

Pilot Schooner ALABAMA (ALABAMIAN)  
Vineyard Haven  
Martha's Vineyard  
Dukes County  
Massachusetts

HAER No. MA-64

HAER  
MASS,  
4-VINHA,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER  
MASS,  
4-VINHA,  
1-

Pilot Schooner ALABAMA (ALABAMIAN)  
HAER No. MA-64

Rig/Type of Craft: 2-masted schooner; mechanically propelled, sail assisted

Trade: pilot vessel

Official No.: 226177

Principle Dimensions: Length (overall): 88.63' Gross tonnage: 70  
Beam: 21.6' Net tonnage: 35  
Depth: 9.7'

Location: moored in harbor at  
Vineyard Haven  
Martha's Vineyard  
Dukes County  
Massachusetts

Date of Construction: 1925

Designer: Thomas F. McManus

Builder: Pensacola Shipbuilding Co., Pensacola, Florida

Present Owner: Robert S. Douglas  
Box 429  
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts 02568

Present Use: historic vessel

Significance: ALABAMA was designed by Thomas F. McManus, a noted fishing schooner and yacht designer from Boston, Massachusetts. She was built during the final throes of the age of commercial sailing vessels in the United States and is one of a handful of McManus vessels known to survive.

Historian: W. M. P. Dunne, HAER, 1988.

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## PROLOGUE

A map of the Americas, drawn by Martin Waldenseemuller in 1507 at the college of St. Die in Alsace-Lorraine was the first to name the newly explored western shore of the Atlantic Ocean as "America". It clearly shows a large bay on the Gulf of Mexico labeled Bahía Espíritu Santo, and it is a reasonable assumption that Waldenseemuller, a professor of geography, worked from data originating with Amerigo Vespucci's 1497-1498 voyage to the continents named after him.<sup>1</sup>

The Bahía Espíritu Santo might have been the bay at Mobile or Pensacola or Tampa or Galveston or any of the other deep intrusions made by the Gulf into the northern continent--given the then nascent status of western hemisphere cartography. Historians writing after 1850 customarily ascribed its waters to one of the above ports with judgement usually tempered by local loyalties or political proclivities.<sup>2</sup> Mobilians and Pensacolans have frequently laid claim to Espíritu Santo with a degree of just cause; but the accurate identification of the elusive Spanish bay is a question cartographers have examined for centuries without reaching a definitive determination.<sup>3</sup>

The first person to stand on the shores of Mobile Bay and record a description that has remained clear to posterity was the Spanish conquistador, Guido de las Bazaes. The Alabama bay is unquestionably his Bahía Filipina.<sup>4</sup> He led a 1558 exploratory expedition to locate a site where another Spaniard, Tristán de Luna y Arellano, might establish a colony as a base for his planned campaign to seize and hold La Florida. Luna's subsequent expedition was nearly destroyed before it began by one of those cyclonic terrors of the Gulf of Mexico, the August 19, 1558 hurricane, which struck the fleet while it was unloading at Pensacola.<sup>5</sup> Another fearsome tempest 348 years later, in 1906, would eradicate the summer village of the Mobile Bay pilots at Pilot Town in Navy Cove on Point Mobile. Whether or not Mobile Bay was in fact the 15th and 16th-century Bahía Espíritu Santo, it was the French, rather than the Spanish, who established a port there in 1702 with the settlement of Fort Louis de la Louisiane.<sup>6</sup> This broad body of water is generally shallow,

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<sup>1</sup> John Noble Wilford, The Mapmakers (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981), pp. 70 and 81.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., Peter J. Hamilton, Colonial Mobile (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1976 edition, first published 1897), passim.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Delanglez, El Rio del Espíritu Santo (New York: The United Catholic Historical Society, 1945), passim.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Ingram Priestley, translator and editor, The Luna papers (Freeport, New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1971 edition, first published 1928), passim.

<sup>5</sup> Lucille Griffith, Alabama, A Documentary History to 1900 (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1987 edition, first published 1968), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Jay Higginbotham, Old Mobilic, Fort Louis de la Louisiane 1702-1711 (Mobile: Museum of the City of Mobile, 1977), passim.

river-fed and roughly twelve miles wide by thirty miles long<sup>7</sup>. It has an average tide-fall of approximately eighteen inches. The bay-mouth lies between Point Mobile on the east and Massacre Island on the west.<sup>8</sup> The continually-shifting sands of this entrance make the assistance of a local pilot requisite for safe passage.

Wherever there are bays and coasts there are by necessity pilots; but, pilots are also a function of population density as expressed by the volume of ship movements to and from a harbor. For the first century of European intrusion into the Gulf of Mexico, coastal pilots, better described as shipboard navigators who usually had gained local experience on earlier voyages, were employed by succeeding exploring expeditions. Harbor pilots along the northern gulf coast were non-existent, as there was insufficient traffic to warrant them.

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Chart 11376, Mobile Bay, 30 May 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, translator and editor, Iberville's Gulf Journals (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981), p. 38. Iberville chose this name after finding the skeletal remains and household effects of more than sixty men and women.

## THE COLONIAL PERIOD AT MOBILE 1702-1813

The French settlement of Fort Louis de la Louisiane was founded by Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville in 1702 and developed under the guidance of his brother Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville. It was on a bluff twenty-seven miles north of the present city until it was relocated in 1711. The harbor was in the lower bay, southeast of Massacre Island and inshore of Pelican Island.<sup>9</sup>

The first professional pilot found working on Mobile Bay was Nicholas La Voye. As he entered the annals of history, La Voye was stranded on the sands of Massacre Island with his charge, the traversier the Esperance, much to the chagrin of its skipper Ensign Jousellin de Marigny. Fittingly, there is no further mention of La Voye in colonial records.<sup>10</sup> He and his immediate successors, Ignace La Valle, François Léon and Jacques Bernard, *dit* Matagon, were required to be familiar with several ports along the northern littoral of the gulf and thus would best be termed coastal rather than harbor pilots.<sup>11</sup>

The 1705 losses of the traversiers Saint-Antoine on Mobile Point and Précieuse on Massacre Island, coupled with the destruction of the Spanish Nuestra Señora de la Rosario off Pensacola established the need for permanent harbor pilots, notwithstanding the light transportation volume of the period.<sup>12</sup>

Addressing the positive side of the problem, the colony's second commissary, Jean-Baptiste Dartaguiette, a respected administrator, noted upon his return to France:

The port at Ile Massacre is secure, the anchorage is excellent, quite easy to protect. There are always twenty feet of water in the channel which, to be certain, is narrow; but once we have [capable] pilots, there will be no risk in entering it. The anchorage on the outside, when the winds are not favorable for entering, is very good. In the port there are five and one-half to six fathoms of water, very little swell, and the bottom is all sand and mud. It is capable of containing more than fifteen vessels of forty to fifty cannons and many other smaller ones.<sup>13</sup>

Previous to Dartaguiette's departure, one Simon Cousott residing on Massacre Island was appointed

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<sup>9</sup> Op. cit., Higginbotham, Chapter 22, passim, and p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> A traversier was a small merchantman of 40 to 50 tons burthen used by the French at Mobile for commercial intercourse with Pensacola, Vera Cruz, Havana and Cap-Francais, and Op. cit., Higginbotham, p. 58, names the pilot and Op. cit., McWilliams, p. 164, names the vessel.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., Higginbotham, pp. 151, 158, and 199.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 215, 217, and 226.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 442. Underline added.

as the first permanent Mobile bar pilot.<sup>14</sup> Hamilton's Colonial Mobile also mentions a "Pilot Girod" as "Pilot of the Alabomene [Alabama River]".<sup>15</sup>

A danger to maritime commerce that Mobile shared with the other temperate and tropical waters of the world was the appetite of the marine mollusk *teredo navalis* for ship timbers.<sup>16</sup> During the summer of 1707 the colony lost its trading brigantine the Aventurier when she went to the bottom at her Massacre Island mooring as a result of holes drilled in her hull by these voracious wood-borers.<sup>17</sup>

Mobile's importance declined through the first half of the 18th-century after it was supplanted as the French capital by Old Biloxi in 1718; but the Mississippi town's reign was a short one.<sup>18</sup> The newly-founded city of New Orleans became the French seat-of-government in 1720 and within thirty years New Orleans replaced Mobile as the most important city in the Gulf region.<sup>19</sup>

After the British ejected the French in 1763, the first British pilot listed was Samuel Carr, who resided on Dauphin Island, the renamed Massaere Island.<sup>20</sup> The following year Carr obtained an indentured servant:

In 1764 Thomas Dobbins was bound for a period of three years to Samuel Carr, pilot of the Port of Mobile. . . Carr promises to instruct Thomas in "his art," to furnish him with meat, drink, and lodging, according to custom, and give him a new suit of clothes at the expiration of his service.<sup>21</sup>

George Gauld, a surveyor and cartographer assigned to chart the Gulf Coast for the Hydrographer

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<sup>14</sup> Cf., ibid., pp. 365, 413 and 444.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., Hamilton.

<sup>16</sup> A species of marine mollusk that bores into the underwater sections of unprotected wooden vessels, especially in warm waters, and causes great damage.

<sup>17</sup> Op. cit., Higginbotham, p. 305.

<sup>18</sup> Present day Ocean Springs, Mississippi. New Biloxi, the site of present-day Biloxi, was founded in 1722.

<sup>19</sup> Harriet E. Amos, Cotton City, Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1985), p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Op. cit., Higginbotham, pp. 465n. The name of Massacre Island was formally changed to Dauphine by Bienville in 1711 to honor Marie-Adélaïde de Savoye, the granddaughter-in-law of the king. Later usage dropped the final "e".

<sup>21</sup> Cecil Johnson, British West Florida 1763-1783 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 181.

of the Navy on board the 14-gun sloop-of-war Ferret during 1765-1766, mentions Carr.<sup>22</sup>

Once under way, [October 12, 1766] Ferret proceeded toward Dauphin Island and by midafternoon had approached to within two miles of Pelican Island, when the pilot boat was seen approaching from the distance. Within the hour Samuel Carr, mobile pilot, had scrambled aboard the heaving Ferret. His boatman, Thomas Harmond, would normally have returned to the pilot station on Dauphin Island, but "a great sea stove and lost the pilot's boat under the lee of the ship in his getting on board." Thus he too was compelled to come aboard with the pilot.<sup>23</sup>

According to one local history, Carr later moved from Dauphin Island to Mobile Point on the opposite shore under criminal circumstances, having been charged with killing cattle and illegally chopping down trees.<sup>24</sup> The controversial Carr was succeeded at Mobile in 1768 by Captain Richard Hartley:

In 1765, the merchants of Pensacola sought action from Governor Johnstone, and in 1768 they petitioned Lieutenant Governor Browne to establish a pilot at Mobile in order to encourage merchant vessels to utilize the ports of British West Florida rather than proceed on to New Orleans. Browne had agreed to appoint Captain Richard Hartley to that service and cited his qualification as having "attended Mr. Gall [Gauld] at his surveying a good part of the coast." In 1767, the Commons passed An Act Constituting Commissioners for the Examination and Appointment of Pilots, and for Establishing the Rates of Pilotage for the Harbour of Pensacola.<sup>25</sup>

Hartley was rewarded with an annual salary of 50 pounds sterling.<sup>26</sup>

Two surviving traveller's journals present an unembellished picture of Mobile Bay during the first British occupation. In 1764-1765, Colonel Adam Lord Gordon, a Member of Parliament and commanding officer of the Sixty-sixth Regiment of Foot, toured the North American continent. In his journal he wrote about at trip with a different pilot and gave a very complete description of Mobile Bay in its contemporary state:

On the 12th of October 1764, I left the Tartar [a 28-gun frigate assigned to the Royal

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<sup>22</sup> James J. Colledge, Ships of the Royal Navy (London: Greenhill Books, 1987), p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> John D. Ware, George Gauld, Surveyor and Cartographer of the Gulf Coast (Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1982), pp. 74-75.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Harry L. [Grace Evelyn] Hargrove nee Roberts, partially published typewritten manuscript concerning the history of the Mobile Bar Pilots, Mobile: c. 1955, p. 1. Published portion appeared in Port of Mobile News (August 1960), pp. 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> Op. cit., Ware, p. 190.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 1.

Navy's North American Station] at anchor near Rose Island and Sailed in a small schooner, along with Mr. John Steward (Superintendent [sic] for His Majesty's Indian Affairs) to the Southward for Mobile, and came to Anchor off of the point that Evening within the Bar - -next day we made sail up the Bay, the River Poisson being to Starboard, and the Isle Dauphine, or Massacre, being on our Larboard Quarter, rather a stern. We had a good Pilot, one Jerome Matulicht, a Slavonian, who resides between Mobile and Orleans, and is a very sensible fellow. On that part of the Bar of Mobile which we traversed, were all breakers, and not more than eight feet water, but on the best passage you have fourteen feet water. After you have crossed the Bar, which is not to be risked without a Pilot, you may carry up with you Sixteen feet water, keeping the middle of the Channel, until you come within two, or two and a half Leagues of the Town. -- Round the Point Mobile there is a good holding ground for small Craft, and if you follow that up, you enter into a Bay called St. Andrew's Bay, leading up the River Poisson, which ends in a swamp, lying in the road between Pensacola and Mobile. -- On Passing over St. Andrew's Bay and River, you come to a point of Land called Mallet point, from which place, quite up there occurs nothing very remarkable, 'till you meet the great Alibama [sic] River, which in its course divides the Creek and Choctaw Nations. On the Western Shore of the Bay of Mobile you meet first the River au Poilles, then the River au Chevreuils, and lastly the River au Chiens, two Leagues below the Town. The Fort, formerly Fort Conde, stands on the Western bank of the Tombecby River, which is called Mobile River, for the space of twelve Leagues upwards, and all the Land which lies between the said River, and the Alibama is held common, between the Creeks and Choctaws, altho' the last pretend, that the Creeks should not pass the Alibama river.

When you get within two, or two and a half Leagues of Mobile, the Water becomes shallow, unless you keep on the east of Alibama Side, where you may ascend above the Town, round a Swamp, and then come down to Mobile, by a Channel, called the Spanish Channel. . . . The Land round Mobile, tho' light, is certainly better than about Pensacola, and from what I have seen in South Carolina, I should think it very proper for the growth of Indigo; at present it will produce most of the American and European fruits and roots. I ate here some excellent white Figs, and Saw Vines and Mulberry trees in abundance.<sup>27</sup>

The British Chief Engineer for North America, Captain Harry Gordon, of the Sixtieth Regiment of Foot, was given orders by General Gage in 1766 to proceed down the Ohio, Illinois, and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans and return to New York via Mobile and Pensacola to examine Indian affairs.

