



FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

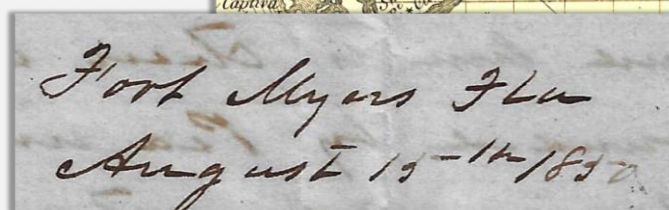
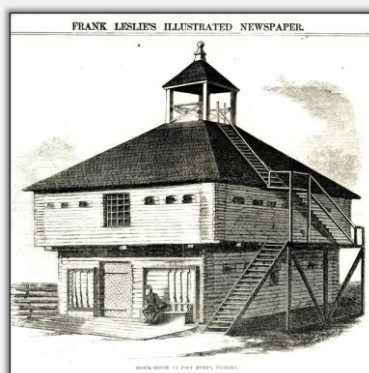
Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State



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Whole No. 81



Military Fort Myers from 1850 – Part 2

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



Little River, Florida



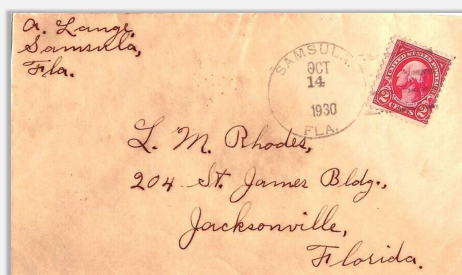
Atseena Otie, Florida



Florida Revenue Stamps



Pensacola's First
Postmaster



Samsula, Florida



Fort Jefferson
Postmark Colors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Military Fort Myers from 1850 – Part 2 <i>by Vernon R. Morris, Jr., M.D.</i>	3-11
Literature Competition Awards	11
Little River P.O. Keeps Town Memory Alive <i>by Dan Maddalino</i>	12-13
Atseena Otie, Florida to Kupferzell, Germany <i>by Phil Eschbach</i>	14-15
Articles of Distinction Awards	15
State Revenue Stamps of Florida: An Introduction <i>by Richard Lomax</i>	16-17
Cary Nicholas – First Postmaster of Pensacola <i>by Thomas M. Lera</i>	18
Samsula, Florida <i>by Juan L. Riera</i>	19-20
Fort Jefferson Postmark Colors <i>by Thomas M. Lera</i>	21-23

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Military Fort Myers from 1850 – Part 2

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

Editor's Note: Part 1 of this article appeared in the January 2022 issue of the Florida Postal History Journal. 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.

Tampa, August 19, 1850

Within four days, the folded letter reached Tampa's post office, 124 miles to the north confirmed by red "TAMPA / AUG / 19 / Flor." circular date stamp with matching red eighteen mm numeral "10 in circle" Type IV B⁴³ (Figure 13).

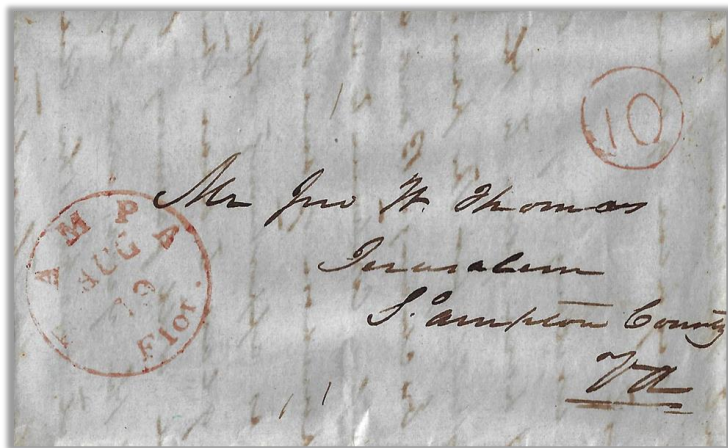


Figure 13. "TAMPA / AUG / 19 / Flor ." circular date stamp.

From 1850 to 1858, Captain Gonzalez and his schooner⁴⁴ had transported mail and provisions between Tampa and Fort Myers, most likely once a week.⁴⁵ Tampa's post office had been operational since September 13, 1834.⁴⁶ The author is not aware of any road directly south of Tampa during the 1850s.

Not until 1859 does a map reveal a road to the north shore of Charlotte Harbor, about twenty-two miles north of Fort Myers (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Map revealing road to north shore of Charlotte Harbor.

Some Florida postal routes in 1850 were still in their formative stages. Noted authority Deane Briggs has suggested⁴⁷ the most likely Florida route was Tampa to Ocala⁴⁸ which continued as post route 3506⁴⁹ to Pilatka on the St. John's River (approved on June 15, 1844). This land route ran twice a week, altogether was 159 miles, and required over two and a half days.



By 1847, many boats had been contracted to carry locked mail bags from Pilatka past Jacksonville, to the Atlantic, and on to Savannah.⁵⁰ Steamboat route 3251 was 358 miles, ran three times a week and also required two and a half days.

From Savannah to Virginia most likely continued by sea⁵¹ as far as Norfolk. The Post must have switched again to land travel to reach Jerusalem, Virginia. A total 760 miles readily qualified for over 500-mile postal rate of ten cents, as designated by the red number "10 in circle," due from the recipient's brother.

No auxiliary postmarks or manuscript markings appear on the front or reverse to further elucidate additional postal information.

Total distance traveled from Fort Myers to Southampton County, Virginia via four segments alternating between land and sea had been 884 miles (*Figure 15*).

Figure 15. Fort Myers to Southampton County, Virginia.

Fort Myers Stockade

The initial barracks, officer quarters, warehouses, and stables were "makeshift" thatched palm fronds. In August 1850, an unexplained murder in Tampa provoked Washington D.C. to order two more companies to Fort Myers including carpenters and masons.

Bricks ordered from Pensacola were in short supply. Yellow pine joined by wooden pegs were salvaged eighty years later.

First built was a substantial 1000-foot wharf with rails, slightly west of today's Hendry Street,⁵² which greatly facilitated off shoring of heavy supplies by tram. In 1851, brick chimneys and huge cisterns were built for a tall hospital just north of today's Royal Palm Ave.

Over time, construction included officers' quarters, administration offices, warehouses for storage of munitions and general supplies, guardhouse, blacksmith and carpenter shops, a kitchen, bakery, laundry, sutler's store, stables, and a two and a half story hospital with plaster walls costing \$30,000. By 1854, the post was considered one of the finest in Florida. *Figure 16*⁵³ reveals the plan inside the stockade.

