

1973

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Recommended Citation

Stanaback, Richard J. (1973) "Postal Operations in Territorial Florida, 1821-1845," *Florida Historical Quarterly*: Vol. 52 : No. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol52/iss2/5>

POSTAL OPERATIONS IN TERRITORIAL FLORIDA, 1821-1845

by RICHARD J. STANABACK*

FLORIDA IN 1821 was transferred from Spanish to American control and the need of providing the territory with internal and external lines of communication was a problem that called for immediate solution.¹ The post office department, which had the responsibility of transporting the mails, played a major role in helping meet the Florida situation. Creating internal communication routes proved formidable since post offices, post roads, and postal personnel had to be supplied before mail service could exist.

From March to July 1821, communication between federal officials and Andrew Jackson, newly appointed governor of Florida, was by a combination of the postal service and special messenger.² Official correspondence and other letters were carried to Milledgeville, Georgia, by post rider and then by messenger to wherever Jackson was encamped.³ At the same time, within the territory, messengers were relied on for communication between local officials. The establishment of post offices and post roads assumed a high priority just as soon as possession of the territory became a reality on July 17, when Jackson raised the American flag over Pensacola.⁴

Most in need of a postal connection to begin with were Pensacola and St. Augustine. The former had been selected by Jackson as his temporary capital, and the latter had been picked by Presi-

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1. William M. Mallory, comp., *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements Between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776-1909*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1910), II, 1651-58; *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 395.
2. Andrew Jackson accepted the position of governor previous to March 1821. Clarence E. Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of The United States*, 26 vols. (Washington, 1934-1962), XXII, 9n.
3. *Ibid.*, 56, 70.
4. *Ibid.*, 93, 119, 135, 122024. For mail being sent out of the territory, the post office at Blakeley, Alabama, was probably used. *Ibid.*, 11; *House Documents*, 17th Cong., 1st sess., no. 1, 3-4.

dent James Monroe as a place of residence for the Secretary for East Florida.⁵ But the development of efficient routes of communication between them, as well as to the closest post offices in Georgia and Alabama, was to prove difficult because of the vast expanses of wilderness to be traversed.

The first postal route between Pensacola and Alabama was instituted around June 23, when a line north to Clairborne went into operation. This was a private operation and the mails were carried for the postage they produced.⁶ Two months later, the *Floridian* announced the establishment of an official weekly mail between Pensacola and Clairborne and the opening of a post office there.⁷ Clairborne proved to be an excellent choice as a postal link to Pensacola because it was located on the principal post route between Washington, D. C., and New Orleans.⁸ The postmaster at Pensacola was Cary Nicholas, former army man and co-publisher of the *Floridian*.⁹

The inauguration of the route enabled the mails to make the journey between Pensacola and Washington in seventeen days—about average time for that day of almost non-existent roads and horse-conveyed mails. The time appeared quick, however, when compared to the twenty-five to thirty days it took for letters from parts of Tennessee to reach Pensacola. One explanation for the speedy delivery of the former mail may have been the employment of a stage to convey it between Clairborne and Pensacola.¹⁰ Even then Nicholas was not completely satisfied with the postal

5. *Ibid.*, 53-57, 117. Jackson estimated that some 3,000 Floridians were awaiting a mail connection to the United States in 1821. *Ibid.*, 213n.

