

**United States Post Office Department Operations
in the Seceded States in 1861**

*A collection of covers from 1861 illustrating the operations of the
United States Post Office Department in the seceded states*

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The pages have been numbered at the bottom for ease of reference

United States Post Office Department Operations in the Seceded States in 1861

Background: On January 1, 1861 South Carolina had been an independent state for 11 days, having seceded from the United States (US) on December 20, 1860. Nine additional southern states would secede by the end of May 1861. Each was a self-proclaimed independent state until joining the Confederate States of America (CSA). The US Post Office Department (USPOD) continued to provide mail service in the seceded states until June 1, 1861. Tennessee was the only state to secede after this date.

Purpose: Illustrate the continuation of USPOD service in the seceded states through May 31, 1861 with surviving covers.

Plan:

- 1) Illustrate chronologically covers mailed at the common single letter rate delivered by the USPOD in:
 - a) the 6 states that seceded prior to formation of the CSA
 - b) the same 6 states after they become Confederate States on Feb. 4, 1861 and
 - c) the 4 additional states that seceded after the formation of the CSA and before the termination of USPOD service on May 31, 1861.
- 2) Illustrate covers from this period mailed at less common postal rates.



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Spartanburg, SC double circle
date stamp with grid cancel
Jan. 7, 1861



SC Ind. State

At the time this cover was mailed on January 7, 1861 South Carolina had stood alone in its state of rebellion, a self-proclaimed independent state, having seceded from the US 18 days earlier.

Six Southern States Claiming Independent State Status* in Jan. 1861

South Carolina
Mississippi

US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Clinton, SC circular date
stamp postmark
Jan. 19, 1861



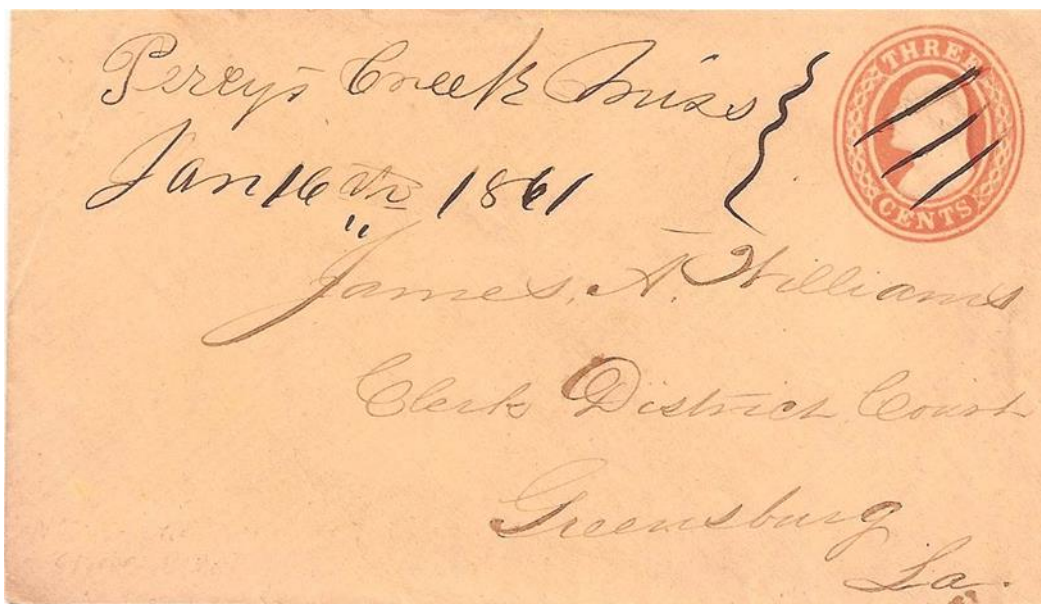
SC Ind. State



South Carolina Secedes – Dec. 20, 1860

The US refused to recognize secession while South Carolina and Mississippi legislators considered secession a state's right and their states to be independent states or republics when these covers were mailed.

Mississippi Secedes – Jan. 9, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1853 3 cent stamped
envelope

Percy's Creek, MS
manuscript postmark with
pen cancel
Jan. 16, 1861



MS Ind. State

*Secession and CSA admission dates used in this exhibit are from Kaufmann, et al, (2012) *Confederate States of America, Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, Inc., p. 4.

