



The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

Figure 1. Leonard Hartmann's De La Rue exhibit which garnered Reserve Grand and Gold at St. Louis Expo 2016.

Collecting Confederates on a Shoestring Budget



Figure 3. Richmond, Virginia, soldier's letter. Content drives the price to \$300, rather than the markings on the cover.

Confederate stamps and postal history have a reputation for being expensive and they certainly can be. Collectors see sky-high auction prices and shy away from this fascinating category because they assume they can't afford it. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

So how and what do you collect if you don't have "deep pockets?"

I am often asked, "How much can I expect to pay?"

My answer is usually, "As much as you want." The more money you have, the more money you will typically spend. It is not unlike houses, boats, cars or other collectibles.

The first thing to determine is whether you want to collect and study stamps or covers or both. Both categories can be collected inexpensively, if you have a mind to. And both have wide opportunities for research and exhibiting, if you are so inclined.

Stamps. The Confederate government was unusual in that it issued stamps with the three different printing methods available at that time—lithography, typography and gravure (aka intaglio or engraved). This makes for a wide variety of potential subjects including corresponding varieties, color shades, perforated issues, color cancels, auxiliary markings and more.

Leonard Hartmann has developed world class exhibits of the



Figure 2. Trish Kaufmann presenting the 2010 CSA Trophy to Randy Neil for 1863-65 10-Cent CSA Steel Plate Issue exhibit.

lithographed issues and produced seemingly endless articles and plating studies on the topic, furthering our knowledge and understanding of what can be a very tricky area. Lithographed issues are not necessarily the cheapest to collect, but demonstrate what can be done if you are inclined to research, display and awaiting the proper items to illustrate your point.

More recently, Leonard has moved on to study the De La Rue typographed issues as well. He has had great success exhibiting both lithographed and typographed issues. Shown in Figure 1 is his De La Rue exhibit with earned ribbons for Reserve Grand and Gold at St. Louis Expo 2016.

Your magazine editor, Randy L. Neil, over the years has developed more than one exhibit on the engraved issues. He won the coveted CSA Trophy, the best of 27 CSA entries, for his exhibit at the 75th Anniversary of the Confederate Stamp Alliance held in Richmond in 2010 at APS StampShow (Figure 2). These are stamps that, in basic form, catalog only \$15-20. Varieties and shades understandably cost more but are still quite affordable. With proper study and display, they become something special. Collecting the various printer imprints (Confederate versions of today's U.S. plate blocks) and types can make an interesting display as well, whether it is the focus or part of a more encompassing study.

Figure 4. PAID 5 Cts. stampless cover from Richmond, Virginia, in standard condition.



Figure 5. PAID 10 stampless cover from Richmond, Virginia, in poor condition.



Figures 6, 7, 8. Examples of Confederate Army field cancels. CSA catalog types ANV-11, ANV-18, and ATN-b.

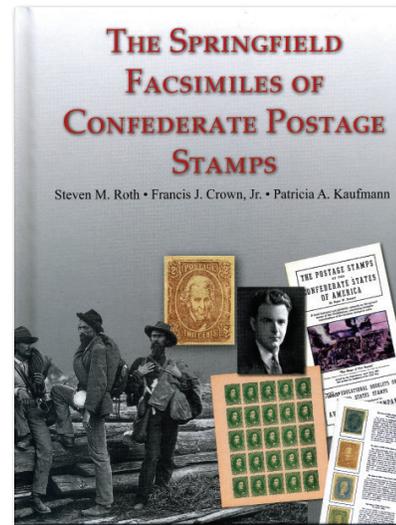


Figure 9. *The Springfield Facsimiles of Confederate Postage Stamps* by Steven M. Roth, Francis J. Crown, Jr., and Patricia A. Kaufmann

Covers. Obviously, rare provisionals on cover and unusual uses such as across the lines mail generate both great interest and a major drain on your wallet. What do you do if your resources are significantly more limited?

One-town collections—depending on the town—can be very reasonably priced, especially if you pick a city such as Richmond. Richmond produced a boundless amount of mail as the seat of political power, an industrial center, and a transportation hub. It was the terminus of five railroads, as well as a seaport with access to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Soldiers passed through the city daily in great numbers. Multiple prisons and hospitals dotted the landscape, producing interesting categories of mail that often have a story to tell, such as the Libby Prison Escape in February 1864, one of the most successful prison breaks of the Civil War via a rat-infested tunnel. Richmond covers provide wonderful opportunities for fascinating postal history selections.

Because of the wide variety of mail generated in Richmond, it has been well studied by students such as Peter W. W. Powell, who produced a book typing the many datestamps. Confederate students often collect Richmond by Powell postmark types.

But you not need collect only well-known towns. You can collect “Podunk” just as successfully and make your own study of it. The caveat is to pick a town where you can find a half-dozen covers. The caveat is not to pick a town where you can find only a half-dozen covers. Because of that, some collectors assemble a specific state or county instead of a town. Or they collect covers that have interesting enclosure, although sometimes a challenge to

find both letter and cover together.

The next three figures all show similar Richmond covers that are priced differently because of content or condition. The content of your wallet will likely dictate which one you would want to purchase.

Figure 3 shows a folded letter described as: RICHMOND / VA. // JAN / 1 / 1863 black cds (CC Type Q, CV \$100) struck off the right top of a small folded soldier’s letter with matching DUE 10 to Robert T. Hubard, Curdsville, Va. with mandated soldier’s endorsement at upper right in darling wavy lined manuscript box “R. T. Hubard, Jr. 3rd Va. Cavalry.” His letter says, in part, that while he has had a cold, etc., he fears “for our poor horses [which are] suffering dreadfully, and this is a cause of much anxiety and annoyance (they are basically starving to death)...Col. David J. Woodpin was here yesterday. He said there certainly are 3 French functionaries in Richmond, that they are stopping with our Cabinet officers and great secrecy is maintained concerning them. I rather doubt the story as our President is travelling in the Southwest. I think he would scarcely leave town while foreign ambassadors were there negotiating a treaty...The only excitement today is the examination by Cols. Roper, Mumford & Drake of a 1st Lt. ...I understand Foster has been whipping everything about the Mountain white and black and had a free fight with a negro at Tom Garrett...I think it likely part of our army will pursue Burnside if he attempts to retreat.” Lots more excellent content. Retail price \$300.

The higher price on the cover in Figure 3 is driven by the letter content.

Figure 4 is described as: RICHMOND / Va. // AUG / 9 / 1861 with matching PAID 5 Cts (CC Type F, CV \$100) on clean commercially made cover to Rev. Thomas H. Early, Charlottesville, Virginia. Retail price \$100.

The Figure 4 is what I would call a “standard” example of a Richmond stampless cover.

Figure 5 is described as: RICHMOND / Va. // JUL / 22 / 1861 with matching PAID 10 (CC Type H, CV \$100) on cover in peacock blue ink to J. L. Dillard, Crawford, Georgia; war weary. Retail price \$45.

Figures 3-5 all have a \$100 catalog value but are priced according to the added interest (letter content) or condition.

Another area is Army field cancels on soldiers’ covers. These covers come without town markings in an effort by troops to obscure their movements. Temporary camp post offices were run by postmasters who traveled with the Confederate armies to provide postal services to the troops in the field. Army field post offices often used special postal markings on the mail they handled. They can be collected by types from the CSA catalog. (Figures 6-8)

Soldiers’ covers are often exciting in other ways. They are popular because one can nearly always track corresponding soldiers through online archival sources. Confederate students collect by army units, by commanders, by war dates and so forth. Soldiers’ covers almost always have a story to tell.

