

Louisville Commerce

The Early Years

Due to its location at the falls of the Ohio, Louisville became a crossroads for river, road, and rail traffic. A wide variety of commercial enterprises sprang up and thrived. This exhibit will show examples of mail to and from enterprises involved in

- wholesaling
- retailing
- manufacturing
- construction
- agriculture

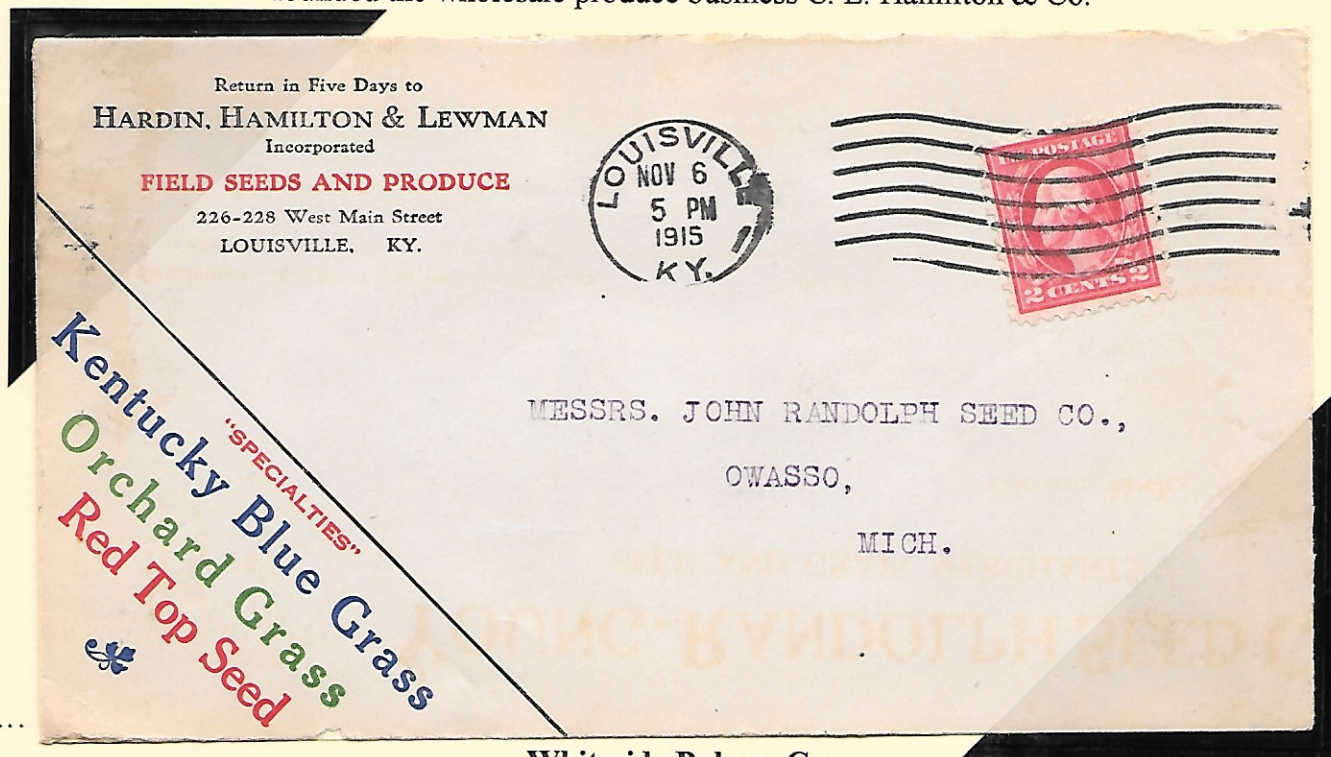
Wood, Stubbs & Co.

Wood, Stubbs and Company provided seeds to Louisville area gardeners and farmers from the 1890's to the 1920's. This cover likely contained a copy of the 1919 catalog since the three cent franking would have overpaid the two cent letter rate. Wood, Stubbs, & Co. also provided poultry feed. Note the printed logo touting feed that could produce a hen capable of laying 200 eggs per year.



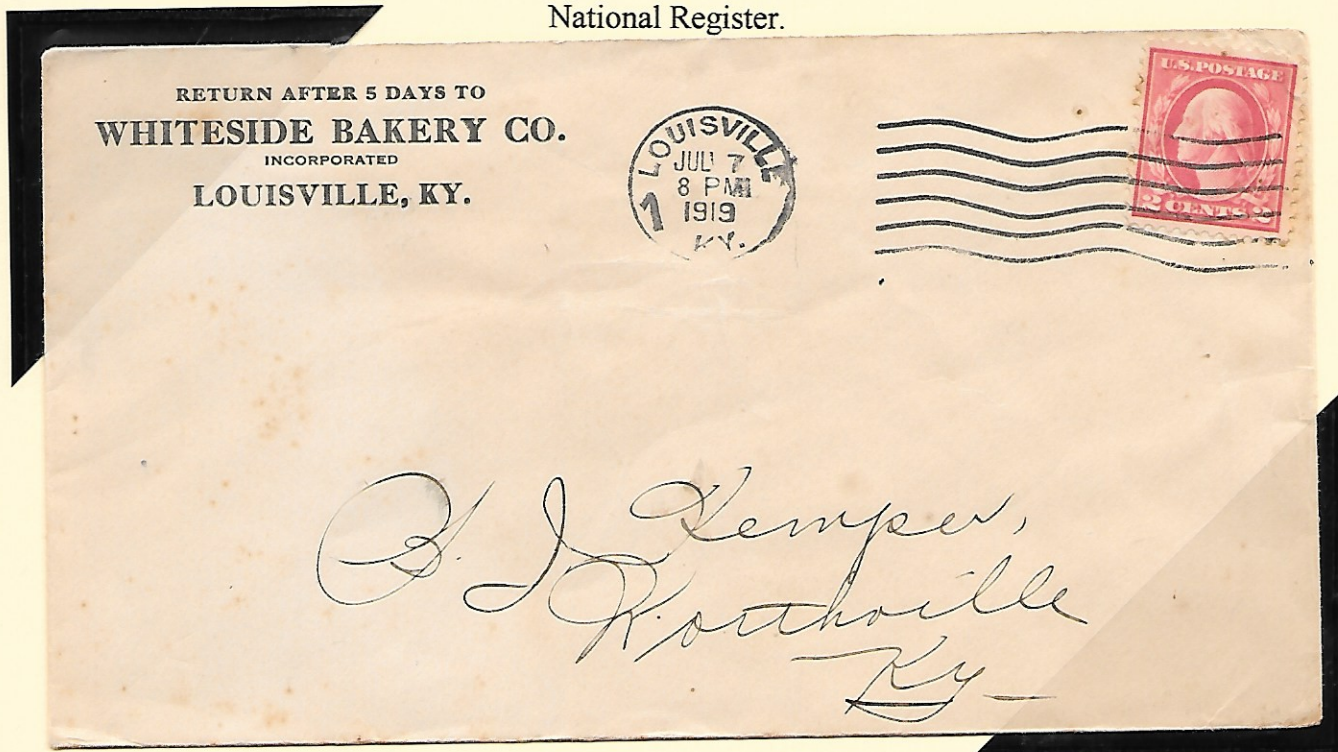
Hardin, Hamilton, & Lewman, Inc.

This cover was mailed a little more than 6 months after the company suffered a disastrous fire at its 217 West Main Street building in April, 1915. After a near total loss of its seed stock, the company moved to new premises at 226-228 West Main Street. One of the company's partners, C. L. Hamilton, later founded the wholesale produce business C. L. Hamilton & Co.



Whiteside Bakery Co.

