



# The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

## Found in a Vintage Book: Confederate Patriotic Cover

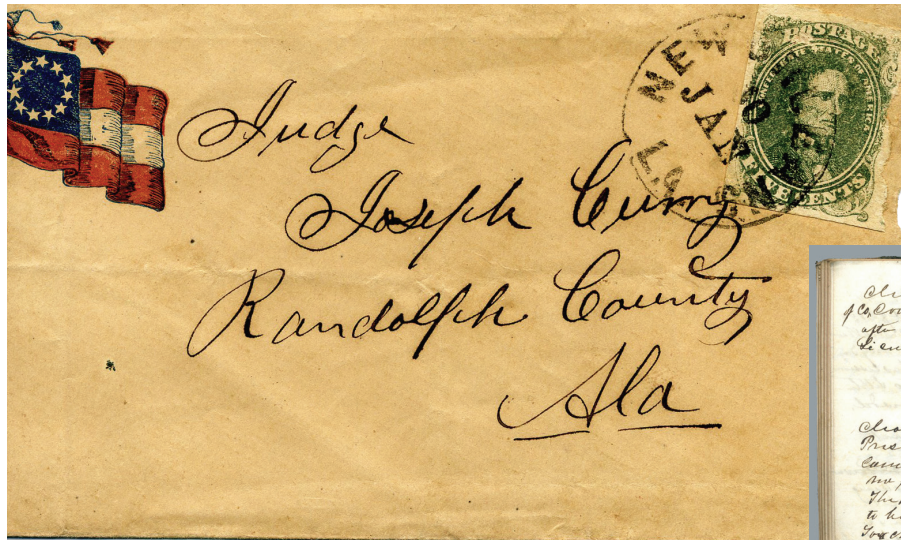
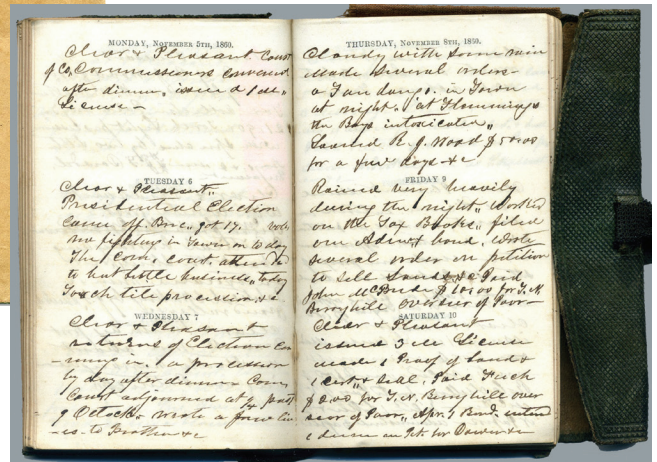


Figure 1. The Confederate 11-star flag patriotic cover recently fell out of the book into the lap of a happy collector.

A section of Judge Currie's pocket diary where thoughts on the 1860 presidential election are recorded.



Recently, I gave a talk on Confederate Postal History at a Civil War Round Table in New Jersey. By a show of hands, the audience was nearly 50 percent philatelic, as word had spread about my subject matter to the local stamp clubs, as well as the Civil War buffs.

During the question and answer session after the talk, one man raised his hand and said he collected coins, not stamps. He wondered how new finds usually came to light in postal history circles.

Other than from personal family sources, I answered that sometimes new finds came to light when stamps or covers fell out of old books. Such a case was the largest recorded multiple of a Confederate patriotic sticker, which I wrote about in these pages in March 2015.

Imagine my surprise when the week after I gave that talk, those words of prophecy echoed in my ears. A gentleman I had not spoken to in a decade called and said he had a Confederate patriotic cover that he found in a book. I chuckled inwardly at the foreshadowing.

The seller said he would be glad to send the book and an antebellum diary that came with it as well. “Hazmat suit optional,” he kidded. And, ever the pushover for an interesting story for you—my readers—I took him up on that.

The scarce waving 11-star flag patriotic shown in Figure 1 is the cover that fell out of the book. It is franked with a CSA 1, 5¢ green tied by a New Orleans, La., January 10 [1862], circular date stamp. The patriotic design is listed in the CSA catalog as type F11-3.<sup>1</sup>

The cover is addressed to “Judge Joseph Curry (sic), Randolph County, Ala.” As best I can determine, the addressee appears to be Joseph Currie, who was born January 11, 1809, in South Carolina and died July 31, 1894, in Okfuskee, Cleburne County, Alabama. Currie is buried in Hepsabah Cemetery, Hollis Crossroads, Cleburne County, Alabama. His gravestone is shown in Figure 2.

