

# Philatelic Genealogy in South Carolina: 1861-1865

By James R. Miller

Old envelopes and postcards from postal history collections are a source of genealogical information.[1] This paper presents seven envelopes from South Carolina from 1861-1865 with key genealogical data on the sender and recipient (when available) to introduce the Philatelic Genealogy website and database (<http://philgen.org>). The website was launched in March 2009 to begin building a digital archive of envelope and postcard images with genealogical value and to promote an exchange between postal history collectors and genealogists. The site has grown to more than 1,250 envelopes and postcards. Every item includes a photo (used with the owner's permission) and U.S. census or similar details on the sender and/or addressee.

South Carolina was a part of the Confederate States of America (CSA) from 1861 to 1865. Many residents served in the military and surviving envelopes from these years let us glimpse their lives, and handwriting, during this time. G. L. McGee of Butlersville, Anderson District, South Carolina received an envelope from Charleston, South Carolina circa 1862.[Figure 1] The return address is written around the South Carolina flag in the upper left and states: "J. L. McGee, Co[mpany] G, Orr's R.R.SCV [Rifles Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers], Sullivan's Island." [2] A G. L. McGee and his apparent son John are in Anderson County in the 1860 U.S. census.[3] A John Lewis McGee served with Company G, Orr's South Carolina Rifles [4] and the regiment was initially stationed at Sullivan's Island.[5] The envelope appears to have been sent by a son to his father. As with any source of genealogical information, old envelopes must be used in combination with other sources before reaching any conclusion. This envelope and Figures 2, 3 and 7 were found in online philatelic auction catalogs from which *Philgen.org* has permission to use photos.[6]

Mrs. W. H. Felker of Cross Anchor, South Carolina received an envelope from Columbia, South Carolina circa 1863.[Figure 2] The envelope was sent by "private W. H. Felker 18<sup>th</sup> Reg[iment] S[outh] C[arolina] V[olunteers]." A W. H. and Nancy Felker, apparently husband and wife, are in Hobbysville (about five miles west of Cross Anchor) in the 1860 U.S. census.[7] A Wiley H. Felker served with Company E, 18<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.[8] The envelope appears to have been sent by a husband to his wife.

Corporal Edward J. Dean of the Spartan Rifles, 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment South Carolina Volunteers received an envelope from Spartanburg, South Carolina in 1861.[Figure 3] An Edward J. Dean is in Spartanburg in the 1860 U.S. census [9] and an Edward J. Dean served with Company K, 5<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.[10] Company K was known as the Spartan Rifles.[11] The envelope has a Spartanburg postmaster's provisional stamp that was used before CSA stamps became available.[12] The regiment was organized and moved to Virginia in 1861 and the envelope was sent to a military address in Virginia.[13] The envelope may have been sent by a mother to her son or by a sister to her brother.

Dr. Walter Brice of Fairfield District, South Carolina received an envelope from Thomas Brice, Company F, Hampton's Legion postmarked in Richmond, Virginia in 1862.[Figure 4] A Dr. Walter Brice and his apparent son "Thos." W. Brice are in Fairfield County in the 1860 U.S. census.[14] A Thomas Brice served with Company F, Hampton's Legion.[15] The envelope has a verse and an illustration of a mounted soldier and appears to have been sent by a son to his father. This envelope and Figures 5 and 6 appear in a different collection of online philatelic auction catalogs than the other figures.[16]

Mrs. Jonathan C. McClenaghan of Marion, South Carolina received an envelope from Tudor Hall, Virginia in 1862.[Figure 5] The envelope was sent by Jonathan C. McClenaghan, "Q[uar]ter M[aster] 8<sup>th</sup> S[outh] C[arolina] Reg[iment]." A J. C. and Mary McClenaghan, apparently husband and wife, are in Marion in the 1860 U.S. census.[17] A John Charles McClenaghan served as quarter master, Company I, 8<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.[18] The envelope appears to have been sent by a husband to his wife.

