United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name V.W. Bush Warehouse

other names/site number CKW-561

Related Multiple Property NA

2. Location

street & number 127 North Main Street NA not for publication

city or town Winchester NA vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Clark code 049 zip code 40392

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** _X_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title **Craig Potts/SHPO** Date

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

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

V.W. Bush Warehouse
Name of Property

Clark County, Kentucky
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
X	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		**Total**

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCIAL-warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER-Mid-19th Century Commercial Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: stone
walls: brick
roof: wood
other:

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The V. W. Bush Warehouse (CKW-561) is located in north Winchester at the intersection of Main Street and Depot Street. The building was erected in 1880 adjacent to the tracks of the Elizabethtown, Lexington & Big Sandy Railroad (EL&BS) and about 400 feet from a freight depot shared by the EL&BS and the Kentucky Central Railroads. The structure was designed to serve as a warehouse for hemp, wheat and other grains. The 27,000 square foot building is two stories with a full basement. The area proposed for listing is .86 acres, and contains one contributing building.

Character of the Site and Surrounding

The building stands on a triangular-shaped lot. The property is bounded on the west by Main Street, on the south by Depot Street, and on the north by the right-of-way of the CSX Railroad and a brick building housing Rapha Ministries. The lot has a few trees and shrubs but no other structures (except a dilapidated wooden fence). The building covers the western ¼ of the lot.

The original building had a wooden platform attached to the south and west sides of the structure and a set of scales located on west side adjoining the platform. At some point, the platforms were replaced with concrete sidewalks (now mostly absent on the south side). A defunct set of scales adjoins a remnant of sidewalk on the south side.

Exterior Description

Valentine White Bush erected the building, and the structure has been formally referred to as the “V. W. Bush Warehouse” in all deeds from 1883 through 2016.

The building is trapezoidal in shape and includes a historic early addition on the north side. Four attached concrete grain silos, topped by a wood structure with a shed roof, and a metal storage tank, are attached in the rear, on the east side (photograph 2). Exterior walls are three widths thick of load-bearing brick masonry

with a laid stone foundation and a flat wood roof. Interior framing is heavy timber post and beam. There is a diagonal entrance on the southwest corner that leads into a small office area. A sign over the entrance reads "Sphar & Co. Puritan Field Seeds" (photograph 3). Except for the office and two adjoining rooms, the building has an open floor plan.

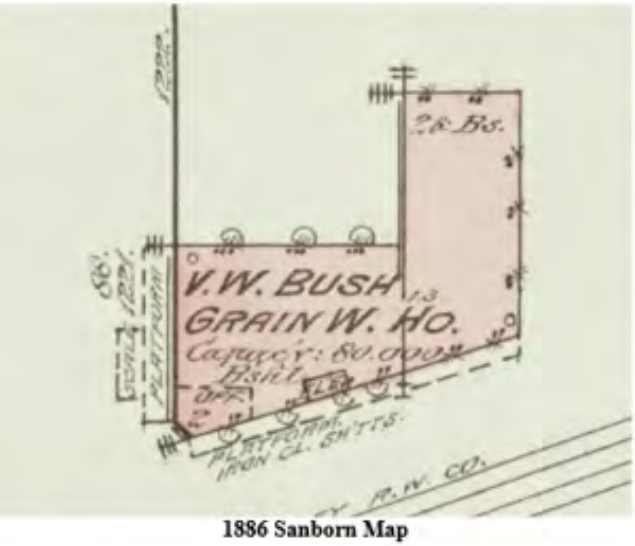
Photo 3, southwest corner entry building

Photo 2: silos at east (rear) end of

Photo 9: West Side

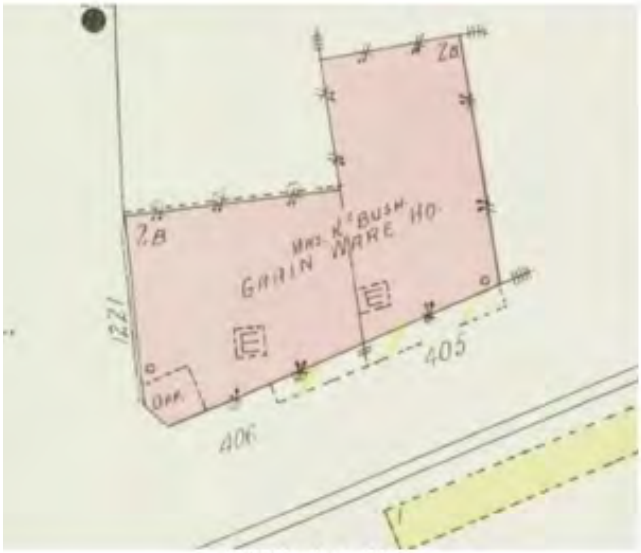
Photo 10: North Side

The building had one historic addition made sometime between 1912 and 1926 which gave it its present form. This is referred to as the "north addition," which is shown on the 1926 Sanborn map but is absent on the 1912 map (see below). This early historic addition increased the building size and footprint without significantly changing the character or function of the building. A later addition was installation of four grain silos at the rear of the building by Sphar & Co.[i] sometime between 1936 (date of their partnership) and 1948 (historic photo). These attached ancillary structures, installed during the booming years of the bluegrass seed industry, held both raw and cleaned seed. These structures allowed the warehouse to handle bulk quantities of grass seed without having to receive and ship it in bags. The silos were connected to the warehouse by piping used to move seed back and forth from processing equipment located inside the warehouse (some but not all this equipment is still in place). The water storage tank adjacent to the silos was deemed a minor structure for this nomination. We speculate that it was also installed during the bluegrass seed era.

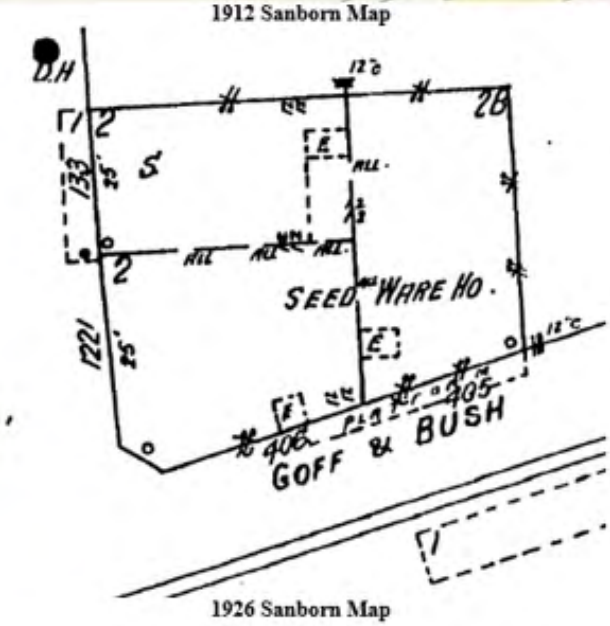


1886 Sanborn Map

1912 Sanborn Map



1907 Sanborn Map



1926 Sanborn Map

1886, 1907, 1912, and 1926 Sanborn Map

[i] Personal communication with Bill Pumphrey, son-in-law of Bill Sphar Jr., September 28, 2016.

The south facade has seven bays separated by brick pilasters with seven window openings on the second floor and three window openings, three arched door openings and one rectangular door opening on the first floor (photograph 8). On the second floor, four of the window openings are enclosed with a pair of hinged iron-clad wooden shutters, two have double-hung wood frame windows (broken) with 6-over-6 glass panes, and one window open to the elements. On the first floor, three of the door openings are boarded over and one has been converted to a pair of side-by-side double-hung wood frame windows. Two of the window openings have double-hung wood frame windows with 6-over-6 glass panes and one has been boarded over.

Photo 8, south side

The west facade has eight bays separated by brick pilasters with eight window openings on the second floor and two window openings and six door openings on the first floor (photograph 9). Four of the second floor windows are enclosed with a pair of hinged iron-clad wooden shutters and four are boarded up. The first floor has three arched door openings and three rectangular door openings (all boarded up) and two windows, one boarded up and one with a pair of hinged iron-clad wooden shutters.

The north facade has seven bays separated by brick pilasters with six windows on the second floor and five windows and one arched door (boarded up) on the first floor (photograph 10). The double-hung wood windows are 6-over-6 glass panes, except for two that are boarded over. The stone foundation of the basement is exposed on the north facade and has three door openings, one arched and two rectangular; two are boarded up and one is open to the elements.

