



FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

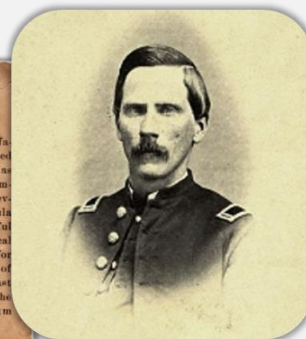
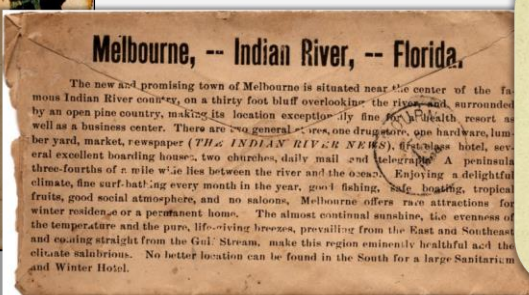
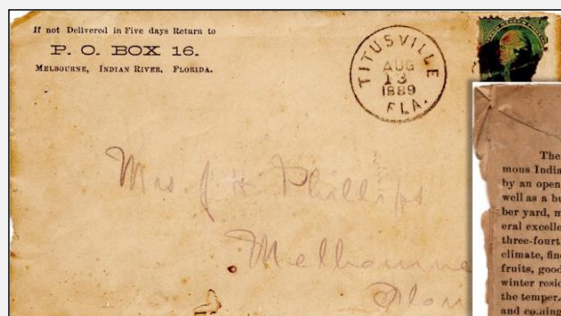
Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State



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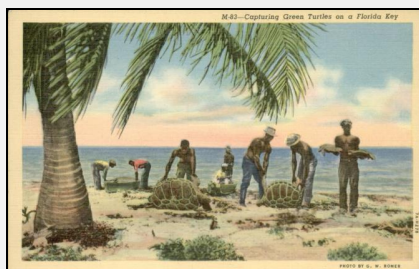


Melbourne, Indian River, Florida

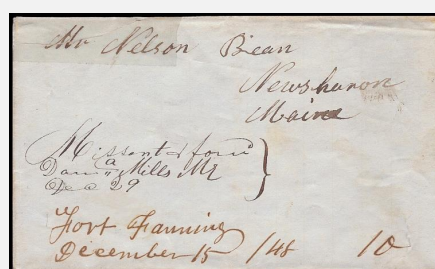
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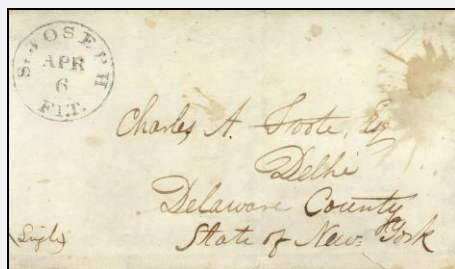
Orlando Cover to Germany



Gleason Romer Postcards



Fort Fanning, Florida



St. Joseph, Florida



Fort Jefferson, Florida

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Melbourne, Indian River, Florida <i>by Phil Eschbach</i>	3-4
An 1885 Orlando Cover to Germany <i>by Steve Patrick</i>	5
Gleason Romer Postcards Document South Florida History <i>by Juan L. Riera</i>	6-8
United States Philatelic Classics Society Distinguished Philatelist Award Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D.	8
Fort Fanning Then and Now <i>by William Johnson, D.D.S.</i>	9-10
St. Joseph, Florida <i>by Jack Malarkey with</i> <i>Pat Malarkey-Stallard</i>	11-17
New Hampshire Regiments Garrisoned at Fort Jefferson, Florida <i>by Thomas M. Lera</i>	17-19
Florida Postal History Society Dealer Members Contact Information	20

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Melbourne, Indian River, Florida

By Phil Eschbach

An interesting advertising cover with a nice backstory is the **Figure 1** cover postmarked TITUSVILLE FLA. AUG 13 1889. It was sent by John Phillips to his wife, the former Annette Marsh. John fought in the Civil War in Mississippi during the time he met Annette. Annette worked for the Freedman's Bureau and had gone to Mississippi to teach reading and writing to freed slaves.

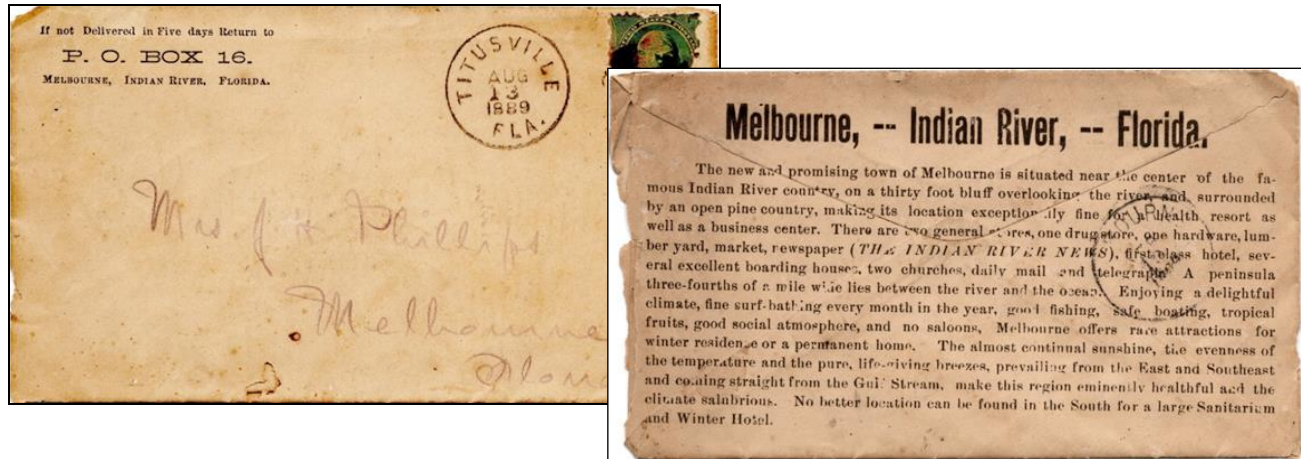


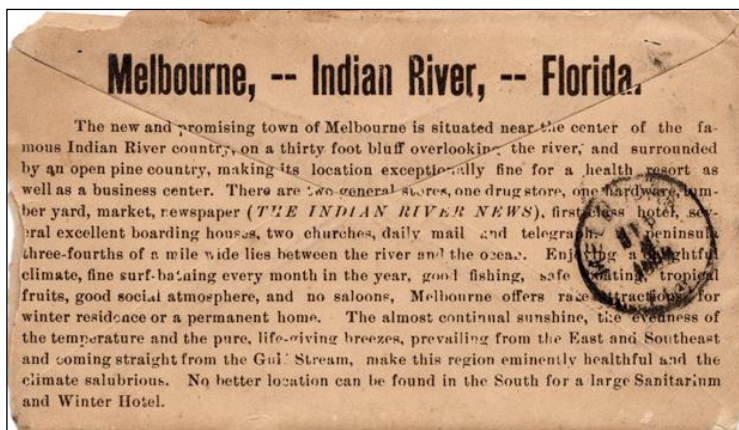
Figure 1. Melbourne, Florida advertising cover mailed in 1889 from Titusville, Florida.