Mr. J. Truesdel of Flat Rock, South Carolina received an envelope from Richmond, Virginia in 1861.[Figure 6] A Jesse Truesdel is in Flat Rock in the 1860 U.S. census.[19] The envelope has an 10-star Confederate flag. The sender's name does not appear on the envelope.

Miss Jane Pursley of New Center, South Carolina received an envelope from Buffalo Paper Mills, North Carolina circa 1863.[Figure 7] A Jane Pursley and her apparent brother James W. Pursley are in New Center in the 1860 U.S. census.[20] A James W. Pursley served with Company G, 18<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry[21] and the regiment was in North Carolina from late 1862 until early 1863.[22] The envelope has a 13-Star "Jackson" Flag and two CSA stamps showing CSA President Jefferson Davis.[23] This envelope, and others, may have been sent by a brother to his sister.[24]

I hope this article has shown you how postal history documents our ancestors' wartime experience. Other envelopes relate to our ancestors' political and social interests, work, recreation, and immigrant origins.[25] Many more envelope and postcard photos involving South Carolina residents are available. Postal history vendors have given *Philgen.org* permission to use thousands of photos from their websites and archived philatelic auction catalogs and most have not yet been placed on *Philgen.org*. The purpose of *Philgen.org* is to classify envelope and postcard photos by who wrote and received each one to make them accessible to genealogists. Anyone interested in helping to add South Carolina envelopes and postcards to the website is invited to contact the author. Photos and data posted for each item will be credited to the person and/or their genealogical or philatelic association.

#### Notes

1 James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy: Old Envelopes, Postcards, and Immigrant Origins," *New England Ancestors* 10:2 (2009): 37–38 and "Philatelic Genealogy Update: An Initial Assessment of the Genealogical Value of Old Envelopes and Postcards," *American Ancestors* 11:1 (2010): 45 [both viewable at <http://philgen.org>, click on NEA and American Ancestors in the Main Menu].

2 Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions [hereafter Schuyler Rumsey] (<http://www.rumseyauctions.com>, accessed 3 May 2010, select Prior Auctions, select Sale 37, scroll down in the Table of Contents to Lots 1649-1683 to locate Lot 1680).

3 1860 U.S. census, 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Anderson County, South Carolina, p. 31 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,212. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.

4 National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System [hereafter CWSSS], John Lewis McGee, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, South Carolina Rifles (Orr's) (<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/soldiers.cfm>, accessed 3 May 2010).

5 CWSSS, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, South Carolina Rifles (Orr's).

6 Schuyler Rumsey, Confederate postal history appears in the catalogs for Sales 29, 32, 34 and 37.

7 1860 U.S. census, Hobbysville Post Office, Southern Division, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, p. 115 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,226. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.

8 CWSSS, Wiley H. Felker, 18<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.

9 1860 U.S. census, Spartanburg, District of Spartanburg, South Carolina, p. 24 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,226. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.

10 CWSSS, Edward J. Dean, 5<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.

11 "Fifth South Carolina Infantry Regiment" (<http://batsonsm.tripod.com/b/reg5.html>, accessed 5 May 2010).

12 Schuyler Rumsey, Sale 37, scroll to Lots 1389-1424 and locate Lot 1423. For additional information on provisional stamps, see Patricia A. Kaufman, "Confederate Postmaster Provisionals" (<http://arago.si.edu/>, search on postmaster provisionals, accessed 6 May 2010).

13 CWSSS, 5<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry.

14 1860 U.S. census, Fairfield District, South Carolina, p. 157 (written), NARA series M653, roll 1,219. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.

15 CWSSS, Thomas Brice, Hampton Legion, South Carolina.

16 Robert A Siegel Auction Galleries (<http://www.siegelauctions.com/>, click on ~~siegel~~ Power Search, enter 980 as Sale # and 2856 as Lot #). Confederate postal history is shown in catalogs for Sales 795, 801, 815, 822, 834, 841, 845, 860, 870, 874, 907, 950, 954, 966, 980, and 988.