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Part 6: Miscellaneous and Bibliography

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CSS *ALABAMA* : AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

In Six Parts:

You are
here

Part 1: Building of Ship 290

Part 2: Officers and Crew

Part 3: Cruise of the *Alabama*

Part 4: Battle with *USS Kearsarge*

Part 5: Wreck Exploration & Excavation

---> Part 6: Miscellaneous and Bibliography
(the Alabama Claims, poems, music, sword of
Raphael Semmes)

To read any of the other parts, return to the menu
and select that part to be downloaded.

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CSS Alabama: An Illustrated History

MISCELLANEOUS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS, 1862-1872

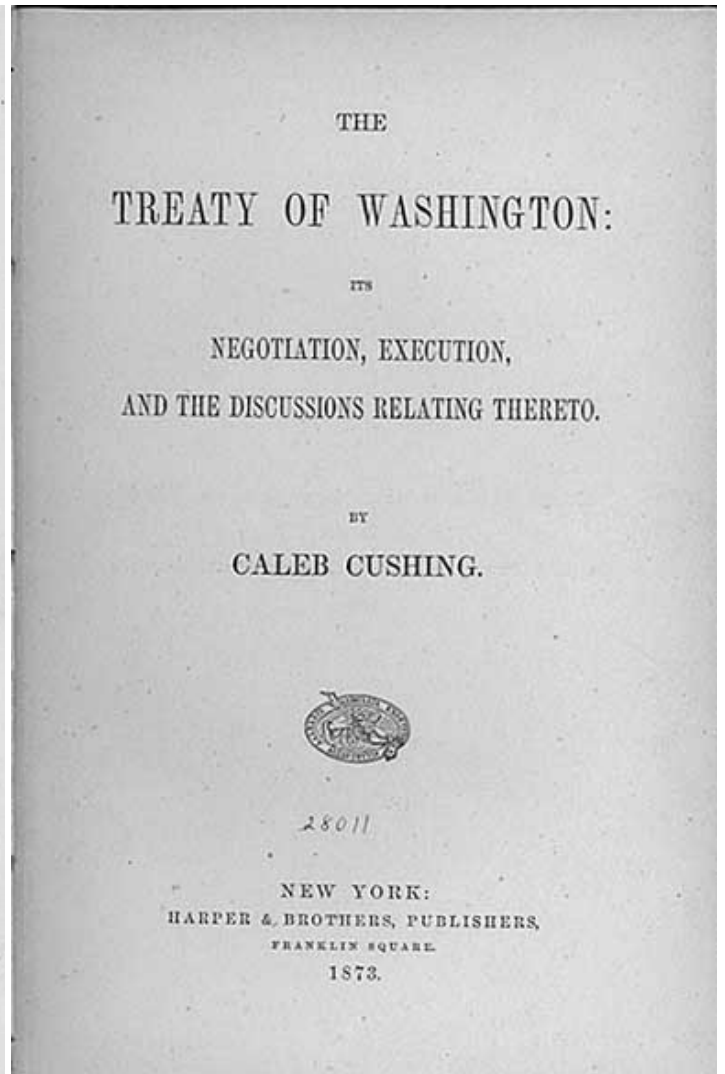
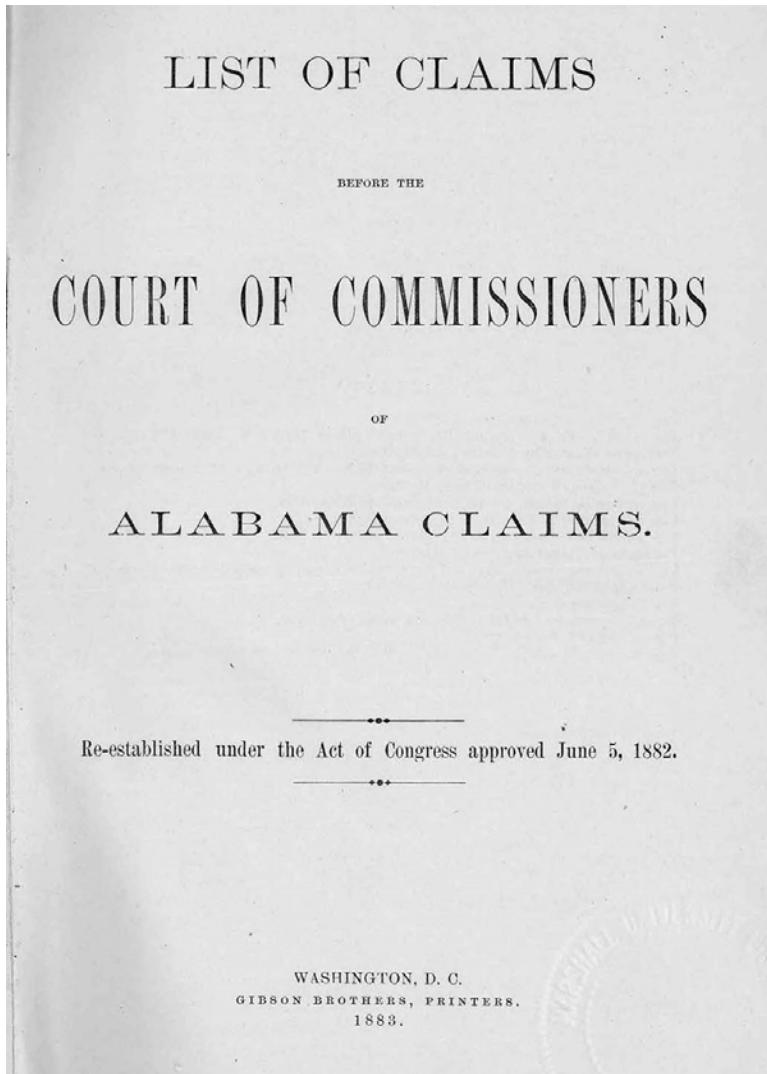
Summary from the U.S. State Department

