

Admiralty Case Files 1855-1863

District Court of the United States
[RG 21](#)



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By Martha Wallace - 2016

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ADMIRALTY CASE FILES, 1855-1863

The National Archives at San Francisco
Record Group 21, Records of District Court of the United States
U.S. Circuit Court for Districts of California

This series consists of cases on appeal from the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Southern Districts of California.

Cases 9, 16, 25, 28, 29, and 30 are missing. Oversized portions of cases are housed in boxes 6 through 9.

Cases involve ships with too many passengers, abandoned contracts, damaged goods, cargo not paid for, workers not paid, mistreatment of passengers, Panama and Nicaragua crossings.

Box 1: United States Case 1, The United States v. The Steamship “*Sierra Nevada*.”

Box 2: Private Cases 1-7

Box 3: Private Cases 8-14

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Box 6: Private Case 14 (oversize item)

Box 7: Private Cases 18, 19, and 20 (oversize items)

Box 8: Private Cases 21, 22, and 23 (oversize items)

Box 9: Private Cases 24 and 27 (oversize items)

ARC Identifier 6286526 (HMS ID SB-5588)

2 linear feet, 10 linear inches

Boxes 1-9 (5 LGA-R; 3 FLT-S; 1 FLT-Q)

Location: 2113D (boxes 1-5)

Location: 2290A (box 6)

Location: 2255C (boxes 7-9)

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Admiralty Cases 1855-1863

Selected Details

Synopsis of Topics

The names of the ships are in italics.

Too many passengers

- *Sierra Nevada* - San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, 592 allowed, took 562, fine \$14,750
- *Sonora* – from Panama, 850 allowed, carried 1100-1300, with deplorable conditions described in documents

Abandoned contracts

- *Yankee Blade* - contract for New York/San Francisco across the Panama Isthmus

Damaged goods

- *Pons Aeli* - soap delivered from Liverpool was damaged due to leaky deck and heavy storms
- *Black Warrior* - spirits shipped from New York did not arrive
- *Alboni* goods not delivered

Cargo not paid for

- *American* - Delivery of coal by Hippolite Worms from London not completely paid for
- *Goliath* - Delivery of coal from Cardiff not completely paid for
- *B F Shaw of Damariscotta* – coffee cargo from Rio de Janeiro shifted and caused problems, sued for completion of payment

Collision

- *Martin White* - ran into the *Banner* and caused damage \$1750; includes hand-drawn map of the incident

Workers not paid

- *Uncle Sam* - workers hired as waiters & pantry man through Nicaragua by carriage; ship went to Panama instead where they were discharged and not paid (war in Nicaragua)
- *Tartar* - workers on a ship from Calcutta left the ship in San Francisco due to ill usage, short allowance, bad provisions, and sickness; they sued for damages and pay
- *Scargo* – fees for unloading not paid

Ship repairs/supplies not paid for

- *Hartford* - \$1900 was paid, balance due of \$4514.70 + \$250 for rigging, sails and spars
- *Lady Jane* supplies for ship to Honolulu not paid for
- *Umpqua* – proceeds of sale paid mortgage; surplus needed for other debts of ship

Mistreatment of passengers

- *Golden Gate* - passenger smoking a cigar and companion were beaten by ship officers
- *Yankee* – Martin Gallagher, customs night watchman, was kidnapped by the Vigilance Committee, held, and then shanghaied to Honolulu
- *Glimpse* – passengers to Melbourne, sisters, paid extra for private room and special food, but did not get it
- *Gray Feather* – passengers did not receive promised elegant services (accommodations, food, medicine), master was drunk, passenger kept in irons

Panama and Nicaragua crossing

- (See also *Uncle Sam* above)
- Cornelius Vanderbilt v four Garrison steamers – Vanderbilt was to have control of the ships until the mortgage was paid, but he did not get control
- *Uncle Sam* – passengers on the Nicaragua route went to Panama instead, then to Aspinwall where they were abandoned for 17 days
- *Uncle Sam* – instead of going to San Juan del Sur, ship went to Panama where there had been attacks by natives on the rail; forced to land in small boats in a rainstorm, crowded into freight cars, then locked in a yard until the ship for New York had left, then no lodging or food for 17 days
- *John L Stephens* – private state room from Panama to San Francisco had a third person assigned they were forced to move in with others

