

# FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

*Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State*



Vol. 19, No. 1

January 2012

Whole No. 100

## Military Camps in Florida during the Spanish American War

By Yamil H. Kouri, Jr.

For several years I have been working on a comprehensive book about the postal history of the Spanish-Cuban/American War. The recent article by Douglas S. Files in this journal about Tampa and the Spanish American War (Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2011, pp. 10-16) stimulated me to put together some of the information I have gathered on the many military encampments that emerged throughout the state as a result of this conflict.

When war with Spain was declared in April 1898, the U.S. military was utterly unprepared for this conflict. The regular Army consisted of only 28,000 men scattered throughout the country. President William McKinley called for 125,000 volunteers on April 23, and for an additional 75,000 volunteers on May 25, 1898. Initially, the volunteers were organized by state and mustered in at local camps, but in May it was decided to send many of these units to much larger train-



**FIGURE 1**

*Patriotic cover from Panama Park (Florida) to Battle Creek, Michigan on July 26, 1898. It has a "PANAMA PARK / FLA." circular datestamp and a circular grid obliterating the stamp.*

ing camps holding entire Army Corps. The U.S. Army was organized into eight corps, although some of the corps were never fully formed and there was no Sixth Corps. The Fifth Army Corps was sent to Cuba and the Eighth Army Corps to the Philippine Islands.

It was a logistical nightmare for the Army to suddenly have to provide lodging, transportation, supplies, training and medical care to more than a quarter million men. Mail service to the troops also represented a significant challenge. At the peak of its activity, the largest military training camp alone handled 320,000 pieces of mail per day, including 1,200 registered letters.

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Mail from U.S. soldiers and sailors was treated as civilian correspondence with the exception of the concessionary rate for the troops. U.S. forces and other persons contracted to work for the military were allowed to send unpaid mail that was not subjected to the usual penalty of double the postage deficit. Also, troops serving in or around the Spanish possessions were entitled to domestic postage rates for both outgoing and incoming correspondence.

### The Types of Camps

The scant philatelic literature on the military camps in the United States during the Spanish American War has failed to make a distinction between the different types of troop encampments and their main purposes. The military camps can be classified into seven distinct types that are listed below, more or less chronologically:

- 1: Local and regional camps for state volunteers
- 2: Muster in camps for U.S. Volunteer regiments
- 3: Camps for troops assigned to reinforce coastal defenses
- 4: Large training camps for Army Corps
- 5: Embarkation camps
- 6: Winter camps
- 7: Demobilization camps

### Local and Regional Camps for State Volunteers

These were the first camps used to muster in, and in some cases, muster out volunteers from every state and territory in the nation. Many states had more than one encampment in use at different times. About 140 of these camps have been identified, some of which were short-lived. In many cases, these camps were informally named by the troops, and we only know their names because they have been recorded by local newspapers or other publications. They had no separate postal facilities or special postmarks; the local post offices handled the soldiers' correspondence. Some of the troops were sent from these camps to the larger training camps for Army Corps or to the camps for Volunteer Regiments, but the war was so brief that many of them were mus-



**FIGURE 2**

*This October 15, 1898 cover, mailed from Panama Park, is addressed to St. Louis, Missouri, and has an example of the scarce "Railway" style duplex canceller from this station.*

tered out directly from their local camps.

There were three local camps used to muster in the Florida Volunteers, two for the infantry and one for artillery. They were all in the Tampa area. The first camp used to organize the 1st Florida Volunteer Infantry regiment was Camp Mitchell. It was in use from around May 13 to July 21, 1898, and was located on the old garrison reservation of Fort Brooke. This camp was named after Henry L. Mitchell, a former justice of the state Supreme Court and governor of Florida from 1893 to 1897. Beginning on May 27, this encampment was moved to the Desoto Park area of Tampa which was initially referred to as "Camp at Palmetto Beach." Its name was later changed to Camp Florida, which was in use approximately between June 6 and June 26. On June 30, a battalion of the 1st Florida was moved to Camp Rogers two miles away. When the conditions in the Tampa area became unhealthy, the troops from this and other camps were moved to Camp Fernandina, on Amelia Island.

The 1st Florida Volunteer Artillery was assembled at Camp Rogers in Ybor City, in use from May 21 to August 20, 1898. This camp was named for General John

*Continued on page 4*

I. Rogers, Chief of Artillery of the U.S. Army. This was a formidable camp with a large number of heavy guns, also intended to be used as headquarters for the artillery batteries to be sent to Cuba.

Unfortunately we have not been able to find any mail from the Florida volunteer units during their stay in these regional camps. A number of covers are known from Desoto Park, but they were sent by military units from other states when this area was used as an embarkation camp.

### Camps for U.S. Volunteer Regiments

Volunteer regiments were formed by soldiers from different states. There were 10 infantry, two cavalry and one engineer regiment. Most of the camps for these units were established in the South, West, or Southwest, but there were none in Florida. Some of these units sailed to Cuba from Port Tampa, the most famous of which was the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, or "Rough Riders."

### Camps for Troops Assigned to Reinforce Coastal Defenses

The only two ports in Florida that were well defended were Pensacola, protected by three fortifications, and Key West, which received additional guns for the newly renovated Fort Zachary Taylor. They also received the majority of funds for the improvement of coastal defenses. Fernandina received some money to upgrade Fort Clinch. The headquarters of the state's National Guard was at St. Francis Barracks, in St. Augustine, which also received money to construct a temporary shore battery. The latter was not completed until the end of the war. Mines were also laid to protect the entrances to the last two ports. They were detonated after the cessation of hostilities. Miami also requested protection against a possible attack. The Brickells offered their property for the construction of a temporary battery, a rudimentary installation that was named Fort Brickell. Tampa Bay was part of an elaborate plan to defend the

city, in which mines were laid and a variety of guns were mounted on the islands of Egmont Key, Mullet Key and Palm Key (Anna Maria Island).

