

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Laird & Company Distillery Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1 Laird Road, Scobeyville

☐ not for publication

city or town Colts Neck Township

☐ vicinity

state New Jersey

code 034

County Monmouth

zip code 07724

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Deputy SHPO Assistant Commissioner of Community Investment and Economic Revitalization

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
- ☒ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
2	0	sites
1	1	structures
		objects
8	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

COMMERCE/business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage

COMMERCE/business

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH-20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

NO STYLE / Functional distillery vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK; CONCRETE

walls WOOD/shingle; WOOD/weatherboard

CONCRETE/concrete block

METAL/corrugated steel

roof ASPHALT/shingle; WOOD/shake;

OTHER/bituminous coating

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- ☒ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1851 – 1972

Significant Dates

1866, 1912, 1922, 1934

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

W.H. Conover & J.H. Conover (1934 Renovation)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 25.25 acres

Latitude / Longitude Coordinates

(Note to Preparers: NJ HPO will complete this portion of the Registration Form for all Preparers, based on the coordinates derived from the Site Map or District Map that HPO produces.)

1. Lat. 40.302316 Long. -74.143699
2. Lat. 40.302402 Long. -74.142744
3. Lat. 40.300746 Long. -74.141215
4. Lat. 40.297353 Long. -74.140262
5. Lat. 40.296891 Long. -74.143126

(NJ HPO will place additional coordinates, if needed, on a continuation sheet for Section 10.)

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet for Section 10.)

Boundary Justification Statement

(Explain, on the section sheet following the Verbal Boundary Description, how the chosen boundaries meet the requirements for boundary selection and are the most appropriate boundaries for the nominated property or district.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Siri Olson, Miranda Shugars, and Francesca Evans
organization Easton Architects, LLP date December 11, 2023
street & number 20 West 44th Street, Suite 604 telephone 212.779.9570
city or town New York state New York zip code 10036

Additional Documentation

(Submit the additional items with the completed form that are outlined in the "Standard Order of Presentation" that NJ HPO provides. Each page must contain the name of the nominated property or district, and the State and the county in which the property or district is located. Consult with NJ HPO if you have questions.)

Property Owner

(Either provide the name and address of the property owner here or provide the information separately to NJ HPO. Check with NJ HPO for other requirements. All owners' names and addresses must be provided, including public and non-profit owners, but their presence on the form, itself, is not required).

name Laird & Company Distillers & Importers; Contact: Lisa Laird Dunn, Executive Vice President & World Ambassador
street & number 1 Laird Road telephone 732.542.0312
city or town Scobeyville state New Jersey zip code 07724

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. The proper completion of this form and the related requirements is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Direct questions regarding the proper completion of this form or questions about related matters to the Registration Section, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail code 501-04B, PO Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420.

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Continuation Sheet

Laird & Company Distillery Historic District
Monmouth County, New Jersey

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Narrative Description

Description Summary

The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District in the Scobeyville area of Colts Neck Township, New Jersey, is composed of five contributing buildings, two contributing sites (a ruin of the original Office building and a man-made pond), and one contributing structure (a dam) that are associated with the development of Laird & Company and its production of popular alcohols including apple cider, applejack, and apple brandy. The contributing buildings are the House (now used as an office), Barn, Still House, Former Bottling Plant, and Bonded Warehouse 1B. The property contains one non-contributing structure (the mechanical equipment shed) and one non-contributing building (the Current Bottling Plant).

The Laird & Company distillery, cidery, and business headquarters have been located at the present site since 1851. Some of the buildings within the historic district date to the distillery's origins in the period 1851 to c.1880 and others were added over the many decades of the company's operation. Exact construction dates for most buildings are not available, though the general periods of construction and expansion are known. These buildings represent the evolution of the Laird & Company distillery over its major periods of 19th century growth, post-Prohibition expansion, and current operations (Figures 1-4). The distillery's early establishment and operational period is defined as 1851-1912. This period is informed by several factors that help to date the buildings: 1851, when a distillery was documented in a contemporary map under the ownership of a Laird relation and when the company's distilling operation moved from the Colts Neck Inn to this site (Figure 5); 1866, when Robert Laird purchased the property; 1861, 1873, and 1889, when contemporary maps noted the operational distillery (Figures 6-8); 1880s-90s when three photographs were taken of the distillery (Figures 10-12); and 1912, when distillery operations paused after Robert Laird's death. The second period of growth occurred from 1922-1972, when the Laird family re-opened the cider mill to produce non-alcoholic product; officially incorporated as Laird & Company in 1928; significantly expanded operations following the repeal of Prohibition in 1933-34; altered and expanded several of its buildings in the 1940s as it absorbed nearby cideries and converted facilities for war-time contributions; and constructed the Current Bottling Plant in 1965, which continues to operate following the relocation of the distillery's main production facilities to Virginia in 1972.

The Scobeyville site remains in use for bottling operations, and throughout the late 1970s Laird & Company expanded the Current Bottling Plant several times. In 2011, several c.1880-1890s deteriorated distillery buildings were removed, including the original cider mill, warehouse, and other minor buildings. In 2019 the original Office roof collapsed, damaging one of the exterior walls and rendering the building uninhabitable. Throughout its history, the Laird & Company Distillery property has evolved in response to regionally and nationally significant trends, such as Prohibition, and the advancement of new technologies and industry processes. Although several important distillery buildings have been removed, including the original cider mill and warehouse, the buildings that remain from the Period of Significance retain integrity of materials, design, and workmanship while the complex retains integrity of location, setting, and association.

Site Description

The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District occupies a 25.25-acre parcel in the Scobeyville area of Colts Neck Township, Monmouth County. The parcel occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of Monmouth County Road 537 and Laird Road. The House (#1) and Barn (#2) are located in the south portion of the property (Photo 1). The Current Bottling Plant (#7) occupies the center. The Office ruin (#3), Still House (#4), Former Bottling Plant (#5), Bonded Warehouse 1B (#6), and dam (#9) and man-made pond (#10) are clustered in the north portion of the property to form the distillery complex (Photo 2).

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The topography of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is mostly flat with a depression in the land around the distillery complex. The distillery complex was originally built around the banks of a natural stream called the Yellow Brook that flowed through the western boundary of the site. Water was an important component of the distilling process to cool the stills. This brook was dammed in 1933-34 to create a man-made pond to support the distillery's increasing production and infrastructural improvements; the dam structure (#9) and the pond site (#10) are therefore considered contributing features (Photos 3-4). The topographic changes in the site are characteristic of 19th and early 20th century distilleries. Both the Still House (#4) and Bonded Warehouse 1B (#6) are built into the sloping terrain, which was typical for distilleries that used gravity to ease the flow of the liquid product through different stages of processing and ageing.

A boundary of mature trees surrounds the parcel and an open lawn fronts County Road 537 and Laird Road. Orchards, open fields, and farms surround the property to the west and south. The county-owned Dorbrook Recreational Area is located to the east. A branch of the Swimming River Reservoir and a small residential subdivision are situated to the north. The rural setting is characterized by large parcels of land with clusters of small buildings dispersed along the County Road for residential and agricultural use.

The construction chronology and development of the site are graphically illustrated in Figures 1-4. Many of the resources described below were constructed in multiple phases, leading to varied massing. Therefore, these additions have been assigned volume letters to provide clarity in each description. The volumes and their construction eras are graphically depicted in Figures 1-4.

Individual Resource Descriptions*Resource #1: House* (contributing building)

Date of Construction: c. 1700-1776

Date(s) of Alterations: c. 1849; 1934

Architectural Style: Colonial Revival

Number of Volumes: 4

Volume A: 18th century

Volume B: c. 1849

Volumes C & D: 1934

Related Photographs & Figures: Photos 1, 5-13; Figures 2-4, 20-21

The House is the Laird family's former residence and, since 1934, has been in use as the Laird & Company's administrative office.¹ The House was constructed in three phases during the 18th century, the 19th century, and in 1934 (Figure 2). The façade faces south and the building is oriented on an east-west axis. The Colonial Revival style building has two-and-a-half stories and is composed of four rectangular volumes (Photo 5). It has a brick foundation and is capped with a cross-gable roof clad in asphalt shingle. The House is clad with painted wood shingles of varying widths. Roof eaves and raking cornices at gable ends have denticulated moldings. Fenestration includes six-over-six, double-hung wood windows flanked by painted wood shutters throughout the building and four-light fixed wood windows at the attic level at the east elevations. Fanlights are located above the formal entrance on the south façade and within the two pediments at gable ends. Overall, the building is in good condition.

¹ The designation of this contributing resource as the "House" is used to distinguish this building from the original Office building that is part of the distillery complex.

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The House's phased construction is expressed in the asymmetrical four-volume massing. The 19th century volume (Volume B) is the largest and visually establishes the core of the building slightly west of the building's center. It was constructed c. 1849.² It has an end gable roof and is divided into three bays. It features a pedimented portico at the south façade. The columns are narrow square columns and are capped with simple square capitals. The portico contains a second story wood porch, which shelters the building's formal entrance in the east bay. An interior-end painted-brick chimney is located at the west side of the building, intersecting with the westernmost wing (Volume C). The building's main entrance is located at the rear (north) elevation, composed of a paneled-wood enclosure with four- and two-light windows and a projecting hood with carved wood brackets and flanked by fluted pilasters (Photo 6).

The oldest volume of the house (Volume A), dating from the 18th century, is located to the east of Volume B. Its earliest date of construction is unknown but has been reported as before the Revolutionary War.³ It has a side gable roof that intersects with the east slope of the 19th century gable roof. There is an interior-end painted-brick chimney at the east gable. This volume is divided into two bays and has a one-story, shed-roofed addition at the rear elevation with a standing seam metal roof. The outermost volumes (Volumes C and D) were added in 1934, when the House was extensively renovated. Each wing's primary (south) façade has a side gable roof and is divided into two bays. Volume C is located to the west of Volume B. Volume D, located to the east of Volume A is set back from the façade plane and has a saltbox roof with a shed-roofed dormer at the rear elevation (Photo 7). A secondary entrance is located at the rear elevation within a projecting wood frame enclosure. The House's unified exterior materials are the result of the 1934 renovation.

Interior

At the interior, the main entrance from the rear (north) elevation leads to the center hall of Volume B. This hall contains a single-run wood stair with a carved newel post and balusters facing south towards the formal entry with a partially glazed door and fanlight above (Photo 8). To the east is the oldest portion of the House, Volume A, where there are two rooms with low ceilings and exposed wood beams. These beams have mortise and tenon joints, rough hewing marks, and shadows of former lath and plaster ceilings. The walls and doors are wood beadboard of varying widths (Photos 9-10). Volume D contains two small office and storage rooms with non-historic finishes.

West of the building's center hall, still within Volume B, is a single room with a brick fireplace and elaborately molded mantle. The plaster walls have wood base boards, chair rails, and crown molding; these appear to be original finishes. Two paneled wood doors on either side of the fireplace connect this room to the west wing (added in 1934). The west wing also consists of a single room with plaster walls, base board, chair rail, and crown molding continued from the previous room. The east wall is clad with full-height wood paneling. The center of the wall projects into the room and features a brick fireplace faced with decorative ceramic tiles depicting five stages of the applejack distilling process. These tiles were created by the architect who designed the 1934 renovation, J.H. Conover (Photos 11-12).

The second floor at Volumes B, C, and D contains additional offices with original plaster walls and prominent molding surrounding the windows and doors. In Volume A is a large room with exposed wood beams at the ceiling, a brick fireplace and vertical wood paneling similar to the first story rooms (Photo 13).

Resource #2: Barn (contributing building)

Date of Construction: c. 1780

Date(s) of Alterations: 19th century

² Letter from J.E. Laird to Ken Williamson, January 25, 1951, Laird & Company Archives.

³ Letter from J.E. Laird to Ken Williamson, 1951 [citing "built a little before the Revolution."]. Another source cites "c.1700" as the construction date: Elizabeth Makin Thompson, ed., "Colts Neck Old Homes and Families," (1987), 166, Laird & Company Archives.

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Number of Volumes: 3

Volume A: c. 1780

Volume B: 19th centuryVolume C: 19th century

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 1, 14-25; Figures 2-4, 20, 22-23

The Barn is located northeast of the House (#1). Based on the physical evidence of the building, the Barn had three main phases of construction estimated from the late 18th century into the 19th century (Figure 2). These phases are distinguished by foundation materials, the multi-volume massing, changes in the size and configuration of framing members, and the size and appearance of sheathing boards. The earliest portion (Volume A) has been previously estimated as c.1780 and was likely associated with the construction or early occupation of the House.⁴ The second (Volume B) and third (Volume C) phases are estimated to date to the 19th century. The wood-framed building is generally C-shaped in plan and is composed of three volumes. The north part of the building, Volume C, is a two-and-a-half story rectangular volume with a gable roof set on an east-west axis. A two-story volume, Volume B extends to the south with a perpendicular gable roof. This roof continues into the saltbox roof of the southernmost volume, Volume A. The long saltbox slope extends to the east. The multi-volume massing creates a small courtyard on the east side of the Barn (Photos 14-16). The Barn is simple in its form and design. Its vernacular simplicity reflects its functional purpose and its varying uses over time as an agricultural barn, a horse barn, and a cooperage shop for making applejack barrels (Figure 19).

The Barn has a brick foundation below Volume A, the oldest, saltbox portion of the building; the foundation is exposed above grade. The rest of the Barn has a concrete block foundation, exposed above grade and covered with a cementitious coating. The roofs are clad with cedar shakes, although they are each covered with plastic tarpaulins due to deterioration. The building is clad with painted wood shingles, with the exception of painted wood clapboards at the south elevation of Volume A. The west elevation faces the property's main driveway. This elevation features two wood sliding barn doors with original exterior hardware, one single-light awning wood window, and two similar awning window openings that have been covered with plain wood boards. There are two wood hayloft doors with strap hinges at the second story and one four-over-four double-hung wood window at the gable end (Photo 14). The south elevation has a single door opening and second story hayloft door opening that are both covered with plywood as stabilization measures. The east elevation contains the small courtyard and includes one fixed four-light window at Volume A, two wood Dutch doors with diagonal bracing that lead into two rooms (likely former stable rooms) in Volume B, and a flush plywood door and covered adjacent window opening leading into Volume C (Photo 15). At the second story are three six-over-six, double-hung wood windows at the south and east elevations of Volume C, and one louvered wood vent at the gable end. The north elevation has five six-over-six, double-hung wood windows and one wood batten door with strap hinges. An interior brick chimney emerges from the northern roof eave (Photo 16). Overall, the building is in poor condition.

Interior

The interior of the Barn consists of a root cellar, a first floor with a series of disjointed rooms, and a second floor that consists primarily of the double-height space in Volume C. The wood structure and exterior wall sheathing are visible throughout the Barn's interior. The root cellar of Volume A is located below the southernmost room and is accessed by a large opening in the tongue-and-groove wood floor; approximately half of this floor has deteriorated and is no longer intact (Photo 17). The cellar has a dirt floor, is surrounded by the exposed brick foundation walls, and has a ceiling height

⁴ The Colts Neck Historic Preservation Committee produced a brochure of local homes that claims a Barn construction date c. 1780. No further substantiating information has yet been found for the c.1780 date. A property appraisal conducted in October 1950 dated the Barn's construction around 1900; however, there is no additional information provided and the physical evidence and 19th century sources counter the 1900 estimate. Colts Neck Historic Preservation Committee document held at Laird & Company Archives.

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of approximately seven feet (Photos 18-19). The first floor includes a single room at Volume A, two former stable rooms accessed via the east Dutch doors in Volume B (Photo 20), and two connected rooms in Volume C (Photo 21). The stable rooms have dirt floors and the north rooms in Volume C have concrete floors. A single-run wood stair connects the two floors. A residential apartment once occupied the second floor in Volume C; exposed wood-stud framing of interior partitions remain in this area. Other wall finishes in the Barn include horizontal flush wood boards and drywall, although most of the walls are unfinished and expose the wood structural framing and underside of the exterior siding. The ceilings throughout are unfinished and expose the roof framing and sheathing (Photos 22-25).

The Barn's construction chronology is estimated by the differences in physical materials. The oldest part of the building is the south saltbox Volume A, which is evidenced by its brick foundation and root cellar, wide and irregular wall sheathing, and independent structural posts and raised floor level when compared to the adjacent middle volume, Volume B. Foundation materials change from brick to concrete block between these two volumes. The structure of Volume B has large square posts and top plate, dimensional studs, and diagonal bracing with mortise and tenons joints supplemented by nails. Thick diagonal braces penetrate the second floor perpendicular to the exterior walls. Exposed framing in the northwest corner of the building suggest that the middle gable roof once extended to the northwest corner of Volume C (Photo 25). The exterior sheathing from this phase is overlapping clapboards. The last construction phase was the two-and-a-half-story north volume, Volume C, evidenced by the wood studs, corner posts, and a second top plate were constructed on top of the existing structure in the northwest corner, as well as the flush wood boards exterior sheathing (Photo 25).

Dates of the alterations to the Barn are unknown. The Barn was adapted for different, mostly utilitarian, uses over time—including a root cellar, livestock and agricultural, barrel building, and residential—and these adaptations were not recorded. Observed alterations include several infilled windows and ghosting on the wood shingles at the recessed portion of the east elevation from a shed roof that once sheltered the two Dutch doors. Historic photographs reveal the removal of a car port (an addition from an unknown date) that extended from the west elevation between 1946 and 1950 (Figure 22).

Resource #3: Office Ruin (contributing site)

Date of Construction: Between 1851-1900

Date(s) of Alterations: Between 1900-1935

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 2, 26-29; Figures 2-4, 10, 18, 24, 30, 34-37

The Office was a small single-story, wood-framed, rectangular building that was one of the first distillery complex buildings. It is located between Bonded Warehouse 1B (#6) and the Man-Made Pond (#10), and south of the Still House (#4) (Photo 26). The building is classified as a ruin due to the collapse of the east wall and roof in late December 2019. The building had been in poor condition. The Office was constructed between 1851 (when distilling began at the Scobeyville site) and the 1880s-1890s (when the earliest photograph of the Office was taken) (Figure 10).

The Office ruin has a concrete perimeter foundation with wood joists set directly on grade. Three wood-framed walls remain and are clad with unpainted wood vertical board siding. The façade faces west. The façade contains a door opening, a window opening, and has a slate landing with a low brick edging; the openings are covered with standing-seam sheet metal (Photo 27). At both the north and south elevations are two large window openings (Photos 26, 28-29). The east elevation was destroyed by the roof collapse and is no longer intact (Photo 29). Before the collapse, the east elevation had a second door opening at its center, surrounded by ghost lines where an additional room was once attached (Figure 36). The Office building was formerly capped by a gable roof with an interior brick chimney rising from the center of the

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ridge. Prior to the collapse, the roof cladding was no longer extant and the wood rafters and purlins were exposed (Figures 34-36).

Interior

The Office interior consisted of a single room. There are no remaining interior finishes. The base of the brick chimney is situated in the middle of the room. The upper half of the brick chimney collapsed with the roof and the remaining base leans significantly. The exposed floor joists are resting on grade. Some original wood studs and horizontal and diagonal structural members remain intact behind the exterior wood cladding. Dimensional lumber shoring was installed as an immediate protective measure following the wall and roof collapse (Figure 37).

This building was the original distillery office and was also used as a laboratory. Known alterations to the Office are the removal of a primary façade porch and a large rear addition that was later demolished. Historic photographs indicate that a full-width porch roof originally extended from the west façade over the stone landing and had square wood posts and a wood shingle roof. A company sign hung above the sloped porch roof. There were two-over-two sash windows flanked by shutters and a four-light paneled wood door (Figure 10). By 1935, the main roof gable had been extended west over the porch and a new door and window were inserted at the south elevation. A rear addition had been constructed by this time. The addition had a shallow gable roof and three bays of windows. The porch and the addition were removed sometime after 1967. The current Office ruin shows the original building's footprint and size.

Resource #4: Still House (contributing building)

Date of Construction: Between 1880-1933

Date(s) of Alterations: 1934-1935

Number of Volumes: 4

Volume A: Between 1880-1933

Volumes B, C, and D: 1934-1935

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 2, 30-40; Figures 2-4, 14, 18, 24

The Still House is a one-story-over-basement building that was constructed between the 1880s and 1933. The Still House held the distilling equipment and was one of the main distillery complex buildings. The building, Volume A, is composed of a wood-frame rectangular section with a gable roof and a concrete block extension at the rear (north) elevation. The Still House is located adjacent to the retaining wall at the dam and has a concrete and brick pier foundation. The gable-roofed portion of the building is clad with painted clapboards. The façade faces south and features a small pedimented portico with a flat entablature and simple Doric columns at the entrance (Photo 30). It has a wood panel door at center with two six-over-six double-hung wood windows with operable wood shutters on either side of the façade. The west elevation has two six-over-six, double-hung wood windows with shutters (Photo 31). The rear concrete block walls on the west and north elevations were rebuilt with new concrete block in June 2020, due to deterioration of the original concrete block caused by water damage. Above the rear shed roof is a tall steel-frame addition clad with standing-seam metal sheet; this addition encloses large steel fermenting tanks and was added in the early 1970s (Photo 32). The east elevation contains one six-over-six, double-hung wood window with shutters, a wood panel door, and four-light wood window below the roof gable (Photo 33). The Still House's roof cladding is wood shake on the south slope and asphalt shingle on the north. The concrete block rear section has a low-slope wood-frame shed roof, also clad with asphalt shingle. Known alterations to the Still House include the replacement of an interior end brick chimney with a pipe vent at the west elevation and the removal of a small, gable-roofed volume that extended from the east elevation and also connected to the equipment rooms. These changes occurred after the 1970s.

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Three equipment rooms (Volumes B, C, and D) are connected to the Still House, extending from its northeast corner (Photo 34). This series of connected volumes was constructed in 1934-35. These buildings contain distilling equipment, boilers, and networks of exterior and interior pipes penetrating through walls and roofs. Each is built of concrete block and has a shed roof. The west room, Volume B, has clapboard cladding on its exterior south elevation, matching the main Still House (Photo 35). At the middle room, Volume C, the south elevation has a section of wood siding with three two-light windows (with no glazing) and a sheet metal-clad door. This room contains a large receiving tank. The east room, Volume D, is the boiler room, which contains two large boilers with vent stacks that rise through the roof (Photo 34). The south elevation has two sliding wood doors with fixed eight-light windows; a narrow door has been cut into one of the original doors (Photo 36). Overall, the Still House and equipment rooms are in fair to poor condition.

Interior

The Still House's interior is open and filled with distilling equipment remnants. The floor level drops below grade towards the rear of the building. There are several small level changes and an elevated steel grate platform to accommodate the equipment. The walls are finished with a cementitious parge coating and exposed concrete block, except for small sections of exposed and painted brick. The southeast corner of the building is partitioned into one small room with drywall and painted concrete block finishes. The interiors of the three equipment rooms are single spaces with concrete floors, painted concrete block walls, and unfinished wood-frame ceilings (Photo 37).

The notable feature of the Still House's interior is the collection of intact distilling equipment. An original pot still is set on a cylindrical brick furnace base with a metal vapor coil and condenser above (Photo 38). This type of pot still dates from the early period of the distillery's operation from the 1850s to the 1890s. A second, larger pot still and kettle remains in the center of the building (Photo 39). These stills are surrounded by several fermenting vats, condensers, and a maze of pipes, valves, and controls. Large steel channel beams run north-south and east-west through the interior to support the pipes. The distillery equipment represents a range of technology from the late 19th century, the post-Prohibition expansion in 1934, and some improvements through the 1970s. Several pieces retain painted labels and markings, such as "Condensate." One piece bears a plate from "Joseph-Kavanagh Company Baltimore MD Coppersmiths." This company was founded in 1866 and sold equipment to distilleries throughout the East Coast into the turn of the century, coinciding with major periods of Laird's production. In the boiler room, an original boiler manufactured by the Kewanee Boiler Company remains (Photo 40). Similarly, this company was founded in 1868 and coincided with Laird's early distilling period. The intact equipment holds value for future research related to industrial and manufacturing history. Known alterations to the equipment include shortening a single boiler stack that protruded through the roof and installation of other existing boilers in the 1950s and one in the 1970s. The equipment is in overall fair to poor condition, and some pieces have been displaced or are rusting from water intrusion.

Resource #5: Former Bottling Plant (contributing building)

Date of Construction: Between 1941-1947

Date(s) of Alterations: Between 1963-1969

Number of Volumes: 2

Volume A: Between 1941-1947

Volume B: Between 1963-1969

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 2, 41-46; Figures 2-4, 31

North of the Still House (#4) along Laird Road are two remaining sections of the Former Bottling Plant (Photo 41). The west section, Volume A, was constructed between 1941 and 1947 and the east portion, Volume B, was constructed between 1963 and 1969. This building is no longer in use. The one-story Volume A is constructed of concrete block and

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has a flat façade facing the road and a shed roof. It contains nine-light steel windows and various door openings with single-leaf hollow metal doors and double wood doors (Photo 42). Volume B, a one-story metal frame addition with corrugated metal siding and a shallow gable roof is located to the east (Photos 43-46). The interior of these sections are single open spaces with no interior finishes. Additional wood-framed sections once accompanied this building for use as the applejack bottling facility; these were demolished in 2011. These sections were one and two stories in height with gable roofs and were clad in wood clapboard and corrugated metal. As a functional building, the Former Bottling Plant was constructed in phases and expanded as production need demanded. The remaining sections are not architecturally distinctive but were part of the larger plant and are utilitarian in purpose and design.

Resource #6: Bonded Warehouse 1B (contributing building)

Date of Construction: 1934

Date(s) of Alterations: Between 1934-1940

Number of Volumes: 2

Volume A: 1934

Volume B: Between 1934-1940

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 2, 48-52; Figures 2-4, 16, 27

The Bonded Warehouse 1B is a large three-story rectangular building, located to the east of the Office (#3) and built into the sloping ground of the site. It has two volumes, each constructed of concrete block with a flat roof. The west volume, Volume A, is the original Bonded Warehouse and was constructed in 1934 (Photo 47). The longer east volume of the building, Volume B, was added by 1940. Volume A is square and slightly taller than the rest of the building (Photo 48). The northwest corner of this section projects slightly from the west elevation and contains a copper-frame skylight at the roof. Both volumes feature multi-light steel pivot windows located on the north, south, and west elevations and the openings have stone sills and lintels. At the west elevation, the window openings have brick quoining at the sides. Large metal-clad wood doors are located at the north elevation and at the northeast corner of the building. The northeast door bears the label "Internal Revenue Bonded Warehouse N-1B / Laird & Co Scobeyville NJ / DSP NJ-1" (Photo 49). This labeling is the result of post-Prohibition monitoring by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service; this door is a near replica of the original metal-clad door from 1934, which is still stored inside the building. An infilled opening at the center of the north elevation of Volume A has a stone lintel and sill; this opening formerly held a bridge connecting the Bonded Warehouse to the interior of the distillery's brick bonded warehouse (no longer extant). An elevated metal pipe emerges from the south elevation and connects to the Current Bottling Plant (#5). Overall, the building is in fair condition.

