

## SYNOPSIS

### CONFEDERATE "PAID" USES FROM WEST VIRGINIA (1861 – 1864)

**Overview:** Much knowledge and research went into this fascinating West Virginia postal history story that encompasses the Civil War period. When the Civil War began on June 1, 1861, there were no Confederate stamps available for use. Any letters mailed had to be prepaid at the post office. The method used by the postmaster was to use a handstamp "PAID" device, usually an old device left over from the 1850's when stamps weren't required to be used. If a handstamp wasn't available, then the postmaster would write it out in manuscript form. **This exhibit is a study of the rates, postmarks and associated markings that make up a Confederate "PAID" letter.** Arranging the exhibit chronologically helps to tell a clear story, since this type of use occurred primarily in the first 12 months of the Civil War. The covers exhibited incorporate virtually all known postmarks and associated markings that are pertinent to this study

**Scope & Purpose:** Telling an interesting and narrow story of West Virginia's postal history during the Civil War, of those post offices that processed "PAID" letters. Reasons as to why this occurred add more significance to this historical story. **The importance to both sides of capturing the Kanawha Valley and the areas near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad caused Confederate soldiers to inhabit these areas in West Virginia, with the resultant letters being sent home having appropriate "PAID" postal markings.**

**Reason for the exhibit:** For over 45 years this small subset collection of West Virginia covers grew very slowly & only now in 2025 is the accumulated range & array of material substantially viable, making the written narrative with a clear beginning, an exhilarating view of hard to find covers with specific postal history conclusions reflected on the exhibit's single pages.

**What is included:** Civil War era covers showing postmarks with "PAID" uses from West Virginia post offices, some of which are the only reported uses from those offices. The single frame approach is apropos, due to the limited time frame and limited number of covers available for research. Only 174 total Confederate "PAID" uses have been documented from 33 post offices, of which 44 different uses from 31 post offices are shown in this exhibit.

#### KEY ITEMS (red outline):

1. Harpers Ferry – earliest reported handstamp "PAID" marking from West Virginia
2. Harpers Ferry – only reported patriotic "PAID" use reported from this town
3. Huntersville – only reported stencil patriotic "PAID" use reported from West Virginia
4. Sweet Springs – only reported patriotic "PAID" use from this town
5. White Sulphur Springs – only reported combination use of "PAID" and "WAY" from West Virginia
6. Kabletown – only reported postmark from this town
7. Piedmont – only reported postmark from this town
8. Lewisburg – only reported use of 2 different handstamp rates in combination with the "PAID" handstamp from West Virginia

**Layout:** The presentation selected for the viewer's understanding & reflecting the appropriate cover selection for philatelic exhibiting shows the cover markings & uses chronologically.

**Covers & relevant information:** Because all the covers are from basically a 12 month time frame from a small subset of postal markings available, only enhances their difficulty of acquisition as they were painstakingly gathered one by one, over decades of searching by the exhibitor, to allow this material to be amassed. Certainly, most of the items are considered one of a kind, or one of a few known or available in public hands.

**Historical Background:** At the start of the Civil War, the area of present day West Virginia was an area that was contested by both Confederate and Union forces. Many early skirmishes and battles took place there in 1861 and early 1862. Because of the early concentration of Confederate soldiers in Western Virginia, most of the Confederate "PAID" letters that have survived were sent by soldiers from that period. Once the Confederate soldiers left that area, Confederate post offices were virtually non-existent except for a few counties in the southern part of the state. Subsequently, most of the remaining post offices after July 1862 had stamps available for use.

My knowledge and compilation of data for over 45 years is the basis for statements regarding the scarcity of postal markings in this exhibit. The only references for Confederate West Virginia "PAID" markings are listed below. I have added several new markings in the interim since these references have not been updated for many years.

References:

*Virginia Postal Markings and Postmasters, Colonial to 1865, Virginia Postal History Society, 1984 and supplements*  
*Way Markings, Virginia Postal History Society, August 2000 through February 2002*  
*Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History, Kaufmann, Crown, and Palazolo, 2012*

# CONFEDERATE "PAID" USES FROM WEST VIRGINIA (1861 – 1864)

**PURPOSE:** Is to illustrate & tell the story of "why", "when" and "where" Confederate "PAID" cancellations were used in what is now West Virginia. This exhibit will analyze the rates, postmarks, associated markings and history that defines a Confederate "PAID" letter.

