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## *Fort New Smyrna and the Second Seminole War in East Florida*

By Douglas S. Files, M.D.

The Seminole Indians migrated into northern Florida in the early 1700s and established villages as far south as present day Micanopy in Alachua County. Their language and their methods of hunting and farming were similar to the Creek Indians. The Spanish initially took claim of Florida and established several missions in an effort to Christianize the Indian population and also established towns in Pensacola and St. Augustine.

Following the Seven Years' War between the French and British, the 1763 Treaty of Paris gave control of Canada and Florida to the British, and trans-Mississippi Louisiana and Havana to the Spanish. The British Florida period from 1763-1783 saw an influx of settlers from Georgia and Alabama into north Florida with an English form of government for East and West Florida. Spain, taking advantage of the British vulnerability following the American Revolutionary War defeat, declared war against England in 1779. By 1871 the Spanish had taken Mobile and Pensacola while the British continued to hold East Florida. The Treaty of Paris of 1873, returned all of Florida to

the Spanish. Another influx of American pioneers headed to Florida, lured by Spanish land grants. Escaped slaves also ran to Florida, seeking refuge from U.S. law under a foreign flag.

The U.S. government initially encouraged American settlers to establish farms in the region as a buffer against the Spanish. Gradually Florida grew more American and less Spanish. In 1817 conflicts heated up between the Seminole Indians giving sanctuary to escaped slaves and Southerners wanting to recapture their slaves.

The Spanish had little governmental control of Florida and could not protect American settlers. As a result, President James Monroe ordered General Andrew Jackson in 1818 to invade the region with the U.S. Army

and pursue the Seminoles farther south into Florida. This was known as the First Seminole War and it was actually only a relatively minor "excursion."

Spain eventually ceded Florida to the United States in 1821 for \$5 million, and soon thereafter the U.S. began relocating Indians westward. Most American leaders

*Continued on page 3*



*The Battle of Palaklakhla, Second Seminole War. From the State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/34173>.*

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were not unsympathetic to the plight of the Indians, but relocating them seemed preferable to slow extermination by settlers.

A small number of Seminole Indians signed a treaty in 1832 agreeing to move west within three years. Others

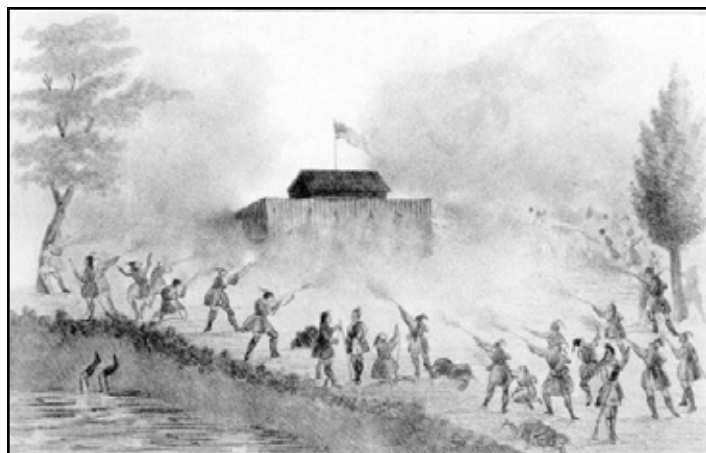


**Osceola (1804-1838), Seminole leader.**  
State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory,  
<http://floridamemory.com>.

disagreed and when the U.S. Army arrived in 1835 to enforce the terms of the treaty, these Seminoles offered a guerrilla resistance. The Second Seminole War started

in December 1835 following the killing of an Indian Agent and an Army Lieutenant outside Fort King (Ocala) and the massacre of Major Dade and his command near Bushnell.

Over the ensuing seven years, 3,000 Indians fought 10 times their number. The U.S. spent \$20 million (more than \$430 million today) on the campaign to rid Florida of Indians. But in 1836, Chief Osceola united the In-



**Blockhouse being burned by Indians, 1837.**  
State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory,  
<http://floridamemory.com/items/show/28612>.

dians and won a series of swamp battles. When Chief Osceola met Army troops under a flag of truce, they treacherously captured and imprisoned him. Many Army officers admired Osceola, and when he died in Fort Moultrie's prison in 1838, the officers insisted upon a military funeral. His tombstone was engraved, "Patriot and Warrior."



**Cover addressed to Lt. John W. Phelps at Fort New Smyrna, East Florida. The cover was postmarked at West Chester, Pennsylvania. Image courtesy of the American Philatelist and Bill Schultz of West Chester, Pennsylvania.**

His death did not end the fighting, which continued sporadically for four more years. No other treaty was signed but most of the Indians moved to Indian Territory, rather than face genocide. The Second Seminole War officially ended in 1842. A Third Seminole War from 1855-1858 attempted to remove all remaining Indians from Florida. By the end of 1858, only 200 Seminoles remained in Florida, most of them in hiding in the Everglades.

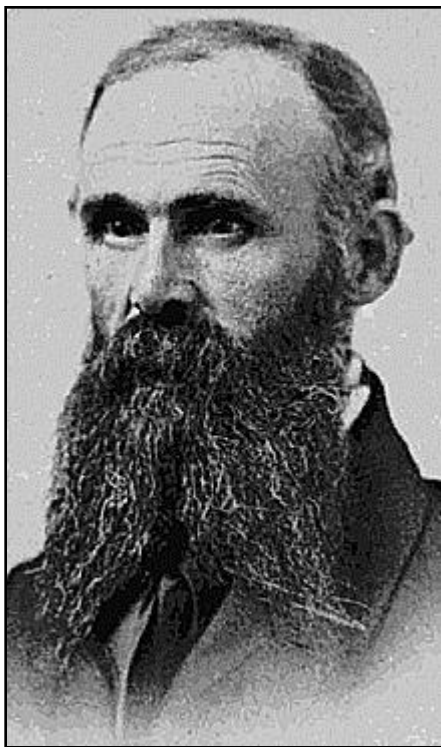
Of the over 100 U.S. Army forts built during the Seminole Indian Wars, 96 were constructed during the Second Seminole

*Continued on page 4*



War and 16 during the Third Seminole War. These were temporary forts, built of pine logs, and not meant to last more than a few years. Letters from these forts are highly collectible. Only a few had established post offices, with most mail being sent by courier to be posted at a nearby (and in some cases hundreds of miles away) post office.

