

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1489

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name J. T. S. Brown & Son's Complex

other names/site number JFCD 2 and 3

### 2. Location

street & number 105, 107-109 West Main Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Louisville N/A  vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Jefferson code 111 zip code 40202

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
David L. Morgan, SHPO and  
Executive Director, KHC 10-29-98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 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): \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 12/10/98

J. T. S. Brown & Sons Complex  
Name of Property

Jefferson, Kentucky  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Warehouse

Commerce/Trade: Business

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

Chicago

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Limestone

walls Brick

Stone/Limestone

roof Asphalt

other Cast-iron

Terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce  
Architecture  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1877-1920 (105 West Main Street)  
1905-1920 (107-109 West Main Street)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1877 (Construction, 105 West Main)  
1905 (Construction, 107-109 West Main)  
1920 (Beginning of Prohibition)

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Whitestone, Henry  
Murphy, Dennis Xavier

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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:**

The Filson Club

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately .25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1 6	6 0 9 2 1 0 0	4 2 3 4 8 1 2 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carl E. Kramer, Ph.D., Vice President

organization Kramer Associates, Inc. date May 22, 1998

street & number 38 Forest Drive telephone (812) 284-3830

city or town Jeffersonville state IN zip code 47130

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name 105 West Main Street Partners, LLC

street & number 222 South First Street, Suite 206 telephone (502) 562-9220

city or town Louisville state KY zip code 40202-1367

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

J. T. S. Brown & Sons, Inc., Complex, Louisville, Jefferson Co., Kentucky

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The buildings at 105 and 107-109 West Main Street are adjoining, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commercial structures that share a common load-bearing wall as well as a common association with Louisville's historic whiskey distilling and wholesaling business. They are located in the north-central portion of Louisville in the central business district (CBD), near the eastern end of the 100 block of West Main Street, on the high southern bank of the Ohio River.

Main Street is the northern axis of the gridiron street that defines most of central, southern, and eastern Louisville. Like other east-west streets in Louisville's CBD, Main Street is a bit wider than those that run north to south. Washington Street, a narrow street that provides basement level access at the rear of the buildings, parallels Main Street, but it is not a major thoroughfare.

The two structures under consideration here are part of a complete block of commercial structures on the north side of Main Street between First and Second streets that were determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. The district was not listed because of opposition from a majority of building owners. However, two other structures in the block have been listed on the National Register. The former Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company headquarters at 129-133 West Main Street, designed by Henry Whitestone and completed in 1877, was listed in 1973. The Beaux Arts-style structure at 121 West Main Street, completed about 1893 and occupied in succession by distillers William H. Thomas, Isaac Bernheim, and George P. Weller until Prohibition, was listed in 1979. Several blocks to the west is the West Main Street National Register District, which includes part of the 500 block and all of the 600 through 800 blocks of West Main.

### 105 West Main Street

The building located at 105 West Main Street, is a Renaissance Revival style structure that exhibits Gothic stylistic tendencies. It was constructed about 1877 according to designs attributed to Henry Whitestone, one of Louisville's most distinguished mid-nineteenth-century architects.

The four-story structure has a narrow, three-bay width. The ground level consists of an ornate cast iron facade with quoins, two delicately rounded columns on

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J. T. S. Brown & Sons, Inc., Complex, Louisville, Jefferson Co., Kentucky

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either side of the central doorway, and five egg-and-dart motifs at the lower cornice line. The upper stories rise on incised brick pilasters with corresponding cornices on the second and third stories, and a wide segmental arch on the fourth level. A stone pediment with a single rosette set within the tympanum accents the central bay, which is projected on the second and third stories. Adding height to the slender structure is a bracketed cornice. The ground level display windows as well as the windows on the upper floors have been boarded.

The structure has a basement-level entrance on the West Washington (north) side of the building, reflecting the historic river-oriented commercial function. Structures erected on the north side of Main Street during the nineteenth century typically had basement stories that opened onto the Ohio River, enabling stevedores to move goods involved in river commerce to and from the city wharf without having to push them up the steep embankment to Main Street. The building is rectangular in plan, measuring 204 feet deep and 25 feet wide, and has zero setback from the wide sidewalk.

The present structure was constructed as a whiskey warehouse on the foundation of a similar building occupied by the firm of Cochran and Fulton, a prominent liquor wholesale, from 1861 to 1877, when the original structure was destroyed by fire. After the fire, Cochran and Fulton transferred operations to another nearby warehouse. The new building, which was owned at the time of its construction by Thomas Fosdick, housed a succession of large-scale whiskey wholesalers and distillers, including W. H. Thomas and Son, from 1882-1894; J. T. S. Brown & Sons, from 1895-1905; and D. Sachs and Sons, 1906 to the beginning of Prohibition in 1920 (*Caron's Louisville Directory*, 1882-1920).

### **J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building, 107-109 West Main Street**

Erected in 1905, this Chicago School structure typifies early twentieth-century commercial design and displays numerous classical motifs. It was built by the firm of J. T. S. Brown & Sons, a prominent distilling and wholesale whiskey firm founded in 1855. The company had occupied several different structures along Main Streets during its history, including adjoining 105 West Main Street from 1895 until it moved into its new headquarters.

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J. T. S. Brown & Sons, Inc., Complex, Louisville, Jefferson Co., Kentucky

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Before construction of the present structure, the site was occupied by several wholesale liquor dealers, a flour mill, and a woolen mill. Although no signed plans for the present structure have been located, its similarity to 528 West Main Street, built in 1889 according to a design by Louisville architect D. X. Murphy, it can be reasonably assumed that Murphy designed this building.

The building at 107-109 West Main Street is a wide, four-story structure composed of white glazed brick. Its facade has a symmetrical, tri-part organization. The ground level consists of a cast iron front set within glazed brick which is delineated by an egg-and-dart trim of terra cotta. The cast iron members bear an ornate, foliated relief pattern. The central entry is marked by two free-standing, fluted columns and arched ironwork above. The name J. T. S. Brown & Sons is inscribed in cast iron immediately over the central entryway opening. All transom glass is, as in the upper stories, multi-paned and visually prominent.

Fenestration of the upper stories is organized into three window pairs each, and these are set within a vertical grid of glazed brick. The grid is emphasized by vertical spirals of terra cotta trim. A large cornice embellished with bas relief design and volute brackets occurs above the fourth story windows. The upper portion of the facade is formed by a parapet which has two decorative terra cotta squares which repeat the bas relief motif of the cornice and a central disc with egg-and-dart trim. The first floor glass windows have been boarded, but the cast iron frame work is still clearly visible. Like adjoining 105 West Main, it has a rectangular plan and measures 204 feet deep, 45 feet, 7 inches wide, and has zero setback from the sidewalk.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries chosen for these structures are based on the original lots historically associated with these buildings and their predecessors, which shared a common architectural style, historic development, and function, particularly their joint historical association with the distilling and wholesale whiskey firm of J.T.S Brown & Sons, which is the basis for their historical and architectural significance. Several of the remaining buildings on the north side of the 100 block of West Main Street also had historical associations with the distilling and wholesale whisky

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J. T. S. Brown & Sons, Inc., Complex, Louisville, Jefferson Co., Kentucky

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business and are part of the context of the structures currently under nomination.

The entire block was certified as National Register-eligible in 1989, but it was not listed because of opposition from the majority of property owners. The Belknap Hardware Company Complex, sited in the blocks north and east of 100 West Main, has buildings which are clearly eligible for listing in the National Register, but they are of a much different character, style, and historical function.

### Archaeological Potential

Archaeological investigations that have been conducted in central Louisville have yielded little valuable information. Archaeological survey, excavation, and/or incidental discovery or monitoring occurred at the following urban sites: The Tarascon Mill at Shippingport Island, the cistern at the Louisville Science Center (formerly the Louisville Museum of Natural History and Science) at 727 West Main Street, the site of the Will Sales/Courier-Journal Building in the 400 block of South Fourth Street, and the Lions Garden at 1015 South Preston Street. In each instance the investigation yielded little historic information, primarily because of the disturbance of cultural resources by continual urban modification.