We continued Coasting [eastward from New Orleans] along until the 25th [September 1766] when we reached Isle Dauphine, the Wind contrary the whole Way; We Landed several Times, but were always carried or went in a Canoe, the Coast being so flat as seldom to

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<sup>27</sup> Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Manuscript Division, Journal of Lord Adam Gordon, handwritten transcript copy of British Library, Bloomsbury, London, U.K., King's Manuscript 213, not paginated. Emphasis added.

permit Our Boat that only drew 27 Inches of Water to come near Shore, one Place Excepted, which was during the Storm on the 22d when the Ferret a little way without us lost her Masts: We Landed several Times, and saw the Shore the whole way, it is covered with Pines, and in general barren Land, but good for Pasturage. The few Inhabitants being only Six on this Tract of Country, that is near 100 Miles in Length, have Numbers of Black Cattle; any Quantity of Tar or Turpentine may be easily made; One Crips, employs a dozen Negroes on this Commodity, which he sends to New Orleans, to a good account. There are a number of Cattle on Isle Dauphine the only stock [that] can live on it, its soil is like that of the coast already described.

The 26th. We entered Mobile Bay and got to the Fort the 28th which is 160 Miles Distance from New Orleans; The Soil on the West Side of the Bay, is better than that on the Coast, it will fetch Corn and Cotton, Garden Stuff and Excellent Pasturage. An Inhabitant called Rochon, has by rcpute above 1000 Head of black Cattle, he has likewise a Number of Negroes, who he chuses [sic] chiefly to Employ on the Tar and Lumber Way.

There are several good Houses near the Fort at Mobile; This is a Square with 4 Bastions, built of Brick in the Way of Revetment, with a Counterscarp of Brick and Glacis; The Barracks in the Fort are so low, that they are deprived of air, and are mere Ovens in the Summer time, from the Reflexion [sic] of the Sun. 60 Men will defend this Fort against Indians; The Navigation up the Bay, Ten Leagues long, is not to be attempted by Strangers, and it is only capable of Receiving Small Sloops.<sup>28</sup>

On March 14, 1780 the Spanish, led by the governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Galvez, captured Mobile and effectively ended its British occupation for all time. The senior English official, Lieutenant Governor Elias Durnford, formally surrendered the town and fort to the Spaniard.<sup>29</sup> The harbor continued at its location under the lee of low-lying Pelican Island. The King of Spain maintained a permanent pilot and four sailors there at an annual expense of \$696.<sup>30</sup>

The second Spanish occupation was a lackluster era and Lucille Griffin succinctly sums up the course of the entire colonial period:

The history of the last Spanish period is essentially the history of the whole colonial period. In it there were three factors at work: rivalry between European nations, the Indians, and land. In the end land won.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Newton D. Mereness, editor, Travels in the American Colonies (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1961), Journal of Captain Harry Gordon's Journey from Pittsburgh Down the Ohio and the Mississippi to New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola, 1766, 457-459, 484-485.

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit., Griffin, p. 41 and 43.

<sup>30</sup> Loc cit., Hargrove.

<sup>31</sup> Griffin, 41, 43 and 50.

## ANTEBELLUM MOBILE BAR PILOTAGE

The United States stewardship of Mobile began on April 12, 1813 during the administration of President James Madison, when Brigadier-General James Wilkinson captured the city from the Spanish in a bloodless victory during the War of 1812. On April 12th Wilkinson arrayed his troops before the undermanned, supply-short Fort Charlotte and addressed a note to its commandant, Captain Cayetano Peréz:

The troops of the United States under my command do not approach you as enemies of Spain, but by order of the President they come to relieve the garrison which you command from the occupancy of a post within the legitimate limits of those States. I therefore hope, sir, that you may peacefully retire from Fort Charlotte, and from the bounds of the Mississippi Territory [and proceed] east of the Perdido River with the garrison you command.<sup>32</sup>

The Spanish *commandante* surrendered upon receipt of Wilkinson's missive and agreed to evacuate the fort by 5 p.m. on April 15th. The cagey Wilkinson, a consummate intriguer, prepared a capitulation agreement that insured his government would not incur any expense due to the Spanish withdrawal. The second article addressed the issue of transportation and pilotage:

2nd. The Spanish garrison being destitute of provisions, a supply is requested, together with transports to convey the troops to Pensacola.

Agreed. But the Spanish government shall be accountable to the United States for the expense; the vessels to sail as flags of truce, and to be guaranteed by the government of Spain against capture, and also against port charges and pilotage: Major-General Wilkinson engages on the part of the United States to guarantee the safe passage of the Spanish garrison against the vessels of those States and the powers at peace with them.<sup>33</sup>

Although there had been no declaration of war against Spain she, like England in 1780, was never again to regain possession of West Florida.<sup>34</sup>

The previous sixteen years had been trying ones for the American frontier traders of southern Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. The Ellicott Survey following the 1797 Pinckney Treaty with Spain laid out the border between the United States and Spanish West Florida along

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<sup>32</sup> Op. cit., Hamilton, p. 411.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 412. Underline added. Although Wilkinson habitually referred to himself as Major-General, he ranked as a Brigadier-General at this time.

<sup>34</sup> Reginald Horsman, The War of 1812 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969), 217ff.

the thirty-first parallel of north latitude, placing the lower areas of the three future states under Spanish control.<sup>35</sup> Even though few Spaniards immigrated into the southern Alabama counties of Mobile and Baldwin, the geographical separation severely constricted exports from the southern United States by placing all the river mouths into Spanish hands. The officious and intransigent attitudes of Spanish customs officials in the Gulf port cities added to this choke on American commerce. After the landmark Louisiana Purchase of April 30, 1803 the United States claimed the Gulf Coast lands west of the Perdido River but the Spaniards obstinately held that the Mississippi River's east bank, exclusive of New Orleans, was the true boundary. Modern Mobile maritime legislation under United States law began during the period of this dispute with the "Mobile Act," introduced to Congress by Representative John Randolph of Virginia. It grandiosely added to the United States' Mississippi customs district, ". . . all the navigable waters, rivers, creeks, bays and inlets lying within the United States which empty into the Gulf of Mexico east of the Mississippi River".<sup>36</sup> The shifting territorial claims between the Americans and Spanish over West Florida continued for a decade, until Wilkinson's capture of Mobile, which brought the city into the Territory of Mississippi for the following four years.

Alabama, with Mobile included this time, gained control of its own destiny when it became a United States territory on March 3, 1817. After the short waiting period of two years it became a state on December 14, 1819, and the Territorial maritime acts were subsequently adopted.<sup>37</sup> The first pilot's licenses under these laws had been granted to James Rooney and Richard Daley of Mobile the previous year.<sup>38</sup>

Three seamen who were brothers, Andrew, John, and Timothy Dorgan were granted pilot licenses by the U.S. Government as a reward for naval service in the War of 1812, and founded a line-of-succession that is still represented today among the active Mobile Bar pilots in the person of Captain Sidney Dorgan.<sup>39</sup>

Through the decade ending in 1827 the colonial town, dominated by Fort Charlotte, gave way to the thriving, steamboat-cluttered, antebellum port.<sup>40</sup> The steamer era, necessitated by the upland rivers which flowed into the bay, literally exploded upon Mobile late in the second decade

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<sup>35</sup> Andrew Ellicott, The Journal of Andrew Ellicott (Philadelphia: William Fry, 1814), p. 83.

<sup>36</sup> Clarence Edwin Carter, compiler and editor, The Territorial Papers of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, Volume V, 1937), The Territory of Mississippi 1798-1817, p. 139, footnote 6.

<sup>37</sup> Op. cit., Territorial Papers, Volume XVIII, 1952, The Territory of Alabama 1817-1819, passim.

<sup>38</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> National Archives, Abstract of Service Records of Naval Officers, 1798-1893, M330, Roll 2, location 10-21-4, service record of Andrew Dorgan.

<sup>40</sup> Mobile City Library, Local History and Genealogical Branch, John Forsyth, Mobile Register, editorial column, 6 July 1856.

of the 19th-century; as steamboats, the most dependable form of transportation of the time contributed to the economic and social life of the state. The maritime trades assumed new importance as the city's waterfront, capable of providing swift and easy access to the sea for Alabama's "black belt" cotton farmers, embarked upon a thirty year stretch of brisk development. The importance of the Port of Mobile to American commerce grew as cotton gradually became its prime commodity during the years following the War of 1812.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the history of antebellum Mobile, the pilots had been individual competitors. The rules of their competition were quite simple: the first pilot to reach the approaching vessel was entitled to the job. They posted lookouts in trees on Dauphin Island or Mobile Point to scan the horizon for incoming ships. Once an inbound vessel was sighted the shore-based pilots raced out to the newcomer in their boats, and the spoils went to the swiftest. As the cotton boom stimulated the rise of the Alabama port, the number of pilots increased dramatically and the competition for pilotage fees became more intense. Pilots with larger schooners began to lay offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, over the horizon and out of sight of land in order to capture the pilotage fee from inbound traffic.

By 1833 there were six licensed bar pilots: Harvey Curtis, James Giles, Andrew Dorgan, John Dorgan, Robert Bruce and Lima Dunmore. John Dorgan was the son of Timothy Dorgan and the father of John Alexander Dorgan, who would later become the founder and first president of the Mobile Bar Pilots' Association.<sup>42</sup>

The water over the lower bar had steadily decreased to a depth of only thirteen feet during the early 19th-century and, in the 1840s, it was dredged to a depth of twenty feet in the channel. The water-level in the upper bay remained consistently at eleven feet, forcing deep-draft vessels to approach the city by a circuitous route on the east side of the bay which led to the Spanish River. This "Spanish Channel" passed above Mobile on the opposite shore and then came downstream to the city's wharves via the Mobile River. Many of the deeper ships calling at Mobile preferred to remain in the lower bay to load and unload cargoes at the anchorage known as Lower Fleet. This custom led to a bustling lighterage trade. These small, shallow-draft craft would haul the transferred cargo up to the city, or down to the waiting ships, as required by the exigencies of the rapidly expanding trade.

In the early decades of United States rule each pilot had his own boat. The 1842 city directory lists two different pilot categories, one for the Mobile Bar and the other for the Upper Dog River Bar.<sup>43</sup> The lower pilots numbered Andrew Dorgan in the Clara, Robert Bruce in the Robert Bruce, John Dorgan in the Mary Ann, Thomas P. Downer in the Washington, Henry Hardy in the Trimmer, Richard Nixon in the William Tell and James Needham in the Liberty; while the

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<sup>41</sup> Op. cit., Griffin, p. 202.

<sup>42</sup> Loc. cit., Hargrove, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> R.P. Vail, Mobile City Directory, or Stranger's Guide for 1842 . . ., Mobile: Dade and Thompson, 1842, p. 68.

upper included Richard St. John in the Richard St. John and P. McRibbon in the P.B. Francis. All of the pilot boats were schooners manned by the pilot and his boatmen. The fore-and-aft rigged craft were favored for their weatherly performance and cat-quick maneuverability in passing through stays, while tacking across the wind.

Through the antebellum years the pilotage competition was tempered by gradual rationalization. As time went on and port traffic expanded, groups of pilots banded together. A consortium including John Joiner, Henry Hardy, Josephus Clements [Clemmons] and Peter Constant Lanno, ordered a boat at Baltimore, Maryland, home of the famous Baltimore Clipper model. Upon completion, her register dimensions were taken off by Baltimore surveyor William Pinkney on September 6, 1843 as 72' 0" length by 18' 5" breadth by 6' 6" depth, making her 76 & 81/95ths tons.<sup>44</sup> In October 1843 this new pilot boat, the Relief, arrived at Mobile after a swift passage of three weeks on her maiden voyage from Baltimore via Havana.<sup>45</sup> Included in the delivery crew was a fourteen year old native Baltimore mariner, William Thomas Norville who would become the most famous of Mobile's blockade-running navigators during the Civil War and rise to the presidency of the Bar Pilots Association in the post-war years. The dynasty Norville founded would last for one hundred and forty-five years until the retirement of his great-grandson, Captain Douglas J. McColl in 1988.

During the 1850s Mobile attempted to expand its port by joining the nationwide railroad boom. Unfortunately, the city received little support from the state and, although it managed to become a railhead, the port lagged behind its competitors and failed to enjoy the appropriate expansion of its cargo volume.

Mobile became one of three American cities, along with Louisville and Portland, that spent more than their respective states for railroad promotion. . . . [R]ailroads failed to expand Mobile's trade significantly. For its major lines of commerce the port still depended on its river system or bay.<sup>46</sup>

In the same decade the Alabama city outstripped the historic port of Charleston, South Carolina, and began to rival river-fed New Orleans as the leading southern cotton terminal.<sup>47</sup> In the oft-quoted, but nevertheless accurate words of one British wag:

Mobile--a pleasant cotton city of some thirty thousand inhabitants--where the people live

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<sup>44</sup> U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records Group 41, Records of the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Consolidated Enrollment and Licenses, Temporary Register No. 64 issued at Baltimore in 1843.

<sup>45</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 4 issued at Mobile, 6 October 1843, listing Relief's change of home port.

<sup>46</sup> Op. cit., Amos, pp. 198 and 207.

<sup>47</sup> P.C. Coker III, Charleston's Maritime Heritage 1670-1865 (Charleston: Cokercraft Press, 1987), p. 171.

in cotton houses and ride in cotton carriages. They buy cotton, sell cotton, think cotton, eat cotton, drink cotton, and dream cotton. They marry cotton wives and unto them are born cotton children. In enumerating the charms of a fair widow, they begin by saying she makes so many bales of cotton. It is the great staple--the sum and substance of Alabama. It has made Mobile and all its citizens.<sup>48</sup>

One advantage Mobile enjoyed was the volume of cotton it could process. The dozen or so cotton presses in the northern part of the city, working in conjunction with the cotton warehouses in the same area, Ward 1, could compress 7,000 bales per day. One journal claimed ". . . that Mobile had better facilities for storing and compressing cotton, in proportion to the amount received, than any other American cotton port. . . ." Fueled by the cotton boom, Mobile's export trade had so developed by 1860 that the port placed third after New York and New Orleans in total value of exports for the nation.<sup>49</sup> Another factor that must be taken into consideration concerning the port's growth was the attitude of its citizenry. Southern-born Mobilians willingly joined with the horde of northern immigrants in entering the city's thriving mercantile trades, with none of the disdain displayed by well-bred Charlestonians towards these occupations.<sup>50</sup>

The Mobile port attracted more than cotton at times, however. Mobile traditionally suffered, in varying intensity, from the scourge of the yellow fever seasons, particularly in the years 1819, 1825, 1839, 1843, and 1859; but the 1853 epidemic, imported into Mobile from New Orleans on board the barque Miltiades, particularly ravaged the city's population. Before the November frosts exterminated the mosquito larvae that fatal year, 1,331 souls perished from the virus.<sup>51</sup>

A Port of Mobile Temporary Enrollment was issued to the pilot boat Relief on November 10, 1856 indicating she was operating in San Luis Pass off Galveston, Texas. Apparently there were just too many pilots vying for the Mobile Bar business:

Before the Pilots Association was founded and after the river entrance to New Orleans has [had] been improved by Eads Jetties, skippers boycotted the inadequate Mobile ship channel. As vessels became scarce and pilots more plentiful, keen individual competition developed. A complaint often heard along the waterfront in the days immediately preceding the Civil War was, "There are more pilots on the Mobile Bar than they know what to do with."<sup>52</sup>

Relief's next document, issued September 1857 for a change of ownership giving C.J. Campbell 3/8ths share, R[ideau] Sheridan 3/8ths and Henry Teaman 1/4 share, also established that she had

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<sup>48</sup> Hiram Fuller, Belle Brittan on a Tour, at Newport, and Here and There, New York: Derby & Jackson Co., p. 112.

