

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation

Other names/site number: Zeropak Corporation, DHR# 138-5140

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 536-580 N. Cameron Street

City or town: Winchester State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication:  N/A

Vicinity:  N/A

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


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

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

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

		<u>4-5-2022</u>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date	
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>			
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government			

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/industrial storage

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; METAL: Steel; GLASS; WOOD

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation developed the plant at 536-580 N. Cameron Street in Winchester, Virginia, and operated from this location beginning in 1902. In 1976, the company acquired the Zeropak Company of Ohio and operated the plant under that name until its closure in 1997. The former ice and cold storage plant today presents as a single building but is the result of several different construction phases extending from 1916 to 1981 (see Sketch Map). The plant consists of three buildings: a 1930 office building, a 1930 ice plant and cold storage building, and a 1916 cold storage building, all of which are contributing (the property has no non-contributing resources). A 1938 addition extends from the north side of the 1930 ice and cold storage building. Between the 1938 addition and the 1916 building is a 1948 addition that connects internally to both of the earlier sections. Two internally connected additions extend from the north side of the 1916 building, dating from 1961 and 1981. The office building is the only resource that does not have internal connections to other parts of the plant. A shared concrete platform and covered walkway connect the office building to the 1930 ice plant. The various sections of the plant are joined in a linear alignment that extends for approximately 785 feet along N. Cameron Street. Industrial in character, the former plant ranges from one to six stories in height and are primarily of brick and reinforced concrete construction. The complex's sections exhibit rectangular to trapezoidal ground plans and flat roofs with no overhang. The southern half of the facility, which originally functioned as the ice plant and company offices, features a variety of original and replacement metal frame windows. The northern half of the

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facility, which functioned as a series of voluminous and interconnected cold storage spaces, is largely devoid of fenestration. While some exterior alterations have occurred to the complex over the years, the majority of the former C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation plant has retained sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship and conveys its original function and significant historical associations.

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

The plant occupies a 3.74-acre property that is bounded to the west by N. Cameron Street and to the east by the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The property extends to Gibbens Street on the north. To the south, the plant is bounded by an extension of E. Wyck Street that separates it from the residential property at 520 N. Cameron Street.

Beginning at the southern end of the plant, 536 N. Cameron Street is a two-story, brick, rectangular plan building with a flat roof and stepped brick parapet that was constructed in 1930 to house the ice company's offices. Also built in 1930, 540 N. Cameron Street is a two-story, painted brick, rectangular plan building with a flat roof that contained the ice plant as well as cold storage space. To its north, at 550 N. Cameron, is a two-story brick addition built in 1938 that is roughly trapezoidal in plan with a flat roof. It originally housed a fruit processing area and cold storage space. The largest section of the plant, at 560 N. Cameron, is a six-story, brick, rectangular-plan cold storage addition that the company constructed in 1948; it connects the 1938 addition to the 1916 five-story, brick, rectangular-plan cold storage building that is the earliest portion of the complex to have survived. Attached to the north side of the 1916 building is 570 N. Cameron Street, a one-story, brick, rectangular-plan, flat-roofed warehouse addition built in 1961. Connected to the 1961 addition is a final addition at 574-580 N. Cameron, which is a one-story, rectangular-plan, concrete addition that was built in 1981. Each section of the complex is described below in order from south to north.

### 536 N. Cameron Street (1930, contributing building)

#### *Exterior*

536 N. Cameron Street is a two-story, brick and concrete, rectangular-plan building that was constructed in 1930 to house the ice company's offices. It is set back approximately 55 feet from N. Cameron Street. Unlike the other sections of the plant, which exhibit no setback and extend for nearly the full width of the lot, 536 N. Cameron Street is tall and narrow in form, extending from the south elevation of 540 N. Cameron Street near its midpoint. The building rests on a raised concrete foundation and its brick upper stories are laid in seven-course common bond. The roof is flat and is accented by a stepped brick parapet, capped with aluminum flashing. The parapet runs along the east, west, and south elevations. An exterior brick chimney rises at the northeast corner of the building.

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The primary entrance is located in the first story of the five-bay west façade. The entrance is accessed by a set of non-original wooden steps at the south end of a concrete porch that extends the full length of the west façade and wraps onto the south elevation of 540 N. Cameron. The porch features replacement wood railing and is sheltered by a bracketed corrugated metal shed roof. The primary entrance has a single-leaf wood door with lights that is recessed within a molded wood surround. Surmounting the door is a three-light transom topped by a soldier-course brick lintel. A secondary entrance of the same design (but with a single replacement transom light) is located in the west façade's northernmost bay. Also at the first story are two six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash windows; the window north of the entrance is paired. An additional window opening, south of the main entrance, has been infilled with brick. All of the building's windows feature soldier course brick sills and lintels. At the north end of the west façade, a shared concrete platform and covered walkway connect this building to the neighboring 1930 ice plant and cold storage building. The second story of the west façade contains four windows and a bricked-up opening in the northernmost bay. The center window is a small square six-light, fixed-sash metal window. The remaining three windows are multi-light, industrial-style metal units with central operable awning sashes. Two are single in configuration, while the other is paired.

The one-bay south elevation features a window at both the first and second stories. The first-story window opening has been partially infilled with brick, and contains a single twelve-light, metal window with a central operable awning sash. A three-part window of the same design is located at the second story.

The east elevation originally contained four windows at both the first and second stories. The two outer bays at each story have been infilled with brick. The two inner bays still contain a small square fixed-sash metal window and a paired multi-light industrial-style metal window, both of the same design, in the west elevation's second story.

### *Interior*

The interior of 536 N. Cameron Street contains offices with original hardwood floors, plaster walls with original wood base and crown moldings, and plaster ceilings with non-original inset, can-style lighting fixtures. Also present are original paneled wood doors in simple unmolded wood surrounds. Contrasting with these office interiors, the remainder of the plant's interiors present a functional, industrial aesthetic with no ornamentation. The office building is not internally connected to the adjacent 1930 ice plant and cold storage building

### 540 N. Cameron Street (1930, contributing building)

### *Exterior*

Constructed in 1930, 540 N. Cameron Street is a two-story, brick, rectangular plan building with a flat roof that contained the ice plant as well as cold storage space. Like 536 N. Cameron, the building exhibits a raised concrete foundation and brick upper stories laid in seven-course

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common bond. The west façade is divided into five bays at the first and second stories. A historic photograph of the building taken during the early 1930s (Figure 17) reveals that a railroad siding originally ran along the west elevation, and was serviced by a covered porch, or loading dock, that extended the full length of the first story. This loading dock has since been removed. The outer first-story bays each contain a set of original, double-leaf, battened wood doors. Three sidelights, stacked above rectangular, molded wood side panels, flank each set of doors. The original transom lights have been removed and infilled with plywood. The remaining first and second-story bays contain four-light sliding-sash metal replacement windows with soldier-course brick sills and lintels.

Extending from the south elevation of 540 N. Cameron Street is a concrete and brick porch/loading dock with a flat corrugated metal roof supported by metal posts. The covered dock runs along both the east and west halves of the south elevation, to either side of the building's junction with 536 N. Cameron Street. West of 536 N. Cameron, the south elevation contains a large replacement metal access door. The east side of the south elevation is pierced by a small, single-leaf metal door.

### *Interior*

The 1930 ice plant at 540 N. Cameron Street contains one interior floor. At the south end is a narrow loading and storage area that opens onto the south exterior dock via large steel doors. The space has brick walls, concrete floors, and a concrete ceiling with exposed steel I-beam joists. A brick partition separates this area from a large open space to its north that originally contained the ice making and processing machinery. This space is finished in the same manner as the loading area to its south, and the high, full-height ceiling's I-beam joists are supported by steel columns. Large windows at the first and second exterior stories provide daylighting into this space. A large rectangular concrete platform is located in the west half of this room. A single-leaf metal door and a large sliding metal door, both in the north wall, lead to the adjacent interior of the 1938 addition at 550 N. Cameron. The presence of infill brick suggests that there were originally four large rectangular openings in the north wall. The east half of 540 N. Cameron, divided from the main manufacturing floor by a brick partition, contains a long ice storage room. A door opening in the partition allows access to the ice storage room. To the south of the door opening is a brick and concrete block hearth with a decorative concrete hood embellished with a medieval landscape scene that includes a seated king and his courtiers. This hearth, recently installed and not original to the building, occupies the location of an earlier doorway that is depicted on the 1942 Sanborn map (Figure 12) and there is infill brick above the hearth where the flue penetrates the east wall. The ice storage room is finished with original wood floors and ceilings supported by exposed steel joists and structural columns. The brick walls of the ice storage room are covered by several layers of thick foam insulation panels. A heavy steel door is located at the north end of the ice storage room and provides an interior connection with the addition at 550 N. Cameron.

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550 N. Cameron Street (1938 Addition)

*Exterior*

Continuing to the north, 550 N. Cameron Street is a two-story brick and reinforced concrete addition that is roughly trapezoidal in plan with a flat roof. The brick is laid in six-course common bond. The addition was constructed in 1938, and it housed a large fruit processing space and cold storage rooms.

In the west façade, two single-leaf, flat metal service doors are located at the south end of the elevation, at the basement level. There are also seven basement-level window openings that have been infilled with brick. The first story is divided into nine bays, which include two double-leaf, metal and glass replacement doors with side and transom lights. In addition, three first-story bays contain three-part, sliding-sash, metal replacement windows with soldier-course brick sills and lintels. Three first-story window bays have been bricked, and the remaining window bay is partially bricked, but has ten lights in its upper half divided by metal mullions. The second story is divided into seven bays, each containing a three-part sliding-sash, metal replacement window of the same type found at the first story.

*Interior*

The 1938 addition at 550 N. Cameron continues the interior scheme of concrete floors, concrete ceilings, and brick walls on both floors. The 1942 Sanborn fire insurance map indicates that this section of the plant originally contained floor space for fruit processing in the west half and cold storage in the east half. This layout is still evident, with brick partitions dividing the sections on both floors. A freight elevator, which is still present, allowed material to be moved in bulk quantities between the first and second floors. Offices, located at the southwest portion of the first floor, are separated from the adjacent fruit processing area by brick and concrete block partitions that feature large fixed-sash wood windows in molded wood surrounds and more recently installed vinyl windows. A building permit issued in 1976 for office remodeling at 550 N. Cameron indicates that some of these partitioned office spaces may have been added or upgraded at this time, which accounts for the differences in materials and window types.<sup>1</sup> Spaced at intervals in the interior of the open-plan processing areas on both floors are round concrete structural columns with flared capitals. Like the 1930 building at 540 N. Cameron, the interiors of the expansive processing areas are lit by the large exterior windows of the addition's west façade. The cold storage rooms in the east half of 550 N. Cameron exhibit concrete floors and concrete ceilings, which are supported by the same style columns found in the processing area, but in the cold rooms the columns are clad in galvanized sheet metal. These metal-clad columns can be seen in a 1944 photograph of the cold storage room in use (Figure 23). The brick walls have been covered in several layers of foam insulation panels. A section of the east wall of the first-floor cold room is clad in wood sheathing consisting of horizontally-laid boards.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Winchester, Building Permit 8798, November 1, 1976.



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560 N. Cameron Street (1948 Addition and 1916 Building)

*Exterior*

The south half of 560 N. Cameron consists of a six-story, brick and reinforced concrete cold storage addition constructed in 1948. It joins the 1938 addition and the 1916 cold storage building and replaced an earlier frame section of the ice plant that burned in 1947. The brickwork of the 1948 addition is laid in six-course common bond and the west façade is divided into seven bays. At the far northern end of the first story is a single-leaf, paneled wood service door with nine lights in its upper half. The door opens onto a set of concrete steps with steel railing. Immediately to the south, the first-story is pierced by three overhead-rolling metal garage doors. Two additional openings at the south end of the first story appear to have originally contained large dock doors to facilitate shipping and receiving activities. Both openings have been partially infilled with concrete block. The north opening contains a small square, fixed-sash metal window. The south opening contains an identical window along with a single-leaf metal replacement door. The door opens onto a small steel loading dock, supported by brackets, with a steel ladder at its south end. Situated between the two modified openings is a third small, square, fixed-sash metal window. The southernmost bay of the west façade is a two-story extension using the same brick and concrete materials as the remainder of the 1948 addition. Small square windows, boarded over, are at the basement and first-story levels. The upper stories of the west elevation are un-fenestrated. Painted signage bearing the name "Zeropak" is right-of-center on the second story of the west façade and on at the corner of the fifth story on the south wall.

