

ASHLAND DISTILLERY (RD #1)

Turner, Clay & Company (1865 – 1871)
Wm. Tarr & Company (1871 – 1899)
Kentucky Distillers & Warehouse Company
(1899 – 1902, 1908 – 1923)
Stoll & Company (1902 – 1908)



Sanbourne Map, 1894

In 1865 Turner, Clay & Company established the Ashland Distillery on Manchester Street (Old Frankfort Pike at Cox Street, at the city limits). This distillery was the first to obtain a federal register distillery license in Lexington and was assigned RD #1. The firm was comprised of Horace H. Turner, Samuel M. Clay and Thomas Mitchell (which see). Messrs. Turner, Clay and Mitchell were prominent merchants in Lexington. The property was purchased on November 12, 1866 for \$10,000.²¹

They advertised “Manufacturers of Pure Copper Distilled Whiskey, at Ashland Distillery, ns Manchester, west of Cox.”²² Their product was known as “*Ashland*” whiskey. The firm produced twenty four hundred barrels from October 1868 to January 1869. The firm was averaging thirty barrels per day, slightly less than the



thirty-seven barrel capacity. They also completed their bonded warehouse in December 1868, which was said to be “fire proof”.²³

This firm operated the distillery for five years, before liquidating after the death of Mr. Turner in 1871. Mr. Turner’s estate included \$17,745 received from the distillery, less liabilities of \$11,364, for a net of \$6,381.²⁴

Wm. Tarr & Company:

In November 1871 William Tarr (which see) of Bourbon County and Thomas J. Megibben (which see) of Harrison County acquired the distillery and restarted whiskey production. Mr. Tarr was a prominent land speculator and Mr. Megibben was a successful dry goods merchant. Both were also distillers, entering the business before the Civil War. They continued to produce “*Ashland*” and introduced “*Wm. Tarr*” whiskey. Both brands were distilled in a rye and bourbon version.

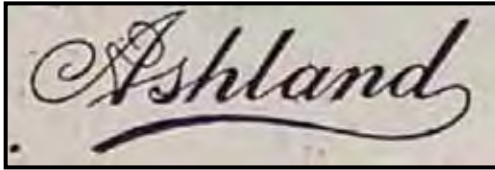
In May 1879 a fire destroyed the distillery. Distilleries were always prone to fires given their wooden construction and the volatile nature of their products. This fire (and the Phoenix Hotel fire later in the month) forced the local business community to establish a waterworks to lower insurance rates. The waterworks provided a year round supply of water to fight fires.

The distillery was reorganized in September 1879 as Wm. Tarr & Company – a partnership consisting of William T. Tarr (President), Thomas J. Megibben, Sam Clay, Jr. (which see) and Joseph M. Kimbrough (which see). Mr. Clay was a broker that distributed the company’s whiskey. Mr. Kimbrough was Mr. Megibben’s son-in-law and managed the plant. They owned forty, forty, ten and ten percent, respectively. The plant was rebuilt at the cost of \$75,000. The renovated facility was valued at \$115,000.

The firm’s property included eleven acres. The rebuilt distillery and warehouses were made of brick construction. The company had two warehouses - Warehouse #1 (two adjoining buildings) and Warehouse #2. The warehouses covered an area of one and half acres. The firm had the annual capacity of six thousand barrels.

The distillery's floor space covered twenty five thousand square feet. The plant has fourteen fermentation tubs, with the capacity of nine thousand five hundred gallons each. The primary mash tub held ten thousand gallons, with four hundred smaller mash tubs of one hundred and one gallons each. Before refrigeration equipment, these smaller tubs allowed the product to cool faster than a larger tank. The beer still's daily capacity was five thousand gallons, while the doubler had the capacity of twenty five hundred gallons.

The distillery operated three steam engines, with a total one hundred twenty five horsepower. In 1882 the company had thirty-five employees, paid \$1.75 per day. The company's production was approximately forty-five barrels per day. The company daily mashed three hundred bushels of corn and one hundred twenty bushels of rye and barley malt. The corn was purchased locally from Fayette County and generated an estimated \$30,000 in sales for the local farmers. The rye and barley malt was purchased out west and shipped in on the railroad. The firm had eighteen thousand barrels in bonded storage.²⁵



The Louisville, Cincinnati & Lexington Railroad's yard (later Louisville & Nashville Railroad) was adjacent to the plant, with a siding running into the distillery.

Water was supplied to the distillery from the Ater Spring^a, two hundred yards to the west of the plant. The spring was under lease to the company. The lease was for twenty-five years, with an annual payment of \$100. The distillery constructed "a stone wall around the spring also to cover the spring with a small house the better protection of the water".²⁶ Later Mr. Tarr purchased the spring property. Pumps

^a Ater Spring was located on the original land grant of Frances McConnell (and thus a possible location for the founding of Lexington). Around 1800 the site was used by Alexander Turner as a distillery. Mr. Turner was the great uncle of William Tarr. During the War of 1812 a hemp bagging plant was located on the site. Later the Ashland and Lexington Distilleries both drew water from this spring. After the fires of May 1879 it was considered for the city's waterworks. The spring was later covered in the 1910s when the L & N expanded its yard.

supplied two hundred thousand gallons of fresh limestone water daily through two three-inch pipelines. The water was at a constant temperature of fifty-seven degrees.



“Ashland”, circa 1900s



“Old Tarr”, circa 1890s



“Old Tarr”, circa 1900s

The distillery maintained a cattle-feeding operation with the stillage on the ground for five hundred head. During 1881 a cooper shop was built at the distillery that produced fifty barrels per week, with twenty employees.

In 1882 the distillery produced the “Ashland”, a sweet mash, and “Wm. Tarr”, a sour mash (later known as “Old Tarr”) brand of whiskey. The sweet mash was held for ninety-two hours and the sour mash for ninety-six hours.²⁷

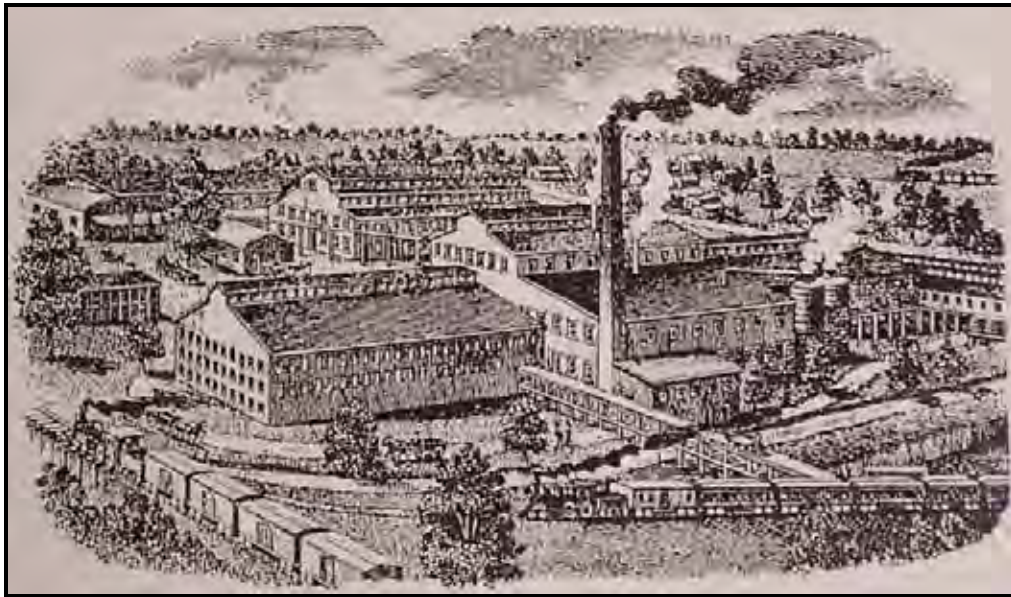
The company had sixteen thousand ninety barrels in bonded storage in 1882. Their annual production was six thousand barrels, valued at \$150,000.²⁸ In 1884 Sam Clay, Jr. left the partnership after a disagreement over the sale of the Kentucky Union Railroad (see Kentucky Union Affair). Distributions of the distillery’s products were assumed by J. A. Lail & Company (which see). From 1886 to 1890

the company leased the rear portion of their bonded Warehouse #1 to the firm of Derby & Day, whiskey brokers of Louisville.

In November 1888 Wm. Tarr Company was incorporated, owned by William Tarr (40%), Thompson Tarr (10%), Thomas J. Megibben (40%) and Joseph M. Kimbrough (10%).²⁹ The firm capitalized was \$100,000. The officers were Mr. Tarr - President, Mr. Megibben - Vice President and Mr. Kimbrough - Secretary. Thompson Tarr was Mr. Tarr's son.

After the deaths of Messrs. Megibben and Kimbrough in 1890, Mr. Tarr purchased their interests. Mr. Tarr continued as President, while his son was elected Vice President and J. B. Huffman was selected Secretary.³⁰ Distribution was also shifted to R. S. Strader & Company (which see).

In 1892 the distillery purchased the adjacent Lexington Distillery to acquire ten thousand barrels of bourbon in storage. That distillery plant was demolished and the whiskey relocated to the company's warehouses.



Ashland Distillery, circa 1893

On January 1, 1897 the company issued \$50,000 in first mortgage, gold bonds to the Security Trust Company. These bonds were secured by the company assets. At the time, directors were William Tarr and James S. Stoll (which see).

In May 1897 the company and Mr. Tarr were forced to assign their assets to James S. Stoll and Richard P. Stoll (which see) as receivers. This receivership resulted from Mr. Tarr's endorsed of a number of notes for family and friends that defaulted.³¹ The aftereffects of the Panic of 1893 and depression in the whiskey industry also compounded these problems. He had judgments ranging from \$200 to \$8,000 arising from these endorsements.



Thimble, circa 1900s

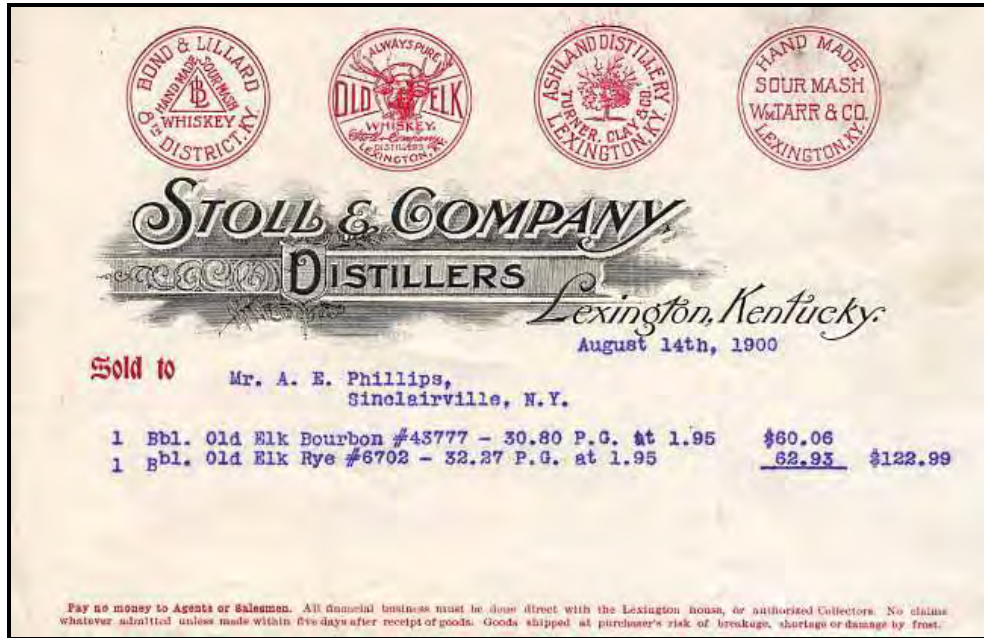
His personal assets included two thousand acres of farmland in Bourbon County (fifteen hundred of which was prime bluegrass land), commercial real estate in Paris, the Ater Springs in Lexington and a number of lots in Superior City, Michigan.

The distillery assets included ten thousand barrels in bond of “*Wm. Tarr*” bourbon. Liabilities included ordinary payables and the first mortgage bonds. The first mortgage bonds would later become the subject of litigation (see Settlement of Wm. Tarr & Company). The newspaper noted that except for these endorsements, Mr. Tarr would not have become “financially involved”.³² Mr. Tarr was 72 years old at the time.

On February 20, 1899 the distillery was auctioned at a Master Commissioner's sale to Leonard G. Cox, of Graves, Cox & Co., for \$60,001. He was bidding against G. G. White, distiller of Paris, Lewis LeBus, of Cincinnati, and Squire Basset, of the Fayette National Bank of Lexington. These three were the larger creditors of the company. Mr. Cox turned out to be a straw bidder for Charles H. Stoll (which see) and the Kentucky Distillers and Warehouse Company (the whiskey trust).³³

Stoll & Company:

After the sale of the Stoll family’s Commonwealth Distillery in 1899, James S. Stoll operated his brokerage business as Stoll & Company (as successor to Stoll, Vannatta & Company). “Old Elk” was the company’s proprietary brand of whiskey. He also controlled the market in “Old Tarr” and “Bond & Lillard” whiskies, owning large numbers of warehouse receipts for these two brands. This whiskey was stored in the bonded warehouses at Ashland Distillery, owned by the whiskey trust. Mr. Stoll marketed these brands.



Invoice, 1900

<pre-pro.com>

In December 1902 Stoll & Company Inc. as incorporated, with capitalized of \$600,000 in common stock. James S. Stoll was President; George J. Stoll III (his son) was Vice President and Samuel C. Stofer was Secretary / Treasurer. Mr. Stofer was the firm’s office manager.³⁴ The same month, the Ashland Distillery and the Bond & Lillard Distillery^a, located in Anderson County, were sold by the whiskey

^a Bond & Lillard Distillery – built in 1820 by John Bond on Cedar Run, Anderson County, Kentucky, about two miles from Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. In 1869 W. F. Bond, his son, formed a partnership with Christopher C. Lillard to distill “Bond & Lillard”. The brand became popular in the North, especially in Chicago. In 1885 Mr. Lillard left the partnership. In 1899 the distillery was purchased by the Kentucky Distillery and Warehouse Company (the Whiskey Trust).

trust to Stoll & Company.³⁵ The company now controlled the “*Bond & Lillard*”, “*Old Tarr*”, “*Ashland*” and “*Old Elk*” brands.³⁶

In 1904 the Stoll & Company’s “*Bond & Lillard*” won a gold medal at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition and World’s Fair in St. Louis.



“*Old Tarr*”, circa 1910s



“*Old Elk*”, 1926



“*Belle of Nelson*”, circa 1920s

In March 1905 the company purchased the Belle of Nelson^a and E. L. Miles & Co.^b Distilleries in Nelson County, Kentucky. The purchase price was \$486,655.32 for both. They also obtained twenty five thousand barrels of bonded whiskey with the deal. With these two additional distilleries, the Stoll & Company became the largest distilling concern in Kentucky – with four operating distilleries. They also

^aBelle of Nelson Distillery – located at New Hope, on the South Fork of Pottinger Creek, near Bardstown, Kentucky. The distillery was originally operated by Bartley – Johnson, who produced the “*Belle of Nelson*” bourbon. In 1891 the company was reorganized by Robert J. Tilford. The company was sold to the whiskey trust in 1900 and resold in 1905 to Stoll & Company.

^b E. L. Miles & Company - was founded in 1796 by Henry Miles as a small distillery at New Hope, near Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky. In 1875 the plant was expanded to twenty barrels by his son Edward L. Miles. The plant produced “*E. L. Miles & Co*”, a sweet mash whiskey. The distillery was sold to the trust in 1900. In 1905 the distillery was sold to Stoll & Company. The plant was also known as New Hope Distilling Company, which produced “*New Hope*” whiskey.

