Newspapers in the Mails: Postal Unification of the British American Colonies
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Abstract

The Stamp Tax of 1765, by which the British Crown was attempting to pay for its expensive wars, inflamed in particular the printers whose newspapers had been admitted to the mails to bolster colonial solidarity against the French and Indian depredations. Whereas the newspapers in Britain were taxed as well as denied postal distribution, in the American colonies newspapers had been exempted from the tax and admitted to the mails—a transformational combination of public and private information that underwrote the Revolutionary War and the establishment of the United States Post Office Department.

We will place the decision of the joint Postmaster Generalship of Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter to introduce newspapers to the colonial mails in 1757 in terms of the strategic value in the perception of a postal union.