

Marseilles Nabisco Factory History

1867, Brown and Norton Paper Company

Marseilles history first mentions a paper mill in 1867 following the construction of a dam on the Illinois River. The power produced by the dam was first used by the Brown and Norton Paper Company. It was the Illinois River Mill around 1893 that manufactured special grades of “combination board” for the Howe and Davidson Company of Chicago. They used the board to make cartons for the National Biscuit Factory.



1900, Crescent Paper Company

In the year 1900 the Crescent Paper Company produced paper box board, wrapping paper, egg cases, fillers, folding paper boxes and cartons of every description. Crescent Paper Company was incorporated in 1896. Mr. R.F. Knott was president. Howe and Davidson of Chicago had started to manufacture folding boxes about 1893. Mr. Davidson started a box factory in New York City right next to the National Biscuit Company. Then in 1902 he moved all the presses and equipment into a new carton factory and paper mill built in Marseilles, Illinois. Davidson continued as manager until poor health in the early 1930's forced him to retire. During this time 520 employees worked at the paper mill and factory, 135 employees at the Crescent Mill and 85 at the South Side Coal mine.

In 1902 the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) bought the Howe and Davidson plant, a paper board and carton manufacturer. Before this purchase, Howe and Davidson supplied paper cartons necessary for Nabisco's bakery items. In 1920 Nabisco began construction on the now iconic eight-story warehouse, which opened its doors in 1921. At the time, this was the largest industrial building in the state of Illinois outside of Chicago, and it was the only air-conditioned factory in this part of the country. The building measures approximately 180' x 150.'

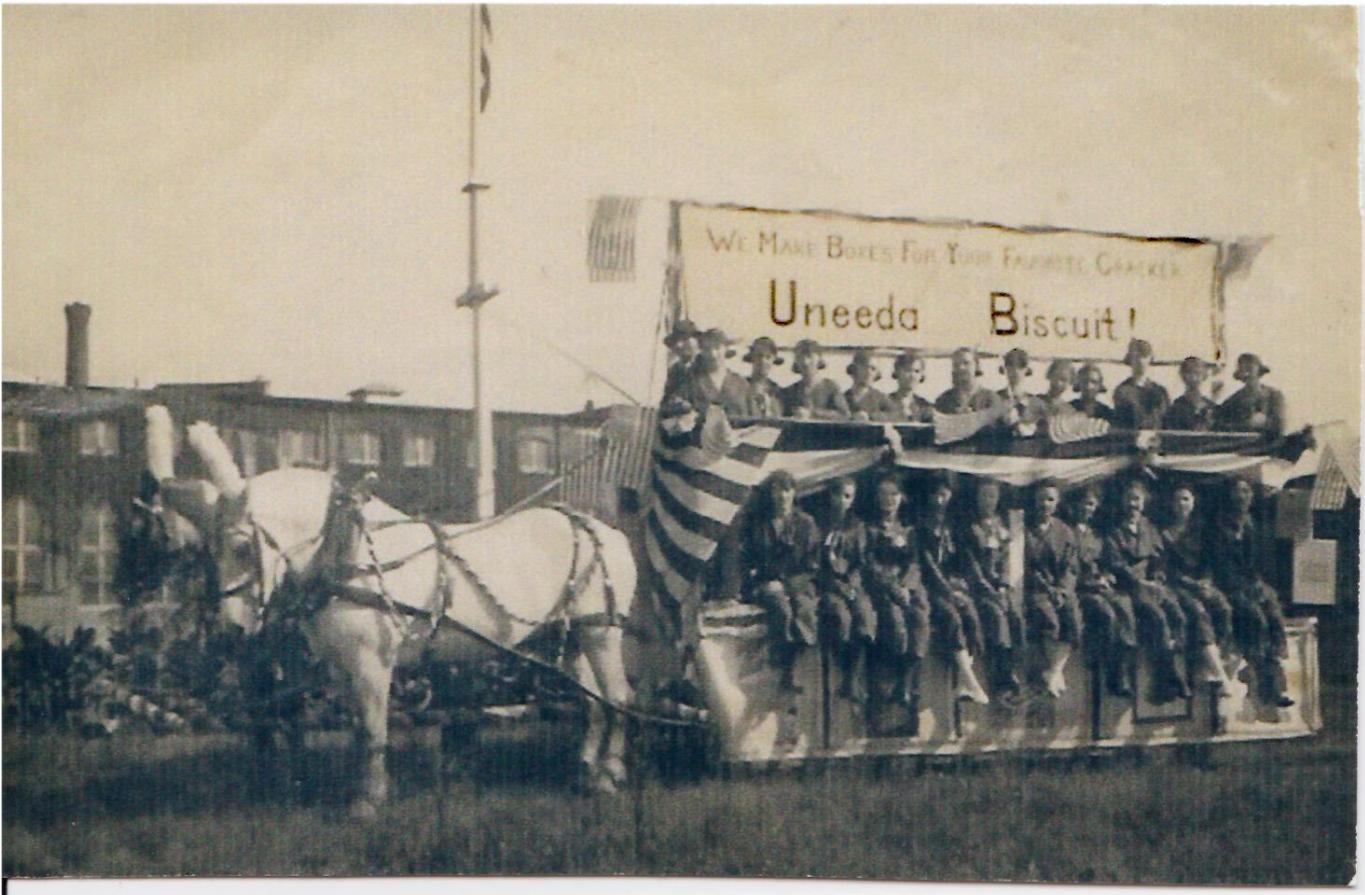
(Source: Historic American Engineering Record, 1992)



Photos, postcards and other articles scanned by Leah Egofske, June 2017.

1919, Uneeda Biscuit Boxes

The Uneeda Biscuit was National Biscuit Company's first packaged cracker.



1919
NAT BISCUIT FLOAT
MARSEILLES, IL.



Nabisco Trademarks through the years



1900



1918



1923



1941



1952



1958



TODAY

National Biscuit Carton Factory, Marseilles, Ill. 25823-r



MARSEILLES ILL
NATIONAL BISCUIT
(NABISCO)

1913 Factory District Post Card



View in Factory, District, Marseilles, Ill.

Marseilles
 Marseilles, May 8 - '13
 Dear Lou:-
 POST CARD
 THIS SPACE FOR
 THIS SPACE FOR
 THE ADDRESS
 HOW ARE YOU.
 We want to hear,
 We want you to come
 in June (early) for
 strawberries. You
 come if others can't.
 So hope today all
 tried out. Be
 sure & write you will
 come, see you by possible
 Barber Shop
 Mrs. Geo. G. Pomeroy
 1902 N. 59th St
 Chicago, Ill
 23144

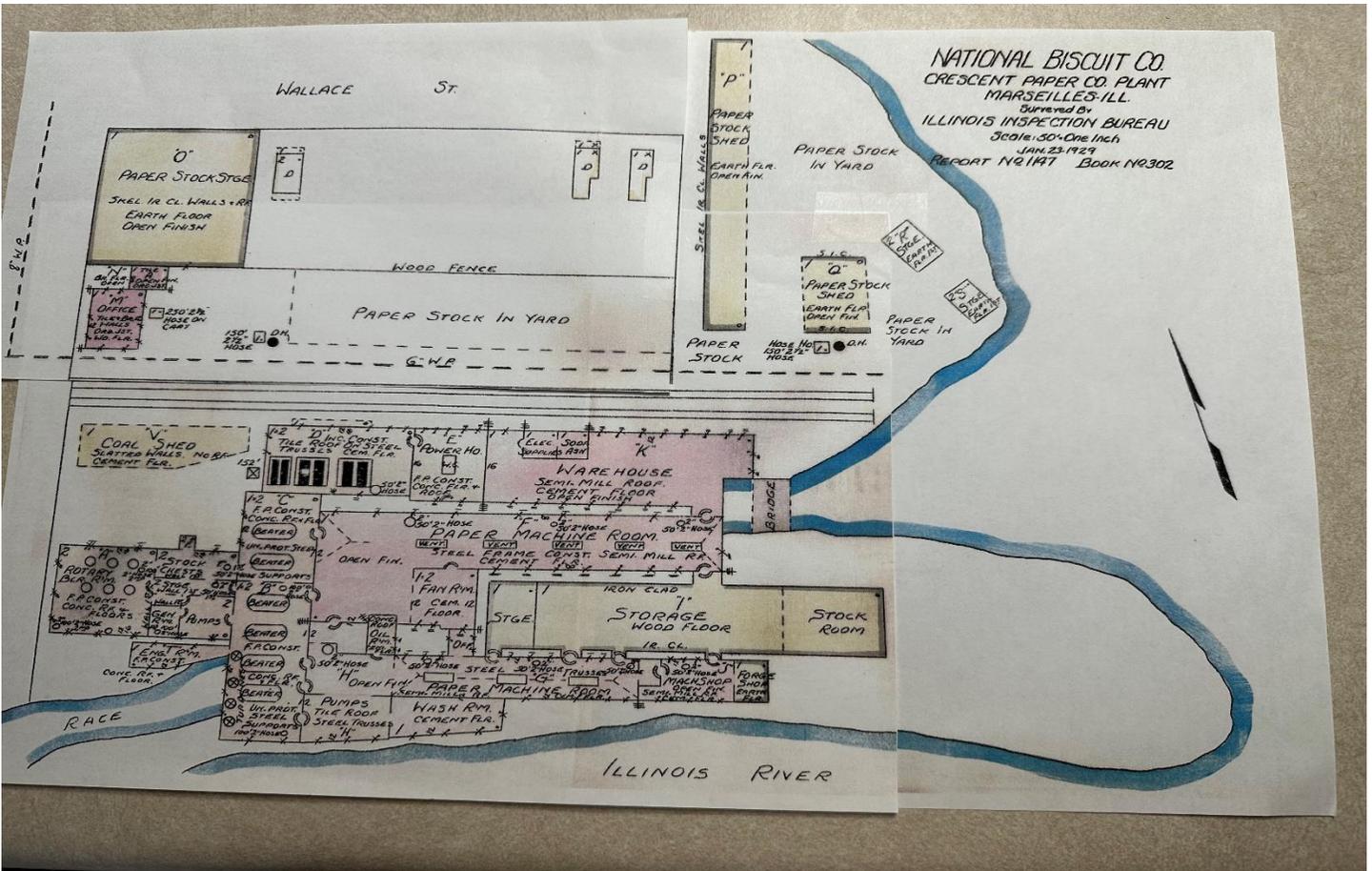




WRECKING NABISCO

8290

1921 Nabisco Expansion



1939 Nabisco Post Card

National Biscuit Co., Marseilles, Ill.



D-5933

POST CARD (REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.)

PLACE
ONE CENT
STAMP
HERE

POST CARD



1940s to Present



1962 Nabisco (National Biscuit Co. carton division) was the largest employer in Marseilles. Located at 240 Main St. it employed 410 people among whom were plant manager Howard R. Alder, traffic manager George H. Hill, purchasing agent Lewis C. Smith and the product line was boxes for Nabisco use. Since 1832 the falls at Marseilles was a source of water power for industry. In 1902 the National Biscuit Company purchased the site and expanded it into a large industrial complex. The most impressive structure, the eight-story Carton Factory (built in 1920), is one of the area's visual landmarks.

In 1984 the plant was sold to Federal Paper Box Company and in 1991 was sold again to Field Container. In 2006 the plant was closed for good. There was some conversation of the building being repurposed for possible condominiums. But that dream has yet to be fulfilled.

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