

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF RICHMOND, VA., MARKINGS ON THE SAME COVERS

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Richmond, Va., had a large post office during the Civil War and used many different canceling devices. Consequently, the study of these postal markings is both popular and stimulating. The late Peter W.W. Powell was a Richmond resident. One of his most enduring publications is his 1987 book, *Confederate States of America, Markings and Postal History of Richmond, Virginia*, to which I often refer. Richmond markings can be accurately dated with the help of this book, the definitive work.



Figure 1. Scott US U10, 3¢ red Nesbitt postal entire, used with two different types of Richmond, Va., Jul (1864) postmarks, as well as "DUE 10" rate, to Columbia, S.C.

## Example One

The cover shown in Figure 1 is unusual in that it is a Scott U.S. U10, a 3¢ red Nesbitt postal entire, used with two strikes of different types of Richmond, Va., July (1864) circular datestamps (Powell types 5f and 6m), as well as a matching "DUE 10" (type P). Why the clerk would use two different canceling devices on one cover, rather than just re-ink the first device that made the faintly struck postmark, is anyone's guess.

The envelope is addressed to "Miss Fannie Dickens, Treasury Department, Columbia, S. Carolina." The U.S. postal stationery was not valid for postage, thus the handstamped Confederate "DUE 10" marking was added to indicate the deficient postage. This is not a soldier's due cover, as it has no soldier's endorsement.

Addressee **Frances (Fanny) Margaret Dickins** (1842-1914) was employed by the Confederate Treasury Department. In 1863, she moved to Columbia, S.C., to work with a branch of the Confederate Treasury. She is *one of the ladies who signed Confederate banknotes* under "For Treasurer" while in Richmond, but apparently not after she moved to Columbia.

Fanny's father, Francis Asbury Dickins (1804-79), was a British-born attorney in Washington, D.C. He was a Confederate sympathizer who was imprisoned at least three times during the war on suspicion of aiding the South. Dickins had voted against the Virginia *Ordinance of Secession*. His family residence was Ossian Hall Plantation in Fairfax County, Va., in what today is the District of Columbia suburb of Annandale, Va.

The Dickins family tree is rich with historical Virginia family names, including Randolph, Jefferson, Mann, Harvie, Asbury, Calvert. They socialized and did business with many more well-known public names, such as Fitzhugh, Stuart, Custis and others. During the Civil War, Ossian Hall was within Union lines and close to Washington. Dickins' sons served in the Confederate army, while both daughters moved to Richmond for the duration of the war.

Acquiring a job at the Confederate Treasury was natural for Fanny because the family had a history at the U.S. Treasury Department. Before entering the practice of law, her father served in the U.S. Treasury and War Departments. Her grandfather, Asbury Dickins (1780-1861), was a prominent chief clerk of the Treasury and secretary of the Senate. A sketch of Fanny appears in *Confederate Treasury Notes, The Signers and Their Stories*, by Charles Derby and Michael McNeil, published in 2022.



Figure 2. Two different types of Richmond "DUE 2" markings, one struck over the other on the same cover.

### Example Two

I was chatting online with fellow CWPS member Larry Kesselring and talking about the Figure 1 cover, when Larry mentioned he also had a Richmond cover with similar scenario, as shown in Figure 2.

Larry's cover, which he is kind enough to share with us, bears an 1862 Richmond postmark and bears two different types of "DUE 2" markings, one struck over the other. Type N, with the arched "DUE 2," is struck over the straightline "DUE 2," type M. Initially, I questioned whether the straightline value was other than a 2. Although difficult to tell from a scan, it is clearly a "2" when viewed in person. As with the Figure 1 cover, we have no idea why a clerk or postmaster would use two different types of canceling devices on the same cover.

Larry's cover is a soldier's drop cover with the mandated endorsement of "D.G. Campbell, Lieut. Eng(ineer) Corps, CSA." It was sent to his wife in Richmond care of his father, the Hon. John A. Campbell.

**Duncan Green Campbell** (1835-88) was the only son of John Archibald Campbell (1811-99), who was associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1853-61) and assistant secretary of war in the Confederate government (1862-65). The elder Campbell was married to Anne Esther Goldthwaite (1804-83), Duncan's mother. He was undoubtedly named for his paternal grandfather Duncan Green(e) Campbell, for whom Campbell County, Ga., was named. The Civil-War-era Duncan married Ella Spence Calvert (1840-1902) in 1861; they had four children together. She probably lived in Richmond with her father-in-law during the war. He served as a lieutenant in the Confederate Engineer Corps. He was promoted to captain in March 1864, and served until April 1865. They settled in New Orleans after the war.

It is common to see overpaid drop covers to Richmond, as soldiers in the field would frank their mail with 10¢ stamps and then give their outgoing missives to other soldiers headed to or through Richmond. In this case, the cover is properly rated 2¢ for a Richmond-to-Richmond drop rate.

Duncan Campbell was an officer with the Signal Office of the Engineer Corps. Confederate signal offices and stations were strategically placed on high ground, church steeples and towers near major battle lines and besieged cities, with key locations including Signal Hill in Manassas, Va. (1861); Richmond, Va.; Charleston, S.C.; and Vicksburg, Miss. These stations, often using aerial telegraphy (wig-wag flags), were crucial at Fredericksburg, Antietam and during the defense of Petersburg and Mobile Bay. Such systems were used by both North and South. At least some of the time, Campbell was stationed in Richmond but clearly did not live at home. He would have been with the troops so Richmond-to-Richmond makes sense postally. There are 124 files on Campbell in the Civil War Service Records for the Confederate Government, 1861-65, in the U.S. National Archives.

Simple stampless covers often generate postal history mysteries, as with these two subjects. If you have a theory as to why two different Richmond canceling devices were used on the same cover in lieu of simply re-inking the original device, please share with CWP readers. Please email [trishkauf@comcast.net](mailto:trishkauf@comcast.net).

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