The Alabama claims were a diplomatic dispute between the United States and Great Britain that arose out of the U.S. Civil War. The peaceful resolution of these claims 7 years after the war ended set an important precedent for solving serious international disputes through arbitration, and laid the foundation for greatly improved relations between Britain and the United States.

The controversy began when Confederate agents contracted for warships from British boatyards. Disguised as merchant vessels during their construction in order to circumvent British neutrality laws, the craft were actually intended as commerce raiders. The most successful of these cruisers was the *Alabama*, which was launched on July 29, 1862. It captured 58 Northern merchant ships before it was sunk in June 1864 by a U.S. warship off the coast of France. In addition to the *Alabama*, other British-built ships in the Confederacy Navy included the *Florida*, *Georgia*, *Rappahannock*, and *Shenandoah*. Together, they sank more than 150 Northern ships and impelled much of the U.S. merchant marine to adopt foreign registry. The damage to Northern shipping would have been even worse had not fervent protests from the U.S. Government persuaded British and French officials to seize additional ships intended for the Confederacy. Most famously, on September 3, 1863, the British Government impounded two ironclad, steam-driven "Laird rams" that Confederate agent James D. Bulloch had surreptitiously arranged to be built at a shipyard in Liverpool.

The United States demanded compensation from Britain for the damage wrought by the British-built, Southern-operated commerce raiders, based upon the argument that the British Government, by aiding the creation of a Confederate Navy, had inadequately followed its neutrality laws. The damages discussed were enormous. Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, argued that British aid to the Confederacy had prolonged the Civil War by 2 years, and indirectly cost the United States hundreds of millions, or even billions of dollars (the figure Sumner suggested was \$2.125 billion). Some Americans adopted this argument and suggested that Britain should offer Canada to the United States in compensation. Such proposals were not taken seriously by British statesmen, but they convey the passion with which some Americans viewed the issue.

After years of unsuccessful U.S. diplomatic initiatives, a Joint High Commission meeting in Washington, D.C. during the early part of 1871 arrived at the basis for a settlement. The British Government expressed regret for its contribution to the success of Confederate commerce raiders. This agreement, dated May 8, 1871, and known as the Treaty of Washington, also established an arbitration commission to evaluate the merit of U.S. financial claims on Britain. In addition, the treaty addressed Anglo-American disputes over boundaries and fishing rights. The arbitration commission, which issued its decision in September 1872, rejected American claims for indirect damages, but did order Britain to pay the United States \$15.5 million as compensation for the Alabama claims.



Both from Rosanna Blake Collection, Marshall University Special Collections.

Exploration of the Wreckage of the CSS Alabama

The French Navy mine hunter La Circe discovered the wreck of the Confederate raider CSS Alabama in 1984. During June and July 2001, the American CSS Alabama Association and the French Association CSS Alabama carried out an archaeological investigation of the remains of the Confederate commerce raider CSS Alabama.

To see the complete illustrated report of these groups, please go to the main menu and download "Part 5: Wreck Exploration & Excavation." Or go to:

<http://mua.apps.uri.edu/alabama/reports/ala2k1.PDF>.

The Museum of Underwater Archeology has a "findings gallery" for the *Alabama* at:

<http://mua.apps.uri.edu/alabama/alafind8.html>

Right:

The CSS *Alabama* fired this shell from its 110-pound rifle early in the action against USS *Kearsarge*, landing a critical blow into *Kearsarge*'s stern post. But it didn't explode, allowing *Kearsarge* to continue the battle, eventually defeating *Alabama*. Originally deposited in the Ordnance Museum, Navy Yard, Washington, DC. *Naval History and Heritage Command, Communications and Outreach Division*.



A shell recovered from the wreckage of CSS *Alabama* during a 2001-02 excavation shows it still in its wood case, held together with a rope. Image from: *Naval History and Heritage Command, Communications and Outreach Division*.

The Sword of Raphael Semmes

While in England, following the sinking of the Alabama, Captain Raphael Semmes was presented with a special presentation sword, bearing the inscription:

"Presented to Captain Raphael Semmes, CSN, by Officers of the Royal Navy and other friends in England as a testimonial of their admiration of the gallantry with which he maintained the honour of his country's flag and the fame of the ALABAMA in the engagement off Cherbourg with a chain-plated ship of superior power, armament, and crew, June 19th, 1864."

