

FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

VOL. 8, NO. 1

JANUARY 2001

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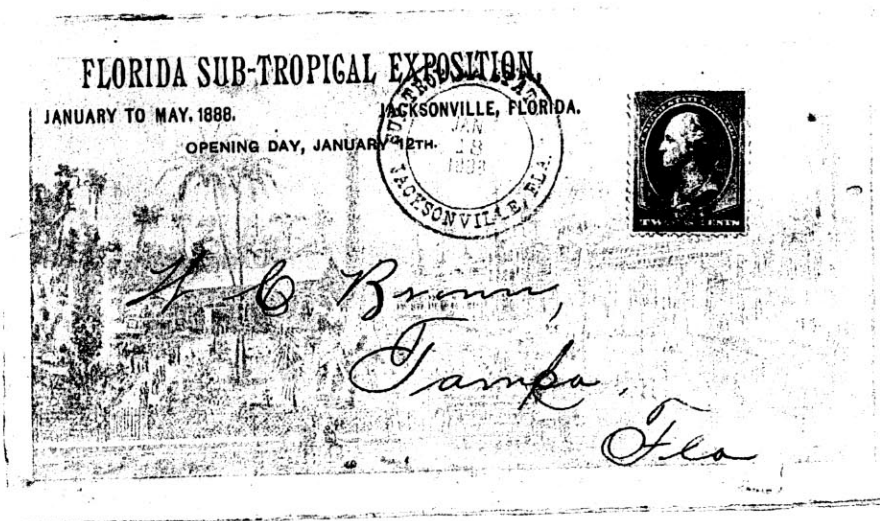
HERBERT P. McNEAL

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FLORIDA SUB-TROPICAL EXPOSITION

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



SUB TROPICAL STATION / JACKSONVILLE, FLA. JAN 18 1888 postmark on Exhibition advertising cover

The Florida Sub-Tropical Exposition was the first real attempt in Florida to increase tourist awareness of Florida and its resources. Waterworks Park at the corner of First and Main Streets (now called Pine Street) was leased from the city of Jacksonville to be used for an Exhibition. First advertised in the *Florida Dispatch* in October 1887, the Florida Sub-Tropical Exposition opened on January 12, 1888, with a beautiful, large, multi-storied exhibition building which displayed local products and resources from the State of Florida, the Bahamas, West Indies, Mexico, and Central America. In an effort to get people from out of Florida to come to the exposition, the following advertising verse was composed.

"Come and see our green groves hung with clinging gold, more beautiful than a poet's dream.

Come look upon our waving palms and bask in the warmth of our genial clime.

Come see our broad rivers, gleaming in the sunlight like a sheen of rippling silver, and view our timber forests bending lazily in the scented breeze.

We mean to say by exhibitions like this that we are willing to submit to your closest scrutiny, to your most personal test and criticism."

The presidential opening address by Colonel Burbridge explained the premise of the exposition: " Every great and prosperous city in the country every year opens to the public a fair or exposition, so that the citizens of the surrounding country can meet together and exhibit their mechanical and agricultural products. This exposition was opened so that the counties of the state could come here and display the products of their respective counties, so that the strangers visiting our city can see just what we produce. If we look to west Florida we see some of the best agricultural lands in the country. These lands are particularly adapted to the raising of the long staple cotton that compares favorably with, if is not superior to the famous Sea Island cotton of the Carolinas. These lands are also adapted to the raising of tobacco.

And then we look to south Florida, and near Kissimmee we find lands adapted to the cultivation of sugar, where already large mills have been established which are shipping sugar to all parts of the county. these lands in south Florida are equal of the Egyptian lands of the Nile, and will compare favorably with the lands of the Mississippi Valley."

The exposition remained open until May 1888, and must have been quite successful since it was scheduled to reopen every year. President Grover Cleveland and his wife, Frederick Douglass and Henry Plant were among the luminaries who attended the expo. The beautiful overall advertising cover shown above has one of only a few examples known of the "Sub-tropical Station" postmark. Herb McNeal had at one time in his collection an example of this postmark used as a receiving mark on mail coming to the exposition. A commemorative medal was issued for the exposition, and to date only one example is recorded. (fig. 2)



Fig. 2 1888 FLORIDA SUB-TROPICAL EXPOSITION MEDAL

The 1889 Florida Sub-Tropical Exposition opened on February 20, 1889, and only for the months of February, March and April. Attendance at this exposition may well have been less than expected because of the recent Yellow Fever outbreak which quarantined the city of Jacksonville in the fall of 1888 (August through November) and obviously gave the city a less than desirable image.

