

# Sources of Historical Information

## on Post Offices, Postal Employees, Mail Routes, and Mail Contractors

Publication 119  
October 2006



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*The Postal Service shall have as its basic function the obligation to provide postal services to bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people. It shall provide prompt, reliable, and efficient services to patrons in all areas and shall render postal services to all communities.*

—Title 39, United States Code, Section 101

The history of the United States Postal Service® is one of transformation—from the first use of railroads to carry the mail in the 1830s, to online stamp sales in 1997, to new developments in the 21st century. Within the history of the Postal Service lies the history of the nation as a whole, as mail routes and Post Offices™ spread westward, keeping the growing nation connected.

Historians, postmasters, genealogists, and others who want to learn more about the history of their communities will discover valuable sources of historical information on Post Offices, postal employees, mail routes, and mail contractors in this publication. Sources are listed chronologically and then discussed by subject. Following that, they are described in alphabetical order. The final pages list addresses for these resources and provide further references.

## Sources Chronologically

1700s–	Newspapers, city directories
1773–1774	Hugh Finlay’s journal
1775–1778	Benjamin Franklin’s ledger
1782–1799	<i>Ledgers of the General Post Office</i>
1789–1818	<i>Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters</i>
1789–1952	<i>Letters Sent by the Postmaster General</i>
1789–	<i>Annual Report of the Postmaster General</i>
1789–	Congressional Serial Set
1789–	<i>Federal Statutes</i>
1790–1930	Census records
1803–	Lists, tables, and directories of Post Offices
1814–1960	Contract route registers
1814–1971	<i>Record of Appointment of Postmasters</i>
1816–1911	<i>Official Register of the United States</i>
1830s–1940s	Post route maps
1835–1953	<i>Orders of the Postmaster General (“Journals”)</i>
1837–1950	Site location reports of Post Offices
1861–1865	Confederate Post Office Department records
1863–ca. 1900	<i>Record Cards of Letter Carriers Separated from the Postal Service</i>
1874–1954	<i>United States Official Postal Guide</i>
1880–	<i>Postal Bulletin (Daily Bulletin prior to 1919)</i>
1890s–1986	Record cards of postmaster appointments
1896–1970s	Rural route cards
1901–1934	Rural free delivery records
ca. 1910–	Personnel records
1986–	Postmaster Finder

## Sources by Subject

### Post Offices and Employees

For information on Post Offices and postmasters before 1814, major sources include:

- *Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters.*
- *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General.*
- Hugh Finlay's journal, a survey of post roads.
- Benjamin Franklin's ledger.
- Newspapers.

For information after 1814, the primary source is the *Record of Appointment of Postmasters.*

For concise listings of Post Offices by state and alphabetically, sources include the lists, tables, and directories of Post Offices, as well as the *United States Official Postal Guide* and *Official Register of the United States.*

For postmaster salary information and lists of other Post Office employees, refer to the *Official Register of the United States.*

Personnel records may be available for employees whose service ended after about 1910.

Site location reports of Post Offices provide geographic and other information on specific Post Offices.

### Mail Routes and Contractors

For information on mail contracts and contractors before 1814, sources include:

- *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General.*
- Hugh Finlay's journal.
- Newspapers.

Contract route registers are available beginning in 1814.

Names and salaries of contractors are listed in the biennial *Official Register of the United States*.

Rural route cards provide rural route establishment dates, as well as the names, dates of service, and salaries of rural carriers.

The historian of the United States Postal Service has compiled tables showing first rural routes established, by Post Office, through 1904, from issues of the *Postal Bulletin* and the 1901 *Annual Report*.

Names and salaries of rural and city carriers are listed in the biennial *Official Register of the United States*.

Dates of service of city carriers whose service ended before about 1900 are available in *Record Cards of Letter Carriers Separated from the Postal Service, 1863-1899*.

Personnel records may be available for rural and city carriers whose service ended after about 1910.

## Sources Alphabetically

### Annual Report of the Postmaster General, 1789–

**E**arly editions of the *Annual Report* (title varies slightly) offer only brief summaries of a few pages each on mail service nationwide, but by the 1840s the report begins to include statistical tables on everything from missent mail (by state) to international money orders issued (by state). Although the subjects of the statistical tables vary year by year, the following remain fairly constant (year of first appearance given in parentheses):

- The lengths of mail routes and modes of conveyance, by state (1836).
- Railroad and steamboat contracts (1843 and 1845, respectively).
- The number of Post Offices by state (1847).

