

In 1684 a conference took place at Albany between the representatives of the several colonies and of the Iroquois nations. This conference was important in several respects, but particularly in the fact that it was the first in which all the colonies took part. Even remote Virginia sent a delegate.

While the colonies were in this mind, Colonel Dongan, governor of New York, determined to make an effort to establish a permanent postal service among them. His plan was to establish a line of post houses along the coast from the French boundaries to Virginia. The king, who was much pleased with the proposition, directed Dongan to farm out the undertaking to some enterprising contractor, for a period of three or five years, and to turn over at least one-tenth of the profits to the Duke of York.¹

The duke appears to have had a claim on the revenues of the post office on two grounds. He was proprietor of the colony of New York; and under the post office act of 1660, he was recognized as entitled to a share in the profits from the English post office.

How far Dongan succeeded with this extensive scheme does not appear. He planned to visit Connecticut, Boston, and, if possible, Pemaquid. In March 1685, he had an ordinance adopted in the council of New York for a post office throughout the colonies, and fixed the charges for the conveyance of letters at threepence for each hundred miles they were carried, and for the hire of horses for riding post, threepence a mile.

Dongan's jurisdiction did not, however, extend beyond the colony of New York; and the records of the other colonies are silent as to their acquiescence in this arrangement. The only evidence that has appeared as to the operation of the service, and it establishes the fact that the service was performed for a time at least, is that Leisler, an insurrectionary leader, who seized the government of the colony in 1689, arrested the mail carrier on his way from New York to Boston, and confiscated his letters.²

In July 1688, a weekly post was established in Pennsylvania. Letters were carried from Philadelphia to the Falls of Delaware for threepence; to Chester for twopence; to New Castle for fourpence; and to Maryland for sixpence.³

As part of the scheme of James II for the confederation of the New England States under a royal governor, a postmaster was appointed for the united colonies. The choice fell upon Edward

¹ *Cal. S. P. Col. Am. and W. I.*, 1681-1685, no. 1848.

² *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, III. 682.

³ Winsor, *Narr. and Crit. Hist. of Am.*, III. 492.