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.


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.


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.


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, 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 rec¹ of the Sᵈ 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 Treasˢ.
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 secʸ 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’, was unanimously chosen.
Adjourned till to Morrow at 8 o’Clock.
Resolved, That the resolution of Congress respecting the lowering the rates of postage be suspended until farther orders from Congress.

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)
September 30, 1775. pg 84
Postage of Letters to be same as usual.  
(Samuel Ward) Representative from Rhode Island, served from 1774-1776)
1 Magazine of American History, I, 551

John S Olenkiewicz