

ELGIN MILLS CO. LTD., CAWNPORE

Led the Industrial Resurrection Post Sepoy Mutiny

Introduction
Cawnpore witnessed the horrifying battle and massacres during the sepoy mutiny of 1857. The Administration, communication and trade in the region were disturbed until 1859. Elgin Mills were the first commercial setup to have been provisioned post mutiny. It gave the necessary push to re-establish trade and commerce in the region.

Purpose
This exhibit showcases the importance of Elgin Mills, its history and products. The exhibit also tells about the global reach of its trade and the brand value of the organization.

Scope & Importance
This exhibit illustrates the story of Elgin Mills using postal items and ephemera of the British India Period. Elgin Mills were the first Cotton Mill that established Cawnpore as an industrial hub of North India

Location

Elgin Mill company was setup on the banks of River Ganges, between the old Cawnpore and the cantonment. It was located next to the military hospital. A railway siding was also planned for quick rail transportation.

Cawnpore-The Chosen One

Cawnpore was already a trading center for Cotton. Raw cotton from Agra and Budekhund was transported and traded at Cawnpore and forwarded to Calcutta for export to England

Railways had already reached Cawnpore in 1859 and river Ganges provided the needed water supply.

In 1860, Cawnpore Cotton Committee was formed by Fredrick Buisit, the station master of EIR. Buisit suggest of setting up a mills leveraging the abundant supply of cotton locally, instead of sending it to Calcutta.

Letterhead of The Elgin Mills Co. Ltd., 1936



Plan of Exhibit

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Setting Up Elgin Mills | 5. Managing Agents | 9. Elgin Mills Post Office |
| 2. Change of Guards | 6. Elgin: The Global Brand | 10. Value Payable Post |
| 3. If its Elgin Its Good | 7. World War I | 11. Indian Independence |
| 4. Manchester of the East | 8. Elgin Products | 12. Closure of Elgin |

References

- Yalland, Zee. Bowwallahs: The British in Cawnpore, 1857-1901. M Russel Publications, 1994
- Yalland, Zee. Traders and Nabobs The British in Cawnpore 1765-1857. M Russel Publications, 1987
- Mehra, SP. Manchester of the East, The Rise and Fall of Industry in Kanpur, Bloomsbury Publications, 2020.
- Nevel HR, 1909, Cawnpore A Gazetteer, Government Press, Allahabad.
- Cooper Allen & Company, 1946, Footprints in the Sands of Time, Cooper Allen Publishing, Cawnpore



The Brand Logo

SETTING UP ELGIN MILLS

The Elgin Cotton Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. was incorporated in 1861 and commenced work in 1864, the initial capital being 3 lakhs of rupees. Named after James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, the Viceroy of India during 1862-63. Platt Brothers, B. Hicks & Sons and Doyle & Co. were given contracts for machinery procurement and construction.



4 Anna QV postcard with privately printed as

ELGIN: ADVERTISING SLOGAN

Elgin's advertising slogan proudly assured high quality
If it's ELGIN It's Good



4 Anna Meter franked Mill stationery envelope to Kurwai State, Central India

CHANGE OF GUARDS

The contractors could not set up the mill in time. In 1870, petition was filed to wind up the company. Hugh Maxwell took over the enterprise and appointed Gavin Jones as the Mill Manager



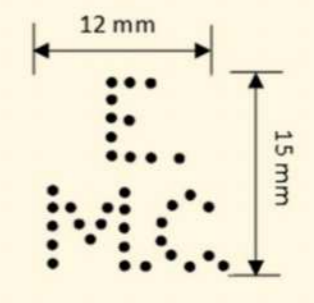
From The Elgin Mills Company CAWNPORE.

Above: Pictorial formula post-card from Elgin bearing image of the gate of Elgin Mills.

Below: Top part of reverse of the postcard



Grill Type Cancellation of Elgin Mill Post Office



36 pin hole Perforation of Elgin Mills

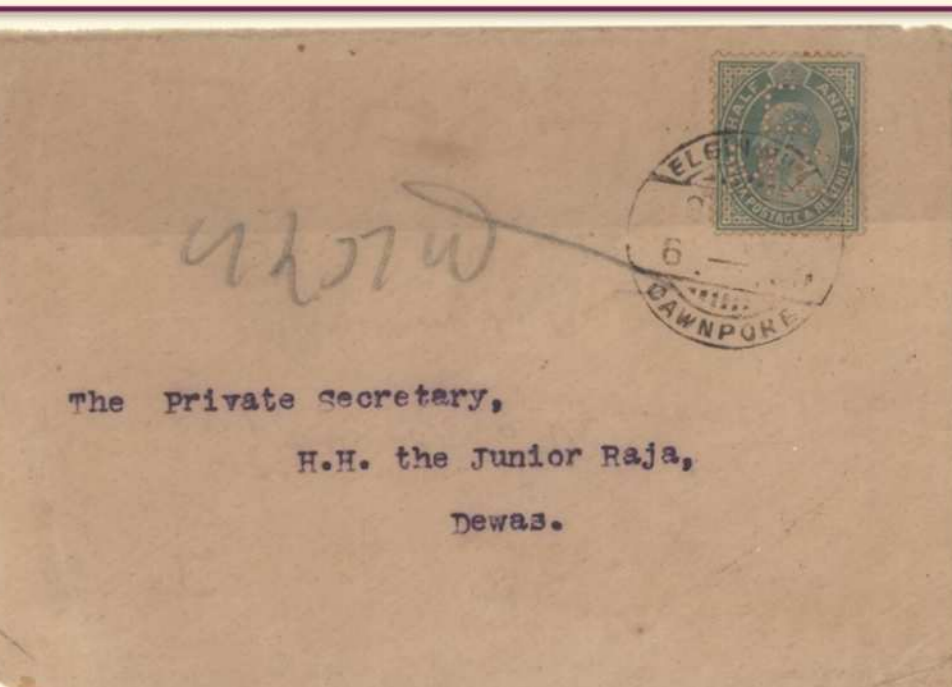
MANCHESTER OF THE EAST

Elgin Mills gave the much needed impetus to the industrialization of Cawnpore. Elgin employees learnt at job and forked out, creating their own companies. Mills like Cawnpore Woolen Mills, Hair Mills. Cawnpore Cotton Mills were setup by Ex-employees of ELGIN. Soon, Cawnpore became famous as Manchester of the East



2 1/4 Updated 6D QV Postcard from Manchester England to Cawnpore (Manchester of the East)

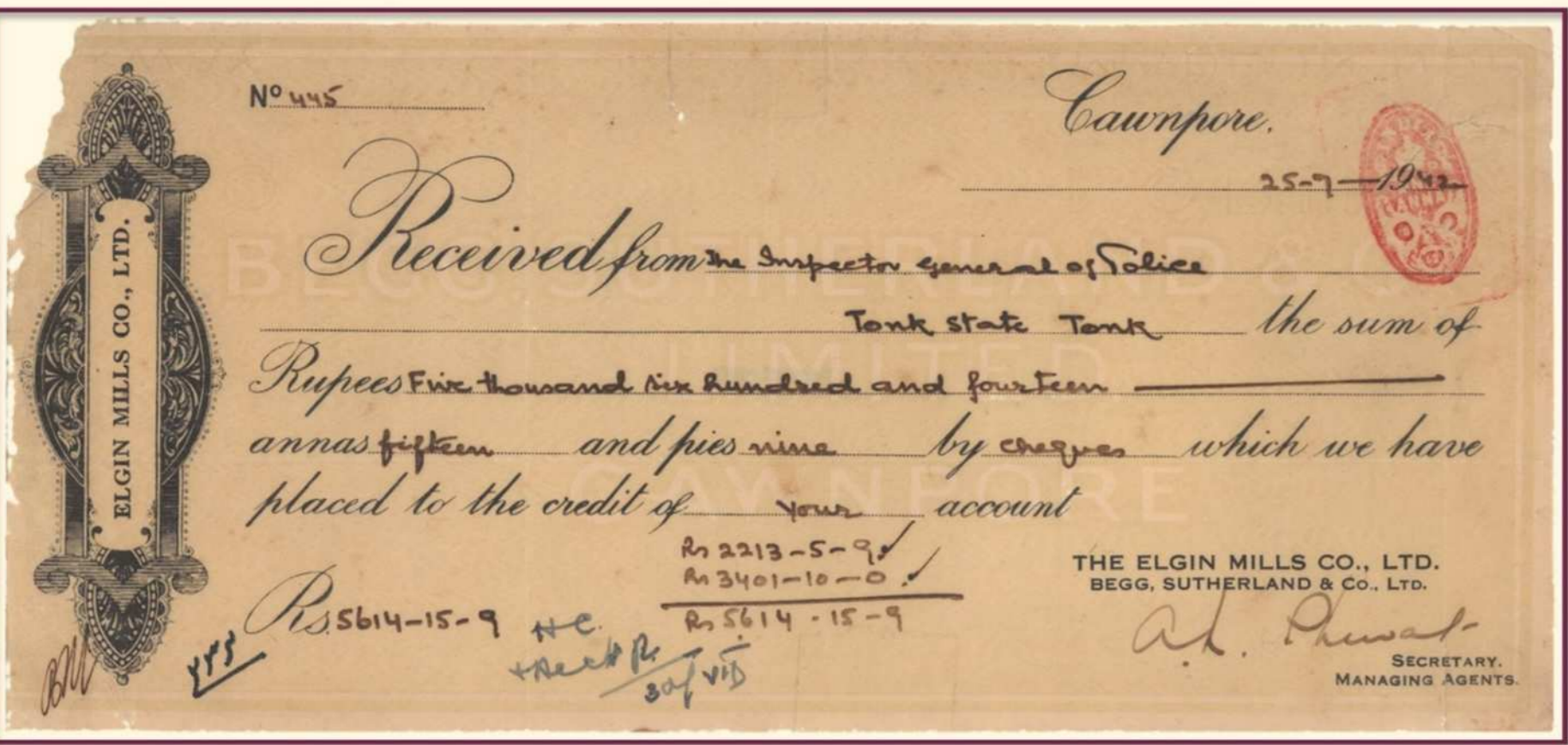
Postage Stamps used by Elgin Mills were perforated for security purposes with initials R.M.C. The mill stationery carried the emblem of Elgin Mills on its flap



