

Collection #
P 0148

**PERU, INDIANA
COPY PHOTOGRAPHS, 1897-1898**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder of photographs

COLLECTION
DATES: Ca. 1898

PROVENANCE: Purchased, 1983

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 1983.1230

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Peru, Indiana

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

The opening of the Erie Canal from Fort Wayne to Peru further boosted migration and trade in 1834. Chief Godfroy of the Miami offered \$500 to any steamboat that would come to his property on the Mississinewa. In 1854, the first railroad line was completed from Indianapolis to Peru. The town reaped further rewards when, in the 1880s, livery stable owner Benjamin Wallace established a large-scale traveling circus in the town, and used local contractors exclusively in order to build, paint, and finish its quarters, rail cars, and wagons, print its advertisements, *et cetera*.

Natural gas was discovered near Peru in 1886. During geological probing, a small amount of petroleum was also found. However, oil prospecting remained a minor concern during the gas boom period until a larger pocket was discovered in the summer of 1897. Around twenty distinct oil companies were incorporated within 60 days, and prospectors from all over the country came to Peru. By the following year, 230 wells had been tapped in the area. However, as with natural gas, output dwindled by 1900, and the business was abandoned.

Sources:

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains 18 black-and-white photographs of street scenes in Peru, Indiana. Contained in one folder, the photographs are copy prints dated 1897–1898 and were made from glass plates. Most of the images were taken during a street fair and parade in Peru during the oil and gas boom.

Primary descriptions originate from handwritten notes on the verso of the photographs when available. Further descriptions were provided by the processor resulting from research of the above sources. These are in square brackets.

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Photograph 1:
"Peru oil fields, 1898"
[view of oil derricks, houses, and railroad tracks]

Photograph 2:
"Wabash Railroad Hospital, 1897"
[was located in Peru near Mt. Hope Cemetery.
Opened Nov. 1896]

Photograph 3:
"Peru Fire Dept., 1897"
[horse drawn wagon with hose reel in parade, street
decorated with flags.
Falk department store in background, sold boots,
shoes, clothing, and hats]

Photograph 4:
"Broadway north from Main St.
Miami Co. Court House"
[street fair scene with flags and bunting around
courthouse. Courthouse built 1856–8, in use until
1906. Had a jail in the basement.]

Photograph 5:
"Peru, Broadway north from 2nd St., 1898"
[street fair scene with vendor booths, flags and
bunting]

Photograph 6:
"Peru street fair
Broadway south from Main, 1897"
[crowds, vendor booths, signs and flags]

Photograph 7:
[Pliny M. Crume and his son Graham M. Crume
driving an early automobile. Crume had one of Peru's
first automobiles and toured with it extensively in

CONTAINER

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Northern Indiana. He was nicknamed "foxy grandpa."]

Photograph 8:

"Peru street parade, 1898"

[Horse drawn wagon filled with men and an oil rig on parade in front of Pliny Crume's store]

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Photograph 9:

"Peru Street Fair

North on Broadway from Bearss Hotel Balcony, 1897"

[parade of horse drawn wagons with signs referring to crude oil and miners. In the scene is Hale's Blk. another major department store and Bearss Hotel, the biggest and best in town.

Photographs:

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Photograph 10:

"Peru street fair

South on Broadway from Main St., 1897"

[Hays & Volpert Horse Shoers / Capewell Horse Nail Co. vendor booth]

Photographs:

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Photograph 11:

"McCaffrey & Co. Groceries"

[horse drawn wagon]

Photographs:

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Photograph 12:

[Peru street fair and "Peru Queen of the Harvest"

parade float, 1897, Hays & Volpert Horse Shoers/Capewell Horse Nail Co. vendor booth]

Photographs:

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Photograph 13:

[Photo reads "Peru Free Street Fair 12-M"

Sells Brothers Circus posters visible at left]

Photographs:

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Photograph 14:

"Peru street fair

Looking east on Main St., 1897"

[Old courthouse at left, crowds, dairy wagon in center, "Australian Wild Girl" show at right]

Photographs:

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Photograph 15:

"Peru street fair, 1897"

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[Ponies lined up outside of Reyburn Harness Shop]

Photograph 16:

"Wabash RR wreck

March 19, 1898, 7:00 a.m."

[Wabash Railroad went through Peru on a line
between Toledo, OH and Champaign, IL]

Photographs:

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Photograph 17:

"Peru street fair, 1897"

[Hays & Volpert vendor booth with parade float in
background]

Photographs:

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Photograph 18:

"West side of Broadway between 3rd and Main St.
Peru, 1898"

[parade in front of Pliny Crume's Bookstore and a
saloon during the street fair]

Photographs:

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