

Collection #
P 0248

**PERU, INDIANA
NEGATIVE COLLECTION, CA. 1890S–1940S**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 folder of photographs 3 boxes of 5x7 glass plates 151 nitrate negatives, now scanned and online
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1890s–1940s
PROVENANCE:	Unknown
RESTRICTIONS:	None
COPYRIGHT:	
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	Scanned images from this collection are in the Digital Images Collection
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Peru, Indiana Copy Photographs, 1897–98 (P0148)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	0000.1247
NOTES:	

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Peru, Indiana

The area now known as Miami County, Indiana, which contains the confluence of the Wabash and Mississinewa Rivers, was once populated by great numbers of Miami and Pottawatomie Indians. After Indiana's admittance into the Union as a state in 1816, white settlers from Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia streamed into the area. At the junction of the two rivers in 1826, a treaty between the Miami and the United States granted many sections of land to Chief John B. Richardville. One of these was conveyed to Joseph Holman, on which he platted the town of Miamisport in 1829. Land deals of this sort proliferated during the 1830s and 1840s, many taking place at the famous "Seven Pillars" natural landmark on the Mississinewa. The settlers established Miami County as a distinct political entity on March 1, 1834. That same year, William N. Hood platted the town of Peru immediately east of Miamisport in direct competition with Holman to secure the designation of county seat. This competition led to rapid growth for both towns, but in 1841 the plat of Miamisport was abandoned and in time Peru would engulf the earlier town.

The opening of the Erie Canal from Fort Wayne to Peru further boosted migration and trade in 1834. Chief Godfroy of the Miami offered \$500 to any steamboat that would come to his property on the Mississinewa. By 1850 the population of Peru numbered about 1,266. In 1854, the first railroad line was completed from Indianapolis to Peru. The town boasted a population of about 5,280 by 1880.

The town reaped further rewards when, in the 1880s, livery stable owner Benjamin Wallace established a large-scale traveling circus in the town, and used local contractors exclusively in order to build, paint, and finish its quarters, rail cars, and wagons, print its advertisements, *et cetera*. Wallace's circus grew year by year, and from 1884 to 1906, Peru's pride was its hometown circus, the Great Wallace Shows. In late 1906 Wallace successfully purchased the equipment and name of famous German animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck's circus. The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus would remain one of the most popular circuses in the country for a further thirty years.

Sources:

Beasley, Al D. *Twentieth Century Peru* (1899)

Bodurtha, Arthur L., ed. *History of Miami County, Indiana: A Narrative Account of Its Historical Progress, Its People and Its Principal Interests, Vol. I* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1914)

Graham, John A. "History of Miami County" *Combination Atlas Map of Miami County, Indiana* (Kingman Bros., 1877. Reprinted 1974)

History of Miami County, Indiana (Chicago: Brant & Fuller, 1887)

Stephens, John H. *History of Miami County* (John H. Stephens Publishing House, 1896)

<http://www.peruthenandnow.blogspot.com>

<http://www.history.rays-place.com/in/miami-peru-2.htm>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The glass plates and negatives in this collection show a variety of subjects in and around Peru, Indiana from the 1890s to the 1940s. There are scenic views, people, buildings, schools, businesses, the 1913 flood, Gabriel Godfroy and other Native Americans, and circus views with performers and animals.

The thirty-eight 5x7 glass plate negatives are stored in three boxes. Two copy photographs made from glass images are in one photograph folder. There were also 151 nitrate negatives that were scanned and cataloged in CONTENTdm and are available online. Researchers may view these by going to the Digital Images Collection on our website and typing P0248 in the search box.

The glass plates and copy photographs are described in the Contents section of the collection guide. Captions were written on the negatives, these are in quotation marks and the processor's remarks and descriptions are in square brackets. The processor also did the cataloging of the scanned images and contributed identifying information to those as they were not identified.

The glass plates were numbered and are arranged in that numerical order. The last eight glass plates in Box 3 were not numbered and the processor assigned numbers to them. The photographer and the source of this collection are unknown.

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CONTENTS

"Wabash River, Peru, Indiana"
[scenic view of river and trees]

"Downtown, Peru, Indiana"
[street corner with drugstore]

"Wayne St. bridge, Peru, Indiana"
[elevated view of bridge and river]

"Bearss Hotel, Peru, Indiana"
[19 thru 25 S. Broadway Street. Groups of people standing outside the hotel. Dated 25 March 1913.]

"Warren St. Peru, Indiana"
[Cleanup efforts after March 1913 flood. Men working on repairing streetcar tracks. Dated 30 March 1913.]

"Site purchased in 1910 for 'Castle Hall' Peru, Indiana"
[Two buildings with "Ellis, Stiles & Co." carriage builder company signs. A buggy sits in front. Caption suggests municipal corruption.]

"Indians"
[Gabriel Godfroy and his son Durand standing on a porch.]

"Miami County courthouse, Peru, Indiana"
[Courthouse is under construction. Caption reads "largest stone ever put in public building in state" and dated 2 August 1909. This is the current courthouse.]

"Indian, Peru, Indiana"

CONTAINER

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 1

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 2

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 3

Photographs:
Folder 1

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 4

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 5

Photographs:
Folder 1

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 6

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 7

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 8

5x7 Glass Plates:
Box 1, Plate AR 9

<p>“Waterfall under railroad trestle, Peru, Indiana” [Waterfall appears to be frozen solid.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate AR 10</p>
<p>“Knights of Pythias float, Peru, Indiana” [The Knights of Pythias was the first fraternal organization to receive a charter from the United States Congress. It was inspired by a play about the legend of Damon and Pythias. The float is built around an automobile and is ridden by a man dressed in a wig and false beard and a goat.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates: Box 1, Plate AR 11</p>
<p>“Stream & building, Peru, Indiana” [possibly an image of a flooded street from March 1913. A figure wades through the water past some household items.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 1, Plate AR 12</p>
<p>“Large crowd at building site, Peru, Indiana” [A speaker addresses crowd of people standing on the rubble of a building. A U.S. flag is draped over the makeshift podium and others fly overhead from the tops of the scaffolding.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 1, Plate AR 13</p>
<p>“Soldier in uniform, Peru, Indiana” [Soldier shown in dress uniform with U.S.R. and castle insignia on collar. This U.S. Reserve block letter insignia came into use after 1916.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 1, Plate AR 14</p>
<p>“Onward School, Peru, Indiana” [Students and staff on front steps of the school. Onward, Indiana is in Cass County, about ten miles southwest of Peru. The sign over the door of the school bears the date 1907.]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 1, Plate AR 15</p>
<p>“Lily pads on a farm pond, Peru, Indiana”</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 2, Plate AR 16</p>
<p>“Farm with children fishing in stream, Peru, Indiana”</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 2, Plate AR 17</p>
<p>“Log cabin, Peru, Indiana” [Cabin has a crude shake roof]</p>	<p>5x7 Glass Plates Box 2, Plate AR 18</p>

“Boy in a ‘go-cart’, Peru, Indiana”

[Plate is divided in half and contains two similar images. Boy is dressed in knickerbockers, tie, goggles, and leather gloves. A plant with large, broad leaves is in the background.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 19

“Log cabin, Peru, Indiana”

[Cabin has wood siding applied and a shake roof. The photographer has blacked out the sky to achieve a clean white background on prints.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 20

“Winterquarters of circus, Peru, Indiana”

[G.H. Ream photo. Elephants practicing barbershop act. One elephant sits on a tub wearing a cutting cape while another stands on its hind legs behind it. A third appears to be sharpening a razor on a sharpening wheel. Caption reads “ ‘Sharpening the razor’ in the Barber Shop at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace.”]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 21

“Winterquarters of circus, Peru, Indiana”

[G.H. Ream photo. Elephants practice standing on tubs. Four elephants stand on their hind legs on top of tubs. Caption reads “Trainer (Percy) Phillips teaching his class to stand at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows.”]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 22
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“Winterquarters of circus, Peru, Indiana”

[G.H. Ream photo. Four elephants practice sitting on tubs. Caption reads “Trainer (Percy) Phillips School is ‘Tooked up’ at Winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows Combined”]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 23

“Spencer camp, Tillett-Fisher party, Jackman, Maine, 1909”

[Ten deer carcasses hang from their hind legs in front of a commercial building.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 24

“Burned building, Peru, Indiana”

[A crowd of bystanders watch fire fighters in front of a burned building. Icicles have formed on the ledges and awnings.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 2, Plate AR 25

- “Building, erected in 1860”
 [Central School, a towered Italianate building located at the corner of West Sixth and Miami Streets. It was demolished in 1910.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 2, Plate AR 26
- “Spencer camp, Tillett-Fisher Party, Jackman, Maine, 1909”
 [Five men sit on a curb in front of ten deer carcasses hanging from their hind legs.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 2, Plate AR 27
- “View of large factory and houses, Peru, Indiana”
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 2, Plate AR 28
- “Brown Commercial Car Company, Peru, Indiana”
 [The Brown Commercial Car Company built delivery trucks. Extra seats could be purchased for conversion into a bus. Prices were between \$1650 and \$1850.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 2, Plate AR 29
- “Farm”
 [Shocks of corn scattered across a field with a farmhouse and outbuildings in the distance. Railroad tracks run across the bottom of the photo.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 2, Plate AR 30
- “Scene at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows, Peru, Ind.”
 [G.H. Ream photo. Two elephants stand on tubs facing each other with their forelimbs resting on the back of a third elephant. A fourth elephant stands mounted on the hindquarters of the third.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 3 [1]
- “Saluting a visiter (sic) at winterquarters Hagenbeck and Wallace Shows, West & Stevens, Peru, Ind.”
 [Four elephants and two men standing outside of a brick barn. Two elephants have their trunks raised in a salute. One man holds an elephant hook. In the background is a large wagon shed which reads “Winter Quarters of the Great (Wallace) Shows”]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 3 [2]
- “You are next! in the Barber Shop at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows Combined, Peru, Ind.”
 [G.H. Ream photo. Elephants practice barbershop act. One sits on a tub wearing a cutting cape while another stands on its hind legs behind it.]
- 5x7 Glass Plates
 Box 3 [3]

“‘All Tired Out’ at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows Combined, Peru, Ind.”

[G.H. Ream photo. Four elephants lay on their sides in a row. Circus baggage wagons are parked in the background.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 3 [4]

“The ‘Fire Drill’ in Trainer (Percy) Phillips School at the winterquarters of the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Show, Peru, Ind.”

[G.H. Ream photo. Four elephants in profile in a single-file line. The elephant in front stands on four legs while the other three stand on their hind legs “mounted” on the back of the one in front of it.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 3 [5]

“Miami Co. Court House, Peru, Ind.”

[The current courthouse is shown soon after its completion in 1917.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 3 [6]

“An Oriental Danser [sic] with the Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows, Peru, Ind.”

[G.H. Ream photo. Two elephants and a man dressed in a band uniform and holding a bass drum stand outside of a large barn. One elephant has a large decorative blanket on its back.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 3 [7]

“‘Playing Dead’ Hagenbeck and Wallace Shows, West & Stevens, Peru, Ind.”

[Two men stand on top of an elephant laying on its side in front of the elephant barn at Wallace winter quarters. Another man and elephant look on. All three men hold canes used for directing elephants.]

5x7 Glass Plates
Box 3 [8]