

# DISRUPTION OF MAILS

CSA 1861—South

Inauguration of Confederate Postal System

The CSA postal system officially commenced operation on 1 June 1861, at which point all post offices were required to collect CSA postage on mail and remit receipts to the CSA Post Office Department. Covers show CSA rates of 5¢ for distance up to 500 miles and 10¢ over 500 miles.



Pensacola FL, 1 June 1861, with "Paid" and "5" cents CSA rate to Belmont AL.

Pensacola FL, 1 June 1861, with "Paid" and "5" cents CSA rate crossed out and re-rated "10" to Norfolk VA.



The above covers illustrate both the 5¢ and 10¢ rates used on the first day of CSA postal service, with both originating in the same Florida city.

*Bottom cover the only recorded example with the re-rating to 10¢*



Evergreen LA, 1 June 1861, balloon-style circular date stamp in red with matching straightline "PAID" handstamp to New Orleans on red and blue 10-star Confederate Patriotic design.

# DISRUPTION OF MAILS

## US/CSA 1861—North and South

## Demonetization of US Stamps

The termination of US mails in the South and the start of the CSA's own postal system left both sides with the need to replace postage stamps used before the war. The US acted quickly by printing and distributing the new 1861 series and demonetizing all of the previous issues. Post offices in several cities used hand-stamped markings to indicate "Old Stamps Not Recognized." In the CSA the attempted use of old US stamps was also disallowed.

US Rejection  
of Old Stamp



CSA Rejection  
of Old Stamps



Harrisburg PA datestamp with "OLD STAMPS NOT RECOGNIZED" and "DUE 3" handstamps; US 3¢ 1857 stamp was no longer valid for postage.



Nashville 4 June 1861 (still in Union as of this date) with US 3¢ 1857 stamp rejected by New Orleans post office and marked "due 10" for CSA postage over 500 miles owed by addressee.

New York 29 May 1861 with US 3¢ 1857 stamp rejected by Columbus post office and marked "DUE 5" in circle for CSA postage under 500 miles.



*There are fewer than ten known southbound across-the-lines covers with CSA postage due*

# DISRUPTION OF MAILS

US/CSA 1861—North and South

Demonetization of US Stamps

Similar to the Harrisburg example presented on the prior page, Philadelphia also used an “Old Stamps Not Recognized” handstamp to indicate demonetization of old stamps no longer valid for postage. However, demonetization did not apply to old stamps when used to prepay the 1¢ carrier fee, as shown by the usages presented here.

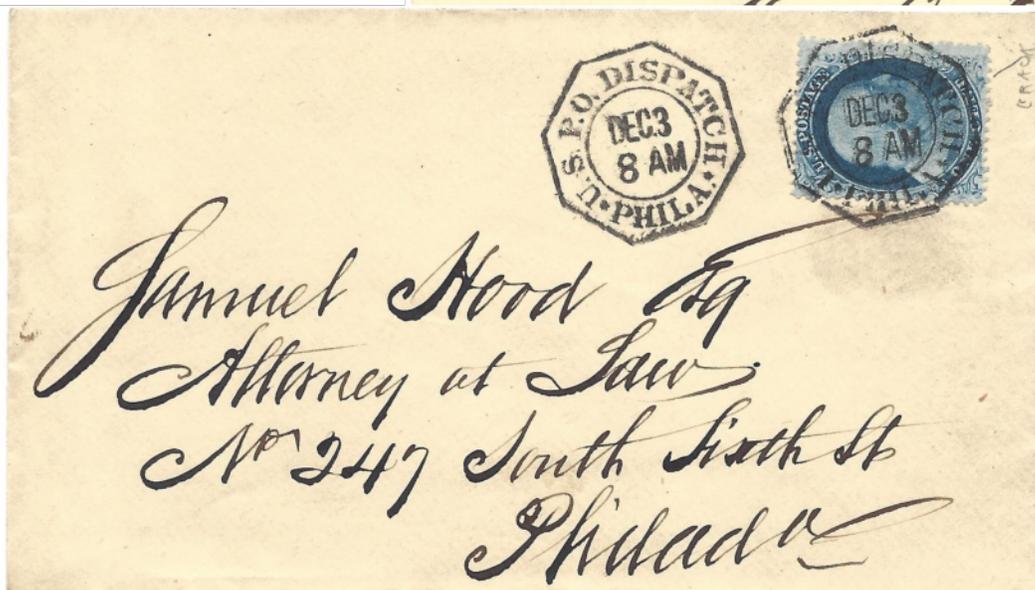


3¢ red US star die buff entire to Fort Pickens Fla. bearing US 1¢ 1857, type II, cancelled by "OLD STAMPS / NOT RECOGNIZED" two-line handstamp with "Due 3" straightline handstamp, 16 August 1861.

The exchange period for postal stationery in Philadelphia was August 8-14, 1861, and prior postal stationery issues were no longer accepted for postage afterwards.

*The earliest recorded use of the Philadelphia "OLD STAMPS / NOT RECOGNIZED" handstamp*

Red and blue Union patriotic envelope, Philadelphia 9 September 1861 to Howard PA with US 3¢ 1861 (new stamp) and US 1¢ 1857, type I (old stamp), paying the carrier fee.



U.S.P.O. Dispatch Phila., Dec 3, 8 AM datestamp ties US 1¢, type V, to local Philadelphia address; docketing on back dated 1861, indicating late acceptance of the demonetized 1¢ 1857 issue by Philadelphia for carrier use.

# DISRUPTION OF MAILS

US/CSA 1861—South

US and CSA Dead Letter Offices

On 27 May 1861, the Union Post Office Department ordered the suspension of all mail service in the seceded states, effective May 31, and southbound letters to suspended southern post offices were to be forwarded to the US Dead Letter Office (DLO) in Washington DC. At the DLO, the diverted mail was opened to ascertain the sender's address, which was written on the face. The diverted letters were then postmarked before being returned to the sender and marked for return postage due.



## US Dead Letter Office

New York NY to  
Memphis TN, 5 June  
1861 cds ties US 3¢ 1857,  
with "Dead Letter Office/  
P.O. Dpt./Jul 6/1861"  
double-oval and "DUE 3  
cts" straightline  
handstamps applied at the  
DLO in Washington.

Until 23 May 1861, mail between the United States to eastern CSA states was normally carried on the Washington DC/Richmond route. The Federal occupation of Alexandria VA closed this route on May 24, and from this time until June 1, northbound letters - including both intra-CSA and attempted across-the-lines mail - were diverted to the CSA DLO in Richmond. Upon the June 1 commencement of the CSA postal system, Richmond began to forward mail from the eastern CSA to the US via the Nashville-Louisville across-the-lines route instead of diverting it to the CSA DLO. The very short period during which mail was diverted to the CSA DLO makes these covers rare.

## CSA Dead Letter Office

Jacksonville FL 23 February  
(1861) cds ties US 3¢ 1857  
on folded letter to Hampton  
VA, forwarded to  
Richmond with manuscript  
"forwd" and blue "Hampton  
Va. Mar. 1" cds. When  
unclaimed in Richmond, it  
was struck with the  
"ADVERTISED" oval  
handstamp and "Richmond  
Va. Mar. 8, 1861" cds, and  
then sent to the CSA DLO  
and marked in magenta  
manuscript "P.O. Dept.  
Dead Letter Office, 19  
Aug. 1861 H, 52-1".



