

Wallpaper Envelopes - Necessity and Invention

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During the final years of the U.S. Civil War, Union navy and railroad blockades isolated the Confederacy from all markets, creating shortages of almost every kind of commodity, including paper. The saying, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention", has never been more aptly used than when describing the multitude of solutions to the paper shortage the Confederate states encountered. Blank pages of paper needed to write letters and make envelopes was almost nonexistent.

One of the most creative, and colorful, remedies for the envelope scarcity was the use of wallpaper, either having been stripped from living room or dining room walls or cut from unused rolls.

The envelope was made by cutting a rectangular piece of wallpaper and folding it into the appropriate shape, with the design being the inside of the piece.



(Images reduced to 75%.)

Wallpaper envelopes. Just one of the many ways the Confederacy embraced the saying, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention," in their attempts to deal with adverse conditions toward the end of the Civil War, both on and off the battlefield.