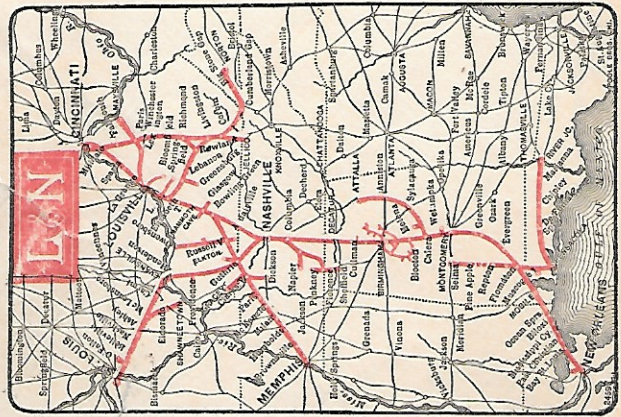
Isaac F. Whiteside began his bakery in Jeffersonville, Indiana, in the early 1900's. In 1908 he moved the company to Louisville, housing it in a large building at 14th and Broadway. The plant was capable of producing 140,000 loaves of bread daily, marketed under the names of Mother's Bread and Betsy Ross Bread. With its Spanish and Mediterranean styles the Whiteside Bakery Company building is on the National Register.



**Louisville & Nashville
Railroad Co. (L&N)**

The Louisville & Nashville Railroad was founded in Jefferson County in March of 1850. It served as a powerful engine for Louisville's economic growth with its extensive rolling stock of passenger express cars and freight cars. The L&N's greatest period of expansion came after the Civil War. It acquired and reconstructed war-ravaged rail lines in Tennessee and Alabama. This expansion allowed the railroad to reach the Gulf Coast. In 1870 the L&N completed the first railroad bridge to cross the Ohio River at Louisville. This gave Louisville rail access to the Midwest and Northeast. Later in the 19th century and continuing into the 20th the L&N extending its markets into eastern Kentucky, providing for Kentucky coal to reach markets more easily. The L&N merged in 1983 with the Seaboard Coast Line and ceased to exist as a separate corporation.

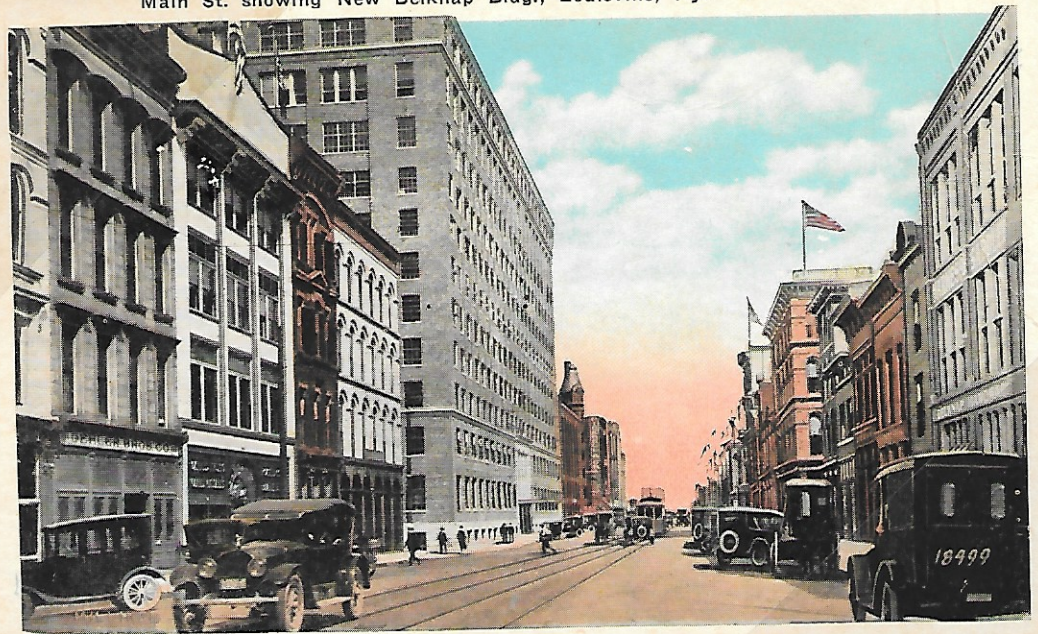
AFTER 10 DAYS, RETURN TO
LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD CO.
OFFICE OF THE GEN'L. PASSENGER AGENT,
LOUISVILLE, KY.



M. W. Sullivan
of Journal
Middleton

W. B. Belknap & Co.

Belknap was founded by Massachusetts-born William Burke Belknap. At its most productive the Belknap Hardware Company manufactured 90,000 different items from church bells to revolvers. Its catalog rivalled the catalogs of Sears, Roebuck and Company and Montgomery Ward. After encountering the same marketing difficulties of these rivals, Belknap closed in 1986. Today its former headquarters address at 101 East Main Street is occupied by Humana Corporation.



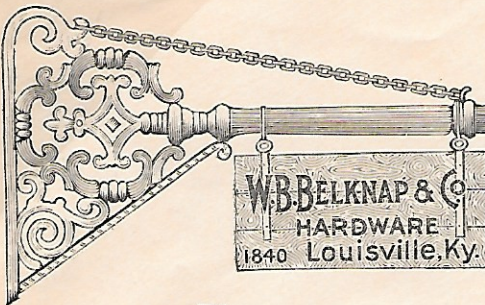
W. B. BELKNAP & CO.
IRON AND METALS.

113 and 115 W. Main Street, LOUISVILLE, KY.

all when this can go *Oct 6* 1874
 Dear Sir

Your favor of _____ has been received with
Don't delay Springs - (1/2 + under with holes)
we have orders ahead for 1/2 + 5.
Send 7/32 Steel Shovel plates first shipment.
If Moorhead & Co. are ready ship with
them - by Tuesday - 10/8
 Yours truly
 W B Belknap

Return if not delivered in 5 days.



LOUISVILLE,
 KY
 NOV 23 1 - PM '98



Pack Store & Warehouse Co.

