

The Post Office of Setzler's Store



With the recently opened Schuylkill Navigation Canal in 1825, a location was soon needed to fulfill postal requirements of the local citizens, as well as to meet the activity and expected business growth. In charge of the facility was the Postmaster whose appointment was a reward given by whichever political party was in power at the time.

When this post office was established in Coventry township, it was located in Frederick Setzler's Store near Lawrenceville. It was established on December 31, 1827, with Setzler appointed as Postmaster. He would remain in that capacity for 29 years.

The next three were from the same family. In succession Samuel N. Rowland, Thomas M. Rowland, and then D. Webster Rowland would be in charge of the distribution and posting of mail. The post office was still located in Setzler's Store.

In 1866, Joseph K. Miller was appointed, and he moved the post office to the premises of his nursery located just outside of Lawrenceville, but the postal identity would remain as Setzler's Store. In March of 1869, two petitions were circulated by the citizens served by the post office. One called for a change of Postmaster and to move the post office back into the village. The other requested that Miller should be retained with no change of location.

Soon after, Isaac Kolb, a local boat builder, was awarded the function of Postmaster, with the office location moved back to Setzler's Store.

In 1873, Benjamin Ireby was appointed, and the post office was moved into his store at Lawrenceville where it remained for 10 years. The salary for postmaster's pay at this time was 85.00 dollars per year.

In 1884, the Schuylkill Valley Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad was completed and operating. This served as an inducement to change the name of the post office to Parker Ford in order to match that of the railroad station. This occurred on August 4, 1888. Harry Hiestand was the Postmaster, and the facility was relocated to his store at Lawrenceville. Soon after the village name of Lawrenceville would also be changed to Parker Ford, thereby aligning the same identification for mail, destination, and residency.

Dr. Aaron R. Savidge was appointed and once again the post office was moved outside of the village. This did not suit many of the patrons, who would soon boycott the post office using other locations for their needs. East Coventry had three other post office locations, as well as one located in Linfield just across the river. This would reduce the income of the Postmaster and as a result, Dr. Savidge would soon resign from office.

Jacob F. Keller's commission was issued by President Cleveland on April 17, 1894. The post office was now located in a small frame building near the railroad station.

In 1898, Lyman B. Custer acquired the office of Postmaster, and would remain in office for 17 years with the post office removed to his store at Parker Ford.

The Shade family would next assume the responsibility for the postal service. Charles M. Shade would serve from 1915 to 1925 and then his wife, Bertha, continued until her resignation in 1946. She was the daughter of Harry Hiestand and together with her husband continued the service at what was once her father's store. She would be the last appointee as Postmaster, as all new persons considered for assignment would be determined by a civil service examination.