



# POSTAL HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

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## **Purpose:**

This exhibit, believed to be the first on this subject, portrays the history of the Department of State of the Confederate States of America (CSA) through examples of contemporarily used envelopes and semi-official stationery. Surviving examples are very scarce; the exhibit includes all examples encountered during 40 years of collecting and original research on the United States of America (USA) and the CSA State Department by the exhibitor.

## **Background:**

The government organization of the CSA was modeled after that of the USA executive branch including the Department of State (DOS). Three men served as Secretary of State and one as Acting Secretary from 21 February 1861 to 3 May 1865 coinciding with the end of the CSA on 10 May 1865. Despite active efforts by the Secretaries of State to seek diplomatic recognition from England, France, Spain, the Vatican, and Mexico, none recognized the sovereignty of the CSA. Therefore, the State Department focused more on relationships and coordination between the CSA government in Richmond, Va. and its member states and respective militias. This is validated in that virtually all known State Department mails are domestic. The sole recorded non-domestic example is an 1861 letter from the Confederate Commissioner in London sent by blockade route to Charleston, S.C. (See Row 2, Page 2).

## **Scope:**

Examples from the Department of State, both pre-stamp and stamped, bearing signatures of all Secretaries of State and the three Commissioners to Europe and Mexico are presented. All five recorded Department of State imprinted envelopes as listed in the "Confederate States of America, Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History, Confederate Stamp Alliance, Inc., 2012" and additional, unlisted varieties, resulting from original research by this exhibitor are also shown.

## **Organization:**

**Section I:** Examples from all the permanent and the acting CSA Secretaries of State.

**Section II:** Examples of mail of US diplomats who were Confederate Commissioners to Europe and Mexico.

**Section III:** Pre-Stamp and CSA stamped mail carried privately or through the CSA postal service.

**Section IV: Original research by this exhibitor** has identified additional DOS imprinted envelope varieties of different sizes and paper stock colors not currently identified in the 2012 CSA Handbook. These new examples should be included in subsequent editions of the handbook.

## **Keys Within the Exhibit**

**Items accompanied by expert committee certificates are designated "e."**

**Items of exceptional importance are framed within a red box.** 

**Supporting reference is available using a phone to scan the QR codes within in the exhibit.**

Reference



# CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF STATE

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**William M. Browne, Acting Secretary: 18 February - March 1861;  
Assistant Secretary: April 1861 - March 1862**



Browne was a native of Ireland who fought on behalf of England in the Crimean War, then immigrated to New York City in 1855. He wrote for New York journals, was well-connected and was active in the Democratic party in Washington, D.C. where he became known as "Constitution Browne." He was an avid proponent of secession. In 1861, Browne moved to Athens, Georgia. He became a favorite of both President Davis and first Secretary of State Toombs. Browne served as Acting and then Assistant Secretary of State for the Confederacy until March 1862 and later as a temporary brigadier general in the Confederate States Army.



Imprint Type DOS-1. White paper stock, 13.5cm x 8.0cm.

Endorsed "Wm M Browne, Ast. Secy" and addressed to "Mrs. Howell Cobb, Athens Ga." Struck with black "RICHMOND VA. JULY 8 1861" circular date stamp (CDS) and "PAID 10" for a distance over 500 miles.

The recipient's husband, Mr. Howell Cobb, had been Secretary of Treasury of the USA and later was the President of the Provisional Confederate Congress in Richmond.

Two examples are recorded; both are in this exhibit.

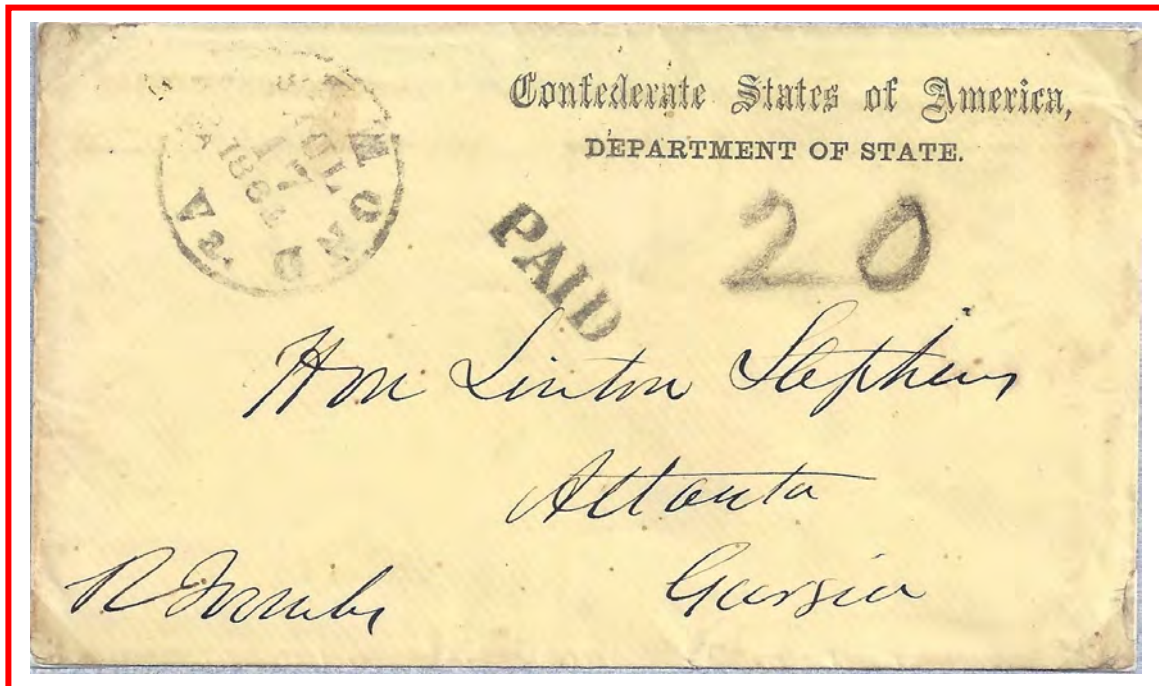
# CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF STATE

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**Robert Toombs, First Secretary of State: 25 February 1861 - 25 July 1861**



Toombs was an American politician and a founding father of the Confederacy and its first Secretary of State. A lawyer by training, he was an impressive speaker in both the U.S. House of Representatives, and later the U.S. Senate. Believing strongly in states' rights and the institution of slavery, Toombs found common ground with fellow-Georgian Alexander H. Stephens both advocating secession. President Davis appointed him as the first secretary of state in the newly formed Confederate Government. He criticized the attack on Fort Sumter which put him at odds with President Jefferson Davis. On 25 July 1861 Toombs resigned his Secretary position to join the Confederate States Army.



