



FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

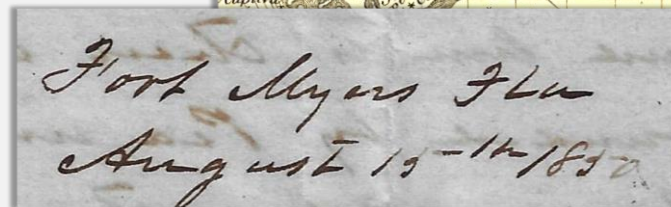
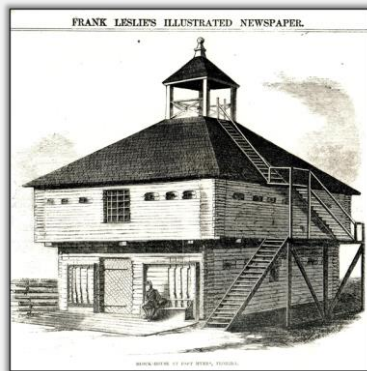
Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State



Vol. 29, No. 1

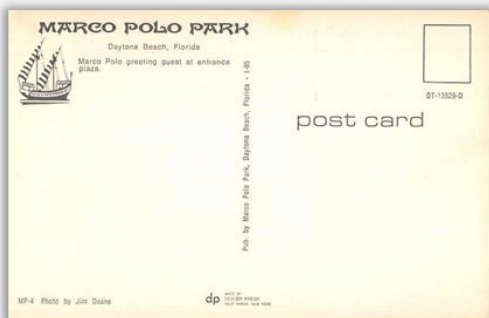
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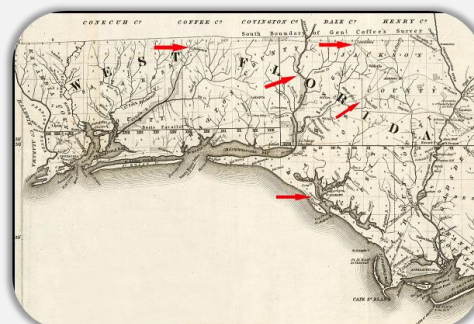
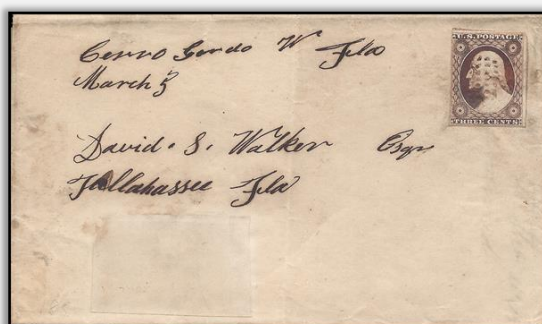


Military Fort Myers from 1850 – Part 1

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Military Fort Myers from 1850 – Part 1

By Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D.

Editor's Note: This is the third 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.

The only known cover in private hands, and possibly the earliest archival example, from military Fort Myers on the Caloosahatchee River contains important historical content. The mailing travelled a long, varied, segmented postal route, and hailed from the moment of conception of a future great metropolis. The dynamics of the indigenous people are germane not only to this article but to the entire series of Seminole War military fort postal history articles. The postal history and contents are integral to the three Seminole Wars and the fort itself.

Caloosa Indians

In 1513, Ponce de Leon explored Florida's southwest coast and discovered an archaic Caloosahatchee culture which had migrated up from Central America over the previous thousand years (*Figure 1*).



Based upon estuarine fisheries, they fashioned fishhooks, prized conch shells, built burial mounds, were canal diggers, and lived on wild berries, fruit, nuts, and roots.¹ Ponce de Leon returned in 1521 searching for the Fountain of Youth and was mortally wounded.²

By the seventeenth century Spanish traders developed a relationship with the Caloosas who became known as Spanish Indians. The Spaniards unfortunately brought dreaded white man's diseases. Entire villages were devastated by smallpox, tuberculosis, yellow fever, and measles.³

English eventually settled the nearby Carolinas and Georgia where

Figure 1. Caloosa Indians 1521.

Creek populations had lived and were being pressured south from expanding white populations. In 1708, the Spanish Governor at St. Augustine reported twelve thousand Christian Indians had been captured by English and sold into slavery.⁴

Seminole Indians

The word Seminole, derived from Spanish "cimarrones," or "Sim-in-oil," means "wild ones" or those who "broke away."⁵ The name Seminole first appeared during the late 1700s near Gainesville for Creeks pushed south into unoccupied Florida.⁶

In 1813, a Creek Indian rebellion in Alabama forced more into Spanish held northern Florida between the Suwannee and St. Marks rivers⁷ (*Figure 2*).

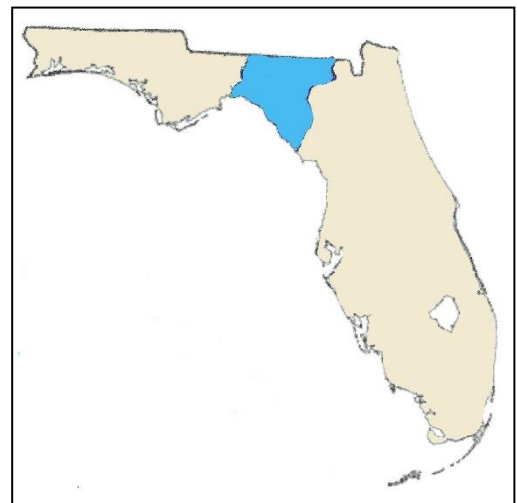


Figure 2. Seminole Indians 1813.

Although both Creeks and Seminoles believed no one could “own” earth, they were more than simple hunter-gatherers, as they adopted aspects of white frontier society: herded cattle, rotated crops, and built some cabins.⁸

Seminoles also practiced a benign form of slavery, typically woman and children captured in war.⁹ Escaped Africans helped Seminoles interpret European culture, often intermarried, and eventually built villages protected by nearby Seminoles, representing a threat to slave-owning southern states.¹⁰

Seminole Indian Wars

An inevitable clash of civilizations resulted from mutual lack of understanding as well as cultural bias and arrogance. European concepts of private property, ownership, formal marriage, and social stratification clashed with a misconception that Indians were just part of the wilderness. Indigenous populations also suffered from depletion of deer, otter, and beaver further compounded by disease and alcohol problems.¹¹

The Seminole Wars were three conflicts in Florida from 1816 through 1858 between the U.S. Army and native and runaway African Americans. Taken together, the Seminole Wars were the longest and most expensive Indian Wars in terms of human and monetary suffering in United States history.

