

USS Pittsburg Paymaster's Ledger

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1862



Title Statement

USS Pittsburg Paymaster's Ledger USS *Pittsburg* Paymaster's Ledger, 1862 Ms.2009.026

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2009.026

Unit Date

1862

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection contains a U.S. Navy paymaster's ledger, believed to be from the USS *Pittsburg*, a Union Navy gunboat during the American Civil War. Also includes a single sheet officers' pay roll, dated 1866, believed to be from the USS *Shawmut*.

Extent

0.3 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The USS *Pittsburg* Paymaster's Ledger was purchased by Special Collections in 2008.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the USS *Pittsburg* Paymaster's Ledger commenced and was completed in February 2009.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], USS *Pittsburg* Paymaster's Ledger, Ms2009-026, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

The USS *Pittsburg* (sometimes spelled the "*Pittsburgh*"), an ironclad gunboat, was built at St. Louis Missouri and commissioned for service in January 1862, with Lieutenant Egbert Thompson commanding, during the American Civil War. Joining the U. S. Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla, the *Pittsburg* sustained damage during the bombardment of Fort Donelson, Tennessee. Following repairs, the gunboat participated in the sieges of Mississippi River Island 10 and Fort Pillow later that spring. The *Pittsburg* was transferred to U. S. Navy service on October 1, 1862 and joined in operations on the Yazoo River and Steele's Bayou, Mississippi. In April 1863, the gunboat successfully passed Confederate emplacements at Vicksburg and led the attack at Grand Gulf. In 1864, the *Pittsburg* joined the Red River Expedition. The gunboat was decommissioned after the war and sold in November 1865.

The USS *Shawmut* was a steamship commissioned for service in the U.S. Navy in 1864. With Lt. Commander George U. Morris commanding, the *Shawmut* served primarily as a gunboat within the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. In 1865, it was refitted for foreign service and soon afterward sailed to Brazil Station, where it served a year before being decommissioned in December 1866. Recommissioned in August 1867, the gunboat served in the North Atlantic Squadron until July 1868, and again from March 1871 until January 1877. The USS *Shawmut* was decommissioned and sold to E. Stannard & Co. in September 1877.

Biographical Note

George Upham Morris was born in Massachusetts in 1830 and commissioned a U. S. Navy midshipman in 1846. By March 1862, Morris was a lieutenant in temporary command of the USS *Cumberland* when that vessel was sunk by the CSS *Virginia* during the American Civil War. Promoted to lieutenant-commander in July 1862, Morris was placed in command of the gunboat *Port Royal*, serving in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and later the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron. He took command of the USS *Shawmut* in 1864, serving in that position until 1866, when given command of the *Brooklyn*. Morris retired from the navy in 1874 and died the following year.

Scope and Content

This collection contains a paymaster's ledger from an unidentified Union Navy ship during the American Civil War. Research on the crewmembers named within the ledger suggests that the item originated from the USS *Pittsburg*. The ledger contains the names of 169 sailors and records the pay issued to each in the form of clothing, personal goods from small stores, and money. Listed among the crew are two "contrabands," African Americans who had escaped slavery and joined Union military forces.

The collection also contains a single payroll sheet listing officers of an unidentified ship. Again based on research on individual names--including those of George U. Morris, commander; and B. J. Cromwell, lieutenant-commander--the item seems likely to have been from the USS *Shawmut*. The sheet contains names of officers, their rank, and pay.

Keywords

Civil War

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

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Description of Subordinate Components

Paymaster's Ledger

Unit Date 1862

box 1

General Physical Description note [accompanied by payroll sheet, 1866]