

Mississippi 1861: Post-Secession Use of U. S. Postage

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Mississippi 1861: Post-Secession Use of U.S. Postage

Purpose and Scope: This Postal History Exhibit documents how mail was handled in Mississippi from the time of its secession from the United States on January 9, 1861, to May 31, 1861 – the last day when U.S. postage could be used to mail a letter in the seceded states. This period was further divided by Mississippi's status as an **Independent State** from January 9 until it joined the Confederacy on February 4. The period from February 4 to May 31 is referred to as **Confederate State Use of U.S. Postage** as the U.S. government permitted its stamps to continue to move the mails in the rebel states.

This exhibit covers the period prior to the Confederacy taking over the mails in the seceded Southern states on June 1, 1861.

Background: The narrow 4-month, 3-week period covered by the exhibit was a time of turmoil and confusion. Mississippi residents and their postmasters had to carry on as mail was the primary form of communication. Mail distribution was facilitated by the federal government in Washington, which allowed a continuation of services in the seceded Southern states until May 31, 1861, in the hope that differences could be resolved without acrimony.

Rarity: Important and scarce covers are **framed in red boxes**. Notations about postally significant covers are **described in blue text** beneath the envelope's description. Covers certified by experts are marked with a "C." The term "known" refers to knowledge gathered by the exhibitor from publications, auction sales, exhibits and exhibitor's own soon-to-be-published philatelic census data.

First Day of Independent Statehood

1853 Nesbitt issue 3-cent
embossed buff envelope

Holly Springs, Mississippi

January 9, 1861



Exhibit Organization

Chapter 1: Independent Statehood Uses of U.S. Postage -- **Pages 1-5**
[January 9 to February 3, 1861]

Chapter 2: Confederate Use of U.S. Postage -- **Pages 6-16**
[February 4 to May 31, 1861]

Chapter 1: Independent Statehood Uses of U.S. Postage

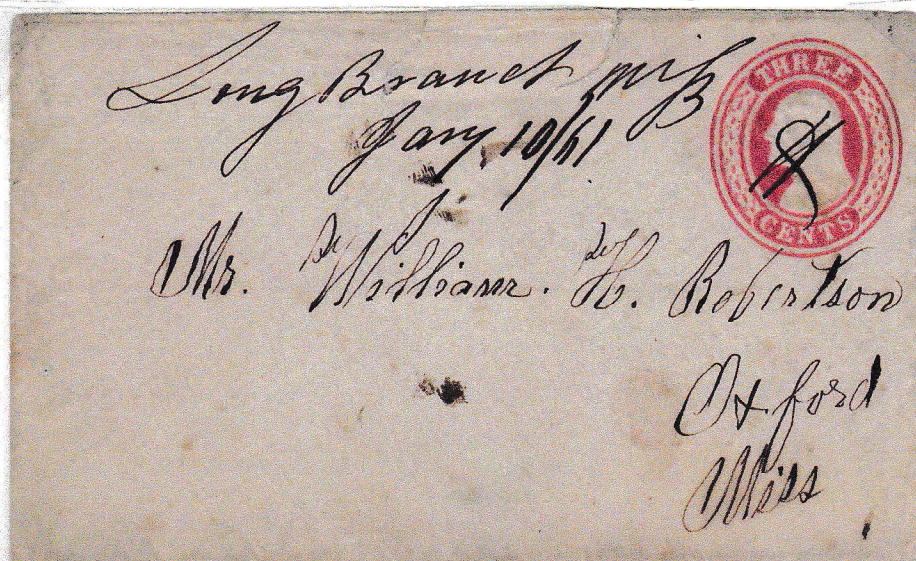
1.1 First Week of Independent Statehood

1853 Nesbitt issue 3-cent embossed
white envelope

Long Branch, Mississippi

January 10, 1861

**Only known cover known from
Long Branch during the
Independent Statehood period.**



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent
embossed stamped buff envelope

Columbus, Mississippi

January 12, 1861

**Only recorded advertising cover
from Columbus during the
Independent Statehood period.**



Black ink PAID and boxed
"3" cent handstamp

Canton, Mississippi

January 13, 1861

**Seldom seen truncated
boxed "3" cent handstamp
was only used in Canton
from late November 1860 to
April 27, 1861.**



1.2 Mid-Month



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent embossed buff envelope

Circle of Wedges cancel

Enterprise, Mississippi

January 16, 1861



U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

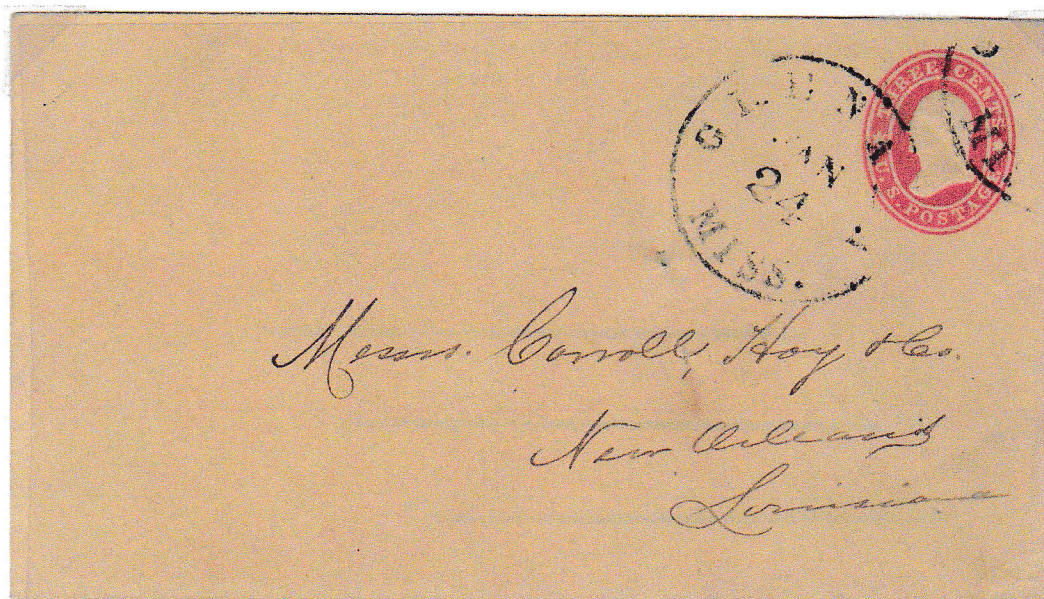
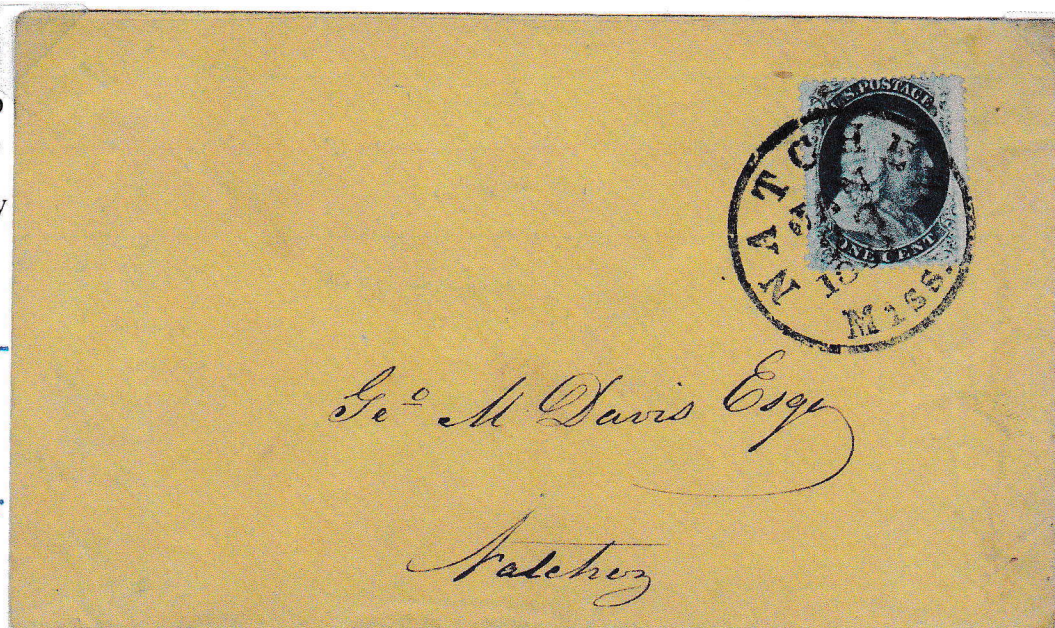
Steamship mail – originating town unknown – received at Natchez, Mississippi, on January 19, 1861, where “STEAM” handstamp was applied to cancel the stamp.

