

A COUNTRY DIVIDED:

EFFECTS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR ON THE MAILS

EXHIBIT FOCUS AND STRUCTURE: This exhibit tells the story of the American Civil War and its effects on the mails. It is arranged by the sections listed in the table shown at right. A colored block in blue ■ and/or gray ■ at the upper left of the first page in each chapter serves to identify Union and/or Confederate representation:

- The bold sub-header on each page at upper left indicates the postal system involved, year, and geographic location or direction traveled of the items displayed.
- The bold sub-header at upper right identifies the category of mail or type of item.
- ***Boldface, italicized*** statements describe important items, including the degree of rarity, supported by census data if available or based on the exhibitor's experience. Especially rare items are highlighted in a **red box**.

EFFECTS ON POSTAL SYSTEM: In 1860 the mails were the essential means of communication, augmented by the telegraph system, and were so important that the Postmaster General was a presidential cabinet member. With the secession of Southern states and formation of the new Confederate government, the postal system that once served an entire continent was divided into two separate entities:

- The Civil War's effects on the mails were felt on both sides of the conflict, but they were more severe in the South.
- Correspondence between the North and South was banned along with trade. The CSA postal system was inaugurated on 1 June 1861. Approximately 1,200 Southern postmasters who had previously sworn oaths to the US government resigned. Many were reappointed as CSA postmasters, while others were replaced. Railroads, stagecoaches and vessels that once carried the US mails now did so for the CSA.
- Southerners accustomed since 1851 to paying 3¢ for a letter—usually with an engraved, perforated stamp—now paid 5¢ or 10¢ a letter.
- The CSA's failure to provide stamps for months forced post offices to revert to handstamps and other provisional means of paying postage, and the stamps eventually furnished were crudely printed and lacked perforations. Shortages of paper and other materials forced Southerners to find creative ways to improvise, such as making envelopes from wallpaper and other materials, or reusing previously-mailed envelopes.
- The Federal coastal blockade and eventual conquest of the Mississippi River forced Southern correspondents to use blockade runners and special couriers to carry letters. The mails followed the soldiers, and prisoners of war sent and received letters that were exchanged under flags of truce at designated locations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The secession of states that started with South Carolina in 1860 was viewed by the Lincoln administration as a lawless act of insurrection, and the United States never recognized the legitimacy of the Confederate States. The war spanned four years, commencing with the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861 and concluding with the capture of Confederate president Jefferson Davis and the surrender of the major CSA armies in the spring of 1865. Approximately 625,000 soldiers on both sides, 2% of the entire population, died for their causes. The war was indirectly responsible for the assassination of one president, Abraham Lincoln, and the election of another, Ulysses S. Grant. The social, economic and political effects of slavery and emancipation reverberate to this day, almost 160 years later.

Every item has at least one certificate from The Philatelic Foundation or Confederate Stamp Alliance.

■	The Politics of 1860
■	Union and Secession
■	Commerce & Trade
■	Disruption of Mails
■	Across the Lines
■	CSA Provisional Postage
■	CSA Post Office Issues
■	In Search of Addressees
■	Postage Due
■	Patriotic Fervor
■	Wartime Adversity
■	Wartime Economy
■	War in the Southwest
■	Confederate Telegraphy
■	Confederate Colleges
■	CSA Government
■	Southern Waterways
■	Southern Railroads
■	Special Routes
■	Prisoner of War Mail
■	Civilian Flag of Truce
■	The War's End

THE POLITICS OF 1860

The Antebellum Period in American history, generally spanning the period from the end of the War of 1812 to the commencement of the Civil War in 1861, was characterized by the rise of abolition and the gradual polarization of the country between abolitionists and supporters of slavery. Growing belief in Manifest Destiny - the idea that America was destined to expand its civilization, culture and superior morality from coast to coast - increasingly divided the Northern and Southern states over the rights of slave owners and the issue of extending slavery to the new western states. In this context, the presidential election of 1860 served as the catalyst for the outbreak of the Civil War by splintering the Democratic Party into Northern and Southern factions and fostering the creation of a new Constitutional Union Party. The unified Republican Party, dominant in the North, won the election for Abraham Lincoln with only 40% of the popular vote and almost no support from the South. Voter turnout was 81.2%, the highest in American history to date.

