



The U.S. Civil War in Contemporary Illustrated Material

by Eliot A. Landau

Most readers of this journal are very familiar with, and may even be over-exposed to, the images of recent wars widely shown on television, the Internet, magazines, and so many other media in current use. This was not the case during the American Civil War in 1861–65. While newspapers and magazines did show many woodcut illustrations, they did not have the detail, professional polish, and emotional impact we take for granted in the twenty-first century.

Nevertheless, many fine illustrations were produced and many of those were of philatelic interest because they were cachets on patriotic covers. Both sides in the Civil War produced covers and stationery with patriotic sentiments and cartoons and caricatures of each side's leaders and opponents. However, when it came to illustrating actual military and naval actions, those were overwhelmingly produced to show the Union side in battle.

While historians, political scientists, and economists have different points of view as to the root causes of the Civil War, most scholars would agree on three issues that divided the North and South. First, for the North, was the abolition of slavery and the refusal to extend it to newly admitted states carved from the Louisiana Purchase and former Mexican territories. Much of this was based upon strongly held religious beliefs that originated with Dr. William Wilberforce (1759–1833) in England in the late eighteenth century and

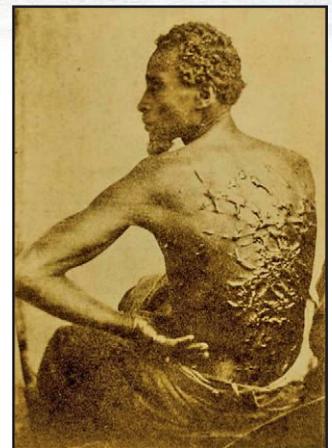
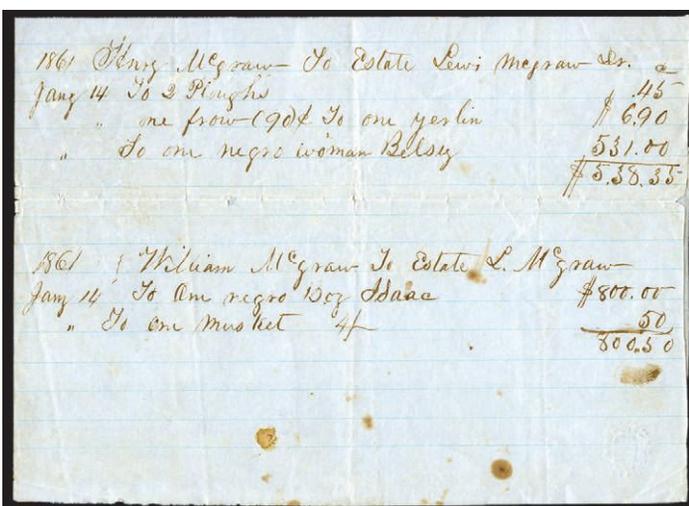


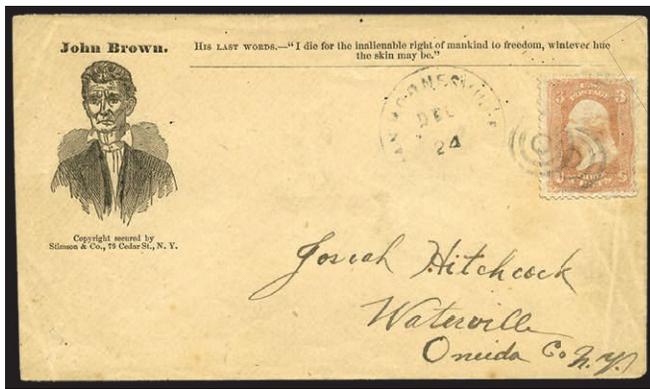
Photo of slave Gordon shows effect of repeated whippings. He escaped to Union Army in Louisiana and served as a soldier and guide, 1862–65. *Harper's Weekly* (July 21, 1863), page 429.



Estate of Levi McGraw distribution statement for January 14, 1861 showing transfer of "negro woman Betsy" at \$531 to one heir and to another "negro Boy Isaac" valued at \$800.

Cover with vignette showing "The Innocent Cause of the War," Boston, MA, July 4 (year?), to Pittsfield, MA.





Civil War patriotic by Stimson & Co., with John Brown's last words: "I die for the inalienable right of mankind to freedom, whatever hue the skin may be." December 24 (1862?), to Waterville, NY.



CSA President Jefferson Davis was often shown on stamps and on patriotic covers. Dublin, VA, June 24 (1862), to Wytheville, VA; April 1862 5-cent CSA general issue stamp used to seal flap.

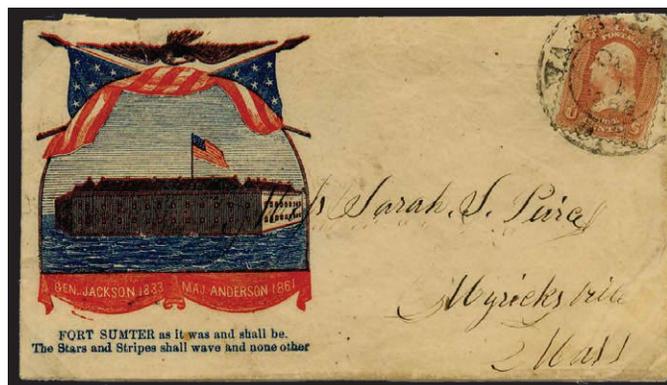


CSA Stars and Bars cover shows that four more states have seceded by the four additional stars hand-painted onto the design. Postmarked Starkville, GA, May 13, 1861.

resulted in England's Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Southerners believed that they had a right to own slaves and that no law should prohibit it. Abolitionists were appalled at the evidence of the severe mistreatment of slaves.

Second, there was the Northern belief in a strong central government and national sovereignty, while the South adhered to a belief that states each enjoyed their own measure of sovereignty that the federal government should not interfere with and should limit itself to matters that were only of direct national concern.

The third cause related to economics. The beginnings of industrialization had taken hold in New England and the Middle Atlantic states and started in newer western urban centers, especially Cleveland, Chicago, and St. Louis. Many in the South felt that they were being left out of opportunities for future growth. They further believed that slavery was an economic necessity in order to make agricultural production affordable, because they could not profitably sell their goods in the North and in Europe if they had to add the cost of paid human labor. Also, the expansion of railroad access in the North and West without much extension in the South at this time had led to relative inequity in the cost and speed of getting goods to market.



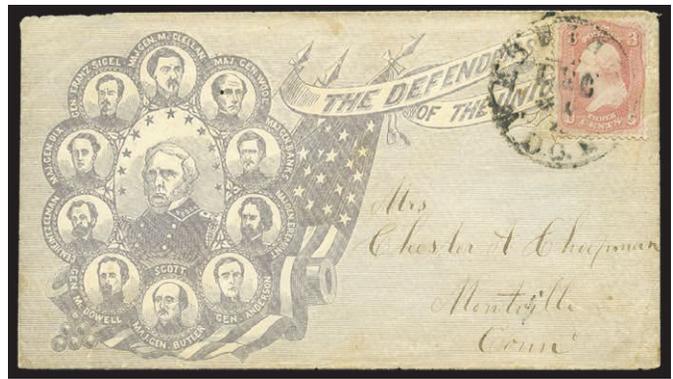
Fort Sumter patriotic. Washington, DC, October 1, 1862, to Myricksville, MA.

In a political sense, the Civil War began with the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that drew the Mason-Dixon Line across the country, north of which new states were to be admitted as free states without slavery while those south of the line were to be admitted as slave states. This issue rose again in 1850 with an extension of the Compromise and the question of whether Kansas and Nebraska would be admitted as slave states or free states.

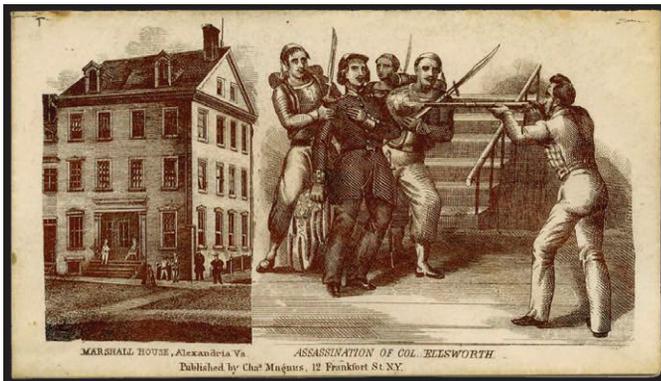
The fighting in Kansas over that division became very bitter in 1856 and led to serious armed conflicts, resulting in the all-too-accurate nickname of "Bleeding Kansas." Pro-abolition militias arose, loosely commanded by Captain John Brown. Brown later led a raid on October 16, 1859 on the U.S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia for weapons to be passed out among slaves in the vain hope that it would lead to a massive slave rebellion. Brown was arrested two days later and condemned to death for treason. He was hung on December 2, 1859; his death is commemorated in the cover shown.



An 1861 depiction of Lincoln and his Cabinet, with General-in-Chief of the Army, Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott. Used in 1861 to Worcester, MA.



General Scott's field commanders and staff are shown on this patriotic cover. Washington, DC, December 30, 1861, to CT.



The first Union officer to die was Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, shot at close range by a Southern sympathizer after Ellsworth tore down a Confederate flag in Alexandria, Virginia. Unused Magnus cover.



Highlanders, Zouaves, Lancers, and regulars are shown on this rare three-color Union patriotic. Used from Middleborough, MA, Nov. 11, 1861, to a soldier in the Eighteenth Regiment, Co. D, Massachusetts State Volunteers, sent care of the War Department, Washington, DC.

Before the Civil War began there was a relatively small number of illustrated covers, most of which advertised products for sale or schools or politicians. Virtually all of them were printed in black on white, yellow, tan, or blue cover stock. The outbreak of war brought forth thousands of patriotic cachets, many printed in blue and red, some in the early stages of multi-color experimentation, and others in metallic inks: gold, silver, bronze, and copper. Others were printed in single colors. Known designs range from very common to rare (less than five known surviving examples). There are also some examples that were hand-tinted, usually in water colors.

There is a marked contrast between Union and Confederate images. The latter emphasize the Confederate States of America (CSA) flags and mottoes, with occasional portraits — usually of President Jefferson Davis. The Union covers show the national flag but also show many portraits of officers and troops, images of Lincoln and allegorical figures (especially “Liberty”), eagles, and scenes of troops and the Navy in combat.

