

## THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR: ADVERSITY USES

Exhibitor: Daniel J. Ryterband

### Synopsis

**Objective, Methodology and Page Structure:** This one-frame exhibit focuses on Civil War mail commonly known to collectors as “adversity” covers. The conflict, which commenced in April 1861 and ended in the Spring of 1865, caused severe shortages of paper and stationery in the Confederacy. This reflected the North’s near monopoly in the paper manufacturing industry and the blockade of Southern ports and waterways by Union troops, which was intended to strangle the Confederate economy by restricting the flow of goods in and out of the major cities. Letter writers had to resort to a wide variety of products and methods to fill the void, and adversity covers include envelopes made from paper used for other purposes as well as re-used or modified envelopes.

The exhibit commences with the unique wallpaper cover from Andersonville prison, which is widely known as the most important of all Civil War adversity uses. It then presents two examples of Northern adversity uses, which are much scarcer than Confederate uses, and then Southern examples presented in three categories:

- printed forms
- wallpaper, and
- re-used envelopes

The exhibit is intended to illustrate the finest known and scarcest examples of the innovative ways used by correspondents to maintain channels of communication during the war, many of which were never seen before or after. The captions provide important information about each cover and boldface type is used to describe the significance of especially important or rare items.

**Importance, Rarity, Condition and Challenge of Acquisition:** The covers presented in this exhibit originated in the most horrid of war-time conditions, and the surviving artifacts often spent decades in the hot southern climate and were subject to vermin and insect damage. Viewers should take special note of the exceptionally fine condition of the items displayed in this exhibit, and the extraordinary difficulty in assembling a comparable collection. I have been careful to avoid defective or repaired items, and I have carefully assembled a display of adversity uses that are especially important and rare.

This exhibit includes numerous items that have provenance from historically renowned Civil War collectors, such as Birkinbine, Brandon, Myerson, Risvold, Walske, Haas, Gross and Kilbourne, which indicates that the items have been recognized as prime examples of significant rarities for multiple generations. The exhibit contains numerous covers that are especially noteworthy, including the following items:

- Unique wallpaper cover from Camp Sumter (Andersonville Prison), censored by camp commandant Henry Wirz, bearing CSA 5c De La Rue and handstamped Due 6 for US postage
- Letter fashioned from a cardboard shirt collar, written by a Union soldier and bearing three copies of the US 1¢ 1861
- Envelope made from a printed form bearing the CSA 10¢ Rose Lithograph
- Envelope made from a printed form bearing the CSA 2¢ Green Lithograph, paying the drop rate
- Envelope made from wallpaper bearing the CSA 5¢ Green Lithograph. Wallpaper covers bearing the first CSA general issue adhesive are especially rare because the paper shortages did not occur until well after this stamp was replaced by the 5¢ Blue Lithograph
- Envelope made from wallpaper bearing the CSA 10¢ Jefferson Lithograph and mailed from Texas, where very few wallpaper covers originated
- Envelope made from wallpaper and bearing the scarcest of all CSA general issue adhesives, the 10¢ frameline

- Envelope made from wallpaper and bearing the CSA 20¢ Washington paying double the 10¢ rate and cancelled by a Red cds, a double rarity
- Envelope made from wallpaper and bearing the CSA 2¢ Jackson Engraved, paying the drop rate
- Obsolete US 3¢ star die envelope used in the Confederacy and bearing two copies of the scarce 10¢ frameline, paying double the 10¢ rate
- Turned cover bearing both the 2¢ Jackson Engraved paying the circular rate and the 10¢ Die A
- Turned cover with both sides bearing the 20¢ Washington, one tied by a Red cds
- Turned incoming blockade cover, with one side bearing CSA 10¢ Die B and the other with numeral “6” handstamp indicating postage due for delivery at port of entry for an incoming ship letter

**Literature, Research and References:** The study of Civil War postal history is facilitated by a focused body of literature. Over a period of more than 15 years, I have intensely studied the material and consulted with expert postal historians. In choosing items for acquisition and developing this exhibit, the following publications have provided essential information:

*Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Edited by Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., and Jerry S. Palazolo, 2012

*Confederate Philatelist*, The Confederate Stamp Alliance

Patricia A. Kaufmann articles and website (<http://www.csadealer.com>)

Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries sale catalogs and website (<http://www.siegelauctions.com>)

**Message to the Judges:** This exhibit has never been shown publicly. I look forward to feedback from the judges and I thank you for your time and consideration.

DJR