

Collection #
SC 3052
OM 0565

AMERICA, INDIANA MATERIALS, 1941–43

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript folders, 1 oversized folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1941–1943

PROVENANCE: Cynthia Carr, New York, New York, 2006

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0229

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

America was an unincorporated town in Liberty Township, Wabash County, Indiana that was first settled by European-Americans in the 1830s. At its peak in the mid- to late nineteenth century, it was still small enough that census records merely list residents as living in Liberty Township. The township is a rural area in the southeast corner of Wabash County, and encompasses the town of LaFontaine as well as Grant Creek (mentioned in Jerome A. Scott's letters), Treaty Creek, and the eastern end of Mississinewa Lake. The town of America should not be confused with Americus, a census-designated location in the Lafayette, Indiana metropolitan area. The "Hittle Community" mentioned by Scott was likely a religious or geographic community near or within America. John and Adeline Hittle are described in town histories as devout Baptists who lived "eight miles southeast of Wabash on the LaFontaine pike."

As of 1880, America's downtown area (as described by Scott) had a school, a general store, a doctor's office, a blacksmith, a cemetery, calf and hog lots, and approximately a dozen homes. Several churches were organized in residents' homes in the early part of the century, but by midcentury, Baptists and Methodists—the prominent denominations in the town—shared a log meeting house. Due to factors such as the rotting of the plank road running through the town and the community's exclusion from railroad lines, America declined in the late nineteenth century and, in the words of Scott, "was dead." The town no longer appears on maps, but unconfirmed sources place it a mile or two northeast of LaFontaine, near where John and Adeline Hittle would have lived. This is supported by the fact that S 500 E, which today runs through that location, is also known as S America Rd.

Jerome A. Scott (1867–unknown) was born to Catharine McPherson Scott and Jesse D. Scott, farmers who resided in Liberty Township. He was the third of three children and lived in America for much of his childhood. His mother died when he was young, and his father married Mary Palmer shortly thereafter. Jerome Scott worked at a variety of jobs before attending business college in Missouri in the early 1890s. Following this, he worked in a variety of Midwestern locations as a hospital attendant, an office clerk, and an independent farmer. In 1895 he married Zilpha Hicks, with whom he had two children, Paul and Merl. In 1902 Scott took a job as a railway mail clerk, which he held until his 1929 retirement. Jerome and Zilpha Scott retired to Fort Meade, Florida.

Sources:

Collection Materials

United States Census Records

Weesner, Clarkson W. *History of Wabash County, Indiana*. Wabash County, Indiana: Lewis Publishing Company, 1914.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This short collection consists of materials regarding the town of America, Indiana. Included are three long letters written to Anna Carr (“Mrs. Carr”) and her mother Elizabeth Nixon Waggoner (“Lizzie”) containing reminiscences of the town in the 1870s and 1880s, when he and Waggoner were children. The two are distantly related through Scott’s stepmother Mary Palmer. Scott discusses various schoolteachers, relatives, church congregations, marriages, and deaths. Most of the letters’ contents are straightforward accounts of who is related to whom and what happened to them. Prominently mentioned are Jesse D. Scott (not to be confused with Jerome Scott’s father, who shares the name), founder of the America Baptist Church, and schoolteacher Cisne Patterson. There are also a few anecdotes, such as when Scott recounts being disappointed at his father’s cancellation of a shopping trip to Wabash due to the news (from an unnamed source) that the world would be ending the next day. Needless to say, this proved incorrect.

Other materials produced by Scott include a map of the town in 1880 (drawn in 1942), a list of former residents, a page recounting the town pioneers, and a list of people who were part of the “Hittle Community.” Finally, there are drawings of several town buildings by Elizabeth Nixon Waggoner, which were probably also made in the early 1940s. It is clear from both the map and the letters how close-knit the community would have been—everyone knew everyone, and many were related. The collection would be of interest to those researching the history of America, Liberty Township, Wabash County, or religious communities the area.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Elizabeth Nixon Waggoner, Drawings of Former
America Buildings, early 1940s

Correspondence from Jerome A. Scott to Anna Carr
and Elizabeth Nixon Waggoner, 1941–43

Jerome A. Scott, 1880s America Town Map and Lists
of Residents, 1942

CONTAINER

OM 0565
Folder 1 of 1

Folder 1 of 2

Folder 2 of 2

CATALOGING INFORMATION

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

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 3052).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.