



The New York Public Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**United States Sanitary Commission records**

1861-1879 [bulk 1861-1872]

MssCol 3101

The conservation, arrangement and description of the collection was made possible by generous funding from the Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust and a grant from the Save America's Treasures program.

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, Elizabeth Delmage, Melissa Haley, Joseph Lapinski, and Jane Rothstein, 2013

## Summary

**Creator:** United States Sanitary Commission

**Title:** United States Sanitary Commission records

**Date:** 1861-1879 [bulk 1861-1872]

**Size:** linear feet

**Source:** Gift of the United States Sanitary Commission to the Astor Library, January 1879.

**Abstract:** The United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), 1861-1879, was a civilian organization authorized by the United States government to provide medical and sanitary assistance to the Union volunteer forces during the United States Civil War (1861-1865). As the USSC broadened the scope of its work during the war, Regular troops, sailors and others also benefited from its services. The collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, military service claim files, registers, diaries, financial records, scrapbooks, posters, illustrations, photographs, printed matter, maps, ephemera and artifacts concerning the Commission's sanitary, medical and relief work during the Civil War, as well as its post-war relief work and publication activities. The collection also includes the records of the American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields, founded in 1866 by USSC officers and former associates.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Preferred citation:** United States Sanitary Commission records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

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**Related Materials:**

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## Creator History

The United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), 1861-1879, was a civilian organization authorized by the United States government to provide medical and sanitary assistance to the Union volunteer forces during the United States Civil War (1861-1865). As the USSC broadened the scope of its work during the war, Regular troops, sailors and others also benefited from its services. The USSC wrapped up its war relief operations in the fall of 1865. At that time it established an Historical Bureau to collect, arrange, and preserve its records, which would also serve as a documentary resource for planned publications on historical and scientific topics. Some special relief operations, such as the running of employment bureaus and homes for disabled soldiers and sailors, continued until early 1866. The USSC's Army and Navy Claim Agency, which helped soldiers, sailors, and their family members to file pension and other claims with the government without charge, ceased accepting new claims as of January 1, 1866. Its agents continued to process existing applications until approximately 1870. The Statistical Bureau prepared monograph reports on its findings through 1868. Also during this period, USSC officers and former associates established the American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields (1866-1870). By 1872, the USSC's Historical Bureau and General Secretary had completed two arrangements of its records, which had been collected or submitted on a rolling basis. The Sanitary Commission remained relatively dormant until 1878, when its Standing Committee authorized a third and final arrangement of its records, and a complete statement of its financial accounts from 1861-1878. USSC President Henry W. Bellows officially brought its work to a close on January 7, 1879.

The USSC's roots lay in the collaborative efforts of New York City's civic leaders, medical community and, particularly, the Woman's Central Association of Relief, to channel the public's outpouring of support and concern for the troops in ways most useful to the government and the military at the start of the war in April 1861.

A delegation to Washington in May 1861 representing these groups led to the appointment of "A Commission of Inquiry and Advice in respect of the Sanitary Interests of the United States Forces" to work in collaboration with the War Department and Medical Bureau, as ordered by the Secretary of War on June 9, 1861, and approved by President Lincoln on June 13. The commission was named the United States Sanitary Commission and officers were elected from among its members. Reverend Henry W. Bellows, a Unitarian minister and vice-president of the Woman's Central Association of Relief, served as president, with Alexander Dallas Bache serving as vice-president, and George Templeton Strong as treasurer. Frederick Law Olmsted was hired as general secretary and appointed a member of the Commission. The Sanitary Commission was empowered to inquire and advise as to matters concerning the inspection of recruits, the health and sanitary condition of the volunteer forces, their general comfort and efficiency, the provision of cooks, nurses and hospitals, and "other subjects of like nature." The Commission received further endorsement by order of the U.S. Army Surgeon General on June 15.

The USSC did not receive funding from the federal government. Its work was supported by donations of cash and supplies from supporters at home and abroad. Insurance companies were solicited. Soldiers' aid societies collected supplies and funds, and Sanitary Fairs were held in major metropolitan areas. Substantial funds were raised by Western states and territories, notably California. Donations were also received from supporters around the world.

It was a guiding principle of the USSC that it should work only to supplement, not supplant or compete with, the work of the government, while supporting Army discipline. The Commission began its work investigating the condition of the troops. Its members formed committees concerned with camp and

hospital inspections, collection of statistics, and preparation of reports on sanitary practice, the preparation of food, and the quality of supplies. In the early months of its investigations, the Sanitary Commission looked carefully at the lessons of the Crimean War, when British forces lost many men to disease caused by unsanitary conditions.

