

***“SYMBOL OF PROGRESS  
AND FORWARD STRIDE”:  
THE HIGHWAY POST OFFICE***

Presented by:  
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“Symbol of progress and forward stride;  
We sing its praise and greet with pride;  
Equal in portent and true progress;  
To the ‘Rail,’ ‘Airmail,’ and ‘Pony Express.’”<sup>1</sup>

Those lofty verses are part of a poem penned back in 1941 by a resident of Middleburg, Virginia, named Dabny Simpson. He wrote the poem, which appeared in a Virginia newspaper, to commemorate the inaugural run of the Highway Post Office service in his home state.<sup>2</sup>

The Highway Post Offices were large vehicles that are not as widely remembered today as those other means of mail transportation cited in Simpson’s poem. Nonetheless, the Highway Post Office likewise deserves recognition as an innovative transportation technology that effectively moved the mail.

Those vehicles, during a fast-paced and often turbulent period of American life between the World War II era and the Age of Watergate, acted as a crucial link in expediting postal operations. At the height of their existence, the brightly colored Highway Post Offices became familiar and welcome sights along the nation’s roads. The vehicles were also motorized beehives of frenzied activity. They carried postal employees who used the travel time to rapidly pick up, sort through, and drop off mail along the way.<sup>3</sup>

The Highway Post Office’s origins can be directly traced to an earlier time and older mode of transportation. Back in the late 1830s, “Route Agents” from the U.S. Post Office Department first traveled on trains to partially sort through the mail on board. About a quarter-century later, a more comprehensive approach for processing mail on trains was introduced. George B. Armstrong, assistant postmaster general in Chicago, saw trains as a more vigorous, higher-speed alternative to other means of postal transport that could get a lot of the work done en route. In July 1862, he established an experimental route for that purpose in converted baggage cars on the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad. This improved mail distribution subsequently expanded to other rail lines. The Railway Mail Service was ultimately established in 1869.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the remaining decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that service thrived as an increasing number of train tracks crisscrossed the nation. The Railway Mail Service became more than just a major force of the mail delivery network; it was in many respects the U.S. Post Office Department's backbone.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1920s, however, the Railway Mail Service faced a formidable threat to its existence. That threat involved a sharp decline in passenger and business traffic on the nation's trains. This trend continued at a furious pace throughout that decade and into the 1930s as well. Railroad companies, faced with huge losses in freight revenue, began to scale back and even eliminate the operation of many unprofitable trains. These curtailments on both main and branch lines serving various far-flung communities nationwide led to the termination of a lot of railway post office cars.<sup>6</sup>

The main reason for this dramatic drop in railroad use was a competing transportation system that grew larger in both size and significance during those decades. That system encompassed the nation's highways which had evolved a great deal from the often dirt-based, rutted, and impassable jumble of roads earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This growth was aided by the introduction of motor vehicles and the need for better, stronger roads to accommodate that new means of transportation.<sup>7</sup>

The nation's mail-delivery priorities likewise played an important role in efforts to improve those roads. The Rural Free Delivery program, for example, broadly fueled the demand for good, all-weather routes for distributing mail throughout the countryside.<sup>8</sup>

That demand brought about the first major federal expenditures for roadbuilding since the 1830s. A Post Office Department appropriation bill approved in 1912 launched an experimental federal-aid post road program. The Post Office Appropriations Act for 1913 accomplished this by authorizing \$500,000, divided equally among the states, to improve roads that were or could be designated for the rural free delivery of mail. Those funds, however, were available to state or local governments only as long as they agreed to pay two-thirds of the costs involved. The act also authorized a joint congressional committee to study and report on federal aid to highways.<sup>9</sup>

The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, in turn, defined and established the basic concepts of a federal-state program for building rural post roads. That law apportioned \$75 million spread out over five

years and based on one-third each of a state's area, population, and rural post road mileage. The federal share was 50 percent of the cost, which could not exceed \$10,000 per mile. A state, in order to be eligible for that funding, would need to have a highway agency in place. In addition, the state's legislature needed to formally assent to the law's provisions.<sup>10</sup>

The Federal Highway Act of 1921, which further strengthened federal participation in state-level roadbuilding efforts, brought about an even larger share of well-kept roads. That landmark law appropriated \$75 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1922, to be distributed to the states for work on roads. These funds had to be spent on seven percent of each state's total mileage. Three-sevenths of those designated roads had to be interstate in character, and as much as 60 percent of the federal funds could be spent on that portion.<sup>11</sup>

These provisions, by focusing funds on just a small fraction of each state's roads, led to a more efficient and better connected highways system in place of the irregular, piecemeal segments previously built. Another key provision made continued federal funding contingent on a state's compliance with enhanced engineering standards for the adequacy, durability, and width of its designated roads.<sup>12</sup>

The Federal Highway Act of 1921 ushered in what many call the golden age of roadbuilding. Over the next decade or so, the amount of improved highways more than doubled to approximately 470,000 miles.<sup>13</sup>

Even the Great Depression could not slow down this steady progress. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal spent about a billion dollars altogether on roadbuilding projects during the 1930s to put people back to work.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout both decades, many more highways became hard-surfaced. Those highways, more than ever before, were also wider, smoother, straighter, and able to handle heavier traffic and higher speeds. The bridges carrying those highways also improved markedly. The increased federal support constituted a key reason for these strides; so did such major technological innovations as sturdier pavement design and more refined earth-moving equipment.<sup>15</sup>

Those advancements made it even easier for more and more individuals to abandon trains for the now-greater convenience and flexibility offered by highways. Automobile travel skyrocketed. Truck use likewise intensified. The motorbus industry also blossomed during this time.<sup>16</sup>

Travel by all these types of motor vehicles increased from 45 billion to 252 billion vehicle miles between 1920 and 1936 – a jump of 460 percent.<sup>17</sup> As railroad operations continued to shrink in response to this breathtaking trend, postal officials struggled with how to preserve the fast-mail service being lost in the process. A consensus emerged that highways, which created the problem in the first place, could also provide a solution.<sup>18</sup>

The Post Office Department's first proposed solution to be implemented, however, proved to be insufficient. That solution entailed setting up a widespread Star Route system relying on trucks to provide postal deliveries in areas where the Railway Mail Service had been withdrawn. Those trucks, it turned out, could not equal the level of service that the trains had supplied. This was mainly because the trucks only carried the mail; they were not set up for any mail-sorting operations in transit. That inactivity on the road consequently shifted extra work onto already inundated post offices along the way.<sup>19</sup>

Something more was needed to fill the void left by discontinued trains. A California-based railway mail clerk named James F. Cooper, in 1927, sought to creatively address that need. He envisioned a big, specially outfitted highway vehicle that could assume the functions of a railway mail car. Cooper, who has since been called the "Father of the Highway Post Office," introduced a resolution proposing his idea at a meeting of the Railway Mail Association's Sacramento branch. That motion was eventually endorsed as well by the association's California Division. Postal officials in Washington, D.C., however, did not act upon the proposed idea despite the ever-growing loss of rail service.<sup>20</sup>

There were other attempts, notably from enterprising bus and truck manufacturers, to convince the Post Office Department to allow vehicles similar to railway cars out on the highways.<sup>21</sup> As the shutdown of money-draining trains only accelerated in the 1930s, the department's leadership finally

embraced the need for larger-sized mail service on the highways and started asking Congress for authorization to make that happen.<sup>22</sup>

A bill acceptable to all parties finally triumphed after a couple of dashed legislative efforts. House Resolution (H.R.) 6424, which provided for the transportation and handling of mail on motor vehicles where adequate railroad facilities were not available, passed the House of Representatives in August 1939, and the Senate the following June. Roosevelt signed the measure into law on July 11.<sup>23</sup>

The Highway Post Office service had at long last been officially approved, and it was now up to the Post Office Department to make those vehicles a reality. The task of mapping out the plan for that fell to Second Assistant Postmaster General Smith W. Purdum, who was temporarily in charge of the agency following James A. Farley's recent resignation as Postmaster General.<sup>24</sup>

About a month after Roosevelt signed H.R. 6424 into law, Purdum named a committee of postal employees to figure out how to best implement its provisions. That committee consisted of Railway Mail Service General Superintendent John D. Hardy; two of that service's assistant superintendents, Nair G. Maxson and Edward R. Jones; Motor Vehicle Service Superintendent Al G. Biedenweig; and Floyd M. Williams, a postal engineer.<sup>25</sup>

A huge priority for this group was to examine possible types of vehicles and decide which ones could best be modified to operate like railway mail cars. The committee settled on three types that appeared to be the most promising: a standard passenger bus with a pancake-shaped engine under the floor; another bus with its engine in the rear; and a tractor-trailer. Each of these vehicles would need to be tested out on the road to determine their actual effectiveness.<sup>26</sup>

Frank C. Walker, who had become the new Postmaster General in September, therefore wrote a letter on October 11 to the U.S. Comptroller General requesting permission to purchase – without advertising – one of each of those vehicles. This request was approved a week later.<sup>27</sup>

The committee, having made headway on the matter of vehicles, then focused on another key challenge for the Highway Post Office service: where its experimental routes should be located. On October 26, Hardy disseminated a nationwide survey to the Railway Mail Service divisional

superintendents to help determine that. Approximately 200 routes were recommended as a result of this survey.<sup>28</sup>

In deciding which of these routes to choose, the Post Office Department took road conditions into careful account. The Highway Post Offices, after all, could not perform effectively on anything other than hard-surfaced, year-round, modernized roads of sufficient width. In addition, the bridges had to be strong enough to withstand the heavy Highway Post Offices and each underpass needed to be adequately elevated to allow those vehicles safe passage beneath.<sup>29</sup>

With all that in mind, the first experimental route to be selected among the 200 candidates was a 146-mile-long one between Washington, D.C., and Harrisonburg, Virginia. That route wove through three Virginia-based highways that in many respects reflected the Old Dominion State's considerable progress in roadbuilding since the early 1920s. The route, because its diverse topography ranged from flat to steep in both rural and urban settings, also offered optimal testing conditions for the service's vehicle.<sup>30</sup>

The vehicle chosen for this route was the passenger bus with the pancake-shaped engine. That vehicle, which had a gasoline tank with a 105-gallon capacity, was built by the White Motor Company. It weighed 10 tons, and measured nine-and-a-half feet high and eight feet wide. Its bumper-to-bumper length was about 33 feet.<sup>31</sup>

This vehicle had been specially outfitted for mail-handling purposes. Its interior, as a matter of fact, closely resembled that of a railway mail car. There was a sorting table with pigeon holes just above it towards the front of the vehicle, and steel racks with hooks were located nearby for lining up mailbags. There was also a work table on board. The rear of the vehicle included storage space for up to 150 sorted-through mailbags. In addition, there were electric lights on the ceiling. Finally, letter drops had been installed on the vehicle so that individuals could easily deposit their mail during stops along the route.<sup>32</sup>

The first use of those letter drops took place on January 20, 1941, when the vehicle was driven to the White House for a courtesy call. Roosevelt used the occasion to deposit the first-ever Highway Post letter.<sup>33</sup>

Three weeks later, on February 10, that Highway Post Office made its initial trip. The vehicle left Washington, D.C., at 5:33 that Monday morning, rumbling past the city's marble buildings and soon making its way deep into the Virginia countryside. At scheduled stops along the way, this new means of postal transportation was greeted with considerable fanfare. The vehicle reached Harrisonburg just ahead of schedule at 10:49 that morning. For the return trip, the vehicle departed that Virginia city at 4:00 p.m. and made it back to the end point in the nation's capital at 9:24 that night.<sup>34</sup>

In the wake of that celebratory inaugural trip, the crew of the first Highway Post Office continued to amass a solid record of ontime mail distribution. Those veteran railway postal clerks, working daily except on Sundays and holidays, busily and efficiently sorted and dispatched mail on that new mode of transportation.<sup>35</sup>

Their vehicle more than proved itself a suitable substitute for train-based service. This was reinforced by the subsequent performance of the other two vehicles elsewhere that same year.

