

**Newspapers in the Mails:**

**Strategic Unification under the Franklin/Hunter Dual Postmaster Generalship**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Two strategic postal innovations accompanied the British Crown's war with France for dominion in North America. The first was a transverse line of postal communications overland among the colonies, as represented in a map of 1715. The second was the 1758 inclusion of newspapers in the mail at cheap, prepaid rates by Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter as Joint Postmasters General. Both innovations were distinct from postal practice in Great Britain, and both persisted after 1792 to distinguish a United States postal system.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Benjamin Franklin has been considered the 'Father of the United States postal system' – for, under his Postmaster Generalship beginning in 1775, he translated the British colonial postal arrangements into Republican form. What hasn't been enough examined is the period when he held the position of Joint Postmaster General, with William Hunter, under the Crown. When the Royal Mail took up the farm, for the mails of North America, from the assignees of the Neale patent in 1711, a line of posts was established across the spokes of Empire<sup>1</sup> – as mapped by Herman Moll in 1715. Whereas in England, with six postal trees sprouted from London, the Crown had little interest in cross posts. The joint appointment of Franklin and Hunter in 1753 challenged the line of posts with the unification of the plantation economy and the Triangle

Trade, with their shared interest in the business of the press. In 1758 they capitalized by permitting the popular press into the mail bag.

### A STRATEGIC LINE OF POSTS

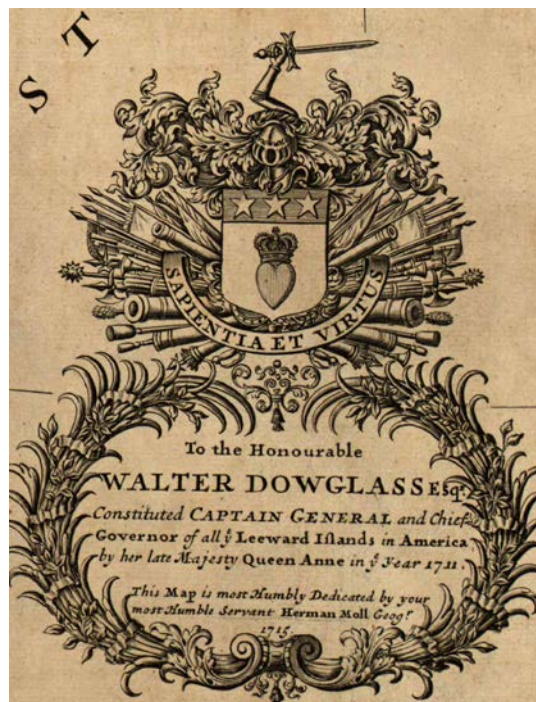
Maps by Herman Moll featuring details of British postal arrangements in North America are known in many editions.<sup>2</sup> The 1715 edition dramatizes the strategic importance of these postal arrangements, a context which is lost in the subsequent versions.<sup>3</sup> [See Figure 1]



**FIGURE 1.** 1715: *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America. Containing Newfoundland, New Scotland, New England, New York,*

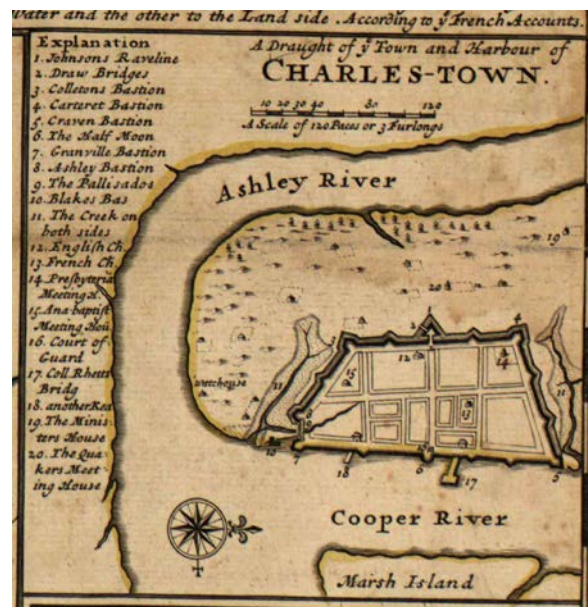
*New Jersey, Pensilvania [sic], Maryland, Virginia and Carolina. According to the Newest and most Exact Observations by Herman Moll Geographer.* Library of Congress.

