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Terms of the Star

ARE TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS per annum, payable half yearly IN ADVANCE: No paper can be discontinued until the same is paid for.—

ADVERTISEMENTS,

ARE inserted *three weeks* for *ONE DOLLAR*, and continued *weekly*, for *TWENTY-FIVE CENTS* per square.

Laws of the Union.

(BY AUTHORITY.)

AN ACT

Regulating the Post Office Establishment.

BE *it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled*, That there be established, at the seat of government of the United States, a General Post Office, under the direction of a Post Master General. The post Master General shall appoint two assistants, and such clerks as may be necessary for performing the business of his office. He shall establish post offices and appoint post masters, at all such places as shall appear to him expedient, on the post roads that are or may be established by law. He shall give his assistants, the post masters, and all other persons whom he shall employ, or who may be employed in any of the departments of the general post office, instructions relative to their duty, he shall provide for the carriage of the mail on all post roads that are or may be established by law, and as often as he, having regard to the productiveness thereof, and other circumstances, shall think proper, he may direct the route or road, where there are more than one between places designated by law for a post road, which route shall be considered the post road. He shall obtain from the post masters their accounts and vouchers for their receipts and expenditures once in three months, or oftener, with the balances thereon arising in favor of the general post office. He shall pay all expences which may arise in conducting the post office, and in the conveyance of the mail, and all other necessary expenses arising on the collection of the revenue, and management of the general post office. He shall prosecute offences against the post office establishment. He shall once in three months render to the Secretary of the Treasury a quarterly account of all the receipts and expenditures in the said department, to be adjusted and settled as other public accounts. He shall also superintend the business of the department in all the duties that are or may be assigned to it, *Provided*, That in case of the death, resignation, or removal from office of the post master general, all his duties shall be performed by his senior assistant, until a successor shall be appointed and arrive at the general post office to perform the business.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the post master general, and all other persons employed in the general post office, or in the care, custody, or conveyance of the mail, shall, previous to entering upon the duties assigned to them, or the execution of their trusts, and before they shall be entitled to receive any emolument therefor, respectively, take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation, before some magistrate, and cause a certificate thereof to be filed in the general post office; "I. B A. do swear, or affirm (as the case may be) that I will faithfully perform all the duties required of me, and abstain from every thing forbidden by the laws in relation to the establishment of the post office and post roads within the United States." Every person who shall be in any manner employed in the care, custody, conveyance, or management of the mail, shall be subject to all pains, penalties and forfeitures for violating the injunctions, or neglecting the duties required of him by the laws relating to the establishment of the post office and post roads, whether such person shall have taken the oath or affirmation above prescribed or not.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be lawful for the post master general to provide by contract, for the carriage of the mail on any road on which a stage waggon or other stage carriage shall be established, on condition that the expence thereof shall not exceed the revenue thence arising. It shall also be lawful for the post master general to enter into contracts for a term not exceeding eight years, for extending the line of posts, and to authorise the persons so contracting, as a compensation for their expences, to receive during the continuance of such contracts, at rates not exceeding those for like distances established by this act, all the postage which shall arise on letters, newspapers magazines, pamphlets, and packets, conveyed by any such posts; and the roads designated in such contracts shall during the continuance thereof, be deemed and considered as post roads within the provision of this act: And a duplicate of every such contract shall, within sixty days after the execution thereof, be lodged in the office of the comptroller of the Treasury of the United States.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That no other than a free white person shall be employed in carrying the mail of the United States, on any of the post roads, either as a post rider, or driver of a carriage carrying the mail; and every contractor or person who shall have stipulated or may hereafter stipulate to carry the mail, or whose duty it shall be to cause the same to be conveyed on any of the post roads aforesaid, and who shall contrary to this act to employ any other than a free white person as a post rider, or driver, or in any other way to carry the mail on the same, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay the sum of fifty dollars; one moiety thereof to the use of the United States, and the other moiety thereof to the person who shall sue for and prosecute the same, before any court having competent jurisdiction thereof.

Sec. 5 *And be it further enacted*, That the post master general shall be authorised to allow the post masters at the several distributing of offices such compensation as shall be adequate to their several services in that respect: *Provided*, That the same shall not exceed, in the whole, five per cent. on the whole amount of postages on letters and newspapers received for distribution: *Provided also*, That if the number of mails, received at and dispatched from any such office, is not actually increased by the distributing system, then no additional allowance shall be made to the post master.

