

COMMON MAIL FROM UNCOMMON TIMES

**December, 1860 through May, 1861
in the Southern United States**



Cover mailed on April 16, 1861 – 4 days after Confederate batteries opened fire on U.S. troops in Fort Sumner

The southern states of the United States of America (U.S.) were in varying degrees of political chaos following the presidential election held on November 6th, 1860. On December 20, 1860 South Carolina seceded from the U.S. Ten additional southern states would follow in the first half of 1861.

Each state progressed from a U.S. state to an independent state to a Confederate state. The U.S. Post Office Department, however continued to provide mail service in the southern states until June 1, 1861. Tennessee was the only southern state to secede after the Confederate government took control of mail delivery.

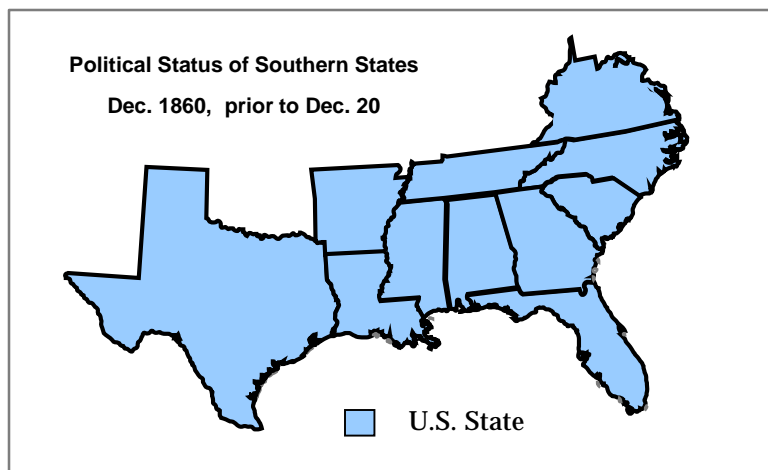
This exhibit shows covers mailed within the 11 southern states from early December 1860 through late May 1861. During this period the political map of the region underwent 14 changes. A cover delivered by the U.S. Post Office Department during each of these periods is shown on the following 15 pages.

Period 1 – Pre-Secession

Prior to December 20, 1860

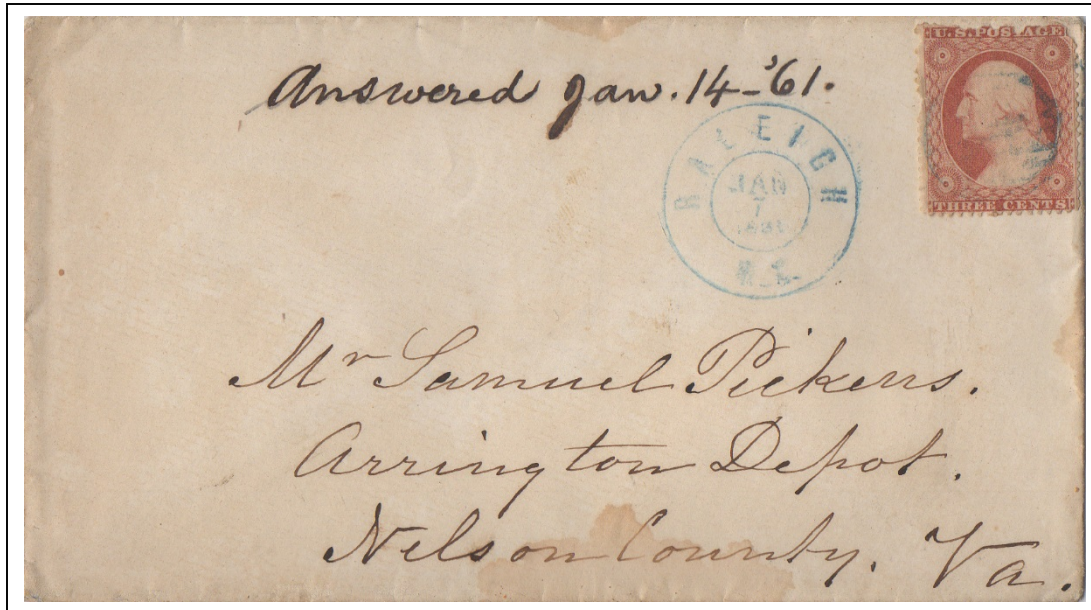


Mailed on December 8, 1860
from Charleston, South Carolina to Marion, Alabama;
a U.S. State to a U.S. State usage.
A U.S. 1860 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.
State delegates in Charleston would vote in favor of South
Carolina's secession from the U.S. 12 days later.



Period 2 – South Carolina Secedes

December 20, 1860 to January 8, 1861



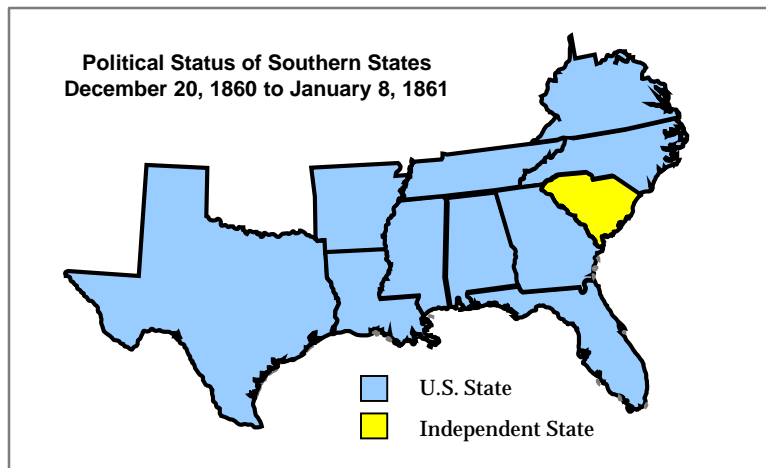
Mailed on January 7, 1861

from Raleigh, North Carolina to Arrington Depot, Virginia;

a U.S. State to a U.S. State usage.