The map is centered with a large and colorful interpretation of the Coat of Arms of the Duke of Douglas (from 1694) bristling with armaments (by the Treaty of Union of May 1, 1707, Scotland and Great Britain were newly one after much strife). The map is dedicated “To the Honourable Walter Douglass Esqr. Constituted Captain General and Chief governor of all ye Leeward Islands in America by her late Majesty Queen Anne in ye Year 1711.” Orthography aside, the geographer is giving Walter Douglas (1670-1739) arms he did not bear, though he was, indeed, Governor of the Leeward Islands (appointed after his predecessor was assassinated in 1710, he would be superceded in 1716 after being found guilty of bribery and extortion). [See Figure 2]



**FIGURE 2.** Detail of the 1715 Moll map - the cartouche and the dedication to the Governor of the Leeward Islands.

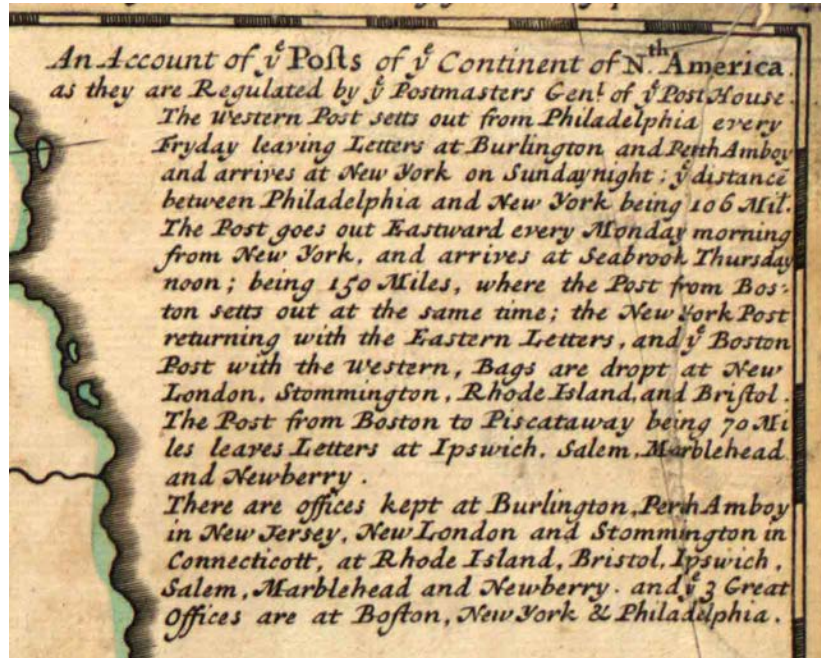
Why, in 1715, would such a handsome map be dedicated to a fairly obscure Scot, governor of a handful of small islands? Indeed, at the bottom right of the map is an inset of the whole of known North America, with the Leeward Islands prominently labeled. Two other insets enlarge a portion of the Carolinas, and identify in great detail the strength of the fortifications at the port of Charles Town. [See Figure 3] The geographer's choice emphasizes the commercial importance of these British colonies. A packet service had been established by the British Crown <sup>4</sup> to serve, specifically, this port and these islands, and the postal business of the packet ships was, compared with the other colonies, very large.<sup>5</sup> The plantation economy capitalized upon slave labor to grow sugar and tobacco in exchange for English manufactured goods.



**FIGURE 3.** Detail of the Moll map - the “Town and Harbour of Charles-Town.” Emphasis on the fortifications of the important British port reflects upon the successful defense of the city against a combined French and Spanish fleet in 1706.



Supplementing the packet lines serving southern plantations, the map offers, in the upper right corner, a paragraph describing a line of post on land, following the coastal settlements north of Maryland. [See Figure 4] A faint double line marks the route. [See Figure 5]



**FIGURE 4.** Detail of the Moll map: paragraph from upper right, describing the line of post, Philadelphia to New York, to Boston, and onward to Piscataway; listing 15 post offices.

Politically, this map was created in the wake of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) that formalized with other European countries, particularly Spain, a peace agreement made in 1711 between France and Great Britain. The coloring of versions of the map, despite being accomplished by different hands, clearly indicates the ceding to Great Britain of Newfoundland and New Scotland (the more southern part of Nova Scotia) while France retained the greater part of what is now Canada, Cape Breton Island (the more northern part), St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island) and other islands in the gulf of St. Lawrence. The paragraph printed on the map just above the compass rose details the complex fishing arrangements in this area.

