



Mercantile Agency,
Louisville, December 15th 1851.

DEAR SIR:

We herewith enclose to you a list of traders heretofore reported in your district, and would request that you send us your semi-annual Review, by the *first day of January, proximo*. During the month of January our merchants make their preparations for the spring trade, and apply to us for information concerning their customers. While, therefore, we do not wish to receive reports dated before January 1st, yet if they are delayed much after that time, it deranges our system of operations, sometimes seriously. If you cannot report all the names upon the list, together with all others who do business in your district, by the first of January, please report as many as you can at that time, and the remainder as soon thereafter as you may be able.

Our correspondents, in reporting to us the value of a trader's real estate, sometimes neglect to inform us of the liens and encumbrances thereon. Would it be too much trouble for you to refer to your county records, and there ascertain to a certainty what mortgages, judgments, &c., are entered against every trader? We have sometimes obtained this information from the county officers themselves, and also by means of traveling agents; but our experience shows, that it is hazardous to rely upon such records, unaccompanied by explanations such as you would generally be able to furnish. A few hours' labor will suffice to examine the records, and we think you will find it time profitably spent, both for yourself and for us.

Sometimes judgments and chattel mortgages will be found against those who own no real estate. These also should be noted, and if possible explained, that the credit of traders who are really responsible may not suffer thereby.

During the past season the Mercantile Agency has extended its branches into the cities of New Orleans and Charleston, and is about establishing an office in Pittsburgh, to be in operation by February next. The number of our subscribers has also largely increased, and we are happy to find that the amount of business we have been instrumental in directing to correspondents has increased in an equal, if not greater proportion. Those of our correspondents who have manifested a practical interest in our institution, by giving prompt and thorough attention to the care of their districts, have seldom if ever failed to be fully remunerated by the natural flow of business consequent thereon. Those who feel no such interest, and have made no such efforts, cannot, of course, expect to be equally remunerated; for in this business, as in all others, the labor comes first and remuneration afterwards.

The success of this Agency, the oldest in the country, has induced others to start Agencies in imitation of, and in competition with it. Some of these, with limited business, have still an existence in the eastern cities, and similar efforts are renewed every now and then, by other parties. An establishment of this kind, to prove of service to a lawyer, must necessarily have the confidence of the merchants, and their liberal patronage. Our success in this respect, we believe we may truly say, is so far before that of *all others combined*, as to give us every possible advantage, and make a connection with our Agency, in most localities, a very desirable one. Our agents are frequently and importunately urged, by some of these opposition Agencies, to act for them also. Our Association, consisting now of nine offices, labors *wholly* to promote the interests, professionally, of its correspondents, in their respective districts. We therefore think we are entitled to ask of them, that, laboring for them, as we do, to the exclusion of all others in *their profession*, they should simply reciprocate, by giving us their services, to the exclusion of all others in *our line of business*.

We hope that, endorsing our view of this matter, you will carefully note the list, at foot of this, of such offices as are in our connection, and, should you be addressed by any others, that you will decline corresponding with them, while you remain connected with us.

We shall be happy to render you any service in our power. Command us freely, and be assured we will promptly reciprocate any efforts you may make, to advance the interests of all concerned.

Awaiting your report, we remain, very respectfully, yours.

B. Douglass & Co

OUR ASSOCIATED OFFICES ARE:

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| TAPPAN & DOUGLASS.....New York. | B. DOUGLASS & Co.....Louisville. |
| WM. GOODRICH & Co.....Philadelphia. | B. DOUGLASS & Co.....St. Louis. |
| E. RUSSELL & Co.....Boston. | B. DOUGLASS & Co.....New Orleans. |
| J. D. PRATT & C.....Baltimore. | B. DOUGLASS.....Charleston. |
| B. DOUGLASS &.....Cincinnati. | |

Please return your report to Louisville