*This is a photograph of General John Phelps in later years after he received the letter shown on the previous page.*



The location of the actual fort can often only be obtained from the dateline of the enclosure. Our society book *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861* has a listing of these forts and their period of use and post offices used. A drawing of a typical fort is also shown in the book.

In December 2013, an article was printed in the *American Philatelist* about the postal history of West Chester, Pennsylvania. One of the covers depicted in the article is reproduced on the previous page. The article discussed the sender but I was more interested in the letter's recipient: Lieutenant John W. Phelps at Fort New Smyrna, East Florida. Despite rampant malaria in that region, the Army established a post at New Smyrna in Volusia County in 1838, and continued to maintain the fort until 1852. Mail from Fort New Smyrna is known to be postmarked from St. Augustine and it is likely that the above cover was routed from St. Augustine.

Ruins of an old Spanish fort exist today in New Smyr-



**Map of the Second Seminole War in East Florida. New Smyrna is the easternmost point on the map, at the center right. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/32122>.**

na Beach but that is not where Fort New Smyrna was located during the Seminole Wars. Instead, it lay near what is now Lytle Avenue (State Route 44), the main East-West route through town.

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E.D. Townsend, letter, December 21, 1837. Accession #10935, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., Archive Grid website, <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/data/647823258>.



*Mountain Cherokee Indian 1838, drawn by  
Lt. John W. Phelps.*

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## ***Update on FPHS: meeting at FLOREX in Orlando on December 6, 2014***

**By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.**

**T**he next meeting of the Florida Postal History Society will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 6, 2014 at FLOREX in Orlando. There will be a Daniel Kelleher Auction at 5 p.m. following our meeting, so why not come and make it an afternoon. I was notified by Mary Whitney after our last journal issue that FPHS Charter Member Bob Whitney passed away on December 4, 2013 at the age of 98. He attended many of our early organizational meetings in the 1990s at FLOREX and despite failing health always enjoyed reading our journal, especially articles on small Florida towns.

I also received a nice email from Carl Peterson in response to an article on our website, "Fort Pierce Amphibious Training Base" by James Moses from our October 2004 issue (Vol. 11, No. 3). It was a post card written by his father, PFC Frank Peterson, as a member of the World War II Rangers who participated in the D-Day scaling of the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc. The article concluded that Moses could not find any reference as to whether Frank Peterson survived the invasion. Carl's email confirms that he did, was awarded the Silver Star for valor and fought with the Rangers 2nd Bn for the remainder of World War II. He was wounded many times and went on to be "the best dad in the world as well as my best friend." This shows that our website is popular with non-philatelic persons and that having back issues of our journal available to the world wide web is worthwhile. We get several hundred hits on our website daily according to our server. This is all due to the efforts of our webmaster, Francis Ferguson.

**REQUEST:** I am currently working on a book on Florida County and Postmaster Postmarks as mentioned in my article in this issue. Please send me a scan by email attachment of any such postmark you have to make the census of these fairly scarce postmarks as accurate as possible.



# Florida County and Postmaster postmarks

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

During the past half century, county and postmaster postmark collecting has become a popular area of specialization within the scope of postal history. State postal history societies have been established for nearly all states in this country and many of these societies have published or maintain comprehensive listings and tracings which include county and postmaster postmarks.



**Figure 1**  
*Larry Resnick, circa 1972.  
From the Congress Book  
1972, published by the  
American Philatelic  
Congress.*

In 1972, Larry Resnick (**Figure 1**), a founding member of the original Florida Postal History Society, published the first comprehensive listing and tracings of Florida county and postmaster postmarks in the American Philatelic Congress Book.<sup>1</sup> This author was fortunate to receive Resnick's reference material after his death and has continued to update the Resnick census for the past 25 years. This article is a preliminary effort of what will eventually become a full color book which will document all the known Florida county and postmaster postmarks and include a listing of the dates of use as well as a current census of all known examples.

One of the earliest articles about these types of postmarks is credited to Warner Bates, who published an article "County Cancellations on U.S. 1870-1882" in the May 1926 issue of *The American Philatelist*. He reported a nationwide total of only 107 examples. In 1935, Dr. Howard K. Thompson published a census record of these postmarks used during the period 1870-1897 from four states: Alabama (12), Arizona (2), Arkansas (16) and California (121) totaling 151 examples.<sup>2</sup>

Over the next 15 years numerous examples from other

**POST OFFICE SUPPLIES**  
ESTABLISHED 1872.  
**WE ARE HEADQUARTERS**  
For the most complete line of articles used by P. M.'s and their Clerks.

Engraved Letter Headings,  
" Note Headings,  
Stamp Ribbons (all colors),  
Money Order Daters,  
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P. O. Canceling Ink (by Express),  
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Steel and Rubber Stamp Racks,  
Coin Detectors,  
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Gem Type Case,

**THE BEST OFFER YET.**  
One RUBBER P. O. Dater and Canceller, Ink Powder, and Pads, Dates for ten years in Walnut case with tweezers, and all the single line stamps needed in a Post Office, this style type: **UNCLAIMED**  
By mail, postage paid, on receipt of price, \$3.00.

**PROOFS FROM POSTMASTERS.**  
Your Quarterly Record received, and I like it very much. — J. W. Cline, P. M., California, Md.  
The \$5 Outfit ordered by me was duly received this evening. They are all A No. 1 articles, and give entire satisfaction. — J. A. S. Harris, P. M., Orangeburg, N. Y.  
The Rubber Stamps, Note and Bill Heads, came to hand all right and met with favor with those who have examined them. For cheapness, neatness, and durability. — T. W. Lirvin, P. M., Picture Rocks, Pa.  
I have been using one of your Stamps and Pads for the last year and it gives satisfaction. — W. S. Nowak, P. M., Suel-Field, Iowa.  
I received my Note and Letter Heads, Dater, etc., all O. K. Am a blessed with your job. It far exceeds my expectations. — W. J. Kirk, P. M., Jacksonville, Mo.  
The Dater received, and I am well pleased with it. — Cass, P. M., Albion, Idaho.  
Your Box Receipts ordered, and is all O. K. — J. W. Frow, P. M., Fort Madison, Iowa.  
The Pads ordered came to-day. I am very much pleased with them. — Ed. S. McLean, P. M., St. Genevieve, Mo.

