

# MAIL FIRST CLASS

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The *Postscript*  
Tallahassee Stamp & Cover Club  
1904 Nanticoke Cir  
Tallahassee, FL 32303

## President's Message *from Mike Francis*

I need articles for the *Postscript*. The two articles published in this issue are the last two I had stored in the "articles pending" folder. Jerry Davis' piece in this issue is an example of a human interest article of one's personal involvement with one area of philately. Email your articles and images or your ideas for articles to [drmikef@comcast.net](mailto:drmikef@comcast.net) and I will contact you about getting the article or idea published.

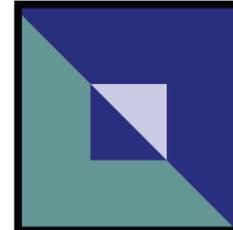
Time again to sign up for presenters for the club meeting. We need three (or four if you are tired of listening to me so much) more presenters to complete the schedule for 2008. Give me a call, email me or catch me at the June meeting if you would like to be a presenter.

Many thanks to Dana Bryan for his presentation at the club meeting in May relating to his, what we feel, important participation at the first day ceremony of the issuing of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings 41c stamp that occurred in Hawthorne, Florida on Febru-

ary 21, 2008. We especially thank Dana for the very nice first day covers he gave to the members present at the meeting. (See cancellation below.)



We are all glad to see Jim Says back at the meetings and hope that other members who have taken ill recover soon and are able to participate once again in club activities. Mike



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Tallahassee Stamp & Cover Club

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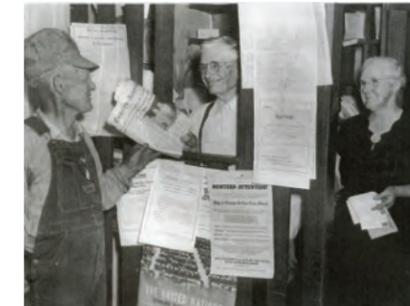


## The World's Smallest Post Office? *by Jerry Davis*

The smallest, largest, oldest, tallest, and other, often exaggerated, claims are made every day by someone, somewhere, and many such pronouncements have been given greater credence by being officially documented in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Crawfordville, Florida and Clayton, Georgia, both layed claim to the world's smallest police station at one time, with a telephone booth serving as the law enforcement nerve center for Clayton.

In a similar vein, while I do not claim it to have been the smallest post office anywhere in the world, the post office that occupied a five-by-five foot space in a corner of my grandparent's house in Sulphur Lick, Kentucky, was, and remains, the tiniest I have ever seen. It was constructed of upright four-inch slats of wood which alternated with open four-inch spaces, not unlike the bars of a wooden cell. It had a smaller door constructed similarly, which my grandparents, Clem and Lonnie Howard, religiously kept closed to keep twin brother and me out. There was a small open window on one side through which my grandfather, and my grandmother, as his official assistant, passed the smaller pieces of mail. Inside this small barred office, were a large floor scale, a cabinet with a few drawers for safeguarding postage stamps and office rubber stamps, and hung on the back wall, several

rows of letter boxes into which the mail was appropriately sorted. A small "POST OFFICE" sign hung on the front porch and a small letter slot allowed customers to drop their letters through the slot which then fell into a basket on the floor inside the small post office cubicle.



Jerry's grandfather (in the middle) delivering mail at the Sulphur Lick, Kentucky PO

Sulphur Lick was a small rural community in Monroe County in south-central Kentucky about fifteen miles north of the Tennessee state line. I am uncertain now as to how many residents were served by the post office, but my best guess would be that the number probably never exceeded fifty. In the early years, there were no hard surface roads and the mail was carried by horseback or horse and buggy, often reach-

## Meeting Dates & Presentations, 2008

March 11 — Mickey Dwyer  
April 8 — Club Auction  
May 13 — Dana Bryan  
June 10 — Mike Francis  
July 8 — Mike Francis

August 12 — TBA  
September 9 — TBA  
October 14 — Annual Bourse  
November 11 — TBA, Elections  
December 9 — Annual Christmas Party

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### NOTICE:

- The club auction in March raised \$250 and was a wonderful success. As discussed at the April 2008 meeting, we will attempt to have a pre-auction catalog or the auction web site will contain more detail on each item.
- For the first time since the early 1990s the club is ahead of the curve in collecting annual dues. A special thanks to Larry Sharp for all his hard work in this matter.
- A special thanks to Ed Walters for trying to get the Tallahassee Democrat to publish our meeting notices and to Larry Benson for being our American Philatelic Society Chapter Coordinator.

## World's Smallest Post Office? *(cont.)*

ing my grandparent's home well after dark which meant it had to be sorted by lamplight. In the later years, about mid-morning six days a week, the mail truck would drive through an elliptical drive in my grandparents front yard and deposit a canvas mail bag near a small stone wall. If I or my brother happened to be visiting my grandparents, we would be allowed to retrieve the mail bag, but we were not permitted to loosen the metal slide closure which gathered the cotton rope that secured the mail inside.

My grandfather, often times with my grandmother's help, would sort the mail, placing the letters and smaller parcels in the boxy pigeonholes. My grandfather recalled how he helped the local boys fill out their draft questionnaires prior to them being drafted into three wars. Some, he noted, he never saw again as they were killed in action. Particularly poignant were many of the letters mailed home to loved ones by servicemen. Unable to read or write, some postal customers had to have their mail read to them by my grandparents. As a young farmer and auctioneer, my grandfather lost his leg just below the knee in an accident with a threshing machine. He served as the postmaster of the Sulphur Lick, Kentucky, post office for about forty years from 1914 to 1952, when, at the age of 70, he was required to retire on May 31, 1952. This last day was a very

busy one as news of the closing of the post office was announced in collector's publications and collectors desired the last day of operation cancellations as shown in the following photos.



The long life of the Sulphur Lick Post Office ended with my grandfather's retirement and mail thereafter was delivered by vehicles to individual mailboxes positioned alongside the rural area's dirt and graveled roadways.

I fondly recall the smell of newsprint when the mail bag was opened, the intriguing assortment of postage stamps, and, most importantly, the conscientiousness and care with which my grandparents went about their post office tasks. Unfortunately, neither collected stamps as a hobby, but I am convinced that some of my early interest in postage stamps evolved from what I was able to observe during my childhood years watching my grandparents perform their U. S. Post Office duties at what was surely one of the smallest post offices anywhere.

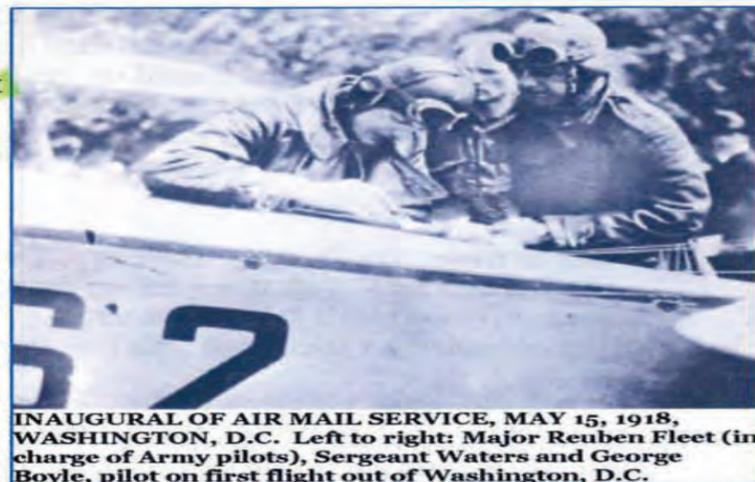
## Significant US Air Mail Events *by Larry Benson*

**September 23, 1870**— Free floating balloons cast adrift in Paris with 500 pounds of mail

**September 23-30, 1911**—First "demonstration" air mail service in United States

**Fiscal Year 1917- 1918**—Funds appropriated by U.S. Congress to establish an experimental air mail service

**May 13-15, 1918**— First three U.S. air mail stamps depicting the Curtiss "Jenny" go on sale for 6c, 16c and 24c



INAUGURAL OF AIR MAIL SERVICE, MAY 15, 1918, WASHINGTON, D.C. Left to right: Major Reuben Fleet (in charge of Army pilots), Sergeant Waters and George Boyle, pilot on first flight out of Washington, D.C.

## Identity Uncovered? *by Dr. Mike Francis*



Maybe an expert collector of middle Eastern or South-east Asian stamps can identify this stamp but for the majority of collectors the task is daunting. The script on the stamp appears to be Arabic in nature which covers many, many countries of the world when dealing with older stamps, especially those of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

The best approach for identification is a picture reference source such as Linn's Stamp Identifier or any other philatelic material that has picture references. Another

source is to have someone who reads Arabic translate the symbols on the stamp. The language on the stamp may not be Arabic but a modification of Indian-Arabic dialects used in the Indian Native Feudatory states.

To date, no one has identified this stamp. This stamp may be a back-of-the-book (BOB) type such as a local, revenue or tax issue that is not listed in the Scott catalogs. If it is a BOB, then identification may require expertizing. If any club member knows, or thinks he or she knows, the identity of this stamp, email me at [drmikef@comcast.net](mailto:drmikef@comcast.net) and, hopefully, the correct answer will be published in the next *Postscript*.

## Identify This Stamp



See if you can identify this stamp. Its identity will be uncovered in the next issue.

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*The Postscript is the quarterly journal of the Tallahassee Stamp and Cover Club. Articles may be reproduced provided credit is given to this publication.*

**Sources for Significant US Air Mail Events:** Flying the Mail, by Donald Jackson, Time Life Books, Chicago. 1982

A Brief History of the Air Mail Service of the U.S. Post Office Dept." by Edward Keogh, 1927.

## Significant US Air Mail Events *(cont.)*

**May 15, 1918**—First U.S. air mail route inaugurated using Curtiss JN-4Hs, nicknamed the "Jenny" and rebuilt DeHavilland aircraft

**August 12, 1918**—Post Office Department takes over entire air mail operations

**August 1920**—Radio station installation starts at landing fields from NY to San Francisco

**September 8, 1920**—Fourth and last leg of transcontinental air mail route inaugurated

**February 22, 1921**—First time mail flown both day and night over entire route between New York City and San Francisco

**August 15-21, 1923**—Second set of U.S air mail stamps issued: 8, 16 and 24 cent De Havilland

**February 15, 1925**—First commercial air mail flight in United States

**September 1, 1927**—All air mail now awarded to contract carriers mostly being owned by U.S. airlines (See article source at bottom right of this page.)



**THE FIRST AIR MAIL STAMPS.** These stamps were printed in two colors requiring the sheets of stamps to be passed through the printing presses twice. The first sheets of stamps were printed upside down. One sheet was sold before the error was discovered. These stamps are rare and very valuable today.

**PILOT JAMES H. "JACK" KNIGHT.** Taken at Checkerboard Field, Maywood, Chicago base on February 23, 1921, after the history-making flight from Cheyenne to Chicago through storm and darkness.