

Cargo manifests of Confederate blockade runners

COMMENTARY AND SIDEBAR NOTES BY DAVID WALBERT

From Frank E. Vandiver, ed., *Confederate Blockade Running through Bermuda, 1861–1865: Letters and Cargo Manifests* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1947).

As you read...

CARGO MANIFESTS

A *cargo manifest* is a list of the cargo carried on board a ship. These manifests are from blockade runners traveling from Bermuda to the Confederate States, and they were found in the Custom House at St. George's, Bermuda, many years after the war. Bermuda and the Bahamas were good trading posts for blockade runners, because of their location and because the residents mostly supported the Confederacy.

NEEDS AND WANTS

The manifests here are a small sample of the records that survive, but they will give you an idea of the kinds of merchandise Southerners were willing to pay for during the war. It's obvious that some of the items were for military use, but it's equally obvious that other items were not. Items such as sugar, coffee and tea, wine, fine cloth, and paper became increasingly scarce during the war, and they could fetch a higher price than the lead, rope, boots, and blankets the army needed — and so enterprising blockade runners were sure to pack as many luxury items onto their ships as possible.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Each manifest is written in a similar way. First, make sure you understand how they're written and what each part means.

- The names of ships are italicized (just like the titles of books).
- Each manifest begins with the name of the ship and its *tonnage*, the weight of cargo it can carry. Then it notes the port in Bermuda where the ship had stopped (such as St. George's) and the port where it was headed (such as Nassau, in the Bahamas). You may want to map these routes.
- Each entry underneath begin with "from." This means that the cargo had been loaded from another ship.

As you read through these manifests:

- Think about who might have needed or wanted these goods and why. Can you tell which ones had military uses?
- Which things would likely have been imported before the war began, and which were things that the South might simply have run out of?
- Note the dates on each manifest, and think about what was going on in the war at the time. Do the goods carried by blockade runners seem to change over the course of the war?

Minho, about 253 tons, St. George's for St. John's, N.B., September 26, 1862, F. T. Parke, master:

- From steamer *Phebe*, England: 48 hogsheads brandy, 21 1/2 casks brandy, 63 cases brandy, 10 casks wine, 673 cases wine, 6 1/4 quarts whiskey, 14 hogsheads spirits, 8 cases apothecary ware, 1 case marine glasses, 1 case cutlery, 2 bales merchandise, 641 cases general merchandise, 7 cases quinine, 31 boxes candles, 5 cases drugs, 3 parcels thread, 8 packages merchandise (boots), 12 chests tea (from *Merrimac*), 1 case stationary, 12 cases mustard and starch, 37 barrels ale and porter, 6 barrels crushed sugar, 1 box sardines, 4 cases merchandise (meats), 14 kegs gunpowder, 2 cases merchandise, 5 cases tea, 1 case screws, 28 cases tin, 32 cases shoes.
- From *Gladiator*, Liverpool: 441 cases hardware, 83 cases merchandise, 4 cases merchandise.
- From *Merlin*, Halifax: 17 packages general merchandise, 500 bushels salt, 12 sacks salt, 7 rolls lead, 3 bags pepper, 10 bags coffee, 25 sheets iron, 3 cases cigars, 113 boxes soap.

Herald, about 283 tons, St. George's for St. John's, N.B., October 25, 1862, L. M. Coxetter, master:

- From warehouse, imported per *Gladiator*: 30 cases quinine, 201 cases hardware, 101 cases general merchandise, 64 barrels combustible merchandise, 167 boxes combustible merchandise, 500 bags saltpeter, 500 barrels gunpowder.
- Transshipped from *Delta*, Halifax: 3 cases merchandise.
- From John T. Bourne's warehouse: 4 quarts brandy, 1 hogshead sherry wine.
- Transshipped from *Ella*, Liverpool: 1 case merchandise, 25 hams and cheeses, 12 cases brandy.
- 25 bundles oakum, 42 cases and trunks consisting of boots, shoes, flannels, and general merchandise, £1,333.10.6.

Columbia, about 259 tons, St. George's for Nassau, May 8, 1863, Burroughs, master:

- From W. L. Penno's warehouse, imported per *Gladiator*, Liverpool: 200 cases hardware, 250 boxes combustible ammunition.
- From same warehouse, imported per *Justitia*, London: 25 bundles hardware, 151 barrels saltpeter, 50 pigs^I lead, 44 cases merchandise.
- From same warehouse, imported per *Merrimac*, London: 133 packages hardware.
- From same warehouse, imported per *Dashing Wave*, London: 15 cases hardware, 56 cases general merchandise.
- From same warehouse, imported per *Phebe*, London: 200 cases brandy.
- From John T. Bourne's warehouse, imported per *Merrimac*, London: 63 cases brandy.

- From warehouse, imported per *Princess Royal*: 21 bundles telegraph wire.
- Group of cargo, valued at £169.0.0: 37 barrels beef and pork, 34 boxes cheese, 5 barrels molasses, 16 sacks salt, 56 boxes harness.

