

1863

U.S.S. Kearsarge patrolling of the N.W. Coast of Africa
AFRICAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY S.S. Macgregor Laird
INMAN LINE S.S. Etna
Depreciated Currency

The U.S. Navy smooth log shows that the U.S. Screw Sloop-of-War Kearsarge, 1550 tons, was in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean off the N.W. Coast of Africa in the spring, summer and early fall of 1863, seeking the Confederate Screw Sloop-of-War Alabama which had been wreaking severe damage to Union shipping for nearly two years.

In March the Kearsarge was at Cadiz, Spain, then cruised into the Atlantic where she steamed about the Azore Islands, Madeira in April and May, then back to Cadiz in June. Late June, July and August found her back at Fayal and Terceira in the Azores. Early in August her log notes, "While lying off Town of Huga [Island of Teceira, Azores] sent a letter bag for the U.S. on board the Schooner 'Dearborn', bound for Sydney, Nova Scotia."

This letter was written while the Kearsarge laid at anchor at Horta Bay, Fayal from August 26 to September 2, 1863. It was transported by island conveyance to the Island of Madeira to meet the track of the West Africa to Britain steamships, which made calls at Madeira.



1863

U.S.S. Kearsarge patrolling off the N.W. Coast of Africa
AFRICAN STEAMSHIP CO.
INMAN LINE

S.S. Macgregor Laird
S.S. Etna



PACKET LETTER

September 2, 1863. The S.S. Macgregor Laird touched at Madeira where this letter went aboard.

September 9. London Sun, Liverpool. The royal mail steamship Macgregor Laird has arrived here with about 30 passengers and 513 ounces of gold dust. Her dates are: Benin, July 24; Fernando Po, 29th; Cameroons, 31st.; Old Calabar, Aug. 2; Bonny, 7th; Accra, 12th; Cape Coast Castle, 14th; Cape Palmas, 17th; Bathurst, 25th; Teneriffe, 31st and Madeirs, Sep. 2.

September 9. Transit backstamp at London. The Inman Line S.S. Etna, Capt. McGuigan, departed from Liverpool Sept. 9, and picked up this letter with the London mails on the 10th at Queenstown.



September 22. Arrival date of Etna at New York to John G. Dale.

This letter from Madeira would normally have been rated at 29¢ per ¼-oz., British Mail via Southampton (eff. 7/59). However, Because it came into Liverpool by African

Mail, it was rated at the Africa, West Coast rate of 33¢ per ounce. The 33¢ was divided: 12¢ British Transit to England; 16¢ Transatlantic and 5¢ U.S. Inland. The U.S. was debited with the 12¢ British Transit. U.S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢ As settlement with Britain was on a gold basis, the 33¢ was converted into the day's value in greenbacks (U.S. NOTES) as 45¢, a 1.36 depreciat-
i factor.