Southington

Ohio

Nachod Signal Company

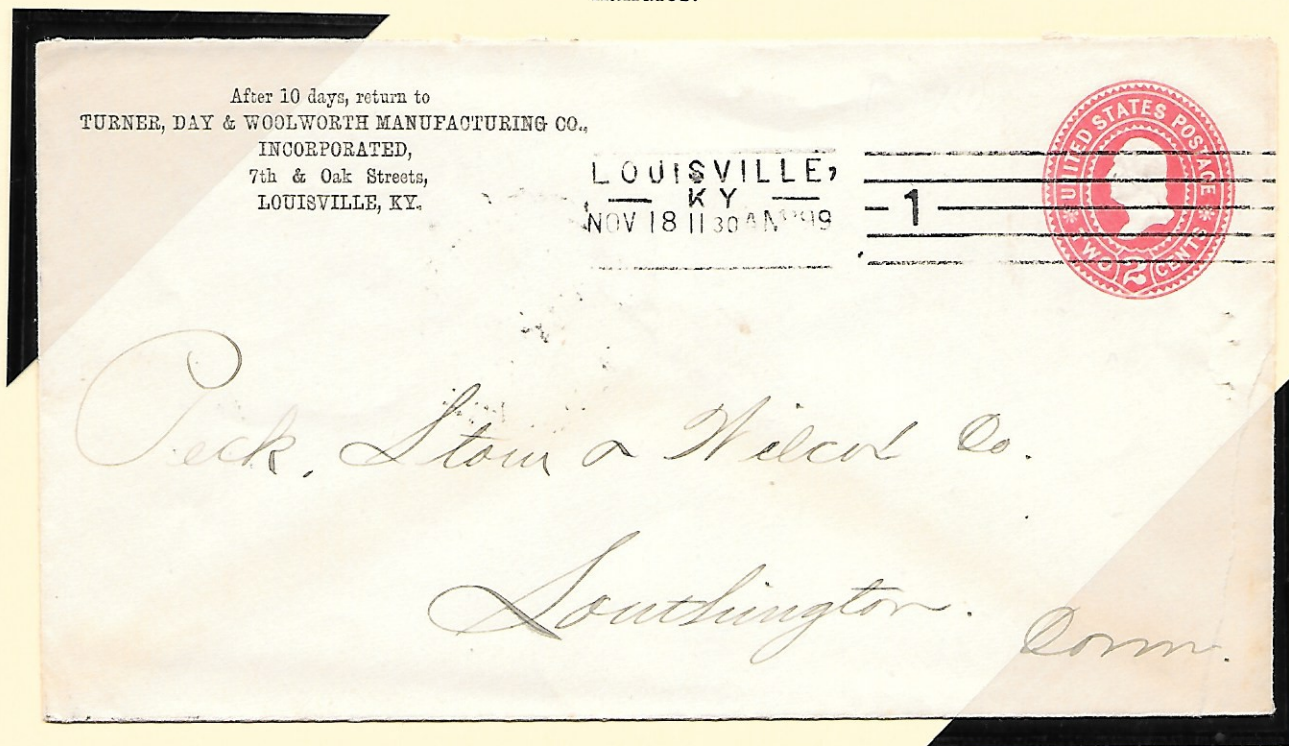
“Nachod Spells Safety” was the slogan of the Nachod Automatic Signal System. This system, patented in 1906 by Carl P. Nachod, was used by electric railways and trolleys throughout the United States. The system’s operation was controlled by the car itself and proved to be much safer than manual signal systems.



Turner, Day & Woolworth Manufacturing Co.

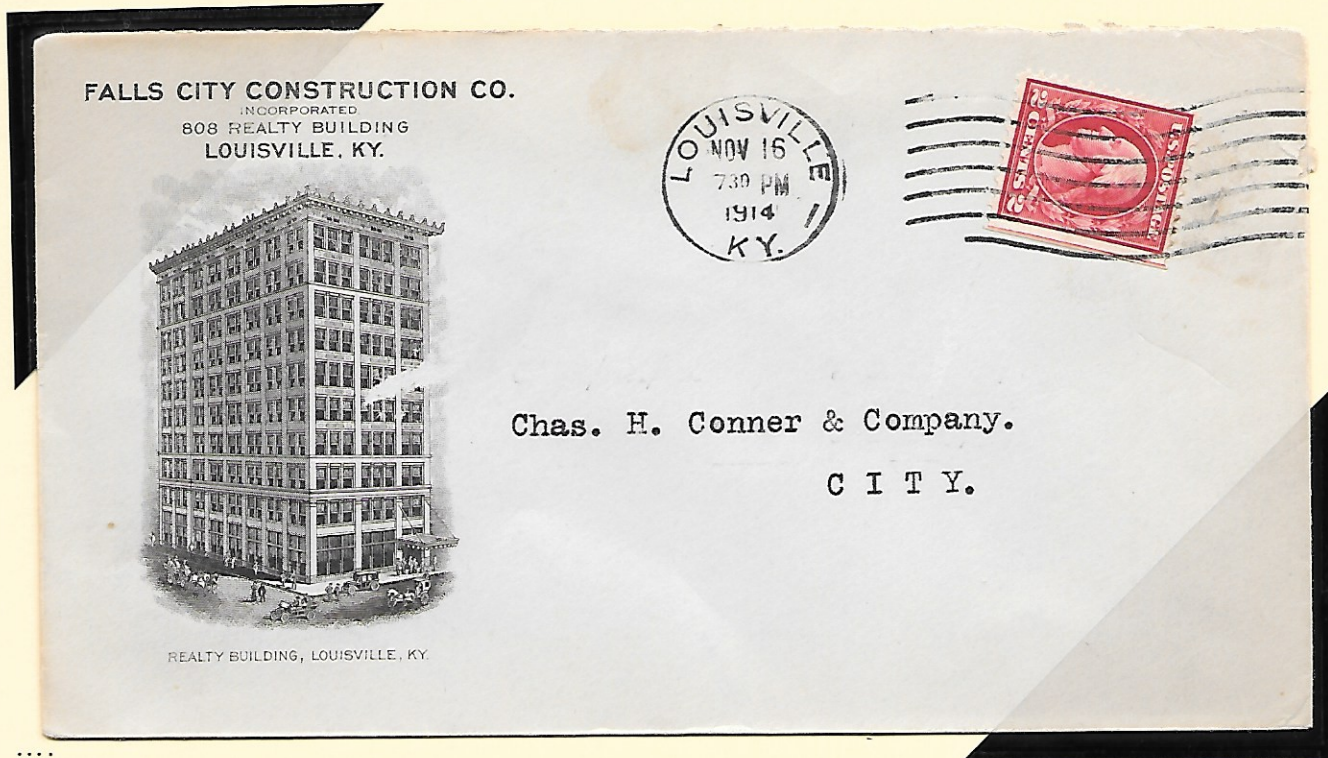
In 1884 James Woolworth, maker of hickory ax handles, merged with the Turner, Day Company, becoming the largest manufacturer of “hickory striking tool handles.” Their slogan became “We Handle the World.”

Turner, Day & Woolworth was sold to Seymour Manufacturing in 2004 and still produces hickory ax handles.



Falls City Construction Co.

Based in Louisville and active in the early 20th century, Falls City Construction Company became noted for its elegant county courthouses. Several of its surviving works have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. One example is the Shelby County Courthouse built in 1912. The Realty Building is in the 500 block of West Jefferson Street.



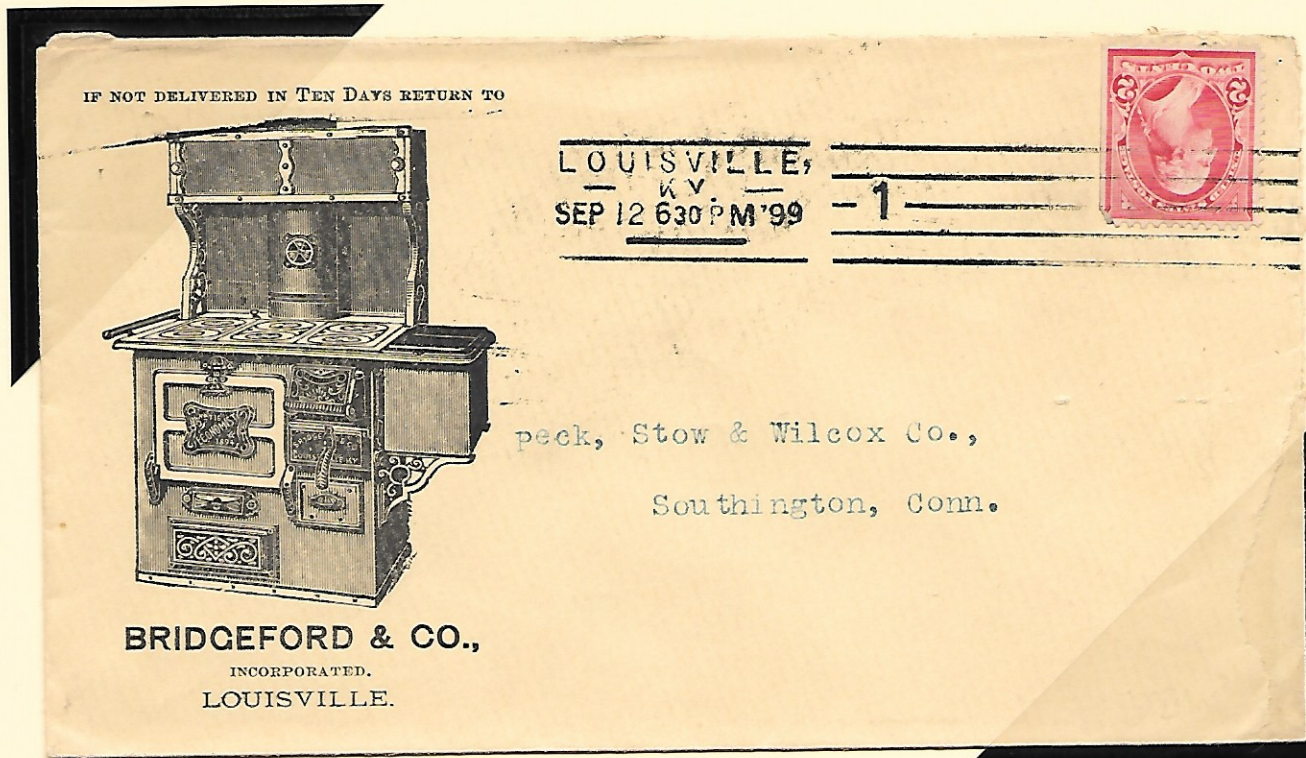
C. C. Mengel & Bro. Co.

