

New Orleans, Louisiana John L. Riddell, Postmaster

John Leonard Riddell (1807-1865) was a scientist, inventor (the binocular microscope is to his credit), melter and refiner of the New Orleans Mint (1838-1848), and, from August 1, 1860, to February 19, 1863, the New Orleans postmaster. Riddell owned slaves, but was opposed to secession. After Louisiana joined the Confederacy, and the new government's postal system was inaugurated, Riddell was replaced as C.S.A. postmaster by two different men, but neither one was confirmed, so Riddell continued to perform his duties, including the issuance of provisional stamps.

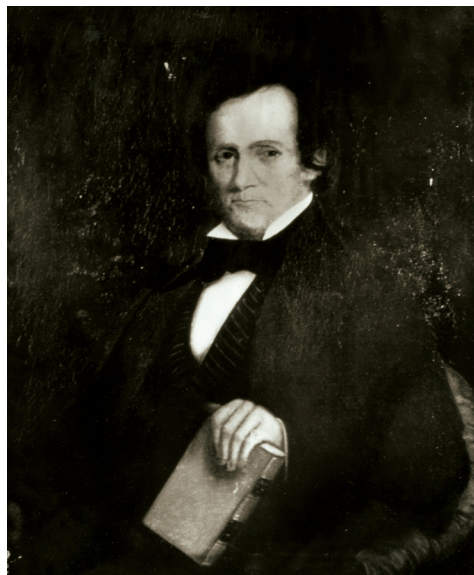
On June 6, 1861, Postmaster Riddell placed an order for stamps with John V. Childs, an engraver and printer located at 10 Camp Street. The 5c Brown stamps were delivered on June 12, and one cover is recorded with a June 12 datestamp. 2c Red stamps were printed from a plate without the imprint, but these were evidently withheld from sale until January 1862. The 2c stamps in Blue were printed from plates with the imprint, and these were issued in late June or early July. Although 10c stamps were initially ordered, they were not printed. Handstamped envelopes were also sold as provisionals.

The stereotype plate of 40 subjects was arranged in five rows of eight. Imprints at the top and bottom of the 5c sheet read "Usable exclusively in the New Orleans Post Office." On the 2c Blue sheet, a similar imprint appears at top and a three-line imprint at bottom explains the rates paid by a 2c stamp. The "exclusively" imprint is thought to have been added to the plates after Postmaster Riddell received complaints from other postmasters about attempts to use the stamps outside New Orleans. It was copied by the Mobile postmaster, Lloyd Bowers, when he ordered his own provisional stamps from a local printer.

Several different printings of the adhesive provisional stamps were made in 1861, including a color change for the 2c and some color variation for the 5c. The earliest and latest recorded dates for the different stamps are listed in the table below (adapted from Dr. Hubert C. Skinner's 1978 *Congress Book* article):

Stamp	Earliest	Latest
62X2, 2c Red (1st Printing)	Jan. 6, 1862	Apr. 4, 1862
62X1, 2c Blue (2nd Printing)	Jul. 14, 1861	Feb. 22, 1862
62X3, 5c Brown on White (1st Printing)	Jun. 12, 1861	Aug. 17, 1861
62X3b, 5c Ocher on White (1st Printing)	Jun. 18, 1861	Sep. 2, 1861
62X4, 5c Red Brown on Bluish (2nd Printing)	Aug. 20, 1861	Feb. 12, 1862
62X5, 5c Yellow Brown on Off-White (3rd Printing)	Dec. 4, 1861	Jan. 1, 1862
62X6, 5c Red Error on White (1st Printing)	June 1861	—
62X7, 5c Red Error on Bluish (2nd Printing)	Sep. 17, 1861	Dec. 4, 1861

The New Orleans provisionals exist in large numbers relative to other post offices' stamps. The variety of New Orleans provisional printings and postal uses enables philatelists to form collections to a level of depth that is not possible for any other Southern post office.



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New Orleans Postmaster 1860-1863