

# THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

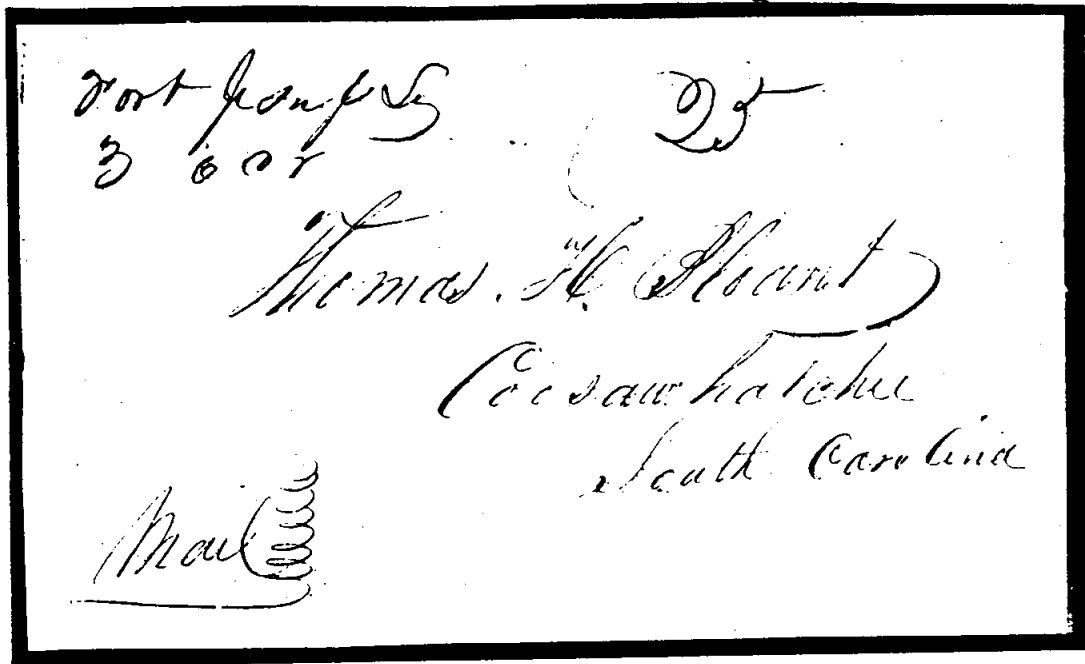


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Cover illustrated on the front page is a Pre-Republic folded letter from Nacogdoches, Texas to Coosawhatchie South Carolina, September 27, 1835. It was privately carried to Fort Jessup, Louisiana where it entered the U.S. Mail and was rated 25¢ due. See Otis L. Alley's article starting on page 4 of this issue.

# THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Dues \$10 per year payable to Secretary-Treasurer

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### POSTAL HISTORY SEMINAR-

On January 12th, in Tucson, AZ, there was a most interesting and informative Postal History Seminar. This seminar was sponsored by The Western Postal History Museum. Since the seminar preceded the ARIPEX -89 show by a day, it allowed show participants to attend and nearly one hundred registered and took part in the discussions. The program included the following topics; a) Defining and Popularizing Postal History, b) Exhibiting and Judging Postal History, c) Mail Transport and Postal History, d) Classic vs. Modern Postal History, e) Elements of Stampless Postal History, f) Research Methods in Postal History, g) Postal history Sources and Resources, h) Expertising Postal History, and i) Postal History at Auction.

The panel for this seminar consisted of such notables as Thomas Alexander, James Bruns, Ernst Cohn, Richard Frajola, Richard Graham, Robert Harris, Richard Helbock, David Jarrett, Richard John, Douglas Kelsey, Michael Laurence, Susan McDonald, Frank Mandel, David Phillips, Henry Spelman, and Charles Towle.

If you missed this gathering, you missed an opportunity of a lifetime. Almost every topic that should concern a postal historian was well addressed. Those who attended asked many questions which were fully answered by the experienced panelist. I for one, learned a good deal, and came away throughly impressed by the experience.

### ARIPEX-89-

The ARIPEX-89 show continued it's outstanding tradition of being one of the best run and most hospitable events in the nation. Approximately 325 frames, all first rate material, were on display. Some idea of the caliber of material shown may be gained from the 18 gold awards given by the judges. It was shown in a spacious, well lighted and comfortable arena.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the whole show were the hundreds and hundreds of school age children who poured into the show on Friday and Saturday. These children, accompanied by their teachers, seemed to give a vibrant and joyous atmosphere to the whole show. Volunteers of the Western Postal History Museum put in endless hours in the Tucson Public School System providing philatelic instruction to these young students as part of their education. In my opinion, this approach has great merit and should be adopted in other communities.

### SPRING GET-TOGETHER AND TRADING SESSION-

The spring meeting of the T.P.H.S. will be held Saturday, Mar. 18, 1989 in San Marcos, Texas. The site is the San Marcos Holiday Inn at 1635 Aquarena Springs Drive, just off I-35. For reservations Tel. 512-353-8011. Room rates are \$37.70 plus tax.

## THE WESTERN POSTAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The Western Postal History Museum, Affiliate No. 148 American Philatelic Society, is a non-profit Arizona corporation dedicated to the study, preservation, propagation, publication and promotion of all forms of postal history, and all types of stamp collecting. Particular emphasis is on youth and senior citizen education.

The museum is located at 920 N. 1st Avenue, in the vicinity of the University of Arizona. It is also devoted to philatelic education, research, reference, and the advancement of philatelic and postal history publications. The museum was founded in 1960 as an affiliate of the Arizona Historical Society by Dr. Raymond Brandes, Assistant Director of the Society, and by the late William L. Alexander, curator emeritus of philately at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is a self-supporting, non-profit organization staffed by over thirty philatelists, teachers, and specialists, and surprisingly it is the only multi-purpose philatelic institution west of State College, Pennsylvania.



Despite its name, which comes from its location, the museum is dedicated to all aspects of postal history. Initial efforts to establish the museum centered around building an excellent reference collection of western postal history for both public exhibition and use by researchers. But this endeavor has expanded into the acquisition and preservation of specialized philatelic collections encompassing all parts of the world. The museum is also a repository for photocopies of government documents, photographs of post offices and postmasters, and post office memorabilia.

A major activity of the museum is its Youth Education Program which began over twenty-five years ago when volunteers started teaching philately to young patients at the National School for Asthmatic Children. When that institution closed, the program was expanded into the Tucson Public Schools with museum workers giving classroom

instruction in the schools in social studies, history and science utilizing stamps as a tangible learning aid while teaching the fundamentals of philately. Since its beginning, the program has introduced stamp collecting to over 25,000 school students. In the Fall of 1988, over 800 children were enrolled in the program. All stamps, albums, catalogs, and supplies are provided by the museum without charge.

Other major programs and activities of the museum include;

- \*An advanced philatelic lending library providing original source documents, books and periodicals.

- \*A research department providing research and study facilities and a staff to answer questions, provide data and service requests.

- \*Philatelic and postal history exhibits, provided to the Arizona Historical Society and the U.S. Postal Service.

- \*Collections of post office artifacts, a U.S. "type" collection, and various postal history collections.

- \*Sponsorship of U.S. postal history research.

- \*A publication program for books and the quarterly museum publication, THE HELIOGRAPH.

- \*Field trip research.

- \*Sales of surplus stamps, covers and literature.

- \*Philatelic and postal history seminars and workshops.

In addition to these activities, the museum designed and maintains a very sizeable display area in the Arizona Heritage Center at 949 E. 2nd Street in Tucson. Through the use of specially created exhibits, interesting topics pertinent to the postal history of the West are vividly illustrated. Historic artifacts and carefully conceived thematic materials present subjects of general philatelic interest.

Museum hours are 8 am to 2 pm, Monday through Friday. For more information about the Western Postal History Museum, write P.O. Box 40725, Tucson, AZ. 85719 or call (602)-623-6652.

Information for this note was provided your editor by Mr. Douglas A. Kelsey, Executive Director of the Western Postal History Museum.

A PRE-REPUBLIC LETTER

BY

OTIS L. ALLEY

This folded letter, with dateline Nacogdoches, Texas, Sept. 27, 1835 to Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, poses as many questions as it answers, but because of its date it deserves to be noted in the record.

As a novice, it seems almost as difficult to establish an adequate reference library, as it is to find material to research. I offer what information I have and hope other members seeing this cover will offer their help in making any corrections or additions.

The 25¢ rate seems to be correct for a single letter going over 400 miles, according to the U.S. Postal Rate Act which took effect May 16, 1816. The letter was privately carried from Nacogdoches to Fort Jessup, Louisiana where it was posted on October 3, 1835.

