

POSTCARDS

— from —

Historic Frankfort
KENTUCKY

by Russ Hatter and Gene Burch
Foreword by Carl Howell





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Bib.

Item.....

Barcode.....

Call no.

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Date

POSTCARDS

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Historic Frankfort K E N T U C K Y

By Russ Hatter and Gene Burch

Foreword by Carl Howell

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FIRST EDITION

ISBN: 978-1-4951-6484-2

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Manufactured in China

This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Charles Carpenter.

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INTRODUCTION

A postcard is a rectangular piece of thick paper to write on and mail without an envelope. Postcards came about because the public looked for an easier and quicker way to send a communication rather than through regular postal channels. There is a distinction between postcards that require a stamp and postal cards that have the postage pre-printed on them.

The collecting and study of postcards is called deltiology. It was coined from the ancient Greek word *deltion*, a derivation of *deltos*, meaning “writing tablet” or “letter.” It is the third largest collectible hobby in the world, behind coin and stamp collecting.

Postcards have portrayed almost every subject imaginable. Most collectors are interested in the picture side, or the front of the card. Billions of cards have been produced and mailed since the creation of postcards in the 1800s. The earliest known postcard dates back to 1840 in London, England. John P. Charlton of Philadelphia produced the first commercial post card in 1861. He patented his postcard, selling the rights to Hymen Lipman who labeled his cards “Lipman’s postal card.” There were no images on these cards.

The first known postcard with an image on one side was created in France in 1870. The first card to function as a souvenir was sent from Vienna in 1871. Postcards used for advertising businesses or events came about in 1872 in Britain and 1874 in Germany. The Heligoland postcard of 1889 is considered the first multi-colored card ever printed. But it was images of the Eiffel Tower in 1889 and 1890 that really brought on the popularity of postcards.

Here in America Morgan Envelope Factory in Springfield, Massachusetts developed our first traditional postcards. The first pre-stamped postcards came out in 1873 when John Cresswell, U. S. Post Master, produced his “penny postcards.”

The first souvenir postcard in America came out in 1893 to promote the

World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Postcards featuring buildings were distributed during the fair. These were illustrations on government-printed postcards and on privately printed souvenir cards. The government cards included a printed one-cent stamp while the privately printed cards required an attached two-cent adhesive stamp.



The World’s Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World’s Fair, was held to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the New World in 1492. Over 27 million people attended the event in 1892 and 1893. This card was sent to “Miss Jessie Cox,” a noted local young artist who studied under the famed Paul Sawyer. She had a long teaching career in the Art Department at Frankfort High School. This is a very rare card and one of a set of 12 official 1893 Chicago World’s Fair postcards that include the one-cent postage on the reverse side.

The only establishment allowed to print postcards was the United States Post Office. That changed in 1898 when Congress passed the Private Mailing Card Act allowing private printers and publishers to make postcards. Postcards at that time were not allowed to have a divided back and correspondents could only write on the front of the card. They called this the “undivided back” era of postcards. Printed on the back of the card was “Private Mailing Card” along with a statement signifying that the card was authorized by the Act of Congress of May 19, 1898.

The United States Post Office in 1901 issued an order which allowed the words “post card” instead of “postal mailing card,” but messages were still not allowed on the back of cards. It wasn’t until 1907 that private citizens were given permission by the Post Office to write on the address side of the card with messages on the left side and addresses on the right side, ushering in the “divided back,” and began the Golden Age

for American postcards. During this time the blank space on the front of post cards, previously used for messages, disappeared.

