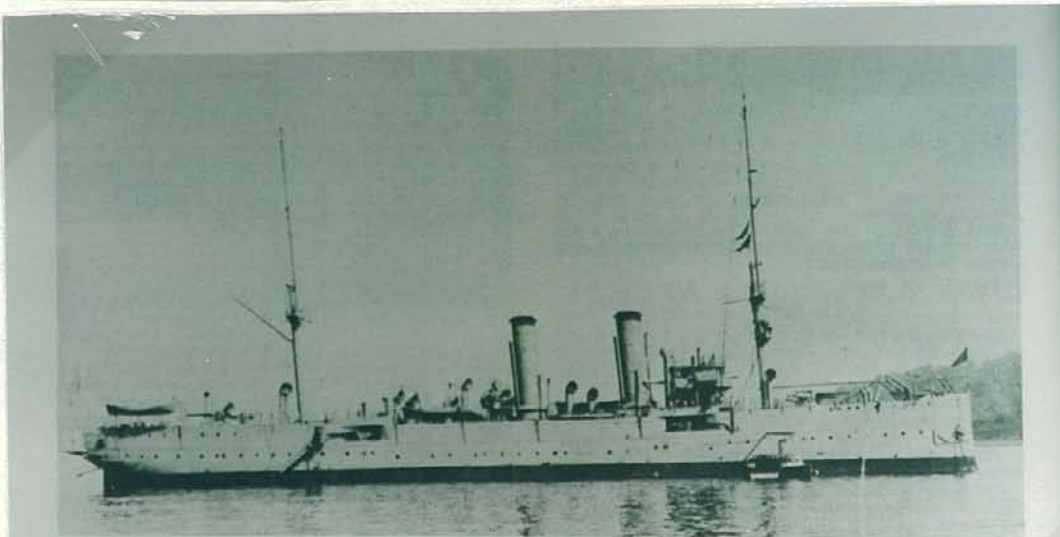
U. S. Flagship San Francisco

Designated Cruiser No. 5, the San Francisco, a steel protected cruiser, was launched October 26, 1889 at the Union Iron Works, San Francisco. She was of 4085 tons, 324'-6" long by 49'-2" beam, speed 19 knots, and had a complement of 384. Her armament was twelve 6" guns, four 6 pounders and four 3 pounders.

From 1895 to 1897 she was in European waters cruising in the Mediterranean. She returned to the U.S. during the Spanish American War in 1898. She was later refitted as a mine layer, a duty she performed during World War I.



The protected cruiser *San Francisco* (Cruiser No. 5) rides at anchor in the white-and-buff of the 1890s. Her wood-paneled wheelhouse and her 6-inch broadside battery give her an old-fashioned effect that combines oddly with her steel hull and breechloading guns. A pedestal-mounted 6-pounder rapid-fire gun, along with a similarly-mounted Gatling gun, can be seen just below the second stack; other such guns, intended for close-in defense against torpedo boats, are mounted elsewhere on *San Francisco's* decks. She carries heavy spars on fore- and mainmasts, but no sails.



San Francisco before World War I as a "mine planter," her bridge enlarged and her topmasts heightened. Her original battery and torpedo tubes have been removed. Pairs of 5-inch 40-caliber guns are mounted forward and aft on her main deck, with two more pairs carried in broadside mounts on the second deck. Minelaying tracks have been installed on this same deck; an extended framework surrounding her stern mine ports is seen below her ensign staff. By 1918, *San Francisco's* battery had again been changed, this time to four higher-powered 5-inch 51-caliber guns.

1895

U.S.S. San Francisco (Cruiser No. 5) at Greenock, Scotland
AMERICAN LINE: S.S. Paris, N.Y. to Southampton



September 17, 1895. A letter to Paymaster Joseph Foster, USN, aboard the U.S.S. San Francisco. It is directed to the care of B.F. Stevens, 4 Trafalgar Square, London, the Naval Despatch Agent who forwarded navy mail throughout Europe. This letter was posted at Portsmouth, N.H. at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate, paid by the 5¢ chocolate, Issue of 1894.

N.Y. Times. Departed from New York Sept. 18, SS Paris for Southampton.

N.Y. Times. By Cable, LONDON. Sept. 26. S.S. Paris, Capt. Watkins, from New-York for Southampton, passed Hurst Castle at 7:30 A.M. to-day.

September 26. Letter arrived at the offices of B.F. Stevens, which deleted his name and address and struck their oval receiving mark and the purple: CARE OF THE/ UNITED STATES CONSUL with the manuscript note: Greenock/Scotland.

September 26. Letter back into the mails at the London Charing Cross office, forwarding under U.P.U. at no further charge.

N.B.: This letter is addressed U.S. Flag Ship San Francisco.



1896

U.S.S. San Francisco (Cruiser No. 5) at Smyrna, Turkey
HAPAG LINE: S.S. Fuerst Bismark, New York to Queenstown



July 21, 1896. A letter to Paymaster Joseph Foster, USN aboard the U.S.S. San Francisco. It is directed to the care of B.F. Stevens, 4 Trafalgar Square, London. Stevens was the Naval Despatch Agent who forwarded navy mail throughout Europe. This letter was posted at Portsmouth, N.H. at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate, paid by the 5¢ chocolate, Issue of 1894.

N.Y. Times. Departed from N.Y. July 23, F. Bismark for Hamburg.

N.Y. Times. BY CABLE: London, July 30. S.S. Fuerst Bismark (Ger.,) Capt. Albers, from New-York for Cherbourg and Hamburg arr. at Plymouth at 4:35 A.M. to-day.

July 30. Arrival backstamp at the London West Central, St. Martin's Place Office.

July 31. Letter was handled by the B.F. Stevens Despatch Office and redirected "CARE OF THE UNITED STATES CONSUL/SMYRNA, TURKEY." Stevens struck his forwarder's purple stamp.

August 7. Arrival backstamp at the British P.O., Smyrna, where the San Francisco lay.



1899

U. S. S. Scindia - A Navy Collier
Made only two voyages for the U.S. Navy



1899

U.S.S. Scindia - A Navy Collier

Made only two voyages for the U.S. Navy

A collier, built 1890 by D. & W. Henderson & Co., Glasgow, Scotland. Purchased by U.S. Navy 12 May 1898, and commissioned as Scandia 21 May.

Following one voyage from New York to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with coal (2 June - 1 July 1898), Scindia departed from New York 12 October 1898 with a load of coal for Honolulu. After rounding Cape Horn she delivered her cargo (12 February - 18 March 1899) and proceeded to Mare Island Navy Yard, California where she went out of commission 27 May 1899.

October 25, 1898. This letter, originating at Brooklyn, New York, is addressed to Ensign Frank H. Schofield who was then aboard the U.S.S. Scandia en route to Honolulu via Cape Horn. Letter, paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate, was originally addressed to Punta Arenas, Straits of Magellan.

January 4, 1899. Letter missed Scindia at Punta Arenas so was forwarded to Valparaiso, Chile.

January 17. Scandia had already sailed from Valparaiso, so this letter was forwarded on to Callao, Peru.

January 28. Another miss at Callao so letter was again forwarded, this time to San Francisco where it finally caught up with Ens. Schofield on February 25. All this for 5¢!

All these movements are recorded on a series of backstamps on this letter.

On the Scindia's return from Honolulu to Mare Island, California, she went out of commission on 27 May.

1897

U.S.S. San Francisco (Cruiser No. 5) at Villefranche-sur-mer, France
CUNARD LINE, R.M.S. Umbria, New York to Queenstown



December 17, 1897. A letter to Passed Asst. Surgeon B. Robertson aboard the U.S.S. San Francisco. It is noted as U.S. Flag Ship San Francisco, care of B.F. Stevens, 4 Trafalgar Square, London. Stevens was the Naval Despatch Agent. Posted at New Haven, Conn., the 5¢ U.P.U. rate was paid by the stamped envelope, Issue of 1887, cancelled by the flag of New Haven.

NEW YORK, N.Y.
DEC 18 4- PM '97



December 18. R.M.S. Umbria of the Cunard Line departed for Queenstown and Liverpool. N.Y. transit backstamp.

N.Y. Times: BY CABLE. London, Dec. 25. SS Umbria (Br.,) Capt. Dutton, arr. at Liverpool to-day.

December 27. London arrival backstamp.



Dec. 27. B.L. Stevens directed the letter to the U.S.S. San Francisco at Villefranche sur Mer, the U.S. Naval depot in France.

