



Provenance Marking of R.L. Deitrick – Early 1900s Dealer

Provenance is a record of ownership from an item's earliest existence, essentially a legal chain of custody, whether in postal history or any other area of collectibles. It helps establish pedigree and authenticity.

Stamps or covers with a demonstrable pedigree are more coveted. A cover that was once owned by Caspary, Ferrary, or another famous collector tends to whet our philatelic appetite. Many such markings are familiar to us, if we are serious students.

Knowing who owned an item and being able to track it via auction catalogues or articles is helpful not only in establishing lineage but in determining whether an item has been altered, forged or restored to a greater or lesser degree. This continues to get easier in the age of technology.

More than a decade ago, I added a section to my website illustrating provenance markings and signatures of philatelic owners, dealers and experts in the field of Confederates. It has a great deal of overlap with markings found on U.S. and worldwide material, as few collectors have or had only Civil War material in their collections.

Since inception, I have made countless additions, changes, and corrections—many thanks to readers sharing information. Such is the fluidity of publishing on the web. Not surprisingly, other dealers are the most frequent contributors, as they tend to see more stamps and covers than the average collector.

Such was the case recently when colleague and good friend John Kimbrough sent me an image of a handstamp not in my files, along with a brief biography from his preliminary search on the dealer handstamp of R.L. Deitrick, shown in Figure 1. It is a light purplish handstamped replica of Deitrick's signature. As it turned out, we had both seen the dealer handstamp before, years ago, but neither of us remembered it.

The cover is franked with a Scott CSA 12, 10¢ Jefferson Davis stamp tied by a red Petersburg, Virginia, circular datestamp dated November 15 (1864). It is addressed to Dr. R.M. Young of Greenville, So. Carolina, which address has been lined through

and then forwarded to Sandy Plains, Polk County, No Ca, with a manuscript "forwd 10" (forwarded 10¢) that was applied in Greenville, representing payment of the forwarding fee. The cover is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Front of the forwarded cover on which the subject Deitrick handstamp was found.

The back of the cover, shown in Figure 3, is cluttered with mostly pencil notations from the dealers or collectors who handled the cover over the years. It passed through the hands of late prominent collectors David Kohn (his is the blue Star-of-David

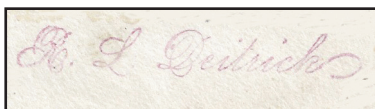


Figure 1. R.L. (Robert Lee) Deitrick purple backstamp used on backs of covers.



Figure 3. Reverse of cover on which the subject Deitrick handstamp was found, surrounded by other collector and dealer markings.

handstamp) and John R. Hill, Jr. Deitrick may have been the first philatelist to handle the cover, as I recognized no one earlier than him, unless it was Kohn. Also noted was Sampson with an old Scott designation of 211 instead of the current Scott numbering system for Confederates. Sampson likely referred to E.N. (Nort) Sampson who edited the 1965, 1971, and 1978 editions of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*. Kimbrough also owned the cover once before in 2012. Dealer Jim Taff's code is noted in the lower lefthand corner. Even I had seen this cover before, as my handwriting is at bottom right. The encircled auction lot number 1062 was added when making up old photo plates for Kaufmann Auctions during the 1970s or 1980s. I don't have the motivation to look through 142 catalogues to figure out in which sale it was sold. My late husband John Kaufmann's code was above that, the encircled CC.

Robert Lee Deitrick – Turn of the Century Stamp, Coin, and Antiquaries Dealer

Robert Lee Deitrick (1870-1938) was a Confederate stamp dealer from Virginia in the early 1900s. He worked at various trades, to wit, telegraph operator, boarding house owner, paint and hardware merchant, and most importantly as a dealer in old newspapers, Civil War relics, paper money, stamps, and coins. He was deeply interested, knowledgeable, and active in all aspects of collecting, despite remarks made by some modern numismatic historians who characterize him as mainly a stamp dealer.

Deitrick lived and worked from the family home in Tuckahoe, Virginia, in Henrico County near Richmond. He lived with his mother and brother, and he never married. Deitrick used a mailing address at Lorraine, Virginia, where he was appointed postmaster on February 14, 1891. In 1890, he began selling Confederate paper money and published his first annual edition of *Deitrick's Paper Money Catalogue*. Additionally, he published a semi-annual *List of Rare Coins and Fractional Currency, Bought and Sold* (1890). Deitrick wrote and published a standard catalogue of Confederate paper money in 1912. Figure 4 shows one of his Rare Coins and Fractional Currency booklets.

According to Numismaticmall.com, in 1896, Deitrick published on the back cover of his List No. 12, that he was a member of the Sons of Philately, No.1395, and Philatelic Society of America, No. 984. If anyone has information on either of those groups, I would be most interested in any details you can provide. I checked with the American Philatelic Society (APS) and was told they never had a member by the name of Deitrick. He joined the American Numismatic Association (ANA) in 1909.

