

**CONFEDERATE STATES
OF AMERICA
The Special Postal Routes**

By Lawrence L. Shenfield



THE COLLECTORS CLUB
22 East 35th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

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Foreword

This is a very useful book. It is a study of perhaps the most interesting and romantic portions of the postal history of the Civil War—the unusual ways and means by which some letters traveled between North and South, to and from abroad, and between widely separated sections of the Confederacy—all despite the exigencies of a terrible and continuing war. As such, it will form an outstanding contribution to the steadily growing background literature on the Civil War and, more particularly, on the Confederate States of America.

The author of this work is an old and close personal friend—Lawrence L. Shenfield. I have worked closely and intimately with him on Confederate postal subjects for some twenty or more years. Not only is he a keen and thorough student, but more than that, a *scholar*. Mr. Shenfield holds top rank with the few real scholars who have existed in this field. Their slim ranks include, of course, the “Father of Confederate Philately,” August Dietz, Sr., Edward S. Knapp, Stanley B. Ashbrook, Frederick J. Grant, and a few others. Great collectors of the past and present owe much to these men.

Impatient with mediocrity, relentless with chicanery, and devoted to thoroughness and real knowledge, Mr. Shenfield’s contributions to Confederate philatelic history are of untold value. This book on “The Special Postal Routes” forms an outstanding such contribution.

Van Dyk MacBride.

Newark, N. J.
February, 1961.

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CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

The Special Postal Routes

Introduction

This year of grace, 1961, marks the Centennial of the outbreak of the War-Between-the-States. In the years to come, as memory recalls this Centennial, it may be recalled also as the high tide of novels, biographic campaign treatises and battle dissections of the War. For this fratricidal contest—its leaders and its little men, its brutality and its chivalry, its tragedies and its glories—have gripped the souls and stirred the fading memories of Americans for decades. And rising philatelic interest in the stamps and postal history of the Confederate States has followed the same course.

Here, for the first time in America, philatelic study and postal history research were offered the opportunity to explore the obscure trails of the last, longest, and most gigantic of the “romantic” Wars. Families torn apart, soldiers shut off from news from home, the land split asunder by armies, ports closed by blockade, prisoners doomed to hardship and disease—all these and many more circumstances of war cut the threads of communication—the delivery of the mails—that could have contributed so greatly to sustain public morale, to promote vital business and to direct the war effort.

It is with these disrupting results of bitter war, and the special steps of postal reform taken by the Post Office of the Confederate States and others to overcome the difficulties, that this volume concerns itself. The special postal routes and their regulations of greatest interest to philatelists were not always initiated by the legislation alone of the Confederate Post Office. Sometimes the difficulties to be resolved were of mutual concern—to the North *and* to the South. And occasionally Southern or Northern relations with foreign states had an effect upon the final solution. The criterion therefore for inclusion of a Special Postal Route in this volume, is whether its operation was of benefit to the Confederacy, its government, its citizens or its soldiers.

Part of the material contained in the succeeding pages, and much of the basic research, are reproduced from articles by the author written and published over the past twenty-five years. Each article has been carefully revised and brought abreast of current knowledge of the subject by appropriate inclusion of new data that may have come to light in subsequent research by the author or by others. At the time of going to press, the subjects covered represent the latest knowledge in each field. But since philatelic research is a restless, active force and new finds occasionally come to light, there is no blinking the chance that ere the ink is dry on these pages, a fresh fact should be included among those presented herewith. Who dares claim to have written the last word?

At this point, it is possible that the reader may have a question on the tip of his tongue—“Why does this book stop at Special Postal Routes?”

The reasons are twofold. First: of all Confederate States covers, the most highly prized by collectors are those used over Special Postal Routes. Not only are such covers most eagerly sought for—they are without doubt the most interesting, the most historic, and the most characteristic of the War. Further, they are usually the most “showy” covers—with more stamps on them, or South and North stamps, or extra handstamps, or a label. Now add to these attractions the fact that most of them are not common, most of them come in less than fine condition (rough routing and extra handling) and you have the perfect combination—historical interest, “showy” appearance, scarcity, hard-to-find “fine”—that stirs the lust of the collector of Confederate States covers.

Second: Research on the *stamps* of the Confederacy, their manufacture, their colors, their plating, their dates of issue, their usage under the simple (domestic only) postal rate schedule, etc.—is so voluminous and so fully brought up to date in the comprehensive DIETZ CONFEDERATE CATALOG AND HANDBOOK, 1959, that to cover the stamps or handstamps or imprinted envelopes or provisionals again would be, indeed, “carrying coals to . . .”

So, in the pages that follow, the collector may delve into the details of these favorites that he seeks. If he is most advanced, he may discover little new, yet he may thrill at the sight of a cover he now owns—or wince at the sight of another he nearly acquired. And the novice to Confederates (he is legion) may he learn as he reads, understand his collection better—and be he of the North, or of the South, may he join with his brother in sharing the joys of philatelic history.

Lawrence L. Shenfield

Bronxville, N. Y.
February, 1961

I.

The "SOUTH. LETTER UNPAID" Marking of Louisville, Ky. June and July 1861

During the early months of the War-Between-the-States correspondence between the North and the South and vice versa became increasingly difficult. As early as March, Postmaster General Reagan had initiated postal legislation in the Confederate Congress and it was evident that he was prepared to take over postal service in the seceded states. His proclamation of May 13th named May 31st as the final date upon which Southern postmasters would close their accounts with the Federal Government, and begin on June 1st their duties in the postal service of the Confederacy.

From that date on "Paid" handstamps and postmasters' provisional stamps of the Southern cities began to be used. However, great confusion reigned and on both sides of the lines people sought to carry on correspondence, without knowing whether or when their letters would be delivered. Sometime early in July the two chief carriers of express mail—Adams Express Company and the American Letter Express Company—were doing a flourishing business through their Union offices at Louisville and the Southern offices at Nashville. Their express messengers carried mail across the lines between these two cities and their method of charge and payment of postage carefully observed the postal regulations of both the Union and the Confederacy. Despite Postmaster General Blair's order that postal intercourse between the states was declared to be unlawful after May 28, 1861, the express mail business flourished and grew. It continued, apparently unchecked, until August 28th when finally a Federal post office edict put an end to it.

It is not known whether Postmaster Blair's order for May 28th, 1861, was issued to coincide with the take-over of the postal service by the Confederacy on June 1, 1861, but it had the immediate effect of bringing to light the pile-up of mail directed across the lines which had accumulated in border post offices both Northern and Southern.

The tendency of postmasters in the Southern States to ignore orders from Washington, and those in the doubtful states like Kentucky and Tennessee to show Southern sympathies, made it difficult to enforce Federal postal regulations. For example, on June 1st, 1861, many postmasters received a regulation from the Dead Letter Office at Washington reading:

"You will return all mail directed to Southern States which cannot be forwarded to their intended destination on account of the discontinuance of mail service or any other cause. You will therefore once a week or oftener, if they accumulate rapidly, make a separate return of such letters, postmark each on the sealed side, put domestic, foreign and registered letters in separate parcels and mark each parcel outside and bills showing their number and rates."

In this way the Union tried to prevent letters crossing the lines from the North to the South.

Without doubt, this order went to W. D. McNish, Postmaster at Nashville, Tenn., which was still in the Union column of loyal states. This Nashville office and its companion office across the lines at Louisville presented the soft spot in mail transit, because Nashville was pro-Southern and Louisville housed many strong Southern sympathizers. The Richmond-Washington line was closed to

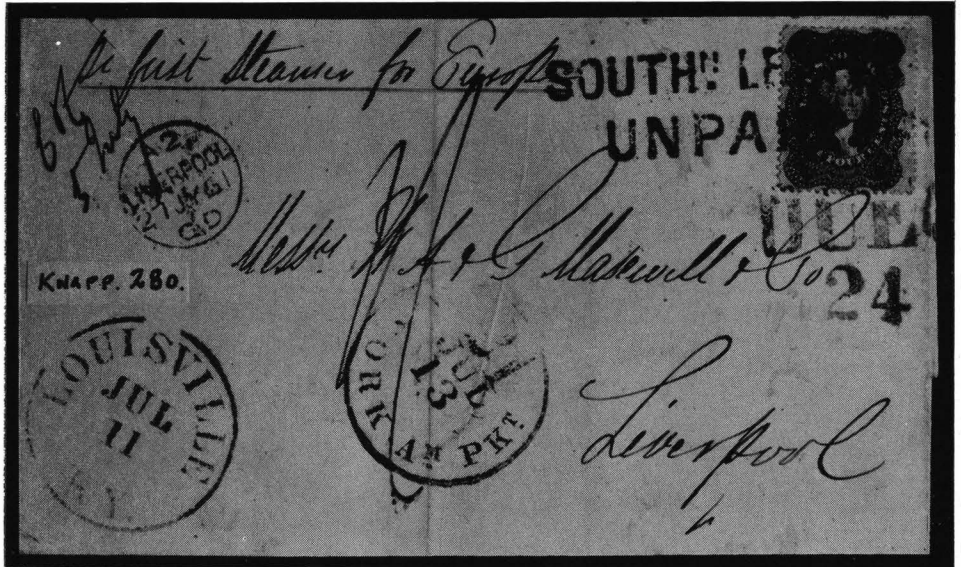


Fig. 1. 24c 1857 to Liverpool: Most beautiful of all "Southn. Letter Unpaid" covers. Originated in Petersburg, Va. (possibly on July 5, 1861) but not cancelled there. Reached Louisville, Ky., and postmarked there July 11 when the "Southn. Letter Unpaid" and "Due 24" was applied. Forwarded to New York and there postmarked in black (unpaid), N. Y. Am. Packet. Received in Liverpool July 27, 1861, where it was rated 1 shilling postage due. Note that the "24" was struck separately from the "DUE."

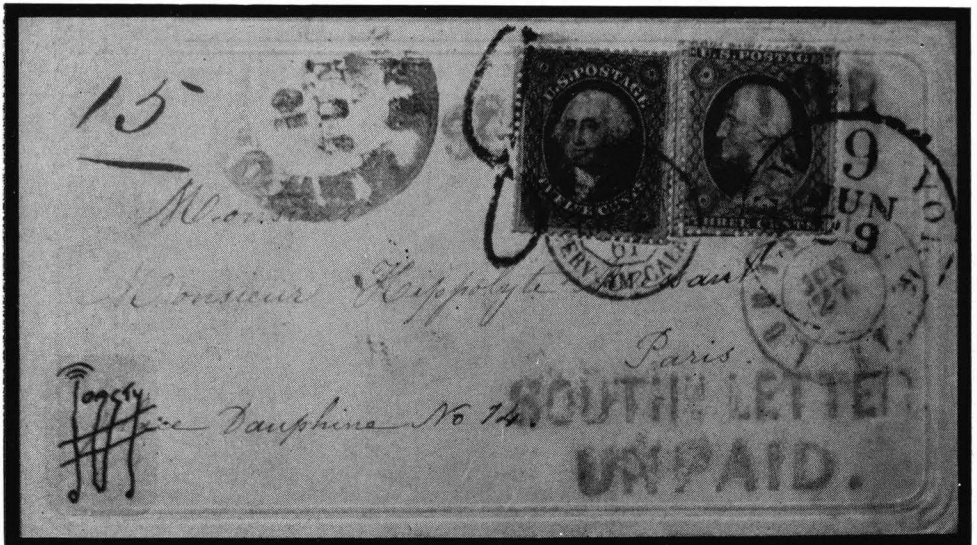


Fig. 2. New Orleans to France: Dated at New Orleans June 10, paid to the lines, with 15c in 1857 stamps affixed for the U. S. to France rate. Dated at Louisville June 27 and at New York June 29. French "8 decimes" (15 cents due) and Calais marking are normal. Note the "15" (due) in mss. instead of by handstamp.

mail transit in mid-May and the other principal open avenue was through Memphis far to the West. From covers of the period examined, it appears that New Orleans tried to clear most of its mail to and from the North through Memphis, while the Nashville-Louisville avenue seemed to be known as a favorable line for letters between the Midwest and East in the Union and the South-east portion of the Confederacy.

On June 6th, 1861, McNish at Nashville was advised that Washington had discontinued the Memphis post office and he was ordered to forward to the Dead Letter Office all mail directed to Memphis. Thus by mid-June, or certainly by the end of June, the Memphis line was closed and the Louisville-Nashville route—the home of the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” marking—was the only line open.

Up to this time Washington had taken care of regulations covering mail *to* the South, but there is no record of regulations on mail *from* the South—at least it was not prohibited passage through United States post offices if it reached them. So, it is easy to understand why by early June or Mid-June mail from the South to the North was accumulating in volume at the Louisville post office, the only gateway to the North that was open. A large quantity of this mail was addressed to Europe, because Union sea-ports were open and Southern ports were blockaded. Although much of the mail bore evidence of payment of Confederate postage, the covers also bore 1857 United States stamps to carry them in the United States mail to their destination. At this time the refusal to honor stamps of the 1857 issue had not yet been decided upon by the Federal Post Office Dept. and they were valid for U. S. postal carriage.

So people in the South put their faith in the mail route through Nashville and Louisville in an effort to get letters to the North. Oddly enough, the 1857 stamps placed on these letters in the South to pay the U. S. postage, were even at this time contraband in the South when used to prepay mail there.

On June 25th, 1861, the *Louisville Courier* printed the following announcement, with the explanation that Dr. J. J. Speed, Postmaster at Louisville had received the dispatch relative to the forwarding of letters from the Southern States to “parties” in the loyal states, and revealed that some 4000 or 5000 letters from the South in the Louisville post office would be forwarded to their proper destinations. The dispatch read as follows:

“Washington, June 24, 1861—J. J. Speed, Postmaster: You will forward letters from the South for the loyal states as unpaid after removing postage stamps but foreign letters on which pre-payment is compulsory must go to the Dead Letter Office.

(signed) A. N. Zevely, 3rd Assistant Postmaster

This regulation is the key to the origination of the famous “Southn. Letter Unpaid” marking. We can surmise that the telegram was in answer to an inquiry from Dr. Speed asking for instructions on the disposal of this accumulation of mail from the disloyal states, because there is no evidence that a similar dispatch was sent to other borderline post offices and there is no record of any marking similar to “Southn. Letter Unpaid” having been used in other borderline post offices.

Note that the instructions “as unpaid after removing postage stamps” is based upon the view that stamps of the 1857 issue presented by citizens of the disloyal states were in effect contraband and had no value and should be removed.

But think of what the Louisville post office was asked to do—go over 4000 or 5000 letters on hand (with other hundreds coming in), segregate carefully foreign letters on which pre-payment was compulsory (the foreign mail regu-



Fig. 3. With New Orleans stamps: One of the two known covers with New Orleans provisional stamps, brown on white. Origination—New Orleans, June 21 (?) when the two New Orleans provisionals were cancelled in the Confederacy and the 3c 1857 left untouched. At Louisville, the "S.L.U." and "Due 3" were applied, and the letter was delivered at Evansville, Ind. No Louisville postmark appears on this cover.

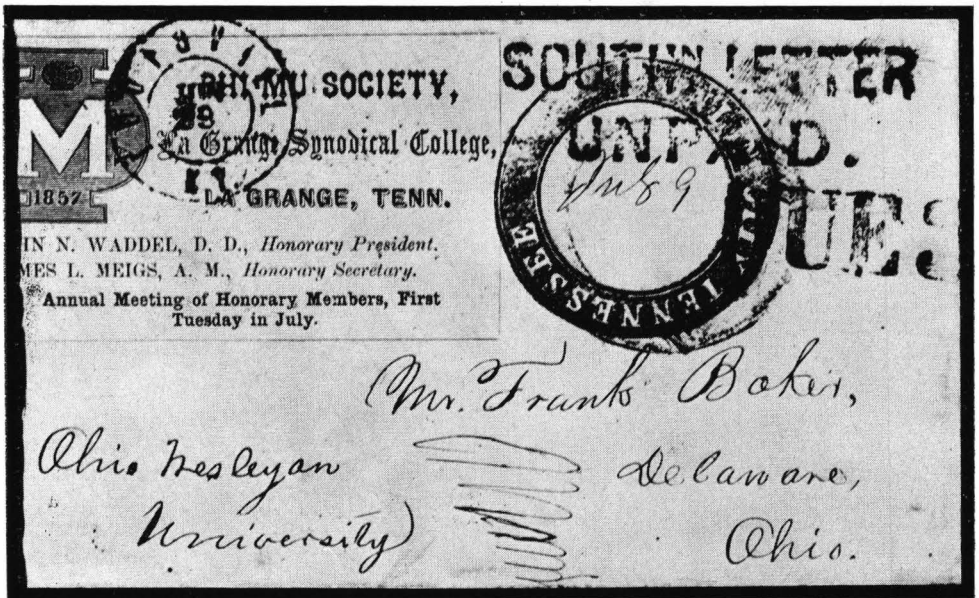


Fig. 4. From Union City, Tenn. to Ohio: Mss. date shows Jul 9, but Louisville cancel is clearly Jun 29. This is a cover which proves that accumulations of north-bound letters in the Louisville office were postmarked in quantity without changing the dating in the postmark. The "South. Letter Unpaid" and "Due 3" marks are in blue as usual.

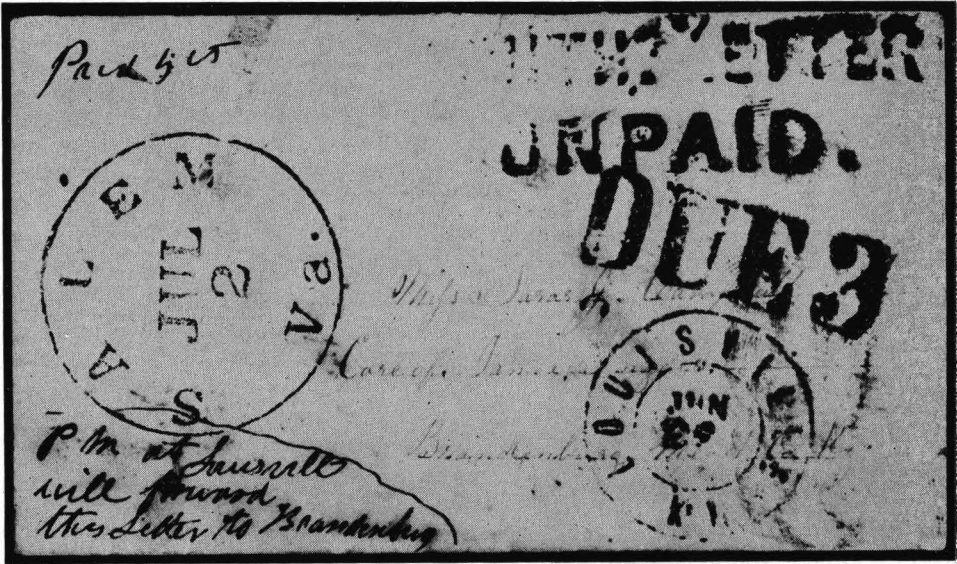


Fig. 5. From Salem, Va., to Kentucky: By the time this letter left Salem, Jul. 2, the postmaster probably knew Louisville was forwarding letters from the South. Therefore he wrote "P. M. at Louisville will forward this letter to Brandenburg." Louisville postmark is dated Jun. 29—further proof of "mass" forwarding of accumulations of letters from the South. No U. S. stamps here.

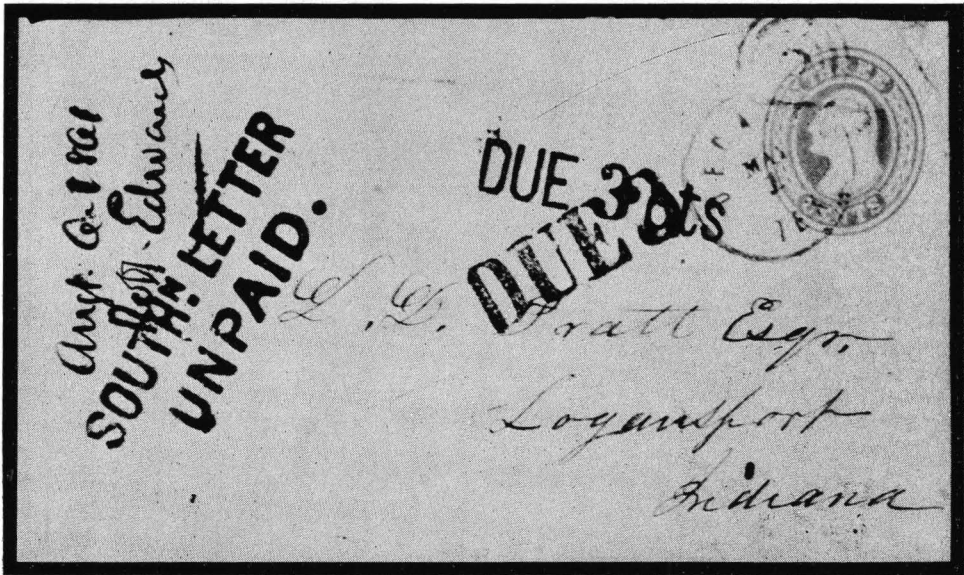


Fig. 6. From Decatur, Tex., to Indiana, via "Dead Letter Office:" This is the only example noted of a cover bearing the Louisville "S.L.U." mark and the dead letter marking (on the reverse). Started May 1 at Decatur, Tex., was received at Louisville at date unknown (no Louisville postmark), and went to Dead Letter Office, July 31. Finally it was delivered, and bears the additional marking "DUE 3 cts." in black, applied at the Dead Letter Office.

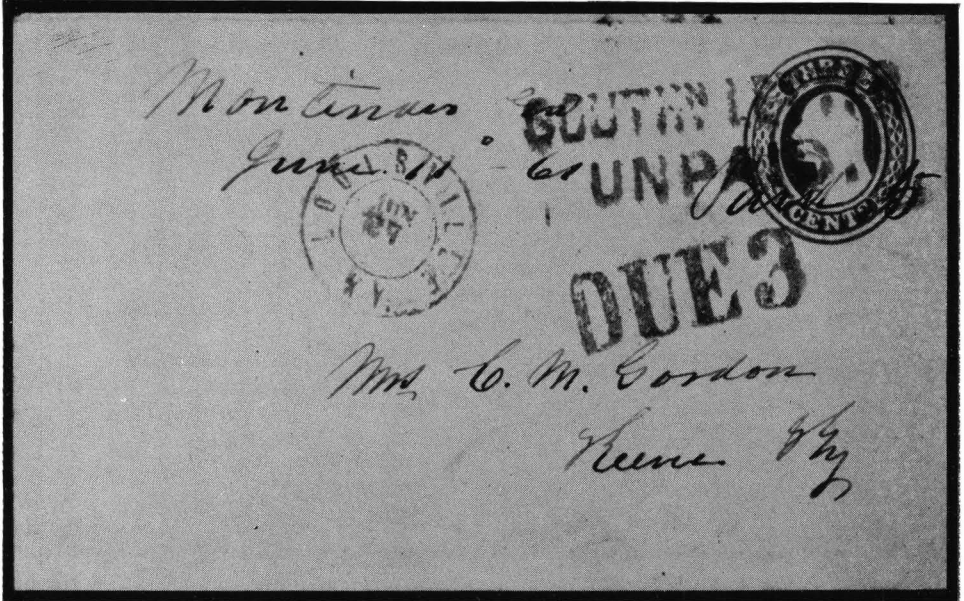


Fig. 7. From MONTINAS, Ga. "Paid 5" (mss.), Jun 11, 1861, to Keene, Ky.: The Louisville marks are normal and all in blue. This is the earliest clear date—Jun. 27—noted on covers of this kind. The latest is July 11. Possibly about that time the practice of forwarding from Louisville to the North was stopped.



Fig. 8. Beautiful example—letter mailed at McKinney, Texas, May 31, through Louisville (no postmark) and forwarded from Bryantville, Ky., to Frankfort by 3c 1857 tied over the "DUE 3." May 31, 1861, was the last day on which the 3c U. S. rate was valid in the Confederacy; hence the 3c U. S. envelope is properly hit with the "star" killer.

lations were very intricate), and endorse these to the Dead Letter Office; then steam or soak or tear off the 1857 stamps from letters for the North and mark each letter unpaid in some fashion. Dr. Speed devised a quicker method—perhaps after trying to remove a few stamps without harming the enclosure. He ordered the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” handstamp (possibly more than one) and with it a rating mark “Due 3.” Clerks then proceeded to handstamp letters from the South after separating those foreign letters which could not go unpaid. Examination of many covers shows that well into July some mail still arrived at Louisville from the South to add to the already heavy accumulation.

Several of the covers illustrated herewith show postmarks applied in the South at a date later than the dating of the Louisville postmark—the most frequent dates of which are June 27th, 28th and 29th, and the latest of which is noted as July 11th. But the June 27th, 28th and 29th dates outnumber by a huge margin any July datings noted. Certainly the letters did not go back to the South, because they were actually delivered in the North or overseas, and therefore it is clear that the dating stamps in the Louisville postmark were not changed daily—and therefore often show earlier dates than the Southern dates of mailing on the letters on hand. What actually happened is that the clerks attacked the accumulation of letters and probably cleared most of them away on June 27th, 28th and 29th and on those days applied the bulk of the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” markings. The earliest date known in the postmark accompanying the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” is an unclear June 26th (could be 28) and the latest date noted is July 11th.

One example bearing the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” bears also on the reverse the Dead Letter Office marking of the United States. These Dead Letter Office markings show dates of late July although the letters were delivered via the Dead Letter Office. Therefore, it is fair to assume that sometime around the 15th of July, coincidental with the great rise in express transmittal of mail across the lines, Louisville ceased to use the “Southn. Letter Unpaid” marking, stopped forwarding letters as per the June 24th instruction, and sent them instead to the Dead Letter Office.

Regarding the “Due 3” rate marking, apparently only one stamper “Due 3” was used. Letters to Europe which bore “Southn. Letter Unpaid” and which required due markings of “30” or “24” or “15” show a separate handstamp for the figures in a smaller size than “DUE,” or they appear in manuscript.

For purposes of the record, it should be noted that the words “Southn. Letter” measure 55 mm.; “unpaid” 35 mm.—and all letters are 6 mm. high. “Due 3” is 34 mm. long and the letters are 11 mm. tall. The color of these markings is greenish blue, the usual color of the Louisville postmarks of the period. There is only one type known of both markings although it is possible that multiple stampers were prepared showing no discernible difference. From the impressions, the stamper appears to have been of rubber.

On the question of scarcity or rarity, the marking is exceptionally scarce—even rare. Fine clear examples of it are the exception, perhaps due to the speed with which the post office clerks attacked the accumulated letters in Louisville. Most examples are poorly struck and messy. Not all examples carry the Louisville post office marking and some carry it on the reverse. Only one forgery of these markings has been noted, in blue-black ink with high sheen.

II.

Flag of Truce Mail

Via Fortress Monroe and Norfolk, Va.

During the Period Sept. 1861 to Feb. 1862

It will be recalled that the North, on Aug. 28, 1861, prohibited the operations of the Adams Express Company and the American Letter Express Company which transmitted mail via the Louisville, Ky. and Nashville, Tenn. route. This was the last officially sanctioned and non-secret method of carrying on correspondence North to South, and vice versa. Even some prisoner-of-war letters after the battle of Bull Run came this way. But in the main the route was used by civilians who wished to avoid resort to Flag of Truce letters with their attendant difficulties of permission and censorship.

However, there were many surreptitious methods of getting letters across the lines with the aid of accommodating postmasters or travelling agents, especially across the Potomac into Virginia and via Baltimore, a hot-bed of secession sentiment. These methods endured for years; the Point-of-Rocks, Md. to Waterford, Va. route was in operation at least to August, 1864. But because nearly all such carriage of the mail was unreliable or cost an extra fee, the public clamor for an official flag of truce route and the growing numbers of prisoners of both sides demanded a way to write home.

Sometime in October or early November of 1861, before the agreement on complete regulations for Flag of Truce or Prisoner of War letters, between North and South, the exchange of mail was begun between Old Point Comfort, Fortress Monroe, and Norfolk, Va. which remained in Confederate hands until May 10, 1862. It is not known when the exchange through Norfolk ceased. The latest date recorded is April 21, 1862, on a Prisoner's letter. After the mail ceased to clear through Norfolk, Flag of Truce and Prisoner of War mail was exchanged at Aiken's Landing, and later at City Point. When these via Norfolk, Va. covers were first recorded, it was believed that they travelled by a secret route to get them across the water, but the presence of censor markings and the discovery of Prisoner of War covers established the route as official. North to South civilian letters are known from November, 1861, and letters to Northern prisoners of war held in Richmond are also recorded from November, 1861, to Dec. 21, 1861.

Three extremely interesting covers which crossed the line through Norfolk, Va. are here illustrated. Two of these covers are from the same correspondence; and they are interesting because the writer was E. S. Zevely, brother of A. N. Zevely, 3rd Asst. Post Master General. He was writing to his sister, Mrs. Butner, who lived in Salem, N. C. At this time, as noted, and until May 10, 1862, Norfolk was in Confederate hands.

Upon each letter he pasted coin of the U. S. A. and a 3c 1861 stamp. Across the yellow paster which held the coin to the envelope he wrote "Confederate . . ." or "10 cts. . . ." The torn-off pasters carried away the balance of the inscription with the coin! But we may safely guess that they read "Confederate Postage" and "10c for Confederate Stamp"—or something like that. These legends explained the presence of the coin and its purpose.

His idea achieved its purpose for both letters reached Salem. The first is cancelled "Norfolk, Va. Nov. 18, 1861" but the letter enclosed has been lost.

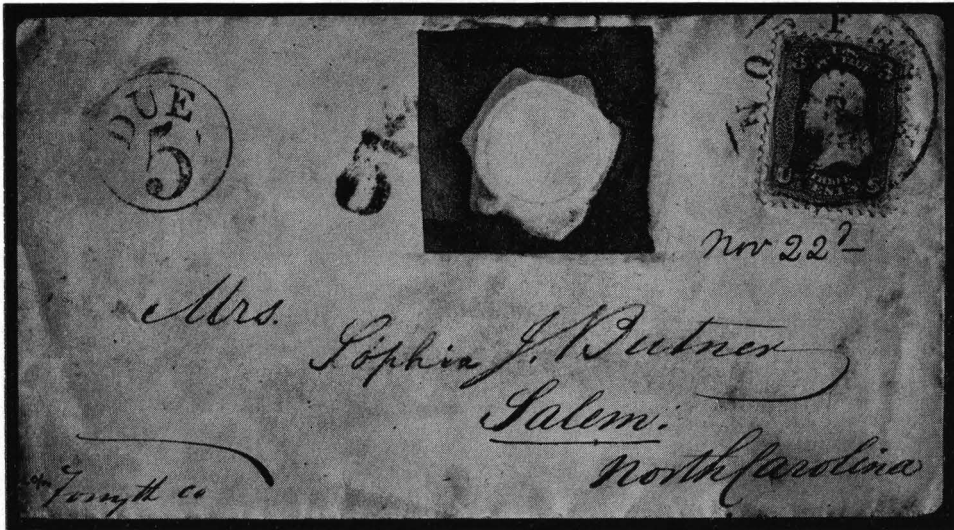


Fig. 9. The 5c coin attached was removed to pay the Confederate postage as the "5" (paid) in blue and the Norfolk town mark, Nov. 18, 1861, over the 3c stamp indicates. But the Salem P.O. must have been wary of the appearance of the envelope, because it was struck "Due 5" in black. Norfolk to Salem is some 200 miles and the Confederate rate was 5c, not 10c.

The second is cancelled at Norfolk, Dec. 7, 1861, and is a folded letter. It reveals an interesting sidelight on the difficulty of Northerners in corresponding with relatives across the fatal line. The letter reads:

"Washington City, D. C.
Dec'r. 1, 1861

My dear Sister:

I send this via Fortress Monroe hoping it will be allowed to pass with others and that we may hear from you through the same channel.*

Accidentally lately via Litiz we heard of the death of Aunt Hetty, but no particulars, or *when*, and we would like to hear and how you all are.

Some months ago, about the time that way closed, we by a mere chance received two (I think) letters from you and one or two from Father via Louisville, since which nothing.

Do try to keep us advised about private family matters at least—to which there should be no objection.

Write either to me here or to Mal at Cumberland.

All well here and there.

With love to all,
Yours
E. S. Z.

* attaching 3 cts. to pay Federal postage"

Mr. "E. S. Z.," from his letter, had evidently been getting letters through the Adams Express route via Louisville. But as he truthfully hints in his letter that route did close on August 28, 1861. So he tried another way and the letters went through.

The Old Point Comfort-Norfolk route for flag of truce mail was recognized as official by both South and North. Letters were censored and handled in the

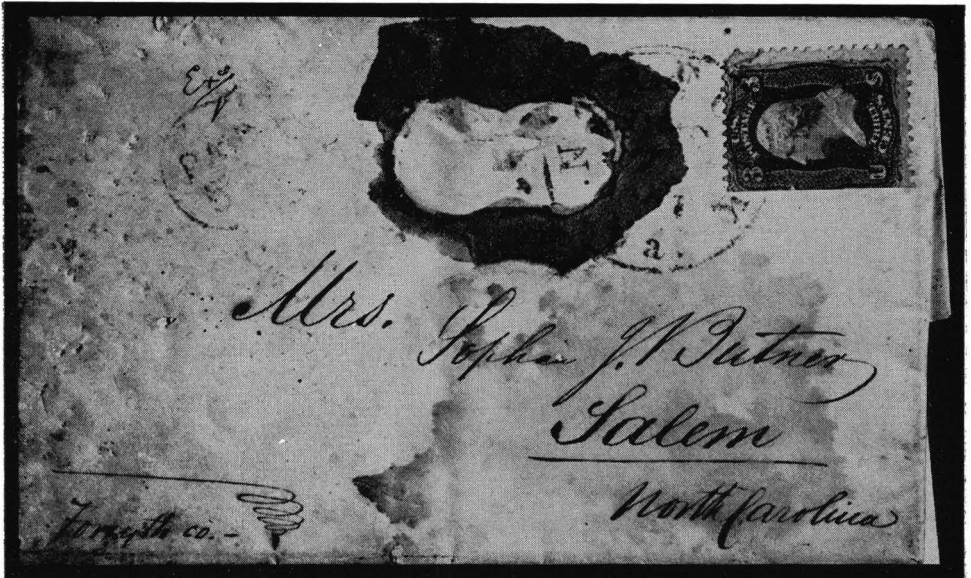


Fig. 10. This letter bore two 5c coins and was rated PAID 5 and struck with the Norfolk town mark, Dec. 7, 1861. Apparently a clerk at the Norfolk P.O. was enriched by 5c U. S. coin. Note the "Exd . . ." censor marking. Censors' initials known on Norfolk route flag-of-truce covers are "D.W.C.," "S.C.," "J."



Fig. 11. The 5c green Confederate stamps were affixed and cancelled at New Orleans; the direction "via Norfolk and Flag of Truce" took the letter to Old Point Comfort (via Fortress Monroe) and there the 3c U. S. stamp was added and cancelled. The date in the New Orleans cancel is not clear. It is possible that the 3c U. S. stamp was enclosed in the letter, which was opened for censoring. Or a coin may have been enclosed to buy the stamp.

same manner as flag of truce mail in the later years of the War. Covers to prisoners in the South are known bearing in ms. "Flag of Truce, Via Fortress Monroe." Others, such as Figs. 9 and 10, were probably enclosed in an outer cover, directed to Fortress Monroe. Still others, to Northern prisoners confined in Richmond, in December, 1861, bear in ms. "Postage within" or "Care of Gen. Winder" or "\$5.00 in gold, 5 cents for postage." Apparently the Confederate postage from Norfolk Southward was usually paid in coin enclosed or attached. This may account for the fact that many covers by this route were enclosed in an outer envelope. All bear the Norfolk town mark and "5" or "10" (paid) in blue; most bear "Exd (with initials)" in ms.

