

TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY: THE EARLIEST RAILROAD
MARKINGS

by Gordon Bleuler

At the recent gathering in Austin of those collectors interested in Texas Postal History, a question was raised as to the date and usage of the earliest railroad markings in the state of Texas. A cover in the collection of Gordon Bleuler has the following marking:

"G.H. & H. R.R. Texas, Confederate States of A" and "March 11th/61," all in manuscript on an orange envelope with horizontal pair of the 3¢ 1857 issue, also cancelled in manuscript. The envelope is addressed to William C. Hume, Esq., Orange Co. Ho., Orange & Alx. R.R., Virginia.

The marking above reflects usage on the Galveston, Houston, & Henderson Railroad, and the date of March 11, 1861 indicates Confederate-Texas, Secession state usage of U.S. stamps.

Information available indicates the Galveston, Houston & Henderson Railroad was chartered on Feb. 7, 1853, and work was begun in 1856. By Oct. 22, 1859, a stretch of 40 miles of track was completed from the mainland to the outskirts of Houston, Texas. In 1860, a bridge was built across Galveston Bay. The railroad was never completed to Henderson as projected. The railroad was used effectively by General Magruder, the Confederate General, in his attack on the Federal army on Jan. 1, 1863.

This writer has seen no other Texas railroad markings during the 1850's or 1860's. The next Texas railroad marking in his collection is one with the postmark of Ft. Scott & Deni. R.P.O. (Fort Scott, Kansas and Denison, Texas) on a small envelope with a 3¢ green (on greenish) with a green cancel. The stamp and usage indicates this cover dates in the very early 1870's. The cancel is a green wedge killer.

It would be interesting to determine if there are other Texas railroad markings in the 1850's or 1860's. Was the G.H. & H. R.R. the first railroad in Texas

(These notes prepared by Gordon Bleuler...February 16, 1976)