In 1863, Currie married Martha Jane Humphries (1840-1921) and they had nine children, depending on which records you consult.<sup>2</sup> Ancestry.com<sup>3</sup> shows nine children, while Genealogy.com shows seven. Just to further confuse things, Rootsweb<sup>4</sup> shows Currie as born about 1815 and marrying Humphries; I find this unlikely, but it shows just how challenging research can be and how careful you need to be when quoting sources. Rootsweb also shows Currie dying in “Oakfuskee” (it should be Okfuskee). Ancestry.com shows Martha Jane as born in 1839, but every other source says June 4, 1840, as it is inscribed on her gravestone.

I found Joseph Currie was often listed as John Joseph Currie, not inscribed that way on his headstone. Joseph Currie and John

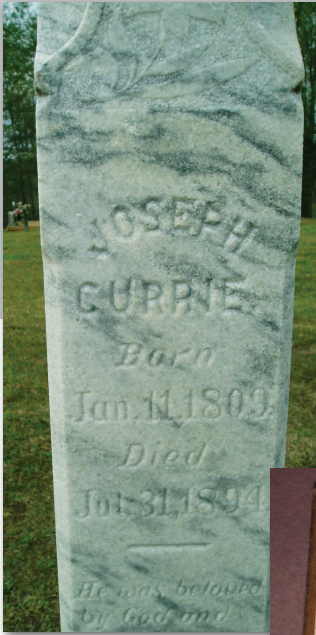


Figure 2. The gravestone of Judge Joseph Currie, recipient of the newly discovered patriotic cover.

*“A gentleman I had not spoken to in a decade called and said he had a Confederate patriotic cover that he found in a book. I chuckled inwardly at the foreshadowing.”*

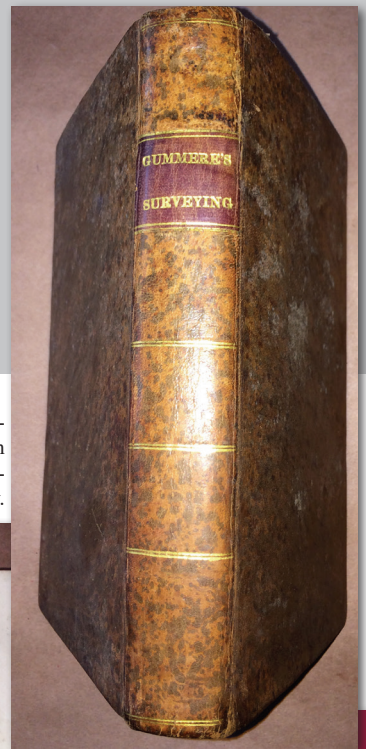


Figure 3. Gummer's Surveying, the book in which the subject cover was hiding for over a century.

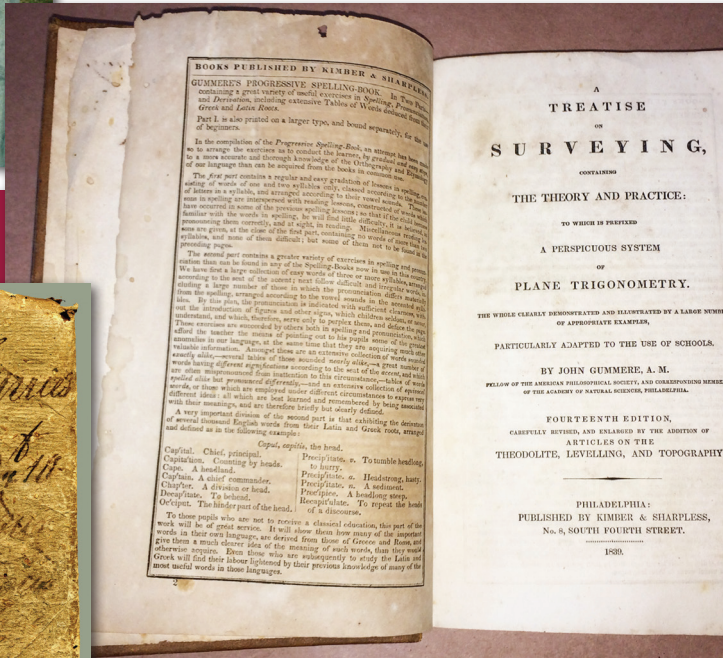


Figure 4. The title page of Gummer's Surveying.