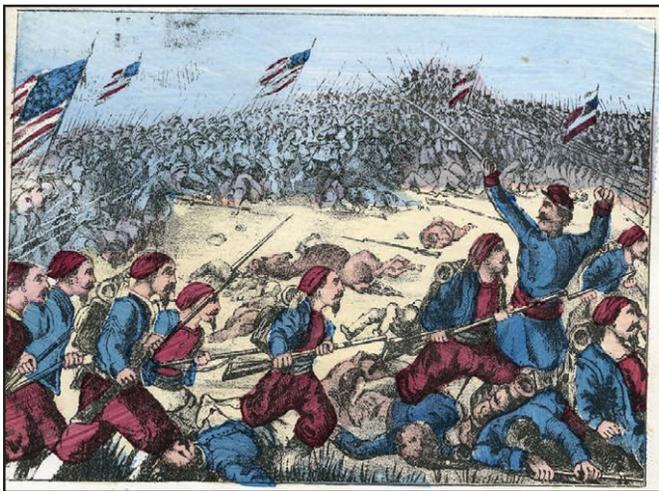
This article will focus on those examples of covers, song-sheets, and lettersheets that show military and naval personnel and actions on land and sea. While daguerreotypes and

photographs already existed, the technology for their mass reproduction on affordable patriotic stationery was not yet available. The most elaborate and colorful ones were produced by Charles Magnus and many are included here.

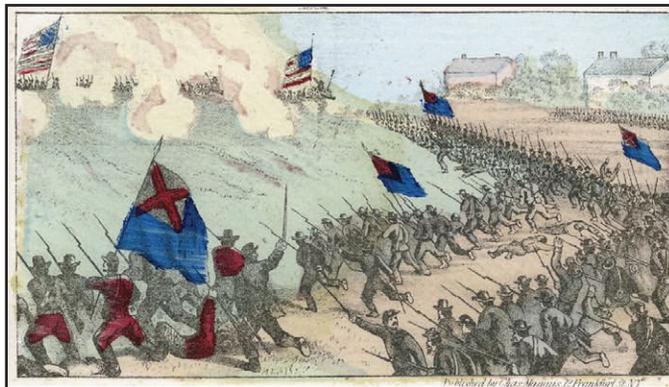
Political Figures

The severe divisions in the nation resulted in four different major candidates running for president in the 1860 election. Abraham Lincoln won the election with a plurality of 39.8 percent of the vote, and many of the southern slave states threatened to secede from the Union. Because the Constitution did not then provide for a newly elected president to take office until the following March 4, there was a four-month period during which lame duck President James Buchanan did nothing to prevent seceding states from breaking up the Union.

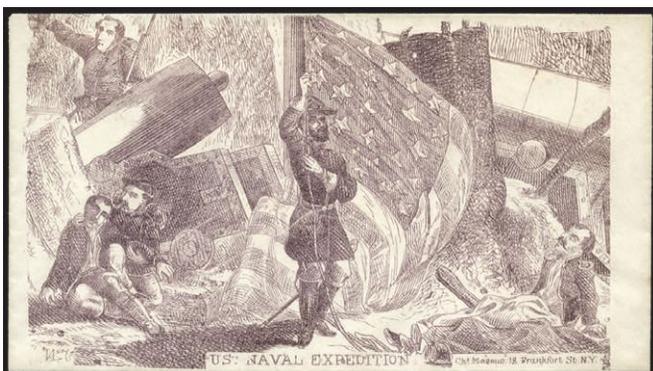
On December 2, 1860, South Carolina passed its Ordinance of Secession. It was soon joined by six other southern states, and on February 4, 1861 (a month before Lincoln could be inaugurated), the Confederate States of America was formed. Four more states quickly joined, bringing the total to eleven. Former U.S. Senator Jefferson Davis was



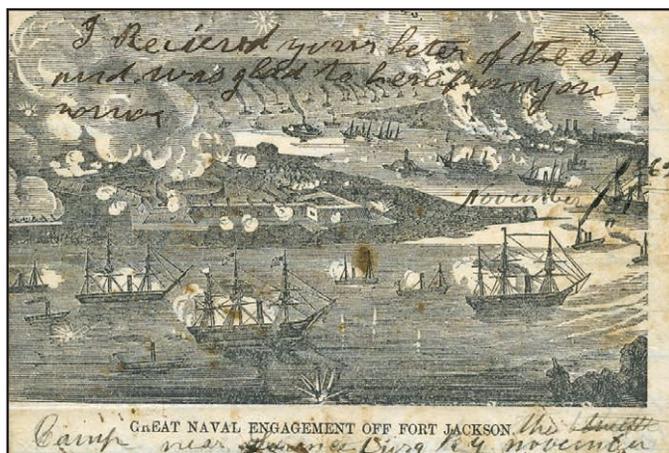
Battle scene showing a Union charge, from a Magnus songsheet, "Mother, I've Come Home To Die."



Magnus produced songsheets of popular pieces with different illustrations to appeal to both northern and southern customers; here CSA troops advance. "Just before the Battle, Mother."



"U.S. Naval Expedition" — Raising the colors after the successful naval battle taking New Orleans for the Union, 1861.



Soldier's letter written on patriotic lettersheet featuring the "Great Naval Engagement Off Fort Jackson, New Orleans."

elected president. (Davis had resigned his congressional seat when his home state of Mississippi seceded in 1861.)

Military Men

The city of Charleston, South Carolina quickly organized its Confederate forces under General P.G.T. Beauregard after he resigned as Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The siege of the federal forts that had protected Charleston Harbor began December 26, 1860.

