HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

1775-1993

![United States Postal Service eagle logo] UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN POSTAL HISTORY

1639	Richard Fairbanks' tavern in Boston named repository for overseas mail
1775	Benjamin Franklin, first Postmaster General under Continental Congress
1789	Samuel Osgood, first Postmaster General under Constitution
1823	Navigable waters designated post roads by Congress
1825	Dead letter office
1829	Postmaster General joins Cabinet
1830	Office of Instructions and Mail Depredations established, later Office of the Chief Postal Inspector
1838	Railroads designated post routes by Congress
1845	Star routes
1847	Postage stamps
1852	Stamped envelopes
1855	Registered Mail
	Compulsory prepayment of postage
1858	Street letter boxes
1860	Pony Express
1862	Railway mail service, experimental
1863	Free city delivery
	Uniform postage rates, regardless of distance
	Domestic mail divided into three classes
1864	Post offices categorized by classes
	Railroad post offices
	Domestic money orders
1869	Foreign or international money orders
1872	Congress enacts Mail Fraud Statute
1873	Penny postal card
1874	General Postal Union (later Universal Postal Union)
1879	Domestic mail divided into four classes
1880	Congress establishes title of Chief Post Office Inspector
1885	Special Delivery
1887	International parcel post
1893	First commemorative stamps
1896	Rural free delivery, experimental
1898	Private postcards authorized
1902	Rural free delivery, permanent
1911	Postal savings system
	Carriage of mail by airplane sanctioned between Garden City and Mineola, NY; Earle H. Ovington, first U. S. mail pilot
1912	Village delivery
1913	Parcel post
	Insurance
	Collect-on-delivery
1914	Government-owned and -operated vehicle service
1916	Postal Inspectors solve last known stagecoach robbery
1918	Airmail
1920	Metered postage
	First transcontinental airmail
1924	Regular transcontinental airmail service
1925	Special handling

1927	International airmail
1935	Trans-Pacific airmail
1939	Trans-Atlantic airmail
	Autogiro service, experimental
1941	Highway post offices
1942	V-mail
1943	Postal zoning system in 124 major post offices
1948	Parcel post international air service
	Parcel post domestic air service
1950	Residential deliveries cut from two to one a day
1953	Piggy-back mail service by trailers or railroad flatcars
	Airlift
1955	Certified mail
1957	Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
1959	Missile mail dispatched from submarine to mainland Florida
1960	Facsimile mail
1963	ZIP Code and sectional center plan
1964	Self-service post offices
	Simplified postmark
1965	Optical scanner (ZIP Code reader tested)
1966	Postal savings system terminated
1967	Mandatory presorting by ZIP Code for second- and third-class mailers
1968	Priority Mail, a subclass of First-Class Mail
1969	Patronage no longer a factor in postmaster and rural carrier appointments
	First die proof of a postage stamp canceled on moon by Apollo 11 mission
1970	MAILGRAM
	Postal Reorganization Act
	Express Mail, experimental

PREFACE

When the Continental Congress named Benjamin Franklin the first Postmaster General in 1775, the United States was a weak confederation of colonies scattered along the eastern seaboard. The postal system that the Congress created helped bind the new nation together, support the growth of commerce, and ensure a free flow of ideas and information.

In the more than two centuries since, the United States and the Postal Service have grown and changed together. Today, the Postal Service fuels the nation's economy and delivers hundreds of millions of messages and billions of dollars in financial transactions each day to eight million businesses and 250 million Americans. The Postal Service is making history, too, as it helps lead the way in making the federal government more businesslike and responsive to customer needs.

This is the story of the evolution of the Postal Service and the role it has played in the development of the United States.
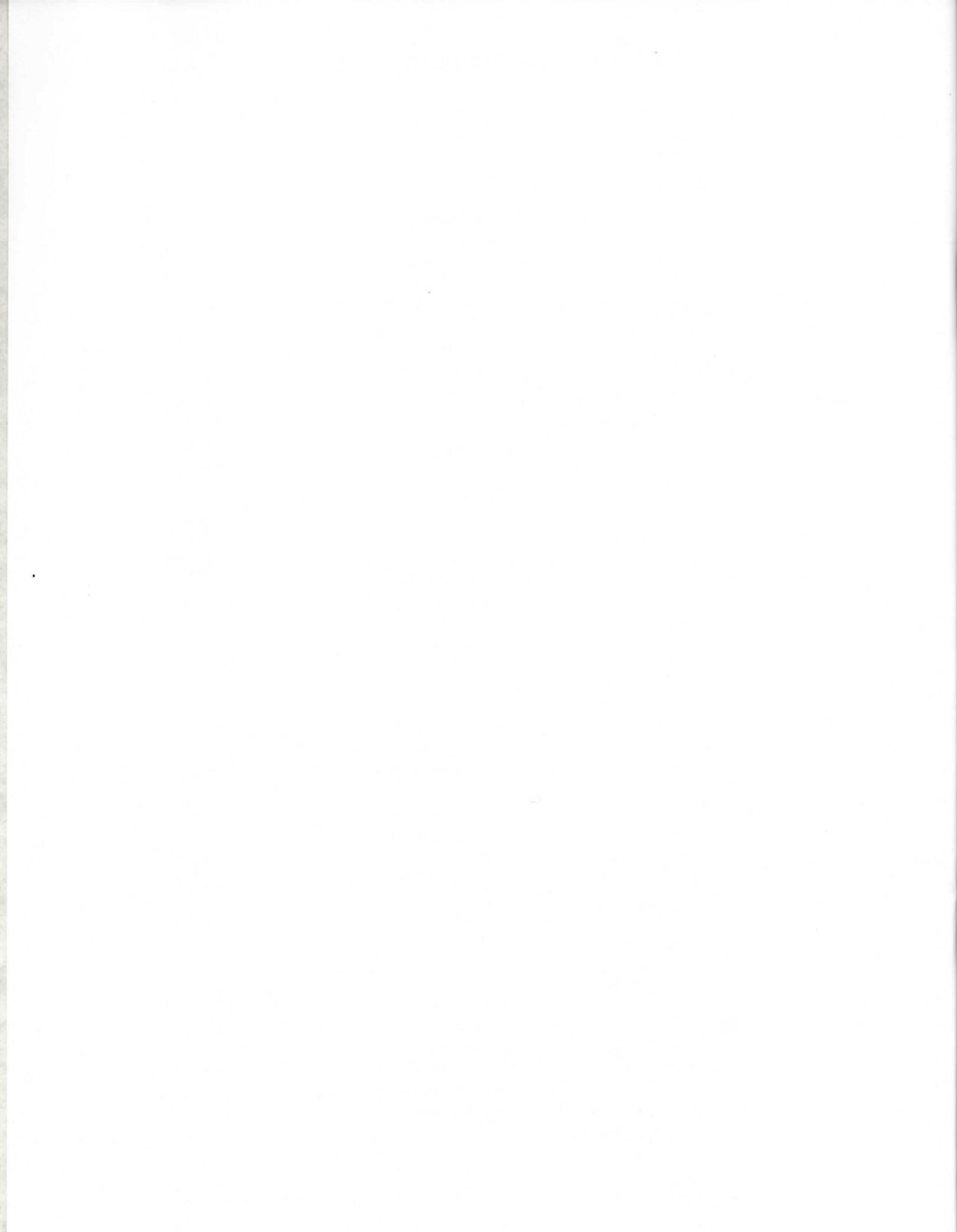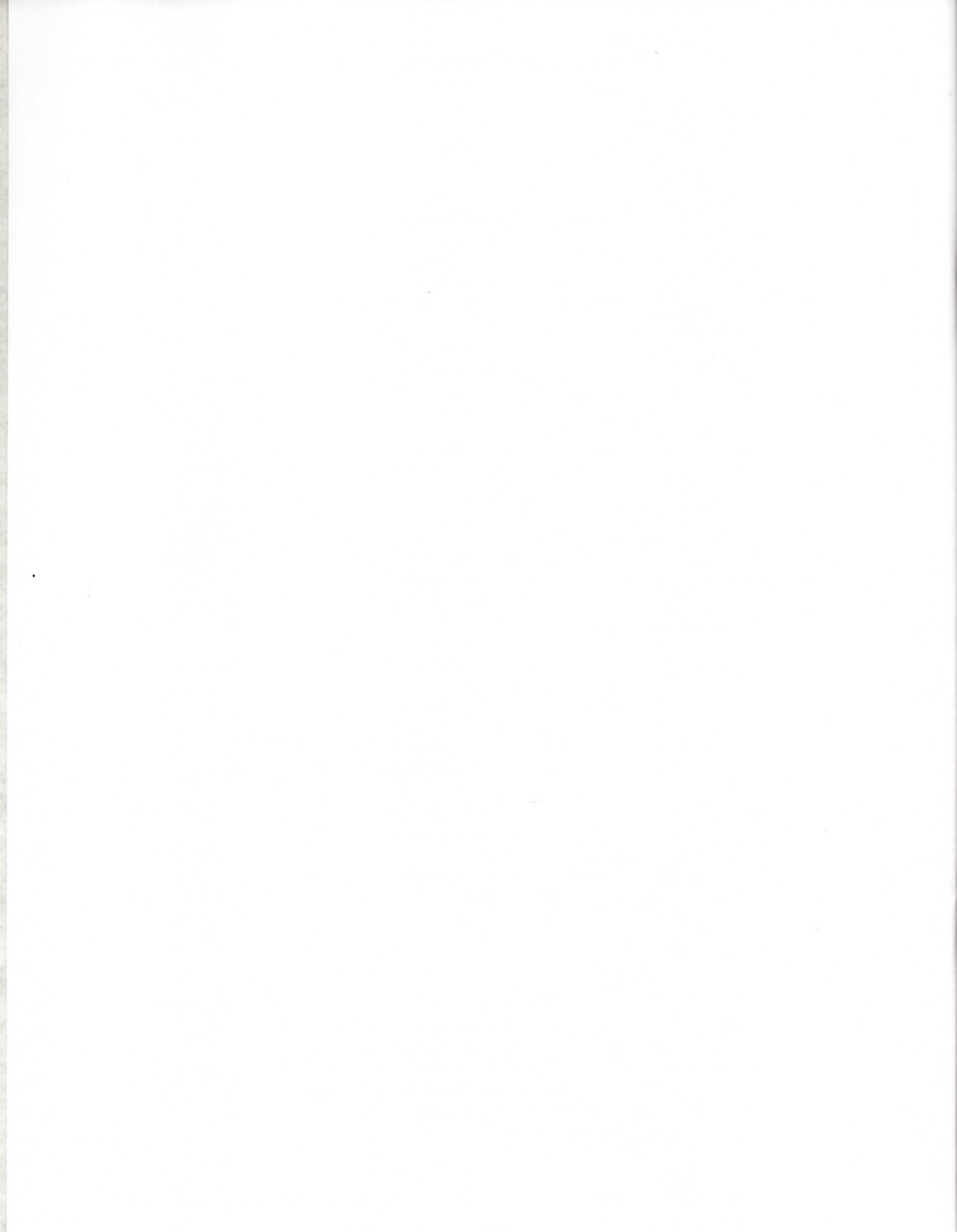
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On July 26, 1775, members of the Second Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, agreed " . . . that a Postmaster General be appointed for the United States, who shall hold his office at Philadelphia, and shall be allowed a salary of **1,000** dollars per annum . . . ."

