

# History Investigation



## Old Hand Written Letter

How do you let friends and relatives know the latest news? How did people communicate before modern technology? Are there similarities in the contents of a letter written in the 1800s with an email or phone call today? What clues can you find in a letter that will lead to more information?

Let's look at an old letter and see what we can learn about the author, his plans, travel, transportation, and the time period during the expansion of the United States. Look for clues in the letter to answer these questions.

1. Who wrote the letter?
2. To whom was the letter written?
3. Why had the author gone to Illinois?
4. What area of Illinois does he mention?
5. What kind of fever did the writer encounter?
6. Who else does he mention in the letter?
7. Why does he quote the prices for wheat, corn, beef, pork, and milk cows?
8. Where did he live?
9. How did he travel home?
10. How long did it take him?

Bonus: When was the letter written?

Use family information and the history of the United States Postal Service to determine the date the letter was written.

Transcript of Letter

Spelling and grammar was not corrected. Punctuation was inserted for easier reading.

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Dear Friend, I take this privilege to rite to you that we are able and hope that these few lines may find you in the same state of health. I promised to rite to you as soon as I got to the west but I have neglected it but now I beg your kindness that you will not think hard of it that I did not write to you sooner. I did intend to rite to you as soon as I landed. I had nine days traveling after I left your house and after I got to Rock River I had a severe attack of the bilious fever. I was for three weeks that I was confined to bed but really that did not discourage me of the country we all intend to move to that country this spring. Uncle Isaac Grush is going to move with us to Rock River Settlement. I have got eighty acres of land that I traded the horse and carriage for. I got it for 1.50 cts. per acre. There is many chances yet and first rate Country that a man can make a better liven there then in any Country that I ever was in for they can rais from thirty to fifty bushels to the acre without any expence onely there labour for the land is smooth. I think it is better for at once to leave all and go to Illinois for now is the time to get land cheap for in two years time all the best chances will be taken up for there is many people going to that Rock River Settlement. There is a hundred familys going to from Washington County Maryland. I would like to see you and the family come out next summer to Ogle County Illinois that is the place that we are going to. Isac is going to the same neighborhood. The market was good for to be a new country wheat was seling for seventy five cts per bushel corn twenty cts a bushel when I left that country beef 4 cts per pound pork 5.00 per hundred milch cows from 12 to 15 dollars. I started from Illinois for home on the 20 day of October and landed on the 11 of November. I came by water all the way home.

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We received a letter from Grand father on the 11 day of February. they is well and like there home. They have moved out to his sisters. David bought him a place in Cambridge but he sa that he will stay where he is for his sister to take care of him as long as he live. Nothin more remains but my love to you and to all the enquiring. Direct your letter Lancaster county Blue Ball Post Office.

I want you to rite me as soon as you received this letter. We intend to start on the 25 of March. Direct your letter to Ogle County Illinois Grand Detour Post Office.

Phillip Eby

Hymn C3 PM is written at the bottom of the page

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Upper right hand corner: 10

Address:

Mr. William Grush  
Galion PO  
Richland Co  
Ohio

Lower Left Hand Corner

Shade Gap Pa  
July unreadable 8<sup>th</sup>