- Receipts/expenses by state (1851).
- Statistics on city delivery (1873).
- Establishment dates of rural free delivery, by Post Office (1897–1901).

More detailed financial statistics are often available on the largest U.S. Post Offices — for example, receipts, expenses, and money allowed for clerk hire and rent, light, and fuel. The 1970 *Annual Report* has a statistical overview of the history of the Post Office Department from 1789 to 1970, such as number of Post Offices and revenue. In 1971, the report reverts to a limited format, with statistics available for the most part on only a national basis.

Selected editions of the *Annual Report* may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Benjamin Franklin's Ledger, 1775–1778**

Benjamin Franklin was appointed the first Postmaster General™ under the Continental Congress on July 26, 1775. He and his successor, Richard Bache, kept a ledger of the quarterly accounts of the General Post Office from 1775 to 1778. This ledger includes sums paid to and received from Post Offices — serving as a useful list of early Post Offices — with postmaster names sometimes noted.

A facsimile of the original ledger was reproduced in 1976 as *The Ledger of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, Postmaster General, 1776*, by the Historic Documents Publishing Company in Vineland, New Jersey. This book may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Census Records, 1790–1930**

Federal census records are available for every 10 years from 1790 through 1930, though most of the 1890 records were destroyed by fire. Records before 1850 contain little

information beyond the name of the head of household. Beginning in 1850, the records list every household member by name, along with their age, occupation, and other information. The records are arranged by state and county, then by township or enumeration district, and then by household in the order visited by census takers. For information available by year, see “Availability of Census Records About Individuals” by the U.S. Census Bureau at [www.census.gov/prod/2000pubs/cff-2.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2000pubs/cff-2.pdf).

Census records through 1930 are available on microfilm from the National Archives. Statewide indexes are useful for locating individuals in the microfilm records. Census records through 1930 have been digitized by *Ancestry.com* and *HeritageQuest.com*, making it possible to search for individuals by name only. Access to the records on these Web sites is available by subscription, and free-of-charge at some public libraries.

### **City Directories, 1700s–**

Several of the largest U.S. cities had city directories by the end of the 1700s. By 1861, directories were printed in more than 80 cities. These directories list businesses, public and private institutions, residents and their addresses, and often contain detailed city maps. Occupation and race of residents are often noted in directories in the 19th century. City directories usually contain a separate section on the Post Office, listing the address and the name of the postmaster, and sometimes every employee, Post Office hours and mail schedule, and postal rates and regulations.

Directories through 1960 have been reproduced by Primary Source Microfilm as *City Directories of the United States*, and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan. Libraries, historical societies and state archives may have copies of local city directories. A list of directories beginning with 1861 can be found at [www.loc.gov/rr/microform/uscity](http://www.loc.gov/rr/microform/uscity).



## Confederate Post Office Department Records, 1861–1865

Surviving records of the Confederate Post Office Department are located at the National Archives and at the Library of Congress.

Records at the National Archives include:

- A list of Post Office establishments, discontinuances, and name changes in the Confederate states beginning in 1861 (undated).
- A register of accounts, 1864 to 1865, for Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, listing name of Post Office, county/state, and receipts.
- An undated list of Kentucky Post Offices, by county.
- Confederate records on mail contracts and routes in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Confederate Post Office Department records at the National Archives are part of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109.

Records at the Library of Congress include:

- An Appointment Bureau list of Post Offices, 1861 to 1865, with establishments, discontinuances, and name changes noted, along with names of postmasters and appointment dates, for Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.
- A register of accounts for the quarter ending March 31, 1862, for Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas (includes Post Office and postmaster name and financial information on the office — sometimes incomplete).
- An Appointment Bureau list, 1861 to 1865, in no discernable order, of postmasters appointed in Arkansas, Indian Territory,

Louisiana, and Texas (provides dates of appointment, bond and commission of the postmaster, the name and reason for leaving of the previous postmaster, the county of location, sureties' names, and miscellaneous remarks).

- *Journal and Orders* of the postmaster general (contains lists of hundreds of postmaster appointments in the summer of 1861).
- Letters sent by the postmaster general, 1861 to 1862 (contain occasional references to postmaster appointments).
- Appointment Bureau letters sent, 1861 to 1865, partially indexed through November 4, 1863.
- Letters sent by the Contract Bureau, 1861 to 1864, mainly to contractors and postmasters, which are indexed by recipient or Post Office name and provide details on mail service.
- Confederate records on mail contracts and routes in the states of Mississippi and Virginia.