1.2 Mid-Month

U.S. 1857 issue 1-cent stamp
(used for local "Drop Mail")

Natchez, Mississippi, January
23, 1861

**One of two recorded
examples of the 1857 issue 1-
cent stamp used to leave a
letter at the Natchez post
office for another resident.
Earliest 1-cent "drop" cover
known during Independent
Statehood period.**



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue
3-cent embossed stamped
white envelope

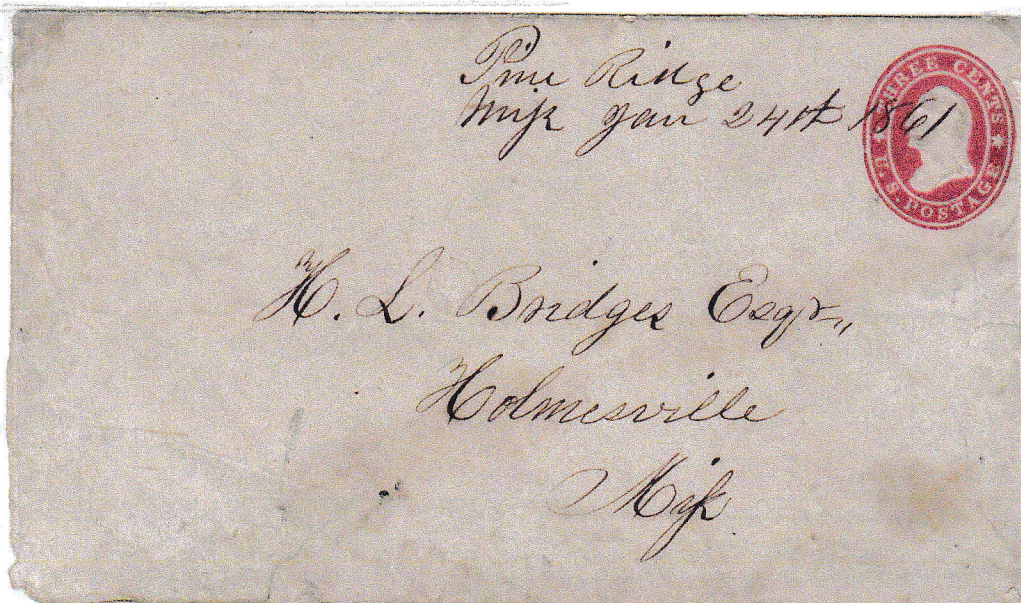
Grenada, Mississippi
January 24, 1861

**One of two recorded
examples of Nesbitt Star
Die covers mailed from
Grenada during the
Independent Statehood
period and the earliest
known use.**

1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue
3-cent embossed stamped
white envelope

Pine Ridge, Mississippi,
January 24, 1861

**Only known cover mailed
from Pine Ridge during the
Independent Statehood
period.**



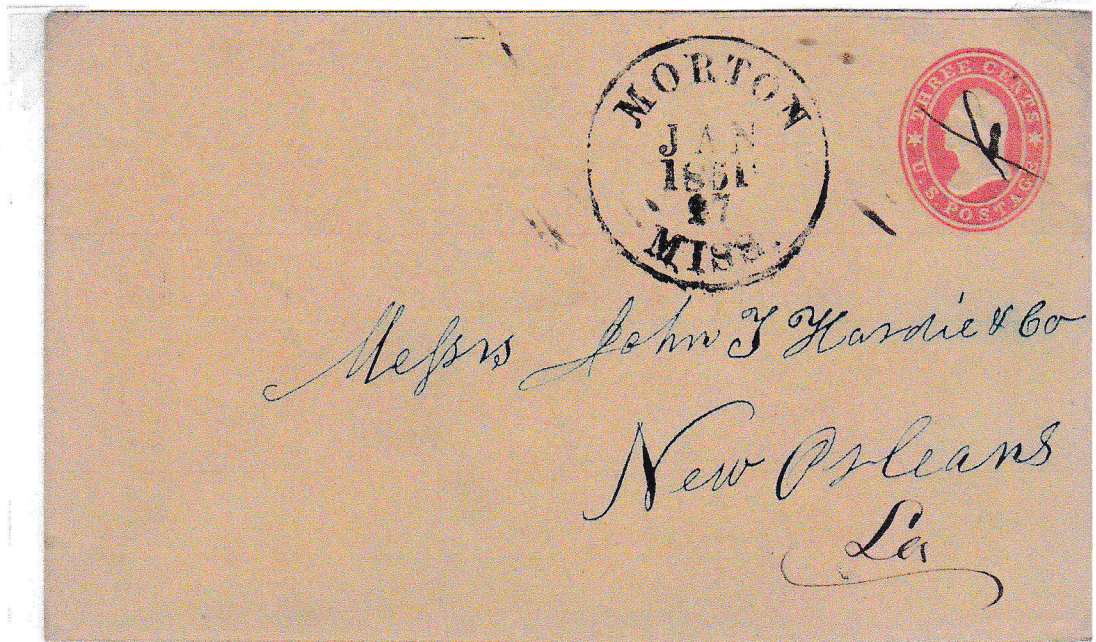
1.3 Final Week of Independent Statehood

1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent
embossed buff envelope

Morton, Mississippi

January 27, 1861

*Incorrect year slug of 1851 inside
circular date stamp. Also, listing
of month-year-day is unusual.*



