

Continued from page 1 — began Baltimore’s first newspaper, the Maryland Journal. In February 1774, the Philadelphia shop closed and Mary Katherine moved to Baltimore to take over the new plant and newspaper.

The 10 May 1775 issue of the Maryland Journal made official what had been in practice for over a year when the colophon was changed to read, “Published by M. K. Goddard.” Mary Katherine proved to be a steady, impersonal newspaper editor and during the Revolution she was usually Baltimore’s only printer. From her press, in January 1777, came the first printed copy of the Declaration of Independence to include the names of the signers. Mary Katherine Goddard was also responsible for issuing several Almanacs, while in Baltimore.

As a publisher and postmaster, Goddard believed she was responsible to her public. During the Revolutionary War, for example, she continued her service, believing in the “American cause” of self-sacrifice for the “commonweal.” Mary Katherine often used her own funds to pay the post-riders and to cover the costs of printing issues of *The Maryland Journal*. At the same time, Goddard’s efforts were tied into her role as a businesswoman, ensuring that her subscribers received the paper and that the customers had their mail delivered.

In 1775, Mary Katherine became postmaster of Baltimore, probably the first woman so appointed in the colonies, and certainly the only one to hold so important a post after the Declaration of Independence. She continued in the office for fourteen years until in October 1789 when, the first United States Postmaster General Samuel Osgood ordered Goddard to resign from her post. She was replaced by John White, Osgood’s political ally. Because Baltimore was to become the new regional headquarters, Osgood asserted that the postmaster would have to make frequent, long-distance travels, which he stated would be unmanageable for a woman. When, in fact, the growing port city of Baltimore presented a lucrative source of income and opportunity for political favors.



Refusing to accept her dismissal, Goddard petitioned the highest authorities for reinstatement. She wrote a letter to President George Washington, expressing her loyal service to the state and claiming that her post office “remained ‘the most punctual & regular of any upon the Continent.’” More than 230 Baltimore citizens signed a petition in defense of Goddard’s competence and protest her unfair removal. However, their efforts were not enough. Washington refused to intervene. Goddard then appealed to the U.S. Senate, but they too failed to act.

Having been replaced, she remained in Baltimore and continued to operate, until 1809/10, the bookshop she had begun as an adjunct of the printing business.

During the Revolutionary war period, Baltimore had a population of about 10,000 making it the fifth largest city in the country (after Philadelphia - 40,000, New York - 25,000, Boston - 16,000 and Charleston - 12,000). The colonies had a total population of just under 2,500,000 of which about a third were for independence from Great Britain.



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