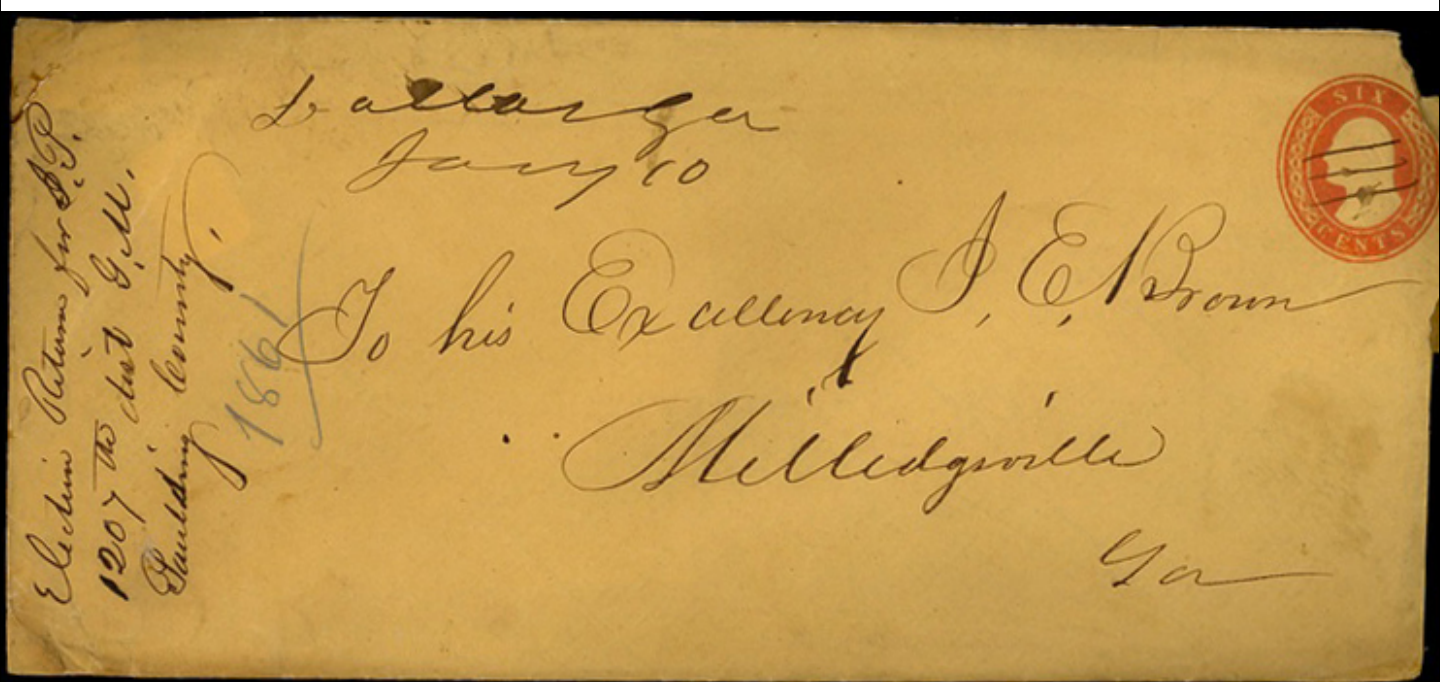
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamp paid the postage.

South Carolina was the first state to secede. North Carolina would not secede until the following May.



Period 3 – Mississippi Secedes

January 9, 1861 to January 10, 1861

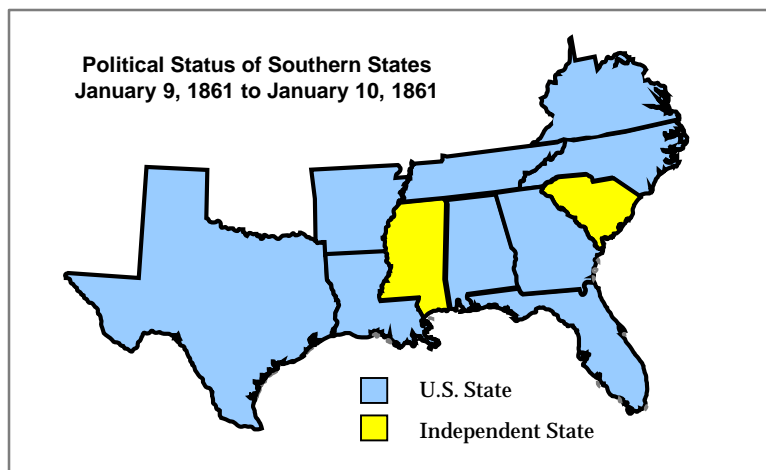


Mailed on January 10, 1861

from Dallas, Georgia to Milledgeville, Georgia (state capital in 1861);
a U.S. State (intra-state) usage.

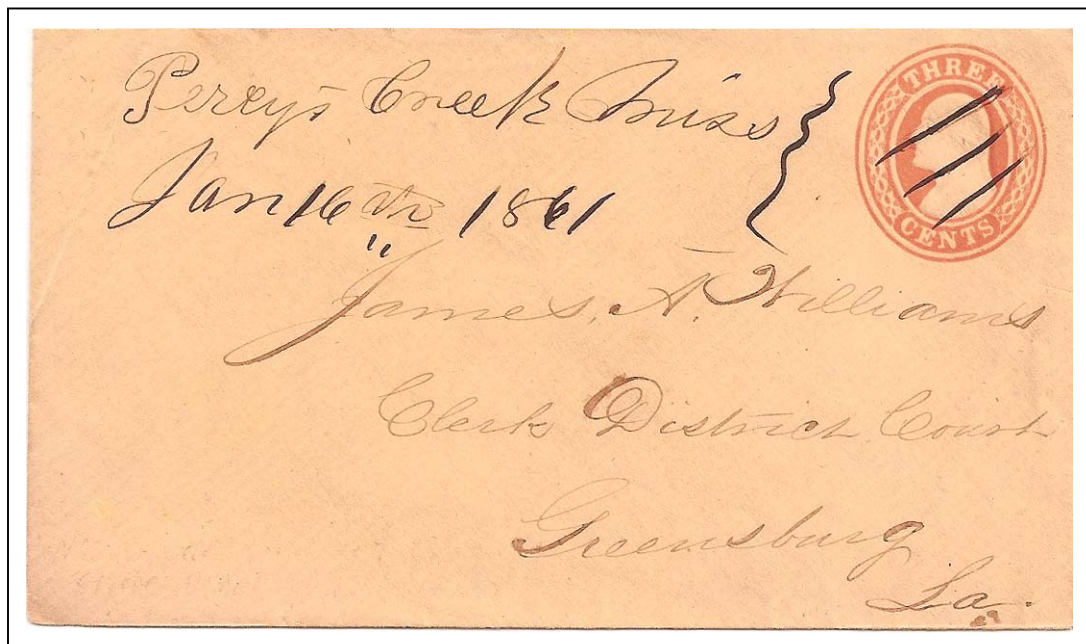
A U.S. 1853 6 cent stamp paid the postage (double rate for weight).

