



Figure 1. A Confederate 10-cent blue frame line tied by Mobile, Ala. double circle postmark on cover fashioned from prewar letter, addressed to: 'Miss Ellen A. Shackelford, Care Hon. C.J. Munnerlyn, Bainbridge, Georgia.' The stamp has a full frame at the bottom, a partial at the lower left and a trace at right. Full four-frame frame-line stamps are quite rare as the frame lines were shared by adjacent stamps.

First Battalion Florida Special Cavalry 'Munnerlyn's Cow Cavalry'

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

A Confederate 10-cent frame-line stamp¹ franks the homemade cover in Figure 1. It is plated as position 82 on the verso in pencil and signed by the late illustrious philatelic student Stanley B. Ashbrook.

While most collectors today are familiar with Ashbrook as a student of U.S. stamps, particularly the 1-cent stamp of 1851-57, many don't realize that he was heavily involved with Confederate philately as well. He was among the first Confederate Stamp Alliance members as member number 2 (the first 81 members were arranged alphabetically) and he served on the first board of the CSA authentication committee along with CSA luminaries August Dietz Sr. and Lawrence Shenfield.²

The subject cover was sent, "Care of Hon(orable) C.J. Munnerlyn, Bainbridge, Georgia." The envelope is fashioned from a prewar letter, typical of the "adversity covers" that are represented by all types of paper products from which envelopes were produced during the war.

The scarcity of paper was caused by the South being cut off from supplies from both the industrial North and Europe by the early blockade of Southern ports.

The most well-known and popular use of paper to collectors was from spare rolls of colorful wallpaper, but all manner of paper products were used, including the fly-leaves of books, printed bank checks, military requisition forms, marine charts and so forth. All are extremely collectible.

Charles James Munnerlyn (1822-1898, Figure 2) was of Welsh-Irish origin of old Colonial stock.³ Munnerlyn's grandfather and six of his brothers fought in the Revolutionary War. Munnerlyn's parents were married in Georgetown, S.C. where he was born on February 14. In 1833 they moved to Gadsden County, Fla. His father was a successful planter and accumulated substantial property. As an only child, Munnerlyn inherited the estate, which included several hundred slaves and his father's plantation "Refuge," located south of Bainbridge near the Florida line.

He was educated at Emory College (now Emory University) at Oxford, Ga., and studied law under the celebrated Judge A.B. Longstreet, its president, after which he was admitted to the bar. He never entered into law practice, however, as his inclinations ran to other endeavors.

Here's how *The Atlanta Constitution* of Thursday, May 19, 1898, described him upon his death:

Colonel Charles Munnerlyn Dead⁴

Bainbridge, Ga., May 18 - (Special.) - Colonel Charles J. Munnerlyn died here last night after a protracted sickness at the age of seventy-six years. He has been ordinary of the county for twelve years. Colonel Munnerlyn stood among the few remaining Confederate congressmen. He represented his district after serving as a private soldier for a long time. He was a true type of the educated southern gentleman and always enjoyed the love and respect of his compatriots. He was a South Carolinian by birth, but citizen of Georgia from early boyhood. Colonel Munnerlyn was one of the wealthy men of the old south, numbering slaves by the hundreds. His sweet and kindly disposition during a long and useful life won for him great host of friends.

Selected portions from a more expansive biography printed in the Wednesday, June 22, 1898, *The Atlanta Constitution* follow.

Brave Confederate Passes Beyond Hon. Charles J. Munnerlyn Goes Down Into The Grave⁵

Bainbridge, Ga., June 21. - (Special.) - The death of Colonel Charles J. Munnerlyn, one of the last of the members of the Confederate Congress, removes an elegant gentleman and a true patriot.

Politically he was an old line democrat, from his youth to ripe old age. He was a southern man, every inch. He could not tolerate and despised the northern aggression, which timely precipitated the War Between the States. Therefore, he was in favor of secession, and was a member from this county to the convention that voted the secession of Georgia from the Federal Union. He favored the formation of the Southern Confederacy, and urged the election of Jefferson Davis to the presidency, and was always one of that great statesman's most ardent admirers and closest friends.

When secession was accomplished and war was declared against the south this old Roman, who favored war rather than submission and disgrace, volunteered as a private soldier in the Bainbridge Independents, First Georgia Regiment, shouldered his musket and went to the front at the very first call for soldiers.

Colonel Munnerlyn was perhaps the wealthiest man in Decatur county, the owner

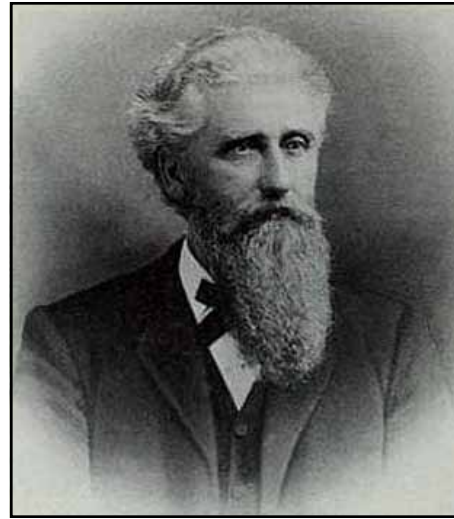


Figure 2: Charles James Munnerlyn was commissioned by Confederate President Jefferson Davis to lead the First Battalion Florida Special Cavalry that became known as 'Munnerlyn's Cattle Battalion.'

among other valuable property of 500 slaves, and yet he enlisted as a private in the ranks and was among the very first to go in the front. During the famous Laurel Hill retreat from northwestern Virginia, the larger portion of the First Georgia Regiment was lost in the Allegheny Mountains for a week without food. This terrible experience broke down Colonel Munnerlyn's health and he was retired from the army on that account.

Returning home he was elected a member of the Confederate Congress, where he made an able and most efficient congressman. Having voted for the conscript set which was a most unpopular thing for the stay-at-homes and half-breeds, he was defeated for re-election.

Without sulking, but still desirous of serving his beloved south, he once more enlisted as a private, this time in Colonel Scott's Battalion of Cavalry serving in Florida. He was soon detailed by General Batten Anderson on special service.

Reporting to President Davis, who knew and appreciated his merit and patriotism, he was given a major's commission and ordered to Florida, where he was to organize a regiment south of the then military line. It was the duty of this regiment to keep open the lines, and in every possible way to facilitate the collection and forwarding of supplies to the starving army in Virginia.

This duty faithfully performed secured his promotion to a lieutenant colonelcy, which



Figure 3. A Florida Cracker cow and calf.

position he held at the surrender, in view of the uncertain state of affairs, General Sam Jones, commander in Florida, advised him to remain quiet and held himself in readiness to facilitate the escape of any of the officers of the late government who might desire to leave the country.

It thus became his privilege to aid in the escape of Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of War.

The war over, Colonel Munnerlyn returned to his home to appreciate the fact that he had risked all, dared all, lost all for his country, and that his immense wealth was swept away, and that he was left a poor man.

This inevitable he accepted like the gallant gentleman that he was. There was no murmuring, no despairing word from him nor from any members of his family.

To offer a timeline to the *Atlanta Constitution* text, Munnerlyn was elected to represent his district in the Confederate Congress in November 1861 and was defeated in his bid for reelection in 1863.

When Munnerlyn was ordered to Florida, he collected and forwarded supplies, primarily cattle, to the Armies of Virginia. The unit was authorized by the War Department on March 28, 1864, with authority granted to C.J. Munnerlyn on July 7, 1864, to organize the battalion. The First Battalion Florida Special Cavalry became known as “Munnerlyn’s Cattle Battalion.”

