

**Edged in Black
Mourning Covers in the Confederacy**

David Savadge

Received for hosting with the permission of the owner

June 2024

Civil War Philatelic Society, Inc.

The pages have been numbered at the bottom for ease of reference

EDGED IN BLACK

MOURNING COVERS IN THE CONFEDERACY

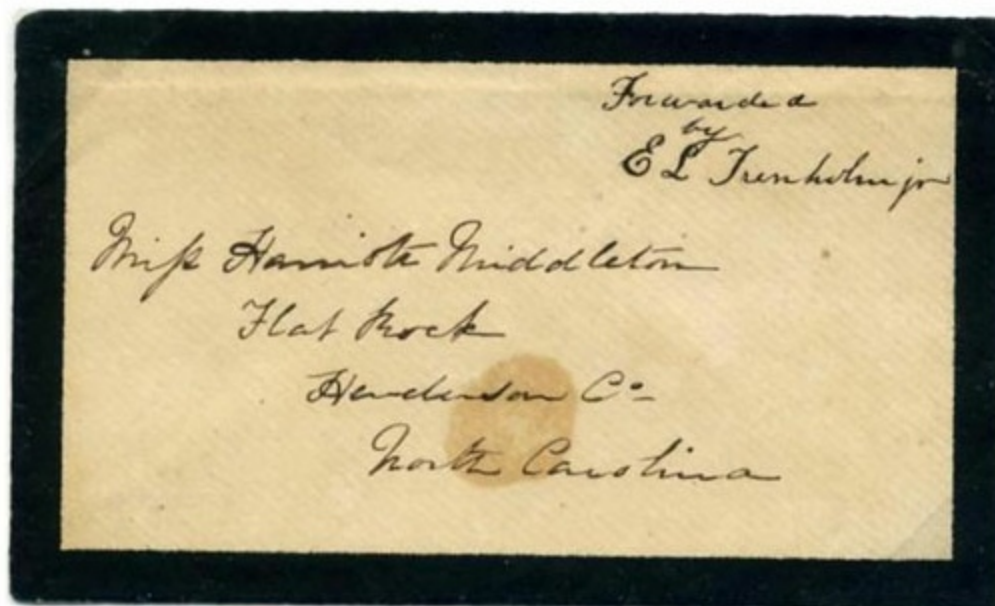
Shown are black bordered mourning covers displaying postmaster's provisionals, through-the-lines uses, forwarded covers, adversity covers; plus regular mail at the 2 cent, 20 cent, 5 cent, 10 cent rates.

The practice of using mourning covers for correspondence dealing with the death of a loved one had become firmly entrenched in the American cultural consciousness by the time of the War Between the States. This custom naturally continued in the Confederate States.

With the initial lack of CSA government adhesive stamps, Northern invasion with its resultant disruption of transportation, and the Union blockade of the coastal ports, postal service in the South was never an easy matter. Even so, the citizens of the Confederacy (and their friends, relatives, and business acquaintances in the North and overseas) used mourning covers to express their sympathy for the loss of both soldiers and civilians.

The Confederate postal system began operations on 1 June 1861. Mourning cover usage greatly diminished as the war progressed, so most are recorded from the early years, 1861 to 1863. Reasons include blockade-caused paper shortages and people becoming desensitized to the mounting casualty rate both in battle and from disease. For those reasons, few 1864 or 1865 Confederate mourning covers exist.

INCOMING BLOCKADE RUN MAIL – PRIVATE FORWARDER



"Forwarded by E.L. Trenholm, Jr."

c. May 1863: From England via Charleston SC to Flat Rock, NC

Transported out of the Confederate mails by E.L. Trenholm Jr., a member of the leading blockade running firm (Fraser Trenholm & Co.) in Charleston.

POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONALS

Before the Confederate government issued postage stamps, postmasters had to improvise. Provisionals were also used when the supply of stamps became temporarily exhausted.

Savannah, Georgia (Paid 5)

Typical diamond shaped control mark at upper left.

12 October 1861
to Athens, Georgia



Talbotton, Georgia (Paid 5)

Creating the Talbotton provisional took two steps – first the circular part with the town name and PAID, then another impression of the rate in the center.

17 September 1861
to Augusta, Georgia



Houston, Texas (Paid 10)

Regular Confederate stamps were not available.

