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Project Mercury First Day Cover

By William J. Hancock

In the summer of 1961, the U.S. Post Office Department began a secret project to print the Project Mercury stamp in a secure, locked room accessed only by a small number of postal employees.¹ The four cent Project Mercury stamp was printed using a new Giori Printing Press which allowed stamps in two or three colors to be printed in a single run, unlike prior stamps requiring a run for each color. These stamps were sent in sealed packets to postmasters in 305 locations around the country in time for an original Friendship 7 launch date of December 21, 1961. Postmasters were instructed not to open the packets until authorized and they were clearly marked "Classified Material. Do Not Open." Weather caused delays in the launch until February.

In February 1962, it was announced that Astronaut John H. Glenn would make an orbital flight from Cape Canaveral, Florida aboard Friendship 7, part of the Mercury Atlas 6 program. I prepared some cacheted envelopes for the event and mailed one to the postmaster at Titusville, Florida asking for it to be stamped with the new stamp and with a postal cancellation on the issue date. Little did I know that this was a secret project. Fortunately the nearly five hour three orbital space flight went successfully and Friendship 7 splashed down at 2:43 p.m. and John Glenn had become the first American to completely orbit the earth. At 3:30 p.m., post offices were notified by telephone, teletype and telegraph that they could distribute the Project Mercury stamps. Had there been a failed flight, the stamps would not have been released. The postmaster complied with my request, and several days later I received Figure 1, my cacheted cover with a photo of John Glenn and the Project Mercury rocket with a First Day of Issue cancellation postmarked "Cape Canaveral, Fla." on February 20, 1962, with the new Project Mercury US #1193



Figure 1
"FEB 20 1962" Cape Canaveral, Florida postmark on First Day of Issue of U.S. Scott #1193, the four-cent Project Mercury Stamp, with special John Glenn cachet.

Continued on page 3

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stamp (*Figure 1*).

The late afternoon release of the Project Mercury stamp gave little time to get First Day Covers serviced, only an hour and a half in Florida. Cape Canaveral was listed as the official site of the First Day of Issue, but there was no functioning Cape Canaveral Post Office until 3:30 p.m. on February 20, 1962. That was when a U.S. Air Force van was made into a temporary post office and called a substation of the Cocoa, Florida Post Office. The actual Cape Canaveral Post Office did not become functional until September 1, 1962 with Richard R. Moeller as postmaster.²

In 1998, after two years of lobbying NASA, it was announced that then 77-year-old sitting Ohio Senator John Glenn would once again take his second space flight.³ I returned the original cover with an additional 32 cent stamp to reflect the-then postal rate to the Cape Canaveral postmaster, asking for another cancellation. Figure 3. is now a treasured cover in my collection with the second Cape Canaveral postmark some 36 years after the original one on the same envelope. The postmark of October 29, 1998, is the date Glenn flew as payload specialist on the nine day Space Shuttle program Discovery mission, thus being the oldest person to fly in space (*Figure 4*).



Figure 2
Astronaut John H. Glenn in his Project Mercury space suit.



Figure 3
"OCT 29 1998 Cape Canaveral FL 32920" double circle postmark with 32¢ U.S. Scott #3226 on reuse of cover from Figure 1.



Figure 4
John H. Glenn at age 77 in space suit as payload specialist for the Space Shuttle Discovery Mission.

Footnotes

¹ Website: <https://www.mysticstamp.com/Products/United-States/1293/USA>.

² John S. Gallagher, *Florida Post Offices*. (Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1997), p. 18.

³ Website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Glenn

day from their local post office. The Government Printing Office (GPO) supplied the stationery. In addition, private companies with postal permits printed the letter sheets (*Figure 3*). On one side of the form was space for a letter of about 100 to 300 words, the address of the serviceman or woman to whom the letter was to be delivered, the address of the sender, and a circular area in the top left corner for the censor's stamp of approval.



Figure 4
16mm roll of film containing V-Mail.

Once the message was written, the form was folded and sealed. It then made its way to a processing center where the form was re-opened, read and approved (or words and sections marked through) by a censor and then fed through a Kodak machine that photographed the letters onto 16mm film. The letters were printed from the 16mm roll of film (*Figure 4*) and then delivered overseas or to the States depending on their origin. The final "V-Mail" item was comprised of a single sheet of paper measuring 4.25 by 5.0 inches (*Figure 5*). The sheet was folded after processing and placed in a special-purpose window envelope, so that the receiver's name and address was shown through the window. All processed V-Mails have, therefore, a horizontal bend slightly above the center as can be seen on the V-Mail in *Figure 5*. Given the very small size of a V-Mail, 37 mail bags required to carry 150,000 one-page letters could be replaced by a single mail sack. The weight of that same amount of mail was reduced dramatically from 2,575 pounds to a mere 45.



Figure 5
The printed V-Mail measured 4.25 x 5.0 inches.