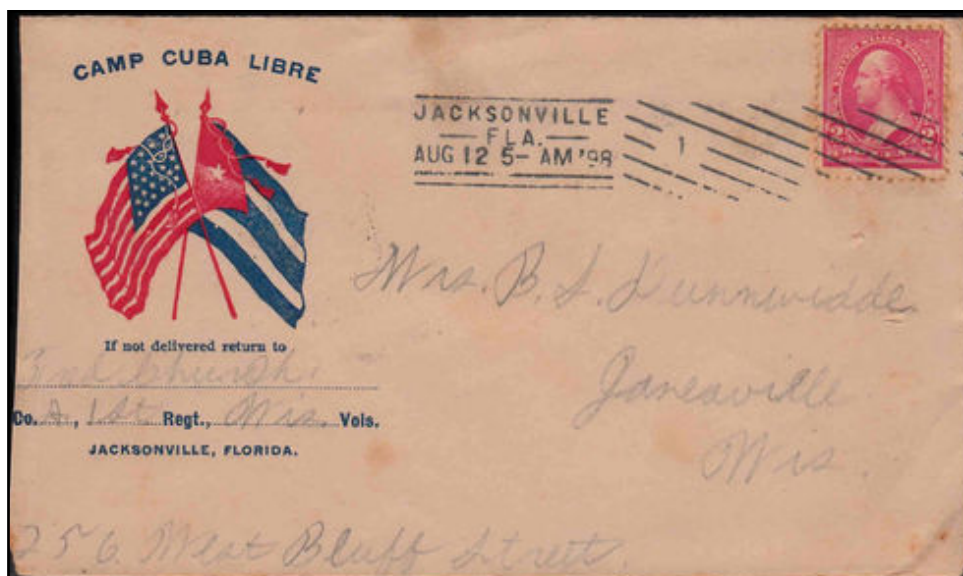
In spite of the efforts described above, no military camps are known in Florida created specifically for the protection of the coastal defenses during the war.

### Large Training Camps for Army Corps

These camps, also referred to at the time as "Federal Camps," were large training facilities where entire Army Corps were concentrated. The largest of these camps, in Georgia, had an average daily census of nearly 47,000 men. There were eight large military training camps in the United States, most of them in the South, and half of them in Florida. The Florida Federal Camps are listed below, in descending order according to the number of troops they housed.

- 1: Camp Cuba Libre
- 2: Camp Morton, also known as Camp Lakeland or Camp Massachusetts
- 3: Camp Miami
- 4: Camp Fernandina, also known as Camp Amelia

Some of the larger training camps were as big as cities and required new postal facilities to handle the soldiers' incoming and outgoing mail. Regimental post-



**FIGURE 3**

*This illustrated cover was sent from Camp Cuba Libre to Janesville, Wisconsin, on August 12, 1898, and received a machine cancel applied at the Jacksonville Post Office.*



masters and mail carriers were also selected from the ranks to facilitate the distribution of correspondence to the troops that were frequently being moved in between camps.

Camp Cuba Libre, which means “Free Cuba,” was the third largest military training camp in the United States. It was located on the banks of the St. John’s River, three miles from the commercial district of Jacksonville, and was in use from May 29 until the end of October 1898. The site was initially named Camp Springfield, after the Jacksonville location where it was established, but the name was changed in early June. Its commander was Major General Fitzhugh Lee, the former U.S. Ambassador to Cuba. This camp held a total of 28,842 volunteers and was one of the best managed and equipped of all the large camps. When the camps in Tampa, Florida became overcrowded, the Seventh Army Corps was transferred to this camp. In spite of the clean water and good sanitary conditions in this camp, there were 246 deaths from all causes.

There were several encampments within the grounds of Camp Cuba Libre that were individually named, including Camp Panama Park, Camp Reynolds and Camp Wells.

A fairly large amount of mail was generated at Camp Cuba Libre, which was mainly handled by a postal facility established at the camp as well as by the Jacksonville civilian post office. The largest encampment within Camp Cuba Libre was at Panama Park, where the camp’s post office was located. One full time postal clerk was assigned to this postal station which used two different cancelling devices. **Figure 1** (front page) shows a patriotic cover sent by a soldier from Panama Park to Battle Creek, Michigan, on July 26, 1898. It has a “PANAMA PARK / FLA.” circular datestamp and a circular grid obliterating the stamp. We have seen other types of circular grids used in combination with this CDS on troop mail. There are also several different styles of patriotic covers with this camp’s name, most of which depict the American and Cuban flags.

The cover in **Figure 2**, from Al Kugel’s collection, was also mailed from Panama Park by a member of the 7th Army Corps. It is addressed to St. Louis, Missouri, and has an example of the scarce “Railway” style duplex canceller from this station, dated October 15, 1898.

This type of cancelling device, with movable characters, was issued to seven military training camps in the United States: five large, one demobilization, and one winter camp. It was also used at several military postal stations in Cuba and Puerto Rico. It is referred to as “Railway” or “Railroad” handstamp by stamp collectors, because it was typically used by clerks working



**FIGURE 4**

*Cover sent on June 1, 1898 from Chicago to a soldier in Jacksonville, when the encampment was still known as Camp Springfield.*

for the Railway Mail Service who were mobilized in large numbers by the U.S. Department of Posts to work at many of the postal stations that were hastily established to serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of troops in military training camps. Congress appropriated \$50,000, referred to as the “Military Postal Service” fund, to pay for the new postal stations and for the additional personnel needed to provide mail service to the troops. This is a late example of the CDS, which was used at this camp from at least August.

