

PRIVATE EXPRESS SERVICES, CENSORSHIP, JENKINS' IDENTITY AND MORE...

Patricia A. Kaufmann

Not Playing by the Rules

In the Third Quarter 2020 issue of the *Confederate Philatelist*, I introduced a new private express listing, Jenkins Express – a paid mail service across the blockaded Rappahannock River, whereby mail was delivered from Confederate troops serving with the Army of Northern Virginia to their families on the Northern Neck of Virginia.

While clandestine exchange of mail is known to have existed between North and South along the river borders in the Chesapeake Bay, no express company mail had been positively identified before these two Jenkins Express uses recently came to light, along with a treasure trove of letters from the Basye family that explain the mail process in detail.

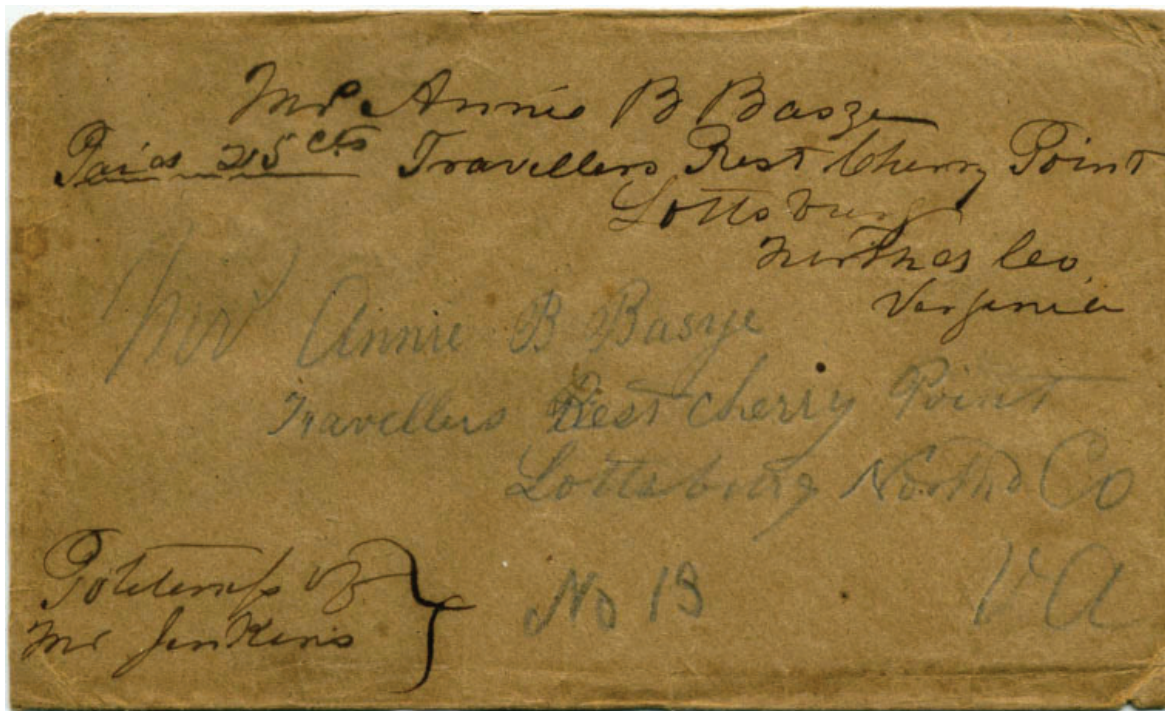


Figure 1. One of the two Jenkins Express covers noted “Politeness of Mr. Jenkins” and “Paid 25cts,” addressed to “Mrs. Annie B. Basye Travellers Rest, Cherry Point, Lottsburg, Northd. Co. Virginia.”

Figure 1 shows one of the two express covers, which is addressed in pencil, as was most of Basye’s correspondence. In ink is noted “Politeness of Mr. Jenkins” and “Paid 25cts” with a penciled “No 13” to indicate the number in the letter series. It is directed to “Mrs. Annie B. Basye, Travellers Rest, Cherry Point, Lottsburg, Northd. Co. Virginia.” Traveller’s Rest was the name of the Basye’s farm, which he sometimes spelled with one “l” and sometimes with two.

As Henry explained in letters to his wife, Jenkins carried money and goods in addition to mail. This compares to modern-day Federal Express and United Parcel Service. The money content was

not noted on the envelopes, as is often seen, nor was money enclosed in letters, due to security concerns. It was handed directly to the carrier.

As numerous frustrated researchers have found, there is little to nothing in period newspapers about these types of private services because their activities were unlawful, and they were not anxious to provide printed evidence. Word of mouth kept them sufficiently busy.

Confederate Postal Regulations Regarding Private Express Services

The adoption of a constitution by the Confederate Provisional Congress on Feb. 8, 1861, was the first step in the process leading to establishment of postal rates in the new Confederacy. Through several subsequent Acts of the Confederate Congress, provisions were implemented to continue all laws of the United States that were not inconsistent with the *Constitution of the Confederate States*, including those applicable to the newly formed Confederate States Post Office Department (CSPOD). This meant that, initially, Confederate postage rates, services and laws mirrored those in effect in the United States on Nov. 1, 1860. This included a prohibition on the carriage of mail by private ventures, which the U.S. Congress had reserved exclusively for the U.S. Post Office Department (USPOD). The rationale for this prohibition was that without the protection afforded by a legal monopoly, the USPOD would be forced to rely on taxpayers to continue operations, since private companies would gain the advantage on high-profit delivery routes, leaving only money-losing routes to the USPOD.¹

Effective June 1, 1861, the CSPOD took over its own affairs from the USPOD and established a rate of 5¢ per half-ounce letter traveling a distance not more than 500 miles and 10¢ for greater distances. Effective July 1, 1862, this rate was increased to 10¢ regardless of distance.

Initially, express companies were authorized to carry all mailable matter provided that Confederate postage was paid from the point of receipt to the point of delivery. Effective June 1, 1862, the Act of April 19, 1862, rescinded all laws regarding the carriage of mailable matter by express companies and reinstated the earlier prohibition except for letters carried in sealed stamped envelopes (postal stationery). Letters prepaid by stamps were prohibited. The CSPOD never issued stamped envelopes, thus technically disqualifying private expresses from carrying letters.

Notwithstanding the prohibitions, the reality in the field was far different. From contemporaneous sources, we know of the existence of smuggled mail, express mail services and other types of covert operations to facilitate mail delivery. Finding verifiable examples of such conveyances, however, is often difficult because many can be identified only by known markings or descriptive contents such as contained in the invaluable Basye correspondence.

Articles and Presentations Encourage Meaningful Discussion

I recently made a presentation to the Collectors Club (New York), choosing Jenkins Express as the topic. There were 316 registered viewers for the 50-minute program, which included an extensive question-and-answer session that led to stimulating discussion and follow-up. The presentation may currently be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/652496853>. The web link is also on my website (www.trishkaufmann.com) under virtual presentations on my “Articles” tab.

Collectors’ Club president and new CWPS member, Larry Haber, asked if the Jenkins letters were delivered directly to the addressee. My knee-jerk reaction was “no” because we are typically discussing postal mail that was delivered from post office to post office. However, Jenkins-delivered mail was not postal mail. I quickly realized my error and corrected my misstatement.

Henry Basye, sender of the two recorded Jenkins’ Express covers, described an intricate person-to-person hand-off of mail and/or goods and money in his letters. These transfers were usually by unpaid private couriers that included furloughed soldiers, family members, friends,

“servants” (slaves) and others. If a paid service such as Jenkins was used, there was typically written indication on the envelope of a fee paid.

The direct delivery of Basye mail by Jenkins is noteworthy because in both the United States and the Confederacy at the beginning of the war, postage paid was solely for the delivery of mail from post office to post office. Citizens typically picked up and dropped off their mail at the post office, although in some cities a government “carrier service” was available for an extra 2¢ fee or citizens could employ private delivery firms.²

Civil War Censorship

During my talk, I mentioned that Henry Basye, a private in the 9th Virginia Cavalry (Army of Northern Virginia) more than once told his wife, Annie, not to write anything in her letters that she didn't want made public because all letters were opened and read before delivery. Henry also repeatedly told Annie that he was *not allowed* to write everything he'd like.

One of the active Collectors' Club presentation Q&A participants was Confederate Army mail student Stefan Jaronski, who maintains an ongoing database now totaling about 6,000 items. Jaronski said that he had never seen any mention of military censorship in his reading of hundreds of letters from soldiers, as well as official military records as part of his research into the postal history of the Confederate armies. Nor had he recorded even one piece of Basye mail in his extensive database. His not finding other Basye correspondence was not surprising to me, as I knew its history. The correspondence was sold by the widower of an elderly female Basye family member only about a decade ago and was distributed on the manuscript market rather than into the philatelic community.

Most envelopes included with the Basye letters were of little philatelic importance, except as they add to this narrative, and some were completely missing. The two dozen covers and descriptive letters now in philatelic hands add greatly to our knowledge of how Confederate mail was handled in the Chesapeake Bay region around the Rappahannock River during the war. It also provides insight as to how it may have been handled elsewhere.

After the presentation, I also heard from award-winning Civil War postal history exhibitor Dan Ryterband, who said of the Q&A after the talk:

“I attempted to say hello and to provide a possible explanation for Stefan's question on censorship, but it was impossible to get a word in ... I suspect that the references to the mail being read reflected the paranoia shared by many people during the war on both sides. The view was generally that the mail would be read, or unofficially censored, because those in charge were seeking out spies and others who were disloyal to the cause. This is one of the reasons many letters were carried by private couriers and the express companies, especially at the beginning of the conflict.”

Later, Ryterband continued:

“Both sides were looking for spies and disloyalists within the ranks and, as you noted, troop movements and other strategic information needed to be held in confidence. This was especially true because mail could be intercepted by the enemy.”

Because this discussion was stimulating to the three of us, we enjoyed a good three-way email exchange, encouraging us all to further contemplate censorship. I promised to try to find what I could of Basye's letter content, and we individually delved into Civil War censorship, sharing what we'd found with each other.

As evidenced from his detailed letters, Henry's concern was the mail reaching home due to carriers who had to evade enemy troops on the blockaded Rappahannock River and elude sentries

in Union-occupied home territory. Those were not the only fears. The Neck was vulnerable to federal raiders operating from nearby Point Lookout, Md., across the Chesapeake Bay.

In a June letter to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, a committee of three prominent Northumberland County residents complained that troops led by Col. Alonzo Draper, commander of the 36th U.S. Colored Infantry:³

“... were allowed unbounded license in pillage and waste, and in the indulgence of their brutal passions and appetites ... houses searched and ransacked, ladies and gentlemen in many cases stripped of all of their clothing, furniture defaced and destroyed, and bed clothing, cutlery of every description, jewelry, silver, plate and money, wherever found, stolen and carried off.”

Henry had plenty to say on that score as well. He was as concerned for those at home, as their families were for their fighting men. He relayed to Annie, with anguish, much of what he'd heard from fellow soldiers, as evidenced by his pointed questions and advice on how to keep herself, their children, parents, servants, property and farm safe.

To one of Ryterband's points, the Northern Neck, particularly King George County, was the frontier between Union and Confederate armies. As such, it was an operating base for spies on both sides. Union forces controlled the Potomac River and the North shore of the Rappahannock River farther upstream for much of the war.

Figure 2 shows the first page of Henry's second letter after joining the army. Henry's spelling is mostly kept as written, although I added punctuation to facilitate reading. The letter is dated April 14, 1862, and reads, in part:

“... don't put anything in it [her letter to him] that you don't want anybody els to know because the letters are all opened & read ... when I wrote to you before I sent to you \$20 and would have sent more but I was afraid you would not git it...”

Figure 3 shows the second page of the same letter, where he continues:

“I have some war news that I could tell you if was allowed to do so.”

A scan of the hand-delivered envelope, pencil-numbered “No 2” is shown in Figure 4. It is addressed to Annie for pickup at the Lottsburg post office in Northumberland County, Va.

Henry regularly sends Annie money, but it is not indicated on the envelopes. He fears the Yankees will intercept the mail and, if they do, they will also obtain the money. He thus directly entrusts any money to the mail facilitators, as he explains in his letters.

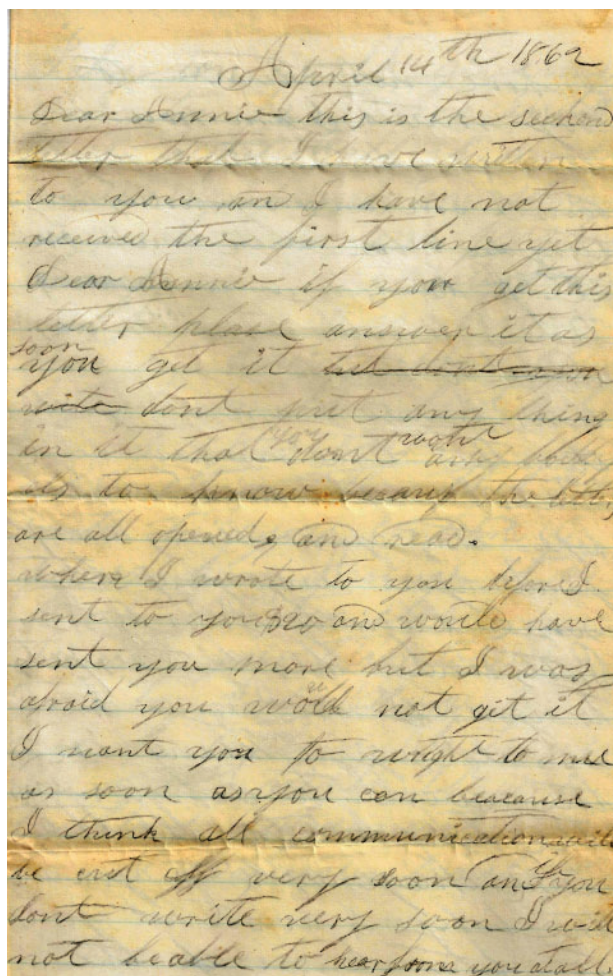
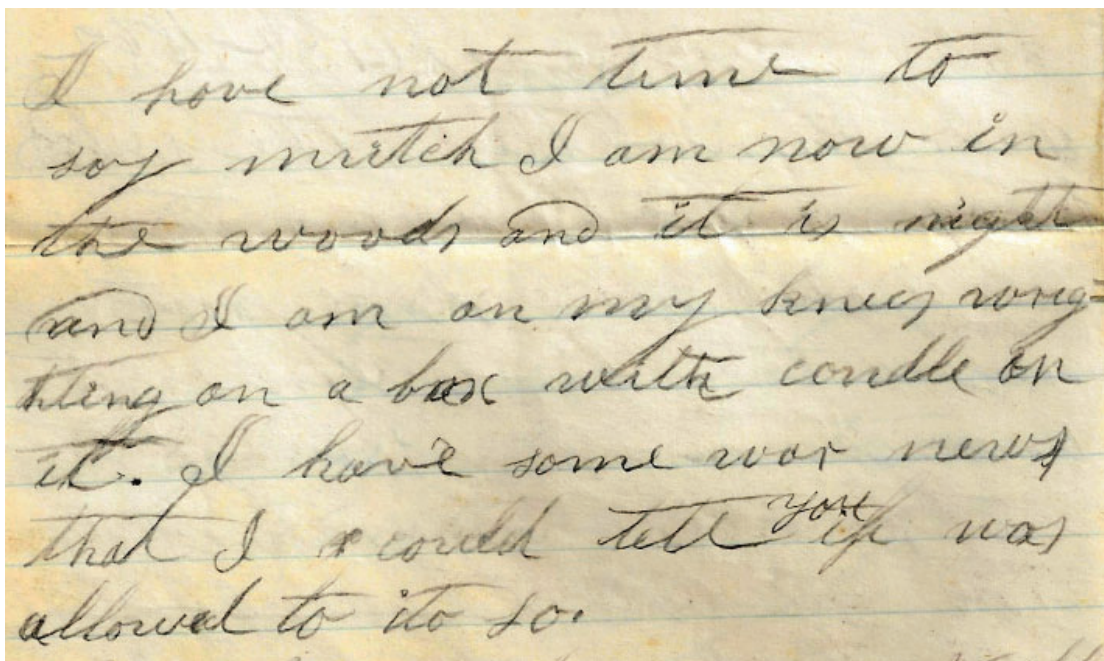
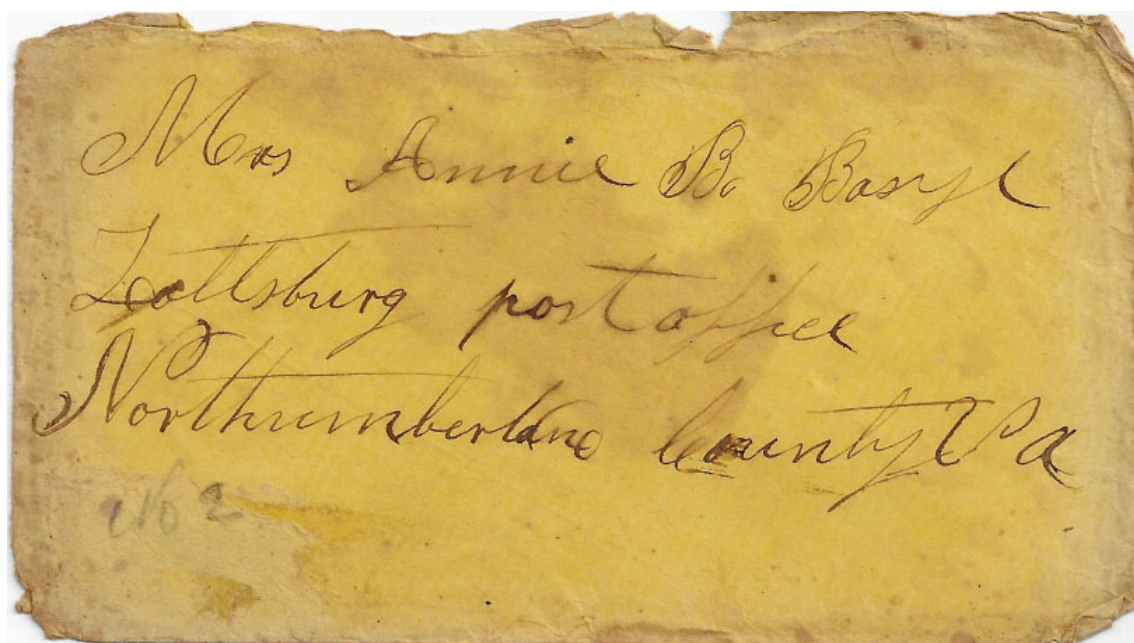


