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 for individual properties and 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 from 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  ILLINOIS ALCOHOL COMPANY BUILDING

other names/site number  Bison City Warehouse

name of related multiple property listing  N/A

2. Location

street & number  1432 Niagara Street [ ] not for publication

city or town  Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state  New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14213

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Federal agency and bureau</th>
<th>Signature of certifying official/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State or Federal agency and bureau</th>
<th>Signature of certifying official/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[ ] 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) __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the Keeper</th>
<th>date of action</th>
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**Illinois Alcohol Company Building**

**Erie County, New York**

### 5. Classification

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<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<td>(check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[X] private</td>
<td>[X] building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing 1 Noncontributing 0</td>
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**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter “N/A” if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

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### 6. Function or Use

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<tr>
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<td>Industrial storage, manufacturing facility</td>
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### 7. Description

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<td></td>
<td>roof asphalt</td>
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<td>other</td>
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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)
**Illinois Alcohol Company Building**

**Erie County, New York**

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Enter categories from instructions)

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

#### Period of Significance:

1925-1950

#### Significant Dates:

1925; 1928; 1929; 1930; 1942; 1950

#### Significant Person:

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

#### Architect/Builder:

Chesley, Earl & Heimback (builder)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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#### Primary location of additional data:

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<td>Federal Agency</td>
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<td>Local Government</td>
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<td>University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other repository:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Illinois Alcohol Company Building

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  0.20 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

<table>
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Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title    Annie Schentag, Ph.D.; Kerry Traynor, MS, MArch   [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization kta preservation specialists

date  4/12/2022

street & number  422 Parker Avenue

telephone  716.864.0628

city or town    Buffalo

state  NY

zip code  14216

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name

street & number

telephone

city or town

state

zip code

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. Response to this request 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, D.C. 20503
The Illinois Alcohol Company Building is a two-story concrete warehouse building located at 1432 Niagara Street, between Potomac Ave. to the north and Sloan St. to the south in Buffalo, NY. The building is located in the Niagara Street corridor, with the N.Y.C. R.R. tracks and Niagara River adjacent to the property to the west. The Peace Bridge to Canada is one mile to the south and downtown Buffalo is less than three miles to the south.

The Illinois Alcohol Company Building is located in what was historically an industrial area, situated between the Scajaquada Creek to the north, the Belt Line and N.Y.C. R.R. to the north and west, and the I-190 highway and Niagara River about a quarter-mile to the west. Some of the nearby industrial buildings were demolished beginning around the 1980s, but the Illinois Alcohol Company building remains extant as a good example of the type of industrial architecture that was built in the area during the early twentieth century. The building is located within the transshipment corridor of Niagara Street that is historically aligned with industrial and commercial development and is, therefore, an important representative of this context of industrial history and settlement patterns. Specifically designed to take advantage of the area’s transportation infrastructure, the building was constructed and functioned with two ‘faces,’ one oriented towards the railroad tracks to the west and one oriented towards Niagara Street to the east. On both of these elevations, the building is minimally setback from the adjacent transportation infrastructure, be it street or railroad.

The factory presents as a rectangular two-story building that contains loading access points on both the east elevation facing Niagara Street and the west elevation facing the N.Y.C.R.R. tracks and the Niagara River farther to the west. The building is six bays wide facing Niagara Street with vehicular entrances in the second and fifth bays and also has a six-bay-wide elevation facing the railroad tracks to the west with a pedestrian entrance and a loading dock in the form of a garage door. A concrete railroad dock is in deteriorating condition on the west side of the property, and concrete driveways lead to the vehicular loading docks on the east side of the building. Occupying a rectangular lot, the grounds are not landscaped, although there is a small asphalt paved rectangular parking lot in the adjacent lot at its north end. Although today a red stucco paint has been applied to the exterior, the building’s original design and form remain sufficiently intact to convey its historic significance and functions in association with the brewing and distilling industries. The building also retains sufficient integrity of its interior spaces, including retaining the original open floor plan on the first floor and small offices on the second floor, defined by rows of concrete columns supporting concrete walls and floors. The building is significant as a good example of an early twentieth-century concrete warehouse that played a key role in the history of brewing and distilling in Buffalo from 1925 to 1950.
Exterior
The two-story concrete-block Illinois Alcohol Company Building was constructed in 1920 to serve as a storage and transfer facility for the Bison City Storage & Transfer Co. Built by local contractor Chesley, Earl & Heimback, the modest style of the building was intended to blend in with the other industrial buildings and warehouses on Niagara Street. The building has rectangular massing with a flat roof and is constructed of reinforced concrete walls. Several design elements were included to divert attention away from, rather than toward, the building in order to provide security for the storage company’s customers who had goods stored inside. The six-bay-wide primary east elevation features no major ornamental details and contains two vehicular entrances and an offset simple pedestrian entrance. The most distinguishing feature of the building’s exterior design is the inclusion of original glass block windows, which were incorporated into the building’s design to provide enhanced security and privacy. These windows are an early use of this material, predating the mass-production of glass block windows in the United States by about ten years. As some American buildings began to be constructed using glass block shipped from Europe in the 1920s, they were primarily relegated to industrial purposes, such as seen here. In the late 1920s and 30s, American architects began including glass block in commercial and residential designs to convey a streamlined, modern look. The original glass banks of glass block windows remain intact in their original concrete openings on three of the elevations, providing a good example of this rare, early use of glass block in Buffalo. The west elevation, designed to access both Niagara Street and the railroad tracks to the west, also features a raised pedestrian entrance and a loading entrance with a garage door. The north and south elevations feature windows only on the second floor and are unadorned given that they are secondary elevations. The building still maintains a significant portion of its original exterior design, setting, and materials to demonstrate its historic function.