A significant volume of troop mail was also handled by the civilian post office in Jacksonville. In fact, 20 new clerks were assigned to this post office to help with the additional correspondence to and from the soldiers. This

*Continued on page 6*

is the largest number of clerks financed by the Military Postal Service fund of any civilian post office during the war. An example of this type of correspondence appears in **Figure 3**. This illustrated cover was sent from Camp Cuba Libre to Janesville, Wisconsin, on August

Army Corps were transferred to Camp Onward in Savannah, Georgia.

Some correspondence addressed to the troops at Camp Cuba Libre has survived. The cover in **Figure 4** was sent on June 1, 1898, from Chicago to a soldier in Jacksonville, when the encampment was still known as Camp Springfield. The patriotic cover in **Figure 5**, with an unusual design, was sent from Unionville, Iowa, to a member of the state's volunteer forces in Jacksonville.



**FIGURE 5**

*Patriotic cover from Unionville, Iowa to a member of the state's volunteer forces in Jacksonville.*

12, 1898, and received a machine cancel applied at the Jacksonville Post Office. It is not clear if mail was sent in bags directly from the camp to be processed at the civilian post office, which we suspect took place, or if it was posted by a soldier while visiting the city on a pass.

Mail from this camp has also been reported cancelled at the Pablo Beach civilian post office, although we haven't seen any examples. Panama Park did not offer much shade to the troops, and on September 9 this encampment was moved to the resort area of Pablo Beach, which was renamed Jacksonville Beach in 1925. This area suffered some floods and on October 2 the encampment was moved again to the Fairfield area, in the southeast corner of Jacksonville. On October 24 most of the troops of the 7th

Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was the first unit to

The second largest Federal Camp in Florida was Camp Morton, located on Lake Morton in Lakeland, Florida, 30 miles east of Tampa. It served mainly as a staging area for troops on their way to Cuba. Approximately 9,000 troops from five units camped in Lakeland, the first units arriving in mid-May and the last leaving in late August 1898. This area was selected because it had access to water and rail connections



**FIGURE 6**

*This patriotic cover could have been carried by a soldier in transit from Camp George H. Thomas in Georgia to Tampa by way of Camp Morton. It was sent unpaid to Peshtigo, Mississippi, and was posted at Port Tampa.*

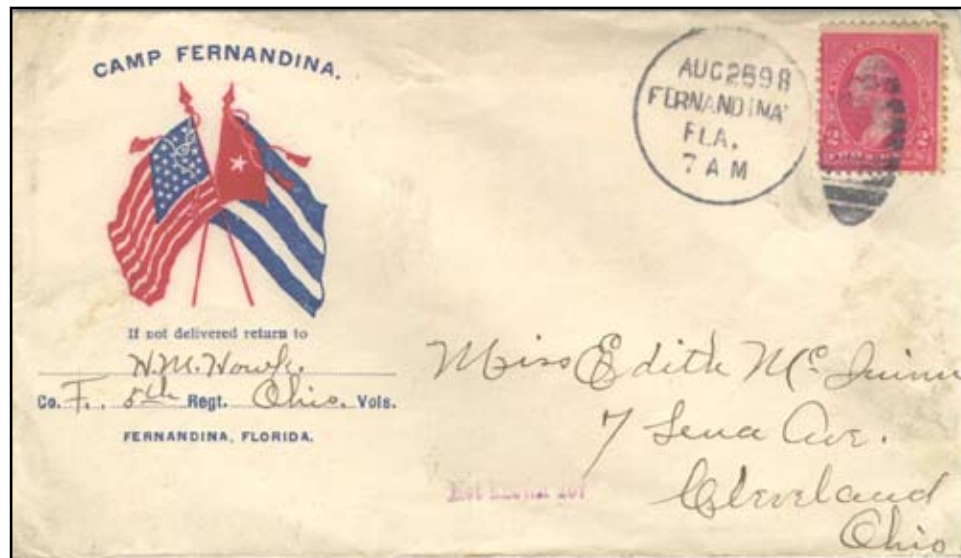
arrive in this area, for which the encampment was also known as Camp Massachusetts. The soldiers swam in the lake until they realized they were sharing it with alligators. There were several other encampments in this area that remained unnamed.

We have not seen much mail from this camp. A letter that may have been sent by a soldier stationed at Camp

troops were sent to Jacksonville by late July.

Camp Fernandina was located in Amelia Island and was used mainly from late July to late August, although the last units moved out in September 1898. There were at least eight regiments at Camp Fernandina that had been moved from Tampa because of the unsanitary conditions there. The smallest of the eight "Federal Camps,"

it housed primarily the Third Division of the 4th Army Corps. By late August, however, Camp Fernandina had also become crowded and unhealthy, and in early September most of the troops were moved to Huntsville, Alabama.



**FIGURE 7**

*This patriotic cover was sent on August 25, 1898, to Cleveland, Ohio, in the last week or so in which this camp was in use. It features a "Railway" style postmark.*

Morton is shown in **Figure 6**. This patriotic cover could have been carried by a soldier in transit from Camp George H. Thomas, in Georgia, by far the largest military training camp in the United States during the war, to Tampa by way of Camp Morton. It was sent unpaid to Peshtigo, Mississippi, and was posted at Port Tampa, which was then a separate city from Tampa.