The commissioners, who formed what was initially described as an executive board or legislative council, met on a quarterly basis throughout the war to review submitted reports and to set general policy. The board usually met in Washington, D.C. Once military actions began and sanitary and relief work spread across great geographical distances, the committee structure was gradually replaced by an executive administrative structure.

The demands of the war soon required more frequent decision-making. This led to the creation of the Standing Committee, which met on a nearly-daily basis in New York City where most of its members resided. The Standing Committee initially consisted of five commissioners who retained their position for the entire war: Henry W. Bellows, George Templeton Strong, William H. Van Buren, M.D., Cornelius R. Agnew, M.D., and Wolcott Gibbs. Charles J. Stillé of Philadelphia joined the Standing Committee in 1864. Their decisions were implemented and informed by the general secretary, who in turn worked with the associate secretary of the East (Eastern Department), based in Washington, D.C., and the associate secretary of the West (Western Department), based in Louisville, Kentucky. Van Buren, Agnew and Gibbs also formed the USSC's Medical Committee. They directed inquiries and projects on medical, surgical, sanitary and other scientific topics, including the publication of professional papers during and after the war. Committee members also engaged in USSC efforts to modernize and reform the Army Medical Bureau in the early years of the war. USSC commissioner Elisha Harris, M.D., worked closely with them.

The general secretary and the associate secretary of the East were located at the USSC's Washington headquarters at 244 F Street. In early September 1863, Olmsted resigned as general secretary, and was replaced by J. Foster Jenkins, who served in that position until the spring of 1865. The USSC implemented further executive restructuring in October 1863, following Olmsted's departure.

John S. Newberry, M.D. was associate secretary of the West throughout the war. (The Western Department should not be confused with the Western Sanitary Commission, an independent organization that declined to join the USSC. Its headquarters was located in St. Louis, Missouri.) Associate secretaries were responsible for the general supervision of regional staff, agencies, supply depots, and relief services in their geographical territory. They made sure the supply needs of inspectors and relief agents serving with the Armies in the field were met, and often coordinated USSC operations at major battles. Louisville and Washington were also the location of the USSC's two largest supply depots. Associate secretaries were supported by an assistant secretary and other staff. In the fall of 1863, a third associate secretary position was created for a chief of inspection (held by John H. Douglas), who set the responsibilities of inspectors and handled general matters of "inquiry and advice." An additional assistant secretary was based at the USSC's New York Office.

The Standing Committee relied on an enforced system of regional and functional reporting, largely through the general secretary, to maintain control and communication, and to formulate policy. The number of employees on the Commission's roster varied from roughly one hundred fifty to several hundred, the average number being about three hundred. While some men and women, at all levels of service, preferred to work on a volunteer basis, as a rule officers and employees received salaries as a matter of policy to ensure accountability and consistency in the work force. As Charles J. Stillé wrote in his *History of the United States Sanitary Commission* (1866, p. 258), their work was "too full of toil, drudgery and repulsive reality," especially in the field, to be sustained solely by volunteer workers. The exposure to disease and/or incessant overwork resulted in death or serious illness for a number of men

and women associated with the USSC, including both paid and volunteer workers.

USSC sanitary and relief work in the field was generally administered in geographical departments roughly resembling the jurisdictions of U.S. military departments or districts, such as the USSC's Department of the Gulf. USSC superintendents of such departments were often inspectors with medical backgrounds, supported by relief agents and other staff; inspectors often carried out relief work. USSC department heads reported to the general secretary and worked closely with associate secretaries. Staff members were also assigned to accompany particular Armies in the field, carrying out inspection and relief duties.

The central administration was supported by the work of its branch offices. The USSC provided hospital supplies, clothing and food contributed by aid societies and individual citizens, which were channeled geographically through large branch offices across the Union to major USSC supply depots. Additional supplies were purchased as necessary. The branches were semi-independent regional offices with their own administration under the direction of the USSC. It was believed that donations and supplies could more effectively be raised through local efforts, and distributed more efficiently according to need by a central bureaucracy in official communication with the government. There were also branches located in London, England and Paris, France. Women's branches such as the Woman's Central Association of Relief, the New England Women's Auxiliary Association and the Pennsylvania Women's Branch worked closely with the USSC offices in their cities – the New York Office, the Philadelphia Agency, and the Executive Committee of Boston Associates. The term "branch" was sometimes used to refer to the collective activities of a city, such as the "Boston Branch." The USSC in its entirety was essentially a federal system.

