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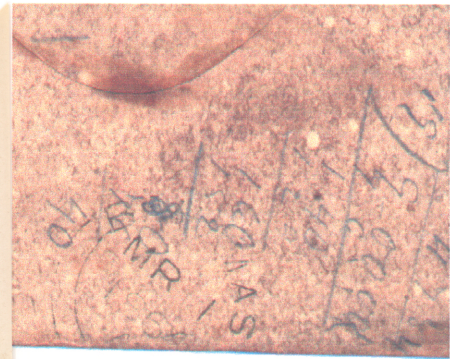
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# JOHN GRIMBALL, CSN



Reverse

***This letter from John Grimball's father left Wilmington, NC on the blockade runner "Syren" on 25 Feb. 1864 and arrived in Nassau on 1 Mar. 1864 where it received a Bahamas DC postmark on the reverse. The letter left Nassau on 14 Mar. on the Cunard Branch Line ship "Corsica" arriving in New York 18 Mar. The letter, in a locked pouch, was transferred to the Cunard transatlantic steamer "Australasian" which left New York on 23 Mar. and arrived in Liverpool on 3 Apr. where it received the Liverpool postmark and re-statement in black of the 2 shillings (due) postage. This was double the postpaid rate and was allocated as shown by the Nassau crayon markings with 7 pence to Nassau and 1 shilling five pence to Great Britain.***

***The "Syren" belonged to the Charleston Import & Export Company. She made 33 round trips through the blockade, the most of any blockade runner and came through the blockade to Charleston her last time on 16 Feb. 1865, two days before Charleston fell to Union forces. She was tied up in the Ashley River and set afire when the Feds. arrived. The black US occupation troops put out the fire and the ship was sent North where it became a merchantman.***

Lieutenant John Grimbball, C. S. N., now residing Charleston, was born in that city in the year 1840. In 1854 he entered the United States naval academy, and was graduated June 10, 1858, one of the fifteen in his class eighty who attained that honor. After his graduation young Grimbball sailed to the Mediterranean on the flagship Macedonian; and remained two years in those waters. Then returning home, he resigned upon the secession of his State and tendered her his services. He was on duty at Fort Moultrie when the Star of the West was fired upon and compelled to abandon the attempt to victual Fort Sumter. Subsequently he was commissioned first lieutenant Confederate States navy, and assigned to the Lady Davis, under command of Capt. John Rutledge, with which he participated in the defense of Port Royal and other encounters. From the Lady Davis he was transferred as first lieutenant to the ram Arkansas, built on the Yazoo river, near Greenwood, Mississippi during the Federal operations against Vicksburg, under the command of Lieut. Isaac N. Brown. He and Lieut. G. W. Gift commanded the eight-inch columbiads and the two forward broadside guns on this vessel during her memorable trip down the Yazoo into the Mississippi, and through the combined fleets of Farragut and Davis to Vicksburg. The guns commanded by Grimbball did most effective action in the running fight, and when steam had gone down, and on account of defective construction the fire-room was a hell of red-hot iron, the heroic Grimbball headed a party to relieve the exhausted and almost roasted firemen. He remained on the Arkansas during the attempt of the Federal fleet to destroy her while running the Vicksburg batteries, and took a conspicuous part in repelling the attack of the Essex and Queen of the West. Subsequently he was transferred to the ram Baltic, at Mobile, Admiral Buchanan's flagship prior to the completion of the Tennessee, and thence he was ordered abroad in charge of a detachment of naval officers who were to go on duty on one of the vessels then building in England. But these were seized by the British government soon after his arrival, and some time later he was ordered as one of the first lieutenants to the cruiser Shenandoah. From, Madeira he sailed on this famous vessel, the last of the Confederate cruisers, to Australia, and thence to the North Pacific, and into the Arctic ocean, destroying the American whaling fleet. She captured in all thirty-eight ships, and on June 28, 1865, burned eight prizes near the mouth of Bering's strait. On August 2d they met the British bark Barraconta, from San Francisco, and learned of the capture of President Davis and the end of the war, whereupon they struck all guns below transformed their ship into the appearance of a merchantman and sailed for Liverpool, where they anchored November 6th. Then was hoisted for the last time the flag of the Southern Confederacy, having been carried by the Shenandoah to almost every quarter of the globe. There the ship was surrendered by Captain Waddell to Paynter, of the British ship Donegal, and after some correspondence between Captatn Waddell and Earl Russell, the officers and men were permitted to go ashore. Lieutenant Grimbball went to London, after examination before the marine board obtained a certificate of qualification to command an English ship. He then went to Mexico as a colonist and settled on a ranch near Cordova. About the time of the collapse of Maximilian's empire he returned to Charleston, studied law admitted to practice in 1867. A year later he to New York city, where he practiced his profession for sixteen years. Since 1884 was a resident of Charleston, and practically retired from professional work.