Camp Miami, originally intended as an embarkation point, was very short-lived. It was in use from about June 20 to July 31, 1898, and housed the First Division of the 7th Army Corps. Miami had neither a deep water port nor the necessary warehouse facilities required by the troops, but railroad magnate Henry Flagler lobbied strongly in favor of this location that would benefit his Florida East Coast Railway line and his Royal Palm Hotel, which was used as the officers' quarters. At its peak there were more than 7,000 volunteers in this camp. Flagler began the construction of a new pier, but before it was completed, it was no longer needed. The camp conditions were unhygienic and most of the

Interestingly, this was one of the seven camps that received one of the 10 different "Railway" style postmarks (Camp Thomas had three and Camp Alger had two). An example of this marking is shown on the cover in **Figure 7**. This patriotic cover was sent on August 25, 1898, to Cleveland, Ohio, in the last week or so in which this camp was in use. This style of patriotic design, with some variations, was

used in Florida with relative frequency. Correspondence from this camp has also been reported cancelled at the Fernandina civilian post office.

Fort Clinch was also located in Amelia Island and was occupied by regular artillery troops, but we have not identified any mail from this site.

### **Embarkation Camps**

The original plans called for Tampa, New Orleans, and Mobile to be the principal embarkation points for the troops destined for Cuba, but this was reconsidered and Tampa was chosen as the main port of departure. The strong lobbying by railroad and steamship magnate Henry B. Plant no doubt influenced this decision. Tampa had the closest deep water port to Cuba, but very limited rail connections. The wharf facilities at Port Tampa, only capable of handling 15 or 20 vessels at a time, were also inadequate to handle the large number

*Continued on page 8*



of transport ships needed to take the troops to Cuba.

In April, the 5th Army Corps, made up mostly of regular soldiers, was assembled in Tampa. Shortly thereafter, the 4th Army Corps was moved from Mobile to Tampa. As these units kept coming, the number of troops completely overwhelmed the existing facilities. The storage facilities in the city were inadequate and some of the perishable goods were ruined in the summer heat. There was a single track running between the city and the port, and railroad cars with supplies were backed up all the way to Columbia, South Carolina!

troops were sent to the other encampments. Tent cities were set up to the west of downtown extending to the Old Tampa Bay, to the east to Ybor City, Palmetto Beach and Desoto Park, and farther to the south to Picnic Island (Port Tampa) and the old garrison at Fort Brooke. Desoto Park was partly, but not exclusively, occupied by the 1st Florida Volunteer Infantry.

Artillery and cavalry units were encamped near the embarkation point at Port Tampa. Colored units were settled in an area between Tampa and Ybor City known as "the scrubs." There were a number of violent racial incidents involving these troops due to the segregation laws in Florida.

All of these camps were meant to be used for a very short time since they did not have adequate facilities, but as the embarkation continued to be postponed, the conditions became unsanitary. The camps had drinking water and some even had electricity, but the big problem was disposing of human waste. It was very difficult to dig deep latrines into the hard coral stone, even with dynamite.



**FIGURE 8**

*Cover sent to Taftville, Connecticut by a member of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, popularly known as the "Rough Riders."*

Throughout the war more than 48,000 soldiers destined for Cuba were encamped in or near Tampa, a city of only 26,000 inhabitants. In addition, there was an influx of a large number of reporters, entertainers, salesmen, prostitutes, etc.

There were seven separate troop encampments in the Tampa area: Tampa Heights, Desoto Park, Fort Brooke, Palmetto Beach, Ybor City, West Tampa and Picnic Island at Port Tampa. Plant's luxurious Tampa Bay Hotel was used by those officers and reporters who could afford it, and served as military headquarters. The encampment at Tampa Heights, north of the downtown area, was the first and the largest embarkation camp. It was used primarily by infantry regiments. When this camp's capacity was reached, after it was expanded to come close to Robles Pond to the north, newly arrived

cancellers have been reported used on troop mail from the Tampa area. Two are duplex CDS, one of them from substation 4, and the other is a much scarcer machine flag postmark. A cover from one of these encampments is shown in **Figure 8**. It was sent by a member of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, popularly known as the "Rough Riders." Addressed to Taftville, Connecticut, it was postmarked on June 14 in Tampa, and has the plain type of duplex canceller. The cover's upper left corner appears to have the endorsement of Lt. Col. (Theodore) Roosevelt, which is highly unlikely to have been penned by the future U.S. President given that his name is misspelled. The endorsement of a military officer or chaplain allowed the sender to enjoy the military concessionary rate, which in this case was not necessary. Another cover from a Tampa area camp appears in **Figure 9**. This printed patriotic envelope, provided by





FIGURE 9

*This printed patriotic envelope, provided by the Y.M.C.A. and addressed to Springfield, Ohio, was sent by a soldier from one of the Ohio volunteer units stationed at Desoto Park.*

the Y.M.C.A. and addressed to Springfield, Ohio, was sent by a soldier from one of the Ohio volunteer units stationed at Desoto Park. The "Y" established writing and reading tents at many of the military camps, where envelopes and letterhead paper were distributed to the troops. Over a dozen different designs of Y.M.C.A. covers used by soldiers are known from this period. This letter has the substation 4 duplex canceller of July 10.

The illustrated patriotic cover in *Figure 10* shows an embarkation scene from Tampa. Addressed to Norwalk,



FIGURE 10

*An illustrated patriotic cover from Tampa, addressed to Norwalk, Ohio. It was also cancelled at substation 4.*

Ohio, it was also cancelled at substation 4 on July 18, but this type of duplex canceller has a different grid than the postmark on the previous cover.

An account of the 3rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry regiment on July 8, 1898, mentions that its encampment was known as Camp Wrenn, and that it was located at Port Tampa. This underscores how many of the smaller and transitory encampments were informally named by the troops.

There was also a little known and short lived embarkation camp at Key West. The First battalion of U.S. Marines was assembled in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and transferred to Key West where it was stationed from May 24 to June 7, 1898. It was then shipped to Cuba. Their encampment, named Camp Sampson, was located two miles from the docks at La Brisa Villa in the outskirts of the city. In spite of its proximity to the island of Cuba, Key West could not support a large number of troops because of the lack of fresh water. We have not seen any mail from Camp Sampson.

