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*Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State*



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## Evinston, Florida 32633

By Phil Eschbach

Evinston, situated on the Marion-Alachua County line near Orange Lake, is over 130 years old. The post office was chartered in 1882, the same year the railroad and depot were built. However, an early Spanish mission, built in the 1500s, was located nearby. Prior to that, Native Americans roamed the area for thousands of years. It is said that one early settler in the area named Baxter traded with the Natives in the early 1800s. Probably the first early permanent settlers were the Reeves, from North Carolina, arriving around 1875. Shortly after, another family, the Wolfendons, arrived from Wisconsin. Then the Evins family arrived in the early 1880s from South Carolina. The Evins-Wood house (see photo), built in 1886 by William Drayton Evins, still stands today and has been restored by a descendant, Ashley Wood. Captain W.D. Evins, for whom the town is named, farmed much of the land in the area, as did the other settlers and their children.



*Figure 1*

*Evins-Wood house today, built in 1886 by Captain W.D. Evins.*

The current post office is in the old store (see *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*) which was built in 1882 as a warehouse for the railroad. It was sold in 1884 to J.S. Wolfendon when he was appointed postmaster. The first postmaster was George Center, appointed February 28, 1882. The second postmaster was Robert Bass, appointed August 20, 1883. Joseph Wolfendon, who also bought the store, was appointed on July 16, 1884. The current structure passed through several hands and was first used as a store by owner John Hester around 1900. From 1882 to 1913, the post office was located in several places, including the old store. But in 1913, H.D. Wood became postmaster (*Figure 4*) and the post office finally landed in the store where it remains uninterrupted to this day. Wood and his brother-in-law Robert Creswell Evins (H.D. Wood had married Captain Wood's daughter, Anna) had purchased the store in 1905 from John Hester who had to leave town quickly because he shot and killed a

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man in a boxcar across from the store, the result of an argument.

After H.D. Wood, the next postmaster and store-owner was his son, Robert P. Wood (*Figure 5*), followed by his brother Fred Wood (*Figure 6*). Robert Wood had sold the store to his brother, Fred, and brother-in-law, Paul Swink. Ever since the store became known as the "Wood and Swink Store," even though Swink sold out to Wood two years later. Fred Wood remained postmaster from 1933 to 1979. He was the longest serving post-



*Figure 4*

*H.D. Wood, postmaster 1913-1930.*



*Figure 2*

*The Wood & Swink store in 1967.*



*Figure 3*

*The Wood & Swink store as it is today.*



*Figure 5*

*R.P. Wood, postmaster 1930-1934.*



*Figure 6*

*Fred Wood, postmaster 1933-1979.*

master in Florida -- over 44 years. His son, Freddie Wood, inherited the store and his wife, Sue, became the postmaster after her father-in-law in 1979 (*Figure 7*). She was postmaster until 2010. So the store has remained in the same family for over 100 years and the postmaster position was in the family for nearly 100 years as well.

The first railroad through Evinston, built in 1882,



was the Florida Southern Railroad, a narrow gauge railway later merging with the Savannah, Florida & Western Railroad to become the Atlantic Coastline. The tracks had been upgraded to standard gauge around 1886. Passenger service to Evinston was discontinued in the 1950s. The ACL finally discontinued its line through Evinston in 1981, removing the tracks. **Figure 8** shows the Evinston depot in the 1930s.

Until the railroad was discontinued, for many years the mail was picked up and delivered by train which did not stop but picked up the bags by the tracks on the fly from an apparatus called a crane. A special pole was used to place the outgoing mail on the pole which was placed in a canvas bag with metal rings on each end. The bag was hung by the rings on metal bars that were part of the mail crane. The train had an attached hook that was lowered from the mail car door when it approached the crane. The mail car hook snatched the bag from the crane, usually at speeds of about 50 m.p.h. The incoming mail was kicked out of the mail car door and was picked up off the ground along the railroad track, usually within 10-20 yards from the mail crane.

The store is on the National Historic Register and has been photographed and written about in many publications, including *National Geographic*, *Southern Living* and many newspapers. It is believed to be the oldest post office in Florida still operating in the same building to this day.

*All photos were supplied by the Wood family and the author.*

*Many thanks to Ashley, Freddie and Sue Wood for their time and input in helping me produce this account.*



**Figure 9**  
*Postal delivery man Morris Nelson, photographed in the 1920s.*



**Figure 7**  
*Freddie and Sue Wood*



**Figure 8**  
*The Evinston depot, photographed in the 1930s.*

**Figure 10 (right)**  
*Old store sign offering "Pure Bred Beagle Puppies" for sale as well as "Fancy Eggplants."*





**Figure 11**  
*These photographs from the 1950s show a train at the Evinston depot.*



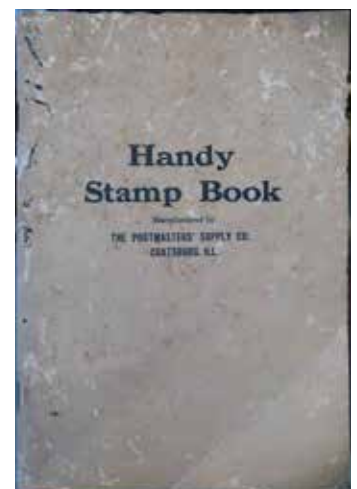
**Figure 12**  
*An array of old circular datestamps and other implements used in the Evinston Post Office.*



**Figure 13**  
*Postmaster Sue Wood, 1979-2010*



**Figure 14 (left)**  
*Contemporary view of postal window.*



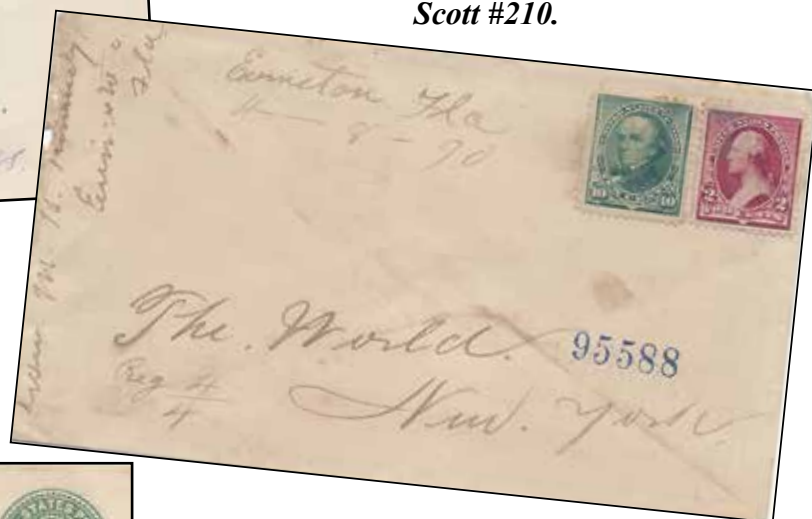
**Figure 15 (right)**  
*“Handy Stamp Book” used by earlier postmasters.*



## An assortment of early Evinston covers



**“EVINSTON / FLA. MAY 13 1884”** early second year postmark with killer-cancelled Scott #210.



**“Evinston Fla / 4 - 8 - (18)90”** manuscript postmark with pen-cancelled Scott #220, 226. Late use of a manuscript postmark.