The third cover illustrated, Fig. 11, fortunately contained its enclosure, which proves that the Norfolk route was well known in the South for flag of truce mail transmittal. This remarkable cover bears a pair of 5c Confederate stamps cancelled at New Orleans and a 3c U. S. stamp, and was not enclosed in outer cover. It bears "Via Norfolk and Flag of Truce" and cleared through Norfolk (Confederate postage paid), thence to Fortress Monroe and Old Point Comfort, where the 3c stamp was cancelled. Just who supplied the 3c stamp is a bit of a mystery.

The enclosure is extremely interesting. It reads:

"New Orleans, Jan'y 23rd, 1862

Mess. Wm. S. Toole & Co.
New York, 170 Fulton St.

Gentlemen:

I understand lately that letters containing no reference to political or military matters, can be sent North via Norfolk by Flag of Truce. This I find confirmed by the enclosed slip from the papers.

I received some weeks ago a pile of letters from my sons in California and from my wife and two youngest sons in France. They were all addressed care of C. A. Bamore & Bro. If you should hereafter receive letters for me as you did for years heretofore, I request you to send them to me the best way they can by the flag of truce and Fort Monroe if possible. Letters so sent are read both at Norfolk and at Fort Monroe. As I have no political correspondence and really care only for family letters, I have no objection that the letters addressed to me be opened and read. I think that must be a mode of sending letters from the North to the South in the same manner.

My brother-in-law, Col. Richard Delafield, whose residence is 6 West 18th Street, New York, will no doubt be good enough to indicate and facilitate the way of sending me such letters. He has friends at Fort Monroe.

If this letter reaches you I desire to send you letters for my family by the same channel. Please write as soon as possible.

Truly yours,

Louis Janin"

This letter, written long after Postmaster Blair's order of August, 1861, prohibiting regular correspondence between the lines, shows how the Flag of Truce route was attempted as a means to free intercourse. It is doubtful whether Mr. Janin succeeded in so using it, for as time went on Flag of Truce letters were very difficult to get through, unless the case was urgent and the writer of some importance.

III.

Across-the-Lines Mail Carried by the Express Companies

The policy pursued by the United States Post Office in May of 1861, of continuing to operate the mail routes in the seceded states brought many protests from the citizens of the loyal states. In spite of these, Postmaster General Blair was determined to carry the mails as long as possible. His most important reasons: business houses in the North had financial accounts to settle with Southern customers, or many of them would face ruin; the Post Office Department hoped to receive the monies owed to it by postmasters in the seceded states, many of whom were deserting their posts; the War Department, by mail, was receiving information valuable to its plans from loyal citizens in the seceded states and from its secret agents there; the people of both North and South had relatives across the line for whose welfare and safety letters were the most important means of advice and solace; and finally, intercepted letters to known Southern sympathizers and pro-secession groups, of whom there were many in the North, might supply the State and War Departments with information leading to their arrest and imprisonment.

So the Post Office Department struggled to keep the avenues of communication open until Postmaster General Reagan of the Confederacy announced that on June 1, the Confederate States would take over the postal service in the seceded states. Coincidental with the release of this information, the Federal Post Office Department ordered that on May 28 all mail service to the seceded states would cease. By this time, as noted in the history of the "Southern Letter Unpaid Marking" (Chapter I) the route Louisville, Ky.-Nashville, Tenn. was the main gateway between the North and the South. The two cities were hotbeds of Southern sympathizers and spies. Kentucky at this time was a "doubtful" state, finally throwing off the shackles of a status of neutrality that its governor had sought to impose upon it, to become "Loyal." And Tennessee, after signing a secret military treaty with the Confederacy on May 7, seceded from the Union on June 8 and joined the Confederacy on July 3. However, Kentucky, in deference to its pro-Southern minority, was represented in the Confederate Congress, and most of East Tennessee remained "Loyal" until the end of 1861. But despite all the intrigue and pro-secession elements in a section of its populace, Louisville was a Union city; and Nashville was a Confederate city.

On June 1, the Dead Letter Office, Washington, ordered many Southern Postmasters to return to that office "all mail directed to the Southern States which cannot be forwarded to their intended destination on account of discontinuance of mail service or any other cause." Postmaster McNish, at Nashville, received this order. Thus Washington sought to seal off this route for mail to the seceded states. But not until June 8 did Washington stop all United States mail for Nashville. By this time the pile-up of mail in Louisville and Nashville, intended to go both ways, was formidable. Southern postmasters were refusing to close their accounts with Washington and to remit for the United States stamps held by them; so Washington refused to recognize the U. S. stamps on letters coming North for delivery, and these letters went to the Dead Letter Office.

In the face of all this confusion, one fact became clear to the public and to the owners of the *Louisville Daily Journal*, the Union newspaper. It was

that an express company for an extra fee could continue to carry mail for the South across the lines provided only that the letter must be enclosed in a government stamped envelope. The good news was published far and wide, in newspapers of the North and South.

The two principal beneficiaries of this postal regulation were the Adams' Express Company, a very old and large company operating throughout the United States, and the American Letter Express Company, a new enterprise, formed in Louisville in June. A much smaller express service was begun by M. D. Whiteside, of Franklin, Ky., at the same period.

Adam's Express Company Mail

At the outbreak of the War, Adams maintained offices in no less than fourteen Southern cities, in addition to its network of offices in the East and West of the United States. Adams had achieved this dominant position by purchase and consolidation of Stimson & Co.'s, Hoey Co.'s and Harnden's express lines, both steamers and rail-route franchises. By 1859, Adams dropped the names of the former two companies, retaining Harnden's in Georgia because of its excellent reputation with the public.

The main office of Adams for handling across-the-lines mail was Louisville, Ky., and all such mail North to South and South to North passed through that office. Adams offices in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston, as well as in Louisville, accepted letters to be sent to the Confederacy. The Adams offices in the Confederacy were at Albany, Atlanta, Augusta, and Macon, Ga.; Charleston, S. C.; Charlotte, N. C., Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn.; Mobile, Ala.; New Orleans, La.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and Savannah, Ga.—the last continuing to use the Harnden name.

To comply with the U. S. Post Office regulations letters to be sent South had to be enclosed in a U. S. stamped envelope (3c), properly addressed, and delivered or mailed in outer envelope to an Adams Northern office, together with 25 cents in cash for letters not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight; double weight at 25 cents more, etc. Letters to be sent North were enclosed in a plain envelope, properly addressed, and mailed in outer envelope or delivered to an Adams Southern office with 25 cents in cash for letters not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight; double weight at 25 cents more, etc. Quite often Southern correspondents used U. S. 3c envelopes, or affixed a 3c 1857 adhesive to their letters, not realizing that such postage was considered contraband in the Union and of no value. Out of the fee of 25 cents, the company paid the postage necessary at Louisville or Nashville, paid the express messengers and clerks and retained the balance for profit.

On Southbound mail the 3c stamped envelope "outside the mail" paid the United States postage, even though it did not pass through a post office of the United States; and upon the mail's arrival at the Adams Nashville office, via the Louisville Office, Adams paid the necessary Confederate postage at the Nashville post office and the letter went on to its destination.

On Northbound mail, the Confederate postage was paid by the sender in cash and was handstamped or had a provisional stamp affixed; the letter enclosed was delivered to or mailed to an Adams office, which sent it on to the Louisville office where a 3c stamp was added, and the letter put in the U. S. mail.

There were some variations in routing the mail, possibly due to the routes of the express messengers between the Adams offices. Some early letters before June 1st went by ship direct from the New York office to a Southern post office

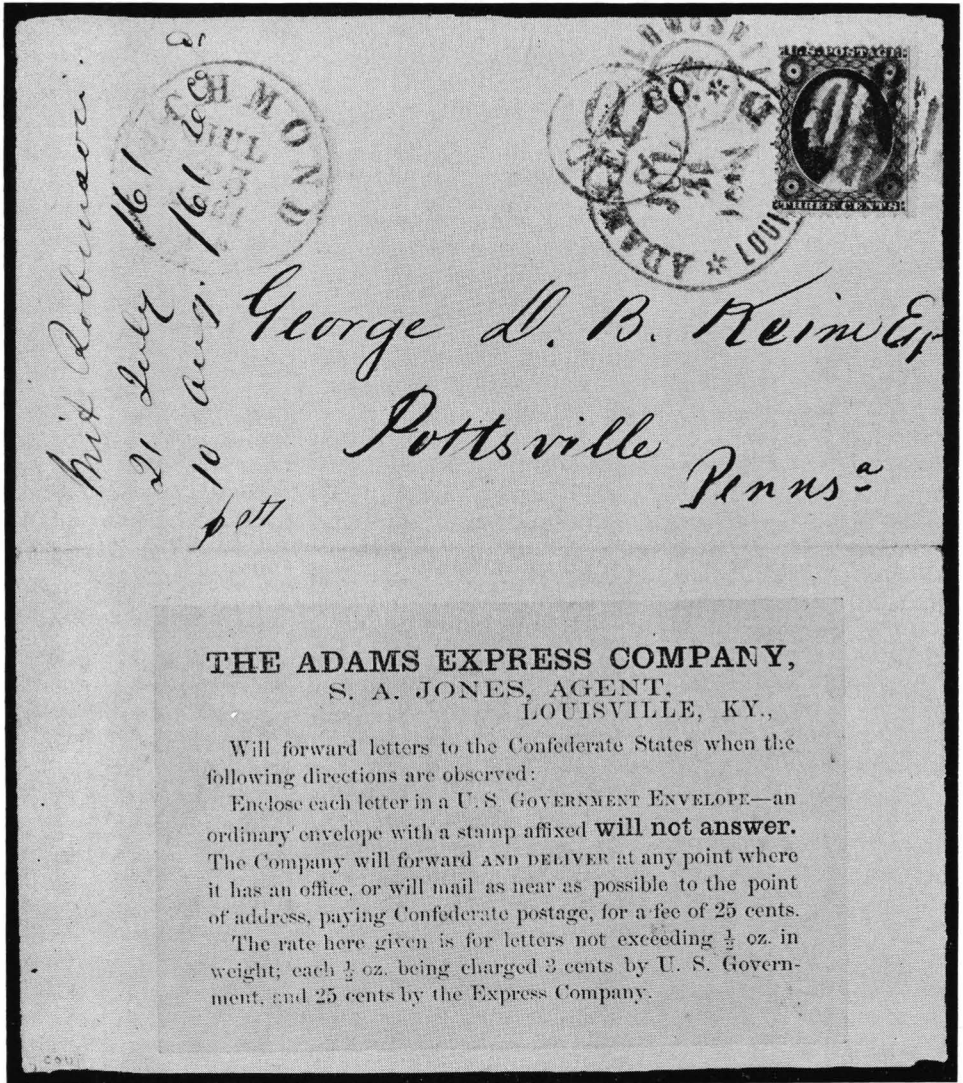


Fig. 12. From Richmond, Va., July 25, 1861, to the North via Adams Express office at Louisville. Confederate postage paid—"PAID 10" for distances over 500 miles. Through the Louisville office July 31 and into U. S. mail same day with postage paid by 3c 1857 issue stamp. The label gives directions for using Adams Express service. Note the ms. "10 Aug/61 rec'd"—ten days in transit from Louisville to Pottsville, Pa. The express company paid only the U. S. postage; the sender paid the Confederate postage.

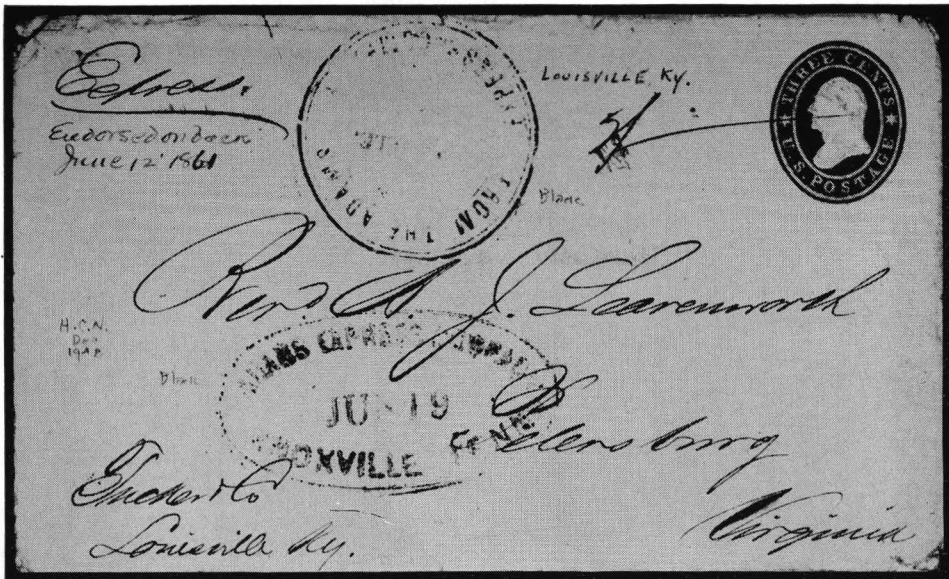


Fig. 13. From Louisville to Petersburg, Va., Jun 12, 1861—a very early use. The double circle stamper “FROM THE ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY—LOUISVILLE, KY. . .” is the only example recorded. Possibly the usual Adams Louisville stamper was not in service this early. This letter cleared through the Adams Knoxville office—not the Nashville office. The mss. “2/” (two bits) shows the 25c fee as paid. Most Adams express covers are so marked.

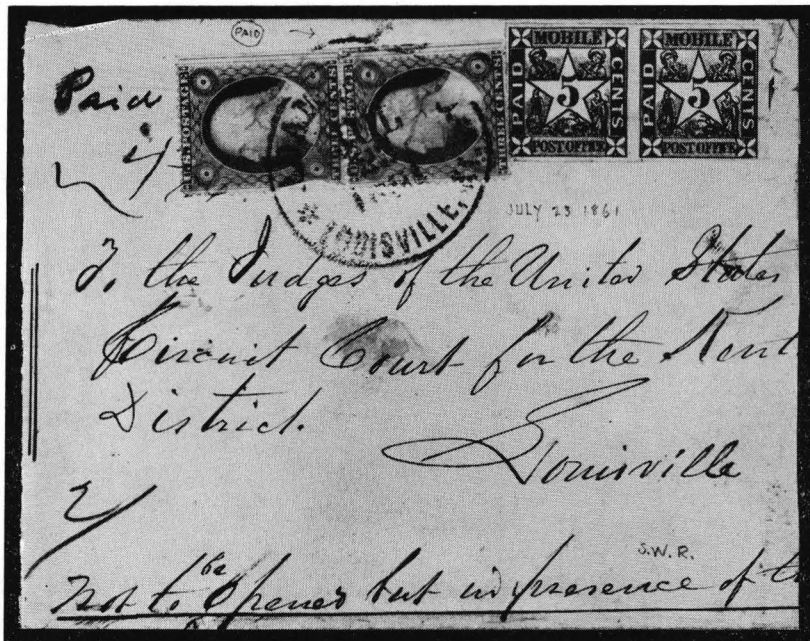


Fig. 14. From Mobile, Ala., to Louisville; double weight legal cover (shown folded under). The pair of Mobile provisionals paid the Confederate postage and were left uncanceled, with a PAID in circle struck to the left. At the Louisville Adams office the pair of 3c 1857 were affixed and struck with the Adams stamper, July 23, 1861. This letter never entered the U. S. mail but was delivered direct from the Louisville office. The “Paid 4/” in ms. shows 50c paid to Adams, probably to the Nashville office.



Fig. 15. From Nashville, Tenn., to the North, from the "Knowles" find. A 5c carmine Nashville Provisional pays the Confederate postage and is tied by the oval Adams Nashville, Aug. 15. This letter never entered the Confederate mail. Cleared through the Louisville Adams office Aug. 17, 1861, the 3c stamp affixed and forwarded in the U. S. Aug. 18 "Paid 2/" in ms. partly under the U. S. stamp. The Adams envelope adds interest.



Fig. 16. From Nashville, Tenn., to the North through Louisville Aug. 22, 1861. The 5c Nashville provisional is tied by the blue "POSTAGE PAID" marking applied by Adams' Nashville office to comply with Confederate postal law, although the letter never was carried in the Confederate mail. Other markings normal. The 3c star die envelope was often used on South to North express letters, due to the confusion with the directions for North to South mail. It was not recognized.

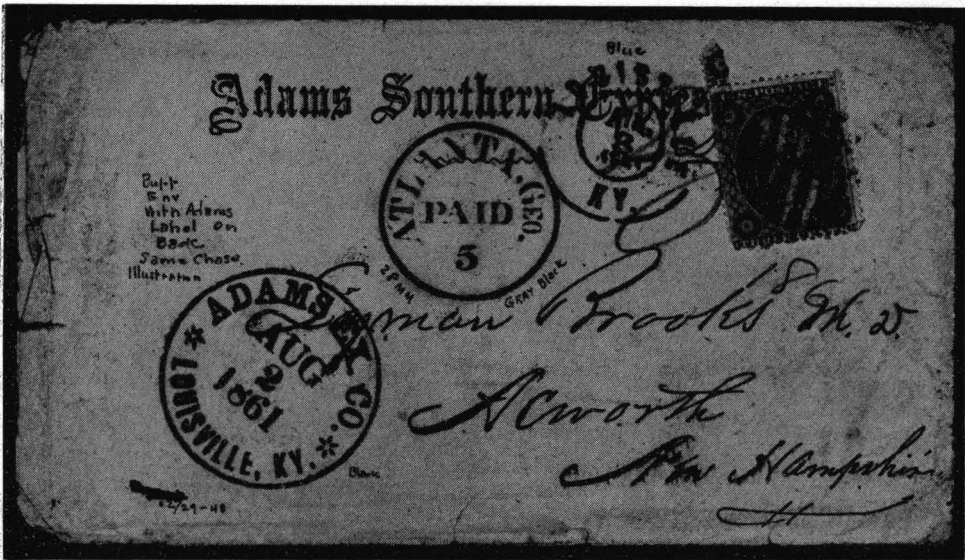


Fig. 17. From Atlanta, Ga., to the North, the Confederate postage paid by the Atlanta 5c handstamped provisional—apparently used in this case purely as a handstamp. Other markings are normal. The envelope heading shows the change of Adams to Adams Southern Express. On back of this cover there is pasted an Adams label with directions, as in Fig. 12. Another variety of this label giving directions, is recorded.



Fig. 18. From Adams Philadelphia office to Alabama July 18, 1861, the marking in red and very rare. This letter was carried "outside of the mail" through the lines via the Louisville Adams office, and Nashville to Mobile where the 5c Mobile provisional, cancelled on July 30, carried it in the Confederate mail to Demopolis, Ala. A similar cover to the same addressee, cancelled July 23 at Mobile, does not bear the marking of the Adams Philadelphia office.

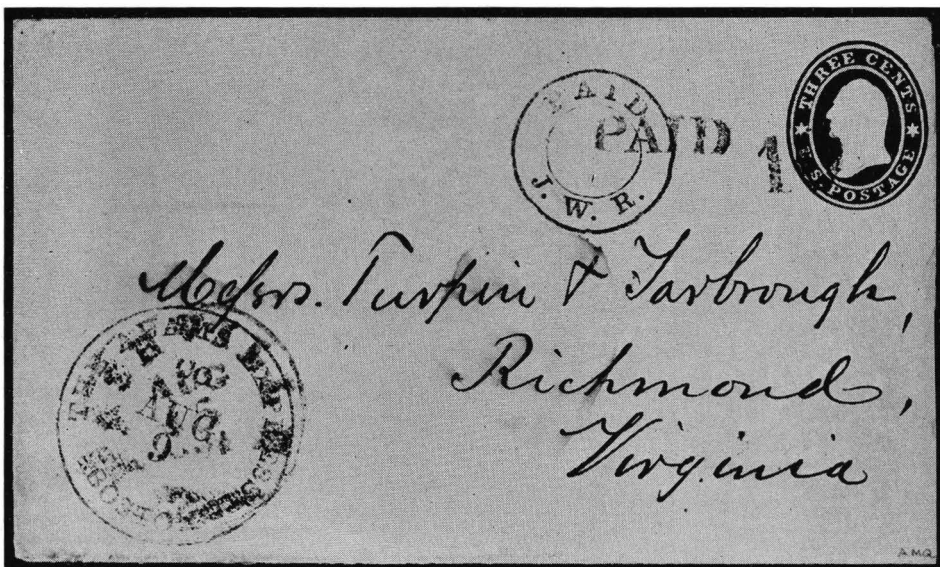


Fig. 19. From Adams Boston office to Richmond, Va., Aug. 9, 1861, the Boston marking in black and very rare. The double circle "PAID J.W.R." in black was used only in the Boston office and indicates the 25c Adams charge as paid. This letter cleared through Adams' Louisville and Nashville offices without receiving the markings of those offices, and was carried "outside the mail" all the way. Posted in the Confederate mail at Nashville Aug. 15, where the "PAID 10" shows the proper rate to Richmond, Va. A remarkable cover.



Fig. 20. From Charlotte, N. C. to Philadelphia, via Adams Charlotte office, the marking in red and the only example recorded. The "PAID" in blue is continued to read "10" under the U. S. stamp. Other markings normal; in U. S. mail July 14, 1861. Here again a 3c 1855 envelope though used, served no postal purpose.

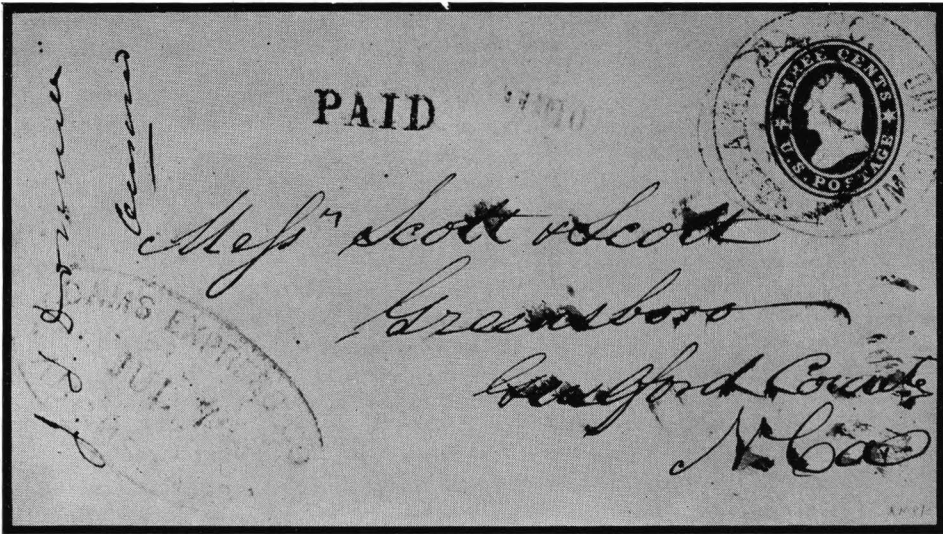


Fig. 21. From Adams Baltimore office, July 1, 1861, the marking in black, to Greensboro, N. C. via Adams Augusta office, July 7, the latter marking in blue and both Adams markings very rare. Another type of the Baltimore office marking is recorded: "Express" is spelled out, and all the lettering is serified and very squat. Color—black. Carried "outside the mail" by express courier probably via Nashville and Knoxville to Adams Augusta office, where it was posted July 22 at Augusta and rated "PAID 10" in black. A round-about route, first South, then North.



Fig. 22. From the North to Petersburg, Va., and carried entirely "outside the mail" through the lines. The Adams Louisville marking dated July 30, 1861; the Nashville oval marking Aug. 1. The 10c Nashville provisional pays the proper 10c rate for distances over 500 miles, and is cancelled by the express marking, not by the Nashville P. O. in which it was never deposited for delivery. The mss. "2" in magenta indicates the double rate, confirmed by the blue rating stamper "10." Only two such covers are recorded.

of Adams nearest to the addressee. Sometimes a letter did not pass through the Nashville office at all, but was carried in the express from Louisville to Augusta or Mobile where the office put the letter in the Confederate mail.

The Northern offices of Adams, with the exception of New York, used circular date stamps, showing the name of the city. New York used large oval (31½x60 mm.) or smaller double circle (27 mm. diam.) handstamps both without date. The Southern offices, with the exception of New Orleans, used oval month and day dated stampers (27x51 mm.) but without year date. New Orleans used circular date stamp, with and without year. Black, blue and red inks were used.

In regard to the U. S. envelopes used, the most frequently seen are the 3c Nesbit "Star" dies of 1860. The 1853 3c envelope was used occasionally. All 3c adhesives affixed at Louisville on north-bound letters were 1857 issue, with one remarkable exception—a cover dated Aug. 26, 1861, in Adams Louisville cancel, Aug. 27 in Louisville cancel, addressed to New York and bearing a 3c near pink of the 1861 issue.

Although no records have been compiled on the earliest date of use of the Adams service, it would appear from surviving covers, and the advertisements of Adams, that their service commenced a few days after June 10. The earliest use recorded, North to South, is June 12 (see Fig. 13). The earliest South to North use is a cover from Nashville June 20, to Warren, R. I. from the Knowles correspondence. This cover, 3c envelope, bears the small double circle marking "Adams Express Company N. Y." in blue without date; "due 3" and New York date stamp "June 25, 1861." The usual black "Louisville" marking of Adams is absent. The Nashville date stamp shows June 20, so the letter probably went via Louisville. It is possible that at that date the Adams Louisville date stamp was not ready. The first Adams advertisement of the service appeared in the Louisville papers on June 22.

All across-the-line express covers are attractive, but the most eye-arresting (and the rarest) are those carrying Confederate provisional stamps to pay the Confederate postage. Among those known are the Nashville and Mobile adhesives and the Atlanta hand-stamped. The illustrations display a wide variety of examples of the Adams Express mail.

American Letter Express Company

The American Letter Express Company was a Louisville enterprise founded by Wm. M. McGill (of Brown and McGill's, U. S. P. O. Dispatch, Louisville) and Thos. E. Jenkins. McGill, at his office in the Post Office, became aware of the opportunity to form a letter express service between North and South, through Louisville and Nashville. It was widely rumored that Tennessee would join the Confederacy, so a Nashville office could distribute Northern mail to the Confederacy, and Louisville could distribute Southern mail to the Union. Between the offices, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad could be used by the express messengers as far as possible, filled out at the border or where necessary by horse relays.

McGill planned for fast schedules and a good volume if he could pick up packages, newspapers and mail at stations near stagecoach stops on the turnpikes to Nashville. The plan was ambitious; the finances were lacking—until an angel, Nathan Bloom, head of the South's leading wholesale dry goods house, came to the rescue. On June 14, 1861, the American Letter Express was announced in the *Louisville Daily Journal*, and on June 18 the *New York Herald* carried the news. Advertisements in newspapers announcing the details of the service appeared in Louisville and Nashville papers, handbills were distributed

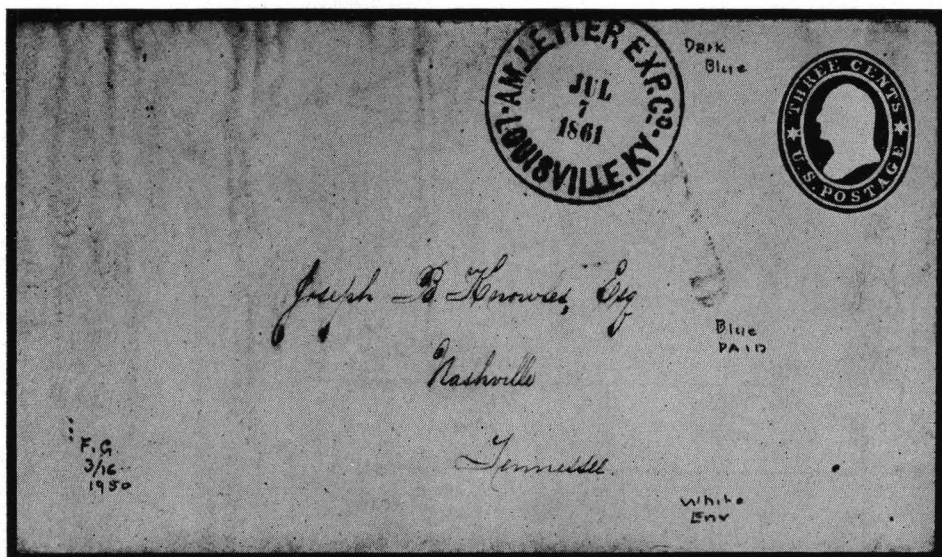


Fig. 23. From the North (Warren, R. I.) to Nashville, Tenn., handled by the Louisville office of the American Letter Exp. Co. on July 7, 1861. "Out of the mail" all the way and probably delivered to addressee at the Nashville office of American, after the Confederate postage of 5c was paid by American, as indicated by the faint "PAID" of the Nashville P. O.

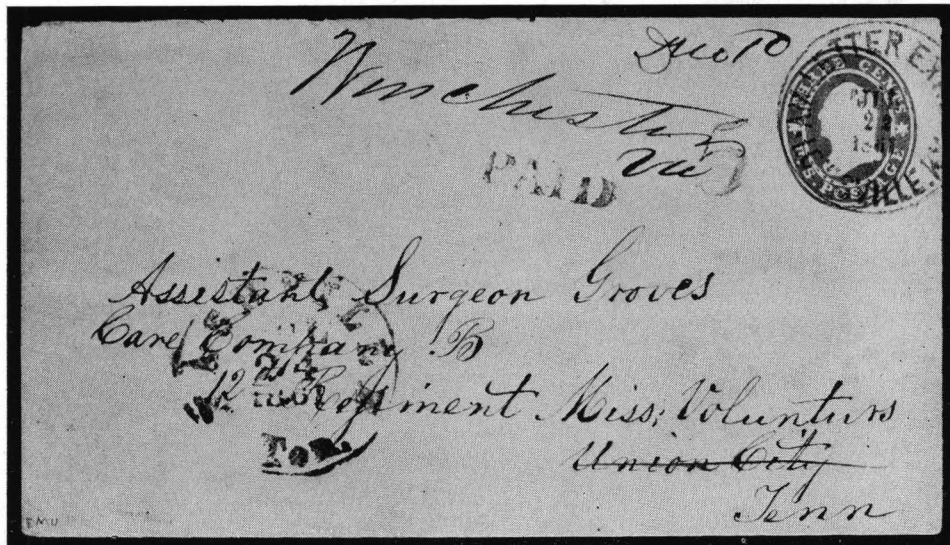


Fig. 24. From the North to Union City, Tenn., and forwarded with 10c due to Winchester, Va. Handled by American "out of the mail" as far as Nashville, where the Confederate postage was paid—"PAID 5" (July 24, 1861) in the Nashville date stamper, both in blue. The American Louisville stamper, in blue, is dated Jul 22, 1861. During the month of July this circular stamper carried the full date; sometime in August the center was changed and reads "307 Green," the Louisville address.



Fig. 25. From the North to Florence, Ala. Same markings and carriage as the cover shown in Fig. 24, with the exception of the center of the Louisville stamper which now reads "307 Green" in two lines. Put in Confederate mails Aug. 15, 1861.

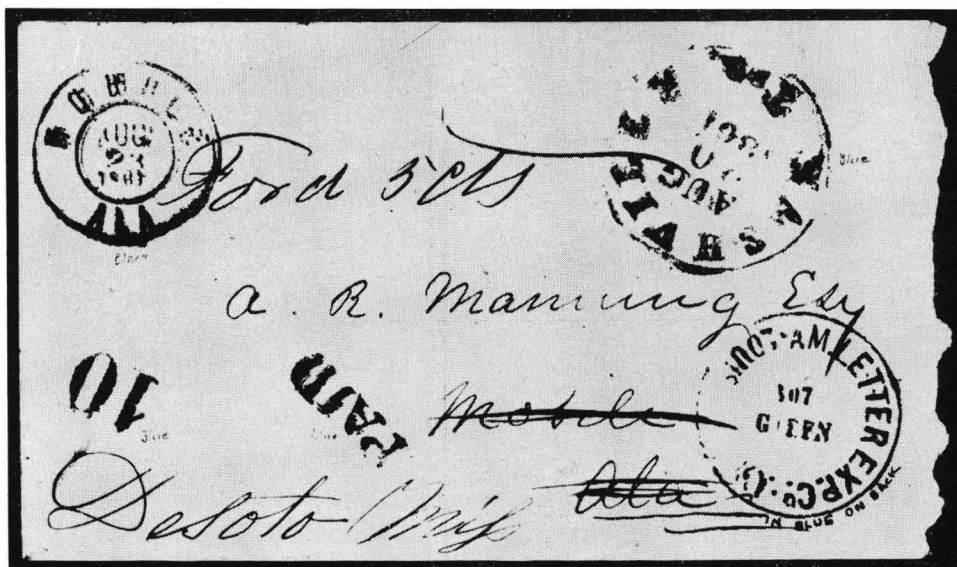


Fig. 26. From the North to Mobile, Ala. and forwarded to DeSoto, Miss. (due "5 cts"). Cleared at Louisville to the Nashville office of American where the letter was entrusted to the Confederate mails and the postage of 10c paid on Aug. 20, 1861. Finally forwarded in the mail Aug. 23 from Mobile to DeSoto.

in North and South, and on June 15 the company's first messenger left Louisville with his saddle-bags filled with letters for the South and bundles of newspapers ready to distribute at each stagecoach stop. As he left the office of the company at 307 Green Street, it is said that the assistant manager of the Adams Express Company, on orders from S. A. Jones, the manager, and M. D. Whiteside, just starting his rival express company, were there to size up the quantity of mail and other express matter that would be carried.

The Nashville office of the company was located in the Nashville Post Office, and Jenkins was in charge. Because the company was a Tennessee corporation, Jenkins took full advantage of favorable official opinion and continually advertised in newspapers, and by distributing his circulars to postmasters of the larger cities as well as to business firms and banks. Days before the first messenger from Louisville was due in Nashville, Jenkins hung a large poster on the Post Office door leading to their office, announcing the arrival of the messenger at 10 A. M. June 17. Since Nashville had received little news and few letters from the North since June 1, the excitement was at high pitch, and the American Letter Express was conceded to be a welcome and worthy enterprise, particularly by the Southern newspapers who were anxious to print news appearing in the Northern newspapers, now to be brought them by the express.

The directions for using the service of the American Letter Express were identical with the instructions issued by Adams, except as to the rates. On letters going South the charge was based upon the place to which the letter was directed—if under 500 miles from Nashville, 15c; if over 500 miles 20c. This was in accord with the Confederate postage rates the company was obliged to defray: 5c if under 500 miles, 10c if over 500 miles. American's charge was therefore 5 or 10 cents less than Adams. On letters going North the charge was 15c to cover all expenses, or 10 cents less than Adams. The cost for newspapers was 10c per copy, going either way.

It must be borne in mind that on South-bound mail both companies did not defray the cost of the U. S. postage, but only the Confederate postage; on North-bound mail neither company defrayed the cost of Confederate postage. Adams *always* paid the U. S. postage with a 3c adhesive stamp, while American sometimes did when the envelope was plain, but often allowed a 3c envelope to go through to pay the U. S. postage at Louisville. This device worked until the U. S. Post Office refused to recognize any U. S. stamps originating in the Confederacy.

American used circular date stamps both reading AM. LETTER EXP. CO.—one with LOUISVILLE, KY. for that office—the other reading NASHVILLE, TEN. The Louisville stamper is known with center blank, with full date or with "307 Green" in two lines. The Nashville stamper is known with center blank or with "Jenkins and McGill" in three lines. All varieties were struck in blue ink.

This express was praised continually in the news columns of the Louisville and Nashville newspapers, especially for its delivery of newspapers. Apparently it tried to get letters through, even though the express fee was not remitted with the letter. They used a small label on North-bound letters affixed to the envelope reading "Due the American Letter Express Co. 15 cents (for postage advanced) in this letter. Send the amount in money to the Company at Louisville, Ky." A variety has "10 cents" in place of "15 cents."

Delivery of the mail from the South was at 307 Green Street, Louisville, and from the North at Jenkin's office in the Nashville P. O. Examples of American Letter Express covers are extremely rare, much rarer than those of Adams Express. Based upon the wide publicity given the service by advertisements, circulars and news items, in the North and South, it would seem that



Fig. 27. From the North to New Orleans, La. Cleared, Jul —, 1861, through the Nashville office of American via the Louisville office (struck on the envelope stamp). Examples showing markings of both the Louisville and Nashville offices are rare. This letter was mailed at Nashville July 20 where the postage of 10 cents was paid, and the cover struck with the blue "PAID" and "10" in circle, the rate for distances over 500 miles.

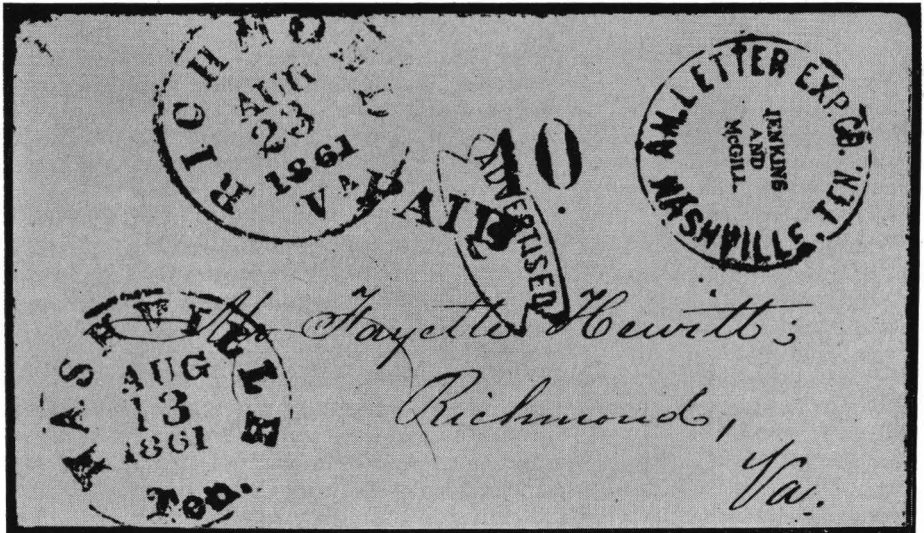


Fig. 28. Another interesting example showing the Nashville office marking of American with the scarce "Jenkins and McGill" in the center. The letter came from the North, apparently, clearing through the Louisville and Nashville offices, where it entered the Confederate mail to Richmond, Va., on Aug. 13, 1861. Confederate postage was paid and "PAID 10" struck in acknowledgment. Arrived at Richmond Aug. 23, and when undelivered after the customary 30 days was advertised as shown by the "ADVERTISED 2" stamper. Apparently it was finally delivered.

they should have done a large business. The company operated up to the end of the permission granted by the U. S. Post Office Dept.

At Nashville and Louisville their service was considered equal to Adams in the view of the postmasters of those cities. In an interesting telegraphic exchange printed in the *New Orleans Picayune*, and reprinted in the *Louisville Journal*, July 3, J. L. Riddell, Postmaster at New Orleans, on June 24 asked McNish at Nashville if he could send mail to Louisville, to which McNish replied "Letters to Louisville only letter express." Riddell then wired John J. Speed, Postmaster at Louisville: "How can I send Washington mail?" to which Speed replied: "Send this office, I will distribute." This satisfied Riddell, who apparently was seeking to close his accounts with Washington, and he wired Speed: "I shall send Northern mail closing this evening at half past 6 o'clock, to the Postmaster at Nashville. It will then be conveyed by the Adams Southern Express, or American Letter Express Company to the Louisville Post Office."

* * * * *

The route for the Adams and American express messengers across the border is not definitely known. Probably it varied with the activities of border guards, the weather or other circumstances. The Louisville and Nashville R. R. in Kentucky ran its cars as far south as Franklin, four miles from the border; and the same road in Tennessee ran its cars as far north as Mitchellville, about eight miles below the border. Messengers could use the railroad, and between terminal points, stage coaches and horses. Exact routes were apparently kept secret and, without doubt, some contraband, carried by daring operators, crossed the border. On a few occasions the messengers or stages were interfered with by authorities on both sides of the border, in an effort to stop smuggling and the carriage of mail by travellers.

After August 10, when President Lincoln proclaimed that on August 16 commercial intercourse with the South would cease, Postmaster General Blair was forced to state the position of the Post Office Dept. in respect to the proclamation. Blair replied on August 21 that he had no power "to suspend intercourse between the loyal and Rebel States, by private express or otherwise." The power, he said, rested with the War and Treasury Departments alone, and so long as they did not exercise it, correspondence between the insurgents of the South and their friends and debtors in the North may be lawfully continued. He explained that his power extended only to the protection of the revenues of the department from fraud and that the conveyance of mail, partly over U. S. post routes and partly by private express, was not unlawful.

However, he called attention to the President's proclamation and said: "It is presumed that instructions will be issued by the Treasury Department." The instructions were not long in coming. On Aug. 26 Blair issued the following order:

"The President of the United States directs that his proclamation for the 16th, interdicting commercial intercourse with the South, shall be applied to correspondence.

"Officers and agents of the Post Office Department will, without further instructions, lose no time in putting an end to the written intercourse with those states by causing the arrest of any express agent or other person who shall after this order, receive letters for transmission to or from said states, and will seize such letters and forward them to this department.

(Signed) M. Blair, Postmaster General"

The Post Office Department acted swiftly. Deputy Marshals in New York, early on the morning of Aug. 26, seized a large number of newspapers from disloyal states in the office of the American Express where they were in transit. On the morning of August 30, the American Letter Express messenger, on arrival in Louisville on his last trip, was seized, together with his mail bags, and held for hearing before the U. S. Marshal. McGill of the company succeeded in freeing the messenger from custody by stating that he was blameless and that the company was terminating its business. S. A. Jones of Adams, Louisville, announced on August 28 that Adams had discontinued its letter carriage and newspaper service beyond the Union border.

Thus ended the service of the two companies that for nearly three months had kept the Louisville-Nashville route open to correspondence and news.

M. D. Whiteside Express

The third and somewhat mysterious enterprise to use this route was run by M. D. Whiteside of Franklin, Ky. His advertisement first appeared in the *Louisville Daily Journal* under date of June 22. It was repeated on July 4. Up to that time, at least, Whiteside appears to have carried mail North to South only, for which the rate was 10c—money or stamps; 15c cheaper than Adams and 5c or 10c cheaper than American Letter. But on July 25 he advertised that senders of letters over half ounce, or directed to a point more than 500 miles from Nashville, must enclose 15c. Also, he would carry transient newspapers at 5c each. But more important, he stated: "In like manner, letters from the Seceded States may be directed to me at Nashville. No detention whatever by this route, for I send them by couriers daily each way."

No mail of the Whiteside Express has ever been identified. No handstamps or labels were used, and no cover enclosure has ever been discovered to throw light on this mysterious service. Whiteside kept changing his directions for getting letters to him, but apparently he used couriers between Franklin, Ky. and Mitchellville, Ten. to cross the border. It is said his messengers used the Upper Turnpike from Louisville to Franklin, Ky., where he lived, via Gallatin to Nashville.

At this time the smuggling of contraband to the South—arms, ammunition, metals; and to the North—United States postage stamps to be sold at a discount of 50% by Southern postmasters—was at its height. No doubt Whiteside was engaged in these activities, even though he had respectable sponsors in Kentucky. Apparently he carried on until all expresses were stopped, for his advertisement of Sept. 4 in the *Louisville Daily Journal* says:

"NOTICE: All newspaper advertising that I will forward letters South will please discontinue the same as all such letters are detained at the Louisville office.

(Signed) M. D. Whiteside"

[IMPORTANT.]

To the People of the United States.

THE AMERICAN
Letter Express Co.

Transmits Letters and Printed Matter to and from all points North and South, with the knowledge and approbation of the Postmaster General.

DIRECTIONS :

(LETTERS GOING SOUTH.)

Enclose and direct each letter to your correspondent in a U. S. stamped envelope, (a stamp or stamps stuck on a common envelope will not do.) put that letter in another envelope, and direct on this outside envelope to

American Letter Express Co.
LOUISVILLE, KY.

Enclosing in the outside envelope when the letter is to go to any point in the Southern States.

Under 500 miles from Nashville, Tenn.	15 cts.
Over 500 "	20 cts.

Be particular about distances, and make the enclosure to the Company in money, stamps will not answer. This will prepay all expenses to its destination.

The rates here given are for letters not exceeding half ounce in weight: double, treble, &c. letters must have an additional amount enclosed in proportion to weight.

PRINTED MATTER.

For single newspapers enclose the Company 10 cents.

N. B. All letters accompanied with an insufficient amount to prepay to their destination are liable to be sent dead-letter office.

[IMPORTANT.]

To the People of the Confederate States.

THE AMERICAN
Letter Express Co.

(Chartered by an act of the Tennessee Legislature.)
Transmits Letters and Printed Matter to and from all points North and South.

DIRECTIONS :

(LETTERS GOING NORTH.)

Enclose and direct each letter to your correspondent as usual; put that letter in another envelope, and direct on this outside envelope to

American Letter Express Co.
NASHVILLE, TENN.

Enclosing 15 cents in money; this prepays all expenses to its destination.

The rates here given are for letters not exceeding half ounce in weight: double, treble, &c. letters must have an additional amount enclosed in proportion to weight.

Do not use U. S. stamps or stamped envelopes — they are valueless when coming from the Confederate States.

PRINTED MATTER.

For single newspapers enclose the Company 10 cents.

Letters for Europe must have an additional amount enclosed, to enable the Company to prepay the international postage.

N. B. All letters accompanied with an insufficient amount to prepay to their destination are liable to be sent to the dead-letter office.

Fig. 29. American Letter Express Co. was active in circulating the two handbills shown here; that on left was distributed from the Louisville office to many large cities in the North and East; that on the right from the Nashville office to cities in the South. Business houses and banks were covered especially, and the same copy was used for newspaper advertisements in large cities. These handbills, on brown paper for the South, white paper for the North, were about 6x9 in. A smaller version, 3x5 in. on blue or brownish paper, was used as envelope stuffers and sometimes pasted on the envelopes in correspondence.

IV.

Prisoner of War and Flag of Truce Mail

Introduction

Communication by letter between prisoners of war and relatives across the lines or others, or between civilians under flag of truce privilege, may be divided into two periods of time. The first and very short period began after the Battle of Bull Run in July, 1861, and ended about February, 1862, when the regulations of both sides to govern such mail were first proposed. The second, and formal period, ran roughly from March, 1862, to the end of the War. During this period, in June, 1862, the formal regulation to govern exchange of mail and prisoners was accepted by North and South.

During the period June through August, 1861, civilian correspondence was carried on largely through the facilities of the Adam's Express Company or the American Letter Express, until on August 28 these express mail services were stopped by the U. S. Post Office Dept. A few Northern prisoners of war, taken at Bull Run and held in Richmond, also used the Adam's Express service to send word to their relatives. After August, and beginning in larger quantity in October, flag of truce letters began to cross the lines via Fortress Monroe at Norfolk, Va., then in Confederate hands. Such mail was apparently censored both at Fortress Monroe and Norfolk. Much of the flag of truce mail via Norfolk was directed to Northern prisoners of war captured at Bull Run, and by November their prison locations and addresses became known to their relatives in the North.

Some civilian flag of truce letters of the first period had attached to the envelopes five or ten cents in U. S. coin to pay the Confederate postage to destination, the U. S. postage paid by a 3c stamp or by cash. Various censors' initials are known. Flag of truce letters from the South via Norfolk, both prisoner of war and civilian, are also recorded.

Illustrations and descriptions of several of these early covers sent via Old Point Comfort, Va., and Norfolk are shown in Chapter II. Chapter IV which follows covers the prisoner of war and civilian flag of truce mail of the years from February, 1862, to the end of the War.

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Prisoner of War and Flag of Truce covers used during the War Between the States have long been recognized as a fascinating "side line" by collectors of both United States and Confederate Stamps. For these covers (and Express-between-the-Lines covers) seem to join the two warring sides together, philatelically and sentimentally. In the years just after the War, dozens of books, and even a few Congressional investigations, enveloped the military prisons of both North and South in an aura of misery and romance, military incompetence and misguided discipline. Nearly a century later it is apparent that both sides were guilty of the maltreatment of prisoners; the South because of its food shortage, lack of materials and lack of foresight—the North because of its amazing political appointments of incompetents to military rank.

Prisoner of War covers are those which were sent from a prisoner to a person in the outside world, or from someone in the outside world to a prisoner.

Therefore, not all Prisoner of War covers crossed the lines between the Union and the Confederacy. Some were letters which passed between prisoners of war and friends in the country of their imprisonment; others were letters

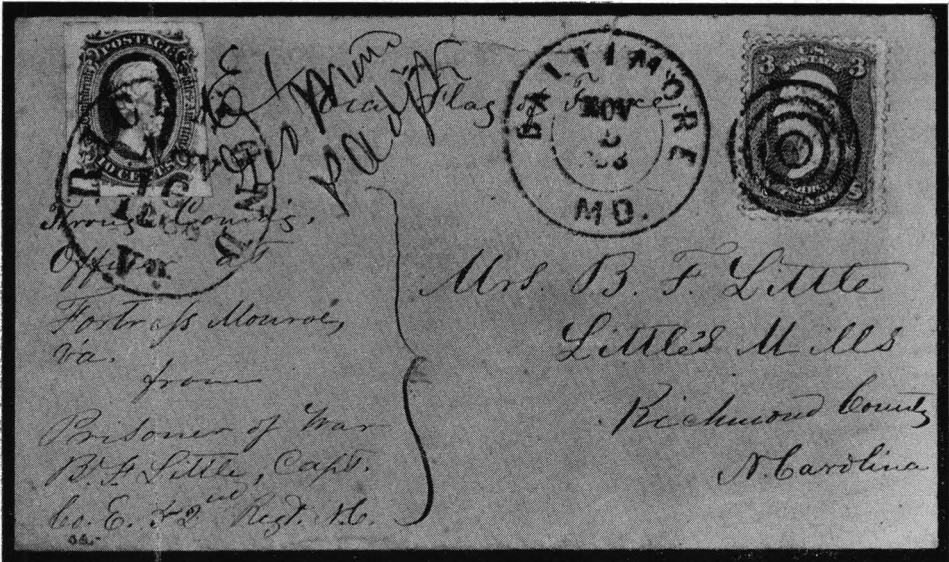


Fig. 30. FROM BALTIMORE, MD. Prisoners' letters from Baltimore are extremely scarce. Prisoners at Baltimore were confined at Fort McHenry, and to date no censor handstamp of this prison has come to light. This cover is censored in mss. "Ex. Geo. Wind (possibly Wund) P. Adgt." It seems reasonable to suppose that it came from a prison at Baltimore because if it originated at another prison and was carried to Baltimore to be mailed, the marking of the other prison would appear.



Fig. 31. CAMP MORTON, INDIANAPOLIS. Many letters from this prison are addressed to points in Tennessee. Not a large prison, covers from it are uncommon and usually are on 3c envelopes. This example came from a small group of covers all addressed to "Rev'd T. R. Bradshaw, Sweetwater, East Tennessee," from various prisoners in Point Lookout Prison, Fort Delaware Prison and Camp Morton. All are inscribed "Care Commander of the Post" and none bear Confederate Stamps, because Sweetwater was in that part of Tennessee under Federal control in Oct. 1864.

which passed between Union prisoners (or Southern prisoners) held because of military infractions, and relatives or friends in their own country. Such censored covers are of lesser interest. They bore a stamp of the U. S. or of the Confederacy and were marked in mss. as "examined," "passed," etc. before 1863, and in the U. S. usually with a handstamp "examined" from 1863 on, appropriate to the prison from which they were sent.

In March, 1862, across-the-lines letters via flag of truce began to be delivered at Aiken's Landing on the James River. In late 1862 City Point, Va., just below Richmond on the James River, became the exchange ground for mail and prisoners, and continued so to the end of the war.

The *New York* was the official flag of truce boat and carried mail and prisoners for exchange from Fortress Monroe to City Point. Since City Point was close to Richmond and Fortress Monroe to Old Point Comfort, Va., south-bound letters cleared through Richmond, and north-bound letters through Old Point Comfort.

Letters from Southern prisoners of war confined in Northern prisons, to points in the Confederacy, always bear a 3c U. S. Stamp of 1861 or are enclosed in a 3c envelope, and show the postmark of the city in or near which the prison was located, together with a censor marking of the prison (frequently with censor's initials), or merely the censor's initials in mss. Often, but not always, such letters bear in addition, a Confederate stamp, which was usually cancelled at Richmond as the letter cleared through that city. When no Confederate stamp was used, almost always the cover is marked "DUE 10" in italic caps or a large Roman "10" (black) applied at Richmond. And finally, these covers frequently bore the name, regiment and rank of the prisoner, together with "Flag of Truce, via Fortress Monroe" or similar directions in the prisoner's handwriting.

Letters from Southern sympathizers or suspicious persons confined in the North, to the Confederate States were also transmitted by flag of truce. Usually they were endorsed "by Flag of Truce" and came most often from inmates of Old Capitol Prison, Wash. D. C. and bear that prison's circular censor marking (Fig. 33), or from Washington, D. C. and bear the large oval censor mark of "J. N. Patterson, Capt. & Provost Marshal, Point Lookout, Md." (Fig. 34). Sometimes they have both the U. S. 3c stamp and the Confederate stamp affixed; sometimes only the Confederate stamp, duly cancelled at Richmond.

Then there are covers endorsed only "Flag of Truce" and bearing only a Confederate stamp, cancelled at Richmond; no censor handstamp, no censor's initials in mss. Many of this class of covers were enclosed in outer envelopes bearing the censor's initials and addressed to Fortress Monroe. They were posted in Richmond.

Letters to the North from Northern prisoners of war confined in Southern prisons, came in via Old Point Comfort, Va., and almost invariably bear the town postmark of that place, nearest to Fortress Monroe. Sometimes they bear a Confederate stamp cancelled at a Southern city or left uncanceled. Most often they show no evidence of Southern origin except the prisoner's name, rank and (rarely) the town of confinement and "Prisoner's letter" in mss. Seldom did letters of this type bear a U. S. stamp. When letters did bear a 3c U. S. stamp, and reached the Union side they were struck with the Old Point Comfort postmark and cork killer; if unpaid, then by the current U. S. marking, Due 3 or Due 6 in a circle, which passed them to their destination "collect." The Due 6 marking indicates the double U. S. postage exacted because the letter was unpaid. (Sec. 27, Act of March 3, 1863.) However, the 6c due was in error, because the penalty did not apply to soldiers' letters, and this should have included prisoners' letters. (See Fig. 40).

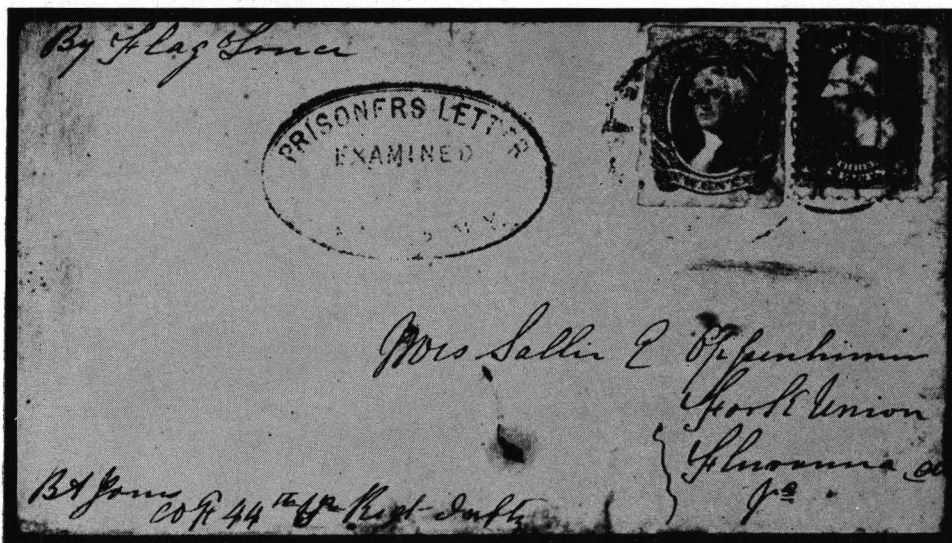


Fig. 32. THE 20c GREEN ON PRISONER'S LETTER. A remarkable cover, from Elmira Prison, Oct. 21 (1864). At this time the 20c green was widely used as small change in the Confederacy. On this cover the 20c stamp merely overpaid the 10c rate. The oval censor marking (black) is normal. Note that the 20c green is tied by the Elmira cancel. The letter says in a postscript: "I enclose one stamp." Presumably this was a 3c U. S. stamp which the prisoner sent to his folks so they might affix it to a letter to him and thus avoid the chance the letter may be delayed.

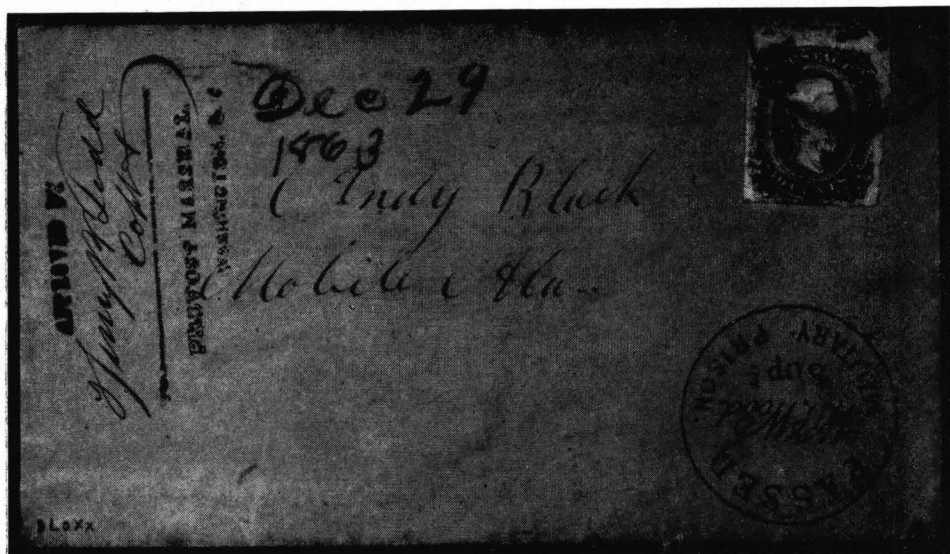


Fig. 33. OLD CAPITOL PRISON, AT WASHINGTON. Many noted prisoners of war and spies were confined at this prison. Henry B. Todd, Capt. Cavalry, was in charge of all prisons in the city of Washington, and W. P. Wood was superintendent of Old Capitol Prison. The circular censor marking (black) of W. P. Wood is not common. This cover bears also the marking (red) "APPROVED BY Henry B. Todd Capt. & (signed) PROVOST MARSHAL, WASHINGTON, D. C." No U. S. stamp was used; the Confederate stamp is cancelled at Richmond, Jan. ? (1864). Probably this letter was delivered outside the mail to Fortress Monroe.

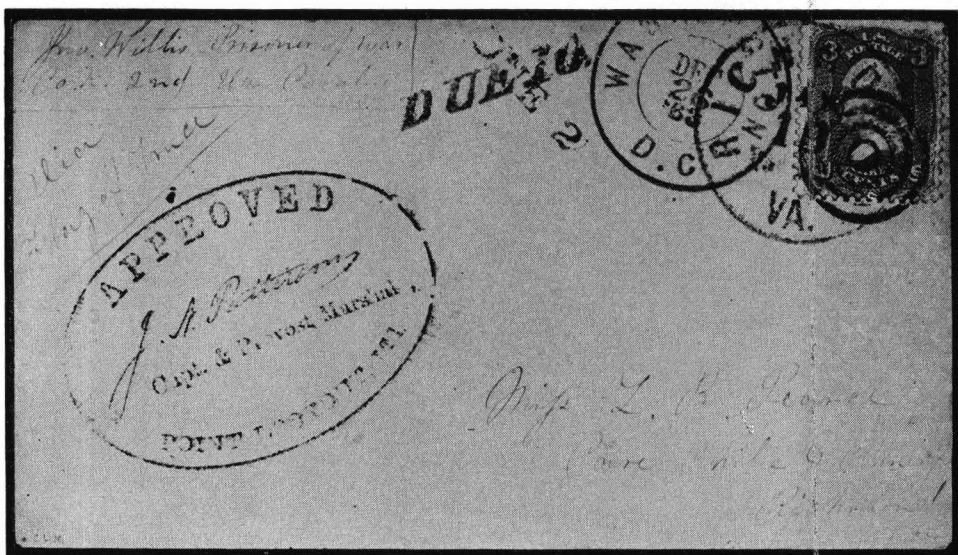


Fig. 34. "J. N. Patterson" in Large Oval (black). This censor marking had some special, but unknown, significance. Without doubt it was used on prisoners' letters sent from Point Lookout Prison, but it is far scarcer than the usual censor marking of Point Lookout. Because most covers bearing this large oval marking were post-marked at Washington, D. C. instead of at Point Lookout, Md., it is possible that it was used on letters which demanded special censorship. This example went to Richmond, Va. and the letter was "Due 10" at destination. The "DUE 2" was applied first, in error, at Richmond, then overstamped "DUE 10."



Fig. 35. FORT DELAWARE PRISON TO NEW BRUNSWICK. An unusual example, from a Southern Prisoner of war.. The letter enclosed asks for a loan of \$50.00 and the writer offers to give a note to a fellow prisoner to bind the deal. The 12c rate is a 2c overpayment, possibly because only 3c stamps were in the possession of the prisoners. Oct. 10 (1864) Delaware City, Del., with the usual oval censor marking. The Canadian marking "U. States" is in red, and the cover is back-stamped "St. John's, N. B. Oc 14, 1864," and the letter apparently was mailed unsealed.

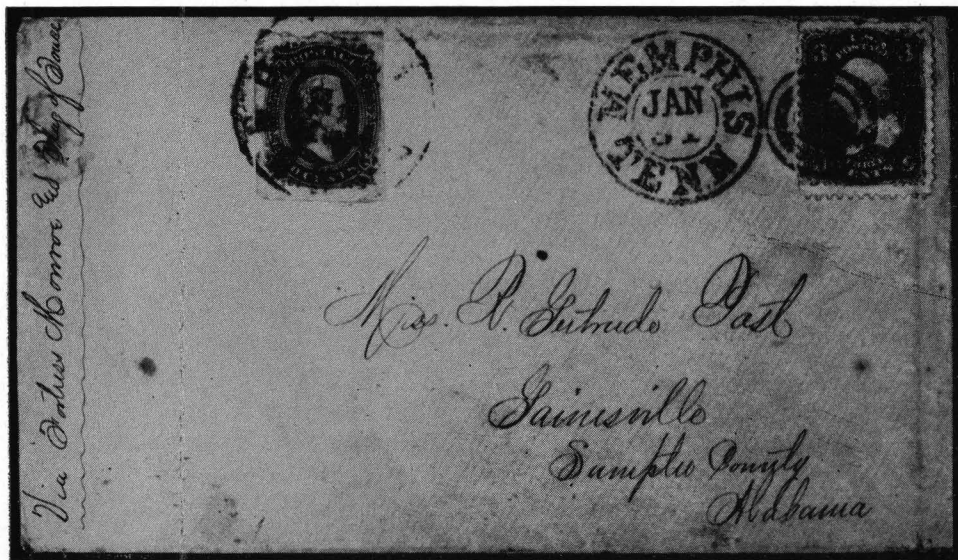


Fig. 36. CIVILIAN FLAG-OF-TRUCE FROM MEMPHIS, TENN. TO ALABAMA. Flag of Truce letters from Southern cities that fell to the Federals are unusual. This letter from Memphis, Jan. 31 (1864) went through Richmond on Feb. 18 (1864) via Fortress Monroe, a long roundabout trip.

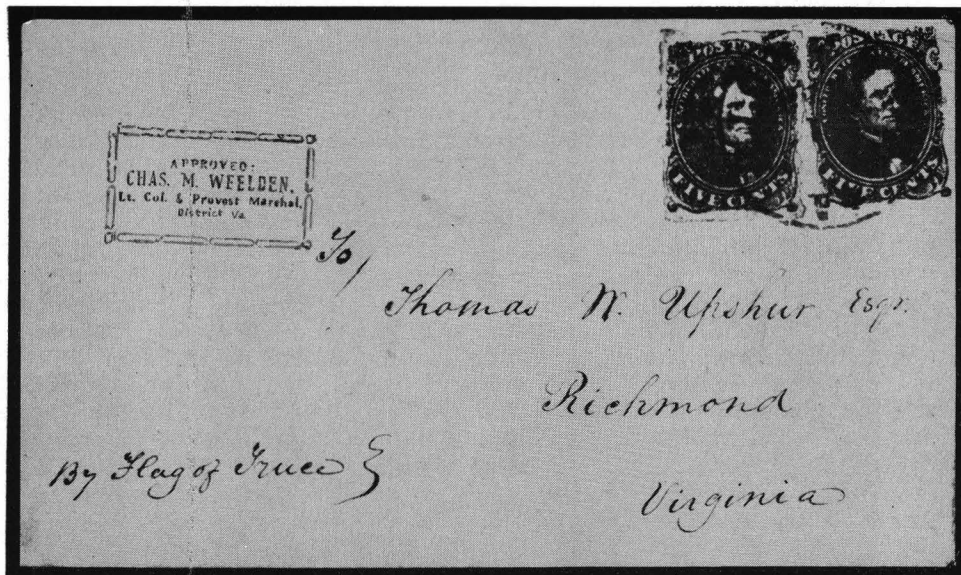


Fig. 37. FLAG OF TRUCE LETTER, NORTH TO SOUTH. A civilian letter to Richmond, Va., and bearing the scarce censor marking of the Provost Marshal, District of Va. which reads "APPROVED, CHAS. M. WEELDEN, Lt. COL. & PROVOST MARSHAL, DISTRICT VA." The two 5c Blue Lithographs are cancelled "Richmond, Va. Feb. 10." (probably 1863). Because this cover bears no Northern postmark to indicate its point of origin, it probably was delivered "out of the mail" to the exchange ground and thence sent South.

Letters from Southern friends or relatives to Southern prisoners of war confined in Northern prisons, are quickly identified, of course, by the address. Such letters followed more rigidly the regulations for Prisoner of War letters. Usually they bear a Confederate stamp and a U. S. stamp. Sometimes the Confederate stamp is cancelled with a Southern town postmark (or mss.), sometimes left uncanceled. The U. S. stamp is always struck with a cork-killer and nearby is the Old Point Comfort postmark. Generally, the cover also bears the censor's initials or marking in mss. Rarely does the town postmark of the city in which the Northern prison was located appear on this type of cover. (Fig. 38 and Fig. 39).

It can be seen from these explanations of the appearance of Prisoners' letters and Flag of Truce letters, that such letters cleared at Fortress Monroe. If the variety of ways in which stamps of both sides were affixed or not, if the presence or absence of the proper cancellations seem confusing, you must charge it to the carelessness of letter writers or to the lack of a uniform system for handling Flag of Truce letters.

The actual regulations, issued by General Dix, U. S. Commandant at Fortress Monroe in 1862, and supposed to govern the sending of Flag of Truce mail, were simple. They are given herewith, together with comments upon the usual practice as distinguished from the literal Federal regulations.

1. No letter must exceed one page of a letter sheet, or relate to any other than purely domestic matters. (This regulation apparently was never violated. All letters noted are on single sheets and have the primer-like quality of reporting strictly personal affairs).
2. Every letter must be signed with the writer's name in full. (Seldom if ever violated).
3. All letters must be sent with *five cents postage enclosed*, if to go to Richmond, and ten cents if beyond.

This section of the regulation is a mystery. Many covers addressed to Richmond, and many more to "beyond" all bear 10c Confederate postage or are marked "Due 10." An exception is a cover illustrated herewith. (Fig. 42) bearing a 5c Local print, but this is addressed to *beyond Richmond*. Probably when these regulations of General Dix were first promulgated (the cartel was signed July 22, 1862) the Federal Government was not aware that postal rates in the Confederacy were to be raised after July 1, 1862, to 10c for all letters to any point, from the former 5c for distances under 500 miles, and 10c for distances over 500 miles. Therefore this regulation was amended to the 10c Confederate rate for all letters. The words "postage enclosed" in this section are misleading; and probably gave rise to the impression conveyed by earlier students of Flag of Truce letters that the Confederate stamp was affixed at the Exchange Ground, or "where the letter crossed the line." Possibly this did happen infrequently. But examination of hundreds of covers seems to establish the fact that the Confederate stamp most often was affixed to the envelope at the same time that the 3c U. S. stamp was affixed. For example, of a great many covers tabulated, North to South, 28% have the Confederate stamp tied by the U. S. cancel; 68% have the Confederate stamp in the opposite corner where the U. S. cancel could not tie it except by a second strike; 4% show the Confederate stamp clearly affixed later over the U. S. cancel.

Similarly with all South to North covers tabulated: 15% have the U. S. stamp tied by the Confederate town cancel; 70% have the U. S. stamp in

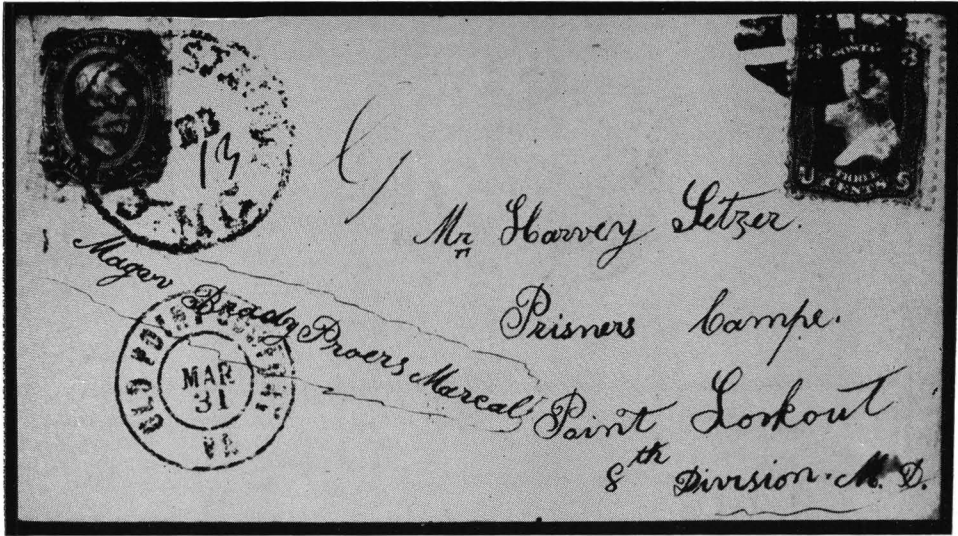


Fig. 38. SOUTH TO NORTH, TO A SOUTHERN PRISONER AT POINT LOOKOUT PRISON. Mailed from Catawba Station, N. C. Feb. 13 (1864) which ties the Confederate stamp, the letter evidently is from the prisoner's family. Went through Old Point Comfort, March 31, where the 3c U. S. stamp was cancelled with a typical Old Point Comfort cork "Killer" of which there were numerous varieties. The censor marking is the large mss. "G" seen often on covers to Point Lookout. Other mss. censor initials known on letters from South to North are "L" and "L.T.P."

