

A review of the Journals of Congress re General Post Office established by the Continental Congress on 26 July 1775 and particularly the 20% Postage reduction.

Journals of Congress, Vol. II, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905

MONDAY, MAY 29, 1775

The Congress met according to Adjournment.

Resolved, That Mr.[Benjamin] Franklin, Mr. [Thomas] Lynch, Mr. [Richard Henry] Lee, Mr. [Thomas] Willing, Mr. S[amuel] Adams, and Mr. P[hilip] Livingston, be a committee to consider the best means of establishing posts for conveying letters and intelligence through this continent.

Journals of Congress, Vol. II, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1775

Met according to adjournment.

The Committee appointed to consider the ways and means of establishing posts, bro't in their report, which was read, and ordered to be taken into consideration to Morrow.

Journals of Congress, Vol. II, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1775

Met according to adjournment.

Agreeable to the order of yesterday, the Congress resumed the consideration of the report of the Committee on the post office; which being debated by paragraphs, was agreed to as follows:

That a postmaster General be appointed for the United Colonies, who shall hold his office at Philad^a, and shall be allowed a salary of 1000 dollars per an: for himself, and 340 dollars per an: for a secretary and Comptroller, with power to appoint such, and so many deputies as to him may seem proper and necessary.

That a line of posts be appointed under the direction of the Postmaster general, from Falmouth in New England to Savannah in Georgia, with as many cross posts as he shall think fit.

That the allowance to the deputies in lieu of salary and all contingent expenses, shall be 20 per cent, on the sums they collect and pay into the General post office annually, when the whole is under or not exceeding 1000 Dollars, and ten per cent, for all sums above 1000 dollars a year.

That the rates of postage shall be 20 pr cent less than those appointed by act of Parliament.¹

That the several deputies account quarterly with the general post office, and the postmaster general annually with the continental treasurers, when he shall pay into the rec^t of the S^d Treasurers, the profits of the Post Office; and if the necessary expense of this establishment should exceed the produce of it, the deficiency shall be made good by the United Colonies, and paid to the postmaster general by the continental Treas^r.

On motion made, *Resolved*,

That it be recommended to the postmaster general to establish a weekly post to South Carolina.

That it be left to the postmaster general to appoint a sec^y and comptroller.

The Congress then proceeded to the election of a postmaster general for one year, and until another is appointed by a future Congress, when Benjamin Franklin Esq^t, was unanimously chosen.

Adjourned till to Morrow at 8 o'Clock.

¹ Suspended September 30.

Author's Note: There were 5 paragraphs considered for debate, only three of the five issues were resolved (passed). The so called 20% reduction was not resolved; the debate on it was suspended until the 30th of September.

Secret Journals of the Acts and Proceedings of Congress, Vol. I, Printed and Published by Thomas S. Wait, 1821.

Saturday 30 September 1775.

It being represented to Congress, that from the present situation of affairs, and the correspondence now carried on through North America, if the rate of postage is lowered, agreeably to the resolution of Congress, it is apprehended the proceeds of the office will not support the necessary riders; and the people in general are well satisfied with, at least have made no complaints in regard to the rates lately paid for the postage of letters.—

Resolved, That the resolution of Congress respecting the lowering the rates of postage be suspended until farther orders from Congress.

Journals of Congress, Vol. III, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1775

It being represented to the Congress, that from the present situation of affairs and the correspondence now carried on through N. A., it is apprehended that if the rate of postage is lowered agreeable to the resolution of Congress, the proceeds of the office will not support the necessary riders; and as the people in general are well satisfied with, at least no complaints have been made with regard to, the rates lately paid for the postage of letters,

On motion, *Resolved*,

That the resolution of Congress respecting the lowering the rates of postage be suspended until farther orders from this Congress.

Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, Vol. I, August 29, 1774 to July 4, 1776.

Edited by Edmond C Burnett.

Richard Smith, Diary.¹

Saturday 30 September 1775.

On Motion of Dr. Franklin the Resolution that the Postage should be 20 per Cent less than the Kings Postage was suspended till further Order, he being fearful that the reduced Postage at this Time may not be sufficient to pay all Charges.⁴

¹ American Historical Review, I, 293

⁴ See the Journals, July 26, Sept. 30.

(Richard Smith) Representative from New Jersey, served from 1774-1776)

**Letters of delegates to Congress, 1774-1789, Volume 2, September 1775-December 1775.
Published by the Library of Congress, 1976-2000.**

Samuel Ward's Diary.¹

September 30, 1775. pg 84

Postage of Letters to be same as usual.⁴

(Samuel Ward) Representative from Rhode Island, served from 1774-1776)

¹ Magazine of American History, I, 551

⁴ See Letters of the Delegates, Sept. 30.

John S Olenkiewicz