4 Anna franked envelop from Elgin Mills PO to Devas

MANAGING AGENTS

The Management Agency system became one of the main instruments for industrial development in India from the mid 1800's. These Agents were partnership of a few individuals using their own money and that from investors to establish limited liability companies. They were autonomous from the investors and so were free to make business decisions rapidly and flexibly. It was a clever business model that spread risk whilst maximizing expertise and profit.



Receipt of payment from Tonk State. Signed in the name of Begg, Sutherland managing agents

ELGIN: THE GLOBAL BRAND

By 1910, Elgin Mills became a global brand. It traded with princely states for military supplies and with the local public for household cotton products



4 Anna KEVII postcard from Cawnpore to Elgin Mills Cawnpore, Jan. 1908



Managing Agents for Elgin Mills Begg, Sutherland & Co of Cawnpore was formed in the late 1860's; initially named Begg, Christie & Co then Begg, Maxwell & Co.

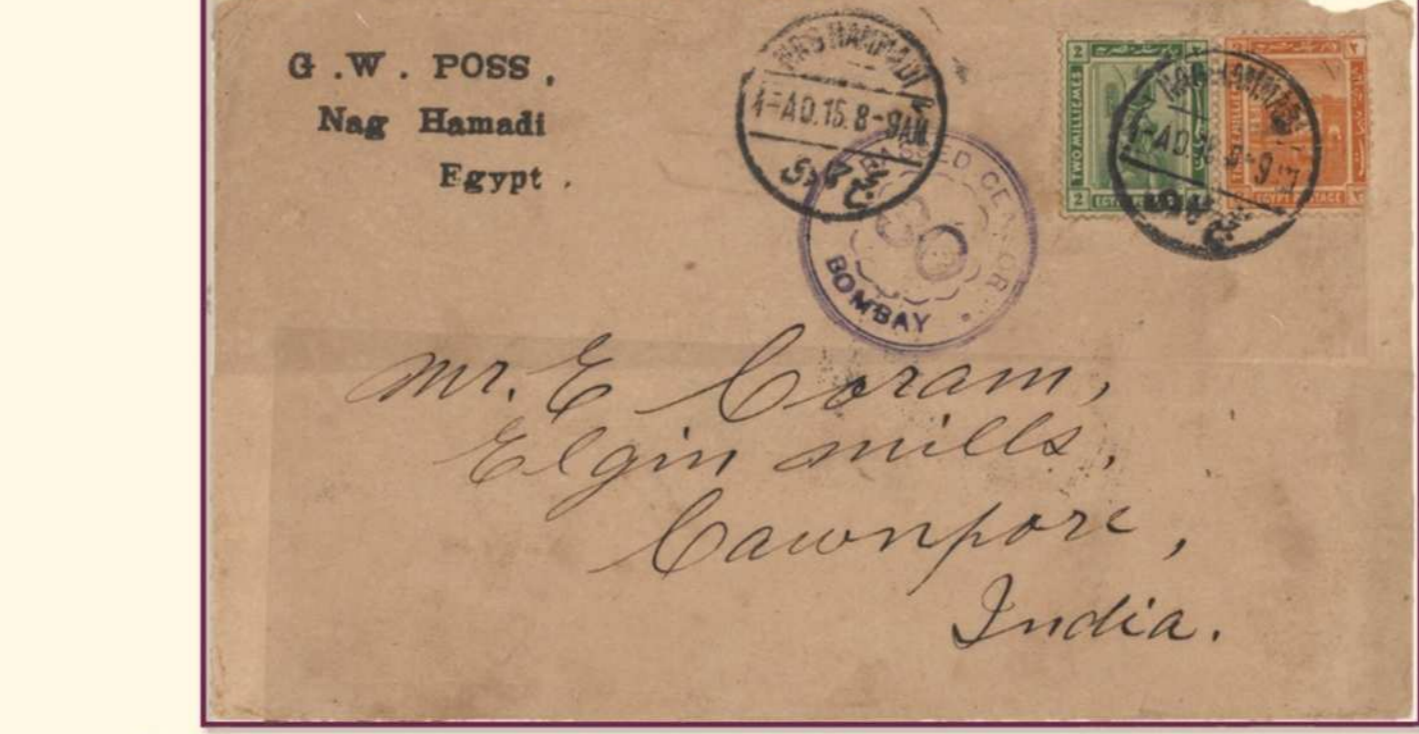
Receipt of part payment from Shela district. Signed in the name of Begg, Sutherland managing agents



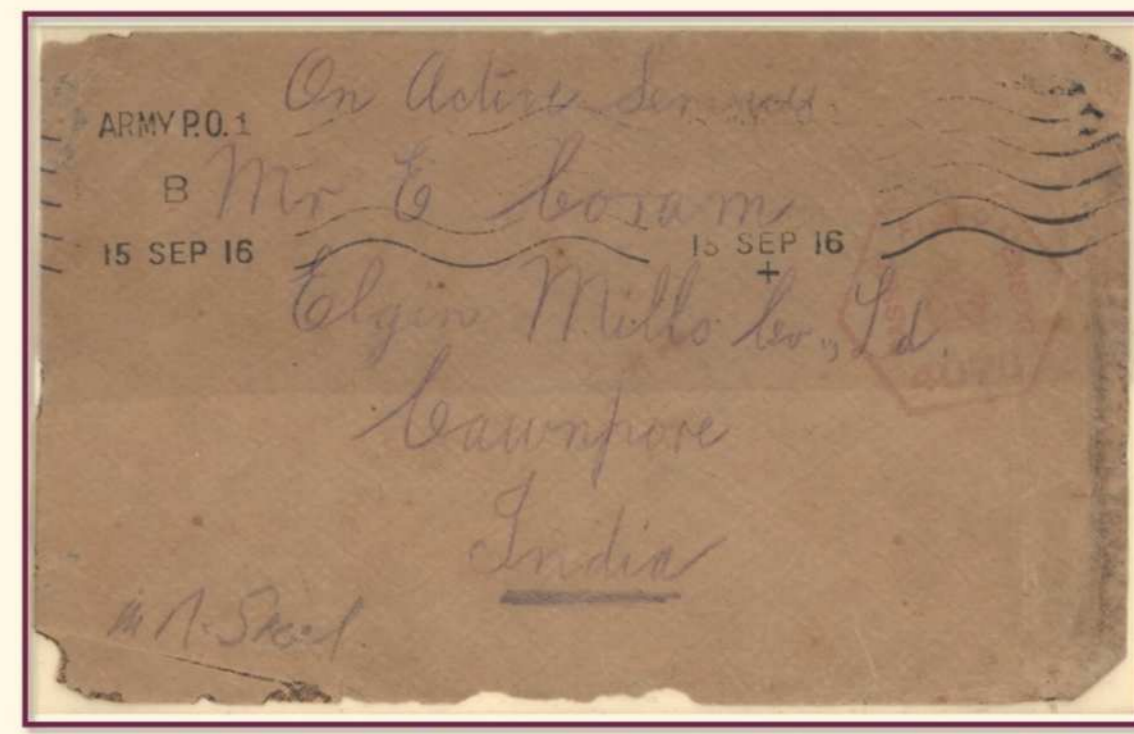
Nasser-eddin Shah Qajar Foreign Postcard from Ispahan (Dec 17, 1907) to Elgin Mills (Jan 13, 1908) with private receiving ink stamp of mail room of Elgin Mill

WORLD WAR I

The World War I broke out in 1914, which further increased the demand for cotton fabric throughout Europe. In 1915, 12.5 million yards of uniform cloth was exported. Between 1914 & 1916, 20000 tents were exported and in 1918, Cawnpore alone contributed to 12% of the total trade of the province.



In- THE ILLUSTRATED PIONEER MAIL



Incoming censored On Active Service mail from Army PO No.1, Le Havre, France to Elgin Mills, Cawnpore

PRODUCTS

With expertise of manufacturing, dyeing and bleaching cotton fabric, Elgin Mills produced a variety of products catering to the needs of military as well as domestic household.

The Products included:

- Tents
- Durrees
- Table Cloths
- Sleeping Suits
- Shirts
- Towels
- Knitting Wool
- Bed Linen

ELGIN PRODUCTS: SLEEPING SUITS

Advertisement of Sleeping Suits in the Illustrated Pioneer Mail, dated 24 Dec. 1921

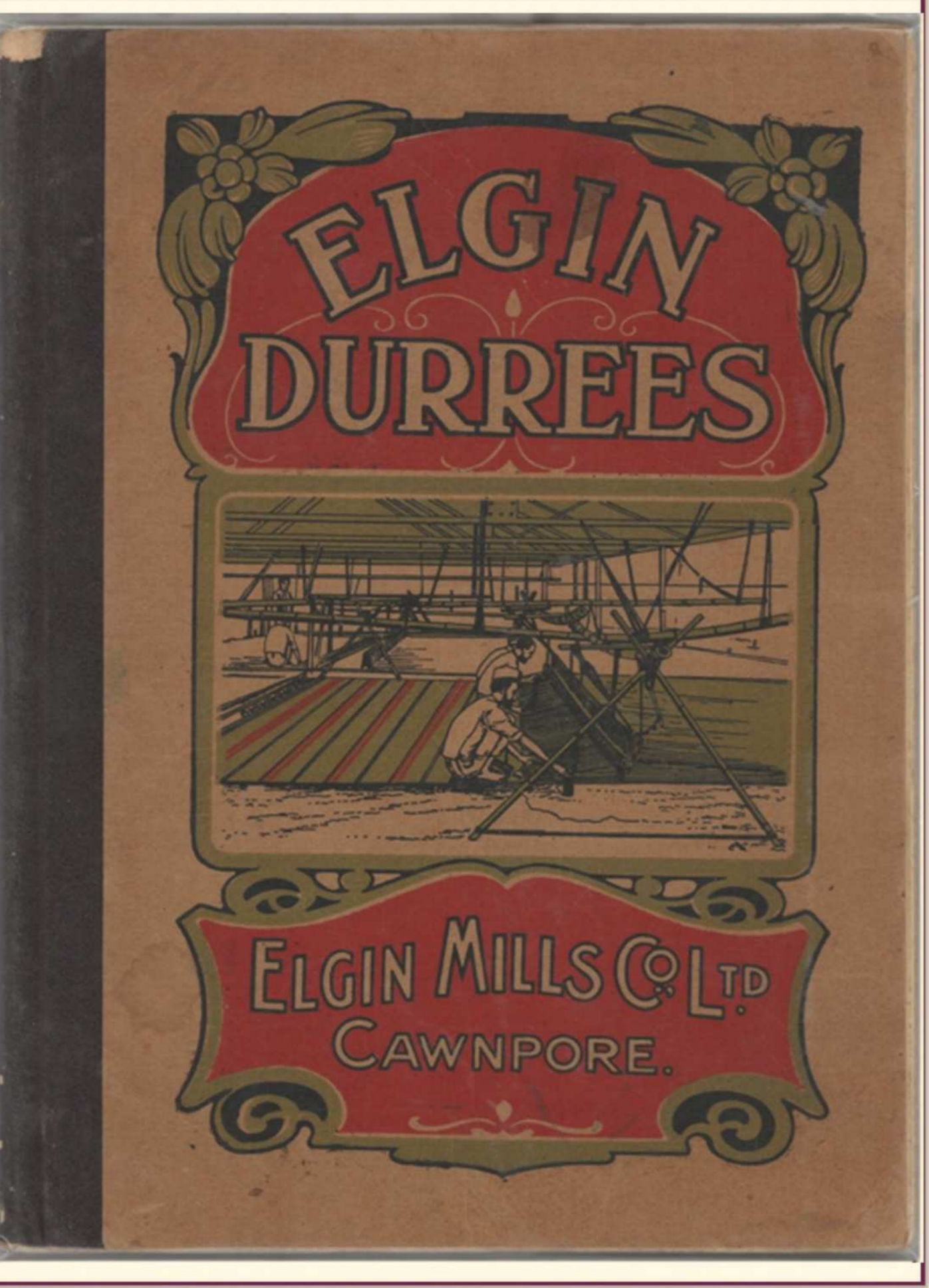
ELGIN PRODUCTS: TABLE LINEN

Advertisement of Elgin Table Linen in the Illustrated Pioneer Mail, dated 11 Feb. 1922



ELGIN PRODUCTS-DURREES

Durree is a heavy cotton rug of Indian origin. Elgin Mills was known for its durable durrees.

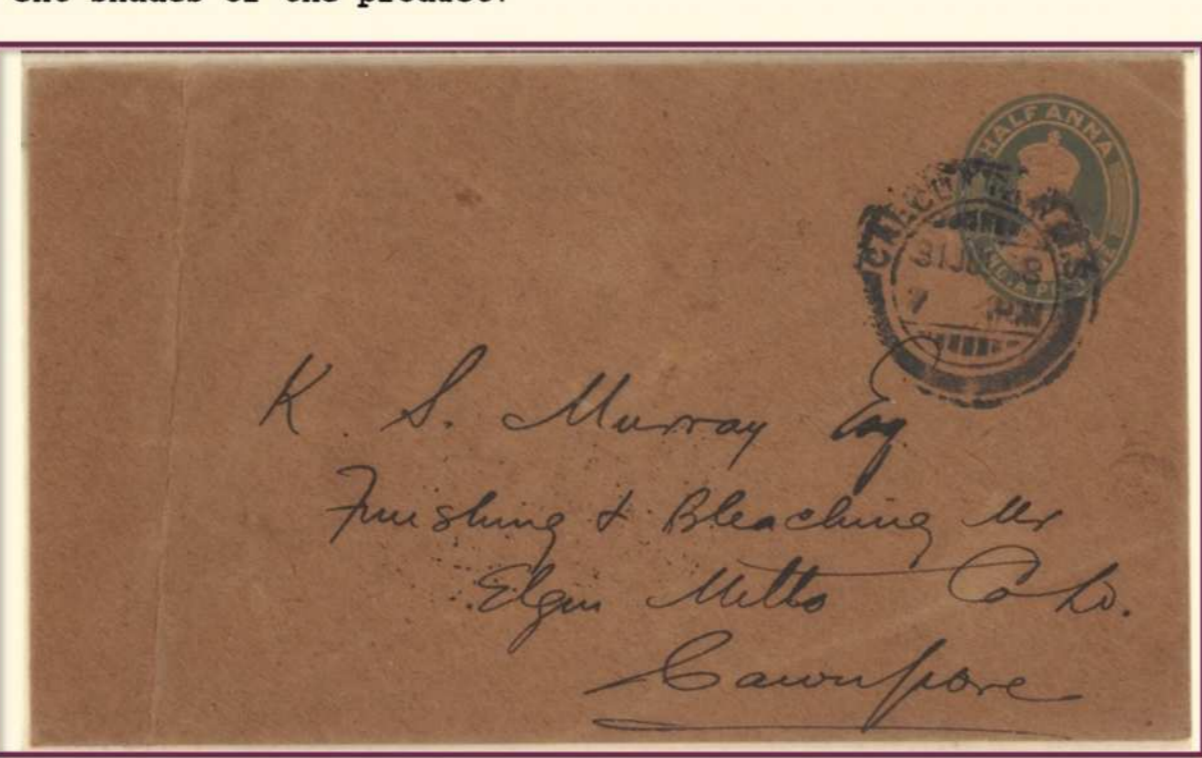


Catalog of Durrees on sale from Elgin Mills. Carries guarantee info and washing instructions as well

Elgin employees were expert at bleaching and coloring the cotton yarn and hence the company was able to provide 40 different shades of the product.



Reduced scan of pages of Elgin Durrees catalog showing colored patterns



4th Anna HGV Postal Stationery Envelope address to the bleaching department of Elgin Mills.

