

United States Department of the Interior Draft 3, 3/10/23  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: John G. Epping Bottling Works

Other names/site number: JFCH 1313, et. al., see table in section 10

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

## 2. Location

Street & number: 702, 708, 712, and 718 Logan Street

City or town: Louisville State: Kentucky County: Jefferson

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 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

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

#### 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

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

- Private: ☒  
Public – Local ☐  
Public – State ☐  
Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

- Building(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

##### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
		Total

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2 are listed in  
the Phoenix Hill Historic District: 702 Logan and 708 Logan

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

**Current Functions**

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional

Vacant/Not In Use

Work In Progress

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements/Commercial Style

**Materials:**

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, Brick, Terra Cotta

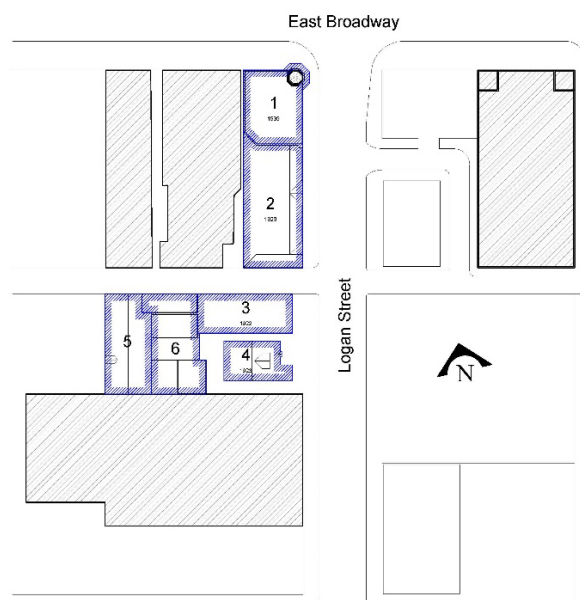
John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The John G. Epping Bottling Works (JFCH 1313, et.al., see table in section 10) was a soft drink processing complex running along both sides of Logan Street immediately south of East Broadway. The buildings are unified in appearance by height (one and two stories) and red brick construction with limestone accents, some with regular branding marks in stone. The construction period spanned from 1920 to the 1940s. The full complex with integrity is comprised of six buildings, one of which has two large additions: 702, 705, 708, 712 (with additions), 718, and 725 Logan. Two of these buildings—705 and 725 Logan—are on the east side of Logan Street and were historically a part of the Epping Bottling Works operation but are left out of this nomination per owner request. Three of the buildings within the complex—702, 705, and 708 Logan—are listed on the National Register within the Phoenix Hill Historic District; 702 and 708 were evaluated as contributing and 705 was evaluated as non-contributing. The buildings at 705 and 725 Logan Street currently would be evaluated as contributing to the John G. Epping Bottling Works listing and can be added in the future when their owners withdraw their objection to listing, provided those buildings retain integrity. This nomination form proposes individual National Register listing for the complex on the west side of Logan Street: 702, 708, 712 (with additions), and 718 Logan Street. The area proposed by this nomination to be added to the National Register, which currently is not listed is .29 acres, which consists of 2 contributing buildings (with additions) that are not National Register listed. The listing supported by this form includes the two already-listed buildings, which makes 4 contributing buildings in all, covering .47 acres.



Area proposed for listing outlined in blue



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The office and storage building at the corner of Logan and East Broadway, facing southwest.



The location of the office and storage building as constructed originally by Kokomo Rubber Company in 1920, seen here in 1928.

1. *The Office Building, 1939, 702 Logan. Listed in the National Register, Contributing.* Starting at the southwest corner of East Broadway and Logan Street is the primary office building constructed in 1939. The building is a Georgian style brick building with marble and limestone accents. At the base of the exterior wall is a solid limestone frieze panel that extends the entire length of the building along East Broadway. The facade features four main windows, all 8/8 double hung. A narrow window is located at the far east side. All the main windows are original and feature marble lintels with raised keystones. Above the windows is a shallow metal overhang

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

with Italianate detailing. Above the overhang, corresponding to each window, is a limestone panel, recessed into the brick wall, with an "E" in a diamond in the center. At the corner is a copper domed tower, extending to two stories in height. The tower is octagonal and featured a large clock facing the intersection with a copper overhang and dense brackets. Beneath the missing clock, facing the intersection is a limestone surround single doorway. Around the corner onto Logan Street, is another narrow window and a single large window, matching the front facade windows. Further south, adjacent to the window, is a large garage door opening with a segmented arch and a limestone keystone and limestone abutments. To the south of the garage door is a large window opening, now infilled with a non-historic aluminum commercial window system.

The interior has been converted to a modern open floor plan office space.

*2. Storage Building, 1920, 708 Logan, National Register listed, Contributing building*

Immediately adjacent to the office is an automobile garage, originally constructed by Kokomo Rubber Company, which Epping repurposed as a storage building.<sup>1</sup> The building is two stories tall and features a repeated facade. On the ground level of the north side is a large bank of windows, now filled with modern aluminum commercial windows. A single pedestrian entrance is located immediately adjacent. Above is a bank of windows flanked by taller windows on either side, aligning with the edge of the first-floor windows and the pedestrian entrance. To the south is a large arched opening that appears to have been bricked in, but matches the opening in the east side of the office building several yards away, with a limestone keystone and limestone abutments. In the center of the second floor above is a single window with a stone label mold and a "K" encircled in the center. Above the window is a gable with a simple frieze board and rounded roof tiles. The entire configuration is repeated immediately to the south, creating a single long facade punctuated by facing gables in the center and the south end.

---

<sup>1</sup> As evidenced by the 1928 Sanborn map, vol. 2, East, 1941, Sheet 43e, and the city directories from 1934 through 1967, as well as Courier-Journal articles from 1934, 1945, and 1961.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



**The storage building at 708 Logan St., adjacent to the office building. The entire building faces Logan Street.**

The interior on the first and second floors has been converted to a modern office space. Most of the walls have been covered with gypsum wallboard, the ceilings have been dropped with an acoustic tile grid, and the floors covered in a low-profile office carpet.

### *3. Garage/Bottling Plant, 1922, 712 Logan, contributing building, including additions*

At 712 Logan, on the south side of the alley, is the original building Epping built in 1922 when the business was beginning to grow most dramatically. The building is a single-story masonry building with a three-bay front facade. The center features a bricked-in entrance, though the original limestone lintel remains as well as the limestone bases on either side of the entrance. Above, on the parapet, are four limestone squares and a central limestone frieze panel. On each side of the central bay is a flanking bay that originally featured a full-height storefront window with a soldier course of bricks as the lintel with limestone squares in the corners. Above the windows on each side is a wide limestone panel with a more decorative brick perimeter. The side bays have a slightly lowered parapet level with a light stone cap. On the edges of the building the corners feature limestone quoins with a slightly elevated corner parapet level with a limestone cap. The central bay features the highest parapet with a matching limestone cap.



**Original warehouse and bottling plant built in 1922**

The interior has been used for storage for years and there are no interior partitions.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

*Addition: Warehouse I, designated as "5" on complex plan*

Jefferson County, KY

County and State



**Addition 1: Warehouse**

At the rear of the site, behind the Logan Street buildings, is a warehouse building, constructed of masonry, two stories tall, with a shallow gable roof. The first-floor features regularly spaced window openings, though there are no remaining windows. The second floor features a similar window pattern, though the only windows remaining are non-historic. A loading dock along the alley is still functional and on the south side of the rear facade is a blocked-in garage door.

The interior has been used for storage and features a concrete floor and exposed columns. The ceiling is covered in steel tiles from the Wheeling Corrugating Company. Specifically, the design appears to be No. 8650-AL Ceiling Design, from the Wheeling 1937 Steel Ceilings Catalog. There are several reasons such a ceiling would have been installed. One is to prevent the spread of fire between buildings, which is likely why it is on the first and second floors and complete to the walls and lower running beams. Another reason for such a ceiling is sanitation. The Wheeling catalog notes:

Because Wheeling Steel Ceiling panels fit up closely to eliminate gaps and open seams, dust cannot sift through from above. Because when properly painted they may be washed readily, they may be kept permanently bright and clean. They afford no home for vermin. They present a picture of wholesome cleanliness, because they are wholesomely clean.

That was the company image Epping desired for all of its facilities. The timing is also correct for the ceiling's installation, as the ceiling type appears in the 1937 catalog, which would have been the same time planning and construction was underway for the larger additions completed in 1938.

*Center Site Additions, 1938, designated as "6" on the complex plan*

On the east side of the warehouse are a series of smaller additions that have connected it to a covered shed area and to the original garage/bottling plant along the alley. At the south side these additions are mostly shed roofs that open to the east, which would have been the backyard of Epping's home. The southern-most shed appears to be non-historic. The construction is steel with

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

a more modern corrugated roof, suggesting it to be a much more modern addition used by tenants in the house on the site. In the center of this area is a single-story brick addition that appears to be equipment storage, a bathroom, an extension at the rear of the bottling plant, and a second story addition that was used as a laboratory space.

The additions were mostly made in 1938 when the entire plant was expanded to handle additional sales and lines of business. The lab space on the second floor is distinguished on the interior by the tile walls and tile floors, which would have made cleaning easier than the more typical painted brick found throughout the plant.

#### *4. Residence, 1923, 718 Logan, contributing building*

The home that John Epping built is located at 718 Logan. It is a masonry craftsman style residence. The front entrance features a classical portico with columns and an open facing gable that shelters the stoop. On the north side of the entrance is a set of wood double-doors, currently enclosed by a Juliet balcony. On the south side of the entrance is a similar opening, though it appears to have been infilled with a 2x4 frame and plexiglass. A similar Juliet balcony encloses the opening. Each of these openings have limestone keystones



