

REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
December 4, 1837.

SIR: On the 1st of July last, the post routes of the United States in operation were, as nearly as can be ascertained, 141,242 miles in extent, and the annual transportation of the mails upon them 32,597,008 miles, viz:

On horses and in sulkeys,	-	-	-	11,999,282
In stages and coaches,	-	-	-	18,804,700
In steamboats and railroad cars,	-	-	-	1,173,024

The increase of routes in operation during the preceding year was 22,978 miles, and of the annual transportation 5,018,620.

From the 1st of January next, the post routes covered by contracts will be at least 142,877 miles in length, and the rate of annual transportation upon them 36,228,962 miles.

The number of post offices in the United States on the 1st July last was 11,767, showing an increase of 676 within the preceding year.

The number of post offices established within the year was 956, the number discontinued 280, and the changes of postmasters 2,235.

The number of post offices on the 1st instant was 12,099.

The postmasters generally perform their duties with admirable fidelity and precision.

The number of contractors in the mail service, during the last year, was 1,682. Of these, 430 have been fined, more or less, for various delinquencies; and the aggregate of fines imposed and deductions made during the year is \$41,705 95. Most of the contractors have always been energetic and faithful, and among the rest there has been, within the last year, a very sensible improvement.

The revenue of the Department for the past year, including an estimate for deficient returns, was

The expenditure, including an estimate of demands not adjusted, was

Excess of revenue over expenditure	-	-	-	<u>\$756,208 84</u>
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The increase of the whole year was 20½ per cent. over the revenue of the preceding year, producing \$228,834 50 more than was estimated.

Detailed statements, with estimates for the coming year, will be laid before Congress, in obedience to the act of 1836.

On the 1st instant, the Department had bank funds,	-	\$430,655	57
Specie in post offices reported subject to draft,	-	410,642	81

Total funds on hand,	-	-	-	-	<u>\$841,318</u>	<u>38</u>
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In consequence of the failure of Congress to reduce the postages at the last annual session, arrangements have been made to improve the mail service beyond the extent of the accruing revenue, so as to absorb the surplus. The career of improvement has been arrested by apprehensions of a reduction of revenue growing out of the general commercial embarrassment; but no reduction of the service contracted for is at present contemplated.

The following improvements have been made in the time of transmitting intelligence within the two last years, viz :

<i>From New York—</i>		1835.	1837.
To Washington, D. C.	-	1 day, 8 hours.	1 day, 0 hours.
To Richmond, Va.	-	2 " 13½ "	1 " 13½ "
To Raleigh, N. C.	-	3 " 22½ "	2 " 7 "
To Columbia, S. C.	-	6 " 3 "	3 " 5 "
To Charleston, S. C.	-	6 " 19 "	3 " 16½ "
To Milledgeville, Ga.	-	7 " 15 "	3 " 21½ "
To Montgomery, Ala.	-	10 " 3 "	4 " 19 "
To Mobile, Ala.	-	12 " 12 "	5 " 17 "
To New Orleans, Lou.	-	13 " 19 "	6 " 19 "
To Wheeling, Va.	-	3 " 11 "	2 " 8 "
To Columbus, O.	-	4 " 16 "	2 " 22 "
To Indianapolis, Ind.	-	7 " 14 "	3 " 19½ "
To Vandalia, Ill.	-	11 " 15 "	4 " 15½ "
To St. Louis, Mo.	-	13 " 10 "	4 " 23½ "
To Cincinnati, O.	-	5 " 17 "	3 " 14 "
To Louisville, Ky.	-	7 " 18 "	4 " 8 "
To Nashville, Tenn.	-	9 " 20 "	5 " 6 "
To Huntsville, Ala.	-	11 " 22 "	5 " 20½ "

<i>From New Orleans—</i>		1835.	1837.
To Montgomery, Ala.	-	3 days, 21 hours.	2 days, 0 hours.
To Huntsville, Ala.	-	8 " 5 "	3 " 2 "
To Nashville, Tenn.	-	10 " 0 "	3 " 18 "
To Louisville, Ky.	-	13 " 0 "	4 " 17 "
To Cincinnati, O.	-	14 " 11 "	5 " 17 "
To Columbus, O.	-	16 " 9 "	6 " 7½ "
To Pittsburg, Pa.	-	18 " 5 "	7 " 8 "

These are the results of the express mails. The ordinary mails have also been expedited—

<i>From New York—</i>		1835.	1837.
To Wheeling, Va.	-	3 days, 11 hours.	2 days, 19 hours.
To Columbus, O.	-	4 " 16 "	3 " 5 "
To Cincinnati, O.	-	5 " 17 "	4 " 6 "
To Louisville, Ky.	-	7 " 8 "	5 " 4 "
To Memphis, Tenn.	-	13 " 20 "	7 " 20 "
To Natchez, Miss.	-	16 " 19 "	11 " 13 "

From New York—(continued.)