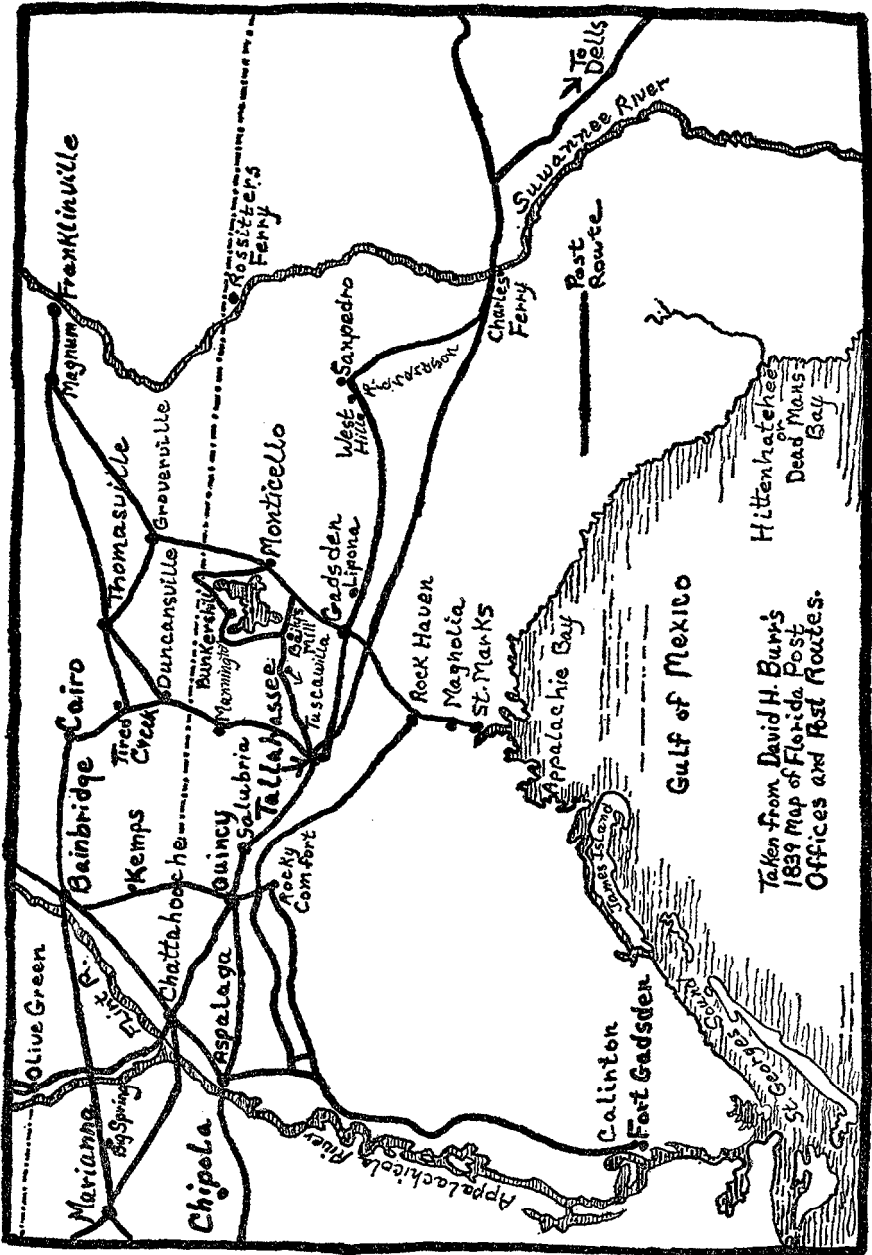
6. *Niles Weekly Register*, June 23, 1821.

7. Pensacola *Floridian*, August 18, 1821; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 198; *Niles Weekly Register*, September 29, 1821.

8. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XVIII, 354n. As Congress was not in session, the route was promulgated by the postmaster general under an 1814 law which gave him the power to establish post roads to state and territorial capitals until such time as Congress could establish them. *Annals*, 13th Cong., 1st and 2nd sess., 2841-44.

9. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 979n; James Owen Knauss, *Territorial Florida Journalism* (Deland, 1926), 67; Pensacola *Floridian*, October 8, 1821.

10. The contractor for the Clairborne Pensacola route had asked the postmaster general for \$1,500, an amount suggesting the use or contemplated use of a stage. The contractor was told the post office could only allow him \$20.00 per trip. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 290. It is difficult to determine exactly the postal operations in Florida during this period as the Letter Received Files of the post office were destroyed by fire in 1836. *House Reports*, 24th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 134, 1-46.



schedules, and he suggested that they could be improved by rebuilding an old Indian trail running eastward from the town and making it a post road. His suggestion was acted upon, but not until the latter part of 1825 would mail be sent east over it.¹¹

Other Pensacola citizens also suggested new routes. In January 1822, a man offered to construct a wagon road to Blakeley, Alabama, lying ninety miles northwest of the town and ten miles east of Mobile. But apparently postal officials were not interested in this proposal.¹² This did not mean that the government did not seek to improve service. On May 8, 1822, Congress authorized three new post routes for Pensacola: one from Mobile, another from Fort Hawkins, Georgia, and a third from St. Augustine.¹³ Two months later, the post office advertised, as was the custom, for bids on the St. Augustine and Fort Hawkins routes plus a third one from Pensacola to Road Forks, Alabama. But either no acceptable bids were received or technical difficulties intervened, as in the case of the St. Augustine route, for only the old Clairborne route was let.¹⁴ The agreement for the latter was to last four years, the usual length of such contracts, from January 1, 1823, to December 31, 1826. The contractor was to receive an annual salary of \$1,200.¹⁵

The first attempt to extend the mails into East Florida probably occurred sometime prior to June 19, 1821, when Jonathan Sturgis Beers was appointed deputy postmaster for St. Augustine. A few days later, on June 29, the post office department informed Beers that a post route was being placed in operation from St. Marys, Georgia, to St. Augustine, and that he was to activate his office as soon as possible.¹⁶ The records do not reveal when the post office at St. Augustine opened, but the *Florida Gazette* announced July 21, 1821:

11. Pensacola *Floridian*, September 8, 1821; Mark F. Boyd, "The First American Road in Florida: Papers Relating to the Survey and Construction of the Pensacola-St. Augustine Highway, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIV (October 1935), 100.

12. Pensacola *Floridian*, June 28, 1822; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XVIII, 497.

13. *Annals*, 17th Cong., 1st sess., 2643.

14. Boyd, "The First American Road in Florida," 87, 161.

15. *House Documents*, 17th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 104, 17. This document has the contractor receiving only \$100 annually which is an obvious misprint. *American State Papers, Post Office Department* (Washington, 1834), 136; *House Documents*, 18th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 49, 55.

16. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 4-5, 102.

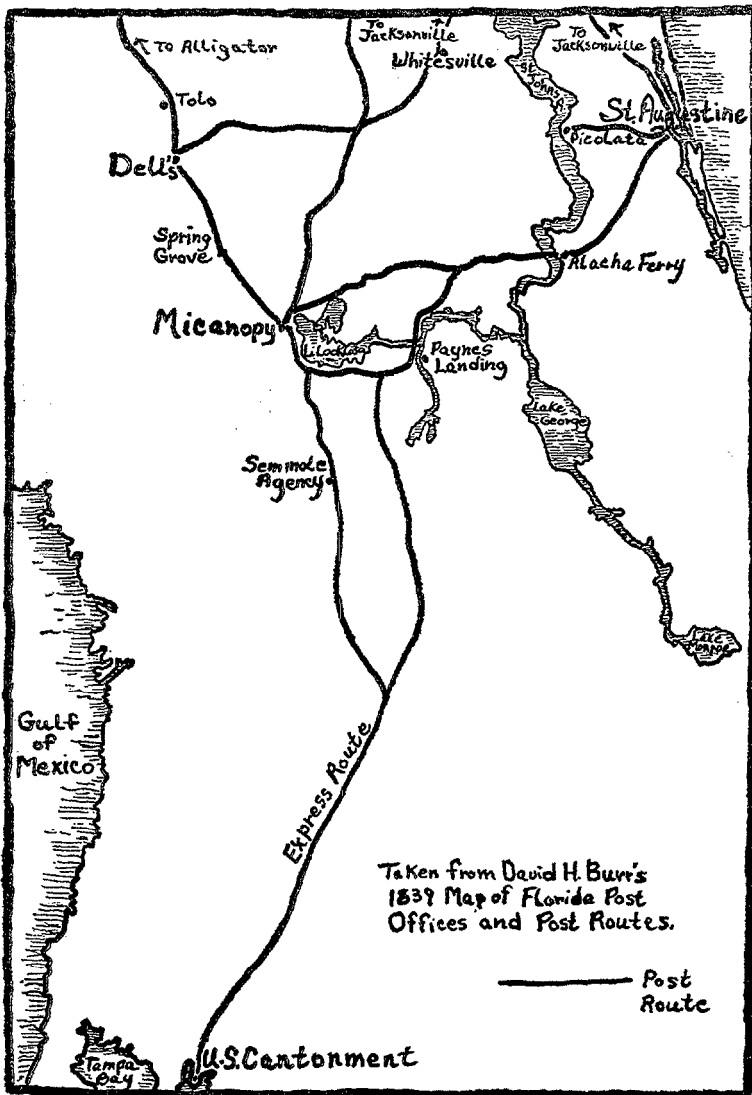


TABLE OF EARLY FLORIDA POST OFFICES, 1821-1830^a

Post office	County	Date of First Return	First Postmaster	Receipts for 1830
Alaqua	Walton	November 5, 1827	C. V. S. Jones	\$37.45
Almirante	Walton	January 31, 1827	Jeremiah Savell	\$15.58
Aspalaga	Jackson	March 22, 1828	Fabian Armstead	\$90.76
Campbellton	Washington	- - - - -	- - - - -	\$6.34
Dells	Alachua	January 1, 1826	James Dell	\$32.31
Escambia	Escambia	May 4, 1827	Radford Cotton	\$10.34
Fernandina	St. Johns	September 22, 1821	Domingo Acosta	\$50.01
Ft. George	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	\$7.29
Holmes Valley	Washington	March 2, 1827	Barylett Barr	\$55.19
Jacksonville	Duval	March 1824 ¹	John L. Doggett	\$184.80
Key West	Monroe	June 25, 1829 ²	Henry Waterhouse	\$47.83
Lipona	Jefferson	November 28, 1828	Achilles Murat	59.88
Magnolia	Leon	November 9, 1827	George Hamlin	\$213.26
Marianna	Jackson	March 14, 1828	John Mackenheimer	\$192.71
Monticello	Leon	May 10, 1826	John G. Robison	\$102.69
Mt. Vernon	Gadsden	March 6, 1828	John McCulloch	\$55.19
Pensacola	Escambia	August 1821 ³	Cary Nicholas	\$1,350.99
Quincy	Gadsden	December 28, 1825	Hector McNeill	\$296.88
Rocky Comfort	Gadsden	November 5, 1827	David Ohilltree	\$105.09
St. Augustine	St. Johns	July 20, 1821	Jonathan Beers	\$817.94
St. Johns	Duval	January 30, 1828	Elisha F. Jenkins	\$22.90
St. Marks	Leon	March 28, 1827	Turbut Betton	\$19.92
Salubrity	Gadsden	April 19, 1828	Joseph McBride	\$31.80
Seminole Agency	Alachua	May 3, 1828	Gad Humphreys	\$109.41
Spring Grove	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	\$5.06
Tallahassee	Leon	April 1825 ⁴	Ambrose Crane	\$1,174.61
Tuscanelia	Leon	May 8, 1828	John Parkill	\$46.48

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TABLE OF EARLY FLORIDA POST OFFICES, 1821-1830^a

Post Office	County	Date of First Return	First Postmaster	Receipts for 1830
Waukeenah	Jefferson	January 23, 1825	John G. Gamble	\$41.06
Wantons	Alachua	February 6, 1826 ²	Ruben Charles	\$23.50
Webbville	Jackson	December 31, 1825	Jack M. Stone	\$258.78
Whitesville	Duval	May 8, 1828	Malachia Hagin	\$13.56

³Found in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 978-82 and *A. S. P., Post Office Dept.*, 296.

¹St. Augustine *East Florida Herald*, February 7, 1824.

²Key West *Register*, June 25, 1829.

³Pensacola *Floridian*, August 18, October 8, 1821.

⁴Pensacola *Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, April 9, 1825.

The Public are informed, that a regular Mail will be continued between this City and St. Marys— It will leave on Thursday mornings and return the following Monday's [*sic*]. Letters intended to go by Mail must be left at the Post Office on Wednesdays.¹⁷

It was signed by acting postmaster Daniel Copp, Beers having not yet arrived in town.¹⁸

Undoubtedly the town's citizenry was delighted to see postmaster Beers commence his duties on August 13.¹⁹ But he soon resigned, and the post office was moved to the residence of Thomas H. Penn, the new postmaster.²⁰ No reason was given for Beer's decision to leave the service, but he probably did so because of the low salary.²¹

Fernandina on the northern tip of Amelia Island was the only other Florida post office to open in 1821. Although it probably had had some system of communication with the mainland earlier, this was its first permanent post office. The initial return of the office was dated September 22, and was signed by postmaster Domingo Acosta.²² It was probably served by the same sea route which passed from St. Marys to St. Augustine.

The opening of these offices and the creation of two primary postal routes did not completely satisfy the residents of the territory, and they were soon voicing their complaints concerning the quality of the mail service they were receiving. Certain St. Augustine citizens disliked having their mail delivered by ship and they expressed their discontent in a memorial to Congress. They described the water route as, "not only unnecessarily circuitous, but in consequence of mail being carried by water, the greater part of the way from St. Marys to St. Augustine, it is in

17. *Ibid.*, 127; St. Augustine *Florida Gazette*, July 28, August 4, 1821. The approximate population of St. Augustine in 1821 was 2,000. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 552, 643.

18. St. Augustine *Florida Gazette*, July 28, August 4, 1821.

19. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 169n.

20. St. Augustine *Florida Gazette*, September 1, 1821.

21. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 102. At this time postmasters did not receive a stipulated salary; their compensation was a percentage of the postage they collected. See section II of the Postal Act of 1816 in *Annals*, 14th Cong., 1st sess., 1809-11. The *Register of Public Officials of East Florida*, February 1, 1822, listed Penn as the postmaster and contained a notification on the resignation of Beers. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 361, 978.

22. *Ibid.*, 197, 978.

boisterous weather and during the prevalence of low tides, subject to detention and exposed to the danger of being lost.²³ The memorial suggested replacement of the route with one which would pass on land from Jefferson, Georgia, through Coleraine and Cowford (Jacksonville) to St. Augustine. Such a route it was believed, would reduce the danger of lost mail and shorten the present route by forty miles.²⁴ Congress authorized the change in May 1822, but it was not until January of the following year that a contract for the new road was let by the post office.²⁵ The contractor, John Floyd, agreed to transport the mail from 1823 to 1826 at an annual compensation of \$1,040.²⁶ The mail rider was to utilize the "Kings Road" which had been built by the British the previous century, but, as might be expected, the age of this highway greatly reduced its value. The section between the Georgia line and Cowford was in especially bad condition.²⁷ A bill ensuring its repair was placed before Congress, but it failed to pass in the Senate in 1823.²⁸ However, the mails needed to be delivered, and so it was utilized by the Post Office in 1824 despite its deplorable state.²⁹

The development of the land route to St. Augustine was instrumental in the authorization of a fourth post office at Jacksonville, whose importance would increase because of its favorable location near the only ford on the St. Johns River for miles in either direction.³⁰ As a way station on the primary road to St. Augustine it shared in the general growth of the territory. Late in 1823 Richard Keith Call, Florida's delegate to Congress, recommended the establishment of a post office.³¹ His request was acknowledged in February 1824, with the appointment of John L. Doggett, a member of the Territorial Legislative Council, as Jacksonville's first postmaster.³²

23. *Ibid.*, 366.

24. *Ibid.*, 366-67.

25. *Annals*, 17th Cong., 1st sess., 2641.

26. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 487, 487n, 767n; *House Documents*, 17th Cong., 2nd sess, no. 104, 17.

27. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 366, 633-35.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *St. Augustine East Florida Herald*, February 7, 1824.

