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The Earliest Listings of Confederate States Stamps

A few years ago, during some free time at a multi-day meeting of the Council of Philatelists at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, I perused the philatelic library stacks. In so doing, a tiny handwritten volume in French caught my eye because it was dated September 1861 in magenta ink, early in the American Civil War (Figure 1).

On the front of this small work is a mimeographed sticker, shown in Figure 2, reading, “Berger-Levrault. Strassburg (sic). (List of Stamps) September 1861. The VERY EARLIEST PUBLICATION on Stamp Collecting of any country, and of which 2 other copies are known. One in the British Museum (Crawford Bequest) and Dr. Diona (whose copy will be left to the Italian nation, as with the remainder of his library).”

Despite the mimeographed wording on the Berger-Levrault list, the National Postal Museum Library asserts there are four copies known – all in museums.¹

The copy in my hands was that of the late George T. Turner (1906-79), whom I was honored to know well during my early formative years in philately. George, acting curator of the Smithsonian Institution’s philatelic collection from 1959-62, owned one of the greatest private philatelic libraries ever assembled.² Through Turner’s bequest, the Smithsonian Institution received the Turner library’s finest items, totaling more than 3,000 books and related material. This acquisition forms the core of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum Library.

Turner joined the American Philatelic Society (APS) in 1933, and rarely missed a convention the rest of his life. He served on the APS Board of Directors for 28 years. He received the prestigious Luff Award in 1976 for Outstanding Service to the Society, as well as the Lichtenstein Medal in 1976. He signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1978. He still had much more to contribute when he died at age 73.

Imagine my surprise when the top listing on page 12 of the Berger-Levrault list was the New Orleans 5¢ provisional from the Confederate

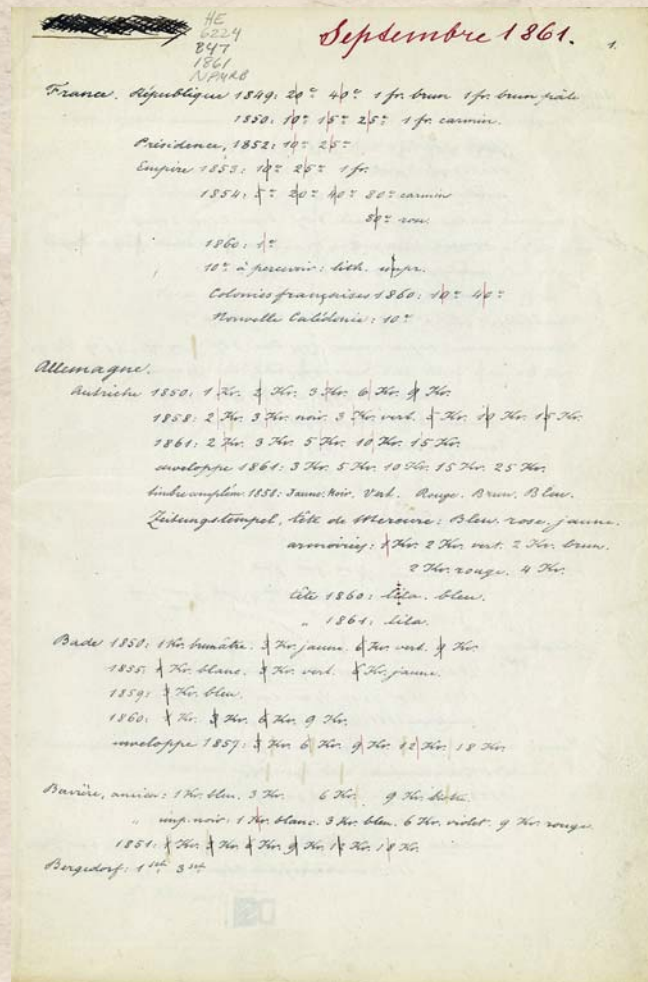


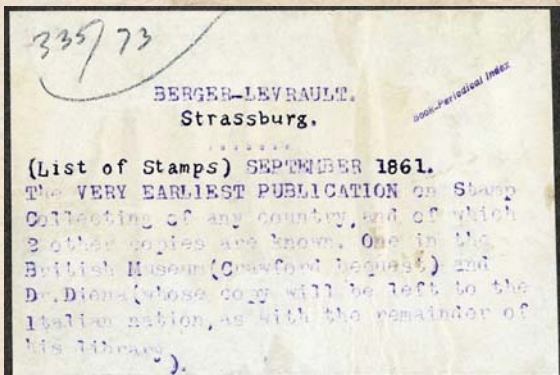
Figure 1. First page of the earliest publication on stamp collecting from any country, by Oscar Berger-Levrault.

Figure 2. Mimeographed description sticker on the Figure 1 Berger-Levrault front cover (Smithsonian National Postal Museum Library).

States of America (Figures 3 and 4).

There was no mention of the 2¢ New Orleans provisionals (red and blue) or the fact that there are several different impressions, papers and shades. Nor was there any mention of the Confederate general issues, because they had not yet been released. The first Confederate general issue was not offered to the public until Oct. 16, 1861, in Richmond, Va.³

François Georges Oscar Berger-Levrault (1826-1903) was born in Strassbourg, France, the capital city of the Grand Est region — formerly Alsace — in northeastern France. Strassbourg is the formal seat of the European Parliament and sits near the German border, with culture and architecture blending



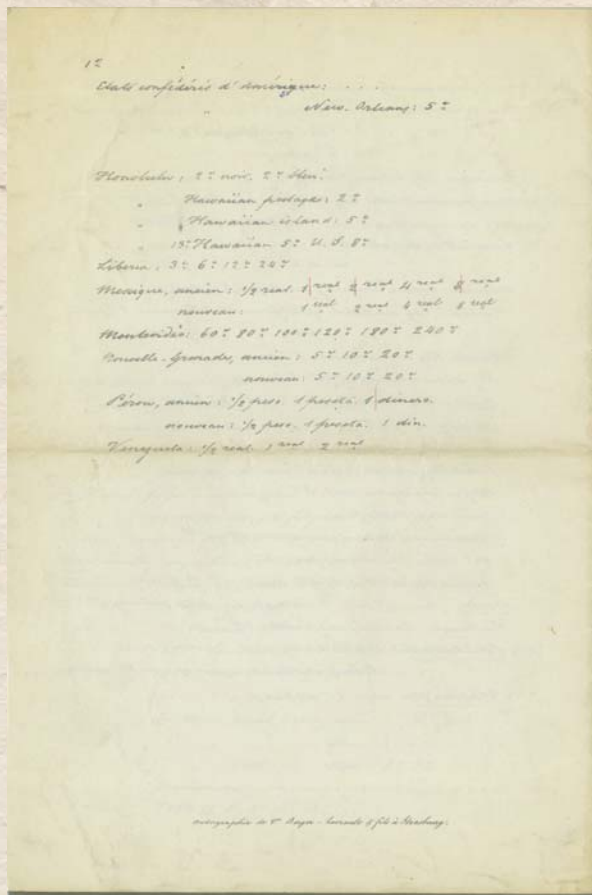


Figure 3 (left). Berger-Levrault list, which notes a Confederate States of America 5¢ New Orleans stamp as the first entry on page 12.



Figure 4 (right). Scott 62X3, 5¢ New Orleans postmaster's provisional with red wharf-side double circle postmark.

German and French influences. After the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), Germany took possession of portions of Alsace and Lorraine. Like many Alsatians, Berger-Levrault had to go to France or become German. He opted for France and moved his printing establishment to Nancy, where he eventually died more than three decades later. Nancy is a riverfront city and former capital of the Duchy of Lorraine.

The photo collage of Berger-Levrault shown in Figure 5 is from a family source on a French genealogy website.⁴ It shows his lengthy name the way I am using it here. I found his name listed various other ways by different sources, but presume the family's is the correct variation. He simply used the first name Oscar in his publications.

In more than one photo, he is wearing an Order of Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor) medal. The National Legion of Honor is the highest French order of merit for military and civil merits, established in 1802 by Napoléon Bonaparte.

There are five classes in the Legion of Honor, in ascending order: Chevalier (Knight), Officer, Commander, Grand Officer and Grand Croix.

Berger-Levrault was Chevalier, followed by Officer (O.L.H.).^{5,6} An example of a medal is shown in Figure 6.