Adjoining the 1948 addition to the north is a five-story, brick and concrete cold storage building that dates to 1916. This building is constructed on a concrete foundation and its brick is laid in seven-course common bond. To right of center at the first story of the west façade is an eight-light, industrial-style, fixed-sash, metal window with central operable awning sashes. The window rests on a soldier-coursed brick sill and shares a heavy concrete lintel with a door to its south. Adjacent to it is a deeply recessed entry with a single-leaf paneled wood door with lights and accessed by a set of concrete steps. To the south of this entry is a larger overhead-rolling vehicular access door that also features a heavy concrete lintel. The upper stories of the west elevation are devoid of windows, except for two narrow openings that have been bricked-up.

*Interior*

The interior of the 1948 addition at 560 N. Cameron contains cold storage space on all six floors. It is interconnected to the 1938 addition to the south and to the 1916 section to the north. The west half of the first floor consists of a long open concourse for transporting material from the loading dock located at the first floor's northwest corner to the two freight elevators. This area features concrete floors and ceilings, concrete block and brick walls, and large, round, concrete structural columns with flared capitals. The east half of the first floor contains insulated cold storage rooms with concrete floors and ceilings. The structural columns are square in cross section with flared capitals to distribute the load from the upper floors. The walls are clad in

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multiple layers of sheet cork and spay-on foam insulation. As mentioned, two freight elevators and a narrow, concrete block stairwell provide access to the upper floors, which are entirely devoted to cold storage. The large, open-plan storage rooms are finished in the same manner as the first-floor cold room. Large industrial chillers that were used to keep the cold-storage rooms at sub-zero temperatures are still present on the upper floors.

The adjacent 1916 cold storage building to the north also contains loading and storage areas on the first floor and freezer rooms on the four upper floors. The interior treatment consists of concrete floors and ceilings, brick and concrete block walls, and reinforced concrete columns and girders. A long, narrow, high-ceilinged shipping and receiving space is located in the south half of the first and second floors, and it is separated from a first-floor storage room to the north by a brick partition. A freight elevator and concrete stairwell are located in the north half of the 1916 building. The stairs, like the others in the plant, are of concrete and feature standard tubular steel handrails. Likewise, the upper-floor cold storage rooms are similar to those found elsewhere in the plant. Entered from the stairwell and adjacent elevator landings at each floor through original heavy wood doors on steel strap hinges, the cold rooms have concrete floors and ceilings and walls covered in layers of spray-on insulation. 536 N.

#### 570 N. Cameron Street (1961 Addition)

##### *Exterior*

Located at 570 N. Cameron Street is a one-story, rectangular-plan, brick warehouse addition with a flat roof. Constructed in 1960-1961, the addition is attached to the north wall of the 1916 cold storage building. The 1961 addition's exterior brick is laid in seven-course common bond.<sup>2</sup> The west façade is divided into eight bays. Situated in a two-bay recess is a set of metal double-leaf doors accessed by a set of concrete steps with steel railing. The area surrounding the door has been boarded, suggesting that a larger doorway once existed at this opening. The adjacent bay to its south once contained an overhead-rolling garage door for truck deliveries, but it has also been boarded. To the north of the two-bay recess is a deeply recessed entry with a single-leaf paneled wood door with lights that is approached via a set of concrete steps. The remaining west-elevation bays all contain window openings that have all been infilled with brick, which has changed the appearance of the addition considerably. A historic photograph taken in 1977 (Figure 25) indicates that the windows were originally industrial-style, metal-sash units.

##### *Interior*

570 N. Cameron contains a large open warehouse space. The interior features concrete floors and concrete block walls. Green wall tile is present in portions of 570 N. Cameron, as well as 574-580 N. Cameron, despite their different dates of construction, suggesting that the tile was added sometime after 1981, either by Zeropak or by a subsequent owner. Areas of brick flooring are present in 570 N. Cameron. The concrete ceiling is braced by reinforced concrete structural joists

<sup>2</sup> City of Winchester, Building Permit 1144, March 16, 1960.

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and steel columns. The addition is interconnected with the 1916 cold storage building to the south and the 1981 addition to the north.

#### 574-580 N. Cameron Street (1981 Addition)

A large one-story warehouse addition forms the north end of the complex. Built in 1981, the addition is attached to the north wall of the 1961 addition. It is constructed on a concrete slab foundation.<sup>3</sup> The uniform, windowless exterior elevations are clad in precast concrete panels with full-height vertical concrete fins. The principal pedestrian entrance and loading dock area is located in a deep recess in the west façade. A sloping concrete ramp with steel railing leads to a set of double-leaf metal doors in a corrugated metal surround. To the south are four overhead-rolling metal garage doors for truck deliveries. This addition is identical in all respects to buildings constructed at around the same time at the nearby Rinchem Corporation on W. Wyck Street and the National Fruit Product Company on Fairmont Avenue.

#### *Interior*

The interior of 574-580 N. Cameron consists of large storage areas separated by concrete block partitions. Like 570 N. Cameron, the interior has concrete floors and concrete slab ceilings braced by joists and steel columns. As previously mentioned, areas of contemporary green wall tile are found in this addition. Doors on the south side of the addition connect it to the 1961 addition.

#### **Integrity**

While some exterior alterations have occurred over the years, the majority of the former C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage plant has retained sufficient integrity to convey its original function and significant historical associations. The plant occupies its original **location** on the east side of N. Cameron Street. Integrity of **design** has been retained, and the various sections of the plant maintain their original form, massing, height, and setback. The office building at 536 N. Cameron retains its stepped brick roofline parapet. A number of windows have been replaced or infilled along the plant's Cameron Street (west) façade. This is a fairly common alteration seen in historic industrial buildings and does not greatly detract from the plant's overall strong integrity. The exception, however, is the 1961 addition at 570 N. Cameron Street, which has had nearly all of its windows and doors either altered, infilled, or boarded. Importantly, the arrangement of interior spaces within the plant and interconnections among each of the cold storage sections have not been significantly altered and still communicate the property's historic function. Situated on the edge of the Winchester Historic District, the plant's **setting** of nineteenth to early twentieth-century dwellings and light industrial uses tied to the apple and cold storage industries has also largely remained intact. Integrity of **materials** and **workmanship** remain relatively strong through the retention of the plant's original brick cladding and interior finishes, from the fruit processing and adjacent office areas to the large insulated cold storage

<sup>3</sup> City of Winchester, Building Permit 11306, October 9, 1981.

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rooms. A number of historic steel and wood interior doors are also still present throughout the complex. Collectively, these aspects of integrity allow the plant to convey the **feeling** of an early to mid-twentieth century industrial facility, and **association** with the twentieth-century growth of the Shenandoah Valley apple industry and the industrial history of the city of Winchester.

That said, the later additions to the plant lack some of the design elements that characterize the older sections. The 1961 addition has been considerably altered on its exterior with the alteration of its main doorway and almost all its original window openings having been infilled with brick. The one-story 1961 addition was purpose built as a warehouse and, unlike the earlier ice plant and cold storage sections, lacks the interior division of spaces by function, multi-level plan, and verticality that characterizes the older sections of the plant, and as such is more typical of present-day single-story warehousing operations. Similarly, the 1981 addition, constructed within the past fifty years, is a utilitarian design that does not meet the threshold of exceptional importance required under Criteria Consideration G.

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## 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.)

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1916-1972

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1916

1930

1938

1948

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The former C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation plant at 536-580 N. Cameron Street is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the areas of **Commerce** and **Industry**. First established in 1902, and incorporated in 1911, the Robinson Corporation emerged as one of the earliest and most prominent firms in the local apple industry, and it formed part of an active fruit processing and cold storage district situated north of downtown Winchester that thrived for much of the twentieth century. The period of significance extends from 1916 to 1972. This period begins with the date of the earliest extant section of the property constructed by C. L. Robinson and concludes with the fifty-year end date as the company continued successful operations, into the 1980s, including merging with Zeropak Company in 1976; however, the more recent activities do not meet Criteria Consideration G. Significant dates for the property are 1916, when the growing company expanded the plant with a five-story brick cold storage addition, which now survives as the oldest section of the extant facility; 1930, when construction of the modern ice plant, which featured a 100-ton capacity, coincided with the company's move into the quick freezing of foods; 1938 when the Robinson Corporation built a new fruit processing and storage addition that adjoins the 1930 ice plant for the use of the Zeropak Company; and 1948 when a modern "fireproof" addition of steel frame and reinforced concrete construction and large interior structural columns significantly increased the subzero capacity of the plant.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Throughout the twentieth century, Winchester, Virginia, was the center of the fruit processing and storage industry in the eastern U.S. Beginning in the colonial period, the fertile Shenandoah Valley was recognized as being ideal for apple cultivation. By the early twentieth century and the establishment of the Cameron Street plant, a combination of capital investment and Winchester's role as a regional rail hub spurred the rapid growth of the Valley's apple industry. Virginia became one of the biggest apple producers in the country, led by Frederick County, which contributed the bulk of the state's million-plus bushel harvests by mid-century. With this tremendous growth in apple farming came the concomitant development of related industries, and Charles L. Robinson established the Shenandoah Valley's first large-scale apple storage facility in Winchester during the early twentieth century. Robinson was one of the city's most prominent industrialists, orchard owners, and civic figures at the time. The large fruit processing and cold storage plant on N. Cameron Street, first begun in the early 1900s and modernized over the ensuing decades of the twentieth century, stood at the core of a significant and robust industrial district in northern Winchester of apple storage, packing, and processing concerns – the most extensive in the U.S. outside of Washington state. For most of the twentieth century,

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Winchester remained at the forefront of the apple and cold storage industries, and along with the Robinson Corporation, was recognized as such in industry publications such as *Ice and Refrigeration* and *American Fruit Grower*. In 1976, the company merged with the Zeropak Company, and operated under that name until its closure in 1997 amid the decline of Virginia's apple sector.

## Historic Context

### *Growth of the Shenandoah Valley Apple Industry*

C. L. Robinson's move to Winchester, and his entry into the local ice and cold storage business, coincided with the significant growth of the apple industry in Frederick and surrounding counties. Apple trees were first cultivated in Frederick County during the late eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, Dr. George Stephens, the great grandson of pioneer Peter Stephens, developed the Newtown Pippins variety in his orchard near Stephens City. By the late nineteenth century, large commercial orchards joined smaller family ventures in the rural landscape, and supplied apples for the popular ciders, sauces, and vinegars of the era, much of which was consumed in the large east coast cities. The apple industry continued to grow in scale during the early twentieth century, and Frederick County was Virginia's largest producer. In 1910, Frederick County Growers produced 351,490 bushels, a figure that grew exponentially during the following decades.<sup>4</sup> The loamy, well-drained soils of the Shenandoah Valley were well suited to apple cultivation. Apple growing in the Shenandoah Valley region was concentrated along Apple Pie Ridge, an upland area on the western edge of the Valley that extended north to south for over 100 miles.<sup>5</sup> Harry F. Byrd, Sr., who served as Virginia governor and U.S. Senator, became one of the largest apple growers in the country during the twentieth century, and by the 1950s was operating eleven orchards in the Shenandoah Valley, totaling 5,000 acres, that produced millions of bushels annually. Other prominent local growers included Fred and Philip Glaize, who combined apple production with a lumber and millwork business and other concerns.<sup>6</sup>

By the 1920s, Frederick County was producing over one million bushels annually and the apple industry had become engrained in local culture. The first Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival was held in 1924 (Figure 16). The event was organized by Shenandoah Valley, Inc., a regional chamber of commerce formed to promote tourism and economic development. The festival drew more than 30,000 people in its first year and featured a parade through Winchester led by grand

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<sup>4</sup> Rebecca A. Ebert and Teresa Lazazzera, *Frederick County, Virginia: From the Frontier to the Future, A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1988), 132-33, 135.

<sup>5</sup> Meador Wright, "Winchester Apple Market," *American Fruit Grower* 64, no. 12 (December 1944): 18.

<sup>6</sup> Warren R. Hofstra and Mike Foreman, "Legacy and Legend: The Cultural World of Patsy Cline's Winchester," in *Sweet Dreams: The World of Patsy Cline*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 25.