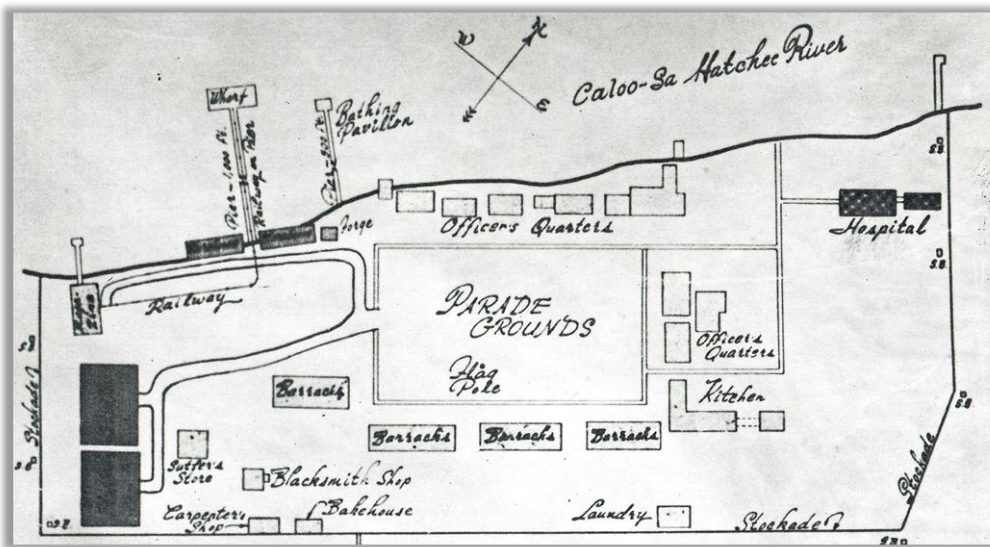


Figure 16. Interior plan of the Fort Myers stockade.

Suspected extravagance prompted a fiscal investigation by the War Department and Major McKinstry. He identified that “unnecessarily expensive buildings have been erected and that a lavish and uncalled for expenditure of public money had been obtained at that post, particularly for the hospital building.” Especially disturbing was a bowling alley and additional bathing pier 500 feet out into the Caloosahatchee.

Nonetheless, in 1854 Captain F.A. Hendry claimed this fort as one of Florida’s finest, with soldiers in white gloves and golden epaulettes. The 139 acres and fifty-seven buildings,⁵⁴ *Figure 17*⁵⁵, were bounded by present day Hough, Monroe, and Second Streets (*Figure 18*).

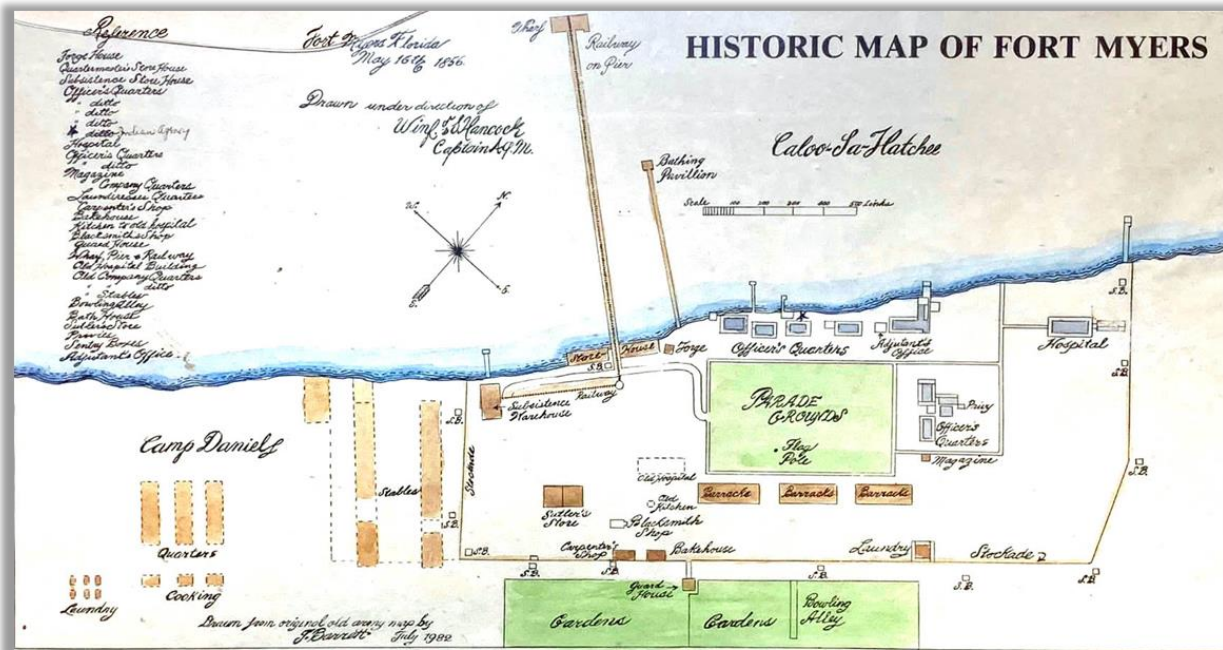
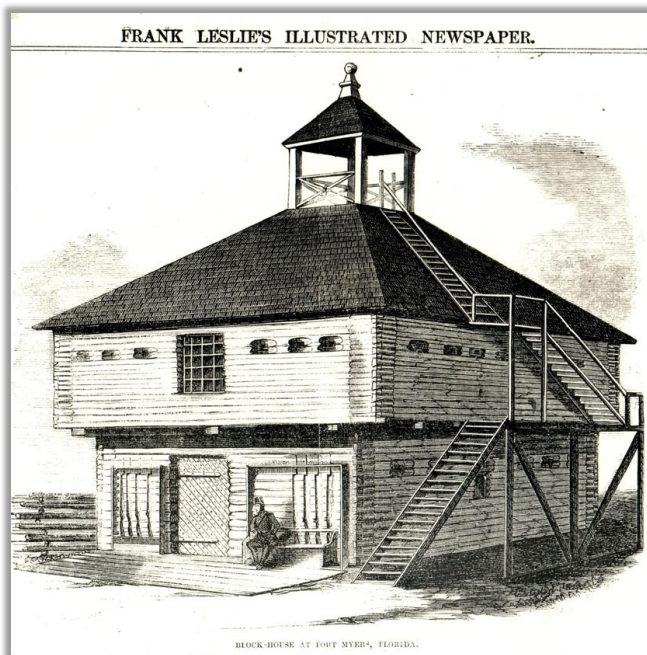


Figure 17. Fort Myers: 139 acres and fifty-seven buildings.



Figure 18. Original fort boundaries: Red line on land, and blue line where original river edge had been.

The Fort Myers architecturally attractive blockhouse (*Figure 19*), a place of containment, received national attention showcased on page 275 of Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* on October 2, 1858,⁵⁶ just a few months after the June abandonment of Fort Myers.⁵⁷



Wives of some officers had lived at the fort. The wife of Capt. Winfield Scott Hancock, who became famous a few years later at the Battle of Gettysburg⁵⁸, gave birth in 1857 to the first white child in what is now the City of Fort Myers.⁵⁹

Winfield Scott Hancock was the Democratic Party nominee for President in the Election of 1880, just barely losing to James Garfield. Each candidate won 19 states⁶⁰ with a difference of only 1,898 votes, the lowest margin of victory ever.⁶¹

The following year, Garfield was fatally shot in office on July 2, 1881.

Figure 19. Fort Myers' blockhouse.

Billy Bowlegs

During the Second Interlude, Washington aspired to peacefully relocate Indians to the West. Special Indian agents in Florida spoke many times with Billy Bowlegs (alias for Holatter Micco)⁶², the central person in the subject letter. In September 1852, Billy visited Washington D.C. for a relocation agreement which he signed “William B. Legs.” He was rewarded with an excursion to New York for fine clothes and wine. Upon return to the Big Cypress, 36 Seminoles did relocate, but Billy slipped away.

Another Special Indian Agent was also unsuccessful for relocating Billy during 1853 and 1854. On May 3, 1854, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis approved “gradual strangulation,”⁶³ that Indians were to be captured but not killed.⁶⁴ Trading posts were closed, old roads into the interior were re-opened, and additional troops were dispatched among Caloosahatchee forts. In mid-December 1855, troops located and destroyed Billy’s banana patch garden⁶⁵ and personally disgraced him. The next day, Billy killed two and wounded three soldiers. The Third Seminole War began on December 20, 1855 and lasted until March 4, 1858.

Civil War

Three years following the end of the Seminole Indian Wars, on January 10, 1861, Florida was the third state to secede from the nation. One year earlier, the U.S. Census of 1860 for Florida counted 140,424 with 78,679 free and 61,745 enslaved persons.⁶⁶ Fifteen thousand joined the Civil War; one thousand were killed and four thousand died of disease. Very late in the war, Florida became important to the Union for beef supplies and free black soldiers.

The July 4, 1863, fall of Vicksburg gave the Union control of the full length of the Mississippi River and ability to terminate beef shipments from the West to Confederate troops. Cattle herds south and east of Tampa, however, numbered over 40,000.⁶⁷ Union control of Fort Myers took on new significance to disrupt Confederate beef rancher shipments now necessary for Confederate troops, but instead 4,000 heads of beef went to Union troops.

The Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, ordered all slaves belonging to “disloyal” masters be classified as “free captives of war.”⁶⁸ Six months later, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, brought more escaped slaves to the Union and Florida. Garrisoning Fort Myers with soldiers of the newly mobilized U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) served to humiliate, insult, and irritate like a “prickly pear cactus under the Confederate saddle,” provoking their greatest fear: armed blacks.⁶⁹

For several years, Confederate supporters had likely been using Fort Myers as a way station for refugees. Near midnight January 6, 1864, twenty Union soldiers arrived at Fort Myers and arrested 3 confederate loyalist who had orders to burn all if the Union attempted reoccupation.⁷⁰ Fort Myers was the southernmost fort East of the Mississippi, the only federally occupied fort in south Florida,⁷¹ and supported by the Navy’s blockade of the Gulf coastline. Three additional blockhouses were constructed.⁷² Union soldiers in Fort Myers numbered 250 but were short of ammunition and arms.⁷³

One year later, Confederate commander Francis Hendry marched 275 men from Tampa south to Fort Myers.⁷⁴ On February 20, 1865, fifteen years to the day of original establishment of Fort Myers, under a flag of truce, Confederates demanded surrender of Fort Myers within one half hour. An eleven-hour battle turned on the accurate firepower of two Federal cannons, resulting in forty Confederate casualties compared to only four Union losses. Confederates quickly retreated to Fort Meade.⁷⁵ By March 14, 1865, Union forces departed from nearby Punta Rassa. On May 20, 1865, the Union flag flew over Tallahassee.⁷⁶

Reconstruction

During the year following the Civil War, settlers appeared from all over south Florida in search of scarce building materials from all but demolished sections of the proud fort's buildings. Windows, doors, flooring, siding, and shingles were taken to rebuild homes. Unguarded fort buildings were owned by "damn yankees."⁷⁷ Confederate currency was no longer valuable.

The Union quickly promoted trade with Cuba via the International Ocean Telegraph Company available to the public by September 11, 1867. Also, cattle shipments from Fort Myers, which previously sold to troops for \$8 to \$10 a head, now realized \$25 to \$30 in Cuba.⁷⁸

The Fort Myers community was founded near the abandoned fort on February 21, 1866, by Captain Manuel Gonzalez, noted earlier as military mail courier before and during the Third Seminole War including the subject philatelic cover. He started the area's first trading post for tobacco, gunpowder, otter and gator hide. Capt. F.A. Hendry became known as "The Father of Fort Myers."⁷⁹

Florida was fully restored to the United States on June 25, 1868. Railroads, however, were not kind to Fort Myers. The nearest railroad was 200 miles north along the coast at Cedar Key, which in 1861 had finally connected the Gulf coast with Atlantic Coast at Fernandina, just north of Jacksonville.⁸⁰ Henry Plant's railroads didn't reach Tampa until 1884⁸¹, and Punta Gorda on north shore of Charlotte Harbor in 1887.⁸² Fort Myers was denied and had always been dependent upon small schooners and sloops for supplies and provisions because the Caloosahatchee depth was only five feet at high tide. In 1883, the federal government deepened the channel to eight feet.⁸³

Fort Myers Post Office

Fort Myers first regular transportation was provided by Capt. John L. Bright, owner of the sloop "Margaretta." On August 22, 1876, America's Centennial year, the Post Office Department awarded him the first contract to carry Fort Myers mail. He made two trips per week between Fort Myers and Fort Ogden while also picking up mail in Punta Rassa.⁸⁴ He departed Fort Myers on Wednesdays and Saturdays; each trip was a full day and sometimes overnight. The government opened this post office in the town of "Myers."

In order to avoid confusion with a town in Virginia called Fort Myer, the government, in its infinite wisdom, declared Florida's village was simply "Myers," even though Fort Myers, Florida of and by itself was indeed different from Fort Myer, Virginia.⁸⁵ In practice, no one in Florida followed the federal position. The people of Fort Myers objected strenuously, and the name Myers was never used locally.

The first postmaster was W.M. Hendry, known as Uncle Marion. The first official post office was his general store on the northeast corner of First and Hendry.⁸⁶ It was registered on April 6, 1876, eighteen miles east of the post office at Punta Rassa, and located one mile west of Billies Creek, serving 150 inhabitants of Fort Myers, and supporting a local population of 500.⁸⁷

During the prior year, an unofficial postmaster had been John Blount, owner of a general store on the northwest corner of same intersection. Once Hendry's term expired, the successor postmaster was Blount's business partner Howell A. Parker. Parker soon became the principal of the school and the town's first mayor.⁸⁸

The earliest recorded example of a manuscript postmark in Fort Myers, December 12, 1879, is shown in **Figure 20**. The earliest recorded handstamped postmark in Fort Myers was March 21, 1883, shown in **Figure 21**. Both covers are courtesy of Deane R. Briggs.

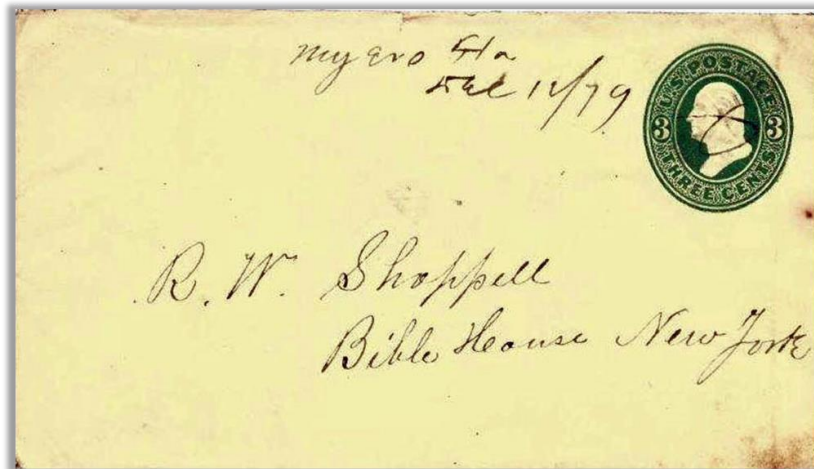


Figure 20. Earliest recorded example of Fort Myers manuscript postmark.



Figure 21. Earliest recorded Fort Myers handstamped postmark.

Epilog

In January 1872, the first circuit rider preacher, Methodist Reverend Jordan, came by horseback from Bartow one hundred miles away for a congregation of two families.⁸⁹ On November 15, 1878, a log cabin schoolhouse opened and doubled as the first church.⁹⁰ The first hotel was built in 1882.⁹¹ Between 1882 and 1886, Fort Myers grew by more than it did during the previous seventeen years since the Civil War.⁹² No sidewalks in town. No streets paved or even graded. No public water system. Fort Myers was incorporated on August 12, 1885. Lee County was established on May 2, 1887, named in honor of General Robert E. Lee. Only Tampa was larger on the west coast of Florida south of Cedar Key.⁹³

On March 4, 1885, Fort Myers was visited by Thomas A. Edison, who then made a significant discovery: winter weather was often much better in Fort Myers than further north in St. Augustine. Six months later, Edison purchased the Summerlin property, built the Seminole Lodge, and was married on February 24, 1886. History was made on March 27, 1887, when the first electric light in Fort Myers was turned on by the hand of Edison himself.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Present day Fort Myers is a booming metropolis of almost one million. Sadly, the indigenous Seminoles had been progressively pressured out of Florida from a clash of cultures, and military and economic strength. Military Fort Myers was built in 1850 during the Second Interlude and became key during the Third Seminole Indian War. “Hot-headed” Billy Bowlegs⁹⁵ was the last Seminole Indian leader in Florida, and an important character in the earliest known and only non-archival cover from inside Fort Myers, a cover which traveled over 884 miles in four segments of alternating land and water transportation.

The author is grateful to Dean R. Briggs, Richard Winter, and Francis J. Crown, Jr. for their research and suggestions, and Thomas M. Lera for his peer review. Assistance from John Dawhowski of the IMAG History & Science Center in Fort Myers, and also Genealogist Bryan Mulcahey of the Fort Myers Regional Library was much appreciated. The Tampa Bay History Center Curator, Brad Massey Ph.D., and Maria Steijlen were also helpful. Furthermore, the Florida Historical Society in Cocoa, FL was greatly appreciated: Holly Baker, Archivist, and the society’s journal *The Florida Historical Quarterly*.

ENDNOTES

⁴³ Briggs, Ferguson, Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, Florida Postal History Society, 2018, 416-417.

⁴⁴ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁴⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Briggs, Ferguson, Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, Florida Postal History Society, 2018, 412.

⁴⁷ Email communication July 7, 2021.

⁴⁸ Tampa north to Fort King in Ocala was cleared in 1827. Ocala post office began by September 14, 1847; Briggs, Ferguson, Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, Florida Postal History Society, 2018, 32, 279.

⁴⁹ Briggs, Ferguson, Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, Florida Postal History Society, 2018, 32.

⁵⁰ James Baird, *The Chronicle of the United States Classic Postal Issues*, November 2016, Vol.68, No.4, 326, 333; Email, Frank Crown, July 7, 2021.

⁵¹ Email, Richard Winter, July 10, 2021.

⁵² Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁵³ <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/fort-myers-florida-fort/>.

⁵⁴ *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No.2, 130.

⁵⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁵⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Leslie%27s_Illustrated_Newspaper.

⁵⁷ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁵⁸ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/winfield-scott-hancock>.

⁵⁹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 66; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winfield_Scott_Hancock.

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1880_United_States_presidential_election.

⁶¹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1880>.

⁶² *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No.2, 130.

⁶³ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁶⁴ Knetsch, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁶⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁶⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_in_the_American_Civil_War.

⁶⁷ *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No.2, 140, 141.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 133-134.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁷¹ <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/fort-myers-florida-fort/>.

⁷² *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1993, Vol. 72, No. 2, 136.

⁷³ Ibid., 148.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁷⁷ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁷⁸ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁷⁹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁸⁰ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 96; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Railroad.

⁸¹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

⁸² Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁸⁶ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁸⁷ Tom Lera research. National Archives, Record Group 28 Post Office Department, Reports of Site Locations, Florida: Jefferson to Madison Counties, Image M1126-093-0744.

⁸⁸ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁸⁹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁹² Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁹³ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁹⁴ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁹⁵ Grismer, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

Literature Competition Awards

Congratulations are extended to Society members for awards earned at recent philatelic literature competitions.

Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition January 21-23, 2022

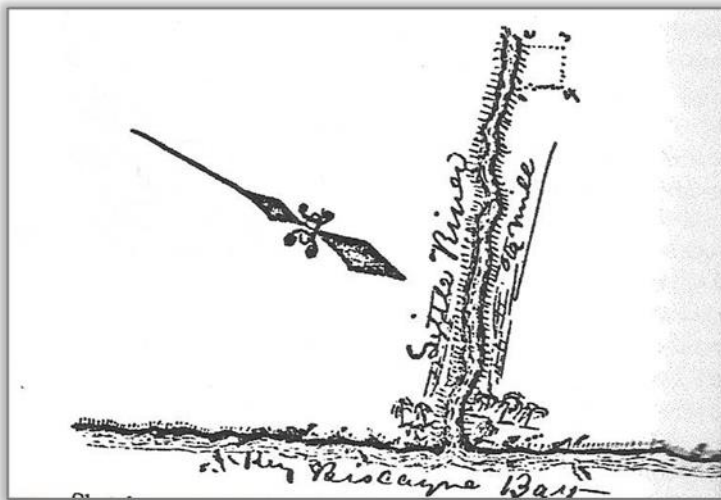
- Gold: **Bill DiPaolo**, "Searching for the 10c Coil of the 1938 Presidential Series"
- Large Silver: **Juan L. Riera**, "The Merrick Brothers, Wilson Larkins, and Southwest Miami Mail"
- Large Silver: **Steve Kennedy**, "Military Assistant Surgeon's Ft. Lauderdale East Florida Letter"
- Silver: **Juan L. Riera**, "Lindbergh Spends the Weekend at Flagler Beach"

Little River P.O. Keeps Town Memory Alive

By Dan Maddalino

In northern Miami-Dade County, north of the Miami River, fresh water from the everglades dumped into Biscayne Bay from three small rivers. North to south, they are the Snake River, the Arch Creek River, and the Little River. These three rivers flowed generally parallel to each other and supplied not only large amounts of potable water, but access from the bay to the interior.

Indigenous societies had continuously occupied the area of the three rivers for more than 1,500 years¹, with the first known attempt to create a permanent European settlement occurring in 1567 (Spanish). It failed two years later. Several English families from the Bahamas settled on Little River in 1784 and built a mill. Their fate is unknown as only the ruins of the mill and some pieces of china were found, and recorded, by the first homesteader on the river in 1843².



Alva F. Woods of Quincy, Illinois, became the first permanent settler of the village of Little River with his filing for a 160-acre land grant in 1843, under the Armed Occupation Act of 1842³. **Figure 1** is the original sketch and partial description of the land on Little River sought by A.F. Woods in 1843. Arrow points north. Homestead outlined in upper right⁴.

Although the area was poor for commercial agriculture, and poor in useable timber, the settlement of Little River became the fastest growing and most popular settlement on the Bay.

Figure 1. Little Rive original sketch and description.

When Miami was incorporated in 1896, Little River had a significantly larger local population. Little River itself never became an incorporated town. Opening a post office would seal its place in the history of Miami-Dade County.

The Little River Post Office opened in 1898⁵ with storekeeper R. Hudson Burr as its first postmaster⁶. It became a post office sub-station for Miami on February 16, 1927⁷ following the annexation of the Little River area into Miami's expanding suburbs.

Figure 2 is a March 23, 1909, Little River postmarked card.

