Inside the Vault:
Mary Katherine Goddard: Woman Printer, Entrepreneur, and Postmaster in the Founding Era

March 3, 2022

The session will start shortly. Please note:
• Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
• You can participate through the Q&A function.
• If you have technical difficulties, please email collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.
During the Session

- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions at the end of the session.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.
Our Team

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
- Shelby Miller - Curatorial Intern
- Dr. Martha J. King - Senior Editor with the Papers of Thomas Jefferson at Princeton University
Today’s Documents

- Petition Addressed to Samuel Osgood, November 12, 1789
- Petition to reinstate Goddard as Baltimore's Postmaster, November 13, 1789.
- Mary Katherine Goddard to George Washington, December 23, 1789
- George Washington to Mary Katherine Goddard, January 6, 1790
Mary Katherine Goddard (1738–1816)

- 1762 - moved to Providence, Rhode Island, to assist her brother William
- 1768 - moved to Philadelphia with her mother, Sarah Updike Goddard, to assist William
- 1774 - moved to Baltimore, Maryland
Maryland Journal, and Baltimore Advertiser

Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, July 6, 1779. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.
A colonial print shop


Timothy Print Shop, Charleston, South Carolina
Some other women printers

- Elizabeth Timothy, Charleston, South Carolina
- Ann Timothy, Charleston, South Carolina
- Anne Catharine Green, Annapolis, Maryland
- Clementina Rind, Williamsburg, Virginia
- Ann Smith Franklin, Providence, Rhode Island
- Cornelia Smith Bradford, Philadelphia
- Anna Catharina Zenger, New York
- Dinah Nuthead, Annapolis, Maryland
Reprinting of the Declaration

WITHOUT names of the signers
Printing the Declaration of Independence

- January 1777 - the first printing of the Declaration to include the names of the signers AND included her full name in the colophon.
A DECLARATION
BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF
The United STATES of America,
In General Congress Assembled.

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to judge of the necessity, and declare the cause therefor.

--The Declaration of Independence
IN CONGRESS, January 18, 1777.

ORDERED,

THAT an authenticated Copy of the DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCY, with the Names of the MEMBERS of CONGRESS, subscribing the same, be sent to each of the UNITED STATES, and that they be desired to have the same put on RECORD.

By Order of CONGRESS,

John Hancock, President.

Baltimore, in Maryland: Printed by Mary Katharine Goddard.
Printing Process & Replicating the Goddard printing

Courtesy of Mindy Belloff, Intima Press
Postmaster of Baltimore 1775–1789

• August 1775 - Goddard appointed as Postmaster of Baltimore
  • She was the only woman in that position.
• Autumn 1789 - removed from the post
  • A petition for her reinstatement was signed by more than 200 Baltimore citizens.
• December 1789 - She wrote to President Washington
• February 1790 - Her petition is presented to the Senate
• May 1790 - her claim is sent to the House of Representatives
Petition to Samuel Osgood

Petition Addressed to Samuel Osgood, November 12, 1789.
Gilder Lehrman Collection
Petition to Reinstate Goddard - After Treatment

Petition Addressed to Samuel Osgood,
November 12, 1789.
Gilder Lehrman Collection
“A Deputation of us waited upon Jonathan Burrell Esqr. as he passed through this Town ... He gave this reason for it that some inferior offices would be put under the direction of the Deputy here; and more travelling might be necessary than a Woman could undertake.”
"We beg leave to request it as a favour, that you will reconsider the matter, and restore her to her former appointment. We wish her to be continued in office no longer than her conduct is consistent with the Duties and Interest of the Establishment."

Petition Addressed to Samuel Osgood, November 12, 1789.
Gilder Lehrman Collection
Petition to Reinstate Goddard as Baltimore’s Postmaster

Petition to reinstate Goddard as Baltimore’s Postmaster, November 13, 1789. Gilder Lehrman Collection
“The change made in the Post office department of this place, has excited the Surprize & Indignation of the whole Community. This office was kept by a Lady upwards of 14 years, whose conduct, during that period, gave uncommon Satisfaction; And all the Postmasters General have been heard to declare, that the regularity of her Accounts & payments were equalled by few, & exceeded by none, upon the Continent.”
“As this Lady conducted the business during the arduous difficulties attending the depreciation of the Continental currency, when its value was not adequate to her trouble, she could not conceive it possible, that any person would cast a wishful Eye upon it, at least whilst she wished to enjoy it, and discharged its duties with so much punctuality and Satisfaction.”
Mary Katherine Goddard to George Washington, December 23, 1789.