**“EVINSTON / FLA. JUN 10” (1895)** postmark on 2¢ green entire.



**“EVINSTON / FLA. OCT 2 1906”** Doane Type I (1) forwarding postmark. The latest of two known Type I Doane postmarked examples. Inez Barron was likely daughter of the postmaster, James Barron. James Barron's son, Watt, was murdered by Hester near the store.



**“EVINSTON / FLA NOV 10 1907”** Doane Type III (1) postmark on “Wood & Evins” advertising cover for the general store. The latest of two known Type III Doane postmarked examples. The “Evins” in the corner card was Robert Evins, one of Evinston's founders. His partner, Henry Wood, operated the store, now known as Wood & Swink. Henry Wood's grandson still lives there and is the store's current owner.

# Another U.S. Colored Troops Cover

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

In my article in the September 2016 issue of the *Florida Postal History Journal*, I requested members to submit other “colored troops” endorsed covers from Florida. Then I saw the membership application that Todd Hause had prepared which showed the cover in **Figure 1** addressed to Mrs. Woodbury C. Smith. Lo and behold, it is also endorsed as a 35th U.S.C.T. cover which I discovered when I got the scan of the cover from Todd. The cover in my article was postmarked at St. Augustine, but following the Battle of Olustee, the 35th remained in and

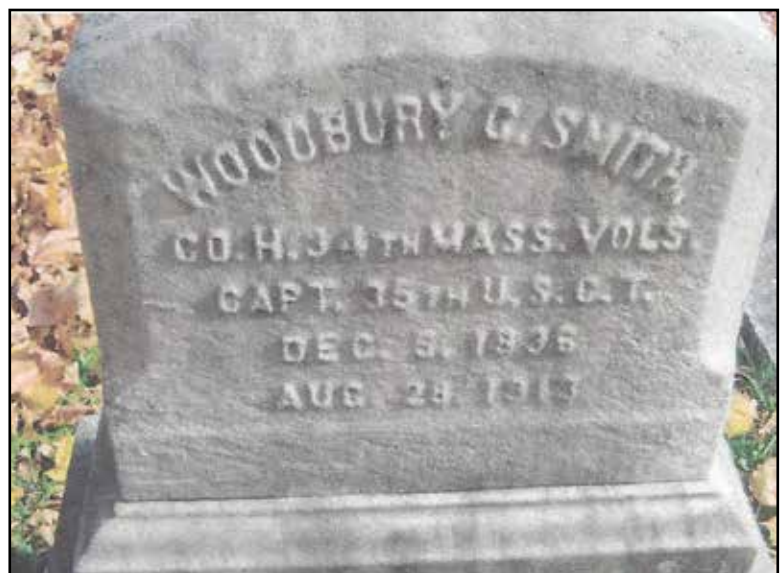


**Figure 1**  
**“JACKSONVILLE / FLA. JULY 25” (1864) Union Occupation**  
**postmark on double rated cover docketed 35th USCT.**  
 From the Todd Hause collection.



**Figure 2**  
**Photograph of Woodbury C. Smith.**

around Jacksonville until the end of the war. North Carolina postal historian Maurice Bursey has also sent me information on Woodbury Smith which helps round out the history of this soldier.



**Figure 3**  
**Gravesite memorial in Worcester Rural Cemetery,**  
**Worcester, Massachusetts.**



Woodbury Comstock Smith was born on December 5, 1836, in Uxbridge, Massachusetts and married Helen Elizabeth Wheeler on July 23, 1862<sup>1</sup> (**Figure 2**). One week later on July 31, 1862, he enlisted in Company H, Massachusetts 34th Infantry Regiment. His occupation had been as a machinist.<sup>2</sup>

He was promoted to a First Lieutenant when he was re-commissioned in Company F, U.S. Colored Troops, 35th Infantry Regiment on February 9, 1864, just before the Battle of Olustee.<sup>3</sup> He was promoted to a full Captain on June 17, 1865, and was mustered out of the service on June 1, 1866. He died on August 28, 1913 from tuberculosis which had spread to the lymph glands<sup>4</sup> (**Figure 3**).

Prior to his death he had worked as a clerk in a loom works. He had two daughters, one of whom died of meningitis from tuberculosis at age three. It seems tuberculosis was a virulent disease 150 years ago (**Figure 4**).

After his death, his surviving widow filed for pension income. The application in **Figure 5** shows a notation that Woodbury Smith had initially been with the 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry before it was changed to the 35th U.S.C.T. as was mentioned in my previous article.

**Standard Certificate of Death**

PLACE OF DEATH: 435 Pleasant St., Ward

FULL NAME: Woodbury Comstock Smith

RESIDENCE: Worcester

DATE OF DEATH: Aug 28, 1913

SEX: Male, COLOR OR RACE: W, MARRIED: Married

DATE OF BIRTH: Dec 5, 1836

OCCUPATION: Clerk, Crompton & Knowles Loom Works

BIRTHPLACE: Uxbridge

NAME OF FATHER: Samuel Smith

BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER: Blackstone

MARRIED NAME OF MOTHER: Harriet Blackman

BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER: Vt.

CAUSE OF DEATH: Tubercular Adenitis

DATE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL: Aug 30, 1913

PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL: Worcester

DATE OF BURIAL: Aug 30, 1913

PLACE OF BURIAL: Worcester

Figure 4

*Certificate of Death listing tubercular adenitis.*

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/87343487/person/44555415467/facts>.

<sup>2</sup> Personal information gathered by Maurice Bursey.

