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## Survey of postmarks of the Christmas, Florida Post Office

By Christine C. Sanders

Christmas, Florida is located on State Road 50 between Orlando and Titusville. Its post office was established in 1892, and the mail was carried from Chuluota twice a week by the son of the first postmaster, Samuel B. Hurlbut. At this time, small fourth-class offices were not provided with standard postmarking devices by the Post Office Department (POD). Thus, the earliest postmarks consisted of a simple circular datestamp (CDS) with a “target” shaped cancel (*Figure 1*). Covers up to 1906 bear this postmark.

In an attempt to standardize postmarks, the POD began providing Doane handstamps to small post offices from 1903 through September 1906. It is likely that the Christmas Post Office acquired its Doane 3 device at some time during 1906. The earliest known Doane 3/1 postmark from Christmas, Florida is January 7, 1908, and its latest known use is March 1, 1911.<sup>1</sup> The Doane Type 3 postmark was characterized by its solid four bars with a numeral at the center of the middle two bars (*Figure 2*). It is considered to be the forerunner of the 4-bar postmark. Absence of covers from 1912 to 1927 in my collection preclude certainty as to what postmarks were used in Christmas during this time. However, four dif-

ferent types of 4-bar handstamps were issued sequentially by the POD to small post offices during this time: the B (1910-1920), the C/1 (1920-1922 and 1925-1930), the A/3 (1923-1924), and the D (1924-1925).

During the late 1920s, post offices with Christmas-associated names became popular places for mailing Christmas cards to friends and family.



*Figure 1*  
1899 CDS with target killer.  
From the Deane Briggs, M.D.  
Collection.



*Figure 2*  
Doane 3/1 postmark dated  
March 25, 1910.



*Figure 3*  
C/1 4-bar postmark dated  
December 25, 1927.

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Thus, more covers postmarked in Christmas, Florida can be found from this time forward. The C/1 4-bar handstamp was used in the Christmas Post Office from 1927 through 1930 (*Figure 3*). This was characterized by serif lettering within the CDS that almost touches the circle of the dial. From 1931 through 1933, the Type E 4-bar handstamp was used (*Figure 4*). Between 1934 and 1936, the C/2 4-bar handstamp appeared on items from the Christmas Post Office (*Figure 5*).



*Figure 4*  
December 25, 1933 E 4-bar postmark in green with serif lettering.



*Figure 7*  
Close-up of Juanita Tucker applying the F/1 postmark to mail.  
(Photo courtesy of Max Hunn)

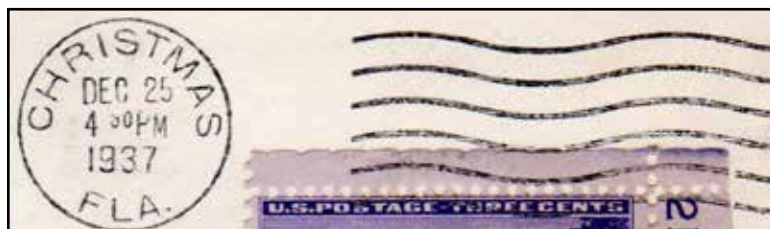


*Figure 5*  
December 25, 1935 C/2 4-bar postmark.



*Figure 6*  
December 25, 1939 Type F/1 4-bar postmark.

It differed from the C/1 4-bar in that the serif lettering was farther removed from the rim of the CDS. In 1937, the Christmas Post Office began using the F/1 4-bar handstamp readily differentiated from the C/2 by the presence of block (sans serif) lettering within the CDS (*Figure 6*).<sup>2</sup> This type of postmark would appear on the mail from the Christmas Post Office for almost 30 years. The application of the F/1 postmark by Postmaster Juanita Tucker is shown in the photograph in *Figure 7*. In 1937, the Christmas Post Office also introduced a Universal machine cancel with a killer consisting of six horizontal wavy lines (*Figure 8*). Very little changed with this postmark from 1937 through the 1990s. Although ZIP Code was introduced in 1963, postmarks from Christmas, Florida and many other small towns did not include the ZIP Code until 1965. In fact, one could find postmarks with and without ZIP codes on mail from the Christmas Post Office in December 1965 (*Figures 9a*



*Figure 8*  
Christmas, Florida 1937 Universal machine cancel.

*and 9b*). The new postmark with the ZIP Code was designated the F/2 4-bar. This new postmark also introduced the use of standard two-letter abbreviations for each of the states. It was used from 1965 to late 1969.

In 1970 a new subtype of the F/2 4-bar handstamp appeared (*Figure 10*). In comparison to the

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