Illustrated Catalogue of Post Office Supplies sent free to Postmasters only. For samples of Note and Letter Headings send 6 cts. Address:  
**F. P. HAMMOND & CO., Aurora Illinois.**

No. 529.  
NEBRASKA CITY, IOWA CO.  
JUN 1 '75  
J. BELL, P. M., NEBRASKA.

No. 530.  
HENDERSON, MINNESOTA.  
FEB 5 1872

No. 531.  
RUTLAND, VA.  
FEB 2 1875  
R. Lewis, P. M.

No. 532.  
PARKERSBURGH, WOOD CO., WEST VIRGINIA.  
JUL 30 1880  
J. BOWELL, P. M.

33

**Figure 2**  
*Example of F.P. Hammond & Co. advertising.*

states were submitted to him, which led to his first comprehensive article on this subject, "U.S. County & Postmaster Postmarks." This was published in 1949 in Billig's Handbook<sup>3</sup>, Vol. 8 and contained 3,037 listings and 1,230 tracings. Following Dr. Thompson's death in 1972, this work was further updated by his collaborator Edith R. Doane in the 1973 Billig's Handbook<sup>4</sup>, Vol. 31. The most recent reference was published by Kenneth L. Gillman in his 1990 book, *Doane-Thompson Catalog of U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks*, in which he specifically numbered 4,526 different examples including 54 from Florida.



**Figure 3**  
*Another example of F.P. Hammond & Co. ads.*

These county and postmaster postmarking devices were purchased privately by 4th class postmasters who were not authorized U.S. Post Office Department supplied handstamp postmarkers. Most of these devices have the county name incorporated in the handstamp and a few contain both county and postmaster name. Some of these postmasters received as little as \$50 in compensation and may well have included their name in the device partly due to pride in their position, others for self-esteem. What is most unusual is for the device to contain only the postmaster name and not the county name since one of the purposes of these devices was to help identify the location within the state of these small post offices.

Many companies were in the business of supplying these devices, including F.P. Hammond & Co. of Aurora, Illinois, one of the most popular producers (**Figure 2, 3**). Others included E.S. Miller, Zevely, A.S. Carter & Co., Ward & Adams, also of Aurora. Most of these firms actively advertised in the *U.S. Postal Guide* and supplied similar devices, often making it difficult to determine the actual manufacturer. For completeness, it should be mentioned that these devices were to be used for postmarks and not as cancels for the stamp or postal entire. Many devices included a fancy cancellation in a duplex device including the fancy "wheel of fortune" by Hammond and the "Maltese cross" by Miller. Eventually, these devices were prohibited by a post office policy change and as a result there are very few examples with usage after the early 1890s.

Thompson's initial article contained 28 types of Florida county and postmaster cancels obtained from a census of 43 known covers. Resnick's 1973 article listed 55 types obtained from 139 known covers. As of this date there are to my knowledge 74 different types of postmarks from 64 different Florida towns. This was obtained from a census of 280 known non-archival covers covering the "classic period" of use of only 17 years from the earliest known example from Altamonte (October 17, 1877) to the latest use from Antioch (May 15, 1894). Of the 74 different types of postmarks, 20 contain only the postmaster's name and five contain both county and postmaster's names.

This article will reproduce examples of many of the various types of county and postmaster postmarks and will include an example of manuscript postmarks which are not considered "classic" handstamped postmarks, but do contain the county name.

The following types of markings and abbreviations will be used which is similar to those found in Gillman's book:

*Continued on page 8*

**CDS** – circular date stamp  
**DC** – double circle  
**DLC** – double line circle  
**DLDC** – double line double circle  
**Oval** – oval  
**DO** – double oval  
**DLO** – double line oval  
**DLDO** – double line double oval  
**SL** – straight line  
**Octagon** – octagon  
**D octagon** – double octagon  
**DL octagon** – double line octagon  
**DLR** – double line rectangle

Additionally, serif or non-serif lettering will be mentioned as well as the terms “fancy,” “sawtooth,” “cogged,” “fleuron,” and “NOR” (no outer rim) to better describe the markings.

**Figure 4**  
**“YELLOW BLUFF/HILLSBOROUGH**  
**CO., W.V. Futrell, P.M./FLORIDA.”**  
*Type I DLC postmark with cogged outer*  
*rim in blue ink on 3¢ green entire.*



One of the most unusual Florida towns to use county and postmaster postmarks is the small Hillsborough County town of Yellow Bluff. There are actually four different postmarks, all containing both the Hillsborough County name and the “W.V. Futrell, P.M.” name. A Yellow Bluff Post Office was originally established in Duval County in 1853 and discontinued on May 7, 1875. Shortly thereafter, a post office of the same name was established in Hillsborough County on November 3, 1875, but discontinued on May 18, 1877 with mail handled at nearby Tampa. At a separate more western location in Hillsborough County, where Palm Harbor (currently Pinellas County) is located, another post office with the Yellow Bluff name was established on August 3, 1882, as a name change from Bayland. William V. Futrell was the postmaster and apparently continued as postmaster even after Yellow Bluff was discontinued forever on April 1, 1889, with a name change to Ozona.

The first postmark used by Futrell at Yellow Bluff was a DLC with cogged outer rim and non-serif lettering in blue ink with pen cancelled entire. **Figure 4** represents the only known example, dated November 14, 1882, three months after the post office was established. Within six months a second postmarking device was obtained by Futrell; this one very similar but with a wavy inner rim and a negative star in circle cancel (**Figure 5**). This second type of postmark has known use from April 17, 1883 to May 22, 1883, with three known examples currently recorded in my census, all in black ink. The third type of postmark used by Futrell is a rimless postmark with non-serif lettering. Perhaps this is the same device as shown in Figure 5 but with the outer rim broken off as it does not appear to be just a poorly struck postmark.

