The history of the post office from its establishment down to 1836

Joyce Herbert
THE HISTORY
OF THE
POST OFFICE
THE
HISTORY
OF THE
POST OFFICE
FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT DOWN TO 1836
BY HERBERT JOYCE, C.B.
OF THE POST OFFICE

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen
1893
CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction—Master of the Posts—Posts centred in the Sovereign—Instructions for their Regulation—Travelling Post—Object of the Post Office Monopoly . . . . . . . . . . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II

The Post through the County of Kent—This Post put under the care of De Quester—Stanhope of Harrington, as Master of the Posts, asserts his Rights—Vacillating Decisions of the Privy Council—Sir John Coke—Thomas Witherings . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 8

CHAPTER III

Decadence of the Posts—Witherings's Plan—Introduction of Postage—Concessions to the common Carrier—Post-haste—Witherings appointed Master of the Inland as well as the Foreign Posts—His Dismissal—Philip Burlamachi—Dissensions between the Lords and Commons—Edmund Prideaux appointed Witherings's Successor . . . . 15

CHAPTER IV

Prideaux's Activity—Unauthorised Post set up to Scotland—System of Farming—Prideaux ceases to be Master of the Posts—Secretary Thurloe—The Posts become the Subject of Parliamentary Enactment—Rates of Postage—Letters circulate through London—The Travelling Post not a Source of Revenue—Clement Oxenbridge . . . . . . . 24
CHAPTER V


CHAPTER VI


CHAPTER VII

State of the Packet Service—Ship Letters—Special Boats built for the Harwich Station—M. Pajot, Director of the French Posts—Establishment of West India Packets—Edmund Dummer, Surveyor of the Navy—Regulations for the Management of the Packet Stations—Conditions of Employment—Smart and Bounty Money—Passes required for Passengers—and for Goods—Regulations habitually infringed—Smuggling—Packets forbidden to give Chase—Practice on Capture of a Prize—Packet Stations at Falmouth and at Harwich conducted on different Principles—Packets employed to carry Recruits—Letters not to be carried in Foreign Bottoms—Court-Post—Restoration of Packet Service with Flanders—John Macky, Packet Agent at Dover—The Postmasters-General act as Surveyors of News to the Court—Their Interview with Godolphin—Posts set up for the Army in Flanders—Packet Establishment placed on a Peace Footing—Dummer's Bankruptcy and Death . . . . 72

CHAPTER VIII

American Posts—Thomas Neale—Andrew Hamilton—Ocean Penny Postage—Posts transferred to the Crown—Become self-supporting . . . 110
CHAPTER IX


CHAPTER X


CHAPTER XI


CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

Model of Mail-coach—Patent Coaches—Thomas Hasker—His pithy Instructions—Roof-loading—The King’s Interest in his Coach—General Result of Palmer’s Plan—Condition of the country Post Offices—Francis Free-ling—Enlargement of the General Post Office—Communication with France—Bank Notes cut in half—Letter-carriers put into Uniform—Grant to Post Office Servants—Development of the Penny Post—Edward Johnson—Excessive Absence among the Letter-carriers—By the Penny Post prepayment ceases to be compulsory—The Ten-mile Limit—Origin of the Twopenny Post—Dead Letter Office—American and West Indian Correspondence—Correspondence for the India House—Post with the Channel Islands—Further Restrictions on Franking—Bankers’ Franks—Patterns and Samples—Metropolitan Cart Service—Horse and Cross Posts—Rates of Postage increased—Mysterious doings of the Packets—Brilliant Engagements—Post Office Usage—Counsellors’ Fees—New Years’ Gifts—Todd’s Indifference to Censure—His Death . . . . 281

CHAPTER XIV

Ship-letter Office—Increase in Rates of Postage—Abolition of the Penny Post—Invoices and Bills of Lading—Convention Posts—Prosecutions—Auckland’s Pleasantries—Repressive Powers—Guarding the Horse-mails—Recovery of stolen Mail Bag—Troubles with Contractors—Surveyors deprived of their Post Offices—Rates of Postage again increased—Threepenny Post—Post Office Revenue—William Cobbett—Early or Preferential Delivery—Treatment of Foreign Newspapers—Newspaper Summaries—The Times—Olney Post—Death-blow to Convention Posts—Turnpike Trusts—Exemption from Toll—Roads discoached—Yet further Increase in Rates of Postage—Bewildering Complications—Want of