

Gulf Islands National Seashore



The Branded Hand, c.1845 (daguerreotype) by Albert S. Southworth (1811-94) & Hawes, Josiah (1808-1901) © Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, USA/ The Bridgeman Art Library

"The Branded Hand" of Jonathan Walker

In 1844, Jonathan Walker was caught helping escaped slaves. Imprisoned for months in Pensacola, Florida, his hand was branded "SS" for "slave stealer." Reinterpreted as "Slave Savior," this inspired a popular poem, "The Branded Hand." Walker's published journal bore witness to harsh punishment of slaves, and images of his hand were widely circulated among abolitionists.

To learn more, visit: www.nps.gov/guis

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE