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## Thomas Jefferson LaMotte, South Carolina Bookbinder 1850-1905

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## Thomas Jefferson LaMotte, South Carolina Bookbinder 1850-1905

### Abstract

The discovery of a rare 19th-century binder mark launched this investigation of South Carolina bookbinder Thomas Jefferson LaMotte (1830-1911). This article will discuss his bookbinding practice and newspaper career, Civil War experiences, and civic roles. LaMotte's biography will develop a fresh framework for future research of South Carolina book arts. Included in the appendix is a new roster of 44 Columbia bookbinders—including 10 women—active from 1859 to 1911.

### Keywords

Thomas Jefferson LaMotte, binder stamps, bookbinder, book arts, South Carolina

### **Thomas Jefferson LaMotte, South Carolina Bookbinder 1850-1905**

Amongst the books in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina resides a first edition of Richard Whately's *Thoughts on Secondary Punishments* (1832). Inside the front cover appears a small stamp identifying the binder as T. J. LaMotte of Columbia, SC. In the Wade Hall Collection for Southern History and Culture at the University of Alabama Libraries there is housed *The Annals of Newberry: In Two Parts* (1892), another book bearing the binder's mark of T. J. LaMotte. The discovery of two 19th-century bindings attributed to the same bookbinder is remarkable because early American bookbinders rarely signed their work (French, 1967; Palmer, 2007; Ladd, 2012). While the *Annals of Newberry* binding stamp is listed in "Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books" and the Digital Public Library of America, the Whately stamp is not included in either collection.

For more than 60 years, Thomas Jefferson Talley LaMotte (1830-1911) resided in Columbia, SC. He lived as a bookbinder, Civil War veteran, journalist, and jack of many trades. This study creates a personal and professional biography of LaMotte, placing him within 19th- and 20th-century South Carolina book arts. This investigation also expands the narrative of American bookbinding and suggests further study of Columbia, South Carolina, and Southern bookbinders and book arts.

### **Bookbinding in 19th-Century America**

In her review of "Bound and Determined: Identifying American Bookbindings"<sup>1</sup> L. Palmer explains that identifying bookbinders will always be a difficult task because most bookbinders were anonymous. Palmer writes that, "Compared to printers, whose names generally appear on the title page of every piece of work they produce, binders' names typically appear nowhere on the books they have bound" (2007, p. 477). Palmer adds that "on very few occasions" (p. 477), early American

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<sup>1</sup> "Bound and Determined: Identifying American Bookbindings," was a 2007 exhibition curated by William Spawn and Thomas E. Kinsella for Bryn Mawr College.

bookbinders used tickets, advertisements, or stamps on the inside and outside covers to identify their work; the discovery of intact stamps is a rarity (p. 478). Thus, the existence of two LaMotte binder stamps (see Appendix A) invites a brief synopsis of 19th-century bookbinding in America and South Carolina.

The 1850 census of the United States indicates a healthy bookbinding industry with 3,414 bookbinders at work in 31 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia (U.S. Congress, 1850, p. 68). New York and New Jersey bookbinders accounted for nearly 64% of the trade; in strong contrast, South Carolina had only 15 bookbinders. Charleston and Columbia were the largest cities in South Carolina at that time.

### ***Charleston***

Book arts in mid-19th century Charleston incorporated multiple trades and businesses. The 1848 Charleston census reported 122 white residents and 8 Black "slaves" as "Contributing to Literature and the Arts," including 13 bookbinders and 70 printers (Dawson & DeSaussure, 1970, pp. 32-35). This classification of printers and bookbinders is significant, illustrating the recognition that binders were specialists alongside artists, book dealers, daguerreotypists, editors, engravers, librarians, painters (Dawson & DeSaussure, 1970, pp. 32-33).

### ***Columbia***

An 1859 Columbia city directory listed three binders and one bindery, the Carolina Bindery (Hershman, 1859). LaMotte was not mentioned in the 1859 city directory but he was documented as a Columbia binder in 1854 (*Independent Press*, 1854). Columbia printers, who often employed binders (see Appendix B), were producing newspapers as early as 1791 (McKissick, 1936, p. 226), books in 1801 (Babcock Meriwether, 1936, p. 192), and periodicals by 1830 (Babcock Meriwether, 1936, p. 220).

In a study of Reconstruction printers, Lustrea (2017) discovered four bookbinders active in Columbia from 1860 to 1879: Samuel Bunch; John Dorsey; Enoch R. Stokes; and Thomas Wood (pp. 46-47). LaMotte's name does not appear in Lustrea's research; however, this study establishes that

LaMotte is one of 44 binders who served the state capital community from 1859 to 1911. Inspection of 19 city directories published during LaMotte's six decades in Columbia (see Appendix B) reveals a vigorous bookbinding trade which included 10 women and market dominance by two newspapers and one printing company.