Laying the foundation for what would be known as the French and Indian War (1754-1763) was the treaty's requirement that the French recognize the British alignment with the Iroquois. On the map, text that spans Maryland and "Pensilvania" details the background to this alliance.<sup>6</sup>

The inset bottom left seems designed to underscore what potential threat the Indian allies of the French might pose: "to show the South Part of Carolina, and the East Part of Florida, possess'd since September 1712 by the French and called Louisiana; together with some of the principal Indian Settlements and the Number of the Fighting Men According to the account of Capt. T. Nearn and others."<sup>7</sup> Indicated is a pattern of paths that could link Charles Town to these enemy-held territories west to the Mississippi, and south to Florida.

### THE ACTUAL LINE OF POSTS



**FIGURE 5.** Detail of the Moll map with the approximate path of the post road indicated by a double grey line in the engraving, with red dots added to indicate five of the places mentioned in Sarah Knight's 1704 overland journey by horse: (North to South) Dedham, Providence, New London, Stonington, Seabrook.



Moll's "road" – the King's Road <sup>8</sup> - was not a true thoroughfare. The experience of post riders just before the Act of Queen Anne is best imagined by reading Sarah Kemble Knight's recounting of a journey she took in 1704 from Boston to New York by horse, accompanied for part of the way by successive post riders (whom she called guides).<sup>9</sup> Her first post rider was met at Dedham, south of Boston, and where, at that time, the so-called Western Post met the Eastern (according to Moll's map, the Western mail from New York, was exchanged with the Eastern at Seabrook, or Saybrook, on Long Island Sound). Crossing the river at Providence on Narragansett Bay was managed, barely, by canoe. And to make about 20 miles per day the post rider and Mrs. Knight sometimes traveled into the night, trees pressing in from both sides on the narrow path. She let the post rider cross the Paukataug River without her, as the water was so high, choosing to stay on the east side before venturing over to Stonington at low tide.

These post riders carried the mails, but also whatever other merchandise they could contract for. They might have carried imported, but not yet American, newspapers. The first paper in North America was published by the postmaster in Boston the same year as Kemble's journey, but none were recorded carried by her guides.<sup>10</sup>

## **DUAL POSTMASTER GENERALSHIP**

At mid eighteenth century, the British Crown needed to replace their overseer of the North American line of posts.

## **CANDIDATES**

## Two Printer/Publishers

After his printing apprenticeship in Boston, his print shop experience in Philadelphia, and his typesetting in London in the 1720s, Benjamin Franklin imported a press from England and became the official printer for the Province of Pennsylvania (*The General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, For all the British Plantations in America* 1741), publishing also the newspaper of record (*The Pennsylvania Gazette* 1729), as well as operating as a job printer often engaged in his own projects (*Poor Richard's Almanack* 1733). In 1748, Franklin sold his press and retired to other activities.

In Williamsburg, William Hunter (a generation younger than Franklin) was apprenticed to the official printer for the Colony of Virginia, William Parks, in 1745 and, two years after Parks's death in 1750, took over that role. As with Franklin, publishing was split between public works (*A Collection of all the Acts of Assembly, Now in Force, in the Colony of Virginia* 1733 under Parks), the newspaper of record (*The Virginia Gazette* 1751), and job printing (*Virginia Almanack* 1751). He, too, imported his printing supplies from London. Franklin and Parks had even collaborated in building a paper mill at Williamsburg, completed in 1743.



**FIGURE 6.** Postmaster/printer mastheads: *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 9, 1754. “Containing the Freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic” published by Benjamin Franklin. From the Library of Congress. And *The Virginia Gazette*, September 5, 1755. “With the freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic” published by William Hunter. From the collections of Historic Williamsburg, with permission.

## *Two Postmasters*

Both Franklin and Hunter were postmasters, Franklin having been commissioned in Philadelphia by Postmaster General Spotswood in 1737, and at Williamsburg Hunter taking over from Parks in 1750. One of Postmaster General Elliot Benger's first appointments, in 1744, was to make Franklin comptroller for the British colonial post. Franklin in turn had instigated a system of accountability, via printed Post Bills, that had strengthened the whole system.<sup>11</sup>

Benger was a Virginian, and the two Postmaster Generals before him were similarly from the Virginia colony (Alexander Spotswood until 1739, Head Lynch until 1743). Though Virginia could be thought of as 'the end of the line' of posts, it was also the principal funnel for the exchanges between the Virginia plantations and England.