February 1863 to
Columbia, Texas



THROUGH THE LINES – EXPRESS COMPANY

SOUTHERN LETTER UNPAID – DUE 3 CENTS

Franked with two copies of the 5¢ New Orleans provisional plus a 3¢ U.S. stamp.

From:	To:	Via:
New Orleans	Nashville	Confederate States postal system
Nashville	Louisville	American Letter Express Company
Louisville	Evansville	United States postal system



22 June 1861: New Orleans, Louisiana to Evansville, Indiana



Postmaster John Speed of Louisville (Kentucky) created this marking to indicate that the U.S. stamp applied was invalid for postage on mail from the Southern States routed via Nashville to Louisville. Such letters destined for onward transmission were also additionally handstamped DUE 3.

The only known mourning cover marked SOUTH^N LETTER UNPAID.

THROUGH THE LINES – FLAG OF TRUCE

NORTH TO SOUTH – VIA FORTRESS MONROE

Prepaid with two U.S. stamps – one for Federal and perhaps a second one as an attempt to pay Confederate postage. Routed per endorsement via Fortress Monroe (Virginia) where it was censored and examined. Entered the Confederate postal system at Richmond, where the cover was marked **DUE 10** as the second U.S. stamp was not recognized.



18 March 1863: Newark, New Jersey to Montgomery, Alabama
Postmarked Richmond, Virginia after being exchanged

SOUTH TO NORTH – VIA RICHMOND



Charleston, South Carolina to Huntington Valley, Pennsylvania
Postmarked February 1864: Old Point Comfort, Virginia

Mailed in an outer envelope using the Confederate Postal System from Charleston to Richmond, where the outer envelope was opened, then discarded. Carried by steamer to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, the Union exchange point. Entered the Union postal system at nearby Old Point Comfort.

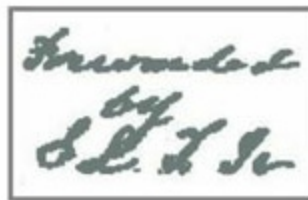
THROUGH THE LINES – INCOMING BLOCKADE RUN

FROM GREAT BRITAIN VIA BAHAMAS TO CHARLESTON



Postmarked 26 September 1864
Charleston, South Carolina to Flat Rock, North Carolina

Cover arrived in Charleston via the Charleston Importing & Exporting Company blockade runner **Syren** from Nassau on 23 September 1864. Signed on reverse, stamped, and placed into the Confederate postal system by **Edward L. Trenholm Jr.** at Charleston for delivery to Flat Rock.



Forwarded by E.L.T. Jr.
(Enlargement of endorsement on reverse flap.)

Trenholm forwarded covers were carried as personal baggage by a company agent, and therefore not subject to the normal 2-cent captain's fee for an incoming ship letter.

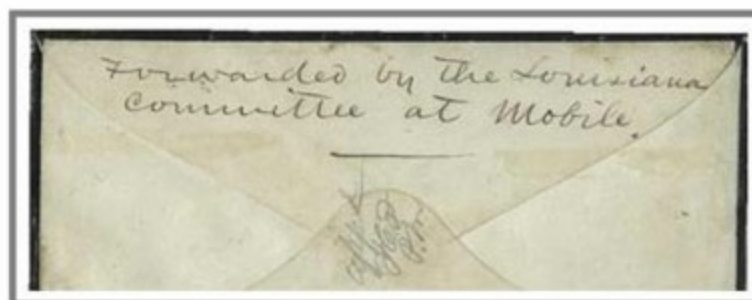
THROUGH THE LINES – SMUGGLED

THE LOUISIANA RELIEF COMMITTEE



Hand carried though the Union lines from New Orleans to Mobile
Postmarked 30 August (1863) at Mobile, to Selma, Alabama

Smuggled out of Union occupied New Orleans. The Confederate Provost Marshal at Mobile examined the letter before mailing. Postage provided by the Louisiana Relief Committee as a courtesy. Right edge restored.



(reverse reduced 25%)

“Forwarded by the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile”

“Appd JCD PM”

(Approved by Jules C. Denis, Provost Marshal – in pencil on flap tip)

One of two known mourning covers handled by the LA. Relief Committee

ADVERSITY COVERS – REUSED

The Union blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf ports resulted in a severe envelope and writing paper shortage. In an effort to conserve, envelopes were turned inside-out and reused.

Issue of 1863
printed by Archer and Daly

Both of the Archer and Daly printings, with the early printing on the original mourning cover and the second printing (positively identified by plate number 3) used to seal the turned flaps, with the Valdosta address written on the envelope's other side.