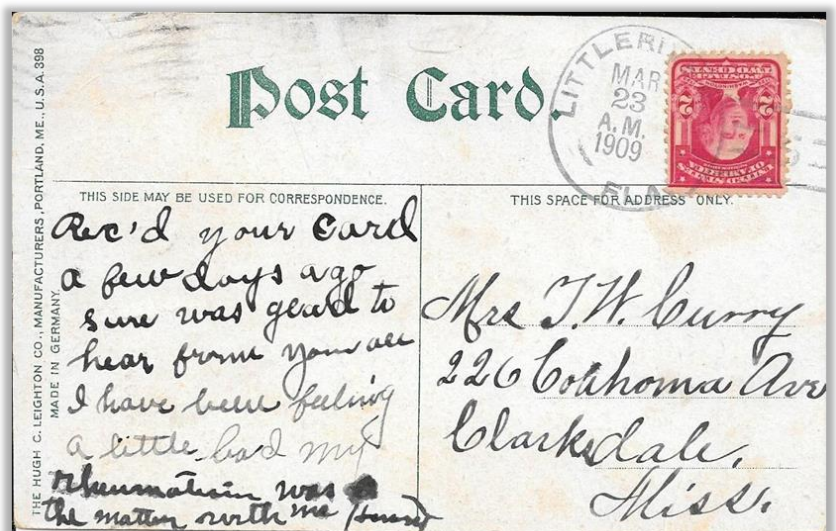


Figure 2. LITTLE RIVER/FLA/MAR/23/1909 to Clarksdale, Mississippi. (Author's collection)

The post office was replaced by a more modern structure in 1961 and remains the Little River Miami Station, *Figure 3*, in the northern neighborhoods of Miami.



Figure 3. Little River Station, 140 NE 84th St, Miami, FL 33138.

Save for this post office, the name Little River has been nearly eradicated by many new residents to Miami.

ENDNOTES

¹ www.cnn.com/2014/02/04/us/florida-indian-village. *Questions of preservation after ancient village found in downtown Miami*. Matt Smith and Justin Lear. Accessed June 6, 2021.

² Peters, Thelma. *Pioneering on Biscayne Bay, 1850-1925* (Banyan Books, Miami, FL, 1976), p. 6.

³ www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/27th-congress/session-2/c27s2ch122.pdf. Accessed June 6, 2021. pp. 502-504.

⁴ Peters, *op cit.*, p. 6.

⁵ Helbock, Richard W., *Florida Postmark Inventory* (La Posta Publications, Lake Oswego, OR., 1996), p. 39.

⁶ Peters, *op cit.*, p. 175.

⁷ Gallagher, John S. *Florida Post Offices* (The Depot, Lake Grove, OR. 1997), p. 43.

Atseena Otie, Florida to Kupferzell, Germany

By Phil Eschbach

Figure 1 is an interesting and unique cover that made quite a journey to its destination in Europe. It was mailed from Atseena Otie, Florida on May 29, 1856, at a cost of twenty-four cents. According to the back and front postal transit markings, it arrived in New York in June in time to be carried on the “Africa,” a Cunard line ship leaving New York on June 11 and arriving in Liverpool on June 23¹.



Figure 1. From Atseena Otie, Florida, May 29, 1856.

As seen in **Figure 2**, the letter then went to London, a distance of 223 miles, and was sent on to Calais in a packet, arriving on June 24. It then travelled through the French mails to Strasbourg, arriving on June 25 (quite an overnight feat in those days being 375 miles or six hours by car today). Next it crossed the border into Germany and passed through Heilbronn on June 26 (only 110 miles), arriving in Kupferzell on June 27 (the last twenty-six miles), taking almost a month in transit from Florida.



The black PAID handstamp is a new listing for Atseena Otie in our society book, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*. The sender paid twenty-four cents, the transatlantic rate of nineteen cents, plus five cents for the distance to New York. The nineteen cents was credited to Great Britain, which included sixteen cents for the packet and three cents for the inland route to London. The other numerical markings of 27, 21 and 6 concern rates (probably in francs) across France to Germany.

Figure 2. Travel route for Atseena Otie mailing. (Courtesy of John Barwis)

Atseena Otie, usually spelled Atsena Otie, was an island and town in the Cedar Keys in Levy County and was incorporated in 1859². It had been inhabited first by Indians and later during the Seminole Wars was used as a depot for military use and also as a port to ship Indians west. It was first named Depot Key and was renamed Atsena Otie by Augustus Steele in 1843.

At the end of the Second Seminole War in 1842, Augustus Steele and David Levy had visions of developing the Cedar Keys. Steele bought the island and developed it for wealthy northern visitors. It became a bustling town with shops, schools, shipping port and a cedar mill which shipped excellent quality cedar wood for pencils.

There are several confusing name changes for the post office. The first post office there was named Cedar Key and Steele became its first postmaster in 1845 until 1852 when he changed the island and post office name to Atsena Otie. It remained Atsena Otie until 1866, when it reverted to Cedar Key. But in January of 1884, it reverted to Atsena Otie which lasted only six months when it again was changed back to Cedar Key in July of 1884. The name changes may have been due to moving the PO between the islands.

When David Levy's railroad crossed Florida from Fernandina in 1859, it terminated at Way Key which was closer to the mainland than Atsena Otie on Depot Key. The first train arrived in 1861, just short of the embargo on the west coast during the Civil War by the Union navy. After the war Atsena Otie began to decline, due to the increasing use of Way Key's railroad terminus at the town of Cedar Key. Atsena Otie was essentially abandoned after a hurricane devastated it in 1896 when the storm surge swept over the island. Today the town of Cedar Key, once connected by rail, is now connected only by road, the railroad having been abandoned in 1932.

ENDNOTES

¹ Hubbard, Walter; Winter, Richard F., *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75* (U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1988), Chapter 1, p. 37.

² Fishburne, Charles, *The Cedar Keys in the 19th Century* (Cedar Key Historical Society, 1993, First Edition).

Articles of Distinction Awards

At the Society's January 22, 2022, Annual Business Meeting, Articles of Distinction winners were announced. Congratulations are extended to the following members for their "best of the best" articles in the 2021 issues of the Florida Postal History Journal.

First Place

**Jack Malarkey with Pat Malarkey-Stallard
"St. Joseph, Florida" September 2021**

Second Place

**Deane R. Briggs, M.D.
"Florida 'Way' Covers" July 2021**

Third Place

**Juan L. Riera
"Islamorado, Florida Post Office" January 2021**

State Revenue Stamps of Florida: An Introduction

By Richard Lomax

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles by Richard Lomax exploring Florida revenue stamps. Subsequent articles will detail specific categories of Florida revenue stamps and materials. The next article planned will cover Food Product revenue stamps of Florida.

An area of philately that many are not very familiar with is revenue stamps. At the Federal level, revenue stamps came about through federal legislation in the late 1800s. This was subsequently followed by state legislation resulting in state revenue stamps. The purpose of all of this activity was to provide governmental control or oversight of various goods and services. Otherwise, the consumer could not be assured of product quality. Of course, tax revenue was also generated for these governing bodies as a result.

The definitive catalog of state revenue stamps and materials was edited by Dave Wrisley (*The State Revenue Catalog: Revenue Stamps and Related Materials of the States of the United States of America*, 2013). The catalog is over 700 pages and is published by the State Revenue Society (SRS).

The SRS is an affiliate of the APS and publishes a quarterly magazine, the *State Revenue News*. The catalog is organized by state. Different states have issued stamps and materials for different categories of goods and services. Thus, some states have only a few items (such as Alaska, DC, New Jersey, and Vermont) and other states have many (such as Arkansas, South Carolina, and Washington). This was dependent upon the variety of products produced in that state and the tax legislation levied.

