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Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State



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Follow the “Woodpecker Route” for a glimpse of “Old Florida”

There is something magical about extreme North Florida. It is almost a region that time forgot, a microcosm of the past, the way life used to be in the South. It's about as far from Disney World and the rush of traffic and noise as one can get. Rolling hills, fall foliage, few people, miles and miles of open road and no congestion are all hallmarks of this area. But there is more here than perhaps meets the eye on initial inspection. This is indeed “Old Florida,” a remote area along the Florida-Georgia border where you can drive for 10 miles and not see another vehicle and the road is as straight as an arrow. But it is also an area where, it can be argued, the tourism history of Florida began. And as gentle breezes sway the hanging moss on giant



This long abandoned service station is found on U.S. 441 near the Florida-Georgia border. It likely was in business in the days of the Woodpecker Route.



This was the logo used by “The Woodpecker Trail,” the second name for the road. Has anyone seen this logo on cover?

live oak trees and magnolias spread an intoxicating perfume in the air, one can almost imagine life as it used to be back in those days of old.

It wouldn't be much of a stretch to stand here today on U.S. 441 north of Lake City and imagine you are back in the days of the Model T when only the occasional traveler would chug their way south, looking for the land of milk and honey that Florida was promoted to be in the earlier days of the 20th Century. This, you see, was the original “Woodpecker Route” that brought countless people over the years to the Sunshine State. It was probably the earliest “major highway” (although that's a misnomer as it's only a narrow two-lane road even today) from the Northeast, long before the hustle and bustle of Interstate 95 and other roads.

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Journal, and much, much more!*

In fact, the Woodpecker Route may be one of the oldest tourist routes in the United States. It began just after World War I when Americans were flexing their muscles -- automobiles and the desire to travel and explore were becoming more important. In 1922, the route was listed in the Automobile Legal Association's *Automobile Green Book*. The description of the route at that time was from Augusta, Georgia to Lake City and Jacksonville, Florida. Much of the general line of travel is still followed today. Before the days of numbered highways, and in its original designation, the Woodpecker Route carried travelers from South Carolina into Florida. The road began in Greenville, South Carolina and wandered through Georgia until it ended at Lake City, Florida, a city that still calls itself "The Gateway to Florida." The route passed through Greenwood and Trenton in South Carolina, and through Augusta, Waynesboro, Metter, Reidsville, Alma, Waycross, and Homerville in Georgia. A 1923 Georgia map showed that the Woodpecker Route was one of 14 auto trails in the state.

No one knows how many tourists made it to Florida by following the early Woodpecker Route. There is no question that motels, restaurants and gas stations sprang up along the route. Even today, remnants of those facilities can be found,



An old gas pump rusts in the hot Florida sun on U.S. 441. The pump indicates the price of gas was 63 cents when last used!

long since abandoned and rusting and rotting in the hot Florida sun on what is now U.S. 441. Over

time, new, faster routes sprang up, primarily U.S. 1 and U.S. 301, the latter serving as one of the primary routes between Florida and points north until the completion of Interstate 95. There are numerous places through the Carolinas in particular where even today a driver can see old abandoned gas stations on U.S. 301 as it parallels the interstate.

In 1947, a group of leaders from several communities met at Magnolia Springs near Millen, Georgia to discuss the revival of the original tourist route, this time under the name of the Woodpecker Trail Association. The Association secured permission to use Walter Lantz's cartoon caricature



This abandoned structure along U.S. 441 may have been a motel in the days of the "Woodpecker Route."



Straight as an arrow and not a vehicle in sight for miles; this is U.S. 441 today in Columbia County near the Georgia state line.

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“Woody Woodpecker” for the trail’s mascot. Signs with “Woody” on them were hammered into pine trees along the highway from Charlotte, North Carolina to St. Petersburg, Florida, some 620 miles. The Woodpecker Trail was promoted to folks in the Northeast as the fastest way to the Gulf Coast. Florida and South Carolina changed their state highway numbers to match the Georgia State Route 121; thus motorists could travel through three states following the same state highway number.



Pretty much lost to history, but recalled by this monument at the Florida-Georgia state line is the fact U.S. 441 was designated the “Cone Highway” in 1938 in honor of Florida’s 27th governor, Frederick Preston Cone.

But in creating the new route, the section of what is now U.S. 441 that includes Fargo, Georgia and Lake City, Florida (a 38 mile stretch of scarcely populated roadway with more opossums and armadillos than people) lost the designation “Woodpecker Route.” In South Carolina the new trail followed state highway 121 through Ft. Mill, Rock Hill, Chester, Whitmire, Newberry, Saluda, Johnston, Belvedere and North Augusta. In Georgia it became Georgia 121 and went through Augusta, Waynesboro, Millen, Metter, Cobbtown, Collins, Reidsville, Surrency, Bristol, Blackshear, Hoboken, Race Pond, Folkston and St. George. In Florida, it followed Florida 121 through Macclenny, Lake Butler, Worthing-

ton, La Crosse, Gainesville, Wil-
liston, Lebanon
Station, Crystal
River, Tarpon
Springs, Clearwa-
ter and St Peters-

burg. The nearest approach to Lake City for the new “trail” was about 50 miles to the east.



Was this gateway put in place during the time when the Woodpecker Route was popular? It marks a private road through the piney woods off U.S. 441.



A newer logo used for the “Woodpecker Trail” when Route 121 was so designated.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Interstate Highway System began to be completed and the travelers found a fondness for the fast lane, 24 hour restaurants, gas stations, motels and no traffic lights. This again reduced the number of tourists on the Trail and its use, like that of U.S. 301, faded as a tourist route.

By the mid 1990s, many of the traveling public

had grown weary of the fast lane and again desired the much more scenic and relaxed two lane highways of old. Visitors to welcome centers would occasionally ask whatever happened to the Woodpecker Trail they remembered traveling as a child. Gradually interest grew to again revive the trail. Representatives of 10 counties in southeast Georgia met, felt the timing was right and began putting together a plan to accomplish their goal. The group became incorporated with a representative from each of the counties as well as many local and state agencies. An effort to again use Woody Woodpecker as the trail logo was unsuccessful, so the newly established board began looking at the logo from the 1920s and began making modifications, such as color, a tree lined highway and a state highway sign. After several drafts, a great colorful travel oriented sign was created (shown on previous page).

