

Collection #
SC 3054

MAIDLOW FAMILY PAPERS 1762–2005

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Processed by

Kate Scott
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript folders

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive 1762–2005; Bulk 1762–1823

PROVENANCE: Malcolm Walford, Waterlooville, Hampshire, UK

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2005.0190

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Maidlow Family migrated from Hampshire, England to the Evansville, Indiana area beginning in 1818. Farmer James Maidlow (1764–1851) left the town of Blendworth in 1818 with the intention of joining an English settlement in Illinois. In Blendworth he had also been a churchwarden and school charity trustee. The weekly *Hampshire Telegraph* described him as “not less reputed for his matured judgement [sic] as a practical Agriculturalist, than esteemed for his fidelity, candour, and generous conduct in all transactions with his neighbors and society.”

Maidlow’s letters do not state why he emigrated, but the opportunity to own land and pay lower taxes attracted many English settlers to the United States. Two of his sons accompanied him to the United States, while his wife Mary Lockyear Maidlow stayed behind in Hampshire. Also in the traveling party was J. Purse, a linen draper from the town of Havant who does not seem to have been related to the family. After reaching their destination in eastern Illinois, Maidlow and Purse concluded that they preferred the land they had passed through in western Indiana. Each bought tracts in Vanderburgh County and, along with several other local residents, founded the town of Saundersville (also known as Sandersville, and later Inglefield). Maidlow traveled to Hampshire in 1819 and accompanied his wife to their new farm in Indiana, where he had built a log cabin with the assistance of neighbors. Several more of the couple’s sons immigrated to the United States as well. Mary Lockyear Maidlow died in 1822.

By 1825 James Maidlow had moved to New Harmony and remarried. Soon he became involved in the creation of Feiba Peveli, an offshoot of New Harmony’s utopian Rappite community. In 1840 folk artist Jacob Maentel painted his portrait. The painting depicts Maidlow wearing fine clothes, sitting in a carpeted room with a desk and bookcase. While the contents of such paintings do not always reflect reality, the fact that Maidlow could afford to have his portrait painted at least shows that he had achieved a modicum of success in his new country. He died in Vanderburgh County in 1851.

There are still Maidlows living in Evansville and other areas of the state. Maidlow Ditch is a canal in Vanderburgh County.

Sources:

Carmony, Donald F. and Josephine M. Elliott. “New Harmony, Indiana: Robert Owen’s Seedbed for Utopia.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 76.3 (September 1980), 161–261.

Collection Materials

Indiana Death Records

Maentel, Jacob. *James Maidlow*. Watercolor on paper, circa 1840.

United States Census Records

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This short collection consists of photocopied documents related to the Maidlow family. The first folder holds miscellaneous documents: church baptism and marriage records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, advertisements for the sale of the family's goods, and two maps.

The second folder contains seven excerpts of letters published in the *Hampshire Telegraph* between 1818 and 1823. Accompanying the letters is an introduction by collection donor Malcolm Walford, which discusses the Maidlow family and the economic situation in Hampshire prior to their departure. Transcriptions, also done by Walford, are provided. The first few letters are personal messages not originally intended for a newspaper, but later on the authors seem more aware of the possibility of publication. Five are written by James Maidlow, and the other two are from his countryman J. Purse.

Both men seem extremely pleased with their situations, and their letters are abundant in facts. They describe in great detail the journey they took through the interior of the United States and the subsequent process of selecting their land. Also included is a discussion of the prices of goods in the United States, which came at much higher prices than in England. A great deal of attention is given to the processes and costs of cultivation, perhaps to better inform Hampshire readers who might be considering emigration. Apart from agricultural and other practical concerns, Maidlow's fourth letter includes a significant section describing the settlement at New Harmony, Indiana led by George Rapp. "They now have the handsomest town in Indiana," he says, and praises both the residents and Rapp's leadership.

The letters conjure a version of Vanderburgh County that was rapidly shifting from frontier land to an urban center surrounded by settled farmers. The collection may be valuable to researchers interested in the Maidlow family, Hampshire emigrants, the founding of Saundersville/Inglefield, early settlers in southwest Indiana, Evansville in the early nineteenth century, or the development of New Harmony.

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Miscellaneous Maidlow Records (Photocopies), 1762–
1819

Letters from James Maidlow and J. Purse Published in
the *Hampshire Telegraph* (Photocopies), 1818–23

CONTAINER

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 3054).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.