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Here is a subject philatelists have been enthralled with for over 100 years.



The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

A Confederate Gem: The largest known block of CSA #8

One of my favorite covers from the Confederate section of the National Postal Museum is a block of 12 of the 2¢ brown red Andrew Jackson (Scott CSA No. 8), which is thought to be the largest known used block.² Many viewed it during the Southern Supper held at the NPM during the Confederate Stamp Alliance annual convention at NAPEX 2005.

Mr. Bernard Peyton donated this spectacular Confederate gem to the Smithsonian on December 4, 1962.³ The 2¢ block is tied by 11 strikes of an undated Mobile, Alabama double circle cancel and is addressed to Douglas M. Hamilton, Esq. in Woodville, Mississippi. These stamps, which total 24-cents, paid the rate for mailing 12 circulars, per the manuscript notation “12 Circulars/24 cts.” The famed Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile mailed the circulars.

Organized for the relief of the miseries suffered by the citizens of New Orleans after occupation by Union forces in the spring of 1862, the Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile handled mail passing to and from New Orleans and other places in the Confederacy. Communications between the people of New Orleans and their friends and family in the Confederate States were forbidden by the occupying Union. The Relief Committee smuggled letters in small ships, a great service to the struggling citizens of New Orleans.

In May of 1863, General Nathaniel P. Banks ordered the deportation of all those citizens who had refused to take the oath of allegiance of the United States. Approximately 700 families from New Orleans moved to Mobile in pitiable condition. Prominent citizens of Mobile organized the Relief Committee to supply food, medical care, shelter and transportation for these refugees. The Committee also assumed the job of handing the mail for them. The Louisiana Relief Committee was in operation from June or July of 1863 until September of 1864.⁴

Through the Arago™ project, the National Postal Museum is reaching out to an international, online audience of philatelists, historians,

educators, students, and the public in a bold way. Arago™, the NPM's educational and research Web site, presents the collections in a context-rich setting with full color images. The Web site went live May 28, 2006, as part of Washington 2006. The national philatelic collection illustrates and invites research into philately and postal history. It contains prestigious Confederate, U. S., and international postal issues and specialized collections, archival postal documents and three-dimensional objects that trace the evolution of the postal services.

The Confederate block highlighted here is only one of the wonderful covers and stamps easily available at your keyboard clicking fingertips. You will be delighted with the zoom capability and the way you can manipulate the object you are viewing to more carefully examine a stamp or marking. I urge you to visit this wonderful Museum resource at arago.si.edu. Allow yourself some time, as you'll be able to spend many hours poring through the material presented.

For information on the Confederate Stamp Alliance or the forthcoming Confederate States Catalog and Handbook, write Trish Kaufmann, 10194 N. Old State Road, Lincoln, DE 19960 or e-mail trishkauf@comcast.net. Information is also available on websites csalliance.org and csacatalog.org

1. www.arago.si.edu
2. Green, Brian M., *The Confederate States Two-Cent Red-Jack Intaglio Stamp*, New York, NY: The Philatelic Foundation 1983.
3. United States National Museum Accession Memorandum No. 245469
4. Shenfield, Lawrence L., *Confederate States of America, The Special Postal Routes*, New York, NY: The Collectors Club 1961. ✉

Arago PEOPLE, POSTAGE & THE POST



Author's Note:
This column is dedicated to the memory of National Postal Museum Philatelic Curator Wilson Hulme, who died suddenly on January 10, 2007 while on a business trip. At the time of his death,

Wilson was also the president of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society. He was a life member of the Confederate Stamp Alliance and editor for the Private Perfs section of the forthcoming Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook. He was also simply a genuinely nice person. Philately has lost a valuable asset; he will be greatly missed. PAK



Wilson Hulme