One of approximately 10 known Confederate Dead Letter Office covers according to the Special Routes book. This is a Confederate use of U.S. postage from Florida, sent to Virginia before the state seceded on April 17, and is the only known example from Florida

# DISRUPTION OF MAILS

CSA/US 1861—South to North

“Southern Letter Unpaid” Mail

Approximately four months after the formation of the CSA, on 27 May 1861, the US Post Office Department suspended postal service in the seceded Southern states. However, the government mails from seceded states continued to be carried north via Nashville and Louisville after the commencement of the CSA postal system on 1 June 1861. Since US postage applied by CSA postmasters was considered contraband, the Louisville postmaster (Dr. John J. Speed) was instructed to “remove” the stamps and mark the letters unpaid. As a practical solution to invalidate postage on the approximate 5,000 accumulated letters, Dr. Speed employed the “SOUTH. LETTER UNPAID” handstamp, usually in combination with the “DUE 3” handstamp and a Louisville datestamp. The *Special Routes* book records 29 known covers.

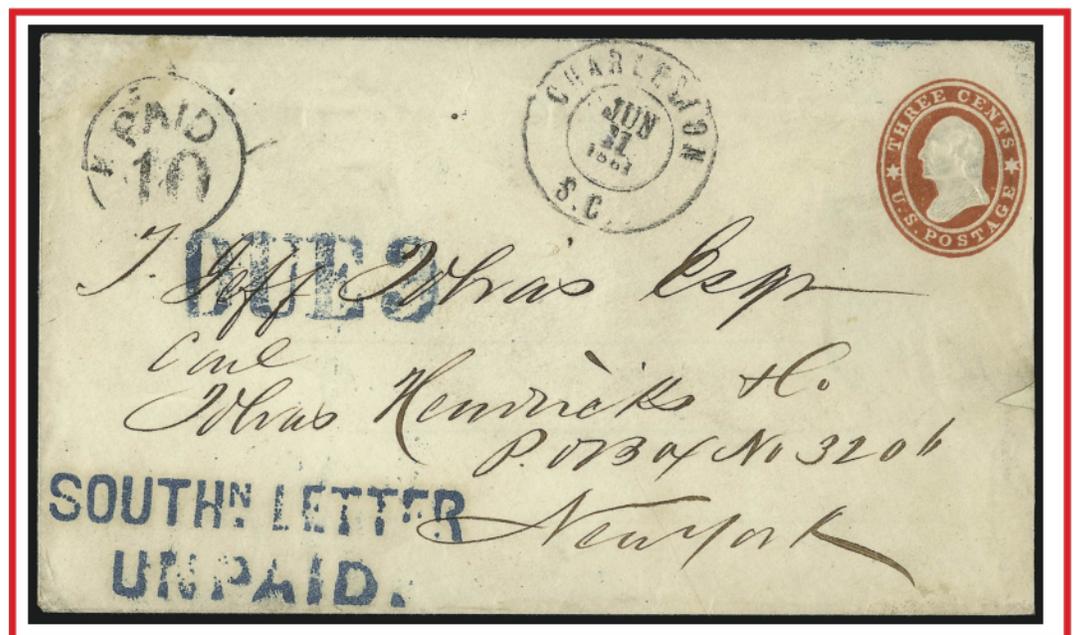


New Orleans 10 June (1861) datestamp and blue crayon "10" for prepaid CSA postage; manuscript "15" (cents) applied in US and "8" decimes due handstamp applied in France; US 3¢ 1857 and US 12¢ 1860 tied by a combination of handstamps; blue "SOUTH. LETTER UNPAID" handstamp applied at Louisville.

Unlike the domestic cover below, no “DUE” marking was applied because the US-France treaty permitted unpaid letters to travel through the US mails with no postage due until arrival in France.

**One of two recorded “Southern Letter Unpaid” covers bearing the US 12¢ 1860 issue and one of only five to a foreign destination**

Charleston 11 June 1861 datestamp and “PAID 10” CSA rate handstamp on US 3¢ Star Die envelope to New York City; blue “SOUTH. LETTER UNPAID” and “DUE 3” handstamps applied at Louisville.



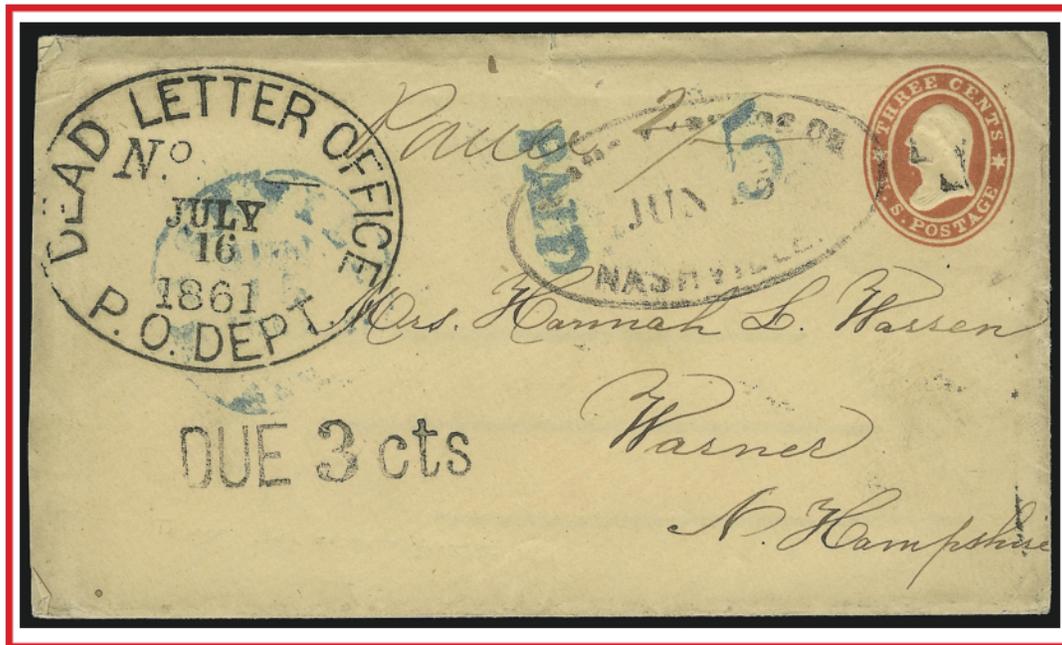
**One of only two recorded “Southern Letter Unpaid” covers from Charleston**

## DISRUPTION OF MAILS

CSA/US 1861—South to North

Diverted to US Dead Letter Office

Adams Express Company began advertising its across-the-line service on 22 June 1861, but they had been carrying mail for months prior to that announcement. After the US Post Office Department declared the termination of government mail service in seceded states, US postage on letters from the South was considered invalid contraband. Adams Express appears to have overcome the problem by applying (or re-applying) US stamps at Louisville. However, the procedure was not fully implemented in mid-June, as the cover shown here demonstrates.



