

The South Dade Settlement of Cutler, Florida

By Juan L. Riera and Steve Swain

The area that became Cutler was originally called the Hunting Ground because for generations it was used for that very reason. Located fifteen miles south of Miami, the area was part of the thirty-six square mile township granted to Henry E. Perrine (1797-1840) by the U.S. Congress in 1838 (Figure 1).¹

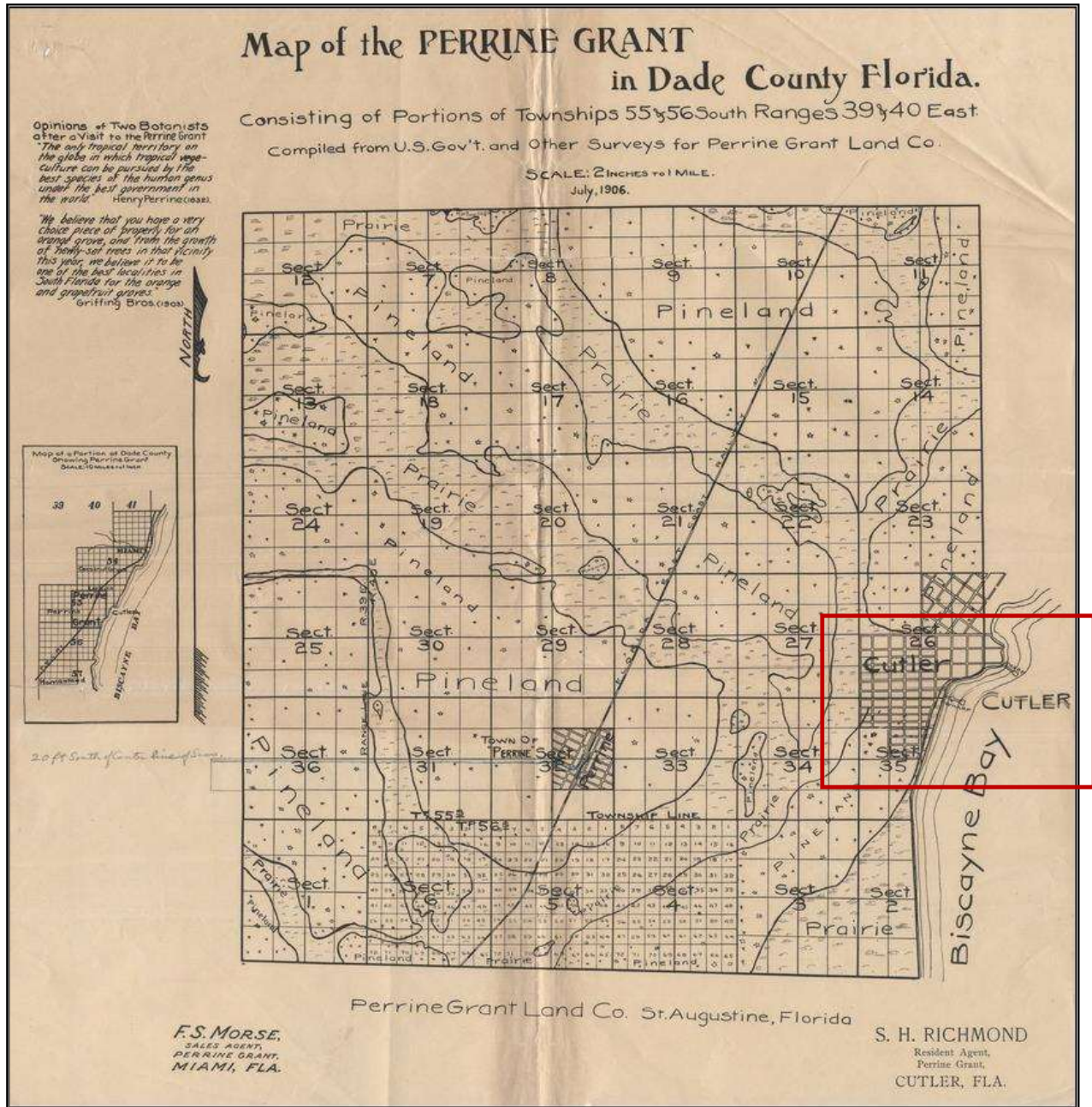


Figure 1. Map of Perrine Grant in Dade County, Florida. Cutler is outlined in red.