On page 182 of the *Virginia Philatelist* (VP), Volume 2, No. 8, April 1899, is listed "R. L. Deitrick of Lorraine, Va., Telegrapher. Refs. Roy B. Bradley, W.C. Lowry, Aug. Dietz." Detrick applied for membership in the Virginia Philatelic Association (VPA) at the same time as 28-year old H.E. Deats. Hiram Edmund Deats was a revered collector born the same year as Deitrick. He was also interested in both stamps and coins. Application information was

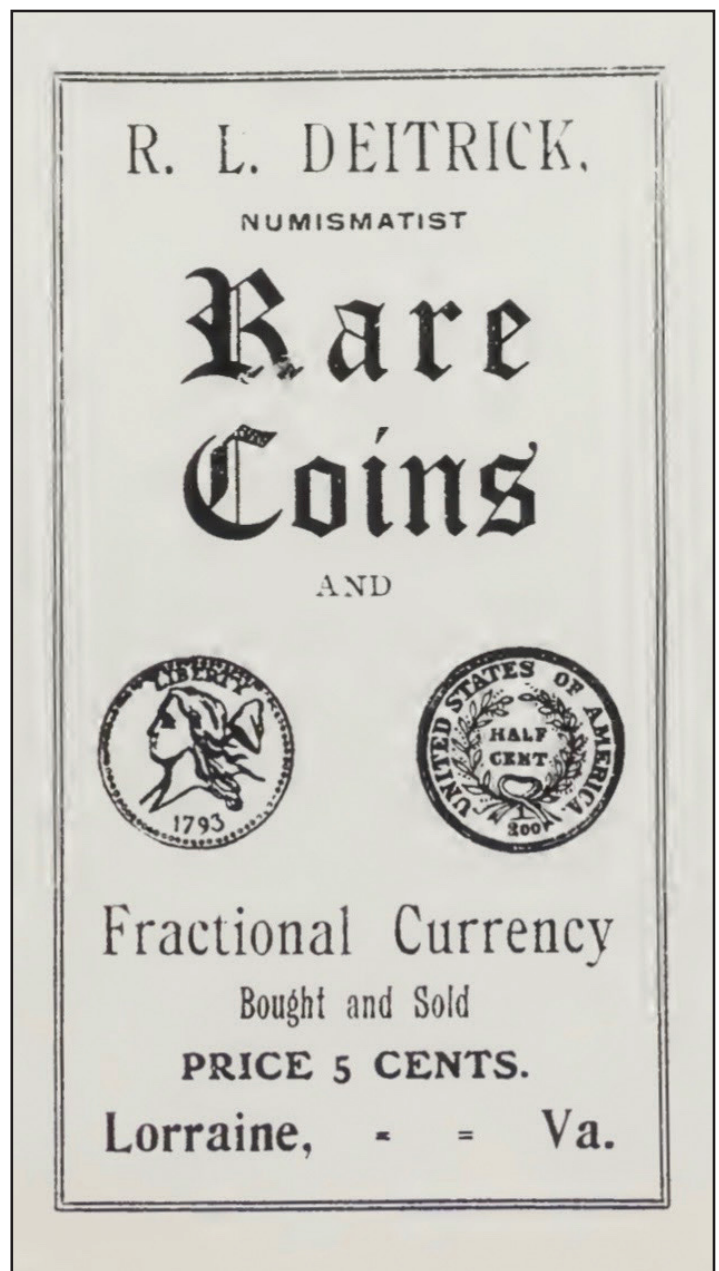


Figure 4. R.L. Deitrick, Numismatist, a price list for Rare Coins and Fractional Currency.

printed in the *Virginia Philatelist* as the official organ of both VPA and the Southern Philatelic Association (SPA). On the same page, was a movement spearheaded by August Dietz to consolidate the VPA with the SPA, which later became the Society of Philatelic Americans, which was disbanded in the early 1980s. While some belonged to either the APS or the SPA as large general philatelic organizations, a number of collectors belonged to both. I did. I served on both boards.

In Deitrick's List No. 12, he published:

Wanted for cash Confederate stamps used or unused confederate and busted bank notes all kinds small or large quantities. Dealers send lowest wholesale quotations. Send 8c for my catalogue of old paper money. R. L. Deitrick, Lorraine, Va.

It is said that Deitrick ran his business on a shoestring budget and that his early correspondence is usually found on recycled paper and defunct unused postal stationery envelopes bought by the box at a fraction of the postal value. While much historical information on Deitrick was found on the *Newman Numismatic Portal* at Washington University in St. Louis, I found the most information about his business online at numismaticmall.com – the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Numismatic and Philatelic Biographies*, founded by John N. Lupia, III. This resource illustrates Deitrick ads in numerous philatelic publications, as well as national magazines such as *Popular Mechanics*.