Oscar Berger-Levrault was a bookseller, printer and publisher in his birthplace, Strasbourg. He was one of the first stamp collectors who dealt with the scientific and systematic establishment of stamp collections. In September 1861, he published an untitled stamp and postal stationery register headed "Description of the stamps known to date." It is often referred to as the world's first stamp catalog, although it was more a list than a catalog because of the lack of illustrations or pricing. However, it listed 973 postage stamps known to him that had been issued around the world up to then.⁷

Berger-Levrault's work was intended only for his friends and only 40-50 copies of it were produced. He was both a collector and a dealer. His 1890 reminiscences were published in No. 64-65 of the *Philatelic Journal of America*.⁸

Because Berger-Levrault was the first to make such a list, errors crept in. It was used by Alfred Potiquet as a template for the first illustrated stamp catalog, issued in December 1861.

Alfred Potiquet (Figure 7) was a French official responsible for the first actual stamp catalog. The 1861 first edition is held by the

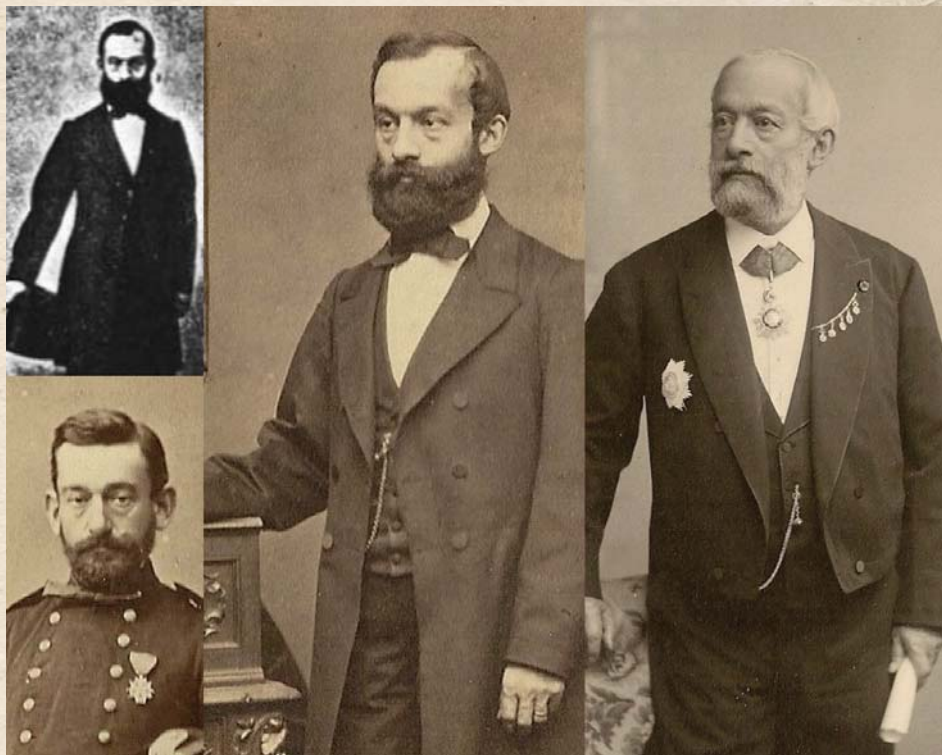
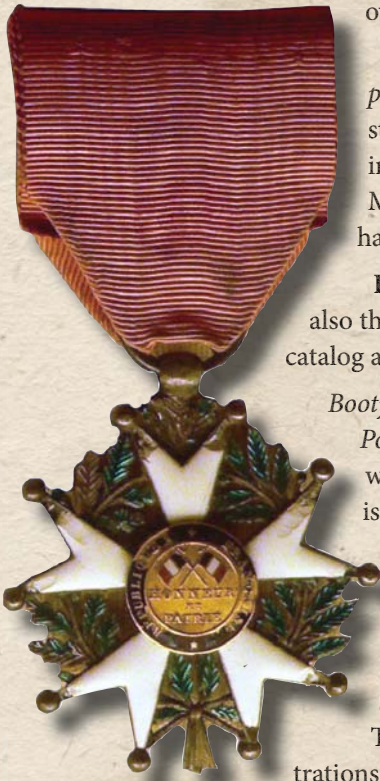


Figure 5. Family photo collage of François Georges Oscar Berger-Levrault.

Figure 6. French Legion of Honor medal.



Royal Philatelic Society London.⁹ He developed his catalog based on the register of Oscar Berger-Levrault, referred to by many as the first catalog. Potiquet added many stamp issues that had been overlooked by Berger-Levrault and corrected his errors.

Potiquet's work was published in December 1861 in Paris under the title *Catalogue des timbres-poste créés dans les divers états du globe*. It contained 1,080 postage stamps and 132 pieces of postal stationery. This much-improved publication was still not error-free. For example, there was no information about stamps that were still unknown at that time, such as the "Post Office" stamps of Mauritius. And, although I've not personally seen a copy, I would bet the Confederate general issues hadn't yet made it into that catalog either.

Frederick William Booty (circa 1840-1924) was an artist, living in Brighton, England, who was also the author of the first postage stamp catalog published in English, and the first illustrated stamp catalog anywhere.

Booty's Aids to Stamp Collectors, being a list of British and Foreign Postage Stamps in Circulation since 1840 - by a Stamp Collector, was published in April 1862, just weeks before Mount Brown issued his more successful work, and when Booty was in his early twenties. The catalog was partly based on earlier works produced in Belgium and France.

Later in 1862, Booty was the first to issue an illustrated catalog, titled *The Stamp Collector's Guide; being a list of English and Foreign Postage Stamps, with 200 fac-simile drawings*. This edition listed 1,100 stamps and Booty drew all the illustrations himself (Figure 8).

Booty also contributed to the *Monthly Advertiser*, published by Edward Moore & Co., in 1862. These catalogs may have been a business venture, capitalizing on Booty's artistic skills, as there is no evidence that Booty was a philatelist. Booty's watercolor landscapes are still regularly featured in art auctions in Britain.

Mount Brown (1837-1919) was an early British philatelist and compiler of the second published stamp catalog in the English language. Brown attended the City of London School and started collecting stamps around 1860 (Figure 9).

Mount Brown published his *Catalogue of British, Colonial, and Foreign Postage Stamps* in May 1862, just weeks after Frederick Booty published his catalog in April. Unlike Booty, Brown's catalog was not illustrated. Others may already have prepared unpublished handwritten lists of stamps. Brown's catalog was more successful than Booty's and went through 7,500 copies and five editions up to 1864.¹⁰



Figure 7. Alfred Potiquet, Frenchman responsible for producing the first actual stamp catalog in 1861.



Dr. John Edward Gray (1800-75) was a stamp collector from the earliest opportunity. The Penny Black was the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system. On May 1, 1840, the day the Penny Black first went on sale, Gray purchased stamps with the intention of saving them, thus making him one of the world's first recognized stamp collectors.¹¹

By trade, Gray was a British zoologist. He began his zoological career by volunteering – at age 15 – to collect insects for the British Museum. He was Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum in London from 1840-74. During his years with the British Museum, Gray wrote prolifically, including many descriptions of

Figure 8. Frederick William Booty's Stamp Collector's Guide, the first postage stamp catalog in English, and the first illustrated stamp catalog anywhere.

species new to science. A list of the books, memoirs and papers written by him (issued after his death), contains 1,162 titles. Under his direction, the zoological collection became the most important in the world.¹²

Gray married Maria Emma Smith (1787-1876) in 1826. She helped him with his scientific work, especially with her drawings. Between 1842-74, she privately published five volumes of etchings, titled *Figures of Molluscan Animals for the use of Students*, and she mounted and arranged most of the Cuming collection of shells in the British Museum.¹³ Figure 10 shows a photo of them together in 1863. Figure 11 shows an earlier portrait of him.

According to the Society of the History of Natural History, Gray claimed to be the inventor of the postage stamp. In 1862, he published one of the first stamp catalogs, along with Frederick Booty and Mount Brown—all in Great Britain. It was accessioned by the British Museum on Dec. 1, 1862.

Although Gray's catalog listed 21 previously published stamp albums, manuals, catalogs and price lists, he was certainly in the forefront of people leading the way, as the earliest of those was published Dec. 21, 1861.

Originally, catalogs were simply dealer price lists. Over time, catalogs added supporting details about the stamps such as dates of issue, color variations and so forth.



Figure 9. Mount Brown, an early British philatelist and compiler of the second published stamp catalog in the English language.

The full title of Gray's catalog is *Hand Catalogue of Postage Stamps for the Use of Collectors*, by John Edward Gray, PH.D. F.R.S. F.L.S. &c. of the British Museum. London: Robert Hardwicke, 192, Piccadilly. 1862. The cover of the catalog was illustrated with a full-page sized Penny Red and comprised 54 pages plus a substantial introduction.

In his introduction, Gray states,

"During the terrible Civil conflict in the late 'United States' they form almost the only currency (postage stamps) of small value in circulation; and the Government issued them without being gummed for the purpose of their being so used as it was found that the gummed stamps were apt to adhere together when carried and handled...there will not be found in the stamps issued...by the different City expresses, or errand and carrier offices of the United States, which have often been regarded as postage stamps, and entered as such in the lists published by different persons."

Gray's assertion as to Confederate stamps being issued without gum is inaccurate. All Confederate general issue stamps were gummed ... maybe not very well-applied gum, but gum nonetheless.

On page XIV, he goes on to say,

"This list is confined to the postage stamps which are issued by the different

governments. I have therefore excluded the stamps issued by different private persons or companies who carry letters or parcels, or electric telegraphic message, and have found it convenient to issue stamps. They are no more postage stamps than the stamps issued by the Inland Revenue Office for fiscal purposes."

In the introduction, Gray lists numerous works or articles that had been printed about stamp collecting, all published in 1862 or 1863. He does not note Berger-Levrault in 1861, although it is said he based his list on Berger-Levrault's "register." Likely this is because it was a simple handwritten list and not a printed publication. Four of the listed publications were by J. B. Moens, published in Brussels and Paris, including one Moens wrote on fakes and facsimiles. Yes, fakes and facsimiles existed virtually from the beginning of stamps. There are well-known advertisements for



Figure 10. Dr. John Edward Gray and his wife, Maria Emma (Smith) Gray, 1863.



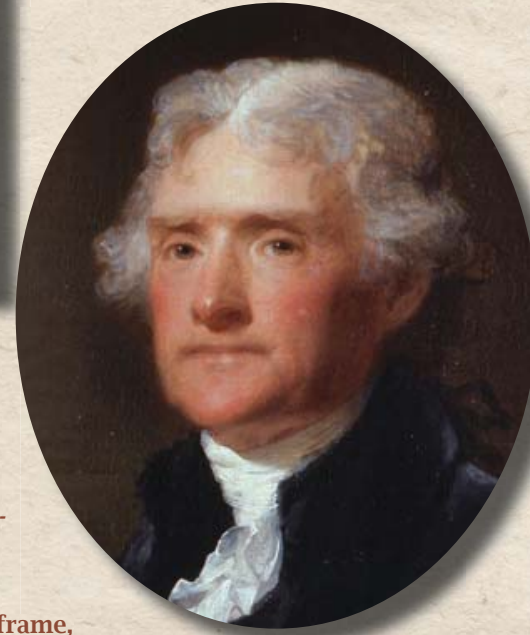
Figure 11. Dr. John Edward Gray, an earlier portrait. He published one of the first stamp catalogs in 1862.



Figure 12 (far left). CSA 2-H, 10¢ blue, Thomas Jefferson, earliest recorded use Nov. 8, 1861.

Figure 13 (left). CSA 5, 10¢ rose, Thomas Jefferson, earliest recorded use March 10, 1862.

Figure 14 (below). Portrait of Thomas Jefferson by Gilbert Stuart, 1805. Possibly a mirror-image portrait source for CSA 2 and CSA 5.



Confederate States fakes, fantasies and facsimiles in America as early as 1862 by S. Allan Taylor.

On pages 49-50 of Gray's catalog, are the CSA listings:

CXVIII. CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

1. Engraved portrait of Jefferson Davis to right, in oval disk, with *Confederate States* in its upper part, with florid ornament at angles. *Postage* above, and *five cents* below, in large oblong erect frame. *5 cents*.
2. Engraved portrait of **Colquhoun** (sic) to right, in circle, in oblong erect frame, with *Confederate States* in its upper margin. *One cent*.
3. Like 2, but portrait of Jefferson Davis. *Five cents*.
4. Engraved portrait of **General Beauregard** to right, in circle, with *Confederate States* in upper, and of **North America** in lower edge, with number (10) in angle and *Postage ten cents*, in upper and lower margin. Red or blue ink.

There are some stamps in circulation among the French dealers which they profess to belong to the Confederate States, but the imitators seem never to have seen the original stamps.

The army of the Confederate States are said to issue stamps as they occupy the towns, &c.

Again, Gray errs in several ways in his Confederate listings. These are laughable mistakes to today's students, but it makes for interesting reading to follow as early collectors/catalogers stumbled along during the infancy of philatelic study and without benefit of the helpful technology we so enjoy today.

