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FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING

SARASOTA NATIONS STAMP EXHIBITION

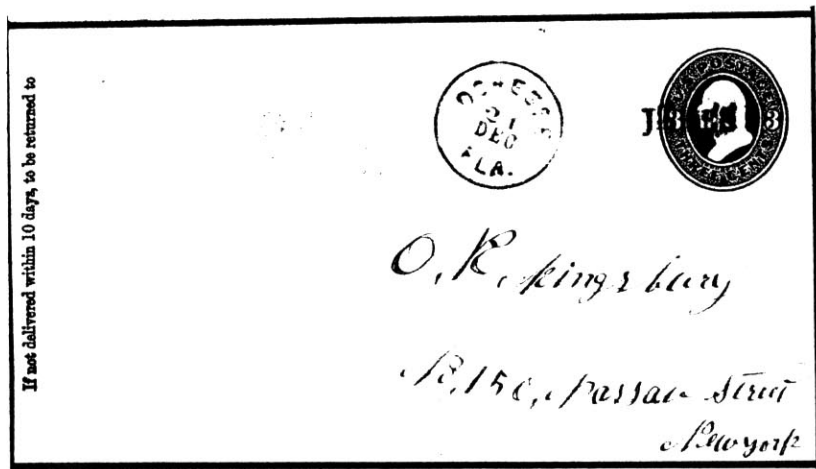
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2007 - 12:00 PM

The Annual Meeting of the Florida Postal History Society will be held in Sarasota, Fla. in conjunction with the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition on Saturday, February 3, 2007, at 12:00pm. The location is in the Convention Building on US.41, just north of the Ritz Carleton Hotel. Ample parking is located in front of the building. Installation of our new President, William H. Johnson, DDS and Vice President Stephen Patrick will precede a slide presentation on Florida Postal History during the Spanish Period by member Yamil Kouri, M.D. He is an authority on Spanish postal marking in the Americas and has obtained some new information from the postal archives in Cuba as well as those in Spain. He may even be able to document some new markings. This should be a very interesting presentation and members are encouraged to attend.

The Florida Postal History Society did have a meeting on December 2, 2006 at FLOREX in Orlando. Vice President elect, Stephen Patrick presented a short talk on Hawks Park postal history. Several very interesting exhibits related to Florida Postal History were reviewed by our Editor, one of which was a thorough presentation of Lake County Postal History, which included two previously unrecorded Doane postmarks. Our Society will definitely continue to hold a second meeting each year in conjunction with the FLOREX show as it is now becoming a first rate show with excellent dealer representation.

OCHESEE STRAIGHTLINE "JAMES" CANCELLATION

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



OCHESEE / FLA. 21 DEC (1878) cds postmark with unusual "JAMES" cancellation on 3c U136 entire with usage to New York.

The above cover is unusual in the usage of a straightline "James" handstamp to cancel the 3c postal entire. The post office in the town of Ochesees was established on 12 May 1835, in Jackson County with H. D. Stone as postmaster. The Ochesees county name on the official P.O.D. records was changed to Calhoun County on 19 October 1846. The post office functioned through the Civil War until it was officially discontinued by post office accounting on 29 March 1867. It was not re-established after the war until 11 March 1870, also in Calhoun County with James W. Yearty as postmaster. It was discontinued on 14 April 1873, but re-established back in Jackson County on 18 February 1875, and

continued until a final discontinuation on 12 January 1887, with mail handled by the West Wynnton post office. Records are unclear as to reason for the changes in county location of the town. The West Wynnton post office was in Calhoun County and was discontinued on 31 January 1887, shortly after the Ochesees post office was discontinued. Perhaps Ochesees was located near the border of both counties and at various times was considered in one or the other county.

