

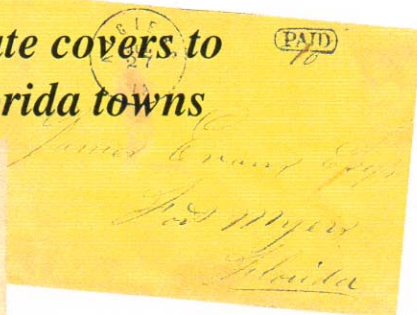
# FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

Vol. 16, No. 1

January 2009



**Confederate covers to  
small Florida towns**



Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State



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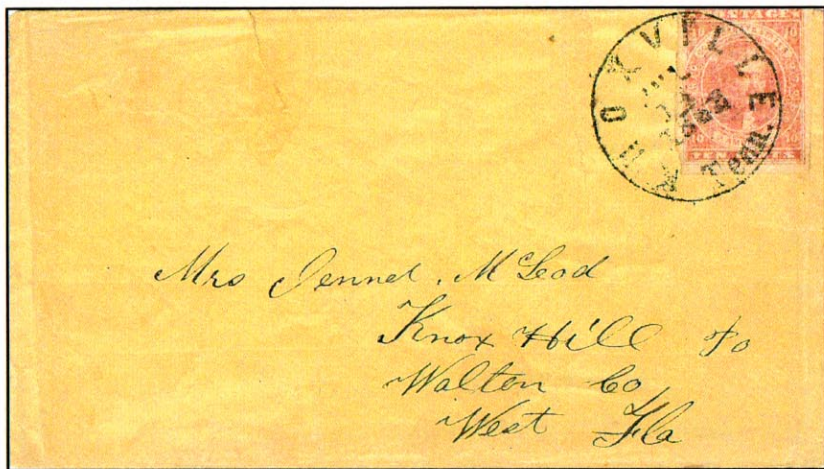
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# Confederate covers to small Florida towns

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

**A**s an avid collector and exhibitor of Florida Confederate postal history, I am always on the search for unusual Florida Confederate usages. One area of unusual usage consists of Confederate covers addressed to small towns in Florida from which there has been no recorded usage of a town postmark, either stampless or with adhesive stamps. The examples in this article are perhaps the only surviving Confederate postal history items from these small towns and shows that these post offices did actually function. The example in Figure 1 is a nice cover with



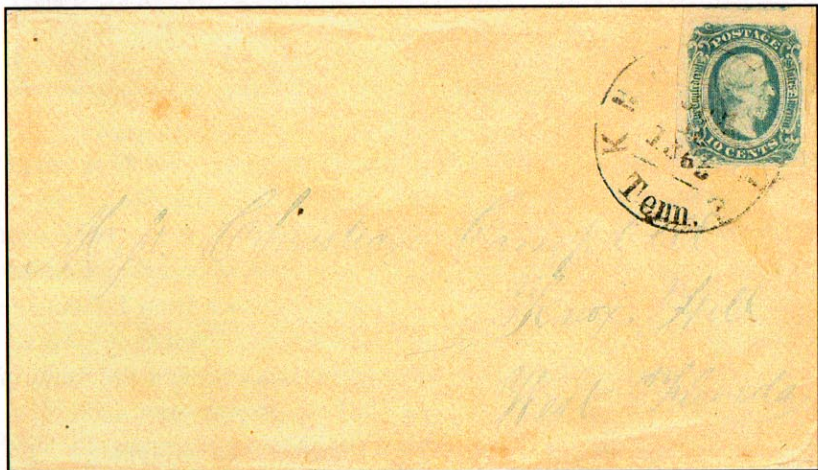
**FIGURE 1**

***KNOXVILLE / Tenn. JUL 12 1862 postmark ties Scott #5 to cover addressed to Knox Hill PO, Walton Co., West Fla.***

usage of 10¢ rose Scott #5 postmarked by a Knoxville, Tennessee handstamp and sent to “Knox Hill PO, Walton Co., West Fla.” That makes two Knox on one cover! Usage of Scott #5 from Florida is extremely scarce with only four recorded uses on cover. This is the only example of Scott #5

used to Florida that I have seen.

The example in Figure 2 is a beautiful cover with an extremely fine four margined 10¢ Scott #11 cancelled by a Knoxville, Tennessee postmark and sent to Knox Hill, Florida. This appears to be from a different correspondence than the example in Figure 1 and is a year later usage. The Knox Hill Post Office was established on March 8, 1852, as a change from Chestnut Hill and continued to function throughout the Civil War as a Confederate post office.