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the categories of revenue stamps and materials produced by the state of Florida.

The state revenue categories for Florida, as detailed in Wrisley (for a total of twenty-eight pages), are as follows:

- 1) Documentary: (a) Documentary Stamps; and (b) Documentary Meter Stamps
- 2) Agriculture: (a) Feed; (b) Feed Tags; (c) Fertilizer; (d) Fertilizer Tags; (e) Plant Inspection; (f) Peat & Humus; (g) Peat & Humus Tags; (h) Seed Certification; and (i) Seed Packet
- 3) Alcoholic Products: (a) Beer, Bottle Caps & Labels; (b) Citrus Beverage; (c) Liquor; and (d) Liquor, Exported
- 4) Food Products: (a) Citrus Fruit; (b) Citrus Fruit, Advertising; (c) Citrus Fruit, Prorating; (d) Grapefruit; (e) Limes; (f) Oranges; (g) Tangerines; (h) Eggs, Carton; and (i) Eggs, Case
- 5) General Inspection & Excise: (a) Bedding; (b) ICC (Interstate Commerce Commission) Cab Card Stamps; (c) Oil; and (d) Weights & Measures
- 6) Tobacco Products: (a) Cigarettes; (b) Cigarette Meter Stamps; (c) Cigarette Meter Stamps, State-Local; (d) Cigarettes, Native American; (e) Cigarette Meter Stamps, Native American; and (f) Cigarette Vending Machine

There are other categories not included in Wrisley, such as (a) hunting, fishing & game stamps (an entirely different entity with its own specific catalog), (b) local government stamps, (c) automobile license decals, and (d) other items that are not considered to be stamps or tags by the SRS.

Figures 1-4 are Florida revenue stamps from my collection, just to provide several examples.



Figure 1. Orange stamp (42x29mm, ca. 1936).



Figure 2. Grapefruit stamp (72x40mm, 1935).



Figure 3. Tangerine stamp (41.5x28.5mm, ca. 1936).



#K-548		SPACE TO ATTACH	
DO NOT REMOVE THIS TAG Under Penalty of Law			
ALL NEW MATERIAL CONSISTING OF			
INNER SPRING UNIT 85% BLENDED COTTON FELT COTTON LINTERS 75% WHITE PICKER 25% 15% CELLULOSE FIBRE			
N.C. Stamp Exemption #9 REGISTRY NUMBER NEW YORK-5 (Ga.) 34-G			
(Space for Stamp)	Certification	 	
This article is made in compliance with an act of: Dist. of Col. approved July 3, 1926; Kansas approved March 1923; Minn. approved April 24, 1929; New Jersey revised Statutes 24:10-6 to 18. La. Act 467-1948. Mass. G.L., Sec. 270, Chap. 94.	is made that the materials in this article are described in accordance with law.		
VENDOR SEARS-ROEBUCK & CO.			
ADDRESS _____			
Date of Delivery <u>QC34G813501</u>			
PATT. NO. <u>71464</u>			
SIZE <u>4-6</u> COVER <u>1036-1036</u> WT. _____			

Figure 4. Bedding inspection stamp attached to a tag.
Florida is the lower orange stamp.
(Tag 90x150mm, stamp 19.5x22mm, 1953).



Editor's Note:

The State Revenue Society (SRS) promotes and encourages the study and collection of revenue stamps and related materials of the states, possessions, districts, territories, and other entities of the United States and their subdivisions.

The SRS can be found at <https://staterevenue.org>.

Cary Nicholas – First Postmaster of Pensacola

By Thomas M. Lera

In *Florida Postal History 1763-1861*, page 314, Charles Bradford is listed as postmaster “pro-tem” confirmed by his letter of August 6, 1821, the date Pensacola was transferred from Spain to the United States.¹ Cary, not Carey, Nicholas’ postmaster appointment date is listed as unknown.² This article establishes a date of Pensacola’s first postmaster.

Nicholas was born in Virginia about 1786. He served under Andrew Jackson as a major from 1813 – 1821, retired February 11, 1821, and moved in Pensacola, Florida.

A major reason for his settling in Pensacola was the opportunity for appointment to government offices, an opportunity made possible by his association with Andrew Jackson. Because Nicholas was not a member of Jackson’s inner circle, he could not expect premier appointments, but he did not have to wait long for one. Nicholas was named as Pensacola’s first postmaster, a typical appointment for a small-town newspaper editor.³

The third Florida printing town was Pensacola in West Florida, where Cary Nicholas and George Tunstall established a printing office in the summer of 1821. They ordered a press from Philadelphia in April 1821, but it did not arrive until August 10, and on August 18, 1821, the first issue of the Pensacola *Floridian* appeared. Together, they published the *Floridian* until June 1822.”⁴

The first issue of the *Floridian*, on August 18, 1821, announced “There is established in this place a Post Office, and regular weekly mail to Claiborne, Alabama, the most convenient point of intersection, with the Eastern, Northern, and Southern mails. The Postmaster General having made the necessary arrangements, with his usual promptness and care for the extended usefulness of his department.” One can conclude this announcement confirms Cary Nicholas was Postmaster.⁵

When Nicholas sold the *Floridian* in March 1823, he relinquished the postmaster’s position to Robert Mitchell.⁶

The Saturday March 29, 1823, issue of the *Floridian* announced “the post office is removed [from the offices of the *Floridian*] to the tenement adjoining the Book Store. The mail arrives on Friday at 8 A.M. and closes the same day at 3 P.M., Robert Mitchell Postmaster [appointed by the Postmaster General on May 28, 1823].”

Cary Nicholas died April 20, 1829, in Tallahassee after having served for a number of years as Clerk of the Superior Court of Middle Florida.⁷

ENDNOTES

¹ Deane. R. Briggs, M.D. (1993). Florida’s First Letters, *Florida Postal History Journal*, Florida Postal History Society, Vol. 1(1): 8-9. Bradford wrote on August 2, 1821: “I will know in a few days what my final destination will be, whether to pursue business as a merchant or take a small farm or remain in the office I now occupy as Postmaster pro tem.”

² Briggs, M.D., Deane R., Thomas Lera, and Francis Ferguson (Eds.). (2018). *FLORIDA STAMPLESS POSTAL HISTORY 1763 -1861*, Florida Postal History Society, p. 314.

³ Dennis Golladay, (1985). A Second Chance: Cary Nicholas and Frontier Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 64(2), pp. 129-147.

⁴ Douglas C. McMurtrie. (1944). The Beginnings of Printing in Florida. *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 23(2), p. 73.

Samsula, Florida

By Juan L. Riera

Samsula, a rural agricultural area located about ten miles west of I-95 and about fifteen miles west of New Smyrna Beach and Port Orange, **Figure 1**, has an interesting past. It is not incorporated as a municipality, but rather is a census-designated place in Volusia County as Samsula-Spruce Creek. According to the 2010 census, the population was 5,047 in the 17.4 square miles designated in this area.