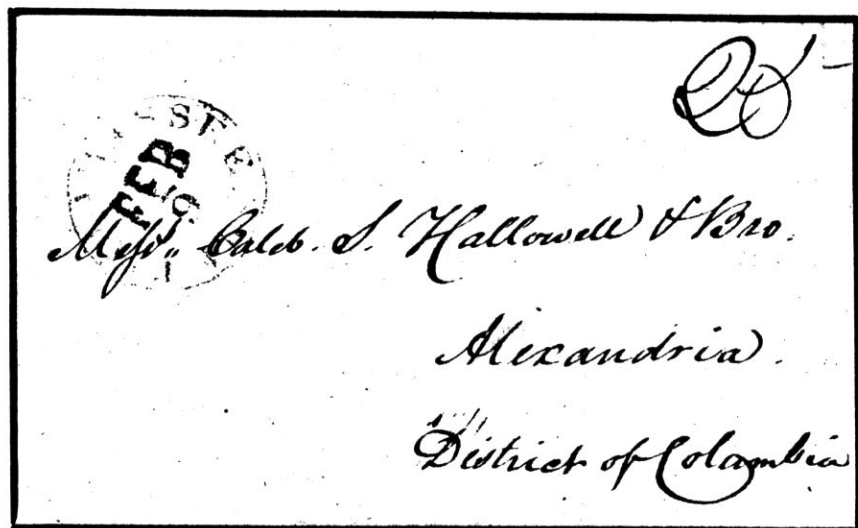
My first thought as to the reason for the "James" handstamp cancellation device was obviously that it was the name of the postmaster. Certainly with the re-establishment of the post office after the Civil War, "James" Yearty was the new postmaster. He served for the three years that the post office functioned in Calhoun County, until 1873, but not, however, when this cover was cancelled in 1878. Review of the USPO microfilm records of postmaster appointments shows that Henry Brash was the postmaster during 1878, when this cover was cancelled. Perhaps "James" was the Postmaster Brash's son or the earlier postmaster, James Yearty, had made a canceling device with his name on it, which was left in the post office and used by Brash in 1878. At any rate, a most interesting cancellation and an unusual item of Florida postal history.

FLORIDA CONFEDERATE POSTAL HISTORY

Your editor, Deane R. Briggs, has been selected Florida state editor of the new **Dietz Catalog**, which is to be published in a few years. The authors have requested that all Confederate stampless markings from each state be reproduced in color with the best obtainable examples of all Postmarks, handstamped Rate, Paid, Due, and Ancillary usage from each town. Please send me color scans in tiff file on CD or by email (drb@gte.net). This is a great opportunity to have your nicest Confederate Florida covers reproduced in the new Dietz Catalog.

TALLAHASSEE TERRITORIAL POSTMARK VARIANT

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



TALLAHASSEE Flor. FEB 9 (1845) red cds postmark with 7-mm. height to month date slug

Since the publication of our society reference text *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763 – 1861*, many additions and corrections have been submitted by readers. The above cover with the type VII postmark in oxidized red ink is unusual because of the excessively tall letters in the month date slug. The normal height is 4-mm., and this one clearly is 7-mm. and is not just the result of a slurred strike. This is the only example of such a tall month slug I have seen from the numerous type VII examples I have recorded. As a result, I have given this marking a type VII* listing as a variant of the normal type VII. This date of use is also the latest known use of the type VII postmark during the territorial period.

PHOSPHATE MINING HISTORY FROM POSTCARDS

Richard A. Fifer

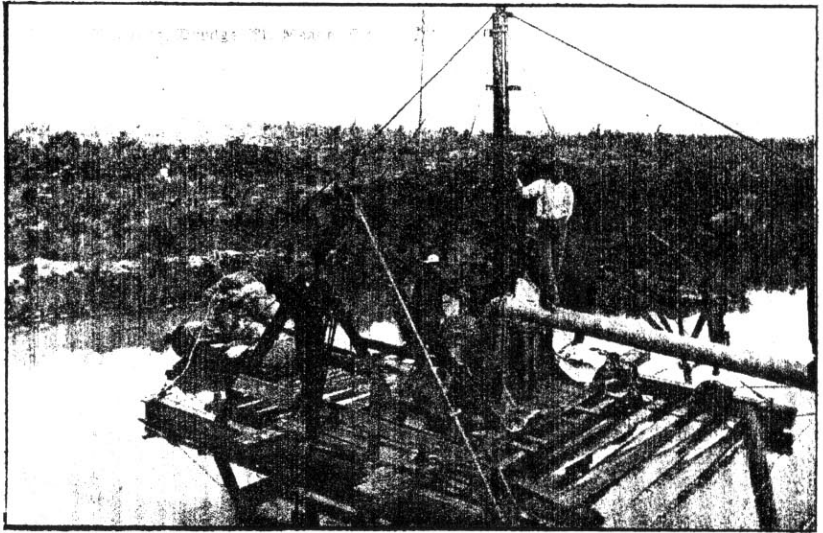


Fig. 1. Fort Meade, Fla. Phosphate Dredge c. 1910

The mining of phosphate has been a major Florida industry for over 100 years. Florida currently provides over 75% of the nation's supply of phosphate fertilizer and approximately 25% of the world's supply. However, this large industry had very humble beginnings.