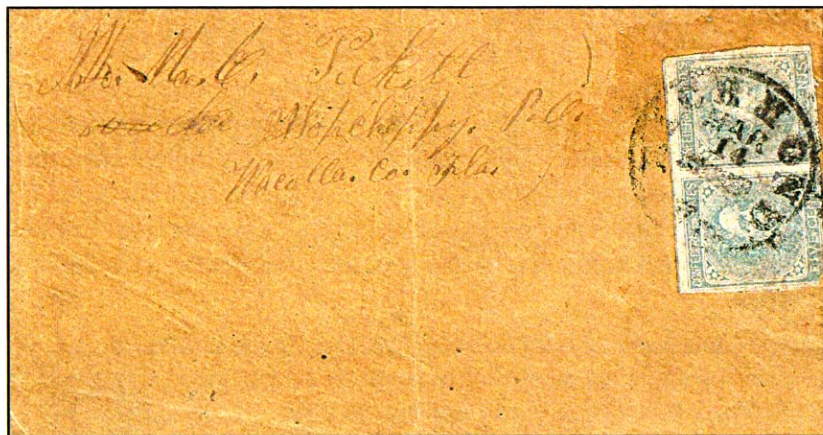
**FIGURE 2**

***KNOXVILLE / Tenn. JUL 10 1863 postmark ties Scott #11 to cover addressed to Knox Hill, West Florida.***

The Knox Hill post office was serviced by Confederate postal route 6565 / 1536 from Marianna to Milton, 140 miles, with twice weekly service with stops at Orange Hill, Vernon, Douglasville, Knox Hill, Uchee Anna, East River, and Austinville. Although the route was let at \$3,750 per year, it must have had very little postal usage or at least little surviving. Of these towns, only Austinville and Uchee Anna have surviving non-archival Confederate covers and then only one each.

The cover in Figure 3 is postmarked with a Richmond, Virginia postmark with indistinct year date and addressed to Sopchoppy, Florida. The Sopchoppy Post Office was established on May 9, 1848, and had an inter-





**FIGURE 3**

***RICHMOND / Va. MAR 14 186x postmark ties pair Scott #7 to cover addressed to Sopchoppy P.O., Waculla (sic) Co. Fla.***

esting history during the Confederacy. The town was serviced by Confederate postal route 6560 / 1532 with once weekly service from Tallahassee to Sopchoppy, 45 miles, with stops at Benhaden and Shell Point. Apparently the Confederate Post Office Department discontinued the route in June 1861, but in April 1863 discovered that the prewar contractor, H. H. Walker, had continued his services for the Confederate government for \$350 per week. Whether he was ever paid this amount is unclear but in mid-May 1863, the contract was officially let to Jacob Raker of Shell Point for \$350 per year with the route going from St. Marks to Tallahassee with all offices supplied.<sup>1</sup> This annual rate represented 1/52 of the prior pre-war rate! There is no other recorded Confederate postal history from Sopchoppy, Benhaden or Shell Point.

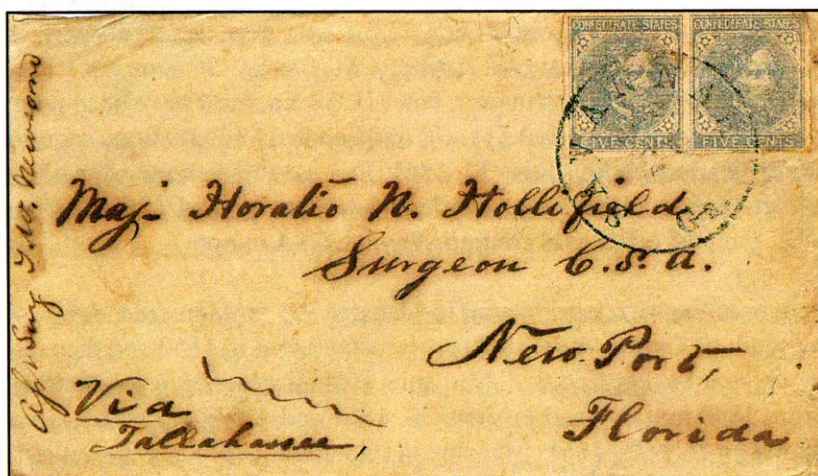
The cover in Figure 4 is addressed to the small town of Centreville, located theoretically in the “center” of the state 11 miles north of Tallahassee. A post office was established in 1848 but postal history is scant from this town with only a single pre-war cover recorded. As a Confederate post office, it was serviced by route 6086 / 1655 with twice weekly mail between Thomasville, Georgia and Tallahassee. The “Flag of Truce” docketing is in the same handwriting as the addressee and represents a North to South cover which was likely enclosed in an outer envelope and posted in Richmond. There are no censor markings and no U.S. postage or postmark.



**FIGURE 4**

**RICHMOND / VA. APR 22 postmark ties Scott #11 to  
“Flag of Truce” cover to Centreville, Leon Co., Florida.**

The cover in Figure 5 has an enclosure datelined Fort Jackson and is addressed to a C.S.A. surgeon in New Port, Florida. New Port is a small town located on the St. Marks River, a few miles from the Gulf. It was estab-

