

# FLORIDA WAY MAIL CENSUS

by Thomas Lera

## Table of Contents

|                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| • Introduction .....                                           | 2  |
| • Spanish West Florida Way Mail.....                           | 5  |
| • PinckneyvilleMT (Mississippi Territory) Way Mail.....        | 7  |
| • St. Francisville, La. Way Mail.....                          | 10 |
| • New Orleans (Orleans Territory) Way Mail to Bayou Sarah..... | 11 |
| • Other Spanish West Florida Covers with “No Way Marking”..... | 14 |
| • Florida Territorial and Statehood Way Mail .....             | 18 |
| • Stagecoach Mail with Way Bill Box Manuscript Notation .....  | 26 |
| • Railroad Post Office Way Mail.....                           | 27 |
| • Acknowledgements.....                                        | 27 |
| • References.....                                              | 28 |

# FLORIDA WAY MAIL CENSUS

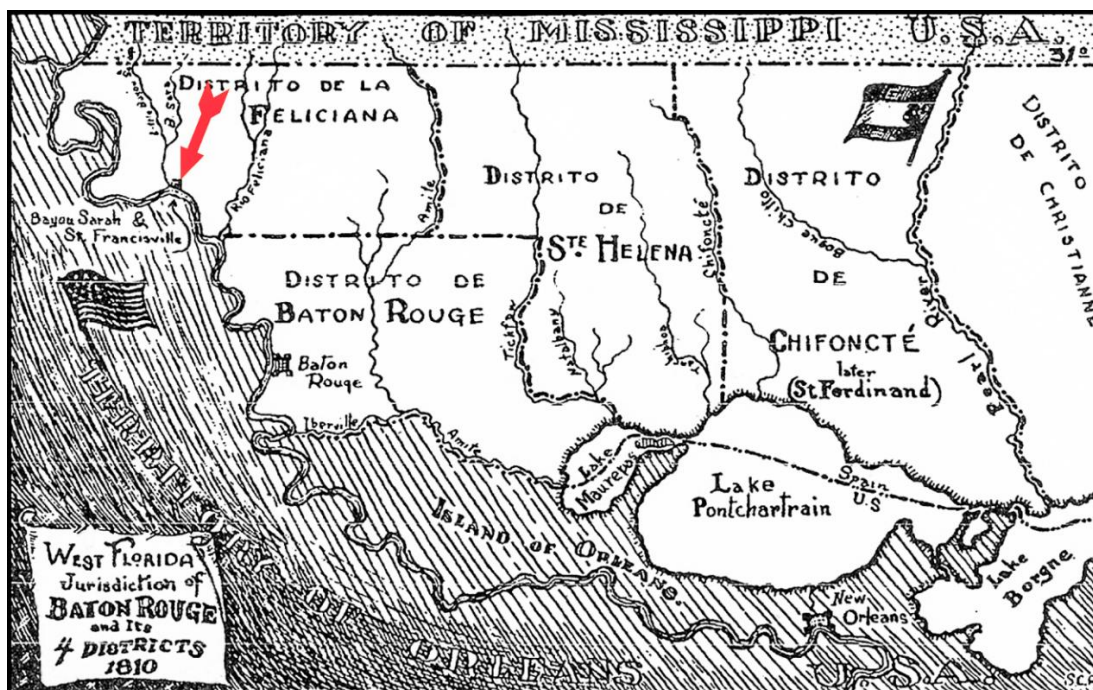
## Introduction

“Way letters are those received by a post rider or contract mail route carrier (an individual or firm performing transportation of the mail by means of stage, wagon, water way vessel, or railroad) on the way between post offices, and which are to be delivered at the first post office reached on the route.” (ACCS Vol. II: 152)

The recorded WAY letters in this census are marked with the simple endorsement WAY or with the word in combination with a rate designation. Several Territorial WAY letters do not show the name of the post office where the WAY marking was applied.

This paper is a census of WAY markings in Spanish West Florida and on Florida Territorial and Statehood letters, stagecoach Way-Bill-Box letters, and Railroad Post Office Way markings.

## Second Spanish Period 1784-1819



Map showing the Bayou Sarah (*Florida Stampless Postal History 1763 – 1861*, Florida Postal History Society, 1999, page 16)

During the Second Spanish Period, no postal routes were established in Spanish Florida, mail was handled by nearby United States post offices in Fort Adams, Natchez and Pinckneyville in the Mississippi Territory and New Orleans handled most of the West Florida mail. Mail was picked up from or delivered to persons in Spanish West Florida by couriers / carriers for a 1¢ “Way” fee.

## Rates for Domestic Letters 1799 - 1851 \*

| Post Office Act                   | Distance                             | Postage ¢ * | Postage plus Way 1¢ Fee** |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| May 1, 1799<br>per letter sheet   | not over 40 miles                    | 8           | 9                         |
|                                   | over 40 and not exceeding 90 miles   | 10          | 11                        |
|                                   | over 90 and not exceeding 150 miles  | 12½         | 13½                       |
|                                   | over 150 and not exceeding 300 miles | 17          | 18                        |
|                                   | over 300 and not exceeding 500 miles | 20          | 21                        |
|                                   | over 500 miles                       | 25          | 26                        |
| May 1, 1816<br>per letter sheet   | not over 30 miles                    | 6           | 7                         |
|                                   | over 30 and not exceeding 80 miles   | 10          | 11                        |
|                                   | over 80 and not exceeding 150 miles  | 12½         | 13½                       |
|                                   | over 150 and not exceeding 400 miles | 18½         | 19½                       |
|                                   | over 400 miles                       | 25          | 26                        |
| March 3, 1825<br>per letter sheet | not over 30 miles                    | 6, 6¼       | 7                         |
|                                   | over 30 not exceeding 80 miles       | 10          | 11                        |
|                                   | over 80 not exceeding 150 miles      | 12½         | 13½                       |
|                                   | over 150 not exceeding 400 miles     | 18¾         | 19¾                       |
|                                   | over 400 miles                       | 25          | 26                        |
| March 3, 1845<br>per 1/2 oz.      | not over 300 miles                   | 5           | 6                         |
|                                   | over 300 miles                       | 10          | 11                        |

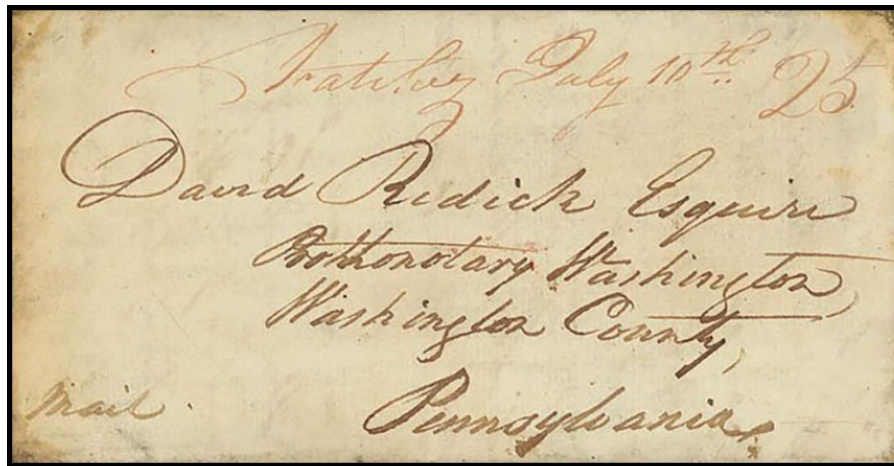
\* Red indicates Way letters rates seen in the Florida Census.

If 1¢ fee not shown, it was paid to the courier by the postmaster when delivered.

\* Double weight, two letter sheets, paid double the single postage

\*\* The March 3, 1825 Law, Chapter LXIV, Sec. 20 stated: "The post-riders, and other carriers of the mail, receiving any way letter or letters, (and it shall be their duty to receive them, if presented more than one mile from a post-office,) shall deliver the same, together with the postage, if paid, at the first post-office to which they shall afterwards arrive, where the postmaster shall duly enter the same, and specify the number and rate or rates, in the post-bill, adding to the rate of each way letter, one cent, which shall be paid by the postmaster to the mail carrier from whom such way letter shall be received."

A West Florida letter from David Bradford datelined “Bayou Sara July 6, 1802” described the unofficial postal system of Spanish West Florida: “The post is the only conveyance of certainty. Address me at Natchez or Bayou Sara - the postmaster at Natchez knows where I live, and all letters will be forwarded.”



July 10, 1802 Natchez postmark on Bradford letter dated Bayou Sarah July 5<sup>th</sup>.  
(Rumsey Sale 45, Lot 248)

Examples of other covers mailed in Spanish West Florida are seen on pages 4-9.

Two 1807 covers datelined “Bayou Sara” and carried by post riders entered the mails in Pinckneyville, Mississippi Territory with a “Way 26” rate reflecting the 25¢ postal rate + 1¢ “Way” fee. (Page 6 & 7, Type I, Nos. 6 & 7). On page 8 Numbers 11 & 12 show small “p” pinckneyvilleMT “Way ” covers.

“NO WAY MARKINGS” (Page 13, Type I, bottom) datelined “Bayou Sara” was personally carried to enter the mails at Fort Adams, Mississippi Territory with a (due) 50¢ rate (**red ink indicated postage due**).



Courtesy of Harmer-Schau Auctions Sale 106, Lot 1176 and Yamil Kouri Reference #8, page 105 Fig. 3-42.

An interesting New Orleans November 6 (1804) red **FREE** letter to Nathaniel Evans, Fort Adams Postmaster, asking about the condition of the mailbags, is shown above.

## Spanish West Florida Way Mail

Fort Adams Way 26 and Way 52, \*means Archival. (ACCS Vol 1: 192-194. Reference #1)

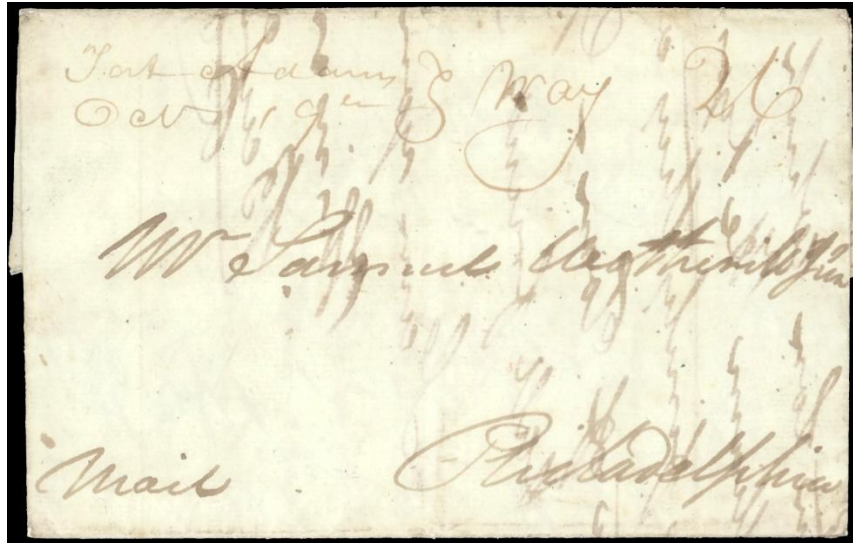
Type I : Fort (or) F (or) FtAdams (MT -Mississippi Territory) 09.21.1803 / 11.24.1811

Type II : F,\*Adams- 31 x 5mm, 02.01.1804\* (lower case feb'22) / 04.17.1816\*

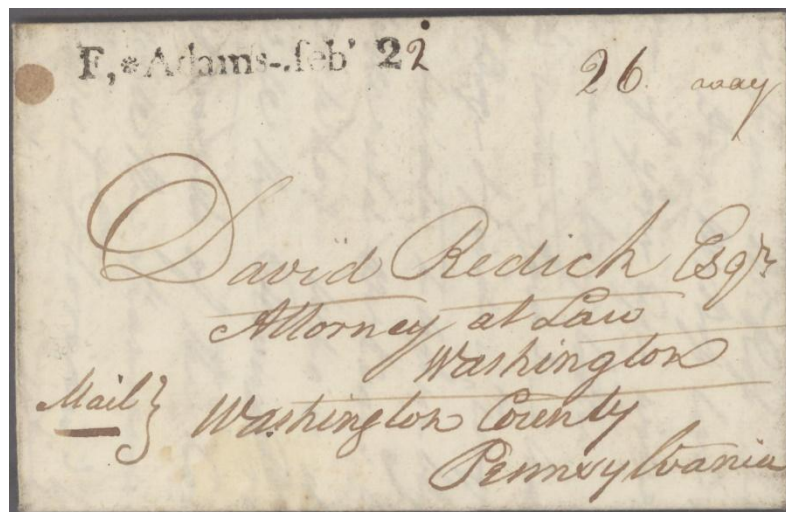
Type III : F-Adams, 26.5 x 4.5mm, 07.12.1805 / 12.10.1805

Type IV : F.Adams, 28.5 x 5mm, 08.23.1805 / 12.23.1805

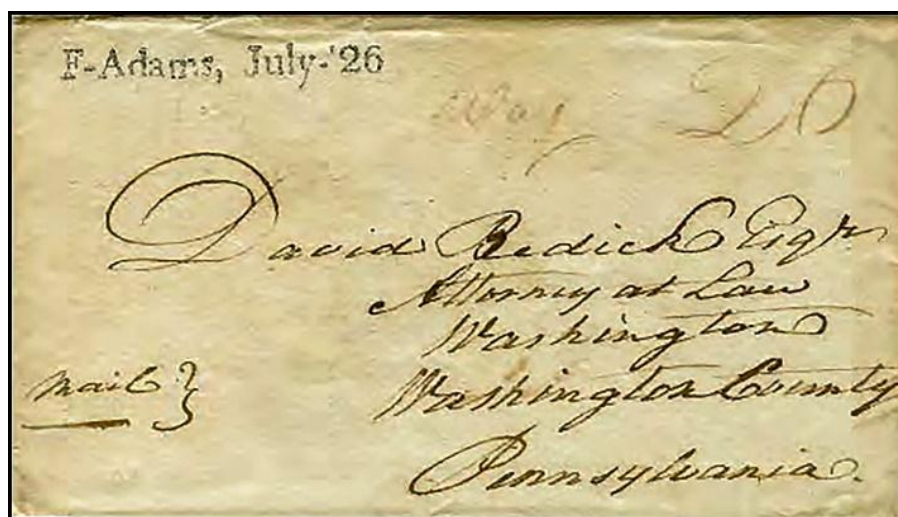
Type V : F\*Adams\* 29.5 x 4.5mm, 10.18.1806\* / 03.23.1809



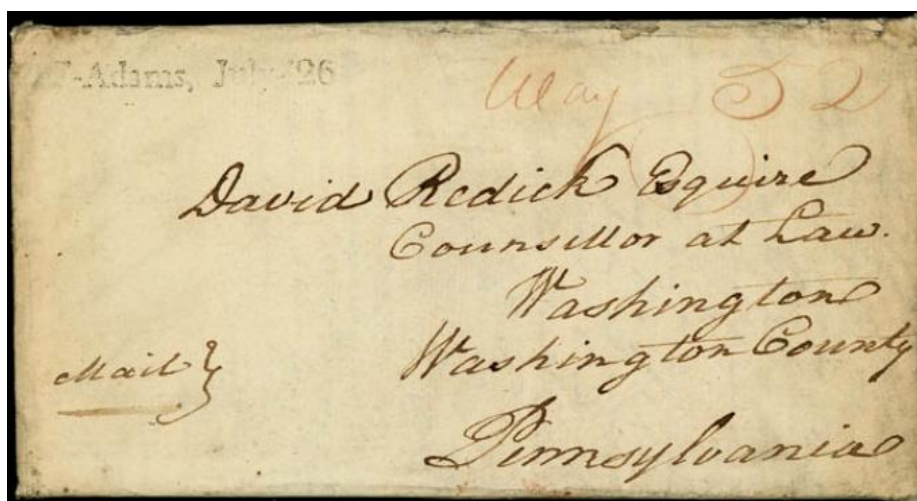
1. Type I: Fort Adams, October 9, **Way 26** to Samuel Wetherill, Jr., Philadelphia. (courtesy of Van Koppersmith, Yamil Kouri, Reference #8 page 106 Figure 3-46.)



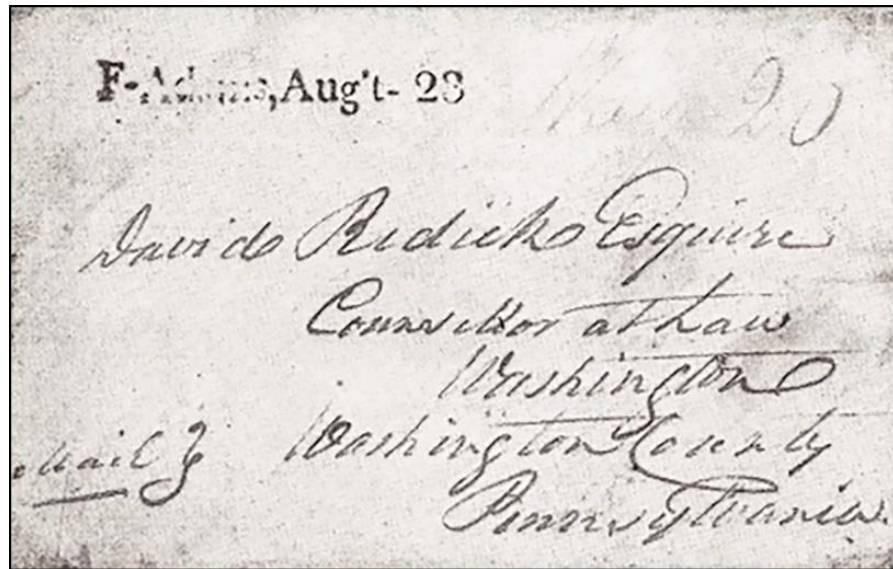
2. Type II : F,\*Adams- 31 x 5mm, lower case feb'22, **26 way** to David Redick, Sear., Attorney at Law, Washington, Washington County, Pennsylvania. (courtesy of Van Koppersmith)



3. Type III: F-Adams, July-26 (1805) **Way 26** to David Redick, Esqr., Attorney at Law, Washington, Washington County, Pennsylvania. (ex- Meroni. See Reference #2)



4. Type III: F-Adams, July-26 (1805) **Way 52** to David Redick Esquire, Counsellor at Law, Washington, Washington County, Pennsylvania. This was a double weight “way” letter and the postmaster charged  $26\text{¢} \times 2 = 52\text{¢}$ . A double “way” fee. (ex- Meroni, Rumsey Sale 74 Lot 1175)



5. Type III: F-Adams, Aug't-23 (1805) **Way 26** to David Redick Esquire, Counsellor at Law, Washington, Washington County, Pennsylvania. B/W (Meroni Sale Lot 21).

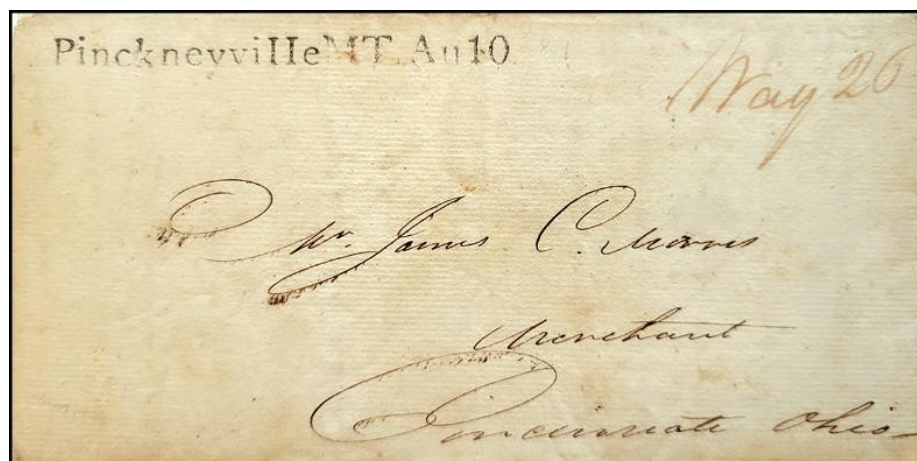
## PinckneyvilleMT (Mississippi Territory) Way Mail