Advertisement showing the variety of patterns and shades of durrees available



The Illustrated Pioneer Mail, 12 Mar. 1922

ELGIN PRODUCTS:TOWELS

Manufactured premium cotton used for making towels



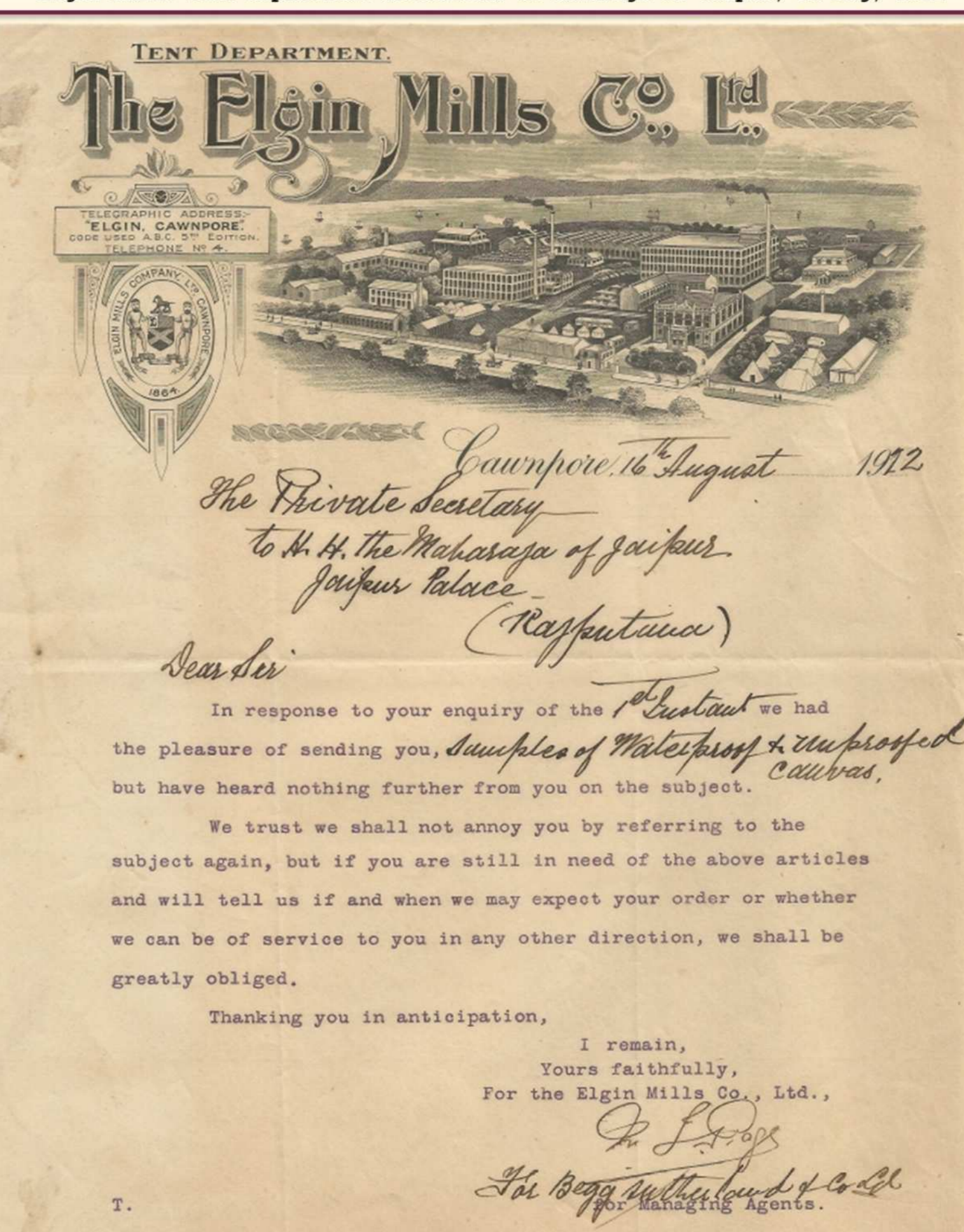
Advertisement showing discounts for Elgin tents



The Illustrated Pioneer Mail, dated 22 Mar. 1922

ELGIN PRODUCTS:TENTS

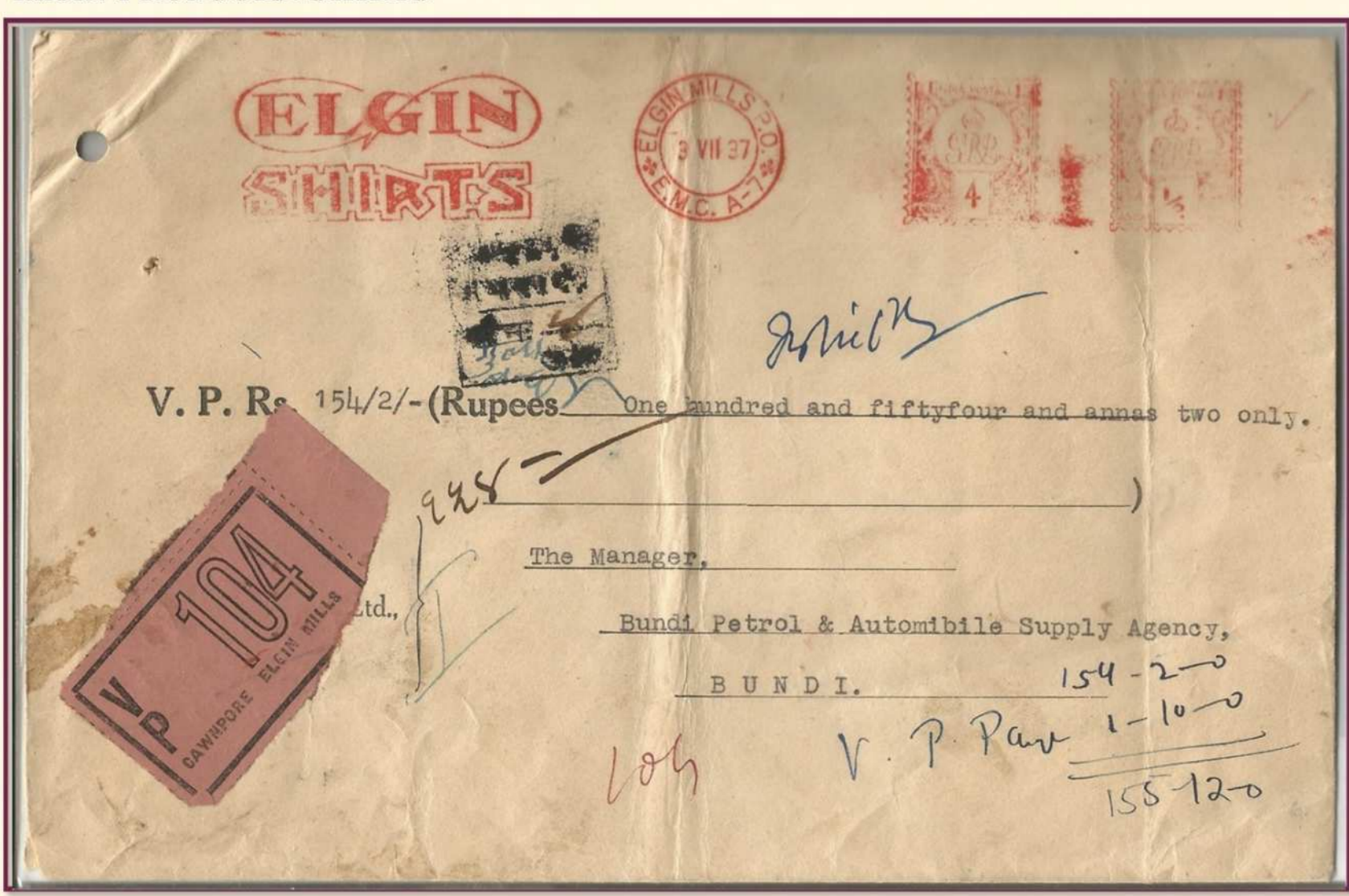
Elgin Mills excelled in making waterproof canvas, used for making tents.