Nashville 15 June 1861 blue datestamp with “PAID” and “5” CSA rate on US 3¢ Star Die envelope addressed to Warner NH; black “ADAMS EXPRESS CO./NASHVILLE/JUN 15” oval datestamp and manuscript “Paid 2/-” (two bits, or 25¢) express charge; the Star Die envelope was considered invalid, diverted to US Dead Letter Office and released 16 July with oval datestamp and “DUE 3 cts” marking for US postage.

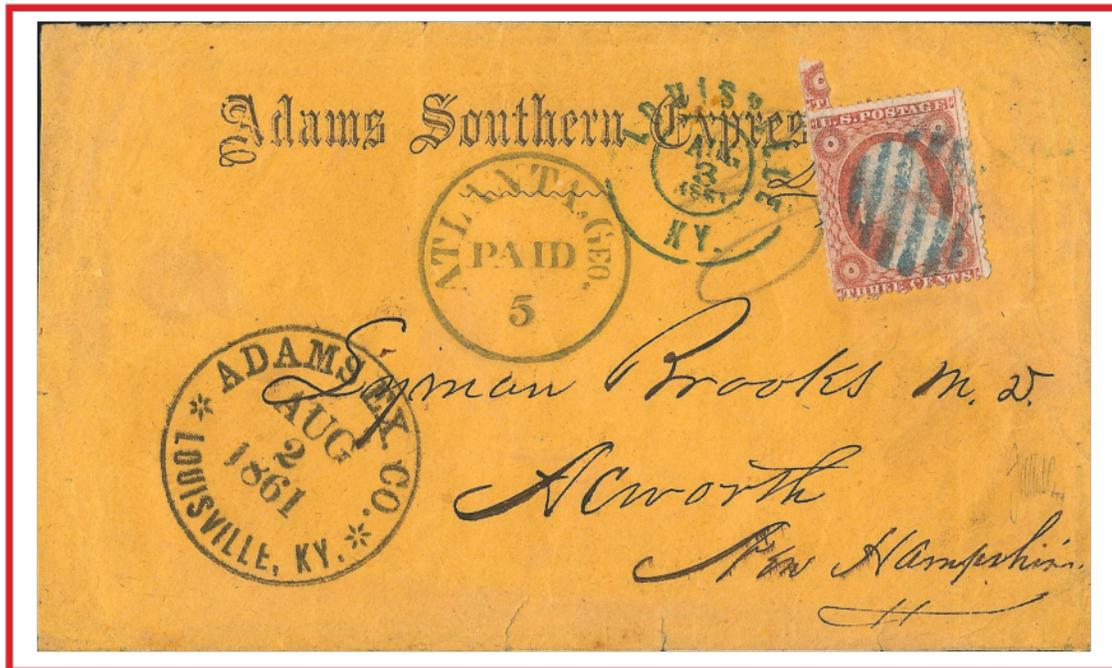
*The only example of a Civil War express cover diverted to the United States Dead Letter Office, according to the Special Routes book*

One of the two letters enclosed in this cover states: “So much information is sent to our enemies by private letters to friends, falling into the hands of treacherous agents & postmasters, that our government has resolved to stop mails between here.”

After the government mail routes were closed in early June 1861, the transportation of mails across the lines between the CSA and the US was facilitated exclusively by private express companies. Louisville and Nashville served as the primary conduit for express mail, and the largest operator by far was the Adams Express Company, followed by the American Letter Express Company and Whiteside's Express. A ban on all commercial exchange, including express mail, was proclaimed by President Lincoln, effective 26 August 1861.

CSA/US 1861—South to North

Adams Express Company—Atlanta



“Adams Southern Express” printed envelope with Atlanta postmaster’s provisional handstamp for 5¢ CSA postage to Nashville; carried to Nashville and across the lines to Louisville by Adams Express with Louisville 2 August 1861 datestamp; US 3¢ stamp applied by Adams at Louisville and entered US mails to Acworth NH on 3 August with blue Louisville datestamp and grid.

*One of two recorded express covers with the Atlanta postmaster’s provisional*

**THE ADAMS EXPRESS COMPANY,**  
S. A. JONES, AGENT,  
LOUISVILLE, KY.,

Will forward letters to the Confederate States when the following directions are observed:

Enclose each letter in a U. S. GOVERNMENT ENVELOPE—an ordinary envelope with a stamp affixed **will not answer**. The Company will forward AND DELIVER at any point where it has an office, or will mail as near as possible to the point of address, paying Confederate postage, for a fee of 25 cents.

The rate here given is for letters not exceeding  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. in weight; each  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. being charged 3 cents by U. S. Government, and 25 cents by the Express Company.

Adams Express attached labels to the back of northbound letters to provide instructions for mailing letters from the North to the South. Label removed from back of cover prior to acquisition to illustrate.

Southbound letters were to be sent to Adams’ Louisville office in a US government envelope; the express charge of 25¢ included CSA postage.

Northbound letters from the CSA were mailed to Nashville, carried by express to Louisville where the Adams agent applied US postage and mailed them.

# ACROSS THE LINES

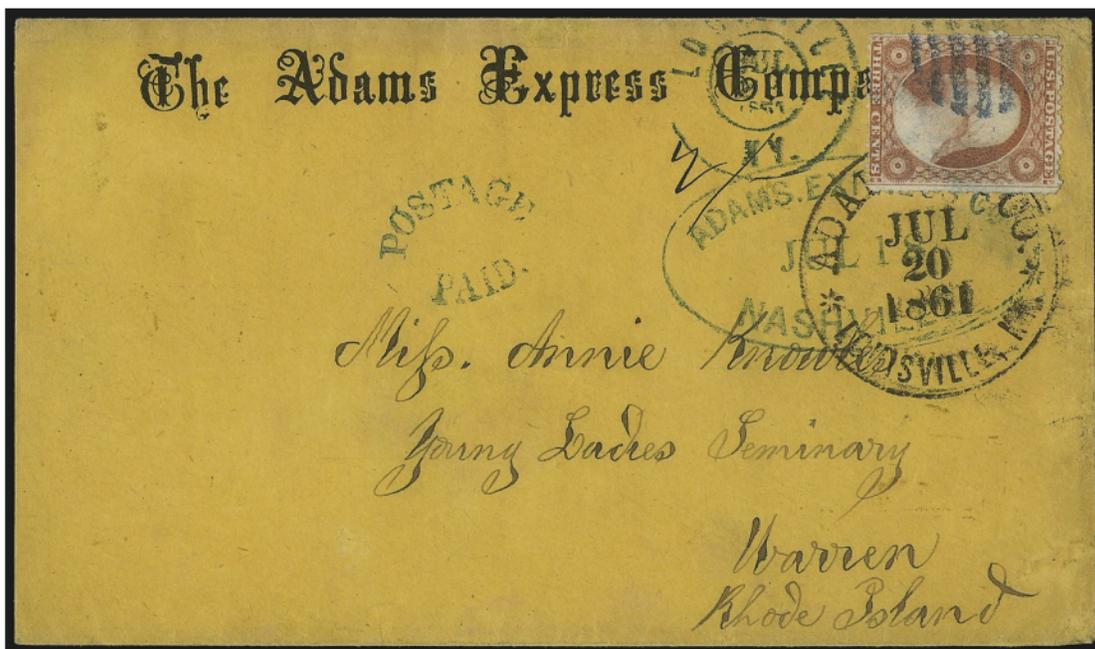
CSA/US 1861—South to North

Adams Express—Louisville and Nashville



Originated in Lynchburg VA with “Paid 10” for CSA rate to Nashville and US 3¢ 1857 stamp at upper right; carried by Adams Express to Nashville and across the lines to Louisville with 18 August 1861 datestamp; “Paid 2/ 6/C” express charge (two bits, or 25¢), original 3¢ stamp cancelled by Adams and another 3¢ stamp affixed on top and cancelled by Louisville post office with 20 August datestamp and grid.

*Three across-the-lines express covers originating in Lynchburg are recorded in Special Routes*



“The Adams Express Company” imprint envelope to Young Ladies Seminary at Warren VT with Adams Express Co. Nashville 18 July 1861 blue oval datestamp and “Postage Paid” handstamp (5¢ CSA rate); manuscript “2/” express charge (two bits, or 25¢); Adams Louisville 20 July datestamp partly covered by US 3¢ 1857 stamp affixed by Adams and cancelled by Louisville 22 July datestamp and grid.

The “Postage Paid” handstamp was used exclusively at Nashville CSA post office.

# ACROSS THE LINES

US/CSA 1861—North to South

Adams Express—New York City and Boston



Adams Express  
New York office  
backstamp

Adams Express used its transportation network to carry mail to its offices in the CSA—in this case from New York City to Augusta GA where Adams blue oval 16 July 1861 datestamp was applied on US 3¢ Star Die envelope; entered CSA mails with Augusta 16 July datestamp and “PAID 10” CSA rate to Fayetteville NC.

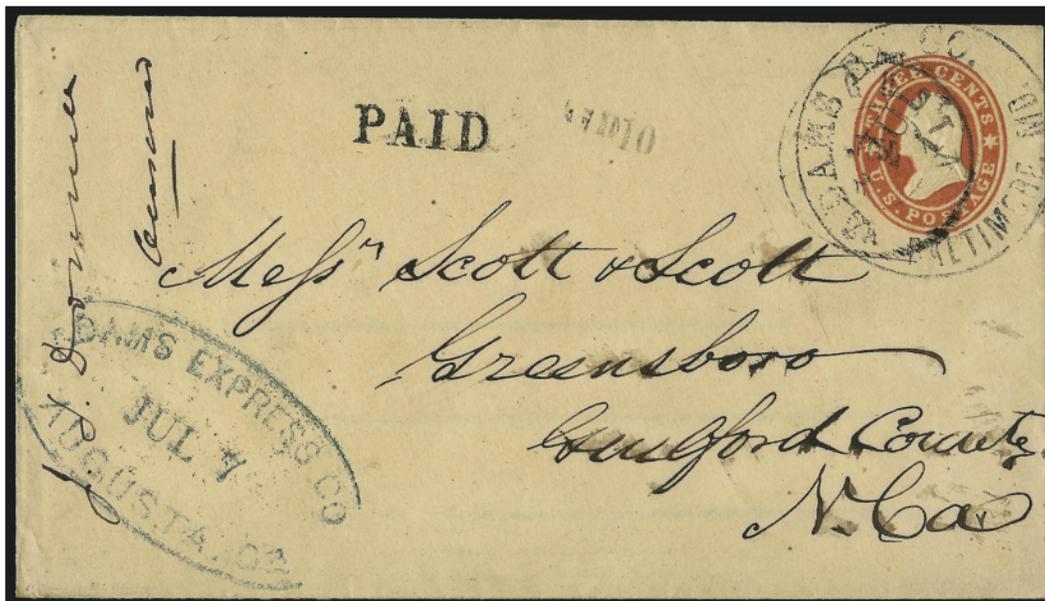


Adams Boston 11 July 1861 datestamp and “PAID J.W.R.” double-circle handstamp applied to US 3¢ Star Die envelope by J. W. Richardson, the Adams agent in Boston, with manuscript rate (“25” cents); carried by Adams to Richmond without any evidence of CSA post office involvement.

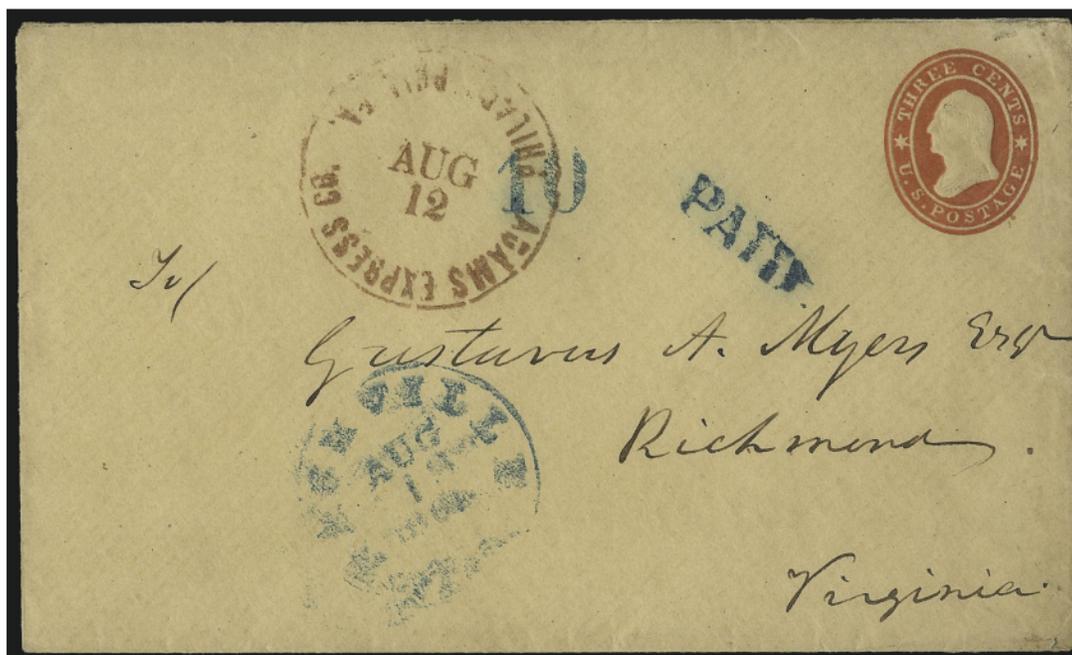
# ACROSS THE LINES

US/CSA 1861—North to South

Adams Express—Baltimore and Philadelphia



Adams Baltimore 1 July 1861 datestamp on US 3¢ Star Die envelope to Greensboro NC; Adams Augusta GA blue oval 7 July datestamp; entered CSA mails with Augusta 8 July datestamp and “PAID 10” handstamp for CSA rate; notation “Censored” at left indicates letter was opened and read at Baltimore.



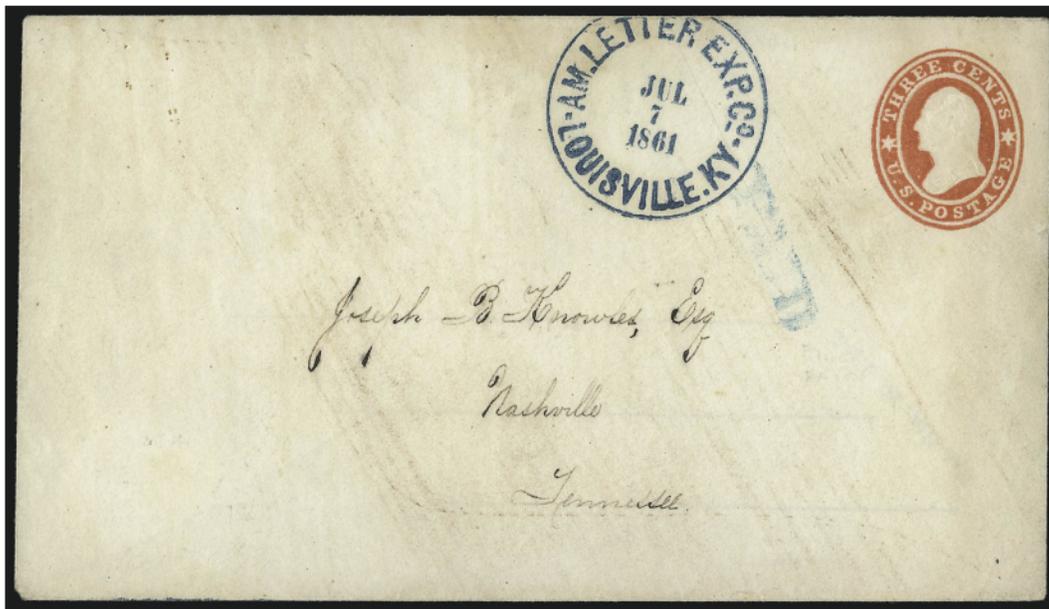
Adams Philadelphia 12 August 1861 red datestamp on US 3¢ Star Die envelope to Richmond; entered CSA mails with Nashville 13 August datestamp, “PAID” and “10” CSA rate.

# ACROSS THE LINES

US/CSA 1861—North to South

American Letter Express Company

The American Letter Express Company was chartered in April 1861 by two former letter carriers, William McGill and Thomas Jenkins, in anticipation of the termination of government mail service between the North and South. The company was given responsibility to carry the residual government mails from Nashville to Louisville after 12 June 1861, and their first advertisement of express service (southbound) appeared on 15 June in the *Louisville Daily Journal*. The earliest advertisement of northbound service by American appeared in the 29 June *Nashville Union and American*. For a southbound letter American charged 10¢ for its services plus 5¢ or 10¢ CSA postage, depending on distance. For a northbound letter, the charge was 15¢, which included 3¢ US postage (the sender was responsible for paying 5¢ or 10¢ CSA postage to the Nashville office).

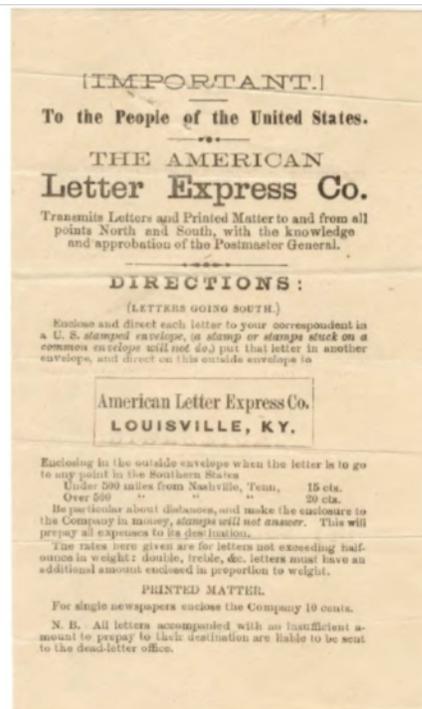
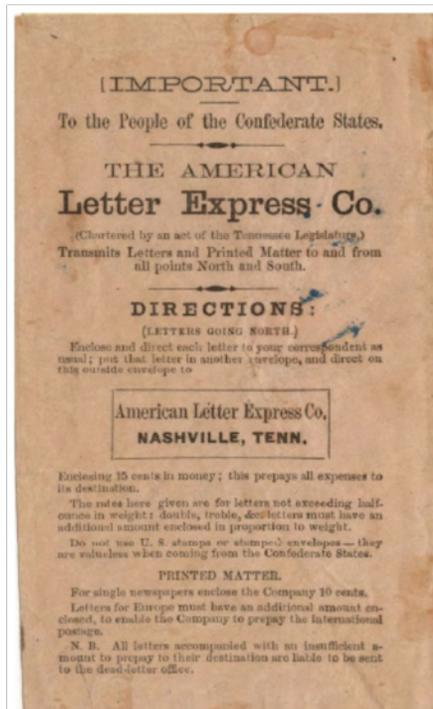


US 3¢ Star Die envelope mailed to American Letter Express in Louisville inside another US 3¢ envelope; datestamped 7 July 1861 and carried across the lines to Nashville where it entered the post office as a drop letter; the blue “Paid” hand-stamp is a Nashville CSA postal marking.

American Letter Express attached instructions to the backs of some express letters.

Left: photocopy of northbound instructions from the Confederacy.

Right: photocopy of southbound instructions from the Union.

