

Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Historian's Office
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Features

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Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of *Deerpark Diary*—2007. The topic in this year's issues will be the history of the Postal Service and Deerpark Post Offices. This issue provides a general history about the postal system and the local post offices no longer in service. The post offices serving Deerpark today will be topics in subsequent issues: Cuddebackville—June Huguenot—September Sparrowbush—December. If you have any information about local post offices to share, please contact the Historian's Office at the Deerpark Museum, 25 Grange Road, Huguenot or call (856-2702 or 754-8070).



The Colonial Postal Service

On November 5, 1639, the General Court of Massachusetts passed this order: *For the preventing of the miscarriage of letters, it is ordered, the notice be given, that Richard Fairbanks, his house in Boston, is the place appointed for all letters, which are brought from beyond the seas, or to be sent thither, and he is to take care that they be delivered or sent according to their directions; and he is allowed for every such letter one penny; provided that no man be compelled to bring his letters thither except he please.*

Richard Fairbanks lived on Washington Street near the Town House in the marketplace. It is easy to imagine what a crowd must have filled his house when a ship anchored in the harbor after the long two or three month voyage from England.

Somewhat later it became the custom to bring the letters to the Exchange in the Town House and to let them run the risk of their being delivered by chance visitors.

In 1672 Governor Francis Lovelace of New York established a monthly post between New York City and Boston over what later became the Boston Post Road.

In 1683 Governor William Penn of Pennsylvania established a post office in Philadelphia, where Henry

Waldy, the first postmaster, was authorized to send mail weekly between Newcastle Delaware and Philadelphia and to supply the riders with horses to serve the routes. A post route extending from Maine to Georgia was established in this same year; these old routes later became the trunk highways serving the eastern United States seaboard.

In 1691 Andrew Hamilton of Edinburgh, Scotland was appointed by the British crown as postmaster general for the American Colonies. The first advance toward an organized intercolonial service was made by granting a patent to Thomas Neale on February 17, 1692, to establish post offices in North America. An office was established at Philadelphia and rates were fixed to most of the Colonies, but receipts did not cover expenses and in 1707 the government purchased the rights.



In 1753 Benjamin Franklin became joint postmaster general for the North British Colonies in America and served until 1774 when he was dismissed because

of his sympathies toward American independence.

Many improvements in the colonial postal system were made under his administration. Despite poor roads and great distances between centers of population, Franklin made the postal service an efficient and reliable means of communication. Post roads were in operation from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada.



United States Postal Service

Franklin was appointed head of the American postal system by the Continental Congress on July 26, 1776 at a salary of \$1,000 a year and served until November 7, 1776. Franklin deserves credit for establishing a sound U.S. postal system.

Following ratification of the constitution, George Washington appointed Samuel Osgood of Massachusetts to serve as postmaster general on September 26, 1789. At that time the postal service was a part of the Treasury Department and it remained so until 1829 when the Post Master General became a member of the President's Cabinet.

Postal Service

Milestones

- Mail Delivery**
Act of 1792—recognized letters, packets and newspapers as mail matter
- 18th Century**—any road on which mail traveled by was designated as a Post Road—foot, horseback, stage coach
- 1823**—steamboats carry mail between post towns where no roads exist
- 1831**—steam-driven engines carry mail
- 1847**—postage stamps became available
- 1848**—Pacific Mail Steamship Co. carries mail to California from New York to Panama by rail to the Pacific then by ship to California—military carries mail over land to California
- 1858**—compulsory prepayment for mail delivery and street letter boxes are installed
- 1860**—Pony Express carries mail from Missouri westward
- 1863**—free city delivery instituted in 49 of the country's largest cities
- 1864**—postal employees sort mail on railway post office cars and money order system allows money to be sent by mail
- 1889**—National Association of Letter Carriers was organized
- 1896**—experimental rural free delivery routes began in West Virginia
- 1899**—"horseless wagon" tested to collect mail in Buffalo, NY.
- 1901**—first contract to carry mail by automobile
- 1914**—established the use of government-owned motor vehicles
- 1918**—some airmail service in northeastern states
- 1920**—transcontinental airmail service
- 1935**—transpacific airmail service
- 1939**—transatlantic airmail service
- 1941**—buses used for highway mail service
- 1943**—postal zoning system for faster distribution of mail
- 1946**—helicopter shuttle airmail system carries mail from airports to terminal annex post offices
- 1948**—international air parcel-post inaugurated
- 1977**—railway post office service terminated
- 1963**—Zip Codes added to addresses



Pony Rider Leaning Red Butte Station by William Henry Jackson

The Pony Express

Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred.

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Thus read newspaper ads in March, 1860. William H. Russell, an American transportation pioneer, tried repeatedly to get backing from the Senate Post Office and the Post Roads Committee to carry mail between St. Joseph, Missouri (westernmost point reached by the railroad and telegraph) and California.

Many people believed transportation across the 2,000-mile central route to the West was impossible because of the extreme weather conditions. Russell thought a route was feasible and organized his own express system to prove it.

Russell, and two partners, Majors and Waddell, formed the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. They built relay stations, searched for good horses, and recruited riders. Before being hired, riders had to swear on a Bible not to "cuss, fight, or abuse their animals" and to conduct themselves honestly.

The route ran through parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and California. On an average day, a rider covered 75-100 miles. He changed horses at relay stations, set about 10-15 miles apart, transferring himself and his "mochila" (a saddle cover with four mail carrying pockets) to the new mount, all in one leap.

The first mail by Pony Express, April 3, 1860, took ten and a half days. The fastest delivery was in March 1861, when President Lincoln's inaugural address was carried in 7 days and 17 hours.

From April 1860 through June 1861, the Pony Express operated as a private enterprise. From July 1, 1861, it operated under contract as a mail route until October 24, 1861, when the transcontinental telegraph line was completed and the Pony Express became history.

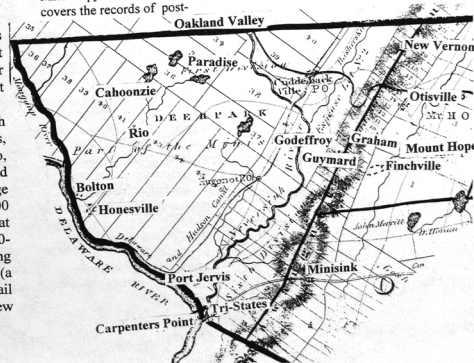
Post Offices serving Town of Deerpark

Some of these records were compiled by Richard Carey, retired Town of Deerpark Historian, in 1977. His source was the National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy 841, Roll 89, which covers the records of post-

master appointments in Orange County, New York from the year 1832 to September 30, 1971

You will notice that some of the post offices listed are now located in the Towns of Mount Hope and Walkkill and the City of Port Jervis. Prior to 1825, the Town of Walkkill and the Town of Deerpark had a common boundary line. In that year, land was taken from both Walkkill and Deerpark to form the Town of Calhoun, later known as the Town of Mount Hope. Port Jervis was part of Deerpark until it became a city in 1907.

Today Deerpark is served by three post offices: Cuddebackville; Huguenot; and Sparrowbush. (histories to be written in future issues) However, during the 19th and early 20th centuries there were many post offices serving the Town of Deerpark.



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Listed below are the names and dates of service for those of which there are records in the Historian's Office.

Butler Postmaster, Samuel Brown, April 1, 1817—no other entry available

Cahoonzie July 23, 1892 mail sent to Rio for delivery after May 3, 1901

Carpenters Point Postmaster Francis Kelley, January 1, 1817—no other entry available

Finchville Established before 1832—discontinued September 24, 1852

Godeffroy July 8, 1880—The post office closed on February 28, 1990, then mail was delivered by Cuddebackville. Originally the name was to be Port Clinton and located on the western side of the D & H Canal. On the map included in the application, the post office is located on the Port Jervis Monticello Railroad. The name Port Clinton has been crossed out and the name Godeffroy entered.

Graham Established before 1832—discontinued March 25, 1843.

Guyward Established June 2, 1866, Peter L. Gumaer—Postmaster—additional information is available

Honesville Established before 1832—discontinued November 15, 1840

Minisink Established before 1832—discontinued November 30, 1921 Mail was sent to Port Jervis for delivery.

Mount Hope Established before 1832—no date available about discontinued service. The last entry for a Postmaster is John H. Jeffers March 24, 1865, however there is one legible entry for Postmaster

Benjamin Woodward, April 1, 1817.

New Vernon Established before 1832—discontinued November 1853

Oakland Valley Sullivan County February 11, 1871. The only other information available is that there was a request to move the post office to a new site on September 8, 1920.

Otisville October 12, 1819 The Otisville area at the time the post office was established was located in the Town of Deerpark and remained in the town until 1825.

Paradise February 3, 1873 Mail was sent to Oakland Valley, Sullivan County for delivery after November 8, 1895.

Port Jervis Established before 1832. Today the Port Jervis Post Office serves the city as well as some of the surrounding areas in the Town of Deerpark.

Rio May 13, 1886 Mail was sent to Sparrowbush for delivery after January 18, 1951.

Tri-States July 15, 1885 Mail was sent to Port Jervis for delivery after March 17, 1903.

Local mail delivery has changed with the times. Some of the old time post offices were located in postmasters' homes or in general stores where the neighbors gathered in a social setting to catch up on the happenings of the day.

Unfortunately there are no records available dating back to the 18th century, however there must have been some form of postal delivery because letters and documents from other parts of the country exist in the town's archives.

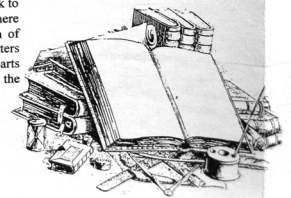


Hawk's Nest Book

The Hawk's Nest, A Newspaper History of the Road, compiled by Norma Schadt, Town of Deerpark Historian, was published in December 2006. Using newspaper articles, dated from 1874 to 2002, you can read about its development from a winding single lane dirt road to one of New York's Scenic Byways.

Funding was made possible in part by a grant sponsored by Senator John Bonacic through the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and Upper Delaware Council.

The books are available for \$15.00 at the Deerpark Museum, 25 Grange Rd., Huguenot, NY; Deerpark Town Hall, Rt. 209, Huguenot, NY; the Upper Delaware Council Office, Narrowsburg, NY; and other historical societies. Call 856-2702 or 754-8070 for additional information.



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