East Elevation
The primary elevation presents a six-bay-wide facade facing Niagara Street to the east. The concrete foundation is visible at grade. On the first floor, the primary entrance to the building is located in the southern bay, with vehicular access through garage doors in the second and fifth bays from the south. Each of the six bays is delineated by engaged concrete pilasters rising two stories to meet a simple concrete cornice with parapet below the flat roofline. Every bay contains a glass block window on the second floor, original to the construction of the building in 1920. These historic glass block windows are eleven blocks wide by seven blocks high and contain four rectangular casement openings, also historic, with the two lower openings twice as tall as the upper ones. The windows are set within original rectangular openings in each bay. Concrete belt courses run along the lower portion of the second story and the upper portion of the first story, creating a horizontal emphasis in keeping with the modest Modern style of the building. On the first floor, the first, third, fourth, and sixth bays from the south each feature a glass block window that is narrower than those above, each being eleven blocks wide and five blocks high. In the south bay, this window is centered above the pedestrian, a simple wood door.
West Elevation

The west elevation faces the railroad tracks and is similar to the east elevation, serving as the other functional face of the building although it is more modest in style. The six-bay-wide elevation contains a vehicular loading dock with metal overhead garage doors in the fourth and fifth bays from the south. The remaining bays each feature a window opening, although most of the windows have been filled in with brick, boarded, or, in one case on the second floor, replaced with non-historic sliding vinyl windows. The concrete pilasters are absent from this elevation, and the glass block windows have either been infilled or boarded. This elevation served historically as a loading dock for the railroad tracks adjacent to the west, which played a large role in the Illinois Alcohol Company activities at the building. Evidence of this function is visible in the vehicular loading docks as well as in the second bay from the south, where a raised pedestrian service entrance has infilled the railroad dock loading space and brick ‘ghosting’ of the original opening is visible. The freight elevator mechanics are encased in a square portion rising above the roofline at the center of this elevation.

North and South Elevations

The north elevation faces the adjacent parking lot to the north and is the simplest visible elevation, three bays wide. It features a solid concrete wall on the first story and a window in each bay on the second story. Original glass block remains in two of these openings, with the easternmost bay containing a larger window opening that is currently boarded. The south elevation is obscured by its proximity to the adjacent building to the south, but the second story is visible and contains three bays of glass block windows in original openings, much as on the north elevation.

Interior

The basic plan of the Illinois Alcohol Company Building reflects its historic function as a storage and shipping warehouse. The building retains sufficient integrity remaining in terms of plan and materials to convey historic meaning and function. The first floor features an open floor plan, designed to accommodate storage in a flexible arrangement of goods. Five rows of three square concrete columns running east-west provide structural support in this otherwise uninterrupted space. The second floor features the same rows of columns in the same location. The second floor is partially subdivided by concrete walls and stud partition walls to provide office spaces, some of which were original to the period of significance on the south side of the building. On both floors, regularly spaced rectangular window openings are located on the east and west walls, with several original glass block windows located on the east wall in particular. The windows have been infilled with brick or boarded on much of the west wall. The non-historic partition walls on the second floor are removable, and overall the building retains a high level of integrity to the interior spaces, including retaining the concrete walls, floors, and ceiling, as well as original glass block windows in many locations. These interior spaces remain largely legible as a warehouse historically used to store, ship, and produce alcohol and brewing equipment during the period of significance.
Stairs, Stairwells, and Corridors
The primary stairs and stairwells remain in their original location, with most of their original materials intact. The primary stairwell is located at the west end of the building, with a secondary stairwell at the south end of the building. Both of these stairwells access both floors. The west stairwell is enclosed behind a fireproof dividing wall with a wood handrail affixed, where the straight stairs with cast concrete treads and risers lead to a flat landing on the second floor. The south stairwell is enclosed in a wood-paneled partition wall with a simple wood handrail affixed, where cast concrete straight stairs lead to the second floor and terminate at a flat landing. A freight elevator is located on the west wall and rises from the first floor to the second floor, and the elevator penthouse conceals the mechanics above the roofline.

While the first floor features one large open space, the only corridor occurs on the second floor adjacent to the offices subdivided at the south end of the building. The corridor forms an L-shape following the south and east walls of the building, accessing the subdivided office spaces to the south of a concrete brick wall and to the east of a drywall partition wall. The remainder of the building features open spaces and rooms that enter directly into one another without corridors.

First Floor
The first floor retains the original open floor plan and most of the original material finishes that convey the original historic use of the as storage and shipping space. Entering through the primary entrance at the south end of the east elevation, one encounters a single open space occupying a majority of the first floor. Aside from a restroom partitioned by a concrete wall at the south end of the building, the first floor presents a single unified space. Five rows of three-square concrete columns running east-west provide structural support, terminating in a ceiling with exposed concrete beams. Six original glass block windows in rectangular openings are located on the east wall facing Niagara Street, but the north and south walls do not contain windows. The west wall has evidence of original window openings that have been infilled with brick or concrete. A secondary pedestrian entrance is located at the south end of the west wall. Vehicular access is provided through overhead metal garage doors, with two facing east and one facing west.

Second Floor
The second floor has five rows of square concrete columns in the same location as on the floor below. In some places, the second floor has been subdivided into office spaces, by a concrete wall to the south and a drywall partition wall to the east. The north portion of the space remains an open uninterrupted space. Some non-historic alterations have occurred on this floor, but they are all removable without disrupting the historic integrity of the space and its original functions as an office and storage space. Dropped ceiling heights cover the original concrete ceiling above. Some original glass block windows remain intact on the east and north wall,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Name of Property       | Illinois Alcohol Company Building |
| County and State       | Erie County, New York              |

while others have been partially altered, removed, or boarded. Although partition walls interrupt the otherwise open space, they do not disrupt the materials of the original space.
Statement of Significance:

The Illinois Alcohol Company Building at 1432 Niagara Street in Buffalo is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Social History for its association with the brewing and distilling industry in Buffalo during the first half of the twentieth century and, specifically, for its role in a large, illegal bootlegging operation during Prohibition. Constructed by local contractors Chesley, Earl & Heimback in 1920, the building was originally intended to serve as the Bison City Storage Company warehouse. During the Prohibition Era, the building’s design proved to be well suited for an illegal bootlegging ring led by the Illinois Alcohol Company from 1925 to 1929. Taking advantage of the privacy provided by the building’s non-descript appearance, original glass block windows, concealed vehicular loading docks facing Niagara Street to the east, and the railroad loading dock to the west, the Illinois Alcohol Company managed to conduct an extensive bootlegging operation at 1432 Niagara Street for several years. Once this illegal scheme was discovered, the resulting year-long trial uncovered the involvement of several corrupt local and state government agents, railroad workers, and the company employees at 1432 Niagara Street. In 1930 the building continued to be affiliated with the brewing industry when it was owned and occupied by Charles Jacobowitz’s company, the Niagara Filter Corporation. Jacobowitz first produced non-alcoholic beer at the building, switching to the production of brewing equipment when Prohibition regulations ended in 1933. By the time he died in 1950, Jacobowitz had become one of the nation’s leading manufacturers of brewing equipment, particularly filtration systems.