U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

C

Vaiden, Mississippi

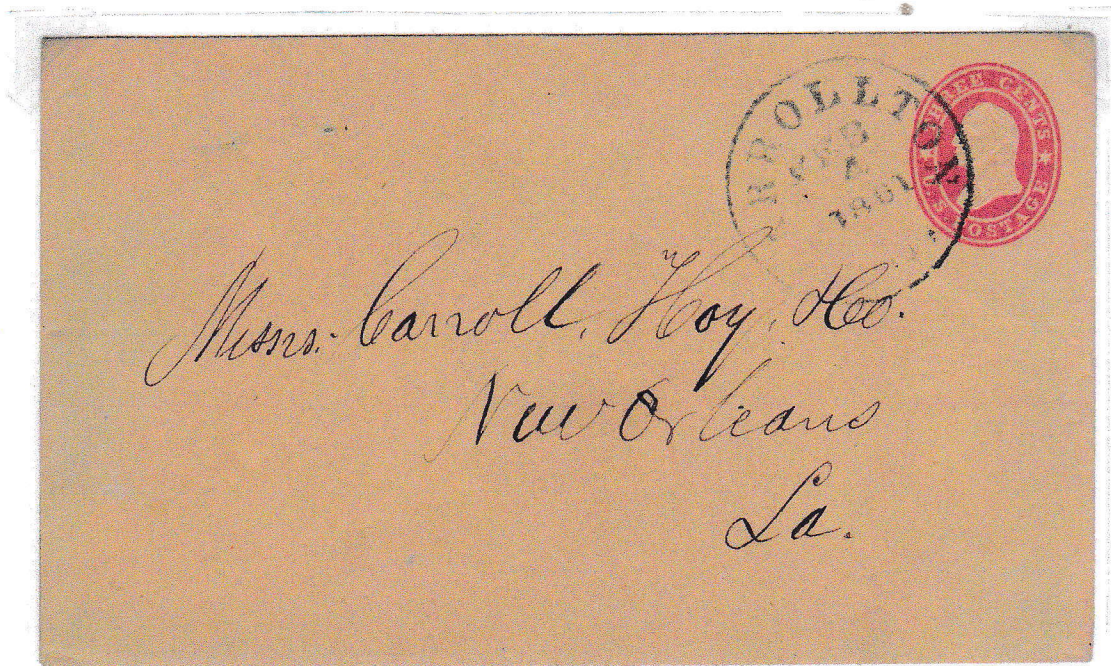
January 28, 1861

Only known Mississippi star statehood patriotic cover mailed during the Independent Statehood period. Fewer than five of these Mississippi star covers have survived from the entire Civil War period.

Chapter 2: Confederate Use of U.S. Postage

2.1 First Week as a Confederate State

First Day of
Confederate Use



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent embossed stamped buff envelope

Carrollton, Mississippi

February 4, 1861



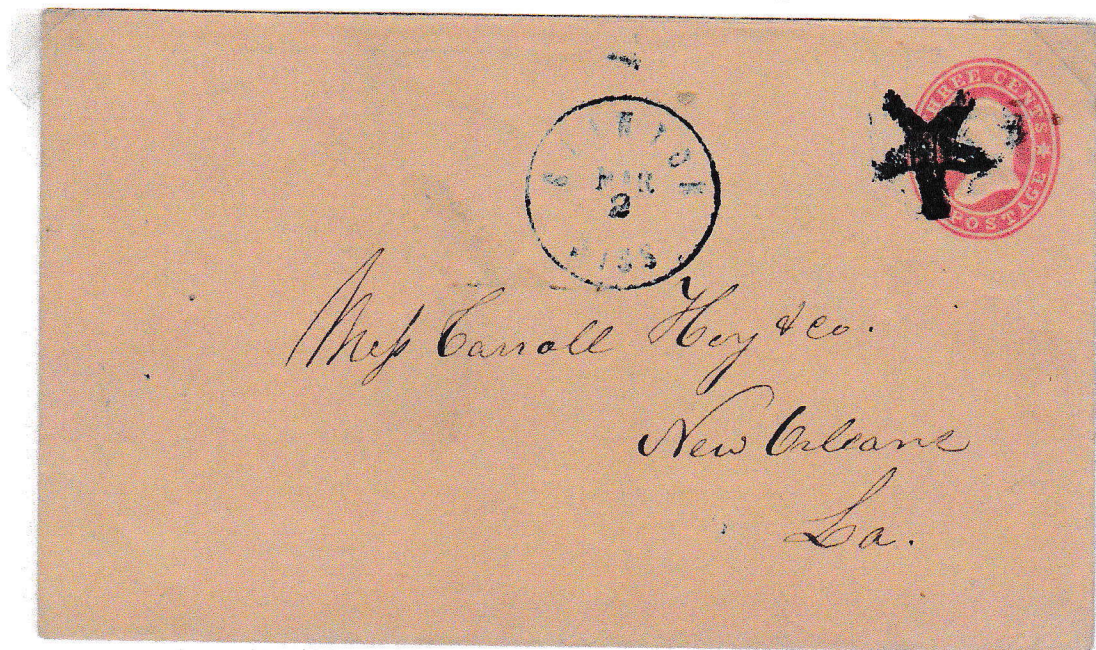
Strip of three U.S. 1857 issue 1-cent stamps

Circle of Wedges cancel

Enterprise, Mississippi

February 9, 1861

2.2 Star Cancels



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent embossed stamped buff envelope

Clinton, Mississippi, March 2, 1861

Blue ink star handstamp canceled the Nesbitt Star Die. Clinton was one of six Mississippi post offices that used blue ink.

