



Ohio Postal History Journal

The Official Publication of the Ohio Postal History Society

September 2020

Issue No. 155

2020 Bi-centennial Year For Fifteen Ohio Counties

In 1818 Ohio was growing by leaps and bounds. On 28 Sep 1817 the federal government purchased land owned by Wyandot, Ottawa, Seneca, Delaware, Potawatomi, Shawnee, and Chippewa tribes through the Lower Maumee Treaty. The prospect of a canal running between Lake Erie and Cincinnati, land act of 1820, and 1821 Relief Act, reducing acres Ohioans had to purchase from 160 to 80 and cost from \$2.00 an acre to \$1.25; all attracted settlers who moved to northwestern areas of the state. The Relief Act also permitted return of land for a credit towards their debt. Additionally, credit was extended to the buyer for eight more years.

Ohio's legislature created fourteen new counties on 12 Feb. 1820: Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Marion, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, and Wood from an area known as the Erie District. These counties joined

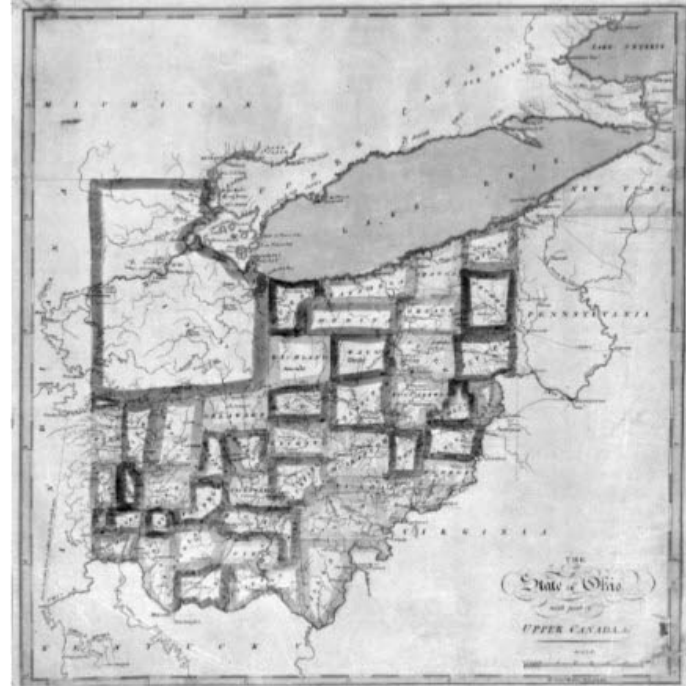


Figure 2 Map images from David Rumsey Historical Map Collection Figure 1



Union County, created Jan. 10, adding fifteen counties to the Ohio map. Many of these were counties in name only. For example, for administrative and judicial purposes Hancock, Henry, Paulding, Putnam, and Williams were attached to Wood (Ohio Laws 1819, 18th assy., loc., ch. 37, secs. 1-3/pp. 91-92; Chase, 3:ch. 429/pp. 2134-2135) and Seneca County was formed in 1820 but not organized until 1824.

Figure 1 is an 1818 map of Ohio showing counties existing that year.

Figure 2 is an 1820 map showing the new counties, which comprised about one fourth of the state. However, only five post offices served the entire area encompassed by these new counties. In this re-boot issue of the OPHS Journal we are going to take a look at the five counties with established postal service on the date they were formed. Sandusky and Wood are featured in this issue with Marion, Henry, and Union to be featured in the December issue.

Ohio Postal History Journal Reboot

Dave Plunkett

In June I attended a virtual ASP seminar on the American Philatelic Research Library. The presentation was very enlightening as we learned about the vast collection of materials and the emergence of their digital collection. At the conclusion a request was made for volunteers to assist in indexing material for the digital collection. As this was something that could be done from home and I had a fairly long run of the OPHJ I looked into it. I ended up working on indexing the OPHJ for the library. Indexing took quite awhile, mostly because of the frequency of which I stopped to read the articles. As I read the articles I remembered how much I had enjoyed the journal and why it has been almost three years since one has been published. The further along I got the reason started to become very clear. **I WAS THE REASON!** With each indexing entry the same few names were appearing article authors. Between 1976 and 2017 there were 154 OPHJ issued. If we averaged 9 articles an issue that would be 1,395 articles. An OPHS member for thirty-five years I had only contributed one of the 1395.

Why had I joined the OPHS? I joined the OPHS because of my love of history, my passion for Toledo and Lucas County postal history, discussing my collection with others, and learning from the vast knowledge of other members. Then I asked myself; Why then had I not been proactive in pursuit of these reasons? I didn't like the answer I got.

Arriving at this realization I decided since I had a pretty good working knowledge of Microsoft Publisher, had accumulated enough material for at least four issues, and liked to share my material I would make contact with the powers to be and commit to formatting four issues for publication. With the reappearance of the journal my hope is that other members will want to show, talk about, and share knowledge of their holdings with the rest of the members.


For a sixteen page issue can be accomplished with just thirteen members providing one page four times a year. Of course multipage submissions would reduce number of contributors needed.

I contacted Matt Liesbon and Alan Borer with an offer of four issues of sixteen pages with information I have available. If others wished to contribute, their information would be used first. After that, if there seems to interest, I will continue to format information provided with number of pages for each issue dependent on information available at the time. Matt was interested and Alan offered to assist by proof reading each issue.

I hope you enjoy the reboot issue and are able to provide articles so that this experiment does not end up as an exercise in futility. Any submitted material would be preferred emailed as a word document or as a pdf to yellowbrd9@aol.com. If you do not have computer access, items can be mailed to SCCT, Dave Plunkett, P.O. Box 2, Maumee, Ohio, 43552-0002.

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WANTED - Toledo Postmarks

I exhibit Toledo PO's of the world. 34 Toledo PO's have been located in the US along with 6 in foreign countries.

I am looking for examples from;

Toledo, FL - Brevard or St. Lucie Co.	Toledo, TX - Fayette & Newton Co.
Toledo, IN - Huntington Co. IN	Toledo, MO - Calloway & Henry Co.
Toledo, IL - Union Co. IL	Toledo, NC - Rutherford & Transylvania Co.
Toledo, Norte de Santander Department, Colombia	Toledo, KY - Metcalf & Pulaski Co
Toledo, AL - Fayette Co.	Toledo, LA - Vernon Parrish
Toledo, AR - Cleveland Co.	Toledo, SD - Lyman Co.
Toledo, CO - Prowers Co.	Toledo, MS - Lowndes Co.
Toledo, WV - Nicholas Co.	

A postmark or postmarks, corner card or cachet of a business, or letter addressed to any of the above, or information on the location of one would be appreciated.

Contact: Dave Plunkett
Yellowbrd9@aol.com or 419-531-7810 or
P.O. Box 2, Maumee, OH 53537-0002

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Postal Innovation of the Classic Era
Evolution Leading to Modernization

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The Ohio Postal History Society is APS affiliate #66. Society membership dues are \$15 per calendar year. Membership applications, renewals, and changes of address, should be sent to the Secretary Denise Stotts.

American Philatelic Research Library

The APRL has one of the world's largest and most accessible collections of philatelic literature. Its nearly four miles of shelving contain more than 23,000 book titles and 5,700 journal titles including a complete run of the OPHSJ. Recently all of the journals were indexed so you can access the APRL enter your topic in the search box and receive information on which issue contains the article. This is an ongoing endeavor hoping to continue to update the index with additional information to make your topics easier to find.

Researchers are welcome to visit the library at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. For those who cannot travel to Bellefonte, the APRL offers photocopy and scanning services as well as reference assistance by phone and e-mail. APS and APRL directly by mail and non-members may borrow books through interlibrary loan. To learn more about our services

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For a cover postmarked at Toledo's main post office on the morning of February 17, 1921

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This link is an article from the March/April issue of "First Days", publication of the American First Day Cover Society.