U.S. NOTES

45 Due
48 5



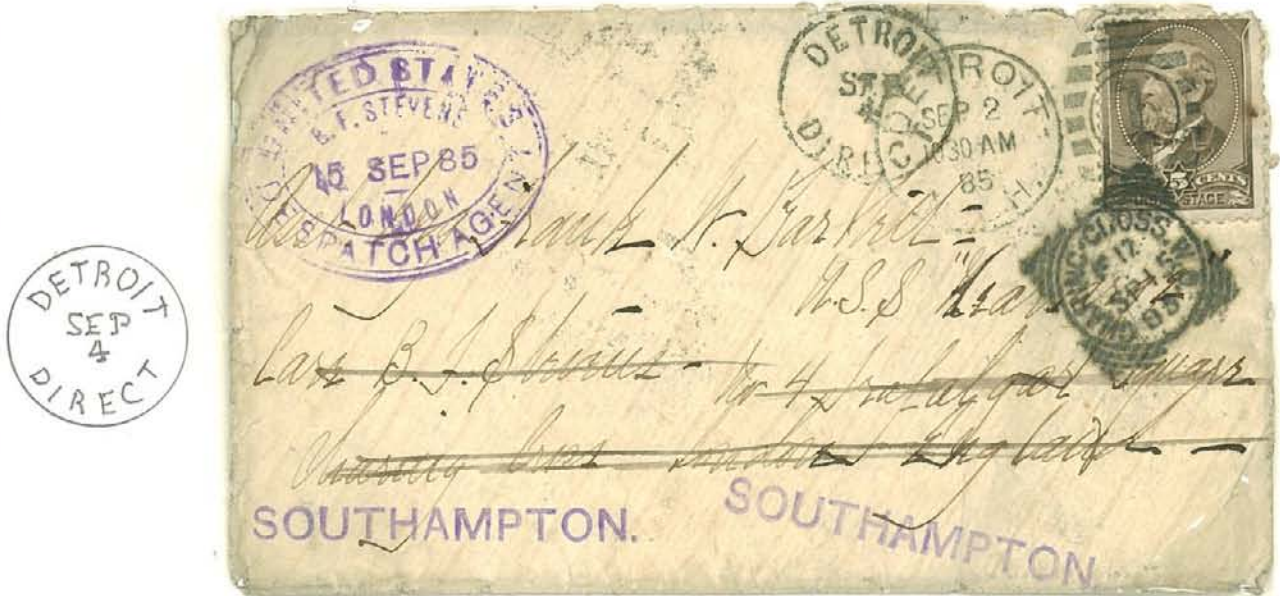
Forwarded

October 6. This letter was forwarded from South Braintree, Mass. to Plymouth, so an additional U.S. Inland forwarding charge of 3¢ was added to the 45¢ due in U.S. Notes to total 48¢ due, shown in manuscript. The U.S. Internal rates were already in greenbacks, so no depreciation factor was needed.

U.S.S. Kearsarge was in European waters until June 1864, when she fought and sank C.S.S. Alabama off the coast of France at Cherbourg, terminating Alabama's 21 month scourging of Union shipping.

1885

U.S. Screw Sloop-of-War Kearsarge at Southampton
INMAN LINE S.S. City of Richmond



September 2, 1885. A letter posted at Detroit, Mich. and paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate by the Issue of 1882. It is addressed to Asst. Eng. Frank Bartlett, U.S.S. "Kearsarge"/ Care B.F. Stevens/ No. 4 Trafalgar Square/ Charing Cross London England. It received the "DETROIT DIRECT" handstamp on September 4.

N.Y. Times: OUTGOING STEAMSHIPS, SAT., Sept. 6: City of Richmond for Liverpool, Sails 1 P.M.

BY CABLE: London Sept. 14. The Inman Line steamship City of Richmond, Capt. Lewis, from New-York Sept. 6 for Queenstown and Liverpool, passed Fastnet at 3:50 P.M. to-day.

London Times. TUES., SEPT. 15. The Inman Line steamer City of Richmond arrived at Queenstown yesterday and proceeded for Liverpool at 8:50 P.M.



September 15. London arrival back-stamp at St. Martins Place. B.F. Stevens stamped his DESPATCH AGENT cachet and forwarded the letter to Engineer Bartlett at Southampton. Back into the mails at Charing Cross, London, Southampton back-

stamp the same day, a fast turnaround.

Kearsarge had departed from New York August 21, 1883, to arrive for three years in Mediterranean and Northern European waters and along the coast of Africa, which duty she was on when this letter was written. She returned to Portsmouth, N.H. November 12, and was decommissioned in the Portsmouth Navy Yard December 1, 1886.

