Postal Service in 1911

In 1911, it cost 2 cents to mail a one ounce, first class letter. A deal? Not so much. Given inflation over the years, that 2 cents is about the same price as a first class stamp today. By comparison, however, in 1911 a dozen eggs cost 16 cents; 25 lbs of flour cost 25 cents, a fancy girl's dress could be bought for a dollar or two, a porch rocker for $2.

Directory and Post Office Guide

In 1911, Lewisburg postmaster W. E. Housel issued the "Complete Directory and Post Office Guide" of Lewisburg, West Lewisburg and Rural Routes. The directory presented "in compact form and extraordinary completeness," information on postage rates within the US and abroad, general delivery, money orders, post office boxes and rural mailboxes, and "the only complete Directory ever published of … the name and address of every person.... from the head of the family down to those of ten to fifteen years of age."

Forty-five pages of this little booklet list everyone (over 2000 individuals) in Lewisburg and West Lewisburg from "Adams, Harry - North 2d - Barber Shop" to Zimmerman, Miss Clarcy and family at North Fifteenth.

Rural Routes 1, 2 and 3 list at least 1000 people, from Roy Aikey at R.D.2, Box 95a through Dale and James Zubler at R.D. 2, Box 10. On Milton Rural Route 4, we find about 180 names, from Wesley Adams to the Zieglers at Box 57a.

Many familiar names, of families still here today, are listed in the Directory.

Post Office Services

The post office lobby was open from 5:30 in the morning until 7:30 in the evening, with registered mail, stamps and money orders available from 7:15 a.m. on.

In-town letter carriers began work at 6:45, and started deliveries at 7:35. Market Street had four deliveries and five collections, while residences had two deliveries and collections, every day except Sunday. Stamps and money orders could be purchased at the post office on Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:30; letters posted on Sunday were dispatched at 4:15. In 1911 there were twenty-six letter boxes throughout Lewisburg.

Mail traveled out of town by train, beginning with the 6 a.m. westbound L & T line. The Pennsylvania Railroad picked up and delivered mail eight times per day on its north-south runs. The Reading Railroad came through five times a day, also running north-south.

Rural Routes

Rural Route 1, handled by Clyde Gundy in 1911, began at the Market Street post office, ran south along River Road to Turtle Creek, west along Furnace Road, along Smoketown Road, across the old turnpike (Rte. 45) and back to Lewisburg.

Samuel Dunkle carried the mail on Rural Route 2, northwest of town, along Buffalo Creek to Pine Grove, to Kelly Point, along several roads in Kelly Township to Shriner Mill, back on Buffalo Road (Rte. 192) to the post office.

C. Oscar Walker was responsible for Route 3, from Lewisburg northwest to Buffalo Cross Roads, north to Mazeppa, south to Vicksburg, and back to the post office with side trips along the turnpike.

J.C. Bostian had the Milton No. 4 Route from the Milton post office, crossing the

Susquehanna into Union County, west to Kelly Cross Roads and down to Red Top, and along River Road.

Letters and packages for people further along on the same route were delivered the same day, otherwise on the next trip. Carriers sold stamps, postcards and pre-stamped envelopes; registered letters and took money order applications.

This Directory and similar documents are available for research at the Union County Historical Society, providing a wealth of information on how our predecessors lived and worked.

Post Office Staff - 1913