Elgin Mills Tent Department Letterhead to Maharaja of Jaipur, 16 Aug, 1912

ELGIN PRODUCTS: SHIRTS

Elgin Mills PO Meter Franking advertising Elgin Shirts



V.P. envelope to Bundi state. Dated 3 Jul. 1937



Elgin Mills Label from bed linen, 1960s



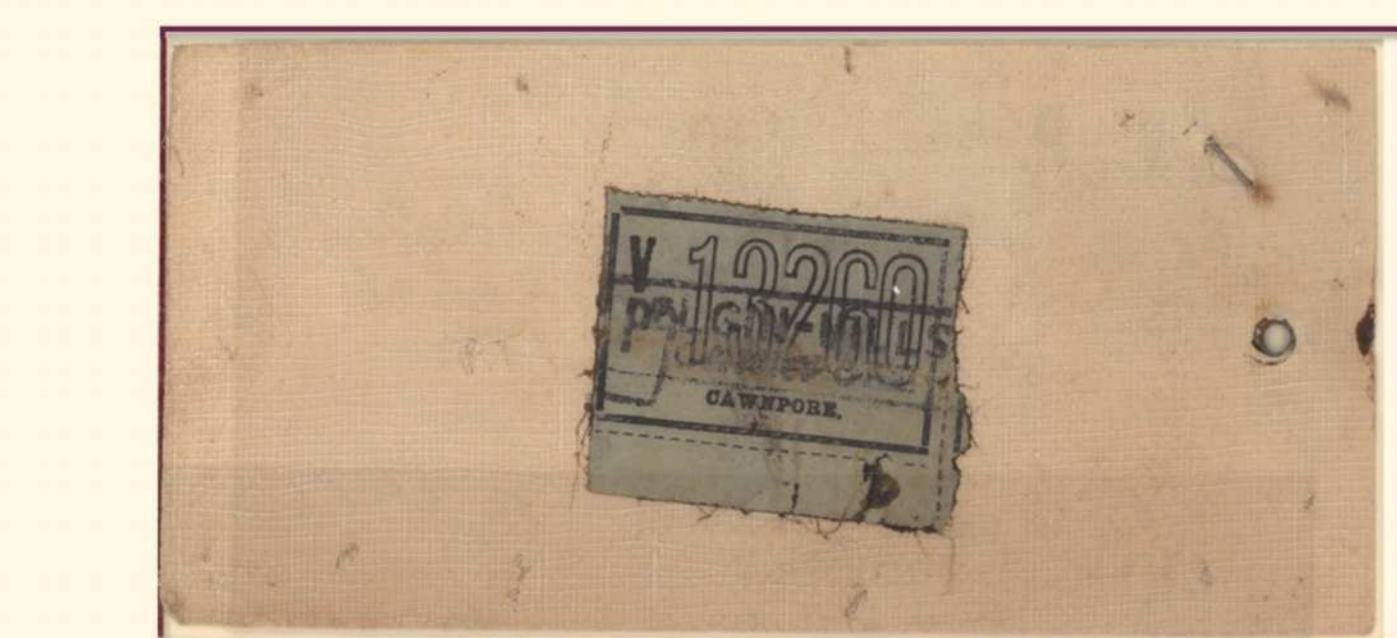
ELGIN MILLS POST OFFICE

Elgin Mills Post office was opened in 1891 and it served the needs of the Mill, nearby manufacturing setups and the common people.

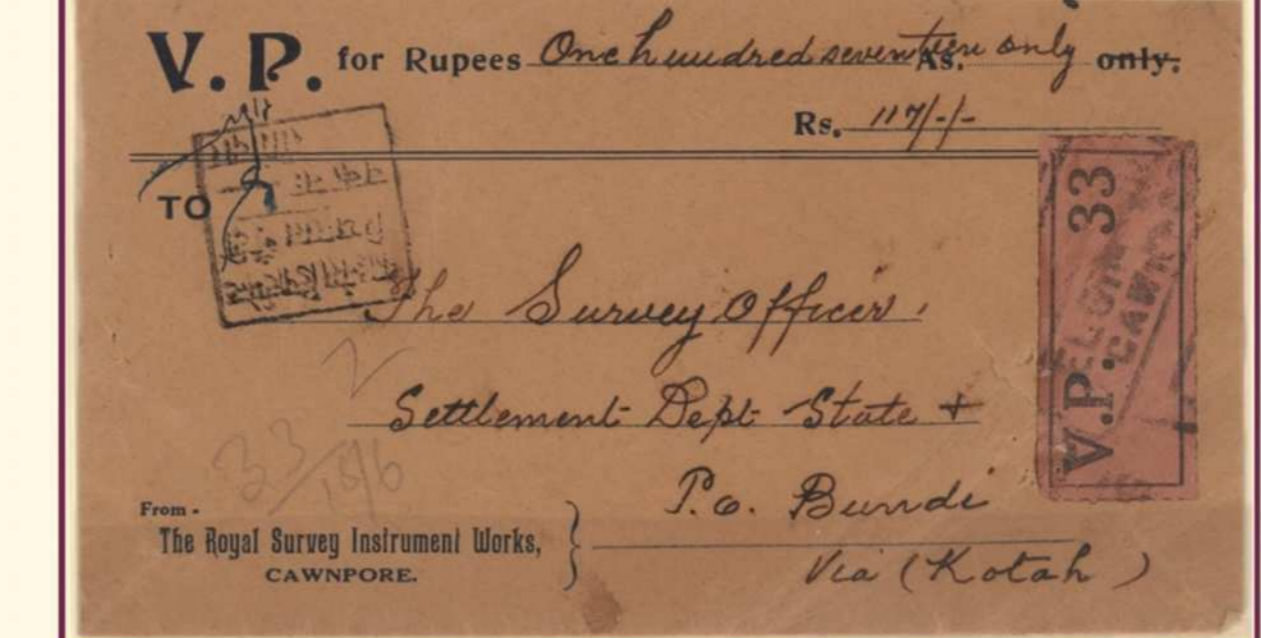
2 Annas franked envelope to Bombay with Combined date and time obliterator dated 28 Jun. 1949

PREFERRED BUSINESS MODE-V.P.P.

Elgin Mills post office was primarily used for booking products of Elgin Mills and nearby manufacturing setups under Value payable post facility of the postal system for delivering products and receiving payments.



V.P.P. slip of Elgin Mills Post Office booked by nearby North West Tannery, to Udaipur dated 22 Sep. 1932. V.P.P. Value: Rs7/6 annas.



V.P.P. Label of Elgin Mills Post Office booked by nearby Royal Survey Instrument Works, to Bundi dated 18 Jun. 1940. V.P.P. Value: Rs17

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

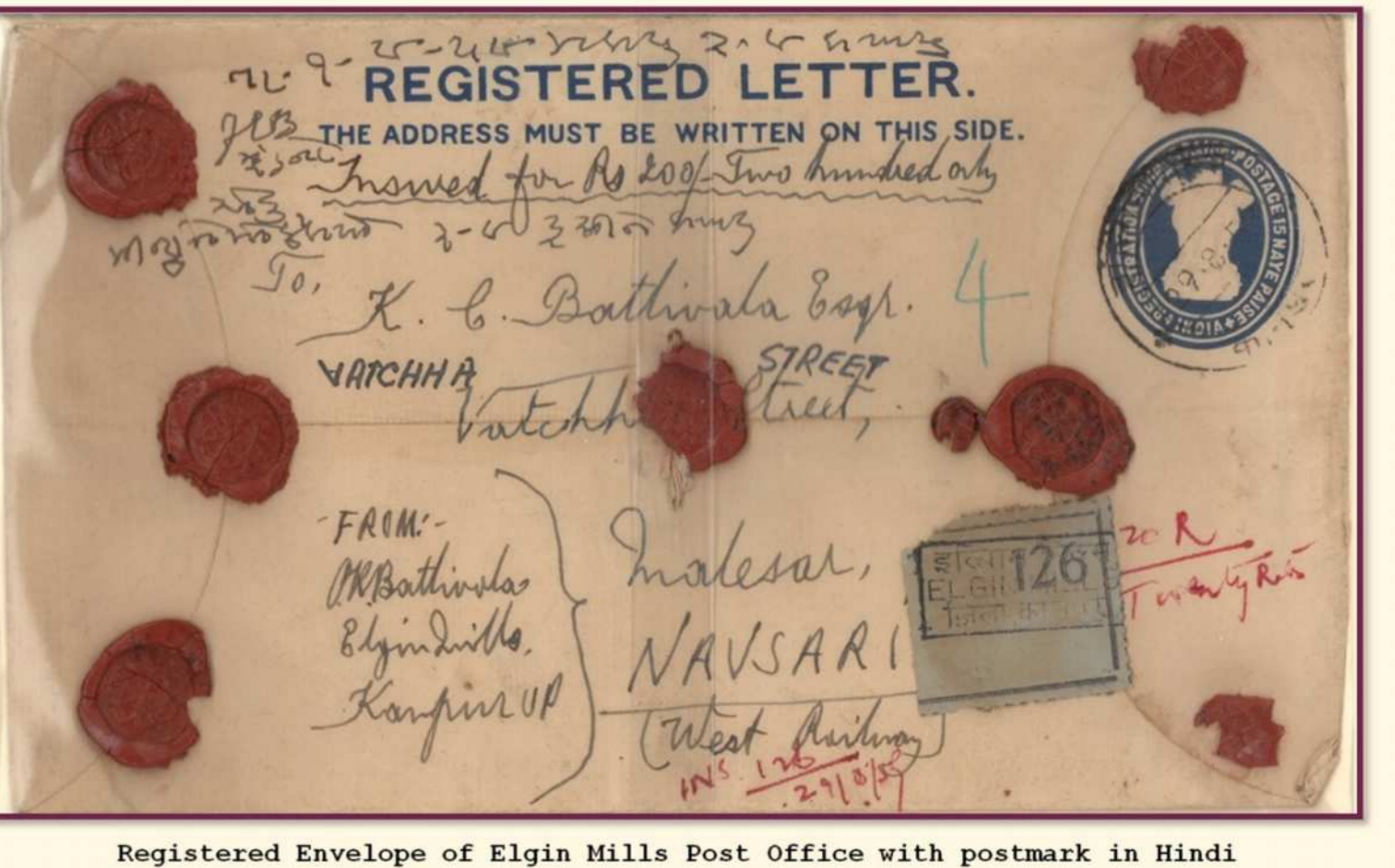
India got Independent from the British rule on 15 Aug. 1947. Jai Hind (means Long Live India) stamps were the first stamps of Independent India.



First Day Usage of Jai Hind stamps on registered cover obliterated at Elgin Mills post office

Elgin Mills made fabulous profits during the 1960s and 1970s

Elgin Mills came fully under Indian management as the English men associated with the Mill started returning back to England after Indian Independence.



Registered Envelope of Elgin Mills Post Office with postmark in Hindi

CONCLUSION: CLOSURE OF ELGIN

Elgin Mills were shut down during 1990s due to bad performance and losses. The post off of Elgin Mills is still operational.



2 Anna Postal Stationery Envelope to Bombay with Elgin Mills PO postmark.



Four Rupee Promissory Note (Hundi) signed for Elgin Mills

ELGIN MILLS CO. LTD., CAWNPORE

Led the Industrial Resurrection Post Sepoy Mutiny

Introduction

Cawnpore witnessed the horrifying battle and massacres during the sepoy mutiny of 1857. The Administration, communication and trade in the region were disturbed until 1859. Elgin Mills were the first commercial setup to have been provisioned post mutiny. It gave the necessary push to re-establish trade and commerce in the region.

Demand of Cotton

The British textile mills primarily based out of Lancashire and Manchester imported cotton from America and India.

In 1857, Manchester Cotton Supply Association was formed to encourage the production of cotton in overseas British empire.

In 1861, the American Civil War broke out and it impacted the American cotton export to England leaving British India to fulfill the cotton requirement

Purpose

This exhibit showcases the importance of Elgin Mills, its history and products. The exhibit also tells about the global reach of its trade and the brand value of the organization.

Scope & Importance

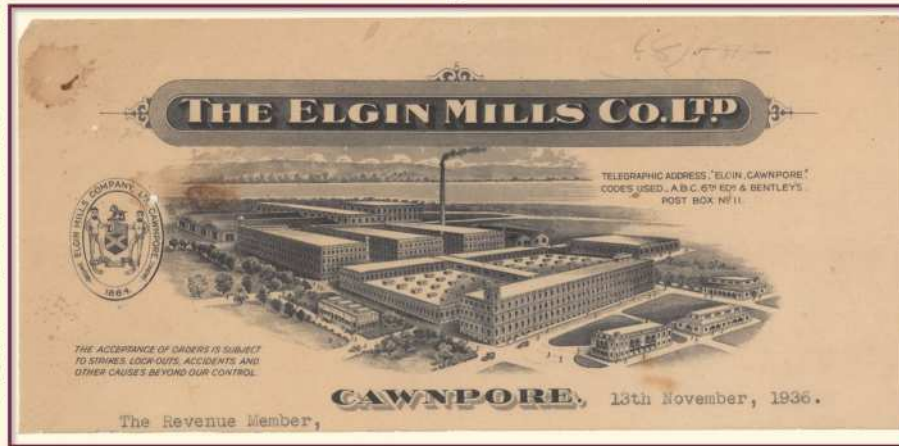
This exhibit illustrates the story of Elgin Mills using postal items and ephemera of the British India Period.

Elgin Mills were the first Cotton Mill that established Cawnpore as a industrial hub of North India

Location

Elgin Mill company was setup on the banks of river Ganges, between the old Cawnpore and the cantonment. It was located next to the military hospital. A railway siding was also planned for quick rail transportation.

Letterhead of The Elgin Mills Co. Ltd., 1936



Cawnpore-The Chosen One

Cawnpore was already a trading center for Cotton. Raw cotton from Agra and Budelkhund was transported and traded at Cawnpore and forwarded to Calcutta for export to England

Railways had already reached Cawnpore in 1859 and river Ganges provided the needed water supply.

In 1860, Cawnpore Cotton Committee was formed by Fredrick Buist, the station master of EIR.

Buist suggest of setting up a mills leveraging the abundant supply of cotton locally, instead of sending it to Calcutta.

Plan of Exhibit

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References

- Yalland, Zoe. Boxwallahs: The British in Cawnpore, 1857-1901. M Russel Publications. 1994
- Yalland, Zoe. Traders and Nabobs The British in Cawnpore 1765-1857. M Russel Publications. 1987
- Mehra, SP. Manchester of the East, The Rise and Fall of industry in Kanpur, Bloomsburry Publications. 2020.
- Tripathi, Lakshmikant. Kanpur ka Itihas, Kanpur Itihas Samiti, Kanpur. 1958
- Upper India Chamber of Commerce Cawnpore 1888-1938, The Time of India Press, Bombay. 1928
- Nevil HR, 1909, Cawnpore A Gazetteer, Government Press, Allahabad.
- Cooper Allen & Company, 1946, Footprints in the Sands of Time, Cooper Allen Publishing, Cawnpore



Elgin Emblem



The Brand Logo

SETTING UP ELGIN MILLS

The Elgin Cotton Spinning and Weaving Co., Ltd. was incorporated in 1861 and commenced work in 1864, the initial capital being 3 lakhs of rupees. Named after James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin, the Viceroy of India during 1862-63. Platt Brothers, B. Hicks & Sons and Doyle & Co. were given contracts for machinery procurement and construction.



¼ Anna QV postcard with privately printed as

ELGIN: ADVERTISING SLOGAN

Elgin's advertising slogan proudly assured high quality

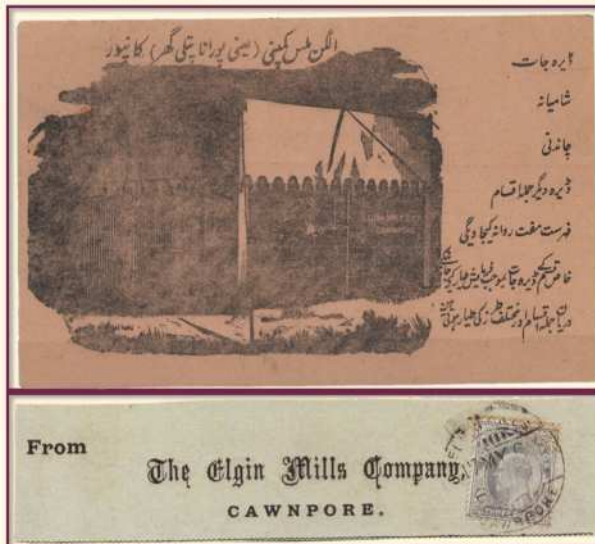
If it's ELGIN It's Good



¼ Anna Meter franked Mill stationery envelope to Kurwai State, Central India

CHANGE OF GUARDS

The contractors could not set up the mill in time. In 1870, petition was filed to wind up the company. Hugh Maxwell took over the enterprise and appointed Gavin Jones as the Mill Manager

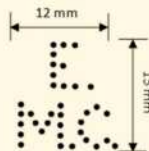


Above: Pictorial formula postcard from Elgin bearing image of the gate of Elgin Mills.

Below: Top part of reverse of the postcard



Grill Type Cancellation of Elgin Mill Post Office



36 pin hole Perforation of Elgin Mills

MANCHESTER OF THE EAST

Elgin Mills gave the much needed impetus to the industrialization of Cawnpore. Elgin employees learnt at job and forked out, creating their own companies. Mills like Cawnpore Woolen Mills, Muir Mills, Cawnpore Cotton Mills were setup by Ex-employees of ELGIN. Soon, Cawnpore became famous as

Manchester of the East



2 ¼ d Uprated ¼d GB QV Postcard from Manchester England to Cawnpore (Manchester of the East)

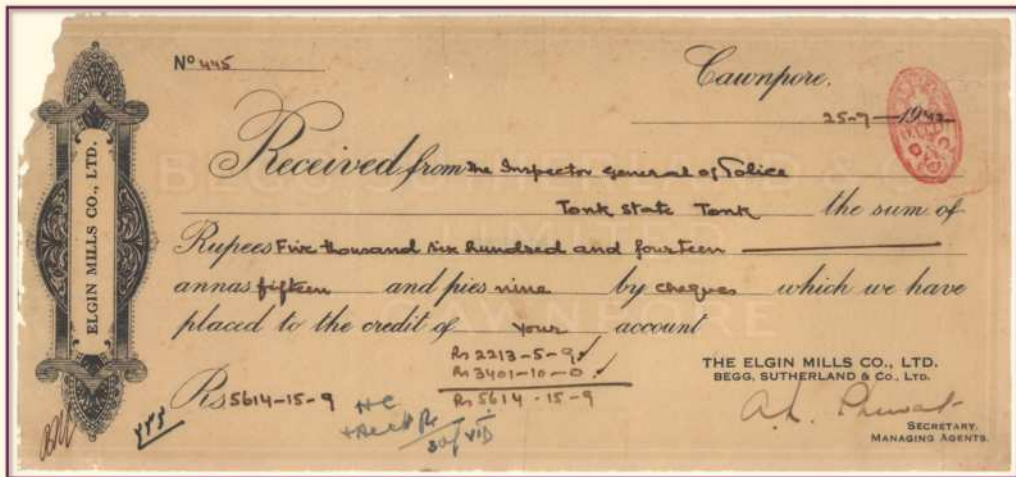
Postage Stamps used by Elgin Mills were perforated for security purposes with initials E.M.C. The mill stationery carried the emblem of Elgin Mills on its flap



¼Anna franked envelop from Elgin Mills PO to Dewas

MANAGING AGENTS

The Management Agency system became one of the main instruments for industrial development in India from the mid 1800's. These Agents were partnership of a few individuals using their own money and that from investors to establish limited liability companies. They were autonomous from the investors and so were free to make business decisions rapidly and flexibly. It was a clever business model that spread risk whilst maximizing expertise and profit.



