

# MYSTERIOUS NUMBER “605” ON KEATINGE & BALL PRINTING

*Patricia A. Kaufmann*

A partial pane of 62 of the Keatinge & Ball type I (CSA catalog<sup>1</sup> 11-KB) engraved issue recently crossed my path. It is a common stamp issue in average condition with the dark blue ink and dark gum characteristic of Keatinge & Ball (KB) products. It also shows inadequate wiping of the printing plate on many stamps, easiest to see in the margins. Incomplete plate wiping is a primary KB trait.

Shown in Figure 1 is the partial pane. What makes it unusual is the printed “605” in the right margin. When I first saw a scan of the block, I was unsure whether it was contemporaneous. Once I saw the block in person, I was convinced it was period ink; the ink color was a good match. I determined to send it to Dr. Harry Brittain for forensic testing.

Because of the poor general condition of the larger piece, I reduced the partial pane to a smaller block of four with the number in the margin, as shown in Figure 2.

## How was “605” applied?

It is apparent that the “605” was not engraved (also known as intaglio, a raised ink surface), the method used for printing the KB stamps. If the “605” was printed, that leaves only the options of lithography (flat print with no raised surfaces) or typography (letterpress). The latter is defined as printing from a base that uses a relief (raised) surface to carry the ink and apply it to the printing paper – the opposite of intaglio. On engraved (intaglio) issues, the ink sits on top of the paper (relief).

The words “typography” or “letterpress” refer to the printing method, not to the method used to create the initial stamp image used to make the printing plate. The original image, called a master die, usually was engraved in softened steel — in relief for typography and in recess for intaglio.

One of the main ways to determine whether the engraved frame line on a CSA 10 is genuine is to determine if the line is in relief when viewed with oblique light. If the ink does not appear to stand up on the paper when viewed from the image surface, the line is not engraved and thus cannot be genuine. That is not always easy to determine, such as when the stamp has been soaked and pressed, which flattens the frame line and makes authentication difficult.

With letterpress, the method used to print De La Rue issues CSA 6, 7-L, 7-R and 14, one is sometimes able to see a raised impression on the back. Such impressions are generally most visible on the edge of a straight line such as the frame.

When viewed from the gummed side, a raised edge is evident on the bottom leading curve of the “6” of the “605” on the subject block, shown in Figure 3 at 2,400 dpi. Unfortunately, this is extremely difficult to see, even in person, but you may be able to discern how flat the “5” appears from the back compared to the “6.” As with the frame line, it is best to view the stamp at an oblique angle holding it to your eye with light falling across the target area. Such an examination takes practice to do correctly, as it involves a bit of a technique.

The raised edge, as viewed from the verso, leads me to conclude it may be typographed rather than lithographed – if printed.





Figure 1 (above). Partial pane of CSA 11-KB with mysterious “605” in the right margin

Figure 2 (below). CSA 11-KB block of four with “605” in margin.

Figure 3. The “605” viewed from gum side, which shows evidence of a raised edge on the leading curve of the “6.”



If the number was not printed – by any method – another possibility is that the number was struck with a numbering machine. Having used a Bates® numbering machine for years to sequentially number auction lot pages, I am quite familiar with them. But did metal numbering handstamps exist in the 1860s?

According to the Early Office Museum, the Ruggles’ Patent Hand Stamp was issued patent number 13,470 in 1855 and advertised 1854-60 by the Boston Hand Stamp Company of Boston, Mass. It specifically noted that the die was metal, not rubber; it was not sequential. Office machine historians believe rubber handstamps were invented around 1864-66. Neither was it rubber.

Holt’s Consecutive Numbering Machine was first advertised in 1870 by Power & Wallwork of New York City, which also promoted the French Consecutive Numbering Stamp the same year. The venerable Bates® Automatic Numbering Machine was not patented until 1891.<sup>2</sup>





Figure 4. Keatinge & Ball imprint with plate No. 2 on block.

### For what purpose is the mysterious number?

My initial discussions about this unusual item began with fellow philatelic students Leonard Hartmann and Jerry Palazolo, as well as currency specialist Crutchfield Williams.

Was the number for in-house accounting or some other reference by the printer?

