

## Louisville's Connection to the World

Much like modern-day Louisville, the Louisville of the past was a hub of activity. Spurred by industry, viable businesses, various modes of transportation, and tourism, Louisville was strategically located to take advantage of the Ohio River, many highways, and various railroad enterprises, that allowed the city to be well known, both nationally and internationally. As in the present day, Louisville in the late nineteenth and entire twentieth centuries produced and sold products around the world, hosted national and international exhibitions and conventions all of which spurred the local economy and required the building of new infrastructure to accommodate the changing world around it.

This exhibit highlights various aspects of Louisville and how it managed to become a player in the national and international economy. Through various postal history covers and cards, we will examine some of the factors that brought Louisville in contact with the rest of the world. The exhibit looks at the following topics:

- Louisville's earliest hotels
- Government contracted airmail service and the expansion of airport facilities
- Advent of Highway Post Office
- The Ohio River navigational system
- Railroads such as the Big 4 and L&N
- Other modes of transit
- How local industries became suppliers and customers to businesses on all major continents of the world

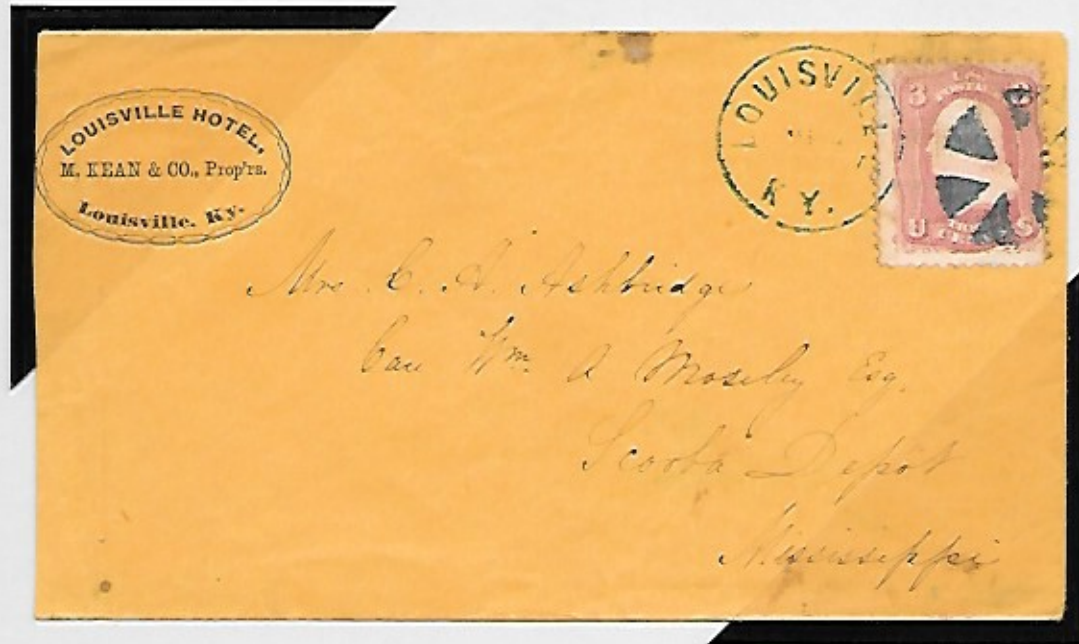
### Mailed from Louisville to Dijon, France



This postcard written in French was mailed at Louisville on January 29, 1911 to "Cher Edmond" in Dijon, France. Signed "Paul, Orpheum Theatre, Memphis, Tennessee, he notes he was departing Louisville and heading to Memphis, New Orleans, and then back to New York City. Perhaps Paul was an impresario or an actor. The front of the card shows part of Louisville's 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and of special interest, the Majestic Theatre.

## Louisville's Connection to the World Hotels

The Louisville Hotel was built in 1832 at 610 West Main Street. It closed in 1938 and was demolished in 1949. When it was built, it was said to be equal to the finest hotel in Boston.



This cover, bearing the pre-printed ad of the hotel, was mailed sometime in the early to mid-1860's from Louisville to Scooba Depot in Mississippi. It is franked, which means stamped, with a 3-cent stamp which was issued in 1861 and which pictures George Washington. Three cents was the rate for a first-class letter at the time.