**Scope:** Exhibit begins with the earliest reported handstamp "PAID" use on June 4, 1861 & ends with the latest reported "PAID" use on July 14, 1864. This is the most complete array of West Virginia "PAID" covers ever assembled & this is the 1<sup>st</sup> time displayed.

**Research & Knowledge:** Forty-five years of studying the postal history of Virginia and West Virginia culminates an in-depth understanding & statistically valid results (census, etc.). The research is shown on each page & knowledge is reflected in the presentation of the postal markings, rates & uses of each cover selected for this exhibit. The best available covers have been selected.

**Organization:** Covers are arranged chronologically with **key items outlined in red**. Items that have been expertized are labeled with "E".

**Plan of Organization:** The plan is simplified – presenting this type of postal history of West Virginia by showing 44 Confederate "PAID" uses from 31 post offices during the Civil War period.

**Original & important historical research is in boxed bold text.**

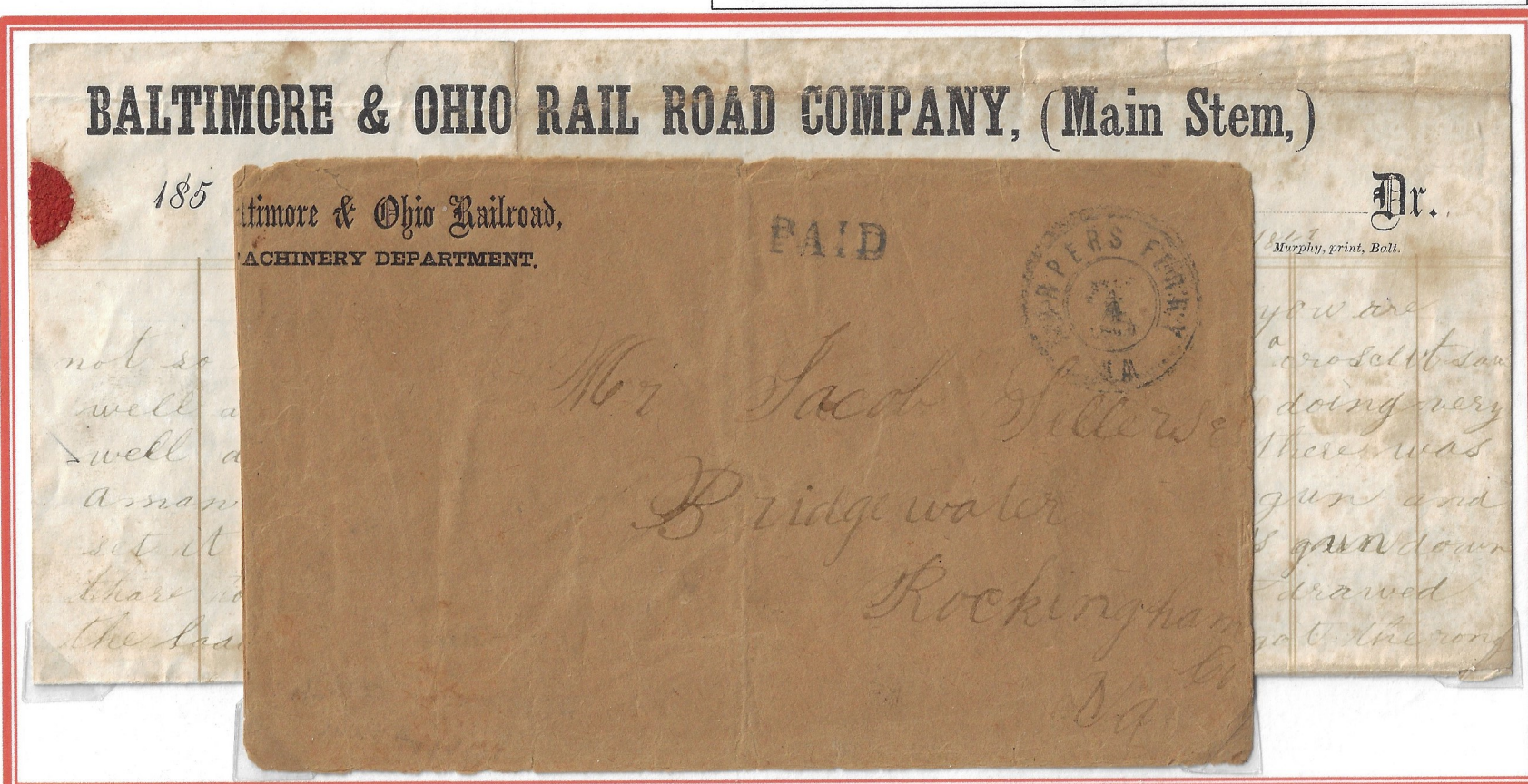
**Importance and Background:** Western Virginia, the area of present day West Virginia, was a significant area of EARLY military action during the Civil War period. Soldiers of both sides initially tried to gain control of the Kanawha Valley and areas near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Most of the Confederate town postmarks associated with 1861-62 "PAID" markings were on letters mailed by soldiers.