US 1860-1861—North

1860 Campaign Envelopes

Campaign envelopes were used to promote each party's candidates. The production and use of pro-Lincoln envelopes was limited to the North.



Republican Party platform slogans in ribbons below portrait; US 3¢ 1857, 24 September 1860.

Beardless Lincoln three-quarter portrait facing right, with red and blue crossed waving flags and slogan "The UNION, it must and shall be preserved"; US 3¢ 1857, 1 November 1860.



THE POLITICS OF 1860

US 1860-1861—North and South

1860 Campaign Envelopes

Former Whigs and Know Nothings founded the Constitutional Union Party to preserve the Union by taking a neutral stance on slavery, nominating John Bell and Edward Everett.



Bell-Everett campaign cover used in New Hampshire and addressed to Boston; US 3¢ 1857, 13 August 1860.

Bell campaign cover over-printed "TRAITOR." in red, reflecting the mixed sentiments in both the North and South of his slavery-neutral position; US 3¢ 1857, 29 June 1861.



Vice President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky and Joseph Lane were nominated by the Southern, pro-slavery, Democratic Party. The Northern Democratic candidate was Stephen A. Douglas.



Breckinridge portrait and "Equality of State Rights" campaign label tied by S-bar grid in frame along with US 3¢ 1857 on cover from Montgomery AL; 17 October 1860. This label is rare and likely unique tied on cover.

UNION AND SECESSION

Following the election of 1860, the national focus shifted to whether the South would accept the outcome. Almost immediately, secessionists gained momentum and pushed states toward disunion and on 20 December, only a month and half after the election, South Carolina passed its Ordinance of Secession and formally left the Union. Five other southern states followed and on 4 February 1861 they formed the Confederate States at the convention held in Montgomery AL. This insurrection, as Lincoln's administration described it, led to the Confederate bombardment of Union-held Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor on 12 April 1861. Public sentiment for and against Union and Secession exploded in the aftermath of the surrender of Fort Sumter, and by summer the guns of war were heard around the world.

US 1861

South Carolina's Secession



US 3¢ 1857 on 3¢ red star die entire, paying double rate, Charleston SC to Upton MA, mailed on 20 December 1860, the date of South Carolina's secession and the beginning of the Civil War.

US 1¢ 1857 type IV, strip of three, from Charleston SC to Greenville SC, 18 January 1861, on wholesale grocer's cameo corner card cover.



South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union. The top cover was mailed on 20 December 1860, the date of secession, and the bottom cover was mailed approximately three weeks after secession and two weeks before the formation of the provisional Confederate government at Montgomery, demonstrating that many things—including operation of the Post Office—initially remained unchanged despite the winds of war.

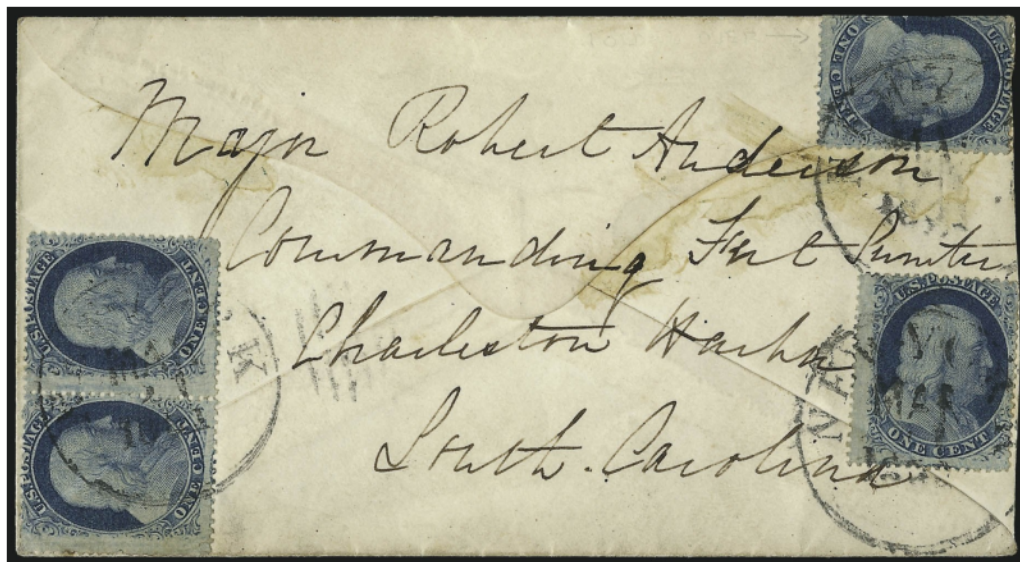
UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861

