#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE:	Missouri	
COUNTY	Platte	
	FOR NPS USE ON	ILY
ENT	RY NUMBER	DATE

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	· ·	McCo	ormick Disti	llery	,					
	AND/OR HISTORIC:									٦
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	CITY OR TOWN:	HIGI	nway JJ	·						4
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Although there are several buildings and sites on the McCormick Distillery grounds in Weston, Missouri, the historical nucleus of the nineteenth-century distillery remain intact. The old "bland-water" spring, from which pure water was drawn, continues to be used in the production of McCormick bourbon and other whiskeys. In addition, the rock building constructed by David Holladay in 1857 is standing on the property and is the primary distilling facility of the McCormick operation. The limestone caves originally used by Holladay for the storing and aging of whiskey have been reopened and repaired by the McCormick Distilling Company and are accessible to tourists. These three sites, the rock distillery building, the caves, and the "bland-water" spring, constitute the three essential components of the distilling process, and all survive from the time of their use by David Holladay's distillery. These three historical facilities are the only portions of the McCormick Distillery nominated herein to the National Register of Historic Places.

McCormick's "bland-water" spring is the primary source of water for the distilling of McCormick bourbon. The subterranean spring flows into a limestone pool approximately twenty feet by fifteen feet in diameter. The pool is fed directly from the spring, and when filled to capacity is nearly 25 feet deep. Approximately 1,200 gallons flow from McCormick spring during a 24-hour period. McCormick Distillery taps the spring by means of an underground pipe located at the south side of the pool.

The waters of the spring are excellent for the manufacture of smooth bourbon whiskey since the water maintains a constant 54-degree temperature, regardless of outside weather conditions. Furthermore, the water is virtually free of iron deposits and various acids which could react with the alcohol and spoil the taste of the bourbon. The present owners of the distillery complex, the Cray Family, have attempted to preserve the integrity of their spring by erecting a screened pavilion around the pool, allowing visitors to view the spring while retarding possible damage from debris or mischief.

The rock distillery building, constructed in 1857, is a rubblestone structure of limestone. Although the original building has been obscured in recent years by the construction of an office wing on the east (front) facade, and by the placement of large tanks close to the building, the early structure is relatively intact. It is a rectangular-plan, two-story structure having major appendages added to the east and south facades which obscure original fenestration. The roof peak follows the long-axis of the structure. Interior partitions, if any existed, have been removed and replaced by steel catwalks between the various tanks and vats used in the distilling process. The roof was replaced following a fire in 1957, and the building was re-tuckpointed. The new roof reportedly simulates the appearance of the former, with the exception of the shed-like projection near the southeast corner. This extension was done to allow taller distillery appliances and machinery to protrude through the roof. The present roof is a medium-gable pitch, constructed of metal, and supposedly replaced a

SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	X 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable	e and Known) 1857	to present	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	ck One or More as Appropr	iate)	
Aboriginal	■ Education	Political	Urban Planning
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Excellent spring water is essential for the distilling of smooth whiskey, and the continuous existence of a distillery at David Holladay's spring since 1856 attests to the superior quality of the ground water near Weston, Missouri. Holladay's spring, rock distillery building, and aging caves are now the nucleus of McCormick Distillery, the only whiskey distillation operation in the State of Missouri. Although the distillery and spring have endured many changes in ownership through the years, they have supported a commercial distilling operation continuously since 1857.

The spring at Weston is noted on the earliest extant map of the Platte Purchase. This 1838 map, executed to describe the region surrounding Ft. Leavenworth, locates the spring at a junction in an old Indian trail which had traversed western Missouri many years before cartographers entered Platte County. A claim to the property containing the spring was registered on March 1, 1846, ten years after the annexation of the Platte region to Missouri. Land titles were not recorded in Platte County until 1844, but the earliest abstracts show no claim registered for the spring until they were purchased by William J. Norris, who eventually sold his tract to Benjamin Holladay in 1849, for \$8,000. Holladay, a stagecoach entrepeneur of considerable wealth, apparently did not develop a distillery on the site of the spring until his brother, David Holladay, speculated that the existence of the "bland-water" spring might provide an ideal location for the distillation of spirits. Accordingly he commissioned a Mr. Beloit to travel from Peoria, Illinois, to "locate and plan the distillery," for which he was paid \$178.80 on February 2, 1857.2