John, **Figure 2**, and his twin brother, James, were born in 1840 to missionaries in India, but returned to the states in 1853 for their education. After the Civil War, the John Phillips family initially lived in the Chicago area where they adopted two children. They moved to Melbourne, Florida in 1886. Their daughter married Charles Horton of Melbourne, who later moved to Ft. Pierce. Many of their descendants live in Florida today.

It is interesting to note that the advertisement on the cover's reverse is for the city of Melbourne (probably printed by developers promoting the area) but was mailed from Titusville. Obviously, John picked up a few of these blank envelopes in Melbourne and used them for future letters back to his wife, this one from Titusville.



Figure 2. John Phillips.



There is another of these same advertising covers, **Figure 3**, that John used to mail to his wife from Marshall, Minnesota, where he had gone to visit his wife's sister and husband. Both covers have Melbourne backstamps. Titusville's post office was established in 1869 but Melbourne's did not exist until 1880.

Figure 3. Melbourne, Florida advertising cover sent from Marshall, Minnesota by John Phillips to his wife.

The intriguing backstory about this family is that they had dealings with Abraham Lincoln and his administration. James Phillips wrote a letter, **Figure 3**, to his brother, John, during the war in 1864 telling him about his visit with President Lincoln in the White House. He began with a tour of Gettysburg Battlefield then moved to Washington, D.C., where he was introduced to Lincoln and had a brief chat.

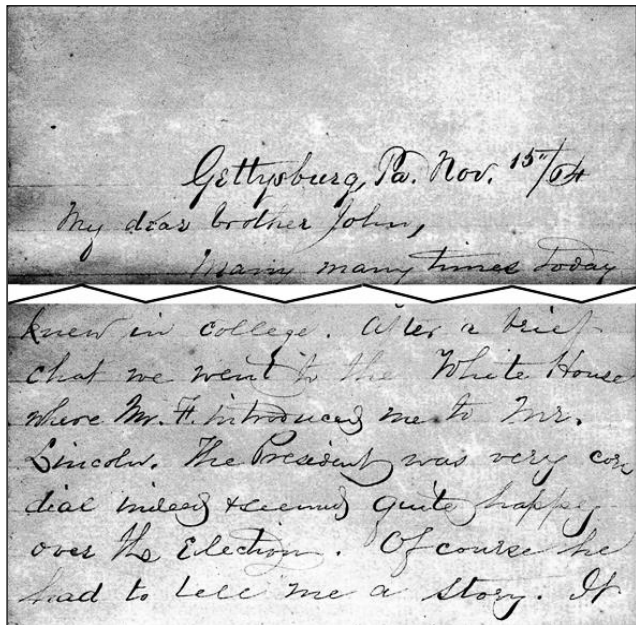


Figure 3. James Phillips' letter from Gettysburg to his brother John.

Also during the Civil War, John Phillips had become good friends with Anson T. Hemingway, **Figure 4**, who was serving in the same unit (Company H, U.S. Colored 70th Regiment), along with their friend Ethan Montgomery.



Figure 4. Anson T. Hemingway.

Anson was the grandfather of Ernest Hemingway. During the war, Anson ran the Freedman's Bureau in the Mississippi area. After the war, Anson and John ended up living next door to each other in Cicero, Illinois.

Figure 5 is a letter written in 1869 in Ionia, Michigan to Hemingway from their mutual friend and wartime companion Ethan Montgomery. He writes to Hemingway mentioning their friend John Phillips, noted as "John HP."

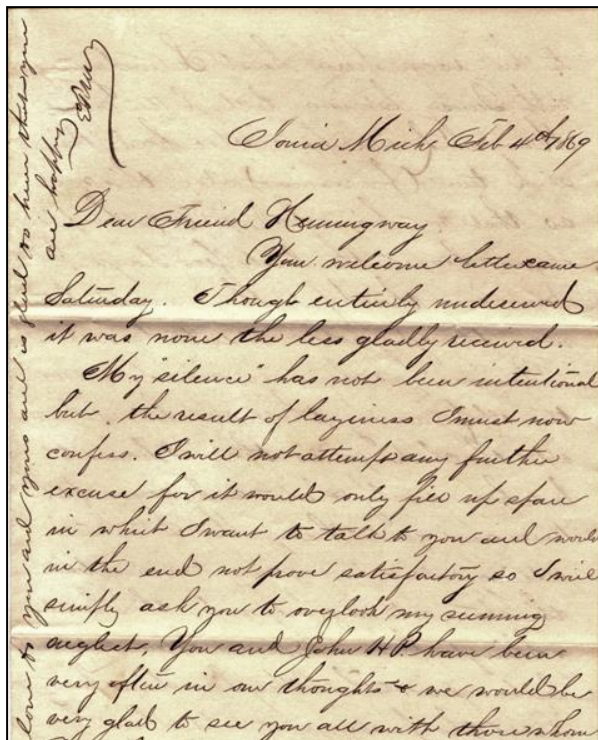


Figure 5. Ethan Montgomery's 1869 letter to Anson Hemingway.

When John and family moved to Melbourne, he established a pineapple farm. He lost the farm in the famous 1895 freeze. He gave up farming and then helped organize the Melbourne State Bank and became its president. He died in 1901.

My thanks to Blair and Joe King, descendants of John Phillips' adopted daughter, for sharing these stories and images.

An 1885 Orlando Cover to Germany

By Steve Patrick

Having owned the only two pre-Civil War covers from Orlando, I have been in search of Orlando cancels from 1865 to 1885. I have not seen a cover with a bank note stamp before 1883. I assume that mail volume was low and collectors removed most stamps from covers.



The cover in **Figure 1** was recently purchased on eBay for a modest \$10 including shipping. I like it for several reasons.

First, it is the first example of a cork killer from this time. Not very artistic, but effective for its purpose. The seller advertised it as a “fancy cancel.” The postal stationery is an example of design U66 from 1883.

Figure 1. July 10, 1885, Orlando mailing to Germany, arriving July 26.

The second reason is the foreign destination to Germany. It left Orlando July 10 and passed through New York July 13. It arrived in Germany July 26, per backstamps.

The third reason is because, per the enlarged return address portion of the cover, **Figure 2**, it originated in Gotha, a settlement founded about 1883 by a German named A. H. Hempel, **Figure 3**, who named his 1000-acre purchase after his hometown in Germany. A Gotha post office existed from 1883, but the **Figure 1** mailing was posted in Orlando.

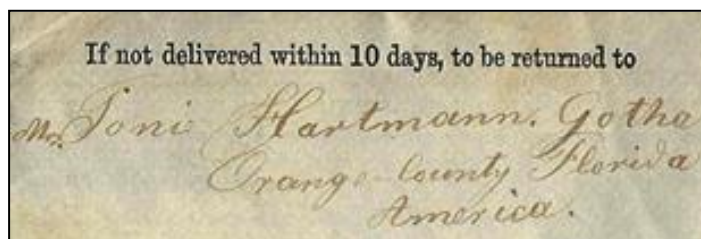
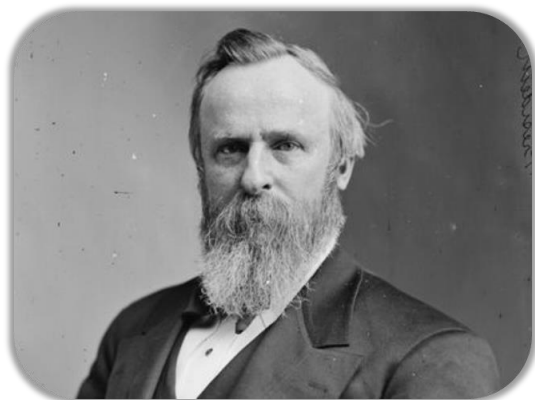


Figure 2. Enlarged return address portion of cover.



Today, Gotha has been swallowed by metro Orlando but is a census-designated place (CPE). It is 11 miles west of downtown Orlando between Windermere and Ocoee. It is the home of Palm Cottage Gardens, Florida’s first experimental botanical garden founded by famed horticulturalist Dr. Henry Nehrling. The local cemetery also holds the final resting place of Bob Ross, the longtime PBS artist/instructor.

Figure 3. A. H. Hempel. (Courtesy of the Orlando Sentinel, November 08, 2020.)

Gleason Romer Postcards Document South Florida History By Juan L. Riera



Figure 1. Gleason Romer's photographs used on circa 1940 postcards.

Left: "Capturing Green Turtles on a Florida Key." Right: Seminole Indian Girls Stringing Beads."

Gleason Waite Romer (Sept. 7, 1887 - July 5, 1971) was born in New York and in 1925 moved to Miami at a very opportune time. He used his profession of photography to document the rapidly changing landscape of south Florida during that era. Postcards displaying Gleason Waite Romer's photographs of South Florida, such as those in *Figure 1*, are the postal history lens through which we can understand and appreciate not only the history but the humanity of south Florida during the many years Romer photographed the area.

At age 19, Romer was working as a newsboy on trains and found a Brownie box camera left behind by a passenger, which he turned in to a porter who sold it to him for fifty cents. Romer was hooked on photography taking his first photograph from the back of a slow-moving train going over a bridge.

After a couple of years, he bought a secondhand Premo camera in 1908, as advised by an Atlanta area photographer. This was considered a commercial grade camera that used glass negatives and suddenly he was a professional photographer taking pictures of groups and individuals.

By 1910, Romer had saved enough to purchase his own studio and in 1925 he made the move to Miami at the height of the Florida Land Boom. Upon arriving, Romer found a job at the Illustrated Daily Tab and within six months was the head of the photo department. Everyone else quickly left to make their fortune flipping real estate.

When the Daily Illustrated Tab ceased operations several months later, Romer was owed eight weeks back pay. In lieu of payment, he took a complete hardbound file of all copies of the paper, all the dark room equipment, and the negatives of the pictures used in the paper.

Soon thereafter, the 1926 Hurricane essentially leveled Miami and Miami Beach and Romer began documenting the changing of south Florida. He took photographs from land, boats, and planes. He also photographed winter residents such as Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Will Rogers, and William Jennings Bryan. His photographs ranged from beauty contests to KKK rallies.

Figures 2-5 are postcards illustrating Gleason Romer's photographs, courtesy of the Florida Memory Project of the State of Florida archives (<https://www.floridamemory.com>).



Figure 2. APR 5 1943 PALM BEACH FLA. "A Beautiful Florida Home."



Figure 3. DEC 23 1934 STUART FLA. "A Seminole Indian Village in Florida."

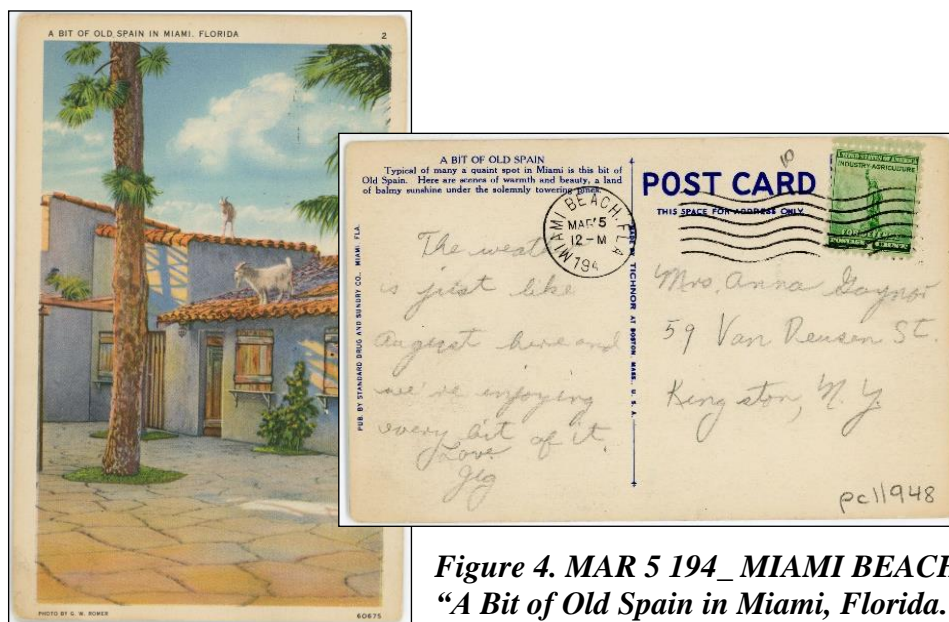


Figure 4. MAR 5 1944 MIAMI BEACH FLA. "A Bit of Old Spain in Miami, Florida."

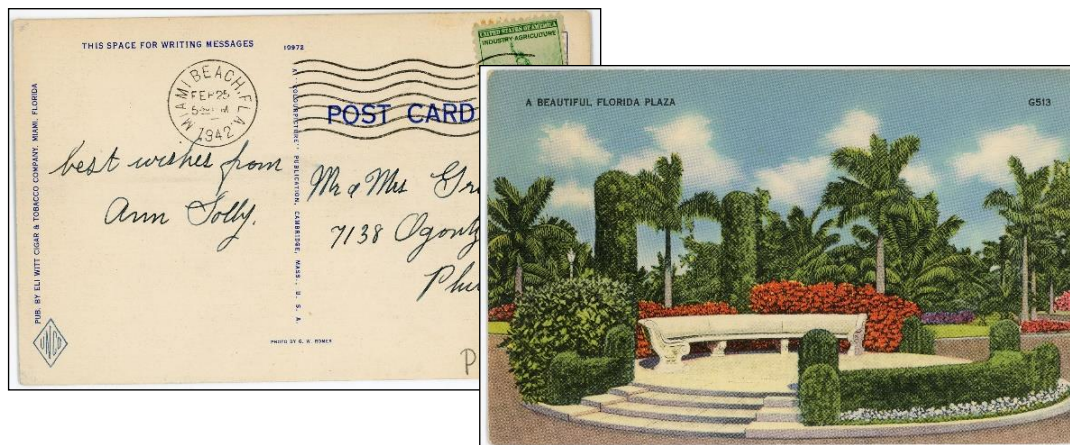


Figure 5. FEB 25 1942 MIAMI BEACH FLA. "A Beautiful Florida Plaza."

While Romer often made parts of his collection accessible via exhibits, he was concerned about the fate of his collection as he got older. He knew he had a treasure trove of images that needed a permanent home.

In 1959, Romer repeatedly contacted Miami Assistant City Manager Merritt Stierheim who eventually came to see Romer's photographic collection. The collection included 40 years of Romer photography as well as collections acquired from Jesse Bratley (1911 Miami Welcome Arch photograph) and Dr. Fuad Hanna of the south side neighborhood (currently known as the Brickell neighborhood). Arrangements were made to purchase the collection and the deal was concluded in 1965.

The Gleason Romer Collection is owned by the City of Miami and stored and administered by the Miami-Dade Public Library System.

United States Philatelic Classics Society Distinguished Philatelist Award Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D.

The Distinguished Philatelist Award was bestowed upon Florida Postal History Society's President **Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D.** at the February 20-21 annual meeting of the United States Philatelic Classics Society (USPCS). The award recognizes exceptionally meritorious service to US philately through published research, award-winning collections, active participation in the organization and promotion of philatelic exhibitions and sustained administrative service to the national or international organizations which further United States philately.

Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D. is an award-winning philatelist from Philadelphia. He is active in multiple stamp organizations, including the American Philatelic Society, United States Philatelic Classics Society (Regional Vice President for Florida/Board of Directors), and Carriers and Locals Society (President). He is on the Board of Trustees for the Philatelic Foundation, the Manuscript Society, Pennsylvania Postal History Society, Mid Atlantic Federation of Postal History, and Florida Postal History Society.

Through his study of postal history, especially Philadelphia local posts, he has earned multiple McDonald Awards (USPCS) and Editor's Awards (CALs). In 2006, his exhibit "Fighting the Fed in Philadelphia: Locals, Carriers, and Independent Mails, 1835 to 1867" won the Champion of Champions award and proceeded to earn five large gold medals in international competition.

Congratulations to Vernon for this well-deserved recognition and award.

Fort Fanning Then and Now

By William Johnson, D.D.S.

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles presenting letters originating from military forts during the Seminole Wars. Additional authors to be part of the series are welcomed. If you are interested, please contact Steve Kennedy at skycopatc@yahoo.

Fort Fanning, **Figure 1**, was an important U.S. Army post built in November 1838 on the Suwannee River during the Second Seminole War. It was first called “Palmetto” and later renamed in honor of Colonel Alexander Fanning, who had served under General Andrew Jackson in the First Seminole War.



Figure 1. Fort Fanning located on the Suwannee River.

As one of the first graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Fanning graduated in 1812 and went on to serve in the War of 1812. Fanning came to Florida in 1818 as a Major under Andrew Jackson and was part of the campaign that led to the destruction of Suwannee Old Town, a large Seminole village that lay just across the river from the later site of Fort Fanning.

The purpose of Fort Fanning was to protect the highly strategic and heavily utilized crossing of the Suwannee River.

The fort was a strong log stockade located atop a level bluff. It served as a base of operations for U.S. and Militia troops that tried to suppress the activities of small bands of Creek and warriors that operated from the vast swamps of the lower Suwannee River. Raids and skirmishes were a constant part of life in the region during the years 1836 to 1842.

It was not until 1842 that the last groups of Native Americans in the region gave up the fight. The forced removal of the American Indians to what is now Oklahoma ended the need for the occupation of Fort Fanning and it was abandoned in February 1843. Because it was made of wood and located in a warm humid climate, it soon deteriorated.

There are no known postal covers from this period. But apparently enough Floridians resided in the area to establish a post office in May 1846 that continued service until 1857 with the name changed to Sikesville. There are six known stampless covers from 1846 until 1851.

There are several types of postmarks known (*Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, Briggs, Ferguson, Lera, Florida Postal History Society 2018, pg.147-148.) Type 1 was misspelled Fort Fanning. A December 19, 1846, example is shown in **Figure 2**.



Figure 2. Front and reverse of 1846 cover with misspelled Fort "Faning".

Type III is Fort Fanning spelled correctly. A December 29, 1848, example, courtesy of Deane Briggs, is shown in **Figure 3**.