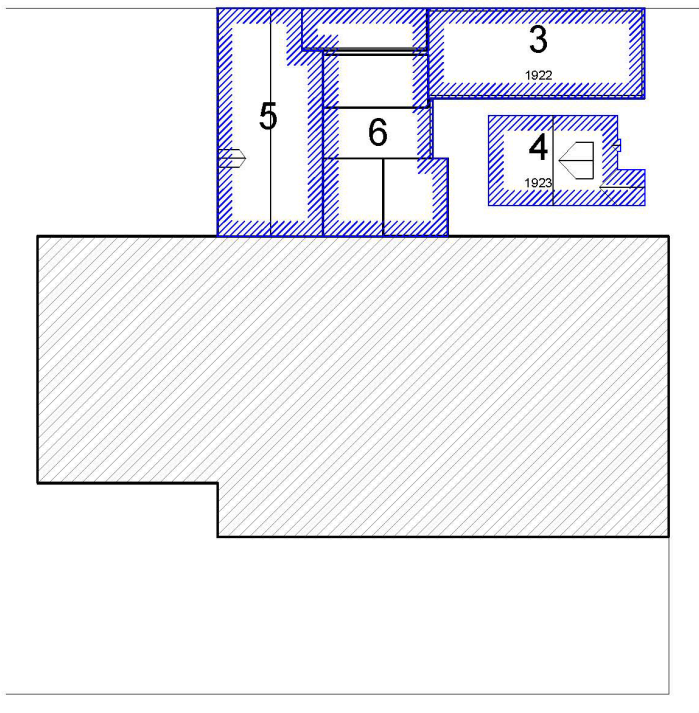
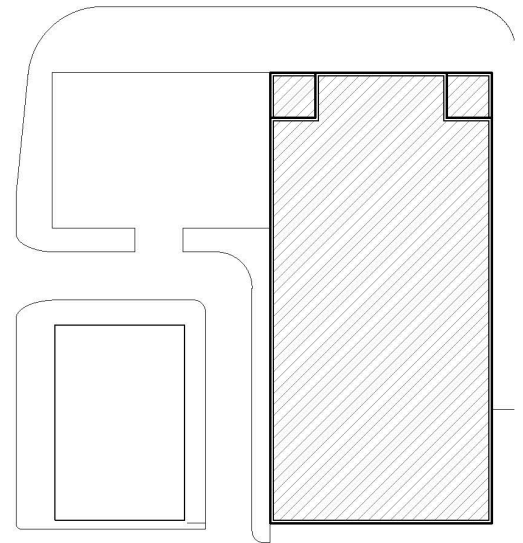
**Residence constructed in 1923**

in a flat brick lintel. The broad roof faces the street and extends down to a long overhang. In the center of the roof is a projecting shallow facing-gable dormer with three sets of double casement windows. On either side of the dormer are large overhangs that extend back to the main roof. On the south side of the front entrance is an ell with a tri-partite window centered in each part of the facade. The original sashes are gone, but the jamb, sill, and lintels remain. The windows all feature the same brick lintel with a limestone keystone. The roof is a facing gable that extends back to connect to the main roof. On the far south side is a single brick column with a limestone cap and an embedded diamond with an engraved "E".

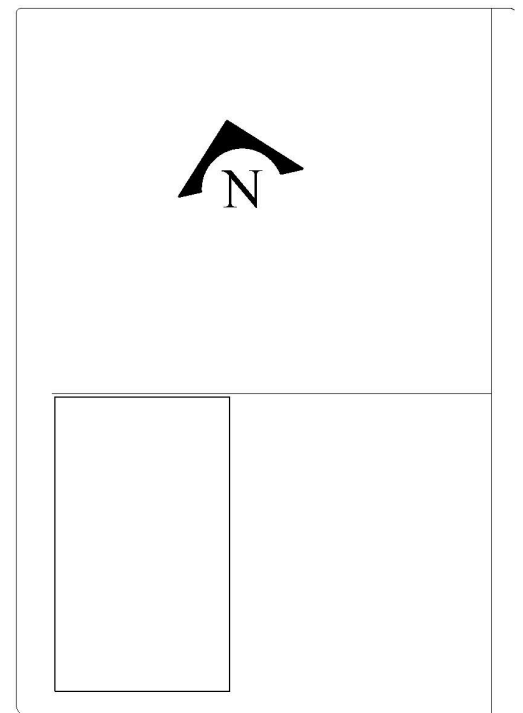
John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

East Broadway



Logan Street



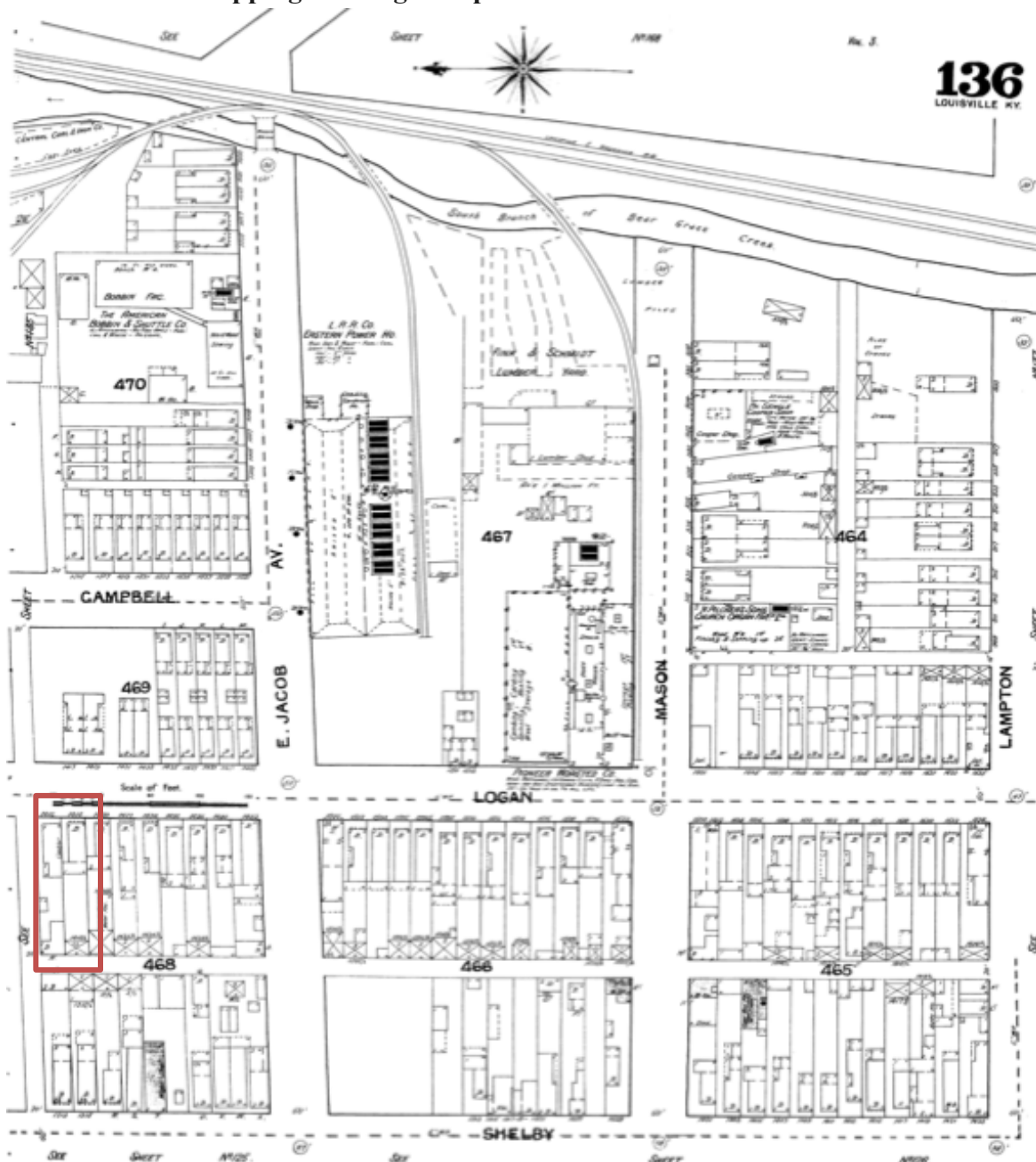
John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

## Construction of the Epping Bottling Complex



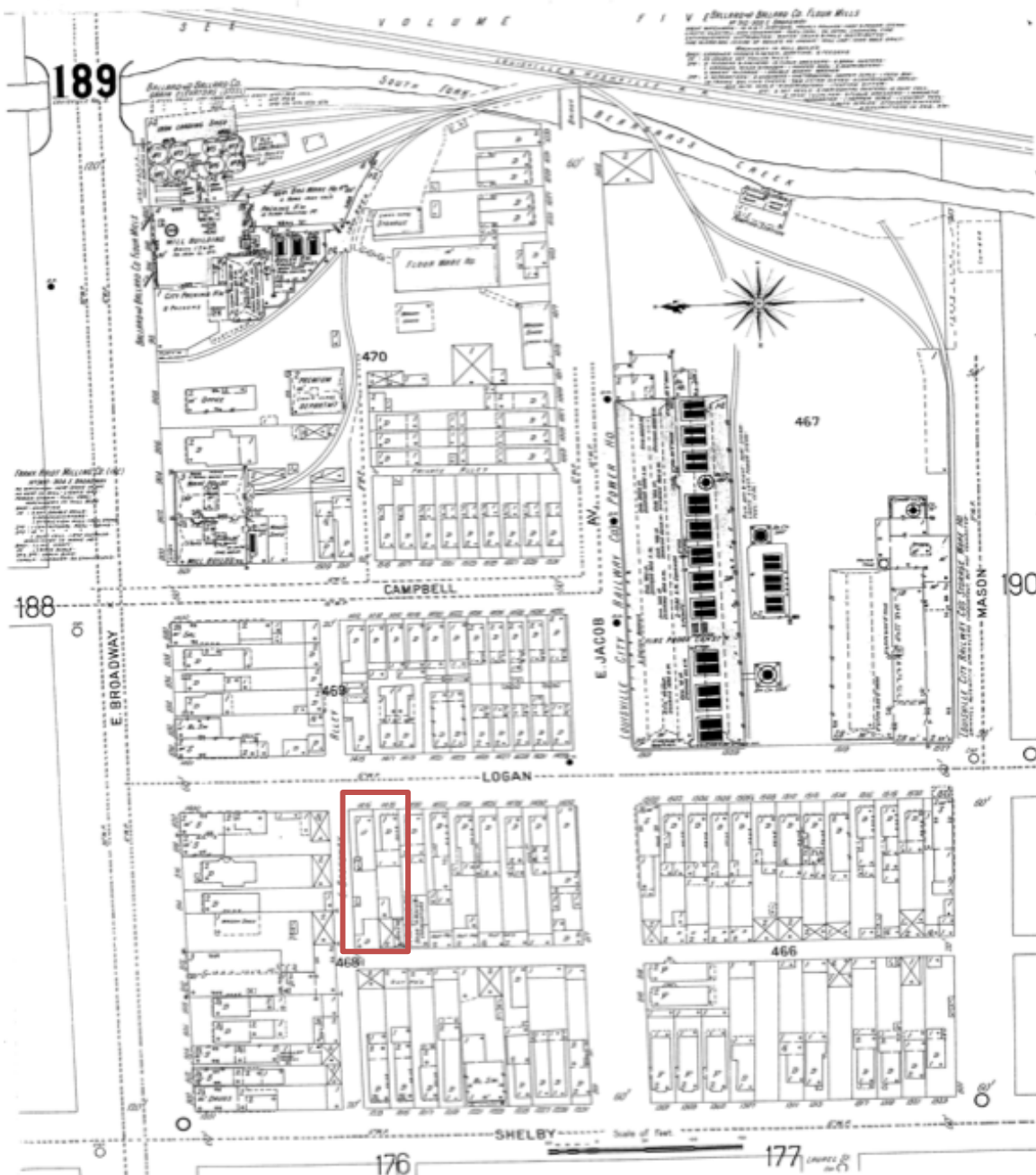
1892 Sanborn Map, Vol. 2, Sheet 136. 1420 1/2 Logan is labeled "Mineral Water Fac."

The beginning of the company was behind the house of Herman Epping on Logan Street. The 1892 Sanborn map for the area shows a mineral water factory behind the house. The entire complex would eventually grow from this small original building. In 1905 the Sanborn map for the area shows the same location, but labels the rear buildings, not just the middle building, as "Bottling W'ks Soda Water Carbonators." The company was expanding, but slowly.