FLORIDA'S SUB-TROPICAL EXPOSITION, 1889
 February, March and April Jacksonville, Fla.
 J. M. SCHUMACHER, Treasurer.
 WANTON S. WELLS, Director-General. SOLON A. ADAMS, Secretary.

GRAND INTER-STATE MILITARY DRILL
 —AT—
JACKSONVILLE
 APR. 10, 11 & 12,
 1889.
\$3,000 IN PRIZES.
 OPEN TO ALL AMERICA.

Wm. C. Brown,
 Tampa,
 Fla.

Fig. 3 FLORIDA'S SUB-TROPICAL EXPOSITION, 1889
 advertising cover with JACKSONVILLE APR 3 89 duplex pm.



Fig. 4 Reverse of above advertising cover

Figures 3 and 4 show an example of an overall advertising cover used during this second year of the exposition. On the reverse, the same design as on the 1888 cover is used showing the great exposition hall. There does not appear to have been used a special "Sub-tropical Station" postmark during this second year. No medals are recorded for the 1889 year. Newspaper advertisements were plentiful during 1889 in an effort to attract attendance. The second year theme was "A Mid-Winter Revelation of Tropical Luxuriance". (Fig. 5,6)

Opens February **SECOND YEAR.** Closes April

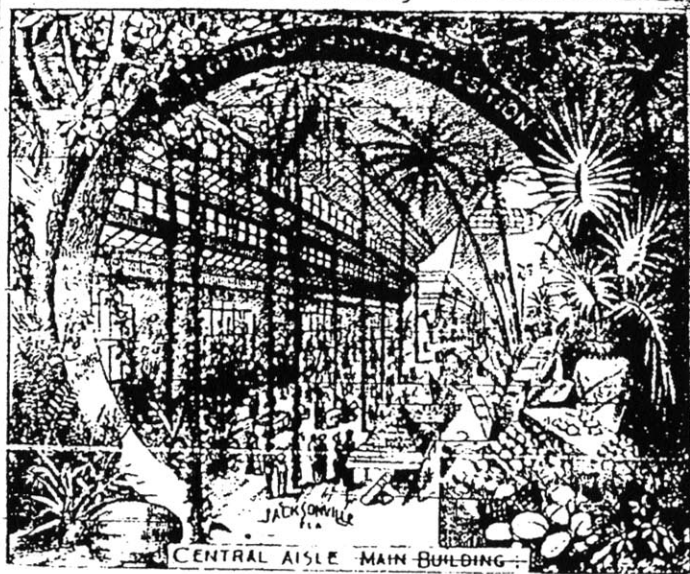
—THE FLORIDA—

1889 Sub-Tropical Exposition. 1889

OPENS FEB. 20.



Jacksonville, Florida



A Mid-Winter Revelation of Tropical Luxuriance!

Fig. 5 Newspaper advertisements for the 1889 Exposition

WEST FLORIDA'S DAY
AT THE
Sub-Tropical Exposition,

— WHICH CONTINUES —
A Mid-Winter Revelation of Tropical Luxuriance.
TUESDAY, MARCH 26
Great Chess Game
With Live Moving Figures.
Friday :- Evening :- March :- 29.
GEORGIA'S ELECTRIC WONDER
will Appear Every Afternoon and Evening.
GRAND :: CONCERTS
Daily at 8 and 7:30 p.m. By
GARTLAND'S CELEBRATED
New :: York :: Tenth :: Regiment :: Band
AND ORCHESTRA.
Dancing Every Evening at 9:15.
GENERAL ADMISSION, 25 CENTS.
Reserved Seats in the Galleries, only 10 Cents Extra.

Fig 6. Newspaper advertisement for "West Florida's Day"

The Florida Sub-Tropical Exposition continued to be held in Jacksonville in 1890 and 1891. A medal (Fig 7) was issued for the 1890 exposition. It is slightly different from the 1888 example and there are 8-10 of these known. Several show fire damage.



Fig. 7 1890 FLORIDA SUB-TROPICAL EXPOSITION medal

The 1891 exposition was the last year in which the Sub-Tropical Exposition was held. A fire damaged the exposition building that year and it did not reopen. The exposition building was eventually removed in 1897. In retrospect, this annual Florida Sub-Tropical Exposition can well be called the beginning of the annual Florida State Fair.