An archaeological investigation of 105, 107-109 West Main Street probably would produce the same result, because of the numerous constructions and reconstructions which have occurred on the site between initial construction in the mid-nineteenth century and 1905, when the most recent construction was completed. At this time no investigation has been made to discover if remains exist at the site, and no modifications are anticipated by the current owner-developer which would cause disturbance of or below the basement levels of the buildings. If, however, in the course of work, it becomes evident that the site might reveal archaeological information, it is recommended that work cease and the appropriate Kentucky Heritage Council staff be notified.



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J. T. S. Brown &amp; Sons, Inc., Complex, Louisville, Jefferson Co., Kentucky

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The two-building complex composed of 105 West Main Street and the adjoining J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building at 107-109 West Main Street meets criterion "A" and is locally significant as a major center of commerce and development between the mid-nineteenth century and 1920. The structures are being evaluated in the context of "Louisville's Distilling and Wholesale Whiskey Industry, 1877-1920" and specifically the complex's association with the firm of J. T. S. Brown & Sons.

The complex is also meets criterion "C" and is being evaluated in the context of its association with "Henry Whitestone and D. X. Murphy, Louisville's Master Architects of the Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries" and as an example of the sophisticated use of "Cast-Iron and Glazed Architectural Terra Cotta" to enrich the buildings' commercial facades.

**Louisville's Distilling and Wholesale Whiskey Industry, 1877-1920**

The distilling and wholesaling of whiskey has been a part of Louisville's economy since the city's early settlement. One of the first acts of the Kentucky County Court in June 1780 was to establish rules to control distilling. At that time, Evan Williams, Marsham Brashears, and Jacob Myers were already producing whiskey in Louisville (Yater, 1987). In 1819 a New England company invested \$100,000 in construction of the Hope Distillery at the western end of Main Street near Portland Avenue. The enterprise proved a failure, and the industry grew slowly through the pre-Civil War decades (Casseday, 1852). Nevertheless, several firms appeared during this period, some of which became prominent in the trade. John Cochran established a wholesaling operation on Main Street in 1835. This firm later became known as the Cochran-Fulton Company when Edward Fulton joined G. H. Cochran, the founder's son, as a partner. By 1891 Cochran-Fulton was the city's oldest whiskey wholesaler (*Courier-Journal*, Jan. 1, 1891).

The industry gathered momentum during the Civil War as the United States Army purchased large quantities of liquor for use as a pain-killer to treat wounded soldiers. Several government liquor warehouses were established to facilitate the military trade. The greatest period of expansion occurred after the Civil War, as firms such as Taylor & Williams (1866), S. Lehman & Sons (1869), Applegate & Sons (1869), Phil Hollenbach & Co. (1871), W. S. Harris (1872), Sweetwood

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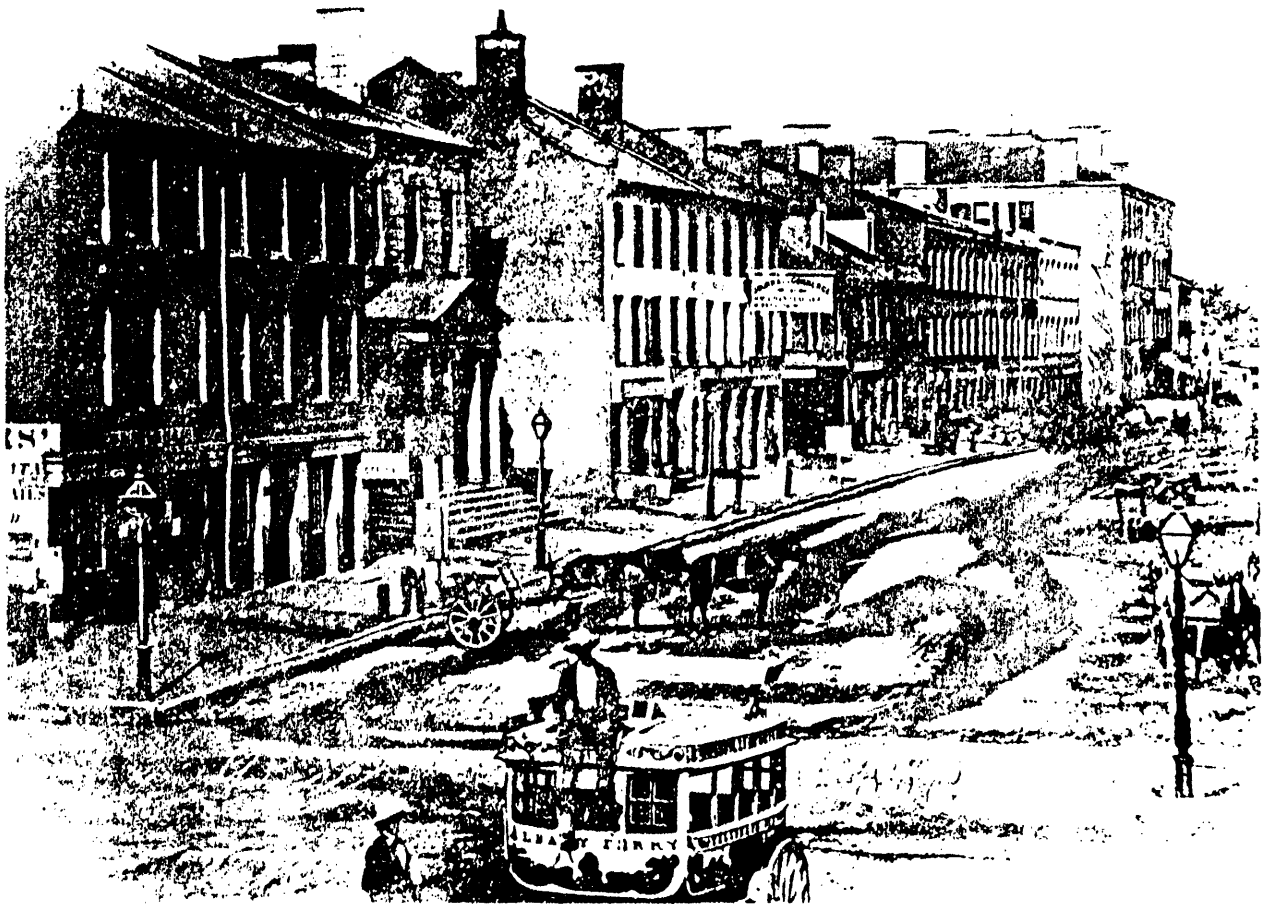
Distillery Co. (1888) established operations along Main Street between first and Ninth Streets (*Courier-Journal*, Jan. 1, 1891). By the mid-1870s so many distillers, blenders, and wholesalers had set up operations that this stretch of Main Street was known locally as "Whiskey Row" (Pearce, 1970). In 1905 the 100 block of West Main Street alone had at least nineteen distillers, wholesalers, and other whiskey-related businesses, including J. T. S. Brown & Sons, Inc.

In addition to producing whiskey in local distilleries, many Louisville wholesalers handled whiskey produced by distilleries in outlying communities such as Lawrenceburg, Frankfort, Owensboro, and Bardstown. Louisville wholesalers purchased Bourbon whiskey, blended it to suit their particular clients and shipped it to both local and distant markets via steamboat or rail, both of which modes were immediately available to riverfront warehouses. By 1887 the city's Bourbon whiskey shipments totaled 119,637 barrels. A decade later, the city had nineteen distilleries, along with handling the production of Nelson, Franklin, Daviess, Anderson, and other counties. Distilling remained one of Louisville's major industries until 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect, forcing the closing of nearly thirty distilleries and destroying an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 jobs in the distilling industries (Yater, 1987).

With the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 Louisville again became one of the nation's leading whiskey distilling centers. But few of the firms that had been put out of business in 1920 reestablished operations, and most of those that did operated on a much larger scale, frequently under absentee ownership. While distilling remains one of Louisville's distinguishing industries, it constitutes a very small part of the city's economic base.