Figure 2. The first page of Henry Basye's April 14, 1862, letter, instructing his wife not to put anything in her letters that she does not want known, as all letters are opened and read.



I have not time to
say much I am now in
the woods and it is night
and I am on my knees writing
this on a box with candle on
it. I have some war news
that I could tell ^{you} if was
allowed to do so.

Figure 3. The second page of the same letter, where he advises, "I have some war news that I could tell you if was allowed to do so."



Mrs Annie B. Basye
Lottsburg post office
Northumberland County Va
2162

Figure 4. The hand-carried envelope containing letter numbered No. 2 to Annie for pickup at the Lottsburg post office in Northumberland County, Va.

Henry repeats his admonition against writing anything she doesn't want someone else to know in his next letter. On the second page of letter "No. 3" written on April 27, 1862 (Figure 5), he again tells her he has some news he could tell her but he is not allowed to do so. He repeatedly uses that specific wording — "not allowed," which leads me to believe this was indeed censorship, although there are no formal examined markings on covers nor letters. Also in letter "No. 3," he explains that he is sending this letter via George Cox, as all other communication is cut off. He indicates he

is at Massaponax Church in Spotsylvania County, between Fredericksburg and Richmond.

George B. Cox is listed in the Confederate military records as a 27-year-old farmer who enlisted March 31, 1862, as a private in the same unit and company as Henry. Cox was discharged on April 27, 1862, for chronic diarrhea. The date of his discharge is the same date as Henry's letter "No. 3." As both men belonged to the same unit, I believe this is the George Cox responsible for taking this letter to the Lottsburg post office.

The 1862 "No. 3" envelope, Figure 6, is addressed to "Mrs. Annie B. Basye, Lottsburg P. Office, Northumberland County, Virginia," with a manuscript directive at lower left to "Travelers Rest in Cherry Point." There is no postage applied, yet it is addressed to Annie at the post office, and we know it was privately carried. Nor is there postage applied on other similar covers in this correspondence. That is a bit of a conundrum. There is no indication of "due" or "paid" by the receiving clerk or postmaster. Was it instead taken directly to their farm, Traveler's Rest?

The "No. 4" envelope was similarly addressed to Annie at the Lottsburg post office. The accompanying April 28, 1862, letter tells her how to route her reply. He says, in part:

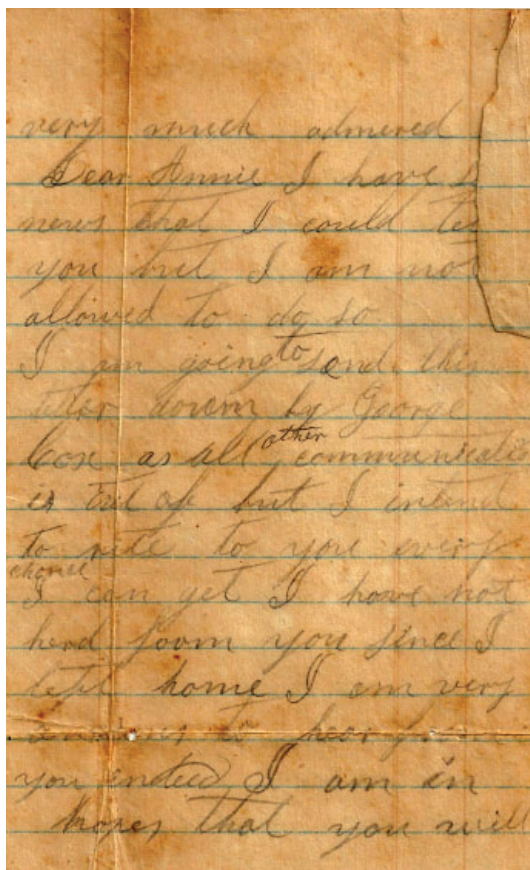


Figure 5. Part of letter No. 3 in which Henry repeats his admonition to Annie against writing anything she doesn't want someone else to know.

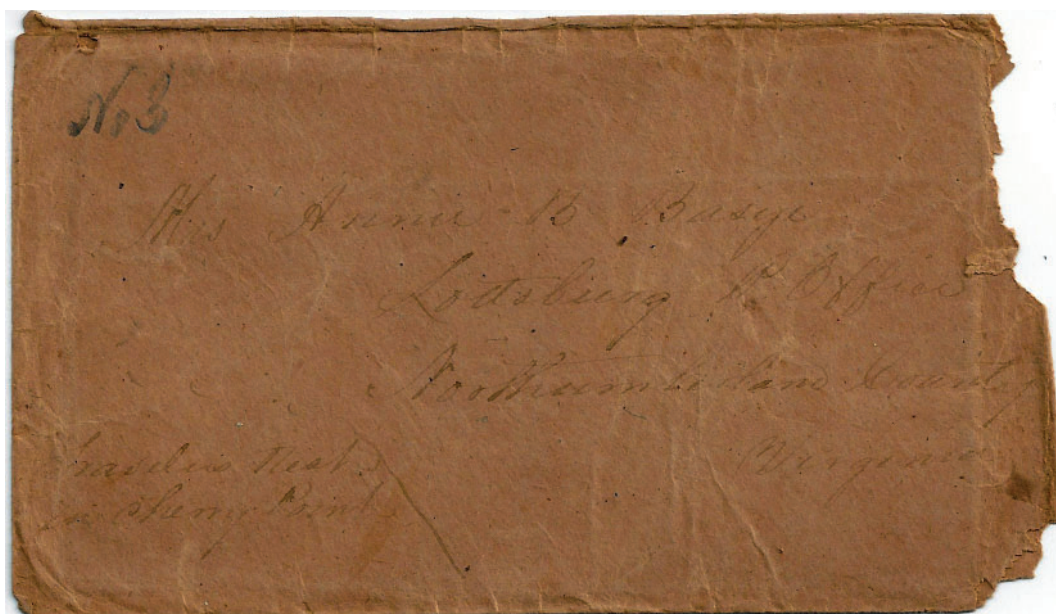


Figure 6. Letter no. 3 envelope addressed to "Mrs. Annie B. Basye, Lottsburg P. Office, Northumberland County, Virginia," with a manuscript directive at lower left to "Travelers Rest in Cherry Point."

"... this servant [delivering the letter to Lottsburg] is lieutenant Pierce's and he is going home on business for him. He wil stay home a week. Samuel Rice is going to send a letter down by him and they wil both come down together. When you get this letter answer it directly and send it up to Mrs. Rice and she will send it down to Mrs. Pierce and the servant will get it from there and bring it to me but ... you must put stamps on it so that if the servant don't get it, it will come by mail. Annie you might send al of your letters to Mrs. Rice and when she sends her letters she wil send yours. You must get Jo Beacham to aid you to send letters to me. Annie, Joseph Hazzard is trading with Mr. Bass at Owen hil. You know that is where we kept picket. It is on this side of the river opposite the Mitchells. This man Hazzard married Sam Rices sister and he lives close to his house and I think Mrs Rice sends her letters to him and he carries them down to the river and Mr Bass takes them over and mails them at Montague. That is a post office in Essex County."

The "No. 5" envelope was similarly addressed. The accompanying letter is headed Camp Hicks, May 13, 1862. In it, he writes, in part:

"I ... send you a few lines by Mr. Tapscot if he can get across the river. I doubt it very much. The Yankeys have possession of the river and keep sentinels on the northern neck side very close together to keep anybody from crossing."

The "No. 6" envelope is addressed like the others but has a part of a 5¢ blue Confederate lithographed stamp ripped off. The letter is dated May 20, 1862. In it, he says, in part:

"I ... send you a few lines by T.C. Cox or Samuel L. Straughn ... would be at our camp tomorrow to pay us our militia money and if they do I will have a chance to send you this letter and also the money that he will pay to me and more besides if he thinks he can get it to you safe. I would have sent you some money before this if I were sure you would get it but I don't know what to do about sending money to you but however I will try to send you some every safe chance that I can get for I have more than I have any use for I want to let your ma and pa have money as long as you have a cent and be sure to do so. I want to send you somewhere near \$50 if T.C. Cox comes up here and will bring it to you when he comes home ... I sent you two [letters] last week, one by a man from Richmond County [Jenkins] and one by a member of our company C – Tapscott."

The "No. 7" envelope is addressed like the others. The letter is dated June 6, 1862. He states they are four miles from the city of Richmond, not to be confused with Richmond County on the Northern Neck. Importantly, he states:

"I am going to write again this week by Mr Jenkins from Richmond County and you can send a letter to me by him as he is the man who brings the letters from the northern neck up here to us."

Henry must have lost track of his numbering system because there is a second 1862 letter noted as "No. 7." The cover is addressed to "Mrs Annie B. Basye, Travellers Rest, Lottsburg, Northd, Virginia." The letter is headed "Sycamore Bottom (Va) May 2nd, 1862." Once again, he gives her the familiar admonition:

"You told me in your letter to tell you everything I had seen and heard but I am not allowed to do so ... I sent 40 dollars to you last week by Mr. Jenkins to be delivered to W.S. Calle for you."

I interpret Henry's continued warnings to Annie as military censorship, especially since their mail crossed from Confederate troops in the field through Union-held territory.

Analysis of the various letters indicates that Henry was quite diligent in the means he used to ensure successful correspondence. He plainly states that he used private couriers instead of the

postal system whenever possible. He used every possible means of delivering letters to his family including paid service such as Jenkins, slave-delivered mail, letters sent home with furloughed soldiers, his brothers and so forth. He carefully recorded the names of most who facilitated delivery of his letters and instructed Annie how to return letters to him in the field as the troops relocated.

Henry's letter "No. 9" is dated June 20, 1862, and reads, in part:

"I sent you \$40 by Mr Jenkins and also a letter. I did not put the money in the letter. I was afraid to do so. I gave the money to him in his hand and Major Downing was present at the time that I gave him the money. I told him to give the money to W.S. Cralle and he and tell him to give it to you or send it to you the first chance and he said he would do so."

Henry's letter "No. 12" is dated July 4, 1862, and reads, in part:

"I send you a few lines by Mr A.J. Brent ... I was surprised when he came and told me he did not bring a letter for me. I did not think you would let Mr. Brent come up here without bringing me a letter. I received the letter you sent me by Mr. Jenkins the 2nd of July. You said he did not bring you any money. I told him when I gave it to him to give it to W.S. Cralle and tell him to send it to you and to bring me a receipt from him to show that the money was safe and he done so. He brought a receipt from Mr. Cralle in his own handwriting and I know the money's alright. He has the money and will send it to you if he has not already done so. I expect he has by this time."

Military censorship particularly resonates with me due to my late father, who was a young officer in the European theater during World War II. I have multiple letters from him warning my mother to be careful what she says because all letters are opened and read – echoes of Henry Basye.

I also have a lengthy handwritten description of my father's war movements, which he wrote in 1945, stating at the beginning of his extensive chronicle that he could not put this down on paper until the war was over because he was not allowed to because of troop movements, tactical information and such. The concealing of troop positions from the enemy is the reason Army of Northern Virginia (and other) military field cancels exist.

In a similar vein, the J.B. Dutton-facilitated letters, which were carried across the upper Potomac, were clearly censored. The foremost difference is that they went through a provost marshal (or Dutton, acting as a provost marshal) with examined and passed manuscript notations on the covers. There is significant physical and written evidence of military censorship of civilian mail across the upper Potomac River. Figure 7 shows such an example on the left end of a J.B. Dutton-handstamped cover with "Passed by Lt. Yellott, P Marshal, Pt of Rocks, Md."

On the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) website, is an interview with Myron Fox, a past vice president of the Military Postal History Society. He is an expert on U.S. military and civilian censorship in World War I and World War II.⁴

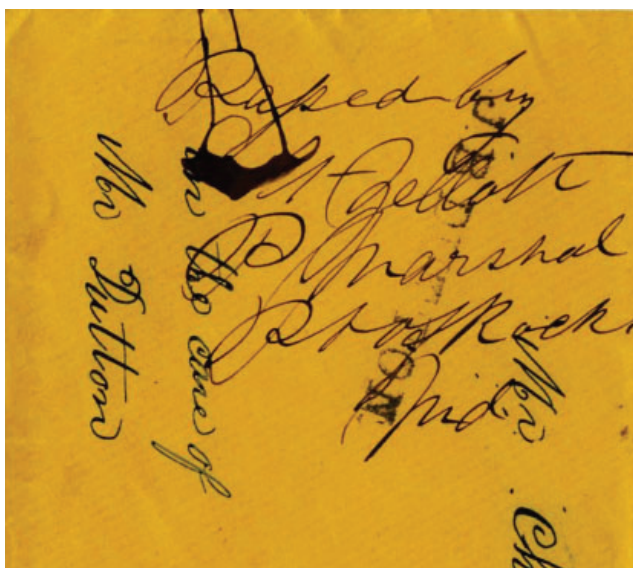


Figure 7. An example of manuscript censor markings at the end of a J.B. Dutton straightline handstamped cover with "Passed by Lt. Yellott, P Marshal, Pt of Rocks, Md."

Fox indicated that soldiers' letters were not censored in an overt manner before the Civil War. He speculated that most troops before then were illiterate and officers were largely trusted, so they didn't bother.

When asked, "**When were the first soldiers' letters censored in the United States?**" Fox replied:

"There was some censoring during the Civil War because letters sometimes had to cross enemy lines. He suggested that most Civil War censoring came from prisoner-of-war camps. For example, if someone was writing a letter from Andersonville, those at the camp didn't want people to know what was happening so the prisoners wouldn't be allowed to say anything bad about a camp."⁵

"The censors were looking out for two things in World War I and World War II. They didn't want the soldier to say anything that would be of value to the enemy, such as where they were. They always wanted to camouflage how strong the troops were. 'Loose lips sink ships' was the phrase that was very prevalent in WW II and that was the theory in WW I as well."

Another interview question to Fox was, "Did censoring influence the quality of the letters written?" to which Fox replied:

"In general, in the Revolutionary War and Civil War the letters have much more information. The writers would say, 'We're outside of Fredericksburg' or 'I'm in the 12th division,' and that's important information that was often cut out in World War I and World War II."

Fox's observations are in line with my experience while reading both Basye's and other Civil War letters over the years.

Both Jaronski and Ryterband believe, as do I, that censorship was likely on a case-by-case basis, generated by specific military commands, instead of a wide-sweeping directive.

The Lancaster Cavalry (Henry Basye) and Lancaster Grays (the infantry unit in which Henry's brother Octavous served) were composed of men from the Northern Neck of Virginia, which was largely controlled by Union troops during much of the war. Thus, mail delivered by any means was suspect. It is not hard to imagine guarding against sensitive information falling into enemy hands.

Ryterband, who is an avid collector of Civil War POW mail that crossed the lines, noted that virtually all mail to and from prison camps was censored. An interesting aspect of many of the larger Union camps are handstamp censor markings, which were not employed at any Confederate camps. Ryterband notes, however, that regardless of whether a camp employed formal markings, most POW mail clearly indicated that it had been censored. Ryterband believes that mail censored in the field by friendly censors would not necessarily be marked because censorship was not officially required, thereby meaning that notation was not needed to demonstrate accountability. At the same time, Jaronski has read innumerable letters from soldiers in which they described military movements, potential and actual plans, detailed descriptions of battles just experienced and news from other military fronts. Letters to soldiers from home often include comments about morale and economic conditions. In these many instances, there was clearly no censorship.

Mr. Jenkins of Richmond County, Va.

I initially assumed that Jenkins might be Samuel Jenkins (either father or son of the same name) from Lottsburg in Northumberland County. Because of the questions raised during the Collectors' Club presentation and subsequent discussions, I further reviewed the letter transcripts and found a major comment by Basye I originally missed, indicating Mr. Jenkins was from adjacent Richmond County, *not* from Northumberland County, as I originally rationalized.

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The relevant section of the May 15, 1863, contract for Confederate mail route number 2408 is shown in Figure 8 from Warsaw, Va., via Oldham's Crossroads, Union Village, Lottsburg, Heathsville and Wicomico Church to Kilmarnock and back, twice a week.

Warsaw is in Richmond County. The farthest town on the route was Kilmarnock, which straddles Northumberland and Lancaster Counties; the rest of the towns were all in Northumberland. The contract, only a small portion of which is shown here, is signed by Confederate Postmaster General John H. Reagan. It names Richard H. Mothershead as contractor to transport the mail on this route.

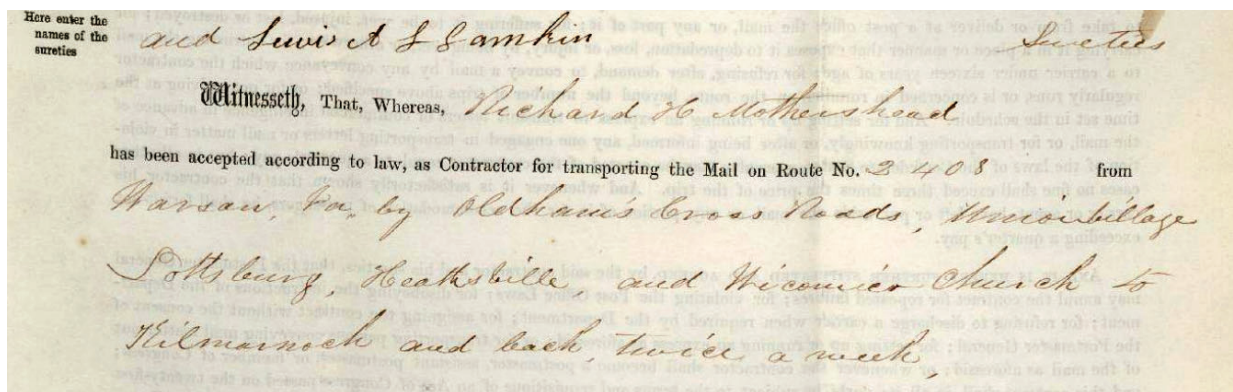


Figure 8. Part of the May 15, 1863, contract for Confederate mail route number 2408 from Warsaw, Va., via Oldham's Crossroads, Union Village, Lottsburg, Heathsville and Wicomico Church to Kilmarnock and back, twice a week.

Figure 9 shows a close-up portion of the Northern Neck of Virginia as surveyed in 1736-37, showing the lands between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers. It is part of the map collection housed at the Library of Congress that shows Richmond County adjacent to Northumberland County. Cherry Point is well marked on the Coan River, a tributary of the Potomac, and Lottsburg is identified in red.



Figure 9. Close-up of the Northern Neck of Virginia between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers, as surveyed in 1736-37. Cherry Point is on the Coan River off the Potomac in Northumberland County; nearby Lottsburg is marked in red. Library of Congress

The town of Tappahannock is strategically located at the crossroads of Central and Tidewater Va., joining Essex County on the South, and Richmond County on the Northern side of the river. To get to Northumberland County from Tappahannock, you must pass through Richmond County.

The 1863 map pictured in Figure 10 shows the geographical relationship of the Fredericksburg-Orange Court House area, where the Army of Northern Virginia was located much of 1862-1864, to Northumberland County, as well as the city of Richmond.⁶

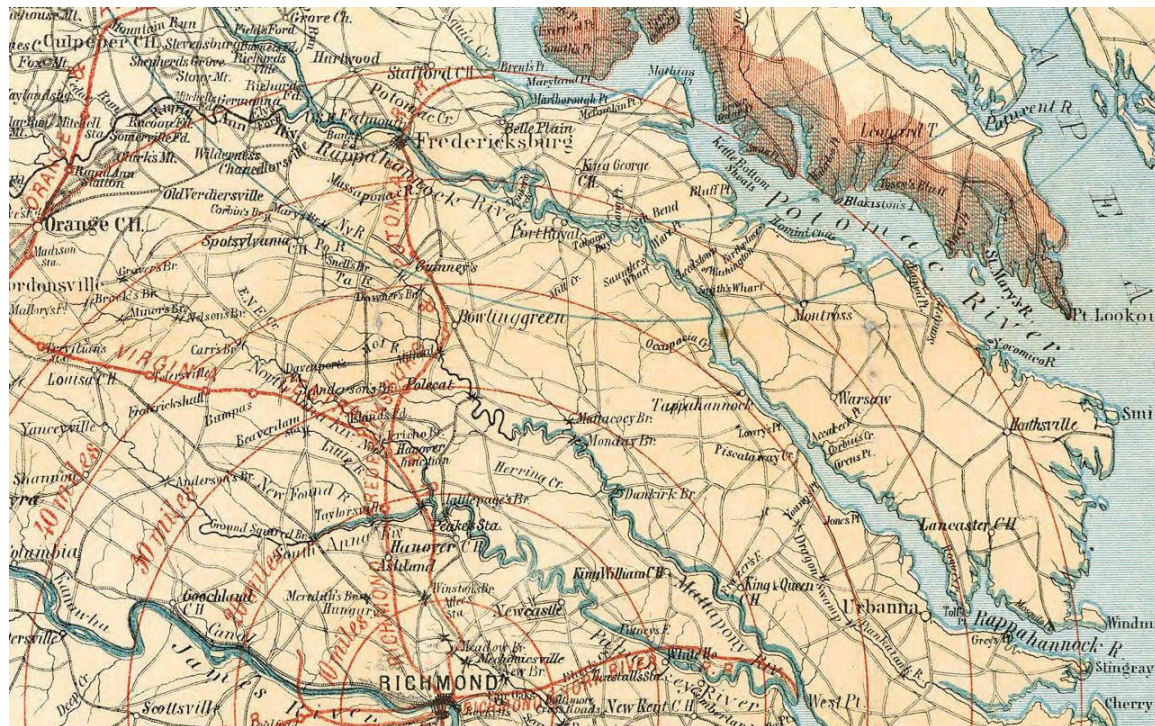


Figure 10. An 1863 map showing the geographical relationship of the area, where the Army of Northern Virginia was located much of 1862-1864, to the Northern Neck. Library of Congress

I found four Jenkins from Richmond County as mail-carrier candidates.

