

Under Six Flags

Expanding the Mail Service in Texas 1801-1865

This exhibit will illustrate with postal history artifacts how the mail system was expanded in Texas in the period 1801 through 1865. This time frame encompasses the postal administration of six (6) different countries or governing entities commencing with the earliest recorded artifacts from Spanish Texas.

The exhibit not only focuses on the expansion of the postal routes internal to the region but also how mail entered and left the boundaries of Texas. Emphasis is given to the expansion of routes using examples from Texas Frontier Forts, the Butterfield Overland Mail and other significant historical events that shaped the growth of the mail system and of Texas. The covers displayed provide a broad overview of the impact of military conflict, conquest, western migration and the struggles encountered during the expansion and settlement of the American southwest.



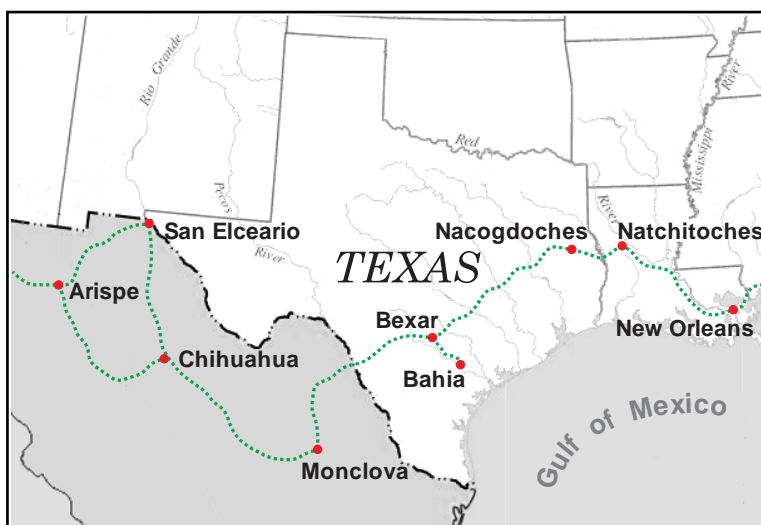
The exhibit is arranged by the six postal administrations that provided or oversaw mail service in Texas. These sections are subdivided into more specific categories as identified in the header at upper right of each page. Maps identifying the towns where artifacts originated, were destined, crossed the borders of Texas or were gathered for distribution elsewhere are included to assist the viewer in visualizing how mail was handled. As the exhibit progresses, these graphics help illustrate the steady geographic expansion of routes and associated post offices throughout the region.

The exhibit is organized into the following sections with each new section, as well as their continuation onto the next frame, denoted by the "Flag" of the governing country or administration:

- Section 1: **Spanish Texas**...two pages with two of the four known artifacts
- Section 2: **Mexican Texas**...three pages with four of the 15 known artifacts
- Section 3: **Provisional Government of Texas**...four pages with four of the 10 known artifacts
- Section 4: **The Republic of Texas**
- Section 5: **The State of Texas**
- Section 6: **Confederate Texas**

Spanish Texas

Mail via the El Camino Real



The Spanish empire in North America was linked by a series of royal roads or “Los Camino Reales”. The major east-west road in Texas, the “El Camino Real de Los Tejas”, was first used as a postal route in 1779 when Don Teodoro de Croix, Governor and Commander-General of the Interior Provinces of New Spain, inaugurated a monthly mail service in the province now called Texas. This principal road continued in use after Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1821.



Bahia (Goliad) to Bexar (San Antonio)

August 11, 1807

Mailed on official business with notation "Rl. Serv" (Royal Service) from Jose Ogante, commander at La Bahia to Governor Don Antonio Cordero of Coahuila y Texas in Bexar.

The earliest dated Texas letter extant – a Texas postal history icon

An 1802 inspection report of the post offices in Texas, the "Provincias Internas de Oriente" or Internal Provinces of the East, reveals that **Don Francisco Xavier Galan** was then the postmaster at Bexar (San Antonio). His endorsement along with Franca (Paid) can be found on this letter.

Franca
Galan



Bexar to Monclova

circa 1801-1805

Folded letter posted on official business with notation "R^l Servicio" (Royal Service) to Governor Don Antonio Cordero of Coahuila in Monclova, capital of Coahuila, prior to Cordero's relocation to Bexar in 1805. Transported by pack animal south on the El Camino Real to destination.



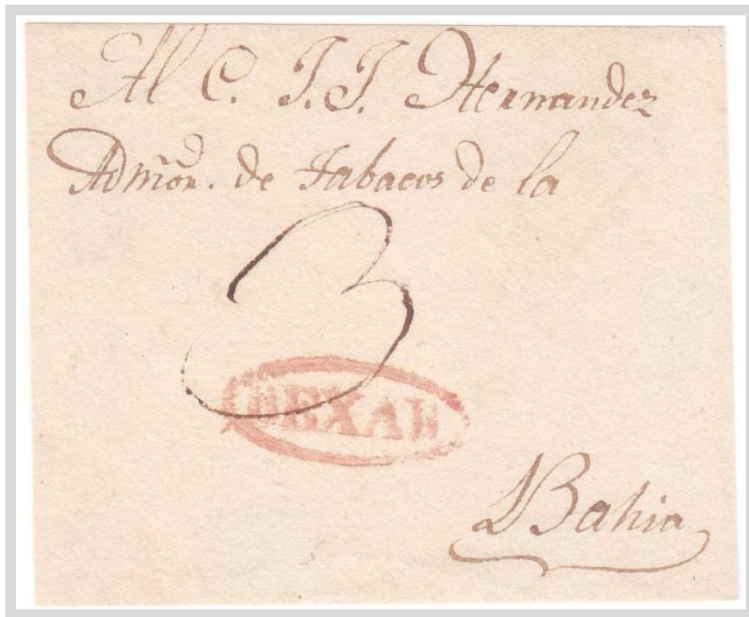
Founded at the site of mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, the settlement was abandoned on two occasions due to fear of a French invasion from Louisiana. Permanently settled in 1779, Nacogdoches became a gateway for trade into East Texas, mostly illicit, with the French and later the Americans, from Natchitoches and New Orleans, Louisiana.



Nacogdoches to Bexar

June 8, (1828-30)

Folded letter posted "3" reales collect and carried down the El Camino Real to Captain Candido de Arcos, commander of the soldiers of the second regiment stationed in Bexar.



Bexar to Bahia

circa 1824

Posted 3 reales collect, letter travelled the original Spanish mission road southeast to destination.



Bahia to Bexar

circa 1824

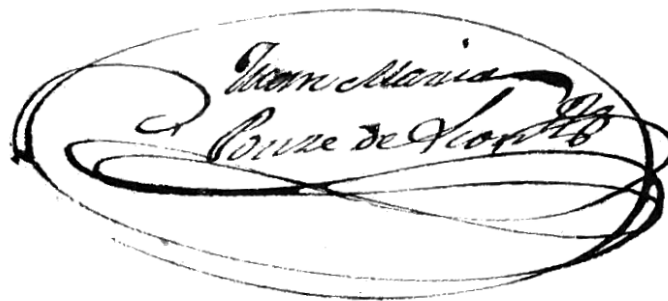
Posted 4 reales collect, letter travelled the original Spanish mission road northwest to destination.



San Elceario to Chihuahua

1826

Manuscript "3" reales on verso, letter travelled south by pack animal to destination.
San Elceario was the early name for San Elizario which is now part of El Paso.



Letter is signed by Juan Maria Ponce de Leon who founded El Paso in 1827 with the purchase of 200 acres of land.

Unique – the only reported example.



In 1835 the majority of settlement in Texas was situated in the southeast along the Gulf Coast and the U.S. border with Louisiana. As relations with Mexico deteriorated, Texas residents elected committees to discuss separation from Mexico. These committees communicated with one another by means of a **"Government Express"** mail system.



Bexar to San Felipe de Austin

July 19, 1835

Folded letter dated July 19, 1835, addressed to Mr. A. E. Baker. Sent via Texas revolutionary post rider on the road between Bexar (San Antonio) and San Felipe, the seat of the Texas independence movement.

Texans in Brazoria established a private subscription post to facilitate the handling and transportation of the “Anglo” mails thus circumventing the Mexican system.



New Orleans, LA to Santa Anna, TX via Brazoria, TX

August 19, 1835

Folded letter datelined New Orleans and directed “**Via Brazoria**” carried aboard the Schooner *San Felipe* to Texas where it was transported privately from the port at Velasco via Brazoria to destination.

EXCHANGE AND POST OFFICE,

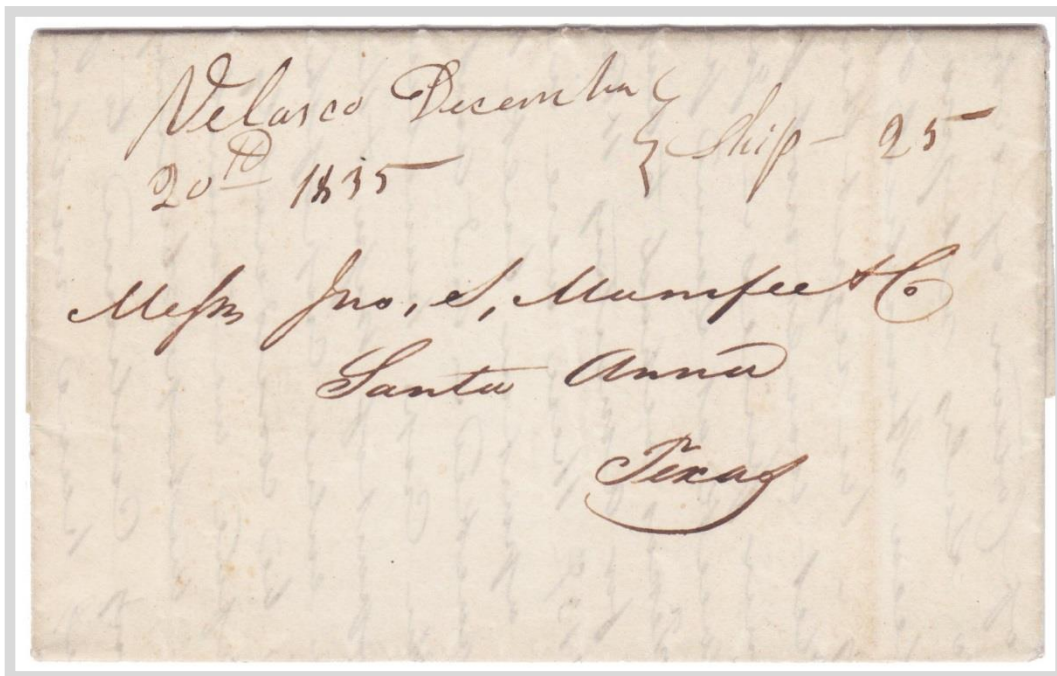
(First door West of the Brazoria Hotel.)

THE subscribers have made arrangements to receive letters from vessels from the United States for this place, and will forward them by the first safe conveyance to the various places of their destination; and all letters left in their care either for the United States or the surrounding country, will be forwarded with as little delay as possible—free of charge. j5-1

MIMS & SHARP.

Texas Republican (Brazoria, Texas) July 5, 1835

On December 12, 1835 an Ordinance and Decree for creating a General Post Office Department was approved by Henry Smith the Governor of the Provisional Government of Texas. Most importantly this ordinance established the **routes, rates, post offices** and **regulations** of Texas' first postal system.



Velasco, TX to Santa Anna, TX

December 20, 1835

Folded letter datelined New Orleans privately carried by ship and entered the Texian mails at the port of Velasco where it was rated collect to destination.

The earliest known artifact from the Texian Postal System.



Nacogdoches, TX to Baltimore, MD

December 21, 1835

Folded letter datelined Washington-on-the-Brazos carried privately to Nacogdoches, TX and posted there. Crossed the Sabine River at Gaines Ferry and entered the U.S. mail system at Fort Jessup, LA.

Republic of Texas



Mail from Army Headquarters
from San Jacinto...Texas Free and Independent

Texas declared its independence on March 2, 1836 and on April 21, 1836 General Sam Houston's Texian army attacked and defeated General Santa Anna's Mexican army at the decisive battle of San Jacinto.



Headquarters of the Army of the Republic to Scotland

May 1836

Carried by military express across the Sabine River at Gaines' Ferry into Louisiana and placed in the U.S. mails at Natchitoches, LA. Fledgling republic postal laws provided that a post route be established from the location of the headquarters of the army to the general post office and on to Gaines' Ferry on the Sabine River.

In his letter George R. Mercer states.....

(We chased) them about 3 miles till night stopped the carnage which was terrible, they are strewn about everywhere. I think that about 400 were killed and we took upwards of 500 prisoners – all their baggage, Military chest money (about 10,000 dollars), caravans of horses and mules.

*We had only 7 men killed and about 40 wounded – which unless I had seen the fact I could scarcely have believed considering the hotness of their fire but I observed they over-shot us owing to their charge being too heavy – next day we took **Santa Anna** prisoner, he was about 8 miles from the field of battle and disguised as a peasant – he would not allow that he was the dictator till he come into camp in front of the prisoners who exclaimed '**Santa Anna**' all at once, He offers to acknowledge our independence for his liberty – and to order all the Mexican troops out of the country.*

I send this by the Express which now leaves.

The only contemporary eye-witness account of the Battle of San Jacinto in private hands.

The Provisional Government of Texas established 17 post offices and 5 postal routes.
During the Republic Period 320 post offices and 29 new routes were added



Matagorda, TX to Velasco, TX

April 13, 1839

Folded letter prepaid and carried on a route from Texana to Velasco via Matagorda established in May 1838.



Houston, TX to San Augustine, TX

May 1839

Folded letter prepaid and carried on a route from Houston to Nacogdoches established in May 1838.



Austin, TX to Mt. Vernon, TX

March 17, 1842

Folded letter posted collect and carried on routes established in 1840. Missent to Washington-on-the-Brazos, former county seat of Washington C(oun)ty, rerouted to nearby Mt. Vernon, TX, then current seat of county government.



Houston, TX to Nacogdoches, TX

December 18, 1845

Folded letter prepaid and carried on a route from Houston to Nacogdoches established in May 1838.

Much of the early internal mail was between officials, officers and postmasters on service of the infant republic. These individuals had the franking privilege to convey letters by post...free of postage.

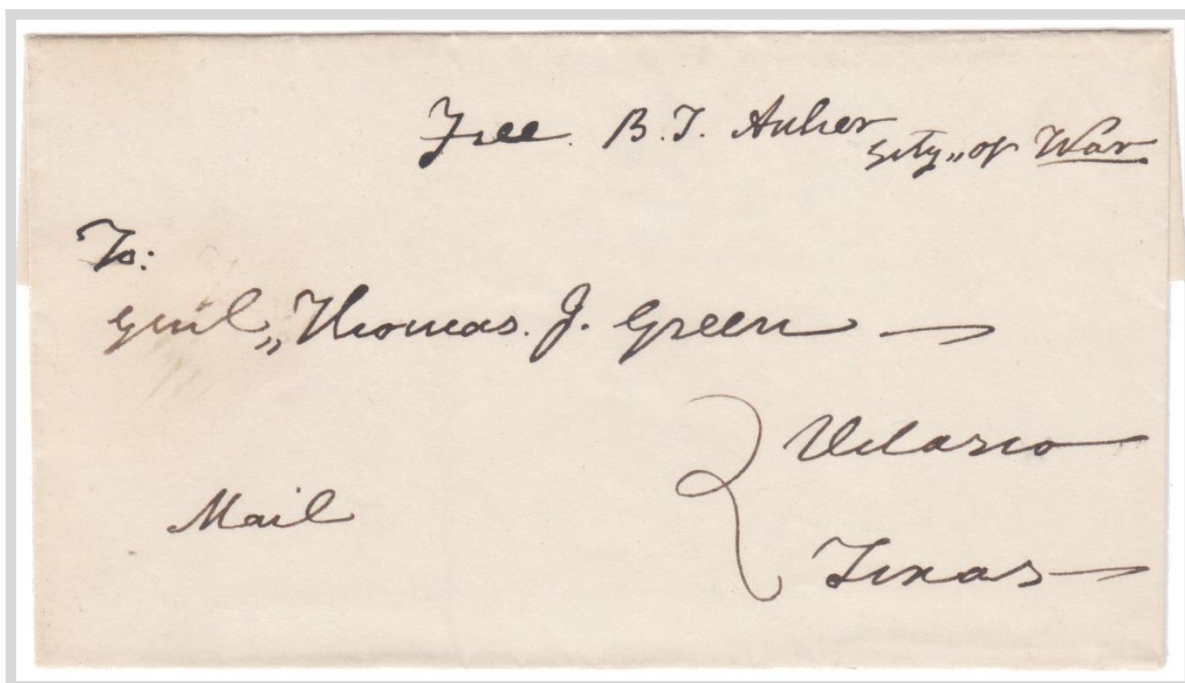
**Austin, TX to
Philadelphia, PA
August 2, 1840**

Folded letter mailed free to the Texas border by frank of **John Rice Jones, Postmaster General of the Republic of Texas**. Probably departed from Galveston and entered the U.S. mails in New Orleans where it was rated to destination.