| Box | Docket Book | Case No | Libellants | Claimants | Appellants | Witnesses | Date Filed | Date of Offense | Location | Subject | Proctors | Disposition |
|-----|-------------|---------------|---|--|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | United States of America | The Steam Ship "Sierra Nevada" her tackle, etc. | | Charles Morgan, owner, James H Blethen, master, Charles J Sprague, John Walton, George W Guthrie, Francis J Manly | 16 Jan 1856 | 27 Sep 1855 | San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua | Libel of Information that James H Blethen, master, did take on board 562 steerage passengers, which was 295 over the number allowed, for which there was a penalty of \$50 per person, totaling \$14,750 | S W Inge, US District Attorney; Crockett & Page, Proctors for Respondent | |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | Robert J VanDewater | The Steamship "Yankee Blade," her tackle, etc. | Libellants | Henry Randal, master | 16 Jun 1855, appeal filed | 24 Sep 1853 | New York City | That William H Brown, owner of the Steamer "America," entered into a contract with Edward Mills, owner of the "Yankee Blade" and the "Uncle Sam," for connecting passage between New York and San Francisco across the Panama Isthmus, and that the "Yankee Blade" abandoned this contract (more details in file) | William Barber, Proctor for Libellant | |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | John Gover, master | Hippolite Worms & 1291 1/4 Coal, cargo of British ship "American" | Libellants | Eben'r Lawson, owner, Abel Guy appellant | 18 Jul 1855 | 20 Jun 1853 | London, England | Appealed; \$1534.76 still owed for the coal | Finley McKinlay & Alex Garrioch for ?, Manchester & Hodges for Libellant | 26 Oct 1855 Filed notice to discontinue |
| 2 | 1 | 3 | Richard K Ham, Charles L Reed, owners of the sloop "Banner" | Steamer "Martin White," her tackle, etc. | Libellants | E T Mendell, L Walker, John Newman, William M Neil, O A Montgomery, L V Niugaboon, Edward R Jones, W C Allen, R V Dye, E M Birdsall, J H Ham, T Walker, John A Lessig | 31 Dec 1855 | 12 Jun 1853 | San Francisco Bay | Appealed; that the "Martin White" ran into the "Banner" and caused damage \$1750; includes hand-drawn map of the incident | Blanding, Wise & Della Torres, Proctors for Claimant; P W Shephard, Proctor for Libellant | 3 Mar 1856 Order reversing the decree of the US District Court |
| 2 | 1 | 4 | Finley McKinlay, Alexander Garrioch | "Pons Aelii," her tackle, etc., William Morrish, master, Robert & Edward Formby, owners | Libellants | Mirse, Flints Warehouse, William Morrish, William Henry Moore, Thomas Ritchie, William Broadhurst, O P Sutton, L Chas Boge, James H Wallace, David Fay, J Y Nicholson, George Campbell, William Arrington, Amos Noyes, J H Coghill, Albert Dibblee, Ernest Leyd, Juling Kuyenhaiden, Thomas Harris, S L Jones, Wm Broad | 27 Feb 1857 | 20 Jun 1855 | Liverpool, England | Appealed; In 1854 4220 boxes of soap were shipped from Liverpool to San Francisco with payment made in Liverpool. On arrival in San Francisco, the soap was found to be damaged due to a leaky deck and other circumstances. Ship had received heavy damage during several storms. | Manchester & Hodges, Proctors for appellants; H R Hepburn, I P Haven Proctosr for Claimants | 20 Feb 1857 Order dismissing libel |
| 2 | 1 | 5 | Stephen Card | Steamer "Goliath" (now called the "Defender," Anthony J Brown, master, Thomas Maguire, owner | Claimants | | 16 Feb 1857 | October & November 1855 | Sacramento River | That Cornelius K Garrison & William Garrison supplied 160 tons of Cardiff Coal & 20 tons of Lackawanna Coal for \$4500. On 21 Nov 1855, the Garrisons transferred their claim for the amount still due (\$2830) to Card. That amount is still due. | William Barber, proctor for libellant, Bowlin & Poe Proctors for "Goliath" claimant | Appealed by claimant; Decree confirmnd; includes check for \$2860 for Stephen Card |
| 2 | 1 | 6 | Malcolm Turner, Thomas Turner, James Turner, Robert Turner, dba Turner Brothers | Thomas S Murphy, master, Ship "Black Warrior," Davenport & Dempster as sureties | Claimants | Chancy J Dempster, William T Reynolds, Stephen Hutchinson, Amos Colvin, Robert Gunn, C M Sterling, Alexander Coffin, J W Coxe, William White, J B Thomas, Florence Mahoney, John Richardson, J Coffin, O W Easton, Capt C Hows, Capt Luvasey, | 26 Apr 1856 | Aug 1855 | New York | That Turner shipped two hogsheads & two barrels of fine spirits to San Francisco, but the contents did not arrive; asking for damages of \$600; goods were not in good order when shipped | Manchester & Hodges, Proctors for Libellants | Judgment against Dempster & Davenport; Appealed; Davenport and Dempster ordered to pay |
| 2 | 1 | 7 | John W Brittan | William H Barnaby of ship "Alboni" | Libellants | Albert Dibblee, Chas E Latimer, Teunis Van Vechten, A D McGowan, Thomas Davenport, William H Talmadge, C J Dempster, Henry Carlton, Jr, O A Reynolds, Edward P Flint, Charles L Case, J G Kittle, John Richardson, H P Hutchings, J B Thomas, Amos Noyes, R C Eldridge, George Weller, James Gordon, Rufus Eells, B R Prevost, Henry Carlton, Jr, A B Southworth, Gabriel Winter, J R Rollinson, Thomas N Selby, Henry M Hale, L L Treadwell, James Freeborn, Bradford B Williams | 10 Jul 1856 | May 1855, 20 Oct 1855 | New York to San Francisco | Goods shipped by J B Jones, value \$4614.59, less freight \$247.12, have not been delivered; suing for value; list of goods included | Alexander Ely & Rankin for Appellants, J K Rose for Claimant | 17 May 1859 Judgment reversed and decree dismissed |
| 3 | 1 | 8 (no folder) | Peter Craig | Steamer "Hartford," (owned by California Steam Navigation Company) | Steamer "Hartford" | William Norris, Nathan C Paddock, John A Crocker, Thomas D Johns, Samuel J De Wolfe, Charles Chesebro, D C M Goodsell, James Duncan/Densey, Larry Comyns, B B Williams, Wm C Ralston, W B Farwell, Patrick R Hanna, E D Sawyer, Geo S Mann, Henry C Mallory, C H Wetherby, James White, Simeon Kimball, John B McDonald, Charles Hughes, Jared Lockwood, Edward W Trovers, | 5 Jun 1856 | 3 Dec 1855 | San Francisco | Craig furnished materials and labor for the repair of the "Hartford." \$1900 was paid, with a balance due of \$4514.70 + \$250 for rigging, sails and spars not paid. | Jno V Wattson, Lawyer & John A Reichart for Libellant, W Barber for Claimant | 25 Oct 1856 Decree of District Court affirmed |
| x | 1 | 9 | A J Pope | The Barque "Juan Manuel Agarate" | Libellants | John H Mayhew, | 13 Dec 1856 | | | | Wm Barber for appellant, Hall McAllister for respondent | Costs paid by appellants attorney |
| 3 | | 10 | Gabriel B Post, Joseph a Post, George T Upham, Edward A Allen, dba G B Post & co. | Clipper Schooner "Lady Jane" & owners Israel Kashow & Elisha Bloomer | Clipper Schooner "Lady Jane" & owners Israel Kashow & Elisha Bloomer | William Murphy, Elisha F Baldwin, Charles N T Hunter, John T Wright, Richard H Bowlin, George S Wright, John D Hildreth, John K Dallison, Peter Thompson, Charles W Brooks, B F Dunham, E C Palmer, J E Terrell, Francis Cunningham, | July 6, 2856 | Dec, Nov 1854 Jan, Feb 1855 | San Francisco | Post supplied materials for outfitting the ship for travel between San Francisco and Honolulu, value \$5383, not paid | George C Bates & Lawrence for libellants, Campbell & Hackett for libellants, Foote Aldrich & Poe for Respondents | Bond cancelled but costs not aid |
| 3 | 1 | 11 | Chas Moreno, Richard Helbourne, Francisco Robeney | Steamship "Uncle Sam," R H Horner master, Accessory Transit Company of Nicaragua (of New York), owner, W R Garrison, agent | Steamship "Uncle Sam," R H Horner master | Thomas W Ward, consul, W C Ralston, C K Garrison, | 12 Sep 1856 | 4 Apr 1856 | San Francisco, bound for san Juan del Sur in Nicargua and back | The company offered transit by sea between New York and San Francisco through Nicaragua (by carriage).The libellants Moerno & Robeney were hired by Horner to serve as waiters on the ship (\$30 per month) and Helbourne as pantry man (\$40 month). The ship went to Panama, Republic of Grenada instead, where they were discharged from the ship after appealing to the US consul. They were not paid for their services. There was a war between Nicaragua and Costa Rica and the Nicaraguan government was overtaken by Costa Rica, preventing the transport of passengers and goods through the country, so they went to Panama instead. | Manchester & Hodges for Libellants, Crockett & Page, proctors for appellants | 14 Nov 1856 Decree of District Court upheld |
| 3 | 1 | 12 | Donald Campbell and others | Steamer "Uncle Sam," the Accessory Transit Company of Nicaragua | Steamer "Uncle Sam," the Accessory Transit Company of Nicaragua, W R Garrison, | | 28 Aug 1856 | | | | Glossell & Leigh for Libellants, Crockett & Page for appellant | 6 Nov 1856 Decree of District Court affirmed |
| 3 | 1 | 13 | James Maguire/McGuire, Thomas H Place | Steamship "Golden Gate" and owners (Pacific Mail Steamship Company), F W Lassidge, master, Anderson B Forbes, agent | Steamship "Golden Gate" and owners | Thomas Kelly, Thomas Conroy, Anderson B Forbes, William S Eilimann, William Dayton, Christopher Dall, Filurry Styles, Angess Leslie, John Nash, Thomas H Place, James McGuire, H H Toland, E S Farnsworth, R T Maxwell, MD, Dr J P Riley, Dr Holman, R B Macy, Henry Johnson, Thomas Stoddard, Milton Tift, O Clark, | 30 Oct 1856 | 31 May 1856 | Panama, Republic of Grenada, bound for San Francisco | Maguire & Place were passengers on the ship. Place was smoking a segar on the forward part of the ship when second officer Farnsworth abusively told him to get the hell out of there and then with others beat him and dragged him. When Maguire yelled out, they did the same to him, while Lassidge and the boatswain were watching. | Manchester for libellants, Hall McAllister for claimants | 20 Feb 1857 Decree of Circuit Court reversed and payment ordered to Maguire & Place |

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|---------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 4 | 1 | 17 | Wm T Coleman, Henry Carlton, Jr, James Randall | Ship "Scargo" and owners, H K Loving, Henry K Winchester, Levi Hames, Prince S Crowell, Christopher Hall, Davied Crowell, Benjamin Freeman, Jr, John Freeman; Nelson Crowell, master | Libellants | | 23 Mar 1857, 1 Apr 1858 | Feb 1857 | From Cardiff, Wales, to San Francisco | That fees for services for unloading the cargo in San Francisco were not paid, \$949.50. | Crockett, Baldwin & Crittenden for the defendants, Cook & Fenner for plaintiff | 12 Mar 1858 District Court ordered that the libellants be paid |
| 3 | 1 | 14 (2 folders - 2nd folder is in box 6, oversize item) | Hadji Hassan, Shack Badacrooden/Barrooden, Imangloo aka Mungloo, Thadanu, Shack Azum aka Mamed Dusden, Mumbaruck, Mootee aka Motse, Ameerow aka Amceron, Abdul Kurreen, Ishmael Enduph, Kadir, Edoe, Happian aka Aram Samy, Assenar, Cureen, Omarullender aka Molydin | Ship "Tartar," Edward Parker, claimant, Charles B Polhemus, Edward A Mix, sureties | Claimants | Shack Badacrooden/Barrooden, Imangloo aka Mungloo, Thadanu, Shack Azum aka Mamed Dusden, Mumbaruck, Mootee aka Motse, Ameerow aka Amceron, Abdul Kurreen, Ishmael Enduph, Kadir, Edoe, Happian aka Aram Samy, Assenar, Cureen, Omarullender aka Molydin, Edward A Mix, J J Joseph Jr, Patrick McCormick, -- Buckley, C M Chamberlain | 20 Jan 1857 | prior to 12 Jul 1856 | Calcutta to San Franciscoco | The libellants shipped on the "Tartar" in Calcutta, Hindoostan, for a two year voyage on the East India coast. When the ship arrived in San Francisco, they were compelled to leave the ship due to ill usage, short allowance, bad provisions, and sickness. They sued for pay and \$1000 damages each. Requests for damages: Hadji Hassan \$169.20, Badamoden \$100.77, Abdul Kuneen \$112.77, Kadir \$126.20, Assenar \$84.20, Molydin \$54.20, Mungloo \$54.20, Mumbaruck \$97.55, Ishmael Eusuph \$116, Motee \$54.20, Edoe \$100.77, Mamud Dusdu \$36.40, Thardam \$36.40, Careen \$36.40, Aram Samy \$36.40, Anceron \$49.60, total \$1308.62. | Manchester & Hodges for appellants, Henry B Janes for libellants | 16 Mar 1857 Decree of District Court reversed and libellants to be paid. |
| 4 | 1 | 15 (two folders) | Cornelius Vanderbilt | Steamers "Cortes," "Pacific," "Brother Jonathan," "Uncle Sam," Cornelius K Garrison, William R Garrison | Claimants | C H Baldwin, D B Fay, Edmund Randolph, J B Crockett, C Adoph Sow | 22 Jun 1857 | 12 Jun 1856 | Nicaragua to San Francisco | The ships, owned by the Accessory Transit Company of Nicaragua, were in New York to pay Vanderbilt \$70,617.37 for money he had advanced to them (as in a mortgage). They also wanted further advancement of money. They agreed that he would have control of the ships until the money was repaid. Vanderbilt was not given control of the ships. | McAllister, Barber and Lake for libellant, Crockett & Page for defendants, J P Hoge for appellants | 30 Nov 1857 Affirmed the decree of the district court |
| x | 1 | 16 (no folder) | B Frederick Moses | Steamship "Cortes" | Claimants | | 28 Jan 1858 appeal filed | | | | Delos Lake for Appellant, Shafter, Park & Shafter for Moses | 10 Jan 1860 filed continuance for the term |
| 4, 7 | 1 | 18 (two folders 2nd folder is in box 7, oversize item) | Charles Hare | Surplus proceeds of Schooner "Umpqua," owners James Calrk, Charles W Baker, Alexander Reed; George T Allan | J T Stelle, J S Dunham | George T Allan | 29 May 1858 | 12 Feb 1856, 18 Apr 1856 | | Ship was mortgaged with control to belong to George Allan until he was reimbursed; rights to earnings and proceeds included. The vessel was condemned and sold, the mortgage paid off. The libellant is asking that the surplus be used to pay other debts of the ship. T T Stelle, John S Dunham, true owners, denied making any mortgage. | Allan Lowe & James Lowe for George T Allan; H B Janes for Petitioner, Fully R Wise for Claimant | 21 Apr 1858 Petition allowed and Hare to be paid the balance of the proceeds of the sale of the ship; 21 Oct 1858 Appeal dismissed and Hare to be paid |
| 4, 7 | 1 | 19 (two folders 2nd folder is in box 7, oversize item) | O P West | Steamship "Uncle Sam" | Charles Adolphe Law, agent for William H Vanderbilt, owner; Charles H Baldwin, agent, Edwin Davis, Mrs Epsey Cottle, R H Warner, D D J Colman, W H Fry, Christopher Tracy | | 5 Jan 1859 | 5 Apr 1856 | San Francisco | West paid \$400 for passage for himself and his wife to New York on the Nicaragua route. Instead of going to San Juan del Sur in Nicaragua, the ship went to Panama where they were told that there was a steamship waiting for them in the port of Aspinwall on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus. The passengers and their luggage were transported to Aspinwall and left there for 17 days with no food or accomodation and no steamship to take them to New York. | William V Wells for West, James T Boyd for Claimant; Thomas C Hambly for libellant | 15 Dec 1858 Decreed that West be paid \$800 plus costs; the steamship to be sold to accomplish this. 28 Apr 1859 Affirmed lower court decree |
| 4, 7 | 1 | 20 (three folders, 3rd folder is in box 7, oversize item) | Martin Gallagher, night watchman for US Customs (Catharine Gallagher, estate administrator) | James Smith, Master of the bark "Yankee" | Claimants | P McGovern, William Carr, Daniel H Hanrahan, Patrick Crawley, George R Ward, G H T Morse, Samuel Drietz, Charles L Abbott, Charles Farrien, A H Emanuel, Samuel C Harding, Charles Gallagher, John B Schaffer, James Lynch, C L Richards, Geo H Lemont, Delos Lake, | 18 Feb 1859 | 25 May 1856 | San Francisco | That James Smith did conspire to abduct, banish, and injure Martin Gallagher. While on duty as a Customs night watchman, Gallagher was surrounded and seized by 6 armed men and taken to the Vigilance Committee Rooms and held in a cell for several days. He was told he had been convicted of being a rioter and supporter of disturbances at elections and that he was banished from the state. He was then taken in irons to the steamtug "Hercules" and as they were leaving the bay, the bark "Yankee " came alongside and he was forced to get on that ship and was taken to Honolulu. He later worked his way back to San Francisco. | J B Manchester, E H Hodges for Gallagher; Cook & Fenner for Smith; Jones, Lake & Boyd for appellant, Manchester for appellee | Smith to pay Gallagher \$3000 plus costs; affirmed upon appeal |
| 4, 8 | 1 | 21 (two folders, 2nd folder is in box 8, oversize item) | Josephine Gougenheim | the bark "Glimpse," her owners, & her master, S A Dayton (owners Hos H VanBrunt, Henry L Slagher, Smith A Dayton, Ellwood Walter, Chas C Hemman, Jas Sutherland, John Saxton, Isaac Hall, Wm V Hemmingway, Hiram Ramsdell, David Moore, Daniel Farrington, Jun.), Judah Baker, D A Jennings, bondsmen | Libellant | A Davis, Solomon Golland, T W Freelon, Isaac R Morgan, R A Eddy, George R Rossiter, Richard Cameron, Daniel D Ring, Henry Kensbury, William Morehouse, John Green, Joseph Watson, Capt Michael Wiseman, Capt Dommett, James Smith, Eliza Helmechen, | 26 Mar 1859 | middle of July 1858; 3 Aug 1858 | Melbourne, British Colony of Victoria | Josephine, her sister Adelaide (who was subject to bad sea sickness), and her agent Ripley A Eddy embarked on the "Glimpse" for non-stop passage to San Francsco for £200, paying extra for sole use of the after cabin and meals delivered, including fresh meat. When unable to eat regular meals, they requested broth and were told that there was no fresh meat for preparing broth. The master told the other passengers that they were "asking for hell and they shall get hell." Josephine asked to be put ashore in New Zealand if they were unable to fulfill the contract. The master said it was an oversight that the fresh meat was not on board and that he would stop in the Pitcairn Islands to get some. Seven weeks into the voyage the ship stopped in the Marquesas. During the seven weeks, the master had been rude in many ways to the ladies and their agent. Two weeks after the stop, the ship was again without fresh meat and the master continued with extreme rudeness. A petition from other passengers was handed in in Honolulu asking the sisters and their agent be removed from the ship. | Channing G Fenner for appellant; T W Freelon for appellee | 7 Feb 1859 Libel dismissed, libellant to pay costs; 2 Jun 1860 decree that libellant be paid \$700 |
| 4, 5, 8 | 1 | 22 (three folders, 2nd folder is in box 5, 3rd folder is in box 9, oversize item) | Wm H McDougall, Louis Derome, John D Campbell, Alexander McDonald, Aemilian Spony, William Dempster, John Petterson, Fridolin Grimm, Jacob Carl, Edward R McCreedy, Peter Petson, Julius Hoffman, John Cedarblom, L J Barrows, Charles Smitht, Gottlieb Altburger, James Garwin, Mary Ann Maguire, Mary W Greer, David Pate, William Carroll, Robert Campbell, William W French, Hugh Galligan, George Tew, William Apps, Thomas McDougall, Winsor S Inman, John J Nichols, James McKeough, T W McCreedy, George McDougall, Adolphus Abbott, Henry Martin, Jr, Jemima E Stalberg, John Kean, Robert Young, Ewen McMillan, John A McMillan, A B McMillan, Hugh McDonald, Louis Dachlaff, Charles Fesenbeker, Joseph Auston, Joseph Berrier, Francois Brabant, Louis Valeis, John C Teichert, George Morse, Thomas Bowser, Alexander Hemphill | Reuben H Harford, master of the ship "Gray Feather" | Claimants | Charles Francis, J Frank Stein, Peter Petersen, John W Young, James Haggin, Charles Derome, Robert Rankin, Wm H McDougall, Julia Aldrich, Emilian Sponey, Louis Derome, Alexander McDonald, Julius Hoffman, Mary Martel, T W McCreedy, Charles Smith, George Mcdougall, James Garvin, Charles O Jordan, Hiram C Clark, Louis Mawrer, R F Harford, H M Gregory, A L Edwards, Caroline Hewson, C A Adams, James G Baker, A F forbes, J P Haven, John Brannan, Jas P Bennett, E Derome, J Hoffman, Mary Ann Maguire, Jno Siddenbloom | 12 Sep 1859 | Sep Oct 1858 | New York to San Francisco | Ship was advertised as an elegant A1 clipper ship with accomodations fo the first order for passengers. The libellants engaged passage and paid various amount for it. Accomodations, food and medical care were described. Spony was on the ship as a physician. He paid his own way and understood that the passengers would pay him for any needed services. Ship did not sail until one month afer announced departure date. Passengers did not have sufficient food and water, cabins weren't properly ventilated, no fresh provisions during last 3 months of voyage, and other promises of accomodation were not kept. The master was habitually drunk and abusive. Passenger Smith was put in irons and kept on the poop deck for 12 days. Passengers want return of passage money and \$200 each, except for a few who wanted more. | J B Manchester for appellant, Robert Rankin for appelles, H C Clark, advocate | 14 Jul 1859 Decree that passengers recover moneys, as listed, to be paid by the sale of the ship; 19 Mar 1860 decree affirmed |