On Dec. 13, 1864, Munnerlyn was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Provisional Army of

the Confederate States. His “Cow Cavalry” was comprised of nearly 800 soldiers in nine companies. It was their job to protect the Florida cattle herds from roving bands of deserters and Union sympathizers; drive beef cattle north to the commissary depots to feed the Confederate Army; round up deserters; check the nuisance raids conducted by Union troops garrisoned at Fort Myers; assist with scouting and picket duty; assist the blockade running operations, and protect the Salt Works. It became one of the most colorful and effective militia units organized during the war. Several companies of the Cow Cavalry surrendered between May 15-20, 1865; the battalion was formally surrendered June 5, 1865.

Florida Crackers

Some believe the term “Florida Cracker,” when referring to native Floridians, has a negative connotation. This is not so. The term stems from the early Florida cowboys and the Confederate cow cavalymen. Instead of the rope used by Texas cowboys, they wielded long braided leather bullwhips, 10 to 12 feet long, and when snapped over a cow’s head, they made a sharp “crack.” Thus the term “Cracker” was born.⁶

Florida Cracker cattle⁷ (Figure 3) are small to moderate sized animals descended from the original cattle brought to Florida by the Ponce de León in the 1500s. Because of Florida’s environment, the original stock developed into a smallish, long-lived and heat-tolerant breed that is quite resistant to parasites and can grow and reproduce on the relatively low-quality forage of Florida grasslands, swamps, and scrub habitats. Their horns tend to point up as they do on Texas Longhorns.

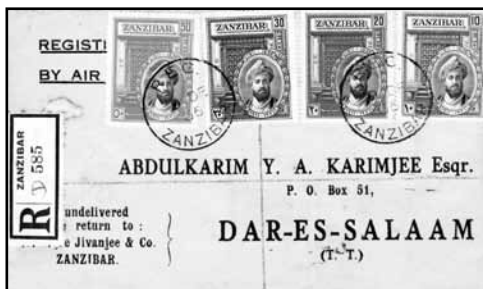
During the Civil War, Florida’s cattle industry was the major provider of beef for both sides of the conflict. After the war, Florida’s economy thrived mostly due to the cattle trade with Cuba. The thousands of cattle that were traded for gold currency during these times formed the foundation for Florida’s agricultural economy. Cattle ranching operations were the beginning of many of Florida’s oldest and largest businesses, some still in operation today. Florida was the first territory of the New World to have cattle, as well as cowboys.

After the war, Munnerlyn set about to rebuild his fortune. Even though he had lost hundreds of slaves, he was able to retain most of his land and successfully make the transition to free labor. He was greatly involved in the building of the Savannah, Florida, and Western Railroad. He and his family moved to Bainbridge, Georgia after “Refuge” was totally destroyed in a fire on Nov. 28, 1883. The loss was estimated from \$10,000 to \$12,000 with no insurance.

Endnotes

- 1 Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown Jr. and Jerry S. Palazolo. *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History* (Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012), pp. 342-43.
- 2 Richard L. Calhoun and Patricia A. Kaufmann. *A Concise History of the Confederate Stamp Alliance* (The Confederate Stamp Alliance, Website: www.csalliance.org/csa-1.htm Accessed February 2013).
- 3 *The Atlanta Constitution*, Vol. XXXI, page 3, Atlanta; June 22, 1898. (Website: www.munnerlyn.info/scrapbook/JAMES_SR/JOHN/Charles_J,Sr/Obit-Charles_James,Sr.htm. Accessed February 2013).
- 4 "Colonel Charles Munnerlyn Dead," *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 18, 1898, Vol. XXX, p. 2.
- 5 "Brave Confederate Passes Beyond; Hon. Charles J. Munnerlyn Goes Down Into The Grave," *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 22, 1898, Vol. XXXI, p. 3.
- 6 William Russell. "'Cracker' The Story of Florida's Confederate Cow Cavalry" (Website: www.floridareenactorsonline.com/cowcav.htm. Accessed February 2013.)
- 7 Christa Carlson-Kirby. "Cracker Cattle: What are Cracker Cattle and How Did They Get Here?" (Manatee County, Fla., Website: www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/community-services/kids-pages/our-history/cracker-cattle.html. Accessed February 2013).

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