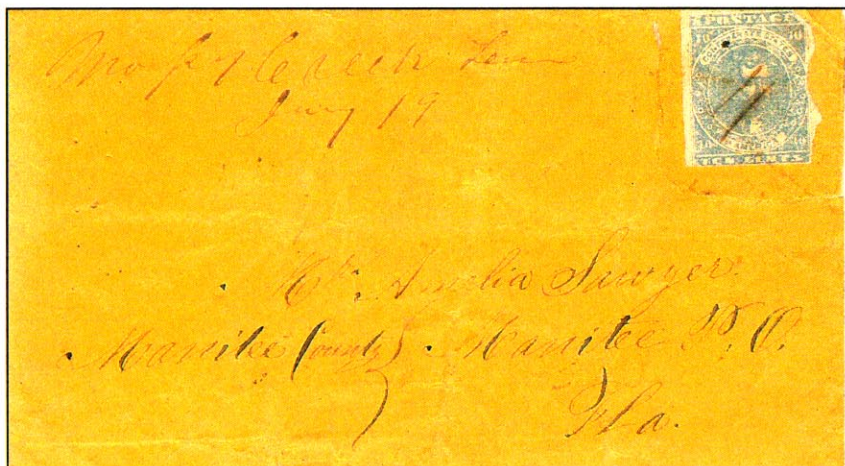


**FIGURE 5**

**SAVANNAH / Ga. APR 27 (1863) postmark ties pair Scott #7 on cover  
to Maj. Horatio N. Hollifield, Surgeon C.S.A., New Port, Florida.**

lished in 1844 as a new “port” after a hurricane wiped out the port town of Port Leon a year earlier. The docketing “Via Tallahassee” implies that this cover was carried over Route 6556 with daily service except Sunday to St.





**FIGURE 6**

***Mossy Creek Tenn July 19 manuscript postmark and pen cancelled Scott #2 (reunited) on cover to Manatee P.O. (sic) Manatee County, Fla.***

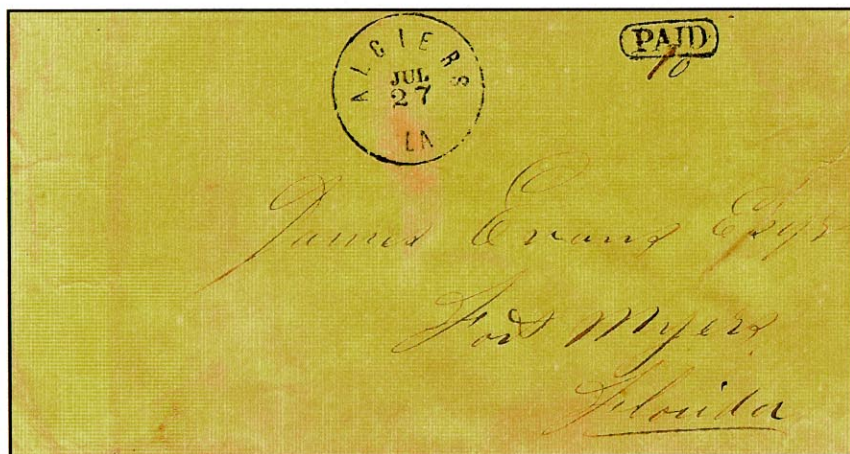
Marks and then either picked up there or sent by military courier to New Port as there was no Confederate postal route to New Port. There is only one Confederate State use cover known from New Port, dated February 28, 1861, and addressed to Jackson Artillery, Ft. Brown, St. Simon's Island, Georgia. The New Port postmaster, Peter H. Swain, must have been pretty busy, as he was compensated \$111.77 and handled \$133.00 in postage for the three quarters ending June 30, 1861. Despite this volume of mail, no Confederate covers have been recorded from New Port and it is questioned whether the post office was continued by the CSA or not.

The cover in Figure 6 is addressed to Manatee P.O. in Manatee County, 40 miles south of Tampa. A post office was established in 1850 and there are many pre-war covers recorded. Nathaniel P. Hunter had been the postmaster from 1859 but resigned on June 30, 1861 and was replaced by James Williams on July 25, 1861. Manatee is important as it was the southernmost Confederate Florida post office and was serviced by Route 6534 / 1520, Tampa to Manatee with weekly service at \$557.08 per annum. The pre-war Miami post office, much farther south than Manatee, was not continued by the CSA.

The cover in Figure 7 is most unusual. It was addressed to a lawyer in Fort Myers, Florida. Early in the war, Fort Myers was an active port where cattle were shipped to Cuba for high prices and paid in "gold" money. As the war



progressed and Confederate commissary needs required the cattle to be shipped to the troops, Fort Myers became less important. It was also occupied by Union forces from the Gulf Blockade Squadron in late 1862. This cover most likely dates from 1861 or 1862. More unusual is the fact that