<sup>3</sup> [http://search.ancestry.com/search/collections/civilwar\\_histdatasys/4194366/prINTER-friendly](http://search.ancestry.com/search/collections/civilwar_histdatasys/4194366/prINTER-friendly).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=111916321&ref=acom>.

**Robert A. Siegel Auctions, Inc., will be having a May 9, 2017 auction sale of a portion of the Briggs Florida Confederate Postal History collection. Those interested can check the Siegel website or call (219) 753-6421.**

NAME OF SOLDIER: Smith, Woodbury C.

NAME OF DEPENDENT: Widow, Smith, Helen E.

SERVICE: 35th U.S. Col. Inf. 1862-1866

DATE OF FILING: 1914

CLASS: Invalid, Widow, Minor

APPLICATION NO.: 1087.049

CERTIFICATE NO.: 1129426

STATE FROM WHICH FILED: Mass.

Figure 5

*Widow's pension application from Helen E. Smith.*



# Florida's important Civil War battles

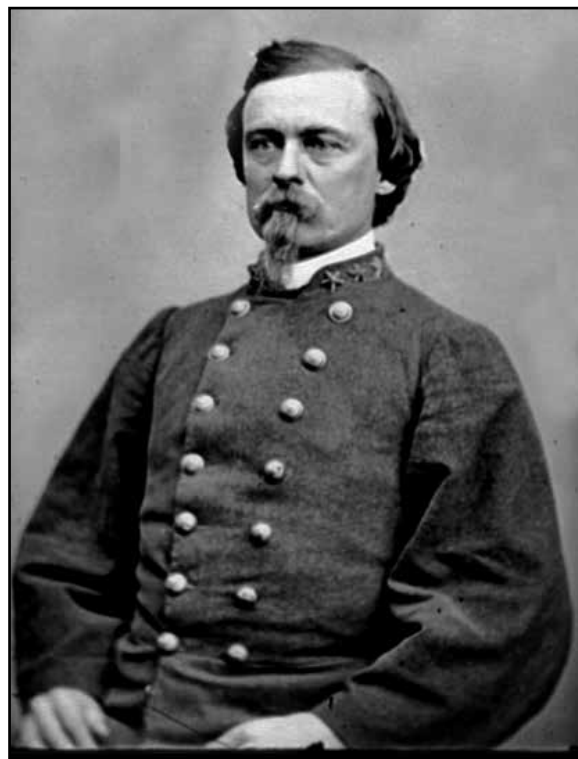
## Part 1: The Battle of Olustee

By Thomas Lera and Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

In February 1862, Union forces controlled both ends of the Florida Railroad Company which ran from Fernandina to Cedar Key. The Confederate Army received orders to remove the Florida Railroad Company's rails and use them to build a new strategic link connecting the Georgia and Florida Rail systems.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 1863, the Union controlled various coastal railroad terminals in Florida, while the Confederates used the internal rail transportation to move men and materials.

Key points for the Confederates were Baldwin, Lake City, the railway bridge on the Pensacola and Georgia line that crossed the Suwannee River at Columbus, along with the proposed connector line north of Houston (Live Oak) through Jasper to the Georgia state line. Destruction of the Columbus bridge would disrupt lines of communication between East and Middle Florida, and the destruction of connector lines would ensure the gap between the Georgia and Florida rail systems remained. This alone was a valid military objective for a Federal expedition, as seizure of the system was paramount for Federal success.

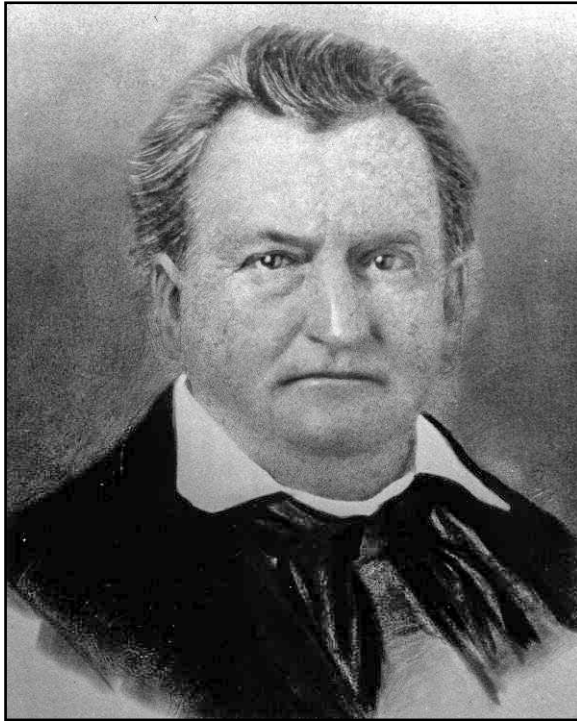
Assigned to the Florida Expedition was General Truman B. Seymour. He was disenchanted with the prospect of being involved with an operation smaller in scale and less strategically important than the one he was proposing for South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> He reasoned if the railroad bridge over the Suwannee at Columbus was destroyed, East and



*Left: Brig. Gen. Truman B. Seymour (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.; No. LC-DIG-cwpb-07118); Right: Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan in a colonel's uniform (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.: LC-DIG-cwpb-06278).*

West Florida would be divided. If there was a possible bridge crossing the Suwannee near Sulphur Springs just north of Houston (Live Oak), its destruction would further separate Florida from the other Confederate States. This area of the Suwannee was militarily and politically important.<sup>3</sup>

On February 7, 1864, Seymour led the Union East Florida campaign from Jacksonville and his cavalry conducted raids west towards Lake City and Gainesville. His command consisted of 5,500 - 6,000 troops organized into three infantry, one cavalry, and other supporting artillery units. General Seymour consolidated his position around Jacksonville, which included control of the important railway junction at Baldwin, a community about 20 miles west.<sup>4</sup> Seymour decided to move his small army from Baldwin past Lake City where he hoped to destroy the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad bridge at Columbus on the Suwannee River.<sup>5</sup>

