The Post Offices of Superior Township;
Dixboro, Superior, Geer
and
The Post Office of Borodino in Plymouth Township

The Rural Free Delivery System in Superior Township

A Brief History of the United States Postal Department

There existed in Superior Township local post offices that operated intermittently from 1826 to 1905. None have operated since the advent of Rural Free Delivery.

"Soon after I came to Detroit (May 1825) I made a contract to carry the mail from Detroit to Ann Arbor for four years, and all that time I forded all the streams, never once crossing a bridge, for there were none to cross. During the winter of 1825 and 1826 my son Lucius and I carried the mail on horseback, and often in fording the rivers in high water we were obliged to secure the mail bags on the top of the saddle, grasp the horse's mane and swim him over."

     Bethuel Farrand, Volume 6, page 445 of the Michigan Pioneer Collection.

Other information indicates Farrand's route of choice was the old Ann Arbor road, from Detroit to Ann Arbor, through Superior Township, by way of Plymouth and Dixboro.

Karl Williams
April 2007

Dixboro Post Office

The Dixboro post office was established by **John Dix**[1]. No date is shown in the referenced microfilm records but Walter Romig in his book Michigan Place Names (1973) states that post office archives as reported by Wendell W. Hobbs show that Dix was appointed postmaster of Dixborough (sic) on 6 December 1825.[2] **William M. Clements** became postmaster 7 May 1834[3]. Subsequent postmasters were **Theodore** (?) **Hawkins** appointed 21 January 1846[4], **Robert P. Sinclair** appointed 3 February 1848[5], and **John Whitney** appointed 16 April 185-[6]. The post office at Dixboro was discontinued 23 September 1850[7] but reinstated 11 July 1861 with **Nelson Townsend** as postmaster.[8] It was discontinued 20 January (possibly June) 1863.[9]

Vader L. Shankland reopened the post office at Dixboro on 26 May 1890, the mail being supplied from Ann Arbor,[10] and **Robert W. Shankland** took over as postmaster on 17 May 1894[11]. On 17 May 1905 notification was made that effective 15 June 1905 Dixboro mail would be delivered from Ann Arbor[12]. This may have been a consequence of Rural Free Delivery being instituted in the Dixboro area, the new owner of the Dixboro general store desiring not to continue the post office (see below), or a combination of both.

Other names associated with the Dixboro post office on the microfilm records were **N. Wolcott** and **A. Norton** in 1837, and **Reubin Lafiner** and **Thomas Sinclair** in 1844.[13] These people are noted as having posted a security bond. They were local residents.

John Dix. Dix was one of the first settlers in Superior Township, purchasing 469.12 acres in 1824. He is responsible for the founding of Dixboro, having a portion of his land surveyed and subdivided. He is credited with the first barn in Superior township, erected a grist mill, and operated a small general store.[14] He was definitely a land promoter and establishing a post office would have been in his interest. Dix sold his holdings and left the area about 1833, moving to Texas.

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[1] Roll 62, reference entry a
[2] Romig, page 158.
[3] Roll 62, reference entry a
[4] Roll 62, reference entry b
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid. This portion of the microfilm is hard to read. The appointment date likely was 16 April 1850.
[7] Romig, page 158
[8] Roll 62, reference entry c
[9] Romig says January (Jan) but the original entries had the months abbreviated and this entry could be interpreted as June (Jun) in the microfilmed records. On the other hand Nelson Townsend died in November 1862 and his death quite possibly resulted in the closing of the post office in January 1863.
[10] Roll 62, reference entry e
[11] Roll 62, reference entry e
[12] Roll 62, reference entry f
[13] Roll 62, reference entry b
[14] Chapman, page 1071

William M. Clements In the 1840 Superior tax rolls Clements is shown owning 58 acres in section 18, the section where Dixboro is located. He was Superior township clerk in 1835 and sat on the township board as a justice in 1840.

Theodore Hawkins   Olney Hawkins owned 319 acres in sections 7 and 18, the Dixboro area, according to the tax rolls of 1840. There is no information regarding a Theodore Hawkins but it is presumed that he was a member of this family, three members of which, Jabez, Daniel, and Hannah, owned a total of 10 parcels in Dixboro per the 1847 Superior township tax rolls. .

Robert P. Sinclair was a land owner in Dixboro as of 1847.

John Whitney owned 5 lots in Dixboro in 1847.

Nelson Townsend Died 10 November 1862, age 42.[15]   In the 1861 and 1862 tax rolls Nelson is shown owning 3 lots in Dixboro. In 1863 these lots are owned by Mary Townsend, presumably his wife.

Vader L. Shankland   Vader S. Shanklin was the Superior township treasurer in 1869. On the 1890 application to reopen the Dixboro post office the signature is Veder L. Shankland.[16]

Robert W. Shankland Carol Freeman credits Robert Shankland with reopening the Dixboro post office when he was operating the Dixboro general store.[17] Robert Shankland was the Superior township clerk during the years 1894 through 1897 and the Superior township supervisor in 1901, 1902, and 1903.[18] According to Freeman, the post office was closed never to reopen when Shankland sold the general store to John Quackenbush, the year being 1905.[19]

N. Wolcott   Wolcott is shown owning the 160 acres of the NW 1/4 section 17 in 1838.

A. Norton Alvin Norton was Superior township clerk in 1840. The Superior tax rolls for that year show his residence as Dixboro and he owning 80 acres of land.

Reubin Lafever (Lafiner?).   Reuben & Stark LeFever owned three vacant lots in Dixboro totaling 1 acre as of 1840 and subsequent Superior township tax rolls. Reubin Lafever died 19 July 1849 and is buried at Pray cemetery.

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[15] Dixboro Oak Grove cemetery inscription.
[16] This discrepancy in the spelling of Shanklin/Shankland is noted in several records. Also Vader, Veder, and Veeder.
[17] Freeman, page 29.
[18] Officials of Superior township. A personal research paper by the author.
[19] Ibid   Freeman may be incorrect. The Superior township tax records show Robert Shankland owned lots 1 and 10 in the SE 1/4 of Dixboro as of 1909. In 1911 this land is owned by Mary Shankland. Additional research, not a part of this paper, needs to be conducted on the history of the Dixboro general store.

Thomas Sinclair Thompson (sic) Sinclair was the Superior township clerk in 1842 and an owner of 320 acres in the Dixboro area.[20]

One would assume that the Dixboro post office was always located in the local general store or similar commercial establishment and it is likely, although not substantiated, that the above mentioned postmasters operated the local general store or similar establishment. Dixboro has always been identified as a settlement presumably with some commercial activity but there has been no definitive study on the history of Dixboro or how the village fared after the railroad from Detroit was completed to Ypsilanti in February 1838 and to Ann Arbor in October 1839[21]. This would have significantly reduced the traffic on the Ann Arbor - Detroit Road through Dixboro and Plymouth. Chapman in 1881 notes that an 1859 article in the Ann Arbor Journal stated that after John Dix left, c1833, the village was on the wane.[22] The lessening of Dixboro's population as well as the lack of a public spirited individual to take on the duties and responsibilities of post master could very well explain the hiatus in postal service for the settlement between 1850 and 1861 and again from 1863 to 1890. But there may have been another reason. (See Superior post office).

Superior Post Office

The Superior post office was established by **John Brewer** on 2 March 1838[23]. **Silas Wheelock** became postmaster 23 September (year not legible)[24], and **Thomas F. Leonard** became postmaster 15 June 1853[25]. **William C. Murray** assumed postmaster duties 5 January 1859.[26] The post office was discontinued 20 June 1863[27] and does not appear in any subsequent records, although in 1890 William Geer submitted the name of Superior, which was rejected, when he applied to establish a post office in that year. (See Geer Post Office).

Initially the post office was either in the home of John Brewer or in one of the commercial establishments that had sprung up in a new settlement initially called Panama.[28] By the time Brewer established the post office in 1838 the township had been renamed Superior and that is the name Brewer chose for the post office. It is not known if this name was also applied to the settlement but later, after the First Free Church of Michigan was built there in 1855, the settlement was called Free Church. It was located at what is now the intersection of Gotfredson Road and Ford Road (M-153) in Superior Township. Little evidence remains of the settlement. The church was demolished in the

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[20] Superior Township tax roll of 1843.
[21] History of Washtenaw County, Charles Chapman. Chapman Co. Chicago 1881, page 531.
[22] Ibid. Page 1071.
[23] Reference entry a.
[24] Reference entry b
[25] Reference entry b
[26] Reference entry c
[27] Reference entry c
[28] David Zelisse stated that he at one time saw an 1847 map of the area that indicated a post office at the intersection of Ford and Gotfredson roads, not in Brewer's house.

1930's. The Free Church cemetery remains, the last burial having occurred in 1952. The settlement name of Panama does not appear on any known maps but the settlement is shown on the 1839 Burr map identified as Superior, the name perhaps referring only to the name of the post office[29].

John Brewer had purchased the 160 acres of the SW 1/4 of section 12 in Superior Township from the federal government 3 April 1826. By 1840 he had acquired the 160 acres of the SE 1/4 of section 12 and by 1856 had acquired an additional 160 acres south of his land in section 13. Brewer was Superior township supervisor in 1848 and 1849, a justice on the township board in 1852, and again the township supervisor in 1858. He died in 1870 and is buried at the Free Church cemetery. He was one of the people instrumental in building the Free Church. Prior to the building of the church his home was evidently used for church services as it is identified as a church on the Washtenaw county property owners map of 1856. The Brewer house was in 1938 indicated as having been built in 1837[30] and if so, it makes it one of the oldest structures in the township.

Silas Wheelock is listed in the Superior Township tax rolls of 1838 as owning 227 acres in the township; the SW 1/4 and the W 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of section 3. This location is on Plymouth Road east of Curtis Road. The 1856 property owner map shows Wheelock's dwelling on the south side of the road at the location of what is now known as the Ida Freeman house. The Rural Land Survey of 1938 indicates that this house was built in 1876 but it is possible that portions of the house could predate that time or that another dwelling was situation on the property.[31] Wheelock was the Panama Township clerk for the years 1829, 1830 and 1832 and Superior Township supervisor in 1842.[32] In 1847 he was a justice and sat on the township governing board.[33] The Superior post office <u>may</u> at some date been moved to Wheelock's home, or not. (see below) Wheelock's house was located on the Ann Arbor - Plymouth Road which was a post road, over which the mail between Detroit and Ann Arbor by way of Plymouth was carried. Brewer's house and his post office were not so conveniently located.

Thomas F. Leonard owned the 80 acres of the E 1/2 of the SW 1//4 in section 2 of Superior Township in 1842 that appears to be his first ownership of land in the township. By 1856 he had moved to section 9, owning the area around Frains Lake and Prospect Road. This parcel of land was also on the Ann Arbor - Plymouth post road a short distance west of the Silas Wheelock property. Leonard was the Superior Township clerk in 1851, 1852, and 1853 and <u>may</u> also have maintained the post office in his home. (see below) The location of his residence has not been determined.

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[29] The 1839 Burr map shows the location of all post offices and postal routes in southeast Michigan at that time.

[30] Superior Township Rural Land Survey of 1938. Superior Township archives.

[31] Oral history puts its construction about 1850, per William Fishbeck.

[32] Panama Township, which comprised congressional townships T1S R7E and T2S R7E were separated into Salem and Superior Townships in 1833. The township of Panama is well documented and appears on early maps.

[33] What we call a township trustee today was then referred to as a justice. Justices were, in fact, officially justices-of-the-peace, an elected position, although they may have not performed any duties of that office, their only function being as a township board member.

William C. (Conklin) Murray was the son of Charles and Abigail Murray and had come to Superior Township with his parents at the age of 6 years in 1830. He acquired the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of section 10 through inheritance and purchase from other heirs.[34]. This property is contiguous to the Silas Wheelock farm and a little east of where Leonard had his property. William C. Murray was the Superior Township treasurer in 1861 and 1862, and the Superior Township supervisor for the years 1884 and 1885.

Murray was at one time the local postmaster, the post office being located in the house of his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Murray and Robert T. Wheelock, the son of Silas Wheelock.[35]   Their house, which is still standing, is located at the northwest corner of Curtis road and Plymouth-Ann Arbor road. Quite possibly Mary and/or Robert Wheelock operated the post office, William Murray taking the responsibility of being postmaster. The house may very well have also been the post office during the period that Silas Wheelock and Thomas Leonard were postmasters but this as yet has not been established.   This location was known c1900 as Murray's Corner and was probably identified by that name for some years prior.

Because the Frains Lake area is situated relatively close to Dixboro this may be the reason that the Dixboro post office was discontinued in September of 1850. If any of the above named individuals operated a commercial establishment in Dixboro, the post office would certainly would have been located there during the periods of their incumbency, but that does not appear to have been the case. Relocating the post office onto the Ann Arbor road, a post road, from the settlement of Panama, does make a good deal of sense.

What is surprising is that in terms of official records there was no post office located in Superior township between the closing of the Dixboro and Superior post offices in 1863 and the reopening of the Dixboro and the establishment of the Geer post offices in 1890.

