



MUTH'S CANDIES HISTORY WEBSITE

Muth's first candy shop, 533 E. Market St., 1921

## Old Places, New Bridges

America's culture and history are tied to transportation. Without rivers, highways, and bridges, travel would be difficult. Commerce would slow to a trickle.

## Stop and Go...Or Stay

Travel and commerce have always been at the heart of the Falls of the Ohio River region. All river travelers – those passing through and those settling down – must stop at the Falls. These rapids are the only natural obstacle in the Ohio-Mississippi river system.

Human history at the Falls begins with the arrival of Native peoples 10,000 years ago. It continues today within Louisville's many residential and commercial neighborhoods.

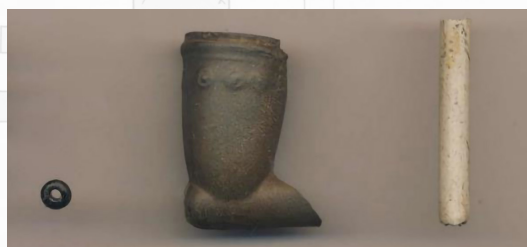
In planning for the new bridges that now span the Ohio River in east Louisville - **the Louisville Bridges Project (LBP)** - the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) worked with archaeologists to document the **Phoenix Hill neighborhood** before bridge construction destroyed it.

Fragments of this historic neighborhood lay beneath urban landscapes and the grassy easements of Interstate 65.

This archaeological work – directed by federal historic preservation and environmental regulations – included conversations with the Kentucky Heritage Council (the State Historic Preservation Office) and other stakeholders and interested parties.

## A Neighborhood Begins

Structure foundations, documentary records, and archaeological artifacts record a dynamic and diverse 19th- and 20th-century history for this section of east Louisville. It was an industrial area in the early 1800s, home to potteries, lumber and flour mills, iron foundries, and a lead factory.



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Black glass bead and clay smoking pipe fragments excavated from residential lots in the neighborhood

By the 1840s, Louisville's prominence as a transportation center was attracting many immigrants. A decade later, a residential neighborhood was developing around the Louisville and Frankfort Railroad depot. Churches and businesses served these new residents. Some wealthy White landowners built homes on their property. Others subdivided their lots, then built commercial buildings and houses.

## For More Information

About other Ohio River Bridges educational materials, visit [www.in.gov/indot/3696.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/3696.htm).



Scan to find out about other **KYTC Archaeology projects**.



Scan to find out about Kentucky archaeological sites at **Discover Kentucky Archaeology**.

**Cover image:** Louisville tailor shop and African American tenement house circa 1909  
REPORT OF THE TENEMENT HOUSE COMMISSION OF LOUISVILLE UNDER THE ORDINANCE OF FEBRUARY 16, 1909 BY JANET E. KEMP

## University of Louisville Photographic Archives

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A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD at the New Louisville Bridges



## Newcomers

Middle-class business owners and poor immigrants, most of whom were Catholics from Ireland, Germany, and Italy, settled here prior to the Civil War.

German immigrant Conrad Luebig operated a successful confectionery and bakery for over 30 years. Anton Pfrunder was a tailor. Unlike most other business owners, he ran his shop from the building he owned and lived in. These newcomers built a Catholic church to minister to their religious needs.

## New Waves of Immigrants

After the Civil War, Eastern Europeans joined the stream of Western Europeans and formerly enslaved Black people flocking to Louisville. Commercial buildings and wealthy landowners' large homes in Phoenix Hill were converted to or replaced with multi-family apartments, tenements, and boarding houses.

Although economic opportunities for most of these newcomers were limited, some established successful businesses and bought property in the neighborhood. The Solinger family, Jews from Poland, operated a stove manufacturer, had a clothing store, and owned grocery stores.

For Black people, life was difficult. They often lived in small houses in alleys and in segregated tenements. African American James Patterson, a coal retailer, rented the building that housed his barbershop and the home he and his family shared with several other families.



Philip Passafiume fruit truck at the Haymarket, 1926

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The early to mid-1900s brought a third wave of immigrants. The Passafiume family were Italians who founded a successful fruit company. The Haddad family from Lebanon established a butcher shop. One son became a well-respected Louisville attorney.

Churches mirrored the neighborhood's changing demographics. The Baptist church established by White congregants during the 1840s became a Black Congregational church in the 1880s. Ten years later, it functioned as a Jewish Synagogue. In the 1920s, it was the home of the Italian-American Club, but a decade later, it served as an Eastern Orthodox Church.



St. Michael's Eastern Orthodox Church, 432 E. Jefferson St., circa 1960

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## Continuing Neighborhood Changes

Despite some families' successes, by the early 1900s the neighborhood had become a "red light" district. Substandard sanitary conditions of the many tenements and overcrowded buildings did not help the area's image.

### Minnie Grant, 410 Jackson Street.

As there are only a limited number of first-class resorts on this street, and as the writer only advertises the strictly first-class resorts, it therefore makes it its duty to devote a space to this popular proprietress. She is not only a clever entertainer but has surrounded herself with six pleasing young ladies that wilt assist her to entertain friends and visitors to the Encampment and races. She has a fine line of Wines and Beer.

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC SOUVENIR SPORTING GUIDE, WENTWORTH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1895

One of two dozen such "entertainment" options in the neighborhood

Decades later, the City of Louisville declared much of Phoenix Hill neighborhood a "slum," attaching this unfair stigma to this community of poor Eastern European immigrants and Black people. The City used this designation to justify taking the neighborhood for urban development, including interstate construction.

## Stewards of Our Past

America's archaeological sites and historic structures, like the ones examined in this east Louisville neighborhood, link us to people and times long ago. They hold our collective stories – stories often not found in history books. To preserve these stories,

we must preserve these fragile reminders of our past and the information they hold.

The **LBP** illustrates how KYTC considers old places even as it builds new bridges. This brochure shares what was learned to ensure that our stories are told and remembered.



Circa 1890s building foundation uncovered during archaeological investigations

Prepared by Jay Stottman (Kentucky Archaeological Survey) for the Living Archaeology Weekend Steering Committee as part of a KYTC grant.



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