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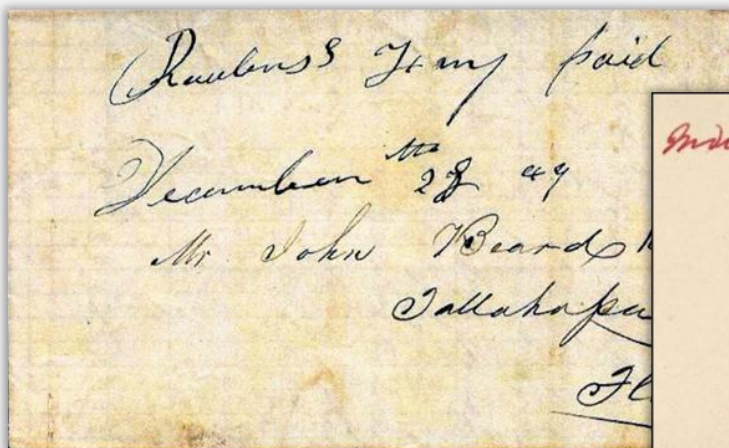
May 2026

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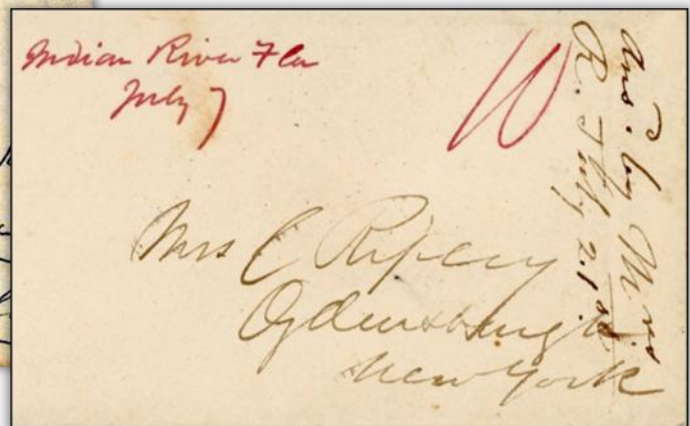


Negative Handstamps from St. Augustine, Florida

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Raulerson Ferry



FORT CAPRON Third Seminole War Fort

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Negative Handstamps from St. Augustine, Florida

By Thomas M. Lera

Introduction

When postage rates changed in 1845, many post offices created handstamps to apply rate markings of 3, 5 and 10 cents. A separate PAID handstamp would be added if postage was prepaid. Initially, prepayment was optional and most letters were sent collect. Rates changed again in 1851, and more new handstamps were needed.

One of the different varieties of rate handstamps was the negative circle. Commencing July 1, 1851, those mailing letters could prepay postage of three cents or send the letter unpaid for five cents.¹ One of the different varieties of rate handstamps was the negative circle. St. Augustine used negative 3, 5, and 10-cent handstamps from September 12, 1852, to February 27, 1853.

The Florida Postal History Society has classified the ST. AUGUSTINE FL.T. CDS handstamp as Type XIV and Type B (Negative 3), D (Negative 5), and H (Negative 10).²

St. Augustine Negative 5 & 10 Handstamps

The 5 and 10 handstamp markings are both struck on the forwarded cover shown below in Figure 1. The first negative 5 restated the original due postage and the second negative 5 the forwarding postage. The two handstamps were summed up to yield the negative 10 due. The ST. AUGUSTINE FL.T. Apr 18 [1852] circle date handstamp (CDS) is a Type XIV used between December 30, 1845, and November 21, 1854. Black, red, and blue-green color CDS are known to be used during this time period.



Figure 1. Black Apr 18, [1852] ST. AUGUSTINE FL.T. Type XIV DH.
(Courtesy of James W. Milgram)