It is quite possible that after the Superior Township post offices closed, informal post offices were created, they being locations where area residents could pick up their mail, it having been brought from Ypsilanti, or Plymouth, or Ann Arbor by residents who were going into town for whatever reason, or by star route carriers. Daniel Roper makes an interesting comment that star route carriers were authorized to perform a limited mail service for patrons on their line of travel.[36]   If Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road was a star route in the latter part of the 1800s, as it appears to have been earlier, then the star route carriers could very easily have serviced informal post offices along Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road. Since these post office were not official, they would not appear on any records. Closed post offices such as the Superior post office, having once existed, quite possibly continued to operate, the post master or the clerk who ran the unofficial post office receiving no compensation; doing it as a civic responsibility, and perhaps reselling stamps purchased at the official post offices, as well a notions and other small items. This type of situation stills exists in England today, where local post offices in small

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[34] Oral history, William Fishbeck, great grandson of William C. Murray.
[35] Ibid   W. Fishbeck has no information concerning the dates that William C. Murray was postmaster or how long the post office was located in the house of Robert T. & Mary Wheelock.
[36] Roper, page 147

"mom & pop" stores operate under contract from the Royal Post. If this were the case, perhaps one of the final unofficial post offices was at the home of William Geer (see Geer post office) who, for whatever reason, made an effort to become an official post office.   I want to emphasize that this is speculation. No oral or written confirmation of this possibility has been found.

Until the advent of RFD, the farmers were still required to pick up their mail at the post office, or have friends and neighbors obtain it for them, if they had not made other arrangements.

A statement made by Charles A. Root, born in 1881 who was a brother of Bessie Root mentioned in connection with the Geer post office, sheds some light on the subject. Charles stated in an interview regarding early local history that "The neighbors took turns every Saturday to go to town and bring the mail and groceries."[37]

This is corroborated by two articles in the Local News column of the Plymouth Mail,

> "Free rural mail delivery is making some changes here as well as elsewhere. H.O. Hanford[38] called at this office yesterday and ordered his paper sent to Ypsilanti, where it goes into a free delivery route. Mr. Hanford stated that he organized a daily mail delivery over 35 years ago with ten of his neighbors, each to go to the post office one day every two weeks."[39]

> Murray's Corner. "On account of the free delivery what was known as the Hanford Mail Club will be broken up as the mail route takes in several of the members."[40]

The proximity of Superior Township to the post offices in Plymouth, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor may have facilitated the creation of mail delivery clubs such as the Hanford Mail Club but no reference has been found to any other such clubs. This sort of thing might have been an undefined aspect of postal activity, neither legal nor illegal. Being a member of the club would have been voluntary. If it worked and no one complained it would have remained in place until things changed, which they eventually did. The fact that two official post offices were created in Superior Township in 1890 indicates that a change in post office policy may have been instituted at that time. Could it be that it was becoming more difficult for people pick up mail for friends or neighbors? One can see how this might lead to confrontation or criminal activity. There is some indication of this concern. Appearing in the Plymouth Mail was the following statement:

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[37] The Plymouth Mail (newspaper), September 7, 1950, page 4.

[38] According to in Cornerstones, A History of Canton Township Families, page 155, the Henry O. Hanford (1844-1904) residence was located at the northeast corner of Ridge road and Hanford road in Canton township. Hanford Road is located 1/2 mile north of Ford Road between Beck and Napier roads in Canton township and is in close proximity of the northeast corner of Superior Township. There is no indication who were the members of his mail club.

[39] The Plymouth Mail, October 27, 1899

[40] The Plymouth Mail, November 3, 1899. Murray's Corner identified local news items from Superior Township.

>"People who call for another person's mail at the post office and fail to deliver the same are liable to a fine of $500, or one year in the penitentiary. This applies to newspapers as well as other mail matter."[41]

This may have been another reason why the Hanford Mail Club was being discontinued, and/or the reason William Geer made the effort to establish an official post office.

In addition, if our speculations are correct, William Geer's submission of Superior as the name of the post office he established in 1890 now makes more sense. It was not only the name of the township but had been the name of several post offices previously established along the Ann Arbor - Plymouth road, perhaps some of them unofficial and known only locally. The name Superior post office which was submitted by Geer was undoubtedly rejected because there was by then already somewhere in Michigan a Superior post office and the policy had been established not to have duplicate post office names within a state.

Geer Post Office

The Geer Post Office was established by **William Geer** effective 13 June 1890,[42] his proposal being submitted on 7 May 1890. He proposed initially the names Superior and Eruha, both of which were rejected. The name Geer Post Office was accepted and the mail was to be supplied from Plymouth.[43] **Benjamin D. Geer**, his son, officially became postmaster 4 April 1896 after the death of William. Sometime during the summer of 1898 a request was made by Benjamin to the appointment division of the Post Office Department that the Geer Post Office be moved 70 rods (1155 feet) in an easterly direction and that Miss **Bessie Root** be appointed postmaster[44]. This relocation evidently was approved as Bessie Root is shown becoming the postmaster on 4 November 1898[45]. On August 31, 1900 the Geer Post Office closed, its duties being assumed by the Plymouth Post Office.[46] This was a direct result of the establishment of a Rural Free Delivery route for the area on August 15, 1900.[47]

Mary Louis Horwood, a teacher at Geer school, in 1974 wrote a short history of Geer school. In it she stated the William Geer had been elected Director of the school board in 1880 and was responsible for the present school building being built.[48] Consequently the school was named after him, in addition to the fact that he operated the local post office and general store.[49] No other information has come to light that Geer operated a general store at his house where his post office is known to have been located, but it is possible

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[41] The Plymouth Mail, November 3, 1899

[42] Reference entry e

[43] Site location report, Michigan 1837-1950, microfilm roll 289.

[44] Site location report, Michigan 1837 -1950, microfilm roll 289

[45] Reference entry f

[46] Reference entry f

[47] The Plymouth Mail, August 3, 1900.

[48] This is confirmed by other records.

[49] Mrs. Horwood did not give the source of her information.

that he did. At that time there was no prohibition of such activity in a residence. If this were the case, it substantiates the supposition that Geer operated an unofficial post office, which would have been located in his store, prior to his request to open a regular post office in 1890. Again, speculation. At the time he opened his post office the concept of rural free delivery, which resulted in the closing of many small rural post offices, was not a consideration.

William Geer and his brother Watson purchased the 80 acres of the E 1/2 of the SW 1/4 in section 2 in 1850, the land that Thomas Leonard had once owned. In 1852 Watson married Mary Jane Pray, the daughter of Esek Pray, who was a justice-of-the-peace and pillar of the community. Watson Geer moved in with his in-laws who owned approximately 400 acres a mile west of the Geer farm. Esek died suddenly in 1856 and his widow returned to her family home in Rhode Island. Watson inherited through marriage and took over the substantial operation of the Pray farm. Meanwhile William Geer had married Elizabeth Depue, the daughter of a nearby neighbor. William remained on the original farm, expanding the acreage to some extent and becoming involved in local government. He was active in the local school district and instrumental in building what became Geer school. He was elected Superior township clerk in 1860, 1862, 1864, 1865 and 1866; township supervisor in 1869, 1871 and 1872; and township clerk in 1884, 1885 and 1886. If, as township clerk he was running an informal post office, he was certainly the logical choice for the creation of an official post office.   After his death March 11,1896 William's son Benjamin Geer became the postmaster. For whatever reason by 1898 Benjamin no longer wished to function as such and nominated Bessie Root as postmaster.

Benjamin D. Geer. One of the sons of William Geer, born in 1862. He inherited William's property and the position of postmaster at his father's death in 1896. Superior township tax records indicate that he continued to own the farm until 1913 at which time Daniel Jewel took over the payment of taxes. This does not establish when Benjamin left the farm as Jewel may have been leasing it prior to 1913. The Plymouth Mail of February 20, 1903 carries an advertisement that Ben Geer was to have a farm auction on March 3rd, and a social note appearing in the Ypsilanti Daily Press of May 2, 1905 reads, "Mrs. Ben Geer is ill at her home on Washington street" (in Ypsilanti). Oral history suggests that Benjamin moved to the city of Ypsilanti where he operated a small manufacturing plant.[50]   Quite likely his proposal to make Bessie Root postmaster was in preparation of his moving from the area.

Bessie Root was the daughter of Augustus Curran Root, Benjamin Geer's neighbor directly to the east of the Geer house and post office. Bessie was 22 years old at the time, unmarried, and living at home. The recommendation for her appointment was accepted, as was evidently the move of the Geer post office to the Root home. The Augustus Curran Root house served as the local post office until it was closed in August 1900. In 1905 Bessie Root married Thomas Geer, the son of Watson Geer.

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[50] Interview with Don Staebler.

The Root house, believed to have been built in 1880[51] is still as it was at that time, somewhat altered. The Geer house burned to the ground sometime in the 1920's or 1930's. The outbuildings survived and the farm granary was remodeled into a residence.

Borodino Post Office (Wayne County)

A small settlement and the Borodino Post Office was located on the Plymouth - Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth Township a mile east of the Washtenaw/Wayne County line at the intersection with Ridge Road.   This post office was established by Roswell Root on 29 June 1826. Like John Dix, Roswell Root may have been a land promoter and the establishment of a post office would have been in his interest although he never platted the land or officially attempted to create a village. On 8 June 1854 Simon H. Obear was appointed postmaster. The post office was discontinued 4 April 1855. It was reinstated on 12 March 1856 with Henry R. Root, Rozwell's son, as postmaster[52]. The Borodino Post Office was again discontinued 20 June 1863, never to be reopened.

Rozwell Root immigrated from New York State and took up 400 acres of land in section 31 of Plymouth township in the spring of 1825.[53] The settlement that resulted, to some degree dependent on the pioneer traffic generated by the westward movement of settlers into the interior of the State, at one time had a blacksmith, cooperage, cabinet shop, shoe shop, and a general store.[54]

Other names associated with the Borodino Post Office as shown in the microfilm records are D.D. Cady and Jasper Shutte on 2 January 1836; A.Y. Murray and William N. Stevens as of 9 April 1844; and Larry Fairman and Ebenezer J. Penniman as of 20 September 1851[55].   These individuals, all local land owners, underwrote a security bond for the post office.

The name Borodino obviously came from the Battle of Borodino in Russia. It occurred September 7, 1812 shortly before Napoleon's forces entered Moscow.

An interesting sidelight is that Roswell L. Root, probably a son of the Roswell Root who established the Borodino Post Office, was very active in Plymouth business and politics and became postmaster at the Plymouth Post Office on 17 June 1867.

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[51] Rural Land Survey of 1938
[52] Reference entry b
[53] Bureau of Land Management records show that a patent was issued for the land August 18, 1825. At that time the period of obtaining a patent from Washington D.C. was two to three months from the time it was purchased at the Detroit land office.
[54] Theresa S. Root
[55] Reference entry b

Roswell Root died October 23, 1873, aged 93 years and was buried in Kenyon cemetery in Canton township. He was primarily a farmer and active in local affairs.

Henry R. Root was the youngest son of Roswell Root and took over the management of the Root farm and related duties.

D.D. Cady was a major land owner on Joy road in Canton township.

Jasper Shutte. No information.

A.Y. Murray. Archibald Y. Murray bought land in sections 1 and 2 in Superior township in 1827 and an 80 acre parcel in Canton township on the east side of Napier road between Ann Arbor - Plymouth road and Warren road. He erected a steam sawmill in Superior township and a steam flour mill in Canton township which proved to be uneconomical and was removed to Detroit in 1857.[56]

William N. Stevens. Amos and A.D. Stevens were land owners in the area as of 1876.

Larry Fairman. As of 1876 F.W. Fairman, presumably a descendant, owned 320 acres of the west half of section 32 in Plymouth township, the land immediately east of Ridge road and the Root property.

Ebenezer J. Penniman   No information.

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[56] Chapman, page 1086. The 1856 map of property owners of Superior Township also shows these mills.

What happened on the 20th of June, 1863? As of that date both the Borodino and Superior post offices were discontinued and possibly the Dixboro post office as well. The 20 January 1863 date for the Dixboro closing may actually be 20 Jun, there being some difficulty in deciphering the handwritten ledgers. Because of the Civil War, those post offices that were not generating sufficient income or had little activity may have been eliminated as a cost cutting device.

A brief word about the term justice as a member of a township board since many of the post office officials mentioned above were at one time justices.

The law establishing township government stipulated that the township supervisor, township clerk, and the two local justices-of-the-peace whose terms were soonest to expire were to comprise the township board, they being authorized to conduct township business. The first two positions were elective terms of one year. Justices were to be appointed by the governor to four year terms, there being up to four justices-of-the-peace in each township and it being a requirement that they reside within the township of which they were a justice of the peace. Territorial Governor Cass let it be known that he would appoint anyone who ran and was elected to this position. This election of justices-of-the-peace was later written into the first Michigan constitution. The justice-of-the-peace was the local magistrate, settling small local legal disputes and crimes, and therefore considered competent to sit on the township governing body. Hence the term Justice, meaning a township board member other than one of the officials. Those running for the office of township justice were not obligated to perform judicial duties, and as time passed the duties of the local justice-of-the-peace were severely restricted in favor of a court system run by trained professionals.   Still, justices-of-the-peace were being elected, sitting on township boards, and on occasion performing judicial functions.

In 1952 the term township justice was changed to township trustee, the result of a Michigan Supreme Court decision that declared that the justice-of-the-peace was a judicial function and that a township board member was a legislative function. The Michigan Constitution forbade individuals from functioning both in a judicial and a legislative capacity.   The Michigan constitution of 1963 provided for the gradual phase out of the office of justice-of-the-peace and it no longer exists.

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Washtenaw County Atlas (of Property Owners). A reprint of the Washtenaw County
     atlases of 1856 and 1864. Krohn and Liskow, Editors. Genealogical Society of
     Washtenaw County, Michigan 1997

Combination Atlas of Washtenaw County. A reprint of the Washtenaw County atlases of
     1874, 1895, and 1915. Ypsilanti Historical Society 1991.

