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Post Office Department,  
Feb'y 23<sup>rd</sup> 1828.

Mr. S. D. Ingham, chairman  
of the Committee on the Post  
Office & post roads. —

In answer to your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> Inst.  
including a resolution of the House of Representatives respecting the expediency of  
establishing a mail route from Mobile to Pascagoula Bay, I have the honor to  
enclose two letters from the Postmaster at New Orleans, which is all the information,  
in the possession of the Department, on the subject.

J. M. L.

22

W. H. Hunt, P. M.

Pensacola, Fla. Tr.

Your letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> ult. is received. A change  
has lately been made in the Post Office at Parrot Corn, occasioned by the resignation  
of D. Stewart. The change of the route so as to go by the way of Fort Mitchell  
and Pensacola to New Orleans, does not come within the power of the Department  
without a law of Congress; and there does not appear to be in its favor any reason  
sufficient to counterbalance the sacrifice which it would require.

J. M. L.

22<sup>c</sup>

J. A. Poole, P. M.

Colo. Ohio.

Your letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> Decr., 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> Inst.  
are received. Letters on any other subject than that of quarterly returns, should  
always be sent separately, and never in the accounts.

Tin coverings to mail bags would be attended with considerable expense,  
with much inconvenience to the horses, and would not last more than one  
week before the tin would be broken. That iron has long since been proposed,  
but the use of it is declined because it will not effect the object designed.

You will not fail to open the return mail of Mr. Ross. If it contains  
but little, the labour will be but little. When the expense of transportation is  
incurred, no advantage of it should be lost to a single individual of the  
community on account of the trouble which it may give a Post Master to  
open the mail.

J. M. L.

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Post Office Department,  
February 22, 1828,

George Eager - Trm.

Gallivania, N.Y.

It is the duty of a Post Master at all times  
to correct the rates of Postage on letters received at his office, when he knows  
them to have been incorrectly marked at the office where they were originally  
mailed.

It is not common for the Department to furnish scales for weighing  
letters, except at the larger offices, where they are required to be kept for  
that purpose exclusively. Post Masters have generally occasion to keep some  
kind of scales for their own use, with which they weigh such letters as  
may occasionally require it.

J. M. L.

22<sup>c</sup>

J. Wm<sup>g</sup> Eng<sup>r</sup>

Cincinnati O.

Your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Inst. with its enclosure is  
received. The subject shall be investigated. For the removal of an officer,  
something more definite is requisite, than what is set forth in the memorial.  
The Memorialists complain of their want of confidence in the Post master  
at Aurora, but point out nothing definite, specify no act which ought  
to impair confidence, or which renders him unworthy of the situation  
which he holds. If any thing can be definitely stated and proven, to  
show that he is unworthy of confidence, I shall be glad to have it.

J. M. L.

22<sup>e</sup>

James P. Preston - P. M.

Richmond, Va.

Please inform me the price for which you  
can purchase wrapping paper suitable for the office. If it can be procured  
cheaper in Richmond, and of quite as good a quality, there can be no objection  
to your purchasing it.

J. M. L.

J. Wilby - P. M.

Woodwards & Roads, Frankfort, Ky.

Post Masters are by law exempted from  
militia duty and from serving on juries. No other exemption is contained in the  
law. Regulations for keeping roads in repair belong entirely to the state govern-  
ment, and to the laws of Kentucky you are referred.

J. M. L.

Post Office Department,  
Feb<sup>r</sup>y 22<sup>e</sup>. 1828.

Mr. Mynderse, T.M.

Seneca Falls, N.Y.

The seals on a deed, or other instrument of writing, do not increase the postage. If the letter referred to in yours of the 13<sup>rd</sup> Inst. did not weigh an ounce, and contained only two pieces of paper; it was no more than a double letter. Letters are now rated according to weight, unless they weigh an ounce or more.

J. M.S.

22<sup>e</sup>.

John R. Brown Esq.

Monistown N.J.

Your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> Inst. is received. After finishing the investigation though you may feel reluctant to giving a decision in the case, it will be agreeable to me to have your opinion, as a person knowing the character of the parties and of the witnesses, and observing the minutia both in the manner and matter of investigation, has many advantages in making a correct decision, which cannot be had at a distance.

J. M.S.

Robert Cumming Esq.