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marshal Lewis M. Allen, a local physician and horse breeder. The parade culminated with the crowning of Elizabeth Steck as the first Queen Shenandoah on the steps of Winchester's George Washington Hotel. Over the years, the parade's grand marshals have included entertainers such as Bob Hope, Ed Sullivan, Bing Crosby, and Lucille Ball, in addition to Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Gerald Ford.<sup>7</sup>

The massive growth of the apple industry in Frederick County during the first half of the twentieth century was commensurate with that of associated industries such as processing and cold storage. During the early twentieth century, Winchester emerged as the regional center for storing, packing, and shipping apples, as well as the production of apple products. The National Fruit Product Company, established in Alexandria in 1908, opened a vinegar plant in Winchester in 1915 and a cannery in 1918. The company, famous for its White House brand of apple products, relocated its headquarters to Winchester in 1938, and by the 1950s was employing between 325 and 700 people. In addition to its Winchester plant, National Fruit operated plants in Strasburg and Waynesboro, Virginia, as well as plants in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. From these plants, the company produced canned apples, sauce, jelly, juice, and dried and frozen fruits. Another large apple processing concern in Winchester, the Shenandoah Apple Cider and Vinegar Company, produced a range of canned apple products and employed approximately 300 local workers at the peak of the season. In 1932, Zeropak, an Ohio frozen foods company, established a plant in Winchester that processed millions of pounds of apples annually and employed around 400 workers at the peak of the annual season. H. J. Heinz operated a vinegar plant in Winchester that also processed millions of pounds of apples each year.<sup>8</sup>

By the 1940s, three cold storage companies were operating in Winchester. The Winchester Cold Storage Company constructed a large \$1 million facility in Winchester in 1925, with backing from Senator Byrd. The plant was capable of storing 1,400,000 bushels of apples and was the largest of its kind in the U.S. The C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation operated the second largest plant in Winchester, with a storage capacity in 1944 of 400,000 bushels. The third plant in Winchester was operated by the Virginia Cold Storage Company and had a capacity of 300,000 apples.<sup>9</sup>

These companies collectively formed an industrial district in north Winchester associated with the apple and cold storage industries. The district was served by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Cumberland Valley Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad. With the growth of these companies during the twentieth century, this district became marked by its verticality, with new multi-story cold storage buildings towering over the surrounding neighborhood of frame dwellings.

<sup>7</sup> Ebert and Lazazzera, 132-33.

<sup>8</sup> Hofstra and Foreman, 26-27; Wright, 6, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, 6, 18.

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In 1944, *American Fruit Grower* published a feature-length article on the Winchester apple market. That year, the Shenandoah Valley had produced seven million of Virginia's thirteen-million-bushel apple harvest. In addition, millions of bushels of apples grown in West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were stored and processed in Winchester. The article referred to the city as the "largest apple market in the east, which means it is the largest apple market in the world with the possible exception of Wenatchee, Washington." The article cited harvest data from 1937, during which time the northern Shenandoah Valley had only a third of the commercial bearing trees in the state, yet it produced almost half of Virginia's harvest for that year. Furthermore, the article observed:

That the North Valley has forged ahead in the apple industry is due primarily to Winchester as a market. Here are huge processing and cold storage facilities, and buyers from all over the globe have come to think of Winchester as the capital of the apple world.<sup>10</sup>

During the 1950s, the total value of the Frederick County apple yield more than tripled, and fruit constituted 66 percent of total farm production. With this dramatic increase in the economic value of apple farming, wheat production in Frederick County – a staple of local agriculture historically – declined markedly as farmers transitioned to orchards and livestock farming.<sup>11</sup>

The apple industry remained an essential and lucrative component of the local economy throughout much of the postwar era, but by the late 1980s and 1990s, it had begun to decline. During this period, oversupply issues and the consolidation of food retailers led to lower apple prices in the U.S. Apple demand from Asia, a key U.S. export market, was reduced alongside increased production from China. Chinese exports of cheaply priced apple concentrates and other apple derivatives to U.S. firms such as the National Fruit Products Company also weakened the local market. By the early 2000s, many longtime apple growers in Virginia were either selling their orchards or greatly reducing the scope of their operations. In 2002, the state's growers voted to end a decades-old marketing program to promote Virginia-grown apples.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Origins of the Cameron Street Plant*

In January of 1901, businessman E. D. Palmer announced plans to construct a new ice making plant in Winchester with machinery provided by the Frick Company of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. Located on the east side of N. Market Street (as Cameron was known at the time), opposite present-day Wyck Street, the plant was operational by the spring of 1901.<sup>13</sup> The "Winchester Ice Plant" was a two-story, frame, irregular-plan building. It contained an icehouse, freezing tanks, the twenty-ton Frick ice machine, and a storage room for coal. The plant was served by a siding constructed off the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, located just

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<sup>10</sup> Wright, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Hofstra and Foreman, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Greg Edwards, "Uprooting Virginia's Apple Industry," *Winchester Star*, June 1, 2004, 21.

<sup>13</sup> "New Plants and Improvements," *Ice and Refrigeration* 20 (January 1901): 53.

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to the east. Just prior to the construction of the plant, in 1900, Palmer had entered into an agreement to supply ice to prosperous Frederick County farmer and ice dealer George W. Hillyard and his son, William R. Hillyard.<sup>14</sup>

In February of 1902, E. D. Palmer sold the Winchester Ice Plant to Charles L. Robinson for \$9,000.<sup>15</sup> Charles Lee Robinson (Figure 13) was born in 1855 in Indiana, and grew up in Fairmont, West Virginia, where his father was employed with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. As a young man, he started a coal and ice business in Fairmont, which provided his initial experience in the industry. Acting on advice from a good friend and national bank examiner, Robinson made several fact-finding trips to the Shenandoah Valley to investigate the efforts being undertaken to establish the apple industry there. Sensing opportunity, in 1902, he moved to Winchester with his family and, over the next twenty years, established himself as one of the city's leading businessmen.<sup>16</sup> After purchasing the Winchester Ice Plant from Palmer, in 1905 Charles Robinson contracted to supply ice dealers William R. Hillyard and Bentley Kern with bulk ice at four dollars per ton, while retaining the right to engage in limited retail sales directly from the plant.<sup>17</sup> Robinson and William Hillyard eventually partnered in the ice business as C.L. Robinson & Company, operating plants in Winchester and Charles Town, West Virginia.<sup>18</sup>

#### *The C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation*

Amid the rapid early twentieth-century growth of the apple processing and storage industry in Frederick County, the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation was incorporated in Winchester in May 1911, with Charles L. Robinson as president and treasurer, and William R. Hillyard as vice president. At the time of incorporation, the company held \$150,000 in capital. As stated in the certificate of incorporation, the company's purpose was:

To buy, sell, store, import and export fruit, fish, butter, milk, and all kinds of food products. Also, to buy, sell, and store apples, peaches, pears, and other fruits. To buy or lease, sell, and operate apple, peach, pear and other fruit orchards. To manufacture, buy, or sell cider and vinegar; to buy and sell sand. To operate and

<sup>14</sup> Agreement between E.D. Palmer, George W. Hillyard, and William R. Hillyard, December 21, 1900, Box 3, Contracts and Deeds, 1900-1921, C.L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA.

<sup>15</sup> Agreement between E.D. Palmer and Charles L. Robinson, February 22, 1902, Box 3, Contracts and Deeds, 1900-1921, C.L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA.

<sup>16</sup> William Couper, *History of the Shenandoah Valley*, vol 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1952), 112; "Charles L. Robinson, Deceased," *Ice and Refrigeration* 62 (May 1922): 426.

<sup>17</sup> Agreement between Charles L. Robinson, William R. Hillyard, and Bentley Kern, February 16, 1905, Box 3, Contracts and Deeds, 1900-1921, C.L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA.

<sup>18</sup> Certificate of Incorporation, C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation, May 24, 1911, Box 3, Contracts and Deeds, 1900-1921, C.L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA.

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maintain stores, buildings, warehouses, depots, for carrying on any of the aforesaid lines of business.<sup>19</sup>

In 1912, C. L. Robinson established a third plant in Berryville, Virginia, after buying out the Berryville Ice and Refrigerating Company. In 1917, Robinson consolidated his control over the company by buying the entire capital stock of the Winchester, Berryville, and Charles Town businesses.<sup>20</sup>

The company manufactured ice using water obtained directly from the city supply. After being received into the plant, the water was purified through a distillation and condensation process. This rendered a final product that was absolutely pure from a chemical standpoint and healthy for consumption.<sup>21</sup> Once the water was purified, the plant utilized a standard ice-making process wherein ammonia and a salt-brine solution were used in a recirculating system to freeze vats of water into blocks of ice.<sup>22</sup> C. L. Robinson served on the executive committee of the Eastern Ice Association, one of the largest trade groups in the U.S. for the ice and cold storage industry.<sup>23</sup> The association's members held annual conventions in New York, Washington DC, and other large cities, and published technical articles in the trade journal *Ice and Refrigeration* covering a range of topics connected with the industry.

Charles L. Robinson was one of the region's larger apple growers. He purchased his first orchard in 1910, and by the mid-twentieth century, his family had amassed over 2,500 acres of fruit trees. The Robinson orchards were located in Frederick County, Virginia; Jefferson and Berkeley Counties, West Virginia; and Washington and Allegheny Counties, Maryland. Grown were a number of popular commercial varieties, such as Ben Davis, Duchess, Golden Delicious, Jonathan, King David, McIntosh, Newtown Pippin, Rome Beauty, Stark's Delicious, York Imperial, and others.<sup>24</sup>

In 1910, Charles Robinson acquired the Snapp Foundry, first established in Winchester by F. R. Snapp in 1865. Under Robinson's ownership, the company expanded and modernized its plant at 405-09 N. Market Street, and the Snapp Foundry became one of the more significant industrial concerns in the greater Winchester area. The company manufactured grey iron castings, which it shipped to a wide customer base located across the country, and also specialized in structural steel fabrication and erection. The company remained in the family's ownership after C. L. Robinson's death.<sup>25</sup> Among the Snapp Foundry's products was a patented ice saw developed at the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation's Winchester Plant (Figure 14). The

<sup>19</sup> Certificate of Incorporation, C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation, May 24, 1911, Box 3, Contracts and Deeds, 1900-1921, C.L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA.

<sup>20</sup> Couper, 111-112.

<sup>21</sup> "C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation," *Winchester Daily Independent*, December 16, 1924, 6.

<sup>22</sup> P. E. Morris, "The Ice Industry: Past and Present," *Winchester Star*, August 23, 1972, 27.

<sup>23</sup> "New Officers Elected," *Ice and Refrigeration* 41, no. 6 (December 1911): 228.

<sup>24</sup> Couper, 112.

<sup>25</sup> Couper, 112.

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Robinson Power Ice Saw was designed to quickly and efficiently cut blocks of ice weighing between 300 and 400 pounds. The cast-iron wheeled chassis with handlebars resembled an oversized push lawn mower with circular saw blades capable of reducing an astounding ten to fifteen tons of ice per hour.<sup>26</sup>

The C. L. Robinson Corporation expanded the Winchester plant during the early twentieth-century. By 1908, the plant had been enlarged to the north with a two-story office addition and a five-story cold storage wing. In 1911, it constructed additional cold storage rooms, which were outfitted by the Frick Company.<sup>27</sup> The enlarged plant is illustrated on the 1912 Sanborn map (Figure 10). The new consolidated cold storage building was a five-story frame building that adjoined the original 1901 ice plant to the south, encapsulating the earlier office and cold storage additions. The north elevation of the new cold storage addition abutted a street-level siding off the Cumberland Valley and Maryland Railroad, which augmented the existing B&O siding, situated below grade on the east side of the plant. This arrangement, unique among cold storage facilities in the Winchester area, allowed for the loading and unloading of freight from two different levels of the building simultaneously.<sup>28</sup> The earlier sections of the original plant, built between 1901 and 1911, were replaced over time as the plant modernized.

In 1916, the growing company again expanded the Winchester facility with a five-story brick cold storage addition that was constructed onto the existing north elevation of the plant. This addition survives and is the oldest section of the extant facility. Apples and other perishables were stored in barrels inside the fireproof cold storage building. The new addition was designed to store 100,000 barrels, more than doubling the plant's 80,000-barrel capacity.<sup>29</sup> The building appears on the 1921 Sanborn map (Figure 11). The south section contained a narrow, two-story loading-unloading area – still extant – that was adjacent to the exterior west-elevation door. A spur off the Pennsylvania Railroad served the building's west freight door, while dock doors on the east side of the building allowed for the shipping and receiving of goods and supplies via the B&O Railroad. Upon receipt into the plant, the barrels of produce and foodstuffs were transported between floors via a still intact freight elevator.