Montgomery Convention and the Siege of Fort Sumter

On 4 February 1861, six seceded states - South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana - met in Montgomery AL to select leaders and establish a provisional Confederate government. The convention sat in Montgomery until 20 May 1861, when it adjourned to Richmond VA, where it completed a permanent constitution and held its first and only presidential election in November 1861. The Union government rejected the claims of secession and considered the Confederacy illegally founded. The War began with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861.

US 3¢ 1857, Charleston SC to Lafayette LA, mailed on 4 February 1861, the date the provisional Confederate government was formed in Montgomery AL by the six seceded states and sent from the state that seceded first.



29 March 1861 from Lieutenant General Winfield Scott in New York City to "Major Robert Anderson, Commanding Fort Sumter, Charleston Harbor, South Carolina," approximately two weeks before the siege of Fort Sumter; the US 1¢ 1857 stamps and address were placed over the flaps to prevent opening without detection.

The letter from General Scott that this envelope carried to Major Anderson is now in the Library of Congress. General Scott reprimanded Major Anderson for making comments about conditions at Fort Sumter: "I have heard of your declaration to Col. Lamon, indicating a desperate purpose. I forbid it as your commander, it being against your duty both as a soldier & Christian."

On 11 April 1861, General Beauregard sent representatives demanding the surrender of the fort, and on 12 April the Confederate shelling of the fort began, continuing for 34 hours before Major Anderson agreed to evacuate.

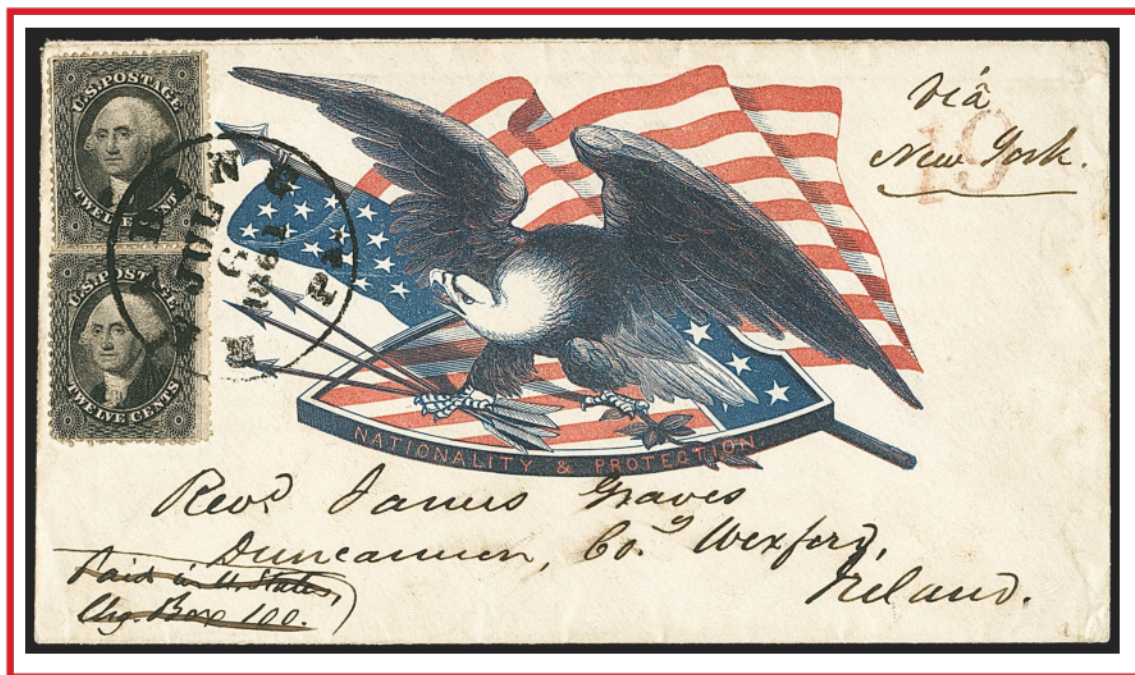
UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—North

Early Pro-Union Envelopes

By the early months of 1861 the first envelopes printed with patriotic flags and slogans began to appear. Following the surrender of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, Northern use of patriotic stationery exploded. At the same time, Southerners in the newly-formed CSA and sympathizers in states still part of the Union began using envelopes with their own pro-Confederate designs. This section displays examples from this early period of the war.

34-star red and blue flag with "Freedom's Soil" patriotic poem—used with US 3¢ 1857 in May 1861 and typical of the earliest designs.



This multicolor design depicting an Eagle, Shield and Flag in support of "Nationality and Protection" originated in Reading, PA, 6 July 1861, and was sent to Ireland. The 24¢ postage paid by two copies US 12¢ Black 1857, arranged as a vertical pair, lower stamp has double frameline at right. Red numeral "19" credit handstamp and receiving backstamp.

UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—North

Early Pro-Union Envelopes



An early and spectacular multicolor design depicting the Union eagle destroying the eleven secession snakes (one for each state) and the CSA flag in tatters at lower left; portraits of Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun in the corners; Harback & Sons imprint; used with US 3¢ 1857, 3 September 1861 in Vermont.

Text on back reads: The destruction of the Snake of South Carolina, Nullification and Secession, and all her progeny by the National Bird. To portray the ultimate overthrow of the evil power, which strikes at the life of the National Government, is the object of this cut.

Elephant with US flag stepping on the “hungry rat” of secession—published by Murphy & Sons in NYC; used with US 1¢ 1857 stamps, 29 August 1861.



Although the origin of the Republican elephant is attributed to a Thomas Nast cartoon published in 1874, this extremely rare Civil War patriotic shows a US elephant crushing the “hungry rat” of secession.

UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—North

Early Anti-Secessionist Cartoons



Berlin & Jones
 "Repudiation" cartoon
 depicting the "South"
 refusing to pay invoices
 for Northern
 merchandise; used with
 US 3¢ 1857, 26
 December 1861.

Very unusual
 cartoon depicting
 CSA soldiers with
 shadows showing
 them hanged; US
 3¢ 1857, 28 July
 1861.



Early cartoon
 showing a freed
 slave walking away
 from "Massa Davis"
 hanged from a
 tree—used 30 June
 1861 with US 3¢
 1857 from
 Baltimore, where
 there were many
 pro-secessionists.

UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—North

Early Anti-Secessionist Cartoons



Early cartoon depicting "Good Noose for Traitors," used from Jersey City NJ with US 1¢ 1857 stamps, 2 July 1861.

Cartoon depicting Jefferson Davis being carried off by an American Eagle with freed slaves below; used from Boston MA with US 3¢ 1857, 8 July 1861.



Hand-colored Berlin & Jones cartoon depicting Northern Uncle Sam reaching out with an American flag in an attempt to save the South, which has fallen into alligator-infested "secession" waters; used from New York with US 3¢ 1857.