Newspaper Microfilms

The Plymouth Mail. Plymouth Library, 223 S. Main St., Plymouth, Michigan 48170

The Ypsilanti Sentinel-Commercial, Ypsilanti Daily Press, and others.
     Ypsilanti District Main Library, 5577 Whittaker Road, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
     Halle Library, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti

The Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat, Ann Arbor Courier- Register, and others. Ann Arbor
     Main Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor, Michigan

National Archives post office information contained herein comes primarily from microfilm reel M-841, roll 62. This microfilm reel is of post master appointments in selected Michigan counties for the period 1832 to September 30, 1971. This information is contained in several ledgers which have been microfilmed as shown below. For my purposes I am interested only in the post offices of Superior Township; Dixboro, Superior (Panama), and Geer, and the post office of Borodino in Wayne County. If you have reason to view this microfilm reel it is recommended that you read the introduction found at the beginning of the microfilm reel to acquaint you with some of the details of its contents.

Ledgers: Volume 12B, 1832 - 1844   footnote reference <u>a</u>
             Volume 15, 1843 - 1857   <u>b</u>
             Volume 20B, 1855 - 1865   <u>c</u>
             Volume 31, 1864 - 1878   <u>d</u>
             Volume 54, 1878 - 1896   <u>e</u>
             Volume 91, 1896 - 1908   <u>f</u>

Two other microfilm reels, M-1126 #289 and M-1126 #290, The Reports of Site Locations 1837-1950, contains reference only to the Geer and Dixboro post offices in Washtenaw County (Dixboro for only the 1890 post office, nothing on the earlier John Dix post office) and there is no reference in the Wayne County site location reel to the Borodino post office.

Subsequently all Washtenaw county post offices were located in cities, no post offices being located in Superior Township after the closing of the Geer and Dixboro post offices. This was undoubtedly due to the establishment of the Rural Free Delivery system which resulted in a policy of closing fourth class rural post offices.

William Romig's book, <u>Michigan Place Names</u>, surprisingly contains no reference to the township or settlement of Panama. Its entry on Superior refers only to the township, there being no information regarding the Superior post office.

United States Postal Service
A Brief History

In America a rudimentary postal service with no fixed schedules had been established on the eastern seaboard in the 1600's, primarily to facilitate communication between the various colonial governments and correspondence between the colonies and England. In 1639 the first official notification of a postal service appeared when the Fairbanks tavern in Boston was designated as the repository for mail arriving from or being sent overseas. In 1691 Thomas Neale obtained permission from the British Crown to establish a postal service in the American colonies, this being in effect a private monopoly. The British Government took over the operation in 1707 and by 1710 had established a government run postal service resulting in scheduled mail service between various centers of population.

Most of us remember that Benjamin Franklin was the first Postmaster General of the United States. This position was not a political plumb for his efforts in the Revolutionary War. He was well qualified for the job. In 1737 he had assumed the job of postmaster in Philadelphia and was subsequently assigned by the British Post Master General in the colonies to regulate the activities of the entire Colonial Post Service and to establish accounting procedures for local postmasters.

Franklin held this position until 1774 when he was removed from this office by the Crown because of his support for American Independence. In 1775 he was appointed Postmaster General by the Continental Congress with the charge of establishing an American postal system. Franklin served in this capacity for 16 months before he relinquished the position because of other responsibilities.   Postal laws and regulations were revised and codified under the Ordinance of October 18, 1782.

In 1789 George Washington appointed Samuel Osgood of Massachusetts as Postmaster General and it was Osgood, and the subsequent Postmaster Generals, using the concepts initiated by Franklin, and new ways of doing things dictated by circumstances, who created the postal system as we know it.

In the beginning all mail was paid for by the recipient upon its delivery. It was a very inefficient and costly system.   Osgood estimated that half the revenue due the post office was not being obtained, either because the mail was refused by the recipient due to the cost, or because some of the money collected by the mail carriers was not being turned in. On occasion recipients could not be located and there was the problem of competition from private couriers who would carry mail at a lesser rate and pocket all the proceeds. It was not uncommon for postal service contractors who were carrying federal government mail, for which they received a percentage of the postal fee, to also be carrying private mail for their own benefit.

Osgood proposed, and these recommendations were eventually adopted, that postal rates be based on distance of travel, that the monopolistic aspects of the federal postal system be enforced, and that contract carriers be hired on the bases of character and integrity

rather than they being the lowest bidder. He also introduced prepaid mail, in that newspapers, not initially sent by mail, could be sent prepaid at a low fixed rate, half the money being retained by the postmaster.

As the nation grew so did the post office. It was eventually recognized that the post office was the one function of the federal government that almost everyone dealt with. In 1829 the office of Postmaster General became a cabinet position and the post office a function of the government in its own right. Up until that time it had been a part of the Treasury Department. However, it remained that postal revenues were turned over to the U.S. Treasury, with Congress authorizing appropriations to run the Post Office Department.

In 1845 a number of reforms were instituted. The more significant reduced mail rates, changed the method of letting contracts hence giving more authority to local postmasters, reinforced private mail penalties, restricted franking privileges, and addressed the handling of overseas mail.

July 1, 1847 was the beginning of federally issued prepaid stamps. This system replaced a system instituted by local postmasters who were using various methods of identifying prepaid mail, one of them being locally printed stamps called " postmaster provisionals". Prepaid mail was a derivative of the prepaid newspaper delivery instituted previously. There was some resistance to prepaid mail service. Indeed, a not unreasonable attitude was that if you paid in advance and the post office had your money, what guarantee was there that they would actually deliver your letter. On the other had there were many letter writers and businesses who wished to send mail and advertisements prepaid to insure that the letters and such would be accepted.

In 1851 the Postmaster General Nathan Hall reduced by half the cost of sending printed matter, primarily newspapers, through the mails if the postage was prepaid, and he directed that newspapers were to be distributed free within the county in which they were printed. Hall also instituted the acceptance of bound printed matter, books and magazines, which had originally been too heavy and bulky for the post office to handle. By 1851 railroads, riverboats, and steamships, had made the transportation of bulky mail feasible.

One of the problems the post office had with the collect-on-delivery system was that advertisers were flooding the mails with circulars and letters of solicitation to be paid for or refused as the addressee saw fit. A problem akin to our present experience with email "spam". In 1855 prepayment of all mail was made mandatory. Doing so made the mail more convenient, eliminated in part the above mentioned abuse, and solved many accounting problems, as well as enhancing post office revenue.

July 1, 1863 began free delivery service in major American cities. This service was already being practiced in some European cities and the idea of personal delivery was not new. As of 1794 American postmasters had the authority to contract out "special" delivery post workers. Of course, the recipient incurred an extra charge but it was

available to those who were willing and able to pay for it. When true free delivery was started it was limited to cities whose postal revenues could support it. These cities, were of course, also the cities where difficulties were arising due to the increasing number of people who were calling for their mail at the post office. There was resistance to the idea but experience showed that by delivering mail to individuals use of the postal service increased, and the increased revenues paid for the service

At the post offices in the larger cities sorting the mail was becoming a problem. It would be delivered in bulk, usually by train, and had to be sorted and distributed to the various post offices in the area. En route sorting was first tried in 1862 and became official in 1864 with the introduction of the railroad post office car. Improving the speed of delivery was important but the post office also began introducing other services that were needed by the public. The postal money order was initiated in 1864. In 1868 agreements on the standards for handling international mail were reached. The penny post card was introduced in 1873 and became very popular. In 1898 private penny post cards were authorized. The special delivery letter was introduced in 1885. 1896 saw the start of Rural Free Delivery (discussed elsewhere). In 1911 the postal saving bank began operation. On January 1, 1913 parcel post began, and six months later the C.O.D. (cash on delivery) option was added. In 1918 airmail service began, Washington D.C. to New York, and by July 1924 there was regular one day transcontinental air mail service.

The postal service continued to make use of new technology as it developed, primarily in the area of transportation of mail, but the cost of operating the post office grew greater and greater over time and this cost was not being offset by increased revenues. During the 1950's a number of internal reforms took place to make the post office more efficient. but the postal deficit continued to grow, partly because of the politics associated with the operation of the post office department.   In 1970 The Postal Reorganization Act was passed which radically changed the nature of the post office; the intent being to make it a self-sustaining function of the government. But except for the introduction of the Zip Code in 1963 and the Zip + 4 in 1983, and, of course, the significant increase in postal rates resulting from it being put on a pay-as-you-go basis, the public perceives the United States Postal Service little changed from what it had always been.

We tend to take fast, secure, and convenient mail delivery for granted, as we do so much of the benefits we have obtained in a modern progressive society. We should, on occasion, reflect on the fact these things were not always so; that we created them; and that they could easily be uncreated. We should appreciate what we have. As technology advances and gives us more and faster ways to communicate, it is still the U.S. Postal Service that is one of the basic and important parts of our of our social fabric. It is of inestimable value that we have an organization that will take almost anything we create, any thought that we have, and physically move it to anyplace in the world.

Think about it.

The Zip Code

The ZIP code (Zone Improvement Plan) was introduced July 1,1963 to improve the mechanical sorting of mail. The idea of a numeric coding system had been under consideration for over a decade. The post office went through quite a program of introducing the ZIP code and getting people to use it. Now all commercial mailers are required to use it and a person's mailing address doesn't seem complete without the ZIP code tag after the State. Zip + 4 was introduced in 1983.

The first five digits identify the area of the country and the delivery office to which the mail is directed. The next two numbers identify a delivery sector, which may be one or more buildings, a group of streets or post office boxes, or a small geographic area. The final two digits denote a building floor, a specific street, a specific department in a large organization, or some other factor.

The ZIP code was a refinement of postal zone codes in major cities established in 1943. Old timers will remember that big city addresses usually carried a zone, such as Detroit 3, Michigan.

As mail volume and population increased ZIP codes have been divided into smaller areas with new codes being created.

The post office department has some flexibility, particularly for those rural residences that originally had a mailing address that was out of an established ZIP code area. There are currently residences in Superior township who live in one ZIP code area, but receive their mail through a different city. There are individuals living in the Ypsilanti ZIP area who have an Ann Arbor mailing address, and people who live in the Ann Arbor Zip area who receive their mail through Plymouth. This does require that they place their rural mail box in the appropriate zone for the city from which they receive their mail or that they maintain a post office box in the desired city.

What is interesting about the Superior township ZIP code boundaries is that they reflect the service areas of the original RFD routes out of Ann Arbor, Plymouth, and Ypsilanti; and the RFD routes reflect the original settlement patterns.

The associated map indicates the ZIP code boundaries in Superior Township. This is a generalized map, and as mentioned above there are some inconsistencies with individual residences do exist.

Definitions

There are several terms that are often used in connection with post office research that could do with some explaining.

Post Road.   The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines a post road as "a road or route over which mail is carried". The U.S. post office web site defines it being "any road on which mail was delivered". Presumably they are not talking about rural delivery routes but only those roads used to carry mail between post offices. In the United States in 1823 canals were declared post roads and in 1838 all railroads were declared post roads. I have found no specific information indicating any advantage of a route being declared a post road but quite likely funds for improvement and maintenance and a certain amount of federal jurisdiction was a factor.

Star Route. An act of the U.S. Congress in 1845 affected a number of aspects of the U.S. postal service, one of the provisions being that contracts to carry the mail let to private individuals where to be let "to the lowest bidder, tendering sufficient guarantees for the performance, without other reference to be the mode of transportation than may be necessary to provide for the due celerity, certainty, and security of such transportation." Although it is not stated, this provision may have been included to reduce the awarding contracts at exorbitant rates as a consequence of political pressure. This type of contract was marked with an asterisk or star, hence Star Route. Such routes were intended to serve small post offices located off the lines of railroad travel. These carriers were also allowed to bring mail to those families on their route who were distant from a post office, a precursor of RFD. The star route designation did not apply to boats or railways, the contacts of which were established under different laws. In 1971 the term Star Route was changed to Highway Contract Route to better reflect what it actually was.

Post Office Classes.   In 1864 post offices were categorized by classes based on the amount of revenue they generated. Originally a First Class post office had revenues in excess of $40,000; Second Class between $8000 and $40,000; Third Class $1900 to $8000, and Fourth Class revenues less than $1900. Post office class categories were eliminated in 1976.

Post, in connection with the sending of messages.

Roper says that the term is derived from antiquity as a result of sending messages (mail) by relays of men either on foot or mounted. "With the Romans the place where the relay was effected was marked by a "post" along the side of the road, from which fact will appear the derivation of the term "post office" (page 3). Maybe, but the latin term for a stake or pole is palus.

Summerfield says only that the English *Post* (meaning mail) derives from the French. (*poste,* or *mettre a la poste*, meaning mail). English relay stations were called *posting stations* and the station atttendants *postillions*, hence the delivery of messages became a *post service* (page 19).

To enlarge on Summerfield, the term *post* derives from the latin, *positum* which became the Italian *posta*, and the French *poste*; the Latin meaning being *to place or put*. At least this is what is said in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language.

Positum is the root of the English, *to post*, as in *to post in command*, which could have also devolved into *to place in command of messages* or *given a position of responsibility*, in other words, *to carry the messages*.

I wonder what the term was for the persons who carried messages between the various bishoprics of the Catholic Church in medieval times. That was one organization that required a considerable amount of communication and the universal language of the church was Latin.

This is not intended to be an in depth study of the Post Office. It is intended only to acquaint you with significant facts that may allow you to understand why things are now the way they are, and how they came to be.

Virtually all the information contained herein was obtained from three sources.

The Internet Web site of the United States Postal Service
    http://www.usps.com/history/history/his2.htm

The United States Post Office by Daniel C. Roper.
    Funk & Wagnalls Company, NewYork, 1917.

U.S. Mail, The Story of the United States Postal Service by Arthur E. Summerfield.
    Holt,Rinehart & Winston, New York 1960.

The Rural Free Delivery Routes in Superior Township

Introduction

Until 1863 the sole responsibility of the postal service was to move mail from one post office to another, as fast and as conveniently as possible. Once it had arrived at the post office it was the patron's concern to obtain it.