Interior

At the interior, the Bonded Warehouse 1B contains original barrel aging racks in the 1934 section of the building. These racks are made of dimensional lumber and fill the multi-level space (Photos 50-51). A concrete perimeter foundation surrounds a dirt floor. Elevated wood-plank walkways allow circulation within the room. The walls are unpainted concrete block and there is modern insulation at the ceiling. A metal lift in the northwest corner runs on cables from the first story to the third and was used to transport barrels to ageing racks in the upper stories of Volume A. Above the lift is a small pyramidal skylight. The interior of Volume A is separated from the rest of the warehouse by a wall of concrete block and brick and is accessed by a sliding metal-clad wood door. The rest of the warehouse interior has a concrete floor, steel posts and beams, and unfinished wood ceiling. Metal barrel storage racks fill the room (Photo 52).

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Date of Construction: 1965

Date(s) of Alterations: 1975, 1979, 1980

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 1, 4, 53-62; Figures 2-4, 25, 29

The Current Bottling Plant occupies the center of the Laird & Company parcel (Figure 25; Photo 53). The first part of the building was constructed in 1965 and additions occurred in 1975, 1979, 1980.⁵ The building is composed of a series of rectangular volumes constructed of concrete block and steel. These volumes have flat roofs and vary between one and two stories in height. The building is clad with corrugated metal siding and brick veneer. The south façade features a narrow porch with thin fluted posts, three aluminum sash windows with fanlight transoms, and the building's primary entrance with a wood door surround with sidelights and a broken pediment (Photo 54). There is brick quoining at the corners, an articulated brick cornice, and a canopy sheltering the nine bays of loading docks at the center of the façade. The west elevation is clad with brick veneer and contains one entry door in the center of the elevation accessed by a metal stairway (Photo 55). The western portion of the north elevation is clad in brick veneer. The volume located to the east of the north elevation's east is of concrete block construction and features a loading dock with one loading bay sheltered by a metal canopy (Photo 56). The east elevation is clad with both corrugated metal and brick veneer. This elevation features several entry doors in the corrugated metal-clad section to the north and two garage doors in the brick-clad volume to the south (Photo 57).

Interior

The interior of the Current Bottling Plant is composed of large open rooms that are set up for various stages of the bottling process. Finishes include painted concrete block, corrugated metal, concrete floors, and exposed steel posts and beams throughout. Rooms that are adjacent to each other are accessed through large openings in the walls. The exterior entrance on the south façade leads to a vestibule which opens into an enclosed area with modern faux wood flooring and a drop ceiling that has partitions creating office spaces. From the office space, a hallway runs north toward the rear of the building and contains additional offices on the west side. The east side of the hallway contains a door which opens into a large open room that is one of four that run along the length of the south façade. As these rooms are closest to the loading dock, most contain garage doors leading to the exterior and contain boxes of product on pallets or ready to be put onto pallets for shipping (Photo 58). From the last room in the southeast corner of the building, a doorway on the north wall leads to a large room with bottling equipment, with conveyor belts running above transporting boxes and bottled spirits to the various stations within the room (Photos 59-60). Continuing north along the east side of the building, smaller rooms contain modern fermenting and mixing tanks (Photos 61-62). A door on the northeast corner of the building leads to a small loading dock (Photo 56).

Resource #8: Mechanical Equipment Shed (non-contributing structure)

Date of Construction: 2012

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 2 and 63; Figures 2-4

A modern one-story mechanical equipment shed is located across the dam (#9) from the Still House (#4) (Photo 63). It was constructed in 2012 to house mechanical equipment and pumps related to the man-made dam. It is set below grade level next to the dam and surrounded by two retaining walls. This small concrete structure occupies a portion of where the former Cider Mill building was located.

⁵ Laird & Company, "The History of Laird & Company," (1991), 5, Laird & Company Archive; Copies of 1965 building permits held in Laird & Company Archive.

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Date of Construction: 1934

Related Photographs and Figures: Photos 3-4; Figures 2-4, 18

The man-made pond extends in a north-south direction adjacent to Laird Road and turns east towards the Office (#3). The pond is approximately 355 feet in length, 57 feet at its widest point, and narrows to 8 feet at the dam. The pond was created in 1934 by damming the natural Yellow Brook, which flowed through the distillery complex along the west boundary of the property. A concrete retaining wall dam channels water from the pond to the low ground west of the Still House—formerly the area between the Still House (#4) and the old Cider Mill (now demolished). The dam has a grass pathway and acts as a bridge between Laird Road and the distillery complex (Figures 18, 24; Photos 3-4). The dam and pond were constructed as part of the post-Prohibition expansion to supply water for condensation, cooling, and temperature regulation to the distilling equipment.

Demolished Distillery Complex Buildings

The distillery complex formerly contained other buildings and industrial features that were part of the applejack production, bottling, and distribution process. Buildings and equipment were consistently altered, demolished, and added during the distillery's active period from 1851 through 1972 (Figures 1-4). A summary of these buildings supports a better understanding of the complex and is therefore provided in this section.

Demolished buildings include the Cider Mill, two brick bonded warehouses for barrel aging and storage, and ancillary support buildings. Industrial features included concrete sorting beds, large fermenting tanks, an apple-sorting hopper, and a water tower. These buildings were clustered among the existing distillery complex buildings and extended north towards the Former Bottling Plant (#5) (Figures 2-4, 9; Photos 64-65). Most of the now-demolished distillery complex buildings were constructed in the late 19th century, during the distillery's initial construction. An 1887 newspaper account noted that Robert Laird had been "fitting up" his distillery and installing new machinery, although it is not documented what the machinery was or what alterations to the buildings were made (Figure 40).⁶ Other smaller buildings and industrial features were added to the property in 1934 when the distillery complex was expanded for a post-Prohibition production boom.

Two prominent buildings at the distillery complex were the original Bonded Warehouse 1A and the Cider Mill. The original warehouse was a brick building northeast of the Office (#3). The gable-roofed building had a center door flanked by two shuttered openings. The warehouse was constructed during the initial establishment of the distillery c.1851-1866 and was documented in photographs from the 1880s-90s (Figure 10). A large brick addition to the original warehouse was constructed in the early 1930s (Figures 13 and 27). It was built into the sloping land above the warehouse and perpendicular to the original structure. The original Cider Mill was located west of the Still House (#4), built into the bank of the brook. The wood-frame building has a steeply sloping roof, large ell, and a prominent gable roof (Figures 11-12). This building dates from the period of 1851 to the 1890s. At this time, a wood bridge spanned the natural brook (where the dam is today) and a log fence ran along the path from the road.

The distillery complex buildings remained in active use through 1972, when Laird & Company transferred their main distillery operations to North Garden, Virginia. Most of the buildings were wood construction and vulnerable to deterioration over the ensuing period of disuse. Demolition of minor sheds and ancillary structures occurred intermittently as structures deteriorated. The water tower fell by 2001. Six distillery complex buildings, including the Cider Mill and brick warehouses, had deteriorated and were demolished in 2011.

⁶ "Town Talk," *Red Bank Register*, August 17, 1887, 2.

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Early documentation of the Laird operation at Scobeyville indicates the presence of a mill for grinding and pressing apples, coal to power the farm and distillery, a still house for the pot stills and later column stills which produced applejack and apple brandy, and a warehouse to age the product. Unlike many farmers in the area, Laird had an official bonded warehouse which allowed them to store and age their alcohol for up to five years before paying taxes on it. This gave them a financial advantage over other farms in the area which either paid taxes during production, years before they could sell the alcohol, or stored their product in a bonded warehouse elsewhere. Harry B. Weiss, in his book *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from the Colonial Times to the Present*, notes that several farms stored their alcohol in bonded warehouses in Pennsylvania.⁷

In the few years following the repeal of Prohibition, Laird & Company scaled up production and expanded physically, adding new distilling equipment, additional bonded warehouses, laboratories for the company's chemists and product testers, and bottling rooms to the property (Figures 13-19).⁸ The company enlarged the brick warehouse to accommodate thousands of barrels for aging, and the Still House (#4) was repainted and outfitted with additional stills.⁹ Cider flowed from fermentation tanks into the Still House through a network of pipes and vats. Having warehouses already on the property gave Laird & Company a competitive advantage over other distilleries, which contributed to their economic success. A much larger brick warehouse was constructed and connected to the rear of the first brick warehouse (c.1851-1890s) (Figure 13). This warehouse became Bonded Warehouse No. 1A. This building was connected to the 1934 Bonded Warehouse (No. 1B) (#6) by an elevated walkway (Figure 27). The Office (#3) and its cinderblock addition were used as a laboratory. The property improvements built upon the existing infrastructure, which allowed the company to quickly comply with new government rules and to scale up production. Construction of the man-made pond (#10) and dam (#9) supplied the distillery with more water for condensation, cooling, and temperature regulating processes.¹⁰ Photos of their operations from this period show large hoppers full of apples, sophisticated apple presses and filters, both pot and column stills, and a chemical laboratory.¹¹ The company reportedly relocated the Scobeyville post office and general store buildings to the property to use for production,¹² though it is unknown what function these buildings served. In the post-Prohibition era and likely earlier, the Barn (#2) was used as the Cooperage Shop where applejack aging barrels were built (Figure 19).¹³ It is possible that the Barn was expanded in 1934 during the rest of the property's improvements.

In a parallel effort to prepare for a post-Prohibition distribution boom, the House (#1) was extensively renovated in 1934 to create new offices. The local *Red Bank Register* published a profile on the property's renovations and encouraged the public to visit the re-opened operation.¹⁴ The west wing featuring the applejack tile fireplace and the east wing were added and most of the interior finishes were removed and replaced. The framing and partitions in the 18th and 19th century portions of the House remained, as did part of the brick foundations and some of the interior finishes including the carved wood stair. J. E. Laird wrote in a 1951 letter, "We added the two wings on either end in 1934, taking the house practically down to the frame, but in no way changing the character. The old part still has the hand hewn beams and pine panels [at

⁷ Harry B. Weiss, *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Agricultural Society, 1954), 116, 179-187. The distilleries with bonded warehouses in Philadelphia mentioned by Weiss include the Collier Distillery at Bordentown, the John A. Bennett Distillery at Jamesburg, and the James D. Courtney Distillery in Monroe Township.

⁸ Weiss, 193-194.

⁹ "A Monmouth Industry Is Reborn," *Asbury Park Sunday Press*, 1933.

¹⁰ "A Monmouth Industry Is Reborn," *Asbury Park Sunday Press*, 1933.

¹¹ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 195-204.

¹² "New Headquarters For Laird Company," *Red Bank Register*, September 26, 1934.

¹³ Raymond S. Smith, surveyor, "Plan showing property operated by Laird & Company," (Freehold, NJ, 1941), Laird & Company Archives.

¹⁴ "New Headquarters For Laird Company," 1934.

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the ceiling].”¹⁵ Alterations included a new wood-shingled roof, new chimneys and fireplaces, new plaster walls and ceilings, new wood wall paneling at the oldest part of the house, and new wood and tile floors. Details included paneled wood shutters with brandy snifter silhouettes at the first story exterior windows. The renovation was designed by the architecture firm W. H. Conover & J. H. Conover, which maintained offices in Freehold and New York City and specialized in Colonial Revival styles. J. H. Conover also designed the applejack tiles of the fireplace surround.¹⁶ The Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory identified that 1934 renovations also included adding the exterior shingle siding, two-story portico, the door enframements on the rear façade, the denticulated moldings, and new windows and shutters.¹⁷ The visual and stylistic cohesion of the House’s exterior supports this analysis.

During World War II, Laird & Company converted their distilling equipment to dehydrate apple pomace (crushed apples) for pectin, which was used as a food preservative, and to make cider vinegar for pickling and canning.¹⁸ The company returned to applejack production after the war, and during the 1940s they made several minor changes and additions to the buildings. Property appraisals and photographs from the 1950s illustrate that the site has experienced only minor changes in the last half century except for the construction of the Current Bottling Plant (#7). The land surrounding the House (#1) and Barn (#2) had three wells, a picket fence and low brick wall, a small wood-frame playhouse, and a water tank (demolished after 1980). Between 1946 and 1950, a second-story porch was added to the portico at the House’s primary façade and the center window converted to a door, and the car port at the Barn was removed (Figures 20-23). Laird & Company offices occupied the first floor of the House while the upper story was used as a Laird family residence through at least the 1950s; the company’s offices now occupy the full building.¹⁹ The distillery complex also remained largely unaltered (Figures 24, 26-29). The first section of the Current Bottling Plant (#7) was constructed in 1965 to house modern equipment and it was enlarged in three phases as Laird & Company expanded their business as an importer for several specialty European spirits (Figure 25). In 1972, responding to agricultural and land use changes, Laird & Company relocated their production facilities to Virginia. The Scobeyville site remains in use for bottling operations, and throughout the late 1970s Laird & Company expanded the Current Bottling Plant several times.

Of the applejack distilleries founded or operating during the 1800s and early 1900s in New Jersey, little physical evidence remains. The Laird property retains an overall layout and key buildings which define early American distilleries: a natural water source, the dam and pond, barrel aging warehouse and associated coopery (barrel making facility), still house, and part of the former bottling plant. The site has undergone many changes and technological upgrades, not all of which are thoroughly documented. In the style of America’s original distilleries, Laird & Company adapted their property as needed and as new innovations became available. The property represents a rural tradition of ingenuity and function emblematic of its region.

Laird & Company after the Period of Significance

The Laird & Company Distillery was surveyed in 1981 and 2001 as part of the Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory. These survey forms on file with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office provide relevant past

¹⁵ Letter from J.E. Laird to Ken Williamson, 1951.

¹⁶ “New Headquarters For Laird Company,” 1934. The fireplace tiles are initialed “J. H. C” and dated 1934.

¹⁷ James McCabe and Robin French, “Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Survey,” Inventory #1309-13, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, March 1981, updated November 2001.

¹⁸ Rose Laird, Laird Family Biographies, Laird & Company Archives; “Lairds Convert Plant to Aid War Effort,” *Red Bank Register* April 22, 1943, 9.

¹⁹ Theodore F. Appleby, “Appraisal of the Property at Scobeyville, New Jersey Made for Laird & Company, Scobeyville, New Jersey,” (Asbury Park, NJ: T. Frank Appleby Agency, Inc. Realtors, April 5, 1946); W. Raymond Van Horn, “Appraisal Report on the John E. Laird Real Property Used for Office and Residential Purposes,” (Fair Haven, NJ: Ray Van Horn Agency, October 25, 1950). Both documents held at Laird & Company Archives.

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documentation of the site.²⁰ Comparison of these forms to current site conditions illustrate several major changes that have occurred, primarily as a result of the threats that are still present at the site. While several of the distillery complex buildings have been removed, the remaining buildings represent a long history of production and adaptation. Many are part of the post-Prohibition property improvements. Of the five buildings recorded on the inventory forms from 1981, the brick "Barrel Warehouse" (Bonded Warehouse No. 1A) and the Cider Mill have been demolished. The northern water tower fell between 1981 and 2001.²¹ Other warehouse buildings had deteriorated so severely that they were demolished in 2011. Numerous vats and fermenting tanks, pipelines, apple drying racks and various industrial apparatuses have been removed (Figures 30-33).

Even before its collapse in 2019, the Office (#3) had severely deteriorated from its 1981 condition. The portico at the west entry and a cinderblock addition at the rear had been removed, the windows and doors had been removed, and the roof cladding was missing. The Office has now been classified as a ruin due to the loss of the roof and east exterior wall. The Still House (#4) remains intact from its 1981 condition, with the exception of the partial rebuilding of the rear concrete block addition to replace missing wall material and address persistent flooding at the building. The House (#1) and Barn (#2) appear unchanged since 1981, except for the replacement of the brandy snifter shutters.

The remaining distillery complex buildings are only part of the full complex as it existed during Laird & Company's peaks of production in the 1890s and late 1930s. The complex went through many physical developments over this long history—constructing, altering, and demolishing buildings in response to historical events and regional changes. The remaining buildings of the Laird & Company distillery demonstrate the long history of apple alcohol production in Monmouth County and New Jersey. Few sites remain to preserve the physical history of this industry that helped shape the country, economically and culturally, from its colonial era through the 20th century. The Laird & Company distillery offers the potential for further study and education about this important part of American history.

Statement of Integrity

The Laird & Company Distillery property is a rare surviving example of a distillery in Monmouth County and New Jersey. The existing buildings represent two main periods of the distillery's growth: the Laird & Company's relocation to Scobeyville and initial growth from 1851 through 1912, and its post-Prohibition renovation and expansion from 1933-1972. The individual buildings each retain integrity of materials, design, and workmanship from the property's Period of Significance—the period of active applejack, cider, and apple brandy distilling and distribution. The House (#1) is largely unaltered from its 1934 renovation during the post-Prohibition resurgence of Laird & Company's applejack production. The Barn (#2), Still House (#4), Former Bottling Plant (#5), and Bonded Warehouse 1B (#6) have undergone alterations, yet these changes supported their ongoing use for alcohol production, for which the property is significant. Their original functions remain evident in their physical character. The most recent large-scale change at the complex was the construction of the Current Bottling Plant in 1965 which, at the center of the district, is a prominent feature on the property. Despite the size of the Current Bottling Plant, the district retains its integrity as a rare surviving example of a property type belonging to an industry that was once ubiquitous in New Jersey. The ruin of the Office building (#3) has lost its integrity of material, design, and workmanship due to its severely deteriorated condition; however, the remains of the structure and its building materials do show its original character. The distillery complex as a whole has been altered by demolition. Many of the early distilling and warehouse buildings, from both growth periods of 1851-1890s and post-Prohibition, no longer exist. Historically, buildings at the distillery complex were often added onto, altered, or replaced to fit the functional needs of the company. Many architectural changes to the complex occurred during the Period of Significance.

²⁰ McCabe and French, "Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Survey."

²¹ Noted in the Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Survey forms.

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The Laird & Company Distillery retains integrity of location and setting. The property's original clusters of the north distillery complex and the south House (#1) and Barn (#2) remain intact. While development throughout Monmouth County has diminished the visibility of the agriculture that supported distilling activity, open land and small orchards still surround the Laird & Company Distillery. The Laird & Company Distillery also retains integrity of association. The Laird family continues to own and operate the company and the property continues to be used as the company headquarters and distribution facility. Each of the existing buildings is associated with specific steps in the production of apple liquor. Despite the alterations, the surviving buildings of the Laird & Company Distillery retain integrity of feeling as a collection of related buildings. The clustered multi-building organization, emphasis on building functions, and rural agrarian location is characteristic of 19th and early 20th century distillery typologies across different types of alcohol and regions of production. The property's development over time is evident in the different architectural styles and materials, the spatial relationship of the buildings to each other, and the continuity of use at most of the buildings.

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Statement of Significance

Summary

The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its association with apple-based alcoholic beverages production and as the only operational distillery that predates Prohibition in New Jersey, and as a rare surviving physical example of a 19th and 20th century distillery complex in Monmouth County and New Jersey. The Laird & Company Distillery's production of apple-based alcohol highlights a lesser-known component of America's long history of alcohol production and consumption, which is dominated by sites, primarily in Kentucky and Pennsylvania, associated with the manufacture of whiskey and bourbon.²² Applejack, apple brandy, and cider were significant products of New Jersey that originated in the colonial era and are closely identified with New Jersey and its agricultural heritage. Today, there is little surviving evidence of the once-prominent applejack and cider distilling legacy in Monmouth County and across New Jersey. The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District's Period of Significance, 1851-1972, encompasses a unique and nearly unbroken continuity of use, reflected in the additions and adaptations to the built landscape which maintained the legacy business through historic events like Prohibition and the shifts in local agricultural land use patterns. The continuity of the Laird family ownership and long-standing operation in Scobeyville distinguishes the Laird & Company Distillery in this broad historical context. Laird & Company was one of the few distilleries in New Jersey that succeeded following the repeal of Prohibition in 1934 and is the only remaining distillery in the state that predates Prohibition. In the 1930s and 40s, Laird & Company scaled up production, constructed new buildings, and altered existing facilities in response to their expanding operations which included buying out nearby cideries. In the following decades, suburbanization and development led to a regional decline in the number of apple orchards in New Jersey and thus limited supply to the state's fruit distilleries. In response to shifts in the region's land use and agriculture, Laird & Company relocated production to Virginia in 1972—closer to the Shenandoah Valley where their apples were now sourced—therefore marking the end of the Period of Significance. Despite the loss of some distillery buildings, the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District conveys the type of multi-building complex necessary for distilling and formerly found on farms across the state. The site, former buildings, and remaining equipment offer valuable insight into and further opportunities for the study of the industrial history and pre- and post-Prohibition distilling activities of this region and the state as a whole.

The following historic context examines the development of the Laird & Company Distillery and its history in relation to local, state, and national events; contains a comparative analysis of distilleries in New Jersey; summarizes early settlement and agricultural trends within the state and Monmouth County; explores the apple industry in New Jersey; introduces the history of apple-based alcohols in America and how they contributed to national trends; and then discusses the significance of apples and apple-based alcohols in New Jersey. It provides an overview of the distilling process and the physical commonalities that contribute to an American distillery typology, regardless of the specific spirit produced. This section also explores the limitations of documentation and established context for this subset of the alcohol industry. Distilleries, including Laird & Company specifically and other apple-based alcohol distilleries, do not consistently appear in agricultural or industrial censuses, directories, and similar contemporary primary source records.²³ Additionally, prior to the mid-20th century the terms "applejack," "apple brandy," and "cider" were often used interchangeably, making it difficult to separate and study the production and trends of each individual product.

²² Based on National Register of Historic Places listings and National Historic Landmarks designation records maintained by the National Park Service, examined by author. For recommended contexts for whiskey distilleries, see: Daniel J. Pezzoni, *George T. Stagg Distillery National Register of Historic Places Nomination* (Lexington, VA: Landmark Preservation Associates, 2000); David H. Hall, *Labrot & Graham Distillery National Register of Historic Places Nomination* (Bardstown, KY: Old Nelson Heritage, Inc., 1995); and Kathryn M. Joseph and Craig A. Potts, *James E. Pepper Distillery National Register of Historic Places Nomination* (Lexington, KY: Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc., 2009).

²³ See "Research Restrictions" section of this document for an in-depth explanation of inconsistencies related to apple-based alcohol nomenclature, manufacture and taxation records, and other primary and secondary source documents and records.

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Developing a historic context for the applejack industries relies on the combination of piecemeal studies, newspaper stories (often anecdotal in nature) and advertisements; township- and county-level records, applications, and deeds; and bridging the gap between scant scholarly works on the New Jersey applejack industry and works addressing the American alcohol history writ large.

Development of the Laird & Company Distillery

Laird & Company traces their history of applejack and cider production to William Laird, who immigrated from County Fife in Scotland to Monmouth County in 1698. He was among the early farmers to produce hard cider and “cyder spirits” (applejack) and is believed to have transferred his experience distilling scotch whiskey to colonial Monmouth County.²⁴

The Laird family’s first formal steps in apple alcohol production occurred during the late 18th century and Revolutionary War period. Robert Laird (1758-1811) was the proprietor of the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern, an establishment that had been founded by a Laird ancestor in 1717.²⁵ Behind the Inn he constructed a distillery to produce apple alcohols and serve them in the Tavern. At the time, the Inn & Tavern was owned by Joshua Huddy, who became a well-known martyr during local Revolutionary War events. Robert Laird served in the Continental Army and, according to family records, he supplied applejack to George Washington and the troops when they were in the area preceding the Battle of Monmouth in 1778.²⁶ George Washington is believed to have written a letter to the Lairds requesting the applejack recipe to reproduce at his Mount Vernon plantation.²⁷ The first recorded sale of Laird’s applejack has been traced to a 1780 entry in Robert Laird’s account ledger for the Inn & Tavern. This Inn & Tavern location was the precursor to the Scobeyville distillery. An entry from 1790 notes the sale of a “quart Cyder Spirits” to a Joseph Benham on September 10th and “1 Gallon Cyder Spirits” on December 25th.²⁸

The Laird family continued to run the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern distillery in the 19th century and became a prominent local family. Samuel Laird (1787-1859) took over the proprietorship of the Inn & Tavern upon Robert’s death.²⁹ He acted as the first postmaster for the Colts Neck village and helped establish the stagecoach routes that encouraged development of the surrounding area.³⁰ Other family members founded a successful general merchandise store in Colts Neck and were involved in local and state politics.³¹ Apple alcohol production continued at the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern under the direction of Samuel and his son Robert (1835-1912) until the distillery burned down at an unknown date between 1847 and 1849.³²

²⁴ “The History of Laird & Company,” 1. In some archival sources and newspaper articles, he is identified as Alexander Laird.

²⁵ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 191.

²⁶ Rose Laird, Laird Family Biographies, Laird & Company Archives.

²⁷ The letter from George Washington and the connection between the Lairds and Washington is cited in numerous histories of the company and of applejack spirits. According to the Laird family, George Washington’s letter was loaned to an exhibition and its current whereabouts are unknown.

²⁸ Robert Laird Account Ledger, “Old Laird Family Account Book and Record,” Laird & Company Archives; Weiss, *History of Applejack*, 190; “The History of Laird & Company,” 1.

²⁹ “Tavern Applications, 1736-1919” Database, Box 70, Monmouth County Archives, Monmouth County Clerk.

³⁰ Weiss, *History of Applejack*, 191.

³¹ In the 1830s and 1840s, Samuel Laird bred and trained thoroughbred racehorses, contributing to another significant element of Monmouth County’s history. “A Famous Race,” *Red Bank Register*, August 14, 1929, 3; “Obituary: Joseph T. Laird,” *Red Bank Register*, October 17, 1894, 5.

³² Archival sources conflict on the exact year that the original distillery burned down. The Historic Sites Inventory forms notes the date of 1847, citing an interview with John Laird III. Various company histories written by Laird & Company claim 1849 as the year the distillery burned down.

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By this time the Lairds were connected to many prominent local families through marriage and business. The most important was the connection to the Vanderveer family. Like the Lairds, the Vanderveers were involved in local commerce, politics, and cider distilling. Elias Vanderveer married Samuel's daughter, Mary Laird, and established a business partnership with Samuel and Robert Laird. Elias Vanderveer owned the Scobeyville farm property in the 1850s. It was through this connection that the Lairds moved their distillery operations from Colts Neck to the nearby Scobeyville village in 1851.

The *Map of Monmouth County* published in 1851 shows the original distillery, the House (#1), and another residence belonging to the Lairds north along a branch of the Yellow Brook (Figure 5).³³ Samuel and Robert Laird, with Elias Vanderveer, operated the cider mill and distillery here and continued to run the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern, where they sold their product. An 1858 advertisement provides a glimpse of the property at that time. It included "a two-story Dwelling House, Barn, Wagon House, Distillery, Cider House, and a good well of water."³⁴ This description suggests that sections of the current House (prior to the 1934 renovations), Barn (#2), and maybe some early distillery complex buildings can be dated to at least 1858. The House was originally owned by Captain Joshua Scobey, a member of another prominent local family, and is estimated to have been constructed in the late 1700s and added onto c.1849.

Robert Laird purchased the Scobeyville property from Vanderveer in 1866.³⁵ Samuel and Robert Laird had continued to run the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern, and sell their cider and applejack there, until this time. Elias Vanderveer started a new distillery in Manalapan and Robert Laird employed David A. Vanderveer as the distillery engineer. The Scobeyville site allowed the Lairds to increase commercial production and standardized their applejack and apple brandy recipes, providing them with more land to build out a complex of functional buildings for steps in the distilling process and install new equipment (such as stills and condensers) that better controlled the manufacturing process.³⁶ The Lairds also began to sell the apple brandy directly from the distillery site, evidenced in tavern and wholesale liquor applications and following the custom of the time. The following decades included several campaigns of construction and expansion. The Lairds' cider and apple-based spirits as commercial products were synonymous with the family name, as was typical for small distilleries in this period; a surviving bottle from the late 19th century reads simply: "Old Apple Brandy / Distilled and Bottled by R. Laird / Scobeyville, Monmouth Co. N.J." (Figures 38-39).

A fire in 1875 destroyed the distillery building.³⁷ A portion of the stills were reported to have been saved, although the configuration of the complex at the time and other outbuildings that survived is unrecorded. A local newspaper reported that a "fire-proof building" (of unknown materials and design) was in construction only two months later.³⁸ An 1887 newspaper account noted that Robert Laird had been "fitting up" his distillery and installing new machinery (Figure 40).³⁹ From historic photographs, by the 1880s-90s, key buildings in the distillery complex were completed: the Office (#3), the original brick warehouse, and the Cider Mill (Figures 10-13). It is possible that the Office and brick warehouse buildings were constructed earlier and not harmed by the 1875 fire. The Lairds advertised in local newspapers during the 1890s to buy apples from local farmers, as did other distilleries in Scobeyville, Tinton Falls, and throughout Monmouth County (Figure 41). These advertisements attest to a thriving regional industry.⁴⁰

³³ Jesse Lightfoot, surveyor, "Map of Monmouth County New Jersey from Original Surveys," (Middletownpoint, NJ: J.B. Shields, 1851), Library of Congress.

³⁴ "Farm at Public Sale," *Monmouth Democrat*, December 2, 1858.

³⁵ Warranty Deed, Book 187, Page 256 (March 28, 1866), Laird & Company Archives and Monmouth County Clerk.

³⁶ Weiss, *History of Applejack*, 192.

³⁷ "Scobeyville," *Monmouth Inquirer*, December 16, 1875, 3.

³⁸ "Scobeyville," *Monmouth Democrat*, February 3, 1875, 3.

³⁹ "Town Talk," *Red Bank Register*, August 17, 1887, 2.

⁴⁰ Weiss, *History of Applejack*, 200-201, 206-208.

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The Lairds continued to expand their apple alcohol distilling and distribution until the death of Robert Laird in 1912. David Vanderveer ran the distillery for another year until his death, at which time the wholesale license to sell alcohol from the distillery transferred to James Laird.⁴¹ The distillery closed for a few years and was rented for a time by a James Courtney of Yardville to make sweet cider and vinegar.⁴² James Laird maintained the wholesale business through 1915.

The 18th Amendment, also known as the Prohibition Amendment, banned the production and sale of alcohol and went into effect throughout the United States in 1920. There was widespread opposition to Prohibition in New Jersey, especially in urban and coastal recreational areas. Monmouth County had communities that supported both sides of the debate over Prohibition.⁴³ In 1922, John Evans (J. E.) Laird (1896-1955) and Joseph T. Laird III (1903-1950) reopened the Cider Mill and adapted their production to non-alcoholic apple cider, applesauce, and chocolate syrup.⁴⁴ The portion of the property containing the House and Barn was temporarily sold to the local Schenk family in 1922; it was re-purchased by the Lairds in January 1934.⁴⁵

J. E. Laird, his wife Mabel Willet, and Joseph T. Laird III officially incorporated Laird & Company in September 1928, in anticipation of Prohibition's repeal. The Lairds became the first distillery in the state licensed to make alcohol after petitioning the government for a special permit to produce and sell apple brandy for medicinal purposes. They won their appeal partly by describing the economic hardship on regional farmers with excess apple crops, and partly thanks to their clean legal record and avoidance of illegal bootlegging.⁴⁶ Their facility was authorized as "Fruit Distillery and Bonded Warehouse #1" under the license number DSP-NJ-1 in September 1933, three months before the official end of Prohibition (Figure 48).⁴⁷

Under the special permit, Laird & Company resumed applejack production and embarked on a campaign of property improvements, construction, and installation of new distilling equipment. They ramped up production in anticipation of the repeal of Prohibition, which officially occurred on December 5, 1933. Even with a federal limit on the number of gallons allowed and applejack that had only aged for a few months, the company had applejack ready for sale (Figure 15). The company faced new governmental regulations on the general construction and operation of distilleries, including the regulation of bonded aging warehouses and on-site Internal Revenue Service inspectors.⁴⁸ The existing Bonded Warehouse #1B (#6) was constructed in 1934 to conform with these regulations (Photos 47-52). Laird & Company's two warehouses were fitted with doors stamped "Internal Revenue Bonded Warehouse No. 1A/B Laird & Company Scobeyville N.J." as part of the post-Prohibition oversight and tax regulation procedures. The original stamped door of the Bonded Warehouse (No. 1B) has been salvaged and was relocated inside the current building.

⁴¹ "Tavern Applications, 1736-1919."

⁴² "Tinton Falls News," *The Daily Register*, September 11, 1912, 10; "Goodbye to Applejack," *Red Bank Register*, August 29, 1917; "Cider Mill to Re-Open," *Red Bank Register*, August 6, 1919. Family archives indicate that Joseph T. Laird Jr. continued to operate the distillery until Prohibition.

⁴³ Gary D. Saretzky et al., "The Bootlegger Era: Prohibition in New Jersey," exhibition program, Monmouth County Archives, 2013, 21 and 69.

⁴⁴ "The History of Laird & Company," 3; "The Laird Cider Mill to be Re-Opened Next Week," *Red Bank Register*, September 6, 1922.

⁴⁵ John Evans Laird, Inventory of Laird & Company Archives, 92-93, Laird & Company Archives.

⁴⁶ "A Monmouth Industry Is Reborn," *Asbury Park Sunday Press*, October 22, 1933, 11.

⁴⁷ Treasury Department, Bureau of Industrial Alcohol, "Permit Issued Under the National Prohibition Act, As Amended and Supplemented, and Regulations Issued Thereunder. Serial No. NJ-A-121," September 29, 1933, Laird & Company Archives.

⁴⁸ Laird, Inventory, 85-86.

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Laird & Company's increased production in anticipation of Prohibition repeal was published in newspapers across the United States. A photograph of apples being unloaded into storage troughs at the Laird & Company distillery, paired with a photograph of New Jersey Congressman William H. Sutphin viewing the distilling equipment, was circulated in newspapers in California, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Indiana, Ohio, and Texas (Figure 42). The caption names a "plant at Scobeyville" and the preparation of apple brandy for sale once Repeal legislation passed. This circulation illustrates both the Laird & Company marketing strategy and national interest in liquor legalization. Anticipation of renewed sales and the commencement of "a million gallons of apple brandy, also known as applejack" were announced in Washington D.C. newspapers, and Laird & Company advertised across the country throughout the 1930s (Figures 43-45). Post-Repeal marketing emphasized both the "oldest" and "family" aspects of the Laird & Company distillery—themes that continued in future decades of applejack advertising and distribution throughout the country (Figures 46-47, 49, 52).⁴⁹

Upon the repeal of Prohibition, Laird & Company continued to increase their production (Figure 17). Their success was hindered by the continuation of prevalent bootlegging and low-quality spirits from the Prohibition Era, which was a broad issue for the alcohol industry. To protect the reputation of the product and the brand, Laird purchased numerous other distilleries and consolidated applejack production.⁵⁰ However, this narrowed the market for applejack and demand for and knowledge of the alcohol decreased, and today Laird & Company is one of the only major producers of applejack in the United States.

Changes to the Laird & Company business and their methods of production were tied directly to the local patterns of development in Monmouth County. As agricultural land developed into residential and commercial use and the number of apple orchards in Monmouth County declined in the mid-20th century, Laird & Company struggled to continue all facets of the applejack production process in Scobeyville. Redevelopment of agricultural land at a regional scale meant that there were not enough apples to meet apple-based alcohol production demand. The environmental impacts of distilling and bottling were also no longer compatible with the proximity of increasing residential use. In 1972, Laird & Company moved their apple harvesting, fermentation, and distilling to a new plant in North Garden, Virginia, where local apple orchards were accessible (Figure 53).⁵¹ All of Laird & Company's products continue to be bottled at the Scobeyville site.

Comparative Analysis of Distilleries in New Jersey

To emphasize the significance of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District as a rare surviving example of a pre-Prohibition applejack distillery in New Jersey and Monmouth County, this nomination includes research identifying comparative examples of distilleries specializing in the manufacture of apple-based alcohol products in the state, summarized in the table presented in Appendix A. As described in greater detail in the Research Restrictions section, a comprehensive study and thorough evaluation of New Jersey's distilleries is difficult due to the nature of resources available. Many of the distillers in the fruit-based alcohol industry had small operations that mainly served their immediate area; therefore, extensive records about production and sales were not kept. Records that do exist, such as maps, tax records, and agricultural records are limited in the information they convey, especially when attempting to find individual company or operation data in a specific geographic area.

⁴⁹ Laird, Inventory, 64, citing Inventory Item #F-41. In recognition of Laird & Company's legacy as one of the oldest operating distilleries in the country, the company was granted permission by the U.S. Treasury Department to use the statement "America's Oldest Family of Brandy Distillers" in their branding.

⁵⁰ "The History of Laird & Company," 4.

⁵¹ "Laird's Bicentennial Year: A Toast to Spirit of Applejack," *The Daily Register*, April 6, 1980, 3-4; "The History of Laird & Company," 5; "Facts about Laird's Applejack," Laird & Company Archives.

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Research to find pre-Prohibition distilleries was difficult as many distilleries experienced multiple changes in ownership. Constant changes in ownership, which also led to the use of new distillery names, made it difficult to track the evolution of each distillery over time. The dates of a distillery's operation were also not clear, both due to changes in ownership and due to a lack of record keeping. In addition, addresses for distilleries, which were often located on farms or property far removed from town and city centers, were not found often during the research process, preventing determination of whether the distilleries listed were still extant. Finally, most records found did not indicate whether the distilleries produced fruit-based or grain-based alcohol. Where possible, distilleries that only produced grain-based alcohol were removed from the comparative analysis. Many of the pre-Prohibition distilleries provided in the table in Appendix A are indicated as being no longer extant or there was not enough information found to determine the exact location of the site. Most of the distilleries that do survive are no longer in use as distilleries. The list is by no means comprehensive as it was not intended to be an inventory of all pre-Prohibition distilleries within New Jersey; rather, the distilleries listed and the data points included are intended to demonstrate the significance possessed by the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District as a rare surviving example of a distillery within a once-ubiquitous industry in New Jersey. This fact is also emphasized by the table in Appendix B, which shows the prevalence of distilleries in New Jersey during the early 19th century and a decline in that number, specifically at the turn of the 20th century and following the repeal of Prohibition.

Dates of Construction

The identified pre-Prohibition distilleries are located within sixteen of New Jersey's twenty-one counties and range from the mid-18th century to 1893 in dates of construction. Many distilleries that operated at the turn of the 19th century closed their doors c.1920 in response to Prohibition and very few continued operations after the 18th Amendment was repealed; those that did often changed ownership, indicated by holders of licenses issued by the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, established in 1934. Sources noted several distilleries constructed in the 19th century that were demolished and had new facilities built, usually following a devastating fire or new ownership. Although many distilleries were found through a review of published resources, in many instances details of construction dates and years of operation were unable to be confirmed. Though maps and directories point to a year when a subject distillery was extant, these do not indicate when the business began, was sold off to another owner, or was shut down. Of the representative sample included in the table, the number of distilleries that ceased operations in the first two decades of the 20th century just before Prohibition aligns with statewide data showing a sharp decrease in the number of distilleries from 1880 to 1920 (Appendix B).

Geographic Disbursement

No distilleries were recorded from Atlantic County, Camden County, Cape May County, Ocean County, or Passaic County. Only one distillery was recorded for Bergen County while the greatest number of distilleries recorded were located in Monmouth and Morris Counties. Of the 167 distilleries identified, seventy percent were located in the northern part of the state, with one in Bergen County, seven in Sussex County, 29 in Morris County, 16 in Essex County, one in Hudson County, three in Union County, ten in Warren County, 17 in Hunterdon County, three in Somerset County, 16 in Mercer County, and 15 in Middlesex County. Of the ten distilleries that have confirmed extant buildings or ruins, the majority are also located within North Jersey, including one in Essex County, five in Morris County, and one in Sussex County. Monmouth County has two known extant distilleries or related buildings/ruins while Somerset County has one.

Distilleries in Monmouth County

The authoritative scholarly work on applejack in New Jersey is Harry Weiss's *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from the Colonial Times to the Present*, published in 1954. This work continues to be cited by recent

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scholars of American alcohol consumption.⁵² In this work, in addition to chronicling the rise of applejack and its methods in a broad historic context, Weiss documented each New Jersey county and the known applejack distilleries that operated there. By Weiss's 1954 investigation, only two applejack and cider distilleries operated in New Jersey at that time, and little physical evidence remained of the once-ubiquitous local applejack industry. Of the many fragmented accounts that Weiss offers of historic applejack distilleries in New Jersey, six had operated in Monmouth County: Laird & Company in Scobeyville; Jonathan Holmes in Freehold Township; James A. Perrine and Elias Vanderveer Distilleries in Manalapan Township; Captain David Augustus Walling Distillery in Tinton Falls; Doctor Clarence Walling Distillery in Nutswamp; and Hendrick Hendrickson Distillery in Middletown, with Laird & Company being by far the most extensively documented and largest operation at the time of writing. Weiss also described several smaller family stillhouses and distillery references found in 19th century maps and local family histories. Much of Weiss's narrative rests on sparse, incomplete documentation including debt or sale ledgers, wills, and other passing references to distillery activity, since very little remained to document the operations and physical buildings involved. Of the distilleries profiled in Monmouth County, only the four larger operations have visual documentation such as historic photographs; of those, only two—Laird & Company and the Walling Distillery in Tinton Falls—remain in evidence today. Only Laird & Company is still in operation. The other, now known as the Arthur Wilson House for its original owner, is a historic landmark in Tinton Falls, New Jersey consisting of two buildings and a renovated house. The other distilleries that once existed in the area have been torn down or disappeared; for instance, of the once-extensive Vanderveer distillery site, Weiss writes that "Stillhouse Brook, a branch of the Manalapan Brook, is now the only reminder of the distilling activities that once took place in that vicinity."⁵³ In all of New Jersey, Laird & Company is the only pre-Prohibition distillery still in operation.⁵⁴ Laird & Company is distinguished from other pre-Prohibition distilleries that produced apple-based alcohols due to its continuous ownership, the complex's continued use within the apple-based alcohol industry, and a defined cluster of extant buildings on the property constructed within the Period of Significance.

Previously Listed New Jersey Distilleries & Cider Mills

There are no examples of distilleries in South Jersey, the region of the state where the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is located, that are listed in the New Jersey and/or National Registers of Historic Places; however, in North Jersey there are three individually listed sites—Mount Rose Distillery Site; Reverend John Hancock House, Cider Mill and Cemetery; and the D.L. Bryant Distillery Site—and one site that is a contributing site within a listed historic district—the Ralston Cider Mill.

The Mount Rose Distillery Site, listed in the State and National Registers in 1995 and 1996, respectively, was in operation from the 1840s through the 1920s. The site, which is abandoned, is listed under Criterion D and contains eight contributing sites but only one contributing building (Figure 54). The extant two-story brick building was mainly used for administration and storage. Despite a pre-Prohibition operation period that is similar to Laird & Company, this site differs from the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District in that most of the distillery buildings are no longer extant and the site is no longer in use.

The Reverend John Hancock House, Cider Mill, and Cemetery, listed in the State and National Registers in 1984, is significant in the areas of historic archaeology, architecture, industry, invention, and religion. The Cider Mill was

⁵² See Mark Lender and James Martin, *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1987); Scott C. Martin, (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives* (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015); Annie Prolux and Lew Nichols, *Sweet & Hard Cider: Making it, Using it, & Enjoying it*, (Charlotte, VT: Storey Publishing, 1980); and W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁵³ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 206.

⁵⁴ Hunton and McCabe, *Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory*, 67 and 176.

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constructed c.1880 and ceased production in 1947. The Hancocks produced cider and vinegar, but it is not clear if apple brandy or applejack were produced as well. The Hancock Cider Mill has a shorter Period of Significance than that of Laird & Company, though the Cider Mill was also able to continue operations through Prohibition. The Cider Mill remains extant and is located on private property behind the John Hancock House and adjacent to the Cemetery. It is unknown if the c.1880s cider making equipment remains in the mill. It is unclear that the Cemetery is connected with the House and Cider Mill as they are set apart physically, through the construction of two houses on the tax parcels between the buildings and site, and visually, by the trees and shrubs planted on the two aforementioned parcels. Therefore, this listed property does not have the same physical and visual cohesion as that of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District.

The D.L. Bryant Distillery, listed in the State Register in 1976, was derived from two prior businesses: a cider mill and distillery constructed in 1809 and a distillery and store opened in 1840. The distillery produced cider and distilled spirits until 1920 and was able to remain in business during Prohibition through the manufacture of non-alcoholic apple cider. According to the State Register nomination form, the Bryant Distillery closed in 1934. Soon after the building was converted into a residence, during which time the interior and exterior of the building underwent extensive alteration (Figure 55). While the history of the building will always be connected to New Jersey's apple-based alcohol industry, the physical alterations do not make this connection obvious; therefore, the physical aspects of the building itself are not necessarily representative of the built environment found on properties involved in the fruit distilling industry.

The Ralston Cider Mill, listed in the State and National Registers, is a contributing resource within the Ralston Historic District. Though the mill building was constructed in 1848, it was converted into a distillery in 1908 and produced spirits (known as "Tiger Apple Jack") until Prohibition, at which point the mill manufactured apple cider through the 1930s. The mill retains equipment from both its period of use as a grist mill and from its conversion to a water-powered distillery and cider mill. The building is in use today as a museum which hosts at least one annual apple pressing using the restored historic equipment that is now powered by electricity rather than water.

The distilleries and cider mills listed in the State and/or National Registers all share significance in industry for their association with the production of apple-based alcohols in New Jersey; however, they all differ in the number and type of extant resources, the physical cohesion of buildings on each property, and the integrity of the remaining resources. The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District first stands out from previously listed distilleries and cider mills as the only pre-Prohibition distillery that continues to operate in New Jersey. The district is also set apart in the number of extant buildings on the site that were constructed within the Period of Significance, the level of integrity that the buildings and site retain, and the district's ability to present a picture of the apple-based alcohol industry in New Jersey both during the height of the industry in the 19th century and the industry's decline in the 20th century. In short, the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District—despite the loss of buildings and alterations made to existing buildings over time—is the largest and most complete pre-Prohibition complex that remains in New Jersey out of the hundreds, both documented and undocumented, to exist in the state's history.

Early Settlement and Regional Agricultural Trends

The colony of New Jersey was first claimed by the Dutch who governed the territory until 1664 when the British took control of the land, dividing it into East and West Jersey. In the 17th century, the colony was becoming culturally diverse, with Germans, Scandinavians, Flemings, and Huguenots, among others, settling on the land. Subsequent to English rule,

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New Englanders began to migrate to areas comprising present-day Essex, Union, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties.⁵⁵ Settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries included five main settlement groups, including: New Englanders (primarily English Quakers and Baptists), Scottish Presbyterians, Dutch settlers, and English Quakers from the Delaware Valley who arrived during the late 17th century. During this time, Monmouth County was organized into three municipalities: Shrewsbury, Middletown, and Freehold. By the 1840s, these three townships began to be further subdivided as the administrative bodies recognized the disadvantages of overseeing a large area. In 1847, the New Jersey legislature passed an act creating the Township of Atlantic, known today as Colts Neck Township.⁵⁶ Scobeyville is an unincorporated community located within Colts Neck Township in Monmouth County and derives its name from the Scobey family, whose settlement on the land dates to the late 17th century.

The early landscape of New Jersey was characterized by dispersed rural residences and an agrarian economy. New Jersey can generally be divided into three geographic agricultural regions which have varying natural resources and topography—these regional differences within the state allowed for a myriad of economic opportunities, both agricultural and industrial, depending on one's location within its borders. The northern part of the state, which contains mountains and a hilly topography, was best suited for the raising of field crops and dairy farming. Potatoes and row crops were the main produce farmed in the fertile soil and level, rolling lands that characterize the central part of the state, while fruits and hay were also harvested. The level, sandy coastal area of southern New Jersey was ideal for apple and peach orchards as well as cranberry bogs. At the outset, subsistence farming prevailed across the state as settlers attempted to establish permanent homesteads; once a farm became self-supporting, farmers could focus their attention on planting crops to sell in local markets. As the populations of New York City and Philadelphia grew, and as the nation sought to expand westward in the latter half of the 19th century, farming in New Jersey began to move away from general farming toward crop specialization.

While agriculture was paramount in New Jersey during the early colonial period, trade and the state's natural resources prompted the spread of manufacture—Elizabeth became a center for tanning hides to make harnesses and saddles; the forests of southern New Jersey provided lumber to ship carpenters in Cape May, Newton, Salem, and Burlington; and New Jersey's apple industry fueled Newark's brewing industry.⁵⁷ An increase in manufacturing, the development of strong trade networks with surrounding cities, and the advances of the Industrial Revolution all contributed to a decrease of farming throughout the nation. Small-scale farms began to disappear as farmers could not compete with the large-scale enterprises of commercial farming and, as a result, greater numbers of people sought factory work in nearby cities. This trend was occurring throughout the nation. In 1790, over ninety percent of Americans lived on farms and worked in the agricultural industry; by the onset of the Civil War, the number of Americans living on farms was just over fifty percent.⁵⁸ By 1910, only thirty percent of Americans resided on farms.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Peter O. Wacker, "New Jersey's Cultural Resources: A.D. 1660-1810" in *New Jersey's Archaeological Resources from the Paleo-Indian Period to the Present: A Review of Research Problems and Survey Priorities*, ed. by Olga Chesler (New Jersey: Office of Cultural and Environmental Services, Department of Environmental Protection, February 1982), 199.

⁵⁶ *Acts of the Seventy-First General Assembly of the State of New Jersey and Third Session Under the New Constitution* (Trenton, NJ: Phillips & Boswell, 1847). The Act notes that the first annual town meeting would be held at the "public house now kept by Samuel Laird in the village of Colt's Neck."

⁵⁷ Federal Writers' Project, *The WPA Guide to New Jersey* (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 2013), 69.

⁵⁸ Dan Pucci and Craig Cavallo, *American Cider: A Modern Guide to a Historic Beverage* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2021), 65-66.

⁵⁹ J.C. Folger and S.M. Thompson, *The Commercial Apple Industry of North America* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921), 10.

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Monmouth County is a 472 square mile land area bound by Sandy Hook and Raritan Bays on the north, on the west by Middlesex, Mercer, and Burlington Counties, on the south by Ocean County, and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean. The development of Monmouth is closely tied to agriculture as that was the mainstay of the County's economy from the beginning of European settlement through the mid-20th century. The fertile soil, notably that in the western and central part of the County, produced a high crop yield that was quickly and easily sold due to proximity to major metropolitan markets. The Industrial Revolution coupled with the rise of railroads and the automobile, were catalysts for major economic and spatial change throughout the country, the effects of which were prevalent in Monmouth County by the middle of the 20th century. While agriculture remains part of the County's landscape today, that specific industry is no longer the economic driver.

The 1984 Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Report divides the County into five regions; Colts Neck Township is in Region 5, along with the Englishtown, Farmingdale, and Freehold Boroughs as well as the Townships of Freehold, Howell, Manalapan, and Marlboro. This 195 square mile region of land (42% of the county) contains the fertile soils of the Inner Coastal Plain. The 1984 report refers to the region as "the agricultural heartland" of the County but indicated that this epithet no longer holds true due to rapid development.⁶⁰ In the 19th century, large quantities of marl, a natural fertilizer, were discovered in the region and served two purposes: as fertilizer for thriving potato farmers and as a source of revenue for areas, such as Farmingdale, who shipped the natural resource to all parts of the country. The area's successful agricultural industry spurred the development of infrastructure (railways and roads) to transport crops to nearby cities and port towns. By the first half of the 20th century, large farms within the subject area of Monmouth County practiced agricultural specialization, beginning with potato farming and continuing with an increase in garden crop production, horse raising, dairy farming, and poultry farming. Post-World War II suburban growth transformed the land use of the region and reduced its agricultural base.