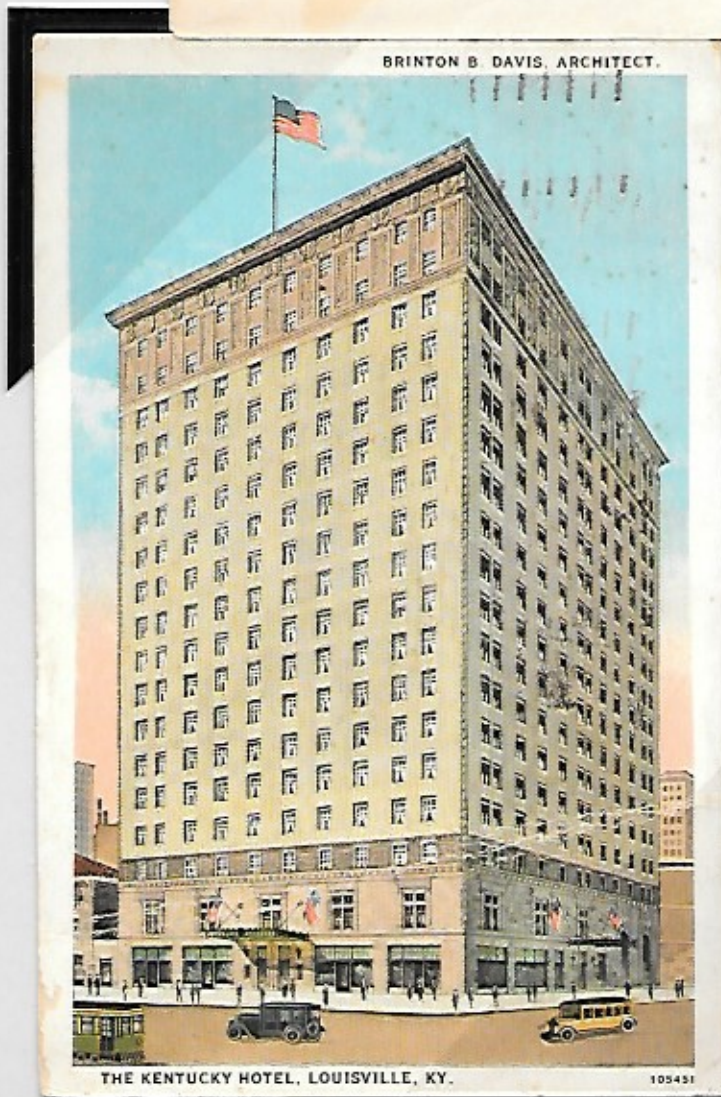
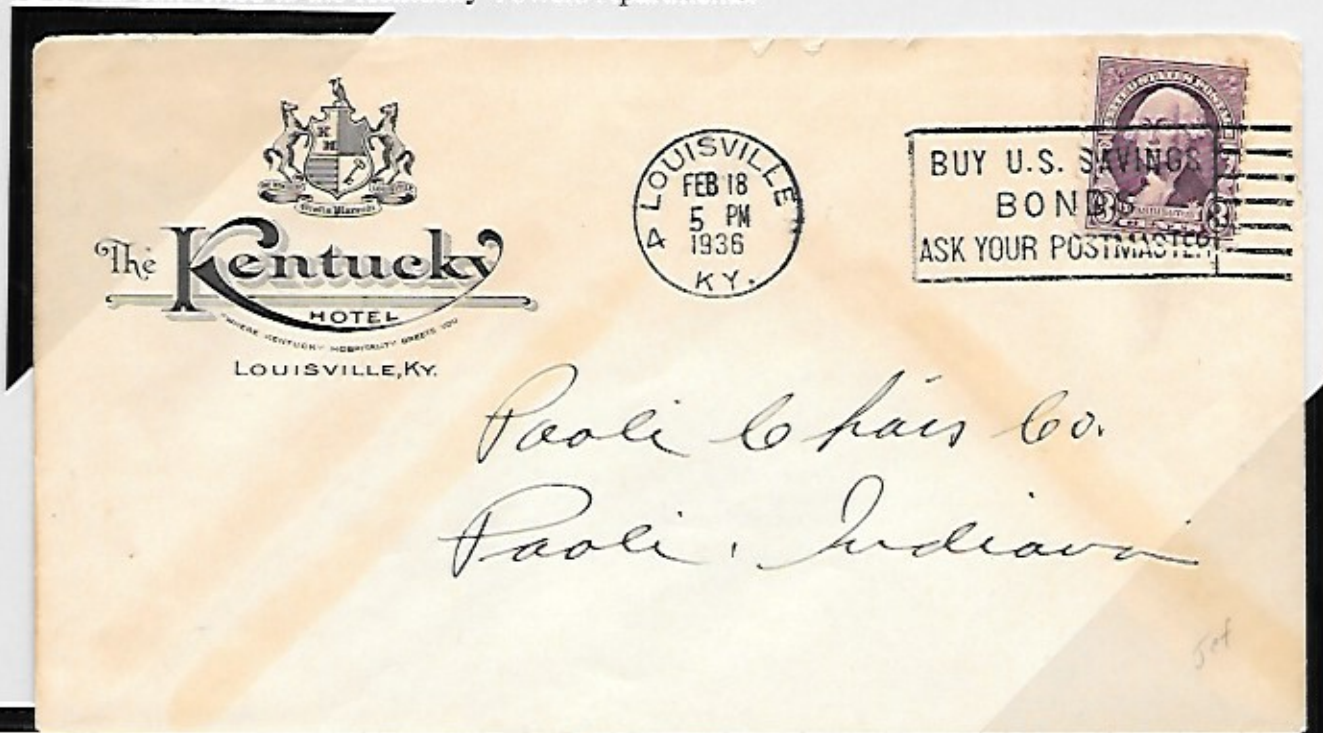
By the 1870's Louisville had thirty-five hotels. One of these was the Willard Hotel, which was known as the Croghan House in the 1850's and 1860's. It was located on Jefferson Street at Armory Place.