First use – Date and origin unknown: to Charleston, South Carolina

Second use – 27 June (c.1864): Savannah to Valdosta, Georgia



Gray-scale image with the envelope flap folded under showing the complete dated Savannah post mark.

ADVERSITY COVERS – HOMEMADE

Due to the envelope shortage, pre-printed black border mourning envelopes were not always available. These senders created their own mourning covers. Both the address and the hand drawn black border are done in the same ink.

Issue of 1863, printed by Archer and Daly



16 December (c.1863): Abingdon to Lebanon, Virginia
Envelope made from light brown butcher paper.

Issue of 1862, printed by Archer and Daly from De La Rue plates



25 May 1863: Franklin Depot, Virginia to Silver Hill, North Carolina
Mourning border drawn on a regular envelope after stamps affixed.

POST OFFICE FORWARDED

An additional rate required to forward a letter to another post office if the intended recipient had moved or relocated. This service was not free.



15 July 1862: Shufordville, North Carolina to Georgetown, South Carolina
25 July 1862: Forwarded to Raleigh, North Carolina

Originally sent with vertical pair of Hoyer and Ludwig 5-cent [Stone 2] dated 15 July (1862) with 4 corrected to 5 in the postmark. Forwarded to Raleigh NC with additional two single copies of 5-cent [Stone 3] at upper right corner, of which the left stamp appears to be a fraudulent re-use.



26 May 1863: Richmond, Virginia to Charleston, South Carolina
29 May 1863: Forwarded to South Santee, South Carolina

Horizontal pair of the Archer & Daly Richmond printing originally addressed to Charleston and canceled with blue Richmond postmark that was used only from 14 to 30 May 1863. Forwarded with a 10-cent Archer & Daly to South Santee.

POSTAL RATES – 2 CENTS LOCAL DROP

The Confederacy established a 2-cent rate for local drop letters addressed within the same city as postmarked.

Issue of 1863
printed by Archer and Daly



19 October 1864: Richmond, Virginia

POSTAL RATES – 20 CENTS DOUBLE RATE

The 20-cent stamp primarily issued to pay for overweight letters. Sometimes used when a ten cent stamp would suffice, due to the rampant inflation that rendered Confederate currency almost worthless.

Issue of 1863
printed by Archer and Daly



20 September (c. 1864): Richmond to Ballsville, Virginia

POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS STAMPLESS

Initial Confederate postal rates were distance dependent, 5 cents for under 500 miles.
This rate effective from 1 June 1861 through 30 June 1862.



18 December 1861: Prattville, Alabama to Griffin, Georgia

POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS with STAMP

Issue of 1862
printed by Hoyer and Ludwig



15 June 1862: Columbia, South Carolina to Hillsborough, North Carolina

Joined 'CE' at top of Cents, from Stone 3, Plate Position 33

One of two known mourning covers franked with this constant plate flaw.

POSTAL RATES – 5 CENTS with STAMP

Issue of 1861
printed by Hoyer and Ludwig



23 March 1862: Hillsboro, NC
to Smithfield, Virginia

Both covers written by
Mrs. Frances Hamilton,
the top to her husband,
the right to her mother.



PAID 5 Hillsboro marking
created from pre-war PAID 3
by altering the numeral.



December 1861: Smithfield, Virginia to Hillsboro, NC.
Incorrectly routed to Charlotte and annotated **Missent**.
As this was a post office mistake, no additional postage charged.



May 1862: Greenville, South Carolina to Roswell, Georgia

POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS STAMPLESS

Initial Confederate postal rates were distance dependent, 10 cents for over 500 miles.

TO A SOLDIER IN THE FIELD



29 November 1861: Waynesboro, Georgia to Williamsburg, Virginia

To Captain Henry Page Lord King, the aide-de-camp for Major General Lafayette McLaws. Regiment stationed near Williamsburg, where the post office provided a specific location “**at Mr. Brights**”, referring to Samuel Bright, a local farmer. Williamsburg was occupied by Union troops on 6 May 1862 and held for the remainder of the war.

A standardized 10 cents per half ounce rate regardless of distance implemented on 1 July 1862.