Information and reproductions of the Florida Sub-Tropical medals were obtained from *Token News*, publication of the Florida Token Society. Members interested in joining the Florida Token Society may contact Steve Ratliff, 1717 Saint Marys Bay Drive, Milton, FL 32583-7343.

FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2001 12:00 P.M.

EXPOSITION CENTER, U.S. 41, SARASOTA, FL

"FLORIDA STAMPLESS FORWARDED MAIL"

PRESENTATION BY THEODORE LIGHT

LA VILLA JUNCTION FUMIGATION HANDSTAMP

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



GILLENWATER / TENN. AUG 21 88 postmark on fumigation cover to Beauclerc, Florida with magenta FUMIGATED handstamp and double rows of fumigation punch holes

Herbert P. McNeal prepared a well researched article on Florida "fumigation" covers from the 1888 Yellow Fever epidemic for the very first issue of the *Florida Postal History Journal*, vol. 1, no.1, July 1993. Anyone interested in this aspect of Florida postal history is encouraged to read it. Fumigation stations were established first at Waycross, Ga. on August 13, 1888, and at Flomaton, Ala. on August 20, 1888. These stations fumigated all mail leaving Florida. Mail coming to Florida and especially mail originating in Jacksonville and other towns in Florida for delivery within Florida were fumigated at La Villa Junction, near Jacksonville. This site also began fumigation on August 20, 1888. At the time of the McNeal article mentioned above, the known example of a fumigated cover with La Villa Junction punched holes sent to a Florida town was a cover from my collection (Fig. 1). It was mailed from Monticello, Fla. and sent only thirty miles away to Madison, Fla. However, because of the Yellow Fever epidemic, postal regulations dictated that the letter was sent to La Villa

Junction for fumigation before being returned for delivery to Madison.

In the final paragraph of the McNeal article, Herb mentions hopefully that "Someone has a cover fumigated at La Villa Junction, perhaps bearing a "FUMAGATED" handstamp know to have been used there -- and someone may have an incoming cover addressed to Florida and fumigated for no reason which we can imagine." Well, the above cover now confirms these questions. The cover from Gillenwater, TN addressed to Beauclerc, Fla. was recently offered in auction as a "smallpox" fumigated mail cover. I noticed the fumigation punches, the Florida address, and August 21, 1888 date, and it became evident that what I thought was a faked "FUMIGATED" handstamp was in fact the La Villa Junction handstamp from the Florida Yellow Fever epidemic. The cover has a BEAUCLERC / FLA receiving mark on reverse confirming that it was delivered. The "FUMIGATED" handstamp may well have been used early in this period to notify Florida recipients that the mail had in fact been fumigated (August 1888). As Floridians became aware of the punch marks connotation of fumigation, the additional handstamp marking may well have been unnecessary (by the November use in Fig. 1.)

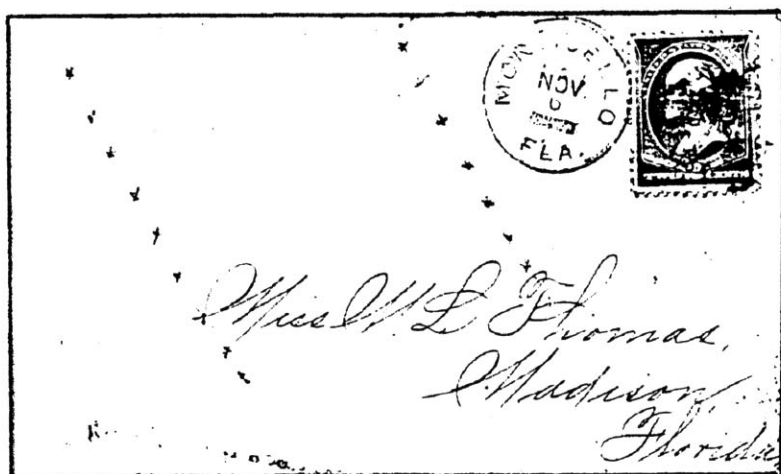
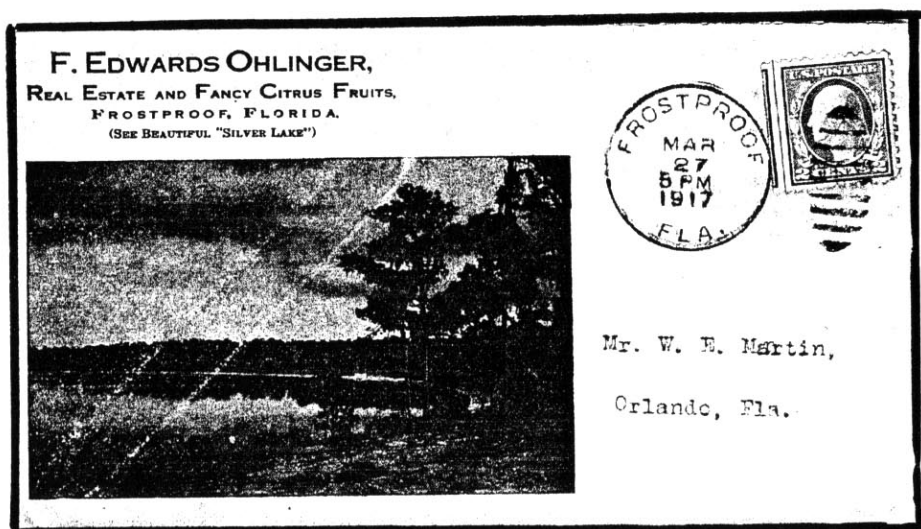