### **Henry Whitestone and D. X. Murphy, Louisville's Master Architects of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

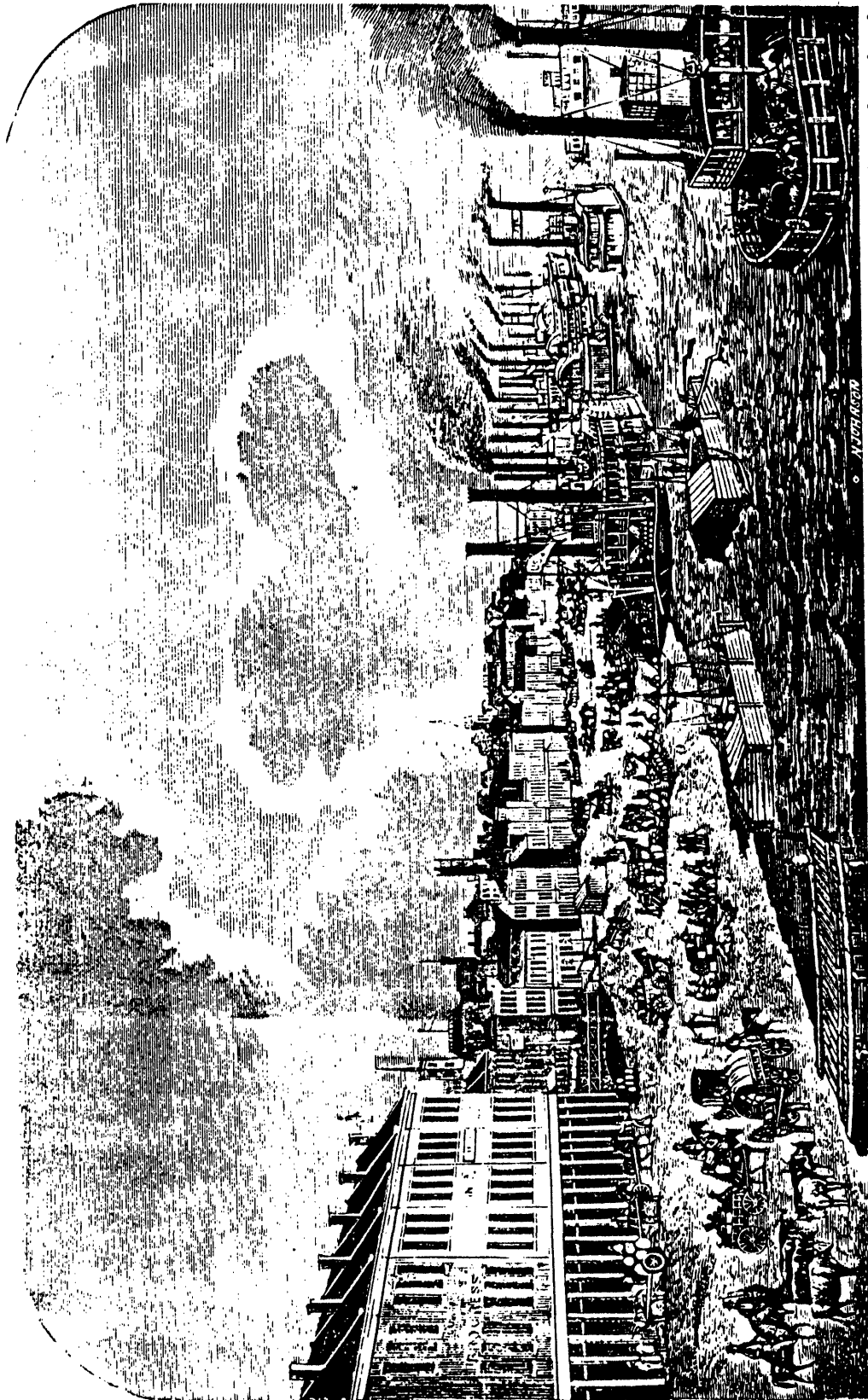
The J. T. S. Brown & Son's complex is architecturally significant because of its apparent association with Henry Whitestone and D. X. Murphy, two of Louisville's most creative and prolific architects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and because of the artistic use of cast iron and terra cotta as decorative building materials.



Belknap's, U.S. Branch Bank and Galt House are in this 1850 view of Main Street looking east from 3rd.  
98.

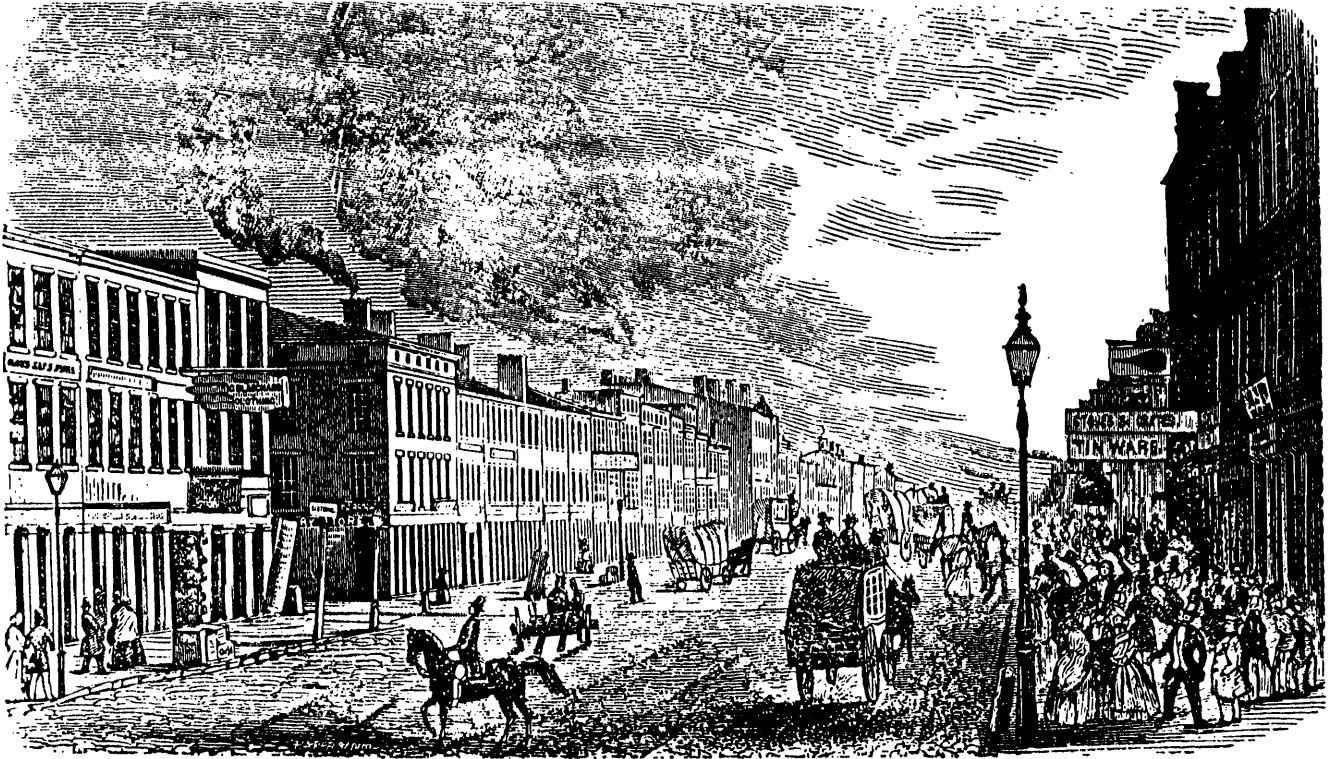
View of the north side of the block adjoining the 100 block of West Main Street, where the J. T. S. Brown & Sons complex is located.

From: Samuel W. Thomas, Views of Louisville since 1766 (1971)



This scene of the public landing in 1856 is probably the most explicit view ever made of stevedores loading boats along the wharf. 161.