Although the building was originally constructed in 1920, the period of significance for the building begins when the first affiliation with the history of brewing and distilling began, in 1925 when the Illinois Alcohol Company leased the building and began its bootlegging operations. The period of significance ends in 1950, when the last company to be affiliated with the brewing industry, Niagara Filter Corporation, left and sold the building. This period includes all major changes to the building and indicates the years in which 1432 Niagara Street was associated with the rich history of the alcohol industry in Buffalo as it grew from 1925 to 1950.

Neighborhood Context: Niagara Street as a Transshipment Corridor

The building’s location on Niagara Street played an integral role in its function and history with the production and shipment of alcohol-related products. Through the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Niagara Street developed as a primary transshipment corridor on the west side of Buffalo. The confluence of waterways, railroad lines, and roadways made this area around Niagara Street ideal for businesses to manufacture, store, ship, and receive products through multiple forms of transportation networks in close proximity to the buildings constructed there. Throughout the building’s history, several companies utilized the location and position of 1432 Niagara Street between the Niagara River and rail lines to the west and the roadways to the east. The
context of Niagara Street as a primary transshipment corridor played an important role in the design, function, and history of the building.

As the second half of the nineteenth century saw Buffalo begin to grow out toward its city limits, transportation, and technological improvements paved the way for the later construction of the nominated building in 1920. By 1870, Buffalo still only featured three major streetcar lines, including along Niagara Street as well as Main Street and Genesee Street. Niagara Street was therefore already established as an important corridor at this time, largely due to the presence of this early transportation network in conjunction with its access to the adjacent waterways and shipping canals. In 1883, the New York Central Railroad constructed tracks that encircled the City of Buffalo and connected to the main railroad network. The Belt Line, as it was called, was a fifteen-mile loop that transported people and goods around the city and provided connections to the larger railroad system that connected Buffalo to the rest of the country. Aside from the presence of the actual Belt Line tracks, the New York Central Freight House and Office (NR listed 2018) remains at 68 Tonawanda Street, reflecting this history. Industry and residential neighborhoods also developed along the Belt Line loop when it was in operation for approximately thirty years, gradually fading out of existence due to competition from trolley lines and automobiles.

By the 1890s, a state-of-the-art electric streetcar line serviced Niagara Street from downtown to Hertel Avenue, with other lines extending further north provided by other companies. By 1895, all of the horse-drawn streetcars in the city of Buffalo had been replaced by electric streetcars, which ran by a system of overhead wires and steam-powered facilities. In November 1896, the Niagara streetcar line was one of the first to be powered by electrical current supplied from Niagara Falls. As the first transmission line to Buffalo electrified the trolley system, this “effectively ended the horse-drawn and local steam-powered electrical trolley systems.”¹ Not only did this technology forever change the region and the nation, but it also made a remarkable impact on the physical infrastructure of the city of Buffalo.

The transmission and distribution of this power made Niagara Street the focus of many electrical and infrastructural improvements at this early, experimental stage. Public services and industrial facilities were quick to utilize this power, starting from Niagara Street and radiating outwards to the rest of the city and surrounding area. In addition to the connectivity that the electrical network provided between all of these stations, the application of that electrical power to other industries—particularly the streetcar lines—further united the Niagara Street area into a single transportation corridor. Other transportation elements were undergoing changes on the waterways running alongside Niagara Street as well. Between 1905 and 1924 the federal government made improvements to Black Rock Harbor and Bird Island Pier. The work created the Black Rock Canal and Lock, a channel between Buffalo and Tonawanda for deep-draft vessels. The section of the canal in

Buffalo was abandoned by 1918 upon completion of the Erie Barge Canal, which terminates in Tonawanda. A few years later, in 1925, the Peace Bridge created a direct connection to Canada from Niagara Street, south of the district.

Industrial businesses emerged along the Niagara Street corridor to take advantage of the proximity of low-cost electricity. Located on the street to take advantage of the proximity to affordable electricity, a thorough streetcar network, and access to waterway transportation networks along the canal and river, these businesses often manufactured parts, engines, or machines related to the transportation industry in some way. The American Body Company, the Sowers Manufacturing Company, the Sterling Engine Company, and the Buffalo Gasoline Motor Company provide some examples of this type of industry, all located within a few blocks of the Illinois Alcohol Company Building. Even those industries that did not produce any transportation-oriented goods were linked into the same electrical network that united the area. The Curtiss Malting Company House at 1100 Niagara Street, for instance, was a long-time customer of the Niagara Power and Conduit Company, using electricity from Niagara Falls to power its operations. Strategically located near this source of power distribution, the Curtiss Malting Company used this to their advantage in order to increase production. As one of the only other brewing affiliated businesses on Niagara Street by the 1920s, it serves as a good example of how multiple types of industries took advantage of Niagara Street as a transshipment corridor.

The Niagara Street area remained a bustling industrial and commercial corridor through the 1920s and into the 1930s, as new transportation-oriented developments began to change the infrastructure of the area to favor the automobile instead. When the Bison City Storage & Transfer Company chose to construct the two-story concrete warehouse at 1432 Niagara Street, the location was an obvious choice for any company looking to situate itself in an industrial corridor with ample access to multiple transportation networks.

**Architectural History of 1432 Niagara Street, ca.1920-1950**

The two-story building was constructed at 1432 Niagara Street ca. 1920, and by this time many other buildings of this type were similarly oriented to take advantage of the shipping lines throughout the area. On April 8, 1920, the vacant lot at 1432 Niagara Street was sold by Joseph Fybush to Bison City Storage & Transfer Co. Inc. Two days later, permits were granted to the Bison City Storage company to build a two-story concrete warehouse at 1432-1442 Niagara Street. Led by company President George T. Lee and Secretary Arthur B. Weaver, Bison City intended to provide storage space in its new warehouse, where stored items could also be shipped and received by land or rail. The building was designed according to ‘private plans’ and constructed by the local general contractor Chesley, Earl & Heimback.