Fig. 1 MONTICELLO / FLA NOV 6 postmark on fumigation cover to Madison, Florida with La Villa Junction punch holes.

IS IT REALLY "FROST"PROOF?

David C. Lingard



FROSTPROOF / FLA. MAR 27 1917 duplex postmark on real estate and citrus illustrated advertising cover

Frostproof Florida, is a quiet little town of about 3000 residents located in Southeastern Polk County. Its history goes back to the late 1880's when the area was called Keystone City. Five families originally settled the area around Lake Clinch. Their mail was being left for them to pick up about 5 miles away at the Avon Park crossroad. Since this was very inconvenient, the settlement decided to apply for its own Post Office. The first postmaster was one of the original settlers, Walter H. Overocker, who had been an employee in the US printing office in Washington D.C. He bought 40 acres of land near Lake Clinch sight unseen. When he came to Florida to view his land, he liked his purchase so much that he quit his job in Washington and immediately planted orange trees and built a house.

How Frostproof got its name has several stories. The devastating freezes of 1894-1895 had nothing to do with the naming of Frostproof,

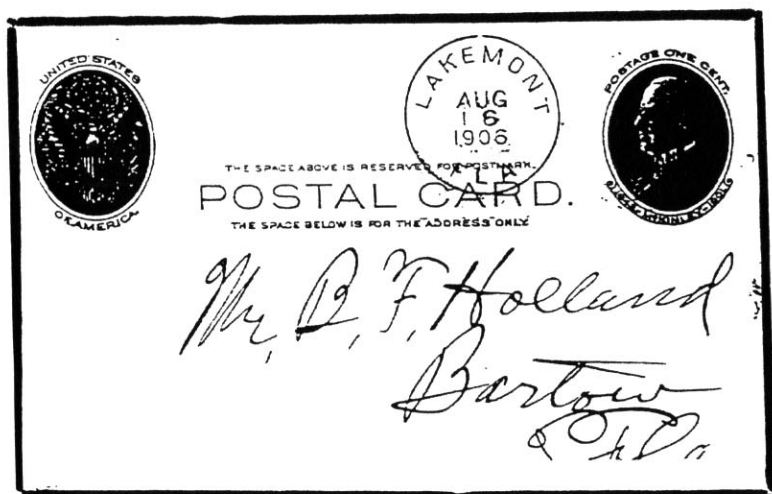
since the name was first established in 1892. Margaret Overocker Reeves, the daughter of the first postmaster, gives the most likely explanation. The name of Keystone City was first submitted, but declined by the POD because an existing town Keystone Heights was too similar in name. Mr. Overocker then submitted Lakemont, which means "among the lakes and hills". The Lakemont application had to be submitted through the post office at the head of the postal route, which was Fort Meade. One of the local residents, Joe Carson, agreed to personally take the application to Fort Meade. Mr. Carson was a real estate agent and likely wanted the town to be named to entice northern property buyers. When Mr. Overocker finally received his postmaster appointment on December 8, 1892, he was astonished to learn that he was the postmaster of Frostproof and not Lakemont!



Fig. 1 Frostproof postmaster Walter H. Overocker (insert)
Note "Post Office" sign above front porch of his home

After the freezes of 1894, 1895 and 1897, the residents agreed that the town name was not appropriate, was misleading, and was used dishonestly in advertising. They petitioned the POD to change the name to Lakemont, which was granted on February 14, 1898. Joe Carson and his family never gave up trying to revert the town's name back to Frostproof, and they finally succeeded and Lakemont became Frostproof once again on August 24, 1906. The name has remained unchanged since then. Frostproof's claim to fame is its citrus and the Ben Hill Griffin family. At one time, Frostproof was first in production and shipment of citrus in the entire state of Florida.

