



Figure 1: Three-cent 1853 entire with "ROME Ga. DEC 1" addressed to Albert or Abram Ables "Chatnooga" Tenn. This cover was sent to the Dead Letter Office in Washington, D.C., and bears a black double oval "P.O. DEPARTMENT/DEAD LETTER OFFICE/MAY 22 1857 210-11" and large red "A" with blue ms "\$1-" and number "6811."

Money Letter Handling by the Confederate Dead Letter Office

By Col. James W. Milgram

Practically nothing has been written about money letter handling by the Confederate Post Office. Registration of mail had come into existence in 1855, but it was not a service offered by the Confederate postal system.

A couple of covers exist with registration during the period that U.S. postage was still valid in the Confederate states.

However, much valuable mail was sent without registration with cash in an envelope sent at the risk of the sender. Most, but not all, of this mail was delivered.

Figure 1 shows a December 1856 cover sent from Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where the addressee was unknown.

Eventually it was sent to the Dead Letter Office (large black oval dated May 22, 1857) where it was opened and found to contain a dollar bill.

On the face of the cover is a large red "A," the first letter of the last name of the addressee,

and a blue "\$1" indicating the amount of money. The other numbers are record numbers.

Figure 2 shows a cover mailed at Charleston on the last day that U.S. postage was valid, May 31, 1861.

The cover was addressed to "Mrs. S.S. Brown, Raleigh, N.C." On the front of the envelope is a blue "ADVERTISED" from Raleigh. There is no rating marking.

On the reverse of the envelope is a blue "RALEIGH N.C. OCT 1" which would be the date that the envelope was forwarded to the Confederate Dead Letter Office.

When opened it was found to contain \$18. This is marked in pen on the front with red "B" for "Brown" and "90," the record book number. There is also a pencil \$18 on the reverse with a signature. This item has a Confederate Stamp Alliance certificate.

This is the only example of this handstamped lettering system at the D.L.O. during the

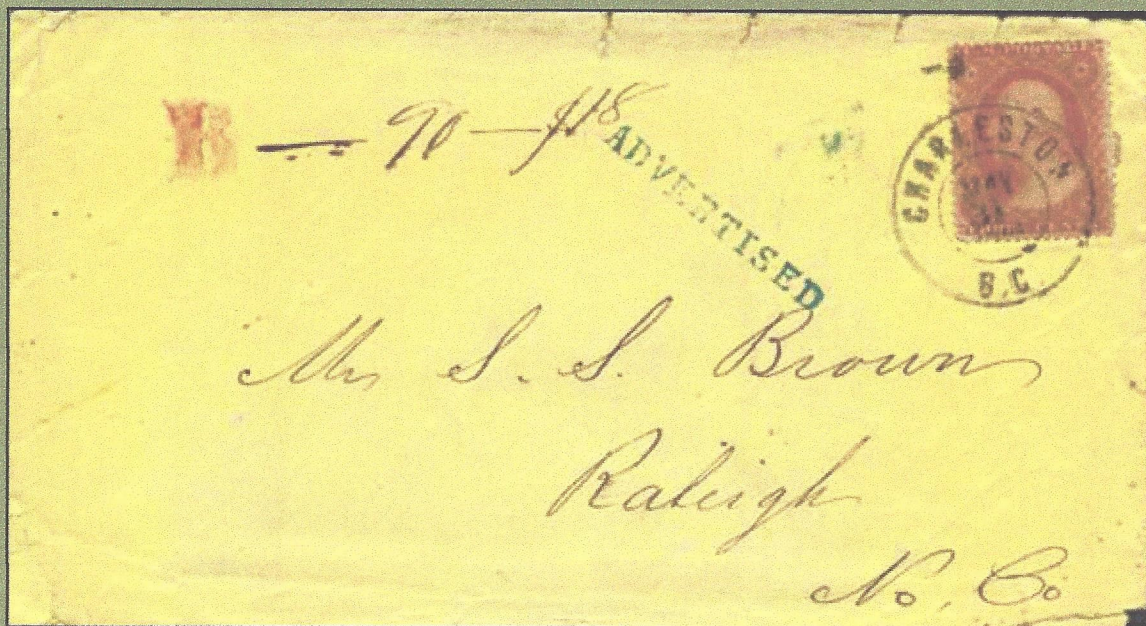


Figure 2: A three-cent 1857 stamp tied by a "CHARLESTON S.C. MAY 31, 1861" (The last day U.S. postage was valid in Confederacy) sent to Mrs. S.S. Brown, Raleigh, N.C. The cover is backstamped "RALEIGH N.C. OCT 1" in blue, matching the blue "ADVERTISED" straightline on the front of the cover. There is also a red "B" and manuscript "90-\$18" indicating that the envelope contained eighteen U.S. dollars.



Figure 3: "TUDOR HALL VA. JUN 26 1862 (inverted date)," "DUE 5" in arch, "5" in circle and "ADV. 2" bold Mobile handstamps on a cover mailed by a soldier in the 24th Alabama Regiment.



Figure 4: Three-cent 1857 stamp tied "JACKSONVILLE Flor. FEB 23" on a cover mailed to Miss Mary A. Hunter Hampton, Virginia. The cover bears a manuscript "Forwd 3" and "Richmond" change of address with "HAMPTON Va. MAR 1" in blue. There, it was "ADVERTISED" (black oval) with black "RICHMOND Va. MAR 8 1861." It must have been left at the Richmond Post Office and not sent to Washington because it bears a manuscript "P.O. Dpt Dead Letter Office 19 Aug 1861 H, 52-1," which appears to be a marking of the Confederate Post Office Department. (John Kaufmann February 1987 auction)



Figure 5: A 10-cent blue with a manuscript "Jennings Gap Va. Sept. 24 1864" on a cover addressed to Staunton, Virginia, where a black straight line "ADVERTISED" was applied. No rate is indicated.

Confederacy that I have found. In the prewar post office it is specific for money letters.

Figure 3 shows a soldier's cover through Tudor Hall, Virginia, to Mobile, Alabama, with an "ADV 2" mailed just prior to the 10-cent rate. Only some of the "advertised" postmarks show the rate, often in manuscript.

Figure 4 shows a cover mailed before the war, forwarded at Hampton, Virginia, to Richmond, and then advertised there, all before Virginia seceded.

The cover is also marked "P.O. Dead Letter Office 19 Aug 1861 H, 52-1." This manuscript notation is during the period when the D.L.O. was Confederate.

Apparently the letter stayed in the post office at Richmond for a number of months. Note the "H" for the last name of the addressee, Hunter. But it was not a money letter and there is no handstamped letter "H."

The Confederate Post Office rate for advertising was two cents. Peter W.W. Powell wrote a pamphlet that lists many examples of these markings.

Figure 5 shows an "ADVERTISED" marking from Staunton, Virginia, without a rate. There are more postmarks without a rating than with a rating. New Orleans removed the "1" from a pre-war marking in a box. Canton used three different "2" cancels with "Ad."

The best article I have found about the Confederate Dead Letter Office is by Van Dyk MacBride. He shows one type of imprinted envelope known on legal sized envelopes for usages from the D.L.O.

Then there is an oval dated marking "DEAD LETTER OFFICE/CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA/with date" that was applied on the front of covers sent to the D.L.O. for processing. Some of these ovals show manuscript record book notations including the use of initials for the last name of the addressee. None show indications of the money contents.

I would be very interested in learning of other, similar usages.

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