



Civil War Love Story Gave Rise to Unique 1861 Fort Valley, Georgia 5¢ on 3¢ Postmaster Provisional

BY PATRICIA A. KAUFMANN

The Sternes Correspondence

The correspondence came from multiple sources. The covers and letters belong together but the sections, both small, had been separated.

The first group was from Julia Keziah (Treadwell) Lowman to Arba Sternes. The second lot appeared several months later at auction as a group lot; they were from Arba to Julia. Most were Civil War era covers, all with letters. The letters tell a love story set amid the turmoil of the Civil War and provide the backdrop for a handstamped postmaster provisional which made its way into the *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History* in late 2012, just before the final deadline.

Fortunately, I had not written the first group of material because I wanted to read the long letters. That delay afforded the opportunity to view both groups at the same time. I've no idea whether there may be other sections of this correspondence disseminated elsewhere.

One of the ordinary looking stampless covers particularly caught my attention. It appeared to be a never-before-seen revalued handstamped provisional. That's every philatelist's secret dream: to make a new discovery.

Eufaula Thursday May 2^d 1861

My Dear Arba

I should have written to you before but have been from home all since Monday returned last night just at dark have been attending to business that could not be deferred, went up from here to the Plantation from there to Mr J Loumans and thence to Clayton where I received Letters of Administration on this Estate and had to make application for the same on Mr Loumans Estate, so as soon as I can get that bond ready and signed can get out the Letters It was his wish that I should take charge of every thing Oh Arba I cannot describe my feelings when his Trunk with his clothing was opened and put before for examination and to take charge of, with tears

Confederate Handstamped Postmasters' Provisionals

When the Confederate government was established in early February 1861, there was no Confederate States of America Post Office Department (CSPOD). It was established February 21, 1861, followed by the appointment of John H. Reagan as Postmaster General on March 6.

Meanwhile, the U.S. continued to provide postal service in the seceded states: U.S. postage rates were still in effect, postmasters were still under oath to the U.S. Government, and mail contractors operated under the control of the U.S. Post Office Department (USPOD) with the full cooperation of the newly formed Confederate States.

From the time the Confederacy was established until May 31, there were sporadic shortages of U.S. postage stamps at some Southern post offices. Stamps were necessary because U.S. law required prepayment of letters by stamps. To overcome these shortages, a few postmasters prepared their own stamps or handstamped envelopes for sale to their patrons. These provisional stamps and postal stationery were accepted as postage when mailed from their town of origin.

Each postmaster was left to his own devices to come up with a way to indicate the postage paid or due on letters. Postmasters at many offices had a supply of handstamping devices left over from the late 1840s and early 1850s.

To meet the demand for stamps, a few postmasters went one step further and provided either adhesive stamps of local manufacture or handstamped envelopes for use by postal customers as postal stationery as early as mid-February 1861, before the CSPOD took over its own affairs on June 1, 1861. All such stamps and postal stationery prepared in advance of use are known as postmasters' provisionals. The majority of these provisionals were created after June 1. There are only a handful of U.S.-rated provisionals recorded.