The First Seminole War began November 17, 1817,¹² but was not much more than Andrew Jackson’s incursion into northern Florida without directly confronting any Seminoles.¹³ Spain was unable to defend itself, and the Adams-Onís (Transcontinental) Treaty of 1819 ceded the territory of Florida to the United States,¹⁴ which for the first time reached the Pacific Ocean. Little else was accomplished, as all Native Americans and blacks remained united and elusive.

An influx of white settlers during the First Interlude led to inevitable conflicts and need for protection. The 1823 Treaty of Moultrie Creek¹⁵ required Seminoles to relocate for twenty years, compensated with \$5,000 each year, from northern Florida to a 4,000,000-acre reservation in the central Florida interior¹⁶ (*Figure 3*).



The U.S. government enforced the treaty by building a series of forts and trading posts along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. However, the federal Indian Removal Act of May 28, 1830, applied to all southern Native Americans including Seminoles for tribal relocation west of the Mississippi River by 1836. Seminole Indian spokesperson Osceola protested this obvious violation and was temporarily imprisoned.¹⁷

Hence, the Second Seminole War began mid-December 1835, a costly and bloody war for seven years during which time many escaped blacks became loyal to Indians.¹⁸

Figure 3. Seminole reservation 1823.

At first, the outgunned Seminoles effectively used guerrilla warfare to frustrate the more numerous American military forces.¹⁹ In late 1837, under a flag of truce meeting near St. Augustine, outspoken Osceola was knocked out, bound, imprisoned in South Carolina, and died on January 31, 1838.²⁰ The war officially ended more than four years later on August 14, 1842.

Approximately 3,000 Seminoles and eight hundred black Seminoles were then relocated west of the Mississippi. Those remaining were allowed to be in south central Florida between the [Pea] Peace and Kissimmee Rivers, no closer than twenty miles from the coast (*Figure 4*).

Army losses were 1,466 in addition to several hundred Florida volunteers.²¹ Public discontent over the long war led Congress to pass the Armed Occupation Act. As an incentive to populate Florida, a one-year homesteading was encouraged in the former war zone offering 160 acres anywhere south of Gainesville and Palatka.²²

During the Second Interlude, Florida was admitted to the Union as the 27th state on March 3, 1845, the last full day of John Tyler's presidency. Congress passed the Swamp Land Act of 1850 on September 28th allowing land developers in five southern states, including Florida, to drain the Everglades and convert swamp into plantations for rice and sugar cane.²³

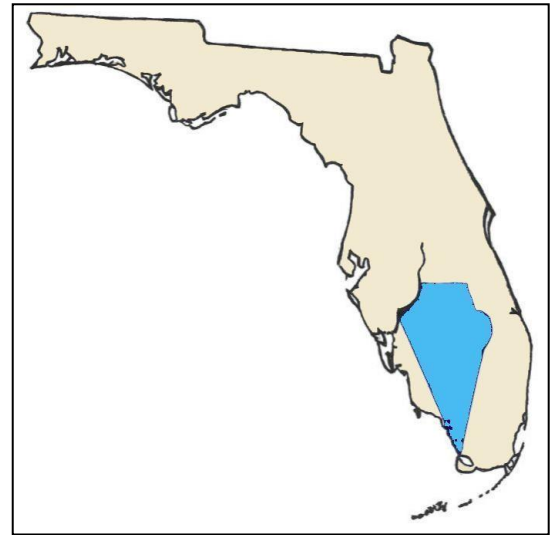


Figure 4. Seminole reservation 1842.



The Third Seminole War, or Billy Bowlegs War, began on December 20, 1855, but was one of attrition and demoralization. Seminole Indians numbered only 600 of which just 150 were warriors and were pressured to leave or be exterminated.²⁴ Faced with starvation and weary of war, an agreement at “Billy’s Creek,” four miles northeast of Fort Myers, was reached on March 4, 1858.²⁵ Billy received \$7,500 for himself and \$1,000 to each warrior who relocated to Oklahoma.²⁶ Nevertheless, 350 retreated²⁷ to the Big Cypress Swamp near present day Everglades City where no white settlers were willing to live.²⁸

On May 1, 1858, Billy and his wife were among thirty-eight warriors plus eighty-five women and children that boarded the steamer *Grey Cloud*. An image of Billy (**Figure 5**) appeared in Harper’s Weekly as Billy arrived in

Figure 5. Seminole Chief Billy Bowlegs. (Courtesy of FloridaMemory.com)

New Orleans on his way west.²⁹ On May 8, 1858, the War was officially declared over.³⁰ Billy Bowlegs died in Oklahoma within one year on April 27, 1859.³¹

Caloosahatchee River

As the Seminoles were being ever pushed further south toward the Everglades, the 27-mile Caloosahatchee River (**Figure 6**) became increasingly strategic as it reached nearly from inland Lake Okeechobee, Florida’s largest freshwater body, to saltwater Charlotte Harbor.

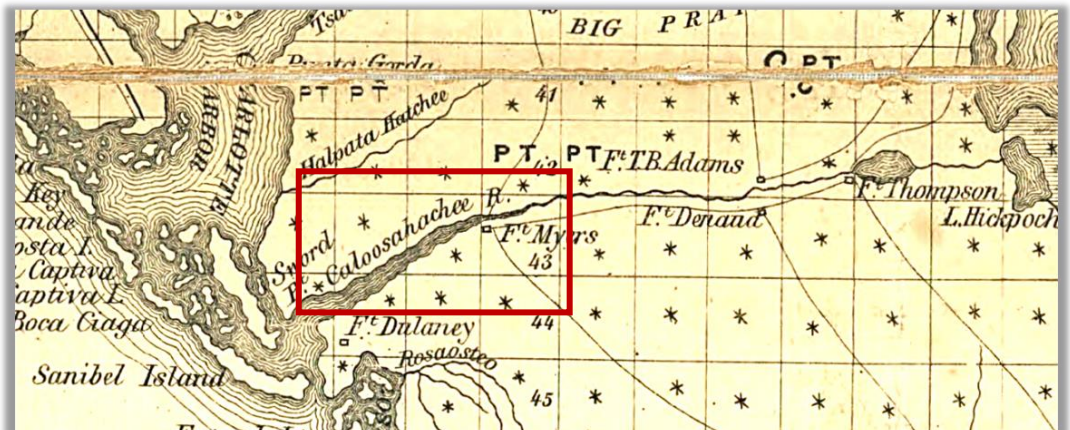


Figure 6. Caloosahatchee River.

The river provided easy penetration into the interior and was well situated for a series of protective forts, with tidal effect extending all the way to Fort Denaud (1837-1842 and 1855-1858) only five miles west of present-day LaBelle. The entrance to the Caloosahatchee was Punta Rassa,³² “smooth flat” land originally used by 16th century Spanish conquistadors to unload cattle.