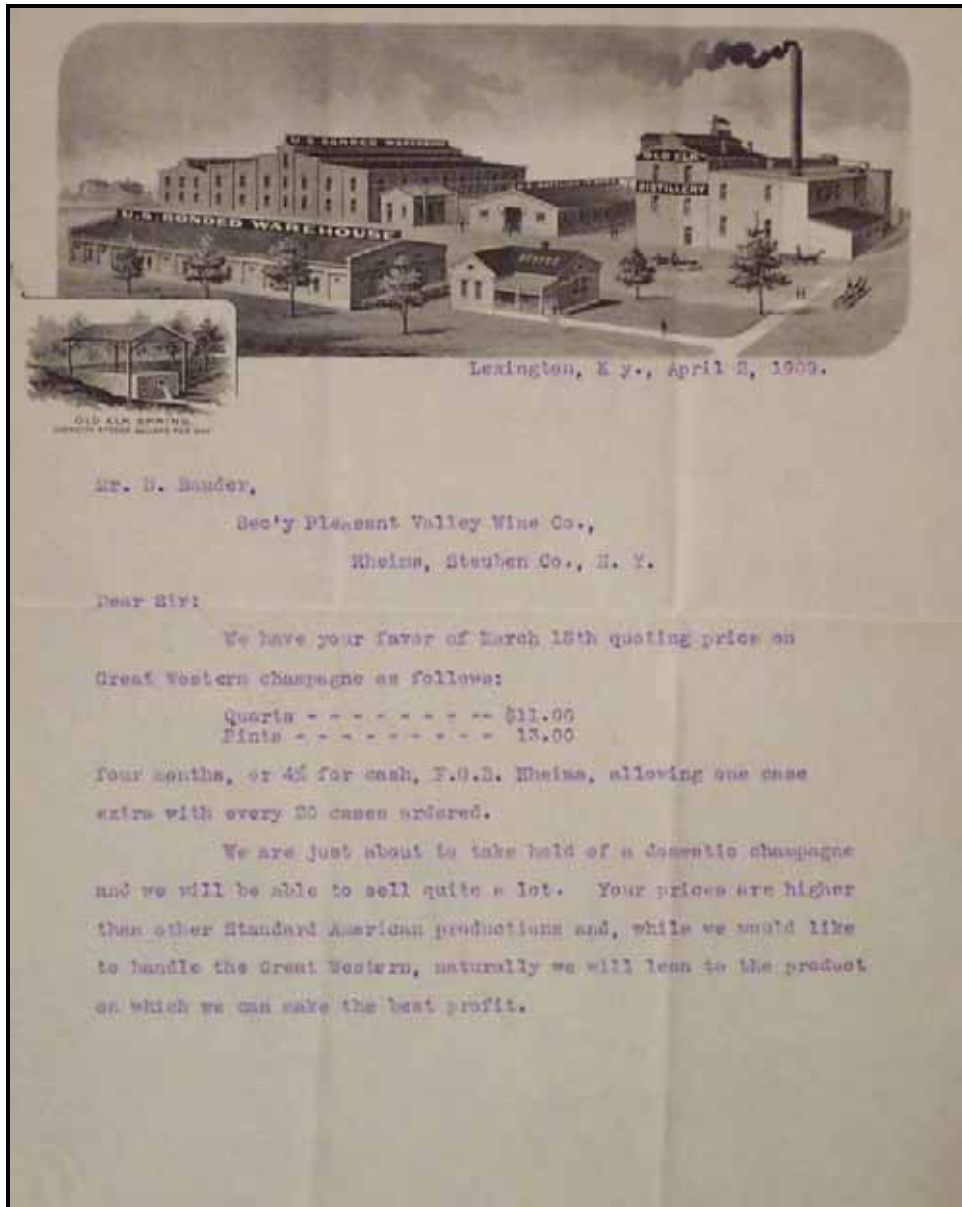
picked up two additional brands – “*Belle of Nelson*” and “*E. L. Miles*” – for a total of six brands of whiskies.³⁷



“Old Elk” Promotional Item, circa 1900s

On July 1, 1907 the Stoll family consolidated their wholesaling whiskey businesses – Stoll & Company and Stoll, Hamilton & Company (which see) into Stoll & Company Inc. James S. Stoll was President, John G. Stoll and George J. Stoll were Vice Presidents and Samuel C. Stofer was Secretary and Treasurer of the new concern. John G. Stoll was the son of Richard P. Stoll (who died in 1903).

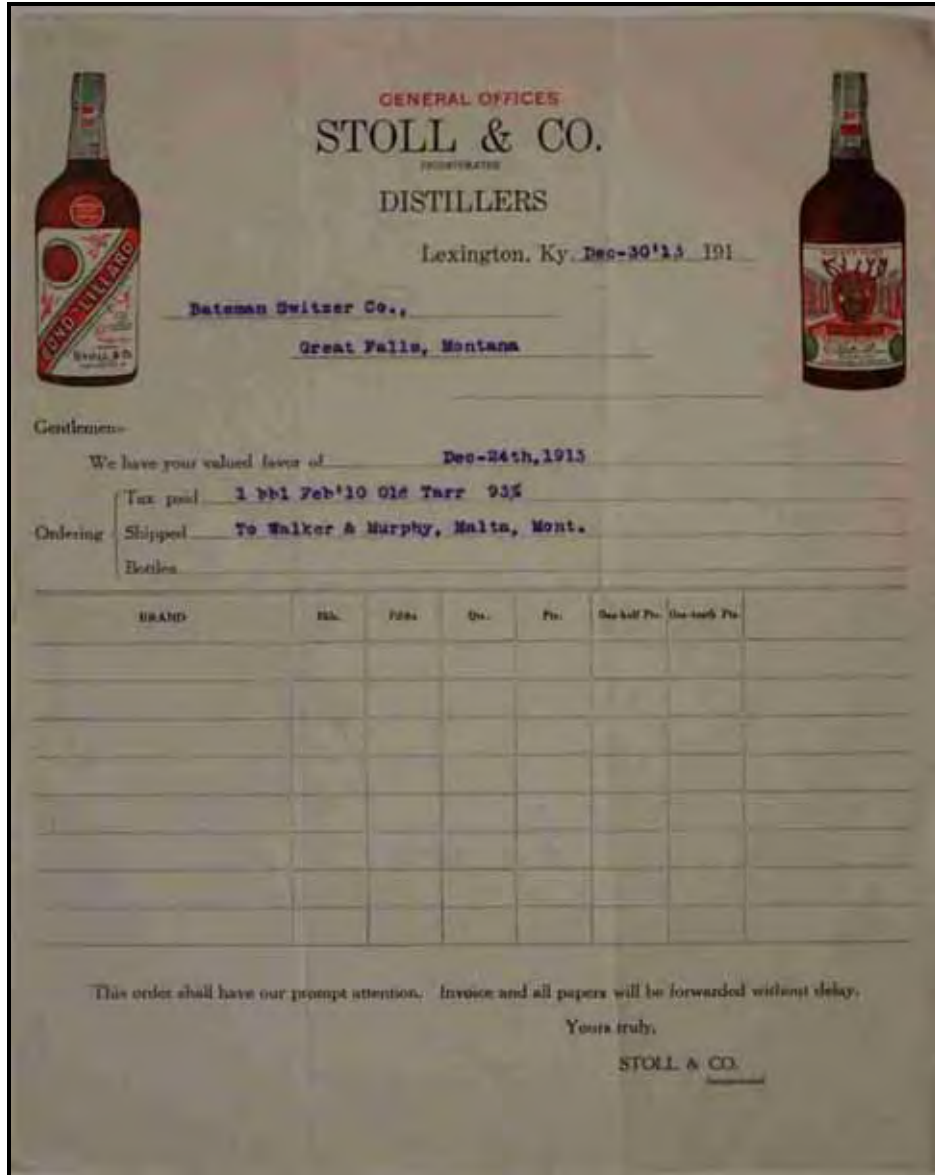
The new firm distilled and marketed seven brands; which were “*Ashland*”, “*Old Tarr*”, “*Old Elk*”, “*Bond & Lillard*”, “*Belle of Nelson*”, “*E. L. Miles & Co.*” and “*New Hope*”. They engaged sales representatives to cover the entire United States. Their main office and warehouse was retained in Lexington, while the firm had six other warehouses around the state. They employed over one hundred workers.³⁸



Letterhead, 1909

In 1908, after the deaths of Richard P. Stoll (in 1903) and James S. Stoll (in 1908), the Stoll distilling interests were consolidated into the Kentucky Distillers and Warehouse Company (the whiskey trust). The Ashland distillery plant was dismantled. After 1908 Mr. Stofer continued as a whiskey and wine merchant under the name Stoll & Company until Prohibition in 1919. Mr. Stofer in 1910 reintroduced “*Old Buckhorn Whiskey*” (an old Commonwealth Distillery brand) and “*Sam Clay Bourbon*”.

In March 1909 Maurice Greenbaum, of the S. J. Greenbaum Company of Louisville, purchased the entire whiskey inventory in the Ashland warehouses. Mr. Greenbaum was associated with the whiskey trust and owned a distillery in Midway (destroyed by fire the prior year). The bonded warehouses held a total of eighteen thousand barrels of whiskey produced from 1902 to 1907. Mr. Greenbaum paid the distillery \$375,000 and assumed \$600,000 in warehouse receipts. He paid roughly \$1.75 per gallon.



Letterhead, 1913

Mr. Greenbaum also purchased a plot of land, consisting of three-quarters of an acre, adjacent to Warehouse #1 and immediately began the construction of a bottling house. The fast pace construction was completed in less than three week. A bottling plant at the distillery was required to bottle in bond. Over the next ten years, Mr. Greenbaum bottled whiskey from this stock. The plant had the capacity of forty barrels per day and employed thirty-five workers.

In 1913 the rear portion of the property (where the distillery was located) was sold to the L & N Railroad to expand its yard at the rear of the distillery. The Ater Spring was included in this purchase.

Whiskey Bandits:

On the night of March 20, 1920 a band of masked whiskey bandits raided the warehouses at the distillery. After overpowering the two guards, the thieves took ninety-six cases of bonded whiskey from the government storeroom. This whiskey was valued at \$20,000. The police believed that the band was from Ohio.

In April 1920 the remaining seventy-six barrels of “*Old Tarr*” bourbon was removed to the concentration warehouses in Louisville (controlled by the whiskey trust). The newspaper indicated that the value of this bourbon was \$266,000 or \$3,500 per barrel (or \$4.50 per pint “Prohibition” prices). This move eliminated the cost of the guards at the warehouse.³⁹

Bonded Warehouse Number One remains at the site today, but a fire destroyed the bottling plant was destroyed in 1986.





“A Call in Arizona”, “Belle of Nelson”, circa 1895



“A Bluff in Chicago”, “Belle of Nelson”, circa 1895
 xxxx“A Good Story By A Good Fellow”

Kentucky Union Affair:

The Kentucky Union Railroad Company was chartered in 1872 to build a railroad into the rich timber and coal fields of Eastern Kentucky. The investors included Thomas J. Megibben, William Tarr and Sam Clay, Jr.

In 1884 Sam Clay, Jr. arranged a deal with outside investors to acquire the railroad. Meanwhile Messrs. Tarr and Megibben (his partners in the distillery) arranged a counter offer by a group of local investors. When Mr. Clay's investors arrived in Lexington with the tender amount in gold the railroad was already sold.

The local investors turned out to be Henry Clay McDowell (grandson of the statesman), Richard P. Stoll and Charles H. Stoll. Mr. Clay was outraged and filed suit against Messrs. Tarr and Megibben for interfering with the closing. Mr. Clay left the distillery partnership.

In June 1891 Mr. Clay won a judgment for \$10,000 against his former partners. This judgment was one factor in Mr. Tarr's bankruptcy.



Tin Sign, circa 1902 – 08



"Old Elk", circa 1900s



"Old Tarr", circa 1890s

Settlement of Wm. Tarr & Company:

In 1897 Richard P. and James S. Stoll were appointed joint receivers of the company. After both of their deaths, J. Will Stoll (which see), President of the Lexington City National Bank, was appointed interim receiver. The Stolls had collected \$130,402.35 and paid out \$127,192.02 for a balance of \$3,110.35. Mr. Tarr's creditors were paid in full, with interest.

The Stoll brothers liquidated the distillery in 1899. At the same time, they were involved with the formation of the whiskey trust. The distillery sold at auction for a fire sale price of \$60,001 to the trust. Within the next few years the distillery was easily worth three or four times that amount. The company's bonded whiskey was sold for as little as \$5 to \$10 per barrel. Within a year it was worth four times that amount and within the next few years at least eight times that amount.

The receivership was kept open for an unusually long twelve years. Finally, in 1910 Lewis E. Pearce was appointed replacement receiver for the Stolls. He was

ordered to settle the affairs of the Wm. Tarr & Company. He immediately began to question the Stolls' actions.

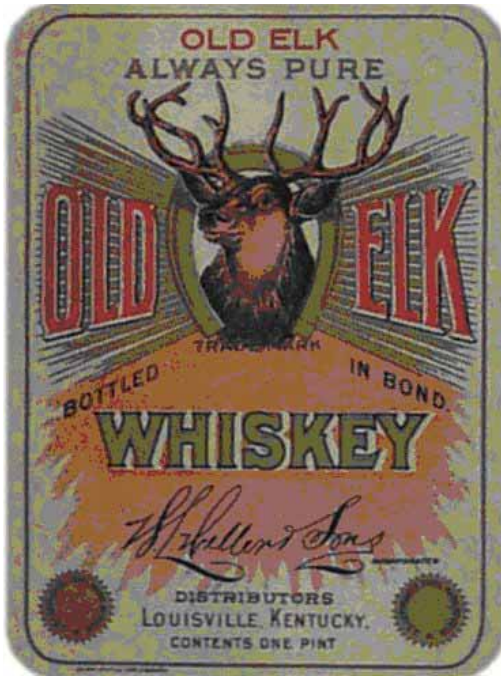
In August 1911 Receiver Pearce filed suit against the estates of the Stoll brothers to recover \$60,399.55 paid from the company. He claimed that the gold mortgage bonds were issued for the benefits of the Stolls, not business purposed. He claimed that these bonds were delivered without consideration and in anticipation of insolvency. He additionally claimed that the receivers had charged excessive fees and paid excessive interest on the repaid loans to their related entities.

Richard P. Stoll was the closing attorney for the bonds while he was President of the Lexington City National Bank (the largest creditor and primary beneficiary of the bond issue). His brothers – Charles H. and James S. Stoll – were involved with the whiskey trust. James S. Stoll was also a director of the Tarr distillery.

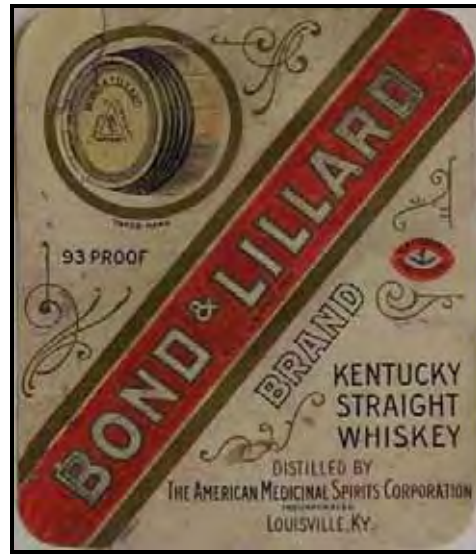
At closing, the bonds were divided among the Lexington City National Bank which received thirty-three bonds; James S. Stoll received five bonds; First National Bank received five bonds, William Tarr received five bonds; Lexington City National Bank received one additional bond as a fee and Fayette National Bank received one bond to secure a loan of Mr. Tarr. Each bond had the face value of \$1,000. Mr. Tarr's bonds were payment for the sale of the Ater Spring property to the distillery. After the receivership, he was forced to surrender these bonds back to the receivers.

The Stolls charged a receiver fee of \$10,000 for their services. The company also had additional loans with the Lexington City National Bank for \$32,000, Fayette National Bank for \$4,300 and Stoll, Vannatta & Company for \$3,200.⁴⁰ These loans were paid in full with interest.

After Mr. Tarr's death in 1911, the suit was settled out of court. Many observers thought the Mr. Tarr had turned to his friends the Stolls for help and the Stolls helped themselves. It is interesting to note that the Lexington Herald, a paper friendly with the Stolls, ran a short obituary stating "he used to be very wealthy". Other papers from around the state ran lengthy obituaries, fitting his position and many accomplishments.



"Old Elk", circa 1920s



"Bond & Lillard", circa 1920s



"Old Elk", 1938



"Old Tarr", circa 1920s

HENRY CLAY DISTILLERY (RD #5)

Headley & Farra (1869 – 1872)

Jas. E. Pepper & Co. (1879 – 1907)

James E. Pepper Distillers Company (1907 – 1933)

Schenley Products (1933 – 1976)



Sanbourne Map, 1894

The Henry Clay Distillery was built in 1869 by the partnership of Headley & Farra (which see). This partnership consisted of John A. Headley and James A. Farra.⁴¹ The firm purchased four acres for \$2,000, from Judge George Robertson in January 1869.⁴² The plant was located a mile outside of the city limits on Old Frankfort Pike. This was the location of the Royal Spring and old Royal Mill. The distillery operated for about three years until it was destroyed by fire in 1871. The loss was set at \$15,000.⁴³

After the fire, the property was sold by the Federal government in August 1872 for unpaid taxes. Mr. Headley later founded the Woodland Distillery on Harrodsburg Pike. Between 1875 and 1879 the property was used as the Blue Grass Pork House. The property was sold to George C. Buchanan^a, a Louisville distiller and land speculator, and sold on 7 April 1880 to George A. Starkweather, Jr., a wine importer of New York City. The purchase price was \$7,429.12 (cash of \$4,096.12 and assumption of notes of \$3,333.33).⁴⁴

^a George C. Buchanan operated Newcomb, Buchanan & Company, whiskey brokers of Louisville, Kentucky. In 1872 he was the largest distiller in Kentucky, with the Anderson, Nelson, Buchanan and Greystone (later Elk Run) Distilleries. He was connected with Parris, Allen & Company, an English investment bank. He sold out to the trust in 1905.

Jas. E. Pepper & Company:

In 1879 George A. Starkweather, Jr. established a partnership with James. E. Pepper (which see) and reconverted the old plant to whiskey production.⁴⁵ Colonel Pepper came from a family of distinguished distillers.