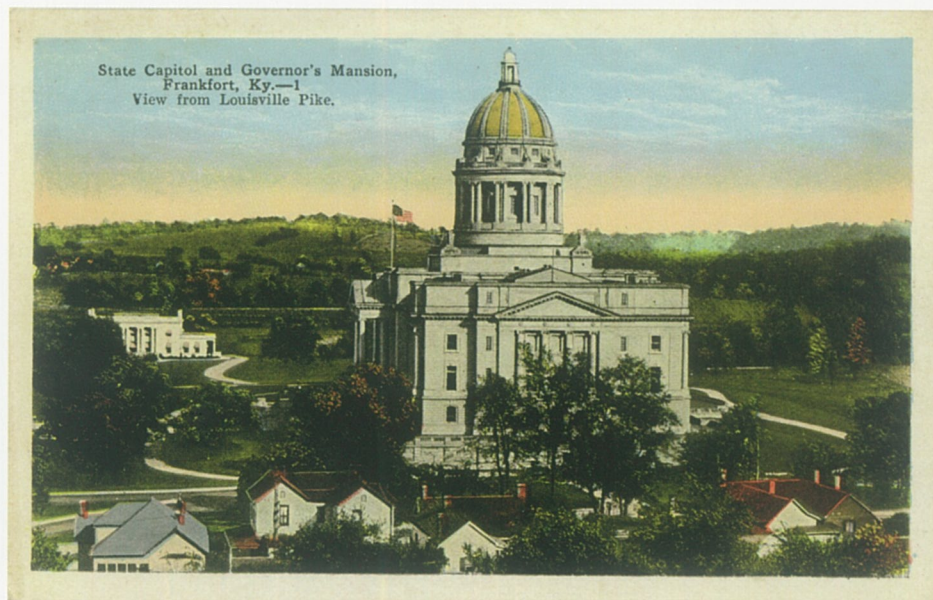
In 1908, nearly 700 million postcards were mailed. Due to the aggression of Germany bringing on World War I, the Germans were no longer able to produce their cards for sale in America, so printers in the United States began to pick up the slack. The “white border” era of the postcard lasted from 1916 to 1930. Printers saved ink by not printing to the edge of the card, leaving a

white border around the image. This was also the time when postcard pictures were described in detail on the reverse side.

Hand-tinted postcards were photo postcards with various topics that were colored by hand, giving them a realistic look of color. The process was very labor intensive and even unhealthy. Mostly women artists sat in rows while the postcards were passed down assembly-line style. Each woman was responsible for a specific color. The cards were small and the artwork detailed. Women would wet the tip of their brush with their lips as they worked. Soon the lead in the paint took its toll as the women became sick. The hand-tinted postcard process didn't last very long. The first section of this book begins with the Kraemer Art Company of Cincinnati and features their beautiful hand-painted postcards.

Because new printing processes were developed, postcards could be printed with a high rag content which made them look like they were printed on linen or cloth. Bright colors were identifiable of this era from 1930 to 1944. During World War II postcard production waned due to lack of supplies.

The "chrome" era started about 1939 and has lasted right up to the present. They began dominating the market around 1950. The pictures on these cards are based on colored photographs featuring a glossy appearance given by the coating of the paper. Photochromes are not real photos – they are actually printed cards done by a photochrome process. You can tell the difference between a real photo postcard and a printed postcard by examining it with a magnifying glass. According to Smithsonian Institution Archives "the best printed cards produced were done by the photogravure process. They are difficult to discern from real photos but usually don't have the glossy finish of photographs."



The "white border" era was popular from about 1916 to 1930.

The greeting card is almost as basic as the view card. Birthdays, Easter, Christmas and other holidays and special events are fairly common. There are also historical cards that commemorate wars, parades, social problems, politics, and expositions. There were dozens of Frankfort disaster postcards commemorating the flood of 1937. Cards have been printed on everything

from metal, wood, leather, plastic, to fine silk. Some cards will make you laugh and others are designed to make you cry.

The Capital City Museum houses a huge collection of historic postcards from local collectors such as Charles Carpenter, Bill Feldman, Ron Moore, Cam Nickell, Bill Rodgers, and others who have donated postcards. These images present a unique and often forgotten moment in Frankfort's past.

The sources for this introduction were compiled from the Wikipedia online encyclopedia, the Postcard Traders Association, the Smithsonian Institution Archives, and A Short History of the Post

Card in the United States, compiled by Mr. John H. McClintock.

We are also pleased to offer a foreword to this book by foremost postcard collector Carl Howell, a native of Hodgenville, Kentucky. He graduated from Larue County High School in 1959, attended Campbellsville College, and is a 1963 graduate of Georgetown College. He also attended the University of Kentucky Law School in the early 1960s and practiced law in Larue County. He worked as a special agent for the FBI in the late 1960s. Mr. Howell started collecting postcards while a high school student and is a regular contributor to the Kentucky Explorer magazine, featuring postcards from his vast collection.

FOREWORD

Welcome to a panorama of beautiful picture postcards that were created during a nostalgic and bygone era in our Commonwealth's history. The first chapter of the book you are holding showcases the Kraemer Art Company's Franklin County images that were created during the Golden Age of postcards (1905-1915). The experience of examining individually these stunning 3.5" x 5.5" colorized views in the numerical sequence that Albert Kraemer identified and labeled them is, for me, a special treat. It is akin to seeing all of artist Paul Sawyer's Franklin County paintings in the precise order in which he painted them.

The colorization process by which black and white negatives were transformed into miniature works of art, as I often describe these vintage postcards, has always fascinated me. Instead of being paintings that give the appearance of photographs, these images are actually photographs that give the impression, at least to many unknowing viewers, of being paintings. The pastel colors which often were not as true to the actual colors of a landscape, somehow gave the subjects an embellished appearance. Although unintended, the results were often more appealing, as flaws, cracks, and other imperfections were covered and the pictures actually became more visually attractive.

This book brings to life a new dimension in the already rich history of Frankfort and Franklin County – not only by these rare postcard images but also by the well-researched captions that are prevalent throughout.

Buildings, landmarks, architecture, and institutions that no longer exist, that would otherwise have been lost to future generations, are now on display for the first time.

Rare glimpses of distilleries, waterways, schools, churches, vistas, and downtown street scenes make this book a "must-see" for present-day residents of the area.

Authors Russ Hatter and Gene Burch take us on a fascinating journey back to the early 1900s that enables us to experience the tranquil beauty and charm of this era in a way that words alone cannot. The array of subjects and scenes in this visual history is sure to delight readers, both young and old.

Carl Howell
Hodgenville, Kentucky

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Books don't just happen. While an author's name appears on the cover, there are always other people involved with the final product. The idea for this book originated with the donation of seven albums of Frankfort postcards by the late Charles Carpenter. Mr. Carpenter was quite familiar with the Capital City Museum and shared specific postcards for several previous Frankfort Heritage Press publications. Without Carpenter's massive collection, this book would not exist. We started working on the book in late 2013 but other projects delayed the publication until now. Sadly, during that interval, Mr. Carpenter passed away before the book was completed.

As with most of our books we have prospered by the talents, skills, and advice of Bob Lanham of Lanham Media Service. Anna Bernard was also helpful with our design layout. We also wish to thank Cam Nickell, Mary Ann Burch, Bonnie Cress, and Nicky Hughes who, by reading and critiquing, have greatly enhanced this book. We hugely benefited from the encouragement and direction of Carl Howell, one of Kentucky's premier postcard collectors, who contributed the foreword to this book.

The postcard captions are the result of many historians, both living and deceased. They are: W. H. Averill, William Donald Coffey, Ermina Jett Darnell, John Mack Faragher, Nettie Glenn, Bayless Hardin, Charles F. Hinds, Willard Rouse Jillson, L. F. Johnson, James Klotter, Carl Kramer, Clay Lancaster, Donald A. Nunnally, Ramona Slattery, Richard Taylor, Alice Elizabeth Trabue, John M. Trowbridge, and the publishers, photographers, and designers of the postcards themselves.

Others who supplied information or postcards include Melony Benassi, Jack Burch, Charles M. Bogart, David Buchta, Sam K. Cecil, Bill Feldman, Frankfort City Directories, Hank Hancock, William Jennings, Erica Kaiser, Sharon Kouns, Sallie Monroe, Ron Moore, Cam Nickell, Bill Rodgers, State Journal, Rebecca Horn Turner, Scot Walters, Eric Whisman, and Chester Zoeller.

The authors take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Russ Hatter, Gene Burch
June, 2015

KRÆMER

HAND-PAINTED POSTCARDS



There were many publishers of early private mailing cards. One organization was in nearby Cincinnati, Ohio. The A. O. and G. A. Kraemer Company published a full catalogue of beautiful, colorized postcards. They can be found in the Library of Congress, in personal collections such as Kentuckian Carl Howell's vast collection, in postcard books such as this one, in the Cincinnati Public Library, and, thanks to Charles Carpenter, at the Capital City Museum in Frankfort, Kentucky. Online sales of Kraemer postcards range in price from fifty cents to \$10.00.