**Imprint Type DOS-1. Yellow paper stock, 14.0cm x 9.0cm.**

Endorsed "R. Toombs" and addressed to "Hon. Linton Stephens, Atlanta, Georgia" and struck with "RICHMOND VA. JULY 17 1861" CDS. The "PAID" and "20" markings indicate prepayment of the double the half ounce rate of 10 cents for a distance in excess of 500 miles. Linton Stephens was the half brother of Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the CSA.

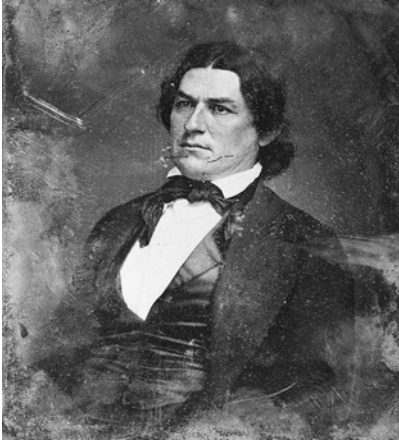
In 40 years of research, this is the only endorsed R. Toombs example recorded reflecting Toombs' short five-month tenure as Secretary of State.



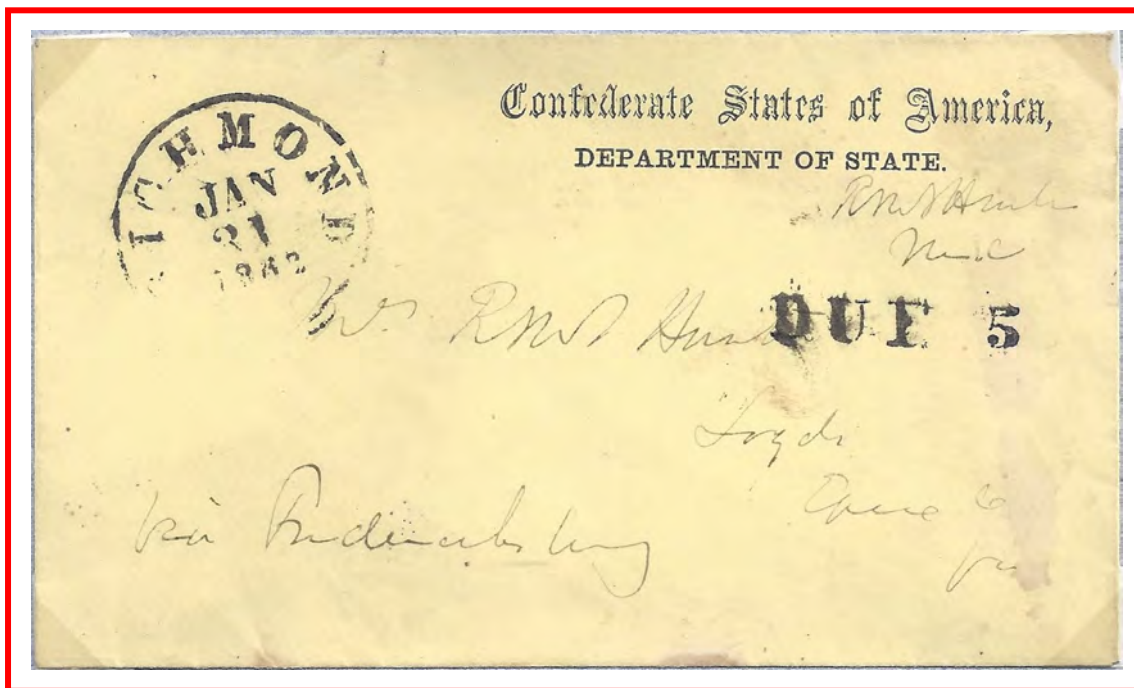
# CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF STATE

**Robert M. T. Hunter, Second Secretary of State : July 1861 - 18 February 1862**

Hunter was a prominent Virginian and former Speaker of the House and US senator who, in early 1861, resigned the US Senate and was elected to the Confederate Provincial Congress. In July 1861, he was appointed Secretary of State and subsequently resigned on 18 February 1862 to



In 1862 Robert M T Hunter became the first Confederate Secretary of State to be depicted on the Confederate \$10 bank note.



**Imprint Type DOS-1, Yellow paper stock, Size: 13.8cm x 7.9cm**

Signed "R.M. T. Hunter, Mail", sent unpaid to "Mrs. R. M. Hunter, Loyd, Va" and docketed "Via Fredericksburg". "DUE 5" upon receipt represents single letter rate for less than 500 miles which was collected from the recipient.

In 40 years of research, this is the only signed R. M. T. Hunter example recorded and reflects Hunter's short seven-month tenure as Secretary of State.

