

# EDGED IN BLACK

## MOURNING COVERS IN THE CONFEDERACY

**Purpose:** To show black bordered mourning covers displaying postmaster's provisional stamps, through the-lines uses, forwarded covers, adversity covers; postage due covers, plus regular mail at the 2 cent, 20 cent, 5 cent, and 10 cent rates.

**Background:** The practice of using mourning covers for correspondence dealing with the death of a loved one had become firmly entrenched in the American cultural consciousness by the time of the War Between the States. This custom naturally continued in the Confederate States.

With the initial lack of CSA government adhesive stamps, Northern invasion with its resultant disruption of transportation, and the Union blockade of the coastal ports, postal service in the South was never an easy matter. Even so, the citizens of the Confederacy (and their friends, relatives, and business acquaintances in the North and overseas) used mourning covers to express their sympathy for the loss of both soldiers and civilians.

The Confederate postal system began operations on 1 June 1861. Mourning cover usage greatly diminished as the war progressed, so most are recorded from the first three years, 1861 to 1863. Reasons include blockade-caused paper shortages and people becoming desensitized to the mounting casualty rate both in battle and from disease. For those reasons, few 1864 and even fewer 1865 Confederate mourning covers exist.

### United States Post Office in the Confederacy Incoming Trans-Atlantic from England to Charleston, then Forwarded



25 February 1861, fully prepaid from Bolton (92 in cancel). Note **CSA** in address. Carried on Inman line *Etna*, departed Liverpool 27 February 1861, arrived New York 14 March 1861. Red credit marking 21 CENTS to United States. Forwarded 19 March 1861 from Charleston to Georgetown at the 3 cent United States domestic rate, as there was no free forwarding.

# POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONALS

Before the Confederate government issued postage stamps, postmasters had to improvise. Provisionals were also used when the supply of stamps became temporarily exhausted.

## Savannah, Georgia (Paid 5)

Typical diamond shaped control mark at upper left.

12 October 1861  
to Athens, Georgia



## Talbotton, Georgia (Paid 5)

Creating the Talbotton provisional took two steps – first the circular part with the town name and PAID, then another impression of the rate in the center.

17 September 1861  
to Augusta, Georgia



## Houston, Texas (Paid 10)

Regular Confederate stamps were not available.

February 1863 to  
Columbia, Texas



# POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONALS – ADHESIVE STAMPS

## Fredericksburg, Virginia



October 1861: Fredericksburg to Manassas Junction, Virginia

## Limestone Springs, South Carolina



May 1862: Limestone Springs to Richmond, Virginia

The only recorded examples of this provisional stamp printed on white paper.

# THROUGH THE LINES – EXPRESS COMPANY

## SOUTHERN LETTER UNPAID – DUE 3 CENTS

Franked with two copies of the 5¢ New Orleans provisional plus a 3¢ U.S. stamp.

From:	To:	Via:
New Orleans	Nashville	Confederate States postal system
Nashville	Louisville	American Letter Express Company
Louisville	Evansville	United States postal system



22 June 1861: New Orleans, Louisiana to Evansville, Indiana



Postmaster John Speed of Louisville (Kentucky) created this marking to indicate that the U.S. stamp applied was invalid for postage on mail from the Southern States routed via Nashville to Louisville. Such letters destined for onward transmission were also additionally handstamped DUE 3.

**The only known mourning cover marked SOUTH<sup>N</sup> LETTER UNPAID.**

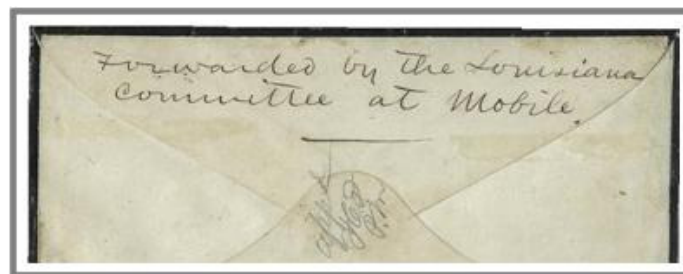
# THROUGH THE LINES – SMUGGLED

## THE LOUISIANA RELIEF COMMITTEE



Hand carried though the Union lines from New Orleans to Mobile  
Postmarked 30 August (1863) at Mobile, to Selma, Alabama

Smuggled out of Union occupied New Orleans. The Confederate Provost Marshal at Mobile examined the letter before mailing. Postage provided by the Louisiana Relief Committee as a courtesy. Right edge restored.



