



Discovery: Stories Revealed from Confederate Postal History

by Col. D. Thomas Royster, Jr.

War begins: April 12, 1861

Figure 11. Augusta, GA, USA star die used in the CSA. CDS “Apr. 12” (1861), the day on which Ft. Sumter was bombarded – the war began. Adams Express Company, New York in green ink.

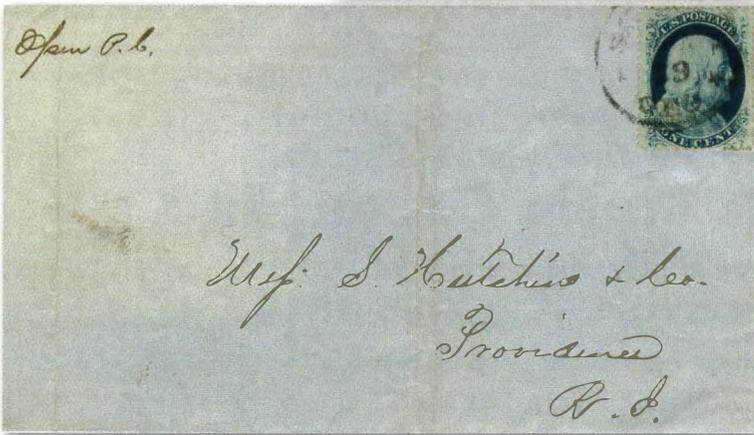


Figure 12. This folded, printed circular was mailed using US 24 tied by a CDS “Savannah Geo Apr 19” (1861) to a firm in Providence, RI. (The Savannah “stars” cancellation.)

In a printed circular (Fig. 12) of the Savannah Republican, dated Friday, April 19, 1861, only a short week after the firing upon Ft. Sumter, the Savannah market report on cotton and certain other crops and lumber/timber was forwarded by Hunter & Gammell.

“Cotton – Since our last report of the cotton market made a week ago, a war has been initiated, which, disturbing all commercial calculations, and producing an uncertainty in regard to the future, that has put a complete check upon operations in our leading staple. The sales of the week only amount to the insignificant sum of 68 bales, and it is utterly useless to attempt quotations, which we therefore omit.” Concerning “Timber – The market is completely upset by the war news. The arrivals have been light, but the demand has been lighter, and prices cannot be named.”



Figure 13. On May 11 1861, Ambrose W. Winston, of Lynchburg, VA, and soon to be commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in E Co, 58th Virginia Infantry, wrote a four-page letter to his uncle William H. Winston at Castle Craig in Campbell County, VA, in which he related preparations for war. He notes that “the motto of the loyal native born Southern may be ‘War to the death or Lincoln & his cohorts.’” The letter was written from Woodville, AL, and was contained in the Confederate seven-star color patriotic (Dietz F7-16 but unlisted in color) with manuscript Woodville, AL, “Paid 3, May 11/61.”

From Camp Davis near Richmond on May 22, 1861, Hartwell P. Spain, 1st South Carolina Regiment, wrote his sister a four-page letter in bold pencil which was enclosed in an advertising cover—imprinted with the design for American Hotel, By J.L. Carrington & Co, Richmond, VA - with a partial Richmond, VA, CDS, May 23, 1861. The CDS most certainly tied a U.S. stamp which is missing, perhaps the result of anger and frustration on the part of the sister. The envelope also has a period pencil docket on the front: “From Hartwell Spain, wounded at Gaines Mills, died in Richmond”. The reverse of the cover has the following written in ink: “Direct to Richmond, Va., 1st Regt. S.C.V, Capt. W.B.M. We leave in the morning at 5 o’clock for Alexandria – our ? will be forwarded to that place. Good night dearest Sissy. Your Bro. H.P.S.” The following is the significant majority of the letter:

“Camp Davis, near Richmond, May 22d, 1861. My Dearest Sissy. Your affectionate and sympathetic epistle reached me this morning. I thank you dear Sissy for your kindness and affection to me. A loving brother only can truly appreciate such bountiful bestowments. O how it delights and gratifies me to hear from my relatives. I have written you several times from this place – had concluded that some delinquent of “Old Abe’s” had halted them, but I suppose you have rec. all ere this. I rec. a bundle and several letters from home this morning – what will I do when Mother & Father are gone! I feel that I could not survive their death! Well Sissy, I have so much to write about it is impossible for one to begin appropriately – don’t criticize a soldier’s letter I beg you. The camp is all alive and much excited at this time. Orders were sent to the 2d Regt., Col Kershaw’s Com., yesterday evening to the affect, prepare yourselves for marching early on Thursday morning. Our Regt. will go the same time. Tis said we are going in 30 miles of Washington, called Manassas Gap. Our men are in fighting condition. We are willing, yet anxious to strike a blow for our rights and dearest

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- **More of Tom Royster’s Stories** Revealed from Confederate Postal History.
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Figure 14: Advertising cover to Mrs. John T. Wightman Charlotte, NC, from brother Hartwell P. Spain.

honor. I would plunge a dagger in the breast of a man if he would dare to speak Union in my presence. Hanging is too good for a low contemptable and cowardly submissionist. They are destitute of having patriotism and pride, who preach submission to tyranny and exterminism. How dare a human entertain such sentiments to the glorious Union. Tell Bro. John to hurry up the "Old North State." And Kentucky! Shame, shame forever on her! Assuming a neutral position in such an hour of extreme peril and excitement! I look with disgust and horror upon the action of some of the states who should at once dash the chain of displeasure to affirm – join their sisters and grasp with steady arm the shield, and draw with agility the sleeping sword with determination to conquer or die. I thank God for the enabling spirit, that I am destitute of fear. I long to aim my unceasing rifle at the very life primitive of my antagonist. Do you know Wm. Atkinson? He and I mess and sleep together. He is a noble fellow! I am a member of the Richmond Rifles. D.G. Wailey did not come in with his company. Only a few low characters came from the company with L. Daniel McIntosh. I preferred joining a company where I could associate with respectable young men. About 30 of this company are in So. Ca. College, Capt. Miller commanding. The drum is beating. I must close until after drill. We are subjected to some exercise here, drill four times a day will do us good. I am improving in health. We are encamped near the trotting course, two miles from the heart of the city, a beautiful and pleasant spot. We fare very badly indeed. Some days we have nothing at all palatable, but occasionally some fair hand is extended with delicacies to the suffering soldiers. Bless the Ladies! I desire to see them at home, but I am, thank God, united in an ingenious and glorious cause and I'll go where my country calls. Richmond is crowded with soldiers – still companies are ordered to different points and our time will come soon you may depend. The Republicans dread us. They must know that where we raise our arms we conquer. I wish you could see us. Our uniforms are musty, but the outward appearance of things deceiveth much. I contemplate visiting you when I return. I will perhaps go through Charlotte on my way to South Carolina. I'm sorry Charleston is blockaded. I must confess the Yankees have astonished me this time for I had no idea that they could muster so large a force in the field and extend their impudence and threats to our very doors. No parallel can be found in history to their atrocity. They are infatuated, mad & revengeful. Their all will be soon fluttering in the winds of destruction if they continue their encroachments. We, the 1st S.C.V., have but five more weeks to remain in service. The Regt. will remain as long as there is prospect for fighting. I think we will have a fight soon. Dearest Sissy, I think of you often. Please write frequently. As ever, your dearest Bro., H.P. Spain".