

No. 4.

A statement of the contingent expenses of the General Post Office for the year 1822.

1822.			1822.		
Jan'y 1,	To balance on account rendered,	\$142 53 $\frac{1}{2}$	Aug. 30,	To cash paid Thomas Quarles, -	\$32 50
Jan'y 1,	To cash paid Gales & Seaton, -	10 00	Aug. 30,	To cash paid William Paine, -	18 00
Jan'y 22,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Aug. 31,	To cash paid John Long, -	25 50
Jan'y 22,	To cash paid John Remington, -	1 50	Sept. 3,	To cash paid David Butler & Co., -	7 12
Jan'y 23,	To cash paid William Cooper, -	24 00	Sept. 5,	To cash paid Thomas Stanley, -	19 26
Feb'y 20,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Sept. 9,	To cash paid Oliver Everett, -	5 00
Feb'y 21,	To cash paid Ab'm Bradley, 3d., -	41 95	Sept. 10,	To cash paid Peter Devereux, -	5 00
March 19,	To cash paid Charles Durden, -	15 00	Sept. 11,	To cash paid William Paine, -	22 00
March 20,	To cash paid Joseph Borrowes, -	26 09	Sept. 12,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00
March 22,	To cash paid Charles Durden, -	5 75	Sept. 19,	To cash paid Thomas Beard, -	9 50
March 22,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Oct. 1,	To cash paid Samuel Holtzman, -	38 50
March 29,	To cash paid James Thomas, -	11 25	Oct. 1,	To cash paid Charles Bell, -	51 00
April 2,	To cash paid Charles Bell, -	51 00	Oct. 7,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00
April 4,	To cash paid Arch'd Cheshire, -	120 00	Oct. 17,	To cash paid Davis & Force, -	17 75
April 18,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Oct. 26,	To cash paid Jonathan Elliott, -	20 00
April 20,	To cash paid William Salter, -	3 44	Oct. 26,	To cash paid John Frank, -	44 50
April 20,	To cash paid Thomas Rowe, -	248 62 $\frac{1}{2}$	Oct. 31,	To cash paid Alexander Kerr, -	37 62
April 22,	To cash paid Aaron Sims, -	1 00	Oct. 31,	To cash paid Charles Durden, -	70 31
April 26,	To cash paid Edward Holland, -	75 00	Oct. 31,	To cash paid Joseph Borrowes, -	35 15
May 16,	To cash paid Isaac Randolph, -	96 00	Nov. 16,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00
May 16,	To cash paid John W. Moore, -	22 30	Dec. 3,	To cash paid Benj. French, -	2 75
May 17,	To cash paid John Frank, -	160 25	Dec. 6,	To cash paid Rachel Herbert, -	5 50
May 22,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Dec. 14,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00
May 25,	To cash paid Davis & Force, -	27 62 $\frac{1}{2}$	Dec. 28,	To cash paid Matthias Jeffers, -	2 00
May 28,	To cash paid J. Eschback, (wood,) -	549 43	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Charles Bell, -	51 00
May 29,	To cash paid Edward De Krafft, -	62 50	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Joseph Borrowes, -	400 00
June 3,	To cash paid John Rowlett, -	19 25	Dec. 31,	To cash paid William Ward, -	11 50
June 18,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00	Dec. 31,	To cash paid T. W. Pairo, -	14 75
June 17,	To cash paid J. A. Burch, -	211 62 $\frac{1}{2}$	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Way & Gideon, -	105 50
July 1,	To cash paid Charles Bell, -	51 00	Dec. 31,	To cash paid R. W. Pomeroy, -	5 00
July 2,	To cash paid C. T. Coote, -	4 31	Dec. 31,	To cash paid T. S. McLeod, -	25 50
July 5,	To cash paid Andrew Way, -	116 00	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Davis & Force, -	37 25
July 12,	To cash paid Joseph Borrowes, -	23 75	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Thomas Rowe, -	142 75
July 15,	To cash paid T. Clark, -	41 50	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Abm. Bradley, 3d., -	47 85 $\frac{1}{2}$
July 16,	To cash paid William Cooper, -	18 75	Dec. 31,	To cash paid John Frank, -	124 50
July 19,	To cash paid Thomas Beard, -	42 50	Dec. 31,	To cash paid James Thomas, -	5 00
July 19,	To cash paid Thomas Beard, -	41 00	Dec. 31,	To cash paid Joseph Borrowes, -	11 50
July 19,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00			
July 22,	To cash paid John Frank, -	23 50			3,800 71
August 2,	To cash paid Thomas Beard, -	49 00			
August 6,	To cash paid William Hunt, -	24 00			
August 8,	To cash paid W. H. Stewart, -	6 00			
August 9,	To cash paid William Allen, -	6 00			
Aug. 14,	To cash paid W. W. Beard, -	42 50			
Aug. 14,	To cash paid Robert Speak, -	22 00			
Aug. 14,	To cash paid Thomas Beard, -	33 00			
Aug. 23,	To cash paid William Brown, -	4 00			
					\$199 29

Credit.

By two warrants, viz: One in January, and one in July, each \$2,000, -

4,000 00

\$199 29

17th Congress.]

No. 49.

[2d Session.

## POSTAGE ON BOOKS—EXPENSE OF CARRYING CERTAIN MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE POST OFFICE AND POST ROADS,  
MARCH 1, 1823.

SIR: GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, January 27, 1823.

In reply to the inquiries of the committee, I have the honor to state, in relation to the first proposition of the resolution, that the transportation of the public mails between Nashville and New Orleans, the emporium of the West, is opposed by many natural obstacles, and supported but by few artificial facilities and conveniences. A great portion of the intervening country is intersected by bayous, rivers, and streams, which are frequently impassable, for the want of bridges and ferries, and the banks of which are often overflowed. These the mail carriers are sometimes compelled to swim; and sometimes the rider and his horse overthrown by the rapidity of the currents. By these causes of impediment the mails become wet; and, by the friction of carriage on horseback, the contents of the mail become seriously injured.

It would be of great importance, as regards the transportation of the mail, if Congress should make an appropriation for improving that road, and grant small tracts of land on the banks of those bayous, rivers, and streams, upon the express and perpetual condition that the grantees, and their successors, should erect bridges, and keep them in repair; or establish ferries, and forever keep them in suitable order; and over which the United States' mail should always pass free of toll or ferriage.

To the second proposition, contained in the resolution, I have to state, that the military road (so called) extends from Florence, in the Tennessee river, in the State of Alabama, to Madisonville, in Louisiana, and is about four hundred miles in length. On that road thirty-five bridges were erected, measuring three thousand two hundred and thirteen feet. Three hundred and ninety-two causeways were made, measuring altogether nearly twenty-six thousand feet; and mile-posts were erected throughout the whole road. All which labor was performed by the troops of the United States. This road was well opened, and of ample breadth. This road is now somewhat dilapidated; some of the bridges are swept away; others want repair; and the road is greatly incumbered by the falling of timber.

This road is some hundred miles shorter than the present mail's route to New Orleans; and, if put in a state of repair, the mails might be transported to New Orleans in light covered carriages, with a greater celerity, more safety, more certainty, and more to the benefit of the United States.

I respectfully suggest to the committee the expediency and propriety of recommending an appropriation for the improving of the road from Nashville to New Orleans, and for repairing and clearing the military road from Florence, in Alabama, to Madisonville, in Louisiana.

By an act of Congress passed the 21st of April, 1806, the President of the United States was authorized to cause to be opened a road from the frontiers of Georgia, on the route from Athens to New Orleans, till the same intersects the thirty-first degree of north latitude; also, to open a road from the Mississippi river to the Ohio river, and to the boundary line established by the treaty of Greenville; for which six thousand dollars were appropriated. Also, to open a road from Nashville to Natchez, by act of March 29, 1806, for which six thousand dollars were appropriated.

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

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. MONTFORT STOKES,  
*Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, in the Senate.*

SIR:

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 21, 1823.*

I am favored with your letter of this date, in relation to the postage on sundry books sent to the State of Missouri.

It appears to me that no book ought ever to be sent by mail, even if letter or packet postage was paid on it. It is an article which is not, like letters and newspapers, valuable only for its quick conveyance, and may well be sent by the usual routes of many articles of merchandise. Books can, without inconvenience, be sent from every place where they are printed to some considerable commercial town, and from thence to any settled part of the country. Hence there is no necessity of burdening the mail with such as are intended either for public or private use.

Books are usually bound with leather, and so strongly pressed together, that they have the hardness of blocks of wood, and, when carried in the mail with letters and newspapers any considerable distance, rarely fail to wear out the wrappers, and break the bundles of letters and papers to pieces, by which the letters are injured, and many newspapers lost.

