



The Civil War Post

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CSA Typographed Stamp Issues and Pretenders

If you are an experienced philatelist, there are undoubtedly times when you've looked at a stamp and said, "that just doesn't look right." An example with which most Confederate collectors can identify is the London Print (Scott CSA No. 6), which unused retails for about \$20. If you dabble on eBay at all, you have certainly seen countless New York counterfeits described as genuine and, somewhat less frequently, the Ward (Philadelphia) private printings. To the non-Confederate specialist, they all look the same. See Figures 1, 2 and 3.

Over the years, I've had countless serious collectors and experienced dealers (specializing in other than Confederates) argue with me that examples of Figure 2 (New York Counterfeit) and Figure 3 (Ward Private Printing) are genuine. These challengers are mostly people who don't know me, nor my experience level. Figure 4 shows the Ward printing in black, which should fool no one, as it is not the color of the issued stamp.

While serious students of Confederate philately would spot these pretenders in an instant, many serious students are still fooled and are unable to explain why they are not genuine London prints. I so often encounter this basic problem that it is the topic of one the most-consulted short monographs on my website under "Confederate Stamp Primer Online: Trouble Spots."

The Confederate London Print was produced by Thomas De La Rue & Co. in London, England, on thin hard-surfaced paper. The image was engraved in relief on steel, then electrotyped and flat-bed printed. Impressions are sharp and clear; the ink is a consistent color from light blue to blue. The gum is thin, even transparent, colorless gum.

The London Print stands out among the crudely produced lithographed issues of the Confederacy. Most Confederate general issues are known for their inconsistent color shades and myriad printing flaws, both constant and transient varieties. Those countless varieties provide a breadth of examples to collect, which is part of what makes collecting Confederate stamps so interesting. Even the later engraved printings, although generally of noticeably higher quality than the lithographed issues, provide countless shades and distinct printing variances.

CSA 7-L and CSA 7-R, the Richmond prints on different papers, are the same portrait design as CSA 6, the De La Rue London print. The Richmond prints were printed by the Richmond, Va., firm of Archer & Daly from electrotype letterpress plates provided by De La Rue on white wove paper in two grades – the thin glazed paper from London shipped with the plates (CSA 7-L) and an inferior coarse grade of paper with colorless thin gum of an inferior darker hue (CSA 7-R).¹

De La Rue shipped printing plates, ink and a quantity of stamp paper to Richmond via blockade runners. Consequently, there are Richmond prints (CSA Catalog 7-L, Scott CSA 7) that are very close to the same quality as the London prints.

There are many, however, that are quite clearly "local" or "Richmond" prints, (CSA Catalog 7-R, Scott CSA 7). See the comparison in Figure 5. The right stamp is the local print, which has filling in of the fine lines of the hair and a muddy appearance to the entire stamp by comparison.

Figure 6 shows a Richmond print on local paper with the collectible filled-in frame lines on two sides, a variety cataloged in the 2012 CSA catalog as CSA 7-R-v3. When you see these filled-in frames, you can be assured they are Richmond – not London – prints. The color of the successive printings ranges from pale blue to dark blue to a darker cobalt blue. The impressions are coarse with many plate (constant) and printing (transient / variable) varieties.

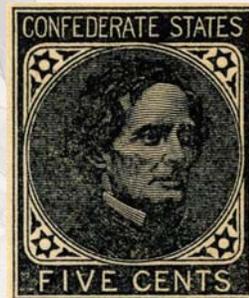


Figure 1 (top). CSA No. 6, 5¢ London Print, a consistent light blue color.

Figure 2 (center). New York counterfeit, with many tell-tale signs.

Figure 3 (above). Ward private printing in blue, also known as the Philadelphia Private Print.

Figure 4 (left). Ward private printing in black, not as much a threat as the blue printing.



Figure 5. Side-by-side comparison of CSA 6 (left) and CSA 7.

the genuine stamp. I've always said that I can spot a New York Counterfeit at five paces; this is because of the unusual aqua color, which my brain instantaneously tells me is not right. The next most obvious and defining difference between the counterfeit and the original is the shorter crossbars on the "F" and the "E" of "FIVE" in the value at the bottom.



Figure 6 (top). Richmond print on local paper with filled-in frame lines on two sides, CSA catalog No. 7-R-v3.

Figure 7 (above). The popular "white tie" variety, CSA catalog No. 7-L-v1.

Other things to notice on the New York product are the lack of detail in the eye (very little white area) and a general lack of clarity and definition. The outer frame line is also thicker than on the originals. The white centers in the upper stars are smaller than on the original, while their flanking trefoils are larger. While there are other minor differences, those noted here are more than enough for you to correctly determine the genuine from the forgery.

Ward Private Printings (AKA Philadelphia Printings)

The British blockade runner *Bermuda* carried the third order of stamps from De La Rue,² its order "C," which was shipped on Feb. 20, 1862, by Fraser Trenholm and Co., owners of the vessel, on her second run across the Atlantic.³ On April 24, 1862, she slipped out of St. George's and made her way southwest to the northern Bahamian

island chain of Abacos, where she was spotted a few days later by the *Mercedita* which fired a shot across her bows, boarded her and took her to Philadelphia as a prize of war.

The presence of the remaining De La Rue stamps along with ink, stamp paper, and cutlery engraved "Jeff Davis, our first President, the right man in the right place" – openly addressed to Charleston – sealed their fate. There was no denying their destination.

The popular "white tie" variety (CSA catalog No. 7-L-v1) is illustrated in Figure 7. If the stamp you are examining has printing defects, darker gum or shows uneven gum application, large skips or heavy brush marks, it is a Richmond print.

