



## Confederate Stamp Alliance — 75th Diamond Anniversary

The Confederate Stamp Alliance's (CSA) 75th anniversary celebration will be held in Richmond, Virginia, in conjunction with the APS STAMPSHOW, August 12–15. The CSA is a long-time affiliate of the American Philatelic Society and is excited to join with them during this important year.

### CSA History

Prior to the end of the Civil War, individuals began collecting the stamps issued by the postmasters of various southern cities and the Confederate Government. Information on various aspects of Confederate philately date back to the 1870s when early stamp catalogues and monthly journals published data that was presented to them. By the early 1900s, with the increased popularity of stamp collecting, many fakes and counterfeits stamps, including those of the Confederacy, were being offered to unsuspecting collectors. It wasn't until the early 1920s that authoritative information on Confederate stamps and postal history, based on research and knowledge, was offered to serious collectors.

In 1924 an avid researcher and collector began writing articles on the subject of Confederate postal history. August Dietz Sr., owner of the Dietz Publishing Company and editor of the *Southern Philatelist* (published in Richmond, Virginia), began providing informative articles to aid the increasing number of Confederate collectors. Dietz was born in Prussia, but moved with his parents to Richmond in 1871 and began collecting as early as 1880. An engraver trained in lithography and typography, he understood the printing processes necessary for the preparation of the various Confederate postage stamps.

With his in-depth knowledge of printing and interest in Confederate postal history, it was long speculated that Dietz obtained some of his information directly from the postmasters, printers and/or clerks who had firsthand knowledge of many of the actual philatelic items used during the Civil War. This was confirmed by original documents in the possession of the current CSA President, Patricia A. Kaufmann. By 1896 Dietz was the editor of *The Virginia Philatelist*, a monthly stamp magazine printed in Richmond, and in March 1901 he started his own company, the Dietz Printing Company in Richmond. In subsequent years, he operated the company with his son, August Dietz Jr. as business manager, and published *The Southern Philatelist* (1924–1929), *The New Southern Philatelist* (1929–1933), *Stamp and Cover Collecting* (1933–1936), and *Stamp and Cover Collecting Review* (1937–1939).

Each of the publications on which he worked contained articles related to Confederate philately, including new finds, plating research, illustrations of postal markings, and answers to questions from collectors. He also wrote several reference books on Confederate philately, including his opus, the 1929 treatise: *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America*. That book, often referred to as "The '29 Dietz," included most of the information printed in his earlier publications. Today, August Dietz Sr. is considered the Father of Confederate Philately.

By mid-1934, a small group of serious Confederate collectors was beginning to emerge. In February 1935, Dr. Marye Y. Dabney, another enthusiastic Confederate collector and friend of August Dietz, wrote to Dietz and suggested that an organization be formed for the more intensive study of Confederates, the exchange of relevant data, and the dissemination of acquired knowledge. The name of the organization suggested by Dr. Dabney was the Confederate Stamp Alliance, a name that has continued to this day.

The American Philatelic Society bestowed the Lindenberg Medal on Dietz in 1938. He received the first Luff Award in 1940 for Exceptional Contributions to Philately and the Lichtenstein Medal in 1955. On September 26, 1963 Dietz died in Richmond, Virginia. He was inducted into the APS Hall of Fame in 1964.

By early 1937, the Confederate Stamp Alliance had enrolled eighty-five members. In August of that year, the

Confederate Stamp Alliance held its first national convention in Asheville, North Carolina.

In 1940 Dietz discontinued publication of *The Stamp and Cover Collecting Review* and began publishing a four-page pamphlet, *The Confederate Bulletin*, exclusively for the members of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. During World War II, interest and activities in the Confederate Stamp Alliance declined and the organization remained informal, although *The Confederate Bulletin* continued until August 1952.

In 1944 Colonel Haydn Myer, the Secretary-Treasurer of the CSA, took the lead in revitalizing the organization. He began printing a monthly newsletter for the membership, discussing activities and general interests of the members. Renewed interest and enthusiasm in the Confederate Stamp Alliance began. In August 1945, the second national convention of the CSA was held in Newark, New Jersey, in conjunction with the annual American Philatelic Society exhibition. In April 1938, the Confederate Stamp Alliance adopted a Constitution and By-Laws which, from time to time, have been revised and amended to meet the changing needs of the Alliance. From the mid-1940s, interest in Confederate philately and Civil War history in general grew steadily as the nation moved towards the Civil War Centennial of 1961–1965.

In June 1978, the American Philatelic Society accepted the Confederate Stamp Alliance as an affiliate (No. 73) in its organization. This enabled the two organizations to share files for membership, authentication, and recruiting. With the increasing material available for reference and research, the Trustees chose the American Philatelic Research Library as the official repository for the archives and research material of the Alliance.

Nearly 150 years after the Civil War, collectors of Confederate postal history are still attempting to understand many of the unusual and unique items that were used to convey mail during those difficult years. The study, research, and collecting of the fourteen Confederate general issue stamps, Postmaster Provisional stamps from more than fifty-five southern cities, hand-stamped rate markings from more than 770 southern cities, manuscript markings, patriotic covers, express mail, prisoner-of-war mail, blockade-run mail, and many other aspects of postal history have captured the interest of philatelists. Research projects and collections have focused on particular cities, particular stamps, particular markings, general Confederate postal history, soldier's mail, prisoner-of-war mail, and numerous other specialized and general areas of interests. Although it is estimated that less than one-half of one percent of the Confederate philatelic items (1 out of every 200) have survived for our research, enjoyment, and collecting interests today, many spectacular items do exist and new finds are continuing to be made.

From its early beginnings, the Confederate Stamp Alliance has attracted many serious collectors and researchers of Confederate philately. From the eighty-one members in 1937, the CSA declined slightly during the years of World War II, but then grew steadily until by 1979 there were more than 800 members from the United States and ten foreign countries. Today, many of the 600+ members of the CSA are the proud owners of the most highly prized and sought after gems in the philatelic world.

The CSA boasts a top-notch, full-color quarterly publication, *The Confederate Philatelist*, edited by Randy L. Neil, as well as a quarterly newsletter. The CSA Authentication Service is recognized as the top in its field by collectors, retailers, and auction houses. The annual conventions are held in different locations around the country as well as more casual mid-year meetings, usually held in smaller Southern cities. The exhibit awards given out by the CSA at the annual Southern Supper are vied for with enthusiasm, as well as the service, writing, and research awards.

The CSA is a non-political fraternal organization open to all. Education and dissemination of research are its primary goals. In 2009 the CSA published *Special Mail Routes of the American Civil War: A Guide to Across-the-Lines Postal History* by Steven C. Walske and Scott R. Trepel, which won the literature Grand Award three times in literature competitions held at NAPEX, CHICOPEX, and STAMPSHOW in Pittsburgh.

In 1931, Dietz published the first actual catalogue that bore his name, a small volume of 320 pages that was followed up with a supplement in 1932 of eighty pages. Subsequent editions were issued in 1937, 1945, and 1959. The most recent edition was published in 1986, and a new edition has not been issued since.

In October 2006, the CSA announced acquisition of the rights to the *New Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook*. The twenty-first century edition of the *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook* is long overdue and will no doubt be in much demand by collectors, serious students, and dealers. The publication goal is 2011 to coordinate with the sesquicentennial of the beginning of the Civil War. The editorial board of the forthcoming *CSA Catalog* is headed by editor-in-chief Patricia A. Kaufmann, also the current president of the Alliance, as well as Francis J. Crown Jr. and Jerry S. Palazolo. Contributors include literally dozens of section editors.