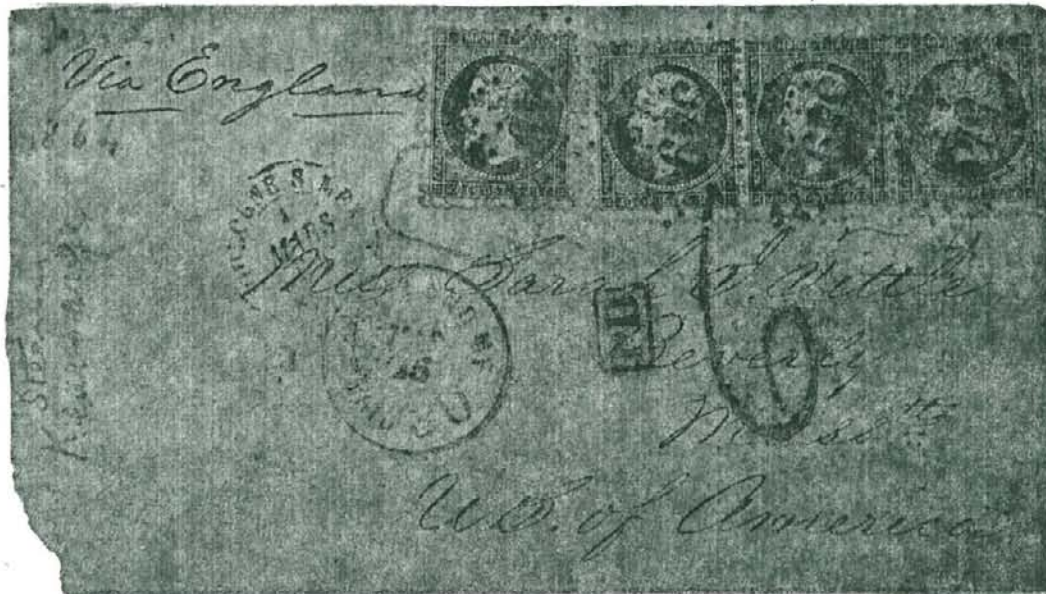
1864

FRANCE TO U.S. VIA ENGLAND

ALLAN LINE

S.S. Jura

U.S.S. Kearsarge at France seeking the Confederate Alabama



February 21, 1864. A docket notes that the letter that was with this cover was written aboard the "Steamer Kearsarge". The reason the U.S.S. Kearsarge was in French waters in 1864 began with an event early in the Civil War. The Confederate raider Alabama, a vessel built secretly in England for the Confederacy, had been commissioned on the high seas off the Azores in February 1862, and had since been wreaking havoc with U.S. shipping worldwide. The U.S.S. Kearsarge, a 1550 ton screw sloop-of-war, heavily armed was assigned the task of capturing or destroying the Alabama. Kearsarge prepared for her fight with Alabama at Cadiz, Spain (Nov. 1862 - March 1863), then searched for the raider from along the coast of Northern Europe to the Canaries, Madeira and the Western Islands. This March 1, 1864 letter was written aboard her while she cruised the waters of Northern Europe, and was at the French seaport of Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Arriving at Cherbourg, France June 14, 1864, the Kearsarge found Alabama in port and took up patrol at the harbor's entrance. On June 19, Alabama stood out of Cherbourg for her last action. Alabama opened fire first and, when within 1000 yards, Kearsarge returned fire. Within an hour Alabama had been reduced to a sinking wreck. One point in Kearsarge's favor was that the quality of Alabama's powder and ammunition had deteriorated. Also, Kearsarge had been given added protection by chain cable triced in tiers along her sides at vulnerable areas.

1864

FRANCE TO U.S. VIA ENGLAND

ALLAN LINE

S.S. Jura

U.S.S. Kearsarge at France seeking the Confederate raider Alabama



February 21, 1864. A double weight letter, over $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz., but not over $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz., written while the U.S.S. Kearsarge was in port at the French coastal city of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Even though this city was on the English Channel, the letter was routed back through Paris for make-up in the closed mails to the U.S. through England (as noted at upper left.)

March 1. Letter posted at Boulogne-s-Mer and paid at double the 80 centimes French rate x 2 (double letter) = 160 centimes (16 decimes). Payment is by a strip of 3 and a single 40 centimes French stamps, Issue of 1862. Cancellation is by the gros chiffres (large numerals) "549" of Boulogne-sur-Mer in the Department of Pas-de-Calais, No. 61, shown at the base of the date stamp.

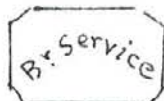
March 2. Paris transit backstamp. The U.S.-French Convention rate of 1857 was divided:

	<u>Single</u>	<u>Double</u>
French Inland	4¢	8¢
British Transit	2	4
British Packet	6	12
U.S. Inland	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u> = Credit to U.S.
	15¢	30¢.

U.S. was credited with 6¢ for U.S. Inland, double weight letter, shown by the large red handstamped "6".

March 3. S.S. Jura of the Allan Line departed from Liverpool, picked up this letter in the closed bags at Londonderry, Ireland on March 4.

March 14. Jura arrived at Portland, mail processed the 15th. The Portland Exchange Office handstamp shows that 30¢ had been prepaid. Mail from France by the Allan Line (Canadian Packet) was considered as by British Service.