**FIGURE 7**

***ALGIERS / LA JUL 27 cds postmark with PAID 10 (ms) rate on cover to Fort Myers, Florida.***

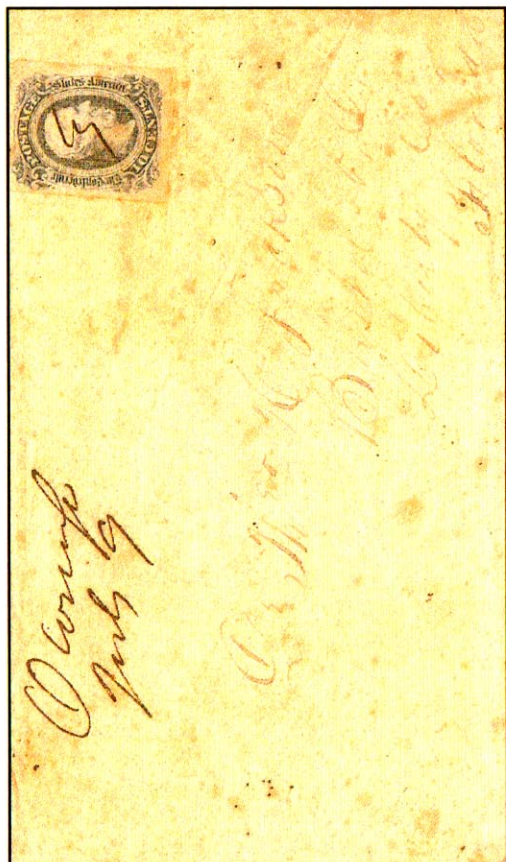
there was no Confederate post office at Fort Myers, in fact a post office did not become established there until 1876, 11 years after the war. This cover must have been carried to Tampa and from there by boat outside the Confederate mails as there was no inland route.

This last cover, Figure 8, is addressed to yet another small Florida Confederate post office from which there are no recorded usages. I am unable to identify the originating post office in the manuscript postmark, but the cover was sent to the Bristol Post Office in Liberty County. Moses Strauss was appointed the CSA postmaster on July 25, 1861, having been the only postmaster since the town's post office name was changed from Ridleyville on April 13, 1859. There also has been no recorded pre-war usage from this town despite post office receipts of \$21.38 for the three quarters ending March 31, 1861.

The author would be pleased to receive scans to or from other small town Confederate Florida postal covers to add to his records.

## FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup> Stefan T. Jaronski, "The Postal Routes Of Confederate Florida Part 2," *The Confederate Philatelist*, Vol. 37 No. 2, Whole No. 266 (1992), 64-65.



**FIGURE 8**  
*Unidentified post  
office, July 9 manu-  
script postmark with  
pen  
cancelled Scott #11 on  
cover to Bristol Post  
Office,  
Liberty County,  
Florida.*



# Florida Airmail Crash Covers

By Edward R. Joyce

One area of Florida postal history which has not been discussed in prior issues of our journal is Florida airmail “crash” covers. To my knowledge, there are three documented Florida “crash” events with collectible covers. The cover in Figure 1 is a CAM 25 cover from the March 1, 1929 first flight of spur service from Daytona to Tampa. The contractor



**FIGURE 1**

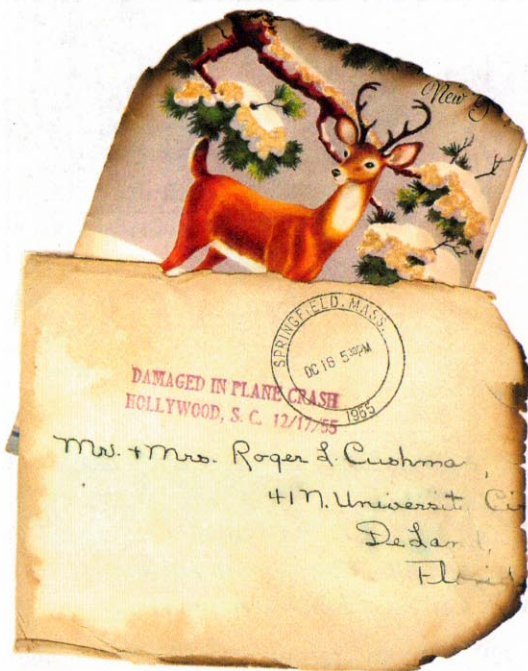
**JACKSONVILLE / FLA. STA. A. MAR 1 1929 machine cancel on CAM 25 airmail, water-soaked cover to Tampa with stamp missing following plane crash at Daytona.**



**FIGURE 2**  
***MACON / GA MAR 1 1929 machine postmark on First Flight  
 CAM 25 cover with cache for the spur from Macon to Orlando.***

was Pitcairn Aviation Corporation, piloted by C. J. Faulkner. The engine failed shortly after takeoff from the Daytona airport and the plane nosedived and crashed into the Halifax River, landing in about eight feet of water. Fortunately, the pilot only received a scratch above his right eye and all 500 pounds of mail was recovered, being only water damaged. Most of the surviving covers have loss of the stamps and a few, such as this cover, have a signed statement explaining the mishap, this one by the receiving postmaster in Tampa. Note that the Tampa receiving mark is dated the same day as the crash and the cover arrived in Tampa by 4:30 p.m. That is a pretty quick recovery and probably would not be able to be duplicated today due to a thorough aviation accident investigation which might take

