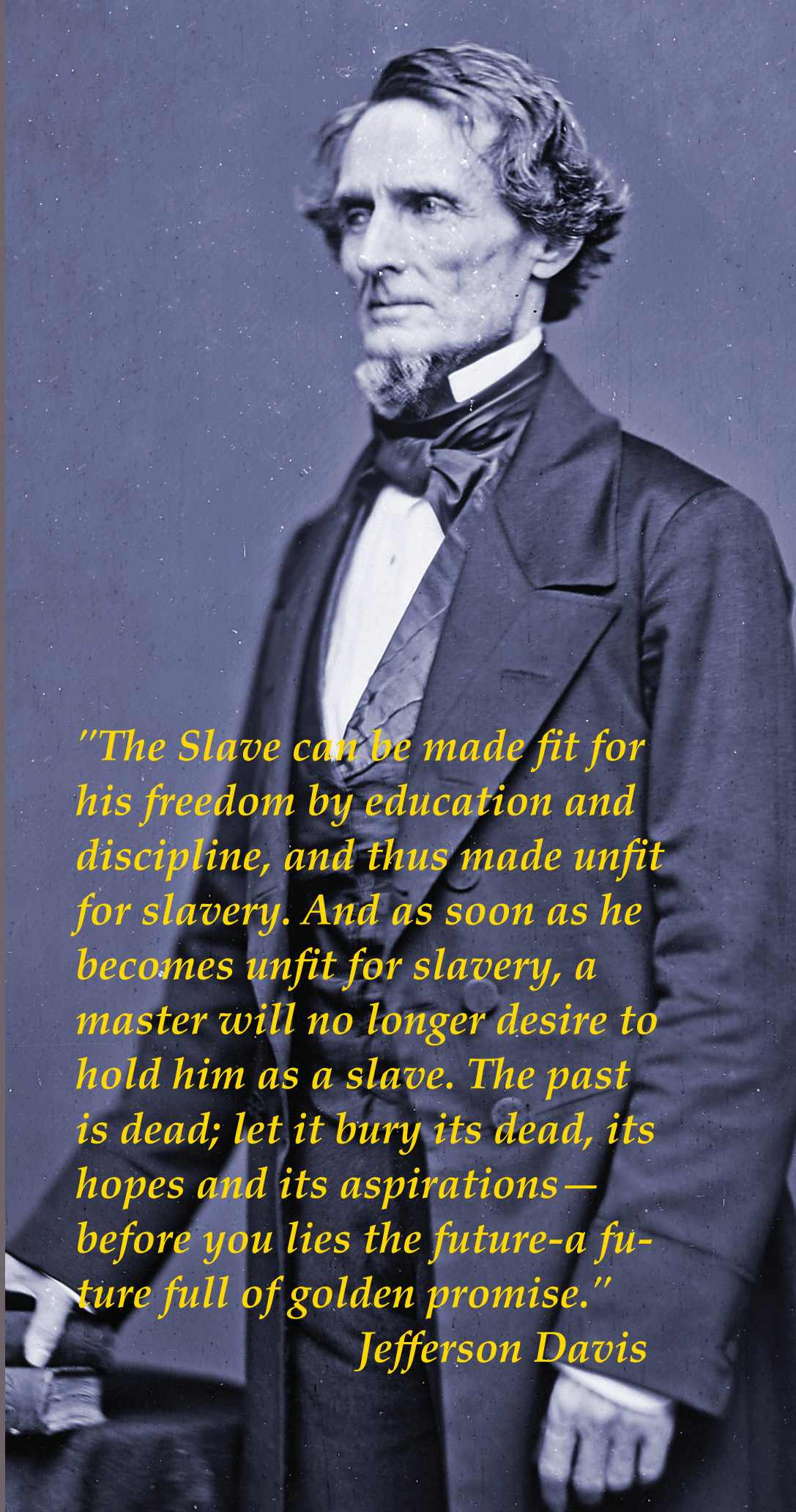


Varina Davis relates many stories of her marriage and life with her husband Jefferson Davis, once the president of the Confederate States of America, in her famous memoir. On the following pages is the story of his nephew—mentioned in Mrs. Davis' memoir—but offered in detail to us here by one of the greatest of our Civil War historians & philatelists...

"The Slave can be made fit for his freedom by education and discipline, and thus made unfit for slavery. And as soon as he becomes unfit for slavery, a master will no longer desire to hold him as a slave. The past is dead; let it bury its dead, its hopes and its aspirations—before you lies the future—a future full of golden promise."

Jefferson Davis





The Jackson, Mississippi, 10¢ black postmaster's provisional (Scott #43XU2), shown in Figures 1 & 1a was handstamped on an all-over advertising cover displaying an illustration of the Bowman House Hotel. The envelope boldly proclaims H. Hilzheim as the proprietor. Bowman House operated in Jackson from 1857 to 1863, before burning in a fire on June 9, 1863. In its short history, the five-story brick structure was the scene of frequent political and social events. It also served briefly as both Union and Confederate headquarters early during the war.¹

The top back flap shows the imprint of the printer, William Murphy of New York; presumably an antebellum design still available at the beginning of the war. Census records for this provisional at the Robert A. Sie-



Figure 1. Jackson, Mississippi, 10¢ black postmaster's provisional (Scott #43XU2) handstamped on an all-over Bowman House Hotel advertising cover



President Jefferson Davis' Nephew Returns Home from Gettysburg

by Patricia A. Kaufmann



Figure 1a.



gel Auction Galleries website show only three or four such examples.

When the Confederacy took control of the mail system from the United States on June 1, 1861, there were not yet Confederate postage stamps available. Some postmasters made substitutes in the form of local adhesive stamps, printed envelopes, and handstamped envelopes which were prepared and sold in advance of use. These are referred to as postmasters' provisionals.

The Jackson cover is an example of a scarce handstamped postmaster's provisional. Such provisionals were valid only in the towns in which they were

sold, although postmasters in other towns occasionally accepted them.

Capt. Isaac Davis Stamps (1828-1863)

The subject cover is addressed to Capt. Isaac Davis Stamps, C.S.A., Richmond, Virginia. Stamps is pictured in Figure 2. He was a lawyer from Woodville, Mississippi, who served as a member of Company E, 21st Mississippi Infantry, also known as the Hurricane Rifles. The regiment was part of the illustrious Army of Northern Virginia, Humphrey's Brigade, Kershaw's Division,