1864

U.S. Sloop-of-War Kearsarge

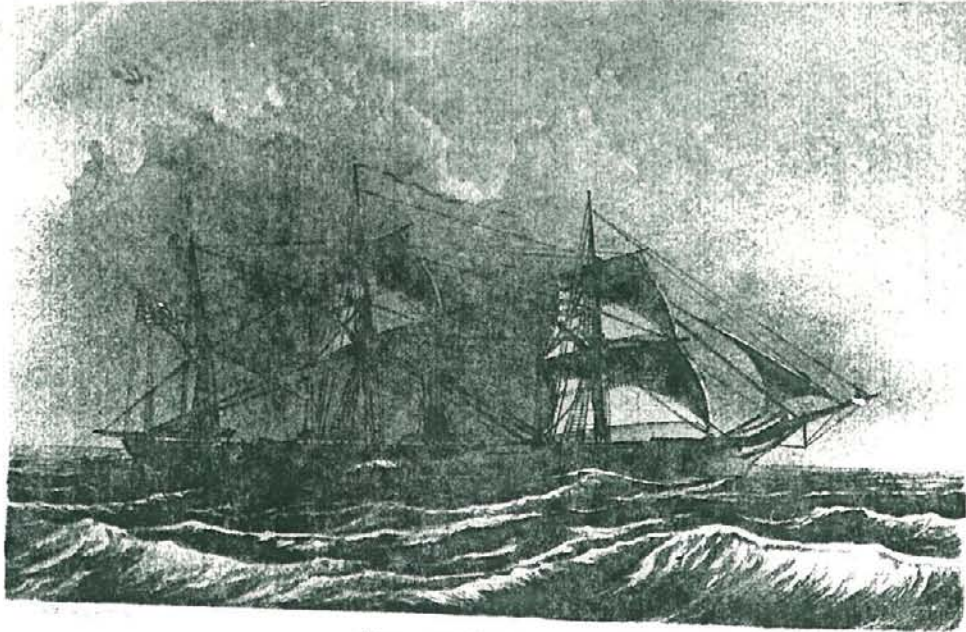
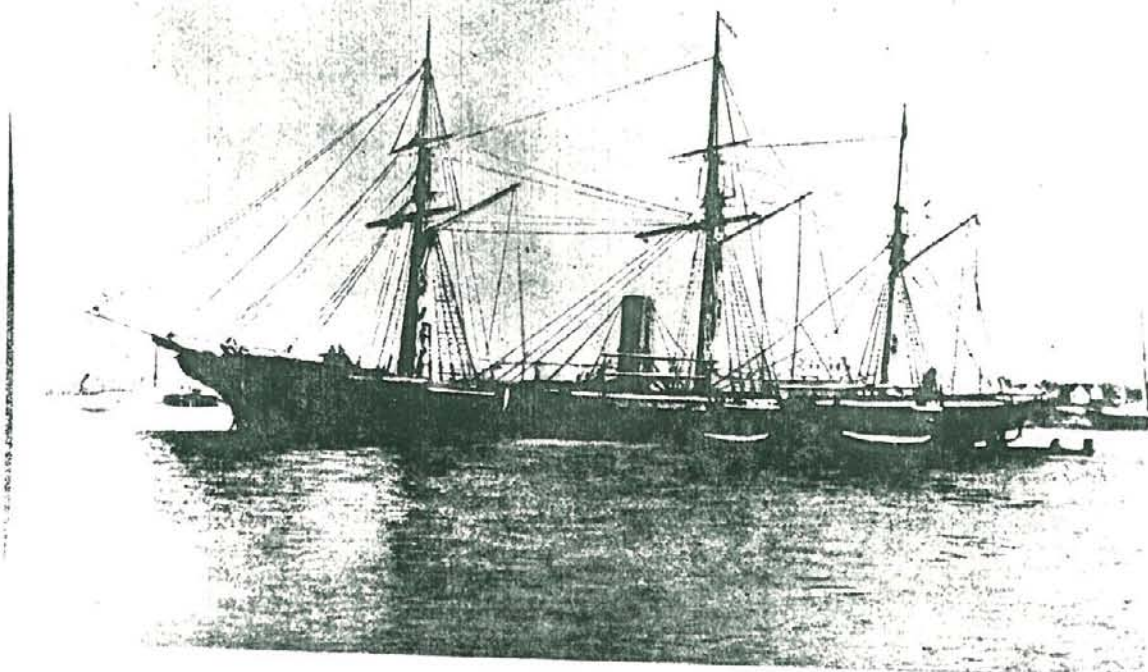


Illustration by [illegible]

The "Iroquois" and "Kearsarge" Class.