We all agree the “605” looks contemporaneous and it is not a plate number. Plate numbers and imprints on KB stamps were engraved and all are well documented and cataloged. An example of a Keatinge & Ball imprint with plate No. 2 is shown in Figure 4. Recorded plate numbers for Keatinge & Ball are plate numbers 1-4. These imprints look nothing like the mysterious “605.”

Jerry Palazolo remarked that the “605” had the look of some of the numbers found on Confederate currency. Thus, I brought Crutchfield Williams into the conversation because of his experience in the currency field.

Figure 5 shows an 1863 type T-63 50¢ Confederate note with red serial numbers, while the 1864-produced type T-72 in Figure 6 shows the numbers in black. Both notes bear the imprint



Figure 5 (top). An 1863 type T-63 50¢ Confederate note with red serial numbers.

Figure 6 (above). An 1864-produced type T-72 Confederate note with black serial numbers.

Figure 7. An 1864 \$5 note, type T-69, which shows the names of lithograph staffers Young and Taylor in the margin (inset).



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of Archer & Daly, Richmond, Va. Images for these are shown courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Numismatic Collection in the National Museum of American History.

The names of the printers of lithographed paper money are familiar to Confederate philatelists – Keatinge & Ball, J.T. Paterson & Co., Archer & Daly and Hoyer & Ludwig. These Southern printers printed currency as well as stamps.

One theory was that the “605” could be Sheet No. 605 in a run. It is without question an identification number of some sort. But post-printing sequential numbering of sheets would seem a waste of time. Although my online research indicated the sequential numbering machine was not advertised until 1870, Crutch said that the Treasury had sequential numberers during the war and used them for 1863 high-denomination notes and 1864 notes. He advised the numberers and daters for currency were in different rooms, and the ink was different.

Another thought was whether “605” identified a specific printer, as printers were known to put their names in the selvage on both currency and stamps. But these identifiers appear to all be by name, not number.

Figure 7 shows an 1864 \$5 note, type T-69, courtesy of Crutch Williams. It shows the names of lithograph staffers Young and Taylor, who worked for Keatinge & Ball in Columbia, S.C. It was a way to keep track of their work so they would be accurately compensated.



Figure 9. The only recorded 5¢ blue lithograph (CSA catalog No. 4-2-il) with a Cammann imprint between positions 31R and 40L.

Similar names are known on Confederate lithographed stamps, such as Mr. Cammann who worked for J.T. Paterson. Figure 8 shows such an imprint on a 10¢ rose lithograph.

Cammann's name also appears on paper currency. The J. T. Paterson firm, of both Columbia, S.C., and Augusta, Ga., acquired some of Hoyer & Ludwig's equipment and employed 13 of the lithographers who had worked for the Richmond company. Paterson simultaneously maintained operations in both Columbia and Augusta before his stamp contract.<sup>3</sup>

In 1985, Everett K. Cooper speculated in these pages that the 5¢ blue and 10¢ rose lithographed stamps, which have always been attributed exclusively to Hoyer & Ludwig, could have been printed by both that firm and J.T. Paterson. The theory is that the Hoyer & Ludwig (HL) imprint on the 10¢ stone was left unchanged during the Paterson printings when only a short print run remained. It is not a far-fetched idea that Paterson may have printed stamps from the Hoyer & Ludwig printing stones.

It has been established that the Archer & Daly (Richmond) intaglio printing plates for CSA 11 and CSA 12 were used, initially without imprint change, by Keatinge & Ball of Columbia, S.C. The CSA catalog lists such an example as 12-KB-ic-d. There is a recorded strip of six printed by Keatinge & Ball with an Archer & Daly imprint, as well as a block of 12, both with full imprint. That was an earlier “Eureka!” moment when I realized I was looking at a KB printing bearing an AD imprint, unnoticed by earlier students.

According to a postwar letter from Col. H. St. George Offutt, who contracted for all Confederate stamp printers, “*Before delivery (of) the (stamp) transfers, Hoyer & Ludwig were careful to*



Figure 8. Cammann imprint in the margin of CSA 5, 10¢ rose lithograph.

*weave into the design several scattered 'secret marks,' by which the Augusta printing could readily be identified."*

There is only one recorded 5¢ blue lithographed stamp (CSA catalog No. 4-2-il) with a Cammann inscription between position 31R and 40L. The CSA catalog lists it in italics at \$15,000 (Figure 9).