**Pattillo's P.O., TX
to Houston, TX
August 27 1837**

Franked by George Pattillo, postmaster, and mailed free to Sam Houston, the President of the Republic of Texas.



Texas Secretary of War to Velasco, TX

circa 1840

Franked by Branch T. Archer, Republic of Texas Secretary of War.



Austin, TX to Nacogdoches, TX

December 18, 1845

Franked by the Acting Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office



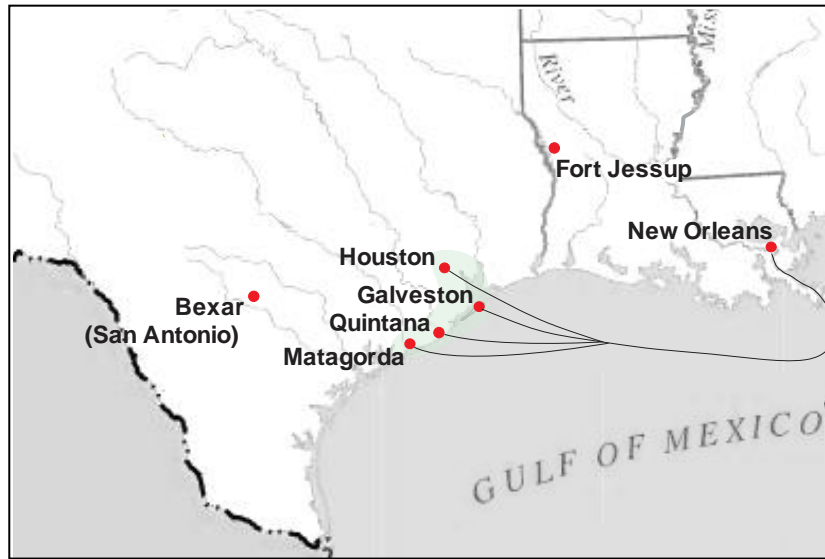
**Austin, TX to
Philadelphia, PA
December 2, 1841**

Folded letter mailed free within the Texian postal system by frank of Clark Owen, a member of the Texas Congress. Probably departed Galveston for New Orleans where it entered the U.S. mail system and was rerouted for delivery to destination.

**Lexington, MS to
Houston, TX
September 5, 1838**

Folded letter addressed to the Surgeon General (Republic of) Texas. Mailed prepaid to the U.S. border in New Orleans. Forwarded to Texas where it was rated "Free" to destination.





During the Republic period, mail forwarders in New Orleans were contracted by the Texian government to facilitate the flow and administration of mail between the U.S. and the fledgling republic. Galveston received 70% of the mail delivered to Texas, mail was also sent directly to ports at Matagorda, Quintana, Velasco and Houston.

Forwarded by
WILLIAM BRYAN
Ge'n'l Ag't for Texas

Pleasant Grove, GA to
Washington, TX
March 12, 1836

Mailed free by James H. Starr, postmaster, and routed to New Orleans. Directed by sender to Fort Jessup, LA for delivery across the Sabine River into Texas, but delivered via ship to the Texas gulf coast. Forwarded by William Bryan during his first term as Texas mail agent.



One of five (5) covers reported bearing this three-line handstamp.

*Forwarded by
William Bryan
St. Louis
New Orleans*

Charlestown, SC
to (Houston, TX)
November 21, 1836

Prepaid to the U.S. border in
New Orleans and directed to
Texas on the **Steamship
Columbia**. Forwarded by
endorsement of
William Bryan on verso.



*Care of J. J. Crittenden
New Orleans*

Baltimore, MD to
Houston, TX via Galveston
March 10, 1837

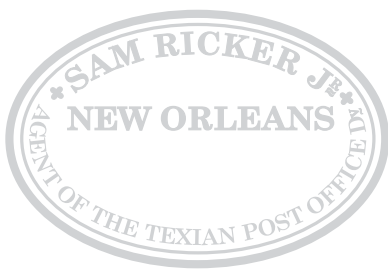
Letter franked by U.S. Senator
J.J. Crittenden which traveled
free to New Orleans.
Forwarded by Thomas Toby
Brothers to Galveston via ship
and rerated for delivery to
destination.



Houston, TX to Clarendon, VT

April 2, 1838

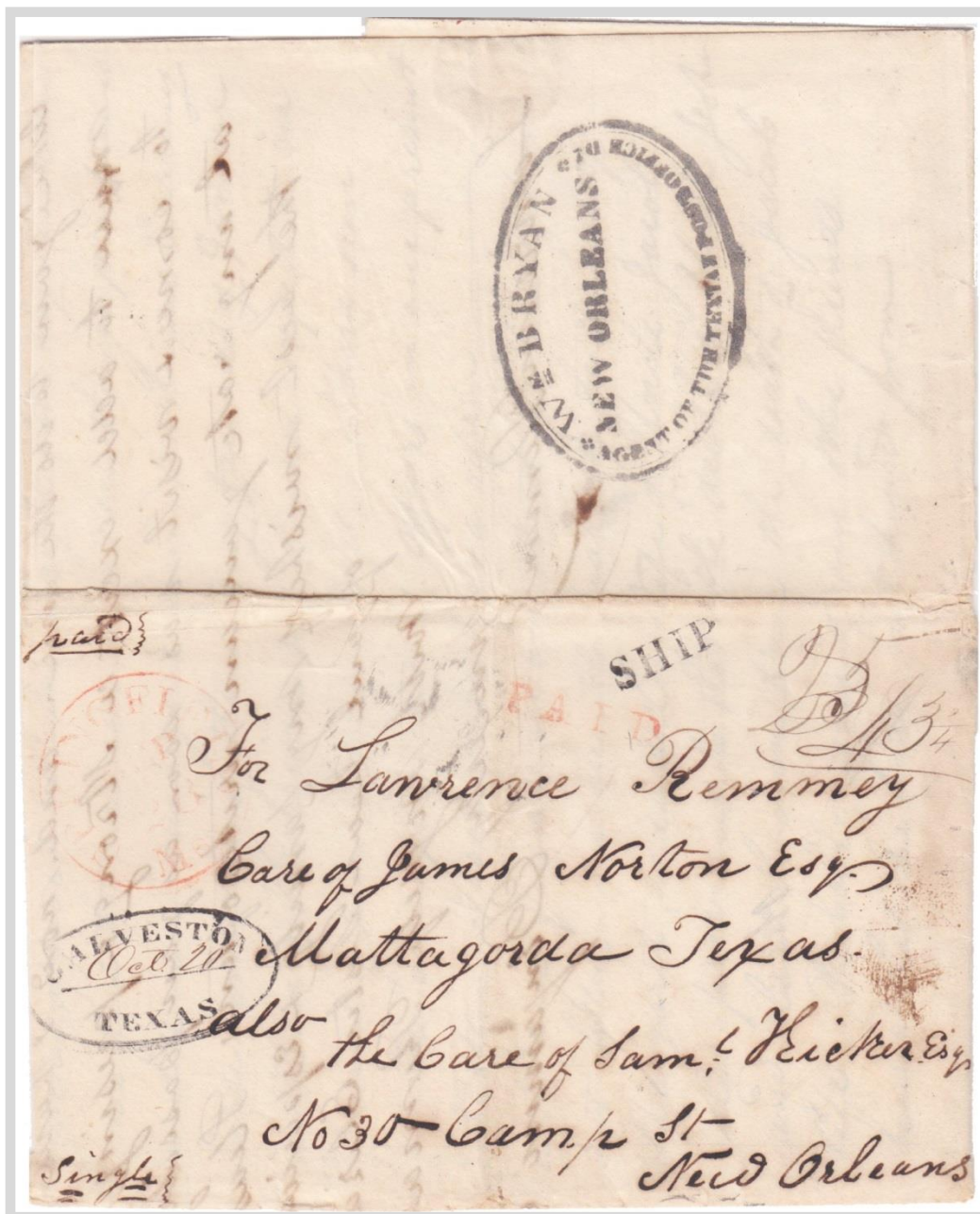
Franked "Free War Dept" for Texas transit to New Orleans. Forwarded to the U.S. mails in New Orleans by Samuel Ricker, Jr. who served as agent in 1837 and 1838.



**Pendleton, SC to
San Antonio de Bexar, TX
June 14, 1838**

Letter prepaid to the U.S.
border at New Orleans.
Forwarded by ship to Galveston
where it was rerated and
entered the Texian mails.





Springfield, MA to Matagorda, TX

September 28, 1840

Prepaid to the U.S. border in New Orleans. Forwarded to Galveston by William Bryan, during his second term as agent, where it was rerouted collect for delivery to destination.

FORWARDED. BY.
WILLIAM. BRYAN.



West Point, NY to Galveston, TX

August 18, 1842

Letter addressed to Texian General Albert Sidney Johnson prepaid to the U.S. border in New Orleans. Forwarded via ship to Galveston by William Bryan during his second term as agent.

One of three (3) covers reported bearing this two-line handstamp.



Galveston, TX to Westfield, MA

April 6, 1840

Privately forwarded by J.F. James of Galveston to New Orleans where it entered the U.S. mails.

New Orleans agents sent mail to Texas via water on various vessels at their discretion.



Granby, MA to
Independence, TX
February 10, 1838

Paid to the U.S. border
in New Orleans and
forwarded by Samuel
Ricker, Jr. to Galveston
on the **Steam Packet
Columbia**.



Nashville, TN to
Matagorda, TX
May 29, 1838

Prepaid to the U.S. border in New Orleans.
Letter placed aboard the
Steam Packet Columbia for Galveston where
it entered the Texian mails.

New York, NY
to (Galveston) Texas
January 6, 1838

Prepaid "Express Mail" to Mr. James
Reed and Co. New Orleans, agents for
the **Steam Packet Columbia**. Privately
carried onboard the Columbia to
destination in Galveston.





Galveston, TX to Kennebunk, ME

March 20, 1838

Carried aboard the **Steam Packet New York** from Galveston and entered
the U.S. mails in New Orleans.

Republic of Texas

Coastal Waterways

...other ships

New Orleans, LA
to Quintana, TX
December 3, 1840

Folded letter datelined
New Orleans and handed
to the captain of the
Schooner Yew Tree for
transit to Texas. Entered
the Texian mails at
Galveston and rated for
delivery to destination.



Washington, IN to
Texana, TX
September 26, 1839

Folded letter prepaid to
the U.S. border at New
Orleans. Transported by
ship to Houston where it
received the Houston
"SHIP" mark, was rerated
and entered the Texian
mails for delivery to
destination.



Houston, TX
to Spring Hill P.O., TN
September 12, 1841

Folded letter prepaid from
origin to the Texas border at
Galveston. Transported by
ship to New Orleans where it
entered the U.S. mails and
was rerated for delivery to
destination.



During the Republic period, hundreds of European immigrants came directly to Texas from the port city of Le Havre, France. On rare occasion, mail was transported from Europe directly to Texas aboard these vessels without entering the U.S. postal system.



Rome, Papal States to Galveston, TX

14 May 1844

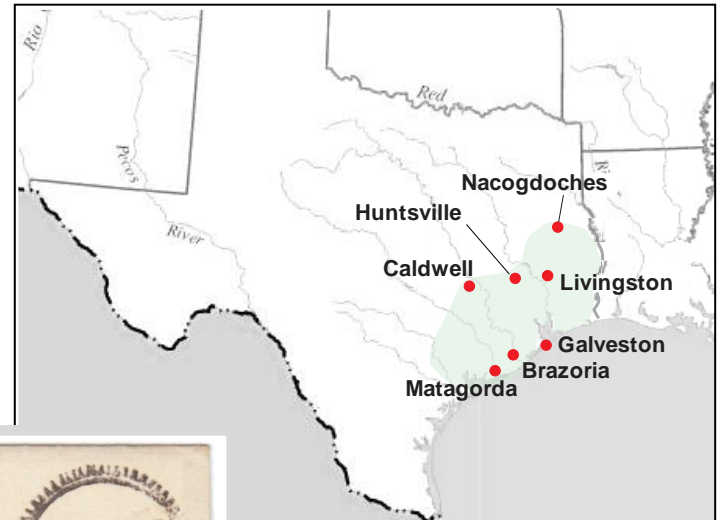
Folded letter prepaid on verso sent via Austria and Huningue exchange office to Havre, France where it was mailed direct to Galveston in the Republic of Texas by private ship. Galveston SHIP handstamp and implied 6 1/4c port ship fee due upon arrival

U.S. Statehood Period

Mail Routes in Southeast Texas



In December 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state to the U.S. Many post offices in southeast Texas pre-dated the Statehood period and transportation of the mails in that region generally used pre-existing Republic routes.



**Livingston, TX to Nacogdoches, TX
December 30, 1849**

Folded letter mailed collect
travelled by stage along routes
first established in 1840.



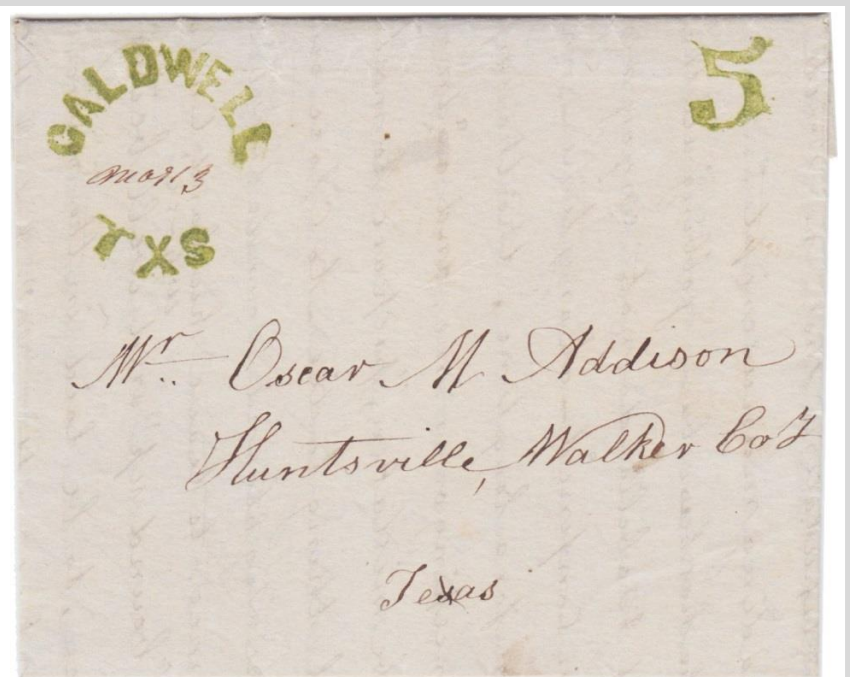
**Matagorda, TX
to Brazoria, TX
June 19, 1848**

Folded letter mailed
collect travelled by
stage along a route
first established in
1840.



**Caldwell, TX
to Huntsville, TX
March 13, 1850**

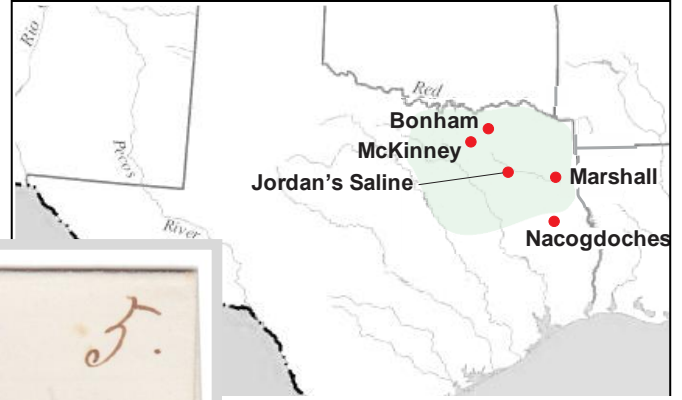
Folded letter mailed
collect travelled by stage
along routes that were
established by 1845.



U.S. Statehood Period

Route Expansion into Northeast Texas

Several routes were established into northeast Texas during the Republic period. However, only three maintained reliable service. The regions greatest period of expansion occurred during the years 1846–1855 when counties were established and the population density increased.



**Bonham, TX to
McKinney, TX
December 21, 1849**

Travelled by stage along a
major east-west route
established in 1847 by statute.



**Marshall, TX to
Houston, TX
May 23, 1848**

Travelled by stage along routes established in 1846 by statute.



**Jordan's Saline, TX to
Nacogdoches, TX
December 6, 1850**

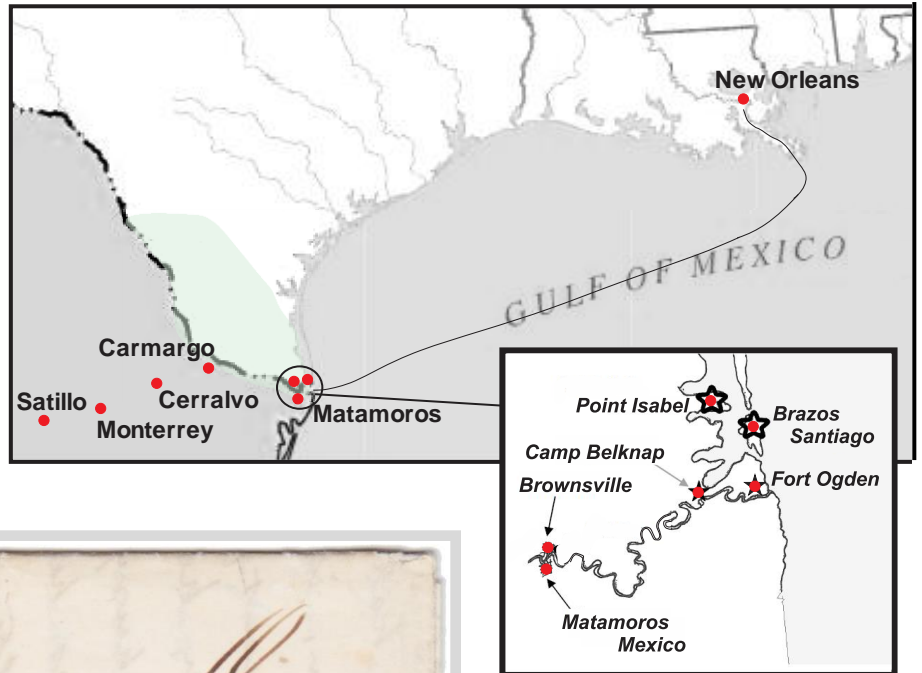
Prepaid folded letter
travelled by stage along
routes established in
1847 by statute.



U.S. Statehood Period

Expansion into Southwest Texas

The military build-up to the Mexican-American War was responsible for the expansion of Texas mails in far southwest Texas. In May 1846 the New Orleans postmaster dispatched Henry Levy, one of his distribution clerks, to Point Isabel to facilitate the transportation of the mails to U.S. troops on the Rio Grande.



**Camp Belknap, TX to
Athens, OH
via Pt. Isabel, TX
August 28, 1846**

Folded letter datelined "Camp Belknap" which entered the mails at Point Isabel for distribution to New Orleans via military transport vessel.

*P. Isaac
Aug 28
Doc Wm Blackstone
Athens
Athens County
Ohio*

**Fort Ogden, TX
to New Orleans, LA
via Pt. Isabel, TX
January 18, 1847**

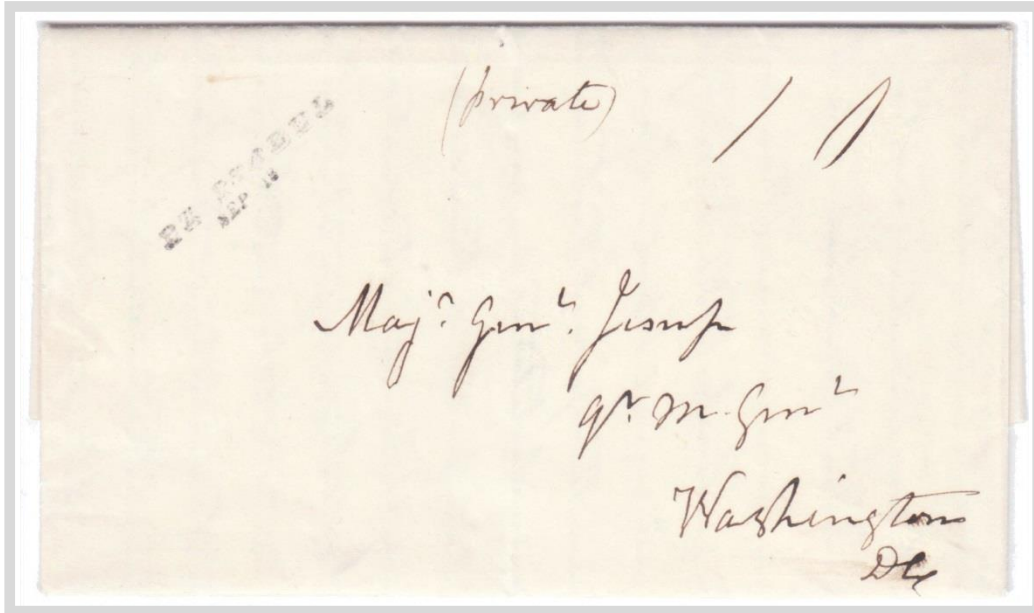
Folded letter datelined "Fort Ogden Mouth of the Rio Grande" entered the mails collect at Point Isabel for distribution to New Orleans via military transport vessel.

*C. H. Ogerton Esq
New Orleans
Smith, Hadden & Leach & Co
La*
PT. ISABEL
JAN 18 1847
10

U.S. Statehood Period

Expansion into Southwest Texas

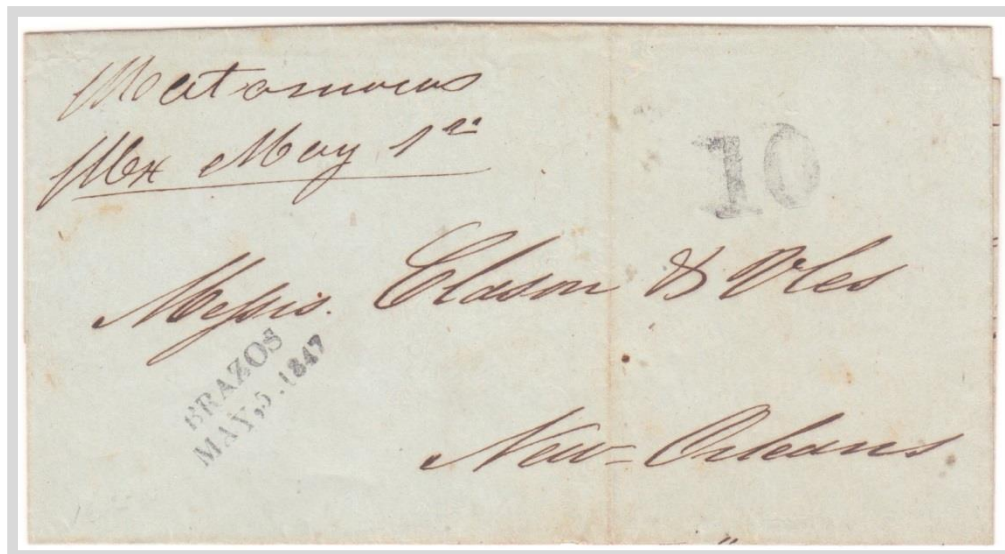
Initially handled at Point Isabel, mail distribution was transferred to Brazos Santiago in April 1847. As U.S. troops occupied Mexico, mail was transported to these distribution offices for transportation to New Orleans. In some cases, special occupation post offices were set up in Mexico to facilitate the handling of the mails.



Matamoros, Mexico to Washington, DC via Pt. Isabel, TX

September 18, 1846

Folded letter datelined Matamoros carried by military courier and posted in Point Isabel for distribution to New Orleans.



Matamoros, Mexico to New Orleans, LA via Brazos Santiago, TX

May 5, 1847

Folded letter endorsed "Matamoros, Mex" by military postmaster and transported across the Rio Grande River to Brazos Santiago for distribution to New Orleans.

U.S. Statehood Period

Expansion into Southwest Texas

Special Mail Routes out of Mexico



Buena Vista, Mexico to Grassy Creek, NC via Brazos Santiago, TX

April 20, 1848

Folded letter datelined Buena Vista, Mexico was transported and posted at Brazos Santiago and routed to New Orleans via contract mail vessel for distribution to destination.



Matamoros, Mexico to Hartford, CT via Brazos Santiago, TX

November 23, 1848

Folded letter datelined Matamoros, Mexico was transported across the Rio Grande and posted at Brazos Santiago and routed to New Orleans via contract mail vessel for distribution to destination.

U.S. Statehood Period

Expansion into Southwest Texas

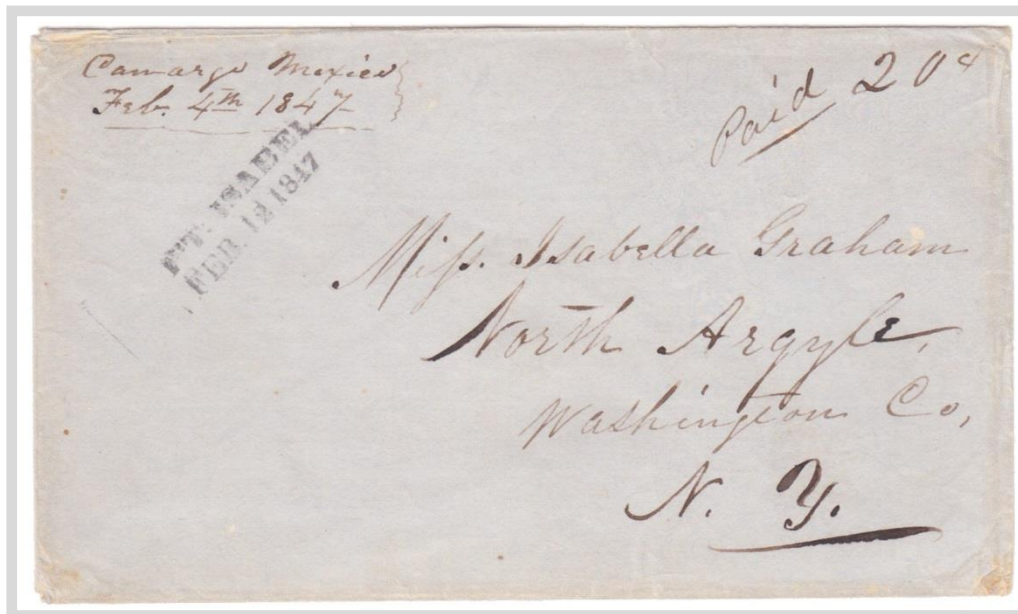
Special Mail Routes out of Mexico



Cerralvo, Mexico to Washington, DC via Pt. Isabel, TX

September 18, 1846

Folded letter datelined Matamoros carried by military courier and posted in Point Isabel for distribution to New Orleans.



Carmargo, Mexico to North Argyle, NY via Pt. Isabel, TX

February 12, 1847

Folded letter endorsed "Carmargo, Mexico" by military postmaster and transported down the Rio Grande to Point Isabel for distribution to New Orleans.

U.S. Statehood Period

General Issue Postage Stamps

1847 Issue



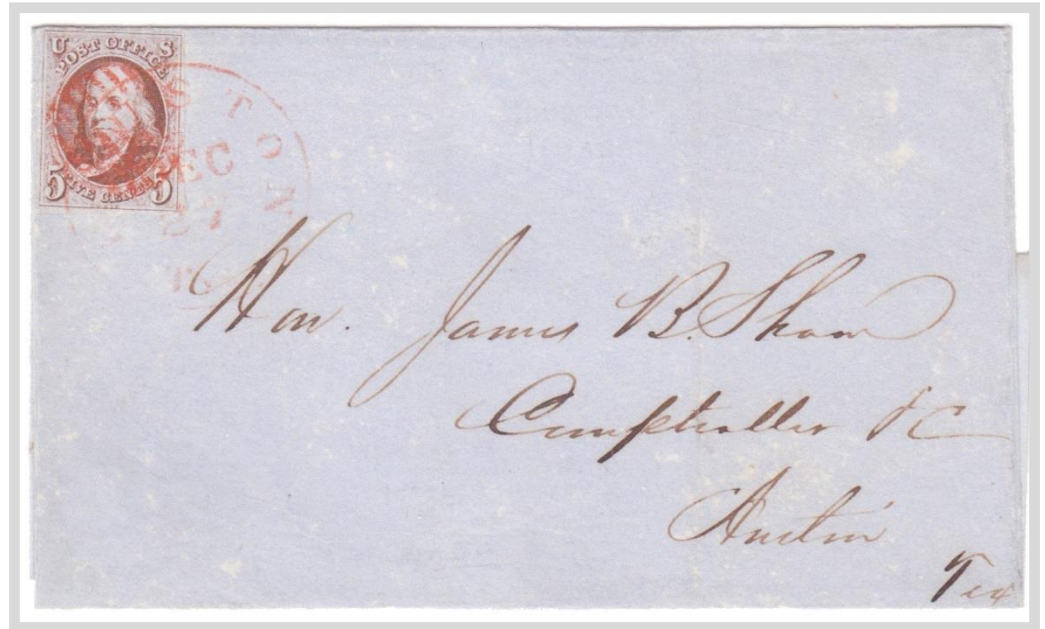
Continued

Almost coincidental with Texas' admission to the Union, the U.S. Post Office Department issued its first adhesive stamps for the prepayment of postage on mail. The use of U.S. stamps on Texas mail was an unmistakable announcement of Texas' new statehood status.

**Houston, TX
to Austin, TX
circa 1849**

5c 1847 issue prepaid the less than 300 mile rate on letter carried by stage from Houston to Austin.

One of only six (6) covers franked with the 5c 1847 issue originating in Texas.



**San Antonio, TX to
Campbell Station, TN
circa 1849**

10c 1847 issue prepaid the greater than 300 mile rate on letter carried by stage to Indianola and then to New Orleans by contract steamer for distribution to destination.

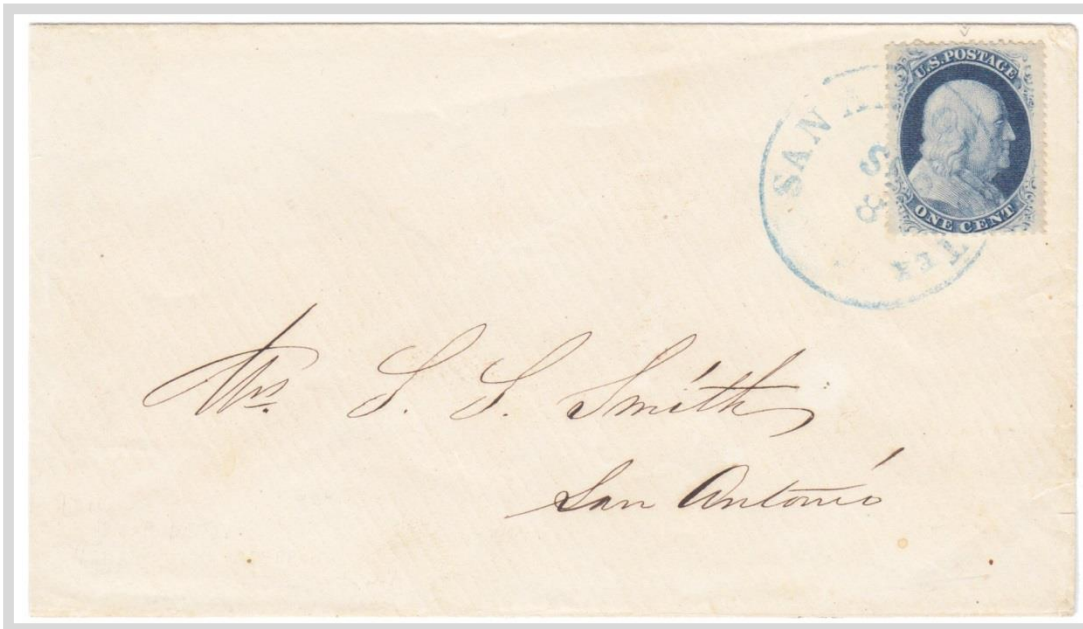
One of only eleven (11) covers franked with the 10c 1847 issue originating in Texas.



U.S. Statehood Period

General Issue Postage Stamps

1851-1860 Issues



San Antonio, TX
circa 1859

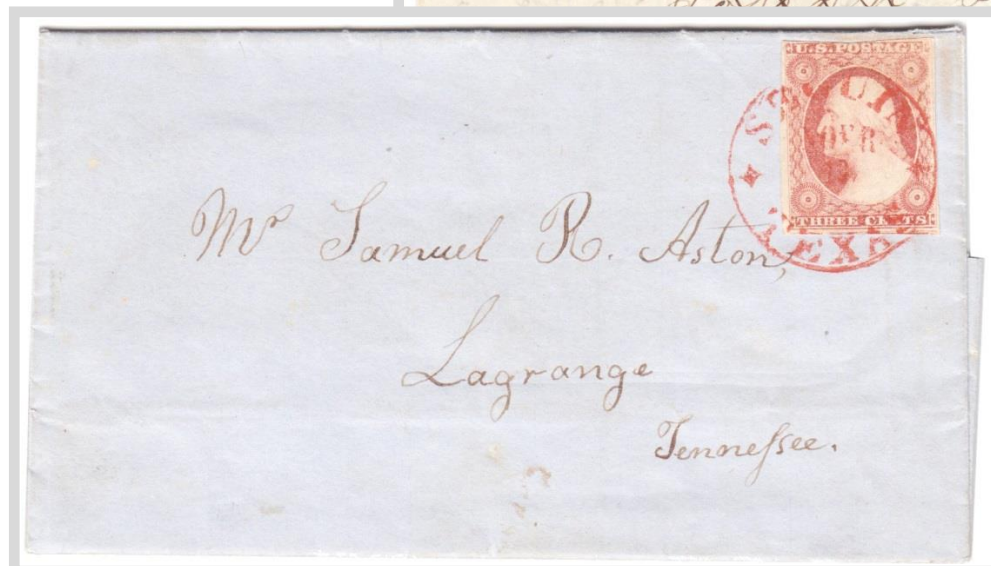
1c 1857 issue prepaid the local drop rate on letter posted in San Antonio ...the major distributing post office in southwest Texas.

Seguin, TX
to Charlotte, NC
July 21, 1857

3c 1851 issue prepaid the less than 3000 mile rate. Both Seguin folded letters traveled by stage to Indianola then by contract steamer to New Orleans for distribution to destination.



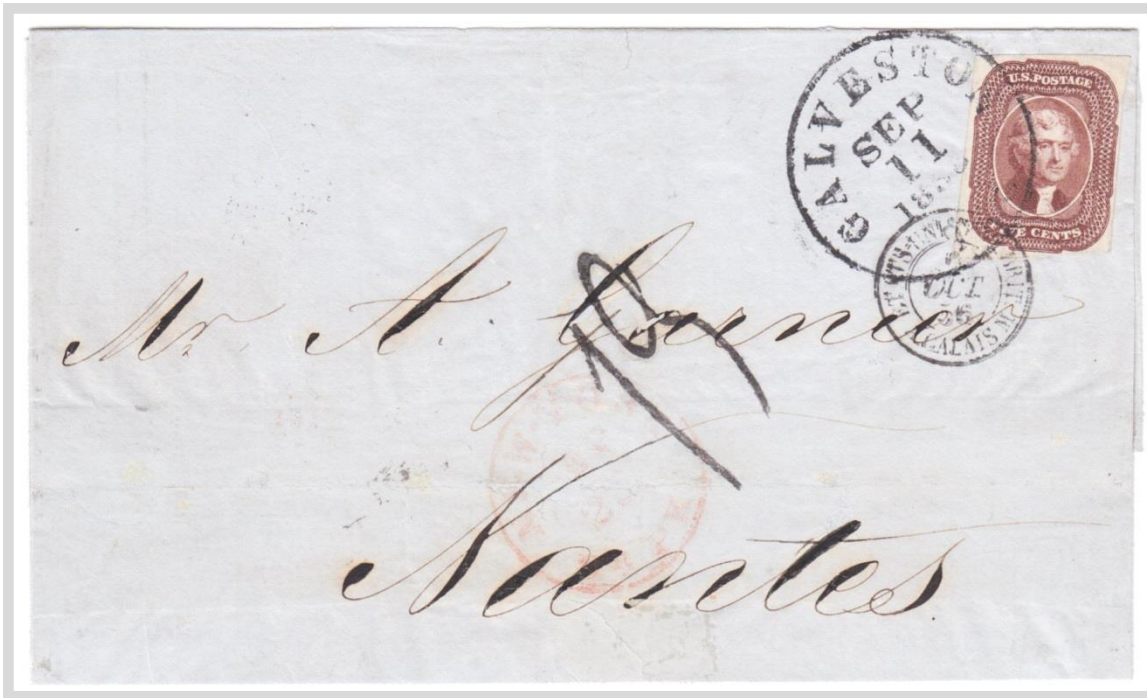
Seguin, TX to
LaGrange, TN
November 10, 1855



U.S. Statehood Period

General Issue Postage Stamps

1851-1860 Issues



**Galveston, TX to
Nantes, France
September 11, 1856**

1851 5c issue prepaid the Open Mail rate to France on folded letter carried by contract steamer to New Orleans for distribution to New York and on to Europe.

**Indianola, TX
to Aix-en-Othe, France
September 4, 1857**

Short payment of the double 15c French Treaty rate on cover carried from Texas to New Orleans for distribution to New York then by British Packet to Europe.



**Bright Star, TX to
Napa, CA
September 21, 1858**

10c 1857 issue prepaid the greater than 3000 mile rate from Texas. Cover was carried by stage to Shreveport where it was placed on contract Red River steamboat for New Orleans. Letter traveled via Panama to California.



U.S. Statehood Period

General Issue Postage Stamps

1851-1860 Issues



Galveston, TX to Montech, France

March 12, 1859

3c and 12c 1857 issue overpay the 15c Treaty Rate to France. Carried to New Orleans by contract steamer for destination to New York and Europe.



Galveston, TX to Liverpool, England

June 29, 1860

12c 1857 pair prepay the 24c Treaty Rate to England. Carried to New Orleans by contract steamer for destination to New York and Europe.

In 1846 a route "by water" was established between Galveston and Houston which replaced a pre-existing circuitous route. For several years, the shallow draft steamer **S.M. Williams** was used to transport the mails between the two towns.

"*S.M. Williams*"

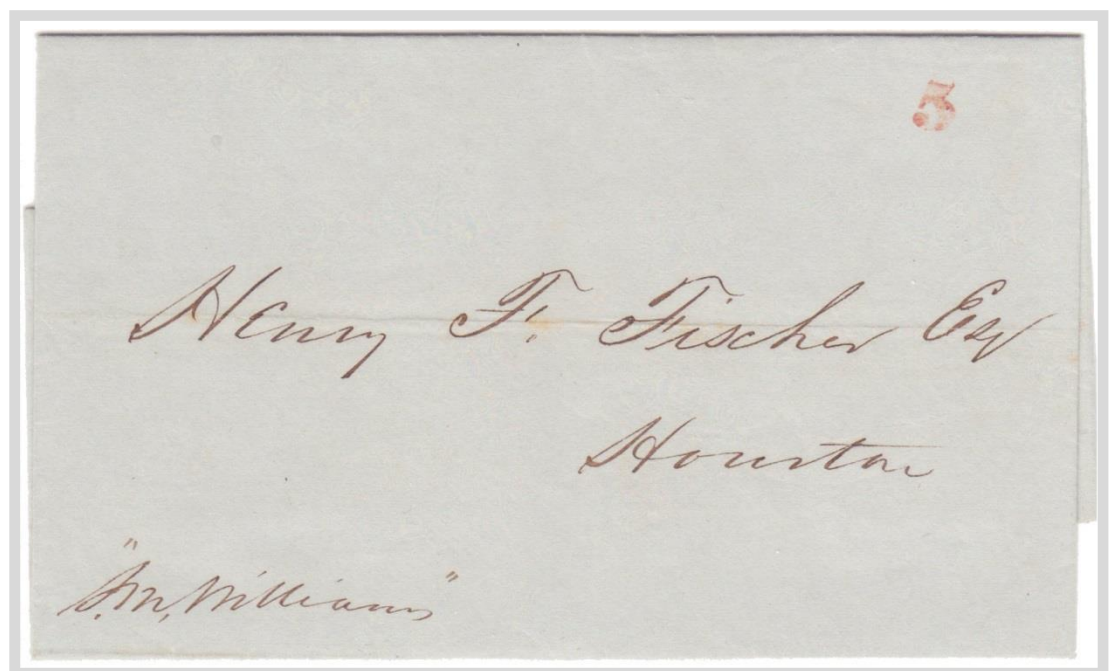


**Houston, TX to
Galveston, TX
April 5, 1846**

Folded letter entered
mails in Houston and
arrived in Galveston
aboard the contract
steamer **S.M. Williams**.

**Galveston, TX to
Houston, TX
June 29, 1846**

Folded letter placed in
the mails at Houston
after arrival from
Galveston aboard the
contract steamer
S.M. Williams.



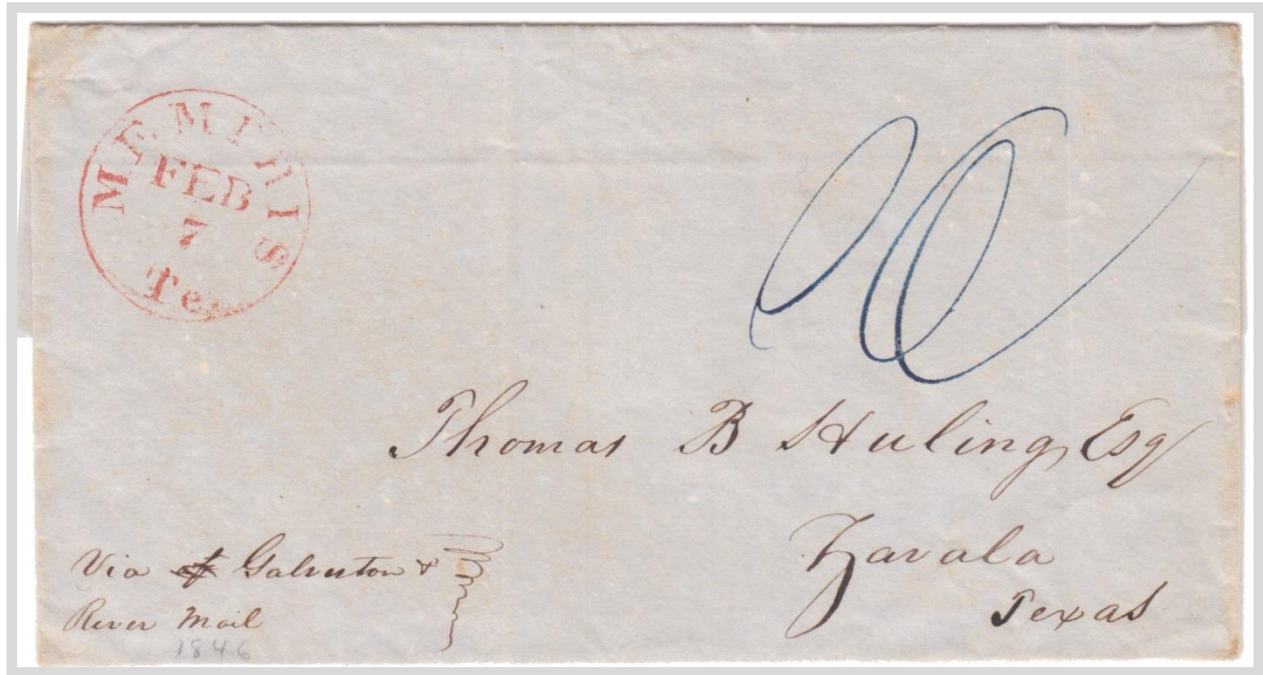
A contract mail route, by water, from Shreveport to New Orleans, LA on the Red River had been established prior to Texas joining the Union. To take advantage of this “three trip a week” high traffic water route, east Texas mail routes were expanded into Louisiana as denoted by the color groups below.



New Orleans, LA to Zavala, TX

September 1, 1853

Folded letter directed “**via Red River**” and mailed “Free” by travelling frank of postmaster to his son at destination. Routed by Red River steamboat to Alexandria, LA then overland crossing into Texas at Burr’s Ferry.



Memphis, TN to Zavala, TX

February 7, 1846

Folded letter directed “**via Galveston & River Mail**” was carried from Memphis to New Orleans and then to Galveston for routing by land to destination in Texas.



Memphis, TN to Zavala, TX

March 10, 1846

Folded letter directed “**By ShrevePort La.**” was carried to New Orleans and possibly routed up the Red River where it connected to a Texas land route to destination in southeast Texas. These covers, both mailed a month apart from Memphis, illustrate the variety of ways mail would be directed to the same remote Texas destination.



Jefferson, TX to New Orleans, LA

December 6, 1850

Folded letter mailed collect and carried down the Red River by contract steamboat to destination.
Jefferson could be reached by steamboat much of the year.



Jefferson, TX to New Orleans, LA

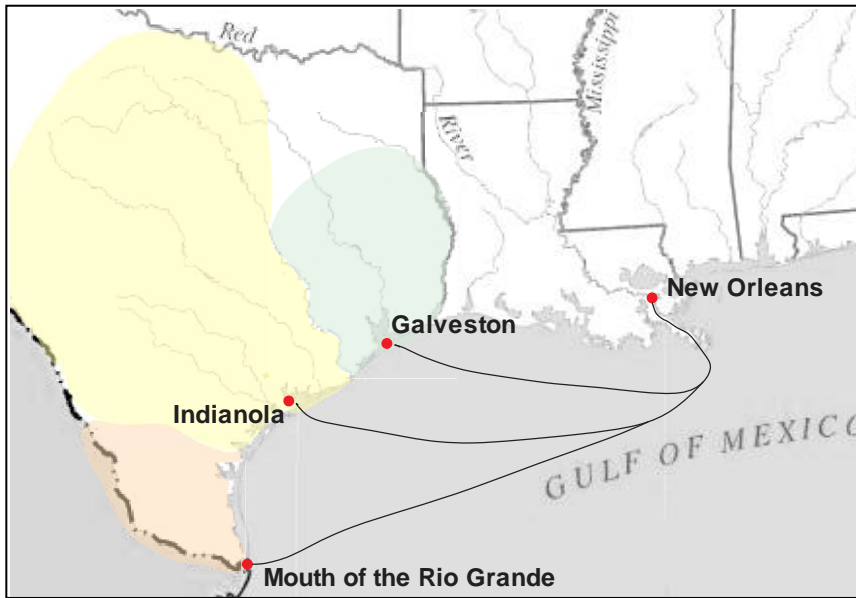
January 8, 1851

Folded letter datelined Jefferson which arrived in New Orleans aboard the non-contract
Red River steamer "**ECHO**" and placed in the mails collect.

U.S. Statehood Period

Coastal Waterways

from Galveston



New Orleans, LA was the distributing post office for the majority of mail flowing into and out of Texas. Mail to out-of-state destinations was directed to the following ports for transportation to New Orleans aboard contract vessels.

Southeast Texas mail - Galveston

Central and Western Frontier mail - Indianola

Southern Rio Grande Valley mail - Mouth of the Rio Grande River



**Galveston, TX to Philadelphia, PA
May 22, 1846**

Mailed 10c collect from Galveston on the day the Republic of Texas post offices were transferred to the U.S. Post Office Department.

A Texas First Day Cover

**Galveston, TX
to Trenton, NJ
April 19, 18(50)**

Folded letter prepaid in Galveston and taken by contract steamer to New Orleans for distribution to destination.





LaGrange, TX to Freystadt, Austria via Indianola, TX

July 3, 1857

Prepaid 21c French Treaty rate to Austria. Letter routed to Indianola by stage and transported to New Orleans by contract steamer for distribution to New York where it was carried to Europe by American Packet.



San Antonio, TX to Mons, Belgium via Indianola, TX

August 3, 1860

Prepaid 21c French Treaty rate to Belgium. Letter routed to Indianola by stage and transported to New Orleans by contract steamer for distribution to New York where it was carried to Europe by American Packet.