Colonel James Edward Pepper

<M. Veach>

Colonel Pepper designed the distillery and the layout of equipment. He hired John McMurty, noted local architect, to translate these ideas into plans and specifications. The grounds contained forty-eight and half acres. The distillery was constructed of brick with floor space of forty thousand square feet. The plant had twenty fermentation tubs of six thousand five hundred gallons and seven hundred mash tubs of seventy-two gallons. The company had a three chambered beer still of twenty five hundred gallons and a doubler of twelve hundred gallons. Both were made of copper.⁴⁶

He installed four steam boilers to provide heat to the mash tubs and stills. Many distilleries still used open flames for heat. In addition, he installed two steam engines of one hundred twenty five horsepower each to supply power. The steam engines drove a series of shafts throughout the plant. These shafts were attached to pulleys and belts to provide power to the machinery. He purchased a six roller mill,

also powered by belts, to grind his grains into uniform consistency. He designed rows of windows on two sides of his plant to allow ventilation and lighting.

These designs, while not revolutionary, allowed the distillery to operate with higher efficient, improved yields and uniform quality. Moreover, it allowed him to distill a consistent, higher-grade whiskey that was his hallmark.



The distillery plant was finished in April 1880, with the capacity of twenty-eight barrels (roughly three hundred bushels) per day.⁴⁷

In September 1880 the company let bids for the construction of two bonded warehouses. Both warehouses were roughly nine thousand square feet, four stories high and projected to hold ten thousand barrels of whiskey in storage. The foundations were of stone, walls of brick and roof of iron clad. The first warehouse was finished in late 1880 and the second finished in early 1881.⁴⁸

Over the next twenty years, Colonel Pepper constructed four additional warehouses – giving the distillery bonded storage of sixty thousand barrels. The average distillery in Kentucky had storage for five to ten thousand barrels. These warehouses were:

	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Year Built</u>
Warehouse “A”	10,000 barrels	1880
Warehouse “B”	8,500 barrels	1881
Warehouse “C”	6,000 barrels	1890
Warehouse “D”	5,000 barrels	1897
Warehouse “E”	8,500 barrels	1897
Warehouse “F”	11,000 barrels	1901

The distillery was supplied water from the farm of Colonel Wilson^a – with a basin of seventy-five feet square – and conveyed to the plant by a five-inch pipeline. The spring was considered in the 1880s for the water works for the city. Two pumps supplied one million gallons per day to the distillery. The water supply seemed inexhaustible and never ran dry. The company maintained five hundred head of cattle on the property, feed from the stillage.

The Louisville, Cincinnati and Lexington Railroad (later Louisville & Nashville Railroad) had tracks on both sides of the distillery, with a siding into the distillery on the Frankfort Pike side.



1893

By 1882 the plant's capacity had been increased to fifty barrels per day and ten thousand barrels per year. The distillery was valued \$125,000. The plant operated for ten months each year, with forty employees at an average of \$1.75 per day. They purchased oak barrels from the Bauer Cooperage Company for \$2.50 each. At the time this plant was the largest distillery in the world.

In February 1882 a fire of unknown origins destroyed the cattle sheds and pens at the Pepper Distillery. The fire occurred at three in the morning and caused the damages of \$4,000 to \$5,000. The loss was fully covered by the Western Insurance Company.⁴⁹

^a Now known as McConnell Springs, a historical park credited as the founding site of Lexington.

“Old Pepper” Brand Name:

In May 1880 Colonel Pepper began distilling “*Old Pepper Whiskey*”. This was a century after his grandfather established the first Pepper distillery. “*Old Pepper*” was distilled to his grandfather’s proprietary formula – developed in 1780, improved by Dr. James Crow and passed down three generations. The whiskey was a sour mash, fermented for seventy-two hours. This name “*Old Pepper Whiskey*” derives from his family name and reflects the heritage and tradition established by his family over the past one hundred years. The distillery also produced a rye whiskey called “*Old Henry Clay*”, a brand inherited from the prior distillery.

He reinforced this image by constantly stressing the quality of his whiskey by promoting its longevity (thus experience) and imitation by competitors. He used the slogans - “Established 1780” and “Purest and Best in the World”. These slogans also tapped into the patriotism following the Civil War. He placed the warning - BE AWARE OF REFILLED BOTTLES – on his labels. This created the impression that his whiskey was so good that others wanted to imitate it. In addition, he sealed his bottles with a stamp bearing the script signature of “Jas. E. Pepper & Co.” Signatures were protected under the forgery laws, which were faster to enforce than a trademark.

He was also one of the first distillers to invest huge sums for advertising and promotion. His success can be measured by that he was able to charge significantly more than his contemporaries.

George A. Starkweather marketed the distillery’s products on the East Coast, while Colonel Pepper managed the production at the distillery. During 1882 the company produced ten thousand barrels, valued at \$300,000. After Mr. Starkweather’s death, in December 1883, his interest was conveyed to James E. Pepper for the sum of \$70,000.⁵⁰

In 1884 Colonel Pepper sold half interest in his company to Colonel William S. Barnes (which see) of Lexington, Kentucky.⁵¹ Both Colonels Pepper and Barnes traveled around the United States promoting “*Old Pepper*” whiskey. Colonel Pepper concentrated on the East Coast, especially New York, and Colonel Barnes promoted in the North and West, especially in the Chicago area. They supplied the whiskey that made the **old west wild**.

Bottling Trade:

Initially, Colonel Pepper sold whiskey in barrels for the “bulk trade”. Distributors from around the country purchased barrels for sale to saloons and bars. The distributors resold the whiskey in barrels, half barrels and jugs. The distiller also supplied “bulk decanters”, with their name in gold leaf, and the retailer filled and refilled the decanters from the barrels.



“Old Pepper”, circa 1880s



“Old Jas. E. Pepper” circa 1900

In 1886 the company began bottling “Old Pepper” whiskey in quarts and pint flasks. The company entered the bottling business to counter rectifiers that blended his whiskey with cheaper substitutes. The company supplied distributors, if they wanted, with gold “Old Pepper Whiskey” labels. These labels had a white blank on the bottom where the distributor listed their name.

In 1887 the company filed suit to stop the Labrot & Graham Distillery in Versailles from using the “Old Pepper” name. That firm purchased the Old Oscar Pepper Distillery in 1878. The court enjoined them from using the “Pepper” brand name.

The “Old Pepper Whiskey” brand at this time had established strong name recognition across the United States. In the late 1880s Prince Henry of Prussia was served “Old Pepper Whiskey” while traveling on the Pennsylvania Railroad.⁵²

Many experts considered it as the best bourbon produced in Kentucky. With its success, the “*Old Pepper*” trade name was constantly being “adopted” by others.

In the late 1880s Colonel Pepper invented the “Old Fashioned” cocktail at the Pendennis Club in Louisville. His formula called for two ounces of bourbon (“*Old Pepper*” of course), a splash of sugar syrup, bitters and soda water.⁵³ He also originated “Bourbon and Branch”, for a bourbon and water. The “Branch” was referring to water taken from the Town Branch of the Elkhorn Creek (where the distillery drew its water supply). Both of these cocktails became famous in New York, where Colonel Pepper personally promoted his whiskey.

By 1889 the bottling trade expanded to a level that the company faced a shortage of aged whiskey. They purchased one thousand barrels from the Wm. Tarr & Company’s Ashland Distillery and five hundred barrels from other distilleries. This whiskey was blended under Colonel Pepper’s supervision with the existing stock of “*Old Pepper*” whiskey.

In 1890 the company advertised that “*Old Pepper Whiskey*” was a “grand medicine for Consumption, Malaria, etc.” This was prior to federal regulations, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.

In January 1891 Colonel Pepper advertised that he used “rye, barley and corn in a 100 year old formula” and the he mashed” by hand one bushel at a time in 1,000 small tubs with NO yeast added and single and double distilled over an open fire”.⁵⁴ During April the distillery sold out of all its aged whiskey from 1887, 1888 and 1889. Colonel Pepper indicated the inventory was sold to over ninety brokerage houses around the United States and he had set aside fifteen hundred barrels for himself.⁵⁵

In 1891 the trade paper stated that the “reputation established by this brand (“*Old Pepper*”) throughout the eastern States, and especially in New York City, has been the wonder of the entire trade and competitors of the house”.

In July 1891 Colonel Pepper brought out Colonel Barnes for \$100,000 (cash of \$60,000 and broodmares valued at \$40,000). Over the ten years, Colonel Barnes had taken out an estimate of \$250,000 in profits; receiving \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually from his interest.⁵⁶

**OLD PEPPER
WHISKEY.**

Distilled Only By
JAS. E. PEPPER & CO.,
LEXINGTON, KY.

Under the same formula for more than One
Hundred Years. Is the

PUREST AND BEST IN THE WORLD.

Unequaled as a beverage. Is a grand medicine
for Consumption, Malaria, etc. Our own bottling
at the Distillery, aged under our personal super-
vision, is genuine only when bearing our unbroken
fac-simile signature across the stopper. Sample
case sent on trial. If not satisfactory, it can be
returned to us and money will be refunded.

1890

DON'T let Whiskey get the best of you. Get
the **BEST** of Whiskey, which is the

GENUINE DISTILLERY
BOTTLING OF . . .

Old Pepper Whisky
AND OLD
Henry Clay Rye

Bottled and Distilled ONLY by
James E. Pepper & Co.,
Lexington, Ky.

Under the same Formula for more
than 100 YEARS, is guaranteed
absolutely the **PUREST** and **BEST**
in the World.

Sample Case, \$15.00.

Send us what, which, if not satisfactory, can be
returned and money will be refunded.

Send and save the Expense on Old Pepper Whisky
and Old Henry Clay Rye, and we will give the
\$3.00 in addition to the \$1.00 per dozen.



1898

Old "Pepper" Whisky

Distilled only by **Jas. E. Pepper & Co., Lexington, Ky.** under
the same formula for more than 100 years, is the **PUREST** and **BEST**
in the World. "Pepper" Whisky is an outstanding whiskey, made
in the old time way from a Formula used more than 100 years by
three generations of the Pepper family. It is made from Selected
Rye, Barley and Oats. The material is mashed by hand, one
bushel at a time, in small tubs, nearly one thousand of which are
constantly required for the purpose. No yeast is employed to
secure an unusual fermentation or large yield, and we strain and
double through.

COPPER STILLS OVER OPEN FIRES.

All the water used is from the celebrated "Wilson Spring" on
our premises, which is the largest Natural Spring of Pure Lim-
estone Water in Central Kentucky. Our cooperage is the best and
of our own manufacture. Perfect storage warehouses. Our Mr.
James E. Pepper is the only one of his name who has been engaged
in the distilling business in Kentucky for over twenty years, and
therefore any whiskey offered to the trade as genuine "Pepper"
whisky is fraudulent unless distilled by us.

Jas. E. Pepper & Co.

1891

**BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
TO DAY**

IN the days of the
Stately Minuet—
the days of civility and of
courtly manners—the halls of the halls
of our land had no drink but a bowl of
golden wine. To be sure at that time
our **James E. Pepper** Whisky was
already made at the distillery. In those days
there were good liquors. The law "old
time" **James E. Pepper** and **Henry Clay Rye**
were made in the old time way. It is a
fact that the **James E. Pepper** Whisky
is the only one of its kind in the world.
The **James E. Pepper** Whisky is the only
one of its kind in the world. It is a
fact that the **James E. Pepper** Whisky
is the only one of its kind in the world.

**ESTABLISHED 1788
BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
OLD PEPPER WHISKEY
BOTTLED IN BOND**

Our Nearest Distributor Can Supply You as Follows:
J. C. & F. W. Co. (The Pepper) Bottled in Bond. \$1.00
The James E. Pepper Co. Bottled in Bond. \$1.00

THE JAMES E. PEPPER DISTILLING COMPANY
111 Franklin St., Lexington, Ky. 411 Knox Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

1908

HAPPY



Drink the Health

of your holiday guests in a glass of "Old James E. Pepper" Whiskey. The name and the name of Old Pepper Brand have a part of the history of the world. One hundred and twenty years ago, the first Old Pepper Whiskey was made by Elijah Pepper of the famous old Scotchman family of Virginia. It is still today in the name of the brand is an established standard in the civilized life of every well-to-do family in every part of the world. It is as pure as a snowflake, as light as the breeze of a breeze in the air, and as pure as the sun.

It is not only a healthful and refreshing beverage, but it is also a tonic and a stimulant. It is a healthful and refreshing beverage, but it is also a tonic and a stimulant. It is a healthful and refreshing beverage, but it is also a tonic and a stimulant.

ESTABLISHED 1790 BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
OLD PEPPER WHISKEY
 BOTTLED IN BOND

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER
 1 Full gallon of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, guaranteed to give full satisfaction. If you prefer, we will send you a 50-cent bottle of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, and a 50-cent bottle of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, and a 50-cent bottle of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond.

The James E. Pepper Distilling Company
 417 Franklin Pike, Louisville, Ky. 211 North Wabash, Chicago, Ill.

1908



The Fragrant Memory

of a departed one, long ago, is a drink of "Old James E. Pepper" Whiskey. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower.

Ask for "Old James E. Pepper" Whiskey. You will appreciate its delicate flavor and its healthful qualities. If your doctor does not think it, or if you live in a healthful place, you will appreciate its delicate flavor and its healthful qualities. If your doctor does not think it, or if you live in a healthful place, you will appreciate its delicate flavor and its healthful qualities.

ESTABLISHED 1790 BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
OLD PEPPER WHISKEY
 BOTTLED IN BOND

OUR NEAREST DISTRIBUTOR CAN SUPPLY YOU AS FOLLOWS:

1 Full gallon of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, guaranteed to give full satisfaction. \$4.00
 1/2 Full gallon of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, guaranteed to give full satisfaction. \$2.00

THE JAMES E. PEPPER DISTILLING COMPANY
 417 Franklin Pike, Louisville, Ky. 211 North Wabash, Chicago, Ill.

1909



This good old Whiskey is fine for you

Old James E. Pepper Whiskey

Protection

Old James E. Pepper Whiskey

Offer to You

And This is Just What

1909



MINE HOST OF THE WAYSIDE TAVERN

in Old James E. Pepper Whiskey. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower. It is a memory that is as fragrant as the perfume of a flower.

Ask for "Old James E. Pepper" Whiskey. You will appreciate its delicate flavor and its healthful qualities. If your doctor does not think it, or if you live in a healthful place, you will appreciate its delicate flavor and its healthful qualities.

BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
OLD PEPPER WHISKEY
 BOTTLED IN BOND

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER
 1 Full gallon of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, guaranteed to give full satisfaction. \$4.00
 1/2 Full gallon of "Old Pepper" Whiskey, bottled in bond, guaranteed to give full satisfaction. \$2.00

THE JAMES E. PEPPER DISTILLING COMPANY
 417 Franklin Pike, Louisville, Ky. 211 North Wabash, Chicago, Ill.

1909



On Magnificent Kentucky Thoroughbreds

The Kentucky tradition of the old school horse is found in a series of names. The first "Old James E. Pepper" Whiskey is a series of distinguished lines. Standing over a hundred years ago, John Pepper of the old and famous "Cokeberry" family of Virginia made the first Old Pepper Whiskey, selected to form its germ. It is made today in the same old distillery, old equipment, carrying the name of the line good distill of Kentucky, aged in white oak casks and bottled in bond at the distillery. Its reputation, built and maintained by the quality of good Kentucky whiskey.

Buy Old Pepper and get the "Old James E. Pepper". You will appreciate its distinctive taste and your personal opinion. It will make you think it is a fine line in whiskey when you get the real thing. But the standard is made by John Pepper, who also has the positive assurance that it is John Pepper's own whiskey. It is a fine line.

ESTABLISHED 1780
BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
OLD PEPPER WHISKEY
 BOTTLED IN BOND

OUR NEAREST DISTRIBUTOR CAN SUPPLY YOU AS FOLLOWS:

(All cities) "Old Pepper" Bottled in Bond \$5.00
 (All cities) "Old Pepper" Bottled in Bond \$1.00

THE JAMES E. PEPPER DISTILLING CO.
 117 Franklin Pike, Lexington, Ky. 211 East Main, Chicago, Ill.
 145 Grand Street, New York, N. Y.

1909

Bottled in Bond



Established 1780

Stock this!

Old Jas. E. Pepper Whiskey
 ESTABLISHED 1780

"Born with the Republic"

The Best Value and the Greatest Whiskey-Whisker!
 WHY? Because it is the only whiskey that has stood the test of time and is still the same today.

The James E. Pepper Distilling Co.,
 LEXINGTON KY., CHICAGO NEW YORK.

1910

Not Age Alone—but Purity

Good whisky must be properly aged, it must be pure. The process of aging has made the test for purity made by thousands of eminent physicians who prescribe it, and by all good merchants on each street.

Money back if not pleased.

The James E. Pepper Distilling Co.
 117 Franklin Pike, Lexington, Ky.


