

On 21 February 1861, just 19 days before actual conflict broke out the then seven [South Carolina (20 December 20, 1860), Mississippi (09 January 1861), Florida (10 January 1861), Alabama (11 January 1861), Georgia (19 January 1861), Louisiana (26 January 26, 1861) and Texas (01 February 1861)] Confederate States of America Post Office Department was established and by 01 June 1861 had assumed responsibility for postal service among the seceded states and the task of providing postage stamps and mail services for its citizens.

On April 12, 1861, the American Civil War officially began when the Confederate Army fired upon small US garrison occupying the unfinished brick fort at the entrance to Charleston SC.

It should be noted that the CSA Constitution provided for a national postal service to be established, then required it to be self financing beginning March 1, 1863 (somewhat like the charter for the USPS today). President Jefferson Davis appointed John Henninger Reagan on March 6, 1861 to head the new Confederate States of America Post Office Department.

Within a month after his appointment, Reagan ordered that ads be placed in both Southern and Northern newspapers seeking sealed proposals from printing companies who were interested in printing postage stamps for the Confederate States. The Confederate Post Office received bids from companies in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Newark, New Orleans and Richmond.

After the war started, it was decided that the contract to print Confederate stamps should go to a Southern firm. The CSPOD therefore awarded the contract to lithographers Hoyer & Ludwig, a very small firm in Richmond VA.

These first stamps were inferior in image quality compared to the engraved printings that the USPOD had issued, but given the sparse resources Confederacy had, they produced some nice designs.

It was not until 01 June 1861 that the United States Post Office Department ceased to handle the mail of the seceded states. At this point, the Confederate postal service took over and proved to be very efficient and remained in operation for the entire period of the Civil War.

In its brief 52 month existence, the Confederacy issued 14 major varieties of eight designs. The first Confederate issue, a 5¢ green imperforate bearing the portrait of President Jefferson Davis, appeared on 16 October 1861. Davis was the first living president to appear on a postage stamp.