

An Orange County D. P. O.

by A. Stephen Patrick

This 1939 cover from Doctor Phillips, Florida, was found in a dealer's stock at the Atlanta APS show in January. I'm always on the lookout for inexpensive postal history and this qualified at only \$8.00. Three things attracted me about this cover: it's a discontinued post office (1959), the insufficient postage marking, and the green ink overprints.



I visited the Sarasota National Exposition the first weekend in February to attend the annual meeting of the Florida Postal History Society. The president Alex Hall gave me a copy of the January 1975 *Florida Philatelist*, the journal of the now defunct Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs. It contained an article by Arthur Bond listing 14 former independent post offices that were swallowed by the growing city of Orlando. His list included:

Conway (1884-1907)
Formosa (1886 – 1917)
Gatlin (1883 – 1884)
Jernigan (1850 – 1851)
Livingston (1896-1908)

Lockhart (1896-1960)
Orlo Vista (1927 – 1960)
Pine Castle (1874 – 1955)
Sunbeam (1903-1907)
Taft (1909-1955)

Troy (1884-1886)
Wekiwa (1870 – 1898)
Wilcox (1880 – 1886)
Winter Home (1912- 1924)

Bond speculated that finding a postal marking from each one of these would be a challenging task. This is certainly true in that there exists only one or two from Jernigan. This list has several missing offices including the Doctor Phillips cover. Of course, several of these offices continue today as branch post offices within the city.

The second feature is the message “Insufficient postage for Air Mail Disp. From Miami, Disp. Via . . . “ I’m assuming that the rate was ten cents for foreign airmail, so the letter was put on a boat instead of an airplane. It seems to have reached its destination in time for Allen Logan to get it at the Fort Montague Beach Hotel and save it for posterity.

But the third curiosity is the green overprints for Doctor Phillips, Fla. and Air Mail. The clerk applied a purple Air Mail mark and presumably made the deficient rating error. The three stamps are from 1935, 1936, and 1938, but it would not be unusual to find these in his drawer for sale in 1939. One can speculate that a stamp collector chose the three stamps for their purple color and variety instead of using a single air mail stamp. But why add the green overprint for the city? Is this an example of “boosterism” done to high-light Doctor Phillips for outgoing mail? Does this violate some sort of postal regulation? The mystery is compounded by Air Mail in two colors.

Florida postal history doesn't have to be expensive to be interesting and collectable. I would be interested in club members showing me any of their examples of local history. This is such a natural area of study for our club.

Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



Finds!

What collector doesn't dream of finding a super rare stamp? It is the winning lottery ticket of philately, bragging rights when stamp collectors get together, though rare doesn't always equate to valuable. Finding a rare stamp means taking nothing for granted, looking through every envelope, watermarking and working with a perf gauge and having fun with our collections. Discoveries can be made on any day. Dealers are overwhelmed with details and often sell bulk lots in which tantalizing surprises can be found.

My first extraordinary find happened not long after leaving John McDaniel's employ in 1976 with only a few hundred dollars nest egg. I'd been working for dealers since junior high school plus trading for my own during college so I knew the ropes. I enjoyed great contacts within the dealer community.

I tagged along with a friend to visit another dealer. He would buy dealer stocks and large collections, disassembling them into more manageable units for sale. He'd just purchased the Betty Roberts' Tampa stamp store stock. As Betty was kind of a crude and abrasive lady; I had always steered clear of her. Then, as now, I shy away from confrontation.

Working with limited means, I had to carefully select what I wanted which was difficult since nothing was priced ahead of time. Most of the material was predictable and easily evaluated, but then...!

In a brown envelope, I found an almost complete roll of an Irish stamp, the 1p Map design, perforated on three sides instead of two. I knew right away that it was the recently delisted Scott #105c, a very valuable coil stamp. I knew that I didn't have the funds to buy it so I placed it at the bottom of my stack of selections and wondered if I could work a deal to have it on consignment.

I sat down with the dealer and he tallied my purchases. He called off agreeable prices for each group and finally he opened the Irish coil envelope. He pulled out the Scott catalogue. Seeing the valu-

able 1940-6 coil listings (#105 and variations) vs. the sheet stamp (#107, 10 cents each), he said he could never be that lucky, so it had to be the #107. Then he estimated the number of stamps on the coil as 500. Actually Irish coils conform to the British system of 480 and 960 subjects. They were made from sheets in multiples of 240. This was a nearly complete roll of 930.

His price for the Irish coil was \$10!

The seller would have benefited from my knowledge by asking my opinion, for then I would have been honor-bound to tell all. Instead, he reasoned it out, without my input.

Paying for my purchases, trying to look as calm as possible, I went to the car. My friend exclaimed "Michael, you're not breathing!" I exhaled all in one gust "I'm on my way!"

I'd met George Holschauer, the Los Angeles based dean of British Commonwealth philatelists years before and decided to place the coil with him. In a few months, he contacted me with the welcome news that he was sending me \$2,250.

Years later when I had my stamp shop, I had garnered a reputation of buying pretty much anything that would come in the door. My philosophy was that if someone collected it, someone else would like it. Dealers passing through town would stop by with a collection they had just acquired for a quick flip.

On one of those lazy days when we didn't have any customers in the shop, I started cleaning out the back cabinets. I found a 6" x 9" stockbook of no gum U.S. Washington-Franklin definitives blocks with plate numbers. Reaching for the *Durland Catalogue of Plate Numbers*, I checked out the imperforate offset blocks, finding a very rare #534B block of

four with top plate number. This doesn't qualify as a plate block which needs six stamps. Even so, it catalogued for several thousand dollars. I have only a dim memory of the dealer from which the stock book came months before.

Best thing was, I found the block during the first week of December, and having a virtually zero cost in it, I was in a position to reward my really good Winter Park Stamp Shop customers with something ultra rare for not much money in the holiday season. My way of saying "thanks." The plate number pair went to an orthopedic surgeon, the two singles elsewhere.

Modern errors abound today but this was not always the case. In the Orlando area, just about every first class coil that is found imperforate is found here.

Three weeks into working for John McDaniel in 1973, I found an imperforate roll of the 6-cent Flag over the White House (Scott 1338A) in a mixed lot. Now while the 8-cent Flag coil is real common, the 6-center is a scarcer fellow. At the time of our discovery, it was only the second or third roll on the market. John sold it to Andy Levitt for \$3,000, turned around and gave me \$50. (Smile)

Fast forward to 1989, my China/Asia company was then confined to a few rooms over retail shops in Winter Park. Coleen Nagy had just started with us. Besides her accounting duties, she helped out in the mailroom. One day she brought me an imperforate commemorative sheet which had shown up in a postage lot, only that someone had folded and refolded and refolded it. Still, I was able to sell it for a thousand dollars! Remembering how John's \$50 bonus rankled, I escorted Coleen to the jewelry shop down the street where she picked out a fine pair of gold earrings. ☒