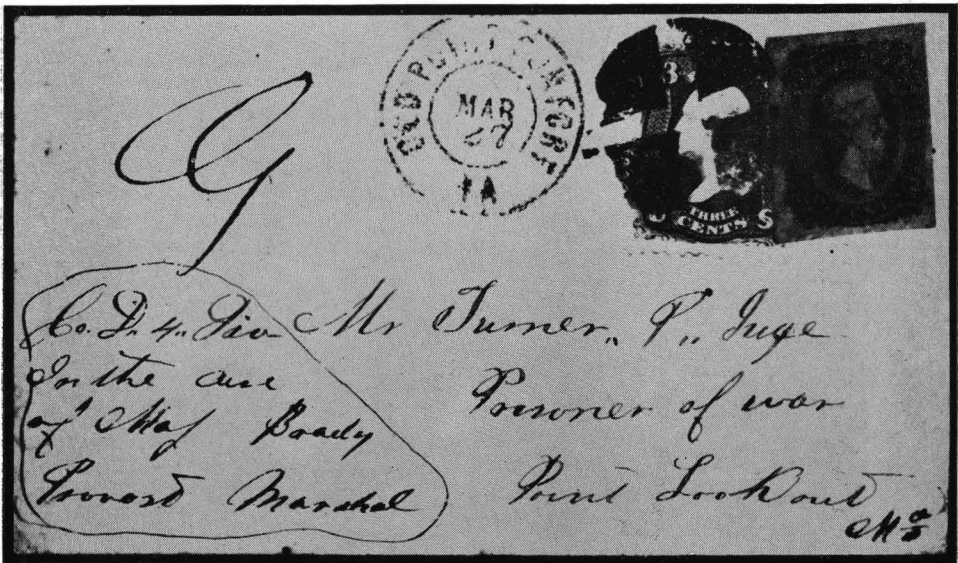


Fig. 39. TO A SOUTHERN PRISONER OF WAR AT POINT LOOKOUT PRISON. This letter with the 10c Confederate (Keatinge & Ball printing) overlapping the 3c U. S. stamp seems to indicate that both were affixed at the point of origin; and later tied together by the Old Point Comfort cork Killer. No Confederate postmark; the date is probably March 27, 1865, because the Keatinge & Ball printing first appeared in December of 1864. Censor marking "G" in mss.



Fig. 40. FROM A NORTHERN PRISONER-OF-WAR IN THE SOUTH TO PHILADELPHIA. This cover is typical of those which bore only the Confederate stamp and therefore were "due" at destination for the unpaid U. S. postage of 3c. This letter was marked "Due 6" at Old Point Comfort as are most covers of this type noted. This particular letter containing only a single sheet (written on one side only as per regulations for prisoners' correspondence) certainly was not overweight. The letter is headed "C. S. Military Prison Camp, Columbia, S. C. Nov. 15/64." The censor marking in mss. is "Ex'd A. C. Mead Capt." Covers which were not postmarked at the Confederate city of origin, sometimes show the Richmond postmark applied as they cleared through that city. The Old Point Comfort postmark is normal.

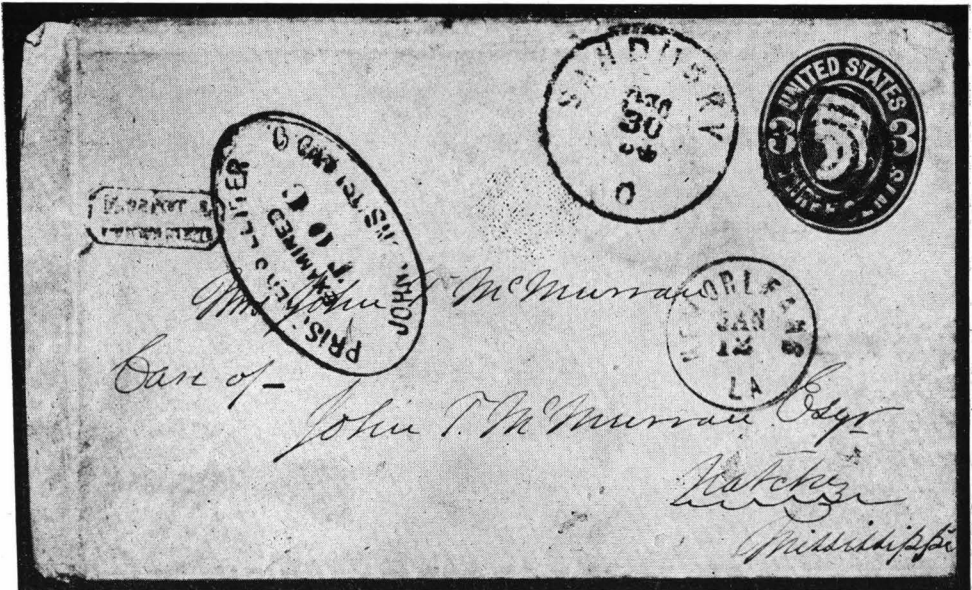


Fig. 41. FROM JOHNSON'S ISLAND PRISON, SANDUSKY TO NATCHEZ, MISS. VIA NEW ORLEANS, LA. This cover is typical of the special routing of prisoners' letters often resorted to when the destination was near a city in Union hands. Because the letter never left Federal territory no Confederate stamp was necessary; Natchez was in Union hands long before Dec. 30, 1864, the date in the Sandusky postmark. The small New Orleans postmark is typical of the period. The small illegible hand-stamp at the extreme left of the cover reads "MISSSENT & FORWARDED," no doubt applied at New Orleans to expedite delivery to Natchez. The initials "T.O.C." in the oval censor marking are one of ten sets of initials (or names) used in this prison.



Fig. 42. THE 5c LOCAL PRINTING, FROM JOHNSON'S ISLAND PRISON. A very unusual cover for many reasons. It was postmarked at Richmond Aug. 25, 1863, so the 5c Local Printing stamp, an underpayment of 5c slipped through because there is no "due" marking. The Sandusky postmark with grid killer (instead of target) all in blue is rare. There is no Johnson's Island Prison oval censor marking, but instead "Examined W.H.H." in mss.

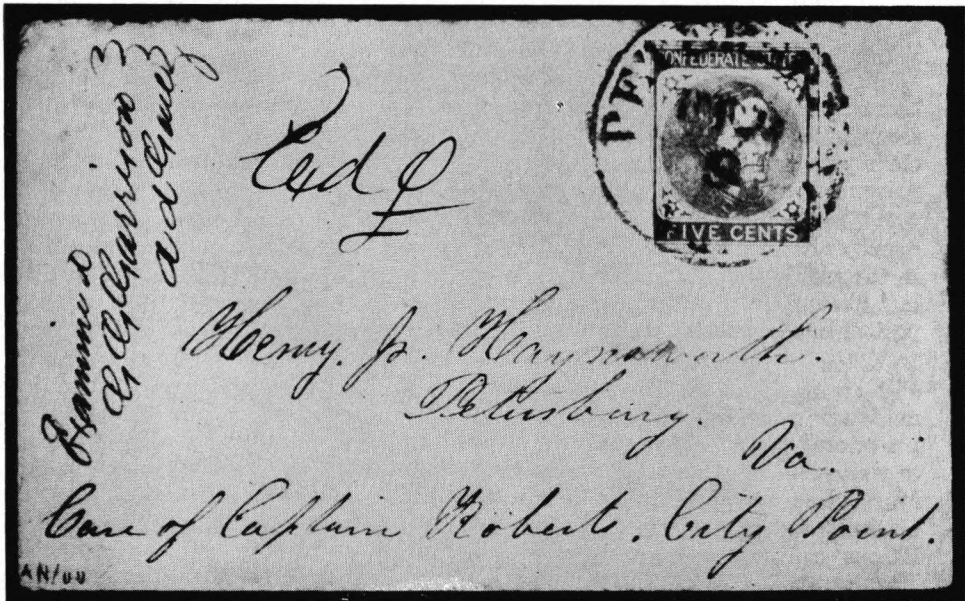


Fig. 43. AN UNDERPAID FLAG OF TRUCE LETTER. The notation "Care of Captain Roberts, City Point" shows that this Flag of Truce letter passed through the usual channels, although not marked for flag of truce. The mss. "Exd L." in black (horizontal) is a regular Union censor marking used at Old Point Comfort; the mss. "Examined G. G. Garrison Ad. Gen'l" in violet (vertical) is Confederate.

the opposite corner where the Confederate cancel could not tie it except by a second strike; 15% show both the Confederate stamp and U. S. stamp not tied by any cancel until the letter reached Old Point Comfort, where both stamps were hit by that postmark or its "killer." By postal legislation in 1863 Confederate stamps were made available to Southern prisoners in the U. S., and in March, 1865, U. S. stamps became available at some prisons in the Confederacy. Some of the "other side's" stamps came in enclosed in Flag of Truce letters to the prisoners; but, whatever the means of supply, they were available from time to time. (See Fig. 32).

4. All letters must be enclosed to the commanding general to the Dept. of Virginia, at Fortress Monroe. No letter sent to any other address will be forwarded.

This section was scrupulously followed. All letters bear "via Flag of Truce," and "care of Commanding General, Fortress Monroe" or similar direction. Prisoners' letters (as distinguished from civilian Flag of Truce mail) often show on the cover the name, rank and regiment of the prisoner.

It should be pointed out that the direction "must be enclosed to the commanding general, etc." in this Regulation 4 has caused confusion and has led to misinterpretation of its true intent. Not a few authorities on Confederate philately have stated erroneously that the phrase means that . . . "all Prisoners' and Flag of Truce through-the-lines covers were to be enclosed in an inner unsealed envelope, properly addressed . . . Letters from the North were to be *enclosed in an outer envelope* addressed to the Commanding General at Fortress Monroe . . . The letter was examined, usually at the Prison or by the nearest Provost Marshal, so handstamped or marked, sealed, and forwarded to Fortress Monroe, or to Richmond, where the outer envelope was opened and destroyed, and the inner envelope with its letter placed in the mails at the nearest post office."

The true meaning of Regulation 4 is simply that prisoners' letters must be enclosed in an *envelope addressed to the commanding general, etc.* The second sentence—"No letter sent to any other address will be forwarded"—clearly proves that the intent of the Regulation was to confine the sending of prisoners' mail to one place, Fortress Monroe.

The mere fact that prisoners' mail bears the town cancel of the city nearby the prison proves that such mail was deposited there for forwarding in the mails, and could not have been enclosed in an outer envelope when it left the prison. It is possible that prisoners' mail was cancelled at these post offices in batches and went to Fortress Monroe in bundles.

Now in respect to civilian Flag of Truce mail, the method of censorship and transmission differed from the handling of prisoners' mail. Civilian mail across-the-lines was discouraged and consequently is far scarcer than prisoners' covers, either military or civilian. Any Northern civilian desiring to write to a relative or friend in the South was obliged to apply to a Provost Marshal or a prison superintendent (sometimes to a Congressman) and state his reasons. If permission was granted, the letter, observing the same regulations as for prisoners' letters, was censored by the proper authority. Then it was enclosed in its envelope to the addressee, marked "Flag of Truce, (sometimes "Ex'd") and with Confederate postage affixed or coin enclosed. This envelope was then enclosed in another addressed to Fortress Monroe with U. S. postage affixed. At Richmond the inner cover was posted. Such covers can be identified by the "Flag of Truce" endorsement and the Confederate stamp postmarked at Richmond.

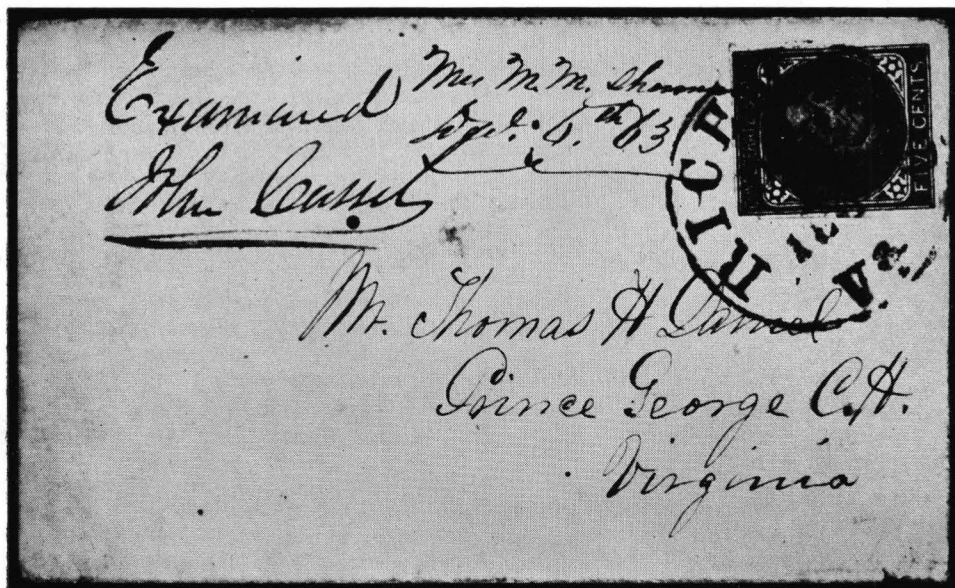


Fig. 44. "EXAMINED" LETTER, UNSEALED; 5c LOCAL PRINT. This letter marked in mss. "Examined John Cassels," postmarked Richmond, Va. Dec. 11, 1863, and addressed to Prince George C. H. Va., a few miles from City Point, Va., for years presented a mystery. But with the recent discovery of a cover handstamped with "APPROVED, FORT MONROE, VA. Mar. 11, 1864—JOHN CASSELS, Capt. and Provost Marshal," the identity of Cassels was disclosed and the origin of the cover revealed. Apparently from a civilian prisoner, Mrs. M. M. Sherman. at Fortress Monroe, approved by the Provost Marshal.



Fig. 45. One of only three prisoners covers known from the infamous Andersonville Prison, Ga., postmarked Andersonville, Ga. (no date) tying the Confederate stamp. Cleared at Old Point Comfort Aug. 25, over 3½ months later than the date of the letter enclosed, May 2, 1864. Censors initials apparently "M.S." A second type of the Andersonville town mark appears on one of the other known covers.

The identity of these civilian Flag of Truce covers has evoked considerable discussion from time to time among students of Confederate postal usage. A theory has been advanced that many of these covers are not from civilians but are prisoners' letters enclosed in an envelope and then enclosed in an outer envelope directed to Fortress Monroe. However, it seems improbable that prisoners, knowing that their letters went forward safely (if slowly) to the addressee in a single envelope, directed in care of Fortress Monroe, would go to the extra trouble of addressing two envelopes, when the second was unnecessary and wasteful. In fact, envelopes were usually extremely hard to come by.

5. All letters sent to Fortress Monroe without a strict compliance with these rules, except for prisoners of war, will be transmitted to the Dead Letter Office.

(Here prisoners' letters are dealt with more leniently. This accounts for the fact that so many prisoners' letters bearing only the 3c U. S. stamp, and marked "Due 10" at Richmond were delivered to the South, instead of to the Dead Letter Office).

These precise regulations were adopted by the Confederacy and applied, in reverse, to South to North Flag of Truce mail.

When prisoners' letters from the North were addressed to friends in former Confederate territory, then under Federal control, they bore only the U. S. stamp and were invariably addressed "Care of Genl. (Capt.)—Commandant of the Post" at the town to which the letter was sent. (See Fig. 31).

Until the formal regulations quoted above were mutually agreed to by South and North on July 22, 1862, the markings "Examined" and "Approved" and prison titles were in manuscript on North-to-South prisoners' letters. But by early 1863, handstamps were generally in use in most prisons of the North.

In the South, however, no prison ever employed a handstamp. All markings remained in manuscript to the end of the War.

Provost Marshal Markings

Provost Marshals were appointed as a military rank to preserve order and military regulations in a district, a camp or a city or town. They commanded details of soldiers and guards, and their duties closely paralleled the present-day duties of Military Police. They received prisoners captured in battle pending their transfer to prisons.

Provost Marshals had the authority to censor flag of truce mail for transient prisoners and for civilians under arrest. Handstamps are recorded for the Provost Marshals of the Military Districts of Virginia, of North Carolina, of Washington, D. C. Manuscript "approved" markings are known from Carthage and Knoxville, Tenn., and from New Orleans, after their capture by the Federals.

Censor Handstamps — Union Prisons

Censor handstamps (with or without mss. initials) were used from the following Northern prisons (1863-1865):

Camp Chase, Columbus, O.	Old Capitol Prison, Washington, D. C.
Fort Delaware, Delaware City, Del.	Point Lookout, Point Lookout, Md.
Camp Douglas, Chicago, Ill.	Rock Island Prison, Rock Island, Ill.
Elmira Prison, Elmira, N. Y.	Ship Island, Mississippi River mouth
Johnson's Island, Sandusky, O.	(1863)
Camp Morton, Indianapolis, Ind.	



Fig. 46. The 2c brown red properly used to pay the Confederate drop letter rate at Richmond and the only example known. Other prisoners' letters addressed to Richmond show 10c stamps used or 10 cents due. The Baltimore, Md. postmark may indicate origin of the letter at Ft. McHenry, although there are no censor markings. The 2c stamp was probably affixed at Fortress Monroe.



Fig. 47. A rare example, from Ft. Warren in Boston Harbor. Very few covers from Ft. Warren are known. Posted Dec. 26 (1864) at Boston, arriving in Richmond Jan. 10 (1865). The writer, Brig. Gen'l A. R. Johnson, was wounded and blinded when captured. The signature may be his; the address is by another hand.

Other Northern prisons and hospital prisons used only mss. censor's markings:

Castle Williams, N. Y.	Fort Warren, Boston, Mass.
Chester Hospital, Chester, Pa.	Hilton Head, Port Royal, S. C. (1862)
De Camp Gen'l Hospital (David's Island), Pelham, N. Y.	Morris Island, Charleston, S. C.
Fort Columbus, N. Y.	New Orleans, La. (1862) (several prisons)
Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Md.	Tombs Prison, N. Y.
Fortress Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Va.	U. S. Gen'l Hospital, Gettysburg, Pa. (1863)
Fort Pulaski, Savannah, Ga. (1862)	

Sometimes, and for short periods of time, prisoners were confined to jails and penitentiaries, at Alton, Ill., and Columbus, Ohio, for example.

Confederate Censor Markings

Prisons in the South used only censors' marking in mss., and not hand-stamps. The Confederate prisons, permanent and temporary, were:

Andersonville Prison, near Andersonville, Ga.	Lynchburg, Va.
Atlanta, Ga.	Madison, Ga.
Beaufort, S. C.	Richland Jail, Columbia, S. C.
Camp Ford, near Tyler, Texas	Richmond Gen'l Hospital, Richmond, Va.
Camp Grace, near Hempstead, Texas	Roper Hospital, Charleston, S. C.
Camp Morgan, Cahaba, Ala.	Salisbury Prison, Salisbury, N. C.
Camp Oglethorpe, Macon, Ga.	Savannah (Stockade), Ga.
Camp Sorghum, Columbia, S. C.	Selma, Ala.
Danville Prison, Danville, Va.	Staunton, Va.
Florence (Stockade), S. C.	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
Libby Prison, Richmond, Va.	Wilmington, N. C.
Liggon's & Crew's Tobacco Warehouse, Richmond, Va.	

One fact, not generally known to collectors, is that prisoners were exchanged and Flag of Truce letters crossed the lines, not only at City Point or Cox's Landing, on the James, but also very occasionally at Vicksburg, Miss. after its capture by the Union forces. Obviously, all Flag of Truce covers marked "Fortress Monroe" crossed at City Point.

There is of record but one cover routed via Vicksburg. It carries the notation "For Flag of Truce, Via Vicksburg, Miss" and bears only a 10c 1863 Confederate stamp cancelled at Jackson, Miss. (Apr. (?). On the reverse of this unsealed envelope in mss. appears "H. D. Qua. Dept. of Miss., Vicksburg, Miss. March 24, 1865 Approved by order of Maj. Gen. N. J. T. Dana—W. H. H. Emmens, Asst. Adj. Genl." This letter is addressed to Clinton, La., and a fragmentary enclosure indicates it originated at Johnson's Island Prison, Sandusky, O. Probably it was enclosed in an outer envelope to carry it to Vicksburg.

The covers illustrated were selected to show a wide range of interesting Prisoners' or Flag of Truce letters. Because the regulations for Prisoners' letters were not always followed by correspondents, oddities come to light from time to time that are difficult to "read."

Prisoner of War Mail of Morris Island, S. C. Hilton Head, S. C. and Fort Pulaski, Ga.

As the arena of the War broadened and as unusual prison and prisoner situations arose, it became expedient to improvise special ways to meet the local needs at some distant point. The main route for prisoner of war mail through Fortress Monroe and Richmond that served the great masses of inmates in Northern and Southern prisons was often remote. And as long as the general regulations for prisoner of war mail were observed, local commanders could devise their own methods.

The most interesting group of prisoner of war covers in this category were those sent to or from the temporary Union prisons at Morris Island and Hilton Head, S. C., and Fort Pulaski, Ga. These temporary prisons, deep in the South, were strung along the Atlantic Coast—Morris Island in Charleston Harbor, Hilton Head on an island off Port Royal, Fort Pulaski at the entrance to Savannah Harbor. All these places had long been in Union hands—Hilton Head since Nov. 7, 1861; Fort Pulaski since April 11, 1862; Morris Island since Sep. 7, 1863. Port Royal was made the staging area for expeditions against the Southern coast ever since its occupation in November, 1861.

But the reason for the establishment of stockades or prisons to house Confederate prisoners of war at these three points off the Confederate-held coast was indeed unusual and reads like a page from a Victorian war novel. It seems that General Gillmore, U. S. A. whose troops landed on Morris Island in July, 1863, succeeded in forcing the Confederate defenders to evacuate the island on Sept. 7, and immediately Charleston was put under continuous bombardment. On June 13, 1864, the commander of the Union forces was advised by the commander in Charleston that five Union generals and forty-five officers, prisoners of war, had been sent to Charleston for imprisonment and were exposed to the Union bombardment.

In retaliation Major General Foster, U. S. A. threatened to keep an equal number of prisoners of like grade in positions on Morris Island, exposed to the fire of the Confederate guns. So in June, 1864, five Generals and forty-five others officers, from Colonels down, were chosen from prisoners in Fort Delaware and delivered to Maj. General Foster at Hilton Head. Very quickly the commander in Charleston, General Jones, proposed the exchange of these two groups of prisoners; and the exchange was made by the first week in August.

Thus for a period of only a few weeks, these Confederate prisoners on Hilton Head were enabled to send letters by flag of truce to relatives and friends in the Confederacy. These rare covers entered the Confederacy at Charleston and bear only Confederate handstamp markings since they did not "cross the lines." (See Figs. 48 and 49).

However, the exchange of these fifty prisoners did not settle matters, but possibly gave Gen. Sam Jones in Charleston a clever idea. He continued to expose, or was reported to be exposing, some 600 Federal prisoners in Charleston to the fire from Morris Island in the hope that here was an easy device to effect exchanges of prisoners and thus augment the South's dwindling military manpower. But the Federals again resorted to "eye-for-an-eye" strategy and in August, 1864, 600 Confederate prisoners from Fort Delaware were shipped to Morris Island. Arriving on Sept. 7, they were held in an open stockade exposed to the shelling from Charleston.

If General Jones held any hope of effecting the exchange of these 600 for his Union prisoners in Charleston, his hopes were dashed by General U. S. Grant's letter to the Secretary of War, dated Aug. 27, 1864.

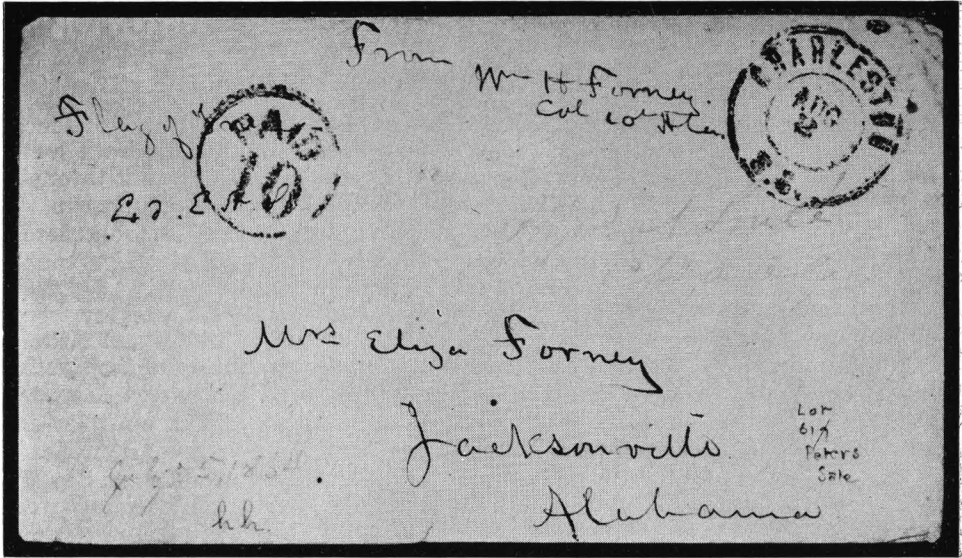


Fig. 48. From prisoner-of-war, Col. Wm. H. Forney, 10th Ala., one of the fifty prisoners sent to Hilton Head in June 1864. Cover shows his rank, the censor's "Exd" and "Approved." Postmarked at Charleston, S. C. Aug. 2 (1864) with 10 paid. The notation "July 25, 1864" at lower left is probably the date of the letter. Col. Forney re-joined troops after his exchange, became a Brigadier General, fought through the war and was present at the surrender at Appomatox C. H.

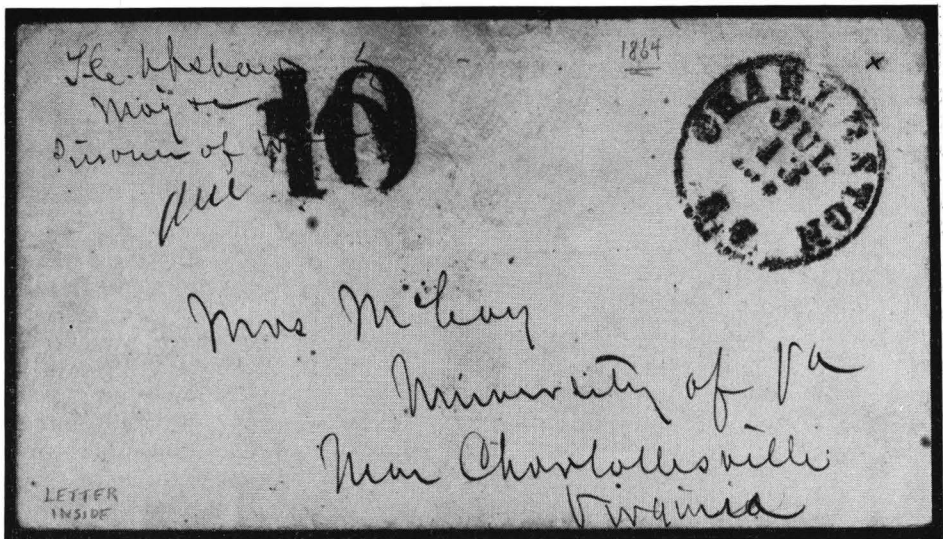


Fig. 49. From prisoner of war T. E. Upshaw, Major, 13th Va. Cavalry, written July 7, 1864, while aboard the prison ship off Hilton Head. Postmarked at Charleston, S. C. July 13 with "10" due and addressed to Charlottesville, Va. The letter enclosed is pertinent to the story of Hilton Head, saying in part "Have been sent here with 49 other officers of the C. S. Army as hostages for the safety of certain Federal Officers held by Major Genl. Sam Jones in Charleston, S. C. supposed to be in danger."

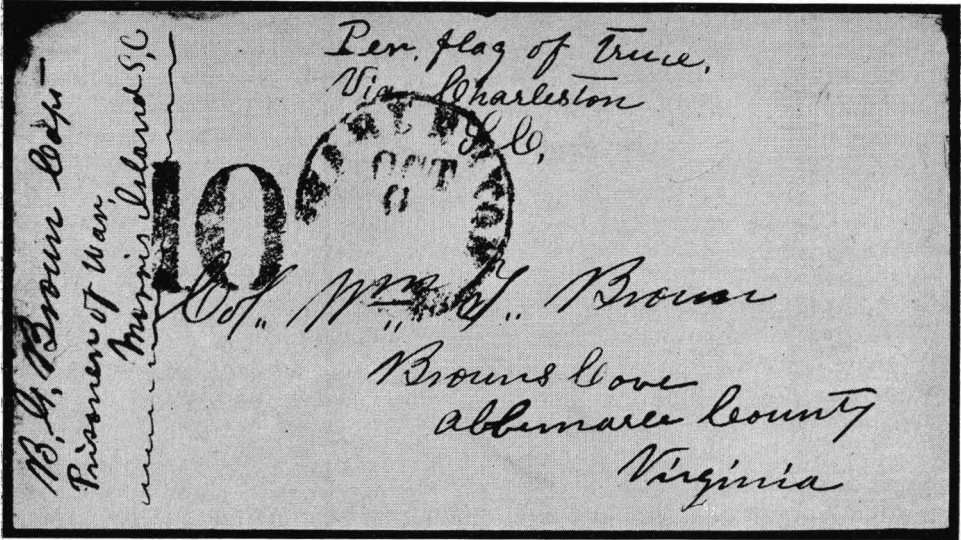


Fig. 50. From a prisoner at Morris Island, sent "Via Charleston, S. C." where it was postmarked Oct. 6 (due) "10." Capt. Brown, the writer, was among the 600 prisoners sent to Morris Island in August of 1864. "10" (due) from the addressee in Brown's Cove, Va. No censor marking.

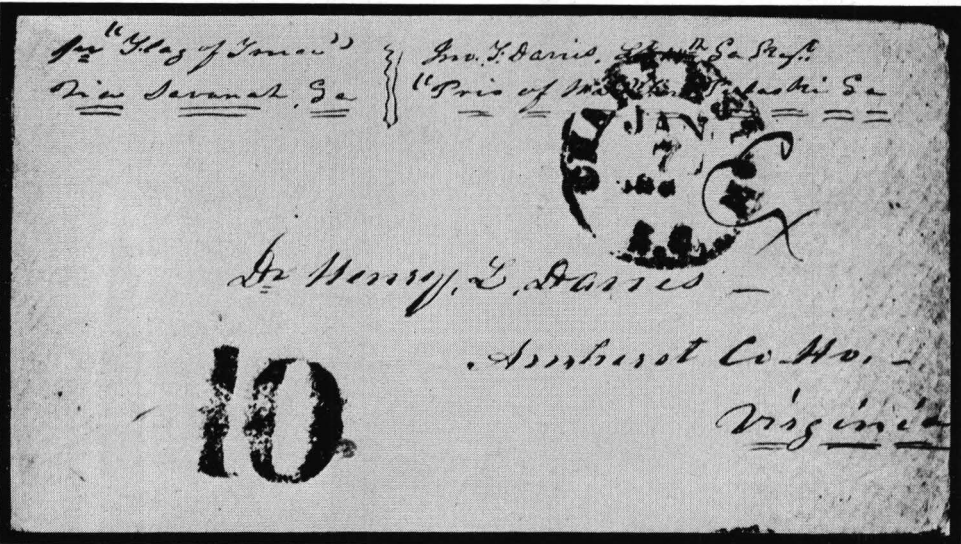


Fig. 51. From a prisoner at Fort Pulaski, Ga., and although marked "via Savannah, Ga." this letter went via Charleston on Jan. 7 (1865); "10" (due) and "Ex" of the censor adorn this pretty example.

General Grant's letter read :

"Please inform Maj. Gen. J. G. Foster that in no circumstances will he be allowed to make exchange of prisoners of war. Exchanges simply re-enforce the enemy at once, whilst we do not get the benefit of those received for two or three months and lose the majority entirely. I telegraph this from just hearing 500 or 600 more prisoners have been sent to Major General Foster.

U. S. Grant, Lieutenant-General"

On October 23rd, the Confederate prisoners were transported from Morris Island to Fort Pulaski near Savannah, Ga. Shortly afterward 200 of the surviving prisoners at Fort Pulaski were sent to Hilton Head. After the capture of Savannah and finally Charleston, the group still at Fort Pulaski were shipped to Port Royal where they were joined by the surviving prisoners on Hilton Head, and all were returned to Fort Delaware prison.

While these prisoners were confined at Morris Island and Fort Pulaski, they were able to communicate with Southern citizens via flag of truce mail. These covers, too, are rare. (See Figs. 50 and 51).

Apparently the transportation of prisoners of war mail was carried on by two Flag of Truce boats, one Federal, the other Confederate. The Federal boat plied the coastal waters from Fort Pulaski, Hilton Head and Morris Island, meeting the Confederate boat in Charleston Harbor where mail, dispatches and supplies were exchanged. Most of the Flag of Truce mail entered the Confederacy at Charleston. A few of the surviving covers are directed "via Savannah," but nevertheless were postmarked at Charleston. However, some mail from Fort Pulaski did enter at Savannah.

The following summary will enable collectors to identify these covers :

Covers from Prisoners to Confederate Addresses

From one of the 50 prisoners sent to Hilton Head, S. C.

Postmark : Charleston, S. C. Paid 10 or 10 (due) Late July to early August 1864

From one of the 600 prisoners sent to Morris Island

Postmark : Charleston, S. C. Paid 10 or 10 (due) Early Sept. through Oct., 1864

From Fort Pulaski, Ga.

Postmark : Savannah, Ga. Paid 10 or 10 (due) Late Oct. to Dec. 1864

Postmark : Charleston, S. C. Paid 10 or 10 (due) Late Dec. 1864 into Jan. 1865

From Hilton Head, S. C.

Postmark : Charleston, S. C. Paid 10 or 10 (due) From Nov. 1864 Mar. 1865

All such covers bear the prisoner's name and/or rank and/or regiment; and usually, but not always, their location—"Morris Island," "Hilton Head," "Fort Pulaski;" "Flag of Truce" and/or "via" or "to" Charleston or Savannah. Many covers show also censor's markings.

The conditions to which the 600 Confederate prisoners were exposed on the voyage to Morris Island and in the camps there remain a blot on the Union record. Many of the prisoners were convalescent wounded and disease and inadequate rations took toll of the rest. When they were embarked at Fort Delaware, they believed that they, too, like the fifty officers at Hilton Head, were on the way to exchange. Before the group was finally sent to Fort Pulaski, where their treatment improved greatly, the helpless wounded were exchanged.

V.

Blockade-Run Mail From Europe To The C. S. A.

To understand the glamour and desperation of the blockade-running period of the War, the reader must vision a South fabulously rich in cotton and tobacco it could not turn into gold, and miserably poor in war munitions, military equipment and the luxuries of Europe. She needed guns, bullets, shoes, blankets to carry on the War and silks, clothes, jewels and wines to carry on the social amenities of her traditions. She got both, though never enough of all to win the War.

When the War began, the Federals toyed with the idea of a blockade of the Coast from South Carolina south. As early as April 19, 1861, a blockade was declared and eight days later the blockade was extended to include North Carolina and Virginia. It was but an empty gesture, for the Federal steam navy consisted of just twenty-nine ships, and the blockade went unrecognized by neutrals.

Presently the War Department failed to retake promptly Forts Monroe and Sumter; and the forts below New Orleans, at Mobile, Wilmington, Savannah and Pensacola went ungarrisoned by the North. The Navy Yards at Norfolk and Pensacola were wrecked and lost. So the Federals had on their hands a blockade of three thousand miles of coast line!

It was a Gargantuan task for the slowly building Federal Navy. Though the blockade (and the loss of the Mississippi) finally strangled the Confederate States, there was never a time from 1861 to 1864 when it completely closed the ports of Wilmington and Charleston to swift blockade runners, and until early 1862, New Orleans and Savannah, also.

The first ill effect of the Federal blockade upon the mail routes of the Confederacy fell naturally upon the steamship lines operating in the Gulf and in Chesapeake Bay. By April 20 the mail between Norfolk and Baltimore and Old Point Comfort had ceased. In the Gulf, mails between New Orleans and Mobile, Key West and Brazos Santiago, and other routes along the Gulf Coast were suspended.

Equally serious to the communications of the South was Reagan's inability to negotiate postal treaties with European nations. When it became evident that the Confederacy would be unable to establish trans-ocean mails, enterprising individuals offered to provide service once a month via Mexico, thence to be put aboard English steamers calling at Mexican and West Indies ports. By October, 1861, an entrepreneur, M. Antonio Costa, did get over a thousand letters aboard a British mail steamer and the service for November was advertised. Costa's charge was \$1 to Europe; 75 cents to Cuba and 50 cents to Mexico—all per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. This mail is unidentifiable.

Meanwhile, the frantic efforts of Reagan to effect mail contracts with European countries failed. Ever since March, 1861, when T. Butler King of Georgia arrived in Europe, negotiation after negotiation fell through. A Belgian-American group refused to discuss the plan; an obscure French company agreed to transport mails from Havre to Savannah and New Orleans, but only to begin *after* the Federal blockade was lifted. An English company, Sabel & Co., signed a contract but the Confederacy refused to ratify it. King pursued his purpose until November, when he sailed home, only to be stranded in Havana by the blockade for two months. Even Mason, the principal agent of the South in

Europe, was incommunicado for long periods and his mission was a failure. All plans, some of which continued to be proposed as late as 1862, were fruitless.

The only communications with Europe were carried on by the blockade runners of the government and private ship owners, via West Indies ports, and Bermuda and Havana occasionally.

During the Autumn-Winter of 1861-62 as agents of the Confederacy in British and French ports became active in the purchase of war munitions and ships to run the blockade, United States Consuls in London, Liverpool, Le Havre and other cities became equally active in reporting to Washington on the transactions they could ferret out. The kind and quantities of munitions, the contracts for ship building, the cargoes, departures and destinations of foreign flag steamers—all such information reached the blockading squadrons via the Navy Dept. But despite this secret service, British steamers ran safely into Atlantic, Gulf and Mexican ports with their cargoes up to early 1862. At Nassau and Havana, too, Federal agents ashore and special watches aboard the blockading squadrons were busy tracking down ships seeking to evade the blockade.

However, the many passes and channels interlacing the off-shore islands and sand bars, and the very severe fogs made detection extremely difficult. And the stupid Union practice of showing mastlights by the blockading ships permitted the evaders to run safe courses between them at night. Later the practice ceased.

Blockade-running quickly grew into an enormous naval industry. Early in the War Southern representatives to foreign governments had to be assured safe passage; commercial envoys had to be sent abroad to arrange credits for the poorly financed South, rich only in cotton—the “white gold” of the Southern States. No one in the South believed the world could long endure without American cotton or tobacco and so they thought Europe would arrange to get them. In fact, the South believed the War would last a year at the most. Only when the year 1861-62 saw but 13,000 bales of cotton sent overseas against 2,000,000 bales in the previous season did the Confederate States realize the gravity of the situation. Charleston alone in October-December, 1861, shipped less than 1,000 bales against 110,000 for the last quarter of 1860. Rice and naval stores' shipments fell to the vanishing point.

In late 1862, A. H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, brought forward a plan to issue Government 8% bonds against all cotton subscribed at 10 cents a pound. Credit thus created was to be used to build in Europe fifty swift iron-clads to get the cotton to European ports. There it was to be held for higher prices and the debt thus liquidated at a handsome profit to be used to pay for more blockade-runners. Stephens thought cotton might go to 50 cents a pound. Actually it went much higher, but the plan never matured and the South lost its great opportunity when the Lancashire cotton spinners stood by the North and refused to recognize the Confederate States.

So one can sense the rising tide of clamor for ships to run the blockade and get the cotton out and the war necessities in, especially after the Mississippi fell under Federal control in 1862.

Many of the blockade runners built by the Confederacy were products of British shipyards and therefore were obliged to make their first ocean voyage from British ports to some West Indies port. There they were manned by properly trained crews, assigned cargoes destined for a Southern port and entered the service. When an outbreak of yellow fever struck Nassau, blockade activity was temporarily transferred to Bermuda. Since the coal capacity of the blockade runners was limited, they often were forced to put in to a Caribbean port to fuel. One remarkable voyage is recorded of a ship which reached Halifax, there took on cargo, then skipped down the Coast into Wilmington.

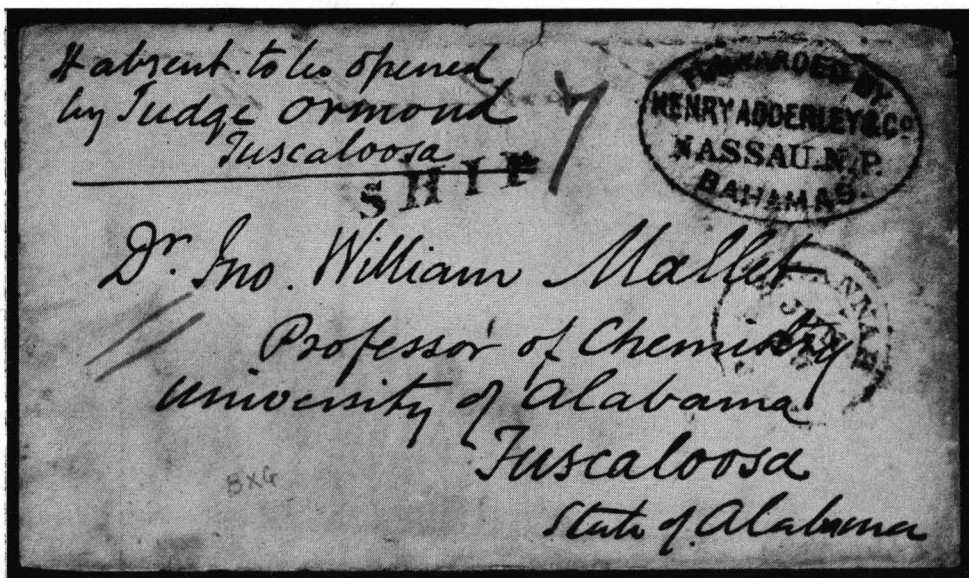


Fig. 52. Only recorded blockade cover received at Savannah; postmarked June 25 (1862) with the scarce "star" town mark of Savannah. Arriving before the single rate was raised from 5c to 10c on July 1, 1862. The letter was rated due "7" (5c + 2c for private ship). The italic "SHIP" was used only on private ship mail at Savannah. The "Adderley" forwarding cachet embellishes this rare example.

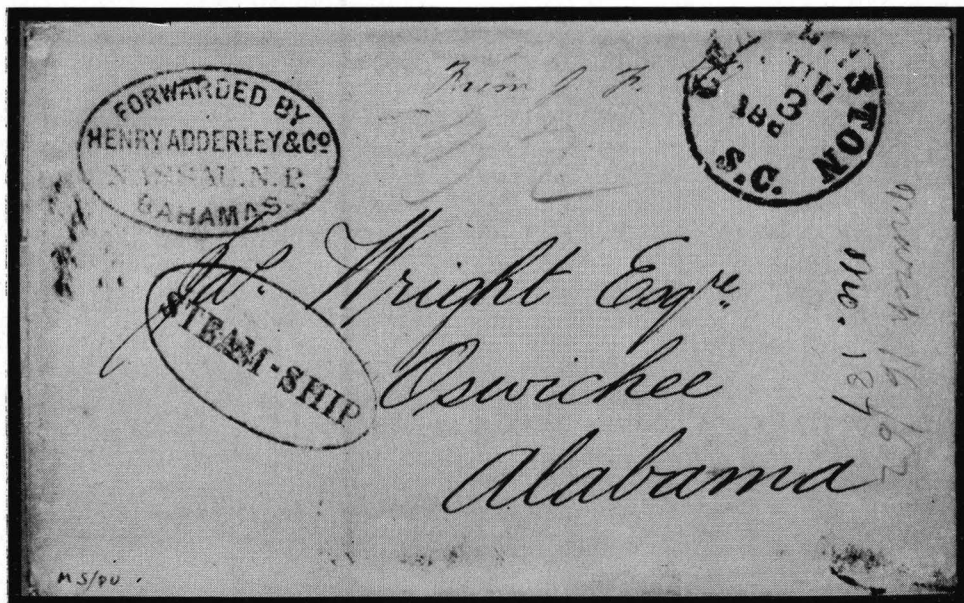


Fig. 53. Posted in Liverpool, Mar. 16, 1862. Thence by British Packet to the West Indies; transferred to blockade-runner at Nassau, Bahamas (handstamped upper left). Arrived at Charleston July 3, 3 mos. 17 days in transit. 32 cents due (in light pencil), the triple rate. Typical black "STEAM-SHIP" in oval marking used only in Charleston.

What part the dispatch of mail played in this picture is not made clear by history. If the Confederacy ever expected to maintain regular mail-ship contact with Europe, it failed to include a specific schedule of postal rates in its postal laws or legislation. Probably the blockade soon became so effective from the viewpoint of neutrals that the South abandoned hope for regular mail service and quickly resorted to blockade-runners for getting both men, goods and mail to and from European ports, via Nassau, West Indies, Bermuda and Havana.

A growing fleet of swift, lean, Clyde-built iron ships was supplied by British capital anxious to glean the stupendous profits of the hazardous trade. Munitions for the South were carried from Europe by regular steamers to the West Indies ports—Nassau, particularly, and there transferred to the blockade-runners. From Nassau there have been noted on these covers the handstamps of five firms, who evidently forwarded the letters as well as handled merchandise shipments via blockade-runners.

Some mail cleared through Havana, or attempted to reach the C. S. A. by that route. There is recorded a blockade-run letter dated at Liverpool, Meh. 13, 1863, which says in part: "We had this pleasure on the 18th & 30th ulto. via Havanna (sic), in both of which we handed you Account Current to 31 Dec. last and which showed a balance in your favor of £16281/13/3 in Cash that date. The disturbed state of your country interferes now so much with regular communication that we think it most prudent to guard against accidents and enclosed therefore beg to hand another copy of the Account Current hoping that one or other of our letters may reach its destination." There is no record of a handstamp of a forwarding firm of Havana.

It is said these greyhounds of the time scheduled their arrivals off Charleston or Wilmington to moonless nights and slipped past the blockading ships. On return voyages they were loaded to the gunwales with cotton, slipped into the self-same West Indies ports and transferred cargoes to European-bound ships. None fled directly to Europe. Since speed was the essence of their profits if privately owned, they sailed no farther than the West Indies or Bermuda before returning to a Southern port with cargoes newly arrived from Europe.

Captains of blockade runners were usually paid \$500 per round trip in gold; \$300 base pay and \$200 in bonus on completion of the voyage. Confederate supervisors of cargoes lived in the West Indies ports and managed the quick transfer of munitions from incoming foreign steamers to the runners.

Some statistics are interesting. During the War 1,504 blockade runners of all tonnages were captured or sunk. The gross proceeds of lawful prizes captured at sea before November 1, 1864, amounted to \$21,840,000. British investors are estimated to have lost some \$30,000,000 in the trade, offset of course by their actual profits. In the last two months of 1864 the imports of Charleston and Wilmington included over 8,500,000 lbs. of meat; 1,500,000 lbs. of lead; 200,000 lbs. of saltpeter; 500,000 pairs of shoes; 316,000 pairs of blankets; 500,000 lbs. of coffee; 69,000 rifles; 43 cannon; 97 packages of revolvers; 2,639 packages of medicine. Blockade-running was indeed an industry.

Yet these same blustering captains who gambled with death for high stakes "carried the mail." These letters were all "private ship" letters, that is, carried by blockade-runners which were not in the regular "contract" mail service. Letters never bore a foreign stamp, but were enclosed under cover to a forwarding agent; and never a Confederate State stamp unless they were "forwarded" after reaching a Confederate port.

Letters from abroad were "postage due." The rate oddly enough was based upon the private ship-letter rates then current in the United States. Following is the section of C. S. A. Postal Laws applying to foreign mail.

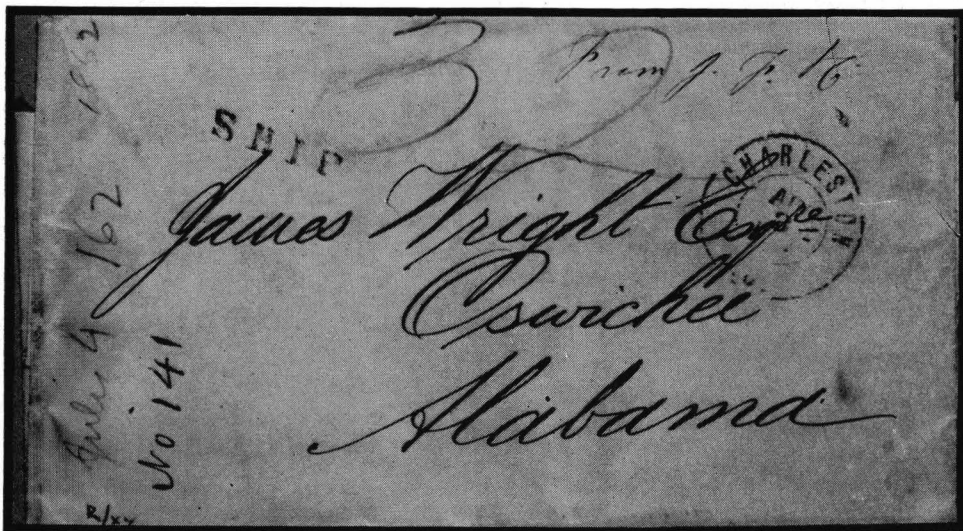


Fig. 54. Posted at Liverpool, July 4, 1862; came via a West Indies port, probably Nassau, arriving at Charleston Aug. 3, 1862—time 29 days. 32 cents due—the triple rate. Double circle Charleston cancel and “SHIP” both in black, showing Charleston used both oval “STEAM-SHIP” cancel and “SHIP” in 1862.

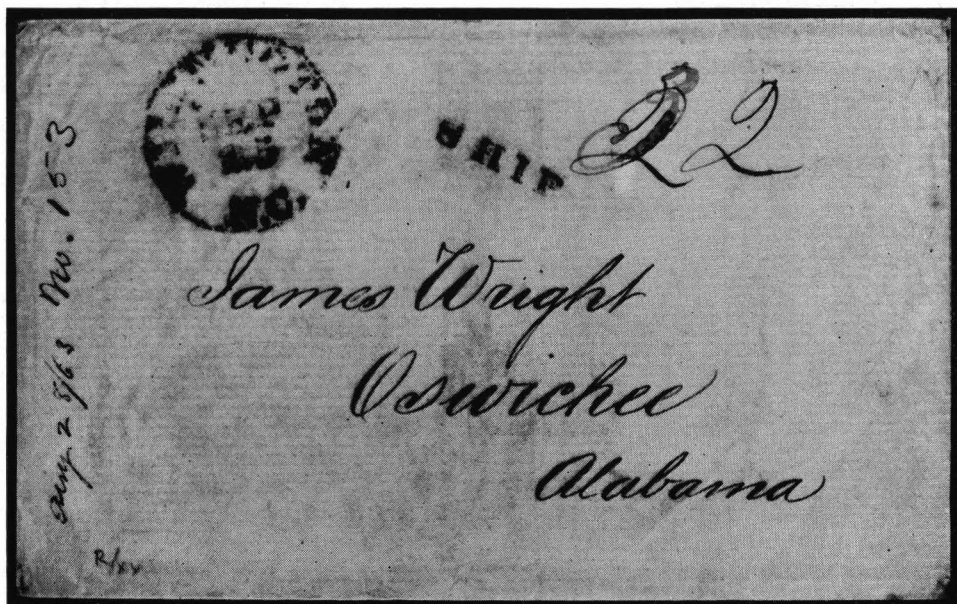


Fig. 55. Double rate 22 cts. changed to triple—32 cents. Posted Aug. 28, 1863—arriving 28 days later at Wilmington. “SHIP” cancel at Wilmington in black. This cancel differs slightly in lettering from the Charleston “SHIP” cancel.

Mch. 1, 1861

Chapter XXIII. An Act Supplemental to an act to Regulate the Rates of Postage and for other purposes.

* * * * *

SEC. 2. Be it further enacted, that until otherwise provided by law, the Post Master General may contract with any line of steamers for the transportation of mail matter between the ports of this Confederacy and the ports of foreign governments; Provided, that the rates of postage shall not exceed the rates allowed by the present laws of the United States for similar service, and the compensation to be paid shall not exceed the income from postage on such matter. (APPROVED MARCH 1, 1861)

This section presupposes, evidently, the possibility of regular mail-ship service to and from Confederate ports and foreign ports. There is no evidence that contracts of this kind were ever entered into by the C. S. A. Post Office Department. Nor is it probable that any contracts were signed; the blockade must have shown quickly the impossibility of regular mail-ship service between Europe and the confederacy.

However, in a "Post-Master's Return" for a Southern city dated "period Jan. 1-March 31, 1862," among the lines to be filled out in the accounting to the Post Office Dept., is one which reads:

"5. To Postage of _____ Ship Letters, at 6c each, originally received at this office for this Delivery."

This rate, printed in the form corresponds with the U. S. rate of the period and confirms SEC. 2 quoted above, in regard to contract steamer rates.

The interesting part of SEC. 2 is that the C. S. A. were content to adopt the rates current in the United States for letters that might be carried by regular mail steamers. No doubt the legislators had in mind the rates to and from foreign countries direct but, as it turned out, the rates paid for blockade-run letters on private ships from West Indies ports, followed the current United States rates also.

The U. S. rates for private ship letters then current were based upon letters brought into a port by a private vessel, that is, a non-mail-contract line. Such letters were deposited in the Post Office at the Port of Entry and specifically were not deposited in the Post Office of origin. Postage was either on delivery to addressee or prepaid. If addressed to the city of Port of Entry, the "ship letter" rate was 6 cents, 2 cents of which was paid to the ship captain. If addressed to a point outside the Port of Entry, regular postage current plus 2 cents, which was paid to the ship captain.

Examples of Ship Letter Rates of the U. S. A.

Period 1861

Through Port of New York	to New York	"Due 6' "
Through Port of New York	to Boston	"Due 5c" (3c plus 2c)
Through Port of New York	to St. Louis	"Due 5c" (3c plus 2c)

Without doubt, the Confederacy adopted the regular rate (5c or 10c) plus ship letter (2c) for single weight letters for blockade-run letters addressed to any city in the Confederacy. If letters were forwarded from an address in the Port of Entry to an address outside the Port, then the regular forwarding rate was necessary.

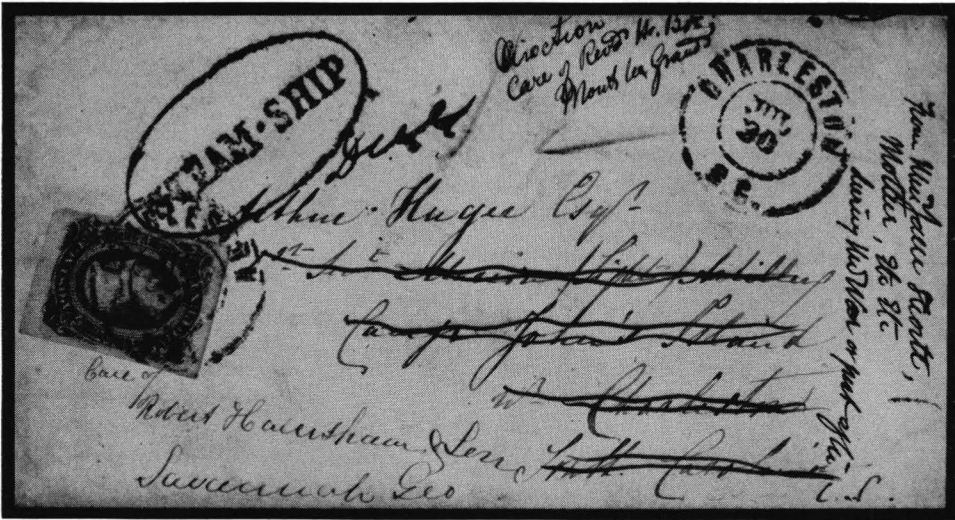


Fig. 56. Blockade cover with forwarding rate paid by stamp. Reached Charleston July 30 (probably 1864); forwarded to Savannah and stamp cancel dated July 31. Note "Due" and "12" in blue pencil.

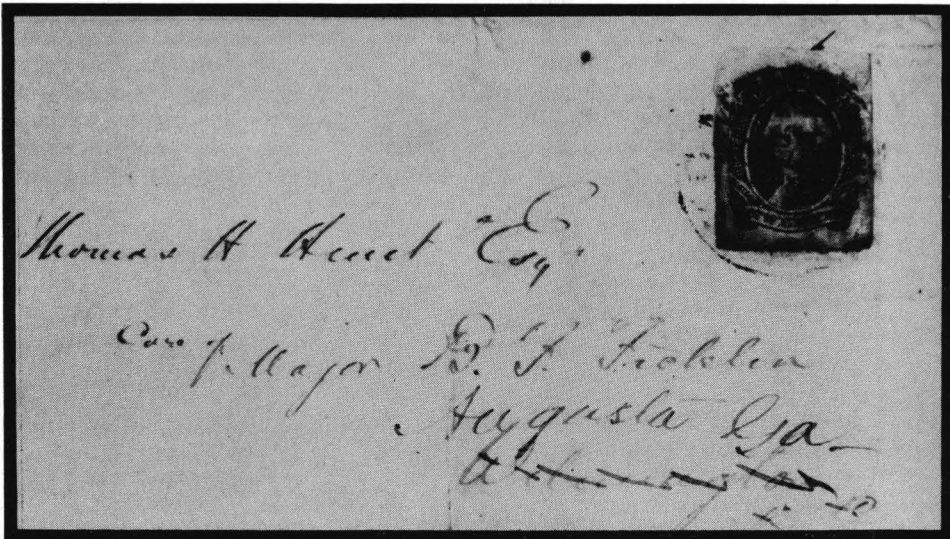


Fig. 57. Arrived at Wilmington, N. C. Oct. 20 (1864); from London, under cover, via Martin & Co., Nassau, where it was rated 6 pence due and paid—the tip of "6" showing at top of stamp. Possibly because addressed to B. F. Ficklin, Confederate head of war supply, no Confederate due mark appears. Forwarded with 20c stamp—apparently rated double weight.

Rates therefore after July 1, 1862, were due "12," "22," "32," etc.—each half ounce adding an extra 10c over the single letter rate of 10c plus 2c for the ship captain. Before July 1, 1862, the single letter rate was "7" due (5c plus 2c Ship). All "due" markings are in pen or pencil. No handstamp was used for this purpose. Most covers bear "STEAM-SHIP" in oval or "SHIP" in black, and the receiving postmarks of Charleston or Wilmington. No blockade-mail markings other than the ones illustrated herewith, and no receiving town-marks other than Charleston, Savannah (1862), Wilmington and in one instance Houston, Tex., have been noted. Without doubt all markings were applied at the Port of Entry.

It is difficult to explain why a paltry 2c per letter would satisfy the ship captain of a runner. His receipts from letters carried must have been small when compared with the profits of running in goods and munitions. However, there is evidence that some letters carried by blockade-runners were "favored" letters—perhaps in the nature of special dispatches whose safe delivery was connected with cargoes carried and collections for the same. This is evidenced by the great number of cotton market letters from England that were run through and also the notations on some covers indicating that the contents were about shipments or blockade-runners or about sailings of blockade-runners. We must assume that Southerners shipping goods abroad had some correspondence with their agents or those who received the goods.

Perhaps covers bearing a West Indies stamp of the time and postmarked at Nassau or Hamilton, Bermuda, and received in Europe were actually blockade-run from some Southern port via the West Indies. A very few covers are known that did go to Europe from the Confederacy via West Indies ports and foreign packets. They bore no Confederate stamps and were postage paid in cash or postage due at European ports. The absence of stamps or postmarks of the Confederacy rests sure identification of these covers upon corner-cards, manuscript notations or enclosures—and of course, upon the dates in the foreign postmarks. These criteria are sometimes evidence that may be debated. However, one group, showing the corner-card of the Department of State, Confederate States, without doubt ran the blockade to Paris and London via delivery by blockade runner either to Nassau or a West Indies port, thence by foreign steamer. Another cover known is addressed to a member of the Wheat family in Paris and the markings show it travelled via Nassau.

Equally rare are a few covers to Union points which, after reaching a West Indies port via blockade runner, were put in the West Indies mails to the United States, usually postage due. Here again the proof must reside with the letter written in the Confederacy, and actually known to have been enclosed in that cover. One such cover is proven to have reached Canada from Charleston, S. C., via Nassau and from there via British Packet.

It is known that some letters from Europe to the beleaguered Confederacy were carried first to Northern ports, possibly enclosed, and then sent South by express or private courier. But as the feeling between the North and the South became more bitter it is certain that such routes were less and less useful. Also some correspondence, possibly from Europe via Mexico, was carried on through Matamoros, Monterey and Bagdad, Mexico across the Rio Grande to Brownsville and Eagle Pass, Texas. But since the Texas-Mexico border was not blockaded, such mail is not blockade mail.

The reader will note from the illustrations that a large number of letters were very heavy with rates running up to 52c for 2½ ounce letters. It is probable that many letters were overweight because they contained information on more than one subject. Invoices, cotton-market letters, samples, bills of lading, etc., were among the items that were imperative to "get through."

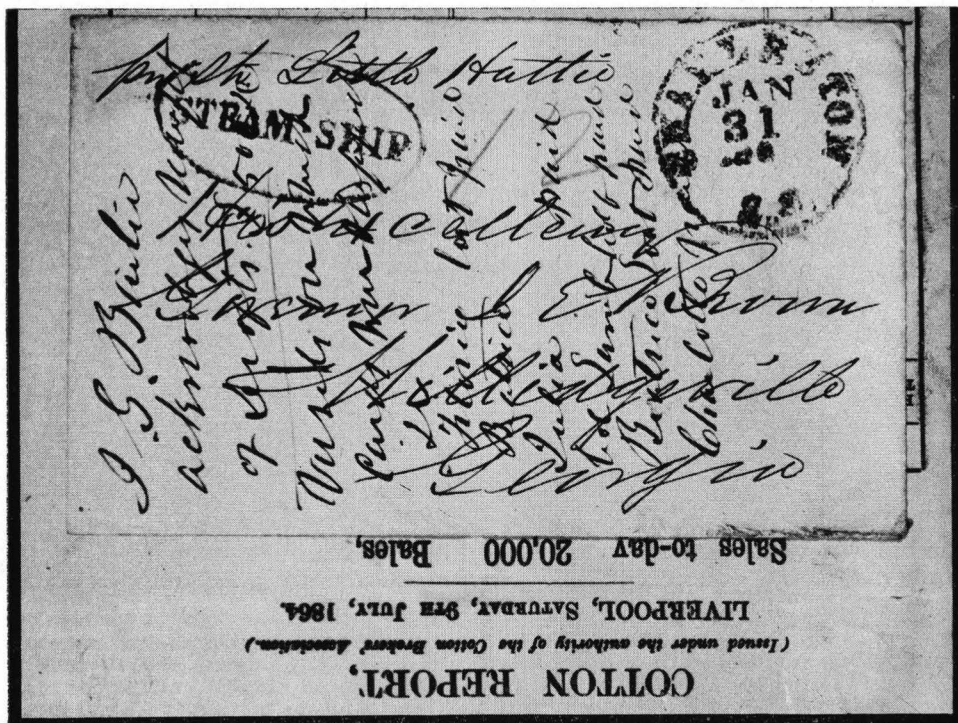


Fig. 58. From a remarkable find of blockade-run-covers to J. E. Brown, Governor of Georgia, all showing interesting notations. This one—"per Str. Little Hattie" and "J. G. Bailie," acknowledging receipt of drafts £500. Vessels on which cards were shipped, etc." (The background shows part of a Liverpool cotton report).

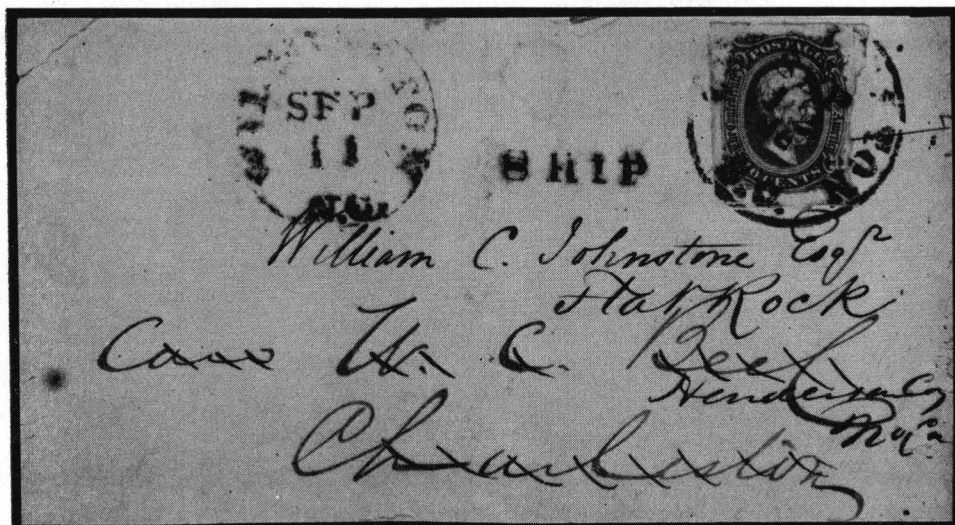


Fig. 59. Another example showing the forwarded rate pre-paid by stamp. Letter entered Wilmington, N. C. Sept. 11 (probably 1863) forwarded to Flat Rock from Charleston—its original destination. Typical Wilmington "SHIP" cancel, and (under the stamp) "12" in mss.

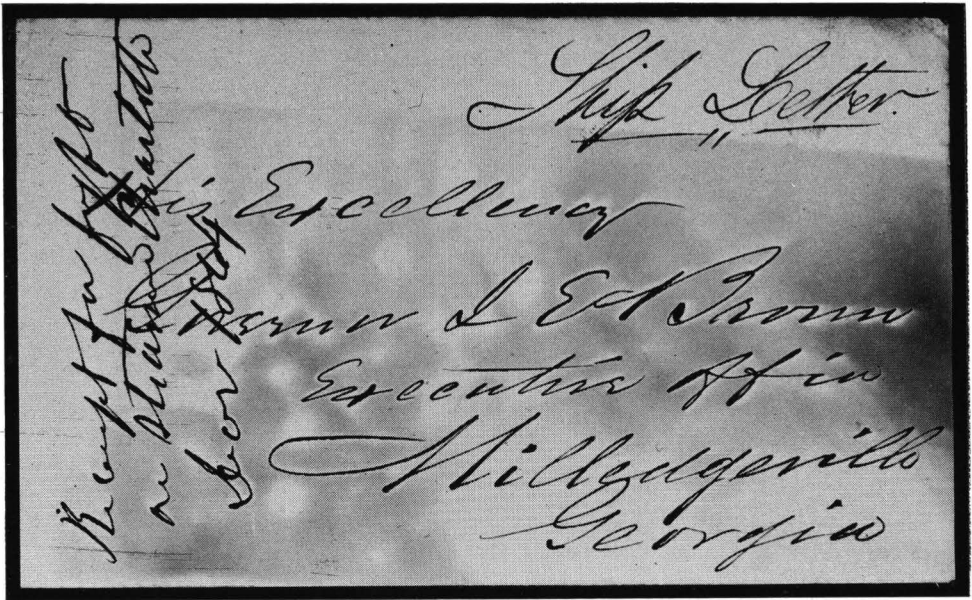


Fig. 60. This "Ship Letter" contained a receipt for payment of £164/11 for blankets from Henry Adderley & Co. This firm was evidently a commission merchant handling transshipment of goods at Nassau, N. P. Letter dated Dec. 6, 1864 at Nassau. No cancel; no rate; apparently an official letter carried outside the mail.

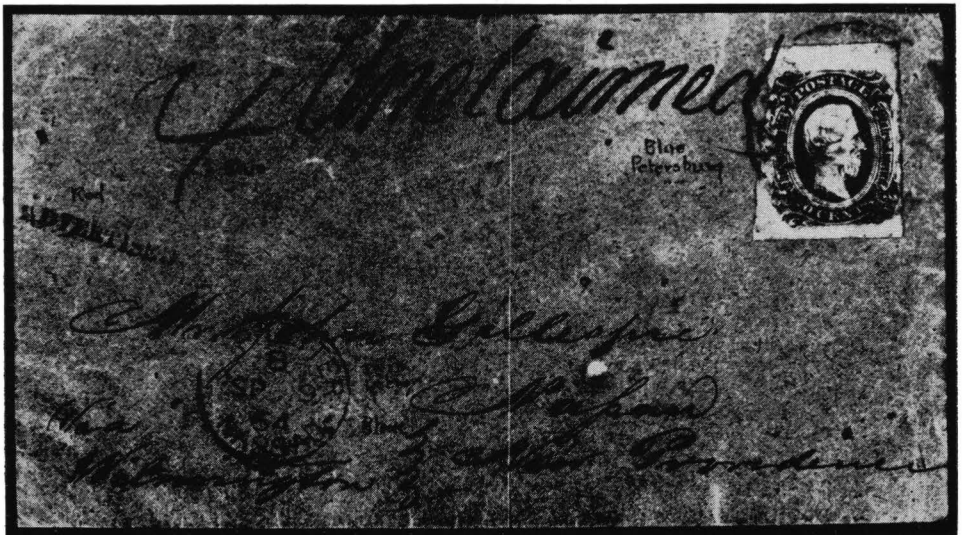


Fig. 61. Through the blockade, Wilmington to Nassau, N. P. A remarkable example—the 10c Confederate stamp cancelled at Petersburg, Va., thence "via Wilmington" to Nassau. There the stamp was not recognized, the letter rated "4" (pence due) and the Nassau "Ship Letter" date stamp applied in black. Finally "Advertised" and "Unclaimed."

Perhaps some letters were monthly compendiums of financial or market information. Hence the double, triple and higher rates.

Sometimes blockade letters were inscribed "Ship Letter"; sometimes they carried a notation of the name of the blockade-runner. The following have been noted: *Little Hattie, Charlotte, Will O' the Wisp, Col. Lumb, Beatrice, Flora, Julia.*

Judging from the dates of letters and notation of receipt on covers, the average good running time between writing and receiving a letter was one month, more or less. And it did not seem to vary much because of the seasons. But now and then a cover shows that it took two to three months.

There are no records of the "STEAM-SHIP" in oval marking of Charleston, nor the "SHIP" markings of Charleston, Wilmington, and Savannah used on any but blockade covers. Apparently these handstamps were for this service alone. At first glance the "SHIP" used at Charleston appears the same as the "SHIP" used at Wilmington, but they are different. That used at Charleston shows letters a little taller that slant backwards a little more sharply than the "SHIP" of Wilmington; and there is more space between the "S" and the "H" in the Wilmington type than in the Charleston type. The "SHIP" marking used at Charleston is comparatively rare.

It would appear that after the middle of 1864 the "STEAM-SHIP" and "SHIP" stampings were less frequently used. Many blockade-run letters of this period show merely the rate due in pen or pencil, and sometimes "SHIP LETTER" in manuscript.

Blockade-run covers are scarce, especially in fine condition. Many of the covers which survived show marks of rough handling in transit.