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



1905 Sanborn Map, Vol. 2, Sheet 189.

In 1922 Epping constructed a new garage, at a cost of \$2,000, at the mineral water bottling plant on Logan Street.<sup>2</sup> It was his first move to expand his operation. In 1923 Epping applied for a building permit for a new framed residence at 716 Logan Street with a proposed cost of \$2,500.<sup>3</sup> Three years later Epping applied for a building permit to construct a garage at 715 Logan Street at

<sup>2</sup> *Real Estate Transaction*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 2, 1922: 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Business Builder*, Louisville Building projects, Board of Trade Journal, Vol. 8, 1923, Louisville Board of Trade: Louisville.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

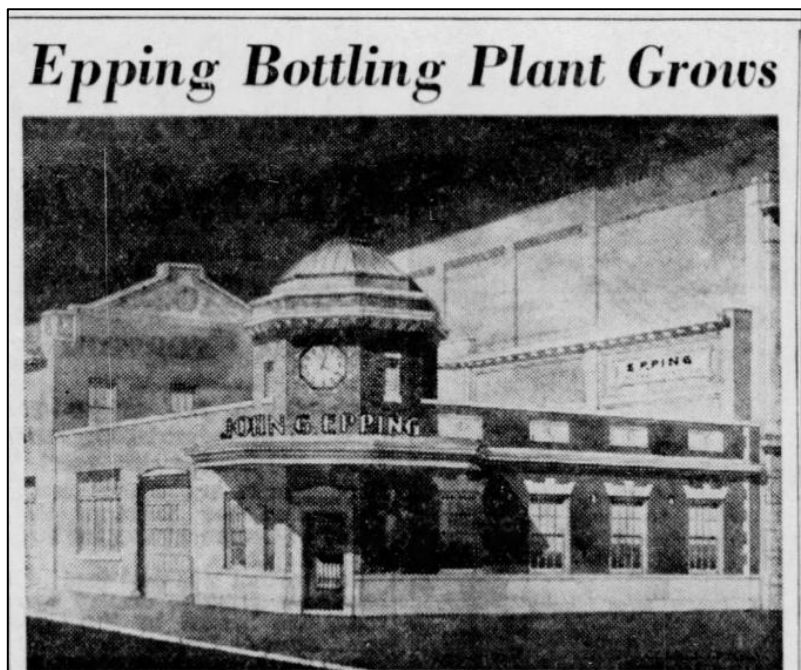
County and State

a proposed cost of \$3,500.<sup>4</sup> At this point Epping was running a significant business on Logan Street, with building on both sides of the street. His complex was beginning to take shape.

In 1930 Epping bought the buildings on the southwest corner of Logan and East Broadway. At the time the site was occupied by several stores and offices and an automobile service station at the corner.<sup>5</sup> The building was put to use as storage and production space for the increasing product lines the company was developing. In 1935 a large refrigeration unit was added to the bottling plant that had been constructed previously.<sup>6</sup>

In 1938 new power equipment was installed in a new two-story addition to the bottling plant, which measured 30' by 125'.<sup>7</sup> The additional equipment and building cost an estimated \$75,000, a large investment, but a necessary one given the growing demand for soft drinks. That same year Epping purchased ten parcels, five on Logan and five on Campbell Street, which backed up to Logan. Though Epping did not build on these properties immediately, he held them for future expansion of his bottling plant.<sup>8</sup>

In 1939 Epping announced the planned construction of a new office building at the southwest corner of Logan and East Broadway. The new office would be a single story and have a corner entrance directly at the intersection of two busy streets. The new offices were proposed to be of Georgia granite with brick and marble trim and a large dome at the corner with a copper roof.<sup>9</sup> The Courier-Journal described the proposed building as "one of the most attractive and distinctive buildings of its kind in the city."<sup>10</sup>



Epping office plan illustrated by architect.

<sup>4</sup> *Building Permits*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 9, 1926: 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Building Sold*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 2, 1930: 7.

<sup>6</sup> *John G. Epping Bottling Works, Volume Up, is Looking Forward to Banner Year*, Courier-Journal, July 21, 1935: 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Power Engineering*, Vol. 42, p. 484.

<sup>8</sup> *Epping Acquires 10 More Properties*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 13, 1938: Sec. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Epping Bottling Plant Grows*, Courier-Journal, Dec. 18, 1939: 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

The office was the final addition to the John G. Epping Bottling Works complex. At its completion the company had buildings on both sides of Logan Street from East Broadway south to almost the mid-point of the next block. Today nearly all the original buildings still stand, though there have been significant interior changes. Additionally, ownership of the buildings has been divided.



Sanborn Map, 1928-1941, Vol. 2, East, Sheet 43e. Epping Buildings are colored in blue.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

### **Alterations to the Original Buildings Since the Period of Significance**

The exteriors of nearly all the buildings retain sufficient integrity for listing (see integrity justification below). One alteration to an exterior is on the front façade of the original bottling plant (Building 3, with additions), where the windows were raised and blocked in with glass block and the front door was bricked over. These changes have been reversed, at least to the windows. The rhythm and configuration of the façade is still evident.

More significant alterations have occurred in the office and storage buildings that exist along the corner of East Broadway and Logan Street. These spaces were converted to modern offices decades ago. The interiors were furred out and drywall was applied to all surfaces as well as office carpeting and dropped ceilings. The result is that the storage building on the interior does not feel like a utilitarian storage building, but rather a modern office. The corner office building has retained its use, but its original historic materials are concealed, which does have an impact on the interior historic feeling.

The other buildings, the residence, the bottling plant, and the contributing warehouses, exhibit greater amounts of intactness. The utilitarian nature of the production buildings has been retained by current uses. The residence has been uninhabited for decades and was never converted to a different use.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☒ 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

- ☐ 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

Commerce  
Industry

### Period of Significance

1912-1967

### Significant Dates

1922 – Garage/bottling plant constructed  
1923 – Residence constructed

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

1926 - Garage addition  
1938 - Power plant and refrigeration units installed  
1939 - New office building constructed

**Significant Person**

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

## Statement of Significance

### Summary Paragraph

The John G. Epping Bottling Works (JFCH 1313 et. al., see table in section 10) meets National Register Criterion A and is significant in Louisville's general industrial and commercial history as an early soft drink manufacturer that developed from mineral water sales and grew to a regional operation, adapting to new markets with new products and technologies. Its significance is interpreted within the historic context "The Development of the Soft Drink Industry in Louisville, Kentucky, 1861-1967." The company was very successful in its time of greatest activity, and because of that, it remained one of the last local soft drink companies to avoid consolidation while also remaining profitable and involved in the community and industry.

### Historic Context: The Development of the Soft Drink Industry in Louisville, Kentucky, 1861-1967

#### I. The Origins of Soft Drinks

The modern soft drink is distinguished most importantly from alcoholic drinks. From its inception, producers had made a variety of non-alcoholic drinks available, most made at home in the kitchen for personal consumption. At various points these drinks were made available to a wider public, most often with lemon flavoring. The most significant change came with adding carbonation to the water to give it the now-familiar fizz. This carbonated water began in the mineral springs around Europe and early North America.

#### *Mineral Water*

In its earliest form, mineral waters were found from springs and baths were erected around them. As early as the 1300s people were traveling to these springs, bathing in them in the hope that their rheumatism, gout, nephritis, or indigestion would be healed.<sup>11</sup> The healing effects may have been entirely from a healthier diet and a break from the unsanitary city, but the aura around mineral spring baths grew.<sup>12</sup> Aside from bathing in the water, mineral water was considered a health drink and consumption was encouraged. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, doctors and pharmacists encouraged its consumption.

The geographic location of these springs limited their commercial appeal and so proprietors began looking for ways to bottle the waters. The earliest waters were named after the various natural springs around the world where mineral waters could be found; Vichy, Carlsbad, Saratoga.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tchudi, Stephen N. *Soda Poppery: The History of Soft Drinks in America*. New York: Scribners, 1986, p. 5

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 6.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

These bottled waters were claimed to cure rheumatism, gout, indigestion, fever, nausea, and dehydration. The marketing for these waters "ranged from the fanciful to the patently fraudulent."<sup>14</sup>

Eventually, the supplies of natural mineral water were insufficient for the market. Sometimes the springs were simply overdrawn, but often a proprietor simply had no access to a spring, only a strong desire to commercialize the product. Luckily, many men were hard at work developing an artificial mineral water, or more specifically, a carbonated water that would pass as mineral water. In 1772 Joseph Priestly, a British scientist published a book with instructions for impregnating water with carbon dioxide.<sup>15</sup> This carbon dioxide in water created a weak carbonic acid, which had fairly mild disinfecting properties, which helped to purify the water. Though carbonated water is not a significant purifying agent, it was certainly better than much of the available water across Europe and early America.<sup>16</sup>

Within a few decades, the "mineral water" industry was off and running. There were significant varieties, some actual carbonated mineral waters bottled at a spring and others complete imitations, artificial from conception to bottle. Given the purported therapeutic qualities of mineral water, it became common in pharmacies, which dispensed it on site. In 1832 John Mathews invented an apparatus that created carbonated water.<sup>17</sup> The apparatus was mass produced and sold to soda fountain owners around the country, most typically in pharmacies.

### *Bottles, Caps, and Efficient Production*

Relatively early on, everyone encountered the same problem: the bottle. Early bottles were not designed for the pressurized contents. Bottle manufacturers began to experiment with different glass thickness, neck shapes, bottom shapes, and sealing methods. Within a few years over 1,500 patents had been filed.<sup>18</sup> Eventually bottles were figured out and were being mass produced, rather than individually blown. This mass production encouraged standardized processes and engineered solutions, which resulted in strong bottles that no longer exploded during the bottling process.

Caps were still a barrier to efficient mass production. An early solution was similar to champagne, using a cork with a wire ligature. This early stage of capping gave future mineral water its common name "pop," which was the sound when the bottle opened.<sup>19</sup> Then in 1892 William Painter invented the crown cap. The crown cap was simple and quick to fix to the bottle. Production could now be more efficient, much faster, more reliable, and much safer than when individual

<sup>14</sup> Oatsvall, Neil S. "Bottling Nature's Elixir: The Mountain Valley Spring Water Company, Environment, Health, and Capitalism." *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2019): 1-31, at 2.

<sup>15</sup> Tchudi, *supra* at 7.

<sup>16</sup> Tchudi, *supra* at 9.

<sup>17</sup> Guetig, Peter & Conrad Selle, *Louisville Soda/Mineral Waters*, Louisville: 24 Hour Books, Inc., 2017, at 133.

<sup>18</sup> Guetig, *supra*.