Pebble phosphate was discovered in the Peace River by Captain Francis LeBaron in May 1881, but mining of this "river pebble" phosphate did not begin until 1888. "Hard rock" phosphate was discovered near Dunnellon by Albertus Vogt in May 1889, with mining operations beginning the following year. Concurrently, the vast beds of "land pebble" phosphate were discovered in Polk County, and mining in "Bone Valley" (so-called because

of the many fossils found during mining) began in 1890. Land pebble phosphate mining was cheaper and easier than either river pebble or hard rock mining and soon dominated production.

Central Florida was primitive at the end of the Nineteenth Century, and amenities were few. The roads were poor, so transportation was especially difficult. As a result, each mining company built a village or town near its mining operations to house its workforce and their families. Each family lived in a company-owned house and were required to shop at the commissary --- the company-owned store.

Research on these early phosphate mining companies is hindered by the limited number of photographs that are available. The remote locations of these mines and plants at the turn of the century resulted in few photographers journeying to these sites to document the mining of phosphate. Of the photographs that were taken, many have not survived the intervening years.

Many of the larger company-owned mining towns in Bone Valley had a post office located on site. These towns included Acme, Bone Valley, Brewster, Christina, Hull, Kingsford, Nichols, Pauway, Pebble, Pembroke, Phosphoria, Pierce, Terraceia, and Tiger Bay. Postal history from these post offices is quite limited. Other nearby towns with post offices included Mulberry, Bartow, Fort Meade, West Fort Meade, Arcadia, and Fort Ogden. Mail from these towns can be very revealing, as shown by the following examples.

Figure 1 shows a postcard mailed from Fort Meade on February 8, 1916. The postcard shows a photograph taken years earlier, of a suction dredge on the Peace River near Fort Meade. The centrifugal pump used to pull the river pebble phosphate from the river-bottom can be clearly seen. Note that the card is evidently mistitled as showing a "Phosphate Mining Drudge."

Ironically, since a drudge is someone who does hard, monotonous work, the title could apply to the workmen standing on the dredge.