### **Thomas Jefferson LaMotte**

#### ***Charleston and Columbia, SC: 1830-1850***

LaMotte was the son of Elizabeth Ann Kirk and James Henry LaMotte, a blacksmith in Charleston, SC, of French Huguenot descent (LaMotte, J., 1828; U.S. Census Bureau, 1850; *The State*, 1911; Gault, 1977). There is some discrepancy as to when Thomas LaMotte first came to Columbia. LaMotte's obituary in *The State* (1911) and a biography of LaMotte (Gault, 1977) claim that he moved to Columbia when he was 16 years old, around 1846; however, the 1850 census places him in Charleston on Sept. 19, 1850. In the 1850 census, LaMotte appears as a bookbinder and his two brothers as printers. The 1850 Richland County census surname index does not reference any LaMottes (Richland County 1850 Census Index, 1987) and because the 1840 U.S. Census is not digitized (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), LaMotte's 1840 residence cannot be confirmed.

Some sources state that LaMotte moved to Columbia in 1846 to represent the Charleston "book-binding firm" Evans and Cogswell at the South Carolina legislature (Gault, 1977). But how likely is this story? Why would a bookbinding firm need representation at the state capital? *The Camden Weekly Journal* of Sept. 18, 1860 confirms Evans and Cogswell as publishers. *The Camden Weekly Journal* said that until lately they were called "Walker, Evans, & Co." (*Camden Weekly Journal*, 1860, p.2). The firm appeared as early as August 1854 (*Camden Weekly Journal*, 1854). It is an open question as to whether Walker and Evans even existed when LaMotte came to Columbia. Assuming the firm had existed, there might be a reason that LaMotte would represent its interests in Columbia. *The Lancaster Ledger* of Nov. 8, 1854, reported expenditures for the local commissioner of public buildings, including an expense for \$46.50 to Walker and Evans for books; these were most

likely blank record books (*The Lancaster Ledger*, 1854). This suggests that the account given in Gault (1977) and *The State* (1911) is accurate. If Walker and Evans had or were seeking a contract with the state to supply such books to the South Carolina government in 1846, then one would not be surprised that LaMotte would be sent to grease the wheels in Columbia.

### ***Columbia, SC: 1851-1860***

LaMotte married Mary Harriet Beard of Columbia, SC, on Sept. 25, 1851 (Gault, 1977). Mary was the eldest daughter of William Beard, a Columbia tax collector<sup>2</sup> who left his estate to LaMotte (U.S. Census Bureau, 1850). Eight years later, the LaMotte household included Thomas, Mary, and their four children, plus four of Mary's sisters (U.S. Census Bureau, 1860). At this time, LaMotte's personal and real estate holdings were valued at \$2,500.

In addition to managing the Beard estate and income, LaMotte opened his own bindery. The Dec. 15, 1854, issue of the *Independent Press* reports damage caused to buildings in Columbia by a fire (*Independent Press*, 1854). Mentioned in the story was damage sustained to a book bindery owned by T. J. LaMotte, located above Miot's drug store. This places the bindery at 196 Richardson Street (Hershman, 1859). Several months later, *The Camden Weekly Journal* of Jan. 30, 1855, has LaMotte staying at a hotel called the Mansion House in Columbia, probably because his dwelling burnt down in the fire (*Camden Weekly Journal*, 1855). This suggests that LaMotte was also living in his bindery. LaMotte was married and had one child when he was binding books over Miot's drug store.

LaMotte would soon change occupations. In the *Edgefield Advertiser* of Jan. 4, 1854, an announcement appeared of the creation of *The Carolina Times* newspaper, signed by Greneker<sup>3</sup> and Thomas LaMotte as publishers (*Edgefield Advertiser*, 1854). Less than a year later, LaMotte and

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<sup>2</sup> Beard's 1852 will placed LaMotte in charge of his unmarried daughters and extensive real estate holdings valued at \$20,000 (Beard, 1852, pp. 1-9). The estate included multiple city properties, a farm, an indentured servant named John, and "... certain slaves, my property, named Margaret and her daughter Emma, Delia and Isaac with the future increase of the females thereof ..." (Beard, 1852, pp. 1-9).

<sup>3</sup> This may have been Thomas F. Greneker, who would later publish *The Newberry Herald* for a short time. See the Sept. 21, 1881, issue of *The Newberry Herald*.

Greneker both withdrew from *The Carolina Times* and the paper was suspended (*Camden Weekly Journal*, 1854). A differing historical account of Columbia newspapers states that *The Carolina Times* was established in 1850 and sold to E. H. Britton around 1853 and renamed the *Daily Carolina Times* (McKissick, 1936). LaMotte was not mentioned in these transactions.

Throughout his adult life LaMotte was active in the agitation for temperance. *The Camden Weekly Journal* of Feb. 13, 1855, has LaMotte participating in the South Carolina Temperance Society (Dellay, 1855). LaMotte seems to have been in the movement at least this early and then for the rest of his life. By 1859 LaMotte resided at the corner of Taylor and Winn in Columbia and worked as a magistrate (Hershman, 1859; U.S. Census, 1860).