At that important location in late 1837, Fort Dulaney was established as an army supply depot and hospital. Although closed one year later, Fort Dulaney was reestablished in September 1841, only to be destroyed one month later by a hurricane on October 19, 1841.³³

Army operations accordingly moved fifteen miles up the Caloosahatchee River to establish Fort Harvie on the southern bank, site of future Fort Myers, but which was abandoned a year later in 1842 at the end of the Second Seminole War. Fort Myers and satellite Punta Rassa strategically controlled an area which stretched one hundred miles from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Okeechobee near the geographical center of south Florida.³⁴

Birth of Military Fort Myers

By orders of General Twigg in Tampa, Major Ridgely sailed during the Second Interlude from Fort Brooke, on Monday February 18, 1850, with two companies of artillery. On the following day, they arrived at Punta Rassa. Two days later, they sailed up the Caloosahatchee River to the ruins of Fort Harvie, a most beautiful high spot with tall oak trees and palms,³⁵ and near a tiny creek which trickled in good fresh water.³⁶

The American Flag was raised on February 20, 1850, and Fort Myers was born. Within a few days, Billy Bowlegs and his tribesmen made a friendly appearance, mentioned their settlements in the Big Cypress about 30 miles southeast, and said they wanted to be left alone. According to the 1850 Census, Florida’s population was 87,445.³⁷



Figure 7. Lt. Col. Abraham C. Myers.

Abraham Myers

Lt. Col. Abraham C. Myers (May 1811 - June 20, 1889) (*Figure 7*) graduated on July 1, 1833, from the U.S. Military Academy South Carolina.³⁸ Myers served in the bloody Second Seminole war during 1836-1838 and 1841-1842.

While in Tampa during 1850, the gallant officer had the good fortune of marrying Marion Twigg, daughter of David Emanuel Twigg, Commanding General of US Forces stationed at Fort Brooke, Tampa.³⁹ Abraham Myers was the chief quartermaster of the Department of Florida, and Twigg’s new son-in-law. Myers was never stationed at Fort Myers, nor did he ever visit Fort Myers.

1850 Military Letter

Although Fort Myers had no official post office for another twenty-six years, written military correspondence began in 1850 during the Second Interlude.

The *Figure 8* cover, acquired from Deane Briggs, was written within five months of the fort’s inception.

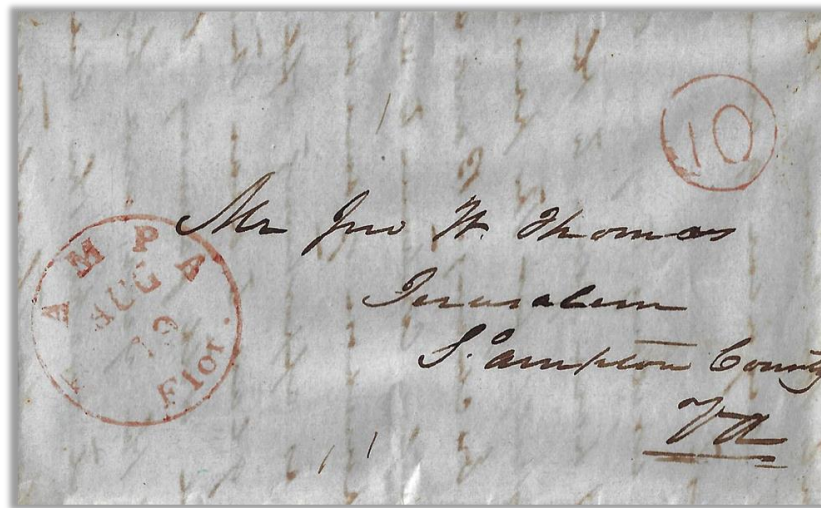


Figure 8. August 15, 1850, Mailing from First Lieutenant George Thomas.

More than three pages were authored by First Lieutenant George Thomas to his brother James Thomas in Virginia, addressed to “Mr. Jno. W. Thomas / Jerusalem / S^oampton County / Va.”

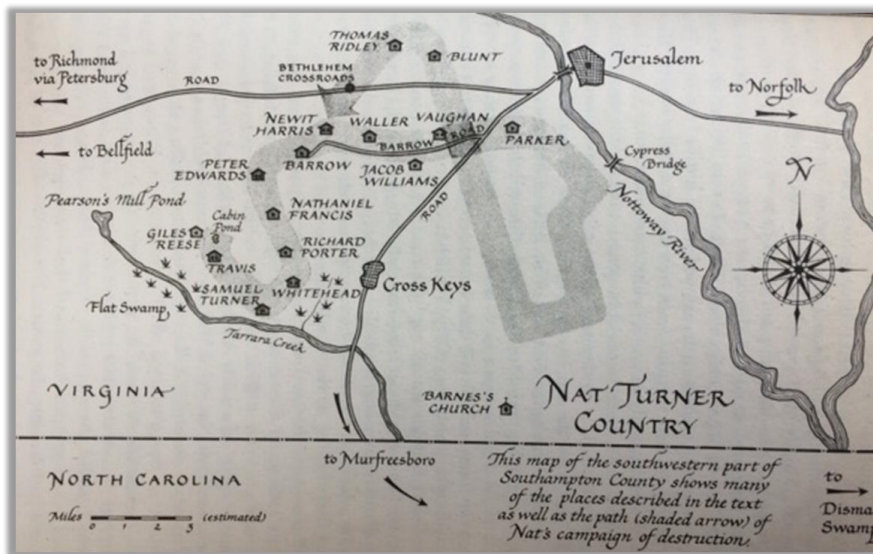


Figure 9. Jerusalem, Southampton County, Virginia.

Founded in 1749, Southampton County was located along Virginia's southern border near Norfolk (**Figure 9**).

Jerusalem was founded in 1791 as the first town and county seat. The Census of 1850 recorded Southampton County with 5,940 whites and 7,581 slaves. The county is probably best known for the infamous 1831 slave rebellion initiated by preacher and slave Nat Turner. At least fifty-one whites were killed, retaliated by one hundred blacks killed and fifty-six executed. Turner was hanged on November 11, 1831, in Jerusalem.⁴⁰ Jerusalem's name was changed in 1888 to Courtland.

George H. Thomas

The family of George Henry Thomas (**Figure 10**) (July 16, 1816, to March 28, 1870) owned twenty-four slaves and 685 acres of Southampton County.⁴¹ On the day of insurrection, young 15-year-old George and his family fled into the woods hiding. Thereafter, George became more sympathetic, viewed slavery as a vile institution, and realized slaves were not content to be cared for but very willing to fight and die for freedom.