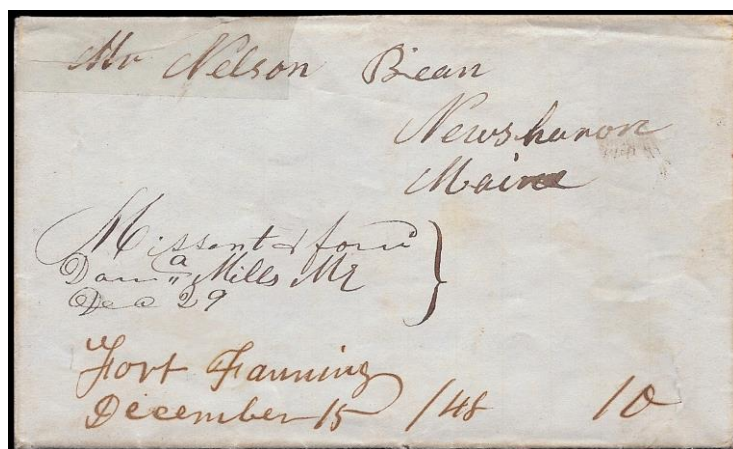


Figure 3. Type III Fort Fanning postmark on December 29, 1848, cover.

There is an adhesive stamped cover recorded in *Florida Postal History 1763-1861* dated March 29, 1857, **Figure 4**, just before the post office name changed to Sikesville.

The site of Fort Fanning is preserved today at the Fort Fanning Historic Park in Fanning Springs, Florida. The city owned facility is located at the original fort site and features the reconstructed gates and a section of stockade wall. A roadside marker gives a brief history of Fort Fanning to all interested visitors (**Figure 5**).



Figure 4. March 29, 1857, stamped cover.



Figure 5. Fort Fanning history marker.

St. Joseph, Florida

By Jack Malarkey with Pat Malarkey-Stallard

Civilizations past and present leave their mark, though many leave only written memories of what once was. Because Florida has so many of these lost, abandoned, or renamed towns and cities, my goal is to collect cancelations from as many as possible. What greater proof of these lost communities than a postal cancelation?

Postal records verify openings and closings of post offices and help tell the story of long forgotten places. A thriving post office, with strong receipts and generous postmaster compensation tells us a lot about the town itself. But who lived there? Why did the town exist? And why did it disappear? Why did so many of these once thriving communities become ghost towns?

The reasons are many: railway closures, deadly epidemics, local disasters, extremes in climate, such as floods, droughts and freezes, and in Florida, of course, the dreaded hurricane. Often, it was the loss of natural resources forcing settlers, like our hunter-gatherer ancestors, to simply move on when they ran out of timber or phosphate, or good farmland. And sometimes, it is the bad luck stigma that lingers after too many disastrous events.

The state of Florida has a long and complex history of these successes and failures. St. Joseph, once the most affluent and most populated city in Florida, was one such place.

In the 1500s, Spanish explorers named St. Joseph Bay, Bahi'a de San Jose, but did nothing further to settle the area until 1701 when they established a fort, Presidio San Jose, and a mission at the tip of the peninsula. Both were abandoned after a few brief years. Ships often weathered storms by sheltering in St. Joseph Bay, where a small community, perhaps a forerunner of the city of St. Joseph, was thought to exist as far back as 1812, while the territory was still under Spanish rule.

By the early nineteenth century, on the other side of the Apalachicola River, cotton was being shipped from a place called Cottonton, a British trading post. By 1827, it was known as West Point, then in 1831, by an act of the Legislative Council, it became known as Apalachicola.

The St. Joseph saga may have begun between 1763 and 1784 when the English commercial house of Panton Leslie & Company, eventually controlled by John Forbes, established a trading post, dealing in muskets, powder and other provisions in exchange for deer hides. When Spain regained control of the area, John Forbes sought to collect trading losses through numerous meetings with the Indigenous peoples, held in 1804, 1807 and 1811, resulting in the acquisition of a large tract of land from St. Marks River to the Apalachicola River, known as the John Forbes purchase or Forbes Grant. This large tract was later sold to Colin Mitchell & Associates.

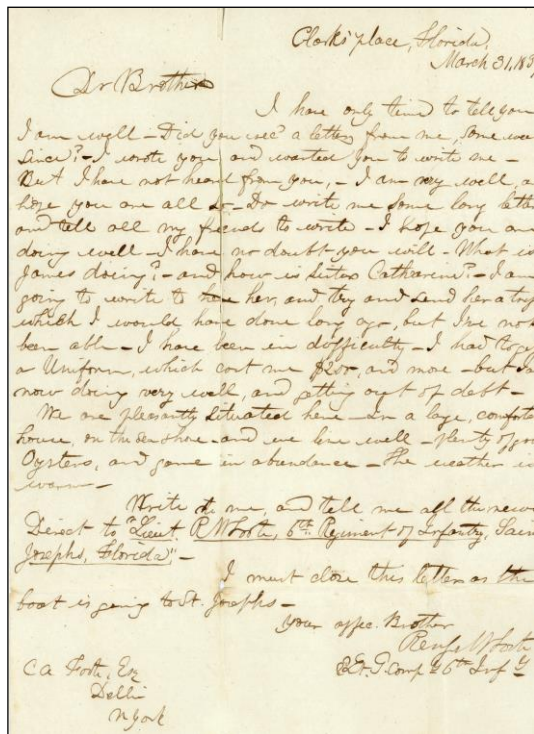
When the United States purchased La Florida from Spain in 1821, all Spanish land grants required legal validation. This resulted in multiple court battles fought over many years and finally ended in the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with Mitchell & Associates, in *Mitchell v. the United States*. With all surveys completed and clear title established, a speculative land market was created. The Apalachicola Land Company was formed, and New York offices listed lots at unbelievably high prices. When title was offered to the existing occupants, who were generally longtime merchants and traders, agreeable terms could not be reached. With anger and contempt, they decided to set up shop across the river.

With a flurry of activity, deep pockets of coinage and strong political backing, they were determined to head off all trade to the old hometown of Apalachicola, thus St. Joseph was born. Much has been written and subsequently lost in early newspapers of the area, including St. Joseph's short-lived *St. Joseph Times* and the *St. Joseph Telegraph*, heralding all that was achieved and all that was so quickly lost. This article represents a compilation of readings from the numerous sources listed.

Ambitious 1835 promoters began their endeavor with an excellent harbor but little access, other than shipping, to the new Florida Territory. It was necessary to find a way to connect trade across land, to water. The proposed Lake Wimico Canal and Railroad Company was incorporated to connect the lake with St. Joseph Bay. Ultimately, the railway materialized but the canal never did.

In the midst of this St. Joseph expansion, while Florida was still a Territory, the post office was established on December 28, 1835, with James Black appointed postmaster.¹

On March 31, 1839, Lt. R.W. Foote, an 1835 Military Academy graduate living at Clark's Place, wrote home to his brother, C.A. Foote, Esq., at Delhi, New York. Though temporarily short of funds because he had to buy a \$200.00 uniform, Lt. Foote was well, but like every other soldier in every era, he was longing for letters from home as can be seen in this excerpt of **Figure 1**:



"Dear Brother...Do write me some long letters and tell all my friends to write...We are pleasantly situated here in a large, comfortable house on the shore -- and we are well -- plenty of good oysters, and game in abundance -- the weather is warm -- Write to me and tell me all the news.

"Direct to Lieut. RW Foote, 6th Regiment of Infantry, Saint Josephs, Florida".

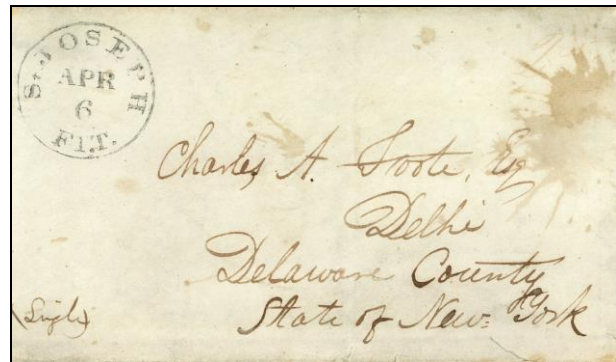
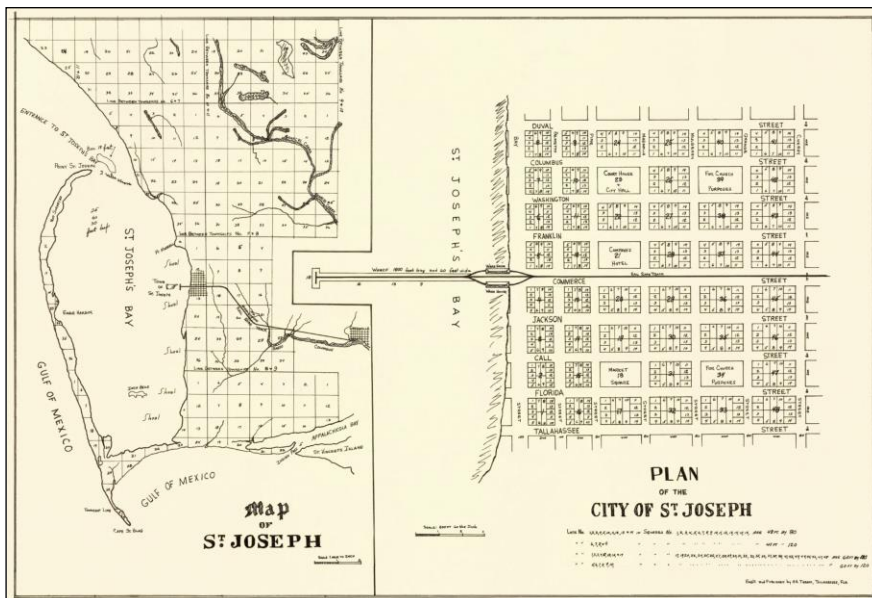


Figure 1: Letter from Lieutenant R.W. Foote to his brother, with St. Joseph postmark. (Malarkey collection.)

Because stamps were not in general use during this period of history, with postage fees usually being collected from the recipient, this was a debt which Lt. Foote was, apparently, eager to incur.



Surveyors laid out the town and lots were sold. St. Joseph was incorporated by the Legislative Council, and a map of the town was available (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Map of St. Joseph and Plan of City of St. Joseph (Courtesy of Maps of The Past, LLC. © Copyright 2021).

The railroad was completed with engine and cars ready for work. Storage houses and wharves were constructed at Lake Wimico and at St. Joseph Bay.

Development continued at a rapid pace. There were banks, seven or eight hotels, and several bars serving iced drinks. There was a gambling house, a racetrack, churches, schools, and other businesses, and a newspaper published twice weekly, as population surged. The “Saints”, as Apalachicola folks referred to the St. Joseph populous, made great headway but they never succeeded in blocking Apalachicola's market.

Trade commenced through every possible route throughout the area, as seen in the **Figure 3** mailing, when a schooner operator wrote on December 28, 1837, to Benjamin Delano, Esq., a business associate:

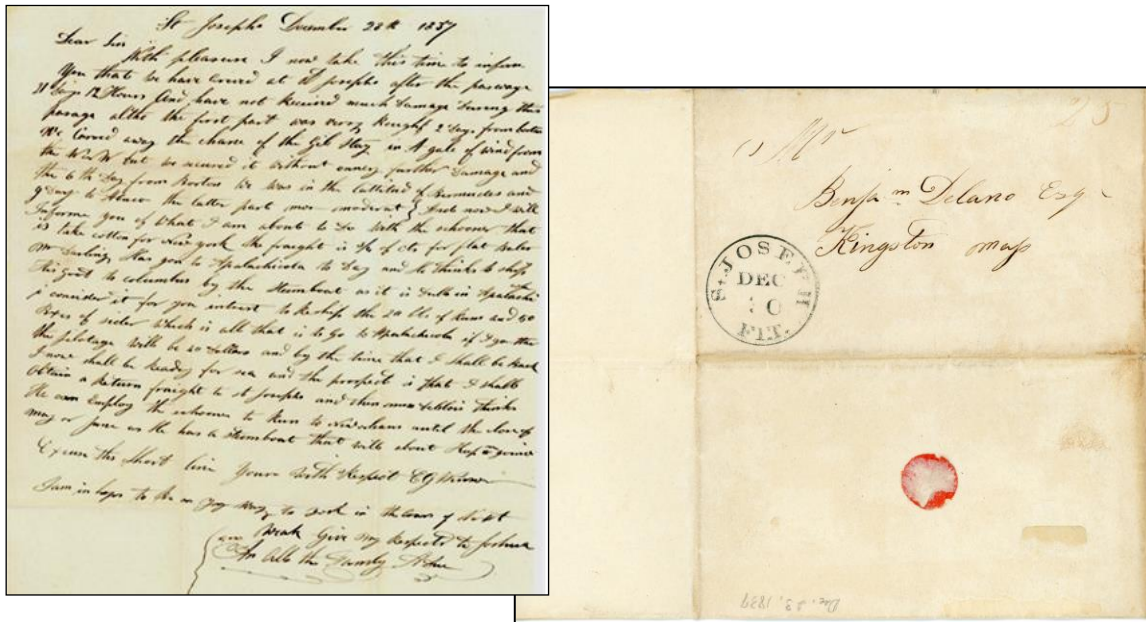


Figure 3: Trade letter, postmarked St. Joseph, describing complexities of moving goods from the Florida Territory to the Northeast. (Malarkey collection.)