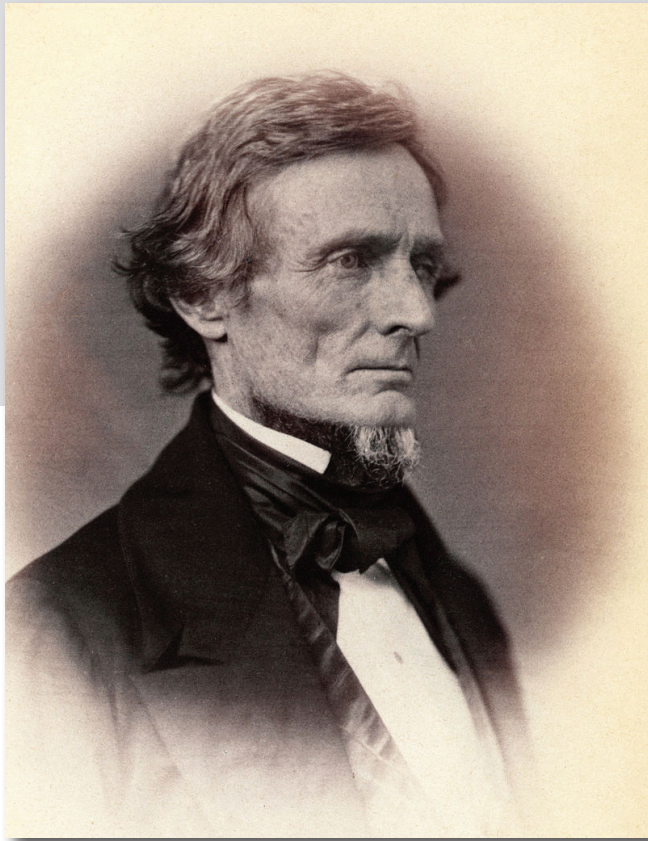


Figure 4. Confederate President Jefferson Davis

Longstreet's Corps. Stamps was a recruiting officer and the acting assistant quarter master for the Hurricane Rifles.

According to his military records, Isaac Davis Stamps was mortally wounded in the bowels at the Peach Orchard on July 2, the second day of the Gettysburg Siege — arguably the most significant of the three days fighting at Gettysburg. Stamps died the next day at the age of 35, on July 3. The second day of Gettysburg itself ranks as the tenth bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

Before the Civil War, Gettysburg was best known for orchards of tasty fruit, but it became famous for a less appealing reason during the Civil War. The Peach Orchard became the site of the clash between Longstreet's Confederate troops and Sickles' Union men. It was the setting for intense fighting on July 2, 1863, from approximately 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. when Longstreet ordered the Confederate infantry assault.²

Figure 3 illustrates the military engagement in the Peach Orchard, as shown on a stereo card by Keystone View Company, circa 1900 (Library of Congress).

Lengthy books have been written about just that crucial second day of action.³ Fighting on the various fields of battle that day involved at least 100,000 soldiers, of whom roughly 20,000 were killed, wounded, captured, or missing.



Figure 3. Engagement in the Peach Orchard, Gettysburg, as shown on stereo card by Keystone View Company circa 1900. Library of Congress.

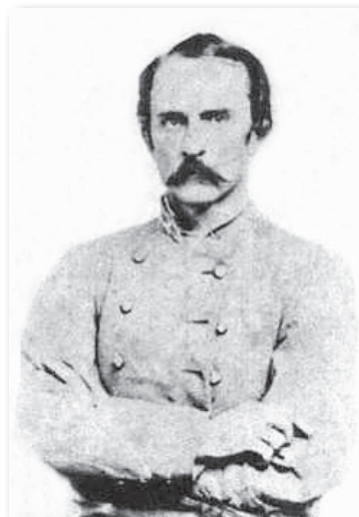


Figure 2. Capt. Isaac Davis Stamps, nephew of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.





McCombville, Ga. St. Louis, Mo.
 Copyright, 1900, by J. F. Stimpney.

10585—Battle of Gettysburg - Engagement in the Peach Orchard.

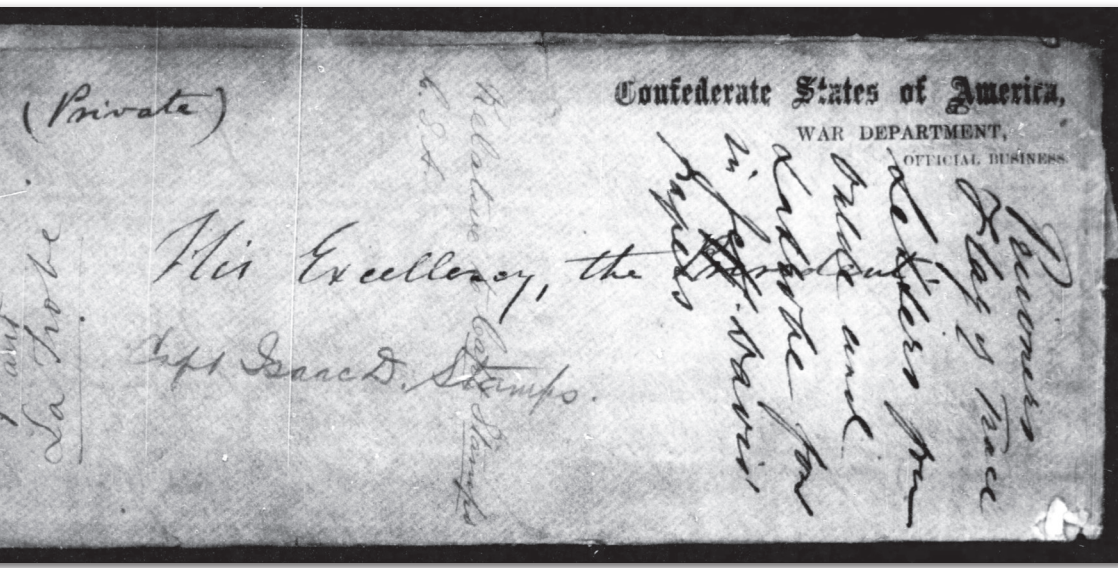


Figure 5. Imprinted Confederate War Department envelope to President Davis which contained letters concerning return of the remains of his nephew, Capt. Isaac D. Stamps.



Baltimore December 3rd 1863

Robert Ould Esq
Dear Sir

Enclosed I send as requested in
your copy of Flag of Bruce of Nov-18th the undoubted bill
for costs of removing & the body of Capt Stamps.
I have in my possession some of the hair of the
accused which was taken from the corpse after its dissec-
tion, and which I am at any time ready to forward
to his family.

Respectfully Yours
Ferdinand L. Latrobe

Estab^d of Cap Stamps & Family
1863
Nov 28 For Expenses to Gettysburg & return
with remains in fine Coffin & 7th of 25 20
for the Coffin 75
Expenses to Baltimore & return 23 50
\$ 133 70

Wm. Latrobe

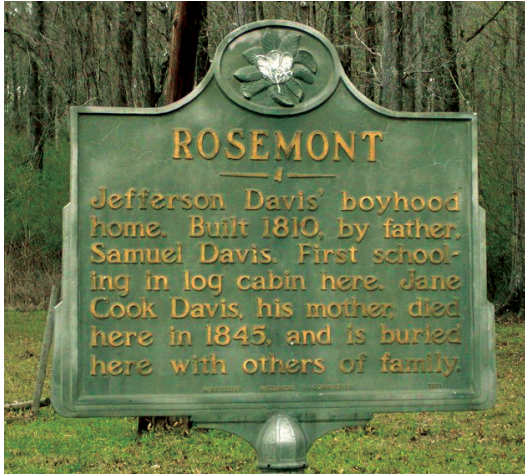


Figure 9. Marker at Rosemont Plantation in Woodville, Mississippi.

Figure 6. December 3, 1863, letter from Ferdinand Latrobe to Robert Ould with attached bill for disinterring Stamps' body at Gettysburg and transporting it to Virginia for further trip south.