Charles L. Robinson died in 1922. Afterwards, management of the company resumed under Robinson's sons, Charles Arthur Robinson, the firm's president, and Harry Delmer Robinson, its treasurer.<sup>30</sup> Not long after Robinson's death, in 1924, the *Winchester Daily Independent* referred to Robinson as "one of Winchester's most highly esteemed and successful businessmen" and "a pioneer in the ice and cold storage business." The article, part of a feature on the city's principal

<sup>26</sup> "The Robinson Power Ice Saw," *Ice and Refrigeration* 63 (July 1922): 75.

<sup>27</sup> "New Plants and Improvements," *Ice and Refrigeration* 41 (October 1911): 141.

<sup>28</sup> Personal Communication, Timothy A. Youmans, Planning Director, City of Winchester, January 31, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> "Out of the Past...From the Archives of the Winchester Star," *Winchester Star*, December 27, 2015, [https://www.winchesterstar.com/lifestyles/out-of-the-past-from-the-archives-of-the-winchester-star/article\\_3f3dd26a-b7a3-5304-b6f9-7e912b3c79cf.html](https://www.winchesterstar.com/lifestyles/out-of-the-past-from-the-archives-of-the-winchester-star/article_3f3dd26a-b7a3-5304-b6f9-7e912b3c79cf.html) (accessed October 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Couper, 112.

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manufacturing and industrial businesses, traced the company's history and growth under Robinson's leadership:

He started his small plant here in 1902 which then had a capacity of not more than 20 tons of ice daily. With the growth and development of the community and increase in patronage the plant was enlarged from time to time to meet these conditions and as a result the concern now has one of the largest ice and cold storage plants in the country. The daily capacity of manufactured distilled water ice has been increased to one hundred tons and the combined storage capacity of the three plants owned and operated by the company at Winchester, Berryville and Charles Town is now 260,000 barrels. All of the plants are modern in equipment and with up-to-date facilities this concern is in a position to render the most satisfactory service.<sup>31</sup>

The company provided apples both for the domestic market and for international export. In January of 1924, a train carrying 8,500 barrels of apples departed from the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation's Winchester plant bound for New York. The shipment consisted of locally grown York Imperial and Ben Davis varieties, and at the time was the largest single tonnage of apples shipped from Winchester on one train. Upon arrival of the train in New York, the apples were loaded onto large ocean steamers and shipped to British ports. Reporting on the news, the *Winchester Times Dispatch* proclaimed, "Apple Shipment Breaks Record Into New York."<sup>32</sup>

The company undertook a major enlargement of the Winchester plant in 1930. The new "modern ice plant" featured a 100-ton capacity. The expansion of the plant coincided with the company's move into the quick freezing of foods.<sup>33</sup> Built at this time were the existing two-story brick office building with stepped parapets at 536 N. Cameron Street and the two-story brick ice plant adjoining it to the north at 540 N. Cameron. The new brick ice plant was built on the site of the earlier 1911 ice plant and boiler room. Intact brick partitions divided the new plant into sections, and ice storage areas were located in the east and south portions. In the basement were tanks for storing ammonia, which was used in the refrigeration process. To the north of the new construction, a portion of the 1911 ice plant was retained and expanded to the west. The enlarged and modernized plant appears on an aerial photograph taken during the early 1930s and held in the collections of the Winchester Public Library (Figure 17). In addition to the new and enlarged buildings, the photograph shows four large concrete coal silos that once stood to the southeast of 536 N. Cameron Street.

<sup>31</sup> "C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation," *Winchester Daily Independent*, December 16, 1924, 6.

<sup>32</sup> "Apple Shipment Breaks Record Into New York," *Times Dispatch*, January 17, 1924, 20.

<sup>33</sup> Bobbie Conrad, "Robinson's Cold Storage Receiving 50<sup>th</sup> Apple Crop," *Winchester Evening Star*, September 1, 1955, 1-2.

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The new ice plant addition was integrated into the extensive rail lines that served the industrial district in north Winchester. A rail spur on the west side of the plant was realigned to service the new ice plant. One unique aspect of the C. L. Robinson facility was not only that it was served by two separate railroads but those rail lines were vertically separated, such that the Pennsylvania Railroad (formerly the Cumberland Valley Railroad) served the street level of the facility coming in from the spurs on the west side, while the B&O Railroad (later CSX) served the lowest level of the building along the east side. Thus, workers could load and unload freight at two different levels of the building at the same time.<sup>34</sup>

In 1932, the Zeropak Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, began leasing the Winchester plant from the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation. Zeropak was founded by Rudolph A. Rasche of Cincinnati, who developed an innovative method for preserving the freshness and appearance of frozen apple slices.<sup>35</sup> The company engaged in the business of selling processed frozen fruit to commercial users. Approximately 65 percent of its sales were to the producers of such products as ice cream, pies, preserves, etc., and the remaining thirty-five percent of its sales were to restaurants, hotels, hospitals, and other institutions. Most of the apples processed by Zeropak were grown in the Winchester area. Zeropak additionally purchased a variety of other types of fruit from other processors to offer for resale to its customers.<sup>36</sup>

Zeropak leased all of the buildings and almost all of the equipment it used in conducting its business operations. The company's Winchester plant, leased from the C.L. Robinson Corporation, included not only the Robinson processing plant but also its storage facilities for raw fruit and processed frozen fruit. The bulk of Zeropak's storage for frozen fruit was in Winchester, although the company also stored frozen fruit in a number of commercial warehouses in different cities in the Midwest and the South.<sup>37</sup> The fruit was stored in five-gallon containers and held in 96,000 cubic feet of allocated cold storage space in the Winchester plant.<sup>38</sup>

In 1938, the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation built a new fruit processing and storage addition (550 N. Cameron Street) for the use of the Zeropak Company, located to the north of and adjoining the 1930 ice plant (540 N. Cameron).<sup>39</sup> The new two-story, brick addition is depicted on the 1942 Sanborn map (Figure 12), and it was divided on both floors by a north-south partition that is still extant. The western half of the addition functioned as a fruit processing area and the eastern half contained cold rooms for storing the fruit. Original offices

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<sup>34</sup> Personal communication with Timothy A. Youmans, Planning Director, City of Winchester, January 21, 2022. Mr. Youmans recalls being told about the plant's unique multi-level rail access during a meeting at the plant with H. Delmer Robinson many years ago.

<sup>35</sup> "C. L. Robinson to Dispose West Virginia Holdings Conclusion 1976 Season," *Spirit of Jefferson Farmer's Advocate*, August 12, 1976, 1.

<sup>36</sup> *The Zeropak Company v. Commissioner*, 47 T.C.M. 181 (1983).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Wright, 18.

<sup>39</sup> "Three Stores in One," *Farmer's Advocate*, June 3, 1938, 4.

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are still extant at the north end of the first floor and are separated from the rest of the floor by brick partitions with large windows.

During World War II, the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation stored perishable foodstuffs for the U.S. government. Considerable space was devoted in the company's various facilities in Virginia and West Virginia for the storage of eggs and lard held for the war effort. The company both shipped and received large quantities of such products for the government during the war as needed.<sup>40</sup> The plant also served as a temporary holding and transport point for prisoners of war. In December of 1944, the *Staunton News Leader* reported that 400 Russian prisoners of war were transferred from a camp near Winchester, and that they were held under armed guard at the siding of the Winchester Ice and Cold Storage Corporation while awaiting rail transport to another destination as part of their repatriation.<sup>41</sup>

After the war, the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation expanded and modernized the Winchester plant. In 1947, the company razed a six-story frame apple storage building, constructed between 1905 and 1912, which the *Washington Post* referred to as the "the first apple cold storage in the Shenandoah Valley." The old section of the plant was demolished to make way for a new six story, \$300,000, brick and concrete quick freezing and cold storage plant. The new construction coincided with a similar expansion being undertaken by the company in Charles Town, West Virginia.<sup>42</sup> During the course of demolishing the old frame apple warehouse, it caught fire, resulting in one of the biggest fires in Winchester's history. On August 5, 1947, construction workers employed by the Arrow Wrecking Company of Washington D.C noticed smoke coming from the partially demolished building. When workmen ran into the building to investigate, they found the elevator shaft on fire. Five Winchester companies and volunteer fire companies from Front Royal, Stephens City, and Clear Brook, Virginia, and Martinsburg, West Virginia, battled the blaze for over three hours. At the peak of the fire, an ammonia pipeline in the building exploded, intensifying the inferno and sending up a huge cloud of white smoke. An onlooker with a camera, standing on N. Cameron Street and looking north, captured the moment when the five-story west wall of the plant crashed into the street, sending bystanders and firemen scrambling for cover (Figure 18). The *Staunton News Leader* reported that:

Great columns of smoke filled the skies for several hundred feet in the northern section of Winchester and attracted several thousand people. Police roped off the area for two blocks or more. Several houses in the vicinity were damaged by the fire.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> "Enlarge Cold Storage Plant," *Spirit of Jefferson Farmers Advocate*, June 9, 1944, 1.

<sup>41</sup> "Winchester," *News Leader*, December 16, 1944, 8.

<sup>42</sup> "Apple Firm Expands," *Washington Post*, June 21, 1947, B2.

<sup>43</sup> "Winchester Cold Storage Fire Damage \$190,000.00," *News Leader*, August 6, 1947, 5.



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The fire also destroyed a nearby apple barrel and box manufacturing plant as well as a building in the vicinity owned by Glaize and Brothers that was being leased to Zeropak and was filled with packing and shipping supplies. Railroad cars held in the adjacent Baltimore and Ohio Railroad yard filled with potatoes enroute to government warehouses were moved to the yard at Brunswick, Maryland, for safety. In total, the fire resulted in \$190,000 in damage and injured four fire fighters.<sup>44</sup>

Rising from the ashes of this conflagration, a new addition that connected the 1938 addition at 550 N. Cameron and the 1916 building at 560 N. Cameron was completed in 1948. It represented a modern fireproof facility, with interior spaces reflecting a relatively open plan layout enabled by the addition's steel frame and reinforced concrete construction and large interior structural columns. A historic photograph dating to c. 1950 shows one of the cold storage areas in use, packed to the ceiling with metal five-gallon containers (Figure 24). The new section of the plant also featured two chambers for quick freezing, which operated at fifty degrees below zero and were capable of processing 150 tons of foodstuffs in a twenty-four-hour period. A total of 1,268,000 cubic feet of "zero space" was located at the Winchester facility. Coinciding with the construction of the new cold storage addition was the construction of a new packing building at the northwest corner of Wyck and N. Cameron Street (today 563 N. Cameron).<sup>45</sup>

Harry Delmer Robinson, son of C. L. Robinson and treasurer of the company, died in 1958. A respected local figure, Robinson was born in Fairmont, West Virginia, in 1896, and joined the company in 1917 after graduating from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. H. Delmer Robison was president of the Snapp Foundry and was an executive in the Winchester Steam Laundry and the Shenandoah Stone and Lime Company. Robinson was elected president of the Apple Blossom Festival in 1948, 1949, and 1950 and served on the festival's board of directors beginning in 1946.<sup>46</sup>

The company continued to expand its physical plant during the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1955, the company erected a concrete block storage building on the west side of N. Cameron Street.<sup>47</sup> Several years later, in 1960-1961, the company built the one-story brick warehouse addition at 570 N. Cameron Street, replacing two frame residences that at the time were addressed as 562-564 N. Cameron Street.<sup>48</sup>

In 1976, Charles A. Robinson, the company's long-time president, died. Like his brother H. Delmer, Charles Robinson was a graduate of Dickinson College. He was a World War I veteran

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Bobbie Conrad, "Robinson's Cold Storage Receiving 50<sup>th</sup> Apple Crop," *Winchester Evening Star*, September 1, 1955, 1-2.

<sup>46</sup> Couper, 113; "Delmer Robinson Dies in Sleep at His Home Here," *Winchester Evening Star*, November 11, 1916, 1.

<sup>47</sup> "Building," *Winchester Evening Star*, October 25, 1955, 3.

<sup>48</sup> City of Winchester, Building Permit 1084, February 2, 1960; Building Permit 1109, March 2, 1960; Building Permit 1144, March 16, 1960.