One Deitrick ad promoted: “Confederates States 5¢ London Print, complete sheets of 100, full gum, Cat. Value \$25. Thick paper, price \$6.50.” The problem with this statement is that “thick paper” would make it the Richmond Print on local paper (Scott CSA 7-R), not the Deitrick-advertised London Print (Scott CSA 6) on thin slick paper.

Deitrick ran a half-page ad in the July 1902 issue of *Philatelic West* which proclaimed: “Established 1890 Largest Dealer in U.S.A.” (of old Confederate paper money) although there were numerous other noteworthy dealers of Confederate paper money at the time.

The illustrated Deitrick ad in Figure 5 ran in the *Canada Stamp Sheet*, June 1, 1903, on page 242, per the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Numismatic and Philatelic Biographies*.

FOR SALE.

Civil War Newspapers, Confederate Stamps, Bonds, Money and War Relics, United States Fractional Currency, Broken Bank Bills, Continental Money. Send 10c. for latest catalogue—24 pages.


R. L. DEITRICK,
Lorraine, Va.

Figure 5. R.L. Deitrick ad as seen in the *Canada Stamp Sheet*, June 1, 1903, page 242.

Deitrick advertised both stamps and notes, as seen in the *Virginia Philatelist* at the turn of the 20th century. Figure 6 shows one of his Confederate stamp ads therein, offering general issues and more, while Figure 7 solicits for Confederate notes and offers a 20-page selling-list for 10¢.

Deitrick and Dietz Stir the Pot

In the May 1899 *Virginia Philatelist*, page 146, it was reported that a stamp dealer named W.C. Bailey, who advertised in the *Michigan Philatelist*, sold Deitrick fake Confederate stamps. Bailey



Collect Confederates!

The Most Rare and Interesting Stamps of our Country.

To start you, I will send a 2c pink for **only 10 cents.**

I can supply any Confederate stamp of the General Issue, and have a few good locals, many U. S. and Revenues, Confederate Money, etc., etc.

Write me.

R. L. DEITRICK,

Lorraine, Virginia.

Reference: Editor and Bus. Mgr. THE VA. PHIL.

Figure 6. *Virginia Philatelist* ad by Deitrick offering “The most rare and interesting stamps of our country.”

Cash Paid for Confederate Notes.

\$1000 Bust of Calhoun, issued 1861..	\$8.25
\$500 Cattle at Brook,	10.00
\$100 Train of Cars at Depot “	2.00
\$50 Three Negroes in Field “	2.25
\$50 Two Females, “	1.25
\$100 Train Cars, “	1.00
\$5 Manouvier, “	1.50
\$100 and \$50 black and green, 1862-63 ea. 100	.02
\$20 \$10 \$5 \$2 \$1 “ ea. 100	.10
\$500 C. S. A. Flag, issued 1861..	per 100 2.00
\$100 \$50 \$2 \$1 “	per 100 .50
\$20 \$10 \$5 and 50c “	per 100 .50

Broken Bank Bill bought at 1c to 5c each.
Send 10c for 20 page selling list.

R. L. Deitrick, Lorraine, Va.

Figure 7. *Virginia Philatelist* ad offering “Cash Paid for Confederate Notes” by R.L. Deitrick of Lorraine, Va.

was the business manager of the *Coldwater Star* of Coldwater, Michigan.

Deitrick sent the questionable stamps and pertinent information to the editor of the *Virginia Philatelist*, the well-known August Dietz, Sr., historically acknowledged as the Father of Confederate Philately.

Dietz was hot on the warpath after Bailey, declaring:

It is our determination to spare no effort in hunting down the philatelic fraud and counterfeiter—to punish him in the pillory of the philatelic press, and to lead in the war of extermination of the entire brood.

This case has attracted our special attention on account of the Confederate stamps which figure very prominently therein, and, with the consent of Mr. Deitrick, who assumes

all responsibility in the matter, we narrate the case, printing a letter from WC Bailey.

Dietz went on to describe Deitrick's receipt of a 4-page pricelist from Bailey with a February 4, 1899-dated letter in which he states he is closing out his stamp business and offers to sell better-class stamps at "one-fourth catalogue price, and in many cases even less."

Dietz denounced all the offered stamps as rank counterfeits. He stated:

Mr. Deitrick is as well posted on the issues of the Confederacy as any man in Virginia, and this one time Bailey 'struck a snag.'

Deitrick affirmed in print, "I heartily approve of this notice."

