

SUBSCRIBER RATE FOR UNSEALED CIRCULARS

Patricia A. Kaufmann



Even if you are a long-time student of Confederate postal history, you may be looking at the illustrated cover and scratching your head over the 1¢ rate. After all, everyone knows that there's no 1¢ Confederate rate, right? Not so fast.

The illustrated cover is postmarked with a Harrisonburg, Va., June 5 (1864) circular datestamp, with a matching handstamped "PAID" and manuscript "1 cent." Antebellum Harrisonburg postmarks look nothing like the Confederate-era postmarks.

The cover is addressed to John C. Rutherford, Esq., Goochland C.H., Va. Up the left side is content docketing indicating the sender was Jno R. O'Neale.

As attested to by the late Bill Bogg on the back, the cover is from the August Dietz Collection. Bill handled the Dietz philatelic estate. No stampless covers I could find are rated with the



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1¢ rate in the *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History* (CSA catalog)¹

This is the rare subscriber rate for unsealed domestic circulars, handbills, pamphlets and domestic newspapers. See Rate Table 4 in the CSA catalog, page 34, Act of April 29, 1863, which took effect July 1, 1863. This would date this circular use to 1864. The rate was 1¢ for the first ounce, plus 1¢ for each additional ounce.

John Coles Rutherford (1825-66) was a lawyer, planter and member of the House of Delegates. The name is sometimes seen as Rutherford. His father, of the same name (1792-1866), was Acting Governor of Virginia 1841-42. Father and son died within weeks of each other in August 1866; they both had illustrious careers. I am uncertain whether the subject cover is addressed to the father or the son.

The younger Rutherford studied in Richmond and at Washington College, Lexington (now Washington & Lee University). In 1841, he entered the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, from which he graduated with the degree of Master of Arts at age 18.² He enlisted as a private in Company E, 10th Virginia Cavalry, Army of Northern Virginia, on Jan. 3, 1864, and served until the end of the Civil War. The Rutherford papers are housed at Duke University Libraries.

If you have not made good use of the Confederate Postage Rates section of the CSA catalog, I would strongly commend it to you. It is far more comprehensive than the predecessor Dietz catalogs and serves as an important reference.

Endnotes

1. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012
2. Paul Brandon Barringer, James Mercer Garnett, Roswell Page, *University of Virginia: Its History, Influence, Equipment and Characteristics, with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Founders, Benefactors, Officers and Alumni, Volume 1*, New York, Lewis Publishing Co., 1904/online public domain, Aug. 12, 2015, pp. 376-377

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