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and was a member of many local civic organizations.<sup>49</sup> Charles Robinson was succeeded as president by H. Delmer Robinson, Jr. who, in 1976, purchased the assets of the Zeropak Company for \$2.8 million. Zeropak, which had leased the Winchester plant from the C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation beginning in 1932, continued to operate under its brand name, retaining all employees, but moved its corporate offices from Cincinnati to Winchester. Since the death of Zeropak founder Rudolph Rasche in 1966, the company had been managed by Layton H. Stockdale of Winchester, a knowledgeable industry veteran who was retained to run the Winchester operation under the new business structure. At the Winchester plant, Zeropak processed and packaged a variety of frozen fruits and berries, including locally sourced apples and peaches. At the time of the acquisition, the Robinson Corporation was one of the largest apple growers in the east, with extensive orchards and cold storage facilities in Virginia and West Virginia. Coinciding with the purchase of Zeropak, the Robinson Corporation consolidated its operations in Winchester, selling its orchard acreage and cold storage plants in West Virginia.<sup>50</sup>

Zeropak operated the Winchester plant until its closure during the late 1990s. The company constructed the large concrete warehouse addition at 574-580 N. Cameron Street in 1981. The addition was built at a cost of \$1,161,370, on the footprint of two frame dwellings and a commercial lunchroom that the company acquired and demolished between 1974 and 1981.<sup>51</sup> In 1983, Zeropak closed its fruit processing plant in Ranson, West Virginia, which the company had been leasing, and moved its processing equipment to Winchester.<sup>52</sup> By the late 1990s, Zeropak, under company president Edward B. Robinson, began to suffer financial difficulties that led to its insolvency and closure. By 1997, the company owed over \$10 dollars to more than 300 creditors, and it began to fall behind on payments to apple growers. That year, six Virginia growers and one New York grower sued Zeropak in federal court for breach of contract, citing the Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930 and the company's inability to maintain sufficient assets in a payment trust to cover its debts. In addition, more than twenty local Winchester companies had filed mechanic's liens against Zeropak for products and services owed them. Zeropak closed the Winchester plant at the end of the 1997 growing season. In April 1998, a federal circuit court judge placed Zeropak in receivership and its assets were liquidated.<sup>53</sup>

The closed plant has changed uses and owners several times in recent years. It was used as a seasonal distribution facility by the local Salvation Army during the early 2000s.<sup>54</sup> In 2007, Jim Justice, owner of Virginia Brewing Company, partnered with investor Janette Hooper and began

<sup>49</sup> "Charles Arthur Robinson," *Winchester Evening Star*, October 27, 1976, 3.

<sup>50</sup> "C. L. Robinson to Dispose West Virginia Holdings Conclusion 1976 Season," *Spirit of Jefferson Farmer's Advocate*, August 12, 1976, 1.

<sup>51</sup> City of Winchester, Building Permit 7317, March 6, 1974; Building Permit 9129, June 8, 1977; Building Permit 11145, June 4, 1981; Building Permit 11306, October 9, 1981.

<sup>52</sup> "Ranson Fruit Plant Closing," *Spirit of Jefferson Farmer's Advocate*, September 15, 1983, 10.

<sup>53</sup> David Foreman, "Judge Places Zeropak in Receivership," *Winchester Star*, April 29, 1998, 1, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Angela Jones, "1,240 young angels get their wings," *Winchester Star*, December 21, 2006, 1.

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leasing the property from owners Batista and Evelyn Madonia of Florida, with plans to rehabilitate it into a brewery and entertainment venue.<sup>55</sup> Their venture was unsuccessful, however, and several years later, in 2013, the property sold at public auction to Zuhtu Akyatan. In 2014, Maryland developer Jeff Javan purchased the property from Akyatan, with plans to rehabilitate the buildings for commercial use. He renovated the interior of 536 N. Cameron Street and installed the new windows and doors currently seen at 540-550 N. Cameron Street.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

As one of the earliest apple processing and storage facilities constructed in the Shenandoah Valley, the former C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage plant holds a significant place within the history of the apple and fruit industry in Virginia during the twentieth century. The plant was purchased in 1902 by Charles L. Robinson, a West Virginia ice and coal dealer who relocated to Winchester and became one of the city's leading industrialists and civic figures. Following C. L. Robinson's death in 1922, the plant remained in the control of the Robinson family, and it underwent several phases of expansion as the company modernized its operations. The company's growth paralleled that of the apple in industry in Virginia, and by the mid-twentieth century, the city of Winchester was widely recognized as the apple capital of the east, exporting tons of apples and apple products to buyers across the U.S. and abroad. The Zeropak Company, a large Ohio apple processor, first began leasing space in the plant in 1932, and merged with the Robinson Corporation in 1976. By the late 1980s, the apple industry in Virginia was struggling amid oversupply and pricing issues and competition from Asian growers. In 1997, the company closed the plant, ending an era in Winchester's industrial past.

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<sup>55</sup> Rebecca Layne, "Woman Wins Suit Against Ex-Partner," *Winchester Star*, March 10, 2011, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Rebecca Layne, "Stubborn Zeropak Fire Extinguished," *Winchester Star*, June 1, 2014.

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- Wright, Meador. "Winchester Apple Market." *American Fruit Grower* 64, no. 12 (December 1944): 6.

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

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Other  
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR #138-5140

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 3.74

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

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

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.193367      Longitude: -78.160436
2. Latitude: 39.193208      Longitude: -78.159903
3. Latitude: 39.192614      Longitude: -78.160136
4. Latitude: 39.190881      Longitude: -78.161014
5. Latitude: 39.190972      Longitude: -78.161339

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927      or       NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The historic boundary is coterminous with Lot 1 of Block B, Tax Map 154-01, containing 3.74 acres, as recorded by the City of Winchester, Virginia. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Location Map, Sketch Map, and Tax Parcel Map.

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

The historic boundary coincides with perimeter lines of Winchester parcel 154-01-B-1, which contains the entirety of the former C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation plant. The property's historic setting and all known associated resources are included in the historic boundary.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: John Gentry, Senior Architectural Historian

organization: EHT Tracerics, Inc.

street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

city or town: Washington state: District of Columbia zip code: 20001

e-mail: john.gentry@tracerics.com

telephone: (202) 393-1199

date: February 2022

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corp.

City or Vicinity: Winchester (Independent City)

County: N/A

State: Virginia

Photographer: John Gentry and Laura Hughes, EHT Tracerics, Inc.

Date Photographed: June 17 and October 28, 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: Looking northeast from Cameron Street.

Photo 1 of 25. View of the plant looking northeast from Cameron Street.

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Photo 2 of 25. 536 N. Cameron, west and south elevations, looking northeast.

Photo 3 of 25. 536 and 540 N. Cameron, south elevation, looking north.

Photo 4 of 25. 536 N. Cameron, east and south elevations, looking northwest.

Photo 5 of 25. 540 N. Cameron, west and south elevations, looking northeast.

Photo 6 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, west elevation, looking northeast.

Photo 7 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1948 section), west elevation, looking northeast.

Photo 8 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1916 section), west elevation, looking northeast.

Photo 9 of 25. 570 N. Cameron, west elevation, looking east.

Photo 10 of 25. 580 N. Cameron, west elevation, looking south.

Photo 11 of 25. 540 N. Cameron, interior, east wall, looking northeast.

Photo 12 of 25. 540 N. Cameron, interior, looking northwest.

Photo 13 of 25. 540 N. Cameron, interior of cold storage room, looking east.

Photo 14 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, interior, first floor, looking west.

Photo 15 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, interior, first floor, looking southeast.

Photo 16 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, interior of first-floor cold storage room, looking north.

Photo 17 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, interior, second floor, looking southwest.

Photo 18 of 25. 550 N. Cameron, interior, second floor, doorway into cold storage room, looking east.

Photo 19 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1948 section), interior, first floor, looking south.

Photo 20 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1948 section), interior, second floor cold storage room, looking west.

Photo 21 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1916 section), interior, first floor, looking west.



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Photo 22 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1916 section), interior, doorway into second-floor cold storage room, looking east.

Photo 23 of 25. 560 N. Cameron (1916 section), interior, second-floor cold storage room, looking west.

Photo 24 of 25. 570 N. Cameron, interior, looking east.

Photo 25 of 25. 580 N. Cameron, interior, looking west.

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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### Maps and Figures

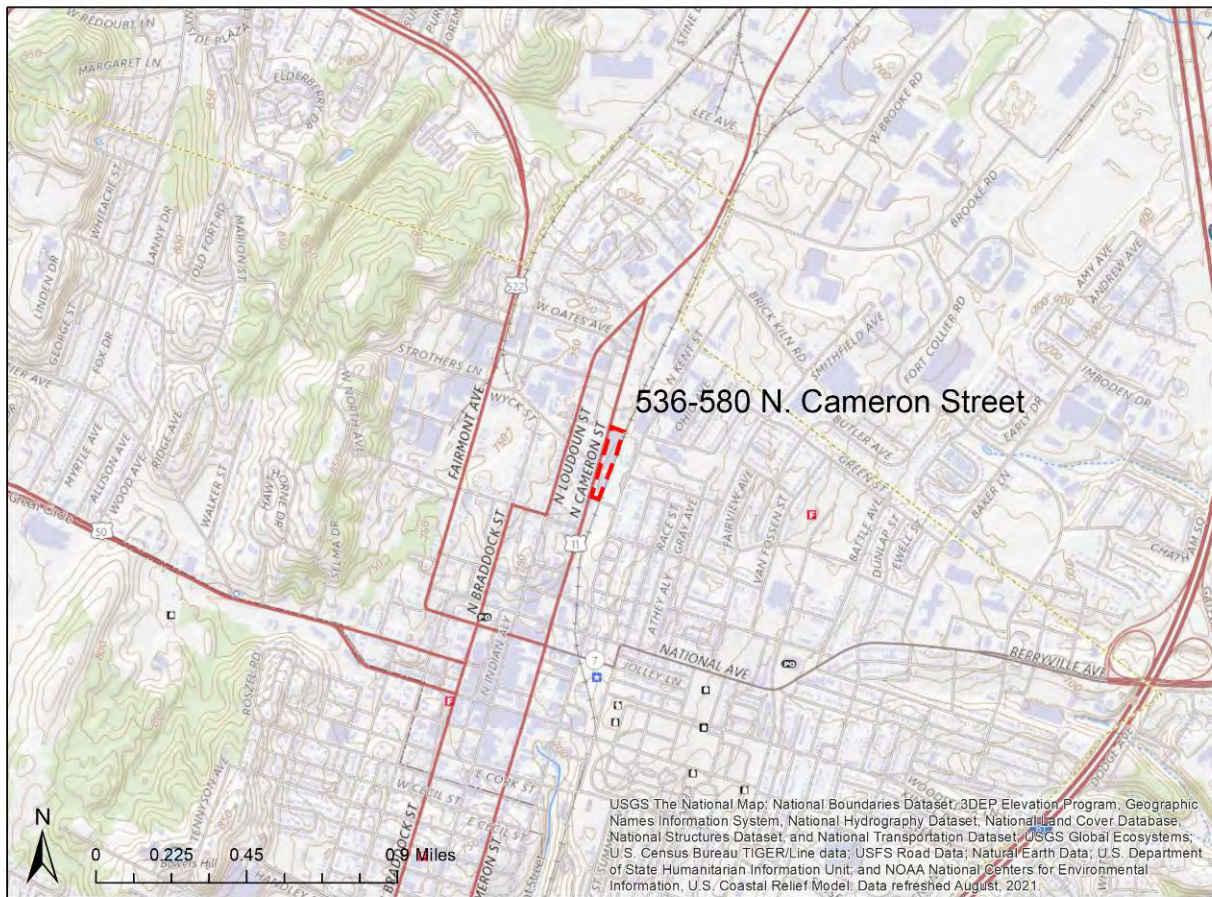


Figure 1: Topographic Map at 1:24,000 scale with boundaries annotated (ESRI/USGS)