<http://toledostampclub.org/images/clubnews/Pagesmith.pdf>

Or visit the website

<https://thepagesmithpostal.wixsite.com/info>

Back hardcopy issues of the Journal remain available at \$2.50 per issue for numbers 1-70 and \$4 per issue thereafter, plus postage. Many earlier original Journals are sold out but will be provided as photocopy reprints. Some journals are also available in PDF format. A cumulative index of the Journal from 1976- 2016 is available in PDF at no charge, or at \$12 hardcopy, postpaid. Order from Matt Liebson. (contact info on this page).

Wood County is located on land once the thickest most dangerous part of the Great Black Swamp. Native tribes traveled through the area, but only as absolutely necessary.

Following the Battle of Fallen Timbers, land was deeded to Native Americans in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. 28 Sep 1817 the U.S. government purchased it back from Wyandot, Ottawa, Seneca, Delaware, Potawatomi, Shawnee, and Chippewa tribes through Lower Maumee Treaty .

12 Feb. 1820, Ohio's Legislature authorized creation of Wood County, and 13 other counties, on this land.

Wood County was named after Colonel Eleazer D. Wood, planning engineer of Fort Meigs. Originally the county included an area that eventually become Lucas County in 1835. Perrysburg became was first County seat in 1822, a distinction awarded to Bowling Green, in 1868.

Population of Wood County was 733 in 1820.

Today, Wood County covers nearly 620 miles of land and water. There are nineteen townships, twenty-one villages, and five cities. In 2010 the census reported a population just over 125,000, and Bowling Green the largest community in county. The number of post offices Wood County has had depends on how you slice the pie.

Located within the original geographic boundaries - 113 offices The original geographic boundaries since county formed there have been 110. *continued to page 5*

Post Roads

From "Ohio Development & Postal History" 2014 by OPHS

In 1810 all prior post roads were canceled. New routes were set up with the Postal Acts of 1810 and 1812. Many of the new routes followed previous routes changed to incorporate new settlements. The map in Figure 3 shows Ohio

routes as of 1814. Route serving Northwestern Ohio came out of New Lisbon by Deerfield, Ravenna, Hudson, Cleveland, Huron, Perkins, Patterson, Lower Sandusky (Ft. Stephenson) to Fort Meigs or Miami Rapids. From the south Alexandria, Chillicothe, Franklinton, Worthington, Mt Vernon, Mansfield, to Lower Sandusky.

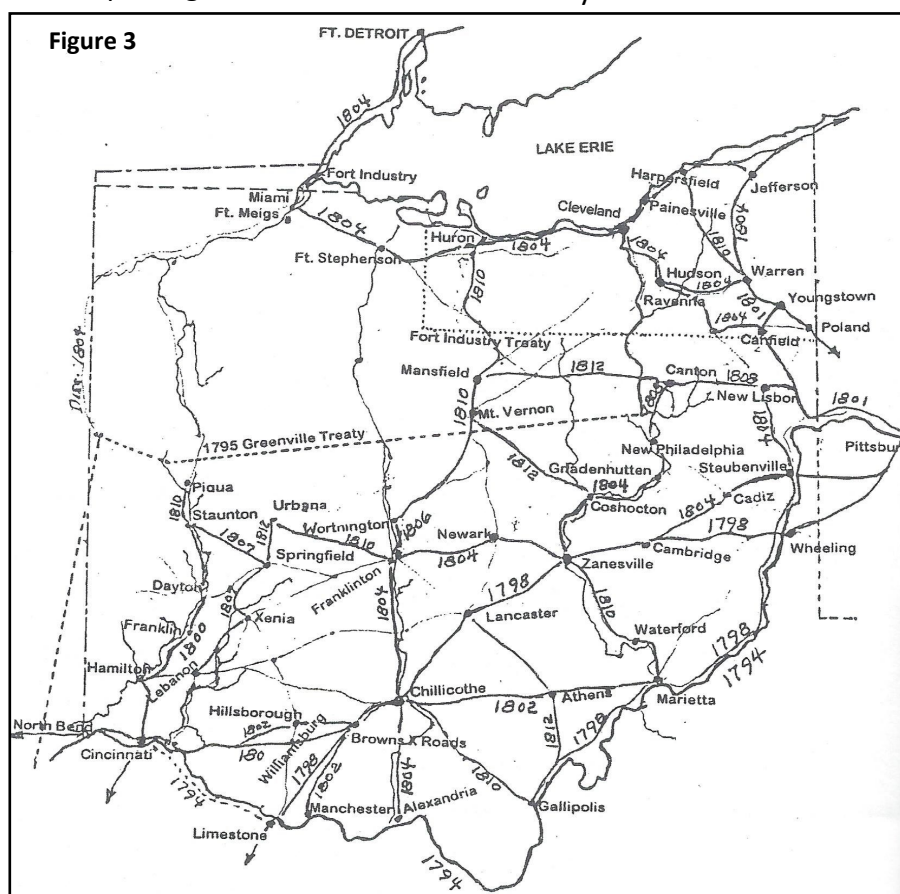


Figure 4

Early Post Office	Wood Established	County Post Office	Offices Established
Ft. Industry	25 Jun 1805	Port Lawrence #2	8 Jan 1834
Miami Rapids	1 Jan 1807	Vistula	8 Jan 1834
Ft Meigs	9 May 1814	Tremainville	7 Jan 1834
Perrysburg	28 Jan 1823	Bowling Green	12 Mar 1834
Depot	1 Dec 1823	Rocky Ford	20 June 1834
Maumee	4 Mar 1824	Toledo	1 Jan 1835
Port Lawrence #1	28 Oct 1825	Whiteford	2 Jun 1835
Portage	29 Jan 1829.		

Current geographic boundaries, minus the area that is now Lucas County the number is 104.

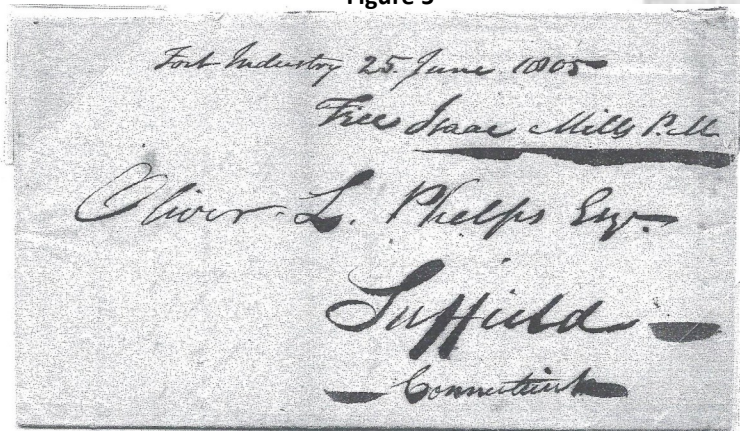
Looking at the original geographic boundaries but recognizing the Michigan Territory's claim on the Toledo Strip you get 105

Figure 4 is a list of all the post offices established with the area assigned Wood County on 12 Feb 1820 until Lucas County formed 20 June 1835.

This look at Wood County's post offices will concentrate on the time prior to formation to the end of it's first decade in 1829 and consider all offices that have been formed with in the original boundaries.

Wood County's first post office was located at Ft. Industry and established 25 Jun 1805. It was located in what today is Toledo where Swan Creek meets the Maumee River. The Fort was built in 1801 and there is no record of mail, other than military dispatches until 1805. On 4 Jul 1805 there was to be a Indian treaty meeting at the fort with the Connecticut Land Co. Isaac Mills was the company secretary and was appointed as temporary postmaster. The cover in Figure 5 bears the free frank of Isaac Mills and is dated 26 Jun 1805. Ft Industry closed shortly after the meeting. This is the only known example from Ft. Industry and is in the collection of

Figure 5



the Toledo Lucas County Library.