Confederate postal records at the Library of Congress are in the Manuscript Division as part of the Records of the Confederate States of America and have been reproduced on microfilm, which may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

### **Congressional Serial Set, 1789–**

From about 1817 to 1890, the *Serial Set* contains records of mail contract routes (also called “star routes”). Reports show the termini of the routes, the names of the contractors selected, and other information. General indexes to the *Serial Set* provide the years and volume numbers of mail route records, but they contain few references to specific mail routes.

The congressional *Serial Set* is generally available in federal depository libraries.



## **Federal Statutes, 1789–**

In 1792, the *Statutes* begin to list post roads established and discontinued by Congress, with stops on the routes noted. While there is a general index by subject (“post roads”), there is no index by Post Office.

*Federal Statutes* are generally available at your local library.

## **Hugh Finlay’s Journal, 1773–1774**

Hugh Finlay was appointed surveyor of post roads by the British postmaster general in 1772. He kept a journal from September 13, 1773, to May 24, 1774, in which he described in rich detail the Post Offices, postmasters, and mail routes he encountered in his journeys through New England and the South. Finlay also included a description of his travels through Quebec and touched on mail service in the cities of New York and Philadelphia.

The journal was originally typeset and printed in 1867, and in 1975 it was reprinted by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society as *The Hugh Finlay Journal: Colonial Postal History 1773–1774*. This book may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Ledgers of the General Post Office, 1782–1799**

The *Ledgers of the General Post Office* contain the quarterly accounts of the General Post Office. These accounts include mail contractor names, their routes, and sums paid, and an alphabetical listing of Post Offices, including the postmaster’s name, letter and newspaper postage collected and the postmaster’s commissions on the same, and sums paid for ship letters.

The *Ledgers of the General Post Office* are located at the National Archives as part of the Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28.

## **Letters Sent by the Postmaster General, 1789–1952**

The earliest letters sent by the Postmaster General, between October 3, 1789, and December 31, 1836, are arranged chronologically in 50 volumes with an index of names of addressees. The letters reference specific Post Offices, postmasters, and mail contracts, and discuss mail transportation, postal laws and regulations, and budgetary matters, among other things.

These volumes have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication 601, *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General, 1789–1836*, which is available for purchase from the National Archives and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Lists, Tables, and Directories of Post Offices, 1803–**

Lists, tables, and directories of Post Offices are available for nearly half of the years from 1803 to 1870, and continuously from 1955 to the present. (For information on the intervening period, see the entry below for the *United States Official Postal Guide*.) Although there is some variation by year, the earliest lists typically provide an alphabetical listing of Post Office names, along with the name of the postmaster, county and state, and the distances from the Post Office to the state capital and to Washington, D.C. The 1831 *Table of Post Offices in the United States* provides the first listing of Post Offices by county, which is regularly featured beginning in 1859. Directories of Post Offices from 1955 to 2004 list Post Offices, as well as stations and branches, alphabetically and by state and county, and provide the class of the Post Office (before 1975), as well as names of postal units discontinued in the preceding year. They do not show names of postmasters. Beginning in

1957, numbers of boxes served by Post Offices are listed. City delivery statistics are available beginning in 1979, when the *Directory of Post Offices* combined with the *National ZIP Code Directory* to form a new title, the *National ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*. This was last issued in 2004 as the *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory*. Lists of Post Offices by state and county since 1986 can be found at [www.usps.com/postmasterfinder](http://www.usps.com/postmasterfinder). (See page 16, *Postmaster Finder*.)

Selected editions of the *List of Post Offices in the United States*, *Table of Post Offices in the United States*, *Directory of Post Offices*, and *National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory* (titles vary slightly) may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

### **Newspapers, 1700s–**

Early newspapers often contain advertisements for mail route bids and for service on various routes. They also might contain the schedule of mail arrival and changes to mail service, Post Offices, and postmasters. *Note:* In the 18th and early 19th centuries, postmasters were sometimes also the local newspaper editor/printer.