On stamp listing 2, the name of John C. Calhoun is noted as "Colquhoun," but the more interesting error to me is listing number 4 where Gray identifies the portrait as "General Beauregard." There was never a postage stamp issued with the portrait of Beauregard. The error is compounded with "of North America" at the bottom. No Confederate stamp ever appeared with "North America" on its face, nor the word "North" in any manner.

Stamps 2 and 3 appear to be the Thomas De La Rue & Co. typographed (letterpress) issues produced in England for the Confederacy. Whether Gray realized that or not is uncertain. If he did, he made no mention of it.

Since Gray noted stamp 4 as being issued in both blue and red ink, the logical assumption would be that these are what we today designate as CSA 2 and CSA 5,¹⁴ as both are the same design with a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, not G.T. Beauregard. The plating of the 10¢ rose (CSA 5) is the same as for the 10¢ blue (CSA 2), as they originated from the same transfer stone. These stamps were issued in 1862, so the time frame fits (Figures 12 and 13).

The Jefferson portrait is thought to be a mirror image of the 1805 portrait by Gilbert Stuart, shown in Figure 14. Stuart painted the first five U.S. presidents.¹⁵ Figure 15 shows a photo of General G.T. Beauregard, as he was most commonly known.

Stamp listing 1 is undoubtedly CSA 1, the 5¢ green lithographed issue, although he does not note the color. As with the CSA 2 and CSA 5 issues (Gray's listing 4), the portrait is identical, but it was printed in green as what we today identify as CSA 1 and in blue as CSA 4. They were printed by Hoyer & Ludwig of Richmond, Va. The earliest recorded use is Oct. 16, 1861, the first day it was offered for sale at the Richmond post office, as noted in the *Richmond Daily Examiner* of that date.¹⁶ The earliest recorded date for the 5¢ blue (CSA 4) is Feb. 26, 1862.

Gray also directly mentions the fakes and fantasies already circulating in 1862. I find most interesting the comment, "The army of the Confederate States are said to issue stamps as they occupy the towns." I surmise that, since we know of no stamps issued by the Confederate armies, Gray was most likely confused by the locally produced postmasters' provisional stamps, which had nothing to do with the troops.

An earlier, little-known version of Gray's catalog appeared during 1862 in a series

of five articles titled "The Postage-Stamps of the World" in the short-lived magazine *Young England*. It was in the first article that Gray claimed to be one of the earliest collectors as well as the inventor of stamps, although he provided no dates. Gray stated that "I was the first that proposed the system of a small, uniform rate of postage, to be prepaid by stamps... [but] Mr. (now Sir) Rowland Hill, who had leisure at his command, undertook the question."^{17, 18}



Figure 15. General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard (1818-93) never graced a Confederate postage stamp.

John William Kline, Jr. (? - 1892) and Adelia C. Kline (circa 1825-99). The first (plagiarized) catalog in the United States was *The Stamp Collector's Manual*, by A.C. Kline (possibly a pseudonym for John William Kline) also in 1862. A.C. Kline is thought by most to be John's wife, Adelia C. Kline.

Research by George T. Turner, completed after his death by Herbert A. Trenchard for the *American Philatelic Literature Review*, suggests that John Kline was absent in military service during the Civil War, serving as a colonel, and that Mrs. Kline was the one who printed *The Stamp Collector's Manual* in December 1862. The following year, A.C. Kline is listed as a coin dealer in the 1863 *Philadelphia Directory*. She (or he, if A.C. Kline is a pseudonym for J.W. Kline) was apparently both a stamp and coin dealer in her/his own right.

Prof. John N. Lupia III ably explores this fascinating possibility in the *Encyclopedia Dictionary of Numismatic Biographies*, in which he offers persuasive evidence that this was the case. I personally could not verify Kline's military service from my usual sources so

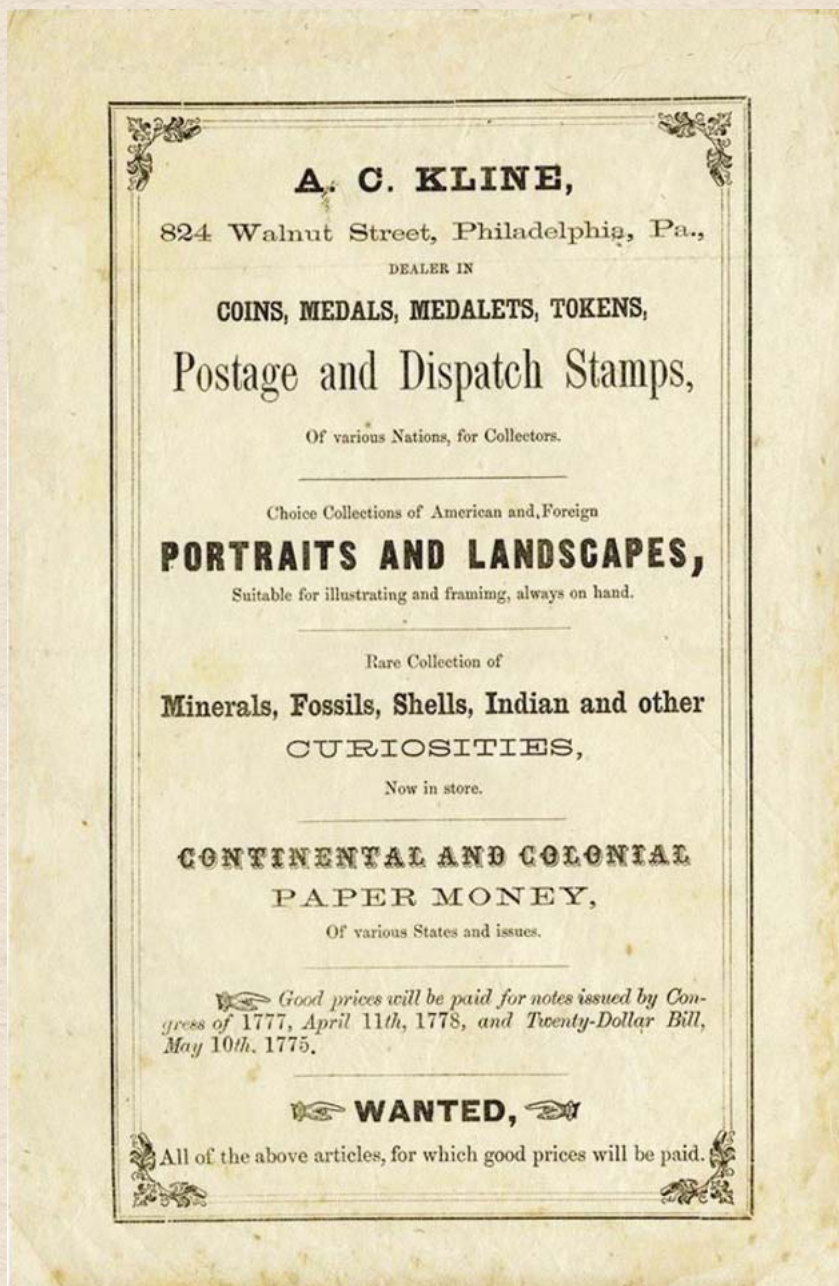


Figure 16. An 1863 A.C. Kline broadside; she or her husband published the first (plagiarized) stamp catalog in the United States.

am not prepared to assert that it was she, not he, who was selling as A.C. Kline, but I love the thought that A.C. Kline could be one of the earliest female stamp/coin dealers in the U.S./world, if not the earliest – misguided though Kline was in using the work of others without attribution.

During the Civil War, it is said that during her husband's absence, Mrs. A.C. Kline began to publish her catalog, which she pirated from Mount Brown's *Catalogue of British, Colonial, and Foreign Postage Stamps* (London, 1862), adding additional original material, especially Confederate and U.S. stamps, in December 1862, under the name A.C. Kline. This was the first American philatelic publication. Though a line-for-line plagiarism, it was published in three editions from 1862-65, with the second edition plagiarizing the work of Dr. Gray. Figure 16 shows an A.C. Kline 1863 broadside. Courtesy Lupia Numismatic Library.^{19,20}

Early philatelic publications are a web of intrigue and contradiction that are fascinating to modern students. This article presents thumbnail sketches of only some of the early catalog preparers. Full biographies offer more nuggets of information worth pursuing, should the spirit move you. While their works are ripe with flaws and ambiguity, they continue to offer opportunities for further research. ☐

Trish Kaufmann enjoys hearing from readers. She may be reached at trishkauf@comcast.net

Endnotes

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¹⁴Kaufmann et al.

¹⁵Kevin P. Andersen, "Demystifying the Stone Y Flaw," *Confederate Philatelist*, no. 390, vol. 61, July-September 2016.

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