David Holladay's business ledger indicates that work began on the rock distillery building during April, 1857. Apparently work had progressed significantly by May, 1857, since his records show the receipt of several "distillery books" during that month, suggesting Holladay's first brew was begun that spring. On August 5, 1857, Holladay paid his stone mason, and in September, ordered the installation of 7,798 shingles for the distillery building.3

The construction of the building coincides with the transfer of the spring and surrounding land from Benjamin Holladay to David Holladay's "Platte County Hemp Manufacturing and Distilling Company," in September, 1858.4

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFE		

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

Business ledger of David Holladay, Platte County Hemp Manufacturing and Distilling Company, 1856-1860, in possession of McCormick Distilling Company, Weston, Missouri.

Cray, Richard B., President, McCormick Distilling Co., Weston, Missouri, interviewed by Stephen J. Raiche, staff member, Missouri State Historical Survey Office, April 1, 1971. On file at Missouri

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# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Platte	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)	(Number	all	entries)
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6. #1

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

Missouri State Historical Survey

(state)

1973

Missouri State Park Board

P.O. Box 176

1204 Jefferson Building

Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Code: 29

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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7. #1

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

roof of similar design and material composition. The destruction was limited essentially to machinery and all walls of the distillery survived the fire. The fire exposed early fenestration in the rock walls by removing certain later appendages. The east (main) facade included a large double doorway having a jack-arch, with three equidistantly spaced rectangular-plan windows in the second floor. The center window was raised closer to the roof peak. This window treatment is currently quite obvious in the facade.

The caves used for aging the whiskey are located several hundred yards north of the rock distillery building. The caves occur in a limestone bluff and have been reopened by the McCormick Distilling Company for use by visitors. Interpretive signs, walkways, and a protective pavilion have been erected near the cave opening.

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Missouri	
COUNTY	
Platte	
FOR NPS USE ON	LY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. #1

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

It is uncertain whether the Holladay brothers operated a hemp manufactory in Platte County, but the distillery was obviously successful since the initial spirits were aged sufficiently to be marketed by October, 1858. Originally, Holladay traded small quantities of his whiskey for supplies, such as brooms, meal and salt. Quantity sales began in November, 1858. By December, David Holladay was marketing his beverage in quantities as great as 757 gallon lots, at a price of 35¢ a gallon. Holladay's ledger also suggests that he constructed a cooperage and boarding house on the distillery property, both indispensible to the distilling process, since barrels and accomodations for workers were both scarce on the Platte frontier. Apparently construction of the distillery was financed by Benjamin Holladay, as the ledger records payments of several large notes to his accounts after liquor production commenced.

Although the type of whiskey produced by Holladay cannot be determined, it is assumed that he manufactured "corn liquor" since his papers indicate rather substantial purchases of the grain during 1858 from numerous Platte Valley farmers. It is interesting to speculate that Holladay may have also produced beer in Weston, since an entry in the ledger mentions purchase of a quantity of hops.8

Unfortunately the Holladay ledger ceases to record distillery finances after January 12, 1860, but David Holladay's will and testament specifically mention the existence of a functioning distillery at the spring in 1888. Although little is known of David Holladay's operation between 1860 and 1888, it is certain he was producing whiskey in Weston until his death in 1893, and that his heirs continued the distillery. During the execution of David Holladay's estate in 1894, the probate court allowed his son-in-law, a Mr. Barton, to continue manufacture of whiskey, using the name "Holladay-Barton."9 However, because of a disagreement among the heirs, the distillery was sold at public auction and the proceeds divided among the various descendants. The spring and distillery passed from possession of the family on July 18, 1900.

The opportunity to distill spirits at Holladay's facilities attracted George H. Shawhan, a distiller from Lone Jack, Missouri, who had lost his original distillery in a fire. The timely sale of the Holladay distillery prompted Shawhan to recommence operations at Weston. There is no indication that the distillery ceased production during the change of ownership, and by 1902, the brands "Shawhan," "Holladay," and "Lone Jack" whiskeys were distributed throughout the Missouri-Kansas market area.