“Dear Sir: ...we have arrived at St. Joseph’s after the passage 21 days 12 hours and have not received much damage during the passage....And now I will inform you of what I am about to do with the schooner, that is take cotton for New York.

“Mr. Darling has gone to Apalachicola today and he thinks to ship his load to Columbus by steamboat as it is full in Apalachicola...I consider it for your interest to re-ship the 20 barrels of rum and 50 boxes of sider (sic) which is all that is to go to Apalachicola if I go there...prospect is that I shall obtain a return freight to St. Joseph and then...employ the schooner to run to New Orleans until the last of May or June.”

In an excerpt from **Figure 4**, lovesick John B wrote on February 12, 1840, to his wife, Mary B, in Boston:

“Dear Beloved Wife,

“It is with pleasure that I embrace this opportunity of writing to one who is dearer to me than any other earthly treasure. The time has appeared long to me.

“I am in hope that I will be home about the middle of March, then I am in hope to see my dear beloved Mary in good health and spirits, but then, oh dear, sometimes think with pleasure, then at others I dare not think. It is so long since I received a letter from you. I am afraid something is the matter which prevents you from writing. I hope you have not kept nothing secret from me...it must be a detention of the male (sic)...”



Figure 4: Letter from lovesick husband, postmarked St. Joseph, demonstrating the difficulty in exchanging mail along complex mail routes. (Malarkey collection.)

The letter goes on to plead for mail from her which has been so scarce and so infrequent, that he fears she has undergone a change of heart; he finally concludes that the long, letter-less wait is due to the complexities and delays of receiving precious mail at St. Joseph.

In time, a sand road, later called “Old Stage Road”, opened from Georgia, passing through Marianna, St. Andrews Bay, and St. Joseph, then on to Apalachicola, providing land access to St. Joseph and enabling St. Joseph to receive mail once or twice a week from Marianna.

A glance at these complicated routes makes one wonder how mail was ever successfully exchanged. As a philatelic enthusiast, I am deeply interested in the details of routes, and markings on covers and stamps, but reading these ancient letters reminds me of the humanity beneath this endeavor.

Getting to “know” some of these letter writers, who were so dependent upon this service, lends depth and appreciation for the magnitude of the postal service, then and now. The people and the circumstances of their lives are the basis for postal history in every generation.

Throughout this period, rivalry and dislike continued between the citizens of St. Joseph and Apalachicola. Located in Franklin County, the saints could not resist antagonizing the old hometown by twice attempting to make St. Joseph the county seat, only to see it returned, each time, to Apalachicola.

1837 was both a good and a bad year, and possibly a preview of future events. A storm struck the area, causing some damage at Apalachicola, while sparing St. Joseph, causing only minor destruction there.

In late 1837, two bills were passed by the Legislative Council, creating Calhoun County, with St. Joseph as the county seat and designating St. Joseph as the location for the Florida Constitutional Convention, **Figure 5.**



Figure 5: Marker commemorating Florida Constitution, Constitution Convention Museum State Park, at the site of the Florida Constitution Convention held in 1838 at St. Joseph, Florida.

On the national front, a financial depression, known as the Panic of 1837, was in progress. Many local banks held their gold and silver, causing their paper money to become all but worthless. The St. Joseph economy was weakened, yet local enthusiasts went out on a limb and continued to extend the railroad to Tennessee Bluff, giving birth to the town of Iola. While this made for a safer, shorter distance to Georgia, funds rapidly diminished and soon they

were badly overextended. It was like putting one shovel in and taking two out.

The Florida Postal History Society's *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, states:

"St. Joseph was located in Franklin County on the Gulf Coast west of Apalachicola. The area became part of Calhoun County in 1838 and part of Gulf County in 1925. It must have been initially a very busy post office as the returns for 1837 reflect the 5th largest postmaster compensation in the territory and in 1841 the 7th largest postal receipts. St. Joseph became a busy port and a railroad to Iola added to the town's importance."

"However, by the mid-1840s both receipts and postmaster compensation had dropped considerably, leading to the closure of the post office in 1854. Three things led to the decay of St. Joseph: (1) the cost of transportation, (2) danger to vessels from a northwest wind, and (3) a severe yellow fever epidemic resulting in a large number of deaths. The town was deserted by 1854. Mail was handled by postal routes No. 2468, 2471, 2473 and 3503."²

By the middle 1840s, St. Joseph could well have earned a theoretical namesake change from St. Joseph to the famously unlucky St. Jobe, but without Jobe's successful conclusion.

Competition between St. Joseph and Apalachicola became so fierce that revenues dropped to unsustainable levels. Cotton prices dropped while the train to the bay reduced charges so low that abandonment and eventual sale resulted.

In 1841, a storm destroyed part of the wharf at the bay. Later, fire destroyed a part of the town, and yellow fever decimated the entire area. In 1842, a Spanish ship seeking shelter from a storm, entered the harbor and was detained. When decayed cargo was off-loaded, a towns person became ill, causing panicked residents to leave in droves, fearing that yellow fever had returned. Many believed that the town was cursed.

By 1843, with the loss of the train, there were many business failures and foreclosures. Another storm, in 1844, destroyed much of what was left of the town. Through 1845, the downward spiral continued, leaving Calhoun County without a county seat until January 1848, when Abe Springs Bluff was selected. Unlike the despised Apalachicola Land Company, which in its decline filed for bankruptcy, St. Joseph became a gift that kept on giving.

Folks in Apalachicola purchased St. Joseph buildings for pennies on the dollar, dismantling or shipping entire structures across the river. Bricks from the buildings went to Pensacola to pave the streets. The cemetery was pillaged; some head stones were found being used as counter tops in area businesses. As a final insult to once prosperous St. Joseph, during the Civil War, Confederates used St. Joseph materials to build a salt works, only to have it blown up by federal gunboats.

The closing of the post office, March 3, 1854, could be considered the final page in the story of St. Joseph. Today, there are no streets or buildings left, only the granite marker at Convention Park, commemorating the spot where the convention was held to draw up the Florida Constitution.

At Port St. Joe, there is a cemetery with a mass grave of yellow fever victims, and a museum highlighting the town that might have rivaled New Orleans or Savannah or may have become the future site of a state university and maybe even the state capitol, since Tallahassee was to have been a temporary capital.

