

# The Lilac Hinge

Inland Empire Philatelic Society, PO Box 3731, Spokane, WA 99220  
<http://ieps-stamps.com/> APS Affiliate 0343-030681

Meetings: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays (except July & December),  
Spokane Valley Eagles, E. 16801 Sprague

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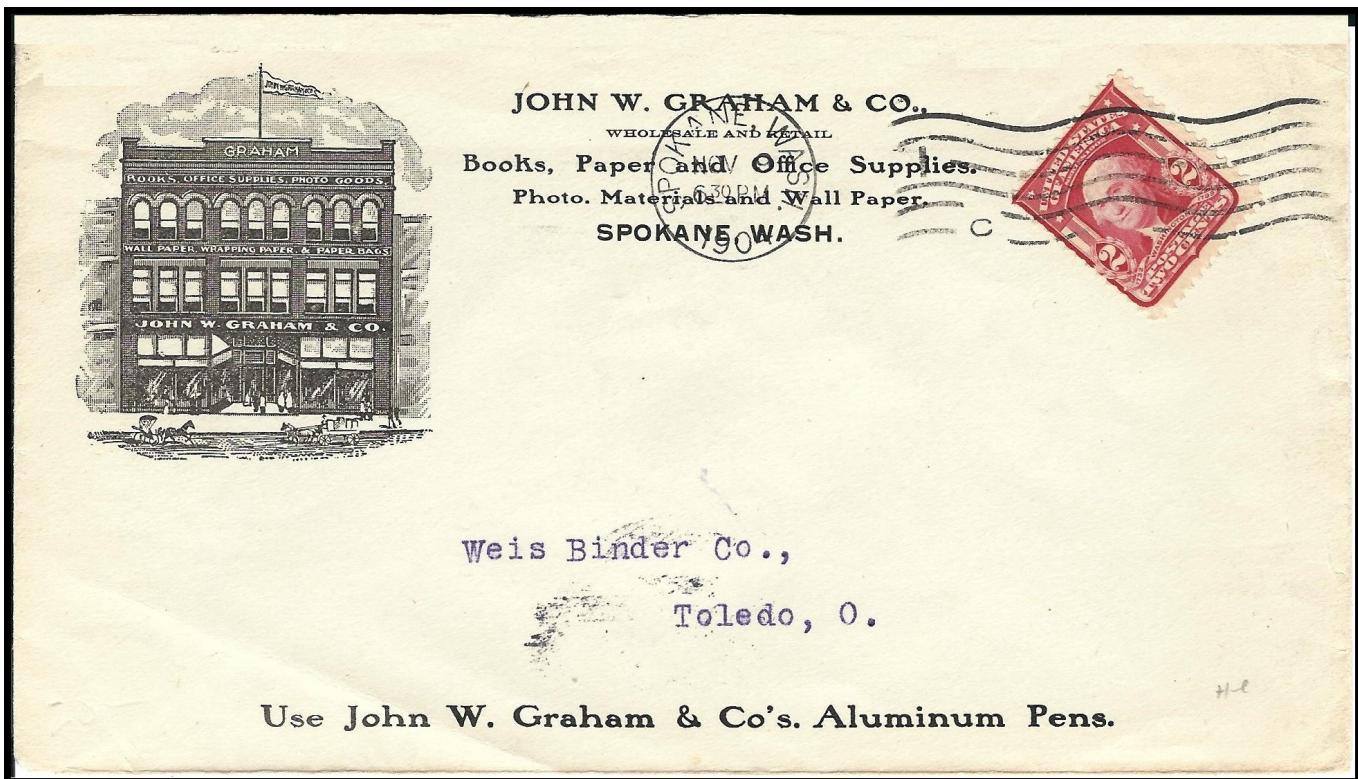


October, 2020

## Cancelled Meetings

The October meeting has been cancelled.

## John W. Graham & Co.



November 9, 1904 cover from John W. Graham & Co. to Toledo, Ohio

The "C" in the International cancel is for mail collected from a mail box.

This November 9, 1904 cover was mailed from John W. Graham, a pioneer Spokane company that sold books, office supplies, maps, wallpaper, pens and ink, maps, and much more. Their advertising slogan was that "If it's made of paper, we have it."

The owner, John W. Graham, was born in Rockport, Indiana in 1860. He arrived in Spokane in 1888 and took a job in a stationery store owned by Sylvester Heath. The store burned in the Great Fire of August 4, 1889. After Heath decided not to rebuild his business, Graham started his own stationery business from a tent on the site of Heath's burned-out

store. Graham soon relocated his business to the Great Eastern Building on the southeast corner of Riverside and Post, one of the new buildings constructed after the Great Fire. This building burned on January 24, 1898, and was rebuilt as the Peyton Building, which still exists.

Graham's business eventually relocated to the 700 block of west Sprague in a building that extended south to First Avenue. The 1904 cover shows a three-story building that was later expanded to two additional floors as shown below in a 1951 photo.

In her book, *Downtown Spokane Images, 1930-1949*, Carolyn Hage Nunemaker described the odd arrangement of the building that included many "strange nooks and crannies:"

Walking toward the back from the Sprague Avenue side, you would find a short narrow stairway. After climbing five or six steps, you would find yourself in a low ceilinged area and at the First Avenue level. Or you could choose to turn and go up an additional bit of stairs to a mezzanine. Because of the odd plan, the elevator had doors that opened to the front and to the back, depending upon the floor. The occasional friendly creak of the floor underfoot simply added to the homey feeling.

Graham died in 1941, and ten years later a group of employees bought the business from Graham's estate.

The business survived at that location until 1973, when the entire block was torn down and replaced by the current Washington Trust Bank building. John W. Graham stayed in business for a few more years in a smaller location at Riverside and Stevens, before disappearing when J.K. Gill Co purchased it in about 1980.

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1951 Spokesman-Review photo of the John W. Graham building

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*Mike, Kathy and Jon McLean*

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