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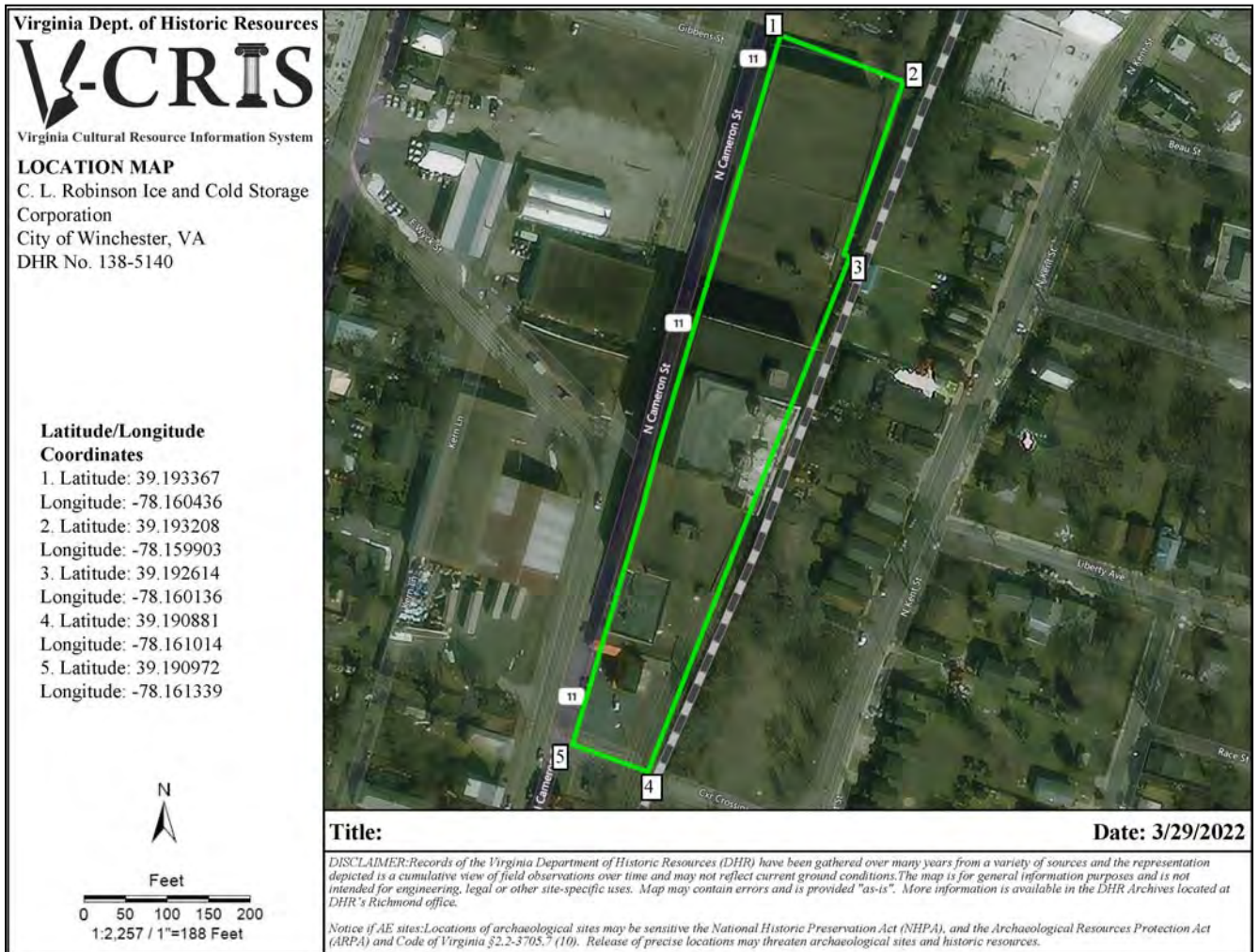


Figure 2: Location Map with boundaries and coordinates annotated

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Figure 3: Sketch Map showing C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation (1 contributing building) with building phases annotated (ESRI)

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Figure 4: Photo key south (ESRI)

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Figure 5: Photo key north (ESRI)

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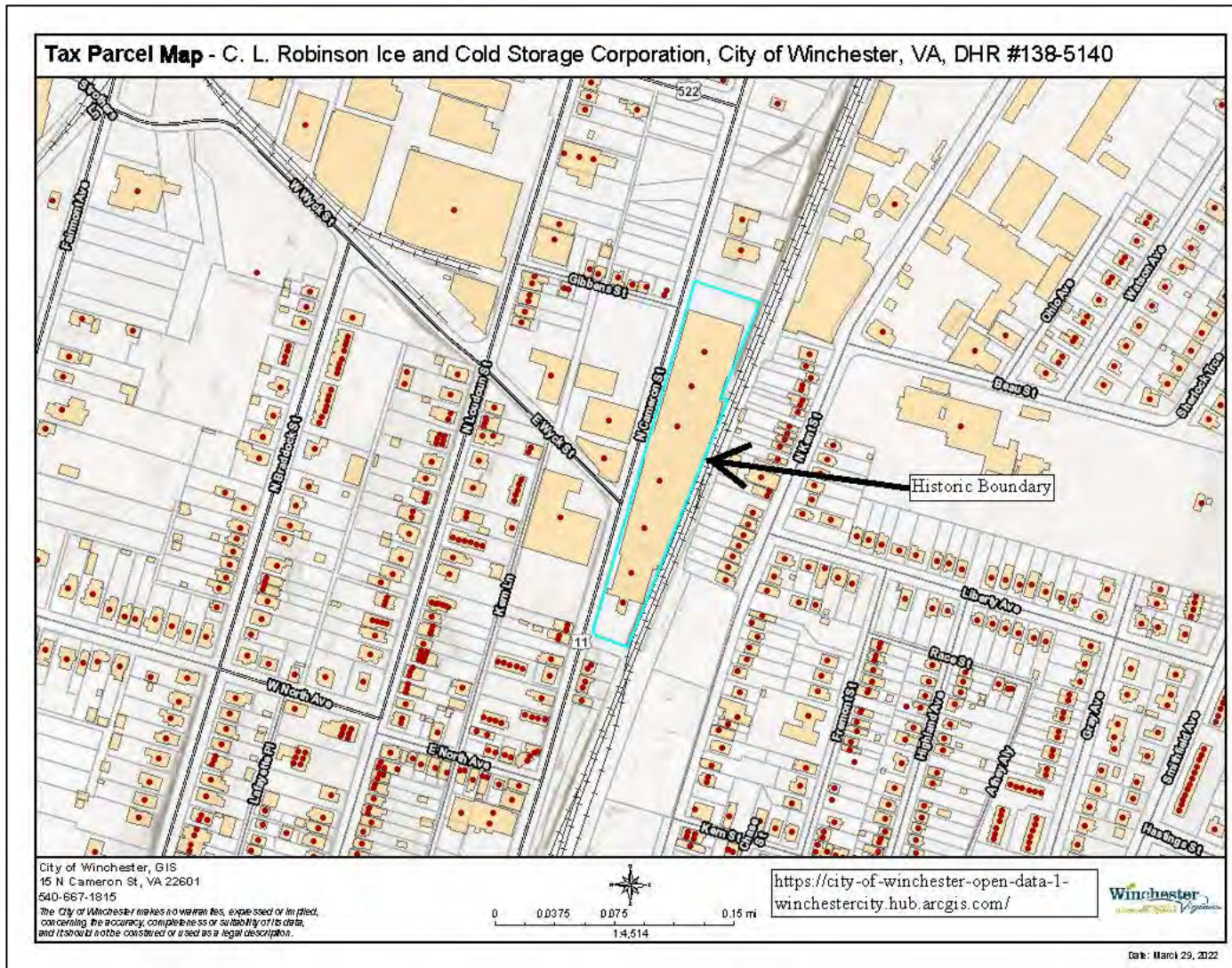


Figure 6. Tax Parcel Map showing Historic Boundary for C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation.

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Figure 7. Aerial View Showing Location of C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage Corporation within the City of Winchester.



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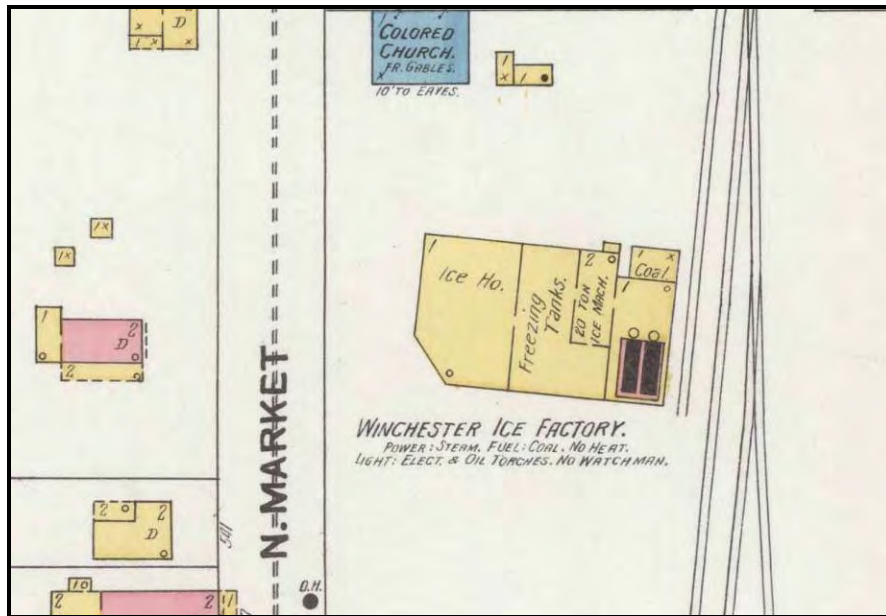


Figure 8: Detail from 1903 Sanborn map, sheet 13 (Library of Congress)

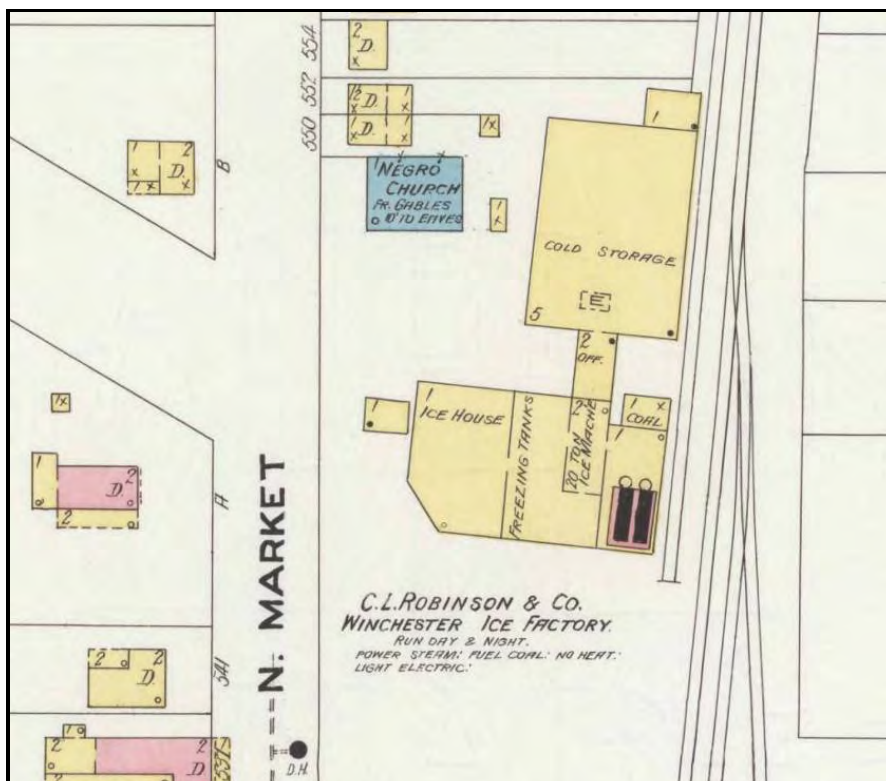


Figure 9: Detail from 1908 Sanborn map, sheet 13 (Library of Congress)