New York Forgery - J. Walter Scott

This commonly encountered forgery was printed from an electrotype letterpress plate by J. Walter Scott for use in the Scott albums in the early 1900s or possibly even the late 1800s. It was produced in New York City, hence the "New York" label. The master die was photographically reproduced from a print from the 10¢ altered plate (subject of another treatise) and the value in the tablet was changed from "TEN" back to "FIVE." (Figure 8)

The first thing that jumps out at me personally is always the cloudy greenish-blue color, which is nothing like



Figure 8. Trish Kaufmann in 2011 at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, posing with the captured Confederate printing plate, still in its packing crate.

The original engraved die from which the 5¢ printing plates were made was retained by De La Rue and is today in the British Library in London. I had the pleasure of viewing it in 2015 during a Confederate Stamp Alliance tour of the library.

Although this shipment of stamps was confiscated, others managed to get through the blockade. Of the total printing invoiced – 12,405,000 5¢ stamps – only 7,405,000 were received by the CSA; 4,855,000 on the *Bermuda* were captured and ordered destroyed by Federal court order. There is a slight discrepancy in numbers noted.

For almost 90 years, the printing plate was lost to public view. It sat in the basement of an unidentified Philadelphia historical society for an unknown period until it was discovered in 1954 by Maj. Thomas Coulson, then Director of Museum Research of the Franklin Institute in that city.⁴

Philip H. Ward, Jr. (1886-1963), a highly successful Philadelphia



Figure 10. Springfield Facsimile, backstamped "206" with old Scott Catalogue numbering system.

stamp dealer, announced the find of the plate in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* in the Oct. 22, 1954, edition and proceeded to make prints from the plate in conjunction with the Franklin Institute.

Van Dyk MacBride, then vice president of the Confederate Stamp Alliance, wrote to

Stamps Magazine and stated that stamps "in the blue shade of the originals" were being printed from this plate and sold to the public which "has caused dismay and concern." MacBride stated that no matter how good the stated objective, the production of these prints "is both regrettable and amazing." He went on to say that "Perhaps little objection could be made to those printed in black, but those in blue can serve only to confuse collectors and to provide a ready means for the faker to pursue his trade in the future." Indeed, I concur with MacBride.

Printed in blue and black from a complete plate of 400, the sheets are un gummed. The stamp has a flat appearance and is dull and lifeless. Sometimes they are backstamped. The outer frame line is slighter thicker than on the genuine and the letters are not as thick. On some examples, Davis' hair blends into the



Figures 11-13 (above, top to bottom). Crude woodcut forgeries that should fool no one when compared to the genuine or modern catalog illustrations.



Figure 9. Upper corner of the captured printing plate. Courtesy Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

background. The non-specialist is likely to have a difficult time with these, particularly in the blue shade.

The full story appeared in this column in 2011 when the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (NPM) bought the printing plate, which is now on display in the William H. Gross Gallery in Washington, D.C. Figure 8 shows me in 2011 in the vault of the museum with the famous printing plate, still in its packing crate to be readied for display. An upper corner of the printing plate is shown in Figure 9. I was on the NPM Council of Philatelists at the time, part of an exciting few years.

Springfield and Swiss Facsimiles

The commonly encountered Springfield fabrications are often on newsprint-quality paper. While the first examples were blank on the back, later products were handstamped "facsimile" on the back as a result of an agreement between Howard MacIntosh and August Dietz.

The facsimile is 1 mm narrower than the genuine stamp. They were "issued" by Tatham Stamp Co. of Springfield, Mass., in 1934 to the collective horror of the philatelic community. They were copied without permission from copyrighted pen-and-ink drawings made in 1919 by August Dietz, Sr. Seasoned students know them at a glance. Sometimes they have the old Scott numbers printed on the back, such as, 205, 206 and so on. Figure 10 shows a

Springfield facsimile backstamped with the old Scott numbering system, "206."

The Springfield facsimiles are seen daily on eBay, sometimes described as such and sometimes not. There are also other similar facsimiles of Swiss origin, which are very similar but have the modern numbering system on the backs, such as 1, 2, 3, as well as more obviously modern paper than the Springfield product.⁵

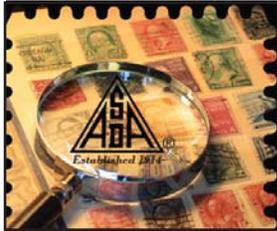
Crude Woodcut Forgeries

The very crude designs in Figures 11-13 bear no resemblance to the genuine and should fool absolutely no one when compared to genuine stamps or quality modern catalog illustrations.

Thus concludes a brief tutorial on the Confederate typographed (letterpress) issues and their pretenders. ☐

Endnotes

1. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, Editors, Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History, 2012, Confederate Stamp Alliance, www.csalliance.org.
2. Drinkwater, John "The Stamps of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865," June 25, 1931, talk to the Eighteenth Philatelic Congress of Great Britain.
3. M. Pearse & Co., www.teesbuiltships.co.uk/view.php?year_built=&builder=&ref=169534&vessel=BERMUDA
4. "Confederate 5c De La Rue Plate Found," Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News, Oct. 22, 1954, Whole No. 3328, Page 1.
5. Steven M. Roth, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Patricia A. Kaufmann, The Springfield Facsimiles of Confederate Postage Stamps, second edition, November 2018



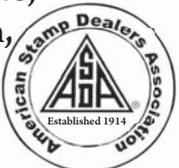
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