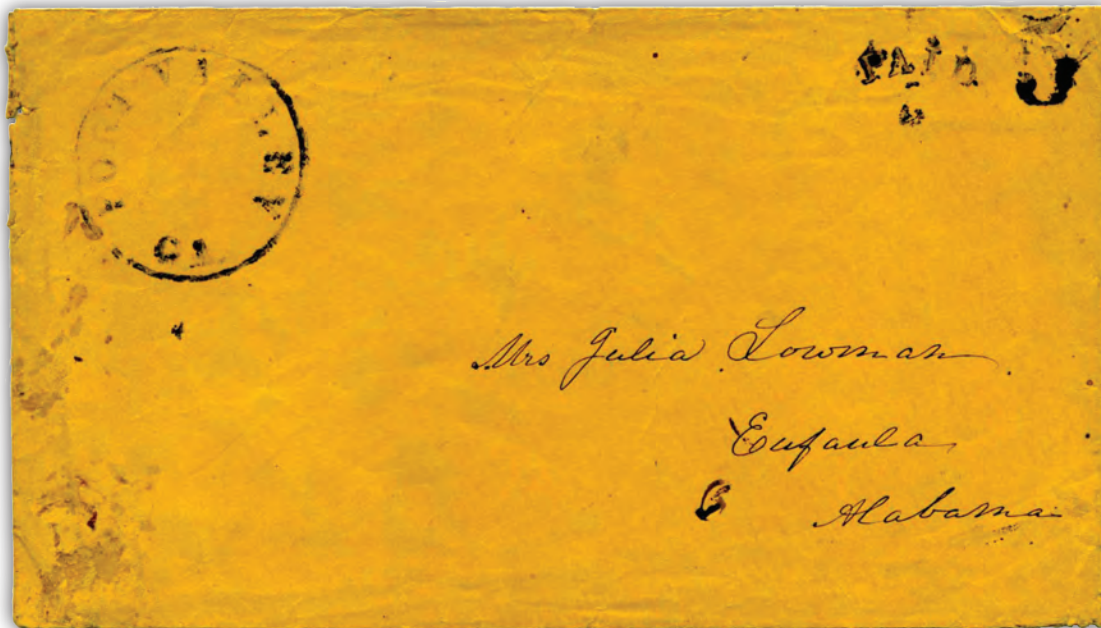
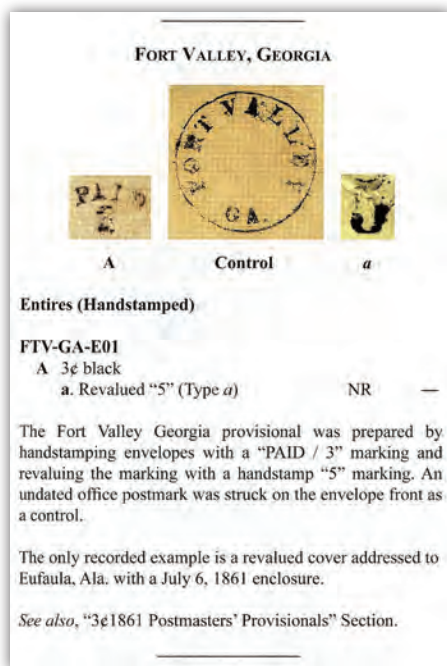


Figure 1. Fort Valley, Georgia, 3¢ U.S. 1861 postmaster's provisional entire with postmaster's control marking at left; rerated to the new Confederate rate of 5¢ in July 1861. The only known example at present, this 5¢ on 3¢ stamped envelope is listed as FTV-GA-E01 in the Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History and as Scott 148XU1 in the Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers. At left (lower), the CSA catalog listing, shown courtesy of the Confederate Stamp Alliance.



Fort Valley, Georgia, Postmaster Provisionals

The re-rated Fort Valley provisional from the Sternes correspondence was prepared by handstamping envelopes with a "PAID / 3" marking (the U.S. rate) and later revaluing the marking with a handstamp "5" marking (the new Confederate rate). An undated office postmark was struck on the envelope as a control marking when the 3¢ rate marking was applied to the envelope. The "3" is difficult to see, but with careful examination, it is indeed that rate.

This is the only recorded example of this provisional stamped envelope re-rated at the time of mailing. It is addressed to Mrs. Julia Lowman, Eufaula, Alabama; the enclosed letter is dated July 6, 1861. It is from Julia's cousin, M.L. Edgeworth, who indicates war is the all-absorbing topic, aside from the crops. "The Yankees are doubtless afraid of our men," she writes.

This cover was authenticated by the Confederate Stamp Alliance Authentication Service in 2012, shortly after it made its first appearance in philatelic circles. [Figure 1] It was sold in the 2012 Siegel Rarities Sale, and at that time its markings were unlisted in any catalog. It is now CSA catalog number FTV-GA-E01 and Scott catalogue number 148XU1.

To create handstamped provisionals, a patron would take a stack of unused envelopes to the post office, pay the postmaster a specified sum and the postmaster would give back the stack of freshly-rated envelopes marked as paid with a control marking so the postmaster could recognize his work when the patron returned to mail a letter. Not until the time of mailing was the envelope stamped with a dated postmark. Additional types of control markings in other post offices included postmasters' signatures, postmasters' initials, and special handstamped seals.

The only other recorded Fort Valley provisional is a 3¢ stamped envelope, not re-rated. It was given CSA catalog number A-FTV-GA-E01 and Scott catalogue number 7AXU1. It bears the handstamped rate and an undated control marking from the time of purchase, as well as a dated postmark at the time of mailing.