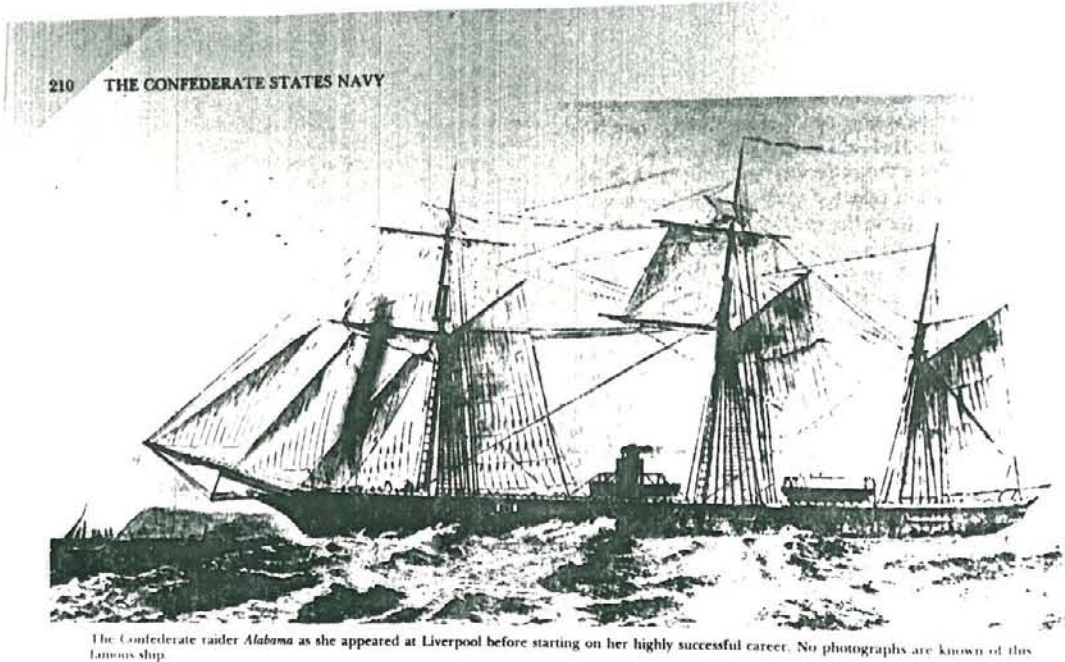
The U.S. Sloop-of-War Kearsarge in late 1864, upon her return from European waters (U.S. Naval Center photograph.)

1862-64

C.S.S. Alabama

The Alabama was a screw sloop-of-war built at Laird's dockyard, Liverpool, England in 1862 for the Confederacy. The famous Hull "290" was launched under the name of Enrica, put to sea from Liverpool on July 29, 1862, and proceeded to Porto Praya in the Azores where Captain R. Semmes, CSN, and her other officers boarded and fitted her out as a cruiser. She was commissioned at sea off Terceira, Azores on August 24 as the Confederate cruiser Alabama. She was of 1050 tons, 220' x 31'-6", 14 knots, and had a complement of 145. Armament was six 32-pdrs., one 110-pdr., and one 68-pdr.

Semmes spent nearly the next two years worldwide, capturing or destroying 69 Union vessels worth over \$6,000,000. This included the U.S. gunboat Hatteras on January 11, 1863, which she sank and captured her crew. Alabama was sunk in a naval battle off Cherbourg, France by the U.S.S. Kearsarge on June 19, 1864.