Docketing indicates it held election results for state secession delegates.



Period 4 – Florida and Alabama Secede

January 11, 1861 to January 18, 1861

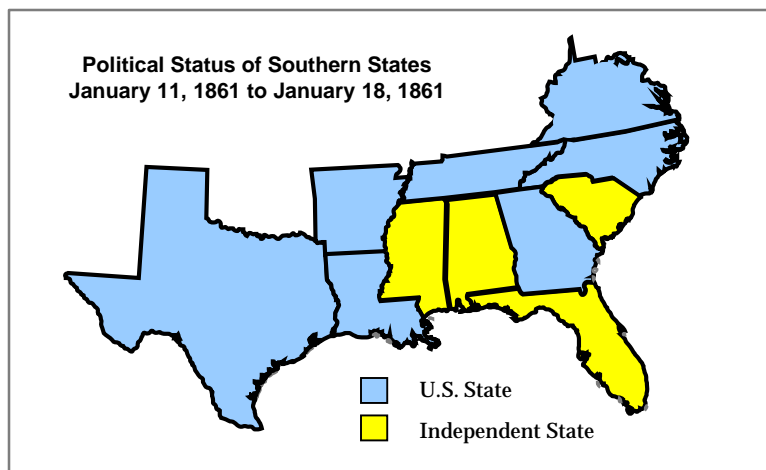


Mailed on January 16, 1861

from Percy's Creek, Mississippi to Greensburg, Louisiana;
an Independent State to a U.S. State usage.

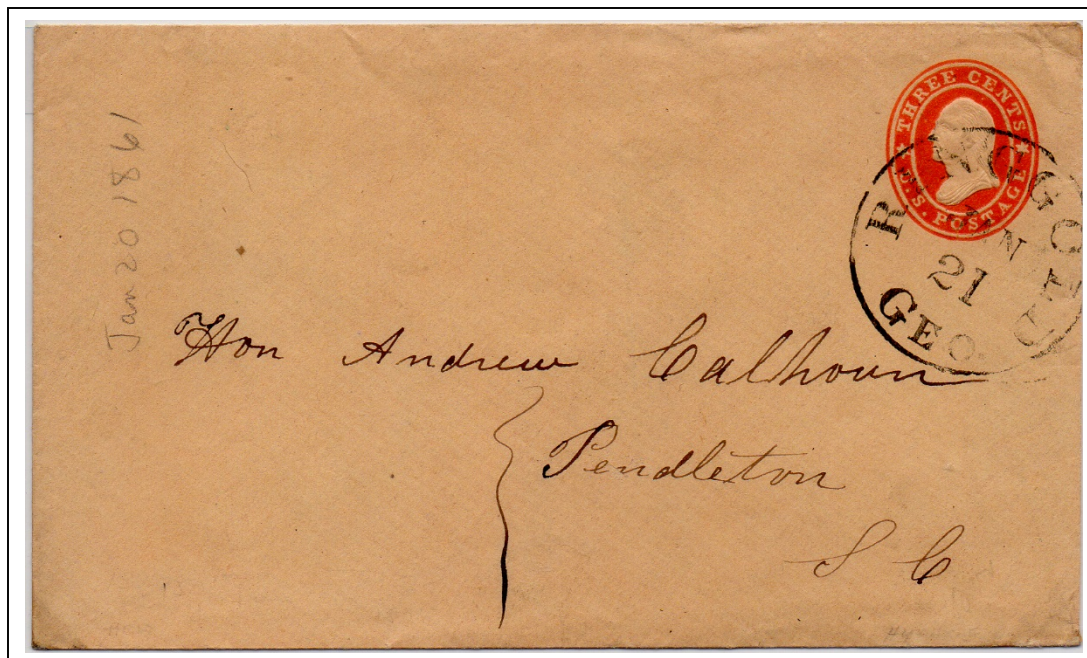
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

Louisiana was still a U.S. State but state troops had begun to take possession of federal property in and around New Orleans.



Period 5 – Georgia Secedes

January 19, 1861 to January 25, 1861



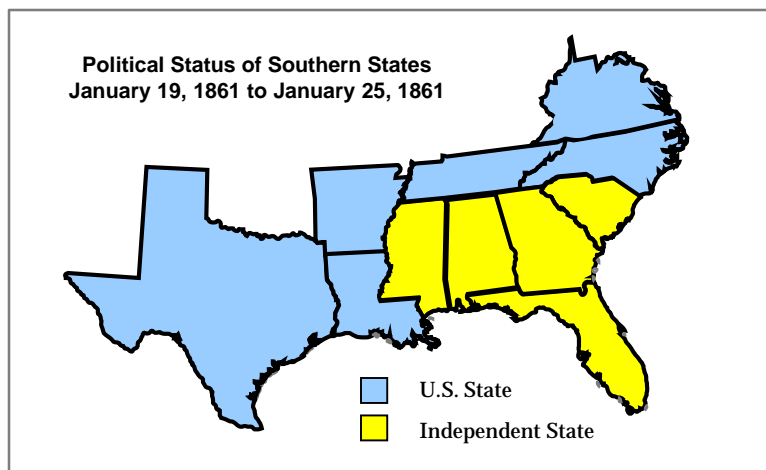
Mailed on January 21, 1861

from Ringgold, Georgia to Pendleton, South Carolina;

an Independent State to an Independent State usage.