**FIGURE 7.** Cover to a 1744 letter "post paid" from John Short to Conrad Weiser in "Heidleburg," Pennsylvania, entering the colonial mail ("For his Majestys Service") at B[oyd's] Hole, Virginia (on the "Potomack" River), rated 4dwt (statutory rates expressed in sterling silver were converted to the weight of coined silver; 1 penny weight, or 1dwt, = 24 grains; 4dwt = 1 shilling). Boyd's Hole was a tavern and, like Heidelberg, was not a post office,<sup>12</sup> making this one of the many way letters of the period.<sup>13</sup> Weiser was responsible for negotiating every major

treaty between the colonial settlers in Pennsylvania and the Iroquois Nations from 1731 to 1758. He was also a cigar maker, and John Short grew tobacco. From the collection of Tim O'Connor.

Mention of Benger's death <sup>14</sup> was made in a letter of May 21, 1751 from Virginia tobacco planter Francis Jerdone, who put forward himself as a candidate for succeeding Benger as Postmaster General. <sup>15</sup> William Hunter would have been another possibility.

Coincidentally, Franklin, in a well-known letter of the same date, May 21, 1751, to Peter Collinson, made the case that he and his post office might be a better choice than a Virginian: "I need not tell you that Philadelphia being the Center of the Continent Colonies ... is by much a fitter Place for the Situation of a General Post Office than Virginia ... ." <sup>16</sup> Moreover, he was confident that Collinson, through William Allen, could help arrange the appointment. <sup>17</sup>

## STRATEGIC PLAN OF UNION

At the same time Franklin was angling for the Postmaster Generalship, he outlined a plan of union in a letter to James Parker of New Jersey of March 20, 1751: "A voluntary Union entered into by the Colonies themselves, I think, would be preferable to one imposed by Parliament; for it would be perhaps not much more difficult to procure, and more easy to alter and improve, as Circumstances should require, and Experience direct. It would be a very strange Thing, if six Nations of ignorant Savages should be capable of forming a Scheme for such an Union, and be able to execute it in such a Manner, as that it has subsisted Ages, and appears indissoluble; and yet that a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a Dozen English Colonies, to whom it is

more necessary, and must be more advantageous; and who cannot be supposed to want an equal Understanding of their interests.”<sup>18</sup>

There followed an ‘interregnum’ in the colonial Postmaster Generalship, from 1751 until August 1753. During that period, Franklin was extraordinarily active with his electrical experiments, for which he was elected a member of the Royal Society and given the Copley medal. He was given honorary degrees by both Harvard and Yale during the course of his 1753 survey of postal routes, as Comptroller.

The appointment of a Postmaster General for the colonies was evidently embroiled with other preparations in London for colonial conflict with the French. In August 1753, Privy Councilors Lords Halifax, Newcastle, and Bedford shared Francophobia, “adamant on the necessity of stopping French expansionism in the New World.” Bedford instructed “all colonial governors to prevent, by force these [encroachments] that may be made by the French, or by the Indians in the French interest.” His successor, also in August, dispatched a special set of instructions to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to acquire artillery for protection when erecting western forts.<sup>19</sup>

A dual postmaster generalship of August 10, 1753 (news of it arriving in the colonies in October) – named Franklin and Hunter Deputy Postmasters General and Manager of all his Majesty’s Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of North America, at a salary of £300 per annum for overseeing the postal routes, Rates, Procedures, and Post Riders of the several Colonies.<sup>20</sup>



**FIGURE 8.** Cartoon by Benjamin Franklin, appearing in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* of May 9, 1754, “soon taken up and reprinted in papers in New York and Boston.”<sup>21</sup>

