

Finding Aid for U. S. Postmaster Appointment Records, 1789-Present

From the earliest days until the Post Office Department became the U. S. Postal Service, the Records of Postmaster Appointment were handwritten in ledgers. After 1971, the ledgers were turned over to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The ledgers were microfilmed, and copies of the microfilms were made available to the public. More recently, the microfilms were digitized by Ancestry.com, transcribed, and the information added to Ancestry's website. For those with access to that site, the transcriptions are easy to read, but they are not the original documents and are not without mistakes. Fortunately, the digitized images of the original ledger pages are available on the NARA website.

Reading old-style handwriting, following the information from ledger to ledger, and navigating a cumbersome website can be challenging. This Finding Aid aims to help.

Entries run straight across two open ledger pages, from the verso (or left-hand) page to the recto page. Continuations of entries may be on the next line down, or they may be on a later pair of pages.



In a technological quirk, the Firefox browser loads all these files in reverse order, from Z to A, while other browsers do not. The files can still be used, but the frame numbers identified here do not apply when the file is viewed in reverse order.

The ledgers are separated into several different files covering three time periods, with overlap from one period to the next. The first two time periods are organized by the first letter of the post office name, not by state, meaning that the aid for these sections can be used for any state, not just Maine. The third time period is organized by state and county. Links will be included here for New England, along with a few pointers about finding the right pages for other parts of the country.

This aid is designed to print out with text on the left-hand pages and tables on the right.

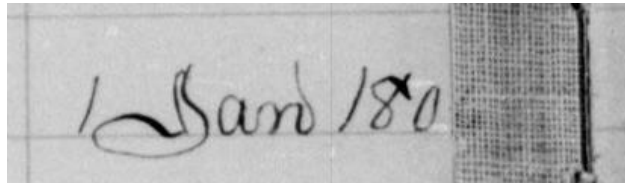
The First Time Period:
Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters,
October 1789-July 1818, Microcopy 1131, Roll 1

The first file, the digitization of Microcopy 1131, Roll 1, covers the time period October 1789 to July 1818. It is a record of First Returns Received from Postmasters, and is a recreated record, done in the mid-1800s because the original appointment ledgers were destroyed in an 1836 fire. It records the date the first quarterly financial returns filed by postmasters were made, meaning the postmaster was most likely appointed during the previous three months.

The pages of Roll 1 are well organized, the handwriting is neat, dark, and easy to read. Spelling is variable, and a few offices are listed with alternate names, such as "Balltown or Whitfield" which is now known as Whitefield.

The listings are by the first letter of the post office name; then within each letter, geographically by state from northeast to southwest; then alphabetically within state. Thus, Maine is the first state listed within each letter. Maine was still a District of Massachusetts at the time, but is listed as if it were its own state. County locations of post offices are not included.

Some pages of this ledger have been reinforced with opaque tape, such that some dates are partially or completely hidden under the tape.



One surviving source which covers many of these early postmaster appointment dates is the *Letter Books of the Postmaster General*. The Letter Books are large ledgers, each containing hundreds of handwritten pages covering a wide variety of topics. Combing through thousands of pages looking for postmaster appointments would be a herculean task. Fortunately for modern postal historians, Robert J. Stets did just that, publishing *Postmasters & Postoffices of the United States 1782-1811*, in 1994. Though not a primary source, it is highly recommended. Thousands of pages of the *Letter Books* and other resources are available on the website of the U. S. Philatelic Classics Society. <https://www.uspcs.org/resource-center/>

On the next page is a table to assist in locating the Maine, or other state, post offices recorded in this file.

Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters,
October 1789-July 1818

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75493318>

First letter	Frame numbers
A	3-12
B	13-38
C	39-69
D	70-81
E	82-88
F	89-99
G	100-112
H	113-131
I	132-133
J	134-139
K	140-144
L	145-161
M	162-188
N	189-206
O	207-212
P	213-232
Q	233
R	234-246
S	247-277
T	278-287
U	288-289
V	290-292
W	293-316
X	317
Y	318-319
Z	320

Table 1

The Second Time Period:
Record of Appointment of Postmasters,
1814-1832, Microcopy 1131, Rolls 2, 3 and 4

The second through seventh files, which cover Microfilm Rolls 2, 3 and 4, span the second time period, 1814 to 1832. These images are of the original ledgers. This time period is broken into five sometimes overlapping parts, 1814-1818, 1818-1824, 1824-1828, 1827-1828 and 1828-1832

The old style handwriting can be challenging to read, the lines can get quite crowded, and the pages are often faded. Spelling can be variable. Mc is alphabetized before Ma in the first several time periods; after Ma in the latter periods.