The expansion of road and rail networks helped to foster industrial enterprises; however, small-scale industrial activity related to food processing had been present before development of the railroads, including distilleries located in Manalapan, Colts Neck, Freehold, and Marlboro.⁶¹ Applejack and apple brandy distilleries were part of the food processing industry in Monmouth County, especially in remote areas with limited access to the Philadelphia and New York markets. Applejack was a commodity that provided one way to utilize orchard produce which was easy to transport and sell. In the early 19th century, many small distilleries were extant in the County—in 1832 Freehold Township alone had 32.⁶² Over the course of the century, the number of distilleries decreased but those that remained increased in size and were largely concentrated in the Freehold-Manalapan area.

Apple Industry in New Jersey

According to the book *American Cider*, written by Dan Pucci and Craig Cavallo, the apple industry in the United States dates back to the first European settlements in the 17th century and was prevalent in all regions of the nation by the late 18th century.⁶³ The nation's regional cultural and economic differences were shaped by early settlement patterns. While settlers in New England were motivated by religious freedom, European settlement in the southeast was funded by England's aristocracy with the intent to exploit the land for goods to sell in the English market. Across the colonies, the planting of apple trees was commonplace as farmers discovered that apple orchards were a low investment and easy to

⁶⁰ Gail Hunton and James McCabe, *Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Summary Report* (Lincroft, NJ: Monmouth County Parks System, 1984), 62.

⁶¹ Hunton and McCabe, *Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory*, 67.

⁶² Hunton and McCabe, 176.

⁶³ Pucci and Cavallo, *American Cider*, 8.

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maintain. Pioneers seeking to settle in the Midwest found that indigenous peoples in the region who had been pushed out had already established orchards of their own while apple orchards were planted as part of Spanish Mission sustenance farming in California in the late 1700s.⁶⁴ Apple trees often increased a property's value and the planting of apple orchards was encouraged and, in some cases, required in areas of new settlement.⁶⁵

New Jersey has been recognized since the late 1600s for its apple products after apple seeds brought from Europe proved to be a successful crop in the state as apple trees survived in land not suitable for other types of cultivation. Farmers were often faced with an overabundance of the crop, which could not all be sold at local markets or eaten. The production of cider was not only a way to utilize the surplus of apples to prevent waste, but the resulting product was a commodity that could be consumed by the farmers producing it or traded as a form of currency for goods and services. The early successes of the state's apple orchards is evident from correspondence and publications in England and Scotland as early as the 1680s, which mention apple cider production in New Jersey from Newark, the Burlington and West Jersey area, Elizabethtown and East Jersey, and the current Perth Amboy area.⁶⁶ A 1685 letter written by John Forbes from New Perth (present-day Perth Amboy) noted that "Fruit Trees advance at a great rate in this place, for a man may have an orchard within a few years after planting, that may yield him a great quantitie [sic] of cyder, which is the chieftest of their drink in this Province."⁶⁷

William Coxe, a notable pomologist who cultivated various types of apples in his experimental orchards in Burlington, New Jersey, praised the fertility of the region's soil for cultivation of orchards. In his book *A View of the Cultivation of Fruit Trees and the Management of Orchards and Cider* (1817), considered the authoritative work on cider making and pomiculture in the United States for decades after it was published, Coxe stated his belief that the best apple growing region extended from the Mohawk River in New York down through New Jersey to the James River in Virginia.⁶⁸ The abundance of waterways on which apples and apple-based products such as cider could be transported and New Jersey's proximity to major cities and ports allowed the region's apple industry to thrive.

In the 19th century, small farm orchards were still common although more commercial orchards were established as the expansion of railroads made it easier to ship products farther distances and as the market demand for fresh produce increased. Experimenting with the cultivation of fruit varieties became a commercial venture as well as a hobby for amateurs exploring the field of pomology. Any fruit that was not "sellable" at markets was used for at-home cider making which could be sold for an additional source of income.⁶⁹ In New Jersey, Newark became the center of commercial cider manufacture in the Mid-Atlantic region, using apples from the state's orchards. Newark's successful cider industry eventually declined as nearby orchards were cleared to make way for the city's expanding industrial endeavors. From 1850-1900 the nation's population tripled; in that time, the value of orchard products skyrocketed from \$7.7 to \$83.7 million, reflecting the growth of commercial orchards as farmers discovered which apples were most profitable.⁷⁰ However, the establishment and success of commercial orchards to supply market demands ultimately led to the decline of smaller orchards. Those who could not farm commercially, in general, were compelled to seek jobs in nearby cities. While

⁶⁴ Pucci and Cavallo, 175 & 253-254.

⁶⁵ Pucci and Cavallo, 176. The Ohio Company of Associates, established in 1786, required individuals who received parcels of land to immediately plant apple, peach, and pear trees to try and encourage settlement on the land and deter land speculation.

⁶⁶ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 17-18.

⁶⁷ Carl R. Woodward, "Odd Bits of Agricultural History: New Jersey Cider," in *New Jersey Agriculture* 9, no. 1 (January 1927): 14-15.

⁶⁸ William Coxe, *A View of the Cultivation of Fruit Trees, and the Management of Orchards and Cider* (Philadelphia, PA: M. Carey and Son, 1817), 9.

⁶⁹ Pucci and Cavallo, *American Cider*, 107.

⁷⁰ Pucci and Cavallo, 107.

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many commercial apple orchards were able to survive through the 20th century, the expense of competing with large-scale orchards, temperance movements, Prohibition, and the development of cities, all sounded the death knell for small, diversified orchards.

Apple-Based Alcohols in American History

Cider, fruit brandies, and applejack were among the most prevalent beverages in America's colonial and federal eras. Although distilled fruit spirits were gradually eclipsed by rum and whisky, they influenced early American drinking patterns. The history of alcohol production is also indicative of regional agricultural histories in America: crops like apples that grew easily in the climate of Colonial America were easy and profitable to turn into alcoholic drinks. Americans modified European methods to suit ingredients that could be grown locally. Liquors made from grains or fruits were easier to produce than beer in reliable quality, which contributed to their popularity. The high alcohol content also allowed them to last longer than beer. Distilling and brewing mostly occurred at the scale of individual households and backyard stills like the Laird family's, gradually increasing the taste for distilled drinks over beers and ciders.⁷¹

Applejack and Apple Brandy

Applejack and apple brandy are both liquors distilled from apple cider. Applejack is a lesser-known spirit today but was one of the most popular drinks produced in early America. Applejack and apple brandy are made from whole apples that are ground into a pulp (called pomace) and pressed to produce a sweet cider. The cider is then fermented in large tanks to develop its initial alcohol content. The cider is transferred to pot stills to complete the distilling process, after which point it is stored in oak barrels and aged for several years.⁷² Applejack is a federally defined category and industrial classification of distilled alcoholic spirit, similar to scotch or gin, which blends apple brandy (typically 35%) and neutral grain spirits (typically 65%).

Although the federal class known as blended applejack became recognized in the 1960s, prior to Prohibition there was no consistent nomenclature for applejack and apple brandy; additional terms used interchangeably for cider-based spirits included apple whiskey, apple spirits, cider brandy, cider (or cyder) spirits, and cider oil. Recent literature will sometimes differentiate applejack as the high-proof liquid heart of a keg of hard cider that is left outside to freeze; as the cider freezes, the liquid separates into two distinct layers of alcohol and water. The water is then siphoned off the top and the process repeated leaving behind a more potent liquid. Apple brandy is often identified as the cooled liquid from alcoholic vapors that are created through the heating of fermented cider or pomace in a copper still.⁷³ The blending of pure apple brandy and applejack with neutral grain spirits can generally be attributed to the high cost of producing all-fruit brandy and a shifting taste among American consumers both before and after Prohibition.

Reliance on local agriculture and domestic production led to regional alcohol trends developing as early as the late 1600s and early 1700s. Alcohol cider made from apples dominated in the northern colonies—cider that could then be distilled into stronger apple brandies and applejack. Historians Mark Lender and James Martin note that "Applejack found a particularly loyal following in the Middle Atlantic colonies, and the best came from New Jersey."⁷⁴ In New England, pear

⁷¹ Mark Lender and James Martin, *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1987), 30-31.

⁷² Laird & Company, "Facts About Laird's Applejack" and "Apple Jack," internally produced documents, Laird & Company Archive; "A Monmouth Industry Is Reborn," *Asbury Park Sunday Press*, October 22, 1933, 11.

⁷³ Annie Prolux and Lew Nichols, *Sweet & Hard Cider: Making it, Using it, & Enjoying it*, (Charlotte, VT: Storey Publishing, 1980), 18, 197-198.

⁷⁴ "A Monmouth Industry Is Reborn," *Asbury Park Sunday Press*, October 22, 1933, 11.; W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 8-9.

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brandy (known as perry) and mead from distilled honey evolved. Peach brandies were popular in the South. Preceding later national trends, grain liquor from corn and rye developed as a local trend in the Appalachian Back Country region. Frontier settlement of inland areas in the 18th century caused a shift toward whiskey in American alcohol production and consumption. Agriculture was again a driving influence since the dominant crop in these regions, grain (mostly corn and rye), was easily harvested and distilled into whiskey. On a national scale, distilled fruit liquor and rum popularity declined. Domestically distilled whiskey rose to widespread prominence and became one of the most significant products of American alcohol culture by the late 18th century.

However, cider still rivaled whiskey's popularity in the apple-growing regions from Virginia through New England. Historian W. J. Rorabaugh wrote, "During the early nineteenth century whiskey's only rival as the national beverage came from apple orchards."⁷⁵ Cider was inexpensive to produce and plentiful.⁷⁶ It was common for farms and orchards to have their own cider press and take advantage of surplus crops. Abundant apple harvests were perishable and only so much of the crop could be consumed and sold in local markets; excess apples were then easily ground up and pressed into cider. From cider, stronger apple spirits could be distilled. Local and individualized production resulted in infinite variation in early "recipes" for applejack and apple brandy.

Alcoholic drinks were a part of daily life for early Americans. Cider and whiskey especially were consumed throughout the day, often as a safer alternative to water. Scholars have estimated that Americans drank around 3.5 gallons of distilled spirits per capita each year in 1770. This assessment groups rum, whiskey, gin, and brandy together, with applejack and fruit brandies understood as a subcomponent of this larger trend.

Following the Revolutionary War, alcohol consumption dropped with new taxes on distilled spirits. This trend was reversed around 1880 with improvements in distilling technology and protests against these taxes, coupled with general economic expansion for the new country. By 1830, annual per capita drinking had reached as much as 7 gallons a year—around three times today's average.⁷⁷ Apple-based alcohols (cider, brandy, and applejack) and whiskey were imbued with patriotic significance during the early 1800s when American drinking was at its heaviest. Unlike imported European liquors, these drinks were celebrated as distinctly "American" spirits in contemporary publications, advertisements, and political rhetoric because the raw materials and finished product were produced in and on American soil.⁷⁸ 1830 was the peak of alcoholic consumption in America. Temperance societies began to exert a steady influence against the production and availability of alcohol. Distilled spirits especially were viewed as dangerous and morally corrupting. The 1830s and 40s saw rise in popularity of German-influenced beer, which challenged hard liquor dominance, and immigration generally helped diversify American drinking patterns. National liquor consumption dropped during these decades and historian Mark Lender estimates that 4,000 distilleries closed across the country, grouping all types of distilled spirits together including whiskey, bourbon, and brandies. The 1850s were the height of temperance reform prior to the adoption of the Prohibition amendment. However, some traditional drinks, including apple cider, remained popular and experienced innovations in mill construction and production methods.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 8-9.

⁷⁶ Lender and Martin, *Drinking in America*, 30-33.

⁷⁷ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 8; W.J. Rorabaugh, "Alcohol in America," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 17; Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 7-8; Mike Stobbe, "US drinking more now than just before Prohibition," *AP News* (January 14, 2020).

⁷⁸ Okrent, *Last Call*, 54.

⁷⁹ Lender and Martin, *Drinking in America*, 63.

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The American cider industry had declined long before Prohibition began in 1919. As market demand for fresh eating apples increased, apple orchards focused on cultivating apple varieties that, unlike the smaller and more sour apples favored for cider, were both attractive in appearance and favorable to consumers. An increase in distilled grain spirits and maritime trade bringing rum into New England led to diminished cider consumption. While cider was still made on local farms for individual consumption, it was no longer a main part of national culture. Cider's popularity has increased in recent years leading to an increase in the number of cideries in the country. In 1990, only ten existed; today, cider is manufactured in all 50 states. In 2020, the number of cideries in the nation approached 1,000 and in 2022 cider produced \$536.5 million in revenue.⁸⁰

Applejack Distilleries in New Jersey

Abundant apple crops and the early tradition of regional distilling made apple cider, brandy, and applejack a lasting influence in New Jersey. National trends in taste and production toward whiskey and beer did play out in the state, but there remained a strong continuity of local and regional traditions of fruit distilling. In his book, *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from Colonial Times to the Present*, Weiss notes that although New Jersey was not the only state to produce and consume applejack, the high volume of production in the state from the late 17th century onward and the spirit's nickname "Jersey Lightning" have intertwined the two histories. The "Jersey Lightning" nickname, which referred to its popularity and potency, appeared in newspaper reports by 1837 though the term was probably in use earlier.⁸¹

New Jersey held a prominent place within the early American apple industry and the cider, apple brandy, and applejack produced in the state were held in high regard. Advertisements for Newark cider, also called Newark Champagne, could be found in 19th century newspapers across the country, including the South and as far west as California. Renowned for its quality, Newark's cider sold for nearly twice the cost of other ciders sold in the South and Caribbean.⁸² The superiority of Newark cider was mentioned by foreign and domestic travelers alike, with one American traveler commenting on English cider, noting: "Compared with Newark cider, or any of our cider of like grade, [English cider] was a dull, flavorless fluid."⁸³ This sample of evidence points to New Jersey's early reputation within the American cider industry. Evidence of local distilling activity dates to the early 18th century. A sale advertised in 1731 for a farm in Newark, New Jersey, noted that the farm included an orchard, a still house, and equipment for distilling cider.⁸⁴ The growth of applejack distilling as an individual household practice and as a burgeoning local industry during this early period is best interpreted through such real estate advertisements, early machinery trade publications, patents for distilling equipment, and tax records. New Jersey tax returns from 1810 illustrate that over 1 million gallons of distilled spirits had been produced that year, with applejack or apple brandy estimated to account for about 75% of production.⁸⁵

Coinciding with the national peak of alcohol consumption, cider production in New Jersey in the 1830s was booming. Note that, at the time and throughout the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, "cider" sometimes referred to brandy or applejack as well, since the terms were not as well defined. An 1834 publication about the history of New Jersey declared that "the cider of New Jersey is justly preferred to any other of the United States" and noted that there were 388 cider distilleries in the state. Monmouth County alone counted 46 distilleries.⁸⁶ The Laird's family-run distillery, at the time

⁸⁰ NielsenIQ, "U.S. hard cider sales show declines overall, local bright spots," January 11, 2013.

⁸¹ "Great Locofoco Riot," *New York Daily Herald*, October 16, 1837.

⁸² Jonathan S. Buell, *The Cider Maker's Manual*, (Buffalo, NY: Haas, Nauert, and Co., 1874), 67.

⁸³ Richard Grant White, *England Without and Within*, (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1881), 178.

⁸⁴ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 59-66.

⁸⁵ Weiss, 75.

⁸⁶ Thomas F. Gordon, "A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey," (Philadelphia: Daniel Fenton, 1834), 16.

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operating from its first location behind the Colts Neck Inn & Tavern, contributed to this abundance. Hunterdon, Morris, Burlington, and Middlesex counties had similarly high numbers of cider distilleries.

Temperance societies in New Jersey gained influence in the early 1800s, again reflecting national trends. They successfully reduced cider and distilled spirits production (including applejack and apple brandy) in the 1830s-50s.⁸⁷ However, during this time, as later under Prohibition, cider and apple spirit distilling experienced waves of local economic success and abundance, thanks to its highly localized agricultural ties and informal production. From the 1860s through the 1910s, tax revenue from distilled and fermented alcohol increased steadily in New Jersey, even as distillery numbers decreased in the region (Appendix B). This mirrors a pattern of consolidation and growth evident throughout the country. Following a sharp decline during Prohibition (1920-1933), tax revenue from the alcohol industry increased dramatically, both in New Jersey and nationally, even as the number of local distilleries continued to decline.⁸⁸

Despite the decline of production and the gradual loss of apple orchards and distillery buildings across the state, applejack remains an important element of the state's agricultural and industrial identity. The State Senate of New Jersey acknowledged its importance in 1964 during the state's 300th anniversary celebrations. They issued a resolution recognizing apples as one of New Jersey's primary agricultural industries and the production of applejack and brandy spirits as "one of the most important uses of New Jersey apples" since the colonial era (Figure 50). The Senate saluted the "Apple Jack Brandy producers as the oldest native distilled spirit beverage industry in the United States and the New Jersey apple growers who make it possible"⁸⁹ (Figure 51).

Distilling Process and Distillery Typologies in the U.S.

The first record of distilleries in what would become the United States date to the earliest colonies. While malt and beer breweries came to the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic with the first ships from England in the 1600s, early distilling activities were crude and dangerous. Several early accounts document explosive experimentation with alcohol production in the colonies. Subsequent waves of immigration, particularly from Scotland and Germany, brought new distilling technology and techniques which increased the quality of American liquor.⁹⁰ These evolutions in the distilling process were evident in the growth and adaptation of American distillery complexes. Though the physical facilities vary with the size of production, how much of the process happens in-house, and the type of alcohol produced, liquor distillation throughout the U.S. follows the same steps of concentrating base liquids into stronger spirits, and therefore requires certain common equipment and facilities.

In essence, liquor distillation involves concentrating the alcohol percentage of an already-fermented drink like apple cider or beer, which are called the "wash." For applejack, the wash is apple cider. For another classic American alcohol, whiskey, the wash is a grain-based mash similar to beer without hops. Alcohol is concentrated from the water-heavy wash by exploiting its lower boiling point, 173.1°F compared with 212°F for water. Above 173.1°F, the alcohol evaporates

⁸⁷ Gordon, 16; United States Department of Agriculture, *Recapitulation of the Aggregate Value, and Produce, and Number of Persons Employed in Mines, Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures, &c.*, 1840; Charles A. Dana and George Ripley, ed., *The New American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge*, vol. XII (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1870), 228-234. Data from federal tax records shows a significant decrease in the number of distilleries in New Jersey during this period, from 388 in 1830 to 68 in 1850.

⁸⁸ United States Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, 1876, 1886, 1896, 1906, 1916, 1920, 1937, 1946, 1956, 1966, 1976.

⁸⁹ State of New Jersey, "Senate Resolution, By Senators Stout and Sarcone, Adopted March 9, 1964." Laird & Company Archives.

⁹⁰ Weiss, *History of Applejack*, 72-73; Scott C. Martin, (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives* (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 165-166.

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from the wash and can then be condensed. However, above 212°F the water will also begin to evaporate, mixing the two together again. Distillation relies on careful temperature control to optimize the process. The same principle means that alcohol freezes at a lower temperature than water, so that in the cold Northeast cider could be left out at a temperature which would freeze the wash but not the alcohol, which could then be siphoned off. This early distilling method, of freezing and “jacking” the alcohol, turned the first American ciders into crude applejack.⁹¹ The primary method of distillation, widely in use by the Middle Ages, involves heating the wash in a large pot still and collecting the steam condensate from a lip or tube at the top of the pot. In the early Renaissance two important innovations improved the efficiency of distillation. First, steam replaced wood fire as the heating method. This allowed for finer temperature control and a higher quality product. Second, a coiled tube or “worm” replaced the straight collection tube from the pot, which gave the alcoholic vapor more surface area to cool and condense. This tube could also be wrapped in a water jacket which circulated cool water outside the tube, more quickly condensing the vapor and protecting the equipment from cracking due to temperature changes.⁹² Though the equipment has become more sophisticated over the centuries, this basic pot still method is still used today to produce some alcohols.

In the 1800s, another significant improvement allowed alcohol production at an unprecedented scale: the invention of the column still. The column still sped up the distillation process by continually running wash through two adjacent cylinders, called respectively the analyzer and rectifier. The analyzer runs steam through wash as it percolates down several perforated plates, and the rectifier collects the alcohol vapors and feeds them into the condenser tube. The cold wash runs first through the rectifier to pre-heat before it reaches the analyzer and helps chill the alcohol steam that rises around it, thus improving the efficiency of the whole. Large liquor producers today favor contemporary versions of column stills, which by continuous circulation can quickly distill large amounts of alcohol. However, some craft distilleries and specialty alcohols use pot stills, which leave more of the impurities that define characteristic flavors. Some productions use both, with column stills producing a purer alcohol which is then blended with less potent and more flavorful liquids.⁹³

Applejack and apple brandy both distill from apple cider, and so apple-based distilleries in early America often involved facilities to produce both cider and its stronger derivatives. Physically, this entailed a variable set of structures and land features including orchards, water sources for power and/or distillery cooling, millhouses to press and grind apples, still houses to distill the cider, and storehouses or warehouses to age the liquor. Not all operations had all of these elements—for instance, apple grinding and pressing might take place off-site at a larger, or common, facility—but many of the larger farm distilleries did. In *History of Applejack*, Weiss documents the physical facilities of many New Jersey applejack producers from the 1700s and 1800s, and many of these included the five elements listed above. Applejack distilling was not unique in its process, nor in the types of buildings needed to process the raw material, house the stills, and age the spirits. Other fruit-based alcohols and grain alcohols like whiskey and bourbon used similar production methods. Although alcohol products tended to follow local or regional trends driven by agriculture, distilleries throughout the United States shared similarities in built character and features, regardless of the type of distilled spirit produced.

Weiss also documents the variety of technologies employed in this cottage industry. Some distilleries used steam-powered mills, while some used horse power, and others used water wheels. The physical arrangement of the buildings also varied depending on the distillery’s sophistication. Some combined the distillery and storehouse so that the liquor could be pumped easily into storage barrels, and some arranged the cider mill above the distillery so cider could be fed in with the

⁹¹ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 72-81; Martin and Lender, *Drinking in America*, 165-166.

⁹² DeSalle, Robert and Ian Tattersall, *Distilled: A Natural History of Spirits* (Yale University Press, 2022), 23-24.

⁹³ DeSalle and Tattersall, 27.

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help of gravity.⁹⁴ Distilleries were frequently located close to a natural water source and used the natural topography and multi-level buildings for this functionality.

While there are some evident similarities between early distilleries, little information is available about a typical or typological American distillery. Historical accounts of American distilleries, such as Weiss's, frequently mention the above building types. However, these are more functional types than physical types, characterized by their use rather than a particular material, scale, proportion, or other defining architectural feature. Although they all produced alcoholic beverages, the physical characteristics varied considerably from distillery to distillery.

Research Restrictions

While the history of some alcohol industries in America such as whiskey have extensive documentation, both in primary records and secondary sources through rigorous scholarship, applejack and apple brandy have not received as much attention from historians. There are limited scholarly works on fruit-based alcohols that provide context for its production and consumption in American history.

Moreover, due to the more informal nature of these operations on private farms and often at a local scale of distribution, and due to the industrial function of the facilities and company closures, much of the historical material was not preserved or made widely available for comparative study. Historian W.J. Rorabaugh, in his book *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*, articulated the challenges to his analysis of historical production and consumption data:

The poor quality of existing records reflects the fact that brewing and distilling were dominated by thousands of small operators whose ledgers, if they ever existed, have long since vanished. As for retail sales, so many people distilled or brewed at home, bartered with neighbors, or bought directly from the manufacturer that the limited information in real account books could not be employed to calculate total per capita consumption.⁹⁵

This reality complicates the development of a comprehensive historic context for American distilling, especially for subcategories of the industry like apple-based alcohols. Laird & Company is an exception to this pattern of non-existent records, as a small operator that grew into an international company and maintains a business archive.

The ubiquity of cider specifically meant that it was not consistently recorded, making it difficult to quantify the origins of apple-based alcohols and tracing its significance in early American industrial patterns. Rorabaugh continues that:

For hard cider, which was neither taxed nor included in a census, use was made of a few scattered references. Cider consumption was estimated based on these sources, the population of cider producing areas (defined as New England [except Maine], New York [except New York City], New Jersey, Maryland, Ohio, and half of Pennsylvania and Virginia), and an alcohol content of 10 percent, the minimum needed to prevent spoilage during storage.⁹⁶

Domestic production and consumption data was generally gleaned from population estimates, tax receipts, census occupations and agricultural censuses, license applications, mortality and medical reporting, and anecdotal accounts,

⁹⁴ Weiss, *The History of Applejack*, 175.

⁹⁵ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 228.

⁹⁶ Rorabaugh, 229.

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which can together lead to gaps in comprehensive primary source data. The interchangeable use of the terms applejack, apple brandy, and cider, among others, make it difficult to distinguish between and study the specific production history of each individual product. These limitations are perpetuated in later research as Rorabaugh's data analysis is one of the preeminent scholarly resources on the topic of American alcohol. These sources and multi-perspective methodology were also employed for this nomination.

Apple-based alcohols and the distilling industry fell between the agriculture and manufacturing industries—relevant to both but often left out of records precisely because it was in a middle ground. “Industrial” directories and censuses in the 19th century and even early 20th century focused on factories producing goods like textiles, metals, grains and foodstuffs, and similar goods. In the *Industries of New Jersey* (published 1882-1883), which profiled New Jersey towns and businesses, Colts Neck was listed as a “post village” and Scobeyville as a “post hamlet” with a population less than 200. Laird & Company (or Robert Laird by name) does not appear, nor do other contemporary distilleries mentioned in Weiss (Vanderveer, Perrine, Tinton/Combs, or Walling), although some names have their dry goods stores listed. However, this period was extremely active for Monmouth County distilleries. *The Industrial Directory of New Jersey* series (published 1901-1980 under varying names) promoted industrial development and manufacturing opportunities, heavily focused on larger municipalities. Only one distillery is listed in Somerset County (the Somerset Distilling Co.) in the 1901 edition. Scobeyville's first appearance was in 1909 with no mention of local distillers or any similar industry: “A farming district with good soil and well cultivated lands. The products are potatoes, grain of all kinds, garden vegetables, fruits and berries.”⁹⁷ In the next edition in 1912, the Laird distillery was the only specific business listed for Scobeyville, and the only distillery noted as such in the whole publication; following the general description of Scobeyville's agricultural character, the directory noted simply: “There is a distillery here owned by Robert Laird.”⁹⁸ In other publications of the liquor industry, no pertinent information about Laird & Company, Monmouth County distilleries, or applejack were found in available holdings of other market trade literature, such as *Mida's Criterion of the Wine and Liquor Industry*.