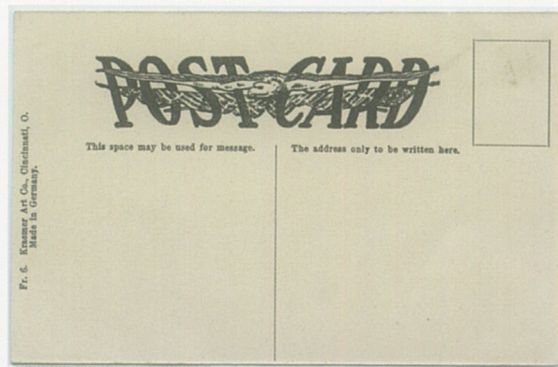
In 1898 the United States Congress opened postcard sales to public venues such as the Kraemer Brothers Company. Look for their fine publications usually labeled "A. O. and G. A. Kraemer Publishers."

The Kraemer brothers, Albert Otto and George A., were born north of Cincinnati in Fairfield County, Ohio, in the small town of Lancaster. They arrived from Germany with their parents in 1883. Ten years later the Kraemer brothers were involved in real estate, sharing a business office at Government Square in downtown Cincinnati.

In 1901 the United States government permitted the words "post card" to be printed on privately mailed postcards. This was the cue for the Kraemer brothers to work independently and the next year they were listed in the Cincinnati City Directory as The Kraemer Art Company.

From 1902 their postcards were registered in the company name rather than by their initials. By 1907 another brother, Gustav, joined the company. The brothers left Government Square for the Cincinnati wholesale district and opened their business at 111 E. Third Street.

By 1910 they were recognized as publishers of souvenir postcards, postcard albums, books, and calendars. In 1912 they were listed as "photogravure manufacturers for the trade, art and reproductions, and post cards." They used sample postcards to promote their services and cataloged over 25,000 varieties from all over the world, featuring the largest variety of postcards in America.



The brothers were not only famous for their view cards but also their souvenir cards promoting Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas and New Year subjects.

When World War I began, it wasn't easy being German in Cincinnati. German books were banned from libraries, German newspapers were forbidden, and even German street names were often replaced.

By 1922 joint-partner, George Schorr, took over the Kraemer Art Company. As the Kraemer brothers died out, Schorr kept the company name until the mid-1950s.

Kraemer cards are found in all the generally accepted postcard eras: Private Mailing Card Era (1898-1901); Undivided Back Era (1901-1907); Divided Back Era (1907-1915); White Border Era (1915-1930); and Linen Era (1930-1945).

Through the years company designs for the words "Postcard" changed in size, placement, and decorated type style. On some undivided back cards, Schorr introduced an eagle with open wings standing on two flags with the words "Kraemer Art Co. Publishers Cincinnati USA-Leipzig." Many of the cards had "Made in Germany" printed on them. Online, the website www.AntiqueTrader.com relates that the "first real logo combined the company name with an artist's palette holding paint brushes through the thumb hole, and the words "Kraemer Art Co." in an arc above the palette and below the words "Cincinnati, Berlin" and "Printed in Germany."



The German reference is found on only some of the cards and can often be seen on a few cards with no logo at all. References to Germany would be removed.

The website shows one detail on these cards that have two or three "n's" in Cincinnati have "tails" or embellishments. The tails were removed on cards of the 1940s and 1950s.

The George Schorr Company and the Kraemer Art Company came to a close in 1957, but the Capital City Museum, amazingly, has a complete collection of the Frankfort-issued Kraemer postcards thanks to the late Charles Carpenter. The following beautiful colorized postcard views have the familiar Kraemer markings, representing the various postcard eras. As you browse through the following pages be sure to note the discrepancies in the artist's stenciled colorizations.

The Kraemer Art Company produced a series of cards on Frankfort and the surrounding area, designated on the reverse side with an "Fr," and the title of the card. The Capital City Museum collection contains all 20 Fr-series cards.

