

**Report from AIRPEX 2004, Dayton, Ohio**  
**September 11-12**  
Bruce Roberts

After returning from Sacramento with my exhibit, Arkansas Postal History: Territory to Post Reconstruction, A Selection, I discovered that the Peach State show in Atlanta already had all the exhibits they could accept. While I was in California, one of the judges suggested I try showing in Dayton at AIRPEX 2004; he knew at that point that they were still looking for exhibits. So I called the exhibits chairman and managed to get my 9-frame exhibit in at the last minute. One of the unusual aspects of AIRPEX is it is perhaps the only World Series show that is only a two day show. This was great for me, because I was able to work until about 1 PM on Friday, and still get to Dayton in time to put up my exhibit, thus taking only 3 hours off rather than two full days. The drive was just over 5 hours, including fighting through the Cincinnati rush hour, and the location was just 3 miles off I-75, so it was easy to find. The show was held in a new location, the TARA EXHIBIT HALL, after having been held downtown in the main Dayton Convention center for years. The TARA includes several full size ice rinks and they were all active with youth games when I got there around 6:00 PM on Friday. AIRPEX was held in the Silver convention hall. I was met by well-prepared exhibit assistants who quickly got me to my frames and assisted in getting the exhibit in place. As it happened, one of the judges was Paul Phillips, a former Knoxville Stamp Club member, now living in Cincinnati. I ran into him as I was leaving the exhibit area and he introduced me to a couple of other judges. Since Paul had just judged my exhibit in California, I told him I had one new page with two new covers, otherwise no changes. He suggested I show him the page, containing two waterway packet covers from Camden, Arkansas to New Orleans in 1849. On Saturday, I spent the day going through cover boxes. There were 20 dealers, and most were busy, especially the cover dealers. I also talked awhile with the APS representative, who had his own table. There were 18 exhibits, including three one-frame exhibits. I attended the meeting of the Ohio Postal History society. I was envious, as they have 200 members (so few people are interested in Arkansas, I always feel like the Lone Ranger), and about 16 attended the meeting. Ribbons went up on the exhibits by 4 PM. I was one of three gold medal winners in the multi-frame group and hoped for another Grand. The judges' critique was held at 5:00 PM. I got two very good suggestions from a judge who had not seen my exhibit before, plus one judge familiar with Louisiana history, pointed out I had a slight misspelling in one of the Louisiana destinations in the exhibit. So I have three changes to make. The awards "banquet" that night was a light snacks and cash bar affair, which was quite pleasant. The exhibit quality was so high that no exhibit got less than a Silver, which is very unusual. I won the APS research medal, which is seldom awarded and is a high prestige award, and then the Reserve Grand, losing to a wonderful study of Cleveland Postal History to 1868. I was surprised to discover in conversation with this exhibitor that the Great Lakes played little or no part in mail transportation... in Arkansas most of the mail was carried on the rivers for most of the 19th century. Sunday was spent with my search for more dated revenue stamps for my "other" collection, and I was able to add about 40 new days. Overall, I had a great time, and recommend that collectors from the Knoxville area consider travelling to Dayton next year.