Agricultural records, in New Jersey and nationally, counted the number of farms, the quantities of products grown and sold, and the number of people employed, with little attention given to how those crops were used for a secondary commercial good. Because many New Jersey smaller distilleries bought apples from surrounding farms, their production is not reflected in crop-based data; operators sometimes owned small orchards, but supported local farmers by purchasing large quantities of apples for pressing and distilling into apple-based alcohols. Newspapers reports from the 1880s through the 1910s contain references to years of abundant apple crops and the distilleries—including Laird & Company—receiving apples and years when a bad crop threatened the production of applejack for the season.

Because small distilleries, especially for fruit-based alcohols, were typically located in rural agrarian settings rather than larger cities, they were less frequently captured (if at all) in centralized records such as fire insurance maps or city directories. Even when distilleries were recorded in maps and atlases, no detail was given regarding the type of distillery, such as grain or fruit. All existing maps of Scobeyville and the subject property are included in this nomination. Insurance maps published about whiskey distilleries in the late 19th and 20th century illustrate the imbalance of records between types of alcohol. *Sanborn's Surveys of the Whiskey Warehouses of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and New York* was published in 1894 (and updated through 1915) and only record one distillery in New Jersey: the Somerset Distilling Co. in Somerset County, featured again because of its location in a larger municipality and connection to a more influential industry. Yet, in the 1890s, the apple-based alcohol distilling industry was very active in New Jersey and Monmouth County, demonstrated by newspaper accounts, tavern and wholesale liquor applications, and Harry B. Weiss's scholarship. Similarly, the Sanborn-Perris Map Company published a compendium of whiskey distilleries and warehouses

⁹⁷ *The Industrial Directory of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Bureau of Statistics of New Jersey, 1909) 399.

⁹⁸ *The Industrial Directory of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Bureau of Statistics of New Jersey, 1912) 430.

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in Kentucky and Tennessee in 1910, illustrating the dominance of whiskey in the historic record of American distilled spirits.

Municipal, county, and state repositories were searched for information on the specific company and family history; construction, agricultural, and industrial reporting records; and information about alcoholic production and distilling. The authors corresponded with repository curators and archivists in the preparation of this nomination.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The Laird & Company Distillery Historic District boundary conforms to the current tax map parcel boundary. The tax parcel is officially recorded as block 35, lot 12. The district is bounded by County Route 537 to the south, Laird Road to the west, and the municipal tax parcel boundaries to the north and east.

Boundary Justification Statement

The tax parcel boundary is the most consistent with the parcels owned by the Laird family over time and best illustrates the boundaries of the distillery during the Period of Significance. The contributing resources are clustered in the southern portion of the property (the House and Barn) and in the northern portion where the original distillery complex stood (the Office, Still House, Former Bottling Plant, Bonded Warehouse 1B, and dam and man-made pond site features). The non-contributing Current Bottling Plant is located at the center of the property. The tax map parcel boundary for the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is consistent with the boundary used for the 1981 and 2006 Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory Survey.

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Current Photographs

Name of Property: Laird & Company Distillery Historic District
City or Vicinity: Scobeyville, Colts Neck Township
County: Monmouth County
State: New Jersey
Photographer: Siri Olson and Francesca Evans
Data Photographed: November 17, 2023.
Location of Original Digital Files: Easton Architects, LLP
Number of Photographs: 65

- Photo 1. View of the southern portion of the property containing the House (left), Barn (center), and Current Bottling Plant (right) seen from County Road 537, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 2. View of the distillery complex at the northern portion of the property containing the man-made pond, dam, and Former Bottling Plant (left); Still House and Office (center); and Bonded Warehouse (right), camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 3. View of the dam and man-made pond, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 4. View of the Current Bottling Plant and dam (left), and man-made pond (right), camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 5. Exterior view of the House, south (primary) façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 6. Exterior view of the House, north (rear) elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 7. Exterior view of the House, east elevation, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 8. Interior view of the formal entry into the center hall in Volume B of the House. Volume A, the oldest portion of the House, is to the left. Camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 9. Interior view of the House, south room of Volume A, the oldest volume of the building, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 10. Detail view of the original wood beams and ceiling finish in Volume A, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 11. Interior view of the House, first floor room in the 1934 west wing of the building (Volume C), camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 12. Detail view of the fireplace surround tiles illustrating the applejack distilling process. The fireplace and tiles were built during the 1934 renovation and the tiles were designed by architect J.H. Conover. Camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 13. Interior view of the House, second floor of Volume A, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 14. Exterior view of the Barn, west elevation, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 15. Exterior view of the Barn, east and south elevations, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 16. Exterior view of the Barn, north elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 17. Interior view of the Barn, southernmost room of the first floor in Volume A, the oldest section of the Barn, with opening to root cellar, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 18. Interior view of the Barn, southernmost room of the first floor in Volume A above the brick root cellar, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 19. Interior view of the Barn, root cellar and exposed foundation walls beneath the oldest section of the Barn, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 20. Exterior view of the Barn, Dutch door leading to former stable located in the middle section of the Barn (Volume B), camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).

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- Photo 21. Interior view of the Barn, northwest room of the first floor in the north section of the Barn, Volume C, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 22. Interior view of the Barn, second floor of Volume B is in the foreground and the second floor of Volume A, slightly elevated, is in the background, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 23. Interior view of the Barn, second floor structural transition from Volume A (left) to Volume B (right) of the Barn, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 24. Interior view of the Barn, exposed wall and roof framing in the middle section of the Barn (Volume B) at the interior side of the east elevation, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 25. Interior view of the Barn, northwest corner of the second floor in Volume C. Interior of north and west elevations and exposed roof structure, indicating two different phases of construction. Camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 26. Exterior view of the Office, south elevation, within the surrounding context of the distillery complex, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 27. Exterior view of the Office, west (primary) façade, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 28. Exterior view of the Office, north elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 29. Exterior view of the Office, collapsed east elevation with temporary bracing and vegetation growth, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 30. Exterior view of the Still House, south (primary) façade, and attached distillery equipment buildings beyond, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 31. Exterior view of the Still House, west elevation with rear concrete block addition and attached distillery equipment buildings beyond, with Mechanical Equipment Shed in the foreground, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 32. Exterior view of the Still House (right) and attached distillery equipment rooms (left), camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 33. Exterior view of the Still House, east elevation, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 34. Exterior view of the Still House (left) and attached distillery equipment rooms, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 35. Exterior view of the Still House (right) attached distillery equipment rooms, Volumes B, C, and D, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 36. Exterior view of the Still House attached distillery equipment rooms, Volume D south (primary) façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 37. Interior view of the Still House, elevated steel grate platform and remnants of old distilling equipment and piping, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 38. Detail view of original brick pot still used for applejack distilling, located inside the Still House, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 39. Detail view of historic still and kettle used for applejack distilling, with additional equipment and piping beyond, located inside the Still House, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 40. Interior view of the boiler room in Volume D attached to the Still House, including an original boiler (right), camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 41. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, south elevation, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 42. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, north and west elevations of Volume A, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 43. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, south elevation of Volume A (left) and Volume B (right), camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 44. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, east elevation of Volume B, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).

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- Photo 45. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, north elevation of Volume B, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 46. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, west elevation where Volume A (right) intersects with Volume B (center), camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 47. Exterior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, south and west elevations, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 48. Exterior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, northwest corner of the 1934 section (Volume A) with the entrance leading to the first floor of the barrel ageing room. Camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 49. Detail view of door in northwest corner of Volume A (the original portion of the building) which is a near replica of the original 1934 door, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 50. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B barrel ageing rack room in the 1934 section of the building (Volume A). Camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 51. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, barrel ageing racks in the original 1934 section of the building (Volume A), camera facing east (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 52. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, later addition (Volume B), camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 53. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, south (primary) façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 54. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, entrance located on south façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 55. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, north and west elevations, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 56. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, north elevation of easternmost building, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 57. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, east elevation, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 58. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, warehouse room to the east of the building's main office, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 59. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, bottling and packaging room, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 60. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, bottling equipment with conveyor belts carrying boxed bottles over the machinery, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 61. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, modern fermentation tanks, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 62. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, large storage tanks, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 63. Exterior view of the Mechanical Equipment Shed built into the dam, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 64. Area of demolished distillery complex buildings, including the Cider Mill, which was located in the foreground and where the current Mechanical Equipment Shed is, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).
- Photo 65. View from across Laird Road of area where demolished distillery buildings once stood within the surrounding context of the extant distillery buildings, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Laird & Company Distillery Historic District

New Jersey and National Registers Nomination
Scobeyville, Colts Neck Township,
Monmouth County,
New Jersey

Boundary and tax map

0 80 160 320 480
Feet

Datum: NAD 1983 State Plane New Jersey

Legend

NJ & NR Nomination

Property

Historic District Status

Contributing

Non contributing

Resource

Status, Type

Contributing building

Non contributing building

Contributing site

Contributing Structure

Non contributing structure

Tax Parcels

Coordinates

1 Resource number

25.25 Acres



NJDEP,
Historic Preservation Office
January 2024

Laird & Company Distillery Site Development Maps

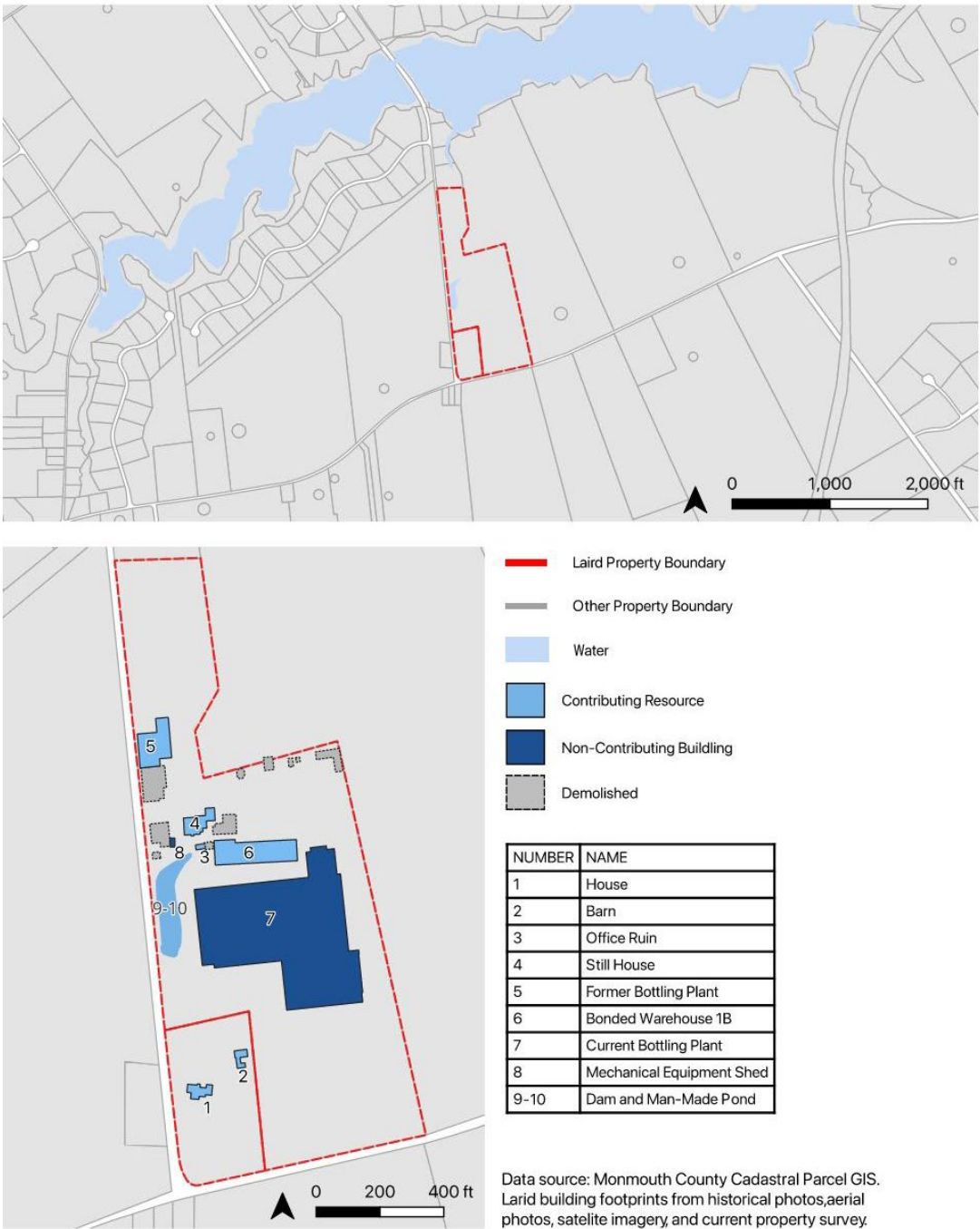


Figure 1. Site boundaries of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District. Contributing and non-contributing resources are numbered according to their Section 7 narrative descriptions and illustrated in relationship to each other and the distillery’s demolished buildings.

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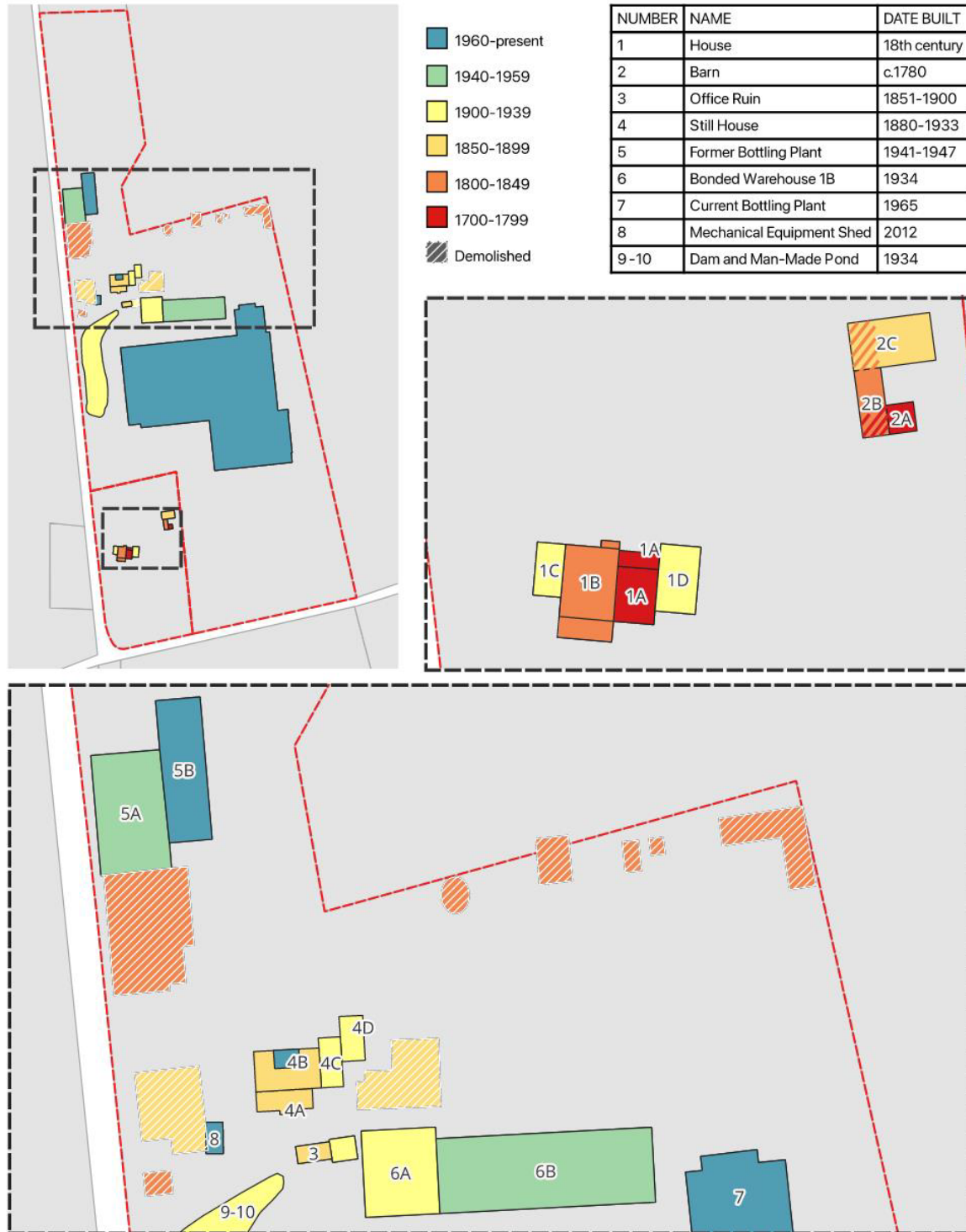


Figure 2. Diagram of all buildings and structures once extant within the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District, depicted by era of construction.

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Construction Era Legend

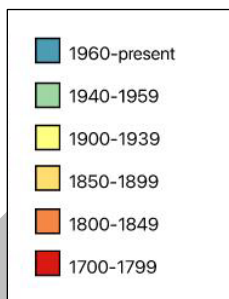


Figure 3. Site development of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District from 1700 through 1899.

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Construction Era Legend

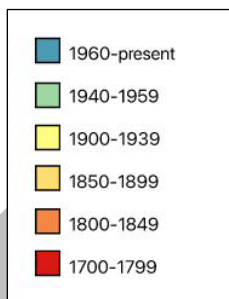


Figure 4. Site development of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District from 1900 to the present.

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Historic Maps & Atlases



Figure 5. An 1851 map illustrates the distillery and House on the current property. The approximate location of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is circled in red. Additional buildings owned by the Laird family are noted Scobeyville and Colts Neck. (Source: Jesse Lightfoot, surveyor, "Map of Monmouth County New Jersey from Original Surveys," Middletownpoint, NJ: J.B. Shields, 1851, Library of Congress.)

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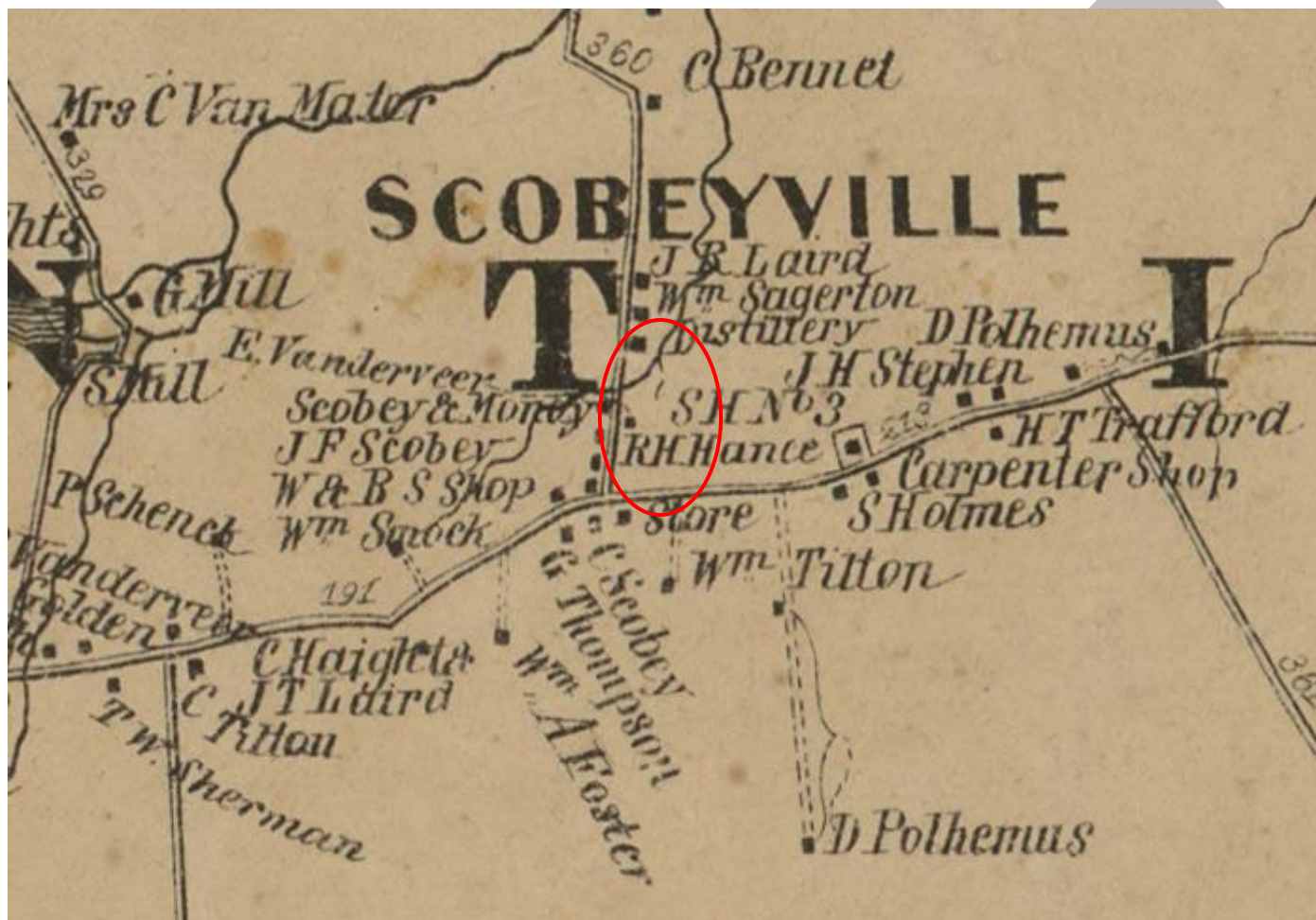


Figure 6. 1861 map illustrating the distillery, the House under the ownership of E. Vanderveer, and the surrounding village of Scobeyville. The approximate location of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is circled in red. (Source: F.W. & S.N. Beers, "Map of Monmouth County New Jersey from Actual Surveys," New York: Smith, Gallup & Holt, 1861, Library of Congress.)

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Figure 7. 1873 map illustrating the distillery and the House, now owned by Robert Laird. The Atlantic Township Business Notices that accompanied this map listed Robert Laird as a Distillery Proprietor in Scobeyville. The approximate location of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is circled in red. (Source: F.W. Beers, "Atlas of Monmouth County New Jersey, Atlantic Township," New York: Beers, Comstock & Cline, 1873, Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections.)

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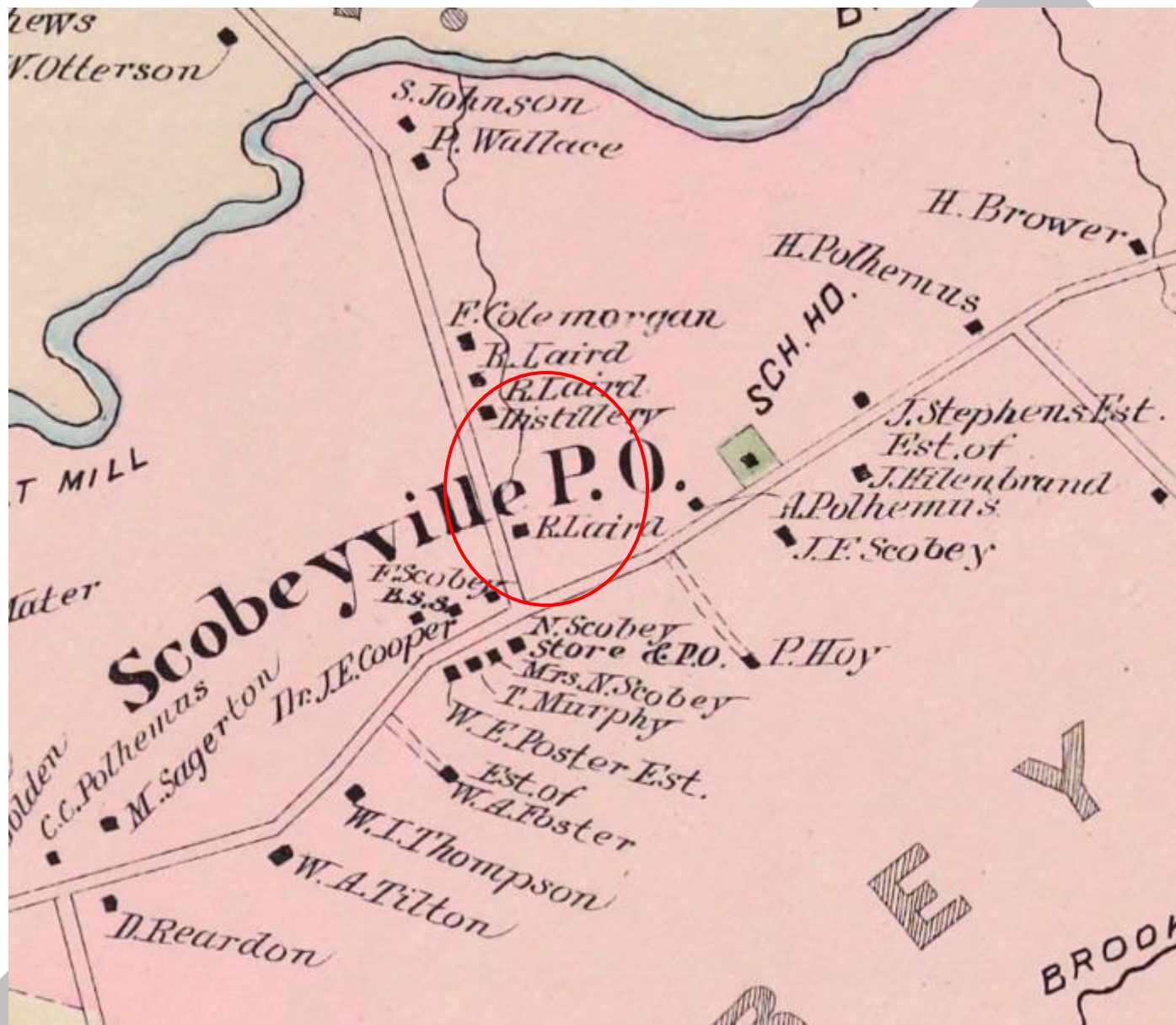


Figure 8. 1889 map of the distillery and House. The approximate location of the Laird & Company Distillery Historic District is circled in red.
(Source: Chester Wolverton and Forsey Breou, "Wolverton's Atlas of Monmouth County, Plate 37: Atlantic Township" New York: Chester Wolverton, 1889.)

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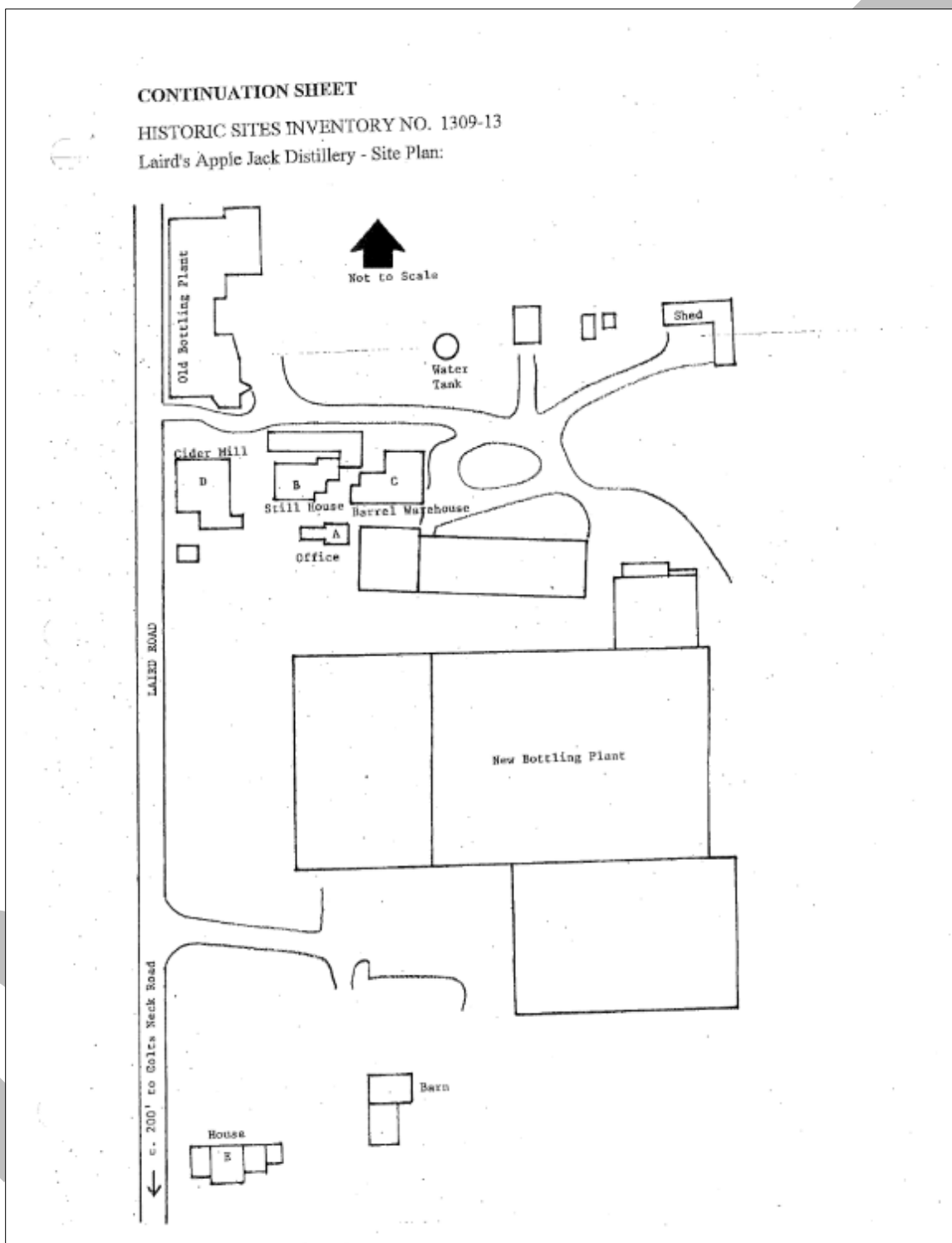


Figure 9. Map of the Laird & Company Distillery site in 1981, prepared for the Historic Sites Inventory. The map includes the demolished distillery complex buildings, such as the Cider Mill "D" and brick Barrel Warehouse "C". (Source: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.)

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Laird & Company Distillery Historic Photographs



Figure 10. The Laird & Company Distillery c.1880s-1890s, view looking east. The view of the distillery complex is adjacent to Laird Road, across a bridge over the Yellow Brook (the location of the current dam). Robert Laird and Joseph Tilton Laird Jr. stand in front of the Office building. The first brick warehouse (demolished) is in the background and the Cider Mill was located beyond to the north (left). (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 11. The Cider Mill buildings in the 1880s-1890s. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 12. The Cider Mill buildings in the 1880s-1890s. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 13. The first brick warehouse and later addition, photographed after 1934, also known as Bonded Warehouse No. 1A. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 14. Receiving and sorting apples at the distillery complex in the 1930s, view looking east. The Still House boiler room is visible at left with a tall single vent. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 15. The first barrel of applejack produced after Prohibition, 1934. The barrel brand reads "D.N.I. Laird & Co. Distillers, 1st Dist. N.J. Brandy."
(Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 16. Interior of one of the Bonded Warehouses with barrel ageing racks, 1934. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 17. Preparing applejack barrels, interior of an unspecified building at the distillery, 1935. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 18. View of the distillery complex, looking north from the man-made pond and Laird Road, 1935. At right are the Still House main volume, boiler room (with tall vent stack), and the Office after its rear addition was completed. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 19. Barrel construction in the Cooperage Shop, which was located in the existing Barn, 1930s. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 20. The House and Barn buildings in 1946, looking northwest from County Road 537. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)



Figure 21. The House in 1946, looking north from County Road 537. The water tower visible in the background was part of the distillery complex. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 22. The Barn in 1946, with attached cart port, view looking northeast (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)



Figure 23. The Barn in 1946, view looking east. The area between the House and Barn had a water tower and small playhouse, as noted in a 1946 property appraisal. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 24. The Still House (left), brick Bonded Warehouse No. 1A (center, demolished), and the Office (right) in 1962, looking east from the dam and adjacent to Laird Road. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 25. Aerial photograph of the Laird & Company Distillery property in 1967, looking northeast. The distillery complex is at left and the House and Barn are at right. The majority of the Current Bottling Plant has been constructed at the center of the parcel. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 26. The Cider Mill (left) and ancillary distillery complex building in the 1970s, located at the edge of the property on Laird Road, view looking northeast from the road. The driveway leading across the dam toward the Office and Still House is to the right. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 27. The 1934 Bonded Warehouse (left) and the brick Bonded Warehouse No. 1A (right, demolished) in the 1970s, looking west. The Still House is visible in the background. The steel and metal tank enclosure, which extends from the rear roof, has been constructed. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 28. The Still House, attached equipment and boiler buildings, and the north water tower, looking northeast. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 29. Aerial photograph of the distillery complex, undated photograph taken after the final 1980 expansion of the Current Bottling Plant, looking northeast. (Source: Laird & Company Archive.)

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Figure 30. The distillery complex in 1981, looking northeast from Laird Road, capturing the Still House (left), the dam (center), and the Office (left).
(Source: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.)

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Figure 31. The Former Bottling Plant in 1981, looking northeast from Laird Road. The building volumes in the foreground have been demolished; the existing Former Bottling Plant buildings are situated in the background. (Source: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.)

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Figure 32. Fermenting tanks at the distillery complex in 1981, looking north. (Source: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.)

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Figure 33. Aerial photograph from 2010 that captures the full distillery complex layout prior to the demolition of several former distillery buildings. The Former Bottling Plant is situated at the top left, the dam and pond at lower left, and the Still House, Office, and Bonded Warehouse are at center. (Source: Google Earth.)

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Figure 34. Exterior view of the Office prior to the roof's collapse, south elevation, within the surrounding context of the distillery complex, camera facing northwest (April 11, 2019).



Figure 35. Exterior view of the Office, prior to the roof's collapse, west (primary) façade and north elevation, camera facing southeast (April 11, 2019).

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Figure 36. Exterior view of the Office prior to the roof's collapse, east and north elevations, camera facing southwest (April 11, 2019).



Figure 37. Interior view of the Office, after east elevation roof collapse prior to current vegetation growth, camera facing west (January 14, 2020).

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Applejack Products, Advertisements and Commendations



Figure 38. Collection of Laird & Company bottles, from the 1870s-1890s (left) into the 1930s-1940s (right), in the Laird & Company Archives.

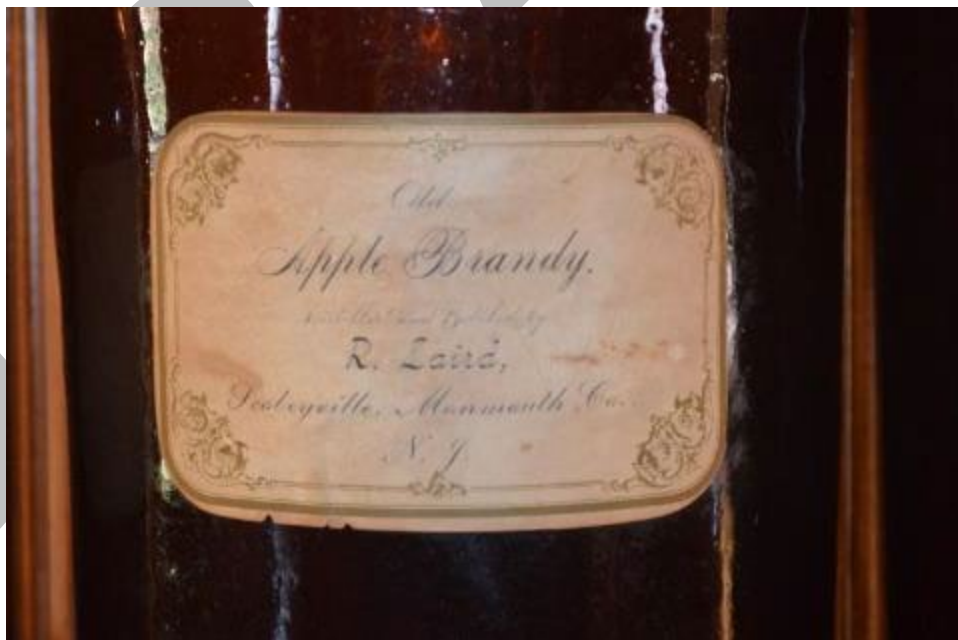


Figure 39. Detail of the label on an original bottle, c.1870s-1880s. The label reads "Old Apple Brandy / Distilled and Bottled by R. Laird / Scobeyville, Monmouth Co. N.J.". It was typical for distilleries of this period to be known only by their proprietor and for the family name to function as a brand (Laird & Company Archive).

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R. Laird, of Scobeyville, evidently doesn't think prohibition is going to strike Monmouth county right away. He has recently spent considerable money fitting up his distillery at that place, and has put in a new fifteen-horse power engine.

Figure 40. Notice in the "Town Talk" section of the local newspaper in 1887 that Robert Laird was expanding the distillery complex and equipment, in contrast to temperance trends at the time (Red Bank, NJ: *Red Bank Register*, August 17, 1887, 1).

R. Laird's cider mill at Scobeyville will open to receive apples on Monday, August 11th.

Apples Being Taken in Large Quantities to Walling's Cider Mill.
Capt. D. A. Walling is having the busiest season he ever enjoyed at his cider mill. Laird's distillery at Scobeyville is not in operation this season, and most of the people who took apples there are now going to the distillery at this place. Some apples

Figure 41. Examples of typical published notices that Monmouth County distilleries were receiving apples from the surrounding farms for producing cider and applejack, which appeared annually in late 19th and early 20th century newspapers. Top: Robert Laird's advertisement in 1890 ((Red Bank, NJ: *Red Bank Register*, July 30, 1890, 1). Bottom: Notice for nearby the Capt. D.A. Walling distillery in 1912. Laird's distillery was not in operation at the time due to Robert Laird's death. Its mention here attests to the anomaly of the closure and the distillery as a well-known business among farmers. (Red Bank, NJ: *The Daily Register*, September 11, 1912, 10).

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Figure 42. Advertisement for Laird & Company's preparation for the end of Prohibition published in newspapers in 1933 across in the United States.

Apples are shown being unloaded into troughs adjacent to the Cider Mill and a New Jersey Congressman viewing the bottling process at the "Scobeyville plant" of Laird & Company. Examples of the same notice as published in Woodland, California (left) and Marysville, Ohio (right).

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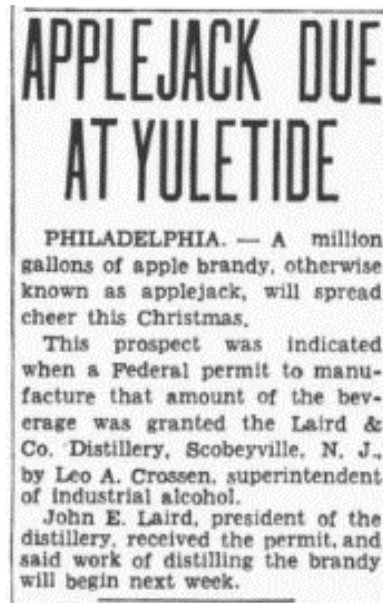


Figure 43. Report of Laird & Company's legal production and anticipation of Prohibition Repeal, published in the *Washington Times* in 1933 (Washington D.C.: *The Washington Times*, October 4, 1933, 19).



Figure 44. Advertisements of Laird & Company's "Laird's Apple Jack" brandy product in 1937 as published in Los Angeles (left), Danville, Virginia (middle), and Burlington, Vermont (right). Advertisement in this period emphasize both the "oldest" and "family" distilling history and the historic "pot-stilled" method of production (Los Angeles, CA: *Illustrated Daily News*, November 2, 1934; Danville, VA: *The Bee*, November 19, 1937, 18; Burlington, VT: *Burlington Daily News*, October 27, 1937, 2).

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Among Knowing Drinkers!



AMONG knowing drinkers it's LAIRD'S
for cocktails, highballs, mixed drinks or
straight. Back of every bottle is more than 156
years of distilling experience.* Made by the
good old pot-still method. Full, mellow, de-
licious and a builder of profits and repeat
business.

*Robert Laird's Apple Brandy distil-
lation records of 1780 are still in
the possession of the Laird family.

LAIRD'S
90 Proof
Three ★ ★ ★ Star
APPLE JACK BRANDY
Laird & Co., Scotchville, N. J.
America's Oldest Family of Brandy Distillers

Figure 45. C. 1936 magazine advertisement for Laird's Apple Jack Brandy (Laird & Company Archives)

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Figure 46. 1940s matchbook advertisement for Laird's Apple Brandy (Laird & Company Archives)

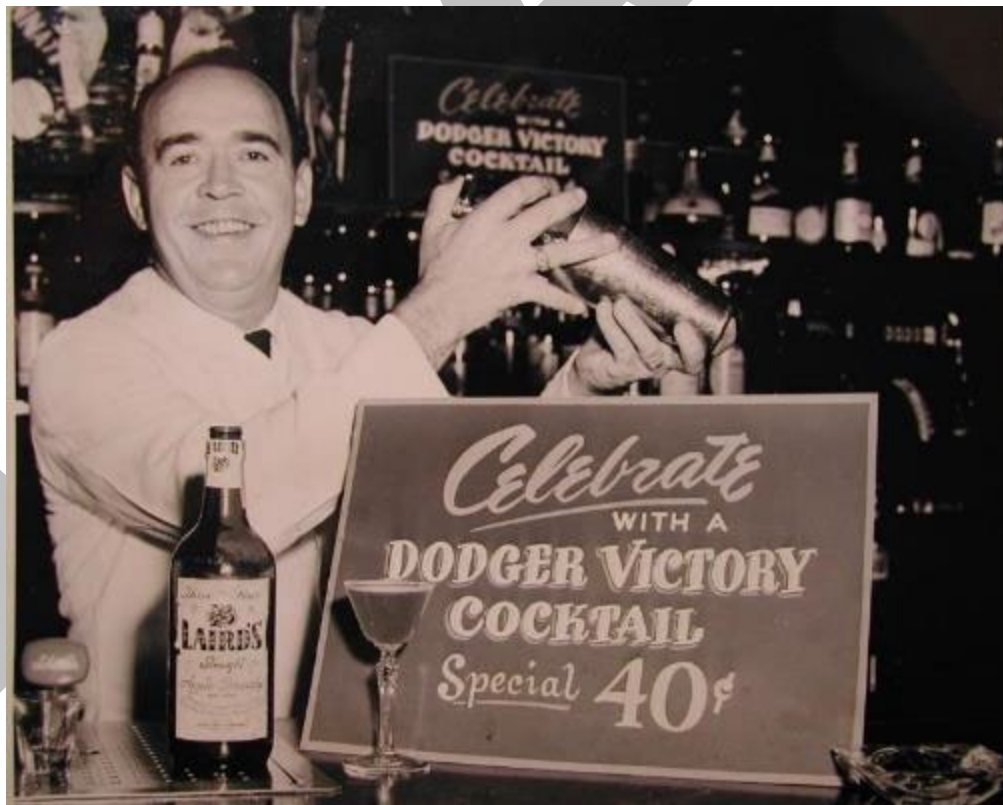


Figure 47. 1940s advertisement for Laird's Apple Jack Brandy in an unidentified publication for a signature Brooklyn Dodgers themed cocktail (Laird & Company Archives).

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OFFICE OF SUPERVISOR OF PERMITS,
Third PERMISSIVE DISTRICT.

To LAIRD & COMPANY, Inc.,
(Inc. in State of New Jersey)
R.F.D.#1 (Scoteyville)
Eatontown, New Jersey.

Application having been duly presented and approved, you are hereby authorized and permitted, subject to the conditions hereinafter stated and all provisions of the laws relating to intoxicating liquor of any State in which any of the privileges herein conferred are exercised, to manufacture, warehouse, sell and deliver in accordance with United States Internal Revenue Laws, Prohibition Laws and regulations issued thereunder, apple brandy for medicinal purposes.

The amount authorized to be produced during the calendar year 1933 is not to exceed 1,000,000 proof gallons, with the understanding that not in excess of 200,000 proof gallons will be released each year, the remaining quantity to be retained for ageing. The actual distillation under this permit is not to begin until all requirements of the law and regulations with respect to the construction and operations of distilleries have been complied with.

The total amount authorized to be possessed under this permit at any one time is limited to 11,900 proof gallons, the maximum quantity permitted under a \$50,000 bond.

The quantity of intoxicating liquor (as defined in Section 1, Title II, of the National Prohibition Act) which may be produced or obtained by the permittee during any calendar year (or proportionately for the remainder of the calendar year in which this permit is originally issued) shall be the quantity necessary to meet the legitimate needs of the permittee for all operations under such permit, but not to exceed _____

wine gallons of alcohol, _____ wine gallons of whisky, _____ wine gallons of other distilled spirits, and _____ wine gallons of wine and alcoholic preparations fit for beverage purposes: Pro-

Figure 48. Federal permit for Laird & Company to produce apple brandy for medicinal purposes while Prohibition was still enforced, 1933 (Source: Laird & Company Archives)

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have
you
met
Jack?

The first inkling you get that you're going to like Apple Jack is the aroma... a rich delicate fragrance that promises a superb drink. Apple Jack is aged in charred oak barrels. It is extraordinarily smooth, easy to take. It has a fine bold flavor yet a natural lightness it shares with no other drink. Distilled since 1780, Laird's Apple Jack is made today by the same

family from the same private formula now 8 generations old. This accounts for the mellow taste and the fact that the only thing that lingers on is the pleasant memory. The next time you're at a bar or liquor store, ask for Apple Jack. Whether you drink it straight, on the rocks or in a highball, you'll thank us for introducing you to this delightful new friend.

Laird's Apple Jack
64 Proof Straight Apple Jack • Laird & Co., Sikeston, N.J.

ESQUIRE / November 1957

Figure 49. 1957 *Esquire* magazine advertisement for Laird's Apple Jack as part of a mid-20th-century campaign "Have You Met Jack?" (Laird & Company Archives).

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Figure 50. 1964 New Jersey state senate resolution recognizing the cultural importance of Apple Jack Brandy as the oldest native distilled spirits beverage of the United States (Laird & Company Archives).

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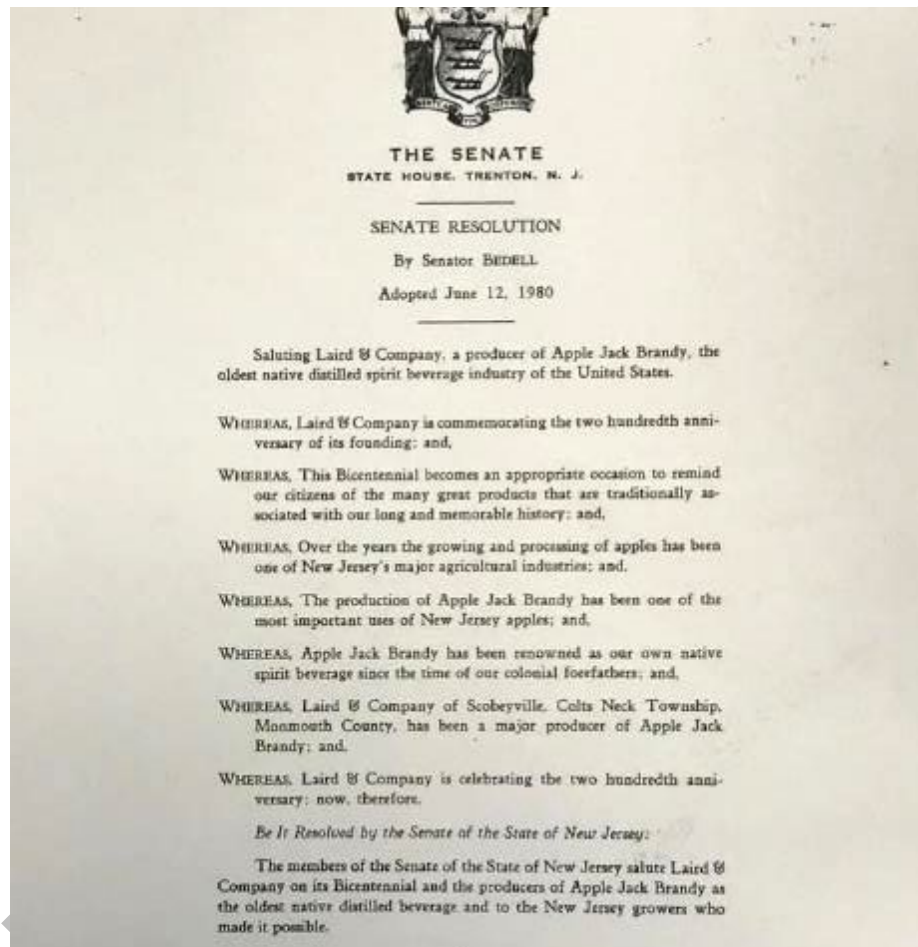


Figure 51. 1980 New Jersey state senate resolution recognizing Laird & Company's 200th anniversary and its connection to the important state beverage Apple Jack Brandy (Laird & Company Archives).

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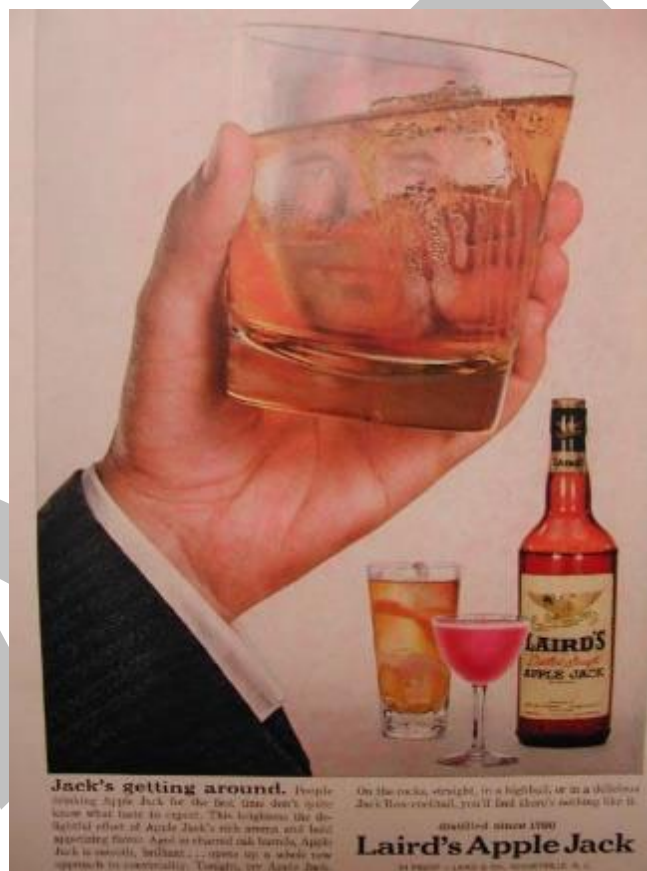


Figure 52. 1981 *Life Magazine* advertisements for Laird's Apple Jack Brandy and the popular Jack Rose cocktail (Laird & Company Archives).

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2009 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 460

Commending Laird and Company.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2009
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 27, 2009

WHEREAS, Laird and Company, an eighth-generation Virginia company that makes Laird's Apple Brandy and Captain Applejack, is commended for its commercial and historical contributions to Albemarle County, Virginia, and America; and

WHEREAS, in 1780, Robert Laird, the descendent of a Scottish immigrant, established America's first commercial distillery at Scobeyville, New Jersey, and began to produce Laird's Premium Applejack; and

WHEREAS, over the years, the Laird family bought several other small apple brandy distilleries along the East Coast, including Distillery No. 5 in North Garden, Virginia, just south of Charlottesville in beautiful Albemarle County; and

WHEREAS, after Prohibition, many applejack distilleries closed or converted to making other products, leaving the Laird family and the distillery at North Garden as the sole producers of the native American spirit since 1934; and

WHEREAS, today, the Laird distillery in North Garden produces all of the Laird's Apple Brandy and Captain Applejack made by Laird and Company and sold throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Laird's Applejack is produced from only the finest tree-ripened Albemarle County apples, with no cultures, yeasts, sugars, or blending agents ever added; and

WHEREAS, Laird's Applejack has played a unique role in both Virginia and American history; founder Robert Laird, a Revolutionary War soldier who served under George Washington, supplied colonial troops with applejack; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln served Laird's Applejack in his Springfield, Illinois, tavern and President Lyndon B. Johnson presented Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin with a case of Laird's Applejack at a summit held in New Jersey in 1967; and

WHEREAS, with a rich tradition and history, the Laird and Company name and products have stood for quality and purity for over two centuries; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commend Laird and Company on its longevity and commitment to quality; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Larrie Laird, president of Laird and Company, as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his family's and company's historical and commercial contributions to Albemarle County, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

ENROLLED

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Figure 53. 2009 Virginia State Senate resolution recognizing the contributions of Laird & Company to Albemarle County, Virginia (where their product is produced today), to Virginia, and to the United States (Virginia General Assembly, Legislative Information System).

