



The Civil War Post

Patricia A. Kaufmann

Circus Broadside Adversity Cover

One of the most popular types of Confederate postal uses is what collectors call adversity covers – so called because adverse conditions in the South during the American Civil War caused a severe shortage of paper. This shortage was mostly caused by blockaded ports, which greatly restricted access to sources of paper from the industrialized North and from Europe. Consequently, almost any piece of paper with enough blank space upon which to write an address was pressed into emergency service. The more elaborate the use, the greater the collector interest and retail price.

Such a fabulous cover is the subject in Figure 1, fashioned on the thick paper of a circus broadside, with an illustration of a circus performer and a revolver.

The cover was originally mailed from a Texas soldier in Mansfield, La., on April 30 (no year date) endorsed “Sergt in copany [sic] H. Randals Regt Texas Volunteers” to “Mrs. J.T. Steward, Fairfield Po Office, Texas.” It was processed through Shreveport and (due) “10” handstamp added, as shown in Figure 2.

The cover was then turned and mailed back to Sgt. Stewart in the Louisiana theater from Fairfield, Texas, with a “PAID 10” handstamp (CSA Catalog Type B¹), used again by the same soldier, this time with a manuscript cancel of “Butler, Texas” with ms. “Aug 18” and matching manuscript “Due.” It is addressed to his wife in Fairfield, Texas. It is an eye-catching “twice turned” double-Texas use.

Figure 3 shows the cover beautifully displayed on an album page. It was one of the jewels in the Texas collection of Vince King, who immediately rose to top levels in open philatelic competition with the force of, not only his outstanding material, but the exceptional treatment of the material on display. This cover also once graced the collection of the late Gordon Bleuler, another exceptional Texas collector.

What amazes me is how casual people were about their names in those days. Sgt. Stewart addresses the cover to his wife as “Steward,” while she addresses him as “Stewart.” And, indeed,

official records record the name either way as well. This was not an uncommon occurrence during the war. In Figure 4, military records record him as Stewart (National Archives and Records Administration).

Sgt. Jeremiah Terry Stewart (or Steward) served in Company H of the 28th Texas Cavalry, Randal’s Brigade, McCullough’s Division, District of Arkansas, Trans-Mississippi Department. Col. Horace



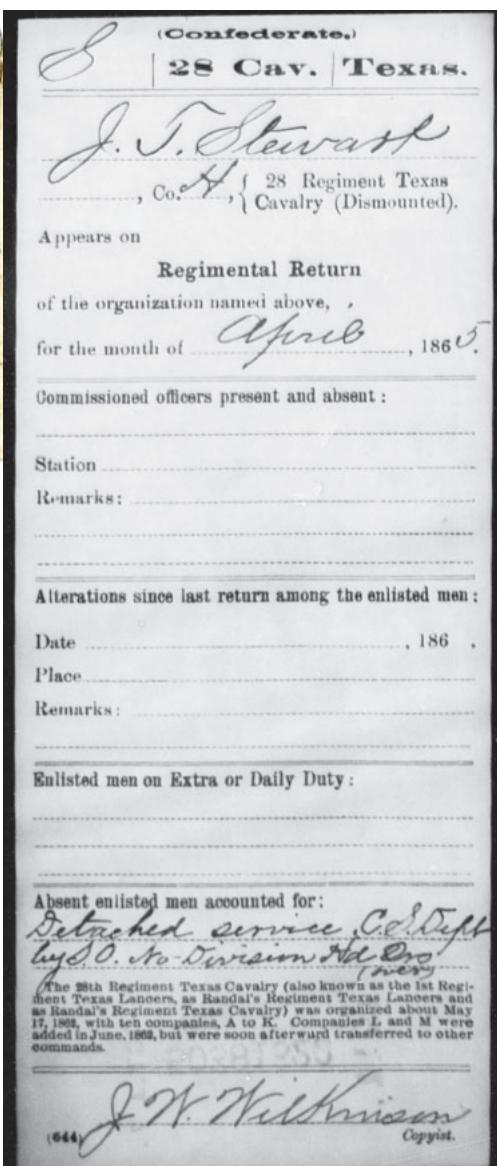
Figure 1 (above). Soldier's cover, fashioned from an illustrated circus broadside.

Figure 2 (left). Original use of the Figure 1 cover, from Mansfield to Fairfield, Texas.

Randal, an 1854 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, organized the 28th Texas Cavalry.

The 28th Texas Cavalry began its organization at a camp three miles east of Marshall, Texas. Company H (Freestone County). Also known as the 1st Texas Lancers, it joined the regiment in July. The unit traveled to Shreveport, La., in July 1862, where it remained until July 18, 1862. The soldiers then traveled north and arrived in Austin, Ark., on Sept. 3, 1862.

By late September, the unit was dismounted, i.e., the unit was converted to infantry. The 28th Texas Cavalry was dismounted because of a surplus of cavalry units in Arkansas and because of a lack of forage for the horses. The men refused to call themselves "infantry," instead preferring the euphemistic term "dismounted cavalry." Much to the disappointment of the men, the 28th Texas was never remounted. The unit spent the entire war in the Trans-Mississippi, where they campaigned extensively in Arkansas and Louisiana.



5600
Dealing with Adversity

Adversity Covers
...use of printed forms



Mansfield, LA to Fairfield, TX
Fairfield, TX to Shreveport, LA
Butler, TX to Fairfield, TX

April 30, (1862)
undated
August 18, (1862)

Homemade cover made from a circus broadside containing illustrations of a circus performer and a revolver originally mailed from a Texas soldier in Mansfield, Louisiana and processed through Shreveport due "10". Cover then turned and mailed prepaid back to Sergeant Stewart in the Louisiana theatre. It appears somewhere along its journey the cover was once again used by the soldier...this time at Butler, TX where it was placed in the mails, endorsed "Due", and sent on to Fairfield. An unusual 'twice turned' cover.

Figure 3 (above). Album page of Vince King, with subject cover as displayed in his award-winning exhibit.

Figure 4 (left). Page from military records of Jeremiah Terry Stewart of Company H, 28th Regiment Texas Cavalry (Dismounted).

According to the Texas State Historical Association's *Handbook of Texas*, the membership of the 28th Texas Cavalry was a little different because it was not formed at the outset of the war. The men were more likely to be older, married, less affluent and less likely to own slaves.²

The Battle of Mansfield was April 8, 1864, thus partially dating the subject cover. Some of the letters between husband and wife may be found online although, according to the Fairfield [Texas] County Museum, some were destroyed by descendants because they were considered "too warm" for others to read.

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Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann was first introduced to Confederate philately in 1965, became active in organized philately in 1969 and became a full-time dealer in 1973. Trish enjoys hearing from readers and may be reached at [trishkauf@comcast.net](mailto:trishkauf@comcast.net).

**Endnotes:**

1. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, editors, *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, 2012, Confederate Stamp Alliance, [www.csalliance.org](http://www.csalliance.org).
2. Andy Galloway, "Twenty-Eighth Texas Cavalry," Texas State Historical Association Handbook of Texas, [www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/twenty-eighth-texas-cavalry](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/twenty-eighth-texas-cavalry), Accessed Sept. 10, 2020.