In 2004, the Georgia Senate and House of Representatives passed SR 843 designating State Road 121 as “The Woodpecker Trail Highway” from the Savannah River to the Florida state line. This legislation was signed by Governor Sonny Perdue on May 17, 2004. On September 19, 2005, Governor Perdue and others officially dedicate the Woodpecker Trail Highway in Augusta. The newly designed logo was imprinted onto highway signs and erected along the trail guiding the traveling public through the great communities, scenic farms, state parks, wonderful downtowns and past historic homes that are located along the trail. Efforts continue to present to bring Florida and South Carolina back into this newly revitalized Woodpecker Trail. But still the days of old are remembered along U.S. 441 north of Lake City, days when things were a lot different, indeed a region that time has now forgotten.



The Woodpecker Route is remembered by this road marker on Georgia's Sawgrass Parkway, connecting Fargo and Valdosta, just north of the Florida state line.



The stories this old chair could tell, still sitting on the porch of a long abandoned service station on the Woodpecker Route.



Still straight as an arrow, the old Woodpecker Route enters Georgia's Echols County a few miles south of Fargo.

It would be fun to know about the post offices along the old Woodpecker Route. Certainly there were towns, as we have mentioned, and probably countless numbers of visitors posted letters and postcards “back home” along the route. Could the old gas station shown on the cover have served as a post office? Keep an eye out for postal history mentioning the original Woodpecker Route, and let your editor know if you find any!

Article and photos by Dr. Everett L. Parker

Miami General Delivery Mail: Philatelically Motivated Misuse?

By Steve Swain

Section D930 of the *U.S. Domestic Mail Manual* states that General Delivery is intended primarily as a temporary means of delivery. It is intended for transients and customers not permanently located; for customers who want post office box service when boxes are unavailable; and for customers whose eligibility for carrier delivery is restricted by *Postal Operations Manual* 653. In other words, under the General Delivery guidelines, the post office will hold mail for someone for future pick-up when it has been addressed to that person in care of the post office, rather than to the person at a specific street address. In essence, the post office provides special services for unusual situations.



Figure 1
Two covers from Aklavik, Northwest Territories, Canada to Miami with “c/o General Delivery, MIAMI, Fla., U.S.A.” address.

When recently reviewing a dealer’s offerings of Florida related items, I noticed several air mail covers mailed from Aklavik, Canada to Miami, Florida. (Aklavik -- translated from the native Inuvialuktun language as “barren ground grizzly place” -- is a hamlet located in the Inuvik region of the Northwest Territories of Canada.) Each cover was addressed to an individual with “c/o General Delivery, MIAMI, Fla., U.S.A.” as seen with the examples in Figure 1. The dealer’s primary promotion of these covers was a Commercial Airways, Ltd. airmail semi-official stamp (CL48) affixed to the back of the cover, as the reverse of the cover to Mr. Brooks shows in Figure 2.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, carrying the mail into the Canadian wilderness was always a difficult job and expensive. In the remote areas of Canada, bush planes began replacing sled dog teams in the 1920s, but the post office was not always quick to respond to the increased cost of aircraft on a particular route. This led to the official recognition of stamps issued by individual air carriers who held mail contracts. The stamps were purchased by the person sending a letter as a way of paying the extra costs. One such contracted air carrier formed in 1928 was Commercial Airways, Ltd., based in Edmonton.

At first glance, the covers were attractive and had an intriguing collecting appeal given the semi-official stamp and the reason for its use. But, again, note in Figure 2 the “MIAMI, FLA.” receiving datestamp and the “Received General Delivery” cancel of the Commercial Airways semi-official stamp confirming this mailing was indeed processed in accordance with the General Delivery guidelines. But why was General Delivery used as opposed to a specific street address? The answer lies in the commonality of the characteristics of the several covers I examined. And these characteristics are not coincidental, but rather attest to the philatelically motivated reason for the items that questions whether there was a misuse of the General Delivery provisions.



Figure 2

Reverse of a Miami General Delivery cover and a close-up of a Commercial Airways Ltd. semi-postal stamp.

The envelopes are exactly the same, with the front of each printed with red and blue images of a Canadian maple leaf, fish, beaver, pine tree, a palm tree, etc., and the “VIA AIR MAIL – PAR AVION” etiquette. For each cover, the addressee’s information was neatly typewritten -- not handwritten -- in the lower right corner of the cover. The return addresses on the reverse of the covers were also neatly typewritten in the upper center. Most importantly, the front of each cover displays the same “From Pine to Palm” handstamp as seen in Figure 3.

The handstamp certainly confirms the mailings from Aklavik, Canada to Miami, Florida were not for a general correspondence purpose, but instead to commemorate or celebrate “From Pine to Palm.” The Jefferson Highway Association (logo in Figure 3), named after Thomas Jefferson (the president responsible for the Louisiana Purchase), was formed in 1915 to build a highway roughly traveling through the states forming the eastern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase. The “From Pine to Palm” slogan was a nickname for the Jefferson Highway given the types of trees likely found at either end: New Orleans was at the “palm” end and Winnipeg, Canada, was at the other.

Thus the pine and palm trees images on the Miami General Delivery covers. However, the use of “From Pine to Palm” on the covers is inconsistent with the Jefferson Highway route since it ended in New Orleans, not Miami, and the name was associated with highway travel, not air travel. Philatelically inspired, again, appears to be the explanation for the appropriation of the slogan for the covers’ handstamp.

Given all of this, a solidly possible scenario and explanation for the mailings is the covers were created by a local stamp club (either in Miami or Canada) for its members and mailed from Canada with the appropriate standard air mail postage and semi-official stamp. Once the mailings were retrieved from the General Delivery facility in Miami, the covers were sent to the club members in a new mailing. This scenario is supported by the return addresses on the reverse of the covers showing the locations of Fenton, Michigan, Sanford, Florida, and

Continued on page 8

Wembley, Alberta, Canada. Presumably, these were legitimate residences for the individuals to whom the mailings were addressed; *i.e.*, they didn't live in Florida and had no intention of doing so.

A curious element of this story -- and my explanation for the mailings -- is the service restrictions section of the General Delivery guidelines warns that a postmaster may refuse or restrict general delivery to a customer who is unable to present suitable identification. How then were the covers retrieved from the Miami General Delivery facility? Each individual to whom the mailings were addressed certainly did not visit the Miami facility to claim their cover. We may never have an acceptable answer to that piece of the puzzle.

