Form No 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Warehouse

AND/OR COMMON
Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Warehouse

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Provost Street, between First & Bay Sts. NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Jersey City — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
14

STATE
New Jersey

CODE
34

COUNTY
Hudson

CODE
017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__MILITARY	X OTHER: Warehouse

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Kaycel Realty (Contact: J. Wohl)

STREET & NUMBER
10 East 40th Street

CITY, TOWN
New York — VICINITY OF

STATE
New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Registry Division, County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER
Hudson County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Jersey City

STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Between about 1900 and 1929, this warehouse formed part of a five-structure A. & P. warehouse and manufacturing complex. At least two other units of the complex are extant, but they are significantly altered. The warehouse, on the other hand, is, for its age and location, remarkably little changed. It is situated about four blocks north of city hall, near the Holland Tunnel, and about three blocks west of the Hudson River, almost directly across from New York's World Trade Center. The warehouse's neighborhood has witnessed considerable change over the years, and now it is undergoing an era of revitalization.

A. & P. utilized the original complex as a manufacturing and distribution point from which to supply all its stores in the metropolitan area, including New Jersey, New York City, Bronx, Brooklyn, and Long Island. The company put the buildings up for sale in 1928-29 as part of a decentralization plan that called for the establishment of warehouses and manufacturing plants in smaller units in different localities. Because the giant got its start in this area and because it used this method of regional distribution throughout the country for many years, the warehouse outstandingly commemorates the firm's contributions to retailing.

The historic structure is a nine-story reinforced concrete building of beam and girder construction and red brick wall fill. Measuring on the whole about 225 by 180 feet, the structure was erected in three sections. The largest measures about 180 feet north to south and about 121 feet east to west. It faces east along Provost Street and contains 196,558 square feet of floor space. The other two sections each measure about 104 feet east to west and 90 feet north to south and form roughly the westernmost third of the building. Together, the three sections contain more than 360,000 square feet.

Along each facade, the building's concrete piers and girders divide its face uniformly into bays, almost all of which hold either a double or a triple window. Generally, double windows grace the north and south facades, and triple windows adorn the east and west facades. The double windows have two-over-two sashes, while the triple openings boast a central three-over-three sash set between a pair of two-over-two sashes.

A massive dentiled cornice crowns the warehouse on all sides but the west, which apparently was left plain during the construction. At ground level, the north, east, and south sides display a series of double, warehouse-type, sliding doors that open onto a circa

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Subject: 1859-present Site: circe 1900-present BUILDER/ARCHITECT Turner Construction Co.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Writing in the Harvard Business Riview in 1933, economic historian Roy J. Bullock observed perceptively that "to undertake a history of the chain grocery or even the chain-store movement in general without the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company would be like an attempt to produce Hamlet with Hamlet left out."[1] Examples of local chain store operations may be found in American history as early as the 1820's, but as business historian Alex Groner points out, "the first nationwide chain was the A. &. P., the beginnings of which trace back to 1859," 20 years before Frank W. Woolworth founded his variety chain.[2] For this reason and because of A. &. P.'s tremendously rapid expansion between 1912 and the mid-1930's, the unsurpassed number of stores it operated in those years, its unenviable position as the chief target of the anti-chain-store agitation in that same period, and its status as the Nation's largest retailer in the middle of this century, the company outstandingly symbolizes every major phase of chain-store history in America.

The A. & P. Warehouse is a little-altered, nine-story, reinforced concrete structure that, between about 1900 and 1929, formed part of a five-unit manufacturing and distribution center serving the entire New Jersey - New York - Long Island metropolitan area. Because the giant chain got its start in this area and because it used this method of regional disbribution throughout the country for many years, the warehouse outstandingly commemorates the firm's contributions to retailing.

History

According to Godfrey M. Lebhar, a leading authority on the history of chain stores in America, this unique form of retailing has passed through three distinct periods of development. In the first, 1859-1900, says Lebhar, "pioneers in several important

[1]Roy J. Bullock, "The Early History of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company," Harvard Business Review, XI (April, 1933), 289.

[2]Alex Groner, The American Heritage History of American Business and Industry (New York, 1972), 244.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet.)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 1]/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	1,8	5,8,1,0,6,0	4,5,1,0,8,1,0,2,0
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See last page of description.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
George R. Adams, Director, Historic Landmarks Project

ORGANIZATION
American Association for State & Local History

DATE
March 1977

STREET & NUMBER
1400 Eighth Avenue South

TELEPHONE
615/242-5583

CITY OR TOWN
Nashville,

STATE
Tennessee

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

3-foot-high, metal-shed-covered, concrete loading dock that passes continually around these sides of the structure. On the north side of the building, the dock exhibits a series of triangular metal projections that enable it to receive an increased number of motorized freight vehicles than the south dock, which lacks the projections. The east dock, which is also plain, served originally as an access point to a rail siding. The tracks remain in place and in use, and the dock remains in sound condition.

The AASLH representative was not permitted to inspect the interior of the warehouse, but it is known to be in use still as a storage facility. A. & P. records indicate that in 1928-29 the structure was serviced by eight large freight elevators and two passanger elevators and had a sprinkler system and three cold storage rooms.

Boundary Justification. Although there are several remnants of the former A. & P. complex here, the boundary includes only the main warehouse because only it appears to have sufficient historical integrity to meet the criteria for selection of NHL's. Moreover, it has always been the dominant building of the complex.

Boundary Description. As indicated in red on the accompanying maps [(1) U.S.G.S., 7.5' Series, N.J.-N.Y., Jersey City Quad., 1967 and (2) A. &. P. Sketch Map, circa 1928-29], a line beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of First and Provost Streets and extending south approximately 180 feet along the west right-of-way of Provost to the intersection of Provost and Bay Streets; thence, west about 225 feet along the north right-of-way of Bay to a point opposite the outer plane of the west wall of the warehouse; thence, northward about 180 feet along the ourter plane of that wall to the south right-of-way of First Street; thence, east approximately 225 feet along the south right-of-way of First to the point of beginning.

chain-store fields got their start and had their early development." Next, between 1900 and 1930 "the chain-store idea captured the imagination of many alert retailers, brought hundreds of new chains into existence, and witnessed the expansion of the system." Finally, in the years after 1930, "the system had to fight for its very existence" against anti-chain-store legislation and charges of unfair competition but "emerged the stronger for its experience."[3] More than any other firm, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company symbolizes these three stages. In addition to being, as Lebhar notes, "the biggest chain in the country today, and . . . the oldest," it is known for having been one of the most frequent targets of anti-chain agitation, as evidenced by the impetus that its business practices gave to passage of both the Robinson-Patman Act of 1936 and the Miller-Tydings Act of 1937.[4]

There is some disagreement among historians about the year of A. & P.'s beginning, but the most commonly accepted date is 1859. In either that or the previous year, George Francis Gilman, son of a wealthy shipowner, opened a hide and leather importing business in New York City. Among his employees was 26-year-old George Huntington Hartford, with whom Gilman eventually formed a partnership. It is unclear which man suggested undertaking trade in tea, but by the end of 1859 the two had begun buying that popular and expensive product directly off clipper ships and retailing it along with their leather goods. By bypassing wholesalers of middlemen and getting their tea directly from suppliers, Gilman and Hartford found themselves able to reduce prices by 50 percent and more. In 1860 they opened a tea store on Front Street in Manhattan, and in 1862 they abandoned their trade in hides and leather. By 1864 they had formed the Great American Tea Company, opened their now legendary discount tea and grocery store on Vesey Street, started advertising widely with circulars, and begun to sell by mail order.[5]

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[3]Godfrey M. Lebhar, Chain Stores in America, 1859-1962, 3d ed. (New York, 1963), 24.

[4]Ibid., 10.

[5]Although most sources state that Gilman and Hartford had an outlet on Vesey Street in 1859, Bullock's search of the New York City Business Directory for those years revealed no Vesey Street listing before 1864. See "Early History of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company," 290-91.

Along with tea, the Great American Tea Company's shelves offered coffee, spices, flavoring extracts, condensed milk, baking powder, and other staples, and the low prices on these items attracted New Yorkers in ever increasing numbers. Gilman and Hartford wasted little time taking advantage of their initial success and expanding. They had five stores in the New York area by 1865, and in the next 4 years, they added six more and adopted a new name, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. According to retailing historians Tom Mahoney and Leonard Sloane, this title reflected Hartford's vision of "a chain of stores that would reach from coast to coast, as the Union Pacific Railroad linked the two seaboards."[6] For whatever reason the partners chose this particular name, the old one was preserved until 1964 in an A. & P. subsidiary that peddled tea and coffee first on a successful mail-order "club plan" and then across the country along regular wagon and truck routes. In keeping with the grandiose name of their retail store operation, by 1876 Gilman and Hartford had opened stores as far west as St. Paul, Minn. By then the chain totaled 67 outlets, all of which were painted in the now-familiar red-and-gold facade that Frank W. Woolworth copied eventually for his variety chain.

In 1878 Gilman retired from active participation in company affairs, made Hartford a full partner with responsibility for general management, and thus opened the way for his family's rise to a preeminent position in American retailing history. As soon as they were old enough, two of Hartford's sons joined him in running the firm. George L. came aboard in 1880, and John followed in 1888. Under the Hartfords' direction A. & P. continued to grow, reaching 100 stores by 1880 and 200 by 1900. Meanwhile, in addition to Woolworth in 1879, other entrepreneurs entered the chain-store field and founded, among other firms, the predecessor of the Grand Union Company in 1872, Kroger in 1882, and Jewell Tea Company in 1899. "None of the competition seemed to hurt A. & P.," says Groner, for besides being soundly established already as "the first national chain," it "built up its product lines along with its outlets and sales volume."[7] Then in 1901 Gilman died without leaving a will or a written record of his co-ownership agreement with George H. Hartford. A year of litigation ensued, but when the court fight ended, the Hartfords had all the company's common stock.

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[6]Tom Mahoney and Leonard Sloane, The Great Merchants: America's Foremost Retail Institutions and the People Who Made Them Great (New York, 1974), 180.

[7]Groner, American Business and Industry, 244-45.

The family's acquisition of full control of A. & P. coincided with the start of the second or expansionist phase of chain-store history. Although the eldest Hartford remained active in company affairs until a year before his death in 1917, his sons played increasing managerial roles in the early 1900's. John Hartford was "the merchandising genius of the A & P," according to Mahoney and Sloane, "while his brother George looked after the financial end."[8] Having gone to work for his father immediately after finishing high school at age 16, John had started his career cleaning ink wells and sweeping floors. By 1912, says Furnas, he was about "to make commercial history."[9] With America in the middle of the so-called "Progressive Era," muckraking journalists and politicians were calling attention to the fact that food prices had jumped 35 percent since 1900, and government agencies were beginning to investigate the rapidly rising cost of living. As a result John became concerned about both A. & P.'s prices and costs. He worried particularly about the cost of keeping delivery fleets, giving away premiums, and maintaining credit accounts for customers. With the consent of his father and brother, he opened a small experimental store a few doors away from a major A. & P. outlet in Jersey City. The new "A. & P. Economy Store" maintained a low inventory, offered cut prices, and provided no credit and no deliveries, but within a few months it drove the larger "frill-oriented" store out of business. In response the Hartfords began opening economy stores throughout the country at the rate of one every 3 days. In 1912 A. & P. had 480 outlets, in 1915 almost 2,000, in 1920 more than 4,500, and in 1930 more than 15,700. Most were laid out exactly alike so that customers could find things in the same location in each store. Although no other single chain grew so fast or so large, A. & P.'s growth paralleled a chain-store boom in nearly every area of retailing. According to Groner, "almost 30 per cent of the national retail volume was being done by chains by the end of the 1920's."[10]

A. & P. reached an all-time high of 15,737 stores by the end of 1930, but this did not mark the pinnacle of the firm's success or of John Hartford's career. While he was making A. & P. the

[8]Mahoney and Sloane, The Great Merchants, 184.

[9]J. C. Furnas, "Mr. George & Mr. John," Saturday Evening Post (December 31, 1938), 55.

[10]Groner, American Business and Industry, 244.

largest chain in the country, several other food chains were turning to still another new kind of store, the supermarket. Introduced by Clarence Saunders of Memphis in 1916, the supermarket was no bigger than an ordinary store, but it featured two important retailing innovations, self-service and use of turnstiles. The former cut down overhead, while the latter boosted sales by directing customers through a maze of displays and past virtually every product the store offered. Because Hartford's economy stores were returning good profits and because he was leading the company successfully through the early depression years by decentralizing and expanding warehousing and manufacturing facilities--he organized Quaker Maid Company (later Ann Page), Nakat Packing Corporation, White House Milk Company, and American Coffee Corporation--he rejected the supermarket concept until the late 1930's. In 1937, however, he adopted the idea, soon improved it by introducing cellophane-wrapped meats and popularizing packaged produce, and eventually made it the primary basis fur future A. & P. operations. In fact, say Mahoney and Sloane, before he died in 1951, Hartford made A. & P. the country's "leading proponent of this method of distribution."[11] By 1959 supermarkets accounted for 69 percent of all food store sales in the United States, and A. & P. alone, having consolidated its over 15,000 economy stores into some 4,500 supermarkets, accounted for almost 10 percent of that total.[12]

As chain stores grew larger and more successful, they came under increasing attack, especially in the mid-1930's, from government officials, independent merchants, and organizations of wholesalers and retailers who feared that the chains' size, manufacturing capabilities, and expanded buying and selling capacities, threatened the entire wholesaler-retailer system. Those groups tried a number of strategies to counteract the trend they saw developing. Several States enacted "fair trade" laws, and Congress, in 1937, passed the Miller-Tydings Act, to sanction price maintenance agreements and thus protect the independents from chain competition. In 1936, following revealing testimony by A. & P. officials in a congressional hearing, Congress enacted the Robinson-Patman bill to prevent manufacturers from rebating to chains "advertising allowances" based on volume purchasing.

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[11]Mahoney and Sloane, The Great Merchants, 186.

[12]Groner, American Business and Industry, 246.

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Two years later Representative Wright Patman introduced legislation to place a special Federal tax on all chain stores, but A. & P. led a successful fight to defeat the measure.

Opposition to chain stores did not end with this episode, but after 1940 the chains continued to grow and establish for themselves an ever stronger and more generally accepted role in American retailing. A. & P. encountered economic problems in the early 1970's, but it remained the Nation's largest food chain.

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