In early April 1861, seeing that his situation was worsening and being without sufficient food and ammunition for his U.S. troops, Major Robert Anderson consolidated his men and armaments into the most heavily fortified structure, Fort Sumter, which was located in the middle of the harbor and not attached to any peninsula. After President Lincoln formally notified South Carolina's Governor Francis Pickens that he intended to resupply Sumter, CSA President Jefferson Davis ordered Governor Pickens to demand the fort's surrender. These orders were passed on to General P.G.T. Beauregard who, on April 11, ordered Major Anderson to evacuate the fort. Anderson, still hoping the supply ships could get through, refused. Confederate gunboats were successful in blocking the small federal supply ships in the

bay that were attempting to reprovision Sumter, and at 4:30 a.m. on April 12 a massive bombardment of the fort began. Two days later, virtually out of ammunition and food, Major Anderson surrendered and was permitted to withdraw from Fort Sumter to the supply ships waiting outside the harbor.

While the southern states were seceding and forming the CSA, Lincoln was assembling his war cabinet. A cover showing the cabinet and General Winfield Scott is a scarce but very popular design. Another early cover showing Lincoln's primary generals also featured the elderly General Scott, who retired at his own request in November 1861 and was succeeded by General George B. McClellan in the East and by General John C. Fremont in the West.

Although two Union soldiers died as a result of accidents at Fort Sumter, the first Union officer to be killed was Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, a close friend of the Lincolns and a popular military leader who founded a New York Zouave Brigade. He was shot at point-blank range by hotel proprietor James Jackson on May 24 as he descended the stairs after personally tearing down a large Confederate flag from the roof of the Marshall House in Alexandria, Virginia. Jackson was immediately shot and killed by one of Ellsworth's men.

In the beginning of the war, Union uniforms were often



Admiral Samuel P. Lee, a cousin of CSA General Robert E. Lee, took command of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Letter to him at Hampton Roads, VA, from Gloucester, MA, November 14 (1862).



"Guerillas Shelled Out Along the Shores of the Mississippi" — Union gunboats shell rebel positions; 1862–63, untinted

very colorful and reflected the organization and tastes of different regiments in the different states. Some regiments based their uniform design on European military styles such as the Highlanders and Ellsworth's Zouaves.

Battles

The war did not progress well in the East, with serious Union casualties suffered at First Bull Run (First Manassas) on July 21, 1861. These were commemorated on a songsheet prepared by Charles Magnus showing the battlefield at Bull Run with the song titled "Mother, I've Come Home To Die" (1863). The music by Henry Tucker, who also wrote "When This Cruel War Is Over" (1862) and "Sweet Genevieve" (1863), was popular with both sides in the conflict.

One of the scarcest CSA propaganda pieces was a songsheet with the sentimental Union song "Just Before the Battle, Mother" written in 1863 by George Frederick Root, who also wrote "Battle Cry of Freedom" (1862) and "Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!" (1864). The sheet was illustrated by Confederate troops advancing under large battle versions of the CSA "Stars and Bars" to attack the Union infantry at the Battle of Second Bull Run, August 29–30, 1862.

The war in the west was more successful. Flag-Officer David Farragut¹ (later the nation's first full Admiral) led his warships out to sea, around Florida and up into the Gulf of Mexico — successfully defeating the CSA Navy at the Battle of Fort Jackson and capturing New Orleans, April 16–28, 1862. One of his top officers throughout these naval encounters was Samuel P. Lee, commander of the USS *Oneida*. For his achievements during the New Orleans campaign and subsequent battles on the lower Mississippi under Grant's campaign, Lee² was promoted to Captain in July 1862 and then to acting Rear Admiral in September 1862 in charge of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. His small fleet operated successfully off North Carolina until 1864 when Lee was given command of the Mississippi Squadron.

This naval success at New Orleans followed a joint Army-Navy operation down the Mississippi River from Cairo,

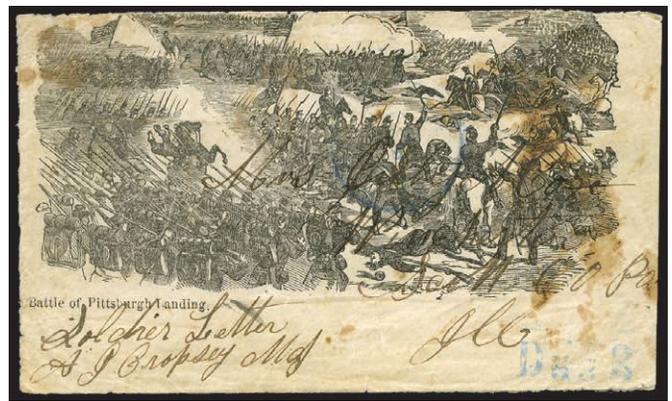
Illinois. The naval forces were led by Flag-Officer Andrew Hull Foote, "Commander Naval Forces in Western Waters," while the land forces were led by Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Foote's Western Gunboat Flotilla was under the control of the Army, so Grant was in overall command of the operations. The Union gunboats successfully attacked rebel positions along the shore from Missouri down to Louisiana, bombarding them from the river, while Marines who had been unloaded from the boats above the Confederate position attacked from behind, such as the ambush of Confederate cavalry illustrated. This joint venture culminated in the capture of Fort Henry (February 6, 1862 surrendered to Foote) and Fort Donelson (February 16 surrendered to Grant). Grant was promoted to Major General and Foote³ to Rear Admiral.

