

---

*William and Mary Goddard, Printers and Public Servants*

---

one, namely, her conduct for fourteen years of the local post office. The first postmaster of Baltimore under the Constitutional Post Office, after its adoption by Congress, was Mary K. Goddard, the sister of the founder of the system. Throughout the Revolution and until the year 1789, she continued to serve in this capacity, and that her service was given at an actual sacrifice of her own interests appears from the words of the memorial<sup>1</sup> which she addressed to His Excellency, President Washington, when in that year a new Postmaster General removed her from office because of his desire to appoint in her place one who should be able actively to visit and superintend the whole Southern Department of the postal system. Miss Goddard recited to his Excellency the tale of her services during the difficult years of the enterprise. She told of the small receipts of the office, and as has been referred to before, the necessity which she had been under of paying from her own purse "hard money" for the employment of riders. She contested the practicability of the plan whereby the office of local postmaster should be combined with that of superintendent of a department, and in words wherein one feels, rather than reads, a repressed resentment, she begged the President to overrule the decision of his Postmaster General. To her petition, a vain protest after all, she subjoined a schedule showing the great increase in the business of the Baltimore Post Office during the years of her incumbency.

After Mary Goddard's relinquishment of the printing and newspaper business to her brother in 1784, and her removal from the post office in 1789, there remained for her employment only the book store, the business of which she conducted until the year 1802. It is doubtful if all of her enterprises together had sufficed to acquire for her more than a decent maintenance, but at the time of her death, in her eightieth year, on August 12, 1816, she was able to leave a small property to a colored woman who had been the servant and companion of her later years.

One comes from a perusal of the facts of Mary Goddard's life with the feeling that, in spite of her activity in public affairs, she had worked, lived and died a lonely woman. An admirer lauded her as "a woman of extraordinary judgment, energy, nerve and strong good sense." Her service to Baltimore throughout the Revolution was of a high order, her patriotism unquestioned. History abounds with anecdotes of colonial ladies who paid fabulous sums to their hairdressers, of dames in silk and bombazine, of daughters of the cavaliers moving gracefully through the minuet. Their gra-

<sup>1</sup> *Papers of the Continental Congress*, 78, v. 10, 617-619. In Ms. Division Library of Congress. Miss Goddard's first assumption of the Baltimore Post Office seems to have occurred on October 11, 1775, when under the heading "Constitutional Post-Office," she announced in the *Maryland Journal* that two posts to the "eastward" and southward set out from and arrived at her office each week.