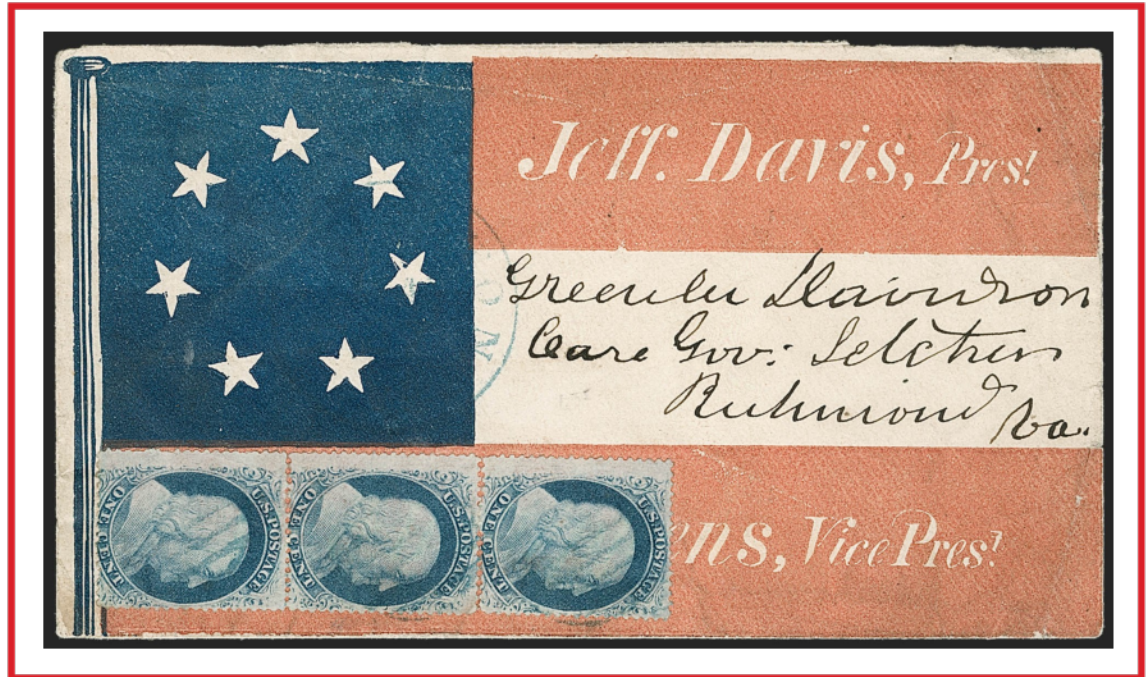
UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—South

Early Pro-Confederate Envelopes

On 9 February 1861, Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens were elected Provisional President and Vice President, respectively, of the CSA. On 11 March 1861 a permanent Constitution was adopted, and the only CSA presidential election ever held took place on 6 November 1861, with the candidates running unopposed.

7-Star Confederate Flag design with names of Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens as President and Vice President under the provisional constitution of February 1861; sent from Lexington VA on 26 May 1861 to Richmond VA; US 1¢ 1857 type IV, strip of three, within the US postal system that still operated in the South.



Black Jefferson Davis Medallion, 7-Star Flags and Sunburst Patriotic design and "Our Flag SC" Patriotic label; sent from Brandon MI on 19 May 1861 with US 3¢ 1857 to Liberty VA. The "SC" in the label stands for "Southern Congress."

Rare South Carolina Palmetto State flag design; sent from Charleston SC on 18 April 1861 with US 3¢ 1857 to Chester C.H. SC.



UNION AND SECESSION

US 1861—South

Early Pro-Confederate Envelopes

The covers below show use of US stamps in the CSA after formation of the CSA on 4 February 1861 and prior to the commencement date of the CSA postal system on 1 June 1861. The 7-Star flag was the official Confederate flag from March 4, 1861 until the admission of Virginia on May 7, 1861.



7-Star CSA Flag design printed in Charleston SC. Sent from Charleston to Ridgeway SC on 3 May 1861 with US 3¢ 1857—the siege of Fort Sumter and its surrender occurred a few weeks before this cover was mailed.

7-Star Confederate Flag design. Sent from Dalton GA to Tuscumbia AL in May 1861 with US 3¢ 1857.



7-Star CSA Flag and "Steamer Vicksburg, R. Holmes, Master" steamboat corner card design. Sent from Vicksburg MI to Zanesville OH on 11 April 1861, the day before the attack on Fort Sumter, with US 3¢ 1857, single and pair.

Unique Confederate Patriotic steamboat advertising cover

COMMERCE AND TRADE

The South's agrarian economy relied on slave labor, the exportation of cotton and the importation of manufactured goods. The North's coastal blockade and eventual control over inland waterways strangled the South's import-export economy, and the gradual degradation of the South's railroad system from military attacks and disrepair severely impeded commerce and trade within the CSA. These circumstances led to food and material shortages, hoarding and speculation, the government's inability to generate revenue, hyper-inflation and the loss of credit in the financial markets. Conversely, the Union had an adequate food supply, an extensive rail network that enabled the rapid movement of men, weapons and goods, and a vastly superior manufacturing base that enabled it to supply its soldiers with adequate weapons and ammunition. This section displays covers that reflect Southern commercial activity and use of the Northern postal system at the beginning of the War, prior to suspension of postal service to the seceded Southern states.

