

The little time allowed for furnishing this report precludes the idea of perfect accuracy, particularly as it relates to mileage and the number of post offices in operation in the several years. Neither the offices discontinued by order of the Postmaster General, or from other causes, nor the reductions of mileage effected by the arrangements of this office, have been attended to in this report. The increased expenditure beyond the mileage has arisen from the increased number and speed of the mails.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GIDEON GRANGER, *Postmaster General.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *April 29th, 1810.*

11th CONGRESS.]

No. 25.

[3d SESSION.]

THE PURCHASE AND FITTING UP A BUILDING FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE  
POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT AND PATENT OFFICE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THE 25TH OF JANUARY, 1811.

*To the House of Representatives of the United States:*

I transmit to the House of Representatives a report from the superintendent of the city, stating the expenditures, under the act of April 28, 1810, for the better accommodation of the General Post Office, and Patent Office, and for other purposes.

JAMES MADISON.

*January 25, 1811.*

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, *Washington, January 19, 1811.*

SIR:

In obedience to your direction to lay before you an account of the purchase of the building, and of the expenditure of the moneys, authorized by the act of Congress, passed the 28th of April, 1810, entitled "An act providing for the better accommodation of the General Post Office and Patent Office, and for other purposes," I have the honor to state, that, on the 21st of May, 1810, the building commonly called the Hotel, standing on the square numbered four hundred and thirty, in this city, together with the lots numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 14, in said square, containing 26,791½ square feet of ground, were purchased, for and in behalf of the United States, for the sum of ten thousand dollars; and that a deed of conveyance for the same, drawn by the Attorney of the United States for the District of Columbia, (who investigated the title of the grantors) has been duly executed and recorded, and is now filed in this office.

That, since the purchase of said building, there has been expended thereon the sum of three thousand two hundred and sixty-eight dollars and twenty-six cents; and, on the public office west of the President's house, the further sum of one thousand three hundred and sixty dollars and eighty-two cents; leaving unexpended, of the twenty thousand dollars appropriated by the above recited act of Congress, the sum of five thousand three hundred and seventy dollars and ninety-two cents.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS MUNROE.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

11th CONGRESS.]

No. 26.

[3d SESSION.]

REMONSTRANCE AGAINST THE DELIVERY OF LETTERS, PAPERS, AND PACKETS, AT  
THE POST OFFICES, ON THE SABBATH.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 31, 1811.

The Postmaster General, in obedience to the resolutions\* of the House of Representatives of the United States, passed on the 4th and 18th of the present month, respectfully reports:

That, to keep the Government and its agents informed of such events as might be interesting to the nation, with as little delay as possible; to equalize, among the merchants of the several capitals, the chances of receiving commercial information; and to cause the great lines of communication to and from the centre to the various parts of the nation to be kept up with regularity and despatch, and the routes to be performed within the least time practicable; he has caused the mail on many of the most important routes to be transported on the Sabbath, under a belief that it was "a work of necessity."

To guard against any annoyance to the good citizens of the United States, he carefully instructed and directed the agents of this office to pass quietly, without announcing their arrival or departure by the sounding of horns or trumpets, or any other act calculated to call off the attention of the citizens from their devotions; but, until after the passage of the act of the 30th April, 1810, this office never demanded of the Postmasters, on the Sabbath day, the performance of any duties, other than those of taking from the mail portmanteaus the letters destined for delivery at the particular office, and duly forwarding the mail according to the usual course of business. In all previous instances where letters were delivered to the citizens, it had been by the courtesy of the Postmasters, though often with the knowledge, and sometimes on the recommendation, of the Postmaster General. That, under and by virtue

\* Referring to him two memorials, from sundry citizens of Philadelphia and New York, substantially similar, the first of which follows this report.

of the 9th section of the act of the 30th of April, 1810, the Postmaster General conceived himself bound to compel the Postmasters to receive letters from, and deliver letters to, the citizens, on the Sabbath day; and in conformity to that act the following instruction was given to the Postmasters, to wit:

“At Post Offices where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open for the delivery of letters, &c. for one hour after the arrival and assorting of the mail; but in case that would interfere with the hours of public worship, then the office is to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meetings for that purpose.”