Charles C. and Clarence R. Mengel opened their tobacco box and whiskey barrel manufacturing business at Brook and Main Streets. It acquired mahogany concessions in Gold Coast (Ghana) and British Honduras (Belize). During World War I the company produced shell boxes and two of its fleet of ships were sunk by German submarines.



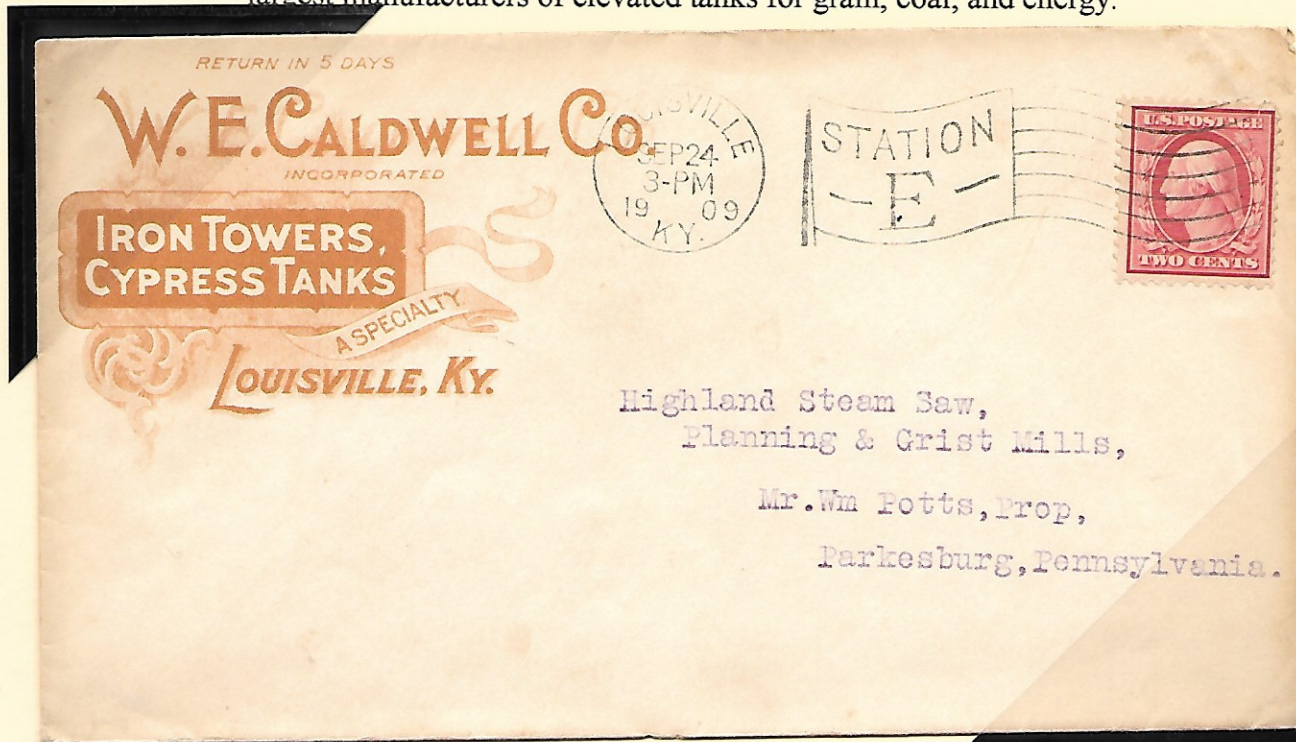
Bridgeford & Co.

Founded in 1829 by James Bridgeford, this Louisville ironworks developed a national reputation under the name of Bridgeford & Co. It produced cast iron stoves, ranges, fireplace furniture, teakettles, and other cookware. Some of its products are sought-after collectibles today. For a time the oldest stove manufacturer in the South, it was bought by Stiglitz Corporation in 1936, which closed the business in 2010.



W. E. Caldwell & Co.

Caldwell Tanks, as it is now known was founded in 1887 by William E. Caldwell. The company built elevated iron and wooden water tanks for railroads and for potable water. The Red Barn Activities Center on the University of Louisville campus is a surviving structure of the company's original factory. Though the Caldwell family sold the company in 1986, its headquarters are still in Louisville and it is one of the world's largest manufacturers of elevated tanks for grain, coal, and energy.



J. G. Dodge & Co.

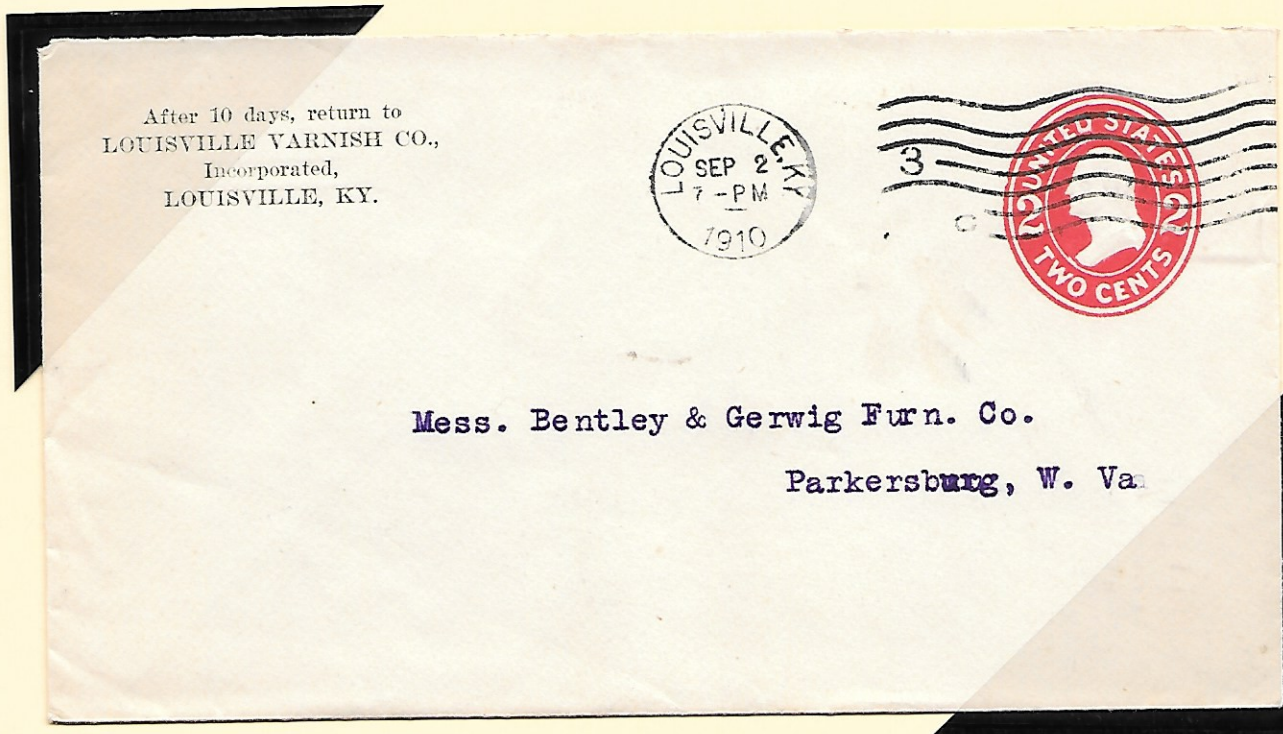
At first glance this cover appears to be an ordinary Civil War era cover franked with a three cent George Washington stamp of 1861. Examination of the reverse, however, shows the embossed company seal of the J.G. Dodge Co. According to the seal the company was the exclusive Louisville agent for Louis's Oilstone Works, Forsyth Scale Works, and Huron stone quarry.