January 1807 brought the second post office to Wood Co. (later Lucas County) when Lewis Bond was appointed at Miami Rapids, or Miami, as well as customs collector for Erie District. Figure 6 is a 18 Aug 1813 letter from Capt. John A. Rogers stationed at Ft. Meigs. In that Rogers was asking for re-assignment, he carried the letter across the river to Miami Rapids post office probably so those stationed in his command did not find out about the request. From there letter traveled via Ft. Sandusky to Cleveland then Warren, Pittsburgh and Washington. In 1809 carrier, Benoni Adams, took over and a stop at the "Military Road" (Detroit & Collingwood Aves. intersection), was added. Later Depot, (later) Port Lawrence #1, and Tremainville , Michigan Territory post offices were added the route. A Round trip took two weeks. Miami Rapids was closed during War of 1812, settlers having fled

Figure 6

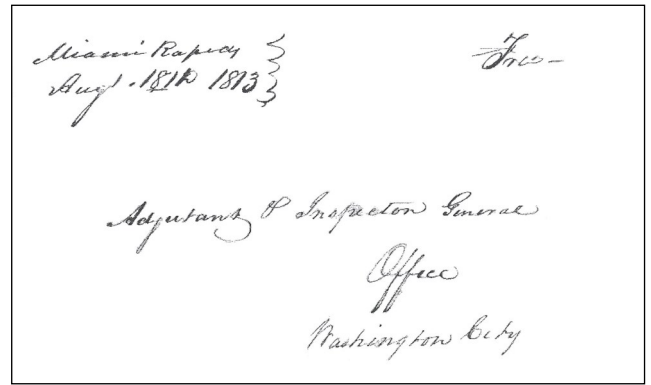


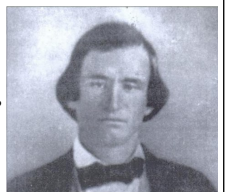
Figure 8



incursion of British into the valley. After the War of 1812 settlers began returning to the area and a new post office was needed. 9 May 1814 Fort Meigs opened with Almon Gibbs (figure 7) as postmaster. Figure 8 shows a

Figure 7

Lt. Almon Gibbs was quartermaster and postmaster at Ft Meigs during the war of 1812. 9 May 1814 appointed postmaster of new Fort Meigs office.



15 March 1814 letter shown is from Gibbs to his father in New York less than two months prior to the establishment of Ft Meigs post office while he was still postmaster at the fort. Ft. Meigs Post Office was located at Ft. Meigs until 1816 when Gibbs quit the army and opened a business in

Waynesfield (Maumee). He took the post office with him. The cover dated 22 Feb 1820, (Figure 9 page 6) was sent nine days after Wood County was established. In March 1817 Waynsfield became Maumee.

continued to page 6

Figure 9

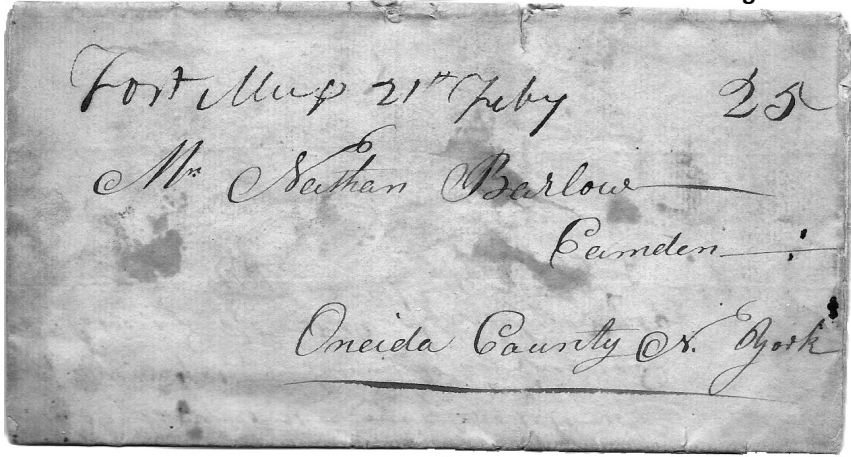


Figure 12

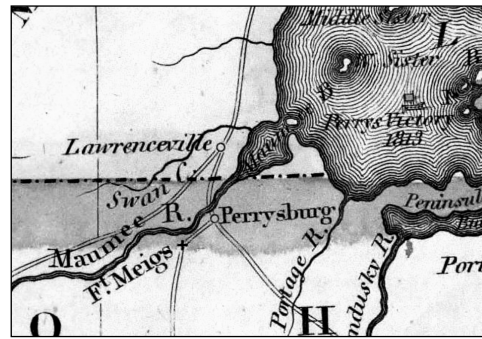


Figure 10

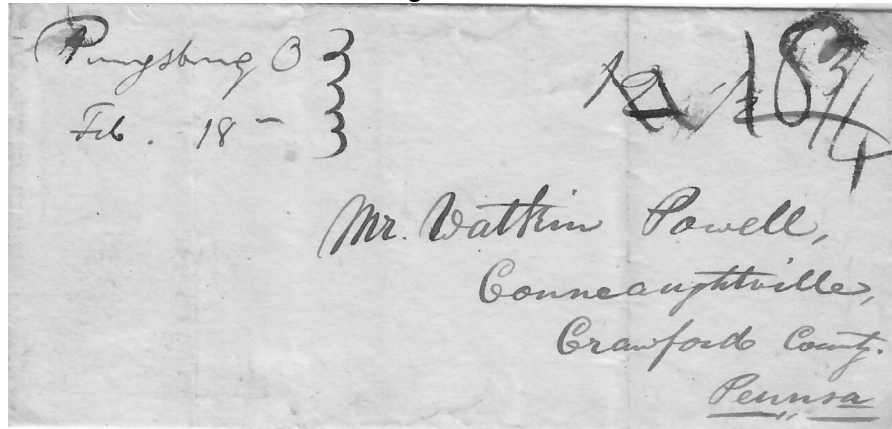
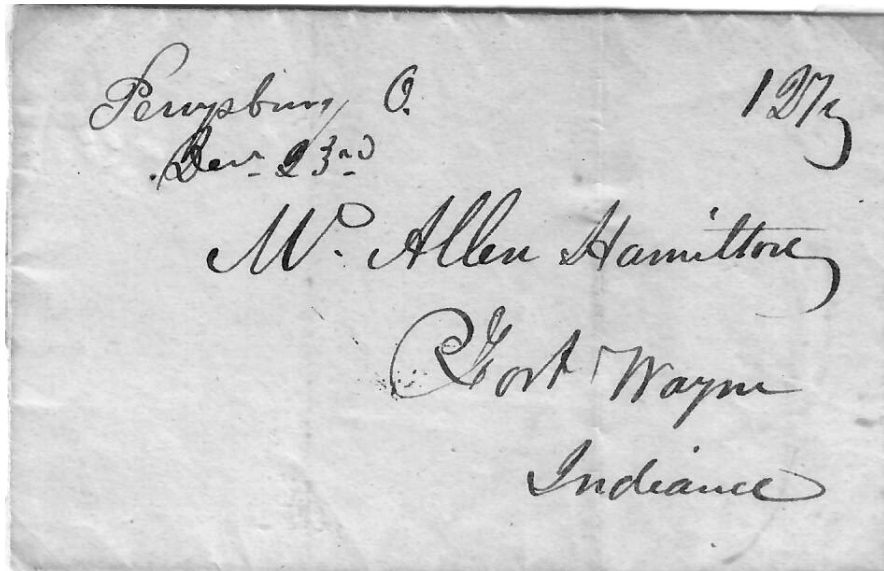


Figure 11



Wood County's fourth post office Perrysburg on 28 Jan. 1823, with Thomas R. McKnight postmaster. During the McKnight administration, an "h" was added to the spelling of town name making it Perrysburgh. John Hollister followed as postmaster 25 Feb. 1828. "h" was officially removed 10 Jul 1894. [Footnote: Appointment dates are from the USPS Postmaster web site. 1 Jan 1823 for McKnight and 2 Feb 1828 for Hollister have also been seen as appointment dates.] Figure 10 is a Perrysburg cover from 18 Feb 1829 with no "h" visible is to Crawford County Pa.

Figure 11 shows a 23 Dec 1834 cover Perrysburg to Ft. Wayne, IN again with no "h" .

The county's fifth post office (depending on who you ask) Depot, was established 1 Dec. 1823 at Lawrenceville, as a Michigan Territory post office. (Figure 12) However, this overlapped part of the area in dispute with Michigan since 1805. Although controlled by Michigan it lay within the geographical boundaries set forth in the Ohio Constitution of 1803.

Benjamin Franklin Stickney, direct descendant of America's first postmaster, was postmaster of this station. There are no known covers postmarked from this office. However, a letter (Figure 13 page 7) is datelined "Depot" 13 Sep. 1823 by Post-

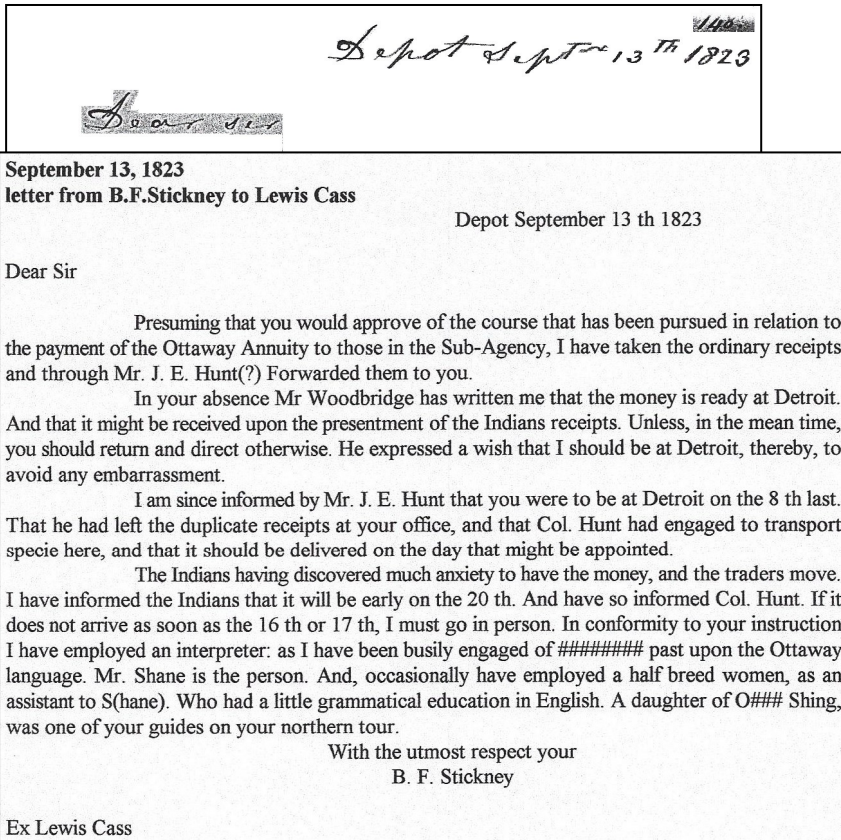
master Stickney. Unfortunately no image was made of the reverse side to examine for postal markings.

Fort Meigs changed names and became Maumee on 4 Mar 1824. Maumee became

the 6th Wood County post office with John E. Hunt as postmaster. A 3 Aug 1833 Maumee cover is seen in Figure 14 page 7 which bears the free frank of John E. Hunt.

continued to page 7

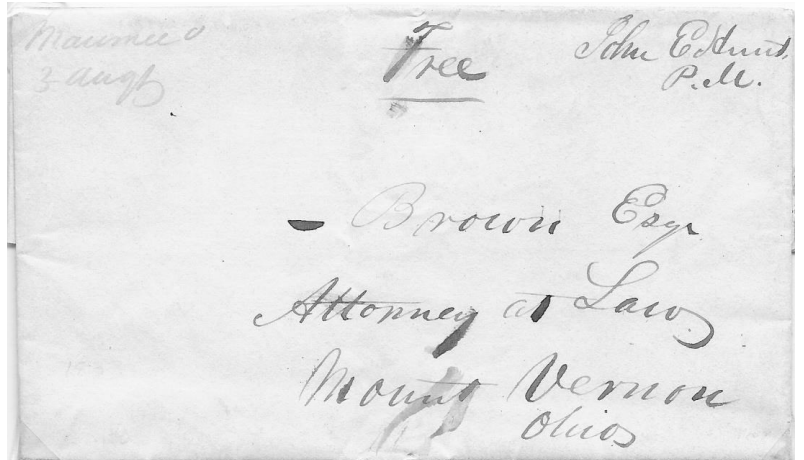
Figure 13



The request was granted and he was appointed postmaster. He held the position for 18 years. Wood Co. had just one post office in 1820 and in the two hundred years since, there have been over one hundred.

Each year the Stamp Collectors Club of Toledo commemorates the area's history. 2020's theme was Wood County's Bi-Centennial. A card, cover, and cancel were created. Both were franked with Scott 4314, a Forever stamp with Ohio's flag. Cachet was the bi-centennial logo with an outline of county and a collage of county scenes. Cancel was a seven bar cancel with county outline center and "Wood County" in top two bars and Bi-Centennial 1820-2020 between the lower two bars. An example of the cover can be seen in Figure 16 page 8.

Figure 14

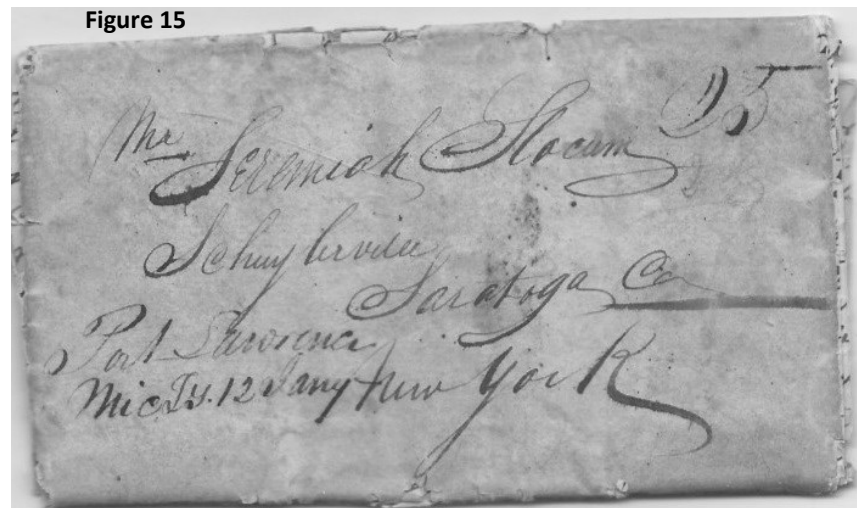


On 28 Oct. 1825 Depot became Port Lawrence and the 6th Wood County post office. Stickney continued as postmaster. Ten known covers are known to exist from this office. Five are in private hands and the others in archives. Figure 15 is a 12 Jan. 1832 cover from Port Lawrence. This is the oldest known cover from the area that would become Toledo.

Wood County rounded out its first decade with a post office opening at Portage, 29 Jan 1829.

The village is named for the Portage River that runs through it. According to "Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio", J.H. Beers & Co. 1897, in September of 1824, Collister Haskins bought the NE 1/4 of Sec /12 R 10 in Liberty Twp. and built a log cabin. At that time mail passed that way every two weeks. In 1828 Haskins petitioned for a Portage post office.