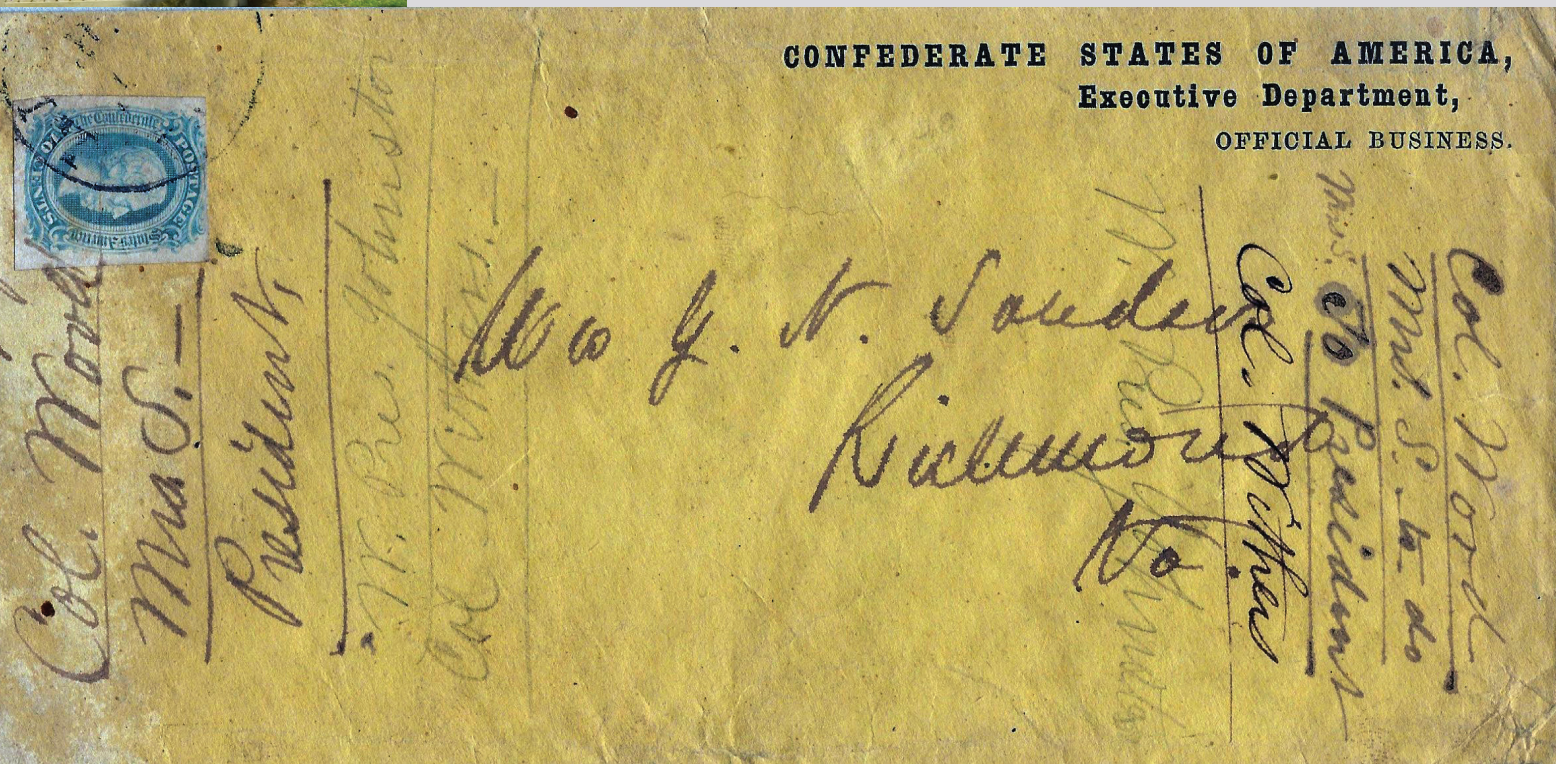


Figure 10. Rosemont Plantation House, the boyhood home of Jefferson Davis.



Jefferson and Varina Davis in a photograph taken in the early 1870s.

All of the handwriting on this cover, including the name and city of the addressee are in the hand of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy.



**CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,
Executive Department,
OFFICIAL BUSINESS.**

(Confederate.)
 S 21 Miss.
 S. S. Stamps
 Capt., Co. E., 21 Reg't Mississippi Vols.
 Appears on
 Company Muster Roll
 of the organization named above,
 for July & Aug., 1863.
 Enlisted:
 When _____, 186 .
 Where _____
 By whom _____
 Period _____
 Last paid:
 By whom _____
 To what time _____, 186 .
 Present or absent _____
 Remarks: Killed Gettysburg
 July 2, 63.
 Mortally wounded. Died
 next day.
 *Bureau Record of Service
 The 21st Regiment Mississippi Infantry was organized about
 July, 1861, as the 1st (Brandon's) Battalion Mississippi In-
 fantry, Companies A to I, some of which had previously been
 in the State service. About September, 1861, Companies K
 and L were added and the designation changed to 21st Reg-
 iment Mississippi Infantry.
 Book mark: _____
 J. S. [Signature] Copyist.
 (642)

The last Regimental Muster Roll on which Capt. Stamps was mentioned. He was killed at Gettysburg on July 2.

