

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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POSTAL SERVICE



We have become so accustomed to the delivery of our mail to our homes and offices and collection of mail from mailboxes, that many take for granted it's always been like that. Prior to American Independence, a Rural Post was operated by England in the colonies with royal riders. American Colonists began to strongly resent the British for operating their postal service for a profit with very high mailing costs. William Goddard, a printer, was a leader in helping set up a Constitutional Post beginning in 1774 which with support of all the colonies, eventually led to the demise of the British mails. The new system was run on the idea of service with any surplus of revenue to go back to the public treasury for betterment of postal operations.

On May 29, 1775 the first Act of an American Congress relating to the postal service, occurred. The Second Continental Congress passed the following resolution: "As the present critical situation of the Colonies renders it highly necessary that ways and means should be devised for the speedy and secure conveyance of intelligence from one end of the continent to the other, Resolved, that Mr. Franklin, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Lee, Mr. Willing, Mr. S. Adams, and Mr. P. Livingston be a committee to consider the best means of establishing Post for conveyance of letters and intelligence through this continent."

Congress acted upon the recommendation of that committee and on July 26, 1775 established a general post office of the "United Colonies." Benjamin Franklin was hired as our first Postmaster General. A line of posts was appointed between Falmouth in New England to Savannah, Georgia.

As the nation rapidly grew in population, postal services were expanded to meet the growing needs of communication and Americans who

headed west. Up to 1861 postal service was limited to the transportation of mail simply from one post office to another. Letters were generally sent collect until 1858 when it became compulsory to prepay. Postmasters were required to mark each letter with the name of the post office and state and the date of receipt as well as the rate of postage. Shortly before 1900 there began the first machine cancellations. It was at this time that Rural Free Delivery, RFD, was also instituted.

In Orleans County the first post office was established at Gaines on July 9, 1816 with William J. Babbitt as postmaster. This was discontinued in 1907. A post office was not established in Albion until March 1822. Here are a few other familiar places and dates their post offices were established: Medina - Jan. 1827; Holley - Feb. 1822; Kendall - June 1837; Lyndonville - 1846, Waterport - March 1845 and Kent 1899.

However, there have been a number of discontinued post offices in Orleans County at such places as Barre Center, Childs, Carlyon, County Line, East Barre, East Gaines, East Shelby, Farmingham, Hindsburg, Kendall Mills, Kuckville, Lakeside Park, Manning, Shelby Basin and Yates to name a few. Some of these places are practically unheard of today. For instance, Carlyon in the Town of Carlton, was later changed to Ashwood and Farmingham was located in the Town of Barre east of Millville on the West Lee Street Road and the Longbridge Roads.

Our turn of the century photo here shows the interior of the Albion Post Office when it was located on East Bank Street. Some postal employees in the picture are: Howard Riley, Floyd Conroy, John VanStone, Bill Luttenton, Fred Butler and John Coughlin.