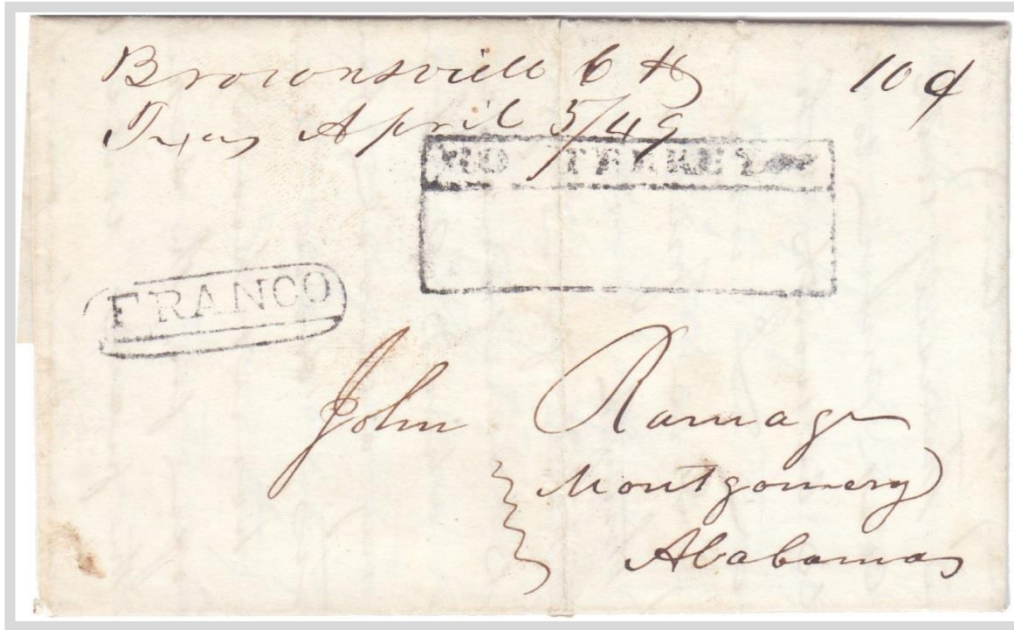
Fort Davis, TX to Glückstadt, Denmark via Indianola, TX

January 22, 1861

Overpayment of the 35c Prussian Closed Mail rate to Denmark on folded letter routed from the Texas frontier through San Antonio and to Indianola by stage. It was then transported to New Orleans by contract steamer for distribution to New York where it was carried to Europe.

U.S. Statehood Period

Coastal Waterways
from the Mouth of the Rio Grande



**Monterrey, Mexico to
Montgomery, AL
via Brownsville, TX
March 17, 1849**

Folded letter postpaid "2" reales on verso at Monterrey. Privately carried across the Rio Grande River and placed in the U.S. mails collect at Brownsville C(ourt) H(ouse). Letter was transported to Brazos Santiago and arrived at New Orleans aboard contract vessel for distribution.

**Brownsville, TX
to Alexandria, VA
via New Orleans, LA
April 12, 1852**

Folded letter datelined Brownsville, Texas arrived at New Orleans aboard a non-contract steamer from the mouth of the Rio Grande where it was placed in the mails for delivery to destination.



U.S. Statehood Period

Coastal Waterways

Mail via Panama



**Little Kauai, HI to
Brazoria Co., TX
March 5, 1852**

Folded letter datelined "Little Kauai, Sandwich Islands" posted in Honolulu and entered the U.S. mails in San Francisco. It was routed via a Panama steamer, crossed the isthmus to Aspinwall where it was then routed to New Orleans and then to Galveston.



**La Sal del Rey Lake, TX
to California
via Brazos Santiago
February 6, 1849**

Folded letter posted collect at Brazos and distributed to New Orleans for transport to California via Aspinwall and Panama. Forwarded to Washington, DC back through Panama. The earliest reported use from Texas to California.



U.S. Statehood Period

Overland Mail

Jackson, CA to
Nuecestown, TX
April 4, 1860

Prepaid 3c for the overland rate and directed "via El Paso and San Antonio". Letter actually travelled across Panama to Aspinwall, New Orleans and Indianola. Stamp probably lifted to read name of addressee.

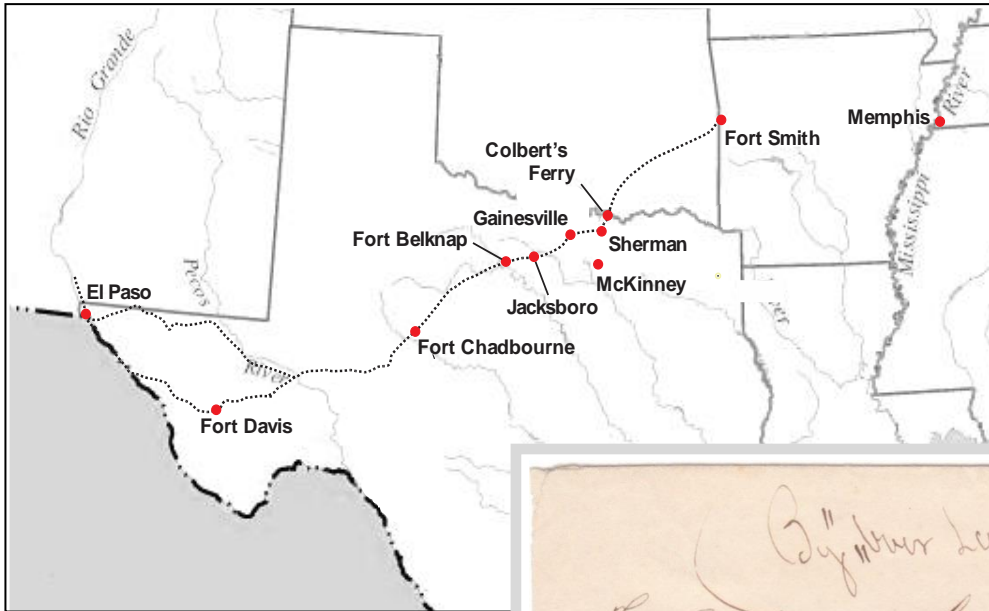


In 1851 a mail route was opened from San Antonio to El Paso and into New Mexico. That route was extended to the west coast in 1857. In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Mail route connected north Texas to El Paso. In far west Texas, mail entered and exited the state at El Paso.



Gainesville, TX to
Los Angeles, CA
October 15, 1860

Prepaid by Nesbitt entire which entered the mails at Gainesville (Station) on the Butterfield route. Letter traveled westward and crossed into New Mexico at El Paso.



The transportation of mails through Indian Territory and Texas via the Overland Route was initiated in 1858. This east-west route reduced the state's dependence upon less frequent land/water routes via the Gulf and New Orleans.

**Fort Belknap, TX to
Wampsville, NY
March 3, 1859**

Prepaid letter directed
'By "Over Land Mail" to St. Louis' from
the Ft. Belknap route station. Carried by
stage and crossed into Indian Territory at
Colbert's Ferry in route to destination.



**McKean, PA to
Jacksboro, TX
August 23, 1860**

Prepaid letter directed
"Please Mail Direct to St. Louis Overland Mail Route"
originally carried westbound
into Texas via Indian Territory
to destination. Forwarded
eastbound along same route
to Kansas and eventually
back to Pennsylvania origin.

U.S. Statehood Period

Overland Mail

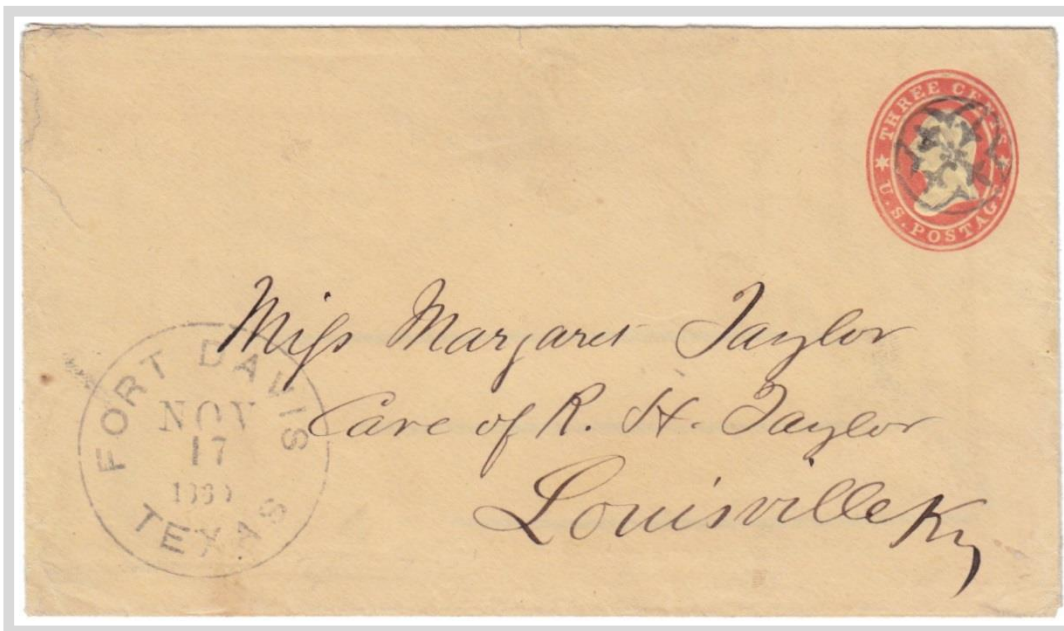
**Sherman, TX
to Philadelphia, PA
November 11, 1859**

Letter directed "via St.
Louis Overland Mail from
California" from the
Sherman route station.
Carried by stage and
crossed into Indian
Territory at Colbert's Ferry
in route to destination



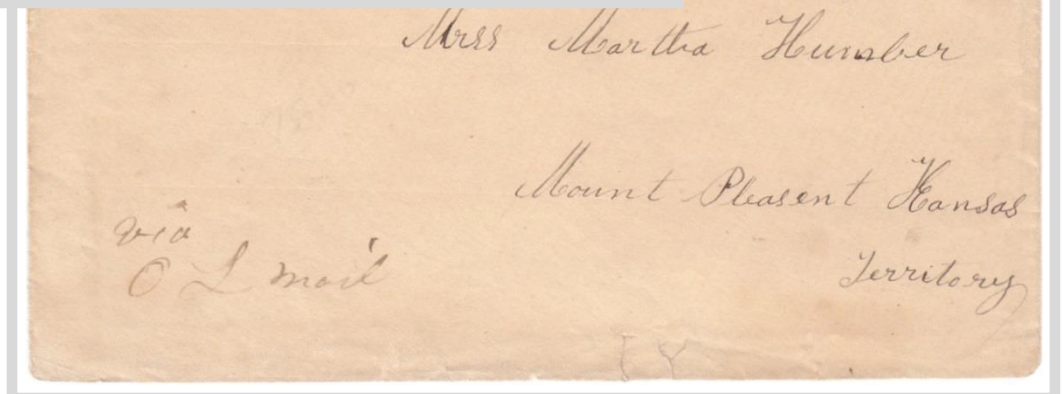
**Fort Davis, TX to
Louisville, KY
November 17, 1860**

Prepaid letter posted from the
route station at Fort Davis.
Transported eastbound into
Indian Territory in route to
destination.



**McKinney, TX to
Mount Pleasant, KT
circa 1859**

Letter directed
"via O L Mail" was carried north
to Sherman and placed in the
Overland mail for delivery to
destination via Indian Territory.



February 1, 1861



Texas' mail routes were well-established when the process of secession began. During early 1861, all mail was generally transported on pre-existing routes.

February 1, 1861 – Texas Secession Convention votes to Secede from the Union



Fort Quitman, TX to Johnston, RI

February 1, (1861)

Double letter rate paid in US postage by 3c 1857 issue on 'star die' entire from soldier stationed in western Texas. Letter traveled overland to Sherman TX then via St. Louis to destination.

Sender writes: "...that Texas was going out [of the Union] on the 28th of the month [January]."

Confederate Texas

Time of Transition

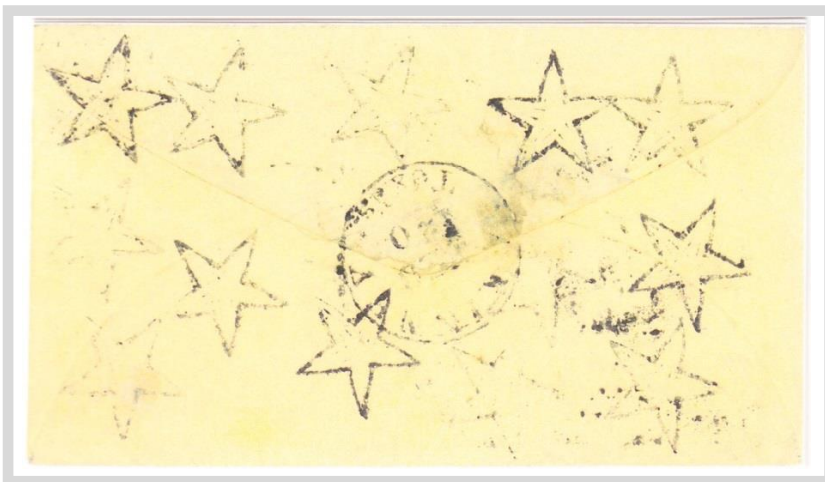
...the 'Independent Republic'

Texas and the other seceded states continued to use the stable US postal system, uninterrupted, for handling the mails during this uncertain transitional period.

**Hempstead, TX
to Coila, NY
February 5, (1861)**

Single letter rate paid in US postage by Nesbitt stamped envelope canceled by hollow-star killer.

Sender writes: "*I suppose you have seen by the papers eve this that Texas has seceded from the Union and is once more an 'Independent Republic'.*"



**McKinney, TX
To Russellville, TN
February 20, (1861)**

Single letter rate paid in US postage by 'star die' entire canceled by beveled star killer.

Postmaster B.F. Engle's patriotic fervor created the 'first Texas patriotic' envelope with multiple strikes of the star killer on reverse.

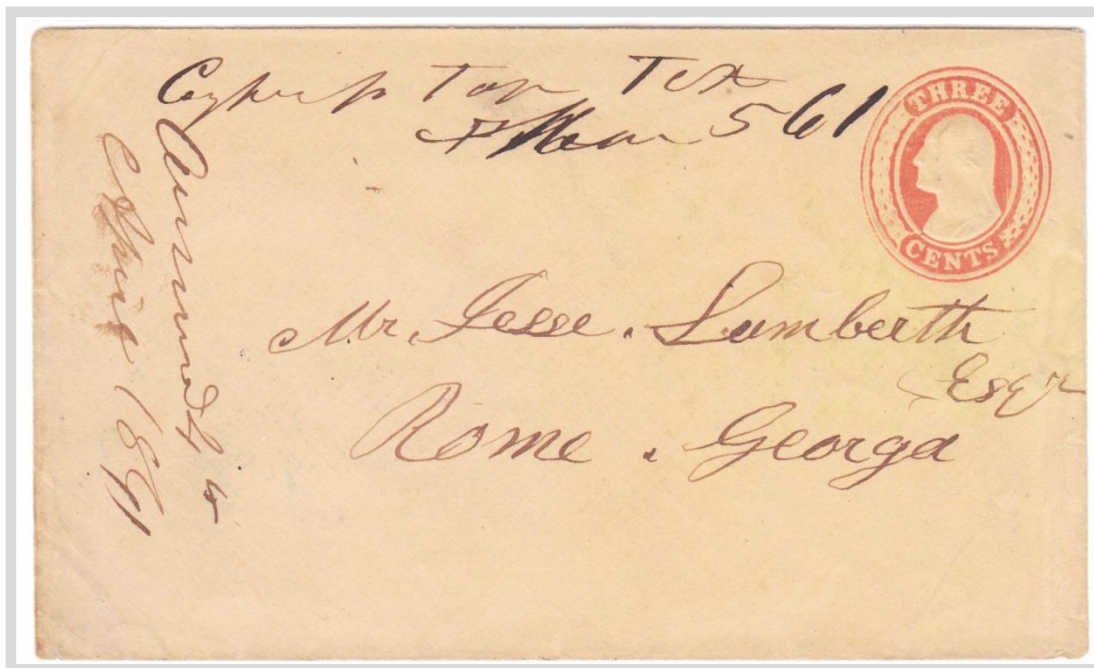




Centreville, TX, to Spartanburgh CH, SC

March 2, (1861)

Single letter rate paid by 3c 1857 issue on cover to Spartanburgh C.H. SC on the day the Texas Ordinance of Secession became effective.



