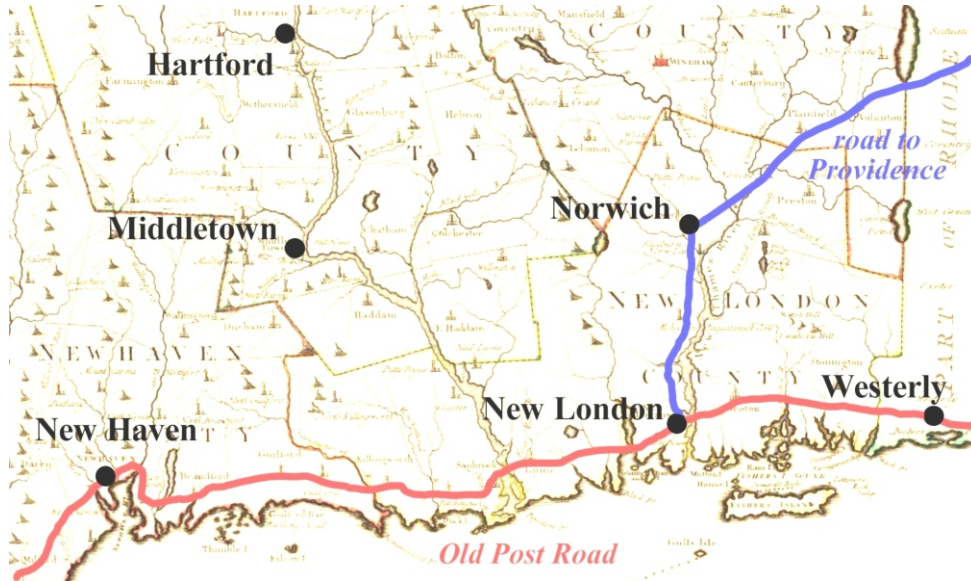


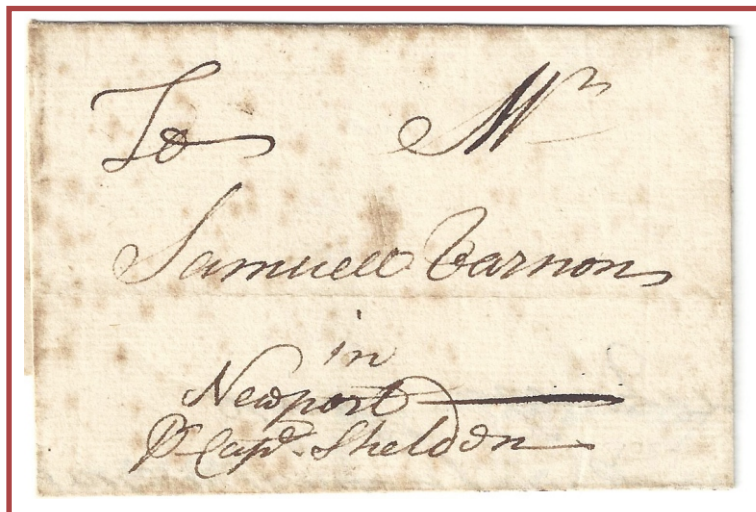
The Earliest Mails of Norwich

This exhibit documents the earliest mail service to and from Norwich, Connecticut. It includes the earliest reported letter in private hands (1755), the founding documents for the 1779 Provisional Continental Congress Post Office, the only known letter carried by that office, the Norwich Post Office birth certificate letter from Ebenezer Hazard that established the Norwich Post Office in 1781, and the earliest reported postmark of Norwich (1787). It ends with a unique 1792 free letter of postmaster Leffingwell with a "Norwich Post Office USA" wax seal as a frank.



The main road connecting New London, Norwich and Providence, RI is shown in blue. The lower Old Post Road, the major colonial era postal route, is shown in red. As will be seen, the blue route was used as a provisional postal route in April and May 1779 after the British disruption of mails carried on the lower Post Road. Norwich became a post office in 1781.

Pre Post Office Privately Carried Mail



2 December 1755 Norwich to Newport, per "Capt. (James) Sheldon" the earliest reported letter from Norwich in private hands