Figure 15



Bowling Green Named

Alan Borer

Joseph Gordon, a post route contractor and a native of Kentucky suggested the name of a town in his home state. Bowling Green in its very early days was made possible only because a few sand dunes stuck up high enough to provide some habitable land from the surrounding Great Black

Swamp. Earliest settlers arrived in 1832, post office being established in 1834 and that was the office that Gordon named. The village was not incorporated until 1855, when draining of the swamp made more land usable. The letter from Bowling Green dated 1838 (Figure 16) dated to when the town was still a swampy, frontier settlement, famous only for mosquitoes and malaria. The writer, one William Jennings, did not give the hamlet a good review:

I wish you would rite and inform me about what times you have in the woods. . . . because I cannot stand to live in this Country ere long for times is gitting hard. . . . I done wrote in hurry the mail is ready to start. . . .

Jennings wrote his letter, filled with spelling errors, in a hurry. Gordon, the aforementioned mail carrier, was due to depart for either Perrysburg or Bellefontaine, and Jennings wanted to finish his letter to send it with Gordon. Gordon

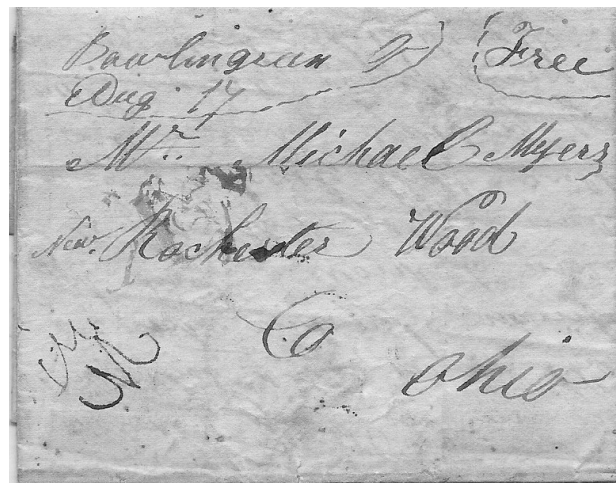
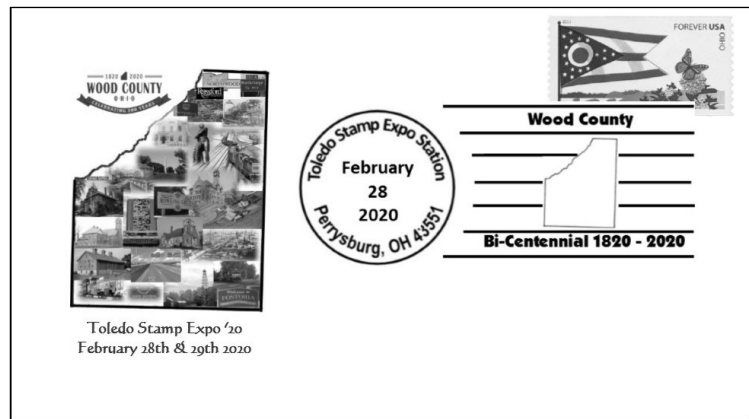


Figure 16

was

Figure 15



still on the job in 1838. Although Jennings did not leave enough information to further identify himself, Gordon had a minor claim to fame as the man who named the town. Also locally famous was Michael Myers, the recipient of the letter. Unlike William Jennings, Myers was content to stay in Wood County once he settled there. Born in Pennsylvania about 1801, Myers relocated to Columbiana County in northeast Ohio. In 1834 he purchased lands on the N.E. corner of Sec. 29 [Freedom Township, Wood County]. His wife, son, and four daughters accompanied him into the wilderness, and aided him in building a hewed log house, on east side of the McCutchenville road, on the north or right bank of the Portage. . . . [p. 257] *It was a larger cabin than was usually found in the wilderness, and this fact, taken together with genial character of Myers, made it at once the*

mecca of immigrants. Within a decade, he built a larger concern to entertain guests. In 1844 he constructed the two story frame building known to this day as "Myers Hotel" . . . [p. 259] In doing so, Michael Myers became the first resident settler of New Rochester.

New Rochester, while unincorporated today, is still a locally remembered landmark for residents and by the neighboring, and once rival, village of Pemberville. His 1844 home, the "Myers Hotel," stood many more years. Innkeeper Myers offered rooms for transients as well as visitors staying awhile. It was located at the north end of the bridge across Portage River and was rumored to be a stop on the Underground Railroad as well.

Michael Myers wore many hats. In addition to his work as a farmer and a hotel keeper, he was postmaster of New Rochester for thirty years. Active in the Methodist church, he donated land for a church. Before the Civil War, letters sent to a postmaster were free of charge. Myers noted that his letter from William Jennings was "#1," suggesting that Jennings wrote other letters. It is fortunate that even one letter survives, for it brings back a long-vanished Wood County of Indians, wolves, log cabins, and swampy roads. Complaints aside, William Jennings opened a window to a long gone time – even if he found life there uncomfortable.

[Quotes are from Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio (Chicago, 1897), pp. 256, 259.] Considering only current borders this letter was sent from Wood County's fifth oldest post office to its eighth oldest post office.



Sandusky County was formed on 12 Feb 1820, from portions of Huron, Delaware and Franklin County. The name is derived from the Wyandot word meaning "water" (*Wyandot: saandustee*). The Sandusky River runs diagonally northeast through the county to its mouth on Sandusky Bay. Total area of the county in 1820 was 1003 square miles; however in 1840 Ottawa County was formed and reduced the county to 418 square miles today. County population in 1820 was 852. Just one post office was operating

in the county when it was formed and the second did not open for three and a half years. In the first fifteen years twelve post offices were established and are listed in Figure 17. Three are still in service with Port Clinton the only one operating under the original name. Two others, Oakley and Fort Seneca were moved to Seneca County in 1824. Lower Sandusky became Fremont 8 Nov 1849. In the early days Lower Sandusky was also known as Garrison, Sandusky, and Fort Stephenson. Page 14 is a re-print

Figure 17

Early Sandusky County Post Offices	
Post Office	Established
Lower Sandusky AKA Garrison AKA Sandusky AKA Ft Stephenson	20 Aug 1806
Oakley	26 Feb 1821
Fort Seneca	21 Dec 1821
York	23 Aug 1823
Green Creek	27 Dec 1825
Townsend	10 Jan 1828
York Cross Roads	11 Feb 1828
Port Clinton	12 Nov 1828
Bridgeford	31 Mar 1829
Sugar Creek	10 Oct 1831
York North Roads	14 Dec 1833
Clay	14 Dec 1833

The Eleventh Postal History Symposium
Postal Innovation of Classic Era: Evolution Leading to Modernization
 October 26-30, 2020

Keynote Speaker
 Scott Trepel
 President, Robert A. Siegel Auctions



Confirmed Speakers:

- **Scott Trepel - Keynote:** *Postal Innovation of the Classic Era*
- **Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris:** *The "Special" Postalization of Locale*
- **William DeWitt:** *Evolution of Intercity Mail Transportation Modes 1840-1880: Insights from Postmaster General Annual Reports*
- **Gordon Eubanks:** *Postal History of the Issue of 1847*
- **Anthony Gallagher:** *The British Colonial Post Office Controversy / A Letter from the American Revolution*
- **Fred Gregory:** *Government Post in Hawaii: Creation and Reform - 1849 - 1859*
- **Yamil Kouri:** *U.S. Post Riders in Spanish West Florida, 1801-1810*
- **Ken Lawrence:** *Mails of Navassa Island, the Original Overseas United States Possession, 1876-1898*
- **Jim Milgram:** *Early Railroads Carry the Mail*
- **Tim O'Connor:** *Rise of the American Post 1639-1776*
- **William Schultz:** *Toll Gates & Toll Houses: Assistance or Hindrance for Mail Delivery Modes*
- **Mark Schwartz:** *The New York Postmaster Provisional*
- **Steve Walske:** *Blazing Trails for the Westward Expansion*

Virtual Exhibits Sponsored by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society
 Attendees will have direct access to the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society website to many of the best exhibits of classic material, including some recently added specifically for this event.

of Dick Parkers research on Lower Sandusky from the OPHJ, Vol. IV p.32. Clay became Woodville in 1839 and is still an operating office under that name.