Irrespective of how the covers were eventually returned to whom they were intended, they were most assuredly philatelically motivated as, admittedly, are numerous items that most cover collectors possess. My own collection would have far fewer items if it were not for the philatelically inspired covers I gladly include in my holdings. The postal service never really challenges the motivation for such mailings and in many cases supports the purpose, such as with first day covers.

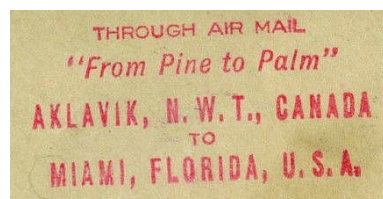


Figure 3
“From Pine to Palm” cachet handstamp and the Jefferson Highway Association logo.

Aside from such items, an intriguing aspect of the Canada-Miami covers is the use of the General Delivery provisions that were intended to support unusual situations to ensure delivery of standard correspondence to the mailing public. Granted, the provision's language of *“General Delivery is intended primarily as a temporary means of delivery for transients and customers not permanently located”* (italics are mine) could apply to the Canada-Miami mailings. But I think we would agree that such language did not anticipate philatelically motivated mailings.

In the final analysis, as a philatelist and collector of postal history, I believe it is too harsh of a judgment to hold that the individuals associated with the Canada-Miami covers engaged in a purposeful misuse of the General Delivery provisions. Instead, they put into motion an informed, clever strategy to acquire some unique and desirable pieces for their collection.

It's highly unlikely you'll immediately recognize this location unless you are a resident or frequent visitor to this Central Florida city. It's Lake Estelle in Orlando, and A. Stephen Patrick found some interesting memorabilia of what once was at this very location while visiting a stamp show in Minneapolis. To learn more, turn to page 18 in this issue of the journal.



United States Colored Troops saw action in the Civil War

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

The story of the 35th U.S. Colored Troops is interesting and detailed in many books and articles on the Civil War. As such, I will relate some of the more interesting aspects in this article. During the Civil War, the Union began to organize free blacks and ex-slaves into regiments of "colored troops." The First North Carolina Colored Volunteers was organized in New Berne, North Carolina during the summer of 1863, and initially participated in siege operations against Charleston. Most of their duties dealt with basic labor and as garrison troops.¹ During the first North Carolina occupation duty in Charleston, anti-black, racist attacks were made by Northern Union forces. One such racial melee involved the 127th New York and the 165th New York which was violent enough that General Gilmore had the 165th confined to Ft. Wagner and threatened to take their colors away. Even so, blacks were continually victimized by both ex-Southern Rebels and Union forces.



Figure 1

ST. AUGUSTINE / FLA OCT 30 '64 postmark with Soldier's DUE/6 rate on cover docketed by "Woodbury C. Smith, 1st Lieut 35 USC Troops."

The commander of the regiment was Colonel James C. Beecher, a half-brother of the author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Colonel Beecher's wife accompanied the troops and taught many of the men to read and write while they were stationed in Beaufort, S.C. and Jacksonville. She wrote: "My mornings were spent in teaching the men of our regiment to read and write, and it became my pleasing duty and habit, wherever our moving tents were pitched, there to set up our school ... and the result was that when the men came to be mustered out each one of them could proudly sign his name to the pay-roll in a good legible hand. When enlisted, all but two or three of them were obliged to put a mark to their names ... while their eagerness to learn and the difficulty that many found in learning were touching. One bright mulatto man particularly worked at his letters for two years, and then could only write his own name; while others learned at once. Whenever they had a spare moment, out would come a spelling book or a primer or Testament, and you would often see a group of heads around one book."²

The 1st North Carolina Colored Volunteers was officially re-designated as the 35th U.S.C.T. on February 8, 1864, before the Battle of Olustee. The earliest known report from this unit being identified as the 35th U.S.C.T. is not dated until well after the battle in a letter from Col. James C. Beecher on May 10, 1864 (**Figure 2**). Despite this, most Civil War authors and websites identify the unit from the 1863 onset as the 35th U.S.C.T. and not the 1st N.C. Colored Volunteers.

