Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-747)

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

# 0688088

NOV 201978

STATE

Kentucky

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NAME				
HISTORIC		•		
	American Association,	Limited, Office P	uilding	
AND/OR COMMON				
	American Association I	Building		· .
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	2215 Cumberland Aver	nue	NOT FOR PUBLICAT	ON .
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NAME	Cumberland Gap Corpo	oration, a subsidia	rv of The America	n Association, Lim
STREET & NUMBER				2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
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TITLE				
	Survey of Historic Site	s in Kentucky (Sup	olement)	
DATE		• •	<b>v</b> .	
DEPOSITORY FOR		rederal	ASTATECOUNTYLC	JUAL
SURVEY RECORDS	Kentucky Heritage Con	amiaaian		



#### CONDITION

**CHECK ONE** 

**CHECK ONE** 

\_\_EXCELLENT

\_\_FAIR

\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_RUINS

\_\_UNALTERED
X\_ALTERED

XORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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Constructed ca. 1890, the American Association Building is a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -story, brick structure reflecting the influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The gabled, northern facade contains three windows in the peak which are united by connecting stone lintels. Two, transomed doors pierce the stone facade of the first floor. A single, round arch opening giVes access from the street to the three-bay, brick arcade along the western side of the building. Stone quoins visually strengthen the northwest corner of the arcade and each brick arch reveals a rusticated keystone.

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Currently used for office space, the building is maintained in good condition.

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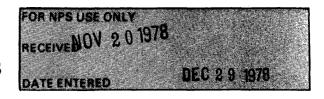
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As the result of his grandiose plans, Arthur returned to England, formed the American Association, Limited, secured financial backing and returned to Kentucky where he purchased thousands of acres of land and laid out the new city which he intended to become the heart of a new empire. He called it Middlesborough after the great manufacturing city of the same name in England. As the result of his initiatives, a small army of construction

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Kentucky Heritage Comm	ission		September 1978 TELEPHONE	
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12 STATE HISTORIC				*
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FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS	PROPERTY IS INCLUDED	IN THE NATIONAL RE	GISTER	
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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



American Association, Limited, Office Building
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 2

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Among the many buildings constructed in Middlesboro, and even in Harrogate, Tennessee, <sup>5</sup> as the result of Arthur's actions, was the new building which housed the offices of the American Association, Limited. <sup>6</sup> Located on Cumberland Avenue and Canal, this building constructed ca. 1890 to house the firm which actually gave Middlesboro its start

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American Association, Limited, Office Building
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

through investments, is still standing today and is still in use. <sup>7</sup> Its construction evidently was completed by 1891. The Consultant Engineer and Architect for the total project of the American Association, Limited, was Colonel George H. Waring of New York City. The overall massive feeling of the structure with its stone trim, sloping roof and circular tower, and the robust, round arch arcade reflects the strong impact of the work of the late nineteenth American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886). The choice of the straight-forward, solid Richardsonian style was most appropriate as a means of emphasizing the progressive goals of this industrial enterprise.

The cost of the building is not known but it is apparent that by October 1890, the American Association, Limited, had a capital stock of \$2,000,000 involved in all of its enterprises in Middlesborough, <sup>9</sup> and it has been estimated that English promoters spent a total of at least \$60,000,000 in the complete venture prior to the end of the year 1892. <sup>10</sup>

Despite the failure of the American Association's project to develop a lasting industrialized center at Middlesboro, its venture did change the way of life in the Bell County area for all time to come. <sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Fuson, Henry Harvey. <u>History of Bell County, Kentucky</u>. New York: Hobson Book Press, 1947, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup>Pearce, John Ed. "Bell County: A Kentucky test of endurance and a tale of two towns," <u>The Courier-Journal Magazine</u> (Sunday, May 14, 1978), p. 12, also see Fuson, op. cit., p. 371.

3"Souvenir of Middlesborough, October, 1890." Louisville, Kentucky: Courier Journal Job Printing Co., 1890 (?), 16 pp., see Fuson, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>4</sup>Pearce, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup>Johnson, Walt, News Editor. ''Davis Home in Harrogate Dates to '85, Was Built for American Assoc Doctor,'' Middlesboro Daily News (Friday, July 2, 1976), p. H-4.