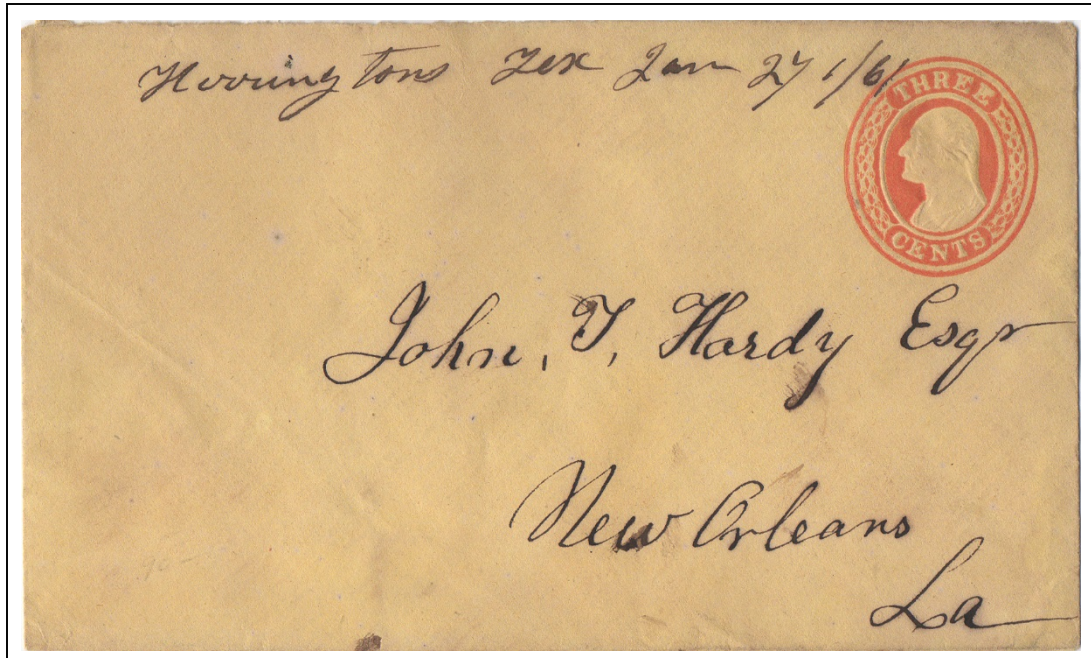
A U.S. 1860 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

On the day this cover was mailed 5 U.S. Senators from seceded states gave farewell speeches to the U.S. Congress in Washington.



Period 6 – Louisiana Secedes

January 26, 1861 to February 3, 1861

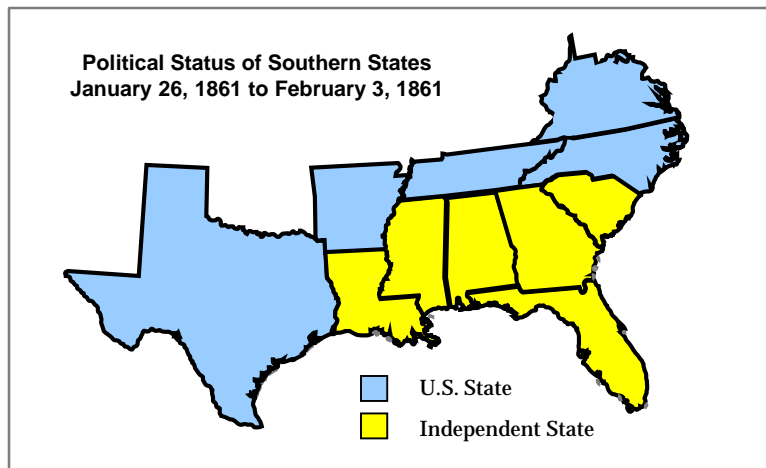


Mailed on January 27, 1861

from Herrington's, Texas to New Orleans, Louisiana;
a U.S. State to an Independent State usage.

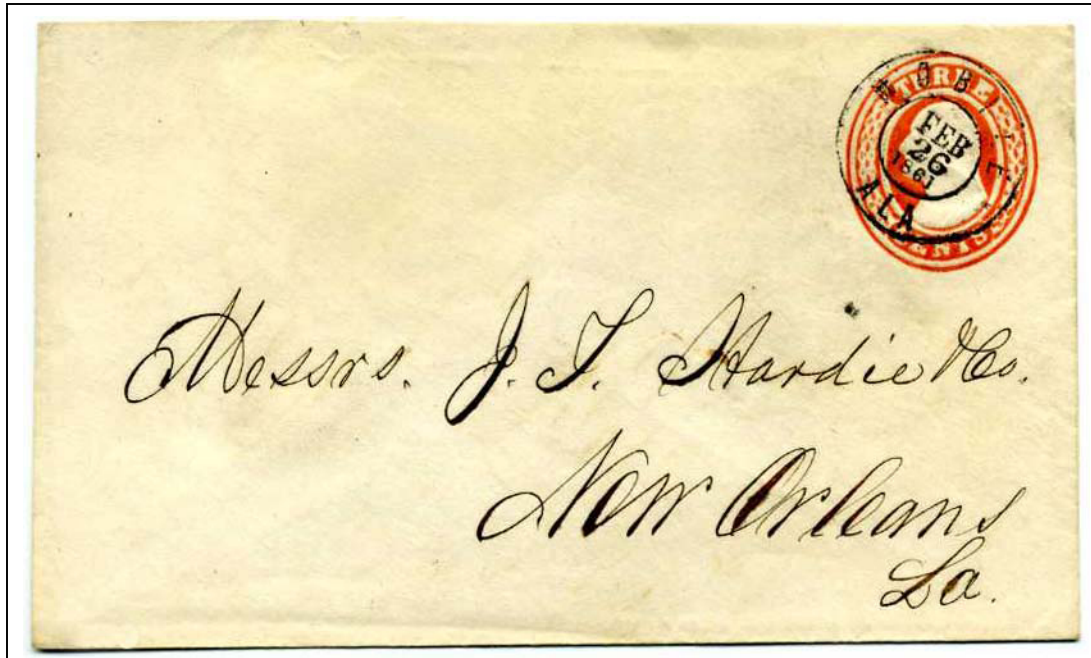
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

Louisiana state troops seized the Federal Branch Mint and
Customs House in New Orleans 4 days after this cover was mailed.



