100-year-old post office now "retired"

Hampton Dunn
MADISON --- The little white house sitting proudly there under the giant lave oaks behind the Woman’s Club once was the Post Office at Ellaville. One of its postmasters was George F. Drew who served as Governor of Florida from 1877 to 1881.

Robert L. Ripley once cited the tiny structure as the world’s smallest post office, but that was after the building had served its better days. Time was when Ellaville, on the Suwannee River, was a booming lumber town and the lively community had a good sized Post Office, plus other signs of bigness such as two churches, a fire brigade, a Masonic lodge and a brass band.

Madison County’s highly respected historian, Edwin B. Browning Sr., related the story of the post office in the local Madison Enterprise-Recorder weekly newspaper. He recalled that the post office dates back to 1867 and revealed that Governor Drew continued as postmaster even while he was serving as Governor in Tallahassee, probably assigning the duties to an assistant.

The last postmistress was Mrs. Pearl Neogel who was serving when World War II began and the office shut down. The little building was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Van H. Priest who used it for a business office awhile, then gave it to the Garden Club.

Historian Browning observes that the mini-post office sits "in quiet and beautiful dignity, apparently waiting for the letters that never come."