

# PRECURSER TO THE NORWICH POST OFFICE

In March 1779, Ebenezer Hazard, then Surveyor of the Post Roads along with Boston Postmaster Jonathan Hastings Jr., made a decision to alter the route of the Post Rider between New London and Providence. The reasoning was that of numerous times the Post Rider on the Lower Post Road, having been stopped and the mail taken by the British forces which occupied Newport from 1776 through 1779.

On 5 April 1779, the route was changed to go from Providence to Norwich to New London. This bypass route lasted just less than 5 weeks, from 5 April 1775 through 8 May 1779. This change caused quite a furor with Rhode Island merchants and politicians, and was quickly reversed.

## Gov. GREENE TO THE DELEGATES IN CONGRESS.

PROVIDENCE, March 11th, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

The General Assembly, having been informed that it was in contemplation to change the route of the post through this State, have also given it to me in charge to direct you to represent the inconvenience that will arise from his passing through a small corner of the State, and the uneasiness it will occasion to the inhabitants, at being deprived of a convenience they have enjoyed almost from time immemorial.

I am, gentlemen, with great esteem, your  
Most obedient, humble servant,  
WILLIAM GREENE

## GOV. GREENE TO WILLIAM ELLERY.

WARWICK, March 15th, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:

The letter to you by me signed of the 11th instant, was draughted by a committee appointed by the Assembly, and as I think they have not been so particular as to the part of the State the post is to ride through by the late alteration, and Mr. Hazard, the Surveyor General of the post road, having thought proper to inform me upon the occasion, by a letter from Boston, a copy of which I think proper to insert here, that you may be informed of his plan, together with his reasons for making the alteration, which is as follows:

BOSTON, March 11th, 1779.

As I have lately been under the necessity of altering the post road through the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, I beg leave to inform your Excellency that, in future, the driver will go from Providence to Norwich, (instead of going through East Greenwich, Little Rest, and Westerly, as formerly,) and from Norwich to New London. This alteration is to continue no longer than until we recover possession of Newport, when the post road will be the same as hitherto.

I am your Excellency's most obedient and very humble servant,  
EBEN HAZARD,  
SURVEYOR OF THE POST ROAD

Mr. Hazard doubtless thought it his duty to let me know of the alteration, and I think it would have been acting a much more prudent part had he taken my advice before he made it, as it much effects the inhabitants of this

State by being deprived of that privilege, the post taking its route near the seacoast, throughout this State, ever since the post was first established, until the last week; and to think of altering the route of the post now, by reason that the enemy are in possession of Newport, is a reason that I am well assured will not be approved of by Congress, as that alone is a sufficient reason for continuing in the same route he has ever rode, as the enemy, by being there, have it in their power to land upon almost any part of the main on the sea coast for sixty miles. If the present plan be adopted, the public as well as the inhabitants of this State, in particular, will be under the necessity of being at the expense of employing expresses from the different parts of the State to the southward of Providence, to do business, which otherwise would not have been attended with any in the usual way, and as this State pays their full proportion of the several post offices through-out this Continent, it appears to me very unreasonable to deprive it of an advantage which will add a burden to a people already grievously distressed.

I do, therefore, request you, in behalf of this State, to use your influence in Congress to obtain their resolve to order the Post Master General to rectify the route of the post in such a way as not to vary from the ancient custom.

I am, with much esteem and respect, your obedient servant,  
WILLIAM GREENE.

P. S.-The Assembly sets in Kings County and Kent one-half of the year, and in one of which the Governor at present has his residence, through both of which the post heretofore went.

**MESSRS. ELLERY AND COLLINS TO GOV. GREENE.**

PHILADELPHIA, April 20th, 1779.

SIR:

We have laid the business of the alteration of the route through our State before the post office committee, and the committee have directed Mr. Hazard to take measures immediately for the post's proceeding in his usual route I saw Mr. Hazard this morning, and he assured me that he would immediately pursue the orders of the committee.

We have only to add now, that we are, with the highest sentiments of respect,  
Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servants,  
WILLIAM ELLERY. JOHN COLLINS.

**MESSRS. ELLERY AND COLLINS TO GOV. GREENE.**

PHILADELPHIA, May 25th, 1779.

Sir:

We received your Excellency's letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> instant, yesterday. We waited upon Mr. Hazard and informed him of what you had written. He said that there was a mistake in the matter; for that he had written to Mr. Hastings, post master in Boston, and Mr. Carter, post master in Providence, that the post was to pursue its old route through our State; and that he should set out for the eastward this day, and would rectify the error.

