

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.