# CONFEDERATE SECRETARIES OF STATE

**Judah Phillip Benjamin ,Third and Last Secretary of State: 18 March 1862 - 10 May 1865**

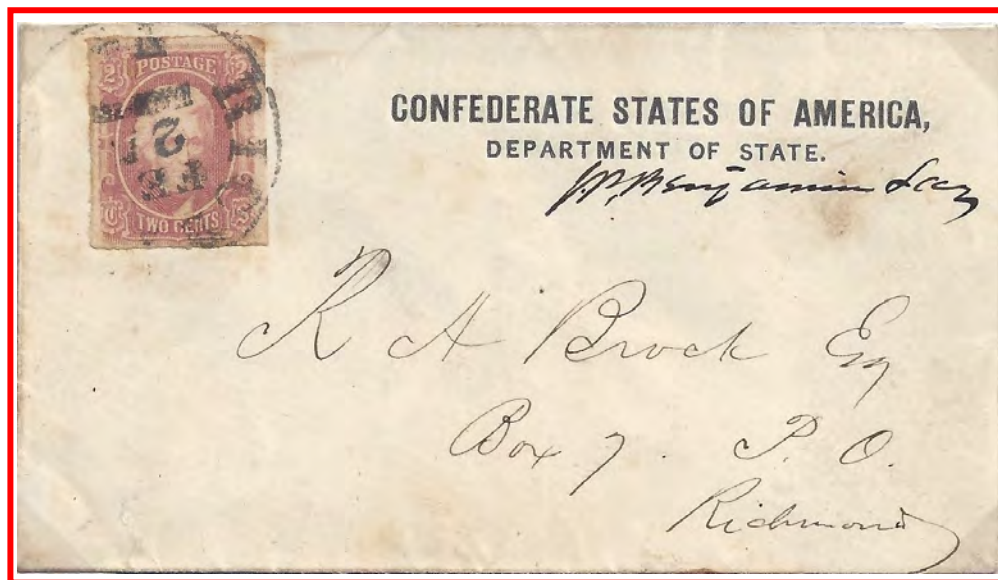


Benjamin was a lawyer who, from 1853, was a United States Senator from Louisiana. In March 1862 he became Secretary of State of the CSA. He unsuccessfully sought to get sovereign recognition of the CSA especially by England and France. Benjamin remained in the Cabinet until the end of the Civil War when he escaped to the United Kingdom, becoming an English barrister. He was the first Jew to be elected to the United States Senate who had not renounced that faith, and was the first Jew to hold a Cabinet position anywhere in the USA.

Benjamin's image as it appeared on the Confederate \$2 note



Only recorded 2c drop letter from Department of State.



**Imprint Type DOS-4, White paper stock, 12.0cm x 6.7cm.**

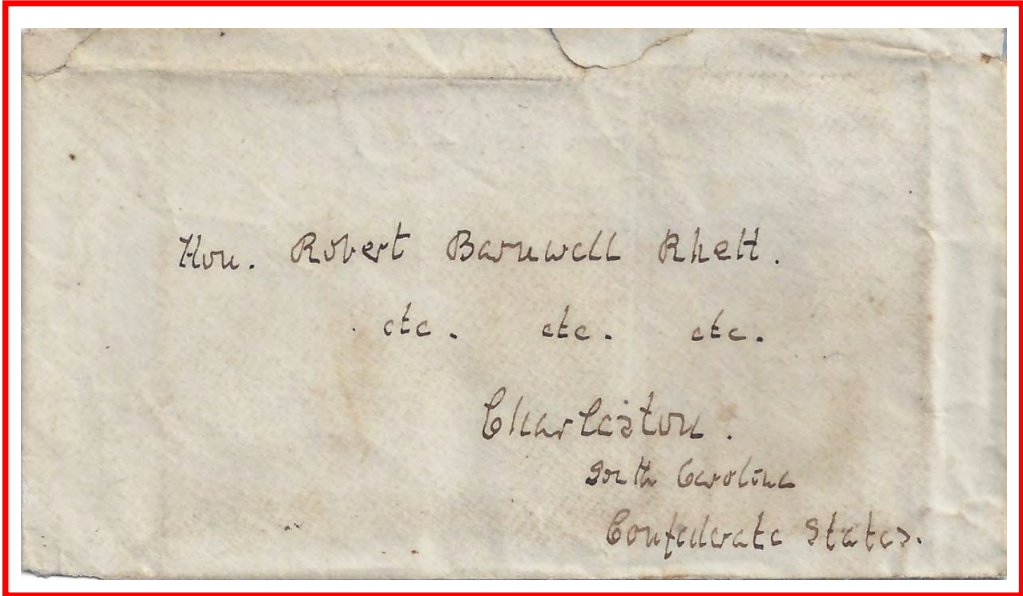
Endorsed "JP Benjamin, Secy" and addressed to "R. A. Brock Esq. Box 7, P.O. Richmond". Brock served in the Confederate Army and then became Corresponding Secretary and Librarian of the Virginia Historical Society. During that time he wrote several books about the Confederacy. (Ex-Dietz)



# CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONER TO EUROPE



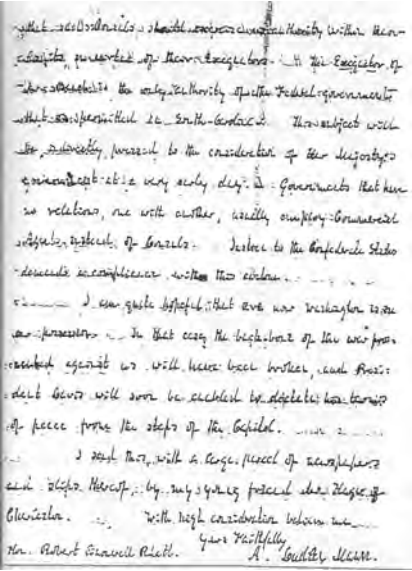
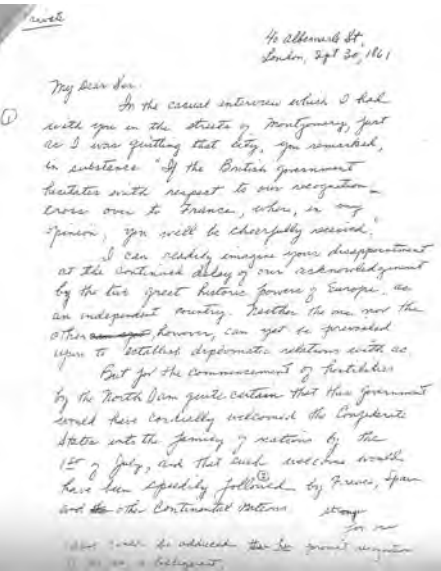
Ambrose Dudley Mann was a career diplomat and was the Assistant U.S. Secretary of State from 1853-55. Being a personal friend of Jefferson Davis, Mann chose to side with the Confederates. On 16 March 1861 he was appointed by President Davis and Secretary of State Robert Toombs to be one of three Confederate Commissioners to Europe. He sailed for England on 28 March 1861, and was based in London. Mann successfully pleaded with the British Government to intervene to seek the release of James Mason and John Slidell (newly appointed Commissioners for England and France) who had been captured by the USA while sailing to England. Subsequently, Mann was appointed to become Commissioner for Belgium and the Vatican.



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Sent from London by Ambrose Mann, dated 30 September 1861 to "Hon. Robert Barnwell Rhett, etc. etc. etc., Charleston, In the Carolina, Confederate States." It was sent on private ships to evade the US naval blockade and routed most likely via St. Thomas (DWI) and Havana Cuba to Charleston, South Carolina.