The Republic of Texas Postal System had it's beginning at the Consultation at San Felipe de Austin and is mentioned in this letter. On October 20, 1835 the group gathered at San Felipe, formed a committee composed of J. S. Hood, Joseph Bryan and A. Houston to establish a postal system and create the postal mail routes. The whole Consultation appointed John Rice Jones the first Postmaster General of Texas on October 23rd. On October 30th the committee presented a plan to the Consultation proposing weekly mail service over fifteen mail routes to go into service during the Fall of 1835. The third route proposed, from Nacogdoches to Sabine River (Gaines Ferry) via Steddams, San Augustine, and Robinson's appears to be the same route over which this pre-republic letter was carried privately. Once it had reached Fort Jessup it entered the U.S. Mails, received it's manuscript marking, was rated 25¢ due, and placed in the mail bag for Natchitoches, La. and Natches, Miss. From there the trail dims. It could have gone overland to the East, or possibly South down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. However, there are no markings indicating it went by ship. See front cover.

Text of the letter is as follows;

Texas, Nacogdoches, Sept. 27, 1835  
To Thos. H. Blount

My Dear Brother:

Misfortune has compell me to fly to Texas for refuge and I would give all I am worth could I return home and not be molested. As to happiness I see now being as I am from my connexion and friends it renders me unhappy but I will bear it with fortitude. I will not dispair and throw myself away as I have known other individuals (to) do on account of misfortune. As to myself I am anxious to return to

Burke County and never see Texas again, although Texas is a fine country.

As to the lands, they are superior to any lands in the United States, but inconvenient to market. New Orleans being the nearest market. Richest lands I ever saw is in Texas and there is a great deal of poor land here at the same time. Common land such as the farmers plant will produce from 12 to 1300 lbs. of cotton per acre. Hands has picked here, as high as 300 pounds of cotton. The more common task, 200 to 250 lbs. to the hand. Common growth of cotton is from 8 to 12 feet high. Distance in the row from 7 to 9 feet so you can draw some idea of the quality of the land.

There will, in the course of one month, be a Revolution in Texas between the citizens and the Mexican Government. The convention of the citizens of Texas will meet on the 15th of Oct. next and after which I think they will declare Texas to be a separate government from Mexico, and they the people will sustain themselves or die in the cause of liberty. Texas is remarkably healthy, fine water on the good lands. (Other places) the water is very bad, not fit to drink at all.

So far I have enjoyed good health and hope this will find Jim, yourself, Aunt and the family enjoying good health. Give my best respects to my sister, Aunt and cousin Thomas and Zacharia and I remain as usual, your brother.

S. W. Blount Jr.

P.S. Direct your letter to Fort Jessup, Louisiana.

T.B. Should I depart this life without seeing you my dear brother, I hope you will take care of my little sisters. These words I write you with tears in my eyes.

Stephen William Blount Jr. author of this letter, was born in Burke County, Georgia, on Feb. 13, 1808. He came to Texas in August 1835, only a month before this letter was written. As far as can be determined he never ventured farther East than Alabama after coming to Texas. He married in Alabama in 1838, and brought his wife to Texas.

One nagging question is-- Why was he so fearful about returning to Georgia?

History attests to the fact that Stephen W. Blount Jr. attended the Consultation of San Felipe de Austin on Oct. 16, 1835. A quorum eventually met on Nov. 3rd. It is apparent that the delegates who were scheduled to meet on Oct. 16th, but who could not muster a quorum until Nov. 3rd must have had some difficulty getting together. On Nov. 6th the delegates voted 33 to 15 not to declare complete independence from Mexico but to abide by the National Constitution of 1824. A Provisional Government was organized with Texas as a Mexican State. Under Santa Anna's Government, Texas was still a part of the Mexican State of Coahuila.

The Consultation adjourned on Nov. 15th having named Henry Smith Governor and charging Sam Houston with the task of raising a Regular Army. Volunteers were already fighting in Bexar against Santa Anna. A delegation headed by Stephen F. Austin was sent to the United States to seek financial aid.

Blount's assessment of the situation on Sept. 27, 1835 was correct even though complete independence from Mexico was not declared until March 2nd the following year.

I want to thank Norma Watz and Dr. Emery for their help and encouragement. I will be happy to send a photocopy of the letter to any member wishing to fill in the gaps or make corrections in my transcription of the letter.

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RARE GOLIAD, TEXAS POSTAGE STAMP DISCOVERED



A rare postage stamp issued by the Goliad, Texas postmaster during the Civil War has been discovered in South Texas by Houston stamp dealer Charles Deaton.