Four Quarts \$5

JAMES E. PEPPER WHISKY
 America's Oldest and Best Known Brand

Bottled in Bond EST. 1780 70 years Old

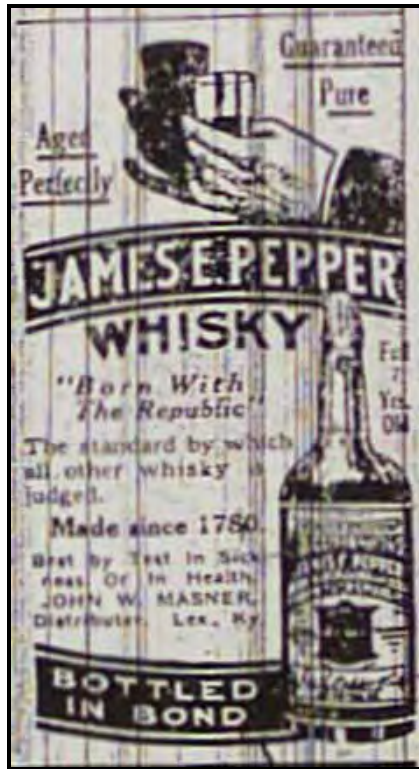
1909

If all whisky were as good and pure as James E. Pepper there would be no prejudice against whisky



"Born with the Republic"

1910



1912

In July 1891 the distillery again took the Labrot & Graham to court to force them to stop using the brand name. That company had interpreted the court ruling to allow them to use the name as the designation of the place of the distillery. Consequently they advertised “*Pepper Whiskey*” as a geographic location. The judge ruled against them.⁵⁷

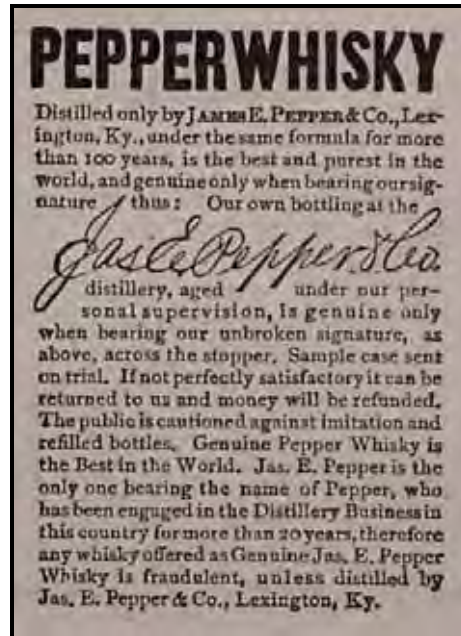
In January 1893 the distillery was also granted an injunction against Thomas E. Pepper (Colonel Pepper’s brother) and Thompson Tarr, of the Ashland Distillery, for their “*Old Tom Pepper*” brand. The judge ruled that this infringed on the trademarks of the Pepper brands.⁵⁸

New York Agency:

During 1891 Colonel Pepper became a silent partner in the firm of Krauss, Hart, Felbel & Company, of New York. This firm operated as a whiskey broker and was managed by Otto Krauss. In January 1892 Colonel Pepper closed out all of the bottling contracts with independent brokers, effectively in one year. In 1893 Krauss, Hart, Felbel & Company became the exclusive dealer in bottled “*Old Pepper*”

Whiskey” nationwide, except for California^a. The contract specified that they would purchase thirty thousand cases of bourbon, one thousand barrels of bourbon and five hundred barrels of rye whiskey each year.

In July 1893 the Krauss firm sued Joseph R. Peebles & Son, of Cincinnati, for bottling “*Old Pepper*” whiskey. During the 1880s the Peebles concern had purchased a number of barrels of whiskey manufactured by the Jas. E. Pepper & Company. Peebles & Son had also for years bottled, with distillery supplied labels. At the time of the Krauss contract, the distillery attempted to repurchase the bonded bourbon back, but the Peebles’ firm demanded too high a price. The distillery owned the trademarks to the “*Old Pepper*” brand and the right to bottle.



Instead of purchasing from the Krauss firm and paying a higher price, Peebles & Sons continued bottling their “*Old Pepper*” bourbon in similar labeled bottles. This was in violation of the trademark laws. Having no defense against the trademark violations, the attorneys for the Peebles concern began claiming that “*Old Pepper* was not genuine”, that the Pepper distillery did not produce all of the “*Old Pepper*” whiskey and was “palming off other whiskey as its own”. Colonel Pepper’s legal team included Senator William Lindsay of Kentucky, Charles J. Bronston and

^a A San Francisco broker handled the market for California and the Far East.

John R. Allen of Lexington and Joseph B. Foraker, the Governor of Ohio. He apparently believed in being well represented.⁵⁹ The court enforced the trademark.

“Old Pepper” Private Car:

In February 1892 the company purchased a private railcar, named the “*Old Pepper*”, from the Arms Palace Car Company for \$10,000. The car was painted bright orange, with hand painted scenes on its sides of “*Old Pepper*” barrels, cases and bottles, with thoroughbred horses and jockeys. The end of the car was lettered “Private Car – *Old Pepper* – Property of James E. Pepper, Distiller of the Famous *Old Pepper* Whisky”. Colonel Pepper was always the showman and promoter.⁶⁰

On September 12, 1892 the cattle pens at the end of the distillery property were again destroyed in a fire. The distillery had ceased production at the end of August. Arson was suspected because of several small fires around the distillery over the past few months. Damages were limited to several thousand dollars.⁶¹

In February 1893 Colonel Pepper purchased a total of \$350,000 in life insurance policies and paid the \$8,000 premium by check. The local paper commented “by no means an everyday occurrence even by our wealthiest men” and “largest life policy south of the Ohio River”.⁶² Colonel Pepper - always the promoter.



Employee Pin, circa 1890s

Whiskey Depression:

In 1893 an economic depression began that lasted five years. This recession caused Colonel Pepper’s thoroughbred investments to drop significantly, while he still had the financial drain of the feed and board bills. In addition, the over supply of whiskey caused the value of whiskey stocks to fall dramatically.

In the middle of the recession, Colonel Pepper purchased the Silver Springs Distillery in 1895. He paid \$20,000 - \$15,000 in cash and \$5,000 in notes. He

apparently did not take advantage of the slump and paid a fair price for the distillery (it was valued at the same price ten years later in a strong market).

In October 1895 Colonel Pepper contracted with Henry Krogers & Company, of New York, to market his whiskies. The agreement required the Kroger firm to purchase two hundred fifty cases per week and was for the term of two years (renewal by both parties). At the same time, he closed the Krauss agency. Over the past four years the agency was a financial drain, with Mr. Krauss taking out of \$100,000 in salary and \$300,000 in other expenses.⁶³



Corkscrew, circa 1890s

Colonel Pepper paid Mr. Krauss the last \$5,000 due in salary in the form of a promissory note, due in six months and secured by fifty-three barrels of whiskey (made in 1892 and valued at \$10,000). Mr. Krauss agreed to renew the note if needed. However, Mr. Krauss discounted the note with Hatch & Company of New York. In late March 1896, Hatch & Company sent the note to the Phoenix National Bank for collection. Colonel Pepper was unable to payoff the note and requested its renewal. Instead, Hatch & Company filed an attachment of the Krogers' contract.

Due to these financial problems, on April 15, 1896, Colonel Pepper assigned his assets to the Security Trust and Safety Vault Company of Lexington.⁶⁴ This receivership also covered his company, Jas. E. Pepper & Co., which was a sole proprietorship. Security Trust retained Colonel Pepper as manager of the distillery, at an "ample" salary. Colonel Pepper projected that he would be able to payback his creditors from whiskey sales over the next eighteen months.

His problems were attributed to “due to extreme dullness in whiskey market – scarcity of money – no demand for whiskey the past three months.” Avery S. Winston, William S. Barnes and Louis Straus were appointed as appraisers of his assets. Mr. Winston was President of the First National Bank and Mr. Straus was President of the Central Bank.

Colonel Pepper’s assets were appraised at:

Assets:	\$497,114
Liabilities:	\$280,286
Net Worth:	\$216,828

Prior to the panic, Colonel Pepper had refused an offered of one million dollars for his distillery.⁶⁵ He also endorsed \$134,110 in company notes and \$10,575 for friends.

His principal assets included the distillery (valued at \$125,000), the Little Pepper distillery (valued at \$18,000), his farm (valued at \$55,000), thoroughbreds (valued at \$17,545) and whiskey (barrels valued at \$227,182 and case goods valued at \$9,015). His stallions, which Colonel Pepper paid over \$100,000, were valued at only \$500, an indication of their decline in value.

His major creditors were the First National Bank (\$39,346), Second National Bank (\$6,300), National Exchange Bank (\$37,550), Northern Bank (\$12,825), Central Bank (\$9,000), Fayette National Bank (\$6,500), Nat Harris (\$5,000), William S. Barnes (\$41,604) and L. Welschoff (whiskey broker – Cincinnati \$3,000).⁶⁶

The company had bourbon in storage valued at \$80,000 (\$10 per barrel or \$.185 per gallon wholesale price), with warehouse liens of \$20,000 to \$30,000. The retail price for a barrel was \$90 at this time.

The Pepper Distillery assets also included the “*Old Pepper*” and “*Jas. E. Pepper*” trademarks and established sales contracts. No value was assigned for these intangible assets. The most valuable intangible asset was the contract with Henry Krogers & Company. At this time, any contract to sell whiskey (especially this size) was worth its weight in gold. In addition, the distillery had normal sales, such as supplying the Khedive of Egypt twice every year.

In August 1896 the distillery was scheduled to be sold at public auction on September 19, 1896. At the auction, Mrs. James E. Pepper purchased the distillery for \$43,142.69. This price was payable in thirds – at one year, two years and three

years, with seven percent interest.⁶⁷ However, Mrs. Pepper paid cash – from the prize purses of her thoroughbred stable.



Case, circa 1890s

Reorganization:

In December 1896 the Jas. E. Pepper & Company was organized as a corporation, with \$150,000 in capital. The distillery has previously been a sole proprietorship. Colonel Pepper owned two thousand nine hundred ninety four shares of the total three thousand shares. John G. Offutt (his bother-in-law) and Charles O. Johnson (bookkeeper) owned three shares each. These shares allowed them to qualify as a director under the laws of the time.⁶⁸ The company was authorized to “engage in the manufacturing, handling, selling and dealing in distilled spirits at the old distillery, formerly run by James E. Pepper, and in buying, feeding and selling of cattle and hogs”.⁶⁹

On February 9, 1897 Mrs. Pepper transferred the plant, equipment, stock and other assets purchased at auction to the new concern.⁷⁰ In February 1897 the Jas. E. Pepper & Company issued \$150,000 in gold bonds to the Harrisburg Trust Company. Charles J. Bronston and Charles H. Stoll represented the company at the closing. These bonds were for five years, with interest at six percent, payable in gold coins and secured with a first mortgage on the company assets. These assets included the Old Pepper Distillery and the trademarks of “*Genuine Old Pepper*”, “*Henry Clay*” and script signature Jas. E. Pepper & Co. The Little Pepper Distillery was not included. This financing allowed the resumption of operations immediately.⁷¹

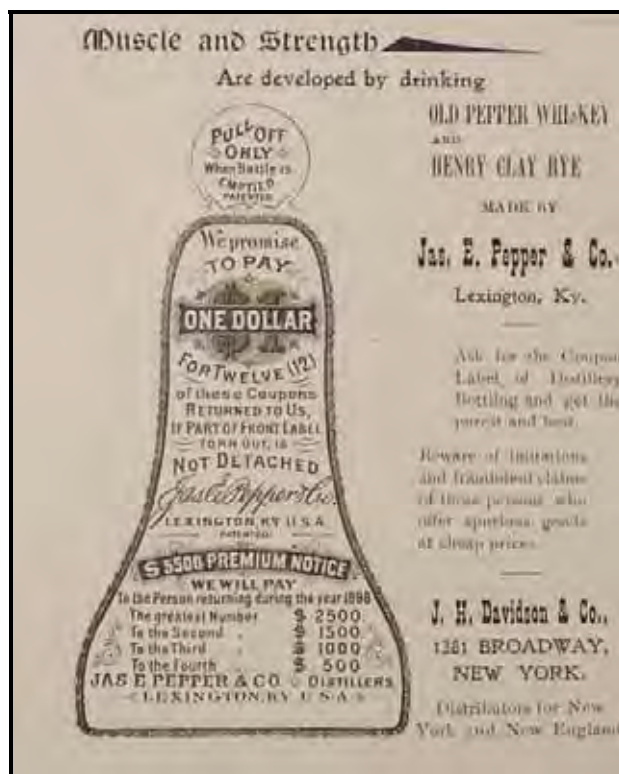


Invoice, 1897

The next day the company resumed distilling bourbon. Colonel Pepper had several months earlier placed drummers (sales representatives) on the road to book orders for the soon to be reopened distillery. The officers at this time were James E.

Pepper (President), A. G. Kinsley (Vice President) and James G. Hubbell^a (General Manager and Secretary & Treasurer). Mr. Kinsley represented the Harrisburg Trust and the bank placed Mr. Hubbell at the distillery to oversee the financial side of the operations.⁷²

In 1897 the company introduced a coupon rebate program to promote their products. The distillery offered a \$1.00 refund for every twelve coupons returned. These coupons were located under the label and pulled off by the customer. Each coupon carried a serial number stamped in red. In addition, the three customers that returned the greatest number of coupons received \$500, \$300 and \$200, respectively. In 1898 the program was increased to include the top four with awards of \$2,500, \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500. The coupon rebate promotion was successful and continued until at least 1902. The distillery had preprinted checks for this program.

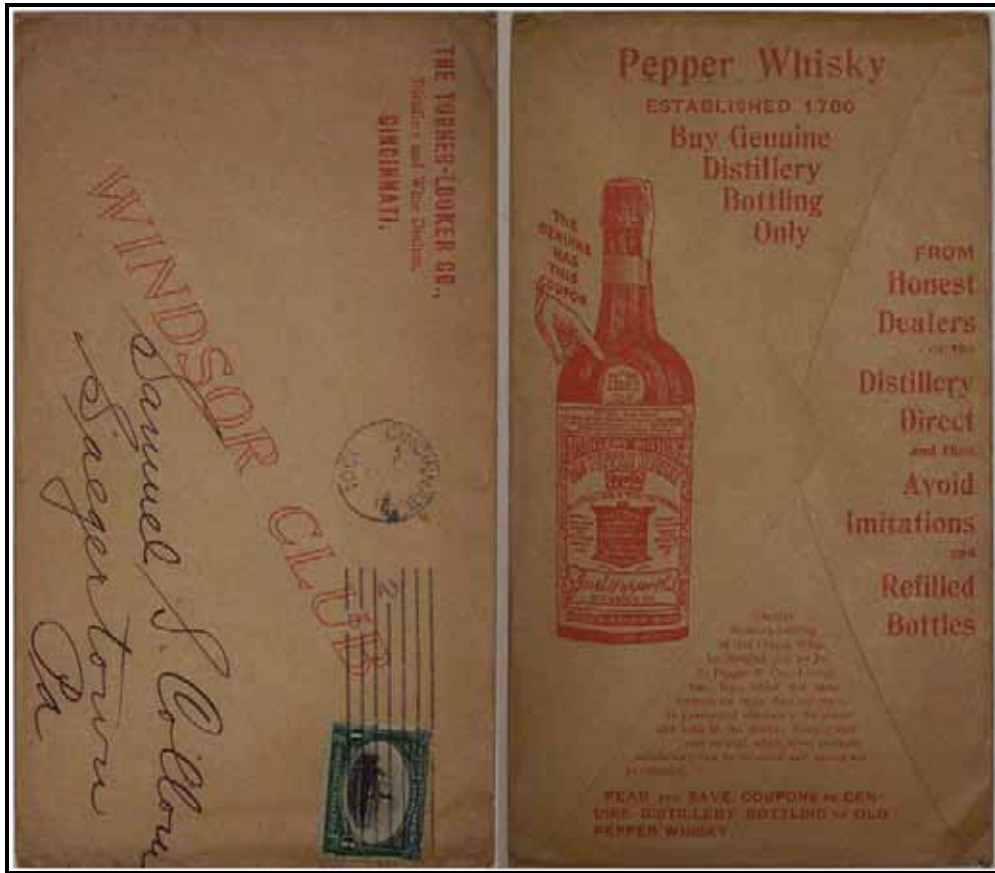


1898

^a James G. Hubbell was born in Cincinnati and relocated to Lexington in the 1880s, after marrying the sister of J. Hull Davidson. He was city bookkeeper in the late 1880s and manager of the Phoenix Hotel in the early 1890s. He was also a National Bank Examiner.