SOLDIER'S DUE LETTER FROM THE FIELD



6 April 1863: Rodney, Mississippi to Parks, Arkansas

Endorsed by Captain Edwin O. Williams of the 27th Texas Cavalry (informally called the First Texas Legion). By providing his name, rank and unit, the officer sent this cover as a “Soldier’s Due” letter, with the recipient paying the 10 cents. Notification to Mrs. Lucy Halley that her husband, First Lieutenant Francis Halley, died of wounds sustained at the battle of Thompson’s Station [Tennessee] in March 1863.

POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS STAMPLESS

CHARGE BOX



Two different postmarks: 5 re-rated to 10 cents for over 500 mile distance. Annotated **Chg Box 41** with initials, so 10 cents deducted from sender's account.

14 August 1861: Fredericksburg, Virginia to Charleston, SC

"MISSENT & FORW'D"

PO erroneously sent to Greensborough, Alabama instead of Greensboro, North Carolina. Re-routed at no additional charge.

12 July 1862:
Livingston, Alabama to
Greensboro, NC



STAMPS NOT AVAILABLE

Smaller towns often ran out of stamps, and reverted to hand applied **PAID** markings and manuscript rates. Sender initially wrote "Paid" and his initials. Postmaster crossed out the initials and wrote in the 10 rate.

5 October 1863:
Clarksville, Georgia to
Columbia, South Carolina



POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS with STAMPS

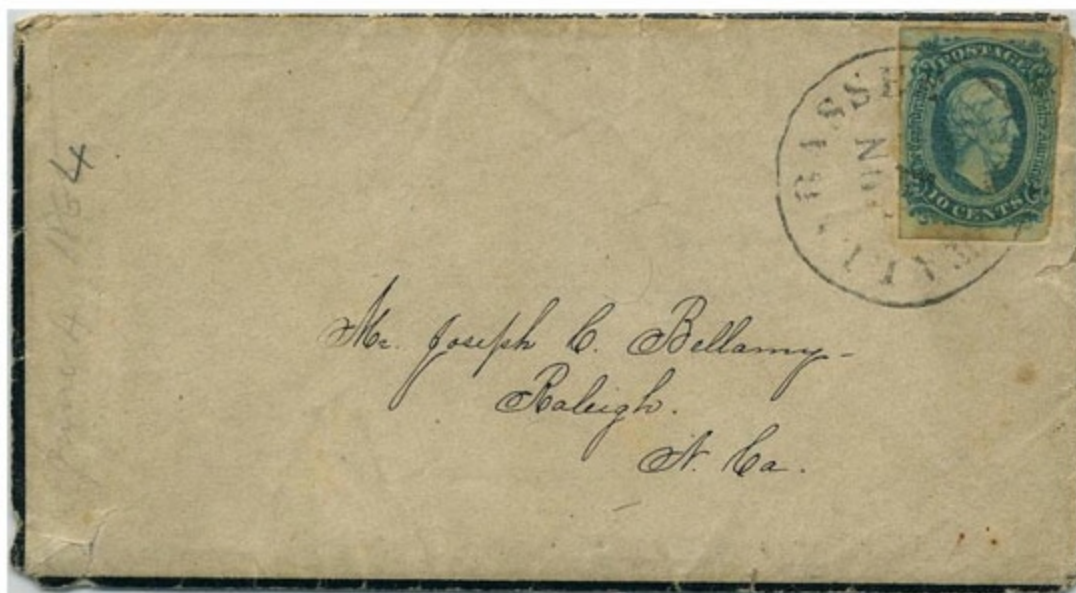


Issue of 1861
printed by
Hoyer and Ludwig

29 July 1862:
Hewletts to
Richmond, Virginia

Issue of 1862
printed by
Archer and Daly

22 December (c.1863):
Charleston, SC to
Augusta, Georgia



Issue of 1863
printed by
Archer and Daly

**Fewer than five
mourning covers
recorded from
Confederate
Florida.**

7 June 1864: Tallahassee, Florida to Raleigh, North Carolina

POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS with STAMPS

Issue of 1862
printed by J.T. Paterson
and Company
Stone Y

4 March (c.1863):
Greenville to Selma,
Alabama



Issue of 1862,
printed by
Hoyer and Ludwig

11 October (c.1863):
Winchester to
Richmond, Virginia

Issue of 1864
printed by
Keatinge and Ball

From **Confederate
Navy Commander
John M. Kell** to his
wife. Kell served
as Executive
Officer on the
commerce raider
CSS Alabama.



28 February 1865: Richmond, Virginia to Macon, Georgia