This postmaster's stamp is considered one of the rarities of the Confederate postal history era, and is highly sought after today, said Deaton. It has a current catalog value of \$7,500. The stamp was printed in Goliad by Rev. A. M. Cox, owner of "The Messenger" newspaper, at the instructions of Goliad Postmaster John A. Clarke, who was frustrated at the inability of the Confederate Post Office Department to provide a regular supply of postage stamps for use by postal customers. It is not known how many were printed, but very few copies are known to exist today. Other Texas postmasters apparently shared Clarke's frustrations, for similar postmaster's stamps were also produced in Beaumont, Victoria, Helena, Gonzales, Austin, Houston, Independence, Richmond, and Galveston.

Deaton, a specialist in Texas Postal History, was contacted after the stamp was discovered in family papers, and acquired the stamp after confirming its authenticity. It has since been sold to a private collector of Texas postal history. It is entirely possible, Deaton noted, that other copies of these rare postmaster's stamps from Texas towns are laying undiscovered in old family or business papers. Anyone who has such papers or letters they wish examined should contact him at his store, Deaton's, 2516 Drexel at Westheimer, in Houston.

## AUCTION ACTION

By

Charles Deaton

The September 14-16, 1988 auction of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries Inc. (160 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022) had one of the best groups of Texas covers to come on the market in several years. In the Republic of Texas Section, a beautiful 1842 Austin triple circle cover brought \$500. There were several of the Galveston ovals with various other markings, and they sold in the \$135-\$160 range. There were two nice examples of the Houston double oval postmark, and they sold for \$240 each. A nice Matagorda oval went for \$210, and a manuscript Sabine Town went for \$240.

There were several of the Bryan and Ricker ovals from the Texian Agency in New Orleans during the Republic period. One nice Ricker with an additional Steam Packet/Columbia marking went for \$425, while another, with the scarce manuscript Express Mail marking from 1836-1839 Eastern Pony Express service went for \$725. There were six of the Bryan ovals, with five selling in the \$90-\$125 range, and the other selling for \$230.

In the statehood stampless period, a nice pair of Austin covers, one of which was the triple circle CDS type, sold for \$210. A nice Beaumont CDS went for \$120, and a group of six different stampless covers from Brazos St. Jago, Gonzales, Henderson, Montgomery, Tyler, and Washington, brought \$220. An unusual red rimless circle from Cameron, in nice condition, went for \$375, while a standard Cameron CDS in bold, bright green went all the way to \$725. This green Cameron is the only one I've seen. There were two of the Corpus Christi, Texas straight-line postmarks in the sawtoothed boxes. They are scarce postmarks, and sold for \$1200 and \$1150. A Corpus Christi CDS went to \$375. A Huntsville, Texas red rimless circle went for \$125. A nice clear Liberty, Texas CDS sold for \$210. The scarce straightline Matagorda, Texas marking went for \$270.

Also in the statehood section, a nice Rio Grande City cover sold for \$180. A most unusual rimless CDS of Sabine City, Texas went for \$525. There were two of the scarce Shelbyville, Texas straightlines; a black one with tape stains went for \$270, while a red example, the only one I've seen, sold for \$525. A rare Wheelock, Robertson Co. Texas CDS, one of the few county postmarks of the stampless period, sold for \$750. An unlisted Woodville, Texas CDS topped out at \$180.

The prices above do not include the 10% auction commission. There was active bidding on these by at least three agents, and most items sold through the agents.

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The November 4, 1988 auction of David G. Phillips Co. (Box 611388, North Miami, FL 33161) had one of the best groups of Mexican-American war covers to hit the market in years. Most Texas collectors are familiar with these covers, especially the straightline Brazos, Vera Cruz, and point Isabel markings.

In general, prices were strong at the Phillips auction. Realizations in the \$200-\$300 range were not uncommon for covers with

better than usual markings or content. Three nice Pt. Isabel straightlines, went for \$240, \$270, and \$525, while one with no contents sold for \$125. Routine copies of the Brazos straightlines sold in the \$105-\$120 range, but more interesting ones did get into the \$200-\$300 range. Most of the Vera Cruz straightlines sold in the range of \$180-\$325, though one sold as high as \$475 and one as low as \$44. A Vera Cruz cover with the rare EMXICO misspelling was estimated at \$300-\$750, but sold for \$1600.

Please note these prices quoted here do not include the 10% auction commission.

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### IS THE USPS IN TEXAS OFFICIAL?