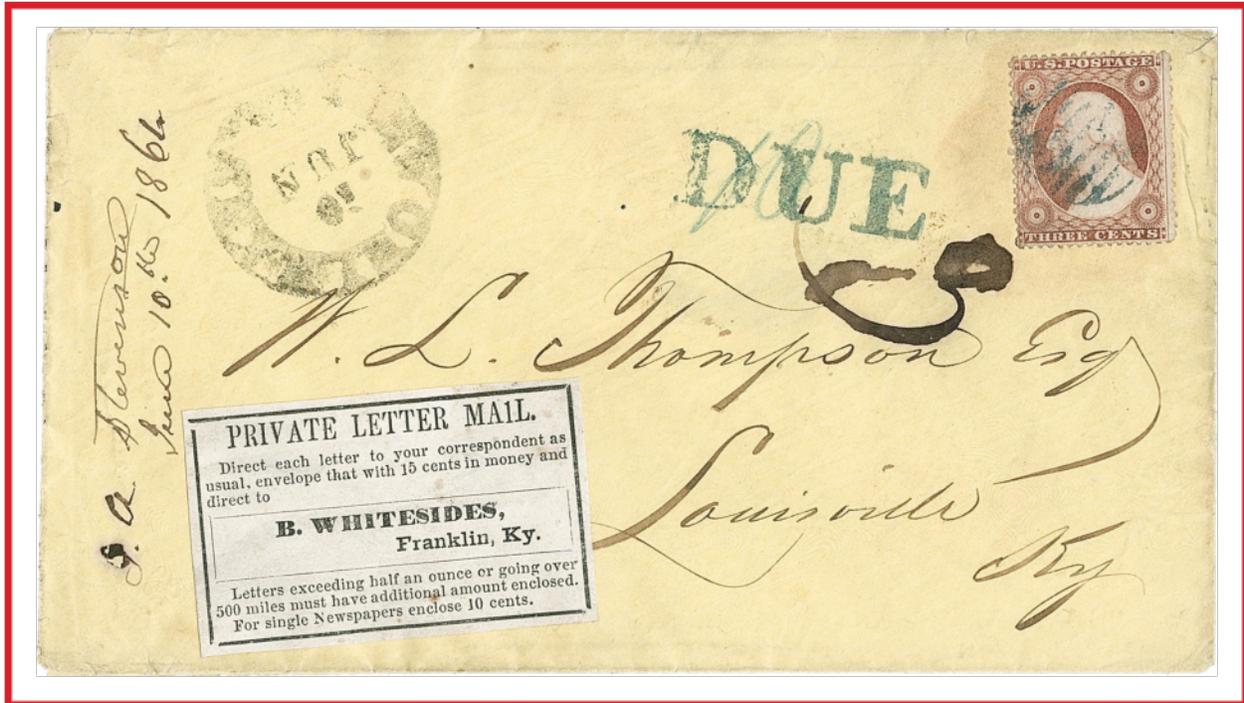


## ACROSS THE LINES

CSA/US 1861—South to North

Whitesides Express

M.D. Whiteside (no "s") and his uncle, Berry Whitesides, operated a contraband letter express during the Spring and Summer of 1861. According to Brooks's *American Letter Express Company*: "Whiteside had his messenger use the Upper Turnpike out of Louisville to Franklin, Ky., where he lived. He travelled from Louisville to Bardstown, Ky., to New Haven, Buffalo, Glasgow, Scottsville, and Franklin, Ky., and thence to Gallatin, and Nashville, Tenn. His main stop was Franklin, since it was only four miles from the State Line. He used a Confederate friend and sympathizer to carry the mail across the border to Tennessee. The messenger received 10 percent for his services... This smuggling commonly was known as the 'Grapevine.'" Whiteside later expanded his operation to smuggle slaves, arms, ammunition, lead, copper and other items relevant to war efforts.



Originated in New Orleans LA with "New Orleans La./10 Jun"(1861) circular dates-tamp, blue crayon "10" for Confederate postage to Nashville, and then carried from there by Whitesides to Louisville KY where 3¢ dull red 1857 was cancelled and the blue straightline "DUE" and manuscript 3 were added to indicate rejection of the US

*One of two recorded covers carried across the lines by Whitesides Express from Nashville to Kentucky. No Southbound covers are known from Whitesides*

The label reads: "PRIVATE LETTER MAIL. / Direct each letter to your correspondent as usual, envelope that with 15 cents in money and direct to/ B. WHITESIDES,/ Franklin, Ky./ Letters exceeding half an ounce or going over 500 miles must have additional amount enclosed. For single Newspapers enclose 10 cents."

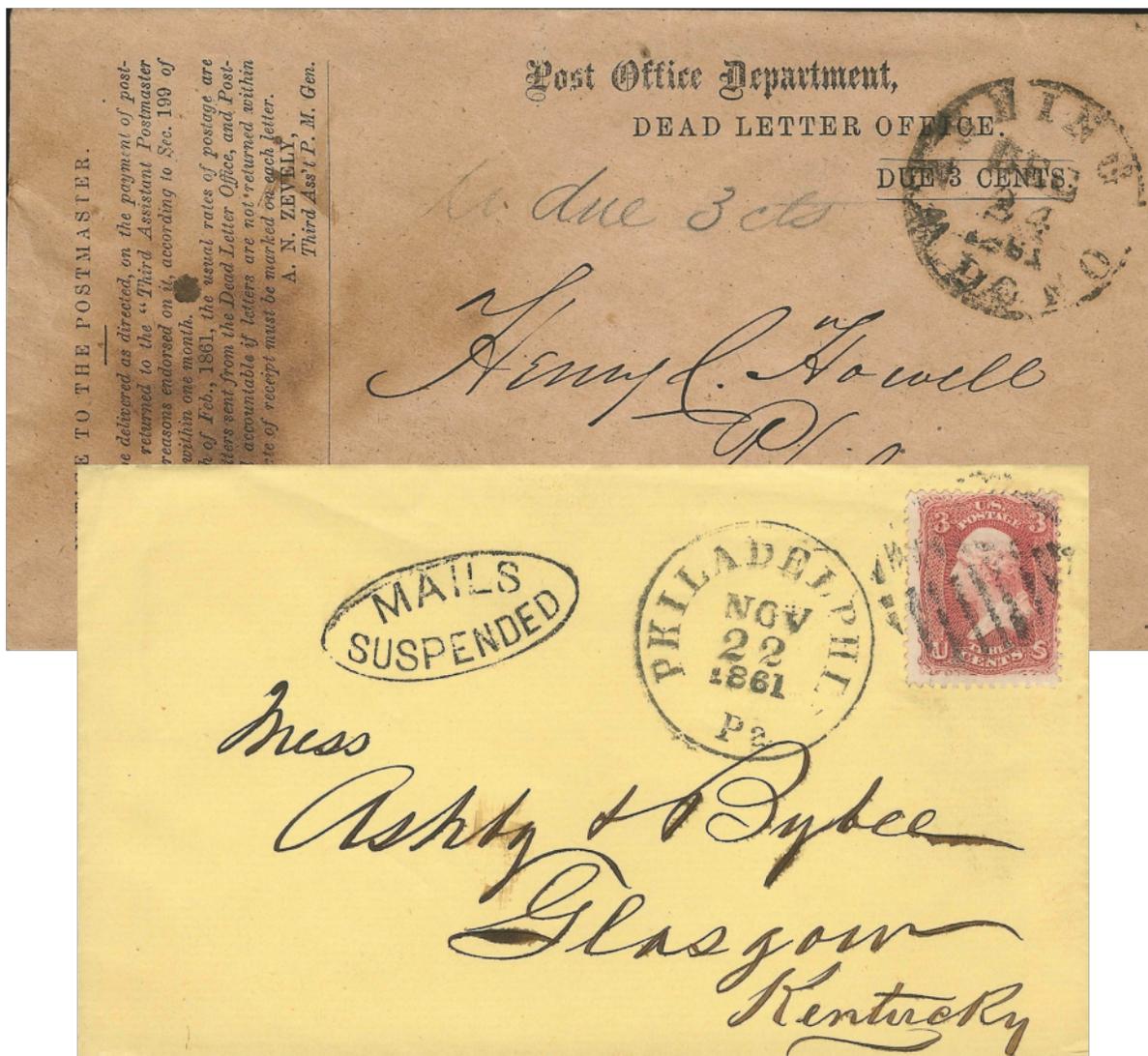
An advertisement for express mail service to the seceded states was first published by M. D. Whiteside on 22 June 1861, in the *Louisville Daily Journal*. The advertisements specify lower rates than those printed on this label (10c vs. 15c for letters, 5c vs. 10c for newspapers). The rates on the label are identical to the American Letter Express rates advertised on June 15, which indicates that Whitesides may have lowered its rates to more effectively compete with American Letter Express and Adams Express.

# ACROSS THE LINES

## US 1861—Attempted North to South

## Termination of Mail Across the Lines

President Lincoln proclaimed on 16 August 1861 that all commercial intercourse between the residents of loyal states and “insurgents” in the South shall be unlawful. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair subsequently announced on 26 August that the ban applied to mail correspondence. The express companies immediately stopped accepting southbound mail, and the last northbound mail carried by American Letter Express from Nashville on 28 August was seized by a US marshal upon its arrival in Louisville on 30 August. For the duration of the war, across-the-lines mail was facilitated only through flag-of-truce exchanges, blockade runners, covert routes and unsanctioned means.