### Winter Camps

Since it was not known how many troops would be needed for the occupation of the newly acquired former Spanish possessions, many soldiers were kept in winter camps until early 1899. There were about a dozen of these camps, all located in the South or in Hawaii, but none in Florida.

### Demobilization Camps

After the signing of the peace protocol on August 12, 1898, many soldiers realized that they were not going to be deployed, leading

*Continued on page 10*

to significant unrest. Nearly 40 camps were created to muster out many of the troops, although some of the original muster in camps and large training camps for Army Corps were also used for this purpose. No specific demobilization camps were set up in Florida.

Although strictly speaking not a Florida camp, we include the following cover because of its connection with the state. **Figure 11** shows a roughly opened patriotic cover sent from a soldier of the 1st Florida Volunteer Infantry in Huntsville, Alabama, to the town of Fort Meade in Florida, on September 23, 1898. This military unit never saw any action during the war, and after it was first assembled at Fort Brooke, it was transferred to Desoto Park, then to Camp Fernandina, and finally to Camp Albert G. Forse, in Huntsville, from where it was mustered out. The latter was a demobilization camp that held three cavalry and four infantry regiments, or about 14,000 men. It was in use until March 7, 1899.

The main purpose of this article has been to illustrate the important role that Florida played during the Spanish American War and its rich postal history legacy. But I also hope that our readers can contribute additional information or examples of mail from these camps. You can contact me at [yhkouri@massmed.org](mailto:yhkouri@massmed.org).

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**FIGURE 11**

*Patriotic cover sent from a soldier of the 1st Florida Volunteer Infantry in Huntsville, Alabama, to the town of Fort Meade in Florida, on September 23, 1898.*





# C.A.M. No. 10

## *First Florida Contract Air Mail Route*



By Douglas S. Files

The tenth U.S. contract air mail route was established in Florida and was the first route to exist only within a single state. Florida Air Ways, Inc., was contracted to cover a 468 mile route between Jacksonville and Miami with intermediate stops in Fort Myers and Tampa where mail was picked up and delivered. Lieutenant John Harding, who participated in the first around the world flight, was president of the company. Since the route terminated at Jacksonville and did not make connections with any other air mail route, its usefulness to business and individual Floridians was minimal, especially considering the additional air mail postage costs.

On the inaugural flight on April 1, 1926, Pilot Norman W. Potter flew his plane "Miss Miami" north from Com-  
fort Field in Miami at 6:30 a.m., carrying 3,514 magenta cacheted letters. The first cacheted cover was addressed to Postmaster General Harry S. New. At the stop in Tampa, Potter was greeted by Tampa Mayor Perry G. Wall

and Postmistress Elizabeth Barnard (*Figure 1*). The Post Office Department had produced special cachets for each stop along the route but Tampa did not receive its rubber stamp in time. Thus, covers originating in Tampa bear no cachet (*Figure 2*) but can be identified by the April 1, 1926 Tampa postmarks and their "April 1, 4 p.m., Station A, Miami" or "1 p.m. Jacksonville"

receiving back-stamps (*Figure 3*). Aerophilat-elists on hand for the Tampa ceremonies were chagrined by the lack of a first flight cachet to mark the occasion. They even asked Barnard to take back the covers and cachet them, but Assistant Postmaster General W. Irving Glover replied that it was not practical to return them to Tampa for cacheting.

A few disappointed philatelists sent their naked covers to Washington, D.C., where a black courtesy cachet was applied after the fact. These covers are quite scarce and command a premium.

Inaugural flights took place from the other stops on the route as well. Leonard S. Flo flew south from Tampa to

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**FIGURE 1**

*Photograph of plane and Tampa Mayor Perry G. Wall and Postmistress Elizabeth Barnard with pilot Norman W. Potter (others not identified).*

*Photograph courtesy of State Library and Archives of Florida.*





FIGURE 2

*C.A.M. No. 10. First Flight Cover (without cachet) postmarked at Tampa, Florida on April 1, 1926.*



FIGURE 3

*"Miami, Fla Apr. 1, 4 p.m." backstamp, confirming first flight status.*

Miami; Ragnar T. Freng flew south from Jacksonville at 9:30 a.m. and H.J. Brady flew north from Fort Myers to Tampa at 8:45 a.m. Covers carried on these inaugural C.A.M. No. 10 flights were valued at \$6 to \$100 in the 1990 pricing supplement issued by the American Air Mail Society.

Service over this route was spotty due to the low volume of mail and Florida Airways, hemorrhaging money, soon suspended service until the routes could be reorganized. On September 15, 1926, Macon, Georgia was added as a stop and Atlanta was established as the northern terminus of the route which allowed letters

to enter a nationwide air mail network. The Post Office Department considered this a new route and issued special first flight postmarks for each city (*Figure 4*). Pitcairn Aviation, based at Candler Field (present day Hartsfield International Airport) in Atlanta, was contracted to run the new route. *Figure 5* shows the Pitcairn Mailwing 220 horsepower airplane which carried 400 pounds of mail.

Macon's airport was not initially prepared for landings until September 27 and Macon's inaugural mail was sent by automobile to Atlanta and by train to Jacksonville. Even this reorganized route continued to operate at a significant loss and all flights were suspended on December 21, 1926, until more connections could be arranged and until the Department of Commerce could install lighting for night flying.

Route No. 10 resumed service on December 1, 1928, Atlanta to Miami with an intermediate stop in Jacksonville, with Fermon A. Stone the pilot (*Figure 6*). Due to poor visibility from low clouds, Stone could only fly at 150 feet and had to abort and land in a wheat field near Cochran, Georgia. He was immediately arrested by a local sheriff for carrying a gun, but was released

following a phone call to Jacksonville where a crowd of 1,000 awaited him. Stone eventually arrived at Jacksonville five hours late and made the return to Atlanta with 10 mail bags. The return flight to Atlanta was scheduled to connect with a northbound flight to New York and points between.

On March 1, 1929, C.A.M. No. 25 took over the C.A.M. No.10 region and the inaugural flights took place between Atlanta, Jacksonville, and Miami with intermediate stops at Macon and Daytona Beach. Pitcairn Aviation continued to be the contractor on this new route. A

**FIGURE 4**

*First Flight cover postmarked "Miami, Fla. 6:30 a.m. Sept 15, 1926."*

spur route from Daytona Beach to Tampa was also established. On the inaugural flight from Daytona Beach to Tampa, pilot C. J. Faulkner encountered engine trouble and crashed into the Halifax River (*Figure 7*).

**FIGURE 5**

*Pitcairn Mailwing 220 horsepower plane which carried 400 pounds of mail at a top speed of 120 miles per hour.*

Fortunately, Faulkner was able to swim ashore, but all 500 pounds of mail on board was water damaged. Most of the stamps on these letters were soaked off. All of this mail was able to be quickly recovered and a reserve airplane took over the flight, remarkably only three hours late, and finished the route on the same day in Tampa.

A March 1, Tampa 4:30 p.m. backstamp confirms first flight status for these covers. Some of these let-

ters addressed to Tampa addresses have notation of the water damaged condition in magenta pen by Tampa Postmistress Elizabeth Barnard (*Figure 8*).

**FIGURE 6**

*Fermon A. Stone with his U.S. Mail C.A.M. No. 10 plane.*

*Illustrations continue on page 14.*

## References

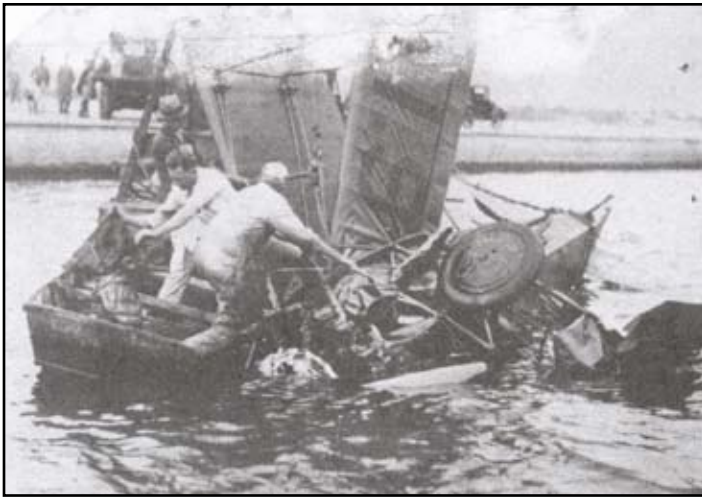
*American Airmail Catalogue*, 5th Edition, Volume 2, Cinnaminson, N.J.: American Air Mail Society, 1977, 673-674.

"C.A.M. Route No. 10," *American Catalogue of Air Mail and First Day Covers*. Cumington, Massachusetts: Berkshire Exchange, 1929, 79-80.

Dierck, Henry C., "An Unusual First Flight Cover." *The American Philatelist*, December 1977.

Photograph of Pilot Fermon Stone: [www.airmailpioneers.org/Pilots/FermonStone.htm](http://www.airmailpioneers.org/Pilots/FermonStone.htm).

*For further information on Florida Air Mail Crash covers, see Edward Joyce's article in The Florida Postal History Journal, Vol. 16, No. 1 (January 2009).*



**FIGURE 7**

*Photograph of the plane crash in the Halifax River with the pilot, C. J. Faulkner and others salvaging mail bags.*



**FIGURE 8**

*First flight "crash" cover to Tampa with stamp soaked off and Barnard magenta ink notation.*



**FIGURE 9**

*Airmail entire "crash cover" with Daytona Beach postmark and C.A.M. 25 cachet.*





# Interesting 1868 Key West ship postmark

By Kenneth D. Gilbert

The cover shown in Figure 1 has a most uncommon Key West postmark, a year-dated ship CDS handstamp of which there are only two other recorded usages with "DUE 10" and "DUE 20" handstamped rates. The others are both stampless, in addition to this adhesive usage. The known period of use is quite short, from July 9, 1868 to March 10, 1869.

It seems that the postmark was intended for stampless incoming ship letters, but in this case, the 10¢ stamp was placed by the sender to cover the 10¢ contract steamship mail rate per half ounce and to avoid the collection of a due rate at Fort Jefferson. This cover likely originated on board a U.S. Navy vessel in the West Indies. Its home base may well have been Fort Jefferson. The letter was likely delivered to Havana where it was transferred to a contract steamship on the main route from Havana to Key West.

It entered the U.S. mail at Key West where the adhesive stamp was accepted as postage and cork cancelled.

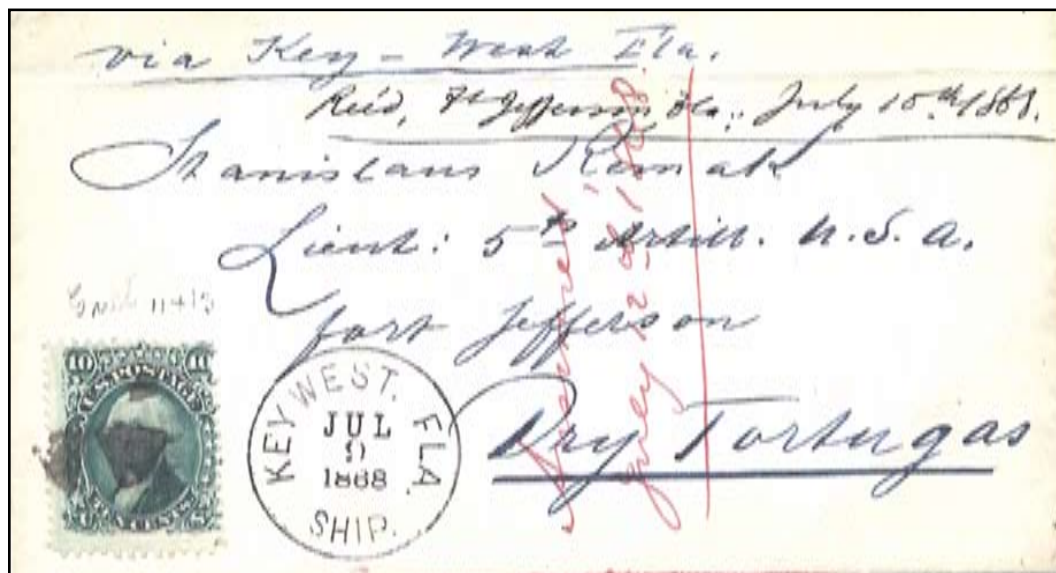


FIGURE 1

**KEY WEST, FLA. / SHIP JUL 9 1868** postmark on cover to Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas with cork cancelled 10¢ green, Scott #89. At left, the circular datestamp rotated 180 degrees.

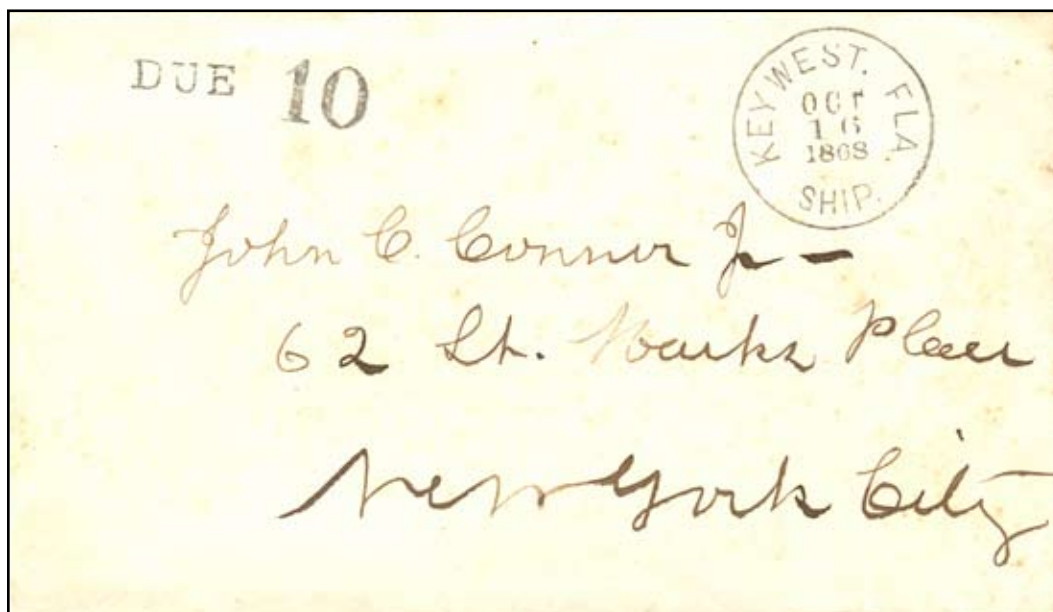


FIGURE 2

**"KEY WEST, FLA. / SHIP OCT 16 1868"** postmark with "DUE 10" handstamped rate to cover the contract steamship rate; usage to New York. (From the Deane Briggs Collection.)

**FIGURE 3**

***“KEY WEST, FLA. / SHIP MAR 10 1869” postmark with “DUE 20” handstamped rate on double rated cover to Brownsville, Texas.***

***(From the Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. Collection.)***

Any cover addressed to Fort Jefferson after the Civil War is unusual, especially with the “Dry Tortugas” location. The use of the 11x13 grilled 10¢ green stamp (Scott #89) makes this an even more desirable cover. It should be noted that the 10¢ steamship contract mail rate included inland mail and in this case delivery by

another ship to Fort Jefferson. The known example of this postmark used on a stampless cover with the “DUE 10” handstamp is shown in Figure 2 (previous page). The known example with “DUE 20” handstamp rate is shown in Figure 3 above.

## ***FPHS at FLOREX!***



***Several members of the Florida Postal History Society gathered for an informal meeting at FLOREX in Orlando on December 3, 2011. Shown in photograph at left are Past President Steve Patrick of Apopka (left) and Secretary-Treasurer Deane R. Briggs, M.D. of Winter Haven. In photograph at right, FLOREX Chairman and FPHS member Francis Ferguson (standing) addresses the group. Shown are, from left, President Alexander Hall of Palm Beach Gardens, Doug Files of Tampa, Steve Patrick, Dr. Deane R. Briggs, Carl Skrzypczak of Orchid Island; and Vice President Todd A. Hirn of Port Orange.***



# Consulate mail: Guatemala to Key West

By Jim Mazepa

The cover in Figure 1 is unusual in many respects. It is a consulate letter to the "Ex Charge d' Affairs of the U States to Central America." The letter is datelined "Consulate of the U States of Amera / Guatemala 15th Oct 1832" (See Figure 2). The cover must have been privately carried to Havana where it entered the Cuban mail system; otherwise, it would have been rated three silver reales postage due in Havana.



