

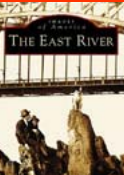


LIRR SERVICE to:

- Van Iderstine Co.
- Shaw-Walker Co.
- Bickfords and Peter F. Mallon
- Eagle Electric #7
- Extrin
- