FLORIDA POSTAL HISTORY JOURNAL

Promoting Philately in the Sunshine State

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Bailey's Mills and Blount's Ferry Postal History

Florida Registered Mail

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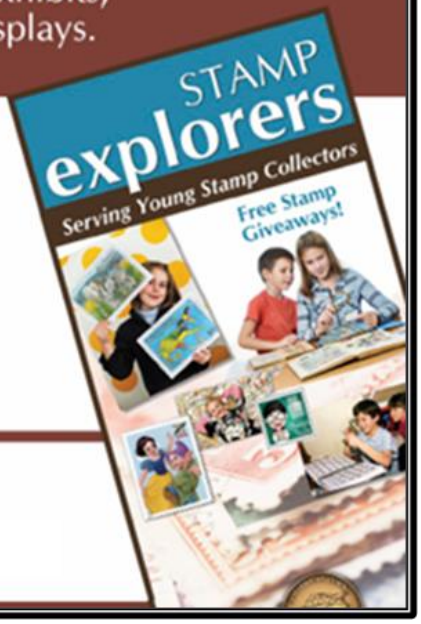

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Bailey's Mills
By Phil Eschbach

Bailey's Mills was founded as both grist and saw mills in the 1820s by my ancestor William Bailey (April 4, 1790 – December 27, 1867) (Figure 1). He was born in 1790 in St. Marys, Georgia and married John Bellamy's daughter, Elizabeth, in 1823. They settled on their plantation called the Cedars in Jefferson County. The Cedars burned after the Civil War and a new plantation was built there called the Dixie-Livingston Plantation (Figure 2).

Figure 1. William Bailey.

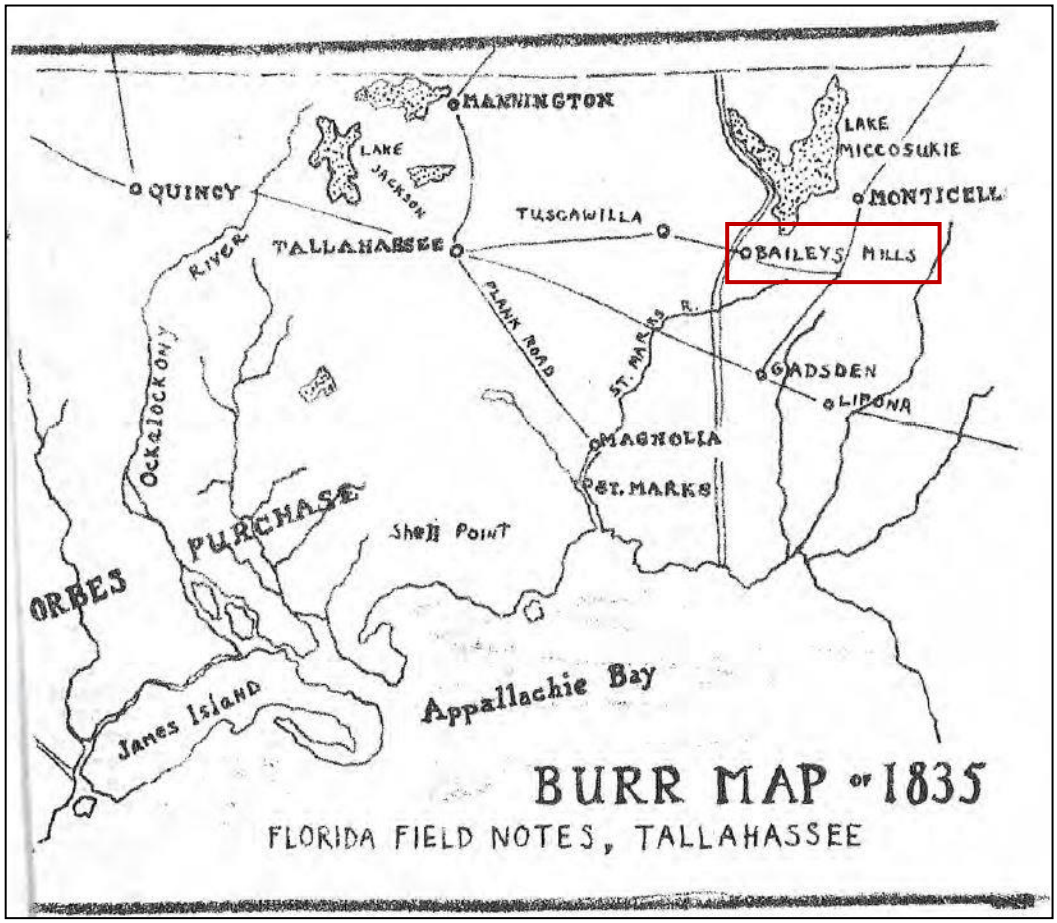
Figure 2. Dixie-Livingston Plantation.

Bailey fought in the War of 1812 and was Jefferson County's first judge. Later he fought in the Second Seminole War of 1835-42 as a General. He was defeated for governor in 1848.

Determined to fight in the Civil War as a 74-year-old, he headed for the Battle of Olustee in 1864 but got there too late. However, he did head up a platoon of cadets for the defense of Tallahassee in Florida's last skirmish at the Battle of Natural Bridge in 1865. Amazingly, this soldier and founder of Bailey's Mills managed to fight in all America's wars in the nineteenth century until his death in 1867.

The first post office, in what was to become Jefferson County, known as Robison's Post Office, was established May 10, 1826, and operated out of the house of postmaster John G. Robison. He was an early settler who had bought land there when it was still part of Leon County. Jefferson County was formed later in January of 1827, becoming the thirteenth county. The first county court session was held in Robison's home with Judge William Bailey presiding. After Jefferson County was established, Robison remained its postmaster until 1829. No covers are known from his tenure as postmaster.

Early in 1827, at the site of an old Indian town (Section 30, Township 2 North, 5 East), a new town was formed at the behest of William Bailey who supplied the land and named it Monticello in 1828 after Thomas Jefferson's mansion. He and the Bellamys, John and son Abram Bellamy (see previous *Central Florida Stamp Club Newsletter,* October 2020 article), had previously purchased a great deal of property from other early settlers and from the government for as little as $3 an acre. This was considered prime farmland for growing cotton. Other prominent early families in the area were James Gadsden (see *Florida Postal History Journal*, September 2023), Achille Murat (see Florida Postal History Journal, September 2018, January 2021), John Lee Williams, William Wirt and Thomas Randolph.



Bailey's Mills was conveniently located at the crossroads of a north-south trail and an east-west trail (Figure 3 map). The north-south trail went from Georgia to the gulf coast at St. Marks. This north-south trail was used by Andrew Jackson during the First Seminole War when Florida was still Spanish territory. The east-west trail went from Monticello, around Lake Miccosukee, through Bailey's Mills to Tuscawilla and on to Tallahassee.

This was the post road established in 1828. The route ran from Tallahassee to Monticello once a week, with a stop in Bailey's Mills, paying $242.50 a quarter.

Figure 3. 1835 Burr Map. Bailey's Mills outined in red.

The Bailey's Mills Post Office lasted until 1842 when it was discontinued but re-established in 1858 with Walter Lloyd as postmaster.

In 1853, a railroad was chartered called the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad which eventually went through Bailey's Mills in 1858. (Figure 4 map, next page). It never ran to or from Pensacola or Georgia!

At that point the town was briefly known as Station Number Two, being the second stop east of Tallahassee and then changing its name to Lloyd, after the prominent local Lloyd family. However, mail continued to arrive addressed to Bailey's Mills. In 1882, the town's post office officially became known as Lloyd. At this time the train made a stop in Lloyd for its passengers to eat lunch at a local house next to the tracks belonging to the Whitfields. Mrs. George Whitfield had twenty minutes to serve as many as 100 passengers before the train left for Tallahassee.

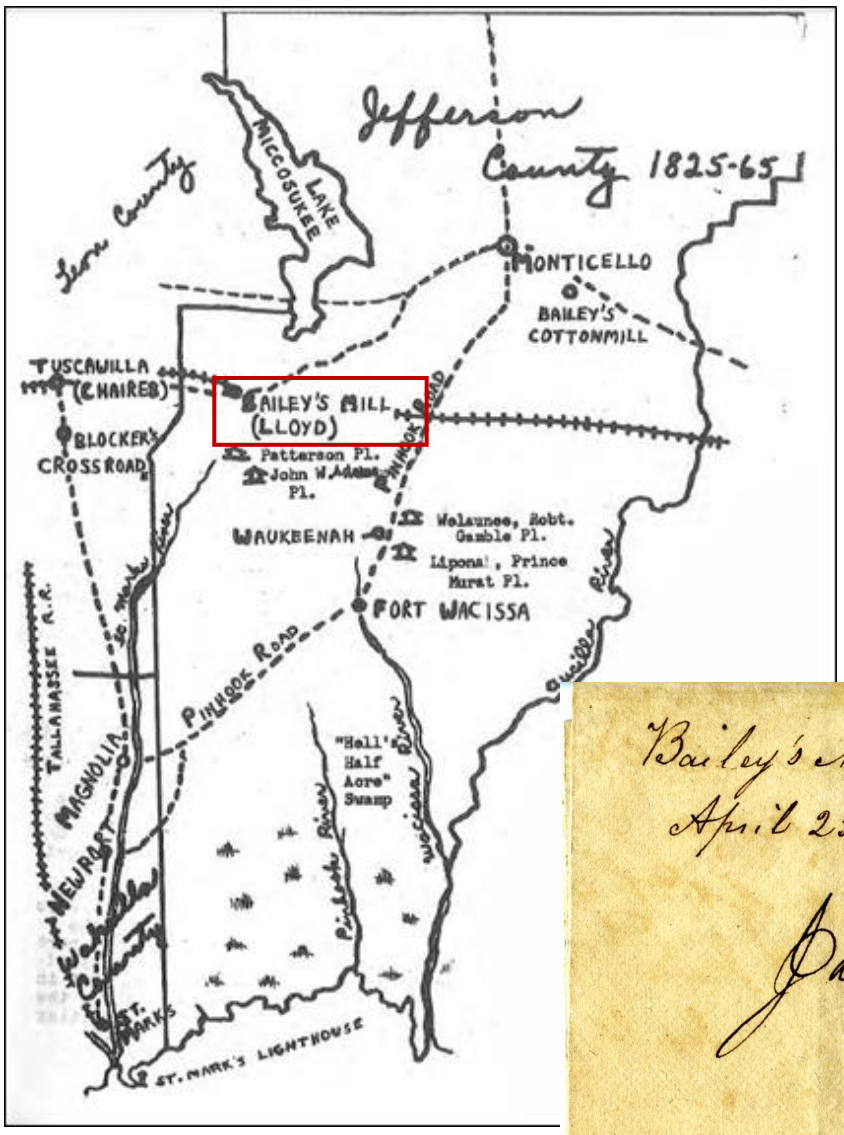


Figure 4. Jefferson County 1825 - 1865. Bailey's Mills (Lloyd) outined in red.

William Hollingsworth was the first postmaster at Bailey's Mills in 1831. Figure 5 shows one of three known Type I manuscript covers to James Westcott in Tallahassee.

In the letter (Figure 6, next page) sent on April 27, 1832, William Connell is asking Westcot for information about his commission as county surveyor.

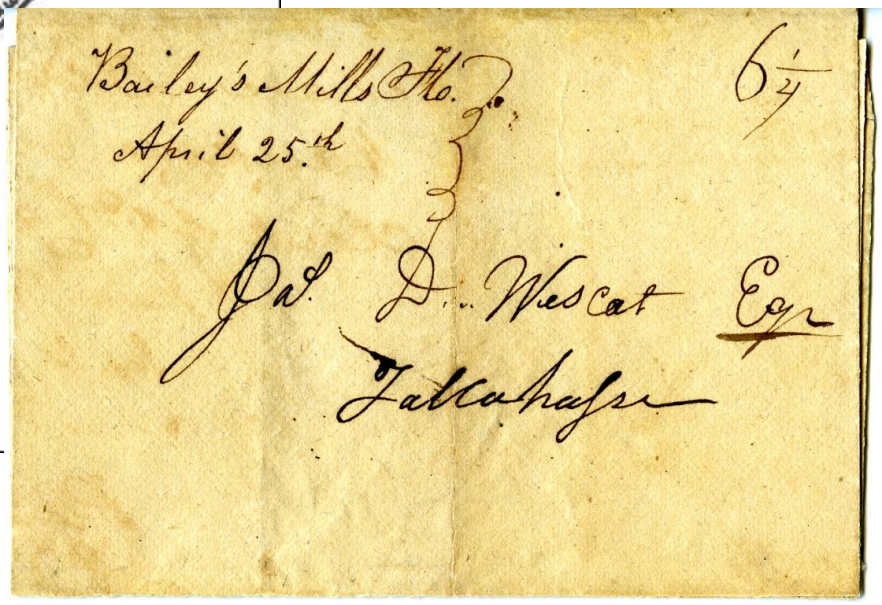


Figure 5. One of three known Type 1 manuscript covers.

A second Type I cover (Figure 7, next page) was sent to Westcott in Tallahassee on March 28 at the 6¼ rate. In Figure 8 (two further pages), the third of the three known Type I shows yet another addressed again to Westcott in Tallahassee and noted from John Couthbert (mis-spelled but officially spelled Cuthbert). It is dated February 15, 1832, sent at a 12½ cent rate and says that it concerns election returns for Jefferson County.

John Cuthbert was a Jefferson County judge and an early settler of the county and fought in the militia in the Second Seminole War as a major. Attorney James Westcott was the Territorial Secretary in the 1830s and therefore received most of the correspondence to the government in Tallahassee. He was briefly dis-barred for misconduct but re-instated, later becoming a senator from Florida, then Lieutenant Governor and a justice on Florida's Supreme Court.

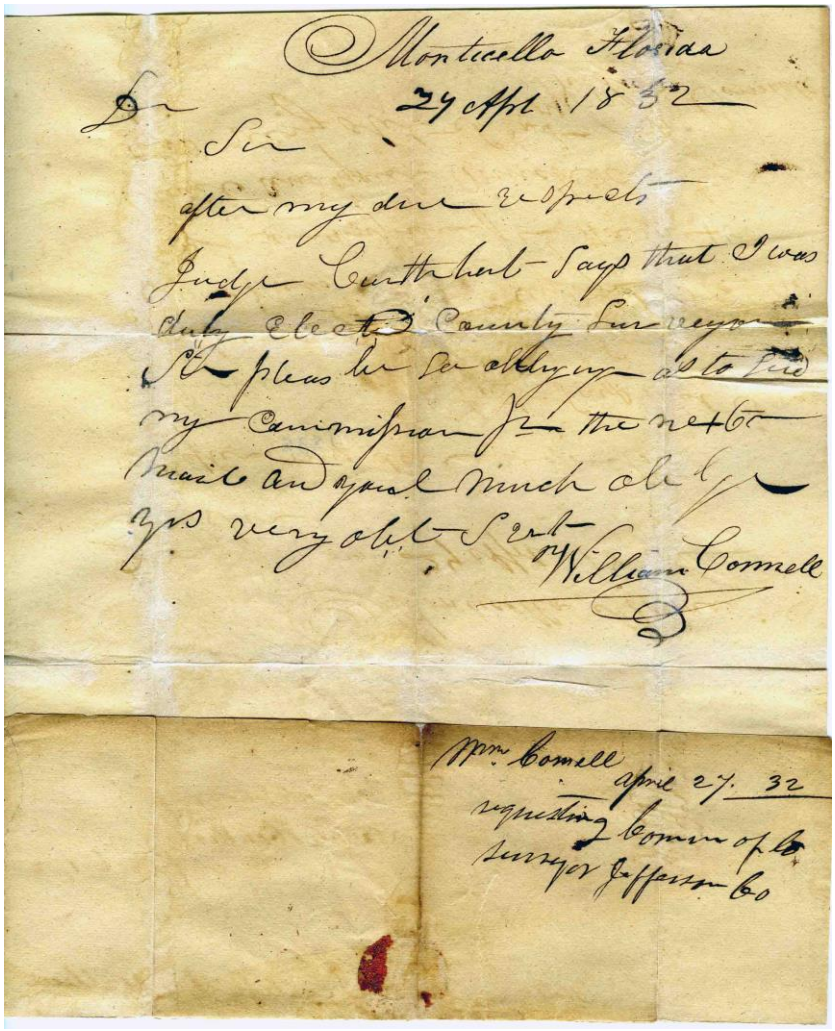

Monticello Florida
24 Apl 1832
Dr Sir
after my due respects
Judge Cuthbert says that I was
duly Elected County Surveyor
& pleas he to allow me to be
my Commission for the next 6
mail and your much obl'd
Yrs very obt Servt
Wm Connell
Wm. Connell April 27. 32
requesting Comm. of Co.
Surveyor Jefferson Co

Figure 6. April 27, 1832. William Connell is asking Westcott for information about his commission as county surveyor. (Courtesy Florida State Archives.)

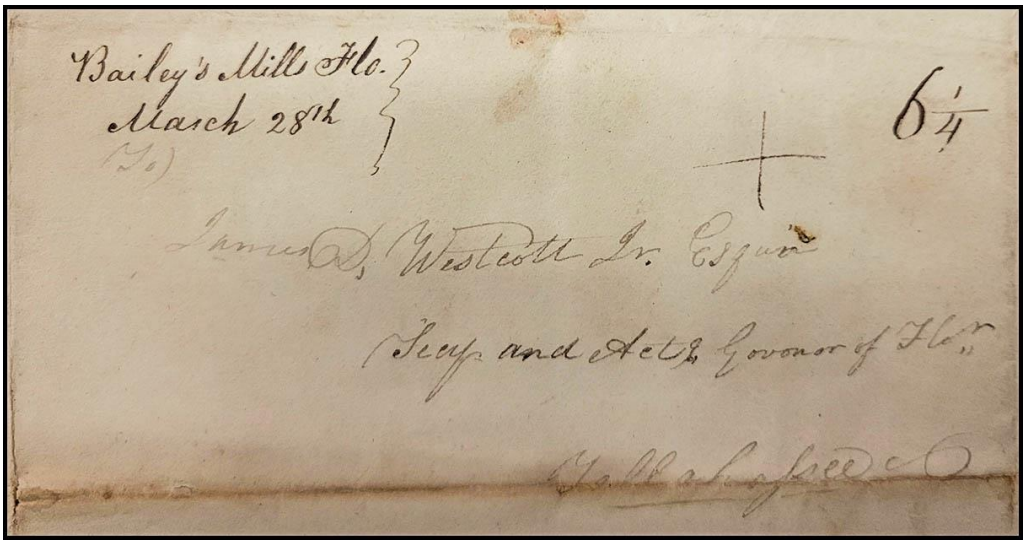

Bailey's Mills Flo.
March 28th
(To)
6¼
James D. Westcott Jr. Esqr
Secy and Act'g Govnor of Flor
Tallahassee

Figure 7. A second Type I cover was sent to Westcott in Tallahassee on March 28 at the 6¼ rate. (Courtesy Florida State Archives.)

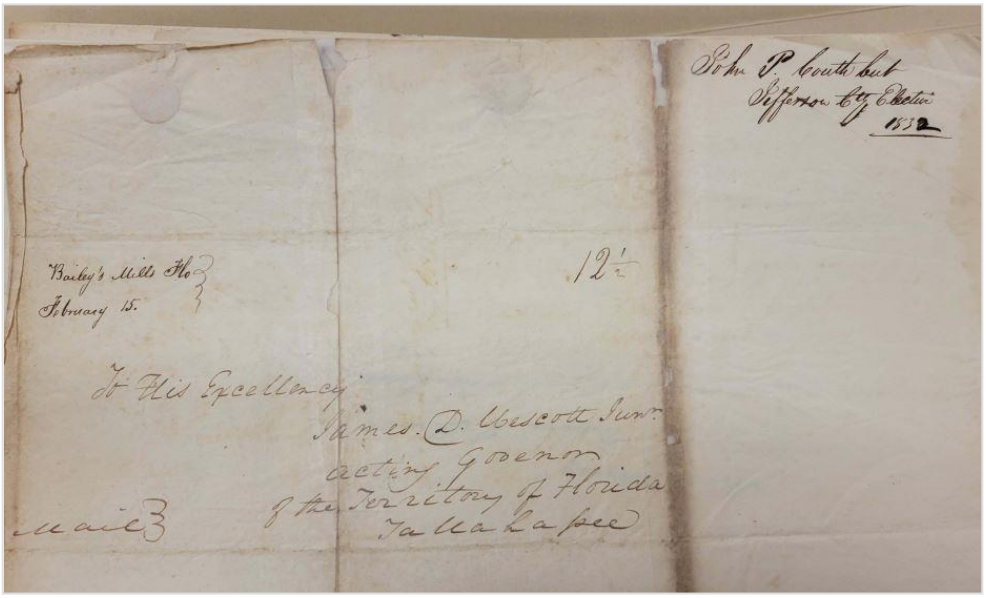
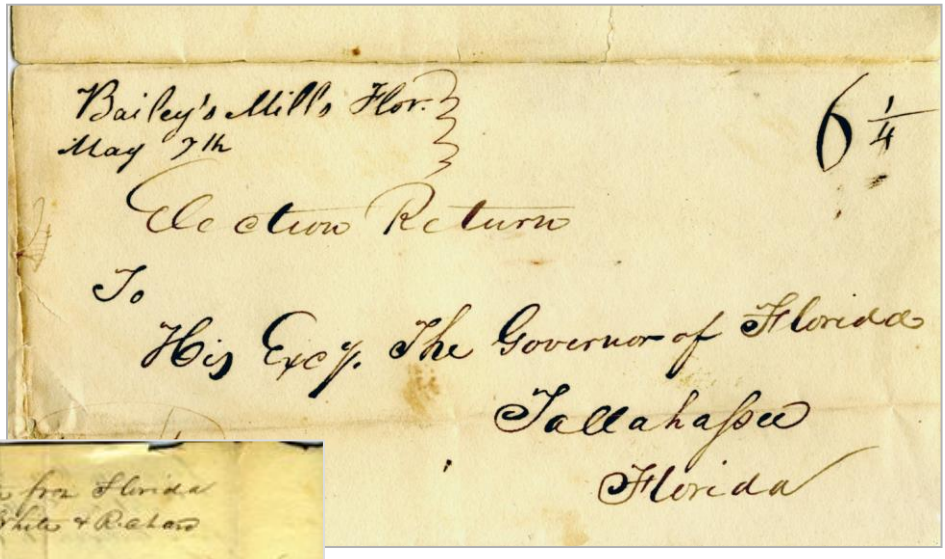


Figure 9 shows one of five known manuscript Type II covers. This one was sent from James Scott to the governor's office on May 7, 1833, showing the election return results from Bailey's Mills precinct for a delegate from Florida to Congress (Figure 10).

This election was between Richard Keith Call and Joseph White. Call won with twenty votes versus White's eight votes.

Figure 8. The third of the three known Type I addressed again to Westcott in Tallahassee.

Figure 9. One of five known manuscript Type II covers.



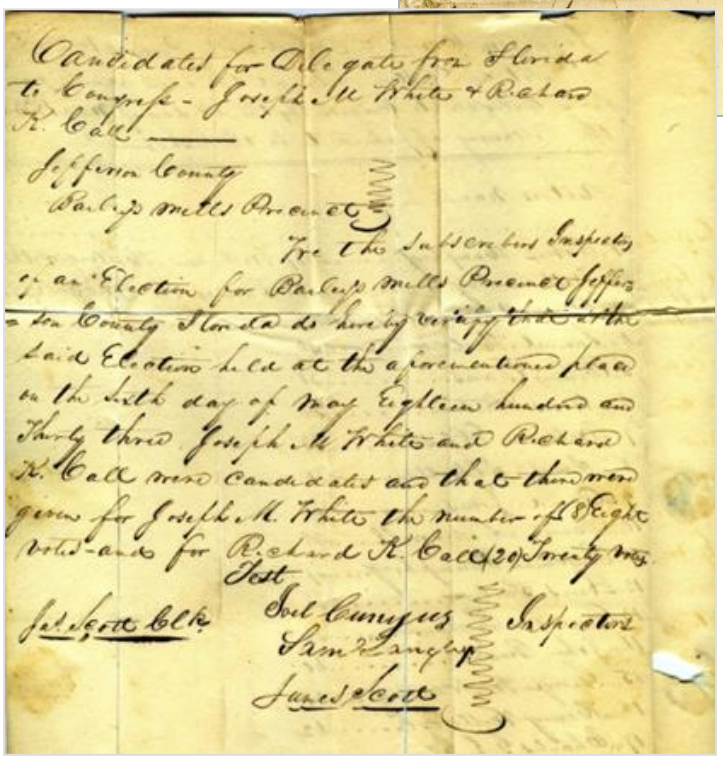
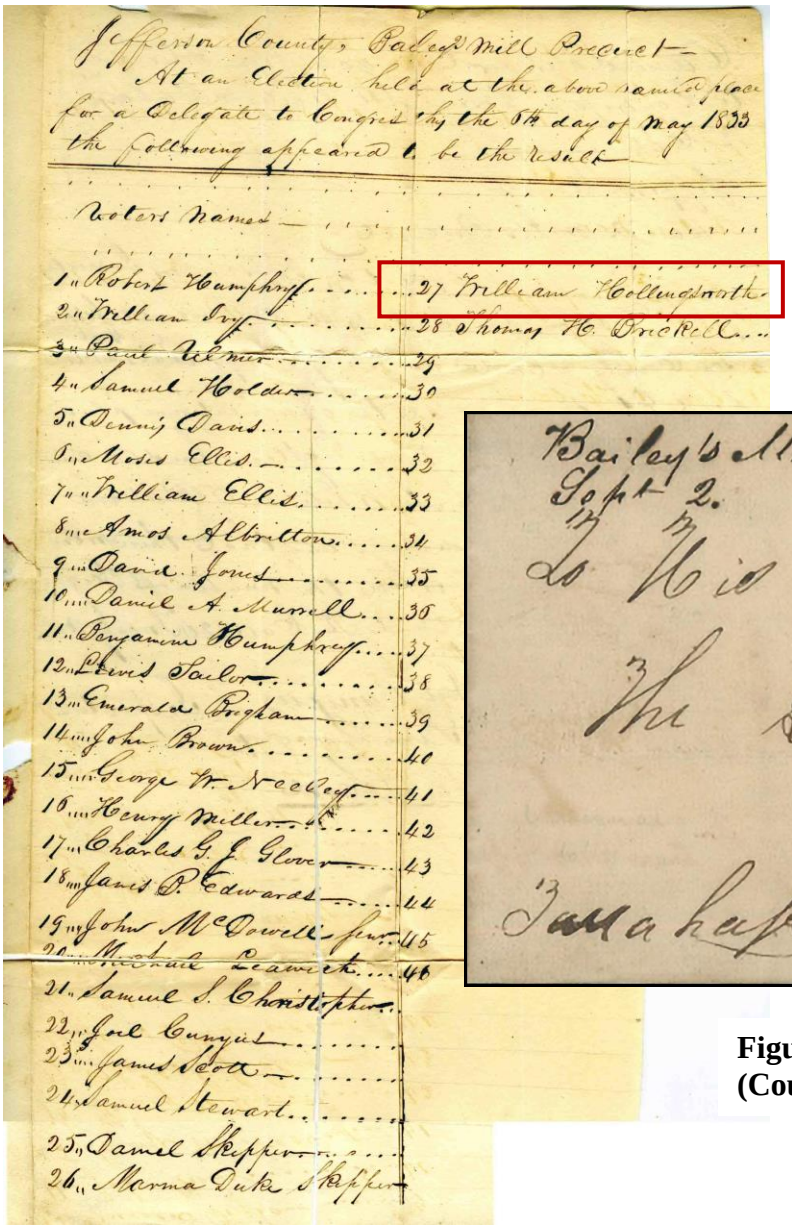


Figure 10. Election return results from Bailey's Mill precinct for a delegate from Florida to Congress.

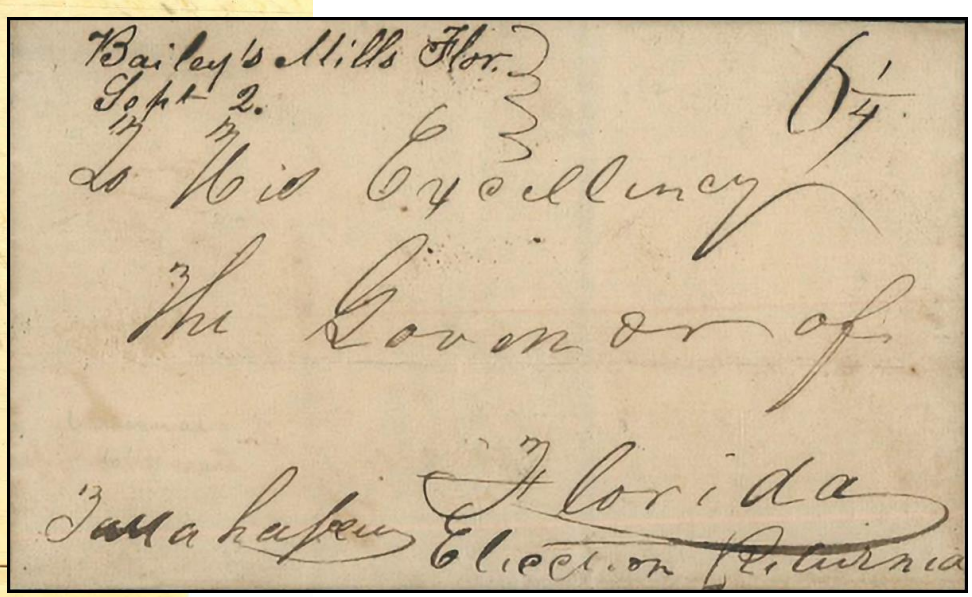


Jefferson County, Bailey's Mill Precinct—
At an Election held at the above named place
for a Delegate to Congress, by the 6th day of May 1838
the following appeared to be the result—

Voters Names—	
1 Robert Humphrys	27 William Hollingsworth
2 William Dry	28 Thomas H. Brickell
3 Paul Ulmer	29
4 Samuel Holder	30
5 Denny Davis	31
6 Moses Ellis	32
7 William Ellis	33
8 Amos Albritton	34
9 David Jones	35
10 Daniel A. Murrell	36
11 Benjamin Humphreys	37
12 Lewis Sailor	38
13 Emerald Brigham	39
14 John Brown	40
15 George W. Neel	41
16 Henry Miller	42
17 Charles G. E. Glover	43
18 James P. Edwards	44
19 John McDowell Jun.	45
20 Michael Seawell	46
21 Samuel S. Christopher	
22 Joel Conyers	
23 James Scott	
24 Samuel Stewart	
25 Daniel Skipper	
26 Merna Duke Skipper	

Figure 11 shows the election names. Postmaster Hollingsworth is listed, outlined in red.

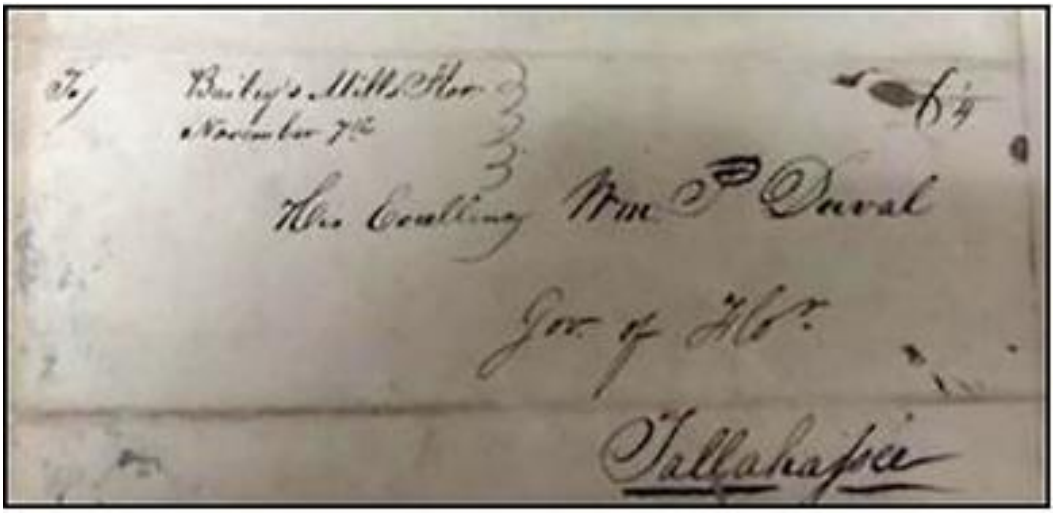
Figure 12 shows a second Type II cover, written to the governor on September 2 and noted as Election Returns in the lower right.



Baileys Mills Flor.
Sept 2.
6¼
To His Excellency
The Governor of
Florida
Tallahassee
Election Returns

Figure 12. A second Type II cover. (Courtesy William Youngerman.)

Figure 11. Delegate from Florida election names.



Baileys Mills Flor.
November 7th
6¼
Hon Gentlg Wm P Duval
Gov of Flo.
Tallahassee

Figure 13 shows a third of the known Type II covers, this one written on November 7 to the Governor Duval in Tallahassee.

Figure 13. A third Type II cover. (Courtesy Florida State Archives.)

The only known cover from the statehood period is a Type III manuscript dated October 20, 1858, on a U-10 three-cent cover (Figure 14).

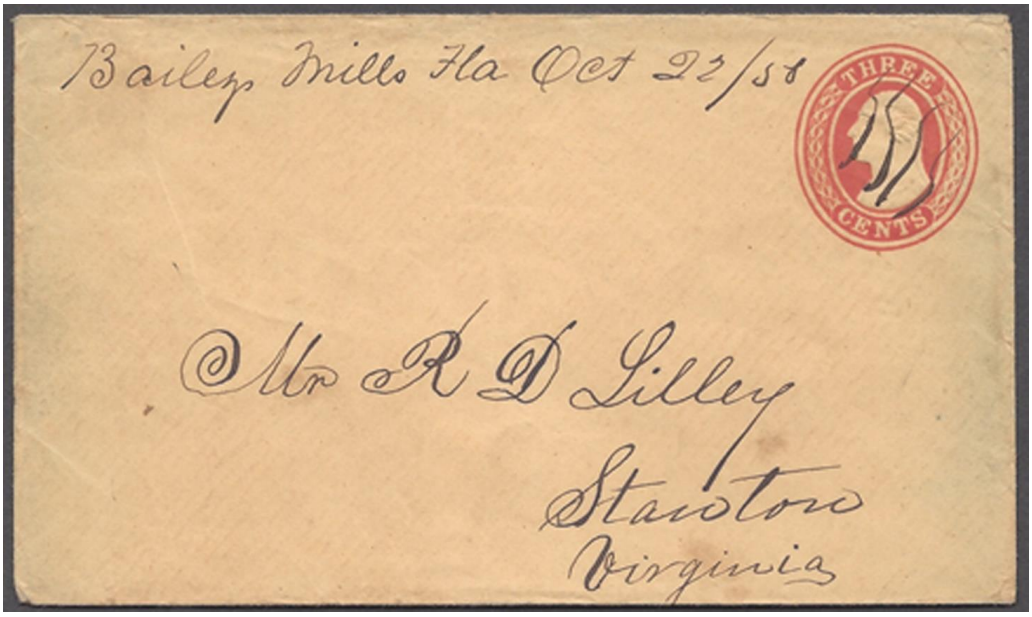


Figure 14. The only known statehood cover, a Type III manuscript. (Courtesy William Youngerman.)

Figure 15 shows a Confederate cover from Bailey's Mills tied with a pair of CSA #7s written to J.B. Collins at the probate office in Monticello on June 5 (year not clear). J.B. Collins was a local merchant in Monticello before the war but during the war he was appointed a probate judge and after the war, appointed clerk of the court.

Figure 15. Bailey's Mills Confederate cover tied with a pair of CSA #7s.

The post office was re-named Lloyd in 1882. Figure 16 (next page) shows a Lloyd cover dated October 28, 1889, from the Whitfield house where train customers were fed. It was written to one B.S. Fleming. Francis Fleming was the governor of Florida at the time, perhaps this was a relative.

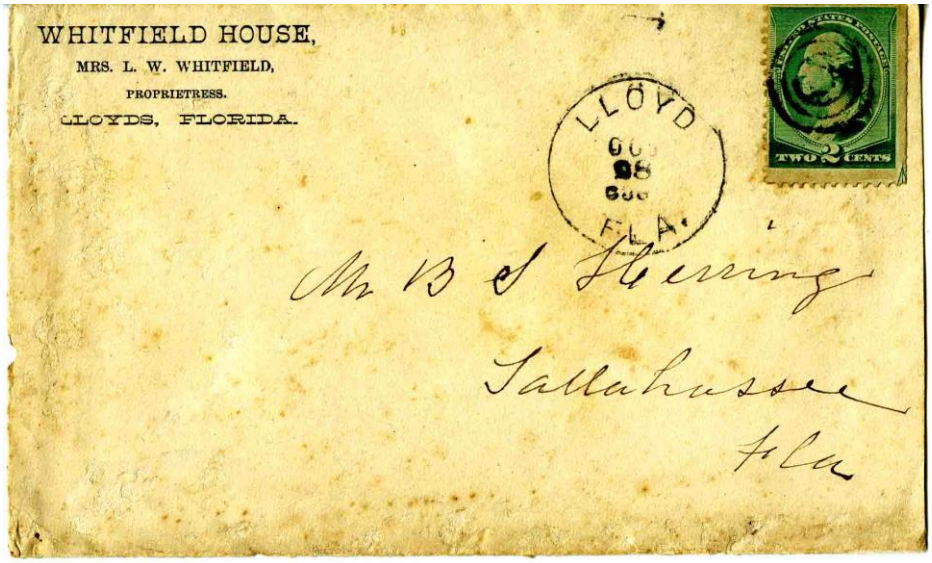


Figure 16. OCT 28 1889 LLOYD postmark. Note the misspelling of "LLOYD" on the cover's corner card.

Figure 17. Lloyd Post Office.

The post office at Lloyd is the oldest post office in Florida that remains in its original stone structure in the old railroad depot. (Figure 17).

The author extends many thanks to Tom Lera for locating and providing scans of the covers not in the author's collection.

Resources

Shofner, Jerrell, *Jefferson County, Florida*, Sentry Press 1976.
Briggs, Deane R., *Florida Stampless Postal History 1763-1861,* Florida Postal History Society, 2022.
Pasco, Samuel. "Jefferson County History*," Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No 2, Oct. 1928.
Smith, Elizabeth, *The Town of Bailey's Mills-Lloyd in Jefferson County,* The Magnolia Monthly Press, Crawfordville, Florida, October 1971.
State Library of Florida, WPA - Historical Records Survey, County Histories; "History of Jefferson County."
Carter, Clarence Edwin, ed., The Territory of Florida, 1834-1839: Territorial Papers of The United States Volume XXV, Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1959.

Florida Registered Mail
Part I - Early Statehood Covers 1845-1857
By Thomas M. Lera

Introduction

James W. Milgram M.D. wrote in his 1999 book, *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870, "*The 1845 Postal Laws and Regulations stated: "No reported loss will be investigated by an agent, unless satisfactory evidence is produced, either by the certificate of the postmaster, or some other individual that the money or other thing was deposited in the post office.

"The senders of valuable mail needed proof of the name of the post office where the letter was placed, the date, postage paid, route, name of the addressee mailed to, and a description of the contents. All of this was placed in a register at the mailing post office and a receipt was issued to the sender" (Figure 1).[1]

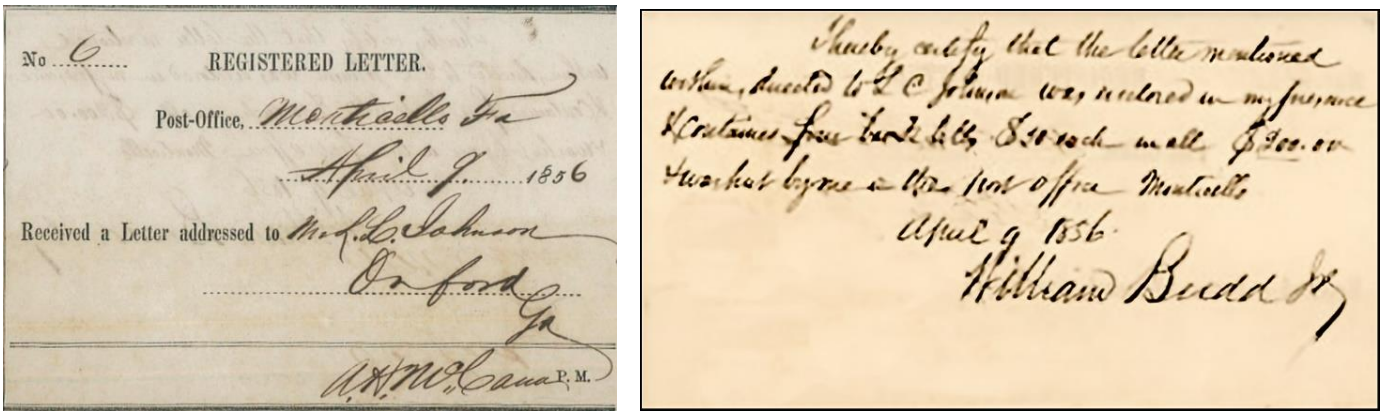


Figure 1. Monticello Postmaster receipt to William Budd Jr. recording his registered letter.

From November 1, 1845, until official registration began on July 1, 1855, an unofficial system of registration was seen in post offices, beginning in Philadelphia (Figure 2). There was no charge for this service nor were there often any markings.

Between 1845-1855, addressed to Philadelphia incoming mail containing money or other valuable items was handstamped on the front by the Philadelphia Post Office with the letter "R".

Figure 2. Earliest known dated postmark on a registered cover.
Black PENSACOLA Flor. OCT 29 (1845), Type VII, with large Philadelphia blue "R".

The Type VII, ALLIGATOR FLA CDS on a 3¢1853 entire (Figure 3) is an example of a "registered" manuscript.

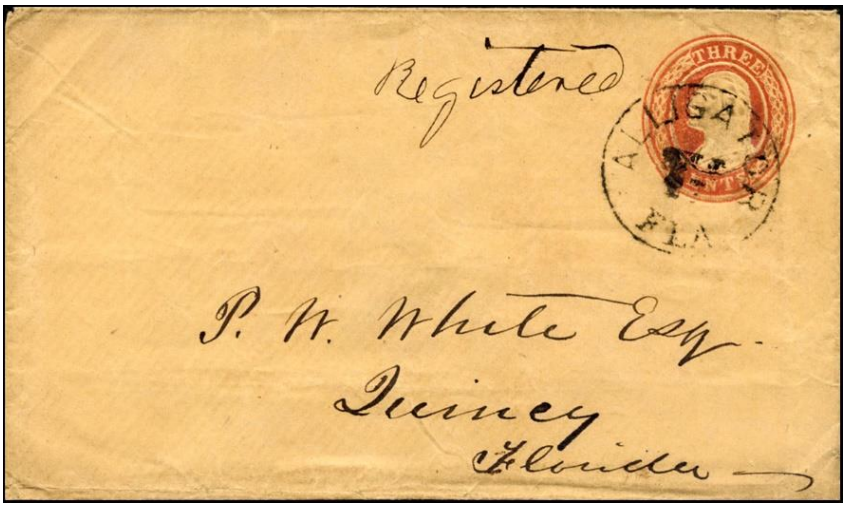


Figure 3. Registered ALLIGATOR FLA, Type VII, with inverted month FEB 27 on 3¢ 1853 entire.

On July 1, 1855, the Post Office Department was authorized to register letters, were required by law must be marked as such on the front of the cover or envelope (Figure 4), numbered at the mailing office, and listed in a special ledger.[2]

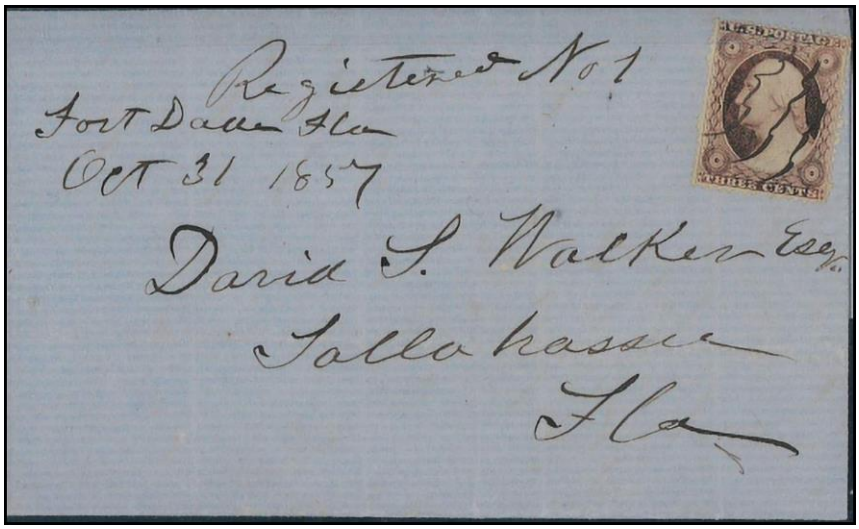


Figure 4. Fort Dade Fla Registered No. 1, Oct. 31, 1857, with 3¢ (Scott 26) stamp.

The Act of 1855, Session 2, Chapter 173, Section 3 stated: "That for the greater security of valuable letters posted for transmission in the mails of the United States, the Postmaster-General be, and hereby-is, authorized to establish a uniform plan for the registration of such letters on application of parties posting the same, and to require the prepayment of the postage, as well as a registration fee of five cents on every such letter or packet, to be accounted for by postmasters receiving the same in such manner as the Postmaster-General shall direct: *Provided, however*, That such registration shall not be compulsory; and it shall not render the Post-Office Department or its revenue liable for the loss of such letters or packets, or the contents thereof."[3]

In 1857, the first marking was authorized for registered mail matter. Section 386, Chap. 36, of the 1857 P. L. & R. stated, "Where a letter has been received, registered, and receipted for, as directed in Section 2, it is to be marked on its upper left-hand corner with the number corresponding to it on the receipt book." The first officially required use of the word "Registered" came in 1867.[4]

Conclusion

Collecting registered mail is an area deserving of more research. I have only touched the surface of what is available in Florida. This is a five-part census with 187 towns, several with different types, shown:

- Part I – Early Statehood Covers 1845-1857 (3 covers, 4 pages)
- Part II – Florida Towns with Registered Mail 1858–1911 (210 covers, 53 pages)
- Part III – Florida Registry Exchange Labels 1883–1911 (14 covers, 18 pages)
- Part IV – Florida Towns with New York and San Francisco Registry Exchange Labels (25 covers, 14 pages)
- Part V – Other Florida Registered Covers with Examiner Markings (32 covers, 19 pages)

The decades after 1857 saw more registered covers as more post offices were established. Russell and Evelyn Ryle's book *Registered U.S.A. – The Handling of Valuable First-Class Mail by the U.S.P.O. Rates, Markings, Delivery Restrictions, and Processing Procedures* would be a good starting point to review the types of handstamps that were available.

For questions about the markings on a registered cover, I recommend contacting the **Registered Mail Study Group** at https://www.usstamps.org/committees/registered-mail-study-group/.

If you have a Florida registered cover between 1845 to 1911 for the census found on our website **www.fphsonline.com**, please send me a scan (tlera4178@gmail.com). If you want to see a scan of the back of any cover in these documents, send me an email.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Matthew Bennett International Auctions, Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Cherrystone Auctions, Kewriga Auctions, Worthpoint, Florida Postal History Society, Deane Briggs, Phil Eschbach, Wayne Farley, Richard Frajola, James Milgram, James Moses, Nicholas Lombardi, and Mike Ludeman for the use of their images.

I appreciate the help I received from Baasil Wilder, National Postal Museum librarian, who provided me the articles written by Barbara Mueller. I also thank Mike Ludeman and Sandra Fitzgerald for their editorial comments and suggestions.

As a note, WorthPoint (www.worthpoint.com) partners with a diverse group of auction houses and online marketplaces. Kewriga auctions can be accessed at www.kewrigaauctions.com/auctions/sale/4.

Endnotes

[1] Milgram, James W., M.D. *United States Registered Mail 1845-1870*, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., North Miami, Florida, 1999.

[2] Milgram, James W., "Unofficial Registration of Mail in the U.S.:1845-1855," *Chronicle* 221 (2009), 9-24.

[3] Thirty-Third Congress. Sess. II. Ch. 173. Approved, March 3, 1855. Page 642. Accessed May 20, 2024, https://www.rfrajola.com/Resources/1855Act.pdf.

[4] Barbara R. Mueller, 1959, "Registry Markings of 1851-1860," *The Chronicle* Vol. 12 (1): 2 -6.

Editor's Note: All five parts of this article series are posted in the Society's website under the Research Tab (at the bottom of the tab) including individual spreadsheets for each part.

Congratulations are extended to members of the Florida Postal History Society for awards earned at the Literature Competition of the 2024 APS Great American Stamp Show.

Reserve Grand
***NJPH*, The Journal of the New Jersey Postal History Society**
Robert G. Rose

Large Vermeil
"Dominica #55 - What Is It?"
Daniel Maddalino

Large Silver
"Department of Florida National Woman's Relief Corps"
Dan Maddalino

"The Barefoot Mailman"
Juan L. Riera

Silver
"Indian Rocks Beach, Florida"
Juan L. Riera

Journal/Periodical – Gold
North Carolina Postal Historian
Editors: Tony Crumbley and Steve Swain

Georgia Post Roads
Editor: Steve Swain

Blount's Ferry
By Phil Eschbach

A ferry across the Suwanee River in Columbia County, Florida at the Georgia border was founded at least by 1834. I can find no references to a ferry before then. Nor can I find out who it was named for or who started it. There are no Blounts listed in the 1830 census, but there are references to folks named Blount in the area as early as 1835.

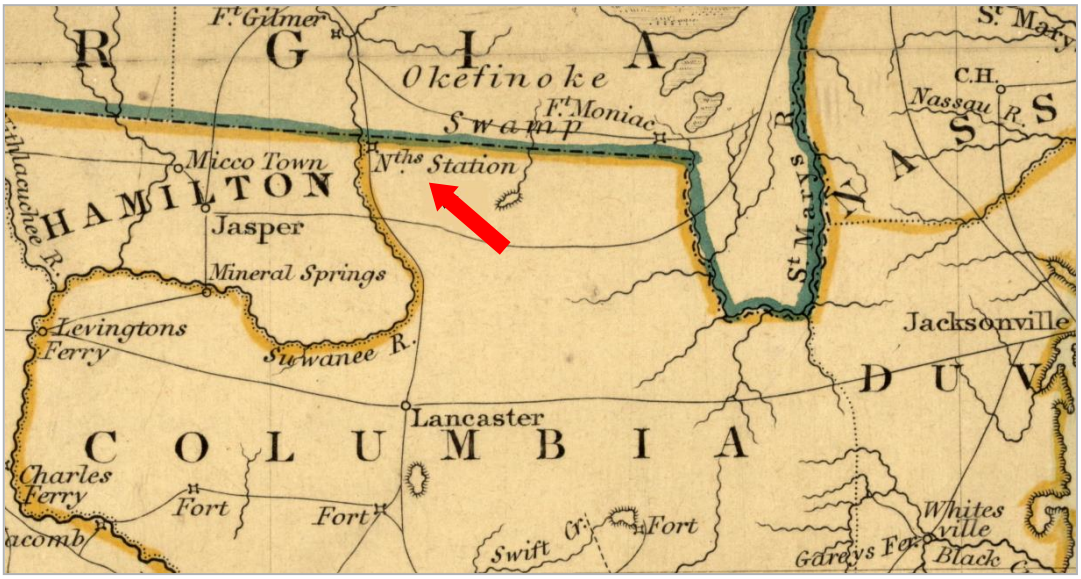


Figure 1. "N^{ths} Station" on 1833 map.

In the early days, the town was variously known as North's Station, Ft. Repose, Norton's Station, Ft. Norton and Ft. Rosa. It is noted on an 1833 map as North's Station (Figure 1, red arrow).

North's Station was named for a Captain North who established it as a fortified site in the early 1830s to guard against Indian incursions in the area. By 1845 it was known as Blount's Ferry.

In an 1846 map (Figure 2), it is listed as both Blount's Ferry and North's Station.

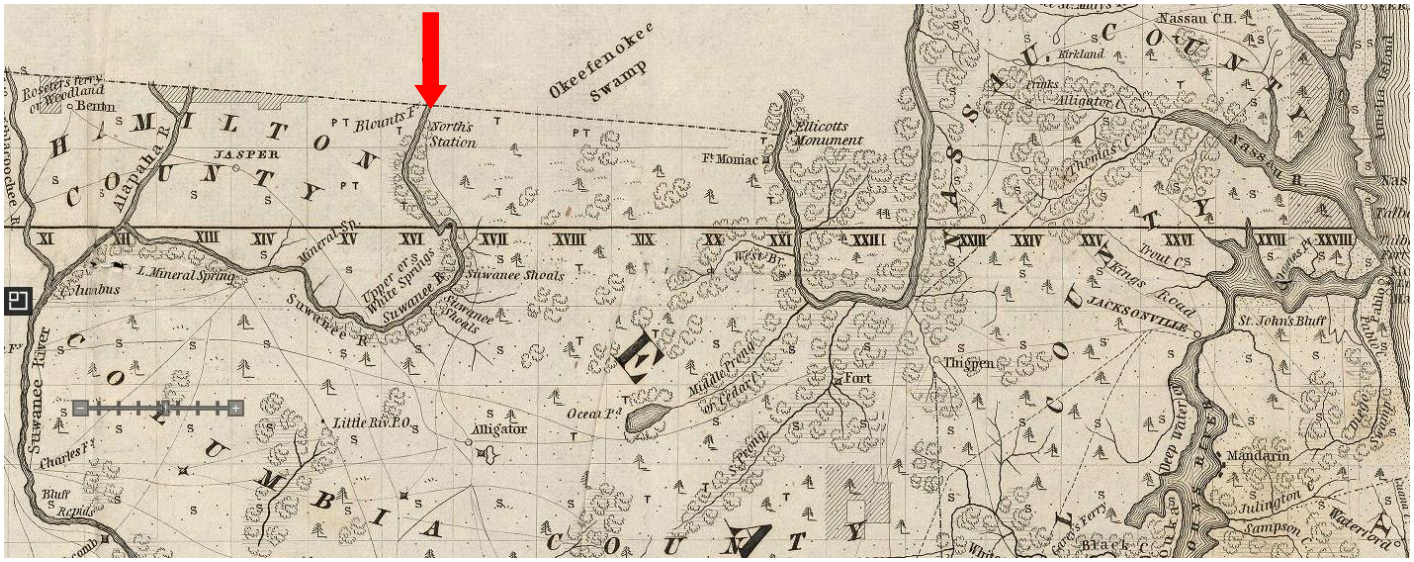


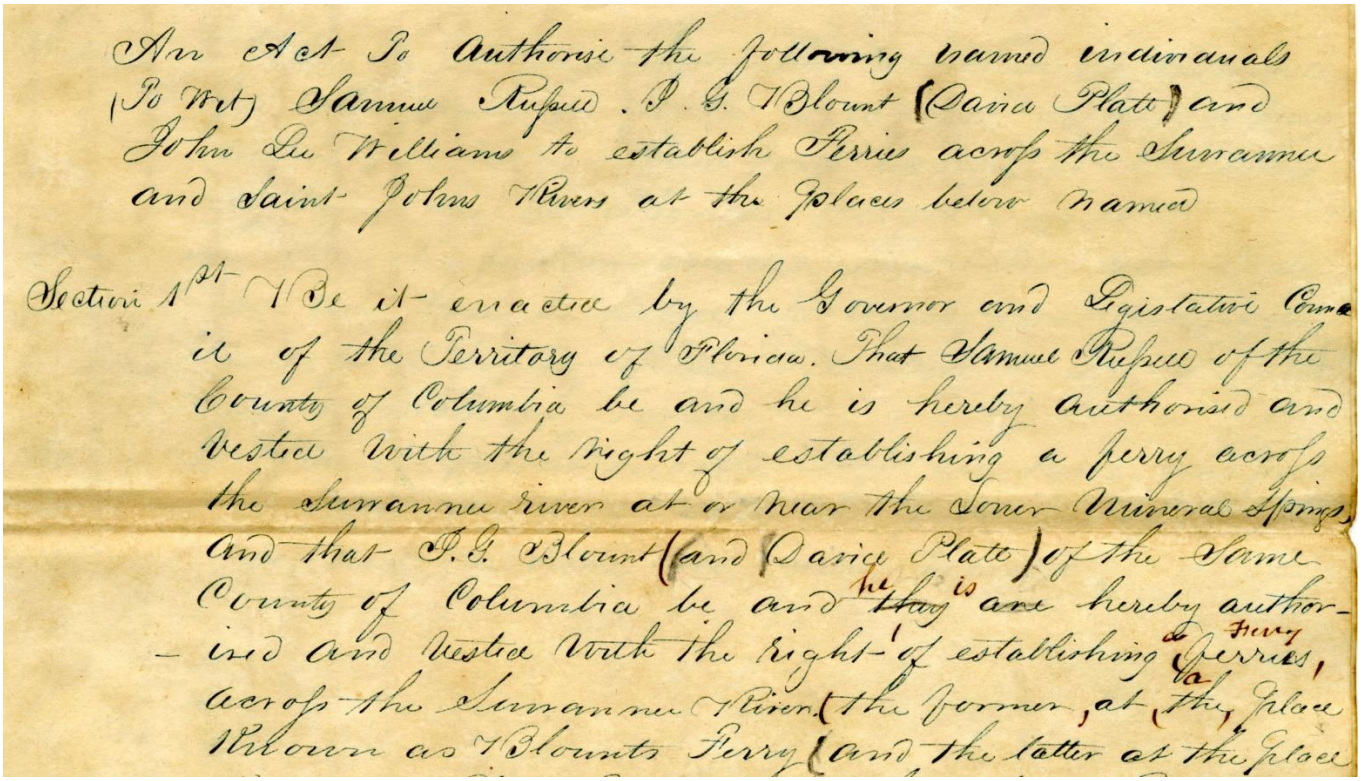
Figure 2. 1846 map showing both Blount's Ferry and North's Station.

The Suwanee River, from the Florida/Georgia border south, was the dividing line between Columbia and Hamilton County. About a mile south of the border was the ferry, a very important river crossing point for migrating pioneers from the Carolinas and central Georgia going to north central Florida. Most were heading to Alligator, (today's Lake City), the county seat.

In 1835 John Blount, born in Beaufort, South Carolina in 1786, and his family moved to Columbia County. He is listed in the 1840 census for Columbia County but died across the river in Hamilton County in 1860. His son Jacob was born in 1839 in Columbia County. His older brother Readding Blount, born earlier in South Carolina in 1824 also resided in Columbia County. It is not known if any of them operated the ferry.

There is also a reference to an Indian named Chief John Blount in the area. He was a guide for Andrew Jackson during the first Seminole War in 1818 but was forced to lead his fellow Indians west in 1834. He probably had nothing to do with the ferry.

It was at least known as Blount's Ferry by 1842 when a document from the state legislature in 1842 (Figure 3) gave permission for ferries to be granted to several people across two different rivers. One grantee was an I.G. Blount, authorized to cross the Suwanee River at a place called Blount's Ferry. This is strange because that would seem to mean there already was a ferry there named Blount's Ferry.



An Act To Authorise the following named individuals (To Wit) Samuel Rufus . I. G. Blount (Daniel Platt) and John Le Williams to establish Ferries across the Suwannee and Saint Johns Rivers at the places below named

Section 1st Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida. That Samuel Rufus of the County of Columbia be and he is hereby authorised and vested with the right of establishing a ferry across the Suwannee river at or near the Lower Mineral Springs, and that I. G. Blount (and Daniel Platt) of the same County of Columbia be and he they is are hereby authorised and vested with the right of establishing a Ferry Ferries across the Suwannee River (the former, at the place known as Blounts Ferry (and the latter at the place

Figure 3. 1842 state legislature permission for ferries across the Suwanee and Saint Johns rivers.

In any case, I found that most of the Blount descendants moved south, and few remained in Columbia County. Redding Blount died in Hillsborough County in 1887, and Jacob Blount died in Fort Myers in 1821. So, the mystery remains as to who founded the first ferry.

The only known manuscript, Type II cover from Blount's Ferry is dated March 23, 1850 (Figure 4). It was written to George Fairbanks, an attorney living in St. Augustine. (See my article on Fairbanks in the FPHJ Vol. 27, No.2, May 2020.)

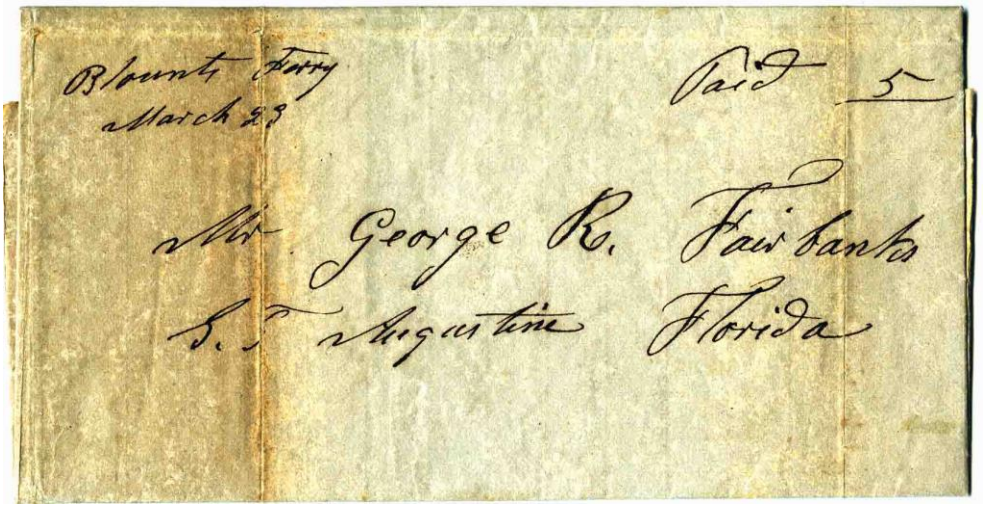


Figure 4. The only known manuscript, Type II cover from Blount's Ferry.

The letter is from William Frink who is asking Fairbanks to settle a debt he has with one Mr. Sammis and encloses a check for $106 (Figure 5).

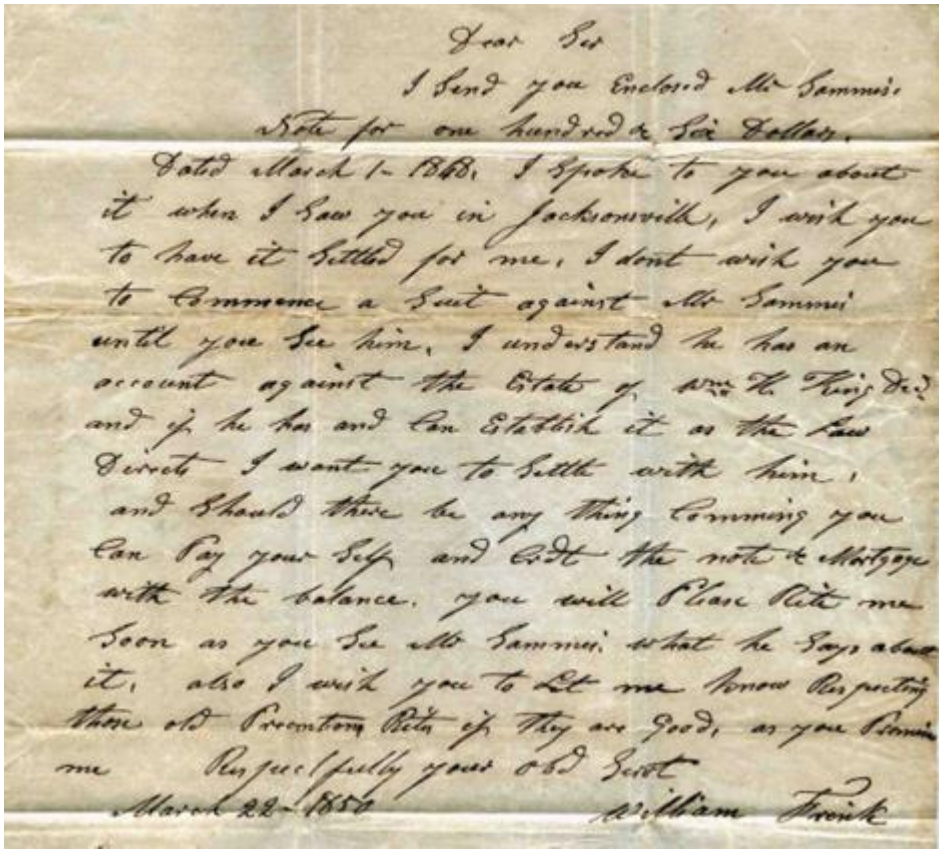

Dear Sir
I Send you Enclosed Mr Sammis
Note for one hundred & Six Dollars.
Dated March 1- 1848. I Spoke to you about
it when I Saw you in Jacksonville, I ask you
to have it Settled for me, I dont wish you
to Commence a Suit against Mr Sammis
until you See him, I understand he has an
account against the Estate of Wm H Frink Dec'd
and if he has and Can Establish it as the Law
Directs I want you to Settle with him,
and Should there be any thing Comming you
Can Pay your Self and Cancel the note & Mortgage
with the balance, you will Please Rite me
Soon as you See Mr Sammis what he Says about
it, also I wish you to Let me know Respecting
those old Preemtion Rights if they are Good, as you Sugest
me Respectfully yours &c Sent
March 22- 1850 William Frink

Figure 5. William Fink's letter.

William Frink was born in Horry, South Carolina in 1797 but his family first moved to Nassau County Florida in the 1830s. While there Frink was postmaster in 1833 for a couple of years at a settlement he started called Frinks. He and his wife Mary then moved briefly to Hamilton County, again moving in 1835 to Columbia County where a son William Jr. was born in 1837. He was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1841 and in 1843 was granted a quarter section land grant near Lake City under the Armed Occupation Act. He died in 1860 in Hamilton County, Florida.

The first postmaster of Blount's Ferry in 1845 was William Cone (Figure 6). James King followed him a few months later and the third postmaster for only six months in 1846 was William Frink who wrote the above letter in 1850, when James King was again postmaster.

There were several postal routes that went to or through Blount's Ferry. Route number 3518, going once a week from Jasper, Florida, across Blount's Ferry, crossing the border and ending at Centerville, Georgia. This route was bid on by both William Frink and William Cone. Route number 3516 went from Alligator (Lake City) once a week through Suwanee Shoals to Blount's Ferry. Another, route number 3284, went from Waresboro, Georgia (near Waycross) to Blount's Ferry once a week. William Frink bid on this service. All listed as of 1852.

Figure 6. Captain William H. Cone (1777-1857).

William Cone was the famous Indian fighter and local hero in the war of 1812. He was born in Georgia in 1777 and lived in St. Marys but moved to Columbia County in 1835. He built a block house at Blount's Ferry for protection from the Indians during the Second Seminole War. He took over the operation of the ferry in 1843. And in 1881 his son William and nephew Daniel Cone built the first bridge over the Suwanee River where the ferry was. Later one of his descendants, Fred Cone (Figure 7), became governor of Florida in 1937.

Figure 7. Fred Cone, Florida Governor, 1937.

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