

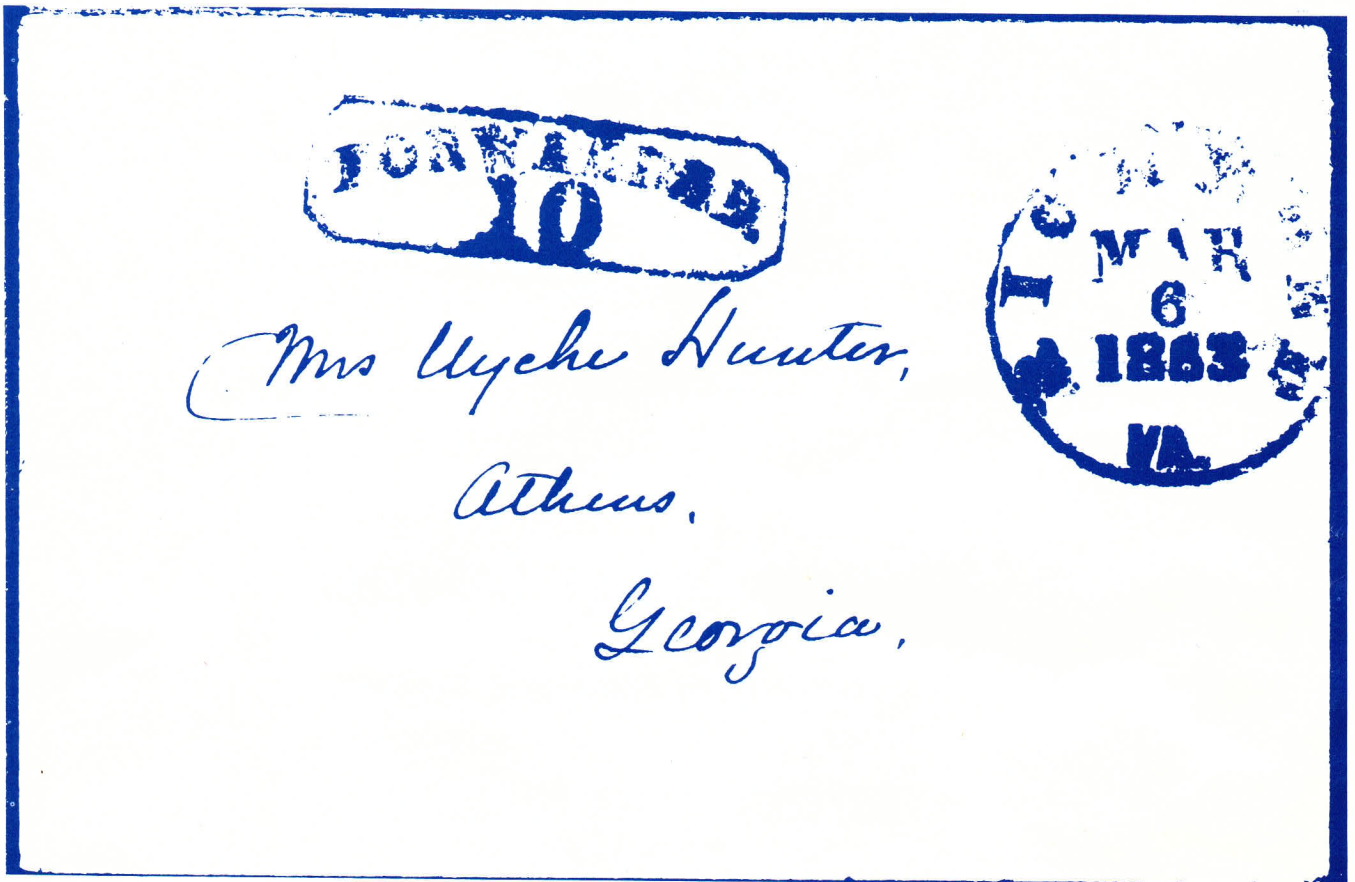
SMUGGLED CORRESPONDENCE FROM BALTIMORE

By Brian and Patricia Green

The cover shown, bearing not only highly desirable Confederate Virginia postal markings, but with the original enclosures as well, gives an interesting insight into the difficulties of communicating across the lines. Though this could possibly be a through-the-lines cover, it is the authors' opinion that instead of using the normal routes through Point of Rocks, Port Tobacco, or Waterford, Maryland, that this correspondence was smuggled by a paroled Confederate prisoner of war, returning from incarceration in Fort McHenry, Maryland to Georgia.

The cover contained two letters originating in Baltimore, to the writer's sister. The first is dated December 14 and the second December 16, 1862. They relate past attempts to correspond with persons in the South.

The first letter mentions the failure to secure a pass to go South; the battle of Antietam; the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation; and methods of forwarding letters via blockade runners from Charleston to France and return through Havana or Nassau.



also found in color, other than black. Blue, violet or magenta, or lavender shades seem to be the most common but red, and brown are occasionally seen. Deep amber or yellow is rather elusive.

Other spheres of collecting interest can include coated cards, earliest reported use of a card to the known official date of release, and the most recent development which is tagging with a luminescent material. Obviously for as many different ideas the mind can conjure, so there will be some specialties of collecting interests.

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The following is excerpted from the first letter:

"I have written to you many times of late, hoping that some of my letters might reach you.... If you would forward your letters to someone in Charleston, I think I would get them, for vessels can secretly run the blockade from that port - I should be thankful for a line to tell me that you are all well. There are so many Southern ports from which vessels sail - If you sent them to Dr. Johnston, 12, Rue St Arnaud, Paris he would forward them to me but from Nassau, or Cuba, or any of those ports I should get them..."

The second letter mentions the discovery of a wounded Confederate officer about to be exchanged. As he was from the Athens, Ga. area, the writer decided to have him take her letters with him upon his exchange. Excerpts from the second letter read as follows:

"You do not know how delighted I am, at the prospect of sending a letter to you at last....I owe this fortunate chance to Lillie, who has discovered in the hospital here (note: probably Fort McHenry as West's Hospital did not have Confederate prisoners until August of 1863) a young officer.... from Green County, Georgia....If he will only take this letter with him to Georgia I shall be a happy woman...."

The correspondence was duly delivered to the Confederate officer, who no doubt carried it with him on the way to the exchange ground at City Point, Va., located just below Richmond on the James River. In late 1862, this had become the exchange site for mail and prisoners, and continued as such to the end of the War.

Whether or not the officer continued on to his home or rejoined his unit is not known. However, the letter was deposited in the mails at the Richmond Post Office, where it received the scarce boxed "FORWARDED/10" handstamp, and was postmarked with Dietz Type 4 Richmond postmark, dated Mar. 6, 1863. At long last, the writer's hope of communicating with her sister was about to be realized.

In the authors' opinion, the "FORWARDED/10" marking was used for one of two reasons. Either the officer had no funds with which to prepay the postage, or more likely, it was to indicate its civilian status as opposed to the use of the Soldiers' Due markings reserved for the military, although this was violated at times.

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THE VIRGINIA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The Virginia Postal History Society, Unit 41 of the American Philatelic Society, is delighted to be able to make the first presentation of its Governor Patrick Henry Trophy for the best exhibit of Virginia postal history at BALPEX-72. This award and others of the Society are offered to stimulate interest in the rich postal history of the Old Dominion.

The VPHS, organized in 1970, is devoted to the study of Virginia's postal history and meets monthly in various Virginia cities to hear programs presented by its members. Membership is nation-wide. The Society also publishes a quarterly journal, WAY MARKINGS, edited by Dr. Daniel C. Warren, which contains original articles on Virginia postal history. Other publication projects are also planned.

You are cordially invited to attend our annual meeting to be held at BALPEX-72; the time and place will be announced. Information regarding the Virginia Postal History Society may be obtained from the Secretary.

Our sincere congratulations to BALPEX-72 and a warm welcome to all collectors.

Peter W. W. Powell, President
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