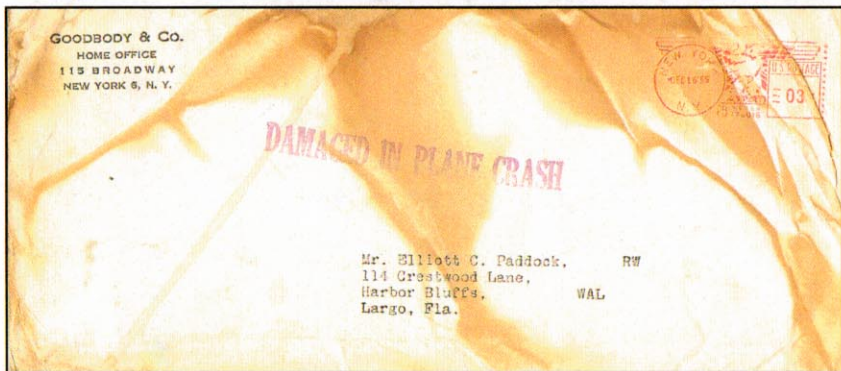




**FIGURE 3**  
**SPRINGFIELD,**  
**MASS. DC 16 1955**  
*double circle post-*  
*mark with stamp*  
*missing with “DAM-*  
*AGED IN PLANE*  
*CRASH / HOLLY-*  
*WOOD, S.C. 12/17/*  
*55” magenta two*  
*line handstamp*  
*marking on cover to*  
*DeLand, Florida.*

days before the mail bags would be released.

The CAM 25 must have been an Atlanta to Miami route with short spur connections handled by Pitcairn Aviation Corporation. The cover in Figure 2 was posted at Macon and after the crash was forwarded on to Orlando



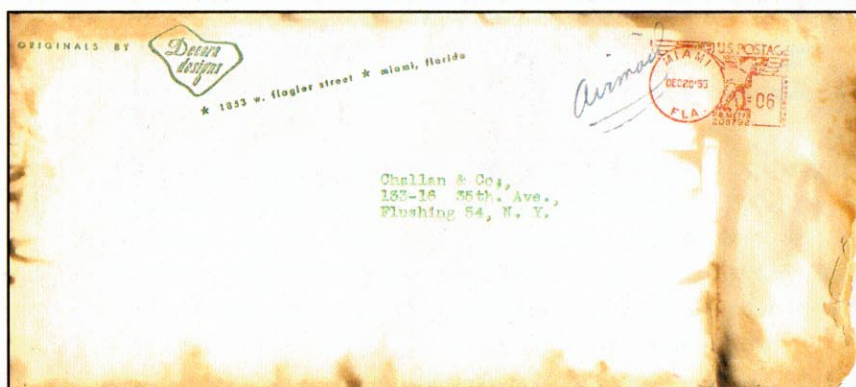
**FIGURE 4**  
**NEW YORK / N.Y. DEC 16 55 postmark on cover from New York to**  
**Largo, Florida with magenta straight-line handstamp marking,**  
**“DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH.”**



**FIGURE 5**

**UNITED NATIONS / NEW YORK DEC 9 1955 “first day of issue”  
postmark on cover to Jacksonville, Florida with magenta  
“DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH” handstamp marking.**

where it received a “Mar 1, 1929 3:30 pm” receiving mark. This means that this cover and the rest of the recovered mail must have been sent on from Daytona to Orlando and the remainder continued on to Tampa since the cover in Figure 1 was received there an hour later. This cover is similar to the cover in Figure 1 with the stamp missing, but has no notation of the reason by any postal representative.

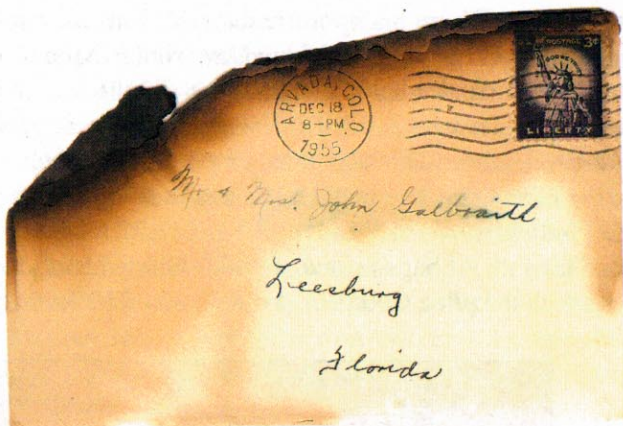


**FIGURE 6**

**MIAMI / FLA. DEC 20 '55 machine cancel on flame damaged cover to  
Flushing, New York with purple straight-line handstamp marking  
“DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH.”**

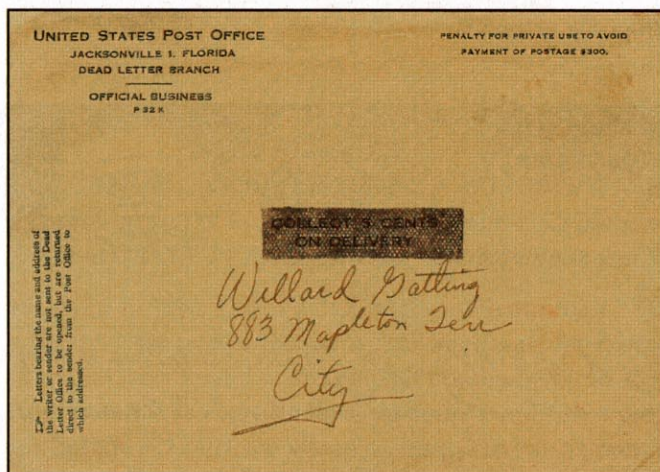


**FIGURE 7**  
**ARVADA,**  
**COLO. DEC 18**  
 1955 machine  
 postmark on fire  
 damaged cover  
 to Leesburg,  
 Florida with no  
 handstamp  
 marking.



**FIGURE 8**  
 Pair of “crash” covers addressed to the same person in Jacksonville,  
 Florida, but each from a different “crash.”

The cover in Figure 3 shows fire damage from the crash of a twin engine C-46 transport carrying mail from New York to Miami. The plane smashed into flat farmland a half mile from the small town of Hollywood, South Carolina on December 17, 1955. The crash was witnessed by Mrs. E. B. Middleton, who said, "The plane circled around the town with the motor cutting in and out. You could tell it was in trouble." The plane was demolished and Christmas mail and parcels were widely scattered about the wreckage. Thirty to 40 bags of mail and 4,398 pounds of cargo were on board along with the pilot, George A. Lohr and co-pilot Richard J. Glendon, both



**FIGURE 9**

***United States Post Office "Dead Letter Office" Official Business envelope addressed to (Dr.) Willard Gatling at Jacksonville.***

of whom died in the crash. The operator of the plane was Riddle Airlines of Miami, and this was the first crash for the firm since it started operation nine years earlier. Surviving covers are known with markings such as those on the covers shown in Figures 4 and 5, "DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH / HOLLYWOOD, S.C. 12/17/55" as well as the generic "DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH."

The cover in Figure 6 shows fire damage from the crash of Eastern Air Lines Constellation Flight 642 from Miami to New York that was attempting a scheduled landing in Jacksonville at 3:40 a.m. on December 21, 1955. William Hess witnessed the accident and reported that he heard the plane as it approached the runway and that its engines sounded in good mechanical condition. "It appeared to hit the top of some pine trees only about 50



feet from where I was standing," he said. The plane crashed 2,000 feet short of the runway on approach to Imeson Airport, with all 17 passengers and crew being killed. A total of 2,400 pounds of mail was recovered with 300 pounds being damaged. This cover has the same magenta straight-line handstamp marking "DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH" as the covers in Figures 4 and 5, but is from the later crash. It is likely both this marking as well as the "DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH / HOLLYWOOD, S.C. 12/17/55" marking were placed at Jacksonville, with the Figure 3 cover having had the mail recovered in South Carolina and taken to Jacksonville for disposition. It is also a coincidence that there were two crashes only four days apart, one going from New York to Miami and the other from Miami to New York.

The cover in Figure 7 is a little difficult to explain since it appears to have been carried on the Eastern Air Lines Flight 642 from Miami which crashed on December 21, 1955, but has no handstamp marking. It could not have been on the December 17 crash flight since the postmark is a day later. Why would this cover have been on a flight from Miami to New York which crashed in Jacksonville? Not only is this a confusing cover but the

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE  
 DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
 Jacksonville 1, Florida

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed mail matter was damaged in plane crash.

☐ Address of sender only located. ☐ Address of addressee only located.

☐ Contents: ☐ Enclosed, damaged. ☐ Contents enclosed in good condition.

☐ Contents not found. ☐ Entire mail intact but damaged.

☐ Loose check or other item only found, sent to you as person signing.

☐ Loose check or other item only found, sent to you as the Bank on which drawn for possible delivery or return.

☒ Any of contents not enclosed was destroyed in crash or missing when mail was recovered.

Sincerely yours,

Geo. C. Blume, Postmaster.

**FIGURE 10**  
*Enclosure from Figure 9 envelope which contained the  
 two covers in Figure 8.*

upper one in Figure 8 is equally so.

The covers in Figure 8 are most remarkable. The upper cover is from the December 21, 1955 crash at Jacksonville. It was mailed on December 18, 1955 from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and addressed to Jacksonville. As is the case in the Figure 7 cover, why would it have been going from Miami to New York? Perhaps because there was a scheduled landing at Jacksonville? But why a circuitous route via Miami? Perhaps all Christmas card mail to Florida went to Miami for processing. At any rate, it must have been on the December 21, 1955 flight. The second cover is from the December 17, 1955 crash at Hollywood, South Carolina and addressed to the same doctor in Jacksonville. It has the "DAMAGED IN PLANE CRASH / HOLLYWOOD, S.C. 12/17/55" handstamp, but the first one has no handstamp marking. Both of these covers were collected in Jacksonville and placed in a United States Post Office Dead Letter Branch Official Business envelope (Figure 9) and sent to Dr. Gatling with a pre-printed enclosure from George C. Blume, postmaster at Jacksonville (Figure 10). This confirms that the 12/17/55 handstamp was applied in Jacksonville.

How amazing for Dr. Gatling to receive two Christmas cards from the Jacksonville postmaster, each having been damaged in a different plane crash.

