

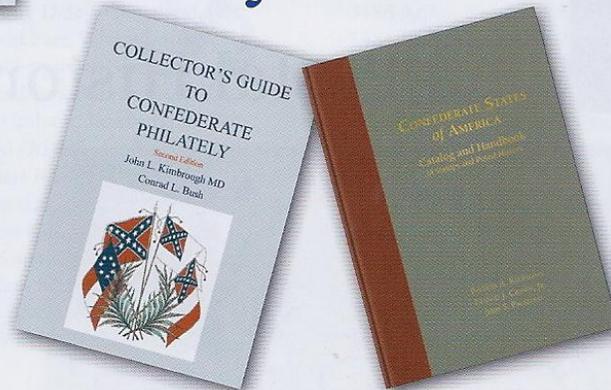


The Back Page

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The Dynamic Duo



Over my years in philately, I've often searched for some new collecting specialty that might send my interests in another, different direction apart from one of my current specializations. I won't delve into a list of the potential specialties I've checked out, but suffice to say that many of them do not pique my interest because they are missing the two basic ingredients for a successful collecting pursuit: A) A well-written and illustrated "how to collect" book on the specialty in question - something that should be virtually encyclopedic in content; and B) An omnibus specialized catalog on the stamps and postal history of the specialty.

Fortunately, we in the Confederate States of America category have been blessed, since our very early years, with both such works - both of which are monuments within the entire spectrum of world philately - August Dietz's 1929 *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America* and, five editions of his *Confederate States Catalog* ending in 1986. For the most part, they have stood well the test of time, especially the former. We now have two new works that fulfill this basic need in our specialty.

I've spent much of what leisure time is available to me these winter months exploring our new *Confederate States of America Catalog* and Gens. John L. Kimbrough and Conrad L. Bush's *Collector's Guide to Confederate Philately Second Edition*. On many evenings, I would end up setting one or the other book down with a look of amazement and awe on my face. I'm sure my wife will tell you I said, "Wow!" more than a few times. These two books - though the editors and/or writers might disavow it - could have each been prepared with the other in mind, for they do such a wonderful job of complementing one another.

In the Kimbrough-Bush work, you have the chronological story of the CSA's monetarily successful carrying of the mails, 1861-1865, replete with a plethora of phenomenal illustrations far beyond the B&W images in the Dietz 1929 work. It is a highly readable, enjoyable narrative backed up with meticulously gathered facts, sidebars and appendices. In many places, it reads like a good story should.

The great *CSA Catalog*, edited by Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr. and Jerry Palazolo, is a giant, highly well-executed compendium of the entire range of CSA stamps and postal history - containing serious research and the complete range of facts and values required by specialists & with copious illustrations - all at once, becoming the authoritative fountainhead of Confederate philately. That these two books appeared within a year of one another is a tribute to their makers and to the countless collectors who helped with their knowledge. Our bestselling "Dynamic Duo" is there for all the hobby to see and be amazed.