### PinckneyvilleMT

- Type I: Way 13 ½ and Way 26, 56 x 5mm, 08.08.1806 / 04.22.1811

### pinckneyvilleMT (small p)

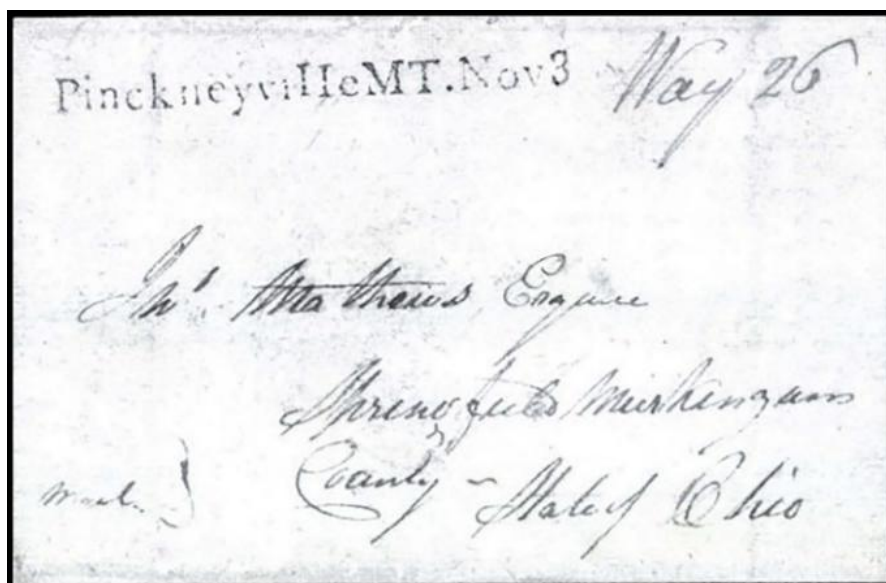
- Type II: Way 51, 54.5 x 5mm, 08.29.1807 / 12.23.1811



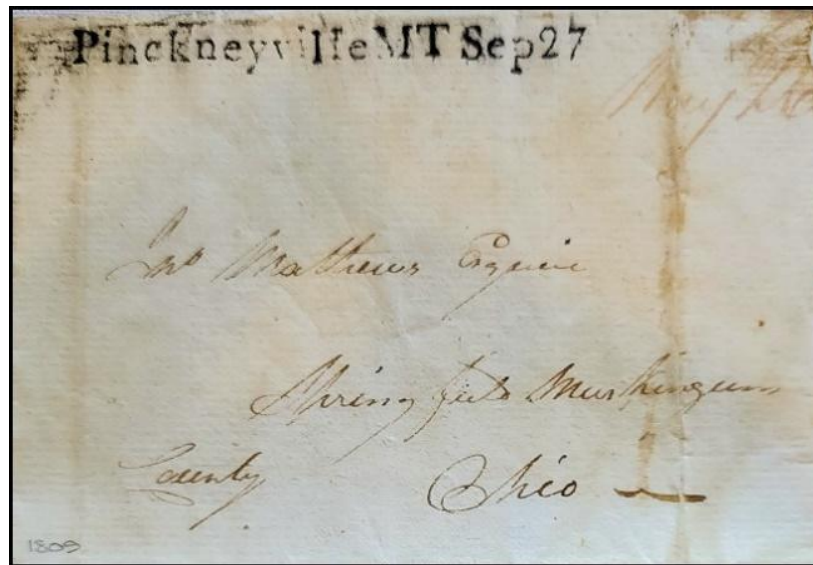
6. Type I: Pinckneyville MT. Au 10 (1807) **Way 26** to James Cikorris, Merchant Cincinnati, Ohio. (ex. Deane R. Briggs, Siegel Sale 1155, Lot 3078)



7. Type I: Pinckneyville MT. Au 24 (1807) **Way 26** to Daniel W. Coxe Esqr., Philadelphia. (Siegel Sale 958, Lot 502)



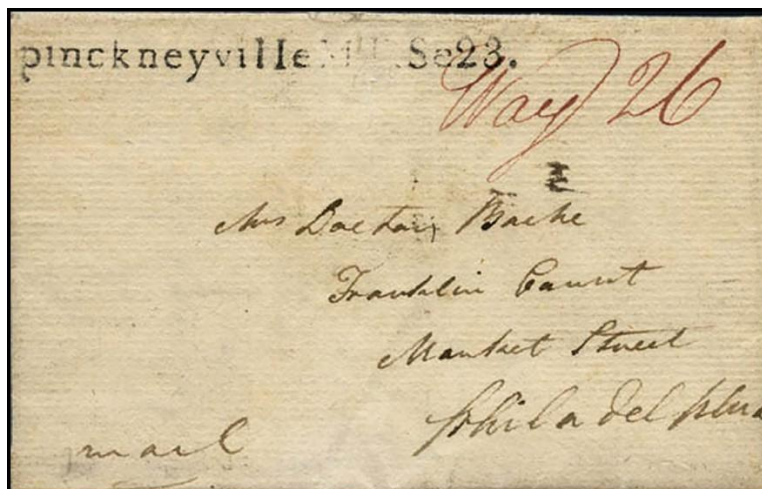
8. Type I: Pinckneyville MT. Nov 3 (1808) **Way 26** to Jas. Mathews Esquire, Springfield, Muskingum County, State of Ohio. (Siegel Sale 790, Lot 1428)



9. Type I: PinckneyvilleMT Sept 27 (1809) **Way 26** to Jas. Mathews, Esquire, Springfield Muskingum County, Ohio. (Siegel Auctions Sale 1167, Lot 2108)



10. Type I: PinckneyvilleMT, Aug 29 (180?) **Way 13½** (Siegel Sale 764, Lot 1250)



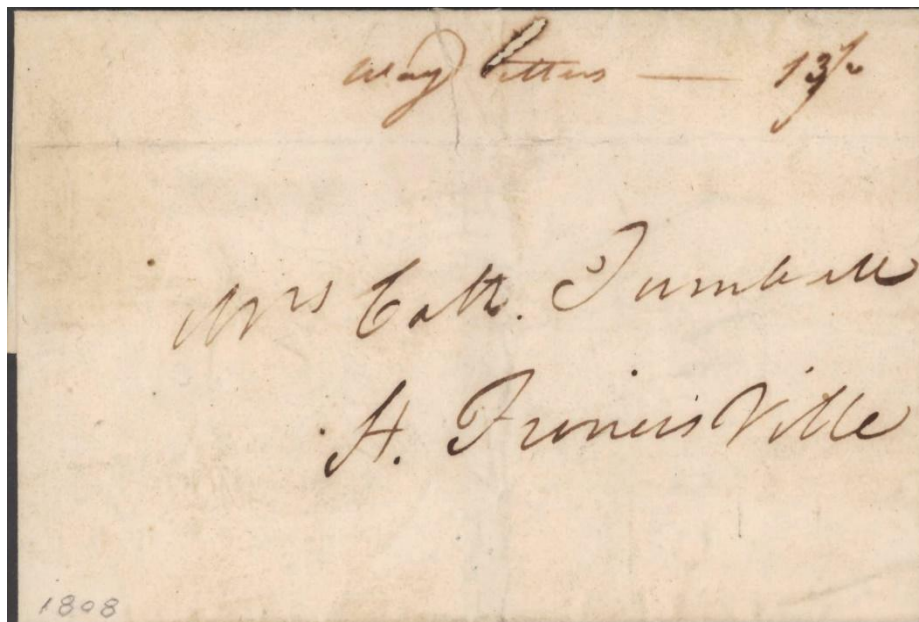
11. Type II: Small “p”- pinckneyvilleMT, Se 23. 1811, **Way 26** to Messrs. Doctors Bache, Franklin Court, Market Street, Philadelphia. (Harmer-Schau Auctions Sale 100, Lot 375)



12. Type II: Small “p”- pinckneyvilleMT, Se 23. 1811, **Way 51** Circuit Court letter to Nashville, Tennessee. This was a double weight letter where the postmaster charged  $26¢ \times 2 + 1¢ = 51¢$  (Rumsey Sale 45, Lot 250).

## St. Francisville, La. Way Mail

- **Type I: Way letters – 1808**



13. Type I: **Way letters 13½¢** (no postmark) to Trumbull, St. Francisville (1808), delivered in Spanish West Florida B/W. This letter is addressed to St. Francisville; picked up by a U.S. carrier on the Natchez-New Orleans southbound route across Spanish West Florida, 1¢ “way fee” was added to U.S. postage at St. Francisville for a 13½¢ rate. (courtesy of Van Koppersmith, ACCS Vol II, 156)

## New Orleans (Orleans Territory) Way Mail to Bayou Sarah

The postmaster charged the “Way Fee” at the receiving post office.

**Type I: NEW ORLEANS**, 28mm circle date handstamp with ornament above & below date,  
03.29.1807 / 05.27.1810 Spanish West Florida before 1812

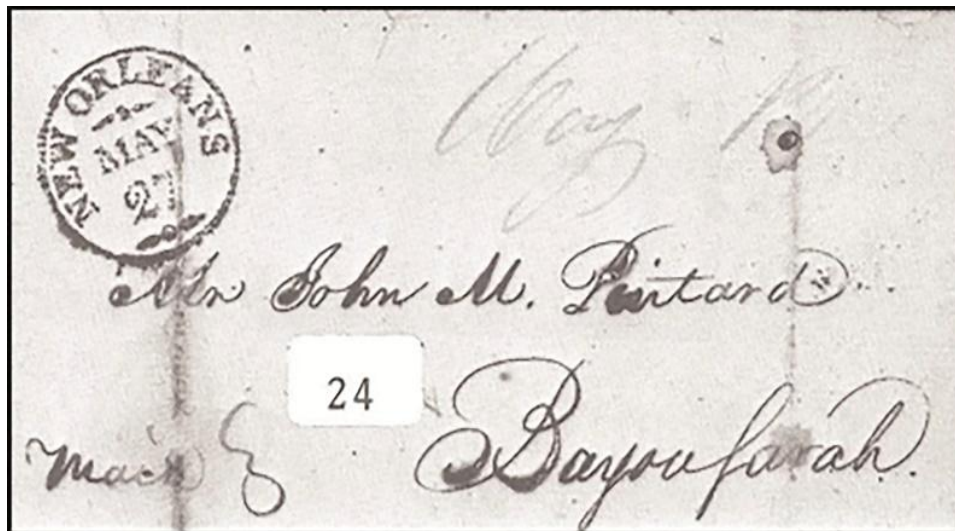
- **Type Ia:** Way 12½ and Way 25
- **Type Ib:** Way paid [manuscript] 12½ and Way paid 25
- **Type Ic:** Way paid [straight-line PAID]

**Type II: NEW ORLEANS** 28mm circle date handstamp with ornament above & below date,  
11.02.1810 / \*11.11.1810 Republic of West Florida

- **Type IIa:** Way paid manuscript
- **Type IIb:** Forwarded – Way 25 manuscript



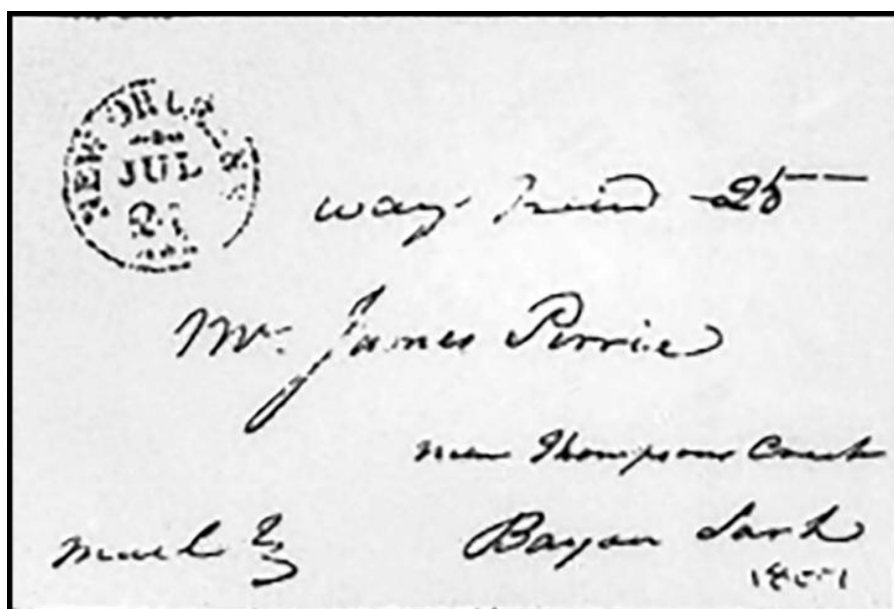
14. Type Ia: NEW ORLEANS / NOV 18 (1809) **Way 25** to James Perrie, Bayou Sarah. B/W.  
(Meroni Sale Lot 25)



15. Type Ia: NEW ORLEANS / MAY 27 (1810) **Way 12½** to John M. Pittard, Bayou Sarah.  
(Meroni Sale Lot 24)



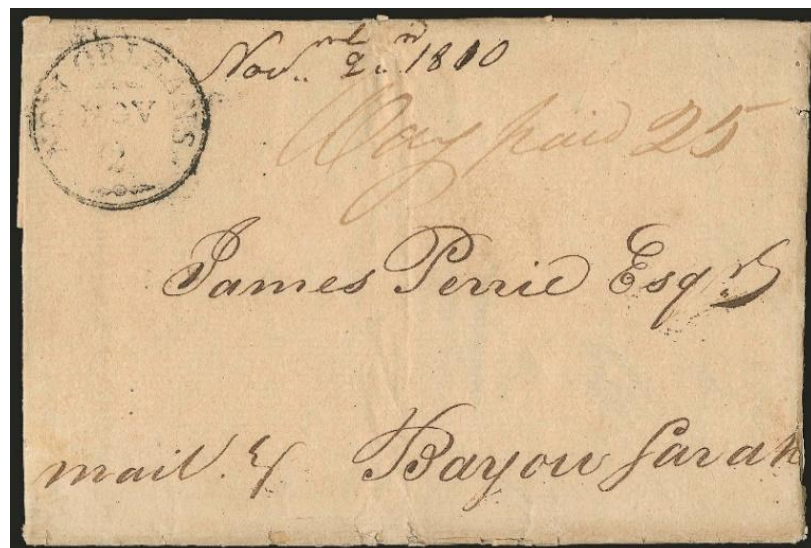
16. Type Ib: NEW ORLEANS / MAY 27 (1809) **Way Paid 12½** to John M. Pittard Esquire, Bayou Sarah. (Siegel Sale 966, Lot 2027).



17. Type Ib: NEW ORLEANS / JUL 24 (1809) **Way Paid 25** to Mr. James Perrie, near Thompsons Creek, Bayou Sarah. B/W. (ACCS Vol. II, 156. See Reference #1)



18. Type Ic: NEW ORLEANS / Sept 30 (1809) **Way PAID 12½** to James Perrie, Bayou Sarah. (Siegel Sale 966, Lot 2028).



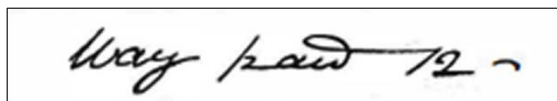
EKU 11.02.1810

19. Type IIa: NEW ORLEANS / NOV 2 (1810) **Way paid 25** to James Perrie, Bayou Sarah. "Delivered Way" mail, prepaid at New Orleans for delivery on the mail route to Natchez. (Meroni Sale Lot 26, Siegel Sale 966, Lot 2029).

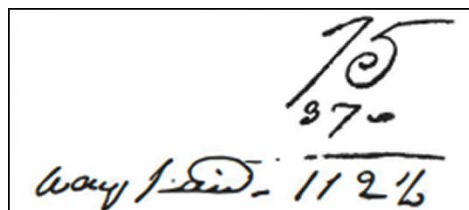
The West Florida Republic was declared on September 26, 1810 and annexed by the United States on December 10, 1810.

## Missing New Orleans Way Mail Images (ASCC Vol II, 157. Reference #1).

1. Way paid 12½ (1808) to Thompson's Creek



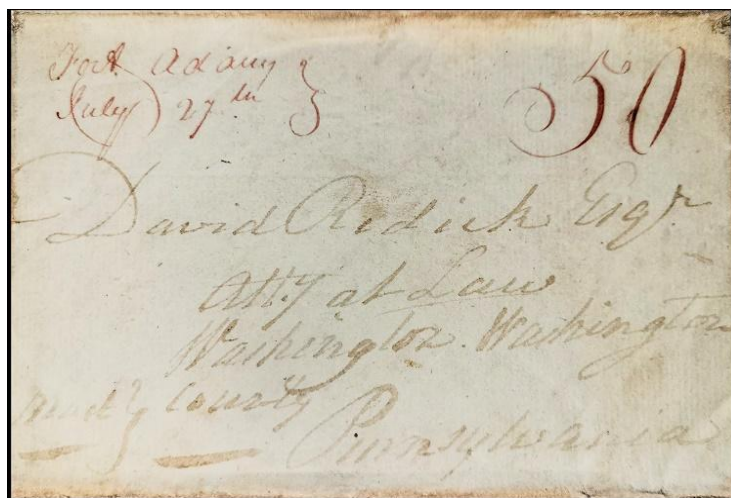
2. Way paid 75 (75¢ + 37½¢ postage = 112½¢) (1809) to Bayou Sarah Archival



## Other Spanish West Florida Covers with “No Way Marking”

Covers from Fort Adams and Pinckneyville with no “Way” markings on pages 13-16 are shown to illustrate the various postmark types found in the ACCS Vols. I, II, and III (See Reference #1). Other examples are known but not shown.

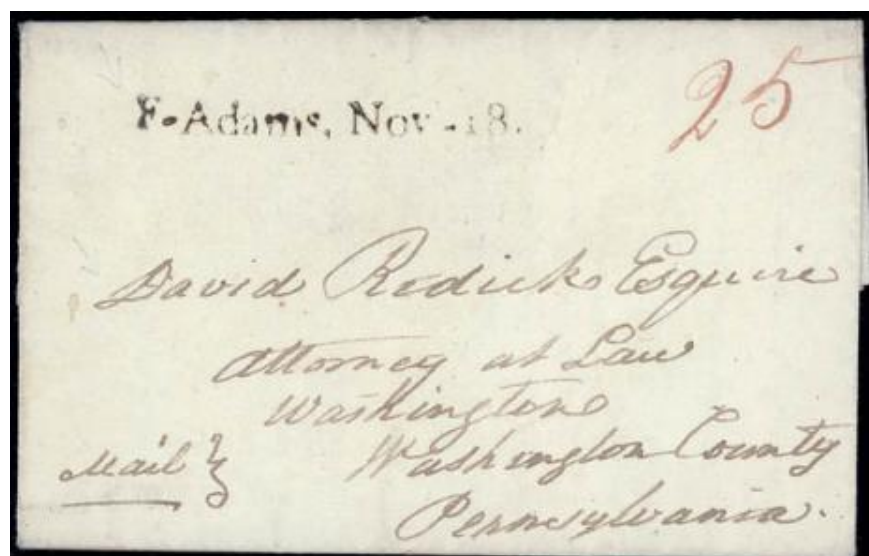
### Fort Adams



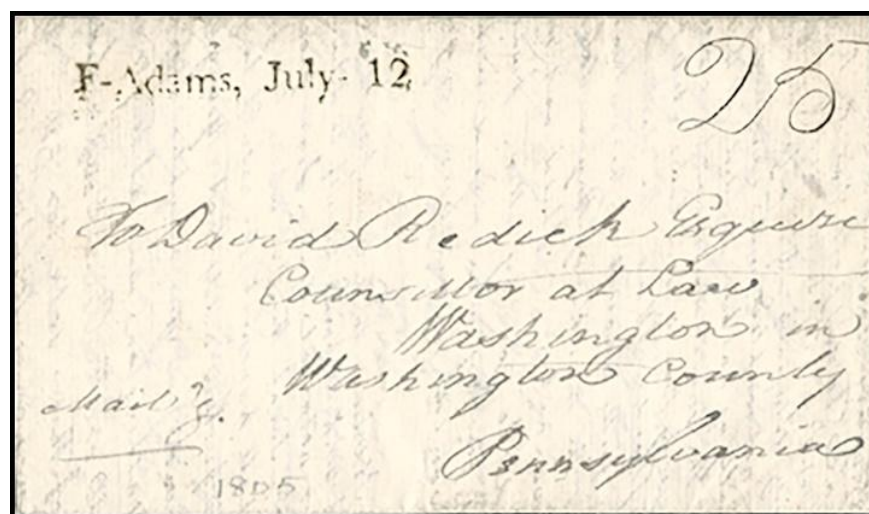
Fort Adams, July 27<sup>th</sup> and 50¢ due in red ink.

Letter from David Bradford, expatriated Whiskey Rebellion leader, datelined Bayou Sarah 07.25.1804, to David Redick, Esqr.

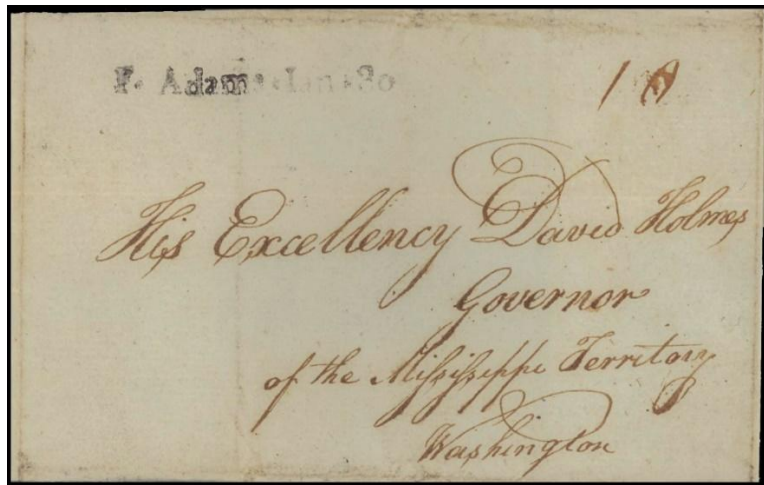
- **Type I: Fort (or) F (or) Ft Adams (also MT -Mississippi Territory) 09.21.1803 / 11.24.1811 (Rumsey Sale 37, Lot 1434)**



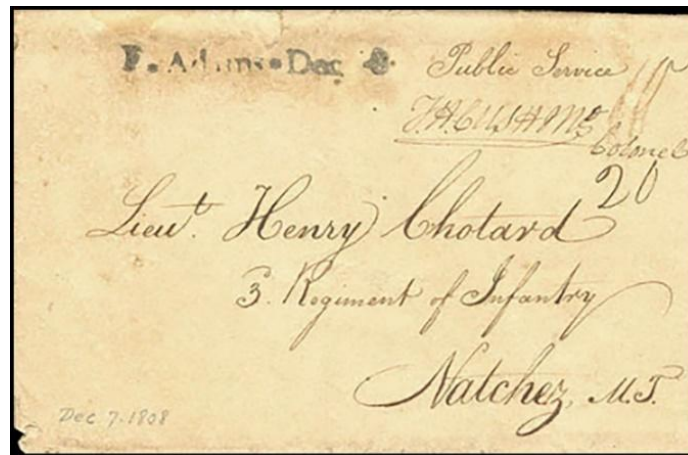
- **Type II: F\*Adams-** 31 x 5mm, 02.01.1804\* / 04.17.1816\*  
(courtesy of Florida State Archives) red ink 25 indicates postage due



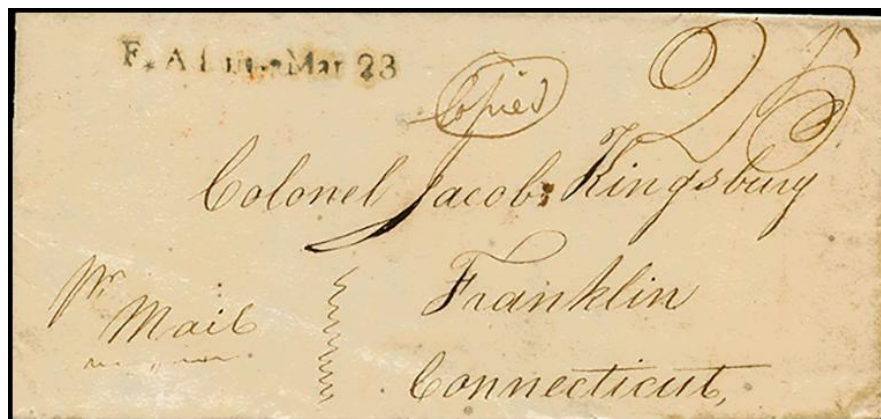
- **Type III: F-Adams,** 26.5 x 4.5mm, 07.12.1805 / 12.10.1805  
(courtesy of Florida State Archives)



- **Type IV: F. Adams**, 28.5 x 5mm, 08.23.1805 / 12.23.1805 (courtesy of Van Koppersmith)



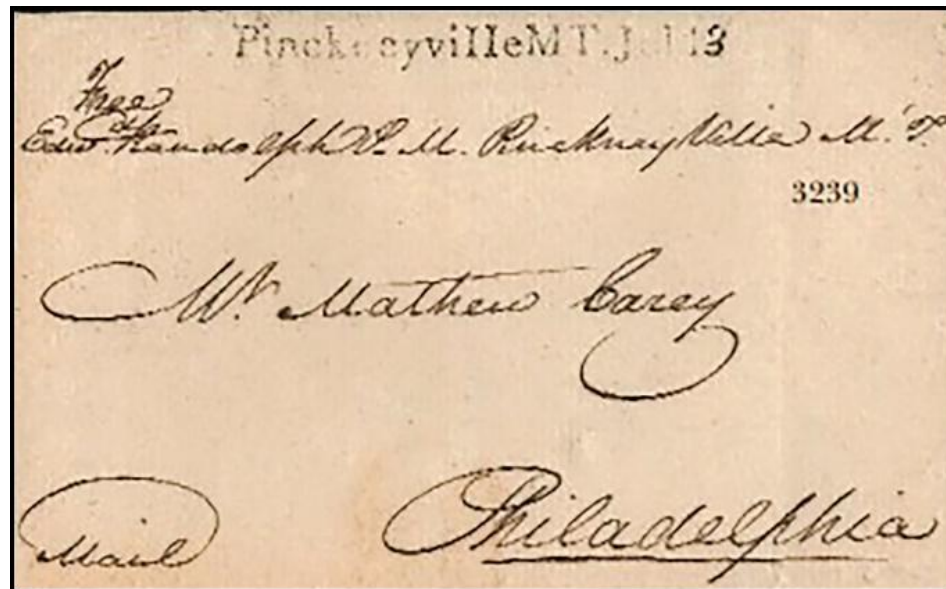
(courtesy of Rumsey Sale 19, Lot 242)



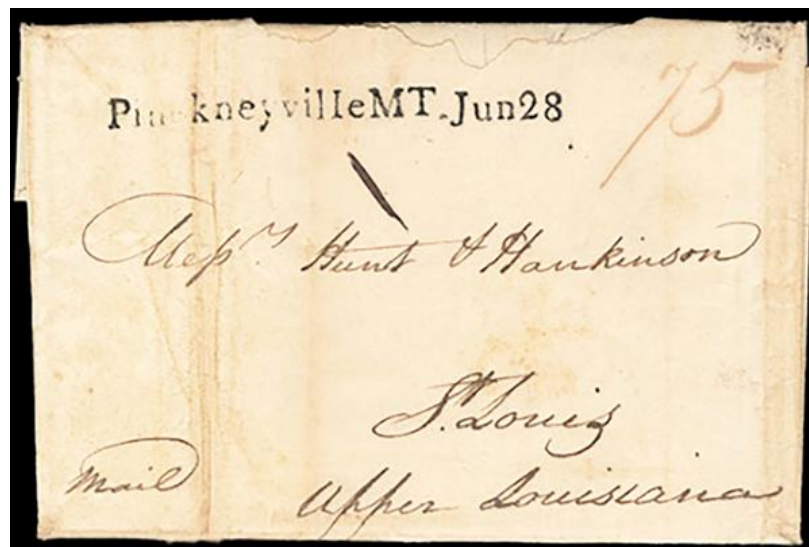
LKU 03.23.1809 (courtesy of Rumsey Sale 94 Lot 865)

- **Type V: F\*Adams\*** 29.5 x 4.5mm, 10.18.1806\* / 03.23.1809

PinckneyvilleMT (Mississippi Territory)



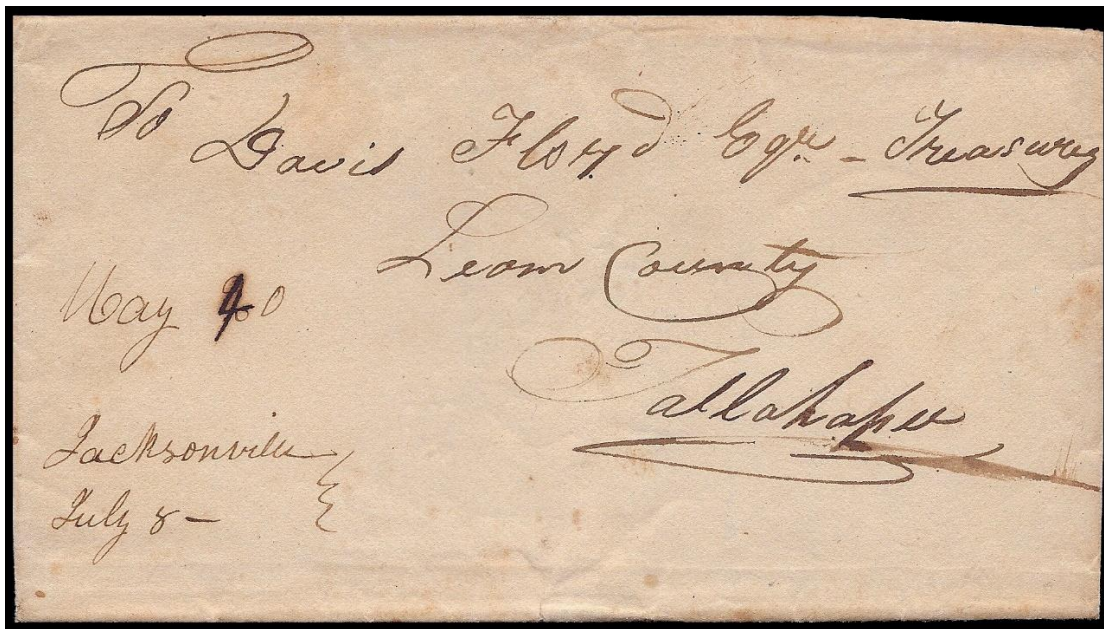
July 13. MS "Free" and manuscript frank  
PM Edward Randolph's (appt. 07.01.1806) (Siegel Sale 1026, Lot 1760)



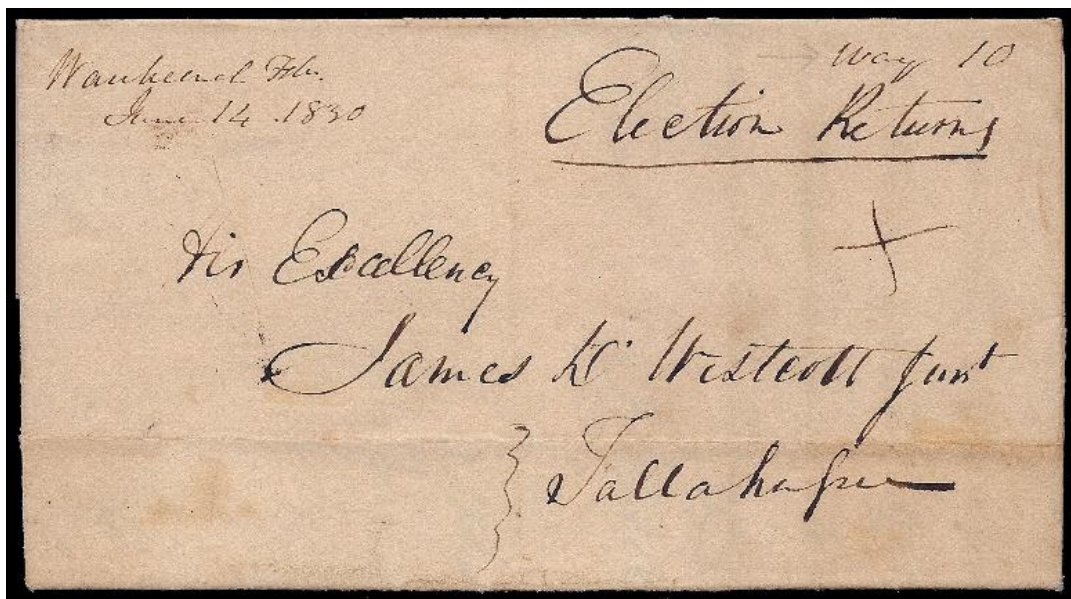
June 28, 1809, red ink 75 (Rumsey Sale 81, Lot 1593)

Both are **Type I**: 56 x 5mm, 08.08.1806 / 01.15.1812.

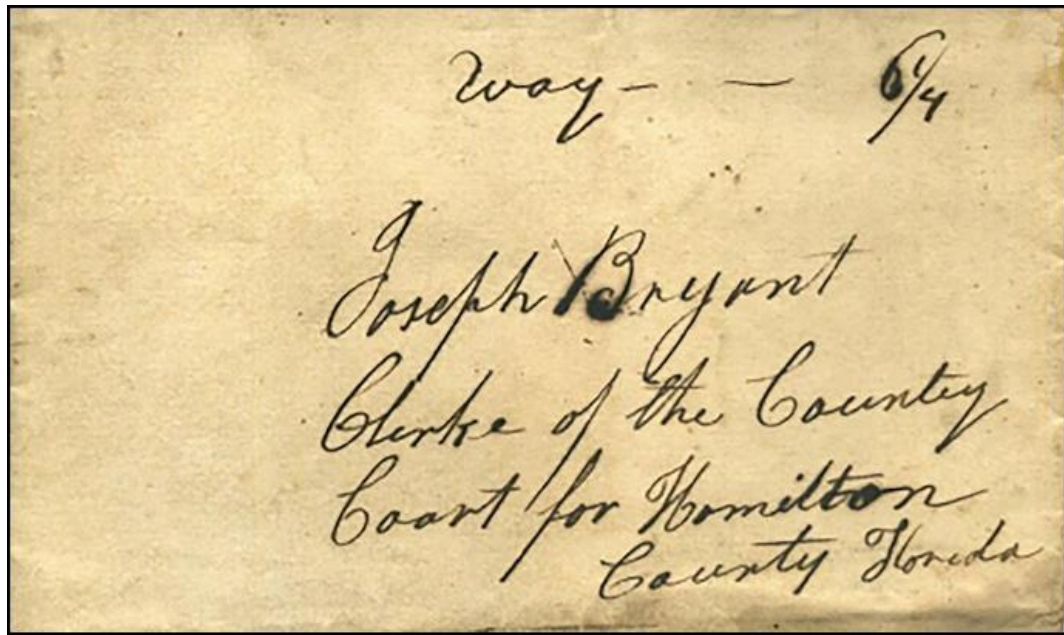
## Florida Territorial and Statehood Way Mail (Reference #5)



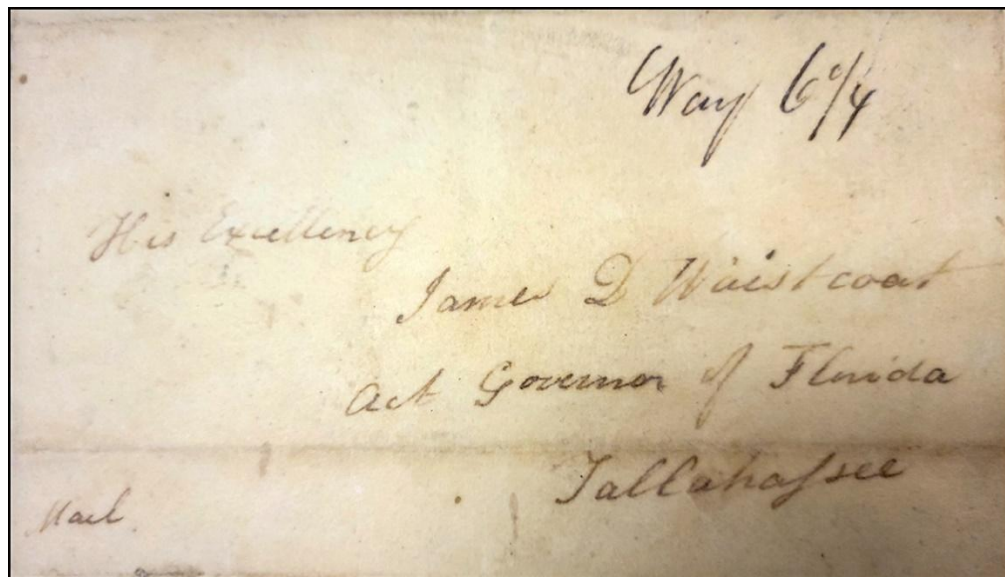
20. Jacksonville July 8 (1827) Type I manuscript with **Way 20** corrected to **Way 40** to David Floyd Eqr. Treasury, Leon County, Tallahassee. (ex. Deane R. Briggs)



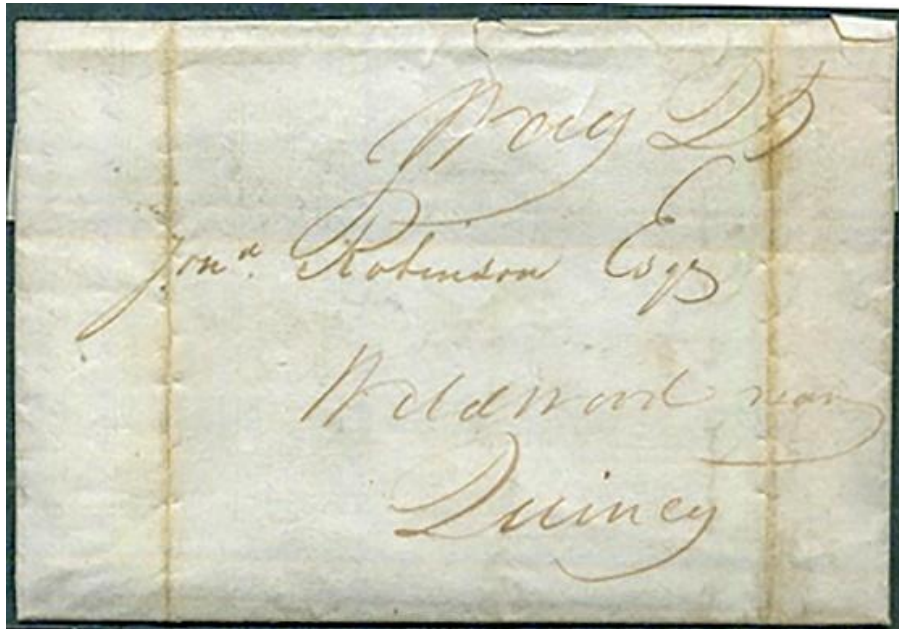
21. Waukeenah, Fla. June 14, 1830, Type I manuscript with **Way 10** to His Excellency, James D. Westcott, Just., Tallahassee. (ex. Deane R. Briggs, courtesy of Phil Eschbach)



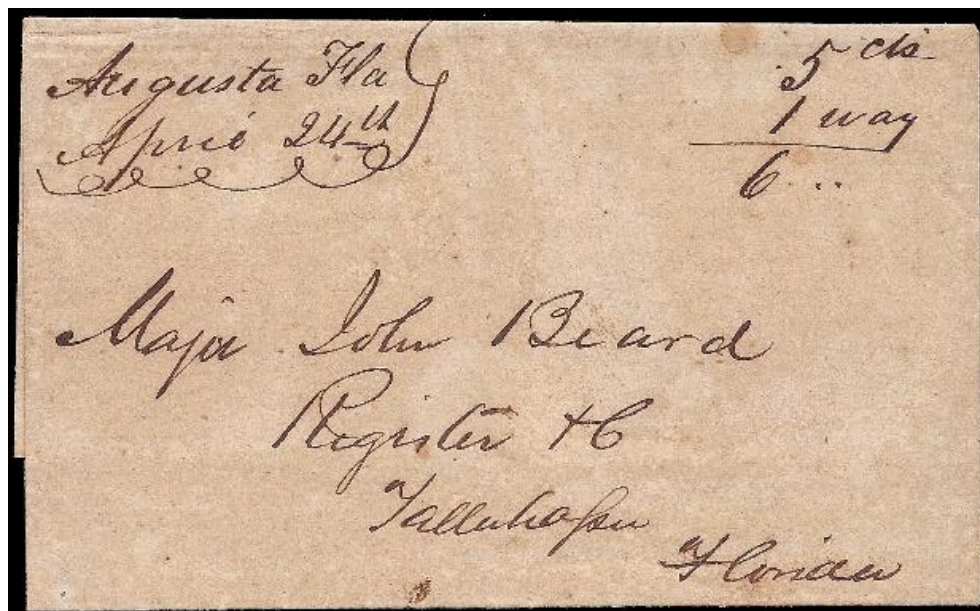
22. **Way - 6 1/4** (no postmark) to Joseph Bryant, Clarke (sic) of the Country (sic), Court for Hamilton, County Florida. The letter was datelined 05.06.1832, from Rossetter's Ferry to MiccoTown Court House and contained Precinct 1 Election Return. (courtesy of James Milgram, M.D.).



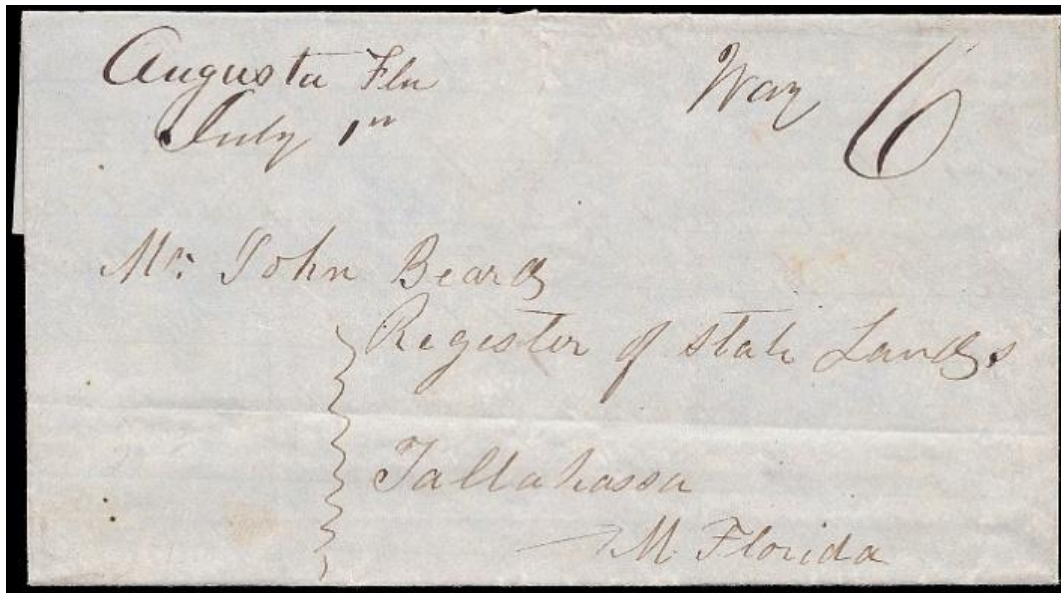
23. **Way 6 1/4** (no postmark) to James Westcott, Acting Governor of Florida, Tallahassee (1832) (courtesy of Florida State Archives).



24. **Way 25** (no postmark) to Jon D. Robinson, Esq, to Wildwood near Quincy. Letter dateline from New York 03.13.1835. (courtesy of James Milgram, M.D.)



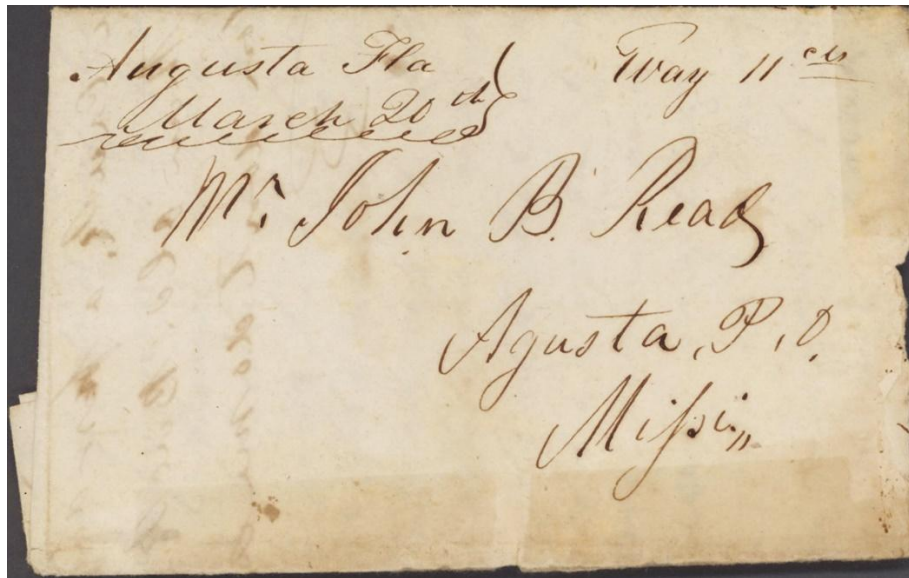
25. Augusta Fla, April 24, Type I, 5¢ rate with **1¢ Way fee** added for total 6¢, to Major John Beard, Register [of State Lands], Tallahassee, Florida. (courtesy of Deane R. Briggs)



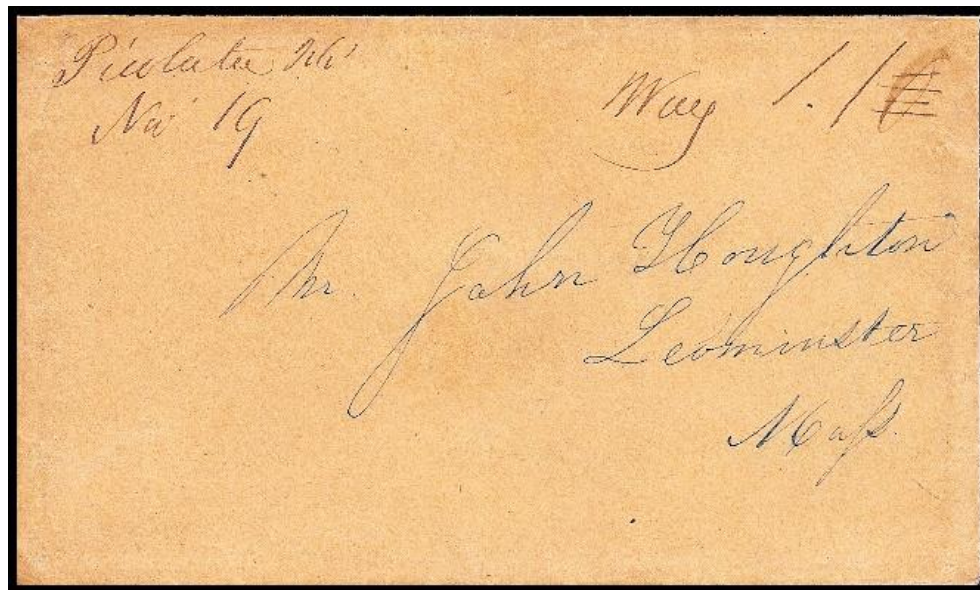
26. Augusta Fla, Type I, July 1st (1850), **Way 6** to Mr. John Beard, Register of State Lands, Tallahassee, M[iddle] Florida. (courtesy of Deane R. Briggs)



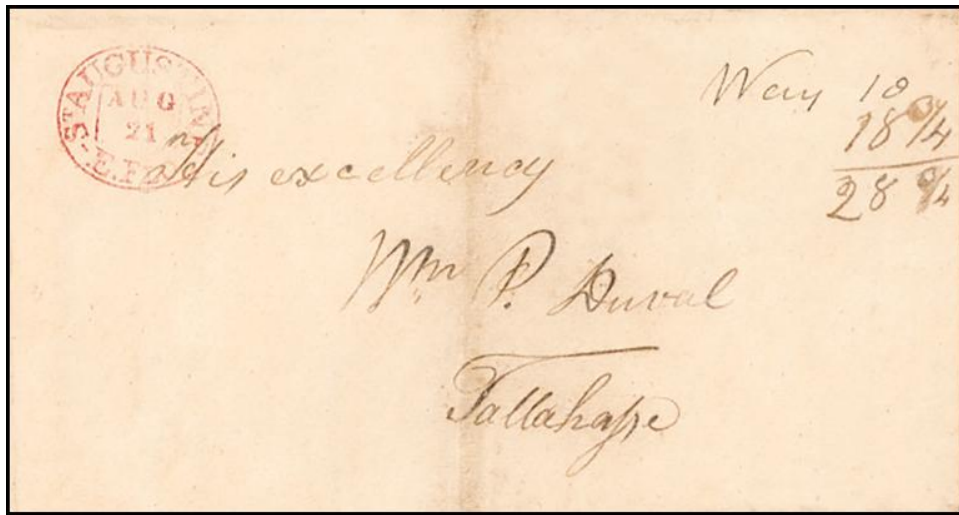
27. Augusta, Fa, Type III, July 14<sup>th</sup> (1846), **6 Way** to the Secretary of the State of Florida, Tallahassee Florida. (courtesy of Florida State Archives)



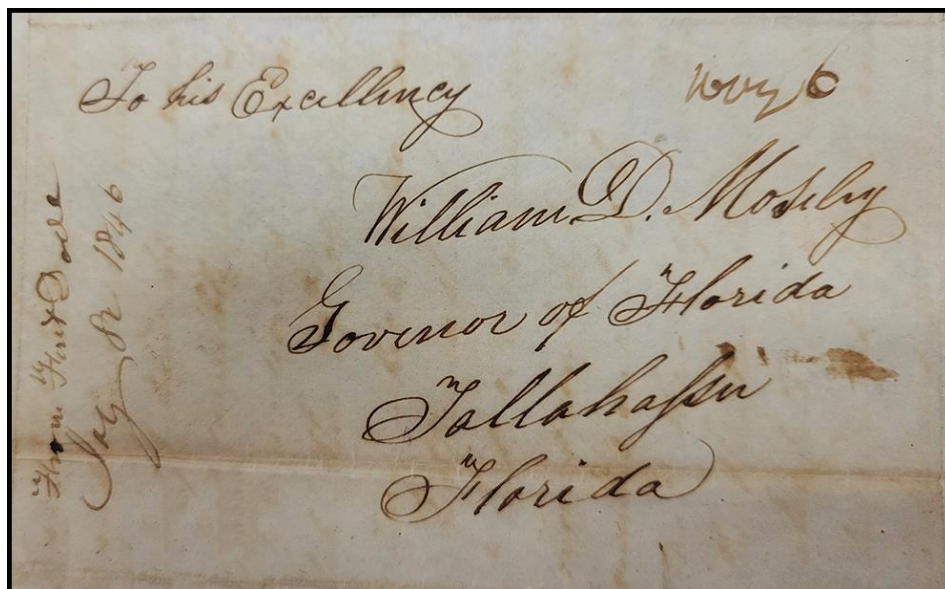
28. Augusta, Fla, Type I, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1847, **Way 11**cts., to John B. Read to be picked up at the Augusta Post Office, Perry County Mississippi (courtesy of Van Koppersmith)



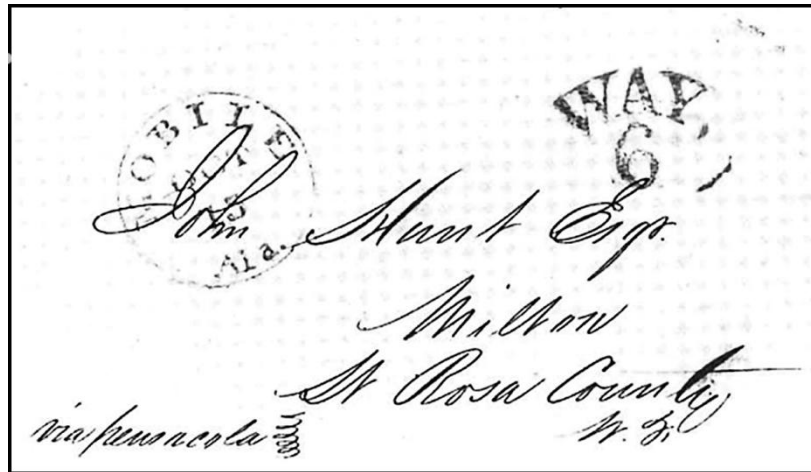
29. Picolata Fla (sic), Type II, Nov 19, **Way 10 corrected to Way 11**, to Mr. John Houghton, Leominster, Mass. (ex. Deane R. Briggs, courtesy of William H. Johnson, D.D.S.)



