

POSTAL HISTORY of the THIRTEEN COLONIES, 1675-1782

Purpose and Scope

The goal of this Colonial Postal History exhibit is to promote an understanding of how and why the American Post evolved in the years between 1675 and 1782.

Organization

Loosely chronological, the exhibit Sections proceed according to the drivers of postal growth. Advances may be the result of outside circumstances, ie War, or internal reorganization, ie Act of King George III. Section headings appear at the upper left. Information about the Sections is located in the top center of a page. Postal usages and services (ie Way, Free, ship, forwarded, Packet, etc) information are in the upper right. A discussion of rates and services appears near the letters. Letters with special significance to the theme merit a red frame. Unique or other worthy letters are indicated in bolding. *Certificates*, *repairs* and *personal research* are noted. Special Colonial topics (calendar dating, currencies, talismanic inscriptions) are explained.

Outline

1. **Forerunners**; 1675-1693...the earliest mail was by opportunity, taking advantage of travelers by land and sea
2. **Neale Patent Period**; **1693-1711**...Royal Neale Patent 1693 -1707, ended when the Patent was sold back to the Crown, and 1708-mid 1711 when the individual Colonies independently perpetuated the popular Neale Patent laws . The first widespread use of postal markings.
3. **Commerce**; some transatlantic mail traffic was linked to the harvests, also merchant's demands prodded the Post
4. **Act of Queen Anne**; 1711-1765...the first Postal Act governing ALL English lands , Crown inspired, as an attempt to increase revenue. In America, sets the main PO at New York, rates in Sterling based on distance/weight.
5. **Franklin-Hunter Instructions of 1753**;...uniquely American, system wide improvements, driven by Dr. Ben Franklin
6. **Act of King George**; 1765-1775...rate reductions, primarily for American/Canadian distances, designed to stimulate mail,
7. **Rebellion**; 1775, Transitional Period including early Patriot efforts to organize a Post not under Crown control
8. **Continental Congress Post**;...July 26, 1775, with Franklin as PMG, many rate Resolutions needed as the currency inflates, ends when the Act of October 1782 creates a Confederation Post.
9. **War**; 1710, 1753, various...The pressures of needing rapid reliable communication stimulated novel postal services, some of which endured after the conflict.

Medford (Massachusetts) August 7, 1677

"To the Much Honored John Levrett Esq Governor
of the Massachusetts Colony at His House in
Boston, these"

Letters in the American Antiquarian Society
mention a Boston Merchant's Subscription Post,
serving surrounding towns like Medford. That
would have been the earliest, multi-town postal
attempt.

This letter could have gone on that Post.