### ***Virginia: 1861-65***

Three months after the Civil War began, LaMotte enlisted as a private in Hampton's Legion, South Carolina Volunteers of the Confederate Army (Confederate Hampton's Legion Company Muster Roll, 1861, image 2). Records from the National Archives indicate LaMotte served the company as commissary and later the Confederacy as a printer. LaMotte is mentioned in a handwritten letter dated July 25, 1863, from Confederate Secretary of the Treasury Christopher G. Memminger<sup>4</sup> to the Confederate Secretary of War, Hon. J.A. Seddon:

Sir. You will please detail private Thomas J. LaMotte, of Hampton's Legion SoCa Vol. Jenkins Brigade for duty in the Lithographic Printing office of Messrs Evans & Cogswell Columbia SoCal. Mr. LaMotte is very skillful in preparing Inks, transfer paper & c. and could be made very use=full [sic] to Messrs Evans & Cogswell in the prosecution of their contract with this Department for printing Treasury notes, as under existing circumstances, owing to the scarcity of all the material used in lithographic printing, they have to manufacture many of the articles, usually bought al=ready [sic] prepared for use, and Mr. LaMotte is skilled in this trade of the business. (Memminger, 1863)

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<sup>4</sup>Memminger subsequently was held responsible for the collapse of Confederate credit, in part by printing too much paper currency that depreciated heavily in 1863 (Memminger, 2017).

LaMotte's transfer from the Hampton Legion to help print Confederate treasury notes might be confirmed by a company muster roll dated July and August 1863, when he is noted "absent" and in "detached service" (Confederate Hampton's Legion Company Muster Roll, 1863, image 12). An undated diary entry by LaMotte cited by Gault (1977) stated that LaMotte "commenced with Evans & Cogswell on Monday, Aug. 22, 1864 at Kinsler's Hall--transferred to lower shop Sept. 2, 1864--nine weeks service at \$40--\$360.00" (p. 1). Gault concluded this was employment undertaken by LaMotte while "home on leave from the army"<sup>5</sup> (1977, p. 1).

By January 1865, LaMotte was posted near Petersburg, VA, living in a cabin on Wilson Farm (LaMotte & Gault, 1864). Portions of his handwritten diary and a transcription provided by a descendant, Louis C. LaMotte of Laurinburg, NC,<sup>6</sup> include extensive details about LaMotte's Confederate army living conditions and experiences during the last four months of the Civil War (LaMotte & Gault, 1864).

**January 1865.** LaMotte described performing watch duty, reading letters from home and chapters of *The Bible*, and eating a New Year dinner of " ... ½ loaf of bread and ½ lb. fresh beef (partly cooked) per man to my Company with 2 turnips for the Company" (Jan. 1-3). He became ill but refused hospitalization; soon, the company doctor ordered LaMotte "to rear" (Jan. 7). Later that month, LaMotte recorded a breakfast of "English beef, irish [sic] potatoes, cornbread, coffee" (Jan. 30) and wrote a letter to his wife, Mary. He described weather conditions alternately as clear, moderate to cold temperatures, snowfall, rain, and on Jan. 31, beautiful.

**February 1865.** LaMotte reported February began as "A lovely morning, like opening of spring" (Feb. 1), but sleet soon fell and LaMotte's leg was sore, for reasons not noted. He described a meal of chicken stew, eggs, butter, and cake shared by an officer the same day he observed

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<sup>5</sup> This period of employment occurred nearly a year after LaMotte was detailed to Evans and Cogswell in 1863. We believe these are two different episodes of work for the same printing company.

<sup>6</sup> Pages of LaMotte's Civil War diary and a letter from Louis C. LaMotte to Jane Roehrs, March 4, 1965, are among three LaMotte manuscripts held by the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina. The entire collection is dated 1864.

prisoners riding the “wooden horse” (Feb. 4), a painful punishment for prisoners. LaMotte’s entries darkened with news of “... Sherman’s approach. The enemy have made a demonstration on our extreme right-at Burgess’ Mill today driving in our pickets<sup>7</sup>. Orders at night to close up for the support of our Principal Battery (Salient) on our left ...” and the company moved 100 yards after dark (Feb. 5); LaMotte, however, remained to guard the company’s baggage. He soon was hospitalized for treatment of his leg and despite applications of flaxseed poultices, the leg ulcerated. LaMotte reported the battle of Hatcher’s Run that ended with the death of Confederate Brig. Gen. John Pegram (LaMotte, Feb. 8, 1865; “Hatcher’s Run,” n.d.), but did not participate in this significant battle; he remained incapacitated amidst rumors of Sherman’s march on Columbia and received two month’s pay of \$45 (Feb. 16). LaMotte wrote of anxiety for his family in Columbia, including his ill wife, but also noted that his leg wound improved after new treatments. His handwritten prayers for his family increased greatly in length and fervency, and on Feb. 20, LaMotte described dire conditions for the Confederacy and his home state:

The papers this morning announce the evacuation of Charleston (on Tuesday) and Columbia (on Friday). I suppose both were unavoidable as Beauregard’s force (if he has any) in the enemy’s front was entirely inadequate even to check him between the Salkehatchie and the Congaree<sup>8</sup>, the most desirable country for defense in the state. The abandonment of Columbia under these circumstances was wise but will turn the whole state open to the N.C. line, and unless troops are supplied at that point, Sherman’s march through that state and junction with Grant will be inevitable. (Feb. 20)

By Feb. 22, LaMotte apparently returned to duty as commissary, despite a blistered and painful leg, with orders to prepare medical supplies for movement.