> The following letters remained uncalled for at the Plymouth post office July 29; Mrs. Harry R. Roberts, Mrs. L. Levine, Lewis Bartrow, Miss Mildred Jordan, Miss Genevieve Wheeler, Miss Lillie Kennedy.[1]

In the early days mail for southeast Michigan from the east coast came through Detroit. As the settlement of Michigan progressed additional routes connected the small village and rural post offices. The routes were generally operated by contracted individuals who carried the mail between the various post offices once or twice a week, and subsequently more often as settlement and the volume of mail increased. .

The Plymouth-Ann Arbor road was very early designated a post road, the mail being carried along it from Detroit, to Plymouth, Dixboro, Ann Arbor and to the interior of the state.[2] By and large post offices were established in settlement centers or along these post roads. Except for Brewer post office in the settlement of Panama, all of the rural post offices in Superior Township appear to have been located on the post road between Plymouth and Ann Arbor. They all would have obtained the mail from the stage coach or the contract carriers which carried the mail on the post road.

Home owners would identify their residence location based on which post office they intended to use, which was usually the nearest one. Hence, residents in the southern part of Superior Township would give their residence, which was understood to mean their mailing address, as Ypsilanti, where they would obtain their mail. Superior township residents in the northeast could use either Superior, at least until 1863 when the Superior post office closed, or Plymouth if they elected to go to Plymouth to get their mail.

Dixboro residents had their own post office, but after the Dixboro post office closed, also in 1863, it being reopened between 1890 and 1905, they would get their mail in Ann Arbor, although as mentioned elsewhere, an informal Dixboro post office may have existed. After the closures mail destined for the Dixboro or Superior post offices would be held in Ann Arbor or Plymouth. Eventually the use of the names of the discontinued post offices disappeared.

As railroads began to serve the principle cities and villages, these locations became the drop off point for mail in that area. Whereas the mail was once brought by stage from Plymouth, after the railroad arrived at Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor the mail would arrive at

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[1] The Plymouth Mail - July 30, 1897   This type of notice appeared frequently in early newspapers.
[2] Burr map of 1839. A map showing postal routes in southern Michigan and Wisconsin.

Dixboro from Ann Arbor, it being closer than Plymouth. The Superior post office, where ever it was located, probably continued to receive its mail through Plymouth, since the residents in the northeast corner of the township identified with Plymouth. Those in the south and central areas of the township identified with Ypsilanti.   Those on the west side of the township with Ann Arbor. Consequently, the mail in Superior Township is still distributed from these various locations.

How dependent the post office had become on the railroads for the movement of mail is illustrated in the schedule shown below.[3]

Plymouth
Arrival and Departure of Mails

Arrive

From the North
F&PM No.10 - 7:10am. North, also Eastern mail arrives on this train.
F&PM No.4 - 10:30am. Mail from northern Michigan.

From the South
F&PM No.5 - 2:10pm. From Monroe, Toledo, Southern and Western
        States

From the East
DGR&W No.1 - 10:00am. Detroit, Chicago and Eastern States.
DGR&W No.3 - 2:10pm. Ditto

From the West
DGR&W No.2 - 11:15am. Chicago, Western States and Western
        Michigan.
DGR&W No.4 - 3:40pm Chicago, Western States and Western Michigan.

Depart

Going North
F&PM No.3 - 8:30am. Holly, Flint, Saginaw and Northern Michigan

Going South
F&PM No.6 - 2:00pm. Monroe, Toledo and Southern States

Going West
DGR&W No.1 - 8:30am. Lansing, Grand Rapids and Western States
DGR&W No.3 - 2:00pm. Landing, Grand Rapids and Western States
DGR&W No.7 - 6:30pm. Lansing, Grand Rapids and Western States

Going East

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[3] The Plymouth Mail - July 28, 1899

F&PM No.4 - 9:30am. Detroit (special delivery, closed bag)
DGR&W No.2 - 10:20am. Detroit, Chicago (sic), Eastern and Southern
        States
F&PM No.6 - 2:00 Detroit (special delivery, closed bag)
DGR&W No.4 - 3:00pm. All goes except local, north and west.
DGR&W No.8 - 8:00pm. All goes except local west. Saturday night
        everything goes.

Nankin daily stage route, arrives 9:45am. Departs 10:20am.

F&PM refers to the Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad
DGR&W is the Detroit, Grand Rapids and Western Railroad.

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Rural Free Delivery

In 1863 in some cities on the east coast, the free delivery of mail to one's residence was instituted. There was some resistance to the idea as it was deemed too costly and it was originally confined to those cities in which the post office revenues could support it. The idea of residential delivery was promoted on the basis that it increased patronage and revenue for the post office and diminished the need for post office personnel to handle the crowds of people seeking their mail at the close of the work day. The practice of carrier delivered mail to residences slowly spread to other cities and villages.

In Ann Arbor partial city delivery started in 1887, it being confined to those areas of the city in which sidewalks had been installed. The entire city was covered by carrier service by 1894.[4] Ypsilanti had residential carrier delivery as of 1891.[5] Free residential delivery in cities was well received. Previously residential delivery, usually by a contract employee, required additional payment.

John Wanamaker, the Postmaster General under Benjamin Harrison, first suggested free rural delivery in 1891[6] and in 1893, shortly before he left office, Congress allocated $40,000 to try out the idea.[7] It took a few years before anyone got around to actually doing it. Five experimental routes originating in the towns of Charles Town, Uvilla, and Halltown in West Virginia officially began operations on October 1, 1896.[8] Free rural

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[4] Beakes, Past and Present in Washtenaw County.
[5] Michigan Manual - 1891. According to the Michigan Manual Ann Arbor also received its first residential delivery in 1891. However, the Manual is printed biannually so home delivery in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor may have started earlier. A note in the Post Office file at the Ypsilanti Museum archives indicates that carrier delivery started in that city in 1888.   Plymouth did not have residential carrier delivery as of 1905, the last year the Manual contained information on home delivery.
[6] Michigan History Magazine, March/April 2006. Page 31
[7] U.S Postal Service web site - history. Rural Free Delivery
[8] Arthur Summerfield, U.S. Mail, The Story of the United States Postal Service, page 83

delivery was deemed to be successful and other rural communities sought establishment of the service.

> The experiment of rural free mail delivery is being tried more extensively in Michigan than any other state. The post office department is learning that it is more economical to deliver the mail from some large office than to maintain so many country offices. But the seventy thousand fourth class postmasters are gong to petition congress to discontinue free delivery as it is cutting into their salaries. It makes no difference to them that rural mail delivery is a great success wherever tried and the farmers are greatly pleased with it.[9]

> How to Obtain Rural Free Delivery

> Present a petition, addressed to the First Assistant Post-master General, signed by those who desire the service. This petition should be signed only by heads of families, and should mention the number in each family. It should set forth the nature of the country where the delivery is desired, whether densely or sparsely populated, the principal avocations of the people, the character of the roads, and the distances which, under existing conditions, each patron has to travel to receive his mail, and should be accompanied, whenever possible, by a rough map indicating the route or routes proposed.

> This petition, when properly signed, should be sent to your representative in Congress, or to one of the your senators, with a request that he indorse thereon his recommendation of the service asked, and forward the petition to the department.[10]

Although it isn't stated, presumably they were to identify from which post office they wished to be served. In all probability residents who were getting their mail out of Plymouth, and therefore having a Plymouth mailing address, would desire to keep the Plymouth mailing address; likewise Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. However, they could change their mailing address if a rural route was established from some other city that would serve their needs. This appears to have happened with H.O. Hanford, mentioned earlier, who asked that his Plymouth newspaper be sent to Ypsilanti so that it could be delivered to him by the rural free delivery then operating out of Ypsilanti. But some Canton farmers objected to the idea of having to change their postal address in order to receive rural delivery (see Plymouth Rural Service).

The first Michigan RFD route started December 3, 1896 out of the Climax general store post office in Kalamazoo County[11] but apparently it took a little time for the idea to catch on locally.

> From the Wayne (Michigan) Review: An effort was made a few weeks ago by several citizens to circulate petitions among the farmers for rural free delivery, and considerable hard labor was expended in the effort (to) secure signatures, with but little success. The farmers do not seem to understand what rural free delivery means and fight shy of it as if it were the small pox. Various reasons were given for not wishing to sign the petition,

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[9] The Plymouth Mail - September 8, 1899
[10] The Plymouth Mail - March 2, 1900.
[11] Michigan History magazine, March/April 2006, page 31.

some thinking it was some gold brick scheme and others objecting because then they would have no excuse for coming to town, but the major reason was that they thought they would be taxed extra to pay for it and taxes are something they don't approve of to any great extent.[12]

In Washtenaw county rural routes started in 1899, the first being out of Ypsilanti. By May 1901 the county had the following established routes: Ann Arbor 4, Chelsea 2, Manchester 2, Saline 1, Ypsilanti 3; and the number then applied for were Ann Arbor 2, Chelsea 1, Dexter 2, Lodi 1, Manchester 1, Milan 1, Salem 1, Saline 3, Sylvan 1, and Ypsilanti 1.[13] Plymouth started with one route in 1900 and by 1907 had four routes.[14]

One of the consequences of rural delivery was the closing of the rural post offices. By 1905 all of the rural areas of Washtenaw county were covered by RFD routes, there being by then a total of 46 routes.[15] As of 1908 only twelve post offices remained in Washtenaw county, down from 31 in 1896. All those that remained were in metropolitan areas or in rural settlements not close to a city.[16]

> The rural post office is surely doomed. The department intends to discontinue more than a thousand of such offices during the coming year. Farmers will get their mail delivered at their houses, and the postal routes will radiate from the large towns. If free rural delivery is to be made a financial success the department finds it necessary to abolish the small offices.[17]

As one can see from the early rural postal routes it wasn't expected that everyone would have a rural mailbox in front of their house. One chose the closest or most convenient place to put one's mailbox on the rural route. If you were lucky it was in front of your house, but if the route went down a nearby road that is where your box had to be. The stated policy of the post office initially was that all rural residents would be within one mile of a rural route.[18] It would not have been unusual for a rural intersection to have a number of mail boxes lined up to receive the mail of several residents in the area. You see this even today, often where a subdivision has been constructed in a rural area, or in a mobile home park.

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[12] The Plymouth Mail - May 4, 1900
[13] The Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat, May 24, 1901.
[14] Michigan Manual - 1907
[15] Ypsilanti Daily Press - May 3, 1905.
[16] Archives, Roll 62. As of 1908 the only post offices remaining in Washtenaw County were Ann Arbor, Bridgewater, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Salem, Saline, Whitmore Lake, Whittaker, Willis, and Ypsilanti. The post offices at Delhi Mills, Dixboro, Eckert, Emery, Freedonia, Geddes, Geer, Lima, Pittsfield, River Raisin, Scio, Sharonville, Stoney Creek, Sylvan, Urania, Webster, Weinsburg, Worden, and York had been eliminated. Given are the post office names, not their location.
[17] The Plymouth Mail - March 23, 1900
[18] Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat, August 11, 1899

Plymouth Rural Service

The first rural carrier for Plymouth was Robert Walker who started with route #1 on August 15, 1900.

> Rural free delivery of mail will be established on the route west and south from Plymouth, Aug. 15th. The route is 25 3/4 miles long, covering 31 square miles and will serve 550 people. Robert Walker will be carrier.[19]

Walker serviced this route for over 30 years, retiring November 1, 1930. Walker's exact route and the area it covered has not been determined but he did deliver to rural residents in the northeast of Superior township and in Salem township, and presumably in Plymouth township as well. He definitely traveled Ann Arbor-Plymouth road in Superior township, quite likely to Curtis road, just as the rural carrier does today.

In the house of Milton and Kitty Geer built c1884 and currently being remodeled, there has recently been found written, evidently by a child, "Roy Geer - FRD No. 1 Plymouth MI." (FRD = Free Rural Delivery) [20] Roy Geer was a son of Milton and Kitty. He was born in 1887 and residing there until 1916.[21] The house is located approximately mid-way between Gotfredson and Curtis roads on the Ann Arbor-Plymouth road.

In a paper dealing with Plymouth history which appeared in the September 7, 1950 issue of the Plymouth Mail, Charles A. Root makes the statement that "About 1900 T. (Tennis) V. Quackenbush applied to the Post Office Department, Washington D.C., for a rural route out of Plymouth, which was accepted. Robert Walker, who resides in Plymouth, was the first carrier."[22] T.V. Quackenbush at that time was a long time landowner on the south side of Joy road west of Gotfredson road in Superior township. He was a Superior Township justice-of-the-peace from 1882 to 1904, first being elected to a partial term in 1872, the type of man who would take the lead in submitting a petition for rural free delivery.

Other rural routes out of Plymouth followed.

> Some of the Canton farmers are a little warm because of a free mail route that has been established, starting at Belleville and running north to within about two miles of Plymouth. These farmers want their mail delivered from Plymouth, but it seems no inspector has ever been sent here for some reason. Congressman Smith has been apprised of the fact by Postmaster Hall and it is probable the matter will be satisfactorily arranged for all concerned.[23]

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[19] The Plymouth Mail, August 3, 1900. Unfortunately no description of his actual route is given. Currently (2007) rural mail service in Superior Township from Plymouth is delivered along Napier, Gotfredson, Berry, Curtis, Warren, Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road, and Joy Roads. It is quite likely that these roads were included in Walker's original service area.

[20] Glenn and Jeanine Miller, current owners of the Milton & Kitty Geer house.

[21] Milton Geer House, final report, July 16, 2001. Washtenaw County Historic District Commission.

[22] Plymouth Historical Museum archives. Root family file.

