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## The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues



After 160 years, a bisected use of the 1¢ 1851 stamp has come to light. The story of the discovery and authentication of this cover—on which the bisected stamp pays a previously unrecognized in-state circular rate—is told in our 1851 section.

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# Table Of Contents

items marked with \* cannot be viewed as an individual PDF document

[Click here to view the entire Volume: 65 No: 1 Chronicle: 237](#)

	<u>Starting Page</u>
<a href="#">Front Cover</a> (1 page)	Front Cover
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: H.R. Harmer Inc.	Inside Front Cover
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Daniel F. Kelleher Co., Inc.	1
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: James E. Lee	2
<a href="#">Masthead</a> (1 page)	3
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (2 pages) Advertiser: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.	4
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: David Feldman, USA	6
<a href="#">Table of Contents</a> (1 page)	7
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Confederate Stamp Alliance	8
<b>The Editor's Page</b>	
<a href="#">In This Issue</a> (1 page) <i>Michael Laurence</i>	9
<b>Prestamp and Stampless Period</b>	
<a href="#">Neale Patent Mail, 1693-1707</a> (15 pages) <i>Timothy O'Connor</i>	10
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Regency Superior	24
<b>1847 Period</b>	
<a href="#">The Five Printings of the Five-Cent 1847 Stamp and the Impressions They Left Behind</a> (12 pages) <i>Wade E. Saadi</i>	25
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Eric Jackson	36
<b>1851-61 Period</b>	
<a href="#">Discovery: Bisected use of One-cent 1851 Stamp</a> (10 pages) <i>Roland H. Cipolla II</i>	37
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Leonard H. Hartmann	46
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Daniel F. Kelleher Co., Inc.	47
<b>1861-1869 Period</b>	
<a href="#">Union Occupation Mail</a> (21 pages) <i>Michael C. McClung</i>	48
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (2 pages) Advertiser: Spink	52
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: U.S.P.C.S.	70
<b>The Western Mails</b>	
<a href="#">Pony Serendipity</a> (6 pages) <i>Steven C. Walske</i>	71
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Stanley M. Piller & Associates	76
<b>Officials</b>	
<a href="#">Late Uses of Official Stamps and Envelopes</a> (6 pages) <i>Lester C Lamphear III</i>	77
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Friends of the YPLF	82
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: The Philatelic Foundation	83
<b>The Foreign Mails</b>	
<a href="#">Discovery: An Earlier Part-Paid British Mail Cover</a> (4 pages) <i>Stephen B. Pacetti</i>	84
<a href="#">Early West-India Rate Steamship Cover Treated as British Steamship Letter</a> (2 pages) <i>Theron J. Wierenga</i>	87
<b>Reviews</b>	
<a href="#">Three New Catalogs</a> (1 page) <i>Michael Laurence</i>	89
<a href="#">Scott Specialised Catalogue of United States Stamps &amp; Covers</a> (4 pages) <i>Michael Laurence</i>	89
<a href="#">Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog</a> (3 pages) <i>Michael Laurence</i>	92
<a href="#">Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History</a> (4 pages) <i>Michael Laurence</i>	94
<a href="#">Line Engraved Security Printing: The Methods of Perkins Bacon 1790-1935, Banknotes and Postage Stamps</a> (2 pages) <i>Charles Snee</i>	97
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Doubleday Postal History	98
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Columbian Stamp Company Inc.	99
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: American Stamp Dealers Association Inc.	100
<b>The Cover Corner</b>	
<a href="#">Answer to Problem Cover in Chronicle 236</a> (1 page)	101

<i>Greg Sutherland</i>	
<a href="#">Problem Cover for this Issue</a> (1 page)	102
<i>Greg Sutherland</i>	
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Freeman's (Global Philatelic Associates)	102
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: U.S.P.C.S.	103
<a href="#">Index to Advertisers</a> (1 page)	104
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Kristal Kare, Inc.	104
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: United States Stamp Society	104
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions	Inside Back Cover
<a href="#">Display Advertisement</a> (1 page) Advertiser: Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc.	Back Cover

of Durland, that provocative dagger will be eliminated.