| Box | Docket Book | Case No | Libellants | Claimants | Appellants | Witnesses | Date Filed | Date of Offense | Location | Subject | Proctors | Disposition | |
|------|-------------|---|---|--|--------------|--|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 5, 8 | 1 | 23 (two folders, 2nd folder is in box 8, oversize item) | W H Chamberlain, S Steinhart, John Garetson, C H Lippincott, J P Cogswell, Esco Pratt, William Fagg, H B Ingham, Josiah Stanford, John Howell, Silas Pearson, William Watts, T R Bailey, Joseph Bitlieb, W Glover, H Moore, A Calhoun, James Dreuing, Rowland Colton, T Winslow, Z Cook, Jr., Alrich Deede, Hans Von Kohlgraber, Chirstian Laskuss, Conrad Sliderburg, Theodore Ingler, John Jaurling, George D Colburn, Charles Dunn, Aaron Barrett, John M Linn, Louise Foller, E B Dover, James McMahon, Joseph Y Miller, Charles Petson, Josph Bithell, John Herriott, Geroge L Miller, Thomas H Griffin, G W Levalley, L L Blass, E W Durgin, Josiah A Ames, George W Woodbara, J W Chamberlain, Franklin Crane, Daniel Bradbury, James Campbell, T G Hewlett, Edward Lockhart, M Hagan, E H Everett, William W Gray, Daid Maloen, George Q Malrea, V S Woodruff, H W Sewall, James Fraser, Daniel Tarsey, J C Eastman, Charles Mana, George Fay, F Gering, George H Lambert, G M Tonsarent, Guiseppe De Martine, A McCullock, Louis Arattro, Antonion Sulares, Joseph Bacigalu, p John Hübenr, Erskine Nichol, Hugh Mann, Lucy A Baker, Augustus R Mann, R Lawless Smith, George R Beards, S Vandycle, William Ross, John Hagner, Frederick Bengholtz, Henry Lineman, R P Heal, William Collins, A H Todd, N S Gilham, L N Rhoads, R H Young, William G Weeks, Joseph Annin, Thomas M Hunlings, D Shear, B F Branham, John Uhrsman, Angel Navarro, Lucianna C Navarro, M E Baker, Andrew Thomas, J H Walker, T E Hennington, Thomas F Ghoup, Henry L Gourette, Chavelleous Miller, John J Jordan, John W Carber, Frederick Fisher, W J Wilson, S D Wilson, A B Wise, W H Thomas, I Boudinot, T C Whitney, Peter Cruse, Francis P Rhodes, Perry Oliphant, Lendall F Tarbett, Alexander Mancheux, Dudley Dusten, Robert Johnson, Edward Gouchfield, Theodore Kreiner, Christian Bohne, Edward Bohne, Thomas Bohne, David MacMullin, Felix Orr, Thaddues J Test, John Carter, Charles Bern, Martin Mathews, George C Grey, H Litmansolf, William Cox, Charles Fox, J H Caton, H H Hackney, William Graff, J M Levy, S Wheelwright, O Hamilton, John Sweeny, George Kress(who sues for himself as well as for his wife, Mrs Kress), H D Martin (who sues for himself as well as for his wife, Mrs Martin, and -- Martin, his minor child, by their attorney in fact Thomas C Hambly), and Henrietta Morrill (who sues by her husband A G Morrill), and Henrietta Morrill (who is under twenty one years of age and sues by her father and next friend, A J Morrill) | The ship "Uncle Sam," owner W H Vanderbilt, C K Garrison & Company, agents | Libellants | | | 15 Dec 1859 | 1 Apr 1856 | From San Francisco to New York by way of San Juan del Sur | Instead of going to San Juan del Sur, they went to Panama, in spite of the fact that a few days before an attack by the natives had been made on the rail across Panama, and the officers, owners, and agents knew this. They were forced to go ashore in small boats in a violent rainstorm in spite of there being available a steamboat kept for that purpose. They were then crowded into coal and freight cars with no seats, separate from their luggage, and kept there for 48 hours until their arrival in Aspinwall at 11 pm. Some of them were then forced into a yard with a high board fence and locked there until the steamship at the wharf had left for New York. Then they were released with no arrangement for food or lodging for the next 17 days. Asking for \$1000 for each plus costs and that the ship be sold to pay for this. (49 libellants) | James T Boyd, proctor for the appellant, Thomas C Hambly, proctor for the appellees | 132 libellants received \$50, a few received more, plus costs. Upheld on appeal, total payments \$13,355. [This file contains doucments tied with green ferret (green tape) and posters displayed by Vanderbilt suspending transport through Nicaragua due to the unrest.] |
| 5, 8 | 1 | 24 (three folders, 3rd folder is in box 9) | Robert S J Bailey, George W Martin, Harriett Ann Martin, George Horton, I R Jerrell, Charles W Lemperle, Manuel C Navarro, Rovert S J Bailey, Edward Robson, John J DeWitte, James Campbell, H E Holbrook, William Quick, John D W Gilson, Catharine McCarrick, Mary Ann Quick, Susannah Quick, Abby M Davis | Steamer "Sonora," Pacific Mail Steamship Company | Claimants | Harvey Hunt, Hervey Sparks, George W Martin, James B Campbell, Catharine McCarrick, Jas C Cowes, Capt Baby, Chas H Hewitt, William R Olden, Mr Forbes, John Foster, Henry Law, Martin Prague | | Oct 1858 | | On a voyage between Panama, New Grenada, and San Francisco, there were no inspection certificates displayed, the ship, built to carry 850 passengers, carried 1100-1300 passengers thus becoming top-heavy. The portholles could not be opened and the crowded 2nd class cabin was full of noxious smells. There was no proper drainage from the water and slops. The second class cabin was also used to store the first class baggage. The water was unfit to drink. One man's berth was filled with baggage, so he had no place to sleep. His wife was assigned to a double berth beneath a grating through which dirt and filth discharged and a man, stranger to both, was assigned to the other half of the double berth. The captain refused to let the man occupy the berth with his wife, and was given a berth far away. The passengers set up a screen to allow the women privacy when dressing, but the Master removed it and put in more baggage to occupy the space. Martin claimed \$1200 damage, Horton claimed \$1000. Others claimed \$600-800. | Hiram C Clark for the Libellants, Hall McAllister, proctor for claimants & appellants | The libellants were awarded damages, about half the amount of the claims. The appeal involved a question about the amount of damages. The original decree was upheld. | |
| xx | 1 | 25 (no folder) | W C Annan, et al | "Star of Hope," &c | Claimants | | 1 Oct 1860 | | | | C Temole Emmet for appellees, E Casserly for appellants | 26 Jul 1861 Argued & submitted | |
| 5, 8 | 1 | 26 (two folders, 2nd folder is in box 9) | John McCann, "B F Shaw of Damariscotta" | Henry Soning, Rudolph Feuerstein, 5424 bags of coffee | Libellants | | 11 Feb 1861 | Mar 1860 to 24 Jul 1860 | Rio de Janeiro | Sonig and Feuerstein paid McCann \$3500 for part of his freight money and promised to pay the rest (of \$6000) upon completion of delivery. Due to bad weather in April, the sails split and the cargo shifted, causing the ship to list and the pumps to work overtime. Things were repaired in the next port. The claimants were ordered to pay and this was upheld on appeal | John H Saunders, Edward Tompkins for appellant, Tho C Hambly for appellee | The claimants were ordered to pay and this was upheld on appeal | |
| 5, 8 | 1 | 27 (two folders, 2nd folder is in box 9) | Robert F Morrison, Julia Morrison | The Steamship "John L Stephens," Pacific Mail Company | Claimants | | 22 Apr 1861 | 5 May 1860 to 27 May 1860 | from New York to San Francisco | Purchased an entire state room for the voyage. On the trip from Panama to San Francisco, a third person was assigned to the state room and the wife was then forced to move in with two other women and the husband into another with two other men. The claim was to recover \$5000. | James T Boyd for libellants, Hall McAllister for claimants | They were awarded \$2500 plus costs. The company appealed and the amount was changed to \$1800. | |
| xx | 1 | 28 (no folder) | James Douglas, Charles Williams | Ship "Caroline Read," John Douglas | cross appeal | | 9 May 1862 | | | | Earl Bartlett for libellants, J B Manchester for repondents | | |
| xx | 1 | 29 (no folder) | James C Conray et al | Ship "Blondell," H W Lunt | Claimants | | 25 Sep 1862 | | | | J B Manchester for claimants & appellants, Alex Ely for libellants & appellees | | |
| xx | 1 | 30 (no folder) | Lock & Montague | Ship "Blondell," H W Lunt | Claimants | | 25 Sep 1862 | | | | J B Manchester for claimants & appellants, Alex Ely for libellants & appellees | | |

Admiralty Cases 1855-1863

Notes on People and their vessels

While searching for the best case to highlight in the SMCBS Blog, the following notes were compiled. They are in no way meant to be inclusive but rather just a start for those who might want to do more research.

James H Blethen

- Master of steamship *Sierra Nevada* which carried too many passengers in 1855. (from NARA database)
 - The *Sierra Nevada* made 57 passages between San Francisco and San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua
 - Wooden side-wheeled steamer, built by William Collyer, New York, and launched as the *Texas*, October 25, 1851. Operated from New York to Chagres from February until October, 1852, by the Empire City Line and originally advertised for this line as the *Quartz Rock*. Made trial trip as the *Sierra Nevada* on February 7, 1852, she was eventually purchased by Cornelius Vanderbilt and sent to San Francisco, where she arrived March 23, 1853. She remained on the San Francisco - San Juan del Sur service until March 1857, and later purchased by the Pacific Mail (1860) and placed in coastal service. In February, 1861, she was purchased by Holladay and Brenham and was wrecked on a reef south of Monterey on October 17, 1869. <http://www.sfgenealogy.com/californiabound/cb135.htm>
 - [Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest](#): An Illustrated Review of the Growth and Development of the Maritime Industry, from the Advent of the Earliest Navigators to the Present Time, with Sketches and Portraits of a Number of Well Known Marine Men

* The steamship *Sierra Nevada* was built in New York in 1851 by Charles Morgan, who intended her for the Texas trade. She was afterward sold to Commodore Garrison, and made three trips to Chagres, then sailing from New York for San Francisco, December 12, 1852, in command of Capt. J. D. Wilson, who died at Panama and was succeeded by Captain Tanner, who completed the voyage. Her first work on arrival was on the San Juan route, in charge of Captain Blethen. She was one of the fastest of the old line of steamships, and, while she might be considered a slow packet to-day, in 1862 she made a record from San Francisco to Portland of 72 hours, which was not beaten for several years. The steamer first came to Portland in charge of Dall, who was succeeded by Wakeman, Conner, Johnston, Williams, Huntingdon, Fauntleroy, and others, of whom Conner was longest in command. During his time the old steamer carried 500 and 600 passengers per trip. When Holladay started the California, Oregon & Mexican Steamship Company the *Sierra Nevada* was one of its best steamers. She made her last voyage to the North about 1868, and the following year was placed on one of the southern routes out of San Francisco, and within a short time afterward struck a reef off Pedro Blanco and became a total wreck.