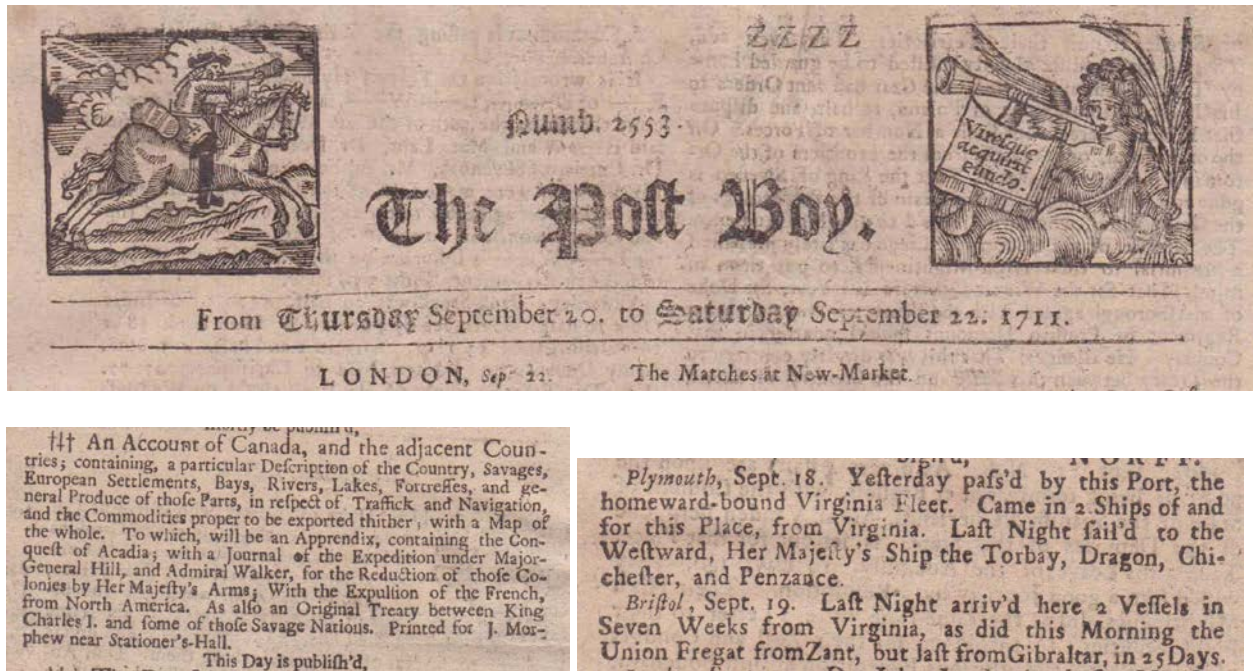
Franklin published his “Join, or Die” cartoon in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of May 9, 1754, along with the announcement of a Conference at Albany (where he would present his “Short Hints Towards a Scheme for a General Union of the British Colonies on the Continent.”) Hunter noted the cartoon in the *Virginia Gazette* of July 19, 1754, reporting on George Washington’s defeat at Fort Necessity: “Surely this will remove the infatuation of security that seems to have prevailed too much among the other colonies [and] enforce a late ingenious Emblem worthy of their Attention and Consideration.”

When, in 1755 General Braddock planned a campaign against the French that would mean travel from Alexandria, Virginia, to Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), Postmaster General Franklin approached him to provide for the surveying and building of a road, the provisions and transportation of the troops, and to connect the advancing army with a line of posts from Philadelphia.



## NEWSPAPERS IN THE MAIL

### THE BRITISH MODEL



**FIGURE 9.** Masthead to *The Post Boy*, a London newspaper, of September 22, 1711, with two paragraphs from page two - advertising a book published about Canada, and news at Plymouth and Bristol about vessels bound for and arriving from Virginia. British newspapers were keen for news of the colonies. From the collection of the authors.

By 1720 London had a large and vibrant press with twenty newspapers reaching thousands weekly; unlike other European countries, the publication of business data was not controlled. But, since the Stamp Act of 1712, duties had been levied on paper and advertisements.<sup>22</sup> There was free transmission of “such newspapers as were able to survive the impositions; but the heavy taxes were intended to prevent the issue of cheap newspapers, and expensive papers could only find sale among those who were not attracted by dangerous doctrines, political or otherwise.”<sup>23</sup>

The popular press – pamphleteering - as it developed in the London coffee house culture (so admired and emulated by Benjamin Franklin and his cohorts),<sup>24</sup> free of such duties and engaged with the public, was viewed with suspicion.<sup>25</sup> “The printers and hawkers of cheap papers that tried to escape unstamped in the search for a more popular audience suffered the legal consequences, including periodic arrest.”<sup>26</sup>

“ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DEPUTY-POST MASTERS OF NORTH  
AMERICA”

Postmasters General Franklin and Hunter, from the General Post Office in London, datelined March 10, 1758 authorized these further instructions in regards to newspapers.

*Whereas the News-papers of the several Colonies on this Continent ...*

There were seventeen newspapers printed in ten of the 28 postal towns of the period.<sup>27</sup> An average of 600 subscribers to have been served by each press, suggests perhaps 10,000 subscribers to the newspapers of North America – perhaps half a million newspapers per year at this time.<sup>28</sup> Contemporaneously, perhaps £1,000 was expended in a year for postage, accounting for about 20,000 letters (ie: one letter for every 25 newspapers). Therefore post riders were much more likely to be employed in the distribution of newspapers to country subscribers than in carrying the post.