The tractor-trailer, used on an experimental route established that May between South Bend and Indianapolis, Indiana, was especially dismal. That International Harvester vehicle had various mechanical defects, an 80-gallon gasoline tank unable to fully cover a 302-mile round trip, and a tendency to jack-knife on slippery pavement. There were also difficulties trying to park the often unwieldy vehicle alongside post office loading platforms. In addition, the driver in the tractor could not readily communicate with the mail-handling crew in the trailer. That type of vehicle was consequently eliminated from further consideration as a Highway Post Office.<sup>36</sup>

The final of the three vehicles, a Mack-International bus with its engine in the rear, was deployed for an experimental route launched between San Francisco and Pacific Grove, California, that August. That vehicle likewise fell short of expectations. One major reason why involved a challenge shared by the International Harvester vehicle in Indiana: the Mack-International bus came with a gasoline tank with only an 80-gallon gasoline capacity, which forced the crew to stop at intermediate points during each 304-mile round trip to refuel. As a result, very few other Mack-International buses would be used as Highway Post Offices.<sup>37</sup>

The White Motor Company bus, as the most successful of those vehicles, became the standard for future Highway Post Offices. The United States' entry in World War II towards the end of 1941, however, halted the introduction of additional vehicles and the routes on which they would serve. The war also put on hold major roadbuilding efforts. Once the war was over, Americans returned to planning, improving, and constructing more highways. The Post Office Department, in similar fashion, resumed extending its new service on those highways.<sup>38</sup>

That service experienced major growth in those post-war years, as the number of railway mail cars continued to dwindle. By the mid-1950s, the number of Highway Post Office routes had mushroomed to approximately 400.<sup>39</sup>

That success rate was due in large part to the organizational committee's thorough planning at the onset. The Post Office Department may have been unusually tardy in adopting that service, but it also went the extra mile in ensuring that those vehicles would get the job done.

In the 1960s, though, the Highway Post Office joined its railway counterpart as an endangered species. The postal sectional centers, containing sophisticated and higher-speed mechanical sorting methods, came into their own during this time. The nation's mail was now increasingly handled in these large centers, which were set up on a regional basis as part of a department-wide reorganization. This mail-handling breakthrough drastically made the Highway Post Office less relevant. That service's routes were therefore gradually phased out, with the original one between Washington, D.C., and Harrisonburg ending in 1965.<sup>40</sup>

The Highway Post Office service's final journey occurred in Ohio on June 30, 1974, between Cincinnati and Cleveland.<sup>41</sup> The last surviving Railway Post Office run, incidentally, took place three years later.<sup>42</sup>

The Highway Post Office, more than three decades after its final trip, is most fully appreciated as an important component of a once-vast postal transportation network. The Highway Post Office did indeed play just a supporting role -- and a comparatively brief one -- within that network, but it was also a pivotal role that kept the nation's fast-mail supply chain both intact and viable during a critical period.<sup>43</sup>

In an even larger sense, those vehicles reflected the ever-growing comfort and savvy of postal officials with deploying road-based vehicles for mail service. The Highway Post Office also wielded far-reaching if overlooked influence in other respects both within and beyond mail-delivery operations. During World War II, for example, the U.S. military drew upon the original Highway Post Office as a model for buses customized and used to transport personnel, stretchers, and cargos.<sup>44</sup> Even one of the Highway Post Office service's earliest and most egregious setbacks – the tractor-trailer tested in Indiana – was adopted to far more effective mail-delivery use in the 1950s. That was when those rigs were first widely and successfully utilized to haul mail between large postal facilities.<sup>45</sup>

As all of this confirms, the Highway Post Office met and arguably even exceeded expectations. That is why it remains an invaluable case study of postal transportation technology in action.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in James H. Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office: Introduction of Highway Post Office Service, Washington, D.C./Harrisonburg, Virginia; A Compilation from Government Documents and Contemporary Accounts* (Mobile Post Office Society, 1985), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> National Postal Museum, *Highway Post Office Buses* (accessed 23 February 2007), available from [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl\\_railwaymail.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl_railwaymail.html), Internet; Andrew H. Malcolm, "Last Highway Post Office Following Pony Express Into Oblivion," *The New York Times*, 26 May 1974.

<sup>4</sup> James H. Bruns, *Mail on the Move* (Polo, IL: Transportation Trails, 1992): 65, 67; Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 77, 78; United States Postal Service (USPS), *The United States Postal Service: An American History, 1775-2002* (Washington, D.C.: USPS, 2003), 15; National Postal Museum, *Mail by Rail* (accessed 6 September 2007), available from [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl\\_railwaymail.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl_railwaymail.html), Internet.

<sup>5</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 67; "The Post Office Rides the Highway," *The Indianapolis Star*, 14 September 1952; Frank J. Romanski, "The 'Fast Mail': A History of the U.S. Railway Mail Service," *Prologue* 37:3 (accessed 6 September 2007), available from <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2005/fall/fast-mail-1.html>, Internet.

<sup>6</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; U.S. Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Dan McNichol, *The Roads That Built America: The Incredible Story of the U.S. Interstate System* (New York City: Sterling Publishing Company, 2006): 46, 48; Richard F. Weingroff, "Building the Foundation: The Federal Road Act of 1916," *Public Roads*, Special Edition (June 2006): 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.; The American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), *Historic American Highways: Significant Incidents in the Development of Highway Transportation in Colonial America and the United States During More Than Four Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: AASHO, 1953): 98; Stephen B. Goddard, *Getting There: The Epic Struggle Between Road and Rail in the American Century* (New York City, Basic Books, 1994):58.

<sup>9</sup> Weingroff, "Building the Foundation," 3; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964* (Washington, D.C.: AASHO, 1965), 151; McNichol, *The Roads That Built America*, 56, 57; AASHO, *The History and Accomplishment*

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of *Twenty-Five Years of Federal Aid for Highways: An Examination of Policies from State and National Viewpoints* (Washington, D.C.: AASHO, 1944), 7, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Weingroff, "Building the Foundation," 5; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964*, 152; McNichol, *The Roads That Built America*, 58, 59; AASHO, *The History and Accomplishment of Twenty-Five Years of Federal Aid for Highways*, 8-10.

<sup>11</sup> Weingroff, "The Federal-State Partnership at Work," *Public Roads*, Special Edition (June 2006): 6, 7; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964*, 152, 165; McNichol, *The Roads That Built America*, 62, 63; AASHO, *The History and Accomplishment of Twenty-Five Years of Federal Aid for Highways*, 10, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Weingroff, "The Federal-State Partnership at Work," *Public Roads*, Special Edition (June 2006): 6, 7; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964*, 152, 165; McNichol, *The Roads That Built America*, 62, 63; AASHO, *The History and Accomplishment of Twenty-Five Years of Federal Aid for Highways*, 10, 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; Weingroff, "The Federal-State Partnership at Work," 7; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964*, 164; AASHO, *The History and Accomplishment of Twenty-Five Years of Federal Aid for Highways*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> McNichol, *The Roads That Built America*, 78; Charles W. Wixom, *ARBA: Pictorial History of Roadbuilding* (Washington, D.C.: American Road Builders' Association, 1975), 122.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 88, 89, 106, 113, 114, 119; AASHO, *Historic American Highways*, 113, 114.

<sup>16</sup> "Traffic By Motor Car Greater Than By Rail," *The New York Times*, 9 December 1923; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; Goddard, *Getting There*, 87, 92; "The New Transportation System," *The Lincoln Star*, 10 May 1926; "Motorbus Traffic Grows Rapidly," *The Kingston Daily Freeman*, 14 July 1927; L.I. Hewes, "Highway Transportation Since 1928," *Better Roads* 8:9 (September 1938), 21; Janet F. Davidson and Michael S. Sweeney, *On the Move: Transportation and the American Story* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2003), 186; James A. Vance, Jr. *Capturing the Horizon: The Historical Geography of Transportation Since the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990): 508.

<sup>17</sup> *First Progress Report of the Highway Cost Allocation Study* (Letter from the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, 28 February 1957, U.S. Government Printing Office, House Document No. 106, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session), quoted by the Federal Highway Administration, *Celebrating the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System* (accessed 19 January 2007), available from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/interstate/freight.htm>, Internet.

<sup>18</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; "The Post Office Rides the Highway," *The Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 14 September 1952; "Stamps" column, *The Washington Post*, 26 January 1941.

<sup>20</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 3, 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-8; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 188.

<sup>22</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 8; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 168.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 169; Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 7-16; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>24</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 15; U.S. Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951*, xviii.

<sup>25</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 15; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>26</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 22; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; Letter from Smith W. Purdum issuing Order No. 14483, 17 August 1940, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway

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<sup>27</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 22; U.S. Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951*, xviii; "Walker Replaces Farley in Cabinet," *The Washington Post*, 1 September 1940; "Frank Walker, Ex-Postal Chief," *The Washington Post*, 14 September 1959; "Frank C. Walker, U.S. Aide, Dies," *The New York Times*, 14 September 1959; Frank C. Walker to Comptroller General of the U.S., 11 October 1940, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; R.N. Elliott, Acting Comptroller General of the U.S., to Frank C. Walker, 18 October 1940, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>28</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 20, 21; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>29</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 21; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169, 171; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>30</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 21, 22, 26; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 169; AASHO, *AASHO: The First Fifty Years, 1914-1964*, 305; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; Unsigned memorandum summarizing the legislative history of H.R. 6424 and details about the first Highway Post Office route, "Motor Vehicle Service – 1940," Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration; Notice from Smith W. Purdum for *The Postal Bulletin*, 22 January 1941, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration "Stamps" column, *The Washington Post*, 26 January 1941; U.S. Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), 20; "Stamps" column, *The Washington Post*, 2 February 1941.

<sup>31</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 40; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 171; "Highway Post Office Vehicle Record," Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation, Highway and Contract Transportation Division, Records of the Highway Post Office Vehicles, 1941-1955, Vehicle 1 to Vehicle 113, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>32</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 41, 43; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 171; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 189; "Motor-Age Triumphs," As the Editor Sees It, *Better Roads* 11:3 (March 1941), 58.

<sup>33</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 49; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 172.

<sup>34</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 51-59; Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 171-73.

<sup>35</sup> "The "Traveling Post Office,"" *The Sunday Star Pictorial Magazine*, 15 September 1948.

<sup>36</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173, 175-77; Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 21; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 188, 190; *A Comprehensive Study and Analysis of Highway Post Office Service in the United States*, 1955, Records of the U.S. Post Office Department, Bureau of Transportation and International Services, Domestic Transportation Division, Highway Transportation Branch, Highway Post Office Service, 1940-1967, Record Group 28, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>37</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173; Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 23; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 188.

<sup>38</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173; "The Post Office Rides the Highway," *The Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 14 September 1952; Tom Kuennen, "The Struggle for the Interstate," *Interstate 50: 50 Years of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways* (Tampa, FL: Faircount, LLC, 2006): 47.

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<sup>39</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173; Malcolm, "Last Highway Post Office Following Pony Express Into Oblivion," *The New York Times*, 26 May 1974.

<sup>40</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173; Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 45, 75; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 196; Malcolm, "Last Highway Post Office Following Pony Express Into Oblivion," *The New York Times*, 26 May 1974; USPS, *The United States Postal Service*, 31.

<sup>41</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 173; Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 75; Bruns, *Motorized Mail*, 196; Malcolm, "Last Highway Post Office Following Pony Express Into Oblivion," *The New York Times*, 26 May 1974; National Postal Museum, *Highway Post Office Buses* (accessed 23 February 2007), available from [http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl\\_railwaymail.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/2cl_railwaymail.html), Internet.

<sup>42</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 69; William Gildea, "'The Wash' Chugs Home To That Great Depot in the Sky," *The Washington Post*, 30 June 1977.

<sup>43</sup> According to the U.S. Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1951*, 38: "For the past several years the withdrawal of many branch and main line trains has resulted in the loss of many railway post offices. The only adequate replacement, which can restore to the postal office in these areas the speed and facilities which it formerly possessed, is the highway post office."

<sup>44</sup> Bruns, *The First Highway Post Office*, 45.

<sup>45</sup> Bruns, *Mail on the Move*, 175-77.