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British East Florida Postal History: 1763-1784

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

Saint Augustine, Florida has the distinction of being the oldest, continually inhabited city in the United States. It was established as San Agustín by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, (*Figure 1*) a Spanish admiral, in September 1565, and served as the capital of Spanish Florida for over 200 years. Despite the length of time St. Augustine has been inhabited, its current population is only 12,975.¹ It had changed hands several times between the Spanish and British and served as the capital of the Florida Territory for two years before being moved to a more central location in the state at Tallahassee.

Juan Ponce de Leon, an early Spanish explorer and governor of Puerto Rico, is given credit for being the first European explorer to visit Florida in 1513. He claimed the entire region for the Spanish crown but for the following 250 years only scattered attempts were made by the Spanish and French to colonize Florida. It was actually the French under the Huguenot captain Jean Ribault who first settled the area in 1562, by founding Charlesfort at Parris Island, South Carolina. Several of his men subsequently deserted to become pirates and attacked Spanish vessels in the Caribbean. Rene Goulaine de Laudonniere subsequently explored the St. Johns River in 1564, and established Fort Caroline across from present day Jacksonville. Ribault returned to Fort Caroline in 1565 with troops and settlers and claimed governorship. It did not take long for the Spanish to attempt to reclaim Florida for Spain by retaliating for pirate actions of Ribault's deserters.

The Menéndez de Avilés flotilla arrived off Florida on August 28, 1565, on the feast day of Augustine of Hippo, thus his naming the territory as San Agustín. They landed on September 7, 1565, and quickly built a fort at Seloy, an earlier Spanish fortification occupied by Timucuan Indians. In response to the Spanish settlement, Ribault attempted an assault by ship on San Agustín. The attack was hampered by a violent storm which lasted for several days. Menéndez took advantage of the French troops being shipbound to march his forces overland to attack the French at Fort Caroline, killing almost everyone except for the women and children. He renamed it



Figure 2
Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.
(From Wikipedia)

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San Mateo. The Spanish returned to encounter the French fleet at the southern end of Anastasia Island and after defeating the fleet, executed most of the survivors including Ribault. The site and inlet is now known as Matanzas, a Spanish word for “slaughters.”

The French attempted a revenge in 1568 by attacking and burning San Mateo, but did not attempt to attack St. Augustine. The British, acting on the belief that Menendez de Aviles and Catholic Spaniards had destroyed English fishing settlements established by John Cabot in the Americas, entered the conflicts at St. Augustine. On June 6, 1586, Sir Francis Drake raided St. Augustine, burning it and driving the Spanish settlers out of town. (**Figure 2**) Drake, however, lacked sufficient manpower and supplies to claim St. Augustine for the British and left the area. Nearly a century later in 1668, another British privateer, Robert Searle, attacked and plundered St. Augustine, which led the Spanish to construct more secure fortifications. As a result, Castillo de San Marcos was built over the next 25 years and remains today as the oldest fort in the United States.



Figure 2
Map depicting Sir Francis Drake's 1586 attack of St. Augustine.

During the next century, the British expanded colonization of coastal America and brought in thousands of slaves to work the plantations bordering Spanish Florida. The Spanish responded by offering sanctuary to slaves escaping to St. Augustine and even offered freedom, arms and supplies to those converting to Catholicism and swearing allegiance to the king of Spain. Fort Mose was established just north of St. Augustine as a free community for ex-slaves, who in turn acted to defend St. Augustine from attack from the north. In 1740, the British under Oglethorpe attacked Spanish Florida with several thousand colonial militia and British regulars as well as bands of Alachua Indians. This led to the three year “Siege of St. Augustine” which was resisted to a large extent by the black community at Fort Mose.

It took until 1763 for peaceful relations to develop in East Florida. This was finalized by the Treaty of Paris which ended the European Seven Years' War. Spain ceded all of Florida, which extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, to the British in exchange for British occupied Havana. The actual transfer of authority took place on August 5, 1763 in Pensacola. This ended the First Spanish Period and began the British

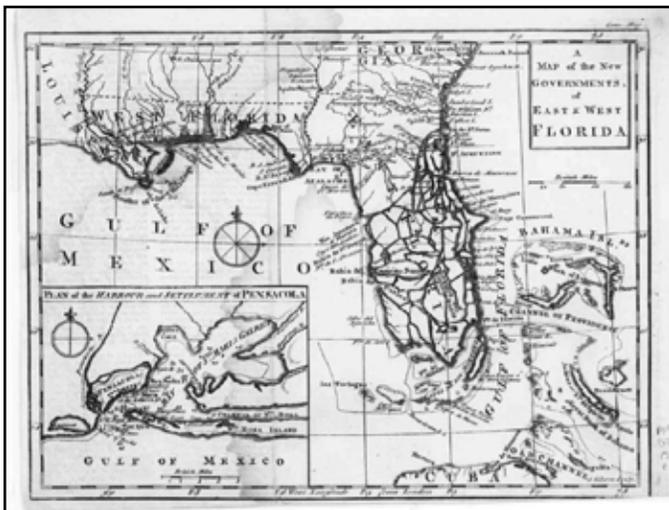


Figure 3
Thomas Jeffery's 1763 map of St. Augustine.

Period of Florida history. In the Thomas Jeffery's 1764 map of East and West Florida it is interesting to note the lack of knowledge of the interior of the southern half of the Florida peninsula. (**Figure 3**). The towns of St. Augustine, Pensacola and New Orleans are well noted as is St. Marks on the Gulf and small Spanish mission settlements of Aspalaga, and Alachua which later in the Florida Territorial period became some of the earliest Florida Territorial post offices. Also note the erroneous location of Apalachicola, far north of the Gulf of Mexico, and actually shown in Georgia.

During the First Spanish Period there was no established postal system or functioning post offices. Obviously mail must have been transmitted between the two major Span-

Continued on page 4

ish towns of St. Augustine and Pensacola and with the Spanish holdings at Mexico City and South America as well as the Spanish courts, but none is recorded to my knowledge. FPHS member Yamil Kouri may have some new discoveries from that period.

The October 7, 1763 proclamation of King George III divided Florida into East Florida and West Florida. James Grant was appointed the first Governor of East Florida and served until 1771, when he returned to England for health reasons. John Moultrie, a South Carolinian and close friend of Grant and loyal to the British Crown, was named the Lieutenant Governor of East Florida. (Figure 4). Moultrie was subsequently granted large tracts of land around St. Augustine which became plantations named “Bella Vista” and “Rosetta.” Andrew Turnbull, also a good friend of Governor Grant, was granted land near present day New Smyrna. This became the Turnbull plantation which was run by Turnbull’s Minorcan indentured servants.

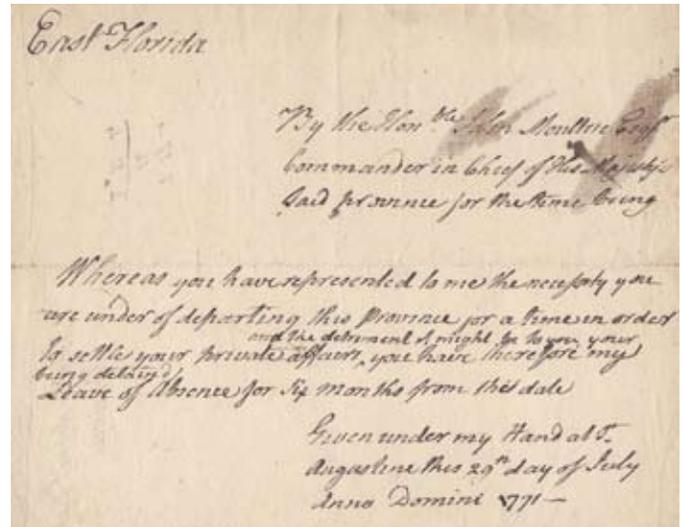


Figure 4
1771 travel permit document signed by John Moultrie, Lieutenant Governor of East Florida.