30. T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513-1924* (St. Augustine, 1925; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 54; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 487, 366n.

31. *Ibid.*, XXII, 833.

32. *St. Augustine East Florida Herald*, February 7, 1824.

A post office began operating in 1825 in Tallahassee, the new territorial capital. The previous year Call had asked for and received, in keeping with the government's policy of extending the mails to state and territorial capitals, the passage of a House resolution to study the possibility of opening a post road to Tallahassee from the Creek Agency in Georgia.³³ Indicative of the importance attached to a mail service for Tallahassee was the legislative council's resolution passed in November 1824, requesting Call to stress to Congress the requirement of creating postal routes for the town from the north, south, and west.³⁴ Congress responded in March 1825, by approving a route to connect Tallahassee with the Creek Agency. One month later, Ambrose Crane, co-publisher of the *Florida Intelligencer*, was appointed postmaster.³⁵

The extension of mails to Florida and the establishment of a few internal postal routes by 1825 paved the way for continued postal expansion required by increasing commercial, administrative, and military necessities. The occupation of Tallahassee by territorial officials in April 1825, led to the authorization of a postal route to it from Early Court House, Georgia, and its designation as a terminus of postal routes converging from Pensacola and St. Augustine.³⁶ Sometime later, the northern route was changed to pass by Pindartown, Georgia, because of delays due to flooded roads in wet weather.³⁷ Then increasing demands for better service made a weekly mail on the route a necessity, and this was supplied by the post office in February 1826.³⁸

The continued development of Tallahassee—its population reached 900 in 1830—called for still greater improvements. In 1827, the first regular stage mail began.³⁹ As postal receipts in-

33. *Annals*, 18th Cong., 1664; *House Journal*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., 274.

34. "The First Message of Gov. William P. Duval To the Legislative Council Assembled at Tallahassee, Florida, 1824," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, I (July 1908), 13-17; "Report of The Committee on Territorial Affairs," *Acts of The Legislative Council of The Territory of Florida Passed at The Third Session, 1824*, 319.

35. *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, April 9, 1825.

36. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 242, 625-27.

37. *Ibid.*, 261, 311-12, 334-35, 339, 354, 358; *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, July 9, 1825.

38. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 372, 438. The contractor, David B. Macomb, agreed to transport the mail at \$9.00 per mile.

39. *Ibid.*, 933, 1012-13. Macomb had contracted for the route in 1827 at \$1,440 per year. *House Documents*, 19th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 121, 21.

TABLE OF POSTAL EXPANSION IN FLORIDA TERRITORY, 1837-1845^a

Year Ending July	Length of Post Roads	Annual Miles of Transportation			Cost
		Horse	Stage	Steamboat & Railroad	
1837	1,845	78,312	84,864	44,720	-----
1838	2,764	53,300	84,916	109,304	-----
1839	1,101	70,488	62,648	47,147	\$40,579
1840	1,772	90,688	75,416	99,242	\$44,587
1841	1,817	95,884	75,416	99,242	\$45,879
1842	1,744	94,014	79,567	99,242	\$44,909
1843	1,735	85,174	107,604	77,106	\$44,199
1844	2,410	56,120	162,300	55,624	\$37,884
1845	2,920	96,680	163,894	75,406	\$42,354

^a*Postmaster General's Reports, 1837-1845.*

creased— from \$634.87 in 1827, to \$1,174.00 in 1830— so did the demands for improved communication.⁴⁰ The postmaster general advanced the mail by one day in December 1830, and two years later replaced the two-horse stage with a four-horse conveyance, thus allowing for still faster service.⁴¹ The switch was applauded by the *Floridian* which announced that it would bring the mails two days earlier than before.⁴² A new appointment in the office of the postmaster generalship threatened Tallahassee with cancellation of its four-horse mail in 1838, but the outcry was so general that it never came about.⁴³ In fact, within a year, two additional post routes were scheduled for Tallahassee from Franklinville and Thomasville in Georgia.⁴⁴

The capital and its environs continued to add population, and by 1840 over 10,000 settlers inhabited Leon County.⁴⁵ According to a number of them the postal service had not kept pace with the growth. For instance, it was reported that, “a gentlemen, who

40. *House Documents*, 20th Cong., 1st sess., no. 60, 75; *American State Papers*, *Post Office*, 180, 296; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 369-72.

41. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 487, *American State Papers*, *Post Office*, 329. These improvements were effected under Postmaster General William T. Barry who had replaced John McLean in 1829.

42. Tallahassee *Floridian*, November 20, 1832.

43. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1838; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 543. Amos Kendall replaced the rather inept Barry in July 1838.

44. The contractor on the Franklinville route was Archibald Graham at \$700 a year, while the contractor on the Thomasville run was John White at \$400. *House Documents*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., no. 220, 108-11.

