

EDGED IN BLACK

MOURNING COVERS IN THE CONFEDERACY

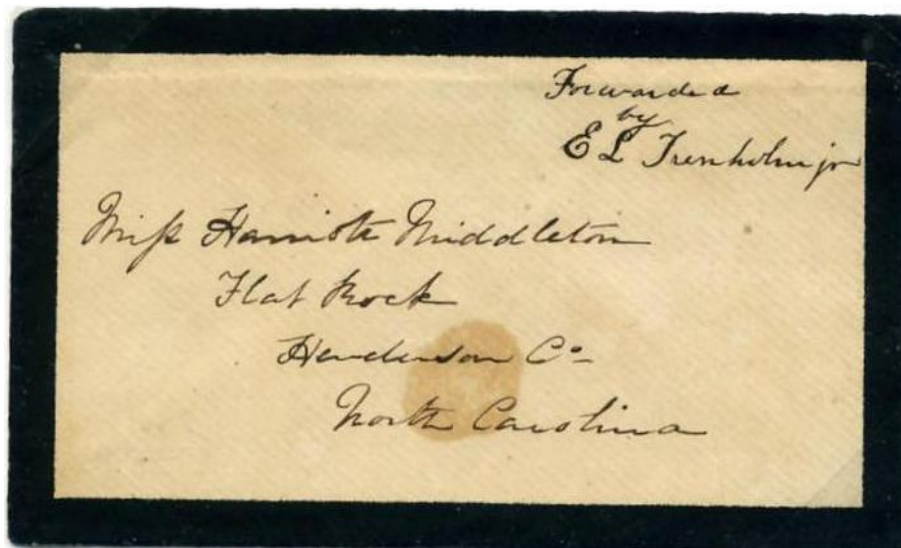
Shown are black bordered mourning covers displaying postmaster's provisionals, through-the-lines uses, forwarded covers, adversity covers; plus regular mail at the 2 cent, 20 cent, 5 cent, 10 cent rates.

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



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

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

**SOUTH^N LETTER
UNPAID.
DUE 3**

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

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

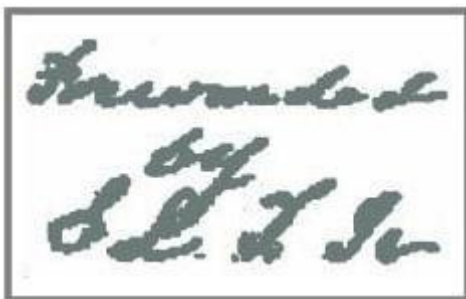
THROUGH THE LINES – INCOMING BLOCKADE RUN

FROM GREAT BRITAIN VIA BAHAMAS TO CHARLESTON

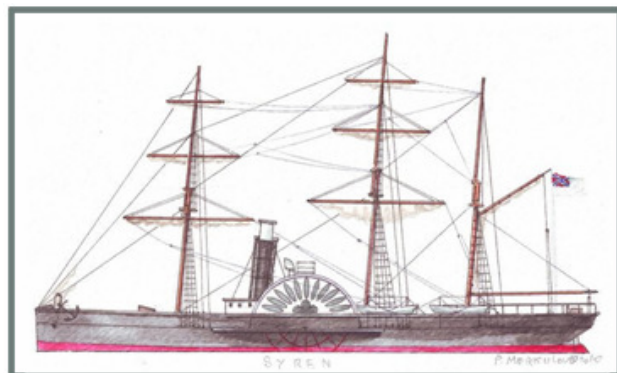


Postmarked 26 September 1864
Charleston, South Carolina to Flat Rock, North Carolina

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.)