By

Bill H. Henderson

In reviewing my list of important Texas postal history dates, used to check covers in flea markets, it was found there was not a date the U.S. Post Office Department took over the Confederate postal system in Texas after the Civil War. So, back to the references, starting with the Civil War period.

February 23, 1861 Texas withdrew from the Union in order to join the Confederacy. This is not a very significant date in Texas postal history. True, the covers dated between this date and when Texas was admitted to the Confederacy are valued. Also, the postmasters were not sure what they should do with funds collected in this period. Postally speaking, nothing happened. It would appear secession was not covered in the postal handbook of that time. Postal people did what they had been doing- they moved the mail. As before, the mail flowed from North to South, and from South to North. Many people thought this secession problem could be resolved without conflict. About a week later the U.S.P.O.D. awarded a contract to a Texas man for part of the mail route between San Antonio and Los Angeles, Cal.

April 1861 Confederate postmaster general Reagan announced that starting May 1, 1861 the Confederate Nation would assume the operation of the postal service in that nation. In the one-up-man-ship tradition, the U.S. Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair, announced that starting April 28, 1861 the U.S. would no longer provide postal service in for the seceded states. Thus the U.S. postal service in Texas which had started May 22, 1846 was officially ended.

May 30, 1865 Texas officially surrendered to the U.S. armed forces.

March 30, 1870 Texas was officially admitted into the Union a second time.

Since no date of the U.S.P.O.D. resumption of postal service in Texas was found, the U.S.P.S. archives was contacted. They were unable to find such a date. Perhaps there are reasons for not noting this date. The U.S. never politically recognized the existence of the Confederacy, so, how could they take over something that did not exist? In the real world- the U.S.P.O.D. quietly followed the U.S. Army as Dixie was invaded. Mail service with the U.S. was established as the army moved South. Since no Postmaster General's order has been



## REMINDER OF RECONSTRUCTION

By Ronald D. Simpson

An interesting reminder of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period of Texas history has come into the possession of the writer. It is a cover (Fig. 1) bearing a single 3 cents regular issue of 1861 with a circular Galveston postmark in black dated Apr. 9, (1866). A printed Corner Card with the wording: "HEADQUARTERS BUREAU OF R., F. & A. L., STATE OF TEXAS. OFFICIAL BUSINESS." The envelope is addressed to Gen. P. Sidney Post, Galesburg, Ill. The meaning of the initials in the Corner Card are explained as follows: Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was created by an act of Congress on March 3, 1865. Established under control of the War Department, to take effect during the War of Rebellion, and to continue in effect for one year after the wars end, but was extended by the later act of July 16, 1866 for an additional two years until 1868. Its purpose was to aid loyal Union refugees and freedmen by furnishing relief supplies, medical services, establishing schools, supervising labor contracts between freedmen and their employers, providing judicial protection for freedmen, and managing confiscated or abandoned lands. The commissioner for the Bureau was General O. O. Howard, and most of the assistant commissioners for the several states as well as many of the agents were army officers.

General Edgar M. Gregory the first assistant commissioner appointed for Texas arrived in late September, 1865. After preliminary preparations leading to the establishment of the Bureau and making an inspection tour of eastern Texas in November, 1865, in company with Inspector General Strong, General Gregory began active operations of the Bureau in December, 1865. In May, 1866, he was succeeded by General J. B. Kiddoo. Under the direction of these men the Bureau, with headquarters at Galveston, operated in Texas with the assistance of a dozen local agents, five of whom were civilians.

There were no abandoned lands in Texas. The loyal Union refugees depended upon the army for protection. As a result, the activities of the Bureau were confined to aiding and supervising the interests of the freedmen. Relief work by the Bureau in Texas was not extensive, since there was plenty of food to be had for work. One hospital was established, but ceased to operate after the close of winter. Educational

work was placed under the charge of Lieutenant Edwin M. Wheelock, who organized day and night schools. Near the end of January, 1866, 26 schools with an enrollment of approximately 1,600 students were operating and in September, 1866, there were 43 teachers and the enrollment had increased to 4,500 students. Labor supervision consisted primarily of clearing the towns of troublesome and idle Blacks and making sure that each freedmen had a fair contract to work, properly executed. The function of the Bureau which irritated and caused the most problems with the white population was that of giving protection to the freedmen in the courts, in the process of which regular court procedure was blocked.

After a turbulent existence, marked by bitter conflicts between the Bureau and regularly constituted state authorities, operations ceased in Texas in 1868.

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