
A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland

system, the British Post Office finally gave up the struggle and withdrew its riders from the roads on Christmas Day 1775.¹

If in the recognition of his plan by Congress he was made happy, however, there is no doubt that Goddard was disappointed when Franklin was immediately named as Postmaster General by the Congress, and Richard Bache, his son-in-law, was appointed Secretary and Comptroller of the system. For two years the great idea had obsessed him to the injury of his private business—two years during which he had kept the highways hot in his ceaseless journeyings in its interest. Now at the moment of success he was given as a reward for his great service his choice between nothing at all and the inferior position of Surveyor of the Post Office. However keen his disappointment, Goddard bore it with a high heart. In a memorial to Congress, dated June 21, 1776,² he recited his services in the establishment of the Constitutional Post Office, and reminded the delegates that they had given the Postmaster General no authority to reimburse him and his friends for their outlay of money in “establishing Postmasters, hiring Riders, and bringing the temporary Establishment, in all its Parts, to that State where your Officer found it, when it was resigned with all those Advantages;” and further, that the Comptrollership and the Secretaryship having been disposed of elsewhere, he had been compelled to content himself with the office of Surveyor, which at the time of writing, he had held for a year at a salary too small for decent maintenance; that the duties of this office having been completed, and scorning to hold a sinecure, he now asked recognition of another sort by the Congress. He apprised the delegates that he might repair his fortunes if he should ask for and receive the office of “Muster-Master-General,” but he expressed disdain for that position as being,

British system was still in operation, although dying from lack of patronage. This seems sufficiently clear evidence that the present United States Post Office is not the descendant of the British colonial system, but of the Constitutional Post Office established by Goddard.

¹ On December 5, 1775 (*American Archives*, 4th Series, 4: 184), the Constitutional Post Office at Annapolis, William Whetcroft, postmaster, announced itself as in operation, and on December 11th (*American Archives*, 4th Series, 4: 234 and 713), the Maryland Convention prohibited the riders of the Parliamentary Post “to travel in or pass through this Province.” On December 25th (*American Archives*, 4th Series, 4: 453), the British Post Office, because of the action of the Maryland Convention and a similar action by the Philadelphia Committee of Safety, announced the cessation of its service.

² *Papers of the Continental Congress*, 42: III, 178. Ms. in Library of Congress. Printed, *American Archives*, 4th Series, 6: 1012. In Smith, William, *The History of the Post Office in British North America, 1639-1870*, Cambridge, 1920, p. 64, occurs a statement which may explain three things in the life of the founder of the United States Post Office; namely, Goddard's especial animus towards Foxcroft, his failure to receive high office under Franklin when the Constitutional Post Office was adopted by Congress, and the fact that he owed Franklin a considerable sum of money, as the latter's will has left on record. Here is the statement, based upon a communication of Foxcroft, joint deputy postmaster general with Franklin, to Todd, (Public Record Office, C. O. 5. vol. 135): “Goddard had been postmaster of Providence, and when he relinquished the office, he was a defaulter for a considerable amount. As the loss from Goddard's defalcation fell partly upon Franklin, as joint deputy postmaster general, the latter would be reluctant to place him a second time in a position of responsibility.”