This 3¢ provisional cover was in the Dr. Karl Agre collection, sold by Siegel Auction Galleries September 25, 2002 (sale 850, lot 5650); it has a 2002 CSA certificate. It was sold again in the Schuyler J. Rumsey auction of the Richard Warren collection April 27, 2013. At that time, it was missing the back flap, was roughly torn at top and lightly toned. The buyer had it professionally restored. [Figure 2]

According to the Siegel website, this 3¢ provisional entire was originally acquired by the Halls in 1924 for \$5 from Nassau Stamp Company in New York and was initialed “JAK” by proprietor John A. Klemann on the back; Klemann was a major dealer of that era. Siegel sold the Hall collection December 17, 2001 (sale 840 lot 33).

Another example of the “PAID 3” entire – but without the all-important control marking – was offered in Siegel’s David Kohn sale (October 29, 1970, lot 35). That cover was dated March 19, 1861, and addressed to John T. Hardie & Co. in New Orleans – the same addressee as the Agre/Warren 3¢ provisional entire. Without the control marking, it is simply a stampless cover paid for at the time of mailing. It is a Confederate use of U.S. postage, not a provisional, which must be proven to have been prepared in advance. But the 3¢ marking is the same.

All 3¢ 1861 provisionals are rare. There are only two towns from which adhesives are recorded: the first Confederate-era provisional ever produced—the Madison, Florida, provisionals—and the Hillsboro, North Carolina, provisional, which is unique. I discovered the latter one and sold it privately decades ago; it is currently in the collection of the late Erivan Haub and is scheduled to be on the block in an H. R. Harmer auction in 2019.

I also was fortunate to successfully prove the long-maligned 3¢ 1861 Madison, Florida, provisionals were genuine — not an easy task. That lengthy project changed the way 3¢ 1861 provisionals are listed in current catalogs. Thus, I was more customarily informed than most postal historians on this subject when the Fort Valley provisional crossed my path.

Fort Valley, Georgia

Fort Valley, Georgia, was founded in the 1820s as a Native American trading post and incorporated in 1856. It is located at the intersection where two early Indian trails met. In 1861, Fort Valley was a commercial center at a major railroad junction of the Southwestern Railroad. It is in the Macon metropolitan area. It was once proclaimed the Peach Capital of the World and, although not as large as it once was, it remains near the heart of the Peach State’s largest peach-producing area.

Fort Valley was established as a post office in 1825. William F. Postell was appointed U.S. postmaster May 29, 1860, as well as Confederate postmaster July 6, 1860.



Figure 2. Fort Valley provisional 1861 3¢ entire, CSA catalog A-FTV-GA-E01, Scott U.S. Specialized catalogue 7AXU1.



Arba Sternes (1810-1871)

Arba Sternes was born in Ogdensburg, Saint Lawrence, New York, on October 20, 1810 or 1812, to Aseph (also seen as Asaph) Stearns (1786-1861) and Louisa Smith (1785-1863), per Ancestry.com. His paternal grandfather was Abraham Stearns (1757-1825), who served as a private at the Lexington Alarm in Capt. William Jennison's company of minutemen.

Arba's name is listed as Stearns in Ancestry.com records, with the addition of an "a" in the name and no "e" before the last "s." As is often the case, online sources show conflicting name spellings, conflicting dates of birth and death, numbers of children, and so forth. Find-a-Grave shows his name as "Araba," which is clearly incorrect.

Arba's gravestone is inscribed "Arba Stearns / 1810-1871." This differs on two counts. He was born as Stearns but he signed all his letters Sternes. His date of birth may be 1810 or 1812. You might think the gravestone must be correct, but in my experience, gravestones often are wrong. He died October 5, 1871, and is buried in Old Fairview Cemetery in Eufaula, Alabama.

Genealogy research done in 1901 by the family states that the original English name was Stern. From centuries ago, the name was varied in this country to Stearns, Sternes, Sterns, Starnes, and more. Few have retained the original orthography, but it remains spelled as Stern in Britain.

Arba is listed in family records as a merchant from Columbia, South Carolina, who was brought up by his uncle, John Stearns. Arba first married Catherine Grace Smith of Columbia, on December 20, 1840; she died in 1852. He married his second wife, Rebecca Pearse in 1857; she was also from Columbia. Arba's third wife was Julia Keziah (Treadwell) Lowman.

Julia Keziah (Treadwell) Lowman (1830-1909)

Julia was the daughter of Samuel Treadwell (1778-?) and Mary Thornton Treadwell (1777-1866). Julia had a brother, Benjamin Franklin Treadwell (1808-1861), and a sister, Nancy Ann Clark (Treadwell) Margart (1816-1909). All were born in South Carolina; all died in Eufaula, Alabama. It is clear the Treadwells were well-off and were slave holders. Julia speaks fondly of the "servants" in her letters. She is well-spoken, articulate and deeply religious, as was Arba.