<sup>19</sup> Tchudi, *supra* at 12.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

blown bottles were being fitted with corks.<sup>20</sup> In 1909 Painter's patent expired and there was an explosion of new manufacturers. In 1912 Charles McManus developed a ground cork liner cap liner, which allowed producers to avoid whole cork to keep the caps sealed. By 1923 his company had a virtual monopoly and glass manufacturers agreed to create a standard for the crown finish bottle.<sup>21</sup>

### *Growth of the Bottling Industry: A Waiting Market*

Many factors came together at the same time to increase demand as well as production for bottled soft drinks. Distribution through soda fountains left a largely rural population underserved, but as this population moved into cities demand increased. At the same time, grocery stores were beginning to centralize grocery shopping. Bottles and caps were becoming standardized and equipment to manufacture the product, as well as the containers, were getting better each year. The automobile allowed delivery to shift from horse and wagon to truck, speeding deliveries and expanding the reach of individual companies around each region of the country.

The convenience of bottling was increasing dramatically as the distribution to corner grocery stores placed the product closer and closer to home and soft drinks found a regular place in the American diet and American culture, particularly during Prohibition.

Early on the soft drink industry was dominated by the soda fountain; 70% of all drinks were sold there in 1900.<sup>22</sup> The proportion had been even higher in the decades before. Many of these soda fountains, located in pharmacies, were the origins of soft drinks, so it was natural that they would have the largest share of the market. As separate companies developed their soft drink brands, separate from pharmacies and soda fountains, this natural collaboration began to collapse. Producers sought larger markets than soda fountains alone could reach. Grocery stores were increasingly the gateway to the massive American consumer market.

### *The Pure Food and Drug Act*

The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 dramatically increased consumer confidence in manufactured food and drinks. The use of colors and additives to conceal deteriorating or spoiled products were a principal cause of the law's passage.<sup>23</sup> The bottled soft drink industry, heavily experimenting with flavors and colors, benefited greatly from this confidence boost.

---

<sup>20</sup> Tchudi, *supra* at 19.

<sup>21</sup> Riley, John J., *A History of the American Soft Drink Industry*, Washington, D.C.: American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages, 1958, at 138.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 133.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 232.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

*Early Bottling Industry Growth by the Numbers*

In 1899 930 million bottles of soda were produced in the United States.<sup>24</sup> In 1919 more than 4 billion bottles were produced and in 1940 more than 13 billion bottles were produced.<sup>25</sup> In 1899 the American public was consuming 12.2 bottles of soda per person per year, and by 1919 that number had skyrocketed to more than 38 bottles.<sup>26</sup> Even as wars raged and the Great Depression struck by 1940 Americans were consuming more than 100 bottles per person each year.<sup>27</sup>

In 1860 there were 123 soft drink bottling plants in the US, by 1870 there were 387, and by 1900 there were 2,763 different plants.<sup>28</sup> The most significant growth of bottling plants occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century, but growth was still continual after that, even through World War I. By 1920 there were 5,200 plants operating in the United States reaching a peak in 1929 of 7,920.<sup>29</sup>

*The Delivery Truck*

The development of the automobile greatly enhanced the distribution of bottled soft drinks. Before trucks, deliveries were done with a horse and wagon. This system severely limited the distribution network of many brands, keeping most companies very local. With the advent of the automobile, deliveries could be larger and delivered much faster. As the range of the automobile improved so did the reach of each brand, quickly extending out from their original locale.<sup>30</sup> This greatly increased competition and the need for advertising as each company sought market share in a suddenly more complex economic space.

## **II. Soft Drink Industry in Louisville**

*The earliest mineral water manufacturers*

The earliest manufacturers are listed in the city directories as far back as 1861, when James Garrison was manufacturing mineral water behind his house, along Bullitt Alley between Main and Market Streets.<sup>31</sup> Like many early industries, these soft drink pioneers were working from their homes and their shops, mostly as a side project or as a way to bring additional customers into their stores. Rarely did they last more than several years, and most were listed as the name of a single person.<sup>32</sup> Such examples include Philo Clark, who is shown as operating for a single year

---

<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 275.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 133.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 137.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 135.

<sup>31</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1861

<sup>32</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1861-1890.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

in 1864, Henry Schuckman, a grocer who tried his hand at manufacturing in 1873, and John Pethers who only shows up as a mineral water manufacturer in 1861 on Jefferson St.<sup>33</sup>

Several of the original manufacturers remained in operation for considerable periods. Jacob Schanzenbacher was active in 1861 and was still producing as late as 1894, indicating at least a small level of sustained success. As his residence moved so did his manufacturing, also suggesting that his operation was still primitive and likely done in a backyard or outbuilding of his residence, not a shop or plant.<sup>34</sup> Similar enterprises were those of Michael Keane, who operated at 523 Market from 1871 to 1880, Ernest Hinecke, who manufactured mineral waters from the early 1860s through the mid-1870s, and George Stang who operated from the 1870s through the 1890s.<sup>35</sup> W. Springer & Bro. were around as early as 1873, Charles W. Springer was still in existence as late as 1890, and the Springer Bros. lasted as long as 1930. Herman Epping was originally trained in the industry by Ernest Hinecke and then went into business for himself. His operation, although small in scale and operating out of his residence, allowed him to hire employees and his business lasted from 1863 until he passed in 1901, and then his wife, Katherine, and son, John Epping, would keep it going into the twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> While these were all small-scale operations, some appear to have been moved to purpose-specific sites as the years progressed, however, many still operated out of their homes, shops, or businesses.

As the time progressed from the 1860s through the 1880s, a few of the larger, time-tested, manufacturers endured and appear to begin to corner the market, allowing for increased production and additional workforce. It was during this time that more individuals show up in the city directories with links to mineral water manufacturing but under the tutelage of an experienced bottler, like Herman Epping, or as an employee of an established company, such as Stang & Co. This is also around the time that single names aren't the only indicators of mineral water manufacturers, but instead, partnerships and larger operations form.

## **Growth, Organization, and consolidation of the industry**

### *Growth*

In the 1890s, the city directories began differentiating between mineral water manufacturing and retail or wholesale trade. In 1890, there were eight manufacturers listed in the directory specifically as Mineral Water Manufacturing (Table 1). Many of these manufacturers graduated from the small operations of the previous few decades and began to expand near the turn of the century. These manufacturers were often still operating out of their houses, but some had progressed to use-

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1861, 1869, 1873, 1879, 1890

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, Various.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid; *Well-Known Business Woman Passes Away*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 2, 1911: 8

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

specific buildings/sites. For example, the Schanzenbacher operation featured two dwellings but several bottling specific buildings on the property. Today, none of these use-specific buildings appear to be extant. Additionally, by this point, more sophisticated companies appeared to be entering the industries. At least four companies appeared to be incorporated or partnerships, suggesting at least some level of planning and engagement, even if manufacturing was still on a small scale.<sup>37</sup> In 1890 the Louisville plants were capitalized at \$19,900 and producing \$30,500 were of product.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 1. Mineral Water Manufacturers Identified in 1890 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
H. Epping	1420 Logan
Jett & Kent	334 W. Jefferson
Klee, Coleman & Co	719 S. 2nd
Louisville Magnetic Water Co.	West side 3rd near Magnolia Ave
Jacob Schanzenbacher	1822 Jackson
Charles W. Springer	1534 Preston
William Springer & Sons	230 3rd
George Stang	1677 Maiden Lane

Through incorporation and partnering are a base level of planning, it suggests that some saw Louisville as a growing market for soft drink consumption that needed dedicated bottlers, rather than hobbyists, which were indicated by residential manufacturing.

By 1900 The majority of those listed in the directories were companies and partnerships and the only individual names remaining were those that had been attached to companies (Table 2). The level of production was increasing rapidly, and most companies had dedicated facilities. In 1900 the soft drink bottling industry had just over \$63,000 invested and produced almost \$70,000 were of bottled soft drinks.<sup>39</sup> Most of the original manufacturers failed to make the leap from hand bottling to production bottling, choosing to leave the market rather than invest significant amounts in machinery, buildings, and employees.

<sup>37</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1890.

<sup>38</sup> Riley, *supra* at 277.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 279.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

**Table 2. Mineral Water Manufacturers Identified in 1900 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
H Epping & Son	1420 Logan
David Fliegel	271 E Market
Charles Goss & Son	504 E Kentucky
Klee, Coleman & Co	719 S. 2nd
C. W. Springer	1534 Preston rear
William Springer & Sons	230 3rd
George Stang	935 Letterle
George Zubrod & Co	311 W Market

### *Standards and Organization*

An important point in the growth of any industry is the point when the most established interests begin to organize and create barriers to entry for their industry. In 1908 the Kentucky legislature passed the Pure Food Law, which mandated standards and methods for producing food and drink. This sort of law strongly favored established and larger companies that were capable of investing in newer machinery, which provided a more sterile bottling process as well as additional personnel, which could oversee the process.

In 1915, R.M. Allen, Head of Department of Non-Alcoholic Carbonated Beverages for the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, wrote, "It is important that these products shall be true to label, free from harmful ingredients, prepared from pure water, in clean plants, with clean equipment and clean bottles."<sup>40</sup>

Inspectors were fanning out across the state and inspecting bottling plants in exceptional detail, searching for unsanitary conditions in the procurement, process, and storage of soft drinks. Samples were collected from every ingredient at every stage of the process, as well as every piece of equipment, to be cultured to determine any bacteriological contamination.<sup>41</sup>

This regulatory effort produced products that were safe for consumption,



<sup>40</sup> Bulletin 192, Non-Alcoholic Carbonated Beverages, Sanitary Condition and Composition, Allen, LaBach, Pinnell, and Brown, State University Press, Lexington, KY, June 1915, p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 60.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

standardized to a degree within each product line, and gave the public confidence. Bulletin 192 recognized this confluence of interests: "If the food industry will put itself upon that plane where the consumer can always depend upon sanitary quality, the consumption will be greatly increased."<sup>42</sup>

In 1888 the American Bottlers Association formed. The organization had been primarily concerned with setting standards for weights and types as well as marketing. Within a decade nearly every major city was represented by delegates to the annual conventions and membership was growing rapidly, both for individual members as well as smaller organizations.<sup>43</sup>

The 1906 Pure Food Act passed at the federal level and the 1908 Pure Food Act passed by the Kentucky Legislature made it imperative that the local industry organize and seek to influence new government intervention into the industry. In 1910 the Louisville Bottlers Association formed during a meeting at the Seelbach Hotel. The meeting was primarily to discuss hosting the Kentucky Bottlers Association at the State Fair to be held several months later.<sup>44</sup> The next year the organization was running ads in local newspapers promoting their compliance with the Kentucky Pure Food Law and demanding that those using their bottles and equipment illegally cease operation under threat of prosecution.<sup>45</sup> Several decades later the local organization was promoting the plan to require a deposit on every bottle sold, to reduce wasting the bottles and increasing the costs to the bottlers.<sup>46</sup>

On September 15, 1910, the State Bottlers Association was formed in the Leather Room at the Seelbach Hotel.<sup>47</sup> Initially membership was slow, with only forty members a year after forming, but the organization's members made up nearly the whole of the state industry in terms of production and were laying the foundation for future growth and lobbying efforts.

### *Consolidation*

The Pure Food Law, coupled with the more stringent regulations on the food and beverage industries forced many smaller operations out of business or made their sale to larger companies a near guarantee. The smaller companies could not keep up with the growing costs associated with the new required sanitation regulations and the increased pressures associated with the laws and the inspectors. As a result, between 1910 and 1941, a trend toward the large bottling companies becomes apparent as all of the smaller operations either go out of business or are consolidated.