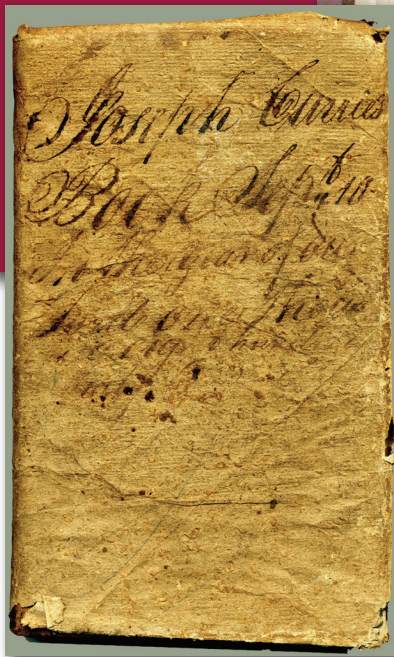


Figure 5. The front of the homemade dustjacket, showing that the volume belonged to Joseph Currie.



Figure 6. The back of the homemade dustjacket, indicating that Joseph Currie was in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, when the book was first acquired.

Wilson Currie (1818-1903) were brothers born of William Currie (1780-unknown – South Carolina) and Catherine Quattlebaum (1786-unknown – South Carolina).

The beautifully mottled book in Figure 3 is the volume that harbored the subject cover for over a century and a half. The title on the spine is Gummere's Surveying. The full title is A Treatise on Surveying, containing the Theory and Practice: to which is prefixed a Perspicuous System of Plane Trigonometry, the whole clearly demonstrated and illustrated by a large number of appropriate examples, particularly adapted to the use of schools. Author and publishing information is noted as, "By John Gummere, A.M. Fellow of the American Philosophical Society, and Corresponding Member of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia. Fourteenth Edition, carefully revised, and enlarged by the Addition of Articles on the Theodolite, Levelling, and Topography. Phila-

delphia: Published by Kimber & Sharpless, No. 8, South Fourth Street, 1839."

The lengthy title is quite the mouthful. The volume is filled, not only text, but endless pages of tables and fold-out plates. (Figure 4)

Gummere's Surveying was one of the major surveying texts of the 19th century, first appearing in 1814. Revised editions were published as late as 1917; it ran through 22 editions. John Gummere (1784-1845) wrote the book to provide schools with a basic text that contained numerous examples of surveying problems.<sup>5</sup>

Gummere was a fascinating man who loved learning and passing on his knowledge to others as a well-loved teacher. I was surprised to find so much information on the Internet about the importance of this work, enthusiastically used for over a century.

The thick paper cover that wraps the book is shown in Figures 5

Figure 7. Notations by Currie showing he paid \$2.25 for the book on August 25,

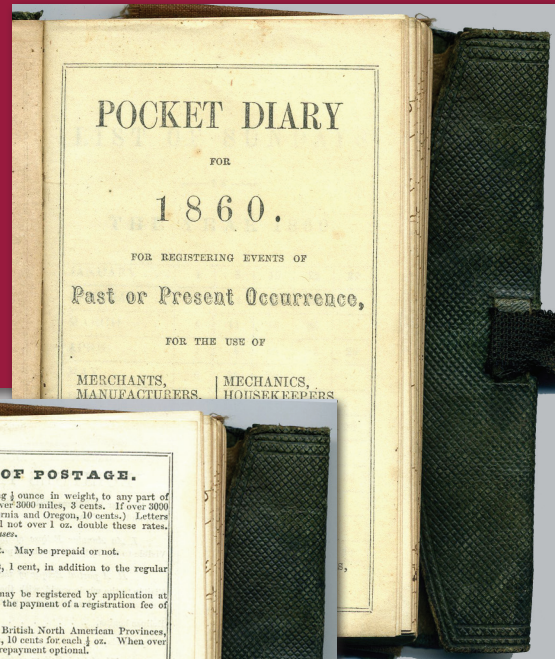
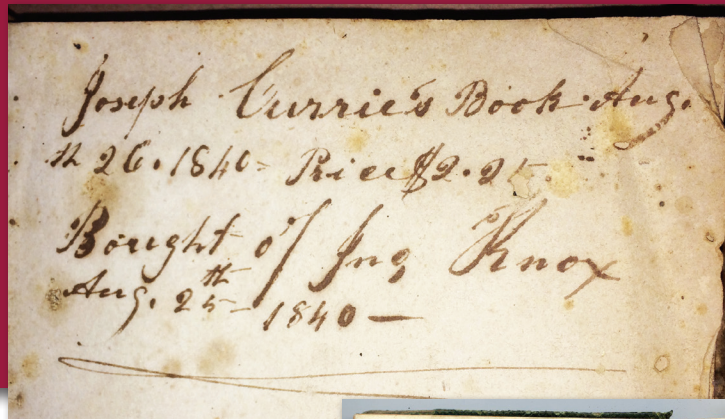