Sec 6 *And be it further enacted*, That whenever it shall be made to appear to the satisfaction of the post master general that any road established, or which may hereafter be established as a post road, is obstructed by fences, gates or bars, or other than those lawfully used on turnpike roads to collect their toll, & not kept in good repair, with proper bridges and ferries where the same may be necessary, it shall be the duty of the post master general to report the same to Congress with such information as can be obtained, to enable Congress to establish some other road instead of it in the same main direction

Sec. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person shall knowingly and wilfully obstruct or retard the passage of the mail, or if any driver or carrier, or of any horse or carriage carrying the same, he shall, upon conviction, for every such offence, pay a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars: And if any ferry man shall by willful negligence or refusal to transport the mail across any ferry, delay the same, he shall forfeit and pay for every ten minutes that the same shall be so delayed, a sum not exceeding ten dollars.

Sec. 8. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be the duty of the post-master general to give public notice in one or more of the newspapers published at the seat of government of the United States, and in one or more of the newspapers published in the state or states or territory, where the contract is to be performed, for at least six weeks before entering into any contract for carrying the mails, that such contract is intended to be made, and the day on which it is to be concluded, describing the places from and to which such mail is to be conveyed, the time at which it is to be made up, and the day and hour at which it is to be delivered. He shall moreover within ninety days after the making of any contract, lodge a duplicate thereof, together with the proposals which he shall have received respecting it, in the office of the Comptroller of the Treasury of the United States: *Provided*, That no contract shall be entered into for a longer term than four years.

Sec. 9. *And be it further enacted*, That every post master shall keep an office in which one or more persons shall attend on every day on which a mail, or bag, or other packet or parcel of letters shall arrive by land or water, as well as on other days, at such hours as the post master general shall direct, for the purpose of performing the duties thereof; and it shall be the duty of the post master at all reasonable hours, on every day of the week, to deliver on demand any letter, paper or packet, to the person entitled to or authorised to receive the same; and all letters brought to any post office half an hour before the time of making up the mail at such office, shall be forwarded therein; except at such post offices, where, in the opinion of the post master general, it requires more time for making up the mail, and which he shall accordingly prescribe; but this shall in no case exceed one hour.

Sec. 10. *And be it further enacted*, That no fees or perquisites shall be received by any person employed in the general post office on account of the duties to be performed by virtue of his appointment.

Sec. 11. *And be it further enacted*, That the following rates of postage shall be charged on all letters and packets (excepting such as are hereinafter exempted) conveyed by the posts of the United States, viz. For every letter composed of a single sheet of paper, conveyed not exceeding forty miles, eight cents; over forty and not exceeding ninety miles, ten cents; over ninety and not exceeding one hundred and fifty miles, twelve and a half cents; over one hundred and fifty and not exceeding three hundred miles, seventeen cents; over three hundred and not exceeding five hundred miles, twenty cents; over five hundred miles, twenty five cents: And for every double letter, or one composed of two pieces of paper, double those rates; and for every triple letter, or one composed of three pieces of paper, triple those rates; and for every packet composed of four or more pieces of paper, or other thing, and weighing one ounce avoirdupois, quadruple those rates, and in that proportion for all greater weight: *Provided*, That no packet of letters conveyed by the water mails shall be charged with more than quadruple postage, unless the same shall actually contain more than four distinct letters. No post master shall be obliged to receive, to be conveyed by the mail, any packet which shall weigh more than three pounds: And the postage marked on any letter or package and charged on the postbill which may accompany the same, shall, in favor of the post master who delivers out said letter be conclusive evidence of the lawful postage thereon, unless said letter shall be opened in the presence of the said post master or his clerk.

Sec. 12. *And be it further enacted*, That every letter or packet brought into the United States, or carried from one port therein to another, in any private ship or vessel, shall be charged with six cents, if delivered at the post office where the same shall arrive, and if destined to be conveyed by post to any place, with two cents, added to the ordinary rates of postage.

Sec. 13. *And be it further enacted*, That if any postmaster, or other person authorised by the postmaster general, to receive the postage of letters, shall fraudulently demand or receive any rate of postage, or gratuity, or reward, other than is provided by this act, for the postage of letters or packets; on conviction thereof he shall forfeit for every such offence, one hundred dollars, and shall be rendered incapable of holding any office or appointment under the government of the United States.

Sec. 14. *And be it further enacted*, That no ship or vessel arriving at any port within the United States, where a post office is established, shall be permitted to report, make entry, or break bulk, until the master or commander shall have delivered to the postmaster all letters directed to any person or persons within the United States, or the territories thereof, which, under his care, or within his power, shall be brought in such ship or vessel, except such as are directed to the owner or consignee of the ship or vessel, and except also such as are directed to be delivered at the port of delivery to which such ship or vessel may be bound. And it shall be the duty of the collector, or other officer of the port, empowered to receive entries of ships or vessels, to require from every master or commander of such ship or vessel, an oath or affirmation, purporting that he has delivered all such letters, except as aforesaid. And if any commander or master of any such ship or vessel shall break bulk before he shall have complied with the requirements of this act every such offender shall on conviction thereof forfeit for every such offence a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars.

Sec. 15. *And be it further enacted*, That the post masters to whom such letters may be delivered, shall pay to the master or commander, or other person, delivering the same, except the commanders of foreign packets, two cents for each letter or packet, and shall obtain, from the person delivering the same, a certificate specifying the number of letters and packets, with the name of the ship or vessel, and the place from whence the last sailed; which certificate, together with a receipt for the money, shall be with his quarterly accounts transmitted to the post master general, who shall credit him with the amount.

Sec. 16. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person other than the post master general or his deputies, or persons by them employed, shall be concerned in setting up or maintaining any foot or horse post, stage waggon, or other stage carriage or sleigh on any established post road, or from one post town to another post town, on any road adjacent or parallel to an established post road, or any packet boat or other vessel to ply regularly from one place to another, between which a regular communication by water shall be established by the United States, and shall receive any letter or packet, other than newspapers, magazines or pamphlets, and carry the same by such foot or horse post, stage waggon or other carriage, or sleigh, packet boat or vessel, (excepting only such letter or letters as may be directed to the owner or owners of such conveyance, & relating to the same, or to the person to whom any packet or bundle in such conveyance is intended to be delivered) every person so offending shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of fifty dollars: *Provided*, That it shall be lawful for any person to send letters or packets by a special messenger.

Sec. 17. *And be it further enacted*, That the deputy post masters and other agents of the post master general shall duly account and answer to him, for all way letters which shall come to their hands; and for this purpose the post riders and other carriers of the mail, receiving any way letter or letters (and it shall be their duty to receive them, if presented more than two miles from a post office) shall deliver the same, together with the postage, if paid, at the first post office to which they shall afterwards arrive, where the post master shall duly enter the same, and specify the number and rate or rates in the post bill, adding to the rate of each way letter, one cent, which shall be paid by the post master to the mail carrier from whom such way letters shall be received. And that letters directed to persons living between post offices may be delivered, and the postage thereof duly collected, it shall be the duty of the carriers of the mail to take charge of, and deliver all such letters as shall for that purpose be committed to them by any post master, and collect the postage thereof, which shall be paid over to such post master on demand. And for every letter so delivered, the mail carrier delivering the same shall be allowed to demand and receive two cents to his own use, besides the ordinary postage. And if any post master or other agent of the post master general shall neglect so to account, he or they so offending shall, on conviction thereof, forfeit for every such offence a sum not exceeding fifty dollars: *Provided*, That no mail carriers shall make such deliveries at any place not on the post road: *Provided also*, That the receipt and delivery of letters on the way, between post offices shall not be required of the mail carriers in case where, in the opinion of the post master general, the time or manner of carrying the mail, or the speed of conveyance, is incompatible with such receipts and deliveries.

Sec. 18. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person, employed in any of the departments of the general post office, shall unlawfully detain, delay, or open any letter, packet, bag, or mail of letters, with which he shall be entrusted, or which shall have come to his possession, and which are intended to be conveyed by post, or if any such person shall secrete, embezzle or destroy any letter or packet entrusted to him as aforesaid, and which shall not contain any security for, or assurance relating to money, as hereinafter described, every such offender, being thereof duly convicted, shall for every such offence be fined, not exceeding three hundred dollars, or imprisoned, not exceeding six months, or both, according to the circumstances and aggravations of the offence. And if any person employed as aforesaid, shall secrete, embezzle, or destroy any letter, packet, bag or mail of letters, with which he shall be entrusted, or which shall have come to his possession, and are intended to be conveyed by post, containing any bank note or bank post bill, bill of exchange, warrant of the Treasury of the United States, note of assignment of stock in the funds, letters of attorney for receiving annuities or dividends, or for selling stock in the funds, or for receiving the interest thereof, or any letter of credit, or note for or relating to payment of monies, or any bond or warrant, draft, bill, or promissory note, covenant, contract or agreement whatsoever, for or relating to the payment of money, or the delivery of any article of value, or the performance of any act, matter, or thing, or any receipt, release, acquittance, or discharge of or from any debt, covenant, or demand, or any part thereof, or any copy of any record of any judgment, or decree, in any court of law, or chancery, or any execution which may have issued thereon, or any copy of any other record, or any other article of value, or any writing representing the same; or if any such person, employed as aforesaid, shall steal or take any of the same out of any letter, packet, bag, or mail of letters, that shall come to his possession, he shall, on conviction, for any such offence be imprisoned not exceeding ten years. And if any, who shall have taken charge of the mail of the United States, shall quit or desert the same, before he delivers it into the post office kept at the termination of his route, or to some known mail carrier, or agent of the general post office authorised to receive the same, every such person so offending, shall forfeit and pay a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars for every such offence. And if any person, concerned in carrying the mail of the United States, shall collect, receive, or carry any letter or packet, or shall cause or procure the same to be done, contrary to this act, every such offender shall forfeit and pay, for every such offence, a sum not exceeding fifty dollars.

Sec 19 *And be it further enacted*, That if any person shall rob any carrier of the mail of the United States or other person entrusted therewith, of such mail, or of part thereof, such offender or offenders shall, on conviction, be imprisoned not exceeding ten years, and if convicted a second time of a like offence, he or they shall suffer death; or if in effecting such robbery of the mail, the first time, the offender shall wound the person having custody thereof, or put his life in jeopardy, by the use of dangerous weapons, such offender or offenders shall suffer death. And if any person shall attempt to rob the mail of the United States, by assaulting the person having custody thereof, shooting at him or his horse or mule, or threatening him with dangerous weapons, and the robbery is not effected, every such offender, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding three years And if any person shall steal the mail, or shall steal or take from or out of any mail, or from or out of any post office, any letter or packet, or if any person shall take the mail, or any letter or packet therefrom or from any post office whether with or without the consent of the person having custody thereof, and shall open, embezzle, or destroy any such mail, letter, or packet, the same containing any article of value, or evidence of any debt, due, demand, right or claim, or any release, receipt, acquittance or discharge, or any other article, paper or thing mentioned and described in the eighteenth section of this act, or if any person shall, by fraud or deception, obtain, from any person having custody thereof, any mail, letter or packet, containing any article of value or evidence thereof, or either of the writings referred to, or next above mentioned, such offender or offenders, on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned not exceeding seven years. And if any person shall take any letter or packet, not containing any article of value or evidence thereof, out of a post-office, or shall open any letter or packet which shall have been in a post office, or in the custody of a mail carrier, before it shall have been delivered to the person to whom it is directed, with a design to obstruct the correspondence, to pry into another's business or secrets, or shall secrete, embezzle or destroy any such mail, letter or packet, such offender, upon conviction, shall pay for every such offence a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars.

Sec 20. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person shall rip, cut, tear, burn or otherwise injure any port mantua, valise, or other bag used, or designed to be used by any person acting under the authority of the post-master general, or any person in whom his powers are vested in the conveyance of any mail, letter, packet, newspaper or pamphlet, or shall draw or break any staple, or loosen any part of any lock, chain or strap attached or belonging to any such valise, portmantua, or bag, with an intent to rob or steal any mail, letter, packet, newspaper or pamphlet, or to render either of the same insecure, every such offender upon conviction shall for every such offence pay a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars, or be imprisoned not exceeding three years at the discre-

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