45. “Population Schedules” for the Territory of Florida, Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, sheet 58, microfilm copy, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

addressed a letter, from Washington, D. C., to Tallahassee, will find, that starting on the same day with his letter, he can reach his destination, several days before its arrival."⁴⁶ But this and similar complaints produced no increase in mail efficiency. In fact, postal interruptions and delays became more frequent in stormy weather after a route change in 1841 required the carrier to make two crossings of the Flint River.⁴⁷

The first post offices to commence operation in middle Florida were those at Dills, Robinsons, and Wantons in 1826.⁴⁸ The very next year, however, they were almost discontinued because of the cost involved— receipts were only \$9.93 at Dills, \$2.48 at Robinsons, and \$65.01 at Wantons.⁴⁹ In answer to requests for a weekly schedule to these places, the postmaster general pointed out that the expense of \$3,375 for such a service would be \$1,775 more than all Florida postal receipts for an entire year.⁵⁰ A private post office was created for the Seminole Agency to the south of Wantons in May 1828, and during its first year of operation it produced receipts of \$147.13.⁵¹ Three years later the post office department was able to provide the area with two more postal routes. One was to run from Tallahassee by Lipona, Waukeeah, Dills, Spring Grove, Wantons, and Whitesville to Jacksonville on a bi-weekly schedule, while the other was to pass between Tallahassee and Monticello on a weekly basis.⁵²

Despite these and other improvements in the distribution of mail from Tallahassee, Floridians continued to petition Congress for additional service. One resolution of the legislative council described the postal arrangements, "as in fact, virtually excluding them from the benefits of the Post Office Establishment— depriv-

46. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXVI, 234.

47. *Acts and Resolutions of The Legislative Council of The Territory of Florida Passed at Its Twentieth Session, 1842*, 54; *Journal of The Senate of The Legislative Council of The Territory of Florida at Its Sixth Session, 1844*, 96-98, 180, 204; *Acts and Resolutions, Twenty-second Session, 1844*, 82-83; *Appalachicola Commerical Advertiser*, February 19, 1844.

48. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 978-82. The names of Dills, Robinsons, and Wantons were later changed to Dells, Monticello, and Micanopy, respectively.

49. *Ibid.*, 664, 667.

50. *Ibid.*, 734.

51. *House Documents*, 21st Cong., 1st sess., no. 61, 83.

52. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 411-12, 428-30. William H. Williams was the contractor on the Tallahassee-Jacksonville route at \$950, while Thomas Heir was the contractor on the other at \$206. *Ibid.*, 430n; *House Documents*, 21st Cong., 2nd sess., no. 117, 14.

ing them of the facilities of communication, and closing against them the avenues of intelligence, by the wisdom of our Government generally open and free to the people of the United States."⁵³ In response, the postmaster general opened a weekly mail between Tallahassee and Jacksonville utilizing a combination of two routes. One to pass through Alligator and the other by Micanopy.⁵⁴ However, postal deficits in the ensuing years forced the suspension of the arrangement in 1836.⁵⁵ Repeated demands by Tallahassee citizens over the next nine years for a tri-weekly mail to the east failed to bring any improvements, and up to at least 1845, a single horse carried a semi-weekly mail to St. Augustine.⁵⁶

Postal routes connecting gulf coast ports with cotton producing areas were inaugurated in 1827 when, first a private and then a public route, was extended twenty-two miles southwest from Tallahassee to St. Marks.⁵⁷ But it must have been rarely used as illustrated by receipts of just \$2.34 for the year ending March 1829.⁵⁸ By this time the inhabitants of Appalachicola and other western settlements were asking for postal connections.⁵⁹ The postmaster general eventually provided Appalachicola, Magnolia, and Monticello with mail routes between 1831 and 1833.⁶⁰ An-

53. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 965.

54. *Ibid.*, XXV, 35-38 James M. Harris contracted for both routes: Tallahassee-Micanopy-Jacksonville at \$1,115, and Tallahassee-Alligator-Jacksonville at \$1,007. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., no. 175, 15-16.

55. The Tallahassee-Micanopy-Jacksonville route was halted on January 1, 1836. *Senate Documents*, 25th Cong., 3rd sess., no. 254, 536-37. Service on the Tallahassee-Alligator route was ordered to stop at Mineral Springs, and the other section of it continuing on to Jacksonville was cancelled in its entirety on October 17, 1836. *House Documents*, 25th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 329, 322-23.

56. *Journal of the Senate of the Territory of Florida, Twenty-first Session, 1843*, 109; *Journal of The Senate of the Territory of Florida, Sixth Session, 1844*, 194 [192]-93.

57. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 943, 1001-02, 1027. It is conceivable that a private mail to St. Marks did exist in late 1827, as a post office opened there sometime prior to March 1827. *Ibid.*, 978-82. Thomas Heir contracted for the official route in 1828 at \$200. *House Documents*, 20th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 135, 29.

58. *House Documents*, 21st Cong., 1st sess., no. 61, 82-83.

59. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 108-10, 199-200; *House Journal*, 20th Cong., 2nd sess., 201. Congress later approved a route from Montgomery to Webbville, Florida. 4 *Statutes* 547.