The British did encourage settlement in Florida and established for the first time roads (the King’s Highway) which exist to this time. Schools were established and St. Augustine and Pensacola were platted into small building lots. Post offices were established in Pensacola and St. Augustine but probably functioned more for the sale of stamp duty than for the collection and distribution of mail. It is recorded that a Mr. Blackwell was postmaster at Pensacola and succeeded at his death in 1777 by Mr. John Stephenson.² My article³ in the October 2014 *Florida Postal History Journal* discussed Blackwell’s position as distributor of stamps for stamp duty in 1768. From 1764 until 1784 only four to eight Falmouth packet ships⁴ came to Pensacola each year, which implies that there was not much mail coming to or leaving Pensacola.

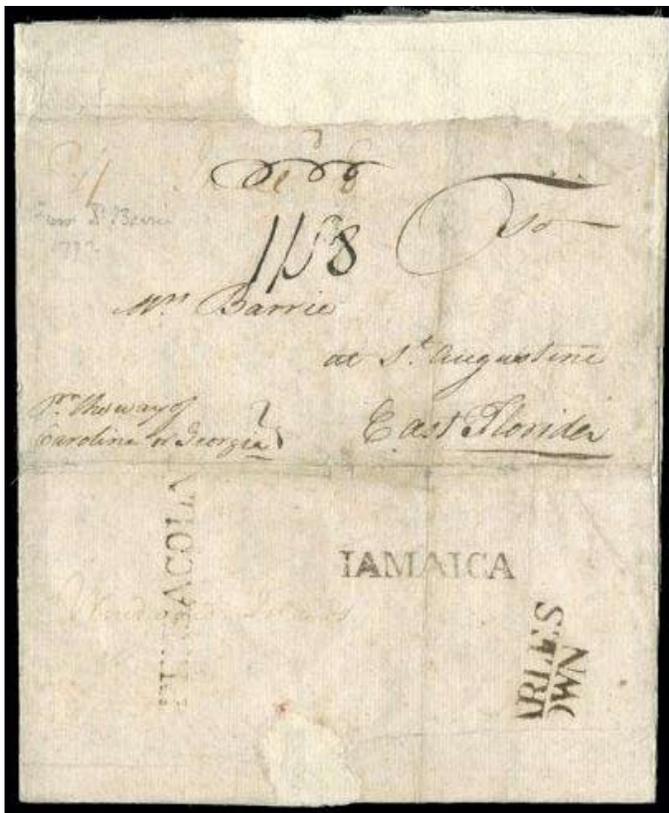


Figure 5
1772 letter to St. Augustine carried on the Falmouth packet via Pensacola and Charles Town.

St. Augustine was the capital of East Florida and did have a larger population than Pensacola and would be expected to have significantly greater surviving postal history. In 1768 a mail courier route was established between Charleston and St. Augustine. Hugh Finlay, Surveyor of the North American Post Roads, recorded on November 14, 1774, “One Mackenfuss rides between Charles Town and St. Augustine in East Florida, after the arrival of the packet boats in Charles Town he set out with mail for Savanna, Sunbury and St. Augustine and returns. The trip he takes twelve times a year.” For a short time from 1764 until 1766, one to three Falmouth packet boats also arrived at St. Augustine, but unlike Pensacola, none serviced St. Augustine for the next 10 years until 1776.

The cover in **Figure 5** is an example of one of four recorded covers from Robert Barrie, a doctor in the British

army in St. Vincent in the West Indies. They were dated from July 1, 1772 to December 10, 1774. This one is datelined "Camp at Grand Sable, 14th December, 1772" and is addressed to his wife in St. Augustine. These covers document the circuitous route to St. Augustine during the time when the Falmouth packets did not directly service St. Augustine. Instead, this cover was carried to Kingstown, Jamaica where it entered the mails with the "IA-MAICA" postmark and rated "In all d8" to cover the 4d rate to Pensacola and 4d to Charles Town the next ports of call. It received a straightline "PENSACOLA" transit marking and "CHARLES/TOWN" receiving mark. At Charles Town it was re-rated 1N8 to cover the extra shilling for the overland route to St. Augustine. Robert Barrie may well have been aware of the lengthy packet route and did note on this cover "per the way of Carolina or Georgia" as some packets went directly to Charles Town or Savannah, thus by passing Pensacola.

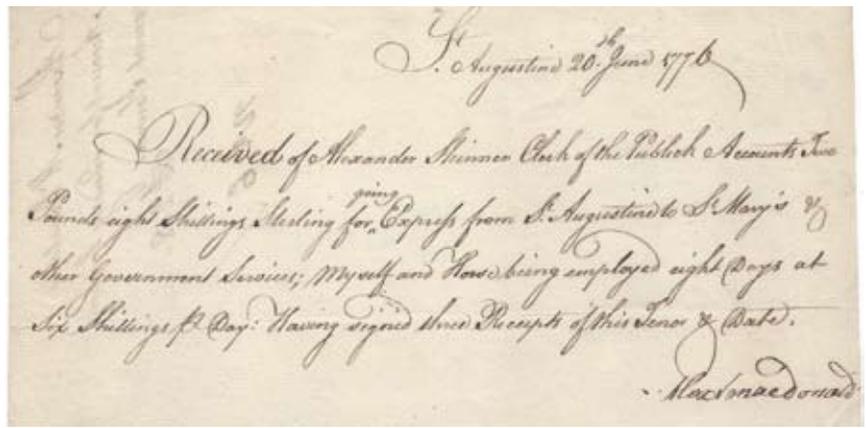


Figure 6
1776 Alexander McDonald pay voucher for "going express."

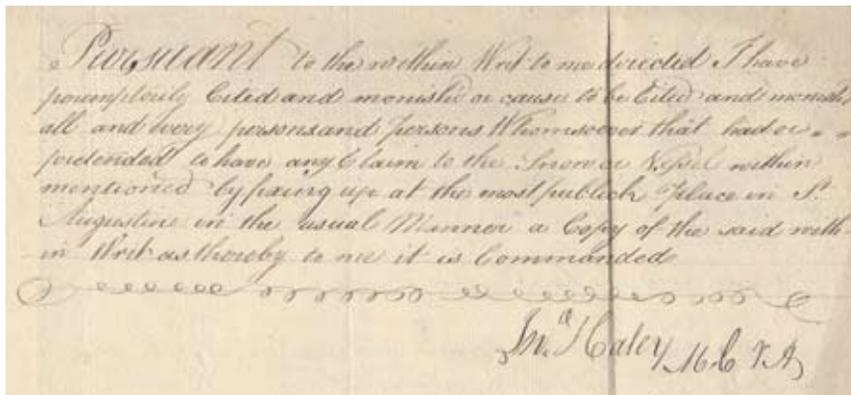


Figure 7
November 25, 1777 Vice Admiralty document signed by St. Augustine postmaster John Haley.

Mail during 1766-1776 must have been delivered via Charles Town to enter the mails and was brought to or from St. Augustine by the Mackenfuss overland postal route as no packets went to St. Augustine. Packet service to St. Augustine was restarted in 1776, and continued until the last Falmouth packet left St. Augustine on April 29, 1784, shortly after the Spanish assumed control of Florida. In the May 2011 issue of the *Florida Postal History Journal*⁵ I recorded a June 20, 1776 pay voucher to a Mr. Alexander McDonald for going express to St. Mary's, Georgia (**Figure 6**). If he did also carry mail, it is possible that express routes to nearby

Colonial post offices allowed for mail service between the times of the arrival of the Falmouth packets.