US 1861—South

Charleston SC Advertising Envelopes



Corner card of Smith & Porter, a machinist and engineering firm, to another engineering firm in New York City, US 3¢ 1857, 11 January 1861.

Charleston Hotel advertising cover with name of proprietor, Daniel Mixer, who died from cholera months after 7 January 1861 mailing date; US 3¢ 1857.



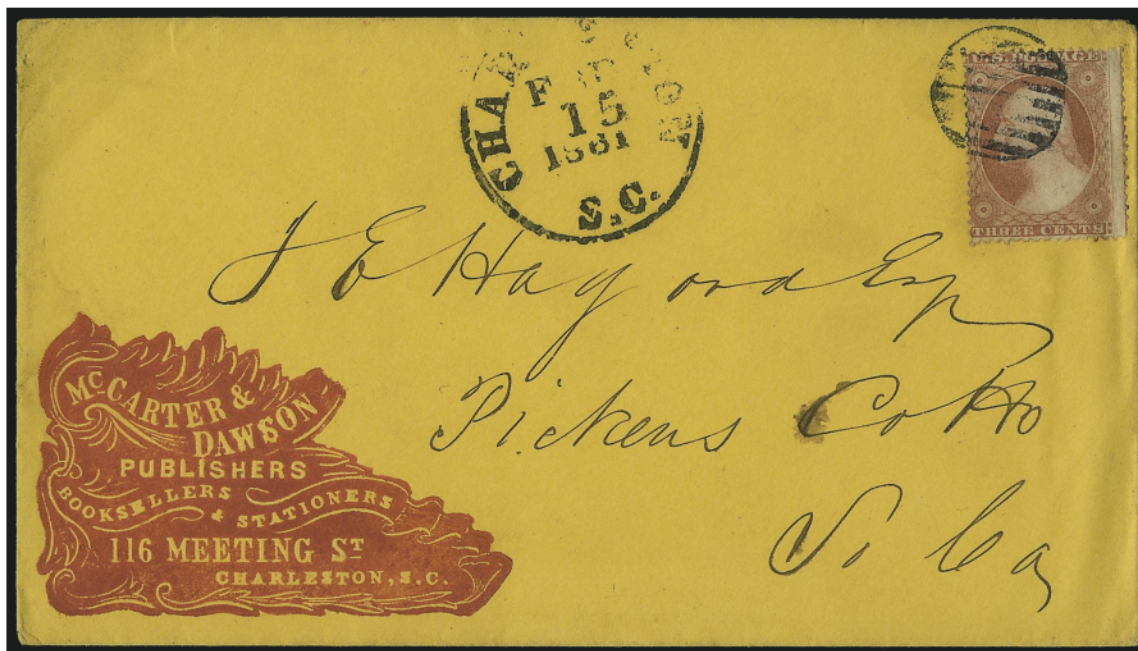
Both covers mailed from Charleston during South Carolina's independent statehood period after secession on 20 December 1860 and before formation of the CSA on 4 February 1861.

COMMERCE AND TRADE

US 1861—South

Woodcut Cameo Corner Cards

High-quality printed envelopes with cameo designs made from woodcuts were used throughout the South prior to the war, but since they were produced almost entirely in the North, these envelopes became increasingly scarce after 1861.



McCarter & Dawson, publishers, booksellers and stationers



George W. Williams & Co., wholesale grocers

Both covers mailed with US 3¢ 1857 from Charleston on the same day, 15 February 1861, after South Carolina joined the CSA on 4 February 1861 and before the CSA postal system began operation on 1 June 1861.

COMMERCE AND TRADE

US 1861—South

Transatlantic Mail from CSA to Europe

Even after Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of coastal ports in the seceded states in April 1861, mail from the South addressed to foreign countries continued to be carried through the US postal system to northern ports from which regular transatlantic sailings departed. Regular mails stopped in June 1861.