To New Orleans, Lou. by the		1835.	1837.
western route, - -		17 days, 18 hours.	13 days, 14 hours.
To Utica, N. Y. - -	- -	1 " 10 "	0 " 23 "
To Buffalo, N. Y. - -	- -	2 " 20 "	2 " 11 "
To Burlington, Vt. - -	- -	2 " 2 "	1 " 19 "
To Haverhill, N. H. - -	- -	3 " 16 "	1 " 22 "
To Concord, N. H. - -	- -	1 " 22 "	1 " 14 "
To Augusta, Me. - -	- -	3 " 9 "	3 " 5 "

Of course, the whole intermediate, adjacent, and more remote regions of the Union are benefited by this increase of expedition.

The advancement of the Department in other respects is equally satisfactory.

	In 1835.	In 1837.
Post offices, - - - -	10,770	12,000
Miles of mail routes under contract, - -	112,774	142,877
Miles of annual mail transportation, - -	25,869,486	36,228,982
Revenue, - - - -	\$2,993,576	\$4,137,056

In 1835, the Department was laboring under an extraordinary debt of \$600,000. In 1837, it has a surplus of \$800,000.

Efforts have been made to organize a great mail line from New York, through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wheeling, Columbus, and Cincinnati, by land, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, by Louisville, Memphis, Helena, Vicksburg, Natchez, &c. to New Orleans. Between Cincinnati and Louisville a steamboat mail now runs daily; from Louisville to New Orleans it now runs thrice a week, under a recent contract, and will run daily after the first year; from Baltimore to Cincinnati the mail has been greatly expedited, and nothing is wanting to complete the plan but a contract with the railroad companies between Philadelphia and Baltimore, of which there is a fair prospect. It is anticipated that, when this line shall be in full operation, it will be expedient to discontinue the express mails between Philadelphia and Cincinnati at least, as little can be gained by them; and the great mail will go from New York to New Orleans by this route in about eleven days.

It is hoped that the bill relative to the transportation of the mail upon railroads, which passed the Senate at the last annual session, may become a law. It is liberal to the railroad companies, and would probably remove all obstacles to making contracts with them.

For some time to come the mail transportation will be nearly stationary. The post offices will greatly increase. The revenue will rapidly advance as soon as the general embarrassments are at an end. That of the last quarter was at least nine per cent. over the corresponding quarter of last year; but the same relative proportions are not to be expected in the coming quarters.

The number of dead letters returned to the Department for the last two quarters has been ascertained as accurately as practicable. For the quarter ending 30th June last they were over 222,000; and for the quarter ending 30th September last, over 225,000. The average may be put down at 900,000 annually. At 12½ cents each, their estimated average postage, the loss to the Department on these letters is \$112,500 a year.

Estimating the letters delivered out at the same average rate, it will appear that the whole number of letters delivered from the post offices of the United States, during the last year, was 29,360,992. For free letters and dead letters may be added at least 3,000,000 more.

The number of newspapers, pamphlets, &c. paying postage, conveyed by mail annually, is estimated at about 25,000,000. The dead and free newspapers may be about 4,000,000.

The convenience of the public business, and the security of the books and papers, require that a fire-proof building be provided for this Department.

It is necessary that the clerks provided for in the appropriations of the last annual session be made permanent.

The great increase of the number of post offices, and in the magnitude of accounts from the old offices, together with the multiplication of contractors, renders it absolutely necessary to augment the force of the Auditor's office.

I take great pleasure in saying that more faithful, devoted, and efficient public officers than my three Assistants, cannot be found, and that the clerks generally partake of their spirit.

Some idea may be formed of the amount of business done in this Department from the fact, that the communications of all sorts received in the different offices, excluding the Auditor's office, amount to a daily average of about 860 for the working days, equal to 269,180 a year; the communications sent, to about 470 daily, equal to 147,110 a year; and the cases actually decided by the Postmaster General, to 48 daily, equal to 15,024 a year.

The magnitude of the work done by the Auditor and his clerks may be estimated from the fact, that they examine and adjust the four quarterly accounts of each postmaster, making near 48,000 accounts a year; and the accounts of each contractor quarterly, or oftener, making about 7,000 a year; keeping the mass of books required in this service; closing each year the accounts of about 2,000 ex-postmasters, and carrying on the heavy correspondence growing out of these extensive duties.

Herewith is an interesting statement of the First Assistant relative to mail transportation.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

AMOS KENDALL.

To the PRESIDENT of the United States.

THE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL.

CONTRACT OFFICE, November 30, 1837.

On the 30th June, 1836, the length of the post routes in operation in the United States was 118,264 miles, and the annual transportation thereon amounted to 27,578,620 miles.

During the year ending the 30th June, 1837, 22,978 miles were added to the length of the post routes, and the annual transportation was increased 5,018,386 miles, as is more fully shown by the following

Table of mail service for the 30th June, 1837.

States and Territories.	Length of routes.	Annual transportation.			Total.
		Horse and sulkey.	Stage and coach.	Steamboat and railroad.	
NORTHEASTERN SECTION.					
Maine	4,004	246,792	638,248	-	885,040
New Hampshire	2,710	72,540	656,734	-	729,274
Vermont	2,490	90,064	603,226	-	693,290
Massachusetts	3,770	110,136	1,287,182	114,556	1,511,874
Rhode Island	490	10,712	127,036	48,256	186,004
Connecticut	2,032	94,120	589,446	26,728	710,294
New York	13,082	845,416	3,249,376	315,328	4,410,120
MIDDLE SECTION.					
New Jersey	1,998	89,536	467,766	43,472	600,574
Pennsylvania	12,337	999,206	1,967,758	201,812	3,168,776
Delaware	591	20,800	117,702	14,976	153,478
Maryland	2,589	237,432	542,178	137,384	916,994
Ohio	10,127	841,854	1,435,044	31,304	2,308,202
SOUTHERN SECTION.					
Virginia	10,434	1,060,452	942,240	146,224	2,168,916
North Carolina	7,155	638,892	830,960	20,384	1,490,236
South Carolina	5,019	484,610	730,904	87,000	1,302,514
Georgia	6,705	633,152	726,648	-	1,359,800
Florida	2,025	91,624	84,864	44,720	221,208
NORTHWESTERN SECTION.					
Michigan	3,494	295,464	368,940	-	664,404
Indiana	7,155	707,408	542,672	12,376	1,262,456
Illinois	7,150	485,888	677,040	-	1,162,928
Wisconsin	1,889	166,192	31,408	-	197,600
Missouri	5,019	506,896	97,552	-	604,448
SOUTHWESTERN SECTION.					
Kentucky	6,779	536,416	648,960	193,136	1,378,512
Tennessee	7,269	744,952	584,888	56,680	1,386,320
Alabama	6,449	775,008	597,376	32,760	1,405,144
Mississippi	3,744	579,280	159,536	117,104	855,920
Arkansas	2,765	417,248	31,200	44,928	493,376
Louisiana	1,972	197,392	68,016	103,896	369,304
Miles	141,249	11,999,982	18,804,700	1,793,034	32,597,006

The present mail service in New England and New York commenced on the 1st of July last, under lettings that took place in May; superseding, from the commencement of the current contract year, so much of the service stated in the foregoing table as is embraced in the Northeastern section.

The post routes in these States are let to contract, as follows:

1st. *Horse and sulkey mails.*

States.	Length of routes								Total.
	Weekly.	Semi-weekly.	Three weeks.	4 times a w.	6 times a w.	Daily.	12 times a w.	15 times a w.	
Maine	1,251	160	64	-	2	14	-	-	1,781
New Hampshire	454	191	10	-	-	18	-	-	676
Vermont	362	191	27	-	-	-	-	-	580
Massachusetts	100	75	105	-	30	-	-	-	310
Rhode Island	89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89
Connecticut	156	282	89	-	6	-	-	-	533
New York	3,644	1,320	450	-	87	21	-	-	5,538
Miles	6,056	2,532	715	-	125	431	-	6	9,507

2d. *Stage and coach.*

Maine	76	339	1,062	12	50	367	-	-	-	1,926
New Hampshire	51	147	1,142	-	284	220	-	-	-	1,844
Vermont	97	309	851	39	115	388	-	-	-	1,899
Massachusetts	60	77	2,420	21	904	276	7	61	2	3,828
Rhode Island	15	37	104	-	30	-	-	-	-	186
Connecticut	-	137	880	-	359	70	-	73	-	1,519
New York	† 187	495	† 3,569	-	457	\$2,459	-	-	-	7,157
Miles	486	1,531	10,048	72	2,229	3,760	7	134	2	18,289

3d. *Steamboat and railroad.*

Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	113	25	-	44	77	259
Connecticut	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	40
New York	-	-	38	-	197	† 288	-	-	** 152	675
Miles	-	-	38	-	310	353	-	44	229	974

* Less by 11 miles in calculation of annual transportation, or average of pay; some of the service not extending through the year.

† Less by 48 miles.

‡ Less by 166 miles.

§ Less by 185 miles.

|| Less by 11 miles.

¶ Less by 24 miles.

** Less by 38 miles.

RECAPITULATION.

States.	Length of routes.				Compensation.
	Horse and sulkey.	Stage and coach.	Steamboat and rail-road.	Total.	
Maine	1,781	1,926	-	3,707	\$87,429
New Hampshire	676	1,844	-	2,520	67,741
Vermont	580	1,829	-	2,409	61,599
Massachusetts	310	3,898	259	4,397	160,875
Rhode Island	89	186	-	275	5,287
Connecticut	533	1,519	40	2,092	55,742
New York	5,538	7,157	675	13,370	368,653
	9,507	18,289	974	28,770	
Equal to an annual transportation of	1,486,960	7,670,100	706,160	9,863,220	
Compensation	\$80,143	\$656,493	\$70,685	-	\$807,326

The average cost of this transportation, per mile, is 5½ cents for the horse and sulkey service; 8½ cents for the stage and coach service; and 10 cents for the steamboat and railroad service.

The foregoing is exclusive of 573 miles of aggregate length of mail supply of special offices, under the 4th section of the act of 1825, amounting to 84,500 miles of annual transportation, the cost of which is contingent, and defrayed wholly out of the proceeds of said offices; neither does it include the steamboat conveyance of letters and packets under the 5th and 6th sections of the act of 1825, as the expense thereof is not subject to ascertainment in a statement of this kind. Such conveyance extends over some six or seven hundred miles in New England and New York.

Since the commencement of the current contract year, there have been established eleven daily express mail routes, extending from Washington, by Frederick, (Maryland,) Cumberland, Uniontown, (Penn.) Wheeling, (Virginia,) Zanesville, (Ohio,) Columbus, Dayton, Indianapolis, (Indiana,) Terre Haute, and Vandalia, (Illinois,) to St. Louis, (Missouri,) 811 miles, running through in three days and twenty-one hours and a half; also, eight daily express mail routes from Dayton, (Ohio,) by Cincinnati, Georgetown, (Kentucky,) Louisville, Bowling Green, Nashville, (Tenn.,) Huntsville, (Alabama,) and Elyton, to Montgomery, 695 miles, through in three days and twelve and a half hours; and a daily express mail from Columbia, South Carolina, to Charleston, 125 miles, through in eleven and a half hours. The annual cost of these express mails is \$211,635.

On the great daily line from Baltimore, by Wheeling and Columbus, to Cincinnati, conveyance in vehicles appropriated exclusively to the mail, excepting three outside seats for passengers, has been substituted for the ordinary post-coach transportation. Speed, at a given rate per mile, has been secured in the contracts, and the whole mail expedited to Cincinnati, so as to make a gain of one business day to that place and twenty-four

hours for all points beyond, at an advance in the cost of transportation on that line of \$57,328 per annum.

The mail service in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, has been relet. A part of it has gone into operation since the 30th June last: the chief portion of it will commence on the 1st January next, and the residue on the 1st July, 1838. Contracts and acceptances of bids have been made for 48,713 miles in extent, amounting to the annual transportation of 3,944,824 miles in horse and sulkey service, 5,148,208 miles in stage and coach, and 1,308,264 miles by steamboats and railroads, at the annual cost of \$1,136,733. A more particular statement of the results of this letting is omitted at this time, as some of the routes are not disposed of, and the final arrangements of nearly the whole remain to be closed.

The improvements made since the 1st July last, in the mail service in the States not embraced in either the May or October lettings, add to the length of the routes 1,010 miles, and increase the annual transportation on horse and in sulkeys 56,992 miles, and in stages and coaches 161,872 miles, at the annual cost of \$26,819.

The following is a *prospective exhibit* of the service for 1838, as provided for in the existing engagements, omitting the supply of special offices, and the letter and packet conveyance by steamboats, under the 5th and 6th sections of the act.

EXHIBIT.

	Length of routes.	Horse and sulkey.	Stage and coach.	Steamboat and railroad.	Total.
Service in the States not embraced in the let- tings of either May or October	62,474	5,412,823	8,215,004	727,276	14,355,103
Alab. express mail routes	279	203,119	-	-	203,119
The express mail routes let this year	1,631	1,187,368	-	-	1,187,368
The May lettings	28,770	1,486,980	7,670,100	706,160	9,863,920
Improvements since the 1st July in the States not embraced in these or the October lettings	1,010	56,992	161,872	-	218,864
The October lettings	48,713	3,944,824	5,148,208	1,308,264	10,401,296
Miles	142,877	12,292,078	21,195,184	2,741,700	36,228,962