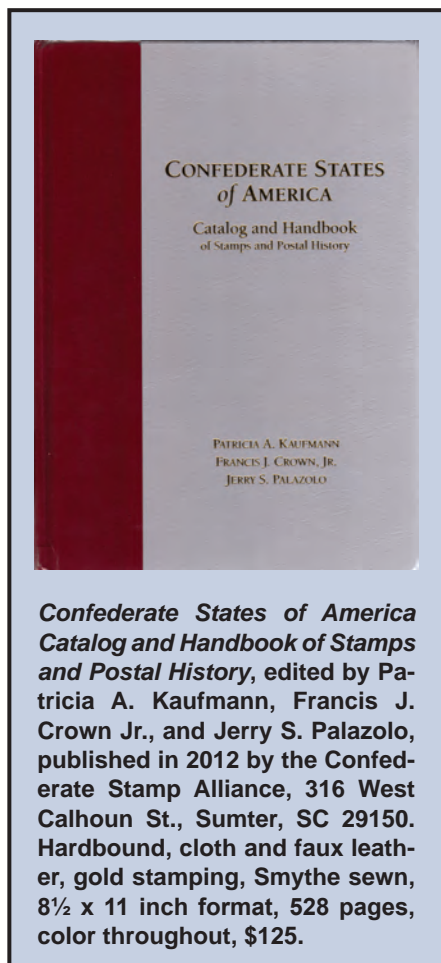
That's how the best catalogs are created—incrementally, with glacial slowness, one new fact at a time. Like the Scott U.S. specialized catalog that it complements, the Durland catalog accumulates and preserves painstaking research and record-keeping, done in solitude over decades, by legions of collectors and dealers—many of them, like Clarence Durland himself, now forgotten. Such works are the majestic treasure of our hobby, simply invaluable. Kudos to the United States Stamp Society for continuing to improve this catalog, for steadfastly keeping it in print, and for making it available to the collecting public at a very affordable price.

### ***Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History***

Collecting the stamps and covers of the Confederate States of America has always involved a special culture and a special following. Ken Lawrence has recently written provocatively about this phenomenon. Confederate collectors have long marched to their own drummer, and the catalog supporting them has reflected their idiosyncrasies. Partly because of this exceptionalism, the catalog under review came into existence through a more halting and circuitous route than Scott or Durland. But it is now at least close to achieving a similar position in the reference pantheon.

In 1929, August Dietz, Sr., a printer who was a student of Confederate stamps (and, critics have charged, an unreconstructed supporter of the Confederate cause), published *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America*. Following the success of the Scott U.S. specialized catalog, Dietz published his first actual catalog in 1931. Called the *Dietz Specialized Catalog of the Postage Stamps of the Confederate States of America*, this work was supplemented in 1932 and then published in revised editions in 1937, 1945, 1959 and 1986. The 1986 version, called the *New Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook*, was flawed in key aspects, some of which are discussed below. In 2006, the Confederate Stamp Alliance acquired the rights to this work (and by extension, to its predecessors) and immediately began creating the new catalog, which because of its lengthy and ungainly title I will henceforth refer to as “the CSA catalog.”

Because quarter-century intervals separate the last three editions of the CSA catalog, its evolution has not followed the incremental gradualism of Scott and Durland. The editors (Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown Jr. and Jerry S. Palazolo) make this clear in their preface: the new CSA catalog “is by no means a simple revision of prior catalogs....It is the result of a major effort to build a new catalog from the ground up.” A guiding principle was that items listed in the catalog had to be confirmed by an image. The result is a treasure-trove of color images of stamps and markings, along with a large number of gaps.



***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, published in 2012 by the Confederate Stamp Alliance, 316 West Calhoun St., Sumter, SC 29150. Hardbound, cloth and faux leather, gold stamping, Smythe sewn, 8½ x 11 inch format, 528 pages, color throughout, \$125.**

At 516 pages, the new catalog is almost twice the size of its 1986 predecessor and features crisp and accurate color illustrations throughout. The 1986 edition contained just eight pages of color, a single signature that was the source of considerable criticism.