Period 7 – The Confederate States is Formed

February 4, 1861 to March 1, 1861



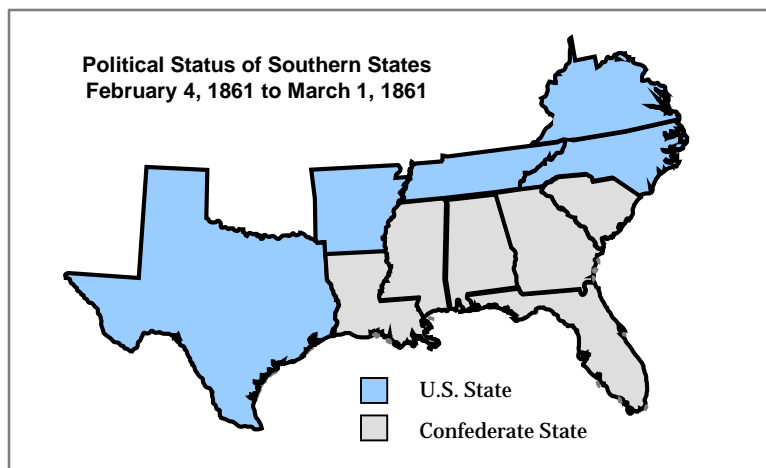
Mailed on February 26, 1861

from Mobile, Alabama to New Orleans, Louisiana;

a Confederate State to a Confederate State usage.

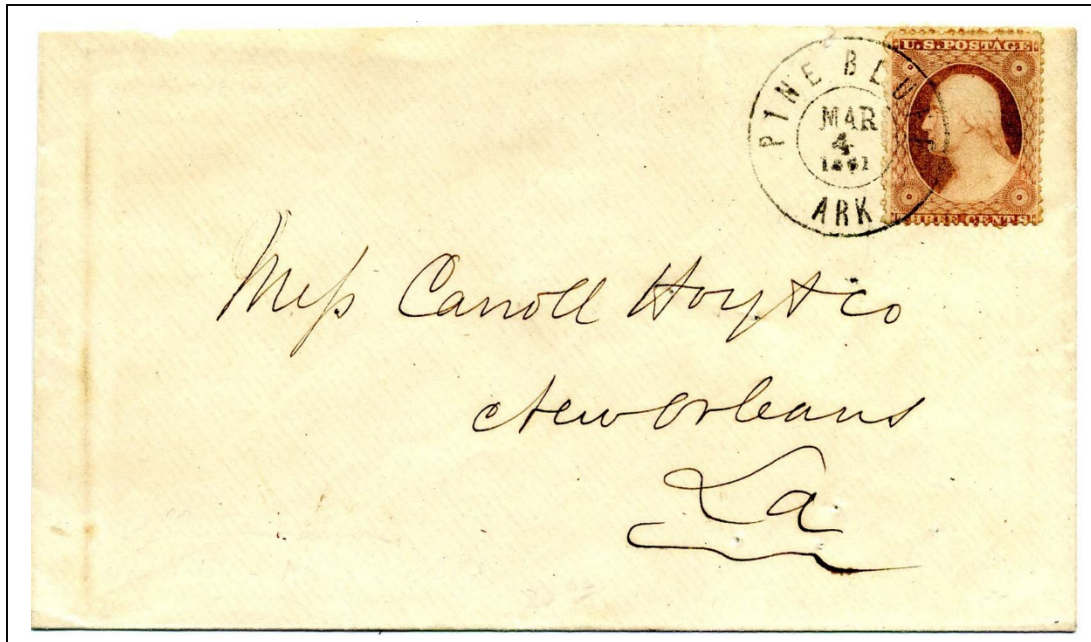
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

The Confederate States of America was formed at a convention of delegates from the seceded states in Montgomery, Alabama.



Period 8 – Texas Secedes

March 2, 1861 to March 4, 1861



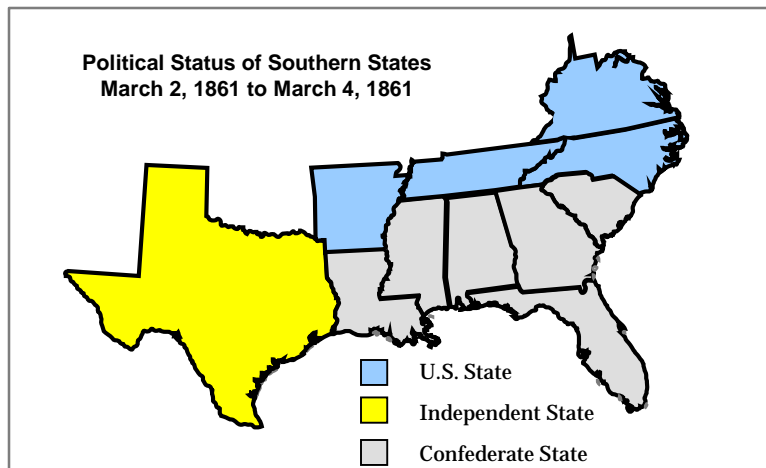
Mailed on March 4, 1861

from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to New Orleans, Louisiana;

a U.S. State to a Confederate State usage.