[23] The Plymouth Mail - April 19, 1901

Congressman H.C. Smith has informed the Canton people that the mail route from this village through that section will be established and service begun about February 1 (1902). This will make three mail routes out of Plymouth.[24]

Ypsilanti Rural Service

The first reference regarding rural routes out of Ypsilanti was found in the March 24, 1898 issue of the Ypsilanti Commercial newspaper. The article in its entirety reads,

Washtenaw is to have a sample of free rural mail delivery.[25].

No mention is given where this "sample" was to take place but a year and a half later Ypsilanti was getting three rural routes.

Rural free delivery will be inaugurated at Ypsilanti, Washtenaw Co., Mich., October 23, 1899. Routes will be as follows (see below), leaving Ypsilanti Post Office every day except Sundays and holidays at 9:00 a.m.[26]

Original Ypsilanti RFD routes.

Route No. 1 made a loop south of Ypsilanti. Route No. 3 was directed easterly, a portion of it going into Van Buren township in Wayne county. (A complete description of this and other routes is given in appendix 1.)

Route No. 2 went north into Superior Township. It entered Superior township on Harris road[27] and went north 1 mile to Geddes; east on Geddes 1 mile to Gotfredson; north on Gotfredson 2 miles to Cherry Hill; west on Cherry Hill 1 1/4 miles to Berry; north on Berry 1 mile to Ford; east on Ford 2 1/4 miles to Napier; north on Napier 1/2 mile to Hanford; east on Hanford road (Wayne county) 1 mile to Ridge; south 1/2 mile on Ridge and then southwest 3 1/4 miles on Ridge through the settlement of Cherry Hill to Geddes; continue south on Ridge until exiting Superior Township.[28]

In 1905 it was reported in the Ypsilanti Daily Press[29] that effective June 1 of that year all the Ypsilanti rural routes were to be revised, the consequence being a new route established, making a total of six rural routes operating from the Ypsilanti post office. Routes #2, #3, and the new route #6 delivered mail to Superior Township residents. This was in conjunction with a project to have all of Washtenaw county serviced by RFD.

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[24] The Plymouth Mail - December 29, 1901
[25] Ypsilanti District Library, microfilm file.
[26] The Ypsilanti Commercial newspaper, October 26, 1899. The notice is dated October 20, 1899.
[27] Harris road in Superior township originally connected to Clark road. The southern portion of Harris road in Superior township was eliminated with the building of Willow Run Village in 1942-43.
[28] The route descriptions has been revised to show current road names. See appendix 1.
[29] Ypsilanti Daily Press, May 3, 1905

Route #2. Entered Superior township going north on Ridge road; followed Ridge road to Cherry Hill road and the settlement of Cherry Hill. From there it went west on Cherry Hill to Napier; north 1 mile on Napier to Ford; west on Ford 1 mile to Gotfredson; south on Gotfredson 3 miles to Geddes; west on Geddes 1 mile to Harris; and south on Harris to Clark, continuing south on Harris into Ypsilanti Township.

Route #3 Entered Superior township going north on Prospect road. It went north 1 mile to Geddes; turned east on Geddes for 1 mile to Harris; turned north on Harris and went two miles to Cherry Hill road. On Cherry Hill road it went east to the settlement of Cherry Hill, turned north on Ridge road and went 1 1/2 miles to Hanford road. West on Hanford road to the county line at Napier, then north on Napier to Warren road. West on Warren road 1 mile to Gotfredson; south on Gotfredson 1 mile to Ford; west on Ford two miles to Prospect; south on Prospect 1 mile to Cherry Hill. At Cherry Hill it went east 1 mile to Harris; on Harris south 7/8 of a mile to Vreeland; west on Vreeland 1 mile to Prospect; south on Prospect to Clark where it turned west for 1/4 mile and entered Ypsilanti on River street.

Route #6 Entered Superior township traveling north on Superior road; connected to Geddes and followed Geddes west to Hickman road. Hickman north to Vreeland road and west on Vreeland road 1 1/2 miles to Stommel. North on Stommel 1 mile to Cherry Hill; west on Cherry Hill 1 3/4 mile to its end at Gale; north on Gale road to the village of Dixboro. From Dixboro the route went east on the Plymouth-Ann Arbor road to Ford road; then followed Ford road east 1 5/8 miles to Frains Lake road. South on Frains Lake road 1 mile to Cherry Hill road; east on Cherry Hill road 1/2 mile to Prospect road; south on Prospect 1 mile to Vreeland road; west on Vreeland road 1 mile to LeForge road; south on LeForge 2 miles to Clark, exiting Superior Township. On Clark the route went east 3/4 of a mile and entered Ypsilanti on River Street.

Ann Arbor Rural Service

Local rural mail delivery was first mentioned in the Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat June 30, 1899 when it was reported that Ypsilanti would soon have rural delivery service. On July 14, 1899 the Argus-Democrat published an interesting survey regarding the attitude of local residents to RFD. (See appendix 2).   By February of the following year two Ann Arbor based rural routes had been determined and by March 23, 1900 they were in operation.[30]

Route #1. From the Ann Arbor post office rural route #1 went east on the "river road", Fuller and Geddes to Dixboro road. On Dixboro road it went north to the village of Dixboro. From Dixboro east on the Plymouth-Ann Arbor road to Voorhies road; north

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[30] Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat - April 6, 1900. The exact date of the first delivery is not indicated and has not been established. What was published was the results of the first 15 days of operation. The Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat of February 16, 1900 stated the Ann Arbor RFD routes were to be established and wording "in just about one month".

on Voorhies to Joy road; west on Joy road to Dixboro road; and then turning north on Dixboro road, exiting Superior Township.

Route #2 was on the west side of Ann Arbor and went into Lodi and Scio townships.

By May 1901 Ann Arbor had 4 rural routes and 2 more were in the process of being established.[31]   On June 1, 1905, everything changed.

Solid Free Rural Service

Plans for Installation Have Been Completed.

Rural Free Delivery Inspector Robards has now completed plans for the installation of solid service for Washtenaw county. The service will consist of forty-six routes emanating from railway post offices in different parts of the county and furnishing a population of 5,000 people with daily mail privileges. All of the routes have been so arranged that every farmer in the county will be able to take a daily paper if he desires and receive it the same day that it is published.

The installation of the service could only be accomplished at the cost of rearranging all of the rural routes in the county. Without an exception these routes had to be partially changed, and made to harmonize with one another so that all of the people could be accorded the privileges which the service offers. They are of uniform length, each carrier traveling twenty-miles each day and serving as nearly as possible an equal number of patrons. One route has been added to Ann Arbor so that there will be nine carriers out of this city from now on instead of eight.

Mr. Robards states that Washtenaw is the tenth county in Michigan to be supplied with a solid service and it is the second county in this representative district, Jackson being the first.

Postmaster Pond states that in all probability, the new service will be put into operation about June 1.[32]

Of the nine rural mail routes that operated out of Ann Arbor after June 1, only one made deliveries in Superior township.

After June 1, 1905 rural route #8 out of Ann Arbor entered Superior township on Plymouth-Ann Arbor road at Dixboro. It went east through Dixboro following Plymouth-Ann Arbor road to Curtis road. At Curtis road it turned north and went to Joy road where it turned west. West on Joy road to Vorheis and then south on Vorheis back to Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road; then west on Plymouth Ann Arbor road to Dixboro road, referred to as Geddysburg road. The route exited Superior Township going south on Dixboro road.

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[31] Ann Arbor Argus-Democrat - May 24 1901.
[32] Washtenaw Courier-Register, April 12, 1905.

This route may have soon changed. It is not known if the closing of the Dixboro post office in 1905 was a consequence of the reconfigured rural routes of that year, or if the reconfigured routes were designed, in part, to accommodate the closing of the Dixboro post office. Ann Arbor route #8 evidently provided rural delivery to the residents of Dixboro after the closing of the Dixboro post office, and appears to have been soon reconfigured[33] so that it went south out of Dixboro on the Cherry Hill road, continuing south on Gale road to Vreeland, then going east 1/4 mile to Hickman and going south on Hickman to Geddes. On Geddes it went west, exiting Superior Township.

Rural route #6 out of Ypsilanti passed through Dixboro as a result of the 1905 reconfiguration but appears not to have delivered mail in the village. Historically Dixboro had been serviced by the Ann Arbor post office and this practice continued. As a consequence of the Ann Arbor rural route delivery mail in the area south of Dixboro, this area assumed an Ann Arbor mailing address after the Dixboro post office closed.

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As far as Superior Township is concerned Rural Free Delivery was a resounding success, although two rural fourth class post offices, Geer and Dixboro, closed, perhaps reluctantly, or perhaps with relief. With some confidence we can lay the blame on their closure on RFD but there may have been other factors as well.

> Dixboro: Those who are having free rural delivery in parts of Superior are delighted. The amount of mail received and sent is nearly or fully double in many homes.[34]

> Free Church: Who would get along without the daily mail? "No one." A number are taking daily papers, etc.[35]

And speaking for myself, it is a convenience I would not care to give up.

Today (2007) Superior Township is served by 12 rural routes. From the Ypsilanti post office there are 24 rural routes, six of which are servicing the heavily populated southern part of the township and a good deal of the rural area. Ann Arbor post office has 35 rural routes of which five enter Superior Township, and Plymouth post office has 8 rural routes of which one enters Superior Township.[36]

Over time route locations and route numbers changed, and still change, as circumstances warrant. The advent of the automobile, changing demographics, and technical innovations all contributed to these changes. Changes were, and are, inevitable. What changes in mail service await us in the future?

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[33] 1915 land owner atlas of Washtenaw county.
[34] The Ypsilanti Sentinel - Commercial newspaper, November 23, 1899
[35] The Ypsilanti Sentinel - Commercial newspaper, November 30, 1899
[36] Interviews with local postal officials.

MAP LEGEND

The following 1934 Superior Township property owners map identifies the location of the properties owned by the postmasters of Superior Post Office and Geer Post Office, and the four locations of the official post offices known to have existed in the Township.

Shown also are the originally created rural routes of Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor in Superior Township, the revised routes of 1905, and the area of the northeast of the Township currently served by the Plymouth rural carrier.

The rural routes of 1934 are also shown, printed on the map.
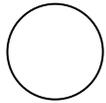
○   Red. Ypsilanti Rural Route #2, 1899
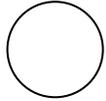
○   Green. Ypsilanti Rural Route #2, 1905
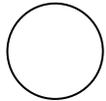
○   Yellow. Ypsilanti Rural Route #3, 1905
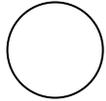
○   Blue-Green. Ypsilanti Rural Route #6, 1905
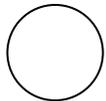
○   Dark Blue. Ann Arbor Rural Route #1, 1900
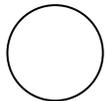
○   Lavender. Ann Arbor Rural Route #8, 1905
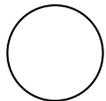
○   Light Blue. Shown are the roads currently service by the Plymouth rural carriers, northeast corner of Superior Township. Presumably much of this area was also traversed by the original Plymouth RFD #1, which was established in 1900..

Ypsilanti rural routes #'s 2 and 3 entered Canton Township in the area of Cherry Hill.

APPENDIX 1

Following are the three original 1899 rural routes out of Ypsilanti and the six revised Ypsilanti routes of 1905; and the original two 1900 rural routes out of Ann Arbor and the nine revised Ann Arbor routes of 1905. These are the complete route descriptions as they appeared in local newspapers at the time.

Ypsilanti Sentinel Commercial - October 26, 1899

Rural Free Mail Delivery

Rural free Delivery will be inaugurated at Ypsilanti, Washtenaw Co., Mich., October 23, 1899. Routes will be as follows: Leaving Ypsilanti post office every day except Sundays and holidays at 9:00 a.m.

Route No. 1

Carrier - L. M. Buland

Beginning at the post office in Ypsilanti in said county and state, and running 1 3/4 miles in a slightly Southwesterly direction to the S.W. corner of section 16; thence in a southeasterly direction 1 mile to section 21; thence in a slightly Northeasterly direction 1/2 mile to the center of section 22; thence in a slightly Southeasterly direction 3/4 of a mile in the same section; thence Southeasterly 7/8 of a mile; thence West 3/4 of a mile to the S.E. corner of section 22; thence due South 2 miles to the Southeast corner of section 34; thence West 1 1/8 miles to the S.W. corner of section 34; thence N. 3/4 of a mile; thence N.W. 7/8 of a mile to section 28; thence N. 1 mile to the N. line of section 28; thence N.W. 3/4 of a mile to the West line of section 21; thence West 1/8 of a mile into section 20; thence due South 2 1/2 miles to the S.E. corner of section 32; thence West 1 1/4 miles to section 31; thence Northeast 2 1/4 miles to the N.E. quarter of section 29; thence West 1 1/4 miles to the S.W. corner of section 20; thence North 1 3/4 miles; thence N.E. 1/4 of a mile; thence slightly N.W. 1/4 of a mile; thence East 1/4 of a mile; thence N.E. 1 1/2 miles to the Ypsilanti Postoffice. Length of route 23 1/2 miles.

Route No. 2

Carrier - Harry M. Holmes

Beginning at the P.O. in Ypsilanti and running North 1/4 of a mile; thence East 5/8 of a mile; thence North 1/2 mile; thence East 1 mile to the East line of Section 3; thence North 1 1/2 miles; thence East 1 mile; thence North 2 miles; thence West 1 1/4 miles; thence North 1 mile; thence East 2 1/4 miles; thence North 1/2 mile; thence East 1 mile; thence South 1/2 mile; thence S.E. (should read S.W.) 3 1/4 miles to the center of Section 25; thence South 1 5/8 miles to the center of Section 1; thence West 1/ 1/2 miles to the center of Section 3; thence South 1/4 of a mile; thence West 3/4 of a mile; thence South 1/4 of a mile; thence West 7/8 of a mile; thence south 1/4 of a mile to Ypsilanti P.O. Length of route 22 1/8 miles.