While researching the town of St. Joseph and trying to learn about the people who lived there, I began searching for information about our young St. Joseph correspondent, Lieutenant Rensselaer W. Foote, (see **Figure 1**). I learned that Lieutenant R.W. Foote remained with the 6th regiment of the Infantry, of the Regular Army, serving throughout the Mexican - American War, and during the Civil War. He was commissioned Captain on June 9, 1853, and posthumously commissioned Major on June 27, 1862, for gallantry and meritorious service at the battle of Gaines Mill, Virginia where he was killed.³

A cenotaph in memory of Captain Foote can be found at Woodland Cemetery, Delhi, New York, **Figure 6**, while his actual remains were left upon the battlefield at Gaines Mill, Virginia.

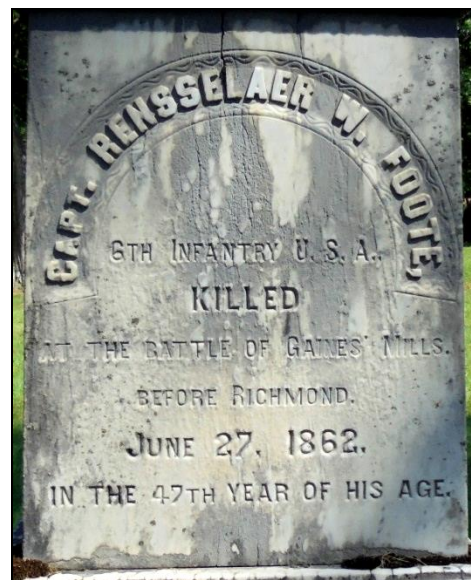


Figure 6: Cenotaph honoring Captain R.W. Foote, Woodland Cemetery, Delhi, New York. (Ancestry.com., U.S. Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current.)

The other St. Joseph correspondents remain mere snapshots in time; remnants of history tucked away in my collection.

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Special thanks to Todd D. Hause for his interest and for directing me to a most valued St. Joseph history source.

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² *Florida Postal History 1763 -1861*, Florida Postal History Society, APS Affiliate 227. Edited by Deane R. Briggs, M.D., Francis Ferguson, Thomas M. Lera. Compilation copyright ©2018 Florida Postal History Society, Wilcox Press, 102 S. Main Street, Madrid, IA 50156, p. 365.

³ <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1555/>, Historical Data Systems, comp. *U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865*.

New Hampshire Regiments Garrisoned at Fort Jefferson, Florida By Thomas M. Lera

Fort Jefferson was garrisoned for the first time in January 1861. With signs of war looming large during that winter, it seems unlikely the time of this occupation was accidental. A few weeks later, on February 10th, Florida became the third state to enter the war. The presence of a detachment of Union troops at Fort Jefferson, along with another at Key West's Fort Taylor, insured the United States would remain in control of the Keys throughout the Civil War. Fort Jefferson was the largest masonry fort in the United States yet was only partly completed.¹



Original plans called for a troop strength of 2,500, but it is unlikely anywhere near that number was actually ever housed within the fort. Quarters for enlisted men were never completed so most of the troops lived in wooden sheds and tents on the parade grounds. The 7th Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteers, shipped out to Fort Jefferson via New York arriving there February 12, 1862.

Figure 1. The 7th New Hampshire Regiment cover with Fort Jefferson postmark. The Regiment was at Fort Jefferson for three months.

The unit arrived at Fort Jefferson, Florida in March 1862, under the command of Col. Haldimand S. Putnam, attached to Brannan's Command, District of Florida until June 16, 1862. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Brannan was appointed a brigadier general of volunteers and placed in command of the Department of Key West. During its term of service, December 1861 through July 1865, the regiment had a total of 426 fatalities from wounds and disease: 16 officers and 410 enlisted men.



Figure 2. Sixteenth New Hampshire Regiment with Fort Jefferson Postmark. The Regiment was at Fort Jefferson only for about 24 hours.



Figure 3. Two other cachets from Deane Briggs's Florida's Civil War Postal History Exhibit.²

On October 24, 1862, the 16th New Hampshire Infantry, mustered in for 9 months' service under the command of Colonel James Pike. The regiment left New Hampshire for New York in November and joined Banks' Expeditionary Corps sailing for New Orleans, Louisiana, December 6. On Sunday morning, December 14, they landed at Fort Jefferson for coal and naval stores and left at daybreak on Monday morning, the 15th. Friday morning, December 20, they landed at Ship Island after weathering a storm in the Gulf of Mexico.³

The 16th New Hampshire Infantry mustered out of service August 20, 1863, at Concord, New Hampshire. The regiment had lost a total of 221 men during service: 5 officers and 216 enlisted men.

Fort Jefferson Post Office

A post office was established to serve Fort Jefferson on October 28, 1861. Communication with the outside world was limited to a single small schooner making one weekly round trip to Key West. Unfortunately, when the weather became stormy or the winds becalmed, the 70 miles round trip voyage required additional time. No information on this schooner is available.⁴

Gordon D. McHenry, in his "Fort Jefferson Postal History", listed the postmasters and showed several patriotic covers with Fort Jefferson postmark.⁵

POSTMASTERS**DATE**

Horace Brooks	10/28/1861, Lt. Col. 2nd U.S. Artillery
George Phillips	11/27/1861, Overseer of Laborers
George T. Jackson	09/01/1865
Disc	03/08/1867; Re-established 08/15/1867
George T. Jackson	08/15/1867-10/27/1868; mail was handled by Key West

The post office was discontinued October 27, 1868, and mail service for those who remained at the Fort was performed by the Key West Post Office.

George Phillips moved to Key West and was appointed Postmaster October 14, 1865.

There are three other articles published in the FPHJ on Fort Jefferson.

1. Deane Briggs, "1852 Fort Jefferson Construction Letter," Florida Postal History Journal, July 2007, Vol. 14(2) pp. 7-10.
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3. Anonymous, "Florida Postal History Seen at Auction," Florida Postal History Journal, Jan. 2019, Vol. 26(1) p. 18.

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Endnotes

¹ *La Posta*, October - November 2002, Whole Number 197, Vol. 33(5), pp. 44-45. Accessed December 12, 2020, <http://www.lapostapub.com/Backissues/LP33-5.pdf>.

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⁵ Gordon D. McHenry, "Fort Jefferson Postal History," *Florida Postal History Journal*, March 1999, Vol. 6(1), pp. 3-11.

Editor's Note: In future issues of the Florida Postal History Journal, Tom Lera will explore Fort Jefferson postmark colors and offer some interesting information on Key West mail service revealed during his research of Fort Jefferson.

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