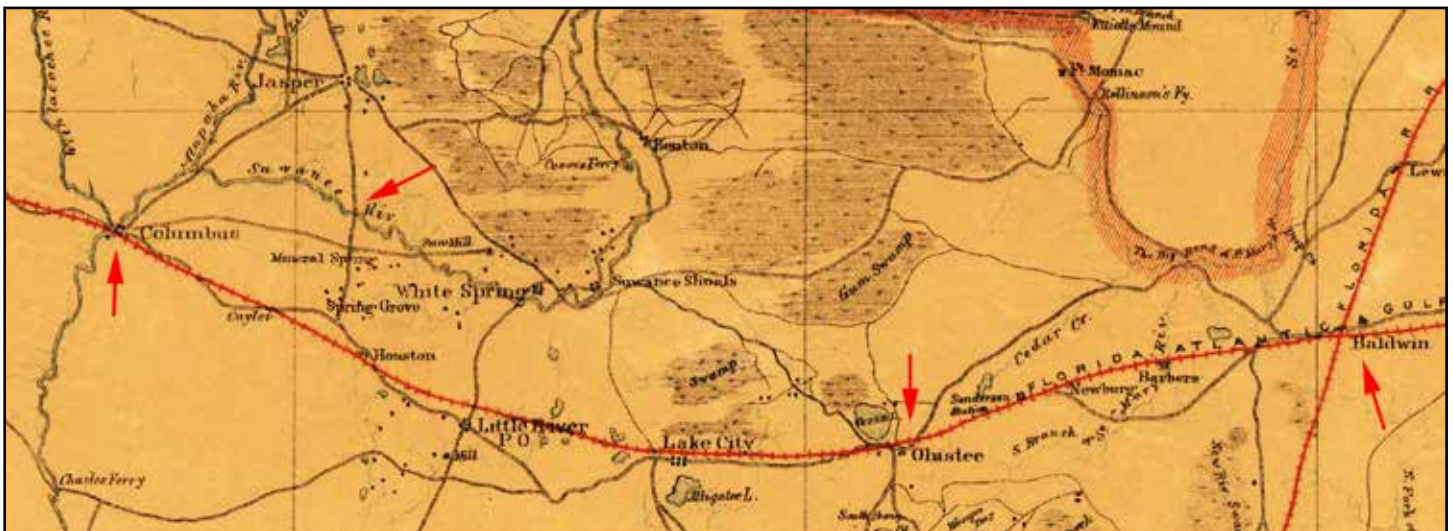


*Left: Portrait of Florida's fifth Governor, John Milton (Florida Archives: GV000497); Right: General Pierre G. T. Beauregard (Brady National Photographic Art Gallery, Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration Record: 11359620).*

Governor John Milton telegraphed the Confederate war department that "all will be lost" in Florida unless Richmond immediately dispatched reinforcements to the beleaguered state. There were some 1,200 Confederate troops in the Department of East Florida, the Confederate command responsible for the defense of Florida east of the Suwannee River. Brigadier General Joseph Finegan, the Confederate commander in East Florida, ordered his scattered forces to gather at Lake City where he planned to block the Union advance.

General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, who had overall responsibility for the command of the Confederate Atlantic Coast south of North Carolina, recognized the threat the Union posed to Florida's continued supply of food to the Confederate armies, and to Florida's ultimate future in the Confederate States. Both Beauregard and Milton feared the advance from Jacksonville might be only one wing of a Union offensive against Florida. They saw the potential for disaster should the Union follow up Jacksonville with a landing on the Gulf at St. Marks and a subsequent attack on Tallahassee (which happened in March 1865). Beauregard decided to reinforce East Florida.<sup>6</sup>

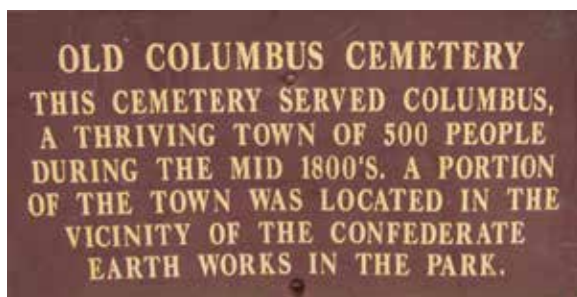




*Red arrows indicate Columbus, proposed bridge on the Suwannee, Olustee, and Baldwin.*

Interestingly the original Columbus bridge was a covered wooden structure, and after each train went through, workers had to rush onto the bridge to put out any embers from the engine's smokestack so the entire bridge did not catch fire.

Confederate troops constructed earthwork fortifications on a high bluff overlooking the junction where the Withlacoochee River joins the Suwannee River, a portion of which now lies in Suwannee River State Park (far left red arrow). These earthworks or bunkers were constructed to protect the 30 men guarding the bridge that crossed the Suwannee River at the town of Columbus, a vital link in the East -West transportation of troops and supplies. Once a stage stop, Columbus also supported Platt's Ferry, a sawmill, and steamboat traffic including the steamship *Madison*, a floating country store operated by Captain James Tucker.

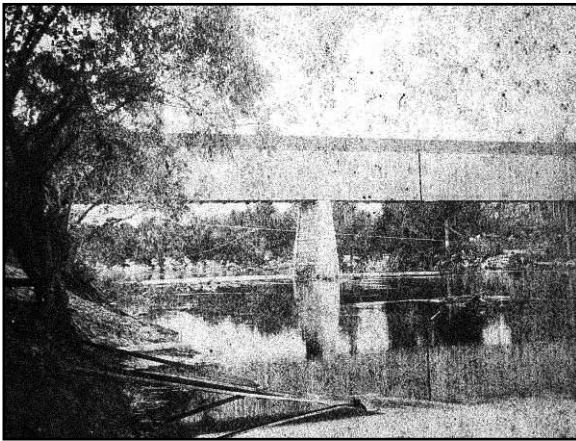


*Columbus interpretative sign and cemetery.  
(Courtesy of Thomas Lera)*



Today the Columbus cemetery, considered one of Florida's oldest, is the only remaining evidence of the town and is located on the Sandhill Trail in Suwannee River State Park. The Confederate earthworks can be viewed from a wooden walkway along the Earthworks Trail and interpretive signage provides historical information.<sup>7</sup> Columbus was the first chartered American community in Suwannee County, founded sometime in or before 1842, as its post office was established February 17, 1842, on a post road connecting Madison and Little River.

In 1861, Confederate postal route 6505, from Jacksonville to Tallahassee via Baldwin, Barber's, Sanderson, Newburg, Alligator (Lake City), Little River, Spring Grove, Columbus, Suwannee Mills, Madison, Sandy Ford,



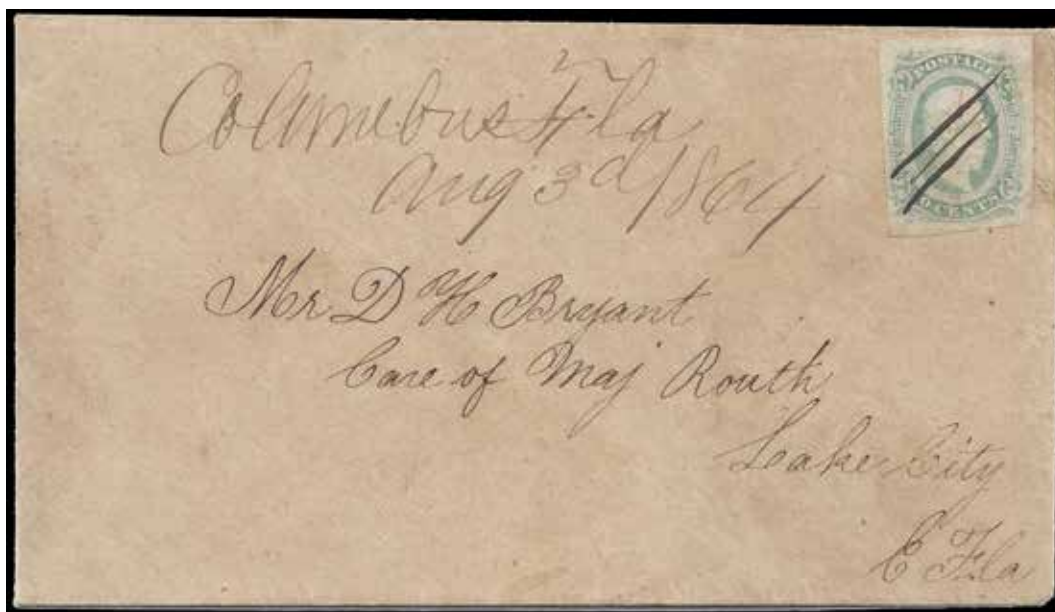
*Left: Covered railroad bridge over Suwannee River at Ellaville, between 1880 and 1899.*

*Black & white photoprint, 8 x 10 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.<sup>8</sup>*

*Right: 2016 view of the railroad bridge from the earthworks. (Courtesy of Thomas Lera).*

*Below: "Columbus Fla, Aug 3d 1864" cover with CSA Scott #11 pen cancel.*

*(Courtesy of the Deane R. Briggs, M.D. Collection)*



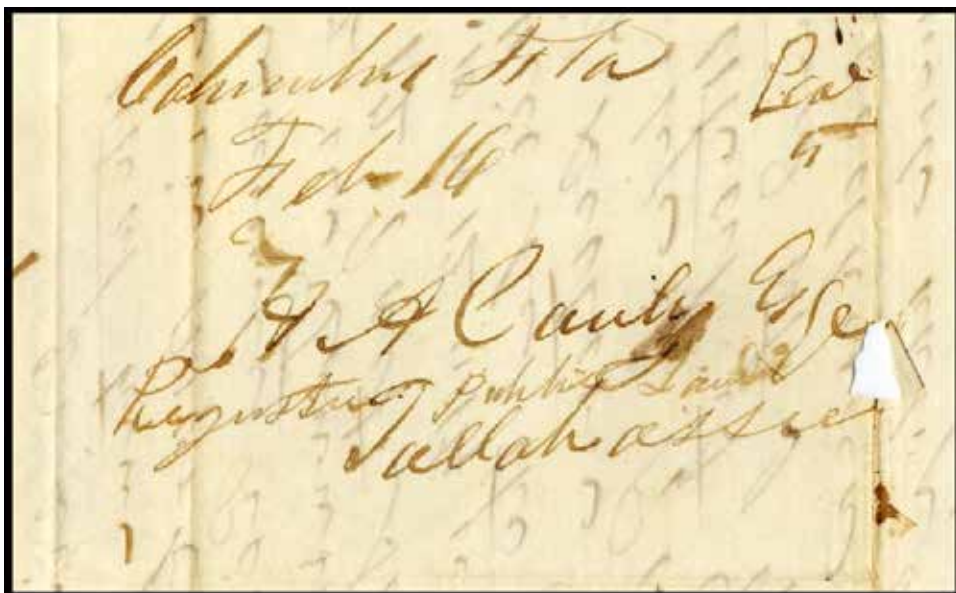
Monticello, Walker's Mill, Bailey's Mill and Chaires handled the mail for Columbus with daily service, except on Sunday. The contractor for this 195-mile one-way service was the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Railroad.<sup>9</sup>

The Battle of Olustee (or Ocean Pond) began February 20, 1864, and was the largest, bloodiest battle fought in Florida during the Civil War. Union casualties totaled 1,861, or 34 percent of their men: 203 killed, 1,152 wounded, and 506 missing. Confederate losses were lower: 93 killed, 847 wounded, and six missing, for a total of 946 casualties, or about 19 percent.<sup>10</sup> Seymour retreated through Sanderson and Baldwin to Jacksonville.

James A. Seddon, in his April 28, 1864 report to Jefferson Davis, wrote: "They were met promptly and gallantly by General Finegan, with a smaller number of hastily collected troops, and completely defeated, with heavy loss and utter rout, in the decisive battle of Olustee. Driven back to the protection of their ships of war, they received large reinforcements, and for a time threatened the renewal of their invasion, but their most bloody experience

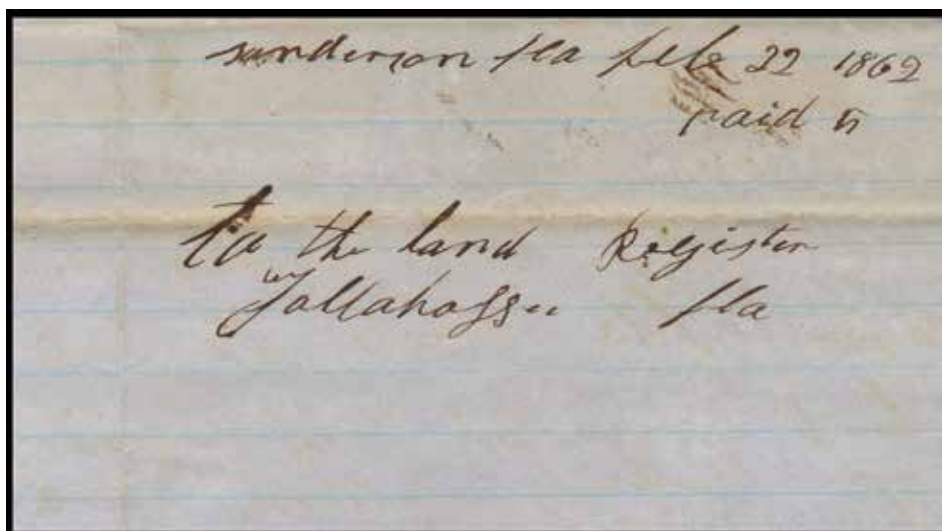
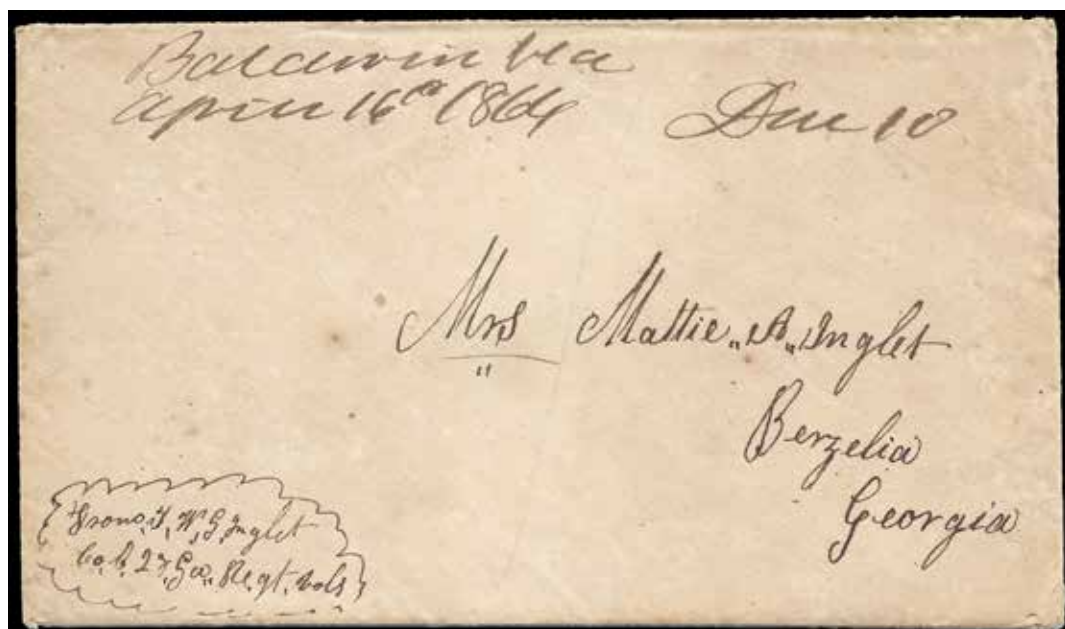
*Text continued on page 14*





Columbus Fla, Feb 14 (1862)  
 "Paid 5." William H. Watson was  
 appointed postmaster on July 25,  
 1861. (Courtesy of the Florida  
 State Archives)

One of three soldier's  
 "Due 10" covers from  
 Baldwin, Florida following  
 the Battle of Olustee.  
 Alfred J. Sweat was post-  
 master from January 31,  
 1861 to May 2, 1866.  
 (Courtesy of the Deane R.  
 Briggs, M.D. Collection)



Earliest known usage from  
 Sanderson (February 22, 1862).  
 (Courtesy of the Florida State  
 Archives)

of the prowess of our forces, and the great consequent discouragement of their troops, doubtless induced despair of success. They have since withdrawn nearly their entire force and relinquished as desperate the invasion of a State so courageously defended.<sup>11</sup> The Columbus bridge was not threatened again for the duration of the war.<sup>12</sup> In 1872, the post office was moved across the Suwannee River to serve the new sawmill town of Ellaville.

Jacksonville remained in Union hands until the end of the war, and was open for trade with the north. Its occupation continued to disrupt the supply of Florida cattle and other foodstuffs to the rest of the Confederacy.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, hereafter *ORA*, 128 vols. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. LII, pp. 350-59.

<sup>2</sup> Seymour to Ira Harris, January 12, 1864, *ORA*, Vol. LIII, pp. 95-98.

<sup>3</sup> Nutly, William H. *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee*, 1990. University of Alabama Press, pp. 116-118.

<sup>4</sup> Baldwin was established on August 19, 1857 at the intersection of the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Railroad, the Florida Railroad, and post road connecting Jacksonville with Lake City. It was a major military rail center during the Civil War. Samuel Lowe, an earlier U.S. postmaster, was appointed Confederate postmaster on July 25, 1861. The mail for Baldwin was handled by Confederate postal route 6502, Fernandina to Gainesville and by route 6505, Jacksonville to Tallahassee, both with daily service except Sunday.

<sup>5</sup> The Pensacola & Georgia Railroad started construction in Tallahassee and eventually met the west-building Florida, Atlantic & Gulf Central Railroad at Alligator Town (renamed Lake City), Florida in December 1860. From Lewis N. Wynne and Robert A. Taylor, *Florida in the Civil War*. (Mount Pleasant, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Lewis B. Schmidt, *The Civil War in Florida, A Military History, Vol. II: The Battle of Olustee*. (Allentown, PA: no publisher listed), 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Musgrove. *A Brief History of Suwannee County, Florida* (2008). See <http://suwcounty.org/county/>, look under "About Us." Retrieved November 20, 2016.; *Ghost Town of Columbus*. See [www.ghosttowns.com.](http://www.ghosttowns.com/), look under Florida/Columbus. Retrieved November 14, 2016; *Suwannee Past Town of Columbus*. See <http://www.fl-genweb.org/mpc/suwannee/articles/Columbus.html>. Retrieved December 29, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Covered railroad bridge over Suwannee River at Ellaville, between 1880 and 1899. Black and white photo-print, 8 x 10 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/1067>, accessed December 29, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Stefan T. Jaronski, "The Postal Routes of Confederate Florida Part 1," *The Confederate Philatelist*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1992,) p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Combined Books (ed.). *The Civil War Books of Lists*, 2008. Book Sales, Inc. (Over 300 Lists from the Sublime to the Ridiculous, Paperback – December 22, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> *ORA*. Series 4 – Vol. III, p. 324.

<sup>12</sup> Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, Florida State Parks. <https://www.floridastateparks.org/park/Olustee-Battlefield>, retrieved November 20, 2016.; <http://www.battleofolustee.org/battle.html>, retrieved November 14, 2016.



## Central Levy County Ghost Town Post Offices: Ellzey, Lukens, Rosewood, Sumner & Wyly

By Dr. Vernon N. Kisling Jr.