Cammann was a known employee of J.T. Paterson and, also, likely one of the employees who had worked at Hoyer & Ludwig before joining Paterson. Everett Cooper was convinced that Paterson produced many more stamps than those for which the company was given credit and that the few stamps found with Cammann imprints were probably printed by Paterson.

### Forensic Test Results

Dr. Brittain's<sup>4</sup> forensic testing confirmed that the stamps test as a classic KB printing and that the ink pigment is Prussian blue. The formulation appears not to have included a whitener. He found that it looks like a lithographic ink, very much like that which was used for CSA No. 4.

As determined forensically with XRF,<sup>5</sup> it is unequivocal that the number "605" was printed using an ink of a different composition from the stamp ink. He declared it "not even close."

Dr. Brittain relayed the following:

*When viewed at 30x magnification (binocular microscope) the ink appears to lay on the surface and does not permeate into the crevices between cellulose particles. XRPD<sup>6</sup> tells me that the paper is entirely cellulose, as would be expected for a KB printing. The amount of Prussian blue in the ink is far less than the Hoyer lithographs (No. 1 and No. 4), but very comparable to the ink profile of the Paterson No. 2 stamps. I will further note that all of my Paterson stamps (admittedly not too many) were printed on the same paper type. But for sure the "605" ink is different in composition to the Stamp ink.*

### Conclusions

For now, the purpose of the "605" number remains a mystery.

Modern forensics prove the ink on the problematic number to be period ink.

As Leonard Hartmann noted, *"I would not think a faker would do such on an unknown item with little chance of appreciation."* I agree.

I hesitate to bring a foggy memory into this dialog, but I believe I may have seen this or similar numbers on large partial sheets or blocks over the years. For whatever reason, it did not capture my attention in the past as it does today. I vaguely remember thinking it must not be contemporaneous.

I find, as I age and I am more fascinated by the nuances of printing, I pay more attention to details. I also try to keep an open mind. We come to new realizations every day about things right in front of us all along. In a future article, I'll have more to say about how a fortunate purchase changed a listing in the Dietz catalog to something entirely different in the CSA catalog.

**Acknowledgments:** My thanks to those who contributed to the discussion on this unusual piece – Leonard Hartmann, Jerry Palazolo and Crutchfield Williams. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Harry Brittain, who took on the task of forensically examining the "605" block and sharing his findings with us.

N.B. Catalog numbers used in this article are from the *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*.

If you have anything to contribute to this discussion, I would appreciate hearing from you at by email at [trishkauf@comcast.net](mailto:trishkauf@comcast.net) or postal mail at 10194 N. Old State Rd, Lincoln DE 19960.

#### 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. "Early Office Museum Antique Date, Cancelling, Time, Number & Name Stamps," [www.officemuseum.com/stamps.htm](http://www.officemuseum.com/stamps.htm) Accessed May 8, 2019
3. Everett K. Cooper, "The Strange Case of Dr. Paterson and Mr. Cammann," *Confederate Philatelist*, January-February 1985, pp. 20-25.
4. Harry G. Brittain, PhD, FAAPS, FRSC, Center for Pharmaceutical Physics.
5. XRF (X-ray fluorescence) is a non-destructive analytical technique used to determine the elemental composition of materials. XRF analyzers determine the chemistry of a sample by measuring the fluorescent (or secondary) X-ray emitted from a sample when it is excited by a primary X-ray source.
6. XRPD - X-Ray Powder Diffraction is a method for measuring the X-rays scattered by a polycrystalline sample as function of scattering angle.

### An important note to all CSA members—

As per a decision made by the Trustees of the Confederate Stamp Alliance at our annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio, in August, we have enacted new privacy rules governing where and when the CSA may publish members' personal information in its roster, official publication(s), and other occasional publications.

You will find an insert with Third Quarter 2018 *Confederate Philatelist*. I urge you to read it over, check the appropriate box(es), sign the form, and return it to the CSA Secretary, **Larry Baum, 316 W Calhoun St, Sumter SC 29150-4512**. Alternatively, you may send your completed form via email to Larry at [csaadcovers@frontier.com](mailto:csaadcovers@frontier.com), or request a new one.

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