

OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRANSMISSION OF THE MAIL FROM ATHENS, IN GEORGIA, TO NEW ORLEANS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 21, 1806.

The Postmaster General, in compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 17th inst. relative to the post route between Athens, in Georgia, and New Orleans, respectfully reports:

That, from the best information obtained, it appears that the first part of this route, from the high shoals of Appalacy to Coweta, being one hundred and thirty miles, is through a level country, generally covered with a thick growth of timber. The path has never been cleared, and is greatly obstructed by fallen trees. There are also twenty-one creeks to be passed, which are too deep to ride in time of freshes; all of them are so narrow that a tree may be fallen across, so as to enable the post rider to take the mail over on his back, and to swim his horse on the lower side of the tree. This part of the route ought to be surveyed and marked out, and cleared of underbrush, and fallen trees, four feet wide. It would be rather an injury than advantage to clear wider than is necessary for a single horse, as it has been found to encourage a thick growth of brush.

Second. From Coweta to Fort Stoddert, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, the woods are much thinner, and the road is but little obstructed with water courses, although there are some places which require clearing.

Third. From Fort Stoddert to New Orleans, a distance of two hundred and twenty miles. On this part of the route the most material obstructions are found, of which the following is the detail:

First. From Fort Stoddert to Dog river, twenty-five miles.

This river is forty feet wide, and is too deep to ride whenever there is a considerable rain. Two logs may be laid across it, so as to enable the rider to cross with the mail on his back, and swim his horse alongside. There is a swamp of a quarter of a mile in width here, which requires causewaying.

Second. From Dog river to Pascagoula river, thirty-five miles.

This river is two hundred and fifty yards wide. A family lives here, and keeps a canoe, in which the rider, with the mail, is crossed, the horse swimming alongside of the canoe. There is a swamp here, five miles wide, which must be causewayed.

Third. From Pascagoula river to Lucer river, nineteen miles.

This river is thirty yards wide. No swamp. A canoe must be kept here for crossing the rider and the mail.

Fourth. From Lucer river to Houma river, ten miles.

This river is also thirty yards wide, and must be crossed in a canoe. There is no swamp.

Fifth. From Houma river to St. Peter's creek, twenty miles.

This creek is only five yards wide, but the banks are high, and it is sometimes too deep to ride. A log ought to be thrown across this creek.

Sixth. From St. Peter's creek to Hammock river, fifteen miles.

This river is thirty yards wide, generally fordable. Logs ought to be thrown across to enable the rider to cross at high water.

Seventh. From Hammock river to Log creek, eight miles.

The land on this creek is very low, and is overflowed for nearly a mile in width in time of freshets.

Eighth. From Log creek to Wolf river, twelve miles.

This river is ten yards wide, and very rapid. A log ought to be thrown across to enable the rider to pass when the river is swelled by freshets. The banks are very high. Nearly one-third of the distance between Log creek and Wolf river is swampy.

Ninth. From Wolf river to Catahola river, twelve miles.

This river is twenty-five yards wide, and must generally be crossed in a canoe.

Tenth. From Catahola river to Pearl river, twelve miles.

Favre's farm. This land is all low from Catahola to Pearl river, and nearly one-half swampy, and requires causewaying.

Eleventh. From Pearl river to New Orleans, fifty-three miles.

The mail is conveyed from Favre's farm to New Orleans by water.

Wherever causewaying is necessary there is plenty of timber for the purpose, and there will be no expense for hauling. Where the places to be causewayed do not overflow, which is about nine miles, it will be sufficient to lay logs five feet in length across the path, but where the land is liable to be overflowed, the logs must be held down by logs laid upon the ends of the cross logs, and these secured by stakes driven into the ground.

It is not possible to make an accurate estimate of the expense, from any data in this office. The following estimate has, however, been made from the information of the post rider who has often travelled the route, which it is hoped will not prove far from the real expense.

First. From the High Shoals to Coweta.

For clearing the road of brush, four feet wide, and cutting away the trees which have fallen across the path, allowing four laborers, one man to supply provisions and direct the laborers, and one horse: the men at one dollar and a quarter a day, and the horse at three-quarters of a dollar, equal seven dollars a day. It is supposed that such a party may, on the average, clear four miles in a day. The expense for one hundred and thirty miles would amount to, say

For laying logs across twenty one creeks, supposed to take the same hands ten days,	\$230
For surveying and marking out the road,	70
	200
	\$500

Second. From Coweta to Fort Stoddert.

The expense is estimated at

Third. From Fort Stoddert to Pearl river.