(reverse reduced 25%)

**“Forwarded by the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile”**

**“Appd JCD PM”**

(Approved by Jules C. Denis, Provost Marshal – in pencil on flap tip)

**One of two known mourning covers handled by the LA. Relief Committee**

## THROUGH THE LINES – INCOMING BLOCKADE RUN

### Origin country - CUBA



Certificate: PF 510359

Exact date in 1864 cannot be determined. Carried on regularly scheduled Cunard steamship from Havana to Nassau [Bahamas] then via blockade runner to Charleston. 6 cents due for in-port addressed ship mail. Black border honors Louise Dubois Chartrand who died in 1864, the mother of addressee Christina Chartrand LeBleux,

### Origin country - ENGLAND



Received in Charleston and annotated 12 cents due, 10 cents for Confederate postage plus 2 cents ship fee. Miller Hallows was a British citizen who owned the Bolingbroke plantation in Camden County. Black border honors Hallows' brother Thomas who died February 1864 in England.

## THROUGH THE LINES – FLAG OF TRUCE

### NORTH TO SOUTH – VIA FORTRESS MONROE

Prepaid with two U.S. stamps – one for Federal and perhaps a second one as an attempt to pay Confederate postage. Routed per endorsement via Fortress Monroe (Virginia) where it was censored and examined. Entered the Confederate postal system at Richmond, where the cover was marked **DUE 10** as the second U.S. stamp was not recognized.



18 March 1863: Newark, New Jersey to Montgomery, Alabama  
Postmarked Richmond, Virginia after being exchanged

### SOUTH TO NORTH – VIA RICHMOND



Charleston, South Carolina to Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania  
Postmarked February 1864: Old Point Comfort, Virginia

Mailed in an outer envelope using the Confederate Postal System from Charleston to Richmond, where the outer envelope was opened, then discarded. Carried by steamer to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, the Union exchange point. Entered the Union postal system at nearby Old Point Comfort.

## ADVERSITY COVERS – REUSED

The Union blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf ports resulted in a severe envelope and writing paper shortage. In an effort to conserve, envelopes were turned inside-out and reused.

Issue of 1863  
printed by Archer and Daly

Both of the Archer and Daly printings, with the early printing on the original mourning cover and the second printing (positively identified by plate number 3) used to seal the turned flaps, with the Valdosta address written on the envelope's other side.