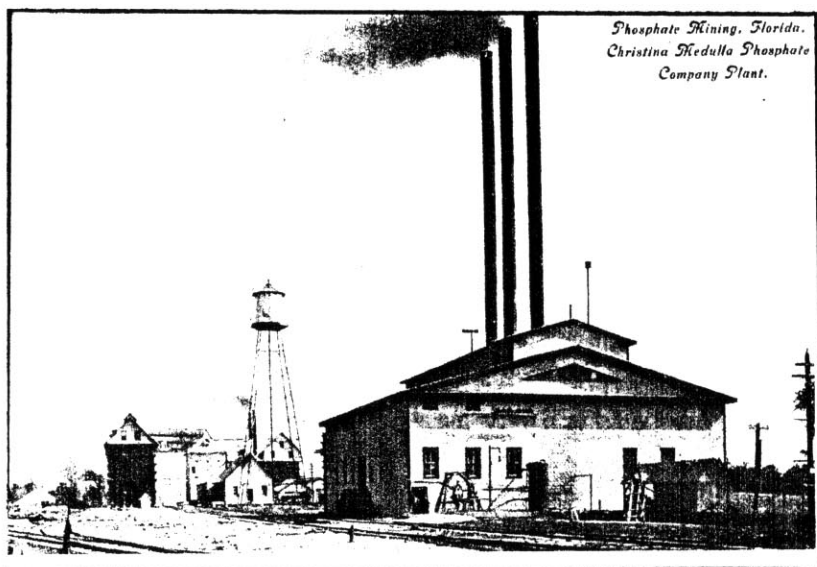
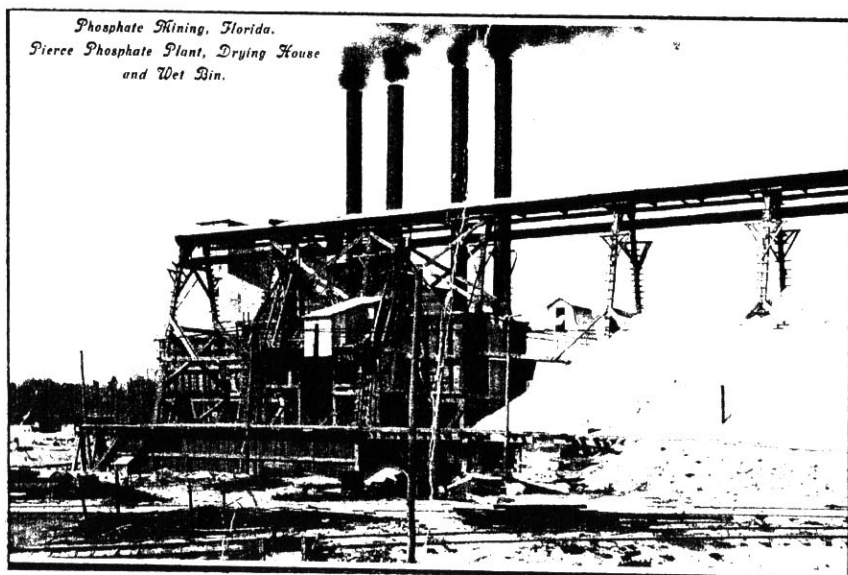


Fig. 2. Medulla Phosphate Co. plant postmarked Christina, Fla. 14 July 1910.

Figure 2 shows a postcard mailed from Christina on July 14, 1910. It provides a rare look at the plant of the Medulla Phosphate Company, started by C. G. Memminger in October 1907.¹ Mining operations began in June 1908,² and the company was sold to the Phosphate Mining Company in January 1910.³ The title of the postcard is misleading since the name of the company was the Medulla Phosphate Company, but the location of the plant was Christina, named by Mr. Memminger for his only daughter, Christine. The photograph shows the power plant in the foreground and the drying plant and wooden dry bin in the background. Both the drying plant and dry bin were destroyed by fire in June 1911.⁴



**Fig. 3. Pierce Phosphate Co. storage facility, postmarked at
Pierce, Fla. 2 January (1911)**

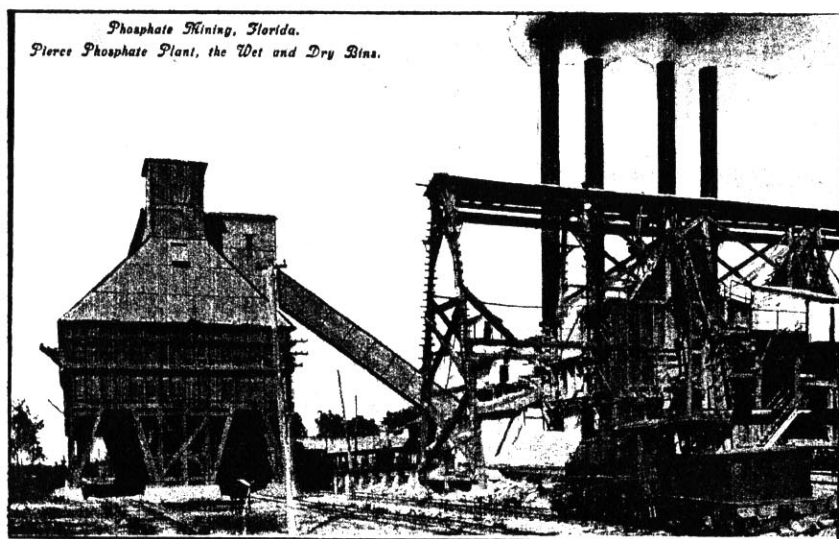


Fig. 4. Pierce Phosphate Co. Wet and Dry Bins (c. 1911)