Figure 1

**Folded stampless letter from "Consulate of the U States at Guata / Henry Savage" to New York with black "HABANA" route marking and "KEY WEST / FLORIDA MAY 1 (1833)" red oval postmark with (due) 75 triple rate.**

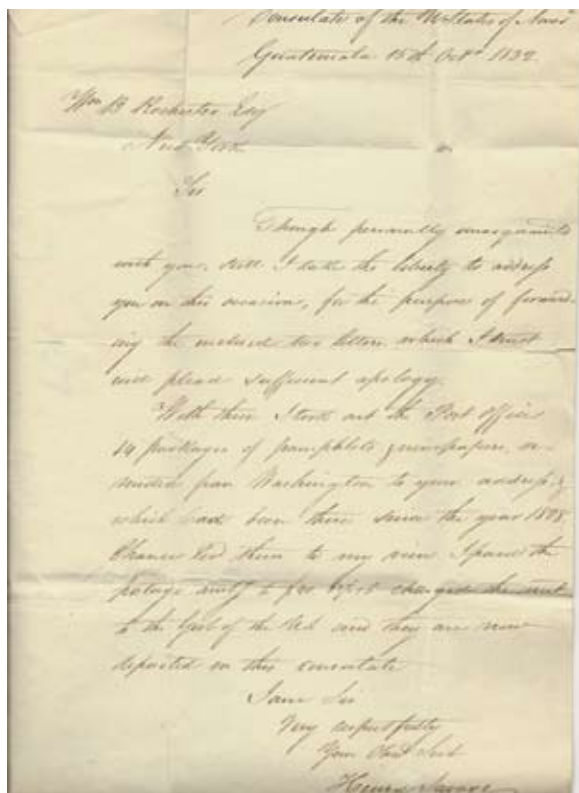


Figure 2

**Enclosure datelined: Consulate of the U States of Amera/ Guatemala 15th October 1832.**

It was handstamped "HABANA," but since there was no way the Cuban post office could send it to the U.S., it was simply handed over to the U.S. Counsel. Since the 75 due rate is missing a two-cent additional ship letter fee, this cover was again privately carried (perhaps in diplomatic pouch) to Key West where it was postmarked and received the 75 triple rate and entered the U.S. mails for New York.

The lengthy time from October 15, 1832 until it was postmarked in Key West on May 1, 1833 implies delays in getting the letter carried out of the mails twice, from Guatemala to Havana and again from Havana to Key West with additional delay in passing the cover from the Havana post office to the U.S. Counsel.



# Whatzit?

Here's an opportunity for members to offer their expertise and also play detective. There are many unanswered questions about Florida postal history. Countless strange and unusual pieces of postal history exist, and often they defy logical explanation. Or do they? Here is your chance to provide an answer or at least an opinion to help your fellow researchers. Send scans of your "problem covers" or unanswered questions to the editor at [eparker@hughes.net](mailto:eparker@hughes.net), or by snail mail to Dr. Everett L. Parker, 249 NW Live Oak Place, Lake City, FL 32055.



Past President Steve Patrick of Apopka came across this interesting 1901 cover from the same city. Notice the corner card shows "Southern Stamp Co./ Apopka, Fla." Would Southern Stamp Company be the oldest in Florida? Does anyone have a cover or know of a dealer who was in business prior to 1901?



## *Coming in our next issue!*

In our next issue, Christine C. Sanders explores the Juanita Tucker family of Christmas, Florida, and how a postmark known around the world came into being many years ago. And she tells us there is more to the small town in east Orange County than just the post office!

Also, Todd A. Hirn will discuss the importance of an 1864 letter from Fort Jefferson.

Coming later this year will be an article about the significance of Suwannee Springs, now a little known and rarely visited area of North Florida near the Georgia border. But in earlier days, it was known as one of Florida's premier tourist attractions.

Do you have ideas for future articles? Don't forget with our new, larger format, there is much more room (and need) for longer, well-researched articles. But we also need smaller "filler" material as well!



*View from early 1900s of a walled-in bathing area at Suwannee Springs. The site still exists today, but is overgrown with trees.*

## **FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING!**

**The 19th Annual Meeting of the Florida Postal History Society will begin at Noon on Saturday, February 4, 2012 at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition.**

**The exhibition will be in the Municipal Auditorium on U.S. 41 (801 N. Tamiami Trail), Sarasota, Florida.**

**A special power point program by Yamil Kouri should be of interest to all members.**

**Please try to attend as this is a great A.P.S. World Series of Philately show with a very active dealer bourse with many of our Society member dealers present.**

**Please support them as they support our Society.**

## **2011 DUES ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Florida Postal History Society dues for 2012 are due and payable by May 1, 2012 to keep your membership active. The society has maintained its membership at 118 active members despite this past year's economic problems. Unfortunately, due to this new sized journal and the additional postage costs, dues for 2012 will need to be increased from \$10 to \$15. Hopefully, this will not lead to a drop in membership and any members who are considering such should contact the Secretary-Treasurer. Any members who have pre-paid the 2012 dues will not be affected. Contributing membership will increase from the current \$20 to \$25. The society needs this increase (the first in 20 years) to cover the cost of the larger size journal (this issue being the first in the new size) and the increased postage. Contributing membership does help cover the costs of complementary journals and new member inquiries.**

**The FPHS hopes you consider membership worth \$15 dues.**

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Below is a listing of FPHS members who are also stamp dealers. Please support our dealer members when visiting stamp shows, or by mail!

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## FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS - 2010

The following members of the Florida Postal History Society have been denoted "**Contributing Members**" for their additional contributions to the Society. The support of these members keeps us 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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**With a new, larger size journal, we need**  
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**there is tremendous room for growth.**  
**Recruit a new member TODAY!**