Photo 11: Rear (east) facade

The east (rear) facade has six bays and is more complicated to describe, as the view is partly obstructed by the storage silos (photograph 11). The south end (two bays) is constructed of painted concrete block (due to a failure of the wall and foundation at some time in the past) and has four metal-frame double-hung windows, two on the first floor and two on the second floor. The middle section (one bay) behind the silos (not visible in the photographs) has the original brick masonry wall and laid-stone foundation. This bay has one window opening on the first and second floors—each with double-hung metal-sash windows—and one arched door opening in the foundation. The two-bay north end has the original brick masonry wall and laid-stone foundation; however, the northern most bay has been covered with stucco, as have two of the brick pilasters. Two window openings on the first floor and two on the second floor have double-hung metal-sash windows (broken) and one window opening in the foundation is open to the elements.

The southwest facade with the diagonal entrance consists of one bay with a rectangular door opening on the first floor and a window opening on the second floor. These are enclosed by a contemporary wooden door and a pair of hinged iron-clad wooden shutters, respectively.

Decorative elements on the exterior include brick pilasters, arched doorways, and a brick parapet surrounding the roof. The parapet has a cornice with dentils and a recessed rectangular brick feature in each bay. The brickwork consists of two patterns. One pattern is a modified Flemish bond with rows of alternating headers and stretchers are separated by five rows of stretchers in common bond. The other is a modified English bond, with rows of headers separated by five rows of stretchers in common bond .

Interior Description

There are two interior masonry walls, one full width north-south wall and one east-west running from the west facade to the north-south wall. The basement wall is laid stone and the first and second floor walls are brick. The building has one freight elevator remaining (of the three that were present in 1926). A front stairwell provides access to the second floor and a rear stairwell provides access to the basement; the latter is inaccessible at present. A large piece of grain-cleaning equipment is located in the rear portion of the building.

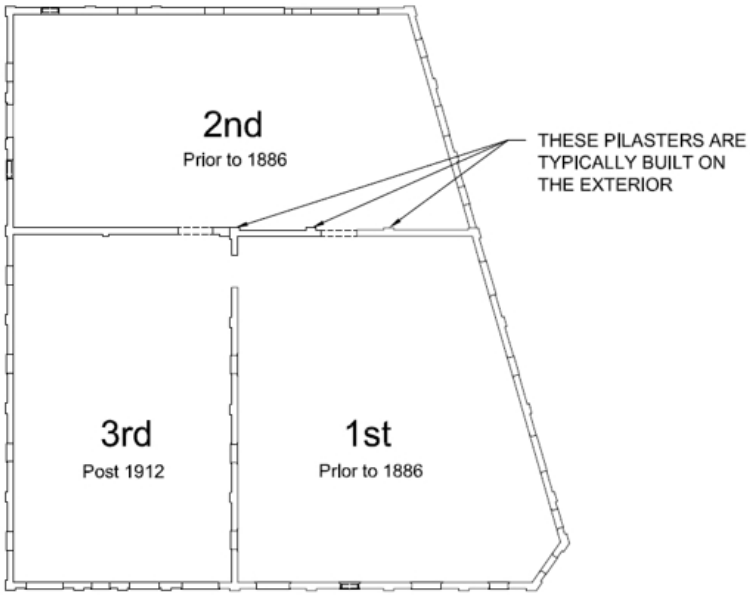


Photo 1: Wall diagram

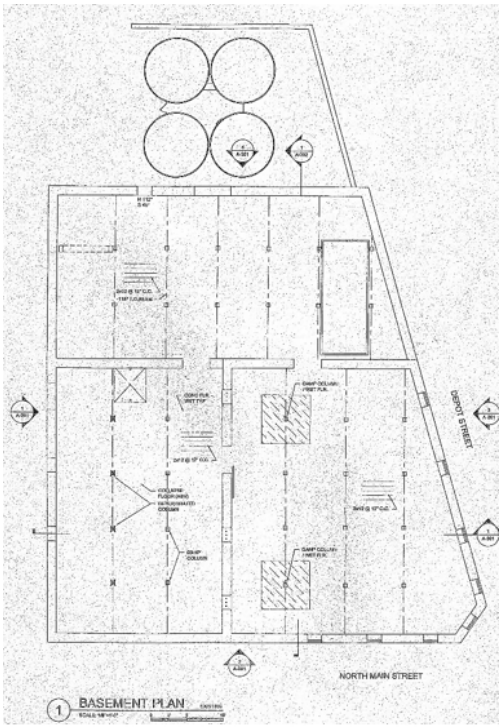


Photo 4: basement plan

Typical Rafter Bearing on Exterior Walls

Typical Roof Framing-Post and Beam

Typical Floor Framing – Heavy Timber Post and Beam

Partially collapsed East Addition

Current Condition. The original portion of the building is in fairly sound structural condition with the exception of a few areas where the roof leaks have caused water damage and rot. The north addition is in poor condition and partially collapsed due to lack of a maintained roof in this area. The rear (east) addition is in fair condition. Some of the rear (east) wall has been replaced with concrete block, likely due to water damage and subsequent bowing/cracking of the brick. There are areas where the floor joists ends are rotted at the bearing ends of the exterior walls and in a few areas the floor has dropped at the exterior walls, indicating damaged joist ends due to water. The roof structure over the main and rear portions of the building is in good condition. The north addition roof has collapsed and must be rebuilt. The north exterior wall (of the north addition) and the rear (east) wall of the east addition both have areas of brick damage that must be repaired. Much of the brick on the exterior walls needs to be tuck pointed, which is to be expected for a building of this age. The City of Winchester has acquired title to the property and to date has secured funding in the amount of $1,900,000 for the rehabilitation. The City has raised the funds needed to make these repairs in a manner that will meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

V.W. Bush Warehouse
Name of Property

Clark County, Kentucky
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1880-1964

Significant Dates

1880, 1903

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance

The Period of Significance begins in 1880, during Winchester's early railroad years, and when V.W. Bush had the warehouse built. The Period continues through the beginning of the bluegrass seed production era, when the warehouse figured prominently into that important activity pattern, until 1964, when seed production ceased to remain an important industry in the central part of Kentucky.

Criteria Considerations NA

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The V. W. Bush Warehouse (CKW-561) on North Main Street in Winchester meets National Register Criterion A and is significant in the area of commerce for the ways it facilitated the sale of local agricultural products. Valentine White Bush (1831-1899) erected his warehouse—thought to be Winchester's first—in 1880. That experiment proved so successful that he enlarged the building between 1880 and 1886. The warehouse was erected initially to store hemp, wheat, and other grains. Prior to the arrival of the railroad and construction of the warehouse, a farmer selling his produce in Winchester had to find numerous customers to purchase his harvest in small lots. With the entry of a warehouse into the commercial arena, sales of agricultural products accelerated in two ways. Farmers could sell their entire harvest, in bulk quantities, to a single purchaser, the warehouse operator. And the warehouse operator could use the railroad to sell those products to distant markets—particularly to manufacturers—such as hemp to factories producing binder twine, and wheat to gristmills, especially large new roller mill establishments. When markets for Kentucky wheat and hemp slumped in the late-19th century, the Bush Warehouse supported an emergent business: seed production. From 1903 to 1964, bluegrass seed production in Kentucky, and Clark County in particular, experienced astounding growth. During this period, the Warehouse expanded from wholesale into retail sales. Local farmers not only sold their seeds to the proprietors of the Bush Warehouse, but the farmers also began purchasing products from the Warehouse, as well, such as fertilizer at first, and then field and garden seeds. While numerous businesses occupied the building during its commercial lifespan (1880-2005), the building's utilitarian design proved adaptable to each new operation it housed.

Several parties operated the warehouse through the years: V. W. Bush, Goff & Bush, Sphar & Co. and Sphar Feed & Seed. The last of these went out of business in 2005. The warehouse is poised to return to service one more time. The City of Winchester purchased the building in 2016, and plans are underway to repurpose the warehouse as Winchester's Welcome Center and professional office space for local agencies including Tourism, Industrial Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Winchester, and The Greater Clark Foundation.

Historic Context: Warehouse Activity in Winchester, Kentucky, 1880-1964

Farm Markets in Clark County Before 1880

Clark County was settled in 1779 with the establishment of two pioneer stations, John Strode's and David McGee's.[2] The county, created in 1792 from parts of Fayette and Bourbon, had a largely agricultural economy for its first two centuries. Finding markets for surplus agricultural products had always been a challenge for the county's farmers. The county seat at Winchester had a market house (1794-1856) that provided limited opportunities for selling produce to town residents.[3] The 19th-century roads were too poor and unreliable to move products from farm to more distant markets. The major transportation route for the county's farm products was the Kentucky River. Beginning in 1789, flatboats began making annual springtime runs from Clark County down the Kentucky, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to reach markets in New Orleans.[4] From there,

[2] Neal O. Hammon, "Kentucky Pioneer Forts and Stations," *Filson Club History Quarterly* (2002) 76:541, 551.
[3] Thomas D. Clark, *Clark County, Kentucky, A History* (Winchester, KY, 1996), pp. 153, 158.
[4] John Halley's journal of flatboat trips in 1789 and 1791, photocopy at the University of Kentucky M. I. King Library, Special Collections.

goods could be loaded on seagoing vessels and shipped to the east coast and Europe. Boatyards and warehouses were established along the Kentucky River to facilitate this vital commerce. Warehouses, established by the state for the inspection of flour, tobacco, hemp and cured meats, served as storage facilities for these products until they could be loaded onto boats for the run to New Orleans on the spring tides. Interestingly, the second warehouse established in Clark County was William Bush's, a kinsman of V. W. Bush, on December 20, 1792.[5]

According to Dr. Thomas D. Clark, the Kentucky River was a lifeline for Clark County farmers until the Civil War, when the southern shipment of Kentucky goods was curtailed. The year 1860 marked the high point for Kentucky's and Clark County's agricultural output. That year "Kentucky ranked fifth among the states in the value of its livestock and general farm products. Never again was Kentucky to attain such a high rating in the area of agricultural statistics."[6] For example, Kentucky ranked number 1 in wheat production in 1840 and had fallen to number 8 by 1870; Kentucky ranked number 1 in corn production in 1850 and had fallen to number 6 by 1870. She still ranked number 1 in hemp but production was falling off rapidly (39,409 tons in 1860 to 7,777 tons in 1870).[7]

What little production was left in the U.S. was centered in Kentucky. In 1879, the whole country harvested only 5,025 tons of hemp, of which 4,583 tons came from Kentucky. After that, the loss of the binder twine market resulted in a further shrinking of hemp production.[8] Wheat continued to be an important commodity in Clark County during this era, but it would rapidly decline, making way for locally produced bluegrass seed to rise in its place.[9]

Dr. Clark has stated that "Throughout the history of Clark County there have been changing patterns of crops produced.... By the mid-nineteenth century many Clark County farmers, especially those once devoted to livestock production, turned to the culture of non-row grasses and clovers."[10] The most important of these for the future would be Kentucky bluegrass.

Rise of the Warehouse in Winchester during the city's Railway Age, 1880-1914

Thomas Clark observed, "The inception of the railway era wrought deep and fundamental changes in the transporting and marketing of farm products."[11] Clark County's first railroad was the Elizabethtown, Lexington & Big Sandy (EL&BSRR), completed from Lexington through Winchester to Mt. Sterling in 1873. The line was soon extended to Catlettsburg (1881), where it connected to the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad and allowed shipments through to the eastern seaboard (the EL&BS would eventually become part of the C&O system).

[5] William Littell, *Statute Law of Kentucky, Vol. 1* (Frankfort, KY, 1809), p. 150; Harry G. Enoch, *Captain Billy Bush and the Bush Settlement, Clark County, Kentucky, A Family History* (Winchester, KY, 2015), p. 206.
[6] Thomas D. Clark, "Agriculture," in John E. Kleber, editor, *Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, KY, 1992), p. 8.
[7] Henry C. Leister, "Kentucky During the War Decades: A Study in Reconstruction," Bachelor of Philosophy thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1912, p. 47.
[8] James F. Hopkins, *History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (Lexington, KY, 1951), pp. 204, 206.
[9] Clark, *Clark County, Kentucky*, pp. 111.
[10] Clark, *Clark County, Kentucky*, pp. 108, 110.
[11] Clark, *Clark County, Kentucky*, pp. 112.

Winchester continued to add rail lines in the 1880s: Kentucky Central in 1883, Lexington & Eastern in 1889-1890. The last to be constructed was the L&N Railroad's line from Winchester to Irvine-Ravenna in 1914.[12]

Warehouses played an essential role in this rail-driven transformation of the town. While livestock could be loaded on the train at the many stations scattered throughout the county, products like tobacco, hemp, wheat and other grains required much greater labor to load onto trains. To market these crops, the farmer required a middle man, and this role was filled by the warehouse operators. The proprietor purchased the farmers' product, in some cases processed it (wheat and bluegrass seed were cleaned, hemp was hackled), then stored it, and finally shipped it out by rail. For convenience, the first warehouses were located in north Winchester near the rail lines; later warehouses were constructed along purpose-built spur lines.

While the railroad exacted a horizontal impact on the townscape of Winchester, opening new corridors of travel through the town, V. W. Bush's introduced a vertical form, a warehouse, intimately related to the new transportation mode. According to the *Clark County Democrat*, V. W. Bush commenced building his warehouse in August 1880:

> Mr. V. W. Bush has made arrangements with the town authorities by which Main Street just beyond the railroad will be still further widened twenty feet. Mr. Bush is going to build an elegant and commodious commission house adjoining the railroad on the north, and work will begin in a few days.[13]

A week later, Bush placed the following notice in the paper: "Wheat Wanted! 50,000 Bushels for which I will pay the highest market price. Call and see me before selling."[14] This was followed by another ad in November: "V. W. Bush, dealer in Hemp, Tobacco, Grain, and County Produce generally. Warehouse on Main Street, at railroad crossing, convenient to depot."[15] The latter ad ran unchanged the rest of the year and into the next. The mention of tobacco raises an issue that is resolved by another newspaper notice that year: "V. W. Bush will at once engage in the tobacco trade when his splendid new warehouse is completed and our farmers will find a profitable market for their crops of the weed at home."[16]

Based on local tradition and recent research, Bush's hemp and grain warehouse may have been the first built in Winchester. City directories are not very helpful for identifying warehouses, as they seldom were listed. The best sources to track Winchester's warehouse construction are newspapers and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. While specific documentation is absent, several lines of evidence suggest that the Bush Warehouse was the first. In order to determine if there were other warehouses in Winchester in 1880 all the issues of the local newspaper, the *Clark County Democrat*, were reviewed for that year. No other warehouse besides Bush's was mentioned. Warehouse operators regularly advertised the products they wished to purchase. No ads appeared that year for the purchase of hemp, grain or tobacco except for the ones placed by Bush. There was one notice that S. P. Kerr had purchased 5,000 bushels of wheat. Kerr was the owner-operator of the Eclipse Mills and, later, the Winchester Roller Mills; his mills produced "White Pearl" and other brands of flour.[17] This sizeable quantity of

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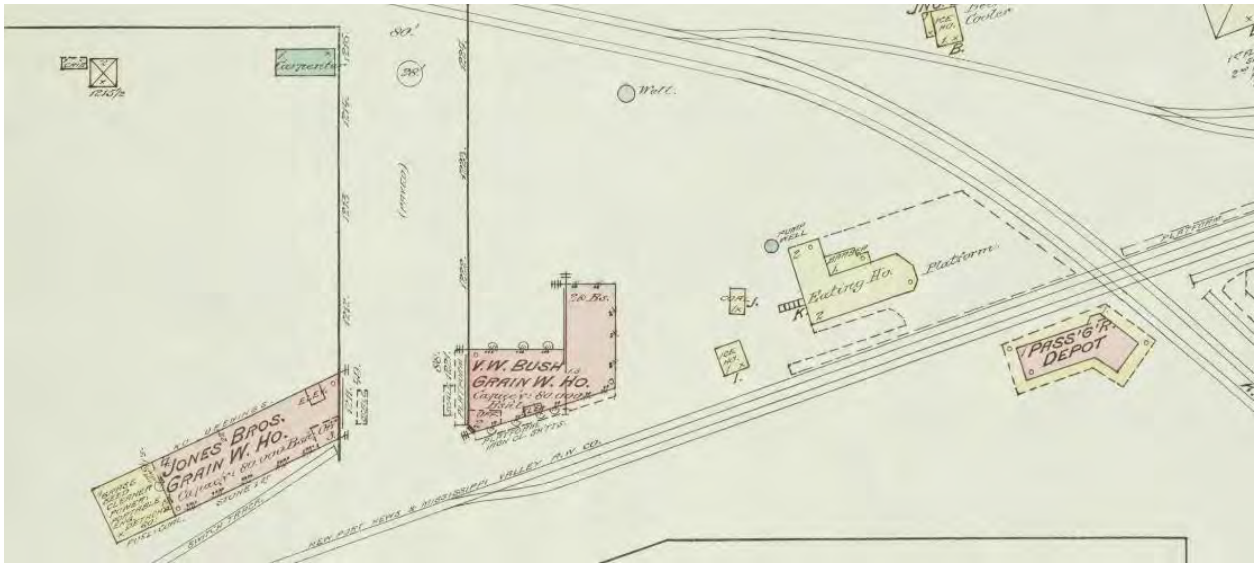
[12] State of Kentucky, *Report of the Railroad Commission of Kentucky to December 1, 1880* (Frankfort, KY, 1881), p. 188; William M. Ambrose, *Kentucky Union Railway, Lexington & Eastern Railroad, Lexington, Kentucky, 1852-1915* (Lexington, KY, 2007), p. 30, 32-38; Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad* (New York, NY, 1972), p. 404.
[13] *Clark County Democrat*, August 4, 1880.
[14] *Clark County Democrat*, August 11, 1880.
[15] *Clark County Democrat*, November 3, 1880.
[16] *Clark County Democrat*, October 13, 1880.
[17] Harry G. Enoch, *History of the Kerr Building and Eclipse Mills, Winchester, Kentucky* (Winchester, KY, 2005).

wheat had to be stored, but the building (a "storage warehouse") would have had a different function from Bush's Warehouse, which purchased goods, stored, processed and then shipped these goods by rail to distant manufacturers; the term "railway warehouse" has been used to describe the latter concern.[18]

The second line of evidence comes from the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The first Sanborn map for Winchester (1886) shows two railway warehouses: V. W. Bush Grain Warehouse (80,000 bushels capacity) and the Jones Brothers Grain Warehouse (80,000 bushels capacity). Both were brick buildings on North Main Street located adjacent to the railroad.



1886 Sanborn Map of Winchester (detail)

The substantial warehouse of the Jones Brothers—Thomas B. and Henry M.—was constructed sometime between 1884, when they purchased the property from V. W. Bush, and 1887, when they sold their warehouse to David S. Gay.[19] While definitive proof is lacking, V. W. Bush appears to have had Winchester's first railway warehouse. It does seem appropriate to recognize Bush as a leading pioneer of the warehousing industry in Winchester.

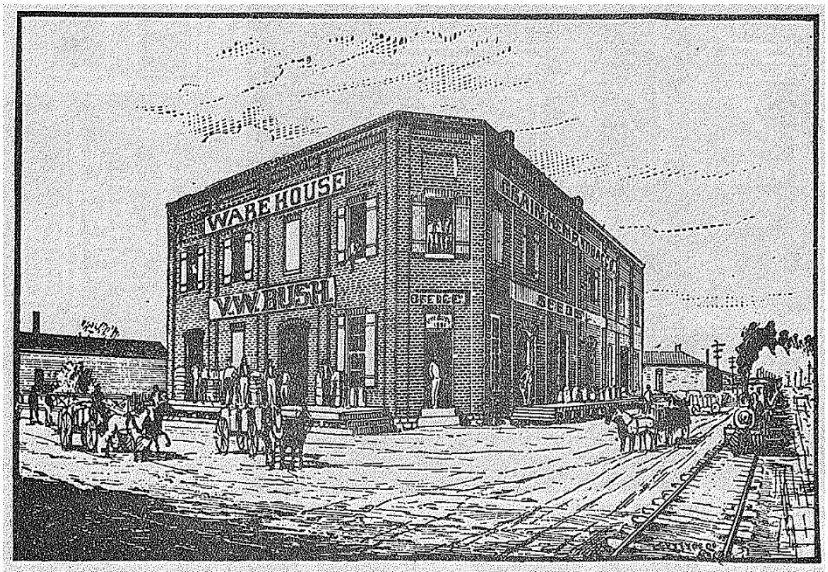
The 1889 *Winchester Handbook* gives a description of the first two hemp and grain warehouses:

> Hemp and Wheat Warehouses. Jones & Gay have a very complete warehouse for storage of hemp, wheat and other produce. They have connected with their establishment a hackling house where their hemp is cleaned and prepared for market. They do an immense business. V. W. Bush has another large warehouse of the same kind which is now leased to Levi Goff. It has the proportions of a city establishment and is always full.[20]

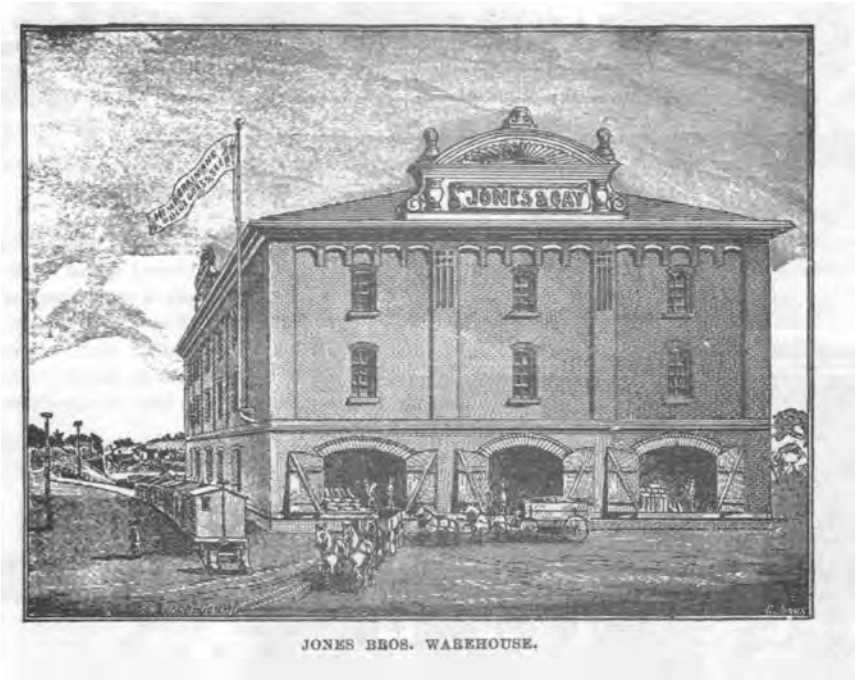
[18] Report of the Committee on Yards and Terminals, American Railway Engineers Association, "Analysis of Design Factors for Warehouses," *Engineering News-Record* (1922) 88:727.
[19] Clark County Deed Book 51:127, 53:378.
[20] William M. Beckner, *Handbook of Clark County and the City of Winchester* (Chicago, IL, 1889), p. 27.

V. W. Bush's long-time associate in the warehouse business was Levi Goff (1852-1941). Winchester city directories for 1908 and 1928 identify the business as the "Goff & Bush Warehouse, dealers in seeds, grain and wool" and "Goff & Bush, warehouse," respectively.[21]

The *Handbook* provided pictures of Bush's and the Jones Brothers' warehouses[22]:



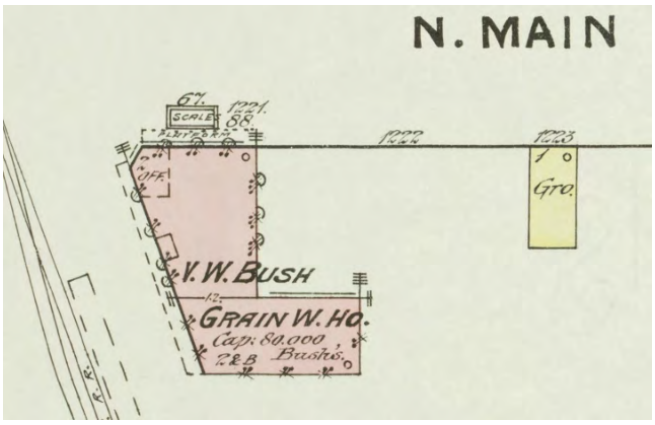
V. W. BUSH'S WAREHOUSE.

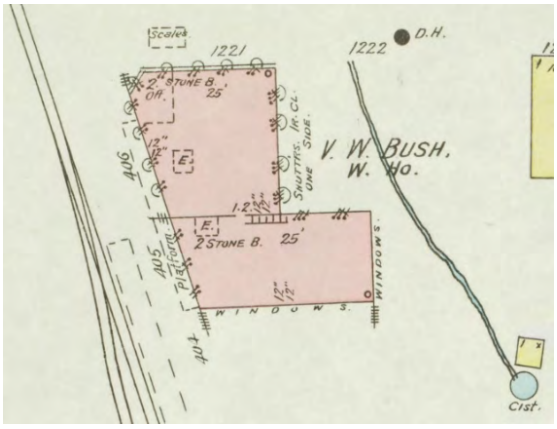


JONES BROS. WAREHOUSE.

[21] Interstate Directory Company, *Directory of Winchester and Clark County Gazetteer* (Marion, IN, 1908), p. 70, 195; Southern Bell Telephone and Telephone Company, "Winchester, Kentucky, Telephone Directory, 1928," p. 12.
[22] William M. Beckner, *Handbook of Clark County and the City of Winchester* (Chicago, IL, 1889), p. 30.

The next Winchester Sanborn maps after 1886 are in 1890. This maps show Jones & Gay and V. W. Bush as the only grain warehouses. Bush also had a tobacco warehouse (Winn Avenue adjacent to the railroad) as did I. C. Skinner.





V. W. Bush Warehouse in Sanborn maps, 1890 (left) and 1895 (right)

The 1895 Sanborn maps indicate that Winchester's warehousing industry was rapidly expanding. The maps show the David S. Gay Warehouse and the V. W. Bush Warehouse. There was one other grain warehouse in the city, a "Grass Seed Warehouse," otherwise unidentified, which stood adjacent to the C&O Railroad where the Winchester Cemetery is now located; a note attached to the warehouse states, "closed August 13, 1895." There are five tobacco warehouses shown: V. W. Bush, R. P. Scobee (2), J. W. Glover and J. R. Stroud.

The 1901 Sanborn map shows five grain warehouses: V. W. Bush, David S. Gay, S. P. Kerr (proprietor of the Winchester Roller Mills), J. R. Stroud, and the Stock Company Grass Seed Warehouse. There were six tobacco warehouses.

Jones' original warehouse on the west side of North Main Street is not shown on the 1907 Sanborn map. His business had suffered two disastrous fires. From newspaper accounts we learn:

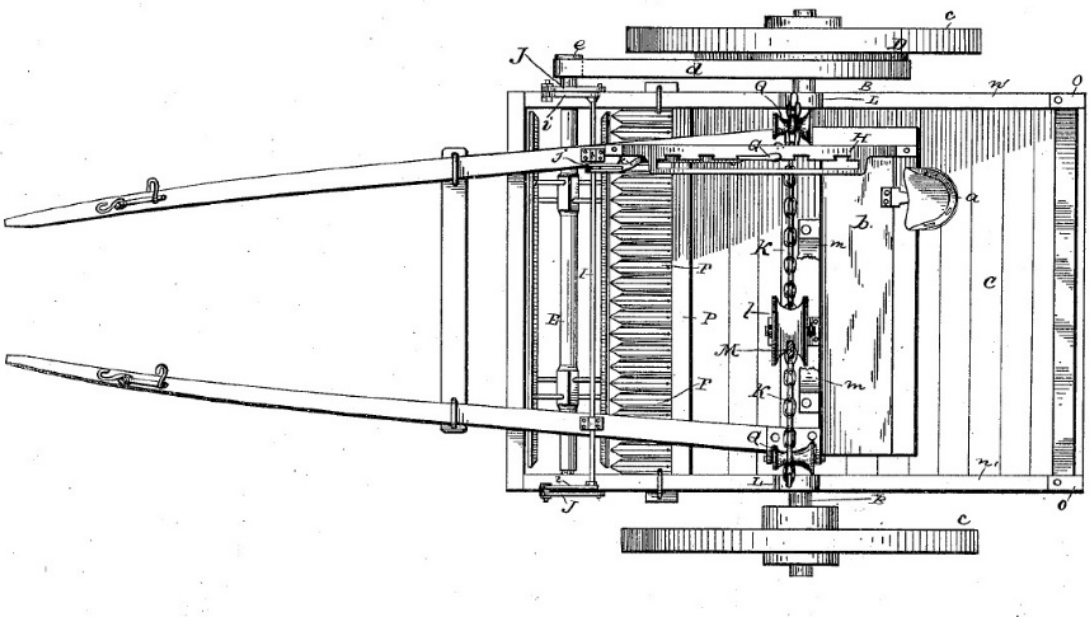
> Winchester, Ky. June 14. The grain and seed warehouse of D. S. Gay burned today, including the largest stock of bluegrass seed in the world. Loss $100,000. (1903)[23]
>
> Winchester, Ky. November 16. The Bluegrass seed factory and warehouse of David S. Gay was burned together with most of its contents. Besides machinery it contained about $15,000 worth of bluegrass seed. (1905)[24]

Gay's warehouse on the west side of North Main Street was gone for good, but by 1907 he had a new establishment at the intersection of Main St. and Winn Ave. shown on the Sanborn map as the David S. Gay Hemp, Grain & Field Seed Warehouse.

V. W. Bush Warehouse during the Bluegrass Seed Era in Clark County, 1903-1964

[23] *Herald Democrat* (Colorado), June 15, 1903.
[24] *Richmond Climax*, November 22, 1905.

Several lines of evidence show the growing importance of bluegrass seed in Clark County, even before the 20th century. Jacob I. C. Naff of Winchester received two U.S. patents related to grass seed: one in 1884 for an improved grass seed harvester that was pulled by mules (shown below) and one in 1885 for an adjustable comb that could be used to harvest "different kinds of grasses—such as bluegrass, timothy, orchard, &c."[25]



Jacob I. C. Naff's Patented Grass Seed Harvester

The 20th century saw demand for bluegrass seed explode. Due to its ease of culture and nutrient value, farmers across the country began to plant bluegrass for pasturing livestock. By 1902 bluegrass seed had begun to make inroads in foreign markets. A U.S. Department of Agriculture report of that year emphasized the importance of marketing clean ("fancy") seed and gave a description of the process:

> Today the seed is cleaned with powerful machinery, so that hundreds of bushels of "fancy" can be turned out in a day. The rough seed is first run onto a cylinder which is armed with steel teeth and which revolves in a jacket of heavy wire mesh. The grass is rubbed between the mesh and the cylinder and the seed is rubbed out. It is then sifted and run through a bran polisher, or some similar machine, to loosen the wool, after which it is finally cleaned through one of the modern seed-cleaning machines, which blows out the wool, dust, and light seed, leaving the "fancy" grade of any desired weight per bushel. The seed demanded by the export trade must weigh at least 22 pounds to the measured bushel.[26]

Agricultural reports and statistics indicate that substantial production in the U.S. of specialty grass seeds, such as bluegrass, orchard grass, smooth bromegrass and common ryegrass, began around the end of the 19th century.[27] The Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture began recording production of bluegrass seed in 1900.[28]

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[25] U.S. Patent No. 304,228, Aug. 26, 1884; U.S. Patent No. 325,109, Aug. 25, 1885, retrieved at https://patents.google.com/.
[26] A. J. Pieters and Edgar Brown, *Kentucky Bluegrass Seed: Harvesting, Curing, and Cleaning* (Washington, D.C., 1902), p. 15.
[27] George A. Rogler, et al., "Production of Grass Seeds," in U.S.D.A., *Seeds: Yearbook of Agriculture, 1961* (Washington, D.C., 1961), p. 170; U.S.D.A., *Index to the Yearbooks of the United States Department of Agriculture, 1901-1905* (Washington, D.C., 1908), p. 88.

We saw that bluegrass seed had already become an important commodity at Winchester warehouses by the first decade of the 1900s, and it would continue to grow. Clark County was at the center of the rise in bluegrass seed production. It is difficult to find statistics production statistics for Clark County, but the data available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture (below) adequately demonstrate the trend.

Kentucky and Clark County Grass Seed Production (in bushels)[29]

	Year	Kentucky	Clark County
Grass seed production	1860	62,561	
	1870	35,806	
	1880	76,880	
	1890	128,039	
Bluegrass seed production	1900	500,000	
	1901	400,000	
	1902	275,000	
	1903	340,000	
	1904	750,000	
	1905	275,000	
	1906	350,000	
	1907	425,000	
	1908	600,000	
	1909	450,000	
	1910	200,000	
	1911	350,000	
	1912	1,500,000	
	1913	175,000	
	1914	700,000	
	1915	350,000	
	1916	250,000	
	1917	200,000	
	1949	219,242	69,443 (72)
	1959	75,903	15,769 (23)
	1964	18,637	4,536 (5)
	1969	N/A	N/A

The number of farms producing bluegrass seed in parentheses. Bluegrass seed production, 1949-1964, was reported in pounds and converted to bushels using 22 pounds per bushel.

The data indicate a fall in grass seed production shortly after the Civil War, but then production returned to pre-war levels by 1880. The figures reported before 1900 are for "grass seed production" and include other grasses

[28] Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Statistics of Kentucky for 1916-1917* (Frankfort, KY, 1918), p. 295.
[29] U.S.D.A. Census of Agriculture, 1880, 1890, 1900 1910, 1950, 1940, 1945, 1964, 1969; production estimates for 1900 through 1917 are from Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Statistics of Kentucky for 1916-1917* (Frankfort, KY, 1918), p. 295.

such at timothy; thus, bluegrass seed makes up an unknown portion of the total. The data nevertheless show that a huge bluegrass seed market developed at the beginning of the 21st century. Bluegrass seed production for Clark County was reported from 1949 through 1964. Clark County led the state, growing one-third of the bluegrass seed produced in Kentucky in 1949; that portion fell to one-fifth of the total by 1959, when 23 farms in the county were still harvesting seed. Clark led the state again in 1964, but the data indicate that bluegrass seed production had for practical purposes come to an end—only five farms were still growing and harvesting seed. By 1969, bluegrass seed production was not reported in Kentucky or Clark County. Thus, 1964 was selected as the significant date for the end of the bluegrass seed era in Clark County.

Naff's patents were followed by several from the McCormick brothers of Winchester. Harry T. and William H. McCormick were awarded a patent in 1903 for an improved grass seed stripper, and Samuel E. McCormick was issued a patent in 1913 for a bluegrass seed stripper.[30] At McCormick's Shop on Lexington Road the brothers manufactured and repaired bluegrass seed strippers. An article in the 1922 *Winchester Sun* described their business:

> On or near the site of Strode's Station is now located McCormick's machine shop in which for the past several years has been manufactured a successful make of a machine-operated bluegrass seed stripper. It is the invention of the three McCormick brothers, of Clark County, each being a natural mechanic as well as inventors. The machine, a four-wheeled vehicle, is horse drawn, with driver and attendant, is driven across or around the fields, the revolving long-toothed steel combs strip the seed from the grass stems; the seeds being placed in bags by a mechanical conveyor. The grass is left standing, only the seeds are taken.[31]

Riding the strippers provided summer employment for many high school boys in the late 1950s and early 1960s (including the author). There are still dozens of these machines rusting away on Clark County farms today.

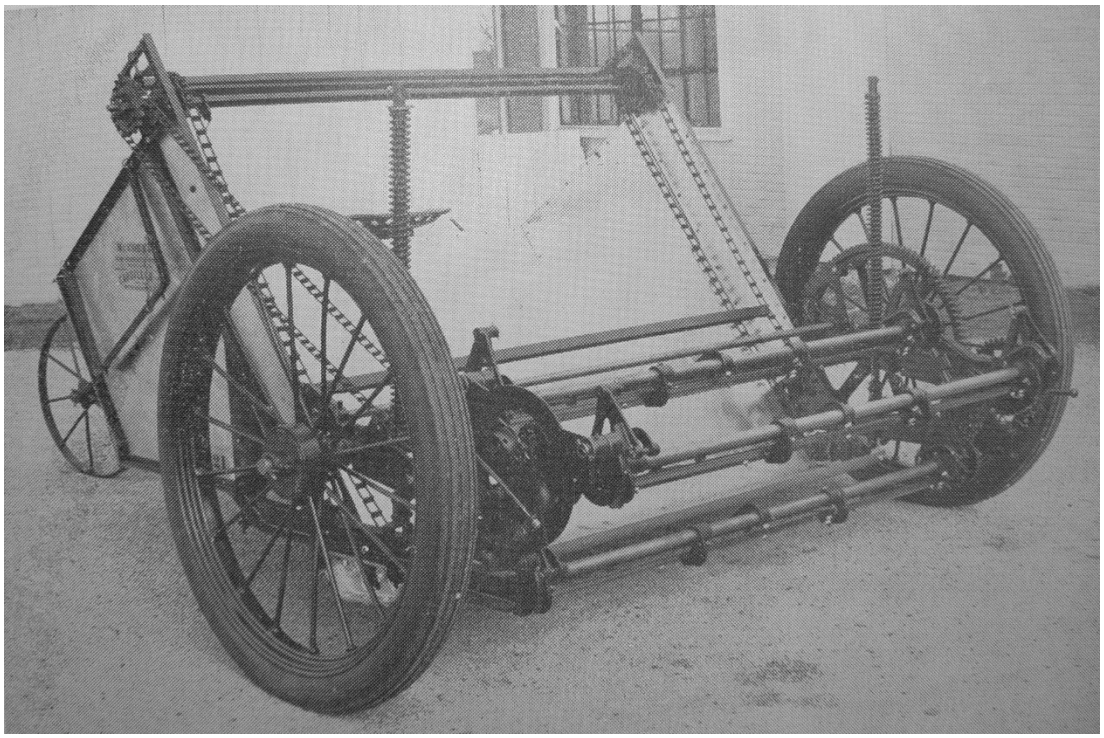
Because no early data are available for bluegrass seed production in Clark County, the "bluegrass seed era" in Clark County is taken to begin with the invention and patent of the McCormicks' famed seed stripper in 1903.

[30] U.S. Patent No. 727,412, May 5, 1903; U.S. Patent No. 1,063,812, June 3, 1913, retrieved at https://patents.google.com/.
[31] Undated clipping from the 1922 *Winchester Sun*, Clark County Public Library, Winchester, KY.

McCormick's Shop/Caudill Implement Co. (top) and a McCormick Grass Seed Harvester (below)[32]

According to a 1902 U.S.D.A. publication, "The seed of Kentucky bluegrass forms an important item in the grass-seed trade of the eastern United States, both in the domestic market and for export."[33] As described in the table above, Kentucky led the nation in bluegrass seed production, and Clark County production led Kentucky for several of the reporting years. The industry provided an important boost to Clark County's agricultural economy during the first half of the 21st century. The Bush Warehouse, by providing a ready market place for the county's seed, played a significant role in this industry. The warehouse also made the seed more marketable by processing and cleaning the raw product supplied by growers. (Bluegrass seed cleaning equipment is still in place in the warehouse.) In turn, the seed industry helped the Bush Warehouse adapt and survive as a viable commercial entity while other railway warehouses in Winchester went out of business and disappeared. Due to the seed industry, the Bush Warehouse today is the only building associated with Winchester's early rail history still standing.

[32] Mullin-Kille Co., *Winchester Kentucky City Directory* (Chillicothe, OH, 1958), p. 43.
[33] A. J. Pieters and Edgar Brown, *Kentucky Bluegrass Seed: Harvesting, Curing, and Cleaning* (Washington, D.C., 1902), p. 3.



