

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

264

1. Name of Property

historic name **J. Finzer & Brothers Company Building**
other names/site number JFCS512, Stewarts Dry Goods Warehouse

2. Location

street & number 419 Finzer Street not for publication N/A
city or town Louisville vicinity N/A state Kentucky code KY county Jefferson code 111
zip code 40203

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

David L. Morgan
Signature of certifying official **David L. Morgan, SHPO**

3-04-03
Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Elson G. Beall
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Jan
Signature of Keeper

4.18.03
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING Sub: tobacco processing plant

Current Functions

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
 roof Asphalt
 walls Brick
 other N/A

Narrative Description - SEE Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance	Industry
Period of Significance	1900-1924
Significant Dates	1900, 1924
Significant Person	N/A
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Architect/Builder	Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance - SEE Continuation sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .72 acres

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing	
16	609 660	4233 360	Louisville East Quad

Verbal Boundary Description: Area proposed for nomination follows the boundary of Lot number 09 021A-0125-0000 as recorded in the Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator's office.

Boundary Justification: The proposed boundaries represent the area historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donna M. Neary and Merrill Moter

date October 15, 2004

street & number 550 S. Fourth Street telephone 502-583-8888

city or town Louisville state Ky zip code 40202

Property Owner

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky
=====

Description

The J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building (JF-CS-512) is located at 419 Finzer Street in Louisville, Kentucky, on the edge of the Central Business District. The building is located in a neighborhood known as Smoketown. This resource, also known as the Five Brothers Building is located one-half block south of Broadway, a major east/west thoroughfare in Louisville. The area around the building was once populated with other factory buildings including Hillerich and Bradsby and other tobacco concerns, including a Finzer Company Warehouse in the next block east on Finzer Street (1884 Hopkins Map of Louisville). The land across Finzer Street from the building is now a vacant lot. During the 1940s the Clarksdale housing projects were built on the city blocks surrounding the Five Brothers Building.

The building, constructed circa 1900, is situated in the center of an approximately three quarters of an acre city lot. The main façade overlooks Finzer Street, renamed from Jacob Street at the turn of the century. The building occupies most of the lot, with the building constructed on the rear property line. An alley runs behind the building on the north side.

The building is a six and one-half story brick factory. The roof is flat, wood deck with asphalt and rolled roofing. Roofs of the main building are not visible from the ground. There are galvanized half round gutters and round downspouts. The building shows Romanesque details on the south, main elevation. The building is fitted with arched brick corbels at the roof on all four elevations of the elevator/stair tower.

A one story attached shipping building, an attached concrete block loading dock, and two attached wood siding basement driveway appear to be original. A radial brick chimney is one story higher than the elevator penthouse level. The attached shipping building is a 2-1/2 story high enclosed loading area. It is brick bearing walls with wood trusses. The south elevation has three overhead truck doors, with wood double-hung windows above them.

Windows are a series of three windows with intermediate mullions in each of the openings. The middle window has a second tier window which is arched and higher than the others. The south elevation has a parapet that conceals a sloped shingle roof. Windows on the east and west elevations are also sets of three double-hung windows and mullions. The clerestory at the top of the roof has windows which alternate with wooden louvers, both are badly deteriorated. Other windows are double hung wood sashes 4 over 4. Only parts of a few windows remain. Most window openings have been covered with corrugated fiberglass or polyethylene sheets. Windows are rectangular with a straight head rail and a curved wood filler panel under arched brick lintels. Sixth and seventh floor window lintels are flat.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

The building is a brick bearing wall structure with true heavy timber interior structure. Columns, beams, and floor are all heavy timber construction. The exterior brick walls are 18 inches thick at the first floor, with brick pilasters every 15 feet, located on the column lines. Pilasters extend to the sixth floor. At the third floor, the pilasters and brick walls become thinner. This is accentuated by stone caps on the pilasters and a brick belt course on the walls. Pilasters are also capped with limestone at the sixth floor level.

The basement walls are poured concrete with a concrete slab. The timber columns, beams, and floor of the basement level have been fireproofed with plaster on metal lath. There is a drive through the basement which was used by the dry goods company. This was added to the building, as the wood beams at the entries have been cut away, on the bottom of the beams. Basement windows are wood awning windows, and occur only on the alley side of the building, the north side.

The building was built as a factory and storage and distribution center for the John Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company. The building served the business until it was closed in 1924. An automobile sales company purchased the building from the Finzers, and was sold to the Stewart's Dry Goods company circa 1940 for use as a warehouse. The building exterior is painted with Stewart's Dry Goods advertising signs, which are still visible. The building is now vacant.

Integrity Evaluation

Few changes have been made to the building since its construction. The character defining feature of the building, the parapet and cornice, are intact. The addition of the drive-thru basement entrance circa 1940 does not detract from the overall integrity of the building. Windows openings are intact but in many cases are covered with plastic sheeting.

The Clarksdale Projects were constructed in the neighborhood in the 1940s. This building was serving as the Stewart's Warehouse at the time of their construction. The site for this building has remained true to its original size and configuration.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

Statement of Significance

The J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building (JF-CS-512) is significant under criterion A and is locally important for its role in tobacco manufacturing in Louisville. The period of significance for the nomination is 1900 to 1924, the period during which the building served as a tobacco production facility. This building served as a factory for the production of plug and smoking tobacco for the Finzer families' tobacco conglomerate, J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company. During the use of this building for tobacco production, the J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company was the leading manufacturer of tobacco products in Louisville.

Historical Context: Tobacco Manufacturing in Louisville, 1880 - 1945

The tobacco industry in Louisville began soon after early settlement. Louisville's location on the Ohio River made it ideal for manufacturing and shipping tobacco products. Tobacco became an important crop in Kentucky in the 1830s. Tobacco was the most important crop to early nineteenth century Virginia, and the most important to that state's economy. Kentucky's early nineteenth century economy relied heavily on tobacco and it was the second most important crop to the farmers of the state (George Yater – Two Hundred Years at the Falls).

Louisville was the center of the tobacco market in Kentucky by 1880, hosting the largest hogshead auctions, and was the center of tobacco manufacturing for the state. Louisville's location at the Falls of the Ohio gave it an advantage of access to both local and international tobacco supplies. There were many contracts with European tobacco concerns to supply tobacco to factories in Louisville (Price).

By the end of the nineteenth century Louisville was the site of the largest loose leaf tobacco market in the world. Many of the tobacco warehouses were located in the city along Main Street between Sixth and Twelfth Streets. That area of the city became known as the Tobacco District, and sometimes called the "Breaks", because of the practice of breaking open of the large wooden barrels which tobacco was stored in, called "hogsheads" (Hugh Foshee – Enterprise Tobacco Warehouse National Register Nomination). Tobacco-related buildings were also concentrated along East and West Broadway from the late nineteenth into the Twentieth century, and some still exist there today.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

The importance of tobacco to the economy of Louisville can be seen in the city directory of 1890. A review of businesses in Louisville show that all aspects of tobacco storage and manufacturing were represented in the directory. The storage of raw materials and finished products was evident in the existence of fifteen tobacco warehouses. There were sixteen manufacturing plants making tobacco twists by the turn of the century, and nearly 80 other tobacco production concerns that accounted for snuff and cigar production in Louisville. These businesses provided tobacco products across the state and the region.

By 1906 the method of packaging tobacco as loose leaf was introduced in Lexington, modeled on Virginia auctions. This new technique of loose leaf tobacco replaced the packing of twists of tobacco into barrels. The new method tied tobacco stalks and stored them in open baskets. This method took predominance over packing and sales in barrels across the statewide burley market. Lexington replaced Louisville as the center of the burley trade, with its new loose leaf auction houses, by 1930. The last hogshead auction was held in Louisville in 1930.

Tobacco use increased at the turn of the century, as did tobacco production. Cigarette consumption in 1900 was reported at approximately three billion for the year 1900. By 1916, industry figures showed an increase to twenty-five billion cigarettes smoked annually by consumers. The first blended tobacco cigarette was introduced in 1913. Those smokers who had formerly rolled their own cigarettes were moving to manufactured cigarettes in record numbers in reaction to the improved cigarettes being offered (Courier-Journal, Nov. 30, 1941).

Thirty-five billion cigarettes were consumed in 1917, the first year of the First World War. Louisville was the center of cigarette production during World War One when tobacco use by soldiers created a huge boon to the market. Tobacco industry sources reported that cigarette use doubled during the years of World War One (Courier-Journal, November30, 1941). The Louisville market of cigarettes may also have been positively impacted by the large population of soldiers stationed at Camp Taylor in Jefferson County.

Changes in state laws also increased new markets for cigarettes, and increased production met these needs. Eleven states (all located in the Midwest) repealed laws which had prohibiting smoking and therefore the sale or purchase of cigarettes. Following the repeal of the ban on cigarettes, Iowa became the first state to levy a tax on cigarette sales (Courier-Journal, November30, 1941).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

The burley tobacco market hit on hard times in 1920 when weather conditions resulted in poor quality tobacco being grown in the state. Demand had not declined, but the substandard product threatened the market. A group of Kentucky businessmen, including Robert Worth Bingham of Louisville, worked to form the Burley Tobacco Growers cooperative Association to help increase the quality, and thus the price of tobacco on the market. These efforts quickly restored the market and made growing tobacco profitable once again. In fact, the tobacco industry, unlike others in Louisville, thrived during the Depression era of the 1930s.

A major boon to the cigarette industry was the increased use of cigarettes by female consumers. The returning Doughboys brought their cigarette habits home with them following World War One, and the women in their lives began acquiring the habit. An advertising campaign for Lucky cigarettes appealed to the stated desires of women in America during the Flapper-era of slim, boyish figures to shed the "old fashioned figure" and aspire to "the slim,...when diets were at their height." The slogan, "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet" resulted in millions of women choosing to have a cigarette instead of candy. This assertion is born out by the cigarette sales figures of 1928, when with the added female consumer's cigarette consumption recorded total cigarette consumption figures in that year to exceed 100 billion cigarettes for the first time in history (Courier-Journal, November 14, 1941).

Brown and Williamson opened a factory in Louisville in 1929, and moved its headquarters to Louisville by 1931. By 1931 the tobacco industry in Kentucky was bringing in approximately 150 million dollars annually, and tobacco farmers were earning nearly 100 million dollars for their produce (Lexington Herald Leader, November 19, 1931). The British-American Tobacco Company moved to Louisville in 1931 from its former United States headquarters from New York City in 1931. By 1934, the Axton Fisher Company, the largest independent tobacco company in America, was grossing \$28 million in sales, thanks in large part to the introduction of "Spud" the first mentholated cigarette (Price). The tobacco industry continued to grow with increased production and sales throughout the mid-twentieth century, and by 1944 Philip Morris purchased the Axton Fisher Tobacco Company and took over production at its facilities.

Philip Morris' acquisition marks a trend in the Louisville tobacco industry of large companies purchasing smaller, local tobacco companies and creating large conglomerates. The importance of the Louisville tobacco market is illustrated by the move of two international tobacco companies, British-American Tobacco and Phillip Morris, to Louisville in the 1930s and 1940s. This trend in the tobacco industry

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

documents the movement from indepently owned, multiple tobacco factories making small batches of products to a few large, international companies making numerous brands of cigarettes, and other tobacco products.

History of the Five Brothers/J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company and 419 Finzer Street Building

The Finzer family immigrated to the United States from Kappeln, Swithzerland in 1853, and moved directly to Louisville. The brothers, John, Benjamin, Frederick, Rudolph and Nicholas, were educated in Louisville and worked at jobs in the tobacco industry. The brothers were educated in the public schools in the city, and brother Nicholas committed funds and attention to the cause of public education throughout his adult life (Hedgepeth, Nicholas Finzer Residence National Register nomination).

The brothers combined their financial resources and in 1866 began the Five Brothers Tobacco Company. The company began as a small business but continued to grow until the 1870s when the brothers opened a larger factory at Jacob and Jackson Streets. The J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company operated several buildings and facilities in the manufacturing of both plug and smoking tobacco with company buildings located on Jacob, Jackson and Laurel Streets.

The company's building at Jacob and Jackson was destroyed by fire in 1880. The company continued operation in existing buildings (location unknown) until the company completed a new building on the same site at 434 Finzer Street (now demolished). J. Finzer & Company owned the lot at 419 Finzer Street by 1884. It appears that this building at 419 Finzer Street was constructed following the fire, c. 1890-1900, in response to the growing market for Finzer tobacco products. It also appears that the name change to J. Finzer & Brothers Company took place at this time.

The company became one of the most successful tobacco concerns in the city by the end of the 1880s (Watkins, *The Tobacco Trade of Louisville*). The company was producing five million pounds of tobacco products by 1887, in a market where a total of approximately 125,000 hogsheads (barrels) of tobacco were sold in Louisville in the same year. These figures show the J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company as the leading manufacturer of tobacco in Louisville, employing six hundred "men, women, and children" (Louisville Board of Trade, *The City of Louisville and a Glimpse of Kentucky*, 1887).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Building, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

The youngest brother, Nicholas Finzer, became the president of the J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco company in 1889. During the same year Nick Finzer was elected president of the Leaf Tobacco Exchange. This organization had succeeded the Buyer's Association, also led by Nick Finzer, which was dissolved in 1885 (Watkins). It was under the direction of Nicholas Finzer that the J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco business grew into one of the most well-known manufacturers of plug and smoking tobacco in the United States (Hedgepeth).

The Company published a newspaper called *The Tabacconist*, which had a monthly circulation of 32,000 (Steven R. Price, "Tobacco" – Encyclopedia of Louisville). The company sold the *Tabacconist* newspaper to the American Tobacco Company in 1904. The American Tobacco Company discontinued the paper in 1924.

The J. Finzer & Company was known nationally for the quality of its plug and chewing tobaccos. The "Old Honesty" Brand was the most popular plug tobacco for the company at the turn of the century. A directory for the "Made In Louisville Exposition", held in Louisville in 1913, lists the J. Finzer & Brothers in the listings for both plug, and smoking tobaccos being manufactured in Louisville. The J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company held its position as a top volume producer of tobacco well into the first decades of the twentieth century.

The Finzer Company appears to have gone out of business in 1924, following the death of Nicholas Finzer. The company listings disappear from the city directories and this building is listed as vacant. The J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Building stood vacant from 1924 to 1928 when it was purchased for use by an automobile business, the Louisville Auto Dealer Association. The building later served as the warehouse for Stewart's, a dry goods retailer.

As were other industrialists, and city leaders, the Finzer brothers were memorialized in a plot at Cave Hill Cemetery by a large obelisk monument. The Finzer family monument, central to a family plot, is topped by an angel reaching heavenward, surrounded by the busts of the five brothers.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Warehouse, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

Bibliography

Courier-Journal Clipping Files. Louisville Free Public Library. Various topics and dates.

Foshee, Hugh. Enterprise Tobacco Warehouse National Register Nomination, 1980.

Hedgepeth, Marty Poynter. Nicholas Finzer Residence National Register Nomination, 1978.

Hopkins, G.T. Map of Louisville, Kentucky, 1884.

Kleber, John, Editor. The Encyclopedia of Louisville. 2000.

Lexington Herald-Leader. Various Dates.

Louisville Board of Trade. The City of Louisville and a Glimpse of Kentucky. Louisville: Courier-Journal Job Printing Co., 1887.

Molony, Charles. "180 Billion Cigarettes a Year – That's How Big the Industry Is: Louisville's contribution of 1-cent brands plays big role in development." Courier-Journal. November 30, 1941.

Price, Steven R. "Tobacco". The Encyclopedia of Louisville, 2000.

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, various years.

Watkins, Thomas G. "The Tobacco Trade in Louisville", in J. Stoddard Johnson's. A Memorial History of Louisville. 1895.

Yater, George. Two Hundred Years At the Falls of the Ohio. 1987.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs

Page 1

J. Finzer & Brothers Tobacco Company Warehouse, Jefferson County, Kentucky

=====

All photographs share the following information:

Photographer:	Donna M. Neary
Date:	November 26, 2002
Negatives:	On file with photographer

419 Finzer Street
Louisville, Kentucky

1. Facing North
2. Facing Northeast
3. Facing Northeast
4. Facing South
5. Facing South
6. Facing Southeast