December 28. French entry mark aboard the Calais to Paris railway sorting office.

December 29. Villefranche sur Mer arrival backstamp.



U. S. Screw Sloop-of-war Monongahela

2078 tons, 227' x 38' beam, 17'-6" draft, speed 8.5 knots. Armament one 200 pounder parrott rifle, two 11", two 24 pounders and two 12 pounders. A barkentine-rigged screw sloop of war built by the Philadelphia Navy Yard, launched July 10, 1862.

She was initially assigned to the North Atlantic Squadron, then sailed to reinforce Rear Adm. David G. Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron off Mobile, Alabama. On March 15, 1863, she was ordered to attempt to run past Confederate batteries on the Mississippi at Port Hudson, La. As Army forces ashore conducted a mortar bombardment the squadron got underway about 10 P.M., heavier ships Hartford, Richmond and Monongahela screening the smaller Albatross, Genesee and Kineo from the forts, the steam frigate Mississippi bringing up the rear. In the ensuing furious engagement only Hartford and Albatross succeeded in passing up river. Monongahela grounded under the guns of a heavy battery, taking a murderous pounding and losing six men killed and 21 wounded, including the captain, until she worked loose with Kineo's aid. Her overloaded engine broke down and she was forced to drift downstream.

After the war she was refitted as a full-rigged ship and joined the Training Squadron in 1891. She was on a cruise to Europe in that capacity when this letter was written.



USS Monongahela.

1900

U. S. Screw Sloop Monongahela, training ship in Europe
NORDDEUTSCHER LLOYD S.S. Kaiserin Maria Theresa

Launched on July 10, 1862, at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, the Monongahela was a barkentine-rigged screw sloop of war. Initially assigned to the North Atlantic Squadron, she soon sailed to reinforce Rear Adm. David G. Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron off Mobile.

After a distinguished Civil War career, she was refitted as a full-rigged ship and joined the Training Squadron in 1891. During the cruise to which the letter below was addressed, the Monongahela is addressed as a training ship.

August 20, 1900. Letter addressed to the Monongahela care of B.F. Stevens, Trafalgar Square, London, paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate at Brooklyn, 5¢ Issue of 1898.

August 21. The NGL S.S. Kaiserin Maria Theresa departed from N.Y. for Bremen via Southampton, mails closed at 7 AM, vessel sailed at 10 AM.



N.Y. Times. BY CABLE: London, August 28. SS Kaiserin Maria Theresa, (Ger.,) Capt. Richmond from N.Y. via Cherbourg for Bremen, arr. at Southampton at 2:35 p.m. to-day and proceeded.

August 29. London arrival backstamp, 7.15 A.M. The U.S. Despatch Agent B.F. Stevens redirected the letter by handstamp to Le Havre, France, struck their oval forwarder's cachet, and deposited it back into the mails at the London West Central office at 6 P.M. U.P.U. allowed letter forwarding at no extra postage cost.

August 30. Arrival postmark at Le Havre, port of call of the Monongahela.

1905

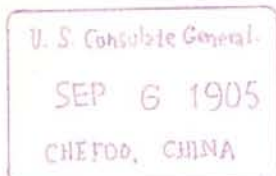
U. S. S. Bainbridge (Destroyer No. 1)

On duty with the 1st Torpedo Flotilla, Asiatic Fleet

This named ship was the 2nd Bainbridge and was launched August 27, 1901 by Neafie & Levy, Ship and Engine Builders, at Philadelphia. She was a 250' destroyer and the first of the Bainbridge class. She departed Key West December 23, 1903, and sailed via the Suez Canal to the Philippine Islands, arriving at Cavite April 14, 1904. Between 1904 and 1917 she served with the 1st Torpedo Flotilla, Asiatic Fleet except for two brief periods when she was out of commission.



August 29, 2905. A letter posted to the U.S.S. Bainbridge at Tsingtau in Kiautschou, a district of China on the south side of the Shantung peninsula. A German colony in 1905, it was on territory leased from China. The U.P.U. rate was there paid by four copies of the 5 pfennig green, Issue of 1900.



September 5. Letter went up the Yellow Sea by German steamship to the German port of Tiensin on the Yangsee River, backstamp.

September 6. Letter went by local steamer over to Chefoo. Receipt backstamp at the U.S. Consular office at Chefoo.