

Oldest U.S. Post Offices

The table below lists the 69 Post Offices in operation on July 26, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin as Postmaster General of the United Colonies, predecessor to the United States. All but nine of these offices — listed below in italics — were still operating in 2022.

The names of some offices changed over time; in such cases, the original name is shown in parentheses. Further information on each office is available in [Postmaster Finder](#), the Postal Service's online record of postmasters by Post Office.

Note: Dozens of Post Offices operated in colonial America prior to 1775, under the British. For information on the first Post Office in British North America and on the longest-occupied Post Office building, see the next page. For a list of the first U.S. Post Office(s) in all 50 states, see [First U.S. Post Offices by State](#).

Connecticut	Fairfield, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, New London, Stamford
Delaware	New Castle, Wilmington
District of Columbia ¹	<i>Georgetown</i>
Georgia	Savannah
Maine ²	Portland (originally "Falmouth")
Maryland	Annapolis, Baltimore, Bladensburg, Charlestown, Chestertown, Easton (originally "Talbot" or "Talbot Court House"), <i>George Town (in Kent County)</i> , <i>Harford</i> , <i>Queens Town</i> , Upper Marlboro
Massachusetts	Boston, Ipswich, Marblehead, Newburyport, Salem, Springfield, Worcester
New Hampshire	Portsmouth
New Jersey	Elizabeth (originally "Elizabethtown"), Newark, New Brunswick, Princeton, Trenton, Woodbridge
New York	Albany, New York
North Carolina	Bath, Edenton, New Bern, Wilmington
Pennsylvania	Bristol, Chester, Lancaster, Philadelphia
Rhode Island	East Greenwich, Newport, Providence, <i>South Kingston (originally "Tower Hill")</i> , Warren, Westerly
South Carolina	Charleston, Georgetown, <i>Purysburgh</i>
Virginia	Alexandria, <i>Colchester</i> , Dumfries, Fredericksburg, Hampton, <i>Hobbs' Hole</i> , <i>Newcastle</i> , Norfolk, Petersburg, Port Royal, Smithfield, Suffolk, Urbanna, Williamsburg, Yorktown

¹ Georgetown in the District of Columbia was part of Montgomery County, Maryland, until 1800.

² Maine was part of Massachusetts until 1820.

First Post Office in British North America: Boston, Massachusetts, 1639

In 1639, Boston had a population of about 1,200 people and was just nine years old. Communicating with family, friends, and business partners in Britain was difficult. Bostonians often relied on travelers or ship captains to carry their letters overseas. Letters arriving from overseas were often deposited at taverns or coffeehouses, where the addressees could pick them up.

To prevent “the miscarriage of letters,” on November 9, 1639, the General Court of Massachusetts designated Richard Fairbanks’ tavern as the official repository for mail brought from or sent overseas. The court decreed:

Richard Fairbanks his house in Boston is the place appointed for all letters, which are brought from beyond the seas, or are to be sent thither; are to be brought unto him and he is to take care, that they be delivered, or sent according to their directions, and he is allowed for every such letter 1d. and must answer all miscarriages through his own neglect in this kind; provided, that no man shall be compelled to bring his letters thither except he please.³

Fairbanks’ tavern handled only overseas mail; there was no domestic mail service at the time. Nevertheless, his tavern was the first place in North America designated for posting and delivering letters. As such, it is considered to be the first Post Office in the British colonies in North America.

Longest time in the same building: Hinsdale, New Hampshire, since 1816

Historically, Post Office quarters were provided by the postmaster. It was common for an office location to change whenever a new postmaster was appointed. The Post Office in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, is unique in that it has occupied the same building for more than two centuries. In 1816, Postmaster Elijah Foot moved the Hinsdale office into the two-story wooden-frame building on Main Street, where it remained as of 2022.⁴



Hinsdale Post Office, New Hampshire, circa 1974

HISTORIAN
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
APRIL 2022

³ *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, volume 7, series 3 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1838), 48, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101076467495?urlappend=%3Bseq=54> (accessed January 31, 2022).

⁴ For more information, see “Living history: Post Office building marks 200th year,” in USPS *Link*, <https://link.usps.com/2016/08/08/living-history/> (accessed January 31, 2022).