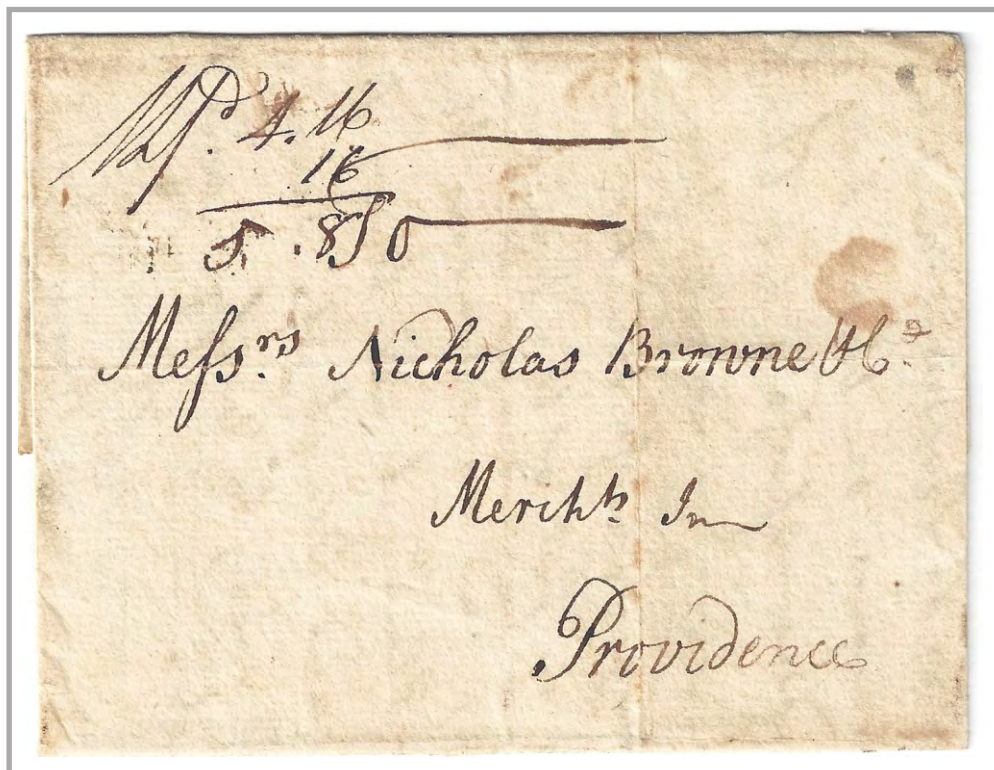
Norwich

Pre Post Office Period

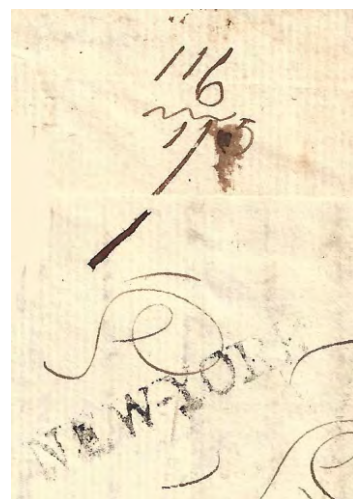
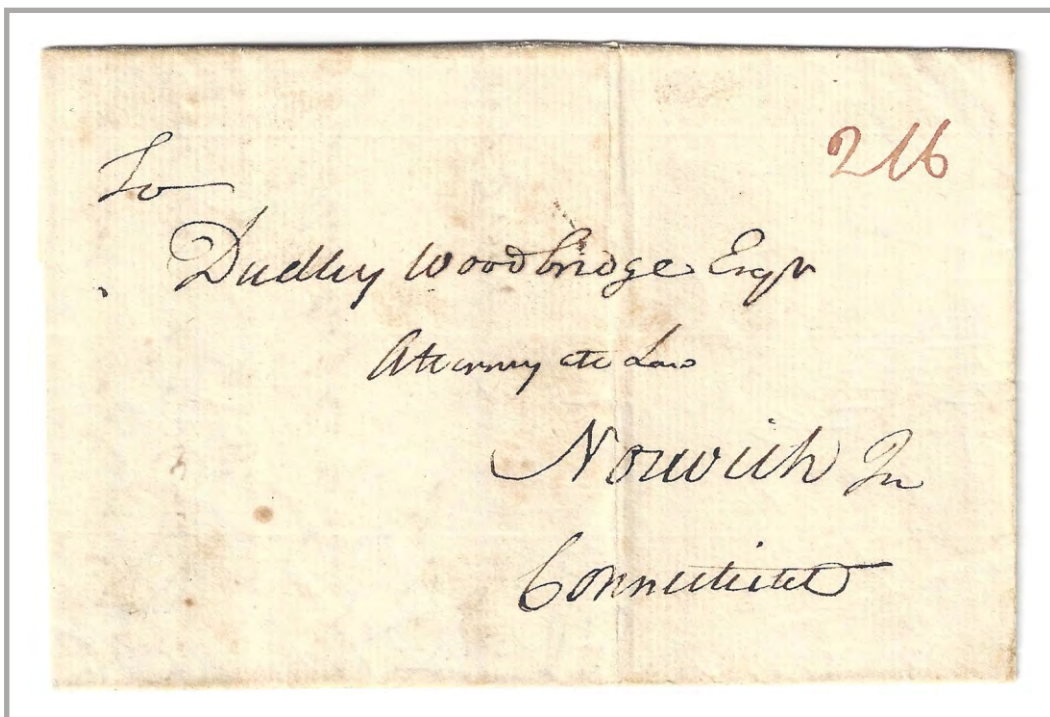
Private Mails to / from British Parliamentary Post



New London
postmark



November 1772 Norwich to Providence double rate letter, carried privately to New London entered the British mails at New London, incorrectly rated as postage due of 4dwt, 16gr postage due amount corrected at Providence to 5dwt 16gr (1dwt 8gr private carriage Norwich to New London + 4dwt double rate to Providence)



12 October 1774 New York to Norwich, postmark on back, 2dwt 16gr due at New London (local currency equivalent of 11d postage + 6d for carriage from New London = 1sh/5d due)

Norwich

Provisional Continental Congress Post Office

During the British occupation of Newport, a provisional mail route via Norwich was established. In March 1779, Ebenezer Hazard and Boston Postmaster Jonathan Hastings decided to change the route between Providence and New London away from the lower Post Road via Westerly to a new route via Norwich. The route was in operation from 5 April to 8 May 1779. Dudley Woodbridge served as the provisional post office agent.

Norwich 5th April 1779 — List of Letters Recd —

William Hubbard — Boston	Post	
Martha Green — Boston	4	
Miss Wheat & Madman — Boston	4	
Leonard Hills — May	2	8

(sent) 7th April

Boston — 1 bundle	12	
Hubbard Wm — May	2	
Applegate Court — May	2	
Williams Joseph — May	20	80

Sent to N.L. 17th April

Gale Samuel — May	2	
-------------------	---	--

Sent to Boston 20th April

3 single — May	12	
1 Double —	8	

Sent to Boston 18th April

Thomas Dunning — 2 single	12	
Elijah Lathrop — 1	10	
3 single to N.L.	6	

from Portsmouth (bill dated 18th)

Howland & Co. — 1 single	6	
1 packet	40	

from Boston (bill dated 22nd)

Elijah Lathrop — 1	10	
Howland & Co. — 2	12	
Wm Hubbard — 1	10	
1 packet	10	
May & Huntington — 1	10	
Frederick Gray — 1	4	paid

25th from N.L.

Benjamin Webster — 1	7	3/4
Sam Johnson — 1	16	4
Benjamin Dummer — 1	16	4
Sam Alden — 1	16	4
Joseph Williams — 1	16	4

Apr 25th Cont from N.L.

Elijah Lathrop S. Ship — 1	6	3/4
Howland & Co. Ship 1	12	3/4
2 ^o — 1	6	3/4
Managers Short — 1	6	3/4
Major Paine — 1	6	3/4
John Corning — 1	6	3/4
Col. Bingham — 1	5	
Gov. Pownall — 1	5	
Gen. Pittman — 1	5	
Col. Davis — 1	5	
2	10	

26th Sent to Boston

4 single	16	
----------	----	--

to Providence

2 single	8	
----------	---	--

Sent to Boston May 6th from

Post from N.L. — 1	12	
Post from Boston — 1	12	
Frederick Gray — 1	4	
Providence — 1	4	
Andrew Huntington — 1	4	
Sam & Co. — 1	4	

May 8th

Sent to Fairfield	3	9
Sent to Saffhill	2	6
Sent to London	2	6

May 10th

Col. Paine — 1	5	
Gov. Pownall — 1	5	
Gen. Pittman — 1	5	
Col. Davis — 1	5	
2	10	

5 April to 8 May 1779, scans of the two page ledger of mails sent and received at Norwich compiled by Dudley Woodbridge acting as postmaster (original displayed on following page)

Dudley Woodbridge was the first postmaster of Norwich. After his temporary service during the provisional route change of 1779, he was officially designated postmaster in 1781 and served in that capacity until 1789. He and his brother Samuel were important merchants in Norwich, dealing primarily in rum and other foodstuffs.



Norwich

Provisional Post Office - List of Letters Sent and Received

Norwich 5th April 1779 — List of Letters Recd —

William Hubbard — Boston 4^{Post}
 Martha Green — Boston 4
 Mess^{rs} Wheat & Madman — D^o — 4
 Leonard Hills — Way — 2nd 8

April 5-1779

(sent) 7th April

Boston — 1 trible — 12
 Recd from N^o 2

Hubbard W^m — Way — 2
 Liffenwell Christ^o — Way — 2
 Williams Joseph — Way S^c — 20

W^m Hubbard — Boston }
 2nd }
 12 — 2 P^{er}ple — 24 }
 W^m Joseph — 4 }

17th April — recd from Boston

Sent to N^o L. 17th April

Gale Samuel Way — 2

Sent to Boston 19th April

3 Single Way — 12
 1 Double — 8

Recd from N^o London 18th April

Thomas Fanning 2 single — 7²

Elijah Lathrop 1 — 10

#s 24 — E. C. Fitch Cant^o 1 — 5

3 Single to N^o L — 6

from Portsmouth (Bill dated 13th)

