

Rare Victoria provisionals discovered among fakes

By Arthur P. von Reyn

After languishing for decades in a stamp company's reference collection of mostly fakes, two copies of the rare Victoria, Texas, Confederate postmasters' provisional stamps were finally recognized as genuine last year, and subsequently sold in a private sale.

The five-cent (Scott 88X1) and 10-cent (Scott 88X2) stamps, only four of each having been previously known to exist, were noticed by a collector who was not a Confederate specialist, but "quite astute and just happened to have a sharp eye," said Patricia Kaufmann, a dealer who brokered the sale of the two unused stamps for \$20,000 each early this year.

The 2008 *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* values the five-cent and 10-cent Victoria provisionals at \$9,000 and \$10,000 respectively.

The pair, both type-set and printed in red-brown on green, surface-colored paper, received certificates from the Confederate Stamp Alliance Authentication Service. They are inscribed "Victoria" and "Postage" along with the denomination and the name of the Victoria postmaster, J.A. Moody, who issued them.

According to Kaufman, who specializes in selling Confederate material and has been active in the Confederate Stamp Alliance for many years, the collector who discovered them sent her a scan and "I almost flipped out when I saw them." She went on to say that the collector had found some other interesting items in the company's reference



These genuine Victoria, Texas Confederate postmasters' provisional stamps were discovered last year in a stamp company's reference collection that consisted of mostly fake items. (Images courtesy of Patricia Kaufmann)

stock, but "nothing of this magnitude."

The collector desired that the discovery be sold as a pair, a wish that she was able to accommodate. Both the seller and the buyer decided to remain anonymous; the buyer was described as a serious Confederate collector.

Most of the Confederate postmasters' provisionals were issued in various southern cities and towns in 1861 after U.S. stamps ceased being valid for postage, but before the Confederate general issue stamps appeared. Some, particularly in Texas, were issued in later periods when regular issues were not available. Provisional issues consisted of stamps or handstamped envelopes; many were quickly forgotten after the Civil War. In 1882,

A. Steves of San Antonio discovered a 10-cent value of the Victoria provisional on a cover addressed to "C. Hallenkamp, Esq. / Lagrange." It was among stamps he received from his grandmother, Mrs. Arthur Guenther, who resided in La Grange. He also acquired an off-cover five-cent Victoria



Only two of the Victoria postmasters' provisionals are known on cover. Both are franked with 10-cent stamps. This one, from the famed Charles and Lucy Kilbourse collection, sold at a Robert A. Seigel auction in 1999 for \$105,000.

provisional.

The only other Victoria, Texas provisional to exist on cover is also a 10-cent value, which sold in 1999 for \$105,000 in the 1999 Robert A. Siegel sale of the Charles and Lucy Kilbourne collection, regarded as the most complete Confederate postmasters' provisional collection ever formed. In the same sale, an unused, five-cent single realized \$7,000 and a used 10-cent one went for \$6,500.

There is one other variety of the 10-cent Victoria provisional, on green pelure paper (Scott 88X3), that is counted among what now amounts to five 10-cent copies known

to exist, including the two on cover.

Other Texas cities currently listed in the Scott catalogues as having Confederate provisional issues, either stamps, stationery or both, are Austin, Beaumont, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Hallettsville, Harrisburg, Helena, Hollandale, Houston, Huntsville, Independence, La Grange, Plum Creek, Port Lavaca, Richmond, San Antonio, and Weatherford.

The Confederate Stamp Alliance (CSA) publishes *The Confederate Philatelist*, currently edited by Randy L. Neil, on a quarterly basis. For more information on the CSA, visit their website <http://www.csalliance.org>.



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