Shawhan Distilling Company was ordered into receivership by the Platte County Court in 1916 for non-payment of debt, and their whiskey stock was placed in

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Missouri	
Platte	
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(Number all entries)

8. #2

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

storage. With the passage of the prohibition amendment in 1919, the distillery was closed and remained inoperative until 1933, when the property was reoccupied by the "Old Holladay Distilling Company," a corporation controlled 97% by Shawhan's receivers. The firm was reincorporated in 1939 as the "Old Weston Distillery."

In the years following World War II when liquor was scarce, the proprietors of Old Weston Distillery sold their property to a holding company known as United Distillers, who bought the distillery primarily to acquire 30,000 barrels of whiskey stored in the warehouse. The present owners of the spring and distilling plant at Weston, the Cloud B. Cray Family, of Atchison, Kansas, purchased the property in 1950 from United Distillers. Mr. Richard B. Cray manages the distillery under the name "McCormick," a title acquired from a defunct Platte County distiller in Waldron, Missouri. The original McCormick Distillery was not reopened after Prohibition, and since the Cray Family had also acquired the Waldron facility, the name was changed to their Weston operation.]

McCormick Distillery continues today the 116-year history of liquor production using the old spring and original Holladay rock distilling building. The "bland-water" spring, free of iron deposits and acid impurities, will continue to provide water in sufficient quantity to maintain an operation indefinitely at the old Holladay distillery.

#### **FOOTNOTES**

- 1. Property abstract, McCormick Distilling Company, Weston, Missouri. Platte County, Missouri, Deed Book "G", p. 328.
- 2. Business ledger of David Holladay, February 2, 1857, p. 2.
- 3. Business ledger of David Holladay, September 16, 1857, p. 4.
- 4. Property abstract, McCormick Distilling Company, Weston, Missouri. Platte County, Missouri, Deed Book "O", p. 156.
- 5. Business ledger of David Holladay, December 7, 1858, p. 37.
- 6. Business ledger of David Holladay, pp. 8, 9, 34, 36.
- 7. Business ledger of David Holladay, August 15, 1858, p. 9.
- 8. Business ledger of David Holladay, July 14, 1858, p. 35.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. #3

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

- 9. Platte County, Missouri, Record of Probate Court, Book 2, p. 490.
- 10. St. Louis <u>Republic</u>, October 9, 1904.
- 11. Atchison Globe, (Atchison, Kansas), September 21, 1967.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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COUNTY	
Platte	
FOR NPS USE ON	LY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

9. #1

#### McCORMICK DISTILLERY

State Park Board, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65101.

Map of a Reserve Near Ft. Leavenworth, June 21, 1838. Original in possession of United States Army, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Platte County, Missouri. Official Record of the County Probate Court, Record Book 2.

Property Abstract in possession of the present owner, McCormick Distilling Company, Weston, Missouri. April 1, 1971.

#### **NEWSPAPERS**

Atchison Globe (Atchison, Kansas), September 21, 1967.

St. Louis Republic, October 9, 1904.

Weston Chronicle (Weston, Missouri), November 7, 1893.

#### SECONDARY SOURCES

Bless, Mrs. B.J., Weston-Queen of the Platte Purchase. Weston, Missouri, The Weston Chronicle Press, 1969.

Kantor, McKinley, <u>Missouri Bittersweet</u>, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969, pp. 322-324.

State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.
Historic Sites File, Ref: Platte County.

The Story of the Old Weston Distillery, 1856-1936. Weston, Missouri: Private printing, 1936.

Weston Old Homes Tour and Heritage Festival. Weston, Missouri: The Weston Chronicle Press, 1969.