**March 1865.** LaMotte read Richmond newspaper reports of Columbia’s destruction by Federal forces (March 11). When orders relocated his entire Brigade, LaMotte instead was admitted

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<sup>7</sup> A reference to soldiers on watch duty.

<sup>8</sup> Two prominent rivers in South Carolina.

to General Hospital, where his leg was treated with water and internal doses of arsenic (March 15). LaMotte's glowing descriptions of the facility, physicians, and food reflect a comfortable environment until mid-month, when his improving condition resulted in reduced rations: "Breakfast- a piece of hard black bread and half pint of cornfed<sup>9</sup> coffee without milk or sugar. My leg improved but my feelings generally not very lively" (March 17). LaMotte's diary turned again to battle accounts on March 25, when 200 wounded arrived at the hospital after "cannonading at daylight on the left near Appomattox R[iver]" led by General Lee (March 25). The next day, LaMotte walked four miles with other convalescents to catch a train for Richmond, VA, and Seabrook Receiving Hospital (March 26). There, LaMotte learned his Columbia home and contents "... were saved from the fire through the efforts of a Yankee friend and some negroes" who subsequently left with the enemy (March 26). His leg ulcerated again and LaMotte was sent to Jackson Hospital, where he described a dinner of rice, peas, soup, and bread as "good ... and enough" (March 27) and breakfast of "coffee, codfish and potatoes, bacon, bread" (March 28). After an overnight bread poultice, a surgeon prescribed an ointment of pulverized lard and mercury that greatly improved LaMotte's leg ulcers, which "discharged during the night" (March 29). LaMotte awoke early on the 29th, for reasons he recorded with humor:

Awaked [sic] before day, being disturbed by the incursions of a numerous pack of hungrey [sic] rats, carerring [sic] over the flour [sic] of our ward, evidently on a foraging expedition. I had to repel the attempt of two to gain my bed. Just at day-break I sat up in bed to witness the evacuation of our premises by the rats! I saw several of the largest specimens I ever saw exit through a hole in the floor. (March 29)

LaMotte concluded this day and month by reading the entirety of *Ten Years of a Preachers [sic] Life* by William H. Milburn and walking to a nearby river.

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<sup>9</sup> Likely a reference to the use of cornmeal as an additive or extender during the Civil War. See Billock (2018) and Webb (2021).

**April 1865.** The transcribed diary at this point skips to an undated paragraph that launches LaMotte's final wartime entries about "the death throes of the Confederacy" (n.d.). LaMotte learned on April 9 of Lee's surrender; the hospital surgeon "told all who can get away to do so" (April 9) and LaMotte observed "Fugitives from the army by tens and hundreds are passing through in haste," (April 9). On the night of April 9, LaMotte and two other soldiers, Harper and Barnhill, began walking a westerly route toward the town of Liberty, VA. They sheltered at 1 a.m. in a stable, where LaMotte wrote, "The train abandoned and the mules and horses taken by the flying fugitives to facilitate their escape" (April 9). LaMotte's entries mentioned some overnights and meals in private homes, but also a campfire and sleeping on the ground. He reached Reidsville, NC, on April 16 and found a train that took him and Barnhill another 10 miles; Harper did not accompany him on this leg. The next day, the men " ... were overtaken by a train of wagons belonging to Butler's Cavalry and by the kindness of Mr. John Calhoun<sup>10</sup> were permitted to ride to Greensboro [NC]" (April 17). In Greensboro, LaMotte wrote eloquently of conditions:

Here everything betokens the excitement and confusion attendant on prospective evacuation. Several thousand paroled and struggling soldiers are here on their way home. Provisions and clothing are being distributed, lavishly to the soldiers. The country people are gathering around like Andeau [sic] Vultures, waiting with longing anxiety for the falling of the Confederacy when they will pounce on the body (politic), give it the finishing stroke, and strip the carcass of its remnant of plunder. We bivouac with the wagons, sup on good biscuit, coffee, bacon, and retire beneath our blankets.

All sorts of rumors are afloat here. The Yankees are all around us. Sherman in front with 25,000, Sheridan coming from Virginia with 10,000 more-Stonewall at Sautisberry with 8 or 10,000 - and Gilmore coming up from Charleston with 10,000 negroes. Johnston and Gov.

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<sup>10</sup> This likely was John Caldwell Calhoun (1843-1918), grandson of South Carolina Sen. John C. Calhoun (1782-1850).