The Frostproof post office remains in operation today. The first postmaster, Walter H. Overocker served for 22 years until June 23, 1914. For most of that time the actual post office was located in his house. Figure 1 shows a picture of Walter Overocker and his house. The sign over the porch reads "Post Office". One room of the house opened to the porch and was used as the post office. Figures 2, 3, & 4 show examples of the Lakemont postmark and the Frostproof Doane type III (2) and 4-bar postmark. I have never seen an example of a Frostproof postmark used during the initial 1892-1898 six year period. If anyone has an example, I would appreciate a copy.



**Fig. 2 LAKEMONT / FLA. AUG 16 1906 postmark used
8 days prior to P. O. name change to Frostproof**

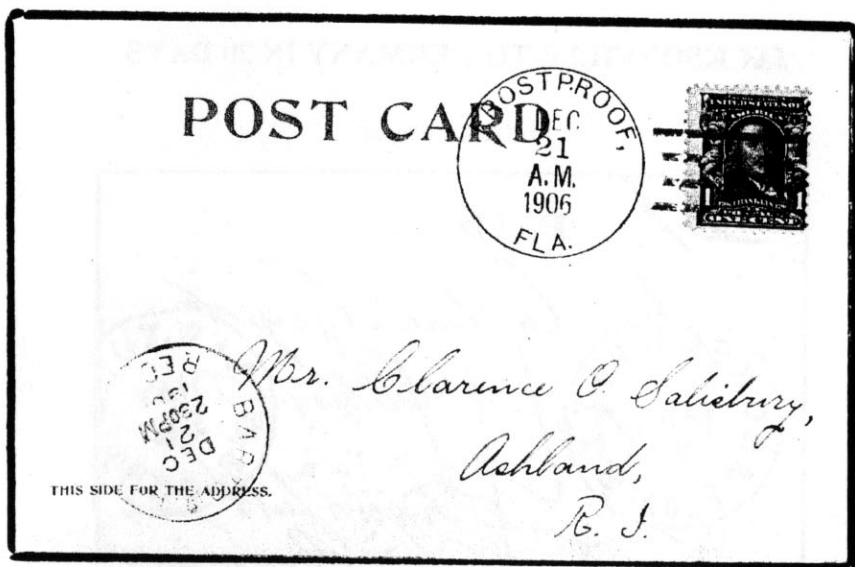


Fig. 3 FROSTPROOF, / FLA. DEC 21 1906 Doane type III (2) postmark used shortly after P. O. name change to Frostproof

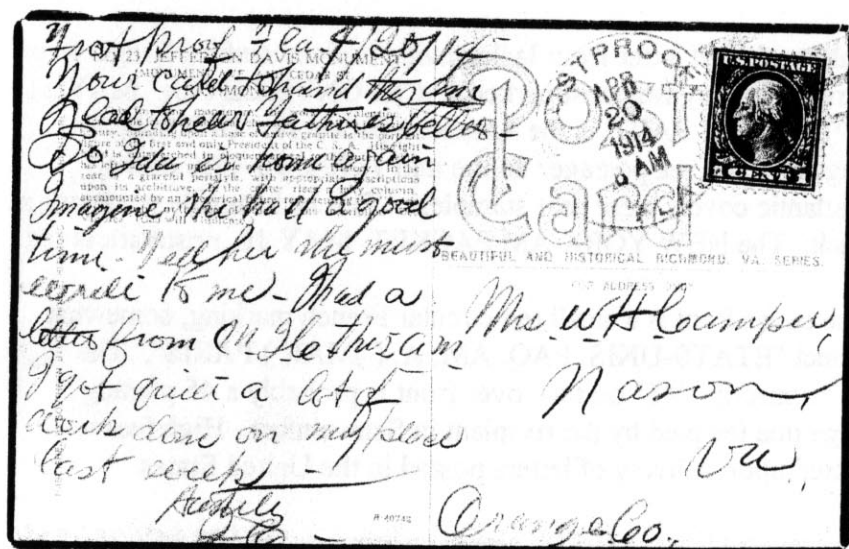
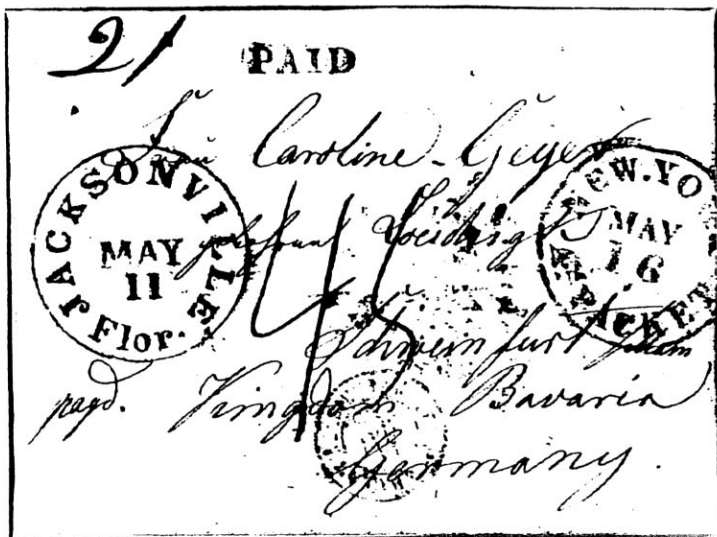