A Love Story Told by Letters

Julia was twenty years Arba's junior. Their romance unfolds through lengthy letters, which began just before the war and continued through August 1861. Other letters, because of Julia's travels, were written in 1863.

Most letters are lengthy; they relate not only expressions of affection but news of politics and turbulence during the war.

Early letters are mostly between Eufaula, Alabama, (Julia) and Columbia, South Carolina, (Arba). Columbia is 365 driving miles from Eufaula by today's highways — not an inconsiderable distance in those days. Eufaula to Fort Valley is 108 driving miles; and Eufaula to Indian Springs, Georgia, is 256 driving miles.

Figure 3. A U.S. 3¢ Nesbitt stamped envelope, Scott U10, dated December 14 [1860] from Julia Lowman at Eufaula, Alabama, to Arba Sternes at Columbia, South Carolina, one week before that state seceded.



The earliest available letter from Julia to Arba is dated Eufaula, December 13, 1860, just a week before the first of the Southern states seceded — South Carolina. It is enclosed in a 3¢ Nesbitt entire (Scott U11), dated December 14 [1860] at Eufaula and addressed to Arba Sternes at Columbia, South Carolina; she addresses him as “My Dearest Friend” and signs it “As ever, Julia.” [Figure 3]

In this eight-page 1860 letter, in which she mentions taking the train to Fort Valley to visit friends and relatives, Julia says, in part:

“...a few moments after you took leave of us at the Depot I raised my head to look at George, and to my surprise his face was suffused with tears, and he almost sobbed audibly. I said, what is the matter, do you hate so much to part with Mr. Sternes? He answered, yes Ma, don't you?

“...I have acknowledged more to you or in other words expressed sentiments toward you that I never in all my life did to any gentleman, not one, except, no, not even the fine looking dashing young man that struck my youthful fancy, won my hand, and led me to the altar, and who might have secured the affection of as warm a heart as once pulsated in human breast had he not proved so unworthy.

“And how often in moments of sad despair would my thoughts involuntarily turn to one far away whom I had known in days gone by but not with the most distant idea of ever meeting again. And for years have I thought of you in this way never expecting to meet you in this side of eternity and when chance threw me in your way, and you the husband of another, I strove to remember you only as a Friend of other days. Whether I succeeded or not was known only to me and my Heavenly Father.

“From all the circumstances connected with what has recently occurred, I am of the same opinion as yourself that it has been directed by an overruling power which does all things for the best. How it will all terminate we cannot tell, at present we must let prudence guide. It is necessary that I should conceal this matter from my Brother... Oh it is sad to think of it and it is still more sad to look at him and see the marks of dissipation and an untimely grave stamped upon him.”

There are gaps in the story which I have been unable to fill, but it is clear from Julia's letter that things were not rosy in the Lowman marriage. Subsequent letters seem to indicate that they were divorced — unusual in that day — or at least estranged.

The next letter in the series is headed Eufaula, January 21, 1861. The enclosing Eufaula, Alabama, 3-cent Washington star-die entire (Scott U26) is dated January 22, 1861, making this the only independent state use in the series. (“Independent state use” refers to the period from the time a state seceded until it joined the Confederacy. Eufaula is not listed in the CSA catalog with an independent state use, making this the only recorded example.) [Figure 4].



Figure 4. A U.S. 3¢ Star-die stamped envelope, Scott U26, dated January 22, 1861, at Eufaula, Alabama — the only independent state use in the correspondence; unlisted in CSA catalog.

Alabama seceded from the Union ten days before, on January 11, 1861. It joined with five other Southern states to form the Confederate States of America. The date traditionally accepted in both philatelic and academic circles as the founding date of the Confederacy is February 4, 1861.

Delegates from the seceded states assembled on February 4 and declared themselves a provisional congress in Montgomery, Alabama. The process proceeded step-by-step through February 8, when the assembly of delegates from the six seceded states approved a provisional constitution. The Confederate States of America was formally established when the delegates signed the provisional constitution.

Julia mentions:

“Last night our Cannon, together with the report of several in Georgia, for you know the Chattahoochee only separates us from that state, gave us the signal that they too had seceded. Our troops are encamped within a hundred and fifty yds of our dwelling awaiting further orders from the governor. Several companies from different positions of the state have already joined them. We are saluted every morning by the sound of the drum and the firing of guns.”