That simple statement signaled the birth of the Post Office Department, the predecessor of the United States Postal Service and the second oldest department or agency of the present United States of America.

Colonial Times

In early colonial times, correspondents depended on friends, merchants, and Native Americans to carry messages between the colonies. However, most correspondence ran between the colonists and England, their mother country. It was largely to handle this mail that, in 1639, the first official notice of a postal service in the colonies appeared. The General Court of Massachusetts designated Richard Fairbanks' tavern in Boston as the official repository of mail brought from or sent overseas, in line with the practice in England and other nations to use coffee houses and taverns as mail drops.

Local authorities operated post routes within the colonies. Then, in 1673, Governor Francis Lovelace of New York set up a monthly post between New York and Boston. The service was of short duration, but the post rider's trail became known as the Old Boston Post Road, part of today's U.S. Route 1.

William Penn established Pennsylvania's first post office in 1683. In the South, private messengers, usually slaves, connected the huge plantations; a hogshead of tobacco was the penalty for failing to relay mail to the next plantation.

Central postal organization came to the colonies only after 1691 when Thomas Neale received a 21-year grant from the British Crown for a North American postal service. Neale never visited America. Instead, he appointed Governor Andrew Hamilton of New Jersey as his Deputy Postmaster General. Neale's franchise cost him only 80 cents a year but was no bargain; he died heavily in debt, in 1699, after assigning his interests in America to Andrew Hamilton and another Englishman, R. West.

In 1707, the British Government bought the rights to the North American postal service from West and the widow of Andrew Hamilton. It then appointed John Hamilton, Andrew's son, as Deputy Postmaster General of America. He served until 1721 when he was succeeded by John Lloyd of Charleston, South Carolina.

In 1730, Alexander Spotswood, a former lieutenant governor of Virginia, became Deputy Postmaster General for America. His most notable achievement probably was the appointment of Benjamin Franklin as postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737. Franklin was only 31 years old at the time, the struggling printer and publisher of *The Pennsylvania Gazette.* Later he would become one of the most popular men of his age.

Two other Virginians succeeded Spotswood: Head Lynch in 1739 and Elliot Benger in 1743. When Benger died in 1753, Franklin and William Hunter, postmaster of Williamsburg, Virginia, were appointed by the Crown as Joint Postmasters General for the colonies. Hunter died in 1761, and John Foxcroft of New York succeeded him, serving until the outbreak of the Revolution.

During his time as a Joint Postmaster General for the Crown, Franklin effected many important and lasting improvements in the colonial posts. He immediately began to reorganize the service, setting out on a long tour to inspect post offices in the North and others as far south as Virginia. New surveys were made, milestones were placed on principal roads, and new and shorter routes laid out. For the first time, post riders carried mail at night between Philadelphia and New York, with the travel time shortened by at least half.

In 1760, Franklin reported a surplus to the British Postmaster General — a first for the postal service in North America. When Franklin left office, post roads operated from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada, and mail between the colonies and the mother country operated on a regular schedule, with posted times. In addition, to regulate post offices and audit accounts, the position of surveyor was created in 1772; this is considered the precursor of today's Postal Inspection Service.

By 1774, however, the colonists viewed the royal post office with suspicion. Franklin was dismissed by the Crown for actions sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. Shortly after, William Goddard, a printer and newspaper publisher (whose father had been postmaster of New London, Connecticut, under Franklin) set up a Constitutional Post for inter-colonial mail service. Colonies funded it by subscription, and net revenues were to be used to improve the postal service rather than to be paid back to the subscribers. By 1775, when the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia, Goddard's colonial post was flourishing, and 30 post offices operated between Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Williamsburg.

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

After the Boston riots in September 1774, the colonies began to separate from the mother country. A Continental Congress was organized at Philadelphia in May 1775 to establish an independent government. One of the first questions before the delegates was how to convey and deliver the mail.

Benjamin Franklin, newly returned from England, was appointed chairman of a Committee of Investigation to establish a postal system. The report of the Committee, providing for the appointment of a postmaster general for the 13 American colonies, was considered by the Continental Congress on July 25 and 26. On July 26, 1775, Franklin was appointed Postmaster General, the first appointed under the Continental Congress; the establishment of the organization that became the United States Postal Service nearly two centuries later traces back to this date. Richard Bache, Franklin's son-in-law, was named Comptroller, and William Goddard was appointed Surveyor.

Franklin served until November 7, 1776. America's present Postal Service descends in an unbroken line from the system he planned and placed in operation, and history rightfully accords him major credit for establishing the basis of the postal service that has performed magnificently for the American people.

Article IX of the Articles of Confederation, ratified in 1781, gave Congress "The sole and exclusive right and power . . . establishing and regulating post offices from one State to another . . . and exacting such postage on papers passing through the same as may be requisite to defray the expenses of the said office . . . ." The first three Postmasters General — Benjamin Franklin, Richard Bache, and Ebenezer Hazard — were appointed by, and reported to, Congress.

Postal laws and regulations were revised and codified in the Ordinance of October 18, 1782.

THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

Following the adoption of the Constitution in May 1789, the Act of September 22, 1789 (1 Stat. 70), temporarily established a post office and created the Office of the Postmaster General. On September 26, 1789, George Washington appointed Samuel Osgood of Massachusetts as the first Postmaster General under the Constitution. At that time there were 75 post offices and about 2,000 miles of post roads, although as late as 1780 the postal staff consisted only of a Postmaster General, a Secretary/Comptroller, three surveyors, one Inspector of Dead Letters, and 26 post riders.

The Postal Service was temporarily continued by the Act of August 4, 1790 (1 Stat. 178), and the Act of March 3, 1791 (1 Stat. 218). The Act of February 20, 1792, made detailed provisions for the Post Office. Subsequent legislation enlarged the duties of the Post Office, strengthened and unified its organization, and provided rules and regulations for its development.

Philadelphia was the seat of government and postal headquarters until 1800. When the Post Office moved to Washington, D.C., in that year, officials were able to carry all postal records, furniture, and supplies in two horse-drawn wagons.

In 1829, upon the invitation of President Andrew Jackson, William T. Barry of Kentucky became the first Postmaster General to sit as a member of the President's Cabinet. His predecessor, John McLean of Ohio, began referring to the Post Office, or General Post Office as it was sometimes called, as the Post Office Department, but it was not specifically established as an executive department by Congress until June 8, 1872 (17 Stat. 284-4).

Around this period, in 1830, an Office of Instructions and Mail Depredations was established as the investigative and inspection branch of the Post Office Department. The head of that office, P. S. Loughborough, is considered the first Chief Postal Inspector.

Railway mail clerk preparing to catch mailbag, 1913

Loading biplane with airmail, 1920s

Airmail flight departing, probably Hazelhurst Field, NY, 1920s

Between the Revolutionary period and the first World War, United States postal officials applied themselves to improving transportation of the mails. From those early days to the present, the Postal Service has helped develop and subsidize every new mode of transportation in the United States. The postal role was a natural one; apart from postal employees themselves, transportation was the single most important element in mail delivery, literally, the legs of communication.

Even when the general public was skeptical or fearful of a new means of transportation, postal officials experimented with inventions that offered potential for moving the mail faster, occasionally suffering embarrassment, ridicule, or even abuse in the process.

As mail delivery evolved from foot to horseback, stagecoach, steamboat, railroad, automobile, and airplane, with intermediate and overlapping use of balloons, helicopters, and pneumatic tubes, mail contracts ensured the income necessary to build the great highways, rail lines, and airways that eventually spanned the continent.

By the turn of the 19th century, the Post Office Department had purchased a number of stagecoaches for operation on the nation's better post roads — a post road being any road on which the mail traveled — and continued to encourage new designs to improve passenger comfort and carry mail more safely.

Ten years before waterways were declared post roads in 1823, the Post Office used steamboats to carry mail between post towns where no roads existed.

In 1831, when steam-driven engines "traveling at the unconscionable speed of 15 miles an hour" were denounced as a "device of Satan to lead immortal souls to hell," railroads began to carry mail for short distances. By 1836, two years before railroads were constituted post roads, the Postal Service had awarded its first mail contract to the railroads.

As early as 1896, before many people in the United States were aware of a new mode of transportation that would eventually supplant the horse and buggy, the Post Office Department experimented with the "horseless wagon" in its search for faster and cheaper carriage of the mails. In its *Annual Report* for 1899, the Department announced that it had tested the practicality of using the automobile to collect mail in Buffalo, New York. In 1901, the Post Office Department entered into its first contract to carry the mail by automobile between the Buffalo Post Office and a postal station in the Pan American Exposition grounds. Although it took 35 minutes to traverse the 4 ½ miles between the two offices, the Department professed great satisfaction with the contract and prepared for similar service on January 1, 1902, at Minneapolis.

From 1901 to 1914, the Post Office performed all of its vehicle service under contract. Then, unhappy with exorbitant rates and frequent frauds uncovered in these accounts, the Department asked for and received approval from Congress to establish the first government-owned motor vehicle service at Washington, D.C., on October 19, 1914.

PONY EXPRESS

In the meantime, in the first half of the 19th century, the population of the United States began to flow steadily into the newly acquired territories of Louisiana, Oregon, and California. Wagon trains inched along the old Santa Fe, Mormon, and Oregon Trails, their passengers often ravaged by ambushes, hunger, disease, and pestilence.

When gold was discovered in California in 1848, the pioneer movement quickened, and in that year the Post Office Department awarded a contract to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to carry mail to California. Under this contract, mail traveled by ship from New York to Panama, moved across Panama by rail, then went on to San Francisco by ship. It was supposed to take three to four weeks to receive a letter from the East, but this goal was seldom achieved.

Some overland mail reached California as early as 1848, if erratically, via the military through Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe. Scheduled overland service for semi-weekly trips began on September 15, 1858, after the Post Office issued a contract to the Overland Mail Company stage line of John Butterfield, whose stages used the 2,800-mile southern route between Tipton, Missouri, and San Francisco. Although the specified running time was 24 days, cross-country mail often took months.

Californians felt their isolation keenly. Los Angeles, for example, learned that California had been admitted to the Union fully six weeks after the fact. Three years later, in 1853, the *Los Angeles Star* somewhat plaintively asked its readers: "Can somebody tell us what has become of the U. S. mail for this section of the world? Some four weeks since it has arrived here. The mail rider comes and goes regularly enough but the mail bags do not. One time he says the mail

is not landed in San Diego; another time there was so much of it the donkey could not bring it, and he sent it to San Pedro on the steamer — which carried it up to San Francisco. Thus it goes wandering up and down the ocean. . . ." It was abundantly clear that faster transportation was needed to the Pacific.

In March 1860, William H. Russell, an American transportation pioneer, advertised in newspapers as follows: "Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."

Russell had failed repeatedly to get backing from the Senate Post Office and Post Roads Committee for an express route to carry mail between St. Joseph, Missouri — the westernmost point reached by the railroad and telegraph — and California. St. Joseph was the strategic starting point for the direct 2,000-mile central route to the West. Except for a few forts and settlements, however, the route beyond St. Joseph was a vast, unknown land, inhabited primarily by Native Americans.

Many people believed transportation across this area on a year-round basis was impossible because of the extreme weather conditions. Russell, however, thought a route was feasible and was ready to organize his own express, with or without a mail contract, to prove it.

As a first step, Russell and his two partners, Majors and Waddell, formed the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. They built new relay stations and readied existing ones for use. The country was combed for good horses, animals hardy enough to challenge deserts and mountains and to withstand thirst in summer and ice in winter. Riders were recruited hastily but, before being hired, had to swear on a Bible not to cuss, fight, or abuse their animals and to conduct themselves honestly.

Starting on April 3, 1860, the Pony Express ran through parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California. On an average day, a rider covered 75 to 100 miles. He changed horses at relay stations, set about 10 or 15 miles apart, transferring himself and his mochila (a saddle cover with four pockets or cantinas for mail) to the new mount, all in one leap.

The first mail by Pony Express via the central route from St. Joseph to Sacramento took 10 ½ days, cutting the Overland Stage time via the southern route by more than half. The fastest delivery was in March 1861, when President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address was carried in 7 days and 17 hours.

From April 1860 through June 1861, the Pony Express operated as a private enterprise. From July 1, 1861, it operated under contract as a mail route until October 24, 1861, when the transcontinental telegraph line was completed, and the Pony Express became a legend.

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

At least three decades before the Pony Express galloped into postal history, the "iron horse" made a formal appearance. In August 1829, an English-built locomotive, the *Stourbridge Lion,* completed the first locomotive run in the United States on the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company Road in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. One month later, the South Carolina Railroad Company adopted the locomotive as its tractive power, and, in 1830, the Baltimore & Ohio's *Tom Thumb,* America's first steam locomotive, successfully carried more than 40 persons at a speed exceeding 10 miles an hour. This beginning was considered somewhat less than auspicious when a stage

CONFEDERATE POSTAL SERVICE

John H. Reagan
Postmaster General
of the Confederate States
of America

The Post Office Department of the Confederate States of America was established on February 21, 1861, by an Act of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States. On March 6, 1861, the day after Montgomery Blair's appointment by President Abraham Lincoln as Postmaster General of the United States, John Henninger Reagan, a former U. S. Congressman, was appointed Postmaster General of the Confederate States of America by Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States.
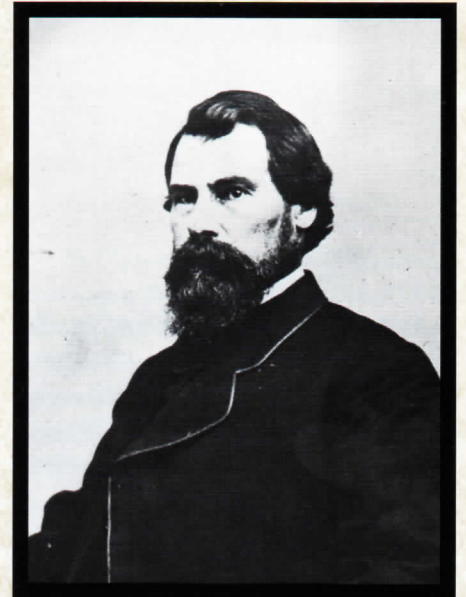
South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas already had seceded from the Nation. In the following months, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and most of Tennessee followed suit. Reagan instructed southern postmasters to continue to render their accounts to the United States as before until the Confederate postal system was organized. Meanwhile, he sent job offers to southern men in the Post Office Department in Washington. Many accepted and brought along their expertise, as well as copies of postal reports, forms in use, postal maps, etc.

In May 1861, Reagan issued a proclamation stating that he would officially assume control of the postal service of the Confederate States on June 1, 1861. Postmaster General Blair responded by ordering the cessation of United States mail service throughout the South on May 31, 1861.

Although an able administrator headed the Confederate Post Office Department, its mail service was continuously interrupted. Through a combination of pay and personnel cuts, postage rate increases, and the streamlining of mail routes, Reagan eliminated the deficit that existed in the postal service in the South. But blockades and the invading army from the North, as well as a growing scarcity of postage stamps, severely hampered postal operations.

The resumption of federal mail service in the southern states took place gradually as the war came to an end. By November 15, 1865, 241 mail routes had been restored in southern states; by November 1, 1866, 3,234 post offices out of 8,902 were returned to federal control in the South.

Postmaster General Reagan was arrested at the end of the war but later was pardoned and eventually made it back to Congress, where he became chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.

driver's horse outran the *Tom Thumb* on a parallel track in a race at Ellicotts Mills, Maryland, on September 18, 1830. Later, however, a steam locomotive reached the unheard-of speed of 30 miles an hour in an 1831 competition in Baltimore, and the dray horses used to power the first trains were eased out.

The Post Office Department recognized the value of this new mode of transportation for mail as early as November 30, 1832, when the stage contractors on a route from Philadelphia to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were granted an allowance of $400 per year "for carrying the mail on the railroad as far as West Chester (30 miles) from December 5, 1832." Although the Department apparently entered into a number of contracts providing for rail transportation as a part of the stage routes in succeeding years, the Postmaster General listed only one railroad company as a contractor during the first six months of 1836, "Route 1036 from Philadelphia to Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania."

After passage of the Act of July 7, 1838, designating all railroads in the United States as post routes, mail service by railroad increased rapidly. The Post Office appointed a route agent to accompany the mails between Albany and Utica, New York, in 1837. The first route agent was John Kendall, nephew of Postmaster General Amos Kendall.

In June 1840, two mail agents were appointed to accompany the mail from Boston to Springfield "to make exchanges of mails, attend to delivery, and receive and forward all unpaid way letters and packages received."

At this time, mail was sorted in distributing post offices. The only mail sent to the agents on the railroad lines was that intended for dispatch to offices along each route. The route agents opened the pouches from the local offices, separated the mail for other local points on the line for inclusion in

the pouches for those offices, and sent the balance into the distributing post offices for further sorting. Gradually, the clerks began to make up mail for connecting lines, as well as local offices, and the idea of distributing all transit mail on the cars slowly evolved.

The first experiment in distributing U.S. mail in so-called "post offices on wheels" was made in 1862 between Hannibal and St. Joseph, Missouri, by William A. Davis, postmaster of St. Joseph. Although this new procedure expedited the connection at St. Joseph with the overland stage, it was discontinued in January 1863. On August 28, 1864, the first U.S. Railroad Post Office route was officially established when George B. Armstrong, the assistant postmaster of Chicago, Illinois, placed a postal car equipped for general distribution in service between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa, on the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Similar routes were established between New York and Washington; Chicago and Rock Island, Illinois; Chicago and Burlington, Illinois; and New York and Erie, Pennsylvania.

When railway mail service began, mostly letter mail was sorted on the cars, which were not equipped to distribute other kinds of mail. By about 1869, other mail, except packages, was sorted as well.

In 1930, more than 10,000 trains were used to move the mail into every city, town, and village in the United States. Following passage of the Transportation Act of 1958, mail-carrying passenger trains declined rapidly. By 1965, only 190 trains carried mail; by 1970, the railroads carried virtually no First-Class Mail.

On April 30, 1971, the Post Office Department terminated seven of the eight remaining routes. The lone, surviving railway post office ran between New York and Washington, D.C., and made its last run on June 30, 1977.

FREE CITY DELIVERY

In the early part of the 19th century, envelopes were not used. Instead, a letter was folded and the address placed on the outside of the sheet. The customer had to take a letter to the post office to mail it, and the addressee had to pick up the letter at the post office, unless he or she lived in one of about 40 big cities where a carrier would deliver it to the home address for an extra penny or two.

Although postage stamps became available in 1847, mailers had the option of sending their letters and having the recipients pay the postage until 1855, when prepayment became compulsory. Previously, if the addressees refused to accept the letter — and they often did — the Post Office's labor and delivery costs were never recovered.

Street boxes for mail collection began to appear in large cities by 1858. In 1863, free city delivery was instituted in 49 of the country's largest cities. By 1890, 454 post offices were delivering mail to residents of United States cities. It was not until the turn of the century, however, that free delivery came to farmers and other rural residents.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY

Today it is difficult to envision the isolation that was the lot of farm families in early America. In the days before telephones, radios, or televisions were common, the farmer's main links to the outside world were the mail and the newspapers that came by mail to the nearest post office. Since the mail had to be picked up, this meant a trip to the post office, often involving a day's travel, round-trip. The farmer might delay picking up mail for days, weeks, or even months until the trip could be coupled with one for supplies, food, or equipment.

John Wanamaker of Pennsylvania was the first Postmaster General to advocate rural free delivery (RFD). Although funds were

appropriated a month before he left office in 1893, subsequent Postmasters General dragged their feet on inaugurating the new service so that it was 1896 before the first experimental rural delivery routes began in West Virginia, with carriers working out of post offices in Charlestown, Halltown, and Uvilla.

Many transportation events in postal history were marked by great demonstrations: the Pony Express, for example, and scheduled airmail service in 1918. The West Virginia experiment with rural free delivery, however, was launched in relative obscurity and in an atmosphere of hostility. Critics of the plan claimed it was impractical and too expensive to have a postal carrier trudge over rutted roads and through forests trying to deliver mail in all kinds of weather.

However, the farmers, without exception, were delighted with the new service and the new world open to them. After receiving free delivery for a few months, one observed that it would take away part of life to give it up. A Missouri farmer looked back on his life and calculated that, in 15 years, he had traveled 12,000 miles going to and from his post office to get the mail.

A byproduct of rural free delivery was the stimulation it provided to the development of the great American system of roads and highways.

A prerequisite for rural delivery was good roads. After hundreds of petitions for rural delivery were turned down by the Post Office because of unserviceable and inaccessible roads, responsible local governments began to extend and improve existing highways. Between 1897 and 1908, these local governments spent an estimated $72 million on bridges, culverts, and other improvements. In one county in Indiana, farmers themselves paid over $2,600 to grade and gravel a road in order to qualify for RFD.

The impact of RFD as a cultural and social agent for millions of Americans was even more striking, and, in this respect, rural delivery still is a vital link between industrial and rural America.

PARCEL POST

The establishment of rural delivery was a heady taste of life for rural Americans and soon increased their demand for delivery of small packages containing foodstuffs, tobacco, dry goods, drugs, and other commodities not easily available to farmers.

Private express companies and country retail merchants fought long and hard against parcel post, but rural residents represented 54 percent of the country's population, and they were equally vociferous. While the question was still being hotly debated in Congress, one of the express companies declared a large dividend to stockholders, and public indignation at so-called exorbitant profits helped decide the issue for Congress.

Parcel post became law in 1912, and service began January 1, 1913. It was an instant success. In all parts of the country, enthusiastic advocates of the service celebrated by mailing thousands of parcels in the first few days. The effect on the national economy was electric. Marketing and merchandising through parcel post gave rise to great mail-order houses.

Montgomery Ward, the first mail-order house, started with a one-page catalog in 1872. After parcel post began, the mail-order catalog became the most important book in the farmhouse next to the Bible; it was, in fact, often called "The Homesteader's Bible" or "The Wish Book."

Sears, Roebuck and Company followed Montgomery Ward in 1893. In 1897, after one year of rural delivery, Sears boasted it was selling four suits and a watch every minute, a revolver every two minutes, and a buggy every 10 minutes. After five years of parcel post delivery, Sears had tripled its revenues.

POSTAL SAVINGS SYSTEM

An Act of Congress on June 25, 1910, established a postal savings system in post offices, effective January 1, 1911. The legislation aimed to get money out of hiding, attract the savings of immigrants accustomed to saving at post offices in their native countries, provide safe depositories for people who had lost confidence in private banks, and furnish more convenient

Postal Savings System savers, 1946

depositories for working people, since post offices were open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week.

The system paid two percent interest per year. The minimum deposit was $1, the maximum, $2,500.

Deposits were slow at first, but, by 1929, $153 million was on deposit. Savings spurted to $1.2 billion during the 1930s and jumped again during World War II, peaking in 1947 at almost $3.4 billion.

After the war, banks raised their interest rates and offered the same governmental guarantee as the postal savings system, and savings bonds gave higher interest rates. Deposits in the postal savings system declined. By 1964, they dropped to $416 million, and they continued to decline by $5 million per month.

On April 27, 1966, the Post Office Department stopped accepting deposits in existing accounts, refused to open new accounts, and, as the yearly anniversary date of existing accounts came up, cut off interest payments. When the system ended officially on July 1, 1967, about $60 million in unclaimed deposits of more than 600,000 depositors was turned over to the Treasury Department to be held in trust, without a time limitation.

Eventually, under a law of August 13, 1971, the Treasury was authorized to turn over the money still on deposit to various states and jurisdictions, each sharing proportionately. Some money was kept on deposit for future claims, but under the Postal Savings System Statute of Limitations Act of July 13, 1984 (Public Law 98-359), no claims could be brought more than one year after enactment. Thus, no claims made after July 13, 1985, have been honored.

AIRMAIL

The Post Office Department's most extraordinary role in transportation was probably played in the sky, a role, unfortunately, little known today other than to postal employees and the pioneers of American aviation.

The United States government had been slow to recognize the potential of the airplane. In 1905, the War Department refused three separate offers by the Wright brothers to share their scientific discoveries on air flights. Even after the brothers had satisfied many European nations in 1908 that air flight was feasible, America owned only one dilapidated plane.

The Post Office Department, however, was intrigued with the possibility of carrying mail through the skies and authorized its first experimental mail flight in 1911 at an aviation meet on Long Island in New York. Earle Ovington, sworn in as a mail carrier by Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock, made daily flights between Garden City and Mineola, New York, dropping his mail bags from the plane to the ground where they were picked up by the Mineola postmaster.

Later, in 1911 and 1912, the Department authorized 52 experimental flights at fairs, carnivals, and air meets in more than 25 states.

These flights convinced the Department that the airplane could carry a payload of mail, and officials repeatedly urged Congress after 1912 to appropriate money to launch airmail service. Congress finally authorized use of $50,000 from steam-and-powerboat service appropriations for airmail experiments in 1916. The Department advertised for bids in Massachusetts and Alaska but received no response in the absence of suitable planes.

Airmail Pilot William C. Hopson, 1920s

In 1918, however, Congress appropriated $100,000 to establish experimental airmail routes, and the Post Office Department urged the Army Signal Corps to lend its planes and pilots to the Post Office to start an airmail service. Carrying the mail, the Department argued, would provide invaluable cross-country experience to student flyers. The Secretary of War agreed.

On May 15, 1918, the Post Office Department began scheduled airmail service between New York and Washington, D.C., an important date not only for the Post Office but for all commercial aviation. Simultaneous takeoffs were made from Washington's Polo Grounds and from Belmont Park, Long Island, both trips by way of Philadelphia.

During the first three months of operation, the Post Office used Army pilots and six Jenny training planes of the Army (NJ-4Hs). On August 12, 1918, the Post Office took over all phases of the airmail service, using newly hired civilian pilots and mechanics and six specially built mail planes from the Standard Aircraft Corporation.

MISSILE MAIL

Throughout its history, the Postal Service enthusiastically has explored faster, more efficient forms of mail transportation. Technologies now commonplace — railroad, automobile, and airplane — were embraced by the Post Office Department at their radical birth, when they were considered new-fangled, unworkable contraptions by many.

One such technology, however, remains only a footnote in the history of mail delivery. On June 8, 1959, in a move a postal official heralded as "of historic significance to the peoples of the entire world," the Navy submarine U.S.S. *Barbero* fired a guided missile carrying 3,000 letters at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Mayport, Florida. "Before man reaches the moon," the official was quoted as saying, "mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to Britain, to India or Australia by guided missiles."

History proved differently, but this experiment with missile mail exemplifies the pioneering spirit of the Post Office Department when it came to developing faster, better ways of moving the mail.
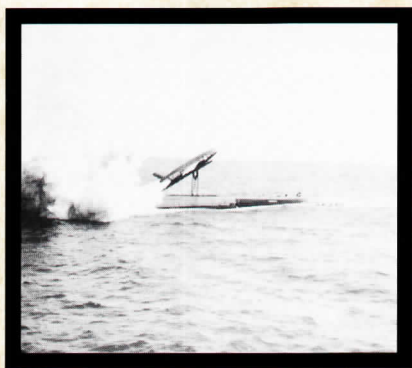
Missile mail launch, 1959

OFFICIAL U.S. NAVY PHOTO

These early mail planes had no instruments, radios, or other navigational aids. Pilots flew by dead reckoning or "by the seat of their pants." Forced landings occurred frequently because of bad weather, but fatalities in those early months were rare, largely because of the small size, maneuverability, and slow landing speed of the planes.

Congress authorized airmail postage of 24 cents, including special delivery. The public was reluctant to use this more expensive service, and, during the first year, airmail bags contained as much regular mail as airmail.

The Department's long-range plans called for an eventual transcontinental air route from New York to San Francisco to better its delivery time on long hauls and to lure the public into using airmail. The first legs of this transcontinental route — from Cleveland to Chicago, with a stop at Bryan, Ohio, and from New York to Cleveland with a stop at Bellefonte, Pennsylvania — opened in 1919. A third leg opened in 1920 from Chicago to Omaha, via Iowa City, and feeder lines were established from St. Louis and Minneapolis to Chicago. The last transcontinental segment from Omaha to San Francisco, via North Platte, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Rock Springs, Salt Lake City, Elko, and Reno opened on September 8, 1920.

At this time, mail was still carried on trains at night and flown by day, but, even so, the new service bettered cross-country all-rail time by 22 hours.

To provide pilots with up-to-date weather information needed to fly the mail all the way from New York to San Francisco, the Department began to install radio stations at each flying field in August 1920. By November, ten stations were operating, including two Navy stations. When airmail traffic permitted, other government departments used the radios instead of the telegraph for special messages, and the Department of Agriculture transmitted weather forecasts and stock market reports over the radios.

On February 22, 1921, mail was flown both day and night for the first time over the entire distance from San Francisco to New York.

Congress was impressed. It appropriated $1,250,000 for the expansion of airmail service, especially ground facilities, and the Post Office Department went on to install additional landing fields, as well as towers, beacons, searchlights, and boundary markers across the country. It also equipped the planes with luminescent instruments, navigational lights, and parachute flares.

In 1922 and 1923, the Department was awarded the Collier Trophy for important contributions to the development of aeronautics, especially its safety record, and for demonstrating the feasibility of night flying. In 1926, an airmail pilot received the first Harmon Trophy for advancing aviation.

On February 2, 1925, Congress passed a law "to encourage commercial aviation and to authorize the Postmaster General to contract for mail service." The Post Office immediately invited bids for its routes by commercial aviation. By the end of 1926, 11 out of 12 contracted airmail routes were operating.

The first commercial airmail flight in the United States occurred on February 15, 1926. As commercial airlines took over, the Post Office Department transferred its lights, airways, and radio service to the Department of Commerce, including 17 fully equipped stations, 89 emergency landing fields, and 405 beacons. Terminal airports, except

those in Chicago, Omaha, and San Francisco, which were government properties, were transferred to the municipalities in which they were located. Some planes were sold to airmail contractors; others were transferred to interested government departments. By September 1, 1927, all airmail was carried under contract.

Charles I. Stanton, an early airmail pilot who later headed the Civil Aeronautics Administration, said about those early days of scheduled airmail service: "We planted four seeds . . . . They were airways, communications, navigation aids, and multi-engined aircraft. Not all of these came full blown into the transportation scene; in fact, the last one withered and died and had to be planted over again nearly a decade later. But they are the cornerstones on which our present world-wide transport structure is built, and they came, one by one, out of our experience in daily, uninterrupted flying of the mail."

ZIP CODE

The change in character of the mail, the tremendous increase in mail volume, and the revolution in transportation, coupled with the steep rise in manpower costs, made adoption of modern technology imperative and helped produce the ZIP (Zoning Improvement Plan) Code.

Despite the growing transport accessibility offered by the airlines, the Post Office Department in 1930 still moved the bulk of its domestic mail by rail, massing, re-sorting, and redistributing it for long-distance hauling through the major railroad hubs of the nation. More than 10,000 mail-carrying trains crisscrossed the country, moving round the clock into virtually every village and metropolitan area.

The railroads' peak year may have been 1930. By 1963, fewer trains, making fewer stops, carried the mail. In these same years, 1930-1963, the United States underwent

many changes. It suffered through a prolonged and paralyzing depression, fought its second World War of the 20th century, and moved from an agricultural economy to a highly industrial one of international pre-eminence. The character, volume, and transportation of mail also changed.

The social correspondence of the earlier century gave way, gradually at first, and then explosively, to business mail. By 1963, business mail constituted 80 percent of the total volume. The single greatest impetus in this great outpouring of business mail was the computer, which brought centralization of accounts and a growing mass of utility bills and payments, bank deposits and receipts, advertisements, magazines, insurance premiums, credit card transactions, department store and mortgage billings, and payments, dividends, and Social Security checks traveling through the mail.

In June 1962, the Presidentially appointed Advisory Board of the Post Office Department, after a study of its overall mechanization problems, made several primary recommendations. One was that the Department give priority to the development of a coding system, an idea that had been under consideration in the Department for a decade or more.

Over the years, a number of potential coding programs had been examined and discarded. Finally, in 1963, the Department selected a system advanced by department officials, and, on April 30, 1963, Postmaster General John A. Gronouski announced that the ZIP Code would begin on July 1, 1963.

Preparing for the new system was a major task involving realignment of the mail system. The Post Office had recognized some years back that new avenues of transportation would open to the Department and began to establish focal points for air, highway, and rail transportation. Called the Metro System, these transportation

centers were set up around 85 of the country's larger cities to deflect mail from congested, heavily traveled city streets. The Metro concept was expanded and eventually became the core of 552 sectional centers, each serving between 40 and 150 surrounding post offices.

Once these sectional centers were delineated, the next step in establishing the ZIP Code was to assign codes to the centers and the postal addresses they served. The existence of postal zones in the larger cities, set in motion in 1943, helped to some extent, but, in cases where the old zones failed to fit within the delivery areas, new numbers had to be assigned.

By July 1963, a five-digit code had been assigned to every address throughout the country. The first digit designated a broad geographical area of the United States, ranging from zero for the Northeast to nine for the far West. This was followed by two digits that more closely pinpointed population concentrations and those sectional centers accessible to common transportation networks. The final two digits designated small post offices or postal zones in larger zoned cities.

ZIP Code began on July 1, 1963, as scheduled. Use of the new code was not mandatory at first for anyone, but, in 1967, the Post Office required mailers of second- and third-class bulk mail to presort by ZIP Code. Although the public and mailers alike adapted well to its use, it was not enough.

Mr. ZIP
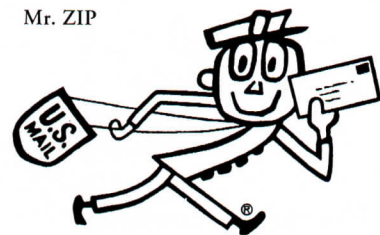
POSTAL REFORM

By the mid-1960s, the Post Office Department was in deep trouble. Years of financial neglect and fragmented control had finally impaired its ability to function in terms of facilities, equipment, wages, and management efficiency, as well as in terms of the highly subsidized rates that existed on all classes of mail — rates that for many years bore little relation to costs.

In 1966, the Chicago Post Office ground to a virtual stop under a logjam of mail. At a hearing in 1967, Oklahoma Congressman Tom Steed, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Treasury-Post Office, stated the case for postal reform while questioning Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien. The Congressman asked:

"Would this be a fair summary — that at the present time, as manager of the Post Office Department, you have no control over your workload; over the rates or revenue; over the pay rates of the employees that you employ; you have very little control over the conditions of the service of these employees; you have virtually no control, by the nature of it, of your physical facilities; and you have only a limited control, at best, over the transportation facilities that you are compelled to use — all of which adds up to a staggering amount of 'no control' in terms of the duties you have to perform?"

What Congressman Steed did not articulate was that this total lack of control by the Postmaster General meant that, in most cases and except for the ZIP Code, the mail was being handled virtually in the same way it had been handled 100 years earlier, despite skyrocketing mail volume.

POSTAL REORGANIZATION ACT

In May 1969, four months after he became a member of President Richard Nixon's Cabinet, Postmaster General Winton M. Blount proposed a basic reorganization of the Post Office Department. The President asked Congress to pass the Postal Service Act of 1969, calling for removal of the Postmaster General from the Cabinet and creation of a self-supporting postal corporation wholly owned by the federal government.

On March 12, 1970, after extensive hearings, the House Post Office Committee reported a compromise measure containing postal reform provisions similar to those proposed by the President and providing a pay increase for postal employees, but postal employees called it "too little, too late." Six days later, a postal work stoppage began and ultimately involved approximately 152,000 postal employees in 671 locations.

The Postmaster General agreed to negotiate with the seven exclusively recognized unions upon the employees' return to work. Consequently, the employees went back on the job, and negotiations began on March 25. On April 2, the negotiating parties announced they had agreed to recommend to Congress a general wage increase of six percent, retroactive to December 27, 1969, for all federal employees, plus an additional eight percent increase for postal workers that would take effect if the parties could agree on legislation reorganizing the Post Office Department and if the legislation could be enacted. Management and the unions agreed to develop jointly a reorganization plan and, on April 16, 1970, announced agreement on such a plan.

Mobile, AL, letter carriers preparing mail for delivery, 1956

The agreement was embodied in a legislative proposal and sent to Congress by President Nixon. The proposal included four basic provisions enunciated earlier by the Postmaster General as necessary to reform the postal system: adequate financing authority; removal of the system from politics, assuring continuity of management; collective bargaining between postal management and employees; and the Postal Service's setting rates after an opportunity for hearings before an impartial rate panel. In addition to the eight percent pay increase for postal employees, the bill provided for negotiation of a new wage schedule so employees could reach the maximum step in grade after no more than 8 years, instead of 21 years.

On August 3, by a roll call vote of 57 to 7, the Senate approved the conference report on House Resolution 17070, a modified version of the legislation proposed by the President; three days later, the House of Representatives approved it. On August 12, 1970, President Nixon signed into law the most comprehensive postal legislation since the founding of the Republic, Public Law 91-375.
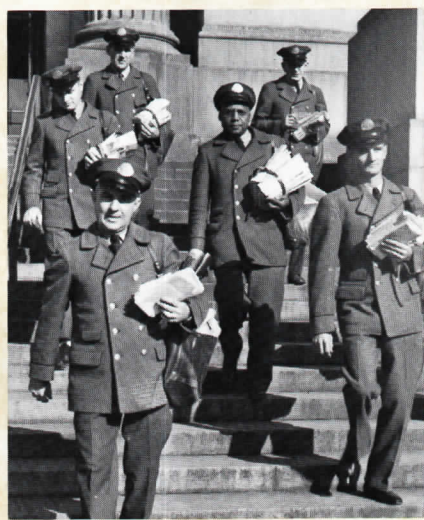
Letter carriers, 1946

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

The Post Office Department was transformed into the United States Postal Service, an independent establishment of the executive branch of the Government of the United States. The mission of the Postal Service remained the same, as stated in Title 39 of the U. S. Code: "The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities."

The new Postal Service officially began operations on July 1, 1971. At that time, the Postmaster General left the Cabinet, and the Postal Service received:

- Operational authority vested in a Board of Governors and Postal Service executive management, rather than in Congress.
- Authority to issue public bonds to finance postal buildings and mechanization.
- Direct collective bargaining between representatives of management and the unions.
- A new rate-setting procedure, built around an independent Postal Rate Commission.

Title 39, the Postal Reorganization Act, also vested direction of the powers of the Postal Service in an 11-member Board of Governors. Nine members (the Governors) are appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. They serve staggered nine-year terms, and no more than five Governors may belong to the same political party. Governors are chosen to represent the public interest generally, may not represent specific interests using the Postal Service, and may be removed only for cause.

The nine Governors appoint the Postmaster General, who is the chief executive officer of the Postal Service and who serves at their discretion, and these 10 people select the Deputy Postmaster General. All are voting members of the Board of Governors, which directs the exercise of the powers of the Postal Service, reviews its practices and policies, and directs and controls its expenditures. The nine Governors alone approve rates and classification changes following a recommendation by the Postal Rate Commission. The entire, 11-member Board determines when rates and classification changes become effective. The Postmaster General appoints all officers of the Postal Service.

The Postal Reorganization Act also changed the United States postal system in other ways:

Finances and rates: It established an independent Postal Rate Commission of five members, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, to recommend postal rates and classifications for adoption by the Governors. It authorized the Postal Service to borrow money from the general public and phased out the general public service subsidy, which the Postal Service ended earlier than required in 1983. It also authorized appropriations to reimburse the Postal Service for carrying congressionally established categories of free and reduced-rate mail and required that rates for each class of mail cover direct and indirect costs attributable to that class, plus a proportion of institutional costs.

Personnel: It established a postal career service, a framework that permits terms and conditions of employment to be set through collective bargaining, and prohibited political recommendations for appointments within the Postal Service. The Civil Service retirement program was retained.

Labor-management relations: The Act authorized collective bargaining on wages and working conditions under laws applying to private industry and provided for binding arbitration if an impasse persists 180 days after the start of bargaining. The ban on strikes, applicable to all federal employees, remained. It authorized the National Labor Relations Board to determine proper bargaining units, supervise representative elections, and enforce the unfair labor practices provisions found in the law. It also protected the rights of all employees to form, join, or assist a labor organization, or to refrain from such activity.

Transportation: It extended laws governing common and contract carriage of mail by railroads to motor common carriers and authorized negotiated contracts with star route operators and motor common carriers.

Pay: The Act established the policy that the Postal Service would maintain compensation and benefits for its officers and employees on a standard of comparability to that offered by the private sector for similar levels of work. However, the Act mandated that no officer or employee shall be paid compensation at a rate in excess of the rate for Level I (Cabinet Officer level) of the Executive Schedule.

Despite the manifold accomplishments of the Postal Service since Reorganization, the mechanization of operations and the ZIP Code had apparently reached their peak in the 1970s, and more was needed to cope with increasing mail volume. In 1978, the Postal Service decided to develop an expanded code of four add-on digits that would speed processing when coupled with new mechanization capable of sorting mail to small geographic segments, such as a city block or single building.

POSTAL MECHANIZATION/EARLY AUTOMATION

At the turn of the 20th century, in spite of a burgeoning mail volume and limited work space, the Post Office Department relied entirely on antiquated mailhandling operations, such as the "pigeonhole" method of letter sorting, a holdover from colonial times. Although crude sorting machines were proposed by inventors of canceling machines in the early 1900s and tested in the 1920s, the Great Depression and World War II postponed widespread development of mechanization until the mid-1950s. The Post Office Department then took major steps toward mechanization by initiating projects and awarding contracts for the development of a number of machines and technologies, including letter sorters, facer-cancelers, automatic address readers, parcel sorters, advanced tray conveyors, flat sorters, and letter mail coding and stamp-tagging techniques.

As a result of this research, the first semi-automatic parcel sorting machine was introduced in Baltimore in 1956. A year later, a foreign-built multiposition letter sorting machine (MPLSM), the Transorma, was installed and tested for the first time in an American post office. The first American-built letter sorter, based on a 1,000-pocket machine originally adapted from a foreign design, was developed during the late 1950s. The first production contract was awarded to the Burroughs Corporation for 10 of these machines. The machine was successfully tested in Detroit in 1959 and eventually became the backbone of letter-sorting operations during the 1960s and 70s.

In 1959, the Post Office Department also awarded its first volume order for mechanization to Pitney-Bowes, Inc., for the production of 75 Mark II facer-cancelers. In 1984, more than 1,000 Mark II and M-36 facer-cancelers were in operation. By 1992, these machines were outdated and began to be replaced by advanced facer-canceler systems (AFCS) purchased from ElectroCom L.P. The AFCSs process more than 30,000 pieces of mail per hour, twice as fast as the M-36 facer-cancelers. AFCSs are more sophisticated too: they electronically identify
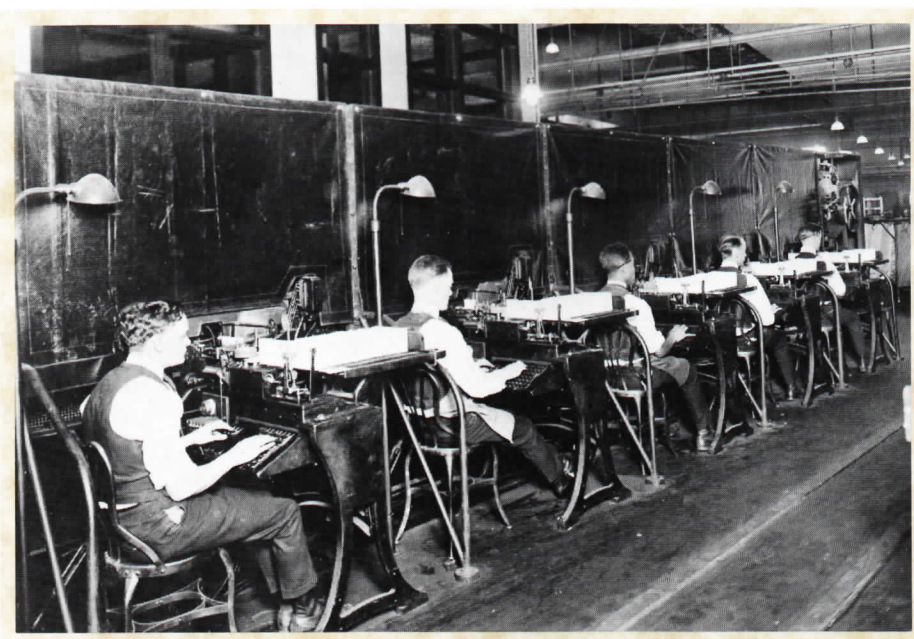
Gehring Mail Distributing Machine test in Washington, DC, 1922

and separate prebarcoded mail, handwritten letters, and machine-imprinted pieces for faster processing through automation.