Fig. 4 FROSTPROOF / FLA. APR 20 1914 4-bar postmark

JACKSONVILLE TO GERMANY IN 20 DAYS

Edward Joyce



**JACKSONVILLE / Flor. MAY 11 (1859) large balloon postmark
with PAID 21 rate to Kingdom Bavaria, Germany**

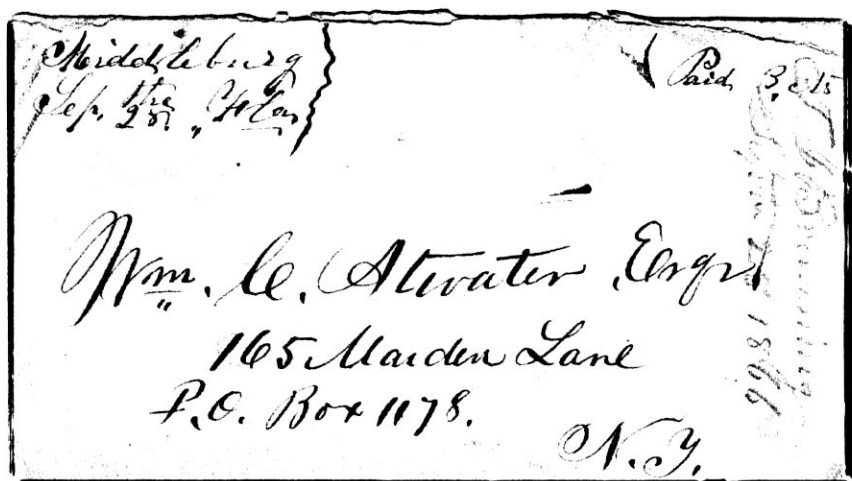
The above folded letter from Jacksonville to Schweinfurt, Kingdom of Bavaria, Germany was postmarked JACKSONVILLE Flor. MAY 11 (1859). The "21 PAID" is the American packet rate of 5c inland postage and 21c sea postage. In the mid 1850's, 30-40% of the transatlantic covers were sent stampless. The Jacksonville postmark is in black. The NEW YORK AM PACKET MAY 16 postmark is red.

On the cover front is a small red circular French marking, somewhat indistinct "ETATS-UNIS PAQ. AM. A. () MAI () PARIS". The large manuscript "45" on the cover front is probably a 45 pfennig postage due fee paid by the recipient in Schweinfurt. High fees were collected upon delivery of letters posted in the United States.

On the reverse is a red British circular postmark "BV 28 MY 28 1855" as is a black semi-circle receiving mark "SCHWEINFURT 31/5". The Cunard Line offered service to the Southern German States via France.

MIDDLEBURG STAMPLESS "PROVISIONAL" COVER

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

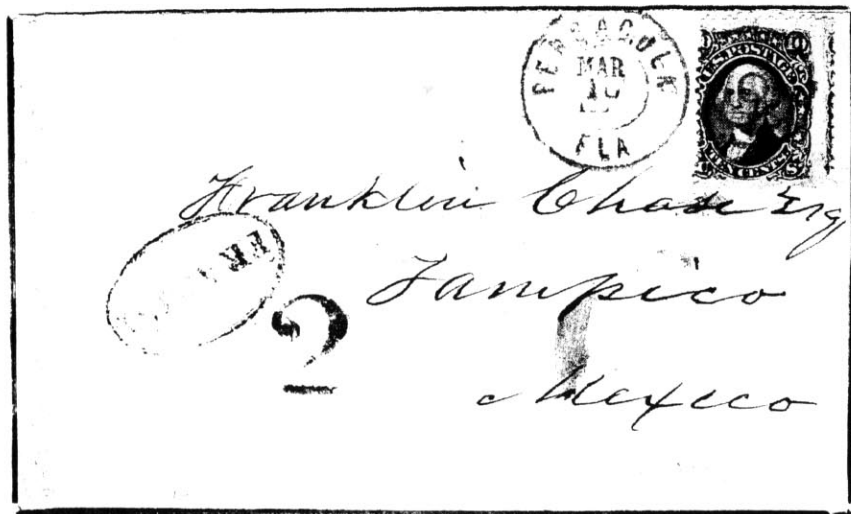


Middleburg / Fla. Sep the 28 manuscript postmark with Paid 3 cts. rate on 1866 cover to New York

Mandatory use of adhesive stamps for payment of postage was effective April 1, 1855 by the postal act of March 3, 1855. Stampless cover are well know after that date, especially in small towns not supplied with stamps. Certainly after the Civil War adhesive stamp use is the rule, but for a short time in the Reconstruction South, USPOD stamps were not available. This makes for the unusually late date for this "stampless Paid 3cts" cover. Middleburg was established as a post office as a name change from Garey's Ferry in Duval County on May 1, 1851. Several pre-war stampless covers are known from Middleburg as are Confederate usages. The post office was not reopened until March 12, 1866, with T. J. Branning as postmaster. The above cover was sent before a handstamp postmarking device or adhesive stamps had been obtained. Thus, this is a "Provisional" postmark and usage. The enclosure relates to the problems with mail during this time. "Capt. Osias Budington is living at (Black Creek) Middleburg Fla. The reason I said Jacksonville was we had no P.O. here then and our mail was directed to Jacksonville".

FLORIDA #68 USAGES

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



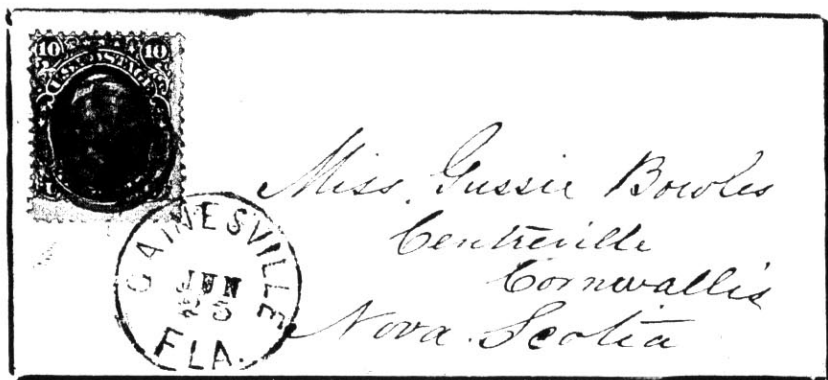
**PENSACOLA / FLA. MAR 10 double circle postmark to Mexico
Possible Union Occupation 1863 usage of #68.**

Florida usages of 10 c adhesive stamps from the pre-Civil War period are exceedingly rare with only a few imperforate usages to California and Oregon Territory known. These were usages of over 3000 miles based on the Act of March 3, 1855 for 1/2 ounce domestic letters. By March 3, 1863, the rate was reduced to 3 c for any distance domestic letter. Foreign mail to Mexico and Canada was 10 c.

The above cover is probably a Union occupation of Pensacola usage from 1863 - 1865, although the year date in the postmark is unclear. This is the only Florida Union occupation cover I am aware of used with the 10 c rate. There is a Key West Union patriotic cover known with use to England with stamp removed, possibly a 10 c. rate.

The second cover is a small ladies cover to Nova Scotia with #68 tied by a blue GAINESVILLE / FLA. JUN 25 (1868) postmark and killer

cancelled. July 4, 1868 Nova Scotia receiving marks are noted on the reverse.



**GAINESVILLE / FLA. JUN 25 postmark and killer ties #68 to
1868 cover to Nova Scotia.**

Both of these Florida usages of #68, are uncommon examples of the 10 c. rate. Later banknote 10 c. usages for registered mail are much more common with examples from many Florida towns known.

FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 3, 2001 12:00 P.M.