Grant was next ordered to take the Union Army of West Tennessee up the Tennessee River where he would connect with Buell's Army of Ohio for a joint campaign. He was waiting for Buell at the unfortified site of Pittsburg Landing on April 6, 1862 when General Albert S. Johnson's newly rechristened Army of the Mississippi was able to launch a successful surprise attack on Grant's green troops. Savage fighting around Shiloh Church and at the Hornet's Nest bought the Union Army time for Buell's troops to arrive. The following day the reinforced Union Army was successful in pushing back the Confederate forces, commanded by Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard following the death of Johnson. It was the bloodiest conflict of the war to date.

After the naval victories at New Orleans and along the Mississippi River, the maritime engagement most memorialized on patriotic covers was the Battle of Hampton Roads (also known as the Battle of the Ironclads or the Battle of the *Monitor* and *Merrimack*), fought near where the James River enters the Chesapeake Bay. On March 9, 1862, the Union ironclad USS *Monitor* fought the CSS *Virginia* (the salvaged and rebuilt USS *Merrimack*) to a standstill and foiled the Confederate attempt to break the sea blockade of Richmond and Norfolk. This battle was a favorite subject of printers



"U.S. Naval Expedition" — Marines ambush Confederate cavalry after being landed from gunboats up the river; hand-tinted.



"Battle of Pittsburg Landing" — Identified as "Soldier Letter" with a "Due 3" handstamp, written from "Camp near Laurenceburg, KY," November 1, 1862, to Winchester, IL.

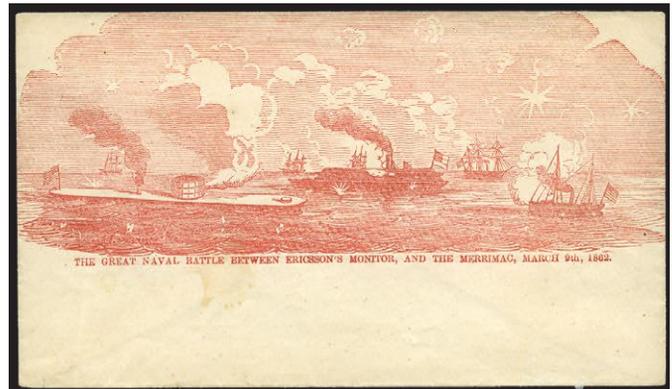
Magnus and Wells. The two ships would never meet again. The *Virginia* was scuttled and burned by her own crew on May 10, 1862 to prevent her capture by Union forces after Norfolk had to be abandoned. And the *Monitor* sank in a storm off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina on December 31, 1862.

March 23, 1862 saw another Union victory in an unplanned encounter between approximately 3,000 troops under the command of General Stonewall Jackson and about 8,000 federal troops under Colonel Nathan Kimball. The two forces met just south of Winchester, Virginia at the small village of Kernstown. The Union soldiers first stopped Jackson's army then counterattacked, forcing the Confederates to retreat. Total casualties were in excess of 1,000 men. It was Jackson's only tactical loss. Kimball (who was promoted to Brigadier General) was the only field commander to defeat both Robert E. Lee (Cheat Mountain) and Stonewall Jackson (Kernstown) in separate engagements. The Indiana physician retired from the military in 1865 with a record of twenty-two victories and only three losses.

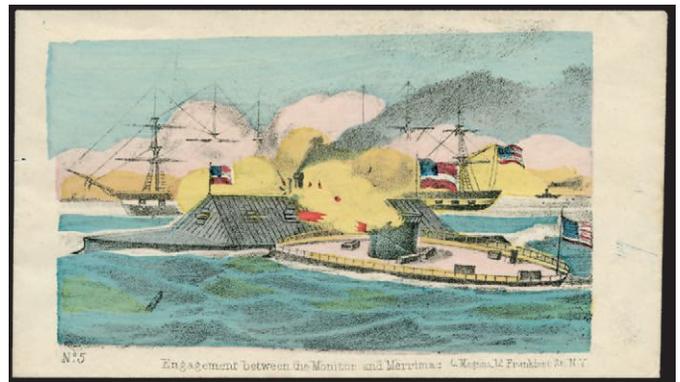
But, the hero of the day was Colonel Erastus B. Tyler (who had raised the 7th Ohio Volunteers but otherwise had no military training).⁴ *Harper's Weekly* for April 12, 1862 reported:

The battle raged along the whole line with great fury from eleven A.M. till half past two P.M., when General Shields ... ordered the right, where the contest raged the hottest, to charge upon the enemy ... The gallant Tyler led the charge, sword in hand, at the head of the line. The rebels fired from the woods with artillery and small-arms, while our men advanced against their murderous showers of lead and iron, returning few shots, and reserving their fire. Up to this time the armies had not been much nearer to each other than three hundred yards, unless in some few instances. The wood was soon cleared at the point of the bayonet, our men discharging their pieces at twenty and even five yards' distance from the rebels, and then dashing at them with the bayonet.

The illustrated cover depicting the Union charge led by Tyler was based on a drawing by newspaper sketch artist Edwin Forbes, who was at the battle. It first appeared in *Frank*



Above: "The Great Naval Battle Between Ericsson's Monitor, and the Merrimack, March 9th, 1862." Wells cover used at treaty mail exchange place, Old Point Comfort, VA, May 3 (1867) to Hanover, MI.
Below: "Engagement between the Monitor and Merrimack." Magnus cover, unused.

