

# One of our great American Specialties

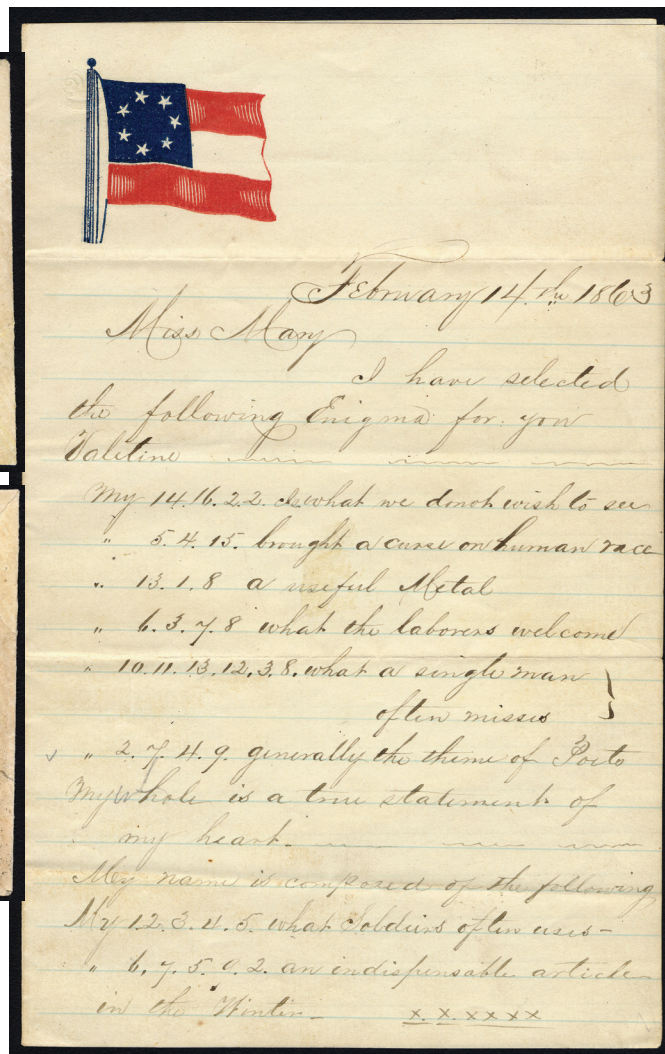
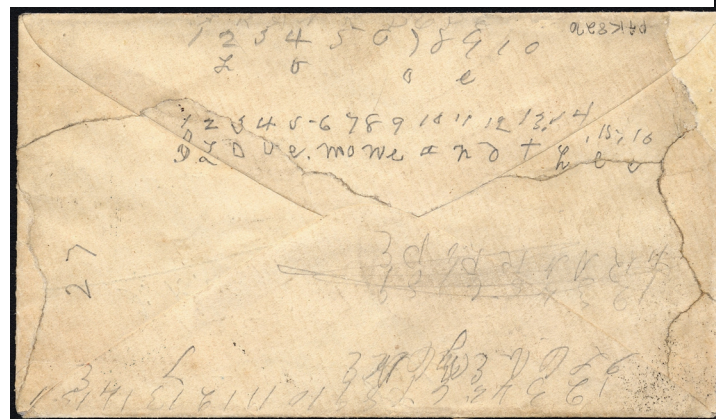
Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



## The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

### Confederate Patriotic Enigma Valentine



February 14th 1863

Miss Mary

I have selected the following Enigma for you[r] Valentine [sic]

- My 14.16.2.2. Is what we do not wish to see
- " 5.4.15. brought a curse on human race
- " 13.1.8 a useful Metal
- " 6.3.7.8 what the laborers welcome
- " 10.11.13.12.3.8. what a single man often misses
- " 2.7.11.9. generally the theme of Porto my whole is a true statement of my heart.

My name is composed of the following.

My 1.2.3.4.5. what Soldiers often uses [sic]

" 6.7.5.9.2 an indispensable article in the Winter. x x x x x

During the Civil War, most Confederate valentines were hand-made due to the scarcity of paper caused by the blockade, which prevented the importation of paper from the North and Europe. As there were only five such days during the War, Confederate valentines are obviously rare and especially sought after.

A spectacular and unusual patriotic enigma valentine reposes in the archives of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum – a word puzzle from a soldier to his sweetheart. Confederate valentines are rare in themselves, but a double patriotic use from a soldier as well as the enigma valentine makes this specimen all the more desirable.

The cover is an 11-star flag design franked with a vertical pair of the 5¢ blue Richmond print beautifully tied by a Company Shops, North Carolina circular date stamp. It is addressed to "Miss Mary Bouknight, Newberry C.H., S.C." The enclosure is a 7-star flag patriotic letterhead with an unusual penna valentine. We can only imagine how Miss Mary treasured this.



The inside and the back of the cover both have penciled code showing her effort to decipher the message of the valentine riddle. The back of the cover at center shows:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16  
I LOVE MONE AND T HE E

Upside down from the above code, it appears that she has deciphered the anonymous correspondent as Frank Pope. There are only a few Confederate soldiers by that name in the military records and only one from South Carolina, which is most likely Miss Mary's beau. His name was Frank M. Pope. He enlisted as a private on an unspecified date and served in Company A of the 15th SC Infantry, also known as the Columbia Rifles.

The 15th SC was engaged in a long list of well-known battles from Second Manassas to Petersburg and many more. In early January 1865, General Lee sent Kershaw's Brigade back to the Palmetto State to oppose General William Tecumseh Sherman who had begun to move into South Carolina following his famous "March to the Sea" from Atlanta to Savannah in late 1864. The 15th SC was one of the last Confederate units to evacuate Charleston. Before surrendering at Greensboro on April 26, 1865, the 15th SC and Kershaw's Brigade served as the last Confederate provost guard of the Army of Tennessee. The men of the 15th SC participated in the changing of the guard ceremony with the 104th Ohio Infantry as they turned the remaining Confederate supplies in Greensboro over to Sherman's Army on May 3, 1863.

Thanks to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum for sharing this gem.

For more information on collecting Confederates, go to [www.csalliance.org](http://www.csalliance.org), the website of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. ☒

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