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2 *Buffalo Courier*, April 8, 1920, 11.
3 *American Contractor*, April 10, 1920, 53.
Like many of the industrial buildings constructed on Niagara Street during the early twentieth century, the building was designed to access both the railroad tracks to the west and the roads to the east. Vehicular access points were included facing Niagara Street, where two garage doors enabled shipments to arrive and depart directly into the building. To the west, a railroad loading dock opening was included in the design of the building to enable direct access to the New York Central Railroad tracks. These access points to the east and west were integral to the original design and function of the building.

Constructed with concrete frame floors, roof, and walls, the building embraced building technology that was typical of the era. Concrete frame construction was common amongst industrial factories and warehouses by 1920, providing plenty of open space inside without the need for interior load-bearing walls or numerous columns for additional support. Designed for use as a storage facility by the Bison City Storage company, it was essential that the building provide plenty of open space inside. The exterior was minimally adorned, befitting a storage facility that was intended to provide a secure location for customers to ensure that their items would be safely protected and would not receive unwanted attention from outsiders.

The building’s original design also included an early use of glass block windows, promoting not only a modern aesthetic but also conveying an added sense of privacy and security. Glass block windows, known historically as glass brick or hollow glass tiles, have long been recognized for their ability to provide excellent insulation, sound reduction, security (due to the thickness of the glass), and privacy, by obscuring outside views while still illuminating a space. Although they were invented by French engineer Gustave Falconnier in 1886 and exhibited at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, they were not mass-produced in the United States until the 1930s.\(^4\) The Structural Glass Corporation, the earliest known company to sell hollow glass blocks in America, began making and selling glass blocks around 1929-1931, based in New York City.\(^5\) Before that time, American builders were still able to use glass block, typically purchasing them from companies in Germany or Holland. This was not entirely uncommon, as the Barbizon Plaza Hotel and Town House Apartments both of which used this material, predated the manufacturing of glass block in America. Several more American companies began manufacturing and selling glass blocks in the 1930s, and by the end of that decade, the material had become overwhelmingly popular not only functionally but also aesthetically.

Given this, the glass block windows at 1432 Niagara Street were remarkably progressive in terms of style for the time the building was constructed in 1920. The choice to employ glass block was likely due far more to their functional benefits than their aesthetic values at the time. The privacy, insulation, and security that the

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Glass block provided was well suited to the purposes of a storage facility looking to maintain safety while located on a busy street. Glass block specialists, GBA in Medina, OH, have confirmed that the glass block in the building today is original to the building, dating to 1920. It has been identified in a 1920s catalog as Pattern No. 1 (see image in supplemental materials). Since this glass block pre-dated its prevalence in American architectural schemes, it was likely sourced from Europe and was considered suitable in the context of a storage warehouse.

The Bison City Company’s time in the building was relatively short, however. Although the building was designed to convey the company’s dedication to sturdy, safe storage, there were incidents in which the company failed to protect customers’ stored items. In August 1920, just a few months after the building was completed, the Bison City Storage company failed to protect the goods for the National Candy Company. The company stored 1,000 bags of sugar at the warehouse; however, when it came time to collect, 173 bags were missing. The National Candy Company successfully sued Bison City Storage for the value of the losses, totaling $1,346.6

Perhaps due in part to incidents like these, the company was short-lived. In April 1923, the company announced it would be holding an auction, wherein it would be selling the building as well as its contents “by order of referee in bankruptcy.”7 About one month later, the building was purchased by Charles S. Jacobowitz.8

Jacobowitz, a local entrepreneur in the brewing equipment industry, remained the owner of the building throughout the period of significance from 1925 to 1950. It was during his ownership that the building was occupied by two major companies affiliated with the brewing and distilling industries: the Illinois Alcohol Company leased the building from Jacobowitz from 1925 to 1929, and then Jacobowitz’s own company, the Niagara Filter Corporation, used the space from 1930 until 1950.

During that time, no major alterations to the building were made. The 1940 Sanborn Insurance Map is the first to depict the building in detail, indicating the concrete floors, roof, and walls as well as the original window openings, which remain intact. The map also indicates the proximity to the rail tracks that were regularly used to ship and receive materials by both companies. Offices were located on the second floor with the first floor used for storage and shipping. In 1942, the Niagara Filter Corporation listed the building for sale for $25,000, describing it as a “well-lighted, well-constructed two-story concrete building. 16,600 square feet floor space, steam heat, two-ton elevator, two drive-in entrances, railroad loading platform in rear. Good condition.”9

Although the building was later taken off the market and not sold until Jacobowitz died in 1950, the advertisement indicates the building remained much the same as it had originally been designed and constructed in 1920.

7 “Miscellaneous for Sale,” Buffalo Evening News, April 14, 1923, 15.
9 Buffalo Courier Express, August 4, 1942, 16.
The building at 1432 Niagara Street is associated with a rich historic context of the brewing and distilling industries in Buffalo. Brewing beer was an important industry for Buffalo’s early settlers. Several factors combined in the nineteenth century to help make Buffalo a successful brewing town. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a large influx of German immigrants brought with them generations-old techniques and skills in the art of beer and ale production, specifically lager (see next section). In the second half of the nineteenth century, a flood of central European immigrants brought a taste for quality beer and ale. The raw materials necessary for beer production are grain and water. Lager requires ice for fermentation and storage. Buffalo, an important port on the Great Lakes, was a major grain center and malt producer and had a readily available supply of ice, harvested off Lake Erie. The city led “most other similar cities as a malting center. The malting capacity of the city is not less than 4,000,000 bushels.”

Water, grain, and malt were inexpensive and readily available in Buffalo. The 1880 census report gave “the amount of capital invested in the production of malt-liquors in Buffalo as $1,859,975 and the value of products as $1,636,020.39.” The brewing industry was an important component of Buffalo’s economy.

Most of the breweries in Buffalo in the first half of the nineteenth century were small concerns, typically consisting of a brewery and tavern. It was not until modern refrigeration that beer would be produced and shipped to distant markets. The tavern-brewery catered primarily to the surrounding neighborhood. Germans drank beer in a “growler,” which would be filled daily at a local tavern for consumption at home. By 1850 there were eighteen breweries listed in the city directory. A trend toward larger, corporate breweries began after the 1840s. The industrial revolution and an influx of immigrants into Buffalo spurred the growth of dedicated facilities for the mass production of beer. “By 1857, some 1.5 million gallons of beer was produced by Buffalo brewers, and most of it was consumed locally.” The 1860 city directory lists twenty-two breweries. An 1897 publication by the Buffalo Brewers’ Association claimed that in 1863, thirty-five breweries in Buffalo were producing 152,000 barrels of beer and ale per year.

After the Civil War, the small tavern-breweries continued their decline as large corporations were formed to mass-produce beer for saloons and the retail market. The Buffalo Brewers’ Association was formed around 1872 in response to rising prices for raw materials and financial losses by the remaining breweries. The goals

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12 Smith, 251.
of the association included establishing fixed prices and other industry-protecting measures. There were three national beer conventions held in Buffalo in the nineteenth century: 1868, 1880, and 1900. In 1896 there were only nineteen breweries but they produced 652,340 barrels of beer and ale per year, making Buffalo a major producer of beer in the United States. Within the next decade “a total production of upwards of one million barrels was marketed.”

Distilling companies also were established and grew during the late nineteenth century. Although they were not as plentiful as the breweries, they experienced some success by producing primarily gin, vodka, rye, and whiskey into the early twentieth century. According to an 1887 book The History of Buffalo, there were only three distilleries in New York State in 1887: two were located in Buffalo and the third was on Long Island. Because Buffalo was a grain terminus, the two largest in the state were located there. At that time, the government taxed ninety cents per gallon and forced companies to manufacture at only 80 percent of their capacity whether for a loss or profit. The Old Red Jacket Distillery was founded by George Truscott after the civil war, and the E.N. Cook Company was founded around 1879, later becoming the Buffalo Distilling Company in 1893. For many years the E.N. Cook company paid $30,000 a month in taxes, representing virtually the whole distilling industry of Buffalo and Western New York. The rest of the alcohol dealers were whiskey wholesalers, rather than producers.

By 1900 technology and demand drove the construction of ever-larger breweries. Some of these were located along Niagara Street in order to take advantage of the prevalent electricity and shipping routes, such as the George J. Meyer Malting Company at 1314 Niagara Street and the Curtiss Malting Company at 1100 Niagara Street. Many of the smaller brewers could no longer compete with the larger breweries, which typically consisted of malt houses, a refrigeration house, a bottling department, stables, and a business office. Refrigeration and bottling were major innovations in the industry that also kept the smaller brewers out of the market. As documented in 1911, “thus far, the twentieth century has made no addition to the brewing establishments of the city.” This situation would remain unchanged in the years leading up to 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the Volstead Act were passed, prohibiting the production, transport, and sale of alcoholic beverages.

The Volstead Act lasted thirteen years, from 1920 to 1933, and brought down many of the local breweries and distilleries. Some brewers adapted by selling soda and malt products. Others survived illegally, by producing

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and/or distributing grain alcohol in direct violation of Prohibition laws. As Buffalo was located within proximity to Canada, as well as multiple railroad and water shipping networks, it experienced a high level of illegal bootlegging during the Prohibition era. The Illinois Alcohol Company was among the largest of these organized bootlegging rings in Buffalo. Others, like the Niagara Filter Corporation, produced ‘near beer,’ which provided a legal, non-alcoholic product that was only mildly popular at the time.

The smaller breweries that survived prohibition came back to find their equipment antiquated; only “mega-brewers” with funds to update their equipment and who had regional or national reach would thrive in the new marketplace. They purchased equipment from manufacturers and dealers of brewing equipment such as the Niagara Filter Corporation, which experienced considerable success at 1432 Niagara Street to meet the high demand amongst breweries that could afford new equipment after Prohibition. Only seven or eight Buffalo breweries survived prohibition and, by the 1950s, only five were left. In 1972 two surviving breweries, the Iroquois and William Simon, ceased their operation, and an industry that was “inaugurated with the incorporation of the city” perished with them. Brewing returned to Buffalo in the 1990s along with the national return to popularity of the brewpub and micro-brewing industry. Today there are several small, microbreweries in Buffalo and the surrounding region. No major distilleries survived prohibition in Buffalo, and it was not until the twenty-first century that businesses like Lockhouse Distillery, the city’s first post-Prohibition distillery, were once again established in the city.

The Illinois Alcohol Company at 1432 Niagara Street, 1925-1929

The building at 1432 Niagara Street is significant for its association with the history of distilling and brewing in the City of Buffalo, beginning with its occupation and use by the Illinois Alcohol Company (IAC) from 1925 to 1929. Operating as a legal alcohol denaturing plant during the Prohibition Era, this company also ran an extensive illegal bootlegging operation from the building for several years before being discovered by the city, state, and federal governments in a massive bust. When these large-scale bootleg operations were uncovered in 1928, over thirty people went to trial, including several governmental agents, for the illegal production and sales of over $3 million in grain alcohol in direct violation of Prohibition regulations. The building at 1432 Niagara Street played an integral role in the illegal operations, serving as the place where the grain alcohol was produced, stored, and shipped illicitly from the west side of the building on the adjacent railroad tracks.

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19 Larned, 44.
21 Portions of the William Simon brewery remain extant at 161 Emslie Street and the Iroquois, one of the pioneer breweries, located at 212-250 Pratt Street, was demolished ca. 2013.
The building was leased in December 1924 from Charles S. Jacobowitz by a group claiming to be the ‘Illinois Alcohol Company.’ This was believed to be an offshoot branch of a parent company of the same name in Belvedere, Illinois, but it was only discovered during the trials of 1929 that this had instead been the first step in an elaborate bootlegging operation. Strategically, the group applied for a permit to denature alcohol in December 1924 under the IAC name; then, as the government had made the investigation and granted the permit, they changed the entity without informing any officials. As the proceeding summary states, “After the formation of that corporation and prior to the issuance of the permit, the corporation sold its entire capital stock and output of grain alcohol to persons and corporations, formed to represent such persons, none of whom had a permit to receive, purchase, or denature grain alcohol. This was unknown to those in charge of the enforcement of the prohibition law.” This was only the beginning of the elaborate plan to profit from the shipment of large quantities of grain alcohol over the next few years. Surprisingly, Jacobowitz’s name is absent from any of the proceedings or newspapers that thoroughly detailed the lengthy trial that followed these activities in 1929. He appears to have maintained his innocence and raised no suspicion surrounding himself, and his involvement ended with the leasing of the property in 1924.

On July 13, 1925, the IAC was granted a permit to denature 43,000 gallons of alcohol a month. At the time, this type of legal operation was only somewhat rare. While alcohol was illegal for consumption in America during Prohibition from 1920 to 1933, there was still a need for denatured alcohol in the nation’s manufacturing industries, commercial businesses, and cleaning services. Also known as methylated spirit, denatured alcohol is essentially ethanol with additives that make it poisonous and bad-tasting in order to discourage consumption. When the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act were in effect during the Prohibition era from 1920 to 1933, denatured alcohol was the only legal form of alcohol that could be produced and distributed. Several companies nationwide received permits to produce denatured alcohol during this time, and regulations were typically very strict surrounding these activities. However, only twelve days after they received their initial permit, the members of the fraudulent IAC managed to obtain a new permit that greatly expanded their operations to 300,000 gallons of alcohol a month. This provided an excellent cover for the large-scale distribution of grain alcohol that they would conduct over the next three years.

From its inception, the IAC operations were thoroughly crafted as a scheme to produce and distribute grain alcohol at 1432 Niagara. The building itself played a crucial role in facilitating and concealing this illegal activity. Its position and design facing both Niagara Street and the railroad tracks provided the IAC with an opportunity to efficiently conceal large shipments of illegal alcohol, and therefore the IAC conceived and carried out its scheme in direct relation to the architectural specifics of the warehouse at 1432 Niagara Street.

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Once the company received the alcohol for denaturing via the railroads, workers would then load it into the warehouse where it was concealed from the public view. There, instead of denaturing all of the alcohol, they would denature only a portion of it. The remainder, the vast majority of the alcohol, would be reshipped and sold to bootleggers. Painting the barrels to make the grain alcohol look like denatured alcohol, they would then ship both types of alcohol on the railroad and in trucks. The building’s direct access to the railroad, away from public view on Niagara Street, enabled these operations to be concealed. Railroad employees were later “said to have conspired with the smugglers by issuing false waybills which would make it appear the cars were shipped on a non-stop route through Canada so that no hint of their having been loaded with liquor would be given.”

It was later revealed that “companies which bought this denatured alcohol were merely ‘cover’ houses for the ultimate purchasers of the more potent alcohol. Every time a freight car of denatured alcohol sold, another freight car containing consumable alcohol was sold.” This strategy continued for three years, and the building’s position and design made it extremely difficult for onlookers and government officials to discover or confirm the illegal activity that happened on the west side facing the railroad tracks.

Furthermore, the IAC also used the east side of the building’s vehicular access to their advantage as well. Able to load trucks from inside the warehouse directly, rather than outside on the street, they would load some trucks with denatured alcohol and others with grain alcohol. Although suspicious government agents would often follow and stop the trucks as they left the warehouse, they were unable to discover anything but legally denatured alcohol because, “every time a truckload of alcohol went out of there, there were three or four of completely denatured alcohol going along, you had to just grab the right truck.”

This tactic was successful in large part due to the design of the building at 1432 Niagara Street, which enabled the loading and unloading of both trucks and railroad cars away from prying eyes.

Even when agents attempted to spy on the IAC, the building at 1432 Niagara managed to conceal the activities inside. As a neighbor testified during the trials, she “peered daily at the plant of the IAC through field glasses from a room across the street…which was a disappointing failure.” The glass block windows on the east elevation of the building concealed the activities inside the warehouse from prying neighbors, thereby aiding the IAC by providing the privacy needed to operate such a large, elaborate ring of organized crime. At one point a few government agents rented a room across the street from the warehouse “to see what, if anything, was wrong with the business of the company,” but struggled to find any clear evidence. Unable to see clearly through the glass block windows or view the activity on the railroad loading side to the west, the agents instead had to focus

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28 “Spying on Illinois Plant Failed to Trap Anybody, Says Undercover Agent,” Buffalo Courier-Express, April 24, 1929, 1.
29 “Spying on Illinois Plant Failed to Trap Anybody, Says Undercover Agent,” Buffalo Courier-Express, April 24, 1929, 1.
their attention on watching the “covered trucks pulling mysteriously in and out.”

Using binoculars, the agent “could see that the trucks that entered the plant that particular day were not weighted down sufficiently to have carried 200 drums. He also saw one truck pull up to Edward Moran [a Government Prohibition agent later convicted of conspiracy], who waved the truck inside.” The combination of glass block windows, strategic vehicular access points, and railroad loading docks at 1432 Niagara Street all provided high levels of privacy that concealed these operations for several years before agents were able to build a case against the IAC.

The IAC used not only the building itself to conceal its activities but also multiple systems of bribery and bureaucratic deception. Over the next few years, the members of the IAC used “various dummy corporations, bank accounts and other methods of deception to keep the denaturing plant going under the permit obtained as stated, while to do so was violative of the National Prohibition Act.”

Extensive, long-term bribery occurred, and the IAC managed to recruit several city, state, and federal government agents as well as railroad workers to profit from this scheme. The reports found “wholesale bribery of the agents in return for their assistance in shipping the drums from the city and for conveying freight cars containing the stuff from Buffalo to points of destination.” From 1926-1928, nearly $500,000 was paid to “the government men to permit the Illinois Alcohol Company to divert carload after carload of the stuff.”

When government agents from Washington were assigned to inspect the plant, the IAC would receive notice from bribed officials and was able to arrange for activities to appear legal, so that there would be no diversion or distribution of grain alcohol during that time. When the local and state agents appeared at the building, however, “the diversion was resumed. Buffalo agents were paid five dollars and New York State agents received ten dollars for every drum of grain alcohol diverted.” Those agents in turn would falsify their daily reports, declaring that the alcohol had been denatured when, in fact, it had not.

With this many government agents, inspectors, railroad workers, and truck drivers in on a scheme occurring at such a concealed location, it took several years for the bootlegging operation at 1432 Niagara Street to be exposed.

On May 15, 1928, state agents used a search warrant and subsequently sized 5,000 gallons of grain alcohol at 1432 Niagara Street on that single day. The accusations were announced and the permit to denature alcohol was revoked within about a month. Overall, reports indicated that at least 108 freight carloads of alcohol had been diverted, with about 11,000 drums containing about 550,000 gallons of alcohol worth about $3 million.