Vance are gone out to propose a surrender which will certainly take place to-morrow, etc, etc. (LaMotte, April 17, 1865)

The next day, LaMotte “reached and crossed Deep River on a raft, 10 miles by noon and at 6 stopped at High Point, 5 miles further. The Yankees destroyed the Depot and public stores here a week ago. Harper came up tonight. Slept on the porch of Impey’s Hotel” (April 18). Alternating foot travel with available trains, LaMotte and his companions managed to reach Charlotte, NC, where Harper and Barnhill separated from LaMotte “on taking the train today” (LaMotte, n.d.). LaMotte carried on via train and by foot, dining with friendly families; by April 20, he was in Rock Hill, SC. His luck with train passage disappeared about 50 miles north of Columbia, in Chester, SC: “The trains can run no further in the direction of Columbia, the road being completely blocked with cars as far as Blackstock,” LaMotte wrote (April 21). On “feet much blistered” (April 23), LaMotte reached Winnsboro, SC, and stayed overnight with Thomas Hobbs. The next day, LaMotte missed a potential ride to Columbia and walked the rest of the way home, where he “found all the family well” (April 24).

### ***Columbia, SC: 1865-1911***

After the war, LaMotte’s life took new directions. An 1868 *Daily Phoenix* article announced that he was appointed a secretary of the Columbia Democratic party. One year later LaMotte appeared as the assignee for several auctions that took place in Columbia (*Daily Phoenix*, 1869). The 1870 census listed LaMotte as a notary public and it may have been in this capacity that he was acting as an assignee in auctions (U.S. Census Bureau, 1870). According to this census, LaMotte was living with his wife Mary, their three sons James, Arthur, and Gamewell, and daughter Mary.

LaMotte showed up again as an assignee in 1871, after the 1870 census (*The Daily Phoenix*, 1871).

This fact lends more credence to the idea that he was acting as assignee while a notary public.

The early 1870s saw LaMotte start his second newspaper. *The Columbia Record* obituary for LaMotte reports that he founded *The Carolinian* with John P. Thomas in 1872 (*The Columbia Record*, 1911). *The Charleston News* confirms this by writing in 1872 that LaMotte worked with *The South Carolinian*, apparently another name for the paper (*Charleston Daily News*, 1872). In 1873 the

*Newberry Herald* also referred to “LaMotte of The Carolinian” (*Newberry Herald*, 1873). That same year, LaMotte appeared in *The Daily Phoenix* as a trustee of the Southern Life Insurance Company in Columbia (*The Daily Phoenix*, 1873). But this position was probably largely ornamental. As a trusted citizen, Lamotte may have been asked to be a trustee despite having no experience in insurance.

On June 1, 1880, LaMotte and his family lived next to the Columbia Female College on Plain Street (U.S. Census, 1880, p. 253). LaMotte, now 49 years old, and his wife Mary, 49, shared their home with sons William J., 27, and Gamewell, 10; daughters Mary A., 20, and Jessie C., 13; and aunt Elma A. Beard, 38 (U.S. Census, 1880, p. 253). Also residing in the same house was a second family of four African Americans identified as washerwoman Maria Williams, 40, and her daughter, house servant Sarah Williams, 18; grandson Jessie Gwins, 14; and granddaughter Rebecca Johnson, 3 (U.S. Census, 1880). Coincidentally, the census enumerator was J. W. LaMotte.

By 1883, LaMotte was working for *The Columbia Register* (*News and Herald*, Oct. 9, 1883).<sup>11</sup> LaMotte shows up consistently in the newspapers of South Carolina as working for *The Register*. The *Columbia Record* obituary for LaMotte stated that he worked as the “local editor” for *The Register* (1911, p. 10); other evidence refers to LaMotte as an agent for the paper (*Abbeville Press and Banner*, March 18, 1885). In 1885, *The Newberry Herald* announced that LaMotte had been made a reporter for *The Columbia Register* (*The Newberry Herald*, June 18, 1885). While a reporter for *The Columbia Register*, LaMotte was involved in the infamous newspaper wars outlined in J. Underwood’s *Deadly Censorship: Murder, Honor, and Freedom of the Press* (2013). On Feb. 2, 1886, LaMotte criticized an article written by Narciso G. Gonzales, head of the *Charleston News and Courier*’s news bureau in Columbia, a passionate rival of *The Columbia Register*. Underwood (2013) wrote, “Gonzales angrily accosted LaMotte at a state government office in Columbia and immediately began to hit him for denigrating Gonzales’ professional honor, continuing to strike him

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<sup>11</sup> This is the earliest, in-print instance of LaMotte working for *The Columbia Register*.

until restrained by an 'on-looker'" (p. 18).<sup>12</sup> LaMotte's brush with the volatile Gonzales received coverage for a full week in *The Columbia Register* (Underwood, 2013); the event likely resurfaced in LaMotte's thoughts in 1903, when Gonzales was shot by South Carolina Lt. Gov. James H. Tillman over negative press coverage of Tillman (Edgar, 2006). Coincidentally, LaMotte's son Gamewell was present when Tillman shot Gonzales and helped move the mortally wounded newspaper editor to *The Columbia Register's* business office (1903, Jan. 22). LaMotte remained a reporter for *The Columbia Register* until 1891; the last reference to LaMotte the reporter was on March 25 of that year (*The Watchman and Southron*, March 25, 1891).

In the years after *The Register*, LaMotte was still active in the temperance movement he had joined as a young man. He drew journalistic ire in 1896 when *The Abbeville Press and Banner* published a criticism of LaMotte's effort to undermine the state's 1892 Dispensary Law. The Dispensary Law granted the state a monopoly on wholesale and retail liquor sales (Hibbard, 1967). LaMotte was identified by the newspaper as secretary of the defunct prohibition party in South Carolina. The paper alleged that he aligned himself with supporters of the "bar-room system, and the enemies of prohibition, to break up the dispensary law" (1896, Jan. 15). Even in his later years Lamotte was active in the state politics of alcohol.

Thomas Lamotte entered the 20th century intact. In 1900, Thomas LaMotte, now 69, Mary, now 70, and their daughter Mary, now 42, lived with their son Gamewell and his family on Washington Street in Columbia (U.S. Census Bureau, 1900). According to Gault (1977), LaMotte wrote an undated memorandum which tells us how he spent his twilight years as a bookbinder:

On retiring from my connection with *The Register*, I established a small bindery where I found work for myself for a number of years, principally in repairing and rebinding records in the office of the Secretary of State and books in the State Library, Supreme Court Library,

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<sup>12</sup> The February 9, 1886, story titled "A Lively Day in Columbia " in the *The Abbeville Messenger* also recounted these events. This story has been digitized and is available through the South Carolina Historical Newspapers collection at the University of South Carolina.

and the libraries of South Carolina College and Winthrop College. (LaMotte & Gault, 1977, p. 5)

He was listed in the 1900 census as a bookbinder. This marks Lamotte's third stint as a bookbinder. Lamotte began binding books again sometime between 1891 and 1900. His listing in the 1904-05 Columbia city directory reads, "Bindery (The), T. J. LaMotte propr, book binders, 1423 Main" (Columbia City Directory, 1904-5).

In these years LaMotte continued to bind books but also labored in areas outside the book arts. He co-founded in 1903 the Law and Order League, an organization dedicated to controlling perceived lawlessness in South Carolina (*The Watchman and Southron*, 1903), and appeared as a league member in 1904 (*The Bamberg Herald*, 1904). LaMotte's activities on this front were likely connected with his support of temperance, as *The Bamberg Herald* (1904) included drunkenness with lawlessness. LaMotte had several other sources of income in the early 1900s, to include clerical employment in the early 1900s for the State Historian, Railway Commission, and Confederate rolls and statistics (Gault, 1977, p. 6). LaMotte stated he maintained the "Permanent Exhibit of Resources of the State" from 1904 to 1907 for the Commissioner of Agriculture and Immigration, and in 1908 prepared a book index for publication (Gault, 1977, p. 6). By 1909, Lamotte was listed as retired in the city directory (*Columbia City Directory*, 1909) and living at 1632 Hampton Street. In September of 1909, LaMotte attended his granddaughter Susie's wedding in Saluda, NC (Gault, 1977, p. 7). This is the last mention we have of Thomas LaMotte until his death.

LaMotte died on Nov. 18, 1911 (*The State*, 1911). He was survived by three adult children: Mary Allston LaMotte (1857-1945); Arthur Kirk LaMotte (1860-1940); and Asbury Gamewell LaMotte (1868-1929), according to Gault (1968) and Swingle (2014). He was preceded in death by the infant daughters Eugenia Marion (1856-1857) and Florence Elizabeth (1859-1860), sons James (1852-1902) and Henry (1863-1865), and his wife Mary (1829-1904), according to the U.S. Census (1860), Gault (1968), and Swingle (2014).

## Discussion

Throughout LaMotte's life we can identify three periods of bookbinding. The first was when LaMotte was listed as a bookbinder in the 1850 census. The second period was when he had a book bindery above Miot's Drug Store that was damaged by fire in 1854. The third stint came after LaMotte retired from *The Register* and probably ended before 1909. The two known artifacts of LaMotte's binding practice provide details of book arts in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

In the process of research, two volumes were found with Thomas Lamotte's binder mark. The first, *Thoughts on Secondary Punishments (Secondary Punishments)* by Richard Whately, was published in 1832 (Whately, 1832). *Secondary Punishments* showed up in the 1836 South Carolina College Library catalog. LaMotte must have rebound or repaired the volume at a later date. The T. J. LaMotte binder stamp found inside *The Annals of Newberry: In Two Parts* (University of Madison-Wisconsin, n.d.) indicates that LaMotte likely bound this book in 1892. LaMotte chose a purple, patterned sand-grain cloth for the cover and added blind stamping front and back, plus gold and blind stamping on the spine (Publishers' Bindings Online, 2008 ). The cover features four corner fans, connected by a double-line frame, and a filigree diamond decoration in the center. The stamping designs are described as Arabesque by Publishers' Bindings Online. *Secondary Punishments* was bound in half calf with black cloth.<sup>13</sup> The spine shows four raised bands and the title in gilt letters. On the front cover, "SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE LIBRARY" is stamped in gilt letters. The spine has a press mark.

LaMotte's status as a 19th-century Southern bookbinder is notable in the 21st-century not only for the discovery of his binder stamps on two books. His Civil War diary, newspaper career, varied jobs, family life, and political interests combine to illustrate the Confederate soldier experience as well as life in South Carolina during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This study also

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<sup>13</sup> This description of *Secondary Punishments* is informed largely by Carter (1995). I would also like to thank Michael Weisenburg of the Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections at the University of South Carolina for helping with the description of the binding on *Secondary Punishments*.

identifies 44 bookbinders, including 10 women, in Columbia from 1859 to 1911. Considering LaMotte's bookbinding and repair services for state agencies and colleges, further investigation of statewide library holdings could add to the body of knowledge about South Carolina book arts. The discovery of 10 women bookbinders working in Columbia during LaMotte's lifetime invites future inquiry; additional investigation of Columbia city directories from 1912 onward also may be in order. Such research will add depth and range to the history of South Carolina bookbinders and book arts.

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**Appendix A**

## Binder Stamps of T. J. LaMotte



Appendix A. **Left:** T.J. LaMotte binder stamp, red ink, on the inside front cover of *The Annals of Newberry: In Two Parts* by John Belton O'Neall (1892). Newberry, SC: Aull and Houseal.

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/C7MY2BCTTJFFG83>. **Right:** T.J. LaMotte binder stamp, black ink and framed by chevron, on the flyleaf of *Thoughts on Secondary Punishments* by Richard Whately (1832). London: B. Fellows. Image shared with permission from Matt Hodge; photograph taken in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina (2021).

## Appendix B

## Columbia, SC City Directory Listings of Binders, Binderies, and Bookbinders 1859-1911

YEAR	BINDER, BINDERY, BOOKBINDER listings in Columbia, SC	TTL	Companies	DIRECTORY creator, publisher
1859	<b>Carolina Bindery</b> ; Dicks, William R.; Dorsey, John; Stokes, E. R.	4	<b>Carolina Bindery</b> Independent	Hershman, J. T.; R. W. Gibbes
1860	<b>Carolina Bindery</b> ; Dorsey, John; Stokes, E. R.	3	<b>Carolina Bindery</b> Independent	Selby, Julian A.; R. W. Gibbes
1875-1876	Stokes, James R.; Woodruff, W. T.	2	Independent	Beasley & Emerson
1879-1880	<b>Dorsey, John</b> ; <b>Williams, John</b>	2	<b>E. R. Stokes</b> <b>Presbyterian Pub House</b>	<b>Chas Emerson</b> ; Lucas & Richardson
1888	<b>Hawley, R.W.</b> ; <b>PERCIVAL, ELEANOR</b> ; <b>STOKES, FANNY</b> ; Calvo, Charles A. Jr.	4	<b>Register</b> Independent	Charles C. Calvo, Jr.
1891	<b>Armstrong, John</b> ; Clifton, Henry; <b>Friedlander, J. G.</b> ; Williams, John S.	4	<b>Register</b> Independent	Unknown
1895	<b>Armstrong, John</b> ; Dicks, Wm. R.; Hawley, R. W.; <b>LaMotte, Thomas J.</b> ; <b>Pinckney, J. Marshall</b>	5	<b>Register</b> <b>Bryan Printing</b> Independent	Douglas, C. M.; The State Company
1897-1898	<b>Armstrong, John</b> ; <b>Calvo, Rupert</b> ; <b>ORLEY, CORA</b> ; <b>Dicks, Wm. R.</b> ; <b>REASONER, MARGARET</b>	5	<b>Bryan Printing</b> <b>Col Daily Register</b>	Maloney, Thomas J.
1899	<b>Calvo, Rupert B.</b> ; <b>Dicks, William R.</b> ; <b>Ellerbee, Alexander W.</b> ; <b>Johnson, Joseph</b> ; <b>LaMotte, Thomas J.</b> ; <b>REASONER, MARGARET E.</b>	6	<b>Bryan Printing</b> <b>Col Daily Register</b> <b>The State</b> Independent	Walsh, Wm. H.
1901	<b>Bashford, Louis G.</b> ; Buckheister, James A.; <b>Calvo, Rupert B.</b> ; <b>Dicks, William R.</b> ; <b>DOOLEY, FANNIE S.</b> ; <b>Ellerbee, Alexander</b> ; <b>LaMotte, Thomas J.</b>	7	<b>R. L. Bryan Co.</b> <b>The State</b> Independent	Walsh's
1903	Buckheister, Jas A.; <b>Dicks, Wm. R.</b> ; <b>Ellerbee, Alex W.</b> ; GREEN, MATTIE S.; HATCHELL, LESSIE A.; HATCHELL, PEARL I.; <b>Macfeat, T. David</b> ; <b>MERIWETHER, LIZZIE</b> ; <b>Seymour, Brantley P.</b> ; <b>The Bindery, T. J. LaMotte</b>	10	<b>R. L. Bryan Co.</b> <b>The State</b> Independent	W. H. Walsh Directory Company
1904-1905	<b>Ellerbee, Alex W.</b> ; <b>Laurey, J. Frank</b> ; <b>The Bindery, T.J. LaMotte</b>	3	<b>R. L. Bryan Co.</b> Independent	W. H. Walsh Directory Company
1905	<b>Ellerbe [sic], Alex W.</b> ; <b>LaMotte, Thos. J.</b> ; Macfeat, T. Davis; <b>Starling, James. E.</b> ; <b>Stronach, Harry Y.</b> ; <b>Wellington, Wm H.</b>	6	<b>R. L. Bryan Co.</b> <b>The State</b> Independent	Walsh Directory Company
1906	<b>Ellerbe [sic], Alex W.</b> ; <b>KIRKLEY, ELOISE</b> ; Macfeat,	8	<b>R. L. Bryan Co.</b>	Walsh Directory

	T. Davis; <b>Smith, Wm C.</b> ; <b>Sowers, Chas P.</b> ; <b>Stronach, Harry Y.</b> ; <b>Wellington, Wm. H.</b> ; <b>Wood, Edw. N.</b>		<i>The State Independent</i>	Company
1907-1808	<b>Ebert, August A.</b> ; <b>Ellerbe, Alex W.</b> ; <b>LaMotte, Thos. J., retired</b> ; <b>Mitchell, Walter G.</b> ; <b>Smith, W. Caldwell</b> ; <b>Sowers, Chas P.</b> ; <b>Stronach, Harry Y.</b> ; <b>Wood, Edw. N.</b>	7	<b>R. L. Bryan Co. State Co.</b> Independent	Walsh Directory Company, Inc.
1909	Calvo, Rupert B.; <b>Cochrane, Chas W.</b> ; Mitchell, Townsend D.; <b>Smith, W. Caldwell</b> ; <b>Sowers, Chas P.</b> ; <b>Stronach, Harry Y.</b> ; <b>LaMotte, Thos J., retired</b>	6	<b>R. L. Bryan Co. State Co.</b> Independent	Walsh Directory Company, Inc.
1910	<b>Cochrane, Chas W.</b> ; Macfeat, Thos D.; <b>Sowers, Chas P.</b> ; <b>Stronach, Harry Y.</b>	4	<b>R. L. Bryan Co. State Co.</b> Independent	Walsh Directory Company, Inc.
1911	<b>Cochrane, Chas W.</b> ; <b>Long, R. Henry</b> ; <b>Sowers, Chas P.</b> ; <b>Stonach [sic], Harry Y.</b>	4	<b>R. L. Bryan Co. State Co.</b> Independent	Walsh Directory Company, Inc.

Appendix B. City of Columbia directories from 1859 to 1911 listed 44 bookbinders, including 10 women whose names are shown in capital letters. Binders working for newspapers, publishing, or printing companies are linked to their employers by matching colors. Binders listed without stated affiliations are represented in black. Thomas J. LaMotte is identified in bold black. All 19 directories were accessed through the Digital Collections of the University of South Carolina, The Caroliniana Library--Columbia, SC City Directories (<https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/sccitydirec/search>).

These resources are listed below in chronological sequence:

Hershman, J. T. (1859). *The Columbia City Directory*. Columbia, SC: R. W. Gibbes.

Selby, J.A. (1860). *Columbia City Directory*. Columbia, SC: R. W. Gibbes.

Beasley & Emerson. (1875-1876). *Columbia City Directory*. Phoenix: Beasley & Emerson.

Emerson, Chas. (1879-80). *Chas. Emerson & Co's Columbia, So. Ca. Directory, 1879-80*. Charleston, SC: Lucas & Richardson.

Douglas, C.M. (1888). *City Directory of Columbia, SC*. Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo, Jr.

Douglas, C.M. (1895). *Columbia City Directory*. Columbia, SC: The State Company.

Walsh's Directory of the City of Columbia. (1903). Charleston, SC: W. H. Walsh Directory Company.

Maloney's Columbia 1887 -1898 Directory. (1897). Maloney Directory Co.

Walsh's Directory for the City of Columbia for 1899. (1899). Charleston, SC: Lucas & Richardson Co.

Walsh's Street and Avenue Department of Columbia, S.C. for 1901. (n.d.)

Walsh's Directory of the City of Columbia for 1903. (1903). Charleston, SC: W. H. Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1904-5. (1904). Charleston, SC: W. H. Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1905. (1905). Charleston, SC: Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1906. (1906). Charleston, SC: Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1907-08. (1907). Charleston, SC: Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1909. (1908). Charleston, SC: Walsh Directory Company.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1910. (1909). Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogwell Co.

Walsh's Columbia South Carolina City Directory for 1911. (1911). Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogwell Co.