Alabama
Florida

US single letter rate

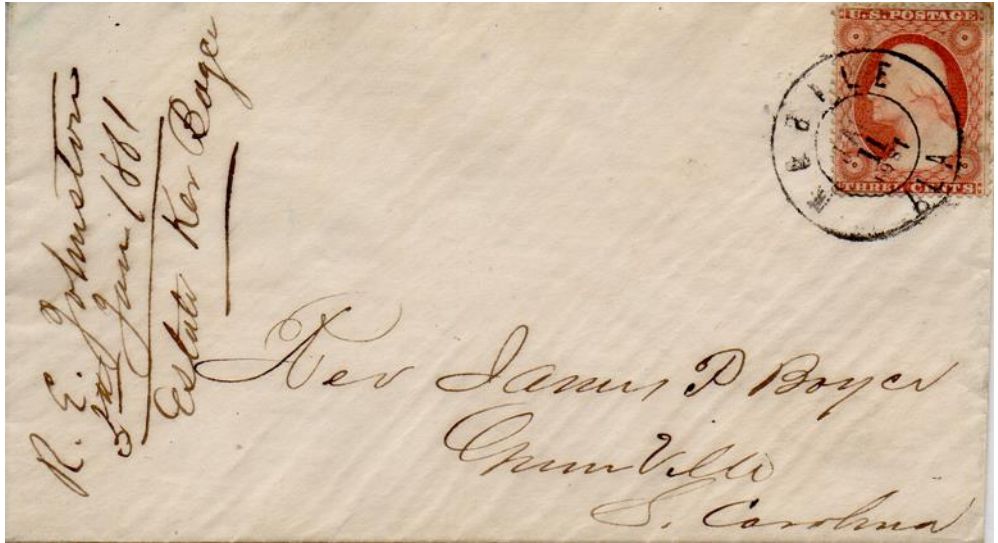
US 1857 3 cent stamp

Mobile, AL double-circle
datestamp
Jan. 11, 1861

**Alabama Independent
State, First Day of Use**



AL Ind. State



Alabama Secedes – Jan. 11, 1861

Alabama and Florida were the third and fourth states to secede and became independent states on the same day.

Florida Secedes - Jan. 11, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

St. Augustine, FL
circular date stamp
with grid cancel
Jan. 29, (1861)

Folded letter datelined
Jan. 28, 1861



FL Ind. State

Georgia
Louisiana

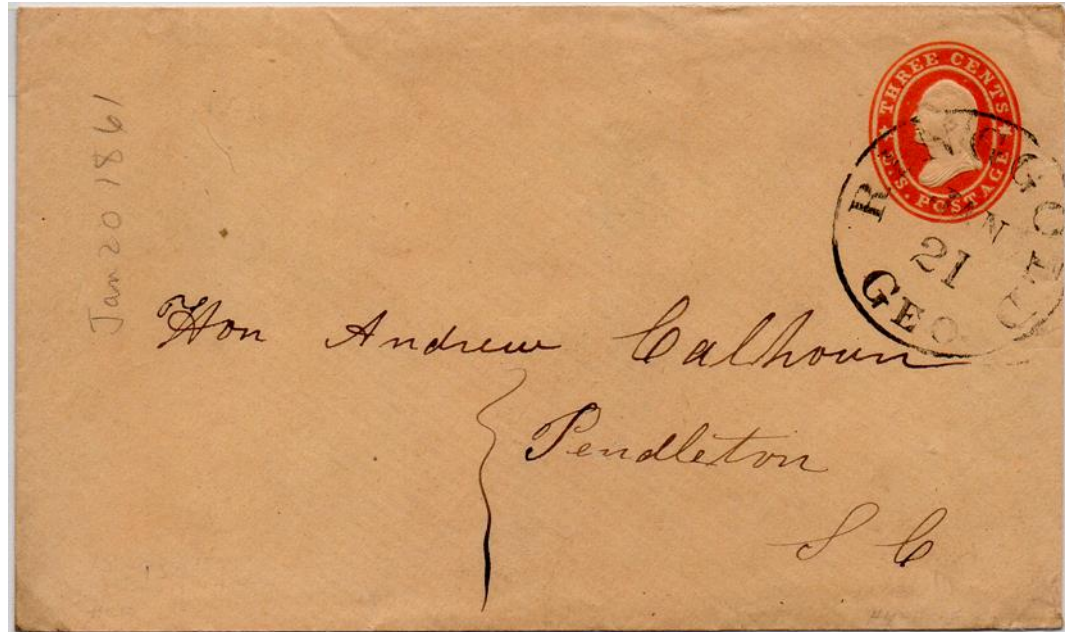
US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent stamped envelope (first available in the fall of 1860 and not legal for use in the seceded states after May 31, 1861, verifying 1861 usage)