Surveying and marking out the road,

Causewaying nine miles by simply laying logs of five feet in length across the road, at seventy-five cents a perch,

Causewaying seven and a quarter miles, where the land is subject to overflow, at one dollar and a quarter per perch,

Throwing logs across four streams, at \$10

On this part of the route the country is very open, and two hundred dollars is considered sufficient to cover the expense of clearing away the underbrush,

	200
	5,500
	\$6,400

In the above estimate, allowance is made for sixteen and a quarter miles of swamp, which is the estimated quantity as the road now runs. The path is very crooked, winding about to avoid gullies and miry places. The distance from Fort Stoddert to Pearl river, on the present road, is one hundred and sixty-eight miles, and but one hundred and ten miles in a straight line; and it is believed that the distance may be reduced to nearly a straight line, causewaying being undertaken.

The distance from the city of Washington, via Athens, on the present route, according to the latest information, is one thousand one hundred and eighty-two miles. Thirty miles may probably be saved by surveying and causewaying the road. The actual travel will then be one thousand one hundred and fifty-two miles, and the distance between the same cities, via Nashville, is one thousand four hundred and seventy-two miles.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GIDEON GRANGER, *Postmaster General.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *March 20th, 1806.*

[9th CONGRESS.]

No. 20.

[1st SESSION.]

INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 17, 1806.

Mr. CLARK made the following report:

The committee, who were appointed on the 21st of March, 1806, to inquire into the conduct of Gideon Granger, Postmaster General of the United States, and report whether, in their opinion, the said Gideon Granger hath so acted, in his capacity as Postmaster General, as to require the interposition of the constitutional powers of this House, submit the following report:

That the committee, without loss of time, engaged in the duties assigned them, and have made some progress therein. It was the sincere desire of the committee that the inquiry should be concluded during the present session, as well as the wish of the Postmaster General; but, from the distance and dispersed situation of the witnesses, whose testimony was deemed necessary, and the approaching close of the session, it is found impracticable. While the committee regret the situation of a public officer, laboring under the suspicious appearance of a constitutional scrutiny into his conduct, yet, in a government like ours, where watchfulness of men in office is the surest guarantee of the preservation of the liberty of the people, the public functionaries must yield their feelings to the general benefit, and endure a temporary inconvenience as an honorable sacrifice to the freedom of our institutions.

That a hasty and premature result is less to be desired on the part of an officer, supported by a consciousness of the integrity of his conduct, than the suspension of an inquiry that may terminate in a satisfactory refutation of charges, which, on the part of the accused, are affirmed to be without foundation, the committee have no hesitation in believing.

Justice to the public, as well as to the individual, requires a thorough investigation, which is found to be impossible before the final adjournment. The committee, therefore, recommend a postponement of the further inquiry until the next session of Congress.

[9th CONGRESS.]

No. 21.

[2d SESSION.]

PROGRESS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT FROM MARCH 3, 1793, TO JANUARY 12, 1807.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 19, 1807.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *January 12, 1807.*

SIR:

Herewith I transmit to you the information required by your communication of the 9th.

With the design of enabling the committee to form some estimate of the labors of the various persons employed in this office, I have likewise transmitted "A view of the progress of the Post Office Department," commencing the third of March, 1793, and ending this day.

I am, sir, with the highest esteem and respect,

G. GRANGER.

Hon. JOSEPH B. VARNUM, *Chairman of the Committee on Post Roads.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *January 12, 1807.*

SIR:

Yours of the 9th was duly received. The deputy post master's accounts for the last quarter of the year 1806 have not yet been received; and the examination of those for the third quarter has not yet been completed.

A statement, therefore, such as the committee request, cannot be furnished from this office, to a later period than July 1, 1806.

The following will show the expenditure and nett proceeds of the Post Office Department, for one year, from July 1, 1805, to July 1, 1806, viz:

	Amount of balances on Post masters' accounts.	Expense of transportation of the mail.	Incidental expenses of the General Post Office.	Nett proceeds of the Post Office Department.
From July 1, to October 1, 1805, - -	\$76,329 26	\$56,180 79	\$367 52	\$19,780 95
From October 1, to December 31, do. - -	73,941 89	61,596 29	3,029 07	9,316 53
From January 1, to April 1, 1806, - -	73,146 54	69,929 45	2,226 75	990 34
From April 1, to July 1, do. - -	81,978 64	60,318 69	2,478 73	19,181 22
Total,	305,396 33	\$248,025 22	\$8,102 07	\$49,269 04

The contracts for the roads, established at the last session, commenced the first of October, 1806. They are not, therefore, included in the above.

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

GIDEON GRANGER.

JOSEPH B. VARNUM, Esquire.