### ENDNOTE

The covers in Figures 1, 4, and 6 are from the Deane R. Briggs collection. Any collectors of "crash" covers with further information related to these three crashes are encouraged to contact the author or journal editor.

### DEALER ADVERTISING

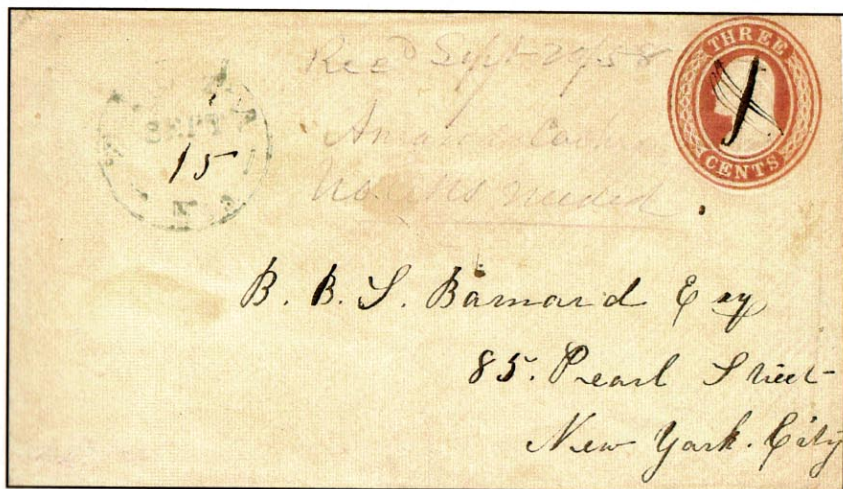
Dealer members of the Florida Postal History Society are encouraged to place a color advertisement in the *Florida Postal History Journal*.

Contact Editor Deane R. Briggs at [drb@gte.net](mailto:drb@gte.net)  
or call (863) 299-1251.



# Iola Pre-Civil War Usage

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



***IOLA / -Fla.- SEPT 15 (1858) green cds postmark on  
pen-cancelled three-cent entire***

**T**he above cover is a newly discovered example of a pre-Civil War cover from a Florida town from which there was no prior known non-archival postal history. A single stampless archival cover is recorded with a manuscript postmark addressed to Robert R. Reed in Tallahassee. That cover is reproduced in our society book *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861*. The above cover has a weak but readable cds postmark in "green" ink. The Iola post office was established on October 16, 1838 in Calhoun County on the western shore of the Apalachicola River, south of Rickoe's Bluff. It was the terminus of the first railroad in Florida, connecting the Gulf town of St. Joseph with Iola. The post office was discontinued on September 1, 1845, then re-established 12 years later on November 4, 1857. The post office did very little business with postal receipts of only \$8.72 for the year ending June 30, 1859, which included the above three cents. The pre-Civil War postmaster, Emma White, served until June 30, 1861. There is no record of a subsequent C.S.A. postmaster commission but the post office must have continued to function as there is an archival stampless cover with manuscript postmark and "Paid 10" rate to Tallahassee, dated August 2, 1862.

# Those alligator corner cards

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



**FIGURE 1**

***Hotel Lagonda, Interlachen, Florida corner card with alligator holding a calling card on cover with INTERLACHEN / FLA. MAR 1890 postmark.***

**I**t seems like Florida has always been associated with the alligator, or as is currently the fad, the “gator.” Before Lake City, in Columbia County, became a town, it was named Alligator, Florida. After that name change, another town in Liberty County became Alligator, Florida from 1892 to 1907. Those counties are quite a bit north for a town to be associated with alligators, but alligators are found far up into Georgia and not just associated with the Everglades to the south.

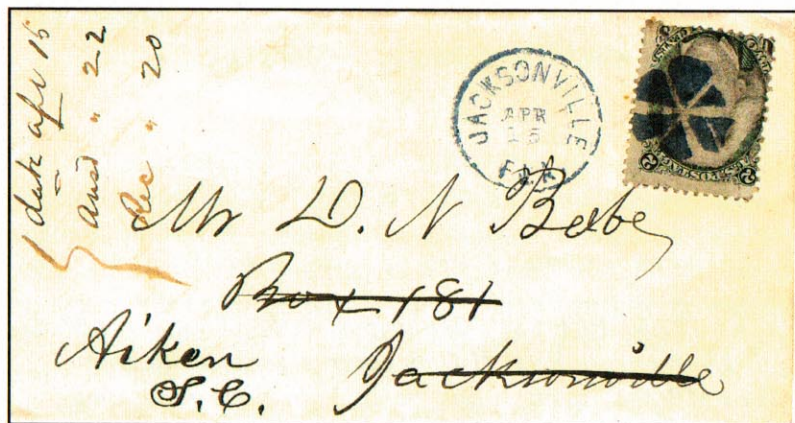
The use of the alligator on corner card advertising covers from Florida is fairly common and the use of humorous alligators on postal cards is highly collectible. The examples in Figure 1 and Figure 2 are nice usages from my collection and hopefully will stimulate readers to submit interesting advertising covers from their collections to share with our members.