Typical view of north (rear) side of Main Street depicting movement of goods from wharf to ground-level floor, which would have been below the front entrance level. Copied from Samuel W. Thomas, Views of Louisville since 1766 (1971)



*During the post-Civil War period, the establishment of distilling, rectifying and bottling plants along Louisville's Main Street caused it to become known as "Whiskey Row."*

From: John Ed Pearce, Nothing Better in the Market (1970)

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Born in County Cork, Ireland in 1819, Whitestone emigrated to the United States in 1852 and settled in Louisville the following year. He studied under Isaiah Rogers, designer of Boston's Tremont House hotel, and subsequently became his mentor's partner. Among their joint works was the four-story, limestone-faced W. B. Reynolds Building at the southwest corner of Sixth and Main Streets, a structure which now houses the Louisville Development Authority and the Louisville Chamber of Commerce.

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century Whitestone became Louisville's leading exponent of the Italianate Renaissance Revival style and one of the city's most innovative and prolific nineteenth-century architects. The popularity and extremely high standards of his work are reflected in the more than eighty known structures which he designed in the Louisville area (Jones, 1974). His clients for domestic architecture included many of the city's most prominent business leaders, who commissioned him to design palatial homes in the rapidly growing residential neighborhood south of Broadway. Among his extant residential structures are Landward House (1872), built for Presbyterian minister Rev. Stuart Robinson, on South Fourth Street, and the Peterson-Dumesnil House in the Crescent Hill neighborhood. Both are on the National Register.

But Whitestone is perhaps even better known for his commercial architecture, including the Gustavus Schurman complex on the south side of Main between Seventh and Eighth streets, and the former Louisville & Nashville Railroad headquarters at 129-133 West Main, erected in 1875. Whitestone executed his structures primarily in limestone, but he used cast iron in many of his Main Street buildings to tie them to adjoining buildings, a characteristic which is apparent in 105 West Main Street (Kramer, 1980; Jones, 1974; Brown, 1966).

Louisville-born D. X. Murphy (1854-1933) began his career as a draftsman in Whitestone's office and took over his master's practice when Whitestone died in 1880. He subsequently took on his younger brother, James C. Murphy (1864-1835), as a partner, and the firm became known as D. X. Murphy & Bro. By the beginning of the twentieth century, D. X. Murphy had developed a reputation that rivaled his mentor's, specializing particularly in commercial, industrial, and institutional design. During its long career, his firm was involved in such major projects as the church and rectory of St. Boniface, the Jefferson County Jail,

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Churchill Downs race track, Waverly Hills Sanitarium, and Bourbon Stock Yards  
(Withey, 1956; Kramer, 1990).

### Cast-Iron and Terra Cotta

In addition to their probable architects, the buildings at 105 and 107-109 West Main Street are significant examples of the use of cast iron and terra cotta as building materials. The use of cast-iron in architecture was perfected during the 1840s, primarily by New York foundrymen James Borgardus and Daniel D. Badger. As a building material, cast-iron had several advantages that appealed to merchants. First, it was a very flexible material, which facilitated the enclosure of large open spaces needed for warehouses and other commercial buildings.

Equally important were the speed and economy with which cast-iron facades could be constructed. The key was mass production. After the individual sections of a front were cast and finished, the smaller elements were assembled and bolted together at the foundry. Before delivery to the customer, all parts of the facade were laid into place, numbered, tested for fit, and given a coat of protective paint. Once the prefabricated parts were at the construction site, they were bolted together, one story on top of another, and then the entire unit was anchored to the building's side walls. (Jones, 1974; Gayle and Gillon, 1974; Kramer, 1980).

The use of modern engineering techniques to mass produce building facades facilitated the construction of elegant commercial buildings at a relatively low cost. This may be even more the case in Louisville, which boasted numerous foundries and architectural iron works companies, such as Merz Architectural Iron Works, Snead Iron Company, and Phoenix Foundry and Machine Shop.

But mass production did not necessarily mean uniformity in design of cast-iron facades. Indeed, the easy availability of cast iron in Louisville, combined with the artistry of architects such as Whitestone and Murphy, also made it possible to produce unique facades that reflected the particular needs and tastes of the client. In any case, the material's attributes helped give Louisville its distinction as having the best collection of buildings with cast-iron facades outside New York City and Portland, Oregon (Weeter, 1989).

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In addition to cast-iron, the J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building (107-109 West Main) also makes extensive use of architectural terra cotta as a decorative feature that adds to its artistic value. This characteristic reflects the building's construction during a period of transition in both the direction of Louisville's growth and in the materials favored by architects. Cast-iron had its heyday during the second half of the nineteenth century, primarily in the Main Street wholesaling district. While some development continued on Main Street after the turn of the century, the primary direction of growth was southward. Accompanying this change in direction was a change in styles and materials, including the introduction of glazed architectural terra cotta.

The J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building was simultaneously one of the last Main Street Renaissance Revival palaces with a cast-iron facade and one of the first structures in the CBD to use terra cotta. Thus, numerous Louisville commercial buildings display prominent use of terra cotta, including the J. Dolfinger and Company Building (National Register, 1990), the Starks Building (National Register, 1987), and works by John Ebersson, McDonald and Dodd, Dodd and Cobb, and J. J. Gaffney, among others. However, virtually all these structures were erected between 1910 and the early 1940s, after cast-iron passed from common usage, and are located well south of Main Street (Weeter, 1990).

**Historical Development--105 West Main Street**

Main Street has been a primary residential and commercial artery in Louisville since the city's founding in 1778. By the mid-1850s the street was lined with brick and frame buildings, mostly of one or two stories, serving both residential and commercial functions. As the city grew in population and expanded in area between the 1850s and the beginning of the twentieth century, specialized residential, commercial, and industrial districts began to emerge. Because of its proximity to the Ohio River and the city wharf, Main Street increasingly specialized in wholesale commercial activity tied to maritime traffic. In the process, residential structure gave way to commercial buildings and one- and two-story buildings were replaced by substantial masonry that reached as many as four stories (Kramer, 1978, 1980).



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The site of 105 West Main was once part of the estate of Robert Ormsby, one of the city's early merchant princes. After his death, the estate was sold to William W. Worsley, a local printer and publisher, who resided there as late as 1852. In December 1852 the estate was partitioned between James E. Breed, who obtained present 101-103 West Main, and Thomas Fosdick, who purchased the lot that became Lot 24, which is 105 West Main Street. Fosdick subsequently erected a warehouse on the site; the structure housed a warehouse operated by the distillery company of Cochran and Fulton from 1861 until December 1877, when the building was destroyed by fire (Weeter, 1988).

After the fire, Cochran and Fulton transferred its operations to another nearby warehouse, and Fosdick erected the present warehouse structure on the foundation of the original building. Because the company had previously occupied the site, the new building has sometimes been identified as the Cochran and Fulton Warehouse, but this is erroneous.

One of the first occupants of the new facility was W. H. Thomas & Son, a wholesale whiskey dealership owned by William H. Thomas and his son, Percy. Established about 1871, the firm moved its offices to 105 West Main Street in 1882 and remained there until 1895. The company was described in the January 1, 1891, edition of the *Courier-Journal* as "handling the oldest and best qualities of fine Kentucky whiskeys in the market. . . . Their office and sales room premises . . . at 105 West Main [afford] every convenience and facility for storage and handling and in addition they have a very large amount of fine stock stored in bonded and free warehouses here and elsewhere in this country and at Bremen, Germany."

The article noted further that the company handled "stocks only in original packages. Their list embraces all of the best and most popular brands of Kentucky whiskeys, including a specially large amount of fine goods from three to ten years old." In addition to his own wholesaling operation, W. H. Thomas was deeply involved in local financial and distilling interests, serving as a director of the Kentucky National Bank, proprietor of the Old Gordon Distillery at Harrodsburg, and a one-third owner of the J. O. Mattingly Distillery in Louisville (*Courier-Journal*, Jan. 1, 1891).

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When W. H. Thomas & Son moved to other quarters in 1895, it was replaced at 105 West Main Street by J. T. S. Brown & Sons, which moved from its most recent headquarters at 747 West Main Street. Founded in 1855, this company was one of Louisville's oldest distillers and whiskey wholesalers. At the time the firm moved to 105 West Main, it was operated John Thompson Street Brown and his five sons--J. T. S., Jr., Graham, Davis, Hewett, and Creel (*Courier-Journal*, Oct. 1, 1905).

J. T. S. Brown & Sons also operated the Old Prentice Distillery in Anderson County, whose products included Old Prentice, a bourbon whiskey named for S. S. Prentiss, a prominent nineteenth-century politician known for his ability build a fire among Kentucky audiences after they had swallowed a few drinks of bourbon (Kroll, 1967). Additional discussion of J. T. S. Brown & Sons company appears below in connection with their building at 107-109 West Main Street.

D. Sachs & Company replaced J. T. S. Brown & Sons at 105 West Main in 1905, when the latter firm moved into its new headquarters next door. Established by David Sachs as D. Sachs & Company in 1872, the company became known as D. Sachs & Sons in 1880, when Morris D. And Edward Sachs joined their father in the business. Known for its Oakland and Delmonico's brands, D. Sachs & Sons had its offices at the Board of Trade Building on Third street as late as 1891 and operated a warehouse at 109 West Main from 1895 through 1905, when J. T. S. Brown & Sons consolidated the adjoining lots at 107 and 109 West Main and built its new headquarters and warehouse. In effect, the Brown and Sachs firms traded places in 1905, and the latter remained at 105 West Main until the beginning of national Prohibition in 1920 (*Courier-Journal*, Jan. 1, 1891).

Since 1920, the structure has housed a variety of business activities, mostly of a wholesale and warehouse nature. From the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s it was back in the whiskey business, serving as a warehouse for W. W. Dant Distillery Company and Kunz's, Inc., wholesale liquors. By 1951 it housed Allied Contractors. Five years later it served as offices for Heffner & Cecil Accountants and Dennison Manufacturing Company, which produced paper products. Since the mid 1950s it has housed a coin dealership and a succession of night clubs. It has been vacant since the late 1980s (Caron's *Louisville Directory*, 1920-1955).

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### **Architectural Development--105 West Main Street**

The design of this Renaissance Revival structure is attributed to Henry Whitestone on the basis of a deed between Thomas Fosdick, owner of the present lot, and Thomas L. Barrett, executor for Salinas S. Hite, deceased, to whose estate the property west of Fosdick's belonged. The agreement concerns reconstruction of their party wall, following the fire in December 1878 and mentions the necessity of first cleaning the rubbish at 105 West Main, taking down portions of the front and rear walls, and removing archways across the middle of the store. The deed was signed by both parties in Whitestone's presence. It seems reasonable to assume that Whitestone would not have had any involvement in the legal transaction unless he was going to be involved in designing the new structure that would replace the one destroyed by fire (Weeter, 1988).

A protégé and later partner of Isaiah Rogers, Whitestone was one of Louisville's most innovative and prolific nineteenth-century architects. During the third quarter of the century he became the city's leading exponent of the Italianate Renaissance Revival style. Among his more significant extant works are the former Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company building at 129-133 West Main Street; the Peterson-Dumesnil House in the Crescent Hill neighborhood, and the original Seelbach Hotel at southwest corner of Sixth and Main streets, all of which are listed on the National Register.

Like other Victorian commercial structures of its style, 105 West Main is characterized by first-floor office space topped by warehouse storage. It offers street-level access in the front and basement level access from Washington Street in the rear. The Main Street level first floor has large glass windows and doors, while the upper stories have elongated Italianate-style windows which allowed natural light to penetrate each floor of warehouse storage space.

The structure's most character-giving feature is its cast iron street-level storefront. The availability of cast iron at a competitive price was a determinative factor in this and other commercial structures in Louisville during the nineteenth century. Developed as a building material by New Yorkers James Bogardus and Daniel D. Badger and first used in Boston in 1842, its advantages were that it could be mass-produced, it was light and strong, and it had a load-carrying capacity that it

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made taller structures with wider expanses of glass possible (Gayle and Gillon, 1974).

Precisely when and by whom cast iron was introduced into Louisville is not known; however, architectural plans by Rogers and Whitestone document its use as early as the 1850s. No doubt contributing to its popularity was the fact that Louisville had an abundance of foundries and architectural iron works companies, which supplied boilers, decorative iron work, and a variety of other products to the Louisville region's steamboat builders (Kramer, 1978).

Merz Architectural Iron Works was responsible for the foundry work of many of the cast iron facades in the 600-800 blocks of West Main Street, while firms such as the Snead Iron Company and the Phoenix Foundry and Machine Shop, later known as Grainger & Co., were other major local producers. Thus the availability of a local manufacturers made the use of cast iron quite economical. Enhancing its popularity was Louisville's immediate proximity to New Albany, Indiana, where John Ford, with financial assistance from his cousin, Washington A. DePauw, developed the first successful American-made plate glass in 1870 (Kramer, 1995; Weeter, 1988).

## **Historical Development--J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building, 107-109 West Main Street**

Like many other lots along this artery, the lot which is now 107-109 West Main still served a residential function at the mid-point of the nineteenth century. According to the 1851-52 city directory, it was site of the home of Abraham Hite, a prominent Louisville businessman. Exactly when the lot was converted to commercial use is uncertain. However, it probably was not later than 1860, since by that time the Robert Ormsby estate immediately to the east had been subdivided as had several other lots to the west. During the 1860s and 1870s H. Verhoeff & Company flour mill, Davis & Haden wholesale whiskey dealers, and Henry Barret's Eclipse Woolen Mill had operations on the site. By 1882 Haden & Davis occupied 107 West Main and Eclipse Woolen Mill used 109, though its primary operations were located at 111-113 West Main (Weeter, 1988).

The situation appears to have remained largely unchanged through the remainder

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of the decade. However, the Eclipse Woolen Mill at 111-113 West Main was gutted by fire in early 1893 and a short time later, its site at 109 West Main was taken over by W. A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine Company. About the same time, Taylor & Williams, a wholesale whiskey firm owned by D. H. Taylor and J. T. Williams replaced Davis & Haden at 107 West Main. By 1895 D. Sachs & Sons, wholesale whiskey dealers, had replaced W. A. Wood Company, and the two competing whiskey wholesalers remained at their respective addresses until 1905, when J. T. S. Brown & Sons, which had been located at 105 West Main since 1895, acquired both lots and built the present three-bay structure (*Caron's Louisville Directory, 1890-1905; Courier-Journal, Jan. 31, 1893*).

**Brown Family Background**

By the time its new building was completed, J. T. S. Brown & Sons was one of Louisville's oldest and strongest wholesale whiskey and distilling firms, with roots that were deeply planted in Kentucky's history. Its founder, John Thompson Street Brown, was born in Munfordville, Kentucky on June 8, 1829, to John Thompson Street Brown, Jr., and Elizabeth Creel Brown, the latter of Culpepper County, Virginia. J. T. S. Brown's father, William Brown, and William's brother Patrick left Hanover County, Virginia, in May 1782 and moved into Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap, joining their brother James at Harrodsburg. There they were involved with George Rogers Clark in early campaigns against the Indians.

William Brown subsequently returned to Virginia and married Hannah Street, also of Hanover County. They returned to Kentucky and settled near Elizabethtown, where they farmed a large tract and owned a large number of slaves. Their son, J. T. S. Brown, moved to Munfordville, where he engaged in business and served as postmaster for more than fifty years. When the Civil War broke out, he became a major in the Confederate army. J. T. S. Brown married twice, having eight children by Elizabeth Creel, the eldest of whom was J. T. S., Jr. After her death, J. T. S. married Mary Garvin, a recent Irish immigrant. Their first child, George Garvin Brown, was born in 1846 (*Courier-Journal, Oct. 1, 1905; Pearce, 1970*).

In 1855, having learned the rudiments of business from his father, the younger J. T. S. Brown moved to Louisville, where he became known simply as J. T. S. Brown,

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not as J. T. S. Brown, Jr. In Louisville he entered the wholesale whiskey business with Joseph D. Allen, an old school friend, in the firm of Allen, Brown & Company. In 1856 Brown married Emily Graham, daughter of Andrew Graham, a prominent local tobacco dealer. The following year, he took over complete control of the business from Allen. His business grew substantially during the Civil War and by 1864 he had amassed a large fortune. Thus, Brown was already a well established figure in local business circles when his seventeen-year-old half-brother, George Garvin Brown, arrived in Louisville to attend Male High School in 1863 (*Courier-Journal*, Oct 1. 1905; Pearce, 1970).

For reasons that are obscure, George did not complete high school. Instead, he returned to Munfordville in the spring of 1865 and remained there for six months before returning to Louisville permanently. He subsequently became a clerk for Henry Chambers and Company, a wholesale drug firm. While learning the drug business, George also learned a great deal about whiskey and developed strong convictions about how it should be manufactured, aged, and blended to assure high quality. In 1870, with financial assistance from his employer, Henry Chambers, he entered business with his elder half-brother in the firm of J. T. S. Brown & Bro., located at 322 Main Street (near Seventh Street under the former street-numbering system) in the heart of what had become known as "Whiskey Row." Listed on local directories and advertising as "distillers and dealers in whisky," the firm became very successful, developing a bourbon whiskey known as Old Forrester (later Old Forester with one r) as well as several other products such as Sidroc Bourbon, Mellwood Bourbon, and Atherton Bourbon (Pearce, 1970; Regan and Regan, 1995).

In 1872 George Forman joined the firm as a salesman and subsequently became bookkeeper. The following year, Chambers bought into the firm, it became known as Brown, Chambers and Company. In February 1874 the firm received a glowing review from the business section of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, described the firm as "certainly second to none in the country" for the high quality of its products, facilities, and production operations. A short time later, however, the partnership dissolved.

The specific reasons for the split are not clear, but it is strongly suspected that philosophical differences between J. T. S. Brown and his younger half-brother over



*Main Street office of Brown-Forman, circa 1900. George G. Brown at far right.*

From: John Ed Pearce, Nothing Better in the Market (1970)

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production methods precipitated the division. In any case, George Garvin Brown, Henry Chambers, and George Forman remained with the firm while moving their operations to Second Street near Main. Meanwhile, they were joined by George G. Brown's cousin, James Thompson. Chambers retired and sold his stock to the other partners in 1881, when the firm was reorganized as Brown-Thompson and Company. When Thompson struck out on his own in 1890, forming Glenmore Distilleries, the two remaining partners formed Brown-Forman Distillers Corporation, which is now the largest American-owned distillery and one of the top ten distilleries in the world (Pearce, 1970; *Impact International*).

Meanwhile, J. T. S. Brown retained the operation at 322 Main, operating as J. T. S. Brown Wholesale Liquors until about 1885, when he was joined by sons Graham, Davis, and J. T. S., Jr. (the latter was the third John Thompson Street Brown, but was referred to as Junior), and the firm became known as J. T. S. Brown & Sons. Sons Creel and Hewett subsequently joined the firm, while Graham left a few years later. In 1895 the company moved its offices, wholesale warehouse, and bottling operations to 105 West Main Street while operating a large distillery at McBrayer, near Lawrenceburg, in Anderson County, where its Old Prentice and other bourbon whiskies were produced (Caron's *Louisville Directory*, 1885, 1895).

The company remained at 105 West Main until 1905, when it completed its new headquarters next door at 107-109 West Main. The founder did not live, however, to see his new building occupied. He died on October 17, 1905, about three weeks after becoming ill on a city streetcar on his way home for lunch. The company continued to operate as J. T. S. Brown & Sons until 1920, when nationwide Prohibition forced it to suspend business. After their father died, Davis served as president; Creel, vice president; J. T. S., Jr., secretary; and Hewett, treasurer (*Courier-Journal*, Oct. 1, 18, 1895; Caron's *Louisville Directory*, 1919, 1920).

Prohibition ended the company's operations in Louisville. Davis and J. T. S. Brown, Jr., established Buzz Engineering, while Creel and Hewett pursued other interests. Meanwhile, Bollinger-Babbage Co., a wholesale grocery company, moved into 107-109 West Main Street in 1919 and remained there for approximately a decade before being replaced by A. Englehard & Sons coffee



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roasters about 1930. A succession of short-term tenants occupied the structure through the 1950s. It has been vacant for most of the period since 1960 (Caron's *Louisville Directory*, 1920-1955).

When Prohibition ended in late 1933, Creel Brown moved to reorganize J. T. S. Brown & Sons as J. T. S. Brown's Son and to open a new distillery near Bardstown in Nelson County. He received the federal permit for his new distillery in March 1935. The day the permit came, he suffered an attack of appendicitis and died a few days later. Creel Brown, Jr., conducted the operation until 1955, when he sold out to the Gould interests of Cincinnati, which subsequently sold out to Canadian-based Seagrams (*Louisville Times*, Mar. 19, 1935; Kroll, 1967).

### **Architectural Development, J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building, 107-109 West Main Street**

The design of this early twentieth-century building in the Chicago School style is attributed to D. X. (Daniel Xavier) Murphy (1854-1933), protégé and successor of Henry Whitestone and one of Louisville's most distinguished architects during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. Working in partnership with his younger brother James C. Murphy (1864-1835) in the firm of D. X. Murphy & Brother, he was involved in such notable projects as the church and rectory of St. Boniface, the Jefferson County Jail, Churchill Downs race track, Waverly Hills Sanitarium, and Bourbon Stock Yards. Specific plans identifying Murphy with this project have never been located, but its similarity to a structure at 528 West Main Street designed by Murphy (according to plans located at The Filson Club) and completed in 1889 supports the view that the present structure is his work.

Even if the attribution of this structure to Murphy should prove to lack validity, the building remains significant on its artistic merits, including the use of both cast-iron and terra cotta as building and decorative materials.

Like neighboring 105 West Main Street, the J. T. S. Brown & Sons building is noteworthy for its cast iron store front, which makes it an integral component of the streetscape. Making it even more important, however, is the cast iron "J. T. S. Brown & Sons" name plate directly over the central entranceway. The nameplate

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not only announces the owner of the structure but also suggests that the facade might have been custom-made rather than simply assembled from premanufactured components. If so, this indicates that an artist such as Murphy was quite able to take a material such as cast-iron, whose primary earmark was its anonymity, to a higher aesthetic level and use it to express the unique personality of his client.

The cast iron door sill inscribed with the name Grainger & Co. provides strong evidence that this local firm produced the facade. The company was founded in 1830 by William H. Grainger as the Phoenix Foundry and Machine Shop. His son Charles F. Grainger became a partner in 1888, and the name was changed to Grainger & Co. It was incorporated in 1891; its plant at 125-141 Tenth Street covered a city block and produced structural ironwork, castings for buildings, wrought ironwork, and riveted work (*Fifty Years Ago, 1923; Resources and Industries, 1903*).

A characteristic that appears to make this structure artistically unique is the architect's use of cast-iron in combination with glazed architectural terra cotta as a decorative feature. Glazed terra cotta is used in several prominent buildings in Louisville's central business district, but the vast majority were erected after 1910, by which time the use of cast-iron in facade architecture had virtually disappeared and the primary direction of growth in Louisville's CBD was southward, away from Main Street, the dominant center for use of cast-iron (Weeter, 1990).

The term "terra cotta" derives from the Latin and literally means "cooked earth." In its broadest sense, the term refers to a high-quality weathered or aged clay that has been either mixed with sand or with ground, previously fired clay and then molded and fired at an extremely high temperature. Four types of architectural terra cotta were used in the United States: brownstone, fireproof construction, ceramic veneer, and glazed architectural terra cotta. All four types were popular in Louisville, but brownstone and glazed architectural terra cotta were the most prevalent, with the latter being employed in buildings throughout Louisville's CBD between 1900 and 1930 (Tiller, 1979; Weeter, 1990).

Before the mid-1890s, most architectural terra cotta used in Louisville and the United States was brownstone, which was glazed with slip, a liquid clay. Its reddish-brown slip-glaze color usually matched the color of the terra cotta and

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served to seal the surface pores, making each piece water-resistant. By the mid-1890s, color options included buff, gray, white, and cream, as well as red. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a full range of polychromatic color options had become widely available.

Glazed architectural terra cotta eventually replaced brownstone terra cotta as the primary decorative material. As a building material, glazed architectural terra cotta had many unique qualities. First, it was self-cleaning, fire resistant, and inexpensive to produce and install. Second, it could be glazed in an infinite variety of colors and could even be glazed to resemble stone. Finally, it could be cast in a modular manner in any number of intricate designs.

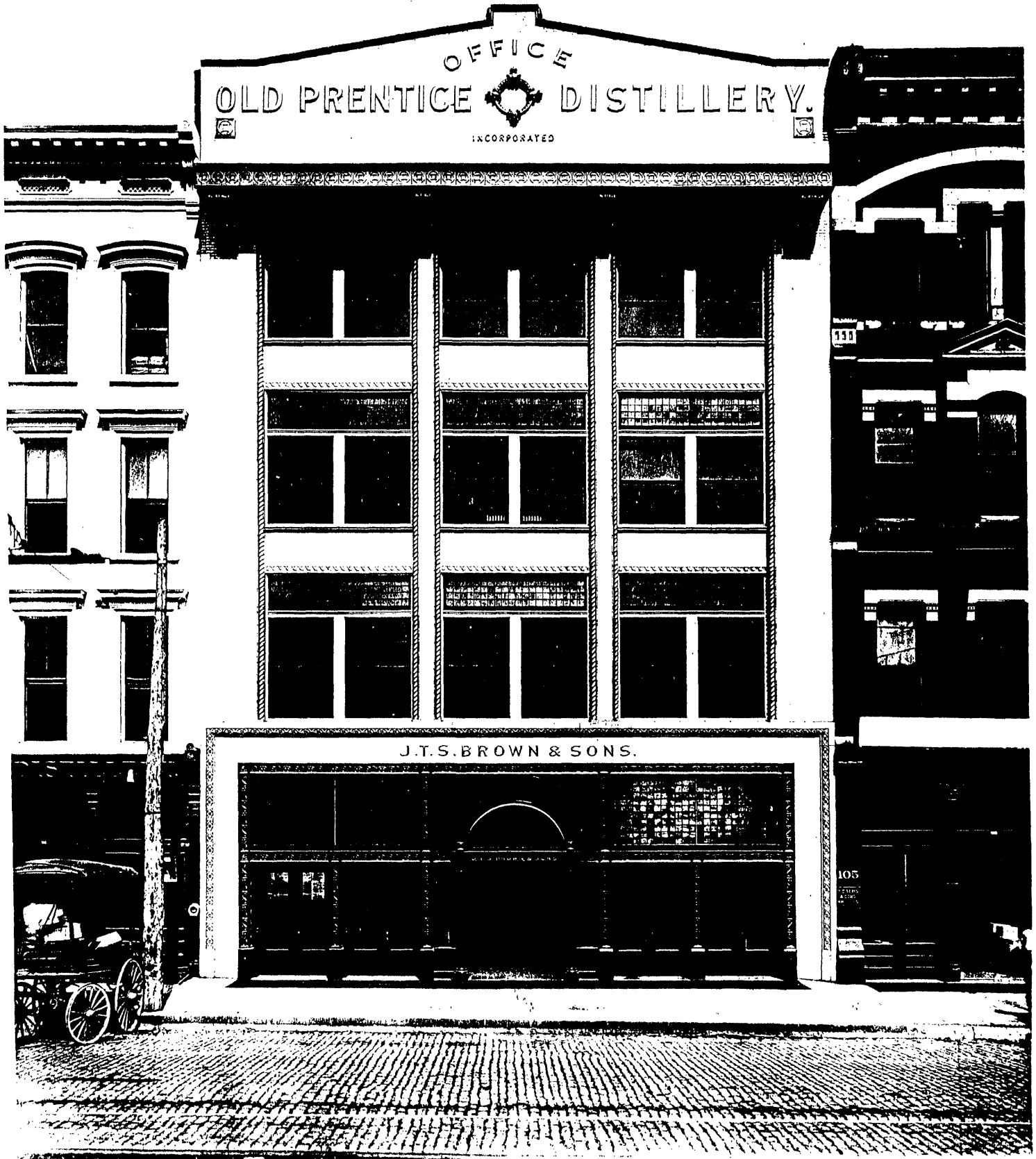
Four building types in Louisville were commonly embellished with glazed architectural terra cotta: multi-story apartment buildings, commercial buildings, institutions and ecclesiastical structures. All are natural or glazed brick structures that are two or more stories in height. Terra cotta was almost never used in combination with wood or stone. Most are located in the CBD, although some examples can be found in surrounding residential and commercial areas. Terra cotta generally adorns only the primary facade except in instances where the building was intended to be free standing and multiple sides are visible from the street (Weeter, 1990).

While a few examples of structures in which the entire facade is sheathed in terra cotta do exist, they are the exception rather than the rule. In most cases, terra cotta was used as trim, often to call attention to important aspects of the building. Terra cotta not only brightened the facade, clearly marked its entrance, and gave the building a crisp, clean look, it also could be used to execute firm names, logos, and trademarks, enabling the entire facade to serve as a unique form of advertisement (Weeter, 1990).

In the J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building, white-glazed architectural terra cotta decorative motifs are employed in combination with white glazed brick to create a facade which dramatically contrasts with those of the adjoining buildings on either side and with the remainder of the 100 block of West Main Street. In both its original and current states, the terra cotta trim serves to outline the first-story storefront and the fenestration of the upper stories, and the large cornice tends to define the borders between the building and its neighbors.

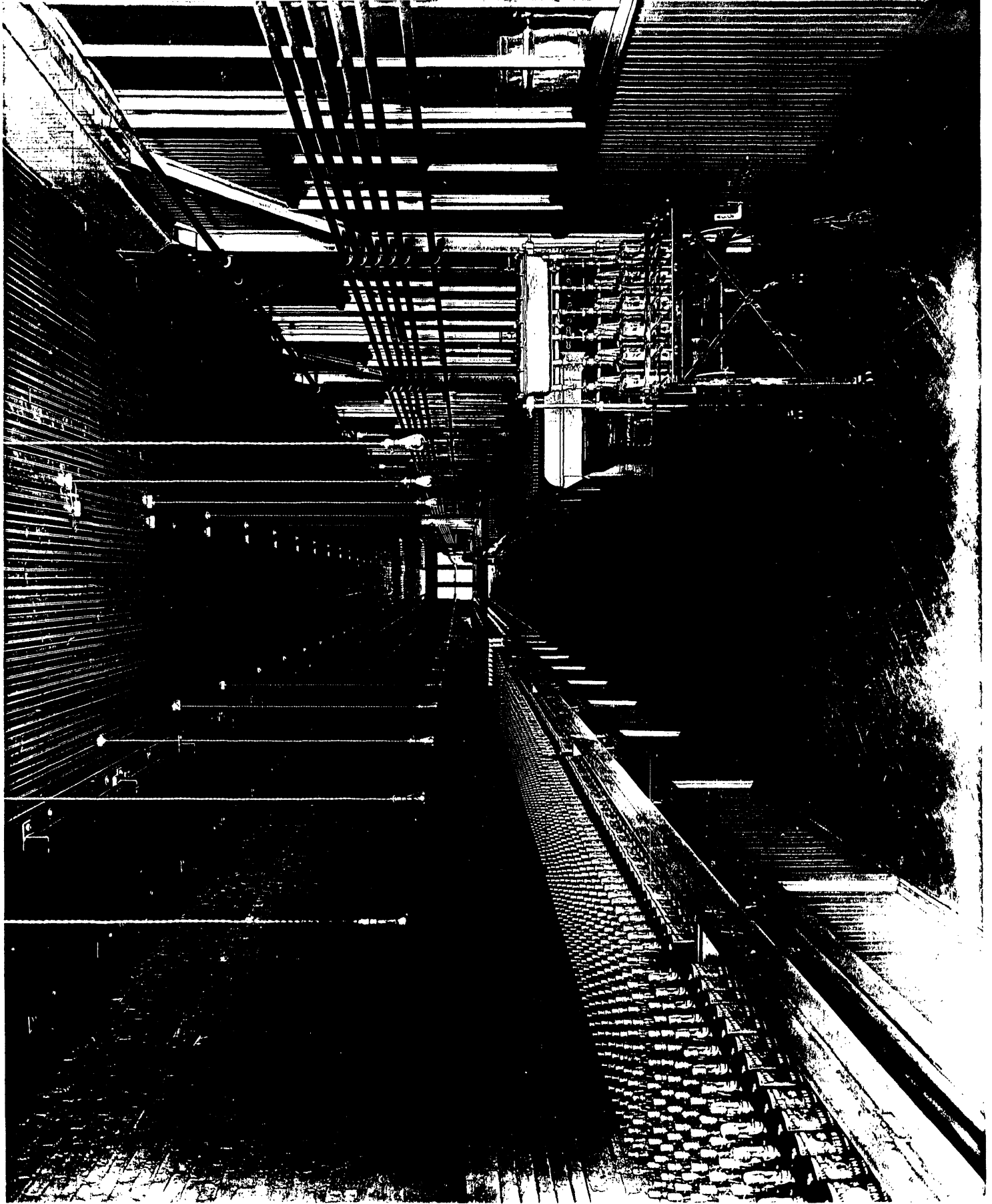
View of facade of J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building, 107-109 West Main Street, ca. 1910. Note "Office, Old Prentice Distillery, Incorporated" in raised lettering on pediment and "J. T. S. Brown & Sons" in raised lettering over front entrance.

Courtesy JoAnn Brown Schuler

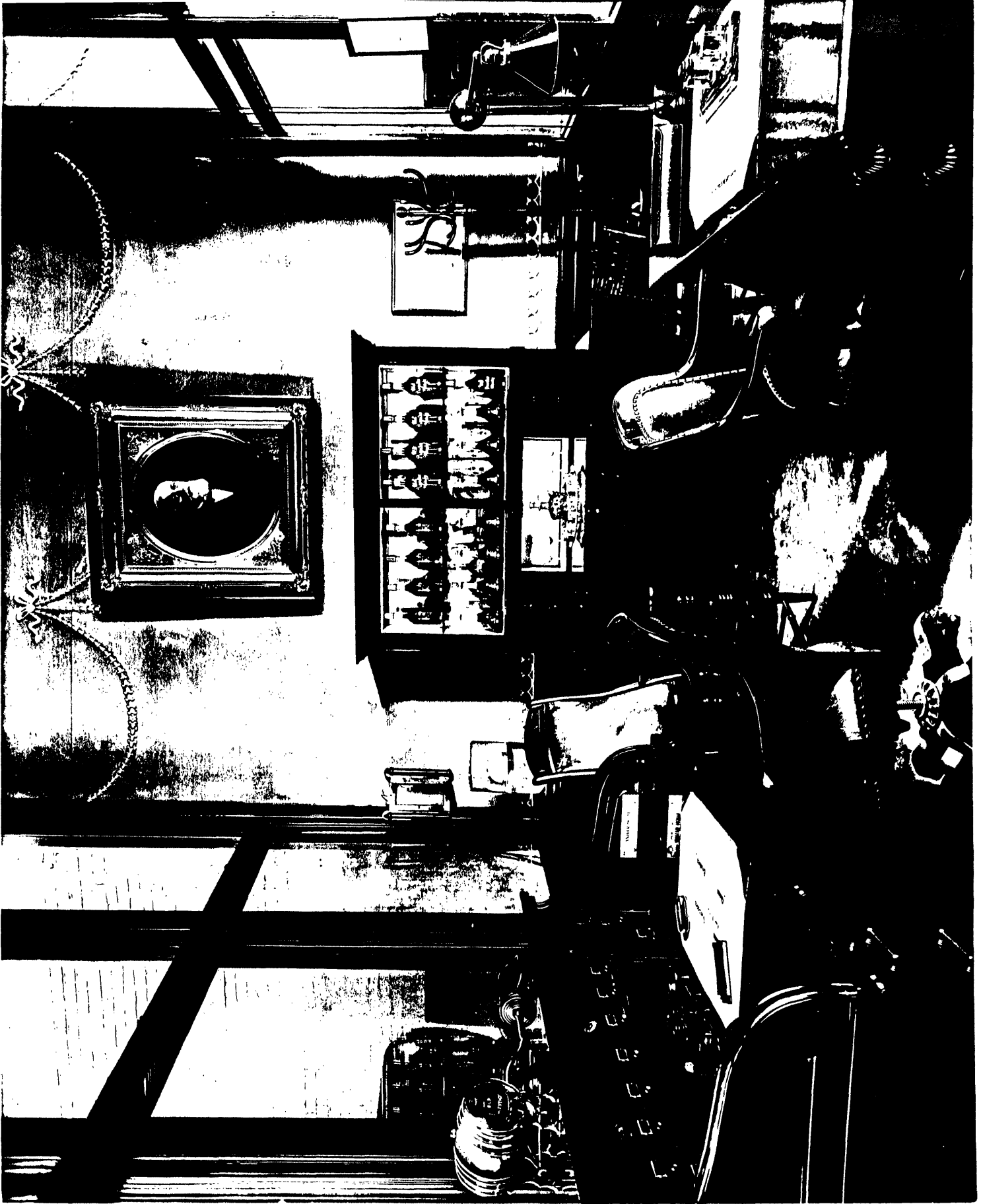




Interior view of J. T. S. Brown & Son's Building, ca. 1910, facing toward Main Street. Some of the dark woodwork is still in tact.



Bottling operation at J. T. S. Brown & Sons Building  
107-109 West Main Street, ca. 1910



Executive Office of J. T. S. Brown & Sons, 107-109 West Main Street, ca. 1910. The large portrait is of founder J. T. S. Brown. It now hangs in the home of his great-granddaughter, JoAn Brown Schuler in Anchorage, KY.

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The property which is the subject of this nomination includes two adjoining parcels in City of Louisville Block 18A, which are described in the following legal descriptions:

### 105 West Main Street

Beginning on the North side of Main Street 48 feet 8 inches West of First Street; running thence West along the North Side of Main Street 24 feet 3 inches and extending back North of the same width in lines parallel with First Street, 204 feet, more or less, to Washington Street.

### 107-109 West Main Street

Beginning in the Northwardly line of Main Street 72 feet 11 inches Westwardly from First Street; thence Westwardly along the Northwardly line of Main Street 45 feet 7 inches, and extending back Northwardly between lines parallel with First Street, 204 feet to Washington Street; the Eastwardly line of said lot passing through a party wall.

Total area of the site is 14,280 square feet.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire sites that have historically been associated with the significant structures.

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J.T.S. Brown and Sons Complex  
Jefferson County KY

### Photographic Identification

Same information for each photograph

Property Name: J.T.S. Brown and Sons Complex  
Location: 105, 107-109 West Main Street, Louisville (Jefferson County) KY  
Photographer: Amos Benjamin  
Date: June, 1998  
Negative Location: Architectural Investments, Inc.  
222 South 1st St.  
Louisville KY 40202-1367

Photo 1: 105 West Main Street, to North  
Photo 2: 107-109 West Main Street, to North  
Photo 3: both buildings, to Northwest