

# REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

## POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,

17th November, 1823.

SIR: In obedience to your request, I have the honor to submit the following statement respecting the affairs of this Department.

There is established by law 88,600 miles of Post Roads in the United States, and, at this time, the mail is transported 85,700 miles on these roads, leaving 2,900 miles not yet carried into operation. The mail is transported in stages on 20,943 miles of Post Roads. At the commencement of the next year, the mail will be conveyed on all the routes established, with perhaps one or two exceptions, for which contracts have not yet been made.

The following statement will shew the increase of Post Roads in the years specified:

In the year 1819 there was established of Post Roads 9,113 miles.

“	1820	“	“	“	4,906	“	
“	1821	“	“	“	6,562	“	
“	1822	“	“	“	5,746	“	
“	1823	“	“	“	2,800	“	
						29,127	“

Making a total increase, in the five years stated, of twenty-nine thousand one hundred and twenty-seven miles.

As near as can be known from the records of this Department, there are about 5,242 post-offices established: means have been taken to ascertain the exact number. The following will shew the increase and diminution of the amount due to the Department, by Postmasters, late Postmasters, and contractors:

On the 31st	December,	1799,	there was due		\$84,544	74
“	31	“	1804	“	144,457	57
“	31	“	1809	“	215,347	63
“	31	“	1814	“	282,652	19
“	1st	April	1820	“	666,472	72
“	1	“	1821	“	613,007	96
“	1	“	1822	“	486,358	25
“	1	“	1823	“	435,651	46

From the 1st of April, 1820, to the 1st of April, 1821, it appears that there was a charge upon the balances due to the Department of	\$55,464 76
From the 1st of April, 1821, to the 1st of April, 1822,	126,649 91
From the 1st of April, 1822, to the 1st of April, 1823,	50,706 79

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\$232,821 46

To the sum of two hundred and thirty-two thousand eight hundred and twenty-one dollars and forty-six cents, must be added, for expenses incurred in transporting the mail, under-bids accepted in cases where contracts have not been executed, or if executed, had not been returned to the Department, about	30,000 00
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\$262,821 46

The amount of postage which accrued for the three years above stated, was less than the actual expenditures of the Department the above sum of \$262,821 46 cts. But the real deficiency will be found much greater than this sum: for, there should be added the losses that will inevitably take place, in collecting more than a million of dollars in each year, from between five and six thousand Postmasters. The real excess of expenditure, above the receipts for postage, which accrued in the three years stated, cannot be much below three hundred thousand dollars. The whole of this deficiency must have been collected out of the balances due to the Department, except the amount that may yet remain unpaid.

The gross amount of postage which accrued from the 1st of July, 1822, to the 1st of July, 1823, was \$1,114,345 12

The expenditures of the Department during the same period, are as follows:

Compensation to Postmasters, including their incidental expenses, &c.	\$353,995 98
Incidental expenses of the Department	30,866 37
Transportation of the mail	784,600 08
Payments into the Treasury	423 08

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\$1,169,885 51

Amount of postage, as above stated,	1,114,345 12
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\$55,540 39

This balance, of fifty five thousand five hundred and forty dollars and thirty-nine cents, remains against the Department, if every dollar of postage which accrued within the year should be collected. This cannot be expected, and the deficiency will be increased, in proportion to the losses sustained in making collections for the year.

On the 1st of July last, there was due by the Department to con-

tractors, for services rendered prior to that time, twenty-six thousand five hundred and forty-eight dollars and sixty-four cents. This sum must be discharged out of the current receipts for postage, or from collections made out of the balances due to the Department. These balances, on the first of July last, amounted to three hundred and ninety-one thousand nine hundred and ninety-four dollars and fifty-nine cents; one hundred and thirty-five thousand two hundred and forty-five dollars and twenty-eight cents of which was due from Postmasters; the balance from late Postmasters and contractors. As this sum includes delinquencies, which have been accumulating since the organization of the Department; and as large sums have been collected from those balances, within the three last years, a large proportion of the amount, which for some years has been due from late Postmasters and contractors, may safely be assumed as lost.

There is now about one hundred and sixty thousand dollars in suit against late Postmasters, and, in a very short time, suits will be commenced for all balances, except those which are due by Postmasters in office.

Not more than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars will probably be collected from the total amount of balances due to the Department. And to realize this amount, some years of unremitting exertions will be necessary. A great majority of the accounts are for less than one hundred dollars each, and some hundreds of suits must be brought, in addition to those now pending.

It was the constant endeavor of my predecessor, for some years past, to reduce the expenditures of the Department within its receipts; and the reduction of the balances due to the Department shews, that, within the three last years, large sums have been realized from that source.

In making the late contracts, the expenditure has been reduced on routes in operation, forty seven thousand eight hundred and twenty-one dollars and twelve cents. And, it is believed, that the public convenience has been promoted by contracts to have the mail conveyed in stages, on several important routes. There will be in operation, the next year, stages for the conveyance of the mail from the city of Washington to St. Louis, and probably to Franklin, in Missouri, as a proposition has been made by the department for an extension of the line from St. Louis to Franklin. The weight of the mail, and its security, require stages on this route.

The routes established at the last session of Congress, which will go into operation at the commencement of the ensuing year, amount to fourteen thousand and twenty one dollars: new routes are always found unproductive, and it may be safely estimated, that two thirds of this sum will be a charge on the revenue of the Department, from other sources, for some years to come.

A contract has not yet been made for the transportation of the mail on the route from St. Augustine, in East Florida, to Pensacola, which was established by act of Congress, in the session of eighteen hundred and twenty-two.

Diligent inquiry has been made, and it does not appear, that there is a road between these places, on the route designated, on which the mail can be conveyed. There are Indian paths, which pass through different Indian settlements, but none, it is understood, that extend for any considerable distance, on the proper direction. The want of a road is not the only obstacle on this route. Almost the whole distance is an uninhabited wilderness, except a few Indian villages, and it is represented, that very large and impassable swamps and lakes will render the passage of the mail, in some places, impracticable.

The lowest responsible bid that has been made for the conveyance of the mail on this route, is four thousand dollars; and it is confidently believed, that the route will not add two hundred dollars to the receipts of the Department. As this is an established route, I shall deem it my duty to accept the best bid which has been made, and close the contract, so that an attempt to transport the mail on it may be made, unless Congress shall think proper to modify or repeal the law.

It is understood, that, whilst Congress are willing that all the revenue of this Department shall be appropriated in extending the travel of the mail, they are unwilling to provide for this accommodation, to any considerable extent, by appropriations from the Treasury.

It is, therefore, an object of great importance, to bring the expenditures of the Department, at least, within its receipts. This may be done, by discontinuing the unprofitable routes, the expense of which greatly exceeds the convenience to the public, and by a rigid economy in the administration of the affairs of the Department.

If Congress, at the ensuing session, will discontinue unproductive routes, so as to lessen the expenditure twenty-five thousand dollars, including the expense of the new routes which they may establish, it is believed that the expenditure of the Department may be brought within its receipts for the ensuing year. It will be remarked, that the amount of reduction here proposed, is less than the sum due to contractors on the first of July last.

There has been paid into the Treasury of the United States, by this Department, since its organization, one million eighty-nine thousand three hundred and thirty seven dollars and twenty-nine cents.

The receipts of the Department, it is expected, will be greater the ensuing year than the present. An arrangement has been made, respecting the postage on newspapers, which will probably increase the receipts nearly thirty thousand dollars.

The average amount received from this source, has been about sixty-six thousand eight hundred dollars annually. There are more than five hundred and sixty newspapers printed in the Union. It has been estimated that, on an average, each newspaper office sends three hundred papers, weekly, in the mail, one-fourth of which are supposed to be sent out of the state or territory in which they are printed. This would give an increase to the revenue of the Department of nearly forty thousand dollars.

Some country papers may not send, weekly, in the mail, more than from fifty to a hundred papers, but some offices are known to send from ten to twenty thousand. From the best data, on which a calculation can be made, it is believed, that something near the estimated result may be produced. But, as fifty per cent. of the postage on newspapers is paid to Postmasters for their compensation, only one half of the increased receipts from this item will be added to the means of the Department.

The deficiencies in the receipts from this item, which are believed to exist, do not arise from any want of integrity in Postmasters, but rather from indulgences which they are in the practice of extending for newspaper postage. It is believed that they generally render an account of the amount received, but they fail to collect what might have been required in advance. An arrangement will soon be made, to draw drafts on each Postmaster, quarterly, for the postage received. This will be done, by arranging the different Post Offices under the numbers of the respective routes on which they are situated, and requiring the receipts of the offices on each route to be exhausted by drafts to the contractor for the route, before he is paid from any other source. If there be a deficiency of funds on the route to pay the contractor, he can be paid by drafts on some other convenient offices, or by checks on banks where funds of the Department may be deposited.

If there be a surplus of funds on the route, they can be drawn for in favor of some contractor on a convenient route, or deposited in some bank, as convenience may require. The large offices will all be required to deposit in banks.

This arrangement will supersede the practice of remitting by mail, as heretofore, and it will induce a much greater punctuality of payment, as Postmasters will always expect quarterly drafts, however small their receipts. This plan will enable the Department to realize, quarterly, the postage paid, more certainly, it is believed, than any other mode which can be adopted.

In making remittances to the Department, about one thousand dollars have been lost, annually; and, as the same money is sent by mail to the Contractors, sometimes into the neighborhood from whence it was remitted, the loss in the transmission must at least be equal to that of remitting by Postmasters. By the arrangement proposed, the labor of the Department will be lessened, and the moneys appropriated will always appear by the transactions of the office, without passing through the hands of any one employed in the General Post Office.

No check whatever, except the integrity of the Postmaster, and of the receiving clerk in the Department, has heretofore existed, for all the moneys which have been remitted. If the Postmaster states that he has remitted any amount, and will make affidavit of the fact, he obtains a credit, though the money has never been received. Should the clerk who receives the quarterly return, in which the remittance is usually enclosed, take the amount, and destroy the return, there is

nothing that can lead to a discovery. The return is supposed to have been lost in the conveyance.

Without entertaining any illiberal suspicions against either Postmasters or clerks, such a system is considered as radically defective, and a change is deemed indispensable. It is believed, that no change is preferable to the one contemplated, as it will give certainty, and, at the same time, simplify and lessen the labor of the Department. Before the commencement of the ensuing session of Congress, copies of all contracts for the conveyance of the mail, made prior to the first of July last, will be deposited in the Treasury. After that period, a duplicate of all contracts will be filed in the Treasury Department, as the law requires.

Accounts have been rendered to the Treasury, up to the 30th September, 1821. This part of the business of the office has not generally been brought up as near the current transactions as at present, but it is contemplated to have the accounts rendered to the Treasury as promptly, in future, as the operations of the Department will admit.

I have the honor to be,  
most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN McLEAN.

*The PRESIDENT of the U. States.*

**REPORT OF THE FIRST COMPTROLLER.**

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT,**  
*Comptroller's Office, Nov. 26, 1823.*

SIR: In compliance with the letter to you from the President of the United States, under date of the 10th inst., which you referred to me, wherein he requests to be furnished with a statement of the settlements, made between the 1st of October, 1822, and the 30th September, 1823, and with a statement of the amount remaining unsettled at the last mentioned date, distinguishing the several heads of Civil, Military, and Naval, from each other; I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a general statement, comprising the information required, together with the particular statements received from the Register, and the Second, Third, and Fourth Auditors of the Treasury, upon which the general statement has been predicated.