**Rarity:** Many of the "PAID" uses are the only ones reported from specific Confederate post offices. The census of "PAID" uses is given for each post office.

## EARLIEST REPORTED HANDSTAMP "PAID" USE FROM WEST VIRGINIA

**HARPERS FERRY** (Jefferson County) 26 mm double circle cancel of June 4, 1861 on a printed Baltimore & Ohio "Machinery Department" railroad envelope; the handstamp "PAID" is without a rate, but the implied rate is 5 cents (for a letter sent less than 300 miles)

The enclosed letter, dated June 3, 1861, was written by Robert Z. Furrey on a printed B & O bill of lading form; Robert was a Captain in J.W. Carter's Company of Virginia Horse Artillery; the letter describes the horrible accidental shooting and death of Thomas Akers occurring that day; Akers was the first soldier to die in the 4<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry

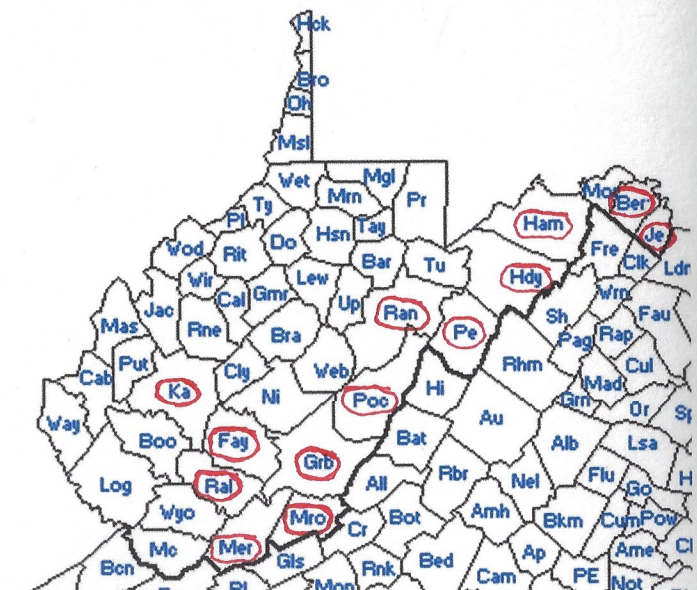


## REASONS FOR "PAID" CONFEDERATE USES

Confederate (pre-paid) "PAID" rates were the only way to pay for postage after the Confederate Post Office Department was established on June 1, 1861. Soldier "due" rates didn't begin until July 29, 1861 and stamps weren't available until October 1861. Most of the postal uses from West Virginia in 1861 only show manuscript or handstamp "PAID" RATES. By mid-1862, the lack of occupying Confederate soldiers in West Virginia made it hard to keep mail routes and small post offices operating. Because of this fact, many of the ONLY reported uses from these short lived Confederate post offices are "PAID" uses.

44 different examples from 30 post offices are shown in this exhibit, primarily during the first 12 months of the Civil War. All reported "PAID" uses from West Virginia are either 5 or 10-cent rates. There are no reported Confederate "PAID" uses from West Virginia involving drop, overseas, circular, POW, flag of truce, Trans-Mississippi, railroad or steamboat rates.

50 counties separated as state of West Virginia  
JUNE 20, 1863



THE WEST VIRGINIA COUNTY MAP AT RIGHT SHOWS COUNTIES (CIRCLED IN RED) WHERE PAID USES ARE REPORTED.



**CHARLESTOWN** (Jefferson County) 33 mm postmark of June 7, 1861 with handstamp "PAID" and "10" cent (over 500 mile) rate to Marion, Alabama; additional docketing at lower left "kindness of Mr. Fignett"

**EARLIEST REPORTED CONFEDERATE USE FROM CHARLESTOWN**