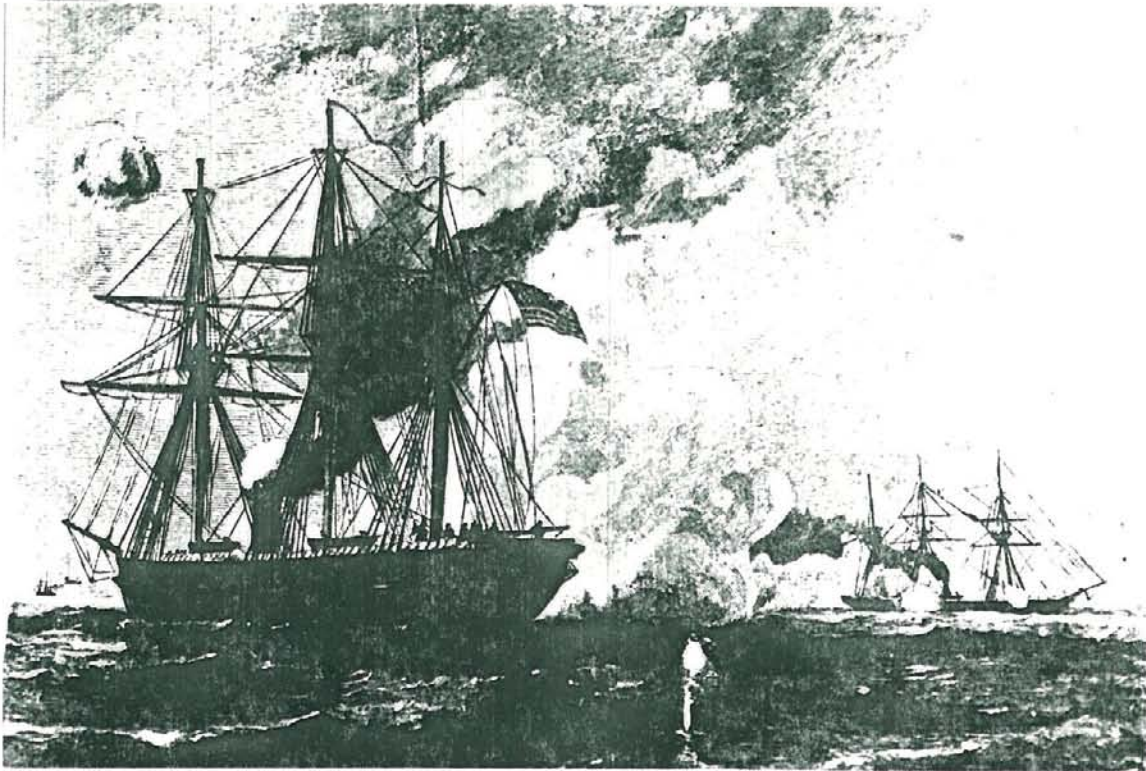


The Confederate raider Alabama as she appeared at Liverpool before starting on her highly successful career. No photographs are known of this famous ship.

The Confederate raider Alabama as she appeared at Liverpool in 1862, before starting on her highly successful career of destroying or capturing Northern shipping.

1864

The naval battle off Cherbourg, France June 19, 1864, between the U.S.S. Kearsarge and C.S.S. Alabama



The Kearsarge returns fire on the Alabama on the first salvos. Kearsarge reduced Alabama to a sinking wreck within an hour. She rescued the majority of the Alabama's crew, but her Captain R. Semmes and 41 others were picked up by the British yacht Deerhound and escaped in her to England.

1862-64

C. S. S. Alabama

Alabama

(ScSlp: t. 1,050; l. 220'; b. 31'8"; dph. 17'8"; dr. 14'; s. 13 k.; cpl. 145; a. 6 32-pdrs., 1 110-pdr., 1 68-pdr.)

CSS *Alabama* was a screw sloop-of-war built at Lairds dockyard, Liverpool, England, in 1862 for the Confederacy. The famous Hull "290" was launched under the name *Enrica*, put to sea from Liverpool on 29 July 1862 and proceeded to Porto Praya in the Azores where Captain R. Semmes, CSN, and her other officers boarded and fitted her out as a cruiser. She was commissioned at sea off Terceira, Azores on 24 August as the Confederate cruiser *Alabama*.

Semmes spent the next 2 months in the North Atlantic where he captured and burned some 20 ships, including a dozen whalers. From there he departed for the Newfoundland Banks to intercept American grain ships bound for Europe, and thence to the West Indies and the coast of Texas where he sank *Hatteras* and captured her crew. Cruising along the coast of Brazil, he used the desolate island of Fernando de Noronha as a base. Shrewdly calculating the length of time necessary for word of his deeds to reach the United States Government, Semmes next put in at Cape Town and sailed for the East Indies where he spent 6 months and destroyed 7 ships before redoubling the Cape en route to Europe. Arriving at Cherbourg, France, on 11 June 1864, he hoped to be allowed to dock and overhaul his ship.