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Comparative Distillery Photographs

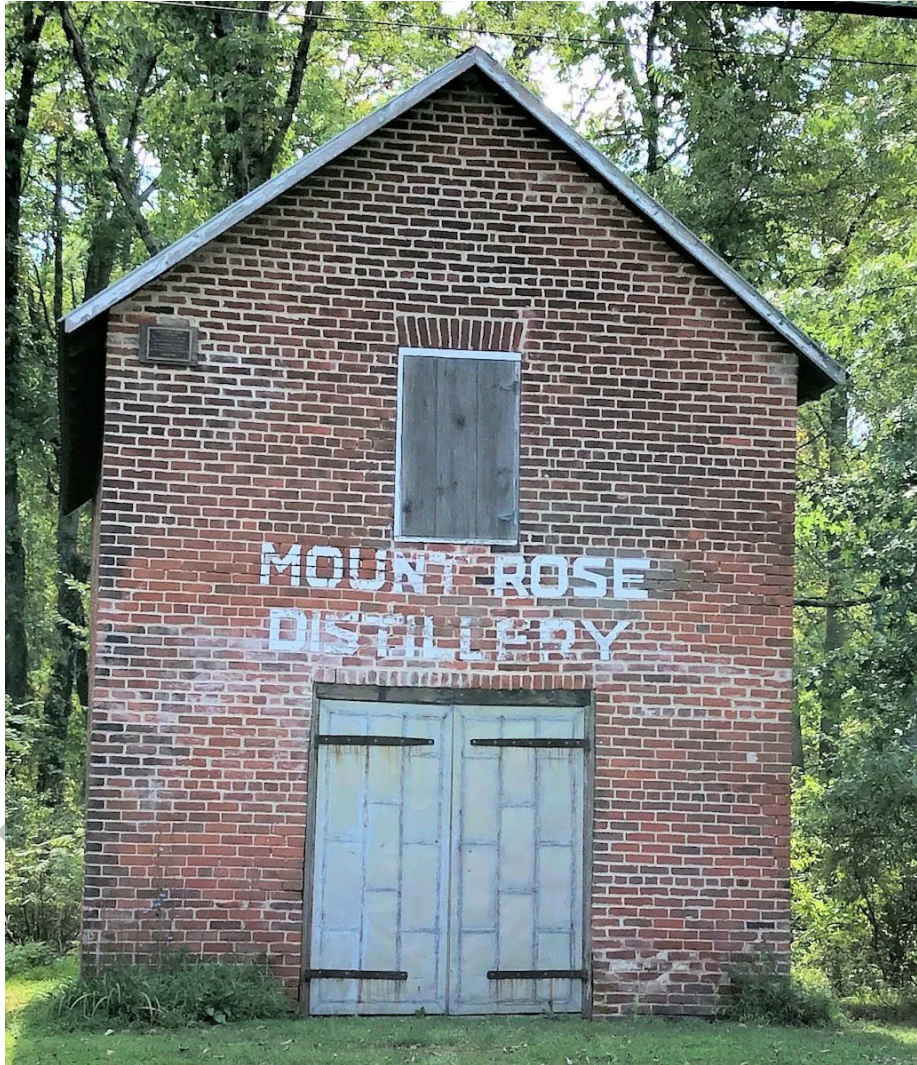


Figure 54. Photograph of the Mount Rose Distillery Building c.2021, located in Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. This distillery building is the only remaining building within the Mount Rose Distillery complex within the site's Period of Significance. The building was rehabilitated in 2017 (Hopewell Valley History Project).

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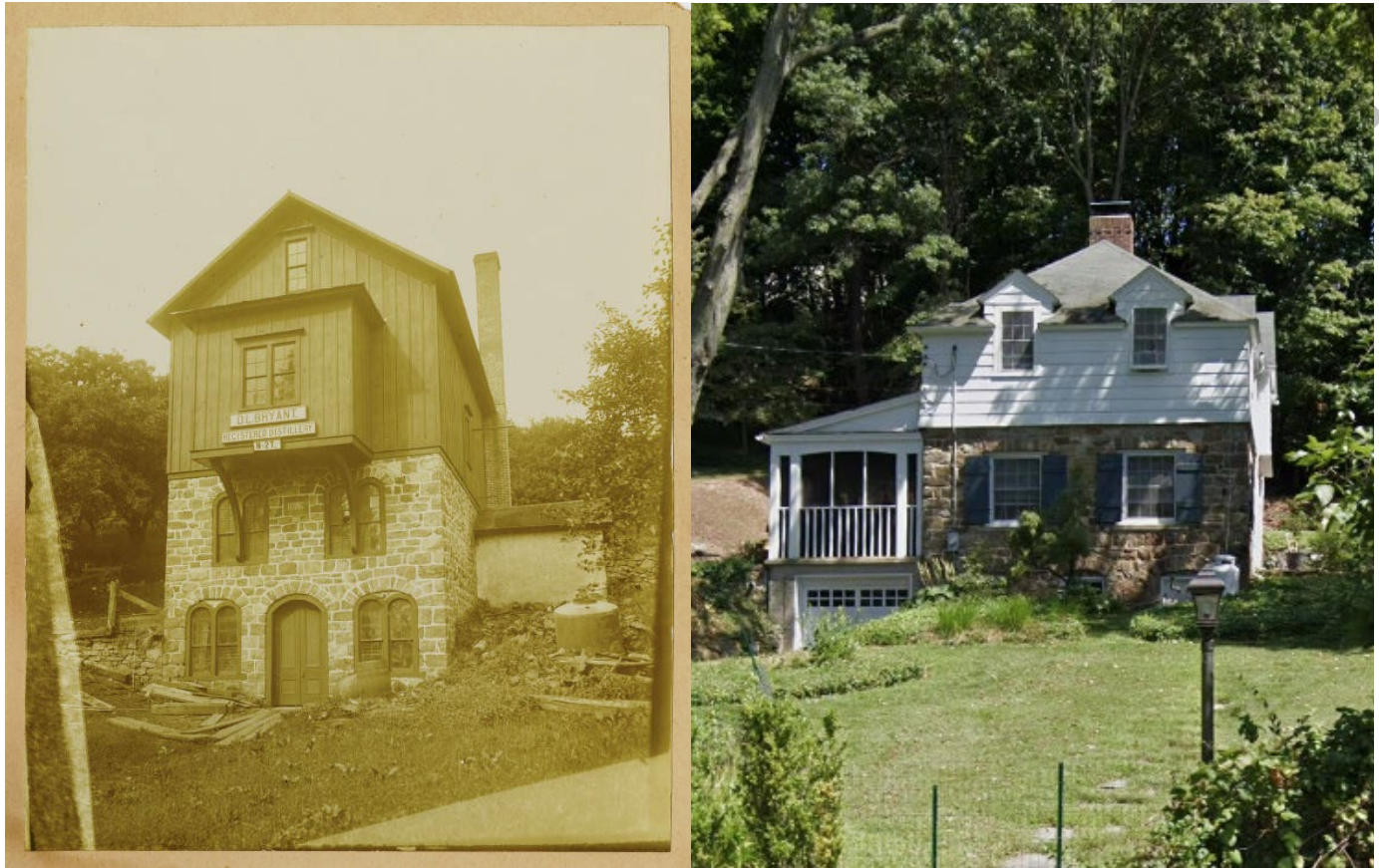


Figure 55. Photographs of the D.L. Bryant Distillery, constructed c.1869, located in Randolph, Morris County, New Jersey. The photograph on the left was taken c.1900 while the distillery was still operating. The photograph on the right is from 2019, showing the major alterations made after 1934 to convert the building into a private residence (Left: Morristown & Morris Public Library. Right: Google Maps, 2019).

Appendix A

Table of Pre-Prohibition Distilleries in New Jersey

The following table lists 167 pre-Prohibition distilleries in New Jersey compiled from various sources including *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from the Colonial Times to the Present*, by Harry B. Weiss, historic directories and maps, and printed works that examine the history of specific New Jersey counties. Where possible, the table includes the name or ownership of each distillery and indicates the dates of operation. The result of research efforts to determine whether each distillery is still in operation and/or extant was also included when that information could be found. Where applicable, information noting the state of preservation (i.e. demolished, listed on the State and/or National Registers, ruins) is also included. A note of “unconfirmed” is included for distilleries where research efforts were unable to determine whether the distillery or any of its associated buildings remain.

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COUNTY	MUNICIPALITY	DISTILLERY/OWNER	YEARS ACTIVE	EXTANT (Yes/No)	OPERATIONAL (Yes/No)	STATE OF PRESERVATION
Bergen	Pascack	John Ackerson	c. 1800-1857(?)	N	N	
Burlington	Columbus	Harvey Brothers' Distillery		N	N	Unconfirmed
Burlington	Vincetown	Irick Stillhouse	c. 1850-1890s	N	N	
Burlington	Wrightstown	Stacy B. Taylor Distillery	mid-19th c.-1905	N	N	
Burlington	Ewansville	Ewansville Cider Works and Distillery	1848-1910		N	
Burlington	Bordentown	Collier Distillery	1852-1918			Unconfirmed
Burlington	Columbus	Keeler Stillhouse	1865-1890			Unconfirmed
Burlington	Wrightstown	Joseph K. Hulme				Unconfirmed
Cumberland	Bridgeton	Minch	before 1909	N	N	
Cumberland	Deerfield	Bates				Unconfirmed
Essex	Caldwell Township	Samuel Crane	18th Century	N	N	
Essex	Montclair	Israel Crane	c. 1900	N	N	
Essex		Nathaniel Crane & Deacon Joseph Crane		N	N	
Essex	Maplewood	Edward L. Crowell	1843-1919		N	Unconfirmed
Essex	Livingston	Nettie Ochs	c. 1877-1937			Unconfirmed
Essex	Montclair	E.C. Fuller				Unconfirmed
Essex	New Providence		1812-c.1930s			Unconfirmed
Essex	Newark	Caleb Bruen	1916			Unconfirmed
Essex	West Orange Township	Benjamin Williams	1776-c.1830s			Unconfirmed
Essex	Nutley	Black Prince	1934	Y	Y	Factory built in 1982 - Now operating in Tennessee
Essex	Caldwell	Philemon Bates	?-1790	N	N	
Essex	Irvington	Camp Family		N	N	
Essex	Orange	Moses Condit	c 1800	N	N	
Essex	Newark	Simon Eulner	c 1860			Unconfirmed
Essex	West Orange	Benjamin Pierson				Unconfirmed
Essex	West Orange	Samuel Harrison				Unconfirmed
Gloucester	Swedesboro	Andrew Hendrickson	1904-?	N	N	
Gloucester	Williamstown	Edward Kurtz	1906-1922		N	Unconfirmed
Gloucester	Ewan	George B. Fox	c. 1893-1900			Unconfirmed
Gloucester	Mantua	Sweeten				Unconfirmed
Gloucester	Williamstown		1906-1920			Unconfirmed
Hudson	Jersey City	N. Basset				Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Bloomsbury	Moses Robbins	?-1881	N	N	Demolished

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COUNTY	MUNICIPALITY	DISTILLERY/OWNER	YEARS ACTIVE	EXTANT (Yes/No)	OPERATIONAL (Yes/No)	STATE OF PRESERVATION
Hunterdon	Fairmount	Isaac Hoffman & Runyon Robinson	?-c.1870s	N	N	Demolished 1888
Hunterdon	Fairmount	William Henry Fleming	1880-1919		N	Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Fairmount	Henry Miller	c. 1829-1849		N	Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Pittstown	Kings Station Distillery/Lord Stirling Distilleries, Inc.	1900-1920/1934-1940		N	Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Ringoes	Simpson S. Sked	c. 1860		N	Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Clinton Village	John B. Taylor & J.W. Bray	c. 1828-?			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Clover Hill	Zebulon Stout - New Jersey Cider Vinegar Works	1878-?			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Holland Township	S. Vansyckle	in 1850 directory			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Reading Township	Michael Kinney	pre-1781-1840s			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	West Amwell Township	Andrew Larison Jr/George H. Larison	c. 1850-?			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Bloomsbury	Daniel Stires	?-1881	N	N	Demolished
Hunterdon	Frenchtown	Augustus Godly	1851-1874	N	N	Burned Down in 1874
Hunterdon	East Amwell	James Riley's	c.1840 - 1870		N	Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Alexandria	Joseph King				Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Lambertville	Eagle Distillery	1880-1893			Unconfirmed
Hunterdon	Ringoes	Jonathan Higgins	1857-1879			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Rosedale	Captain Foster W. Van Kirk Distillery	?-1909		N	Unconfirmed
Mercer	Trenton	Andrew Crozer	1851-1862		N	Converted to a Pottery - Unconfirmed
Mercer	Lamberton (Trenton)	Hall and Anderson Distillery	1800-?			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Near Princeton	Danie Manning	end of 18th c.			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Pennington	Andrew B. Drake	1859 directory			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Pennington	Charles H. Stout	1859 directory			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Pennington	Noah P. Stout	1859 directory			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Stockton	Robert Purdy	1868-1869 directory			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Trenton	Lynch, Neil, and Poal	18th c.			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Trenton	Anderson & Rickey's Distillery				Unconfirmed
Mercer	Trenton	Joshua Norton	c.1830			Unconfirmed
Mercer	Woodsville	Noah Drake Distillery	1876-c.1920			Unconfirmed
Mercer		Edward P. Mount Distillery				Unconfirmed
Mercer	Hopewell Boro	Mount Rose Distillery [Site] (28-Me-259)	1840s-c.1920	Y	N	Ruins - NR/SR
Mercer	Hamilton	Hill-Norton-Mount Distillery Building	1849-1912			SHPO Opinion

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COUNTY	MUNICIPALITY	DISTILLERY/OWNER	YEARS ACTIVE	EXTANT (Yes/No)	OPERATIONAL (Yes/No)	STATE OF PRESERVATION
Mercer	Trenton	Henry Hall & MR. Anderson	1800-?			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	East Brunswick	James C. Stout	1835-1900	N	N	Burned Down
Middlesex	Plainsboro	Charles McDonald	c.1900	N	N	Demolished
Middlesex	"Ten Mile Run"	Dallis Hageman/Miles Smith	1766-1896		N	Unconfirmed
Middlesex	East Brunswick	Henry Patrick/Manning Patrick	C. 1868- ?/1934-1947		N	Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Jamesburg	John A. Bennett Distillery	1892-c. 1920		N	Unconfirmed
Middlesex	"Six Mile Run"	Beekman Distillery				Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Cranbury Township	Matthew A. Rue	1852-?			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Cranbury Township	Mrs. R. Dean's Distillery	1876 atlas			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Monroe Township	James D. Courtney Distillery	?-1920s/1934-1937			Previously owned by Samuel Vandenburg and James Vandenburg; Business purchased by Laird & Company in 1937
Middlesex	New Brunswick	R. Mintorn Distillery	1850 map			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	New Brunswick	The New Brunswick Distillery (John Clark & Robert Blaikie)				Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Piscataway	Martin Distillery	1876 atlas			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	Plainsboro	Nathaniel Britton	c. 1890			Referenced in articles from 1882-1900
Middlesex	South Brunswick	Samuel Combs	c. 1780			Unconfirmed
Middlesex	South Brunswick	Emens & Baumann's				Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Scobeyville	Laird & Company	1851-present	Y	Y	
Monmouth	Tinton Falls	Arthur Wilson/Walling, Captain David Augustus, Distillery	?-1883/1883-c.1920	Y	N	
Monmouth	Ellisdale	Cross, George/Henry Stewart	?-1918	N	N	Burned Down c. 1930
Monmouth	Manalapan	Perrine, James A., Elias Vanderveer, Arthur H. Hendrickson/United States Fruit Distillers	c.1805-1920;1934-1936/1937-1942	N	N	Business purchased by Laird & Company
Monmouth	Middletown	Hendrickson, Hendrick, Distillery	c.1788-c.1870s	N	N	
Monmouth	Nutswamp	Walling, Dr. Clarence, Distillery	c.1898-c.1920	N	N	
Monmouth	Red Valley	Eldridge, Aaron	c.1890-1930	N	N	
Monmouth	Wickatunk	Conover, Lafayette	c.1870(?)-c.1895	N	N	
Monmouth	Middleton	Conover & Micheau "Oak Hill Distillery"	c.1873-c.1896		N	Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	Burk, John H.	c.1850-1866			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	Hall, J.	c.1850			Unconfirmed

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Monmouth	Clarksburg	Morris, Paul	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	Robbins, John B.	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	Walcott, H.H.	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	H.H. Walcott	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	John B. Robbins	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	Paul Morris	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	John H. Burk	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Clarksburg	J. Hall	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Freehold	Holmes, Jonathan	c.1803-1814			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Freehold	Vanderveer, J.E.	c.1873			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Freehold	James A. Perrine	1890-1907			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Freehold	Jersey Fruit Cooperative Association Cider Mill				Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Freehold	John E. Vanderveer				Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Hornerstown	Steward, Isaac/Charles Emley	c.1860-1920			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Manalapan	Elias Vanderveer	1867-1936			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Middleton	Clayton & Thompson	c. 1873			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Perrineville	Davison, Ezekiel E.	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Perrineville	Perrine, Barclay	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Monmouth	Upper Freehold	I.S. Dawes and Son cider and vinegar				Referenced in articles from 1904- 1910
Morris	Florham Park	Reverend John Hancock House, Cider Mill and Cemetery (ID#2119)		Y	N	NR/SR
Morris	Mendham	Ralston Cider Mill, Thomas J. Loughlin	1848-1920	Y	N	NR/SR as part of Ralston HD
Morris	Montville	Van Duyne Cider Mill	1896	Y	N	COE
Morris	Randolph Township	D.L. Bryant Distillery Site	1809-1920	Y	N	SR
Morris	Rockaway	George Ayres	1869-1894	Y	N	Ruins
Morris	Denville	Thomas Green	1840-c.1900	N	N	
Morris	Mendham	Joe Leck's Stillhouse	?-1900	N	N	
Morris		Silas Cook/Andrew Decker cider & grist mill	1795-1814/?	N	N	
Morris	Chester Township	Hacklebarney Farms Cider Mill/Mountain Spring Distilling Company	1865-1895		N	Unconfirmed
Morris	Chester Township	Levi Harvey Distillery	1836-1875		N	Unconfirmed
Morris	Middle Valley	Roelofson	1800-1810		N	Unconfirmed
Morris	Rockaway	Abijah Conger	1820-c.1870s		N	Unconfirmed
Morris		Peter S. Cooper Distillery	c.1870s-1920		N	Unconfirmed

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Morris	Mount Washington	Richard Kimball	1773-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Boonton Township	Henry Ball				Unconfirmed
Morris	Chester Township	Munroe Budd Distillery	c.1853-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Chester Township	Dickerson/DeCamp Distillery	c.1860s-at least 1887			Unconfirmed
Morris	Denville	George Ayres	1868-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Denville	John Hinchman	?-1815			Unconfirmed
Morris	Mendham	Eliza Thompson	Referenced in articles from 1899-1916			Unconfirmed
Morris	Milldale	Cooper Horton Distillery				Unconfirmed
Morris	Montville	Zadoc Baldwin	1798-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Montville	Frank Cook				Unconfirmed
Morris	near Denville	Matthias Kitchel	1820-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Pompton Plains	Alexander Gilliland's Distillery				Unconfirmed
Morris	Rockaway	James L. Davenport	c.1877-?			Unconfirmed
Morris	Washington Township	Dave Rhinehart Distillery				Unconfirmed
Morris		Zopher O. Talmage				Unconfirmed
Morris		Sharp Distillery	c.1800-1830			Unconfirmed
Salem	Wistarburg	Charles Miller Distillery	?-1897	N	N	
Salem	Daretown	Horatio Carmen	1893-1918		N	Unconfirmed
Salem	Remsterville	Gould Hitchner, Jonathan House & George Pierson "House and Hitchner Distillery"	1875-c.1900		N	Unconfirmed
Salem	Daretown	Jacob Wise Distillery				Unconfirmed
Somerset	Bernardsville	Bunn's Mill	1844-1913	Y	N	
Somerset	Branchville (South Branch)	Mr. Amerman	c.1850-1880	N	N	
Somerset	Peapack	W.A. Van Doren	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Sussex	Sparta Township	James Ludlam	c.1822-early 20th c.	Y	N	
Sussex	Green Township	Hunt's Mills	n.d.	N	N	Part of Hunts Mills Historic District, SHPO Opinion 5/21/1991; Ruins; Unconfirmed
Sussex	Sparta Township	John Lennington	1804-1814	N	N	
Sussex	Newton		1820-?		N	Unconfirmed
Sussex	Andover Township	Joseph Northrup	1828-?			Unconfirmed
Sussex	Lafayette	Rodman M. Price				Unconfirmed

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Sussex	Sparta Township	Robert Jr. and Elias Ogden	c.1780s-?			Unconfirmed
Union	Hillside	Woodruff	c.1770s-1904	N	N	Burned Down
Union	New Providence	Burnett's Cider Mill	1876-1929	N	N	
Union		Tillou Cider Mill				Unconfirmed
Warren	Anderson	Joseph Anderson	1810-1852		N	Unconfirmed
Warren	Allamuchy	Joseph Demund	c. 1800-?			Unconfirmed
Warren	Allamuchy	A. Ayres	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Warren	Belvidere	Thomas Abraham	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Warren	General's Point	Garret Smith	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Warren	Lower Harmony	David Howell	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Warren	Phillipsburg	John Tindall	1850-?			Unconfirmed
Warren	Springtown	John Green	c.1850			Unconfirmed
Warren	Blairstown Township	Isaac F. Read/William Beckelman, Stanton Pascal & Irving Pascal	1868-1920/1934-1947		N	Business purchased by Laird & Company
Warren	Mansfield	Ziba Osmun Sr.				Unconfirmed

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The following table lists the number of distilleries in New Jersey from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century, compiled from tax records and various additional sources. The table shows both the prominence of distilleries in the state during the early 19th century and the decline in the number of distilleries through the turn of the century and following the repeal of Prohibition.

Year ¹	Number of Distilleries
1810 ²	727
1830 ³	388
1840 ⁴	210
1850 ⁵	68
1860 ⁶	56
1876	140
1880	110
1890	62
1900	46
1910	40
1918	1
1935	20
1940	8
1945	6
1952	3

¹ United States Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, 1876, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1918, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1952.

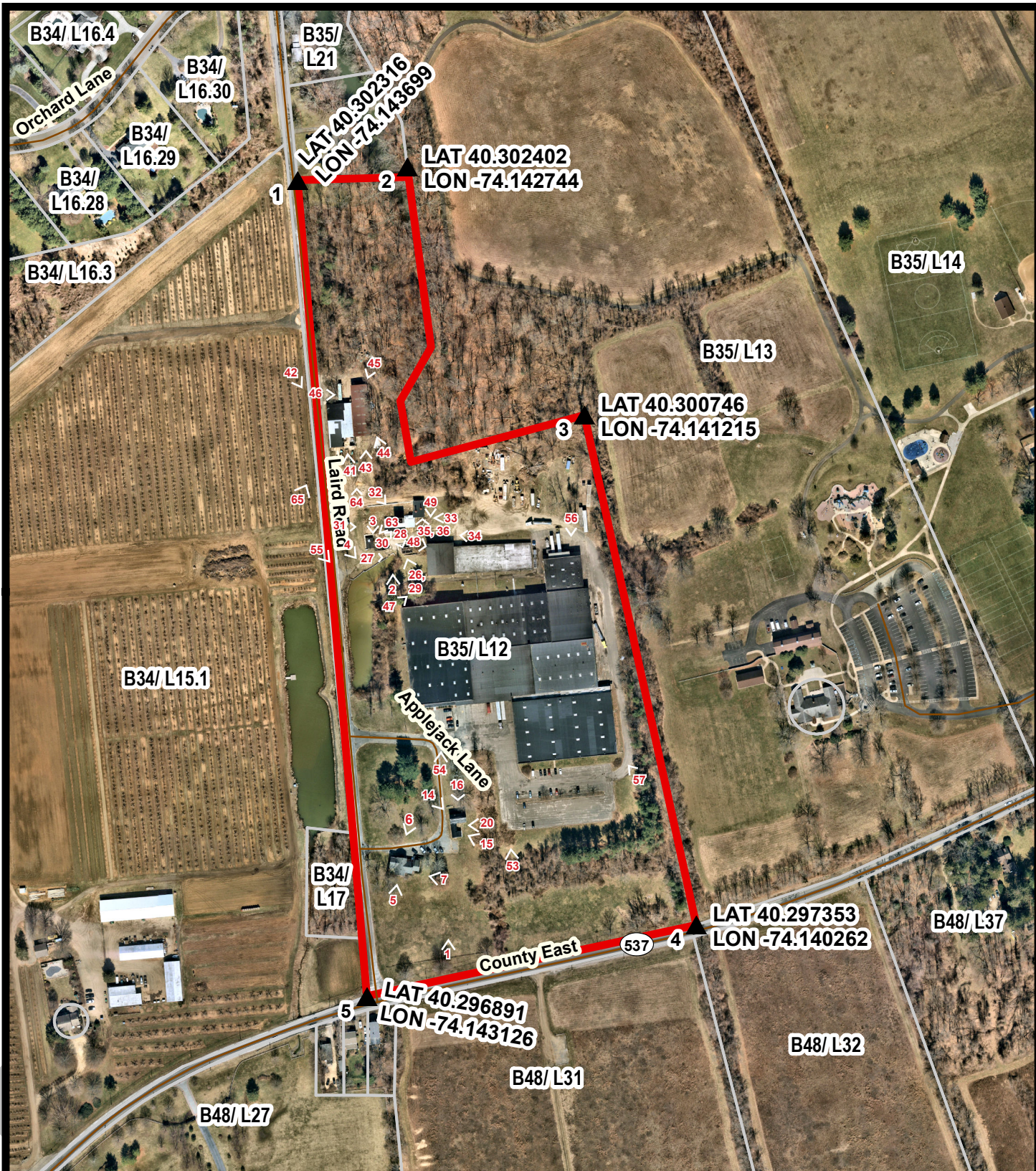
² Tench Coxe, *A Statement of the Arts and Manufactures of the United States of America, for the Year 1810* (Philadelphia, PA, 1814): 42.

³ Thomas F. Gordon, "A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey," (Philadelphia: Daniel Fenton, 1834), 16.

⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, "Recapitulation of the Aggregate Value, and Produce, and Number of Persons Employed in Mines, Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures, &c." in *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Allen, 1841), 138.

⁵ Charles A. Dana and George Ripley, ed., *The New American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge*, vol. XII (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1870), 228-234.

⁶ United States Department of Treasury, "Production of Distilled Spirits in the United States" in *The Internal Revenue Record and Customs Journal*, vol. III, no. 14 (April 7, 1866): 106-107.



Laird & Company Distillery Historic District

New Jersey and National Registers Nomination
 Scobeyville, Colts Neck Township,
 Monmouth County,
 New Jersey

Photo location map

Legend

- NJ & NR Nomination
- Tax Parcels
- ▲ Coordinates

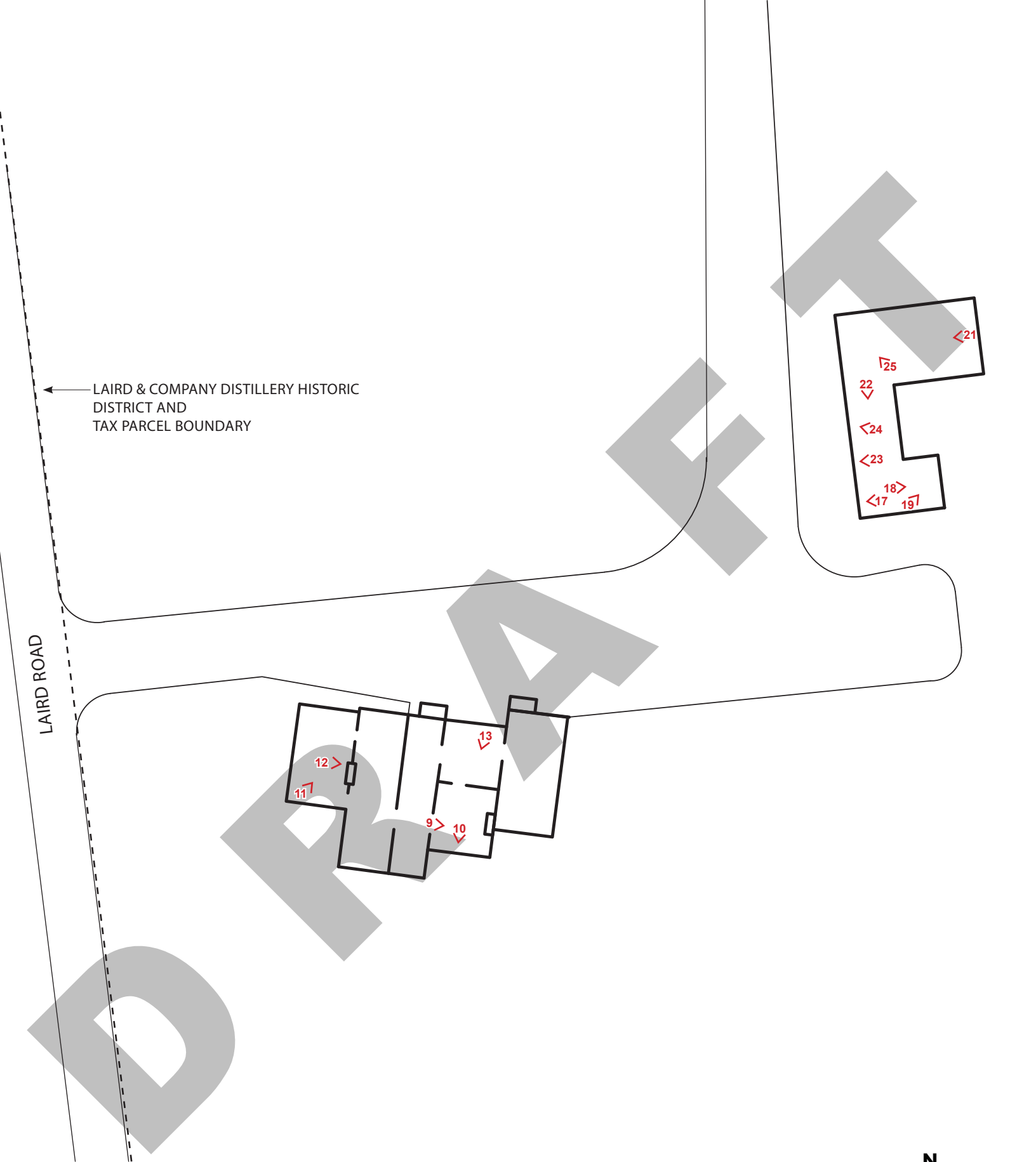
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Datum: NAD 1983 State Plane New Jersey

25.25 Acres

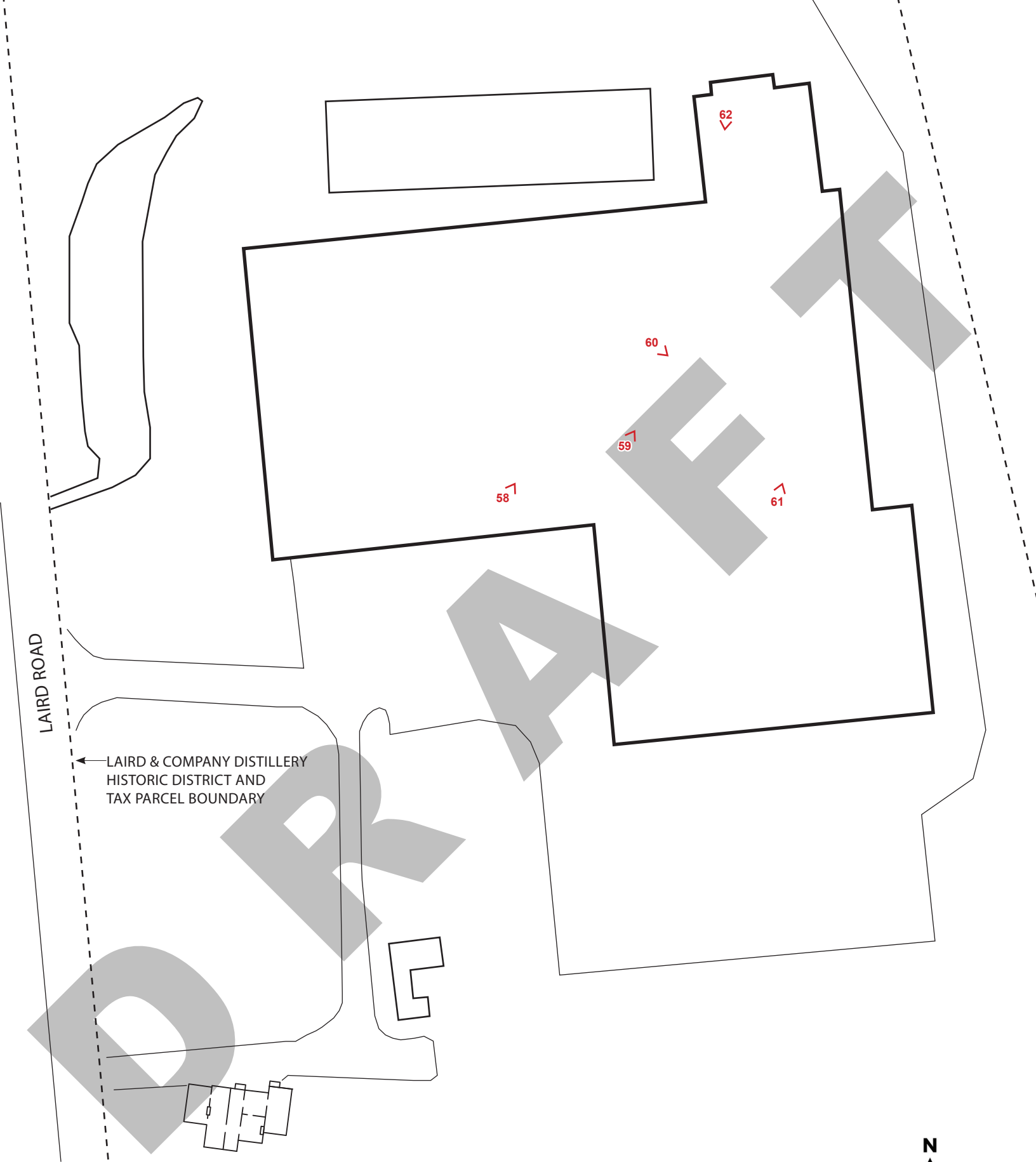


NJDEP,
 Historic Preservation Office
 January 2024



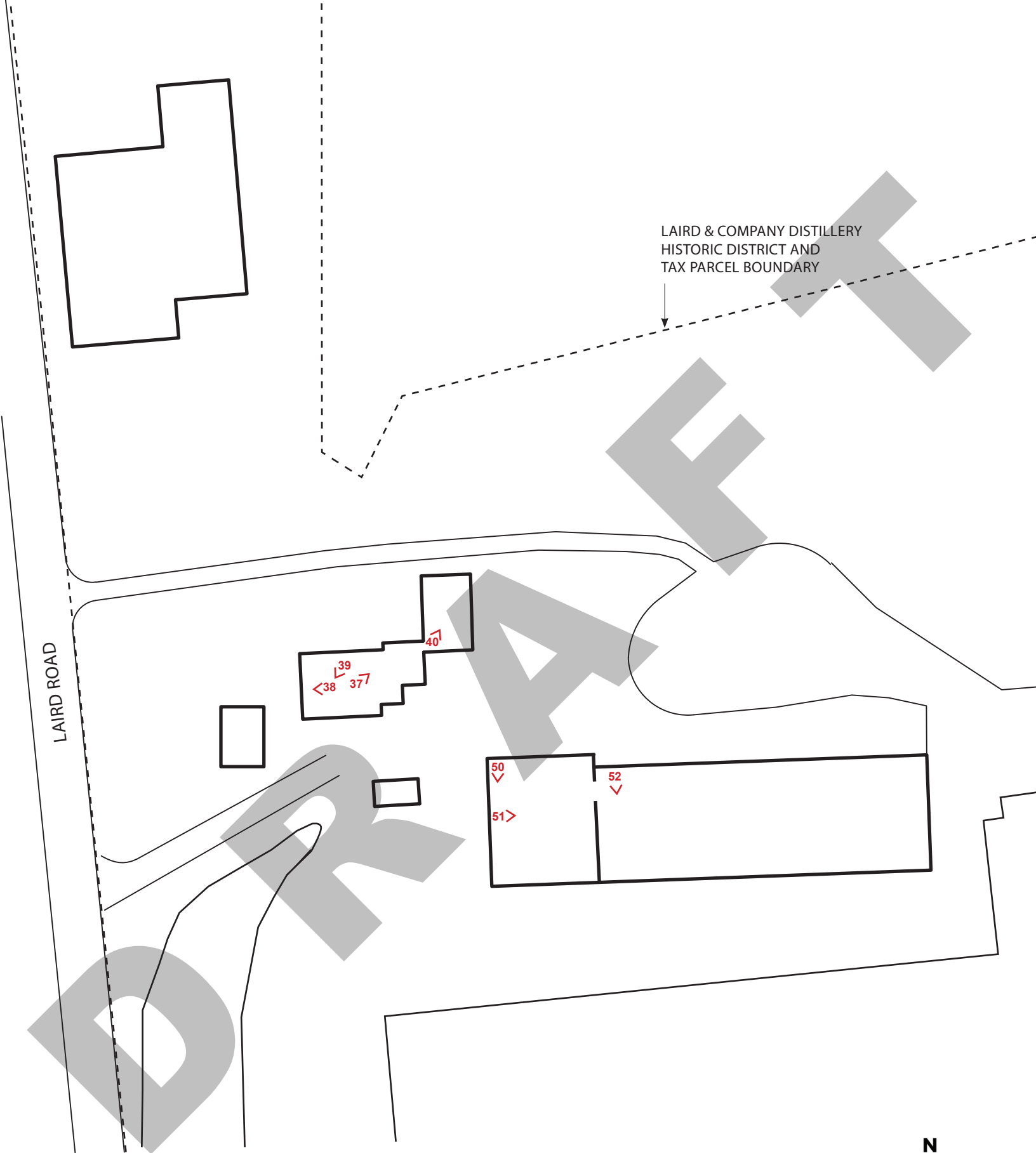
INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH KEY
DIAGRAMMATIC FLOOR PLANS - HOUSE AND BARN
LAIRD & COMPANY DISTILLERY HISTORIC DISTRICT





INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH KEY
DIAGRAMMATIC FLOOR PLANS - CURRENT BOTTLING PLANT
LAIRD & COMPANY DISTILLERY HISTORIC DISTRICT

NOT TO SCALE



INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH KEY
DIAGRAMMATIC FLOOR PLANS - DISTILLERY COMPLEX
LAIRD & COMPANY DISTILLERY HISTORIC DISTRICT



NOT TO SCALE

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Photo 1. View of the southern portion of the property containing the House (left), Barn (center), and Current Bottling Plant (right) seen from County Road 537, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 2. View of the distillery complex at the northern portion of the property containing the man-made pond, dam, and Former Bottling Plant (left); Still House and Office (center); and Bonded Warehouse (right), camera facing north (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 3. View of the dam and man-made pond, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).



Photo 4. View of the Current Bottling Plant and dam (left), and man-made pond (right), camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 5. Exterior view of the House, south (primary) facade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 6. Exterior view of the House, north (rear) elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 7. Exterior view of the House, east elevation, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).

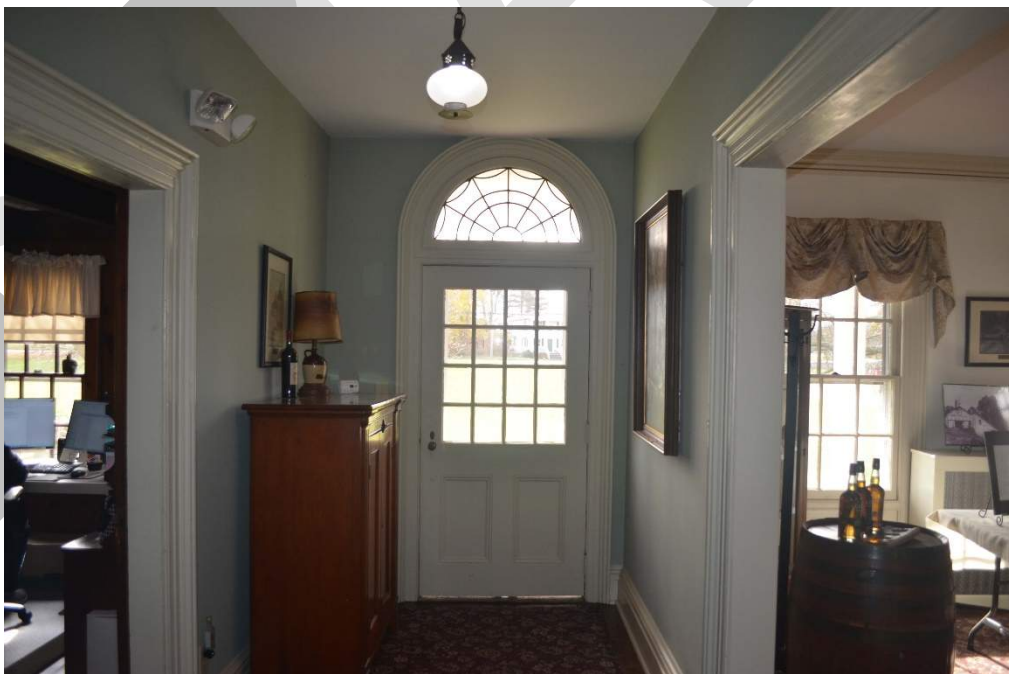


Photo 8. Interior view of the formal entry into the center hall in Volume B of the House. Volume A, the oldest portion of the House, is to the left. Camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 9. Interior view of the House, south room of Volume A, the oldest volume of the building, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).



Photo 10. Detail view of the original wood beams and ceiling finish in Volume A, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 11. Interior view of the House, first floor room in the 1934 west wing of the building (Volume C), camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 12. Detail view of the fireplace surround tiles illustrating the applejack distilling process. The fireplace and tiles were built during the 1934 renovation and the tiles were designed by architect J.H. Conover. Camera facing east (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 13. Interior view of the House, second floor of Volume A, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).



Photo 14. Exterior view of the Barn, west elevation, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 15. Exterior view of the Barn, east and south elevations, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 16. Exterior view of the Barn, north elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 17. Interior view of the Barn, southernmost room of the first floor in Volume A, the oldest section of the Barn, with opening to root cellar, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).



Photo 18. Interior view of the Barn, southernmost room of the first floor in Volume A above the brick root cellar, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 19. Interior view of the Barn, root cellar and exposed foundation walls beneath the oldest section of the Barn, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 20. Exterior view of the Barn, Dutch door leading to former stable located in the middle section of the Barn (Volume B), camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 21. Interior view of the Barn, northwest room of the first floor in the north section of the Barn, Volume C, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).



Photo 22. Interior view of the Barn, second floor of Volume B is in the foreground and the second floor of Volume A, slightly elevated, is in the background, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 23. Interior view of the Barn, second floor structural transition from Volume A (left) to Volume B (right) of the Barn, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).



Photo 24. Interior view of the Barn, exposed wall and roof framing in the middle section of the Barn (Volume B) at the interior side of the east elevation, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 25. Interior view of the Barn, northwest corner of the second floor in Volume C. Interior of north and west elevations and exposed roof structure, indicating two different phases of construction. Camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 26. Exterior view of the Office, south elevation, within the surrounding context of the distillery complex, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 27. Exterior view of the Office, west (primary) façade, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).



Photo 28. Exterior view of the Office, north elevation, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 29. Exterior view of the Office, collapsed east elevation with temporary bracing and vegetation growth, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 30. Exterior view of the Still House, south (primary) façade, and attached distillery equipment buildings beyond, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 31. Exterior view of the Still House, west elevation with rear concrete block addition and attached distillery equipment buildings beyond, with Mechanical Equipment Shed in the foreground, camera facing east (November 17, 2023).



Photo 32. Exterior view of the Still House (right) and attached distillery equipment rooms (left), camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 33. Exterior view of the Still House, east elevation, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).



Photo 34. Exterior view of the Still House (left) and attached distillery equipment rooms, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 35. Exterior view of the Still House (right) attached distillery equipment rooms, Volumes B, C, and D, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 36. Exterior view of the Still House attached distillery equipment rooms, Volume D south (primary) façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).

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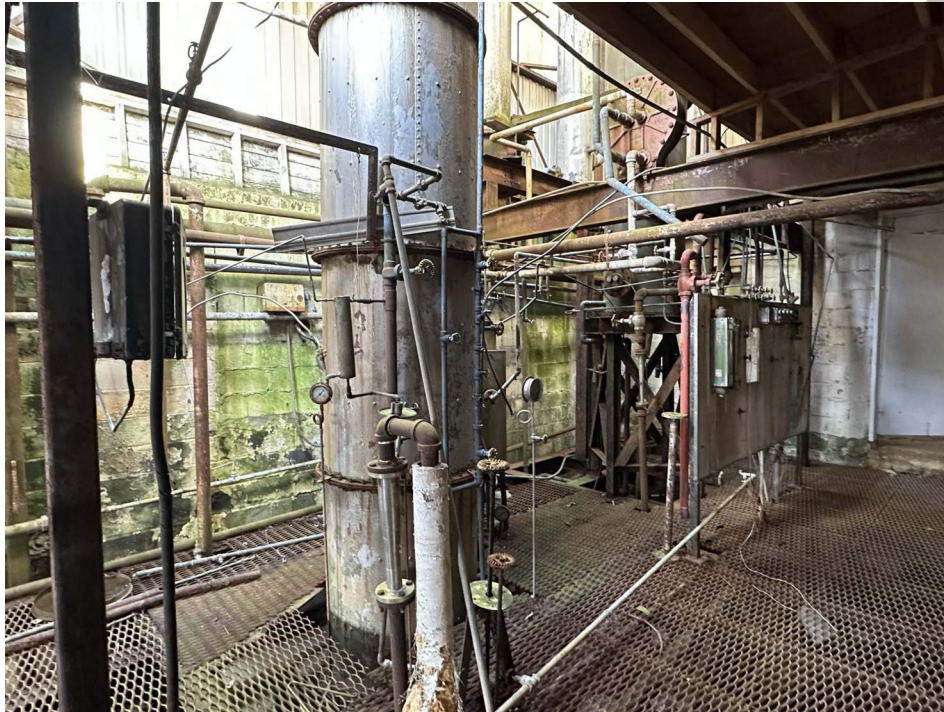


Photo 37. Interior view of the Still House, elevated steel grate platform and remnants of old distilling equipment and piping, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 38. Detail view of original brick pot still used for applejack distilling, located inside the Still House, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 39. Detail view of historic still and kettle used for applejack distilling, with additional equipment and piping beyond, located inside the Still House, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 40. Interior view of the boiler room in Volume D attached to the Still House, including an original boiler (right), camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 41. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, south elevation, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 42. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, north and west elevations of Volume A, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 43. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, south elevation of Volume A (left) and Volume B (right), camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 44. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, east elevation of Volume B, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 45. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, north elevation of Volume B, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 46. Exterior view of the Former Bottling Plant, west elevation where Volume A (right) intersects with Volume B (center), camera facing east (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 47. Exterior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, south and west elevations, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 48. Exterior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, northwest corner of the 1934 section (Volume A) with the entrance leading to the first floor of the barrel ageing room. Camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).

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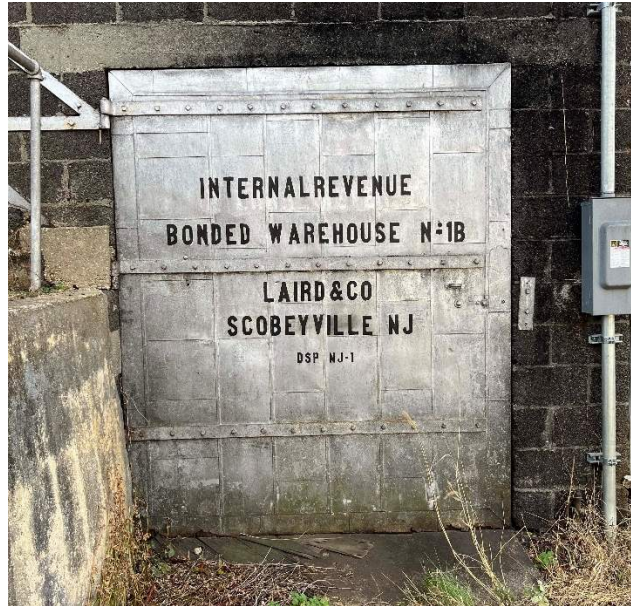


Photo 49. Detail view of door in northwest corner of Volume A (the original portion of the building) which is a near replica of the original 1934 door, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).



Photo 50. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B barrel ageing rack room in the 1934 section of the building (Volume A). Camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 51. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, barrel ageing racks in the original 1934 section of the building (Volume A), camera facing east (November 17, 2023).

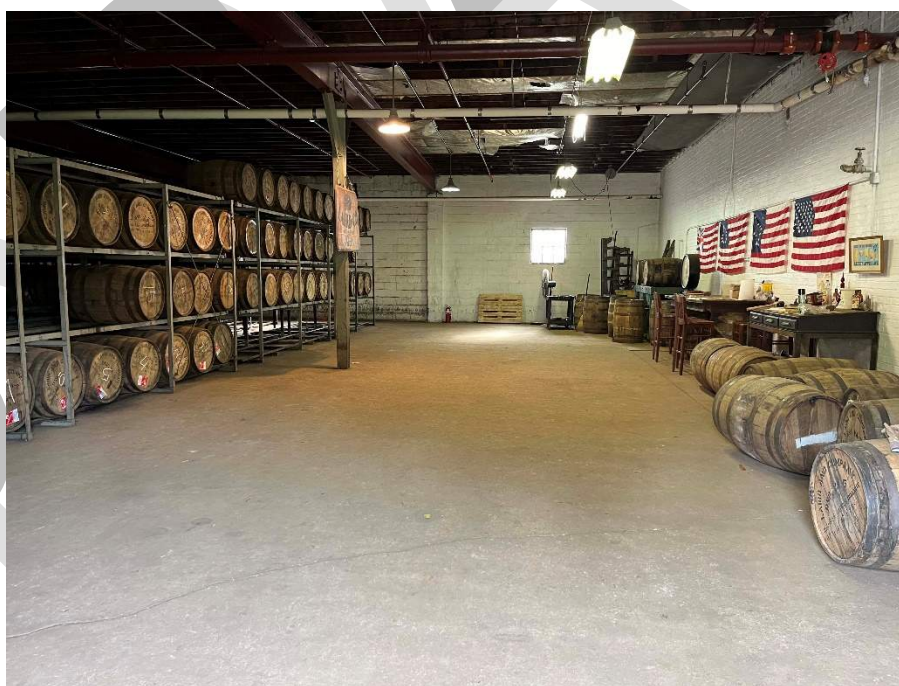


Photo 52. Interior view of Bonded Warehouse 1B, later addition (Volume B), camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 53. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, south (primary) façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).



Photo 54. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, entrance located on south façade, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 55. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, north and west elevations, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 56. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, north elevation of easternmost building, camera facing south (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 57. Exterior view of the Current Bottling Plant, east elevation, camera facing northwest (November 17, 2023).



Photo 58. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, warehouse room to the east of the building's main office, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 59. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, bottling and packaging room, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 60. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, bottling equipment with conveyor belts carrying boxed bottles over the machinery, camera facing southeast (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 61. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, modern fermentation tanks, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).



Photo 62. Interior view of the Current Bottling Plant, large storage tanks, camera facing southwest (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 63. Exterior view of the Mechanical Equipment Shed built into the dam, camera facing west (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 64. Area of demolished distillery complex buildings, including the Cider Mill, which was located in the foreground and where the current Mechanical Equipment Shed is, camera facing north (November 17, 2023).

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Photo 65. View from across Laird Road of area where demolished distillery buildings once stood within the surrounding context of the extant distillery buildings, camera facing northeast (November 17, 2023).