She declares that her circumstances do not permit her to make any definite engagement as she owns no property independent of her parents, thus has no dowry. She hastens to add, “[I] did not mean to imply that you have made any such solicitations.”

The next dozen or so letters are during the period after Alabama had joined the Confederacy on February 4, 1861, but before the Confederate Post Office Department took over its own affairs. During this interim period, U.S. postage rates still applied and Confederate postmasters were still obligated to render any monies due to the USPOD by order of the CSPOD. Most uses are star-die stamped envelopes or are franked with an 1857 3¢ dull red (Scott US 26) with the characteristically well-struck Eufaula postmarks.



Figure 5. A mourning cover franked with a 3¢ dull red of the U.S. 1857 issue, dated April 21 [1861], mailed to Arba.

The black-bordered mourning cover doubtless first signaled Arba about the death of Julia’s brother, Benjamin, before he read the contents. It is franked with a 3¢ dull red dated April 21 [1861] with Julia’s eight-page letter dated the evening before relaying the sad news. At the lower left of the envelope is penned “In haste” and, indeed, the stamp was torn and seemingly hastily affixed. She calls his death an “unexpected event,” but prior missives seem to belie that assertion. She notes that he was buried with full military and Masonic honors. [Figure 5]

In the same letter concerning her brother’s death, she also relays:

“Mr. Lowman died a happy death, was converted to God before his spirit took its flight from

the world, exhorted his children to be Temperate, Virtuous and above all to put their trust in God and meet him in Heaven. He exhorted all his friends in the same manner, inquired about me and told the children to tell me that I must forgive him. Oh, that I could have been there just to have told him that he had long been forgiven...the children got home on Tuesday just in time to see their uncle before he died...what is there now to prevent your coming? Can we not arrange everything satisfactorily between us?

“I have said before that my heart, hand, and all that I have in this world is yours...I cannot leave Alabama as long as my mother lives, and all my worldly interest is here. You know how that is. I have a plenty to serve all your wants without your having to engage in Business for the support of

your children.

“I am satisfied I have your love and sympathy and what more need I care for. I forgot to mention that Mr. Lowman left his property to George & Thornton. It consists of 5 Negroes and I believe 2 or 3 Thousand dollars in money left in care of Mr. John Lowman to manage, as I have a great deal on my hands to attend to.”

Thus, the tide seemed to be turning for their match, albeit by reason of sad events.

Included with the correspondence is a stampless folded letter to Julia's brother-in-law posted from Fort Motte, South Carolina, sent [due] 10 to Mr. B. F. Treadwell, Eufaula, headed “St. Mathews, S.C., Dec. 10th, 1847.” It opens “Dear Brother,” signed John P. Margart to Julia's brother, Benjamin F. Treadwell. Margart mentions the purchase of a Negro woman and two children for \$950 and asks that to be remembered to “Mrs. T(readwell)” and Julia and her husband, thus Julia was clearly married to Mr. Lowman at a young age, as she would only have been 17-years old in 1847. [Figure 6] Julia finds herself putting off going to live at her late brother's plantation. She checks daily on the 14 sick slaves there who are down with the measles. Other of Mr. Lowman's relatives were trying to lay claim to his estate, so Julia clearly had her hands full dealing with two different estates at the same time, applying for Letters of Administration for both.

In a near-miss philatelic situation, Julia writes to Arba from Eufaula on Friday, May 31, 1861, (the last day under USPOD) but does not post the letter until Sunday, June 2 (newly changed to CSA-POD control). The stampless envelope is marked with a “PAID / 5” handstamp (CSA catalog type D). Had the envelope been posted on Saturday, it would have borne a highly desirable June 1 [1861] postmark, making it a First Day Cover for the CSPOD — one of the most sought-after dates by exhibitors of Civil War postal history. No Confederate stamps were available until October 16, 1861, so such uses are usually stampless and very sought-after by collectors.