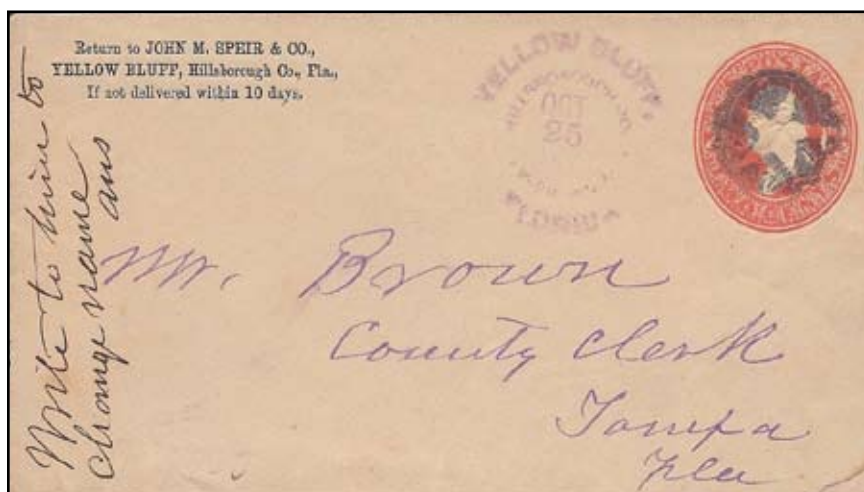


**Figure 5**

**“YELLOW BLUFF/HILLSBOROUGH CO., W.V. Futrell, P.M./FLORIDA.” Type II DLC postmark with cogged outer rim and serrated inner rim with black negative star killer, black ink, on postal card.**



There is only one known usage of this Type 3 device, October 25, 1883, known in magenta ink (**Figure 6**). A fourth postmark is known as just a circular date stamp (CDS) with no inner circle, which has two known usages

**Figure 6**

**“YELLOW BLUFF/HILLSBOROUGH CO., W.V. Futrell, P.M./FLORIDA.” Type III rimless magenta postmark with black negative star killer on 2¢ red entire.**

from March 25, 1885 and June 3, 1885, both in black ink (**Figure 7**). To my knowledge, there are no other types of postmarks recorded from Yellow Bluff. These Yellow Bluff postmarks all contain both the county and postmaster names in the same device, which is unusual and only known from five of the 64 Florida towns to have used these devices.

**Figure 7**

**“YELLOW BLUFF/HILLSBOROUGH CO., W.V. Futrell, P.M./FLORIDA.” Type IV DCL postmark without inner circle in blue ink as receiving postmark on postal card.**

The town of Altoona in then Orange County (currently Lake County) is another Florida town known to have

*Continued on page 10*

used four different types of county postmarks. The town was named for the Pennsylvania birthplace of Thomas J. Hinson, a lumbering pioneer. When the post office was established on August 26, 1880, Francis J. Hinson was named postmaster and likely obtained the county post marking devices. The Type I device (**Figure 8**), a DLO

**Figure 8**

***“ALTOONA/Orange Co., Fla.” Type I DLO postmark with serrated outer rim with grid killer tied 3¢ green banknote on merchant’s advertising corner card cover.***



with sawtooth rim and serif lettering, has three known usages from March 7, 1882 to May 5, 1882 in both black and blue ink. The Type II postmark (**Figure 9**) is a DLC with non-serif lettering and a grid cancellation with three known examples from March 24, 1884 to September 22, 1884, all in black ink.



**Figure 9**

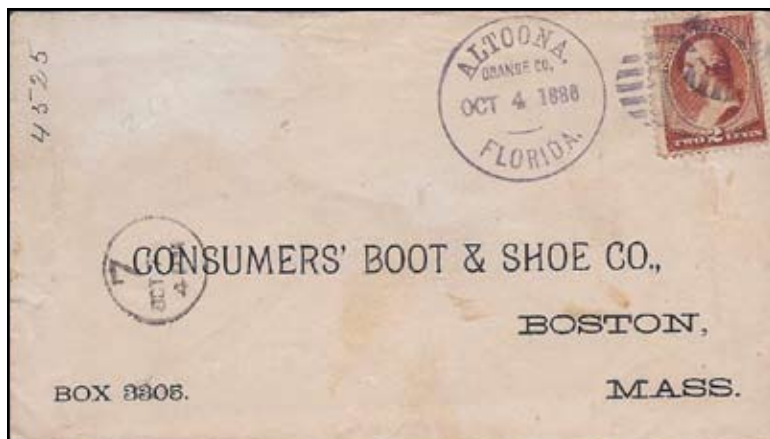
***“ALTOONA/ORANGE CO./FLA.” Type II DC postmark with killer cancelled #210.***

The Type III postmark (**Figure 10**) is a CDS with fancy fleuron and serif lettering with three known examples dated August 1, 1885 to December 28, 1885, all with grid cancels and black ink. The Type IV postmark (**Figure 11**) is a CDS without the fancy fleuron and with only the town name in serif lettering. This is the most common type of county postmark from Altoona with 10 recorded examples, all in black ink.

**Figure 10**

***“ALTOONA/Orange Co/FLORIDA” Type III cds postmark with fancy fleuron and grid killer cancelled #209, 210.***





**Figure 11**  
**“ALTOONA, ORANGE CO./FLORIDA”**  
 Type IV cds postmark with grid killer tied  
 #210 on preaddressed cover.

The Auburndale, Polk County postmark is the most recently discovered of all the Florida county and postmaster postmarks. It was discovered in December 2011 on an eBay auction site. It is very unusual in that the oval rim is made of linked chain and the inside has two fancy fleurons. The cancellation is a wedged rim of circles which is also unusual. **Figure 12** represents the known example of this postmark.

**Figure 12**  
**“AUBURNDALE, POLK COUNTY,**  
**FLA.” oval**  
 postmark with chainlink outer rim and  
 circle of wedges killer on 2¢ brown entire.



Clermont was established on the south shore of Lake Minneola in then Sumter County by the Clermont Improvement Company and named after the birthplace of the company manager, A.F. Wrotniski -- Clermont, France. When the post office was established on January 21, 1885, A. F. Wrotniski was named postmaster and served until November 24, 1886. He likely purchased the unusual double lined rectangular county postmarking device with clogged inner line. Two variations of this postmark are recorded, Type I with year date (**Figure 13**) with six known



**Figure 13**  
**“CLERMONT, SUMTER CO., -- FLA.”**  
 Type I DLR postmark with clogged inner line  
 with 7 line killer on 2¢ red-brown entire.

examples used from March 16, 1886 until September 21, 1886, and Type II without year date (**Figure 14**) with three examples used from October 25, 1886 until August 20, 1887, after Wrotniski had been replaced.

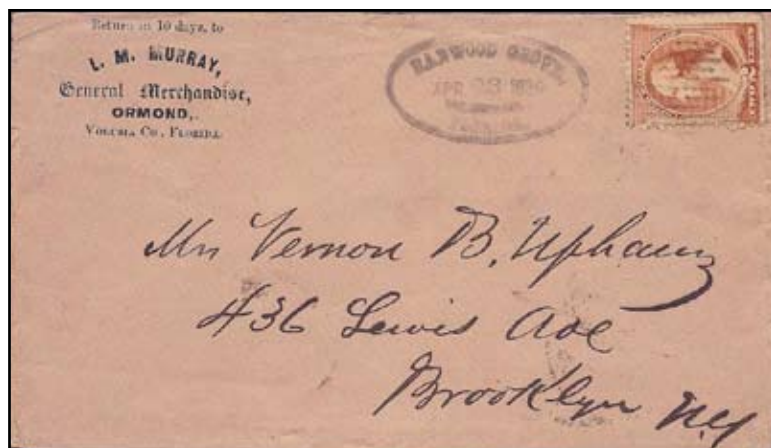
*Continued on page 12*



**Figure 14**  
**“CLERMONT, SUMTER CO.,-- FLA.”**  
*Type II DLR postmark with clogged inner line, no year date with 7 lined killer tied #210 on cover.*



The Harwood Grove, Volusia County postmark is also a very unusual example and worthy of including in this article. The Harwood Post Office, as it was officially known, was established in Volusia County on January 28, 1884 with Norman B. Harwood, an orange grower, the first postmaster. He served until the post office was closed for the first time on April 25, 1887. The town was really just a group of small farms or orange groves and the population in 1885 was only nine. Harwood obviously named the town and post office after himself and when he purchased the postmarking device, included the word “Grove” in the town name on the postmark since he was a citrus grower. The April 26, 1886 DLO with serif lettering in black ink is the only known example (**Figure 15**).



**Figure 15**  
**“HARWOOD GROVE, VOLUSIA CO./**  
**FLORIDA.” DLO postmark with**  
*grid killer cancelled #210 on merchant's*  
*advertising corner card cover.*

The Cocoa, Indian River postmark in **Figure 16** is an unusual example of what appears to clearly be a Florida county postmark. Cocoa was established by fishermen a couple of miles north of Magnolia Point in 1871. The

**Figure 16**  
**“COCOA, FLA./INDIAN RIVER.” Black**  
**DLC postmark with NOR with killer cancelled**  
**2¢ brown entire. Most postmarks are known in**  
*magenta ink.*



town was incorporated in 1875, but a post office was not established until September 11, 1884 with William B. Smith as postmaster. He served during the time of use of this rimless double inner circle postmark until he was replaced by Robert N. Andrews on January 8, 1887. This postmark has always been considered a “county” postmark with the Indian River in the outer ring with seven usages recorded from January 17, 1885 to December 18, 1885.

Actually, however, Cocoa has always been located in Brevard County and Indian River County did not exist until June 30, 1925, fully 40 years after this postmarking device had been produced. Larry Resnick felt that this actually might have been a steamboat postmark placed onboard one of the many steamers plying the Indian River in 1885 since it is known in magenta ink as are many of the steamboat markings.



**Figure 17**

***“LIVERPOOL, FLA./MANATEE CO.,” magenta postmark with black killer on 1¢ blue unsealed circular with additional stamp removed, usage to Berlin.***

The Liverpool, Fla., Manatee County octagon postmark (**Figure 17**) is the only known octagon county postmark used in Florida. The post office was established on February 13, 1883 with John Cross as postmaster. He likely purchased the postmarking device which has two known usages in magenta ink, December 3, 1883 and December 20, 1883. Cross was replaced by John W. James on January 22, 1891. Liverpool was a very small town with an 1890 population of 50. The Liverpool Post Office was discontinued on April 30, 1895 with mail handled at nearby Fort Ogden. It became part of DeSoto County on May 19, 1887.



**Figure 18**

***“SANFORD, FLA./REGISTERED/J.J. HARRIS, P.M.” magenta DLO postmark on registered cover with black ink cancelled strip of three #205,212.***

Sanford was established in 1871 in Orange County on 12,000 acres purchased by Henry Sanford, a former U.S.



minister to Belgium. It was located about a mile west of the site of Fort Mellon, which had existed since 1837 during the Second Seminole War. A post office had been established at Mellonville in 1846 and was changed to Sanford on September 9, 1873 with Lindley M. Moore as postmaster. J.J. Harris became postmaster during the 1880s and had his name placed on the “registered” postmark used on the cover in **Figure 18**. This is the only recorded example, known in magenta ink, and is also the only Florida “registered” postmaster postmark.

The post office at Exeter was established in Sumter County on December 31, 1883 with George Battersby as postmaster. The post office was discontinued on July 31, 1890 with mail handled at the Villa City Post Office. The only known postmark that I am aware of is a most unusual manuscript postmark made to mimic a CDS postmark (**Figure 19**). This is a black manuscript “Exeter, Sumter Co. Fla June 12 / 86” in circle on a 2¢ red postal entire with pen “X” cancellation. Why the postmaster would go to the trouble to mimic a CDS mark and include the county name in the postmark is remarkable and a reason I will include this and other manuscript postmarks with county names in my eventual book on this subject. I do not include these types of postmarks in the list of 74 different Florida handstamped county-postmaster postmarks.

**Figure 19**  
*Exeter, Sumter Co Fla June 12/86 black  
manuscript postmark and X cancelled 2¢ red  
entire.*



There are obviously many more interesting Florida county and postmaster postmarks which I could include in this article, but I reproduced some of the more unusual highlights. This should stimulate some of our readers to start collecting these types of postmarks. These postmarks are not as expensive as their rarity should dictate. The most common is from Altamonte (1877-1878) with only 22 known examples. Many can be obtained for \$30-\$40 or so at dealer bourses or on eBay. I do request that readers send me a scan of any Florida county and postmaster postmark in their collection to add to the census.

### Footnotes

Larry Resnick. “The County and Postmaster Postmarks of Florida,” *American Philatelic Congress Book*, 1972, 113-128.

Kenneth L. Gillman, Doane-Thompson. *Catalog Of The U.S. County And Postmaster Postmarks*, North Miami, FL.: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1990, pp. vii-xii, 37-39.

Howard K. Thompson. “U.S. County & Postmaster Postmarks,” *Billig’s Handbook*, Vol. 8 (2), 1949.

Edith R. Doane. “U.S. County & Postmaster Postmarks,” *Billig’s Handbook*, Vol. 31 (3), 1973.

David G. Phillips, ed. *The American Stampless Cover Catalog*, North Miami, Florida, Vol. 1, 1975.



# 1768 Pensacola cover

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

The cover shown in Figure 1 is the earliest West Florida cover from Pensacola that I have personally seen. The earliest recorded cover is the famous “Exiled Pensacola Sept 5th 1763” cover from John Campbell which describes the British takeover of Pensacola from the Spanish a month earlier on August 6, 1763. That cover was sold in the David Phillips 1985 Meroni sale and to my knowledge has not been exhibited since. There are no surviving covers from the 1st Spanish Period (1513-1763) and the Campbell letter is likely the earliest Pensacola letter. Is this one the next oldest surviving letter?



**Figure 1**  
**“Pensacola 6th August 1768” datelined cover to Pontefract, Yorkshire, England.**

The 1768 cover is also extremely interesting from a Florida postal history standpoint since the letter mentions a Mr. Blackwell who is reported in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*<sup>1</sup> to have been postmaster at Pensacola prior to 1777. This letter was written by John Misdale, who was the British Deputy Distributor of Stamps for stamp duty, according to the American postal history dealer in England, Stephen T. Taylor.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Blackwell was the local Pensacola Distributor of Stamps for stamp duty.

The complete letter is as follows:

*Pensacola 6th August 1768*

*My Dear Sister;*

*I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I leave this place to embark for England in a few days so that soon after this letter reaches your hands, God willing I shall have the happiness to see you. I have had pretty good success for the time I have been away, so that I do not take Charleston in my route as I proposed, but go directly home in the same vessel I came out in. I hope you have seen my good friends Deighton & Oxley, they promised to call on you in one of their journeys. I am more beholden to them than I can describe for they put me in the situation I now am in.*

*As to Mr. Blackwell thank God I have done with him. He and his wife are now here, She has her health but poorly. Mr. Haigh you wrote me about is in this place as a butcher – only in that business with Mr B – the poor man will kill himself with toil. I go frequently to see them & will always keep on good terms.*

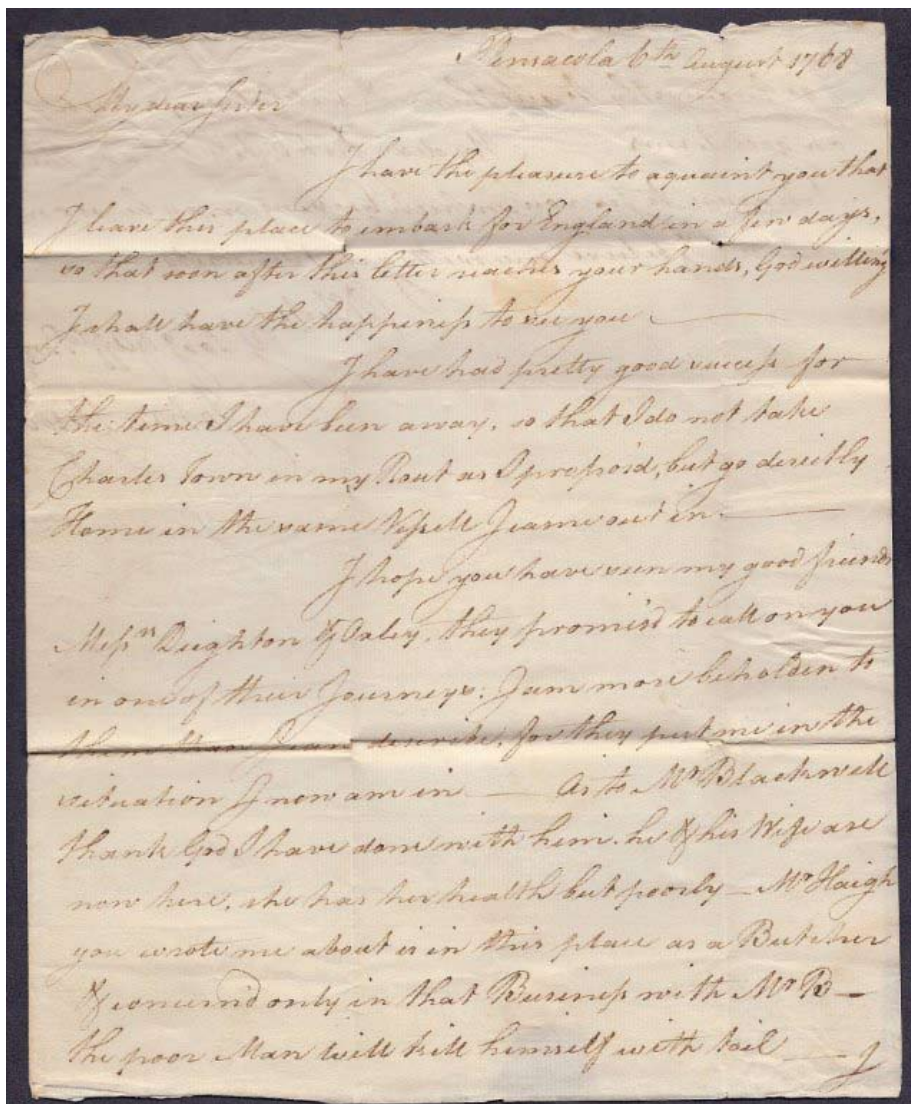
*My dear sister, will I have the pleasure to see you which God may be soon. Adieu & believe me with great sincerity Your loving & affectionate brother. John Misdale*

*Continued on page 16*

According to Hugh Feldman, an English postal historian, stamp duty was a fee paid for stamping excise documents prior to either removing a cargo from an arriving ship or when goods were taken out of a bonded warehouse. This was not an import duty which was collected by separate revenue officers at the port of arrival. The collector of the stamp duty sold a pre-printed piece of paper with the value of the duty which was then affixed by a metal seal to the import document. The customs department in London sold these “stamps” to the distributor of stamps for stamp duty who was supposed to hold sufficient stock to perform his duties.

It can be assumed that John Misdale, the Deputy Distributor of Stamps for stamp duty was in Pensacola only for a short time to supply Mr. Blackwell, the local Distributor of Stamps for stamp duty an inventory of such stamps before returning to England on the same ship that brought him there. The reference in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* that Mr. Blackwell was postmaster in Pensacola may possibly be in error due to not fully understanding what a “distributor of stamps for stamp duty” actually was. Blackwell could well have later (before 1777) become the actual “postmaster” at Pensacola.

On March 1, 1774, there was for the first time an established mail route between Pensacola and Falmouth, England, the Falmouth Packet. This mail route went from Falmouth, England via Jamaica or the West Indies, to Pensacola and from there to St. Augustine, Savannah and Charleston before returning to Falmouth. The entire route would take up to seven months to complete. According to John S. Olenkiewicz’s excellent reference<sup>4</sup>, there were initially five Falmouth sailings during the year 1764 that connected with Pensacola. The following year, 1765, St. Augustine and Savannah were dropped and only Pensacola and Charleston were serviced.



Pensacola 6th August 1768

Mr. Blackwell

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I leave this place to embark for England in a few days, so that soon after this letter reaches your hands, God willing I shall have the happiness to see you.

I have had pretty good success for the time I have been away, so that I do not take Charter town in my Boat as I proposed, but go directly Home in the same vessel I came out in.

I hope you have seen my good friends Messrs Dighton & Daley, they promised to call on you in one of their Journeys. I am more beholden to them than I can describe, for they put me in the situation I now am in. — As to Mr. Blackwell thank God I have done with him, he & his Wife are now here, she has her health but poorly — Mr. Haigh you wrote me about is in this place as a Butcher & concerned only in that Business with Mr. R. — the poor Man will kill himself with toil — J.

**Figure 2**

**The actual letter contained in the cover shown in Figure 1.**

In 1768, when this letter was sent, there were five packets that arrived at Pensacola during that year. One ship, the *Ann Teresa*, had already left Pensacola but was wrecked off the Florida coast on July 28 with the crew and mail rescued near the Bahamas. This cover would probably have been sent on the *Grenville*, captained by John Gaylard, which left St. Kitts for Pensacola on July 20. But records do not record when the *Grenville* arrived or left Pensacola and apparently she was not in port when the letter was sent. The *Grenville* did eventually arrive at Charleston on September 16 and departed on October 19, arriving at Falmouth on November 24, 1778.

This cover was actually sent privately and appears to have docketing at the lower left with the name of a non-



packet ship but unfortunately it was heavily crossed out and is not readable. The letter did arrive in London where the "LONDON / SHIP LRE" handstamp was applied and a "15 NO" receiving mark placed on the reverse. This would imply a three month sailing which probably meant that the ship went to other ports of call before returning to England but did arrive nine days earlier than the Falmouth Packet. It was rated on arrival in London "In all 5" in manuscript for the 4d inland and 1d ship letter fee.

It would be interesting to know when John Misdale arrived back in England on the same ship that took him to Pensacola but it was likely before his letter was received by his sister.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Vol. 1. Miami:David G.Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1985. Notes and email, September 23, 2014, email September 23, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Olenkiewicz, *British Packet Sailings Falmouth – North America: 1755-1826*, updated January 25, 2013.

1764 FALMOUTH PACKET SAILINGS - CARIBBEAN - NORTH AMERICA 1764								
FALMOUTH - WEST INDIES - JAMAICA - BARBADOS - PENSACOLA - ST AUGUSTINE - SAVANNAH - CHARLESTOWN - FALMOUTH								
Sailed	Packet		Via	Via	Via	Via	Via	Arrived
Falmouth	First Falmouth Packet ever sent to Pesacola & Charlestown.		Jamaica	Pensacola	St Augustine	Savannah	Charlestown	Falmouth
1764 Mar 1*	Grenville*	Purchase*	Jun 6/	/	/	/Jul 28	Jul 29/Aug 23	1764 Oct 4*
Falmouth			Windward Iles^	Jamaica	Pensacola	St Augustine	Savannah	Charlestown
1764 Apr 19*	Suffolk*	James Bull*	/	Jun 4^/Jun 7^	/	/	Aug 24/Aug 28	Aug 30/Sep 16
Falmouth			West Indies*	Pensacola	St Augustine	Savannah	Charlestown	Falmouth
~1764 Jul 30*	Hilsborough	Leslie Grove	Sep 3*/Oct 2	Nov 21/Nov 25	/	/	Dec 6/Dec 20	1765 Jan 27*
Falmouth			Barbados	Jamaica	Pensacola	Ran ashore on Dry Tortugas Feb 27, all lost except crew with 7 gallons of water and a few biscuits, rescued, arrived in Charlestown via Havana.*		
1764 Nov 19*	Grenville*	Curlet*	~Jan 4/	~Jan 20/	/Feb 24			
<p>Accessible Archives other The British Newspaper Archive^</p> <p>Lloyd's List data* Newspaper data other</p> <p>Updated 25 January 2013 John S Olenkiewicz</p>								

1768 FALMOUTH PACKET SAILINGS - CARIBBEAN - NORTH AMERICA 1768								
FALMOUTH - WEST INDIES - PENSACOLA - CHARLESTOWN - FALMOUTH								
Sailed	Packet	Captain	Via	Via	Via		Via	Arrived
Falmouth			Madiera*	West Indies*	Pensacola		Charlestown	Falmouth
1768 Feb 18*	Grantham*	John Jones*	/Mar 14*	/	/Jun 7		Jun 26/Aug 3	1768 Sep 8*
Falmouth			Madiera*	West Indies*	Pensacola	Wrecked off Flor. coast Jul 28, crew & mail rescued to Bahamas		
1768 Mar --	Anna Teresa*	Valentine Dyer	/Apr 2*	/	/	Crew brought to St Augustine Aug 5, Mail in Charlestown Aug 9		
Falmouth			Madiera*	St Kitts	Pensacola		Charlestown	Falmouth
1768 May 19*	Grenville*	John Gaylard*	/May 29*	Jul 11/Jul 20	/		Sep 16/Oct 19	1768 Nov 24*
Falmouth			Madiera*	Jamaica	Pensacola		Charlestown	Falmouth
1768 Jul 25*	Hillsborough*	Leslie Grove*	Aug 11/Aug 13*	/Oct 27	/		Dec 19/Jan 23	1769 Feb 25*
Falmouth			Madiera*	Jamaica	Pensacola		Charlestown	Falmouth
1768 Aug 18*	Duncannon*	Charles Edwards*	Sep 3/Sep 5*	/	/Dec 20		Jan 14/Feb 12	1769 Apr 13*
1768 FALMOUTH PACKET SAILINGS - CHARLESTOWN 1768								
FALMOUTH - CHARLESTOWN - FALMOUTH								
Sailed	Packet	Captain		Arrived	Sailed		Via	Arrived
Falmouth	First direct packet from Falmouth			Charlestown*	Charlestown*		Plymouth*	Falmouth
1768 Oct 22*	Le de Spencer*	William Talbot : Pond		1768 Dec 27	1769 Jan 23		Feb 26*/	1769 Mar 6*
Falmouth				Charlestown	Charlestown			Falmouth
	Eagle*	Beals*		1769 Jan 23	1769 Feb 19			1769 Mar 18*
Falmouth				Charlestown	Charlestown			Falmouth
~1768 Dec 26	Sandwich	Samuel Ayres		1769 Mar 1	1769 Mar 25			