As Semmes awaited permission from French authorities, *Kearsarge*, Capt. J. A. Winslow commanding, arrived at Cherbourg, brought there by word of *Alabama*'s presence. *Kearsarge* took up a patrol at the harbor's entrance awaiting Semmes' next move. *Alabama*'s log for 15 June 1864 tells succinctly of her skipper's decision:

"The admiral sent off his aid-de-camp to say to me that he considered my application for repairs withdrawn upon making application for coal, to which I assented. We commenced coaling this afternoon. The *Kearsarge* is

still in the offing. She has not been permitted to receive on board the prisoners landed by me, to which I had objected in a letter to the admiral. Mailed a note yesterday afternoon for Flag-Officer Barron, informing him of my intention to go out to engage the enemy as soon as I could make my preparations, and sent a written notice to the U.S. consul, through Mr. Bonfils, to the same effect. My crew seem to be in the right spirit, a quiet spirit of determination pervading both officers and men. The combat will no doubt be contested and obstinate, but the two

ships are so equally matched that I do not feel at liberty to decline it. God defend the right, and have mercy upon the souls of those who fall, as many of us must. Barometer low, and weather unusually cold and blustering for the middle of June."

On 19 June 1864, *Alabama* stood out of Cherbourg Harbor for her last action. Careful of French neutrality, Winslow took *Kearsarge* well clear of territorial waters, then turned to meet the Confederate cruiser. *Alabama* opened fire first while *Kearsarge* held her reply until the range had closed to less than 1,000 yards. Steaming on opposite courses the ships moved around a circle as each commander tried to cross the bows of his opponent to deliver deadly raking fire. The battle quickly turned against *Alabama*, for the quality of her long stored powder and shells had deteriorated while *Kearsarge* had been given added protection by chain cable triced in tiers along her sides abreast vital spaces. One hour after she loosed her first salvo *Alabama* had been reduced to a sinking wreck. Semmes struck his colors and sent a boat to *Kearsarge* with a message of surrender and an appeal for help. *Kearsarge* rescued the majority of *Alabama*'s survivors, but Semmes and 41 others were picked up by the British yacht *Deerhound* and escaped in her to England.

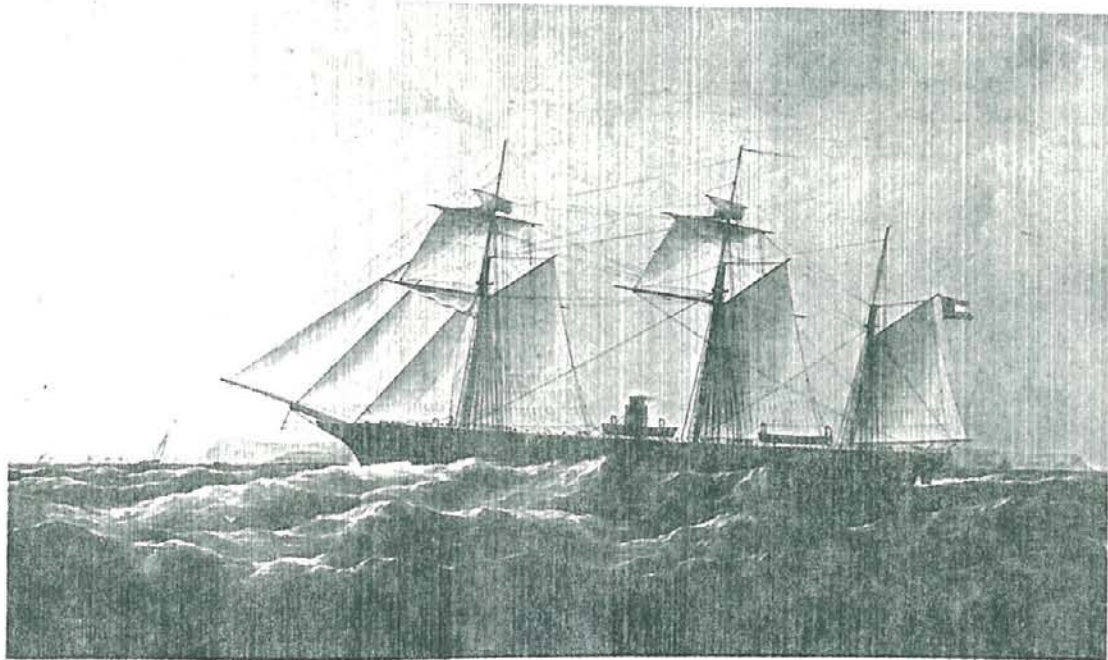
In her 21-month cruise to the four corners of the globe, *Alabama* wrought havoc among United States merchant shipping, taking more than 60 prizes valued at nearly \$6,000,000. The most famous of the Confederate cruisers, her capture caused the Federal Navy Department to divert warships from the blockade to intercepting positions at focal points on the world's trade routes. Northern shipowners were compelled to delay sailings, to pay increased maritime insurance premiums and, in many cases, to transfer ships to foreign registry. *Alabama*'s exploits buoyed the morale of the South during some of its darkest days, and wrote a chapter of daring in the brief history of the Confederate States Navy. [cf. also *Texas*]