Howland West 1 Ship single 6

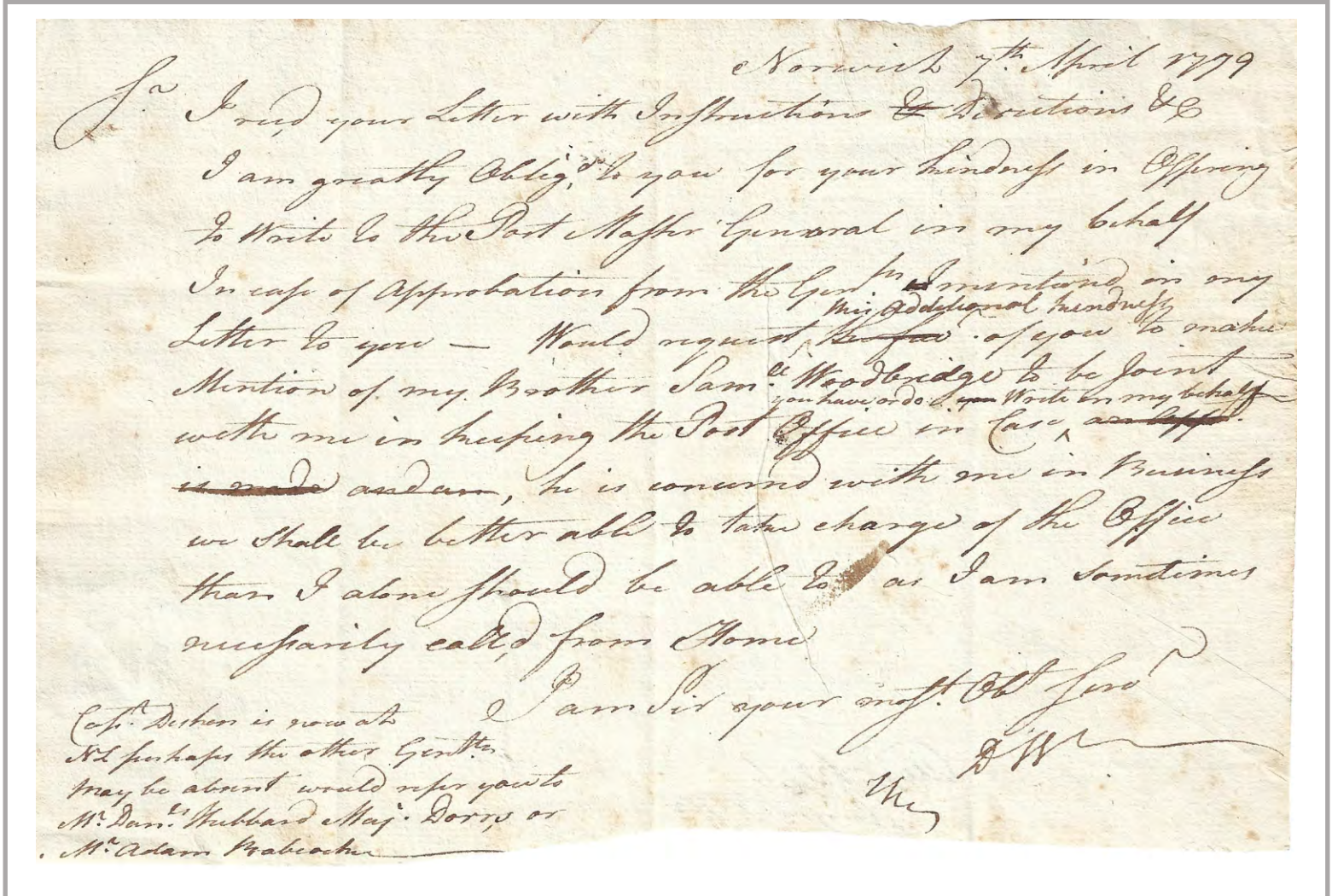
1 packet — 4⁸

from Boston (Bill dated 22nd)

Elisha Lathrop Ship 1 — 9

Holand East — 2 — 12

The provisional postmaster of Norwich, Dudley Woodbridge, writes a draft letter to the Jonathan Hastings, postmaster of Boston, regarding hoped-for official appointment as a postmaster for Norwich. Dated on the first day that mail was to be carried from Norwich over the new route.



7 April 1779 retained copy of Woodbridge letter to Boston Postmaster, Jonathan Hastings, Jr.

Norwich 7th April 1779

Sir, I rec'd your Letter with Instructions, Directions etc, I am greatly Oblig'd to you for your kindness in Offering to Write to the Post Master General in my behalf.

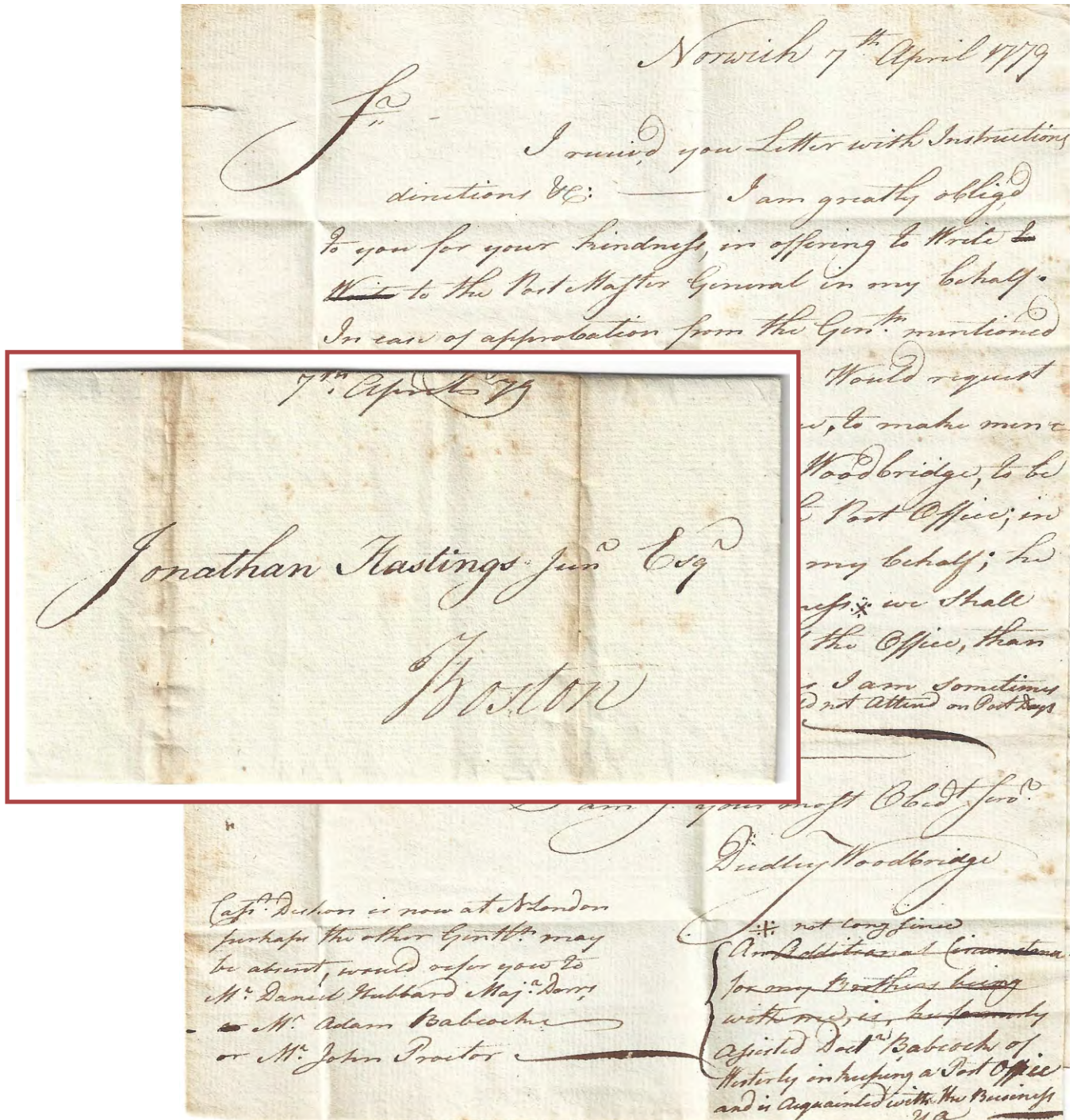
In case of Approbation from the Gentl'm., as I mentioned in my Letter to you - Would request this additional kindness of you to make Mention of my Brother Sam'l Woodbridge to be Joint with me in keeping the Post Office in Case you have or do Write in my behalf, he is concerned with me in Business we shall be better able to take charge of the Office than I alone should be able to as I am sometimes necessarily call'd from Home.

I am Sir your most Obt Serv't, D.W.

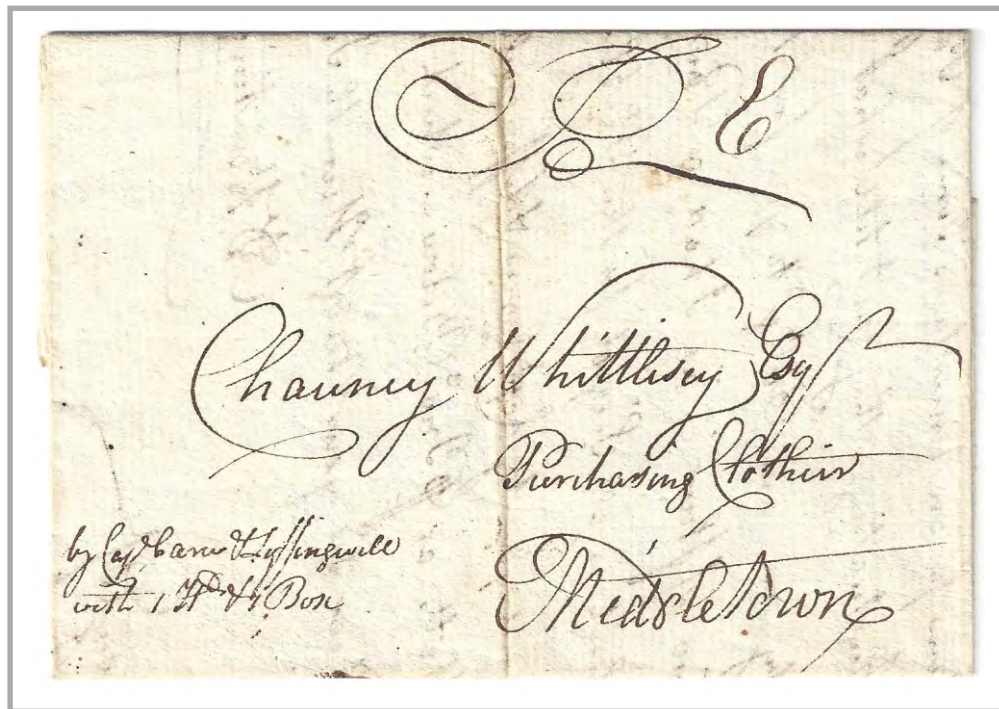
Capt. Deshon is now at N(ew) L(ondon) perhaps the other Gentl'm May be absent would refer you to Mr. Dan'l. Hubbard, Maj. Dorr's or Mr. Adam Babcock.

Letter Carried on First Trip from Provisional Post Office

Letter of Dudley Woodbridge transmitted over the provisional postal route on first day of service. Contents as previous page but with added postscript at bottom right which mentions that his brother had assisted Dr. Babcock at the Westerly, RI post office.



7 April 1779 Norwich carried over provisional postal route as free mail to Boston
Woodbridge writes to Boston postmaster, Jonathan Hastings, Jr.



19 October 1779 Norwich to "Purchasing Clothier" at Middletown
Huntington's invoice for 36 beaver and 300 felt hats endorsed to be carried by Capt. Leffingwell

Norwich Octbr 19th 1779

Sir, I have your favour of the 13th Instant & observe the contents - if I could pay for the Hatts as soon as they are done - or advance part of the pay before hand it would be advantageous - but the makers will not sell them for an uncertain time of payment as the times are so fluctuating they can't tell what the money will be worth by & by - am Obliged to you for the prospect of a barrel or two of flour as I had a part in the cargo of prize flour which is all seized for the Public Use -----

I now send you by Capt C. Leffingwell One Box of Hatts as per invoice below which may arrive safe ...

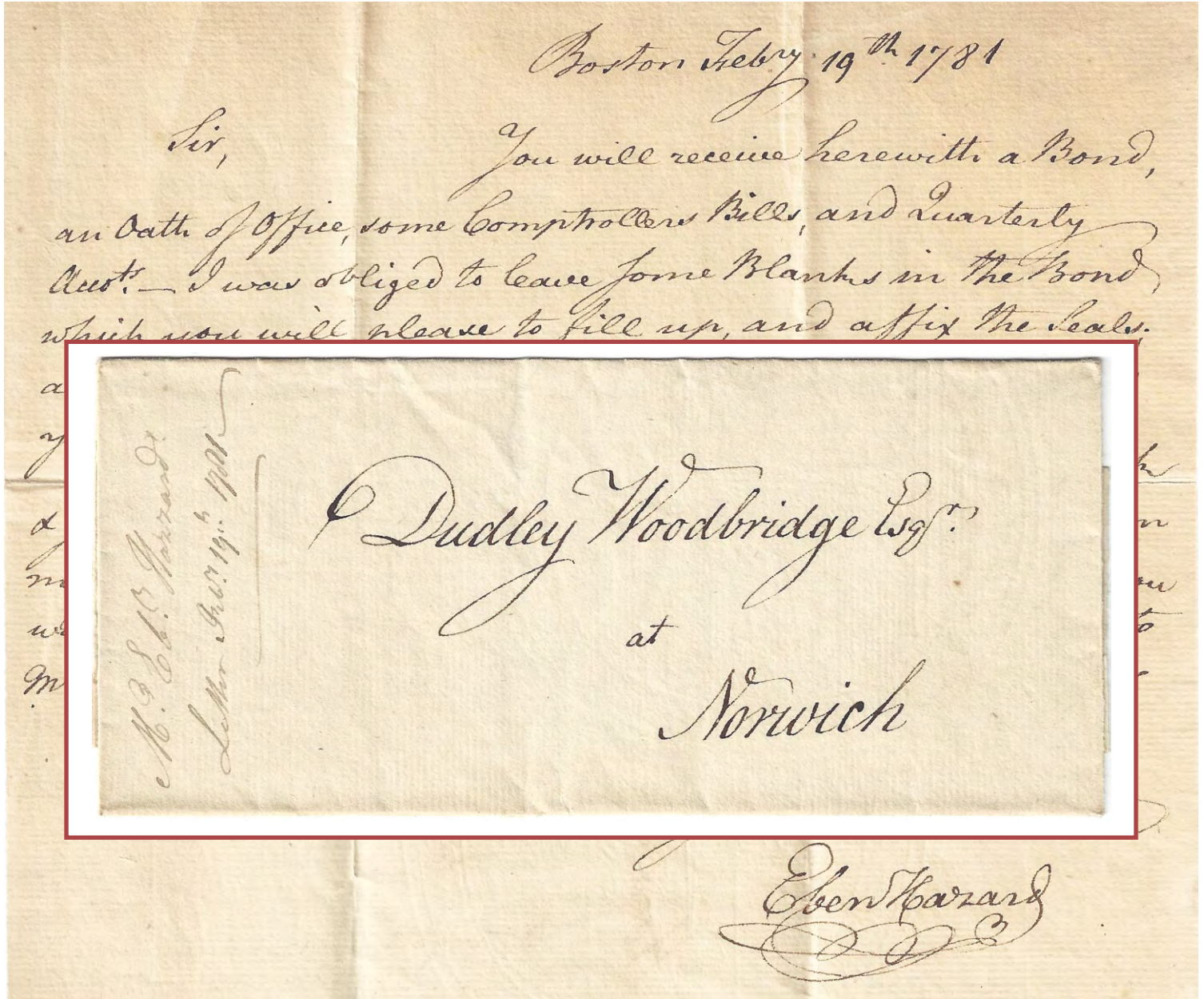
I am Sir your most Obt Serv't, AD (Andrew) Huntington

