

# Earlville, Ohio

by Roger Rhoads

This UX3 postal card is dated May 8, 1875 and was canceled at the Earlville, OH, station of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh R. R. (C. & P. R. R.).

Earlville is unincorporated and is today the typical wide-spot-in-the-road located on Revenna Rd. about ¼ mile northeast of Ohio Rt. 43 and about a mile north of Kent in Franklin Twp., Portage Co. In fact, there is not even a crossroads there.

Earlville had a post office from 1852 to 1906, and apparently the station master was also the postmaster as he used the railroad ticket dater for the blue date stamp with a black manuscript cancellation. This particular C. & P. R. R. station agent marking is noted by Towle<sup>1</sup> as 554-S-2 and is rated in the book as uncommon.

It's interesting to note that Samuel P. Merrill's total salary as a postmaster in 1875 was \$86.19, so getting additional income from being the station master was certainly a bonus.

As many folks in small towns are store owners with the post office being used as a way of encouraging business, I went to the 1870-80 censuses to find out Mr. Merrill's profession. Turns out he was born in Vermont in 1830 and was a farmer.

I'm guessing that Merrill owned the land very near where the station was built and that the train stopped but seldom, so he had time to go about his other duties as postmaster and farmer. An engraving from the 1874 Portage Co. history shows a barn immediately behind the train station. Perhaps that belonged to Mr. Merrill so it was a very short walk to his other work. Or perhaps he had one of his older children doing those duties when he was out in the fields. Children Charles would have been 17 at the time of this mailing while a son Frank would have been 14 years old.

Strangely, in the 1870 listing, the nearest post office on that page as noted by the enumerator was not Earlville but Franklin Mills that

shut down in 1862 with mail to Kent. The nearest post office in 1880 was Kent. Earlville P.O. wasn't mentioned in either. I have no idea as to why this should be.

Earlville never amounted to much, but googling the town name did find one resident of note. Simon Schafer was a noted artist in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century of *tromp d'oeil* style of painting which is a three-dimensional effect made famous by William Harnett (1848-1892, see Scott 1386). He and his wife, a painter as well, first lived in Detroit and then moved to Earlville.

The railroads tracks were deemed not satisfactory for fast trains, so about 1890 it was moved further south and another station was built. That too has disappeared. Today it's one of those places that though you might go through it a hundred times, you never quite remember its name.

<sup>1</sup> *U.S. Route and Station Agent Marking*. Charles I. Towle, 1986, Mobile Post Office Society