You might have thought that was the end of the story. But no. In the next issue of the *Virginia Philatelist*, on page 189, Volume 2, No. 9., May 1899, Dietz reprinted a described "wail" from the *Michigan Philatelist*, in which the publisher and/or editor rant (it was unsigned) that he/they think W.C. Bailey (an advertiser in same) is "an honest and upright man." They wrote to Bailey regarding the Dietz "slander." In reply, Bailey said he had the Confederate locals (provisionals) catalogued by a "good philatelist" (obviously, not very) whom he paid for doing the work, and that he had no reason to think them fakes.

Dietz states that Mr. Deitrick is prepared to exhibit the counterfeit stamps and all letters at a forthcoming convention.

Deitrick and the Chapman Brothers

While looking for information on Deitrick, I stumbled onto a listing on Amazon for a bound volume advertised (in part) as follows:

Deitrick, Robert Lee, 1901-1904 (Dealer in Confederate Stamps, Paper Money, Etc., for Collections, Lorraine, Virginia) [ANS Chapman brothers business correspondence] 1869 [Leather Bound] \$73.84

Leather Binding on Spine and Corners with Golden Leaf Printing on round Spine (extra customization on request like complete leather, Golden Screen printing in Front, Color Leather, Colored book etc.) Reprinted in 2022 with the help of original edition published long back [1869] ... We found this book important for the readers who want to know more about our old treasure, so we brought it back to the shelves. Lang: - English, Pages 57.

The 1869 date on the Amazon offering refers to the Chapman brothers' correspondence, about which I previously knew nothing since I am not a numismatist. The American Numismatic Society (ANS) archives cleared up the mystery. ANS is the repository for the Chapman brothers' business correspondence, 1869-1949.

The ANS and ANA are both prominent organizations in the field of numismatics, but they have distinct focuses. ANS is a scholarly institution dedicated to the study of coins, currency, and related objects, while ANA is a membership organization primarily focused on the hobby of coin collecting.

Brothers S.H. (Samuel Hudson) Chapman (1857-1931) and Henry Chapman (1859-1935) began collecting stamps and other things by the age of ten. While still in their teens, the Chapmans went to work for an important coin dealer of the late nineteenth

century, John W. Haseltine (1838-1925) of Philadelphia where the Chapman brothers lived. The Chapman brothers eventually opened their own business, S.H. & H. Chapman, Numismatists and Antiquaries, in 1878.

When the ANA was founded in 1891, S.H. Chapman was charter member 29, Librarian and Curator, and Counterfeit Detector. Henry Chapman was charter member 28; he was elected to the Board of Trustees 1899-1901 and 1910-1912. He served as Vice President 1919-1920.

From 1879 to 1906, the Chapman company conducted 83 auction sales. The brothers dissolved their business partnership in 1906. S.H. continued to hold auctions on his own until 1924. Henry who continued until 1932, died in 1935. After Henry Chapman's death, his wife Helen carried on the business under his name until 1948.

The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Numismatic and Philatelic Biographies* displays several pieces of correspondence between Deitrick and the Chapman brothers. It is well worth searching out the website for not only this, but other interesting biographies describing collectors and dealers of yore, including more recent passings such as philatelic historian Stanley M. Bierman. A 1912 business letter from Deitrick to a client shown on the Numismaticall website shows his signature, which is clearly the same hand as the handstamped dealer marking that began this quest. Interestingly, his business stationery is headed "R. L. Deitrick Neumismatist" – said by John Lupia to be the Dutch way of spelling numismatist, although I could not find evidence of that after a brief search. It is an often misspelled word, although one would hope someone who is active in the hobby would not make such a mistake. His sales booklets spelled it in the commonly accepted fashion.

R. L. Deitrick is buried in the legendary Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, the final resting place for many American dignitaries including U.S. presidents, six Virginia governors, two Supreme Court justices, prominent authors, suffragists, and more. No surprise are the remains that include Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Major General J.E.B. Stuart (CSA Cavalry chief of the Army of Northern Virginia), 18,000 Confederate soldiers, and countless others of importance in the American Civil War.

It was a decidedly enjoyable journey finding out more about Deitrick and other early philatelic and numismatic collectors and dealers.

If you know of any provenance, expert, or owner markings that are worthy of inclusion on my website for items of the American Civil War era, I would be most anxious to see them. Please send at least a 300 dpi jpg or tif image or greater as well as anything and everything you know about the marking and on what it appears. Measurements of handstamped markings in millimeters would also be helpful. I am also looking to upgrade markings I already have. Send to trishkauf@comcast.net. I invite you to visit my provenance page at <https://www.trishkaufmann.com/provenance>

Acknowledgement: my sincere thanks to John Kimbrough for bringing the Deitrick handstamp to my attention, as well as his peer review and helpful suggestions.