

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 24, 2006

Contact: Community Relations
202-268-2155
Stamp News Release No. 06-042
www.usps.com

**POSTAL SERVICE CELEBRATES QUILTING TRADITION WITH QUILTS OF GEE'S BEND
STAMPS, ISSUED AT LARGEST ANNUAL UNITED STATES PHILATELIC EVENT**

ROSEMONT, IL - The rich quilting legacy of four generations of African-American women in rural Alabama was celebrated today as the U.S. Postal Service issued the *Quilts of Gee's Bend* commemorative postage stamps at the American Philatelic Society's (APS) annual convention and philatelic exhibition. These stamps are sixth in the American Treasures Series, and feature the ingenuity and improvisational style of the Gee's Bend quilters.

As host to the event, Rosemont holds the unique distinction of being the only city in the nation where the stamps are available today. The stamps will be available nationwide Aug. 25.



"These quilts are a tremendous source of pride for the Gee's Bend community and the nation," said Mary Anne Gibbons, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamps. "They have captivated the world of art and are a wonderful addition to our American Treasures Series."

The American Treasures Series is intended to showcase beautiful works of American fine art and crafts.

"This is such an honor," said Mary Lee Bendolph, a Gee's Bend quilter whose "Housetop" quilt is featured on one of the stamps. "I just have to give praise to the Lord. We all are blessed to have our quilts on a postage stamp. We never had any idea this would happen to us. We are all so honored."

The community of Gee's Bend is located southwest of Selma, on a big bend in the meandering Alabama River. For generations, geography has isolated "Benders," as the residents are known. Water surrounds the community on three sides and 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-officially named Boykin in 1949-with Camden, AL, stopped running during the 1960s, but isolation has also brought a priceless gift: generations of skilled quilters.

The 10 *Quilts of Gee's Bend* self-adhesive stamps feature photographs chosen by art director Derry Noyes. The quilts were created between 1940 and 2001.

Currently, a national museum tour of various Gee's Bend quilts is wrapping up. "The Quilts of Gee's Bend" is on exhibit at the de Young Museum, San Francisco until Dec. 31, 2006.

The stamps will remain on display at the American Philatelic Society's (APS) Exhibition until Aug. 27, 2006. There will be a quilting discussion and demonstration by some of the quilters from Gee's Bend whose works are featured on the stamps at the APS stamp show on Fri., Aug. 25 in Hall G.

The APS show provides an opportunity to buy and sell philatelic material. There are more than 150 dealers present, meetings of more than 25 national societies, and more than 100 educational seminars.

Philatelic Products

There are four philatelic products available for this stamp issue.

- Item 674563. First-Day Covers (Set 10). \$7.70
- Item 674565. Digital Color Postmark Random Single. \$1.50
- Item 674568. Digital Color Postmark (Set of 10). \$15.00
- Item 674599. Digital Color Postmark Keepsake. \$9.30

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

QUILTS OF GEE'S BEND STAMPS
POSTMASTER
1000 E OAKTON STREET
DES PLAINES IL 60018-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Sept. 23, 2006.

Quilts of Gee's Bend Stamps

Top row, left

"Housetop" variation by Mary Lee Bendolph (1935-); 1998.

Cotton, corduroy, twill, assorted polyesters.

72 x 76 inches

Top row, right

"Chinese Coins" variation by Arlonzia Pettway (1923-); circa 1965.

Corduroy, denim, cotton twill.

88 x 73 inches

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 inches

Second row, right

Medallion with checkerboard center by Patty Ann Williams (1898-1972); 1960s.
Cotton (corduroy and twill) and polyester knit.

84 x 71 inches

Third row, left

"Housetop"-four-block "Half-Log Cabin" variation by Lottie Mooney (1908-1992);
circa 1940.

Cotton and rayon.

88 x 73 inches

Third row, right

Bars and string-pieced columns by Jessie T. Pettway (1929-); circa 1950.
Cotton.

95 x 76 inches

Fourth row, left

"Nine Patch" by Ruth P. Mosely (1928-); circa 1955.

Cotton and corduroy.

93 x 77 inches

Fourth row, right

Medallion by Loretta Pettway (1942-); circa 1960.
Synthetic knit and cotton sacking material.

87 x 70 inches

Fifth row, left

"Pig in a Pen" medallion by Minnie Sue Coleman (1926-); circa 1970.

Polyester knit and double knit.

61 x 82 inches

Fifth row, right

Blocks and strips by Annie Mae Young (1928-); circa 1970.

Cotton, polyester, synthetic blends.

83 x 80 inches

Since 1775, the United States Postal Service and its predecessor, the Post Office Department, have connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency that visits more than 144 million homes and businesses every day, the Postal Service is the only service provider delivering to every address in the nation. It receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$70 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 212 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves ten million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

###