Figure 10. George Henry Thomas.



Communicate to Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones that in consideration of their having promptly given up the Murderers of last Summer, and shown by their conduct that they are disposed to be on good

terms with the Whites, he agrees that those who do not wish to move west, may remain in Fla. and limits their territory to the lands bounded by Pea river as far as the great Prairie, along the southern border of said prairie to the southern extremity of Istok-pogo Lake along Istok-pogo creek down said creek to Kissimmee river, down Kissimmee river to its mouth and thence in a line due South to the head of Shark river, and then to its mouth.

As soon as this arrangement has been agreed upon, there being no longer any necessity of our remaining here, it is to be hoped that we shall be withdrawn.

In the whole of my service in the Army, I have not had such harassing duties to perform, as this last tour of a twelve month in Fla, and I do assure you, that I have had the means of living for two or three years independent of what I could have done by personal exertion. I should have given up my Commission. This tour of duty has been the most foolish, and utterly useless of any that the Army has ever had to perform within the memory of the oldest officers. The whole affair was as nearly settled two weeks before our arrival as it is now, and there never was any necessity of sending any more troops into the county than those already in the regular garrisons of Tampa and Key West.

Since writing to you about Ill coupons, I have come to the conclusion that it is best to Confine myself, for the present, to the purchase of Exchange Bank stock, and shall therefore continue to send you money (for the purchase of said stock) from time to time, as opportunity offers.

I am glad to hear that you are more satisfied with farming than in the first part of the year, and hope that you may yet make the old place a model for the Southamptoneans.

I will write you again as soon as we hear from the Indians.

Give my love to all the family.

*Yrs truly,
Geo. H. Thomas*

P.S. You will do me a favour by swapping my horse for a good, safe, harness horse, capable of drawing the Carriage easily, as I am fearful the Girls might be tempted to try my horse, which is not safe. no horse is safe in harness that has once run away.

George Thomas characterized Fort Myers as the “most remote of all The Posts in Fla...the most important post.” George explained the fort’s purpose was “to give the Indians an opportunity of trading so as to give them no excuse for going into the settlements.” George clearly referred to Billy Bowlegs, the murders of the previous year, and an agreement that “those who do not wish to move west, may remain in Fla. and limits their territory.”

ENDNOTES

¹ Karl Grismer, *The Story of Fort Myers* (Fort Myers Beach: The Island Press, 1982), 12-14.

² Ibid., 22.

³ Ibid., 41.

⁴ Ibid., 42.

- ⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seminole_Wars.
- ⁶ Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars 1817-1858* (South Carolina: Acadia Publishing, 2003), 13.
- ⁷ <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-osceola/>.
- ⁸ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
- ⁹ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- ¹⁰ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- ¹¹ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
- ¹² Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
- ¹³ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- ¹⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida>.
- ¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Moultrie_Creek.
- ¹⁶ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
- ¹⁷ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- ¹⁸ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
- ¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seminole_Wars.
- ²⁰ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 105; <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/na-osceola/>.
- ²¹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
- ²² James W. Cunningham, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol.40, No.1, 41-52.
- ²³ <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/1711>.
- ²⁴ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
- ²⁵ *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No. 2, 148.
- ²⁶ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
- ²⁷ George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi., *America: A Narrative History* (edition unknown) (W. W. Norton & Company. 412. ISBN 978-0-393-96874-3).
- ²⁸ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Cypress_National_Preserve).
- ²⁹ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
- ³⁰ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 156.
- ³¹ <http://everglades.fiu.edu/reclaim/bios/bowlegs.htm>.
- ³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punta_Rassa,_Florida.
- ³³ <https://digital.lib.usf.edu/SFS0036423/00001/59j>.
- ³⁴ *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No. 2, 131.
- ³⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
- ³⁶ Pamela Sustar, *Historic Lee County: The Story of Fort Myers & Southwest Florida* (San Antonio, Texas: Historical Publishing Network, 2008), 9–10. ISBN 9781893619876.
- ³⁷ George R. Fairbanks MA, *Florida / It's History and It's Romance* (Jacksonville, Florida: Drews Company, 1901) 203.
- ³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Myers.
- ³⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_E._Twiggs.
- ⁴⁰ Frederic D. Schwarz, *1831: Nat Turner's Rebellion*, Archived December 3, 2008, at the Wayback Machine, *American Heritage*, August/September 2006.
- ⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Henry_Thomas.
- ⁴² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nashville.

Flagler County Philatelic Odds and Ends

By Juan L. Riera

As a lifetime member of the Flagler County Historical Society, I periodically receive by email an historical photograph with 2-4 sentences about the photograph or an announcement of some event or activity. Occasionally, these emails relate to philately and in this article I will relay some of this philatelic/postal history while providing some context.

Flagler County is in northeast Florida and is bordered by St. Johns County to the north, Volusia County to the south, Putnam County to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The county was created in 1917 taking portions from St. Johns County and Volusia County. As a matter of fact, some municipal areas fall into Volusia and St. Johns Counties.

The county is named in honor of Henry Morrison Flagler, who built the Florida East Coast Railway, about a dozen hotels along the Florida East Coast, and had a huge impact on Florida. The county has three cities: Bunnell - the county seat, Flagler Beach, and Palm Coast; two towns: Beverly Beach and Marineland; and thirteen unincorporated communities: Dupont, Espanola, Favoretta, and Korona, to name a few.

Marco Polo Park

In Florida tourist history, the area had a “major” tourist attraction shortly before the opening of Disney World on October 1, 1971. That attraction was Marco Polo Park located just west of I-95 near Bunnell. The park consisted of 5,000 acres of which the first phase, 500-acre Japanese Gardens, was completed and opened on December 28, 1970. The park eventually had rides, an overhead suspended gondola system, a petting zoo, and areas depicting what Marco Polo would have encountered on his travels: Venice, Turkey, India, China, and Japan.

The park was never profitable due in large part to not having an easily accessible exit on southbound I-95, leading tourists to continue southward to Daytona Beach and no return northward or getting on I-4 and heading to Disney World. The park closed in October of 1974. It reopened on May 24, 1975, as Passport to Fun World and closed permanently in 1976. The property is currently the Plantation Bay Golf and Country Club community.

Marco Polo Park has left behind a wonderful legacy of postcards and a song, a jingle that was on the radio commercials. Examples of postcards highlighting events and activities at the Park are shown in *Figures 1* and *2*.

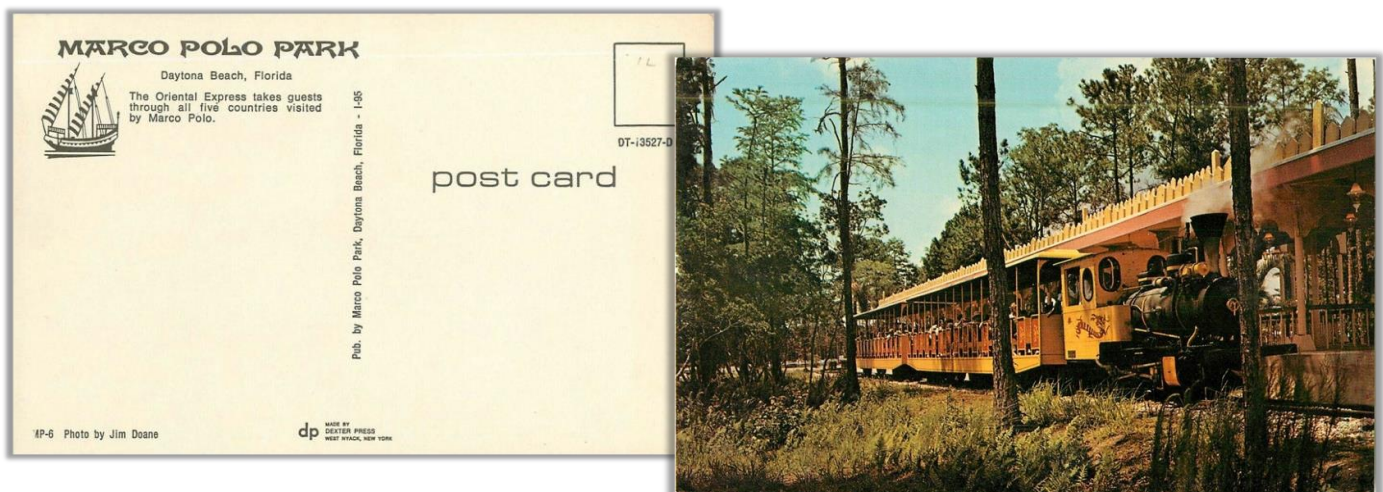


Figure 1. The Oriental Express takes guests through all five countries visited by Marco Polo.

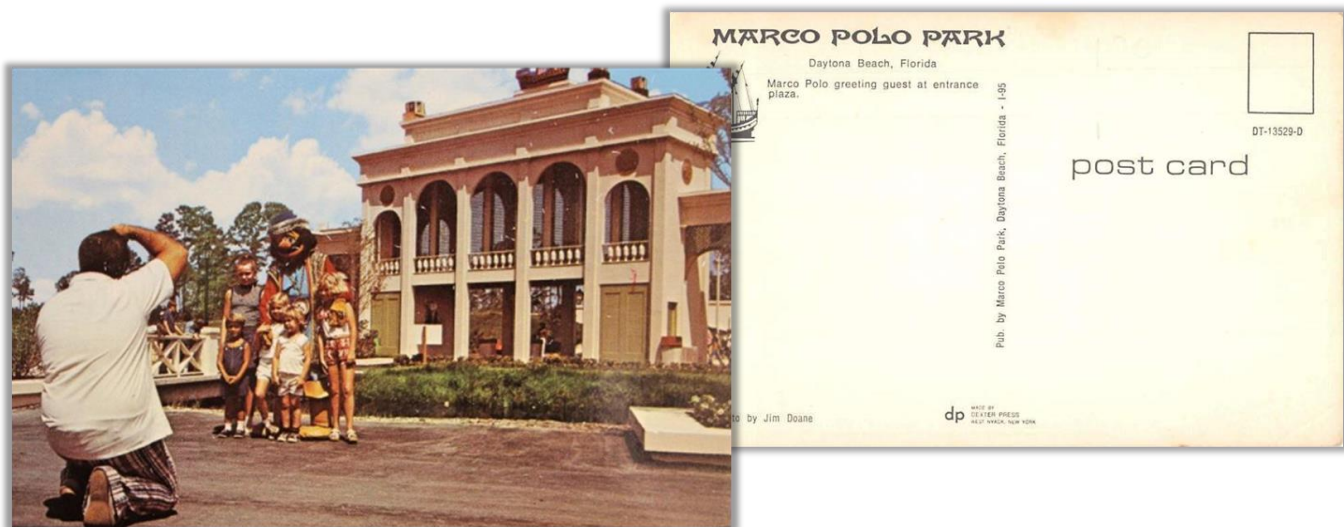


Figure 2. Marco Polo greeting guests at entrance plaza.

Postmaster Ray Lawrence Mercer

On Monday December 9, 2019, the Flagler County Historical Society sent out an email announcing the peaceful passing of Ray Laurence Mercer on Saturday December 7, 2019, at age 93. He was born in Bunnell on February 20, 1926, towards the end of the Florida Land Boom.

Mercer lived what I think was an outstanding Florida life. At the age of twelve, he met Wanda and both fell in love and married on June 8, 1947, after Ray returned from military service in World War II where he earned both a Silver Star and a Bronze Star. *Figure 3* is a photograph of Ray and Wanda relaxing in their home.

Mercer attended the University of Florida having received a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Business Education. This led him to be a school teacher for six years. His career then led to be a postmaster for 33 years, until he retired.



Figure 3. Ray and Wanda relaxing at home.

Since teaching was in his blood, and as a member of First United Methodist Church of Bunnell, Mercer taught Sunday School for many years and was the church organist for 70 years. I think this shows that postmasters are integral parts of the community and have a life outside of the postal service.

Postmistress Leona Moody French

On Wednesday December 25, 2019, an email sent by the Flagler County Historical Society had a picture of Flagler Beach postmistress Leona Moody French and postal clerk Charles Streeter standing in front of the Post Office on the corner of Fourth Street and South Central Avenue in 1951 (*Figure 4*, next page).

French was the daughter of Isaac I. Moody, founder of Flagler County, and Dora Lee Moody. She married Harlan Spencer French and became postmistress in 1950, a position she held for nearly 5 years. Flagler Beach was incorporated in April of 1925, The Flagler Beach Fire Department was established in 1926, and the town had a population of 4,484 in the 2010 census.



Figure 4. Leona Moody French and postal clerk Charles Streeter standing in front of the Post Office, 1951.



Figure 5. Isaac I. Moody, Jr.

Isaac I. Moody Jr. (*Figure 5*) was a businessman in turpentine, shingle milling, real estate, and banking. As a politician, he was the town of Bunnell councilman, St. Johns County commissioner, and Flagler County's first State Representative. In late 1905 or early 1906, he was named postmaster of Bunnell Stop where he had built a post office, a home, and a still near the railroad. He was co-owner and president of the Bunnell Development Company. He died of Spanish Flu on December 17, 1918, at the age of forty-four, which he caught in Tallahassee, Florida.