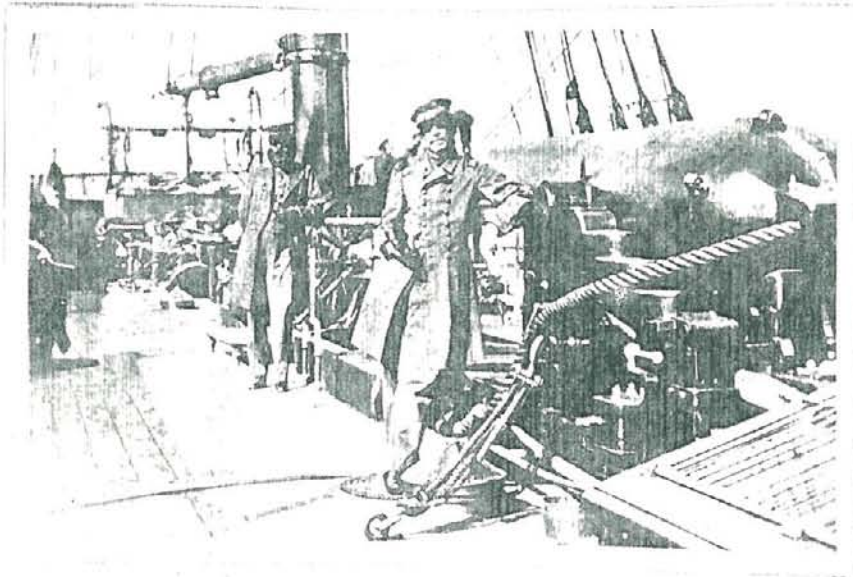
Naval Combat - Kearsarge and Alabama off Cherbourg, France - June 19, 1864.

1864

C.S.S. Alabama



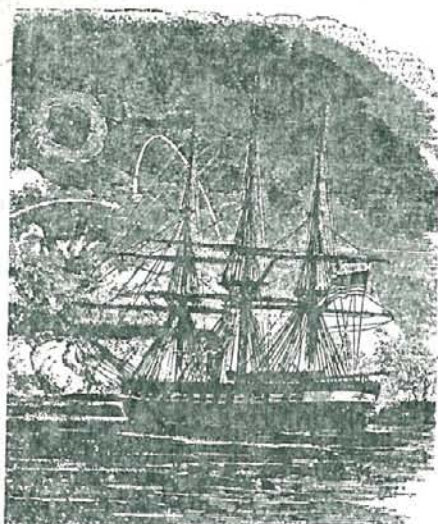
C.S.S. Alabama outward bound off Cork. Painted oil on canvas, Samuel Walters, 1863.



Raphael Semmes standing beside Alabama's massive 110-pounder.

1864

The naval battle of Cherbourg, France
June 19, 1864, between the U.S.S. Kearsarge and C.S.S. Alabama



**
JUNE
19,
1864
**



Witnessed By 15,000 French People,
U S Steamer "KEARSARGE", Capt John
Winslow Commdg, Sank Confed Raider
"ALABAMA", Capt Raphael Semmes Commdg,
Off Coast of Cherbourg, FRANCE

Union: 3 w
Confed: 9 k, 21 w, 70 cap

June 19, 1864. A French cover commemorates the 100th anniversary of the battle between U.S.S. Kearsarge and the Confederate steam ship Alabama, which took place off the French coast at Cherbourg. As the cover notes, the Kearsarge sustained only 3 wounded, while the Alabama had 9 killed, 21 wounded and 70 captured. The Confederate commander Capt. Raphael Semmes, together with 41 Confederate sailors were picked up by the British yacht Deerhound and escaped in her to England.

The action between the vessels lasted just over one hour, with the Kearsarge returning Alabama's initial fire and reducing the latter to a sinking hulk, thus terminating Capt. Semmes' 21 month scourging of Union shipping.