60. 4 *Statutes* 548; *Debates in Congress*, 22nd Cong., 1st sess., app. XIIX; Tallahassee *Floridian and Advocate*, December 7, 1830. Thomas Heir again contracted for the St. Marks route, while J. B. Scott contracted for the Monticello to Magnolia route. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 430n, 724n.

nual receipts were \$246.57 at Magnolia and \$121.84 for St. Marks in 1833; the latter representing a substantial increase in the employment of the mails.⁶¹

In January 1833, a steamboat mail was begun between Columbus, Georgia, and Appalachicola, but so exorbitant was its cost that it was discontinued that June.⁶² However, consequent expansion—receipts rose from \$127.40 in 1833 to \$831.94 in 1835—convinced the postmaster general to let a contract for a semi-weekly mail to the port from Quincy through Rocky Comfort and Fort Gadsden.⁶³ Other mail improvements for the gulf coast in 1835 included a mail every two days by coach from Tallahassee to St. Marks, a similar arrangement from Chattahoochee to Cedar Bluff, and a steamboat mail to travel between Cedar Bluff and Pensacola on the same schedule.⁶⁴ The stage between Tallahassee and St. Marks was part of a postal connection expediting communication between Augusta and Key West, while the second belonged to a system connecting the important gulf cities of Mobile and New Orleans.⁶⁵

Additional progress came in 1837 when a mail was extended to St. Joseph from Appalachicola and when a steamboat connection from the latter to Bainbridge, Georgia, was authorized. The steamboat was to deliver mail twice a week to Appalachicola eight months of the year and once a week for the remainder.⁶⁶ The following notice appeared in a Tallahassee newspaper:

THE subscriber has taken the contract for carrying the United States Mail between Appalachicola, Fla., and Bainbridge, Ga., per Steam Boats, and has selected for that purpose the fast and staunch Steamer Free Trader, which is acknowledged to be one of the fleetest boats on the river.⁶⁷

61. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., no. 63, 74-75.

62. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 984-87.

63. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., no. 63, 74-75; 24th Cong., 1st sess., no. 262, 80; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 35-39. John W. Ochiltree was the contractor at \$2,000. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., no. 175, 16.

64. Stockton, Stokes, and Co. was the contractor on the St. Marks route at \$2,057. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., no. 175, 16.

65. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 559-60.

66. The route from Marianna was rejected on a bid of \$7,000. *House Documents*, 25th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 329, 49-50. William Roane contracted for the Appalachicola-St. Joseph route for \$30 per mile. *Senate Documents*, 25th Cong., 3rd sess., 536-37. The contractor on the steamboat route was James Y. Smith at \$6,000. *House Documents*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., no. 220, 108-11.

67. Tallahassee *Floridian*, July 7, 1838.

The migration to St. Joseph continued, and by 1838 its population stood at around 1,000. The growth eventually led to the construction of a railroad from it to Iola on the Appalachian River. The increased importance of the town was signified when the post office department established a semi-weekly railroad mail on the newly opened road in October 1839.⁶⁸ The nearby port of Appalachicola shared in this general growth, and by December 1840, a tri-weekly stage mail was instituted from it to Pensacola. Appalachicola's emergence as an established cotton export center was signified by postal receipts of \$2,745 in 1840 which was second only to Tallahassee's \$4,238.98.⁶⁹

The development of the gulf coast area extended to Pensacola where the construction of a navy yard and its utilization as a military headquarters served to increase the requirement for more postal facilities. They came in 1826-1827 in the form of a steamboat mail from Mobile and in a land mail from Blakeley, Alabama.⁷⁰ But both were subsequently stopped because of their expense— the latter being reinstated in 1832.⁷¹ Eventually other routes were added, however, and by June 1833, Pensacola was receiving four semi-weekly mails: two by steamboat from the east and two by stage.⁷² The stage mail on the Blakeley run was ultimately raised to three a week in 1835, but Pensacola citizens were dismayed by the steamboat service which was repeatedly being cancelled and renewed by the post office department.⁷³ It was not until 1839 that a regular steamboat mail from Mobile became a reality.⁷⁴

Although all towns in Florida during the territorial period

68. *Biennial Register of All Officers and Agents in the Service of the United States* (Washington, 1838), 191; *St. Joseph Times*, January 22, 1840. Contractor on the route was the St. Joseph Canal and Railroad Co. at \$840. *House Documents*, 27th Cong., 3rd sess., no. 180, 589-90.

69. *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, December 19, 1840. William Childres contracted for the St. Marks route at \$900. *House Documents*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., no. 220, 108-11; *Biennial Register*, 1841, 228-29.

70. 4 *Statutes* 226.

71. *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, March 23, December 28, 1827, July 8, 1828; *Pensacola Argus*, August 12, 1825; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 788n, 892, 922-23, 935, 985-86, XXIV, 373, 790.

72. *Pensacola Gazette and West Florida Advertiser*, June 6, 1833.

73. *Ibid.*; *House Documents*, 24th Cong., 1st sess., no. 262, 80; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 364-65.

