

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE “OLD FAKE” FRAMELINE

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Lately, I have been working on my sizeable collection of fakes, forgeries and fantasies. Over the years, I acquired numerous fake collections from others, but I had not attempted to consolidate them into my own collection until now. It's not surprising that many interesting things came to light. One of them was just how few so-called “old fake” framelines there were compared to the large quantities of Springfield facsimiles and other more common fakes.



Figure 1. Old Fake Frameline of unknown origin.

An example of an old fake is shown in Figure 1. It is backstamped with a red “COUNTERFEIT” handstamp that slightly bleeds through to the face.

The old fake has been noted in various publications, but I hadn't paid it serious attention. In the 2015 publication of *Confederate States of America Philatelic Fakes, Forgeries, and Fantasies of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, by Peter W.W. Powell and John L. Kimbrough MD, it is described on page 69 as an “old fake of unknown origin that is rarely seen, but can be deceptive except for two major characteristics,” which I have noted as the first two in my long list of observed features that characterize the old fake. Many of these characteristics are pointed out

in the enlarged image on page 10.

1. The horizontal lines behind the portrait slope downward to the right.
2. The “O” of “POSTAGE” is smaller than the other letters.
3. The “T” of “POSTAGE” has abbreviated serifs, rather than the longer triangular arms that extend from the top horizontal bar of the genuine.
4. The “G” of “POSTAGE” is smaller than the other letters, particularly noticeable with the thinner left side.
5. The “C” of “CENTS” is smaller than the other letters and not in proper curvature with the others.
6. The “S” of “CENTS” is thinner than on the genuine stamp and flattened on the bottom.
7. The bottom of the hairline at the nape of the neck has three distinct horizontal lines, unlike the genuine stamp, as well as other hair differences.
8. Jefferson Davis' ear is different from that on the genuine stamp.
9. The back-swept beard is different from the genuine stamp.
10. The eyebrow has a more downward sweep than on the genuine.
11. The tiny “OF” between “States” and “America” is simply two dots, instead of a small, but readable, word.
12. The horizontal lines behind the portrait are closer together at the bottom than on the genuine, which has equally spaced lines. Sometimes, this area appears blurry.
13. The frame lines are thinner and fainter than on the genuine stamps.



Fig

14. The “n” in “Confederate” is sometimes correct, although this is not a constant trait. On the genuine Type I die, CSA 11, 10¢ Jefferson Davis (and thus the CSA 10, 10¢ frameline, since the original engraved die for the frameline was also used for Type I), the “n” appears as a “u,” while on the Type II (CSA 12, 10¢ Jefferson Davis), it properly appears as an “n.”
15. The stamp is a photolithographic product rather than an intaglio one.

This fake was noted as a photolithographic product on page 156 in the 1986 *New Dietz Confederate States Catalog & Handbook*, edited by Hubert C. Skinner, Erin R. Gunter and Warren H. Sanders. Therein, it was also declared a “dangerous counterfeit.”

The *New Dietz* editors also point out that the color and paper are extremely close to the genuine frameline stamp. While I have indicated the most egregious lettering differences, virtually all the letters on the fake are narrower, smaller and sometimes misaligned, compared to the genuine stamp.

I have rarely had trouble distinguishing a fake from a genuine frameline by holding the stamp so that oblique light falls across the lines. On the genuine, the ink appears raised on the paper’s surface. On intaglio-printed stamps, the ink appears slightly shiny. Occasionally, I have trouble seeing the raised nature of the framelines when the stamp has been washed and pressed, which is/was a common practice among some retail dealers (not me).

While traditional photolithography does not produce raised ink, some specialized printing methods can create a very slight relief, although it is generally not considered raised. Nonetheless, this can fool the unwary collector who looks only at the frame lines and not the entire design. Since the old fake is seldom seen, it would be easy to fall into this trap.

Compare the four purported frameline stamps shown in Figure 2. One is a genuine frameline, two are old fakes and another is a genuine CSA 11 with drawn-in framelines. Armed with the described characteristics in this article, can you determine which is which? The answers are at the end of this article.



Figure 2. These four stamps are all purported genuine framelines. Can you identify the genuine from the bad actors?

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Figure 3. Old Fake hand-stamped "EB" of unknown significance.

The stamp shown in Figure 3 is canceled "EB." I have seen another old fake with this same cancellation in a different collection, as well as one marked "PD." Although "PD" could easily stand for "PAID," I have no idea what the "EB" is supposed to represent. One possibility is that it could indicate a fraudulent stamp in another language, but this is just speculation. I would be happy to hear other alternative theories.

Figure 4 shows one of the old fakes with numbers corresponding to some of the previously given list of characteristics for fakes.

Proper identification of the images shown in Figure 2 is as follows: Figure 2a is an old fake, 2b is a genuine CSA 11 with drawn-in frame-lines, 2c is an old fake and 2d is a genuine frameline.

The sometimes subtle differences of the old fake reveal the lasting value of philatelic knowledge and the caution necessary in distinguishing the genuine from the fraudulent. The general appearance of this fake can ensnare the unwary. Every collector should have a treasure trove of books and articles to which they regularly refer. There is never just one source. *Caveat Emptor.*



Figure 4. Numbered characteristics of the Old Fake. Numbers correspond to the list found on pages 8-9.