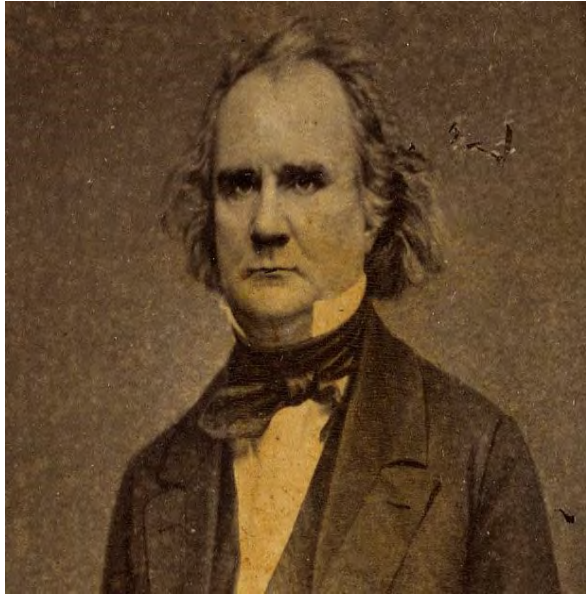
Copy of original letter now residing in an archive



At left is a copy of the original letter carried in the above envelope. The letter, written by Mann, discusses details about his numerous efforts. He expresses optimism to secure diplomatic recognition by July 1862, first from England and then by France, Spain and other Continental nations. The letter also details political and diplomatic sensitivities resulting from prevailing European treaties with the USA.

## CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONER TO ENGLAND

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James Murray Mason was appointed as the first CSA commissioner to England in September 1861. On 15 November 1861, while travelling to Southampton England on the British Steamer Trent, Mason's and John Sildell's party were captured by Federal troops on the USS San Jacinto and imprisoned at Fort Erren, near Boston. The event historically became known as the "Trent Affair." On 1 January 1862, at the direction of President Lincoln and USA Secretary of State Seward, Mason and his party were released and allowed to sail to England. He represented the Confederacy until the war's end. However, his efforts to seek diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy by England were unsuccessful.



Reference



James Mason free frank on a cover from Winchester, Va with "WINCHESTER Va. JUL 9" CDS to Charleston, Mass.

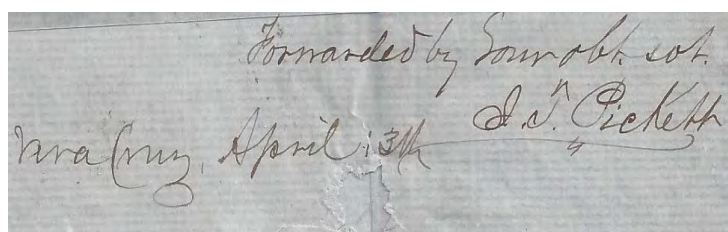
In 40 years of searching, this is the only example found by this exhibitor of a James Mason free franking. The absolute date can not be ascertained.



# CONFEDERATE COMMISSIONER TO MEXICO



John Thomas Pickett was the former U.S. Consul in Vera Cruz from 1853 to 1861. When the "Southern War of Rebellion" broke out he was appointed the Confederate Commissioner to Mexico (May 1861 - May 1862). In a letter dated 16 September 1861 to Foreign Minister of Mexico, Pickett offered to trade some of the US territories to Mexico in exchange for diplomatic recognition of the CSA. The offer failed. In May 1862 Mexican authorities arrested Pickett at a public brawl resulting in his recall, in disgrace, and return to Richmond, Va. He was Secretary of the first Confederate Peace mission in 1863. He also was appointed Special Envoy Extraordinary to Mexico in 1863-1864 when he arranged the escape of CSA soldiers imprisoned in Mexico.



Internal Dateline 25% Reduction

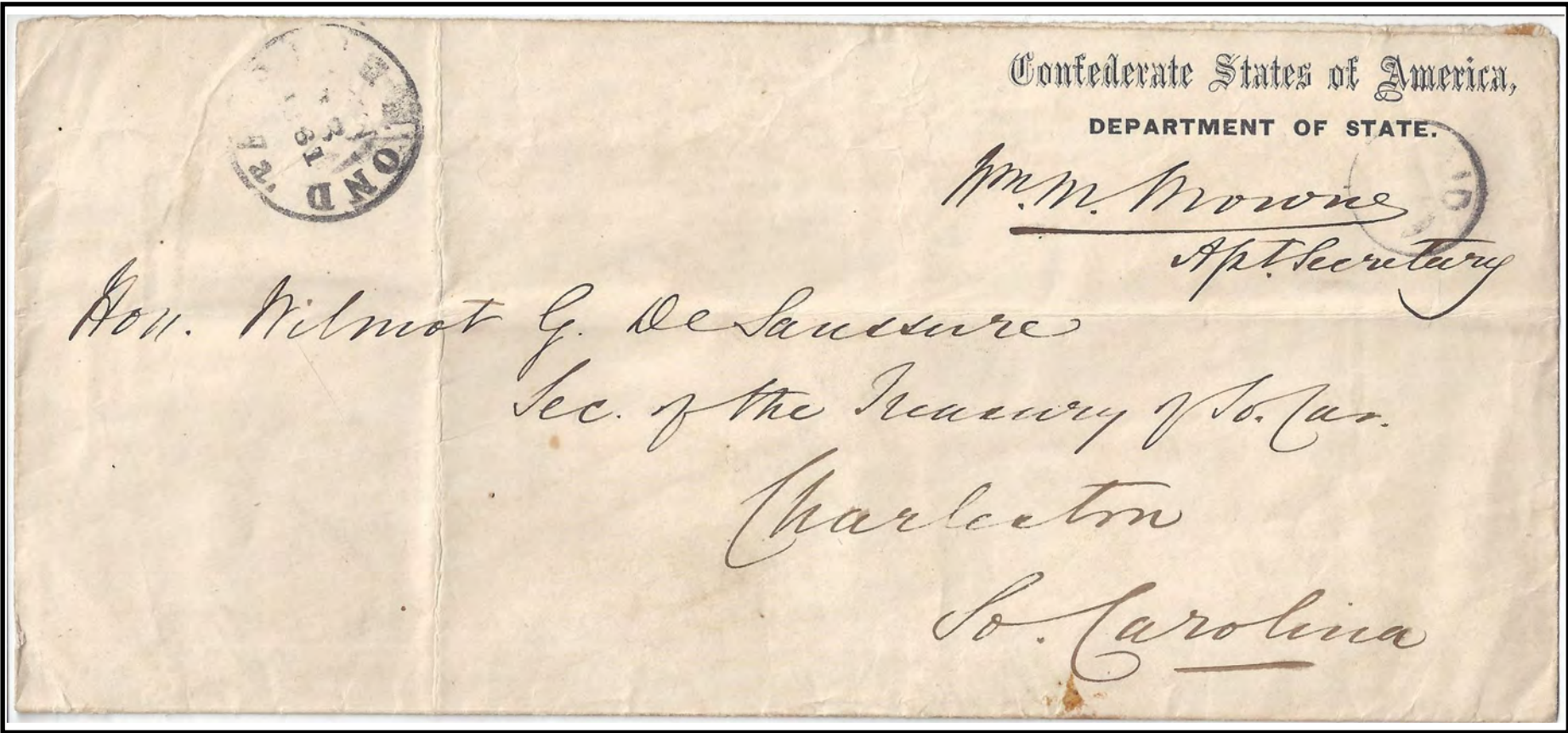
Verso: "Forwarded by Your obt. Svt., J.T. Pickett Vera Cruz, April 13th."  
Manuscript forwarder's notation is that of the U.S. Consul, Vera Cruz, Mexico.