* With the *October* as mate was Daniel P. Farley, who, at the present writing, has spent some 60 years of his life in active

- Biography with ship details
<http://www.maritimeheritage.org/captains/blethenJH.html><http://www.maritimeheritage.org/captains/blethenJH.html>
- Captain of the *SS North America* which sank off the coast of Mexico in 1852. In February of 1852, after a year of record-setting runs between San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua and San Francisco, she was [wrecked off the coast of Mexico](#). All 900 passengers were saved, but Captain Blethen and the Vanderbilt Line suffered from scathing press, which was surprising given that hundreds of ships sunk in the not-so-pacific Pacific Ocean off of the Americas. http://www.maritimeheritage.org/ships/Steamships_N-to-O.html#SSNorthAmerica
 - *SS North America*, which sank off the Coast of Mexico February, 1852. This loss was the inspiration for The Maritime Heritage Project, because Captain James H.

Blethen, great great grandfather of the Project's Founder sank the *North America*.
<http://www.maritimeheritage.org/ships/wrecks.html>

Charles J Sprague (Major) – An army paymaster stationed in San Francisco

George W Guthrie

- An attorney in San Francisco, for R H Crittenden in 1851
- customs officer

Ebenezer Lawson

- A ship captain from New Brunswick
- <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/CAN-NB-WESTMORLAND/2012-01/1327800317>
“I am very interested in Ebenezer Lawson who I have found is my third great grandfather. Last year I started researching in earnest to find out more about my ancestors. I have Ebenezer and Margaret Peters Akerley's wedding certificate as well as other letters and papers naming their children. Your information was the first I have found that confers fairly accurately the names of their children. One of their children, George Rodney Lawson is my 2nd great grandfather. (He is the first of three George Rodney Lawsons).. I have letters and photos from his brother Thomas Handford Lawson, who talks about many people in the New Brunswick area. He speaks of Aimee Akerley Blizzard who lived to 107 as well the Gaunces, Akerley's, Slipps, Briggs, etc and many others. George Rodney Lawson married Elizabeth Bowman and they had 5 children: John Lawson, George Rodney Jr., William Lawson, Charles Lawson, and Lulu Lawson. Sometime later he came to San Francisco where he settled. He was a stairbuilder and I have some of his own handcrafted tools mad from whalebone. I can not find much info of Elizabeth Bowman or her ancestry nor much about her sons John, William and Charles. However, George Rodney Lawson Jr. (my great grandfather) married Luisa Caceras and they had three children: Juanita Elizabeth Lawson (my grandmother), Ambrose Lawson, and George Rodney Lawson III. Great granddad George Jr. spent 30 years with the San Francisco Fire Dept and retired as a Captain. He passed away in the 1920's and I never had the chance to meet him. I do have his fire badge and several photos of his fire stations with horse drawn equipment. He fought in the 1906 Earthquake and fire of San Francisco. Juanita Lawson married Alfred Ratje (my grandfather) and they had two children; George Lawson Ratje and Mary Louise Ratje (my mother). Mary Louise married Francis Sousa (my dad) and they had 3 children: Sharon, Margaret and myself, Antone. I have four children and five grandchildren and, of course, one our children carries the Lawson name - Bryan Lawson Sousa. Any way, any information you could share or advice or suggestions for more such especially in Canada, would be extremely helpful.” Thank you, Antone Sousa (San Anselmo, CA)

Abel Guy

- banker and businessman in San Francisco

John Gover – master of the *American v Hippolite Worms*

- [Master of Opium ship Samarang](#)

Robert J VanDewater

- steamship *Yankee* - <https://casetext.com/case/vandewater-v-mills-claimant-steamship-yankee-blade>

Richard K Ham

- “An Overdue Note. **Richard K. Ham** died intestate on November 2. 1887, at Santa Clara, leaving as a portion of his estate a promissory note for \$8000, given him by Samuel J. Sherman. Charles W. **Ham** became the possessor of the note, and has brought action against Sherman for its payment, it being overdue.” **San Francisco Call, Volume 67, Number 155, 24 April 1890**
- **Sloop Banner**
 - Sloop Banner, Stocking, from San Francisco, with merchandise. Report in **Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 18, Number 2729, 26 December 1859**
 - Sloop Banner, Wendell, San Francisco, lumber to X. L. Drew ; **Sacramento Daily Union, Volume 9, Number 1333, 3 July 1855**
 - A L Sloop Banner Stocking, San Francisco, with merchandise to J. & P. Carolan; **Sacramento Union, Number 59, 28 August 1918**
 - Burdick Stephen, captain sloop Banner office Commercial Wharf
http://www.sfgenealogy.com/san_francisco_directory/1863/1863_170.pdf and 1859
 - Bill for Freight Charges [Billhead: Alviso, Calif., 1866 Nov. 1 - UC Berkeley::Bancroft Library](#)

E S Farnsworth

- witness in *Uncle Sam* case -
- worked for Pacific Mail
- master of steamship "Sacramento" and is listed as such in the wreck reports of this ship (November 1871)

Charles B Polhemus

- **Central Park, San Mateo** - San Mateo's Central Park is a 16-acre city park bordered by El Camino Real, Ninth, Laurel and Fifth avenues. The park is also a historical site whose roots run deep into San Mateo's past. Central Park was once the estate home of Charles B. Polhemus, director of the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad and founder of downtown San Mateo. He lived on the grounds in a 13-room Victorian mansion in the mid-1800s.
 - <http://www.sanmateoarboratum.org/central-park.html>
- **From History of San Mateo County from the Earliest Times:** With a Description of Its Resources and Advantages: and the Biographies of Its Representative Men