<sup>6</sup>See Photo 1.

<sup>7</sup>See Photo 2.

<sup>8</sup>Morgans, Brian H. "Cumberland Gap-Its History and Romance." (No place of publication given; no name of publisher given, no date of publication given), p. 1.

9"Souvenir" final page.

<sup>10</sup>Morgans, loc. cit.

11 Pearce, op. cit., p. 13.

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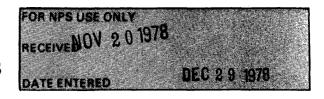
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Unfortunately, beginning in 1890, Arthur's luck changed for the worse. He first had a bad fire in the business district. He hurried to England to secure more financing and replaced the frame buildings with new ones of brick and stone. When the Baring Brothers Bank in England failed, it resulted in deep and desperate trouble for the American Association. At the same time that financial backing ended, so did the iron ore, which Arthur had seriously overestimated.

In a matter of weeks, Alexander Arthur's dream of a new industrial center at Middlesborough (now Middlesboro) came to a precipitate end. The railroad lines were soon covered by high grasses, the iron furnaces were shut down, and many mines were closed. Many stores ended their operations and the population fell to 4,200. Although Arthur never gave up the hope that his dream could be restored, it gradually died. His attempts to secure new investors in New York were also to no avail. In his will he asked that he should be buried at his dream city and in 1912 this was done. His body was placed on a hillside overlooking the city of his dreams and the tombstone is still plainly visable there. 4

Among the many buildings constructed in Middlesboro, and even in Harrogate, Tennessee, <sup>5</sup> as the result of Arthur's actions, was the new building which housed the offices of the American Association, Limited. <sup>6</sup> Located on Cumberland Avenue and Canal, this building constructed ca. 1890 to house the firm which actually gave Middlesboro its start

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through investments, is still standing today and is still in use. <sup>7</sup> Its construction evidently was completed by 1891. The Consultant Engineer and Architect for the total project of the American Association, Limited, was Colonel George H. Waring of New York City. The overall massive feeling of the structure with its stone trim, sloping roof and circular tower, and the robust, round arch arcade reflects the strong impact of the work of the late nineteenth American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886). The choice of the straight-forward, solid Richardsonian style was most appropriate as a means of emphasizing the progressive goals of this industrial enterprise.

The cost of the building is not known but it is apparent that by October 1890, the American Association, Limited, had a capital stock of \$2,000,000 involved in all of its enterprises in Middlesborough, <sup>9</sup> and it has been estimated that English promoters spent a total of at least \$60,000,000 in the complete venture prior to the end of the year 1892. <sup>10</sup>

Despite the failure of the American Association's project to develop a lasting industrialized center at Middlesboro, its venture did change the way of life in the Bell County area for all time to come. <sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Fuson, Henry Harvey. <u>History of Bell County, Kentucky</u>. New York: Hobson Book Press, 1947, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup>Pearce, John Ed. "Bell County: A Kentucky test of endurance and a tale of two towns," <u>The Courier-Journal Magazine</u> (Sunday, May 14, 1978), p. 12, also see Fuson, op. cit., p. 371.

3"Souvenir of Middlesborough, October, 1890." Louisville, Kentucky: Courier Journal Job Printing Co., 1890 (?), 16 pp., see Fuson, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>4</sup>Pearce, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup>Johnson, Walt, News Editor. ''Davis Home in Harrogate Dates to '85, Was Built for American Assoc Doctor,'' Middlesboro Daily News (Friday, July 2, 1976), p. H-4.

<sup>6</sup>See Photo 1.

<sup>7</sup>See Photo 2.

<sup>8</sup>Morgans, Brian H. "Cumberland Gap-Its History and Romance." (No place of publication given; no name of publisher given, no date of publication given), p. 1.

9"Souvenir" final page.

<sup>10</sup>Morgans, loc. cit.

11 Pearce, op. cit., p. 13.

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