Stampless markings are especially important in Confederate philately because so much history unfolded during the months between the withdrawal of U.S. stamps and the first appearance of Confederate adhesives. One of the idiosyncrasies of Confederate philately has been to designate stampless covers (or at least, prepaid stampless covers) as “Handstamped Pairs.” How this came about I have no idea. It goes back at least to the early Dietz catalogs and possibly earlier. The editors of the 1986 “New Dietz” tried to tip-toe around this taxonomical minefield by creating a new category, “Handstamped Provisionals and Other Markings.” But that just made things worse, associating the word “provisional” (which in the philatelic vocabulary implies scarcity) with a slew of common stampless markings.

The new CSA catalog drives a stake into this zombie by calling these what they are: “Stampless Markings.” Listing them, in an eye-pleasing two-column format, takes up 200 pages. The markings are arranged alphabetically by state and then alphabetically by town within each state. Where possible, each marking is illustrated by a color photo electronically clipped from a cover, similar to what we’ve been doing recently in the *Chronicle* (see for example the marking plates accompanying Michael McClung’s article in this issue, starting on page 49).

When a cover wasn’t available for photography, the editors of the CSA catalog picked up the tracings used in the previous (1986) catalog. Photos of markings are presented at about 80 percent lifesize. The tracing pick-ups are lifesize. This results in odd and jarring juxtapositions. I would have preferred to see both photos and tracings presented as lifesize images.

This treatment also emphasizes how much work the editors still have before them. After a page-by-page skim-through, I would guess the ratio of photo images to tracings is no better than 50-50. This implies that half the items listed have not been seen by the current generation of editors. Similarly, within the listing data, an asterisk is used to designate what the editors call “an unsupported listing.” There’s a disturbing number of these too.

The editors deserve the highest praise for selecting this nomenclature, which clearly separates hearsay from fact. Let’s hope their candor brings out supporting covers to diminish the number of tracings and asterisks in the next edition. And let’s hope again that the next edition does not require the passage of another quarter-century.

Rebuilding from the ground up extends to the CSA catalog’s historical information as well. The editors went back to the original documents, with some startling results. Among other things, the dates of secession and admission to the Confederacy have been revised for six of the 11 Confederate states, with much additional information added—and primary sources cited in every important instance.

The section on the general-issue stamps of the Confederacy and their proofs and essays, almost 50 pages, provides much more information, more accessibly presented, than has ever been previously available on this subject. (The comparable information in the Scott specialized catalog consumes less than four pages.) This stamp section of the new CSA catalog has no special by-line, but a note on the frontispiece page indicates the copy-right is owned by Leonard Hartmann. Hartmann has written extensively on these stamps (especially the lithographs) in the pages of the *Chronicle* and elsewhere.

The presentation of the stamp information includes a useful concordance relating CSA catalog numbers to Scott numbers. Many plate varieties are shown. These are crudely produced stamps, especially the lithographs, but the quality of the catalog illustrations is generally excellent. Caution: These stamps are complicated, and this material is not easy sledding. The CSA 10¢ blue lithographed stamp, as an example, has just one Scott number

(Scott 2) but comprises three different stamp designs produced by at least two different printers, differences that are fleshed out in great detail in the new CSA catalog.

Like Scott, the CSA catalog gives a price premium for special cancellations, but does it in a way that I think is much more effective than the Scott method. The CSA approach is to present the price premium for special cancellations in two different categories—off cover and on—and as a percentage of the base price, rather than a dollar premium. One example: For the basic 10¢ blue lithographed Hoyer and Ludwig stamp, which the CSA catalog designates as 2H, the catalog prices a used stamp at \$250 and a single on cover at \$450. Cancellation premiums are then presented as a percentage of the base price in each category. The premium for an express-company cancel on a used single stamp is 200 percent. For an express-company cancel on a cover, the premium is 800 percent. The Scott specialized catalog values the single stamp at \$300 and the cover at \$475, with a \$300 premium for the express-company cancel off cover, and no information to suggest the much greater desirability of the marking on a full cover. The CSA approach, with different premiums for each category, is both more flexible than Scott and more accurate. But I don't want to go very far down this road, because I genuinely believe that pricing does not represent the most important contribution of any of these catalogs.

Almost 70 pages of the CSA catalog are devoted to postmaster provisional stamps and covers, here arranged alphabetically by town in two categories: 3¢ 1861 provisionals (which in a sense aren't Confederate issues at all, since they predate the time the Confederate post office assumed control of the mails and were designed to pay the U.S. 3¢ letter rate) and Confederate provisionals, which were almost always 5¢ and 10¢ denominations (the basic Confederate rates). The presentation for the adhesive provisionals is straightforward and pleasing. It's good to see listed (in both categories) the adhesives and the lone entire envelope of Madison Court House, Florida. Successfully rehabilitated over the last 20 years by editor Kauffman, these had been excluded from the previous catalogs.

While the adhesive postmaster provisional stamps are easily comprehended by traditional collectors, the handstamped provisional envelopes remain a rats-nest. A scarce handstamped provisional envelope can look very much like a stampless cover, and a common stampless cover can look very much like a handstamped provisional envelope. The editors provide ample cautionary words and frequent caveats, but it seems clear to me, from reading the accompanying notes, that there remains a murky mid-range of covers that are for all practical purposes unattributable, and that a fair number of dubious "legacy provisionals" are still listed. These would never be admitted to the catalog under today's standards, but they can't be excised because they've been accepted forever and are anyway not currently available for examination. Scott has dealt effectively with such legacy issues (exiling the once-hallowed "August issues" to the essays section, for example), but the editors of the CSA catalog still have more work to do.

There's much more in the CSA catalog than I can even mention in a brief review. Six tables present Confederate postal rates in all mailing categories. This information, seven pages in all, is more comprehensive and better presented than anything I've seen elsewhere. The 1986 version had hardly any rate information at all.

In the new CSA catalog, almost every imaginable category of collectible stamps and covers is listed, illustrated, described and (where appropriate) priced. This includes perforated and rouletted varieties, fakes and facsimiles, color cancels, fancy cancels, patriotic covers, college covers, official and semi-official imprints, flag-of-truce covers, the list goes on and on. The catalog is said to contain over 10,000 value entries. At \$125 this work is the most expensive of the three, but it's the only one that's packaged in a hard binding that enables it to stand upright in a bookcase without slouching over. I have heard (from unreliable sources) that the print run was 1,000 copies of which almost 800 have already been sold. If true, this is good news, because it suggests an updated edition



might follow in a few years. As I've tried to establish in this essay, frequent revision is a prerequisite for a live and useful stamp catalog. Quarter-century intervals don't work.

If you collect in their areas, all three of these catalogs are well worth buying. If you specialize in the areas they cover, you cannot collect intelligently without them. The richness and diversity of the research they represent, preserved for the ages and constantly improved upon, nourishes all of us and is one of the key buttresses separating stamps, as collectible objects, from beer cans and beanie babies. ■

## LINE ENGRAVED SECURITY PRINTING: THE METHODS OF PERKINS BACON 1790-1935, BANKNOTES AND POSTAGE STAMPS

REVIEWED BY CHARLES SNEE

For almost 10 years, Gary Granzow diligently sifted through thousands of pages of correspondence, carefully analyzed patent diagrams and brought his chemist mind to bear on the task of elucidating how British banknote and stamp printer Perkins, Bacon developed its exquisitely complicated methods of line engraving. The result of Granzow's labors is a substantial and authoritative book, with numerous illustrations and tables, three appendices, a detailed bibliography and an index.

Granzow opens his work with a review of the development of classic line engraving on steel plates, still the most secure means of producing security paper such as banknotes and stamps. Also known as intaglio, line engraving had its beginnings in Italy.

The connection between the methods of Perkins, Bacon and those developed by stamp engravers in the United States began in 1819, when American inventor Jacob Perkins took an experienced team of engravers and machinists to London. Among those who journeyed with Perkins were Asa Spencer, a brilliant engineer, and Charles Toppan, who later founded Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co., printer of the U.S. 1851 definitive stamps.

Spencer had already developed two engine lathes: one, Granzow writes, "capable of engraving complex patterns that rose engines could not produce," and one "designed to engrave directly on the periphery of transfer rollers as well as other traversing designs on flat dies." Spencer, while he was in England, sold these patents to Jacob Perkins.

Granzow, through careful study of the relevant patents, brings to light for the first time how these complex devices were able to produce the intricate white-line patterns of early 19th-century banknotes and the trelliswork

on the dark background of the side frames of the famed Penny Black, Britain's (and the world's) first adhesive postage stamp.