Levy County was formed in 1845 from the western portions of Alachua and Marion counties, the same year Florida became a state. The county was named after David Levy (changed to David Levy Yulee in 1846). It is a sparsely populated Gulf Coast region filled with grass prairies, palmetto scrub, swamps, and forests of pine, oak and red cedar. In 1850 the county population was 465. In 2010 the population was still only 40,801 (less than the number of students attending the University of Florida in nearby Gainesville). It is Old Florida, not quite the way it was, but close.

Levy County has had 65 post offices since the first one opened in 1845 at Cedar Key. All but nine of these have closed and most of the towns that supported them have disappeared. Five of these ghost town post offices lie along one of the few major roads in the county. State Road 24 runs northeast from the Gulf Coast town of Cedar Key up through the central part of the county to Otter Creek, then northeast to the county seat at Bronson, and then on to Archer and Gainesville in Alachua County. Formerly Route 13 (*Figure 1*), this road paralleled the Seaboard Air Line Railroad (one of its several names since it began as the Florida Railroad), which ran from Cedar Key to Fernandina.



*Figure 1*

*Map from 1935 showing towns along old Route 13 from Cedar Key to Otter Creek, Florida.<sup>1</sup>*

Along this route from Cedar Key to Otter Creek (a distance of some 25 miles) lie the towns that also served as railroad depots: Lukens, Sumner, Rosewood, Wyly, and Ellzey. The Cedar Key and Otter Creek post offices are two of the county's nine remaining post offices. The other five post offices are part of the 56 that are gone. Rail service between Archer and Cedar Key ended in 1931.

Early settlers came to take advantage of the abundant natural resources, living off the land and making a living from the land. There were some cotton plantations, although the Florida plantations were not as economically

well off as other Southern plantations. Most settlers relied on the timber, turpentine, naval stores, Spanish moss and fishing to make a living. Especially important was the pine and cedar timber, which was extensive in the early 1800s.

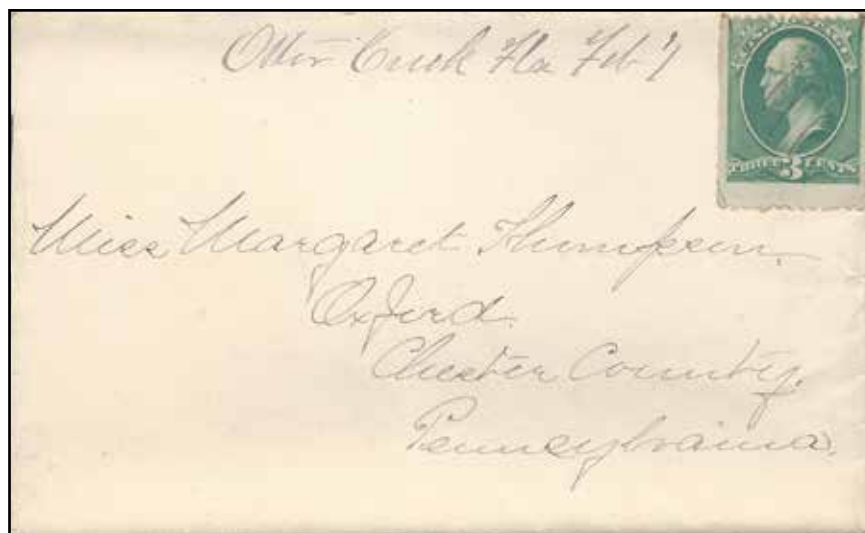
Cedar Key was developed in the early 1840s when Judge Augustus Steele built a resort for wealthy plantation owners. Cedar Key was also a fishing and seafood village, as well as a timber community. The coastal timber boom lasted from the 1870s to the 1890s. A large pencil manufacturing factory run by the Eagle Pencil Company on Cedar Key closed about 1899 and moved to another state. From this time, the lumber and turpentine sawmills and factories moved inland where they created or enhanced towns along Route 13 through the central part of the county. Some of these towns formed on their own while some were company towns. And they all served as railroad depots.

Route 13 was a limestone gravel road. It was not paved until sometime in the late 1930s and came under state control as State Road 24. It was a difficult road to travel, but it was one of the few in the county. Like the road, the towns met everyone's needs but they were not well developed. Nothing fancy or frivolous; just the basic necessities. One of the few civic institutions in these towns, along with the homes, churches and stores, was the post office. There was nothing to keep these towns going when the natural resources ran out and the rail service ended. The jobs were gone, the post offices closed, and the towns vanished.

It is difficult to find a good history of the county or the towns. When the people left they took their history with them. Upon entering Levy County on State Road 24 today, you leave behind the urban and rural development of Alachua County and enter an area with thick forests on both sides of the road, and it stays like that all the way to Cedar Key. The map in **Figure 1** shows the towns as they existed in 1935 along what was still Route 13, but today only Otter Creek and Cedar Key remain as towns. Ellzey and Rosewood are classified as unincorporated communities. The others do not exist. Even so, there are markers along State Road 24 indicating their past locations. These are either state road signs/markers (SM) or they are privately sponsored markers (PM) identifying the former towns as railroad depots.

What follows is a summary of these central Levy County towns and their post offices, traveling from Otter Creek down along State Road 24 to the Gulf Coast town of Cedar Key.

**Otter Creek:** Existing Town. Post Office: 1871-Present.



***Otter Creek, Florida, February 7, 1882 manuscript postmark with enclosure datelined "Gulf Hammock."***

**Ellzey:** Unincorporated Community (SM & PM). Post Office: 1884-1947. Postmasters and the dates of their appointment: Samuel R. Worthington, October 1, 1884; Lawson Meeks, December 2, 1889; Charles Kirkland, March 19, 1890; Josiah A. Williams, July 30, 1890; Samuel L. Bean, July 24, 1894; Samuel R. Worthington, August 14, 1894; Hattie Williams, July 8, 1898; ? (illegible), November 1, 1898; John L. Williams, July 16, 1900; James C. Williams, January 10, 1933; Belva Clark, July 10, 1933; Hattie Pinner August 24, 1936; Marie Meeks, August 7, 1937; Belva Clark Aldridge December 22, 1943; and Irene Cason, April 1, 1945. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Otter Creek October 23, 1947.

**Duttons Spur:** No longer exists (no markers). No Post Office.

**Wylly:** No longer exists (PM). Post Office: 1903-1904. Postmaster Herbert A. Williams, December 14, 1903. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Rosewood, December 14, 1904. It should be noted that there are no known covers with the Wylly postmark.