Ringgold, GA circular date Stamp
Jan. 21, (1861)



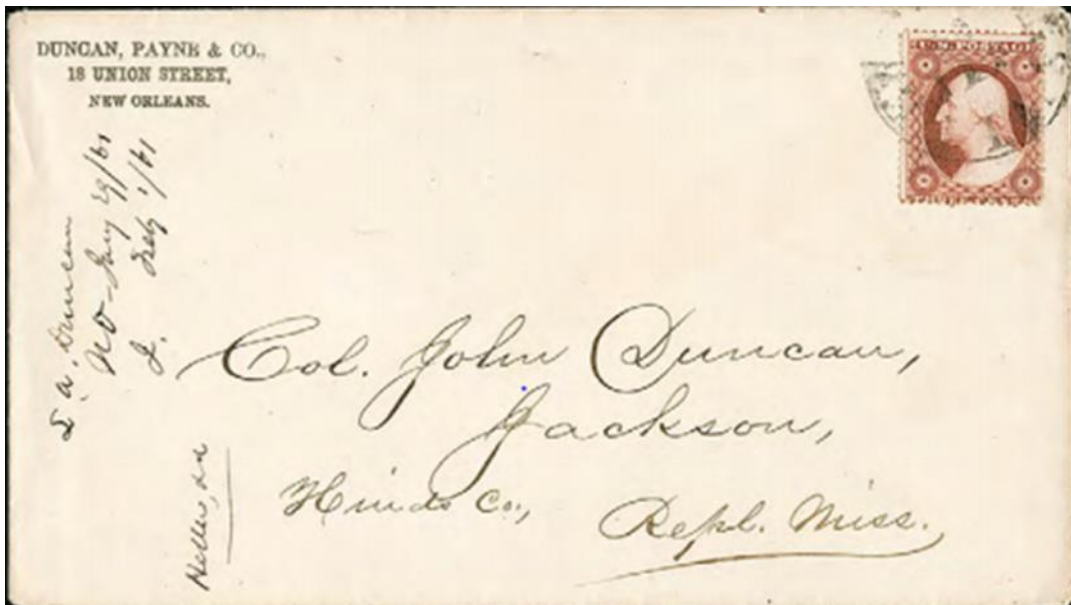
GA Ind. State



Georgia Secedes – Jan. 19, 1861

Georgia and Louisiana were the last states to secede before the formation of the CSA. Delegates met in February 1861 at Montgomery, AL to discuss the formation of the new nation.

Louisiana Secedes - Jan. 26, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

New Orleans, LA,
curricular date stamp
Jan. 30, 1861

To Jackson, **Republic
of Mississippi**



LA Ind. State

Confederate States of America Formed February 4, 1861

On February 4, 1861 delegates from the 6 seceded independent states (South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana) convened at Montgomery, Alabama and voted to join and form the CSA.



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Baton Rouge, LA
circular date stamp and grid cancel
on folded lettersheet
Feb. 4, 1861

First Day of CSA



CSA LA

Despite the actions taken by the authorities of the six southern states, the U.S. Post Office Department continued to service mail delivery into and from the seceded states. The U.S. government did not recognize the legitimacy of the new government, believing that the rebellion would not last. The CSA leadership consented to the arrangement, not yet having the means to provide mail service.



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Marblehead, MA
circular date stamp and grid
cancel
Feb. 4, (1861)
(year confirmed in docketing)