# An 1827 St. Augustine Orange Shipment

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

The stampless cover shown in Figure 1 looks like a cover with a fairly common but boldly struck Type XII St. Augustine territorial postmark. It has stains and file folds which distract from its outer appearance, but it is the enclosure that makes this a most interesting cover.



Figure 1

**“ST AUGUSTINE – E.FLO- / JUL 12” (1827) postmark with unpaid 25 rate in manuscript on cover to New Haven, Connecticut.**

I am a small Florida citrus grower (currently 100 acres or so) but have been involved with the citrus industry of Florida since the late 1980s as a past treasurer of the Dundee Citrus Growers Association, currently the largest shipper of citrus in the entire state. What a surprise to read the enclosure of the above cover and find out about a contract in 1827 to ship 80,000 oranges from Henry Covert, a St. Augustine orange broker, to a merchant in New Haven, Connecticut. This was only five years after Florida became a territory.

The enclosure reads, as best I can decipher poor spelling, as follows:

St-Augustine July 7 1827

Mess Curtiss & Forbes

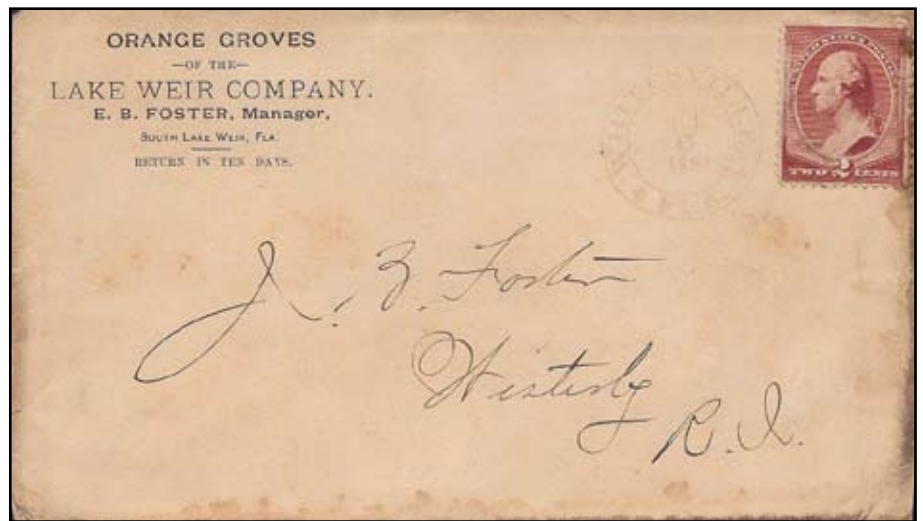
Gentlemen:

You rote (sic) me last year to engage you Eighty thousand of Oranges – of the earliest City groves. After I received your letter I had business that caused me from home knowing that your Vessel would be here if now (sic) accident happened. I handed your letter over to Mr. Northrop who from his knowledge of business done as well as hea (sic) could during my absence. The Vessel come and after her departure from this place I awaited on Mr. Northrop to now (sic) if hea (sic) had made out a invoice bill hea (sic) said now (sic) that hea (sic) had made a charge of twenty dollars for truble (sic) a strange charge you must think. The customary charge is 2 ½ per ct if you send cash – five if wea (sic) have to charge on you. Should you wish to buy oranges this season you had better send out early in the season say by the first of September or the middle of August. The oranges will be fit to pick by the first of September or perhaps before. Should you send goods – send a assorted cargo such as Butter, Lard, Potatoes, Onions, Cheese, good dry white pine lumber. Oranges can be bot (sic) at 75 c now if you want to buy, you had better send early. Remember me to Mr. Beecher and Dennis Covert, yours Respectfully –

Henry Covert –

Citrus had been commercially grown as far north as Georgia until the February 2-9, 1835 coldest freeze on record.<sup>1</sup> In Florida today, it is very unlikely that oranges are grown commercially in or around St. Augustine, mainly due to the devastating freezes of 1894 and 1895 which nearly wiped out citrus in all of Florida.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2 shows an 1884 advertising corner card cover from E.B Foster's Lake Weir Company located in South Lake Weir which was one of the larger growers in Marion County until the 1895 freeze. Small growers did continue to grow citrus along the St. Johns River which warmed the cold winter air and minimized freeze damage and a few packing houses survived into the 1950s in Jacksonville. Today, almost all citrus is grown south of the I-4 corridor.



**Figure 2**

***“WHITESVILLE \*FLA\* 1884” fancy double circle postmark with stain tied #210 on Lake Weir Company advertising corner card cover.***

Oranges are not picked commercially until later than mid-August or the first of September. Back then it may well have been a Satsuma orange that did mature early and survived in freeze prone areas such as South Georgia and North Florida. That orange is no longer commercially grown in Florida to any extent.

The quote of 75¢ in the above letter probably relates to a bushel of oranges or around 25 oranges. I am aware of another citrus contract from the 1820s between a grower in St. Augustine and a merchant in Philadelphia for 5¢ per orange, shipped in barrels of sawdust. That would relate to around \$3.00 per box (about 60 oranges) which considering inflation would be around \$60.00 in today's dollars.<sup>3</sup> A citrus grower today is lucky to get \$10.00 a box for his fruit.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Internet: [www.srh.noaa.gov/images/tbw/paig/PresAmFreeze1835.pdf](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/images/tbw/paig/PresAmFreeze1835.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>

Internet: [www.flcitrusmutual.com/industry-issues/weather/freeze\\_timeline.aspx](http://www.flcitrusmutual.com/industry-issues/weather/freeze_timeline.aspx).

<sup>3</sup> Internet: [www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi](http://www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi).

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