With the infrequent mail dispatches, it can be assumed that there was really not much business for the St. Augustine postmaster during the British period. Alex ter Braake⁶ notes that John Haley was Deputy Post Master in St. Augustine prior to 1781 but no known handstamped markings are recorded during the British Period. It appears that John Haley had other duties than postmaster as he was also a judge in the Vice Admiralty court as noted in a November 25, 1777 document signed by him (**Figure 7**).

The earliest recorded cover from St. Augustine (**Figure 8, next page**) is datelined "St. Augustine, 20th April 1767" and is addressed to Northfolk, Virginia. It predates the Mackenfuss postal route and went by private ship to Charles Town (the Falmouth packets stopped service to St. Augustine in 1766) where a manuscript "Chas. Town Ship / 2d. Ster" rate was applied. It then went to Philadelphia where the "PHILA/DELPHIA" receiving

mark was applied and a “Sh 6” rate applied for the 4d. overland rate to Northfolk, Virginia and 2d. for the ship captain. This is the listing example in the ASCC for the Chas. Town Ship marking.

The cover in **Figure 9** is the earliest recorded letter going to St. Augustine. It is addressed to Lieutenant Governor of East Florida



Figure 9
1765 cover to John Moultrie in St. Augustine,
the earliest cover to St. Augustine.
(O'Connor collection)



Figure 8
St. Augustine, April 20, 1767 datelined
cover to “Northfolk, Virginia.”

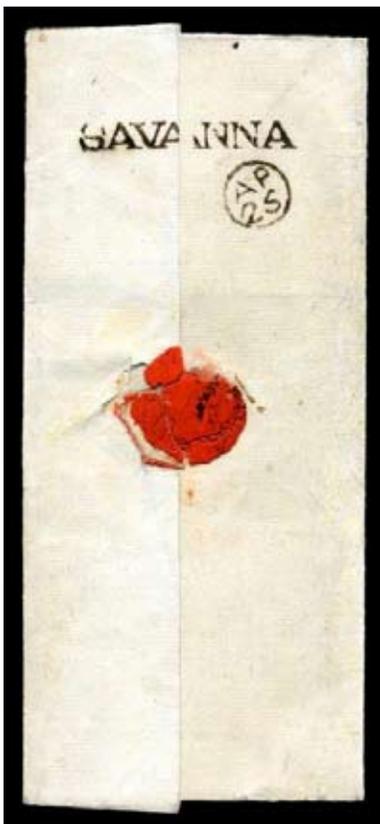


Figure 10
“SAVANNA” receiving
mark on Moultrie cover
with April 25 (1765)
bishop’s mark.
(O'Connor collection)

John Moultrie at St. Augustine and was mailed from Jamaica in 1765 with an inventory of Moultrie’s holdings and rated 1N4d, presumably a double 8d rate for the enclosure. It entered the mails by private ship into Savanna with an April 25 bishop’s mark on the reverse (**Figure 10**). This cover is in FPHS member Steve O’Connor’s collection, and he has found an entry in the *Georgia Gazette* dated May 2, 1765. It reads “Schooner from Jamaica, Alex Mills, master, to be quarantined in the Tybee River for 10 days, all mails have been recovered.” This cover did not go via a Falmouth packet which could have sailed to Savanna from Jamaica, but most likely on the schooner captained by Alex Mills.

There are a few known covers from London, routed via Charleston and addressed to Governor Grant from the 1769-1770 period. They all have CHARLES/TOWN route markings and bishop date stamps with manuscript overland rates from Charles Town to St. Augustine. **Figure 11** documents one example datelined December 5, 1770

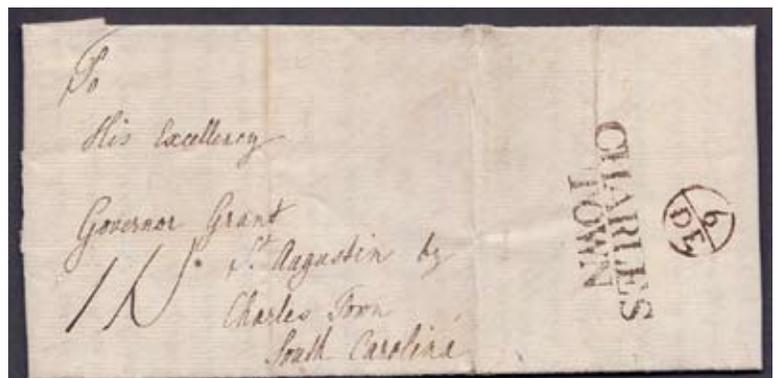


Figure 11
December 5, 1770 letter from London to
Governor Grant in St. Augustine.

from London which entered the colonial mails at Charleston with a 1N rate to St. Augustine.

Two covers going to London are recorded in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* datelined from the Timoka Cowpen or Oswald Plantation, dated July 11, 1773 and April 12, 1774. The later is shown in **Figure 12** and is currently in the O'Connor collection. A third cover (**Figure 13**) also going to London, ex. Donald Thompson collection, is dated September 12, 1774 with a Mount Oswald Plantation dateline. This cover is notable by also having a possible magenta ink manuscript St. Augustine postmark where it entered the mails.

Mail routes to and from East Florida were spotty at best and often took months for letters to be delivered. The Falmouth packets came infrequently to St. Augustine. The following covers are examples from my collection. They were carried privately from St. Augustine and demonstrate the sometimes prolonged length of time for mail to reach its destination. The cover in **Figure 14** is datelined St. Augustine, July 30, 1776 and was sent to a merchant in New York which at that time was occupied by the British. The sender was requesting some silk for his wife, but the letter went to London before finally arriving 11 months later in New York on July 2, 1777. It was rate 1N for the trans-Atlantic crossing. The cover in **Figure 15** (next page) is datelined St. Augustine, July 23, 1777 and was sent by private ship "per fav(or) of Capt. McLeod" to Berwick, England." It arrived at Dover with handstamped "DOVER/SHIP LRE" marking and "25/SE" bishop's receiving mark and a 1N rate. The additional 8d was for overland delivery to Berwick where the letter arrived over two months after being mailed. The cover in **Figure 16** (next page) is datelined "Saint Augustin May 18th, 1783" and was carried out of the mails to Madeira by private ship. It is docketed as received over six months later on December 5, 1783.



Figure 12
April 12, 1774 letter from Oswald Plantation to London. (O'Connor collection)



Figure 13
September 12, 1774 letter from Mount Oswald Plantation with possible St. Augustine postmark.



Figure 14
1776 letter from St. Augustine to New York via England.

It was rate 1N for the trans-Atlantic crossing. The cover in **Figure 15** (next page) is datelined St. Augustine, July 23, 1777 and was sent by private ship "per fav(or) of Capt. McLeod" to Berwick, England." It arrived at Dover with handstamped "DOVER/SHIP LRE" marking and "25/SE" bishop's receiving mark and a 1N rate. The additional 8d was for overland delivery to Berwick where the letter arrived over two months after being mailed. The cover in **Figure 16** (next page) is datelined "Saint Augustin May 18th, 1783" and was carried out of the mails to Madeira by private ship. It is docketed as received over six months later on December 5, 1783.

During the American Revolutionary War, British East Florida was essentially out of the conflict in the north and saw no military action. The Spanish, however, entered into a conflict with England and declared war on England on June 21, 1779. Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana, attacked

British West Florida and captured Natchez on October 5, 1779, Mobile on March 14, 1780, and Pensacola on May 8, 1781. At the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the Treaty of Paris of September 3, 1783 returned British Florida to Spain. The Spanish Governor took up his duties in Saint Augustine on June 27, 1784, thus ending the British Period of Florida postal history.

FOOTNOTES

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Augustine,_Florida.

² David G. Phillips, *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, 1987, p. 48-49.

³ Deane R. Briggs, M.D., "1768 Pensacola Cover," *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 3, October 2014, p. 15-17.

⁴ John S. Olenkiewicz, *British Packet Sailings Falmouth-North America: 1755-1826*, updated January 25, 2013.

⁵ Deane R. Briggs, M.D., "St. Augustine Possible Express Mail Route," *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2011, p. 20-22.

⁶ Alex ter Braake, *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America 1628-1790*, 1975.



Figure 15

1777 letter from St. Augustine to Berwick, England with "DOVER / SHIP LRE" handstamp.



Figure 16

1783 privately carried letter from "Saint Augustin" to Madeira.

Ponce de Leon postal history

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

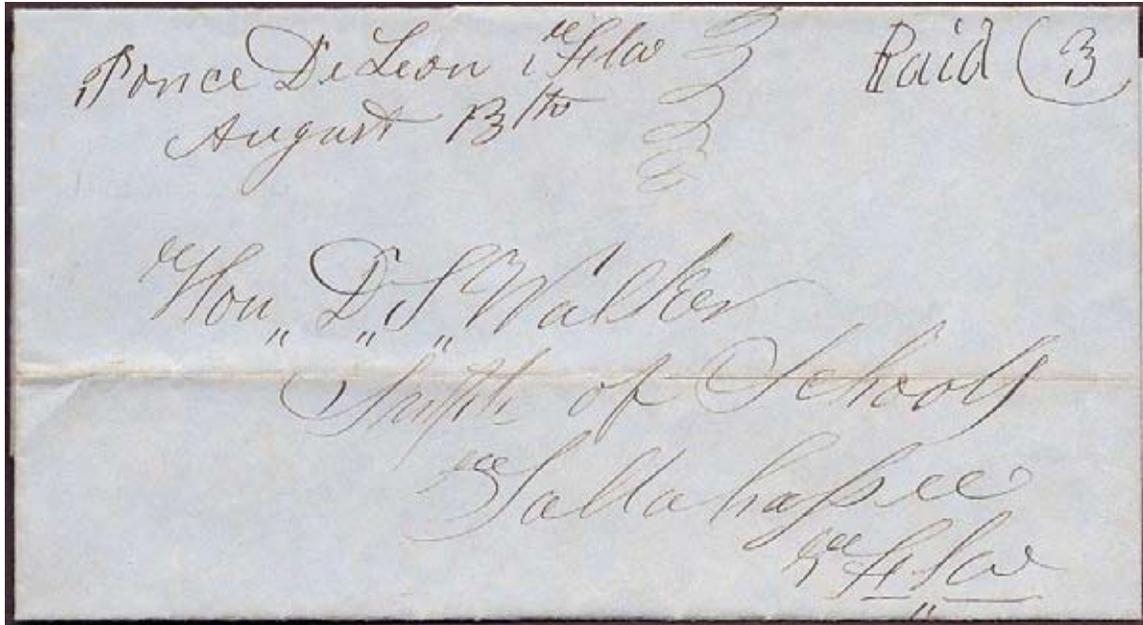
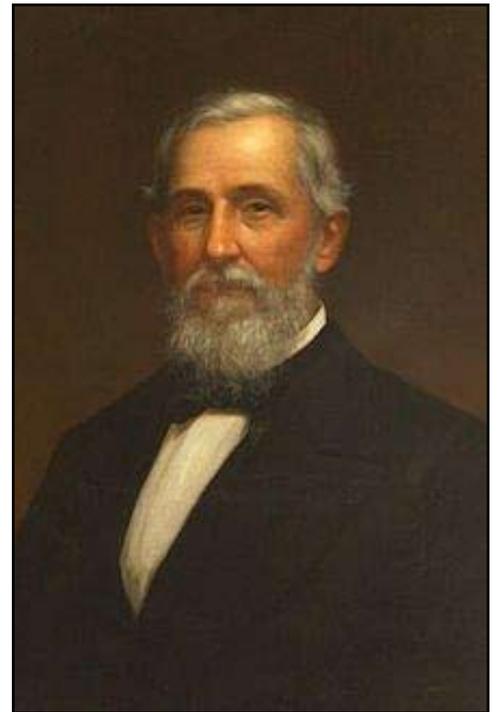


Figure 1

“Ponce De Leon Fla August 13th” (1855) with “Paid 3” rate on stampless letter sheet to D.S. Walker, the only known non-archival example.

It would be assumed that the State of Florida would have a town named Ponce de Leon since he was the Spanish explorer who first came to Florida in 1513 looking for the “fountain of youth.” He was actually not the first explorer to come to Florida as John and Sebastian Cabot explored the Florida coast in 1497 and 1498 and an Alberto Campo map dating to 1502 clearly shows the Florida peninsula.¹ In fact, it is recorded that during de Leon’s 1513 expedition he encountered hostile Indians who spoke Spanish words. At any rate, he is given credit for discovering Florida. He made a second voyage to Florida in 1521, landing at Charlotte Harbor on the western Gulf side. While attempting to colonize the area with 200 settlers, he was wounded during an Indian attack and later died of his wounds after evacuating to Cuba. With this famous historical figure as its namesake, one would think that the town of Ponce de Leon would be a fairly large settlement. It is in fact quite small and has very little postal history from its early statehood period.

The town of Ponce de Leon was established in the southeast corner of Holmes County on the main road connecting Tallahassee and Pensacola, the “Old Spanish Trail.”² A post office was not established until August 24, 1853, with Daniel J. Brownell as postmaster. There was very little business handled by the post office during its first seven years. For the year ending June 30, 1855, government records show only \$.60 of postal receipts and total postmaster compensation of only \$1.96. The records



David Shelby Walker, eighth governor of Florida (from Wikipedia).

for the year ending June 30, 1857 show only \$1.06 in postal receipts and postmaster compensation of \$4.19. It is not surprising that early covers from Ponce de Leon are quite scarce with only one non-archival stampless cover recorded (*Figure 1*). During the 1854-1855 period, only 20 letters at most would have been mailed and that assumes all were prepaid at the three-cent rate. It is likely less than that number were actually mailed. Daniel Brownell, the postmaster, was supplied with stamps and postal entires by the U.S. Post Office Department as is shown by the examples of such usage in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*.



Figure 2
“Ponce De Leon Fla Apr 27” manuscript postmark with pen cancelled U.S. #11 on cover to David S. Walker.

The folded letter shown in *Figure 1* was written by A.H. Brownell, a probate judge, and likely a family member of the postmaster. He was also apparently the Superintendent of Schools in Holmes County. The enclosure asks David S. Walker for advice regarding school funding for a new school and mentions that “I am perplexed almost to death with Jack legs wanting a school and wanting the school funds.” Walker’s hand written response to Brownell was short and to the point and referred him to the Holmes County Court which regulates the number of schools and to the School Act of January 1, 1853.