Your Excellency's most obedient servants,  
WILLIAM ELLERY. JOHN COLLINS

**JEDEDIAH HUNTINGTON TO JABEZ HUNTINGTON.**  
**NEILSONS POINT 20th Aug. 1779.**

*Hond Sir,*

has any Attempts been made to get back the Post through Norwich. Mr Hazzard the Surveyor General of the Post Roads is now at the Eastward & the present may be a convenient Opportunity to make Application for his Opinion on the Matter & Interest in effecting the Alteration.

I should think many Gentlemen of Note in Boston & Providence would certify as to the Advantage which the Public and Individuals would derive therefrom. if Gen• Gates was touch'd upon the Subject by a proper Person he might be a powerful Advocate at Congress. the military & mercantile Concerns & Intercourse will in the View of every One be more benefited and expedited by the Posts riding through Norwich than by the old way.

26. Nothing to add I remain your  
affectionate son

J HUNTINGTON

Honorable Maj. Gen• HuNTINGTON

Norwich 5<sup>th</sup> April 1779 — List of Letters Recd —

April 5-1779

William Hubbard — Boston 4  
 Martha Green — Boston 4  
 Mess<sup>rs</sup> Wheat & Prodanan — do — 4  
 Leonard Hills — Wey — 2.8

(sent) 7<sup>th</sup> April

Boston — 1 tribble — 12  
 Recd from N.L.

Hubbard W<sup>m</sup> — Wey — 2  
 Liffingwell Christ<sup>m</sup> — Wey — 2  
 Williams Joseph — Wey S.C. — 20

Wm Hubbard — Boston }  
 2<sup>nd</sup> }  
 12 — 2 People — do }  
 Wm Joseph — do }

Sent to N.L. 19<sup>th</sup> April

Gale Samuel Wey — 2

Sent to Boston 29<sup>th</sup> April

3 single Wey — 12  
 1 Double — 8

Recd from London 18<sup>th</sup> April

Thomas Fanning 2 single — 72

Elijah Lathrop 1 — 10

E. B. Dutch Car 16<sup>th</sup> 1 — 5

3 single to N.L. — 6

from Portsmouth (bill dated 13<sup>th</sup>)

Hawland & Coit 1 ship single 6

1 packet — 48

from Boston (bill dated 22<sup>nd</sup>)

Elisha Lathrop Ship 1 — 9

Holand Coit — 2 — 12

Wm Hubbard — 1 sing — 4

do — 1 packet — 16

Maj<sup>r</sup> Huntington 1 sing — 4

Frederick Gray 1 — 4 paid

25<sup>th</sup> from N.L.

Pruth Webster 1 — 7 — 3/4

Sam<sup>l</sup> Johnson 1 — 16 — 2

Barrett & Davison 1 ship 8 — 4/6

Jon<sup>n</sup> Alden — 1 ship 6 — 3/6

Joseph Williams 1 do 8 — 4/6

Apr. 25<sup>th</sup> Cont<sup>d</sup> from N<sup>o</sup> 2

Eliza Lathrop's Ship	1	6	—	3/6
Newland's Ship	1	14	—	3/6
Do do	1	6	—	3/6
Manaford's Ship	1	6	—	3/6
Miss Pierce	1	6	—	3/6
John Corning	1	6	—	3/6
E. C. Pugham	1	5		
Gov: Trumbull	1	5		
Gen: Putnam	1	5		
Cap: J. Starr	1	Way	2	104

26 Sent to Boston

4 Single — 16

to Providence

2 Single — 8

~~Recd from Boston May 10<sup>th</sup> None~~

Recd from N <sup>o</sup> 2 May 10 <sup>th</sup>	2		Sent to Boston May 10 <sup>th</sup>	
Recd from Boston May 10 <sup>th</sup>			4 Single	32

Friedrich Tracy	1	4		
Uriah Tracy	1	4		
Proison	1	4		
Andrew Huntington	1	4		
Sam <sup>l</sup> Mays	1	4		

May 10<sup>th</sup>

Sent to Starfield  
3 Single 3 — 9  
Sent to Fighbill  
2 Single 4 — 8  
Sent to N London  
2 Single 2 — 4

May 11<sup>th</sup>

Cap: Jon: Lamb 8 Single paid  
Andrew Huntington 8 pd  
Fred: Tracy 8 pd  
Lynde M: Judd 8 pd  
Jared Tracy 8 pd  
Sam: M: Fred 8 pd  
Joseph Williams May 11 — 24 paid