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30 “Spying on Illinois Plant Failed to Trap Anybody, Says Undercover Agent,” Buffalo Courier-Express, April 24, 1929, 1.
31 “Spying on Illinois Plant Failed to Trap Anybody, Says Undercover Agent,” Buffalo Courier-Express, April 24, 1929, 1.
32 United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, United States V. Illinois Alcohol Co. et al, No 35, Circuit Court of Appeals, November 3 1930.
37 “Permit of Big Alcohol Plant Declared Void,” Buffalo Courier Express, June 29, 1928, 1.
since IAC leased the building and began operations in 1925.\textsuperscript{38} There were eighty-eight individuals named in a blanket indictment in 1928, and among them were nine former Prohibition administrators, Prohibition inspectors, agents, and internal revenue agents, two former chiefs of the Buffalo squad of dry agents, ten salesmen, as well as all of the IAC officers and employees from 1432 Niagara Street. Over the next year, as details of the case unfolded, 186 witnesses from many parts of the country were called to testify in what became the longest trial in the history of the Western New York District court at the time.\textsuperscript{39} One year later, in May 1929, all of the former prohibition officials and agents had been cleared of the charges except for Moran and five men, four of whom were based at 1432 Niagara Street, who had been convicted of “conspiracy to violate the prohibition law by diverting pure grain alcohol from the denaturing plant of the IAC of Buffalo, 1432 Niagara Street.”\textsuperscript{40} They were sentenced to two years in federal prison and a $10,000 fine.

The IAC Corporation was also convicted, but since the company was dissolved it was declared it “is non-existent and therefore not amenable to punishment or to further processes of law.”\textsuperscript{41} The extensive bootlegging activities that occurred at 1432 Niagara Street from 1925 to 1929 create a strong connection between the building and the illegal activities involving the selling and distribution of alcohol during the Prohibition era. The building’s design and location were directly beneficial in IAC’s elaborate scheme to distribute thousands of gallons of illegal alcohol for consumption, earning millions of dollars in the process. The warehouse provided privacy for the bootleggers in the form of glass block windows, a railroad loading dock to the west away from prying eyes, and two vehicular loading docks inside the building, and therefore played an important role in the IAC scheme.

\textbf{The Niagara Filter Corporation, 1930-1950}

Charles Jacobowitz had leased the building to the IAC since 1924, but when the company was dissolved and members were convicted in 1929, he still retained sole ownership of the building at 1432 Niagara Street. In 1930, he began to occupy the building for his business purposes. Having entered the brewing and refrigeration industry in the 1910s, by 1930, Jacobowitz had gained considerable experience in the field. After the IAC left the building in 1929, Jacobowitz began making and selling brewery equipment at 1432 Niagara Street. He appears to have primarily dealt in selling new and used equipment at first, while also brewing non-alcoholic beer at the location during the last few years of the Prohibition Era. A 1931 advertisement for Jacobowitz’s ‘near-beer’ described “A perfect brew. Put up in Lager, Pilsener, and Muenchener. Tastes, smells, and foams like the old stuff. This has no foreign taste like other near beer. Sold in hotels, restaurants, grocers, delicatessen

\textsuperscript{38} “Appeals Planned After Alcohol Case,” \textit{Buffalo Evening News}, May 16, 1929.
\textsuperscript{39} “Appeals Planned After Alcohol Case,” \textit{Buffalo Evening News}, May 16, 1929.
\textsuperscript{40} “Appeals Planned After Alcohol Case,” \textit{Buffalo Evening News}, May 16, 1929.
\textsuperscript{41} “Appeals Planned After Alcohol Case,” \textit{Buffalo Evening News}, May 16, 1929.
stores, and clubs.” Selling his product locally, Jacobowitz developed near-beer at 1432 Niagara Street until Prohibition ended in 1933. Capitalizing on the newly legal market for brewing alcoholic beer, he switched his efforts to focus on manufacturing brewing equipment instead.

In 1934, Jacobowitz founded a company to produce brewing equipment at 1432 Niagara Street. Initially called the Charles S. Jacobowitz Corporation, the name was changed to the Niagara Filter Corporation a few years later in 1939 when he brought his son Arnold into the company. The company sold multiple types of equipment related to the brewing industry, including “labelers, crowners, fillers, air pumps, jacketed kettles, vacuum pumps, bottle conveyer, bronze pumps, copper coils, filters, wood, and steel tanks.” When Arnold joined his father at the Niagara Filter Corporation in 1939, they began to focus primarily on manufacturing devices used in the filtration stage of the brewing process.

Within just a few years, the Niagara Filter Corporation became “one of the world’s leading manufacturers of industrial filters.” At 1432 Niagara Street, they made large stainless-steel tanks that would become parts of other industrial brewing equipment. Designed to mechanically separate solids from liquids, the tanks contained “a battery of metal cloth, leaf fillers with more than 2500 openings per square inch. Unfiltered liquids move through the filter under pressure.” The company’s filtration systems were used to filter not only beer, but also sugar, penicillin, streptomycin, glue, paper, nylon, paint, weed killer, and Sulphur, as well as being used to clarify potassium chlorate and titanium tetrachloride in war industries. About 25 percent of its products were shipped internationally, including to Singapore, Holland, and the Belgian Congo. All of this activity was based out of the headquarters at 1432 Niagara Street, and soon Jacobowitz “was well known in the brewing industry for his activity in assembling and selling equipment to breweries throughout the world.”

Much of this success was established as the company refined its manufacturing processes at 1432 Niagara Street. As the product line expanded and sales demands outpaced supply, Niagara Filter Corporation began looking for a new, larger location. The building at 1432 Niagara Street was briefly listed for sale in 1943, but the advertisement did not appear again for several years. Around that time, the company moved its primary operations to 3080 Main Street, which provided larger facilities to accommodate a growing workforce of about fifty people. The building at 1432 Niagara Street became secondary in the company’s operations, serving primarily as surplus storage and shipping facilities. When Jacobowitz died in 1950, his son Arnold took over the company, and the building at 1432 Niagara Street was sold to the West Disinfection Company that year.

42 Advertisement, Buffalo Courier-Express, March 20, 1931, 23.
43 Buffalo Evening News, August 31, 1938.
46 Buffalo Evening News, April 6, 1944, 31.
This sale marks the end of the period of significance, as the building was no longer affiliated with the brewing and distilling industries as it had been since 1925.

Notable Figures

**Charles S. Jacobowitz**
Born in Buffalo ca.1878, Charles S. Jacobowitz attended School 19 in the city and went to work at an early age when both of his parents died. As a teenager, he became the owner of one of the first stores in Buffalo operating under the Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company. By 1905, he sold that store and entered the coal and ice business. In 1913, he entered the brewing business, somewhat inadvertently. Attending an auction in Geneva that year, he “intended to buy only boxes and packing crates for the carting business, but ended up buying the brewery.”

He worked first in brewing and then in creating refrigeration and ice-making equipment. Recognizing the market to produce and distribute machinery for this industry, by 1917 he was identified as “one of the most extensive dealers in brewery, bottling, and ice-making machinery in this country. He also sells kegs and bottles, brewery equipment and entire breweries.” He advertised that he could “furnish anything needed in a Brewery, Bottling House or Ice Making plant, of any size.” The enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act during the Prohibition Era set him back somewhat, however, and he made sure to diversify his market by focusing on refrigeration and ice-making equipment at that time. He also invested in real estate, purchasing the building at 1432 Niagara Street in 1924, even though he saw no need to relocate his business from 1208 West Avenue at the time. In 1930, following the IAC scandal, he occupied his building at 1432 Niagara Street and built the substantial business of Niagara Filtration Corporation there.

Jacobowitz was a member of the Board of the Jewish Federation, a member and treasurer of Temple Beth Zion, director of the old Lafayette National Bank, a member of Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Willowdale Country Club and Rotary Club. He and his wife had two sons, one of whom, Arnold, joined him in his business ventures. He owned the building at 1432 Niagara Street between 1924 and 1950 and was instrumental in its association with the brewing industry during that time.

After the Period of Significance, 1950-2020

In 1950, the West Disinfection Company purchased the building to use as its warehouse to produce, store and ship its disinfectant products. Known for making ‘CN,’ a chloro-Naphtholeum house disinfecting product, the company dates back to the 1880s in Cleveland, OH, when Robert West first introduced Chloro-Naphtholeum as a

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50 *The Brewers’ Journal* (October 1, 1917), 52.
51 *The Brewers’ Journal* (October 1, 1917), 52.
cleaning product to the American market. By the 1890s the company and its affiliated patents and products had been purchased by Taussig and Co. In 1899, the CN trademark was introduced, and the company enjoyed success and growth at its main NYC office into the 1910s. The owner, Emil Taussig, died on the Titanic, and management and ownership were transferred to the Marcuse family. The Marcuses’ remained active in the company well into the 1950s, with headquarters moving to Long Island and remaining there into the 1970s.

During that time, the West Disinfection Company at 1432 Niagara served as a Buffalo-based branch of this larger corporation. As one of fifty-eight branches at the time, the West Disinfection Company was a small local representative of the parent company, West Chemical Products of Long Island. At 1432 Niagara, they made, packaged, and shipped batches of CN. Although the building was no longer affiliated with the history of brewing in Buffalo, it was still well suited to this type of production, requiring no major changes to the plan of the building.

In 1972, the building was sold to Dupont Assoc. Inc., which remained the owner and occupant until 1996. Neither of these owners required significant conversion of the building to suit their purposes, and they did not generally disrupt the overall plan, materials, and form of the building, which is intact with enough architectural integrity to convey its historic meaning and functions reflecting the history of brewing.

Summary

The Illinois Alcohol Company Building represents a significant contribution to the history of the brewing and distilling industries in Buffalo during the first half of the twentieth century. Constructed initially for the Bison City Storage & Transfer Company by local contractor Chesley, Earl & Heimback in 1920, the building’s design was specifically oriented to take advantage of the transshipment corridor of Niagara Street and the railroad tracks to the west. The building also features an early use of glass block windows, included in the design in order to provide security for the goods stored inside. The building provides a good example of a reinforced concrete warehouse that is significant under Criterion A for Industry and Social History due to its associations with the alcohol industry both during and after the Prohibition Era. The period of significance begins in 1925 when the building was leased by the Illinois Alcohol Company. For the next several years, the building’s design provided useful to this company in concealing their extensive bootleg operations, where they could load and unload shipments of grain alcohol through the multiple loading docks as well as conceal their business with the aid of the glass block windows facing Niagara Street. When the elaborate, multimillion-dollar operation was exposed in 1929, the record-breaking case revealed the involvement of several local, regional, and statewide government prohibition agents in the scheme. In 1930, the building continued its associations with the brewing industry, as the owner Charles Jacobowitz first produced ‘near-beer’ in the building and then founded the

Niagara Filter Corporation there as well. Manufacturing and distributing filtration systems and other brewing equipment in the building, the Niagara Filter Corporation was known nationwide for its high-quality brewing filters. The period of significance ends when Jacobowitz died in 1950 and the building was sold to West Disinfecting Corporation, ending the affiliation to the history of brewing in Buffalo at that time.
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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“Permit of Big Alcohol Plant Declared Void.” *Buffalo Courier Express*, June 29, 1928.


“Spying on Illinois Plant Failed to Trap Anybody, Says Undercover Agent.” *Buffalo Courier-Express*, April 24, 1929.


Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale. The boundary encompasses the property at SBL 88.73-1-8 (per the 2021 parcel year data).

Boundary Justification

The boundary has been drawn to correspond to the historic building and parcel at 1432 Niagara Street (SBL 88.73-1-8). The boundary includes the parcel located at 1432 Niagara Street, which operated as the Illinois Alcohol Company Building. The boundary is justified by the parcel’s boundaries during the period of significance, which remain the same today. The building was never connected or attached to the adjacent building to the south, as shown on historic Sanborn maps dating to 1950 (see attached).
Location of the Illinois Alcohol Company Building (1432 Niagara Street) on the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning Office of GIS tax map. The boundaries of the property are outlined in blue.
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York

1432 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14213

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Coordinate Units: Meter
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York

1432 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14213

Area: 0.20 ac
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Area: 0.20 ac

1432 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14213
Additional Information

Photo Log:
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State

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Historic Map

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950
Volume 4, Sheet 339
This is the first map to depict the building, constructed in 1920. By this time, the West Disinfecting Company occupied the building (starting that year at the end of the period of significance, 1950).
Advertisement announcing the new warehouse constructed in 1920 (Buffalo Evening News).

Photograph of the jury during the 1929 trial.
Historic Glass Block catalogue, c.1920. Image highlights the specific type of glass block in the building, confirmed by GBA, a glass block specialist consultant in Ohio.
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Property</th>
<th>Illinois Alcohol Company Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>County and State</td>
<td>Erie County, New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State
Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Illinois Alcohol Company Building
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
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Illinois Alcohol Company Building
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Erie County, New York
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