Form 10-301 (July 1968)

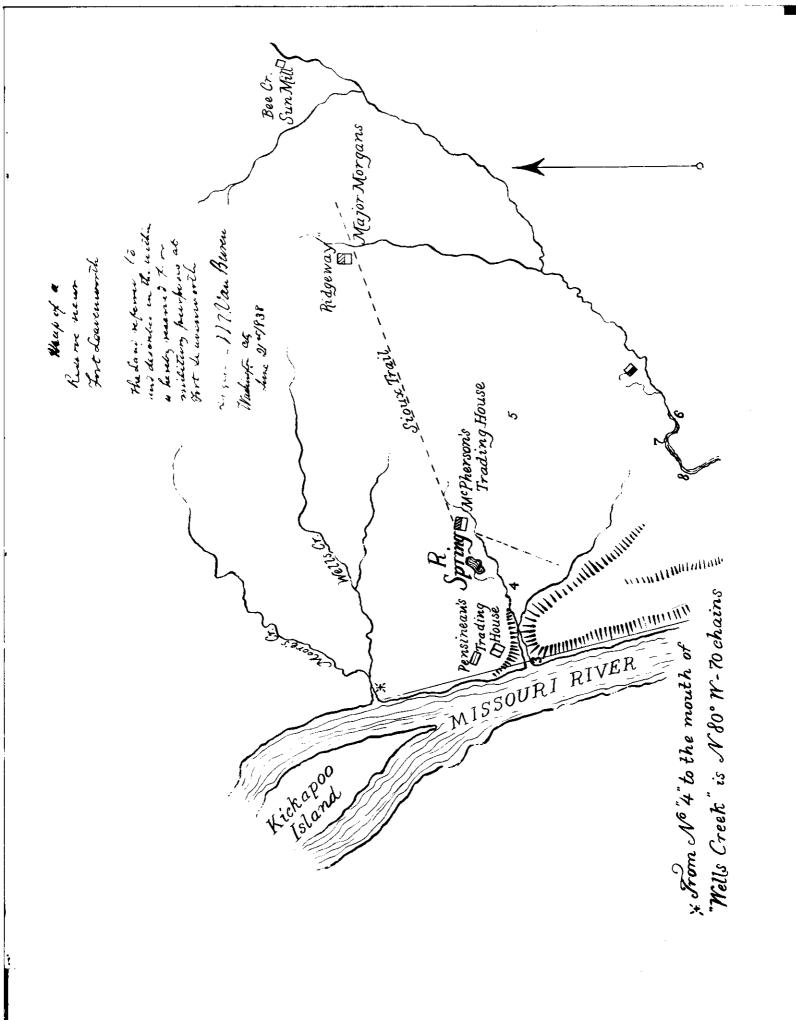
# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

#### PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. NAME	= :		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)	
McCormick Distillery	:		
2. LOCATION			
state Missouri	Platte	Town Weston	
STREET AND NUMBER			
Highway JJ			
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE	DATE	SCALE	
Map of a Reserve near Ft. Leavenworth	June 21, 1838	not to scale	



Form 10-301 (July 1968)

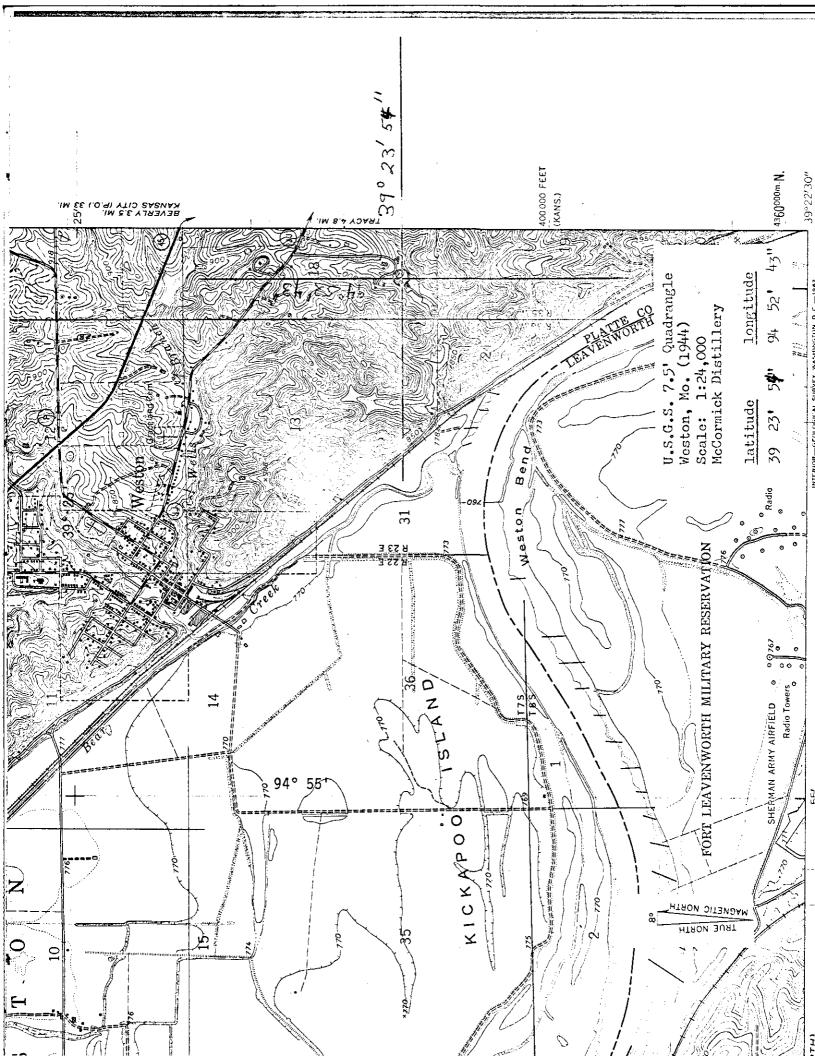
# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