History of the Bush Building:
V.W. Bush had the warehouse bearing his name built in 1880. Its major business was originally the buying and selling of hemp and wheat. By the end of the 19th century, the market for hemp was rapidly disappearing due to importation of jute.[34]

V.W. Bush died in 1899. His obituary states, "He was for a little while in the banking business and for some time has been in the warehouse business."[35] After his death, the Bush Warehouse became heavily involved in the grass seed business. The name of V.W. Bush's wife appears beside the warehouse on the 1907 Sanborn map, listing the establishment as the "Mrs. Kate Bush Grain Warehouse." In fact, V.W. Bush had transferred ownership of the warehouse to his wife in 1883. In two deeds that year, Bush sold the mill to James F. Winn who, the same day, sold the warehouse to Kate Bush.[36]

At her death in 1927, Kate Bush left the warehouse to her son, V. W. Bush Jr., a Winchester attorney. He died in 1963 and willed the warehouse to his daughters, Clara and Wilma.[37] Neither Kate, nor V W. Jr., nor his daughters had a major role in warehouse management. That job appears to have been left to Levi Goff for many years. The 1889 *Handbook* stated that Levi had leased the warehouse from V.W. Bush Sr.[38] Levi may have had day-to-day management of Goff & Bush, which operated until 1936. The 1910 census lists his occupation as

[34] James F. Hopkins, "Hemp Becomes a Minor Crop," in *History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (Lexington, KY, 1951), pp. 203-208.
[35] *Winchester Democrat*, January 31, 1899.
[36] Clark County Deed Book 50:6, 7.
[37] Clark County Will Book 4:10, 20:367, 694.
[38] William M. Beckner, *Handbook of Clark County and the City of Winchester* (Chicago, IL, 1889), p. 27.

"grain warehouse" and he was an employer as opposed to an employee. In later censuses he identified himself as "warehouse clerk" (1920) and "grain dealer" (1930).[39] Levi's obituary (1941) stated that "he attained prominence as a seed buyer...of this county."[40]

In 1936 a new company stepped in to operate the warehouse. In July of that year, W.R. Sphar and his son W. R. "Bill" Sphar Jr. formed a partnership they named "Sphar & Co." to handle "feed, seed, fertilizer, grain and wool" in a rented section of the V. W. Bush Warehouse. W.R. Sphar, Sr., an active farmer, left operation of the company to Bill Sphar and Gus White, who had previously worked for Goff & Bush. Sphar & Co. retailed feed, seed ("Puritan Field Seed") and fertilizer to area farmers. The company soon took over the entire warehouse and enlarged their wholesale business in bluegrass seed.[41]

In 1939 the Sphars formed a partnership—Sphar & Gay Seed Company—which greatly expanded their involvement in the bluegrass seed business. The partners, W. R. Sphar Sr., Bill Sphar, H. W. Sphar and J. D. Gay Jr., operated warehouses and processing facilities near the C&O Railroad at Pine Grove, Clark County. The main business of Sphar & Co. and Sphar & Gay Seed Company was "cleaning, processing, preparing for market, handling, storing, buying, selling, shipping and delivering blue grass seed."[42]

Following the decline of bluegrass seed production in Kentucky during the 1960s, the Sphar and Gay partnership was dissolved (1972).[43] Sphar & Co. continued to operate a retail business at the V. W. Bush Warehouse, which they finally purchased in 1987.[44] In 1999 Sphar & Associates (name changed from Sphar & Co.) sold the warehouse to Wayne Wilson and Spencer Pittman, who operated a feed store they called Sphar Feed & Seed.[45] The business closed in 2005.[46]

The V.W. Bush Warehouse continued in business at its original location and is the only 19th-century warehouse still standing in Winchester. The warehouse survived as a commercial establishment until 2005, although it would be re-invented several times.

Rebirth of the V. W. Bush Warehouse, 2016

After Sphar Feed & Seed closed in 2005, the warehouse stood empty. Unused portions of the building had been deteriorating for many years due to lack of maintenance, and the warehouse was in danger of being razed due to code violations. Recognizing the historic value of the building and its importance in revitalizing the North Winchester area, the City of Winchester and Clark County Fiscal Court stepped forward to rescue the warehouse. Plans call for rehabilitating the warehouse and repurposing it to serve as Winchester's Welcome Center and professional office space for local agencies including Tourism, Industrial Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Winchester, and The Greater Clark Foundation. The city purchased the building in April 2016.[47] The preliminary cost estimate for rehabilitating the V. W. Bush Warehouse is

[39] U.S. Population Census, Clark County, Kentucky, 1910, 1920, 1930.
[40] *Winchester Sun*, August 6, 1941.
[41] Bill Sphar, "History of Sphar Seed," copy at the Bluegrass Heritage Museum, Winchester, KY.
[42] Clark County Deed Book 117:437.
[43] Clark County Deed Book 117:437, notation written on the deed, "This lease is Cancelled & Void as of Oct. 31, 1972, by W. R. Sphar Jr."
[44] Clark County Deed Book 281:169.
[45] Clark County Deed Book 359:498.
[46] *Winchester Sun*, October 26, 2005.
[47] Clark County Deed Book 510:881.

$2,000,000.[48] A total of $1,900,000 has been committed to the project as of this date (Transportation Enhancement Grant, $1,000,000; Kentucky Community Block Grant, $500,000; The Greater Clark Foundation, $300,000; City of Winchester, $50,000; Clark County Fiscal Court, $50,000). This important historic icon (1880-2016) is on its way to serving its community through the 21st century.

Evaluation of the Significance of the V.W. Bush Warehouse within the historic context: Warehouse Activity in Winchester, Kentucky, 1880-1964

The coming of the railroads to Winchester initiated a business boom in the city. Part of this commercial success was due to the proliferation of warehouses in North Winchester, site of two rail lines and passenger and freight depots. V.W. Bush's Warehouse, built in 1880—thought to be the first railway warehouse erected in Winchester—led the way. The beginning of the 20th century saw a rapidly growing market for bluegrass seed. Kentucky led all other states in production, and Clark County production led Kentucky. The V.W. Bush Warehouse, especially under the auspices of Sphar & Co., became Winchester's leading business concern in the bluegrass seed industry. Today the warehouse is the only building associated with Winchester's early rail history still standing.

Evaluation of the historic integrity of the V. W. Bush Warehouse and its current condition:

The V.W. Bush Warehouse has integrity of **location** because the building still stands on its original site.

The V.W. Bush Warehouse was built beside the railroad to access rail service. Bush's Warehouse has integrity of **setting** because, while other warehouses in the area have come and gone, Bush's stands as the only remaining testament to this early industry, and the L&N Railroad still operates a line adjoining the warehouse property.

The original V. W. Bush Warehouse and its two additions have integrity of **materials** and **design**. Two additions were made enlarging the original warehouse, one in the 1880-1886 timeframe and another in the 1912-1926 timeframe. Both may be considered historic additions that contributed to the original business model: warehousing Clark County farm produce. The design was executed in a manner that made the exterior of the building appear to be a single unified mass rather than a building erected in three discernible campaigns.

Because the V. W. Bush Warehouse retains so much of its basic integrity factors, it may be said to retain integrity of **feeling** and **association**. The building has retained an extraordinarily similar appearance through the years (see below) and the building's basic function—wholesaling and retailing farm products—remained the same until the last business closed in 2005.

[48] Pearson & Peters Architects, "Sphar Seed Building Renovation, Preliminary Estimate of Probable Costs," September 19, 2014.

V. W. Bush Warehouse in 1889 (top left), 1948 (top right) and 2016 (below).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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eau+of+Agriculture,+Labor+and+Statistics+of+Kentucky+for+1916-1917+(&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjb1NnFg7DPAhWFHD4KHb4GBdwQ6AEIHjAA#v=snippet&q=bluegrass%20seed&f=false

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): CKW-561

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .89 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	748058.71	4209190	3			
2				4			

See Longitude/Latitude map on final page

Verbal Boundary Description
The property boundary runs from the east side of N. Main St. parallel to Depot St. to the L&N right-of-way, then with the L&N Railroad right-of-way and Rapha Ministries to N. Main St., then along the east side of N. Main St. to the point of origin. See also boundary map on page 22.

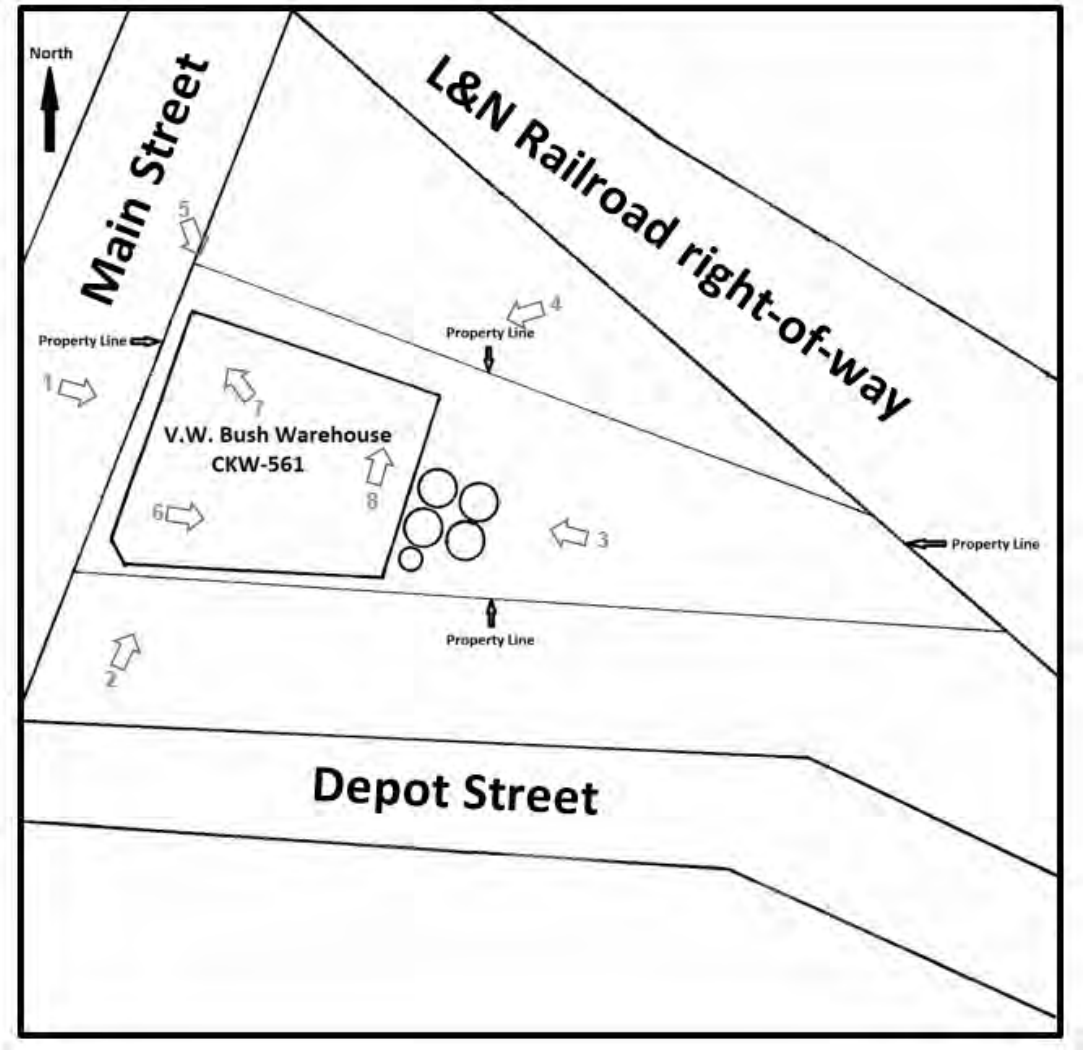
Boundary Justification
The .86 acre tract proposed for inclusion on the National Register includes the historic V.W. Bush Warehouse and the attached structures. The property was purchased in 2016 by the City of Winchester.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Harry G. Enoch
organization _____ date 27 September 2016
street & number 290 Goldwings Rd. telephone (859) 737-9688
city or town Winchester state KY zip code 40391
e-mail h_enoch@bellsouth.net

Photographs:

City or Vicinity: Winchester
County: Clark
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Steve Craycraft
Date Photographed: September 27, 2016



Sketch map for photographs

Name of Property: V. W. Bush Warehouse

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0001.tiff)
West side of Bush Warehouse. Camera facing east.

2 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0002.tiff)

South side and entrance of Bush Warehouse. Camera facing northeast.

3 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0003.tiff)
East side of Bush Warehouse, including grain silos. Camera facing west.

4 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0004.tiff)
North side of Bush Warehouse. Camera facing southwest.

5 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0005.tiff)
North side of Bush Warehouse. Camera facing southeast.

6 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0006.tiff)
Interior, first floor of Bush Warehouse, showing stairwell in the original part of the warehouse. Camera facing east.

7 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0007.tiff)
Interior, first floor of Bush Warehouse, showing partially collapsed floor in the North Addition. Camera facing northwest.

8 of 8. (KY_Clark County_Bush Warehouse_0008.tiff)
Interior, second floor of Bush Warehouse, showing grain bins in the East Addition. Camera facing north.

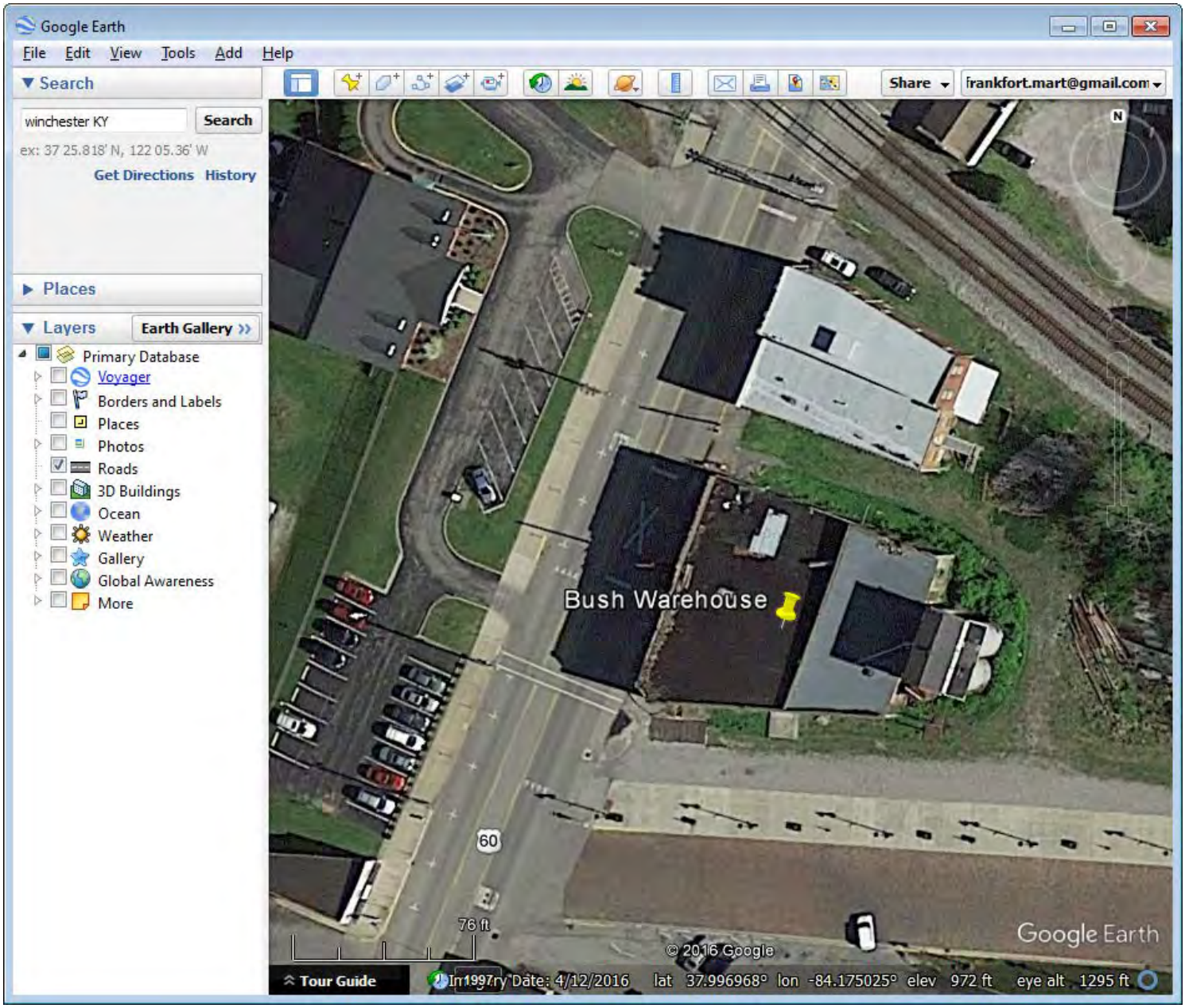
Property Owner:

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

name City of Winchester

street & number 32 Wall Street telephone 859-744-2821

city or town Winchester state KY zip code 40391



Bush Warehouse
Clark County, Kentucky
Latitude: 37.996459°
Longitude: -84.175171°
Scale near bottom left-hand corner of map
North at top of map