This cover was mailed to Chicago on June 19, 1908 by a guest of the hotel. In 1883, the cost to mail a first-class letter had dropped from 3 cents to 2 cents. Therefore, this letter was mailed using the red 2 cent stamp which was issued in 1903.

## Louisville's Connection to the World Hotels

The Kentucky Hotel opened in 1925 at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Walnut Street (now Muhammad Ali Blvd). The hotel was eighteen stories tall. It was the last hotel built in downtown Louisville before World War II. In 1970 - 1972 it was converted to the Kentucky Towers Apartments.



The cover shown above bears the logo and the coat of arms of the Kentucky Hotel. This letter was mailed to Paoli, Indiana on February 18, 1936. Notice the interesting cancel on the 3-cent stamp. At that time, one could purchase U.S. Savings Bonds from the post office. The use of the 3-cent stamp on this letter was due to the postal rate for a first-class letter increasing in 1932 due to the depression.

The postcard, seen at left, cancelled Sep 16, 1926 shows the Kentucky Hotel in an earlier year than the cover above. Notice, that in addition to the legend at the bottom, which was typical of scenic postcards at the time, the top of the card shows "Brinton B. Davis, Architect". It is quite possible that this particular card was designed by the architect as an advertisement of his profession. The sender mentions attending the State Fair and a Bankers Convention while in Louisville.

## Louisville's Connection to the World

### Hotels

The Seebach Hotel opened in 1905 at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Walnut Street (now Muhammad Ali Blvd). It boasted the city's first roof garden as well as gourmet dining. It has played host to seven U. S. presidents.



In 1928 the eight-story Elks Club, at the southwest corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Chestnut Streets, became the Henry Clay Hotel. At the time, it was the only Louisville hotel that had a swimming pool. It was named after the late Representative and Senator from Kentucky.



Mailed on November 21, 1933 to St. Louis, Missouri. The 3-cent stamp was issued to direct attention to the National Recovery Act, which was designed to assist the nation's economic recovery from the Great Depression.

## Louisville's Connection to the World Airmail

Bowman Field, Louisville's first airport, opened in 1921. Prior to 1926, all airmail service was provided by government owned and operated planes. Commercial airline service from Louisville began on August 1, 1928, when Continental Airways (later American Airlines) began CAM 16 (Contract Air Mail route 16) between Louisville and Cleveland, with stops in Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Akron. Initially, this was the only air mail route that served Louisville.



The 5-cent stamp, Scott C11, was first used on this date for 1 oz. airmail service to any address in the USA. Each additional ounce was 10 cents.

The cover below, sent to Detroit, would have been carried on CAM 16 to Cleveland and then made the final leg to Detroit via CAM 6. Note that a 10-cent stamp, Scott C10, was used, though the new rate was 5 cents. 10 cents would not have paid for greater weight; it is assumed the sender simply had it left over from the previous period when the minimum airmail rate was 10 cents.