30¢ rate to Italy
via French Mail



Sent from New Orleans on 5 March 1861, after Louisiana joined the CSA, to Palermo, Italy, arriving on 3 April, shortly after the unification of Italy—carried on Galway Line's *Adriatic* from NYC to Queenstown—red "27" credit crossed out and rated "47" due.



5¢ rate to Spain
via British
Open Mail

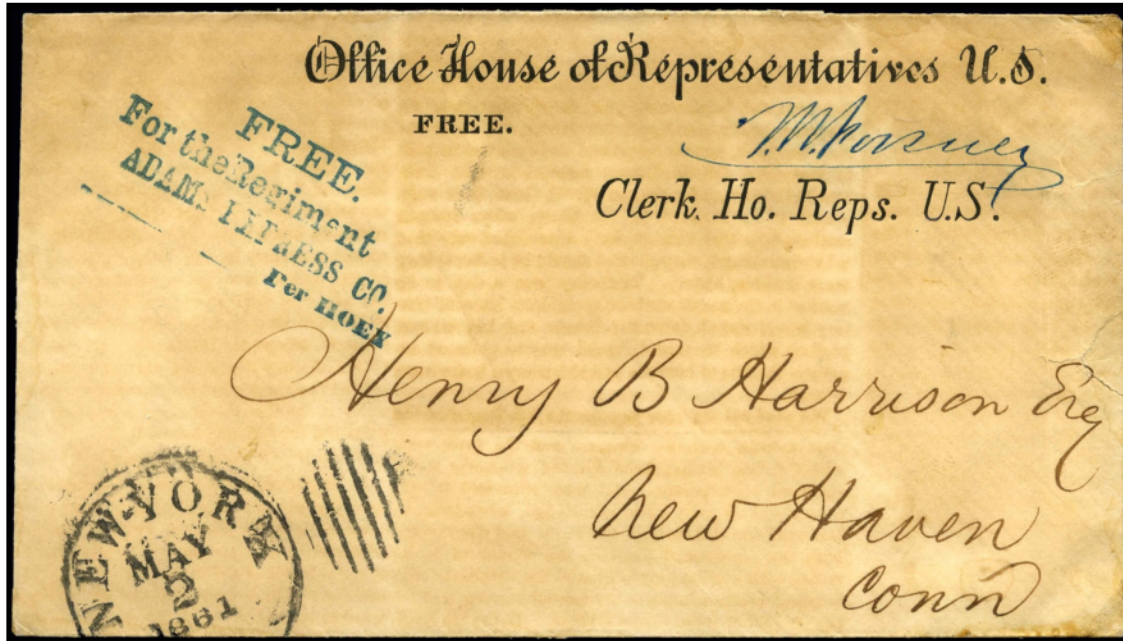
Sent from New Orleans on 14 March 1861 after Louisiana joined CSA—carried on the Cunarder *Niagara*, departing Boston 20 March, arriving in Queenstown 2 April.

DISRUPTION OF MAILS

The surrender of Fort Sumter led to Lincoln's call for troops on 15 April 1861 and a naval blockade of Southern ports. Mail routes to and from Washington DC were disrupted by riots in Baltimore in April, and the US Post Office Department closed the Washington-Richmond route in late May. After the Louisville-Nashville route was closed in early June, mail between the North and South was carried by private express companies until they were banned from carrying mail in August 1861. Flag-of-truce mail exchanges and covert routes were used thereafter.

