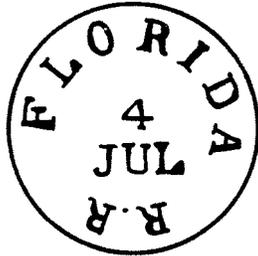


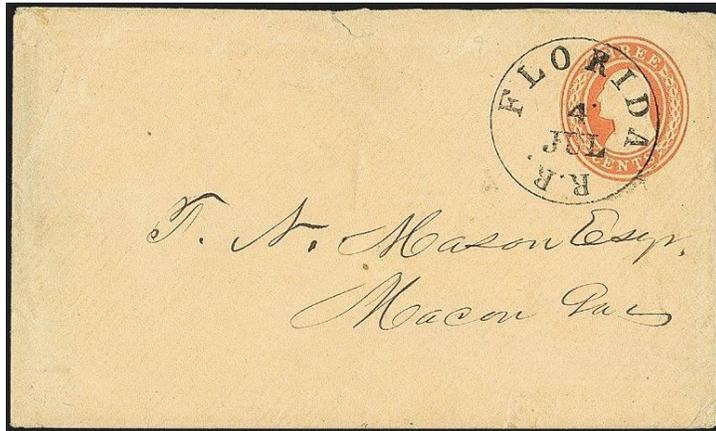
Florida Route and Station Agent Postmarks by Thomas Lera

I decided to undertake this project to learn about railroad postmarks. There is a wealth of information on the subject. The beginning source for any study is a 4-volume 1990 work by Charles L. Towle and Fred Macdonald entitled *The United States Railway Post Office Postmark Catalog 1864-1977*. Culling out the Florida entries, I compiled a listing comprising principally Florida Route Agents postmarks used in the period from the close of the Remele listing in 1861, to the end of 1886. Also shown are Florida Station Agents postmarks between 1888 – 1899 and Florida Transfer Clerks between 1889 – 1893. There are 19 new and 18 updated listings.



380-A-1

Towle Classification and Tracing



Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M. D.

The route agent, an employee of the US Post Office Department (USPOD), rode trains with a contract to carry mail between the terminal stations to which he was assigned. Each agent used his handstamp, similar to a post office's circle date stamp, to mark the loose mail given to him en route. The marking consisted of the railroad's name, terminal name, or some combination of both, either spelled out full or abbreviated.



380-S-1

Towle Classification and Tracing



385-S-1



Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M. D.

A station agent was employed by the railroad, not the US Post Office Department (USPOD). Occasionally, when a station agent received loose letters, he would place his ticket cancelling device handstamp to mark the letter as if it was a route agent's handstamp. These letters were treated as if they had officially entered the mails. There is evidence station agents were formally sworn in as USPOD representatives when there was no route agent present to take control of the mail.

The Florida Route and Station Agent Postmarks list can be found on the Florida Postal History Society website www.FPHOnline.com under the Research tab. If you have a listed or unlisted Florida Route or Station Agent cover or a Transfer Clerk cover, and would like to participate in this listing and census, please send 300dpi scans to RR-FL-Marks@FPHOnline.com. You will be credited in the next updated version.

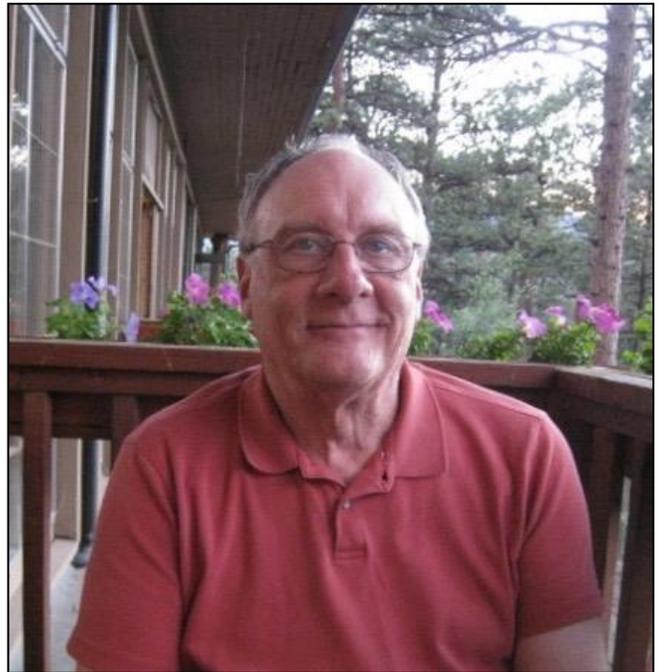
New Member Spotlight

by Gary Byrd

Like most stamp collectors, I started when I was about 10 with a small worldwide collection my father found in our Columbus, Ohio home attic, among his own boyhood treasures. That quickly sparked my interest in the hobby and I added new materials from our family correspondence, packets of colorful stamps from exotic countries “on approval” from H.E. Harris, and trips to the downtown department store, which had a Minkus counter with stamps and collecting supplies. I still have most of the small “treasures” I collected from that period, including:

- stamps from the newly independent African country of Ghana (the former Gold Coast) that had been on letters from a pen pal I corresponded with in Accra (the capital)
- the “La Maja Desnuda” (believe it or not, this translates to “The Nice Woman, in the Nude”) Spanish stamps from the 1930 set commemorating the death of the painter Francisco Goya (Scott 397-399) -- I purchased them on approval and used them effectively to shock my mother!
- a “Penny Black” my grandmother purchased at the Minkus counter and gave me as my best-ever Christmas present

I continued to collect until late high school and then put the collection on a closet shelf when I went away to college. It wasn't until 1971 after I had finished two college degrees and two years of service in the Peace Corps in Africa (where I taught English as a second language to junior high school and college students) and had gotten married, that I found my old collection and decided to take up the hobby again. After some thought, I decided to focus my collecting a bit, by limiting my collection to only the stamps included in the 1971 Scott Catalogs (just three slim volumes at that time, and still one of my main reference sources). I also decided to focus my most serious collecting on the United States and Tunisia (North Africa), since that was where I served in the Peace Corps. By the late 1970's I realized that I would never be able to afford a complete collection of the US, so I sold that part of my collection. However, for the past 35+ years I have continued to focus my collecting on pre-1971 for the rest of the world and on Tunisia.



My Tunisia collection grew tremendously with the help of a few great dealers who focused on France and its colonies and the France & Colonies Philatelic Society and its publications. That collection continues to grow with a wide range of stamps and other philatelic material related to Tunisia. Most recently, I also added the year 1945 (the year I was born) to my list of collecting interests, and I'm finding this to be a very interesting and somewhat challenging focus for my world-wide collecting.

I am new to Florida (as of September 2016) and moved to The Villages from Buffalo, New York after retiring from a 45-year career directing university medical libraries. I worked for the past 21 years at the University at Buffalo (State University of New York system). I am a long-time member of the American Philatelic Society and still an active member of the Buffalo Stamp Club. In addition I hold membership in The Villages Stamp Club.

[Editor's note: we encourage all new members to do a profile as a way to introduce themselves to the club.]