

One of our great American Specialties

Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



The Confederate Post

Specialize in Confederates?

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

So what is it about Confederate stamps and postal history that has enthralled collectors and dealers for more than a century? The production of exquisite stamp designs? Well, no. There are only 14 major Scott numbers for the general issues and most of them wouldn't be considered all that lovely. But my goodness, the overwhelming variety of collecting opportunities in this fascinating field!

Three printing processes were employed in stamp production during the 19th century—lithography, typography, and engraving. Among stamp-issuing governments, only the Confederate States of America, in the four years of its short existence, employed all three.

Numerous of the Confederate general issues have been plated, but others haven't, leaving room for the fly-speck philatelist to make his mark. The extensive varieties caused by poor printing production should make this job a breeze. Well-published Confederate lithograph plating specialist Leonard Hartmann says that that isn't necessarily so. In spite of almost 150 years of scrutinizing the general issues, there are new bits of information published frequently—most often in *The Confederate Philatelist*, the official publication of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. There are both constant plate varieties and inconsistent printing flaws, which make this work a challenge.

The first Confederate issue was placed in circulation in October of 1861—five months after postal service between the North and South had been suspended. In the meantime, postmasters throughout the seceded states were directed to use temporary substitutes. Until real stamps were provided by the Confederate government, some postmasters reverted to hand-stamping the word "PAID" with the appropriate rate. This procedure had been obsolete since 1847, when the first U.S. stamp was issued.

Other postmasters decided to design their own personal adhesives for their towns. Some of these included the postmaster's name as well as the town of origin and the postage rate. They were often printed at or printing offices. These stamps, of course, are the renowned Confederate postmaster provisionals, so called because they were used "provisionally", until the first Confederate general issue appeared.

Confederate covers tell a story. The markings on envelopes mailed by Southern citizens during the Civil War period reveal fascinating historical data. Prisoner-of-War and Flag-of-Truce covers give clues to the destinies of individuals involved in the war. Patriotic covers, illustrated with political themes, capture the sentiments of the time. Blockade-run covers allow the collector to share in the intrigue and danger in the South's strivings to maintain contact with the outside world. Turned covers testify to the ingenuity of the Southern citizens. Southerners, isolated from world markets by Union Navy blockades, experienced shortages of almost every kind of commodity. Paper became almost unobtainable toward the close of the war. As a result, every available scrap with sufficient writing space was pressed into service



One of the rarest of all Confederate patriotics was the notorious "Hanging Lincoln", which portrayed Abe Lincoln hanging by his feet from the limb of a dead tree. (This is the only known unused copy of this famous patriotic. Ex-Antrim and Ex-Malpass.) Lincoln's hands were tied, and an ax and a fence rail hung from his neck. An 11-star Confederate flag flew above him while the Union Stars and Stripes lay on the ground. One of the numerous verses that accompanied the caricature:

*Abe Lincoln, the destroyer.
He once split rails,
now he has split the Union.*



Four copies of the 10 cent Type I (Archer and Daly print) stamp pay the 40-cent Trans Mississippi express mail rate in 1864 from Petersburg, Va. (note the embossed corner card of the Collegiate Seminary of Young Ladies from that town at upper left), to Shreveport, Louisiana, via Meridian, Mississippi. Trans Mississippi usages are among the jewels of Confederate philately.

creating a collecting category called "adversity covers", probably most well-known and characterized by covers fashioned from old stocks of colorful wallpaper.

For Confederate philatelists, the story of this historic conflict lives in their valued collections. The many colorful categories of Confederate collecting, from the printing of general issues to the travels of covers, provide a constant source of fun and adventure for both those with a strict budget or those with unlimited financial resources.

In future issues of *The American Stamp Dealer*, we'll explore this fascinating field in more detail. For information on the Confederate Stamp Alliance or the forthcoming *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook*, write Trish Kaufmann, 10194 N. Old State Road, Lincoln, DE 19960, or e-mail trishkauf@comcast.net. Information is also available on websites www.csalliance.org and www.csacatalog.org. ☐