

		To GEORGE WILLIAMS.				
1816	For carrying the mail from Dumfries to Stafford court-house:					
	First quarter,	-	-	-	-	\$473 63
	Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
	Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
	Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
						\$1,894 52
		To HAZLEWOOD FARISH.				
1816	For carrying the mail from Stafford court-house to Fredericksburg:					
	First quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
	Second quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
	Third quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
	Fourth quarter,	-	-	-	-	473 63
						1,894 52
Total amount credited in 1816 for the carriage of the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, in Virginia,						\$8,915 45

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February 27, 1821.*

I certify that the foregoing is a true statement from the books of this office, and that no greater sum was paid, or any other credits given for the carriage of the mail from Washington City to Fredericksburg, during the year 1816 than those mentioned in this statement, and that the same was compared with the books by the honorable Mr. Culpepper, one of the members of the Committee of Investigation.

ANDREW COYLE, *Chief Clerk.*

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 2, 1821.*

SIR:

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 30th November, 1820, I have the honor to report the names of those persons who were indebted to this Department on the 31st day of December, 1816, and the amount then due from each person. Also the names of those who, since that time, have become and were indebted to this Department on the 30th day of September last, and the amount then due from each person.

It will be perceived that these documents embrace all the Postmasters and late Postmasters whose accounts were not then closed, contractors and agents of every description, throughout the United States, who have any connexion with the Department.

Remarks in relation to each particular account would have been too tedious, and have occupied too much time to have permitted me to make the report in due season; but some general explanatory remarks may not be unworthy the notice of the House.

Most of these balances are against Postmasters who were in office at the time, whose accounts were still running, and continually varying. In most of these cases the balances were intentionally left, as deposits, in the hands of the Postmasters, (especially where branches of the United States Bank were not convenient,) to meet the claims of contractors which were becoming due; as this method of deposit is found more safe than to incur the risk of transmitting the money to the Department, and from the Department back to the contractors.

So far as these balances are against contractors, they are on account of payments made to them while performing the services; but the amount due to them for these services is regularly placed to their credit on the 1st of January, 1st of April, 1st of July, and 1st of October, in each year; so that when balances appear against them, as in those cases on the 30th of September and 31st of December, it should be recollected that the services, in most cases, have been actually rendered, for which they will be credited on the following days.

These lists comprise all the unsettled balances which have arisen since the first establishment of the Department, in 1789; and they, as well as the balances of all others who are no longer in office or employment, up to July 1, 1818, are stated for settlement, and payment has been called for; most of them, subsequent to that date, are in a train for collection. Seven hundred and twenty-five suits have been instituted for the collection of balances prior to the close of the last year, six hundred and eleven of which have been directed since I took charge of the Department, in March, 1814. Two hundred and twenty-six have been prosecuted to a final settlement, and four hundred and ninety-nine remain unsettled, some still pending, others passed to a judgment, and executions issued, which are in the hands of marshals for collection.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. JOHN W. TAYLOR, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

17th CONGRESS.]

No. 42.

[1st SESSION.]

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FROM 1816 TO 1821, INCLUSIVE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1822.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, *February 25, 1822.*

SIR:

Conformable to the directions of a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed the 24th of January, 1822, I communicate the statement therein required.

Statement of the Post Office Department, showing its produce and expenditure from 1816 to 1821, inclusive.

Years.	Number of Post Offices.	Gross amount of postages.	Compensation to Postmasters.	Incidental expenses.	Transportation of the mail.	Balance in favor of the General Post Office.	Balance against the General Post Office.	Extent in miles of post roads.
1816	3,260	961,782	265,944	16,508	521,970	157,360	-	48,976
1817	3,459	1,002,973	303,916	23,410	589,189	86,458	-	52,689
1818	3,618	1,130,235	346,429	24,792	664,611	94,403	-	59,473
1819	4,000	1,204,737	375,828	24,152	717,881	86,876	-	68,586
1820	4,500	1,111,927	352,295	26,206	782,425	-	48,999	73,492
* 1821	4,976	1,029,102	331,882	33,181	800,418	-	136,379	79,808
Dollars,	-	6,440,756	1,976,294	148,249	4,076,494	425,097	185,378	

By an examination of this statement it will appear that a deficiency of the revenue of the office is with much certainty anticipated; and it will be perceived that, since the year 1819, the postages have diminished, while the expenses have increased by the augmentation of post routes; and thus increased disbursements have been made, while the means of their support have decreased.