1853 Nesbitt 3-cent embossed stamped buff envelope

Canton, Mississippi, February 13, 1861

Black ink "twisted rope" star canceled the Nesbitt entire. The cover carried a valentine to Alabama.

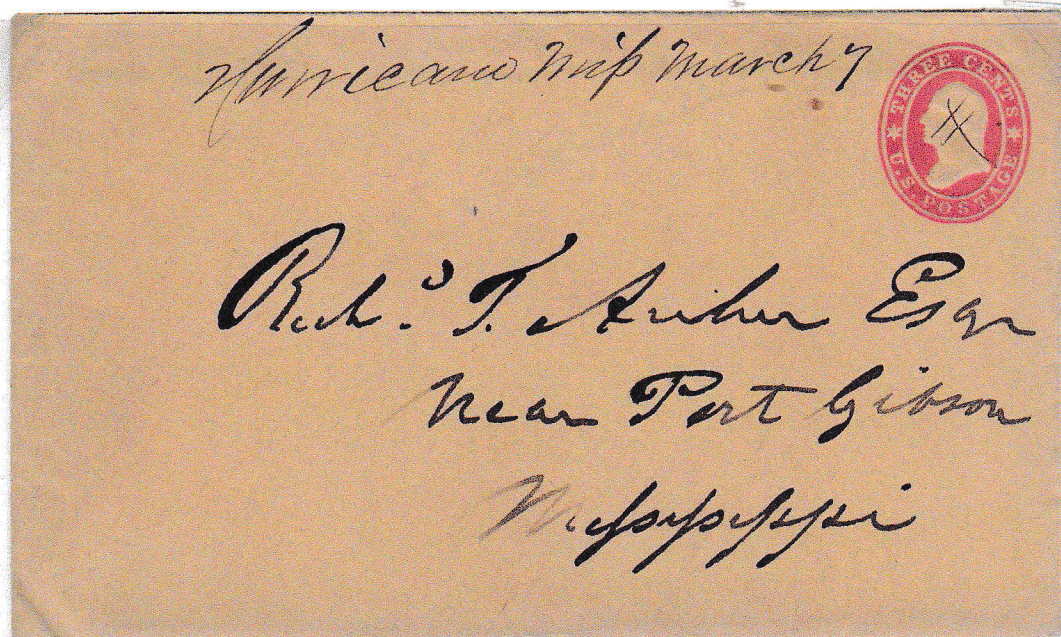


2.3 Obscure Mississippi Towns

1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent
embossed stamped buff envelope

Hurricane, Mississippi, March 7, 1861

**Only known Confederate cover
from Hurricane.**



Hopson Miss
Feb 16

Messrs Carroll Hogg & Co
New Orleans La



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent
embossed stamped buff envelope

Hopson, Mississippi, February 16, 1861

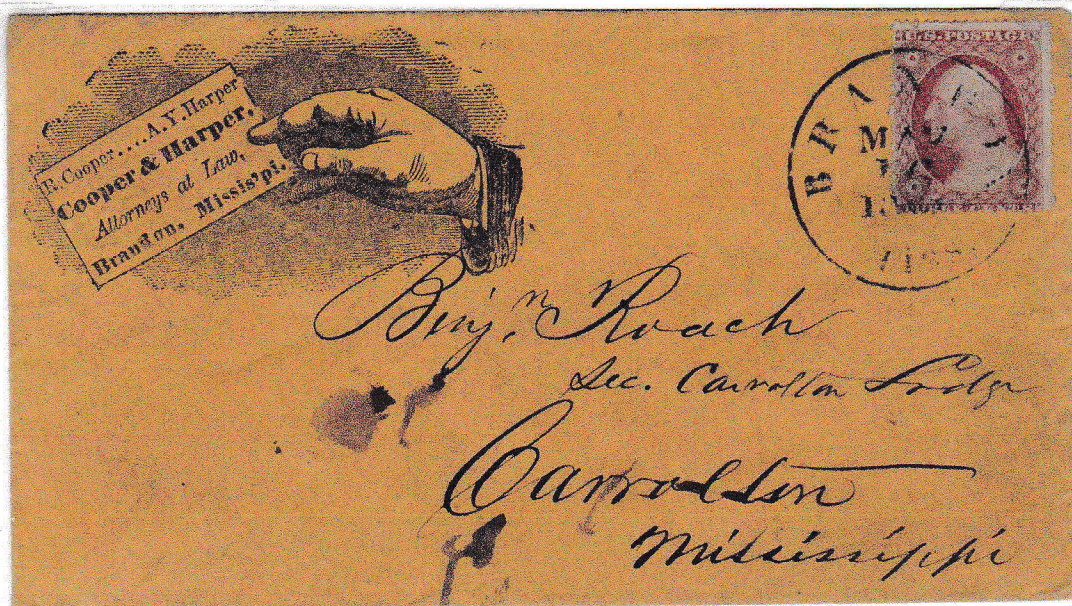
1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent
embossed stamped buff envelope

Doolittle Station, Mississippi

Letter accompanying is dated
March 10, 1861



2.4 Advertising Covers



U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent
stamp

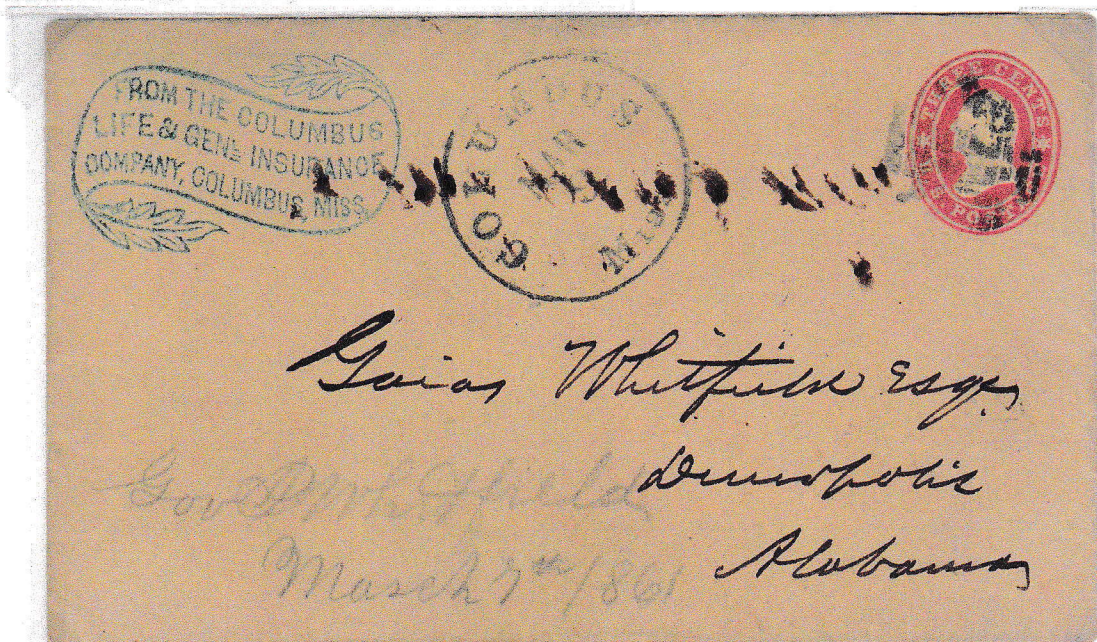
Brandon, Mississippi

May 16, 1861

1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue
3-cent embossed stamped
buff envelope