April 1860: Before he resigned as US Consul in Vera Cruz, Pickett forwarded this letter from Charleston S.C. to John Cripps, a US diplomat in Mexico City. A year later, in early 1861, Pickett joined the Confederacy. 10¢ postage to Mexico is overpaid by 2¢ with four US 1857 3¢ stamps cancelled with "CHARLESTON S.C. FEB 15 1860."



PRE-STAMP PERIOD: MAIL THROUGH CSA POSTAL SERVICE



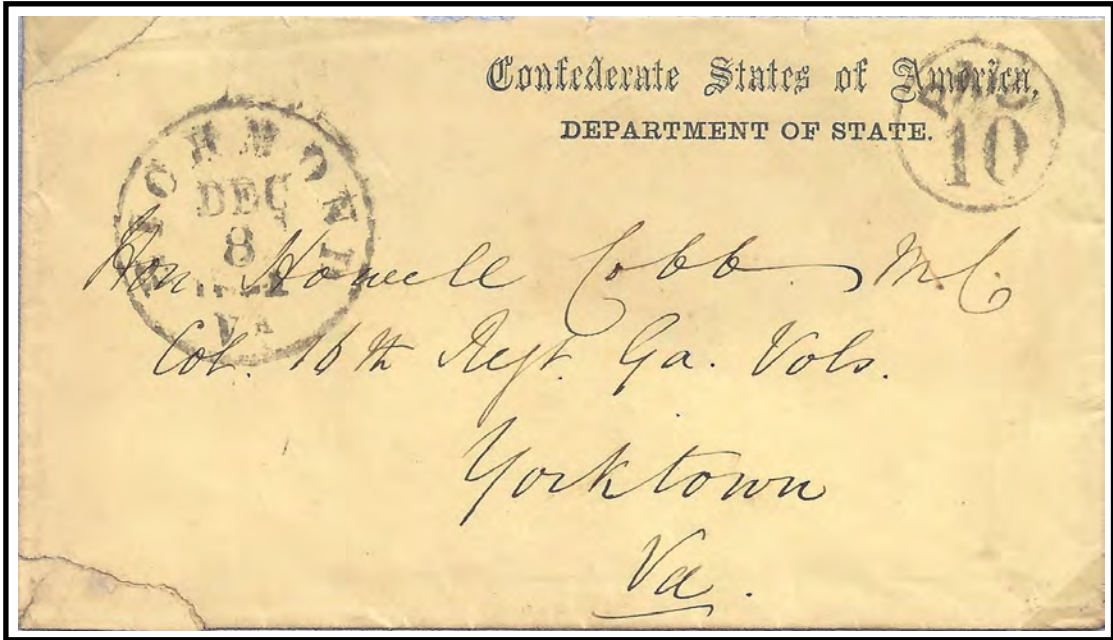
Imprint Type DOS-1, White paper stock, 24.0cm x 10.9cm. The only recorded legal size Type DOS-1

Smaller envelope without endorsement. Addressed to an American political figure and Southern Democrat, the “Hon. Howell Cobb, M. C. (Member of Congress), Col. 16th Regt. Ga. Vols, Yorktown, VA.” He was a five-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Speaker of the House from 1849 to 1851. He also served as the 40th Governor of Georgia (1851–1853) and as the US Secretary of Treasury under President James Buchanan (1857–1860). Cobb served as the first President of the CSA for two weeks between the foundation of the Confederacy and the election of Jefferson Davis. The 10¢ prepayment represents a double weight letter for less than 500 miles.

Endorsed by “Wm. M. Browne, Ast. Secretary” and addressed to “Hon Wilmot G. de Saussure, Sec. of Treasury of So. Car, Charleston, So. Carolina.” Struck with “RICHMOND JUN 31 1861” CDS in conjunction with “PAID 10” in circle; which indicates prepayment of the double 5¢ postage for a letter under 500 miles.

He served three terms in the South Carolina General Assembly (1848–1849, 1854–1857 and 1860–1863). As a colonel, he led his regiment in the occupation of Fort Moultrie and the bombardment of Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861.

Wilmot de Saussure then served as South Carolina Secretary of Treasury from the summer of 1861 to 11 April 1862.

