

HUNTSVILLE PHILATELIC CLUB NEWSLETTER

September 2006



American Philatelic
Society Chapter 597
www.stamps.org



Germany Philatelic
Society Chapter 15
www.gps.nu



Southeast Federation
of Stamp Clubs
www.stampclubs.com



This newsletter is published monthly by the Huntsville Philatelic Club. Meetings are held on the First and Third Tuesdays of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Fern Bell Recreation Center, 107A Sanders Road SW. Visitors are always welcome.

THIS MONTH'S ACTIVITIES

First Tuesday Meeting – Sept. 5

"Bring an Item Night" - Bring any philatelic item, or two, to pass around and get other members to share their knowledge, opinion, or even best guess what it is or what it's worth.

Third Tuesday Meeting – Sept. 19

Member's Philatelic Auction Night

STAMP CLUB NEWS

This month's HPC Newsletter e-Extra features the Gee's Bend Quilts stamps released August 24 in Chicago. The e-Extra is an extra page e-mailed with the club newsletter. If you want to start getting the e-Extra just send an e-mail to hpc-editor@att.net

CLUB OFFICERS

| | |
|------------|---|
| President | Kathy Campbell mcampbell7@juno.com |
| Vice Pres. | Michael O'Reilly mcoreilly@yahoo.com |
| Treasurer | Heinrich Hahn hhahn@bellsouth.net |
| Secretary | Arthur Cole hpc-editor@att.net |
| Directors | Bob Adams, Dave Nicolas, Ed Kazmierczak, Fred Muhl, Wesley Swift, Mary Shaw |

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Huntsville Philatelic Club - P O Box 4395
Huntsville, AL 35815-4395

Membership dues are payable in January. Annual dues are \$12.00 per individual or \$15.00 per family.

The HPC Newsletter may be downloaded from the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs' web site at www.stampclubs.com/news/news-huntsville.htm

NEW ISSUE STAMP NEWS

About Gee's Bend

Gee's Bend is a community of about 750 residents isolated on a sliver of land on the Alabama River between Mobile and Montgomery. Lacking ferry service, Benders, as residents of the area are called, are an hour's drive from the county seat of Camden, the closest source of supplies, schools, and medical services. For generations the women in the community have created quilts from whatever materials were available, in patterns of their own imaginative design. Women in Gee's Bend learned the craft of quilting from their mothers and grandmothers. It was a skill born of necessity and make-do conditions, but they transformed quilt making into the highest form of artistic expression, where innovation and individuality were prized.

Gee's Bend was named after Joseph Gee, the first white man to stake a claim there in the early 1800s. The Gee family sold the plantation to Mark Pettway in 1845 and most present-day residents are descendants of slaves on the former Pettway plantation. Their forebears continued to work the land after emancipation, and many eventually bought the farms from the government in the 1940s.

Gee's Bend became known for its quilts, briefly, during the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-1960s when the Freedom Quilting Bee was organized. Many quilters in the community represent second or third-generation quilting within a family.

If you would like to know more about Gee's Bend and its history, I urge you to read the Pulitzer Prize winning article by J. R. Moehringer at this link: www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/GEEBEND.htm

CLUB CALENDAR

| | |
|----------|--|
| Sept. 5 | "Bring an Item Night" |
| Sept. 19 | Member's Philatelic Auction Night |
| Oct. 3 | Presentation by Frank Crown, "A Look at Postal History" |
| Oct. 17 | Member's Philatelic Auction Night |
| Nov. 7 | Open |
| Nov. 21 | Member's Philatelic Auction Night |
| Dec. 5 | Open |
| Dec. 19 | Member's Philatelic Auction Night |

AREA STAMP SHOWS

September 3-4 **GULFPEX**

Gulf Coast Stamp Club, St. Martin Community Center, 15004 Lemoyne Blvd., Biloxi, Contact Bob Marousky, 228-875-9836

September 22-24 **Southeastern Stamp Show**

Southeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs, Cobb County Civic Ctr., 548 S. Marietta Pkwy., Marietta. Contact Scott Mark, mark_s@bellsouth.net; www.stampclubs.com; 770-619-2917 *WSP*

October 14-15 **MEMPHEX 2006**

Memphis Stamp Collectors Society, Memphis Marriott East, 2625 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Memphis. Contact Ron Williams, mbwilliams@earthlink.net, 901-829-3377