Gilder Lehrman Collection
Mary Katherine Goddard to George Washington

“That she hath kept the Post office at Baltimore for upwards of 14 years; but with what degree of satisfaction to all those concerned, she begs leave to refer to the number & respectability of the persons who have publickly— addressed the Postmaster Gen'l. & his Assistant, on the Subject of her late removal from Office”
“She therefore, at the instance of the Gentlemen thus pleased to Interest themselves on her behalf, lays before your Excellency, Superintendant of that Department, as briefly as possible, the nature & circumstances, of what is conceived to be an extraordinary Act of oppression towards her.”
“when ... the Revenue of the Post Office was inadequate to its disbursements, she accepted of the same, and at her own risque advanced hard money to defray the charges of Post-riders for many years, when they were not to be procured on any other terms; and that during this period, the whole of her labor and industry in establishing the Office was necessarily unrewarded; the Emoluments of which being by no means equal to the then high rent of an Office, or to the attention required both to receive & forward the Mails”
“And as it had been universally understood that no person would be removed from Office, under the present Government, unless manifest misconduct appeared, and as no such charge could possibly be made against her, with the least colour of Justice, She was happy in the Idea of being secured both in her Office, and the protection of all those who wished Prosperity to the Institution & the new Governm’t in general.”
“That she has sustained many heavy losses, well known to the Gentlemen of Baltimore, which swallowed up the fruits of her industry, without even extricating her from embarrassment, to this day, altho’ her accounts with the Post-office were always considered, as amongst the most punctual & regular of any upon the Continent; notwithstanding which, she has been discharged from her office, without any imputation of the least fault, and without any previous official notice: The first intimation on that head being an order from Mr. Burrell, whilst at Baltimore, to deliver up the Office to the Beaser of his Note; and altho’ he had been there several days, yet he did not think proper to indulge her with a personal interview, thus far treating her in the Stile of an unfriendly delinquent, unworthy of common Civility, as well as common Justice.”
“She therefore most humbly hopes from your Excellency’s Philantropy and wonted humanity, You will take her Situation into consideration; And as the grievance complained of, has happened whilst the Post-office Departmt. was put under your Auspicious protection, by a Resolve of Congress, that Your Excellancy will be graciously pleased to order that She may be restored to her former office.”

Mary Katherine Goddard to George Washington,
December 23, 1789.
Gilder Lehrman Collection
George Washington to Mary Katherine Goddard,

“I can only observe, that I have uniformly avoided interfering with any appointments which do not require my official agency:"

“. . . giving power to the Post Master General to appoint his own Deputies, and making him accountable for their conduct, is an insuperable objection to my taking any part in this matter.

I have directed your Memorial to be laid before the Post Master General who will take such measures thereon as his judgment may direct.”
What happened to Mary Katherine Goddard?

- Not reinstated or reimbursed as postmaster
- Operated a bookstore and stationery shop
- Died in August 1816, giving freedom and “all the property of which I may die possessed” to “my female slave Belinda Starling”
Where else might we find clues to history’s mysteries?
Blank Bonds, Manifests, Apprentices and Servants indentures, Seamen's articles and journals, with a variety of other Blanks for sale at the Printing Office of the Evening Post, and at the Book Store of Mary K. Goddard, Baltimore, February 21, 1793.
The Maryland Journal, and Baltimore Advertiser

A ROBBERY.
FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.
STOLEN, from the Subscriber, out of the Room adjoining the Post Office, in Market Street, Baltimore, on Tuesday Evening, or Wednesday Morning last, a small TRUNK, covered with black Leather, and ornamented with Gold-Leaf, containing (besides a Variety of Letters, Receipts, and other Papers of no Value to any one but the Owner) the following Articles, viz.

Fourteen Guineas and a Half, wrapped up in and Fear Half-Johnnies, Paper.
Thirty or Forty Dollars and French Crowns;
One Bank Note for Fifty Dollars;
One Ditto, for Forty Dollars;
One Ditto, for Twenty Dollars;
And about Twenty Five-penny Bits, and other small Pieces of Silver.

One of the Bank Notes had the Figures 28, with others, on the Back of it.

Whoever recovers the said CASH and NOTES, and delivers them at the Post-Office, shall receive THIRTY DOLLARS Reward, and have no Questions asked; and the above Reward may be paid for apprehending and confining the Thief, so that the above-mentioned Articles may be regained, and he or she brought to Justice.

MARY KATHERINE GODDARD.
March 21, 1783.
Mary Katherine Goddard’s Almanack and Ephemeris for 1783,
Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library
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Improved Plan of the City of Baltimore, 1804.
Image courtesy of the Library of Congress
Digital Visualizations

Courtesy of Anne Sarah Rubin  UMBC digital project:
https://earlybaltimore.org/ssfs and https://bearings.earlybaltimore.org
Mary Katherine Goddard

Why does she matter?

Questions?
Upcoming Programs

● **Inside the Vault**: April 7 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)
  ○ *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* with Professor Andrew Robertson

● Gilder Lehrman Teacher Seminars registration is now open!
  ○ Seminars led by Carol Berkin on Women in the American Revolution and Kellie Carter Jackson on Black Women’s History

● Free Professional Development in Baltimore, Maryland: March 12
  ○ Focusing on aspects of the Black soldier’s experience in American military history and how to bring that topic back to the classroom with Professor John H. Morrow and Master Teacher Jermain Corbin