T.M. Marion Ga.

A Post master may frank as well when absent as when at home. Wherever he happens to be, his letter to the weight of half an ounce are free.

If a Post master or any other person, requests you to forward a letter, coming to your office for him, to any other office, it is your duty always to do so. The latest law and instructions will be forwarded to you.

J. M.S.

Mr. Prince T.M.

Oscillton, Carroll Co. Md.

You are entitled to the postage on this letter on delivering it; and the person who receives and opens it has no right after that to return it as unsealed and demand the postage.

J. M.S.

Post Office Department.

22<sup>e</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup>y 1828,

Mr. James Hamilton

Chairman to No. of Reps.

In answer to your communication of the 13<sup>th</sup> Inst. inquiring whether there be any officers in this Department whose services may be dispensed with, without detriment to the public interest, or if the salaries of any of them can be reduced consistently with justice and propriety, and in general whether any of the expenses incident to the Department can be reduced, without impairing the efficiency of its operations; I have the honor to submit a hasty but general sketch of the outlines of the business transacted, annually in this Department.

There are in the United States 1644 mail routes, 99.136 miles of post roads, on which the mail is annually transported, and above 7000 post offices. The amount of postage, which will be collected in the current year, will exceed a million and a half of dollars.

The following is a somewhat detailed view of the business for the current year.

1<sup>st</sup> Arranging the order and connection of all mail routes, being one fourth of the whole every year.

2<sup>d</sup> Examining and recording 6000 proposals for carrying the mail, comparing them and deciding the right, examining numerous testimonials which accompany them, and furnishing a letter of acceptance to each successful applicant.

3<sup>rd</sup> Preparing and causing to be reciprocally executed, 411 contracts with duplicates, bonds and securities.

4<sup>th</sup> Superintending 1644 mail routes, regulating the movements of the mail, changing its direction, and examining the reports of the daily performances of contractors.

5<sup>th</sup> Appointing, registering and commissioning more than 1000 post masters annually, receiving and registering their bonds, ascertaining the responsibility of their securities, and establishing hundreds of new offices.

6<sup>th</sup> Superintending the management of more than 7000 post offices, instructing post masters, furnishing them with constructions of the law, and investigating their conduct when complaints are made.

7<sup>th</sup> Receiving, examining and adjusting more than 28.000 quarterly accounts of post masters, covering together about 900.000 folio pages, with additions of items, chiefly in cents, amounting together to more than \$1.500.000.

8<sup>th</sup> Entering in accounts current 28.000 accounts of post masters with all their various items, and furnishing statements to 2000 post masters of errors discovered in their accounts.

9<sup>th</sup> Opening more than 1000 dead letters daily, registering forwarding to their proprietors such of them as contain valuable inclosures.

10<sup>th</sup> Tracing lost letters, detecting and prosecuting depredations committed on the mail.

11<sup>th</sup> Furnishing from the books of the office about 1200 Postmasters annually, with full statements of their accounts.

12<sup>th</sup> Settling finally the accounts and collecting the balances of 1000 post masters, who annually go out of office, instituting and maintaining about 200 suits in law for recovery.

13<sup>th</sup> Collecting by drafts and otherwise, quarter yearly, the remuneration arising from more than 7000 post offices, and reviewing the account of each four times in the year.

14<sup>th</sup> Settling the accounts and paying their amount, four times in the year, of the several contractors on 1644 mail routes, making together 6576 accounts.

15<sup>th</sup> Procuring mail bags for all the routes, locks, keys, paper, the printing and distribution of blank forms for accounts for the different offices, amounting to many hundred reams.

16<sup>th</sup> Keeping distinct and separate accounts with the post offices, with contractors, and other agents, requiring, besides the previous entries in accounts current, Day Books, Cash Books, Day Books and Journals, 72,000 Ledger entries.

17<sup>th</sup> Preparing quarterly for the Treasury, statements of the whole fiscal transactions of the Department, covering in the year about 1200 large pages, accompanied with about 15000 receipts and 28,000 accounts, besides duplicates of all contracts and proposals.

