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The Hermitage Acquires Gold Box Originally Belonging to Andrew Jackson

HERMITAGE, Tenn. (Dec. 18, 2014) – Over 140 years ago, one of Andrew Jackson's most prized possessions, a gold presentation box given for his bravery in the Battle of New Orleans, disappeared. It was not until recently that The Hermitage was able to recover it.

After leading a militia of American soldiers and Tennessee volunteers to an impressive victory at the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812, Jackson was declared an American military hero. The mayor of New York City, Cadwallader D. Colden, presented the gold box, an honorary award, to Jackson in 1819. The box weighs 9.9 ounces and comes with a story to share. It will be featured in The Hermitage's new exhibit, "Andrew Jackson: Born for a Storm," debuting on Jan. 8, 2015.

"Municipal and state governments would use swords, boxes and medals as items of special recognition to military heroes," said Howard Kittell, president and CEO of The Hermitage. "Next to election to public office, the presentation of this box was considered the highest form of municipal honor by the City of New York. This is a treasured object with such a fascinating history, and it makes a wonderful addition to our impressive collection of unique Jackson-related artifacts."

Jackson owned the gold box until his death in 1845. Before he passed away, he dictated in his will that a few special objects be given away. The gold box was one of them. The gold box was to be given to the individual that his son, Andrew Jackson Jr., judged to be the most important person from New York of the next war. After 20 years and two wars, Andrew Jackson Jr. finally bequeathed the precious gold box to General Ward Burnett, a career army officer, for his bravery

in the Mexican War. The box remained in the Burnett family until last year, when they alerted The Hermitage that the box was still in existence.

“We are lucky that we were able to recover this valuable gift because many of these honorary boxes were melted and sold over the years,” Kittell said.

The top of the box shows the original inscription from the city of New York to Jackson, and the bottom of the box houses the inscription added by Andrew Jackson Jr. for its presentation to General Burnett.

The box will be in the exhibit to symbolize the level of national recognition paid to Jackson that led him to stage his political campaign.

About The Hermitage

Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage: Home of the People’s President is one of the largest and most visited presidential homes in the United States. In 1856, the state of Tennessee purchased the property from the Jackson family, entrusting it to the Ladies’ Hermitage Association in 1889 to operate as one of America’s first historic site museums. Today, The Hermitage is a 1,120-acre National Historic Landmark with more than 30 historic buildings, including restored slave cabins. In recent years, new interpretive initiatives and educational programs such as archaeology and the history of slavery have enhanced the experience of more than 180,000 annual visitors. For more information, visit www.thehermitage.com.