SARASOTA EXPOSITION CENTER, SARASOTA, FLORIDA

**A special presentation by member Ted Light on stampless Florida
Forwarded usages and the various rates**

**All members should try to attend and meet our new president,
Donald Thompson**

SAN FRANCISCO TO KEY WEST

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

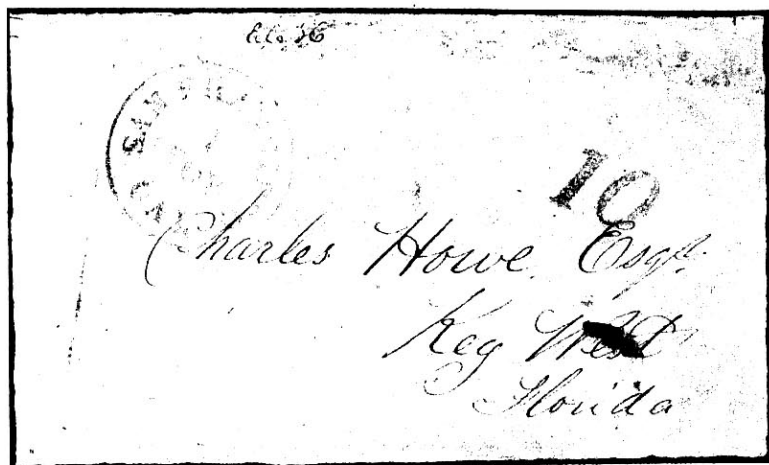


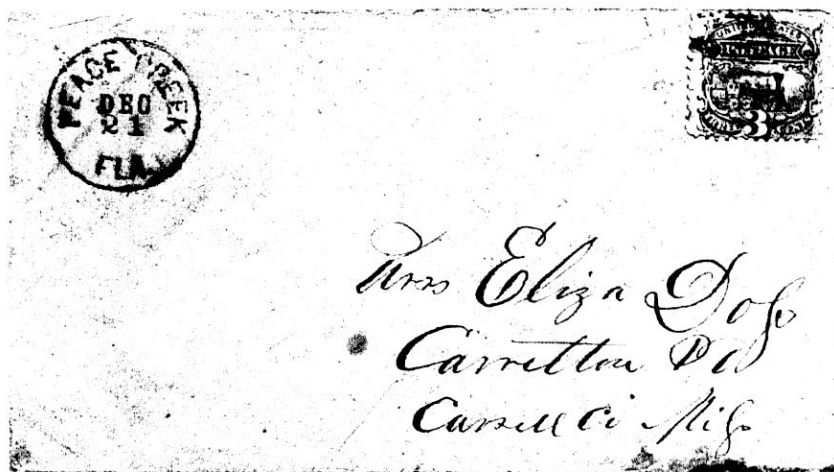
Figure 1.

Although there are many known stampless covers from Key West, examples of usages to Key West are very uncommon. Most of these were usages to the collector of customs at Key West. The above cover, Figure 1., is a stampless cover postmarked **SAN FRANCISCO / CAL. 1 NOV** in black ink with a handstamped **10** in black ink to reflect the unpaid rate for over 3000 miles. There is no docketing to reflect the year of usage. The American Stampless Cover Catalog published by David G. Phillips, Co., Inc., lists the period of use of this postmark as 1851 - 1855. The postal act of March 3, 1855 required the prepayment of postage effective April 1, 1855. This places the above cover to an 1851 -1854 usage.

While stampless usages to Key West are uncommon, usages from California to Key West or any Florida town are almost unknown. This is the only stampless example I am aware of. If any collector has another Florida example of usages either to or from California during the stampless period the author would appreciate a photocopy.

PEACE CREEK FLORIDA

Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



**PEACE CREEK / FLA. DEC 21 postmark with cork cancelled
#114 on cover to Mississippi**

Florida covers with the pictorial issue of 1869 are not common and most that are known come from the larger Florida towns. Only a few #112 and #113 Florida covers are known. A single example of a reduced legal cover with the 15c. #119 is recorded from Florida in the census of the 1869 issues. There are probably no more than 20 towns in Florida with #114 usage and all are very collectable. The above example is an undated usage from a very small town in Polk County.

The Peace Creek post office was established after the Civil War at the location of present day Bartow, Florida. The town was originally Peas Creek (named for the yellow peas found on the banks of the Peas River "now the Peace River"). In 1862 the Confederate Postal System established a post office with the name Bartow. A single CSA cover is known from Bartow. After the war, the USPOD closed the office and did not re-open it until February 23, 1869, and then with the name Peace Creek. The name of the post office was changed to Bartow on May 19, 1879, and it continues to date as the location of the Polk County Courthouse.

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