The listings are by the first letter of the post office name, regardless of state. Because these ledgers have all the states mixed together, this aid will apply to other states just as well as it does to Maine. Within each letter, those post offices which were already in operation at the time each particular ledger was started are in alphabetical order. Immediately following are additional sections with offices newly opened, in chronological order as they were recorded. The order in which they were recorded was not necessarily the order in which they opened, but is quite close. Sometimes when one section of the ledger filled up, continuations of existing offices were added among the additional sections.

There is overlap between the parts. It is advisable to check both the additional sections and each time period.

The additional sections are indexed below as A+, B+, etc.

The 1814-1818 ledgers do not show the post office's county location.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1814-1818

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75493677>

First letter	Frame number
A	3-6
A+	6-7
B	9-16
B+	16-20
C	24-32
C+	33-36
D	43-46
D+	46-47
E	48-50
E+	50-51
F	53-56
F+	56-58
G	59-63
G+	63-64
H	66-72
H+	72-74
I	78
I+	80
J	79-80
J+	80-81
K	82-83
K+	83
L	85-90
L+	90-91
M	95-102
M+	102-106
N	110-115
N+	115-116
O	120-121
O+	121-122
P	123-128
P+	128-130
Q	135
Q+	135
R	136-139
R+	139-141
S	143-152
S+	152-155
T	160-162
T+	162-163
U	165

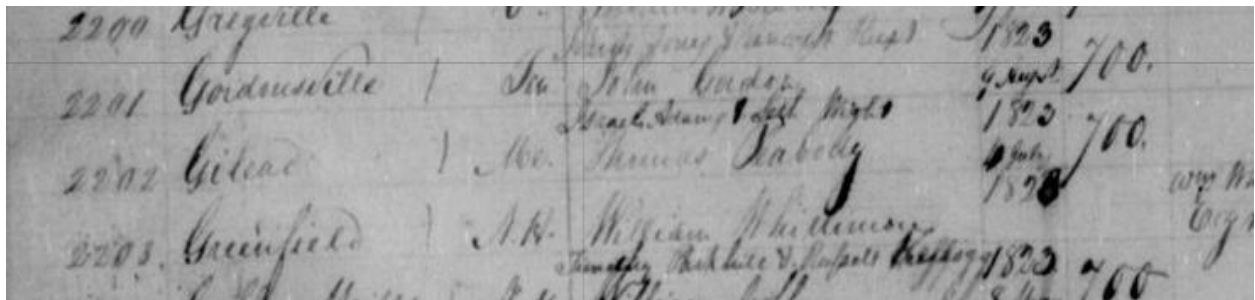
First letter	Frame number
U+	165-166
V	166-167
V+	167
W	168-175
W+	175-178
X	182
Y	183
Y+	183
Z	183

Table 2

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1818-1824

The 1818-1824 part does not show county location.

This time period is probably the most difficult to read. The pages are often faded and the writing can be quite crowded. It has not only the additional sections within each letter, identified here with a + sign, but many letters have a third and even fourth section, identified as A++ or A+++. These are later additions, and are found after the end of the alphabet.



Gordonsville, Tn, Gilead, Me and Greenfield, N. H. from the 1818-1824 period, G+ section, frame 66. This is one of the less faded and easier-to-read sections. Note that the year is written above the day and month. The “700” figure is the amount of the postmaster’s bond. All postmasters were required to be bonded, and the names of those who provided those bonds were often recorded in the ledgers. In this case, the names of Isaiah Adams and Seth Wright appear immediately above the name of Postmaster Thomas Peabody.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1818-1824

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75493864>

First letter	Frame numbers
A	4-7
A+	7-9
B	10-20
B+	20-23
B++	195
B+++	202
C	23-34
C+	34-39
C++	197
C+++	203
D	40-44
D+	44-46
E	47-50
E+	50-52
F	53-57
F+	57-59
F++	194
G	60-64
G+	64-66
G++	198
H	66-74
H+	74-77
H++	196
I	77-78
I+	78
J	79-81
J+	81-82
K	83-84
K+	84-85
L	87-92
L+	92-96
L++	200

First letter	Frame numbers
M	98-106
M+	106-111
M++	201
M+++	205
N	112-118
N+	118-120
O	122-124
O+	124-125
P	127-134
P+	134-138
Q	139
Q+	139
R	140-144
R+	144-147
S	148-160
S+	160-165
S++	199
S+++	204
T	166-169
T+	169-170
U	172
U+	172-173
V	174
V+	174-175
W	176-185
W+	185-189
X	191
Y	192
Y+	192
Z	193

Table 3

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1824-1828

In the 1824-1828 section, the county location is shown. The recording clerks in this period also did a better job of leaving room for future post office openings, meaning that there are far fewer ++ sections, and no +++ sections.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1824-1828

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75494072>

First letter	Frame numbers
A	4-9
A+	9-10
B	12-26
B+	26-29
C	33-48
C+	48-52
D	58-63
D+	63-64
E	67-71
E+	71-73
F	74-80
F+	80-82
G	85-91
G+	91-93
H	97-106
H+	106-109
I	112-113
I+	113
J	114-116
J+	116-118
K	120-122
K+	122-123
L	123-131
L+	131-134
M	137-151
M+	151-156

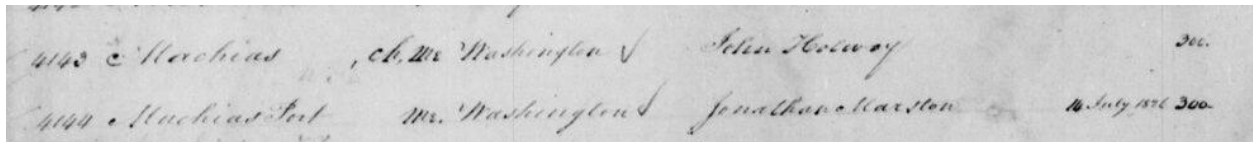
First letter	Frame numbers
N	163-170
N+	170-173
O	175-177
O+	177-178
P	179-189
P+	189-192
Q	196
Q+	196
R	197-203
R+	203-205
S	207-222
S+	222-228
T	233-236
T+	236-239
U	241-242
U+	242-243
V	243-244
V+	244-245
V++	240
W	245-257
W+	257-261
X	265
Y	266
Y+	266-267
Z	267

Table 4

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1827-1828

In the 1827-1828 period, Mc is alphabetized after Ma. These pages are neater and easier to read. Dates are now all on one line. As much of this ledger was copied over from the 1824-1828 ledger, appointment dates are sometimes not shown.

"C. H." means county courthouse.



4143; Machias; ch; Me; Washington; John Holway; no appointment date shown; 300

Entry number 4143, Machias is the courthouse location in Washington County, Holway's appointment date was already recorded in the 1824-1828 ledger, and \$300 is the amount of his bond.

4144; Machias Port; Me; Washington; Jonathan Marston; 14 July 1826; \$300.

Marston was appointed on 14 July 1826, with a bond of \$300.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1827-1828

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75494343>

First letter	Frame number
A	5-10
A+	11-12
B	14-28
B+	28-32
C	32-49
C+	49-53
D	54-60
D+	60-62
E	62-68
E+	68-69
F	69-76
F+	76-77
G	78-85
G+	85-87
H	87-98
H+	98-100
I	100-101
I+	101
J	101-104
J+	104
K	105-107
K+	107-108
L	108-117
L+	117-119
M	120-139
<i>Re M: see note at right</i>	
M+	139-142
N	143-152
N+	152-153
O	153-156
O+	156-157
P	157-168
P+	168-170
Q	170-171
Q+	171
R	171-178
R+	178-179
S	179-198
S+	198-200

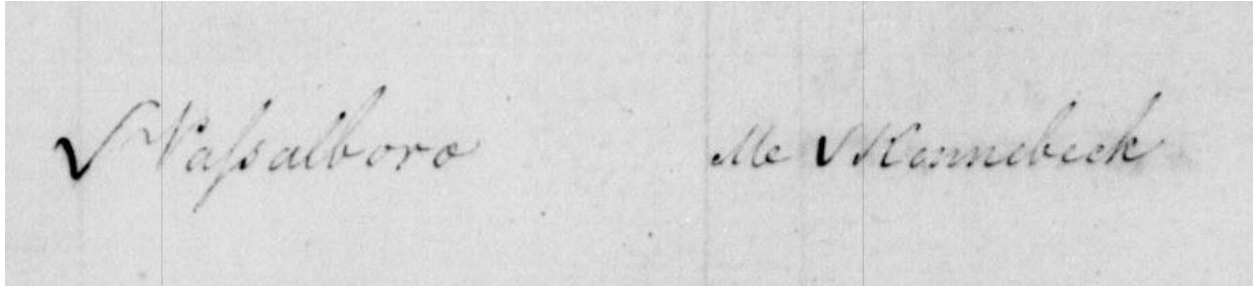
First letter	Frame number
T	201-205
T+	205-206
U	206-208
U+	208
V	209-210
V+	210-211
W	211-225
W+	225-228
X	228
Y	228-229
Y+	229
Z	229

Note regarding letter M:
The first three sets of pages, frames 120-122, were copied over, in frames 123-125. It is not a case of repeating the images, it is how it was done in the original. Whether there are any discrepancies between the two sets of pages has not been determined.

Table 5

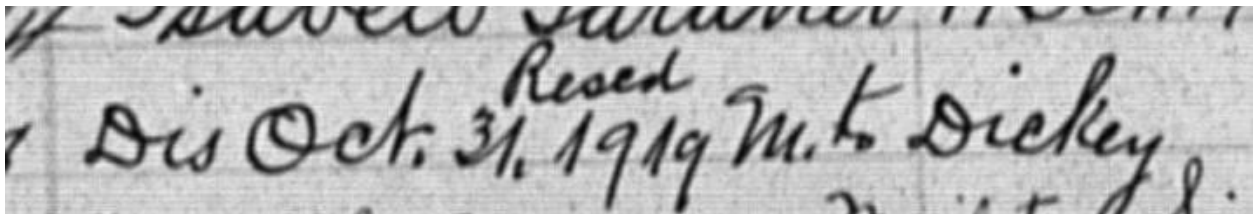
Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1828-1832

The 1828-1832 part has all entries in alphabetical order, with no additional sections. It is divided into two pieces, A-L and M-Z.



Vassalboro shows the first S looking more like an F. Kennebec County was spelled with a K at the end.

The check marks before the name and the county name do not appear to have any historical significance.



Among the numerous notes that appear, especially in the later time periods, are orders that were rescinded before taking effect. The above comes from the 1832-1971 period, and shows an order to discontinue (Dis) Allagash on Oct. 31, 1919, with Allagash mail to be sent to Dickey (M. to Dickey) after that date, but which was rescinded. Note the "Rescd" right above "31, 1919."

Notations of, among others, "Dis" and "Reest" for discontinue and reestablish are common.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1828-1832, A-L

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75494575>

First letter	Frame numbers
A	4-14
B	15-43
C	44-80
D	81-95
E	96-109
F	110-125
G	126-142
H	143-166
I	167-169
J	170-176
K	177-182
L	183-207

Table 6a

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1828-1832, M-Z

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/75494785>

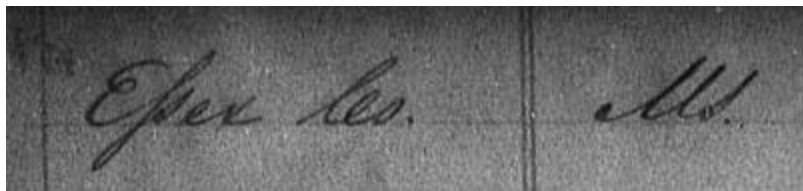
First letter	Frame numbers
M	3-38
N	39-60
O	61-68
P	69-93
Q	94
R	95-110
S	112-152
T	154-165
U	166-170
V	172-176
W	177-208
X	209
Y	210-211
Z	213

Table 6b

The Third Time Period:
Record of Appointment of Postmasters
1832-1971
Microcopy 841

The third time period is 1832-1971, Microcopy 841. These files are separated by state and county, and it is here that the problems arise from farming out the uploading job to the lowest bidder. All of the New England files have been located and are identified below, but careful searching may be necessary in other states. Essex County, Massachusetts, for example, instead of being a single file, is split, by someone unfamiliar with old-style handwriting, into Essex County, Mississippi; Epex County, Mississippi and Essex County, Massachusetts. A number of files have the state name given as "none."

One can search for an individual post office name, but specifying a state seems to confuse the system. Thus, searching for Postmaster Appointments, Salem, Massachusetts brings up irrelevant files. Searching for Salem brings up too many files with Salem in them. Searching for a less common name like Danvers works much better. It brings up Epex, Mississippi, Essex, Mississippi and Essex, Massachusetts, the three files which include Danvers. However, once on a page of Postmaster Appointments for a given county, one can scroll down and find an "Explore this Section" button. Clicking on that button brings up the option to "Search within this Series." Within the series, searches for a specific post office are somewhat more effective.



In the old style handwriting, two S's together were written such that the first one looks, to the modern reader, somewhat like an F, and together they might be interpreted as one P. The common abbreviation for Massachusetts was Ms., which is now Mississippi.

This section follows a similar pattern to the 1814-1832 series, up to about 1929. Each pair of ledger pages covers a period of time, starting with post offices that were already open, in alphabetical order, followed by those newly opened, in chronological order. A new group of pages starts another time period. Starting around 1930, each office had its own page, with more detail on various steps of the appointment process.

In these files, in the pre-one-post-office-per-page section, the abbreviations (P) and (P&S) appear with some frequency. (P) means appointed by the President; (P&S) means appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd class post offices were called Presidential offices, meaning that their postmasters were appointed by the President. Postmasters at 4th class offices, which constituted the vast majority in earlier times, were appointed by the Postmaster General.

In the one-post-office-per-page section, there are columns for several different dates which may occur in the appointment process.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-1971

New England by county:

All dates are approximate

Connecticut:

Fairfield:

Fairfield, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730611>

Hartford:

Hartford, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730665>

Litchfield:

Litchfield, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730722>

Middlesex:

Middlesex, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730774>

New Haven:

New Haven, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730802>

New London:

New London, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730836>

Tolland:

Tolland, Connecticut: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730880>

Windham:

Windham, Connecticut, frame 4 repeats frame 3: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78730908>

Maine:

Androscoggin:

Androscoggin, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746395>

Aroostook:

Aroostook, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746425>

Cumberland:

Cumberland, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746483>

Franklin:

Franklin, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746541>

Hancock:

First four frames, Hancock, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746582>

Remaining frames, Penobscot, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746587>

Kennebec:

Kennebeck or Kennebec, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746653>

Knox:

Knox, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746696>

Lincoln:

Lincoln, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746727>

Oxford:

1832-South Andover, Oxford Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746776>

South Hiram-Wilsons Mills, oxford, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746827>

Penobscot:

Penobscot, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746835>

Piscataquis:

First two frames, Piscataquis, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746906>

Remaining frames, Piscataquis, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746909>

Sagadahoc:

First six frames, Sagadahoc, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746940>

Remaining seven frames, Sagadahoc, maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746947>

Somerset:

First frame, Somerset, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746960>

Remaining frames, Somerset, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746962>

Waldo:

Waldo, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747018>

Washington:

Washington, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747050>

York:

York, Maine: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747101>

Massachusetts:

Barnstable:

First two frames, Barnstable, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747870>

Remaining frames, Barnstable, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747873>

Berkshire:

First two frames, Berkshire, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747928>

Remaining frames, Berkshire Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747931>

Bristol:

First frame, Bristol, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747976>

Remaining frames, Bristol, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78747978>

Dukes:

1832-1842, Dukes, Maryland: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748019>

1835-1853, Dukes, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748021>

1850-1971, Dukes, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748023>

Essex:

1832-1842, Essex, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748032>

1841-1857, Epex, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748035>

1852-1971, Essex, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748040>

Franklin:

1832-1855, First frame, Franklin, Maryland: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748075>

1832-1855, next five frames, Franklin, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748077>

1850-1971, Franklin, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748083>

Hampden:

First three frames, Hampden, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748121>

Remaining frames, Hampden, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748127>

Hampshire:

First frame, Hampshire, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748153>

Remaining frames, Huntington, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748159>

Middlesex:

1832-1855, Middlesex, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748190>

1855-1971, Middlesex, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748198>

Nantucket:

1832-1844, Nantucket, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748260>

1841-1971, Nantucket, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748262>

Norfolk:

First frame, Norfolk, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748268>

Remaining frames, Norfolk, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748271>

Plymouth:

1832-1840, Plymouth, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748309>

1837-1855, Plymouth, Maryland: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748312>

1850-1892, Plymouth, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748317>

1887-1971, Plymouth, None: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748326>

Suffolk:

First frame, Suffolk, Maryland: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748379>