First Day of CSA



to CSA MS

Same Six States Become Founding Members of the CSA on Feb. 4, 1861

South Carolina
Georgia

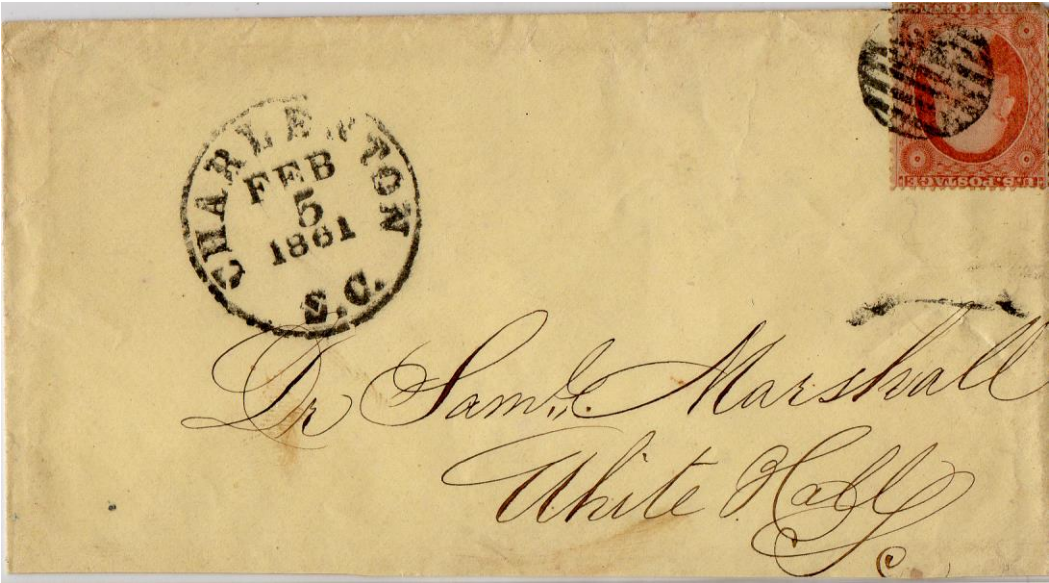
US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Charleston, SC
circular date stamp
with grid cancel
Feb. 5, 1861



CSA SC



South Carolina – Joins CSA Feb. 4, 1861

The US Post Office Department operations in SC, MS, AL, FL, GA and LA were in a foreign country as of Feb. 4, 1861, at least in the view of seceded states. The US Government had a different view and there were still hopes that the disputes between north and south could be resolved peacefully soon.

Georgia – Joins CSA Feb. 4, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent stamped envelope

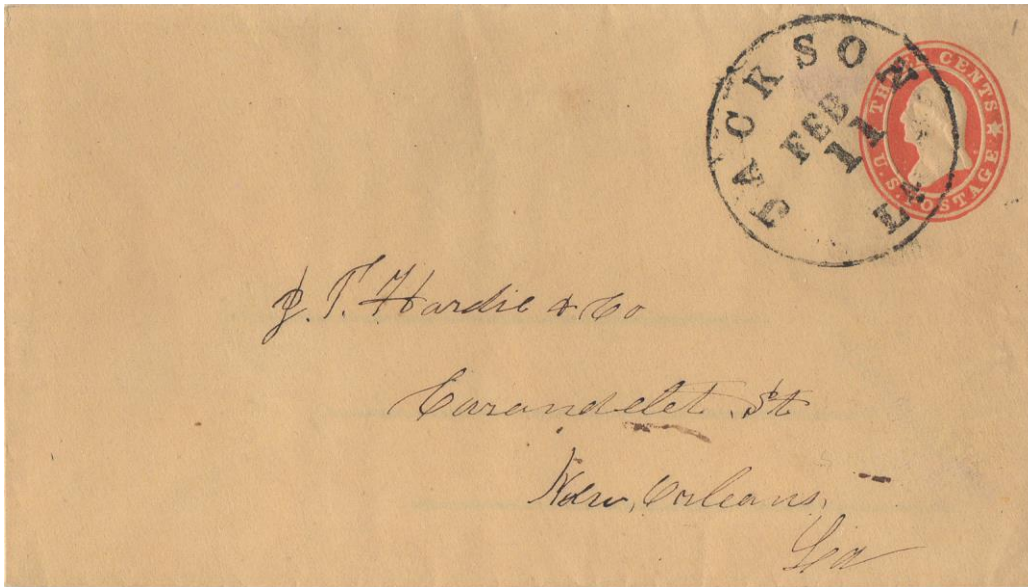
Thomasville, GA
circular date stamp
with grid cancel, Feb.
7, (1861)



CSA GA

Louisiana

Florida



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent
stamped envelope

Jackson, LA
circular date stamp
Feb. 11, (1861)



CSA LA

Louisiana Joins CSA – Feb. 4, 1861

Florida Joins CSA – Feb. 4, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent
stamped envelope

Marianna, FL
circular date stamp
Feb. 22, (1861)