Figure 10. Title page of Judge Currie's 1860 pocket diary "for Professional Men"



Figure 9. Cover of Judge Currie's 1860 pocket diary.

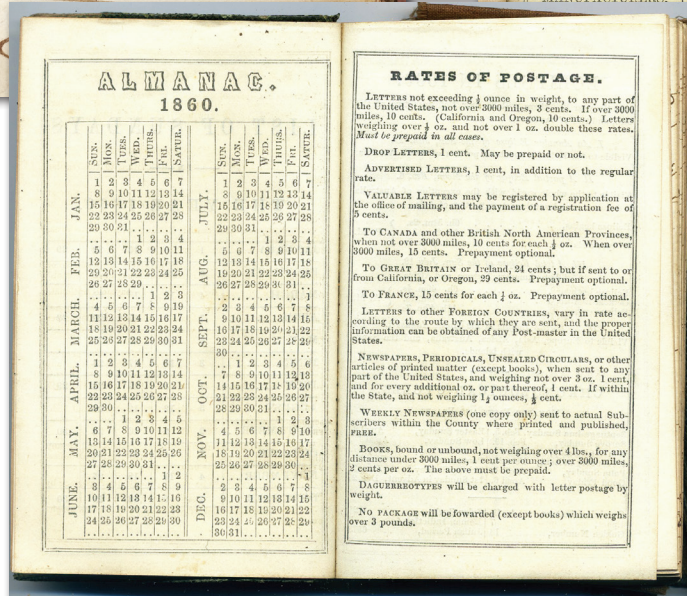


Figure 11. Early pages in the pocket diary showing the 1860 almanac across the page from the U.S. Rates of Postage.

Figure 8 (Below). "Joseph Currie, Esqr., Deputised Surveyor, Aug. the 20th 1845."



and 6. It is designated as the property of Joseph Currie in his hand and was undoubtedly fashioned as a dust cover by Currie himself. It also indicates that he was still in South Carolina at the time he acquired the book.

Inside the book is confirmation that he bought the book from John Knox on August 25, 1840, for the sum of \$2.25. On another page, he signed as "Joseph Currie, Esqr., Deputised Surveyor, Aug. the 20th 1845." (Figures 7 and 8)

The accompanying 1860 pocket diary belonged to the judge as well. Along with the 1860 almanac, the U.S. rates of postage are printed in the front of the diary. (Figures 9-11)

The judge's diary contents are largely mundane, such as the state of the daily weather, limited facts about cases he was working on, "filed taxes," amounts of bills paid and to whom, etc. But there are also references to the presidential election in November 1860, as well as the convention held to appoint delegates, "a fandango in town at night at Flemings & the boys intoxicated," and numerous other more interesting tidbits.

It may be time to scour the book stores for vintage volumes. You just never know what may postal gem may drop in your lap!

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, Editors, Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History, 2012, Confederate Stamp Alliance, [www.csalliance.org](http://www.csalliance.org).

<sup>2</sup>Genealogy.com, William, Joseph, John Currie, SC, AL. <http://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/curry/43/> Accessed April 19, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Ancestry.com, Martha Jane Humphries Currie, [https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/martha-jane-humphries\\_1723736](https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/martha-jane-humphries_1723736) Accessed April 19, 2017.

<sup>4</sup>Rootsweb, NCCASWEL-L Archives, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/NCCASWEL/2007-09/1189176419> Accessed April 19, 2017.

<sup>5</sup><http://www.earlycorvettes.com/books/bookreviews/gummere.htm> Accessed April 19, 2017. <http://www.earlycorvettes.com/books/bookreviews/gummere.htm> Accessed April 19, 2017.