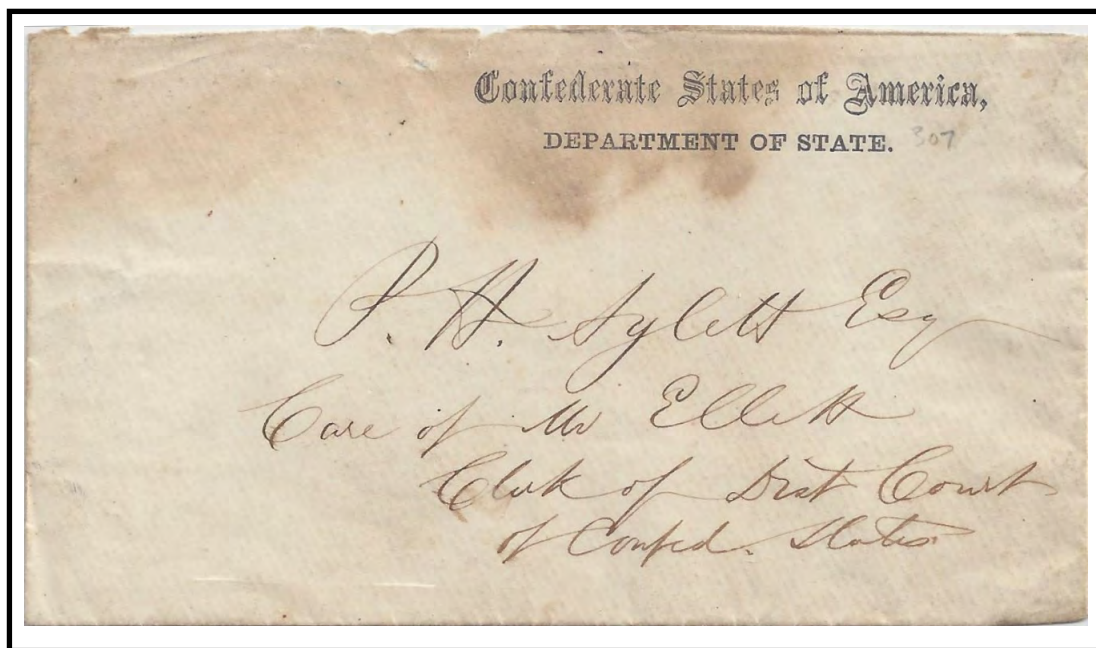


Imprint Type DOS-1, Manilla paper stock, 13.6cm x 7.8cm

# PRIVATELY CARRIED MAIL OUTSIDE OF CSA POSTAL SERVICE

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Imprinted State Department envelopes, without postal markings or endorsement, were privately carried outside of the Confederate postal system.



**Imprint Type DOS-1, Grey paper stock, 14.1cm x 8.0 cm**

Undated and addressed to "P. H. (Patrick Henry) Aylett Esq, Care of Mr. Elliott, Clerk of Dist(ri) Court of Confed(erate) States."

Upon formation of the Confederacy in 1861, President Davis appointed Aylett as the District Attorney of Eastern Virginia located in Richmond, Va.

Reference

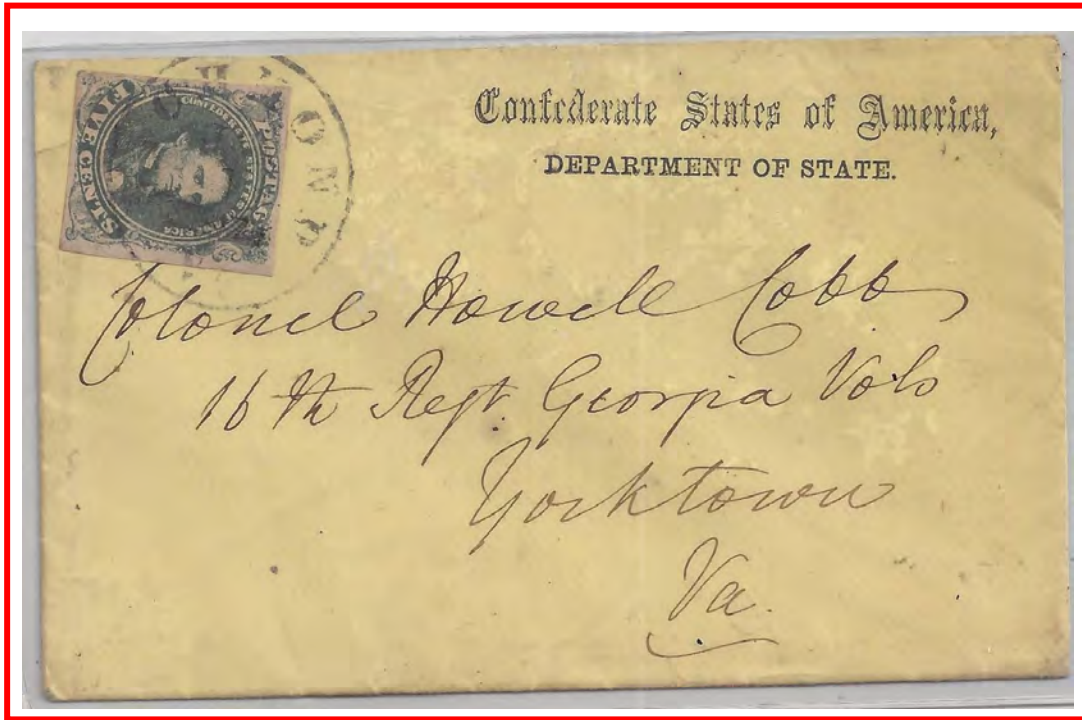




# STAMPED MAIL THROUGH CSA POSTAL SERVICE

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**The only recorded State Department mail bearing the first issued stamp of the Confederate States of America**



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**Imprint Type DOS-1, Yellow paper stock, 14.6cm x 8.0cm**

Without an endorsement, this was addressed to "Colonel Howell Cobb, 16th Regt. Georgia Vols, Yorktown, Va." This first Confederate stamp issue was the 5¢ green with the portrait of Jefferson Davis and was tied by "RICHMOND JULY 7 C. 1862" CDS prepaying the single weight letter rate for less than 500 miles.

Recipient by this time was a Colonel with the 16th Regiment of Georgia volunteers.



# STAMPED MAIL THROUGH CSA POSTAL SERVICE

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The third issue CSA stamp paying 10¢ postage rate effective 1 July 1862



**Imprint Type DOS-1, Yellow paper stock, 14.0cm x 7.9cm**

Addressed to "Hon. A. H. H. *Stewart*, Staunton, Va." with a pair of the third issue 5¢ Jefferson Davis stamp tied by "RICHMOND Va., 27 MAR" circa 1863 which paid the 10¢ rate for under 500 miles.

The recipient, Alexander Hughs Holmes Stuart, served in both houses of the Virginia General Assembly (1836-1838, 1857-1861 and 1874-1877), as a USA Congressman (1841-1843), and as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior (1850-1853). He was part of a three-man delegation who travelled from Virginia to Washington, D.C. to meet with President Lincoln after the fall of Fort Sumter on 12 April, 1861.