A poem was written about his sword by Dr. Frank O. Ticknor, first published in 1879, and published in the *Confederate Veteran Magazine* of August, 1915:

The Sword in the Sea.

The billows plunge like steeds that bear
The knights with snow-white crests;
The sea winds blare like bugles where
The Alabama rests.

Old glories from their splendor-mists
Salute with trump and hail
The sword that held the ocean lists
Against the world in mail.

For here was glory's tourney field,
The tilt-yard of the sea,
The battle path of kingly wrath
And kinglier courtesy.

And there they rest, the princeliest
Of earth's regalia gems,
The starlight of our Southern Cross,
The sword of Raphael Semmes.



Alabama Ship's motto: "Aide Toi, Et Dieu T'Aidera," (God helps those who help themselves, or Help yourself, and God will help)



Statue of Captain Raphael Semmes in Mobile, Alabama. The bronze statue of Semmes was dedicated in Mobile on June 27, 1900.

“The Alabama”
by C. P. Oliver

Sleep on beneath the waters, noble ship,
And take thy well-earned rest;
No longer o’er the billows,
On the wiled waves’ crest,
Shalt thou, the champion, though alone
Flying the flag of liberty, be borne.

From arctic oceans to the sunny south,
From eastern seas to islands of the west.
Thy sharp prow has cleft the waters into foam
Through years of superhuman toil,
No shelter but the open seas for rest,
Now, at rest forever, thou hast found a home.

Full many a fathom deep now art thou laid,
and on thy decks those men who nobly died
Sleep, resting from those toils of former days,
While their brave deeds remain their country’s pride,
And with the cannon’s breath engraved thy name
Upon the highest monument of fame!

Confederate Veteran Magazine, 17 (Feb. 1909), p. 95.

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THE ALABAMA

By
E. King

Music #90; 1-2

Courtesy of
Historic American Sheet Music
Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library
Duke University

THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

Nautical Song,

WITH PIANO FORTE ACCOMPANIMENT.

THE ALABAMA.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO THE GALLANT

Captain Semmes

HIS OFFICERS,

AND CREW,

AND TO THE OFFICERS AND SEAMEN OF THE U.S. NAVY.

AUTHOR OF THE

BY **E. KING,**
NAVAL SONGS

OF THE SOUTH.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1864, by Geo. Dunn in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Confederate States of America, for the Eastern District of Virginia.

RICHMOND, VA. LITHOGRAPHED AND PUBLISHED BY GEO. DUNN & COMPANY

THE ALABAMA.

POETRY BY E. KING

MUSIC BY F. W. ROSIER.

Allegro.

f. *cres.*

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes. Dynamics include a forte (*f.*) marking and a crescendo (*cres.*) leading to the end of the piece.

The wind blows off yon rock...y shore, Boys! set your sails all free; And

The first line of the song features a vocal melody in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in the grand staff. The lyrics are: "The wind blows off yon rock...y shore, Boys! set your sails all free; And".

soon our boom...ing can...non's roar Shall ring out mer...ri...ly.

The second line of the song continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "soon our boom...ing can...non's roar Shall ring out mer...ri...ly."

Run up your bunt...ing taught a...peak; And swear, lads, to de... fend her; 'Gainst

The third line of the song concludes the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Run up your bunt...ing taught a...peak; And swear, lads, to de... fend her; 'Gainst".

ev... ty foe, where... 'er we go, Our mot... to "No Sur... ren... der!"

TENOR I. *ff*

Then sling the bowl, drink ev... 'ry soul, A toast to the A... la

TENOR II. *ff*

Then sling the bowl, drink ev... 'ry soul, A toast to the A... la

BASS. *ff*

Then sling the bowl, drink ev... 'ry soul, A toast to the A... la

CHORUS. *ff*

... ha ... ma; What... e'er our lot, through storm or shot, Here's suc...

... ba ... ma; What... e'er our lot, through storm or shot, Here's suc...

... ba ... ma; What... e'er our lot, through storm or shot, Here's suc...

...cess to the A la ba ma!

...cess to the A la ba ma!

...cess to the A la ba ma!

ff.

cres.

Our country calls all hands to arms,
 We hear but to obey;
 Nor shall home's most endearing charms
 Steal one weak thought away.
 Our saucy craft shall roam the deep,
 We've sworn, lads, to defend her;
 Trim, taught and tight, we'll brave the fight,
 Our motto "No Surrender!"
 Then sling the bowl, &c.

Our home is on the mountain wave,
 Our flag floats proudly free;
 No boasting despot, tyrant, knave,
 Shall crush fair Liberty.
 Firmly we'll aid her glorious cause,
 We'll die, boys, to defend her;
 We'll brave the foe, where'er we go,
 Our motto "No Surrender!"
 Then sling the bowl, &c.

Boys! if perchance it may befall,
 When storm of battle raves,
 By shot or shell our noble hull
 Shall sink beneath the waves,
 Yet while a plank to us is left
 To death we will defend her;
 Facing the foe, down, down we'll go,
 But still cry "No Surrender!"
 Then sling the bowl, &c.