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C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage  
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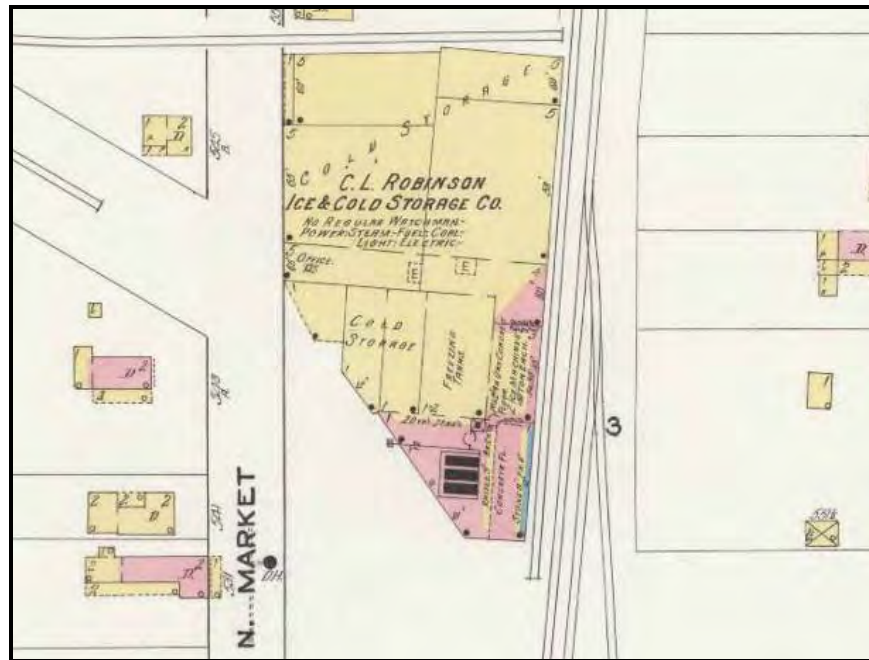


Figure 10: Detail from 1912 Sanborn map, sheet 18 (Library of Congress)

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Figure 11: Detail from 1921 Sanborn map, sheet 21 (Library of Congress)

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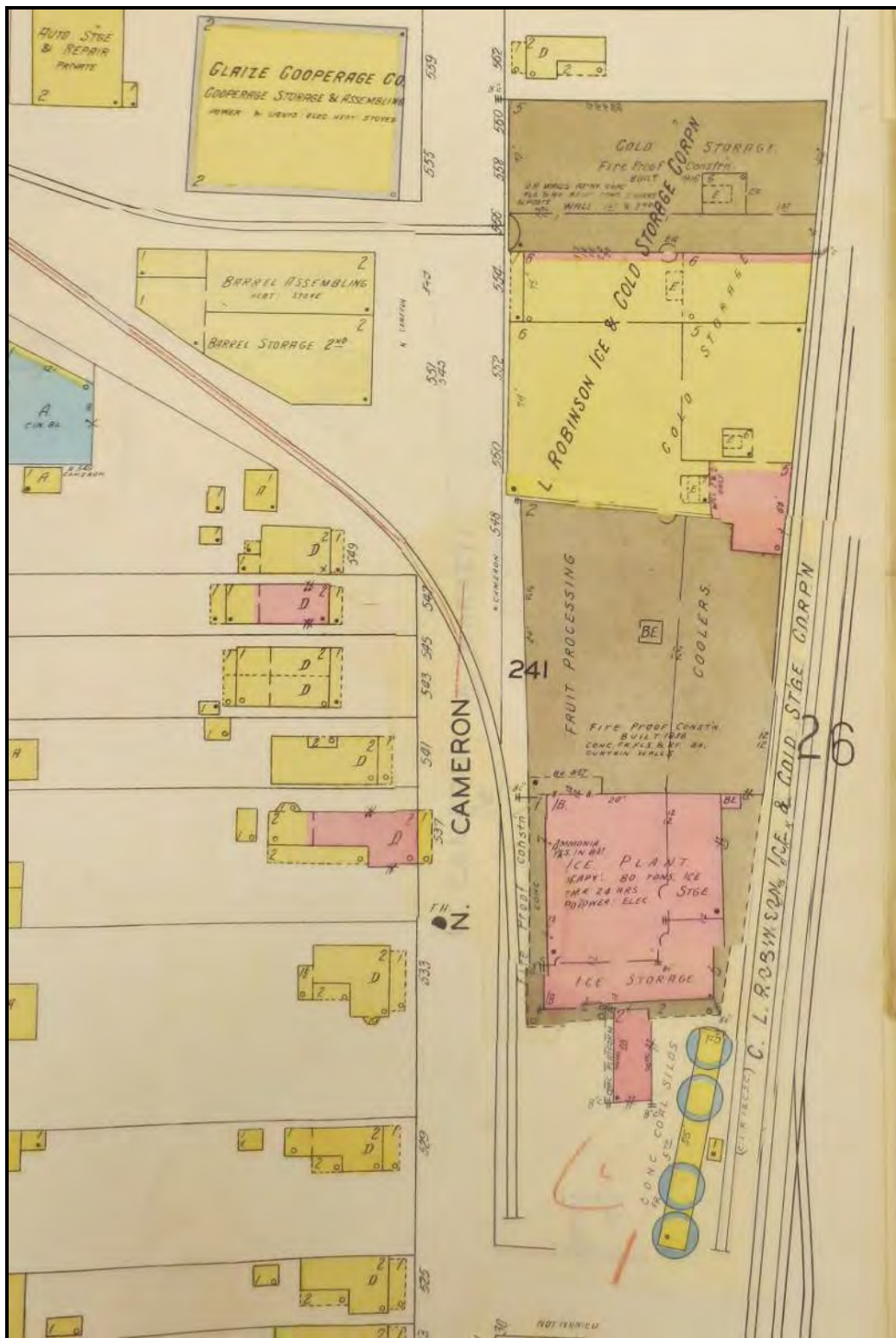


Figure 12: Detail from 1942 Sanborn map, sheet 25 (Library of Congress)

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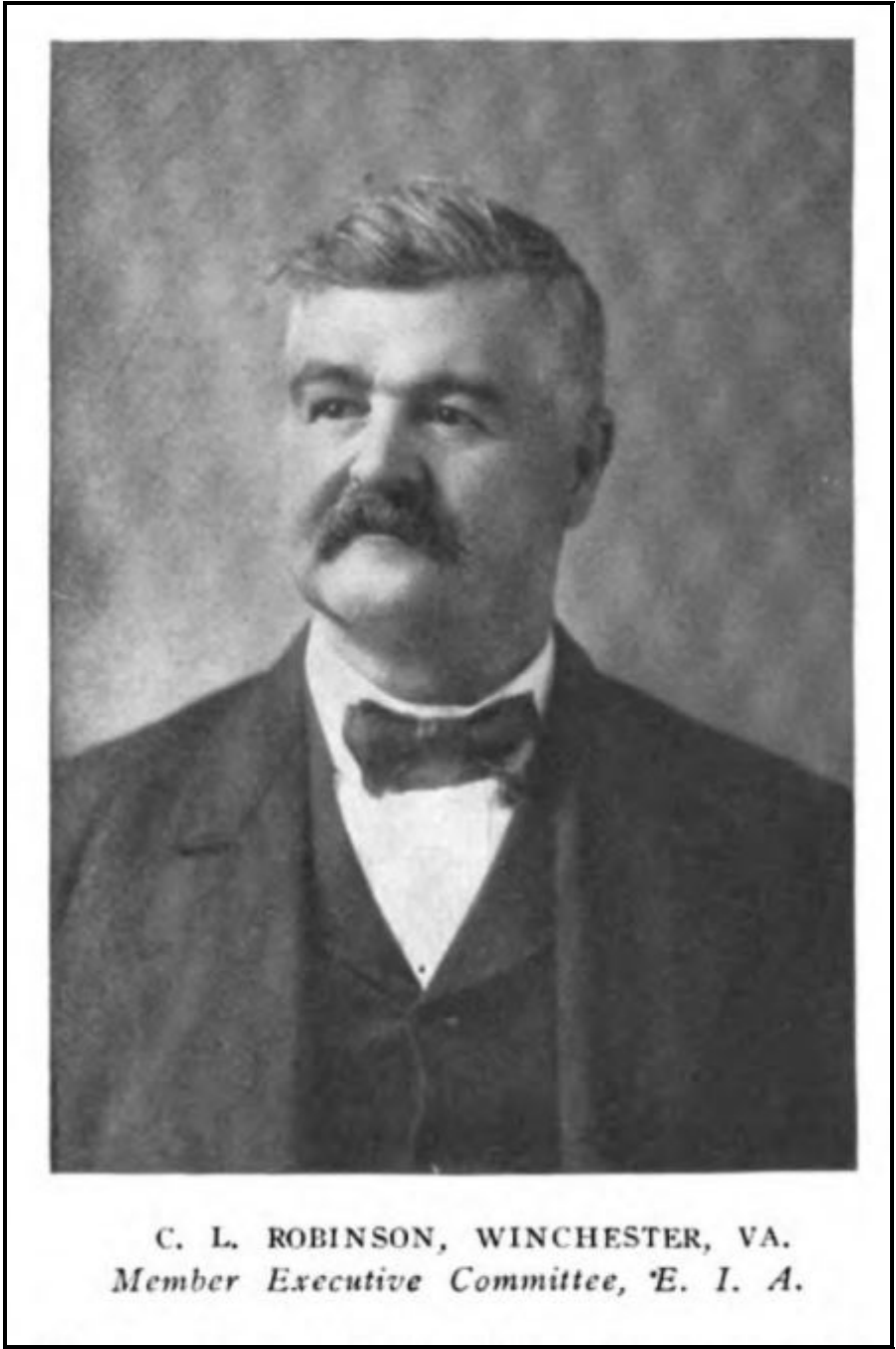


Figure 13: Charles L. Robinson (*Ice and Refrigeration*, December 1911)

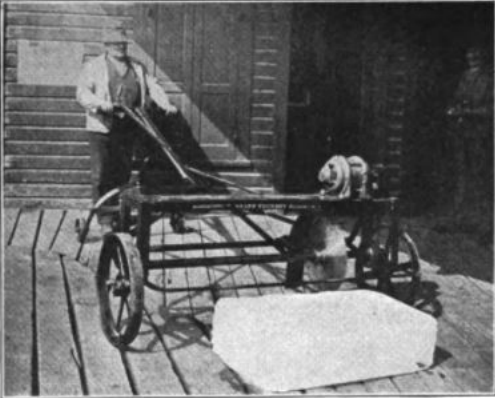
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**THE ROBINSON POWER ICE SAW**  
PATENTS PENDING

Will cut 300 pound block of ice into 12-25 pound pieces in 45 seconds

Price complete \$350.00



Capacity per hour 10 tons to 15 tons

Sent on 30 days free Trial

*Built to cut 300 lb. or 400 lb. blocks of ice.*

**SNAPP FOUNDRY, Manufacturers, Winchester, Va.**

Figure 14: Advertisement for the Robinson Power Ice Saw (*Ice and Refrigeration*, July 1922)

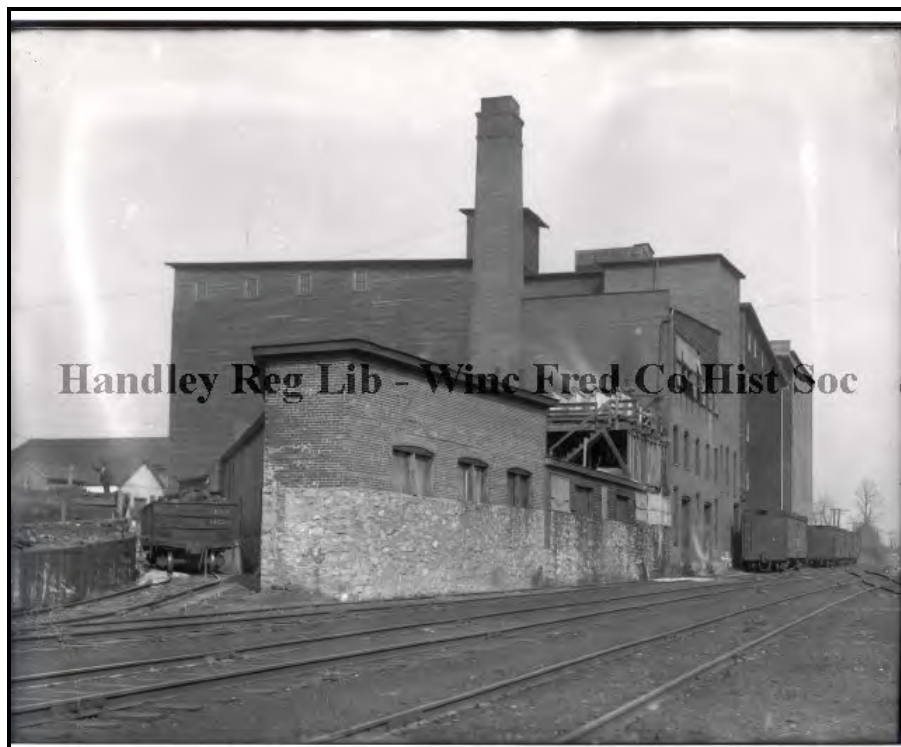


Figure 15: C. L. Robinson Ice and Cold Storage plant, c. 1927 (Handley Regional Library)

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Figure 16: Apple Blossom Festival parade in downtown Winchester, 1927 (Handley Regional Library)

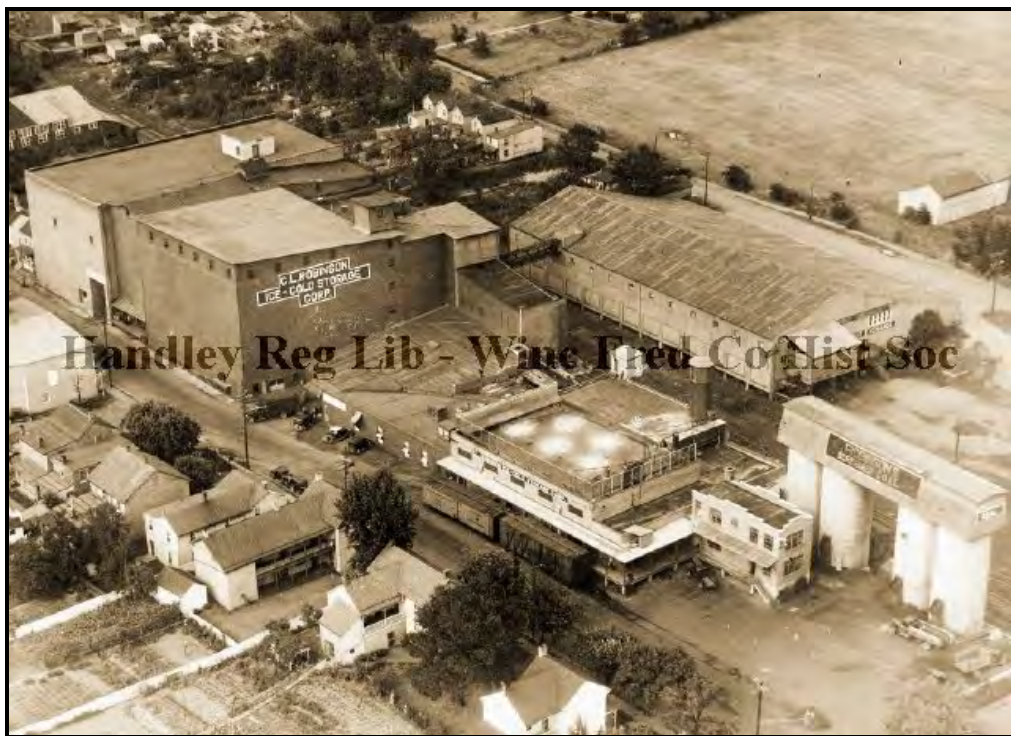


Figure 17: Aerial view of the plant, c. 1931 (Handley Regional Library)



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Figure 18: Fire at the Robinson plant, August 5, 1947 (Handley Regional Library)



Figure 19: Construction of 560 N. Cameron Street, c. 1948 (Handley Regional Library)

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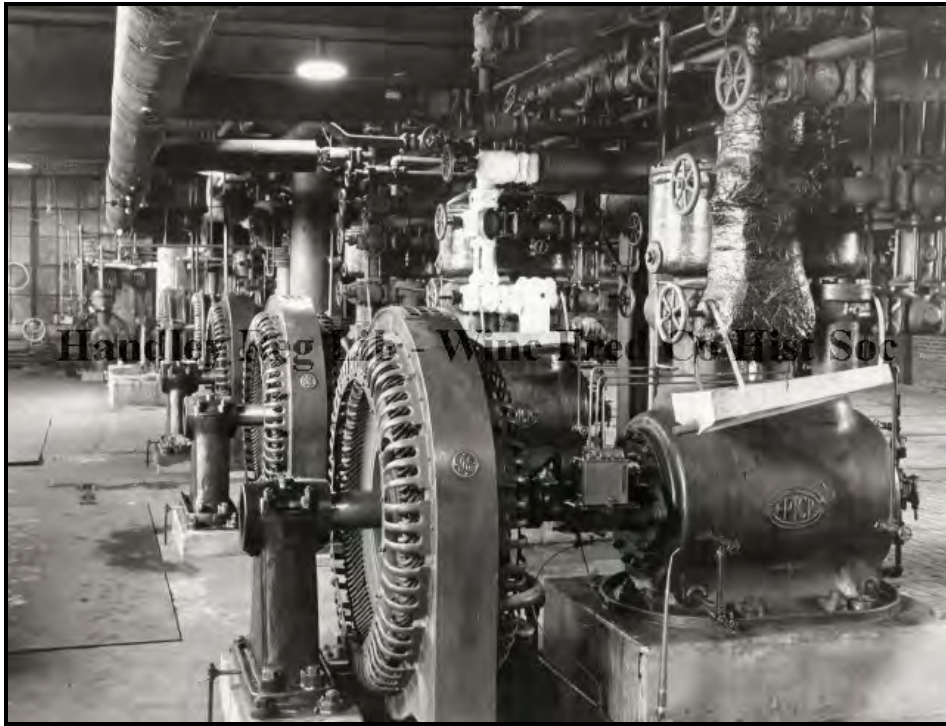


Figure 20: Plant equipment, undated (Handley Regional Library)



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Figure 21: View of the west elevation, looking north, c. 1950 (Handley Regional Library)

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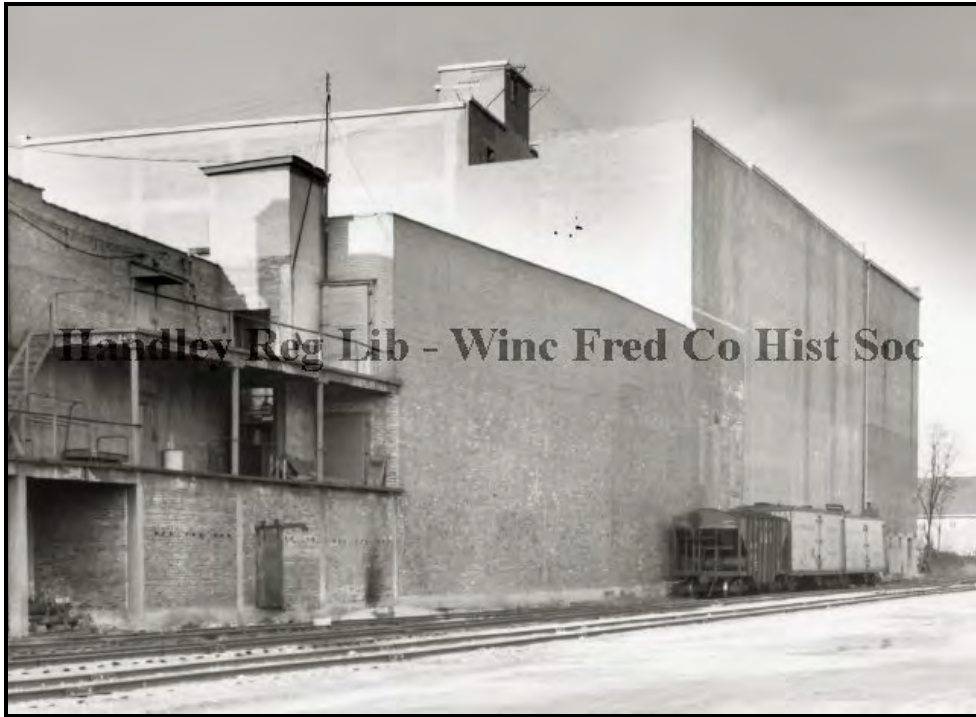


Figure 22: View of the east elevation, looking north, c. 1950 (Handley Regional Library)

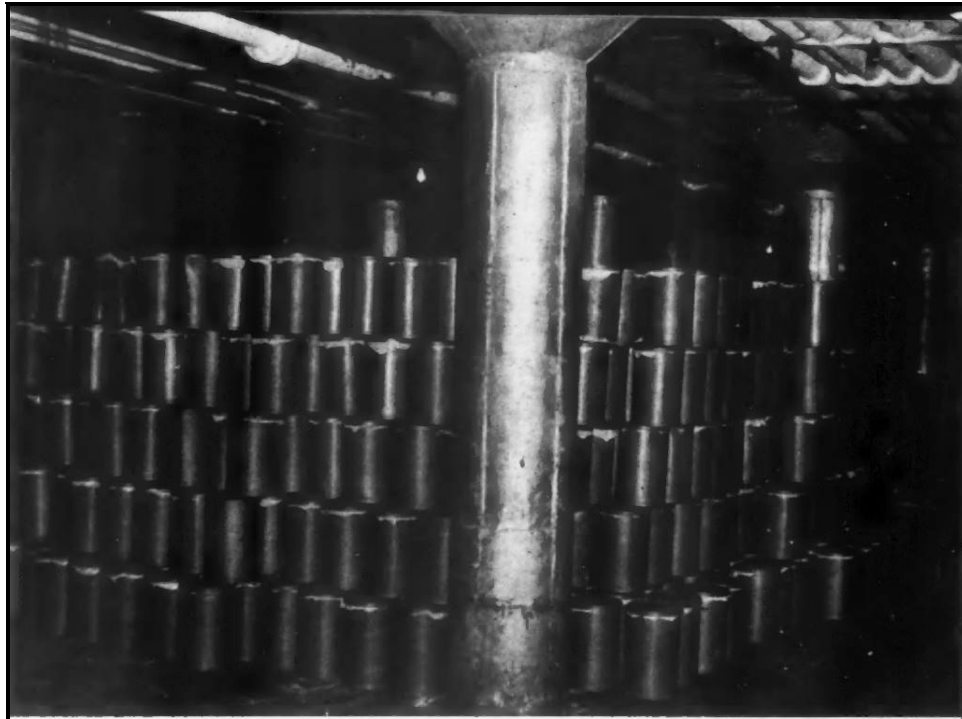


Figure 23: Cold storage room in 550 N. Cameron, 1944 (Handley Regional Library)

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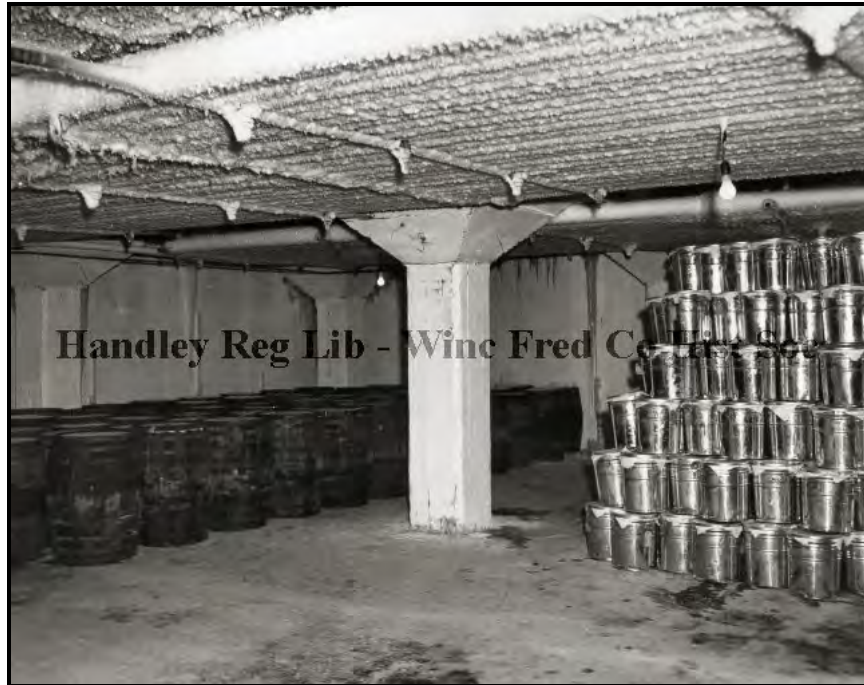


Figure 24: Cold storage room in 560 N. Cameron, c. 1950 (Handley Regional Library)



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Figure 25: Log dwelling adjacent to 570 N. Cameron being demolished, 1977 (Handley Regional Library)