Route No. 3

Carrier - E.J. Koch

Beginning at the P.O. in Ypsilanti, running South 5/8 of a mile; thence East 1/4 of a mile; thence South 1/2 mile; thence S.W. 7/8 of a mile to the line of section 14; thence East 5/8 of a mile to a point near the center of section 14; thence slightly S.E. 1 1/2 miles into section 24; thence due East 3/4 of a mile to the East line of Section 24; thence North 3/8 of a mile; thence East in Section 18, town (township) of Van Buren, Wayne Co., 1/8 of a mile; thence North in Section 18 of said township 1 mile; thence West 1 mile to the S.W. corner of Section 12 in the town (township) of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw Co.; thence North 1 1/4 miles on the Section line; thence S.W. 1 5/8 miles on the gravel road; thence N.W. 5/8 of a mile; thence due North along the section line 5 miles to the N.E. quarter of section 16; thence West along the Section line 1/2 mile; thence South 1 mile to Section 21; thence West 1/4 of a mile on the Section line; thence South one mile to the South line of Section 21; thence West 1/4 of a mile to the S.E. corner of secton 20, thence South 2 miles to the S.E. quarter of section 32; thence East 3/4 of a mile; thence in a slightly Southwesterly direction 1 mile; thence West 1/4 of a mile to Ypsilanti P.O. Length of route 23 1/8 miles.

Total routes 68 3/4 miles; area covered 68 square miles. Population served 2,200.

Mail will be delivered to any family on or adjacent to above routes free of all cost, provided only that a suitable box to receive the mail is put up directly on the route in a place that can be conveniently reached by the carrier without alighting from his wagon. It is particularly desired by the department that the boxes put up by the patrons of the delivery shall be of such character as to be secure, not only from the weather, but from mischievious (sic) or malicious depredations. The U.S. mail cannot be deposited in any but an appropriate receptacle, properly labeled and protected. There is no required pattern of box. Every patron must make or purchase his own. No mail will be delivered unless a box is provided to receive it. Put your name on your box. Watch the carrier and note the time of arrival at your house. Time will vary but little for day to day. Get your mail out of the box as soon as possible after he leaves it. Fasten a white cloth on the inside of your mail box and when you have mail for the carrier to take, pull the cloth out so he can see it. Mail to be sent to the post office should be placed in your box where the carrier can get it when he leaves your mail. He will not stop for mail unless you have the signal out. It will be noted that carriers have a long daily drive and patrons must not delay him unnecessarily on the route. He cannot deviate from the regular route but must follow same course daily. Stamps and postal cards may be purchased of the carrier. It is advised that a supply of these be kept on hand as he has not time to wait while you write or direct your cards or letters.

Routes cannot be changed or deviated from except by order of the P.O. Department. Attention to above rules will do a great deal to facilitate the service, and make it popular and efficient. Changes in schedule and rules will be made as experience in the work may suggest for the betterment of the service.

Respectfully yours, F.P. Bogardus, Postmaster.
Ypsilanti, Mich.; October 20 1899.

YPSI'S NEW RURAL ROUTE
Makes It Necessary For Old Ones To Be Rearranged.
Entire County Now Completely Covered.
Population of 2,559 Now Reached From Ypsilanti

Postmaster Lister has received official authority from the department at Washington for the establishment of a new rural route from the Ypsilanti office beginning June l. This will give the city six routes in all. To arrange the new one it has been necessary to rearrange the entire length of the old routes to make them better and to adjust the new route so that it will be of standard length and at the same time so that one route may not conflict with another. As now arranged the county is divided into forty-six routes; and by this means is completely covered.

The arrangement of the service is such that routes are all full length, approximately twenty-five miles, and each carrier will receive full pay from the department, $720 per annum. By the new arrangement a total length of 150 7/8 miles is covered each day, and area of 73 miles is included in the six routes. There are 569 houses reached by the six carriers, including a population of 2, 559, who are reached from the Ypsilanti post office by the new arrangement.

Below are given three of the six routes, the reminder of which will be given to-morrow. The new route is No. 6.

Route No. 1 as Amended.

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence south to the Crane Corner, 2 1/4 miles; thence north to Lafiin Corner, 3/8 mile; thence east angling to Tuttles Corner, 2 miles; thence south to Young's, 1/2 mile; thence east to Roberts Corner, 1 mile; thence south to Wise Corner, 1 1/2 miles; thence west to Jones farm, 1 3/4 miles; thence northwest angling to Smith's Corner, 1 3/4 miles; thence east to Young's corner, 1 3/8 miles; thence south to the church, 2 miles; thence west to Lowden's, 3 1/4 miles; thence northeast angling to Rogers farm, 2 5/8 miles; thence southwest to Thorn's Corner, 1/8 mile: thence west to Chicken Corner, 1 1/8 miles; thence north to the end of the road, 1 3/4 miles; thence northeast to the post offfice in Ypsilanti, 2 1/8 miles. Length of route, 25 1/4 miles. Area 10 square miles. Number of houses, 102. Population, 459.

Route No. 2 as Amended

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence east to the city limits, 1 mile; thence northeast to Vrooman Corner, 1 3/4 miles; thence north to the end of the road, 3/4 mile; thence east to Scotney, 1/2 mile; thence north angling to Cherry Hill postoffice, 3 3/4 miles; thence west to the county line 1 /4 mile; thence north to Culver's Corner, 1 mile; thence west to the church, 1 mile; thence south to the end of the road, 3 miles; thence west to Lefurges' Corner, 1 mile; thence south to Moon, 1 1/2 miles; thence east to

Botsford, 1 mile; thence south to the end of the road, 1 1/2 miles; thence east to the county line, 1 mile; thence south angling in Wayne county, 1 mile; thence west to Eaton Corner, 1/8 mile; thence south, 1/4 mile; thence west and north angling River road to post office, 5 1/8 miles. Length of route, 26 miles; Area, 13 square miles. Number of houses, 118. Population, 531.

Route No. 3 as Amended.

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence north 1/4, east 1/2 and north 1/4, 1 mile; thence east to the end of the road, 1 mile; thence north to Moon Corner, 1/4 mile; thence west to the end of the road, 1 mile; thence north to Loomis Corner, 1 1/2 miles; thence east to Lefurge Corner, 1 mile; thence north to the end of the road, 2 miles; thence east to Cherry Hill, 2 1/4 miles; thence northeast and north to the Center East line section 7, 1 3/4 miles; thence west to the county line, 1 mile; thence north to Brown's Corner, 1/2 mile; thence west to Depuy Corner, 1 mile; thence south to church, 1 mile; thence west to Vanderwort's, 2 miles; thence south to Town Hall, 1 mile; thence east to Markham's, 1 mile; thence south to Kimmel Corner, 7/8 mile; thence west to the end of the road, 1 mile; thence south to Wilber's Corner, 2 1/2 miles; thence west 3/4 mile; thence south to the pos toffice in Ypsilanti 1 3/8 miles. Length of route, 24 7/8 miles. Area, 12 square miles. Number of houses, 93. Population, 418.

Ypsilanti Daily Press, May 4, 1905

REMAINING THREE RURAL ROUTES
Many Changes Have Been Made In All Of Them.
Patrons Can See What Routes They Are Now On

Below are given the remaining lists of the rural free delivery routes as they will be after June 1. There are many changes and patrons will do well to see what route they are on according to the new arrangement. Route 6 is the new one, but all have been rearranged.

Route No. 4 as Amended

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence east to the city limits, 3/4 mile; thence south 5/8 mile; thence east to Harrison's corner, 3/4 mile; thence south to Tuttles Corner, 1 3/8 miles; thence southeast and east to Dickerson Corner, 1 5/8 miles; thence south to the end of the road, 1 1/2 miles; thence west to Wise Corner, 1/2 mile: thence south to the township line, 1/2 mile; thence west to the church, 1 mile; thence south, 1 1/2 miles; thence west to school, 1 mile; thence north and northwest to school north line section 33, 2 1/4 miles; thence west to Merritt's Corner, 1/2 mile; thence south to Bogs Corner, 2 1/8 miles; thence west to end of the road, 1 5/8 miles; thence northeast to Lowden's Corner, 1 1/2 mile; thence west to the township line xx mile; thence north to the end of the road, 3 1/4 miles; thence northeast to the post office in Ypsilanti, 2 7/8 miles. Length of route, 25 1/2 miles. Area, 15 square miles. Number of houses, 91. Population, 409.

Route No. 5 as Amended

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence northwest on Ellis street to the city limits; 7/8 mile; thence west on electric car line road to Bohnett Corner, 2 5/8 miles; thence south to Bray's Corner, 1 mile; thence west to Campbell's Corner, 1 mile; thence south 1 1/2 miles; thence north to the northwest corner of section 22, 1/2 mile; thence east to Hegole's (Begole's?) Corner, 1 mile; thence south to Saunder's Corner, 1 mile; thence north to school, 1/2 mile; thence southwest to Cubbitt's Corner, 1 1/2 miles; thence south to Hinkley Corner, 1 7/8 miles; thence east to school, 1 mile; thence north to Johnson's farm, 3/4 mile and return, 1 1/2 miles; thence east, 1/2 mile; thence north to the end of the road, 3 miles; thence northeast to Canfield farm, 3/8 mile; thence southwest to Saunder's Corner, 1/4 mile; thence west to Begole's, 5/8 mile; thence north to Brays' Corner, 1 mile; thence east to school, 1 3/4 miles; thence north to Wartz (Waltz?), 3/8 mile; thence east to the post office in Ypsilanti, 1 7/8 miles. Length of route, 25 1/4 miles. Area, 11 square miles. Number of houses, 80. Population, 360.

Route No. 6 - New Route

Beginning at the Ypsilanti post office thence west to Ellis street to the city limits, 7/8 mile; thence west on county farm road to Schmidt, 2 5/8 miles; thence north to township line, 1/4 mile; thence east to Snidacor, 1 1/2 miles; thence northwest 1/2 mile and return, 1 mile; thence east to River road, 1 1/4 mile; thence west to Superior road, 1/2 mile; thence north and west to Bolt Corner, 1 7/8 miles; thence north to the end of the road, 5/8 mile; thence east to Fifley, 1 1/2 miles; thence north to school, 1 mile; thence west to the end of the road, 1 3/4 miles; thence north to Dixboro, 5/8 mile; thence northeast angling to Goetz Corner, 5/8 mile; thence east to Wilber Corner, 1 5/8 miles; thence south to the end of the road, 1 mile; thence east to the Town Hall, 1/2 mile; thence south to Twist Corner, 1 mile; thence west to Pierson Corner, 1 mile; thence south to the township line, 2 miles; thence east 3/4 mile; thence south to the post office in Ypsilanti, 1 3/8 miles. Length of route, 25 1/4 miles. Area, 13 square miles. Number of houses, 85. Population 382.

Ann Arbor Argus - Democrat, February 16, 1900.

NEW RURAL MAIL DELIVERY ROUTES
Will Be Started Out from This City in a Month
WHERE THEY GO
Postmaster Pond Received the Official Announcement from Washington

In just about one month two rural mail delivery routes running out of this city will be established and working. Postmaster Pond has received the official notice.

Route No. 1

Will start at the post office and go eastward on what is known as the river road to the Dixboro road, thence north to Dixboro. It will leave Dixboro on the road running northeast for three-quarters of a mile and then to the town line of Salem. Thence it will go west past the school house for a mile until it gets to the township corner of Northfield, Salem, Ann Arbor and Superior. Thence it will go north three miles, west one mile and south 1 1/2 miles to Leland church. Thence it will go northwesterly to the Northfield Catholic church and then back on the Whitmore Lake road to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 28 3/8 miles.

Route No. 2

Will start out on the Lodi gravel road and continue until within two miles of the Lodi town hall, when it will go south a mile, west two miles and north a mile in order to reach the Lodi town hall. Thence it will go west 2 1/2 miles; thence north two miles, east a half mile and north two miles and past the Scio church. Thence it will go east one-half a mile and northward on the road running through the Jedele farm. From there it will return to Ann Arbor on the winding road which has a generally eastward course.   Length of route, 24 miles. Total length of routes, 52 3/8 miles; area covered, about 65 square miles; population served, about 1650.

In connection with this service, iron collection boxes will be placed at intersection of Saline and Dexter roads, at Lodi cemetery, at Weinsberg Corners, at Catholic church corners. In order to receive mail from this service, the residents along the routes must put up suitable boxes, approved by the department. They can be secured at a trifling cost. Each box must be labeled U.S. mail and used for no other purpose. It must be accompanied with a small flag, which is to be displayed if there is anything in the box. If the flag is not displayed, the carrier will not stop, unless he has something to leave. These boxes have all the protection of any mail boxes, and there are severe penalties for anyone except those having the proper authority from taking anything from them.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY SOLID SERVICE BY JUNE 1
P.O DEPARTMENT SO ORDERS
NINE ROUTES LEAVE ANN ARBOR - ONE NEW CARRIER NEEDED - WHERE
THE ROUTES ARE AND WHAT TERRITORY THEY COVER.

Postmaster Pond has received official notice from the post office Department at
Washington directing him to install rural free delivery from this point in accordance with
the recommendations of Rural Agent Robards. There will be nine routes leaving Ann
Arbor, one new route being added and several of the others amended. The document
maps out the routes as follows:

Route 1.