The USSC's circulars, broadsides, pamphlets and publications such as the Sanitary Reporter (in the West) and the Sanitary Bulletin (in the East) were vitally important in keeping the public aware and supportive of its work. Canvassing agents traveled throughout the country giving lectures to promote the USSC and raise funds. The USSC published medical and surgical essays on topics such as scurvy, dysentery, and amputation for free distribution to military medical personnel. The USSC made use of photography during and after the war to support and document its work.

The collection of statistics was instrumental to the USSC's work from its inception. USSC inspectors conducted camp and hospital inspections, reporting their findings according to specially prepared questionnaires. They also collected information on the physical condition and social background of volunteer soldiers. This information was submitted to the USSC's Statistical Bureau which compiled abstracts from the data to make recommendations for sanitary policy and other studies. The Statistical Bureau was headed by first by E.B. Elliott, and later by Benjamin A. Gould. It reported to the general secretary and later worked closely with the chief of inspection. The scope of the USSC's work grew and its structure evolved as the scale of the war increased. In addition to its promotion of preventative measures to support the health of the forces, USSC staff engaged in several types of complementary relief work. General relief addressed the supplementary supply needs of hospitals, camps, and troops (often referred to as "field relief" in war zones). Battlefield relief consisted of transporting and providing extra medical supplies at times of battle, caring for the wounded on the field and other tasks. Individual relief (supplies or other assistance) was offered according to a serviceman's or civilian's circumstances, at staff discretion. Often the lines between these categories blurred. Out of this work, and in addition to it, grew the USSC's Field Relief Corps (1863), and the Auxiliary Relief Corps (1864), created to provide more flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the Army, as the Army's medical and quartermaster staff developed their own organizational standards. The USSC carried out its work with attention to Army protocols and discipline.

Special relief services aimed to reduce unnecessary suffering among servicemen who found

themselves in “irregular circumstances” or whose needs, for various reasons, fell outside the compass of ordinary government provisions or responsibilities. The Special Relief Department, established in 1861 by Frederick N. Knapp, ran a network of soldiers’ homes and lodges, usually at transit points, which provided food and shelter to sick, wounded or exhausted soldiers, many of them furloughed, discharged and disabled. Special relief staff assisted soldiers with health needs, contacted families in case of sickness or death, resolved problems relating to their military papers, and helped soldiers, sailors and their families file pay and other claims with the government. Similar services were provided by relief agents at large convalescent camps. Special relief work was also carried out by some branches.

The USSC established the Hospital Directory in 1862 to collect and record information concerning the location of sick and wounded soldiers in U.S. Army general hospitals, and to provide that information to the public. Its four offices in Washington, DC; Louisville, KY; Philadelphia, PA, and New York, NY also gathered information from other hospitals and locations, and searched for soldiers who had lost contact with family and friends. Hospital patient data was also used by the Statistical Bureau to monitor the general health and relative strength of the Army. It worked closely with the Special Relief Department.

Assisting soldiers and their families, without charge, to fill out the proper government forms to obtain back pay, pensions, bounty and naval prize monies became an increasingly important part of the USSC’s special relief work. In 1864, it formed the United States Sanitary Commission Army and Navy Claim Agency in Washington, D.C. to better organize its services. Local claim agencies such as the Protective War Claim Association of the State of New York, located in New York City, and the Protective War Claim and Pension Agency, located in Philadelphia, were part of the USSC network of local agents forwarding claims to the central claim office in Washington for processing with the government.

Additionally, the USSC worked with the military to improve transportation of the sick and wounded. It staffed hospital steamers and other ships, some provided by the Quartermaster General, to transport the wounded. It developed special railway cars and ambulances, and used refrigerated rail transport to bring fresh food to Army hospitals. The USSC created several large ‘hospital gardens’ during the war to provide fresh vegetables for patients and for troops in the field, to battle the spread of scurvy. When the war ended in April 1865, the USSC continued much needed relief work with returning prisoners of war, discharged soldiers, and those remaining in hospitals. By July, branches were bringing their work to a close. Active relief work related to the war ceased officially on October 1, 1865, although some tasks continued past that date.

The post-war years of the USSC saw continued activity. Branches continued to tie up loose ends and to prepare their records for shipment to the USSC’s Historical Bureau. The Historical Bureau (1865-1868) was established in New York City to arrange, catalog, and preserve the records for future use by the public, and to aid in the preparation of several planned histories of the USSC’s war work. The Medical Committee, under the direction of Elisha Harris, M.D., collected documentation for histories of war-time medical, surgical, and sanitary practice, while others worked on histories of statistical, special relief, and other USSC activities. In 1867, upon the death of Alexander Dallas Bache, the Standing Committee elected Cornelius R. Agnew as Vice President. At the same time John S. Newberry was elected to the Standing Committee, joining the Medical Committee as well.