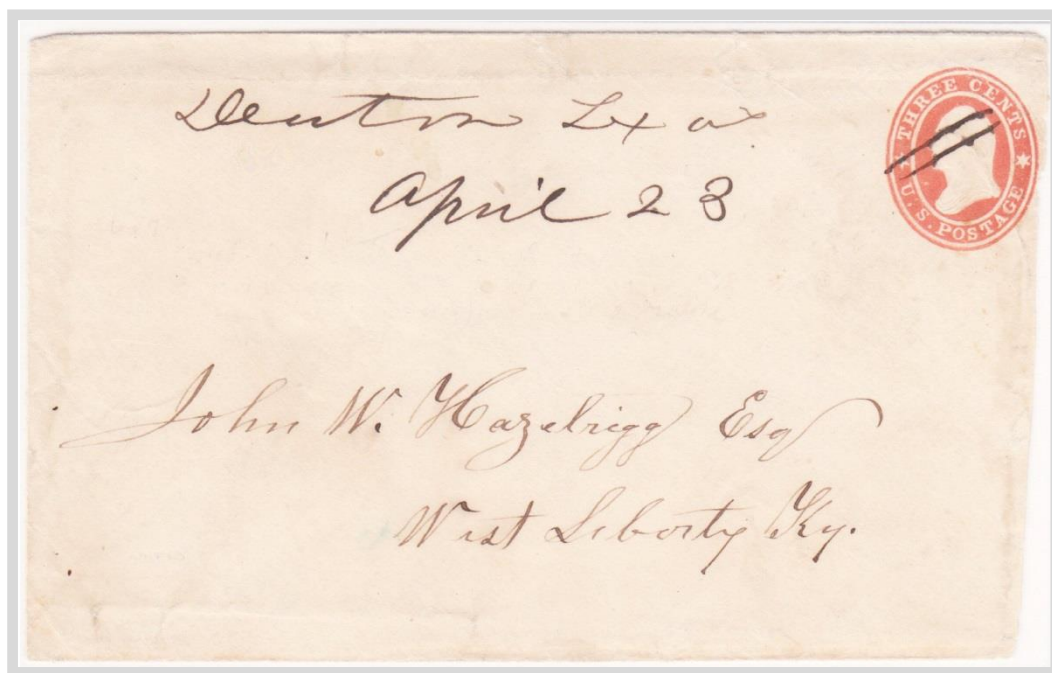
Cypress Top, TX to Rome, GA

March 5, (18)61

3c Nesbitt stamped envelope paid the US letter rate to Georgia on the day Texas joined the Confederate States of America by state ordinance. On March 2, 1861 the Congress of the CSA approved admission of Texas to the Confederacy. On March 5, 1861, "at Austin City", the representatives of Texas accepted the invitation to join the CSA.

By April of 1861, the Overland Mail Route through Texas had closed and other mail routes between North and South were being abandoned due to armed conflict. Finally on May 27, 1861 a US Post Office order suspended all mail service in the seceded states effective May 31.

...*"The Government has changed the Overland Mail Route to California, so as to run North of Texas... I am very sorry that we lose this convenience. Our mail facilities are now worth but little."*...



Denton, TX to West Liberty, KY

April 23, (1861)

US letter rate paid by 3c 'star die' entire via a north Texas remnant of the Overland Mail route still under US contract. Writer discusses the mail service from Texas.



Houston, TX to Middlebury, CT

May 29, 1861

US letter rate paid by 3c 1857 issue from Confederate Texas to Connecticut. Recipient endorsed *"Last Letter before the War opened"* at lower left.

After suspension of postal relations with the South, northbound Texas mail, routed via Memphis or Nashville, was forwarded and held in Louisville, KY. US postage used from the South was regarded as contraband and was refused as prepayment.



Milford, TX to Bloomfield, KY

May 31, (1861)

Postage prepaid by 3c 1857 issue in Milford, Texas the last day of US Postal Service in Confederate Texas. While still technically a US post office this cover was routed to Louisville, KY via Memphis where it was held. Released to final destination on June 20, 1861 by “**SOUTHN. LETTER UNPAID**” and “**DUE 3**” handstamps.

The only reported **SOUTHN. LETTER UNPAID** cover from Texas held privately.

By proclamation of CSA Postmaster General John H. Reagan, on June 1, 1861 all existing postmasters, contractors and special route agents engaged in the transmission and delivery of mails within the limits of the CSA were instructed to assume control of the postal service therein. However the inadvertent use of the US postal system and its postage continued for a time.



Lattington, TX to Caldwell, TX

June 3, 1861

Prepaid by the 1c 1857 issue, the postmaster at Lattington permitted the use of US adhesive stamps 3 days after the creation of the Confederate postal system.



Galveston, TX to Prussia

June 9, 1861

Folded letter datelined "Galveston June 9th (18)61" is transported out of Galveston either under separate cover or by ship captain and reached New York City where it was placed into the US postal system well after June 1st. As a final irony the **US was credited 23c for a letter mailed from Confederate Texas.**

Prior to the receipt of general issue CSA adhesives, several Texas postmasters produced 'rated' envelopes in advance of use. These were sold to the postal patron 'over-the-counter'. In some cases, new marking devices were created to produce these envelopes...in other cases, existing devices were modified.



Galveston, TX to Yorkville, SC

June 6, 18(61)

Provisional "PAID" marking used in conjunction with the "5" rate stamp to create envelope.
Underpaid to South Carolina.



Huntsville, TX to Columbia TX

August 17, 186(?)

Provisional marking created from pre-war circular date stamp and "PAID 10" handstamp used by the Huntsville postmaster to prepare envelopes for sale to postal patrons.

Fewer than three examples of the Huntsville marking are reported to exist.

Shortly after June 1, 1861, postmasters in some cities east of the Mississippi River began producing "provisional" adhesive stamps to facilitate normal postal business until general issue CSA postage stamps became available. However in Texas, the production of these adhesives seemed to be more erratic and in many cases was in response to late-war general issue stamp shortages.



Beaumont, TX to San Augustine, TX

April 9, 1864

Beaumont 10c provisional on yellow paper prepaid the single letter rate on **turned cover** originally sent from San Augustine to Sabine Pass.

Only five examples of this adhesive are recorded...all on cover...this being the earliest recorded example.

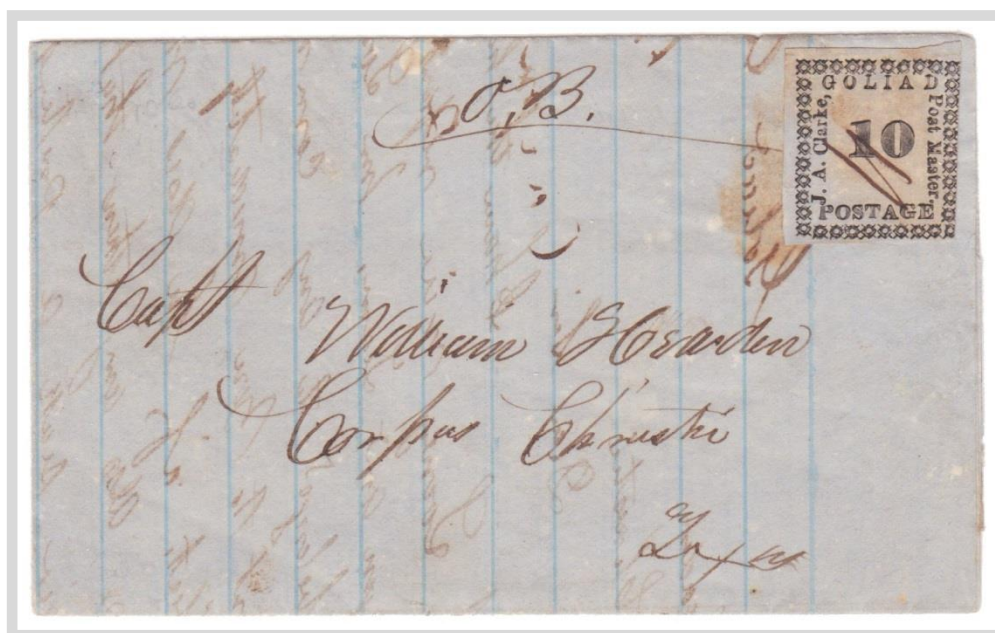
The only Type I Goliad Provisional "cover" in private hands and the only cover extant paying the 5c single letter rate with a Texas provisional adhesive.



Goliad, TX to Austin City, TX

(June 1862)

Goliad 5c provisional signed by postmaster John (Jno.) A. Clarke and noted June 21, 1862 on verso, prepaid the single letter rate a few weeks before the rate increase on July 1, 1862.



Goliad, TX to Corpus Christi, TX

(August 16, 1864)

Goliad 10c provisional prepaid the single letter rate on cover endorsed "O.B." (Official Business)

One of four covers extant franked with the 10c Goliad provisional adhesive.

It is not known when Texas post offices first received Confederate general issue postage stamps. Based on a personal survey of over 200 Texas covers, it probably happened in the fourth quarter of 1861.



Nacogdoches, TX to Washington, TX

May 26, 1862

5c general issue postage stamp paid the less than 500 mile rate.



Decatur, TX to Cleveland, E(ast) TN

April 5, (18)62

5c pair paid the greater than 500 mile rate to Tennessee.



Sutherland Springs, TX to Waskey's Mills, VA

September 27, (1862)

Hoyer & Ludwig lithograph printing of 1861 showing imprint.



Houston, TX to Seguin, TX

February 26, 1863

J.T. Paterson & Co. lithograph printing of 1862 on cover
from soldier in Company D, 4th Texas Volunteers.

Stamped address band enclosing *The Tri-Weekly Telegraph* of Houston



Houston, TX

August 26, 1863

The 1862 2c green adhesive was issued for prepayment of drop letters, circulars and newspapers. Individually mailed newspapers weighing up to three ounces could be posted for two cents.

The only recorded example of a 2c green adhesive used on an address band with original newspaper.

Marshall, TX
to Little Rock, AR
September 10, (1863)

1862 5c blue
lithographed issue paid
the ten cent letter rate
to a soldier in Arkansas.



Galveston, TX to
Brownsville, TX
August 10, (186?)

1862 5c blue typographed
issue on printed **Camp Scene
with Flag and Standing Soldier**
patriotic cover mailed to
Brownsville illustrates a
Texan's early patriotic feelings.

Only two examples of this patriotic envelope are known used.
Texas Confederate Icon



E

Texana, TX to Houston, TX

November 21, (1862)

Fewer than seven examples of this adhesive on cover from Texas are recorded.

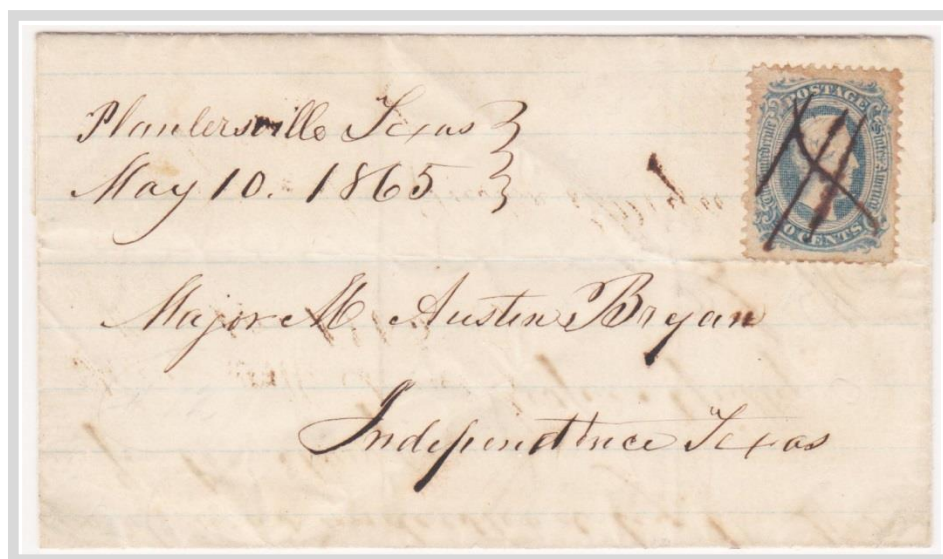


Henderson, TX to Nacogdoches, TX July 15 (186?)

1863 10c blue general issue on cover made from full color
Kansas, Missouri and Indian Territory map paid the letter
rate to Surgeon E. P. Becton of Waul's Brigade.

Plantersville, TX to
Independence, TX
May 10, 1865

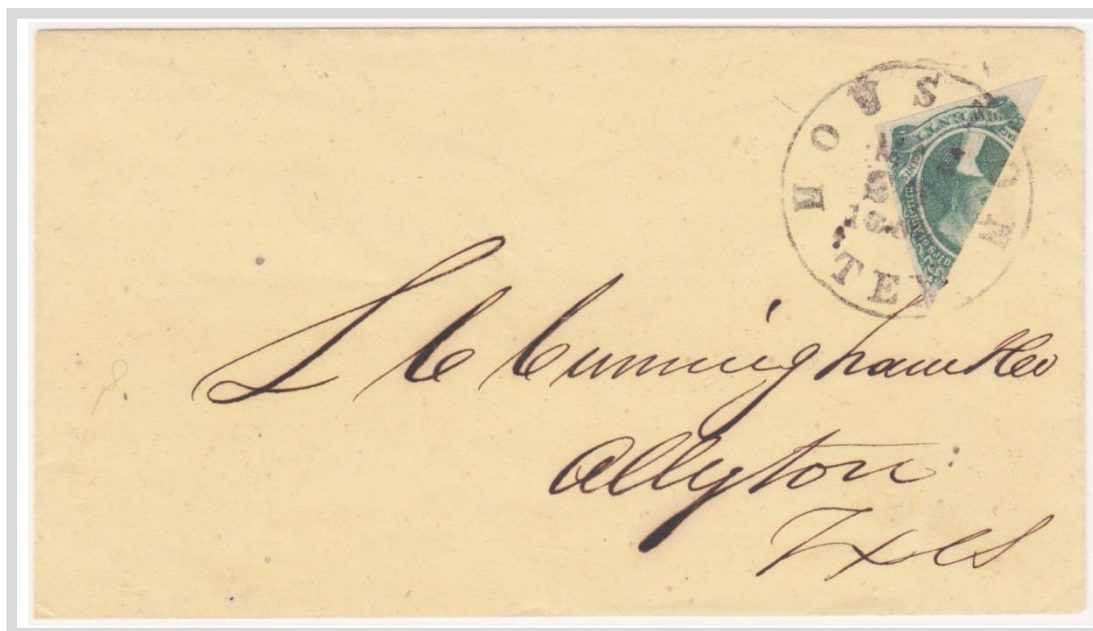
In his folded letter, the
Plantersville, TX postmaster,
J.M. Baker, states...
"I thank you for the stamps".



E

One of two recorded examples of the officially perforated stamps used from Texas.

Generally Texas post offices or patrons bisected this stamp to pay the single letter rate.



Houston, TX to All(e)yton, TX

Ma(?) 2(?), 186(?)



Houston, TX to Anderson, TX

May 1(?), 186(5)

Non-bisected 20c green adhesive used to pay the double letter rate on O(fficial) B(usiness).

Confederate Texas

Dealing with Adversity

...the use of invalid U.S. postal stationery



Continued

As a result of the virtual isolation of the Southern States and the lack of local paper mills, postal patrons devised various methods to deal with paper shortages. These homespun manufacturing practices provided Texas citizens the ability to handle their correspondence and mail when no envelopes were available.

**Anderson, TX
to San Antonio, TX
December 13, (1862)**

1862 5c blue typographed
issue prepaid the CSA
letter rate on invalid US
3c 1860 'star die'
envelope. Stamps lifted
to show 'star die'
indicium.



**Kickapoo, TX to
Woods, TX
May 22, 1864**

1863 10c blue general issue
prepaid the CSA letter rate
on invalid US 3c 1860 'star
die' envelope. Stamp lifted
to show 'star die' indicium.

Confederate Texas

Dealing with Adversity

...reuse by turning covers



Originally mailed in Confederate Texas with valid US 3c 'star die' entire before the secession of postal relations with the US. Turned by postal patron and reused six months later.



Hollandale, TX to Prairie Plains, TX
Prairie Plains, TX to

March 9, 1861
September 6, 1861



Marshall, TX to Marshall, TX
Marshall, TX to Little Rock, AR

undated local drop
Nov 4, (186?)

1862 5c blue lithographed issue paid the letter rate on turned cover originally posted locally in Marshall prior to the establishment of the Confederate postal system.



Harrisburgh, TX to Anderson, TX

July 28 (186?)

1862 5c blue typographed issue paid the single letter rate on cover made from printed Agricultural Implement and Machinery advertising circular.



Marshall, TX to Houston, TX

May 18, 1863

MARSHALL TEX double-circle datestamp ties 1862 5c blue typographed pair on cover made from Pratt, Woodford & Co. printed Galveston ship receipt form.



Bonham, TX to Lane, Collin County, TX

October 4, (186?)

1862 5c blue typographed pair provided prepayment of the letter rate on cover made from grey-blue and green wallpaper.



Jasper, TX to Burkeville, TX

April 2, (186?)

"DUE 10" on soldier's letter made from multi-grey toned wallpaper.
Required soldier's endorsement at far left.

Confederate Texas

Special Mail Routes

...avoiding the Federal Blockade

The mouth of the Mississippi River, at New Orleans, was blockaded by Federal Naval forces in May 1861. This action disrupted and effectively ended ship bound mail service from the Gulf into the city. Alternate overland routes to Texas were established and expanded to maintain mail service.

OUR TEXAS MAILS —

... A mail will therefore leave New Orleans daily for Houston, Tex., and if the railroad connections are regularly made, the time will be reduced from New Orleans to Houston to two days.

... The following is the table of distances: From New Orleans to Berwick's Bay, by railroad, 80 miles; from the Bay, by steamer, to New Iberia, 50 miles; from New Iberia to Orange, 170 miles; and from Orange to Houston, 85 miles; making the whole distance 385 miles.

Daily Picayune (New Orleans, LA)
August 4, 1861



Matamoros, Mexico to New Orleans, LA via Corpus Christi, TX

September 6, (1861)

Folded letter datelined Matamoros privately carried across the Rio Grande River and placed in Confederate Texas mails at Brownsville on September 9th where it was prepaid to New Orleans. Routed "via Corpus" Christi to Houston where it crossed the Louisiana border at Orange, TX for delivery by way of the newly expanded "overland route" to the tightly blockaded city of New Orleans.

Confederate Texas

Special Mail Routes

Arthur H. Edey Express

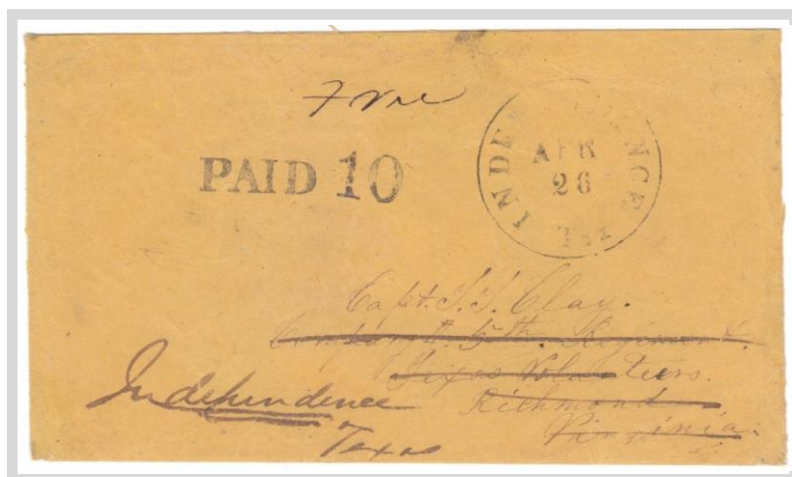


The 5th Texas Regiment of Hood's Division had been incorporated into the Army of Northern VA and detailed Arthur H. Edey to carry mail from the regiment to its families back in Texas. A typeset label was attached to some of these letters.

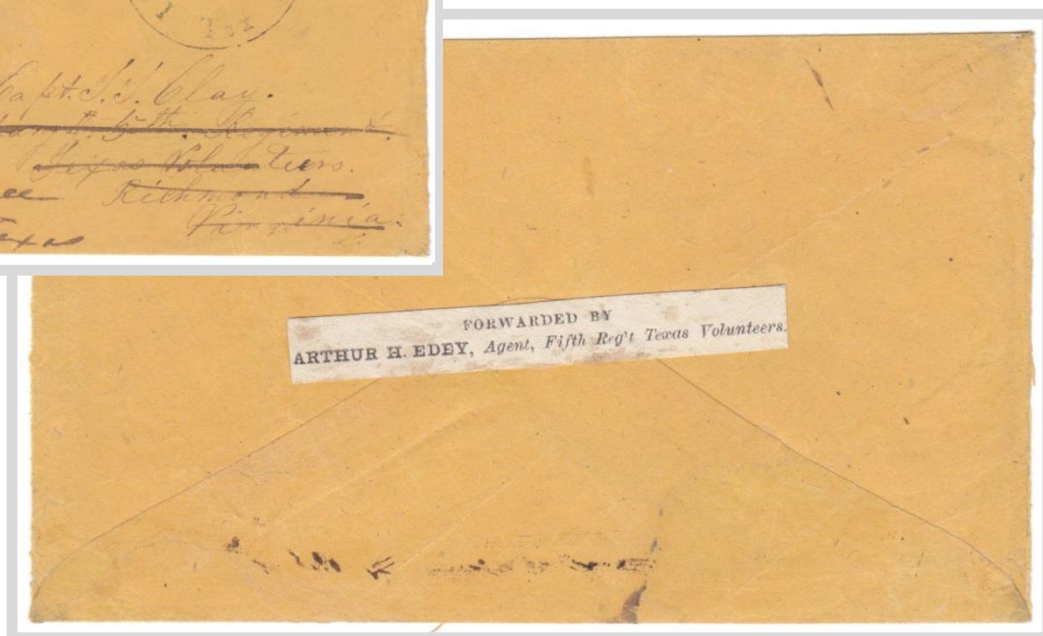
Letter sent from the eastern theatre to Bettie Clay of Independence, Texas **via Arthur H. Edey's express** service. Small remnant and outline of Edey label on verso.

from Richmond VA to Washington, TX via Edey's Express
Washington, TX to Independence, TX

June 1862
August 6, 1862



Cover originally posted and prepaid in Texas to Capt. Clay of the 5th Texas Volunteer Reg't. in Virginia. Letter **forwarded back to Texas via Arthur H. Edey's express** and placed in the Texas mails where it was endorsed "Free".



Independence, TX to Richmond, VA
Richmond, VA to Independence, TX via Edey's Express

April 26, (186?)

On May 1, 1863, as a result of impending Union control of the Mississippi River, the Confederate Congress authorized the Postmaster General to establish special Express Mail routes crossing the river. Eastbound mail out of Texas was to be directed care of the postmaster at Shreveport, Louisiana.

Prepaid **40c Trans-Mississippi express rate** on cover made from wallpaper and directed "Express Mail – via Shreveport". Carried by state into Louisiana just west of Shreveport for delivery to destination.



Sherman, TX to Demopolis, AL
Demopolis, AL to Jefferson, AL

circa 1865



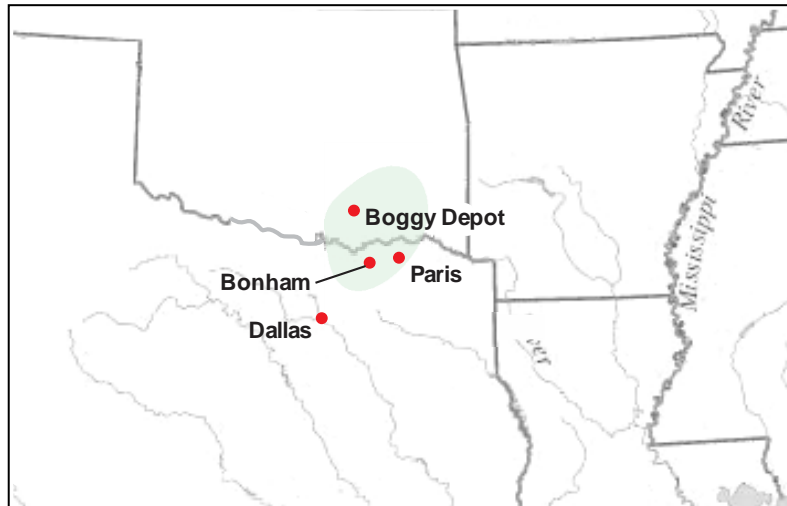
Parkersville, TX to Jackson, MS

March 9, 1865

Prepaid **40c Trans-Mississippi express rate** on cover made from wallpaper and directed "Express Mail – via Shreveport". Carried by state into Louisiana just west of Shreveport for delivery to destination.

E

Most mail into and out of Indian Territory was military in nature and utilized a Military Express to cross the border and deliver to destination.



CSA General Stand Watie 20c Bisect
Confederate Texas Icon



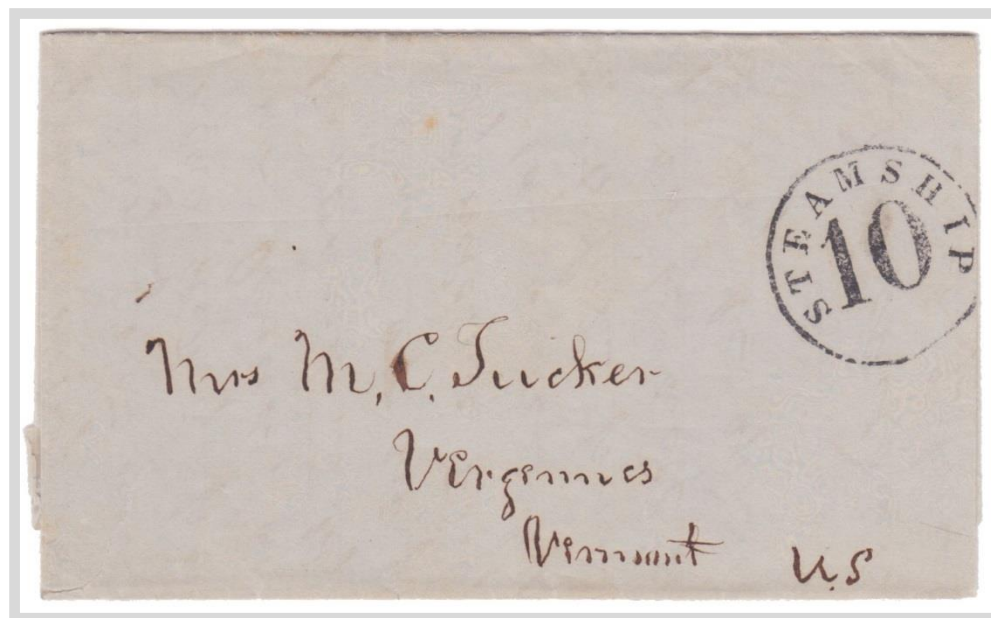
Paris, TX to Boggy Depot, Cherokee Nation

circa 1864

Addressed to CSA Brigadier General Stand Watie, Commanding Indian Division and principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Endorsed "via Bonham & Express" and carried into Indian Territory via Colbert's Ferry.



Galveston was effectively blockaded by July 1861 and external mail service by water was disrupted. Federal troops occupied the island, from October 1862 to January 1863, before Confederate Texas troops retook the city. Despite that reversal, the Federal blockade remained in place throughout the war.



Galveston, TX to Vergennes, VT via Havana

February 1864

Folded letter datelined "Galveston Feby. 16, 1864" carried on unidentified blockade runner from Galveston to Havana, then by non-contract steamer to New York. "STEAMSHIP 10" due handstamp applied at New York.

Fewer than five covers are recorded that ran the blockade from Galveston.

Confederate Texas

Special Mail Routes

Trans-Rio Grande Mail

Texas maintained the Confederacy's only international border with a neutral country. It was separated from Mexico by the Rio Grande River across which mail was exchanged throughout the war. Brownsville, across the river from Matamoros, was the most significant crossing point.



via Brownsville, TX

Folded letter datelined "Matamoros 2 Febrero 1865" carried across the Rio Grande and placed in the Confederate Texas mails at Brownsville for delivery to San Antonio.

Matamoros, Mexico to
San Antonio, TX

September 30, (1863)



via Piedras Negras – Eagle Pass, TX

Folded letter datelined "Monterrey/Septiembre 20" and posted in Mexico in care of R. Groos & Co. in Piedras Negras. Forwarded across the river and placed in the Confederate Texas mails at Eagle Pass.

Monterrey, Mexico to San Antonio, TX

September 30, (1863)

Fewer than five covers are recorded with both Mexican and Confederate postal markings.

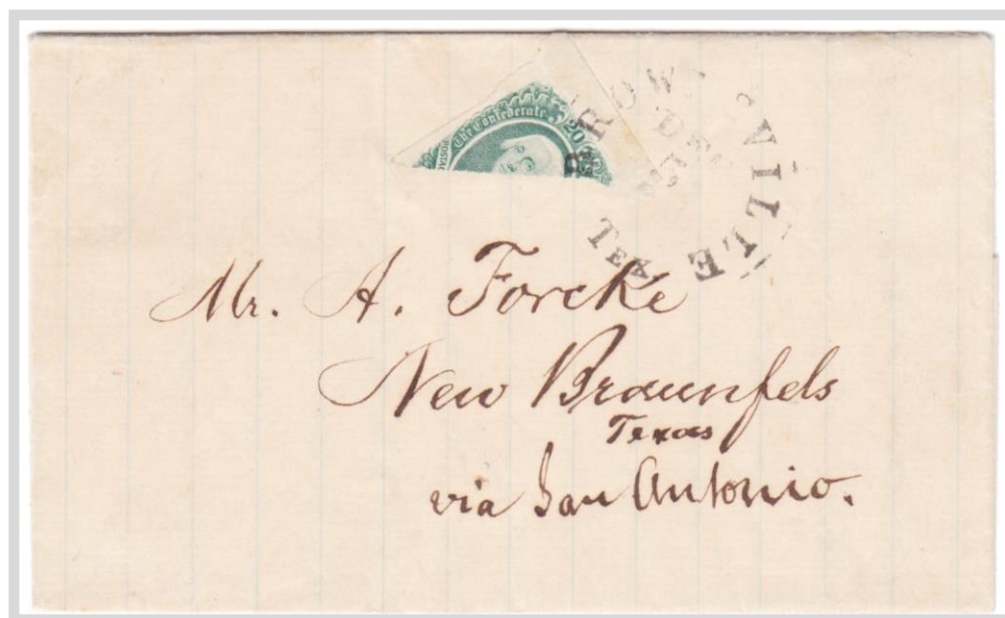


E

Matamoros, Mexico to New Braunfels, TX

December 5, (1864)

Folded letter above was carried across the Rio Grande at Brownsville where it was placed into the Confederate Texas mails. The folded letter below was carried further up river, crossed between Nuevo Laredo and Laredo and entered the mails at San Antonio.



E

Matamoros, Mexico to New Braunfels, TX

December 16, (1864)

Matching Pair of 20c Bisepts

The only pair of covers bearing matching halves of the same 1863 20c issue extant.



Ft. Brown, TX to Fulda, Germany

ca August 1862

Censored at Brownsville by "Examined & Passed, Alex. Young, P. Marshal" Provost Marshal marking and carried across the river to Droege Oetling & Co. in Matamoros for forwarding under cover to Germany.



San Antonio, TX to Magdeburg, Germany via Vera Cruz

March 1865

Prepaid by San Antonio "PAID 10" with enclosure datelined "San Antonio March 20 / 1865". Cover probably crossed the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass and traveled overland to Vera Cruz where it was mailed to Germany.

Flag-of-truce routes were established by North and South, in part, to facilitate the exchange of mail to and from P.O.W.'s. Union defeats at Galveston, Sabine Pass, Mansfield and Pleasant Hill were responsible for a sizeable P.O.W. population in Texas. Most were housed at the Houston Prison, Camp Groce or Camp Ford. In Texas, P.O.W. mail was handled from Houston and Camp Groce via Galveston and Camp Ford via Shreveport.



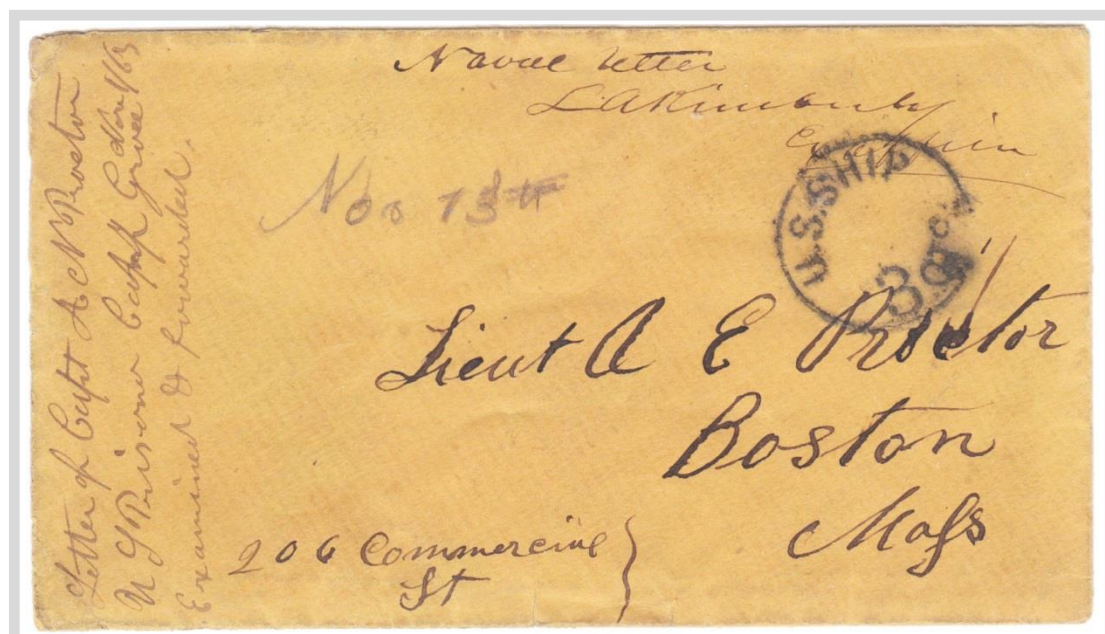
Union prisoner-of-war cover "From M.L. Burney, Federal Prisoner of Late US Str. Clinton", Texas Provost Marshal Examiner mark on reverse, **exchanged by flag-of-truce** with the western Gulf Blockading Squadron and entered the Federal mails in occupied New Orleans where it was forwarded "DUE 6".

Houston Prison, Houston, TX to Warwick, RI

ca January 1864

One of only three covers known to exist from this P.O.W. camp.

Union prisoner-of-war cover "Letter of Capt. A.N. Proctor...", censored by **Camp Groce** Commandant on reverse and Houston Provost Marshal, **exchanged by flag-of-truce** with the western Gulf Blockading Squadron and entered the Federal mails in occupied New Orleans



Camp Groce, near Hempstead, TX to Boston, MA

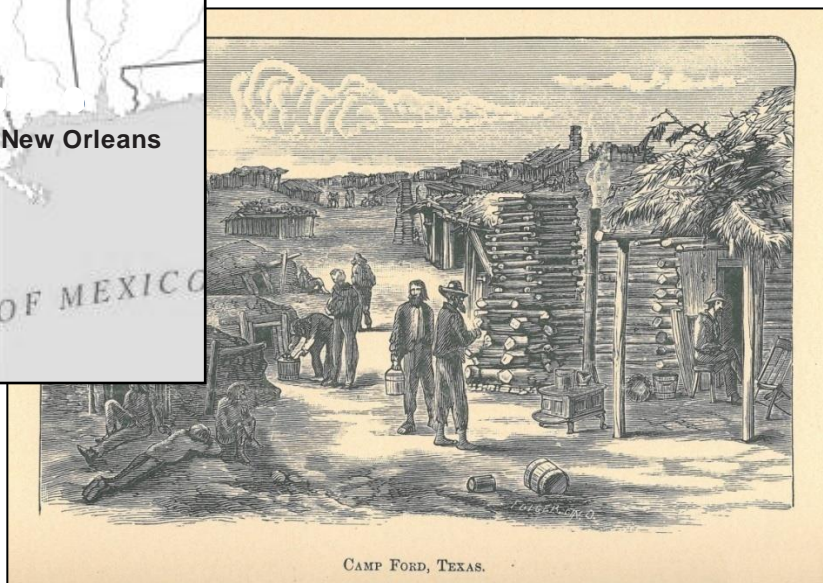
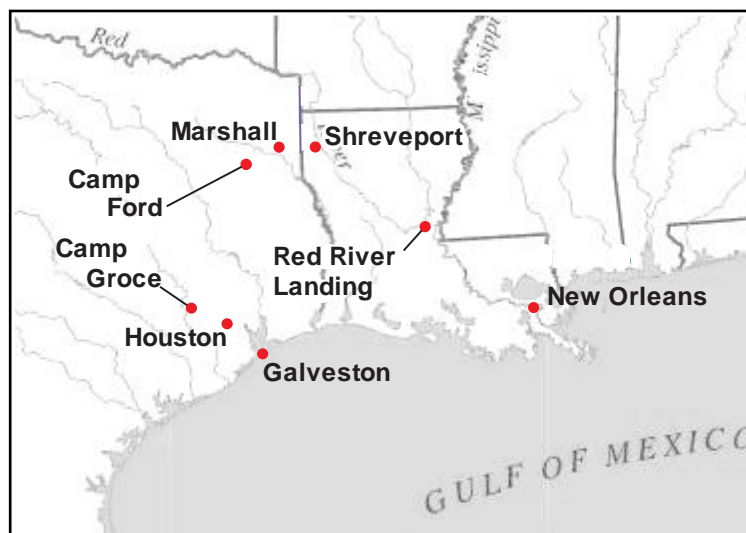
November 1, 1863

Fewer than five covers are known to exist from this P.O.W. camp.

Confederate Texas

Special Mail Routes

Flag-of-Truce Mail



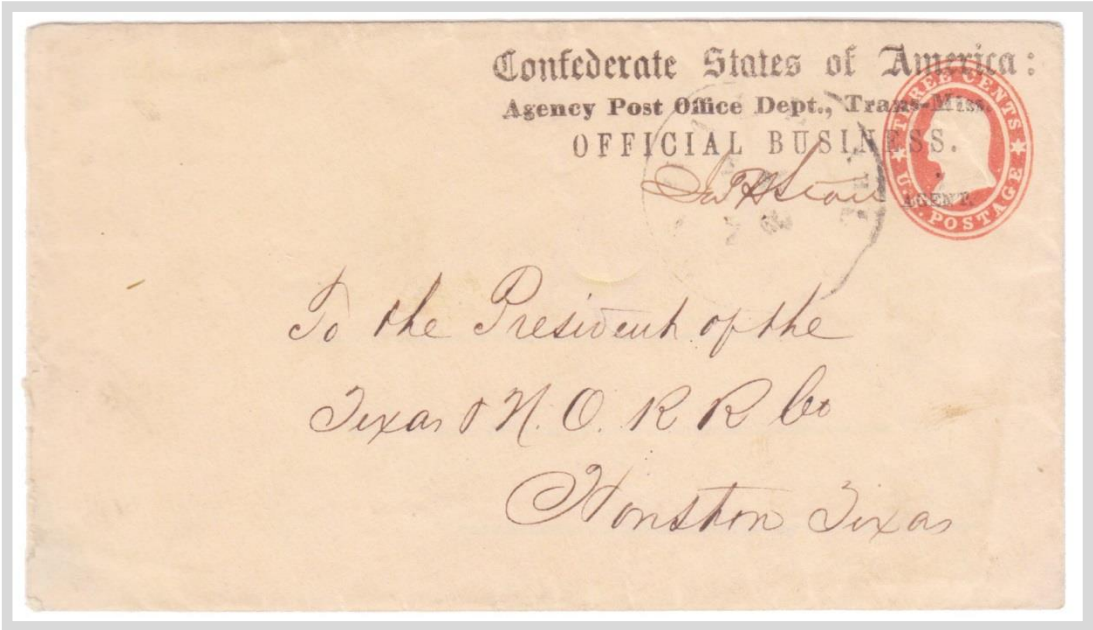
Camp Ford, near Tyler, TX to Oskaloosa, IA

(ca January, 1865)

Union prisoner-of-war cover endorsed "Flag of Truce", censored on reverse by Major Ignatius Szymanski, Agent of Exchange for prisoners in the Trans-Mississippi Dept. Carried 100 miles east to Shreveport and exchanged near Red River Landing in Louisiana where it entered Federal mails in New Orleans.

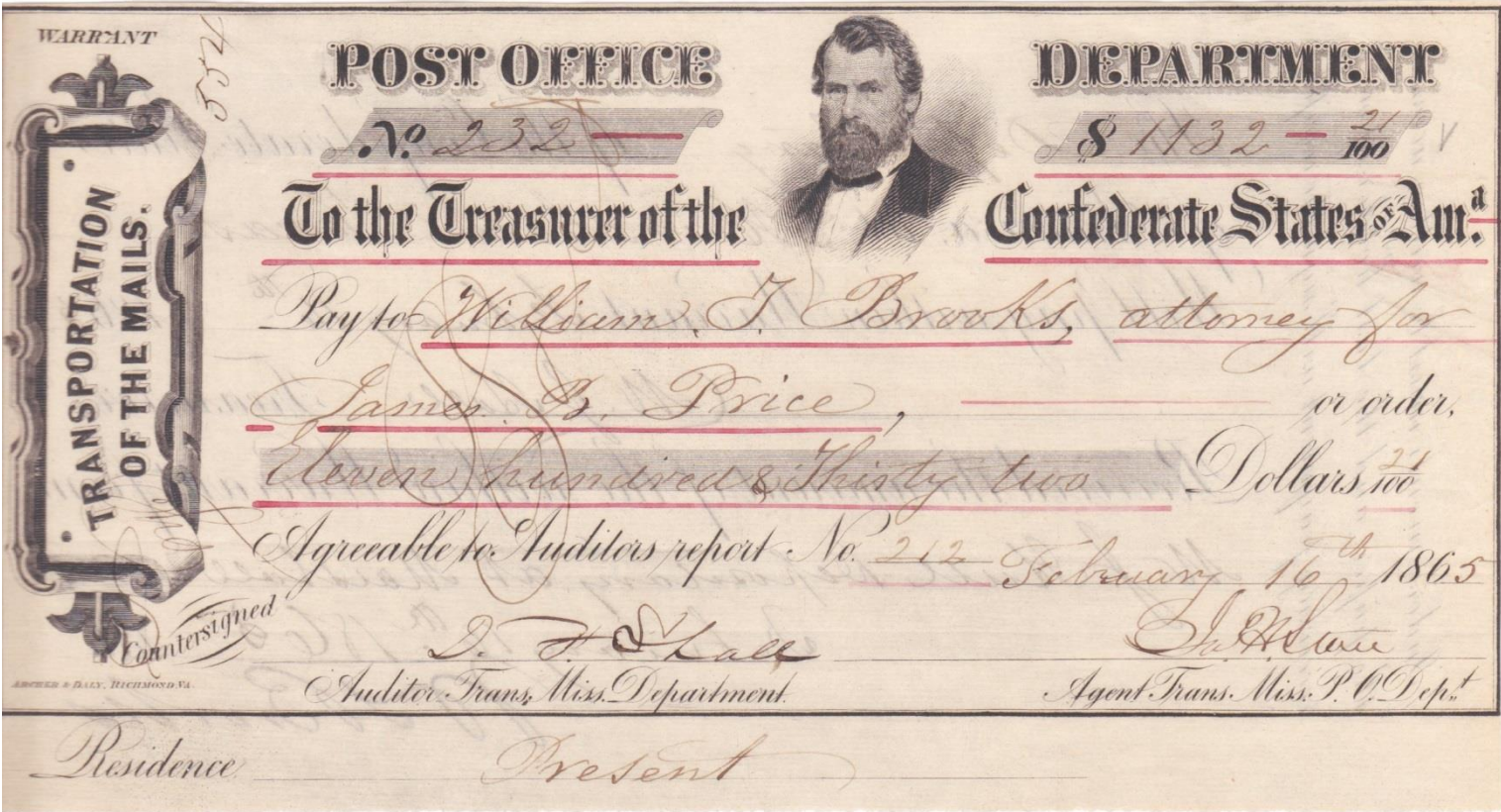
One of five covers known to exist from this P.O.W. camp.

After Federal Troops severed official mail routes across the Mississippi River, the Confederate Government ceded control of western theatre postal operations to the Trans-Mississippi Dept. in Marshall, TX. Dr. James H. Starr, from Texas was appointed Postal Agent in charge of the mails.



Marshall, TX to Houston, TX ca 1865

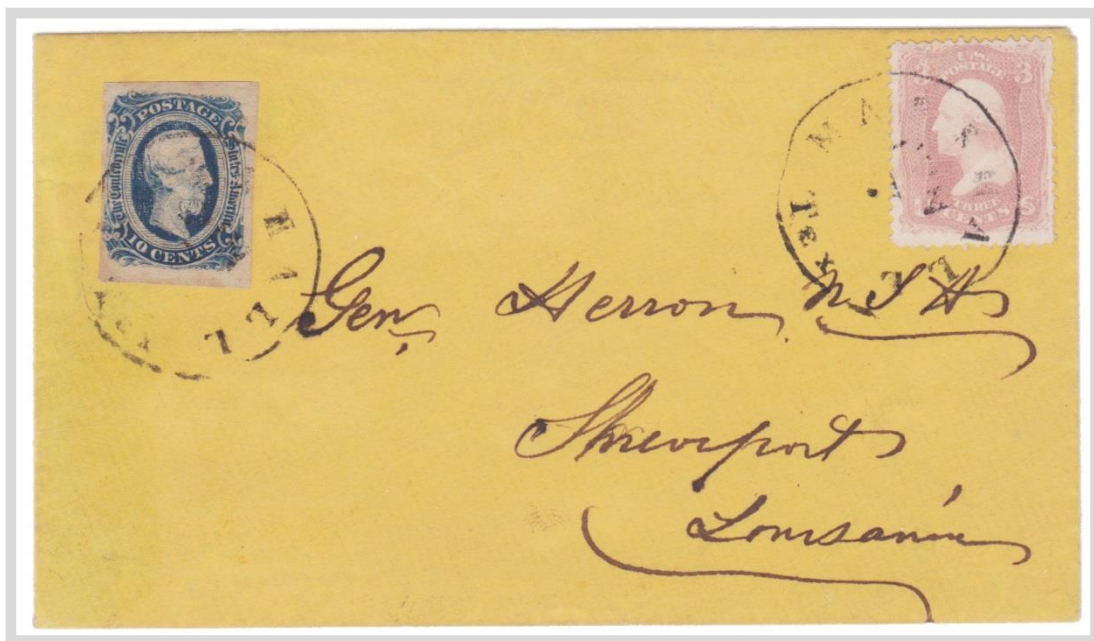
Endorsed and used for official business by Dr. James H. Starr, Agent for the Trans-Mississippi Department in Marshall, Texas, these envelopes were imprinted locally by Dr. Starr and were the only CSA Post Office official envelopes used in Texas.



Warrant for **Transportation of the Mails** issued by the Trans-Mississippi Dept. Depository at Marshall, TX. Countersigned by D.F. Shall, Auditor and J.H. Starr, Agent of the Trans-Mississippi Postal Department.

Dr. James H. Starr, Agent for the Trans-Mississippi Department corresponded with U.S. General Herron on May 25, 1865 concerning the impending surrender of his Department and expressed his hope that the return of normal conditions could be accomplished with the *"usages of Christian nations and the dictates of humanity."* He also prepared a plan of action to prevent a complete breakdown of the mails in the Texas region.

Latest use of a Confederate Stamp on Cover



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Marshall, TX to Shreveport, LA

June 7, 1865

Mailed on the day US General Herron and occupation forces arrived in Shreveport aboard the Steamer Ida May. Confederate Texas postage prepaid by 10c blue adhesive in addition to 3c U.S. postage. Crossed into Louisiana 15 miles west of Shreveport and delivered into the Union occupied city.

During the Civil War post routes in Texas contracted due to malfeasance, lack of maintenance and funding, general disruption and manpower deficiencies. At the same time, the system was expanded and enhanced by means of handling the mails in new creative ways and the introduction of "special" routes and services. After the war the postal system in Texas was in general disarray and did not experience significant growth until after 1870.