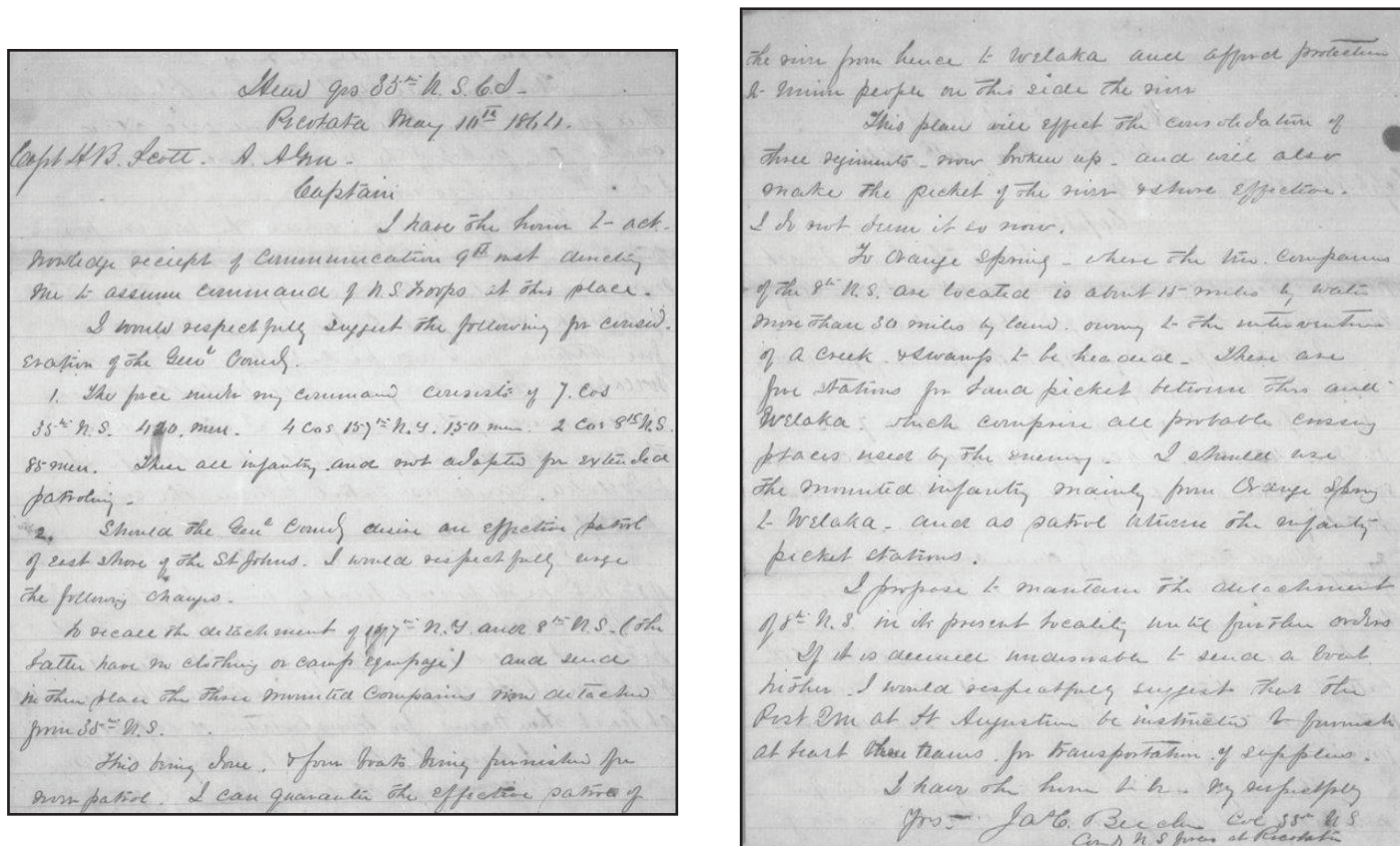


Figure 2

Letter datelined "Pilotka, May 10th 1864" noting the 35th U.S.C.T. designation.

The 35th moved to Jacksonville, Florida during February 13-16, 1864, in preparation for the eventual Battle of Olustee on February 20, 1864. Prior to this time they had not participated in any major battle and were considered a "green unit." At Olustee, the 35th U.S.C.T. was commanded by its second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel William Nikolaus Reed, as Colonel Beecher was on leave in the north. The history of Lieut. Col. Reed is quite interesting as he was a mulatto, born in St. Croix to a father who was Danish from Schleswig-Holstein and a mother who had been a black slave. He was sent to a military academy in Schleswig-Holstein (then Germany) and became a military officer rising to rank of 1st. Lieutenant. He immigrated to the United States in 1853, settling in New York. At this time blacks and mulattos were not appointed as officers in the U.S. Army except as chaplains or medical doctors. Col. Reed became the highest ranking black or mulatto officer to serve in the U.S. Army during the Civil War as a result of being appointed to the rank by Brigadier General Edward Wild, an ardent abolitionist. Wild commanded a brigade in the Department of the South and recognized Reed's prior Prussian military experience and ignored his ancestry.³

At the Battle of Olustee on February 20, 1864, the 35th U.S.C.T. and the 54th Massachusetts Infantry (also colored troops) covered for the retreating 8th U.S.C.T. federal army in the late afternoon. Being poorly trained, they suffered heavy losses with 230 men dead or badly wounded. Many books, including *A Brave Black Regiment* have been written about the atrocities committed by the Confederate troops on the wounded blacks dur-

R | 35 | U.S.C.T.
William N. Reed
1st Lt., Co. 2, 35th Reg't U.S. Col'd Infantry.
 Age *38* years.
 Appears on an
Individual Muster-in Roll
 of the organization named above. Roll dated
Newbern, NC July 11, 1863.
 Muster-in to date *July 11, 1863.*
 Joined for duty and enrolled:
 When *July 10*, 186*3.*
 Where *Newbern, N.C.*
 Period *3* years.
 Remarks: *This Officer was a*
Commissioned 1st Lt.
by Brig. Genl. E. A. Wild,
authorized by the Sec'y of
War.
 Book mark:
Amos
 (536) Copyright

Figure 3
Page from 35th U.S.C.T. Record
Book listing William N. Reed's
commission.

ing the retreat.⁴ Lieut. Col. Reed was himself gravely wounded trying to save the life of Adj. Manning. He was under heavy fire and died of his wounds on February 27, 1864, at the military hospital in Beaufort, South Carolina.⁵

For most of the remainder of the war, the 35th U.S.C.T. was on duty in or around Jacksonville, Florida. It was during this period that the cover in **Figure 1** was mailed while on duty near St. Augustine. After the war they returned to Charleston, S.C. where they were mustered out on June 1, 1866.⁶

I am unable to find any specific information about the writer of the cover in Figure 1, Woodbury C. Smith. The fact that he was a 1st Lieutenant would imply that he was a white officer and not a black enlisted man. The enclosure must have been a couple of pages as the cover is double rated. Trish Kaufmann did find a record of Woodbury in the 35th U.S.C.T. as shown in Figure 3.⁷

This cover is the only U.S.C.T. endorsed Civil War cover from Florida that I have encountered. It is likely that most of the correspondence from the colored troops would have been from the limited number of non-black officers as they would

have been the most literate. I do have an 1866 U.S.C.T. endorsed post-war cover from Cedar Key, Florida. Anyone with additional "colored troop" endorsed Florida covers is encouraged to notify the author.

FOOTNOTES

¹ http://battleofolustee.org/35th_usct.html.

² McPherson, James M. *The Negro's Civil War*. New York: Random House USA, Inc., 2003.

³ http://battleofolustee.org/pics/william_n_reed_35th_usct.htm.

⁴ Luis R. Emilio. *A Brave Black Regiment*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 1995.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olustee_Union_order_of_battle.

⁶ <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/-ncusct/35thregt.htm>.

⁷ Fold3_Page 1 Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops Infantry Organization 31st.jpg.

8 | 35 | usct
** Woodbury C. Smith*
1st Lt., Co. 2, 35th Reg't U.S.C.T.
Capt " 85
 Case Number:
2579013
9 Cards withdrawn from 10th Street and sent
 to Regimental Records Division.
 Date: *Dec 15*, 190*6.*
 Stamp numbers:
Ret. 40799271
Ant Ret 42973992
" 3023
" 4816
" 829
" 845
" 982
" 986
" 42642960
** See 34 Mass*
Hunting
 (578) Searcher.

Figure 4
Military Case Number for
Woodbury C. Smith.

Mayport, Florida: Missile Mail Point of Landing

By Steve Swain

“Before man reaches the moon, mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to Britain, to India or Australia by guided missiles. We stand on the threshold of rocket mail.”

- Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield, June 8, 1959¹

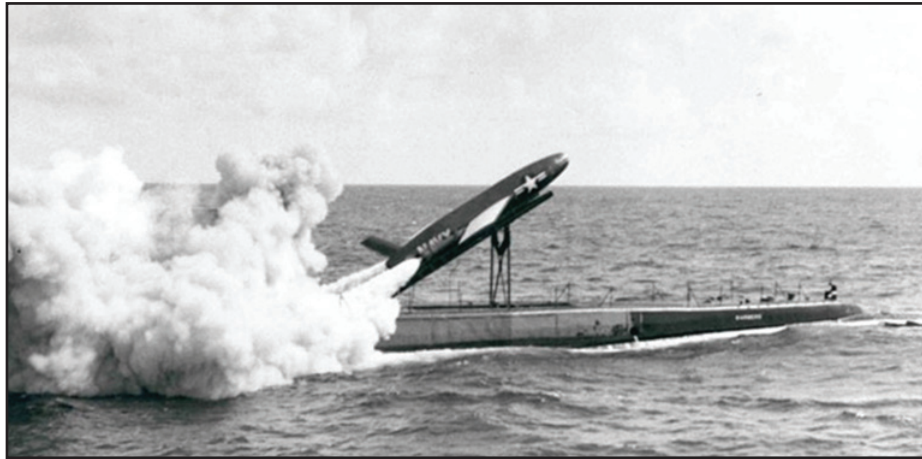


Figure 1

The Regulus I Cruise Missile Being Launched from the USS Barbero.²

A turbojet-powered Regulus cruise missile carrying a payload of 3,000 pieces of mail inserted into its nuclear warhead compartment was launched from the submarine USS *Barbero* off the Atlantic Coast of North Florida shortly before noon on June 8, 1959 (*Figure 1*). The rocket's destination was the Naval Auxiliary Station in Mayport, Florida, seven miles east of Jacksonville at the mouth of the St. Johns River.

Sounding more like a Buck Rogers pulp science fiction adventure than a legitimate postal delivery process, this was the first, and only, experiment with “Missile Mail” conducted by the U.S. Post Office Department (later the U.S. Postal Service). Before the USS *Barbero* left port at Norfolk, Virginia, a branch post office had been established on the submarine. There, 3,000 commemorative covers from U.S. Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield were processed, being addressed to the President of the United States (Dwight D.

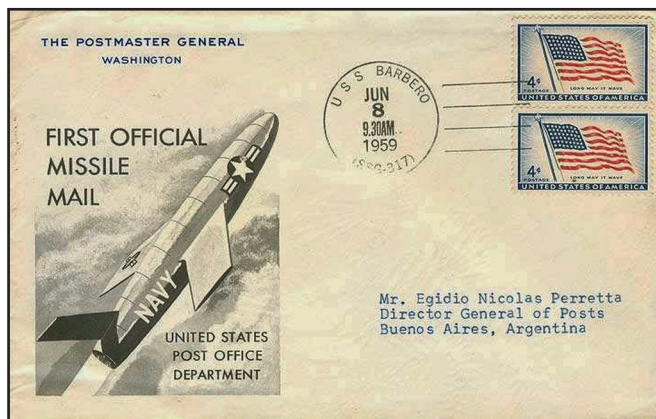


Figure 2

Front and back of “First Official Missile Mail” to Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Eisenhower), various U.S. government officials, state governors, the Postmasters General of all members of the Universal Postal Union, and other notable postal related individuals. (The letter addressed to the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and former Postmaster General James Farley remain in the National Postal Museum's collections, as do the two blue and red metal containers designed to carry letters in the missile's warhead.)

In his enclosed letter, Postmaster Summerfield alerted his recipients that his correspondence "marks an historic milestone in the use of guided missiles for communications between the peoples of earth. The great progress being made in guided missilery will be utilized in every practical way in the delivery of the United States mail." The covers were franked with the four-cent Independence U.S. flag issue (Scott #1132), either a single for the current domestic rate or two for the eight-cent international rate (*Figure 2*). Interestingly, the covers were never characterized as airmail items nor were airmail stamps -- with the then seven-cent denomination -- chosen for the covers even though their delivery was certainly by air.

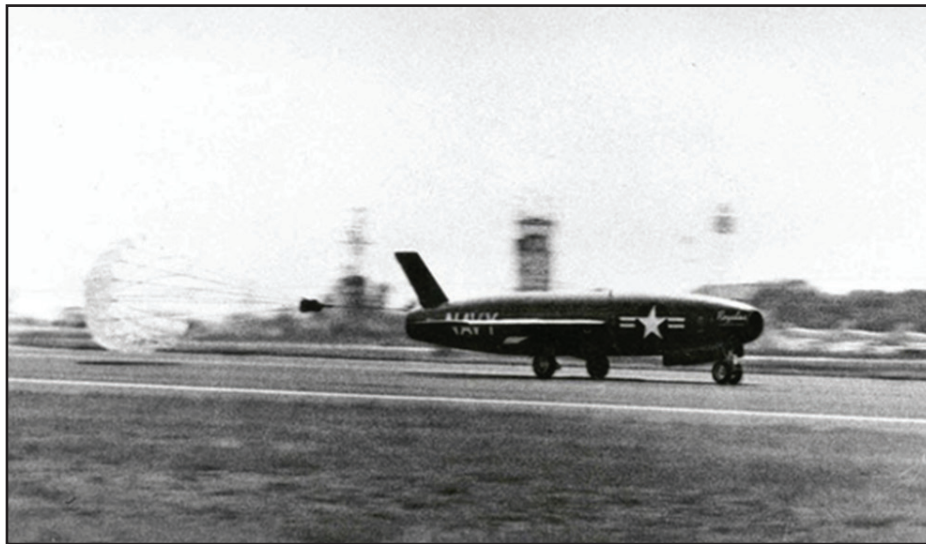


Figure 3
The Regulus I Cruise Missile Landing at Mayport Naval Auxiliary Station.³

All covers received a "USS Barbero Jun 8 9.30am 1959" CDS before the submarine put to sea. The cover's cachet showing a Regulus guided missile in flight was designed by artist Frank J. Crawford, Jr. using the personal stationery of the Postmaster General.

Landing at Mayport 10 miles away and 22 minutes after launch, the missile was greeted by Postmaster Summerfield who retrieved the mail from the warhead's compartment (*Figure 3*). The 3,000 covers were forwarded to the Jacksonville, Florida post office for sorting and routing. Postmaster Summerfield had been working for seven years to modernize the post office and improve its reputation. Encouraging the adoption of new technology and embarking on a significant public relations campaign were the two foundations of Summerfield's efforts.

