

# *Re-Federalization of Confederate Post Offices and Express Companies*

1862 – 1869

## Synopsis of the Exhibit

During the turbulent time of the end of the American Civil War and the collapse of the Confederacy, attempted delivery of mail resulted in confusion and chaos. Re-Federalization of Southern postal operations back into the Federal system posed numerous challenges, including the appointment of post masters, re-opening routes, re-issuing cancelling devices, and, obviously, supplying US stamps.

In this exhibit representative materials come from several Southern cities that never opened Confederate offices, some Southern cities that were captured by Federal forces then recaptured, cities captured by Northern advances that remained Federal until the formal end of the Confederacy, and remaining cities forced into Federal operations by the surrender of Lee at Appomattox in 1865. Mail dwindled in the transition because of paper scarcity, extreme poverty left behind in the South, disruptions to transportation, diversion of critical manpower and desperation of war-torn families.

“Unclaimed Mail” was common. Express Company augmentation of transport of mail was critically important during this period of Re-Federalization of the former Confederate system. Both these areas are featured in the exhibit. Also, 55 Virginia counties not supporting their state’s secession and then becoming West Virginia will be sampled.

The exhibit introduces the Re-Federalization of Southern postal operations into the Federal System during the post-Civil War reconstruction period. In 10 years of assembling this material, six articles on the subject have been published, the last of which appeared in the July 2024 issue of the American Philatelist.