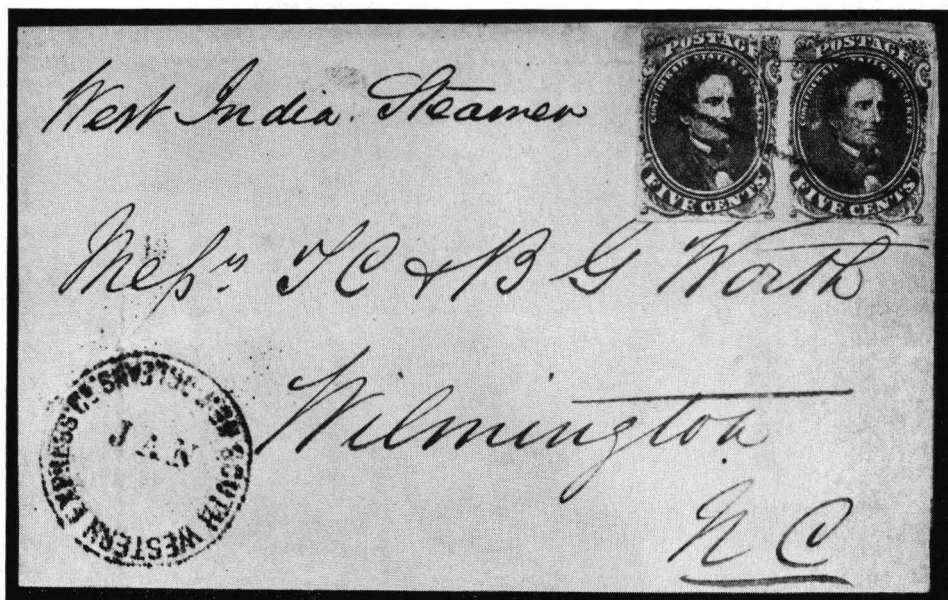


Fig. 62. This cover came into New Orleans via a "West India Steamer" in January 1862 when the Federal blockade of Gulf ports was ineffective. Absence of the usual "due" marking typical of blockade-run covers indicates it was carried "outside-the-mails" and was turned over to the Southwestern Express Co. in New Orleans, who affixed a pair of 5c green lithographs in accordance with post-office regulations, cancelling them with blue crayon. Letter was then forwarded by express "outside-the-mail" to destination, as proven by absence of any New Orleans postmark. Only recorded example of the Southwestern Express Co. marking. Origin of letter unknown.

COTTON REPORT,

(Issued under the authority of the Cotton Brokers' Association.)

LIVERPOOL, SATURDAY, 9TH JULY, 1864.

Sales to-day 20,000 Bales,
Including 10,000 Speculation and Export.

SALES.		DESCRIPTION AND PRICES PAID THIS DAY.	SPECULATION AND EXPORT.		IMPORT.	
Previously This Week.	To-day.		To-day.	Previously This Week.	To-day.	Previously This Week.
800	800	American..... 28½ @ 32½	400	300	157	54
600	800	Perham, &c..... 29½ " 31	...	300	...	...
...	20	Maranham..... 30 " 30½	...	...	...	...
1600	1100	Maccio and Bahia.... 29 " 29½	600	1000	...	...
2000	2500	Egyptian..... 27 " 33	500	500	15	708
300	450	Smyrna..... 22 " 25½	...	...	774	...
		Surat..... 13 " 26			212	...
		Madras..... 19½ " ...			...	...
14780	14180	Bengal, Scinde, &c... .. " ...	8500	7900	...	...
		China..... 19 " 21½			...	...
		Japan..... 22 " ...			...	...
50	150	Peru, &c..... 31 " 32	...	...	...	...
20000	20000		10000	10000	1158	762
20000				10000		1158
40000		Total since last Thursday.		20000		1920

To arrive.

Egyptian.—September delivery 30½.
 Dhollerah.—Fair new merchants', April or May shipment 23½—Ship named
 23½—Fair new, April or May shipment 23½.
 Oomrawuttee.—Fair new merchants', sailing March 23½—May 23½ and 23½—
 Fair new Akote, May sailing 23½.
 Broach.—Fair new merchants', ship named 23½—May sailing 23½.
 Bengal.—Fair new merchants', ship named 17½—April and May sailing 17½—
 May shipment 17½—September delivery 17½.
 China.—Ship named 19—July delivery 19—August delivery 19½.

Market ruled at ½¢
 advanced

TARLETON & CHERRY.

Fig. A. A cotton report of Liverpool, July 9, 1864. From Blockade-run cover.

VI.

The Trans-Mississippi Mails

Introduction

The importance of the great Mississippi River to the Confederate States was incalculable. Into it flowed from the west the White River, the Arkansas, the Ouachita and the Red River; and from the east the Ohio and the Yazoo. These shipping arteries carried streams of sugar, rice, tobacco and cotton from the greatest agricultural valley in the world in the broad bottoms of a vast fleet of river packets whose destination was New Orleans, the most important commercial city of the Confederacy.

The Western tip of Kentucky, Western Tennessee, Mississippi, all of Arkansas and Northern Louisiana shipped down to New Orleans and the Gulf. And far to the Southwest sprawled great Texas with its borders open to Mexico and its gulf coast port of Galveston lost for a time early in the conflict. Texas, too, was forced to look to the Mississippi as a link, a friendly border to its sister states of the Confederacy. Were the mouth of the great River kept open and New Orleans free, the important Gulf coast inland waterways joining Texas ports with those of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Northern Florida could continue to carry cargoes to the southern tier of the Confederate States.

However, the naval strategy of the North was directed early in the War to the control of the Mississippi. The classic pincer movement set one jaw in motion in the North and the other at the mouth of the River. From the north at Cairo, the Federals elected to fight the indecisive battle of Shiloh on Apr. 6 and 7, 1862, which led to the fall of Memphis on June 6. From the south, using Ship Island as the staging base, Admiral Farragut broke open the mouth of the Mississippi and New Orleans fell on April 28. By May 7 Baton Rouge was occupied and the Federal gunboats roamed the great River as far North as Vicksburg, closing it except for surreptitious night traffic by light craft. The Confederacy was cut in twain, and the regular routes of the mails to and from Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana were disrupted.

As long as the Meridian, Jackson, Vicksburg, Shreveport rail line remained open, Postmaster General Reagan was able to maintain some semblance of mail service between the eastern and western States. He used also Special Agents who superintended the carriage of the mails across the river at night to avoid the patrolling Federal gunboats. It is probable that these agents were used in larger number following the signing of the House of Representatives Bill No. 32 by Jefferson Davis on Oct. 6, 1862. This bill authorized the Postmaster General "to employ special agents to superintend and secure the certain and speedy transportation of the mails across the Mississippi River in the Confederate States."

But when on May 14, 1863, Jackson, Miss. fell to the Federals for a short period, and on July 4, when Vicksburg was surrendered, followed on July 8 by Port Hudson, La. the last rail line leading across the River was cut. Apparently these blows to fall upon the Confederacy and their disastrous effect upon Trans-Mississippi mail routes were anticipated by Postmaster General Reagan. For on May 1, 1863, S.118—the bill authorizing Reagan to establish express mails "as a means of securing greater dispatch than can be afforded by the regular mails" was signed by President Davis. Reagan proceeded to expand the duties of his Special Mail Agents who employed contractors to transport the mails across the river and, finally in October established the express mail service across the Mississippi.

In Reagan's report to President Davis, dated Dec. 7, 1863, he reviewed the crisis in the Trans-Mississippi Service and revealed that following the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson "we have had no reliable postal service across the river." Also in this report he reviewed the difficulty of administering from Richmond the postal service west of the River and requested authority to appoint a postal officer to be employed west of the river, with the full authority as the Postmaster of the Trans-Mississippi Post Office Dept. On the 10th of February, 1864, S.159 authorizing this appointment received the signature of President Davis and on the 12th of March the President appointed Dr. James H. Starr to the post. Clerks, stamps, supplies were sent to Starr and thus was born the Trans-Mississippi Post Office Dept. at Marshall, Texas.

During this long period of the progressive deterioration of mail service between west and east the complaints of the people, the soldiers, the western newspapers, the business houses were focussed upon their Congressmen who sought to solve the problem. The War Department also lost speedy communication with forces west of the river and direction from Richmond became difficult. While Reagan struggled to find a way to keep the mails moving, despite the Federal successes and the heavy military demands upon the railroads, the public took matters in its own hands.

First, about April of 1862, E. H. Cushing, the editor of the *Houston Daily Telegraph* began a courier express service to the east to gather news for his paper and later to carry letters from Texan families to Texan soldier sons and husbands fighting in the east, and gathering letters and news for the trip home.

In mid 1862 a rash of private, often one-man, expresses carried mail to and from the east. And in July 1862 at least one special mail agent—Arthur H. Edey, carried mail for the 5th Texas Reg't. Volunteers to and from points in Texas and the east.

In the chapters which follow, the history and details of these Special Mail Services, Trans-Mississippi, are presented:

- VII. The Cushing Express Mail
- VIII. Trans-Miss. Mail of 5th Texas Reg't. C. S. A.
- IX. The Government Trans-Mississippi Express Mail

VII.

The Cushing Express Mail

At the outbreak of the War, E. H. Cushing was owner and editor of the largest newspaper in Houston, Tex., the *Houston Daily Telegraph*. After New Orleans fell to the Federals in April 1862, the Mississippi far above New Orleans was controlled by Union troops and river craft. Texas, therefore, was partly cut off from the east, where news of the War was being made and where many Texas troops were engaged in combat.

Cushing had a difficult time getting news for his paper and likewise transmitting news from Texas to corresponding newspaper publishers in the east. (There was no Associated Press at that period!) At the same time, the people of Texas were experiencing difficulty and delay in getting mail to and from their soldiers and friends in the Confederate States to the east.

So to gather news for his paper, to transmit Texas news to the east, and to carry mail to and from States east of the river, Cushing established an Express Service by special couriers. The route was about 250 miles each way—from the main office at Houston to the "River Offices" established first at Alexandria, La. and at Shreveport, La., with agents of Cushing at each office. There were sometimes relays of riders and ponies and, in addition, all methods of conveyance were used, depending upon the circumstances, the routes and the resourcefulness of the courier. A rider left Houston at more or less regular intervals, and the public were advised of departure times.

Mail entrusted to the Express was supposed to bear regular government postage stamps paying the 10c rate for $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. letters. The Cushing Express had no special stamp of its own. But Cushing did use labels pasted on the back of some of the letters carried; and these labels were designed to help Cushing get news and also to advertise the Express Service for letters to and from the east.

Six types of these labels are known and all are illustrated herewith and described. Letters dispatched by the Cushing Express were carried by the couriers in bulk across the river at devious, secret points. Apparently the plan was to post east-bound letters at eastern post offices along the route of the courier, and west-bound at post offices west of the river. However, the extreme scarcity of postmarks on Cushing labelled covers and the frequency of pen-marked stamps lead to the surmise that some letters may have been delivered without passage through the Confederate mail.

Some years ago, before Mr. A. H. Schumacher, of Houston, Texas, died, he was gracious enough to send the writer his own voluminous collection of clippings from the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* editions of 1862-65 that carried news or comment upon the Cushing Express Mail Service. As a careful student of the stamps of the Confederacy he hoped some day to write of this interesting period of Texas philatelic history, but death intervened.

From this file released to the writer, the following excerpts portray vividly the character of Cushing as a newsman, a patriot and a benefactor to the many Texan families cut off from news of their sons in battle in the east. It will be clear to the reader that the Cushing service was, first, the forerunner of the government Trans-Mississippi Mail, later a supplement and substitute for it, and finally a competitor that aroused again the ire of Reagan toward any private express venture that threatened the income of the P. O. Department.

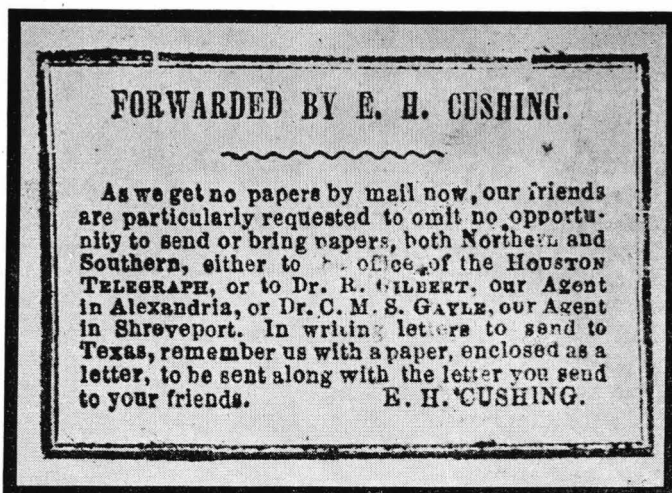


Fig. 63. This Cushing label is in black on white paper, evidently newsprint paper, 37½ x 59 mm. (all Cushing labels, save one, are about this size). One copy is reported on reverse of an envelope addressed to Cooksville, Miss. franked by four copies of C. S. A. No. 206 (Local Print) pen cancelled. No cancel or notation discloses the point of mailing. Another copy is on reverse of a cover bearing a 10c No. 210, unused, pasted over a red Houston, Tex. provisional, and probably came from Houston. Both covers probably 1863.

The first clipping, dated April 30, 1862, is from the *Houston Telegraph*. In true newspaper style it recounts the adventures of a Cushing Expressman.

“An Expressman, Capt. Tinby, had a hard trip of it last time. He arrived at Beaumont at 2 A. M.; the night being dark and dreary, he took his men in a boat and rowed five miles around to the nearest point where the hand car was. Leaving the boat here, they landed in the woods and footed it through mud and water, a mile and a quarter to the road. The hand car was out of order and had to be fixed, and everybody seemed to conspire to hinder the express, but Tinby is indomitable. He was bound to get the news and get it, he did. The public owe him no little for his enterprise. But for him, the *Telegraph* as well as other papers that copy from it would often be without the news for which the people are now so eager.”

Evidently Capt. Tinby came in from Alexandria and he had a bad time of it. Small wonder that so much Cushing mail and Trans-Mississippi Express Mail letters are ragged and water stained.

The next quotation from the *Houston Telegraph* which is of interest is dated Oct. 15, 1862. We quote:

“We still forward letters to soldiers east of the Mississippi. Persons desirous of sending them should affix a Confederate Postage Stamp to them so that they may be mailed east of the Mississippi, then put the letter in another envelope and address that to this office. See that the P. M. does not deface the stamp you intend us to pay the postage on the other side of the river with. Always enclose your letters in an outside *envelope* to us.”

It seems clear then that Cushing as early as 1862 had offered the service of forwarding letters from the people of Houston or beyond to be mailed east of

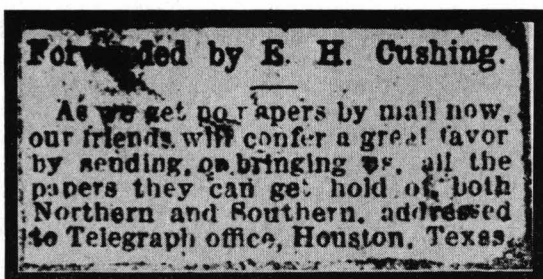


Fig. 64. This is a brief version of the label shown in Fig. 1 and is about 22x45 mm. on bluish. Used 1862, on cover bearing a pair of 5c green lithographs. The postmark is Okolona, Miss. This label is also recorded on greenish paper.

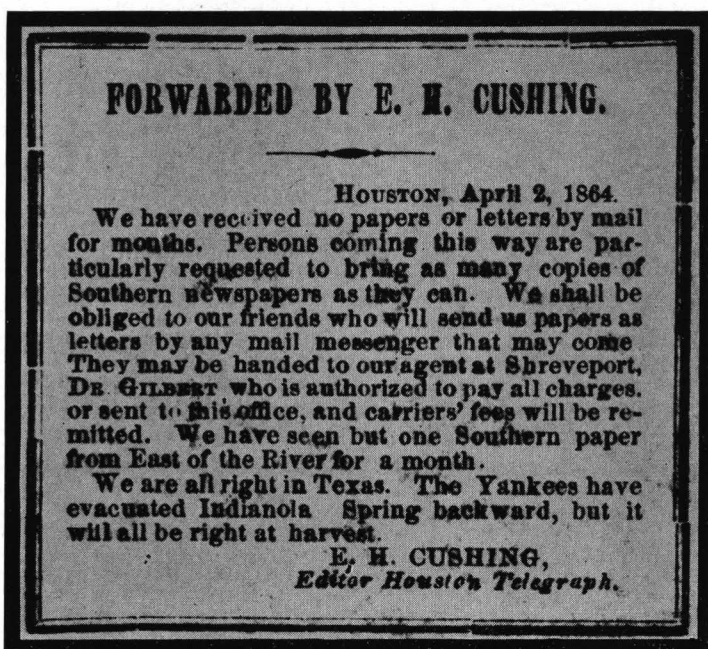


Fig. 65. Two examples of this label are used on the reverse of unstamped, uncanceled covers, both addressed to Capt. John R. Kennard, 10th Regt., Texas Inf. at Dalton, Ga. Evidently used in 1864 since one cover is marked "Ans'd 26 April '64." The P. O. Dept. was done out of its postage on these covers at least, and it may be assumed the senders paid to Cushing Express the \$5 fee then in effect.

the river, and so evidently save time or possible seizure by Federals. No service charges are mentioned; the rate was the usual 10 cents, paid by stamps. Probably Cushing considered it good will for his paper to help Texans get letters to their soldier kin in the east.

The next item is fully revealing of Cushing's mail handling and patriotism. It is dated Nov. 27, 1863, and summarizes conditions between October 1862 and November 1863. By the latter date the government's Trans-Miss. Mail Service at 40c per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. had been advertised and was in operation.

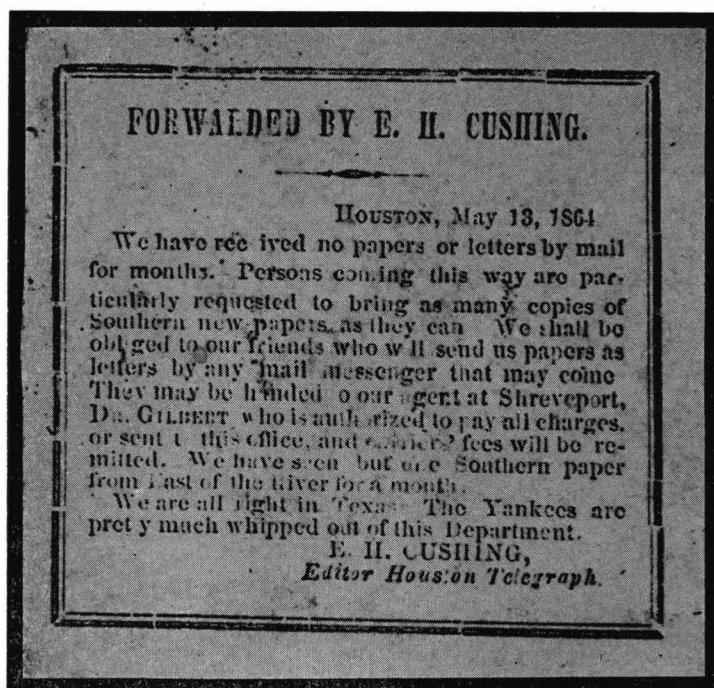


Fig. 66. This label, same as Fig. 65 with the last paragraph changed is used on a letter to the same Capt. Kennard, but in different handwriting. The cover is unstamped and uncanceled. From all appearances both this cover and the cover showing Fig. 65 label were delivered direct by Courier or were enclosed in a package and postage affixed to the outer wrapping or envelope.

This item reads:

“TRANS-MISSISSIPPI COURIERS”

“It is well known that since the interruption of the mails across the Mississippi, we have been in the habit of receiving all letters that were sent to us for that purpose and forwarding them by private hands, this being the only secure means left the people to correspond with their friends and relatives in the army. Before the fall of Vicksburg, mails were sent across the river by the Government with some regularity; still the transmission of letters was so uncertain that most people preferred to depend on private conveyance for their letters. We have in this way, we presume, forwarded not less than 25,000 to soldiers first and last. Since the fall of Vicksburg, now nearly five months, but two small mails belonging to the P. O. Dept., have crossed the river to our knowledge.

“The transmission of letters by chance travelers became, some two months ago, so uncertain that we determined to make up a mail and send it through by special conveyance. Mr. Rose proposed to go and carried nearly 2,000 letters sent by the *News* office and this office, safely across the river. He was followed in two weeks by Mr. Van Liew and Mr. Adams, and he by Thos. W. Bryan who left here in the 20th inst. These four have carried about 6,000 letters and thus been the means of gladdening the

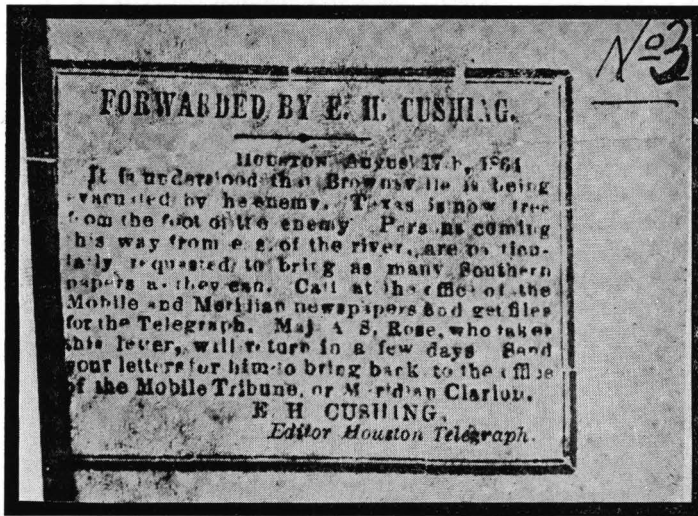


Fig. 67. This label (dated Aug. 17, 1864) is 41x53 mm. on white paper, on reverse of a cover (data unavailable). Cushing here gives directions for depositing letters to be returned by Major Rose.

hearts of thousands of our noble Texan soldiers in the army who otherwise would have been in ignorance of the fate of their friends at home.

“These mails have been carried with the knowledge and at least had the acquiescence of the representatives of the P. O. Department in Texas.

“The mail agent here has been obliged to resort to them for the transmission of his official reports to the Post Office Department. Public documents of all kinds have been carried by them to the Departments of Richmond, free of cost to the government. Not only this, the postage of 10c has been paid on every letter we have sent by stamps purchased from the P. O. Dept. of the Confederate States.

“We now hear through the East of the Mississippi Papers that we have been acting in violation of law and that measures are being taken to stop this private Express and further, it is said that a fine of \$50 a letter is to be enforced against those who have been engaged in the business. The fine in which we are interested will amount to the snug sum of a million and a quarter dollars!

“Whether the head of the P. O. Dept. has authorized this action or not, we do not know, and until we learn, must abstain from comment. We have no hesitation, however, in saying that whoever is at the bottom of it, is bent on disgusting the people and soldiers most thoroughly with him. Red tape is a good thing in its way, but it must not be employed to strangle the affections of a people towards their Government.

“For the present, we will add that it is the imperative duty of the Congress to pass an act not only relieving those who have incurred the penalty of the law but permitting the sending of couriers at pleasure, provided they do not carry letters at less than double Government postage, and provided they pay the Government (10c) postage on all letters they carry. It may be said that the Government has now established an Express mail, and these couriers are not needed. To this, however, we say that it is by

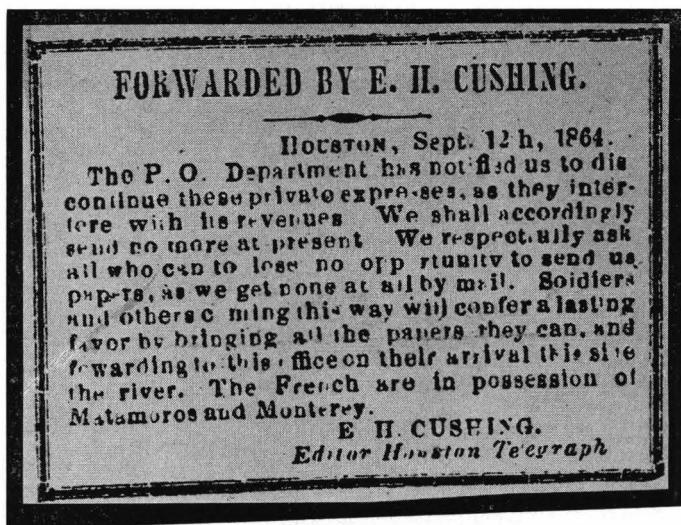


Fig. 68. This label, 41x58 mm. in black on bluish, is used on reverse of a cover addressed to Gainesville, Ala., and franked by a C. S. A. 10c No. 210 cancelled "Selma, Ala." Evidently Mr. Reagan, head of the Post Office Dept. of the C. S. A., finally lost his patience at the inroads of Cushing's Express on the revenue of the Department. This matter had long been a subject of bitter controversy between him and the Confederate Congress. The laws were inadequate to prosecute the large and influential Southern Express Company; it operated to the end of the war and for years afterward. But Reagan never ceased his attacks on all express companies and, finally, as this label shows, Cushing's enterprise fell under an official ban.

no means certain that this Government mail will succeed. It will be an especial object with the enemy to break it up. It runs regularly twice a week for 100 miles through territory in their possession. They will be much more likely to capture it than private couriers, who traveling at leisure, have more time, and we may add, more interest in avoiding the enemy.

"We shall still dispatch all the letters sent to us and which we are pleased to note that our contemporary, the *News*, continues to join us and as our fines already amount to over a million, we may as well be hung for the whole sheep as the quarter. We shall take what risk may attach to an attempt in this way to give the mothers, wives and sisters of our gallant troops a chance to communicate with their beloved ones who are fighting, bleeding and dying, not for tyranny, but for the freedom in the distant battlefields of the Republic."

This item is full of meat. Cushing claims forwarding not less than 25,000 letters, in about 14 months. Whether or not he charged a fee for the service is not stated. The item of October 1862 mentioned no fee to be enclosed in the outer envelope. But Cushing in the above item either proposes that the fee be 20c (double Government postage) in the future for special carriage or attempts to exculpate his enterprise from Government interference by admitting that such a reasonable fee was charged in the past, and that Post Office income was not diminished by his action because the regular postage was paid in addition.

The latter assumption seems to the writer to be much more nearly the truth. For note that 25,000 letters required many laborious and expensive

trips by couriers. He states that Mr. Rose carried nearly 2,000 letters and that the four carried in all 6,000 letters.

25,000 letters would, therefore, require many courier trips. Even if these couriers gathered news for his paper from the east, or even collected mail for the return trip, it seems improbable that Cushing did not charge a fee to which his service entitled him. Confirmation seems positive when he states as above that Public Documents were carried by them, free of cost to the Government—marking a distinction between the free carriage of government department mail and the carriage of all other letters.

It seems evident then that Cushing charged a fee for courier carriage, probably twenty cents per letter, with government mail free, plus the usual government postage paid in stamps affixed.

One important point seems proven. All Cushing Express Mail did not carry Cushing labels. For if all or even a large part of the many thousands of letters forwarded were so labeled, more labeled letters would have turned up, than those already noticed. There are six types known covering 1862 to 1864. Furthermore, by their text they seem to have been used primarily for information purposes about the mail or to solicit the sending of newspapers.

From the above quoted item the reader will note that Cushing did not think very highly of the Government Express Mail. And he determined to go right ahead with his Express Mail, despite the threat of fines. Occasionally the couriers were unable to get through, and the west was left news hungry for weeks. A letter from "H. P." in Alexandria, published in the *Telegraph*, speaks of this difficulty.

"Alexandria, Nov. 27, 1863.

"For two long weeks we have looked for an arrival from the other side, but as Lincoln looks for conscripts, so have we looked—in vain. Not a stranger has (reach)ed here to tell us of the 'situation' and nary paper later than the 14th has come to hand from beyond Walker's Target Floater. Unless something turns up soon, I shall be obliged to adopt the plan in vogue among the Shreveporters—'get out an extra anyhow.'"

"The government express is not yet in working trim; at least no mail from the other side has reached this point up to this time. It may have gone to Shreveport. Neither has any mail under the new arrangement crossed to the other side of the Mississippi, unless it crossed yesterday. I sent today, by Captain Bernos, all the letters from the other side entrusted to my care, as well as my own. I know his facilities, and have no doubt that he will make the trip."

The masthead of the *Telegraph* published December 7, 1863, carried a typical announcement and instructions:

"Army Mail—The next messenger will leave December 20. Carrier's charge on all letters to go beyond the Mississippi, \$2. Remit only Confederate money. No county script is current here.

"Inclose letters to *Telegraph* office, indorsing on outside envelope, 'Army Mail.' C. S. postage must in all cases be prepaid by C. S. postage stamps. Local stamps will not do. Aim to get your letters in two or three days before the day of departure."

Now the rate per letter is raised to \$2.00!

* * * * *

The service was undoubtedly of great value, and particularly appreciated by the Texans who were serving in the eastern armies. The *Telegraph* proudly

published a letter of appreciation from one of these soldiers in its December 7, 1863, issue under the heading "Letter from Tennessee."

"Army of Tennessee,
Near Chattanooga, Oct. 31st, 1863.

"Seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth Texas regiment consolidated, Deshler's brigade, Claiborne's division.

"Editor *Telegraph*: Almost completely cut off from all dear to us at home, as we are, in behalf of the regiment I thank you for forwarding letters to us. Day before yesterday we received a large mail from Texas, mostly forwarded by you. All are praising 'Cushing' for his kindness. . .

Yours, &c.,
'A. T. G.'

* * * * *

The next two items are dated in 1864 and mark a big rise in the cost of Cushing's Mail Service, due no doubt to the depreciation of the currency.

"HOUSTON DAILY TELEGRAPH
March 18, 1864

ITEM

Our army mail—our next mail will be carried by Mr. Adams at \$5.00 per letter. Money will be taken at ten per cent in kind, either specie or currency. Send your money without delay.

ITEM

March 23—DAILY TELEGRAPH

Mr. Warren Adams who takes our next army mail will leave here on Saturday, April 2nd, going through to Richmond. On his return, he will call at the advertising office, Montgomery, Alabama (evidently a newspaper office) and bring all letters sent there for him. Charge per carrying letters \$5, for carrying money 10 per cent, for transacting other business, according to the time and *importance* of the business.

Now the rate is \$5 per letter, and 10% for carrying money. Evidently Cushing switched the service to a high rate personal courier service, at least for part of his income. Another news item exactly like the March 23 item above appeared in the *Galveston News* on March 25, 1864. Now the *Houston Telegraph* and the *News* and the *Galveston News* are operating together to build the service.

And next on Oct. 3, 1864 appeared the following:

"DAILY TELEGRAPH
Oct. 3, 1864

Agency P. O. Dept. Trans-Mississippi
Marshall, Tex. Sept. 1, 1864

"The agency is now able to announce to the public that the mails are regularly conveyed weekly across the Mississippi from East to West and West to East with every possible security against future interruptions.

"Persons sending Eastward should mark their letters 'Express Mail Via Shreveport' or 'Express Mail via Alexandria, Louisiana' as one or the other points may be most convenient. Those on the East side of the river

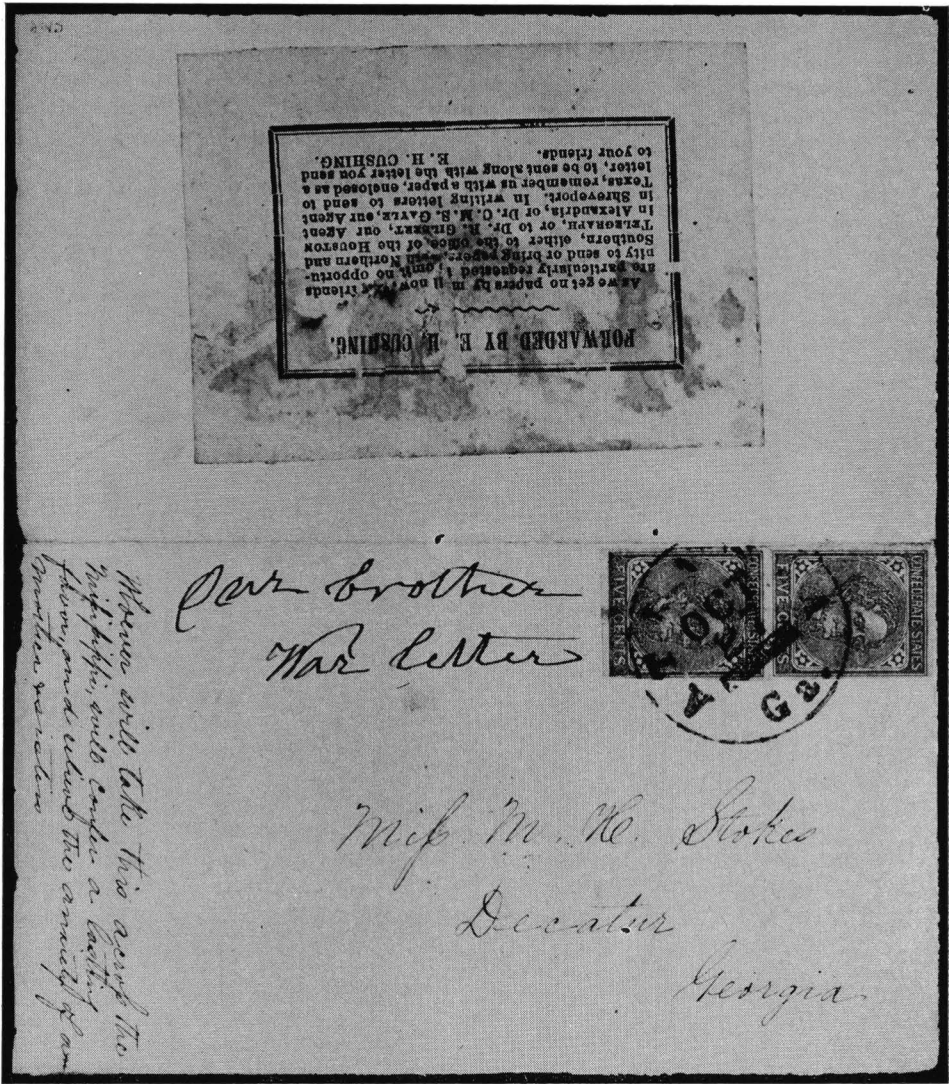


Fig. 69. A very fine example, showing the label (Fig. 63) on reverse of cover, as usual. The ms. notations are touching and revealing of the origin of the letter west of the Mississippi. The Cushing courier posted this letter at Atlanta, only a few miles from Decatur. Date—probably 1863.

sending Westward should mark their letters 'Express Mail Via Brandon' or 'Express Mail Via Meridian, Mississippi.'

"The postage by this mail may be prepaid at any office at forty cents the single rate of each half ounce, or fraction of half ounce.

"The agency is prepared to furnish twenty cent stamps on requisition by Postmasters.

Jas. H. Starr,
Agent P. O. Dept. Trans-Miss."

Cushing ran this in his paper nearly a year after the eastern papers carried a similar notice issued from the P. O. Dept. in Richmond. Perhaps he wanted to stifle the government's competition with his Express and so withheld publication. At any rate, he ran it after one of his printed labels, dated Sept. 12, 1864, announced that "the P. O. Dept. has notified us to discontinue . . . we shall send no more (letters) at present." (Fig. 68).

And finally, long after Appomatox, when the entire postal system of the South was still completely disrupted, these items appear.

"TRI-WEEKLY GALVESTON NEWS
Nov. 3, 1865

"*ITEM*

"The local agents of the 'NEWS' then out, the states are requested to send any funds on hand by either the 'COMMERCIAL' or the 'ADAMS EXPRESS.' When these expresses are not within their reach, they will confer a favor by sending by any safe means that may offer. Drafts in our favor on merchants in Houston or Galveston will be taken and collected direct, "NEWS HOUSTON."

"GALVESTON TRI-WEEKLY
Nov. 3, 1865
ADVERTISEMENT

"Adams Express Company, Great Eastern, Western and Southern Express Forwarders.

"This old and reliable express company having established an office in this city are prepared to receive and forward *letters, money, valuable packages*, freight and etc. to all the principal points in the United States, Canada in the quickest possible time.

"Special messengers on all trains between Houston and Galveston, connecting by steamers with New Orleans for New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Louisville, Nashville and all intermediate points.

"Special messengers leave New Orleans daily for Natchez, Vicksburg, Memphis, Cairo, and (rest is torn out)."

It is evident, however, that no list of rates was included in this advertisement.

Perhaps Cushing's Express Mail, at least while its rate was 20c and before its rate became \$5 per letter in March of 1864, did compete seriously with the regular Trans-Mississippi Express Mail. This would account for the scarcity of the regular 40c Express rate letters. And since very little Cushing mail was identified by labels and none by cancels, it may be that many covers seemingly originating, if judged by the postmarks, in eastern cities were really carried there for posting by a Cushing courier en route after being written in Texas. And vice versa for east to west mail.

So we come to the end, when Express Companies transmitted most of the important mail at large rates, until regular mail service was restored, hampered no doubt by the diabolical sweep of the Reconstruction—the tragic era.

VIII.

Trans-Mississippi Mail of the 5th Texas Regiment, C. S. A.

Arthur H. Edey, Agent

At about the same time in 1862 that E. H. Cushing, owner of the Houston (Tex.) *Daily Telegraph*, established his news-gathering and letter-carriage service between Texas and the east, the famous 5th Texas Regiment began a mail courier service between the soldiers and the folks back home.

This was the critical period when the Federal naval forces controlled the Mississippi and throttled the regular postal routes across the river. Some mail went through over the normal routes, but the delays became more and more intolerable to Texan newspaper editors, business concerns, and especially to the families of Texan fighting men with the armies in the East.

To overcome the difficulty, local expresses employing couriers sprang up like mushrooms. Postmaster Reagan, never an advocate of private express mail, was forced to consider extraordinary means to get the mails across the river by secret routes. The public of Texas and Louisiana was clamoring for a quick solution. After speedy legislation by the House, President Davis on October 6, 1862, signed an Act (H. R. 32) authorizing the Postmaster General "to employ special agents to superintend and secure the certain and speedy transportation of the mails across the Mississippi River."

The tangible evidence of the special mail service of the 5th Texas Reg't. is the appearance on Confederate covers of a label, type-set and printed on thin news-stock paper about 70 mm. x 11 mm., and reading:

FORWARDED BY
ARTHUR H. EDEY, AGENT, Fifth Reg't. Texas Volunteers

From examples of these very rare covers seen, it would appear that there was a multiple setting of the two lines of type, vertically, and then the labels were cut apart horizontally. At least two settings were made, one normal as illustrated herein, the other with the first line much closer to the second line and with a "P" in place of an "F" in "FORWARDED."

The label was pasted upon the envelope, usually on the reverse, rarely on the face. It appears only upon letters mailed in a Texas post office and addressed to some place in Texas. This was puzzling because at first glance it would seem that Edey resided in Texas, and forwarded letters from points there to residents of Texas. Since various Texas postmarks appeared upon the Edey-labeled covers Mr. Edey would have had to be peripatetic beyond belief, or else the Edey "firm" had several couriers. Finally, however, the key came to light, in a notation in mss. upon the face of an Edey cover (label on reverse). This notation reads "From Richmond, Va. June 1862" although the letter was posted at Washington, Texas on Aug. 6. Quite evident, therefore, was the fact that this letter was carried from Richmond into Texas by Edey (or his representative) and posted at Washington at least a month after it was written. That was the method used for the transmission of all these "Edey" letters.

Who was Edey? For years the records and annals of the 5th Texas Regiment Volunteers were searched for a clue as to Edey's identity. No record of his name was found. Obviously, he was some kind of mail "agent" or mail

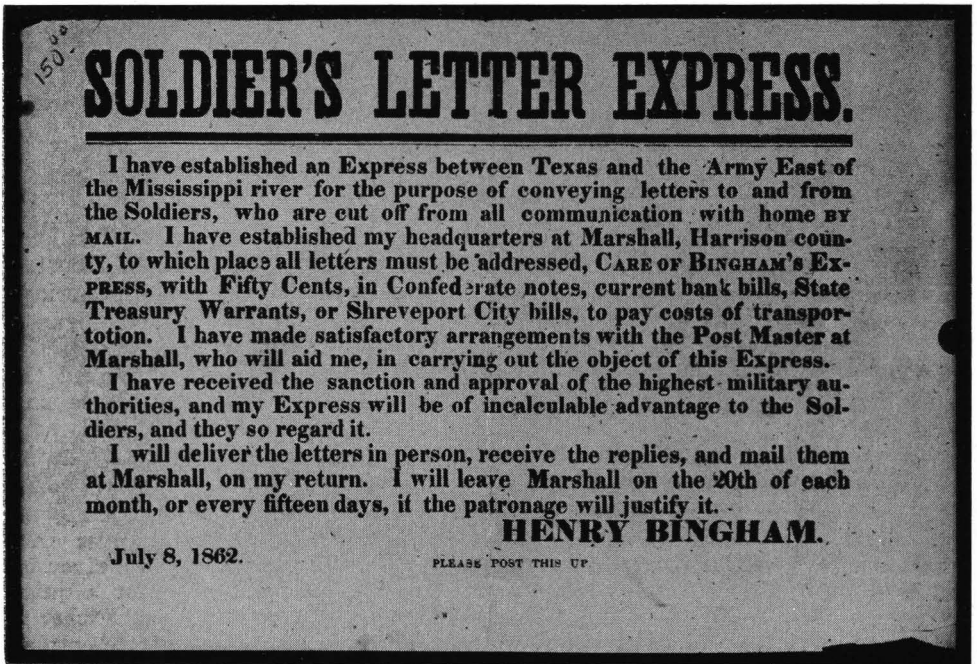


Fig. 70. Poster announcing private Trans-Miss. Letter Expresses. An example of the type of Soldier mail service provided by an individual in July 1862 before the fall of Vicksburg closed the river to government mail routes. The extent of the service and the fee are typical of the period preceding the start of the Trans-Mississippi Express Mail.

orderly, but the Confederate Post Office Records seldom listed mail agents and no record of Edey was found. So the writer's first study of the Edey labelled Trans-Mississippi mail, which appeared in 1943 in the *Stamp Specialist* (Brown Book) had to confess that "The records have so far failed to reveal his identity."

But the veil of mystery suddenly lifted a few years ago, with the discovery of a letter to Jefferson Davis, at Richmond, dated Mar. 6, 1865, from "Arthur H. Edey, Co. A 5th Texas Vols." mailed from "Texas Depot, Richmond, Va." A colorful letter it is, recounting the prison adventures of a very remarkable man—part chaplain, part school-master, part diplomat. It is reprinted in full at the conclusion of this philatelic story of the "Edey" mail.

Probably in 1862 Edey became a special mail agent, appointed to serve with the 5th Texas Regiment by the Post Office Department or by the Regiment's Commander. The reason for a special mail agent to serve with a Texas Regiment in the Army of Tenn. becomes apparent when one notes the dates of all known Edey labelled covers. All known letters were mailed in Texas between Aug. 6 and Nov. 3, 1862, and assuming a month or so for the letters to be carried to Texas from Virginia or the east, all letters were written between June and October, 1862.

At this period of the War, New Orleans had fallen, and Federal gunboats had taken over control of the Mississippi nearly as far north as Vicksburg. Of course, the regular Confederate States mails across the River to Texas were not completely stopped, but evidently they were seriously interfered with. The menace to the Trans-Mississippi mail routes was to grow greater, until, in May

1863, the Government had to resort to legislation authorizing the arrangements for the special Trans-Mississippi mail service at the premium rate of 40c per ½ oz. letter. It is easy to conjecture, therefore, that Texas fighting men in Virginia wanted a sure way to get letters to their loved ones at home, and demanded a courier or mail agent to collect army letters from them, to sneak the letters across the river into Texas and to mail them in batches at various Texas post offices, en route. Evidently Arthur H. Edey (and his helpers, if he had any) did the job.

A short while ago, a badly dilapidated cover turned up to give a hint of the way some of this 5th Texas mail was handled at the Richmond end, without any evidence that they were given to Edey's couriers. The 10c 1863 stamp was cancelled in August (date illegible) at Richmond, and addressed to "Mrs. E. E. Wynne, Huntsville, Texas." On the cover appears in mss. "Care of Sergt. W. V. Bayless, Ag't. 5th Texas Reg't. 5th Texas Depot, Richmond, Va. Please forward by private hand." Possibly Bayless was Edey's assistant in the "Depot" and received westbound mail for Edey. Apparently this letter though cancelled at the Richmond Post Office was handed to a courier for delivery in Texas.

As an example of the efforts at this period to get mail to Texas troops, there is the record of the private express started by J. L. Hart of Shreveport, La. and noted in CHRONICLES OF SHREVEPORT by Mrs. Maude Hearn O'Pry. The newspapers of the period commented as follows:

"At this particular time we are deprived of mail facilities above and from the east and south and this express cannot fail to bring great service to the public at large."

The advertisement of Hart's express is as follows:

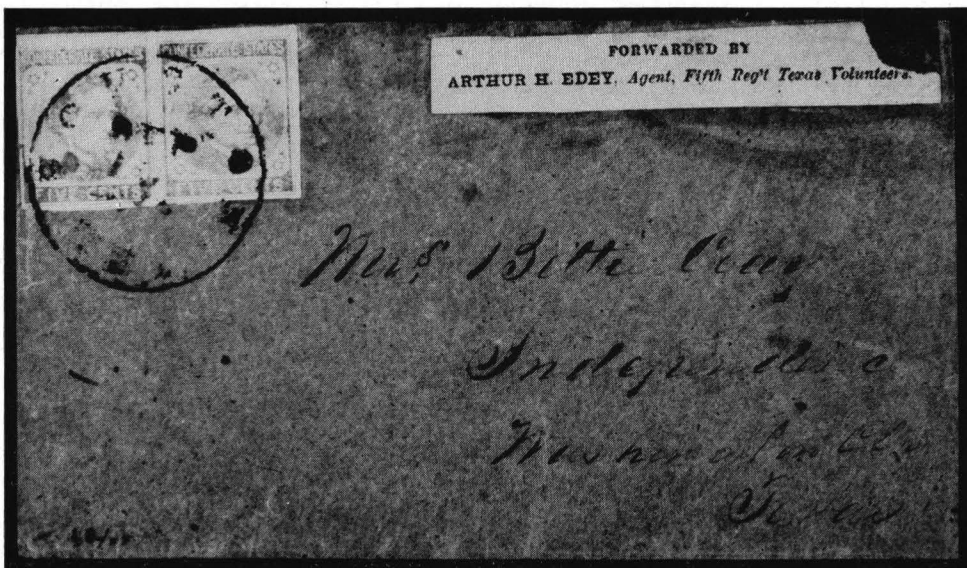


Fig. 71. Edey labels on the face of cover are rare. Posted at Houston, Tex. Sept. 10 1862). On reverse is notation in mss. "Rec'd Aug. 13, 1862"; evidently the date on which letter was handed to courier in Virginia.

“Express between the Confederate Army and the Cities of Louisiana and Texas.

“The high waters of the Mississippi River and tributaries as well as the enemy’s gunboats above make it necessary to establish an express to carry letters to each side of the river and particularly to enable persons on the west bank of the river to correspond with their families in the army.

“The undersigned will carry letters to the Army of Tennessee and Mississippi at 25 cents each; to Virginia, 30 cents each. The letters will be mailed at a post office in Shreveport and thence be forwarded to their respective addresses. I will visit Monroe, Vernon, Minden, Belleview, Shreveport and Marshall, Tex. Mr. Jones at the Verandah Hotel will take care of all letters left with him.

“J. L. HART

“June 11, 1862.

“Reference: Reuben White.”

Another private express for Texan soldiers’ mail was started by Henry Bingham. One of Bingham’s posters (reduced) is illustrated. Note that his rate was double that of Hart’s and he claimed the cooperation of the post-master at Marshall, Tex. A man named Black also ran a letter express and endorsed the covers “Black’s Express.” If the complete records had come down to us, it is probable that dozens of similar one-man express services would be revealed as operative at this period.

Of the known Edey labelled covers all bear two (or a pair) of 5c London or Local prints, or in one instance a single 10c Paterson print. In all, probably less than a dozen Edey labelled covers have survived. It seems extraordinary that since they were used apparently over a period of three to four months, so few have been found. Possibly like the “Cushing” labelled mail, not all letters bore the label, or the poorly affixed labels were lost in the rough transit. Or perhaps Mr. Edey’s little advertisements were frowned upon by the Confederate Post Office Dept. who at this period were endeavoring to stop any and all private transmission of the mail, even though regular government postage was paid. There was always the suspicion that private couriers also carried unfranked mail at high rates.

* * * * *

Here is Edey’s letter to Jefferson Davis :

“Texas Depot
Richmond, Va. March 6, 1865

“To His Excellency,
Jefferson Davis,
President Conf. States of America
Richmond, Va.

“At the suggestion of Col. Lubbock I have the honor to submit for your perusal a short account of the scenes of prison life.

“Your heart has been pained so often by the recitals of the cruelty and barbarity of our common enemy that I purpose to draw a picture in brighter colors—not to efface the other, for truth as we know cannot be removed—so that we may see in prison surroundings, as in our present gloomy scenes, ‘A bow in the cloud.’



Fig. 72. Edey label on reverse (partly removed) "From Richmond, Va. June 1862"; mailed at Washington, Tex. August 6 (1862).

"Soon after my arrival at Point Lookout from Bedloes' Island the plan of starting a school for the prisoners was suggested. We appointed Mr. A. Morgan, Superintendent. (Of S. C.).

"A parole arriving I was permitted to go to New York City for thirty days.

"While there I was enabled by God's blessing to enlist the sympathies of many persons, (on the score of humanity) to contribute books, stationery, &c. By my return everything was in working order, and as I kept up a very large correspondence, books continued to arrive until we were able to instruct over a thousand men each day. A very large Sunday school was organized by Mr. Morgan, and the Library for the Camp was gaining in volumes every day. The teachers were indefatigable in their exertions, and as the prison rations were very small, and the labors of the gentlemen so wearing that I determined to see the Prison Commissary. God prospered the interview and I was allowed thirty six extra rations daily one each to the teacher. The prisoners captured at the Wilderness and Spottsylvania began to arrive in a very destitute condition.

"The correspondence in connection with the School had brought me in contact with many persons in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, and other places. I appealed for clothes, and soon hundreds upon hundreds of suits were sent to be distributed.

"The Hospital Wards were increasing in number and as there was no Chaplain there the Federal Surgeon appointed me acting Chaplain.

"Finding a number of truly devoted Christians in Camp it was arranged that each ward should be visited during the day, and the sick comforted and read to, and at night a public service of short duration held. It was here that an instance of patriotism so sublime was displayed that I am sure you will rejoice to hear of it. A young man, Charles A. Kingland, 1st Texas Vols., Hood's Texas Brigade, was quite sick when he was captured. He originally came from Mass. He met his brother—a Union soldier—in the Wilderness. He

wrote to his father, and told him how sick and destitute he was. His friends promised to assist him if he would take the oath of allegiance to the U. S. He refused, and they abandoned him. He grew weaker and weaker. He sent for his Texas friends and asked their advice about taking the oath for his life's sake. Many advised it. I was talking to him, and at an opportune moment I said, 'Charley, do you think the South is right in this struggle?' 'Yes.' 'And the North wrong?' 'Yes.' 'If you were well would you be exchanged?' 'Yes.' I said, 'Charley, you are a Christian, when you die and are judged you will go to Heaven. You cannot take that oath. You cannot perjure your soul.' He agreed to it, and died the next day. He could have been released by giving way and sending a telegram to a Father. I wrote the Father that he could take the body (as I learned he was coming for it) but the name should adorn the page of Texas History.

"Burial service was held over every deceased soldier. At first I shrank from the responsibility, but being assured by a minister in New York that I ought to have the service rather than the men should be buried without it, I accepted the charge.

"Gaining influence week by week the Federal authorities grew mistrustful and it was determined to send me to Elmira. Accordingly without any official warning I was ordered off, leaving my business unsettled. When I arrived at Jersey City I was placed in a separate car with the Federal soldiers, and two sentinels with loaded and capped guns set by my side with instructions 'to shoot me if I moved from the seat as I was a dangerous man.' Arriving at Elmira I was thrown into a cell and there confined for nine days, one day of which I was allowed the privilege of the guard room. I applied for a hearing using the argument 'that if the charges justified the treatment I was receiving

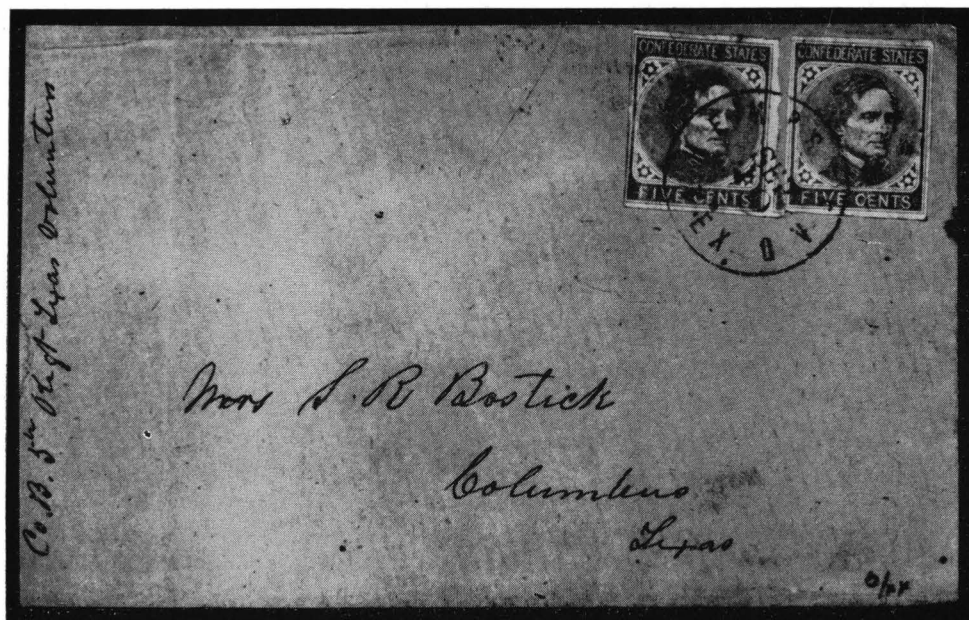


Fig. 73. Cover mailed at Hempstead, Tex. Sept. 20 (1862). Note "Co. B 5th Reg't Texas Volunteers" at left. Edey label is on the reverse.

they certainly could stand an investigation.' I had no trial but was released at the end of nine days. I learned that the drunken Captain who had charge of the prisoners from Point Lookout brought a verbal statement that I was the leader of a mutiny to seize the guards and capture Point Lookout, but the truth of the case was a spite on the part of the Major of the Pt. Lookout prisoners, who was highly censured by Genl. Casey on account of the evidence I obtained relative to the shooting of five of our men by a negro on post.

"Shortly after my release and the transfer of the Col. comd. the post at Elmira I made an effort to establish another school similar to the one at Point Lookout. God again blessed us.

"Books came pouring in, classes were organized, and the school put under the charge of Mr. Eugene Davis of Charlottesville, Va. A Sunday School was started. 35 teachers and four hundred scholars. Everything was working splendidly, men were progressing finely.

"As before I enlisted the good wishes of the Commissary, who gave the extra ration to the day school teachers. This ration was a great help. Other men could make a little money by carving rings &c., but these gentlemen gave their energies to the school.

"Winter grew upon us, and summer coats and pants were no protection from the bitter relentless winds and snows of Elmira. Those angels upon Earth,—the ladies in the cities before mentioned,—were appealed to,—nobly did they respond. Immense quantities of clothes had been received when the Col. comdg. the Prison, Lt. Col. St. Moore, 16 V. R. C. accosted me and remarked that he had many complaints concerning my administration in regard to the distribution of clothing. He said that I avoided the good loyal Union soldiers altogether and gave to Confederate soldiers. I told him frankly that was the case. That if a deserter and a true Confederate soldier presented themselves for clothing, I would certainly give to the Confederate, for the Union man might be released by an order from Washington and the other poor fellow would have to freeze all the winter.

"My plan was to choose five or ten good, true men and instruct them to give me the names and wants of ten men each. In this way the cheats and oath-takers were passed by, and the ladies were not wasting their means.

"The Lt. Col. told me I was not the man for the place, and ordered me not to send any more lists, to turn over everything I had to a man he had appointed—an oath-taker. This was a terrible blow for I had just received a carte blanche order to forward as many names as I could and they should be supplied. I cannot tell you all in this connection, it would occupy too much of your valuable time.

"I was subsequently taken from the Hospital as Acting Chaplain and finally sent to the Guard House and put in a cell. A Union officer came to me a few days after the interview with the Col., saying, 'Mr. Edey, this is confidential. I am a friend of yours, look out, they are going to break you up and no one knows where they will end.' It ended in the cell, and I was deprived of all but two blankets in the bitterest weather I ever experienced. But it is all over now, and I am sure the Lt. Col. feels ashamed of his unkindness.

"I can only add, Mr. President, that great allowances may be made for returned prisoners if they display unusual desire to see their families before rejoining the field. Such devotion, such hoping against hope, exposed to the sneers and false reports of the traitors in their midst, the insidious temptations of the enemy to allure them from the army is only comprehended when witnessed.

"It was to check this that I was made an humble instrument in the hands of Almighty God in getting up these schools &c., which the enemy discovering caused them to bear so terribly upon me.

“Of my private history I cannot speak. I refer you to the Hon. Mr. Oldham, Senator from Texas. He will give you an account which will go to show how crushing and vast are the sacrifices of those who for principles leave their parents in the North to uphold the liberty which Washington fought for, and which you, as his successor, are pledged to defend.

“I have the honor to remain

Your Excellency's

Very Obedt. Servt.

ARTHUR H. EDEY,

Co. "A" 5th Texas Vols.

P.S. A printed statement of the school attached.
endorsed: A. H. Edey; March 6th, 1865.”

IX.

The Government Trans-Mississippi Express Mail The 40c Rate

The embarrassment of the Post Office of the Confederacy because of its inability to maintain reliable mail service across the Mississippi finally forced Postmaster General Reagan to act. Since April of 1862 he had seen more and more mail carried both ways across the river by the Cushing Express, by special regimental agents like Edey, by an uncounted number of private expresses, and—most costly to the revenues of the P. O. Dept.—by hand by travelers. The public had reached the conclusion that the P. O. Dept. was incapable of delivering reliable mails in a reasonable time across the river.

Even when special agents “to superintend and secure the certain and speedy transportation of the mails across the Mississippi River . . . ” were authorized by act of Congress in Oct. 1862, the mails were uncertain and the special agents put an extra financial burden upon the Department. An added difficulty was the raiding and robbery of post offices by Union raiders. However, the Department struggled on, aided by military escorts to protect the surreptitious river crossing spots where the small boats sought to evade the Federal gunboat patrols. So many of the Confederate boats were destroyed that the Department resorted to small rubber portable boats, which were more expendable.

By the early part of 1863, Reagan and the Confederate Congress were convinced that some safer, speedier method of dispatching Trans-Mississippi mail would have to be devised, and that its cost would necessitate an increase in postage on such mail. So, in April 1863, an act was approved, entitled: “An act to establish a preferred mail across the Mississippi River . . . ” authorizing the Postmaster General “to establish a mail route for the more speedy transmission of letters and dispatches only, between the states lying East and those lying West of the Mississippi River.” The provisions of this Act for a “preferred mail” (note, not an “express mail”) were:

- (1) Postage prepaid at 50c per ½ ounce, or fraction.
- (2) Mail matter by this route would have preference over all other mail matter trans-Mississippi.
- (3) The Postmaster General would establish regulations for the mailing, transmission and distribution of mail matter on this route.
- (4) The Postmaster General could apply the income from postages of this route to the employment of couriers or other means to secure safer, more frequent and more rapid transmission of the “preferred mail.”

Finally, the Congress decided upon “express mails,” not “preferred mails,” and passed an Act, approved May 1, 1863, entitled:

“An Act to authorize the establishment of Express Mails.” This final step provided, principally—

- (1) The P. M. G. was authorized, to establish “Express Mail” for letters and government dispatches only, in order to secure greater speed than offered by the regular mails.
- (2) The express mail lines were to be deemed post routes.

- (3) No rate of postage was fixed; but a limit of one dollar for single letters of $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce for a distance not over 500 miles; and double that rate for distances over 500 miles were provided.

Under authority of this Act Reagan proceeded to establish the Trans-Mississippi Express mail.

However, months went on while he struggled with the problem of executing the authority given to him by the bill. Then success crowned the efforts of Gen'l Grant and Gen'l Banks to extend Federal command of the River and in early May Grand Gulf, Port Gibson and Alexandria were taken; Vicksburg was invested on May 18, Port Hudson on May 23—and the coup-de-grace fell when on July 4 Vicksburg surrendered, followed by Port Hudson on July 8.

Reagan, in his report of Dec. 7, 1863, after recounting the difficulties besetting the Postal Service in transmitting mail across the River states:

“Before disposing of this subject, it is proper for me to say that among the means recently adopted for securing mail service across the Mississippi, was the establishment of an express mail line under the authority of ‘An act authorizing the establishment of “express mails,”’ approved May 1, 1863, and making a contract with a party represented to have ample means for carrying it out, for the conveyance of letters and packages, twice a week, between Meridian, Mississippi, and Shreveport, Louisiana. On all letters or packages sent by this line, the postage to be pre-paid, is at the rate of forty cents for each single letter of one-half ounce in weight, and forty cents for every additional half-ounce, or fraction of a half-ounce. Public advertisement has been made, giving directions for the manner of transmitting letters by this line.”

Several statements in the above report are important to explore. Reagan says: “that among the means recently adopted . . .” It is not clear whether the other means “among the means” refers to the regular mails or the Cushing or other expresses then in operation. The writer believes Reagan refers to the expresses for the reason that no covers, trans-Mississippi, in the regular mail after October 1863 have been noted. But Cushing covers and private express covers are known used well into the Autumn of 1864.

Reagan also states: “Public advertisement has been made, giving directions . . .” Strange to say, even under the vital necessity to get the Express into operation as soon after the loss of the Meridian-Jackson-Vicksburg-Shreveport rail route, the only advertisement that has so far come to light is from the *Huntsville* (Ala.) *Confederate* of November 5, 1863, and its date line is Oct. 20, 1863. It reads:

“Post Office Department.

“Richmond, Oct. 20, 1863.

“By virtue of authority vested in me by an act of Congress ‘to authorize the establishment of express mails,’ approved May 1, 1863, I have this day, entered into an agreement by which two mails will be carried, each way, between Meridian, in the State of Mississippi, and Shreveport, in the State of Louisiana.

“Now, to meet the expense of carrying of said express mail, it is ordered that, on all letters and packages to be carried on said route, except the Official correspondence and blanks, and postage stamps of the Post Office Department, the postage, to be prepaid in all cases, shall be at the rate of forty cents on each single letter of half an ounce or less, and forty cents for each additional half ounce or fraction of a half ounce.

“Letters and packages to be sent by this route may be mailed, and the postage paid, at ANY POST OFFICE IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES, and those sent from the East to the West of the Mississippi should be marked VIA either Meridian or Brandon, Mississippi, and those sent from the west to

Fig. 74. Only known advertisement of the Trans-Miss. Express Mail. From the DAILY HUNTSVILLE CONFEDERATE (Ala.) of Nov. 5, 1863. This official notice indicates that the advertisement was prepared on Oct. 21, 1863, the same day on which Genl. Reagan completed his arrangements for two mails "each way." Although it is not stated whether this indicates two mails per day or per week, probably it means per week.

Note. The complete newspaper from which this advertisement is reproduced is still preserved.

New Advertisements.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.
Richmond, Oct. 20, 1863. (

By virtue of authority vested in me by an act of Congress, "to authorize the establishment of express mails," approved May 1, 1863, I have, this day, entered into an agreement by which two mails will be carried, each way, between Meridian, in the State of Mississippi, and Shreveport, in the State of Louisiana.

Now, to meet the expense of the carrying of said express mail, it is ordered that, in all letters and packages to be carried on said route, except the official correspondence and blanks and postage stamps of the Post Office Department, the postage, to be pre-paid in all cases, shall be at the rate of forty cents on each single letter, of half an ounce or less, and forty cents for every additional half ounce or fraction of a half ounce.

Letters and packages to be sent by this route may be mailed, and the postage paid, at any post office in the Confederate States, and those sent from the East to the West of the Mississippi, should be marked via either Meridian or Brandon, Mississippi, and those sent from the West to the East of the Mississippi, should be plainly marked, via either Shreveport or Alexandria, Louisiana, as they will be forwarded from either of said offices, and from none other, without further notice.

JOHN H. REAGAN,
Postmaster General.

Nov 2 '63. - 31.

the East of the Mississippi, should be plainly marked VIA either Shreveport or Alexandria, Louisiana, as they will be forwarded from either of said offices and none other without further notice."

(The key of this advertisement shows that it was scheduled for three insertions beginning on Nov. 2.)

Three points in this advertisement, reproduced here, are important to note. The date line Oct. 20, 1863; the word "I have this day, entered into an agreement, etc."; and "except the Official correspondence and blanks, etc." It is clear that the initiation of the express service began subsequent to Oct. 20, which was the very date upon which the agreement was consummated. Equally certain is the fact that official mail, supplies and stamps of the P. O. Dept. (and possibly mail of other government departments) was carried free by the Trans-Mississippi Express, as part of the terms of the contract.

The great difficulty suffered by the P. O. Dept. in maintaining communication with its offices across the river is indicated by the experience of the postmaster of NATCHITOCHEs, LA. who wrote often during 1863 requesting supplies from the Department. But under date of Dec. 10, 1863, Clements of the P. O. Dept. replied: "I have to inform you that this is the first order received from you this year, and in fact very few letters have been received from offices West of the Mississippi, during the same period."

Apparently it took some time after Oct. 20 for the Express Mail to get into service, although the need for it was pressing. A news item that Cushing ran in the *Houston Telegraph*, Nov. (?) 1863 quotes a letter received from "H. P." a Cushing agent. It reads:

"Alexandria, Nov. 27, 1863

"The government express is not yet in working trim, at least no mail from

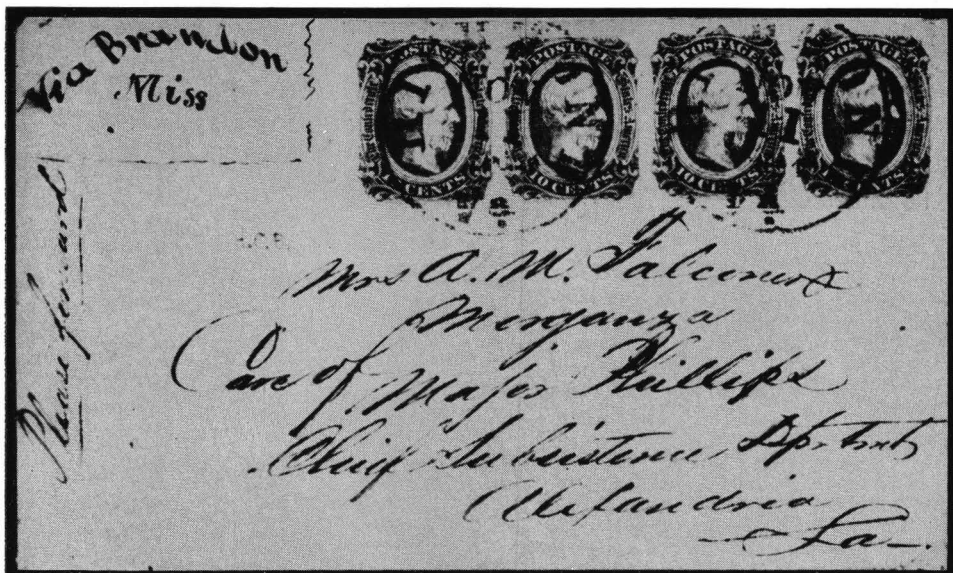


Fig. 75. Second earliest known use of a Trans-Mississippi rate cover—Nov. 11, 1863; bearing strip of four 10c 1863 Type II and routed "via Brandon" to Alexandria, La. Since those in Richmond probably learned of the Express first it may be expected that early uses are from Richmond.



Fig. 76. Wonderful block of four, 10c 1863 Type I, west to east, postmarked Jefferson, Tex., Nov. 28 and addressed to North Carolina. From the color and impression of the stamps the year was probably 1863. To add to the sparkle of this cover it is of wall paper.

the other side has reached this point up to this time. It may have gone to Shreveport. Neither has any mail under the new arrangement crossed to the other side of the Mississippi, unless it crossed yesterday. I sent today, by Captain Birnos, all the letters for the other side entrusted to my care, as well as my own. I know his facilities and have no doubt that he will make the trip." (end)

Obviously H. P. was the Cushing courier at Alexandria clearing his (and another's) mail across the river to the east. And despite the "may have gone to Shreveport" and "unless it crossed yesterday" certainly as at Nov. 27, 1863 the Government Trans.-Miss. Mail was not in flourishing operation.

No Express Handstamp Known

There was no handstamp used on the Trans-Mississippi Express Mail; only the 40c rate, and usually the route marking 'Via Meridian' (or "Brandon") if westbound; "Via Shreveport" (or "Alexandria") if eastbound, showed that the letter travelled by express. These towns were, respectively, the eastern and the western termini of the express route, and presumably batches of express routed letters were handed over at these post offices to the special agents for carriage across the river. No covers are known struck with the town-marks of Shreveport, Brandon or Alexandria in transit; two are known struck with the Meridian townmark in transit.

The following tables analyze the details of 58 Trans-Mississippi covers and 2 pieces—which comprise probably 80% of all covers in existence. Considering the difficulties of transporting mail by this hazardous route, it is not surprising that Trans-Mississippi Express covers in fine condition are very rare indeed. Most of them are water-stained, or creased or soiled—mute evidence of the rough handling they must have received in saddle-bags and leaky sacks, or hidden perhaps on the person of some courier hiding out in a swamp from a Federal patrol along the river banks.

It should be noted that some of the surviving covers indicate that the public did not always follow in detail the postal regulations. For example, a fairly large proportion—16 out of 58 covers—show no route marking; and a few of the late-use covers bear no town cancel. Probably the 40c rate prepaid, sometimes made a route marking superfluous; and by 1864 the exigencies of spreading war closed post offices where letters could be deposited, the couriers picking up the letters personally, at some pre-arranged mail drop.

Analysis of Trans-Mississippi Express Covers—40c Rate

Total: 58 covers—2 pieces

TABLE I

Earliest fully dated uses: Nov. 2, 1863; next Nov. 11, 1863
 Both from east to west
 Latest fully dated uses: Feb. 9, 1865—K&B print—east to west
 March 4, 1865—K&B print—east to west
 *Apr. 12, 1865—K&B print—east to west
 *(Stamps not cancelled; date questionable)

TABLE II

	<i>Totals</i>
Covers from east to west—Dates Known 36; Dates Unknown 3	39
Covers from west to east—Dates Known 20; Dates Unknown 1	21

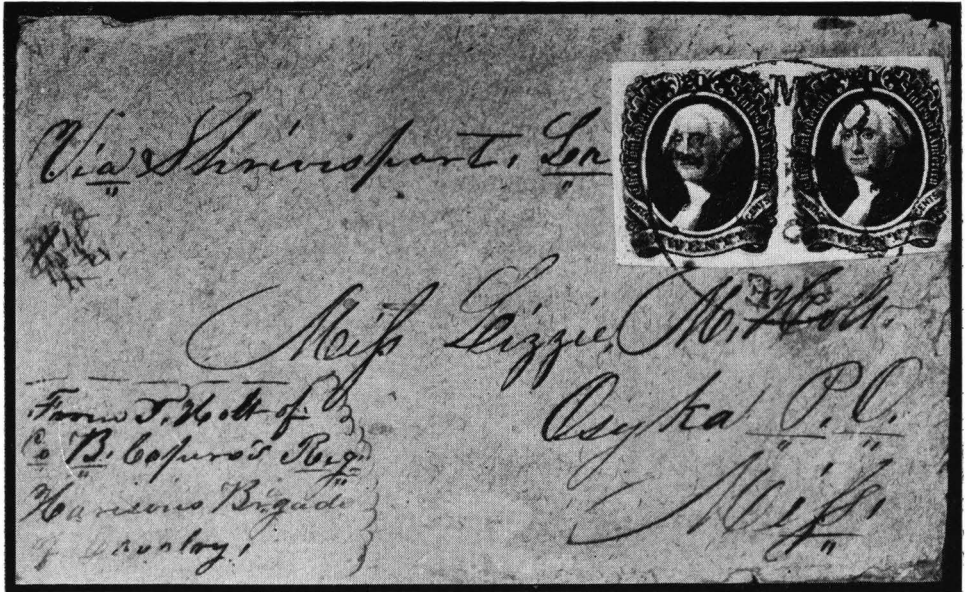


Fig. 77. Pair of the 20c green on a west to east cover. Postmarked at Monroe, La. Aug. 15 (without doubt 1864) and addressed to Osyka, Miss., "via SHRIVISPORT, LA." (sic) While pairs of the 20c green used on Trans-Mississippi mail are not excessively rare, a pair in this exceptional condition is. The color is rich deep green.

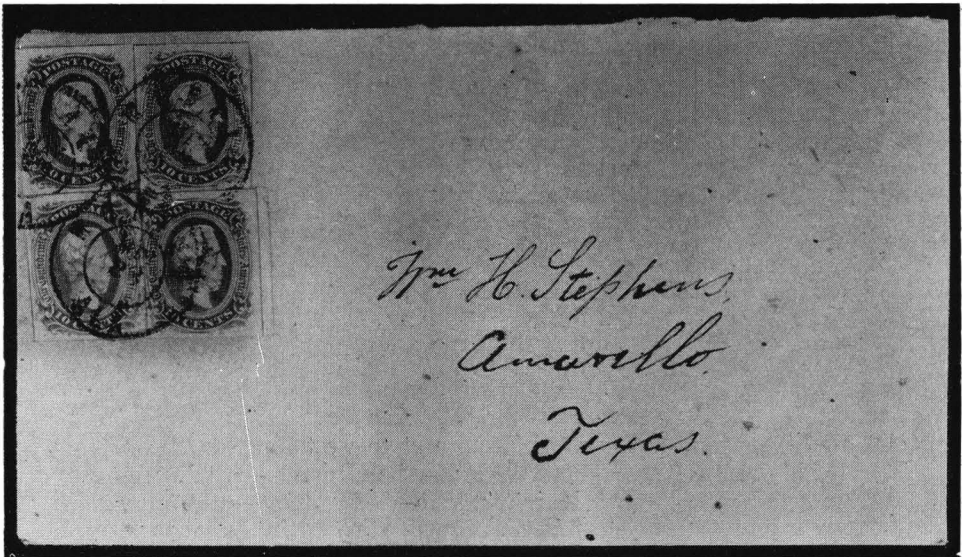


Fig. 78. Four lovely Frame Lines affixed as a block on an east to west cover, Mobile, May 28 (1864) to Amarillo, Texas. No endorsement of route, which is often met with on Trans-Mississippi mail. This is the only known use of the rare Frame Line stamps on a Trans. Miss. Express cover.

TABLE III

	<i>Number Known</i>
Stamps used to pay the rate:	
Combinations of Scott #4 and #12	1
Combinations of Scott #7 and #12	1
Pair and Two Singles Scott #9	1
Four Singles of Scott #10	1
Strip of 4 of Scott #13 (Double Rate)	1
Pairs or Two Singles of Scott #13	16
Four Bisects of Scott #13	1
Strips of 4; Two Pairs or Four Singles, etc. of Scott #11	12
Strips of 4; Two Pairs or Four Singles, etc. of Scott #12	23
Handstamped "PAID" or "FREE"	3

TABLE IV

<i>Usage by Periods</i>	<i>E. to W.</i>	<i>W. to E.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Nov. to Dec. 1863	6	7	13
Jan. to Jun. 1864	13	7	20
Jul. to Dec. 1864	14	5	19
Jan. to Apr. 1865	2	2	4
Dates unknown	3	1	4
	—	—	—
	38	22	60

TABLE V

Use of T. M. mail by months—E. to W. and W. to E. in order of number of covers:

Dec. 1863	8	Feb. 1864	2
Jan. 1864	8	Sept. 1864	2
May 1864	6	Dec. 1864	2
Jun. 1864	5	Apr. 1864	1
Aug. 1864	5	Oct. 1864	1
Nov. 1863	5	Jan. 1865	1
July 1864	4	Feb. 1865	1
Nov. 1864	3	March 1865	1
		Apr. 1865	1

* * * * *

Observations from the Foregoing Tables

Although it may be unrealistic to draw definite conclusions from such limited data as 60 covers and pieces out of possibly thousands that travelled the T. M. route and are lost to us, certain tentative observations seem borne out by known historical facts.

Table I

Apparently after over 16 months of unreliable mail service over-the-river, i.e., from April 24, 1862 to Oct. of 1863, the public did not trust the Trans-Mississippi Express Mail from the moment of its availability after Oct. 20, 1863. They were slow to use it; and the 40c rate—four times the regular rate—probably contributed to their indifference. Also the service was apparently slow to swing into reliable schedules.



Fig. 79. A unique combination and the only Trans-Miss. cover known bearing the 5c Blue (No. 4) lithographed stamps. Travelled west to east; postmarked Shreveport, La. Aug. 29, 1864, and addressed to North Carolina. There is no routing marking. The pair of 10c stamps is of different color from the single 10c, giving the combination a little extra dash.

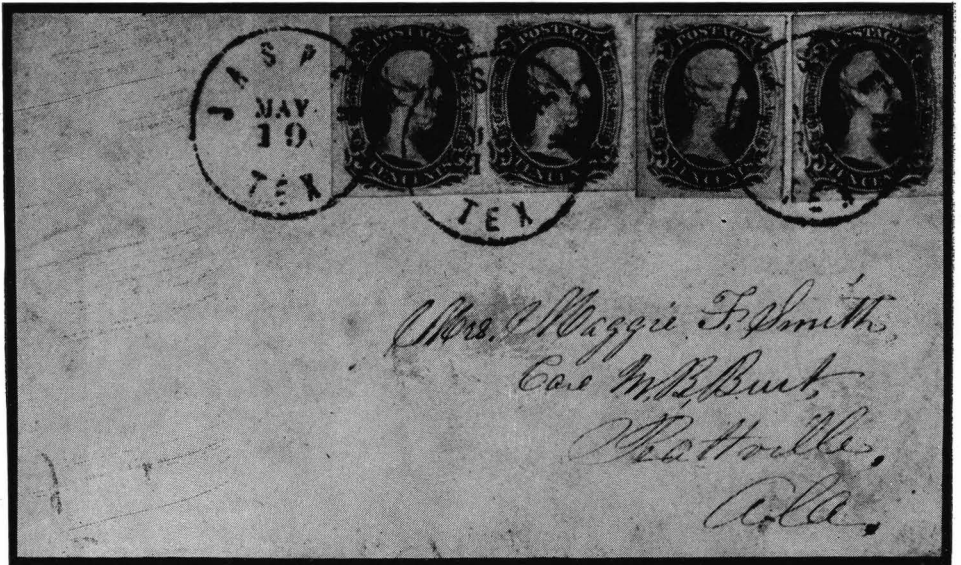


Fig. 80. The "Ten Cent" stamps, pair, two singles to pay the 40c Trans-Miss. Exp. rate from Jasper, Texas to Prattville, Ala. Only known use of the "Ten" on this express; date May 19 is 1864; the absence of routing marking is not unusual. One of the very few immaculate covers of the express mail, with all stamps large margined, of fine color; and with town marks clearly struck.

Table II

Covers, west to east, are twice as scarce as covers east to west. However, it is probable that many letters written by folks at home to Texas troops in the east were lost in the attrition of camp life and battle.

Table III

The use of pairs of 20c stamps (Scott #13) is proven to have been much more frequent than believed years ago.

Table IV and Table V

The large number of existing covers used in 1864, 39 in all, was probably due to the presence of practically all Texas troops, fighting the desperate battles of 1864 east of the river.

With the gradual destruction of Confederate armies in the east, in late 1864 and 1865, and the contraction of Confederate held territory, the Trans-Mississippi mail dwindled in volume as the postal service became demoralized.

* * * * *

One puzzle that has always intrigued students is the charting of a definite route or routes that the couriers followed in crossing the river to outwit Federal patrols and gunboats. Now some light can be thrown on this phase of the service.

In the course of researching material for their fine book *THE GREAT MAIL—A Postal History of New Orleans*—by Leonard V. Huber and Clarence A. Wagner—Mr. Huber was thoughtful enough to remember the writer's interest in the Trans-Miss. Express Mail Service. Mr. Huber noted a most interesting passage in a well-known source book—*SERVICE AFLOAT*, by Admiral Raphael Semmes, who commanded the famous *ALABAMA* to the time of her loss. He returned to America in October 1864 after a sojourn in Europe, entering the Confederate States via Mexico and Brownsville, Texas to Shreveport where he arrived on November 27, 1864. There he sought to make contact with his son, Major C. J. Semmes who was stationed at Alexandria, La.

At Alexandria, then, we pick up the narrative as related by Semmes in his book. Here is an intensely interesting account of *how* the couriers of the Trans-Miss. Express Mail operated.

“At Alexandria, I was kindly invited by General Buckner to become his guest during my stay, and he sent a courier at once to inform my son, who was encamped a few miles below the town, of my arrival. The latter came to see me the same afternoon. I remained in the hospitable quarters of the General a week before the necessary arrangements could be made for my crossing the Mississippi. The enemy being in full possession of this river by means of his gunboats, it was a matter of some little management to cross in safety.

“The Trans-Mississippi mails to Richmond had been sent over, however, quite regularly, under the personal superintendence of a young officer, detailed for the purpose, and the General was kind enough to arrange for my crossing with this gentleman. The news of my passing through Texas had reached the enemy at New Orleans, as we learned by his newspapers, and great vigilance had been enjoined on his gunboats to intercept me, if possible. Our arrangements being completed, I left Alexandria on the 10th. of December, accompanied by my son, who had obtained a short leave of absence for the purpose of visiting his home, and reached the little village of Evergreen the next day. Arrived at this point, we were joined by our companions of the mail service, and on the 13th. we crossed both the Red and Mississippi Rivers in safety.

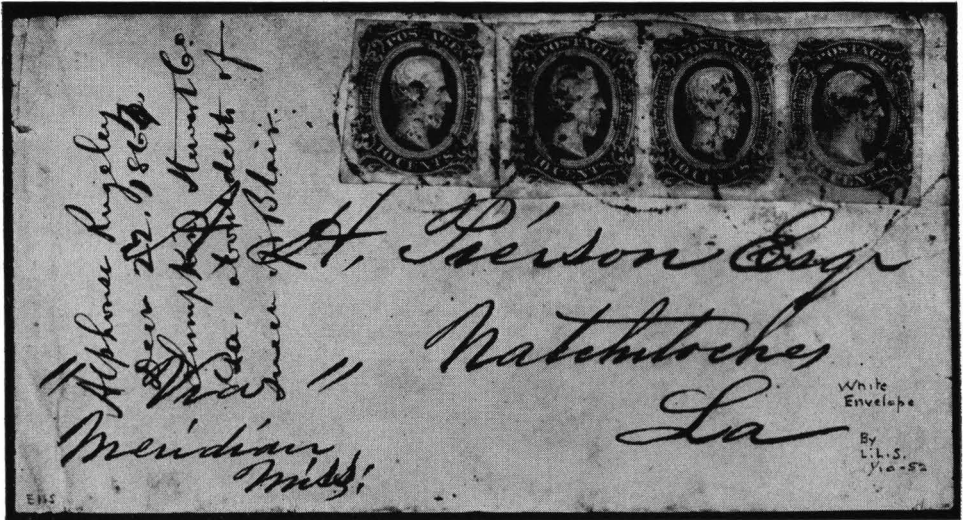


Fig. 81. Use Dec. 22, 1863; from LUMPKIN, GA. to Louisiana and routed "via Meridian." Apparently either endorsement—"via Brandon" or "via Meridian" was used indiscriminately on east-west mail. About half the known covers show the former, about half the latter.

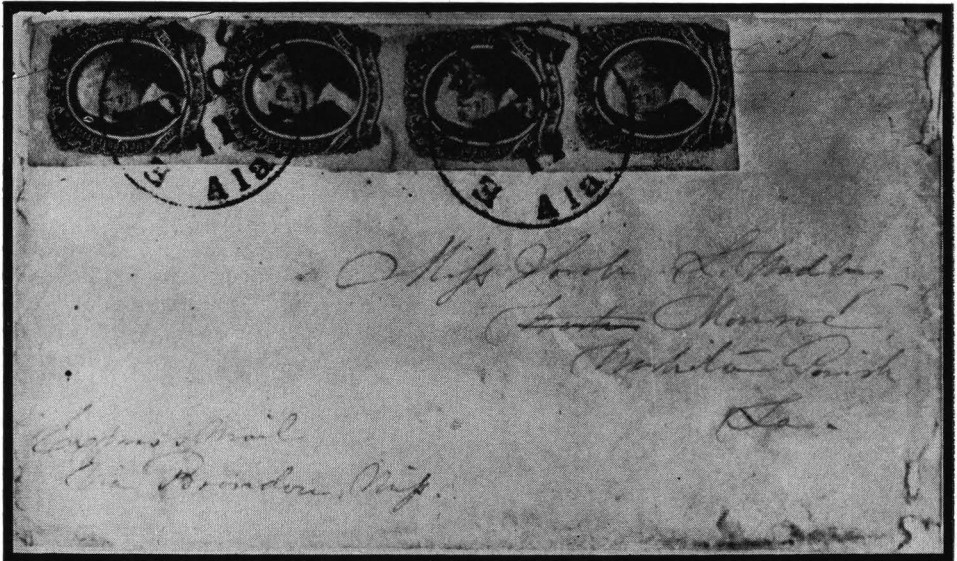


Fig. 82. Vertical strip of four of the 20c green, paying the double rate of 80c for over $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; east to west, EUFAULA, ALA. to Louisiana; Dec. 11, 1863 or 1864. This is the only double rate cover with stamps known. It is routed "via Brandon."

“The journey through the swamps, leading to these rivers, was unique. We performed it on horseback, pursuing mere bridle-paths and cattle-tracks, in single file, like so many Indians. Our way sometimes led us through a forest of gigantic trees, almost entirely devoid of undergrowth, and resembling very much, though after a wild fashion, the park scenery of England. At other times we would plunge into a dense, tangled brake, there the interlaced grape and other vines threatened every moment, to drag us from our saddles. The whole was a drowned country, and impassible during the season of rains. It was now low-water, and as we rode along, the high-water marks on the trees were visible, many feet above our heads. From this description of the country, the reader will see how impossible it was for artillery or cavalry, or even infantry, to operate on the banks of these rivers, during a greater part of the year. Except at a few points, the enemy’s gunboats were almost as secure from attack at they would have been, on the high seas. Occasionally, we had to swim a deep bayou, whose waters looked as black as those of the Stygian Lake; but if the bayou was wide, as well as deep, we more frequently dismounted, stripped our horses, and surrounding them, and shouting at them, made them take the water in a drove, and swim over by themselves. We then crossed in skiffs, which the mail-men had provided for the purpose, and caught and resaddled our horses for a fresh mount.

“We reached the bank of the Mississippi just before dark. There were two of the enemy’s gunboats anchored in the river, at a distance of about three miles apart. *As remarked in another place, the enemy had converted every sort of a water craft, into a ship of war, and now had them in such number, that he was enabled to police the river in its entire length, without the necessity of his boats being out of sight of each other’s smoke.* The officers of these river craft were mostly volunteers from the merchant service, whose commissions would expire with the war, and a greater set of predatory rascals was, perhaps, never before collected in the history of any government. They robbed the plantations, and demoralized them by trade, at the same time. Our people were hard pressed for the necessaries of life, and a constant traffic was being carried on with them, by these armed river steamers, miscalled ships of war.

“It would not do, of course, for us to attempt the passage of the river, until after dark; and so we held ourselves under cover of the forest, until the proper moment, and then embarked in a small skiff, sending back the greater part of our escort. Our boat was scarcely able to float the numbers that were packed into her. Her gunwales were no more than six inches above the water’s edge. Fortunately for us, however, the night was still, and the river smooth, and we pulled over without accident. As we shot within the shadows of the opposite bank, our conductor before landing, gave a shrill whistle to ascertain whether all was right. The proper response came directly, from those who were to meet us, and in a moment more, we leaped on shore among friends. We found spare horses awaiting us, and my son and myself slept that night under the hospitable roof of Colonel Rose. The next morning the colonel sent us to Woodville, in his carriage, and in four or five days more, we were in Mobile, and I was at home again, after an absence of four years!”

* * * * *

There is the picture of the route of the Trans. Miss. 40c Express. The route was purposely through one of the most desolate sections of the river. No doubt this was the route for eastbound mail “via Shreveport or via Alexandria, La.” only. Other routes still unknown were laid out for Westbound mail which was routed “via Meridian or Brandon, Miss.” probably crossing the river at some point or points further to the North.

But the most interesting disclosure is that an Army Captain was in charge of the party apparently for security reasons. The hamlet of Evergreen was the rendezvous for the couriers who carried the mail, and the arrangements for signals and the actual crossing of the Mississippi indicate well laid out plans for the success of the adventure. Incidentally, the fact that on this trip "her (the skiff's) gunwales were no more than six inches above the water's edge" is the reason why so many of the known Trans.-Miss. covers bear heavy water stains. It was a rugged job to keep things dry, and the rainy season must have made the trip even more watery.

The reader can easily plot the route Alexandria-Evergreen-Woodville, Miss. on a detail map of the region. Possibly the actual point of crossing was near Red River Landing—here the Texan & Pacific R. R. now crosses the river. Whether or not all mail went via Woodville is not clear. If so, from there it required a long haul to reach eastbound mail routes of the period.

The extent of the territory which used the facilities of the Express Mail was limited only by the area of the loyal states of the C. S. A. and by the military exigencies existing from time to time. Mobile to Amarillo, Tex.; Georgetown, S. C. to Shreveport, La.; Eufaula, Ala. to Monroe, La.; Fayetteville, N. C. to Camp Bragg, Ark.; Henderson, N. C. to Marshall, Tex.; Richmond to Marshall, Tex.—among covers travelling west. And among covers travelling east—Sherman, Tex. to Jefferson, Ala.; Marshall, Texas to Alabama; Austin, Tex. to Richmond, Va., etc., etc. Some of these distances were great, Mobile to Amarillo, Tex. was at least 1200 miles.

Since all Trans-Mississippi letters were put into the regular mail at the post office of dispatch, office instructions must have directed them to go as marked to Meridian, Brandon, Shreveport or Alexandria by the most expeditious route, and at these offices the courier took over, finally delivering the mail to the Confederate service at the proper post office on the other side of the river.

In a way the Trans-Mississippi Express Mail may be called the barometer of both the fortunes of war inflicted upon the Confederacy, and the anxieties of the folks of Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas for their sons in battle far to the east. This was a war-born mail route whose purpose was to hold together the Southern people of the west and the east. It was part of the grand plan of establishing the military department of the Trans-Mississippi, under Lieut. Gen'l E. Kirby Smith, aimed at making more effective battle use of the 43,000 troops spread west of the river from Arkansas to the Rio Grande. The prime objective of the strategy was the re-capture of New Orleans which would free the river of Federals. But in July of 1863 Confederate forces under Lieut. Gen'l Richard Taylor, after reaching the west bank of the river near New Orleans, were thrown back and thus ended the effort to re-unite the several parts of the Confederacy.

X.

Mail from New Orleans, after its Occupation

Forwarded by the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile

This is the story of the miseries and indignities heaped upon the proud and patriotic citizens of New Orleans, and their efforts to keep in communication with relatives and friends in the Confederacy. After Admiral Farragut received the capitulation of New Orleans on April 28, 1862, Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler with some 15,000 Union troops occupied the city and began an administration that for bitterness, revenge and harsh measures had seldom been matched in modern times by a military commander. New Orleans was put under virtual martial law, and the result of Butler's acts was to strengthen the secret resistance of the people of the city and to reinforce their allegiance to the Confederacy, even in the face of enemy occupation.

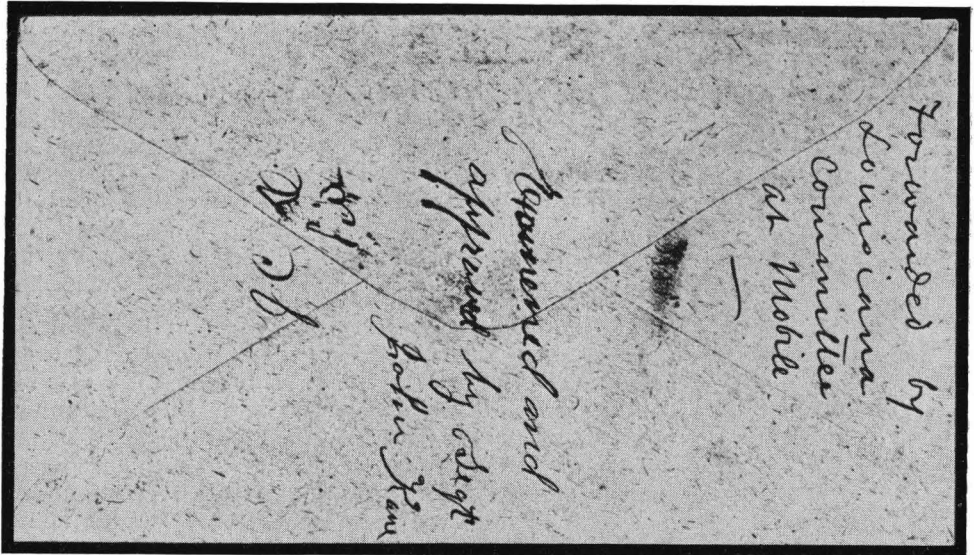
In July, 1862 the Congress of the United States passed a law that empowered authorities of the Union to seize the property of all citizens of the Confederacy who were "aiding, countenancing or abetting the Rebellion" and who did not, in 60 days, renew their allegiance to the United States. Called the Confiscation Act, this law presented Butler with an opportunity to persecute the intransigent people of New Orleans. After scarcely sixty days had elapsed, he ordered all who had not renewed their allegiance to the Union to file an account of their property and to register for certification as "registered enemies of the United States." Imprisonment and fines were the penalties for ignoring the order and nearly 68,000 New Orleanians took the oath. But some 4,000 stirred to hate and anger at the acts of Butler, preferred to be branded as "registered enemies," and to take the consequences.

The effect of Butler's administration upon the postal service in New Orleans was immediate. Although he opened the Post Office under Federal control, he forbade communication between the people of the city, and their relatives and friends in the Confederacy. The result was a busy traffic in smuggled mail in and out of the city on the boats plying between Mobile and New Orleans which Butler permitted to carry food to feed the poor of New Orleans. Schooners on Lake Ponchartrain secretly carried mail and escapees to the north shore, in Confederate hands. Despite arrests and confiscation on this route, and in Mississippi Sound between New Orleans and Mobile, mail continued to get into and out of New Orleans. Such mail can usually be identified only by the enclosure, until in mid-1863 the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile came into operation and forwarded mail at the Mobile P. O.

General Butler's actions in New Orleans resulted in his transfer and Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks succeeded him in January of 1863. Gen. Banks, at first gentle in his treatment of the citizens, was soon lashed to fury by the continued insults to the Union, its president and its flag, by New Orleanians. Banks responded with a long list of restrictive orders for schools, amusement places and ministers. The result, in January, 1863, was the start of a secret exodus of Confederate sympathizers to Madisonville and other Confederate points across Lake Pontchartrain. In May, Banks decreed the penalty of death for anyone convicted of supplying arms to Confederates; and ordered the deportation to Confederate territory by May 15th of all registered enemies of the United States. These were the irreconcilables who had so registered by order of Gen. Butler, when they refused to take the oath.



Fig. 83. Prisoner-of-War cover from M. E. Pratt, Lieut. Co. K 1st Ala, confined in New Orleans. To his wife in Prattville, Ala., in July 1863. The reverse of the cover below, shows the ms. inscriptions. The Confederate stamp is the "Frame-Line" supplied at Mobile; the U. S. stamp, mutilated by three cuts, apparently was to pay the U. S. postage in occupied New Orleans. The cover is properly endorsed "from Prisoner of War" and "Per Flag of Truce."



The mss. "J. C. D. P. M." cleared the letter for the La. Comm. while the "Examined and approved by Seg't. John Kane" is the censor mark of the prison in New Orleans.

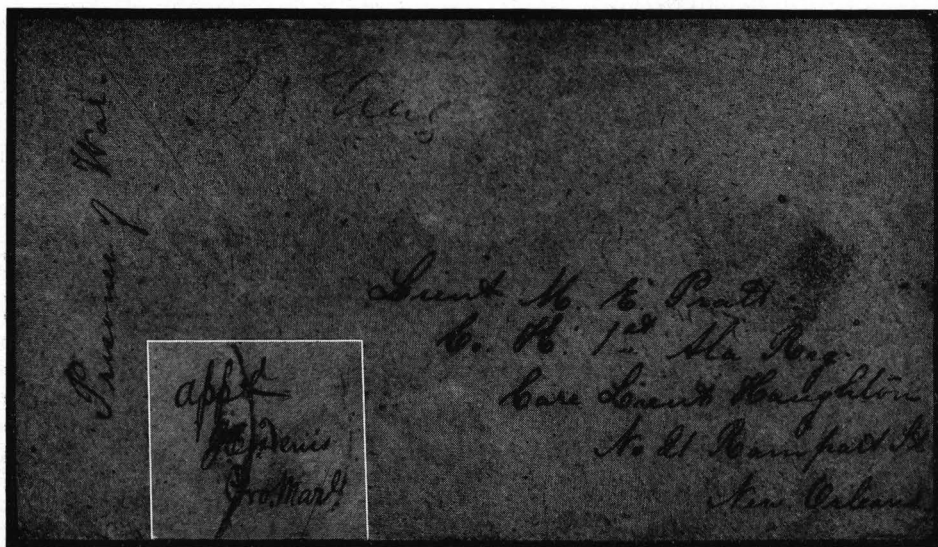


Fig. 84. Only known flag of truce letter into New Orleans, apparently forwarded by the Relief Commission secretly, as evidenced by the provost-marshal's approval of J. C. Denis on reverse, (shown as insert). From Mrs. Pratt to her husband.



Fig. 85. To Mrs. Pratt from her husband, probably sent in 1863, with "appd J.C.D. P.M." (Provost Marshal) on reverse. One stamp in the strip of four to pay the double rate over $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. has been cut off. There was no 15c rate possible in the Confederacy after July 1, 1862, when the 5c rate for under 500 miles was superseded by the 10c rate for any distance.

The deportation order was cruel: property and possessions could not be transferred, forcing the sale at auction; only the day's ration of food, wearables on their backs, necessary beds and bedding were allowed to the deportees. They left by crowded steamer making many trips to Gulf ports, and thence to Mobile overland, after the commander of the Federal blockading squadron at Mobile had refused to permit a flag of truce evacuation by water from the concentration port of Pascagoula, Miss. The exodus was so slow and heart-rending that Gen. Banks was forced to extend the deadline to May 31. By that date more than 700 families from New Orleans had arrived in Mobile, in destitute and miserable condition. Out of compassion for these fellow countrymen, a group of prominent citizens of Mobile formed the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile, which supplied food, shelter, transportation and medical care for the refugees.

The Committee also took over the task of handling the mail of the refugees to and from New Orleans, and to and from places in the Confederacy. Means were found by small ships to smuggle letters in and out of New Orleans; those coming out could enter the mails at Mobile for transit to places in the Confederacy. Since J. C. Denis, a member of the Committee, was Provost-Marshal resident in Mobile, he could approve for the Confederacy any flag of truce mail entering or leaving New Orleans by arrangement with Federal forces. Such flag of truce mail was permitted at least in July of 1863.

From June or July 1863 to September 1864 the Louisiana Relief Committee continued to maintain secret ways to get mail into and out of New Orleans, and to post outgoing mail at Mobile to reach eventually relatives and friends of those citizens of New Orleans still in the city.

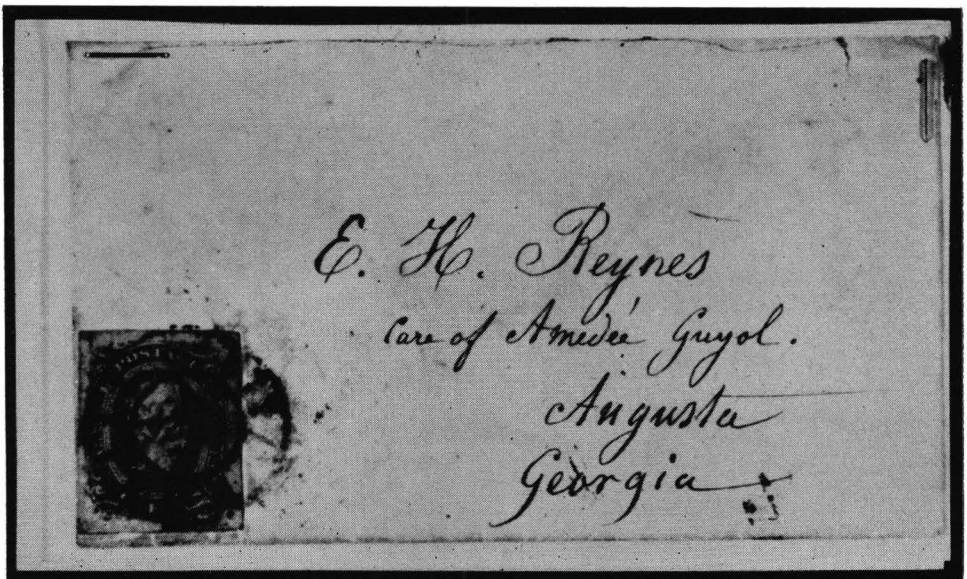


Fig. 86. Typical cover from the Reynes correspondence; all letters were smuggled out of New Orleans and are addressed to a son who escaped from New Orleans and reached Augusta. Date Mar. 29, 1864. "Forwarded by Louisiana Committee at Mobile" in ms. on reverse.

There are several ways by which such covers can be identified. First, the presence on face or back of "Forwarded by the Louisiana Committee at Mobile" or similar phrasing, in ms.; second, the Mobile (double circle) postmark tying the stamp; third, "App'd J. C. D. (or J. C. Denis) P. M." (or similar) in ms. either by itself on reverse or in conjunction with first and second above. It is possible, of course, that a great many letters were handled by the Committee and put into the mail at Mobile without the inscription of the Committee or the Provost-Marshal. In this case they cannot be distinguished from ordinary mail from Mobile.

Covers which traveled this blockade route to Mobile are extremely scarce and up to a few years ago, when known examples were gathered together and research began, the complete story remained hidden.

The illustrations show the appearance of these covers and their inscriptions, which were written on face or reverse.

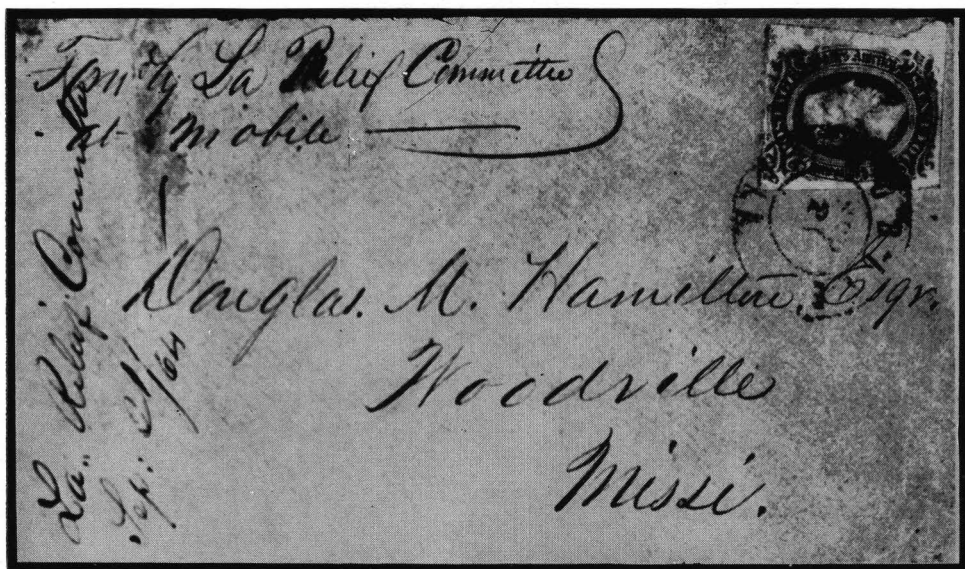


Fig. 87. Latest use known. Sep 2 (?) 1864 postmark of Mobile.

Acknowledgments

As every serious student of philately knows, it is a most extraordinary occasion when one person, single-handed and unaided, comes forth with the solution of a philatelic problem. The feat has been accomplished most often in the field of plating where men of infinite patience and strong eyes have fitted together impossible jig-saw puzzles of hundreds of pieces of paper almost exactly alike except for tremendous trifles.

But Postal History during a war is another *metier* and he who would follow it must be content to pluck his facts or conclusions in a meadow carpeted with musty government records and post office directives, patriotic newspaper clippings and hordes of pamphlets, military orders—and, most colorful of all (and sometimes most baffling) the letters written by the good people who lived through it all. The point is that no single student can, by himself, cover so broad a meadow and arrange all the facts he has plucked into a beautiful, logical and lasting bouquet.

This writer could not—and he therefore wishes to acknowledge the assistance through over a third of a century of a host of fellow collectors and professionals, present and absent, who supplied missing facts, fresh ideas, original research and new material to piece out and complete the jobs he undertook. Among these students—August Dietz, Sr., Edward S. Knapp, Stanley B. Ashbrook, Alfred H. Caspary, Robert Laurence, George Wolcott, Van Dyk MacBride, Ezra D. Cole, Elliott Perry, A. Earl Weatherly, John A. Fox, Jr., Morris Everett, Thomas M. Parks, Earl B. Antrim, F. J. Grant, Leonard V. Huber, Tom White Crigler, Jr., Edward Brooks, Capt. T. S. Dukeshire, U. S. N., Ret., Robert W. Wiseman, Richard E. Townsend, Bernard D. Harmer, Herbert Bloch, Samuel W. Richey, F. A. Hollowbush, Harry B. Keffer, Daniel F. Kelleher, George N. Malpass, David Kohn—and there were many others.

Because this book contains no Bibliography, acknowledgment for some of the facts or figures used is gratefully made to:

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U. S. War Dept. The War of the Rebellion

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Mission of Hon. T. Butler King to Europe

Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy

Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States

Daily Louisville Democrat, June 25, 1861

Postal Service of the Confederate States, *Dietz*

* * * * *

The photographs of covers which illustrate this book are principally from the Stanley Ashbrook Files of the Philatelic Foundation. Others are from the files of the author. Credits are omitted for the good reason that their present owners are in most cases unknown because of the velocity with which Confederate States items have changed owners in the past ten years. It is hoped that the present possessors of these historical covers will be delighted to see them adorn this volume.

L. L. S.

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