Figures 3 and 4 are postcards showing operations of the Pierce Phosphate Company at Pierce, Florida. Figure 3 was mailed from Pierce on January 2, but the year is not legible. Figure 4 was mailed from Daytona Beach on July 7, but again the year is not legible. The Pierce Phosphate Company was formed in early 1906 by Harry L. Pierce, but was sold to the American Agricultural Chemical Company (A.A.C.Co.) in October 1906. It operated as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the A.A.C.Co. until it was absorbed in 1913. These postcards provide a very early look at Pierce operations. Figure 3 shows the wet rock storage facility and the large wooden drying plant, with four rotary dryers, and Figure 4 gives a clear view of the south side of the wooden dry rock storage bin. The elevator that carried the dried phosphate rock to the top of the storage bin can be seen. Empty covered hopper cars would be pulled into the dry bin on one of the two tracks shown in the photograph. There, they would be filled with dry rock and pulled out of the north side of the bin to be assembled into a "phosphate drag" to be taken by rail to Port Tampa or South Boca Grande for shipment.

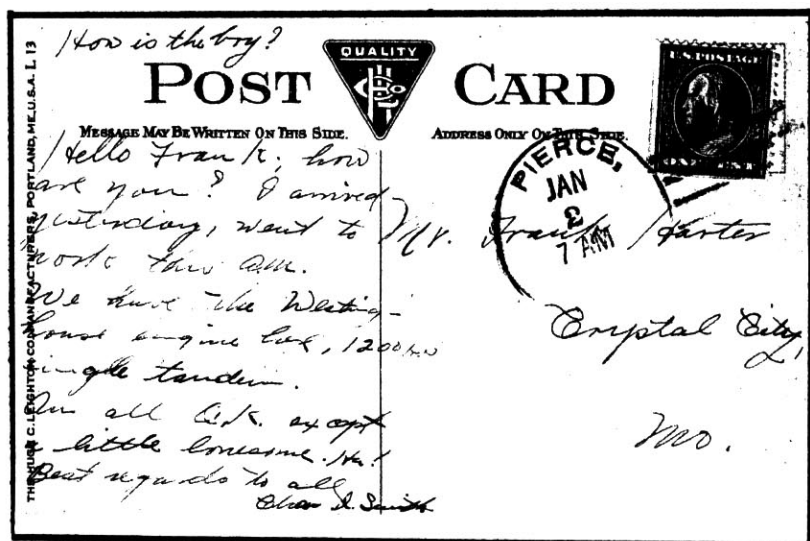


Fig. 5. PIERCE, (FLA. JAN 2 (1912) postmark of Fig. 3.

In addition to documenting the mining towns and operations via photographs, these postcards sometimes provide a glimpse of the human side of mining activities. Figure 5 shows the reverse of the postcard shown in Figure 3. The message reads:

“Hello Frank. How are you? I arrived yesterday, went to work this a.m. We have the Westinghouse engine here, 1200 HP single tandem. Am all O.K. except a little lonesome. Ha! Best regards to all. Chas. I. Smith”

Charles was obviously in Pierce, a long way from home, to help install a large engine. In an inventory taken at Pierce by the A.A.C.Co. on December, 5, 1911, it is noted that one “horizontal tandem two cylinder double acting gas engine” completed installation in June 1911. It further states that the engine was 1200 HP and was manufactured by the Westinghouse Co.⁵ This engine was installed in a new power plant, a gas engine house, at Pierce. This inventory information dates the postcard in Figures 3 and 4 to 1911.

In my research of the history of Florida phosphate mining, I have accumulated over 3,000 vintage photographs of mining operations, mining towns, and mining pioneers. However, I am quick to acquire any old postcards related to the phosphate industry. This author has found that postcards, published or mailed in the early Twentieth Century, provide an excellent supplement to the surviving photographs of these mining operations.

References

1. Bartow Courier Informant, *Phosphate Business Steadily Increasing*, Bartow, Florida, October 10, 1907.
2. Bartow Courier Informant, *Florida Phosphates*, Bartow, Florida, August 13, 1908.

3. Polk County Public Records, Deed Record Volume 97, Page 383, Filed March 14, 1910.

4. Bartow Courier Informant, *\$75,000 Fire Loss at Christina Mine*, Bartow, Florida, June 30, 1911.

5. Unpublished Document, *Inventory of the Phosphate Rock Department, Pierce, Fla., Complete to October 1, 1921*, The American Agricultural Chemical Co.

