

Modern Postal History; Tampa-Saint Petersburg

by Jerald Cowles

As a lifelong resident of Saint Petersburg, Florida I am very familiar with what would be considered more recent history.

St. Petersburg [Figure 1] has a population of about 260,000 in the city limits. Tampa [Figure 2], it's nearest and most ardent rival, has a population of about 419,000. In early 2012 the USPS decided in the interest of saving money to move all mail processing to the main Tampa PO. The main PO in Saint Petersburg would lose processing but retain retail operations as well as PO Boxes.

Because it was feared that the postmark would also be lost, the USPS was heavily lobbied by politicians and businesses in the area. The result was a combined postmark [Figure 3] which remains to this day. As collateral damage, a small Post Office credit union merged with a larger credit union.

Three corner images from the envelopes -- illustrate one which no longer exists and two which are present as of today. The postmark which has only the name of St. Petersburg no longer exists. The Tampa only postmark is still used to this day. The combined postmark of Tampa and St. Petersburg is now used for mail processed in Tampa from St. Petersburg. The main Tampa PO is located near Tampa International Airport. The argument from the USPS is that at the time first class mail usage had dropped 25% since 2006.



Figure 1

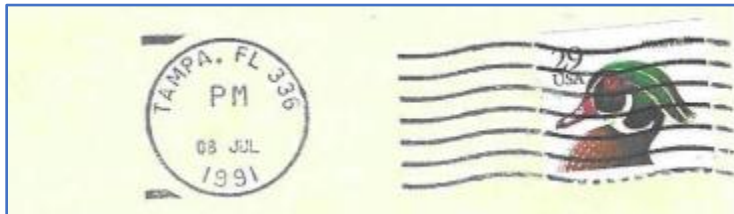


Figure 2



Figure 3

[Editor's Note: My family moved to the new born city of Coral Springs on January 1, 1970 and I can clearly remember receiving letters from relatives in the north country who had to address the letters to a Pompano Beach address because Coral Springs had no postal recognition as of that date. That did not last long as Coral Springs was growing exponentially and very quickly was recognized. I so wish I had saved some of those covers!]