Reverse

Louisville Varnish Company

The Louisville Varnish Company was incorporated December 31, 1894, and initially located on land which later became part of the campus of the University of Louisville. Fixall and Louvarco were two of its trademarks. The Fixall name continues as the Fixall Paint, Varnish, and Enamel Mfgs



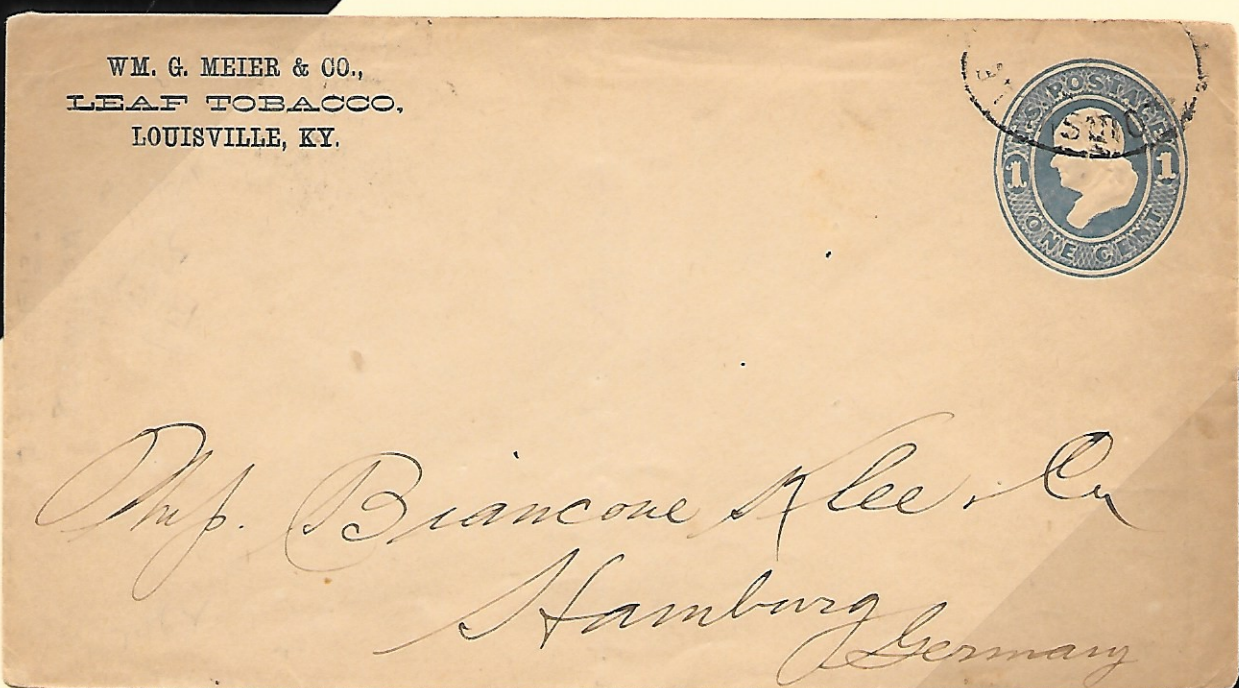
Kremelburg & Co.

This cover from the Louisville office of the New York firm of Kremelburg & Co., a tobacco wholesaler, bears an oval Louisville, Ky cancel with the numeral 4. There is a Rotterdam receiving mark on the reverse. The 1-cent printed envelope was first issued in 1887 and remained in use until 1894.



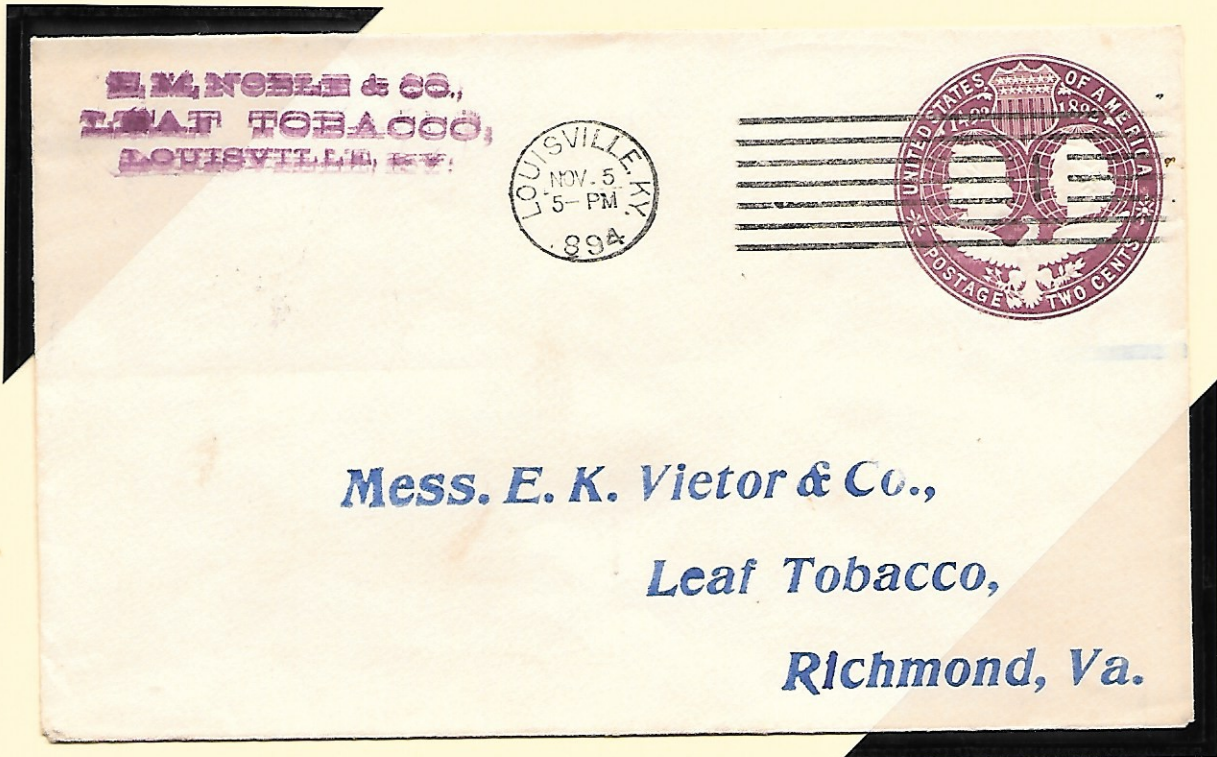
WM. G. Meier & Co.