Editor's Note:

Courtesy of the Flagler County Historical Society, *Figure 6* is a 1925 photo of the post office on the corner of South Fourth Street and South Central Avenue.

At that time, the building served as the Wickline service station, store, and post office.

Figure 6. Flagler Beach post office, 1925.

Alva Alonzo Bunnell

Per a March 25, 2020, email from the Flagler Society, Alva Alonzo Bunnell, for whom the city is named, and his wife, the former Susan Cynthia Goodwin, came to Raulerson, now Espanola, in the late 1870s. In the early 1890s, he moved about four miles south and set up a sawmill and later a store.

The train stopped there to take on fuel, and the settlement was named Bunnell Stop. He was appointed postmaster for Bunnell in October of 1892. In addition to the sawmill, he was a shingle maker and supplied wood to the area's fledgling rail industry.

Rev. Father Andrew Baczyk

Korona, south of Bunnell in the northern section of Volusia County, was a planned community of the Bunnell Development Company that targeted the Polish population of around Chicago in late 1913.



The first thirty-five Polish families arrived in Korona in 1914 via railroad and began building homes and a residence for their new priest, the Rev. Father Andrew Baczyk. **Figure 7** shows Baczyk's house, a part of which eventually became the community's first post office.

Father Baczyk left in 1917 for World War I service and never returned to Korona. This information was from a Society email dated Wednesday, August 12, 2020.

Figure 7. Father Baczyk's house / post office.

Eastern Airlines Flight 611's Emergency Landing

An April 2019 Society email provided a photo of Eastern Airlines flight 611 that made an emergency landing at Flagler County Airport in Bunnell on February 7, 1948 (**Figure 8**).

The flight originated in Boston, Massachusetts, for Miami, Florida, with stops scheduled at New York-LaGuardia Field and West Palm Beach, Florida. Three hours into the flight, the No. 3 propeller failed and a portion of one blade was thrown through the fuselage. It entered the lower right side at the galley section severing control cables, electrical wires and engine controls, and came up through the floor. Bunnell was the closest, most convenient airport for an emergency landing.

The pilot of the plane was Capt. Basil Rowe, who about fifteen years previously had worked for Pan Am and been co-pilot with Charles Lindbergh on several FAM trips, including the one discussed in my previous article on Lindbergh spending the weekend in Flagler Beach.

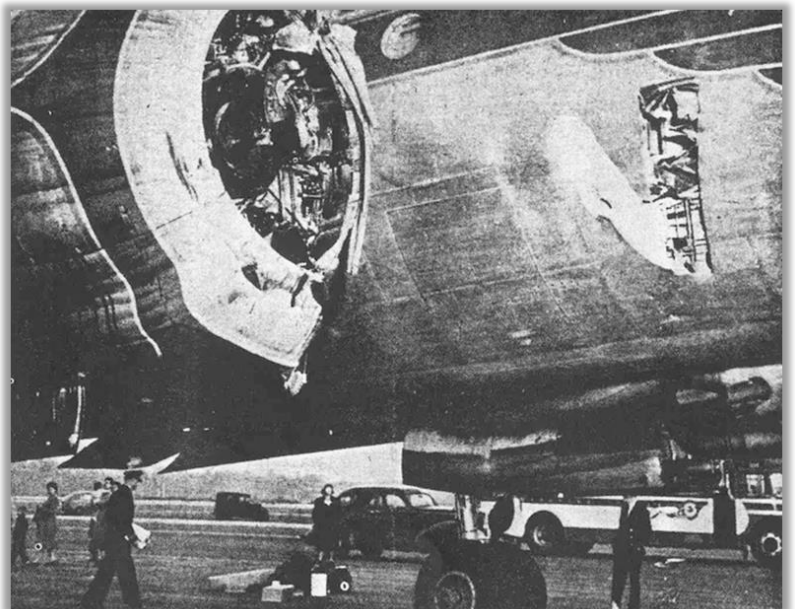


Figure 8. Eastern Airlines flight 611 after emergency landing in Bunnell.

On January 9, 1929, Capt. Rowe flew the first air mail from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Miami, Florida. Coincidentally, Basil Rowe lived about a mile from my house in what is an architectural historic home.

Although I am not sure about Flight 611, Eastern Airlines had several contract air mail flights from the northeast to Miami, particularly connecting Pan Am FAM flights in/out of New York City and in/out of Miami. I would like to think that this emergency landing had airmail on board.

Middle Florida and West Florida Used in Postmarks

By Thomas M. Lera

Postal historians enjoy finding unique and different postmarks, and Florida has a few. According to an 1816 Florida map compiled by the United States Army Bureau of Topographical Engineers, Florida was organized into four sections – West, Middle, East, and South. This article discusses the one known “M” or “Middle” in the postmark from Middle Florida (*Figure 1*) and five known postmarks with “W or West” from West Florida (*Figure 3*, next page).

MIDDLE FLORIDA

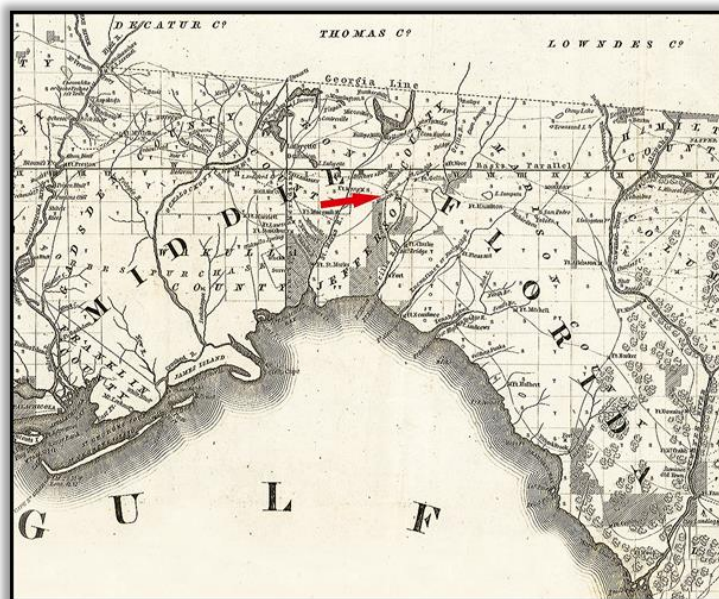
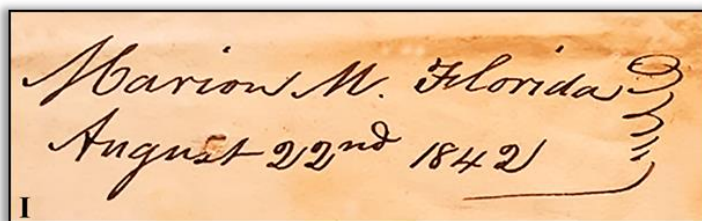
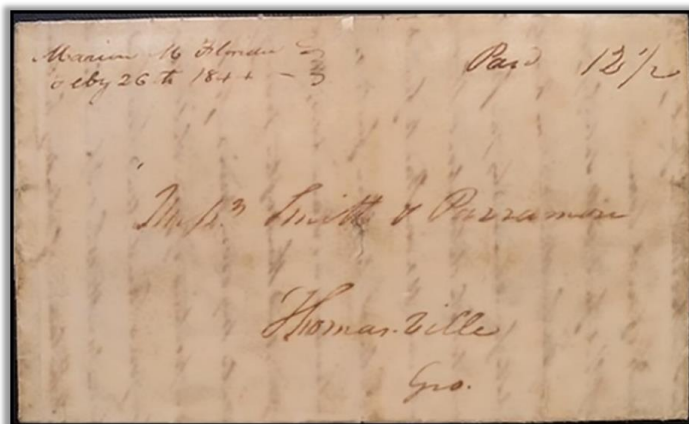