Columbus, Mississippi
March 9, 1861

Only recorded surviving
BLUE stencil advertising
cover from the Columbus
Life & General Insurance
Company mailed in the
Confederate era.



REYNOLDS, STEVENS & CO.
DEALERS IN
General Merchandise,
BRANDON, Miss.

John C. McKinnon Esq.
Raleigh
Miss

U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent
stamp

Brandon, Mississippi

May 8, 1861

2.5 Patriotic Covers



U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Aberdeen, Mississippi

March 23, 1861

Mississippi Confederate State Seal in upper left corner has "Mississippi" printed in tiny type above the single star and "Jan. 9, 1861" in the frame below the images. Illustration shows a steamboat, a train, cotton bolls and large wheels to represent the state's industry and economy.



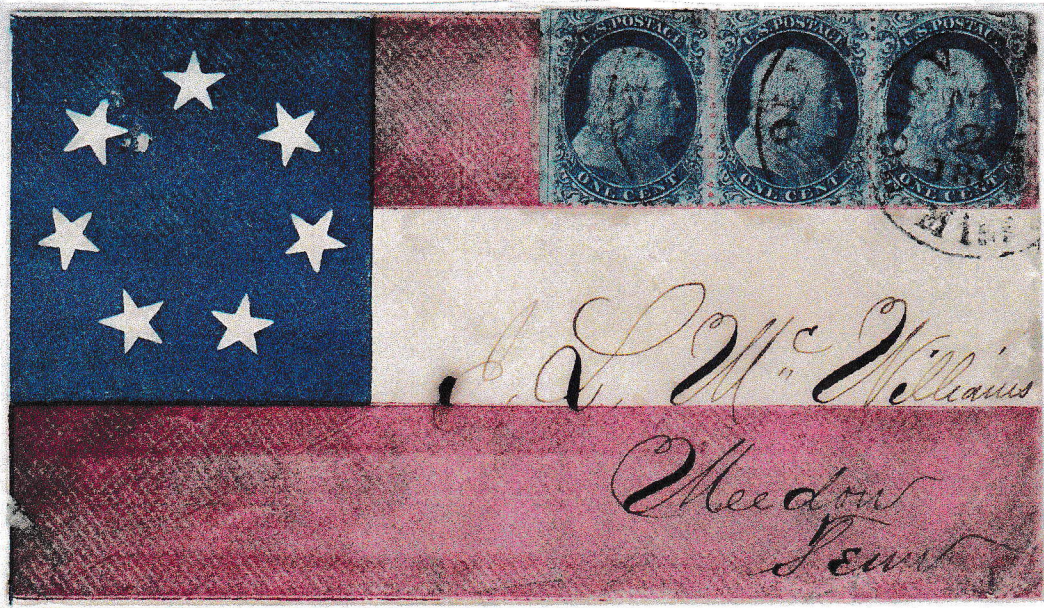
U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Vicksburg, Mississippi

April 24, 1861

Unusual patriotic design with fewer than five known. Upper left corner shows two flags, both with a single star and the right flag with a palmetto tree. Eight stars are in the sunburst at the top. The elaborate allegorical illustration at bottom shows wheat stalks, a train crossing a bridge, a cotton bolls, and cotton buds to symbolize the South's economy.

2.5 Flag Patriotic Covers



Strip of three U.S. 1857
issue 1-cent stamps

Holly Springs,
Mississippi

March 25, 1861.

Overall cover design of
the first national flag of
the Confederacy with
seven stars for the first
seven states to join.

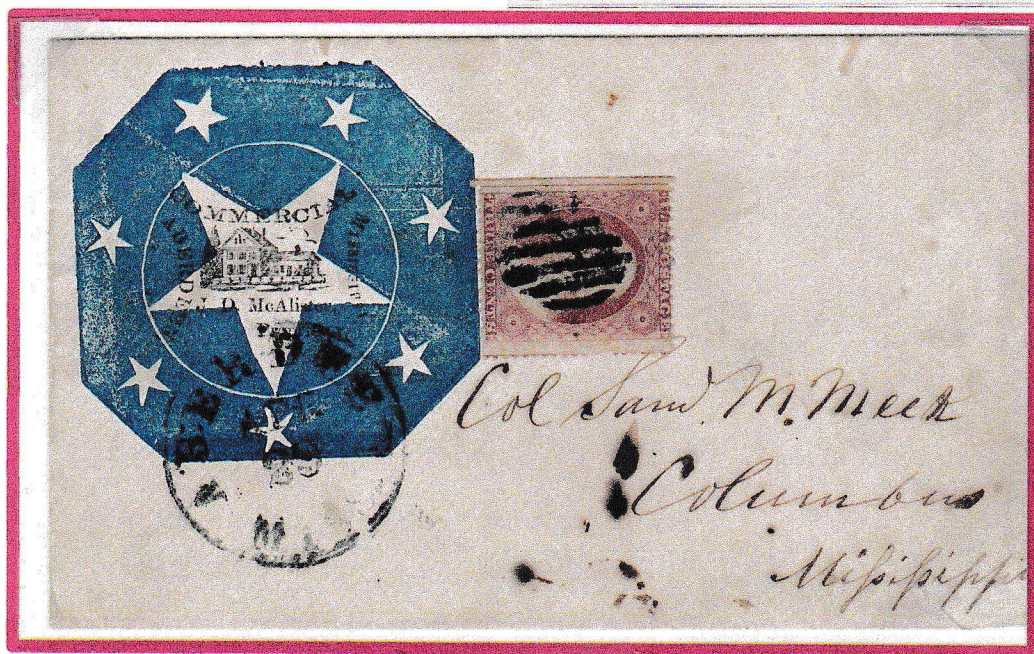
Black ink PAID and boxed "3"
cent handstamps

Canton, Mississippi

Seldom seen truncated boxed "3"
cent handstamp was only used
from late November 1860 to
April 27, 1861.



C



U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Aberdeen, Mississippi, April
29, 1861

Only known example of this
8-star patriotic design used in
the Confederacy.

2.6 Republic of Mississippi



Miss Julia A. Adams
Lower Bank
Burlington Co.
New Jersey

U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Natchez, Mississippi, February 26, 1861

Letter (photocopy) is datelined "Republic of Mississippi / Natchez / February 20th/61."

Republic of Mississippi Natchez February 20th/61

Dear Darling Dearest Judge

Will you forgive me for leaving your letter



1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent embossed stamped buff envelope

Byhalia, Mississippi, March 11, 1861

Letter (photocopy) is datelined "Republic of Mississippi / March 10/61."

Miss Martha Harris
Lisbon Bedford
Virginia

Republic of Miss
March 10/61

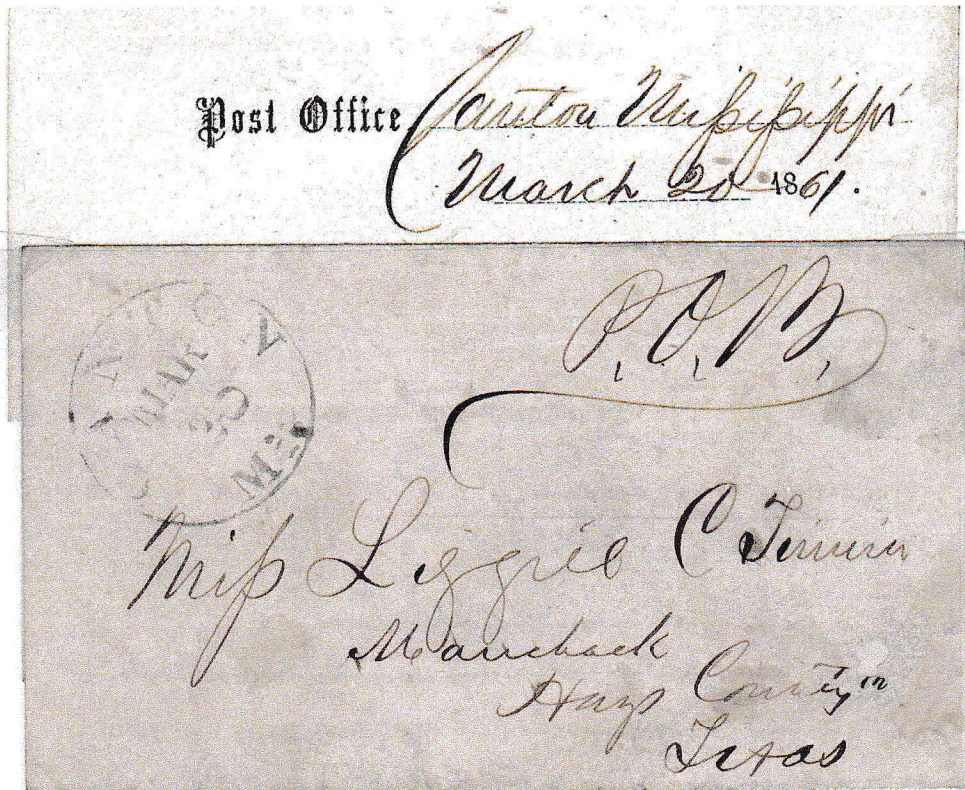
Miss Martha C. Harris

Dear Aunt

I've been

very delinquent in duty toward you

2.7 Official Business Uses

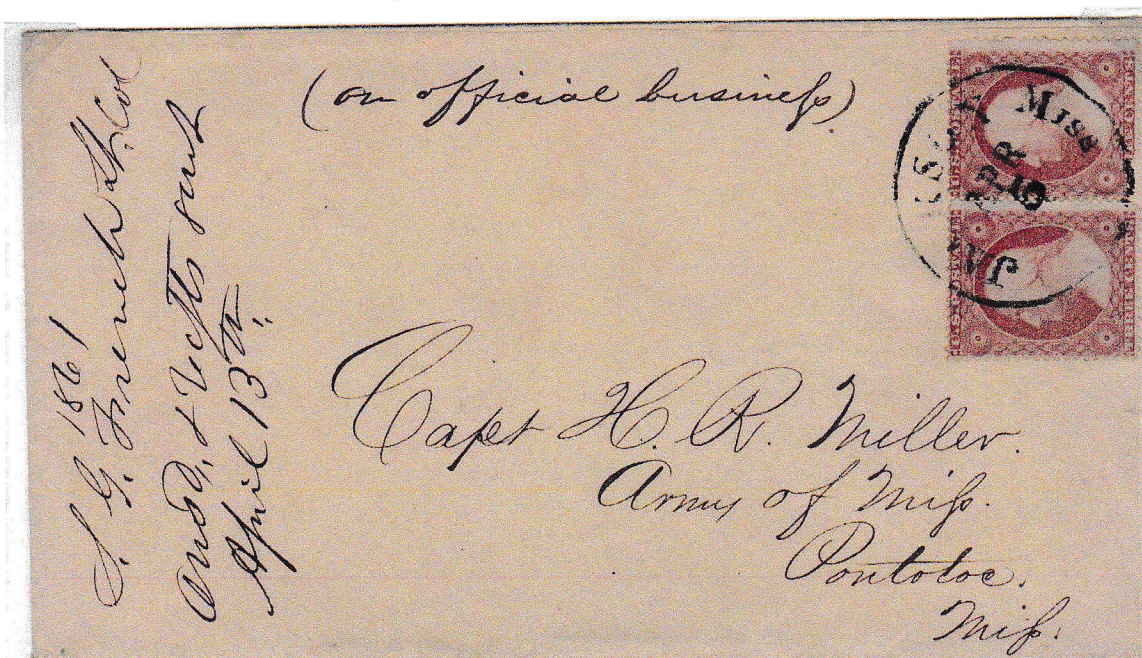


U.S. Post Office Department form mailed FREE with manuscript
"P.O.B."

Canton, Mississippi

March 20, 1861

Very few of these USPOD forms used in Southern states have survived. This cover is the only one known with a manuscript P.O.B. (Post Office Business) from Canton.



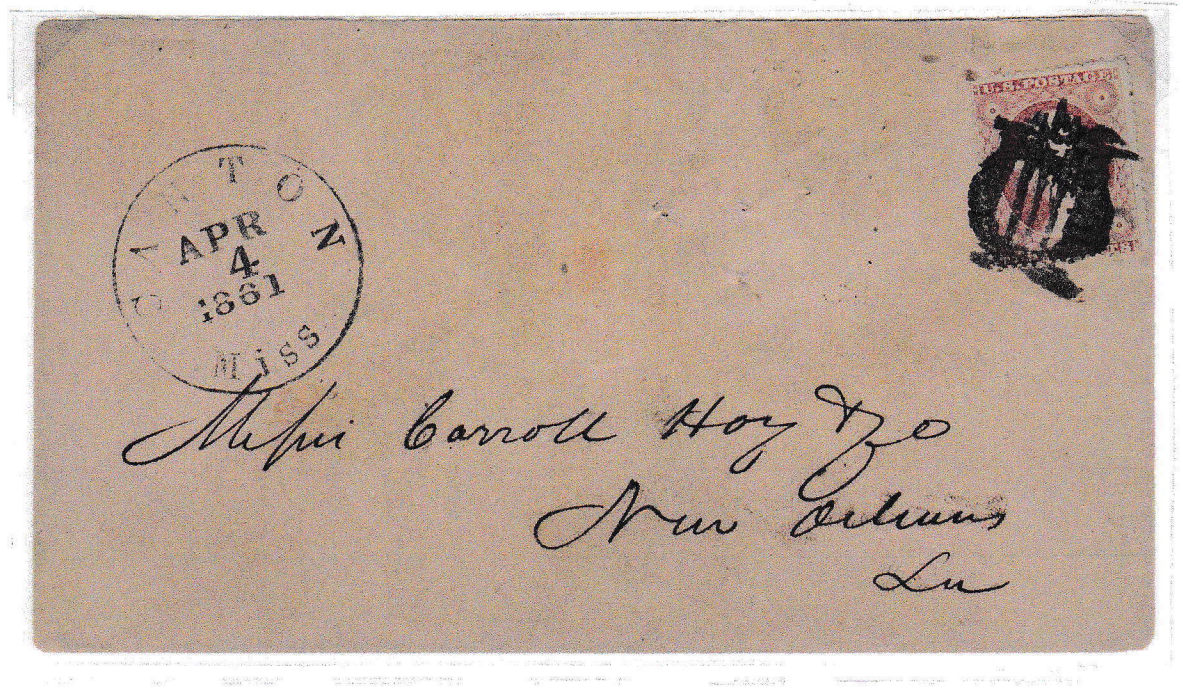
Pair of U.S. 1857 3-cent
stamps

Jackson, Mississippi

April 5, 1861

Invalid manuscript notation by sender "on official business," which only applied to official Post Office mailings, so the Army officer had to buy two stamps to send his letter.