74. Tallahassee *Floridian*, January 5, 1839; *House Documents*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., no. 220, 108-11; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 559-60.

experienced difficulties in their mail service, none could quite match those faced by Camp Brooke on Tampa Bay. At first the camp was forced to communicate with the war department by any means possible. In time, by 1829, the postmaster general authorized a postal route to the camp from Jacksonville through Wantons and Black Creek, but no contractor was willing to transport the mails over it.⁷⁵ Two years later, a post office was opened at the camp with the mail to be brought in from the Seminole Agency. In this arrangement the army was to pay the expenses if the cost of mails did not.⁷⁶ Army mules were even to be employed to haul the mails over the 126 miles separating the two places.⁷⁷ No sooner had this settlement been made, then it was learned that the office at the Seminole Agency had closed because the agent had tired of making up the cost of letters coming to his office. Thus, the camp was forced to extend its communications line up to Wantons, twenty-six miles further north.⁷⁸

In 1837, Congress authorized the establishment of another public route to pass from St. Augustine to the camp via Wantons. But as in the case of the first it was suspended shortly after it went into operation, and the army again had to fall back on a private mail. This situation continued until 1841, when the postmaster general finally managed to hire a contractor to transport the mails over the route.⁷⁹ Even then it was not known how long the deliveries would last. Finally, by the end of the territorial period, another route was provided to pass from Palatka, by Orange Creek, Fort King, Warm Springs, Fort Dade, and Fort Foster, and the link of communication to the north became more permanent.⁸⁰

The last major section of Florida to be bound to the United States by mail was Key West. Although few people inhabited the island in 1821, the establishment of a naval base and a United States District Court about 1828 necessitated a postal connection.

75. 4 *Statutes*, 320; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 43n.

76. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 628n, 628-29. Private post offices received no financial assistance from the post office department to aid in the cost of transporting the mails. Transportation costs were to be paid out of the postage collected or made up by the postmaster.

77. *Ibid.*, 629n.

78. *Ibid.*, 663, 673-74.

79. *Ibid.*, 673-74; *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., no. 63, 75; 27th Cong., 3rd sess., no. 180, 589-90.

80. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXVI, 1005-07, 5 *Statutes*, 669.

Shortly thereafter, the postmaster general was able to arrange for certain mails to be brought in on ships coming from Charleston.⁸¹ But it was by no means satisfactory to the territorial governor who desired a route which would aid him in the administration of South Florida. "I assure you," he wrote to Richard Keith Call, "that it is impossible for me to do justice to the Southern part of the Territory without some conveyance to transmit the laws, commissions, and orders."⁸² A post office must have opened at Key West in 1829, as illustrated by postage receipts of \$47.83 for that year, but no official route was in evidence. Communications were so intermittent as to make business difficult for local citizens. "Orders affecting our rights and interests," they cried out, "are issued by the functionaries of the General and Territorial Governments of which we are totally ignorant, until the time of benefiting by the priviledges [*sic*] offered, or avoiding the evils threatened has past [*sic*] by - "⁸³

These and other complaints for regular contact with the outside world at last prodded Congress to authorize a land route to the island from St. Augustine in 1832. But as the prescribed route was unfeasible, the postmaster general opened a monthly packet service from Charleston in its place.⁸⁴ Another packet on the same schedule began operation in 1835 from St. Marks via Tampa Bay to Key West.⁸⁵ During the remainder of the territorial stage the mail service to the island progressively improved as additional sea and land routes were inaugurated by the post office department.⁸⁶

By 1845, the majority of Floridians had achieved a substantial measure of postal communication with the rest of the nation. Tallahassee was serviced by a four-horse coach mail from the north, commercial ports along the gulf were connected to interior cotton producing areas, military camps and posts were placed in contact with one another as well as with Tallahassee and Wash-

81. *Key West Advocate*, March 14, 1829.

82. *Key West Register*, April 2, 1829.

83. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIV, 626.

84. *Key West Gazette*, August 1, 1832; 4 *Statutes* 548; *Debates in Congress*, 22nd Cong., 1st sess., app. XXIX.

85. William McKean was the contractor on the route at \$1,500. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., no. 175, 16; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 35-39.

86. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXV, 333n; *House Documents*, 26th Cong., 1st sess., no. 220, 108-11; *Biennial Register* 1841, 228.

ington, D. C., and Key West, strategically located in terms of commerce and defense, had postal links with several mainland towns. But this had only been accomplished at a considerable expense to the government as the amount of postal business was never enough, after the first year, to cover the cost of service. As more and more offices and routes became operative-post roads rose from 121 miles in 1821 to 2,920 in 1845— costs accelerated.⁸⁷ Thus by 1841, it was costing the department \$45,879 to supply Florida with an effective mail service while revenue totalled only \$17,649.52.⁸⁸

87. *House Documents*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., no. 151, 2; *Postmaster General's Report*, 1845, 862-63.

88. *House Documents*, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., no. 505, 5-6; *Biennial Register*, 1841, 228-29; *Postmaster General's Report*, 1841, 481.