#### PROPERTY MAP FORM

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COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)		
McCormick Distillery	*			
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Missouri	Platte	Weston		
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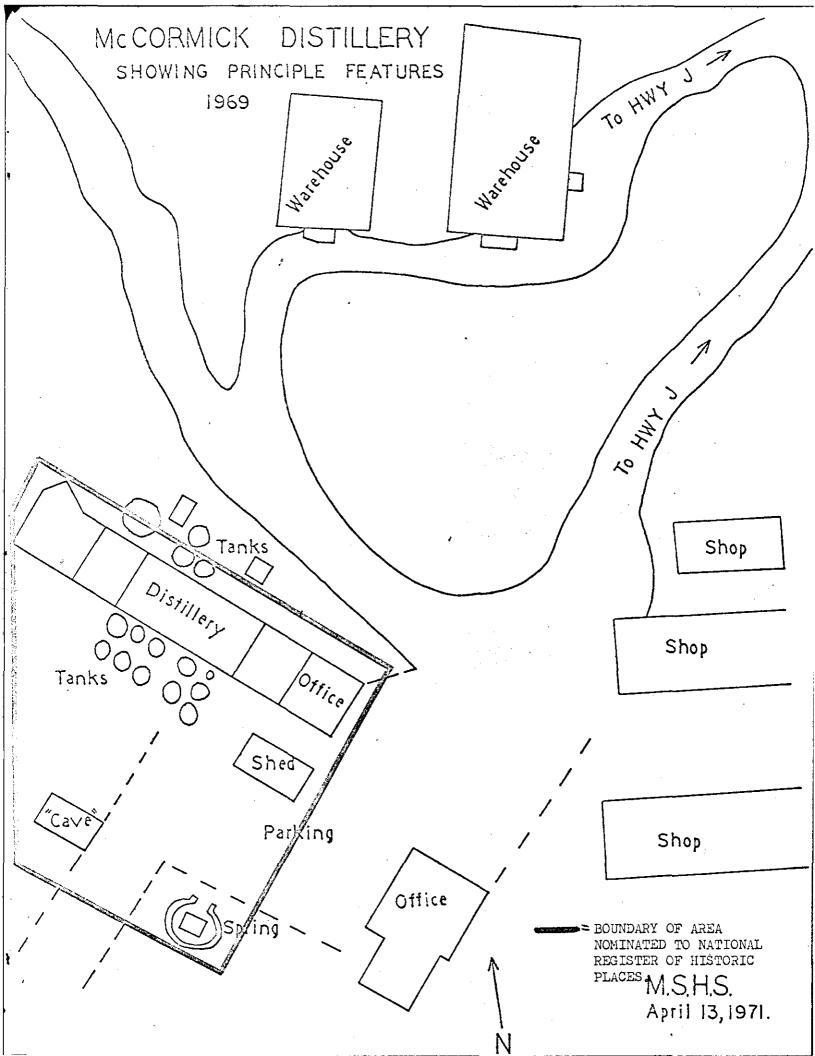
Form 10-301 (July 1968)