Unlike today, envelopes generally did not have return addresses, but soldiers’ mail could be sent “due” and thus the name, rank and unit were supposed to be endorsed on the covers. That makes these covers a historical treasure hunt. Is it that difficult to decipher scribble from a general officer who was killed at Gettysburg? Did he die on the Mississippi river boat *Sultana* along with 1,800 other unfortunate souls on their way home from Andersonville Prison, after having endured the horrors of captivity?

The Confederate military generally used local civilian post offices to process their mails during the war. In some cases, military mail monopolized the civilian postmasters’ attentions. Thus, post offices such as Tudor Hall, Virginia, near Manassas, and other towns, are known mostly for their army-origin mail. These were not official army post offices. In a few cases, civilian offices were opened at personal, rather than official, initiative to specifically serve a nearby body of troops.

It was not until two years into the war that the Confederate Post Office Department established official post offices for the two principal armies--the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee. These army post offices traveled with their respective armies and processed their mail.

Stefan Jaronski has spent a philatelic lifetime studying military mail and publishing his findings in various journals to further our understanding of this popular area. He was the section editor for the CSA catalog. Figures 6-8 show a few of the types.

Another fun area to study and learn from is the very wide topic of fakes, fantasies and facsimiles. This is one of my personal collecting interests. It is preferable to collect them with a copy of the genuine stamp, although this not always possible. Add published articles or your own pages to explain what differentiates the pretender from the genuine.

This can be a reference collection of only stamps or you can add covers as well. If you do not already understand the genuine issues, it is an excellent way to learn as well.

One of two new sources of information on Confederate fakes

and facsimiles is Peter Powell and John Kimbrough’s *Confederate States of America Philatelic Fakes, Forgeries, and Fantasies of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, published in 2015 and winning well-earned literature awards.

The volume includes over 150 fake cancellations photographically illustrated in full color and compared to the genuine markings in large full color format. The descriptions are all original and never before published, including most known John A. Fox Confederate creations. In addition to the fake postmarks, the book also contains profuse illustrations of the fake general issue stamps, fake provisional stamps, and fantasies.

Another valuable new work is *The Springfield Facsimiles of Confederate Postage Stamps* by Steven M. Roth, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Patricia A. Kaufmann, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2017. This research study addresses the Springfield facsimiles, which were prepared by Howard E. MacIntosh of Tatham Stamp & Coin Co. (TASCO) in 1934. (Figure 9)

The Springfield examination presents the fascinating history and controversy that has swirled around these issues, but most importantly, it offers identifying characteristics and large visual comparisons between the genuine Confederate general issues, the facsimile die proofs created by August Dietz and copyrighted in 1919, and the Springfield facsimiles which were patterned after the Dietz facsimiles and produced by MacIntosh.

The Springfields continue to be offered as genuine issues every day somewhere online or in printed catalogs and have even made their way into major international exhibits. Most of the identifying characteristics revealed in this volume are the result of completely original research and careful examination by the authors and have not been published elsewhere, including the Powell/Kimbrough book. Both volumes on fakes are available from the author.

These are only a few examples of what you can relatively inexpensively. But, as with anything, it will depend on the length of your shoestring!

If Confederates are a new area for you, invest in books, catalogs and memberships first. Not already a member? Join the Confederate Stamp Alliance and American Philatelic Society, if not already a member. If possible, attend the annual and/or mid-year meetings, avail yourself of the many group resources such as websites, authentication services, mentor programs and the like.

Use reputable dealers who belong to the ASDA or are APS dealer members. If they do mainly local or regional shows, check to see if they are members of the Florida Stamp Dealers Association, Texas Stamp Dealers Association or whatever appropriate organization with codes of ethics.

For membership information and applications for the CSA and APS, write or email Trish Kaufmann, 10194 N. Old State Road, Lincoln DE 10060. Email: trishkauf@comcast.net

Endnotes:

¹*Confederate States of America, Markings and Postal History of Richmond, Virginia*, by Peter W. W. Powell, 1987.

²*Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, edited by Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012.

³Ibid

⁴Ibid

⁵Ibid