Philadelphia 22 November 1861 with US 3¢ 1861 to Glasgow KY after suspension of US mail service; hand-stamped “MAILS SUSPENDED” and sent to US Dead Letter Office in Washington DC; released 24 December 1861 and mailed inside DLO envelope, 3¢ postage due from sender in manuscript.

Glasgow lies about 33 miles east of Bowling Green, which became the state’s Confederate seat of government after Kentucky’s declared neutrality was broken in September 1861; this cover was mailed before the state was admitted to the CSA on 10 December 1861, but US mail routes in the region had already been terminated.

# CSA PROVISIONAL POSTAGE

The CSA was not prepared to provide postage stamps when it began mail service on 1 June 1861. The first CSA General Issue was not ready until October 1861, and, throughout the war, shortages and disruptions along distribution routes hampered the CSA's ability to keep post offices supplied with stamps. To meet the need to prepay or collect postage, postmasters used provisional means of marking letters, including handstamped and written rate markings, locally-produced adhesive stamps and printed envelopes, and markings applied to envelopes in advance of use.

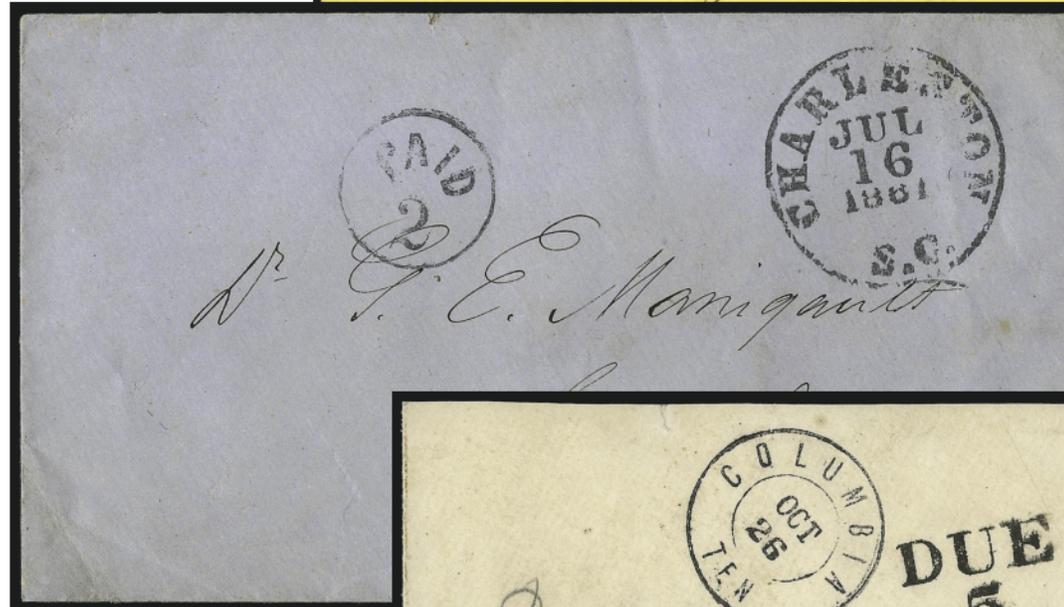
## CSA 1861-1863—South

## Reversion to Stampless "Paid" and "Due" Markings

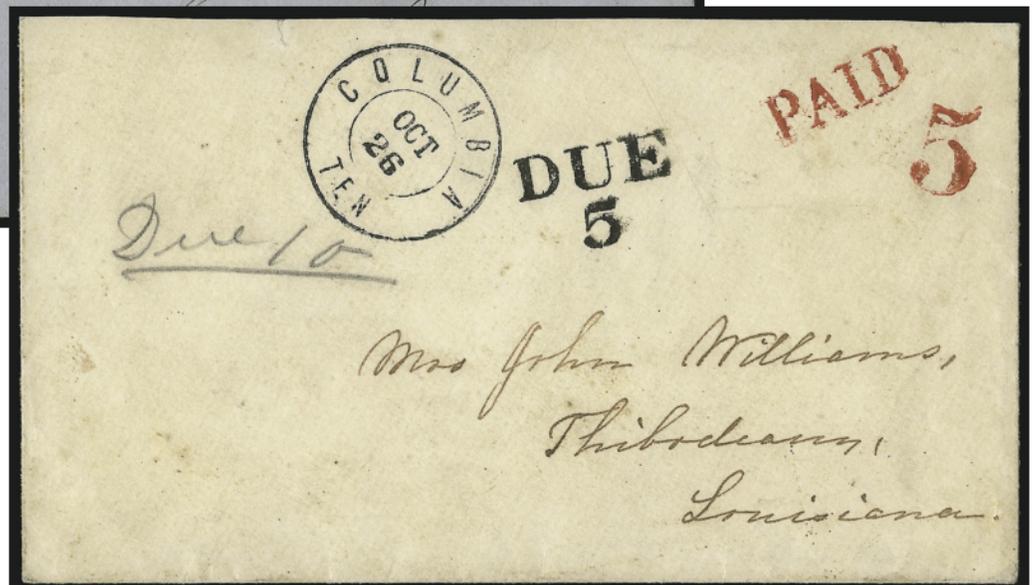


Canton MS wood-cut "PAID 5"  
28 October 1861.

Lake Village AK  
"PAID/5 CENTS"



Charleston SC "PAID 2"  
drop rate 16 July 1861.



Columbia TN  
26 October 1861 with red  
"PAID 5" and Memphis  
"DUE 5" for 10¢ over-500  
miles rate; pencil  
"Due 10" suggests 5¢  
prepayment ignored.