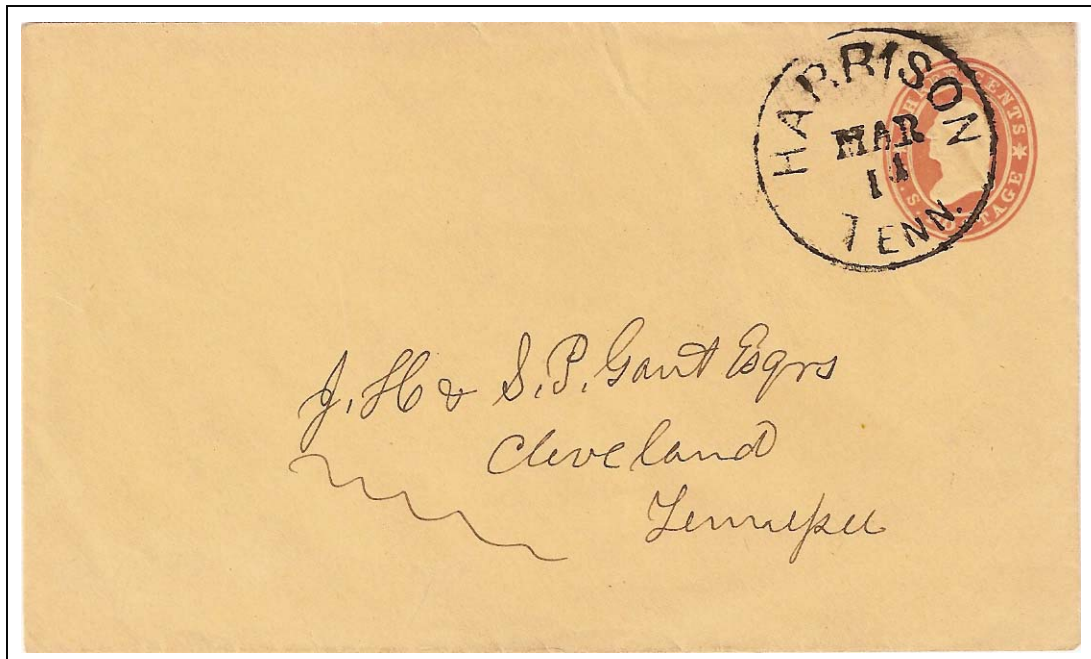
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamp paid the postage.

Abraham Lincoln, elected on November 6, 1860 was inaugurated President of the United States on the day this cover was mailed.



Period 9 – Texas Becomes a Confederate State

March 5, 1861 to April 16, 1861



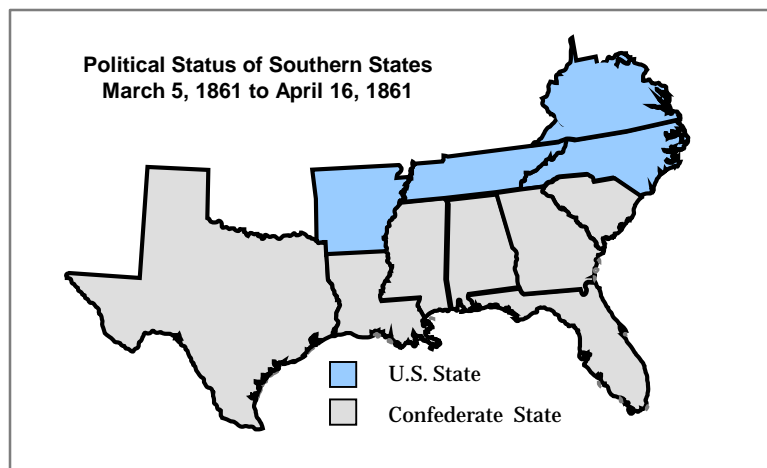
Mailed on March 14, 1861

From Harrison, Tennessee to Cleveland, Tennessee;

A U.S. State (intra-state) usage.

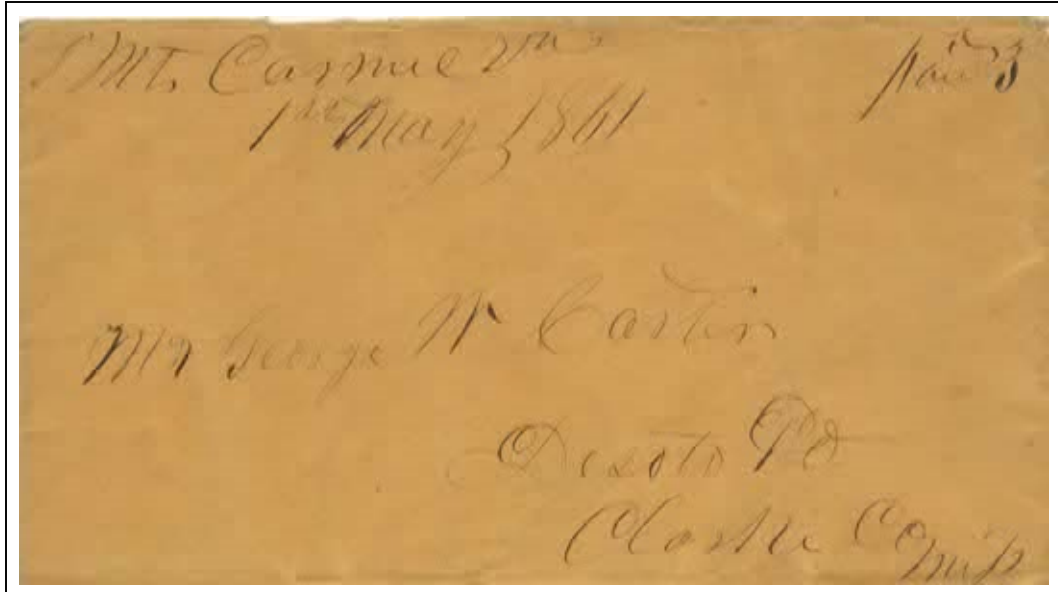
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

Texas joined the Confederacy, against the wishes of Governor Sam Houston.



Period 10 – Virginia Secedes

April 17, 1861 to May 5, 1861

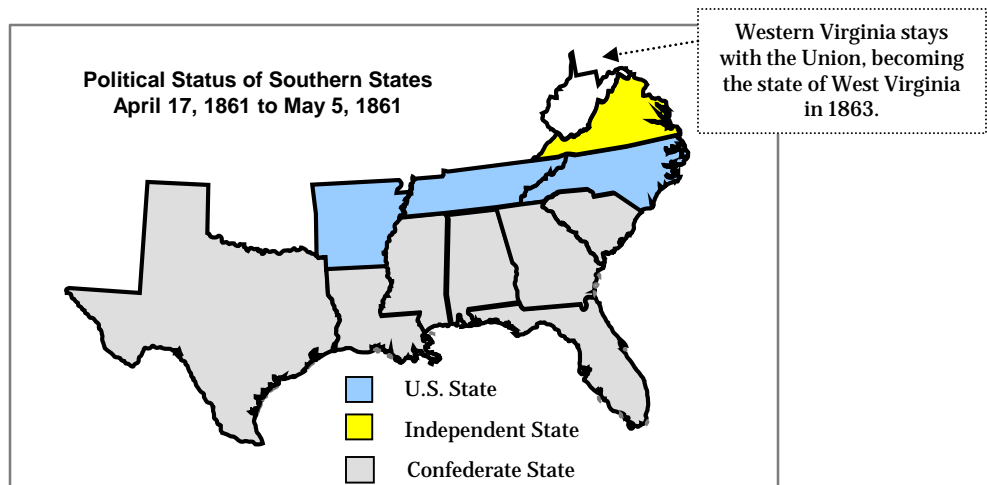


Mailed on May 1, 1861

from Mount Carmel, Virginia to Desoto, Mississippi;
an Independent State to a Confederate State usage.