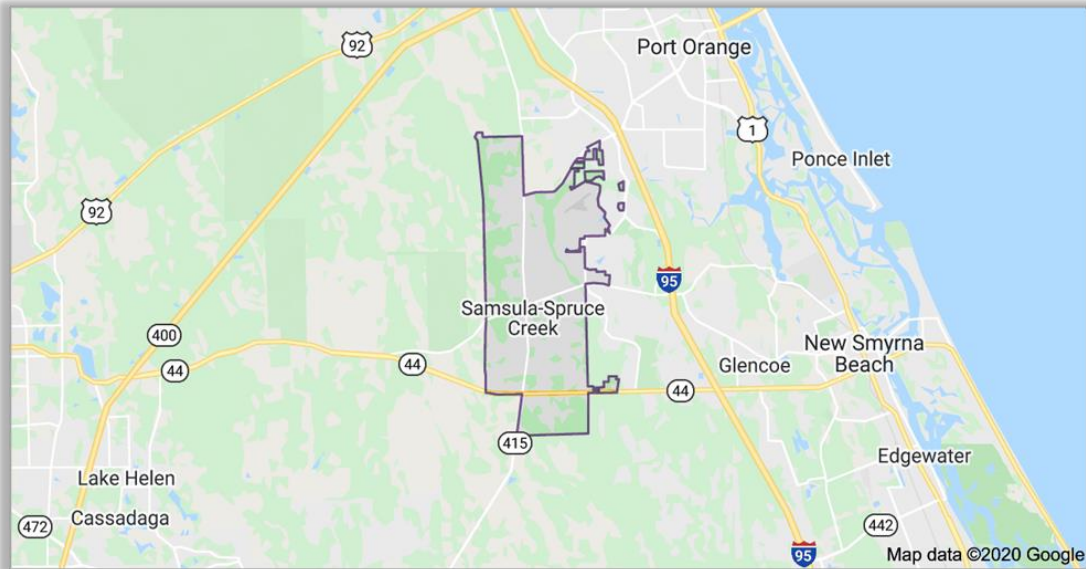


Figure 1. Samsula-Spruce Creek.

Editor's Note: Samsula's original name was Briggsville. According to Volusia County School Board records, a school called the Briggsville School opened in 1893. The school and community were renamed Samsula in honor of Lloyd Samsula, the first World War I veteran to return home to the settlement.



The land developed for farming was originally purchased and platted by a Chicago agency known as Howe and Currier.

Around 1909, Eugene C. Howe and George H. Currier purchased from the Bond Lumber Company 35,000 acres of land west of New Smyrna. It would become New Smyrna Beach in about 1950. The ten-acre plots formed the basis of several communities: Indian Springs, Alamana (near Lake Ashby), and eventually Samsula.

Howe & Currier set up shop in New Smyrna with a Mr. Leidesdorff as agent and began advertising land for sale.

Figure 2 is a 1912 ad from the *Washington, D.C. Herald* illustrating the marketing efforts Howe & Currier were putting into their Florida investment.

Figure 2. "A Money-Producing Farm in Sunny Florida."

Among the area's first settlers in the early 1900s were many Slovenian immigrants lured by the promise of land ownership and an independent business in farming. The Samsula Packing House, originally constructed on a spur of the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway, was an early farm cooperative.

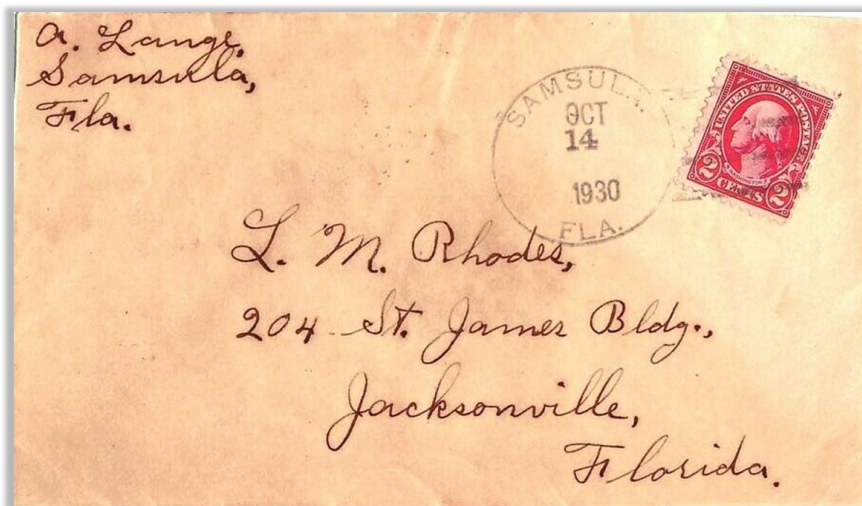
Produce left Samsula for destinations all up the eastern seaboard. The rail line between Orange City and New Smyrna was discontinued at some point after 1932, as the FEC had gone into receivership due to the Great Depression. The Transportation of produce continued via trucks, though more and more farmers turned to local markets. Originally the area had been served by the Atlantic and Western Railroad, also known as the Blue Spring, Orange City, and Atlantic Railroad Company, which ran only one train in the 1880s.

After the settlement at Indian Springs burned, the U.S. Post Office location was moved to Samsula and located in a wooden two-story structure at the intersection of Samsula Drive and the railroad. The post office was discontinued on September 30, 1936, and mail was forwarded to New Smyrna.

The below listing of Samsula postmasters and appointment dates is provided by the USPS Postmaster Finder website.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Appointed</u>
Nellie F. Wildasin	Postmaster	9/19/1919
Mrs. Blanche B. Boynton	Postmaster	2/03/1925
Elmer K. Boone	Postmaster	6/04/1927
Agnes M. Terry	Acting Postmaster	10/01/1928
Victor W. Wiechmann	Acting Postmaster	7/02/1929
Victor W. Wiechmann	Postmaster	1/02/1930
Mrs. Leona E. Boone	Postmaster	12/04/1930
Carl Herbert Langford	Acting Postmaster	8/30/1933
Mrs. Anna Mae Myers	Acting Postmaster	1/01/1934
Mrs. Anna Mae Myers	Postmaster	2/20/1934

Figure 3 shows an October 14, 1930, SAMSULA FLA. mailing. Currently the Samsula zip code is 32128, the same as Port Orange.



Samsula civic organizations include two noteworthy members: SNPJ Lodge 603, which stands for Slovenska Norodna Podporna Jednota (or in English, Slovene National Benefit Society).

The Samsula Lodge was the first organized in the southeastern United States in 1926. The Lodge Hall was built in 1940.

The Samsula Women's Club was chartered in 1949 and is associated with the SNPJ Lodge.

Figure 3. SAMSULA / FLA. / OCT 14 / 1930.

Fort Jefferson Postmark Colors

By Thomas M. Lera

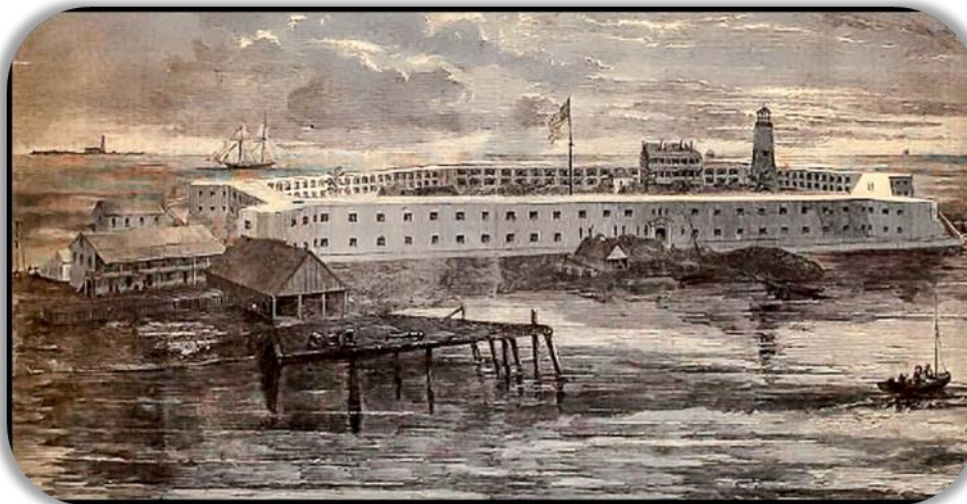


Figure 1. Fort Jefferson from Harpers Weekly, February 23, 1861.

