THE FREDRICKSBURG STAMPS
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NOTE:
**The spelling Fredericksburg and Fredericksburg are used interchangeably throughout the article. **

EDITOR, American Journal of Philately. – I am at this time able to add two to the list of Provisional Confederates (called locals) already known. They were issued by the City of Fredericksburg, Va., in 1861, and are of the value of 5 and 10 cents. Their history is the same as all others of this class.

From one of my correspondents, in a letter dated March 12th, 1871, I received the following description of a local which he had in his collection: “The inscription is Fredericksburg Post Office, Virginia, R.J. Thom, almost square, printed in blue on white paper, five cents.” He further added that “it was genuine, and post-marked Fredericksburg, Virginia, October 4, and that he took it off a letter himself, addressed to his uncle.” At once, upon receipt of this information, I attempted to trace the history and full particulars of this, as yet unknown and undescribed candidate for philatelic honors.

In reply to a letter sent by me to the Postmaster of Fredericksburg, I received a letter informing me that Reuben T. Thom was Postmaster in 1861, and that he died May 7th, 1868, at an advanced age in that city. I further found that he had a daughter living in that city, and at once opened a correspondence with her, to learn the full history of the stamps issued by her father, and try to receive from her every copy of this stamp that she might possibly find among her father’s old papers. She could not satisfy my inquiries as to when issued and used, how many, how long, &c., &c.; but in the other particular, she did for me all and more than I could expect. In looking over her father’s old papers, she found “a proclamation by the Postmaster-General of the Confederate States,” dated at Montgomery, Ala., May 13th, 1861, and directed to all postmasters, together with a quantity of these Fredericksburg stamps of two values, five and ten cents, and some other stamps and papers, all in an envelope, postmarked Richmond, September 26th, 1861, and franked by H. St. Geo. Offutt, chief of Contract Bureau. All of these she sent me, (and I now have them in my possession,) except a few of the stamps, which she kept for herself; concerning which, she writes, “The few I have retained, especially those bearing my father’s name, I shall give only to members of my own family, as “souvenirs of the past.”

The description of the stamps is as follows:

They are type set, printed in sheets of twenty stamps 5x4, and no two of which are alike, having slight typographical errors, and the length of the rules separating the different parts of the stamp being of different lengths. The five cent are printed in dark, dull blue, and the ten cent in a dirty, dull red. All are on thin, Frenchruled note paper, and inscribed Fredericksburg at top, R. T. Thom in a line underneath; the figures, 5 or 10 in the different values underneath again, and at bottom, post office, Virginia.

It will be seen from the above that here are two well authenticated, but as yet unknown stamps of the provisional Confederate series; their character is beyond suspicion, as I can satisfactorily (sic) prove to any person, and in my mind, there are yet many to be brought to light. I would, however, recommend the
strictest scrutiny and most rigid examination into the history and authenticity of every one of this class of stamps, which has been, or may hereafter be brought to light before accepting it as an authentic issue.