Figure 3
V-mail package containing 25 writing sheets and envelopes. Printed by the Wolf Envelope Co.

End Note

Between June 15, 1942 and April 1, 1945, 556,513,795 pieces of V-Mail were sent from the U.S. to military post offices and over 510 million pieces were received from military personnel abroad. However, in spite of the patriotic draw of V-Mail, most people still sent regular first class mail. In 1944, for instance, Navy personnel received 38 million pieces of V-Mail, but over 272 million pieces of regular first class mail. People generally found the V-Mail forms used for letter writing were limited in space and the reduction in size was not like receiving a personal letter.

Micanopy Stampless Postal History

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

The sleepy little town of Micanopy, Florida has a long and storied history dating nearly 500 years, far longer than any other town in Florida other than St. Augustine. Most readers of this article are likely unfamiliar with Micanopy's history and some may not even know where it is located. Today, the town is a little off the main tourist map, but its center is on the National Register of Historic Places, with a great antique and general store, some restaurants, and several nice historic homes. Just on the outskirts of the town is perhaps the oldest cemetery in Florida outside of Pensacola and St. Augustine, well maintained and dating to the beginning of the Florida Territory with the earliest grave site from 1827. There is also an outstanding local history center with several exhibits reflecting the various periods in Florida's past. **Figure 1** shows an interesting 1828 cover to Washington, D.C.



Figure 1

“WANTONS FLO / FEB 9” (1828) red SL (Type V) postmark with “Geo M Brooke, Col USA” Free Frank on cover to Washington DC.

Micanopy's history begins before Florida was discovered with the Timucuan Indians known to have had a village located there. It may have initially functioned as an intermittently inhabited hunting village with a more permanent village farther north at current day Alachua. The Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto noted an Indian village located at current day Micanopy in 1539. William Bartram, a naturalist, visited the area called “Alachua” and found a Cuscowilla village at the site in 1774.¹

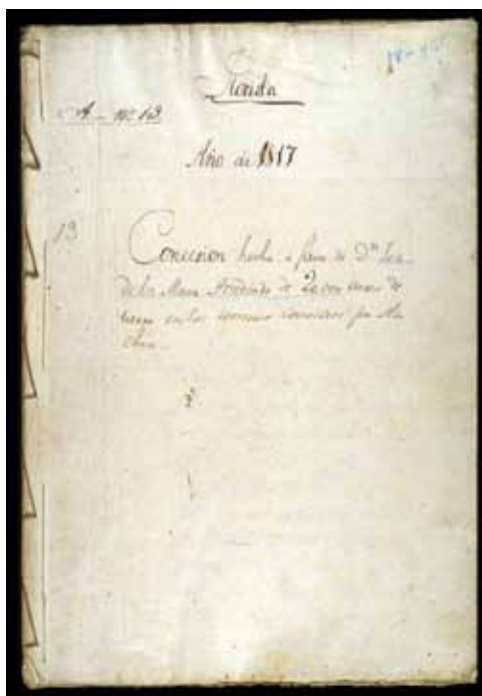


Figure 2

Original 1817 Arredondo Land Grant in Florida State Archives.

Non-Indian and American settlement at Micanopy began following the Arredondo Grant of December 22, 1817 (**Figure 2**) when King Ferdinand VII of Spain granted Don Fernando de la Maza Arredondo and his son Juan 289,645 acres of land in central Florida in recognition of work done in raising troops to defend St. Augustine during the American Patriot's Rebellion of 1812-13. Arredondo also transmitted supplies between Havana and St. Augustine and contracted at his expense to build a military hospital. For these unpaid services, Arredondo requested a land grant. One stipulation of this grant was that within two years Arredondo was to establish settlement in the granted area with 200 families from St. Augustine who would be supportive of Spain. **Figure 3** shows a map of the Arredondo Grant which encompassed several current counties in Central Florida.² When the February 22, 1819 treaty between Spain and the United States was finally ratified in 1821 and Spain ceded Florida to the United States, the Arredondos left Florida and returned to Cuba but continued their claim for the land. The treaty called for the United States to be responsible for up to \$5 million in Spanish debts but was vague on whether the land grants were valid. The Arredondo and also the Forbes Grant in West Florida were subsequently dragged through the courts for over 80 years with disputes over who owned land within the

boundaries of these grants. In 1828, the Supreme Court actually found in favor of the descendants of the Arredondos which further complicated land transactions. Litigation over land titles continued into the 20th century.

After Florida became a Territory, American interests in settling Florida began to flourish. On February 12, 1823, a real estate development group, The Florida Association of New York, headed by Moses Elias Levy, brought Edward M. Wanton along with a group of settlers to Micanopy. Levy had previously obtained 36,000 acres near the Arredondo grant and was a partner with Arredondo and familiar with Alachua County. He had even gone to Europe in 1816 to raise capital and purchased an additional 52,900 acres and had established two plantations in the area.

The settlement became known as Wantons and the ninth post office in Florida was established on March 6, 1826 in the store and Indian trading post run by Edward Wanton. Ruben Charles was the initial postmaster.³ This post office must have been very busy as postal revenues for the first year ending March 31, 1828, totaled \$168.82 compared with \$700.39 for the same year's revenue at St. Augustine, Florida's largest territorial town and \$521.70 for the following year in Tallahassee.⁴ The town name and post office name eventually changed from "Wantons" to "Micanopy" on March 3, 1834. Relative peace between the settlers and the Miccosukee and Seminole Indians lasted until the Second Seminole War. A log picket Fort Defiance was constructed in December 1835 to protect settlers but was abandoned and intentionally burned in August 1836 following the Battles of Micanopy and Welika Pond. A more substantial Fort Micanopy was constructed and completed on April 30, 1837. Following the end of the Second Seminole War, the town was rebuilt and remains little changed today.

Stampless postal history from Wantons and Micanopy is not common but shows a variety of different usages. Two distinctive Wantons straightline postmarks and three different manuscript postmarks are recorded. The earliest example is a "Wantons Flo" manuscript postmark (Type I) dated October 25, 1826 in the State of Florida



Figure 4

"Wantons Flo March 9" (1833) manuscript postmark (Type I) with C. Waldren postmaster Free Frank.

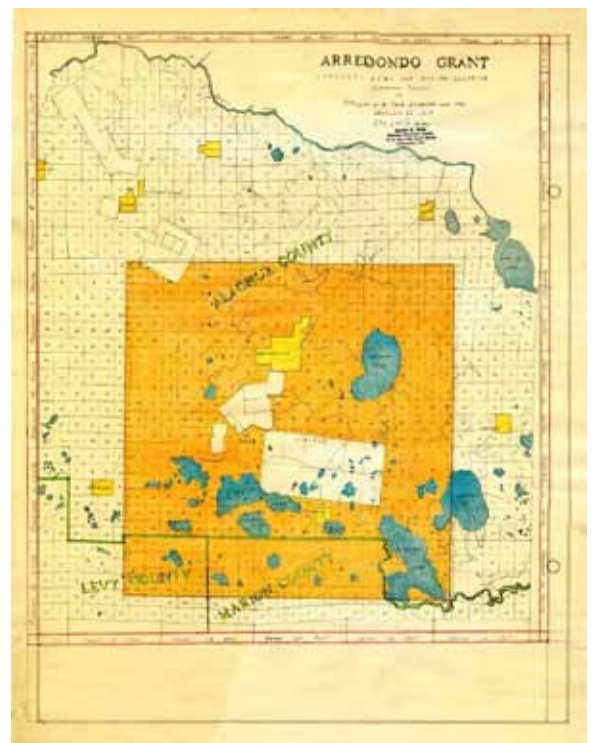


Figure 3

Map showing extent of the Arredondo Land Grant.

Archives in Tallahassee. Two examples of this marking are known in private hands with the example in **Figure 4** being the latest known example with postmaster Charles Waldren's Free Frank dated March 3, 1833. **Figure 5** documents the known example with a manuscript "Wantons Ter Flor" postmark (Type III) dated April 10, 1833 and currently in the William Johnson collection. There is also an example with "Wantons F" postmark (Type II) dated March 2, 1833, the only example in private hands.

The "WANTONS FLO" straightline postmark (Type V) is known only in red ink with two examples recorded, one with a bold FREE marking (Type a) currently in the William Johnson collection. The example in **Figure 1** at the beginning of this article has a Geo. M. Brooke free frank

Continued on page 8

but rated “unpaid 25” in Washington. It is dated February 9, 1828. The “WANTONS P.O. / E FLO” straightline postmark (Type VI) is known only in brown-black ink with three examples recorded dated April 11, 1832 and July 18, 1832 (**Figure 6**).

Micanopy stampless postal history encompasses both the territorial and statehood periods. Territorial postmarks are only known in manuscript with “Miconopy Flo” misspelled (Type I) used in two recorded examples dated May 16, 1834 and December 26, 1834 with Charles Waldren free frank (**Figure 7**). The spelling was corrected to “Micanopy Flo” (Type II) with two recorded examples dated April 6, 1835 and August 6, 1835. A third example is known only in the State Archives with “Micanopy E Fa” (Type III) dated October 15, 1842. Statehood manuscript postmarks are limited to two known examples dated April 9, 1850 and August 1, 1851. A circular datestamp (cds) postmarking device began to be used by 1852 (Type VI) and has known use from September 3, 1852 continuing into the Civil War. **Figure 8** shows a forwarded use with this postmark and an “unpaid 5” (Type B) rate corrected to paid with the additional “PAID 3” rate at St. Augustine. There is also a “PAID/3” in circle handstamped rate (Type A) shown in **Figure 9**.