Some years since the Postmasters, at some of the places where books were printed, construed them as subject only to pamphlet postage. The consequence was, that the mails were soon overloaded with novels and the lighter kind of books for amusement. And I was under the necessity not only of correcting this misconception of the rate of postage, but to prohibit Postmasters from sending books, in any case, through the mail. The order seems to be forgotten in the above cases, but it appears to me that the postage ought in no case to be abated. If it be abated in one case, it becomes a precedent that must be followed in every other, that of individuals as well as of States. It is much better, therefore, that the postage on those books should be lost altogether than it should be reduced.

The whole value of the books is probably less than forty dollars; and the Governor can easily obtain, through a bookseller at St. Charles, either or all of the books.

It would be useful to prohibit, by law, the transmission of books by mail. The Secretary of State has, during the last summer, sent a number of cart-loads of books in that manner. The consequence has been, the mails have been overloaded, and it has occasioned demands probably of twice as much as it would have cost to have sent them, by means of the booksellers, through the ordinary channels; and many newspapers have been rubbed to pieces and lost, and letters damaged.

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

HON. MONTFORT STOKES,  
*Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.*

SIR:

GENERAL POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, and to state the expense of carrying the mail on the several routes therein named, viz: 1. From Nashville, by Columbus and Natchez, to New Orleans. 2. From Florence, by Madisonville, to New Orleans, on the military road. 3. From Fredericksburg, in Virginia, by Milton, N. C., Salem, York court-house, S. C., Union, Petersburg, Geo., Milledgeville, Montgomery, and Cahawba, to Natchez.

1st. The route from Nashville, by Natchez, to New Orleans, is estimated at 727 miles; and the mails are carried three times a week, at the rate of nearly 70 miles in a day, and cost, by estimate, \$29,674 a year.\* This route must be continued, whatever other route is established, as it is the main route of communication between Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, and Natchez and New Orleans. This route falls in upon the rich lands of Mississippi at Port Gibson, Missouri, and continues upon it from thence to New Orleans. Between the towns and inhabitants on those lands and the States above mentioned, there is a great trade carried on; and it is deserving of the frequent and rapid establishment of posts which is now in operation. It is also the great route of communication from all places to the northward of Richmond, in Virginia, to Natchez, New Orleans, &c.

2d. The route from Florence to Columbus (part of No. 2) is provided for by the route No. 1. If the residue is established, it will require considerable expense to make it available, as will be seen by the estimate.

The distance from Columbus to New Orleans is estimated at 360 miles, and, to carry the mail rapidly three times a week, will cost \$40 a mile, or \$12,000 a year, in addition to any savings that may be made by the discontinuance of other mails. It passes through a poor country, whose settlements are amply accommodated with the mail by other routes. When this route reaches Madisonville, a small village on Lake Pontchartrain, it is to be carried thirty miles across the lake by boats. The lake is shallow, and often impassable from high wind. The distance from Natchez to New Orleans, by Madisonville, is sixty miles less than that by the road along the Mississippi, and arrangements were formerly made for carrying the mail once a week by each road; but the obstructions, from high winds, was so frequent, that the merchants at both extremes remonstrated against sending their letters by the Madisonville route, although they could, by that means, when the weather suited, get a mail twice a week, and one day quicker. This near route has, on that account, been abandoned; and the same causes would, doubtless, induce a like remonstrance; and the route, as a mail route, would be of no use, although perhaps 100 miles nearer than the Natchez route. I have not been able to obtain the correct distances on the military road. As a stage route for passengers, it would probably be desirable, for they could return much sooner than they could by the steamboats on the Mississippi.

3d. The route from Fredericksburg to Powelton, Georgia, is carried slowly in a stage, once a week; the distance 549 miles. To carry it three times, expeditiously, would cost \$25 a mile, in addition to the present price. But this would be unnecessary, as the mail is carried three times a week on the main route, through Raleigh, something further, but much quicker than it could be carried on this road for that price. It would cost from \$16,000 to \$20,000 more than is now paid to carry it as soon and as often by this road.

From Milledgeville to Montgomery, Alabama, the mail is carried twice a week, quickly; and the distance, 217 miles, for an additional mail per week, would probably cost \$12 a mile, say \$2,604.

From Montgomery to Cahawba the mail is carried twice a week, and returns a different route; the mean distance, 65 miles, would cost \$12 a mile for a third mail, or \$780 a year.

From Cahawba to St. Stephen's the distance is 112 miles, carried once a week; and would cost \$30 a mile, additional, for a tri-weekly mail, say \$3,360 a year.