U.S. postage paid is indicated by manuscript "paid 3".

The bombardment of Fort Sumner and subsequent U.S. call for troops
to put down the rebellion forced Virginia's secession decision.



Period 11 – Arkansas Secedes

May 6, 1861

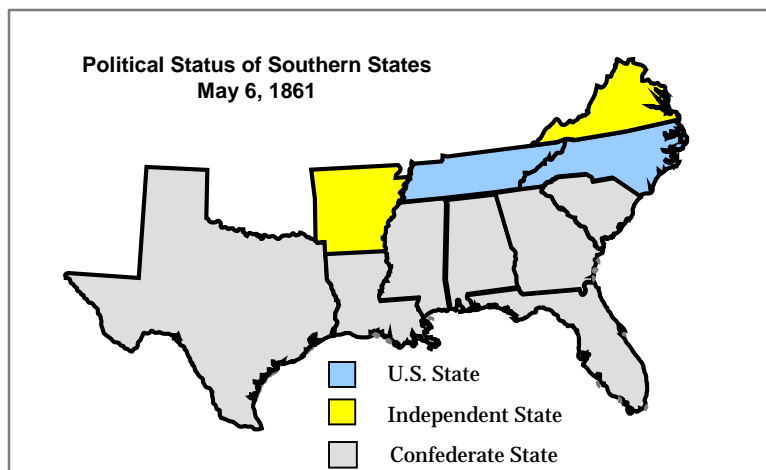


Mailed on May 6, 1861

from Richmond, Virginia to Christiansburg, Virginia;
a Confederate State (intra-state) usage.

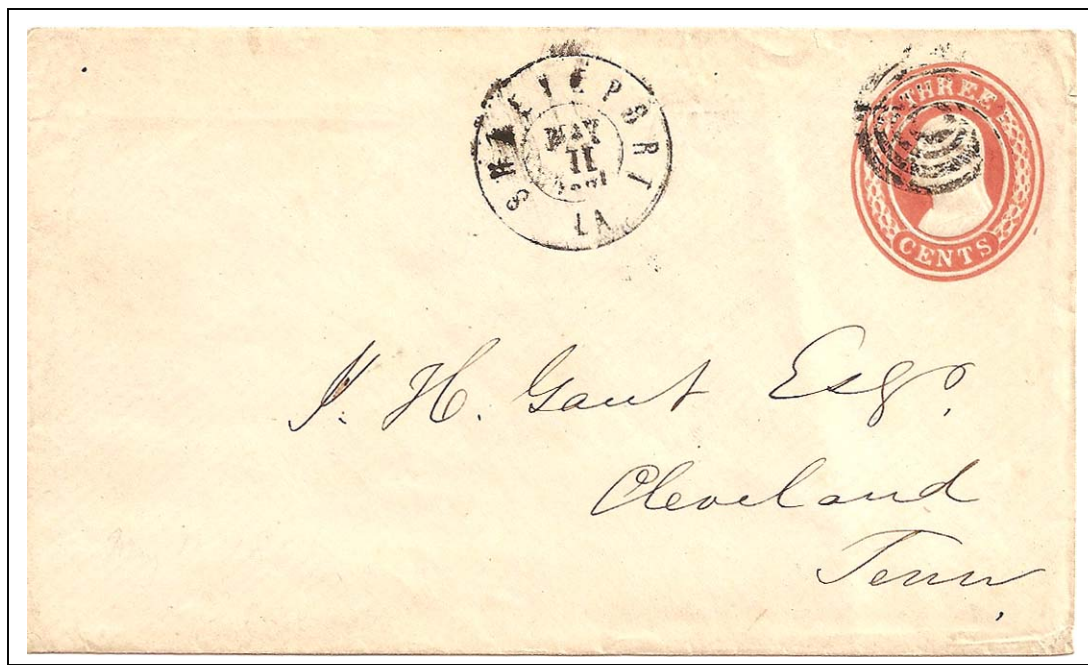
A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamp paid the postage.

On May 6, 1861 the Arkansas legislature voted to sever relations with the U.S. and the Confederacy declared a state of war with the U.S.



Period 12 – Virginia Becomes a Confederate State

May 7, 1861 to May 17, 1861

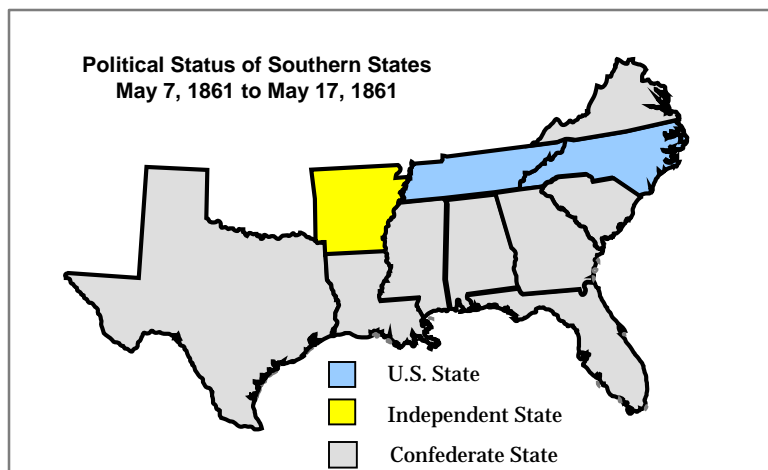


Mailed on May 11, 1861

from Shreveport, Louisiana to Cleveland, Tennessee;
a Confederate State to a U.S. State usage.

