

## ***The Mail and the Snake***

Crossing the Lines During the Civil War

The secession of South Carolina in December 1860 marked the beginning of a period of enormous change for the U.S. Post Office Department that culminated in the complete severing of mail communications between the North and the South in June 1861. Thereafter the passage of mail “across the lines” was accomplished only by means of innovative, non-traditional methods of service. This presentation focuses on the degradation of official mail services during the first half of 1861 and the gap-filling unofficial and often illegal delivery methods employed for the remainder of the Civil War. The story is told in two parts:

Part 1 - Strangling the System

Part 2 - Getting Around and Through