US 1861—North from Capital

Adams Free Regimental Express

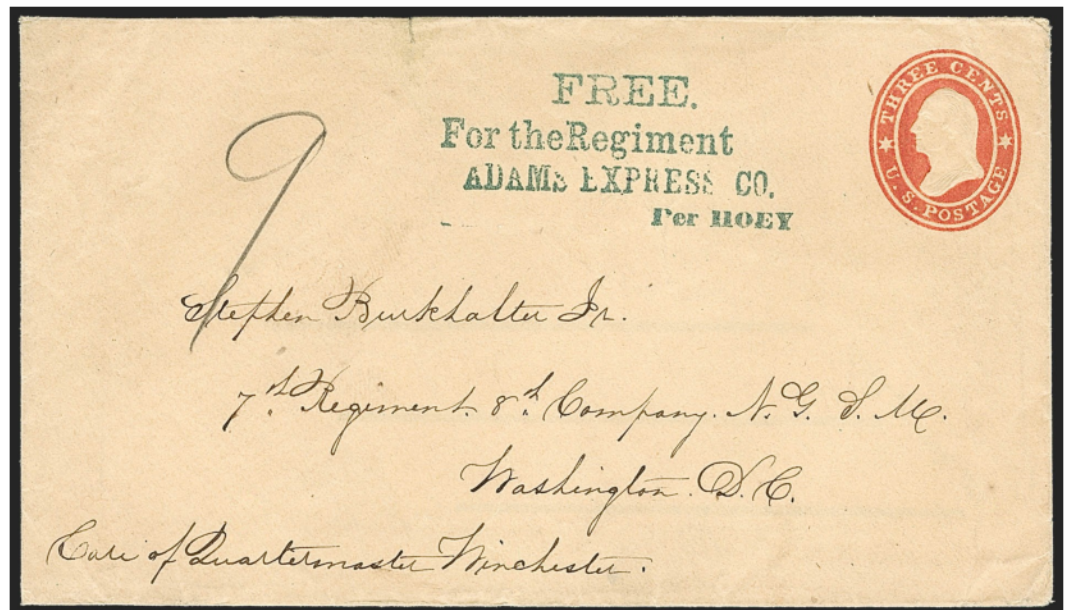


Northbound Route

Blue "FREE./For the Regiment/ADAMS EXPRESS CO./Per HOEY" four-line handstamp applied at the company's New York City office; entered US mails with 2 May 1861 datestamp and sent to New Haven CT—no postage charged on the House of Representatives Free envelope.

Southbound Route

Greenish blue "FREE./For the Regiment/ADAMS EXPRESS CO./Per HOEY" four-line handstamp to member of New York State Militia 7th regiment, on 3¢ red star die entire. This example is unusual because it is one of the few showing the use of a 3¢ stamped envelope, a requirement according to the published notices and postal laws, but apparently often ignored.



After Virginia's vote to secede on 17 April, the North's capital in Washington DC was exposed to CSA invasion from the South. US troops sent to defend the capital were attacked on 18-19 April by pro-secession mobs in Baltimore. No post office mail was carried to or from Washington from 20 April until the evening of 25 April. When the lines were restored and the capital was secured on 25 April, Adams Express started carrying mail and packages free of charge for the 7th Regiment NYSM and others defending the capital, with John Hoey as the company's agent in New York City and Col. Locke W. Winchester, quartermaster-general for the 7th Regiment NYSM, as supervisor in Washington DC.

DISRUPTION OF MAILS

US 1861—South to North, North to South

Private Expresses Before 15 June 1861

As early as February 1861, the express companies started carrying more letter mail, apparently at the request of patrons who were concerned about the security of government mails (delays, tampering, intelligence gathering, etc.). Express service prior to 15 June 1861 is classified as *Precursor Express Mail*, as it precedes the advertised across-the-lines service after closure of the Louisville-Nashville mail route. Covers traveled both North and Southbound.



Southbound: New York to Athens TN, 30 April 1861 via Chattanooga TN with matching "PAID" in oval handstamp.

"Adams. Express Co./Chattanooga/May 5" oval handstamp applied upon arrival the day before the secession referendum.

Northbound: New Orleans LA to Blooming Grove NY, 16 May 1861, entering US mails at New York City on May 23 for final leg to destination.

Manuscript "2/" (two bits, or 25c) express company charge at top left. The 3¢ entire was apparently accepted as full postage from New Orleans to New York and then to Blooming Grove.



Both 3¢ stamped envelopes carried by Adams Express across-the-lines, the top cover Southbound and the bottom cover Northbound. Adams had been carrying mail for months prior to the official commencement of the Confederate postal operations on 1 June 1861 and the May 27 suspension of Union mails in the seceded Southern states. However, there is no documentation or advertisements of the express mail during the precursor period from January to May 1861.