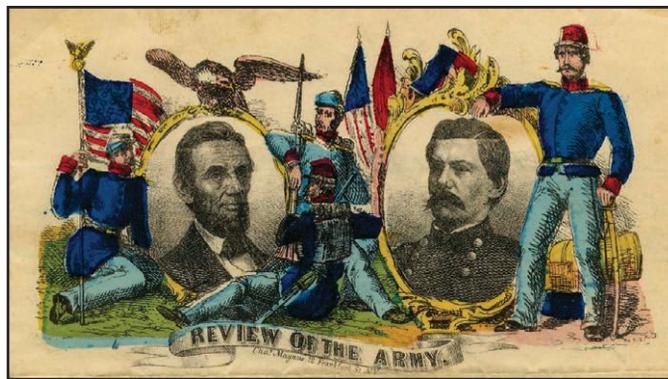


Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper for April 26, 1862.

In 1862 President Lincoln turned to General George McClellan, to whom he entrusted the responsibility for the Army of the Potomac. McClellan rewarded Lincoln by blocking General Robert E. Lee's advance into Maryland after defeating him at the Battle of Antietam (also known as Sharpsburg) on September 17, 1862. The cost of victory was high. According to the National Park Service, 12,410 Union troops were reported killed, wounded, or missing/captured, while the Confederates suffered 10,320 casualties. It remains the single bloodiest one-day battle in American history.



"Desperate Bayonet Charge at Battle of Winchester, March 23, led by Gen. Tyler." Used to Sparrowbush, New York.



Magnus lettersheet showing General George B. McClellan with President Abraham Lincoln. Used from Convalescent Camp, VA, April 18, 1863.



Howells of New York cover showing Zouave regimental vivandiere tending a wounded soldier. Woodburn, IA, to McAlisterville, PA, June 12 (1862).



Lincoln, shown as an apothecary, mixes up medicine to defeat the Confederacy, Old Point Comfort, VA, October 22, 1862, to Saugus Centre, MA.

While the actual encounter was an exhausted draw, because Lee withdrew first, Lincoln was able to claim the battle as a victory and used that to announce on September 22, 1862 that he would issue the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring all slaves held in CSA territory engaged in conflict to be free.

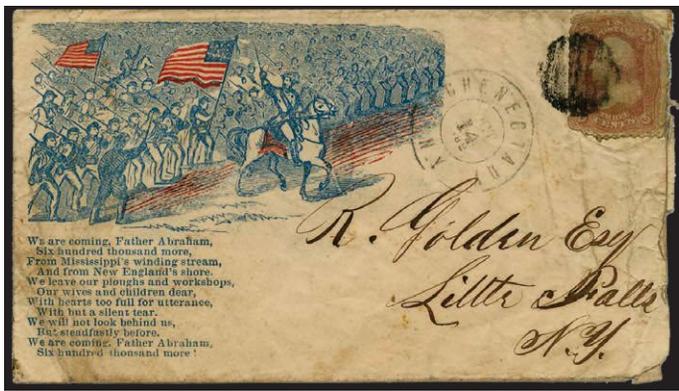
However, the Union losses continued to mount. In addition to the massive casualties at Pittsburg Landing/Shiloh and Antietam/Sharpsburg mentioned above, the cost of the Union defeats at Fredericksburg, VA (December 11–15, 1862; 13,353 men) and Chancellorsville (April 30–May 6, 1863; 17,287 men) was staggering. The encounter at Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863) cost the Union 23,049 casualties — and the Confederacy an estimated 28,063 — a cumulative loss so severe that Lincoln began to worry seriously about the country's ability to continue the war.

There were very few nurses available to care for the wounded, although well-known figures such Clara Barton and Louisa May Alcott both tended the wounded following Fredericksburg, and Walt Whitman, visiting his wounded brother in the hospital after the battle, was moved to become a volunteer army nurse as well. These nurses were supplemented by volunteers attached to particular regiments. The cover shown depicts a *vivandiere* attached to the Zou-

ave regiment to which the wounded soldier belongs. These women were not “camp followers” but played an important role bringing water and providing emergency triage to soldiers lying wounded on the field. They dressed in a female version of the zouave uniform, wearing a knee-length skirt over their trousers for modesty. One of the most well known was Mary Tepe of Collis' Zouaves, the 114th Pennsylvania Infantry, who was awarded the Kearny Cross after the Battle of Chancellorsville. The cover illustration shows the plumed hat she always wore.

The president was hard-pressed to come up with solutions, as seen in the very scarce “apothecary” cover illustrated, in which Lincoln mixes various ingredients to defeat the Confederacy. On July 1, 1862 Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers to enlist for three years. Inspired by the President's call, Quaker abolitionist James Sloan wrote a poem titled “We Are Coming, Father Abraham!” which appeared in *The New York Post* just two weeks later on July 16. It was set to music first by Luthor O. Emerson and later by Stephen Foster, among others. The song and the sentiment quickly became popular. The first verse and chorus appear on a patriotic cover with the promise of troops upgraded to 600,000!

One of the most fascinating relationships in the politics of the Civil War is that between President Abraham Lincoln



Cover and text below illustration promise of 600,000 more Union troops volunteering before year's end to bring victory.

and former slave turned social activist Frederick Douglass,⁵ whom Lincoln often consulted privately and away from his general staff because he felt, with some justification, that their prejudice against an African-American would preclude them from thinking clearly about what was best for the war effort. Although it is traditionally accepted that the two men met only three times at the White House, historical correspondence and journal evidence exists indicating that Douglass and Lincoln also met privately at Lincoln's personal retreat, a quiet hilltop "cottage" he used as a refuge from the clamor and chaos surrounding the White House.⁶ Douglass strongly urged Lincoln to open the army to black soldiers — something he had been advocating since 1861.

Lincoln officially provided for the raising of African-American troops in the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863):

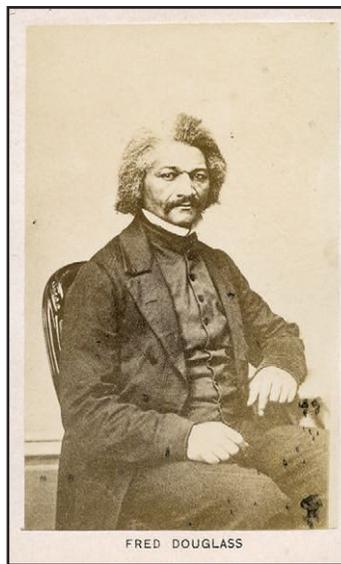
And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

At a formal White House meeting on August 10, requested by Douglass, they discussed equal pay, promotion and protection against Confederate abuse of prisoners. Although the issues of equal pay and promotions were not resolved until 1864, Lincoln had already issued General Order No. 233 on July 21st, threatening equal reprisals against Confederates for any mistreatment of black Union troops:

The Government of the United States will give the same protection to all of its soldiers, and if the enemy shall sell or enslave any one because of his color, the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in



Cover to Joseph J. Lewis, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, from Cincinnati, OH, November 3 (1863), containing letter urging the appointment of Col. Freese of New Jersey to command a regiment of "Colored Troops." Judge Lewis, a trusted Lincoln political advisor, recommended the appointment. Lincoln agreed, and endorsed the cover: "Submitted to the / Sec. of War / A. Lincoln / Nov. 11, 1863."



Rare Frederick Douglass carte-de-visite. He asked, even demanded, that free black men be given the opportunity to "fight for the Union with honor as soldiers for the cause."

our possession. It is, therefore, ordered for every soldier of the United States, killed in action in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every one enslaved by the enemy, or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to prisoners of war.

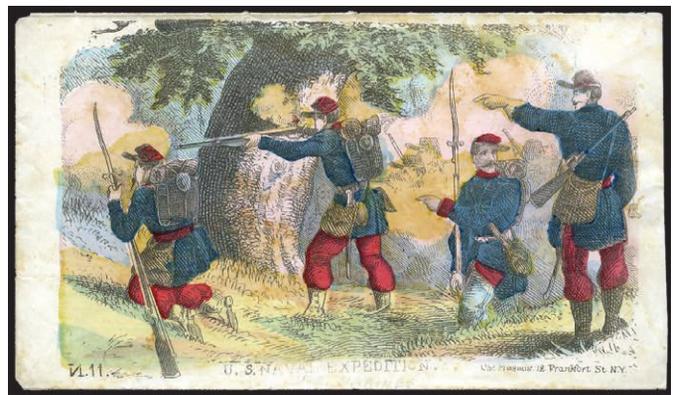
A second White House meeting on August 19, 1864 was initiated by Lincoln to discuss ways to spread the word about the Emancipation Proclamation and encourage southern slaves to escape and join the Union cause. By the end of the conflict, approximately 200,000 African-Americans had served in various branches of the Union army and navy.

A rare cover with a Zouave soldier shows a black member of the Washington Home Guard regiment. During the days surrounding the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863) soldiers from many units were thrown together to form a Home Guard to protect Washington from Lee's army. Addressed to Warren Davis, care of George Tolman in Boston, the cover contained a relief allocation chit for the father of a black soldier.

The year 1864 saw a turning of the tide, mostly in favor of the Union. In March 1864 Ulysses Grant was made commander in chief of the Union armies with the newly revived rank of lieutenant general. Union forces had already divided the Confederacy by capturing New Orleans and the Mississippi River Valley. Now Grant turned to Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman to strike through the heart of the South into Georgia and the Carolinas, while Grant's forces headed



"Death or an Honorable Life." / 2d Battalion, B.L.I." — Washington, DC, January 18, 1864, cover with black Zouave soldier from Washington Home Guard.



"U.S. Naval Expedition" — Back of Magnus cover showing U.S. Marines fighting at the second battle of Ft. Monroe, VA, from Washington, DC, February 14, 1864, to Schram's Lake, MD.

after Lee and the Army of Virginia.. Sherman's troops began their march from Chattanooga on May 6, 1864. The campaign was extremely effective, resulting in the capture of Atlanta (September 2), Savannah (December 22), and Columbia, South Carolina (February 17, 1865), depriving the Confederacy of vital supplies, and controlling the South's major industrial centers. Lee was forced into a tighter and tighter piece of territory to protect the capital of Richmond, and the last remaining railroad and supply center at nearby Petersburg.

The records for the 1864 Columbia–Spring Hill–Franklin engagement between Gen. John Hood's forces and those of Maj. Gen. John Schofield mention two artillery duels. On November 26 there was an artillery barrage from the Confederate artillery as part of an attempt to pin the Union forces down at Columbia so that Hood's men could flank their position. On November 30, however, the Union forces were entrenched at Franklin, although not very securely. Confederate forces were able to break through the center of the breastworks and capture two guns. General Wagner rallied the Union men, who were successful in recapturing their position and the two guns. From then on the day was marked by great slaughter of the Confederate forces as the Union artillery poured grapeshot and shells into their ranks at close range, after which Hood's men fell back and retreated.



"Captured Battery" patriotic shows victorious frontal assault on Confederate artillery. Columbia, TN, May 17, 1862 to Colon, MI.

The cover shown, featuring a Union soldier and titled "Captured Battery," coincidentally was mailed from Columbia, Tennessee in 1862, two years before the dramatic recapturing of the battery at the battle outside Columbia referenced above.

Grant's Overland Campaign crossed into Virginia on May 4 only to be met by Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the Battle of the Wilderness (May 5–7), followed by the series of engagements that came to be called the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House (May 8–21). Grant continued to push Lee, fighting another lengthy battle at Cold Harbor (May 31–June 12), before settling in around Petersburg, the supply capital and railroad hub of the Confederacy, just a little over twenty miles from Richmond. Lee had been forced into a defensive position behind Petersburg's extensive earthworks in order to keep Grant away from the capital. Unlike many other Union generals, however, Grant didn't want Richmond — he wanted Lee's army.

The Petersburg Campaign began June 15, 1864 and lasted ten months. In the end the city surrendered to Union troops on April 3, 1865. That same day the first Federal soldiers entered the abandoned and burning capital of Richmond. The CSA president and legislature, having been warned to leave by Lee, had departed the night before.

Six days later, on April 9, foiled in his attempt to reach supply trains at Appomattox Station and with nowhere left to go, General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses Grant in the parlor of the Wilmer McLean family farmhouse, a few miles from where the Army of Northern Virginia was bivouacked outside the village of Appomattox Court House.

On May 10, near the small farming community of Irwinville in southern Georgia, CSA President Jefferson Davis and his entourage (including his wife and children) were captured by the First Wisconsin and Fourth Michigan Cavalries.

One by one, the remaining Confederate armies stacked their arms. On April 26, General Joseph Johnston surrendered the Army of Tennessee to Major General William T. Sherman near Durham, North Carolina. On May 4, General Richard Taylor (son of former President Zachary Taylor)



"Movement of the Army from Washington to Richmond" — Union infantry advance on Richmond, VA. Unused Charles Magnus hand-tinted cover.

surrendered his troops in Citronelle, Alabama. On June 2, General Edmund Kirby Smith surrendered the Confederate Department of Trans-Mississippi to General Peter Osterhaus in New Orleans. The last Confederate general to agree to surrender was Brigadier General Stand Watie, principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, who formally surrendered the Confederate Cherokee Indian Forces to Lt. Col. Asa C. Matthews on June 23 in Indian Territory (later Oklahoma).

The last dark act of this long and bloody conflict came the evening of April 14 as President and Mrs. Lincoln were attending a performance of the popular comedy *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theatre in Washington. A group of conspirators, including actor John Wilkes Booth, had plotted to assassinate the President, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, and Secretary of State William H. Seward. Stanton escaped unharmed; Seward was seriously wounded by one of the would-be assassins; and Abraham Lincoln was fatally shot in the head by Booth, dying the morning of April 15, 1865. It is fitting that the last item in this article is a mourning cover for the fallen president used by a member of the Union Army Occupation Forces in the former Confederate States.

There are literally thousands of these covers, lettersheets, and songsheets illustrating the military and naval actions of both sides during the Civil War. Those shown here are only a partial selection from the grand award-winning exhibit *Lincoln, Slavery and the Civil War*, available on CD from the American Philatelic Research Library. Other sources for information are listed in the reference section following this article, which is intended to be an overview or introduction to the very broad and fascinating field of military postal history worldwide.

Endnotes

1. The naval rank of Flag-Officer, roughly equivalent to a lower grade Rear Admiral, was created in 1857. It entitled commanding officers to fly a personal flag from their ship. Congress finally authorized the formal creation of nine Rear Admirals on July 16, 1862. In 1864 a Vice Admiral was appointed from the ranking Rear Admirals: David Glasgow Farragut. Two years later, on July 25, 1866, Congress authorized President Lincoln to promote Farragut to Full Admiral, while the rank of Vice Admiral was given to then-Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter.



This mourning cover for Abraham Lincoln was one of the most widely used, even being made available to Union occupation forces in New Berne, NC. Used May 31 (1865) to a soldier in Washington, DC barracks.

2. Lee was a third cousin of CSA Gen. Robert E. Lee and also a Virginia native. When asked why he, too, had not joined the Confederacy, Samuel Lee famously replied: "When I find the word Virginia in my commission I will join the Confederacy."

3. Wounded by shrapnel during the attack on Fort Donelson, Foote oversaw the siege at Island No. 10 (February 28–April 8, 1862) on crutches and after its surrender was recalled to a desk job (Chief of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting) in Washington. He pushed for a return to active duty and was on his way to assume command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron when he succumbed to Bright's Disease on June 26, 1863.

4. Much later, President Rutherford B. Hayes would appoint Tyler postmaster of Baltimore as a reward for his wartime services.

5. In his memoirs (*The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881, p. 350) Douglass wrote: "I have often said elsewhere what I wish to repeat here, that Mr. Lincoln was not only a great president, but a great man — too great to be small in anything. In his company I was never in any way reminded of my humble origin, or of my unpopular color."

6. The restored cottage stands on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington and has been open to the public since 2008.

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