# CSA PROVISIONAL POSTAGE

CSA 1861-1862—South

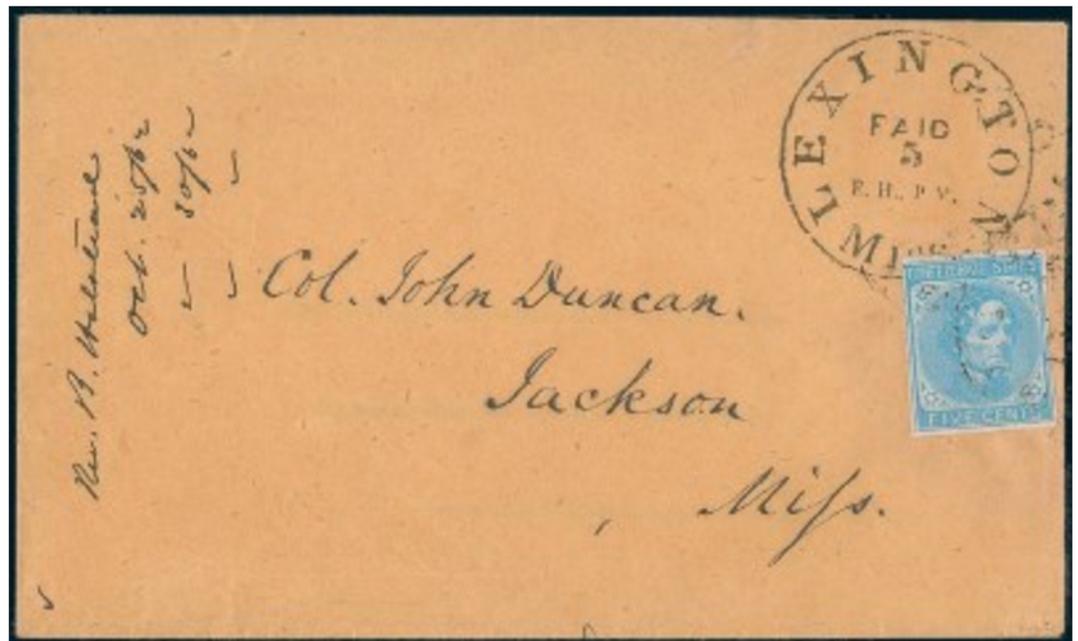
Re-Rated Provisional Markings

The difference between a “provisional” handstamped cover—meaning one that was sold in advance of mailing—and a handstamped marking applied at the point of mailing can be difficult to discern. Each of the covers below was rerated, indicating that the first marking was applied in advance of mailing.



10¢  
downrated  
to 5¢

Jackson MS (Christopher R. Dickson, PM) 16 June 1861 with “PAID/10/CENTS” in circle overstruck by “PAID/5/CENTS” in circle—downrated from 10¢ to 5¢ for distance under 500 miles—how did the sender get credit for 5¢ difference?



5¢ Uprated  
to 10¢ with  
stamp

“LEXINGTON/MISS./PAID/5/“E.H.P.M.” (initials of Erastus Haskins, PM) on envelope mailed in October 1862 to Jackson MS; the CSA rate was changed to 10¢ for all distances, so the 5¢ De La Rue stamp was applied to uprate the envelope; in this case there is no question that the handstamped envelope was sold for 5¢ in advance of mailing.

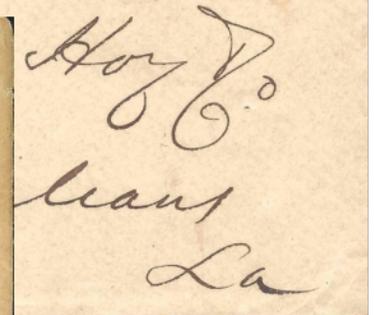
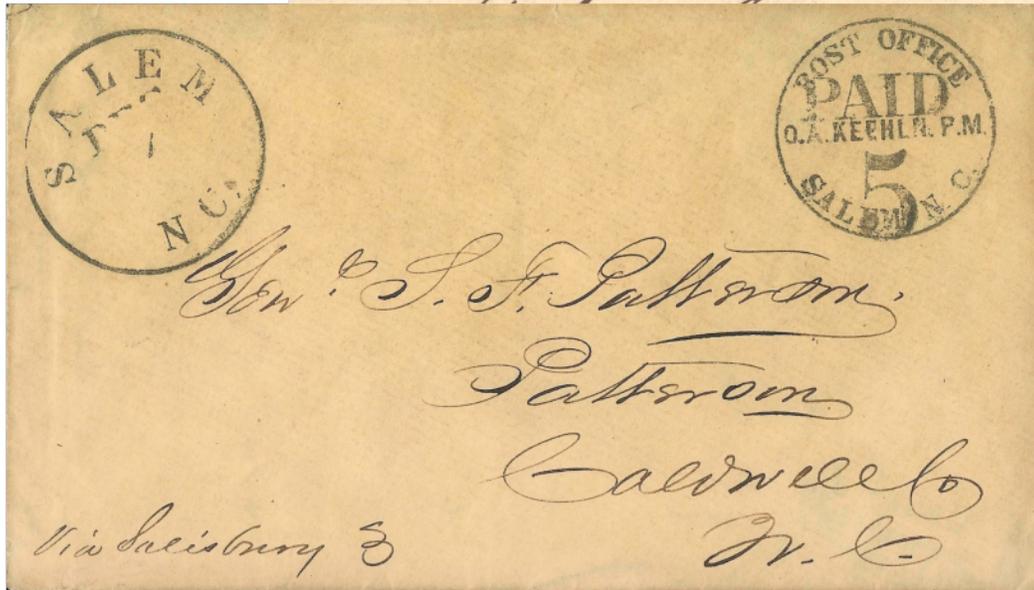
# CSA PROVISIONAL POSTAGE

CSA 1861-1862—South

Provisional Handstamps with Names/Initials and Control Markings

The post office or postmaster names and initials in these handstamped rate markings are indicative of envelopes prepared in advance of use.

Canton MS  
"PAID 5" in Star  
with "P" for PM  
William Priestly.

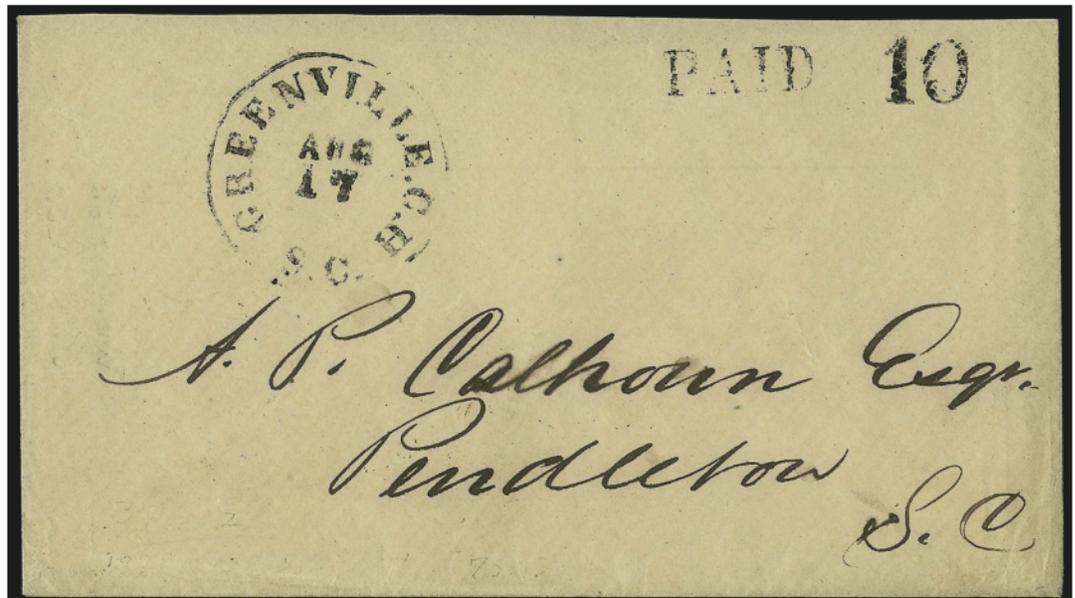


"POST OFFICE/  
SALEM, N.C./  
O. A. KEEHLN, P.M."  
in circle with "PAID 5"  
applied separately.

The presence of a control marking, such as a town circle without date or ornamental handstamp, is evidence that a handstamped "Paid" envelope was sold in advance of use.



Control  
mark on  
back



Greenville CH SC 17 August 1861 with "Paid 10" provisional handstamp, rated 10¢ for weight (distance well under 500 miles).