During the Civil War when stamps were not available, stampless handstamped rates or manuscript usage was again necessary. There are two recorded examples of stampless usage from Micanopy during the Civil War. **Figure 10** shows the only known Micanopy postmaster provisional cover type MIC-FL-E01 (Scott 105XU1) with PAID/5 rate for under 500 miles. What is interesting

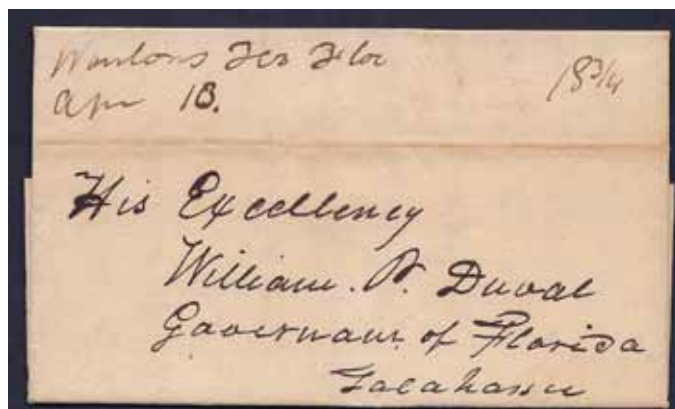


Figure 5
“Wantons Ter Flor April 10” (1833) postmark Type III).

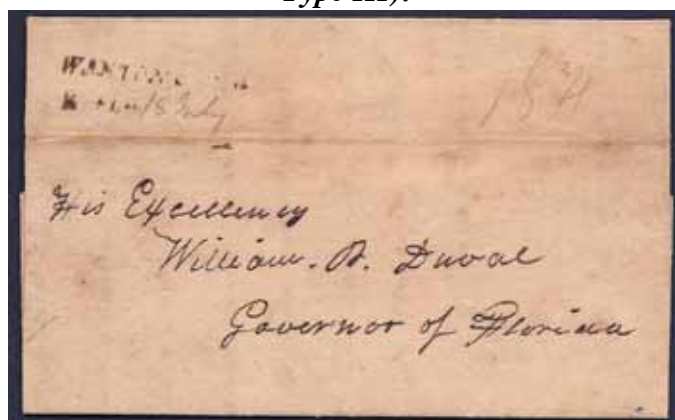


Figure 6
“WANTONS P.O. / E FLO” brown SL postmark (Type VI) with unpaid 18 ¾ rate.



Figure 7
“MICANOPY FLO Dec 26” (1834) manuscript postmark (Type I) with C. Waldren postmaster free frank.



Figure 8
“MICANOPY / FLA. SEPT 3” cds postmark with “Unpaid 5” (Type B) rate corrected to paid in St. Augustine.

about this cover is the address to Monimia P.O., which never existed as a post office. It was actually the name of the daughter of the plantation owner in Clay County, Georgia. The mail route at this time was from Micanopy

to Lake City, and by rail to Tallahassee and then to Bainbridge, Georgia for distribution to Clay County. This was under 500 miles in total distance.

Figure 11 shows a similar Micanopy postmaster provisional cover on an almost identical pink envelope which, like the above cover, was pre-sold before the actual use by the sender. This cover was postmarked April 12 (1862) and sent to Augusta, Georgia. The sender had made this into a mourning cover by outlining the edges in black and writing “post mortem” on the back flap. It was uprated an additional “PAID/5” (Type A) rate because the mail route at that time had changed. Prior to March 12, 1862 mail to Augusta, Georgia would have been routed via Jacksonville to Savannah and then to Augusta (under 500 miles). Following the Union occupation of Jacksonville, mail going north was sent to Tallahassee and then distributed to Savannah and on to Augusta (over 500 miles). The additional five-cent rate added to the provisional five-cent rate makes this cover one of only 14 Confederate “Conjunctive Use” covers. **Figure 12** is an 1828 “Wantons Flo” cover from Bill Johnson.

Footnotes

¹ See Internet site: www.micanopytown.com

² See Internet site: <https://floridamemory.com/items/show/35200>.

³ John S. Gallagher, *Florida Post Offices*. (Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1997), p. 6-7.

⁴ Deane R. Briggs, M.D., ed., *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861*. (North Miami: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1999), p. 189-190 and 294-295.

⁵ Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., and Jerry S. Palazolo, *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*. (Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012), p. 289.



Figure 11

“Micanopy / FLA. PAID/5” Confederate postmaster provisional (MIC-FL-E01a) rate with “Micanopy/FLO APR 12” (1862) postmark with additional “PAID/5” (Type A) over 500 mile rate on “Conjunctive Use” cover.



Figure 9

“Micanopy / FLA. MAR 12” (1854) cds postmark with “PAID/3” (Type A) rate.



Figure 10

“Micanopy, FLA. PAID/5” Confederate postmaster provisional (MIC-FL-E01) rate with “Micanopy/FLO APR 21” (1862) postmark to Clay County, Georgia.