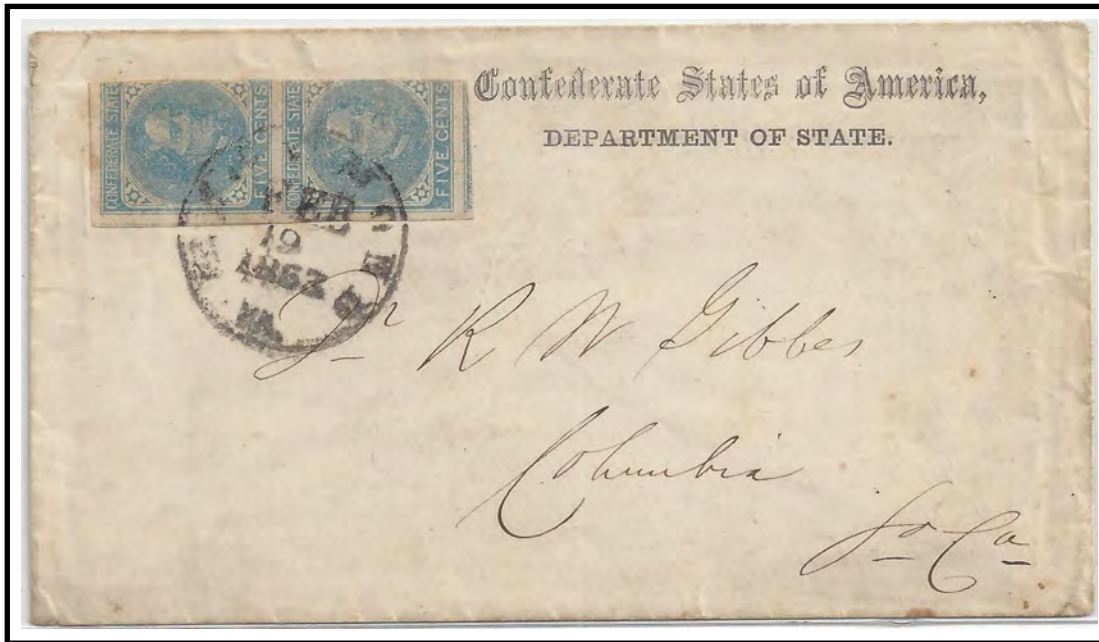
One of only two recorded uses of this 5¢ Jefferson issue on Department of State mail. The other is also in this exhibit.

Reference



# IMPRINTED CSA POSTAL STATIONERY

The CSA State Department, like other CSA government departments, produced its own stationery with "CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA / DEPARTMENT OF STATE" imprints on upper right corner. The envelopes have a variety of different fonts, sizes and paper stocks. A close inspection of all imprinted envelopes bear "DE LA RUE, LONDON" colorless embossing on the inner flap, indicating the stock was imported from England. However, the corner card imprint "Confederate States of America, / DEPARTMENT OF STATE" is believed to be printed in CSA. The 2012 Confederate States Handbook currently lists five different DOS imprint varieties, all shown in this exhibit. However original study by the exhibitor has identified additional varieties of sizes and paper stock which hopefully will be listed in the future editions of the handbook.



**Imprint Type DOS-1, Grey paper stock, 14.1cm x 7.9cm.**

Addressed to "Dr. R. W. Gibbs, Columbia, So. Ca." with a pair of the third issue 5¢ Jefferson Davis stamps tied by "RICHMOND Va. FEB 19 1863." The stamps pay the 10¢ postage for less than 500 miles.

Dr. Gibbs was Surgeon General of the South Carolina Militia.

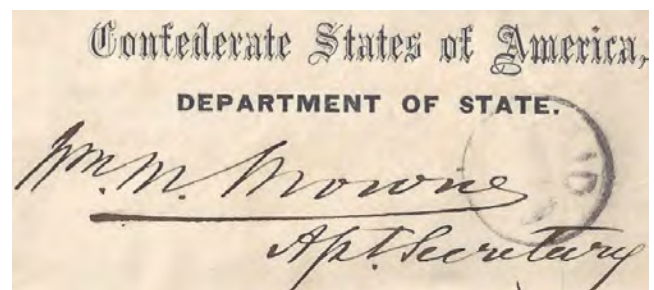
## DOS-1: ENVELOPE SIZE, FONT AND PAPER VARIETIES



