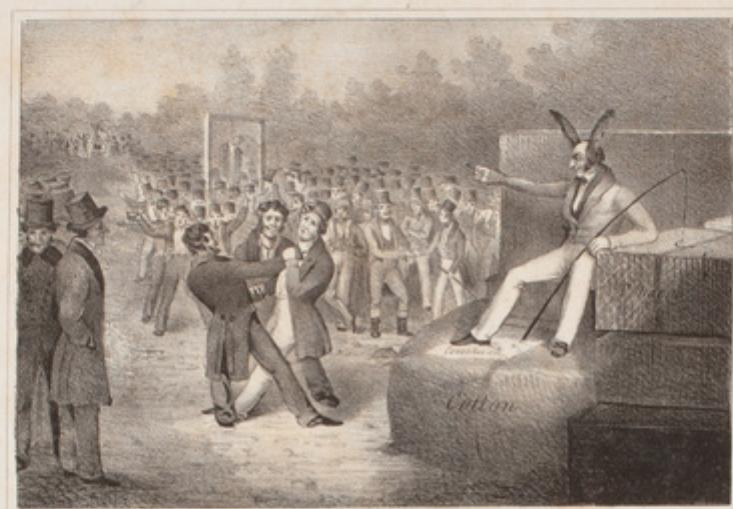


The News Media and the Making of America, 1730-1865

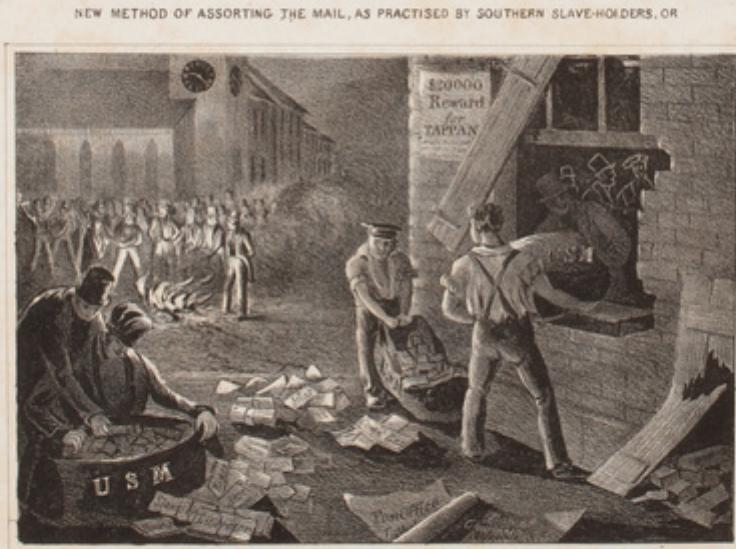
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ATTACK ON THE POST OFFICE, CHARLESTON, S.C.



Sentences passed upon one for supporting that clause of our Declaration viz All men are born free & equal "Strip him to the skin! give him a coat of Tar & Feathers! Hang him by the neck, between the Heavens and the Earth!!! as a beacon to warn the Northern Fanatics of their danger!!"



ATTACK ON THE POST OFFICE, CHARLESTON, S.C.

Description

As veterans of the Bible and religious tract movements, the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) believed in the power of the printed word to convert sinners, including those whose sin was slaveholding. Immediately after its founding in 1833, the society began publishing a broad range of newspapers, tracts, circulars, and periodicals. Within two years, AASS was printing more than a million copies a year. In 1835 the society launched a dramatic effort, dubbed the Great Postal Campaign, to flood the South with antislavery tracts and periodicals. This has sometimes been called America's first

direct-mail campaign. In the South the result was not conversion but outrage and hysteria. Though federal postal law guaranteed the security of the mail, Postmaster General Amos Kendall (1789-1869), a close ally of President Andrew Jackson (1767-1845), gave permission to Southern postmasters to refuse delivery of abolitionist materials. Thus, the U.S. postal service, the great nationalizing institution of the American political experiment, became an instrument of states' rights in the realm of slavery and abolition.

This [lithograph](#) shows two examples of “Southern Liberty” from the abolitionists’ point of view: the mobbing of “Northern Fanatics” and the 1835 attack on the post office in Charleston, South Carolina. In Charleston a mob hauled the bags of antislavery publications out of the local post office and burned them. Southerners were especially hostile to the illustrations in antislavery materials, which they feared might fall into the hands of illiterate slaves and incite insurrection. Not surprisingly, then, the abolitionists used illustrations even more extensively in their publications—woodcuts and engravings as well as lithographs. In the Great Postal Campaign of 1835, as well as in many other episodes, the Southern attack on antislavery print media became the subject for more antislavery print media.

Title

Attack On the Post Office, Charleston, S.C.

Alternative Title

New Method of Assorting the Mail, as Practiced by Southern Slave-Holders, or, Attack On the Post Office, Charleston, S.C.

Type

Political Cartoon

Date

1835

Coverage

Unknown

Format

15.0 x 18.5 cm.

Source

[AAS Catalog Record](#)

[View larger image](#)

Tags

[Political Cartoon](#), [Postal Service](#), [Slavery](#)

Citation

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