Figure 12

“WANTONS FLO FEB 20” (1828) red cds postmark with Type A “FREE” rate.

Lake DeFuniak, Walton County postmaster postmark cover from 1884

By Todd A. Hirn

County and postmaster postmarks were primarily used in small, fourth class post offices during the 1870s and 1880s. Postmasters in these often tiny communities usually received less than \$50 annually in pay, and because they did little business, they were required by the U.S. Post Office Department to purchase their own postmarking devices. Many of these postmarks are very scarce.



Figure 1

“Lake De Funiak, Walton Co., W.B. Saunders, P.M. Florida” postmark.

Of the 54 recorded types of county and postmaster postmarks known to be used in Florida, only four types include both the county and postmaster names in the postmark. The cover shown here in Figure 1, from Lake De Funiak, is one of these. The other three town markings having both the county and postmaster names are Bridgeport in Putnam County, Sorrento in Orange County, and Yellow Bluff in Hillsborough County.



Figure 2

Detail of serrated postmark and fancy killer.

Lake De Funiak, a Walton County post office, was established on February 23, 1883 and discontinued on September 6, 1888 due to a name change to DeFuniak Springs. Formerly known as Funiak, the DeFuniak Springs post office remains open to the present day. The town was named after the president of the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad, Frederick DeFuniak, and is the county seat of Walton County. Lake De Funiak's first postmaster was Thomas D. Walden.

According to a recent census, there are only three reported examples of this Lake De Funiak postmark on cover. All were used during the three day period of March 26 to 28, 1883; the one shown here being the latest.

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Personal correspondence: Dr. Deane Briggs, January 4, 2015.

Website: <http://www.defuniaksprings.net/index.aspx?nid=974>. Accessed December 25, 2014.

Wikipedia: "DeFuniak Springs, Florida: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DeFuniak_Springs,_Florida. Accessed December 25, 2014.



Figure 3
*Location of Lake De Funiak as shown on an 1887
Bradley's County Map of Florida.*

Perfined Precancels

An undiscovered/uncovered niche in Florida Postal History

By Jerry Hejduk

Early in the 20th century, there were two physical philatelic operational considerations that changed the appearance of some U.S. postage stamps. The U.S. Post Office Department, in response to the growing volume of commercial mailings, authorized the use of devices by local post offices to “precancel” stamps before they were sold to the public, and similarly, for security reasons, the Post Office Department also approved commercial enterprises to “perforate” postage stamps with identification patterns, to prove ownership of newly purchased stamps.

Precancels and Perfins Revisited

Precancels are broadly defined as stamps that have been canceled before being affixed to mail matter. In the late 1800s, precancels consisted of pen lines, printed lines or bars, initials or certain designs. In the early 1900s, the Post Office Department decided for the sake of consistency, precancel designs would have the name of the city and state between two parallel lines. Saving time was the usual reason given for precanceling postage stamps. At the onset of the process, it was quickly understood that precanceling 100 stamps in a sheet with a device that usually put the name of the city and state on each stamp at once, would take less time than individually canceling stamps on 100 separate pieces of mail. Precancel Types (TY) refer to style of type and arrangement on a precancel which includes both font, and spacing requirements. There have been approximately 500 type styles used by local U.S. post offices.¹

The word “PERFIN” comes from “PERforated INSignia.” Perfins originated in Great Britain in the 1860s and were authorized for use on U.S. postage stamps on May 18, 1908. Perfins are stamps that have been perforated with designs, initials or numerals by private businesses and governmental agencies to discourage theft and misuse. Perfins have appeared on postal paper of more than 200 nations. In the United States alone, more than 6,400 perfin patterns are known to have been used. The number of patterns used around the world exceeds 50,000: 40,000 of which are between Great Britain and Germany.²

The Journey Ahead

Because the use of precancels does not involve a dated postmark, the exhibit on the following page provides the period of use (POU) for the perfin patterns found in the known Florida Perfined Precancels. There are a few single perfined precancels to be found in private collections. However, in my 40 plus years of collecting these “hybrid” postage stamps from Florida, I have yet to learn of any that are still affixed to their cover, thereby documenting their postal history. The purpose of this article is to encourage the reader/member to examine her/his early 20th century cover holdings to identify precanceled stamps. And then, take a closer look to learn if the stamp also has a perfin. If the presence of both are found, scans of such covers would be graciously received by e-mail at flprepers@comcast.net or via snail mail at Post Office Box 490450, Leesburg, FL 34749-0450.

Footnotes

¹ Randall, John M., ed. *Catalog of U.S. Perfined Precancels of the United States*. (El Cerrito, California: The Perfins Club, 2009).

² *Ibid.*

FLORIDA PERFINNED PRECANCELS

JACKSONVILLE



TY 205



A121.3A

POU
1912-23User
Armour Fertilizer Works

TY 205



G122.3

POU
1914User
Unknown

TY L-2E



I43.7-7

POU
1917-26User
International Harvester Company

TY 257



I43.7C-14

POU
1908-33User
International Harvester Company

TY L-2E



S195-13

POU
1912-33User
Standard Oil Company

TAMPA



TY 202



F54

POU
1912-23User
Florida Citrus exchange

Millview, Florida Fancy Postmark

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

Fancy postmarks and cancellations are highly collectible, especially from Florida. The example in *Figure 1* has both a fancy postmark with Maltese crosses as well as a fancy cancellation with star in circle. The postmark is unusual and unlike any other Florida postmarks of which I am aware. It is a double circle postmark with Maltese crosses placed where other fancy postmarks use fleurons.

The post office at Millview, Florida was established on Oc-



Figure 1

MILLVIEW / FLA. "SEP 5 1879" fancy postmark with "Maltese cross" and star in circle cancellation.



Figure 2

Drew's New Map of the State of Florida, published by Columbus Drew, Jacksonville, 1874. This map shows location of Millview at lower left.

Map courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

tober 22, 1872 in Escambia County with James W. Coombs as postmaster. It was discontinued on November 15, 1935 with mail handled at Pensacola.¹ Millview is located on Perdido Bay to the west of Pensacola and was originally a sawmill town supplying lumber which was shipped from Pensacola (*Figure 2*). Perdido Bay has a very narrow mouth leading into the Gulf of Mexico which occasionally closed up, leaving the bay a large fresh water lagoon covered with lily pads.² It was not considered navigable for shipping and did not have any commercial fishing industry of note. When the timber industry died after the turn of the century last century, Millview basically died as well. Only an occasional house, often a quarter mile apart, dotted the area. It was not until the 1940s that it recovered, being boosted by the World War II Bronson Field Naval Auxiliary Air Base (*Figure 3, next page*). A contemporary map is shown in *Figure 4, next page*.

Footnotes

¹ John S. Gallagher, *Florida Post Offices*. (Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1997), p. 56.

² Jim Lane, "A Brief History of Perdido Bay," Internet website: www.friendsofperdidobay.com.

President's Drivel -- More Questions Than Answers!

By Francis Ferguson

I hope this issue of the *Journal* finds everyone enjoying the flitting days of summer as fall looms on the horizon. I for one, living in Florida for a little over 80 percent of my life, look forward to the cooler temperatures of the fall and winter months – notice I did not say cold. The previous column produced one response – not a good percentage when considering the total membership of the FPHS.

The FPHS has been an APS affiliate for many years – this information should be displayed on everything we print. The single largest expense the society faces every year, is, of course, the production and distribution of the *Journal*. There are currently 22 individuals who have elected to access it via the website -- which means we are mailing roughly 80 journals, three times a year. If you have even minimal computer skills you can access the *Journal* on the website in a PDF format and even print out pages that are important to you. I would like to set a goal of at least half of our membership agreeing to no longer receive a mailed copy. Contact Deane or myself to have your distribution status changed. After trying it, if you don't like it – you can be swapped back to snail-mail delivery easily.

A thought that has been running around in my head is one of frequency and format. Let me explain. A major issue that is prevalent within the membership of the FPHS is a lack of belonging and cohesion. We hold two general meetings a year and you receive three *journals*. This is not much interaction for the course of 12 months. I would like to start the discussion of having the *Journal* come out quarterly AND reduce the format size back to the previous size (turn a standard 8.5/11 page horizontal and you get four “pages” back and front). This should also reduce our mailing costs a little. Additionally I would like to see discussion about the length of service of the officers of the board of directors. To perpetuate knowledge and consistency I would like to suggest that four year terms of service would better serve the society. If you have an opinion on this please give voice. Writers are of vital importance to the continuation of the *Journal*. If you have an idea and the material for a piece, let us know – I am sure we can figure out how to get the article written. The input of multiple folks only helps to make the subject matter diverse and more interesting to a wider audience.



Figure 3

Bronson Field Naval Auxiliary Air Base, now an abandoned site.

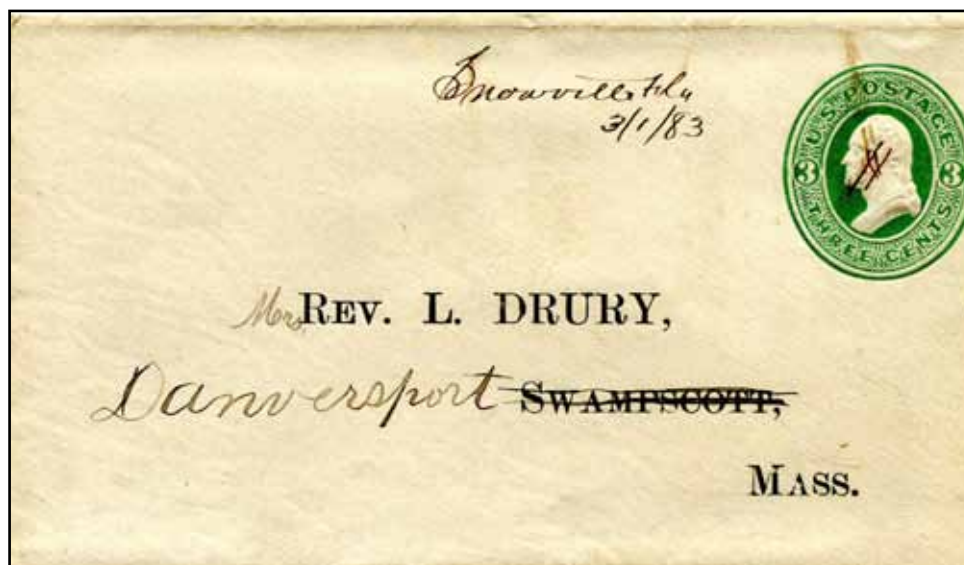


Figure 4

Contemporary map showing area of Millview.

Snowville, Florida 1883 DPO entire

By Todd A. Hirn



“Snowville Fla 3/1/83” manuscript postmark.

Snowville, a short-lived Orange County post office, was established on October 5, 1880 and discontinued on December 7, 1884 when the name was changed to Seminole Station. The name was again changed on January 10, 1887 to Altamonte Springs, an office which remains open to the present day. Snowville’s first postmaster was Daniel W. Holden.



Detail of postmark and pen stroke killer.



Detail of antiquarian map showing “Snow V(ille)” north of Orlando.

Circa 1885 "Oklahoma, Florida" DPO cover

By Todd A. Hirn

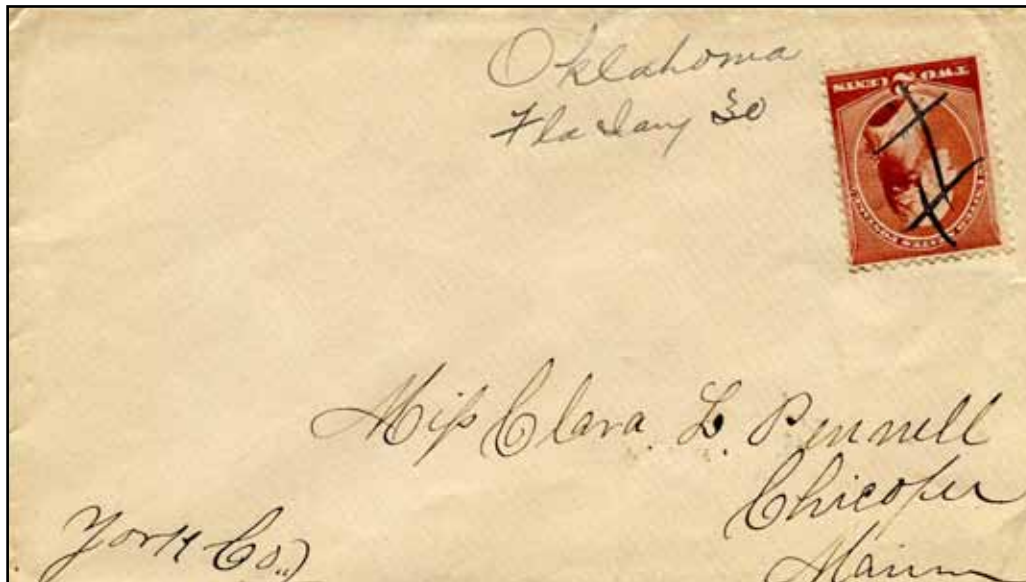


Figure 1
Manuscript "Oklahoma Fla Jan 30" postmark cover.

Established on June 8, 1882, the Duval County post office of Oklahoma was in operation for less than five years. The town's first postmaster was Frank M. Broward. The office was discontinued on April 2, 1887 and mails were sent to Jacksonville. Located on the south bank of the St. John's River, Oklahoma is now part of the city of Jacksonville. The name is misspelled as "Oklahama" in the Gallagher reference text.

Endnote

Gallagher, John S. *Florida Post Offices*. Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1997.



Figure 2 (above)
Detail of postmark with pen stroke killer.

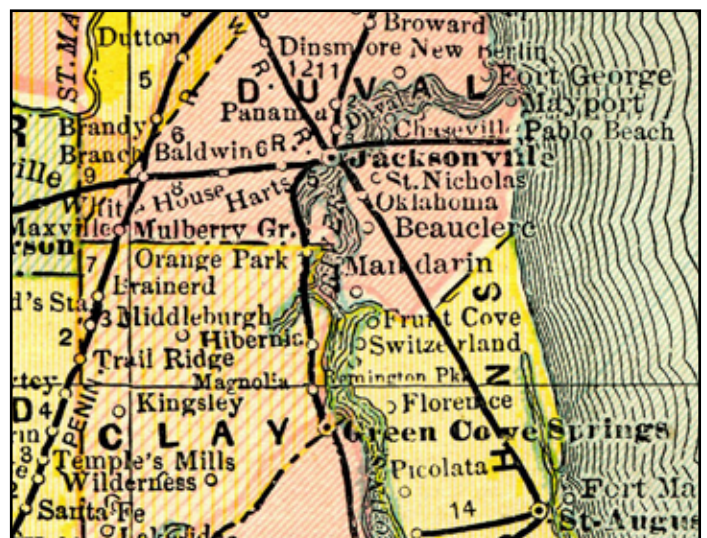


Figure 3 (right)
Oklahoma, as shown on an 1887 Bradley's County Map of Florida.

Matanzas, Florida has long history in St. Johns County

By Dan Maddalino

The tiny town of Matanzas, St. Johns County, Florida exists today only on mailed envelopes (*Figure 1*) and out of print maps of the past (*Figure 2*). The region was described by William Roberts during 1763 in his *An Account of the First Discovery, and Natural History of Florida*, and again by William H. Simmons during 1822 in his *Notices of East Florida*. Both authors reported that north of Pellicer Creek the ground is high and shows itself suitable for the planting of cotton and oranges and the harvesting of fine timber.



Figure 1

Postmark of Matanzas, Florida on cover to New York City.

In 1825, at age 12, Virgil DuPont (see note below) and his siblings were brought to Florida by his parents, Abraham and Jane (Pepper) DuPont. They settled near present day Ocala and began acquiring large sections of land. Old land grants, failed plantations, and poor farms were assembled to create a single ownership scattered over an area extending from the St. Johns River on the west to St. Augustine and the Matanzas River on the east, with Pellicer Creek to the south and Federal Point to the north. On this land Abraham built farms and houses for his family, a large plantation house on Pellicer Creek surrounded by support services (blacksmiths and wheelwrights) and, of course, slave quarters. He named his plantation house “Matanzas.”

The earliest map notation of Matanzas is on an 1861 map of Northeast Florida. It is an unnamed marker shown on the north side of Pellicer Creek and about five miles inland from the Matanzas River. The plantation’s wealth centered on cotton, timber, and turpentine. Using both the Kings Highway and the Matanzas River to ship their products north for sale to European markets, this plantation prospered. Matanzas and about half of the plantation were bequeathed to Virgil upon Abraham’s death on October 15, 1857. Federal Point and the remaining land went to his brother, Cornelius DuPont (1824 - 1877).

Not exempt from the coming conflict, the Civil War (1861 – 1865) was hard on the plantation and Virgil DuPont lost not only his slaves and much of the family possessions, but also his two eldest sons (William and Abraham) to the cause of the Confederacy. However, to this day descendants of Virgil DuPont have continually resided on portions of this land.

Following the Civil War, a small settlement grew at the location of the plantation house and keeping the name Matanzas it eventually earned its own post office. This post office was authorized December 15, 1868 and Virgil DuPont was appointed its first postmaster.

According to “Flagler County Families,” mail was brought from St. Augustine by boat up the Pellicer Creek three times a week. Virgil DuPont also personally moved the mail. Traveling the Old Kings Highway (portions of which are now U.S. 1), he would carry mail between St. Augustine and Daytona. The Matanzas Post Office was closed on September 29, 1870 with its mail diverted to St. Augustine. However, it was re-established about 12 years later on April 3, 1882 with Virgil once again appointed postmaster. Virgil DuPont died August 11, 1885 and is buried in a private family cemetery in Marineland, Flagler County (*Figure 3*). Alas, the Matanzas Post Office was permanently discontinued February 28, 1923 with its mail then diverted to Moultrie, St. Johns County. Matanzas quickly faded from the landscape and ceased to exist by 1928.

NOTE: Although born Virgil DuPont, he frequently used the spelling *Dupont* throughout his life.



Figure 2
Period map of “Northern Florida.”

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- Helbock, Richard, W. *A Checklist of Florida Post Offices, 1821 – 1995*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1995.
- Roberts, William. *An Account of the First Discovery, and Natural History of Florida*. A Bicentennial Floridiana facsimile series. A facsimile reproduction of the 1763 edition, with an introduction and index by Robert L. Gold. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1976.
- Simmons, William H. *Notices of East Florida*. A Bicentennial Floridiana facsimile series. A facsimile reproduction of the 1822 edition, with an introduction and index by George E. Buker. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1973.
- Internet website: www.flaglercountyfamilies.com/fam-dupont-abraham.
- Internet website: www.flaglercountyfamilies.com/fam-dupont-virgil
- Internet website: www.findagrave.com (Virgil: Memorial #40748932)
- Internet website: www.findagrave.com (Abraham: Memorial #40749102)
- Internet website: www.findagrave.com (Cornelius: Memorial #64923604)



Figure 3
*Grave marker for
Virgil DuPont at
Marineland, Flagler County.*

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