
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

have been a frequent issue between the postal authorities and the printers. In a letter which will be quoted later, Goddard, in writing of himself, intimated that more than any other American printer he had been badly used by the ministerial Post Office, and from another source¹ one learns that having become unfavorably known to the government as the proprietor of "a very free press," he had suffered unusual oppression by the Post Office about the year 1770, when he had been charged one pound sterling a week for the delivery of three hundred and fifty papers to places outside of Philadelphia. From his first coming to Baltimore, Goddard, who had learned his lesson, seems to have had in mind a plan by the execution of which he might render himself independent of the established postal system, but it is doubtful if at this time he was thinking of anything more ambitious than the establishment of a private line of riders between Philadelphia and his newly-chosen abode.

In early issues of his journal in the summer and autumn of 1773, one finds him advertising for reliable men to act as post riders. That he was successful in obtaining them and that his plan already had begun to be enlarged is made certain by the fact that on December 30, 1773, the news of the Boston Tea Party was brought from New York to his office in Baltimore by his own riders. About this time his idea seems to have advanced from the embryo, for on February 17, 1774, Mary Katherine Goddard informed the readers of the *Maryland Journal* that she would conduct the newspaper and printing business of her brother during his absence from Baltimore in the prosecution of a very important affair, "interesting to the common liberties of all America." This was, of course, the establishment of the "Constitutional Post Office," from which, and not from the British colonial post, the United States Post Office derives its origin.

Following the announcement made by Miss Goddard which has been referred to, Goddard spent the ensuing months in an eager questing of men and funds wherewith there might be inaugurated a post office system² to supplant that one which had been conducted more or less satisfactorily since its establishment in the colonies by an Act of Parliament in 1710. At this time, Benjamin Franklin, although he had been resident in England for about nine years, was holding under the British ministry the position of Postmaster General of the colonies. There was general dissatisfaction with the administration of the system, and although the great esteem in which

¹ *American Archives*, 4th Series, 1: 500.

² See *American Archives*, 4th Series, 1: 500 *et seq.* where are given copious extracts from letters and newspapers of various colonies from Massachusetts to Virginia in which Goddard may be followed in his journeys and exertions in the cause of a Constitutional Post Office.