Figure 1. Middle Florida with red arrow identifying the location of Marion.¹



*Figure 2. Marion M. Florida Type I cover and tracing.
(Tracing and cover courtesy of
William H. Johnson D.D.S.)*



Marion Middle Florida post office located in the rich plantation section of Jefferson County, fifteen miles south of Monticello, was established as a name change from Weelaunee (*Figure 2*). James C. Johnson was appointed postmaster on 12/11/1841 and was responsible for these postmarks.

Marion M. Florida, Type I, 08/22/1842 – 02/26/1844; two known covers and one archival cover known.

WEST FLORIDA

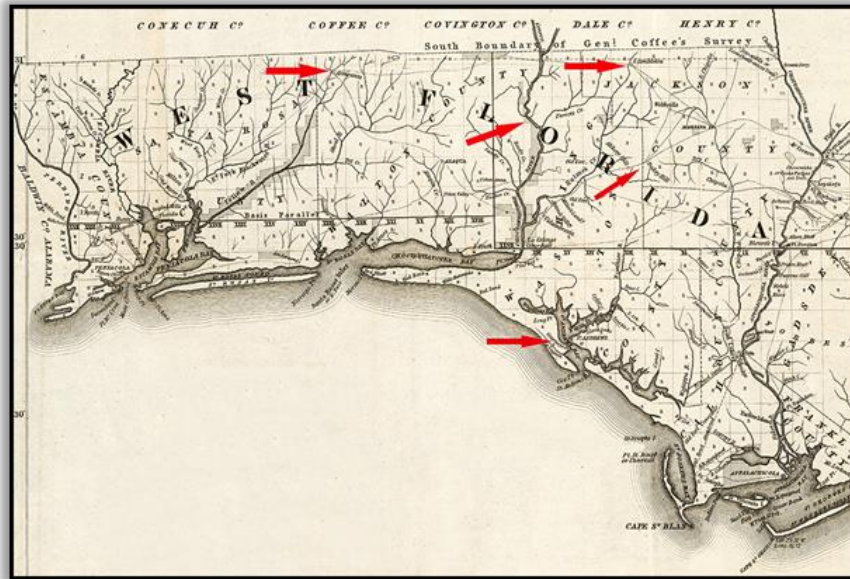
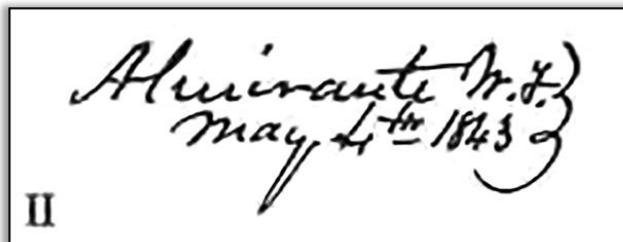


Figure 3. West and Middle Florida with red arrows identifying left to right the location of Almirante, Cerro Gordo, St. Andrews Bay, Campbellton, and Orange Hill.²

Almirante was a small town on the Yellow River in an area which is now known as Laurel Hill. Settlers were documented as having established a community, originally known as Almirante, soon after Florida's acquisition by the United States in 1821.



As a name change from Yellow Water, the post office was established in Walton County on 5/5/1828, with Jeremiah Savell as postmaster. It was on the main postal route between Marianna and Pensacola. Daniel A. Wilkinson was appointed postmaster 01/11/1842 and was responsible for the Type II manuscript postmark (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4. Almirante W. F. Type II tracing from the earliest known cover May 4, 1843.³

Campbellton post office was established in the northwest corner of Jackson County on a post road from Pensacola to Marianna. Samuel L. Solomon was appointed postmaster 04/30/1832 and was responsible for the Type I territorial postmark "Campbellton WF" (*Figure 5*).

Campbellton WF, Type I, 02/12/1834 – 02/08/1836; two known +1 archival copy.

