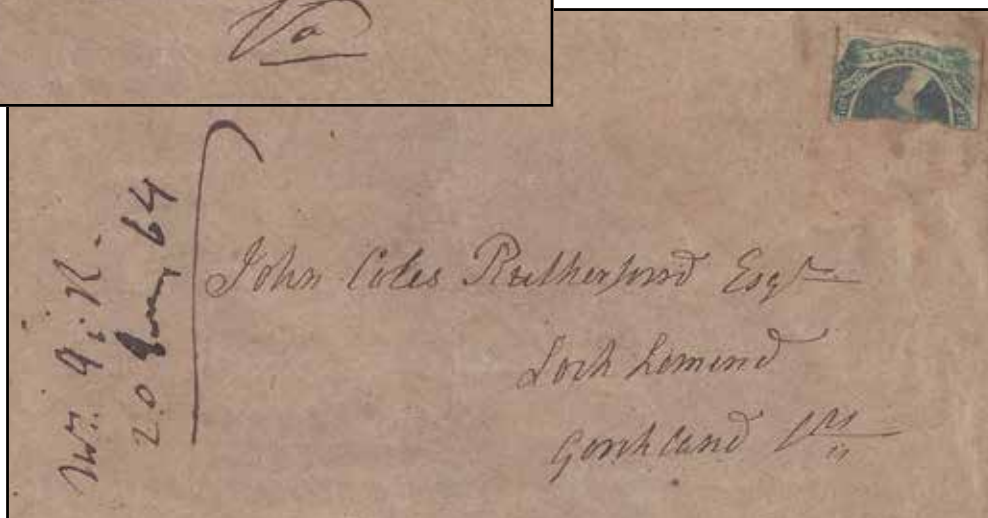


Confederate Postal History



Figure 1: A two-cent brown-red Andrew Jackson stamp (CSA Scott 8) tied by a 'RICHMOND VA. FEB 5' circular datestamp to pay the drop rate.

Figure 2: The inside of the same cover is franked with a twenty-cent green George Washington horizontal bisect (CSA Scott 13e) that is uncanceled but effectively tied by mucilage toning.



Two Rare Confederate Uses on the Same Cover

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

Both the Confederate two-cent brown-red Andrew Jackson stamp (CSA Scott 8) and the twenty-cent green George Washington (CSA Scott 13) are scarce used on cover. To drive home that point, the catalogue values for these two issues are roughly ten times the values of the more commonly found uses. So, imagine the excitement when these two stamps are found used on either side of the same cover.

Figure 1 shows a two-cent brown-red Jackson single tied by a "RICHMOND VA. FEB 5" circular datestamp paying the drop rate on a locally addressed cover to P.H. Aylett Esq., Counselor at Law, Richmond, Va. The inside of the cover (Figure 2) is franked with a 20-cent green George Washington horizontal bisect (CSA Scott 13e) that is uncanceled but effectively tied by mucilage toning.

The cover is addressed to John Coles Rutherford Esqr, Loch Lomond, Goochland (County) Va. with "20 Jan. '64" receipt docketing at left. Horizontal bisects are found far less often than diagonal bisects. That the

bisect was not cancelled suggests the letter was hand carried to Loch Lomond and then to Richmond where it was reused. Although uncanceled uses always give one pause, this appears to be genuine in every respect.

John Coles Rutherford

The addressee on the bisect side of the subject cover was John Coles Rutherford (1825-1866), a lawyer, planter, and member of the Virginia House of Delegates. His home was Rock Castle in Goochland County, Virginia, named for and built on a high rock bluff. The Rutherford papers, 1754-1931, are housed at Duke University.

John Coles Rutherford's father was John Rutherford (1792-1866), the acting governor of Virginia from 1841 to 1842. His mother was Emily Coles Rutherford (1795-1871). Emily Anne Rutherford (1830-1880) was a younger sister who was married to Patrick Henry Aylett, thus the obvious connection with the correspondence.

John Coles Rutherford enlisted as a private in Company E, 10th Virginia Cavalry on January 3, 1864, and served until the end of the Civil War.

The Richmond Calamity: The Virginia Capitol Collapse of 1870

The addressee of the CSA 8 side of the subject cover was Patrick Henry Aylett (1825-1870), a highly regarded Richmond lawyer (Figure 3). His grandmother, Elizabeth Henry, was the youngest daughter of founding father and orator Patrick Henry who made the famous quote: "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

During the American Civil War, Henry Aylett (known by his middle name), was assistant attorney general for the Confederate States as well as the Confederate district attorney.

On the morning of April 27, 1870, Aylett was at the Virginia capitol to hear Supreme Court of Appeals rulings. Members of the general assembly, the bar and the press, police forces, along with visitors and representatives of all classes and conditions, gathered to hear the highly anticipated results of the well-publicized mayoralty case to determine if Richmonders could select their own mayor for the first time since the Civil War.

Large crowds gathered early at the capitol, surging into the visitors' gallery that quickly exceeded capacity. The gallery floor collapsed, sending hundreds of spectators and tons of debris tumbling sixty feet. The number of victims varies according to sources and dates cited. Different writers cite from 56 to 62 victims killed and 250 or more wounded. The great-grandson of Patrick Henry was dead within the hour, crushed to death in what would variously be called the Capitol Disaster, the Richmond Calamity, or the Capitol Collapse.

The overcrowding in the courtroom that day was so extreme that the weight of the crowd caused the floor to give way, plunging scores of distinguished citizens, lawyers, and officials into chaos and tragedy. Among the casualties was Patrick Henry Aylett, whose life and career were cut short by the calamity. The collapse sent shockwaves throughout Virginia and beyond, marking a somber chapter in Richmond's history and forever impacting the families connected by the remarkable cover described herein.

The dreadful disaster was reported across the nation and around the world. Figure 4 illustrates the awful event as shown in Saturday, May 14, 1870, *Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization*.



Figure 3: Patrick Henry Aylett, addressee and victim of the Capitol Collapse of 1870.

A Caspary Treasure

The subject cover was sold in one of the sixteen auction sales of the Alfred H. Caspary (1877-1955) collection sold by H.R. Harmer on October 9, 1957, as lot 565. It also carries the neat backstamp of Raymond H. Weill & Co. Owner brothers Raymond and Roger Weill were well-known for handling the choicest rarities for a discerning clientele.

Caspary is one of the most respected collectors of all time, assembling one of the finest collections of United States and Confederate postage stamps and covers, including rare Postmaster Provisionals.

He was a founding member of the Collectors Club New York and the Philatelic Foundation Expert Committee.

Caspary earned plentiful philatelic honors including signing the prestigious Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1953.

(Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann, Lincoln, Delaware, is a fulltime dealer specializing solely in Confederate States postal history. She may be contacted by e-mail at: trishkauf@comcast.net)



Figure 4: The Capitol Collapse as illustrated in the May 14, 1870, issue of *Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization*.