The Postmaster General further remarks, that, from the peculiar phraseology of the 9th section of said act, it is doubted whether he be warranted by law in limiting the right of the citizens to demand their letters to one hour on the Sabbath; and in one instance, in Pennsylvania, an officer has been prosecuted, under the section aforesaid, for refusing to deliver a letter on the Sabbath, not called for within the time prescribed by this office. Although in cases of extreme anxiety or national calamity, it may be proper for Postmasters to open their offices for the reception and delivery of letters on the Sabbath, and particularly to the officers of Government, still it is believed that the good sense of the officers is a sufficient safeguard for the delivery of letters under all such circumstances; and that compelling the Postmasters to attend to the duties of the office on the Sabbath, is on them a hardship, as well as in itself tending to bring into disuse and disrepute the institutions of that holy day.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GIDEON GRANGER, *Postmaster General.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *January 30, 1811.*

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress, the memorial, representation, and petition, of the undersigned citizens, resident in Philadelphia, respectfully represents:*

That, ever since the establishment of the Post Office in this city, the Postmaster, conforming to the established laws of the Commonwealth, has, until a short time since, kept the office for the receiving and delivery of letters, shut on the first day of the week, usually called the Lord's day; that as well himself, as the different persons employed in that Department, have hitherto enjoyed the privileges of that day in common with their fellow-citizens.

Your memorialists, however, some few months past, have observed the Post Office open, for the distribution of letters on the said first day of the week; and are told that this measure, which infringes upon the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, is in consequence of a provision in the act passed by your honorable body, on the 25th of April last, and which, by the 9th section thereof, provides “that every Postmaster shall keep an office, at which one or more persons shall attend on every day, on which a mail, or bag, or other packet or parcel of letters shall arrive, by land or water, as well as on other days, at such hours as the Postmaster General shall direct. And it shall be the duty of the Postmaster, at all reasonable hours, on every day of the week, to deliver on demand any letter or packet, &c.

Your memorialists are informed that, under this clause, the Postmasters are compelled to keep the Post Office open on the Lord's day; to the evident infringement of the laws now in force in this State, against the violation thereof.

Your memorialists respectfully call the attention of your honorable body to this subject, even on the ground of utility. For many years the city of Philadelphia has carried on a prosperous and extensive commerce, without violating what they deem their duty to state to be, both the law of God and of man. Nor can they see any greater impropriety in keeping open the custom-house, the banks, insurance offices, and the stores of merchants, generally, than of the Post Office. For if the reception of letters can be made of any material advantage to our merchants, much more may those useful institutions be made subservient to their purposes.

Your memorialists cannot, in justice to their own feelings, refrain from observing, that the violation of known and universally received precepts, when sanctioned by the most powerful influence in the Union, cannot fail of having a tendency to justify every species of breach of the laws made for the strict observance of the first day of the week, as set apart by the command of God for his more immediate service.

They do, therefore, most respectfully and earnestly petition your honorable body, that the said 9th section of the act, entitled “An act regulating the Post Office establishment,” and passed the 25th of April last, may be so amended, as to prohibit the delivery of letters, papers, and packets, on the said first day of the week, commonly called the Lord's day. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

JAMES P. WILSON, *and others.*

## SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 3, 1812.

Mr. RHEA made the following report:

The Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom were referred the petition of the Synod of Presbyters and other citizens of several Christian denominations, residing in the western parts of the United States, and the report of the Postmaster General thereon, have had the same under consideration, and do respectfully report:

That, however desirable it would be to advise the adoption of such regulations, relative to the carrying and opening of the mail, as might meet the views of the venerable Synod of Pittsburg, and the other petitioners, your committee cannot, at this peculiar crisis of the United States, recommend any alterations in the law regulating the Post Office establishment; and do respectfully submit the following resolution:

*Resolved,* That the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petition.

13th CONGRESS.]

No. 28.

[3d SESSION.]

## CONDITION OF THE DEPARTMENT AFTER THE INCURSION OF THE ENEMY, IN 1814.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OCTOBER 26, 1814.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *October 25, 1814.*

SIR:

In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives on the subject of information relative to the destruction of official books and papers belonging to the General Post Office, in consequence of the late incursion of the enemy, you are informed that *no* official books or papers were lost, belonging to the Department, in consequence of the late incursion.

I have the honor to be, &amp;c.

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

The Hon. the SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

13th CONGRESS.]

No. 29.

[3d SESSION.]

## SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 20, 1815.

Mr. RHEA, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, to whom were referred sundry petitions and memorials remonstrating against the usage of transporting and opening the mail on the Sabbath, and the report of the Postmaster General relating thereto, reported:

That they have had the same under consideration, and deeming it of great national importance, particularly in time of war, that no delay should attend the transportation of the mail, they deem it inexpedient to interfere with the present arrangement of the Post Office establishment, and, therefore, submit the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient to grant the prayer of the petitioners.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *January 16, 1815.*

SIR:

The Postmaster General, to whom were referred sundry memorials against the usage of transporting and opening the mails on the Sabbath, has the honor to report the following facts and observations:

The usage of transporting the mails on the Sabbath is coeval with the constitution of the United States, and a prohibition of that usage will be first considered.

The mail passes every day in the week from Portsmouth, N. H. to Savannah, in Georgia, and from Wiscasset, in Maine, to Schoodic Falls, without resting on the Sabbath. And the same practice prevails on the great route from Washington City to Ohio, Kentucky, and the Missouri territory; and from that city to Tennessee, Mississippi territory, and New Orleans; and from Charleston, S. C. to Tennessee and Kentucky; and on several other great chains of communication.

If the mail was not to move on Sunday on the first mentioned route, it would be delayed from three to four days in passing from one extreme of the route to the other. From Washington City to St. Louis, M. T. the mail would be delayed two days; from Washington City to New Orleans the mail would be delayed three days; from New Orleans to Boston it would be delayed from four to five days; and, generally, the mails would, on an average, be retarded equal to one-seventh part of the time now employed, if the mails do not move on the Sabbath.

On the smaller cross routes, the transporting of the mail has been avoided on the Sabbath, except when necessary to prevent great delays, and to preserve connexions with different routes.

In relation to *opening* the mails on the Sabbath, it may be noticed that the ninth section of the "Act regulating the Post Office establishment," makes it the duty of the Postmaster to attend to the duties of his office "every day" on which a mail shall arrive at his office, and at "all reasonable hours" on every day of the week. When a mail is conveyed on the Sabbath, it must be opened and exchanged at the offices which it may reach in the course of the day; this operation, at the smaller offices, occupies not more than ten or twelve minutes: in some of the larger offices it occupies one hour; and, it is believed, does not very greatly interfere with religious exercises, as to the Postmasters themselves.

The practice of "delivering" letters and newspapers on the Sabbath is of recent origin, and directed by the above quoted section, commencing in 1810. Prior to that period, no Postmaster (except the Postmaster at Washington City) was required to deliver letters and newspapers on the Sabbath. The "*reasonable hours*" were to be determined by the Postmaster General, who established the following regulations, now existing: "At Post Offices where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open for the delivery of letters, &c. for *one hour* after the arrival or assorting of the mail; but in cases that would interfere with the hours of public worship, then the office is to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meetings for that purpose." Also, if the mail arrives at an office too late for the delivery of letters on Saturday night, the Postmaster is instructed to deliver them on Sunday morning, at such early hour as not to trench upon the hours devoted to public religious exercises. If these regulations are not strictly attended to, it must be imputable to the urgency of applicants and the complaisance of Postmasters.

After the preceding statement, it is to be observed that public policy, pure morality, and undefiled religion, combine in favor of a due observance of the Sabbath. *Nevertheless*, a nation owes to itself an exercise of the means adapted to its own preservation, and for the continuance of those very blessings which flow from such observance; and the nation must sometimes operate, by a *few* of its agents, even on the Sabbath; and such operation may, as in time of war, become indispensable; so that the *many* may enjoy an uninterrupted exercise of religion in quietude and in safety. In the present state of the nation, it may be supposed necessary, *daily*, to convey Governmental orders, instructions, and regulations, and to communicate and receive information. If this daily carriage of the mail be, as relates to the safety of the nation, a matter of *necessity*, it also becomes a work of *mercy*. When peace shall arrive, the necessity will greatly diminish, and it will be at all times a pleasure to this Department to prevent any profanation of the Sabbath, as far as it relates to its official duty or its official authority.

The preceding statement of facts and observations are submitted with much respect for the memorialists, and with great deference to yourself and the honorable the House of Representatives.

RETURN J. MEIGS, JUN.

To the Hon. the SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

[13th CONGRESS.]

No. 30.

[3d SESSION.]

## SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 27, 1815.

Mr. DAGGETT made the following report:

The Committee of the Senate, to whom were referred the petitions of numerous citizens of the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Ohio, praying the Congress to prohibit the transportation and opening of the mail on the Sabbath, having attended to the duty assigned to them, respectfully report:

That the importance of the subject, and the motives which actuate so large a portion of their fellow-citizens, are duly regarded and appreciated. Was the practice of the transportation of the mail on every day of the week now commenced, and that of opening it on the Sabbath under no regulations, the committee would consider it necessary to make some legislative provision on the subject. The General Government, from its establishment, has pursued a system of causing the mail to be transported on the Sabbath, on the great roads leading through and across the country, while the practice has been avoided on routes of less importance. The public convenience has justified these measures in the view of the Government. In 1810, a law was made, directing "that every Postmaster shall keep an office, in which one or more persons shall attend on every day on which a mail, or bag, or other packet or parcel of letters shall arrive, by land or water, as well as on other days, at such hours as the Postmaster General shall direct, for performing the duties thereof; and it shall be the duty of the Postmaster, at all reasonable hours, on every day of the week, to deliver, on demand, any letter, paper, or packet, to the person entitled to or authorized to receive the same." The committee learn, with pleasure, that the Postmaster General, under this law, has prescribed the following regulation: "At Post Offices where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open for the delivery of letters, &c. for one hour after the arrival and assorting of the mail; but in case that would interfere with the hours of public worship, then the office to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meetings for that purpose." Presuming that the Postmaster General will continue this regulation, and that he will, at all times, guard the Post Offices against improper practices, in respect to the opening the mail and the delivering of letters on the Sabbath; and considering the condition of the country, engaged in war, rendering frequent communication through the whole extent of it absolutely necessary, the committee deem it inexpedient, at this time, to interfere and pass any laws on the subject-matter of the petitions referred, and they, therefore, respectfully submit the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That, at this time, it is inexpedient to interfere and pass any laws on the subject-matter of the several petitions praying the prohibition of the transportation and opening of the mail on the Sabbath.

[13th CONGRESS.]

No. 31.

[3d SESSION.]

## NUMBER OF POST OFFICES, AND THE PRODUCE OF POSTAGES FOR SIX MONTHS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1815.

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit to the Senate a report from the Postmaster General, complying with their resolution of the 15th of December last.

February 28, 1815.

JAMES MADISON.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, February 27, 1815.

The Postmaster General, in compliance with your directions, communicating a resolution of the Senate of the United States, relative to the Post Office establishment, respectfully reports—

That the subsequent pages contain an account of the number of miles of post road in each State; the number of Post Offices; the amount of postages, after paying the expenses of collection for six months, ending June 30, 1814; the expense of transporting the mail for six months, by the contracts now in operation, with the difference or balance of or against each State.

Also a detailed statement of the accounts of the several Post Offices, arranged under the heads of the several States, territories, and districts, for six months, ending June 30, 1814, showing the names of all Post Offices then in operation, from which accounts have been received; the names of the several Postmasters; the amount of postage collected on letters and packets; on newspapers; the compensation for delivering free letters; the commission on letter postage; on newspaper postage; the expenditure for ship letters; for way letters; for contingent articles; and the balance in favor of or against each office.

All which is respectfully submitted.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

R. J. MEIGS.