---

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* at 63.

<sup>43</sup> *American Bottlers*, Courier-Journal, Oct. 4, 1899: 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Bottlers of Louisville Form an Organization*, Courier-Journal, July 20, 1910: 7.

<sup>45</sup> *To Whom It May Concern*, Courier-Journal, Mar 4, 1911: 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Notice: The Astounding Waste of Beverage Bottles*, Courier-Journal, Mar 10, 1929: 66.

<sup>47</sup> *Kentucky Bottlers Form State Organization at Meeting Here*, Courier-Journal, Sep 16, 1910: 5.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

This trend of the proverbial “little guy” being forced out of the industry can be clearly seen in Louisville’s soft drink and bottling industry. This shift in the nature of the local industry began with the larger local companies outlasting the small-scale, home operations or local companies absorbing one another to stay afloat. However, by the 1930s and 1940s, the nationally known heavy hitters showed up on the scene and quickened the industry’s changing landscape. In just a few decades, the mineral water, bottling, and soft drink industry went from primarily small operations, often by hobbyists and in people’s backyards, to large conglomerates taking over. During these years, it became nearly impossible for the local operations to do business on the level necessary to compete with the huge companies, thus resulting in the near erasure of the little guy from the playing field.

In 1910 Caron's Directory of Louisville listed S.W. Springer, Roehr & Kragel, Klee Coleman & Co., Mrs. H. Epping & Son, Falls City Bottling Works, and Louisville Bottling Works. Of those listed in 1910, not a single one aside from Epping survived beyond 1940. The list of companies grew to six in 1930 and to ten in 1941.<sup>48</sup> Though there were slightly more companies, there were fewer local concerns and the companies that were listed in 1941 would be mostly recognizable today: Coca-Cola, Canada Dry, Nehi (later renamed Royal Crown), Dr. Pepper, Pepsi-Cola, High Rock Ginger Ale (Defunct), Red Rock (defunct), Spring Bank Bottling (defunct), Sun Spot Beverage (A division of High Rock), and John G. Epping Bottling Works (Table 3 through Table 6).

**Table 3. Mineral Water Manufacturers and Bottlers Identified in 1910 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
Mrs. H Epping & Son	716 Logan
Falls City Bottling Works of Kentucky	222 S. Preston
Klee, Coleman & Co	619 S. 2nd
Louisville Bottling Works	337 E Market
Roehr & Kragel	1804 Letterle
S. W. Springer Jr.	976 Preston Rear

**Table 4. Mineral Water Manufacturers and Bottlers Identified in 1920 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
John G. Epping Bottling Works	712-718 Logan
Sulphur Water Co	120 N. 10th
Louisville Bottling Works	337 E Market
C. W. Springer	976 Preston Rear

<sup>48</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville 1918, 1930, 1941.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

**Table 5. Mineral Water Manufacturers and Bottlers Identified in 1930 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
Coca-Cola Bottling Co.	1513-1533 Bank
John G. Epping Bottling Works	712-714 Logan
Louisville Beverage Co.	708 Baxter
Nehi Bottling Co.	208 Central Ave
Spring Bank Bottling Co	335 Pearl Ave
Springer Bros	976 Preston

**Table 6. Mineral Water Manufacturers and Bottlers Identified in 1941 City Directory**

Mineral Water Manufacturer	Address
Coca-Cola Bottling Co.	1513-1533 Bank
John G. Epping Bottling Works	712 Logan
Canada Dry Bottling Corp of Louisville	735 S. 8th
High Rock Ginger Ale Co	3030 North Western Pkwy
Nehi Beverage Co	208 Central Ave
Dr. Pepper Bottling Co of Louisville	2320 Frankfort
Pepsi-Cola Louisville Bottlers Inc.	1104 Bardstown Road
Red Rock Beverage Co.	976 S. Preston
Spring Bank Bottling Co	335 Pearl Ave
Sun Spot Beverage Co	3030 North Western Pkwy

By 1960, the listed companies were the multi-nationals that are widely known today: Coca-Cola, Canada Dry, Dr. Pepper, Pepsi Cola, Royal Crown, and John G. Epping.<sup>49</sup> Epping was the local holdout to consolidation. The company's exclusive franchise agreements, specifically 7-Up, gave it a significant market share that the other companies could not overwhelm and could not separately acquire. The result was that in Louisville, and the surrounding region, Epping remained a household name well after the other local and regional companies had long been acquired and had their identities subsumed into out-of-state interests.

<sup>49</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1960.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

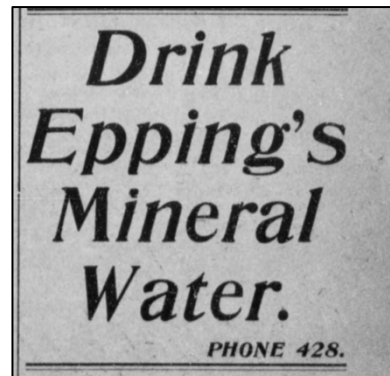
Jefferson County, KY

County and State

### III. The John G. Epping Bottling Co.

#### *Herman Epping*

Herman Epping first appears in the Louisville directories in 1864, as a bottler, at the rear of 26 4th Street. The address was the home of Ernest Heinecke, who was a known mineral water bottler at the time and was likely teaching Herman the system.<sup>50</sup> At this time the industry was mostly still concentrated in backyards and was rarely a full-time vocation for anybody. It appears, at least from the available sources, that it was not a full-time job for Herman Epping in the beginning. In 1870 he is listed as a street hand living in the rear of a house at 240 East Green Street.<sup>51</sup>



1900 Mineral Water ad.

Epping was not destined to cast around for much longer, though.

In 1873 he is listed with a residence at 22 Logan Street, near the intersection of East Broadway, and styled as a mineral water manufacturer.<sup>52</sup> He continues this for several years, evidently making a living and supporting his family. The 1892 Sanborn corroborates this, as the address that 22 Logan Street became, 1420 Logan Street, features a mineral water factory in the rear, in a two-story carriage house with a single-story extension toward the house (given an address of 1420 1/2).<sup>53</sup>

In 1890 Herman Epping married Katherine Broecker. She had previously been married to a Hermann Broecker and brought a son, John George Broecker, born in 1877, and two daughters, Anna and Clara, to the marriage. The family lived in the residence at 1420 Logan Street while Herman made mineral water for sale out back. Herman died in 1901 and passed the mineral water business to his wife.

#### *Mrs. H. Epping & Sons*

After Herman Epping died his wife carried on the business. It was renamed Mrs. H. Epping & Son and John helped to run the business operations. Of note, during the time that Katherine ran the business, all of the directories list her son as John G. Brecker, associating him



1900 Irish American ad for H. Epping & Son.

<sup>50</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1869.

<sup>51</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1870.

<sup>52</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1873.

<sup>53</sup> Sanborn Map, Louisville, 1892, Vol. 2, Sheet 136.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

with the bottling works and also listing him as living in the same residence, now address 716 Logan Street.<sup>54</sup>

The years that Katherine ran the firm were mostly years of holding the line. The business continued, but little advertising was done, and little investment was made in the business. The majority of the product line was still the same mineral water that Herman had developed years before. In 1911 Katherine died. Her obituary noted her as proprietor of a mineral water establishment on Logan Street, but otherwise focused on her prominence in the church and charity community.<sup>55</sup>

*John G. Epping Bottling Co.*

### *Personal*

With the death of Katherine, John became the proprietor of the business and took a more active role in 1913. A few years later he changed his last name to Epping, likely to associate himself more closely with the business, and began to list Herman Epping as his father on government forms.<sup>56</sup>



**Babe Ruth and John G. Epping.**

<sup>54</sup> Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1910.

<sup>55</sup> *Well-Known Business Woman Passes Away*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 2, 1911: 8.

<sup>56</sup> John G. Epping Draft Card for World War I and 1920 U.S. Census.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

Epping was an avid baseball fan, sponsoring amateur teams as his company grew, but also taking advantage of opportunities to meet professional players. Advertising appeared featuring him and Babe Ruth as well photos with exhibition teams featuring Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

## Company Growth

### *New Franchises and Flavors*

Epping expanded the business far beyond the original mineral water. In 1920 he bought out Springer Mineral Water, one of the original mineral water manufacturers in the city. Epping then introduced Epp's Cola and then fruit flavored drinks, such as Mi Grape, Orange Crush, Lemon Sour, and Strawberry. The firm obtained distribution and bottling agreements with Kentucky Club Ginger Ale and Vichy Water.<sup>57</sup>

Aside from soft drinks Epping served for years as the local distributor for Budweiser beer and as the Central Kentucky distributor for Falls City.<sup>58</sup> The firm, once it got its footing as a bottler and not just a mineral water manufacturer, quickly became the preeminent bottler in Louisville.<sup>59</sup>

### *Lexington*

In 1927 Epping acquired the NuGrape Bottling Company in Lexington, Kentucky. Epping used the Lexington plant to continue producing NuGrape, but to also produce the entire product line that was originally produced in Louisville. By 1940 7-Up was the best seller and the buildings had to be expanded to accommodate production.<sup>60</sup>

### *New Equipment for Production*

The company invested in the newest equipment and made a point of announcing in local papers how sanitary and modern its plants were.

As one press release stated: "By the process used, the bottle is hardly touched by human hands . .



Epping plant in Lexington, KY.

<sup>57</sup> *Pure Fruit Flavored Beverages*, Courier-Journal, May 23, 1926: 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Epping Enlarges Delivery Fleet*, Courier-Journal, Sep. 14, 1937.

<sup>59</sup> *Cleanliness Is Aim At Epping's Bottling Plant*, Courier-Journal, Mar. 9, 1923: 16.