*... heretofore permitted to be sent by the Post free of Charge, are of late Years so much*

*increased as to become extremely burthensome to the Riders, ... who demand additional Salaries or Allowances from the Post Office on that Account, and it is not reasonable, that the Office which receives no Benefit from the Carriage of News-papers, should be at any Expence for such Carriage*

Although no mention was made of them in the 1710 Act of Queen Anne, newspapers accompanied the mail in England, and for free, as the perquisite of the clerks of the six post roads leading from London. The clerks then sold them to postmasters for country distribution. In the colonies there were no clerks of the road. Considering just the exchange copies of four newspapers printed in Boston weekly, to each of the 13 printers elsewhere, puts 52 newspapers weekly into the Boston mails, in each direction (whatever the service of distant subscribers).

*... And Whereas the Printers of News-papers complain, that they frequently receive Orders for News-papers from distant Post-Offices, which they comply with by sending the Papers tho' they know not the Persons to whom the Papers are to be directed, and have no convenient Means of collecting the Money, so that much of it is lost; and that for Want of due Notice when distant Subscribers die, become Bankrupt, or remove out of the Country, they continue to send Papers some Years directed to such Persons, whereby the Posts are loaded with many Papers to no Purpose, and the Loss so great to the Printers, as that they cannot afford to make any Allowance to the Riders for carrying the Papers: And whereas some of the Riders do, and others may demand exorbitant Rates of Persons living on the Roads, for carrying and delivering the Papers that do not go into any Office, but are delivered by the Riders themselves.*

*To remedy these Inconveniencies, and yet not to discourage the **Spreading the News-papers, which are on many Occasions useful to Government, and advantageous to Commerce, and to the Publick** [emphasis added], you are, after the first Day of June next, to deliver no News-papers at your Office (except the single Papers exchange'd between Printer and Printer) but to such Persons only as do agree to pay you, for the Use of the Rider which brings such Papers a small additional Consideration per Annum, for each Paper, over and above the Price of the Papers; that is to say, for any Distance not exceeding 50 Miles, each Paper is carried, the Sum of 9d Ster. per Annum, or an Equivalent in Currency. For any Distance exceeding 50 Miles, and not exceeding One Hundred Miles, the Sum of One Shilling and Six pence Ster. per Annum; and in the same Proportion for every other Fifty Miles which such Paper shall be carried; which Money for the Rider or Riders, together with the Price of the Papers for the Printers, you are to receive and pay respectively once a Year at least, deducting for your Care and Trouble therein, a Commission of Twenty per Cent ...<sup>29</sup>*

Franklin and Hunter have made 50 miles the primary unit of distance, rather than the 60 mile/100 mile scheme set by the Act of Queen Anne for letters. This enabled a uniform rate by distance at 9d per 50 miles per year, to be paid to each post rider in carriage fee for every newspaper. The 9d translates to something like a farthing per copy for each 50 miles of carriage. This uniform and low rate for newspapers seemed especially radical when compared with the high letter postages (which would continue until the British reforms of 1765). With an emphasis on postmasters receiving a commission for taking on the responsibility of the financial transactions among printers, subscribers, and post riders, Franklin and Hunter are giving their confederates more

responsibility – entailing more risk – but, importantly, are ensuring that newspapers enjoy the security and certainty of carriage in the mails.<sup>30</sup>

*... And you are to send no Orders to any Printer for Papers, except the Person to whom the Papers are to be sent, are in your Opinion responsible and such as you will be accountable for. And you are to suffer no Riders employ'd or paid by you, to receive more than the Rates above mentioned, for carrying any Papers by them delivered on their respective Roads; nor to carry and deliver any papers but such as will be accountable for to the Printers, in Consideration of an Allowance of the same Commissions as aforesaid for collecting and Paying the Money. ...*

The chain of accountability has a Franklin touch; and the new system would help reduce some of the frustrations encountered by both Franklin and Hunter as printers in distributing their newspapers in a truly democratic fashion.

*And as some of the Papers pass thro' the Hands of several Riders between the Place where they are printed and the Place of Delivery; you are to pay the Carriage-money you collect for the Riders, to the several Riders who have carried such Papers, in Proportion, as near as conveniently may be, to the Distance, they have been carried by each Rider respectively.*

This proportional “carriage-money” was a particular innovation (and a boon) for post riders in the colonies.<sup>31</sup>

Though this change in the colonial post was radically ‘American,’ neither Franklin nor Hunter could be called a revolutionary at this point - both were solidly on the side of Britain in the colonial conflicts.<sup>32</sup> Hunter died in 1761, before his loyalties could be tested. Franklin was one of the colonial printers who objected strongly to the 1765 Stamp Act levying a tax on paper (newspapers in Britain since 1684 had suffered this) – when his “Join or Die” cartoon was reprinted. Though repealed in 1766, the Stamp Act insult to North American newspapers had revolutionary reverberations.

## CONCLUSION

Expanding the British line of posts in North America, Benjamin Franklin (printer, publisher, post master, Royal Society scientist) and William Hunter (printer, publisher, post master), wishing to strengthen communication (both travel and information) between their colonies (for protection in war; for spreading the news “useful to Government, and advantageous to Commerce, and to the Publick”), introduced newspapers to the mail at a uniform cheap prepaid carriage fee. This was an egalitarian change that fostered a less provincial, more broadly American perspective.

## ENDNOTES

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1. D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America, Volume I Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 262, makes the point that the British Empire was not a political system – rather, the constituent colonies depended on individual connection with London.



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2. Herman Moll (1654?-1732), a Lowlander emigrated to London, began an *Atlas Geographus* in 1711 that would in the following six years, five volumes, include a full geographical representation of the known world. In 1715, he issued *The World Described*, a collection of 30 maps of which this map was one. All the maps can be read as propaganda for British policy and regional claims. And they all included elaborate images, such as this scene of beavers building a dam near Niagara Falls (according to William P. Cumming, *British Maps of Colonial America*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974, 10 & 12, the descriptive text “according to ye French Accounts” is accurate, but the scene copied from the cartographer to the French King, Nicholas de Fer’s 1713 *Carte de La Mer du Sud & de La Mer du Nord*, is fairly fanciful).

3. Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe, *The Colonial Posts in The United States of America 1606-1783* (London: Robson Lowe Ltd, 1967) 4, added authority to an assertion by Harry M. Konwiser, *Colonial and Revolutionary Posts* (Richmond VA: Press of the Dietz printing co, 1931). The 1715 Moll was identified as the earlier map to show the British colonial posts by Robert Dalton Harris in “The Beaver Map.” *P.S. No. 4 a Postal History Quarterly* (Wynantskill NY: aGatherin’, 1977), 11-17, with a bibliographic history of the misidentification, traced to Philip Lee Phillips, *List of Geographical Atlases in the Library of Congress*, volume 1, Washington DC 1909: wherein the 1729 Moll map from his *Atlas Minor* was the “earliest known map relating to post routes in the United States.”

4. Begun in 1705, these arrangements were also noted in the Preamble to the 1710 “Act for establishing a General Post Office for all Her Majesties Dominions” (commonly identified by its practice date of 1711): “Posts have at great charges been established by Packet-Boats between ... England and the West Indies, and also on the Mainland in North America, through most of Her

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Majesty's Plantations and colonies in those Parts, as also to divers Ports to which no Packet-Boats were till lately settled." By 1715, these packets had been discontinued but their strategic importance was noted. Howard Robinson. *Carrying British Mails Overseas* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1964) 39.

5. Receipts for two years ending January 1706 were £10,112 pounds; the contract was for five vessels of 140 tons each, with 26 men and 10 guns, contractor earning £12,500 a year. William Smith. *The History of the Post Office in British North America 1639-1870* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1973) 30.

6. "The Iroquois consist of four Cantons, Govern'd by so many Kings and are all hearty friends to ye English: those Princes came into England in 1710 to offer their service agt. ye French in Canada, and had it not been for ye miscarriage of our Expedition to Quebec in 1711, those People would have been of great service to us, for they joyn'd General Nicholson with 2000 men on his March to attack Montreal."

7. For instance, the "Cherecies" just west of the Appalachians had 3000 men.

8. Eric Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route That Made America* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2010) 32-33 reproduces Philip Lea's c.1690 map of New England showing the Post Road following a path closer to Sarah Knight's.

9. Sarah Kemble Knight. *The Journal of Madam Knight* (Boston MA: Small, Maynard & Company, 1920) reprint of 1825 edition. The post riders were not yet carrying mail for the Crown, but for the 'farm' system under the Neale Patent.

10. The British colonies' first newspaper, *The Boston News-Letter*, appeared April 24, 1704, published by the Boston postmaster, and bookseller, John Campbell.

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11. Ruth Lapham Butler, *Doctor Franklin Postmaster General* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co, 1928) 72-81, gives a thorough description of the advantages of Franklin's accounting system that he instituted as Comptroller.

12. J. A. Leo Lemay. *The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 3: Soldier, Scientist, and Politician, 1748-1757* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) 627.