Between 1861 and 1865, Fort Jefferson, *Figure 1*, is known to have used three different colored postmarks – black, red, and blue (blue-black) – with only one type of postmark / cancellation, the elongated circle 35x33 mm. The text FORT JEFFERSON is in Roman sanserif, while the type for FLA., month and day are Roman serif. Unfortunately, the date slug did not have a year line, so one had to rely on a backstamp or enclosure.



Figure 2. Fort Jefferson black cancellation.

The black cancellation on the *Figure 2* cover was probably in Lamp Black printer's ink. The pigment was derived from charcoal (carbonized wood) and later from fine soot. Both were mixed with a gum arabic or oil medium.

In the 1800s, the color varied from dark-brown to blue-black. However, during the 19th century, commercial Lamp Black ink preparations were artificially darkened with a blue pigment such as Prussian Blue or indigo.

Printer's ink is different from the writer's ink of the late 1800s. Much of the earlier writer's ink was iron nutgall which was acidic and bled into the paper.

Different colors of ink were needed to code different types of outgoing mail. This was to distinguish them from unpaid letters struck in black, in the way registry markings were typically struck in blue, and prepaid letters in red (1700s – mid 1800s). It is not known if the Fort Jefferson post office used printer's ink or writer's ink on its cancelling stamp pads.

Postmark cancellers were made of new materials which required experimentation with the ink to make sure the cancel image was clear, fast drying, did not transfer to another envelope, and did not smear.

The Post Office Department had several sections which developed ink for stamps and cancellers. This is an area currently being investigated by members of the Institute for Analytical Philately and the various expertizing services around the world.

Red printer's ink, **Figure 3**, in most cases was a variant of red lead (Pb_3O_4). Red lead is known to discolor in the presence of air pollutants such as hydrogen sulfide and those containing sulfur, such as smoke from coal stoves.

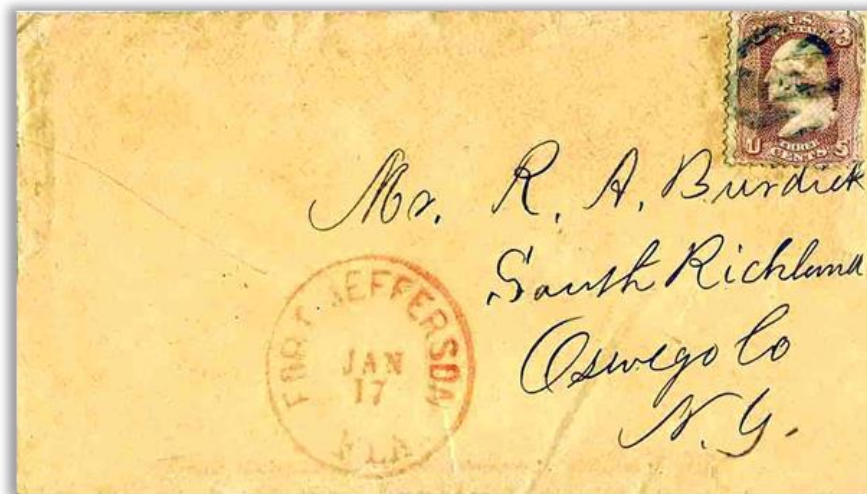


Figure 3. Fort Jefferson red cancellation.

There are many shades of blue cancelling ink, which vary in hue (greenish-blue, violet-blue, and blackish-blue), lightness (light-blue, dark-blue), and saturation (gray-blue, bright-blue).

The Fort Jefferson postmark shown on **Figure 4** is a blackish-blue postmark which may be a commercial carbon ink with indigo added to darken it. I have seen three Fort Jefferson covers listed in auctions with the "blue" postmark, and, in my opinion, none appear to be blue in color. If you know of, or have, one in blue, please send a scan to me or the editor.



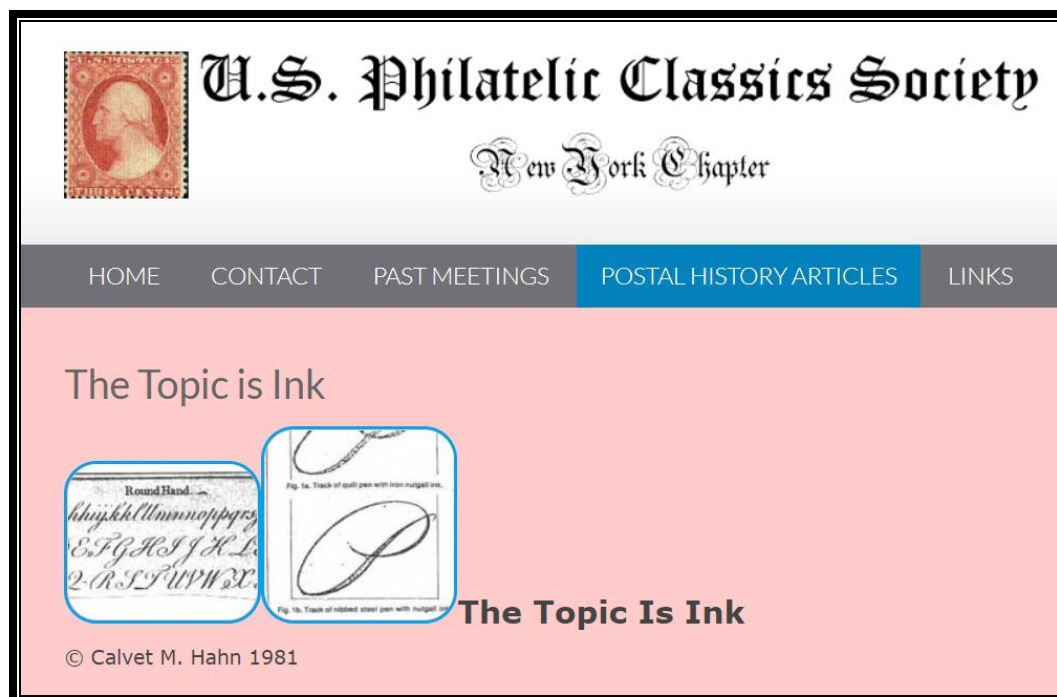
Figure 4. Fort Jefferson blackish-blue cancellation.

There were hundreds of both Union and Confederate Civil War patriotic envelopes. The 220th sale by Robert Seigel Auctions was *Civil War Patriotic Covers* held June 9-10, 1959. It had 1,257 lots, many with multiple offerings, including over fifty Howells poems on envelopes, such as the poem on the **Figure 4** cover.

Editor's Note: *J.A. Howells, Jefferson, Ohio, was a printer and dealer in fancy envelopes between 1861 and 1865.*

The U.S. Classics Society, New York Chapter, has a detailed postal history webpage on ink worthy of reviewing.

Editor's Note: <http://www.nystamp.org/postal-history-articles/the-topic-is-ink/>



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