**Lemon paper stock, 14.1cm x 7.9cm**



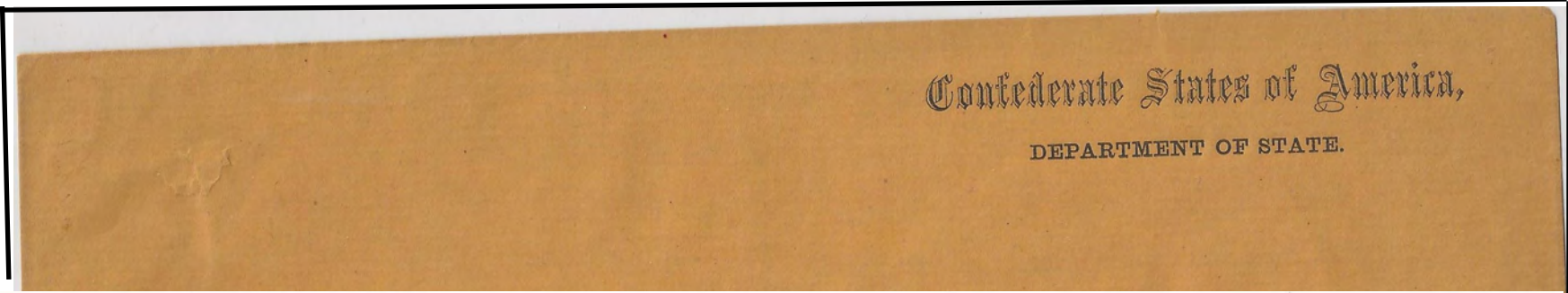
**Grey paper stock, 14.1cm x 8.0cm**



**White paper stock, 24cm x 10.8cm**



IMPRINTED CSA POSTAL STATIONERY



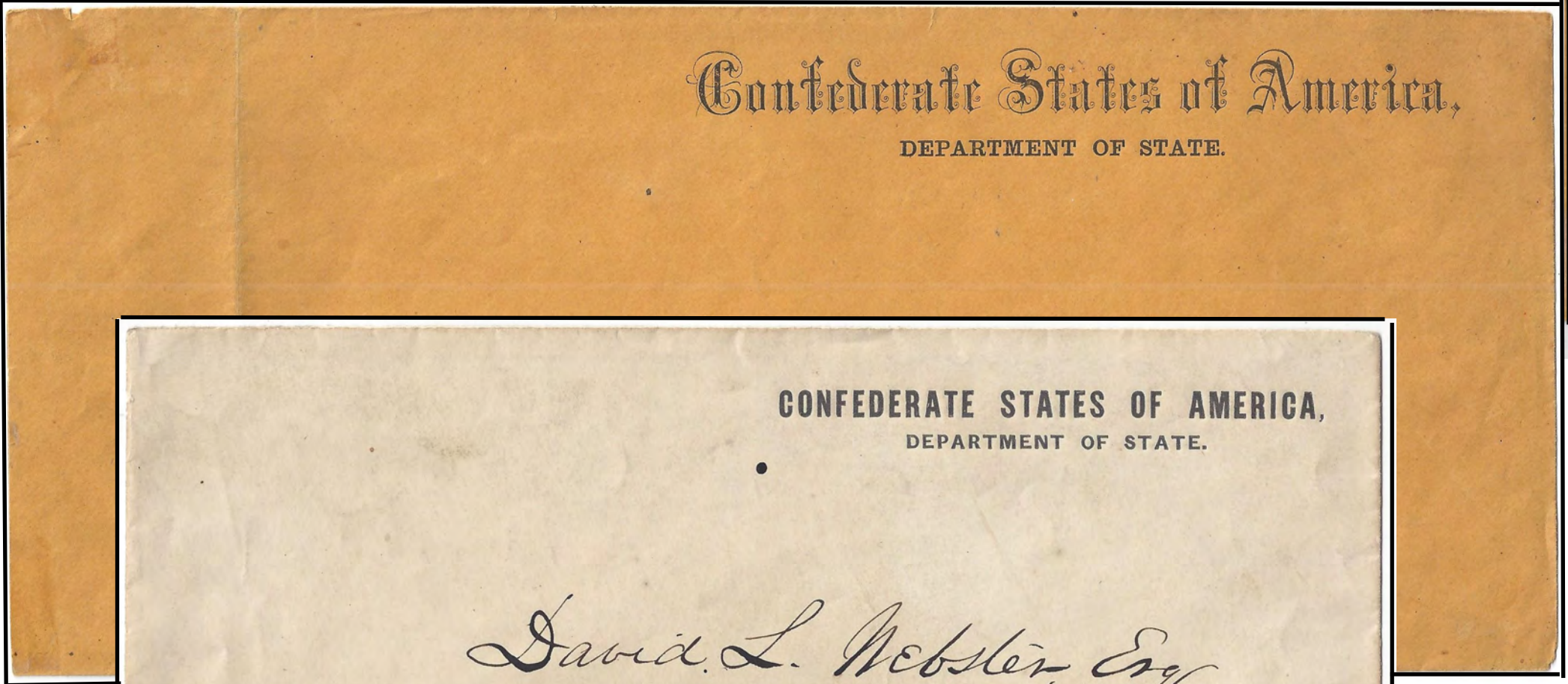
Imprint Type DOS-2, Manila paper stock, 22.7cm x 10.1cm

Similar to Type DOS-1 except the “D” of “DEPARTMENT OF STATE” is under the “d” of “Confederate’ States of America.”

Imprint Type DOS-3, Lighter Manila paper stock, 22.7cm x 10.1cm.

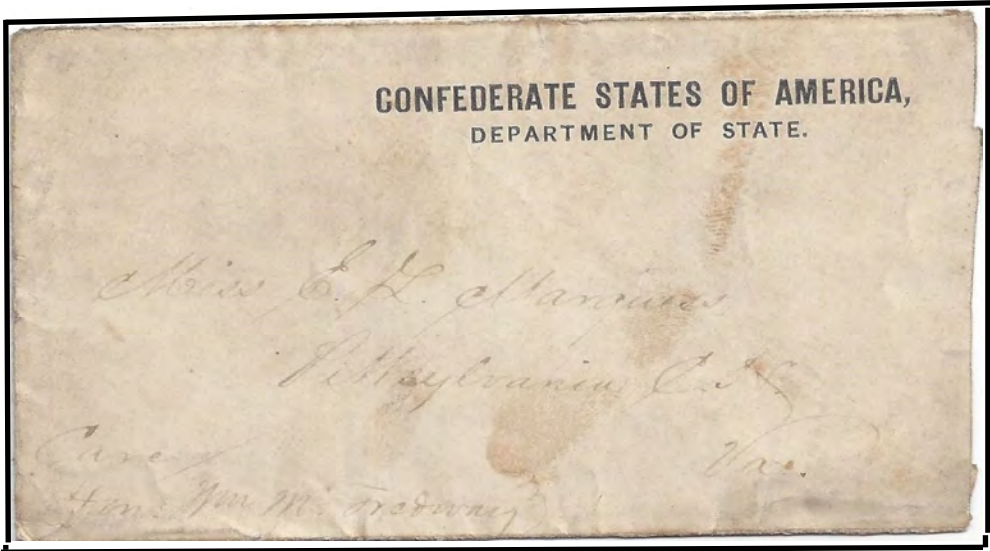
Similar to Type DOS-2 except the “D” of “DEPARTMENT OF STATE” is under the “r” of “Confederate’ States of America.”

This is the largest of the imprinted envelopes produced.  
No examples of DOS-2 and DOS-3 are known used.



Imprint Type DOS-5 , Gray-White paper stock, 22.4cm x 9.6cm

Similar to Type DOS-4. The “D” of “DEPARTMENT OF STATE” is under “R” of “CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.”  
Addressed to “David L. Webster Esq. Boston, Mass.” Webster was a member of the Boston Council and a member of the Massachusetts Legislature.



Imprint Type DOS-4, Gray-White paper stock, 11.8cm x 6.8cm

The letter “D” of “DEPARTMENT OF STATE” is directly under the “D” of “CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.”  
Carried outside of the mails, it is addressed to “Miss E. G. Allanguess, Pittsylvania Va.” Lower left notation: “Care of Hon. Wm. M Tredway.”  
Tredway served in the United States Congress from 1845 to 1847. At the Virginia secession convention he voted against secession on 4 April and then for secession on 17 April 1861.