

**Army Corp of Engineers river snagboat
C. R. Suter photographs, ca. 1885**

(Mss. 4966) Inventory

Compiled by
Mark E. Martin

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2006

SUMMARY

Size	20 photographs ranging in size from 6" X 8.25" to 13.25" X 16.5" mounted on boards ranging in size from 10" X 12" to 18" X 20".
Geographic Locations	Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania
Inclusive Dates	ca. 1885
Languages	English
Summary	20 mounted photographs of US Army Corps of Engineers snagboats
Access Restrictions	No restrictions on access
Reproduction Note	Photographic and digital reproductions may be created
Copyright	Copyright of the original materials in this collection has expired, and they are therefore in the public domain.
Related Collections	Map of a reconnaissance of the Mississippi River from Cairo, Ill's. To New Orleans, La.
Citation	Army Corp of Engineers river snagboat photographs, ca. 1885, Mss. 4966, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location(s)	OS:A

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Brigadier General Charles Russell Suter (1842 - 1920) graduated from the United State Military Academy at West Point in 1862, served throughout the Civil War, and was a prominent figure in the post-war mapping and “improvement” of the Mississippi River. In the 1870s he created the work, *Map of a reconnaissance of the Mississippi River from Cairo, Ill's. to New Orleans, La. To accompany the report on that portion of the third subdivision of the Mississippi route to the seaboard made in accordance with an Act of Congress approved June 23rd, 1874*, published in 1878. The *Map* was published as an atlas consisting of 31 sections (scale 1 inch: 1 mile) showing sand, wrecks, five kinds of riparian woods, towns, cities, and plantations.

The Corp of Engineers honored Suter for his work by naming a river snagboat after him, ca. 1885. Unfortunately, then-current Army rules disallowed naming of a vessel after a living person. As Charles R. Suter – ranked a Major at the time - was alive and serving on the Corps’ Missouri River commission, the snagboat was renamed *Missouri* and spent most of her operational life on the lower Missouri River with occasional activity further up-river.

James Reese & Sons, Pittsburg, PA., began construction of the *C.R. Suter* in 1885. Three years later, the *C.R. Suter* began operating on the Missouri River pulling snags, clearing drift heaps and stumps, and felling trees. She had an overall length of 187 feet, an overall beam of 52 feet, a depth of 7 feet, and displaced 510 tons. Her boilers generated steam at 100 pounds per square inch to power steam engines turning her side-wheels sufficiently to run 5 miles per hour upstream and 12 miles per hours downstream. Construction contract cost was \$115,000.00. There is no record of her finish cost with outfitting.

After operating on the Missouri River for 40 years, the *Missouri* burned at Gasconade, MO., 1928 July 29. The wreck was dragged behind a dike that broke off the next year exposing the wreck. The dredge *Kappa* disposed of the remains in 1929.

Sources:

US Army Corps of Engineers, Office of the Chief of Engineers. *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1914*. Appendix KKK: Statement of floating plant owned by the United States and employed in the Engineer Department at large for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1914. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1914.

Way, Frederick. *Way's Packet directory, 1848-1983: passenger steamboats of the Mississippi River system since the advent of photography in mid-continent America / compiled by Frederick Way, Jr.* Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, c1983.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

These 20 photographic images provide visual documentation of 3 different aspects of the Corps of Engineers river fleet:

1. Four images show the Mississippi River fleet winter quarters in Chester, Illinois, January 1887. Of these four, the first 2 images provide different views of the fleet iced in at winter quarters. The next 2 are the same print of the U. S. snagboat *Horatio G. Wright* in winter quarters.
2. A single image shows the U. S. snagboat *John R. Meigs* moored at the river's edge, perhaps in St. Louis.
3. Fifteen images document the construction (11 images) and operation (4 images) of the U. S. snagboat *C. R. Suter* later renamed *Missouri*.

In one of the construction images, pasted to a pole near the construction site, is a poster with the date 1885. One of the later images of the *C. R. Suter* in operation includes an American flag with 38 stars, which dates it to some time before November 1889. Using this internal evidence we have dated these images no earlier than 1885 and no later than November 1889.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I. Mississippi River Fleet winter quarters, Chester, Illinois, 1887.

Series II. U. S. snagboat *John R. Meigs*

Series III. Construction of the U. S. snagboat *C. R. Suter*

Series IV. Operation of the U. S. snagboat *C. R. Suter*

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

- Series I. Four images show the Mississippi River Fleet winter quarters, Chester, Illinois, 1887.
- Series II. One image shows the U. S. snagboat *John R. Meigs* in St Louis, Mo.
- Series III. Eleven images show the construction of the U. S. snagboat *C. R. Suter*
- Series IV. Four images show the U. S. snagboat *C. R. Suter* in operation

INDEX TERMS

Term	Found in
C.R. Suter (snagboat) —Photographs	496606 - 496620
Government vessels—United States—Photographs	496601-496620
Horatio G. Wright (snagboat) —Photographs	496603, 496604
John R. Meigs (snagboat) —Photographs	496605
Shipbuilding—United States—Photographs	496606 - 496615
Ships—United States—Photographs	496601-496620
United States. Army. Corps of Engineers.	496601-496620

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u>			<u>Item</u>	
<u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
OS:A	1	1	496601	Mississippi River Commission Fleet in winter quarters, Chester, IL, January 1887
			496602	Mississippi River Commission Fleet in winter quarters, Chester, IL, January 1887
			496603	U. S. snagboat <i>Horatio G. Wright</i> in winter quarters, Chester, IL, January 1887
			496604	Second print of U. S. snagboat <i>Horatio G. Wright</i> in winter quarters, Chester, IL, January 1887
		2	496605	U. S. snagboat <i>John R. Meigs</i> moored at river's edge, St Louis, MO, ca. 1890
		3	496606	Bird's-eye-view starboard side of <i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, keel and ribs laid, no hull cladding
		4	496607	Second print of image above on larger mount
		5	496608	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, camera looks forward from aft, stern completely clad
		6	496609	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, keel and ribs laid, partial hull cladding, camera looking aft from bow
		7	496610	Second print of image above
		8	496611	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, partial hull cladding, camera looking aft from bow
		9	496612	Bird's-eye-view of <i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, three-quarter view from starboard side aft
		10	496613	Bird's-eye-view of <i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, three-quarter view from starboard side forward
		11	496614	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, camera at ground level looking forward from stern
		12	496615	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, camera at ground level looking aft from bow
		13	496616	<i>C.R. Suter</i> under construction, camera on river bank looking at newly launched hull in river
		14	496617	Commissioned <i>C.R. Suter</i> moored riverside with snag being pulled aboard, camera looks aft from forward port side
		15	496618	Commissioned <i>C.R. Suter</i> moored riverside with snag being pulled aboard, camera looks amidships

- 16 496619 Commissioned *C.R. Suter* moored riverside with snag being pulled aboard, camera looks aft from a few points off port bow
- 17 496620 Commissioned *C.R. Suter* moored riverside with snag being pulled aboard, camera looks forward from aft port side