1 Box A No 39 Conty	36 Beaver Hatts	8 40	£ 1440
	48 Laster a ^c	2 18	864
	2 1/2 yd Wrapper	3 6	4 10
	Box		2 8
			£ 2310 18
1 Large H. H. No 1. Conty	300 Felt Hatts	8 4	1260
	2 1/2 yd Wrapper	3 6	4 10
	Hhead	2 2	1266 12
	Carriage to Landing & Storage		

Norwich

Birth of Norwich Post Office

Ebenezer Hazard, as Surveyor General of the Continental Congress Post Office, sends Woodbridge a bond and oath of office to fill out and sign as the final step in becoming Norwich's first postmaster.



19 February 1781, Boston to Norwich, free mail, Ebenezer Hazard letter to Dudley Woodbridge

Boston Feby 19th 1781

Sir, You will receive herewith a Bond, an Oath of Office, some Comptroller Bills, and Quarterly Accts. - I was obliged to leave some Blanks in the Bond which you will please to fill up, and affix the Seals; and when you have signed it, and taken the Oath, you will return both to me. -

I have wrote to Phila. for a Book & some Post Master Bills for you; perhaps Mr Hallam may be able to lend you some of the latter, should you want any in the mean Time. With compliments to Mrs. Woodbridge, Miss Cree, your Brother & their Friends.

I am / Sir / Your humble Servt. / Eben Hazard

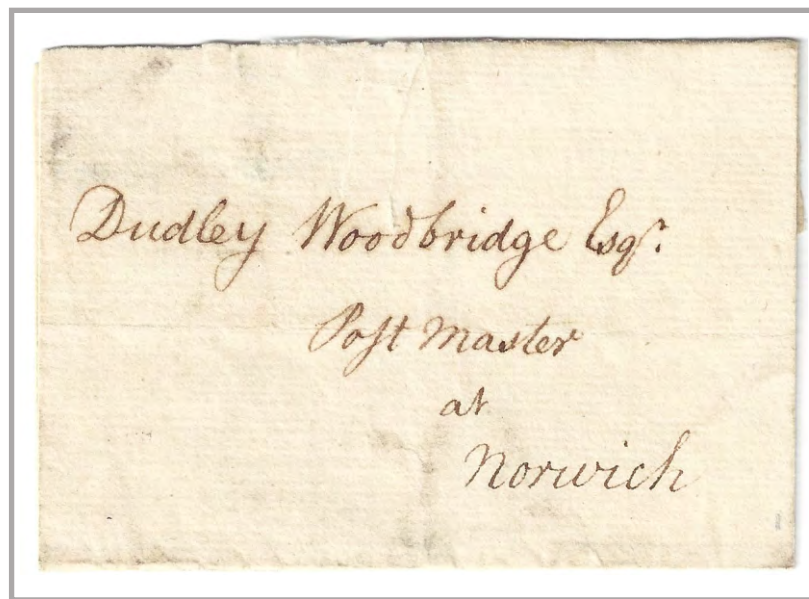
Norwich

Dudley Woodbridge, Postmaster

Post Office Business

Peter Baynton, Comptroller and Secretary of the Continental Congress Post Office writes Dudley Woodbridge on behalf of Ebenezer Hazard, as Surveyor General of the Post Office regarding missent post office bills.

Mr Hazard presents his Compt. to Mr Woodbridge & informs him that Mr Bryson of Philadelphia wrote Mr H. the 13th ult. as follows. "I have sent the Bills &c to Mr. Woodbridge of Litchfield." - By the Bills &c are meant the Papers Mr. Hazard sent for to Phila. for Mr. Woodbridge's Office; - if they are come to Hand it is very well; - if not Mr Woodbridge will please to write to Mr. Hildrups at Hartford, and desire him to direct his Rider to enquire at Litchfield for them: - though Mr Hazard apprehends Litchfield was wrote through Mistake instead of Norwich. - Compt. to Mrs. Woodbridge & Miss Cree. -
March 5. 1781



Dudley Woodbridge Esq:
Postmaster
at
Norwich

5 March 1781, (Philadelphia) to Norwich, free mail addressed to postmaster, no postal markings
this piece confirms that Norwich was an operating post office by this date

Mr. Hazard presents his Compts. To Mr Woodbridge & informs him that Mr Bryson of Philadelphia wrote Mr H. the 13th ult. as follows. "I have sent the Bills &c to Mr. Woodbridge of Litchfield". - By the Bills &c are meant the Papers Mr. Hazard sent for to Phila. for Mr. Woodbridge's Office; - if they are come to Hand it is very well; - if not Mr. Woodbridge will please to write to Mr. Hildrups at Hartford, and desire him to direct his Rider to enquire at Litchfield for them: - though Mr. Hazard apprehends Litchfield was wrote through Misstake Instead of Norwich. - Compts. to Mrs. Woodbridge & Miss Cree. -
March 5, 1781

Norwich

Dudley Woodbridge, Postmaster

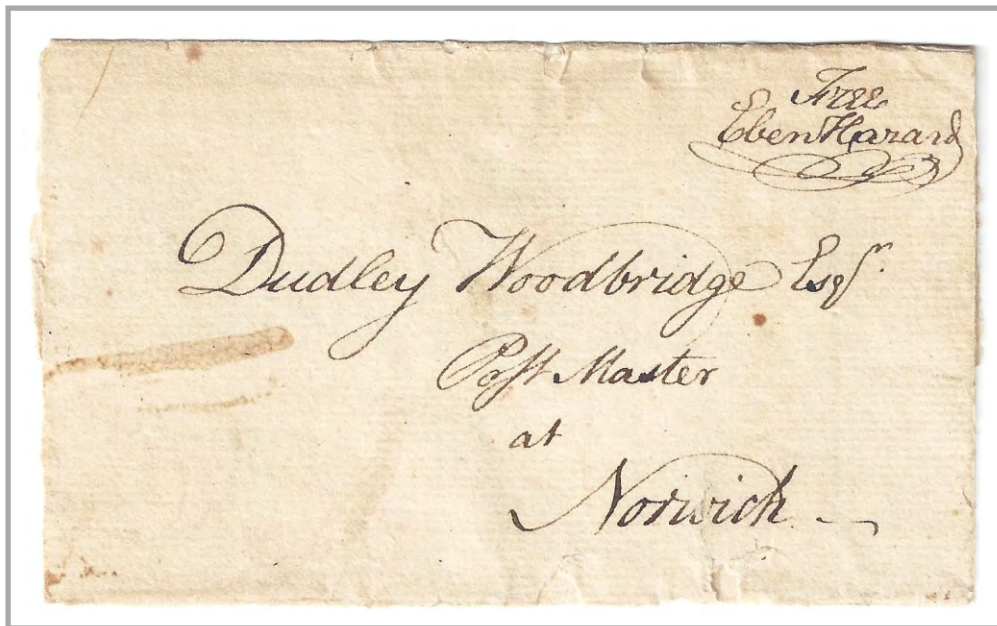
Ebenezer Hazard Free Frank

*Free
Ebenezer Hazard*



Ebenezer Hazard was born in Philadelphia and educated at Princeton University. He was appointed first postmaster of New York City under the Continental Congress.

Hazard was appointed as surveyor general of the Continental Post Office in 1776. In January 1782, he succeeded Richard Bache as the United States Postmaster General, serving until 1789. Most of his tenure in office was while the capital was in New York City (1785 to 1790). During his tenure as Postmaster General, Hazard reorganized the Post Office and largely replaced the old post rider system of mail transport with stagecoach service on the main routes.



25 December 1781, (Philadelphia) to Post Master Dudley Woodbridge at Norwich
Eben(ezer) Hazard free frank used while serving as Surveyor General of the Post Office

Norwich

Dudley Woodbridge, Postmaster

Post Office Business

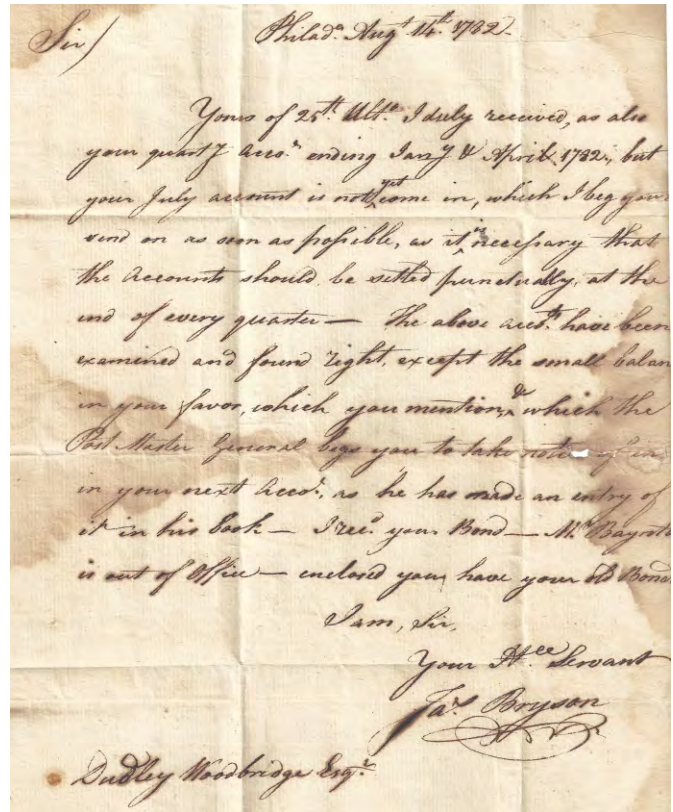
James Bryson, Postmaster of Philadelphia, on behalf of the Postmaster General Hazard, writes Dudley Woodbridge regarding Post Office accounts received and outstanding.

Philada. Augt. 14th. 1782.

Sir,

Yours of 25th. Ult^o. I duly received, as also your quarterly Accts. ending Jany. & April 1782, but your July account is not yet come in, which I beg you to send on as soon as possible, as it is necessary that the accounts should be settled punctually, at the end of every quarter. - The above accts. have been examined and found right, except the small balance in your favor, which you mention & which the Post Master General begs you to take note of in your next Acct. as he has made an entry of it in his book. - I recd. your Bond - Mr Baynton is out of Office - enclosed you have your old Bond.

I am, Sir
Your Hble. Servt. Jas Bryson

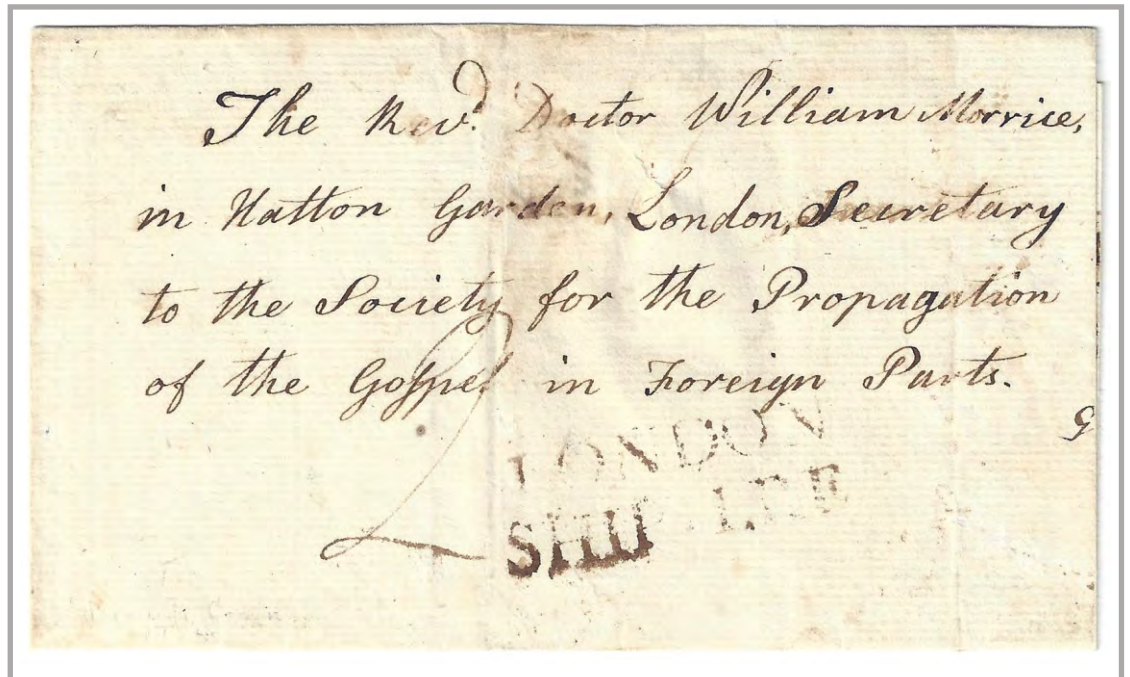


14 August 1782, Philadelphia to Norwich, "FREE*" handstamp addressed to Post Master Dudley Woodbridge

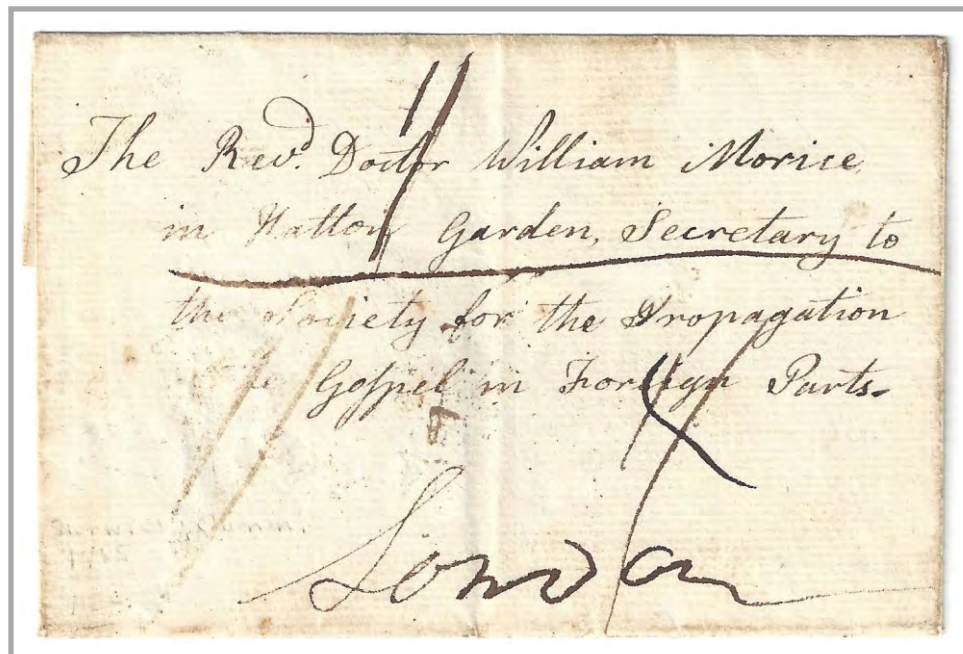
Norwich

Mail to England by Private Ship / Falmouth Packet Service

LONDON
SHIP-LRE



- 1 December 1784 Norwich to London, England by private ship "Little Joe" from Norwich direct
- Howland and Coit advertised the departure of the brig "Little Joe" in Norwich papers
- 23 December 1784 the "Little Joe" departed Norwich, via New London, to London
- 10 February 1785 arrived London, London Ship letter arrival handstamp, 2d due rate

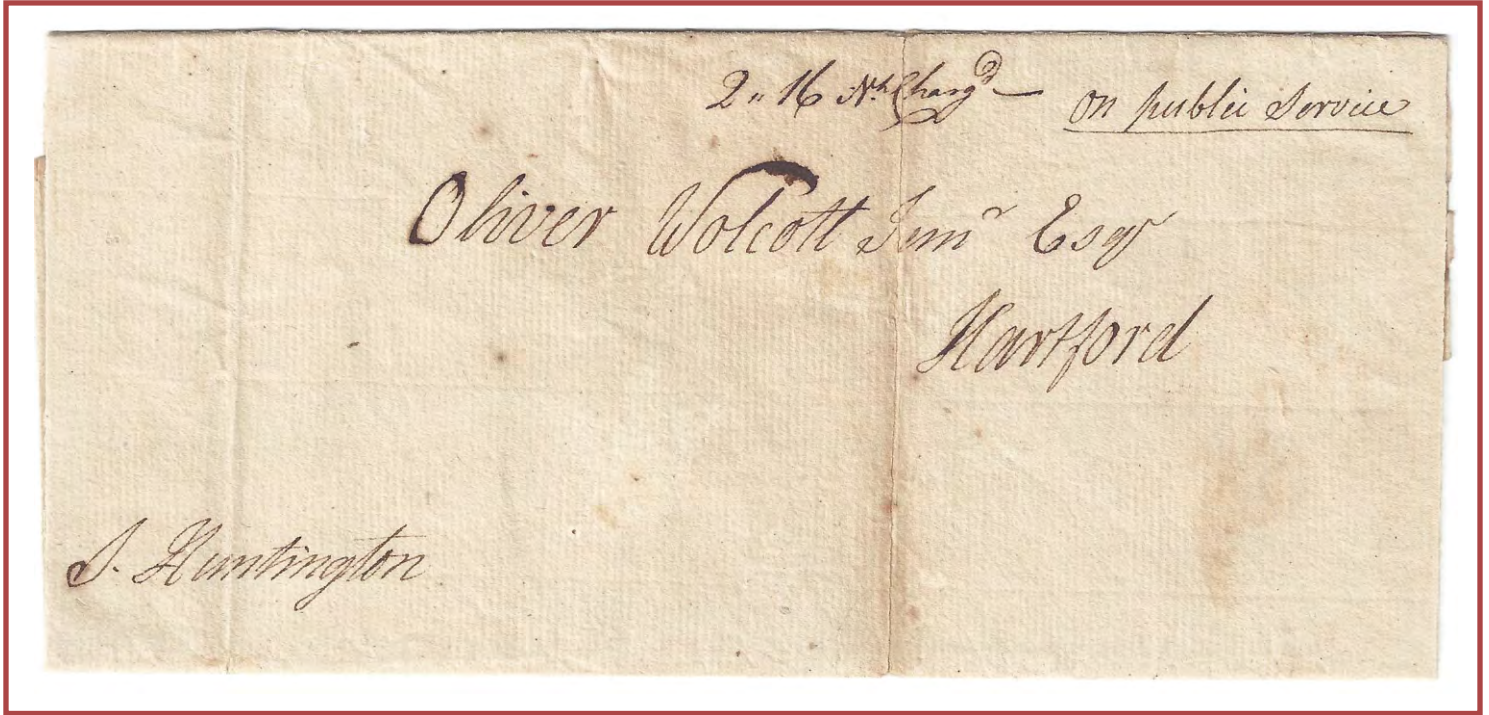


- 1 July 1785 Norwich to London, England by Falmouth Packet departing from New York
- 9 September 1785 New York per British Falmouth Packet "Prince William Henry"
- 10 October 1785 backstamped upon arrived in London, 1/- packet postage due

Norwich

"N^h" - Norwich's First Postmark

2^d N^h Charg^d



8 August 1787 Norwich double rated to Hartford, "N^h Charg^d" postmark and 2.16 (dwt. gr) rate signed by Samuel Huntington and endorsed "On Public Service" so he can claim a rebate the only privately held example of the earliest reported Norwich postmark (two in archives)

LETTERS sent from the POST OFFICE at *Norwich*

Date of the Bills sent.	To what Office the Letters were sent.	Number of unpaid Letters.		Number of paid Letters.		Free Letters.
			Sums unpaid.		Sums paid.	
1787						Number sent.
Aug 6	Boston <i>Post over</i>	1	10/2 1/2		24	14
	Salem			1	38	
8	Alexandria	1	4 1/2			
	Boston	5	10 1/2			
	New Haven	1	2			
	Hartford			1	2 1/2	
9	New York	1	8			

Norwich letter book records this (second line from foot) as a prepaid double rate to Hartford

S. Huntington

Samuel Huntington was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. At the date of this letter he was serving as Governor of Connecticut.

Norwich

Change of Norwich Postmaster

Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard writes to Woodbridge advising him that as he has appointed William Leffingwell to succeed him as Postmaster of Norwich. Leffingwell appends his receipt.

Dudley Woodbridge Esq:
In Case of his Absence,
To the Person having Charge of
the Post Office at Norwich.

Sir,
As you inform me
State, have appointed
succeed you as Postmaster
Therefore deliver the Books & Papers belonging
to the Office to him, & deliver him the Letters
remaining on hand, taking his Receipt therefor.
Please to pay the Balance due from you at
the time of giving up the Office, to Mr. Leffing-
well, to be forwarded to
Sir
Your humble Servt
Ebenezer Hazard Postmaster General
Recd Norwich Sept 4 1789
The Above mentioned articles for ye use
of ye Post Office W Leffingwell

27 August 1789
"to the Person having
Charge of the Post
Office at Norwich"

Ebenezer Hazard

New York Aug 27th 1789

Sir, I have recd. yours of 29th. ult. & as you inform me you are about to leave the State; have appointed Mr. William Leffingwell to succeed you as Postmaster of Norwich: you will therefore deliver the Books & Papers & other things belonging to the Office to him, & deliver him the Letters remaining on hand, taking his Receipt therefor. Please to pay the Balance due from you at the time of giving up the Office, to Mr. Leffingwell, to be forwarded to

Sir Your humble Servt
Ebene Hazard

Recd. Norwich Sept 4, 1789 The Above mentioned articles for ye use Of ye Post Office. W Leffingwell

Norwich nov, 25

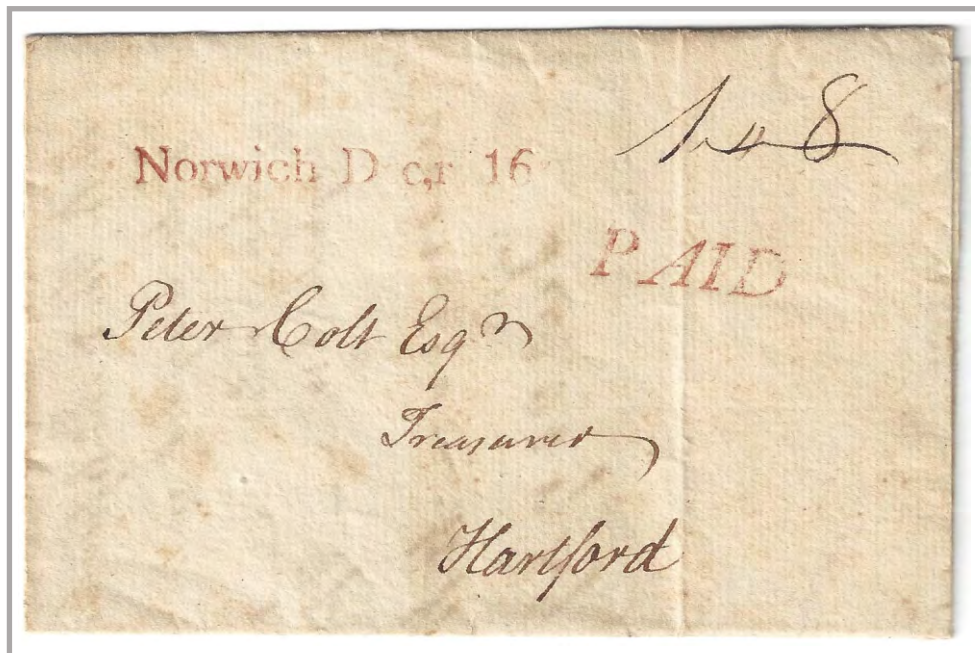
FREE



25 November 1789 Norwich to Hartford, letter of postmaster Leffingwell with "FREE" handstamp
earliest reported use of a Norwich straight line postmark

Norwich Dec,r 16

PAID



16 December 1789 Norwich to Hartford, prepaid 1dwt, 8gr postage, "PAID" handstamp
only reported example of the postmark in red

Norwich

Norwich Post Office Seal

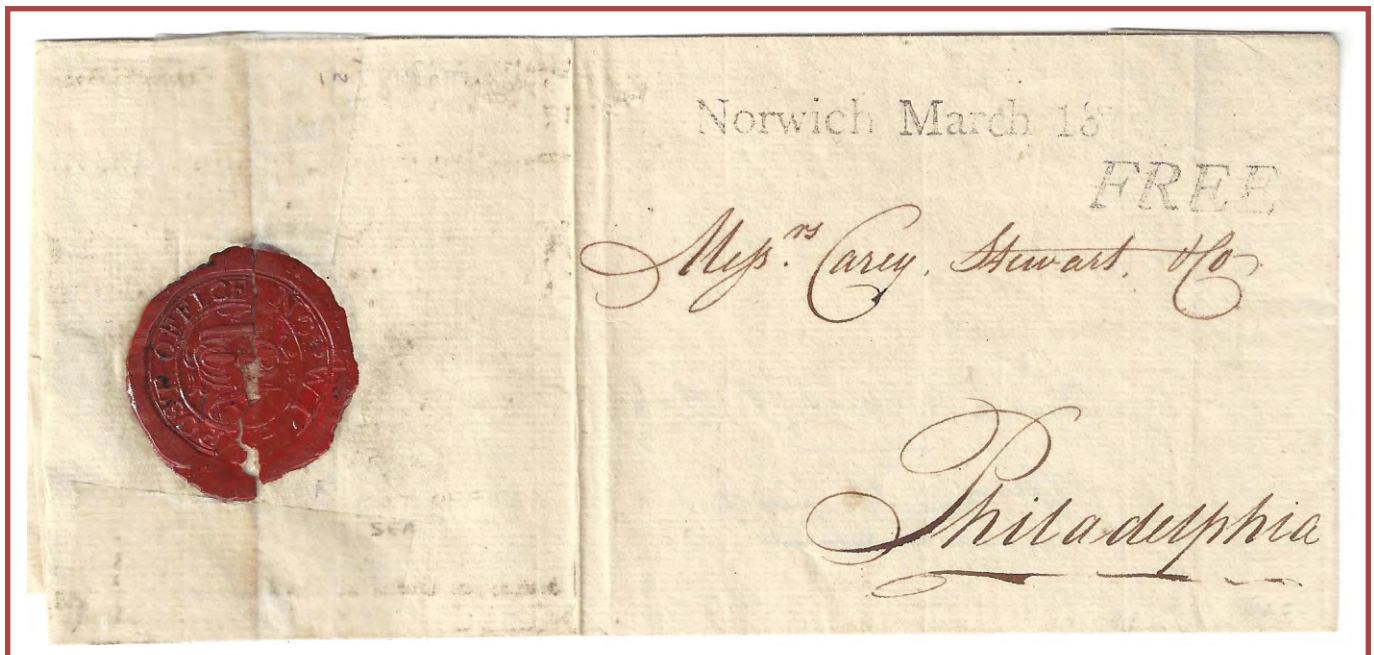
Postmaster William Leffingwell

The Norwich Post Office seal with monogram USA, impressed in wax, is known only on two letters sent by postmasters. No similar seals from other post offices have been reported.



Norwich March 13

FREE



13 March 1792 Norwich to Philadelphia, red wax seal "Norwich Post Office USA" on reverse letter of Postmaster William Leffingwell with "FREE" handstamp

one example of this seal known impressed in red wax and one in black wax

