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**MS 017**  
**Peters Paintings and Dioramas Collection**

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**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

Title: Peters Paintings and Dioramas Collection

Creator: Postal History Foundation

Inclusive dates: 1874 – 2014; bulk 1960s – 1970s

Extent: 1 box; .5 linear feet

Abstract: This collection includes photographs, slides, and background information on the paintings and dioramas by Cal Peters, which were commissioned by the Western Postal History Museum in the 1960s.

Call no.: MS 017

Language: English

Repository: Peggy J. Slusser Memorial Library  
920 N. First Avenue  
Tucson, Arizona, 85719

**ACCESS & USE**

Acquisition information: Materials were accumulated by unknown persons in the PHF over the years and stored in various places throughout the buildings.

Restrictions: This collection has no restrictions.

Copyright: It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission to publish from the owner of the copyright (the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates, or literary executors). The user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Postal History Foundation, its officers, employees, and agents from and against all claims made by any person asserting that he or she is an owner of copyright.

Preferred citation: Peters Paintings and Dioramas Collection. Postal History Foundation.

**HISTORICAL NOTE**

Clarence (Cal) Nicholas Peters was born April 20, 1903 in Port Washington, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. He was the son of Emil J. and Mary E. Felts Peters. He received instruction at the Chicago Art Institute. He married Helen Marie Hall, who was born in Iowa on April 18, 1905.

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In 1935 Peters was one of several artists at the Stout Institute in Menominee, Wisconsin (now a State University) employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). While there, he painted murals and about a dozen portraits. In 1936, again funded by the WPA, Peters painted a mural of Truax Field in Madison, Wisconsin. From 1938-1948 he continued his work for the WPA in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, where he created numerous murals and dioramas. In 1949 he left Prairie du Chien to become the Curator of History at the Los Angeles County Museum.

While in the west, he created other murals, painting, and dioramas, some of which are now part of the collection of the Postal History Foundation. The Western Postal History Museum (now known as the Postal History Foundation) commissioned him to paint five oil painting, and to create four dioramas on various aspects of postal history in Arizona. His work is carefully researched and represents actual events in the state's history. The paintings hang in the Peggy J. Slusser Memorial Philatelic Library and the dioramas are on semi-permanent loan to the Arizona Historical Society at their Tucson and Yuma locations.

### **ARRANGEMENT**

This collection is arranged into two series – documents, containing information on paper pertaining to the creation and celebrations of the paintings and dioramas; and photographs, containing images on photographic paper (and their negatives) pertaining to the creation, exhibition, and celebrations of the paintings and dioramas

### **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

Series 1: Documents

Documents include biographical information about artist Cal Peters written by a historian from Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, where Peters worked on a large mural sponsored by the Works Progress Administration, and a newspaper clipping describing him and his artwork. Also included is correspondence between Cal and wife Helen Peters and William Alexander, director of the Western Postal History Foundation. These letters explain some of Peters's creative decision-making and his monetary compensation. Historical information about the railroad in Yuma, the Fairbank train robbery, the Wickenburg Massacre, and Katherine Stinson were found with some of the correspondence, and are possibly copies of what was sent to Peters to help him create the dioramas. This information would help a researcher understand more about the decisions Peters made in creating the artwork. Finally, publicity and news clippings about the paintings and dioramas, as well as secondary works created by the foundation from Peters's works show the lasting impact the artwork has had on the foundation and the interaction the community at large has had with the paintings.

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### Series 2: Photos

Photographs include visual images of the paintings and dioramas themselves, both in with the content isolated and *in situ*, showing the artwork in the context of an exhibit. Researchers can use the photographs to understand how the painting and dioramas have been exhibited over the years. Also included are photographs of Cal Peters at Western Postal History Foundation events celebrating the artwork.

### **SUBJECT TERMS**

Air mail service – Arizona – History

Apache Indians--Arizona

Camel mail

Mail steamers – United States

Massacres – Arizona – Wickenburg Region – History – 19th century

Mule train mail

Peters, Clarence Nicholas, 1903-1984

Postal service – Arizona – History

### **RELATED MATERIAL**

Related collections :       Postal History Foundation Records (MS 032)  
                                      Arizona Philatelic Rangers Collection (MS 014)

Separated material:        Photograph of person in front of railway mail car in Yuma (now in  
  Photos – Places – Yuma)  
                                      Photograph of covers that are possibly camel express (now in Photos  
  – Subjects – Camel mail)

### **ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE**

Acquisition number :       2010-17

Processed by:                Charlotte Cushman in June 2011 and revised by Valerie Kittell in  
                                      August 2015.

**BOX AND FOLDER LISTING**

Box 1	f. 1	Cal Peters biographical information	1965 – 2010
	f. 2	Correspondence and agreements to create paintings and dioramas	1965 – 1975
	f.3	Historical information [apparently] used by Peters to create paintings and dioramas	1874 – 1973
	f. 4	Publicity and clippings about paintings and dioramas	n.d.; 1966 - 1975
	f. 5	Cachets and postcards made from paintings and dioramas	n.d.; 2014
	f. 6	Photos – Events	n.d.; 1974
	f. 7	Photos – Paintings	n.d.
	f. 8	Photos – Dioramas	n.d.
	f. 9	Slides – Paintings and dioramas	n.d.
	f. 10	CD-ROMs – Digital images of paintings and dioramas	2013
	f. 11	Photographic negatives	n.d.