*Additional illustration on page 21.*



# Jacksonville drop cover

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



**JACKSONVILLE / FLA. APR 15 (1869)** blue postmark with blue fancy circle of wedges postmark cancelling Scott #73 on “Drop” cover with forwarding to Aiken, South Carolina.

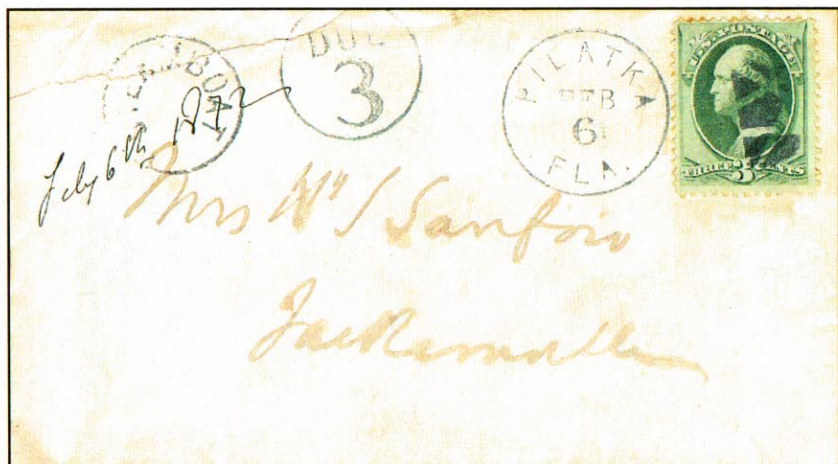
The above folded letter is a pretty example of a “drop” usage with Scott #73 cancelled by the fancy circle of wedges in blue ink. The drop letter was not picked up at the Jacksonville post office box but forwarded to Aiken, South Carolina without additional postage. Usage of #73 or any of the grilled varieties of this two-cent stamp is uncommon from Florida.

## Those alligator corner cards

Continued from previous page



**FIGURE 2**  
“Return to Isaac  
Aten, Merchant,  
Pine Castle,  
Fla.” corner card  
with alligator  
chasing a man on  
cover with  
PINECASTLE /  
FLA. OCT 19  
1897 postmark.



**PILATKA / FLA. FEB 6 (1872) blue postmark and killer cancelled three-cent green Scott #147 on cover to Jacksonville with “STEAMBOAT” in circle and “DUE 3” in circle handstamps.**

## PILATKA steamboat cover

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

The above cover is a nice example of a steamboat cover from Pilatka with the six-cent rate paid by a single Scott #147 and a “Due 3” handstamp to reflect the double letter rate for private ship letters. When the letter was mailed, the sender most likely believed the cover would be sent by an inland route. A private steamship must have been available and offered potentially a faster route to Jacksonville and thus the additional “double” rate effective June 30, 1863 by the Act of March 3, 1863. It is not clear where the “Steamboat” and “Due 3” handstamps were applied but it was likely at Jacksonville, even with the same colored ink in all the markings. This letter is also noteworthy in that the addressee, Mrs. H. L. Sanford, was the wife of the founder of the town of Sanford, Florida.



# FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## ANNUAL MEETING

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2009  
12:00 P.M.**

The annual meeting of the Florida Postal History Society will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2009, at 12:00 pm. at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, Florida, in conjunction with the **SARASOTA NATIONAL STAMPEXHIBITION**. The meeting room will be in the balcony and will be listed in the exhibition program. The weather in Florida is wonderful in February and there is a nice Hyatt Hotel with reasonable rates one block away from the meeting site. Out of state members should try to attend this year.

The slate of officers was unanimously elected and Steve Patrick will take over duties as President for the next two years at our Annual Meeting. Steve hosted a successful mid-year meeting of our Society at FLOREX on December 6, 2008, with seven members attending. Member Todd Hirn brought the highlight "show and tell" cover, the discovery stampless cover from Hazard, Fla., complete with enclosure. That town only existed for a year and a half with a territorial post office and for an additional 3 years as a statehood post office, becoming a DPO in 1848.

### Stamp Club and Stamp Show News

As discussed at our last annual meeting, the *Journal* will include local chapter meeting times and locations as well as local stamp shows and bourses free of charge. Members should contact their stamp club and encourage club membership. Special show cancellations will also be announced for postmark collectors. Please send information to be listed to the editor with a three month lead time if possible.

## FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS - 2009

The following members of the Florida Postal History Society have been denoted as “**Contributing Members**” for their additional contribution to the Society. The support of these members keeps our Society fiscally sound and enables us to respond to member and non-member inquiries regarding Florida postal history and send sample copies of our *Journal*.

----

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Edward R. Joyce, Jr.  
Patricia A. Kaufmann  
John L. Kimbrough, M.D.  
Howard King

Ron Klimley  
Alan E. Knight  
Dr. Vernon Kisling  
Alvin L. Krasne, D.D.S.  
Carolyn B. Lewis  
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Burnam S. Neill  
Kevin Nichols  
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David G. Phillips  
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