Beginning at the Ann Arbor post office, thence northeast on Thayer street to the city
limits; thence northeast and east to the end of the road; north to Dunn's; west to Kern's
farm and return; north to Nixon's corner; west to the end of the road; south, west, and
northwest angling to Reeve's corner; north to Knapp's corner; west to Ludwig's; south to
the end of the road; west to Sear's corner; south through Foster's to the end of the road;
east and south to Kendall's; east and southeast to the Ann Arbor post office. Length of
the route, 24 1/2 miles; area of square miles, 11; number of houses, 99; population 445.

Route 2.

South from the Ann Arbor post office to the city limits; southwest angling on gravel road
to Rash's corners; west to the town line; south; west to Hieber corner; north to Eisele
corner; east to the end of the road; north; east to Dold's corner; north to Worth's; east to
gravel road; north angling to Ann Arbor post office. Length of route, 25 3/8 miles; area
of square miles, 19; number of houses, 101, population, 454.

Route 3.

From the Ann Arbor post office west to the city limits; west on Territorial road to
Oberschmidt corner; southwest and west to the Oberschmidt residence 1/2 (mile) and
return; west on Territorial road to school; south to Frey's corner; west to Luick's corner;
south to school; east to church; north to the end of the road; west to Smith's farm; east to
Reichert's corner; north to the end of the road; east to Beck's corner; south to Aprill's
farm; north to the corner; east angling to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 24 7/8 miles; area
of square miles 16; number of houses, 113; population 508.

Route 4.

Southwest from Ann Arbor on West Liberty street to the city limits; west to the Eberle
corners; south to the end of the road; west to the church; south to the end of the road;
west to Esch's corners; south to the end; north to Nagel's corners; east to the gravel road;

north to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 25 1/8 miles; area of square miles, 14; number of houses, 100, population 450.

Route 5.

Northeast on Fuller street to the city limits; east to Hick's corners; north to church. Leland corners; east to Bauer's corner, south to Stafford's corner; west to Savages; north to Duncan's corner; west to the school; south on angling road to Galligar's; southwest on ankling (angling) road to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 25 3/4 miles; area of square miles, 15; number of houses, 110; population, 495.

Route 6.

Southwest on Packard street from Ann Arbor to city limits; southeast to the school; east to Nordman's corners; south to Campbell's corners; west to Smith's corners; south to the railroad; east to the school; south to the end of the road; east to the end of the road; south to the Saline road; southwest on the Saline road to Harwood's corners; north to the end of the road; west to Campbell's corner; north to end of road; south to Allison's corner; west to Rouse's corner; north to Kerr's corner, angling; east to Laurence's corner; south; north to the Ann Arbor post office. Length of route, 24 1/4 miles; area of square miles, 14; number of houses, 119; population 535.

Route 7.

Northwest on Miller avenue to the city limits; northwest to Green's corner; north through Delhi to Cushman's corner; east; north to the end of the road west; north to the end of the road; east to Donegan's corner; south to Ludwig's; west to the Alexander corner; south to the end of the road; southeast to Reeves; south to Osborn's; southwest angling to Richmond's corner; west and north to the Reath farm and return; south angling to Marsh's corner; west to the school; southeast to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 25 1/8 miles; area of square miles, 14; number of houses, 95; population, 427.

Route 8.

Northeast on Broadway to the city limits; northeast angling through Dixboro to Wheelock; north to the town line; west to Stafford's corner; south to Nanry's corner; southwest; south to Spoozer; west to Geddesburg road; south through Geddesburg to end of road; west to Monahan corner; south to Bobnett; west to Nordman's corner; north to the county farm corner; east to the Steib farm; west and northwest to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 25 3/8 miles; area of square miles, 472.

Route 9.

Southeast on Geddes avenue to the city limits; east and northeast across the railroad and river to the river road; east on the river road to Geddes avenue; north through Dixboro to Finnall corner; west to Nixon; north to the angling road; northeast on angling road to

Sutton's corner; north to the church; east to the end of the road; north to the school; northwest angling to P. Donegan's; south to Ann Arbor. Length of route, 24 3/4 miles; area of square miles, 16; number of houses, 102; population, 259.

No information has been located identifying the original route of Rural Free Delivery Route #1 established at Plymouth in 1900.

You will note that few roads are identified by name. Until the 1930's, although streets in towns and villages were named, most rural roads in Washtenaw county did not have an "official" name. Often they were identified locally by the name of a prominent or long time resident of the road but the same road several miles away might have a different local name. Major roads had names indicating their destination. Intersections were identified by the name of one of the land owners at the intersection or the fact that there was a commercial establishment or other significant structure such as a church located there. It is for this reason that many roads shown in the postal routes are identified by location rather than name. In the 1930's the Detroit Edison Company, needing a way to locate their customers in order to service them, instituted a process of road naming and residence numbering which was subsequently adopted for general use.

Until the advent of county road departments in the early 1900's and the McNitt Act of 1932,[1] the maintenance of rural roads was primarily the responsibility of townships and their citizens. Except for the most necessary work such as drainage, bridges, and the filling of sink holes, little was done for road improvement. This was in part due to the lack of suitable equipment as well as money to improve roads significantly. The quality of a road quite may have influenced where rural mail routes were directed. Improved roads were those that had a layer of gravel placed on them and are so noted, they being termed "a gravel road".

 There may be errors in the above mail route locations, both from my transcription and as a result of errors or omissions by the newspaper typesetter.

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[1] The McNitt Act of 1932 required that over a five year period the maintenance of township roads was to be taken over by the county road commissions.

APPENDIX 2

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY FOR ANN ARBOR

It Meets With Very General Favor Among the Businessmen
Who Are Interviewed - In Fact

THE MERCHANTS OF ANN ARBOR FAVOR IT

They Do Not Seem to Feel That It Would Injure Their
Trade with the Farmers

It is a step in the Direction of Progress - There is No Reason Why Ann
Arbor Should Not Have It - Free City Delivery Did Not Injure Trade -
Why Should Rural Mail Delivery Do It - Interviews with a Number of
Ann Arbor Merchants

Why should not the farmers living about Ann Arbor have rural mail delivery? The Argus has several times propounded this question. The postmaster of Ann Arbor has been quoted as making the statement that he can get rural mail delivery if the people wanted it, and suggested that the business men of Ann Arbor did not want it. There is but one way to get at the opinions of the businessmen and that is to interview them. This the Argus has done today so far as it has been able to see them, for many were found to be out when called upon. The opinion seems to be generally favorable for free rural mail delivery. This is not surprising when it is remembered that the predictions of the croakers when free delivery was established in this city that it would hurt trade was found to be unfulfilled. Rural mail will not injure trade. People will come to town and buy when they need articles and when they don't need them they won't buy even when they do come to town and the less time spent in getting the mail in the busy season of the year, the more money the farmers should have to buy with.

It will be noticed that the business men are generally favorable to trying rural mail delivery at Ann Arbor. Those few who are seemingly opposed, appear to be rather opposed to the government going to the expense of rural mail delivery all over the country than to any trial of it here. But that is not the question here. The government has appropriated a certain sum of money for experimenting in rural mail delivery. If not spent here it will be spent somewhere else. This being so shall the farmers about Ann Arbor be allowed the advantages of the free rural mail delivery? The merchants interviewed spoke as follows:

Herman J. Goetz, with John Goetz, jr., grocer: "In some cases it might be a good thing and in some not. The farmers might want to neglect their work in waiting for the mail."

George Hildebrand, merchant tailor: "It would employ more carriers. If the government feels like spending the money and won't tax the people for it, all right."

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G.H. Wild, merchant tailor: "In Germany the rural free mail delivery is to groups of people living in villages like Lima Center, not to isolated farm houses. I don't think it would be as good here as there would be too much expense to the government."

Michael Fritz, assistant cashier of the Ann Arbor Savings Bank: "I think very favorably of the plan. It would undoubtedly be of great value to the farmers and of great convenience to the town people."

Robert Martin, one of the substantial farmers of the township of Superior: "I think it is all right. The farmers have just as good a right to free mail delivery as the people in town. Let us have it in the country."

Fred Beiser, cashier of the Farmers & Mechanic's Bank: "I don't see why it would not be a good thing. I am not opposed to it."

Anton Teufel, harness maker: "I have nothing against the plan. I think it will not bring the farmers to town as much as at present, but it will not make any difference in business one way or another."

Ex-Sheriff Michael Brenner: "I think it would be an awful expense and not much advantage to the farmers. The farmers that need it get their mail quickly enough. I believe if it was generally introduced it would take from 25 to 50 millions of dollars out of the United States treasury. The telephones at present prices, are so that every farmer can have one and that is much more convenient than free rural delivery."

Ex-Mayer C.G. Darling: "It's a good think. Push it along."

J.J. Goodyear, druggist: "If there is any good around give it to the farmers. They have had enough bad luck."

D.C. Goodyear, merchant: "It won't let the farmers come to town quite so often but it will not make any difference in trade, as when the farmers have something to buy they will come anyway."

William Wagner, retired merchant: " I think it will be beneficent to everybody."

Israel Kuhnle, a prosperous farmer of Scio: "When the matter was first agitated I thought it would be good for us. The farmers are worked to death and need every convenience. It will nourish the prosperity of the country and no one would feel the expense."

Eugene Koch: "I don't think the question is of much interest to us but it is to some business men who may suffer from people not coming to town."

Alderman Simon Dieterle: " I think it is all right and we are bound to have it."

Emanuel Wanger, capitalist and retired grocer: "It is good for the farmers and business men."

Enoh Dieterle, undertaker: "I think it would be very handy. I have often wished I could get a letter quickly into the country."

Col. Dean: "I believe it would be a good think. Never thought that improving mail facilities could injure anybody. When I went around the Horn," said the colonel, "to California, I had to pay $5, on reaching San Francisco, to get my mail. In those days a message which is now put on a postal card, if sent from Ann Arbor to Chicago, cost 18 cents. Country is not growing worse by having quicker mail delivery."

Wahr & Miller: "We favor the scheme. It would bring country and city into closer relationship to their mutual advantage."

George Hailer: "Have never given the matter any thought but on general principles believe it would be a good thing. Don't think it would keep farmers from the city."

President Seabolt: "If the farmers want it they should have it."

Wm. C. Reinhardt: "I think it would be a step in advance, as free delivery in the city has been. Do not believe it would keep farmers away from town or injure trade any."

W.W. Wadhams: "I think it would be a line of advance, a good thing for the rural districts and no detriment to business to the city."

L.C. Goodrich: "Haven't thought of the subject but think the country should have what it wants in the matter."

J. Henne, grocer: "I am not opposed to it. It will give some persons employment. It surely will be a convenience to the farmers. So far as it being detrimental to business I don't think it will be injurious."

John Duffy, justice: "I think we are out to have it. It is now being tried by the government in an experimental way. Those that are opposed to it are largely doing so under a misapprehension. I say this because I can recollect how the business men opposed the letter carrier system. They thought it would injure their business and the results show the contrary. It was the same with the street cars that they thought it would keep farmers from coming to town and hitching their horses on Main st. Now they all know it is a good thing."

John Bennett, attorney: "It is certainly a good thing for the town, country and everybody. There is no reason why the farmers should not have as many conveniences as the people in town."

Fred Schumacher, grocer: "It is something I never thought much about. I don't know why it is not a pretty good thing. I would not help business but it would be great convenience for the country people. It could not do much harm as the country people must buy so many goods anyway."

William Goetz, of Goetz & son, grocers: "Its probably all right. If I lived in the country I would not object to it.."

AC. Schumacher, of the firm of Schumacher & Miller, druggists: "I don't know, I want to think it over. I think it would be fine idea. Mail delivery for the farmers is some times every essential, but not as much so as for the business men. On first thought I do not want to favor the government going to the extra expense. It would need extra mail carriers who would have to be paid by the government."

John Burg, shoe dealer: "It might be good enough for the farmers. It would be a big expense and I do not see where it could be very profitable."

Fred Staebler, grocer: "It would be a move in the direction of progress. Some people claim that not so many people would come to town with rural free mail delivery but I don't think so. I would like to see them try it."

Theodore A. Reyer, secretary of Cutting, Reyer & Co.: "I suppose it is all right. It is a great success in some localities and I think it is a good thing."

Albert Mann, of Mann Bros., druggists: "Can't see but that it would be a good thing. This county is thickly enough populated to try it."

John Lindenschmitt, of the firm of Lindenschmitt & Apfel, clothiers: "I have not given the matter much attention. Where I come from in Germany we have the rural free mail delivery. It is certainly a success there."

Edward Wolfel, manager of the A.L. Nole clothing house: "I don't see why it is not a good thing and the farmers should receive the same mail facilities as any one living in the city."

Moses Seabolt: "I don't know if it is a good thing or not. I rather think it wouldn't do any good."

Walter C. Mack: "I am for it. It is foolish to oppose it as it is an advance in mail facilities. It is nonsense to say it will injure trade. When farmers want to buy they are going to buy. The fact that their mail is delivered to them will not prevent their having to buy things they must go to town to get."

Delos Davis: "I am for it if it will be self sustaining."

D.F. Schairer: "Am for it if it will be self sustaining. Am in favor of anything and everything in the mail line which will be of advantage to the people."

E.F. Mills: "So far as the business men of the city are concerned it will probably neither advantage or disadvantage them. But it would be a great advantage to the farmers. It would keep them in closer touch with the markets and affairs generally."

Wm. Goodyear: "Good thing for the farmers. Often advantageous to business men in the city also through the prompt delivery to farmers of important mail which now frequently lies for several days in home office before it is called for."

Titus F. Hutzel: "I believe it a good thing for farmers and they are the ones interested, no reason why business men should kick on it. Instead of its keeping farmers away from city it will bring them in. Will make it easy to communicate with them when butter, eggs and various other things in their line are needed in a hurry."

