

C.S.S. Tuscaloosa

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of
Alabama October 2009

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Summary Information

Repository:	University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama
Title:	C.S.S. <i>Tuscaloosa</i> Logs
ID:	MSS.0251
Date [inclusive]:	1862--1864
Physical Description:	0.2 Linear feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Portions of the logs for the C.S.S. Alabama and the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa. The logs document the daily weather, longitude and latitude as well as information about engagements with enemy ships. There is also a list of ships captured by the Alabama from 5 September 1862 to 20 June 1863 and copies of the correspondence between Lieutenant John Low as captain of the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa and various authorities of the British colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

Preferred Citation note

C.S.S. Tuscaloosa Logs, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

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Biographical/Historical note

John Low was born in Aberdeen, Scotland on 24 January 1836 and was raised by relatives in Aberdeen and Liverpool. He "went to sea" in 1852 at the age of sixteen and within two years he rose to ship's mate. But later, on the advice of an uncle Andrew Low (a well-to-do Liverpool-Savannah businessman), John Low sailed for Georgia. With the support of his affluent uncle, he soon established himself as a naval supply merchant in Savannah. Partnered with fellow Scotsman, Robert Hardy, under the firm name of Hardy and Low, Ship Chandlers, the two were quickly recognized for their business ethics as well as for their nautical expertise (Hardy had also served in the British Merchant Navy) and their business prospered. With his uncle's recommendation, Low joined Savannah's Democratic Club, participated in local elections and in all ways identified himself with the financial, political and social affairs of area. In 1858, he married Eliza Green, the sister of Andrew's partner, Charles Green.

Low enlisted as a private in the Georgia Hussars at the outbreak of the Civil War. He was preparing to leave with his company for the Army of Northern Virginia when he received orders from Confederate States Navy Secretary Stephen R. Mallory to join Captain James D. Bulloch in Liverpool.

By late summer 1862, Captain Raphael Semmes, C.S.N., had captured and recommissioned the U.S.S. Conrad, as the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa, captained by Low. The Tuscaloosa sailed from June to December 1863 when it was confiscated by the British authorities in Cape Town, South Africa. Low eventually paid off the crew and returned to England.

When Low reached Liverpool, in late February 1864, he learned that his wife, Eliza, had died in Savannah in the fall of 1863 giving birth to a son, John ("Jack") who was being cared for by relatives in Georgia. Low pursued several business adventures. He prospered and became an influential and affluent citizen of Liverpool. In September of 1867, Low married Catherine Morris of Paddington and between 1868 and 1877, the couple had six children, Henry Morris, William Joseph, Andrew H., Louisa Kate, Herbert A., and Marian Elizabeth. Captain John Low died on 6 September 1906 at his home in Liverpool, after a two-month illness at the age of 70.

Sources: Hoole, William Stanley. *Four Years in the Confederate Navy: The Career of Captain John Low on the C.S.S. Fingal, Florida, Alabama, Tuscaloosa and Ajax*. University of Georgia Press, 1964.

"CSS Alabama." Wikipidea, The Free Encyclopedia. 26 Oct. 2009 http://en.wikipidea.org/w/index.php?title=CSS_Alabama&oldis=322184428.

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Scope and Contents note

The collection contains two logbooks of the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa. The larger logbook actually contains portions of the logs for three vessels. First, it is the log for the U.S. Barque Virginia, from 26 August 1862 to 17 September 1862 when it was captured by the C.S.S. Alabama. Next, it is a copy of the Alabama's log from 28 July 1862 to 31 October 1862 and 18 November 1862 to 20 May 1863. Finally, it is the log of the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa (formerly the U.S.S. Conrad, captured by the Alabama on July 20, 1863) from 21 July 1863 to 31 July 1863 and 13-31 December 1863, when it was seized by the British authorities in Simms Bay, Cape of Good Hope.

The smaller logbook covers the period between 21 June and 12 December 1863, and includes lists of the gun crews and each man's duty as well as points on navigational observations.

Both logs document the daily weather, longitude and latitude of the ships, as well as information about engagements with enemy ships. Also, in the larger log, there is a list of ships captured by the Alabama from 5 September 1862 to 20 June 1863.

Also included in the larger logbook are copies of the correspondence between Lieutenant John Low as captain of the C.S.S. Tuscaloosa and various authorities of the British colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

The port authorities had seized the Tuscaloosa claiming Low had violated the British orders for the port in Simms Bay to maintain neutrality in the American conflict. They also argued that the ship then known as the Tuscaloosa had never been condemned as a prize when the C.S.S. Alabama captured it; therefore it was never legally a possession of the Confederate States. Low argued, to no avail, that the authorities said nothing about his violating the neutrality of the port or the legitimacy of the prize when he put in to the same port several months previously.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

May 2010; September 2012

Provenance

gift of Miss Doreen Low, 1957(?)

Processed by

Martha Bace, 2008; updated, 2009; updated, May 2010

Conditions Governing Use note

None

Conditions Governing Access note

None

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Controlled Access Headings

- Alabama (Screw sloop).
- Confederate States of America. Navy.
- Low, John, 1836-1906 -- Correspondence
- Tuscaloosa (Bark).
- Civil War
- Correspondence
- Logs (records)
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Naval operations
- War and Military

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
C.S.S. <i>Tuscaloosa</i> log (includes portions of the C.S.S. <i>Alabama</i> log)	Box 251.001	Folder 1
C.S.S. <i>Tuscaloosa</i> log, June - December 1863, June - December 1863	Box 251.001	Folder 2
<u>Date:</u> June - December 1863	Box 1744	Folder 1

Log book of C. S. S. Tuscaloosa

Digital Object: [u0003_0000251_0000001](#)