\* Some of the contracts on this route are not completed.

From St. Stephen's to Natchez the distance is 247 miles. A slow mail, once a week, is established on this road. For a tri-weekly quick mail it would cost \$28 a mile, additional; equal, for a year, to \$6,492.

On the whole, the establishment of a quick mail, three times a week, from Milledgeville to Natchez, would cost \$13,166, additional; and, if it commences at Fredericksburg, Virginia, it would probably cost more than \$30,000, additional.

The committee will permit me to remark that the post roads have been increased so rapidly within a few years past, that the expenses of the establishment exceed the produce, and there has been great difficulty in collecting money sufficiently fast to meet the demands upon the office. Congress, at the last session, established 6,366 miles of new post road, and discontinued 620 miles of old, leaving an increase of 5,746 miles. These routes went into operation on the first day of this year, and could not have been paid if the prices of a number of old contracts, which expired with the last year, had not been considerably reduced. With that reduction the Department may probably meet its engagements the current year; but it is quite impossible that it can be done if any further expenditure is made, either by the establishment of new routes or increase upon the old ones. And, if any is thought necessary by the committee, it is to be hoped they will say in what manner the expenditure is to be provided for.

I am, with great esteem,

R. J. MEIGS, JUN.

The Hon. MONTFORT STOKES,  
Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads.

18th CONGRESS.]

No. 50.

[1st SESSION.]

NUMBER OF DISTRIBUTING OFFICES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 24, 1823.

SIR: POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, December 24, 1823.

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, passed on the 16th of December instant, directing the "Postmaster General to lay before the House a list of the Post Offices designated 'distributing offices,' in the several States and Territories; also, the duties required to be performed by Deputy Postmasters at such offices, with the regulations adopted for securing a direct conveyance to letters, &c. destined for offices on intermediate post routes," I have the honor to report, that there are forty-eight distributing Post Offices in the United States and Territories, viz:

Abingdon, Va.	Cumberland Gap, Ten.	Nashville, Ten.	Salem, N. C.
Albany, N. Y.	Easton, Pa.	Natchez, Mis.	Savannah, Geo.
Ashville, N. C.	Edenton, N. C.	New York, N. Y.	Sharon, Con.
Athens, Pa.	Erie, Pa.	Norfolk, Va.	Shawneetown, Illi.
Augusta, Geo.	Fayetteville, N. C.	Northampton, Mass.	Stamford, Con.
Baltimore, Md.	Gallipolis, O.	Petersburg, Va.	Walpole, N. H.
Bennington, Vt.	Hanover, N. H.	Pittsburg, Pa.	Washington, D. C.
Brattleborough, Vt.	Hartford, Con.	Portland, Me.	Washington, Ken.
Buffalo, N. Y.	Huntsville, Ala.	Portsmouth, N. H.	Wilmington, Del.
Chambersburg, Pa.	Louisville, Ken.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Winchester, Va.
Chillicothe, O.	Marietta, O.	Providence, R. I.	Windsor, Vt.
Creek Agency, Geo.	Middlebury, Vt.	St. Stephen's, Ala.	Wheeling, Va.

Postmasters of distributing offices are required to open all mails which are directed to the State in which their offices are situated, and give the proper direction to each letter.

All letters destined to places beyond the next distributing office are carefully enclosed in a strong envelope, and directed, so as to be conveyed, on the most direct route, to their places of destination. These are placed in a portmanteau, which is called the principal mail bag, which is opened and examined only at the distributing offices. An account is kept at the distributing offices of all the letters forwarded, and they are accompanied by post bills, in which are stated the charges for postage. Letters which are to be delivered at the offices between the distributing offices, are placed in a separate portmanteau, called the way-bag, which is opened and examined by the Postmasters of the intermediate offices.

To give greater security to the principal mails, locks, entirely different from those used on the way-bags, will be placed on the portmanteaus containing the principal mails, so that they can only be opened, without violence, at the distributing offices.

Respectfully submitted.

JOHN McLEAN.

Hon. H. CLAY, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

18th CONGRESS.]

No. 51.

[1st SESSION.]

COMPENSATION OF POSTMASTERS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 27, 1824.

SIR: POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, January 24, 1824.

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, at their last session, which "directed the Postmaster General to report, at an early period of the next session of Congress, what further measures are necessary to provide for a more equitable compensation to Deputy Postmasters, according to the duties and services rendered by them," I have the honor to report, that the present mode of compensating Deputy Postmasters,