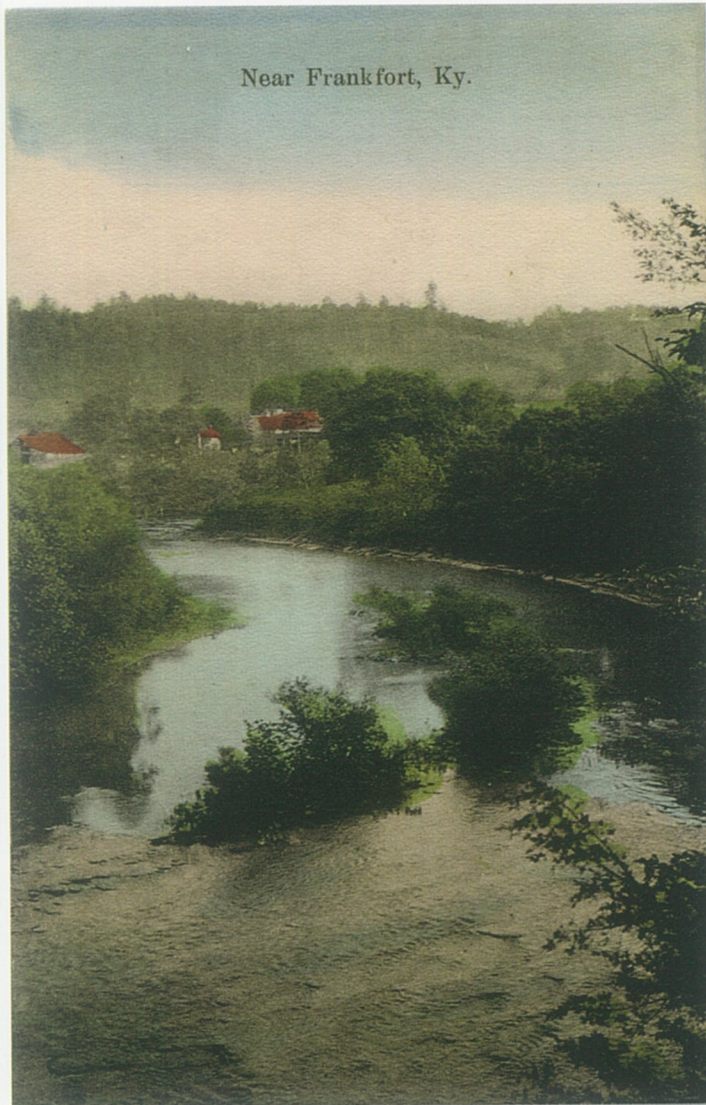


Fr 1- Hemp Breaking, near Frankfort, Ky.

Hemp breaking was the labor intensive process used to separate the woody outer shell of the hemp stalk leaving the long strands of fiber used in the production of rope and cloth.



Fr 2 - Near Frankfort, Ky
A country scene near Frankfort.



Fr 3 - Near Frankfort, Ky

Some postcard-printed views are questionable – just where is this spot “near Frankfort?” Is it on the Kentucky River? Elkhorn Creek? Benson? There is no conclusive evidence but we can still enjoy the placid peacefulness of a place “near Frankfort.”



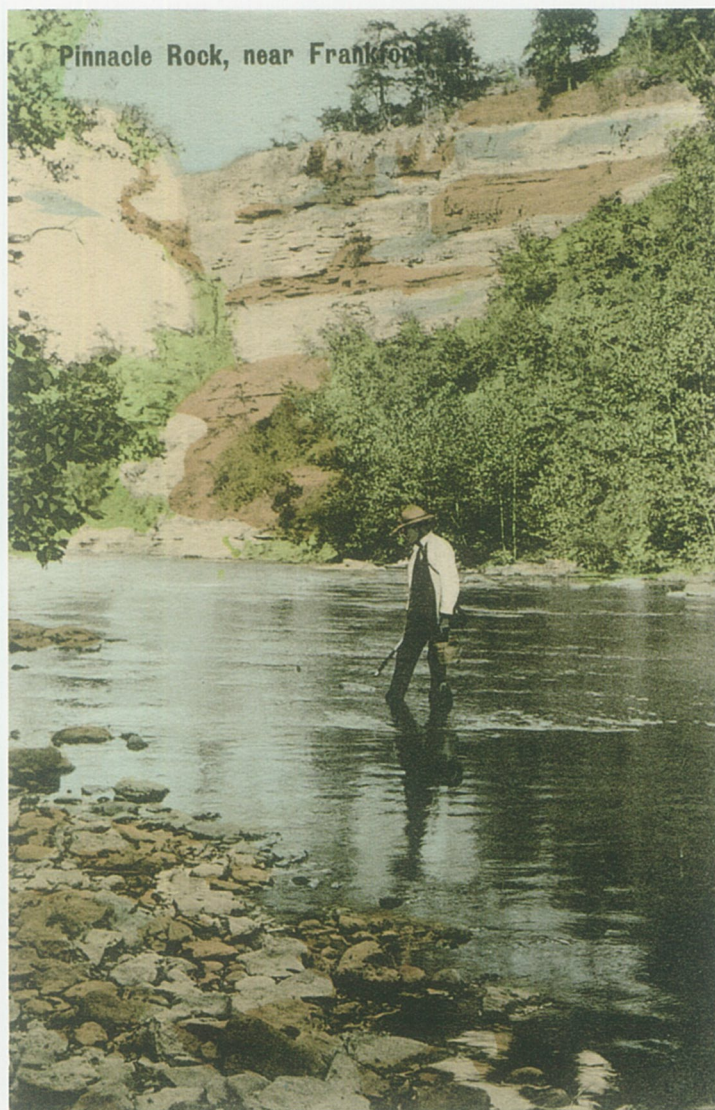
Fr 4 - Up the Kentucky, near Frankfort, Ky.

Traveling “up the Kentucky” early adventurers explored what would become the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1792. Prior to the white man’s intrusions along the river, Native Americans were fishing, swimming, fighting and hunting along the banks of the river.



Fr 5 - Benson Valley, Frankfort, Kentucky

Often referred to as the "Punchbowl," Benson Valley and the creek take their name from Richard Benson who first explored it in 1774 with James Harrod, founder of Harrodsburg, KY.



Fr 6 - Pinnacle Rock, near Frankfort

These two views of Pinnacle Rock on Elkhorn Creek demonstrate how hand-painted cards can be misleading since the ladies painting the cards were in Germany and had no idea how the actual scene appeared. The card on the left, the original F-series card, verified by two different collectors, depicts this scene incorrectly. The card on the right, from the Rodgers Collection, with only a green tint added, shows Pinnacle Rock as it actually appears.



Fr 7 - On Benson, Frankfort, Kentucky

Benson Creek around 1900 - The bridge in the background, still with us today, replaced an earlier 1880 covered bridge and is closed to vehicular traffic. It is now part of the Frankfort Parks and Recreation's River View Park.



Scene on Kentucky River, Frankfort, Ky.

Fr 8 - Scene on Kentucky River, Frankfort, Ky.

Steamboats and barges lazily working their way with white puffs of steam under the 1893 iron bridge at Frankfort. Note how the artist drew in the lines for the bridge.



Fr 9 - Frankfort, Kentucky

One of the favorite views of Frankfort was from the Frankfort Cemetery. This circa 1900 postcard shows a vigorous and active, growing South Frankfort on the left, with new houses and lumberyards. Across the river on the right, we see the sedate and sleepy, but no doubt quite active, downtown Frankfort.



On Bald Knob Road, Frankfort, Kentucky.

Fr 10 - On Bald Knob Road, Frankfort, Kentucky

Rock walls and country homes along the Bald Knob Road, today's north U. S. 421.



From "Old Crow" Distillery, Frankfort, Ky.

Fr 11- From "Old Crow" Distillery, Frankfort, Ky.
This scene shows Old Crow whiskey delivered by wagon,
heading for the Frankfort L & N Depot.



On Buffalo Trace Bridge, Frankfort, Kentucky.

Fr 12 - On Buffalo Trace Bridge, Frankfort, Kentucky.
The trestle was 660 feet long, about 150 feet high, and
cost just under \$26,000 when built in 1889. The bridge
located off Holmes Street was razed in 1987.