Julia's letter extols the virtues of Eufaula and clearly, Arba has earlier praised the virtues of Columbia, where he and his family live (six children). It is the age-old struggle between those separated by distance and the angst of leaving one or the other's family and friends. [Figure 7]

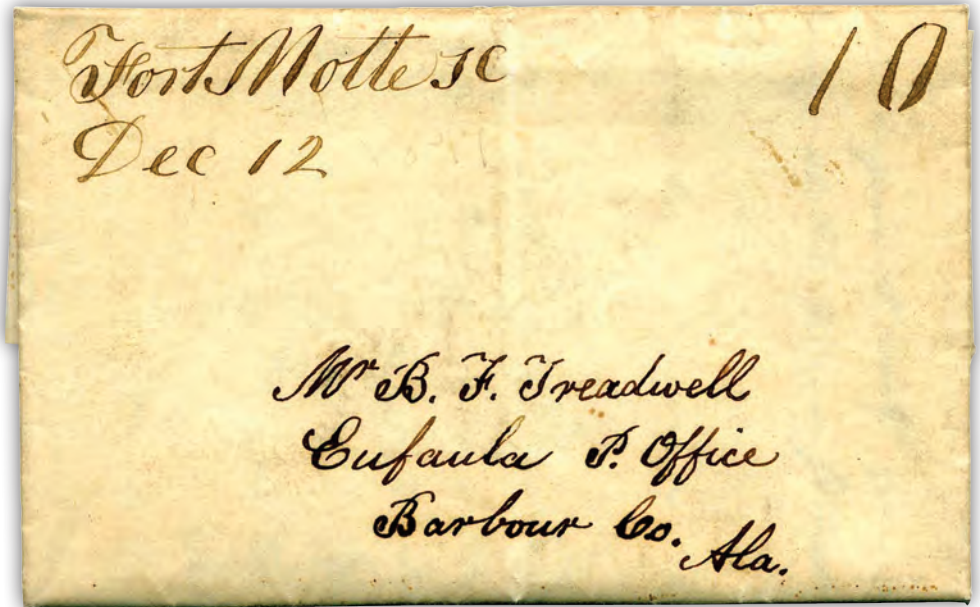


Figure 6. A stampless folded letter to Julia's brother-in-law posted from Fort Motte, South Carolina, sent [due] 10 to Julia's brother, Mr. B. F. Treadwell, Eufaula, Alabama.



Figure 7. A June 2 [1861] stampless envelope marked “PAID / 5” — the first outgoing letter with a Confederate rate.



Figure 8. In her August 20 letter, Julia announced her recent marriage to Arba Sternes to her sister Nancy and Nancy's husband John Margart in Sandy Run, South Carolina.

At last!

Another stampless cover posted from Eufaula on August 21 [1861] contains the letter which announces their marriage to her sister Nancy and her husband. It is addressed to Rev[erend] J[ohn] P[hillips] Margart at Sandy Run, South Carolina. Instead of being signed as Julia Lowman, it is signed "J.K. Sternes." [Figure 8]

The letter is addressed to "Dear Brother & Sister" and says, in part: "Mr. Sterne[s] and I were married last Sunday morning 2 weeks ago, we invited a few of the neighbors then went to church."

Julia talks about how difficult things are with the planation, although crops are doing well. She is considering selling and moving...but she didn't.

The letters from group two are all dated in 1863 from Arba to Julia, a correspondence gap of two years. There was no need to write letters, because they were finally together in Eufaula.

Arba writes from Eufaula on August 23, 1863, to "My Darling Wife." The cover is franked with a pair of Scott Confederate States 12a, the 10-cent light blue Jefferson Davis (Die B), tied by a Eufaula, Alabama, Aug. 23 circular date stamp (CDS)



Figure 9. An 1863 cover franked with a pair of CSA Scott 12a, the 10¢ bright blue Davis, tied by a Eufaula, Alabama, August 23 postmark, addressed to Mrs. Julia K. Sternes, Indian Springs, Georgia, which has been crossed out and the letter redirected back to Eufaula with a manuscript "Due 20" for forwarding, with an Indian Springs, Georgia, September 7 cds.

and addressed to Mrs. Julia K. Sternes, Indian Springs, Georgia, which has been crossed out and redirected back to Eufaula with a manuscript "Due 20" for the forwarding and an Indian Springs, Ga., Sept 7, 1863, CDS. [Figure 9]

Along with a weighty ten-page letter, begun August 15 but written over several days, Arba also includes a lovely poem written for Julia. He talks about many things, including "drilling the company." I found no record of Confederate Army service for him; he doubtless participated in the home guard. Julia appears to have been on a long multi-city trip, as he mentions visiting Macon, Fort Valley, Indian Springs,

Forsyth and possibly other locations. But her main objective was clearly to take in the mineral springs for unspecified ill health.

A letter enclosed by a similar single-rated cover is dated the following day. On the top back flap is a pencil notion from Arba:

Mr. P.M. Indian Springs, Geo / Dear Sir, if Mrs. S has left the Springs when this letter arrives, please forward it to Fort Valley, Geo. & Oblige A. Sternes.