The first post office in the area to become Sandusky County. was Lower Sandusky, established 20 Aug 1806. Lower Sandusky had its beginnings as a village of Wyandot natives. During the 1750s, the French constructed a trading post for fur trade with the Wyandots. During late 1700s and the early 1800s, settlers moved into the area. Elizabeth Foulks and James Whittaker were of the first white settlers to live in Lower Sandusky. As Wyandots captives they fell in love and in 1785 married in Lower Sandusky. White settlers were in violation of the Treaty of Greenville. During the War of 1812, the Army considered removing them by force, but that did not happen. Fort Stephenson, an American military post, was built here during the war. *continued to page 10*

Sandusky Co. continued from page 9

Although the Wyandots still called Lower Sandusky home, by the 1830s it had a sizable white and African American population. Many of the African Americans were runaways and sought safety by living together. Slave hunters often passed through the area looking for runaways.

Lower Sandusky became the Sandusky County seat in 1821. The town grew slowly. In 1835, a traveler through Lower Sandusky described it as "a swampy place and a breeding ground for flies". Despite this, Lower Sandusky emerged as an important economic center. Located on the Sandusky River, with easy access to Lake Erie, the community became active in the shipbuilding industry. As you can see by the map in Figure 18, Lower Sandusky was on the eastern edge of the "The Great Black Swamp" and a good place for travelers to rest before attempting passage through the swamp. (Also see "The Great Black Swamp" page 14)

The cover in Figure 19 was sent from Lower Sandusky to Black Rock, NY on 20 May 1817. The postal route that would have carried this piece was Lower Sandusky - Ft Sandusky - Huron - Cleveland - Warren - Pittsburgh - New York. Fremont to Black Rock is 545 miles.

Figure 20 on page 10 displays a cover with a manuscript twelve and a half cent rate for the ninety three miles from Lower Sandusky to Mount Vernon. The rimless CDS postmark of 26 Mar 1830 impacted by docketing. This is first of two rimless ovals used in Lower Sandusky.

Figure 21 displays a manuscript six cent rate for the twenty-six miles from Lower Sandusky to Tiffin. The manuscript postmark is 13 Oct 1830. The cover was

Figure 18

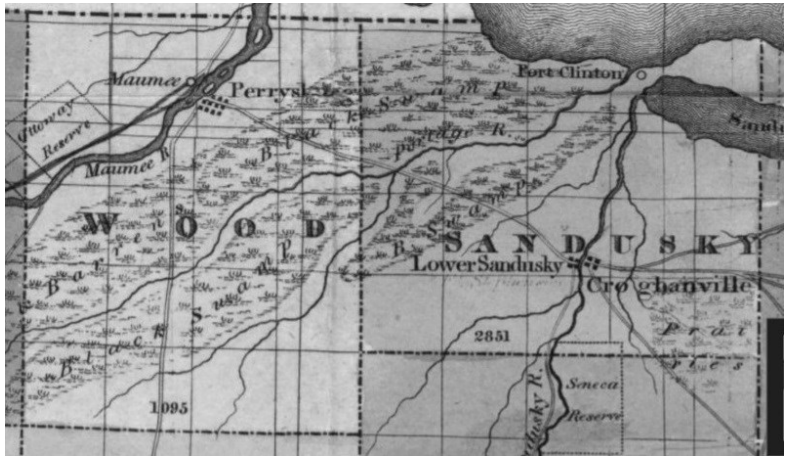


Figure 19

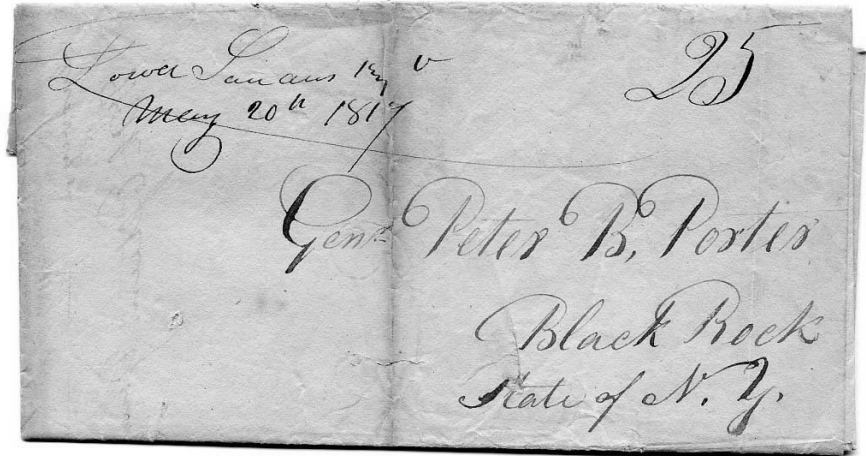
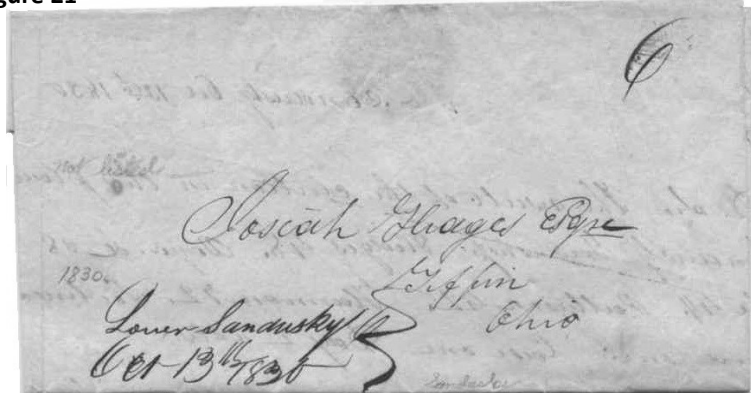


Figure 20



Figure 21



delivered to Tiffin and forwarded back to Lower Sandusky. *Continued to page 11*

Figure 22



18 Nov 1849 residents changed the name of Lower Sandusky to lessen confusion with the other four Ohio post offices that had Sandusky as part of their name. The name Fremont was chosen to honor John C. Frémont, who helped acquire California during the Mexican–American War. Attorney Rutherford B. Hayes, future president, handled the legal work for the name change. Figure 22 shows a 17 Aug Fremont CDS with a paid stamp. It is not known for sure who the first postmaster at Lower Sandusky was; however Joseph Badger filed the first report from the office in 1806.

named after DeWitt Clinton, a New York governor instrumental in creating the Erie Canal, which connected the Midwest along the Great Lakes to the markets of the

households in the community with a population of 249. Although the town had an excellent harbor and access to the Portage River, little shipping took place. A post office was established Nov 1828 with Elias H. Haines as postmaster. This Office is still in operation. Figure 23 is an 1860's cover from after Ottawa County was formed from northern Sandusky County in 1840.

A post office named Clay, opened 14 Dec 1833 with George Watt as postmaster. The office became Woodville 16 Jun 1839. Woodville was laid out and platted in 1836 and named for General Amos E. Wood. The location was the midway point on the Western Reserve

Figure 24



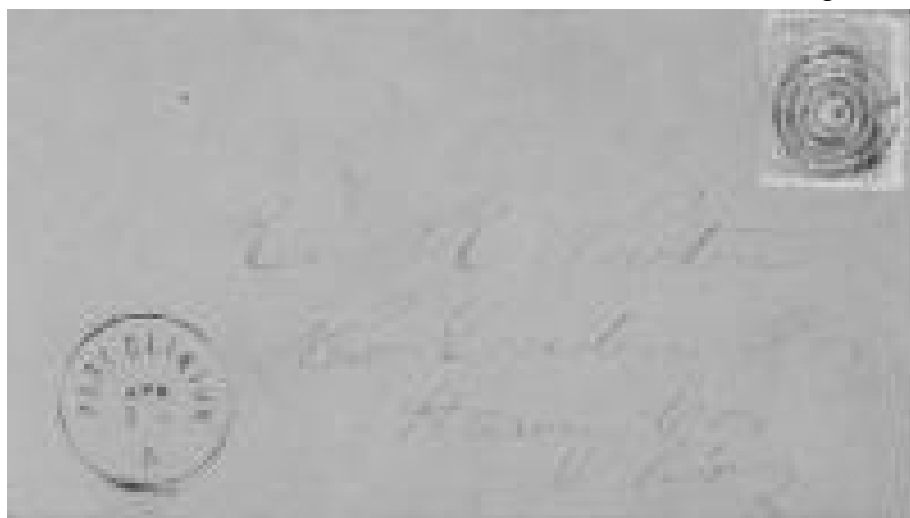
Residents established the community of Port Clinton in 1828 at the mouth of the Portage River at Lake Erie. The town was

Hudson River and New York City. Port Clinton grew slowly. In 1846, there were only sixty

and Maumee Turnpike. Also known as "Old Mud Pike," because of thick mud that often mired animals and vehicles alike, it was the first permanent route across the Black Swamp. The toll road connected Perrysburg with Lower Sandusky.

A mile marker from the road remains at 100 East Main Street, in front of the village pharmacy. Figure 24 is an 1894 Woodville cork killer on Postal Stationery. Today there are eight post offices operating in Sandusky County, Burgoon, Clyde, Fremont, Gibsonburg, Helena, Lindsey, Vickery and Woodville. *Continued to page 12*

Figure 23



The Harrison Trail, Sandusky County

by Alan Borer

If you visit Fremont, Ohio, in Sandusky County, you will likely see the estate of Rutherford B. Hayes, our nineteenth president. It is a beautiful home, an interesting museum, and on a nice day, a pleasant park. President Hayes inherited the parkland from his uncle, Sardis Birchard, who had named the woodland "Spiegel Grove." "Spiegel" is the German word for "mirror," so named because rain puddles in the grove were thought to have a curiously reflective quality. Hayes, incidentally, reflected on and was fascinated by the history of northwestern Ohio, and his museum is full of artifacts. One artifact, the focus of this article is a road. The road that winds through Spiegel Grove was once part of a trail that ran all the way across Ohio from Port Clinton in the north to Portsmouth in the south. At the entrance to Spiegel Grove (Figure 25) you will see the remnant trail marked as the "Harrison Trail," named after General William Henry Harrison, whose army used the trail during the War of 1812. More properly, the road is also remembered as the Sandusky-Scioto Trail.

The trail started as a Native American pathway as many tribes were extremely mobile, following woodland trails and paths to follow game. The trail ran generally north/south, although not in a straight line. "U.S. Route 33 follows the route of the Scioto Trail from the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy rivers to State Route 161, where U.S. Route 33 becomes State Route 257. The Scioto Trail extended from the mouth of the Scioto River at Portsmouth (also known as Shawnee Town) to Sandusky Bay and connected the Shawnee's hunting grounds in Kentucky with Lake Erie. The trail ran along the Scioto River, the Little Scioto River, and the Sandusky River with a portage between the Little Scioto and Sandusky rivers in Crawford County. The Scioto Trail, used for warfare, trade, migration, and starting in 1804 sections were used as post routes eventually carrying mail to Lower Sandusky and Fort Stephenson. It was one of the most important trails in the Old Northwest." British, Indian, and American forces used the trail. It saw use in Pontiac's War of 1764-65,

Colonel Crawford's massacre in 1782, and the British attempt to capture Fort Stephenson in 1813. Harrison built several forts along the Sandusky River, connected by the Sandusky-Scioto Trail. Many military couriers carried their dispatches along traveled this route.

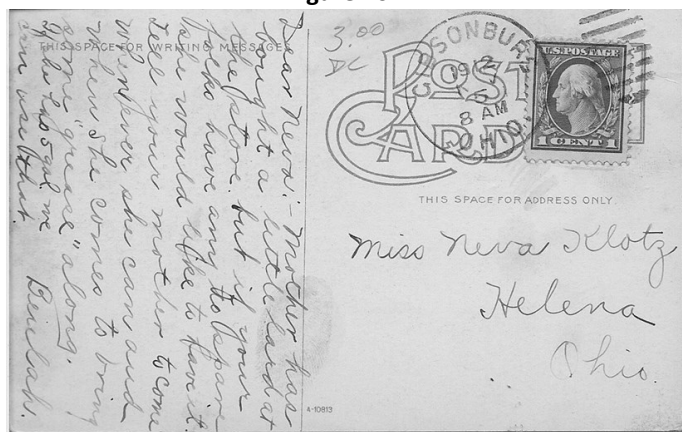
Spiegel Grove was bought by Sardis Birchard in 1845. Presumably the trail was still obvious then. As a busy lawyer, Hayes delayed building a home there until fifteen years later. Service as a general, governor, and president meant irregular residence in Fremont, but Hayes retired there in 1881. When his son, Webb Hayes, deeded the property to the state of Ohio in 1909-10, he specifically instructed that the Harrison Trail be preserved as a drive through the park. Written into the deed, the trail survives to this day.

Figure 25 is a postcard showing the entrance to the trail. Figure 26 is the reverse of a nice clear strike by the Gibsonburg post office. The card was mailed to Helena, so sender, receiver, and picture on the reverse all are in Sandusky County.

Figure 25



Figure 26



Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night..... or The Great Black Swamp.

Postal Service employees have always gone to great lengths to deliver our mail. One of their most challenging must have been the thirty-one miles between Lower Sandusky, Ohio and Perrysburg, Ohio.

That's right—the flat, rich farm land along Route 20, we know and love was once a thick, slimy swamp seemingly incompatible with human settlement. Travelers would only be able to move one mile per day as they trudged through the waters that would be, at times, waist high. As one historian describes, “When horse drawn wagons and carriages traveling the route ‘arrived at either end of the line, the cart, the driver, and the horses often presented an almost indistinguishable mass of slowly moving mud.’”

The sinking mud was such a problem that some set up a lucrative mud hole business along the road for unsuspecting travelers – those unfortunate enough to fall in would be charged an exorbitant sum to be lifted out. The Great Black Swamp of Ohio measured 120 miles long and 40 miles wide. Roughly the size of Connecticut, it stood in the most obstructive position between pioneering settlers and lands in Northwest Ohio. Settlers took a 31-mile mud path through the swamp, known as the Maumee and Western Reserve Road, now US-20, in order to cross the swampy morass. A strip of land about 120 feet wide from Fremont to Perrysburg was taken from the Native Americans in 1808. Made without ditches, the corduroy path soon became as muddy as the rest of the swamp. The path was so legendarily bad that it be-



Figure 27

came known as the “Worst Road in America.”¹ As one traveler recounts: “It would be difficult to describe this worst of all roads, and the agony bordering on despair to which the emigrant was reduced in his effort to pass over to the land flowing with milk and honey beyond.”² This quagmire not only affected travelers but the mails. In an era when the postage for a letter was figured on distance, the rate might vary depending on the season, and if the swamp was frozen or too wet and had to be circumvented. Taverns were dense on the muddy pike, totaling one per mile. Serving important social and political function in the days of statehood they provided, lodging, food, company, and took on many functions as a hospice,

stage office, post office, newspaper, theatre, ballroom, bar room, polling place, court room, jail house, debate platform, doctor’s office, and political convention hall. Legends and myths that surrounded these swamp structures still make them important pieces of history today.

1. Jim Mollenkopf, *The Great Black Swamp : Historical Tales of 19th-century Northwest Ohio*. (Toledo, Ohio: Lake of the Cat Pub., 1990).
2. Ibid.

Information is from a article at Midstory.org by Ruth Chang 2018-09-25

<https://www.midstory.org/trailblazers-of-the-great-black-swamp-31-miles-31-taverns/>

LOWER SANDUSKY PART OF ERIE DISTRICT

Richard Parker

Postal Archive Records in Washington, show LOWER SANDUSKY became Fremont on Nov. 8, 1849, although the date of Nov. 1st. is generally considered the date that the town changed its name.

Early Postal Records raise many questions as to which county or district the Postal authorities assigned to the post office of Lower Sandusky. Today, Fremont is in the county of Sandusky. The 1807 and 1808 Tables of Post Offices, list Lower Sandusky as being in Franklin Co. This is also confirmed from county boundary records, since these lands were not transferred from Franklin Co. to Delaware Co. until 17 Feb 1809 (Acts of Ohio, VII, p. 156).

It is interesting to note that the 1811 Table of Post Offices does not list Lower Sandusky but does list Sandusky. No county or district is listed to show the P.O. location. The National Archive records also list Sandusky for this period, with two Postmasters submitting a return.

The 1813 Table of Post Offices, does not list Sandusky but it does list Lower Sandusky Garrison with William

McConnell as Postmaster. Vol. 3-No. 1 issue of the OPHSJ carried the story of Fort Stephenson during the War of 1812 and about Major George Groghan, successfully defending the Fort against the British on Aug. 2, 1813. There is no evidence that a post office was ever officially open, called Fort Stephenson.

The 1817 Table of Post Offices does not show a county or district for Lower Sandusky. However, the 1819 issue shows that Lower Sandusky is in the "Erie" county or district, and this P.O. should have been included in the Erie District story in the Vol. 3, No. 3 issue of the OPHSJ.

Sandusky Co. was erected and established April 1, 1820. There is no mention of the Erie District after this date. During the War of 1812 and shortly after, these lands were primarily Indian country. Possibly the Post Office set up a special designation for these remote areas in order to properly route the mails.

I now believe that the Sandusky (1811-12) that was mentioned in the Erie District story and Lower Sandusky are the same location. The chart shown below (Figure 28), puts

the known facts together in a logical order.

The subject of distance was raised in the prior Erie District story for the 1811-12 Sandusky. The 1811 Table of Post Offices listed Sandusky as being 479 miles from Washington, whereas later tables listed Sandusky City, Huron Co. as being 415 miles. Lower Sandusky however, is listed in the 1813 Table of P.O. as 468 miles and as 491 miles in the 1819 Table. I believe that the differences is not significant and the two P.O.'s could be the same one.

Sandusky City, Huron Co. did not have their plat recorded until May 1817 and it did include a date at the top Aug. 15, 1816. Prior to this date, very few people had settled in the area and those that did were trappers or Indian traders. John Kilbourn in his 1817 Ohio Gazetteer, included the following under Fort Stephenson - ". . . *This place, together with the settlement in it's vicinity is frequently, and perhaps most generally called Lower Sandusky; it being situated adjacent to the lower rapids of Sandusky River*". He said under Lower Sandusky - "*a small settlement called by that name, about Fort Stephenson*".

It is probable that the above sequence in changing the names of the Post Office is realistic.

Figure 28

POST OFFICE	POSTMASTER	EST'D	COUNTY
Lower Sandusky	Joseph Badger	20 Aug 1806	Franklin
Lower Sandusky	John Wilson	1 Jul 1810	Franklin
Lower Sandusky	William Matthews	1 Jan 1811	Franklin
Sandusky	William Matthews	1 Apr 1811	Erie District
Sandusky	Jacob B. Varnum	1 Apr 1812	Erie District
Lower Sandusky Garrison	George Pease	1 Oct 1813	Erie District (A)
Lower Sandusky Garrison	William McConnel		Erie District (B)
Lower Sandusky Garrison	Morris A. Newman	1 Apr 1814	Erie District
Lower Sandusky	Harvey J. Harman	17 Feb 1824	Sandusky (C)

Note:

- (A) record not clear, date may be 1812
- (B) shown in 1813 Table of P.O. but not in Archives.
- (C) date shown is for appointment.

Charles Dickens and The Great Black Swamp

by Charles Dickens

In 1842 Charles Dickens visited the United States with a portion of his travels taking him through Ohio. He later recalled in "American Notes for General Circulation" (1842), which is still in print, remembrances of his journey from Columbus to Sandusky. We are highlighting them in this issue.

"There being no stage-coach next day, upon the road we wished to take, I hired 'an extra,' at a reasonable charge to carry us to Tiffin; a small town from whence there is a railroad to Sandusky. This extra was an ordinary four-horse stage-coach, such as I have described, changing horses and drivers, as the stage-coach would, but was exclusively our own for the journey. To ensure our having horses at the proper stations, and being incommoded by no strangers, the proprietors sent an agent on the box, who was to accompany us the whole way through; and thus attended, and bearing with us, besides, a hamper full of savoury cold meats, and fruit, and wine, we started off again in high spirits, at half-past six o'clock next morning, very much delighted to be by ourselves, and disposed to enjoy even the roughest journey.

"It was well for us, that we were in this humour, for the road we went over that day was certainly enough to have shaken tempers that were not resolutely at Set Fair, down to some inches below Stormy. At one time we were all flung together in a heap at the bottom of the coach, and at another we were crushing our heads against the roof. Now, one side was down deep in the mire, and we were holding on to the other. Now, the coach was lying on the tails of the two wheelers; and now it was rearing up in the air, in a frantic state, with all four horses

standing on the top of an insurmountable eminence, looking coolly back at it, as though they would say 'Unharness us. It can't be done.'

"The drivers on these roads, who certainly get over the ground in a manner which is quite miraculous, so twist and turn the team about in forcing a passage, corkscrew fashion, through the bogs and swamps, that it was quite a common circumstance on looking out of the window, to see the coachman with the ends of a pair of reins in his hands, apparently driving nothing, or playing at horses, and the leaders staring at one unexpectedly from the back of the coach, as if they had some idea of getting up behind. A great portion of the way was over what is called a corduroy road, which is made by throwing trunks of trees into a marsh, and leaving them to settle there. The very slightest of the jolts with which the ponderous carriage fell from log to log, was enough, it seemed, to have dislocated all the bones in the human body ...

"As night came on, the track grew narrower and narrower, until at last it so lost itself among the trees, that the driver seemed to find his way by instinct. We had the comfort of knowing, at least, that there was no danger of his falling asleep, for every now and then a wheel would strike against an unseen stump with such a jerk, that he was fain to hold on pretty tight and pretty quick, to keep himself upon the box. Nor was there any reason to dread the least danger from furious driving, inasmuch as over that broken ground the horses had enough to do to walk; as to shying, there was no room for that; and a herd of wild elephants could not have run away in such a wood, with such a coach at their heels. So we

stumbled along, quite satisfied. ...a few feeble lights appeared in the distance, and Upper Sandusky, an Indian village, where we were to stay till morning, lay before us. "They were gone to bed at the log Inn, ... but soon answered to our knocking, and got some tea for us in a sort of kitchen or common room, tapestried with old newspapers, pasted against the wall. The bed-chamber to which my wife and I were shown, was a large, low, ghostly room; with a quantity of withered branches on the hearth, and two doors without any fastening, opposite to each other, both opening on the black night and wild country...

"It is a settlement of the Wyandot Indians who inhabit this place. Among the company at breakfast was a mild old gentleman, who had been for many years employed by the United States Government in conducting negotiations with the Indians, and who had just concluded a treaty with these people by which they bound themselves,..... to remove next year to some land provided for them, west of the Mississippi, and a little way beyond St. Louis.

"Leaving this town directly after breakfast, we pushed forward again, over a rather worse road than yesterday, if possible, and arrived about noon at Tiffin, where we parted with the extra. At two o'clock we took the railroad; the travelling on which was very slow, its construction being indifferent, and the ground wet and marshy; and arrived at Sandusky in time to dine that evening.

This interesting account is not exactly postal history but the writings provide us with an insight as to what was endured by those on the post routes of the day.



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