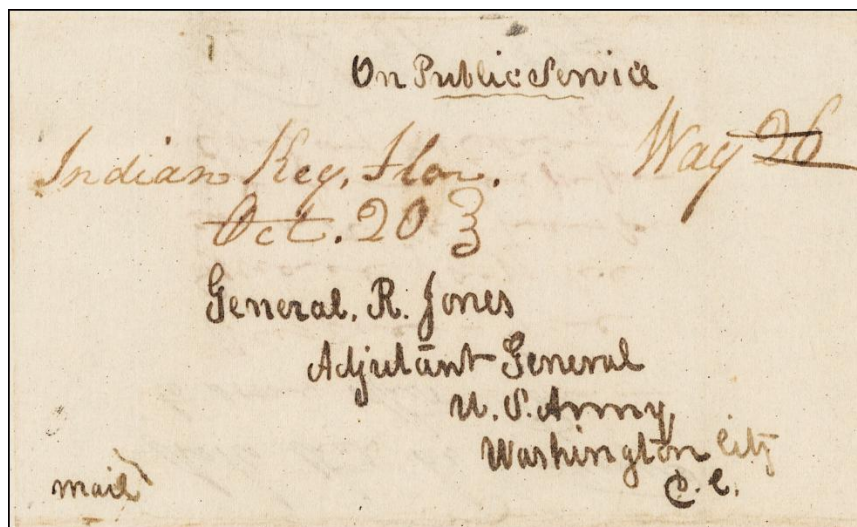
30. St. Augustine, E. Flo., Red Type XII, Aug 21, **Way 10** plus  $18\frac{3}{4}$  forwarded to Wm. Duval, Tallahassee. (Way 10 is the 30-mile rate. A rider picked up the letter and delivered it to closest post office Mandarin). (courtesy of Florida State Archives)



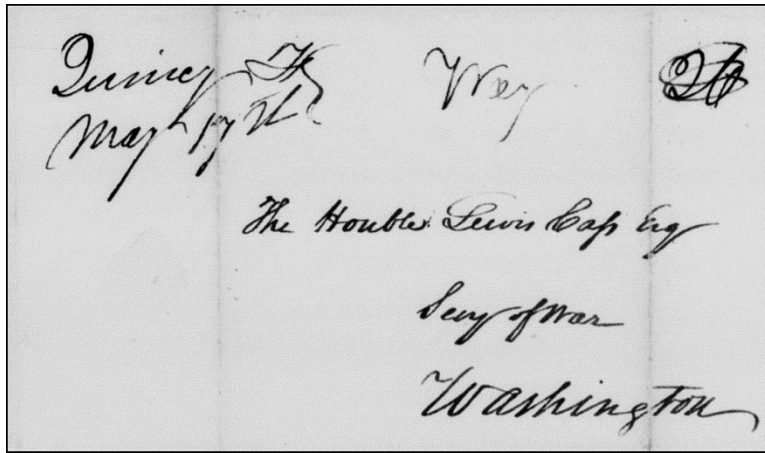
31. Fort Dade, Type I (Statehood) January 8, 1846, **Way 6**. To Governor William D. Mosley, Governor of Florida, Tallahassee. Postal rider picked up the letter at Buddie Lake, six miles south of the Fort Dade Post Office.(courtesy of Florida State Archives)



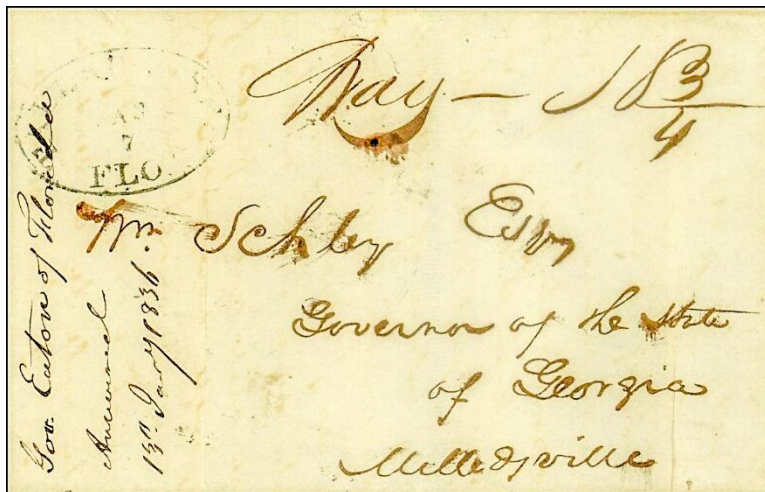
32. **Way 6 in red arc** on 10.15.1846 cover carried by unknown contract vessel into Mobile then transmitted by the postal service to Milton (West) Florida via *Pensacola*. (courtesy of James W. Milgram M.D. *Chronicle* 200, November 2003, Vol. 55, No.4: 275)



33. Indian Key Flor. **Way 26** October 20, 1834 To General Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S. Army Washington City, D.C. The 26 was lined out when the letter reached Charleston, because "On Public Service" meant the letter was free. Way was not lined out since the postmaster paid 1¢ to the captain who delivered the letter from Key West. (Courtesy of National Archives)



34. Quincy F **Way** 26 May 17, [1832] To Lewis Cass, Esq. Secretary of War, Washington. The 26¢ was lined out when the letter reached Quincy, because it was included in a pouch of letters going to Washington D.C. Way was not lined out since the postmaster paid 1¢ to the person who delivered the letter. (Courtesy of National Archives)



35. Tallahassee Flor. **Way** Jan 7, 1835, from John H. Eaton Governor of the Florida Territory to Georgia Governor William Schley. The Governor's urgency to mail the letter is the reason for the **WAY** marking. The mail was delivered to the Governor at his residence, then the postman was handed it to deliver to the Tallahassee Post Office, where the **WAY**, 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>¢, and the Tallahassee black oval postmark handstamp was added. It is not clear who paid the 1¢ WAY fee. (Courtesy Georgia Digital Archives, [https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg\\_zlna\\_tcc558#item](https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_zlna_tcc558#item))

## Missing Florida Territorial Way Cover

- A. Apalachicola Florida, Type I, Jan 23, 1840, Way, listed in the *ASCC* Vol. 1, 50, Reference 1.

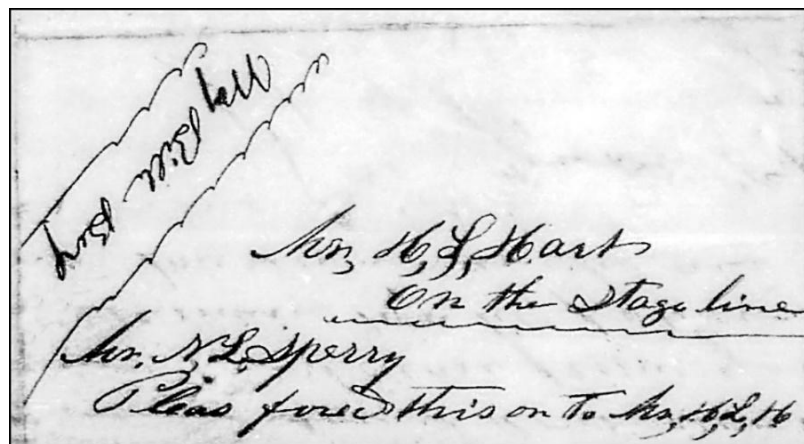
## Stagecoach Mail with Way Bill Box Manuscript Notation



36. To H.L. Hart on the Stagecoach postal route 6804, to Palatka. Letter datelined Ten Mile House, Hills Borough County from W. H. Bass, Nov. 14, 1858. (courtesy of Thomas Lera)



37. To H.L. Hart on the Stagecoach postal route 6804, to Palatka. Letter datelined Ten Mile House from W. H. Bass. Nov. 17, 1858. (courtesy of Thomas Lera)



38. To H.L. Hart, Stagecoach postal route 6804.1 Letter datelined Ten Mile House, Hills Borough County from W. H. Bass, placed in Way Bill Box and forwarded on another stagecoach driven by N. L. Sperry who placed the letter in their stagecoach Way Bill Box from Ocala to Palatka. Nov. 18, 1858. (courtesy of Florida State Archives)

## Railroad Post Office Way Mail (Reference # 4)



39. 350-M-1; A & G R R Way Mail. Dec 2, manuscript “Way” indicated it was picked up by contract messenger who brought mail to a route agent. The Route Agent Contract was awarded to Savannah & Jacksonville, Jan. 16, 1868-72. The Atlantic & Gulf R.R. was an extension of the Savannah & Thomasville established in 1866 on a newly laid track. (Courtesy of Douglas N. Clark)



39. 351-M-1; A & G R R WD (WD – Western Division) manuscript “Way” and date 1869. The Route Agent Contract was awarded to Lawton & Bainbridge, January 1868-71. The Atlantic & Gulf R.R.WD was the western part of the Savannah & Thomasville. (left, courtesy of Deane R. Briggs; right, courtesy of Douglas N. Clark).

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for allowing me to use their images in preparing this census. They are Deane R. Briggs M.D., Douglas N. Clark, Phil Eschbach, William H. Johnson, D.D.S., James Milgram, M.D, Van Koppersmith, Yamil H. Kouri M.D., Florida State Archives, Harmer-Schau Auctions, Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Georgia Digital Images, and David G. Phillips’s auction catalog of the Florida Collection of Charles Meroni.

## References

1. *American Stampless Cover Catalog Vol. I*, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., North Miami, FL, 1997, p. 48-54, 117-118, 192-194; *Vol. II*, , pp. 152-157; and *Vol III*, 1993, pp. 241-242.
2. *The Florida Collection of Charles F. Meroni Auction Catalog*, David G. Phillips Co, Inc., January 25 & 26, 1985.
3. Briggs, Deane R., 2021, “Florida ‘Way’ Covers,” *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 3-13.
4. Towle, Charles L., 1975, *The United States Transit Markings Catalog, 1837 to 1974*. Vol. 1: 1837-1886, Vols. 2-3: 1887-1974, Vol. 4: 1996 edition by Fred MacDonald including work originally begun by Charles L. Towle, Mobile Post Office Society.
5. Briggs, Deane R., Francis Ferguson, and Thomas M. Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861, Second Edition*, Florida Postal History Society, Winter Haven, Florida 33884, pps.7-14, 72, 78-80, 177, 182, 316, 318, 351, 363, 436-437.
6. Briggs, Deane R., 1993, “Florida’s First Letters,” *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol.1, No. 1 (July), pp. 1-10.
7. Braake, Alex L. ter, “Part I: Chapter Q by Charles Meroni”, *The Posted Letter In Colonial And Revolutionary America*, American Philatelic Research Library, State College, Pa. 1975. pp. Q1-Q19.
8. Kouri, Yamil H. and Leo J. Harris, 2020, “Chapter 3 – Florida Occidental (West Florida)” *Spanish Colonial and Mexican Mail in the United States*, pp. 61-112. This is a must read for East Florida (Chapter 2 -Florida Oriental) and West Florida (Florida Occidental).