## Louisville's Connection to the World

### Airmail

This cover was sent to Louisville via airmail from Pittsburgh. It would have gone on CAM 11 to Cleveland and then on CAM 16 to Louisville. Regular cross-country airmail service, including night flights, began in 1924, with Cleveland as one of 15 stops. To aid navigation, light towers were set up at 25-mile intervals. Scott C11 depicts such a tower. It is unclear as to when night flights in and out of Louisville began.



Standiford Field opened to the public in 1947. CAM 87 was awarded to Piedmont Airlines in 1948 and Louisville was one of many stops on this route. While passenger jet service began in 1962, jet service on this airmail route did not begin until 1968.

Louisville's Connection to the World  
Airmail

In 1934, the domestic airmail rate was reduced from 8 cents to 6 cents per oz. and a new stamp was created: Scott C19. This cover shows the "Airmail Saves Time" cancel, one of 32 different types used from 1924 to 1941.



Only two air post special delivery stamps were issued: Scott CE1 and CE2. This cover is posted with CE2 and in addition to being first day air mail special delivery, it is also sent as registered mail.

## Louisville's Connection to the World Highway Post Offices

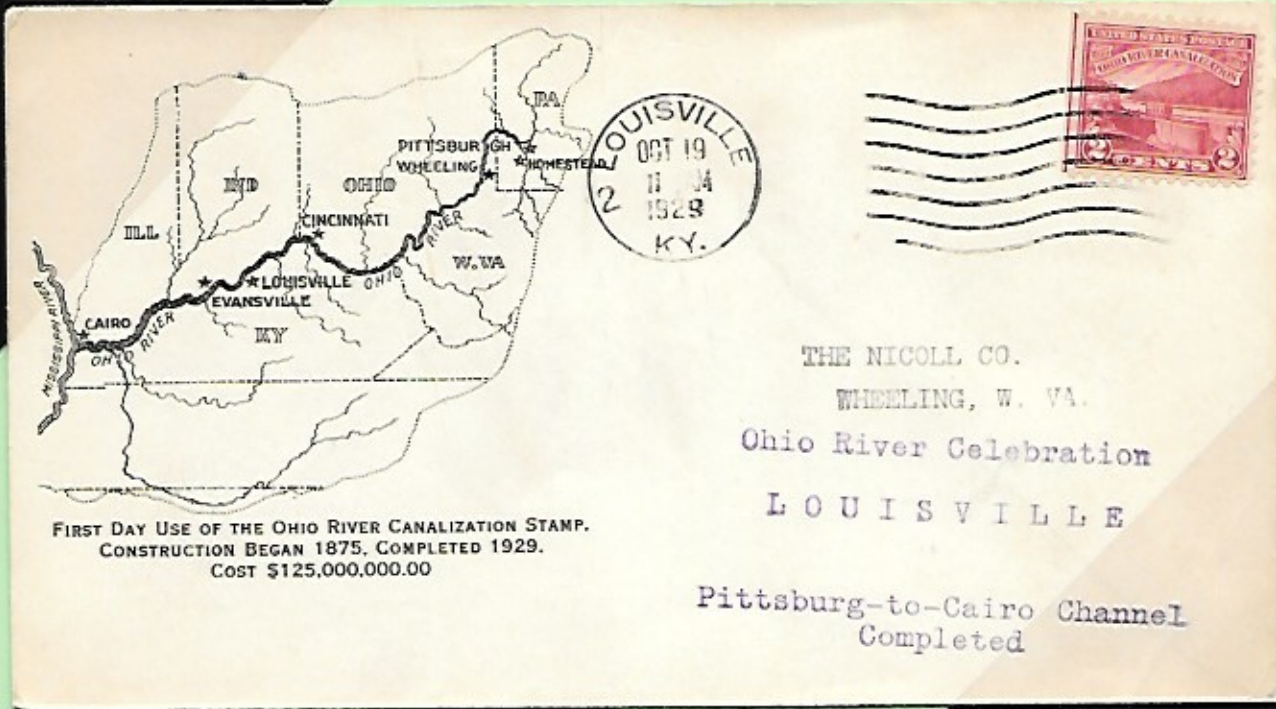
Highway Post Offices were introduced in 1941 in response to the decline in passenger rail routes and the corresponding decline in Railway Post Offices. As on the railway offices, the highway office clerks sorted mail on the buses while they moved from town to town. On average, a highway postal route served 25 post offices. The new ZIP codes of 1963 and section centers (1960) made the highway post office systems inefficient and the last one was shut down in 1974.