First use – Date and origin unknown: to Charleston, South Carolina

Second use – 27 June (c.1864): Savannah to Valdosta, Georgia



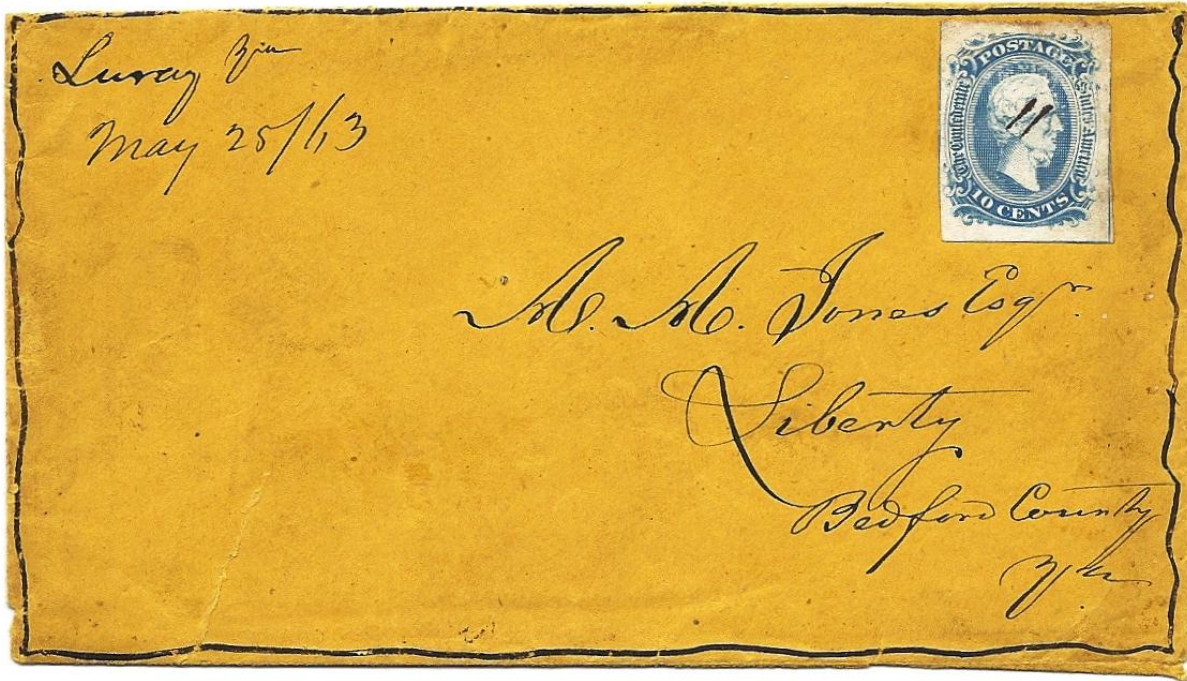
Gray-scale image with the envelope flap folded under showing the complete dated Savannah post mark.



## ADVERSITY COVERS – HOMEMADE

Due to the envelope shortage, pre-printed black border mourning envelopes were not always available. These senders created their own mourning covers. Both the address and the hand drawn black border are done in the same ink.

Issue of 1863, printed by Archer and Daly – the **10 Cent Frame Line**



25 May 1863: Luray, Virginia to Liberty, Virginia

Issue of 1863, printed by Archer and Daly



16 December (c.1863): Abingdon to Lebanon, Virginia  
Envelope made from light brown butcher paper.

## POST OFFICE FORWARDED

An additional rate required to forward a letter to another post office if the intended recipient had moved or relocated. This service was not free.



15 July 1862: Shufordville, North Carolina to Georgetown, South Carolina  
25 July 1862: Forwarded to Raleigh, North Carolina

Originally sent with vertical pair of Hoyer and Ludwig 5-cent [Stone 2] dated 15 July (1862) with 4 corrected to 5 in the postmark. Forwarded to Raleigh NC with additional two single copies of 5-cent [Stone 3] at upper right corner, of which the left stamp appears to be a fraudulent re-use.



26 May 1863: Richmond, Virginia to Charleston, South Carolina  
29 May 1863: Forwarded to South Santee, South Carolina

Horizontal pair of the Archer & Daly Richmond printing originally addressed to Charleston and canceled with blue Richmond postmark that was used only from 14 to 30 May 1863. Forwarded with a 10-cent Archer & Daly to South Santee.

## POSTAGE DUE

Letters mailed in the Confederacy had to be prepaid.  
But there was one major exception, the **Soldier's Due letter**.



6 April 1863: Rodney, Mississippi to Parks, Arkansas

Endorsed by Captain Edwin O. Williams of the 27<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry (informally called the First Texas Legion). By providing his name, rank and unit, the officer sent this cover as a “Soldier’s Due” letter, with the recipient paying the 10 cents. Notification to Mrs. Lucy Halley that her husband, First Lieutenant Francis Halley, died of wounds sustained at the battle of Thompson’s Station [Tennessee] in March 1863.

### UNDERPAID BY 3 CENTS – “Color Confusion”



22 May 1862: Charleston to Greenville, South Carolina

The Hoyer and Ludwig printed 2-cent “Green Jack”, issued to pay the drop rate, was similar in color to the 5-cent green Davis stamp. Sender accidentally underpaid by 3 cents. Faint “Due 3” annotated in red pencil by Charleston PO for collection at Greenville.