Microfilm copies of many newspapers may be available from your local library through inter-library loan. A useful guide to early American newspapers is the United States Newspaper Program at [www.neh.gov/projects/usnp.html](http://www.neh.gov/projects/usnp.html). Ten major U.S. newspapers dating back as far as the 1760s have been reproduced in searchable electronic databases by ProQuest Historical Newspapers™, available online by subscription and at many research libraries.

### **Official Register of the United States, 1816–1911**

The biennial *Official Register* lists Post Offices and postal employees and their financial compensation in 1816, and in odd-numbered years from 1817 to 1911. The earliest editions

of the *Official Register* list Headquarters employees, postmasters, Post Office clerks, and mail contractors. Route agents and mail messengers are first listed in 1855. Railway Mail Service employees and city carriers are listed beginning in 1867, and rural carriers beginning in 1899. From 1877 to 1905, the *Official Register* is indexed by employee name.

Selected editions of the *Official Register of the United States* may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Orders of the Postmaster General (“Journals”), 1835–1953**

The *Orders of the Postmaster General*, referred to as the *Journals*, are arranged chronologically in bound volumes covering the period from July 7, 1835, to March 5, 1953. Noted in these volumes are Post Office establishments, discontinuances, and name and site changes, as well as information on mail routes, contractors, and carriers. Also noted, upon their dates of appointment, are the names of postmasters appointed to Post Offices, as well as the names and reasons for leaving of the previously appointed postmasters (“moved away,” “resigned,” “declined position,” etc.). Although these volumes are unindexed, they are useful to Post Office historians as a secondary source to verify pre-1880 information found in the *Record of Appointment of Postmasters*. (After 1880, the *Postal Bulletin* is available and is easier to use.) The *Journals* are also helpful in identifying individuals who were appointed to the position of postmaster but who did not take office.

The *Journals* are located at the National Archives as part of the Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28.

## **Personnel Records, circa 1910–**

Personnel records for many postal employees whose service ended after approximately 1910 are available at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Note that some employees at smaller Post Offices — such as clerks and assistant postmasters — were employed directly by the postmaster, so federal personnel records are not available. Also, personnel records were not kept for people who carried mail on a contractual basis.

Personnel records are available by writing to the National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Records Facility. Researchers should provide as much identifying information as possible about the former employee and his or her place and dates of employment.

## **Postal Bulletin, March 1880–**

The *Postal Bulletin* (entitled *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the Postal Service* prior to 1919) lists postmaster names and dates of commission until 1942. Acting postmasters are listed from 1884 to 1942. Star (contract) route establishments, discontinuances, and schedule changes are listed from 1880 to 1942, and rural route establishments, discontinuances, and changes are listed from 1898 to about 1934. The *Postal Bulletin* also gives Post Office establishment and discontinuance dates, as well as information on Post Office name and site changes. Beginning in 1907, the establishment and discontinuance dates of Post Office stations and branches are also provided. *Note:* Since the *Postal Bulletin* is largely unindexed, it is useful mainly as a back-up reference.

The *Postal Bulletin* may be available from your local library through inter-library loan. Issues since January 1995 are available on the Postal Service's Web site at [www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/pb.htm](http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/pb.htm).





Postmaster Finder is available on the Postal Service's Web site at *www.usps.com/postmasterfinder*.

## **Post Route Maps, 1830s–1940s**

Post route maps of counties, states, and groups or portions of states depict mail routes and show stops (Post Offices), distances between them, and frequency of service. Bodies of water, railroad lines, canals, and recently discontinued Post Offices are also sometimes shown. Statistics are sometimes given for the states depicted, including area in square miles, population and population density, number of Post Offices, and miles of railroads and canals.

Post route and rural route maps are located in the National Archives' Cartographic and Architectural Section, at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, and in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress.

## **Record Cards of Letter Carriers Separated from the Postal Service, 1863–ca. 1900**

The record cards of letter carriers whose service ended by about 1900 are index cards filed alphabetically by state, Post Office, and the name of the letter carrier. The cards give the carrier's appointment date and the date and reason for his separation from service, such as "resigned," "transferred," "died," or "removed." Causes for removal are sometimes noted. Although the cards generally date to 1899, dates through 1902 and even later may be found.

The cards have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M1846, *Record Cards of Letter Carriers Separated from the Postal Service, 1863-1899* (3 rolls). They are available for purchase from the National Archives and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## Record Cards of Postmaster Appointments, 1890s–1986

The record cards of postmaster appointments (PS Forms 1094, 1095, and 1084) are index cards of postmaster and acting postmaster appointments and officer-in-charge installations at Post Offices from the late 1890s through 1986, filed alphabetically by state and Post Office. Post Office discontinuance/establishment information is also provided, along with dates when a Post Office was advanced to or relegated from the presidential class. (The president appointed postmasters at first-, second-, and third-class offices from 1864 to 1970. Classes were dropped in 1975.) These records are often the sole source of information on postmaster appointments at Post Offices from 1971 to 1986, although before 1971 they largely duplicate information found in the *Record of Appointment of Postmasters*.

The record cards before about 1971 are located at the National Archives as part of the Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28. Cards after 1971 are located in the office of the Historian of the United States Postal Service.

POST OFFICE		STATE			
ORO GRANDE		CALIFORNIA		92368	
NAME		DATE OF APPOINTMENT		ASSUMED CHARGE AS POSTMASTER	REMARKS
		Acting Postmaster	Postmaster		
Mrs. Hazel M. Robinson		9-25-42	3-22-43	6-30-43	4th cl.
OFFICE ADVANCED TO PRESIDENTIAL July 1, 1945.					
2-22-88 White					
Mrs. Hazel M. Robinson			11-9-45	11-9-45	Nm. chg. mrg. 5/9/49
Mrs. Katie B. Smith		3-31-54	4-20-55	6-30-55	Mand. ret. 9/30/69
Mrs. Clella Langley		9/30/69	Acct. trans. to career postal employee as Officer-in-charge.		
dob: 8/16/14				3/6/71	Opt Ret 12-1-76
Mrs. Clella I. Langley DeShields					
Mary L. Ives, PO Clerk, OIC		12-1-76			
David J. Phillips		8-13-77		Promoted Valley CA	PM Lucerne 5-6-78
Roberta Griffin, Window CLK, OIC		5-4-78			
William A. Muller			1-13-79		

Sample record card of postmaster appointments, showing appointments at Oro Grande, California, from 1943 to 1979.

## **Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1814–1971**

The *Record of Appointment of Postmasters* consists of ledgers of postmaster appointments by Post Office from 1814 to September 30, 1971. The records before 1832 are arranged alphabetically on a national basis, by Post Office name and state. County names are given beginning in 1824. After 1832, the records are arranged by state or territory, then by county, and then alphabetically by Post Office. The records show the names of Post Offices, the dates of their establishment and discontinuance, any name changes, and the names and appointment dates of postmasters. Surety information is sometimes provided before 1844. Beginning in the 1840s, presidential appointments are noted. Money order offices are noted beginning in the 1860s. After about 1870, the records show the names of Post Offices to which mail from discontinued offices was sent. Names of acting postmasters are listed beginning in the 1910s. (See also the description of this record at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). Search for *post office records*.)

The postmaster appointment ledgers have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M1131, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, October 1789–1832* (Rolls 2, 3, and 4), and M841, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832–September 30, 1971* (145 rolls). They are available for purchase from the National Archives and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters, 1789–1818**

The *Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters* is a volume containing names of postmasters at Post Offices from October 1789 to July 1818, along with the dates of their first financial returns. Since postmasters were required to submit quarterly financial

statements for their Post Offices, their first financial returns generally postdated their appointment by several months, although delays in submitting accounts were not uncommon. This volume is especially useful since records of postmaster appointments before 1814 were destroyed by a fire at Headquarters in 1836. (It is sometimes possible to find pre-1814 appointment dates for postmasters by searching for them in the index to the *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General* in the months preceding their first return date.)

This record has been reproduced as Roll 1 of National Archives Microfilm Publication M1131, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, October 1789–1832*. It is available for purchase from the National Archives and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Rural Free Delivery Records, 1901–1934**

Among the records of the Division of Rural Mails from 1901 to 1917 and from 1930 to 1934 are correspondence, reports, and supporting documents (sometimes including maps and petitions) regarding proposed rural route establishments and changes, filed by state and county. The Division records also include correspondence, filed by state and Post Office, from 1909 to 1929 and from 1930 to 1932. Inspection reports, referenced in the above files and arranged by state and report number, contain further details on proposed route changes, such as discussions of local topography, existing mail service, and customers served.

The records of the Division of Rural Mails are located at the National Archives as part of the Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28.

## **Rural Route Cards, 1896–1970s**

Rural route cards, filed by Post Office, list route lengths; establishment dates; and names, dates of service, and salaries of rural carriers.

Rural route cards are housed at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

## **Site Location Reports of Post Offices, 1837–1950**

The reports of site locations are forms completed and submitted by postmasters, mostly from 1845 until 1945, giving the location of their Post Offices and other geographical information. The reports typically show Post Office locations in relation to nearby Post Offices and transportation routes. Some reports show locations in terms of legal land descriptions, small grid maps of the vicinity of the office, or both. Reports submitted for proposed Post Offices, referred to as “applications to establish the Post Office,” also list the number of patrons the Post Office would serve. (See also the description of this record at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). Search for *post office records*.)

These reports have been reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M1126, *Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, 1837–1950* (683 rolls), which are available for purchase from the National Archives and may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

into days      Sunday 7/68

(No. 40.)      **POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,**

**TOPOGRAPHER.**      **CONTRACT OFFICE.**

WASHINGTON, *April 30*, 18 *68*

SIR:

To enable the Topographer of this Department to determine, with as much accuracy as possible, the relative positions of Post Offices, so that they may be correctly delineated on its maps, the Postmaster General requests you to fill up the spaces and answer the questions below, and return the same, verified by your signature and dated, under cover to this office.

Respectfully, &c.,

*Samuel M. Bellan*  
Special Agent Postmaster General.

To POSTMASTER AT *Berkeley Springs*  
*Morgan Co. W Va*

The (P. O. Dept.) name of my office is *Berkeley Springs*  
 \*Its local name is *Bath*  
 It is situated in *Bath* Township,  
 County of *Morgan* State of *West Virginia*

The name of the most prominent river near it is *Potomac*  
 The name of the nearest creek is *Sleepy Creek*  
 This office is *2 3/4* miles from said river on the *South* side of it, and is  
*2 1/2* miles from said nearest creek, on the *North* side of it.  
 The name of the nearest office on route No. 4247 is *Monclara*, and its  
 distance is *Eight* miles, by the traveled road, in a *Southern* direction from this my office.  
 The name of the nearest office on the same route on the other side is *Barkland*  
 and its distance is *Twelve* miles in a *Southern* direction from this my office.  
 The name of the nearest office of the route is *Blomery*, and its  
 distance by the most direct road is *22* miles in a *S-W* direction from this my office.

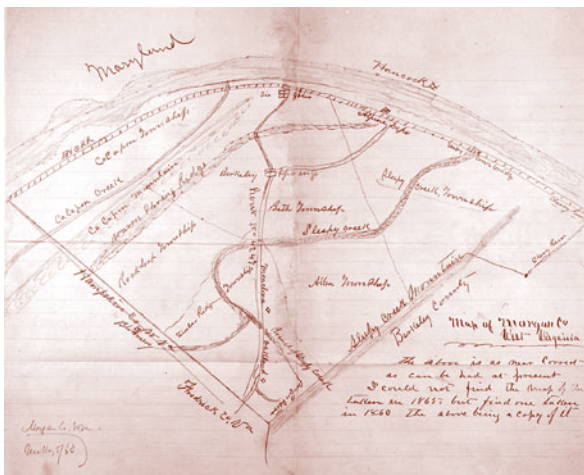
State, under this, the names of all other offices near your office in different directions from it, and their distances from it by the most direct roads.

*South*  
*Virginia Stone Run 4247 - 15 miles from this office*  
*Kingfisher Run B.V. & O.R. - 2 3/4 " " " "*  
*Spine Run " " " " " " " "*

\*If the town, village, or site of the Post Office, be known locally by another name than that of the Post Office, state that other name here, that it may be identified on any published map of the State (or Territory), if appearing thereon.  
 †If a diagram of the township (or, where the land is not so divided, a sketch map) showing the precise location of your office, together with the adjoining Post Offices, towns or villages, the roads, railroads, and larger streams or creeks, in addition to the above verbal description, will be useful, and is desired.  
 A correct map of the locality and adjacent country might be furnished by your County Surveyor, but this must be without expense to the Post Office Department; it being, however, for the general interest and advantage of the community to have the Post Office correctly located on the maps, it may be expected that this will be cheerfully furnished on proper application.  
 State (on margin of this sheet) whether there is an file at your county seat (court-house), or in the hands of your County Surveyor, a map of the county.  
 State also the present Surveyor's name and Post Office address.

Return an exact copy of the State law defining your county boundary.

(Signature of Postmaster) *Ann M. Mead*  
*Ann M. Mead P.M.*  
 (Date)



Site location report for the Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, Post Office, with a hand-drawn map of Morgan County, West Virginia, submitted by Postmaster Ann M. Mead in 1868.

## **United States Official Postal Guide, 1874–1954**

The *United States Official Postal Guide* provides alphabetical lists of Post Offices nationwide, by state, and by state and county. Monthly supplements to the *Guide* show the latest Post Office establishments, discontinuances, and name and county changes.

Selected issues of the *United States Official Postal Guide* may be available from your local library through inter-library loan.

## **Locations of Records**

### **National Archives and Records Administration**

*700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20408-0001*

**T**he Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, and the War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, are housed here. Many of the records most useful to researchers have been reproduced on microfilm and are available from the National Archives and its regional branches, and they may be available from your local library through inter-library loan. For further information, write to the above address or go to [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

### **National Archives at College Park**

*8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001*

Post route maps are located in the Cartographic and Architectural Section of the Archives' College Park facility. For further information, write to the above address or go to [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).



## **National Personnel Records Center**

*Civilian Records Facility  
111 Winnebago Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126*

The Civilian Records Facility has personnel records for many postal employees whose service ended after 1910. It also houses rural route cards.

## **Library of Congress**

*101 Independence Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20540-0002*

The Library's Manuscript Division houses some records of the Confederate Post Office Department. The Geography and Map Division has early post route maps. To see some of its other useful maps, go to <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.

## **United States Board on Geographic Names**

*U.S. Geological Survey  
523 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192-0523*

The United States Board on Geographic Names is tasked with standardizing geographic name usage. To search its domestic geographic names database, go to <http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html>. Post Office names were typically suggested by prospective patrons; there are no postal records that explain their origin.

## **Historian, United States Postal Service**

*475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260-0012*

While the historian's staff cannot respond to requests from the public for information on Post Offices and former postal employees, they can provide guidance in researching specific aspects of postal history.

## Corporate Library, United States Postal Service

475 L'Enfant Plaza SW  
Washington, DC 20260-1540

Copies of many of the publications described in this booklet can be found in the collection of the Corporate Library. While the library does not lend out its historical materials, its collection is open to the general public during regular business hours. The library staff cannot respond to requests for research.

## Further Reading

**A** detailed description of many of the postal records in the collection of the National Archives and Records Administration can be found in *Preliminary Inventory Number 168: Records of the Post Office Department*, prepared by and available from the National Archives.

Many private researchers have compiled books on Post Offices by state, using postal records at the National Archives as well as local records. Your local library might be able to help you locate copies of these and other local postal history sources.

**Alaska** Helbock, Richard W. *United States Post Offices, Volume I — The West*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1998.

**Arizona** Theobald, John, and Lillian Theobald. *Arizona Territory: Post Offices and Postmasters*. Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1961.

**Arkansas** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *Checklist of Arkansas Post Offices*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1983.

**California** Salley, Harold E. *History of California Post Offices, 1849–1976*. La Mesa, California: Postal History Associates, Inc., 1977.

- Colorado** Bauer, William H., James L. Ozment, and John H. Willard. *Colorado Postal History: the post offices*. Crete, Nebraska: J-B Publishing Co., 1971.
- Connecticut** Warmesley, Arthur J. *Connecticut Post Offices and Postmarks*. Portland, Connecticut: self-published, 1977.
- Delaware** Smith, Chester M. Jr., and John L. Kay. *The Postal History of Maryland, the Delmarva Peninsula, and the District of Columbia: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1984*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1984.
- District of Columbia** Smith, Chester M. Jr., and John L. Kay. *The Postal History of Maryland, the Delmarva Peninsula, and the District of Columbia: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1984*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1984.
- Florida** Bradbury, Alford G., and E. Story Hallock. *A Chronology of Florida Post Offices*. [Vero Beach, Florida]: The Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, 1962.
- Idaho** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *A Checklist Of Idaho Post Offices*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1984.
- Illinois** Helbock, Richard W. *United States Post Offices, Volume III — The Upper Midwest*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1999.
- Indiana** Baker, J. David. *The Postal History of Indiana*. Louisville, Kentucky: Philatelic Bibliopole, 1976.
- Iowa** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *Iowa Post Offices, 1833–1986*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: The Depot, 1986.

- Kansas** Baughman, Robert W. *Kansas Post Offices, May 29, 1828–August 3, 1961*. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Postal History Society, 1961. Information from this book is available at [www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org); search for *post offices*.
- Kentucky** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *A Checklist of Kentucky Post Offices*, Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1989.
- Louisiana** Germann, John J. *Louisiana Post Offices*. Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1990.
- Maine** Dow, Sterling T. *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*. Portland, Maine: Severn-Wylie-Jewett Co., 1943.
- Maryland** Smith, Chester M. Jr., and John L. Kay. *The Postal History of Maryland, the Delmarva Peninsula, and the District of Columbia: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1984*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1984.
- Massachusetts** Merolla, Lawrence M., and Frank M. Crowther. *The Post Offices of Massachusetts*. North Abington, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Postal Research Society, 1981.
- Michigan** Ellis, David M. *Michigan Postal History: The Post Offices, 1805–1986*. Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1993.
- Minnesota** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *The Post Offices of Minnesota*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1978.
- Missouri** Schultz, Robert G. *Missouri Post Offices, 1804–1981*. St. Louis, Missouri: American Philatelic Society, 1982.
- Montana** Lutz, Dennis J. *Montana Post Offices & Postmasters*. Minot, North Dakota: publisher unknown, 1986.

- Nevada** Frickstad, Walter N., and Edward W. Thrall. *A Century of Nevada Post Offices 1852–1957*. Oakland, California: Philatelic Research Society, 1958.
- New Hampshire** Smith, Chester M. Jr., and John L. Kay, *The Postal History of New Hampshire: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1985*. Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1986.
- New Jersey** Kay, John L., and Chester M. Smith Jr. *New Jersey Postal History*. Lawrence, Massachusetts: Quarterman Publications Inc., 1977.
- New Mexico** Helbock, Richard W. *A Checklist of New Mexico Post Offices, 1849–1988*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1989.
- New York** Kay, John L., and Chester M. Smith Jr. *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980*. State College, Pennsylvania: American Philatelic Society, 1982.
- North Dakota** Patera, Alan H., and John S. Gallagher. *North Dakota Post Offices, 1850–1982*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1982.
- Ohio** Gallagher, John S., and Alan H. Patera. *The Post Offices of Ohio*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1979.
- Oklahoma/Indian Territory** Helbock, Richard W. *Oklahoma Post Offices*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1987.
- Oregon** Helbock, Richard W. *Oregon Post Offices, 1847–1982*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: Raven Press, 1985.
- Pennsylvania** Kay, John L., and Chester M. Smith Jr. *Pennsylvania Postal History*. Lawrence, Massachusetts: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1976.

**Rhode Island** Merolla, Lawrence M., Frank M. Crowther, and Arthur B. Jackson. *Rhode Island Postal History: the post offices*. Providence, Rhode Island: Rhode Island Postal History Society, 1977.

**South Dakota** Patera, Alan H., John S. Gallagher, and Kenneth W. Stach. *South Dakota Post Offices*. Lake Grove, Oregon: The Depot, 1990.

**Tennessee** Frazier, D. R. *Tennessee Post Offices and Postmaster Appointments 1789–1984*. Dover, Tennessee: self-published, 1984.

**Texas** Wheat, Jim. *Postmasters and Post Offices of Texas, 1846–1930*. [Garland, Texas]: self-published, ca. 1974. Information from this book is available at [www.rootsweb.com/~txpost/postmasters.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~txpost/postmasters.html).

**Utah** Gallagher, John S. *The Post Offices of Utah*. Burtonsville, Maryland: The Depot, 1977.

**Vermont** Slawson, George C., Arthur W. Bingham, and Sprague W. Drenan. *The Postal History of Vermont*. New York, New York: Collectors Club, 1969.

**Washington** Boardman, Tim, and Richard W. Helbock. *Washington Post Offices*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1986.

**Wisconsin** Hale, James B. *Wisconsin Post Office Handbook*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Postal History Society, 1988.

**Wyoming** Helbock, Richard W. *A Checklist of Wyoming Post Offices, 1850–1988*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1989.

**F**or information on United States Post Offices before 1811, see the following publication: Stets, Robert J. *Postmasters & Postoffices of the United States, 1782–1811*. Lake Oswego, Oregon: La Posta Publications, 1994.

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