It is unclear as how many highway post offices there were that originated or ended in Louisville. The first trip of all such post offices however were devoted exclusively to philatelic material.

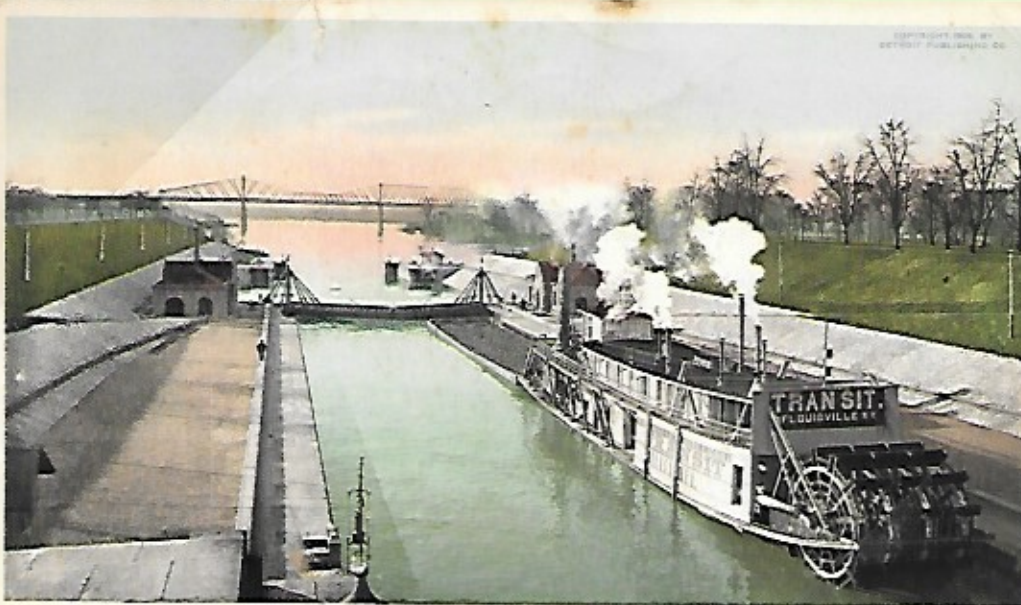


## Louisville's Connection to the World Ohio River Canalization



The completion of the Ohio River Canalization Project in 1929 was celebrated by the Post Office Department with the issuance of a red 2-cent stamp depicting this historic event as seen in the above First Day Cover. The project guaranteed a 9-foot year-round shipping channel the length of the Ohio River. It was comprised of 51 locks and dams, of which, the one at Louisville was #41.

The original Louisville and Portland Canal was completed in 1830. It permitted navigation around the falls. The canal received major improvements in the 1870's, at which time, the locks were the largest in the world. The first dam at the falls was finished in 1881 and was replaced with a new wicket dam in 1910. The canal was widened in 1921, when new locks were completed. A new dam and hydroelectric station were completed in 1927.



Louisville, Jun 27,  
1908

Saturday eve.

Came down this morning  
Will return tomorrow Am  
Having a good visit  
Will write soon.  
Love to all  
Aunt Cal

## Louisville's Connection to the World Railroads

The Big Four Bridge was built by Louisville and Jeffersonville Bridge Co. but sold to the Big Four (Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis) Railroad in 1895. Thirty-seven workers died during its construction.



4603

BIG FOUR BRIDGE, LOUISVILLE, KY.

ILLUSTRATED POST CARD CO., N. Y.

*FEB 28<sup>th</sup> 1966*

*Elba*

Cancel: Louisville. Mar 6, 1906.

The Big Four Bridge was the last of three RR bridges across the Ohio River at Louisville. It was rebuilt in 1929. It entered the city at Preston and Main Streets. It was turned into a pedestrian bridge in 2014.

Union Station was built by the L&N Railroad and dedicated in 1891. It was said to be the largest station in the South when built. It was used up until 1976, when it was sold to TARC, which uses the building for administrative offices. In 2010 TARC received a grant to restore all 278 windows, including 40 of stained glass.

Cancel: Louisville, Nov 27, 1921

Dear Thrya and Lin:

Just thought I'd drop a line to let you know I am still alive. Haven't heard a word from you or the folks, I presume to be busy. Love,

Loraine



66792

Union Station, Tenth Street Depot, Louisville, Ky.