The causes of the diminution of postages may be assigned to a general depression of commerce, and a consequent inactivity of correspondence; to a scarcity of money; and, in some sections of the country, the absence of a currency adapted to the operations of the Department.

The above statement will exhibit the annual increase of the extent of miles of post roads established during the preceding six years, the total increase amounting to thirty thousand eight hundred and thirty-two miles. In the seven years preceding the last, the General Post Office has paid into the Treasury of the United States the sum of three hundred and eighty-five thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight dollars and twenty-one cents.

To supply the contingent deficiency of revenue, and to reduce expenditures, I will suggest:

Firstly. The expediency of discontinuing, by law, all post routes which do not and shall not produce one-third of the expenses of transporting the mails thereon, after an experiment of two years has been or shall hereafter be made.

Secondly. By providing by law for an increase of postage on newspapers, more proportionate to the expenses and distances of their transportation; and yet the increase of postage not to be so great as to affect the circulation of those useful vehicles of information, so necessary to the existence and preservation of free Governments; and by subjecting to postage all newspapers carried in the mail.

Thirdly. To provide for the better securing the postages on newspapers, the remedy proposed is to require the payment of newspaper postage before their transmission by mail.

Fourthly. By a diminution in the expenses of collection. The commissions at some of the Post Offices are greater, it is believed, than are really necessary. The fortieth section of the Post Office law, which requires the surplus, after paying the Postmaster two thousand dollars a year and his necessary expenses, to be accounted for, requires amendment. The Postmaster, being left himself the judge of what he shall pay for clerk hire and other expenses, may calculate so as to expend the whole amount of commission which the law authorizes him to charge. The only practicable remedy appears to be in a reduction of the commission and other allowances, so that no Postmaster may charge more than is really a proper compensation for himself, including his necessary expenses.

Fifthly. By prohibiting all passengers, as well as drivers and owners, in the public stages which travel on a post road, and all passengers who are conveyed in steam or other regular boats or vessels, from carrying letters and packets, other than such as are open and relate to their own concerns; and subjecting all such letters as are conveyed by a passenger, driver, or owner, when delivered into a Post Office, to the same postage as if conveyed in the mail.

The deficiency in the product of the two preceding years has been supplied by the collection of outstanding balances. The balance in favor of the General Post Office, on the 1st of January last, is estimated at something over five hundred thousand dollars. A part of that sum has been collected and paid to contractors for carrying the mail. This would seem to afford a means of supplying the deficiency of the product of the current year. But it should be recollected that this contains the accumulated balances of the Department, from its first establishment, say for nearly thirty-three years. And although the absolute loss will, it is supposed, amount to an inconsiderable sum, it is found to be extremely difficult to collect sufficiently fast to satisfy the demands upon the office. And experience shows that there must be always a large outstanding balance.

The causes previously assigned for the diminution of postages, together with occasional bankruptcies, deaths of Postmasters, and the extensive number of nearly five thousand Postmasters, operate also to retard the collection of balances.

Two clerks have been constantly employed for three years past, and have been assisted most of the time by two others, in this business, and the collection of arrearages is still pressed unceasingly; but, as has been before remarked, new balances arise.

The outstanding balances amount to nearly one-half of the gross amount of postages for one year. Where resort is had to law, collections must be dilatory, and an immediate resort, in all cases, is not the speediest way of obtaining payment. A prudent regard to the interests of the public, as well as that of individuals, requires sometimes a recourse first to other measures.

The changes of Postmasters, from various causes, is no inconsiderable source of delay and of labor in making final adjustments of accounts. These changes amount to nearly one thousand in a year.

But few suits had been commenced previous to my taking charge of the Post Office; in 1814 the whole number on the docket book being but one hundred and fourteen. From that time to the close of 1820, six hundred and eleven suits were instituted, in addition to those before pending, and two hundred and twenty-six were brought to a close before that time. In the course of the year 1821, two hundred and twenty-four suits were instituted, and one hundred and twenty-five of the whole number in suit were brought to a close.

All which is respectfully submitted.

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

The Hon. PHILIP P. BARBOUR, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

* The produce of the fourth quarter of 1821 is estimated, and the incidental expenses of that year were increased by an expenditure for the roof of the General Post Office and a fire engine, amounting to six thousand and twenty dollars.