

## US POSTAL TIMELINE (to 1920)

1639- Richard Fairbanks' tavern in Boston named repository for overseas mail



1775- Benjamin Franklin, first Postmaster General under Continental Congress  
**1789- US POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED**

- 1789- Samuel Osgood, first Postmaster General under Constitution
- 1823- Navigable waters designated post roads by Congress
- 1825- Dead letter office
- 1829- Postmaster General joins Cabinet
- 1830- Office of Instructions and Mail Depredations established, later Office of the Chief Postal Inspector
- 1838- Railroads designated post routes by Congress
- 1845- Star routes
- 1847- Postage stamps
- 1852- Stamped envelopes
- 1855- Registered Mail
- 1855- Compulsory prepayment of postage
- 1858- Street letter boxes
- 1860- Pony Express
- 1862- Railway mail service, experimental
- 1863- Free city delivery
- 1863- Uniform postage rates, regardless of distance
- 1863- Domestic mail divided into three classes
- 1864- Post offices categorized by classes
- 1864- Railroad post offices
- 1864- Domestic money orders
- 1869- Foreign or international money orders
- 1872- Congress enacts Mail Fraud Statute
- 1873- Penny postal card
- 1874- General Postal Union (later Universal Postal Union)
- 1879- Domestic mail divided into four classes
- 1880- Congress establishes title of Chief Post Office Inspector
- 1885- Special Delivery
- 1887- International parcel post
- 1893- First commemorative stamps
- 1896- Rural free delivery, experimental
- 1898- Private postcards authorized
- 1902- Rural free delivery, permanent
- 1911- Postal savings system
- 1911- Carriage of mail by airplane sanctioned between Garden City and Mineola, NY; Earle H. Ovington, first U. S. mail pilot
- 1912- Village delivery
- 1913- Parcel post
- 1913- Insurance
- 1913- Collect-on-delivery
- 1914- Government-owned and -operated vehicle service
- 1916- Postal Inspectors solve last known stagecoach robbery
- 1918- Airmail
- 1920- Metered postage
- 1920- First transcontinental airmail

## The Colonial Period – Part 2 (continued)

The British Government bought the rights to the North American postal service from West and the widow of Andrew Hamilton in 1707. It then appointed John Hamilton (Andrew's son) as Deputy Postmaster General of America. He served until 1721 when he was succeeded by John Lloyd of Charleston, SC.

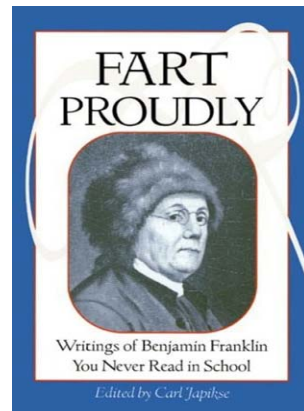
Alexander Spotswood, a former lieutenant governor of Virginia, became Deputy Postmaster General for America 1730. His most notable achievement probably was the appointment of Benjamin Franklin as postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737.

Two other Virginians succeeded Spotswood: Head Lynch in 1739 and Elliot Benger in 1743. When Benger died in 1753, Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter, postmaster of Williamsburg, Virginia, were appointed by the Crown as Joint Postmasters General for the colonies. Hunter died in 1761, and John Foxcroft of New York succeeded him, serving until the outbreak of the Revolution.

During his time as a Joint Postmaster General for the Crown, Franklin effected many important and lasting improvements in the colonial posts. He immediately began to reorganize the service had new surveys made, milestones placed on principal roads, and new and shorter routes laid out. For the first time, post riders carried mail at night between Philadelphia and New York, with the travel time shortened by at least half.



Cost	1700	1750
New York to Philadelphia	9 pence	9 pence
New York to Boston	1 shilling	1 shilling
New York to Charleston	NA	1 shilling 6 pence
New York to London	1 shilling	1 shilling
1 shilling = \$4.00 2010 dollars 1 pence = 33¢		
Time	1700	1750
New York to Philadelphia	4 days	2 days
New York to Boston	30 days	14 days
New York to Charleston	NA	60 days
New York to London	60 days	60 days



By 1760, Franklin reported a surplus to the British Postmaster General. This was a first for the postal service in North America. When Franklin left office, post roads operated from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada, and mail between the colonies and the mother country operated on a regular schedule, with posted times. In addition, to regulate post offices and audit accounts, the position of surveyor was created in 1772; this is considered the precursor of today's Postal Inspection Service.

By 1774, however, the colonists viewed the royal post office with suspicion. Franklin was dismissed by the Crown for actions sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. Within six months, another colonist, William Goddard, a printer and newspaper publisher (whose father had been postmaster of New London, Connecticut, under Franklin) set up a rival post — the Constitutional Post for inter-colonial mail service. Colonies funded it by subscription, and net revenues were to be used to improve the postal service rather than to be paid back to the subscribers. By 1775, when the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia, Goddard's colonial post was flourishing, and 30 post offices operated between Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Williamsburg.

To be continued

Sources: <http://mises.org/daily/1764>  
<http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blmailus1.htm>

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