

## A New Trans-Mississippi Find And a Lesson in Using the Internet

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Illustrated here is a new Trans-Mississippi find. The strip of four 10¢ engraved issue (type A) are postmarked Canton, Mississippi, January 19 [1864]. This envelope and its enclosure recently came from a Louisiana estate.

For those unfamiliar with Trans-Mississippi covers, they represent a special service begun in 1863 to provide mail service across the federally controlled Mississippi River. Details of this service were described in several publications.<sup>1</sup> Krieger<sup>2</sup> illustrated the "Trans-Miss" known up to that time. A special 40-cent rate was charged for Trans-Mississippi service. On this cover the postage was paid with a strip of four 10-cent stamps.



As can be seen in the illustration the cover is addressed to Mrs. Martha H. Edwards in Lake Village, Arkansas. Interestingly, the envelope is graced with an enclosure dated *November 23, 1863*.

*Dear Martha,*

*As Mr Edwards leaves this morning for home, I thought I would send you a few lines by way of remembrance; for you will no doubt by other letters have the news in detail. I have had bad health for three or four months past but I now feel like getting well again for which I am truly grateful to my Heavenly Father. We have had considerable sickness in the family & neighborhood this fall & summer and several deaths; our house has been quite a hospital for sick soldiers for a year past. Your cozs John & James Pointer are still with us John has recovered his health, James I think likely will never get well. We have had as high as five and six for months at a time! Oh the waste and destruction of this cruel war upon the health and lives of our fellow man. And still it increases. Every mail almost brings us news of further effusion of blood. We heard yesterday of another battle in Virginia. Several of our neighbors was killed & wounded. Alfred Cul & William Brooks killed. Scott & Hester & Georgie Ward of Canton wounded. We have had quite a battle below Canton since Mr. Edwards has been over it lasted three days the roar of cannon all over the country was terrific. We cant scarcely look for anything hut to be over with where we are but there is no remedy but to stand & trust God for deliverance.*

*I see I am getting into detail I only intended in the commencement to thank you for the hat & suspenders you were so kind as to send me I'll try and take care of them for your sake. Try and take care of your health & the childrens also. We want all of you to see us as soon as the*

*war closes. Try to advise Susan to regain her health and to come over as she can we are anxious to see all of you. Say to Susan for me that she might write letters and leave them with you as you have many more chances to forward them in the Village than she has in the country. Mr E. is now started - I must stop*

*Your father J. T. Hollingsworth  
Nov 20th 1863*

Based on the size of the folded letter and position of its folds, the letter was contained in the envelope for at least a considerable time after the War, if it was not originally enclosed within it. Why such a disparity between dates? From the letter it seems as though Mr Edwards was to have carried the letter by hand to its destination. There was much fighting around Canton at this time. For one reason or another the letter was not transmitted until January when it was dropped into the Canton post office.

Research into the backgrounds of sender and recipient proved to be an excellent lesson in the resources available on the Internet, esp. within the realm of genealogy.<sup>3</sup> The junior author began with one of the best search engines available — [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Research into the sender, J. T. Hollingsworth, revealed a considerable amount of genealogical activity concerning the family (43,700 hits on Google!). There were, and still are, a lot of Hollingsworths in the United States. But a search for “Hollingsworth” AND “Edwards” (the addressee’s last name) AND “Confederate” AND “Arkansas” yielded some critical information: the first name of J. T. Hollingsworth — Japeth — plus the very fortunate information that Martha H(ollingsworth) Edwards was the daughter of Japeth and had married Judge W.W Edwards of Chicot County Arkansas in 1857 (the Mr. Edwards mentioned in the letter?). Further searching helped to complete much of the background to this cover. Japeth Hollingsworth was born in Franklin County, Georgia, in 1820, but moved to Kentucky in his early twenties and

married Martha M. Ford on January 13, 1843. They produced 14 children (not all of whom survived, a not uncommon occurrence), one of whom was Martha. Hollingsworth moved to Canton, Mississippi sometime before the war, and had a career as lawyer, judge and hotel operator there. For his part, Edwards was admitted to the bar in Canton in 1855. (It is tempting to speculate he met his future wife at this time.) In 1859 he moved to Chicot County, Arkansas, and there entered practice with Judge William H. Sutton, under the firm name of Sutton & Edwards. Edwards was conscripted into the Confederate army in early 1863, the company to which he belonged forming a part of Bell's regiment, Hawthorne's brigade. After the surrender of Confederate forces in 1865, Edwards went to New Orleans, on account of the poor condition prevailing in post-war Arkansas. He was admitted to the bar in Louisiana, and practiced law in the city of New Orleans until 1875. Hollingsworth later moved to Fayette County, Alabama and died there June 30, 1890. The Hollingsworth Family cemetery is located at Fayette, Alabama, and the inscriptions on all the tombstones are recorded on the Internet.

### References and Notes:

1. Dietz, A. 1929. *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America*. Richmond VA: Dietz Printing Co., pp. 287-294; Jaronski, S.T. 1990. "Major Sringer, Lt. Ewell, R.A. Matthews, and the Trans-Mississippi Mails." *The Confederate Philatelist* 35(2): 51-63, 81 (March April 1990); Warren, D. C. 1998. "The Trans-Mississippi Express mail of the Confederacy." *U.S. Stamp Specialist* 4(3): 43 (May-June 1998);
2. Krieger, R. 1984. *The Trans-Mississippi Mails After the Fall of Vicksburg*. (J. F. Dunn, ed.) New York: The Philatelic Foundation.
3. The sources found through google.com were *Louisiana: Comprising Sketches of Parishes, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form (volume 3)*, pp. 145-146. Edited by Alice Fortier, Lit.D. Published in 1914, by Century Historical Association. [<http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/la/vermilli/biographies/edwards.txt>]; <http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/al/fayette/cemetery/hollingsworth.txt>; and Zilpha Galloway Hollingsworth Notebook <http://www.angelfire.com/al2/McCalebs/ZilphaGalloway.html>.