October 28-29 **GAPEX 2006**

30th Annual CSRA Stamp Show, Greater Augusta Stamp Club, Americas Best Value Inn, 3023 Washington Road (at I-20 Exit), Augusta. Contact Peter Igel, igelsp@bellsouth.net, 706-868-6769

February 10-11, 2007 **ALAPEX**

Birmingham Philatelic Society, Bessemer Civic Center, 1130 9th Ave., S.W. (Exit 108 on I-20/59), Bessemer. Charles Hancock, 205-822-3826

Mar 31-Apr 1 **Lexington Spring Stamp Show**

Henry Clay Philatelic Society, Inc., Springs Inn, 2020 Harrodsburg Rd., Lexington. Contact Paul C. Hager, showchair@henryclayphilatelics.org. www.henryclayphilatelic.org, 859-986-3414

June 15-17 **National Topical Stamp Show 2007**

American Topical Association, Sheraton Grand Hotel, DFW Airport, Irving, TX; 35 dealers, 200+ exhibit frames, americantopical@msn.com, www.americantopicalassn.org, 817-274-1181

2006 USPS NEW ISSUES

Jan 3 - True Blue (Bluebirds)- (1) ND special stamp
Jan 5 - X-Plane - \$4.05 Priority Mail stamped env.
Jan 9 - Pikes Peak - (1) 24c PC and (1) 48c DRPC
Jan 9 - Benjamin Franklin - (6) 39c stamped env.
Jan 9 - Liberty & Flag - (2) 39c definitive stamps
Jan 9 - Official Mail - (1) #10 stamped envelope
Jan 10 - Children's Books - (8) 39c commemorative
Jan 11 - Winter Sports - (1) 39c commemorative
Jan 25 - Hattie McDaniel - (1) 39c commemorative
Jan 29 - Lunar New Year - (12) 39c special stamps
Feb 8 - Liberty & Flag - (1) 39c definitive coil
Feb 24 - Bryce Canyon - (1) 63c international rate
Feb 24 - Great Smokey Mts. - (1) 75c intl. rate
Feb 24 - Yosemite - (1) 84c international rate stamp
Mar 1 - Wedding (Dove) - (1) 39c & (1) 63c special
Mar 8 - Dr. Albert Sabin - (1) 87c definitive stamp
Mar 8 - Dr. Jonas Salk - (1) 63c definitive stamp
Mar 8 - Common Buckeye - (1) 24c defin. stamp
Mar 8 - Liberty & Flag - (1) 39c definitive stamp
Mar 8 - Official Mail - (1) 39c official mail stamp
Mar 16 - Crops of the Americas - (5) 39c definitives
Mar 17 - X-Plane - \$4.05 Priority Mail defin. stamp
Mar 17 - X-Plane - \$14.40 Express Mail def. stamp
Apr 7 - Benjamin Franklin - (4) 39c commem.
Apr 6 - Sugar Ray Robinson - (1) 39c commem.
Apr 8 - Liberty & Flag - (1) 39c definitive stamp
Apr 8 - Purple Heart - (1) commemorative stamp
Apr 21 - Disney: Romance - (4) 39c commem.
May 1 - True Blue (two bluebirds) - (1) 39c special
May 15 - Katherine Anne Porter - (1) 39c commem.
May 25 - Amber Alert - (1) 39c commemorative
May 27 - Wonders of America - (40) 39c commem.
May 28 - Samuel de Champlain - (1) 39c - 4 on SS
May 29 - Washington 2006 - (1) \$1, \$2, & \$5 on SS
May 30 - American Diplomats - (6) 39c commem.
Jun 10 - Judy Garland - (1) 39c commemorative
Jun 14 - Ronald Regan - (1) 39c commemorative
Jun 23 - Happy Birthday - (1) 39c special stamp
Jul 15 - Baseball Sluggers - (4) 39c commem.
Jul 20 - Comic Book Heroes - (20) 39c commem.
Aug 4 - American Clock - (1) 10c definitive stamp
Aug 7 - American Motorcycles - (4) 39c commem.
Aug 24 - Gee's Bend Quilts - (10) 39c commem.
Oct 4 - Florida Wetlands - (10) 39c commem.
Oct 5 - Snowflakes - (4) 39c special stamps
Oct 6 - Eid - (1) 39c special stamp
Oct 6 - Hanukkah - (1) 39c special stamp
Oct 6 - Kwanzaa - (1) 39c special stamp
Oct 17 - Madonna and Child - (1) 39c special stamp
? - Silver Coffeepot - (1) 3c definitive stamp

American Treasures: Gee's Bend Quilts

The American Treasures stamp series is intended to showcase beautiful works of American fine art and crafts. For the 2006 issuance, art director Derry Noyes chose photographs of ten quilts created between circa 1940 and 2001 by African-American women in Gee's Bend, Alabama.

Located southwest of Selma, on a big bend in the meandering Alabama River, Gee's Bend - officially named Boykin in 1940 - is a community made up primarily of African Americans descended from slaves. The first slaves were brought to this pocket of bottomland in the early 1800s, when North Carolina planter Joseph Gee established a cotton plantation in the area. His relative, Mark H. Pettway, brought more slaves after indebted members of the Gee family deeded the estate to him in 1845. Today Pettway remains a common surname among the local families.

For generations, geography has isolated "Benders," as the residents of Gee's Bend are also known. Water surrounds the community on three sides, and by land only one long strip of roadway (which was not paved until 1967) leads in from the northwest. The ferry that once connected Gee's Bend with Camden, AL, stopped running during the 1960s. Decades of separation have made it difficult for the residents of Gee's Bend to escape poverty, but isolation has also brought a priceless gift: the uninterrupted transmission of the quilting tradition.

Noted for their unexpected color combinations, bold patterns, and improvised designs, the quilts of Gee's Bend are also remarkable for the humble materials with which they are made and the humbler circumstances in which they are born. Until recently, necessity limited the quilters to fabric from everyday items such as flour sacks, old dresses, and worn-out denim and flannel work clothes. Stains, mended holes and tears, faded patches, and seams all became integral parts of a quilt's design and ensured that the materials, as well as the quilts, told the story of Gee's Bend.

Created for the practical purpose of keeping warm, the quilts also demonstrate how greatly ingenuity and improvisation are prized in Gee's Bend. Having learned from their mothers, grandmothers, and other female relations the fundamental motifs and techniques for stitching pieces together, each quilter is then expected to find her own manner of expression. As a result, seemingly infinite variations have made the quilts sources of both pride and friendly competition.

The quilts of Gee's Bend gained national attention in the late 1960s, when some of the women joined with quilters in nearby communities to establish the Freedom Quilting Bee in Camden, AL. Founded in 1966 with the help of Episcopal priest and Civil Rights activist Francis X. Walter, the quilting cooperative quickly brought recognition to Gee's Bend. Walter transported quilts to New York City, where they were sold at auction, and within two years the cooperative had contracts with leading decorators and large retail stores.

Many of the quilters from Gee's Bend felt constricted by the standardization of their improvisational techniques however, and soon left the Freedom Quilting Bee. Most preferred to give up the minimal monetary benefits the cooperative gave them rather than lose the unique aesthetic practices that the community had so long nurtured. Nevertheless, the women kept making quilts, and their quilting traditions remained vibrant in the local community.



Original Quilt
circa 1940,
Maker
Unknown,
Believed to be
from Alabama

Top Row Left

"Housetop" variation by Mary Lee Bendolph (1935-); quilted in 2001 by her daughter, Essie Bendolph Pettway, Cotton, corduroy, twill, assorted polyesters, 72 x 76

Top Row Right

"Chinese Coins" variation by Arlonzia Pettway (1923-); quilted in 1976, Corduroy, denim, cotton twill, 88 x 73

Second Row Left

"Roman Stripes" variation (local name: "Crazy" quilt) by Loretta Pettway (1942-) 1970, Cotton twill, denim, cotton/ polyester blend, synthetic knit, 86 x 70

Second Row Right

Medallion with checkerboard center by Patty Ann Williams (1898-1972), 1960s, Cotton (corduroy and twill) and polyester knit, 84 x 71

Third Row Left

"Housetop"-four-block "Half-Log Cabin" variation by Lottie Mooney (1908-1992), Circa 1940, Cotton and rayon, 88 x 73

Third Row Right

Bars and string-pieced columns by Jessie T. Pettway (1929-) Circa 1950, Cotton 95 x 76

Fourth Row Left

"Nine Patch" by Ruth P. Mosely (1928-) Circa 1955, Cotton and corduroy, 93 x 77

Fourth Row Right

Medallion by Loretta Pettway (1942-) Circa 1960, Synthetic knit and cotton sacking material, 87 x 70

Fifth Row Left

"Pig in a Pen" medallion by Minnie Sue Coleman (1926-) Circa 1970, Polyester knit and double knit, 61 x 82

Fifth Row Right

Blocks and strips by Annie Mae Young (1928-) Circa 1970, Cotton, polyester, synthetic blends, 83 x 80



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