

## A Civil War Adversity Cover using Piano Sheet Music

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Cover addressed to Capt. H. S. Van Eaton,  
Care of Capt. J. B. Chrisman, Brookhaven,  
Mississippi. Bearing CSA #11 ten-cent blue  
Jefferson Davis stamp

During the American Civil War, citizens in the confederate states faced shortages of basic materials including envelopes and paper. To send letters, they recycled older paper items. Such pieces are now known as adversity covers. This particular cover sent probably towards the end of the war was made from the blank back of a title page of a piece of sheet music.

Unfolding the envelope, reveals in distinctive typeset script the text “Bouquet de Melodies pour le Piano.” This was the name of a series of piano transcriptions of operatic works by Ferdinand Beyer that was immensely popular in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and printed by multiple publishers in several editions.

The Library of Congress is home to a large collection of sheet music, including a mid-1850s edition of Beyer’s arrangement of *La fille du régiment* printed by J. E. Gould of Philadelphia that matches the distinctive fonts inside the adversity cover.

Below left: unfolded inside of cover. Below  
right: Image of J. E. Gould’s edition of  
Beyer’s *La fille du regiment*.  
Library of Congress