## Louisville's Connection to the World Other Modes of Transit

A PAQUEBOT cancellation on a cover means it was mailed at sea; in this case from the ship M.V. Apapa. The Nigerian stamp indicates that the ship was sailing under a Nigerian flag. The Apapa was launched in Liverpool, England in 1947. The stamp was issued and in use from 1938 to 1951. This would suggest that the letter was mailed between 1947 and 1951.



Art Deco Greyhound Bus Station which was built in 1937 at Broadway and Fifth Street. It was designed by Louisville architect W.S. Arrasmith, who designed more than sixty-five such terminals for Greyhound. It was demolished in 1970.

Cancel: Louisville, Nov  
1946

To Quebec, Canada

Phildius

Hello. Would you care to  
exchange view cards from  
someone in KY?

Hilda Steiden



## Louisville's Connection to the World Foreign Mail to Louisville

The Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation established its headquarters in Louisville, KY in 1929. It manufactured numerous brands of cigarettes under a variety of names. It is estimated that at one time, Brown & Williamson had captured 16% of the cigarette market in the United States.

This airmail letter is from the Tann-Papier Company whose headquarters are in Traun, Austria. They manufacture and distribute paper products, including cigarette papers worldwide. They most likely supplied paper to Brown & Williamson.

The 10 schillings and 1.5 schilling stamps were issued in 1973 and 1974 respectively and paid the airmail rate to the United States.



**TANN-PAPIER** Ges. m. b. H. & Co. KG  
**TRAUN/AUSTRIA**  
ERZEUGUNG TECHNISCHER PAPIERE

**FLUGPOST**  
**AIR MAIL**  
**PAR AVION**

Messrs.  
BROWN & WILLIAMSON  
TOBACCO CORPORATION  
1600 West Hill Street  
P.O. Box 35090  
LOUISVILLE/KENTUCKY 40232  
U S A



## Louisville's Connection to the World Foreign Mail to Louisville

The Mann Chemical Corporation established its headquarters in Louisville, KY in 1929. It is a privately held company, located at 757 Logan Street. They are manufacturers of a variety of chemicals.

This airmail letter was sent from E. R. Bernard and Associates which is in Johannesburg, South Africa. They are a manufacturer of dental autoclaves which are used to sterilize dental tools. In this case, we can assume they were most likely buying cleaning chemicals which were to be utilized in their factory.

The 15 cents in stamps paid the airmail rate to the United States. The label at the top left says "By Airmail" in three languages; Afrikaans, English and French.



## Louisville's Connection to the World Foreign Mail to Louisville

Whip-Mix is a 99-year-old Louisville firm that manufactures and sells dental supplies, lab equipment and occlusion products worldwide.

3-On sells dental supplies and products to clinics and hospitals in China.

Express Mail Service is an international express postal service offered by postal-administration members of the UPU (Universal Postal Union). Hong Kong is a member of this cooperative. This cover was sent in 1987.

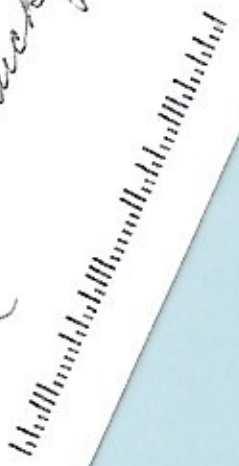


**Louisville's Connection to the World**  
**Foreign Mail to Louisville**

This cover was mailed from the Brazilian zone of interest in Antarctica. Brazil maintains a research facility located in the Admiralty Bay of King George Island. The return address makes it clear that this was mailed while on a tourist expedition. The stamp was issued in 1993 and paid the first-class international rate.



Mr. & Mrs. Don Grant  
4419 Mount Vernon Rd  
Louisville, ~~KY~~ Kentucky 40222  
USA



**Blyth & Company Travel**  
13 HAZELTON AVENUE  
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA M5R 2E1

## Louisville's Connection to the World Foreign Mail to Louisville

This envelope likely contained an order for Brown & Williamson products. Three different Turkish stamps were used. Brown & Williamson was and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the British American Tobacco Company. Brown & Williamson was started in North Carolina in 1894. It moved its headquarters to Louisville in 1929. The headquarters are now located in the Brown & Williamson Tower at 401 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Louisville.



The Turkish stamps are: C40, a Fokker Turboprop airplane, #1921, a Kangal dog, #1953, Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey.