

# Rebel Archives New Discoveries: Jefferson Davis Covers and Dupree's Old Store

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## Introduction

While reviewing just one microfilm reel of the online Rebel archives for covers, I soon realized two things. All the covers had been removed or, if it was a folded letter, had not been scanned. There were no covers with Confederate stamps. However, after reviewing an additional three reels of documents, I found two addressed to Jefferson Davis.

## New Listing

The first one, a new listing, was from Duprees Old Store (Virginia) with a manuscript "Paid 5" marking (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The 5¢ was the postage rate for a letter sent less than 500 miles. The *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook* had just one listing for Dupree's Old Store – an 1862 manuscript "Paid / 2." Note the catalog spells Duprees as Dupree's (the proper name of the town).<sup>2</sup> I use both variations where appropriate.

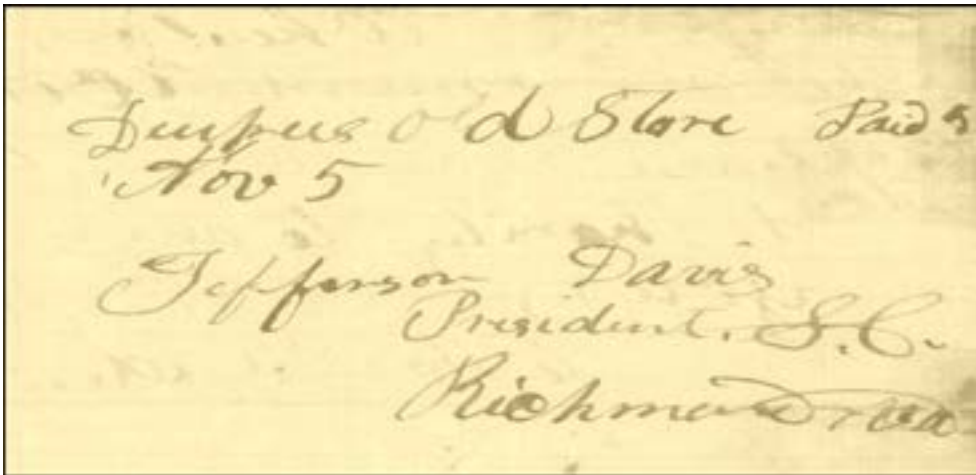
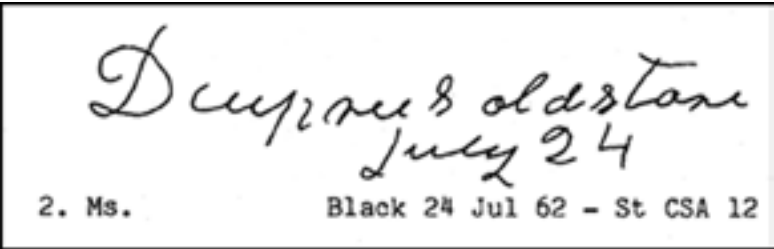


Figure 1. New listing for Duprees Old Store (Virginia), "Paid 5."

This letter, with a dateline of Nov. 1, 1861, was sent to Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States. Thomas J. Morris applied for the discharge of his son, Macon C. Morris, who was in the Keysville Company 23rd Regiment Virginia Volunteers. He wrote that his son was 17 on Aug. 8, had a bad cough and could not sleep at nights. The cold winter weather made the symptoms worse. The letter was received by the Adjutant General's Office Nov. 6, 1861. I could not find his reply to this letter.

Robert Lisbeth's *Virginia Postal Markings and Postmasters, Colonial – 1865* has a July 24, 1862, tracing where the "S" in "store" is lower case (Figure 2).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2. Listing from the Virginia Postal History Society.



**Short History of the Dupree’s Old Store Post Office**

William Dupree Sr. (also spelled Deupree in *Ancestry.com*), born on July 7, 1759, in Lunenburg, Va., married Amey Pettus; they became the parents of seven sons and seven daughters. He died June 16, 1854, in Charlotte, Va., at the age of 94. Figure 3 shows pictures of his house and old store.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3. Deupree’s House and Old Store.

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Figure 4. Portion of David Burr's 1839 *Post Route Map* with Postal Route 2481 in red.

The red line on Burr's *Post Route Map* shows Postal Route 2481 (Figure 4).<sup>5</sup> The 67-mile route went from Nottoway Court House (upper right), through Jeffries Store, Laurel Hill, Double Bridge, Haleysburg, Dupree's Old Store, Wylliesburg, Bentleyville and, finally, to Scottsburg and the Halifax Court House (lower left). A.A. Jetter was the mail contractor awarded the weekly route from Jan. 1, 1849 - June 30 1851, at an annual rate of \$375.<sup>6</sup>

The Dupree's Old Store Post Office was established Sept. 6, 1837, with Thomas L. Morris as its first postmaster. It was located one mile west of Blue Stone Creek, the nearest other post office being Wylliesburg, four miles to the southwest. Figure 5 shows the current Google Map with Deuprees Store Road. The red oval is my estimation of where the Old Store was located. Blue Stone Creek is on the right side of the King's Highway.

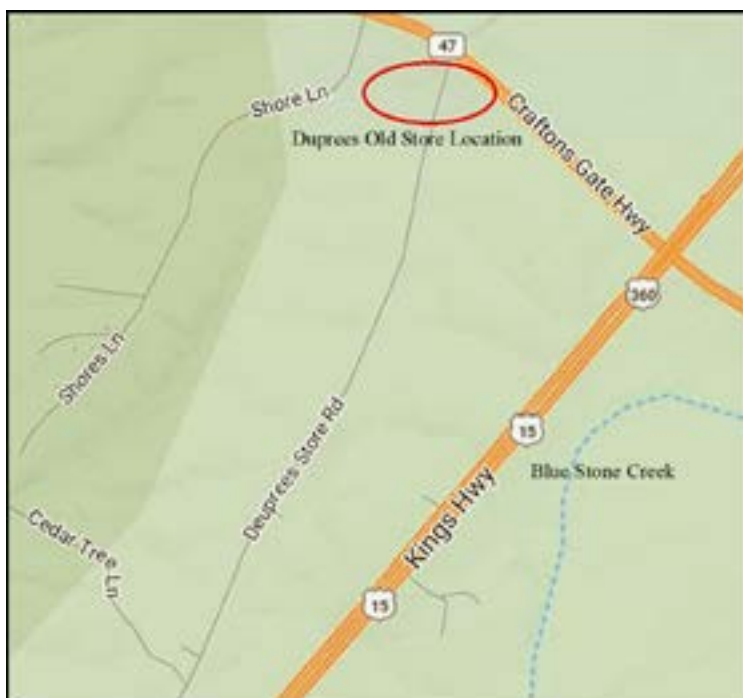


Figure 5. Google Map of Deuprees Store Road.

Postmaster compensation for this post office is seen in Table 1. Morris' compensation was paid according to the amount of postage he collected and dropped in 1845 because of the reduction in letter rates. For example, in 1839, the postage on a letter mailed between 150 to 400 miles was 18¼¢, which in 1845, dropped to 10¢ – a 46% decrease. In 1851 the rate dropped further to 3¢. The table shows Morris' 1845 compensation dropped more than \$20, and the net proceeds to the Post Office Department dropped more than \$35.<sup>7</sup>

**Table One: Postmaster Compensation 1839-67**

Dupree's Old Store Post Office closed Feb. 16, 1881. It reopened May 31, 1881, under the new name of Dupree Post Office and closed July 31, 1918, with mail going to Finneywood.

### Another New Listing

While researching Don Tocher's website, I discovered a Duprees Old Store "Paid 10¢" (Figure 6)<sup>8</sup>. The letter is date-lined Nov. 9, 1861. The 10¢ rate was for all letters traveling more than 500 miles.

Postmaster	Postmaster Appointment	Reporting Data	Postmaster Compensation	Net Proceeds to Post Office
Thomas L. Morris	09.06.1837	09.30.1839	11.72	
		09.30.1841	21.37	38.67
		06.30.1843	31.93	54.67
		06.30.1845	11.64	20.03
		06.30.1847	12.85	5.09
		06.30.1851	16.31	21.17
		06.30.1853	13.35	13.98
		06.30.1855	12.45	4.54
		06.30.1857	16.07	18.19
		06.30.1859	19.79	11.00
	Three Quarters	06.30.1861	21.36	13.94
B.C. Morris	05.08.1861	Civil War		
Thomas J. Morris	04.20.1866	06.30.1867	3	0.73
William F. Crofton	05.29.1871			



Figure 6. New listing for Duprees Old Store with "Paid 10¢" marking.

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## Second Jefferson Davis Cover Found in Rebel Archives

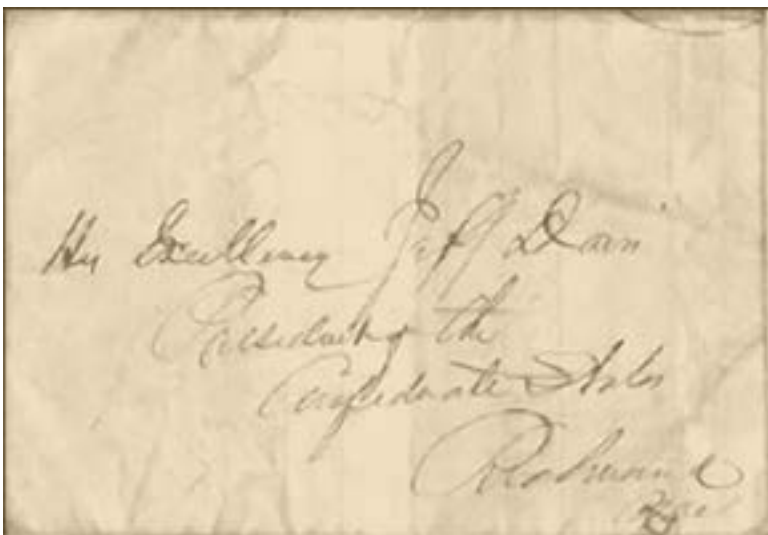
Mr. G.W. Gilmore wrote to His Excellency Jeff Davis, President of the Confederate States, from Copiah County, Miss. on July 20, 1864. He recommended Rev. George J. Mortimer, who was well known in Copiah County and the surrounding counties, as Purchasing Agent (Figure 7).<sup>9</sup>

This letter shows no postal markings and was probably submitted in a bulk envelope sent by Ethelbert Barksdale to the Secretary of War in Richmond from 1861-65. During the Civil War, he represented Mississippi as a member of the Confederate States Congress.

Figure 7. Jeff Davis Cover.

### Conclusion

The Rebel Archives, in "Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General 1861-1865," contain a wealth of information. I was fortunate to have found the previously unknown Dupree's Old Store "Paid 5" Confederate cover.



### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Wayne Farley and Patricia Kaufmann for their recommendations and comments, and Sandra Fitzgerald for her patience and reviews.

### Endnotes

1. Figure 1 source: <https://www.fold3.com/image/638868982/morris-t-j-page-1-us-confederate-letters-1861-1865> (US, Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-1865), accessed Sept. 28, 2023.
2. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012, page 211.
3. Figure 2 source: Robert L. Lisbeth [Ed.], *Virginia Postal Markings and Postmasters, Colonial - 1865*, Virginia Postal History Society, 1984, page 119.
4. Figure 3 source: Charlotte County Photo Album Index, photos contributed by Susan Jones, [www.usgwarchives.net/va/photo/charlotte/pcharlot.htm](http://www.usgwarchives.net/va/photo/charlotte/pcharlot.htm), accessed Sept. 9, 2023.
5. Map of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware Exhibiting the Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals, Rail Roads, &c, By David H. Burr, [www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~1618~140005:Map-of-Virginia,-Maryland-and-Delaware](http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~1618~140005:Map-of-Virginia,-Maryland-and-Delaware), Accessed Sept. 30, 2023.
6. United States Congress, *United States Congressional Serial Set*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1817. Volume 580. Document 88, page 646.
7. Don Heller created US Post Office, 1789 to 1875, Official Register of the United States 1816-1959 website [www.cse.psu.edu/~deh25/post/Timeline\\_files/US-Official\\_Register.html](http://www.cse.psu.edu/~deh25/post/Timeline_files/US-Official_Register.html), accessed Sept. 28, 2023.
8. Figure 6 source: <http://www.postalnet.com/dontocher/Confederate%20Covers/c.csa.u10.turned.va.325.JPG>, accessed Oct. 3, 2023.
9. Figure 7 source: <https://www.fold3.com/image/646171219/barksdale-e-page-7-us-confederate-letters-1861-1865> (US, Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-1865), accessed Sept. 28, 2023.