"Syren" (from an original watercolor by Petr Merkulov)

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 – FLAG OF TRUCE

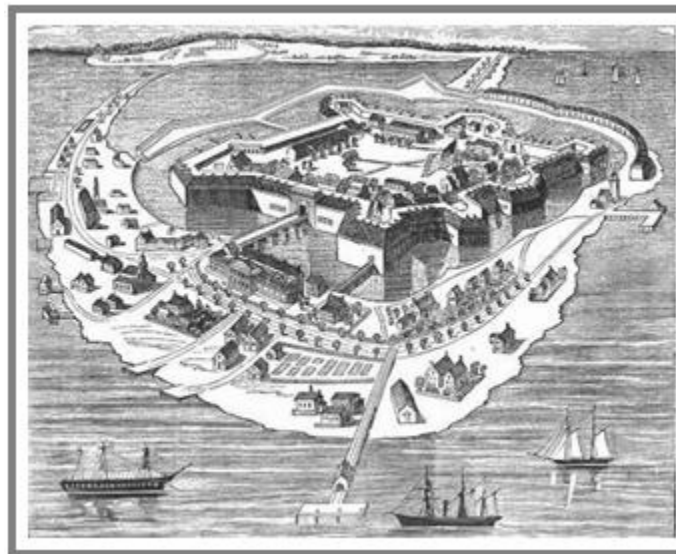
NORTH TO SOUTH – VIA FORTRESS MONROE



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

Prepaid with two U.S. stamps – perhaps one for Federal and one for Confederate postage? Routed per endorsement via Fortress Monroe 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.

This can not have been an overweight letter, as the rules for Flag of Truce mail specifically state: “**No letter must exceed one page of a letter sheet....**”



(drawing of Fortress Monroe, circa 1861)

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

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

Covertly smuggled out of 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.



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ADVERSITY COVERS – HOMEMADE

Due to paper shortages, pre-printed black border envelopes were not always available. These senders created their own mourning covers from normal envelopes. 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

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



25 May 1863: Franklin Depot, Virginia to Silver Hill, North Carolina

ADVERSITY COVERS – REUSED

Issue of 1863, printed by Archer and Daly



First use – Origin & date unknown: to Charleston, South Carolina

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

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 address on the other side.



(postmark & stamp enlarged to 125%)

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

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19 October (c.1863): Richmond, Virginia local address

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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' of Cents at top.
Stone 3, Plate Position 33

**The only mourning cover
recorded franked with
this constant plate flaw.**

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.

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POSTAL RATES – 10 CENTS with STAMPS

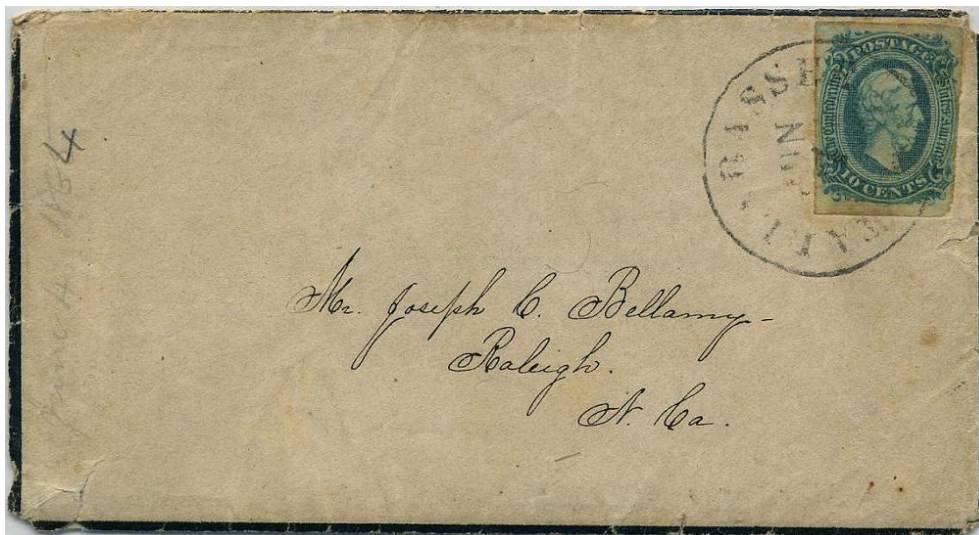


Issue of 1861
printed by
Hoyer and Ludwig

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): Amherst Court House to Richmond, Virginia

Issue of 1862
Printed by
Archer and Daly



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