Remaining frames, Suffolk, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748381>

Worcester:

1832-1836, Worcester, Maryland: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748388>

1835-1850, Worcester, Mississippi: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748391>

1849-1971, Worcester, Massachusetts: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78748399>

New Hampshire:

Belknap:

Belknap, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757550>

Carroll:

Carroll, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757572>

Cheshire:

Cheshire, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757622>

Coos:

1832-1855, Coos, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757661>

1854-1971, coos, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757666>

Grafton:

1832-1884, Grafton, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757694>

1884-Maplewood, Grafton, None: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757710>

Mascoma-Woodsville, Grafton, new Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757736>

Hillsborough:

Hillsborough, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757749>

Merrimack:

Merrimack, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757788>

Rockingham:

Rockingham, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757830>

Strafford:

1832-1842, Strafford, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757885>

1842-1971, Strafford, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757890>

Sullivan :

1832-1922, Sullivan, New Hampshire: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757909>

1910-1971, Sullivan, New Mexico: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78757922>

Rhode Island:

Bristol:

Bristol, Rhode Island: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731433>

Kent:

Kent, Rhode Island: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731442>

Newport:

Newport, Rhode Island: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731467>

Providence:

First frame, Providence, Rhode Island: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731482>

Remaining frames, Washington, Rhode Island, frames 1-30:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731484>

Washington:

Washington, Rhode Island, frames 31-57: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78731484>

Vermont:

Addison:

Addison, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778341>

Bennington:

Bennington, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778370>

Caledonia:

Caledonia, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778392>

Chittenden:

Chittenden, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778426>

Essex:

Essex, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778449>

Franklin:

Franklin, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778468>

Grand Isle:

Grand Isle, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778499>

Lamoille:

Lamoille, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778511>

Orange:

Orange, Vermont, frame 32 is a repeat of Orleans County frame 1:
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778531>

Orleans:

Orleans, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778564>

Rutland:

Rutland, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778594>

Washington:

Washington, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778632>

Windham:

Windham, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778660>

Windsor:

1832-1850, Windsor, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778697>

1850-Simonsville, Windsor, Virginia: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778706>

South Pomfret-Woodstock, Windsor, Vermont: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78778733>

The Post-Microfilm Time Period, 1971-Present

Postmaster Appointment Records of the U.S. Postal Service fall into three time period categories, 1971-1986, 1986-Present and 2011-Present. As with the Post Office Department periods, there is overlap.

1971-1986

This time period is mostly not online. Appointments were recorded on cards, a system which had started some time prior to 1971, duplicating the ledgers. During the 1971-1986 period, these cards are the only place of recording. These cards are located in the office of the Postal Service Historian, whose address can be found through the Postmaster Finder link below. They have not been posted online.

1986-Present

The official place of recording appointments since 1986 is Postmaster Finder, a page on USPS.com.

<https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postmasterfinder/>

Some, but far from all, Postmasters from the 1971-1986 period and earlier, have been added to Postmaster Finder. However these are transcriptions, and they do not always show exactly what the ledgers showed, whereas the post-1986 listings are the official record.

Of note, under the U. S. Postal Service, the term *discontinued* has taken a different meaning than under the Post Office Department. It used to mean *closed*. It doesn't anymore. Now, when a post office actually closes, it is said to be *suspended*. Being *discontinued* now means being legally removed from the books. The discontinuance date is usually later than the suspension date, anywhere from a few days to a number of years. The suspension date is when the post office actually closed. This important distinction has not always been recognized in the postal history community.

For the 1986-2011 period, Postmaster Finder generally reports the suspension date as well as the discontinuance date.

2011-Present

Starting in 2011, the Postal Service began a program called POSTPlan, whereby the majority of small post offices had their hours reduced, and their postmasters replaced by a new category of lower-paid employees, placed under the supervision of the postmaster of a larger nearby office. It is, of course, the smaller post offices that are most likely to be closed. With no Postmaster appointments to record, many post offices are reported in Postmaster Finder as "Converted to a Remotely Managed Post Office under the supervision of the Postmaster at..." Unfortunately, there is no longer *any* system in place for recording when these offices close. Collectors must find this information on a case by case basis and record it for posterity. The Post Mark Collectors Club's state-by-state Directory of Post Offices has been attempting to find and record closings across the country, but will inevitably miss many dates. These directories can be obtained via <http://www.postmarks.org/directory/>.