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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COUNTY	TOWN
Platte	Weston
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	Platte



**COUNTY:** 

LOCATION:

OWNER: ADDRESS:

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

DATE SENT TO JEFF. CITY:

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE (AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

Platte

Highway JJ, Weston, Missouri

McCormick Distilling Company Highway JJ, Weston, Missouri

03-17-73

(05-02-73) 12-13-73

12-14-73

12-18-73

04-16-74

Excellent spring water is essential for the distilling of smooth whiskey, and the continuous existence of a distillery at David Holladay's spring since 1856 attests to the superior quality of the ground water near Weston, Missouri. Holladay's spring, rock distillery building, and aging caves are now the nucleus of McCormick Distillery, the only whiskey distillation operation in the state of Missouri. Although the distillery and spring have endured many changes in ownership through the years, they have supported a commercial distilling operation continuously since 1857.

FORM 10-301 A

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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McCormick Distillery					`		
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STREET AND NUMBER			*				
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4. IDENTIFICATION							

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

General view of McCormick Spring, showing protective pavilion constructed by Cray Family. East-northeast facing west-southwest.

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FORM 10-301 A

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
McCormick Distillery		
2. LOCATION		
state Missouri	Platte	Weston
STREET AND NUMBER		
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Stephen J. Raiche Mo. State Park Board	February, 1973	Mo. State Park Board, Bx. 1 Jefferson City, Mo. 65101
4. IDENTIFICATION		

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Rock distillery building, remnant of David Holladay's original distillery, built about 1857. Southwest facing northeast.



FORM 10-301 A

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

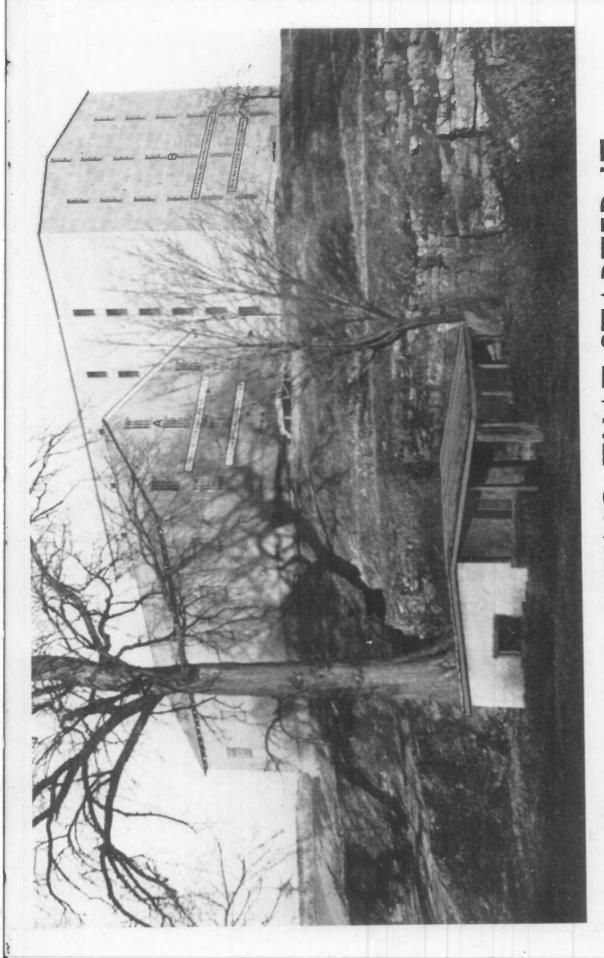
# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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McCormick Distillery				
2. LOCATION				
Missouri	Platte		Weston	
STREET AND NUMBER	<u> </u>	<del></del>		
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Old Weston Distilling Co. The Story of Old Weston Dist.	1936		Mo. State Park Board, Bx. 176 Jefferson City, Mo. 65101	
4. IDENTIFICATION				

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

General view of McCormick Spring and Reservoir pool before protective pavilion installed. West-southwest facing east-northeast.



# THE OLD SPRING THAT STARTED IT

In the foreground is the spring that gave Major Holladay his idea for a distillery at this place. There are several other such springs on the property. This limestone spring water is used exclusively in the production of Old Weston Whiskies.