**Rosewood:** Unincorporated Community (SM, PM, Memorial Plaque). Post Office: 1870/1914. Unlike the other towns, it no longer exists because the town was completely burned and destroyed in 1923 (this historic event is why the town has a memorial plaque). Postmasters and the dates of their appointment: James King, September 12, 1870; Franklin Dibble, August 4, 1871. DISCONTINUED, October 10, 1871. Reestablished, James M. Ford, June 19, 1874; DISCONTINUED, October 27, 1874. Reestablished, Calvin B. Dibble, December 14, 1874; Charles M. Jacobs, November 1, 1883; Mary Jane Jacobs, June 18, 1897; R. E. Edwards, April 26, 1898. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Sumner, July 9, 1898. Reestablished, Stratford Carson, January 31, 1900; Marshall B. Coarsey, September 23, 1912. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Sumner, December 31, 1914.

**Sumner:** No longer exists (SM & PM). Post Office: 1889/1942. Postmasters and the dates of their appointment: John P. Little, July 15, 1889; Charles A. Swain, June 21, 1906. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Rosewood, May 21, 1907. Reestablished, Alfred M. Dorsett, April 7, 1908, ? (illegible) March 3, 1911; Samuel E. Worthington, November 21, 19??; Arthur R. Holt, July 7, 1915; Lucius P. Smallwood, August 28, 1916; Norman Middleton, August 21, 1921; Sarah J. Miller, November 6, 1929; George P. Wilkerson, August 17, 1936, and Annie M. Kirkland 22 July 1942. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Ellzey, December 8, 1942.

**Lukens:** No longer exists (PM). Post Office: 1907-1919.

Postmasters and the dates of their appointment: Lee W. Warren, June 18, 1907; Neal M. Worthington, April 22, 1913; Elmer L. Hunter, July 31, 1914. DISCONTINUED and mail service moved to Cedar Key June 30, 1919.

**Cedar Key:** Existing Town. Post Office: 1845-Present. A summary of the mail service moves along this route, with the year each post office closed, is as follows. Wylly, 1904 -- TO Rosewood 1914 -- TO Sumner 1942 -- TO Ellzey 1947 -- TO Otter Creek (still open). And also Lukens 1919 TO Cedar Key (still open).



*Lukens, Florida, October 12, 1908 4-bar Type A postmark on postal card.*



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## FOOTNOTE

<sup>1</sup> General Highway Map, Levy County, 1935. Florida State Road Department. To the northeast of Lennon (private marker since town no longer exists / PO 1901-1929) is Bronson (County Seat, Levy County), Archer (Alachua County), and Gainesville (Alachua County). This copy of the map is from the University of Florida Libraries Special Collections / Map Library.

**Rosewood, Florida, April 15 (no year),  
double circle postmark with killer tied  
3¢ banknote on cover.**



**Rosewood, Florida, July 24 (no year),  
manuscript postmark on 3¢ entire.**



**Ellzey, Florida, April 27, 1899 postmark  
on registered advertising corner card  
cover.**

# Florida Route and Station Agent Marks

By Thomas Lera

I decided to undertake this project to learn about railroad postmarks. There is a wealth of information on the subject. The beginning source for any study is a four volume 1990 work by Charles L. Towle and Fred Macdonald titled *The United States Railway Post Office Postmark Catalog 1864-1977*. Culling out the Florida entries, I compiled a listing comprising principally Florida Route Agents postmarks used in the period from the close of the Remele listing in 1861 to the end of 1886. Also shown are Florida Station Agents postmarks between 1888-1899 and Florida Transfer Clerks between 1889-1893. There are 19 new and 18 updated listings.

The route agent, an employee of the U.S. Post Office Department (USPOD), rode trains with a contract to carry mail between the terminal stations to which he was assigned. Each agent used his handstamp, similar to a post office's circular datestamp, to mark the loose mail given to him enroute. The marking consisted of the railroad's name, terminal name, or some combination of both, either spelled out in full or abbreviated.

A station agent was employed by the railroad, not the Post Office Department. Occasionally, when a station agent received loose letters, he would place his ticket cancelling device handstamp to mark the letter as if it was a route agent's handstamp. These letters were treated as if they had officially entered the mails. There is evidence station agents were formally sworn in as USPOD representatives when there was no route agent present to take control of the mail.

The Florida Route and Station Agent Postmarks list can be found on the Florida Postal History Society website [www.FPHSonline.com](http://www.FPHSonline.com) under the Research tab. If you have a listed or unlisted Florida Route or Station Agent cover or a Transfer Clerk cover, and would like to participate in this listing and census, please send 300dpi scans to [RR-FL-Marks@FPHSonline.com](mailto:RR-FL-Marks@FPHSonline.com). You will be credited in the next updated version.

## *President's Drivel - Summer 2017*

As I write this at the end of March, 2017 has not been a dull year so far.

- (1) The membership meeting at The Sarasota National Stamp Show and Exhibition was well attended with a nice crowd. The revised By-Laws passed with no issues and go into effect immediately.
- (2) The bi-monthly newsletter is exceeding my expectations. We are looking for short articles with a picture or two with word counts in the 200-400 range. You would be surprised to find how easy it is to achieve that word count once you get started!
- (3) The dues renewal process for 2017 has been completed with a decrease of only one member in total.
- (4) The most current Membership Directory is available on the website in the MEMBERS ONLY section.
- (5) The MEMBERS ONLY section of the website continues to add items as they come available. This is where you will find current membership rosters. The most current version of the membership information has been posted early March. The password to the MEMBERS ONLY section can be obtained by contacting Deane or myself – write it down for future reference.
- (6) Work is continuing on the total overhaul of the 1999 *Florida Stampless Postal History* book. I would estimate that we are approaching the 90 percent completion point. Expected completion has slipped to the summer of 2017.

(7) For those that like to plan well ahead -- place on your calendar FLOREX 2017; December 1, 2 & 3 in Orlando and The Sarasota National Stamp Show and Exposition for February 2, 3 & 4, 2018. The FPHS will hold the annual Membership Meeting from noon to 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 3. We would like to see the LARGEST gathering of society members ever!

In closing I hope you will have a wonderful summer and enjoy your "down" time! Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me. E-mail: [ferg@FloridaStampShows.com](mailto:ferg@FloridaStampShows.com) or call my cell: (407) 493-0956.

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-- 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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