All postcards in Figures 1-5 are from the author's personal collection.

Biography

Richard A. Fifer lived in Pierce until the age of 8. He retired in 2003 after 34 years with the Lockheed Martin Corporation, where he was a missile guidance engineer and a systems engineering manager. He and his wife currently reside in Lakeland. He is actively researching the early phosphate mining companies and towns.

Editor's Note:

Richard Fifer is a new member of the Florida Postal History Society. He will be at our Annual Meeting in Sarasota, on February 3, 2007 at 12:00pm and would enjoy meeting with members interested in the Phosphate Industry. He would like to see any postcards related to the Phosphate Industry or other Florida Postal History items related to that industry or with Phosphate corner cards. Please bring them if you are coming to the Annual Meeting.

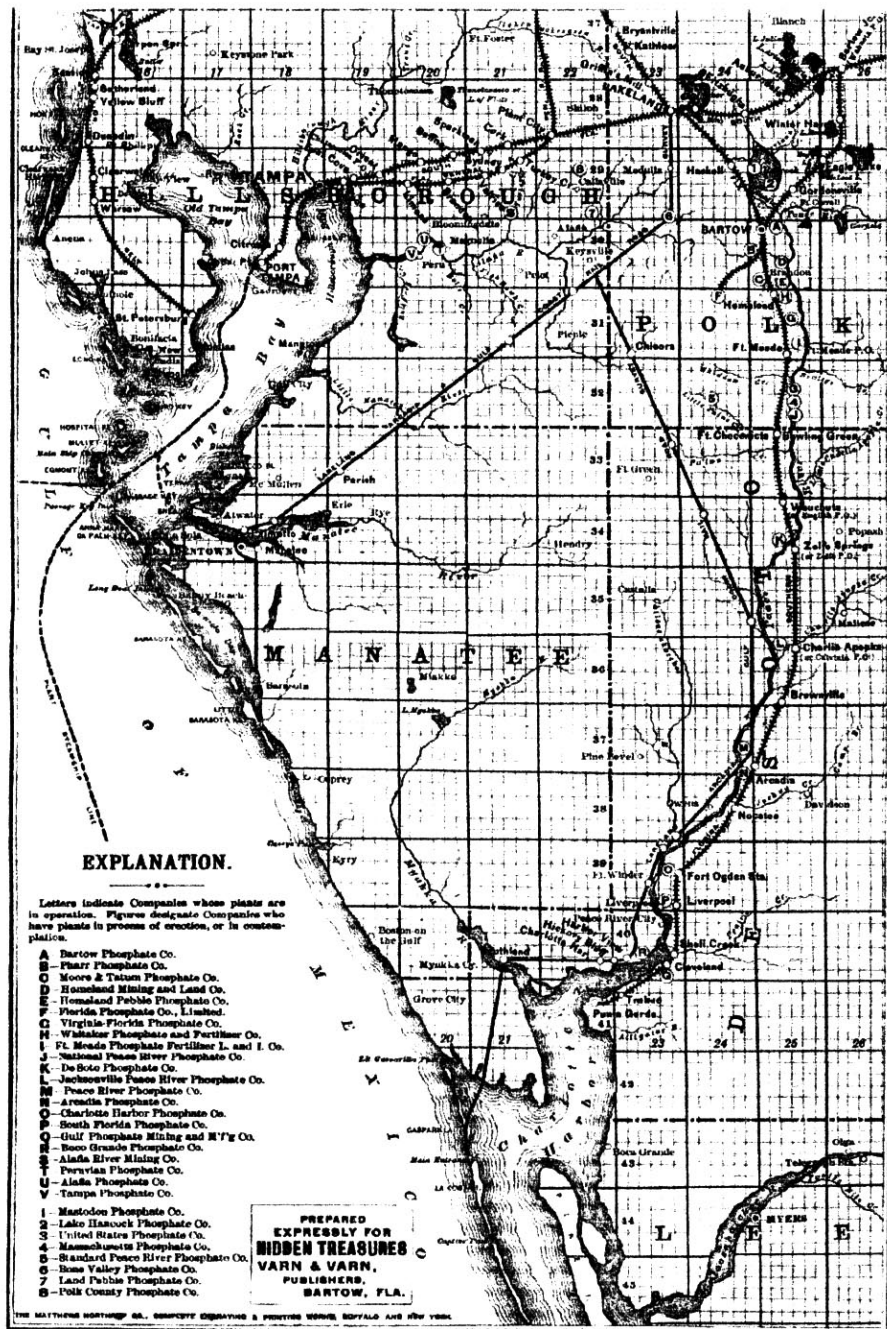


Fig. 6. Map showing mine locations along Peace River

This article will conclude with a listing of Peace River Pebble Phosphate Mining towns as well as a listing of Land Pebble Phosphate Mining towns in Polk and Hillsboro Counties, and a listing of Hard Rock Phosphate Mining towns in Florida. These lists have been tabulated by the author's research as of 2006.

River Pebble Phosphate Mining Towns (List is Incomplete)

Town	Phosphate Mining Company
Polk County	
Arcadia*	many
Bartow*	Bartow Phosphate Company; Lake Hancock Phosphate Company
Bowling Green*	Tilghman Phosphate Company; Interstate Chemical Corporation
Fort Meade*	many
Homeland*	Whitaker Phosphate and Fertilizer Company; Homeland Mining and Land Company
DeSoto/Hardee County	
?	Boca Grande Phosphate Company
Arcadia*	Arcadia Phosphate Company; Peace River Phosphate Company
Charlie Apopka*	Jacksonville and Peace River Phosphate Company
Cleveland	Gulf Phosphate Mining and Manufacturing Company
Ft. Ogden*	Charlotte Harbor Phosphate Company
Hull	Peace River Phosphate Company; Peace River Phosphate Mining Company
Jane Jay	Germofert Manufacturing Company; Cooperative Phosphate Company
Liverpool	South Florida Phosphate Company
Peru	Tampa Phosphate Company
Wauchula*	Scott Phosphate Company; Great Southern Phosphate Company
Zolfo Springs*	DeSoto Phosphate and Mining Company