The importance of the tobacco trade to Louisville is evidenced by a number of tobacco companies. This cover and the Kremelburg cover above show the international character of the tobacco industry. The 1-cent printed envelope was issued from 1874 to 1876.



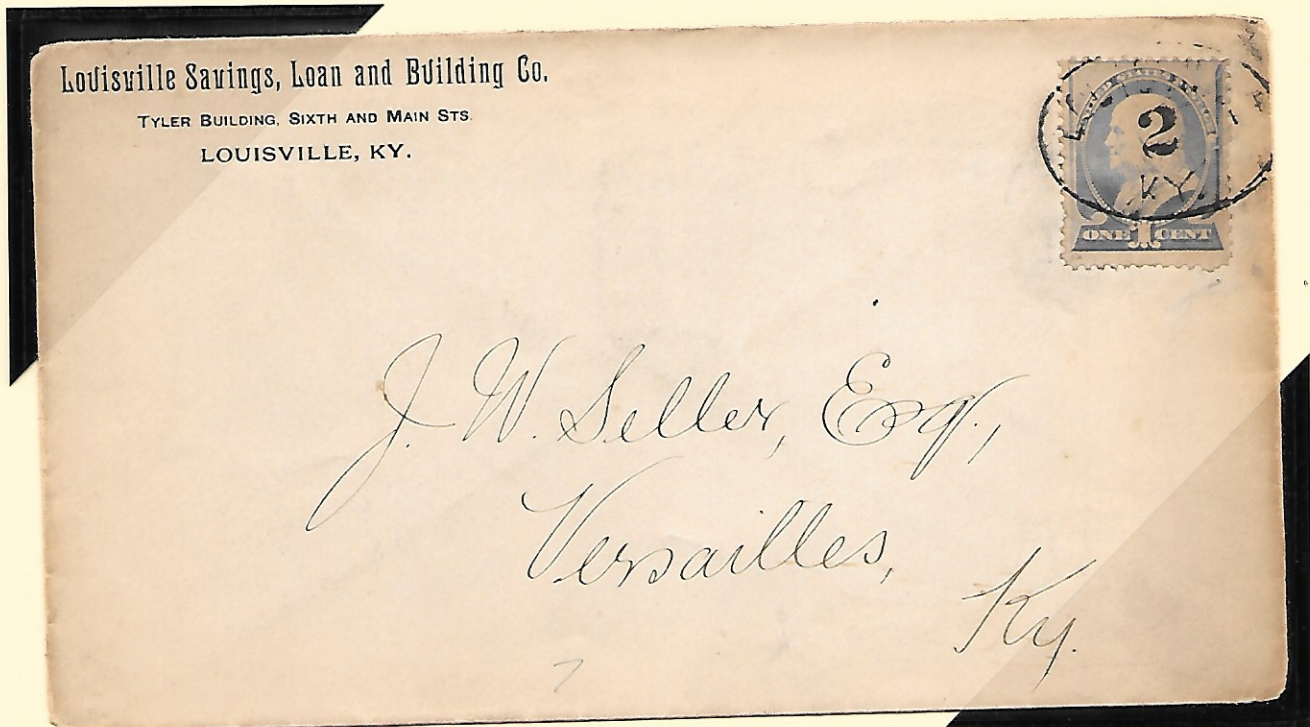
E. M. Noble & Co

A set of four embossed envelopes was issued for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Here is a very nice commercial use of the 2 cent value. E. M. Noble & Co. was an importer of dry goods.



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Louisville Savings, Loan and Building Co.

The 1887 1 cent Franklin stamp is canceled with an oval Louisville numeral.



New York Life Insurance Co

The New York Life Insurance Co. has had a branch office in Louisville since 1848. Until 1918 the company name was hyphenated New-York, as on this 1914 cover. The stamp is perforated with the initials NYL and is called a perfin. Perfins were invented in England and used to prevent employee theft. Once perforated a stamp could not be returned to the Post Office for a refund.

NEW-YORK LIFE INSURANCE CO.

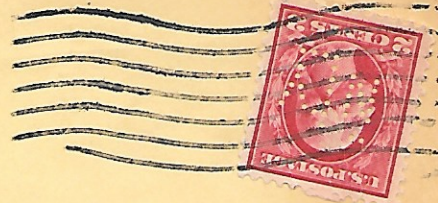
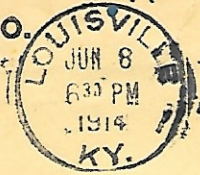
If not delivered in Five days, please return to

LOUISVILLE BRANCH OFFICE

PAUL JONES BUILDING

Cor. 4th & Jefferson Sts.

LOUISVILLE, KY.



Mr. Charles H. Allen,
226 W Main St.,
City.

Paul Jones Building

The Paul Jones Building was built in 1906 by the Jones brothers and named for an uncle. The building was sold to Marion E. Taylor in 1919 and renamed. It was the first piece of Louisville real estate to sell for \$1 million dollars. The building stands at the corner of Fourth and Jefferson streets and is still occupied today.



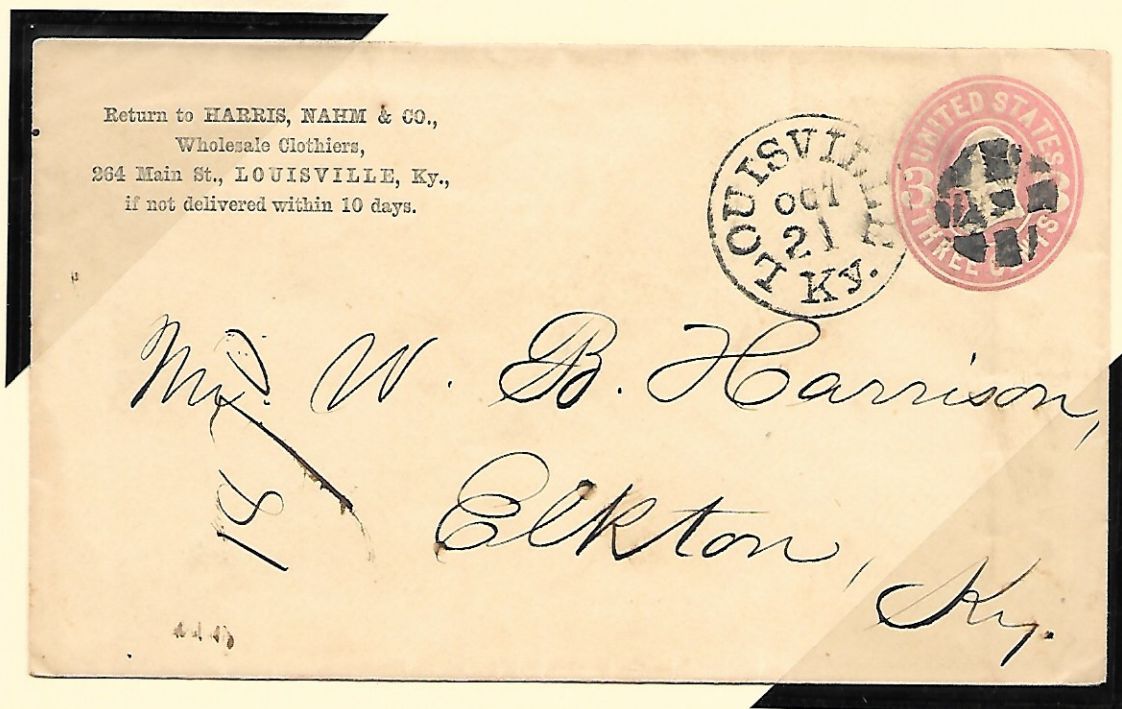
Manual Rosenfeld Fine Shirt Maker

Manual Rosenfeld operated a wholesale and retail men's furnishings and shirt store in Louisville in the 1870's and 1880's. The first record of the store is under the name of Eagle Shirt Store. Rosenfeld sold his store at this address to Kupper and Bernstein in 1883.



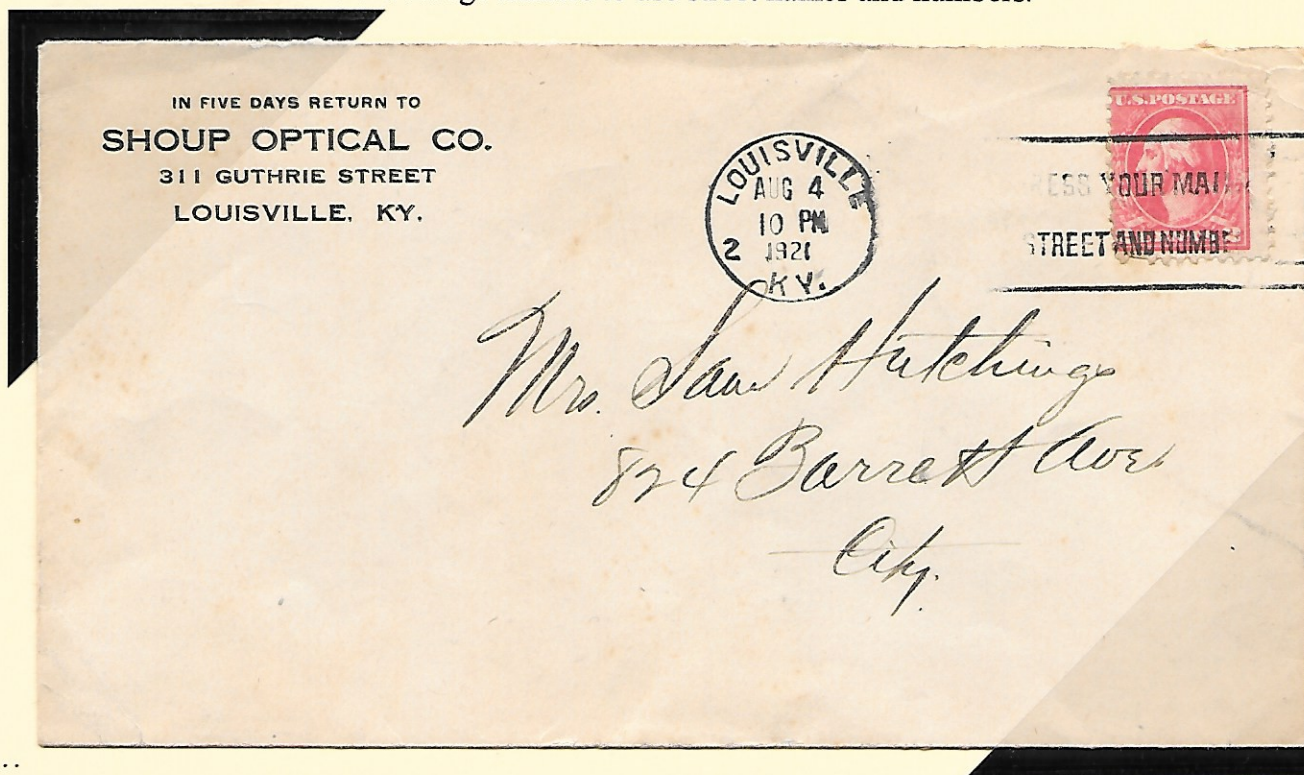
Harris, Nahm & Co. Wholesale Clothiers

Harris, Nahm & Co. apparently formed sometime in the 1860's. The stamped envelope was first issued in 1864-5 and the cancel is from that time period. In 1867 Harris, Nahm announced a partnership with the Foreman Brothers of Chicago and Philadelphia. Their store was at the corner of 5th and Main Streets.



Shoup Optical Co.

Growth of cities and towns meant that postmasters and mail carriers no longer knew everyone in their towns or on their routes. Therefore envelopes addressed with names and towns only were taking longer to be delivered. The slogan cancel on the Shoup Optical cover is one example to the Post Office campaign to encourage mailers to use street names and numbers.



Office Supply Company

Little is known about Office Supply Company. However, the cancel is an early example of a machine cancel. It is not clear what the "3" and the "D" represent but this pairing was in use from 1902 to 1908. Note also the inverted position of the stamp. In non-business use stamp position could convey certain meanings. For example, an inverted stamp meant "write no more."



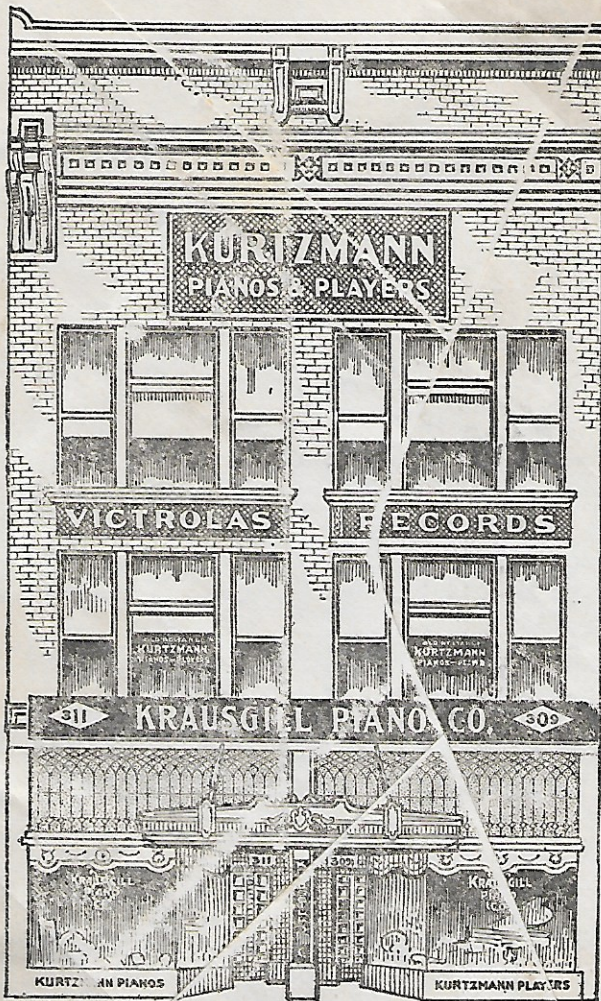
AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO
THE KRAUSGILL PIANO CO.

HIGH GRADE **PIANOS**
PLAYER PIANOS

WAREROOMS: 523-5 W. MARKET ST.
LOUISVILLE, KY.



Mr. Phil T. Allin, Recorder,
321 Equitable Bldg.,
City.



The Krausgill Piano Company

The Krausgill Piano Company was founded in 1912 by Arthur G. Krausgill, shortly before the upper cover was mailed. Krausgill acquired the Steinway franchise in 1921 when Steinway closed its Louisville branch. By 1923 the firm had moved to premises on Walnut Street (Muhammad Ali Boulevard) and expanded its offerings substantially. The reverse of the lower cover shows the Walnut Street store and advertises some of its expanded stock. Arthur G. Krausgill was a member of the Louisville Board of Trade, the Audubon Club, an Elk, a Mason, a Shriner, and of the order of the Eastern Star.

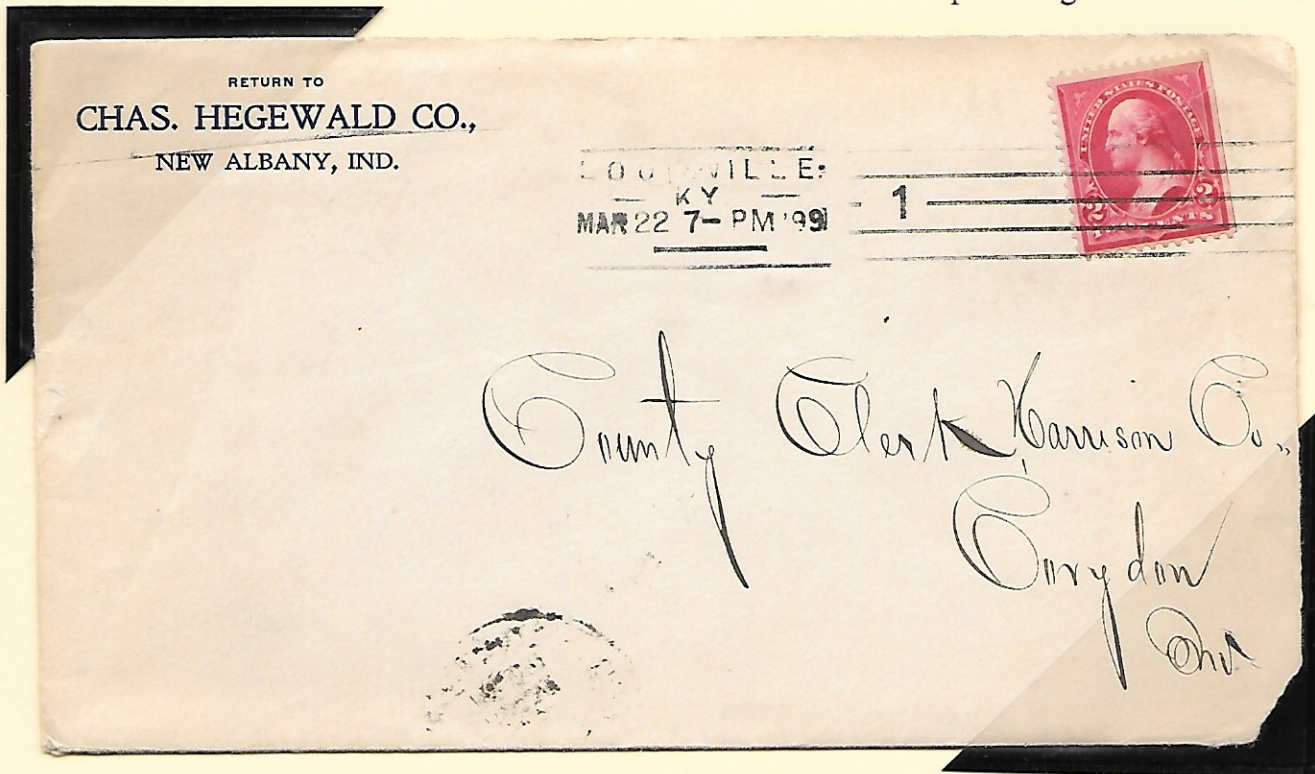
Glazerbrook, Grinstead & Co. Wholesale Grocers

James Grinstead began his career in 1866 at age 21 in the wholesale grocery business. In 1871 he became a full partner of Glazerbrook, Grinstead & Co. In 1907 he was elected as Louisville's first Republican mayor. This cover is Scott U59, issued 1863-4. The enclosed letter indicates a mailing year in the 1870's



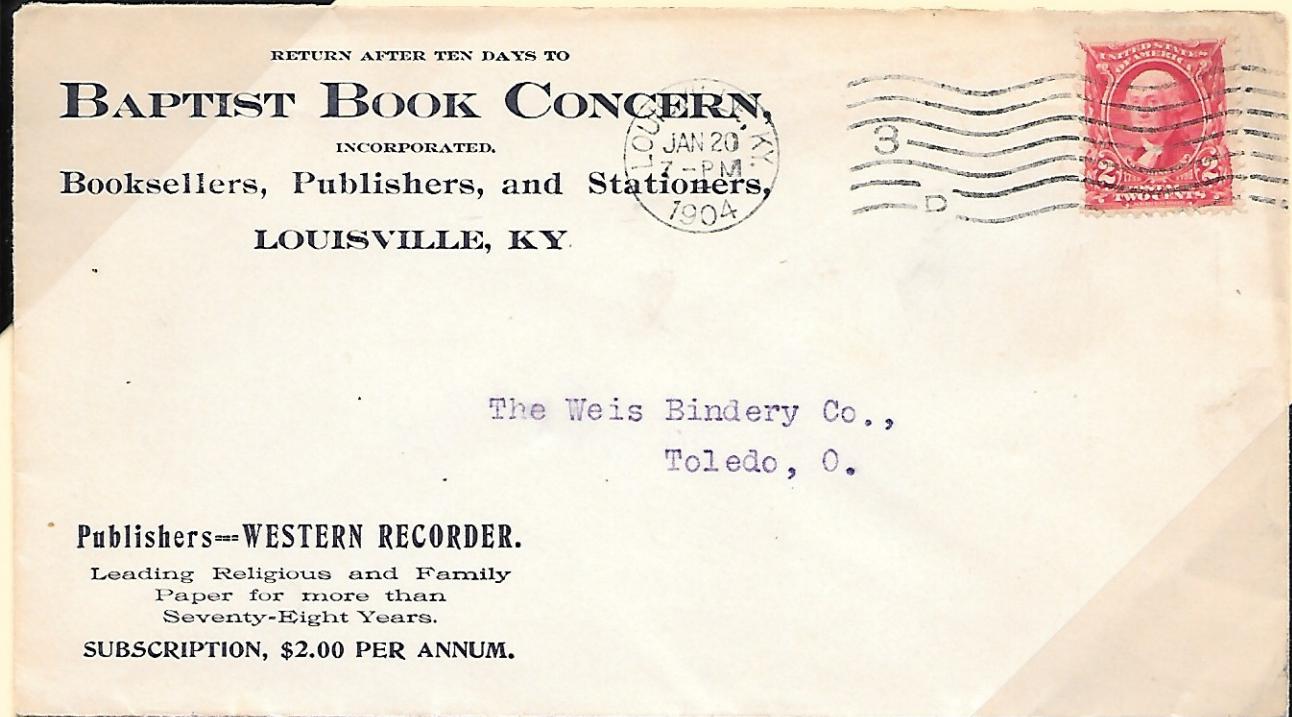
Chas. Hegewald Co.

Charles Hegewald, an immigrant from Saxony began his company in 1873 and incorporated it in 1889. The company manufactured stationary and steamboat mounted steam boilers and machinery, glasswork machinery, brass and iron castings, and smokestacks. Among the nearly 200 boats for which it made machinery was the famed Robert E. Lee and 10 boats for Howard Shipbuilding of Jeffersonville.



Baptist Book Concern

The Baptist Book Concern published books and pamphlets related to the Baptist religion. As noted on the cover it also published the Western Recorder, a weekly newspaper. The Kentucky Baptist Convention acquired the Baptist Book Concern in 1919 and continues to publish the Western Recorder today.



Besten & Langen

This store was first listed in the City Directory for 1905 as Henry Besten and E. O. Langen, ladies tailors, cloaks and furriers. The store moved to to the Fourth Street address in 1920. Here it formed part of the Fourth Shopping district which included Stewart's, Selman's and Kaufman-Straus. Besten and Langen last appeared in the City Directory in 1962