<sup>49</sup> Op. cit., Amos, p. 28, and p. xiii.

<sup>50</sup> Cf., e.g., Op. cit., Coker and Op. cit., Amos.

<sup>51</sup> Op. cit., Griffin, p. 327.

<sup>52</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 4.

returned from Galveston and was again operating off the Mobile Bar. The last archived enrollment document for Relief detailed a change of ownership to C.J. Campbell 5/8th share and Rideau Sheridan 3/8ths. Teaman had apparently relinquished his Relief ownership in order to invest in the new Upper Dog River Bar pilot boat, Mary C. Harris, for he is shown as a 5/8ths shareholder in this new vessel which had been built at Bon Secours, Alabama, in the spring of 1858. Her other owners were John A. Munds (2/8ths) and David Russell (1/8th). The Harris was 42'6" long, 14'4" beam, 4'8" depth, 23 & 58/95ths tons with a sharp bow, a square stern and a Roman figurehead. Her next document was issued at Mobile on June 22, 1859 showing an ownership change to Henry Teaman (7/8ths) and David Russell (1/8th), and was surrendered at New Orleans on December 21, 1859. There is no further record of the Harris in the National Archives.<sup>53</sup>

The 1859 city directory entry for "Mobile Bay Pilots and Pilot Boats" implies that a consolidation had occurred among the pilots. Two new schooners, the Alabama and the Florida, were shown with the combined ownership of William Thomas Norvell [Norville], Frederick Smith, William Johnson, Charles Wallace, S.F. Wilson and Joseph Green. Relief's owners were listed as C.J. Campbell, William C. Wilson, W. Haywood and John V. Grivet. Two previously unmentioned schooners, the Baltic, James Coyle and Samuel Smyley, and the Joe Flanner, Andrew Dorgan, Edward Dorgan, Josephus Clemens and John R.B. McIntosh, were also added to the list of Lower Bar Pilots.<sup>54</sup> Sam Smyley of the Baltic was a northerner who had come south annually during the cotton season and was by 1859 taking up year round residence at Mobile. The Upper Bar Pilots list had the schooner Mary C. Harris owned by Henry Teaman, Thomas A. Deering, David Russell, A.W. Deering and John A. Munds.<sup>55</sup>

Towards the end of the antebellum period Mobile was exporting over 500,000 bales of

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<sup>53</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Enrollment #33 issued at Mobile on 18 September 1857. Enrollment #30 issued at Mobile on 23 October 1858. Enrollment #12 issued at Mobile on 24 April 1858. Enrollment #27 issued at Mobile on 22 June 1859. Register and enrollment numbers were serialized annually by the fiscal year at the issuing port. A "register" number was assigned when an American merchant vessel was "going foreign", *i.e.*, calling at an intervening foreign port between sailing from an American port and arriving at an American port. A vessel intended solely for the coasting trade received an "enrollment" rather than a "register" number.

<sup>54</sup> Florida was built at Baltimore in 1860 for Charles Wallace, William Norville, Fred Smith and William Johnson. She received Temporary enrollment No. 95 issued at Baltimore on 9 October 1860 and was 75'6" long, 19'9" beam, 7'2" depth, 94 & 88/95ths tons with a figurehead and a square stern. She received Enrollment No. 38 issued at Mobile on 1 November 1860 with the same owners. This was her last document. Probably became a blockade runner. Baltic was built at Baltimore in 1860 for James Coyle as sole owner. She received Temporary enrollment No. 101 issued at Baltimore on 24 October 1860 and was 72'0" long, 19'6" beam, 7'6" depth, 92 & 85/95ths tons with an eagle figurehead and a square stern. She received Enrollment No. 40 issued at Mobile on 19 November 1860 with the same owner. This was her last document. Probably became a blockade runner. Florida and Baltic may have been near-sisterships.

<sup>55</sup> Directory for the City of Mobile, 1859 (Mobile: Farrow & Dennett, 1859), p. 18.

cotton per year and the port had been greatly refined.

In 1859 cotton and supplies were bought and sold by more than 150 factors and commission agents. In the same year the city supported 3 local banks and 16 insurance companies. Steamboats were making more than 700 official landings or stops along the Alabama, Tombigbee and Warrior rivers. Six pilot boats and 23 pilots were working the waters in and near the city. Three lighthouses were in operation and between 1826 and 1857 the federal government appropriated more than \$200,000 to improve the harbor.<sup>56</sup>

The first pilot schooner named Alabama, placed into service before 1859, recorded a typical pilotage transaction in April 1860 when Captain Edward P. Stinson, master of the barque Mary Sawyer, paid ". . . Owners of the PILOT BOAT ALABAMA . . ." \$31.63 via a draft on her owner, George A. Preble of Bath, Maine.<sup>57</sup>

The 1861 city directory again manifests substantial changes in the pilot boat fleet. Florida, Baltic and Joe Flanner had disappeared from the Lower Bar list, the venerable schooners Clara and Washington had reappeared and the new Marshall Tookey had joined that group. The Alabama's owners were Norvell, Smith, Johnson and Wallace. S.F. Wilson was an owner of the Marshall Tookey along with Smylcy and McIntosh. Green joined the old Clara along with Coyle, Grivet and Edward Dorgan. Relief's pilot owners were Campbell, William Lee, W. C. Wilson, Haywood and Grivet. The Upper Bar Pilots still had the schooner Mary C. Harris with her ownership including Geo. Thompson, David Russell, J. Munds, Thos. Deering, A.W. Deering and John Dorgan.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Weymouth T. Jordan, Antebellum Alabama: Town and Country (Tallahassee: The Florida State University Press, 1957), pp. 20-21. Underline added.

<sup>57</sup> G. W. Blunt-White Library, Mystic Seaport, Conn., Collection 96, Box 1/6, Edward P. Stinson Papers.

<sup>58</sup> Directory for the City of Mobile, 1861 (Mobile: Farrow & Dennett, 1861), p. 18.

## THE CIVIL WAR

On April 19, 1861 President Abraham Lincoln declared the ports of the Confederate States of America to be blockaded, thereby giving birth to the lucrative sport of blockade-running. Not surprisingly, considering their occupation, with the advent of Lincoln's proclamation, the Mobile Bar pilots became ardent competitors. Indeed, they went beyond merely navigating the inbound and outbound contraband-carriers, to enlist in the entrepreneurial trade on their own account.<sup>59</sup>

Several Mobile Bar pilot boats were captured trying to run the blockade. The former Dog River pilot boat Mary C. Harris successfully operated as a blockade-runner for two years but, on March 24, 1863 she was trapped at Bayport, Florida. Official Union records describe the capture of the Confederate schooner Alabama by the Union steamer Susquehanna on April 18, 1863, but do not refer to it as a pilot boat; however, Marcus W. Price, writing in The American Neptune, prepared a list of captured blockade runners for the period 1861-1865.<sup>60</sup> The author clearly identifies this capture as the Pilot Schooner Alahama, which refutes the 20th-century newspaper reports that she was scuttled by the pilots in 1861.<sup>61</sup> Alabama had cleared Mobile for Havana, Cuba, on March 24, 1863 and escaped through the Union blockading fleet on the same night. After arriving safely in the Cuban capital, her hold was loaded with a cargo ". . . part of wine (claret), brandy (in casks), coffee, cheese, sweet oil, soap, soda, dry goods, nails, cigars, etc. . ." <sup>62</sup> As usual, in those ill-conceived hostilities, luxury goods took precedence over war materials. The captured schooner was placed in the hands of a prize-crew and sent into Key West for adjudication where she was libelled on April 28, 1863.<sup>63</sup> Unusually, she was not sold until March 17, 1864 when she realized \$9,687.38.<sup>64</sup> In the interim, she had been taken into the Union Navy and assigned as a tender to the U.S. ordnance ship Dale.<sup>65</sup> Another former pilot boat, the Joe Flanner, was captured on April 24, 1863 by the U.S. gunboat Pembino off Mobile Point. Like the Alabama, she was inbound from Havana with an assorted cargo and she too went to Key West for condemnation proceedings.<sup>66</sup> She was libelled on May 19, 1863, and condemned in Admiralty

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<sup>59</sup> Charles W. Stewart, ed., Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905, Series I, Volume 4), pp. 156-157.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Volume 17, p. 405, and Volume 20, pp. 144-145.

<sup>61</sup> Mobile, Alabama, Mobile Press-Register, 12 September 1965, Section D, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Op. cit., O.R.U.C.N.W.R., Volume 20, pp. 144-145.

<sup>63</sup> U. S. National Archives, Atlanta, Ga., Records of U. S. District Courts, Key west Admiralty Court, Volumes 31, 32 and 55.

<sup>64</sup> Admiral David Dixon Porter, U.S.N., The Naval History of the Civil War (Secaucus, New Jersey: Castle reprint edition, 1984), p. 833.

<sup>65</sup> Op. cit., O.R.U.C.N.W.R., I:17, 435, letter of Acting Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles dated Key West, May 6, 1863.

<sup>66</sup> Op. cit., O.R.U.C.N.W.R., pp. 277-278.

Court proceedings, "The United States vs. Joe Flanner on May 28th.<sup>67</sup>

During the war, William Norville, who had arrived at Mobile on board the Relief as a youngster, but by then in his mid-thirties, was the most notorious of the pilots who guided Confederate blockade runners through the Union fleet.<sup>68</sup> In the words of Commodore H.K. Thatcher, Commanding Officer of the U.S. Navy's Western Gulf Blockading Squadron,

This William Norvel [Norville], the pilot who brought out the prize schooner John Scott, now a prisoner, is sent to New Orleans to be delivered to your orders with the crew of the prize. He is the man who piloted out all the blockade runners, according to his own confession, and therefore a very important personage to the rebels, and had he been able to return to Mobile would doubtless have been employed by that Government to pilot their armed vessels should they conclude to make a raid upon this squadron, and you will perceive the importance of retaining this prisoner in security. From all accounts Mobile pilots are now very much reduced in numbers and difficult to be procured.<sup>69</sup>

Ironically, Norville's father, a noted Baltimore mariner, commanded Union transports throughout the rebellion. On occasion he brought troops to Fort Morgan--squarely pitting father and son's nautical skills against each other off Mobile Point.<sup>70</sup>

Another Mobile bar pilot, William C. (Black Bill) Wilson, was captured during the war on the Confederate steamer Alabama, a former packet. This steamboat was one of several operating from Mobile that were noted for their speed. As Acting Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey, commander of the Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron, noted to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles:

The James Battle arrived here [Key West] on the 21st instant with 600 bales of cotton, a prize to the DeSoto. She is one of a large fleet of blockade runners carrying on a steady and successful trade between Mobile and Havana.

The Battle was the finest packet on the Alabama River and was altered to suit her for a blockade runner, at a large expense. The Warren, Fannie, William Bagley, W.H. Smith, Alabama, Alice Vivian, and St. Mary's are other vessels of the same class. The DeSoto is the only vessel I have with sufficient speed to overtake any of these traders. I have stationed her to the northwest of the Tortugas in their track, and never a week passes

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<sup>67</sup> Key West Admiralty Court Records.

<sup>68</sup> O.R.U.C.N.W.R., I:21:15-16.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> A.L.S., Elizabeth Norville Shaw of Baltimore, Maryland, daughter of Captain William Norville and sister of pilot William Thomas Norville, to the War Department, 15 October 1906, in the possession of her grandson, retired pilot Douglas J. McColl.

that she does not sight some of them.<sup>71</sup>

It appears that Wilson had first come to Mobile in 1843 as part of the crew hired locally in Baltimore to man the Relief. He was an Irishman from Dublin, whose original name was O'Connor. By 1859 he was listed as one of Relief's owners.

The steamer Alabama's last voyage as a blockade-runner started out badly when she was chased by the Union steamer R.R. Cuyler and had to throw some of her cotton cargo overboard (which was subsequently recovered by the U.S. Bark Roebuck). She unloaded the remainder of her cotton at Havana and took on a cargo of contraband. In company with the Nita, she sailed from the Cuban capital the second week on August, but her movements were being carefully monitored by Union spies. ". . . I have information that the steamers Alabama and Nita sailed from Havana on the 12th, with a view of running the blockade, probably at Mobile, but possibly between Tampa Bay and St. Marks. . . ." Her career came to an end early on the morning of September 12, 1863, when she was captured.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Op. cit., O.R.U.C.N.W.R., I:17, 512.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 525, report of Acting Master John Sherrill, C.O., U.S. Bark Roebuck written in St. Andrew's Bay on 5 August 1863; and 531, report of Acting Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey to commanding officers of blockading vessels regarding the reported movements of blockade-runners, written at Key West on 14 August 1863.

## THE POST-CIVIL WAR ERA

After the war the Port of Mobile's commerce gradually returned to native control. The pilots reorganized and adopted a more resourceful form of operation, the Mobile Bar Pilots Association, thereby eliminating the old pilot schooner races and the farcical situation that saw five or six boat-loads of pilots skimming around the bar in competition with each other. Although a schism still existed between the Lower and Upper Bar pilots, the practices inaugurated on the Lower Bar in 1866 guided Mobile pilotage to the turn of the 20th-century.

Under the revised scheme a pair of pilot boats, numbered 1 and 2, were kept on duty at all times. No. 1 was stationed twelve miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, south of Mobile Point, while No. 2 rode at anchor in the proximity of Sand Island Lighthouse near the entrance to the Mobile ship channel. A new schooner to the service, purchased at Lewes, Delaware, the Glide, became No. 1; and another, the Ida Lowe, was purchased at Key West to serve as No. 2.<sup>73</sup> The pilots who shared the ownership of the vessels were William T. Norville, recently returned to Mobile from over two years internment in a Union prisoner-of-war camp (after his capture by the U.S. Navy he had refused to serve as a pilot for the Union fleet under Rear Admiral David Farragut during its invasion of Mobile in August 1864), Fred Smith, William Johnson, Charles Wallace, S.F. Wilson, Joseph Green, C. J. Campbell, W.C. Wilson, W. Haywood, Peter Weeks, James Coyle, George Cook, Andrew Dorgan, Edward Dorgan, Joseph Clemens and John R.B. McIntosh.<sup>74</sup> The Glide was sold to a Galveston pilot group during or before 1900. The Ida Lowe, built before the war and captured as a blockade-runner during it, was purchased from the U. S. District Admiralty Court at Key West by William A. Lowe, a local merchant, in September 1863. Lowe gave her the name she would bear for the next thirty-six years before selling her to a consortium of Mobile pilots led by C.J. Campbell in October 1866. At 35.55 tons, she was slightly larger than the Glide. The strenuous nature of her dual careers had taken their toll on this speedy schooner, for she was stripped down and completely rebuilt at Fish River in Baldwin County after only two years of service on the bar. Her restructuring was so thorough that she was thereafter documented as rebuilt to "new" in 1868.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 1028 issued at Philadelphia on 24 August 1865 to what appears to be the Cape Henlopen pilot association.

<sup>74</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Galveston on 11 June 1900 to Peter Brandt, John Ericson, O.S. Plummer, Richard Carey and J.C. Plummer, all of Sabine, Texas; Permanent Register No. 75 issued at Key West on 26 September 1863; Permanent Enrollment No. 111 issued at Mobile on 10 October 1866. Register dimensions, 60.5' length, 18.5' beam and 7.1' depth; Permanent Enrollment No. 7 issued at Mobile on 1 August 1881; and Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States . . . For the Year Ended June 30, 1907 (Washington: Government Printing Office), 1907.

The Upper Bar [formerly referred to as the Upper Dog River Bar] pilots sailed in the Prima Donna owned by A.W. Deering, John Carney, John A. Munds, David Russell and Henry Teaman.<sup>76</sup> Little is known of this small schooner other than she operated for a short time in 1867 at Corpus Christi as the Prima Donna of Mobile.<sup>77</sup>

The capriciousness of the weather was a constant bane to the pilots very existence. Storms could arise without warning, and a sudden squall in 1880 caused the stranding and break-up of one of the pilot boats. Only one other vessel was lost while under the control a Mobile Bar pilot during the Association's lengthy history. Grace Hargrove narrated the circumstances of the 1880 disaster.

The . . . wreck occurred around 1880, when Pilot Edward Dorgan boarded a Spanish brig bound for Mobile in ballast. When she neared Sand Island, which at that time extended for some distance south from the light house, the wind died and vessel drifted towards the sandy shore. The pilot dropped anchor, took in sail and waited for a wind. Suddenly, the calm was broken by a southwester, which struck with the fury of a summer squall, bringing mountainous seas which swept the brig, anchors and all into the breakers where the small vessel soon went to pieces. Captain Dorgan was injured, but floated out on a spar and finally made the shore to spend many eventful and useful years as a pilot on the Mobile Bar. No one was blamed for the wreck which was unavoidable.<sup>78</sup>

In 1887 the Ida Lowe was joined by the eighty foot Louise F. Harper, which replaced the Glide as Pilot No. 1 and, at 62.15 tons, she was double the size of her predecessor.<sup>79</sup> Constructed at the famous North Carolina shipbuilding center, Harker's Island, the Harper is said to have been named after the daughter of her builder.<sup>80</sup>

The minutes of the Harbor Master and the Boards of Port Wardens and Pilot Commissioners 1896-1914 are a perfect time-capsule of the day-to-day business operations of the pilots. Created by the Alabama legislature under a law entitled "An act to regulate Mobile Harbor" enacted on February 28, 1889, the Boards of Port Wardens and Pilot Commissioners shared the same members. Control of their actions was overseen by a separate Board of Electors composed of the Mayor of Mobile and the Presidents of the Board of Indemnities, the Mobile Chamber of

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<sup>76</sup> Loc. cit., Directory for 1866.

<sup>77</sup> Op. cit., Archives, License (for a vessel below 20 tons) No. 5 issued at Corpus Christi on 23 November 1867 to Edward Mercer and Benjamin Grant.

<sup>78</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> A matched pair of portraits depicting these two attractive, white-hulled schooners, painted by Mobile artist Renfrew D. Wilcox in 1899, are displayed at Oakleigh Museum. Provenance provided by Abby M. Gilman, Historic Properties Manager, Oakleigh Historic Complex, Mobile.

<sup>80</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, U.S. Coast Guard document number 140867. Register dimensions, 80.1' length, 22.5' breadth and 9.2' depth. And, included in the provenance cited in Note 72.

Commerce, the Board of Revenue and Road Commissioners and the Cotton Exchange.<sup>81</sup>

The declining, but still forceful, hereditary aspect of the bar pilots was exemplified by an 1897 entry in the Boards' minutes when retiring pilots Andrew Dorgan, Edward Dorgan, William Johnson and Josephus Clemmons were replaced by their sons--Eugene H. Dorgan, Edward Dorgan Jr., Curtis L. Johnson and Edward Clemmons.<sup>82</sup>

The Boards' minutes demonstrate a tendency to protect the pilots against outside allegations and charges, but to hold them strictly accountable for compliance with internal rules and regulations. Infractions falling into the latter category generally drew short unpaid suspensions from duty; although in an unusual case, Edward Dorgan Jr.'s piloting privilege was stripped from him.

The Dorgan family has furnished skilled Mobile bar navigators since the end of the War of 1812; but many good families have a black sheep and Captain Ed Dorgan's son proved to be theirs. Young Dorgan, who had been made pilot on August 2, 1897, was reported to the Boards as having ". . . stayed over his 24 hours and come down with out an excuse from you . . .," just seven months later by Captain T.A. Johnson, master of the Ida Lowe. The Boards gave the charge due consideration and then duly suspended the defendant for twenty days from March 1, 1898.<sup>83</sup> Hardly a year had passed, however, before Dorgan, ". . . [W]ho had absented himself from duty from May 1st to May 8th without leave, and, without offering any excuse for so doing. . .," was in hot water again. This time the Port Wardens and Pilot Commissioners suspended him from duty for sixty days at their meeting of May 5, 1899.<sup>84</sup> This penalty, the harshest meted out to date in the Boards' history, apparently did not impress Dorgan for on April 20, 1900 he was found guilty of ". . . [W]ilful neglect of duty. . .," and suspended without pay, this time for six months.<sup>85</sup> But the young bayman, enforced vacation notwithstanding, remained unimpressed. By October 17, 1900 he returned to work on the bar and,

He being charged by the Harbor Master with "Absence from duty Without leave, and Continued Neglect of his duties as a pilot." After full discussion of the question a Motion was Made & Seconded, and carried unanimously, that,"Pilot Edward Dorgan Jr. be Notified that his license as Bar & Bay pilot is hereby revoked, and, that he can no longer serve as such under the state laws."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Records of Harbor Master and Boards of Port Wardens and Pilot Commissioners Beginning March 15th 1896, in the possession of Jack Hargrove. This ledger contains the Board's minutes through 15 March 1914.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

To replace the oft-disciplined Dorgan, Dennis Alexander Smith, the senior apprentice, was "branched" as a pilot. A pilot was said to be "branched" when he was awarded his pilot's certificate and given the right to purchase part ownership in one of the pilot boats.<sup>87</sup> The appointment of the wiry and witty Smith was an excellent one. He looked every inch a "Jack Tar" and was a gifted natural musician whose accordion playing perked up many a boring night for the duty pilots bobbing at anchor on the bar.<sup>88</sup>

A typical but justifiable example of the Boards protecting a pilot against outside accusations occurred in the case of Captain Joseph H. Norville, when they met to consider charges made by the owners of the S.S. Bergen concerning her grounding while under his control. The accident was caused by a swiftly ebbing tide that had doubled the velocity of the downstream river current surging past the end of the wharf. The Bergen had loaded at the Elevator Dock and, as she entered the Mobile river with Norville at her conn, she was swept onto the shoal that lies southeast of the slip by the racing current. The Boards correctly held the pilot blameless in this undeniable case of *force majeure*.<sup>89</sup>

By far the ledger's most numerous entries deal with requests by the pilots for leaves of absence; but it also recounts that, in common with all seaports, Mobile had difficulty locating a suitable site for ships to discharge ballast prior to loading cargoes. Most of the present day harbor front of Pensacola, for example, is built on a foundation of shingle ballast unloaded by cargo ships through the history of that long-serving seaport.<sup>90</sup>

The traffic volume in the Port of Mobile entered a period of decline at the turn of the century, as shown by the refusal to a Pilot's Association request by the Board of Pilot Commissioners:

[T]o take into consideration the question of adding one more pilot to the number already on duty on the upper bar, the same to be taken from the lower bar pilots. After discussion the following motion was made by Commissioner [Dorgan] Ledyard and Seconded by Commissioner [George W.] Van Liew; "That in view of the large falling off in the number of Vessels arriving in port it is not considered necessary to increase the force of pilots on the upper bar;" the motion was put and carried unanimously.<sup>91</sup>

Sometime prior to 1896 the Lower Bar pilots merged with those of the Upper Bar and the operating procedure that had prevailed since the Civil War was modified. Pilot Boat No. 1, the Louise F. Harper, was now stationed off the Fairway Buoy, three and a third miles south of Sand

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<sup>87</sup> Loc. cit., Boards' minutes.

<sup>88</sup> Telephone interview, August 23, 1988, Douglas J. McColl.

<sup>89</sup> Op. cit., Boards' minutes, pp. 7-10.

<sup>90</sup> A broad sampling of the rocks used for maritime ballast can be seen at the Pensacola Historical Museum at 405 South Adams Street.

<sup>91</sup> Op. cit., Boards' minutes, p. 68.

Schooner Alabama  
HAER No. MA-64  
(Page 24)

Island Lighthouse, while No. 2, the Ida Lowe, rode at anchor near the bar off the mouth of the Dog River. Crews were chosen by seniority with the elder pilots showing a decided preference for duty at the upper bar location. Mobile Bay can be rough at times, but there was no comparison between the pounding the duty pilots received on the Harper out in the Gulf, and watches stood on board the Lowe in more tranquil waters.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Early in the new century tragedy struck both of the Mobile pilot's schooners. The Ida Lowe was wrecked in a gale on November 27, 1902, after thirty-six years of service on the Mobile bar, and was replaced as Pilot Boat No. 2 by the Moses H. Grinnell.<sup>92</sup>

Four years later, during the notorious hurricane of September 27, 1906 the Louise F. Harper was driven, twisting and several times nearly capsizing, six miles up the flats and into the edge of the trees at Heron Cove above Cedar Point.<sup>93</sup> Harry L. Hargrove, later President of the Association, who had been branched just three months earlier, was the junior pilot on board when the hurricane struck. He later described the terrifying events of that unforgettable night to his family.

The weather had been fine. The Louise F. Harper had been laying to an anchor on her station two miles S.E. of the Sea Buoy for one week until Monday [September 17]. The day comes in with over-cast sky and fresh N.E. breeze. At noon the barometer began to fall and she was gotten under way and the sea was making. We cruised on our station that day and night. Tuesday-heavy overcast day and increasing breeze and sea. Barometer falling and sea making and it became rough. At sun-down we bore up and proceeded in the Bay for harbor. Wednesday morning-under way at 4:00 A.M. proceeded to sea, weather looking bad. North East wind blowing at gale force and a nasty sea on Mobile Bar; beginning to break.

We managed to keep outside all day only boarding one ship, a Norwegian Fruit steamer. Fort Morgan 4:00 P.M., weather had gotten so bad we proceeded into the Bay. Barometer falling fast and dark and ugly at 4:00 P.M. We were bound up the Bay and decided to anchor east of Beacon eight which was considered a fine harbor any time for a Pilot Boat. We knew nothing up to that time of an approaching hurricane. The Harper was making great speed up the Bay with a reefed main and fore sail and fore staysail. She could fetch her anchorage nicely. Breeze East North East caused C.P. Smith to change the anchorage and order fore staysail down and let go the anchor, one quarter mile West of Beacon Six.

Sails were furled up snug and three boats lashed securely on her deck for the night. It was blowing a gale by this time. We had supper and played a game of pitch until 8:30 when we were surprised the weather was terrible, sea breaking all over and blowing so hard you could not go on deck. The Port anchor was let go at 9:00 P.M. It had gone from bad to worse and she parted Port chain and started dragging the wind West to South East,

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<sup>92</sup> Op. cit., Archives, surrender of Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Mobile on April 11, 1899.

<sup>93</sup> Loc. cit., Gilman.

going over shoals almost turning over at times and leaking badly.

We would get in her cock-pit and stay but the wind and sea would drive us out. We could not stay long. The cabin was the only place in which we could stay but when she would turn over on her side, we had to come out. We managed to hang on some how. Nearly lost a Porto Rican [sic] cabin boy several times but someone would always catch him.

At daylight we sighted trees and she made for them and fetched up against two large pine with three degrees Starboard list and staid [sic] there. The wind would hit those pine trees, take the limbs off then the body would fall. We took soundings and tide was falling, the wind had shifted to South West and we knew it was over. In one hour the tide fell six feet. We had a fire made, pumped four feet of water out of the cabin, had a good breakfast and made the fore and main throat halyard fast to some trees so she would not blow over and all went to sleep. By twelve o'clock [?] M. she was setting in dry land and the tide had fallen twelve feet. We staid aboard that night but next morning the water had fallen and we proceeded to find our way to Coden, sometimes walking on land and sometimes in water over our heads. We managed to find the railroad track and soon we got to Coden. A dozen drowned people had been put in the depot. Some were drowned in the second story of their homes.

A train was made up of one box car and engine and we were notified that any one wishing to ride to Mobile could do so at their own risk. C.P. Smith, H.L. Hargrove, H.R. Murray, G. Weeks and Rufus Barnett, our apprentice, caught this train for Mobile. We arrived in Mobile in about five hours, a distance of about thirty miles. We found everything in the city in bad shape. The next day in a chartered tug we left for our station in the Gulf to resume our duties. All Beacons and Buoys were gone and the light in Sand Island Light House was out for a few nights. All aids to navigation were gone. Capt. Gus Weeks did not return to work. In a few days we had #2 Pilot Boat, Moses H. Grunnell [sic], back on the station and business went on the same. The hurricane was over but not forgotten.<sup>94</sup>

Tragically, the sufferings experienced by the crew on board the Harper and other off-duty pilots elsewhere, were surpassed by the pilot families at Navy Cove. A contemporary newspaper photograph relates the story, under the heading "Mobile's Picture Album," with a caption reading:

Effects of the 1906 hurricane in this area are portrayed graphically in this picture, property of Norville Johnson of Mobile. Winds of 100 miles per hour created tidal waves which wiped out many communities near Mobile. Several hundred persons were killed and property damage was in the millions. Shown here is a section of Navy Cove on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. Homes of Mobile's famous bar pilots were located at this community

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<sup>94</sup> Boarding log of Captain Harry L. Hargrove in the possession of his son, Jack Hargrove. in the possession Jack Hargrove.

which, today, is nothing but sand and marshland.<sup>95</sup>

Retired pilot William Johnson was killed at Pilot Town and the women and children were forced from their flooded homes to face the wind-whipped, waterlogged elements which were obliterating their village. Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw in her previously mentioned letter to the War Department narrated how the Army came to the aid of the sufferers:

We desire to express our gratitude for the noble rescue of the members of our family during the terrible hurricane which recently visited the Gulf Coast.

Three of the daughters of my late brother Wm. T. Norville of Mobile and husband and six children of the eldest daughter were all saved by the soldiers at Fort Morgan.<sup>96</sup> They were at Navy Cove, the summer home of the pilots of Mobile, and fled for their lives at night during that of the storm; some of the members of that devoted little colony sought safety in vain, for the frightful gale and rush of waters swept them out to sea, some found refuge in trees, others to heigher [sic] ground. Among the last named were those of my brothers family, Mrs. T. Alexander Johnston, husband and six children - and her sisters Emily F. and Elizabeth D. Norville were under four oak trees in a space about as large as a room, huddled together for many long hours without food or water in that horrible tempest. The wind was blowing ninety miles an hour and the great black waters surging around them, in the early dawn the great water was flooding over the home they had left and no evidence of Navy Cove was seen, a little later after agonized suspense - lo' a boat was seen coming towards them and manned by U.S. Soldiers; they knew then their lives were saved.

O! We feel so grateful [sic] to the Commander of Fort Morgan and his men, these men had difficulty we know in reaching the people they saved, they took a portion of the family to the fort that evening, but on their return the gale had increased so in violence that Mr. Johnston, who is a pilot, thought it best to wait for awhile, and he told the soldiers to return to Fort Morgan if they desired, but their answer was, "We were ordered to report to you - if you said you could not leave here - we were to stay with you". How we bless the Commander for that order! Then they did the true hero's work by cheering the storm tossed one, they built and kept up a huge fire, which dried their clothing and warmed their chilled blood, and then talked cheerily until the wind subsided, when all were taken to the Fort, there food and clothing was provided.

All the brave ones who peril their lives are not recipients of Carnegie medals, of

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<sup>95</sup> Newspaper clipping in the possession of Lucille [Mallon] Connick, widow of pilot John Mallon, original source unidentifiable.

<sup>96</sup> This is the same William Thomas Norville who arrived in Mobile from Baltimore on board the Relief in 1843. He had passed away three years earlier, June 21, 1903, after a short illness during a homecoming visit to the Maryland city. Obituary in the possession of his great-grandson, Douglas J. McColl.

which these noble men are examples. We ask you to accept our deep appreciation of the service rendered us by the soldiers at Fort Morgan and their able Commander, and should be grateful if some note of this should be conveyed to them.<sup>97</sup>

The Lowe had been a total loss in the equinoctial gale two years earlier, but the storm-damaged Harper was later rescued from her forest lair, laid-up, repaired and then sold to the Bailey Iron Works of Mobile. They in turn passed her on to the E.E. Saunders Company of Pensacola to be employed in the red-snapper fishery. Years later, not even worth a trip to the breaker's yard, she suffered the ignominious fate of being abandoned - a sad demise for the once-sturdy fifty-one year old workhorse.<sup>98</sup>

The Harper was replaced in late 1906 by the veteran Atlantic coast pilot schooner Eben D. Jordan, a 68.81 ton vessel, named for the founder of the Jordan Marsh department stores. She was built by Ambrose A. Martin in East Boston during 1883 and, judging from her lines, she appears to have been a Dennison J. Lawlor design. First placed in service by the Boston Harbor Pilots, she was sold eight years later to a New York Harbor pilot group led by George Washington Beebe. In 1893 while on station offshore of Barnegat, New Jersey, the Jordan was run down by the steamship Saginaw, a calamity all-too-familiar to pilot boats and fishing schooners of that era. She survived the collision, was salvaged, placed back in service and later sold to the Brunswick, Georgia, pilots in 1898. The Mobile group acquired her in 1906 and she arrived at the port in December.<sup>99</sup>

Hereditary pilotage, already suffering from the new state laws controlling pilots' licenses, was dealt a serious blow in 1908 when a son was refused permission by the Boards to fill his fathers' position - even on a temporary basis:

[T]he Chair stated the object of the meeting to be the consideration of a request made to the Board to allow Jas. W. Allen, passed apprentice, to fill his father's position on the pilot boat, as pilot; until the recovery of his father from a severe illness, and return to duty.

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<sup>97</sup> See note 62.

<sup>98</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 36 issued at Mobile on June 6, 1904 and surrendered May 14, 1907. Permanent Enrollment No. 47 issued at Mobile on June 17, 1908. Permanent Enrollment No. P-10 issued at Pensacola on January 15, 1930 and surrendered June 8, 1938.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Permanent Enrollment No. 146 issued at Boston on January 11, 1883. Register dimensions, 73.2' length, 21.2' breadth and 9.8' depth. Ralph M. Eastman, Pilots and Pilot Boats of Boston Harbor (Boston: Second Bank-State Street Trust Company, 1956), p. 85. Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 109 issued at Boston June 24, 1890 and surrendered December 21, 1891. Loc. cit., Eastman. Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 281 issued New York City on June 4, 1896 and Permanent Enrollment No. 8 issued at Brunswick, Georgia, September 5, 1898. Permanent Enrollment No. 32 issued at Brunswick, Georgia, June 27, 1904 and Permanent Enrollment No. 22 issued at Mobile on December 13, 1906.

After a full discussion of the question, the board decided that under the law the request could not be granted.<sup>100</sup>

The underlining is original - things had changed since 1897!

The next year, 1909, Moses H. Grinnell, sailing as Pilot Boat No. 2 on the upper bar, had an altercation with the tug boat Iola and its string of barges in the narrow ship channel. The damage sustained by the schooner required her to come up to the city for repairs; but after only six days she resumed her duties off the Dog River.<sup>101</sup>

After only five years of service, the Eben D. Jordan, which had endured the rigors of the Boston, New York and Brunswick pilot services, and had survived her first ramming off Sandy Hook, had the misfortune to be run down again, this time by the fruit steamer Agnello. The Jordan was under sail about a mile and a half west of the Fairway Buoy in clear weather when the accident took place. Lady Luck, however, continued to smile on this plucky old-timer and once again she was salvaged.<sup>102</sup> On April 8, 1912 the Eben D. Jordan went to Havana and was "sold foreign" to begin a new career under the Cuban flag.<sup>103</sup>

Despite the losses of the Lowe, Harper and Jordan and given the usually short lifespan of pilot boats elsewhere, the Mobile pilots had excellent experience with the longevity of their vessels. The noted American Maritime authority, Howard I. Chapelle, described the typically brief careers experienced by other pilot boats:

These vessels [pilot schooners] were usually without decoration or other frills, but they were all well built and well finished. They were coppered and copper fastened [in the mid 19th-century]; and some of them had long lives, 15 to 20 years in the pilot service. But generally the mortality rate was high; between 1838 and 1860 fifteen New York boats were lost; and in 1888 alone, eight New York pilot boats were sunk. A single hurricane gale might account for two or three boats, despite their seaworthiness.<sup>104</sup>

To replace the lost Jordan the Bar Pilots decided to have one of the highly-regarded Gloucester-type schooners designed for their service and chose the noted New England naval architect, Thomas F. McManus, to lay her out. McManus was one of the leading lights in his field; in fact, he was unquestionably the foremost designer of fishing schooners after the turn of the 20th-

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<sup>100</sup> Op. cit., Boards' minutes, p. 115.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>102</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 6.

<sup>103</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Register No. 17 issued at Mobile December 28, 1911. Minutes.

<sup>104</sup> Howard I. Chapelle, The Search For Speed Under Sail (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), p. 394.

century. His belief that the bowsprit and its rigging were the causes of many of the crew fatalities suffered by schoonermen led to the creation of his highly successful knockabout design. He eliminated this spar, know to fishermen as the 'widow-maker', by rigging the forestay to an extended bow instead of a bowsprit. The knockabouts achieved fame as safe sailing ships and gave their crewmen commodious forecastle accommodations. The pilots' choice of McManus was further motivated by the pilot schooner America of 1897, built by John Bishop at Gloucester, Massachusetts which he had drafted for the Boston, Massachusetts pilot association, and the Henry P. Williams of 1912, built by the Richard T. Green Company of Chelsea, which he had drafted for the Charleston, South Carolina, pilot association.<sup>105</sup>

Alabama, the first schooner to bear that name since the Union Navy captured the pilots' blockade-runner in the Civil War was, at 120 tons, considerably larger than any pilot vessel previous owned at Mobile.<sup>106</sup> She had been built by the James & Tarr Shipyard of Essex, Massachusetts and launched without incident on December 5, 1911. As was the custom, she was afterwards towed to Gloucester to be rigged at the marinc chandlery firm of E.L. Rowe and Son, ". . . [W]ho take the schooner from the builder's hands and fit her with sails, rigging, cooking utensils, nautical instruments, and, in fact, everything ready to go to sea. . ."<sup>107</sup> She was admeasured by A.N. McKenzie for her documentation papers while lying in the famous Cape Ann fishing harbor.<sup>108</sup>

Captain J. T. Newbury of Mobile was hired by the Association to bring the Alabama to her home port. A succinct notation in the Boards' ledger on February 27, 1912 confirmed that the big new schooner had arrived and taken up her station, ". . . Pilot Boat Alabama went on duty today on lower bar. . ."<sup>109</sup> The Essex-built vessel had become Mobile's Pilot Boat No. 1.

Through the previous decade harbor traffic had continued to decline and four months after Alabama's arrival, the pilots' organization petitioned the Boards with an extraordinary request to remain afloat financially:

July 13 1912 Jos. H. Norville was granted permission to bring Pilot Boat Alabama to Mobile & get her ready for a fishing trip. Arrived up July 16 at night & went in Dock 17th.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> For more information on Thomas F. McManus see An Irish Immigration Success Story: Thomas McManus (1856-1938) by W.M.P. Dunne, to be published in late 1991 or early 1992 by the Mystic Seaport Press, Mystic, Connecticut.

<sup>106</sup> Master Carpenter's Certificate of January 1, 1912. Register dimensions, 94.4' length, 24.7' breadth and 12.0' depth.

<sup>107</sup> "The Knockabout Fisherman," Marine Engineering (June 1902), p. 300.

<sup>108</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Temporary Enrollment No. 24 issued at Gloucester on January 19, 1912.

<sup>109</sup> Op. cit., Boards' minutes, p. 136.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 139. Underline added.

The ledger is silent concerning Alabama's catch, there were no further entries until the stark notation, ". . . Pilot Boat Alabama went back on station Aug. 5/1912. . . "<sup>111</sup> It is noteworthy that the port traffic generally slackened in the summer months and on rare occasions both pilot boats had been decommissioned during the dog days.

To relieve the Alabama, the Moses H. Grinnell was shifted down the bay to the Ship Channel entrance. Arriving and departing vessels were temporarily guided over both bars by the same pilot, a foreshadowing of future trends. Later in 1912 the Association perceived that the Grinnell was approaching the end of its service life and, on July 4, the Association obtained a leave-of-absence from the Pilot Commissioners for Captain T.A. Johnson and sent him to Gloucester, to examine and purchase the yacht Wayfarer, a 71 ton schooner that had been built at Port Jefferson, N.Y. in 1894. Presumably he was satisfied with this eighteen year old speedster, for he completed the purchase from Svenning Guttormson.<sup>112</sup> Afterwards he navigated her from Cape Ann to Norfolk, before returning home overland. When he reached Mobile he surrendered Wayfarer's Enrollment. Captain Joseph H Norville was dispatched by the Association on August 16th to collect the new pilot boat at the Virginia port and sail her home around the Florida peninsula. He arrived off Sand Island in early September and on the 18th Wayfarer came up to the city for commissioning. The ex-New York yacht became Pilot Boat No. 2 on September 26th.<sup>113</sup> She was to take the place of the Moses H. Grinnell, which had been retired the previous day, although her respite would turn out to be a short one.

The following evening, the Alabama came up to the city for a month of maintenance work before returning to her anchorage near the Fairway Buoy. Upon her arrival there, Moses H. Grinnell, the briefly-decommissioned schooner that had been put back in service to substitute for Alabama, moved up to the Dog River Bar and relieved the Wayfarer, so that she too could be repaired.

The former yacht did not return to her station until December 7th and even then the work proved ineffectual, as three weeks later she came back up to the city in badly leaking condition.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>112</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 198, issued at New York City on March 28, 1894 to George E. Chisolm. Register dimensions 76.5' length, 21.0' breadth and 9.1' depth; and Archives, Temporary Enrollment No. 2 issued at Gloucester on August 3, 1912. Sale: Svenning Guttormson to John A. Dorgan, William C. Dorgan, Sidney Dorgan, Thomas L. Cook, John Cook, Mary A. Johnson, Curtis L. Johnson, John Johnson, David Coster, Harry Hargrove, Harry Murray, Charles Ladnier, Donald MacKay, Katie Lee Allen, George Godbold, Joseph H. Norville, Dennis A. Smith, Peter Smith, Edward Smith, B.F. Midgett, William Wilson and Harry Wilson. (Each 1/22 share)

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 141, and Op. cit., Archives, permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on September 27, 1912. Home port change.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

Her relatively light construction was apparently not up to the rigors of the pilot boat service. The Grinnell, whose retirement was anything but restful, went down the bay to take over Wayfarer's station once again.

The incessant pounding the pilot boats were subjected to while lying at anchor obviously created continual maintenance problems, especially for the No. 1 pilot boat lying offshore in the Gulf. During April 1913 Alabama was at the city wharves for two weeks undergoing repairs and being painted. She was followed at the end of May by the Wayfarer, also in for upkeep. Two months later the Alabama needed further work and had to be dry-docked. In September Wayfarer was back, yet again, for repairs, this time for three weeks.<sup>115</sup> A November entry in the Boards' minutes proved that, far from being decommissioned, the Grinnell was very much in active service:

The following certificate was filed with this office. We the undersigned Masters of the Pilot Boats "Moses H. Grinnell" "Wayfarer" & "Alabama" do hereby certify that John A. Norville has served his apprenticeship on the Mobile Bar, in Pilot service that is now required by law.

Given under our hand this 30th day of November 1913

Signed, D.W. MacKay - Master, "Moses H. Grinnell"

Signed, E.A. Smith - Master, "Alabama"

Signed, B.F. Midgett - Master, "Wayfarer"

The above is a true copy, /s/Thos. P. Norville, Chairman.<sup>116</sup>

Like most passed apprentices, Norville would have to wait more than ten years to be branched; but fate later proved unkind to this fine young man.

The most hazardous day-in and day-out task faced by these hardy seamen was the transfer back and forth from the pilot boat to an inbound or outbound ship back to the pilot boat in sea conditions ranging from placid calm to storm-tossed breakers. A small double-oared yawl-boat, manned by pilots or apprentices was the transfer vehicle. In preparing to board an inbound merchantman in typically rough seas, the pilot first had to jump from the heaving schooner into the bobbing yawl-boat. Then he was pulled across the intervening seaway to the waiting vessel. To get alongside the arrival as safely as possible, the boat approached from the lee side, where a Jacob's Ladder was dropped overboard for the pilot's boarding "convenience".<sup>117</sup> Once he grasped the ladder ropes firmly in his hands, he faced a climb (or descent) of 30, 40, or even 50, feet up the side of a ship that is pitching and rolling heavily. This dangerous descent led to the death of pilot John A. Norville in a northwesterly gale.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 143-145.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>117</sup> A rope ladder with wooden rungs that become treacherously slippery when wet, i.e., their normal state.

On the night of March 27, 1946, Norville was killed when he fell from the slippery Jacob's ladder into the sea between the ship he had just piloted out of the bay and the tender waiting to take him off to the pilot boat. His remains were never found.<sup>118</sup>

Reaching the conclusion that their schooners were rapidly deteriorating, the Bar Pilots' Association sold the Moses H. Grinnell in 1914, the Wayfarer in 1920, and decided to sell the twelve year old Alabama in 1924.<sup>119</sup> It is probable that the schooner's comparatively short service life was due to her framework of New England red and white oak timbers.<sup>120</sup> These species were highly susceptible to dry rot, a failing that would have been accelerated by the catalyst of warm southern waters. Northern oaks also have the unusual characteristic of rotting from the heart out to the skin rather than the reverse and, unfortunately, the heart wood was generally selected for the deadflat frames, if not the entire skeleton. Lewis H. Story, the notable Essex loftsman and shipbuilder, who had encyclopedic knowledge of fishing schooner construction, confirmed this practice,

[T]hese frames are made first and fastened to the keel, made generally of the heart of white oak, sap part cut away . . . All the vessels built at Essex for Galveston, Mobile and the West Indian ports, etc. all specify oak for frames, planking etc. Never has a round bilge vessel [been] built at Essex with hard pine for the frames, but the[re] has been scows, etc. where everything is straight.<sup>121</sup>

The Alabama was sold locally in October 1927 to Felix Verzone, but two months afterwards she suffered an explosion and fire while lying in the port of Miami, Florida. At first she was considered a total loss, but wooden schooners are hard to destroy. Verzone had her rebuilt and two years later she was "sold foreign" to a Caribbean shipping company and went into British registry.<sup>122</sup>

Although the Association might not have been pleased with Alabama's longevity, they were

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<sup>118</sup> Telephone interview, August 23, 1988 with Douglas McColl, the nephew of Captain John A. Norville.

<sup>119</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 28 issued at Mobile on March 24, 1920. Change of trade and owners.

<sup>120</sup> ". . . In America the principal kind of wood in wooden ships is, and always has been, oak, and oak is among the heaviest of woods. . . ." Dana Story, Frame Up. The Story of the People and Shipyards of Essex Massachusetts (Gloucester, Mass.: Ten Pound Island Book Company, 1986, first published Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing Company, Inc. 1964), p. 16.

<sup>121</sup> Erik A.R. Ronnberg, Jr., "Letters of Lewis H. Story to John M. Minuse 1932-1947," Nautical Research Journal (March 1983), 17, Story to Minus, 5-9 January 1940.

<sup>122</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Permanent Enrollment No. 10 issued at Mobile on 28 October 1927, this was document surrendered at Mobile on January 28, 1928 and stamped "LOST". Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on January 14, 1929 and surrendered there on March 31, 1930 stamped "SOLD ALIEN".

obviously happy with her performance, for they again chose Thomas F. McManus to design her replacement. The new pilot boat was laid down in 1925, delivered to the pilots in 1926, and the Alabamian went into service in July.

During 1927 the multi-million dollar State Docks complex was completed on the north side of the city along the west bank of the Mobile River. The facility was operated by the newly-created State Docks Commission under the chairmanship of a native of Gadsden, Alabama, who had a world-wide engineering reputation--General William Luther Sibert. An 1884 engineering graduate of West Point, Silbert, among his diverse achievements, was famed for his pioneering railroad construction in the Philippines and for building the Atlantic Division of the Panama Canal.<sup>123</sup>

The creation of the new harbor facility proved both beneficial and detrimental to the pilots. On the positive side, the harbor traffic increased, but this was offset by an act of the state legislature which put the Mobile Bar Pilots' Association under the control of the State Docks Commission beginning in April 1927. The net effect of this move was to strip the pilots of their fees and place them on a fixed salary of \$320 per month, which effectively negated the value of the increased traffic to the pilots' income--a poor payment for a group of men who had loyally served the port through the years that it had been in decline.<sup>124</sup>

Led by Captain Harry L. Hargrove, who took up residence in Montgomery, the Association lobbied the legislature for over four years before finally achieving success and re-establishing their independence in March 1931, when the new "Pilots Bill" was signed into law by Governor Miller. As a reward for his services, Hargrove was made President of the newly-independent group.

The exigencies of the profession continued to dissipate the pilots' ranks. In another weather-related fatality, Captain Johnnie Johnson, the son of William Johnson (the retired pilot who had lost his life at Navy Cove in the 1906 hurricane), was killed on May 20, 1928 when the pilot launch George N. Godbold, (named after an early member of the Association whose namesake descendent was a pilot at this time) crashed into the engineer's wharf at Fort Morgan during a gale.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Mobile Public library Oral History, Tape No. 36, interview of John L. Cummings, Jack Hargrove's father-in-law, by Chris McFadden, and Joseph G.E. Hopkins, Managing Editor, Concise Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 956.

<sup>124</sup> Op. cit., Archives, U.S. Treasury Department, Abstract of Title, p. 1, Bill of Sale valuing Alabamian at \$38,200.00 and transferring ownership from the Mobile Bar Pilots' Association to "The State of Alabama represented by the State Docks Commission," as of 3:30 p.m., 21 April 1927.

<sup>125</sup> Op. cit., Hargrove, p. 3.

THE MOBILE PILOT BOAT ALABAMA, EX-ALABAMIAN, 1925-1988

Two years prior to passing into the control of the State Docks Commission, the Association had again, as mentioned previously, turned to McManus to lay out the new vessel for the service. In the Alabamian, Mobile's last sailing pilot boat, the Bostonian designed the state-of-the-art of a commercial schooner for the pilots: a twin auxiliary-powered, gaff-rigged knockabout to be constructed from long-lasting southern shipbuilding timbers.

This new schooner was considerably smaller than her predecessor with register dimensions of 81.4' length, 21.6' beam and 9.7' depth.<sup>126</sup> At 70.68 tons she was less than 60% of the Alabama's size.<sup>127</sup>

McManus called for her stem and sternpost to be hewn from live oak. She was to have double-swan 12" juniper frames on 24" centers. He specified yellow pine for her planking, ceiling, shelves, clamps, decking and deck beams, to be fastened by 1-1/8" treenails [presumably locust]. He further required that all butts and hood-ends below the waterline should be fastened with 6" x 5/8" copper spikes and those above by 6" x 1/2" galvanized steel spikes.<sup>128</sup> She was to be powered by twin, 80 b.h.p. light oil (gasoline) engines built by the Lathrop Company of Mystic, Connecticut.

To produce this naval architectural masterpiece, the pilots chose a Florida firm, the Pensacola Shipbuilding Company, located on Bayou Chico off Escambia Bay. Doubtless this large shipyard's experience with enduring wood species such as live oak and juniper, was a significant factor in their choice, along with the company's proximity to Mobile. Alabamian's keel was laid in July 1925.

In addition to her smaller size and upgraded quality of building materials, a further dissimilarity between Alabamian and the Massachusetts-built Alabama was a significant reduction to her stern counter. McManus had long favored extended fore and aft overhangs. In his earlier designs they were quite overstated. Although handsome in appearance, they magnified the effect of wave action on the hull and the pilots had learned from tiresome experience that Alabama's long counter had made her a victim of the capricious waves.<sup>129</sup> The water conditions peculiar to the

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<sup>126</sup> During the summer of 1986 a team under the field leadership of H.A.E.R. Staff Architect Richard K. Anderson, Jr., measured Alabama at her present location in Vineyard Haven, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. At that time her on-deck length was recorded as 87' 9-3/4".

<sup>127</sup> Op. cit., Archives, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Application for Official Number dated at Mobile 15 December 1926.

<sup>128</sup> A.L.S., Robert S. Douglas, current (1988) owner of Alabama, to Richard K. Anderson, Jr., Staff Architect, HABS/HAER, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., dated 7 May 1987.

<sup>129</sup> Cf., e.g., the James S. Steele and the Flora S. Nickerson.

mouth of Mobile Bay (which had caused the bar to form in the first place) feature an intrinsic conflict between the ordinarily outgoing current and the prevailing onshore wind, which ensures a confused sea-state that can make riding at anchor considerably less than comfortable.

Captain Joseph H. Norville of the Association regularly travelled the seventy miles (in 1925) from Mobile to Pensacola to monitor Alabamian's construction. Richard V. Cowley, the resident naval architect for the shipbuilding firm, who was also the assistant works manager, was her day to day superintendent.<sup>130</sup> Cowley's overseeing capacity leads to the possibility that, as a naval architect himself, he would have insisted that she be built precisely to plan. If this was the case, then more than any of McManus's nearly five hundred designs, Alabamian would have come to completion as he had laid her out on paper. The majority of McManus's creations were built in small New England yards where rule-of-thumb was the rule-of-the-day in ship construction. These local builders tended to interpret rather than to faithfully follow the naval architect's drawings; a practice that sometimes began on the mould loft floor.

Alabamian was launched on June 20, 1926 and forthwith commenced masting, rigging and fitting out. Upon delivery to the bar pilots her total cost amounted to \$25,000.00.<sup>131</sup> She was equipped with two yawl-boats for tenders that were swayed in and outboard from steel davits mounted on her weatherdeck. They were double-oared, but were replaced after World War II by a pair of twenty-five foot motor launches. One of these later tenders was sunk at an unknown time and another, the Bud, was lost in the Gulf of Mexico sometime during 1945.

Designed from scratch as a pilot boat, Alabamian's lines rather more resembled a schooner yacht than that typical knockabout type, the Grand Banks fisherman. One of McManus's last designs, she was to serve the Mobile Bar Pilots Association faithfully for the next forty years. Almost miraculously sixty-two years after her launching, she remains afloat (1988) at Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts. Considering the earlier quotation from Howard I. Chapelle's treatise on pilot boat longevity, Alabamian has had a remarkably long career.

The schooner had her first marine band radio installed in June 1934 and received her first call-letters, WA2098. On July 10, 1935, Alabamian's name was officially changed to Alabama.<sup>132</sup> The Abstract of Title indicates that her original engines were removed at this time and she was re-powered with Gray Marine HNS oil (diesel) engines developing 140 b.h.p. each.<sup>133</sup> When the new diesels were installed they were located considerably forward of the former gasoline engine beds in her bilges. The plugs for the original shaft gland locations are still evident when she is

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<sup>130</sup> There is no evidence that McManus ever went to Pensacola.

<sup>131</sup> Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida, Pensacola, Schedule of Work Completed, Pensacola Shipbuilding Company, June 1918-June 1930.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 6. and Loc. cit., Archives.

<sup>133</sup> Loc. cit., Application, indicates her official number was 226177, her signal letters were MGJQ and that she was normally manned by one officer and five men when underway. At this time Alabamian was not equipped with a radio transmitter.

hailed.

Several months before the United States entered World War II the Alabama's tender, a fifty footer named Annie Ruth was lost in a blaze on April 18, 1941, but her people were saved by the crew of the pilot schooner.

Sometime in the mid-1940's the length of Alabama's counter was increased by three feet. To their dismay the pilots had learned that, although reducing her pitching motion, the shortened overhang caused the seas to break against her transom, thereby exposing her to perpetual pounding.

In February 1942 Alabama was commissioned in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Fleet as CGR9031 and served until November 1945.<sup>134</sup> Later that year the Coast Guard decided that the operational assignments of the reserve fleet vessels required their officers to be commissioned into the service and, on January 4, 1943 Harry L. Hargrove was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in the U.S.C.G. Temporary Reserve. Ten days later, as the chief executive of the Pilots Association, he was promoted to Commander and, on that same date, the rest of the Mobile pilots were commissioned with the rank of Lieutenant Commander, U.S.C.G.T.R. Nearly three years later, on November 15, 1945 fifteen of the pilots were promoted to Commander, two weeks before they were returned to civilian status.

Toward the end of her service period during World War II Alabama rescued a U.S. Naval Aviator whose plane had crashed offshore of Mobile after taking off from the Pensacola Naval Air Station. Her wartime duties and responsibilities were identical to her peacetime pursuits. An added task she performed during the peak of the German submarine threat to Allied shipping in the Gulf was to guide convoys into Mobile Bay where they could lay overnight in safety before proceeding once more into the submarine-infested Gulf. In a statement at the decommissioning ceremonies ex-commander, now once again president, Harry L. Hargrove said:

Our pilots have magnificently performed their arduous duties and have shared substantially in achieving victory. They have done their full share in that enormous nationwide job, handling, during 1944, 120,000 assignments to bring our ships safely into dock and guide them out to sea again, under the most adverse conditions. During the height of the submarine menace in 1942 and 1943, the channel lights were dimmed and other wartime precautions--common to all ports--were observed in Mobile. This meant a double load of risk and responsibility for our pilots.

Our harbor, with its narrow channel, is becoming more crowded with returning ships each day. Our great and steadily increasing problem is what to do with the ships. We are often at a loss to find docking space for the big vessels that continue to arrive at this port since the end of the war, at a rapid rate.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Academy Library, New London, Conn., Record of Vessel Movements.

<sup>135</sup> Hargrove, p. 7.

During her career a pilothouse had been built on her weather deck to offer the duty helmsman a modicum of protection from the seas breaking over her short bulwarks. This extension of her hull also allowed the re-stationing of her mainsail sheeting locations. The final change the pilots made to her occurred on February 1, 1950 when her masts, with their standing and running rigging, were removed to be replaced by light steel spars suitable only for carrying lights and antennae.

In a postwar rescue effort, Alabama saved the crew of a fishing smack owned by the Star Fish & Oyster Company of Mobile after the vessel had run aground on Sand Island and was rapidly breaking up in the surf. The crew of eight or nine men was desperately clinging to the disintegrating hull of their smack when the pilot schooner hove to nearby and launched one of its yawl-boats into the surging surf and picked up the waterlogged survivors.<sup>136</sup>

On February 19, 1959 the Association incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama and became "The Pilots Service Corporation."

In 1966 the Alabama was sold to Captain Robert S. Douglas of Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts, bringing a close to the era of commercial sailing vessels on Mobile Bay. Under Douglas's ownership the schooner has undergone several modifications. The pilothouse and steel masts were removed, her engines, generators, deck and the stockless, self-stowing anchors were all replaced. As of 1988 her sailing rig has not been restored, although the extension to her counter has been removed since H.A.E.R. produced her measured drawings in 1986. The profile that appears on Sheet #1 of the H.A.E.R. measured drawings is based on photographs taken early in her career, while the remaining drawings depict her in 1986 condition.

When Mr. Douglas purchased the Alabama from the pilots he found a plaque installed on her cabin bulkhead embossed with crossed anchors and the U.S. Coast Guard seal with the following words beneath them:

In recognition of the valuable  
service performed by the  
ALABAMA  
in the  
United States Coast Guard  
During World War II<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Mobile Press-Register, September 7, 1972.

<sup>137</sup> A.L.S., Douglas.

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Schooner Alabama  
HAER No. MA-64  
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Glossary:

Ballast - Any material used to replace the weight of a cargo in a vessel travelling without one. A broad sampling of the rocks used for maritime ballast can be seen at the Pensacola Historical Museum at 405 South Adams Street.

Branched - a pilot was said to be 'branched' when he was awarded his pilot's certificate and given the right to purchase part ownership in one of the pilot boats.

Jacob's ladder - a rope ladder with wooden rungs that become treacherously slippery when wet, *i.e.*, its normal state.

*Teredo Navalis* - a species of marine mollusk that bores into the underwater sections of unprotected wooden vessels, especially in warm waters, and causes great damage.

Traversier - a small merchantman of 40 to 50 tons burthen used by the French at Mobile for commercial intercourse with Pensacola, Vera Cruz, Havana and Cap-Français.

APPENDIX

Vessel Documentation History - Mobile Pilot Boats 1843-1966  
A partial compilation through February 18, 1989

Clara

U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 41, Records of the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Consolidated Enrollment and Licenses,<sup>1</sup> Temporary Register No. 81 issued at Baltimore showing Andrew Dorgan as her sole owner. Register dimensions 75'2" length, 19'3" breadth, 7'4" depth, and 94 & 46/95ths tons.

Permanent Enrollment #50 issued at Mobile on October 18, 1841.

Permanent Enrollment #45 issued at Mobile on December 7, 1852 showing ownership of Andrew Dorgan 14/44, J. Clemmons 5/44, George Godbold 3/44, Fred Smith 3/44, Daniel O. Connell 3/44, James Coyle 2/44, Charles Wallace 2/44, James W. Allen 2/44, John R.B. McIntosh 2/44, R. Moore 2/44, John V. Grivet 2/44, William Norville 2/44, William Johnson 2/44, John Bliss 1/44 and Samuel Wilson 1/44.

Temporary Register No. 13 issued at Key West on March 8, 1853 showing ownership of John Ashbey (master mariner), James Coyle, and Andrew Dorgan sharing 14/44, J. Clemmons 5/44, George Godbold 3/44, Fred Smith 3/44, Daniel O. Connell 3/44, Charles Wallace 2/44, James W. Allen 2/44, John Crossin 2/44, R. Moore 2/44, John V. Grivet 2/44, William Norville 2/44, William Johnson 2/44, John Bliss 1/44 and Samuel Wilson 1/44.

Permanent Enrollment No. 34 issued at Mobile on December 15, 1853 shows the same ownership.

Permanent Enrollment No. 19 issued at Mobile on May 7, 1856 showing ownership of James Coyle 6 1/2/22, Andrew Dorgan 2 1/2/22, J. Clemmons 2 1/2/22, Derius Cashion 2/22, George Godbold 1 1/2/22, J.T. & W.G. Allen 1/22, A.G. McKay 1/22, D.O. Connell 1/22, R. Moore 1/22, John V. Grivet 1/22, Chamberlain & Co. 1/22, and John Herlock 1/22.

Permanent Enrollment No. 27 issued at Mobile on October 13, 1858 showing ownership of James Coyle 10/44, Andrew Dorgan 5/44, James Clemmons 4/44, John R. Crossin 4/44, William Norville 4/44, William G. McKay 3/44, estate of Daniel O. Connell 3/44, John V. Grivet 2/44, and James Kelly 2/44. This is the last document for the Clara in Records Group 41.

Robert Bruce

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S.C.G vessel ownership documentation terms: Register and enrollment numbers were serialized annually by the fiscal year by the Collector at the issuing port. A "register" number was assigned when an American merchant vessel was "going foreign", i.e., calling at an intervening foreign port between sailing from an American port and arriving at an American port. A vessel intended solely for the coasting trade received an "enrollment" rather than a "register" number.

Washington

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

Trimmer

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

Liberty

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

Richard St. John

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

P.B. Francis

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

Marshall Tookey

No documents located as of February 17, 1989.

Relief

Temporary Register #64 issued at Baltimore on September 6, 1843. Showing ownership of John Joiner, Henry Hardy, Josephus Clements and Peter Constant Lanno, all of Mobile. Relief was a schooner with one deck, two masts, a square stern, no galleries, and a billet head. Register dimensions 72'0" length, 18'5" breadth, 6'6" depth, and 76 & 81/95ths tons.

Permanent Enrollment #4 issued at Mobile on October 6, 1843. Same owners, change of port.

Permanent Enrollment #81 issued at Mobile on December 2, 1844. Change of owners: Henry Hardy, Josephus Clemmons and Peter Constant Lanno (John Joiner is removed).

Permanent Enrollment #36 issued at Mobile on September 20, 1851. Owner change but names not listed on document.

Permanent Enrollment #42 issued at Mobile on December 7, 1852 showing ownership of James Coyle and Wm. Dorgan sharing 14/44, J. Clemmons 5/44, George Godbold 3/44, Charles Wallace 2/44, James W. Allen 2/44, Fredk. Smith 3/44, Daniel O. Connell 3/44, John Crossin 3/44, R. Moore 2/44, John V. Grivet 2/44, Wm. Norville 2/44, John Bliss 1/44, Wm. Johnson 2/44, and Saml. Wilson 1/44.

Temporary Enrollment #46 issued at Galveston on November 10, 1856 indicating Relief was operating at Galveston but retained Mobile as her home port.

Permanent Enrollment #33 issued at Mobile on September 18, 1857 showing ownership of C.J. Campbell 3/8, R. Sheridan 3/8 and Henry Seaman 1/4, all of Mobile.

Permanent Enrollment #30 issued at Mobile on October 23, 1858 showing ownership of C.J. Campbell 5/8 and Rideau Sheridan 3/8. No further documents found.

Alabama

Temporary Register No. 122 issued at Baltimore on September 9, 1858 showing ownership of William T. Norville, Charles Wallace, Frederick Smith and William Johnson all 1/4. She was a schooner with one deck, two masts and a square stern. Register dimensions 71'4" length, 19'0" breadth, 6'6" depth, and 78 & no/95ths tons.

Enrollment No. 26 issued at Mobile on October 2, 1858 to the same owners was her last document.

Official Union records describe the capture of a Confederate schooner named the Alabama by the Union steamer Susquehanna on 18 April 1863,<sup>2</sup> but do not refer to it as a pilot boat; however, Marcus W. Price, writing in The American Neptune,<sup>3</sup> prepared a list of captured blockade runners for the period 1861-1865. In his Table III the author clearly identifies this capture as the Pilot Schooner Alabama, which refutes the 20th-century newspaper reports that she was scuttled by the pilots back in 1861.<sup>4</sup> Alabama had cleared Mobile for Havana, Cuba, on 24 March 1863 and escaped through the Union blockading fleet on the same night. After arriving safely in the Cuban capital, her hold was loaded with a cargo ". . . in part of wine (claret), brandy (in casks), coffee, cheese, sweet oil, soap, soda, dry goods, nails, cigars, etc. . . ."<sup>5</sup> As usual in those ill-conceived hostilities, luxury goods took precedence over war materials.

The captured schooner was placed in the hands of a prize-crew and sent into Key West for adjudication where she was libelled on 28 April 1863.<sup>6</sup> Unusually, she was not sold until 17 March 1864 when she realized \$9,687.38.<sup>7</sup> In the interim she had been taken into the Union Navy and assigned as a tender to the U.S. Ordnance Ship Dale.<sup>8</sup>

Florida

Temporary Register No. 95 issued at Baltimore on October 9, 1860 showing ownership of Charles Wallace, William Norville, Fred Smith and William Johnson, all 1/4. Register dimensions 75'6" length, 19'9" breadth, 7'2" depth, and 94 & 88/95ths tons. She had a figurehead and a square stern.

Permanent Enrollment No. 38 issued at Mobile on November 1, 1860 with the same owners. This was her last document. She probably became a blockade runner and may have been a near-sistership to Baltic.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles W. Stewart, ed., Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), I:20:144-145.

<sup>3</sup> Marcus W. Price, "Ships That Tested the Blockade of the Gulf Ports, 1861-1865," Part III, The American Neptune (1952) 2:154-162.

<sup>4</sup> Mobile, Alabama, Mobile Press-Register, 12 September 1965, D:1.

<sup>5</sup> O.R.U.C.N.W.R., I:20:144-145.

<sup>6</sup> Documents relative to the Alabama's capture, condemnation and sale in U.S. National Archives, Atlanta, Georgia, Records Group 21, Admiralty Docket, 1861-67, U.S.D.C., S. Dist. of Fla., Key West 53A418 #32:143, 55:266, and 71:147.

<sup>7</sup> Admiral David Dixon Porter, U.S.N., The Naval History of the Civil War (Secaucus, New Jersey: Castle reprint edition, 1984), 833.

<sup>8</sup> O.R.U.C.N.W.R., I:17:435, letter of Acting Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, written at Key West, May 6, 1863.

Baltic

Temporary enrollment No. 101 issued at Baltimore on October 24, 1860 showing her to have 1 deck, 2 masts, eagle head and a square stern. Register dimensions 72'0" length, 19'6" breadth, 7'6" depth, and 92 & 85/95ths tons. James Coyle was her sole owner.

Permanent enrollment No. 40 issued at Mobile on November 19, 1860 with the same owner. This was her last document. Probably became a blockade runner. May have been a near-sistership to Florida.

Joe Flanner

Directory for the City of Mobile, 1859 (Mobile: Farrow & Dennett, 1859) lists the Joe Flanner owned by Andrew Dorgan, Edward Dorgan, Josephus Clemens and John R.B. McIntosh.

Only document located was in Records Group 21, Order Book 1861-63, U.S.D.C., S. Dist, Florida, Key West, 53A418 #31. Original page number 300, docket no. 157, condemnation proceedings, entered May 28, 1863.

Mary C. Harris

Permanent Enrollment No. 12 issued at Mobile on April 24, 1858 showing ownership of Henry Teamen 5/8, John A. Munds, 2/8, and David Russell 1/8. The Mary C. Harris was built at Bon Secours, Alabama in 1858. Register dimensions 42'6" length, 14'4" breadth, 4'8" depth, and 23 & 58/95ths tons. She had a square stern, a sharp bow and a woman's figurehead.

Permanent Enrollment No. 27 issued at Mobile on June 22, 1859 showing ownership of Henry Teamen 7/8, and David Russell 1/8. This document was surrendered at New Orleans on December 21, 1859. No further documents found.

Glide

Permanent Enrollment No. 1028 issued at Philadelphia on August 24, 1865 to the Cape Henlopen pilot association. Official No. 10350. Register dimensions 60.1' length, 16.4' breadth and 6.6' depth, 28.71 tons.<sup>9</sup>

Permanent Enrollment No. 33 issued at Mobile on September 27, 1868 showing ownership of James Coyle 3/13, J. Clemmons 1/13, J.R.B. McIntosh 1/13, William Johnson 1/13, Fred Smith 1/13, William T. Norville 1/13, A. Dorgan 1/13, Peter Weeks 1/13, George Cook 1/13, and Charles Wallace 1/13. This was her first

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<sup>9</sup> The tonnage formula had been drastically revised by an Act of Congress passed on May 6, 1864 so that tonnage more closely indicated the cargo-carrying capacity of a ship rather than its displacement. In practice a given set of register dimensions produced approximately 50% of the tonnage calculated under the previous formula.

Mobile document.

Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on March 20, 1872 attached to bill-of-sale dated April 5, 1979 records the sale, by the estate of James Coyle of 3/13 share in the Glide.

Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Galveston on June 11, 1900 showing ownership of Peter Brandt, John Ericson, O.S. Plummer, Richard Carey and J.C. Plummer, all 1/5.

Permanent Enrollment No. 4 issued at Port Arthur, Texas, on July 17, 1915 states the Glide was destroyed on the east jetty at Galveston during the hurricane of August 19, 1915.

Prima Donna

License (for a vessel below 20 tons) No. 5 issued at Corpus Christi on November 23, 1867 to Edward Mercer and Benjamin Grant.

Ida Lowe

Permanent Register No. 75 issued at Key West on September 26, 1863 showing William A. Lowe as her sole owner. She was a schooner with one deck, two masts, a square stern, no galleries, and a scroll head. This document surrendered when she was re-admeasured as required by the act of May 6, 1864. The Ida Lowe's new register dimensions were 60.5' length, 18.8 breadth, depth 17.1, 35.55 gross tons, and 33.8 net. Her original ones had been 62'0" length, 18'7" breadth, 7'2" depth, and 71 & 28/95ths tons.

Permanent Register No. 22 issued at Key West on February 25, 1865 not found.

Permanent Enrollment No. 111 issued at Mobile on October 10, 1866. Register dimensions, 60.5' length, 18.5' beam, 7.1' depth, 35.55 tons was not found.

Permanent Enrollment No. 2 issued at Mobile on January 24, 1868 showing ownership of C.J. Campbell 3/4, and Edward Dorgan 1/4.

Permanent Enrollment No. 14 issued at Mobile on April 16, 1869 showing ownership of C.J. Campbell 1/2, Edward Dorgan 1/4 and Julia A. Smith 1/4.

Permanent Enrollment No. 3 issued at Mobile on August 5, 1871 showing ownership of George R. Cook 1/4, C.J. Campbell, 1/4, Edward Dorgan, 1/4, and Julia A. Smith 1/4.

Permanent Enrollment No. 8 issued at Mobile on October 19, 1871 showing ownership of George R. Cook, Edward Dorgan, Julia A. Smith, William Johnson, William T. Norville, J.R.B. McIntosh, Joseph Clemmons, Peter Wicks, and Andrew Dorgan, all 1/9.

Ida Lowe first appears with a new construction date on Permanent Enrollment No. 7 issued at Mobile on August 1, 1881 showing ownership of George R. Cook, Edward Dorgan, Julia A. Smith, William Johnson, William T. Norville, John R.B. McIntosh, Joseph Clemmons, Peter Wicks, and Andrew Dorgan, all 1/9.

Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on November 28, 1884 showing ownership of George R. Cook 6/54, Edward Dorgan 7/54, William Johnson 7/54, William T. Norville 7/54, John R.B. McIntosh 6/54, Joseph Clemmons 7/54, Peter Wicks 7/54, and Andrew Dorgan 7/54.

Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on October 22, 1894 showing ownership of Andrew Dorgan, Thomas A. Johnson, J. Clemmons, Gustavus Wicks, Rayfield Wilson, Henry D. Warren, Frank Rota, and Henry E. Godbold.

Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Mobile on April 11, 1899 showing ownership of Andrew Dorgan, Thomas A. Johnson, Gustavus Wicks, Rayfield Wilson, Henry D. Warren, Frank Rota, Henry E. Godbold, S.A. Dorgan, William Dorgan, Edward Dorgan, George R. Cook, Thos. Cook, Joseph Norville, Ed. Allen, William Allen, William Johnson, Dave Coster, Martha A. Coster, Curtis Wilson.

Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Galveston on June 11, 1900 to Peter Brandt, John Ericson, O.S. Plummer, Richard Carey and J.C. Plummer, all of Sabine, Texas.

Surrender of Ida Lowe's Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Mobile on April 11, 1899.

Tragedy eventually struck the Ida Lowe. She was wrecked in a gale on November 27, 1902, after 36 years of toil on the Mobile bar as noted on her surrendered Permanent Enrollment No. 21.

Louise F. Harper

Document #140867. Register dimensions, 80.1' length, 22.5' breadth and 9.2' depth, 62.15 tons gross and net. She was a schooner with a billet head and a square stern.

Permanent Enrollment No. 1 issued at Mobile on July 5, 1895 showing ownership of D. Coster, Joseph Norville, Edward Dorgan, Augustus Weeks, George Cook, Thomas Cook, William Dorgan, W.C. Wilson, B.J. Coster, S.A. Dorgan, Thomas A. Johnson, William Johnson, H. Warren, F. Rota, W.G. Allen, Rayfield Wilson, A. Dorgan, W.C. Carroll, Edward T. Allen, and John A. Dorgan, all 1/21.

Permanent Enrollment No. 22 issued at Mobile on June 6, 1904 not found.

Permanent Enrollment No. 47 issued at Mobile on January 17, 1908 showing sole ownership of James T. Dolan of Mobile.

Permanent Enrollment No. 39 issued at Mobile on April 3, 1909 showing sole ownership of the Bailey Iron Works of Mobile.

Permanent Enrollment No. 8 issued at Pensacola on August 30, 1910 showing sole ownership of E.E. Saunders and Co. of Pensacola.

Permanent Enrollment No. P-10 issued at Pensacola on January 15, 1930 showing sole ownership of E.E. Saunders and Co. of Pensacola.

Moses H. Grinnell

Document #17145. Built at New York in 1860. Listed at Mobile in 1912. Register dimensions 72.1' length, 19.1' breadth 7.1' depth, 40 tons gross, and 38 net.

Permanent Enrollment No. 12 issued on October 17, 1911 at Mobile showing Donald McKay, Thomas A. Johnson, estate of Edward T. Allen, estate of George R. Cook, Mrs. Edward Clemmons, Harvey C. Wilson, William C. Dorgan, Sidney A. Dorgan, Dennis Smith, B.F. Midgett, William Wilson, Curtis L. Johnson, Henry Godbold, Joseph H. Norville, David G. Coster, Thomas L. Cook, Eugene H. Dorgan, Mrs. A.C. Allen, Charles Ladnier, Augustus Weeks, Mary A. Dorgan, Emma Warren (estate of H.D. Warren), Mary E. Wilson (estate of Rayfield Wilson), all owning 1/23 share.

Permanent Register No. 7 issued at Mobile on December 6, 1912, surrendered December 21, 1912 endorsed void.

"Sold Alien" August 15, 1914 to British subjects from Montego Bay, Jamaica. Sale confirmed in a letter from the U.S. Vice-Consul at Kingston, Jamaica, on October 21, 1914 (Serial #77126-N).

Eben D. Jordan

Permanent Enrollment No. 146 issued at Boston on January 11, 1883. Register dimensions 73.2' length, 21.2' breadth, 9.8' depth, 68 gross tons, and 65 net. Official No. 135645, she had 1 deck, 2 masts, straight head and an elliptic stern.

Ralph M. Eastman, Pilots and Pilot Boats of Boston Harbor (Boston: Second Bank-State Street Trust Company, 1956), 85.

Permanent Enrollment No. 109 issued at Boston June 24, 1890 and surrendered December 21, 1891;  
Permanent Enrollment No. 281 issued New York City on June 4, 1896.

Permanent Enrollment No. 8 issued at Brunswick, Georgia, September 5, 1898.

Permanent Enrollment No. 32 issued at Brunswick on June 27, 1904.

Permanent Enrollment No. 22 issued at Mobile on December 13, 1906 showing ownership of David G. Coster 2/25, E.J. Allen, W.G. Allen, Thos. L. Cook, Eugene H. Dorgan, John A. Dorgan, Sidney A. Dorgan, Henry E. Godbold, Curtis Johnson, John Johnson, Thomas A. Johnson, Chas. Ladnier, Donald McKay, Frank Midgett, Joseph H. Norville, Dennis A. Smith, Peter Smith, Augustus Weeks, Joseph J. Cook, Harry Wilson, Wm. F. Wilson, Harry Murray, Harry Hargrove, and William C. Dorgan, all 1/25.

Permanent Enrollment No. 15 issued at Mobile on October 17, 1908 showing ownership of Thos. A. Johnson, David G. Coster, E.J. Allen, Mrs. W.G. Allen, Thos. L. Cook, Eugene H. Dorgan, John A. Dorgan, Sidney A. Dorgan, Henry E. Godbold, Curtis Johnson, John Johnson, Chas. Ladnier, Donald McKay, Frank Midgett, Joseph H. Norville, Dennis A. Smith, Peter Smith, Augustus Weeks, Joseph J. Cook, Harry Wilson, Wm. F. Wilson, Harry Murray, Harry Hargrove, Wm. C. Dorgan, and George N. Godbold, all 1/25.

Permanent Enrollment No. 20 issued at Mobile on November 16, 1908 not found.

Permanent Register No. 16 issued at Mobile on December 16, 1911 to H.M. Costello of Mobile, trade changed.

Permanent Register No. 17 issued at Mobile on December 28, 1911 to H.M. Costello of Mobile, "vessel sold foreign (Cuban flag) April 8, 1912.

Alabama

Master Carpenter's Certificate of January 1, 1912. Official No. 209459. Letters LCGK. Register dimensions, 94.4' length, 24.7' breadth and 12.0' depth, and 120 & no/100ths. She had one deck, two masts, no figurehead (which suggests that she was a knockabout) and an elliptic stern.

Temporary Enrollment No. 24 issued at Gloucester on January 19, 1912 showing ownership of I.T. Newbury 1/11, John A. Dorgan 3/22, Willie F. Wilson, Curtis L. Johnson, Harry Murray, Thomas R. Murray, Mary A. Johnson, Harry Wilson, D.A. Smith, H.L. Hargrove, S.A. Dorgan, George Godbold, Emma Midgett, William Allen, Thomas Cook, J.J. Cook, John Johnson, Edward Smith, Peter Smith, Dave Coster, and Donald McKay, each owning 1/22 share.

Permanent Enrollment No. 25 issued at Mobile on January 21, 1912 showing ownership of John A. Dorgan 3/22, Willie F. Wilson, Curtis L. Johnson, Harry Murray, Thomas R. Murray, Mary A. Johnson, Harry Wilson, Tommy Ruth Smith, S.A. Dorgan, George Godbold, Emma Midgett, William Allen, Thomas Cook, J.J. Cook, John Johnson, Peter Smith, Dave Coster, Margaret E. Smith, Mary A. McKay, Grace E. Hargrove, each owning 1/22 share.

Permanent Enrollment No. 12, replacing No. 39, showing ownership of Harry Murray 1/22, John A. Dorgan 3/22, Sidney A. Dorgan 1/22, William F. Wilson 1/22, Harry Wilson 1/22, Curtis L. Johnson 1/44, John Johnson 1/44, Mary A. Johnson 1/44, Thomas R. Murray 1/22, Tommy Ruth Smith 1/22, Peter Smith 1/22, Margaret E. Smith 1/22, Thomas L. Cook 1/22, John J. Cook 1/22, Katie Lee Allen 1/22, David Costa 1/22, Mary A. Mackay 1/22, Grace E. Hargrove 1/22, Augustus Weeks 3/44, Helen Godbold 1/44 and Emma Midgett 1/22.

Permanent Enrollment No. 23 issued at Mobile May 7, 1923 showing ownership of John A. Dorgan 1/25, Joseph H. Norville 21/500, Sidney A. Dorgan 21/500, William F. Wilson 21/500, Harry C. Wilson 21/500, Mary A. Johnson 21/500, Alice Craig Murray 1/25, Tommy Ruth Smith 21/500, Peter Smith 21/500, Margaret E. Smith 1/25, Thomas L. Cook 21/500, John J. Cook 21/500, Emma E. Midgett 21/500, W.C. Dorgan 21/500, William W. Wilson 21/500, Mary C. Moreno 21/500, George W. Raley 21/500, Curtis L. Johnson, 11/500, Helen A. Godbold 11/500, John Johnson 11/500 and Augustus Weeks 3/50, surrendered October 28, 1927.

Permanent Register No. 10 issued at Mobile on October 28, 1927 to Felix Verzone indicates the ownership change and trade change to "freight". Two other documents relative to Verzone's ownership in file. Sold foreign "British" on March 31, 1930 by U.S.S.B. Order #2141.

Wayfarer

Permanent Enrollment No. 198 issued at New York City on March 28, 1894 to George E. Chisolm. Register dimensions 76.5' length, 21.0' breadth and 9.1' depth. Official no. 81464.

Permanent Enrollment No. 218 issued at New York on June 1, 1899. Change of owner: William H. Patterson.

Permanent Enrollment No. 237 issued at New York on May 16, 1900. Change of owner: Susan Hegeman Mansfield.

Permanent Enrollment No. 34 issued at New York on August 14, 1900. Change of owner: William M. Ivins.

Permanent Enrollment No. 130 issued at New York on December 16, 1902. Change of owner: Edward L. Ryerson.

Permanent Enrollment No. 137 issued at New York on December 30, 1903. Change of owner: John Hays Hammond.

Permanent Enrollment No. 125 issued at New York on March 2, 1910. Change of owner: James Douglas Campbell, Agent, for John Hays Hammond.

Temporary Enrollment No. 2 issued at Gloucester, Massachusetts. Sale: Svenning Guttormson to John A. Dorgan, William C. Dorgan, Sidney Dorgan, Thomas L. Cook, John Cook, Mary A. Johnson, Curtis L. Johnson, John Johnson, David Coster, Harry Hargrove, Harry Murray, Charles Ladnier, Donald MacKay, Katie Lee Allen, George Godbold, Joseph H. Norville, Dennis A. Smith, Peter Smith, Edward Smith, B.F. Midgett, William Wilson and Harry Wilson. (All 1/22)

Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on September 27, 1912. Home port change. Same owners.

Permanent Enrollment No. 21 issued at Mobile on January 11, 1917. As above vice Mahala Coster (David Coster), Margaret E. Smith (Dennis A. Smith) and Emma Midgett (B.F. Midgett).

Enrollment No. 28 issued at Mobile on March 24, 1920. Change of owners and trade. No further records found.

Temporary Enrollment No. 2 issued at Gloucester on August 3, 1912. Sale: Svenning Guttormson to John A. Dorgan, William C. Dorgan, Sidney Dorgan, Thomas L. Cook, John Cook, Mary A. Johnson, Curtis L. Johnson, John Johnson, David Coster, Harry Hargrove, Harry Murray, Charles Ladnier, Donald MacKay, Katie Lee Allen, George Godbold, Joseph H. Norville, Dennis A. Smith, Peter Smith, Edward Smith, B.F. Midgett, William Wilson and Harry Wilson. (Each 1/22 share); Permanent Enrollment No. 11 issued at Mobile on September 27, 1912. Home port change.

Permanent Enrollment No. 28 issued at Mobile on March 24, 1920. Change of trade and owners.

Alabama, Ex-Alabamian

Master Carpenter's Certificate dated December 7, 1926 issued by Richard V. Cowley for the Pensacola Shipbuilding Company. Official no. 226177. Call letters WA 2098. Register dimensions 81.4' length, 21.6'

breadth, 9.7' depth, 70 gross tons, and 35 net.

Application for Official Number dated at Mobile 15 December 1926.

During the summer of 1986 a team under the field leadership of H.A.E.R. Staff Architect Richard K. Anderson, Jr., measured Alabama at her present location in Vineyard Haven, Marthas Vineyard, Massachusetts. Her overall length on deck was recorded as 87 ft. 9-3/4 in.

U.S. Treasury Department, Abstract of Title, page 1, Bill of Sale valuing Alabamian at \$38,200.00 and transferring ownership from the Mobile Bar Pilots' Association to "The State of Alabama represented by the State Docks Commission," as of 3:30 p.m., 21 April 1927.

#### Bonne Fortune

Permanent enrollment No. 8, Official No. 237030, built at Madisonville, Louisiana, in 1937 of wood with a 500 hp diesel engine. Register dimensions 77.5' length, 18.7' breadth, depth 9.1', 98.13 gross tons, 44 net, with one deck, no mast, plain head and elliptic stern. A.B. Paterson of New Orleans was the original owner. Commissioned in the U.S.C.G.R. as CGR 9039 of an overall length of 85'10". Performed coastal convoy duties with a gun mounted on her bow. Lost in the hurricane of 1864, a crewman was swept out to sea and rescued the next day.

#### Mobarpi

Ex-Masonite Corporation yacht approximately 80 feet long. Had twin BUDA diesels. Was laid out with cabins. (Telcon with Jack Hargrove on August 17, 1988). Had an altar in the pilot house. She was used by a roving preacher in the bayous.

#### Bounty

Permanent enrollment No. 108, Official number 270236, WG7152, built at New Orleans in 1955, oil screw (460 hp), one deck, no mast, a curved stem, and an elliptical stern, 47.2' length, 13.6' breadth, 6.1 depth, 34.51 gross tons and 23 net. Issued at New Orleans on September 18, 1962. Document surrendered, renewal spaces filled.