Rebate Check, 1902



Envelope, 1901

In September 1897 the whiskey brokerage firm of R. S. Strader & Son (which see) became the exclusive agents in Kentucky for the company's whiskey

in bulk and bottles. This firm controlled two proprietary brands, “*Old Pugh*” and “*Old Barton*”, which the distillery began producing.⁷³

In November 1897 J. Hull Davidson^a (Mr. Hubbell’s brother-in-law) was hired to be the eastern representative of the distillery. He set up office in New York, at 1881 Broadway (near Wall Street).⁷⁴



Over the next year, Colonel Pepper had constant disagreements with his “overseers” from the trust company. In October 1898 Mr. Hubbell attempted to take control of the distillery from Mr. Pepper (who owned the stock). Supported by his friends at the Harrisburg Trust, Mr. Hubbell announced the financial backing to secure all the bonds (which held a first mortgage) and that it was “only question of time” before he controlled the distillery. He was described as a “hustling” businessman.⁷⁵

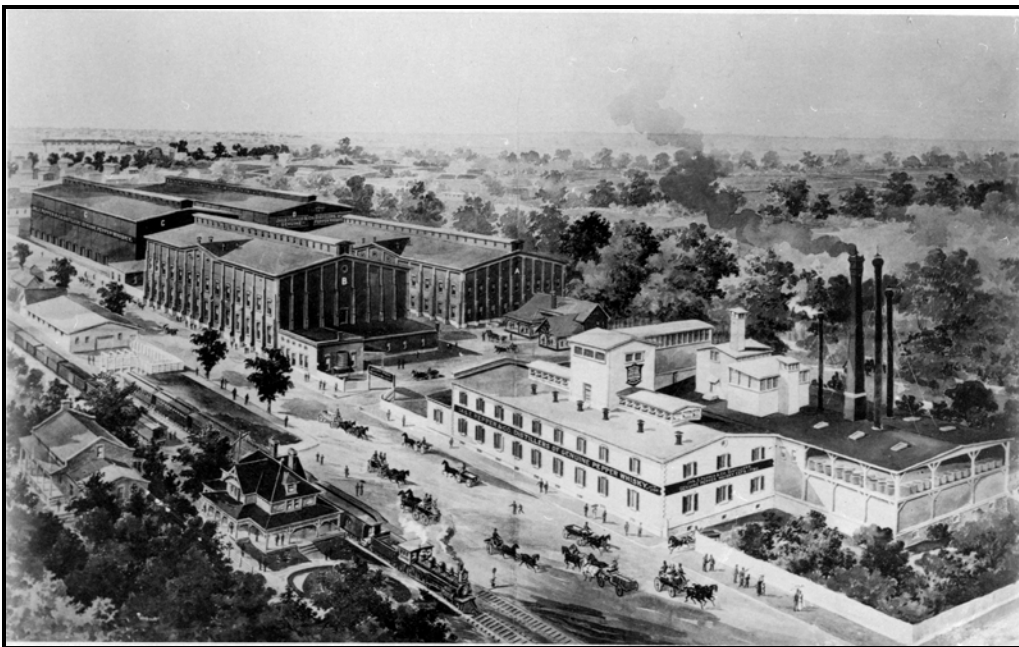
However, in November 1898, Colonel Pepper finally assumed full control of the distillery, after Mrs. Pepper purchased a majority of the bonds issued by

^a J. Hull Davidson operated a number of businesses in Lexington during the 1880s and 1890s. He operated the Kentucky Race Track from 1880 to 1897. In the late 1880s he operated the Phoenix Hotel and in 1891 purchased the hotel for \$175,000. He was the city’s tax collector from 1886 to 1892 and Democratic Mayor from 1893 to 1895. During his term as mayor, the depression of the 1890s forced the cut back of all roadwork and other expenditures. He kept the city solvent. In addition, he order the cleaning of all private privies (enforced by the police) to prevent cholera and turned the workhouse into the Davidson School for children. He relocated to New York in the late 1890s as a thoroughbred agent. In 1900 he operated the American Restaurant at the World’s Fair in Paris, France.

Harrisburg Trust. She held one hundred forty five of the one hundred fifty bonds issued. Mrs. Pepper again used the winning purses from her thoroughbred stable to purchase the bonds.⁷⁶ Colonel Pepper not only had a beautiful wife, but she was also his major creditor (smart enough to have a first mortgage).

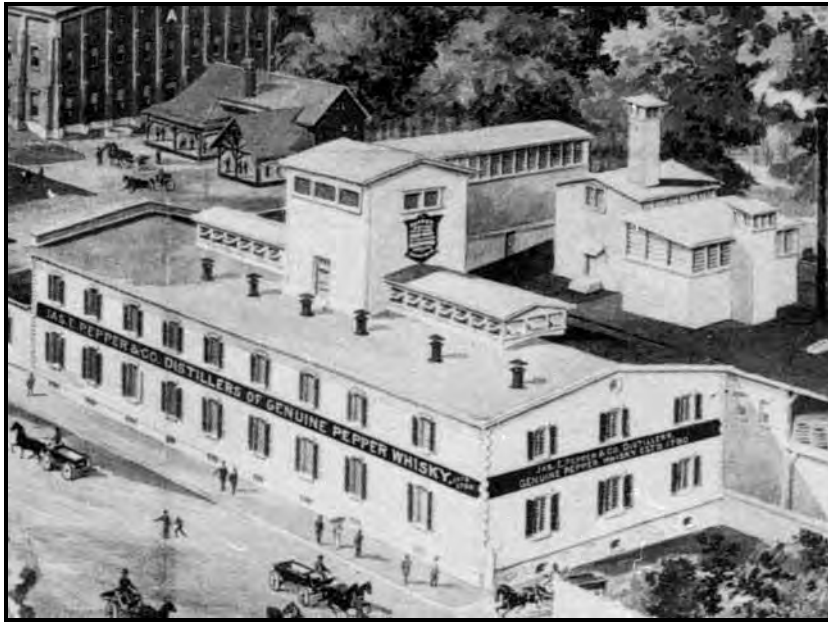
Mr. Hubbell made one more attempt to secure control of the distillery, by having the Harrisburg Trust declare the bonds in default and have a receiver (Mr. Hubbell) appointed. In February 1899 the court refused to appoint a receiver and sided with Mrs. Pepper in replacing the Harrisburg Trust as Trustee.⁷⁷

In February 1899 Warner S. Kinkead was hired as the distillery's Vice President. Mr. Kinkead was an attorney and assumed the business affairs of the company. He was from 1894 to 1898 the U. S. Consul for England, appointed by President Grover Cleveland. He was also married to Mrs. Pepper's sister. Eventually he would become the General Manager of the distillery.⁷⁸

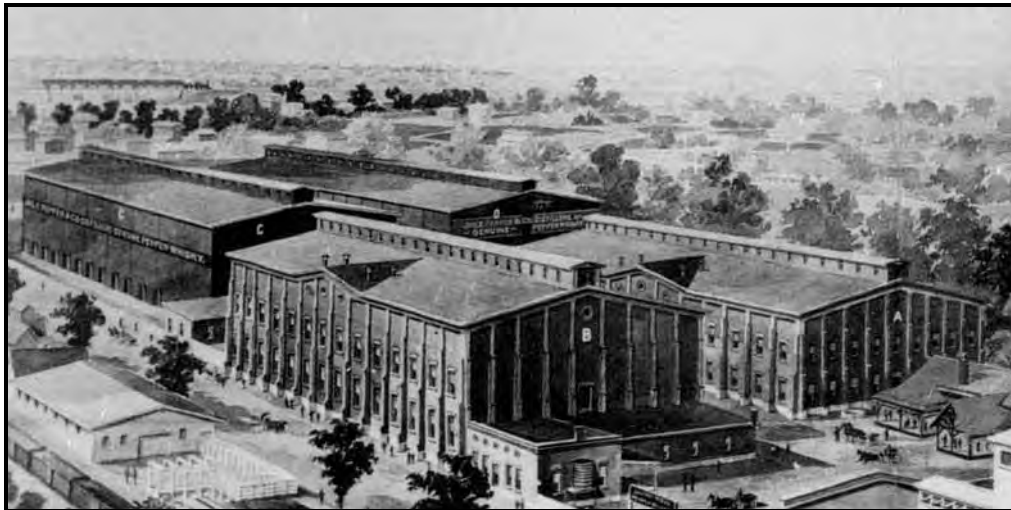


Jas. E. Pepper & Company Distillers – 1898

UK 2002AV #071



Enlargement of Distillery



Enlargement of Bonded Warehouses



Enlargement of Front Gate

In the late 1890s the whiskey trust acquired control of the bourbon industry in Kentucky. With their control, the inventory of bonded bourbon in warehouses was allowed to decline. By the spring of 1899 the price of whiskey had recovered and Colonel Pepper finally operated at a profit.⁷⁹

In 1901 Colonel Pepper rebuilt the “Little Pepper” Distillery and leased it to the Jas. E. Pepper & Co. to operate. They produced the “*Old Henry Clay*” brand at this location.

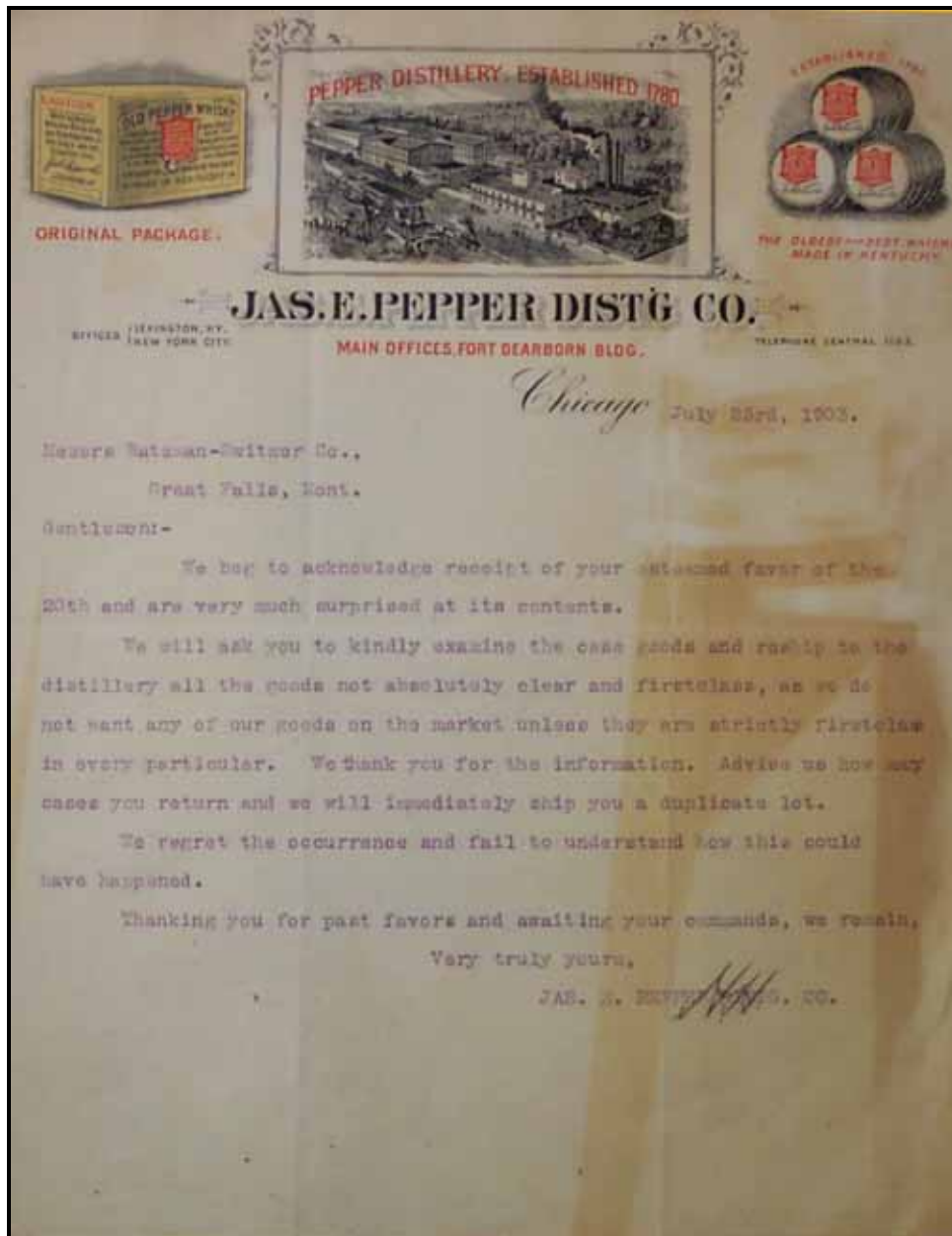
In December 1901 the coopers at J. B. McCoy’s Shop walked off with their tools, after being refused a raise of ten cents per barrels. Mr. McCoy had a contract to supply ten thousand barrels, and had roughly seven thousand finished. Each cooper made about \$20.00 per week, making roughly two hundred barrels at ten cents each.⁸⁰



Serving Tray, circa 1900s



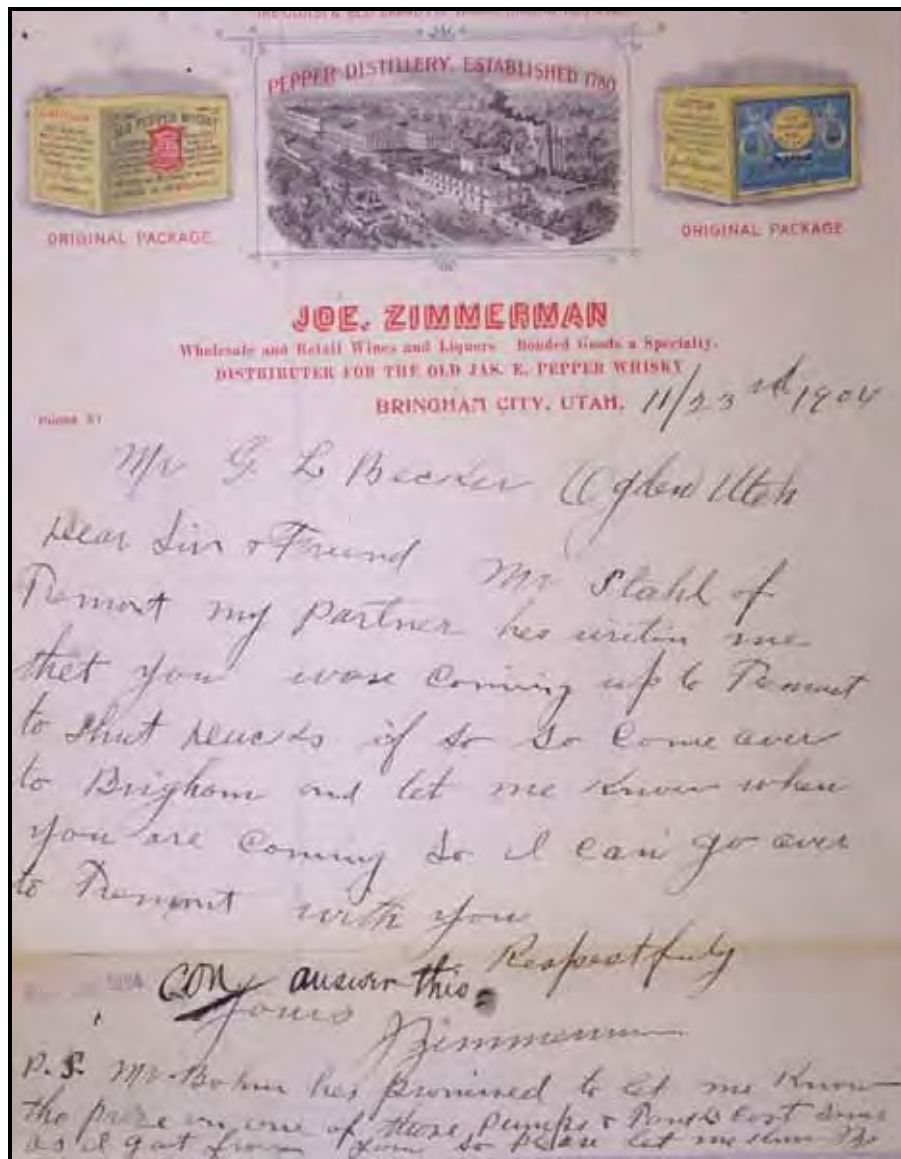
Watch Fob, circa 1900



Letterhead, 1903

In July 1904 the distillery was featured in a Selma newspaper, as “It’s no use trying to drink up all the whisky in the country”. R. E. Niel, a reporter from Alabama, visited the plant and wrote of the “famous Pepper whiskey, a brand well know in Selma”.⁸¹

Colonel Pepper continued to operate the distillery until his death in December 1906. The company had agencies in Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Boston and New York at the time of his death. Colonel Pepper had been described as “one of the best-known distillers of fine whiskies in the world, whose brands have probably been more universally advertised than any other of the Kentucky distilleries”.⁸²



Letterhead, 1904

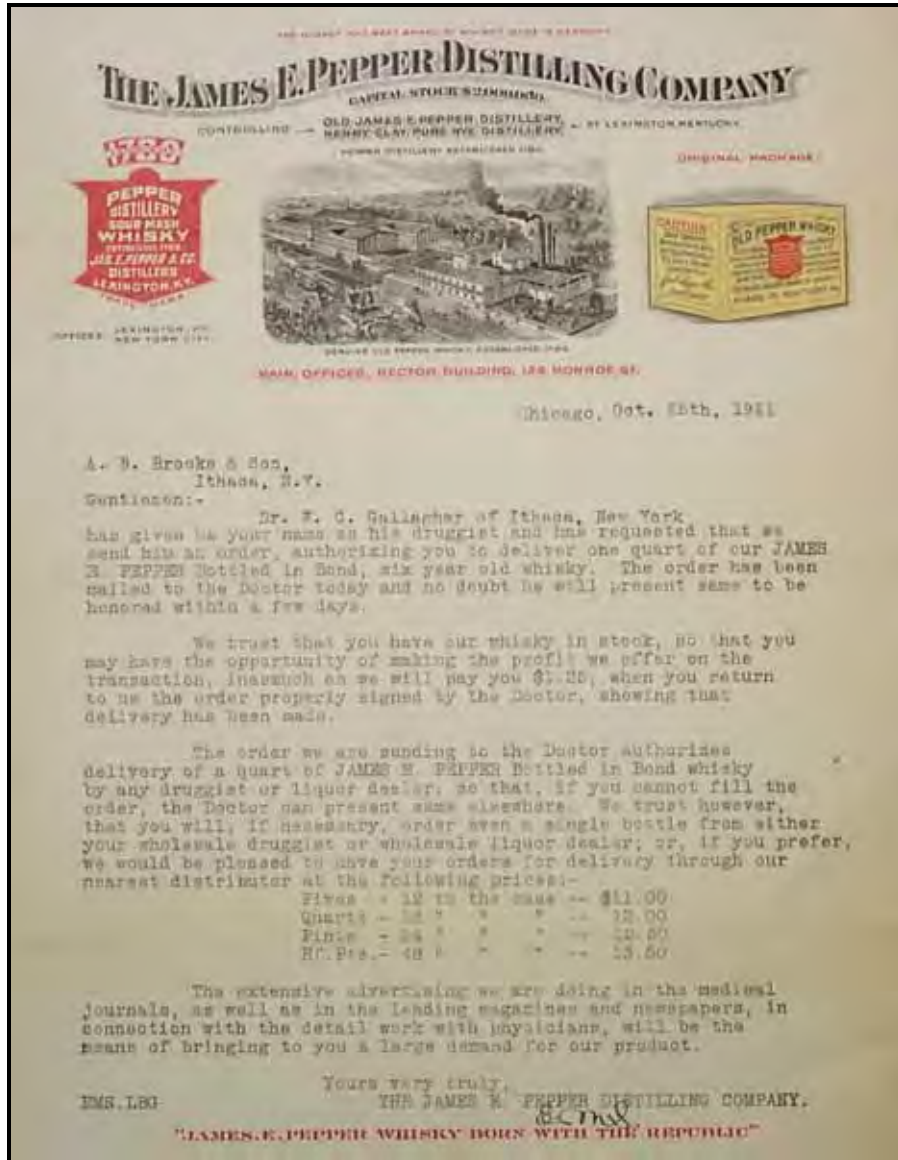
In January 1907 Christopher D. Chenault and Warner S. Kinkead were elected President and Secretary / Treasurer of both the Jas. E. Pepper & Company and the

Henry Clay Pure Rye Distilling Company (which owned the “Little Pepper” Distillery). Mr. Chenault was Cashier of the Lexington Banking and Trust Company (executors of Colonel Pepper’s estate). Mrs. Pepper, Mr. Chenault, Mr. Kinkead and Charles J. Bronston were elected directors of both firms. It was noted that Mrs. Pepper was the largest stockholder and bondholder of both concerns.



Calendar, 1906

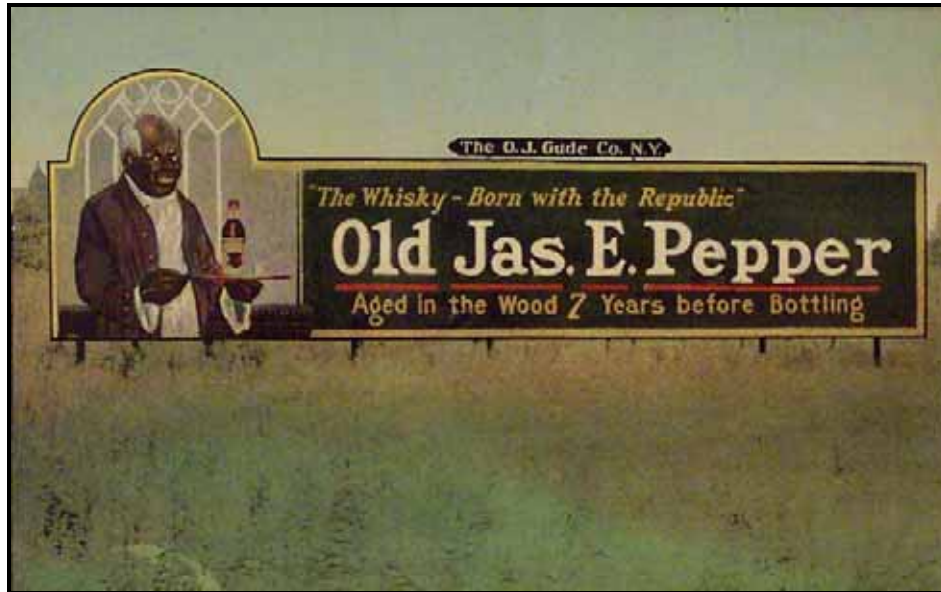
Prior to Colonel Pepper's death, he had hidden a reserve of three hundred barrels of whisky at the distillery for his personal usage. This whiskey produced in the spring of 1899 was maintained at its original "barrel" strength. Colonel Pepper considered this the best whiskey ever produced. During his lifetime, Colonel Pepper had refused to sell these barrels – retaining them for his personnel use. In March 1907, after Colonel Pepper's death, a half-barrel of this whiskey was sold by accident to the Reed Hotel. It was soon recognized as Colonel Pepper's reserve and orders pour into the distillery.⁸³



Letterhead, 1911

On May 15, 1907 a group of Chicago investors, headed by Joseph Wolf, acquired the distillery from Mr. Pepper's estate for \$400,000. The local newspaper noted "Widow of late Distiller Is Now Richest Woman In Central Kentucky". It also noted that she had inherited at least another \$100,000 from insurance and other assets.⁸⁴

The newspaper reported the distillery was a "mammoth concern, which had agencies and branches in every part of the civilized globe."⁸⁵



Postcard, circa 1900s

James E. Pepper Distillery Company:

Joseph Wolf was President of the James E. Pepper Distributing Company of Chicago. For the past seven years, Mr. Wolf's firm managed the distribution of "Old Pepper". Mr. Wolf was a prominent member of the National Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association.⁸⁶

Mr. Wolf reincorporated the distillery as the James E. Pepper Distillery Company. The company selected new officers, including Mr. Wolf (President), Mr. Kinkead (Vice President), Mr. Chenault (Treasurer), William E. Self (Secretary) and Mr. Bronston (General Counsel). All were also elected to the company's board of directors. Mr. Self was Colonel Pepper's bookkeeper.

The new company began making improvements to the distillery and bottling operations. These improvements were budgeted at \$200,000. They immediately placed a fifty thousand dollar order for twenty thousand new oak charred barrels and stepped up production. The company had sixty thousand barrels of Pepper whiskey stored in bond at its warehouses.⁸⁷

In June 1907 three hundred fifty five barrels of “*Old Pepper*” was seized by federal agents under the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 at the Louisville Public Warehouse. The agents claimed that the whiskey was improperly colored, with burnt sugar added to give it a richer color. This was a violation of the law because a rectifier’s tax was not paid. The whiskey was traced to the Pepper Warehouse #5 and was manufactured in 1899. The distillery claimed that it was not a violation of the law because the “sugar was put in at the distillery”. John W. Yerkes, former Commissioner of Internal Revenue, represented the distillery.⁸⁸ In August the whiskey was released, after Mr. Wolf agreed to pay \$2,500 in fines. The whiskey was valued at \$10,000.⁸⁹

In July 1907 the company acquired six acres adjacent to the Tarr Distillery (across Old Frankfort Pike) for \$4,500. They build an additional warehouse, bottling house and cooperage plant on the site.⁹⁰



“The Fight of the Century”, Reno, Nevada, 1910

On July 4, 1910 “The Fight of the Century” was held at the Golden Hotel in Reno, Nevada, between heavy weights Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries. This was the first prizefight with this designation. Johnson was the first black man to hold the world heavyweight title, while Jeffries - "The Great White Hope" - came out of retirement for the event. The fight was stopped in the 15th round; after an out of shape Jeffries was knocked down three times. Johnson took home the purse of \$120,000. The fight was sponsored by “*James E. Pepper Whiskey*”.⁹¹

In 1910 the distillery ran ads to promote medicinal sales with drug stores.

<p style="text-align: center;">This is the Fine Old Liquor That You Should Dispense</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Old James E. Pepper Whiskey Bottled in Bond</p> <p>Every progressive druggist knows the importance of dispensing GOOD whiskey. The BEST liquor is none too good for MEDICINAL USE. For one hundred and twenty nine years this famous old whiskey has been distilled from the same formula. In uniformity, mellowness, fragrant bouquet and sparkling goodness no other whiskey compares with Old James E. Pepper Whiskey.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BEWARE OF REFILLED BOTTLES</p>
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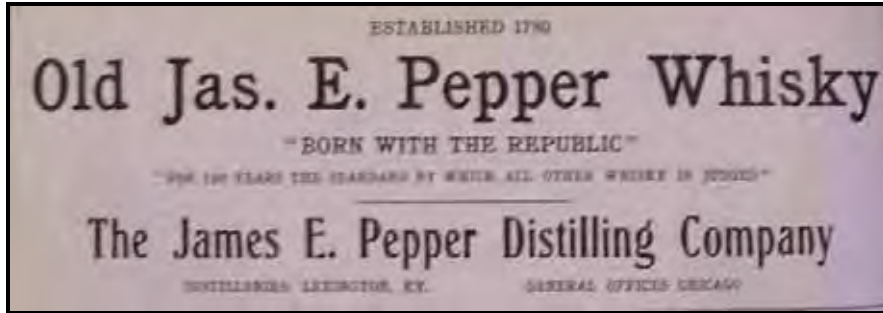
In July 1910 the company started installation of new distilling equipment that doubled its capacity, increasing its daily mashing capacity to one hundred barrels of whiskey or approximately one thousand bushels of grain. The improvements cost \$25,000. Their annual capacity was between twenty to thirty thousand barrels.⁹²

In 1910 the company filed suit against five retail stores in Cleveland for trademark infringement for selling “*Old Pepper Spring*”. The whiskey was produced by S. J. Greenbaum Company, of Midway, who had purchased a spring and renamed it Old Pepper Spring. The courts again protected the “*Pepper*” and “*Old Pepper*” trademarks.

During this period the company introduced “*Old Jas. E. Pepper*” brand name and continued to sale “*Old Pepper*” until the end of Prohibition. Eventually “*James E. Pepper Bourbon*” replaced both trade names. The slogan “Born With The Republic” was introduced around this time.

In July 1911 the Phoenix Hotel purchased twenty-seven barrels of twelve-year-old whiskey at public auction. The auction was conducted by the distillery after the whiskey went unclaimed at the end of the bond period.⁹³ In 1914 J. F.

Conrad Grocers, of St. Louis, advertised "Jas. E. Pepper" for \$1.04 per quart or \$12.00 per case (of twelve quarts).⁹⁴



1913



Promissory Note, 1913



Pepper Advertisement on Building, Location Unknown, circa 1910

Prohibition:

It is interesting to note that during the First World War, the Army trained many of its recruits at the old Civil War battlefield at Chickamauga in Georgia. Northern recruits were transported by the railroads south, a number shipped through Lexington on the way. The first thing they noticed upon entering Lexington was the Pepper Distillery and its boxcar sized billboard for “*James E. Pepper Whiskey*” – “Born with the Republic”. This war was “to make the world safe for democracy”. Less than two years later, these returning battlefield veterans passed the shuttered Pepper distillery on the way home, with whiskey now illegal. Some suggested that the sign should be updated with “Born with the Republic, Died with Democracy”.⁹⁵



Warehouses at Pepper Distiller, circa 1901

<M. Veach>

After the United States entered the First World War, the Federal government rationed barley grains to produce food for the troops. The Pepper plant distilled for the last time on November 11, 1918, when the wartime restrictions on grains forced production to stop.

On December 8, 1919 the company shipped six hundred barrels to its bonded warehouses in Chicago. This was transferred “in bond” from one warehouse to another. The company’s headquarters were in Chicago.⁹⁶ For the

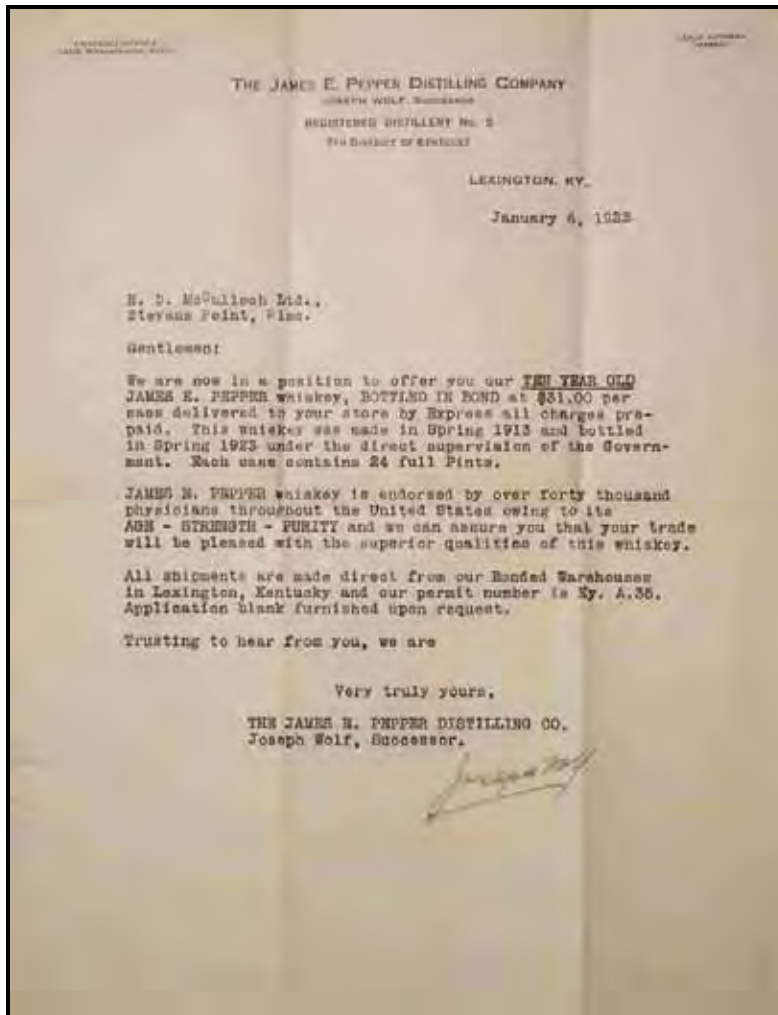
last four months of 1919 the company paid \$8,516 in state and local excise taxes, state and county road taxes and local school taxes.⁹⁷

On January 4, 1920 the final shipment of Pepper whiskey was sent to New York, for export to Hamburg, Germany. The shipment included ten thousand five hundred cases (valued at \$47 per case) and sixteen hundred barrels. The L & N Railroad transported the load, with four armed guards on the train for protection. The company still had twenty thousand cases and twenty six hundred barrels stored in the bonded warehouses. Before legislation allowing medicinal sales, this whiskey in storage was considered worthless because the law did not authorized its removal.⁹⁸



1914

During Prohibition (1920 – 1934) the distilling plant was mothballed and the warehouses used as concentration house for whiskey. Due to the lack of security at a number of rural distilleries, the Federal government ordered the concentrated all whiskey stocks in warehouses in Lexington, Bardstown, Frankfort and Louisville. The Pepper plant received shipments from a number of independent distillers. The whiskey trust operated warehouses in Louisville and Bardstown.



Letterhead, 1923

Whiskey Bandits:

On the winter night of December 2, 1920 whiskey bandits stuck at the bonded warehouses at the Pepper distillery. That night William Anderson, revenue agent, and William Nix, distillery guard, were making their rounds as usual checking on

the warehouses. At the time, eleven thousand barrels and eighteen thousand cases of bottled bourbon were still stored in the warehouses.

About one thirty in the morning the guards were rushed by a band of ten to twelve bandits hiding on the bank of the Town Branch, near the last warehouse. Agent Anderson ordered the thieves to stop and fired a shot from his revolver. The band of thieves immediately returned fire and killed Agent Anderson. Guard Nix was chased towards the office, but escaped and raised the alarm. The thieves left the area before the police arrived from Lexington.

Witnesses stated that two touring cars and a truck, running without lights, raced out Old Frankfort Pike at about two o'clock. The next morning the warehouse wall was "peppered" with holes from the battle.

The distillery increased the security to nine guards and the revenue service sent two more agents. These guards patrolled the grounds for the next several months, with loaded shotguns and revolvers at the ready.

The Governor offered a reward of \$300 for the capture of the thieves. Rumors stated that organized crime from Chicago was behind this raid. The bandits were never found. This is the first attempt to steal whiskey from the facility. However, several weeks before one of the guards was questioned about the whiskey stored in the warehouses and offered "how would \$6,000 look to you". The guard refused.