2.8 Fancy Cancels

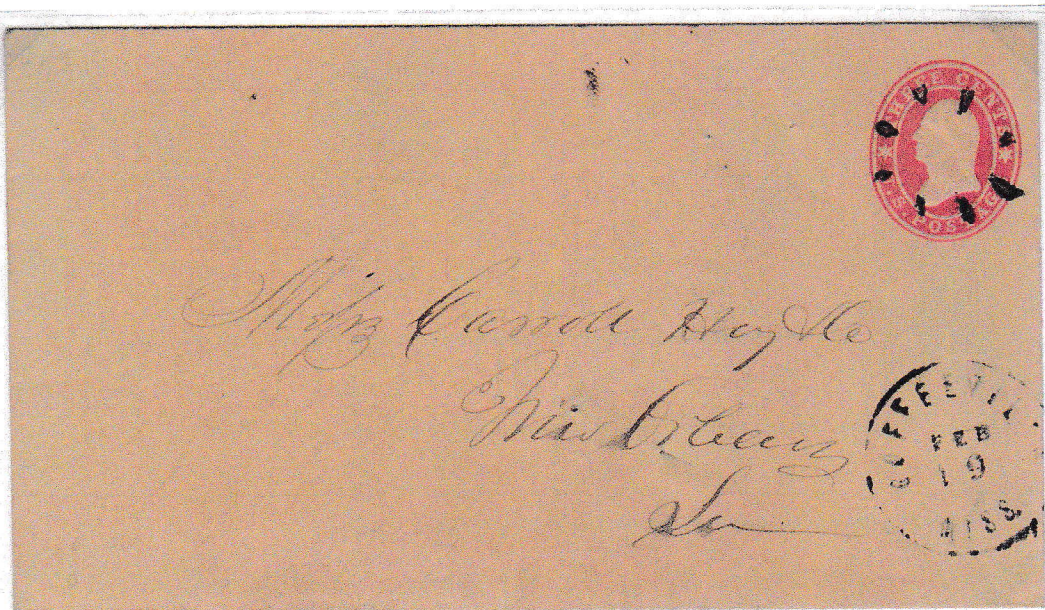


Canton Lyre

U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Canton, Mississippi

April 4, 1861



Coffeeville Circle of Wedges

1860 Nesbitt Star Die issue 3-cent embossed
stamped buff envelope

Coffeeville, Mississippi

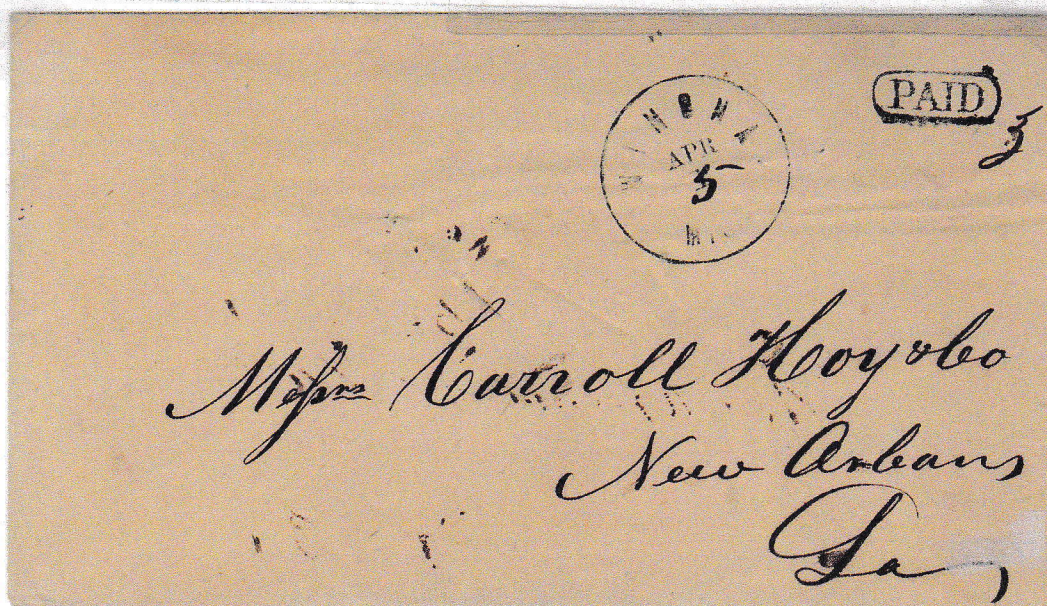
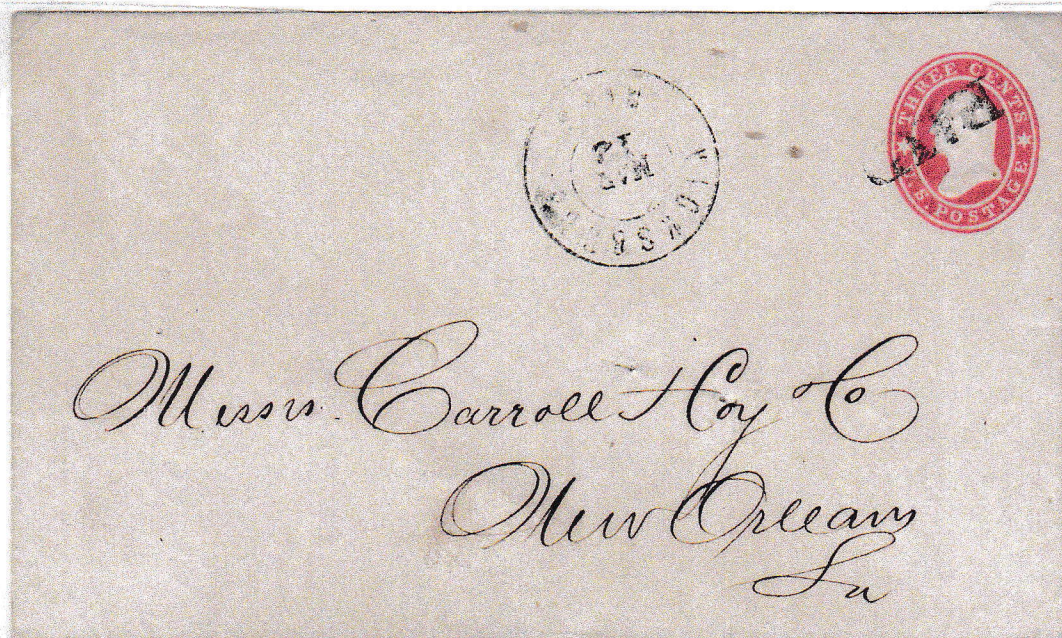
February 19, 1861

2.9 PAID Handstamps

U.S. 1860 Nesbitt Star Die
issue 3-cent embossed
stamped white envelope
with PAID over the Nesbitt

Vicksburg, Mississippi

March 12, 1861



Black ink boxed PAID
handstamp

Manuscript "3" cents
notation of postage paid

Winona, Mississippi

April 5, 1861

3-cent PAID Postmaster
Provisional handstamp

Jackson, Mississippi

May 25, 1861

Some local postmasters prepared
stamped envelopes in advance to
later sell to customers. These are
known as "Postmasters'
Provisionals."

This cover is one of four
recorded surviving examples of
the Jackson postmaster
provisional.



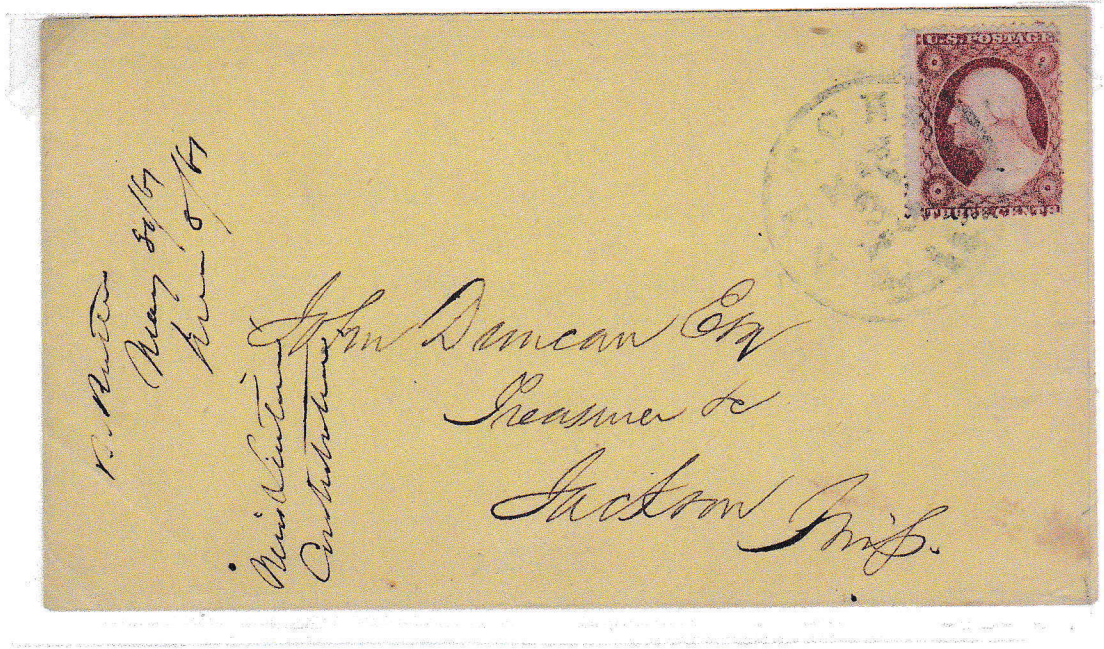
2.10 Final Day Confederate States Could Use U.S. Postage

U.S. 1857 issue 3-cent stamp

Natchez, Mississippi

May 31, 1861

This cover was mailed on the last day that U.S. postage was allowed in the Confederacy.



Epilogue



3-cent U.S. Postmaster's Provisional envelope revalued with 5-cent and 10-cent Confederate Provisional handstamps

Jackson, Mississippi

June 24, 1861

This cover illustrates the confusion at the start of the Confederate postal system. The postmaster had a pre-paid provisional envelope with the 3-cent U.S. rate, then revalued the envelope with the new 5-cent Confederate rate, and then revalued it a second time to 10 cents as the cover was traveling more than 500 miles. Only recorded example of this double revaluation.