The postmaster apparently failed to see his request on the back flap. Arba closes his letter saying that he will direct his next letter to Fort Valley care of J[ohn] C. Thornton. The cover is a mate for the prior day's missive except that it is a single-

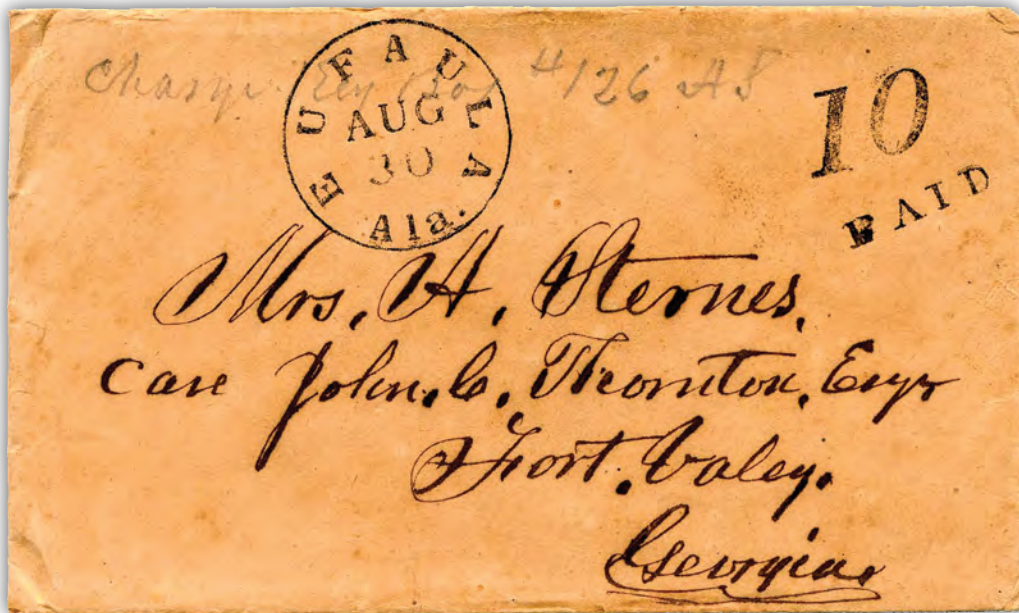


Figure 10. An Eufaula, Alabama, “PAID / 10” Confederate stampless cover, dated August 30 [1863] from Arba to Julia in Fort Valley, Georgia. Apparently out of its supply of stamps, the post office reverted to handstamps.

weight letter. Indeed, he does just that—his August 27th letter is posted to Fort Valley.

Two stampless covers to Julia at Fort Valley are dated a few days later, August 30 and 31. Either he or the post office, or both, were out of stamps and reverted to handstamping the postal rate on the covers. This was necessary common practice during the war. Both covers also note in pencil, “Charge My Box #126, A.S.” [Figure 10]

In his August 28 letter, he says:

“Now Darling for pitty (sic) sake do not urge Cus

(Cousin) Looli to come home with you for we have not got anything to eat and we cannot buy anything for love or money. Another thing, if you contemplate visiting Mr. Bull we will have to do it soon as I shall for the balance of the year be very busy...I had hoped that you would have got my 1st letter containing 10 pages before you left the Springs and would have written.”

Arba figured out that she did not receive that letter, nor the next one, when they were returned to Eufaula. He was concerned enough, not hearing from her, that he tried to telegraph her, but found there was no telegraph operator at Fort Valley.

Arba closes by imploring:

“May the God of all Grace keep you from all evil, restore your precious health and bring you home safe to me is the hourly prayer of your as ever affectionate & devoted Husband Arba Sternes.”



Illustration of the University of Alabama before it burned (circa 1839).

Indian Springs natural artesian spring was – and still is – used by generations of people for its flowing mineral water that some claim to have beneficial qualities. Known to Native Americans long before the influx of Europeans, the area always maintained a steady flow of people seeking healing or recreation.

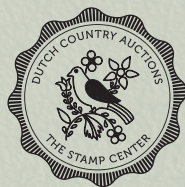
Cadet George F. Lowman

Rounding out the correspondence are a few letters with no covers. Letter contents indicate they were delivered by servants. Separate letters to Cadet George F. Lowman, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, were written by both Julia and Arba, dated in mid-August 1864.