Figure 7. December 27, 1863, return letter from Robert Ould to Latrobe, sending him money for the disinterment of Stamps' body.

Richmond, Va.
 Dec. 27th 1863.
 Ferdinand C. Latrobe Esq
 Baltimore, Md.
 My dear Sir,
 I send today by flag of
 truce, One hundred and thirty four dollars,
 to pay the bill recently transmitted by you.
 The relatives of Capt. Stamps, and especially
 his uncle, have requested me to express their
 grateful recognition of the attention and
 kindness shown by you. The removal was
 a matter which lay very near their hearts,
 and its successful accomplishment through
 your generous services, has done more than
 any thing that belongs to this earth, to as-
 suage the grief that mourned the fall of
 a brave and faithful soldier. You would
 receive a personal expression of grateful
 remembrance, but for reasons which will
 readily suggest themselves to you.
 Respectfully
 R. Ould
 Agent of Exchange



On a personal note, I found records on this conflict in my late father's papers after he died. He was a career Army officer who retired as a colonel after serving over thirty years. He fought in World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam. Those handwritten notes were for part of a course he taught at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in the 1960s.

Sometimes researching soldiers' records at the National Archives yields little to nothing. At other times, there is a treasure trove of information. It is not surprising that the records of Isaac Davis Stamps were many—72 pages in all. Stamps was the nephew of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. (Figure 4)

Figure 5 shows a flag of truce cover on a Confederate War Department imprinted envelope to "His Excellency, The President" noting enclosures concerning the return of his nephew's body for interment in the Davis family cemetery in January 1864. Up the right side is docketed, "Prisoners Flag of Truce Letters from Ould

and Latrobe found in Jeff Davis' papers."

Figures 6-8 are doubtless the letters mentioned in the docketing on the envelope to the president.

Stamps' body was buried at Gettysburg but was returned to Mississippi at the request of his family, including his uncle, the president. Figure 6 is a letter from Ferdinand C. Latrobe, then judge advocate general in Baltimore, to Robert Ould, Confederate Agent for Exchange of prisoners of war. Early in the war, Ould served as Assistant Secretary of War under Judah P. Benjamin.

The letter is dated December 3, 1863. It acknowledges receipt of a letter dated November 14th requesting a bill for relevant expenses. Attached to it is an October 28, 1863, invoice for \$133.70 in undertaker costs for travel to Gettysburg and return with the remains in a pine coffin, an additional metal coffin, and expenses for the trip to Fortress Monroe, Virginia, for the exchange.

The letter also mentions that:



Figure 12. Close-up of inscription. At the bottom, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" — "It is sweet and proper to die for one's country."

