



Figure 1: The Nov. 30, 1860, Columbia, Texas, earliest documented use of any Confederate patriotic.

The New Earliest Recorded Use of a Confederate Patriotic Cover

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

A new Confederate patriotic, shown in Figure 1, only the third recorded of this rare Texas Lone Star flag design (*CSA Catalog* Type FTX-1)¹ has been documented. What makes this example particularly important is that it is dated from Columbia, Texas, on November 30, 1860, making it the earliest documented use of a Confederate patriotic of any kind.

The clearly struck bold postmark ties a three-cent 1857 issue. The cover is addressed to, “Hon. Joseph E. Brown, Milledgeville, Ga.,” who was then-governor of Georgia and staunchly against the Lincoln government.

I first saw this item when it was but an edge-worn cover front at the 2016 international show in New York City. It was in a collection among many common and rare stamps and covers that had been housed in tropical conditions and ill-cared for over the years. There were also a good number of fakes in the group.

The wary nonphilatelic representative for the owner left the show without selling to anyone, despite access to a large hall of dealers and auctioneers. He did not understand that condition plays a vital role in pricing. He had done homework enough to know that some items bring big money at auction, but he did not believe anyone who told him that the collection was worth far less than the record auction realizations about which he had read. Undeterred, he seemed to feel these stamps and covers should bring such record prices too.

The first auction house he approached turned the collection away merely because of the overall awful condition. I tried to buy the lot outright, but he was uninterested in direct sale, even for just the fakes; he just wanted free advice but was unreceptive to it when given in good faith.

The first part of the “old-time” collection was sold by Heritage Auctions in 2017, but some items were held back by the owner; this was one of them.

The cover front eventually made its way to Schuyler Rumsey where he offered it to the public for the first time in his Westpex 2019 sale.

It was purchased by Dr. James W. Milgram, who has long had an interest in Civil War patriotics; I was the underbidder. Dr. Milgram was kind enough to share it, for which I thank him. It has since been professionally rebacked, which I consider a wise move.

Some postal historians may not consider this a “true” Confederate patriotic cover, rather just a Texas state patriotic. I disagree. Confederate patriotics are all about secession, produced to show support for their state, and many were produced and used before that given state seceded.

The November and December 1860 dates of use for two of the three Lone Star designs were in advance of South Carolina’s secession proclamation. South Carolina was the first state to secede on December 20,

Figure 2: Presecession use of a Lone Star patriotic used from Brazoria, Texas, Dec. 12, 1860.



1860, but it could just as easily have been Texas, had many citizens had their way.

Although Texas is often thought of as being one of the “seven” founding states, this is legally not the case, despite patriotic covers showing seven stars, which included the not-yet formally seceded Texas. But the other six states knew Texas secession was coming, if not yet official.

Prominent Unionists were a major reason Texas did not secede before March 1861. The most important of these men was Sam Houston, the governor of the state from 1859 to 1861. He opposed joining the Confederacy. Houston slowed the calling of a convention until January 1861, and helped force the holding of a public referendum on secession on February 23, 1861.

On January 8, 1861, Texans elected delegates to a state convention to consider secession. The convention convened in Austin on January 28 and adopted an Ordinance of Secession on February 1, by a vote of 166 to 8. It then had to be put to the voters in a popular referendum, which was done on February 23. The measure won overwhelming approval of the voters.

Secession became effective on March 2, 1861, as stipulated in the ordinance. The date was significant because it was the anniversary of Texas Independence Day—the adoption of the Texas Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836, when settlers in Mexican Texas officially declared independence from Mexico and created the Republic of Texas. Doubtless to his consternation, it was also Unionist Sam Houston’s birthday.

Docketing across the middle left side of the subject cover reads either, “Texas Meeting/Dec 1860.” or “Texas Mutiny,” depending on your interpretation of the handwriting. When I first saw it, I believed it to be “meeting,” referring to the Texas meetings about

secession that took place immediately after Lincoln’s election and the ones yet to come. Either way, it’s all about secession.

As early as 1858, widespread discussion about slavery led Southerners to discuss a unified separation from the United States. By 1860, most slave-holding states were threatening secession if the anti-slavery Republican Party won the presidency. Pressure to call a convention to consider secession began as early as October 1860, when it became apparent that Abraham Lincoln would be elected president.

Starting around December 3, before South Carolina officially seceded, Texans printed calls in several Texas newspapers for the election of delegates to a convention to consider secession, to be held January 8, 1861.²

Although we do not have the contents of the cover, it is clear from the docketing, the subject Lone Star patriotic, and the addressee that the correspondence was about the call for Texas secession.

Addressee Joseph Emerson Brown (1821-1894) was an attorney and politician who served four terms as the 42nd governor of Georgia from 1857-1865. He was a firm believer in slavery and states’ rights. Brown was a strong supporter of secession after the presidential election, fearing Lincoln would abolish slavery, which he considered the basis of the South’s plantation economy.

Brown spoke out against the Lincoln administration in a solicited open letter to the people of Georgia on December 7, 1860.

What follows is but a tiny fraction of his long open letter,³ but pretty much sums up his position:

What will be the result to the institution of slavery, which will follow submission to the inauguration and administration of Mr. Lincoln as the President. My candid opinion is, that it will be the total

Figure 3: This Feb. 7, 1861, cover from Hempstead, Texas, is the only Lone Star patriotic cover with matching letterhead.



abolition of slavery ... I do not doubt, therefore, that submission to the administration of Mr. Lincoln will result in the final abolition of slavery. If we fail to resist now, we will never again have the strength to resist.

The only other two recorded Lone Star patriotics both passed through the Kilbourne collections handled by Robert A. Siegel auctions, to whom I am indebted for use of their information and images.

Figure 2 shows another precession use from Brazoria, Texas, on December 12, 1860. The Siegel auction description notes that:

This cover was probably addressed by her mother, Martha C. (Cleveland) Stewart, who was living as a widow in Brazoria in 1860. Without doubt, the stationery was provided by Maria's maternal uncle, Charles Lander Cleveland, a Texas legislator from Brazoria who served as one of two delegates from Liberty and Polk counties to the state's January 1861 Secession Convention, and was a signer of the February 1st Ordinance of Secession.

The third and last of the recorded Lone Star patriotics was used from Hempstead, Texas, on February 7, 1861, and is the only one which is also accompanied by the original matching lettersheet. At the time this was written, there were thought to be only two of the Lone Star patriotics.

The Siegel description from the June 28, 2018, Kilbourne sale notes:

The cover and lettersheet offered here were part of the Blake Myers collection at least as far back as the 1970's. In 1990, Mr. Myers separated the letter and sold the cover alone in the Christie's sale that also offered the Weill Brothers' Stock of Confederates, where it was acquired by the Kilbournes. The cover is one of only two recorded examples of the Texas Lone Star design. The enclosed lettersheet was sold by Mr. Myers in Siegel Sale 753 in 1993. From there the letter passed through two different owners before it was acquired by Dr. Ralph Brandon in 2007. When Siegel sold the Brandon collection in 2014, Mr. Kilbourne was the winning bidder, thereby reuniting the two Lone Star rarities.

It is always a joy to add a new piece of the puzzle to a postal history topic, especially a coveted rarity.

Endnotes

1. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, Editors, *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012.
2. Walter L. Buenger, "Secession," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mgs02> Accessed June 29, 2019.
3. Joseph E. Brown, "Gov. Joseph Brown's Open Letter," <http://www.civilwarcauses.org/jbrown.htm> taken from *Secession Debated: Georgia's Showdown in 1860* by William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, editors, 2006, copied online by Justin Sanders.

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