

Burglar's post office scam ended in failure in 1883

Ed Connor may have wished he had never set eyes on Monroe County in the spring of 1883. As a new resident then, his behavior left a great deal to be desired.

Connor, whose age was about 26, apparently arrived in Bloomington in April and found himself a painting job with the firm of Jackson & Wiley. According to the Bloomington *Saturday Courier* of May 5, his work was in some way unsatisfactory, and he was fired.

At the end of April, Connor must have been feeling strapped for money and came up with a scheme that would provide him with money to



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By Rose McIlveen

survive in Bloomington or perhaps move on to another town. His new source of income would be the United States government.

Postal employees were considerably perturbed to find that the office was not as they had left it on the night before. Related the *Courier*, "On Thursday night of last week the post office in Bloomington

was entered by forcing open with a chisel a window shutter in the rear of the building. Between three and four dollars in money was taken and a lot of postage-due stamps." The newspaper explained that the latter were of no use to the intruder, because they could not be traded for money.

Connor was cautious during his ransacking of the office. A candle or lantern might have been noticed by someone passing by. The *Courier* said that the intruder used matches to illuminate his work.

Had Connor used the money to get out of town, he might have got

ten away with the burglary. But he struck again on the next night.

The *Courier* informed its readers, "On Friday night of last week the post office at Ellettsville was entered by forcing open with a chisel a window in the rear of the building." Rather than try a different "M.O.," as the police would say, Connor used the one that had succeeded before. Any law enforcement officer who didn't see the similarity with the burglar in Bloomington would have been a weak link on the force.

Connor got a better haul at Ellettsville. Reported the *Courier*, "Here the ransacking was more ef-

fectual than in the Bloomington office. The principal articles taken were 207 postal cards, 300 stamps, two registered letters, \$5 in money, and the Postmaster's commission."

Business of the Ellettsville post office was conducted in a little store. While he was at it, Connor helped himself to some items there, too. Among them were "a dozen collar buttons, nine cuff buttons, a cigar case, three shirt studs, a French harp, ring case, two rings and a scarf pin."

The newspaper speculated that Connor had the idea of taking the
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