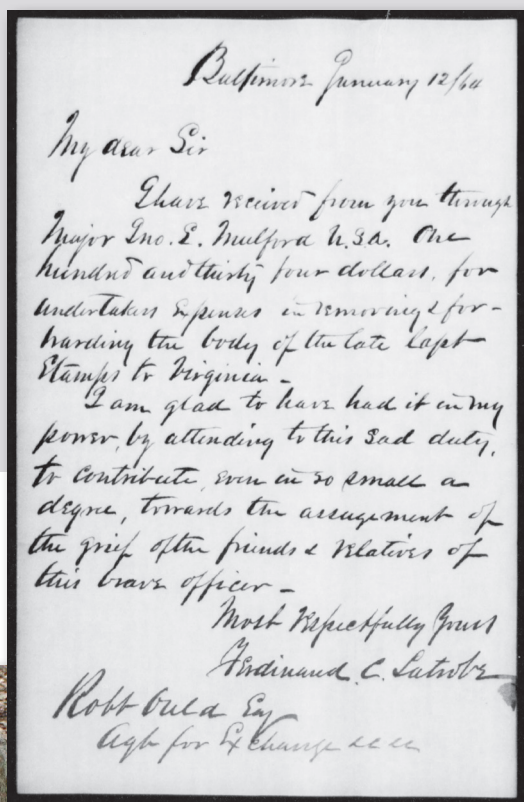


Figure 8. January 12, 1864, letter from Latrobe to Ould acknowledging receipt of payment for the undertaker.



Lucinda Farrar Davis
Sister of Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Mother of Isaac Davis Stamps

I have in my possession some of the hair of the deceased which was taken from the corpse after its disinterment, and which I am at any time ready to forward to his family.

The letter to Latrobe in Figure 7 is headed Richmond, Va., Dec. 27th, 1863, and signed by Robert Ould. It avows that he has sent that day by flag of truce \$134 for the recently transmitted bill.

It states, in part:

The relatives of Capt. Stamps, and especially his uncle (the president) have requested me to express their grateful recognition of the attention and kindness shown by you. The removal was a matter which lay very near their hearts, and its successful accomplishment through your generous services, has done more than anything that belongs to this earth to assuage the grief that mourned the fall of a brave and faithful soldier.

A second letter from Latrobe to Ould is dated January 12, 1864, and shown in Figure 8. It is in reply to

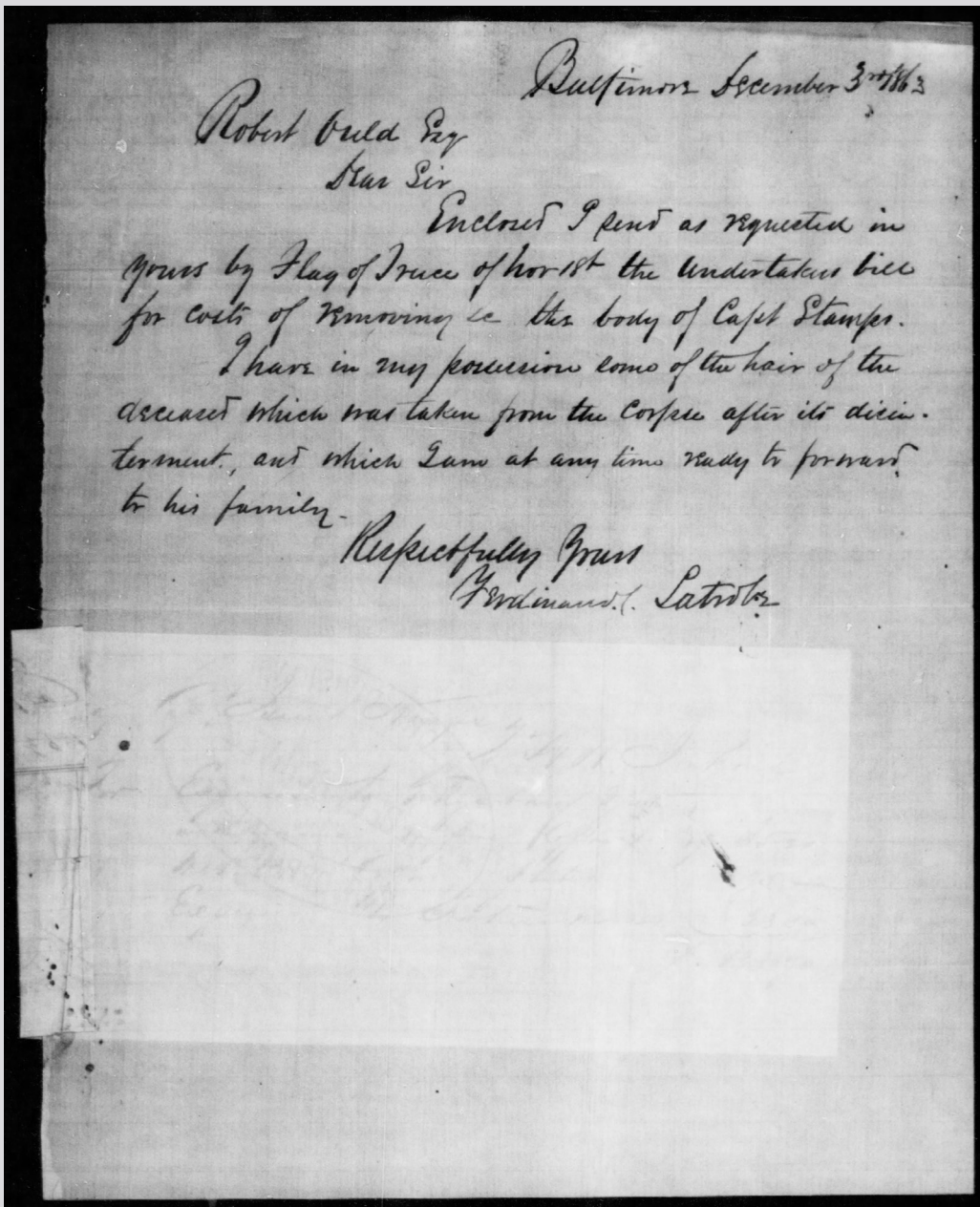
acknowledge receipt of \$134 for undertaker expenses in removing and forwarding the body of the late Capt. Stamps to Virginia, as well as these words of comfort:

I am glad to have had it in my power by attending to this sad duty, to contribute even in so small a degree, towards the assuagement of the grief of the friends and relatives of this brave officer.

Stamps' body was interred at Woodville, Mississippi, in January 1864 in the Davis family cemetery on Rosemont Plantation, home of Jefferson Finis Davis. The plantation is also known as Poplar Grove or Hale House. It was built around 1810 by the parents of the Confederate president; it was his childhood home. (Figures 9-10)

Jefferson Davis was the youngest of ten children. He is buried in historic Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, not in the family cemetery.

President Davis' sister, Lucinda Farrar Davis Stamps, was Isaac Stamps' mother. His remains were brought to



Baltimore, December 3, 1863

Robert Oule, Esq

Dear Sir

Enclosed I send as requested in yours by Flag of Truce of Nov 18th the undertaker's bill for costs of removing the body of Capt Stamps. I have in my possession some of the hair of the deceased which was taken from the coffin after the disinterment, and which I am any time ready to forward to his family.

Respectfully yours,
Ferdinand L. LaTrobe

Rosemont by his wife, Mary Humphreys Stamps.
Stamps!

Stamps. How can we not love that name? It is as if this story was awaiting a philatelic audience.

Stamps' gravestone is shown in Figures 11 and 12. At the bottom is inscribed a line from the Roman lyrical poet Horace's Odes (III.2.13). The line is usually translated as: "It is sweet and proper to die for one's country." The Latin word patria, meaning the country of one's fathers (Latin patres) or ancestors, is the source of the French word for a country, patrie, as well as the English word patriot (one who loves his country).

When I went to research this young officer, little did I expect the middle initial "D" would stand for "Davis,"

nor that it would reveal he was the nephew of the president of the Confederacy. It only points up the philatelic mantra that there is a story behind every cover, if only you are willing to do the research.

Endnotes

Waymarking.com, The Eagle and Bowman Hotels, Jackson, Miss., Mississippi Historical Markers, <http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=0e455c18-d1d3-4240-8c03-eb1e82b58b39&gid=3> Accessed April 29, 2019

Battle of Gettysburg, http://www.thomaslegion.net/battle_of_gettysburg.html Accessed April 29, 2019

Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg—The Second Day*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987, pp. 315, 317-19, 341-2.