CSA FL

Alabama
Mississippi



US single letter rate

US 1853 3 cent
stamped envelope

Mobile, AL double-
circle date stamp
Feb. 26, 1861



CSA AL

Alabama Joins CSA – Feb. 4, 1861

Mississippi Joins CSA – Feb. 4, 1861

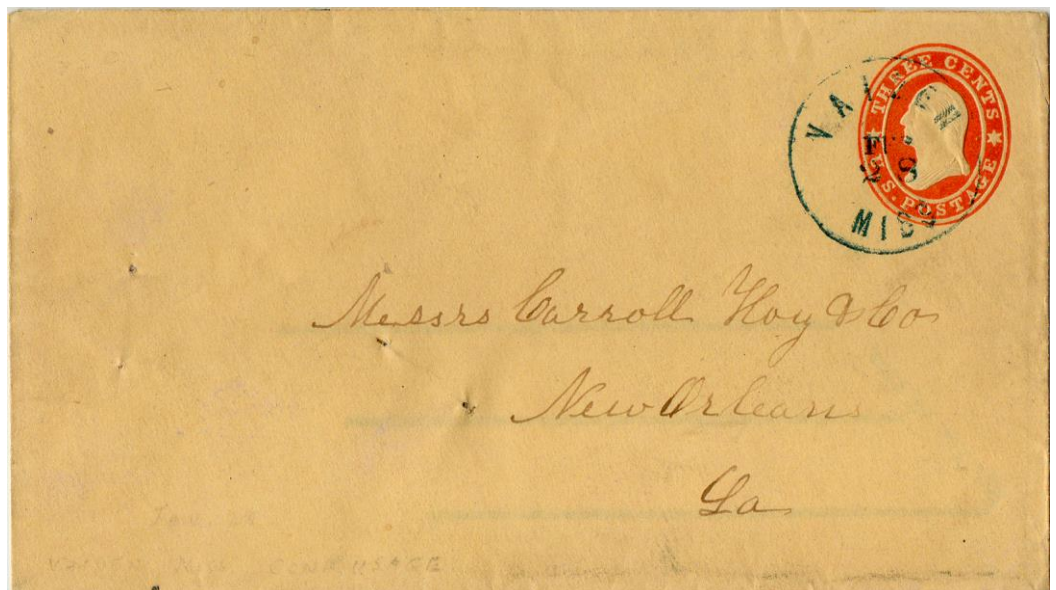
US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent
stamped envelope

Vaiden, MS Circular
date stamp
Feb. 28, (1861)



CSA MS



Four Additional States Secede Prior to June 1, 1861

Texas



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent
stamped envelope

La Grange, TX
circular date stamp
with pen cancel
Feb 6, 1861



TX transition
to Ind. State

Texas Secedes – Mar. 2, 1861

Texas delegates voted to secede on Feb. 1, 1861. The Ordinance of Secession, however also required a state-wide popular referendum to pass supporting secession. It passed on Feb. 23rd and Texas officially became an independent state on Mar. 2, 1861.

Texas Joins CSA – Mar. 5, 1861

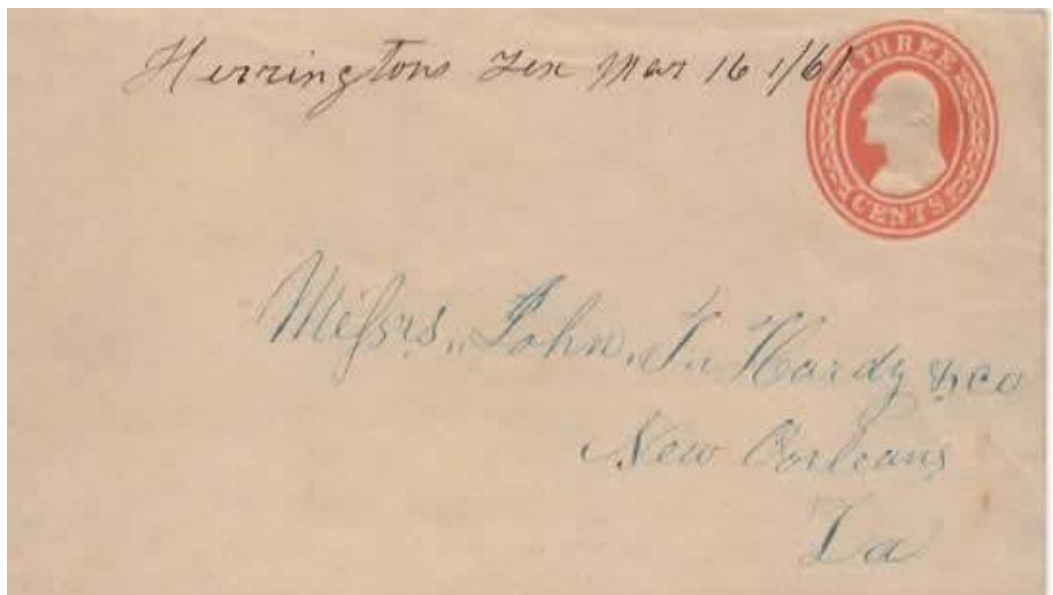
US single letter rate

US 1853 3 cent
stamped envelope

Herringtons, TX
manuscript
postmark
Mar 16, 1861



CSA TX



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent stamped envelope

Dublin, VA circular date stamp
Apr. 18, (1861)



VA Ind. State



Virginia Secedes – Apr. 17, 1861

The remaining undecided southern states were driven to decide on secession after US President Lincoln called for troops to put down the rebellion following the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina on April 12-13, 1861. The rebellion was now a war.

Virginia Joins CSA – May 7, 1861

US single letter rate

US 1860 1 cent
stamped envelope with
2 1857 1 cent stamps

Lexington, VA circular
date stamp with grid
cancels
May 31, 1861

**Last Day of US
Postal Service in the
Seceded States
Unique
Combination**



CSA VA





US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent stamp

Helena, AR double-circle date stamp
May 6, 1861

With original letter dated May 6, 1861, the day Arkansas seceded.



AR Ind. State

Arkansas Seceded – May 6, 1861

Arkansas Joined CSA – May 18, 1861

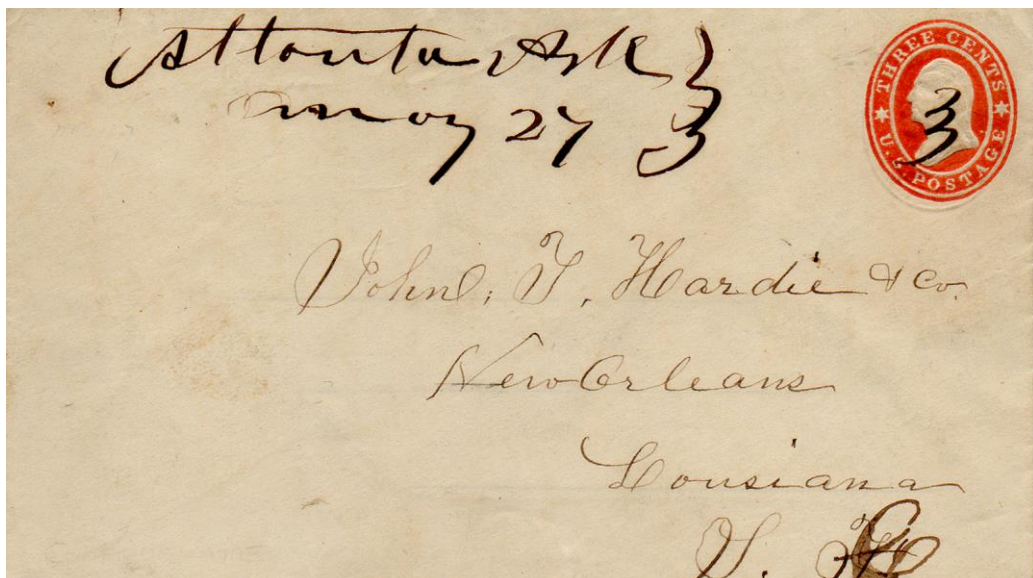
US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent stamped envelope

Atlanta, AR manuscript postmark and cancel
May 27, 1861



CSA AR



US single letter rate

US 1857 3 cent
stamped envelope

Baltimore, MD circular
date stamp
May 21, 1861

To Elizabeth City, NC



to NC Ind. State



North Carolina Seceded – May 20, 1861

North Carolina Joined CSA – May 27, 1861



US single letter rate

US 1860 3 cent
stamped envelope

Raleigh, NC double-
circle date stamp,
May 31, 1861

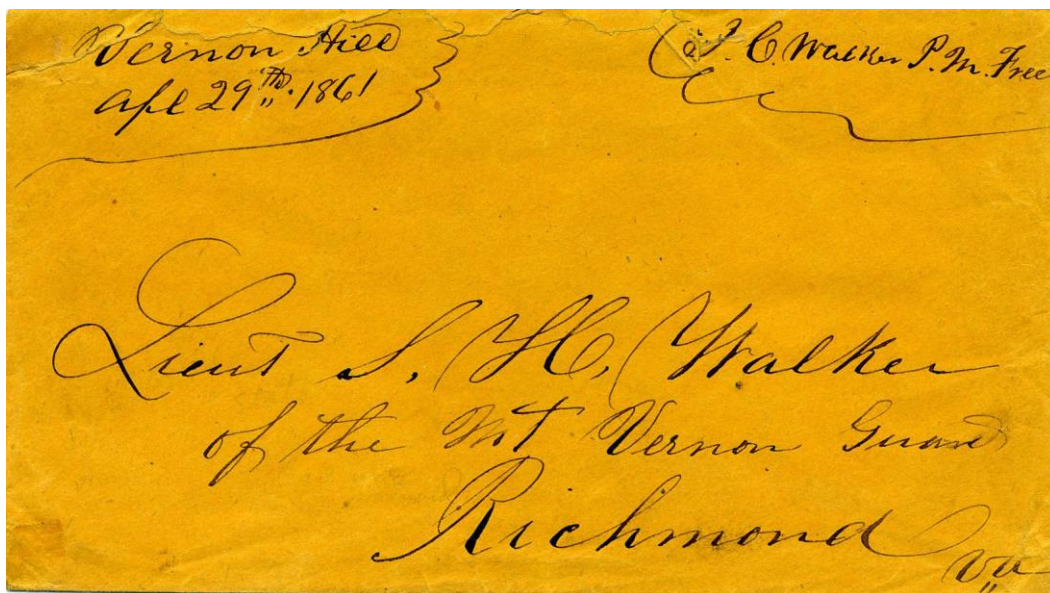
**Last Day of US
Postal Service in
the Seceded
States**



CSA NC

Less Common Postal Rates

Free Frank
Carriers' Fee



Postmasters Free Frank

Vernon Hill, VA
Manuscript postmark
Apr. 29, 1861



VA Ind. State

Free Franking Privilege

Franking privileges were given to several US government officials. Only postmasters making less than \$200/year could use their franking privilege for personal use.

Mail was delivered from one post office to another. Some larger post offices offered delivery to or from local collection points for a fee. A 1 cent official (valid at any post office) or semi-official (valid only at the local post office) Carriers' stamp could be used. The cover below has a Baltimore semi-official carriers' stamp.

Carriers' Fee

Single letter rate with 1 cent
Carriers' fee

US 1857 3 cent stamp with
semi-official 1 cent Baltimore
Carriers' stamp (for delivery to
the Baltimore post office)

Baltimore, MD circular date
stamp
March 9, 1861

to Houston, TX

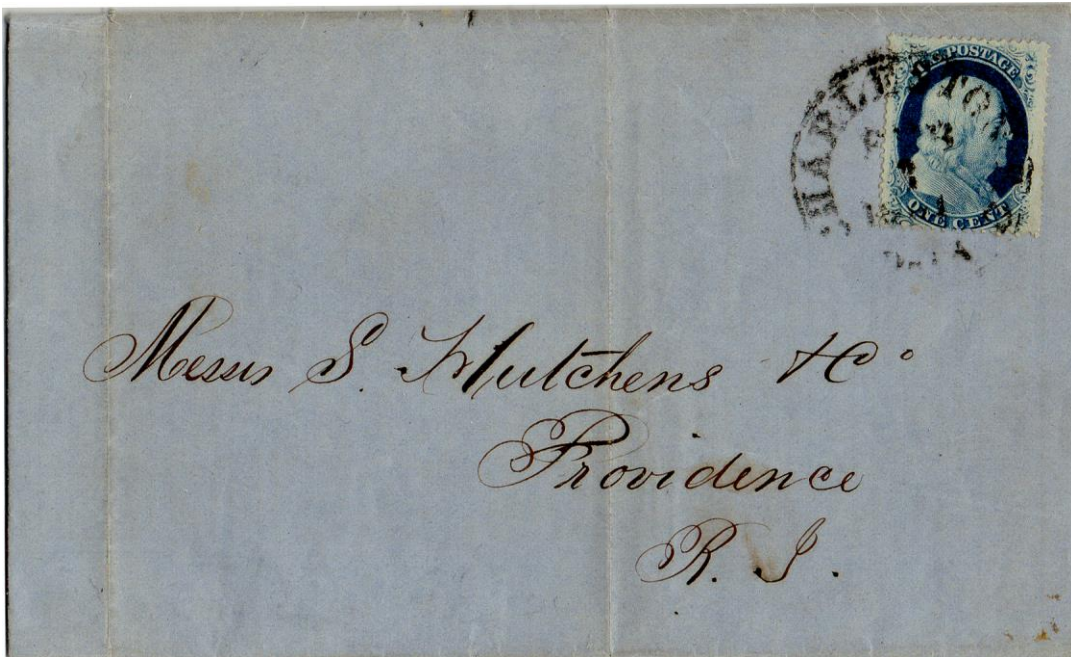


to CSA TX



Printed Circulars

Drop Letters



US circular rate, 1 cent for printed circulars up to 3 ounces, plus 1 cent for each additional ounce, any distance

US 1857 1 cent stamp

Charleston, SC circular date stamp
Feb. 8, 1861

Folded prices current



CSA SC

Unsealed Printed Circulars

The folded *Mercury Prices Current and Commercial Journal* lettersheet above was sent to Providence, RI (US State) from Charleston, SC (CSA State) on Feb. 8, 1861.

Drop Letters

Letter rates only paid for delivery from one post office to another. Letters were delivered to the post office and picked up at the post office. Drop letters (as below) were delivered to the local post office for local pick up by the recipient.

US drop letter rate, 1 cent for letters addressed to a local recipient

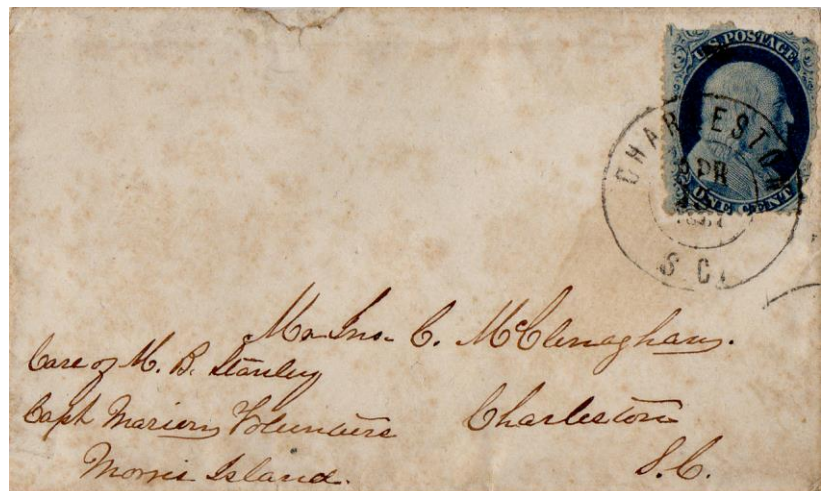
US 1857 1 cent stamp

Charleston, SC double-circle date stamp
April 13, 1861

Sent During the 2 Day Bombardment of Fort Sumner in Charleston Harbor, Apr. 12, 13, 1861.



CSA SC



Overweight Letters

Double letter rate

2 US 1857 3 cent stamps

Charleston, SC
double-circle date
stamp with grid
cancels
Feb. 2, 1861



SC Ind. State



Overweight Letters (over 1/2 ounce)

The US single letter rate for distances less than 3,000 miles was 3 cents. The rate was for letters weighing 1/2 ounce or less. An additional 3 cents was required for each additional 1/2 ounce. Prepayment of postage was required but postmasters could accept underpaid letters and mark them due the amount underpaid.

US Quadruple Letter Rate

3 US 1857 3 cent stamps +
due 3 cents in manuscript

Memphis, TN circular date
stamp with bull's eye
cancels
May 9, 1861

to Thibodaux, LA



To CSA LA



Trans-Atlantic Mail

Single letter rate from the US to France (15 cents)

US 1859 10 cent and 1860 5 cent stamps – 3 cents for US overland + 9 cents for sea or ship + 3 cents for France overland. The “12” at the bottom of the Boston handstamp indicates passage was by US packet (3 cents + 9 cents with the remaining 3 cents going to France).

New Orleans, LA circular date stamp, via Boston and Le Havre Feb. 21, 1861

Folded letter to Paris, France

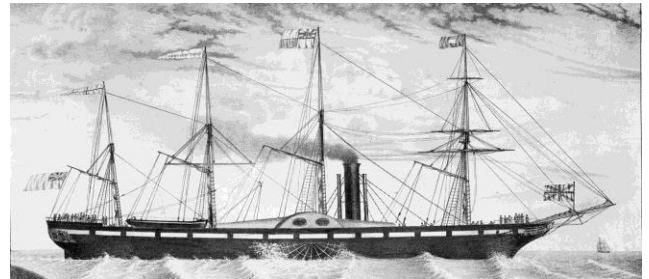


CSA LA



CSA Louisiana to France

Rates to European countries were established by treaties.



England to CSA Texas

Single letter rate from the United Kingdom to United States (24 cents)

UK 1856 1-shilling stamp (equivalent to 24 cents) – 3 cents for UK inland + 16 cents for sea or ship + 5 cents for US inland, 21 cents hand stamp indicating passage via US mail packet (16+5 cents, remaining 3 cents to Britain). Arrived at Portland, ME and forwarded to Texas.

Preston, England duplex date stamp March 6, 1861

Mourning cover to Weatherford, TX



to CSA TX