During his tenure, he championed the adoption of a new red, white, and blue color scheme for all post office boxes, delivery vans, and equipment and narrated a TV series called *The Mail Story* on the ABC network. In 1956, Summerfield initiated discussions focused on the potential electronic, facsimile transmission of mail content. Called "speed mail," Summerfield claimed such a process "would permit messages to cross the continent almost instantaneously." (Sounds like email!) Some of Summerfield's equipment designs were adopted, including the *Hamper-Dumper* internal mail sorting/transport system and the *Mail-Flo Letter Processing System*, which used conveyors to speed mail processing. But perhaps his most daring initiative was

proposing the delivery of mail by rocket. Summerfield diligently sought and gained the approval and support from President Eisenhower for such a launch.

The 1959 event was a huge media success, but the excitement surrounding missile mail quickly faded in the public arena. More importantly, there was little patience from the military brass for more of Summerfield's lofty rhetoric about rocket mail technology. The June 8 event was not to be repeated. However, the Postmaster General was pleased with what had occurred since his ultimate objective was not only to improve the efficiency of the U.S. Post Office Department, but also to bolster its image among the public, which the June 8 event indeed accomplished. We may never know for sure, but the USS *Barbero* missile mail launch may well have been merely a cleverly orchestrated publicity stunt.

Figure 4
Missile mail proof cover made available to the press.



The relatively few covers created for the June 8, 1959 launch and landing would seem to significantly limit a missile mail collection associated with the event. But other items do exist that offer a wider, intriguing scope for a collection and postal history research. One such item is a proof envelope made available to members of the press (**Figure 4**). The CDS on these covers is the official USS *Barbero* marking, but without a date or time. And since these covers were never intended to be put into the mail stream, they do not have an address or a Jacksonville receipt backstamp on the reverse. It is believed that approximately 300 of these covers were produced.



Figure 5
Mayport, Florida "Point of Landing" souvenir cover.

More easily available and affordable than the official launch day covers, is a “Point of Landing” souvenir cover created for the Missile Mail Souvenir Project of the U.S. Naval Station at Mayport (**Figure 5**). Three thousand of these commemorative covers were issued on July 8, 1959, one month after the missile mail launch and landing. Inserted into each cover was a folded sheet providing a history of the Mayport station and its “Fighting Ladies” vessels. Sometimes, the four-cent U.S. flag issue (Scott #1132) franked the souvenir item, as on the official June 8 covers. But numerous issues were used with the July 8 mailing, such as the four-cent Lincoln Birth Sesquicentennial commemorative stamp (Scott #1116) shown in **Figure 5**.

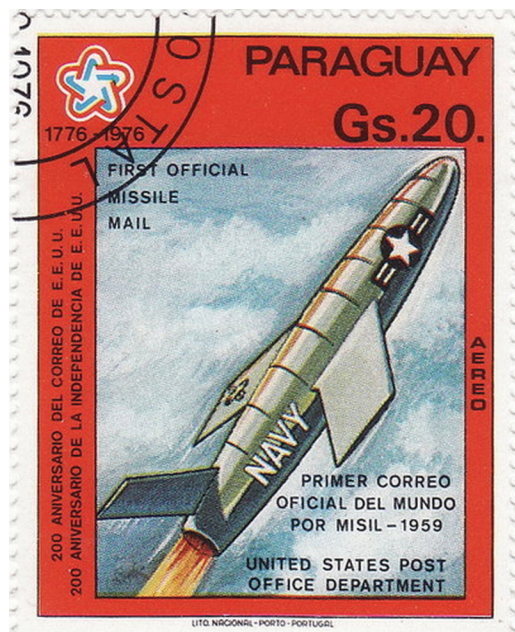


Figure 6
The Regulus missile on Paraguay's American Bicentenary issue.

Included in its 1976 Bicentenary of the American Post series, Paraguay issued the stamp shown in **Figure 6** (Michel PY 2821) depicting the Navy's Regulus guided cruise missile used in the June 1959 missile mail event. Finding this stamp postally used on cover could be challenging as many of the stamps issued by Paraguay in this era were CTOs.

A final collectible item associated with the 1959 missile mail event was created by graphic artist Jim Roth, editor of *The Astrophile* (publication of the Space Topic Study Unit). **Figure 7** shows Roth's 50th anniversary cover (June 8, 2009) commemorating the first official missile mail launched from the USS *Barbero*.

The June 1959 missile mail event was not the first attempt to transport mail by rocket, and it certainly wasn't the last. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of surplus missiles culled from the Soviet nuclear arsenal have been used to deliver mail around Russia, including a few experimental launches from nuclear subs. But in the final analysis, the less than attractive financial component of missile mail was readily apparent. Transport of mail by airplane was, and still is, considerably more cost efficient than delivery by rockets, thereby limiting, if not entirely eliminating, missile mail as a viable option. Interestingly, with the advent of digital technology, even using airplanes for the physical transport of mail is increasingly less needed.

To watch a video of the 1959 Regulus missile mail launch, visit Popular Mechanics' website at <http://www.popularmechanics.com/flight/a21601/usps-first-official-missile-mail-1959/>.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Website: <https://howwegettonext.com/rocket-mail-eb03900b19d3#.6kq2uyjk1>.

² Website: <http://postalmuseum.si.edu/collections/object-spotlight/regulus-mail.html>.

³ Website: <http://postalmuseum.si.edu/collections/object-spotlight/regulus-mail.html>.



Figure 7
50th Anniversary of the first official Missile Mail.

Wauchula, Florida

106 years ago

By Francis Ferguson

FPHS President

Some years ago, A. Stephen Patrick, a fellow member of the Florida Postal History Society and the Central Florida Stamp Club, gifted me with a portion of the Durrance family correspondence. The Durrance family name can be found in listings of early pioneers of this area of Florida. The batch of letters all come from small south-central Florida towns and/or are delivered to them. The most common town names in the correspondence are Bowling Green, Wauchula, Ona, Punta Gorda, Arcadia, Sebring and Zolfo Springs. All of the letters fall into the time period from about 1900 to roughly 1918.



Figure 1
August 15, 1910 cover to Bowling Green, Florida with an interesting letter inside.

This particular piece (**Figure 1**) is from August 15, 1910 and was mailed to Miss Lillie Durrance at a Bowling Green address from Willie O. Bithias (?) located in Wauchula. To add perspective, the population of Wauchula in 1910 was reported by the census at 1,099 people, with 5,001 reported in 2010. The genesis of Wauchula is rather murky but seems to have begun developing in the middle 1870s. “In 1874 Eli English, a veteran of the Third Seminole War, Confederate soldier, and merchant, moved from Fort Meade to near Fort Hartsuff, which was renamed English after him. The arrival of the Florida Southern Railway in 1886 resulted in a boom to Bowling Green (formerly Utica) and English, retitled Wauchula from the Mikasuki word meaning ‘call of the sandhill crane.’”¹

Contrast the statics of Bowling Green: in the census of 1910, the population was 422. In the census of 2010, the population was 2,930. This makes Wauchula look like a big city. The area called Bowling Green seems to have coalesced around a general store and sawmill which started operation in 1886. Once again the early history is a little murky. Bowling Green did come to encompass the former “town” of Utica. (I was amused by this, as I was born in Utica, New York!)

The enclosed letter is shown as **Figure 2**. It is not difficult to read and details the request to participate in an up-coming wedding of the sender to Miss Rachel Tucker to be held on the 21st at 5 p.m. It seems like that is rather short notice since the later is dated August 15, 1910. The partial strike of the "Wauchula FLA" postmark is dated August 15 at 9 a.m. Today, the seven miles between the towns of Bowling Green and Wauchula would be a leisurely 10-minute drive on U.S. 17. In 1910, it would be much longer, but perhaps not by much. The receiving backstamp (**Figure 3**) from Bowling



Figure 3

The receiving mark is timed at 10 a.m., one hour after being mailed in Wauchula!

Green is marked August 15, 1910 at 10 a.m. I am amazed by the quick transit time, apparently only one hour! My only guess is the outgoing mail for the morning of August 15 happened to be timed perfectly with the pickup and continuation of the service northbound. As an additional little surprise, the pair of stamps on the cover are Scott #331a from a booklet pane – note the straight edges on the left and right of the joined pair with an on-cover value of about \$5 to \$10. You never know what old covers and correspondence will contain. Take a look -- you just may be surprised by an interesting piece of history!

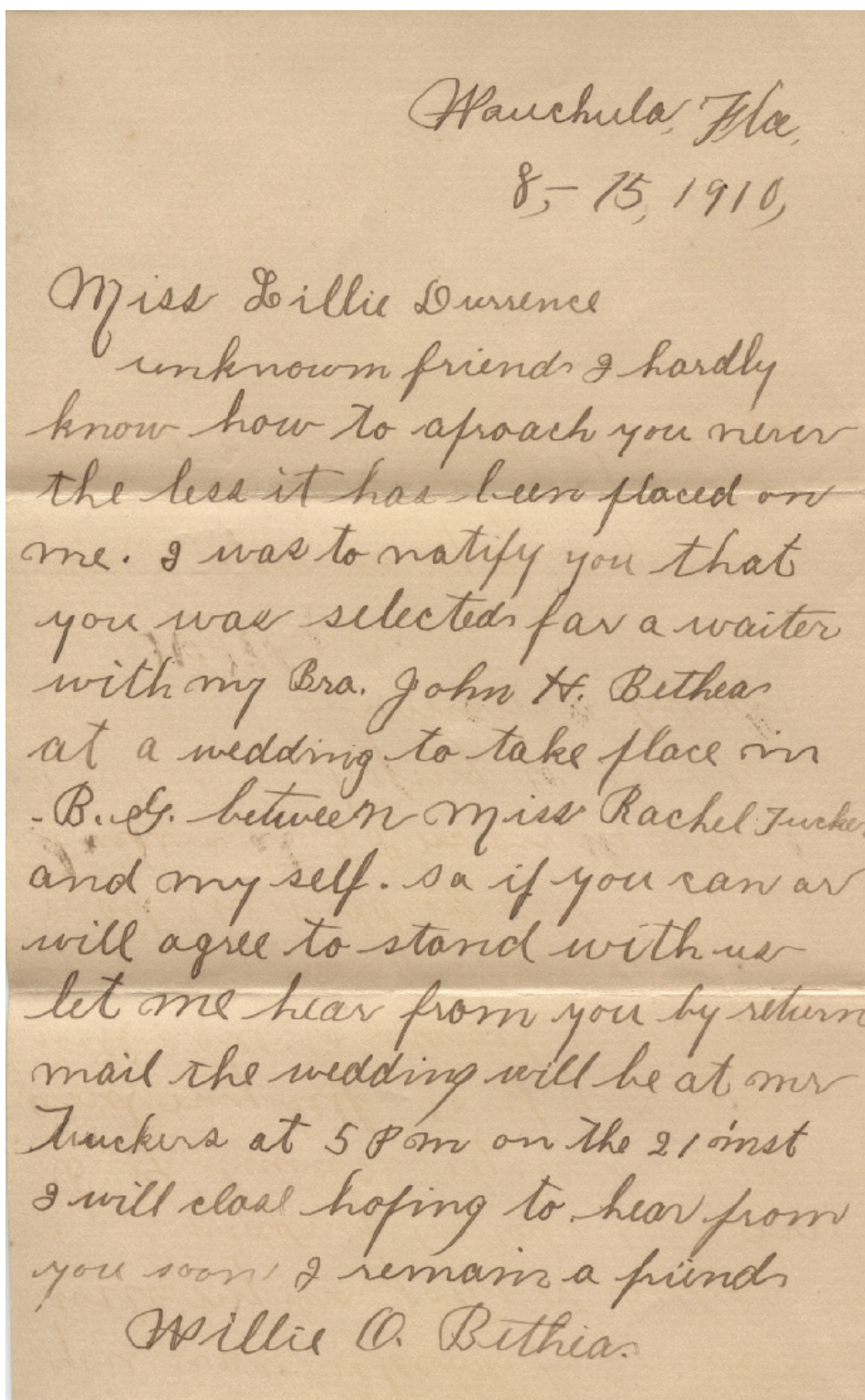


Figure 2

The letter is dated August 15, 1910.

FOOTNOTE

¹ Website: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~crackerbarrel/Hardee21.html>.