* Important phosphate mining town, but not a company town

Land Pebble Phosphate Mining Towns
(List is Incomplete)

Town	Phosphate Mining Company
Polk County	
Acme	United States Phosphate Company; Massachusetts Phosphate Company
Agricola	State Phosphate Company;
Bartow*	Swift & Company
Bone Valley	many
	Bone Valley Phosphate Company;
	Prairie Pebble Phosphate Company
Bowling Green*	Tilghman Phosphate Company;
	Interstate Chemical Corporation
Bradley Junction*	n/a
Brewster	Amalgamated Phosphate Company;
	American Cyanamid Company
Christina	Medulla Phosphate Company
Chicora*	Amalgamated Phosphate Company
Fort Meade*	Charleston Mining & Manufacturing Company;
	Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company
Homeland*	Whitaker Phosphate and Fertilizer Company;
	Homeland Pebble Phosphate Company
Kingsford	Kingsford Phosphate Company;
	Florida Engineering Company
Long Branch*	Long Branch Phosphate Company
Mulberry*	many
	Peninsular Pebble Phosphate Company;
Nichols	Phosphate Mining Company;
	Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company (Corporation)
Pebble	Pebble Phosphate Company
Pebbledale	Pharr Phosphate Company;
	Pebbledale Phosphate Company
Pembroke	Compagnie Generale des Phosphates de Floride
	Coronet Phosphate Company
Philippi*	Electric Phosphate Company
Phosphoria	Florida Phosphate Company Ltd.;
	Bone Hill Phosphate Company;
	Dominion Phosphate Company
Pierce	American Agricultural Chemical Company
Prairie	Prairie Pebble Phosphate Company
	Export Phosphate Company;
Ridgewood	Southern Phosphate Corporation;
	Davison Chemical Company (Corporation);
	W. R. Grace & Company
Royster	F. S. Royster Guano Company
Sanguly	Lakeland Phosphate Company;
	Southern Phosphate Corporation
	Standard Phosphate Company;
Tancrede	Societe Franco Americaine des Phosphates de Medulla;
	Southern Phosphate Corporation
Terraceia	Terraceia Phosphate Company
Tiger Bay	Palmetto Phosphate Company;
	American Agricultural Chemical Company
Hillsborough County	
Bloomington	Alafia River Mining and Mineral Company
Boyet(t)e	American Agricultural Chemical Company
Coronet	Coronet Phosphate Company;
	Smith-Douglass Company
Peru	Alafia River Phosphate Company
Sydney	American Cyanamid Company