Harkaway, about 59 tons, St. George's for Nassau, July 25, 1863, H. Frith, master:

- From W. L. Penno's warehouse, imported per *Dashing Wave*, London: 43 bales calico and woolens, 51 trunks boots and shoes.

Flora, about 359 tons, St. George's for Nassau, November 2, 1863, George M. Horner, master:

- From Penno's warehouse, imported per *Nebula*: 40 bales bagging.
- From Fisher's warehouse, imported per *Nebula*: 23 cases sulphuric acid.
- From Fisher's warehouse, imported per *Harkaway*: 8 bales saddlery.
- From Fisher's warehouse, imported per *Juno*: 2 cases silk handkerchiefs.
- From Penno's warehouse, imported per *Zygia*: 200 bundles hoop iron.
- From Hunter's warehouse, imported per *Lemuella*: 583 bundles shovels, 313 pigs lead.
- From Trot and Atwood, 10 bags coffee.

City of Petersburg, about 426 tons, St. George's for St. John's, N.B., February 29, 1864, F. W. Fuller, master:

- Shipped by Major N. S. Walker, from F. A. Hunter's warehouse: 8 tyres, 135 sacks saltpeter, 100 cases, 15 cases paper, 3 packages lead.
- Stores: 13 cases champagne, 1 case whiskey, 1 case sherry, 1 barrel whiskey, 1 puncheon rum, 11 cases gin.
- 32 cases merchandise.

Little Hattie, about 246 92/100 tons, St. George's for Nassau, June 30, 1864, Jesse DeHorsey, master:

- 200 sacks saltpeter, 15 casks hardware, 16 casks hardware, 6 casks hardware, 2 casks curry combs, 1 cask hardware, 4 casks steel, 1 case steel, 50 barrels provisions, 19 cases stationery, 11 cases stationery, 5 cases fluid, 1 case merchandise, 13 cases leather, 2 cases carbines, 1 case sabers, 21 cases merchandise, 8 cases cavalry equipments, 1 case merchandise, 6 bales twine, 1 roll rubber packing, 50 bales cartridge paper, 120 pigs lead, 6 bales bagging, 25 coils rope, 1 case merchandise, 6 bales shirts, 9 cases merchandise.

Ella, about 404 tons, St. George's for Nassau, August 9, 1864, C. J. Barkley, master:

- From Hunter's warehouse, imported per *Marie Victoria*: 49 cases boots and shoes, 4 cases stationery, 6 hogsheads gin, 1 case calfskins, 2 barrels lamp black, 124 octaves brandy, 10 firkins wine, 1 box bonnet frames, 49 cases tea, 21 cases dry goods, 5 bags pimento, 20 bags pepperr, 10 hogsheads olive oil, 1 case brushes and combs.
- From *Columbo*, imported per *Mary Garland*, duty paid on value £1,762.10.6: 1 case linen, 1 case jaconets, 1 case cloth, 1 case calfskins, 11 bales bagging, 20 casks alcohol, 10 bales gunny bagging, 6 barrels linseed oil.

- 14 boxes tins, 3 cases plies, 7 cases steel, 1 case steel, 1 cask cutlery, 9 casks tins, 38 bundles sheet iron, 7 coils rope, 11 cases hats, 5 casks linseed oil, 100 boxes soap, 30 boxes starch, 75 kegs soda, 2 bales dry goods, 60 barrels herrings, 60 barrels sulphur, 16 barrels leather, 10 cases drugs, 9 cases boots and shoes, 50 bundles paper, 24 cases kerosene oil, 62 kegs bicarbonate of soda, 5 barrels lard oil, 3 bales twine, 7 barrels glue, 11 bolt bales skirting.

Princess Royal, about 103 tons, St. George's for Nassau, December 14, 1864, T. D. Newbold, master:

- 2 bales cotton waste, 2 cases cheese, 1 case fruit, 10 bags coffee, 46 cases oil, 81 bales bagging, 1 boat, 14 floats, 11 barrels porter, 1 barrel ale, 6 cases wine, 224 bundles, 356 plates, 107 sheets iron, 5 casks brandy, 5 rolls matting, 1 iron safe, 2 pianos, 2 boxes harmoniums, 25 cases merchandise, 173 barrels potatoes.

Pleiades, about 330 tons, St. George's for Nassau, December 20, 1864, William Knowlton, master:

- From W. H. Gosling's stores (bonded September 6, 1864), imported per *Solway Queen*: 573 tierces² beef, 745 barrels pork, 65 cases preserved vegetables, 125 cases preserved meats.
- From same store (bonded October 4, 1864), imported per *Emily Agnes*: 418 tierces beef, 400 barrels pork, 66 cases beef juice, 22 cases preserved soup, 9 cases preserved beef.
- From J. W. Mosson's warehouse (bonded October 4, 1864), imported per *Queen of Clippers*: 944 cases preserved meat.
- From same warehouse (bonded July 13, 1864), imported per *J. W.*: 196 cases vegetables.
- From same warehouse (bonded November 1, 1864), imported per *Wanderer*: 345 cases preserved beef.

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Notes

1. A *pig* is a container for lead.
2. A *tierce* is a cask or barrel with a volume of forty-two gallons.

About the author

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