

The Seminole Agency Post Office 1828 – 1837

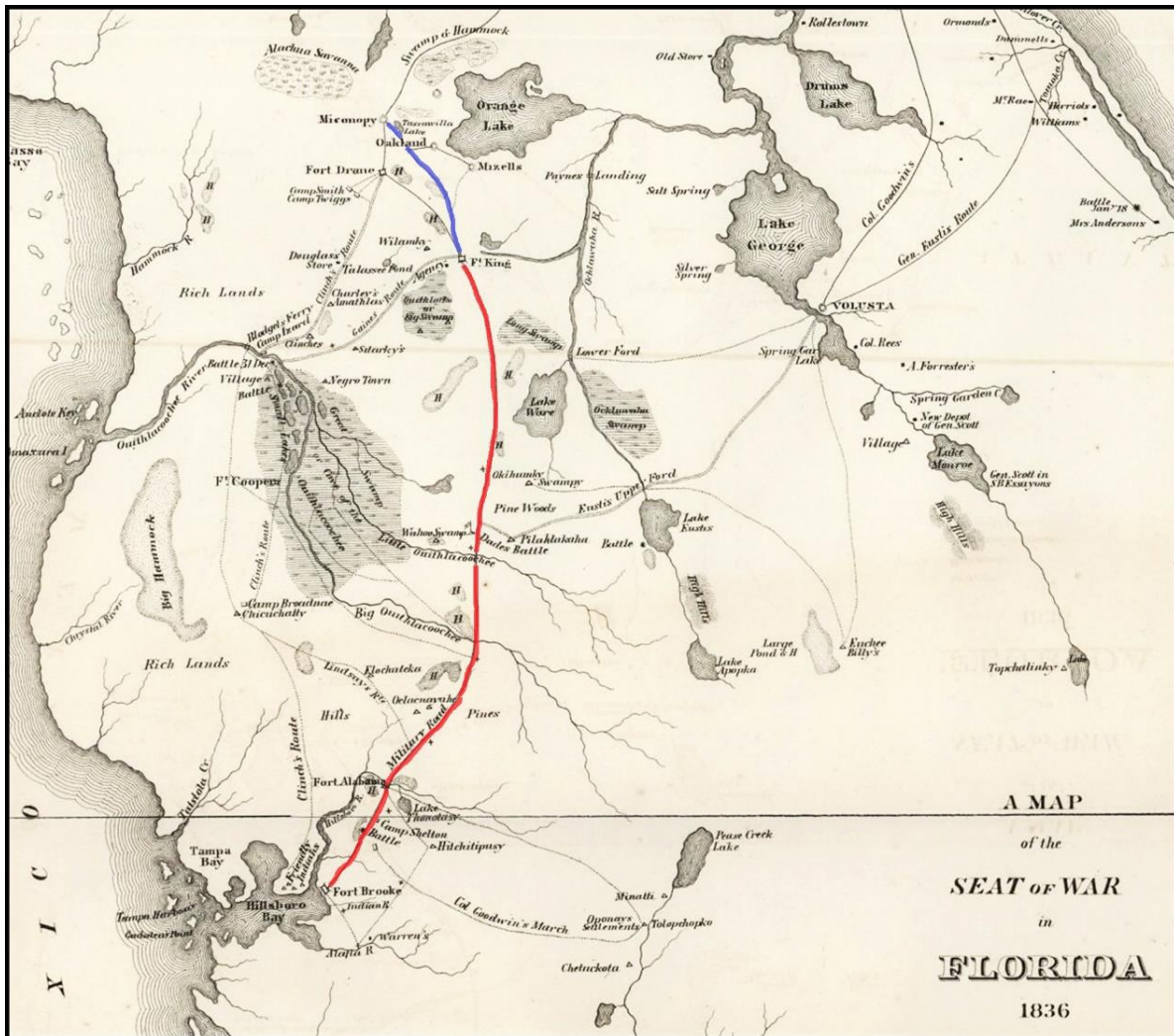


Figure 1. Portion of a Map of the Seat of War in Florida 1836.

Red Line – Fort Brooke to Seminole Agency; **Blue Line** – Seminole Agency to Micanopy.

Introduction

In numerous articles, books, and podcasts on the Second Seminole Indian War, many activities and the participants were identified, including Gad Humphreys, Major Francis L. Dade, and Osceola.¹

Little, however, has been written about The Seminole Agency Post Office near Fort King. This article will explore the history and sad ending of this small, but important, post office.

Gad Humphreys – Indian Agent and Postmaster

The Seminole Agency was located in Alachua County near Fort King, on the main military and post road connecting Micanopy and Tampa Bay. The Agency served as a military and civilian post office which handled a large volume of mail. (Fig. 1).²

On June 1, 1821, after thirteen years' service in the U.S. Army, Lieutenant-Colonel Gad Humphreys was honorably discharged in the reduction of the Army.³ On May 8, 1822, President James Monroe appointed Humphreys to the Florida Indian Agency and requested him to report to Governor William Duval.⁴

In 1825, Cantonment (later Fort) Brooke was established where the Hillsborough River meets Old Tampa Bay and was named for its first commander, Colonel George Mercer Brooke.⁵ Congress appropriated \$12,000 to build a military road from Fort Brooke to the northern boundary of Alachua County. In 1825, construction of the 100-mile military road began.

The Seminole Agency was built at the northern end of the military road from Fort Brooke, where it had also been decided to establish a military camp to aid the Agency. The Cantonment [Fort King], to be built in 1827, would be named in honor of Colonel William King, commander of Florida's Fourth Infantry.

In his May 2, 1828 letter to Brigadier General Thomas S. Jesup, U.S. Army, Charles K. Gardner, Esquire, Post Office Department, Washington City noted,

"The Postmaster General has authorized the establishment of a **Private Post Office** at the "Seminole Agency," the proceeds of postage being allowed for the transportation of the mail from the nearest Post Office, on account of its distance from the mail route."⁶

Seminole Indian Agent Gad Humphreys was appointed Postmaster May 3, 1828, and, with clerks, was responsible for Types I, II, III, IV, and V manuscript postmarks (Table 1: Seminole Agency Types of Postmarks and Handstamps).

Below are examples (Figs. 2-5), of all except Type III with poor quality by the auction catalog images. The abbreviations below are: Earliest Known Usage (EKU), Latest Known Usage (LKU), an asterisk (*) means archival or institutional location.

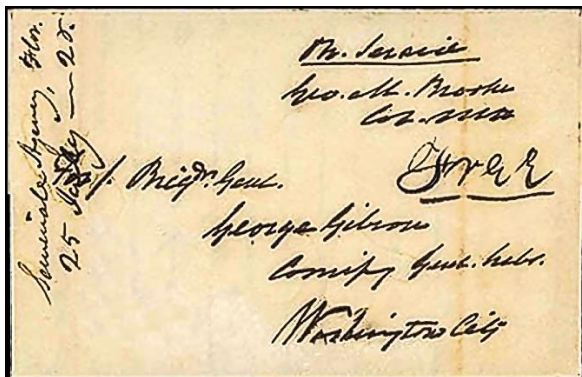


Figure 2. Type I



Figure 3. Type II

Figure 2. Type I 07.25.1828. To Brigadier General George Gibson, Commissary General of Subsistence, Washington D.C. Manuscript "Free" and "On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army]." Courtesy of ex. Meroni & Johnson; Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions Sale 78 Lot 1335.

Figure 3. Type II 05.12.1829* LKU. To His Excellency W. P. Duval Governor of Florida Tallahassee, Alachua Tampa Bay Election Return. Courtesy of Florida State Archives.

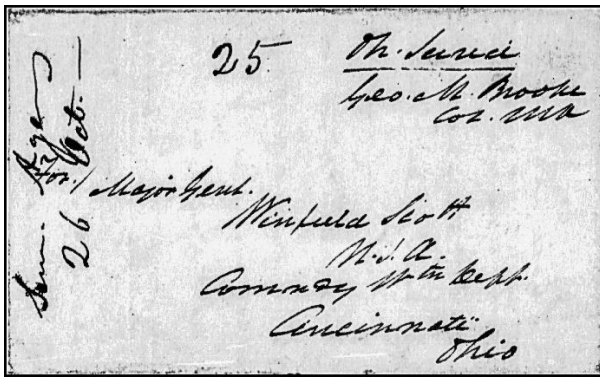


Figure 4. Type IV

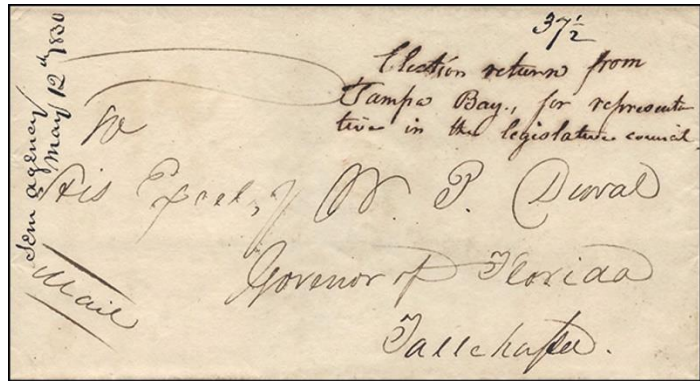


Figure 5. Type V

Figure 4. Type IV 10.26.1828* LKU. To Major General Winfield Scott, U.S.A. [Army] Commanding War Department, Cincinnati, Ohio. Manuscript “25” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Courtesy of Fold3 file # 28742115 and National Archives File: Brooke, Geo M (B245).

Figure 5. Type V 05.12.1830 LKU. To His Excel. W. P. Duval, Governor of Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript “37½” and “Election return from Tampa Bay, for representation in the legislative council.” Courtesy of Deane Briggs M.D.

Brevet Brigadier General George M. Brooke’s June 6, 1828 letter to Colonel Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C. stated,

“A post office having been established at the Seminole Indian Agency, it is the nearest point to Cantonment Brooke, and to which, all letters intended for that post, should be addressed, and should be so noted on the Register.”⁷

In 1829, the Army abandoned Fort King from 1829 to 1832 due to severe budget cuts, leaving the Seminoles with no soldiers to protect them. This meant, with reduced government subsidies, they could no longer buy corn and other staples. Although Fort King was abandoned, the Seminole Agency and post office remained in operation. Humphreys was replaced as postmaster August 8, 1830 by Erastus Rogers.

Erastus Rogers – Sutler and Postmaster

In 1829, Major Glassell provisionally appointed Rogers to “Sutler” [a person who sold provisions to the soldiers] at Cantonment King which was reopened in 1832 as Fort King. A July 18, 1832 letter Lieutenant William Graham, 4th Infantry, wrote to Lewis Cass, Secretary of War,

“I have appointed Erastus Rogers, Sutler to this post [Fort King] and would recommend that he be continued as such, if it meets your approval.”⁸

On January 11, 1832, Major T. Cross, Acting Quartermaster General Washington City, wrote to Captain Arthur W. Thornton, Acting Assistant Quartermaster, Cantonment Brooke,

“The Postmaster General, under authority vested in him by law, has established a Post Office at Tampa Bay with William G. Sanders Postmaster, chiefly with a view to the accommodation of the Garrison at Cantonment Brooke, and has authorized the net proceeds of postage which shall be collected there, to be applied, as far as it will go, in transporting the mail to the next nearest office. Should it prove inadequate, the Quartermaster’s Department must pay the deficiency.

It remains for the Postmaster and yourself to make necessary arrangements on the subject in case of deficiency in the postage to meet the expense incurred.”⁹

On February 6, 1832, Captain Thornton replied, he

“would try to buy mules to transport the mail to the nearest post office [Seminole Agency], a distance of 126 miles.”¹⁰

Capt. Arthur W. Thornton, Acting Assistant Quartermaster at Cantonment Brooke received a letter on February 25, 1832 from Major General Thomas S. Jesup Quartermaster General,

“You are authorized to sign the contract which was transmitted to you by the Post Office Department for transmitting the mail from the Seminole Agency to Tampa Bay, in your Official capacity as Acting Assistant Quartermaster. You will continue to have the mail transported by means of the public horses and receive from the Post Master the net proceeds of the postage collected by him and credit the same in your account current with the department. If he has not received special instructions to pay over the net proceeds of the postage which shall come into his hands, he will be fully warranted in doing so, by the terms of the Contract itself and the enclosed letter from the Post Office Department.”¹¹

On March 19, 1832, Thornton responded to Jesup,

“I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 25th by yesterday’s mail authorizing me to sign in my official capacity the Contract for carrying the mail from this to the Seminole Agency, and also directing the means of transporting and defraying the expenses thereof. I have, Sir, in compliance with your desire signed the Contract, and herewith return it.

“The present Postmaster Erastus Rogers at the Seminole Agency has informed me that he should resign his appointment so soon as the establishment of the Post Office at Seminole Agency was carried into effect, as the proceeds of the Office there at the Agency will not defray the expense of carrying the mail from there to Micanopy. Therefore, I shall have to transport the mail from the 1st of next month, the period when it is now contemplated that this establishment shall go into effect, to and from Micanopy, a distance of 26 miles beyond the Agency.

“Since the lameness of the horse kept in past performance to that service, the mule alone has performed it, but now that the warm weather is coming on, he will not be able to do so, and I shall therefore put the horse which I have purchased for my own use on that route.”

Jesup responded on April 18, 1832 authorizing the purchase of one or more mules. In turn, Thornton responded June 11, 1832 he “would make two horses and one mule answer for the service.”¹²

Postmaster Erastus Rogers was responsible for Types VI manuscript postmark and Types VII and VIIa new handstamps postmarks (Figs. 6-9).

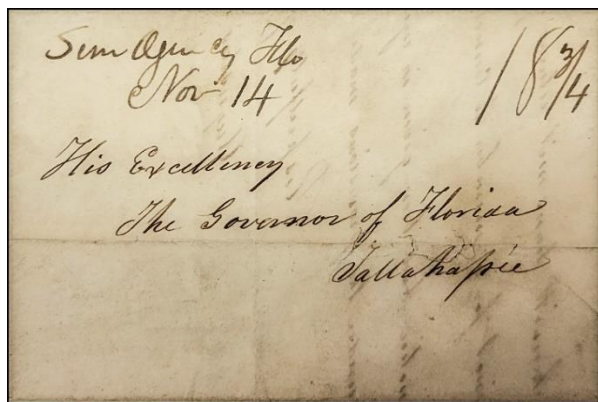


Figure 6. Type VI



Figure 7. Type VII

Figure 6. Type VI 11.14.1833*. To His Excellency Governor of Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript “18³/₄.” Courtesy of Florida State Archives.

Figure 7. Type VII 02.02.1831 EKU. Circle Date Stamp (CDS) Dec 21 Philadelphia, Pa. mailed to Lieut. J. B. Shaw, Cantonment Brooke, Tampa Bay, East Florida. SEMINOLE AGENCY FLO. Handstamp, used as forwarding postmark, dated Feb 2, Manuscript “25” rate; forwarded to St. Augustine with “12¹/₂” rate, totaling “37¹/₂.” Courtesy of J. W. Milgram M.D.



Figure 8. Type VII



Figure 9. Type VIIa

Figure 8. Type VII 12.02.1834. To Robert Butler Esq. Surveyor General Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript “18³/₄.” Courtesy of Thomas Lera.

Figure 9. Type VIIa 07.13.1832*. To Honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Washington City D.C., from John Phagan, Agent Seminole Indians. The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0292.

In 1835, the Post Office Department awarded James M. Harris the contract for Postal Route 2473 from Jacksonville to Micanopy by Whitesville, 80 miles there and back or 160 miles round trip once every two weeks. The Seminole Agency was to be supplied each trip by a cross-route from Micanopy, 26 miles each way or 52 miles round trip. This route started on the first Monday in January 1835.¹³

Fort Brooke would now only carry mail to Fort King, where it would be picked up by James Harris, and took it to Jacksonville to be sorted for delivery.

On August 11, 1835, while on his mail express route between Fort Brooke and Fort King, Private Kinsley H. Dalton was killed by Miccosukee Indians who had moved into central Florida and the Everglades. They were retaliating against the militia who had killed and wounded some of their hunting party at Hickory Sink, Northwest of Paynes Prairie (Appendix 1 & 2). Some historians consider Dalton the first U.S. soldier killed by the Indians in the Second Seminole War.¹⁴

On October 8, 1835 Brevet Brigadier General Duncan L. Clinch wrote to Brevet Brigadier General Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army],

“We shall have to strike a blow at the Mickasuky [Miccosukee] tribe, before that will surrender the murderers of Dalton, or agree to comply with their treaty.”

Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, replied to Clinch’s letter on December 8,

“I concur fully in your suggestions that these persons should be arrested without delay, And you are authorized to proceed in such manner and at such time as you may judge expedient to arrest them and deliver them over to the civil authority.”¹⁵

Osceola’s Actions

On June 3, 1835, Wiley Thompson, who was now the Seminole Indian Agent, had Osceola arrested, placed in irons and confined because he had muttered threats against him. After the intervention of six or seven chiefs, even as he signed the emigration papers to go west to Oklahoma so he could be released, Osceola secretly vowed to get back at Thompson. Thompson did not know he had just declared war and signed his own death warrant.

Lieutenant Joseph W. Harris, in a December 30, 1835 letter to the Commissary General George Gibson, related the facts of General Thompson’s subsequent death as follows,

“On December 28 our excellent superintendent, General Wiley Thompson, has been cruelly murdered and scalped by a party of hostile Indians [led by Osceola], and with him Lieutenant Constantine Smith of the 2nd Regiment of Artillery, Erastus Rogers, Fort Sutler and Postmaster of the Agency, together with his two clerks, Mr. Hitzler and a boy named Robert.

“Erastus had moved his goods into the fort but was in the habit of eating his meals at his house, some six or eight yards off, skirting a thick hammock to the northwest. His clerks ate with him.

“Captain T. W. Lendrum was commanding the Fort and from Mr. Roger’s house shots were heard and the smoke from the rifles firing were seen. A few minutes later several white people and people of color, who escaped from the Sutler’s house, came running into the fort and appraised Captain Lendrum that Mr. Rogers, his clerks, and themselves, had been surprised at dinner, and Rogers and his clerks had in all probability fallen into the hands of the Indians.”¹⁶

At the same time, Chief Mico Onapa (Micanopy), Hotemathla (Jumper), Halpatter Tustenuggee (Alligator), and approximately 180 braves, ambushed Major Francis Dade and his command as they marched north from Fort Brooke to relieve troops at Fort King. Osceola’s attack, and what became known as the Dade Massacre, would be the beginning of the one of the longest and most expensive Indian Wars the United States would ever fight.

A report claimed that at the time of his murder, Roger's stores at Fort King included some \$10,000 to \$15,000 in goods and effects, some of which were still on hand at that post. On May 28, 1836, the Army ordered they be released to his widow and estate.¹⁷

United States Army forces began to withdraw, and in May 1836, Fort King, once again having been abandoned, was burned to the ground by the victorious Seminoles. The victory, however, was short-lived. In 1837, less than a year later, the Army returned, and the fort was rebuilt.

Although the Seminoles were not conquered during the three Seminole Wars (1817–18, 1835–42, 1855–58), thousands moved west. The first group of migrants, under the leadership of Chief Hotemathla, arrived in 1837 in the Indian Territory in Oklahoma. By 1839, the majority of the Seminoles had been relocated.

On December 28, 1835, after the deaths of Agent Wiley Thompson and Postmaster Erastus Rogers, the Seminole Agency no longer officially existed. The Second Seminole War was declared over on August 14, 1842. As far as the government was concerned, the Seminole Tribe was now in Oklahoma, and therefore a new Indian agent was not appointed.

Postmaster Compensation

The Seminole Agency Post Office was extremely active. In Appendix 3 Postmaster Compensation, the *Table 2: Postmaster Compensation and Net Accrued Receipts* shows the Agency was, on average, in the top 70% of Florida post offices in net accrued postal receipts.

In researching the various archives, I discovered most of the letters that had passed through this post office were addressed "On Public Service" or "Free" to federal and state governmental agencies or military forts. The postmasters collected postage to mail all other letters. A single sheet letter sent from the Agency cost 25¢ to mail to Washington D.C., 902 miles away, and 18¾¢ to Tallahassee, at 238 miles. A two-sheet letter was double the rate.

If you assume an average 25¢ per letter rate and divide that into the Net Accrued Post Office Receipts, the result is between 200 and 900 pieces of mail handled per year. While this is not an exact number as newspapers, magazines and pamphlets are not included in the calculation. However, it still says a large volume of mail was processed by this small post office.

The August 30, 1837 Payment of \$135.43 following Erastus Rogers' Death December 28, 1835.

After the death of Erastus Rogers December 28, 1835, mail was still being carried from Fort Brooke to Fort Micanopy and St. Augustine. The February 25, 1832 letter to Captain Arthur W. Thornton shows the U.S. Army signed the post office contract, collected money, and deposited the net accrued receipts as required by the contract. The Army received a final compensation of \$135.43, which was recorded on August 30, 1837.

Conclusion

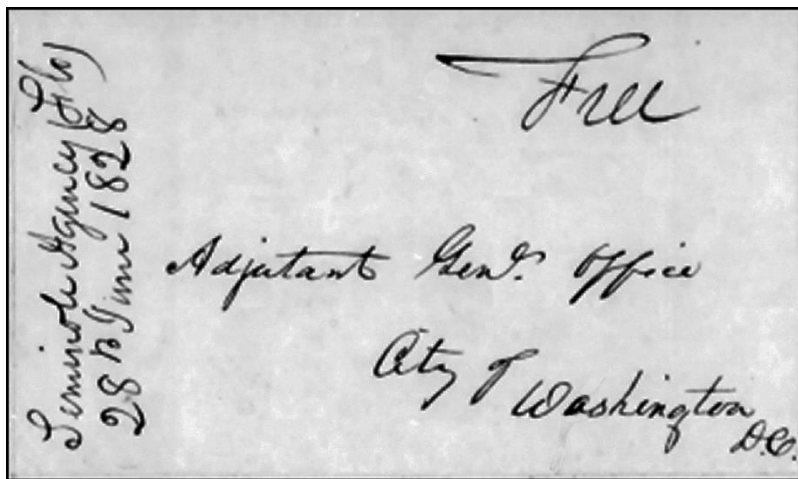
The Post Office Department officially listed the Seminole Agency Post Office closed February 25, 1837.

CENSUS OF SEMINOLE AGENCY COVERS

Table 1: Seminole Agency Post Office - Types of Postmarks and Handstamps

Territorial Usage						
Type	Postmark / Handstamp	Dates Used	Color	Size	Rates	Census
I	Seminole Agency Flor.	06.28.1828* / 10.26.1828*	black		ms. rates	1 known, + 3*
II	Seminole Agency	04.28.1829* / 05.12.1829*	black		ms. rates	1 known, + 4*
III	Sem. Agy	08.30.1828	black		ms. rates	1 known
IV	Sem. Age__y	09.23.1828* / 10.26.1828*	black		ms. rates	+2*
V	Sem Agency	01.16.1829* / 05.12.1830	black		ms. rates	1 known, + 4*
VI	Sem Agency Flo	06.06.1828* / 01.05.1835*	black		ms. rates	+6*
VII	*SEM. AGENCY FLO.*	02.02.1831 / 08.13.1835	black	35 x27mm	ms. rates	7 known + 6*
a	*SEM. AGENCY FLO.*	07.04.1831* / 08.07.1832*	black	21 x 6mm	FREE	+ 8*

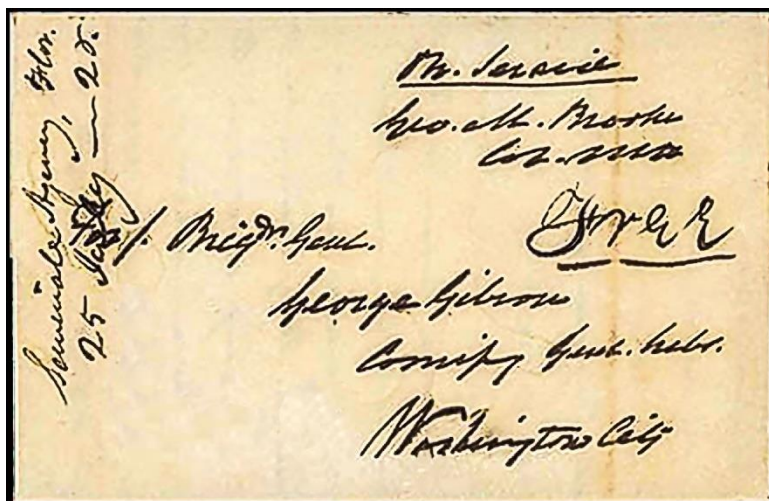
Table 1 shows the various Types I – V postmarks used by Gad Humphreys 05.03.1828 – 08.17.1830 and Types VI – VII, VIIa used by Erastus Rogers 08.07.1830 – 12.28.1835. ¹⁸



Type I. 06.28.1828* ECU

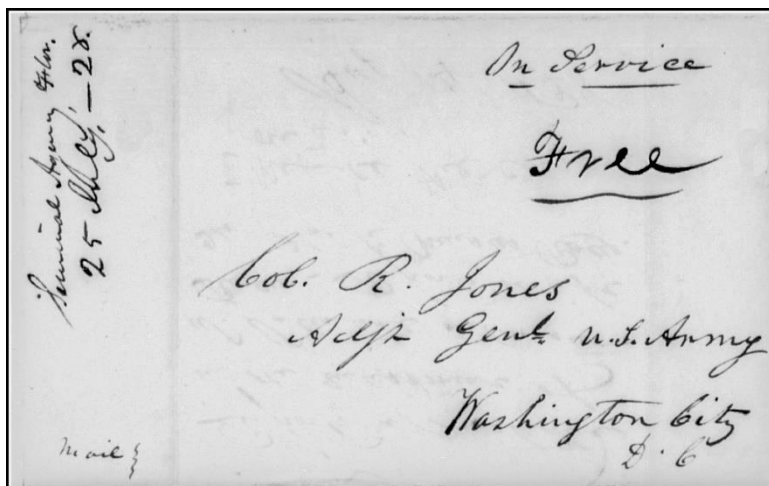
Courtesy of National Archives M567, Glapell, J.M. (also spelled Glapele) (G96)

Note: “EQU” means Earliest Known Usage and “LQU” means Latest Known Usage.



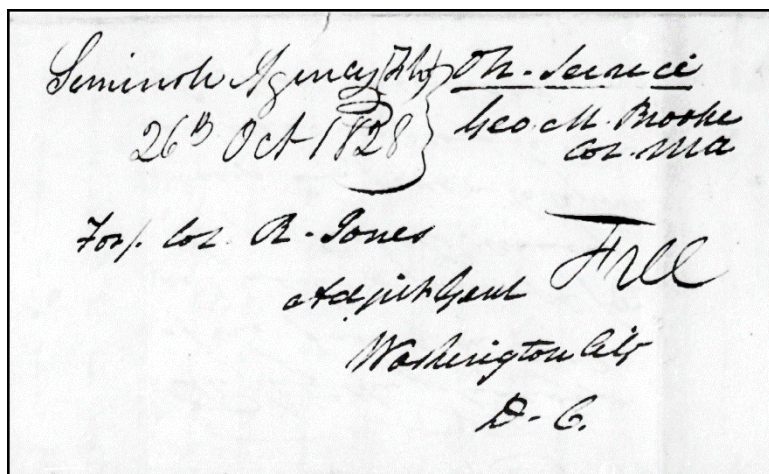
Type I. 07.25.1828

Ex Meroni & Johnson; Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions Sale 78 Lot 1335



Type I. 07.25.1828*

Courtesy of Fold3 - File #287358996 (G103)



Type I. 10.26.1828* LKU

Courtesy of Fold3 - File #287421103 (B245)

Seminole Agency
28th April
Mr. Service
Geo. H. Brooke
M. Brig^d Genl. USA
Full
Inf. Col. R. Jones
Adj^t Genl. USA
Washington City
D. C.

Type II. 04.28.1829* EKU
 Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 (B138)

829.
Seminole Agency
8th May
Mr. Service
Geo. H. Brooke
M. Brig^d Genl. USA
Full
For. Bt. Major Genl.
Wm. S. Jepson
L. M. Genl.
Washington City
D. C.

Type II. 05.08.1829
 Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M.D.

On Service
Seminole Agency
8th May
Full
Col. R. Jones
Adj^t Genl. U. S. Army
City of Washington

Type II. 05.08.1829*
 Courtesy of National Archives RG94 M567, Glapell, J.M. (G65).

Sem. Agency }
 23 Sept. } On Service
 Geo. M. Brooke
 Col. USA
 H. Col. R. Jones
 Adj. Gen. M. M.
 Washington City
 D.C.

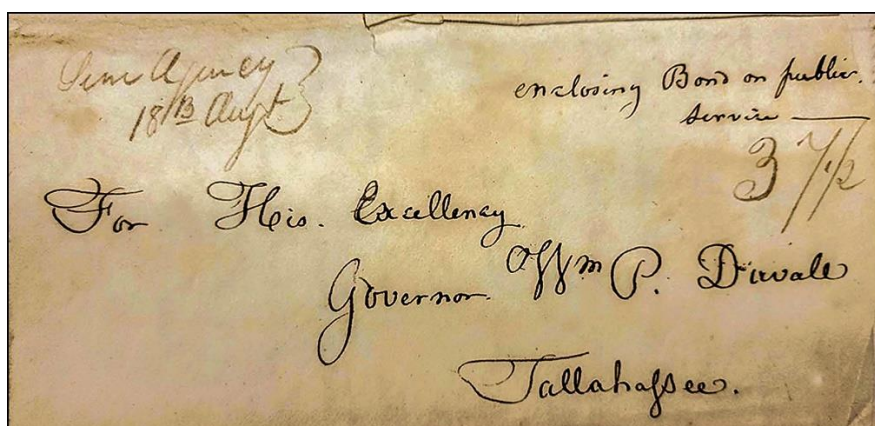
Type IV. 09.23.1828* EKU
 Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567 (B210)

Sem. Agency }
 26 Oct. } On Service
 Major Gen. Winfield Scott
 M. A.
 Commanding M. A. Dept.
 Cincinnati
 Ohio

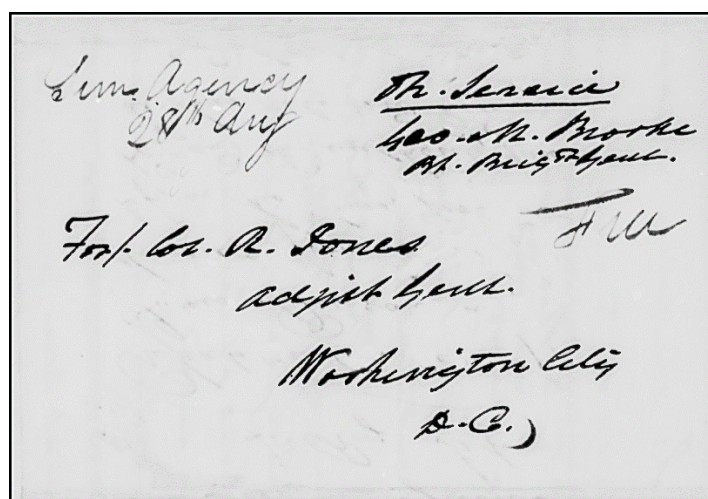
Type IV. 10.26.1828* LKU
 Courtesy of Fold3 file # 28742115, National Archives File: Brooke, Geo M (B245)

On Service }
 Sem. Agency }
 16th June 1829 }
 Brig. Gen. Tho. G. Jesup
 Dr. Master General
 Washington D.C.

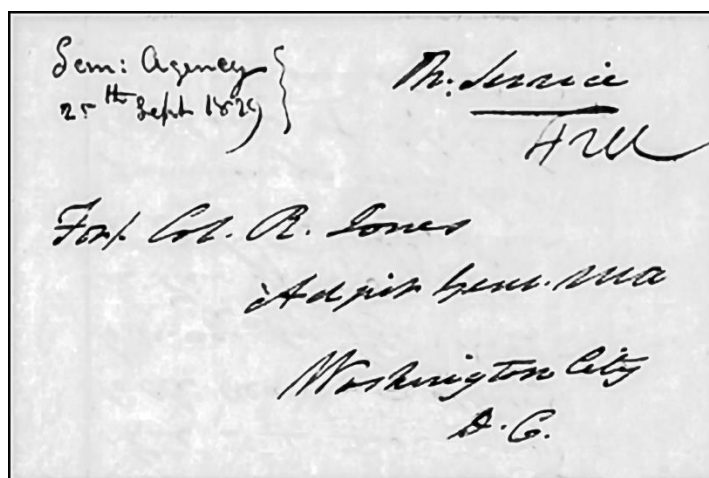
Type V. 01.16.1829* EKU
 Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives
 Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida.



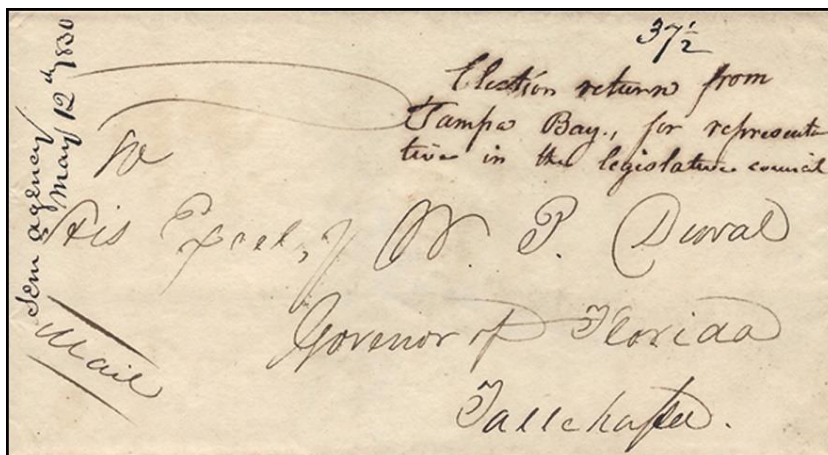
Type V. 08.18.1829*
 Courtesy of Florida State Archives



Type V. 08.28.1829*
 Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567 (B239)

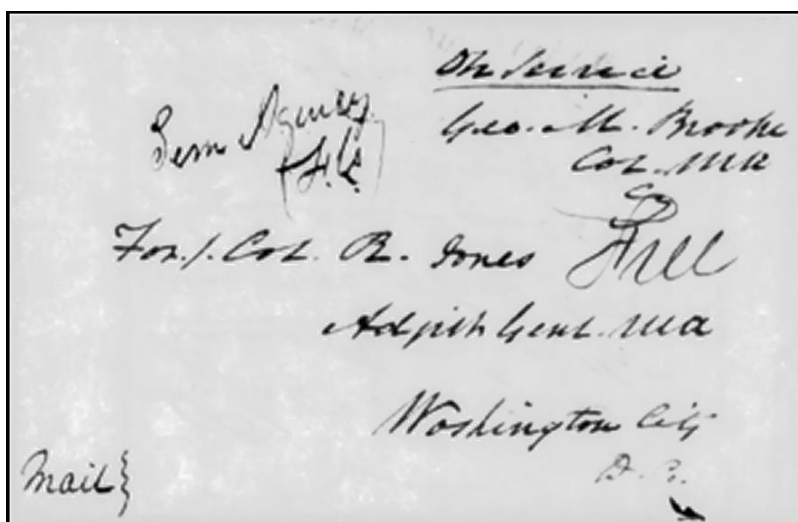


Type V. 09.25.1829*
 Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 Bache, R. (B257)



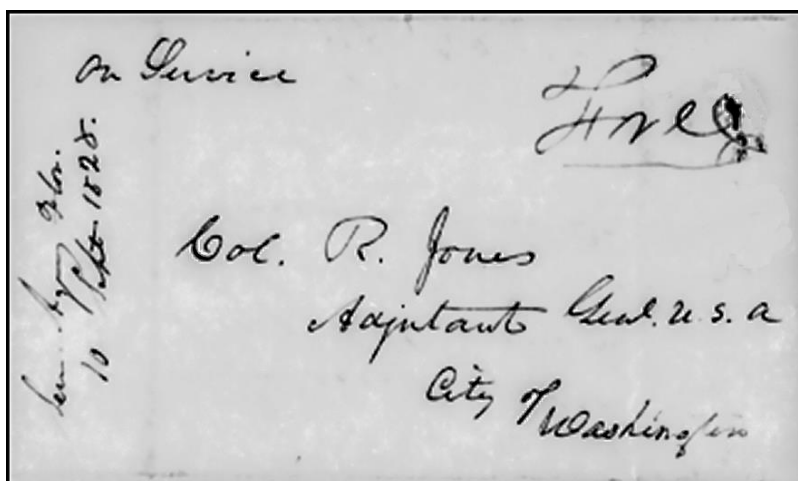
Type V. 05.12.1830 LKU

Courtesy of William Youngerman - Hometowncurrency.org; ex. Briggs and Johnson



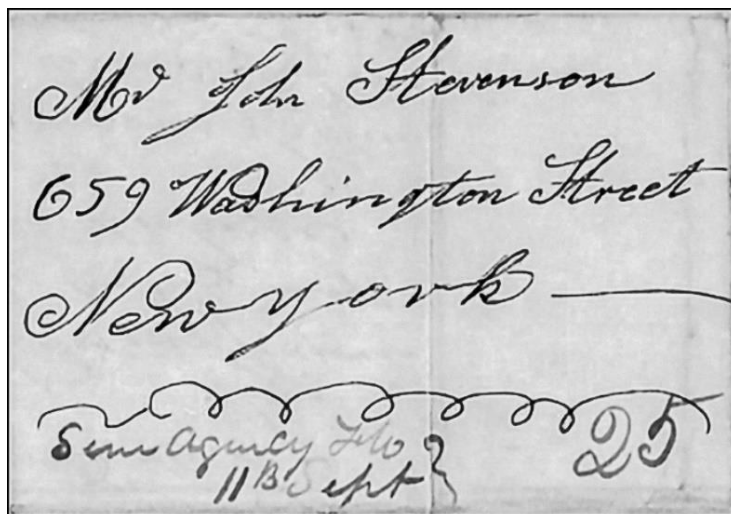
Type VI. 06.06.1828* EKU

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 (B117)

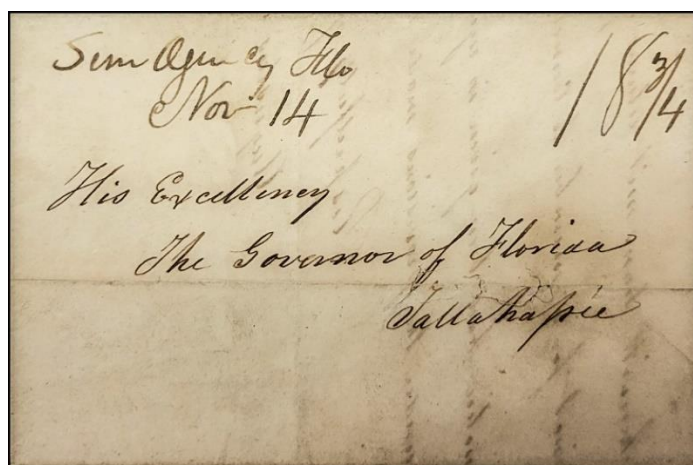


Type VI. 09.10.1828*

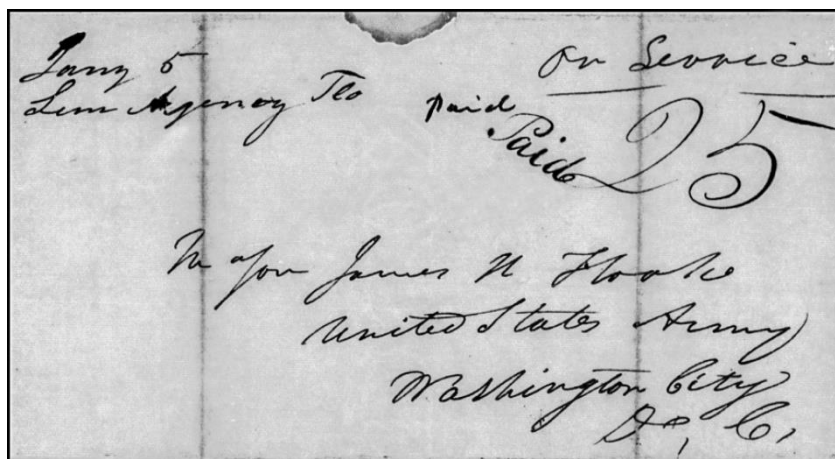
Courtesy of National Archives File M567, Glapell, J.M. (G116)



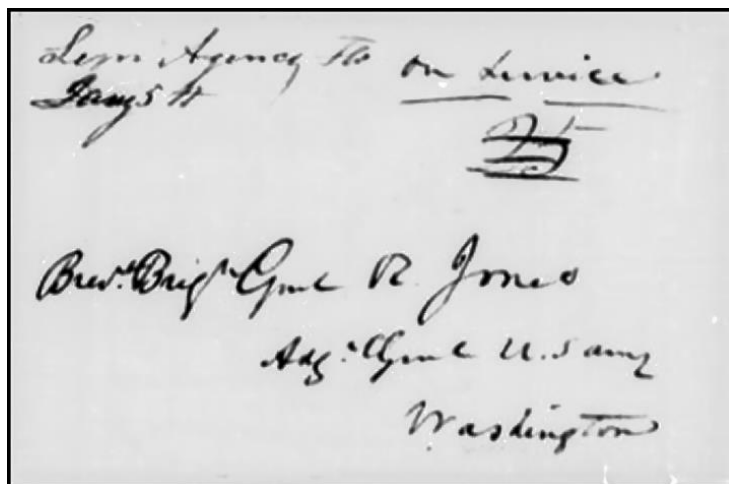
Type VI. 09.11.1830*
 Courtesy of Fold 3 Image #287369194 (S118)



Type VI. 11.14.1833*
 Courtesy of Florida State Archives



Type VI. 01.05.1835* LKU
 Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0491



Type VI. 01.05.1835* LKU

Courtesy of National Archives File RG 75 M567, Clinch, D. (C15)



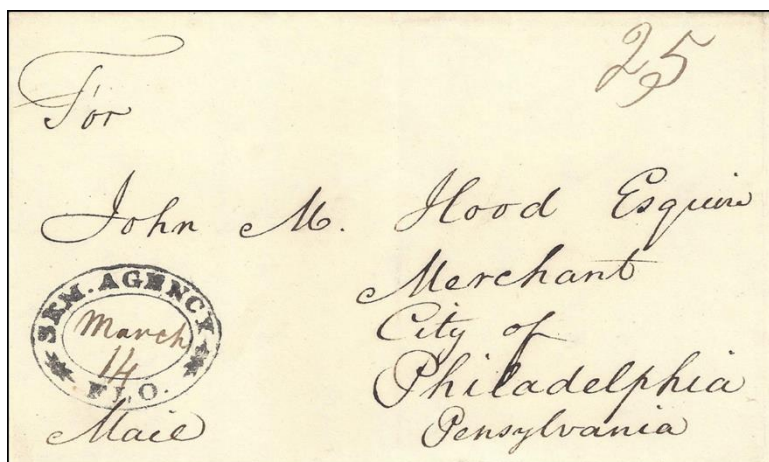
Type VII. 02.02.1831 EKU

Courtesy of James W. Milgram M.D; American Stampless Cover Catalog. Vol. 1, pg. 53.

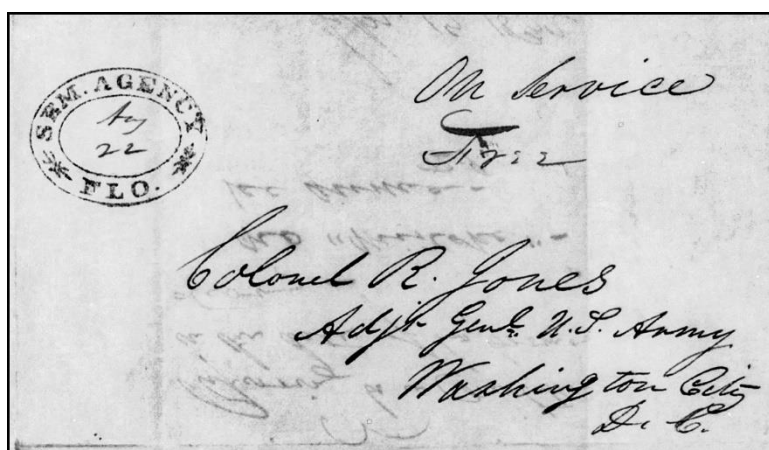


Type VII. 11.23.1831

Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M.D.



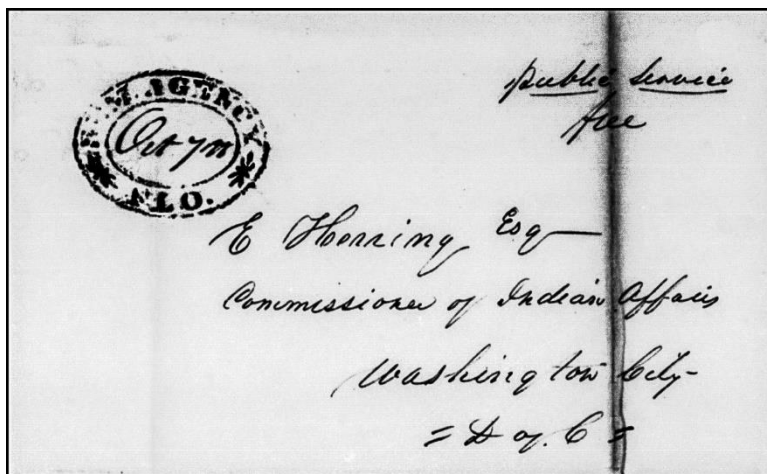
Type VII. 03.14.1832
Courtesy of James W. Milgram M.D



Type VII. 08.22.1832*
Courtesy of National Archives File: RG M567 (G179)



Type VII. 09.11.1832
Ex. Briggs; Courtesy of William Johnson, DDS estate.



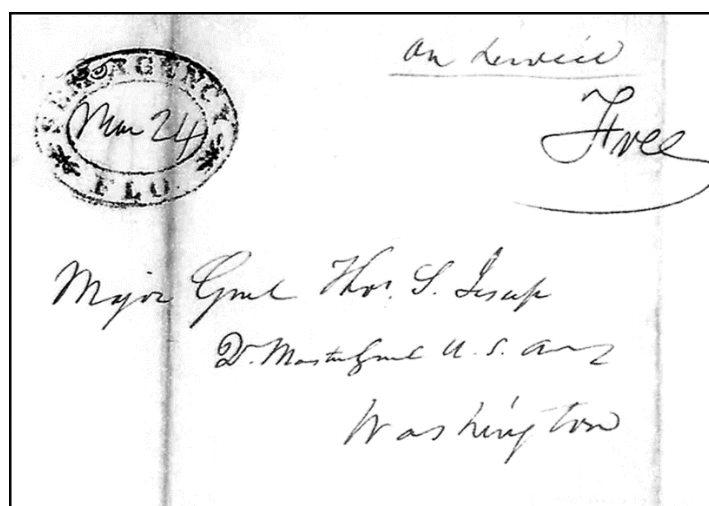
Type VII. 10.07.1834*

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0280



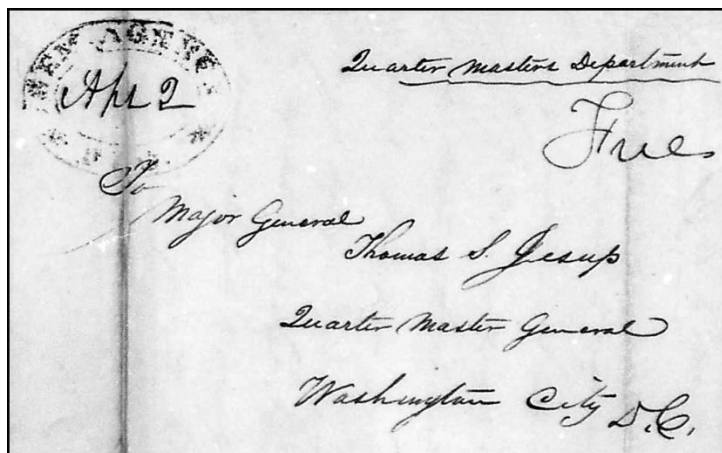
Type VII. 12.02.1834

Courtesy of Thomas Lera



Type VII. 03.24.1835*

Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives
Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida



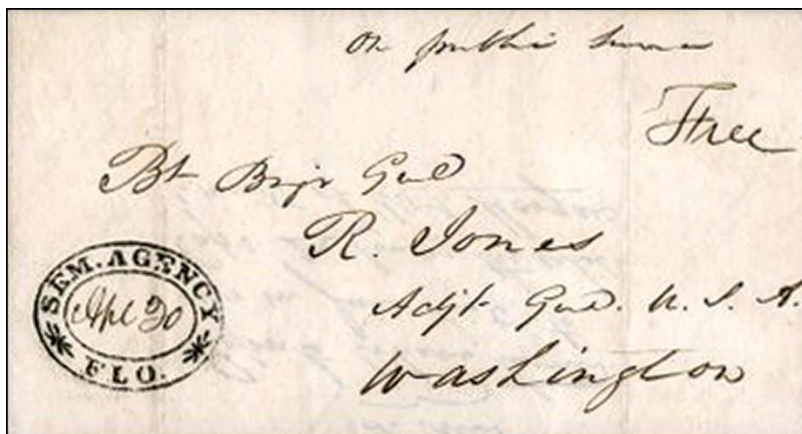
Type VII. 04.02.1835*

Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives
Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida



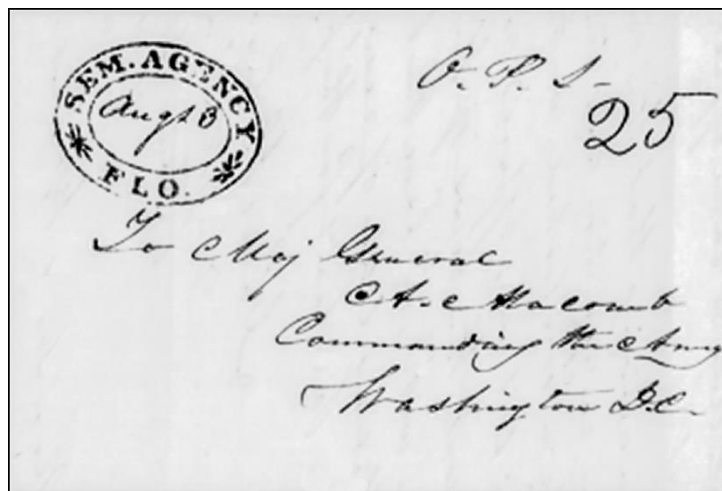
Type VII. 04.16.1835*

Courtesy of AH-THA-THI-KI Museum, Big Cypress, Florida Item #2006.58.4 & letter 58.5.

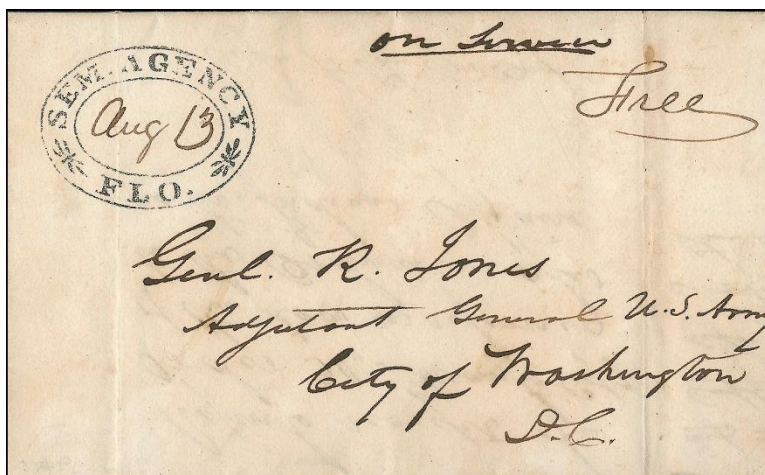


Type VII. 04.20.1835

Courtesy of Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc. Sale 95, Lot 1199



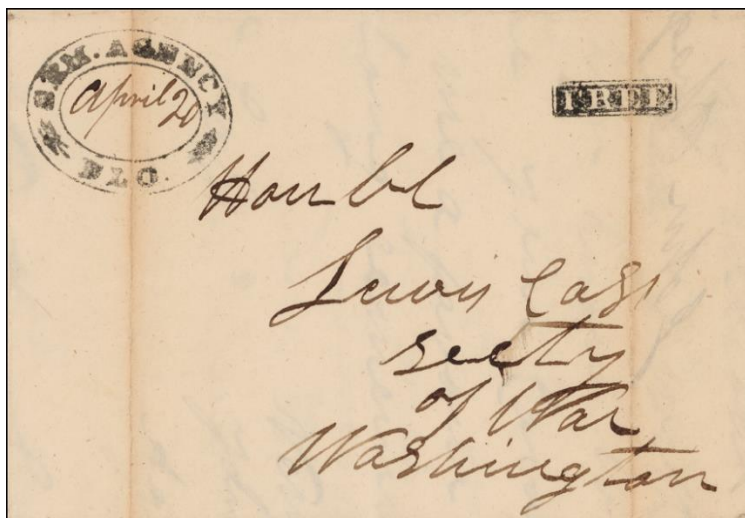
Type VII. 08.03.1835*
 Courtesy of the National Archives File: RG94 800-M567-F101



Type VII. 08.13.1835 LKU
 American Stampless Cover Catalog Vol. 1, pg. 53, Siegel Auctions Sale 1088, Lot 100



Type VIIa. 07.04.1831 EKU*
 Courtesy of AH-THA-THI-KI Museum, Big Cypress, Florida Item # 1994.4.1.



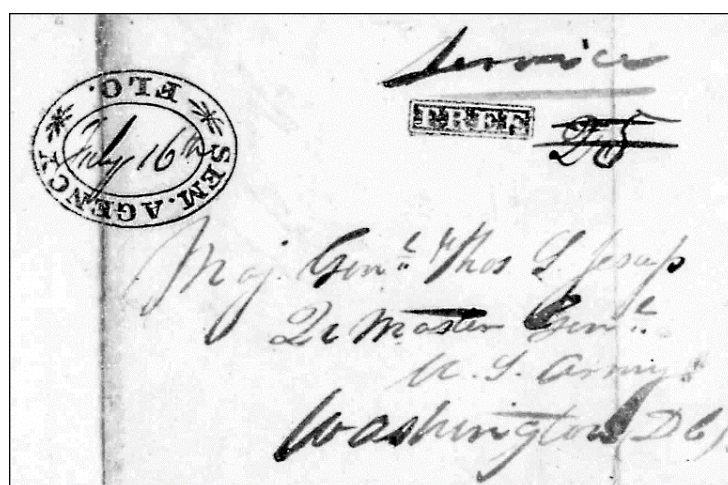
Type VIIa. 04.20.1832*

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0286



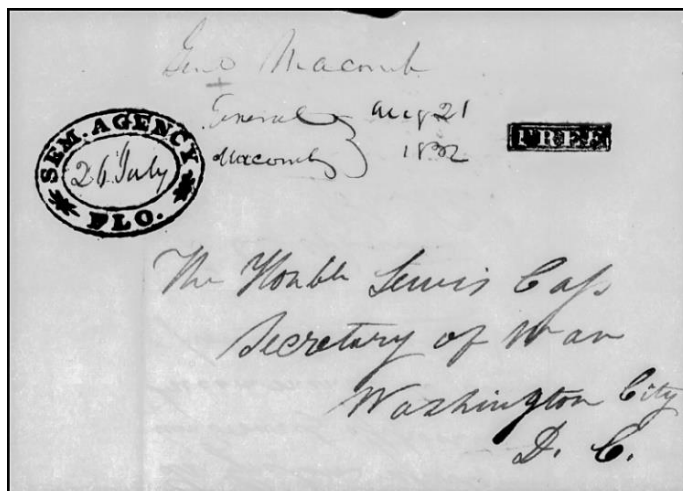
Type VIIa. 07.13.1832*

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0292



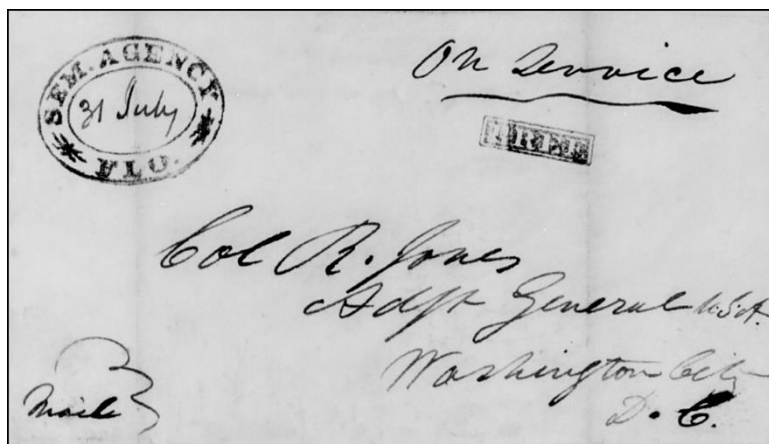
Type VIIa. 07.16.1832

Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives
Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida



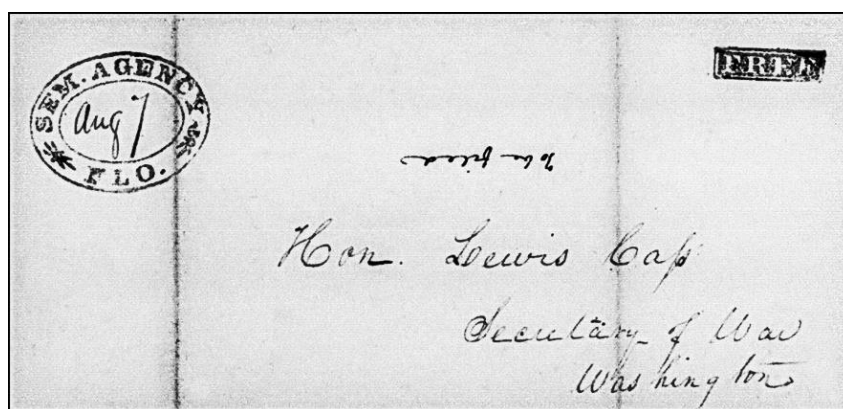
Type VIIa. 07.24.1832*

Courtesy of Fold3 File #291248516 (R42), National Archives File: RG 94 M567



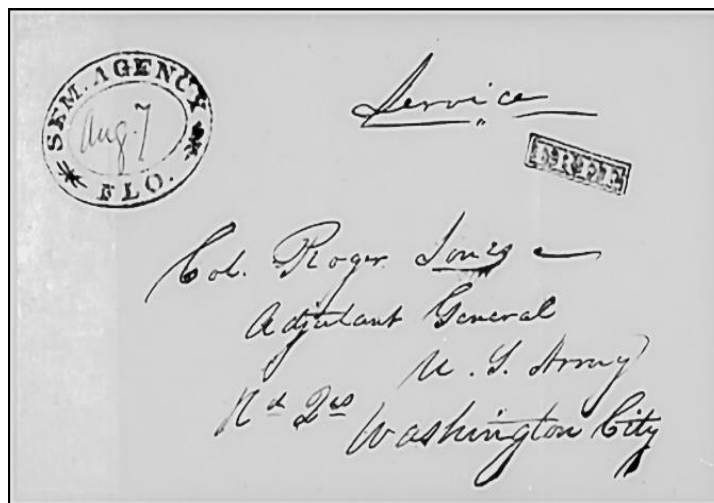
Type VIIa. 07.31.1832*

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567



Type VIIa. 08.07.1832* LKU

Courtesy of National Archives File: RG75 M234-288-0062



Type VIIa. 08.07.1832* LKU
 Courtesy of National Archives File: M567 (H151)

- Type I 06.28.1828* ECU.** To Adjutant General Office, City of Washington DC., Manuscript “Free” from J.M. Glapell, Captain 4th Infantry. Courtesy of National Archives File RG 94 M567, Glapell, J.M. (G96). (NARA also spelled as Glapele, I.M.)
- Type I 07.25.1828.** To Brigadier General George Gibson, Commissary General of Subsistence, Washington D.C. Manuscript “Free” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Ex. Meroni & Johnson; Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions Sale 78 Lot 1135.
- Type I 07.25.1828*.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service.” From Lt. William M Graham, 4th Inf. Courtesy of Fold3 File #287358996 (G103).
- Type I 10.26.1828* LKU.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Courtesy of Fold3 File#287421103 (B245).
- Type II 04.28.1829* ECU.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service, Brevet Brigadier Geo. M. Brooke, USA [Army].” Courtesy of National Archives RG94 M567 (B138)
- Type II 05.08.1829.** To Brevet Major General T. S. Jesup, Washington City D.C. Manuscript “On Service, George M. Brooke, Brevet Brigadier General USA [Army].” Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M.D
- Type II 05.08.1829*.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], City of Washington, Manuscript “Free” from J.M. Glapell, Major 4th Infantry. Courtesy of National Archives File RG 94 M567 Glapell, J.M. (G65).

- Type II 05.12.1829*.** To Major General T.S. Jesup, Quarter Master General, U.S. Army, Washington DC. Manuscript “on public service, Free” From Lt. F. D. Newcomb, Act. A.QM. Ft. King. Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate, National Archives Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida.
- Type II 05.12.1829* LKU.** To His Excellency W. P. Duval, Governor of Florida Tallahassee. Alachua Tampa Bay Election Return. Courtesy of Florida State Archives.
- Type III 08.30.1828 EKU.** To Governor W. P. Duval, Florida Tallahassee. Manuscript “18¾ ” containing election return for District of Tampa Bay. Courtesy ex-Meroni, The Florida Collection of Charles F. Meroni, Lot 150, David G. Phillips Publishing Co. North Miami, FL, Jan 25-26, 1985.
- Type IV 09.23.1828* EKU.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567 (B210).
- Type IV 10.26.1828* LKU** To Major General Winfield Scott U.S.A. [Army], Commanding War Department, Cincinnati, Ohio. Manuscript “25” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Courtesy of Fold3 file # 28742115, National Archives: Brooke, Geo. M. (B245).
- Type V 01.16.1829* EKU.** To Brig. Gen. Thom. S. Jesup, Quartermaster General Washington DC. Manuscript “on service, FREE.” From Capt. J. M. Glassell, Fort King. Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate, National Archives Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, FL.
- Type V 08.18.1829*.** To His Excel. Governor W. P. Duval, Tallahassee. Manuscript “37½” and “enclosing Bond On Public Service.” Courtesy of Florida State Archives.
- Type V 08.28.1829*.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service., Brevet Brigadier Geo. M. Brooke, USA [Army].” Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567 (B239).
- Type V 09.25.1829*.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General, Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free.” Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 Bache, R. (B257)
- Type V 05.12.1830 LKU.** To His Excel. W. P. Duval, Governor of Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript “37½” and “Election return from Tampa Bay, for representation in the legislative council.” Ex. Briggs & Johnson; Courtesy of William Youngerman, Hometowncurrency.org.
- Type VI 06.06.1828* EKU.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], Washington D.C., Manuscript “Free” and “On Service, Geo. M. Brooke, Col. USA [Army].” Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 (B117)
- Type VI 09.08.1829*.** To Col. Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], City of Washington, Manuscript “Free” from J.M. Glapell, Captain 4th Infantry. Courtesy of National Archives File RG 94 M567 Glapell, J.M. (G116).

- Type VI 09.11.1830*.** Mr. John Stevenson 659 Washington Street, New York.
Courtesy of Fold3 file #287369194 (S118)
- Type VI 11.14.1833*.** To His Excellency Governor of Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript “18¾.”
Courtesy of Florida State Archives.
- Type VI 01.05.1835* LKU.** To Major James N. Hook, United States Army, Washington D.C. From
Capt. William M. Graham, Manuscript “ On Service and 25” with
manuscript “Paid.”
Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0491.
- Type VI 01.05.1835*LKU.** To Brevet Brigadier General Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army],
Washington, Manuscript “On Public Service” with “25” crossed out.
Courtesy of Fold3 file # 292113000 Clinch D. (C15), National Archives
RG74 M567.
- Type VII 02.02.1831 EKV.** Faint CDS (circle date stamp) Dec 21 Philadelphia. Pa., to Lieut. J. B.
Shaw, Cantonment Brooke, Tampa Bay, East Florida, SEMINOLE
AGENCY FLO. handstamp used as forwarding postmark dated Feb 2,
[1831], Manuscript “25” rate, forwarded to St. Augustine with “12½” rate
totaling “37½.” Courtesy of J. W. Milgram M.D.
- Type VII 11.23.1831.** To His Excellency Wm. P. Duval Tallahassee, Manuscript “18¾.”
Courtesy of Deane R. Briggs, M.D.
- Type VII 03.14.1832.** To John M. Hood Esquire, Merchant, City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Datelined Canto Brooke, Fla / Tampa Bay / Mar 8, 1832, Manuscript “25.”
Courtesy of J. W. Milgram M.D.
- Type VII 08.22.1832*** To Colonel R. Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], Washington D.C.,
from Lt. William M. Graham, Manuscript “On Service, Free.”
Courtesy of National Archives File: RG94 M567 (G179).
- Type VII 09.11.1832.** To Mr. B. L. Wallace, Princeton, N.J., Manuscript “25” letter datelined
“Fort King”; forwarded to Harrisburg, Pa., with Manuscript “Fowd
[Forwarded], 12½” totaled with the previous “25” to “37½,” postmarked
with an Oct 4 Princeton CDS (circle date stamp).
Courtesy of William Johnson, DDS; Kelleher Auctions Sale 737 Lot 538.
- Type VII 10.07.1834*.** To Elbert Herring Esquire, Commission of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C.
Manuscript “Public Service / Free.” First Commissioner of Indian Affairs
congressional action in 1832 to legislatively establish the BIA and the
commissionership (4 Stat. 564, chap. 174). From T.B.F. Russell, Capt. U.S.
Army. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG75 M234-800-0280.
- Type VII 12.02.1834.** To Robert Butler Esq. Surveyor General Florida, Tallahassee. Manuscript
“18¾.” Courtesy of Thomas Lera; Florida Postal History Journal Vol. 4 (1)
1997, pg. 25.

- Type VII 03.24.1835*.** To Major General T. S. Jesup, Quartermaster U.S. Army. Washington. Manuscript "On Service, FREE" from General D.L. Clinch, Fort King, Florida. Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate, National Archives Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida.
- Type VII 04.02.1835*.** To Major General Thomas S. Jesup, Quartermaster General, Washington DC City. Manuscript "FREE." From Lieut. F.L. Dancy, Fort King Flo. Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida.
- Type VII 04.20.1835.** To Brevet Brigadier General Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], Washington D.C., from Capt. C.W. Thurston Manuscript "On Public Service" and "Free." Courtesy of Shreves Philatelic Galleries, Inc. Sale 95, Lot 1199.
- Type VII 04.16.1835*.** To Mrs. Mary Ann L. Dana, Care for Mrs. Sarah L Harris, Portsmouth, N.H. from Joseph Whipple Harris, Fort King East Florida. "1¾ ounce letter at rate 1.75, unpaid .75 red, paid black 1.00". Courtesy of AH-THA-THI-KI Museum, Big Cypress, Florida Item # 2006.58.4.
- Type VII 08.03.1835*.** To Major General Alexander Macomb, Commanding the Army, Washington D.C., Manuscript "O.P.S. (On Public Service) and 25." From John Farley Lieut. 1st Regiment Army. Courtesy of the National Archives File: RG94 800-M567-F101.
- Type VII 08.13.1836 LKU.** To General Roger Jones Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], City of Washington D.C., Manuscript "On Service" and "Free." American Stampless Catalog. Vol 1, David G. Phillips Publishing Co. North Miami, FL, pg. 53; Siegel Auctions Sale 1088, Lot 100.
- Type VIIa 07.04.1831* EKU.** To Colonel Roger Jones, Adjutant General, U.S.A. [Army], City of Washington. Manuscript "On Public Service," The small "a" listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of AH-THA-THI-KI Museum, Big Cypress, Florida Item # 1994.4.1
- Type VIIa 04.20.1832*.** To Honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Washington, from John Phagan, Agent Seminole Indians. The small "a" listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0286.
- Type VIIa 07.13.1832*.** To Honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Washington City D.C., from John Phagan, Agent Seminole Indians. The small "a" listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 75 M234-800-0292.

- Type VIIa 07.16.1832*.** To Major General Thomas Jesup, Quartermaster General US Army, Washington D.C. from Lt. I.J. Harris. Manuscript “Service and 25”. The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of Seminole War Foundation - Frank Laumer Estate from the National Archives Record Group 92, Consolidated Correspondence Fort King, Florida.
- Type VIIa 07.24.1832*.** To Honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Washington City, D.C, from Lt. William M Graham, 4th Infantry. The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of Fold3 File #291248516 (R42), National Archives File: RG 94 M567.
- Type VIIa 07.31.1832*.** To Colonel R. Jones, Adjutant General U.S.A. [Army], Washington D.C., from “ On Service,” The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG 94 M567 (G155).
- Type VIIa 08.07.1832* LKU.** To Honorable Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Washington, from Acting Surgeon John Hamilton. The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of National Archives File: RG75 M234-288-0062.
- Type VIIa 08.07.1832*LKU.** To Colonel Roger Jones, Adjutant General U.S. Army, Washington City, Manuscript “ Service,” from J. W. Harris. The small “a” listing refers to the Black Negative FREE handstamp. Courtesy of Fold3 File #291218847 (H151).

Appendix 1 – Military Express Riders

Besides having to contend with weather changes, Florida military express riders also had to be aware of Seminoles, especially after the outbreak of the Second Seminole War. In September 1835, news reached Jacksonville that Indians had killed an express rider on the road between Tampa Bay and Camp King.¹⁹

There were five military express riders who were recorded as having died delivering mail during the Second Seminole War.²⁰

- Kinsley H. Dalton, 3rd Regiment Artillery, Company H – Murdered by Indians when riding express between Tampa and Fort King, August 11, 1835.
- Theodore Deyer, 1st Regiment Infantry, Company H – Shot by Indians near Fort Macomb, October 9, 1840.
- Edward Hessen, 1st Regiment Infantry, Company B – Drowned on express from Fort Jackson to Fort Macomb, September 3, 1840.
- Samuel G. Knowlton, 3rd Regiment Infantry, Company A – Shot by Indians near Fort Hamilton, July 29, 1841.
- Lewis Brown, 7th Regiment Infantry, Company K – Killed by Indians near Fort No. 3 [Fort Jennings on the east bank of the Wacasassa River], May 20, 1839.

Appendix 3 - Postmaster Compensation

Table 2: Postmaster Compensation and Net Accrued Receipts

Postmaster	Postmaster Appointment	Reporting Data	Postmaster Compensation	Net Accrued Post Office Receipts Reporting Data	Net Accrued Post Office Receipts ²²	Net Accrued Post Office Receipts Rank
Gad Humphreys	05.03.1828	yr. end 08.30.1829	\$101.27	yr. end 03.31.1829	\$147.13	7th of 30
				yr. end 03.31.1830	\$109.41	9th of 31
Erastus Rogers	08.17.1830	yr. end 08.30.1831	\$82.88	yr. end 03.31.1831	\$223.71	11th of 33
				yr. end 03.31.1832	\$140.36	11th of 40
		yr. end 08.30.1833	\$60.95	yr. end 03.31.1833	\$119.29	15th of 44
				yr. end 03.31.1834	\$53.65	20th of 51
		yr. end 08.30.1835	\$63.57	yr. end 03.31.1835	\$124.68	11th of 51
		3 qtrs. end 08.30.1837	\$135.43			
Post Office Discontinued	02.25.1837					

Total Post Office Receipts are the sum of postmaster compensation and net accrued receipts. The 1829 total was \$101.27 + \$147.13 = \$248.40, 1831 was \$306.59, 1833 was \$180.24, and 1835 was \$188.25.

The decline in Seminole Agency Total Post Office receipts was due increasing number of post offices and post roads established. In 1829 there were 30 post offices, and the number had increased to 51 by 1835.

Instructions to the Postmasters in the United States, Relative to Their Duty ²³

John McLean, Postmaster General., Post Office Department, Washington, March 11, 1828 detailed the following instructions.

Instruction XVI. Compensation of Postmasters. — Section 14.

It will be convenient to collect in one view the allowance made by law to postmasters: these have already been noticed in part, in Instruction XII. Articles 14, 15, 16.

1. A commission of 30 per cent, on not exceeding one hundred dollars of letter postage collected in one quarter. See Act, Sect. 14. and 38.
2. A commission of 25 per cent, on letter postages over one hundred dollars, and on a sum not exceeding 300 dollars collected in one quarter.

3. If more postages on letters than 400 dollars are collected in one quarter, a commission of 20 per cent, on such surplus; the 20 per cent, is not however to be cast on a greater sum than \$1,000.

A commission of 8 per cent, on amount of postage collected on letters in one quarter exceeds \$2,400.

5. Two cents for every free letter (those addressed to yourself excepted) which you receive by post and deliver unless your commission otherwise amounts to 500 dollars the same quarter.

6. A commission of 50 per cent, on the postages collected in newspapers, magazines and pamphlets.

7. To the postmasters who regularly receive and dispatch foreign mails, such allowance as may be fixed by the Postmaster General.

8. The postmasters who regularly receive the mail between nine o'clock at night and five o'clock in the morning, are allowed to charge fifty per cent, on not exceeding one hundred dollars collected in one quarter, instead of thirty, as mentioned in the first article. The average time of arrival must be specially noted by the postmaster on every account current, otherwise it will not be allowed.

9. Contingent Expenses. The articles of contingent expenses which you are allowed to charge, are wrapping paper, twine, wax, plain pine boxes for the safe keeping of letters and papers; advertising letters on hand, and advertisements relative to closing the mails, repairs of portmanteaus, and for new ones. Rent, fuel, and other office supplies are not to be charged as contingent expenses.

After this exercise on calculating compensation, Instructions XI and XII provided the next steps on submitting the accounting forms to the Postmaster General.

Instruction XI Accounts. Sect. 32. At the end of every quarter, which is on the last day of March, June, September and December, you are to make up your accounts, and forward them to the General Post-Office. This is a duty which must be punctually performed, and the accounts should always be in such readiness so they can be forwarded by the first, or at all events, by the second post, after the quarter expires.

Instruction XII Account Current # 20 & 21. You are now to strike the balance of the account, which shows how much you are indebted for postages this quarter. As this account current is intended to show the net proceeds of the office for the quarter, no balance due on a former quarter, or for any payment to the Postmaster General, is to be inserted. You are to keep a distinct account, in which you charge the Postmaster General with all payments made to him, and credit him with the quarterly balances.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for allowing me to use their images: Deane R. Briggs, M.D., J. W. Milgram M.D., William Youngerman, Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Siegel Auction Galleries, Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions²⁴, The Seminole Wars Foundation, The Florida State Archives, National Archives (specifically Record Groups 75, 92 and 94), Seminole Tribe of Florida AH-THA-THI-KI Museum Archives, www.fold3.com, and the Florida Postal History Society.

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Endnotes

¹ Three references for this paper: Drake, Samuel G., *The Book Of The Indians: Biography And History Of The Indians Of North America, From Its First Discovery To The Year 1841*. (Boston, Benjamin B. Mussey, 1845), Chapters 7 -10.; McNeal, H. P., Seminole Agency, The History Behind the Postal History, *Florida Postal History Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 25-27.; Sprague, J. T., *The origin, progress, and conclusion of the Florida war*; (New York, D. Appleton & Company, 1848).

² Johnson, J. E. *Copy of a Map of the Seat of War in Florida* March 20, 1836; [Washington D. C.]. (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc799628/m1/1/> accessed February 17, 2023), University of North Texas Libraries, UNT Digital Library, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/>; crediting UNT Libraries Government Documents Department.

³ Heitman, Francis B., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903 Volume I*, (Washington G.P.O., 1903), pg. 555.

⁴ Carter, Clarence Edwin, comp. and ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. 22 Florida Territory 1821-1824* (Washington G.P.O., 1934-1975), pp. 429-430.

⁵ In 1832, The adjutant General issued General Order 11 which said all military posts designated Cantonments (Camps), were to be hereafter called Forts. Allen, Jeremiah C., *General Orders of the War Department from January 1, 1809 to December 31, 1860*. (Washington G.P.O., 1886), pg. 30.; James Marshall, e-mail message to author, February 23, 2023.

⁶ Carter, Clarence Edwin, comp. and ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. 24 Florida Territory 1828-1834* (Washington G.P.O., 1934-1975), pg. 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 23.

⁸ National Archives, RG 94 Rogers, Erastus 1833 File R42.

⁹ Carter, Clarence Edwin, comp. and ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. 24 Florida Territory 1828-1834* (Washington G.P.O., 1934-1975), pg. 628.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 628.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 663.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 673-74.

¹³ Carter, Clarence Edwin, comp. and ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. 25 Florida Territory 1834 – 1839* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934-1975). pp. 35-36.

¹⁴ Listed in *Return of Killed and Wounded in Battles, 1790-1844, 3rd Regiment of Artillery*. p. 74 www.ancestry.com (accessed February 22, 2023); Brown, George M., *Ponce de Leon Land and War Record*. (St. Augustine, Fla. 1909), pg. 139 item 32; Patrick Swan, e-mail message to author, February 22, 2023.

¹⁵ Carter, Clarence Edwin, *The Territorial Papers of the United States. Vol. 25 Florida Territory 1834 – 1839*: pp. 182-184, pg. 205.

¹⁶ United States. Congress. (1817). *United States Congressional Serial*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O. Congressional Set #292: pp. 246-47.

¹⁷ National Archives, RG 94, Rogers, Erastus 1833 File R2. Letter to Lewis Cass, Secretary of War from William C. Smith, legal representative for the widow.

¹⁸ Briggs, Deane R., Francis Ferguson, and Thomas M. Lera, *Florida Postal History 1763-1861, Second Edition*, Florida Postal History Society, Winter Haven, Florida, p. 381. The Cover Census can be found on the Florida Postal History Website under the Research Tab (www.fphsonline.com).

¹⁹ *Jacksonville Courier*, September 2, 1835

²⁰ *Record of Officers and Soldiers Killed in Battle and Died in Service during the Florida War*, Washington, GPO, 1882, pgs. 27, 33, 40, 49.

²¹ Ancestry.com. *U.S., Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, 1821-1916* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011. Roll 41 - Fourth Infantry, June 1821-December 1831, Roll 42 - Fourth Infantry, January 1832 – December 1842.

²² United States. Congress. (1817). *United States Congressional Serial*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O. Congressional Set 197: Doc. 61 #262 p.83; Set 209.1: Doc. 119 #235 p.88; Set 221: Doc. 262 #435 p.92; Set 233: Doc. 18 #707 p.95; Set 255: Doc. 63 #389 p.75; Set 274: Doc. 176 #1052 p.78; and Set 291: Doc. 262 #1114 p.80.

²³ Internet Archive, *United States Postmaster General, List of post-offices in the United States: with the names of the post-masters of the counties and states to which they belong, the distances from the city of Washington, and the seats of state governments, respectively; exhibiting the state of post-offices, on the 1st of June, 1828*, 384, 388, 394-395, <https://archive.org/details/listofpostoffice00unit> (accessed February 23, 2023).

²⁴ A version of this Seminole Agency Post Office article was published in the *Kelleher Stamp Collector's Quarterly*, Vol. 9(2):18-28.