Young George was in the Alabama Corps of Cadets at the University of Alabama, which was considered the “West Point of the Confederacy.” The Sternes’ letters mention by name the president of the university, Landon Cabell Garland, a noted professor of physics, astronomy and moral philosophy. He later served as the first chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

In the spring of 1865, Federal armies were rampaging throughout the South, destroying anything of value with little resistance from the remnants of the Confederate army. In late March of 1865, Union Brigadier General John T. Croxton was given orders to take his cavalry force of 1,500 troops from Birmingham to Tuscaloosa to destroy anything that might benefit the rebel cause.

Three hundred young men from the Alabama Corps of Cadets, mostly teenagers, were all that stood before the invading force. They commenced preparing in the afternoon and evening of April 3, 1865. In the early morning hours of April 4, not long after midnight, the Corps of Cadets marched down University Boulevard and met the Federal Sixth Kentucky Cavalry, a group of veteran soldiers. The cadets formed a defensive line of battle in the street and a heavy exchange of fire ensued. It was immediately clear that the cadets were out-matched, out-numbered,



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and out-equipped by the larger and more experienced Federal force, who also had the advantage of being armed with repeating rifles.

In the ensuing fire, Captain John H. Murfee, Instructor of Tactics, was wounded along with three cadets: W. R. May, Aron T. Kendrick and William M. King. The bloodied cadet platoon rejoined the main body of the corps, which had advanced at the sound of fighting. Together, they proceeded one block north and took up positions, firing several volleys down on the Union enemy by the river.

Learning from Captain James S. Carpenter, a Confederate officer who had been captured and temporarily released by Croxton, that the Yankee force included 1,500 arms and two captured cannons, President Garland and Commandant of Cadets Colonel James T. Murfee decided that an attack with young boys would be a pointless sacrifice. Captain Murfee was Colonel Murfee's younger brother.

Most of the university and campus was set on fire. Only four major campus structures were saved from burning. Rebuilding began in 1867 and the university was reopened in 1868.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant five days later at Appomattox Court House, April 9, 1865. For the most part, the war had ended, but too late for Tuscaloosa.

Epilogue

It is not often that one gets to analyze a story told through postal history as well as voices of the past through love letters.

The postal history of the Stearns correspondence was exciting, crowned by a rare provisional hiding in plain sight. Covers ranged from pre-war to independent state use, Confederate use of U.S. stamps, mourning covers, ladies' envelopes, stampless Confederate uses of necessity, Confederate stamped uses, and more.

The letters convey a love story articulately told with terms of endearment, confessions of the heart, secrets to be kept, romantic poetry, passion, angst over the political climate, descriptions of a brutal war, turmoil, conflict, struggles, death and - amid it all - unbridled joy.

Interesting news of family and friends, now known to us by name, enables us to flesh out the cast of characters and the narrative. We relish the intimate details of two lives intertwined and follow along as George comes of age and participates in one of the last battles fought in the twilight of the Civil War. Thus do words set to paper a century and a half ago bring the past to light for us in a remarkably relatable way, in a new age that Julia and Arba could scarcely have imagined.

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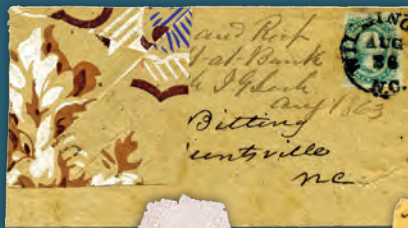
Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann was introduced to Confederate postal history in 1965 and was soon engrossed in exhibiting, writing and researching the subject. Since that auspicious beginning, she has served as editor-in-chief of the 2012 *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, president of the Confederate Stamp Alliance (CSA), editor and co-editor of the CSA's quarterly journal, *The Confederate Philatelist*, and as author and associate editor to other projects and publications. Kaufmann was the 2017 APS Distinguished Philatelist and currently chairs the APS Board of Directors. Most recently, Trish authored an expanded edition of *Independent State Mail and Confederate Use of U.S. Postage — How Secession Occurred: Correcting the Record*, reviewed last month in *The American Philatelist*.



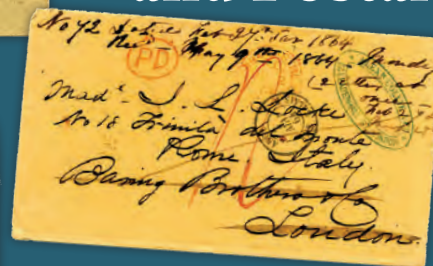
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