<sup>60</sup> <http://lexhistory.org/wikilex/epping-bottling-works>. Accessed 6/30/2021.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

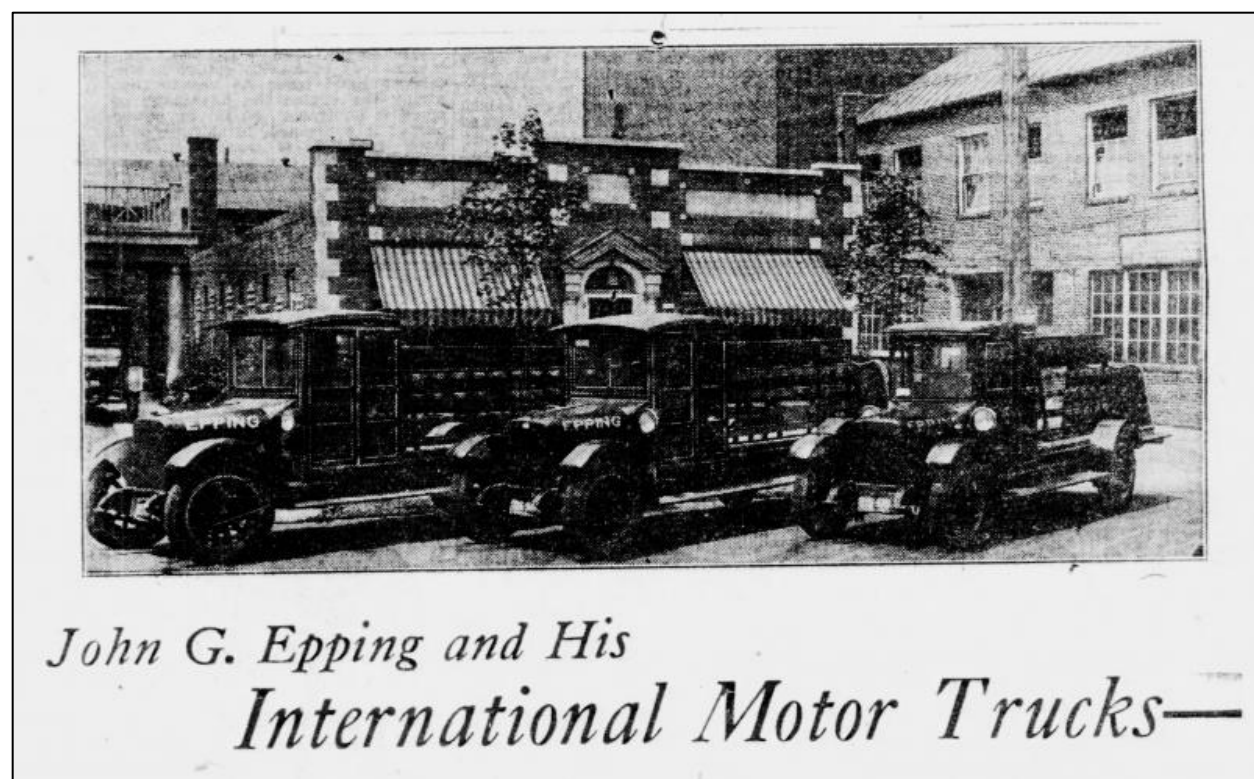
Jefferson County, KY

County and State

. Everything in the plant is kept scrupulously clean, and it is the policy of the company to make merchandise . . . as near an approach to perfection as modern machinery and up-to-date methods will make it possible."<sup>61</sup> In 1935, announcing an expected increase in business, the firm announced the addition of a cold storage room on Logan Street.<sup>62</sup> A few years later the firm showed off the "advanced type of refrigerating unit" at 704-718 Logan Street, which "rounds out a modernization and expansion program which gives this pioneer beverage organization one of the most modern and sanitary plants of its kind in the entire country."<sup>63</sup>

### *Truck Fleet*

The first fifty years of the Epping organization involved delivering bottles by wagon. This severely limited the reach of the company. A wagon filled with bottles could only be reasonably pulled so far outside of the city and the deliveries would have been slow.



Epping and International Motor Trucks ad showing Epping truck fleet, 1926.

<sup>61</sup> *Cleanliness Is Aim At Epping's Bottling Plant*, Courier-Journal, Mar. 9, 1923: 16.

<sup>62</sup> *John G. Epping Bottling Works, Volume Up*, Courier-Journal, July 31, 1935: 14.

<sup>63</sup> *Epping Gets Refrigerating Unit*, Courier-Journal, Aug. 16, 1938: 7.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

Herman Epping did deliveries in a single small wagon.<sup>64</sup> When John took over in 1913 delivery equipment totaled two one-horse wagons.<sup>65</sup> By 1926 Epping was showing off his International Motor Truck fleet in front of his building at 716 Logan Street. His fleet comprised twenty-two trucks, ranging in size and capacity. The trucks averaged fifty miles a day with 90 stops each.<sup>66</sup> This statistic alone proves the necessity of truck deliveries for meaningful growth for any business involved in regular deliveries. Trucks were so integral to the Epping enterprise that John was involved as president of the Motor Truck Club of Kentucky at the time of his death in 1943.<sup>67</sup>

## Advertising

### *Sports Team Sponsorships*

Perhaps Epping's most joyful exercise was sponsoring amateur sports teams, particularly baseball teams. During Epping's

In 1940 Epping was called the Santa Claus of amateur baseball. He was sponsoring eight men's bowling teams, two women's bowling teams, four baseball sponsorship teams won a total of 85 championships.<sup>68</sup> teams, and two softball teams.<sup>69</sup> His pride in his teams was stated by pointing out that rather than his trophy room being in his office it appeared his office was in his trophy room.



<sup>64</sup> *The March of Years*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 14, 1939: 6.

<sup>65</sup> *Business Activities in the Louisville Area*, Nov. 29, 1937

<sup>66</sup> *Ad, International Motor Trucks*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 25, 1926: 7.

<sup>67</sup> *John G. Epping, Owner of Bottling Business, Dies*, Courier-Journal, Nov. 3, 1943.

<sup>68</sup> *Colonel Epping Amid Trophies*, Courier-Journal, Nov. 29, 1937: 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ruby's Report*, Courier-Journal, Aug. 28, 1940: 3.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

Epping's teams typically bore his name, but often bore the name of one of his product lines. In 1940 one team was named the Epping 7-Ups<sup>70</sup> and a 1932 team was the Epping's Orange Crush.<sup>71</sup> The naming was an easy way to get regular product promotion in the sports pages and create additional attention as teams won local championships.

### *Radio*

In 1935 Epping used "Crushy," a well-known character that promoted Orange Crush for Epping, on the "Deed-I-Do" WHAS radio program. "Crushy" was on the air every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to discuss his recent doings and make regular announcements.<sup>72</sup> "Crushy" typically gave away a bicycle, roller skates, jump ropes, marbles, and glider planes in regular children's competitions.

### *Newspaper*

Newspaper advertising was the most common regular advertisement for Epping. The various product lines had regular ads that ran daily in local and regional papers. The ads typically advertised all the product lines in a single ad, mostly promoting the company and the diversity of products rather than a single product, though particularly popular single product lines did receive individual attention.

Most of Epping's single product line ads were smaller and featured only the name of the product, the manufacturer (Epping), and their location. These smaller ads were ubiquitous in the back pages of local newspapers, fitting in with the other smaller ads that filled the paper. The larger ads, which were often tied to anniversaries or new announcements, were company ads and usually announced the entire product line as well as touting the cleanliness of the facilities and the modern processes. All these ads were typical of the time and were the type that kept the company's name in front of the public as a regular reminder of their presence.

### **Leadership in Associations**

At the founding of the Louisville Bottlers Association Samuel Leidigh was made the president. He remained in that position until 1917 when Epping was named president.<sup>73</sup> Epping remained president of the local organization until 1921 when he took the position of secretary. During his time as President Epping helped steady the price of single bottle drinks after the emergency war tax bill was passed in 1919, which added a 10% tax to soft drinks.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> *Sports Scores*, Courier-Journal, May 20, 1940: 11.

<sup>71</sup> *Sports Scores*, Courier-Journal, Jan 8, 1932: 18.

<sup>72</sup> "Crushy" Radio Debut Is Set For Monday, April 15, Courier-Journal, Apr. 11, 1935: 20.

<sup>73</sup> John G. Epping Named President of Bottlers, Courier-Journal, Feb 2, 1917: 10.

<sup>74</sup> Soft Drinks Still 5 Cents, Courier-Journal, Mar 1, 1919: 14.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

After stepping down as secretary of the Louisville Bottlers Association Epping was elected as secretary of the Kentucky Bottlers Association. He remained in the position from 1923 until 1933.

### **Company Sale**

The John G. Epping Bottling Works survived where many other local companies failed or consolidated because of its diverse product offerings. The original recipes of the company helped maintain the original anchoring of the company in the local economy and new distribution agreements allowed the company to tap more popular national brand power. Epping early became the local distributor of 7-Up, which became a popular brand. Because the distribution agreement was restricted to just Epping, none of the larger bottling companies could take the 7-Up brand. This arrangement gave Epping an almost completely protected national brand and market share.

In 1967 Pepsi-Cola General Bottlers, Inc. finally named a price that convinced the Louisville Trust Co., the trustee of the estate of John G. Epping, to sell. For \$1.3 million, in cash, Pepsi-Cola bought all the buildings, assets, and goodwill of the John G. Epping Bottling Works.<sup>75</sup> Production ceased soon after and was moved to other Pepsi-Cola bottling plants.

### **Evaluation of Significance of the John G. Epping Bottling Works within the context of the Soft Drink Industry in Louisville, Kentucky, 1861-1967**

The John G. Epping Bottling Works was once one of the most prominent mineral water manufacturers, and later bottling company, in the region. The Epping Bottling Works grew from a small household operation to one of the largest in the city, one that continued to grow and thrive from its inception in the 1860s through its sale, over 100 years later. The John G. Epping Bottling Works, as it existed on this site, experienced significant growth and the complex demonstrates that in the physical expansion that is visible clear. Similarly, the complex represents the evolution of the company in a physical sense, and tells the story of how the small-scale operation had to expand materially to meet growing demands, and industrially to stay relevant with new markets, technologies, and products.

The Epping Bottling Works district is also unique as it indicative of a larger trend in the earlier days of mineral water and soda production, and that is the evolution and growth from small productions in someone's home to a multi-building company. This company grew from a setup in a residential outbuilding to a complex that rivaled the country's most notable distributors and bottling companies, such as Pepsi and Coca Cola. Moreover, the legacy of the early bottling tradition remained alive in the John G. Epping Bottling Works. Not only was the eventual company the greater realization from the early efforts of Herman Epping, but when the new complex was constructed, on the same site of one of the earliest iterations, appearing as early as 1873, it included

---

<sup>75</sup> *Pepsi Paying \$1.3 Million For Epping*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 28, 1967: B 18.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

a residence for the company's president, a throwback to the early days when bottlers worked out of their homes or in their backyards.

Overall, the John G. Epping Bottling Works is an excellent example of an early twentieth century bottling operation and it shines light on the growth of an industry through the story of the Epping company. Herman Epping was one of the earliest mineral water manufacturers listed in the city, around as early as 1863, and his legacy, led by his widow and eventually his step-son, grew to be one of the most successful bottling plants in the region and one of the last local companies in the industry to avoid consolidation, all while remaining very profitable and relevant.

### **Evaluating the Integrity Between the Significance of the John G. Epping Bottling Works and its Current Physical Condition**

Each building's contribution to the district has been evaluated in terms of its overall relationship to the general integrity standards of the area as a whole and its ability to convey the significance outlined above. The task of evaluating whether a building or district is potentially eligible for NRHP listing means first evaluating its significance according to at least one National Register eligibility criteria, and then evaluating whether there is an integrity between that resource's physical condition and the sense of significance. That will call for "... sometimes a subjective judgment, ... it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance."<sup>76</sup> There are seven aspects of integrity as identified by NPS: **Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, Association**. As stated in *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, "for a district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the components that make up the district's historic character must possess integrity."<sup>77</sup> Moreover, while the Aspects of Integrity were applied to the individual resources as they pertain to the district, importance was placed on larger issues that fundamentally affect the district in its entirety.

The John G. Epping Bottling Works is in good condition overall. Although some of the resources have been altered over the years, most notably the north façade of the office building and the interior of the office and storage building, as a whole, the district remains intact. Moreover, some of the previous changes to the exterior of the contributing resources have been rectified in recent years, specifically the windows on the main façade of the office building. While interior alterations have taken place to allow the buildings to adapt to new uses and industries, the exteriors have remained largely unchanged. Most importantly, the district is still able to accurately illustrate an early to mid-century bottling plant and complex, despite the minimal alterations over the years. A

<sup>76</sup> United States Department of the Interior. *National Register Bulletin #15: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 2002.)

<sup>77</sup> United States Department of the Interior. *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1995) 46.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Jefferson County, KY

Name of Property

County and State

district which meets Criterion A under the aforementioned context that possesses integrity of **Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, Association** will be eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The John G. Epping Bottling Works retains integrity of **location**. The John G. Epping Bottling Works is a significant feature of Smoketown and the commercial and industrial corridor along East Broadway. Its strategic location along one of the city's busiest thoroughfares, as well as its location in a flourishing mixed-use area like East Smoketown, which around the turn of the century was densely packed with both residential and industrial buildings, made this an ideal spot for a thriving business. Additionally, the location is significant as the Epping operation had a presence there from as early as 1873. Even though the current buildings were built in the 1920s through 1940s, the site helps to tell the story of the growth of the Epping company from a small operation in a residential outbuilding to a multi-building complex.

The John G. Epping Bottling Works retains integrity of **design**. The spatial layout of the buildings remains largely the same as the day construction on the complex was completed. The relationship between the buildings and the surrounding infrastructure and other buildings remains largely unchanged. The history and gradual growth of the company informs the sprawling nature of the complex, something that is still visible today. Additionally, architectural ornamentation, some subtle and some more prominent, exist throughout the district in each of the buildings, giving the complex an overall sense of an interconnected design.

The district retains integrity of **setting**. The area included in the district and its immediate vicinity has remained largely unchanged in the past 100 years. The neighborhood remains to be a mixed-use area with both residential and industrial uses and many of the neighboring buildings that existed when the Epping Bottling Works was constructed are still there.

The district retains integrity of **materials**. While some of the exterior built environment has been altered over the years, particularly the windows and doors, the buildings as a whole retain many of the architectural and material features from the time they were constructed. Some of the noteworthy architectural elements and characteristics that remain include the brickwork, the ornamental window crowns and lintels, the arches, the limestone panels, the exposed rafters, the unique roofline and decorative parapets, and various limestone detailing such as the "E" on the buildings denoting their association with the Epping complex, the crossed patterns on the corners of the storage building, the quoins, and several features of the dwelling. The characteristics consistent among each building in the district further enhances the physical integrity, giving the complex a cohesive material quality.



John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

The John G. Epping Bottling Works retains integrity of **workmanship**. Similar to the case made for material integrity, the craftsmanship evidenced in the unique and repetitive decorative features demonstrate a significant level of skill and technique. This stylistic quality allowed for the complex to be both utilitarian and practical as well as aesthetically pleasing. Moreover, the uniform characteristics show an advanced artistry that spanned the twenty-year construction period of the district as a whole.

The district retains integrity of **feeling**. While some of the material features of the buildings have been altered over the years, the complex as a whole, as well as the buildings which make up the district, are still able to portray the feeling of the early to mid-twentieth century bottling facility. The combination of the original design, several material features, workmanship, and setting all aid in relating the feeling of the mixed use industrial and residential experience that was present in east Smoketown at the height of Epping's success.

A district which continues to possess integrity of location, setting, materials, and design will also be said to retain integrity of **association**. Not only do the historic resources in the district still convey the sense of a successful early to mid-twentieth century bottling facility, but its location along Broadway and its proximity to the neighboring commercial, industrial, and residential buildings in east Smoketown accentuates the unique character of this complex. Association with Epping is still readily apparent as well, in the ornamental "E" stamped into the contributing buildings and in the stamped concrete outside the office's main entrance at the northeast corner of Logan and Broadway, reading "Epping's Established 1863." The district still retains several physical features that convey its identity and its historical significance. It remains in its original location and is surrounded by much of its historic setting. It retains much of its historic materials and design—these allow us to experience the district in powerful ways that give rise to our connections with the district's past. The district still provides us today with an insight into the industrial nature of east Smoketown, its prominent residential presence, and the density of commercial properties along Broadway. Similarly, the district provides an insight into the early days of soft drink manufacturing and bottling with the presence of the various buildings coupled with the former company president's personal residence nestled among them. Because it retains integrity of association, the foundation for the claim that it meets Criterion A, it is thus eligible for National Register listing.

This integrity discussion must also examine how the omission of two known, historically associated buildings, from the district affects the integrity of the complex. The buildings on the east side of Logan Street, street numbers 705 and 725, were left out of this nomination per owners' requests; the Kentucky State Review Board approved the nomination of this complex in accord with that request. While the buildings on the East side of Logan were historically a part of the Epping Bottling Works operation, they were not a part of the manufacturing, bottling, or key

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

elements of the company's functions. Instead, both buildings were used as garages for shipping and storage. Moreover, the cluster of the buildings on the west side of Logan still retain enough significance and integrity to convey the identity of the business and demonstrate its significance within the historic context. Not only are these buildings grouped in a cohesive cluster, but they contain the original, most integral aspects to the Epping company's success. These buildings consist of the residence, the office, the bottling plant, and some of the original storage and warehouses. The two buildings omitted from this proposed boundary share much of the history of the buildings on the west side of Logan, and could be considered eligible for listing as contributing resources to the historic complex in a future action. Removing them from consideration in the current action does not render the nominated complex unable to transmit its important story.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Tchudi, Stephen N. *Soda Poppery: The History of Soft Drinks in America*. New York: Scribners, 1986.

Oatsvall, Neil S. "Bottling Nature's Elixir: The Mountain Valley Spring Water Company, Environment, Health, and Capitalism." *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2019): 1-31.

Guetig, Peter & Conrad Selle, *Louisville Soda/Mineral Waters*, Louisville: 24 Hour Books, Inc., 2017.

Riley, John J., *A History of the American Soft Drink Industry*, Washington, D.C.: American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages, 1958.

Bulletin 192, Non-Alcoholic Carbonated Beverages, Sanitary Condition and Composition, Allen, LaBach, Pinnell, and Brown, State University Press, Lexington, KY, June 1915, p. 59.

*American Bottlers*, Courier-Journal, Oct. 4, 1899: 1.

*Bottlers of Louisville Form an Organization*, Courier-Journal, July 20, 1910: 7.

*Kentucky Bottlers Form State Organization at Meeting Here*, Courier-Journal, Sep 16, 1910: 5.

*To Whom It May Concern*, Courier-Journal, Mar 4, 1911: 9.

*Well-Known Business Woman Passes Away*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 2, 1911: 8.

*John G. Epping Named President of Bottlers*, Courier-Journal, Feb 2, 1917: 10.

*Soft Drinks Still 5 Cents*, Courier-Journal, Mar 1, 1919: 14.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

*Real Estate Transaction*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 2, 1922:10.

*Cleanliness Is Aim At Epping's Bottling Plant*, Courier-Journal, Mar. 9, 1923: 16.

*Building Permits*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 9, 1926: 15.

*Ad*, International Motor Trucks, Courier-Journal, Apr. 25, 1926: 7.

*Pure Fruit Flavored Beverages*, Courier-Journal, May 23, 1926: 9.

*Notice: The Astounding Waste of Beverage Bottles*, Courier-Journal, Mar 10, 1929: 66.

*Building Sold*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 2, 1930: 7.

*Sports Scores*, Courier-Journal, Jan 8, 1932: 18.

*Epping Gets Permits*, Courier-Journal, Aug. 2, 1934.

*"Crushy" Radio Debut Is Set For Monday, April 15*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 11, 1935: 20.

*John G. Epping Bottling Works, Volume Up, is Looking Forward to Banner Year*, Courier-Journal, July 21, 1935: 14.

*John G. Epping Bottling Works, Volume Up*, Courier-Journal, July 31, 1935: 14.

*Epping Enlarges Delivery Fleet*, Courier-Journal, Sep. 14: 1937.

*Colonel Epping Amid Trophies*, Courier-Journal, Nov. 29, 1937: 3.

*Business Activities in the Louisville Area*, Nov. 29, 1937.

*Epping Acquires 10 More Properties*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 13, 1938: Sec. 3.

*Epping Gets Refrigerating Unit*, Courier-Journal, Aug. 16, 1938: 7.

*The March of Years*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 14, 1939: 6.

*Epping Bottling Plant Grows*, Courier-Journal, Dec. 18, 1939: 4.

*Sports Scores*, Courier-Journal, May 20, 1940: 11.

*Ruby's Report*, Courier-Journal, Aug. 28, 1940: 3.

*John G. Epping, Owner of Bottling Business, Dies*, Courier-Journal, Nov. 3, 1943.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

*Epping Fire Loss Over \$300*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 9, 1945: 15.

*Theft of Food Alleged*, Courier-Journal, Feb. 9, 1961: 5.

*Pepsi Paying \$1.3 Million For Epping*, Courier-Journal, Apr. 28, 1967: B18.

Power Engineering, Vol. 42, 484.

*Business Builder, Louisville Building projects*, Board of Trade Journal, Vol. 8, 1923, Louisville Board of Trade: Louisville.

Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1861-1890.

Caron's Directory of Louisville 1918, 1930, 1941.

Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1960.

Sanborn Map, Louisville, 1892, Vol. 2, Sheet 136.

Caron's Directory of Louisville, 1910.

John G. Epping Draft Card for World War I and 1920 U.S. Census.

<http://lexhistory.org/wikilex/epping-bottling-works>. Accessed 6/30/2021.

---

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_ table of inventory numbers:

702-708 Logan: JFCH 1313

712 Logan: JFCS 1017

718 Logan: JFCS 1018

705 Logan: JFCH 1318

725 Logan: JFCS 1019

---

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.8901

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

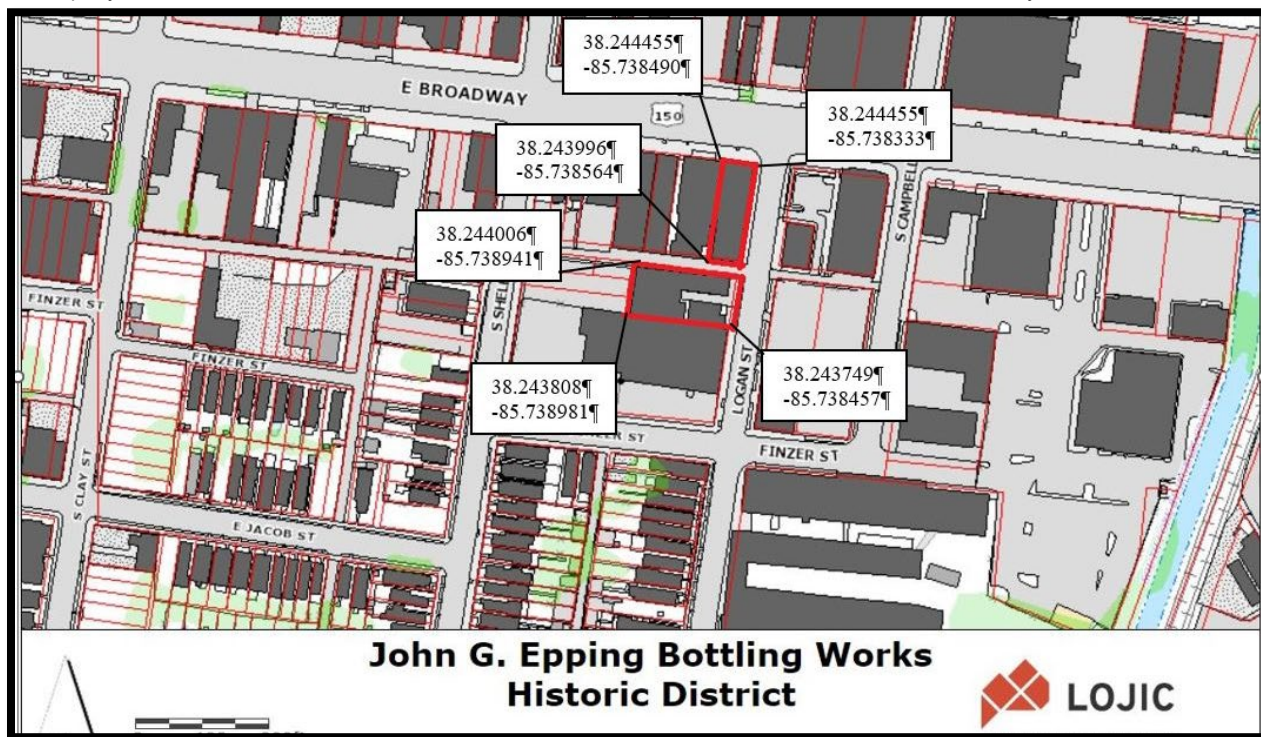
Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.244455 | Longitude: -85.738490 |
| 2. Latitude: 38.243996 | Longitude: -85.738564 |
| 3. Latitude: 38.244006 | Longitude: -85.738941 |
| 4. Latitude: 38.243808 | Longitude: -85.738981 |
| 5. Latitude: 38.243749 | Longitude: -85.738457 |
| 6. Latitude: 38.244455 | Longitude: -85.738333 |

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary begins at the northwest corner of the building at the corner of Logan and East Broadway, runs south to the alley, then west to the rear of the warehouse at the mid-point of the alley, then south to the modern warehouse, then east to Logan and then north again to the corner of Logan and East Broadway.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are intended to include the remaining buildings of the John G. Epping Bottling Works on the west side of Logan Street. There are two buildings on the east side that are historically associated with Epping, and as of this writing, have integrity, but are being left out of this nomination per the owners' request. Other buildings have been demolished, but there is not a good record of their location or connection to the operation and those properties are owned by separate owners.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Joseph C. Pierson  
organization: Pinion Advisors  
street & number: 2309 Mohican Hill Court  
city or town: Louisville state: Kentucky zip code: 40207  
e-mail: JPierson@PinionAdvisors.com  
telephone: (517) 862-7333

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

date: 6/30/2021

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

name/title: Wes Cunningham, MA

organization: Cunningham Consulting, LLC

street & number: 4133 La Crosse Ave.

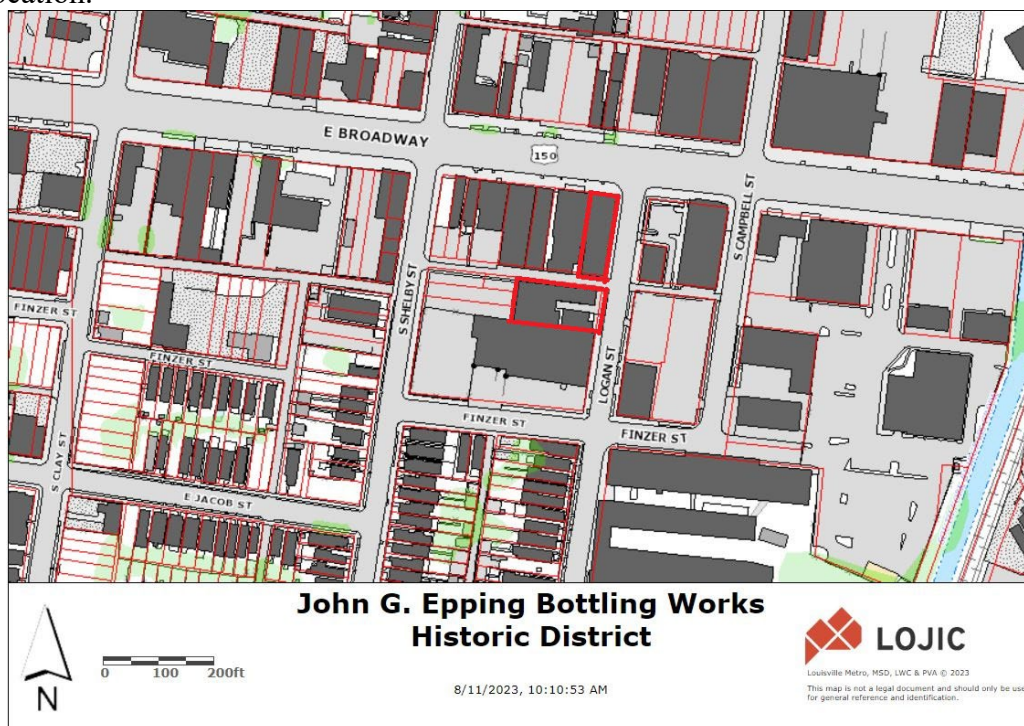
city or town: Cincinnati state: Ohio zip code: 45227

e-mail wscunningham1@gmail.com

telephone: 502-807-0575

date: March 2023

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

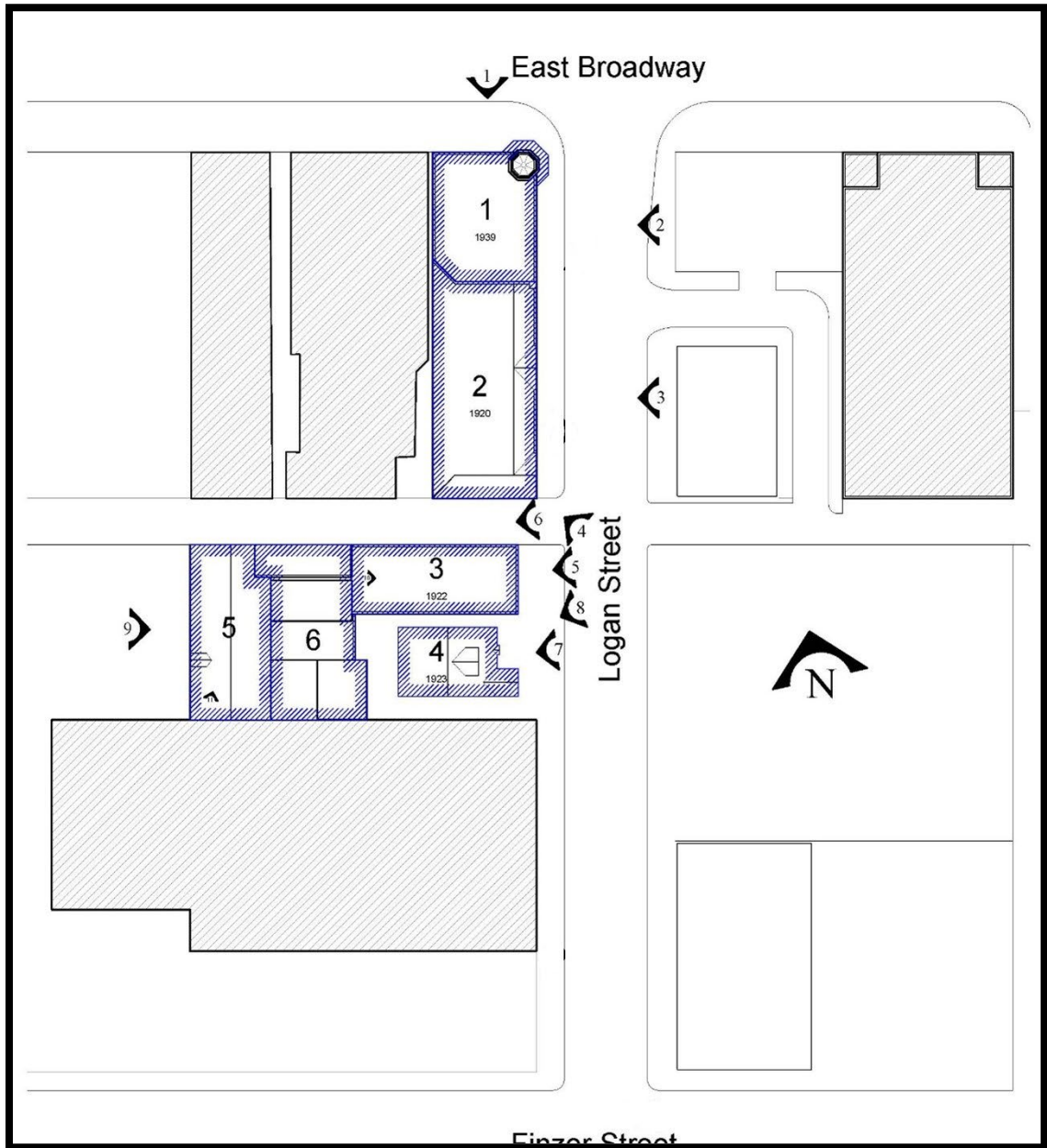


- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State





John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State

## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: John G. Epping Bottling Works

City or Vicinity: Louisville

County: Jefferson

State: Kentucky

Photographer: Joseph C. Pierson

Date Photographed: 10/27/2020



The front façade of the office building, which faces East Broadway. The photograph is facing south, with Logan Street on the left.

1 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The east façade of the office building along Logan Street. The photograph is facing west.  
2 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The east façade of the storage building, originally constructed by Kokomo Rubber Company, along Logan Street. The photograph is facing west.  
3 of 11.



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The south façade of the storage building, at the corner of the alley and Logan Street. The photograph is facing northwest.  
4 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The front of the original bottling plant constructed next to Epping's home on Logan Street.  
5 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The north side of the bottling plant and later additions, facing west along the alley on the north side of the building. The larger warehouse is at the far end of the alley.  
6 of 11.



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The John G. Epping residence constructed by him in 1923. The existing architecture matches the original, except the tiled front patio, which appears to have been a later addition.  
7 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The Epping residence as seen from the edge of the original bottling plant. A small yard separated the house from the plant and eventually the plant grew around the house.  
8 of 11.



John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The original warehouse constructed at the west edge of the site. Pictured is the west façade, which now faces a parking lot, but would have originally run along an alley between Logan Street and the next street to the west. The configuration appears to be mostly original.

9 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY  
County and State



The interior of the original bottling plant, photographed facing east, from the rear of the space. The inside is mostly open, with the original tile floor and exposed walls remaining.  
10 of 11.

John G. Epping Bottling Works

Name of Property

Jefferson County, KY

County and State



The second floor of the original warehouse at the rear of the site. The photograph is facing north on the second floor.

11 of 11.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.