Receipt of payment from Tonk State. Signed in the name of Begg, Sutherland managing agents



ELGIN: THE GLOBAL BRAND

By 1910, Elgin Mills became a global brand. It traded with princely states for military supplies and with the local public for household cotton products



Anna KEVII postcard from Jaunpore to Elgin Mills Cawnpore, Jan. 1908

Elgin Mills dealt with overseas customers from Middle East, Africa and Europe



Nasser-eddin Shah Qajar Foreign Postcard from Ispahan (Dec 17, 1907) to Elgin Mills (Jan 13, 1908) with private receiving ink stamp of mail room of Elgin Mill

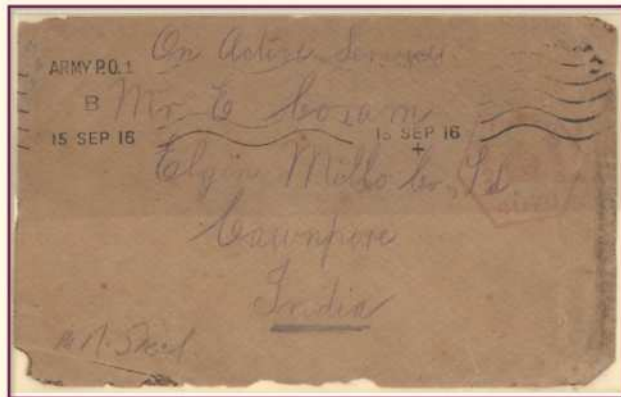
Managing Agents for Elgin Mills

Begg, Sutherland & Co of Cawnpore was formed in the late 1860's; initially named Begg, Christie & Co then Begg, Maxwell & Co.

Receipt of part payment from Bheloa district. Signed in the name of Begg, Sutherland managing agents

WORLD WAR I

The World War I broke out in 1914, which further increased the demand for cotton fabric throughout Europe. In 1915, 12.5 million yards of uniform cloth was exported. Between 1914 & 1916, 20000 tents were exported and in 1918, Cawnpore alone contributed to 12% of the total trade of the province.



Incoming censored On Active Service mail from Army PO No. 1, Le Havre, France to Elgin Mills, Cawnpore

In-

THE ILLUSTRATED PIONEER MAIL

Sleeping Suits



In White Twill RS 7 -
Striped Twill 7 8
White Flannel 8 -
Striped Flannel 10 8
Wool and Union
Flannel 12 8

Samples Post Free
or if you state colour
and stripes preferred
we will select the
material & guarantee
the Quality and Fit.
State height & chest
& neck measurements

The ELGIN MILLS CO^{LD}
CAWNPORE
Agents, Saal Titze & Co^{LD} Calcutta, Bombay & Karachi

ELGIN PRODUCTS: SLEEPING SUITS

Advertisement of
Sleeping Suits in
the Illustrated Pio-
neer Mail, dated 24
Dec., 1921

PRODUCTS

With expertise of manufacturing, dyeing and bleaching cotton fabric, Elgin Mills produced a variety of products catering to the needs of military as well as domestic household.

The Products included:

Tents	Shirts
Durrees	Towels
Table Cloths	Knitting Wool
Sleeping Suits	Bed Linen

ELGIN PRODUCTS: TABLE LINEN

Advertisement of El-
gin Table Linen in
the Illustrated Pio-
neer Mail, dated 11
Feb., 1922

THE ILLUSTRATED PIONEER MAIL

11th February 1922

For the Tasteful Table



Elgin Table-Linen

is unrivalled in Quality and Long Service

Cotton Damask, 70" wide, Rs. 5-8 per yd.
Serviettes to match, Rs. 12-8 per doz.
Union Damask, 72" wide, Rs. 7-8 per yd.
Serviettes to match, Rs. 20 per doz.
Linen Damask, 72" wide, Rs. 12-8 per yd.
Serviettes to match, Rs. 30 per doz.
Matt Pattern Table Cloth, 72" wide, Rs. 3-3 per yd.
" " " " 54" wide, Rs. 1-15-6 "
" Serviettes to match, Rs. 6-3 per doz.
Satin Striped Table Cloth, 78" wide, Rs. 5-12 per yd.
" " " " 54" wide, Rs. 2-8 "
" Serviettes to match, Rs. 10-8 per doz.

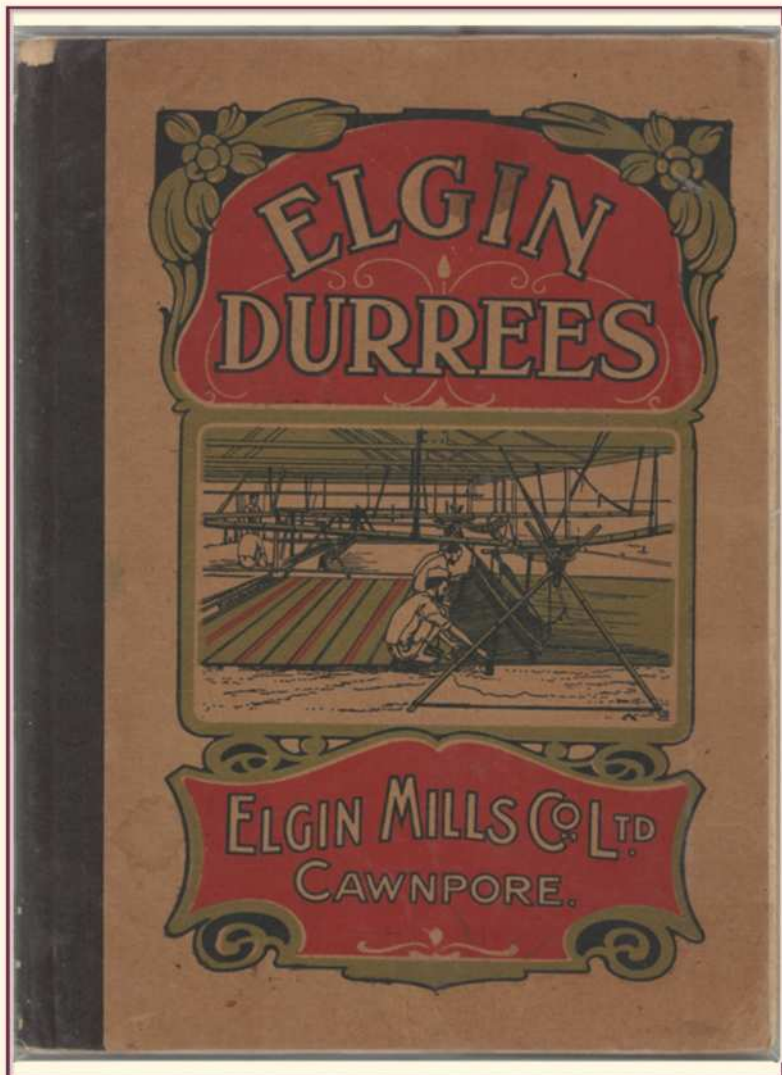
SAMPLES FREE ON APPLICATION.

THE ELGIN MILLS CO^{LD} CAWNPORE
Agents, Saal Titze & Co^{LD} Calcutta, Bombay & Karachi

A.A.A. 66.

ELGIN PRODUCTS—DURREES Durree is a heavy cotton rug of Indian origin. Elgin Mills was known for its durable durrees.

Elgin employees were expert at bleaching and coloring the cotton yarn and hence the company was able to provide 40 different shades of the product.



Catalog of Durrees on sale from Elgin Mills. Carries guarantee info and washing instructions as well



Reduced scan of pages of Elgin Durrees catalog showing colored patterns



1/2 Anna KGV Postal Stationery Envelope address to the bleaching department of Elgin Mills.

Advertisement showing the variety of patterns and shades of durrees available



Elgin Durrees

In Granite, Interwoven, Plain and Striped Patterns.

ARE MADE UNDER EXPERT SUPERVISION with the *Best Labour* procurable from the Company's *Finest Yarns*

Prices from Rs 2/15 to 5/15 per square yd. according to quality

In FORTY ART SHADES dyed on the *Latest Scientific Principles* Samples and shade cards free.

The ELGIN MILLS CO. LTD.
CAWNPORE.

Agent, Samuel Pitze & Co. Ltd. Calcutta, Bombay & Karachi

ELGIN PRODUCTS: TOWELS

Manufactured premium cotton used for making towels

Letterhead of Cawnpore Mills Depot reseller based in Bombay

Cawnpore Mills Depot
 AGENTS FOR
 ELGIN MILLS CO. LTD. CAWNPORE
 BRUSHWARE LTD. CAWNPORE
 CAWNPORE TEXTILES LTD. CAWNPORE.
 "CHURCHGATE" HOUSE
 CHURCHGATE STREET, FORT.
 TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
 "TAPESTRY" BOMBAY.
 TELEPHONE NO. 20433.



Pictorial envelope of Elgin, franked 1a3p, to Cutch, dated 16 May, 1934

Advertisement showing discounts for Elgin tents

These Tents are Down in Price!

Double Poled or Double Flied with double walls suitable for large standing camps or ceremonial functions. Inner measurements 25 x 15 1/2 with Durries, Rs. 1883 each
 Shouldaries 14 x 12 made of 3 folds of Dosuti suitable for servants & menials, Rs. 223
 Survey or Trolley Umbrellas 7 spread Rs. 31/6

The ELGIN MILLS CO LTD
 CAWNPORE

Agents, Saml Fitze & Co Ltd
 CALCUTTA, BOMBAY & KARACHI. 19

The Illustrated Pioneer Mail, dated 22 Mar., 1922

ELGIN PRODUCTS: TENTS

Elgin Mills excelled in making waterproof canvas, used for making tents.

Elgin Mills Tent Department Letterhead to Maharaja of Jaipur, 16 Aug, 1912

TENT DEPARTMENT
The Elgin Mills Co. Ltd

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
 "ELGIN, CAWNPORE"
 CODE "EEL" A.B.C. BY CAWNPORE.
 TELEPHONE NO. 4

Cawnpore, 16th August 1912
 The Private Secretary
 to H. H. the Maharaja of Jaipur
 Jaipur Palace
 (Rajpootana)

Dear Sir

In response to your enquiry of the 1st instant we had the pleasure of sending you, samples of Waterproof & unproofed Calibras, but have heard nothing further from you on the subject.

We trust we shall not annoy you by referring to the subject again, but if you are still in need of the above articles and will tell us if and when we may expect your order or whether we can be of service to you in any other direction, we shall be greatly obliged.

Thanking you in anticipation,

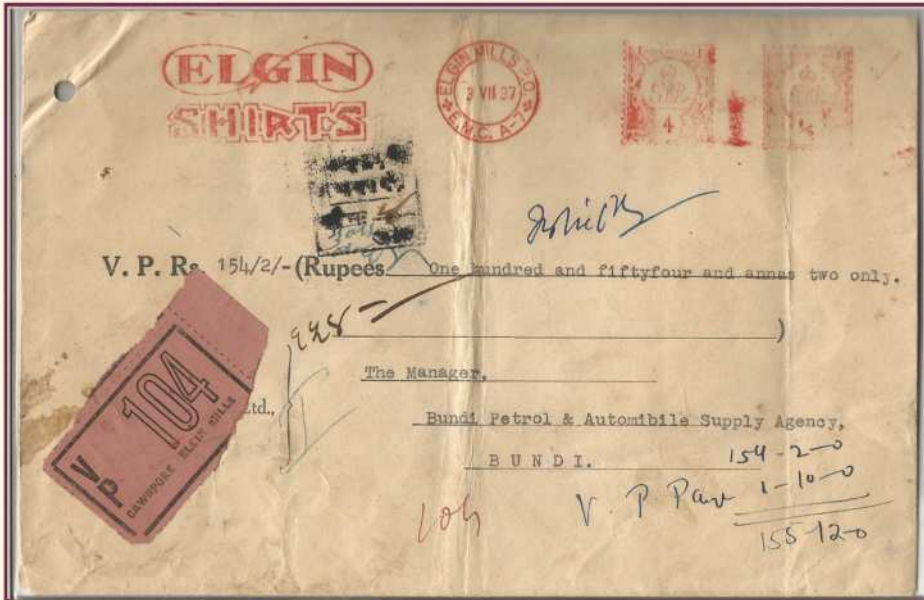
I remain,
 Yours faithfully,
 For the Elgin Mills Co., Ltd.,
 J. L. Pross
 For Being in the hand of the
 Managing Agents.

T.

Form "R.T."

ELGIN PRODUCTS: SHIRTS

Elgin Mills PO Meter Franking advertising Elgin Shirts



VPP envelope to Bundi state. Dated 3 Jul.,1937

PREFERRED BUSINESS MODE—V.P.P.

Elgin Mills post office was primarily used for booking products of Elgin Mills and nearby manufacturing setups under Value payable post facility of the postal system for delivering products and receiving payments.



VPP slip of Elgin Mills Post Office booked by nearby North West Tannery, to Udaipur dated 22 Sep.,1932. VPP Value: Rs7/6 annas.

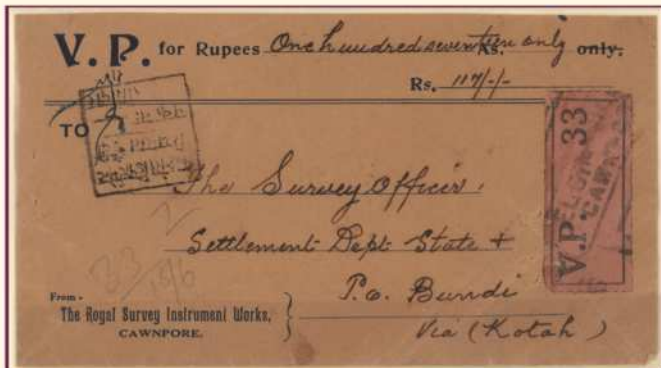


Elgin Mills Label from bed linen, 1960s

ELGIN MILLS POST OFFICE

Elgin Mills Post office was opened in 1891 and it served the needs of the Mill, nearby manufacturing setups and the common people.

2 Annas franked envelop to Bombay with Combined date and time obliterator dated 28 Jun.,1949



VPP Label of Elgin Mills Post Office booked by nearby Royal Survey Instrument Works, to Bundi dated 18 Jun.,1940. VPP Value: Rs117

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

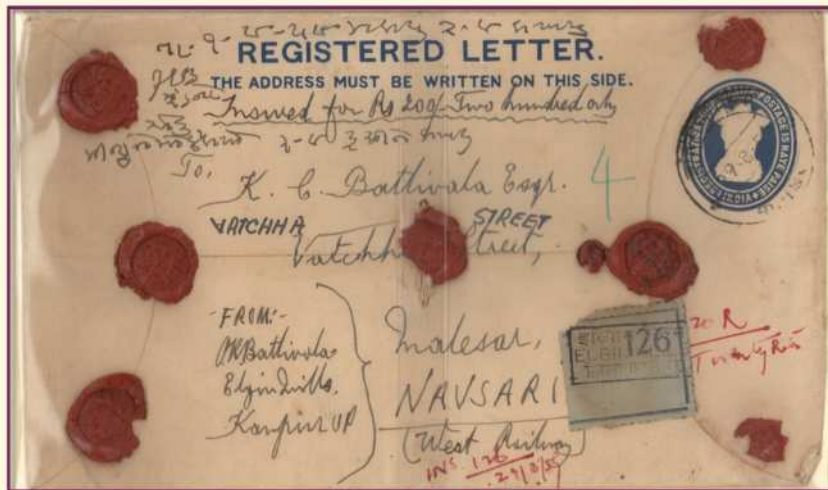
India got Independent from the British rule on 15 Aug., 1947. Jai Hind (means Long Live India) stamps were the first stamps of Independent India.



First Day Usage of Jai Hind stamps on registered cover obliterated at Elgin Mills post office

Elgin Mills made fabulous profits during the 1960s and 1970s

Elgin Mills came fully under Indian management as the English men associated with the Mill started returning back to England after Indian Independence.



Registered Envelope of Elgin Mills Post Office with postmark in Hindi



Four Rupees Promissory Note (Hundi) signed for Elgin Mills

CONCLUSION: CLOSURE OF ELGIN

Elgin Mills were shut down during 1990s due to bad performance and losses. The post off of Elgin Mills is still operational.



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