The USSC Army and Navy Claim Agency and the Protective War Claim agencies in New York and Philadelphia stopped accepting new claims as of January 1, 1866, but continued working on pending cases and brought most work to a close by 1870. Their records were among the last to be received by the Sanitary Commission. Also during this period, USSC officers and former associates such as Henry W. Bellows and Frederick Law Olmsted established the American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields (1866-1870) as the first American branch of the Comité International de Secours

aux Militaires Blessés, later known as the Red Cross. The records of the Association are found in the records of the United States Sanitary Commission.

John S. Blatchford, general secretary from 1865, remained actively engaged through the early 1870s in supervising the collection and arrangement of records and the publication of USSC works, and handling any pending business under the direction of the Standing Committee, which held its final meeting in 1878. Henry W. Bellows, president of the USSC since 1861, officially brought its affairs to a close on 7 January 1879 with the formal transfer of its records to the Astor Library, where they had been stored since 1868.

## Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, military service claim files, registers, diaries, financial records, scrapbooks, posters, illustrations, photographs, printed matter, maps, ephemera and artifacts concerning the Commission's sanitary, medical and relief work during the Civil War, as well as its post-war relief work and publication activities. The collection also includes the records of the American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields.

**Arrangement:** The United States Sanitary Commission Records comprise the following record groups:Accounts and Vouchers ArchiveAmerican Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields ArchivesArmy and Navy Claim Agency ArchivesArmy of the Potomac ArchivesCalifornia Branch ArchivesCondensed Historical MatterDepartment of North Carolina ArchivesDepartment of the Gulf ArchivesDepartment of the Shenandoah ArchivesEnglish Branch ArchivesExecutive Committee of Boston Associate ArchivesHospital Directory ArchivesMaryland ArchivesNew England Women's Auxiliary Association ArchivesNew York, N.Y. ArchivesPennsylvania ArchivesStatistical Bureau ArchivesWashington D.C. ArchivesWestern Department ArchivesWoman's Central Association of Relief Archives

## Key Terms

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Artifacts (object genre)  
Diaries  
Ephemera  
Illustrations (layout features)  
Maps (documents)  
Photographs  
Posters  
Scrapbooks

### Subjects

Military service, Voluntary -- United States  
Public health -- United States

### Geographic Names

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- African Americans  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Campaigns  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Civilian relief  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Claims

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Confiscations and contributions  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Equipment and supplies  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Health aspects  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Hospitals  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Medical care  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Prisoners and prisons  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Public opinion  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Social aspects  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Societies, etc.  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- War work  
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Women

### **Names**

Agnew, Cornelius Rea, 1830-1888  
Bache, A. D. (Alexander Dallas), 1806-1867  
Bellows, Henry W. (Henry Whitney), 1814-1882  
Blatchford, John Samuel, 1831-  
Bowne, John, approximately 1820-1894  
Douglas, John Hancock, 1824-1892  
Elliott, E. B. (Ezekiel Brown), 1823-1888  
Gibbs, Wolcott, 1822-1908  
Gould, Benjamin Apthorp, 1824-1896  
Harris, Elisha, 1824-1884  
Jenkins, J. Foster (John Foster), 1826-1882  
Knapp, Frederick Newman, 1821-1889  
May, Abby W. (Abby Williams), 1829-1888  
Newberry, J. S. (John Strong), 1822-1892  
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1822-1903  
Schuyler, Louisa Lee  
Steiner, Lewis H. (Lewis Henry), 1827-1892  
Stille\_, Charles J. (Charles Janeway), 1819-1899  
Strong, George Templeton, 1822-1892  
Van Buren, W. H. (William Holme), 1819-1883  
United States Sanitary Commission  
United States. -- Army -- Sanitary affairs  
United States. -- Navy -- Sanitary affairs

## Container List

### I. Accounts and Vouchers Archive 1861-1879 (105 boxes, 21 volumes)

The Accounts and Vouchers Archive, 1861-1879, comprise the financial records of New York and Washington offices; records submitted to those offices by local agencies, branches and departments; and rosters of USSC staff. These materials were selectively removed from organizational records and placed in this newly-created record group during the USSC's last post-war arrangement of its records. The bulk of the records are monthly cash accounts, consisting of statements of receipts and expenditures, accompanying vouchers, and staff rosters, which were required to be submitted to accounting staff in Washington or New York. Account books, bank books, miscellaneous accounts for staff members and particular operations, and occasional correspondence are also found. Records of the New York and Washington offices include their own monthly cash accounts, account books and comparative statements for New York, Louisville and Washington operations. New York records also contain correspondence and records of the Commission's treasurer, George T. Strong, and lists of financial contributions received at New York and Washington, as well as an 1878 financial account of the Commission's work from 1861 to that date. Washington records contain accounts for the Central Office, Special Relief Department, and Agency for the Purchase of Fresh Hospital Supplies. Records of local or subordinate USSC entities are arranged alphabetically by name or place name.

### II. American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields archives 1866-1871 (1 box)

The American Association for the Relief of the Misery of Battle Fields (AARMB) was the first American branch of the Comité Internationale de Secours aux Militaires Blessés (later known as the Red Cross), founded in Geneva in 1863. The main objective of the parent society was to secure neutrality in time of war for hospitals, ambulances, surgeons, and all persons legitimately engaged in caring for the sick and wounded, by international agreement. The AARMB, founded in 1866 by persons affiliated with the USSC, worked to secure U.S. adoption of the Geneva Convention treaty of 1864, and to promote and support the operations of the international organization. The records of the Association consist of outgoing correspondence, meeting minutes, financial records, and copies of its publications documenting the Association's administrative work, including promotional and fundraising activities, from its founding in 1866 to its effective closing in 1870.

### III. Army and Navy Claim Agency Archives 1861-1870 (1,190 boxes, 46 volumes)

The United States Sanitary Commission established the Army and Navy Claim Agency (ANCA) in Washington, D.C. on April 1, 1864 to serve as the USSC's central office to assist Union soldiers, sailors, and their families in prosecuting claims on the federal government for pensions, back pay, bounty, commutation of rations, prize money, and other benefits, without cost. The Archives comprise the records of the Army and Navy Claim Agency; the records of the Pension Agency, its predecessor organization; the registers and cash books of its subsidiary local agencies; and the records of two quasi-independent USSC claim agencies whose origins predate the establishment of the Army and Navy Claim Agency: the Protective War Claim Association of the State of New York, located in New York City, and the Protective War Claim and Pension Agency, located in Philadelphia.

### IV. Army of the Potomac Archives 1862-1865 (29 boxes, 1 oversized folder)

The Army of the Potomac Archives, 1862-1865, document the Sanitary Commission's relief work in support of Union armies on campaign in Virginia, from the winter of 1862-1863 to the closing of the USSC's base at City Point in June, 1865. The establishment of the USSC's Field Relief Corps and Auxiliary Relief Corps, and USSC operations during Grant's Overland Campaign and the siege of Petersburg and Richmond are especially well represented. Earlier relief work at Harrison's Landing during the 1862 Peninsular Campaign is also documented. Relief efforts at Acquia Creek, Belle Plain, City Point, Falmouth, Petersburg, Richmond and other stations are documented in materials including letters, reports and journals of USSC officers and relief agents describing operations in the field, as well as letters from USSC staff, military officers, soldiers and civilians. Also present are records of supply distribution and assistance to troops in the field and at stations, lodges and hospitals. Other activities represented include Hospital Directory inquiry work, burial supervision, and camp inspections.

#### V. California Branch Archives 1862-1866 (12 boxes, 1 volume)

The California Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission was founded in San Francisco in September, 1862 as the Soldiers' Relief Fund Committee, an independent fundraising organization. It officially became a branch of the USSC in August of 1864. The California Branch Archives contain the correspondence of Branch Secretary O.C. Wheeler, meeting minutes of its Executive Committee, and reports submitted by local aid societies and organizing agents documenting the extensive fundraising network developed throughout California and into neighboring areas. Other records include a draft of a history of the Branch and a scrapbook.

#### VI. Condensed Historical Matter 1861-1871 (23 boxes, 87 volumes, 5 oversized folders)

Condensed Historical Matter contains the printed publications, graphics, photographs, maps and artifacts brought together by the USSC during post-war arrangements of its records, including some materials from the Medical Committee Archives.

#### VII. Department of North Carolina Archives 1862-1865 (8 boxes)

The USSC's Department of North Carolina was based in the Union-occupied town of New Bern from 1862-1865. Its main functions were the distribution of supplies to area military hospitals, and the provision of special relief services to individual soldiers and civilians in need, including local refugees and former prisoners-of-war. The Archives include letters and reports of relief agents, a journal of Department Inspector J.W. Page, camp inspection returns, inventories of supplies issued, and reports of sick and wounded in army hospitals.

#### VIII. Department of the Gulf Archives 1862-1866 (10 boxes, 1 volume)

The USSC's Department of the Gulf was established in New Orleans in 1862. This city became the Department's base for operations for supply distribution and relief efforts in support of soldiers and sailors in military operations along the Gulf Coast, from Texas to Florida, and into the interior of Louisiana. Its agents accompanied troops during the siege of Port Hudson, 1863, and the Red River campaign in 1864, and sailed with hospital ships carrying sick and wounded soldiers up the Mississippi River. In New Orleans, the USSC established a strong presence by distributing numerous supplies to hospitals, regiments and naval ships. Its Soldiers' Home provided food and shelter to soldiers in transit, becoming the hub of special relief services to soldiers and their families, including assistance in filing pension and other claims. The Department of the Gulf Archives, 1862-1866, comprise the records of its main office, notably the correspondence of George A. Blake and Edward A. Crane, who directed Department activities; its Special Relief Department, as seen in correspondence, record books documenting services at the Soldiers Homes in New Orleans and Brashear City, Louisiana, and back pay and bounty books recording claim assistance. Supply Department records document the extensive distribution of supplies in New Orleans and elsewhere, and to relief agents for use in the field. Other materials include receipts, canceled checks and miscellaneous documents.

#### IX. Department of the Shenandoah Archives 1864-1865 (2 boxes, 1 volume)

The USSC's Department of Shenandoah (also referred to as the Department of West Virginia) was based at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia from spring 1864 through June 1865 under the direction of Superintendent George A. Mühleck, closing its affairs in July under C. F. Howes. The Department of the Shenandoah Archives, 1864-1865, consist of letters, telegrams, reports from relief agents in the field, departmental orders, hospital reports, stock inventories, financial records, and a register of documents, as well as record books from its agencies in Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg, and Winchester. The records document the Department's efforts to support Union troops through the distribution of supplies and other forms of relief, particularly during the Shenandoah Valley campaigns of 1864.

#### X. English Branch Archives 1864-1865 (2 boxes, 1 volume)

The English Branch, which existed from the spring of 1864 to the fall of 1865, was established by Americans living in Britain to gain the support of their compatriots for the work of the USSC and the Union cause. The English Branch Archives document the work of the Branch's secretary and USSC agent in London, E.C. (Edmund Crisp) Fisher, as seen in his incoming and outgoing correspondence, journal with minutes, address book, and scrapbook, as well as a register of letters received, and printed matter.

**XI. Executive Committee of Boston Associate Archives 1861-1866 (7 boxes, 7 volumes)**

The Executive Committee of Boston Associates (ECBA) was officially organized on April 1, 1863 as a department of the United States Sanitary Commission's special relief service. It provided transportation, lodging, clothing, meals, medical attention, and aid in obtaining pay for those soldiers in the Boston area who were either discharged, on furlough, sick, or disabled, and in need of assistance. The Executive Committee of Boston Associates archives, 1863-1866, document work of Executive Committee secretaries John S. Blatchford and James Barnard to coordinate and report on the Committee's special relief services, including their coordination with the New England Women's Auxiliary Association and other relief organizations, and the work conducted by the superintendent and his staff at the office's relief rooms. Records include correspondence, reports, meeting files, registers identifying services provided to over 50,000 servicemen, additional notes on relief provided, a Hospital Directory register, and a surgical and medical record of soldiers receiving treatment under ECBA's care. Two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings provide further information on USSC activities in Boston.

**XII. Hospital Directory Archives 1862-1866 (86 boxes, 137 volumes, 1 oversized folder)**

The USSC established the Hospital Directory in 1862 to collect and record information concerning the location and condition of sick and wounded soldiers in U.S. Army general hospitals at the home front and in war zones, and to provide that information to the public. Its four offices in Washington, D.C., Louisville, Kentucky; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and New York City also gathered information from other hospitals and locations, and searched for soldiers who had lost contact with family and friends. The activities of all four offices are documented in the Hospital Directory Archives, 1862-1866, containing registers of hospital patients; files on individual soldiers containing letters from soldiers' relatives, friends, regimental officers and surgeons, and Hospital Directory staff; lists of deaths, burials, and prisoners of war; and administrative correspondence and record books.

**XIII. Maryland Archives 1862-1865 (13 boxes)**

The USSC Maryland Archives contain the records of USSC stations in Annapolis, Baltimore, Frederick, and Sharpsburg, Maryland. The USSC established offices, storehouses, and homes for soldiers and their relatives in these locations at various times throughout the war.

**XIV. New England Women's Auxiliary Association Archives 1861-1865 (12 boxes, 1 volume)**

The New England Women's Auxiliary Association (NEWAA) was established on November 28, 1861 in Boston, Massachusetts as an auxiliary branch of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). The New England Women's Auxiliary Association Archives, 1861-1865, consist of the extant records of its Executive Committee. Included are correspondence, packing lists, record books, and index volumes documenting its efforts to collect and distribute supplies for the USSC, and to spread information about the Commission's work throughout New England, particularly in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

#### XV. New York, N.Y. Archives 1861-1878 (135 boxes, 25 volumes, 3 oversized folders)

The New York, N.Y. Archives, 1861-1878, comprise the records of the USSC's Standing Committee, papers of USSC president Henry W. Bellows, records of the New York Office, and the Historical Bureau.

Records of the Standing Committee records and the papers of Henry W. Bellows include correspondence, minutes, reports and other materials illuminating strategic planning and decision-making at the highest level over the course of much of the USSC's existence.

Activities of the New York Office, established in 1862, are reflected in correspondence and other records documenting its direction of the USSC's hospital transport work in 1862; the coordination of the shipment of supplies collected by the Woman's Central Association of Relief and other branches to Washington, Baltimore, and USSC departments in the field; and its location as a base for the USSC's general secretary when in New York, especially after administrative reorganization in the fall of 1863, and for accounting staff. Also represented is the work of the USSC's Document Bureau, the main distributor of USSC publications, and the Lincoln Home, which provided shelter and other assistance for disabled and discharged soldiers after the war.

The primary function of the USSC's Historical Bureau was to collect, preserve, and arrange the Commission's archives. Organized in 1865 under the direction of General Secretary John S. Blatchford, the Bureau also supervised the production of various Commission histories and final reports, and was the administrative center for USSC post-war activities, including some special relief work in New York City. Historical Bureau records consist of correspondence, registers of documents in the USSC archives, reports and records received from local aid societies and USSC personnel, scrapbooks of USSC printed matter, and registers and reports of special relief activities. Also present are original writings and other materials submitted and compiled for proposed USSC historical publications, as arranged in the Special Relief Archives and Medical Committee Archives.

#### XVI. Pennsylvania Archives 1861-1867 (43 boxes, 9 volumes, 1 oversized folder)

The Pennsylvania Archives, 1861-1867, bring together the records of three USSC organizations working from offices at 1307 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia: the Philadelphia Agency, which was the operational office of the Philadelphia Associates who organized in 1861; the Women's Pennsylvania Branch, an auxiliary organization established in 1863; and the USSC's Canvassing and Supply Department, created in 1864 to coordinate fundraising and publicity among USSC eastern branches, including publication of the Sanitary Bulletin. Also present are records of supply and relief work conducted by USSC relief agents at Gettysburg and Harrisburg.

Philadelphia Agency records document General Office administrative activities, including the operation of a large supply depot in Philadelphia; providing supply and relief services for USSC eastern operations, especially during major military campaigns; meeting the supply and special relief needs of the Army and servicemen in the Philadelphia area; and developing local support for the USSC. The Agency's Special Relief Department distributed supplies to local Army hospitals and camps; assisted soldiers and sailors in need, especially those discharged and disabled; and established a post-war Soldiers' Lodge. The Agency also operated a Bureau of Employment for discharged soldiers and sailors after the war. The Philadelphia Agency and the Women's Pennsylvania Branch worked closely together to maintain the supply depot and to provide special relief services in Philadelphia. Branch materials document its efforts to collect and stock supplies from a large network of aid societies in Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey, for further shipment to USSC locations and for local distribution for relief purposes.

Other record groups documenting USSC operations in the Philadelphia area are identified in the finding aid of the Pennsylvania Archives.

## XVII. Statistical Bureau Archives 1861-1869 (128 boxes, 35 oversized folders)

The Statistical Bureau was established as a special department at Washington in the summer of 1861 to support the Commission's role as an independent advisory body to the government, with reference to the health, sanitary condition, and general comfort and efficiency of U.S. troops. Under the administration of E.B. Elliott and later Benjamin A. Gould, it compiled forms used by USSC inspectors and relief agents to investigate and monitor such conditions, or other topics determined by the USSC, and it collected data from those forms and tabulated their results for further analysis, reporting and publication by the USSC. It also collected data from Army regimental and medical records to support studies of loss and gain in the U.S. Army, which in turn supported the work of the work of the USSC's Hospital Directory. The Bureau used Army muster records, along with its own original forms, completed by a staff of examiners, to conduct physiological and sociological studies of the American soldier. In the fall of 1865, the Statistical Bureau moved its records and operations to Boston, Massachusetts, near Gould's residence in Cambridge. These activities are reflected in the records of the Statistical Bureau Archives, 1861-1869, containing correspondence, original returns, tabulations, abstracts and other studies. Materials concern Camp Inspections; the physical and social condition of troops as seen in records of Height, Age and Nativity, as well as Physical Descriptions and Physical Examinations; reports of U.S. Army general hospitals; and Loss and Gain in Army strength, including transcriptions of regimental returns, diagrams plotting rates of sickness and mortality, and records of statistical loss and gain in battle, with notable studies of the condition of troops fighting at Bull Run and Gettysburg. Although the bulk of the materials concern the Army, data concerning Navy personnel and civilians is also found. The activities of Bureau staff during the administration of Benjamin A. Gould are documented in his incoming correspondence and weekly reports received from staff.

## XVIII. Washington D.C. Archives 1861-1866 (228 boxes, 23 volumes, 5 oversized folders)

The Washington DC Archives, 1861-1866, consist of records of the following Sanitary Commission offices and departments based in Washington: the Central Office, the Special Relief Department, and the Supply Department, as well as the records of two departments which operated for limited periods of time: the Agency for the Purchase of Fresh Hospital Supplies, and the Department of Special Inspection of the General Hospitals of the Army. Records of the USSC's Statistical Bureau and Hospital Directory, located at 244 F Street, are arranged separately. The USSC's Central Office at 244 F Street was an important operational hub for USSC activities from 1861 through 1865, serving as a base for the General Secretary, the USSC's chief executive officer, for much of the war. With its proximity to government and military departments, and closeness to military operations in Virginia, Maryland and elsewhere, it was a major administrative, relief and supply center, especially for the east. Materials document the activities of the USSC's general secretary (successively: Frederick Law Olmsted, J. Foster Jenkins, and John S. Blatchford), in addition to the work of other staff responsible for USSC Eastern Department or broader operations.

Special Relief Department materials document the variety of aid provided to soldiers, sailors, and civilians passing through Washington and its environs by Department superintendent Frederick N. Knapp and his staff. The Department assisted soldiers in transit to their homes or other destinations, chiefly those who were furloughed, discharged, ill or disabled. It provided lodging, medical care and transportation assistance in a growing system of homes, lodges and relief stations, and helped soldiers and sailors procure back pay, bounty, and other monies due to them. Lodging and other aid was also extended to female relatives of soldiers and hospital nurses in need.

Supply Department records document operations in the network of storehouses forming the USSC's Supply Depot in Washington, D.C., a major center for the receipt and distribution of supplies for general, battlefield and special relief, both locally and for more distant locations.

Records of the Agency for the Purchase of Fresh Hospital Supplies document its operations in Washington and Philadelphia, June 1863-April 1864. At Philadelphia it purchased fresh foodstuffs of a greater variety and quality, and at a lower cost, than what was available in Washington, and quickly transported the perishable supplies to Washington for distribution to U.S. Army hospitals. It provided similar services to Army hospitals at Gettysburg, and to Army convalescent camps and USSC homes and lodges in the Washington area.

The Department of Special Inspection of the General Hospitals of the Army, initiated by the USSC's Medical Committee but located at the Central Office, operated from 1862 to 1863. Records document the Department's efforts to recruit inspectors and perform inspections at general army hospitals, and to report their findings to the Army's Surgeon General for review and action.

**XIX. Western Department Archives 1861-1865 (33 boxes, 13 volumes, 1 oversized folder)**

The USSC's Western Department, formally organized in September 1861, assisted soldiers involved primarily in the operations of the Western Theater through a far-reaching network based in Louisville, Kentucky for most of the war. Geologist and paleontologist Dr. John S. Newberry (1822-1892), an Associate Secretary and Commissioner of the USSC, led the Department. The Western Department Archives, 1861-1865, primarily document the Department's extensive supply distribution and relief efforts in the Western Theater, from its first base in Cleveland, Ohio (1861-1862) and later Louisville, Kentucky (1862-1865). Material is arranged by office or function and includes records for the Central Office, some agency offices, supply distribution, and Soldiers' Homes.

**XX. Woman's Central Association of Relief 1861-1866 (54 boxes, 4 volumes)**

The Woman's Central Association of Relief (WCAR) was founded in April 1861 in New York City, officially becoming a branch of the USSC on June 24. Its primary function was the procurement of supplies, obtained from an extensive network of contributing aid societies. The WCAR also participated in other war relief efforts, such as fundraising, registering female nurses for work in military hospitals, and helping to direct returning, discharged soldiers and soldiers' families to local relief agencies for assistance. The Woman's Central Association of Relief held its final meeting on July 7, 1865, although it continued to receive supplies into October. Two prominent organizers within the WCAR were Louisa Lee Schuyler (1837-1926) and Ellen Collins (1828-1912). The Woman's Central Association of Relief Archives, 1861-1865, primarily document the supply procurement and distribution activities of the WCAR and consist of correspondence, minutes, reports, supply records, and directories listing associate managers.