

## Patriotic Postal Covers: “Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds,” 1861

### Introduction

---

Patriotic postal covers are an important part of the material culture of the Civil War era. People often collected these covers in special keepsake albums. Such decorative envelopes were used as advertisements and to promote various causes such as support of the Union. In 1861, J. H. Tingley in New York City published “Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds.” President Abraham Lincoln and General Winfield Scott face off against Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General P. G. T. Beauregard, while European and African American observers hover in the background. In this contest the Union expectations of a short and successful war are fulfilled, as Lincoln easily beats Davis.

### Questions for Discussion

---

Read the introduction and carefully examine the five postal cover images. Then apply your knowledge of American history to answer the following questions:

1. Explain why postal covers were created, purchased, and collected during the Civil War.
2. Using information in the introduction as well as clues in the five postal covers, describe the illustrator’s point of view.
3. Using information in the introduction as well as clues in the five postal covers, how do we know that these postal covers were created early in the conflict between the Union and Confederacy?

\*\*\* NOTE: The following may be conducted as a collaborative lesson with both an American history and a fine arts teacher. This activity will require clear images of the five postal covers.

- The teacher(s) should model the activity with the “1<sup>st</sup> Round” image, preferably projecting the image on a large screen. Have students recognize and identify images including: Title, Caption, Central Figures within the Ring, Peripheral Images in the Four Corners, Background Images and Other Icons (For example, in the “1<sup>st</sup> Round” image students should be led to recognize and then explain the positioning of the Capitol building behind Lincoln’s supporters and the African Americans seated behind Davis’s supporters). This activity can be facilitated with an electronic pointer or by using a PowerPoint cropping technique.
- Divide students into appropriate groups.
- Distribute copies of the five postal cover images to each group along with a prepared worksheet with five boxes labeled *Title*, *Caption*, *Central Figures*, *Peripheral Images in the Four Corners*, *Background Images and Other Icons*.
- Ask the students to subject each of the four remaining postal covers to the same

## Patriotic Postal Covers: "Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds," 1861

- scrutiny as modeled and to record their discoveries on the worksheet.
- In a debriefing activity, bring all groups together to exchange and compare their findings.
  - Using their findings, ask the students to explain why this set of postal covers offered an unrealistic vision of the resolution of Union/Confederate tensions.

## Patriotic Postal Covers: "Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds," 1861

### Image



"Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds. 1st Round," 1861 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00496.017)



"Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds. 2nd Round," 1861 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00496.017)



## Patriotic Postal Covers: "Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds," 1861



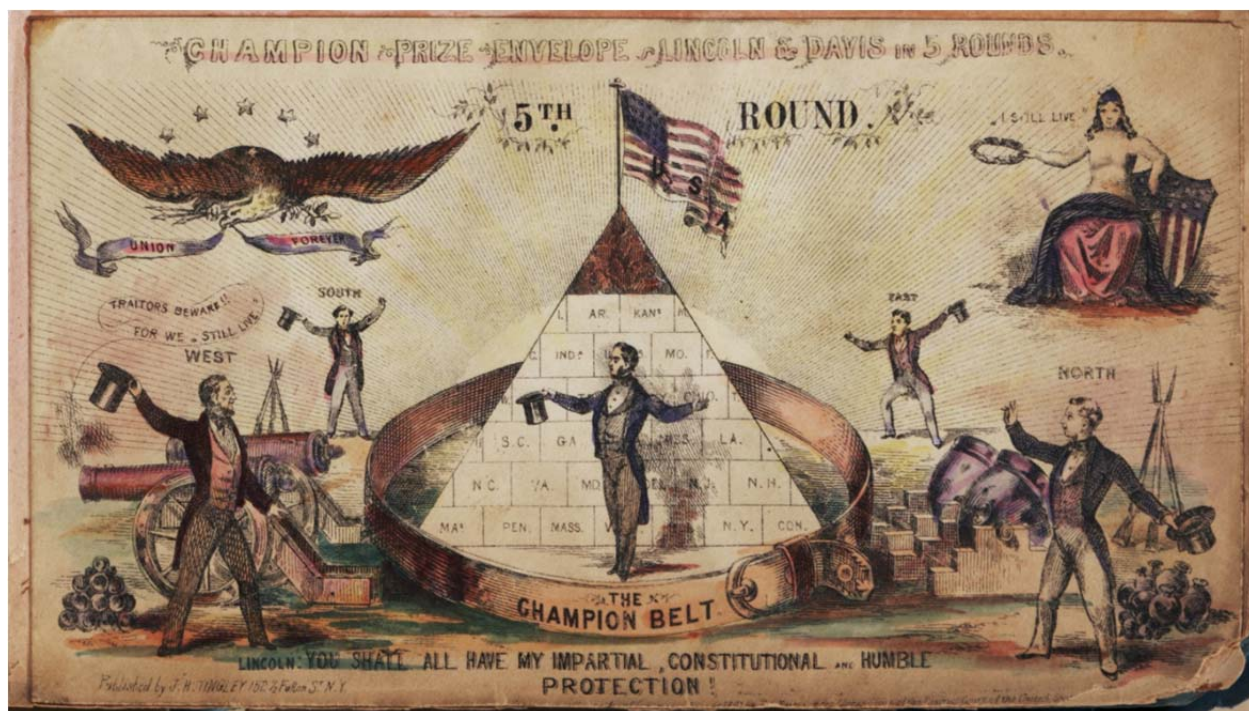
"Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds. 3rd Round," 1861 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00496.017)



"Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds. 4th Round," 1861 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00496.017)



Patriotic Postal Covers: "Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds," 1861



"Champion Prize Envelope – Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds. 5th Round," 1861 (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC00496.017)