The correspondence growing out of these above operations, will exceed six hundred letters daily, I not unfrequently open with my own hands, between two and three hundred letters in a day, on business relating to the various branches of the office. So extensive and complicated are its details, that an accurate view of the annual amount of labour cannot be formed, without some practical knowledge on the subject. There is believed to be no civil branch of governmental operation in this or any other country, which equals this Department in extent, or which embraces so great a variety of interests. Not less than twenty five thousand agents are daily and hourly engaged in its service, a greater number than all the agents of the government beside, including the army and navy.

In regulating this immense force, it cannot be organized into masses and controlled by responsible heads, as the army and navy. Most of the agents act separately and independently of each other, and are each responsible to the chief of the Department. This arises from the nature of their duties, and causes a more extensive correspondence than is required, in the other Departments of the government.

The public interest is intimately concerned in the faithful conduct of all the

persons employed in the operations of the mail, and the slightest omission of duty in any one of them, cannot fail to produce some inconvenience, which may afford ground of complaint. Under such circumstances, some idea may be formed of the necessary energy in this office, which controls and is responsible for the individual acts of so great a number of agents. What is necessary to be done to day, cannot be postponed until tomorrow, without injury to the public, and probably some loss of character to the Department. Hence the necessity of unceasing vigilance in all the clerks of this office. It is believed that they are as industrious and efficient as any other officers of the same grade, employed by the government, and that the public is as much benefitted by their labours. They receive less compensation than the clerks employed in the other Departments. A reduction of their number, or a failure to authorize the necessary additional aid, will paralyze the operations of the Department, and cause it to take a retrograde movement. The effects of this would be severely felt by the commercial and other interests of the country.

I know of no expenses incident to the Department, which can be reduced without impairing the efficiency of its operations. In the making of contracts, for several years past, there has been a great retrenchment of expenditure, taking into view the amount of service provided for, but this can only be accomplished by the ordinary process of making contracts.

J. Mc L.

G. Burroughs

22<sup>d</sup>

Care of Mr. Anderson & Robust  
Louisville, Ky.

Your letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. is received.—A letter mailed in October would not be forwarded to this office as a dead letter till after the first of April next. Should it then be received, it will be forwarded to you. It does not appear that any mail was sent from Louisville to N. York between the 28<sup>th</sup> of October and the 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. If the letter in question was, as you state, put into the Post Office at Louisville on the 31<sup>st</sup> Oct last, it was not mailed at Louisville for N. York, unless it remained there 13 days before it was sent, which is not likely; for the Post Master at Louisville well understands his duty, that he should make up a mail directly for N. York.

whenever there is a letter in his office with that direction and to this duty I believe he is very faithful. I am of opinion that the letter was misdirected, or by accident made up for a different office from what was intended, or unfortunately lost before it left Louisville.

M.L.

John S. Skinner P.M. 23d  
Baltimore, Md.

I am surprised to hear that the mail is not always made up at your office, and sent on by the first mail conveyance to Elkton. I could scarcely believe such indifference could possibly exist at such an office as Baltimore. If such omission ever has occurred, it is confidently expected that its recurrence will never be permitted.

M.L.

Sbridge L. Home 23  
Paris, Edgar Co., Ill. A letter marked in your office will not be sent to this office as a dead letter till after the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. If that of which you write be then received here, it will be forwarded to the writer.

M.L.

N. L. Fennell P.M. 23.  
Georgetown, Md. A key to the large mail box is forwarded, which you will keep as securely as possible from any contingency. Every thing going thro' your office for Louisville & beyond, you will secure under the large box, and the same with every thing for Cincinnati and beyond.

M.L.

Joseph Bond P.M.  
Owensville, Ky. 26

Post Office Depart  
Feb 23d. 1828

- serious complaints are made against you and supported by affidavit. It is alleged,  
 1<sup>st</sup> That you are habitually given to intoxication.  
 2<sup>d</sup> That letters sent from your office are frequently received with their seals broken - that since last May eight letters have been received by one person at different times and at different places which had been mailed at your office, and the seals broken.  
 3<sup>d</sup> That newspapers received at your office are often mislaid, & have been loaned to a neighbour before they were delivered to a subscriber.  
 4<sup>th</sup> That you are offensive in your answers especially to children when sent to your office to enquire for letters or papers.  
 5<sup>th</sup> That persons of the village are dissatisfied with you to such a degree, as to send, in many instances, their letters to some distant office to be mailed, and to require their letters to be directed to another office less convenient.

Your immediate answer is requested; and as these charges are supported by affidavit, it is expected that their disproof will be satisfactorily sustained.

M.L.

L. Fletcher P.M. 23

Breckertown N.J. The letters containing seed must be forwarded. If their weight does not exceed an ounce, they must be rated quadruple. If more than an ounce, rate them by weight, quadruple postage for each ounce.

M.L.

Post Office Depart  
Feb 23. 1828

Post Master

Mackias, Me.

The common locks are forwarded. Will you a key to the large lock? I was not aware that you had, nor that the large lock was used on any mail beyond Portland. Please inform me if you have a key to the large lock, and what mails you receive and send under that lock.

M.M.L

Augustus Dury P.M. 25

Abingdon, Va.

A letter from Carthage, Se., states, Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, "The United States Telegraph for 3 weeks past has come by way of Nashville."

Another letter from Rogersville, Se., of the 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. states, "All or nearly all our mail from every place northeast of Washington arrive here from the west. Our letters pass through the distributing office at Nashville." A letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> from Carthage, Se., states the same complaint. You will cause special care to put an immediate check to these disorders.

M.M.L

James H. Jenkins P.M. 25

Sparta, Se.

There is a considerable delay in the arrival of letters at Gettysburg from the east, and also in their transmission from that office to the east. I will thank you to be very particular in preventing any such delay at your office, and endeavor to learn, by all possible means where the delay is occasioned, and inform me.

M.M.L

Post Office Depart  
Feb 25. 1828

John Dorman P.M.

Lewisburg, Greenbrier Co. W. Va.

In separating the mails for the offices between Lewisburg & Hager C.H. from those which go to the C.H. and beyond, there is much complaint of the want of proper care at your office. Packages for Kent & Selins are often put into the bag for the C.H. and thereby delayed till the return mail. It is stated that you have been a cause of the error by several of the P. Masters, yet it is not corrected. It is expected that you will effectually remove the cause of this complaint, seeing that nothing but proper care is required in order to its being done.

M.M.L

Joseph Stout 25

Pittsburgh, Pa.

As the blank warrants were neither newspapers nor pamphlets, they were, according to law, subject to letter postage, that is \$5 for 30 sheets, or 10 cents per sheet. The Post Master at Columbian Grove was bound, however reluctantly, to charge postage on them at that rate; and in so doing, he has done just what every faithful Officer would have done. But it appears that you were laboring under a mistake, supposing them subject to no more postage than pamphlets or newspapers, and that your ignorance of the provision of the law may subject you to more than the loss of your labor. In consideration of this, and being satisfied that there was no intention to evade the law, the Post Master at Columbian Grove is hereby authorized to remit the charge, and to require no more postage than if every sheet had been a newspaper. Present this letter to Mr. Vaughan, the Post master, and it will give him pleasure to remit.

M.M.L

Post Office Depart  
Feb 26. 1828

Hon H. L. White  
Senate U. States

Your letter of the 22<sup>d</sup> inst.  
proposing the establishment of a line of stages from  
Blountville, in Tennessee, by the way of Jonesborough and  
Athens to Huntsville, Ala., has been received, and I  
assure you that nothing could afford me more pleasure  
than to meet your wishes, and those of the people of  
East Tennessee, in this respect, if I could do so, without  
incurring an expense to the Department, disproportionate  
to the benefits resulting to the public.

With the view of establishing a line of  
stages from Knoxville, by Athens, &c. to Blountville, enquiry  
has been made as to the expense, and it is ascertained,  
that for a sum of between 4 and 5000 dollars annually,  
which is more than three times the amount of the  
product of the route, a weekly four horse stage may  
be put into operation. Although this expenditure  
greatly exceeds the receipts upon the route, the Deptt  
will endeavor to make the arrangement, and in  
doing so, it is believed, satisfactory evidence will be  
afforded, of no ordinary solicitude to meet the public  
expectation. At some future day, and that perhaps,  
not remote, a stage line may be extended on  
the route designated to Blountville.

In the establishment of stages, there  
must be a reference to the profits derived from passen-  
gers. On a line which does not connect important  
points, and which affords but few passengers in  
the stage, the expense must necessarily fall chiefly  
on the Deptt. The mail may as well be conveyed on  
such a route on horse back or in a sulky, as in a  
stage. When the mail is very large and important  
as from Washington to Charleston, S.C. it must be  
carried daily, and in stages, without reference to the  
productiveness of the route, between the important cities.

But this necessity will only apply to the leading routes, a daily  
route has lately been established from this City and Baltimore  
to Cincinnati in Ohio, to be run in six days, when the roads will  
admit, at an average expense of about 32 dollars per mile.  
There is paid on the route from Fredericksburgh by Staunton  
and Knoxville, for three weekly trips, the sum of about \$45 per  
mile. It will be seen that if a greater number of trips are  
performed weekly on the great route to Cincinnati, that the  
expense is less to the Deptt, than the amount paid for less  
than half the accommodation on the Virginia route.

From Lexington where the Kentucky mail branches,  
and runs daily to Louisville, and there connects with a line  
of stages which are to run 6 trips weekly to Nashville, a higher  
compensation is paid for the service, than the route to Cincin-  
nati, but it falls very far below the rate paid for  
the 3 trips by Knoxville. The New Orleans mail is now  
sent by the way of Mobile, and the mail to Nashville,  
whether it is sent through Kentucky, in several days  
less than it can be conveyed by the way of McMinnville.  
On the Virginia route through Staunton &c., there is no very  
important mail conveyed except such as may be for-  
warded from places south of Washington. Although  
the towns of Huntsville, Knoxville and some others are impor-  
tant, they cannot in a commercial point of view be  
compared to Nashville, Louisville, Cincinnati and some  
others on the Ohio and Kentucky route.

To establish the additional trips on the Virginia route,  
would cost little less than \$35,000 annually, and there  
is no probability, that the receipts upon the entire route,  
which would be benefitted by it, would be increased  
\$2000 a year. Any increase of accommodation on this  
route must be given to the post offices on it, and to  
promote the convenience of passengers. The probable  
increase of the former, as has been shown, would not  
justify the expense, and it is believed, that if six trips  
were run, instead of three, the contractors would find  
but a small part of their indemnity from an addi-  
tional number of passengers.

pains have been taken by the Deptt to place this route in excellent condition. It is now in the hands of contractors, long known to the Deptt, as possessing much enterprise and public spirit; and it was hoped, that in the great improvement which has been made on the route in stages and horses, a high degree of satisfaction would be felt by the Deptt's public.

You will do the Deptt the justice to believe, that it can have no other motive in its arrangements than the general good; and if its benefits are experienced in a greater degree on one route than another, they do not arise from the exercise of an arbitrary discretion, but from circumstances, intimately connected with the population and business of the country. To give the same amount of accommodation on different routes, with no other reforma than to equalize the expenditure, would paralyze the operations of the Deptt, and measurably defeat its first and highest object.

The mail on the route through Virginia may be reduced in size, by sending on the other route, all packets directed to places south west of Nashville.

M.L

Aaron Hill P.M.

26

Boston, Ms.  
The enclosure is subject to no more than pamphlet postage. Mr. Starbuck states that you do not consider it a pamphlet because it is not stitched. Arguably to both the law and instruction, you will find that it is not the stitching which determines the character of a pamphlet. The enclosed has every characteristic of a pamphlet, and is to be rated at but half a sheet. If it had contained 16 pages instead of four, you would have had no hesitation to call it a pamphlet. Let it now be considered in the same light, and require no more than pamphlet postage on it. Please return it to him

- M.L

Feb 26. 1838

✓ Charles C. Starbuck

Boston, Ms.

Your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> inst is recd. I have written to the P.M. at Boston, who will hand you the enclosure, & correct the charge for postage. We undoubtedly concur the charge to be correct, the act in perfect conformity with the instructions, which had been given before I came into the Deptt, but which I have deemed it my duty to reverse.

M.L

✓ B. Ames

26

Mobile, Al.

Your letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst is recd. If a daily mail shall be established on the route alluded to, agreeably to the rules of the Deptt, it would be given to the present contractors, paying them for their increased service upon the route. Two distinct contracts for carrying the mail on the same route will tend to confusion, and produce much inconvenience.

M.L

✓ Isaac Ward

26

Your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> inst has been received, and the subject fully considered.

Fixed principles are established for the regulation of the transportation of the mail, on which it is the duty of the Deptt invariably to act. They have never been departed from, and never can be with propriety. So far as the most favorable decision for contractors can be given, without violating these principles, it affords me pleasure to give it; and in the remission of penalties, and in extra allowances in your favor, during the whole of the contract with Bailey, Ward & Lyon, I have uniformly gone to the full extent of what my own sense of duty, or public sentiment could justify.

When ordinary cautions have been made

on the part of the contractors, & when no public injury has resulted from a failure to arrive with the mail in time, the penalties have been frequently remitted. When there is proof before the Deptt that they have used more than ordinary exertion, and that causes over which they have no control, have produced unavoidable delay, it is the uniform practice of the Deptt to remit the penalty. But when it is proven to the Deptt, that the contractors have remitted all their energies - that they have used less than ordinary exertions - that the obstacles which produce the delay were not insurmountable - that the delays are frequent, and productive of public injury - when any or all of these circumstances exist to aggravate the mortification which delays always produce, the penalties are seldom, if ever, remitted. Your case is not anomalous. Others have suffered the loss of their contracts, and the forfeitary which it provides, in case of failures; and without adhering to this principle, there can be no dependence upon contractors for the fulfilment of their engagements.

It was expected, that if the allegations of your want of energy & attention were not correct, you would have furnished some evidence to disprove them. This you have failed to do. It always belongs to the contractor to furnish proof, when the terms of his contract are not strictly complied with, that he used proper exertions - that his provision for the performance was ample - & that the failure did not result from any fault or omission on his part. This proof you have not furnished. Since my last communication to you, I have extended my inquiry, in the sincere hope, that if any facts existed which would favor your claim, they might be elicited; but the opposite has been the result.

It is in proof before the Deptt that you employed but five teams, or twenty horses between N. York and Kingston, where between 30 and 40 are

now employed. That only one team ran from Brunswick to Kingston and returned, without food or rest; and that when the mail arrived at Kingston from Phila. it always remained there till the arrival of your team from Brunswick, which, during the month of Decr from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> amounted to 36 hours, but little short of two hours a day upon an average, and then took its departure with a weary team. That your horses, tho' but few in number, were miserably poor, and miserably fed; running sometimes from Brunswick to Elizabethtown, and after remaining there 10 or 12 hours, without food of any kind whatever, returning to Brunswick, making a distance of 34 miles, and a period of 19 hours, without food; and that all your horses upon every part of the route were entirely inadequate to the service required. That the roads were not worse than usual for that season of the year.

The above facts are corroborated by other circumstances. Since the present contractors commenced, the roads have been incomparably worse than before. Bridges are broken, which have compelled them to abandon, in part, the turnpike, increasing the distance over a road almost impassable, and requiring at least an hour longer of time; yet there has not been an instance of delay to such an extent as to produce inconvenience; and allowing an hour beyond the stipulated <sup>time</sup> for arrival of mail on account of the breaking up of the bridges, the arrival, more than half the times were within the stipulated times, and very seldom a half an hour beyond.

If you will furnish proof, that you did use all proper exertion to perform - that your teams were sufficient in number and quality, and well provided for to keep up their strength; and that the failures did not arise from any omission or neglect on your part, your proposition for the relinquishment of the penalty will then be again considered, and with all that liberality which the case can permit. Without this proof, it would be difficult to justify myself in doing so. The additional expense incurred by the

change of the contract is very considerable; and to remit the penalties which ought to countervail against it, without being able to furnish evidence that insurmountable impediments required the sacrifice, would be an act but poorly calculated to bear the test of investigation. You take the ground that Mr. Simpson entered into an arrangement with you which absolved you from all extra expense attendant on the change. This fact Mr. Simpson disowns; and certainly he was not authorized to do so. His object was to correct the disorder, but not to determine who should bear the loss. Nor can the Dept exercise any other discretion in this matter, than to place it where the fault lay. - You seem to consider the Dept as fixing on yourself individually, the loss, when others were associated with you in the contract; this is not the fact. The penalty lies upon the contract; and the Dept leaves the contractors to settle its proportion among themselves.

Nothing would have given me more pleasure than your fulfilment of the contract; and it will give me as sincere pleasure to remit the penalty, if satisfactory evidence shall be given, that no energy or exertion on the part of the contractors was wanting, and that the failures were occasioned by impediments which it was impossible to remove.

M.L

Hon R. P. Letcher

At. of Rep.

Feb 28.

I regret to learn that there should exist any excitement respecting the late change which has been made, in directing the stage from Danville to connect with the southern line, at Stanford, instead of Lancaster. This was designed to be the connection in the first instance, and the stage was run to Lancaster, through the mistake of a clerk in filling up the contract. That the point of

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connection should be at Stanford cannot be doubted, it would seem to me, when the object to be attained is considered.

The line from Danville was intended to give a mail from that place and all others west of it, to the south by the way of Bear's Station, on Chile's stage line. Now that this communication should be by way of Lancaster, thence to Stanford &c would seem to be unreasonable, and to afford just ground of censure. Mr. Chile, as before remarked, was directed to run to Stanford, agreeably to the arrangement first made, without consulting you on the subject, because it was believed, upon the whole, to be most satisfactory to the public, and certainly such an arrangement, as the Dept believes to be correct. It was hoped, that in directing Mr. Chile's line to pass through Lancaster, instead of Richmond, the Dept afforded some evidence to the people of Lancaster, that there was no disposition, to neglect their interests, when they could be advanced without injury prejudice to the public.)

If a stage can be run between Lancaster and Danville, for a moderate compensation, I shall, with great pleasure, authorize it. And I will thank you to ask the post master to give public notice, and receive bids, for a two horse stage to be run weekly, between Lancaster and Danville. He may also receive bids, for the same accommodation on the route from Lancaster to Richmond. All of which bids he will forward to the Dept, and such arrangements will be made, as to convince the people of Lancaster, that their wishes or interests are not disregarded.

Bids may also be made for 4 horse stages leaving the Dept to chuse.

M.L

Post Office Depart  
Feb 28. 1828

Dear R. M. Johnson

M. S. Senate The claim of E. P. Johnson presented by you, cannot be allowed. In stage lines, no additional allowance is ever made on account of the weight of the Mail. There is sometimes reason for so doing on horse routes, when the arrangements of the Department throw upon the route such an additional weight of transportation as to require a led horse, where a single horse would have been sufficient under the arrangement which existed when the contract was made. To apply this rule to stage routes, would be ruinous.

M.C.

William Doan P.M.

28

Greenville, Mi.

Complaint is made that you do not regularly forward to Malcolm, letters & papers directed to that office. It is certain that great carelessness has existed in this business, which must be corrected. Any letter or paper coming to your office, directed to Malcolm, must be forwarded by the post mail to its destination; and great care must be used at your office to separate for Malcolm all papers and packages belonging to it, and to send them by the earliest mail.

This error may very easily be corrected; but a complaint is made against you of a more serious nature. It is alleged that you are habitually given to intoxication; and that in consequence of this vice, your office is carelessly managed. If this charge is true, there can be no dependence upon the office for a careful discharge of its duties while it remains in your hands. Your answer to the allegation is expected by return of mail.

M.C.

Post Office Depart  
Feb 28. 1828

(Confidential)

Bela B. Clark P.M.

Marymouth, O.

I have just received a letter from Lorenzo Birney, dated Clear Creek, Richland Co., O, stating that money had been lost passing from that place through Wooster. Also that from Ashland, Richland Co., money had been lost at four different times mailed to pass through Wooster, and that suspicion was fixed on Wooster.

These circumstances, taken in connection with what was contained in my last, fix the point almost to a certainty. Do use all possible caution, and let no efforts be remitted that may result in detection. In your discretion and energy I confide, and wish you not to fear responsibility

M.C.

Lorenzo Birney

28

Clear Creek

Via Norwalk, O.

Your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. is received. A plan has been devised to detect what you have named, and is now in operation. The greatest secrecy is necessary to success, and I hope the matter may be kept as still as possible. A little time will prove the result.

M.C.

Theodorus Bailey P.M. 28.

N. York. N.Y.

Your letter of the 22<sup>d</sup> is rec'd. enclosing a communication of Mr. David Hooper, with recommendations of his waterproof composition, and a specimen of the leather to which it is applied. Please ascertain the difference between the price of the different kinds of mail bags made of this waterproof leather, and those now in use; or the price for which the different kinds can be furnished of the waterproof leather, and inform me

M.C.