13. Butler, *Doctor Franklin*, 68: "In America, the collection of way-letters was one of the main services."

14. Benjamin Franklin is the source of the assumption that Benger did not die until 1753, *The Autobiography by Benjamin Franklin* (Vintage Books reprint of 1793, 1990) 125. This error has since been repeated by postal historians: Wesley Everett Rich, *The History of the United States Post Office to the Year 1829* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1924); Butler, *Doctor Franklin*, 34; Konwiser, *Colonial and Revolutionary*, 29; Thomas Coulson "Benjamin Franklin and the Post Office" (*National Philatelic Museum*, Philadelphia PA Volume III Number 1, 1950) 25; Horowicz and Lowe, *The Colonial Posts*, 4; Alex L. ter Braake. *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America* (Stage College PA: American Philatelic Research Library, 1975) B-30.

15. Fairfax Harrison, writing "The Colonial Post Office in Virginia" for the *William and Mary Quarterly* of April 1924, noted the death, and footnoted: "On August 6, 1751, Dorothea Benger qualified as administratrix of the estate of Elliott Benger, deceased." Other scholars of note also correctly noted Benger's death: see Mary Goodwin, "The Colonial Postal System in Virginia," unpublished manuscript January 17, 1956, College of William and Mary (ter Braake refers to her work; she refers to Harrison, but also to Rich who resuscitated Benger until 1753); and Lemay volume 3, page 315.

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16. Letter 119 from the complete letters of Benjamin Franklin, Morgan Library, quoted in Albert Henry Smyth, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Volume III* (New York: NY: The Macmillan Company, 1907) 48.

17. Lemay, *The Life*, 336-337 details the influence of Collinson, Allen, and other influential Britishers in Franklin's appointment.

18. "Philadelphia, March 20, 1751" in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 4, 1750-1753*, 117. (July 1753-March 1755), accessed 10/17/2016 on line through Yale University franklinpapers.org. Lemay, *The Life*, 613-623, offers a comparison of the texts of Franklin's plans of union, beginning with this letter.

19. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (New York NY: Faber and Faber, 2000) 36-37.

20. "General Post Office: Appointment of Franklin and Hunter, 10 August 1753" in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 5, 1753-1759*, 18.

21. Andrew Pettegrew, *The Invention of News* (New Haven CT & London, England: Yale University Press, 2014) 334-335 calls this plausibly the first cartoon on the American continent, and an "inspired piece of pro-British propaganda."

22. Pettegrew, *The Invention*, 306, a "swingeing fee ... probably a greater cause of newspapers failing than the stamp itself."

23. A.D. Smith, *The Development of Rates of Postage* (London, England: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1917) 116-119.

24. Franklin during his exciting sojourn in London as a young man, November 1724 to July 1726, frequented the coffee houses, including Jones's in Finch Lane, the haunt of Daniel Defoe, who had published *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719 and *Moll Flanders* in 1722, Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels* 1726), and Herman Moll. Moll is now known to have provided the maps for

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Gulliver's Travels – locating Brobdingnag as a peninsula off the Pacific coast of North America, Houyhnhnms Land south of Australia, and Lilliput southwest of Sumatra (Dennis Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati: Herman Moll and his intellectual circle* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellon Press, 1997).

25. Pettegrew, *The Invention*, 225-226.

26. Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communication* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2004) 39.

27. Lemay *The Life*, 627.

28. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America, With a Biography of Printers & an Account of Newspapers*. Reprint from the second edition of 1874. New York NY: The Imprint Society, Inc, 1970) 215.

29. Butler, *Doctor Franklin*, 57-58 quotes the whole instruction as published in Hugh Gainé's *The Mercury* of May 29, 1758 – quoted in Paul Leicester Ford, ed. *The Journals of Hugh Gainé, Printer: Biography and Bibliography* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1902) 38-39.

30. Postmasters were the first printers/publishers of newspapers in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Williamsburg. In five of the 10 post towns that had newspapers in 1758, the publisher was at least nominally the postmaster (Annapolis, Charleston, New Haven, New York, Williamsburg; postmasters were no longer involved in Boston and Philadelphia; New London, Newport, and Portsmouth papers began in 1758 but without postmaster involvement). See Thomas and Lemay.

31. According to a Williamsburg souvenir, *Klapper's New Letter*, created July 4, 1958, William Hunter was especially solicitous of his post riders, providing sleeping quarters for several of them in the shop where he had his printing and post office.

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32. William Hunter was a friend of Franklin's son, William, who remained a Royalist during the Revolutionary War.

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