James Henry Jenkins (1841-1900) was noted in federal census records of 1850, 1860 and 1870 as being unable to read or write, nor could most or all his family. His military records showed his “signature” was an “X.” He served in Company D, 40th Virginia Infantry (Lancaster Grays) as a musician (fiddle player) with the rank of private. Henry Basye’s brother, Octavous, served in the Lancaster Grays as well, although in Company F. Interestingly, his grave is marked only by a concrete head and footmarker with no name nor inscription, perhaps because of a largely illiterate family. He is buried in the Jenkins Family Graveyard, Foneswood, Richmond County, Va.⁷

Ernie A. Jenkins (records also filed under **E Jenkins** and **Eri Jenkins**) enlisted Oct. 24, 1861, at Richmond County as a private in Company K, 9th Virginia Cavalry (Lancaster Cavalry). His Certificate of Disability for Discharge is shown in Figure 11. He was discharged for anemia. The certificate shows he was under treatment for 10 years without any benefit; unable to stand the excitement of the 9th, and unable to perform any military duty. His discharge was dated May 10, 1862, and signed by then Col. W.H.F. Lee. This was Gen. Robert E. Lee’s second son, William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, known as “Rooney,” who was later promoted to brigadier general, then major general.

John Jenkins enlisted Oct. 24, 1861, at Richmond County as a private in Company K, 9th Virginia Cavalry (Lancaster Cavalry). The date and method of discharge were not given. He was absent, sick May 15, 1862 (place not stated), and returned July 15, 1862 (estimated day, place not stated). He suffered a gunshot wound to the knee June 9, 1863, at Brandy Station, Va. He was absent again from a wound Sept. 1, 1864. Again, the place was not stated. He committed suicide on Feb. 10, 1891, in Marlton near Emmerton, Va.

ARMY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

CERTIFICATE OF DISABILITY FOR DISCHARGE.

(To be used, in duplicate, in all cases of discharge on account of disability.)

Private Ernie A. Jenkins, of Captain J. P. Morris
 Company, (K) of the ninth Va Cav Regiment of Confederate States
of America, was enlisted by Joseph A. Jeffries, of
 the ninth Regiment of Virginia Cav, at Fort Lourey, Richmond Co
 on the 24th day of October, 1861, to serve 3 years; he was born
 in Richmond Co in the State of Virginia, is
24 years of age, 5 feet, 10 inches high, dark complexion, black eyes,
dark hair, and by occupation when enlisted a Farmer. During the last two
 months said soldier has been unfit for duty 60 days. *(Here consult directions on Form Med. Dept. Gen. Reg.)*

STATION: Camp Sycamore
 DATE: 15th May 1862

J. P. Morris
 Commanding Company.

I CERTIFY, that I have carefully examined the said Ernie A. Jenkins of
 Captain J. P. Morris Company, and find him incapable of performing the duties of a soldier
 because of *(Here consult par. 1134, p. 945, and directions on Form 12, p. 269, Med. Dept. Gen. Reg.)* Medicine of Army
State, the patient at present, without special treatment, is 90% disabled. This
soldier has (I am informed) been under treatment for 10 years
with any benefit. He will not be able to perform any military
duty.
W. H. Lee, M.D., Surgeon.
9th Va Cavalry

DISCHARGED this 15th day of May, 1862, at Camp Sycamore

W. H. Lee, Col 9th Va Cav Commanding the Post.

NOTE 1.—When a probable case for pension, special care must be taken to state the degree of disability.
 NOTE 2.—The place where the soldier desires to be addressed may be here added.

Town— County— State—

(DUPLICATES.)

Figure 11. Certificate of Disability for Discharge for Ernie A. Jenkins, 9th Virginia Cavalry.

James A. Jenkins (also seen as **James Jinkins**) served in the 9th Virginia Cavalry, Company K, Captain Joseph R. Jeffries' Company, Richmond County Cavalry. The unit, first known as the 1st Battalion Virginia Cavalry, was also called Lee's Legion. This Jenkins also enlisted Oct. 24, 1861, the same day as the two aforementioned Jenkins men. They were likely all related.

There were other men named Jenkins in the 9th Virginia, but none I could ascertain as being from Richmond County.

I believe it unlikely that an illiterate infantryman such as James Henry Jenkins would have been the express carrier. And he had no horse, as someone in a cavalry unit such as the 9th Virginia would. Ernie Jenkins, with a history of health problems and discharge for disability, also seems an unlikely candidate.

Of these four, that leaves John Jenkins and James Jenkins. Of those two, James seems the more likely contender. But that is speculation.

Have I solved the mystery of Mr. Jenkins identity? No, I have not. Will we ever? I don't know. But it is fascinating hunt. If we do establish Mr. Jenkins' identify, it may be possible to learn more about his system of carrying the mail.

The Takeaway Message

Had I not first written an article on this subject and followed it up with a well-attended Power-Point presentation, this article would not further augment the subject. This demonstrates the value in sharing information.

One bit of valuable information often leads to another. That is always the case. Or, a different point of view is expressed, provoking the original researcher to dig deeper. The result is often an enriching postal history payoff.

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If you have something to add to this conversation, I'd love to hear from you. Please email me at: trishkauf@comcast.net.

Endnotes

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