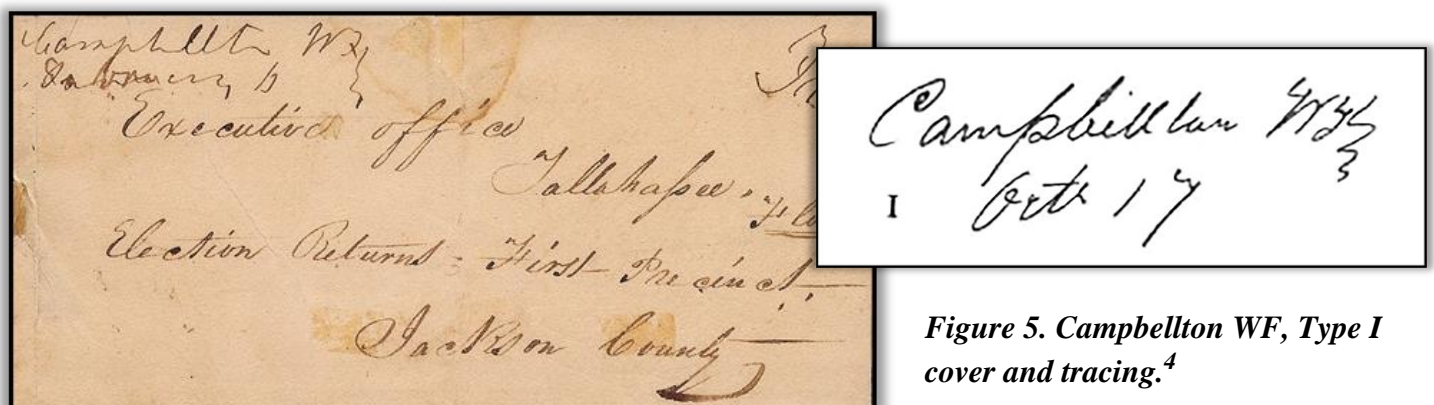
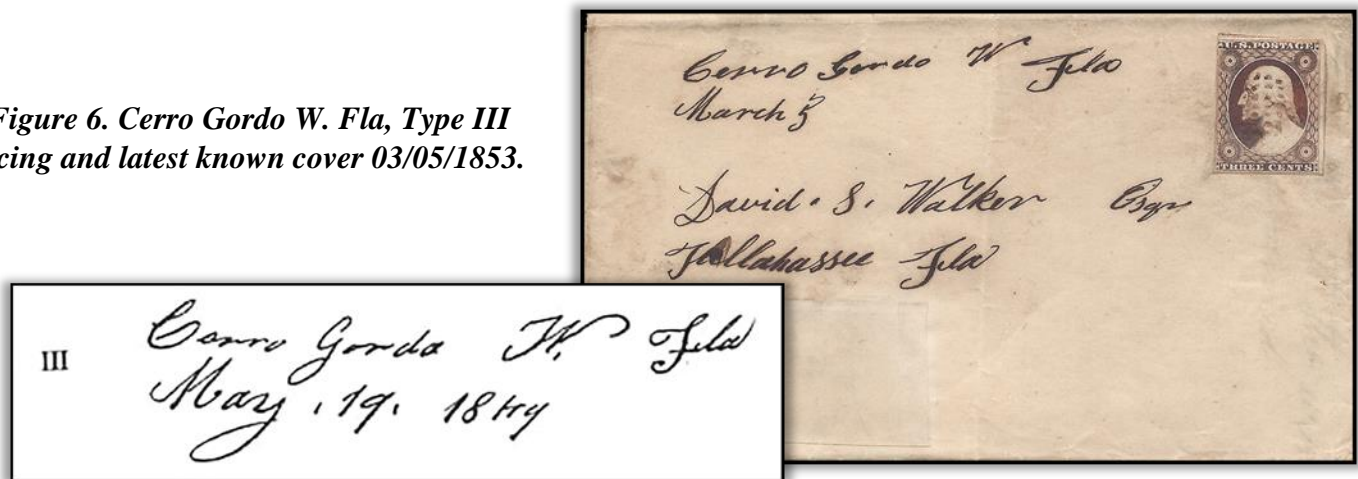


Figure 5. Campbellton WF, Type I cover and tracing.⁴

Figure 6. Cerro Gordo W. Fla, Type III tracing and latest known cover 03/05/1853.



Cerro Gordo post office was located in Holmes County on the Choctawhatchee River, ten miles below the Alabama state line. Henry Hewett was appointed postmaster 07/05/1848 and was responsible for the manuscript cancel with “Cerro Gordo W. Fla.” The first courthouse was built at Hewett’s Bluff and the post office was established there on 07/05/1848.

Cerro Gordo W. Fla, Type III, 05/19/1849, manuscript, archival copy (Figure 6, tracing).

Cerro Gordo W. Fla, Type III, 08/10/1852/ - 03/05/1853; two known with Scott 11 cancelled, and the square grid 4 x 7. (Figure 6, right image)



Figure 7. Orange Hill Type IV West Fla. cover and tracing.

Orange Hill post office, established in Jackson County by name change from Oakey Hill on 04/12/1847, was on the main road from Tallahassee to Pensacola, located between Marianna and Holmes Valley (Figure 7). George W. Underwood was the postmaster responsible for this postmark.

Orange Hill West Fla., Type IV, 11/10/1860; one known on U-10 postal stationery.

Saint Andrews Bay W. Fla. post office was located on the Gulf in Washington County half-way between Tallahassee and Pensacola. Mail from St. Augustine to Pensacola was delivered by steamboat twice monthly, and by coach from Holmes Valley to St. Andrew's Bay. William Cooke was the postmaster when this letter was mailed.

The letter in **Figure 8** was mailed for twenty-four cents from St. Andrews Bay West Florida March 16, 1849. The word “Steamer” referred to transit to New Orleans, by steamboat from Pensacola. If the cover went by this route, it would have then entered the Great Mail route from New Orleans to New York probably on the packet ship *Robert Parker* on 03/19/1849.⁵ Five cents of the prepayment covered the rate to New York per the U.S.-British Postal Treaty of 1848. The letter travelled by steamer to New York where the “red 19” was applied, indicating a nineteen cents credit to Great Britain (16 cents transatlantic plus three cents British inland postage).



Figure 8. St. Andrews Bay W. Fla. Type II cover and tracing.

On April 4th, the letter departed Boston on the Cunard Steamship *Canada* for Liverpool, where it arrived on April 19th. Liverpool postmarked the letter with their arrival date stamp and marked the letter as fully prepaid with their 1/- handstamp. No postage was due in Dublin, as British inland conveyance was prepaid by the sender in Florida.

St. Andrews Bay W. Fla. Type II, 03/16/1849, with manuscript rate of paid 24 [cents] to Dublin, Ireland.

EAST FLORIDA AND SOUTH FLORIDA

There are 19 town postmarks used with “East Florida and its varieties” discussed in the 2018 *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*. They are Alligator, Augusta, Columbus, Dells, Mandrain, Mellonville, Micanopy, Mineral Springs, Newnansville, New Smyrne, Okahumpka, St. Augustine, St. John’s Bluff, St. Louis, Spring Grove, Tampa, Wantons P.O., Woodstock Mills, and Yellow Bluff. The postmarks can be found in seven different varieties – East Florida, E.F., E FA, E FL, E. Flo., EFla, and E. FLOR^A. Some towns used different punctuation marks; in others, capital and lower case letters are used. I know of no postmarks where “South Florida or SF” were used.

Acknowledgements

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Endnotes

¹ 1846 Map - The State of Florida: Compiled in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers by J. Goldsborough Bruff and D. McClelland. Rumsey map search reference "Phillips Maps p. 284".

² Ibid.

³ Deane R. Briggs, M.D. (Ed.). (1999). *FLORIDA STAMPLESS POSTAL HISTORY 1763 -1861*. David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc. Tracings are from this book or copied from the covers shown.

⁴ Deane R. Briggs, M.D., Thomas Lera, and Francis Ferguson (Eds.). (2018). *FLORIDA STAMPLESS POSTAL HISTORY 1763 -1861*, Florida Postal History Society. Covers shown are from this book unless otherwise noted.

⁵ New Orleans *Daily Crescent* March 19, 1849, page 5. Newspaper available at the Library of Congress.

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