

Miami County, Unclaimed Letters at the Peru Post Office, 1841–1842

Transcribed by Ruth Dorrel and Bethany Natali

Before the Civil War, the U.S. Postal Service delivered mail only from one post office to another. Therefore, except in the few locations where personal delivery was available for an additional fee, citizens were required to collect their mail at their local post office. An 1863 Act of Congress provided for the establishment of the direct delivery system we know today, although the service was at first limited to cities in which the income from local postage could cover its cost. Rural areas and small towns did not receive free direct delivery until 1902.¹

For those living in outlying areas and those who simply were busy with other concerns, stopping regularly at the post office to check for mail was not always possible or convenient. The lack of a forwarding service also meant that mail often was left behind when people moved from one place to another. As a result, local postmasters commonly prepared lists of “left letters” to inform recipients of mail waiting for collection. Newspapers periodically published these notices as a public service.

The following notices of left letters were prepared by Peru, Indiana, postmasters E. H./M. Bruce (1841) and John Bush (1842). They were published in the *Peru Gazette* in January, April, and July 1841 and in January 1842. The first two notices simply stated that the letters were remaining in the post office at Peru, Indiana. The latter two notices indicated that if the letters were not picked up within three months, they would be sent to the general post office as “dead letters.”

Notes

1. U.S. Postal Service, *The United States Postal Service: An American History, 1775–2006* (pp. 20, 24), <http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub100.pdf> (accessed November 10, 2010).

Reported in the *Peru Gazette*, January 22, 1841

Remaining in the Post Office at Peru, I[ndian]a., on the 31st December, 1840.

A

Washington Abbott
Simeon Abbott
Mr. Achison
William Apple

B

Cornelius Byers
Gregory Bondy
Norman Boyan
Samuel Bain
Jonathan Baner 3
William Boyles
Abraham F. Barr
David Baggs

C

James Charleton
James Cassle
James Curry Esq.
F. S. Cornwall
John Corder

D

Green Duke
Hamilton Duff
Miss Ann Duff

G

Thomas Goudy
Charles Gilbert

H

Ephraim Henby
Ambrose Hale
M. P. Huling
Thomas Hansburg
Dr. Benjamin Henton
Sylvester Hinton
Henry Hahn

J

William Jones
Griffith Jackson

K

Mr. Jacob F. Keller

L

Mr. C. F. Lathrop
Mr. M. N. Lewis
Mr. M. C. Lewis

M

James T. Miller
John Meloney
Nathaniel M'Guire 2
Edmund Morse
William Moss

P

Oly Paul 2
John Plaster
Zachariah Petty

S

Isaac Stewart
Henry Shuey
Thomas D. Spoor
Henry Smith 2
William Smith
John Stevenson
John Shackelford
John Sanders
John Sellers
James T. Stewart
James B. Sayres

T

Joseph Taylor
Isabod Tharp
George M. Taylor
Mr. L. Talk
Almerin Titus

V

Richard Veal

W

Levi Wright
Bradley Witham
Robert Walker
John B. Wallace

Jan. 16, 1841, E. H. Bruce, P[ost] M[aster]

Reported in *Peru Gazette*, April 2, 1841

Remaining in the Post Office at Peru, In., on the 31st day of March, 1841.

A Adamson, Samuel Atchison, J. II Adams, R.	Hoover, Michel Holman, Joseph Henry, Parker	Perce, Mrs. Susan Porter, Alexander Prettyman, Daniel
B Butler, Hiram Boyles, William	I Iddings, John S.	R Rider, Wm. F. Robinson, Henry
C Clayton, James Carr, Cyrus Conner, Elias R. 2 Coy, Harrison Christman, Jehu 2 Cadey, Benjamin Cook, Eli Caffrey, James or Thomas Calef, Ezra	K King, Benjamin Kesling, Peter 2	S Shackleford, John 4 See, David Spray, William Silgel, Jacob Skinner, Eligah Sanders, John Snider, William Sawyer, Gerome
D Draper, Mr. John Duglass, Mary	L Lambert, Adam Long, Frederick Livingood, Christopher Large, Nathaniel	T Townsend, George Truesdale, Dr. Stephen W.
F Fisher, J. Fennimore, Matthew 2	M Massrion, William Myers, David 2 Moore, C. C. Marquis, Jonathan Miller, John Myers, John McConnel, A. Mr.	V Veal, Richard Vandoren, Isaac
G Guy, John Godfrey, Edward A. 3 Graves, Samuel	N Norris, John	W Wooley, John S. Wilson, John M. 5 William, Wm. 2 Wolpert, Samuel Wolpert, Peter Wade, Sephaniah Watson, Robert Wallick, Wesley Wait, Clarissa
H Hacket, William 3 Hobart, William Hester, Isaac Hafley, Jacob	O Onstott, Andrew Ogle, Elja	
	P Paul, Sarah 2 Peake, Seneca Pendleton, Z. W.	

April 3, 1841, E. M. Bruce, P.M.

Reported in the *Peru Gazette*, July 16, 1841

Remaining in the Post Office at Peru, which if not taken out in three months will be sent to the general post office as dead letters.

A

Abbot, Miss M. J.
Allbaugh, Daniel
Adkison, Jackson
Andrea, Mr.

B

Black, T. L.
Bruce, Mr.
Blackburn, N.
Buckley, T
Bell, P.
Britton, R. L.
Bont, Jesse
Buckman, C. B.
Brown, Samuel
Basset, E. 3
Bell, Pleasant L.
Batchelor, John
Brown, Elias
Black, Thomas
Brown, Joseph M.
Bruce, Malinda

C

Clayton, Jas.
Chamerlin, Meron & Pollard
Cody, Benjamin
Craddock, M.
Clerk of the Probate Court of
Miami County
Coleman, Samuel
Coffman, James
Crane, Isaac
Cly, John
Cavin, John
Clendenin, Benjamin
Baltimore

D

Davis, E. N.
Dolcer, Philip

E

Evans, T.
Eidson, W. D.

F

Fouts, William
Fornash, James
Flagg, A.
Fuller, William
Fisher, S.
Fenimore, Mathew
Fitzpatrick, J. H. 2

G

Graham, David
Gibson, Susan
Goudy, George
Goudy, Thomas

H

Harp, Samuel
Haifley, Jacob
Hahn, Henry
Hawkins, Z.
Hoover, Martin
Hoover, John 2
High, Charles
Hahn, Benjamin

I

Iddings, W. H.
Iddings, H.

J

Jellison, R.
Jones, John
Jackson, A. W.

L

Leonard, J. R.
Large, A.
Loops B.

M

Murphy, B. 2
Murphy, B. W.
McKee, J. B.
Malott, Daniel
McGuire, N.
Maxwelll, W.
McGuire, Nathan
Marks, Daniel
Moore, Hiram
Murrah Scruggs and others

O

Old John John
Over A.

P

Personnett, James
Post Master Mexico
Price, James
Prettyman, Daniel

R

Rautz, Miss E.
Raymond, O.
Ruddelle, John

S

Stretch, Thomas
Saville, Philip
Stroop, Michael
Stewart, Eliza & T Powel
Stapleton, Jesse
Scott, Benjamin H.
Sinclair, Isaac P.

T

Titus, A.
Truslow, Rev. J. F.

V

Veal, Richard
Votaw, Joseph

W

Wilson, Mr.
Wilson, Alexander 2
West, William
Wiseman, Mr.
Wileman, Joseph
Wilson, Woodford
Wilson, Thomas
Wilt, J. M.

Reported in *Peru Gazette*, January 8, 1842

Remaining in the Post Office at Peru, which if not taken out in three months will be sent to the general post office as dead letters.

B

Boban, Jos.
Benjamin, Nath'el
Bailey, John
Buchanan, Wm. C.
Bucknam, Calvin
Brown, Dr. J.
Bruce, Malinda
Brooks, John
Baker, Leaken

C

Cochran, Henry
Charlton, Jas. 2
Crippo, Joseph
Conklin, Tunis

F

Fuller, M.
Fisk, John J.
Fulwiler, J. B.
Fulwider, Mr.

F

Fenimore, Wm.
Fouts, Wm. D.
Fisher, Steans
French, Horatio
Fornash, Jas.

G

Gibot, Pierre
Gidley, Wm.
Godfroy, Alex

H

Hawkins, George
Harbough, Wash'tn
Hobart, Wm. S.
Hahn, John
Hoover, John
Hall, John

J

Johnson, Rev.
Johnson, Samuel

K

King, Henry

L

Lesh, John
Leonard, Jas. R.

M

Mendenhall, Ira
Miller, Jas. R.

N

Nichols & Fenimore

O

Osbon, Elemuel

P

Philips, Wm.

R

Robertson, Saml. 2
Ruddell, John
Robson, John
Raymond, Oliver

S

Spoon, Thos. D.
Sellers, John
Scott, Jas. P.

T

Thomas, Lewis

W

Wilson, Alex
Wallick, Benj.
Wiseman, John
Wilson, John

Jan 1, 1842, John Bush, P.M.

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