How Lake Estelle got its name

By A. Stephen Patrick

Since moving to the Orlando area in 1973, I have been saving Orlando postcards and a small file of Orlando postmarks and postal history. I found the postcard in **Figure 1** at an APS show in Milwaukee while thumbing through a box of Florida postal history. Once you have seen the many views of Lake Eola and Orange Avenue in the Florida box, it is rare to find something new. I was drawn to the card for several reasons. The cancel (**Figure 2**) appears to be a straight line machine cancel from January 31, 1911, at 10:00 a.m. It cancels a typical Ben Franklin one-cent green stamp. It isn't worth removing and replacing to discover whether it is worth 40 cents or 25 cents.

The front of the card is a photo of Lake Estelle in Orlando. The 1911 image is highly different from 2016. You must envision that this west-facing view now contains the main campus of what was then Florida Sanitarium and now is Florida Hospital, the Central Florida anchor of Adventist Sunbelt Health System. This 72 acre plot was offered to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1908 by a group of Orlando businessmen who had speculated about establishing a tuberculosis sanitarium. The view is of the north shore of the lake looking from what is now the U.S. 17-92 causeway that also once held the "Dinky Railway" that ran from Orlando to Winter Park and beyond. The small peninsula in the foreground is now part of Adventist University of Health Science.

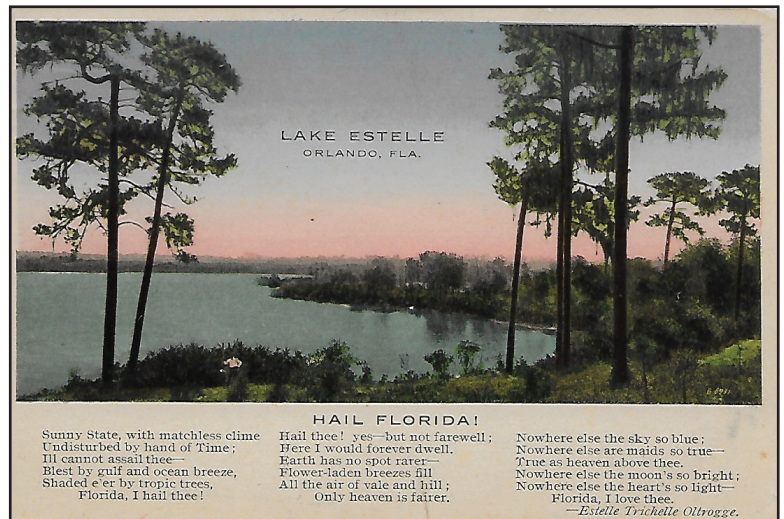


Figure 1
Postcard showing Lake Estelle in Orlando.

So beside the postmark and the scene is also a clue as how Lake Estelle got its name. Below the scene is a three stanza poem describing the glories of sunny Florida titled "Hail Florida!" The author is shown as Estelle Trichelle Ottrogge, perhaps the namesake of the lake. An online search revealed nothing about the author, but this name seems more than coincidence. By 1911, the sanitarium started a substantial 60 bed facility with a concrete veneer, and in 1913 the first five nurses were graduated from their school of nursing. The view from this spot today is mostly that of modern buildings (*see illustration back on page 8*). The card is addressed to Miss Jessie Perkins who is presumed to be a student at the Hollins Institute in Hollins, Virginia, a private women's college. Today it is known as Hollins University and has a Roanoke, Virginia address.

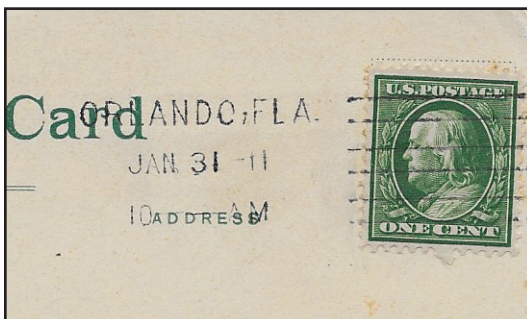


Figure 2
The cancel is January 31, 1911.

Lake Estelle was a popular swimming spot for many years because the sanitarium established a solarium and bathing beach for the health of the sanitarium patients. The message reads: "Wouldn't you like to be in a boat floating about on this or any other lake about sunset. Oh, it's glorious. Dear, I'm having such a happy time. Give my love to Miss Agnes and the rest. Lovingly, Addie." I think Addie would be surprised at the modern view.

President's Drivel - More Than A Couple of Points

By Francis Ferguson

As I write this on the first day of August, Central Florida is sweltering through the most brutal summer that I can recall in my 40 years of living here. On the bright side, fall in Central Florida is about 10 weeks away! It is about this time of year that I am jealous of where our publisher Everett Parker calls home.

Foremost is our need to have articles for the *Journal* which is published three times a year. The well is "bone-dry" – to quote Dr. Parker. There is currently nothing for the January of 2017 issue. The *Journal* survives on contributions from our membership. Please I (we) beg you to submit articles for publication. We can work with almost anything. If you have something related to Florida postal history to contribute -- give it a whirl -- it will be of interest!

The bi-monthly newsletter is continuing to meet my expectations. It is regrettable that a small number of membership can't read some of the short articles in the newsletter as they do not have access to the web.

Please keep in mind that if your contact information changes, we need to know about it as soon as possible. If e-mail is not convenient for you, pick up the phone and call Deane or myself.

The MEMBERS ONLY section of the website continues to add items as they come available. This is where you will find current membership rosters. We are attempting to add a "members collecting interest" to the database and we would appreciate you reviewing what is detailed in the roster and letting us know of any changes or additions. The password to the MEMBERS ONLY section can be obtained by contacting Deane or myself, write it down for future reference. I have had two inquiries as to the desire to set a custom password

for each user. While that may sound like a great idea from a member's standpoint, it is virtually unmanageable for the webmaster (i.e., me!). I am sorry, but we have to continue to use a common password for all the membership.

Work is continuing forward on the update to the 1999 *Florida Stampless Postal History* book. Countless hours of work have gone into this major update with the hope of an early 2017 release date. We are currently planning on an e-publishing format AND a bound book production. The bound book will be by pre-order only. More news on that subject as we get closer to completion.

Please plan on being at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition (February 3-5). The FPHS will host the annual membership meeting from noon to 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 4. We would like to see the LARGEST gathering of society members ever!

In closing for this go-around, I hope you have had a lovely summer and may the cooler temperatures of fall visit soon! Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me:

email: ferg@FloridaStampShows.com
cell: 407.493.0956

**We proudly salute the
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the Florida Stamp Dealers Association
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Thank you so much!**

Special thanks
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them for their continued support and friendship.
We also thank the
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for their financial help as website sponsors.
-- Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

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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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