



# OCHOPEE

## The Story of the Smallest Post Office as told to Maria Stone

- Why was it called “Ochopee”?
- What was life like in remote Florida?
- Who were the people active in the area?
- What has changed over the past 65 years?

It may be a popular tourist stop now but the Ochopee Post Office is a symbol of growth in southwest Florida and of the resilience of its pioneers. Before the little building became the "Smallest Post Office in the United States" in 1953 after a disastrous fire, it was a shed in the thriving tomato farm in Ochopee on the Tamiami Trail, the road linking Tampa to Miami in 1928.

This book recalls the memories of the founding Gaunt family plus their friends and neighbors. There are also reports of more recent times when Evelyn Shealy served the community as postmaster, Jerri Fish drove 123 miles each day to deliver the mail, and Mama Hokie hung out her BEER WORMS sign.

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*These stories were recorded by the late Maria Stone, author of many “written oral histories” that are invaluable to historians. They are reprinted with new material and photos in this edition to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ochopee Post Office.*

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Lila Zuck, a Naples historian, is Maria’s literary executor and selected ECity Publishing to reprint this book. Her comment, after seeing the proof of the new 2018 edition, was:  
*Love it! Very nicely done, especially picture of her & sign! You’ll do well with it.*

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