I beg leave to add that, agreeably to the request of the President, these statements have been made out upon the same principle with that which governed in making out the statements of a similar nature for the last year.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

**JOS. ANDERSON,**  
*Comptroller.*

**Hon. WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD,**  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

**STATEMENT** exhibiting the amount of unsettled accounts on the books of the Fourth Auditor of the Treasury, on the 30th day of September, 1822; the amount since settled; and the amount remaining unsettled on the 1st day of Oct. 1823, viz.

Amount of unsettled accounts on the 1st of Oct. 1822, of moneys advanced prior to 3d of March, 1817	- - -	\$4,367,269 10	
Deduct amount settled from 1st Oct. 1822, to 30th day of September, 1823	- - -	310,996 98	
		<hr/>	\$4,056,272 12
Amount of unsettled accounts on the 1st of Oct. 1822, of moneys advanced from 3d March, 1817, to 1st Oct. 1822	- - -	4,598,632 48	
Amount of advances from 1st of Oct. 1822, to 30th of Sept. 1823	- - -	2,450,009 26	
		<hr/>	
		7,048,641 74	
Deduct amount settled from 1st Oct. 1822, to 30th Sept. 1823	- - -	2,275,296 16	
		<hr/>	\$4,773,345 58
Total amount remaining unsettled on the 1st of October, 1823	- - -	- - -	<hr/> <hr/>
			\$8,829,617 70

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Fourth Auditor's Office, Nov. 17, 1823.

CONST. FREEMAN,

Fourth Auditor.

**STATEMENT**, exhibiting the amount of accounts unsettled on the 30th September, 1822, in the Treasury, War, and Navy Departments, of moneys advanced prior, and subsequently, to the 4th March, 1817; the amount of accounts in relation to these advances, respectively, which were settled during the year ending on the 30th September, 1823; the amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury in that year; the amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 4th of March, 1817, and the 30th of September, 1823, accounted for between the 30th of September, 1822, and 30th of September, 1823; the balances of these moneys remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1823; and the total amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury prior, and subsequently, to the 4th of March, 1817, remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1823.

ON WHAT BOOKS.	IN RELATION TO MONEYS DRAWN FROM THE TREASURY PRIOR TO 4TH MARCH, 1817.			IN RELATION TO MONEYS DRAWN FROM THE TREASURY BETWEEN 4TH MARCH 1817, AND 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1823.					Total amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury, prior and subsequently to 4th March, 1817, remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1823.
	Amount which remained unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822.	Amount settled between the 30th of September, 1822, and the 30th September, 1823.	Balance remaining unsettled on the 30th September, 1823.	Amount drawn from the Treasury, between 4th of March, 1817, and 30th September, 1822, which remained unsettled on the last mentioned day.	Amount drawn from the Treasury between the 30th September, 1822, and the 30th September, 1823.	Amount of accounts unsettled on 30th September, 1822, including the advances made in the year ending the 30th September, 1823.	Amount accounted for between 30th September, 1822, and 30th September, 1823.	Balance remaining to be accounted for on the 30th September, 1823.	
Treasury—Register's Books,	(a) 836,917 80	34,945 07	801,972 73	(b) 8,809,186 76	7,410,998 44	16,220,185 20	7,833,703 40	(c) 8,386,481 74	(c) 9,108,454 47
War— { Second Auditor's Books,	(a) 321,598 74	55,734 58	265,864 36	(b) 2,169,877 69	2,553,623 16	4,523,500 85	3,879,143 52	644,355 33	910,419 69
{ Third do.	(a) 4,367,694 21	561,817 69	3,805,876 52	(b) 4,120,232 91	2,977,524 97	7,097,757 88	2,704,939 46	4,392,798 42	8,198,074 94
Navy—Fourth do.	(a) 4,367,269 10	310,996 98	4,056,272 12	(b) 4,398,632 48	2,480,009 26	7,048,641 74	2,275,226 16	4,773,345 58	8,829,617 70
	£ 6,893,479 85	£ 963,494 12	£ 8,856,973 73	£ 19,607,929 84	£ 13,192,155 85	£ 34,890,085 67	£ 16,713,104 60	£ 18,176,981 07	£ 27,106,966 80

(a) The lists rendered to Congress at their last session, pursuant to the act of 3d March, 1809, entitled "An act further to amend the several acts for the establishment and regulation of the Treasury, War, and Navy Departments," and the act of the 3d of March, 1817, entitled "An act to provide for the prompt settlement of public accounts," exhibit the particulars of which these several balances are composed, with the exception that the cases of insolvencies reported for three years, successively, are not, conformably to the last mentioned act, comprised in these lists.

(b) The lists alluded to, also exhibit the particulars composing these sums, with the exception beforementioned, and that they do not extend to the balances which accrued between the 30th of September, 1819, and the 30th of September, 1822. These balances relate chiefly to accounts in a regular course of settlement.

(c) In these balances, respectively, is included the sum of £ 6,810,389 05, advanced to the Bank of the United States and its Branches, on account of the public debt, the greater part of which sum has, no doubt, been disbursed; but, for these disbursements, credits could not, according to the regular course of settlement of such accounts, be given until after the 30th of September, 1823.

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**Statement** of the amount of accounts unsettled in the office of the Register of the Treasury, on the 30th Sept. 1822, arising from moneys advanced prior, and subsequently, to the 4th March, 1817; the amount of accounts, under each of those heads, which were settled during the year ending on the 30th Sept. 1823; the advances in that year, and the balances to be accounted for on the 1st October, 1823.

OF ACCOUNTS WHICH ACCRUED FROM MONEYS ADVANCED PRIOR TO THE FOURTH MARCH, 1817.			OF ACCOUNTS ACCRUING FROM MONEYS ADVANCED SUBSEQUENTLY TO THE 4TH MARCH, 1817.					Total of balances to be accounted for on the 1st Oct. 1823, of moneys advanced prior, and subsequently, to the 4th March, 1817.
Amount which remained unsettled on the 30th Sept. 1822.	Amount settled between the 30th Sept. 1822, and the 30th Sept. 1823.	Balance to be accounted for on the 1st Oct. 1823.	Amount which remained unsettled on the 30th Sept. 1822.	Advances from the 30th Sept. 1822, to the 30th Sept. 1823.	Total amount unsettled on 30th Sept. 1822, and of advances between that day and the 30th Sept. 1823.	Amount of settlements during the year ending 30th Sept. 1823.	Balance to be accounted for on the 1st Oct. 1823.	
\$836,917 80	\$34,945 07	\$801,972 73	\$8,809,186 76	\$7,410,998 44	\$16,220,185 20	\$7,853,703 46	*\$8,366,481 74	*\$9,168,454 47

\* In these sums is included \$6,319,389 05, paid over to the Bank of the United States and its Branches, for the payment of dividends of interest, and reimbursement of the public debt, declared to be due to stockholders prior to the 1st October, 1823.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Register's Office, Nov. 18th, 1828.

JOSEPH NOURSE, Register.

**STATEMENT** showing the amount of Accounts remaining unsettled in the Office of the Second Auditor of the Treasury, on the 30th of September, 1822; the amount settled since that period, and the balance which remains to be settled on the 30th of September, 1823.

Amount of unsettled Accounts on the 3d of March, 1817, remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822.	Amount of unsettled Accounts on the 3d March, 1817, settled between the 1st of October, 1822, and the 30th of September, 1823.	Amount of unsettled Accounts on the 3d of March, 1817, remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1823.	Amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 4th of March, 1817, and the 30th of September, 1822, remaining unsettled on the last mentioned day.	Amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 1st of October, 1822, and the 30th of September, 1823.	Total amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 4th of March, 1817, and 30th of Sept. 1822, unaccounted for on the last mentioned day, and of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 1st of October, 1822, and 30th of September, 1823.	Total amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 4th March, 1817, and 30th Sept. 1822, unaccounted for on the last mentioned day, and of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 1st of October, 1822, and the 30th September, 1823, which have been settled.	Amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 4th March, 1817, and 30th Sept. 1822, unaccounted for on the last mentioned day, and of moneys drawn from the Treasury between the 1st of October, 1822, and the 30th Sept. 1823, which remain to be settled.	Total amount of Accounts unsettled.
\$ 321,598 74	\$ 55,734 38	\$ 265,864 36	\$ 2,169,877 69	\$ 2,333,623 16	\$ 4,523,500 85	\$ 3,879,143 52	\$ 644,355 33	\$ 910,219 69

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Second Auditor's Office, Nov. 25, 1823.

WILLIAM LEE.

**STATEMENT** of the amount of accounts unsettled, in the office of the Third Auditor, on the 30th of September, 1822; the amount settled from the 1st of October, 1822, to the 30th of September, 1823; and the amount remaining unsettled on the same day.

p. 214-15

Amount of accounts remaining unsettled on the 30th September, 1822, of those accruing from moneys advanced prior to the 4th of March, 1817.	Amount of the same accounts, settled to the 30th September, 1823.	Amount of the same accounts, remaining unsettled on the 30th September, 1823.	Amount of accounts, remaining unsettled on the 30th September, 1822, from moneys advanced since the 3d of March, 1817.	Amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury, from the 1st October, 1822, to the 30th September, 1823.	Total amount of accounts remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822, from moneys advanced since the 3d of March, 1817, and of moneys drawn from the Treasury, from the 1st October, 1822, to the 30th September, 1823.	Amount of accounts settled, from the 1st October, 1822, to 30th September, 1823, arising from moneys advanced since the 3d of March, 1817.	Amount of accounts remaining unsettled, on the 1st of October, 1823, of advances made since the 3d of March, 1817.
\$4,367,694 21	\$561,817 69	\$3,805,876 52	\$4,120,232 91	\$2,977,524 97	\$7,097,757 88	\$2,704,959 46	\$4,392,798 42

**RECAPITULATION.**

Amount of accounts remaining unsettled on the 30th September, 1822, arising from moneys advanced prior to the 4th of March, 1817,	\$4,367,694 21
Amount of accounts remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822, arising from moneys advanced since the 3d of March, 1817,	4,120,232 91
Amount of moneys drawn from the Treasury, from the 1st of October, 1822, to the 30th September, 1823,	2,977,524 97
	<u>\$11,465,452 09</u>
Amount of accounts settled from the 1st of October, 1822, to the 30th of September, 1823, of those remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822, arising from moneys advanced prior to the 4th of March, 1817,	\$561,817 69
Amount of accounts settled, from the 1st of October, 1822, to the 30th of September, 1823, of those remaining unsettled on the 30th of September, 1822, arising from moneys advanced since the 3d of March, 1817, and of moneys drawn from the Treasury, from the 1st of October, 1822, to the 30th of September, 1823,	2,704,959 46
	<u>3,266,777 15</u>
	8,198,674 94
Total amount of accounts, unsettled on the 30th of September, 1823, of those arising from moneys advanced prior to the 4th of March, 1817,	3,805,876 52
Total amount of accounts unsettled, on the 30th September, 1823, arising from moneys advanced since the 3d March, 1817,	4,592,798 42
	<u>\$8,198,674 94</u>
Note.—Since the 1st of October, 1823, the amount of accounts unsettled, of advances made since the 3d of March, 1817, has been reduced	\$799,470 92

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *Third Auditor's Office*, 15th Nov. 1823.

PETER WAGNER. Auditor.