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**The Madison Florida Postmaster Provisionals:  
Anatomy of a Postal History Research Project**

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Abstract

In 1984 I wrote a feature article published in *The American Philatelist* suggesting that there was a third and different type of postmaster provisional, partly U.S. and partly Confederate, which had never been addressed by philatelic catalogs such as Scott or Dietz. These are the 3-cent provisionals issued by postmasters in states declaring allegiance to the Confederacy before the Confederate postal rates went into effect on June 1, 1861.

This is primarily the story of the journey to get the Madison Court House, Florida 3¢ 1861 postmaster provisionals recognized by the two primary authentication bodies which deal with Confederate States material, the Philatelic Foundation and the Confederate Stamp Alliance Authentication Service. It is a story of alternating jubilation and deflation, culminating with the eventual acceptance of the formerly maligned Madison provisionals as genuine provisional issues.

The first of the Madison provisionals was discovered in 1868 by none other than J. Walter Scott, the founder of the Scott Catalogue who stated in print in 1872 that "the Madison was the first issued, best authenticated, and scarcest Confederate provisional." The Madison provisionals subsequently passed through the hands of the most prominent collectors such as Caspary, Ferrari, Lapham, Moody, Philbrick, Duveen, Hind, and Avery as well as celebrated dealers of the time. Although listed by Scott at least through 1896 and for some time thereafter, the Madisons was eventually de-listed and spent nearly a century under a dark cloud.

You will hear what research techniques were used - including some "think outside the box" - to change the minds of the most zealous detractors and prove the genuineness of the Madison provisionals beyond question in order to seal their rightful place in postal history.

But this is far more than the story of the Madison provisionals. It is the story of the successful creation of an entirely new category of provisionals first listed in the Scott's Specialized Catalogue in 2000 as well as in the forthcoming 2012 CSA Catalog – the 3¢ 1861 Postmasters' Provisionals.