**ONLY RECORDED MOURNING COVER WITH THE 2-CENT “GREEN JACK” STAMP**

## POSTAL RATES – 2 CENTS LOCAL DROP

2-cent rate for local drop letters addressed within the same city as postmarked.

Issues of 1863  
printed by Archer and Daly

Richmond uses

Upper – properly paid

Lower - overpaid



What was left of Pickett's Division was engaged in defending Richmond. Military mail picked up in bulk at PO and taken to the field for distribution.

## POSTAL RATES – 20 CENTS DOUBLE RATE

The 20-cent stamp primarily issued to pay for overweight letters. Sometimes used when a ten cent stamp would suffice, due to the rampant inflation that rendered Confederate currency almost worthless.

Issue of 1863, printed by Archer and Daly



20 September (c.1864): Richmond to Ballsville, Virginia

## POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS STAMPLESS

Initial Confederate first class postal rates were distance dependent, 5 cents for under 500 miles. This rate effective from 1 June 1861 through 30 June 1862.



18 December 1861  
Prattville, Alabama to  
Griffin, Georgia

17 July 1861  
Aylett to Richmond  
Virginia

## POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS with STAMP

Issue of 1862  
printed by Hoyer and Ludwig



15 June 1862: Columbia, South Carolina to Hillsborough, North Carolina

Joined 'CE' at top of Cents, from Stone 3, Plate Position 33

**One of two known mourning covers franked with this constant plate flaw.**

## POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS with STAMP

Issue of 1861  
printed by Hoyer & Ludwig

December 1861:  
Smithfield, Virginia  
to Hillsboro, NC

Incorrectly routed to Charlotte  
and annotated **Missent**.

As this was a post office  
mistake, no additional  
postage charge.



## FANCY CANCEL – the Tuscaloosa 8 Pointed Star

Issue of 1862  
printed by Hoyer  
and Ludwig



20 June 1862: Tuscaloosa to Gordo, Alabama

## POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS STAMPLESS

### “MISSENT & FORW’D”

PO erroneously sent to  
Greensborough, Alabama  
instead of Greensboro,  
North Carolina.  
Re-routed at no additional  
charge.

12 July 1862:  
Livingston, Alabama to  
Greensboro, NC



## POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS STAMPLESS

Initial Confederate postal rates were distance dependent, 10 cents for over 500 miles.

### TO A SOLDIER IN THE FIELD

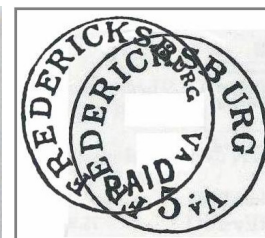


29 November 1861: Waynesboro, Georgia to Williamsburg, Virginia

To Captain Henry Page Lord King, the aide-de-camp for Major General Lafayette McLaws. Regiment stationed near Williamsburg, where the post office provided a specific location “**at Mr. Brights**”, referring to Samuel Bright, a local farmer. Williamsburg was occupied by Union troops on 6 May 1862 and held for the remainder of the war.

A standardized 10 cents per half ounce rate regardless of distance implemented on 1 July 1862.

### CHARGE BOX



Two different postmarks:  
5 re-rated to 10 cents for  
over 500 mile distance.  
Annotated **Chg Box 41**  
with initials, with 10 cents  
debited from sender's  
account.

14 August 1861: Fredericksburg, Virginia to Charleston, SC

## POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS with STAMPS



Issue of 1862, printed by  
Hoyer and Ludwig

11 October (c.1863):  
Winchester to Richmond,  
Virginia



Issue of 1863  
printed by  
Archer & Daly

10 Sept. 1864  
Tallahassee, Fla.  
to Raleigh, NC

**Six mourning  
covers recorded  
from Confederate  
Florida.**

Issue of 1864  
printed by  
Keatinge and Ball

From **Confederate  
Navy Commander  
John M. Kell** to his wife.  
Kell served as Executive  
Officer on the commerce  
raider CSS Alabama.

Uncommon use of a  
mourning cover in 1865.



28 February 1865: Richmond, Virginia to Macon, Georgia