The Department's accelerated mechanization program began in the late 1960s and consisted of semi-automatic equipment such as the MPLSM, the single position letter sorting machine (SPLSM), and the facer-canceler. In November 1965, the Department put a high-speed optical character reader (OCR) into service in the Detroit Post Office. This first-generation machine was connected to an MPLSM frame and read the city/state/ZIP Code line of typed addresses to sort letters to one of the 277 pockets. Each subsequent handling of the letter required that the address be read again.

Mechanization increased productivity. By the mid-1970s, however, it was clear that cheaper, more efficient methods and equipment were needed if the Postal Service was to offset rising costs associated with growing mail volume. To reduce the number of mailpiece handlings, the Postal Service began to develop an expanded ZIP Code in 1978.

The new code required new equipment. The Postal Service entered the age of automation in September 1982 when the first computer-driven single-line optical character reader was installed in Los Angeles. The equipment required a letter to be read only once at the originating office by an OCR, which printed a barcode on the envelope. At the destinating office, a less expensive barcode sorter (BCS) sorted the mail by reading its barcode.

Following the introduction of the ZIP+4 code in 1983, the first delivery phase of the new OCR channel sorters and BCSs was completed by mid-1984.

ZIP+4

Introduced in 1983, the ZIP+4 code added a hyphen and four digits to the existing five-digit ZIP Code. The first five numbers continued to identify an area of the country and delivery office to which mail is directed. The sixth and seventh numbers denote a delivery sector, which may be several blocks, a group of streets, a group of post office boxes, several office buildings, a single high-rise office building, a large apartment building, or a small geographic area. The last two numbers denote a delivery segment, which might be one floor of an office building, one side of a street between intersecting streets, specific departments in a firm, or a group of post office boxes.

On October 1, 1983, the Governors of the Postal Service approved price incentives for First-Class Mail bearing the ZIP+4 code.

By the end of 1984, 252 OCRs were installed in 118 major mail processing centers across the country and were processing 24,000 pieces of mail per hour (an average productivity rate of 6,200 pieces per work hour) — a substantial increase compared to the 1,750 pieces per work hour processed by MPLSMs.

THE AGE OF AUTOMATION

Today, a new generation of equipment is changing the way mail flows and improving productivity. Multiline optical character readers (MLOCRs) read the entire address on an envelope, spray a barcode on the envelope, then sort it at the rate of more than nine per second. Wide area barcode readers can read a barcode virtually anywhere on a letter. Advanced facer-canceler systems face, cancel, and sort mail. The remote barcoding system (RBCS) provides barcoding for handwritten script mail or mail that cannot be read by OCRs.

The ZIP+4 code reduced the number of times that a piece of mail had to be handled. It also shortened the time carriers spent casing their mail (placing it in order of delivery). First tested in 1991, the delivery point barcode, which represents an 11-digit ZIP Code, will virtually eliminate the need for carriers to case mail because mail will arrive in trays at the delivery post office sorted in "walk sequence." The MLOCR reads the barcode and address, then constructs a unique 11-digit delivery point barcode using the Postal Service's National Directory and the last two digits of the street address. Then barcode sorters put the mail in sequence for delivery.

Until now, most of the emphasis in automation has been processing machine-imprinted mail. Still, letter mail with addresses that were handwritten or not machine-readable had to be processed manually or by a letter sorting machine. The RBCS now allows most of this mail to receive delivery point barcodes without being removed from the automated mailstream. When MLOCRs cannot read an address, they spray an identifying code on the back of the envelope. Operators at a data entry site, which may be far from the mail processing facility, read the address on a video screen and key a code that allows a computer to determine the ZIP Code information. The results are transmitted back to a modified barcode sorter, which pulls the 11-digit ZIP Code information for that item, and sprays the correct barcode on the front of the envelope. The mail then can be sorted within the automated mailstream.

Letter mail represents approximately 70 percent of the Postal Service's total mail volume, so development of letter mail equipment has received the most attention. In addition to letter-mail processing, the

Descent into Grand Canyon, 1970

MULE MAIL—
HIGH TECH, THEN LOW TREK

The sign on the only cafe in town reads "No Fries 'Til Mail." Life in the community of Supai, Arizona, literally survives on its mail — and eats more mail than it reads.

Arguably the most remote mail route in the country, the Supai route is the last mule train delivery in the United States. The route brings everything from food to furniture to the tiny Havasupai Indian Reservation, consisting of 525 tribal members who live deep below the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

The only way in and out of Supai is an eight-mile trail on foot, mule, or horseback. The first two miles of the trail consist of a dizzying series of switchbacks that careen along the red rock cliffs of the Grand Canyon's shale formation.

Helicopters and air drops are impractical here, so the mule train makes the three- to five-hour trip five days a week, even through wind and rain. During a typical week, more than a ton of mail is sent via the mules, with each animal carrying a cargo of 200 pounds.

Postal Service is taking steps to automate mail-forwarding systems and the processing of flats and parcels. The Postal Service also has accelerated installation of automated equipment in lobbies to serve customers better. The backbone of this effort is the integrated retail terminal (IRT), a computer that incorporates an electronic scale. It provides information to customers during a transaction and simplifies postal accounting by consolidating data. Postage validation imprinters have been attached to the IRTs to produce a self-sticking postage label that has a barcode for automated processing.

COMPETITION AND CHANGE

Despite improved technology, the Postal Service faced mounting financial and competitive pressures. Following a decade of prosperity in the 1980s that saw a dramatic increase in mail volume, the nation entered a period of slower economic growth in the 1990s. Bankruptcies, consolidations, and a general restructuring of the marketplace reduced the flow of business mail. In 1991, overall mail volume dropped for the first time in 15 years. The following year, volume rose only slightly, and the Postal Service narrowly avoided the first back-to-back declines in mail volume since the Great Depression.

Competition grew for every postal product. The rise of fax machines, electronic communications, and other technologies offered alternatives for conveying bills, statements, and personal messages. Entrepreneurs and publishing companies set up alternate delivery networks in an attempt to hold down the costs of delivering magazines and newspapers. Many third-class mailers, finding their mailing budgets reduced and their postage rates increased higher than expected, began shifting some of their expenditures to other forms of advertising, including cable television and telemarketing.

Private companies continued to dominate the market for the urgent delivery of mail and packages.

To become more competitive, the Postal Service began to change and restructure. In 1990, the Postal Service awarded two contracts to private firms that now independently measure First-Class Mail service and customer satisfaction. The Postal Service also began working more closely with customers to identify ways to better meet their needs and expanded customer conveniences such as stamps on consignment. With the help of business mailers, the Postal Service continued support for rates reflecting customer work-sharing features, many tied to automation, to give customers more flexibility. At the same time, the Postal Service began implementing Customer Advisory Councils, groups of citizens who volunteered to work with local postal management on postal issues of interest to the community. By the summer of 1993, 500 Advisory Councils were in place.

In the summer of 1992, under the leadership of newly appointed Postmaster General Marvin Runyon, the Postal Service intensified its drive for competitiveness. After consulting with mailers, the Governors of the Postal Service, postal employees and their representatives, and Congress, Runyon set a 120-day agenda to reduce bureaucracy and overhead, to improve service and customer satisfaction, and to stabilize postage rates.

To help accomplish these goals, the Postal Service created a new organizational structure, starting at the top. The Postal Service reduced the officer corps by nearly one-half, eliminated layers of management to speed decision-making, and trimmed

overhead positions by nearly one quarter, or 30,000 positions. By offering early-out retirements and other incentives, the Postal Service reduced overhead without layoffs or furloughs.

Throughout the country, the five regions and 73 field divisions were replaced by 10 areas, each with a manager for Customer Services and a manager for Processing and Distribution. At the local level, 85 Customer Services districts and 350 processing and distribution plants were established, and a marketing and sales office was set up in each area. The new structure allowed postal managers to focus their expertise, improved communications up and down the line, and empowered employees to meet the needs of their customers.

The Postal Service also took steps to improve service in 1993. It invested in service improvements in the processing and delivery of mail at every major postal facility, expanded retail hours, and developed a more user-friendly *Domestic Mail Manual.* In cooperation with business customers, the Postal Service began to develop new services to meet specific mailer needs and to overhaul and simplify its complex rate structure. In 1993, it awarded contracts for two additional external measurement systems, one to survey the satisfaction levels of business mailers, the other to track service performance of third-class mail.

Postal finances also improved. The restructuring eliminated some programs, cut costs, brought in new business, and reduced the Postal Service's projected deficit of more than $2 billion. This put the organization in a better position to try to hold rates steady, which means that rates will have remained stable for four years for the first time since the Postal Service began operations in

July 1971. Furthermore, the independent measurement surveys already in place indicated that service was as good or better than ever since the restructuring.

Despite many challenges, the Postal Service plans to draw on its diverse strengths to become a model for government, a force to help American businesses be more competitive, and a more effective communications system that binds the nation together.
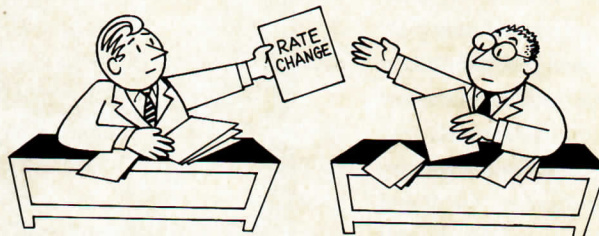

Delivery barcode sorter, Long Island, NY, 1992

RATES

HOW RATES ARE SET

The Board of Governors of the Postal Service proposes new rates to the Postal Rate Commission (PRC). This proposal comes in the form of a formal request accompanied by testimonies and analyses explaining the need for a rate increase and how the various rate proposals were developed.

The PRC has ten months in which to render an opinion and a recommended decision to the Governors. During that ten-month span, the PRC conducts open hearings. In this process:

- The Postal Service answers questions from various interested parties, such as customers, competitors, and consumer advocates, about the proposed rates.

- The interested parties critique the Postal Service's rate proposals and offer their own alternatives.

If the PRC does not give a recommended decision to the Postal Service after ten months, the Postal Service may implement the proposed rates temporarily.

The Governors have several options after they receive the PRC's recommended decision.