* Important phosphate mining town, but not a company town

Note: Major towns are shown in **Bold**

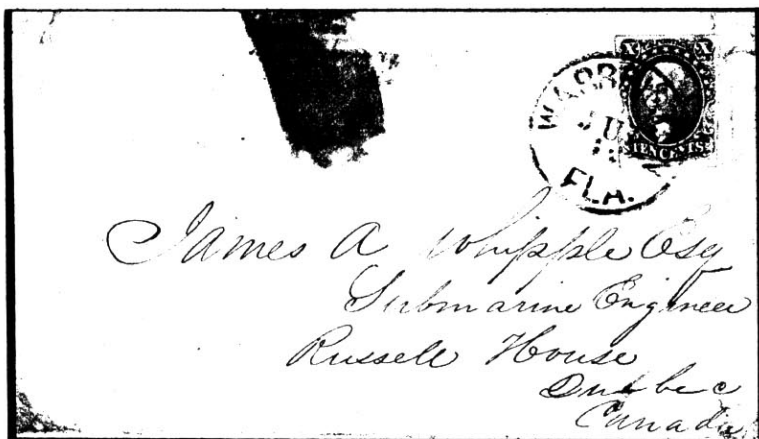
Hard Rock Phosphate Mining Towns (List is Incomplete)

Town	Phosphate Mining Company
Albion	Osceola Phosphate Company
Anthony	many
Bellevue	Bellevue Mining Company
Croom	Leland Phosphate Company; Seminole Phosphate Company
Dunnellon*	many
Early Bird	Early Bird Phosphate Company; Bellevue Mining Company
Elliston	Ocala and Blue River Phosphate Company; Hartshorn Phosphate Company
Floral City*	P. B. & R. S. Bradley Company; Citrus County Hard Rock Phosphate Company; Bradley Fertilizer Company
Fort White	Fort White Phosphate Company; Thompson Phosphate Company
Gainesville*	many
High Springs*	Excelsior Phosphate Company; High Springs Phosphate Company
Inverness*	Holder Phosphate Company
Istachatta	Early Bird Phosphate Company; Istachatta Phosphate Company
Lake City*	Lake City Phosphate Company
Newberry*	Downing Phosphate Company
Ocala*	many
Pemberton	Netherlands Phosphate Company; Chicago and Florida Phosphate Company
Renfro	Marion Phosphate Company; Dunnellon Phosphate Company
Rock Springs*	Alachua Phosphate Company

* Important phosphate mining town, but not a company town

1856 WARRINGTON TO CANADA USAGE

Deane R. Briggs M.D.



WARRINGTON / FLA. JUL 12 (1856) postmark ties 10 c green #15, with usage to a "Submarine Engineer" in Quebec, Canada.

The above cover is a nice example of the 10-cent rate for usage to Canada. It has a nice four margin copy of #15 cancelled by a 29mm. WARRINGTON / FLA. cds postmark. The reverse has a Montreal July 21 route handstamp and a Quebec July 22 1856 receiving mark.

The addressee, James A Whipple, (1821-1861) was a Boston native and initially apprenticed to a steam engine manufacturer. He later became an engineer and studied submarine diving and pursued a career as a "salvor", recovering sunken property along the Atlantic, Caribbean and Mediterranean waters. As an inventor, Whipple made improvements in submarine armor and diving apparatus, and developed a trumpet for communication between a diver and an assistant above water. A collection of 479 letters and 211 documents (1847-1860), related to his work, are in the Clements Library at the University of Michigan.

FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS - 2007

The following members of the Florida Postal History Society have been denoted as **"Contributing Members"** for their additional contribution to the Society. Your additional dues contribution is acknowledged and appreciated and helps underwrite the cost of a third journal issue this year. The continued support of these members keeps our Society financially sound. This enables us to respond to member and non-member inquiries regarding Florida Postal History and furnish copies of our Journal .

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