"James E. Pepper" Pint, 1916

Medicinal Sales:

In 1920 the Federal government legalized “medicinal” sales of whiskey. With a prescription, the local drug store would dispense whiskey. The bottling plant was used to bottle medicinal whiskey.⁹⁹

In 1923 the company marketed to pharmacist and stated “*James E. Pepper* whiskey is endorsed by over forty thousand physicians throughout the United States owing to its AGE – STRENGTH – PURITY and we can assure you that your trade will be pleased with the superior qualities of this whiskey.” A case of twenty-four pints sold for \$31.00 wholesale. For a point of reference – this is a roughly six times pre prohibition price. This whiskey was made in the spring of 1913 and bottled in the spring of 1923.

In 1924 the Wigglesworth Distillery, in Harrison County, shipped its remaining inventory of “*Old G. W. Taylor*” to the concentration warehouses at the Pepper plant. Later, the whiskey inventory from the D. L. Moore Distillery, Mercer County, was also shipped in bond to Lexington. This whiskey was bottled as “*D. L. Moore Whiskey*” for medicinal purposes.



Government Label, 1933

In April 1929 Joseph Wolf of Chicago died. He was the leader of the syndicate that owned the distillery.¹⁰⁰ At the time the firm had offices in Chicago (headquarters), New York (sales) and Lexington (production).

In October 1929 the company was awarded a share of the allocation to distill medicinal spirits for pharmacists. This was the first time that the Federal government allowed production to restocked whiskey for medical purposes. The company estimated that it would cost \$35,000 to put the plant back in commission, so they shifted distilling to the Stilzel & Weller Distillery in Louisville.¹⁰¹

Schenley Products:

With repeal in the wind, in 1933 the Schenley Products^a of New York purchased the company for \$1,000,000. They readopted the Jas. E. Pepper & Co. name and bottled "*James E. Pepper Whiskey*". The company in 1933 published a booklet on cocktails named The Merry Mixer. The forward contained "during the dark decade just past to revive the pleasures of the past to recall those simple days when drinking was an honored social custom". It continued "Jas. E. Pepper & Co. products are your guaranty of quality, they are standards for integrity and excellence".

After fourteen years, the distillery plant was in serious disrepair - with the boilers shot, machinery rusted, pumps frozen and piping corroded. In January 1934 Schenley began rebuilding, modernizing the distilling, and boiler plants. Capacity was expanded to three hundred barrels or approximately four thousand bushels per day. The improvements were budget for \$400,000. Production was scheduled to restart in the first week of May 1934.

During Prohibition, the company acquired the following additional brands - "*Mayflower*", "*Buckeye*", "*Old Fireside*", "*Old Hillside*", "*Old Chelsea*", "*VanArsdell*", "*D. L. Moore*", "*Geo. A. Dickel's Cascade*", "*Golden Premium*"

^a Schenley Products Corporation was controlled by Lewis S. Rosenstiel. Mr. Rosenstiel was born in 1891 and worked before Prohibition at the Susquemac Distillery Company (which control the "*Susquemac Rye Whiskey*"). During Prohibition, Mr. Rosenstiel smuggled whiskey from Bermuda into Cincinnati and then began acquiring distilleries for their inventory of whiskey. In 1923 he purchased the Schenley Products Company of Schenley, Pennsylvania. In 1929 he purchased the Leestown Distilling Company (the original OFC and Carlisle plants of Edward H. Taylor). Its brands included "*OFC*", "*Carlisle*", "*Ancient Age*" and "*Old Stag*" whiskies.

In 1933, just before repeal, he established Schenley as a holding company for his whiskey interests. The same year he acquired the Pepper Distillery in Lexington. Over the next few years he also acquired the Jos. S. Finch & Co. ("*Golden Wedding*" and "*Old Log Cabin*"); the Stilzel – Weller Distillery ("*Old Fitzgerald*" and "*Rebel Yell*"); the Glenmore Distillery ("*Yellowstone*"); Bernheim Brothers ("*I W Harper*" and "*Old Charter*") and Geo. Dickel Company ("*George Dickel*").

Between 1933 and 1937 Schenley was the largest distillery in the United States. By the 1940s the company had expanded into Canadian whiskies and by the 1950s into Scottish distilleries. The company became overextended during the Korea War, when he increased distilling anticipating wartime restrictions. This inventory last for the next ten years. Eventually it became United Distillers, a subsidiary of the Irish beer giant Guinness of London.

and “*Genuine Kentucky*” whiskies. In addition, they distilled “*V O Brandy*” and “*Lord Elston Gin*”.^a



UK 96PA101 #1835
25 January 1934



UK 96PA101 #1856
21 February 1934

^a “*Seal of Kentucky*” and “*Kentucky Seal*” was sold by Pepper & Adams of Frankfort, Kentucky.



UK 96PA101 #908b
22 April 1934



UK 96PA101 #1891
4 April 1934

On March 18, 1934 Governor Ruby Laffon signed an act finally repealing the state's prohibition laws to allow the production and sale of liquor in Kentucky.



Unloading Grain

UK 96PA101 #1905
13 April 1934

During the night of April 28, 1934 a massive fire destroyed the gauging house, office, bottling plant and six warehouses. This night was exceptionally cold and Stanley Travis, night watchman, started the fire in the guardhouse for warmth. However, he mistook gasoline for kerosene and the stove exploded. Mr. Travis was overcome before he could raise the alarm and died later in the morning.

By the time the fire department arrived, the fire had spread to the first warehouse. Fueled by the burning bourbon, the fire quickly consumed the other five warehouses. The blue flames of burning alcohol overflowed into the Town Branch Creek. The fire was observed as far as Frankfort and Richmond.

The police had trouble controlling the crowd of onlookers. A number of which ran into the burning warehouses and "saved" cases of bourbon.

Damages were estimated at over five million dollars. Until the 1980s, this was the largest monetary loss due to a fire in Lexington's history. In equivalent dollars it is still the largest fire loss every experience in Lexington. These losses included fifteen thousand barrels, valued at \$300 per barrel wholesale for a total of \$4,500,000; eleven thousand cases, valued at \$60 per case wholesale for a total of

\$600,000 and warehouses valued at \$100,000. The new distilling plant escaped damage. The bourbon destroyed included “*Republic*”, “*Old Pepper*” and “*Golden Bantam*”. The loss was covered by insurance.¹⁰²



UK 96PA101 #1914
28 April 1934

In May the company began rebuilding the warehouses and production was finally restarted in September 1934. At the time, Fred Pauly was the General Manager and G. C. Cooper was the Master Distiller. Mr. Cooper remained the distiller for two years, before moving to other Schenley plants.

Schenley filed a claim for four million five hundred thousand dollars with their insurance companies. In June 1934 Schenley settled two million, six hundred fifty five thousand, four hundred and sixty seven dollars because of missing paperwork.¹⁰³



Loading L & N Boxcar at Distillery Siding

UK 96PA101 #1334



Enlargement of Cases

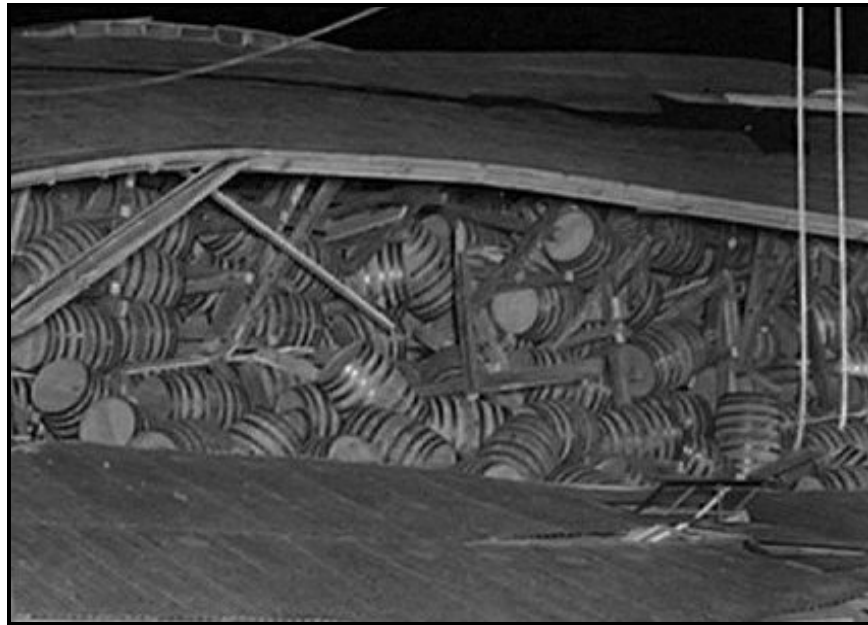
On December 1, 1934 one of the new twelve thousand barrel warehouses collapsed, dumping five thousand barrels of new whiskey into the Town Branch. Lubrecht Construction of Covington built the new warehouse for \$200,000. This warehouse was finished on October 1, 1934 and partially filled with new whiskey. The warehouse was four stories, with twelve tiers of racks.



Collapsed Warehouse

UK 96PA101 #3367b

The Lexington Fire Department rushed to the site, as a precaution that the whiskey might catch fire, and the Lexington Utility Company shut off power to a section of the city, to prevent sparks from hanging wires. The distillery placed guards around the “whiskey soaked mass” to prevent “samples” from being borrowed from the crushed, partially filled barrels.¹⁰⁴



Barrels in the Collapsed Warehouse

These warehouses were later replaced by a five-story warehouse of reinforced concrete. In August 1936 the distillery reported that during the past two years ninety seven thousand barrels of whiskey were produced. The distillery employed one hundred workers at this time.

In 1938 the distilling plant was shut down for the season due to an oversupply of whiskey. Production was consolidated at the Leestown Distillery in Frankfort, Kentucky. At the time, some of their prices were:

“James E. Pepper” (16 year old) \$37.50 per case

“James E. Pepper” (14 year old) \$35.00 per case

“Henry Clay” (14 year old) \$30.00 per case

Blotter, circa 1937

In 1940 the company introduced a new advertising campaign based upon the painting “The Marching Three” by Archibald McNeal Willard. The painting featured two drummers and a wounded fife player marching during the American Revolution. The “James E. Pepper” label was redesigned around this image and the artist Norman Price commissioned to create a series of six paintings along this theme. They were the “The Marching Three”, “The Declaration is Signed”, “The Midnight Ride”, “Give Me Liberty”, “Taxation Without Representation” and “Birth of Our Navy”. These paintings were used for full page ads in Life Magazine in 1940. The distiller reprinted these paintings without the advertisement for schools at \$.25 each.¹⁰⁵

COURAGEOUS MEN IN **1776** FOUNDED A FREE NATION

In that Same Generation the Family of James E. Pepper Founded its Distillery!



The Choice of
Generations
since
Foundation



WHEN THE SPIRIT OF '76 set our nation free, men returned to work with new hearts. In Kentucky, in that same generation, the grandfather of James E. Pepper was making whiskey!

Today, it is still made in much the same way, with the same tender care. For generations—fit over 150 years—this famous bourbon has been traditional with Americans.

Try the superb quality of James E. Pepper—“Born with the Republic.” We sincerely believe it is the very finest Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey available.

A limited number of 9" x 12" collector's prints of above illustration in full color are available without advertising. Address your request to James E. Pepper & Co., Inc., Lexington, Kentucky, enclosing 25¢ for each print.

JAMES E. PEPPER
Bottled in Bond

KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY—100 PROOF

★ ★ ★ “Born with the Republic” ★ ★ ★

Copyright 1940, James E. Pepper & Co., Inc., Lexington, Ky.

“The Marching Three”, 1940



"The Declaration Is Signed", 1940



"Give Me Liberty", 1940



"The Midnight Ride", 1940



"Taxation Without Representation", 1940



"Birth of Our Navy", 1941



1945



1945



1947



1947



1949



1948



1950



1950



1951



1950



1952

So you think you
know Bourbon!

But have you ever...
The one and only
original
Kentucky Bourbon
JAMES E. PEPPER
Bottled in Bond, 100 proof

1953

Born with the Republic...
still **in** taste.
Ever since the **Bar Cent.**
the finest Kentucky whiskey that
money ever bought... **JAMES E. PEPPER**

1954

Give a gift
that's
172 Christmases old!
JAMES E. PEPPER
The original
Kentucky Bourbon...

is today's gift...
Bottled in Bond, 100 proof

1953

Born with the Republic... still **in** good taste

For 174 years...
the finest Kentucky whiskey that
money ever bought... **JAMES E. PEPPER**

1954

During the Second World War production of bourbon stopped and the plant converted to industrial alcohol production for the war effort. The Federal government limited the supplies of grains for distilling whiskey until after the war.

After the Korean War the “*James E. Pepper*” logo was again redesigned around the “Born with the Republic” slogan and using the profile of a minuteman. The James E. Pepper brands were available in Bond (green label 100 proof), Straight (blue label 86 proof) and Blend (red label 65% neutral spirits) versions. During the 1950s, Schenley offered James E. Pepper Mint Stirring Sticks as a marketing gimmick. These sticks dissolved when stirred in bourbon making a Mint Julep.¹⁰⁶

At the start of the Korean War the plant was operated a full capacity, anticipating the Federal government would again limit grain supplies. This restriction did not happen and the company was stuck with an oversupply of bourbon inventory. Production was limited during the 1950s to draw down the existing inventory in the warehouses.



Overhead View, circa late 1940s



Enlargement of Distillery



Enlargement of Bonded Warehouses



Interior of Bonded Warehouse – circa 1930s

Malcolm Mason, Jr. was hired as the plant manager at the end of the war, serving until the late 1950s. In 1949 the company began producing a series of crystal decanters annually for Christmas presents.



Night View of Distillery – circa 1950s



Pepper Warehouse, circa 1950s

In 1958 the distillery closed and Schenley switched production to other plants. The company continued to bottle “*James E. Pepper*” whiskey from the warehouses until the late 1970s. They continued to use the warehouses for bonded bourbon until 1976.

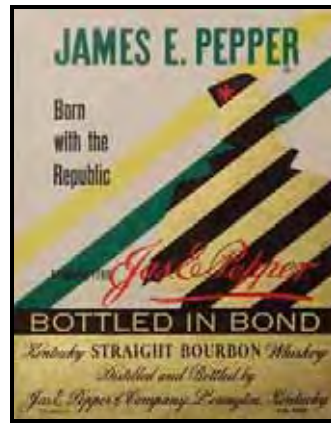
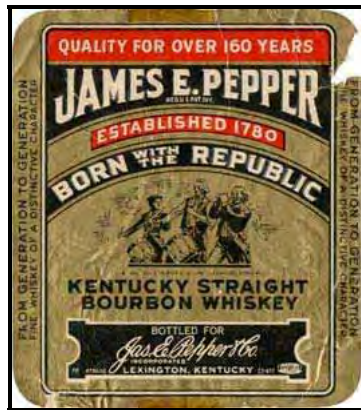
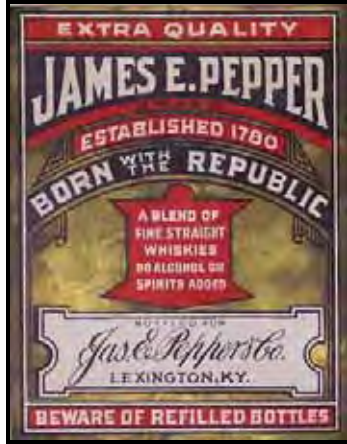
In 1976 the property was sold to Land Development Company for warehouse space. In December 1981 a warehouses collapsed, after a gust of wind, while it was being demolished. Debris forced the closing of Frankfort Pike for a day. Less than two weeks later, another warehouse was destroyed by fire. Both warehouses were five stories, twenty thousand square feet.¹⁰⁷

The distillery (and some of the equipment) and one bonded warehouse remains today. In 1994 United Distillers, successor to Schenley, re-established the “*James E. Pepper*” brand for export outside the United States. They operated as the Jas. E. Pepper Distillery, with production at the Bernheim Distillery, Louisville, Kentucky.



Overview of Pepper Distillery, circa 1950s

Pepper Labels



“James E. Pepper”, 1880 to 1990s

Pepper Bottles



"Old Pepper", 1890s to 1920s

Thomas D. Mitchell
Banker & Dry Goods Merchant.¹⁷⁶

1836 - 1909

Thomas D. Mitchell was born around 1836 in Bourbon County, Kentucky. He settled in Lexington during 1865 (at the end of the Civil War) to become the first Cashier of the First National Bank of Lexington. He held that position from 1865 to 1887. He served as a director of the bank from 1876 to 1906. He was also a director of the Security Trust & Safety Vault Company from 1902 to 1906.

In 1865 he also operated a grocery store on Cheapside, then later the dry goods firms of Mitchell & Cannon and Mitchell, Cassell & Banker. In 1866 he was the junior partner in the distilling firm of Turner, Clay & Company, which operated the Ashland Distillery. He died in Lexington in 1909.

Colonel Jas. E. Pepper
Master Distiller and Turfman.

1850 – 1906

Colonel James Edward Pepper, Master Distiller, was a bigger than life, flamboyant promoter, who was very proud of his distilling heritage – the third generation to produce “*Old Pepper*” whiskey. He claimed the oldest distillery – founded in 1780 – in the United States, the largest distillery in the world and the “best” whiskey in the United States.

He was the original prototype of the “Kentucky Colonel”^a. He was a gentleman who lived life to the fullest, traveled in a private railcar, visited all the fashionable resorts in the United States and Europe. He bred and raced thoroughbreds on both sides of the Atlantic. He dreamed of building a stone castle on his farm outside of Lexington to rival the castles of Europe.

He was born on May 18, 1850 at the family’s distillery on Glassy Spring Branch of Glenn’s Creek, Woodford County, Kentucky. His father and grandfather were Oscar^b and Elijah^a Pepper, respectively. He was educated in Frankfort at the Sayre Institute.

^a The title was honorary, being bestowed by the Governor of Kentucky.

^b His father, Oscar Pepper, inherited the distillery from his father. In 1833 he hired Dr. James Christopher Crow as Master Distiller. Dr. Crow was a physician trained in Edinbrough, Scotland. Dr. Crow brought a scientific approach to distilling – using the saccharimeter thermometer to study fermentation. He was the first to perfect the sour mash process – where a portion of the “sour” stillage from the prior day was mashed in the next day. This created consistency between batches.

He was tutored by his father in whiskey distilling and by the age of fifteen was placed in charge of the Old Crow Distillery. His plans for college were disrupted when his father died in 1865.

In 1865 he inherited a portion of his father's distilleries on Glenn's Creek. At the time he was a minor and Colonel Edmund H. Taylor^b was appointed his guardian. In 1867 he sold the Old Crow Distillery to Gaines, Berry & Company (established by Colonel E. H. Taylor, Jr.).

In 1870 Colonel Pepper relocated to New York and entered the wholesale whiskey trade, brokering the "*Old Pepper*" and "*Old Crow*" brands. In New York, he was a colorful figure and like notoriety, which he used to promote his whiskey. One of his tricks was to place empty bottles on the tables of saloons so that patrons would then order more.

In 1838 he established the "*Old Oscar Pepper*" brand. Henry Clay, noted Kentucky Senator, would annually ship a barrel of Pepper's whiskey to Washington "to lubricate the wheels of government." Other famous customers included Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Ulysses S. Grant, Henry Harrison and Daniel Webster.

Dr. Crow died 1856, at the age of sixty-eight. In 1860 Mr. Pepper built the Old Crow Distillery, a few miles further down Glenn's Creek. "*Old Crow*" whiskey was made at this plant. He was also a prominent Democrat and a "general" in the state militia. He was also an extensive landowner and cattle breeder. He left a sizable estate at his death in 1865. An estate ad in 1865 noted "a few barrels of CROW WHISKEY, the last chance for a good drink."

^a His grandfather, Elijah Pepper, was born around 1764 in Culpepper County, Virginia. In 1780 he is said to have built his first distillery in Culpepper, Virginia. He relocated to Kentucky in 1797 and established another distillery in Versailles (with his bother-in-law, John O'Bannon). This plant was located behind Woodford County Courthouse (using a spring for water).

In 1812 Elijah Pepper built a new distillery on Glenn's Creek, between Versailles and Frankfort. This site had a more reliable water supply. Mr. Pepper was a large landowner, with several farms around Versailles. Mr. Pepper died in 1831.

^b Colonel Edward H. Taylor (1830 – 1922) was orphaned at an early age and raised by his uncles – Zachary Taylor (12th US President) in New Orleans and later by E. H. Taylor, Sr. in Frankfort. He became the cashier of the Commercial Bank in Versailles, Kentucky in the 1860s. He was also a member of the private bank of Taylor, Turner & Company in Lexington during the Civil War. He was a speculator in cotton and whiskey during the Civil War.

During the war learned the art of distilling from Oscar Pepper. He organized the O. F. C. and Carlisle Distilleries in Frankfort (later Ancient Age) and the E. H. Taylor Distillery on Glenn Creek (later Jim Beam). He made a number of innovations to the distilling industry. He is best known today for the "*Old Taylor*" brand.

In 1877 Colonel Pepper became overextended financially and was forced to sell the Old Oscar Pepper distillery to Colonel Taylor. Shortly after, in 1878 Colonel Taylor sold the plant to Labrot & Graham.¹⁷⁷

In 1879 he returned to Kentucky, settling in Lexington, and established the Jas. E. Pepper & Company, at the old Henry Clay Distillery. In 1895 he also acquired the Silver Spring Distillery. He operated both plants until his death.

From 1881 to 1891 he owned half interest, with Colonel William S. Barnes in the Melbourne Racing Stable and Stud Farm. The stable owned the noted Blue Wing, Lioness, Gallifet, The Bourbon, Pure Rye and Once Again. Their stable had two Kentucky Derby contenders (in 1886 with Blue Wing (second place) and in 1888 with Alexandria (fourth place) and in 1886 won the Kentucky Oaks with Pure Rye). Lioness was sold to Captain Samuel S. Brown, of Pittsburgh, for a record \$10,000.

In 1884 he sold half interest in his distillery to Colonel William S. Barnes. In 1891 their partnerships in the distillery and stables were dissolved - with Colonel Barnes keeping the stables and Colonel Pepper the distillery.

In 1890 he married Mrs. Ella Offutt Kean, of Shelby County, Kentucky. She was born on May 18, 1850. The local papers stated "Mrs. Pepper has long been considered one of the most beautiful women in Kentucky - Mrs. Pepper is tall, slender and graceful; her figure is girlish in its outline and she carries herself with dignity."¹⁷⁸

The bridal couple left on their two-month honeymoon to Europe in late July. While in London Colonel Pepper became infamous for thrashing a rude clerk. While staying at the Hotel Metropole, the Peppers returned from the theater and requested their room key. The clerk ignored his request. After the fourth try, Colonel Pepper raised his voice and the clerk finally gave him the room key. As Colonel Pepper turned to walk away, the clerk made a rude comment about Americans. Colonel Pepper then reached behind the counter and picked up the clerk by his collar. He requested and received an apology.

By the time he returned to Lexington in October 1890, the hotel story had taken on mythical proportions - with a six-foot porter and guns - that received favorable coverage across the United States. Colonel Pepper had upheld the honor of Americans.¹⁷⁹

In 1891 he established the Meadowthrope Stable – which owned stakes winner Queen’s Messenger, LaJoya, Black Venus, Prince Pepper, Roxanna and Kilmannock. He stable won stakes races in both the United States and England. In 1891 he also purchased Meadowthrope Stud Farm on Leestown Pike, Lexington, Kentucky for \$60,000. This was a record price of \$275 per acres; the highest ever paid for bluegrass farmland. The farm had two hundred thirty eight acres. The farm was less than a half mile from his distillery. He established a breeding operation, with the stud Kantaka, and a string of quality broodmares. His barns were some of the first to have electric light and telephone connections.

Colonel Pepper planned to build a stone castle on his farm that would be the “wonder of the bluegrass”. He established a quarry at the distillery and stockpiled limestone blocks for his castle. This quarry would later become the Central Rock Company. However, he was beginning to have financial problems and renovated the existing farmhouse instead. His remodeling cost \$40,000 (almost the purchase price of the farm). He converted an old farmhouse into a thirty-room mansion, with hot and cold running water, gas heating and electrical lighting (all novelties at the time). He never was able to build his dream castle.¹⁸⁰

Colonel Pepper and his wife were well known for their Southern hospitality – hosting the cream of society at Meadowthrope during the race meets and horse sales. He would entertain lavishly at his farm – always serving burgoo (traditional Kentucky stew). The Peppers were truly “bourbon” aristocrats.



Meadowthrope - 1898

UK 2002AV #052

In February 1892 the distillery purchased a private railcar, named the “*Old Pepper*”, for Colonel Pepper’s use. In May 1893 he imported a “London Trap” - a coach drawn by six horses and carried sixteen passengers on four rows of seats. This coach was the talk of the town. That summer Colonel Pepper shipped the coach to Chicago and used it to ferry friends to the Columbia Exposition and World’s Fair. That fall he shipped the coach to Saratoga for the races.¹⁸¹

Colonel Pepper won the Kentucky Oaks in May 1892 with Miss Dixie. The winning prize was \$3,850. The horse was named after his sister, Dixie Pepper. He also named another horse Miss Belle, after his other sister, Belle Pepper. He had two horses that ran fifth in the Kentucky Derby (in 1893 with Mirage (ridden by Issac Murphy) and in 1896 with The Dragon).

In December 1895 Colonel Pepper was selected to prepare the chapter on the distilling industry for the centennial of the Jay Treaty (which prevent war in 1795 with England). This was at the height of his financial problems, but his reputation remained intact. He was invited to spend Christmas in New York, and to attend a banquet at Delmonico’s for the centennial. Among the other guests were John Jacob Astor (real estate), John D. Rockefeller (Standard Oil), Theodore Roosevelt (Governor, later President), C. V. Vanderbilt (New York Central Railroad), Charles A. Pillsbury (baking), Fred Pabst (brewing), Charles L. Tiffany (jewelry), William Steinway (pianos), Francis G. duPont (gunpowder), Levi P. Morton (banking), Pierre Lorillard (tobacco) Thomas L. Eckert (Western Union) and Phillip D. Armour (meat packing).¹⁸²

In the fall of 1899 Colonel Pepper shipped King’s Courier to England for the racing season. King’s Courier was owned by Mrs. Pepper and considered by many to be one of the finest thoroughbreds that every lived. The Peppers sent the spring and summer of 1900 in England attending the races. King’s Courier won the Doncaster Cup, defeating the entry owned by King Edward VII.¹⁸³ That fall the Peppers traveled to Paris for the World’s Fair and stayed at the Hotel Continental. While in the American Bar at the hotel, Colonel Pepper requested, “have you Pepper’s whiskey here”. The young lady behind the bar said “yes, monsieur” and handed him a glass and the pepper jar – thinking that this must be some American drink.¹⁸⁴ He returned to Lexington for Christmas.

In 1900 Mrs. Pepper purchased the Ephraim D. Sayre farm on Leestown Pike (adjacent to Meadowthrope). The farm was purchased for \$17,000 - one hundred thirty four acres at \$127.50 per acre.¹⁸⁵

In May 1900 he was featured in the magazine Successful Americans. The article stated “Col. James E. Pepper, from an old Kentucky family, horseman of International fame.” The article stated that the “Pepper distillery, know to the entire world as the markers of one of the best brands of whiskey known.”¹⁸⁶

He died on December 24, 1906 at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York. He and his wife had gone to New York for Christmas. He died of heart and lung problems, following a broker leg received several days earlier.

He left a sizeable estate to his wife. His widow auctioned Meadowthrope Farm and his horses in February 1907 for a total of \$81,050. The farm was sold for \$55,580 to Dr. Samuel H. Halley^a for \$250 per acre. His sixty-three thoroughbreds sold for \$25,470 or \$404 per head. Lady Pepper was sold to Joseph E. Madden for \$4,000. Mrs. Pepper kept Prince Pepper. The Imperial Stud of Japan had once offered any sum of money for Prince Pepper.¹⁸⁷ His wife died on April 2, 1939. Both are buried in the Lexington Cemetery.¹⁸⁸



1907

STOLL FAMILY

George J. Stoll, Sr.¹⁸⁹

1819 – 1893

George J. Stoll was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1819 and moved to Lexington in 1840. Mr. Stoll entered the cabinet and furniture making business in

^a The farm was the site of the first airport in Lexington (known as Halley Field).

Lexington City National Bank. In 1907 he moved to Mississippi and later to Bristol, Tennessee, where he died in 1948.

John William Stoll¹⁹⁴
Banker

1864 – 1929

J. Will Stoll was born in Lexington on September 11, 1864, the fifth son of George J. Stoll. After graduating from Transylvania University in 1882, he enters the employment of the Lexington City National Bank as a messenger. During the 1890s Mr. Stoll became the Cashier and in 1908, after his brother's death, he became President of the Lexington City National Bank. After the merger in 1913, with the First National Bank, he became the President of the First & City National Bank, until his death in 1929.

Mr. Stoll also operated an insurance agency, under the name J. Will Stoll and served as a director of the Lafayette Hotel Company, Lexington Water Company, Kentucky Traction and Terminal Company, Lexington Utilities Company, Lexington Ice Company and Kentucky Coach Company (later Greyhound Corp.). He died on January 14, 1929 in Lexington.

William Tarr¹⁹⁵
Land Speculator and Distiller

1825 – 1911

William Tarr was born on June 22, 1825 in Paris, Kentucky. His first business venture was cultivation of a watermelon patch on the family farm. With these funds, he became a mule trader and farmer. Before the Civil War he entered the distilling business and in 1871 established Wm. Tarr & Company – which acquired the Ashland Distillery in Lexington, Kentucky. He produced the “*Ashland*” and “*Wm. Tarr*” brands of whiskey. During his distilling career he produced over 60,000 barrels of whiskey and paid over \$3,000,000 in excise taxes to the Federal government.

In 1873 he became one of the principals of Kentucky Union Railroad and related companies. He personally guaranteed the bonds in 1883 to start construction of the rail line. Financial problems forced him to sell the railroad in 1886 at a large loss. During the depression of the 1890s, he suffered financial reversals connected to the endorsements of notes for family and friends. In 1897 he was forced to assign the distillery and his assets over to receivers. This receivership lasted until 1911.

In 1898 he retired to his farm. He owned large tracts of farmland in Bourbon County, Kentucky and in Eastern Kentucky. His farm was known as Park Place, five miles from Paris on the Maysville Pike. He maintained a large park for deer on this farm open to the public. The Kentucky Union Railroad built it right-of-way through his property in the mountains.

Joseph Wolf

- 1929

Joseph Wolf was born in Darmstadt, Germany and immigrated to Chicago in his early teens. Arriving in steerage, he worked at odd jobs until he landed a job of liquidating a stock of whiskey on commission. He became a successful whiskey broker. He was a founder of the National Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association in 1895. Mr. Wolf began distributing "*Old Pepper*" when he purchased his first shipment by sight draft. When the barrels were delivered, he used the bill of lading to borrow an additional \$5.00 per barrel from Chicago banks. He successfully sold this shipment. Then using the profit from this first shipment, he paid for the second shipment in cash.¹⁹⁶ By 1899 he was the sold distributor of the whiskey in the United States.

In May 1907 he acquired the James E. Pepper & Company from Mr. Pepper's estate for \$400,000. Mr. Wolf reincorporated the distillery as the James E. Pepper Distillery Company. He created the slogan "Born With The Republic". He operated the distillery until Prohibition (1920) and thereafter the warehouses used as concentration house for whiskey. In 1920 the company began bottling medicinal whiskey.

In December 1921, the Dearborn Independent newspaper attacked the "Jewish Control" of the distilled spirits industry. The article noted that "James E. Pepper" was owned by James (Joseph) Wolf. The newspaper was owned by Henry Ford.

In April 1929 Joseph Wolf of Chicago died. He was the leader of the syndicate that owned the distillery.¹⁹⁷ In 1933 his estate sold the distillery to Schenley for \$1,000,000. He owned significant real estate in Chicago and Kentucky.¹⁹⁸

OTHER PEPPER BRANDS

“OLD OSCAR PEPPER”

The “*Old Oscar Pepper*” brand of whiskey was established in 1838 by Oscar Pepper (father of James E. Pepper) at the Old Oscar Pepper Distillery, Glenn’s Creek, Versailles, Kentucky. The whiskey was distilled to the formula developed by Elijah Pepper (grandfather of James E. Pepper) in 1780 and improved by Dr. James C. Crow in the 1840s. In 1878 the brand name was transferred to Labrot & Graham, when the distillery was sold by Colonel E. H. Taylor, Jr. Production continued until 1918, when stopped by Prohibition. The remaining whiskey was removed to the concentration warehouse at the Frankfort Distillery, Louisville, Kentucky, where it was bottled for medicinal sales.

Today Brown Forman Corporation has restored the distillery and produces “*Woodford Reserve Bourbon*” at the plant.

“OLD ROSS PEPPER”

The R. L Pepper Company was founded in 1870 on Benison Creek, Benison (west of Frankfort), Kentucky. Ross L. Pepper was a cousin of James E. Pepper. The company produced the “*R. L. Pepper*” brand. In 1880 the company was sold to Paris, Allen & Company, an English investment company, who change the name to “*Old Ross Pepper*”. In 1885 the distillery was closed and remaining stocks of whiskey was relocated to Louisville (and bottled).

“OLD TOM PEPPER”

“*Old Tom Pepper*” was distilled by the Glenmore Distillery, Owensboro, Kentucky in the 1920s. Apparently, the brand was created after the death of James E. Pepper. They advertised as “the last of the Peppers”. After Thomas Pepper’s death, his sons operated a distillery in Ashland, Pennsylvania and produced “*Old Rap*” whiskey until Prohibition.

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- ³³ Lexington Leader, February 25, 1899, page 1, column 5, Deed Book 116, pages 52 – 3 and Deed Book 127, page 58, Fayette County Clerk Office.
- ³⁴ Lexington Leader, December 21, 1902, page 1, column 6-7 and Incorporation Book 6, page 134, Fayette County Clerk Office..
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