Fr 13 - Near Frankfort, Ky.

Early postcards were also a means of recording scenes of yesterdays and olden times in Franklin County.



Fr 14 - Indian Rock Near Frankfort, Kentucky.

Indian Rock on Elkhorn Creek is the legendary slab of granite that was believed to be the site where an Indian, shot by an early pioneer, washed up downstream.



Fr 15 - Elkhorn, near Frankfort, Kentucky.

If you are familiar with the work of Kentucky artist Paul Sawyer, you can easily understand why he used Elkhorn Creek in so many of his paintings.

On the Kentucky near Frankfort, Kentucky.

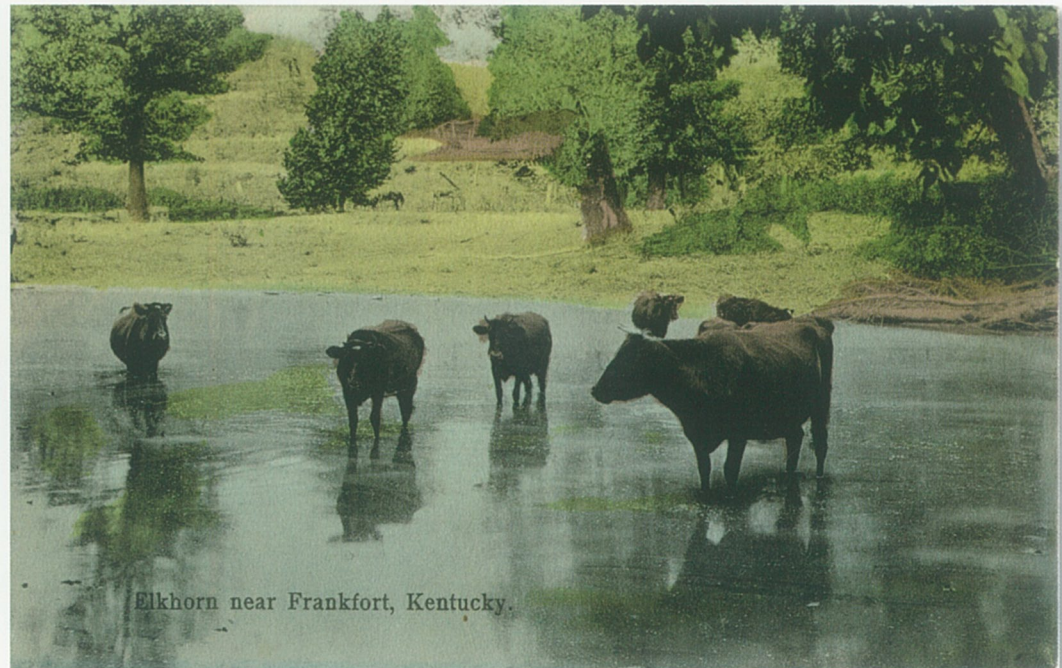


Fr 16 - On the Kentucky near Frankfort, Kentucky.

Kentucky artist, Paul Sawyer, often painted views such as this on the Kentucky River and Elkhorn Creek.

Fr 17 - Elkhorn near Frankfort, Kentucky.

A typical early Franklin County rural scene along Elkhorn Creek, where once were found grist mills, hemp mills, cattle and even buffalo. Today they have been replaced by adventurous people in canoes and kayaks as well as those who enjoy fishing. Note the brown color in the center of the card seems to be smudged.



Elkhorn near Frankfort, Kentucky.



Fr 18 - Elkhorn near Frankfort, Kentucky

Elkhorn Creek enjoyed a national reputation as a superb place for smallmouth bass fishing.

Fr 19 - The "Old Crow" Road Near Frankfort, Ky.

The old road, probably Glenns Creek Road, that wagons used to move barrels of Old Crow whiskey to the railroad depot and beyond.





Fr 20 - Devil's Hollow Bridge, Frankfort, Ky.

The Devil's Hollow Bridge replaced a previous bridge destroyed in 1881. It stood near the intersection of Taylor Avenue and Devil's Hollow Road.