David Walker was a colorful figure in Florida politics. He was born on May 2, 1815 in Russelville, Kentucky, and moved to Florida in 1837.³ Following statehood, he was elected to the first session of the Florida State Legislature in 1845. He served as Register of Public Lands from 1849 to 1854 and also served as Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1851-1859. He served on the Florida Supreme Court from 1858-1865 and following the Civil War, resigned to run for governor. He was elected Florida’s eighth governor, running unopposed with 100 percent of the vote. During his term as governor, Walker worked to restore state government while Florida was under military occupation during Reconstruction. During his tenure as governor, he was often hampered by the political disputes between President Andrew Johnson and Congress over the U.S. Reconstruction policy.⁴

David Walker is best known for his work in promoting interest in free public school education and his efforts resulted in the creation of the first public school in Tallahassee. The David S. Walker Library, also known as the University Library in Tallahassee, was named after him. He died on July 20, 1891, and is buried in St. John’s Episcopal Cemetery in Tallahassee.

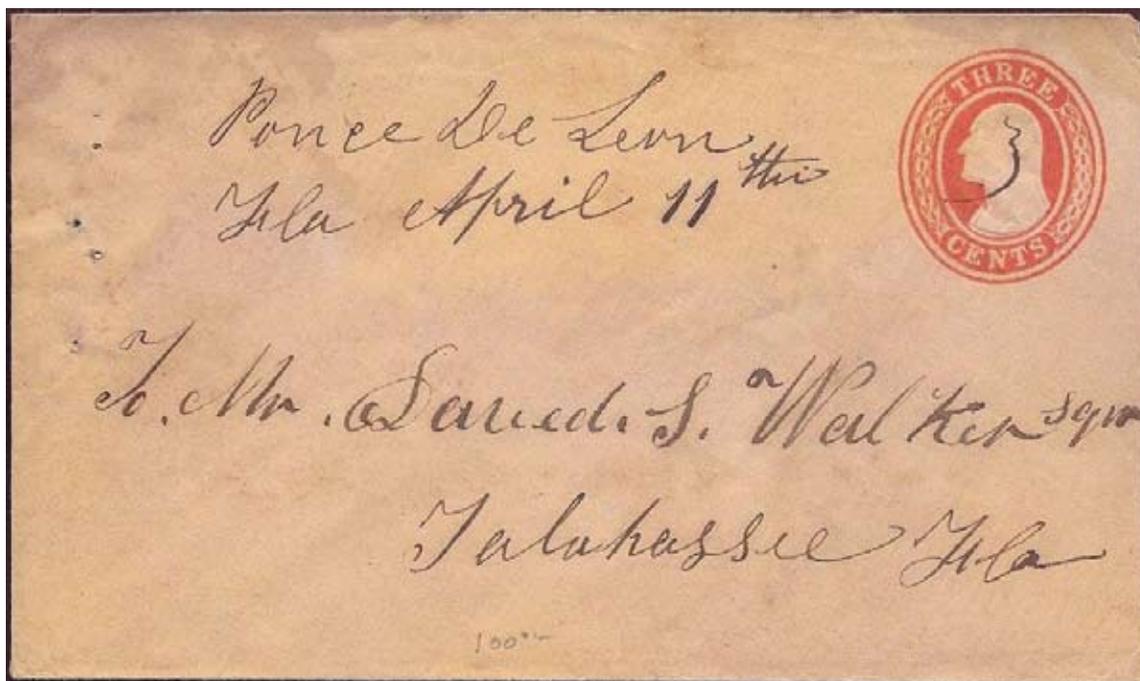


Figure 3

“Ponce De Leon Fla April 11th” manuscript postmark on pen cancelled U.S. #U10 postal entire to David S. Walker.

The covers in Figure 2 and Figure 3 are also from the period that Walker was Superintendent of Public Instruction and are the only other covers from Ponce de Leon dating from the pre-Civil War period that I have seen. There are also an August 18 (year date unknown) cover with manuscript postmark and rate in the archival governor’s papers and two stampless manuscript postmarked covers from Ponce de Leon from the Confederate period in the Florida State Archives in Tallahassee. Readers are encouraged to submit scans of any other pre-Civil War covers for my records.

Footnotes

¹ Deane R. Briggs, M.D., editor, *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861*, 1999, p.5.

² *Ibid.* p.235.

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_S._Walker

⁴ www.nga.org/cms/home/governors/past-governors-bios/page_florida/col2-content

Florida Independent State Period

January 11, 1861 - February 4, 1861

By Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

Before the onset of the Civil War in 1861, Florida was a sparsely populated state with the 1860 census listing 140,424 inhabitants, only 77,747 of these being white.¹ Florida slaves numbered 61,745 with the rest being free blacks and other minorities. The total population of Florida was only 1.5 percent of that of the entire Confederacy.

Madison Starke Perry (*Figure 1*), an Alachua County plantation owner and state senator, was elected Florida's fourth governor, taking office on October 5, 1857. He encouraged the development of railroads in Florida and by 1861 there were over 400 miles of railroads, but none connected with rail lines going out of the state. Perry was fully aware of the secessionist sentiment which was forming in the state.² In 1858, he urged the re-establishment of the state militia to replace Federal troops but this was not realized until 1860. On November 12, 1860, following the election of Abraham Lincoln, a state militia of 83 men was formed at Madison Court House.³ A week later Governor Perry accepted the organization of minutemen for the defense of Florida and recommended to the Florida General Assembly that the state militia be re-organized with an appropriation of \$100,000 for the purchase of arms. Even before eventual secession and with the possibility of eminent war, men were being recruited, equipped and trained.

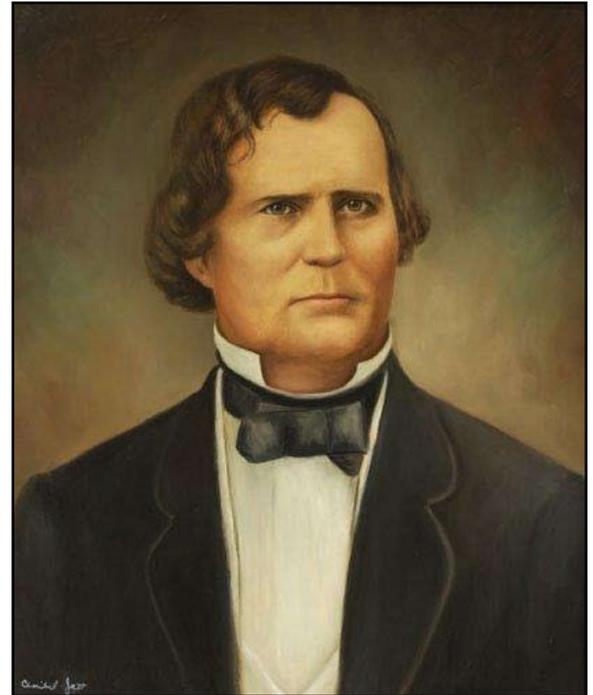


Figure 1
Madison Starke Perry, fourth Florida governor.

Florida's two United States Senators, Stephen R. Mallory and David L. Yulee, added what they could to Florida's independent actions. On December 21, 1860, Yulee asked for and received from Secretary of War John B. Floyd the names and rank of all officers from Florida in the U.S. Army. On January 2, 1861, the war department refused a request for an inventory of munitions and equipment in federal forts and arsenals in Florida. Mallory and Yulee formally withdrew from the Senate on January 21, but Yulee remained in Washington to watch developments and advise his state government.

In early January it was learned that Washington had authorized the reinforcement of the Pensacola forts and naval yards in addition to the destruction of the Chattahoochee arsenal. This spurred the Quincy Guards to take over the arsenal from the ordinance sergeant and three men. The 500,000 rounds of musket cartridges and 50,000 pounds of gunpowder was a valuable addition to the state's almost nonexistent munitions. Two days later the single federal soldier guarding Fort Marion at St. Augustine surrendered its guns and ammunition to a local company of volunteers. On January 8, Colonel William Chase was authorized to command Florida troops and take possession of all forts he felt could be taken successfully.

The Florida state legislature voted to hold a statewide election on December 22, 1860 for the selection of delegates to a State Convention of the People of which ran from January 3, 1861 until January 21, 1861. The sewn

copy of the Ordinances and Resolutions shown in Figure 2 is the only non-archival unopened copy of the passed ordinances and resolutions. Included is the Ordinance of Secession which was passed in the late afternoon of January 10, 1861 by a delegate vote of 62 to 7. It was signed by Governor Madison S. Perry on the following day and, according to the Florida Constitution, became effective on January 11, 1861, making Florida the third state to secede from the Union. This was the beginning of the Independent State of Florida period which lasted until Florida was accepted as one of the seven original states to join the Confederate States of America on February, 4, 1861. During the 23 days that Florida was an

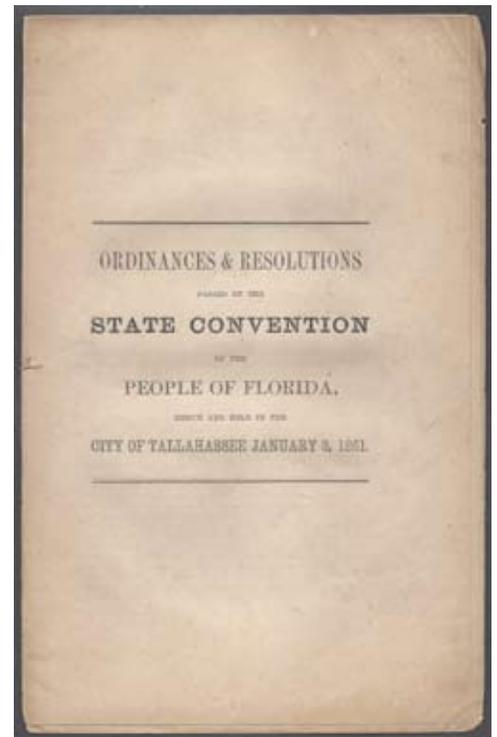


Figure 2
Ordinances & Resolutions passed by the State Convention of the People of Florida. The only known unopened stitch-sewn non-archival example.



Figure 3
Florida Independent State flag made by Helen Broward and presented to Governor Perry.

Independent State she was presented with a state flag (**Figure 3**) made by Helen Broward with the third star representing Florida. This flag hung in the state capitol at Tallahassee until it was removed by a Union Army officer during Reconstruction.⁴ It was subsequently returned to the Florida Archives in 1911.

The original Ordinance of Secession (**Figure 4, next page**) still resides in the State Archives and reads:

“We, the people of the State of Florida in Convention assembled, do solemnly ordain, publish and declare: That the State of Florida hereby withdraws herself from the existing Government of said States: and that all political connection between her and the Government of said States ought to be and the same is hereby totally annulled, and said union of States dissolved; and the State of Florida is hereby declared a Sovereign and Independent Nation: and that all ordinances heretofore adopted in so far as they create or recognize said Union, are rescinded: and all laws or part of laws in force in the State, in so far as they recognize or assent to said Union be and they are hereby repealed.

Done in open Convention, January 10th, A.D. 1861.”⁵

From a postal history point of view it is important to note that the Convention on January 19, 1861, passed Ordinance 19 which specifically “authorized the establishment of a Post Master General with authority to negotiate with authorities in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana for payment for postal routes crossing into

those states.”

On the night before the secession convention voted and signed the Ordinance of Secession, Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer, Union commander at Fort Barrancas in Pensacola, received orders to take any necessary steps to prevent its seizure by Florida troops. Five companies of Alabama troops were moving from Montgomery to join the Florida troops. The Pensacola Naval Yard at Warrington consisted of a million dollar dry dock, workshops, warehouses, barracks, a hospital and munitions valued at \$500,000. Having secessionist sympathies, Commodore James Armstrong and his 50 men yielded the Pensacola Naval Yard without incident. Lieutenant Slemmer moved his 46 men from Fort Barancas to Fort Pickens in Pensacola harbor where they could be better reinforced from sea. Fort Clinch on Amelia Island was also taken by Florida troops. Only Fort Taylor on Key West, the unfinished Fort Jefferson in the Gulf of Mexico, and Fort Pickens would remain in Union control.

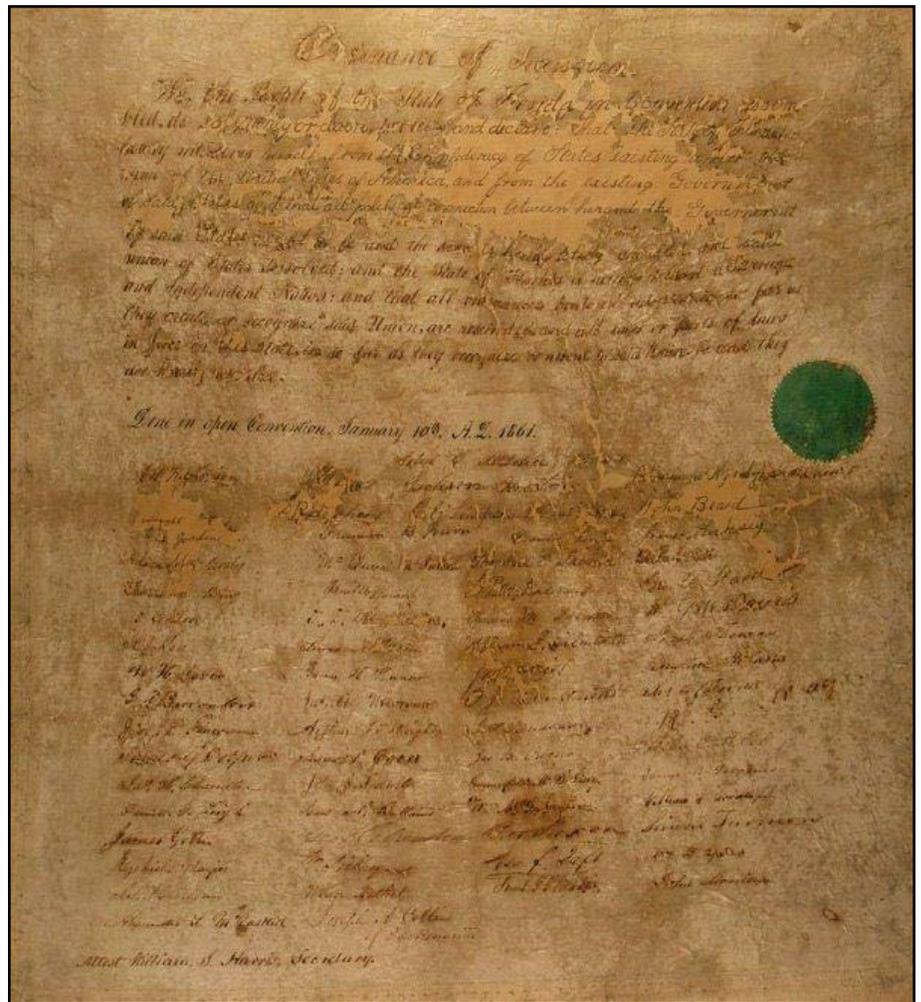


Figure 4
Ordinance of Secession, passed by delegates on January 10, 1861.

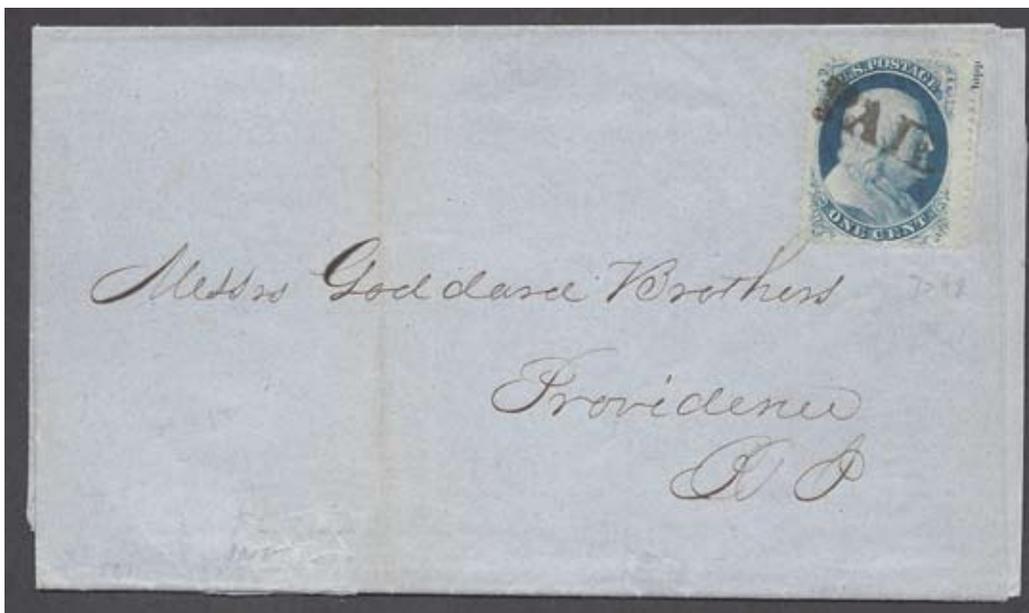


Figure 5
Apalachicola "PAID" cancellation of U.S. #24 on January 12, 1861 "prices current" circular.

There were 153 Union post offices in Florida when she seceded. During the Independent State period only six post offices have recorded usage. Figures 5-10 will show examples from each of these six towns. There are six recorded examples of Independent State usage from Apalachicola, all with "PAID" cancellations of U.S. #24 on "Prices Current" circulars to Providence, Rhode Island. These are examples of payment of the one-cent open circular rate. The example in Figure 5 is dated January 12, 1861

and is the earliest known usage (one day after secession).

Figure 6 is the only known Independent State usage from Baileys Mill with a January 14, 1861 cds postmark and target tied U.S. #26 on a folded letter. It was postmarked on the third day after secession.



Figure 6
"BAILEYS MILL / FLO JAN 14" postmark with target tied U.S. #26.

Figure 7 is the only known Independent State usage from Houston and is a manuscript postmarked February 2, 1861 usage of a pen cancelled U.S. #U-17 three cent Star Die entire used two days before Florida was admitted into the Confederate States of America.

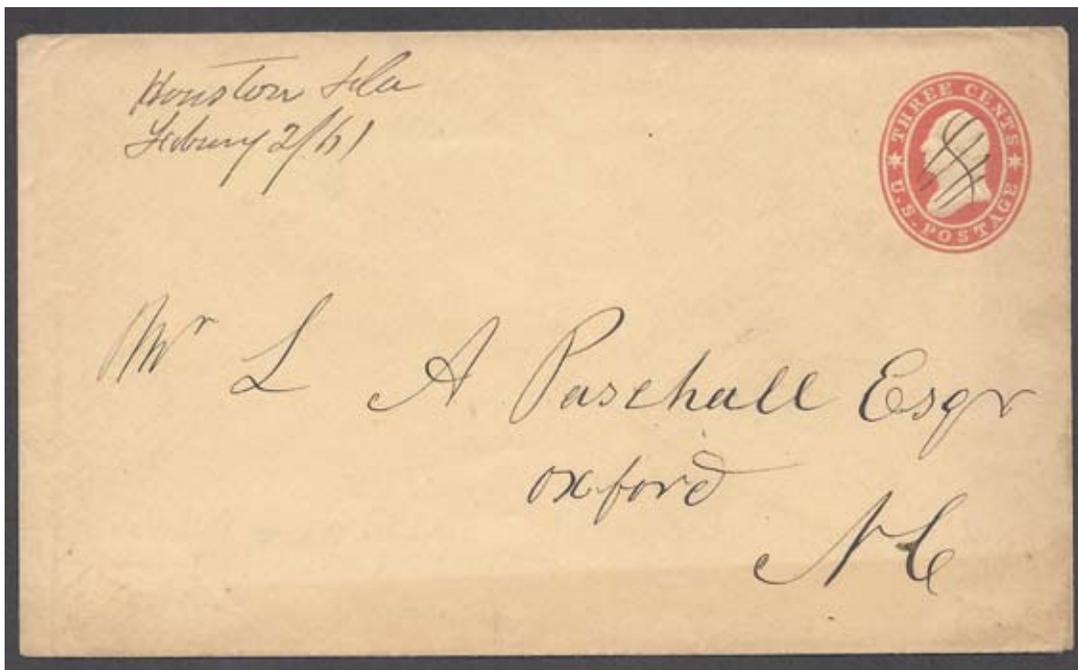


Figure 7
"Houston Fla / February 2/61" manuscript postmark on pen cancelled U.S. #U-17 star die entire.

Figure 8 is the only known Independent State usage from Jacksonville with a January 19, 1861 balloon postmark which ties U.S. #26. There are an additional 13 covers known from Jacksonville during the Confederate State period which began when Florida was accepted into the Confederacy on February 4, 1861 and continued until the beginning of the Confederate postal system on June 1, 1861.



Figure 8
“JACKSONVILLE / Flor. JAN 19” balloon postmark
ties U.S. #26.

Figure 9 is one of two known Independent State usages from St. Augustine, this with a January 29, 1861 postmark and grid tied U.S. #26 on a “FLORIDA HOUSE” hotel advertising cover.

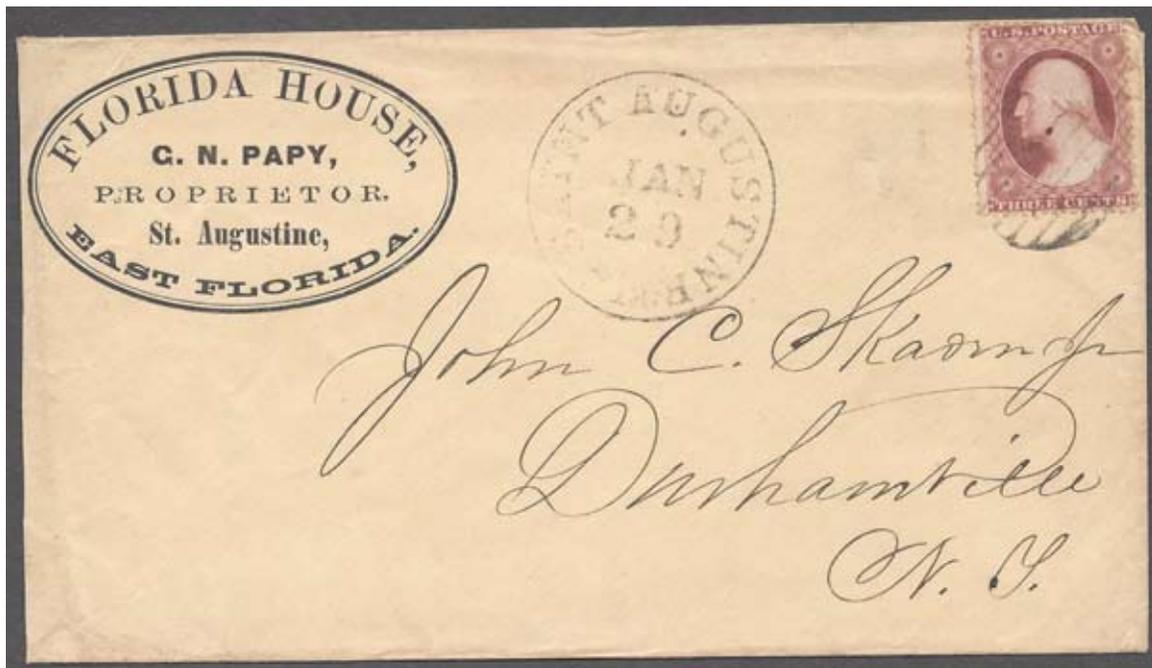


Figure 9
“SAINT AUGUSTINE / Fla. JAN 29” postmark ties U.S. #26 on
Florida House hotel advertising cover.

Figure 10 is one of three known Independent State usages from Tampa, this with a January 24, 1861 postmark which ties U.S. #26. All of the Tampa examples are from the same correspondence to the wife of a U.S. Naval surgeon in Washington, D.C. and docketed as written from January 19-25, 1861.



Figure 10
"TAMPA / Fla. JAN 24, 1861" postmark ties U.S. #26.

Toward the end of the Independent State period, Governor Perry received a January 28 report from David Yulee that due to the Florida and Alabama troop buildup at Pensacola, President Buchanan was planning on reinforcing Fort Pickens. Perry did not like seeing the United States flag flying within sight of Pensacola but was reluctant to initiate a war. He and General Chase met with both ex-senators Yulee and Mallory. They proposed to meet with John Slidell, R.M.T. Hunter and William Bigler and asked that they meet with President Buchanan in an effort to reconsider his action or face the prospect of war. Buchanan shared a wish to avoid war and certainly did not want to be the instigator. He assured the Florida representatives that the status quo would be maintained at the fort as long as they were not attacked and so advised his secretaries of war and navy. This was called the Fort Pickens truce. Unfortunately, this truce only lasted until April 12, 1861 when hostilities broke out at Fort Sumter.

Madison S. Perry's term as governor ended on October 7, 1861 when John Milton was sworn in as Florida's fifth governor. Perry served as colonel in the 7th Florida Infantry Regiment until illness forced his resignation on April 30, 1863. He retired to his Rochelle plantation where he died in March 1865, shortly before the end of the Civil War. He is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Rochelle. The city of Perry, Florida is named in his honor and the city of Starke may well have also been named in his honor.

Footnotes

¹ <http://www.tampabay.com/news/perspective/on-jan-10-1861-florida-was-the-third-state-to-secede>. Bob Rackleff, *Tampa Bay Times* article, January 8, 2011.

² http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madison_S._Perry.

³ Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida*. (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1980), 197-204.

⁴ <http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/exhibits/permanent/civilwar/02.cfm>.

⁵ <http://www.floridamemory.com/exhibits/floridahighlight/secession/>.

Missionary cover to Syria from Jacksonville in 1878

By Todd Hause

Years ago, Edward R. Joyce displayed in the *Journal* an 1878 Jacksonville cover to Syria. Recently I discovered that I had a nearly identical cover and so went searching for the story behind Jacksonville to Syria. What I found was a fascinating tale of missionary life in the latter half of the 19th century.

In the early 1850s a group of six young men with their wives and one single woman, all from the New England area, embarked on a journey to help continue Presbyterian mission work in Syria. Their efforts, the challenges of the missions and life in Syria during the latter half of the 19th century were recorded by missionary Henry Harris Jessup, D.D., in his 1910 book *Fifty Years in Syria*.

Dr. Jessup grew up in Montrose, Pennsylvania and in the summer of 1852 after appealing to church members to support the missionary work or go there and do it, came to the realization of “the incongruity of asking others to do what I was not yet willing to do myself.”

So in early 1853, he and his long time Montrose chum Lorenzo Lyons decided to “offer themselves to foreign mission work.”

Lyons and his wife arrived in Syria in 1853 and were initially assigned to the Tripoli mission. Their daughter, Mary M. Lyons, was born in Syria in 1855. Rev. Lyons and his family returned to America in June of 1863 due to the reverend’s failing health. Eventually he recovered and they settled in Jacksonville from the year 1871 to 1888 where Rev. Lyons was engaged as district agent of the American Bible Society for Florida and Georgia. After completing her studies in America, in 1877 at the age of 22, Mary Lyons returned to Syria and taught for three years at the mission school Sidon Seminary for Girls, before ill health obliged her to return to America.

Reference

Jessup, Henry Harris. *Fifty Years in Syria*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910.

Joyce, Edward R. “Jacksonville to Syria in 30 Days,” *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1, March 1999.



“JACKSONVILLE / FLA SEP 3 1878” cover to Syria. This cover with a five-cent blue 1875 Zachary Taylor stamp has a black circular “Beirut 30/9 78” receiving cancel on the back. There is also a pencil notation on the back, “Sept. 30 Oct. 2,” which may have been by Mary Lyons noting how long the letter took to reach her from Beirut.

Florida Postal History Society

2015 Annual Meeting

The 2015 Annual Meeting of the Florida Postal History Society will begin at noon on Saturday, February 7, 2015 at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition. New officers for the 2015-2016 term will be installed with Francis Ferguson as President; Vernon Morris as Vice-President; and Deane Briggs as Secretary-Treasurer. Deane Briggs and Everett Parker will remain as *Florida Postal History Journal* editors and Francis Ferguson will remain as the webmaster for the society website: FPHSonline.com. For any members wishing to reach the Members Only section and those receiving email or web journals you will need the "Member Only" password. Please email me or Francis Ferguson at FPHSonline@gmail.com for the current password. The last three issues of the *Journal* will be available on line only for members.

All members should have received a dues announcement for 2015 in the mail in addition to the insert in the last mailed *Journal*. We are asking for a complete record update from all members. Please note that Francis Ferguson has made a point to get us into the 21st century with mailed dues announcements and updated membership data. He will post a membership list on the "Members Only" website once all 2015 dues are received. If you have not paid for 2015, please take this as a friendly reminder that dues for 2015 were due on January 1, 2015.

I would like to thank those members who have continued to be contributing members and have waived the mailed journals and received digital web copies which will save the society mailing costs. Several members have contributed a significant additional donation or postage donation and I want to thank Alex Hall, Prof. Henry Higgins, Burnham S. Neill, John A. Beirne, Howard A. King and Steven L. Swain for their extra contribution.

The December meeting at FLOREX was well attended and various members have volunteered to help with projects which should help our society grow. Todd Hause will be producing a tri-folded information and application sheet which will be placed at show infor-

mation desks which hopefully will generate new members. Vernon Kisling will update his keyword and title search for all the journals since his effort in 2007. New member Dan Maddalino will review our original 1992 bylaws and organizational data to see if changes need to be made. Steve Patrick will work on our membership list which Francis Ferguson will get into our website. Todd Hirn is working on some new articles for the *Journal*. It was really great to see the positive response to get members active in the society. Any suggestions will be encouraged and hopefully acted upon.

This should be a great year and I hope you enjoy the article on the British Period which has taken a lot of time and effort to try to be as complete from a postal history viewpoint as possible with reproductions of most of the known material. Any member with information of other British Period covers is encouraged to send scans so further updates can be made. This is an ongoing process and future generations will appreciate our current efforts. Let's keep this going.

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FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS - 2014

The following members of the Florida Postal History Society have been denoted "Contributing Members" for their additional contributions to the Society. The support of these members keeps us fiscally sound and enables us to respond to member and non-member inquiries regarding Florida postal history and send sample copies of our *Journal*.

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