

Bay," and affirmed the hope that the new system would be complete in all points "by the first of September next, that being the time appointed for the meeting of the Grand Congress at Philadelphia . . ." On October 5, 1774, Goddard presented a petition to the Continental Congress,<sup>1</sup> which doubtless had to do with his post office scheme, but as the text of it has not been preserved, one may not know what specific proposal he made to the delegates. Several months later, in a broadside<sup>2</sup> published in New York on May 2, 1775, he pounced upon "a certain John Foxcroft," who, he asserted, had begun life as the servant of a Virginia gentleman of Williamsburg, and who, having been appointed recently to the position of Master of the Posts in North America, had "let loose the Reins of arbitrary Power" to such a length that the liberty of the press had been abridged and detestable publications inimical to the American cause had been circulated through the Philadelphia post office. He offered to give this "Mushroom Gentleman" an explanation on either a public or a private occasion, but he intimated that his offer would not be taken up, as "the General of the Post-Office, like the renowned Gage, keeps himself engag'd."

The "Constitutional Post Office," known popularly as "Goddard's Post Offices," up to this time had received no official recognition. It was a private concern, operating from Massachusetts to Virginia as early as May 8, 1775,<sup>3</sup> side by side with the British post. It had been set going by Goddard on subscribed capital,<sup>4</sup> and that it had small chance of success as a private enterprise is clearly comprehended when one learns that in the year 1776, even after it had become the official system of the colonies, the postmistress of Baltimore, Mary K. Goddard, received from postage only forty odd pounds,<sup>5</sup> and that for several years thereafter she paid the riders with "hard money" out of her own purse. It must have been a devoutly hoped for consummation of Goddard's plans when on July 26, 1775, the Constitutional Post Office was taken over by Congress as the official system of the United Colonies.<sup>6</sup> After several months of attempted opposition to the new

<sup>1</sup> See *Journals of Continental Congress*, October 5, 1774. (Ford ed.)

<sup>2</sup> Ms. Division Library of Congress has a copy of this broadside.

<sup>3</sup> See references to his activity at this time in *American Archives*, 4th Series, 2: 537, where is given a list of "Goddard's Post Offices" then established, and an interesting pronouncement on the subject of the "Constitutional" and "unconstitutional" post offices by John Holt.

<sup>4</sup> Memorial of William Goddard in *Papers of the Continental Congress*, 42: III, 178. Ms. Division Library of Congress. Printed in *American Archives*, 4th Series, 6: 1012.

<sup>5</sup> Memorial of Mary K. Goddard to President Washington, in *Papers of the Continental Congress*, Letters, 78: X, 617-619. Ms. in Library of Congress. See also ms. vol. of Mary Goddard's Post Office Accounts, 1786-1789, in Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>6</sup> *Journals of Continental Congress*. In a Congressional debate of October 7, 1775, it was said that a "Constitutional Post is now established from New Hampshire to Georgia." The debate discloses further the fact that the