L. Gruner: "Great convenience. Farmers should have it. I am in favor of it."

H.J. Brown: "Don't appear to me to be especially necessary or desirable."

Col. Thompson: "When it is made clear to me that a dog needs two tails then I shall be convinced that free rural delivery is a good thing. It seems to me there is no advantage in it."

During the coarse of this research there where found several newspaper articles that relate to Rural Free Delivery. These have not been previously referred to.   They make for interesting reading and are presented in this addendum.

The Ann Arbor Argus - Democrat, a weekly newspaper. June 30, 1899

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY
Arrangements For It About Ypsilanti Next Month

But Some of Ypsilanti's Merchants Do Not Approve of it and a Weekly Editor Thinks it Would Help Dailies.

Postmaster Bogardus, of Ypsilanti, says he has a communication from the official in charge of the free rural mail delivery for this district containing the statement that he will be in Ypsilanti the latter part of next month to complete arrangements for the territory about Ypsilanti. There will be at least three carriers and each will have a route of 25 miles per day. The salary will be $400. No examination is required for these places. The official in charge of district having the power to appoint. The carriers will be allowed to carry passengers, do errands for farmers, take subscriptions for papers, etc. Like all other projects, the scheme of free rural mail delivery has its kickers said Postmaster Bogardus. The Argus wondered what anyone could find to kick about in the plan of delivering rural mail. Well, said the P.M. merchants kick because they claim it will keep farmers from coming to town. Then he said newspaper publishers, that is publishers of weekly papers, object because they say the farmers will all take daily papers and that will kill off the weeklies. Hillsdale has but recently got the scheme in operation.

The Ann Arbor Argus - Democrat. August 11, 1899

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY IS A GO
The Carriers Travel About 25 Miles a Day
HORSEBACK AND WHEELS
Carrier Makes one Delivery and Collection a Day

Many extensions are to be made during the coming fiscal year in rural free mail delivery, the experiments in which have been highly satisfactory to the government.

During the past year many changes have been made, the result of finding weak points in the first experimental services, says the St. Louis Glob-Democrat. In the future the carrier will not attempt to go to the door of every farmer on his route, as has been the case in the past. A route will be established over from 25 to 30 miles of road. The carrier will be scheduled over this on a time basis. He will pass within at least one mile of every farm house on his route. Those living off of the road can put up mail boxes at certain points, where they can leave mail for collection and also receive mail. At every cross

road will be a government mail collection box, similar to those used in cities, where all may deposit mail with the assurance it will not lay there over 12 hours. By this change almost twice as much territory can be successfully served at the expense which was formerly necessary for the smaller routes.

The salaries of the carriers has been raised from $300 to $400, and special permits from the department enable the carriers to establish a parcel delivery of their own. Most of the carriers - where the topography of the country is such that it is possible - use bicycles during the summer and go horseback in winter. They make one delivery and one collection a day. Their equipment is practically the same as that of city letter carriers.

At present the most extensive experiments are being made in Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan and Kansas in the central section, and Colorado and California in the west. During the ensuing year, however, special tests will be made in the Rocky Mountain districts.

Assistant Postmaster General Perry will permit much improvement and extension of tests. Rural mail delivery has been introduced under the most favorable conditions in the garden district of California, where 75 miles of macadamized country roads lead through a succession of parks and past palaces, and are sprinkled daily like city streets. It has been put in operation along the bank of the Bayou La Fourche, La., where the carriers drive along on each side of the bayou. It has been inaugurated in the productive irrigated fruit-growing districts of Arizona, among the well improved and prosperous ranches of Georgia, in the backwoods of Maine, in the lake districts of Vermont and among the summer boarders of Massachusetts. It has been carried over the mountains of Arkansas, through the heavy roads of Saugamon county, Illinois, which Lincoln could hardly get through when he road the circuits, along the rough banks of the Missouri in Kansas, through the unsurveyed and roadless farming districts of Kentucky, over the hills and through the snow filled cross roads of Michigan, down the stiff clay roads of North Carolina, along the sparsely rocky ridges of Westmoreland county Pennsylvania, and among the scattered colored settlements of Virginia. The results have been highly satisfactory. During the ensuing year we hope to battle with even greater natural obstacles. The department wants tests under every condition. There is now no doubt that in a very few years this will be one of the greatest departments of the service.

The effect of rural delivery is noticeable upon the people to whom given. It brings them into as close contact with the outside world as the people living in towns and cities. The morning newspapers are laid down at their doors as early as 8 o'clock on the day of publication. The increase in letter writing, in some instances, has been 1,000 within a year. Farmers know the markets, the weather forecasts, and the general news of the world every morning. The benefits and effects are so obvious that they are hardly worth enumerating. This advanced condition of the farmer has its effect upon the city.

Mr. Heath takes the high ground that, under the present mail service, the United States is not fulfilling her obligation in (ex)change of service with those European countries - notably England, France, Germany and Belgium - which deliver letters and other mail matter to the doors of their rural, as well as city residents. It is proposed to keep the expenses of rural mail delivery very nearly within the figures of the present mail service. This is to be done by abolishing star routes and small post offices. The cost of delivery and collection is very low. In fact, it is surprising. In many districts it runs

much below one cent a piece. This will be lowered as the new changes in service simplify and better it. This, however, must come as the result of experiments.

The Ypsilanti Sentinel - Commercial. November 16, 1899

RURAL DELIVERY
Brings City and Country Together

Rural mail delivery is no longer a vision, but a most satisfactory reality. The plan seems to meet one of the needs of our farming communities, and its patrons are becoming thoroughly alive to the advantages which may accrue to our farmers by being brought into more immediate relation with the world. The one disparaging feature of farm life has been its isolation, and to this cause, perhaps, more than any other can be attributed the influx of our young people to the cities. It remains to be seen what such agencies as the electric railway and rural mail delivery will accomplish in bringing about a more desirable country life for our ambitions and wide-awake American boys and girls.

One cannot desist from comment on the short sighted opposition, or rather, puerile objection made by some business men against allowing the farmer this advantage and convenience. It is very difficult to understand why free mail delivery would decrease the living necessities of rural districts. Even if it were possible that such would be the result, our farmers have a right to free delivery, and every other advantage of rapid communication that they can obtain.

The farmer's business interests as much as those of any other occupation are under the sway of the markets. It is as essential to his own welfare that the farmer should be as intelligent regarding commercial conditions with their daily fluctuations as it is for the manufacturer. Rural delivery will be a valuable means toward this end, if its advantages are fully appreciated and utilized.

The Plymouth Mail, November 17, 1899

Rural free delivery forms an interesting feature of the annual report of First Assistant Postmaster General Heath, in the course of which he says "On November 1 1899, rural free delivery was in successful operation in over 40 states and one territory. Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, and Wyoming were the only States unrepresented.

On April 8, 1899 a rural free delivery was inaugurated upon an entirely new basis. The county of Carroll, Maryland, within a convenient distance of Washington, was selected as the basis of the experiment, the chief purpose of which was to test the possibility of putting a post office on wheels and carrying it to the doors of the people in a well settled agricultural county, instead of requiring the people to travel to the post office. For this purpose a postal wagon was specially built after the design of Mr. Edwin W. Shriver, postal clerk of the Westminster, Md. Post office who originated the idea.

From the first the service proved remarkably successful. Its cost to the government to operate was $1,375 per annum, including pay of postal clerks and driver, and care of horses and wagon. It performs the service heretofore rendered by eight fourth

class post offices and four star route carriers, the cost of which to the United States was about $1,600 per annum. It is believed that with four additional postal wagon routes and auxiliary carriers circulating from the wagons at different points, the entire county of Carroll can be covered by the traveling post offices as the southern half of Carroll county is now covered, and at a less aggregate cost than the present service by fourth class post offices and star route carriers.

The Ann Arbor Daily Argus, March 16, 1900

The Detroit Tribune Washington Correspondent sends the following: The commissioner of internal revenue has rendered a decision that will be of interest to rural free delivery and star route mail carriers. He says "Mail carriers who make a regular practice of carrying packages from one town to another town for which they receive a fee are common carriers within the meaning of law, and must for each package so carried issue a receipt, to which receipt must be affixed a one cent stamp. Mail carriers, who only occasionally carry a package, as an accommodation and not for hire, would not be considered as common carriers within the meaning of the law and would not be obliged to issue or stamp receipts for such packages."

The Plymouth Mail, April 13, 1900

Postmaster General Smith has discovered that while he and First Assistant Heath have been working to establish rural free delivery, the Second and fourth Assistants have been fighting it. The Second Assistant opposed it because it more and more replaces the star route system, which is under his control, and the Fourth Assistant opposes it because it reduces the number of fourth class postmasters, who are appointed by him. Both have been using their influence to prevent Congress from making appropriations asked for by their superior officer. The Second Assistant even addressed letters to every member of Congress calling attention to the extravagance of the rural free delivery, and claimed that the service could be done by his star route carriers with less expense. These letters were brought to the attention of the Postmaster General, who, in rather emphatic reply, knocked out both of his subordinates.

The Plymouth Mail, May 4, 1900

Rural free delivery has triumphed in Carroll county, Md., in spite of the bitter resistance of the farmers, who banded together to support the numerous postmasters who were dropped in consequence of the inauguration of the system. A report, submitted to the Post Office Department, established the value of the new plan not only for Carroll county, but for the entire country, inasmuch as the Maryland community was selected as peculiarly typical of the average difficulties to be expected everywhere from a topographical standpoint, as well as from the opposition sure to be excited by deposed postmasters. In spite of determined resistance the people of Carroll county have now,

according to the report, come to see in rural free delivery an unmixed blessing. The fight was a bitter one and opinion was slow to change.

The Plymouth Mail, November 23, 1900.

　　　Postmaster General Smith will ask for an appropriation of $121,000,000 for the expenses of his Department during the next fiscal year, of which $3,500,000 is for rural free delivery service. By the close of this fiscal year 1300 rural free delivery routes throughout the United States will have been established and the general extension contemplated for the next year will involve about 4,500 additional routes. The success of the service so far instituted has resulted in plans for a very general extension next year.

The Ypsilanti Daily Press, June 1, 1905

RURAL ROUTES RUN AT LOSS
COST OF SERVICE IN 1900 $42,435 - 1904, $12,640,070.
DEFICIT IN POSTAL REVENUES IS THEREFORE INEVITABLE
Will Be the Greatest in the History of the Department

　　　Washington, June 1. - At the end of the present fiscal year, June 30, the books of the post office department are expected to reveal a shortage of $15,000,000 in receipts as compared with expenditures during the preceding twelve months. This will be nearly double the large deficit of the fiscal year 1904, which was $8, 812,769 and more than $4,000,000 greater than the largest previous deficit, which occurred in the fiscal year 1868, when the postal revenues fell $10,652,542 below expenditures. In 1895 the deficit was nearly as great as in 1868. It was reduced to the minimum of $2,961,169 rising in the following year to $4,586,977 and then last year taking another jump to nearly $9,000,000.
　　　The officials of the department are considerably disturbed at the prospect of rolling up this year the greatest deficit that has ever been known in the postal service, but they say it could not be avoided. The principal cause of the undesirable condition is given as the rapid extension of the rural free delivery service. In 1900 this service cost $420,4333, and there were employed in it 1,276 carriers. In 1904 the number of carriers had jumped to 24,565 and the cost to $12,640,070. This year the number of carriers employed is in round numbers 32,000, and the cost will be approximately $22,000,000.
　　　It is well known that a heavy percentage of the rural routes are run at a cost to the government out of all proportion to the returns, but members of congress and the communities served insist on having the service and a deficit in the postal revenues is therefore inevitable. Officials of the department also say there is a general tendency in all branches of the service for the cost to increase in proportion to receipts as the business of the department expands.

Ypsilanti Daily Press, June 14, 1905

RURAL FREE DELIVERY

At the close of the fiscal year, now less than a month ahead, the post office department will show a deficit of about fifteen millions of dollars. This will be the largest shortage in the history of the department. It is accrued largely (due) to the extension and maintenance of the rural free delivery but there is not likely to be (a reduction) of that service on account of the lagging of receipts behind expenditures.

The rural free delivery may have been born as has been frequently charged in party design, but it has turned out to be so popular, so great a concession to the farming communities, that only a few politicians of any party have the nerve to attack it on account of its cost.

It may be also that influential congressmen have been able to procure the establishment of routes in sections where there is not justification for free delivery to the neglect of districts which are more populous, but this is a pernicious incident that will not be allowed to break down a system which is so widely popular. This modern boon of quick communication having been held out to the farmer, it would be political suicide for either party to withdraw or even contract it. Inequalities and crookedness will have to be left to time and rigid administration of affairs for correction.

The increased cost of the enlarged and improved post office system is not likely to seriously inflame popular impatience. The people are less "flighty" than they are supposed to have been formerly over a deficit in the treasury. There has been a collapse of the theory which prevailed in the early days of the Mr. McKinley's administration, that the people could not be prosperous while the government of the United States was running behind in its business. The hard times had reduced the revenue from tariff, and congress was called in extraordinary session to provide for more revenue. Now, in a period of unexampled prosperity, the receipts are behind the expenditures much further than was thought of eight year ago. And there is not serious alarm about it. The theories presented in the McKinley time have collapsed. The people can be making money, "hand over fist," and the public treasury leaking in streams at the same time. The government credit is equal to any emergency. We have been doing great tings and there is general confidence that the books will balance in good time.

The people will have to pay in taxes according to the magnitude of the public operations. The widening of our territory, the upbuilding of the navy, the extension of our post office system and other things cost money. Congress must provide it by further exercise of the taxing power. If every thing about a government adjusted itself automatically there would be no need for statesmen.