In 1864, John and Mary Addison arrived from Manatee County and built a home, which led to the area being called Addison’s Landing by the 1870s. In early 1880, Dr. William C. Cutler visited the area and shortly thereafter decided to buy a 600-acre tract. By 1882, he had persuaded his friend, twenty-two-year-old William Fuzzard, (1861 – 1932) to move to the area.²

In 1883, Fuzzard built a two-story home (Figure 2)³ in this developing settlement that by the end of 1884 had a population of seventy-five.

According to the Records of the Post Office Department, National Archives Catalog⁴, the Cutler post office was established on September 29, 1884, with William Fuzzard as its first postmaster (Figure 3).



Figure 2. A gathering at Fuzzard’s house in 1892. William Fuzzard is shown third from the left with white pants and shirt, legs crossed. On the porch above him to his left is his wife.

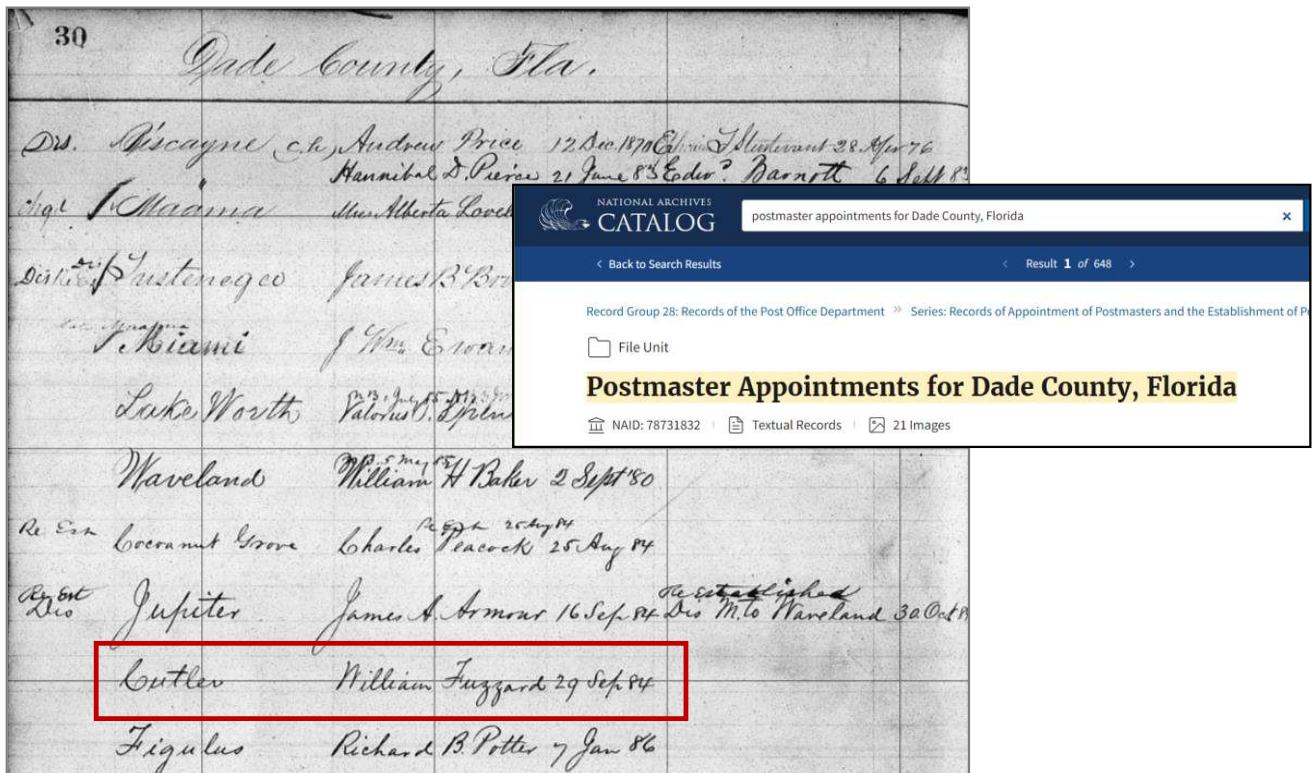


Figure 3. Records of the Post Office Department, National Archives Catalog, Dade County, Florida.

A year earlier, Fuzzard created a trail connecting Cutler with Coconut Grove which was nearly fifteen miles in length and the first iteration of what has become Old Cutler Road (Figure 4).⁵ This trail will become an important element of the Cutler mail service in 1915, as presented later.

The marker reads in part:

“In 1883, Fuzzard, with the help of other residents of Cutler, cut a path north and east through the wilderness of pine rocklands and hardwood hammocks to the village of Coconut Grove. The road followed a natural limestone ridge along Biscayne Bay and established the first overland route connecting Coconut Grove and Cutler. Today, Old Cutler Road which follows a somewhat altered course, maintains the appearance and atmosphere of a country road.”



Figure 4. Old Cutler Road Highway Marker.

An 1896 photograph of the first Cutler post office is shown in Figure 5.⁶ The facility was made from a converted freight car. Two such cars had floated into Chicken Key in a storm and had been rescued by Fuzzard. He made one into a workshop while the other became the Cutler post office.⁷

Standing in front of the post office is Mrs. William Fuzzard, on the left, and an unidentified woman.



Figure 5. First Cutler post office was a converted freight car.

Around 1899, the post office was moved to the Brown and Moody General Store (Figure 6)⁸ located around the intersection of what is now S.W. 168th Street (Richmond Drive) and S.W. 72nd Avenue.



Figure 6. Brown & Moody General Store that housed the Cutler post office.

Research revealed that the Brown & Moody Store was located on lots 23 and 24 of Block 77 of Cutler. Another store, possibly the Tweedell Bros. Store and a Post Office, was located on a part of lot 17. This location is now inside the Deering Estate, where Richmond Drive dead-ends at the rock wall that borders the second Cutler Road.

Figure 7 is a post card sent to Waltham, Massachusetts serviced at the Brown & Moody Store post office. The card carries a CUTLER FLA. APR 30 1903 cds.

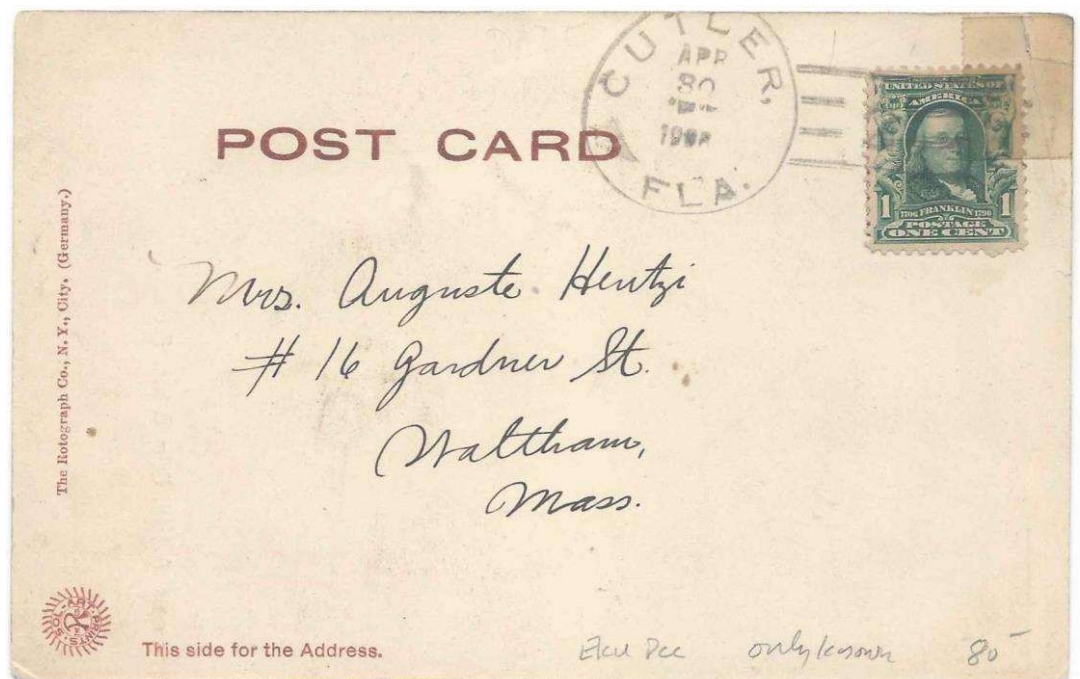


Figure 7. CUTLER, FLA. APR 30 1903 postmark. (Deane R. Briggs collection.)

When the Florida East Coast Railroad bypassed Cutler in 1903, the town began to die. In 1915, Cutler became part of the Charles Deering Estate. All buildings were torn down except Richmond Cottage, which was incorporated into the Deering home. The Fuzzard family moved north to Miami by 1905.

The Cutler post office was discontinued on July 31, 1915 (Figure 8).⁹ The mail would be forwarded to Coconut Grove.

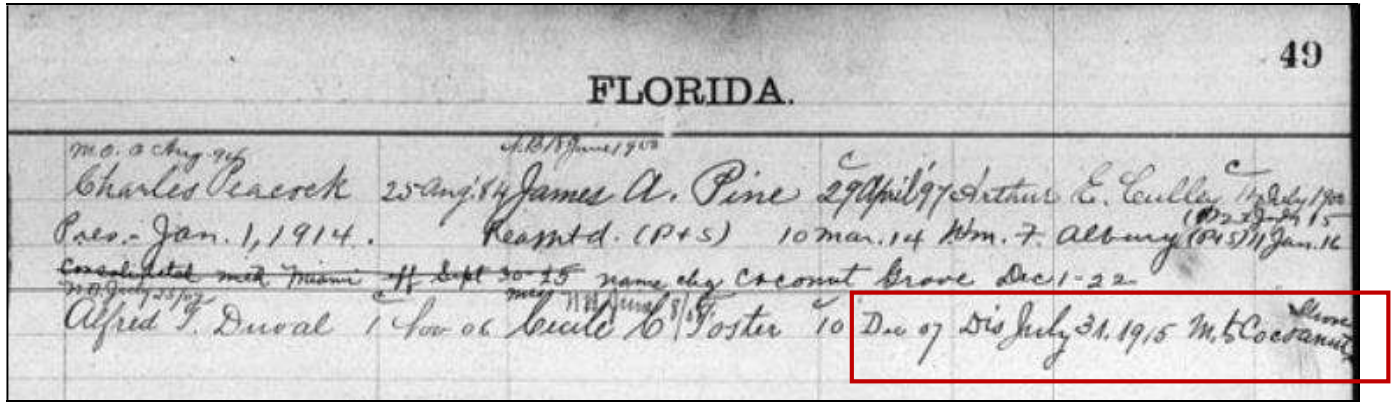


Figure 8. Cutler post office discontinued on July 31, 1915. Mail forwarded to Coconut Grove.

Figure 9 is a December 1, 1885, post route map¹⁰ showing the relative distance and route between Cutler and Coconut Grove.

Endnotes

- ¹ <https://hsdade.com/the-cutler-extension/>
- ² <https://www.ghosttowns.com/states/fl/cutler.html>
- ³ <https://www.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/ingraham/expedition>
- ⁴ <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731832>
- ⁵ <https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/>
- ⁶ <https://www.ghosttowns.com/states/fl/cutler.html>
- ⁷ <https://www.historymiami.org/>
- ⁸ <https://hsdade.com/george-w-moody/>
- ⁹ <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731832>
- ¹⁰ <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth>

Figure 9. 1885 Post Route Map showing relative locations of Cutler and Coconut Grove.