A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

Loyalties were split in many states, especially between agricultural
and mountainous sections.



Period 13 – Arkansas Becomes a Confederate State

May 18, 1861 to May 19, 1861



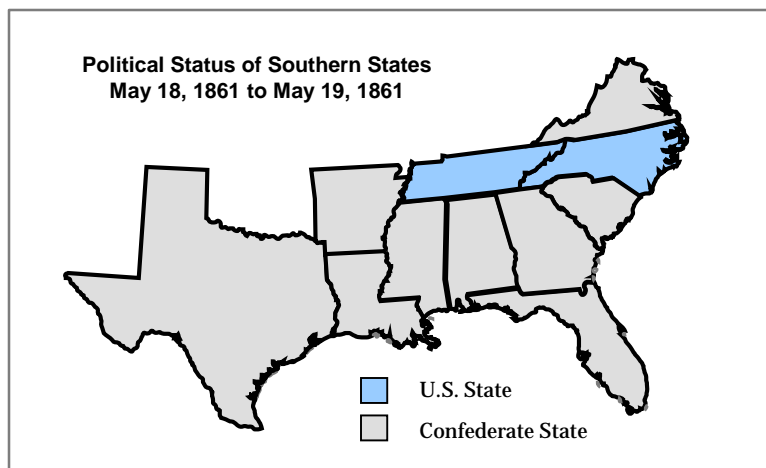
Mailed on May 18, 1861

from Lynchburg, Virginia to Brooksville, Mississippi;

a Confederate State to a Confederate State usage.

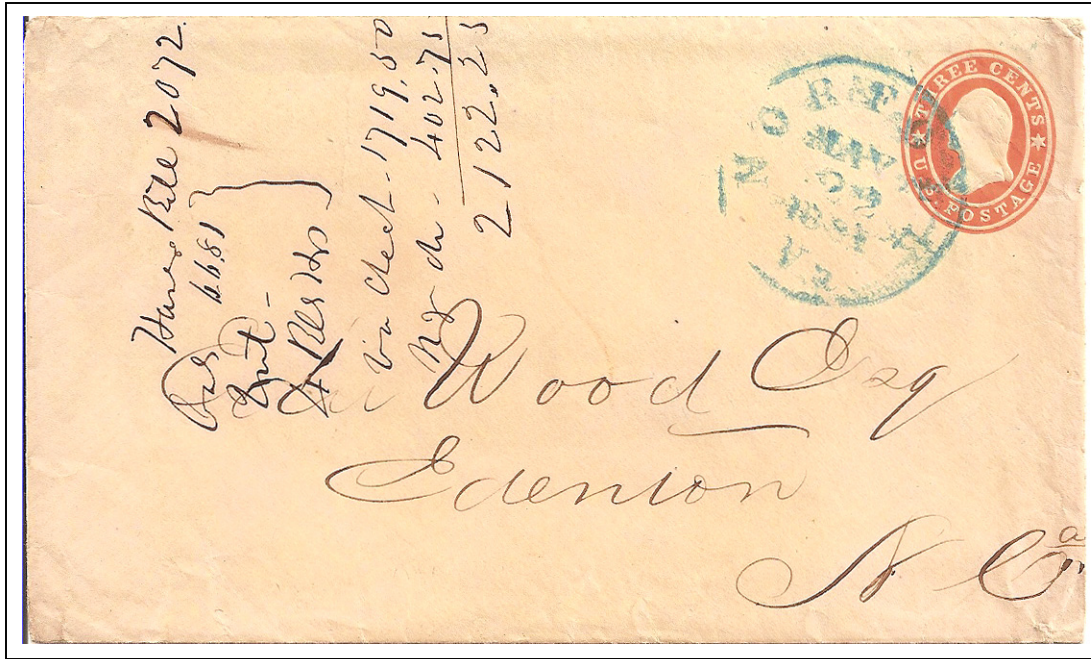
A U.S. 1860 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

On May 20th the Confederate Congress voted to move the Confederate capital from Montgomery, Alabama to Richmond, Virginia.



Period 14 – North Carolina Secedes

May 20, 1861 to May 26, 1861



Mailed on May 22, 1861

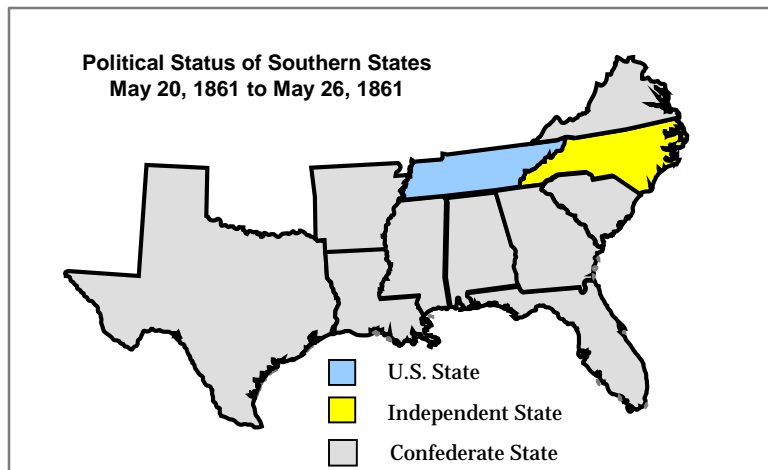
from Norfolk, Virginia to Edenton, North Carolina;

a Confederate State to an Independent State usage.

A U.S. 1860 3 cent stamped envelope paid the postage.

Federal troops occupied Alexandria, Virginia, located across the

Potomac River from Washington two days after this cover was mailed.



Political Status of Southern States May 20, 1861 to May 26, 1861

Period 15 – N.C. Becomes a Confederate State

May 27, 1861 to May 31, 1861



Mailed on May 30, 1861

from Gainesville, Virginia to Mechum's River Depot, Virginia;
a Confederate State (intra-state) usage.

A U.S. 1857 3 cent stamp paid the postage.

The next day would be the last day that U.S. postage could be
legally used in the Confederate States of America.