- They may accept the recommended decision and, with the other two members of the Board, order new rates into effect on a specific date.

- They may reject the PRC's recommended decision and return it to the PRC for reconsideration. Current rates stay in effect.

- They may allow the recommended decision under protest; acting with the other members of the Board, order the new rates into effect on a specific date; and return the decision to the PRC for reconsideration or appeal the decision to the courts.

Finally, the Governors can modify the Commission's second or reconsidered decision by unanimous vote if they determine that the recommended rates yield insufficient revenue.

POSTAL RATE COMMISSION

The Postal Rate Commission is a five-member independent agency created by the Postal Reorganization Act of August 12, 1970, as amended by the Postal Reorganization Act Amendment of 1976 (90 Stat. 1303), approved September 24, 1976.

The Postal Rate Commission acts upon requests from the Postal Service or in response to complaints filed by interested parties. Its major responsibilities are to submit recommended decisions to the Postal Service on postage rates and fees and mail classifications; issue advisory opinions to the Postal Service on proposed nationwide changes in postal services; submit recommendations for changes in the mail classification schedule; and receive, study, and issue recommended decisions and reports to the Postal Service on complaints from the mailing public about rates, classifications, services, and the closing or consolidation of small post offices.

DOMESTIC RATES FOR LETTERS AND POSTCARDS

Prior to the middle of the 19th century, rates were based on the number of sheets in a letter and the distance it was traveling. In 1845, rates were based on the weight of a letter and the distance it was going. Beginning in 1863, domestic letter rates became "uniform," that is, they were based solely on weight, regardless of distance.

Postage listed below is in cents.

LETTERS

Effective Date	Per ½ Ounce
March 3, 1863	3
March 3, 1883	2

	Per Ounce
July 1, 1885	2
November 3, 1917	3
July 1, 1919	2
July 6, 1932	3
August 1, 1958	4
January 7, 1963	5
January 7, 1968	6
May 16, 1971	8
March 2, 1974	10

	First Ounce	Each Additional Ounce
September 14, 1975	10	9
December 31, 1975	13	11
May 29, 1978	15	13
March 22, 1981	18	17
November 1, 1981	20	17
February 17, 1985	22	17
April 3, 1988	25	20
February 3, 1991	29	23

POSTAL CARDS (POSTAL SERVICE ISSUED) AND POSTCARDS (PRIVATELY MANUFACTURED)

Effective Date	Postal Cards	Postcards
May 1, 1873	1	—
July 1, 1898	1	1
November 3, 1917	2	2
July 1, 1919	1	1
April 15, 1925	1	2
July 1, 1928	1	1
January 1, 1952	2	2
August 1, 1958	3	3
January 7, 1963	4	4
January 7, 1968	5	5
May 16, 1971	6	6
March 2, 1974	8	8
September 14, 1975	7	7
December 31, 1975	9	9
May 29, 1978	10	10
March 22, 1981	12	12
November 1, 1981	13	13
February 17, 1985	14	14
April 3, 1988	15	15
February 3, 1991	19	19

STAMPS

CITIZENS' STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Postal Service is proud of its role in portraying the American experience to a world audience through postage stamps and postal stationery.

Almost all subjects chosen to appear on United States stamps and postal stationery are suggested by the public, which submits proposals on thousands of different topics. Established in 1957 to provide the Postal Service with a "breadth of judgment and depth of experience in various areas that influence subject matter, character, and beauty of postage stamps," the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has the imposing task of evaluating the merits of each proposal.

The Committee's primary goal is to select subjects that are both interesting and educational for recommendation to the Postmaster General, who decides which stamps will be issued. Besides recommending 25 to 40 new subjects for commemorative stamps each year, the Committee also recommends subjects for the extensive line of regular stamps. When recommending subjects, the Committee thinks of stamp collectors as well as all citizens and looks for stamp subjects that will stand the test of time, be consistent with public sentiment, and have broad national appeal.

Committee members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Postmaster General. Committee membership ranges from 12 to 15 members, who have a wide range of educational, artistic, historical, and professional expertise. Proposals are submitted at least three years before the proposed date of issue to allow sufficient time for consideration and design production, if approved.

The members also review and provide guidance on artwork and designs for stamps.

Young postal customers, Washington, DC, 1890s

Controversial Columbian Exposition stamps, 1893

THE FIRST COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

Postmaster General John Wanamaker stirred up quite a commotion back in 1893 when he issued the nation's first commemorative postage stamps. He was rebuked by a congressional joint resolution that protested the "unnecessary" stamps. Wanamaker, an astute businessman, defended his actions by saying that the commemorative stamps could become money-makers. History proved him right.

The controversial first commemorative stamps were the Columbian Exposition Issue. Printed by the American Bank Note Company, the stamps were issued to commemorate the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, Illinois, from May 1 to October 30, 1893. The stamps celebrated the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage to the New World.

The series consisted of 15 stamps with face values ranging from one cent to five dollars. Each bore the dates 1492 and 1892. Postmaster General Wanamaker added a 16th, eight-cent stamp to the series when the fee for registering a letter was reduced from 10 cents.

The stamps were immensely popular with collectors and customers, but critics denounced them. The designs were based on paintings by various artists who visualized Columbus differently. The one-cent Columbian showed Columbus clean-shaven, spying land from aboard his ship. The two-cent, taken from the *Landing of Columbus* painting in the Rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., showed him landing, presumably a few hours later, with a full beard. These discrepancies were quickly pointed out.

Even the denominations of the stamps were condemned. Because First-Class postage was only two cents per ounce and only four pounds could be mailed, the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out that even with the addition of the eight-cent stamp for registration fees, the most that could be spent on anything mailed First-Class was $1.36. This made the two-, three-, four-, and five-dollar Columbian stamps useless for mailing. Further, the only way to get the full value for the five-dollar Columbian would be to mail a 62-pound, eight-ounce package of books at the book-rate class of postage.

Wanamaker replied that regular stamps also were available and that nobody had to buy the Columbians. Further, some people did mail packages of books abroad using the First-Class stamps. To show his confidence in the stamps, Postmaster General Wanamaker spent $10,000 of his own money to buy 5,000 of the two-dollar stamps and put them in his safe as an investment. The stamps, still in the safe when Wanamaker died in 1926, were valued at $4.50 each.

In spite of the criticism, the new Columbian stamps were a sensation. Hundreds of people stood in line at the Columbian Exposition and elsewhere to buy the stamps. Two billion commemorative Columbian stamps were sold for 40 million dollars and were credited as a factor in the Exposition's success.

POSTMASTERS GENERAL

A list of Postmasters General, under the names of those who appointed them, and the dates the Postmasters General took office follows. All appointments by the President were made with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Italics indicate a carryover from the previous administration.

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS
Benjamin Franklin	Jul. 26, 1775
Richard Bache	Nov. 7, 1776
Ebenezer Hazard	Jan. 28, 1782

GEORGE WASHINGTON
Samuel Osgood	Sep. 26, 1789
Timothy Pickering	Aug. 12, 1791
Joseph Habersham	Feb. 25, 1795

JOHN ADAMS
Joseph Habersham

THOMAS JEFFERSON
Joseph Habersham
| Gideon Granger | Nov. 28, 1801 |

JAMES MADISON
Gideon Granger
| Return J. Meigs, Jr. | Mar. 17, 1814 |

JAMES MONROE
Return J. Meigs, Jr.
| John McLean | Jun. 26, 1823 |

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
John McLean

ANDREW JACKSON
| William T. Barry | Mar. 9, 1829 |
| Amos Kendall | May 1, 1835 |

MARTIN VAN BUREN
Amos Kendall
| John M. Niles | May 19, 1840 |

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON
| Francis Granger | Mar. 6, 1841 |

JOHN TYLER
Francis Granger
| Charles A. Wickliffe | Sep. 13, 1841 |

JAMES K. POLK
| Cave Johnson | Mar. 6, 1845 |

ZACHARY TAYLOR
| Jacob Collamer | Mar. 8, 1849 |

MILLARD FILLMORE
| Nathan K. Hall | Jul. 23, 1850 |
| Samuel D. Hubbard | Aug. 31, 1852 |

FRANKLIN PIERCE
| James Campbell | Mar. 7, 1853 |

JAMES BUCHANAN
Aaron V. Brown	Mar. 6, 1857
Joseph Holt	Mar. 14, 1859
Horatio King	Feb. 12, 1861

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
| Montgomery Blair | Mar. 5, 1861 |
| William Dennison | Sep. 24, 1864 |

ANDREW JOHNSON
William Dennison
| Alexander W. Randall | Jul. 25, 1866 |

ULYSSES GRANT
John A. J. Creswell	Mar. 5, 1869
James W. Marshall	Jul. 3, 1874
Marshall Jewell	Aug. 24, 1874
James N. Tyner	Jul. 12, 1876

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
| David M. Key | Mar. 12, 1877 |
| Horace Maynard | Jun. 2, 1880 |

JAMES A. GARFIELD
| Thomas L. James | Mar. 5, 1881 |

CHESTER A. ARTHUR
Thomas L. James
Timothy O. Howe	Dec. 20, 1881
Walter Q. Gresham	Apr. 3, 1883
Frank Hatton	Oct. 14, 1884

GROVER CLEVELAND
| William F. Vilas | Mar. 6, 1885 |
| Don M. Dickinson | Jan. 6, 1888 |

BENJAMIN HARRISON
| John Wanamaker | Mar. 5, 1889 |

GROVER CLEVELAND
| Wilson S. Bissell | Mar. 6, 1893 |
| William L. Wilson | Mar. 1, 1895 |

WILLIAM MCKINLEY
| James A. Gary | Mar. 5, 1897 |
| Charles Emory Smith | Apr. 21, 1898 |

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
Charles Emory Smith
Henry C. Payne	Jan. 9, 1902
Robert J. Wynne	Oct. 10, 1904
George B. Cortelyou	Mar. 6, 1905
George von L. Meyer	Jan. 15, 1907

WILLIAM H. TAFT
| Frank H. Hitchcock | Mar. 5, 1909 |

WOODROW WILSON
| Albert S. Burleson | Mar. 5, 1913 |

WARREN G. HARDING
Will H. Hays	Mar. 5, 1921
Hubert Work	Mar. 4, 1922
Harry S. New	Feb. 27, 1923

CALVIN COOLIDGE
Harry S. New

HERBERT HOOVER
| Walter F. Brown | Mar. 5, 1929 |

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
| James A. Farley | Mar. 4, 1933 |
| Frank C. Walker | Sep. 10, 1940 |

HARRY S. TRUMAN
Frank C. Walker
Robert E. Hannegan   May 8, 1945
Jesse M. Donaldson   Dec. 16, 1947

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
Arthur E. Summerfield   Jan. 21, 1953

JOHN F. KENNEDY
J. Edward Day   Jan. 21, 1961
John A. Gronouski   Sep. 30, 1963

LYNDON B. JOHNSON
John A. Gronouski
Lawrence F. O'Brien   Nov. 3, 1965
W. Marvin Watson   Apr. 26, 1968

RICHARD M. NIXON
Winton M. Blount   Jan. 22, 1969

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNORS OF THE
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Winton M. Blount   Jul. 1, 1971
E. T. Klassen   Jan. 1, 1972
Benjamin F. Bailar   Feb. 16, 1975
William F. Bolger   Mar. 15, 1978
Paul N. Carlin   Jan. 1, 1985
Albert V. Casey   Jan. 7, 1986
Preston R. Tisch   Aug. 16, 1986
Anthony M. Frank   Mar. 1, 1988
Marvin T. Runyon   Jul. 6, 1992

GOVERNORS OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Since 1971, the direction of the powers of the Postal Service have been vested in nine Governors. A list of the persons who have served as postal Governors and of the dates of their appointments follows.

Theodore W. Braun	Jan. 11, 1971
Charles H. Codding	Jan. 11, 1971
Patrick E. Haggerty	Jan. 11, 1971
Andrew D. Holt	Jan. 11, 1971
George E. Johnson	Jan. 11, 1971
Frederick R. Kappel	Jan. 11, 1971
Elmer T. Klassen	Jan. 11, 1971
Crocker Nevin*	Jan. 11, 1971
Myron A. Wright	Jan. 11, 1971
John Y. Ing	Jun. 22, 1972
Robert E. Holding	Oct. 26, 1972
Hayes Robertson	May 14, 1974
William A. Irvine	Mar. 3, 1975
Hung Wai Ching	Aug. 5, 1976
Robert L. Hardesty	Aug. 5, 1976
William J. Sullivan	Jan. 12, 1979
Richard R. Allen	Oct. 5, 1979
George W. Camp	Oct. 5, 1979
David E. Babcock	Aug. 20, 1980
Paula D. Hughes	Aug. 20, 1980
Timothy L. Jenkins	Aug. 20, 1980
Wallace N. Hyde	Dec. 31, 1980
John R. McKean	Mar. 9, 1982
Peter E. Voss	Jul. 28, 1982
John L. Ryan	May 10, 1983
Ruth O. Peters	Dec. 2, 1983
Frieda Waldman	Jan. 6, 1984
John N. Griesemer	Dec. 12, 1984
J. H. Tyler McConnell	Dec. 19, 1985
Robert Setrakian	Dec. 19, 1985
Crocker Nevin*	Aug. 15, 1986
Norma Pace	May 21, 1987
Ira D. Hall	Nov. 23, 1987
Tirso del Junco, M.D.	Jul. 15, 1988
Susan E. Alvarado	Jul. 15, 1988
Bert H. Mackie	Dec. 9, 1988
LeGree S. Daniels	Aug. 6, 1990
Sam Winters	Nov. 25, 1991

* Crocker Nevin served two separate terms.

POSTAL INSIGNIA

INSCRIPTIONS

Contrary to popular belief, the United States Postal Service has no official motto. However, a number of postal buildings contain inscriptions, the most familiar of which appear on postal buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C.

General Post Office, New York City, 8th Avenue and 33rd Street

Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.

This inscription was supplied by William Mitchell Kendall of the firm of McKim, Mead & White, the architects who designed the New York General Post Office. Kendall said the sentence appears in the works of Herodotus and describes the expedition of the Greeks against the Persians under Cyrus, about 500 B.C. The Persians operated a system of mounted postal couriers, and the sentence describes the fidelity with which their work was done.

Professor George H. Palmer of Harvard University supplied the translation, which he considered the most poetical of about seven translations from the Greek.

Former Headquarters Building, Pennsylvania Avenue, between 12th and 13th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., now the Ariel Rios Building

The Post Office Department, in its ceaseless labors, pervades every channel of commerce and every theatre of human enterprise, and, while visiting, as it does kindly, every fireside, mingles with the throbbings of almost every heart in the land. In the amplitude of its beneficence, it ministers to all climes, and creeds, and pursuits, with the same eager readiness and equal fullness of fidelity. It is the delicate ear trump through which alike nations and families and isolated individuals whisper their joys and their sorrows, their convictions and their sympathies, to all who listen for their coming.

These words, used by Postmaster General Joseph Holt in his *Annual Report* of 1859, were inscribed on the postal headquarters building dedicated in 1934.

Former Washington, D.C., City Post Office, Massachusetts Avenue and North Capitol Street, now the site of the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum

*Messenger of Sympathy and Love
Servant of Parted Friends
Consoler of the Lonely
Bond of the Scattered Family
Enlarger of the Common Life*

*Carrier of News and Knowledge
Instrument of Trade and Industry
Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance
Of Peace and of Goodwill Among Men
and Nations*

The original of this inscription, called "The Letter," was written by Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard University. President Woodrow Wilson changed the text slightly before the inscription was carved in the white granite of the postal building.

Lobby, Washington, DC, Post Office, 1920s, now the National Postal Museum

SEAL

Mercury, a post rider, and now the eagle have symbolized the postal system in the United States at various times in its history.

In 1782, Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard used the figure of Mercury, the messenger of the gods and the god of commerce and travel in Roman mythology. Mercury was shown riding on clouds, with winged feet and a staff in his right hand. A serpent-entwined staff was placed in Mercury's extended left hand by Postmaster General Gideon Granger in June 1808, until Postmaster General John McLean modified the seal again in 1824 by placing Mercury's right hand at shoulder height.

The official seal used by the Post Office Department from 1837 to 1970 pictured, as directed by Postmaster General Amos Kendall, "a post horse in speed, with mail bags and rider, encircled by the words 'Post Office Department, United States of America.'" It is believed this seal was inspired by Benjamin Franklin. When Franklin was selected Postmaster General by the Continental Congress, he issued a circular letter throughout the colonies, bearing a rude woodcut of a post rider on horseback, with saddle bags behind him for carrying the mail.

On August 12, 1970, the day President Nixon signed into law the Postal Reorganization Act converting the Post Office Department into an independent establishment of the executive branch, the Postal Service announced adoption of a new seal. It featured a bald eagle poised for flight on a white field, above red and blue bars framing the words "U.S. Mail" and surrounded by a square border with the words "United States Postal Service" on three sides and nine five-pointed stars at the base. The stars carry no special symbolism.

FLAG

The United States Postal Service flag is a five-color version of the new seal, placed on a white, rounded square background on an Old Glory blue flag base.

Postal seals, 1782-1993

RESEARCH SOURCES

CORPORATE INFORMATION SERVICES, UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

The Postal Service's Historian and Library, units of Corporate Information Services, have collections of postal histories and historical material. Persons interested in learning more about a particular aspect of United States postal history or obtaining information on post offices and postmasters are invited to write to: Historian, Corporate Information Services, United States Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20260-0012.

Persons wishing to research postal history are welcome to visit the Postal Service Library. The Library is located at the above address; its ZIP+4 code is 20260-1540.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Postal records prior to 1971 are kept at the National Archives and Records Administration. Two of the records most useful to postal historians, postmaster appointment records and post office site location reports, are preserved on microfilm and easily accessible to researchers.

The primary sources for information on post offices and postmasters are National Archives Microfilm Publication M1131, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, October 1789-1832,* and Microfilm Publication M841, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-September 30, 1971.* These records show the names of post offices, the dates of their establishment and discontinuance, name changes, and names and appointment dates of postmasters. Beginning in 1870, the records indicate the names of post offices to which mail was sent from discontinued offices, as well as information on money order post offices and presidential appointments.

These publications can be purchased for $23 per roll, payable by check or money order to the National Archives Trust Fund, National Archives and Records Administration, Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20408-0001.

Site location reports typically show the location of post offices relative to other post offices, transportation routes, and facilities; some include small grid maps. The series has been reproduced in Microfilm Publication M1126, *Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, 1837-1950.* Copies for specific post offices can be be purchased for 25 cents a page, with a minimum order of $6. The Archives also will furnish copies of Publication M1126 for $23 a roll.

NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER

The National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel Records (NCPC), is part of the National Archives and Records Administration. Located at 111 Winnebago Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63118-4199, the Records Center maintains extant personnel records for federal employees whose service ended after about 1910. These records are available for examination at the Records Center or by mail. However, records less than 75 years old are closed to public examination.

Researchers requesting records from the Records Center should provide the full name of the employee, date of birth, Social Security number (if known), name of agency where last employed, and place and approximate dates of employment.

NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The National Postal Museum opened July 30, 1993, and offers exhibits tracing the history of the postal system in the United States. It houses 16 million postal-related items, mostly stamps, and includes a library with 140,000 reference works and 10,000 illustrations. The library is open to the public by appointment.

The National Postal Museum is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. Its mailing address is National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560-0001.

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE LIBRARY

The Railway Mail Service Library includes artifacts, mail route schedules, schemes of mail distribution, and publications relating to the Railway Mail Service/Postal Transportation Service. The Library is open by appointment but handles most requests by mail.

For more information, write to the curator at 12 East Rosemont Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22301-2325.

PONY EXPRESS MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Pony Express National Memorial
Post Office Box 244
St. Joseph, MO 64502-0244

St. Joseph Museum Library
1100 Charles Street
St. Joseph, MO 64501-2875

The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, CA 91108-1218

Utah State Historical Society
300 Rio Grande Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1106

The Wells Fargo Bank History
    Department
MAC 0101-026
420 Montgomery Street
San Francisco, CA 94163-1205

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Continued from the inside front cover

1971   United States Postal Service began operation; Postmaster General no longer in Cabinet

Labor contract achieved through collective bargaining for the first time in history of federal government

Star routes changed to highway contract routes

National service standards established: overnight delivery of 95% of airmail within 600 miles and 95% of First-Class Mail within local areas

1972   Stamps by mail

Passport applications accepted in post offices

1973   National service standards expanded to include second-day delivery of parcel post traveling up to 150 miles, with one-day delivery time added for each additional 400 miles

1974   Highway post offices terminated

First satellite transmission of MAILGRAMs

1976   Post office class categories eliminated

Discount for presorted First-Class Mail

1977   Airmail abolished as a separate rate category

Express Mail, permanent new class of service

Final run of railroad post office on June 30

1978   Discount for presorted second-class mail

Postage stamps and other philatelic items copyrighted

1979   Discount for presorted bulk third-class mail

Postal Career Executive Service (PCES)

New standards require envelopes and postcards to be at least 3 ½" high and 5" long to be mailable

1980   INTELPOST (high-speed international electronic message service)

1981   Controlled circulation classification discontinued

Discount for First-Class Mail presorted to carrier routes

1982   Automation begins with installation of optical character readers

E-COM (Electronic Computer-Originated Mail, electronic message service with hard copy delivery)

1983   ZIP + 4

Ended public service subsidy from federal government

1984   Integrated retail terminals automate postal windows

1985   Jackie Strange, first female Deputy Postmaster General

E-COM terminated

1986   International Priority Airmail

Postal Service realigned; field divisions created

1987   Small parcel and bundle sorters

Stamps by phone

Multiline optical character readers ordered

1988   Inspector General's Act extends duties of Chief Postal Inspector

1989   Universal Postal Union Congress in Washington, DC

International business reply mail

1990   Wide area barcode readers

Easy Stamp, allowing purchase of stamps through computers

1991   Independent measurement of First-Class Mail service

International business reply service

1992   Remote barcoding system

Reorganization: regions, divisions and management sectional centers replaced by area and district offices for customer service and mail processing

Stamps sold through automatic teller machines

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE