

Figure 1

## The Confederate States Two-Cent Red Jack Intaglio Stamp By Brian M. Green

*(Editor's Note: This article is based on excerpts from the opening pages of Foundation Assistant Curator Brian M. Green's recently published "Red Jack" book, part of a continuing series that eventually will include all General Issues of the Confederate States of America.)*

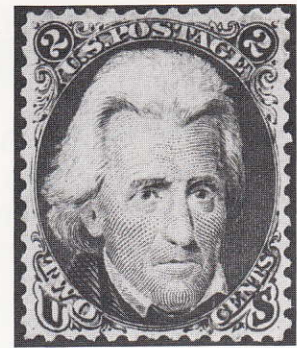


Figure 2

On February 23, 1861 President Jefferson Davis approved and signed a Congressional act to prescribe the rates of postage in the Confederate States of America. Among the rates was that of two cents for "letters placed in any post office, not for transmission but for delivery only" (drop letters) and "for newspapers, unsealed circulars, handbills, engravings, pamphlets, periodicals and magazines, not exceeding three ounces in weight; and for each additional ounce, or fraction of an ounce, two cents additional, and in all cases the postage shall be prepaid by stamps or otherwise as the Postmaster General shall direct. And books bound or unbound not weighing four pounds shall be deemed mailable matter and shall be charged with postage to be prepaid at two cents an ounce, for any distance. Letters advertised—two cents each."

It had been the goal of Postmaster General John H. Reagan to provide for the Confederate States recess printed (intaglio) stamps similar to those in use in the North (United States). Unfortunately, necessity forced the use of inferior lithographed and typographed stamps for two years until success finally came with the Richmond, Virginia firm of Archer and Daly.

Frederick Halpin soon proved his skill as a stamp engraver. One of his works was the Two-Cent Red Jack intaglio stamp of 1863. A portrait of Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) was chosen to grace this stamp (Figure 1).

Students have speculated for years about the similarity of the portrait with that chosen for the 1863 United States Two-Cent Black Jack stamp (Figure 2). It is known that the Jackson head was readily available from the stock of the National Bank Note Company in New York. As earlier noted, Halpin was a former employee of this concern.

Most students believe that the Black Jack stamp was designed from an 1843 engraving by Mosely Isaac Danforth, after a miniature painting of Jackson at age 75 done by John Wood Dodge (1807-1893), an East Tennessee painter and apple grower. Jackson is supposed to have posed for this painting in 1842 while living in retirement at "The Hermitage", his home near Nashville, Tennessee.

A few students think the design was taken from a portrait painted in 1840 by Miner Kilbourne Kellogg, a Cincinnati, during his stay at Jackson's home. However, this painting, currently on display in the Cincinnati Art Museum, shows Jackson's face at a sharper angle than does the Black Jack stamp.

In 1957, Joseph G. Reinis proved that the Jackson head on the bank notes and the Black Jack vignette were identical. By superimposing photographic negatives, he showed that the Black Jack vignette was actually the central portion of the same die previously used for the manufacture of the bank notes. A portion of the original background had been trimmed away to permit the necessary lettering and the addition of a few decorative scrolls to complete the stamp design. The actual engraver of the Black Jack stamp, as issued, is still unknown.

Since both the Confederate Red Jack and the United States Black Jack stamps were issued in close proximity to each other (April of 1863 for the Confederate stamp, and July of 1863 for the United States stamp), the similarity of the portraits is all the more striking. A number of students, including Dietz, known as "the father of Confederate philately," theorized that the ex-American Bank Note Company employee, Frederick Halpin, was responsible for this. Dietz outlined his reasons for this similarity in a letter to the well-known Black Jack collector, Anthony C. Russo of Chicago.

*(Editor's Note: Because of space limitations we must cut off here. The Dietz letter, reproduced in full in the "Red Jack" book, goes on to explain Dietz's theory, including the possibility that the Archer and Daly firm might have been a Confederate branch of the New York based American Bank Note Company. For the full contents of this letter, along with extensive coverage of the Red Jack stamp, postal usages, fakes and forgeries, plus background historical information, you are referred to the Foundation's new publication, "The Confederate States Two-Cent Red Jack Intaglio Stamp," by Brian M. Green, regular retail \$10, Subscriber price \$7.50.)*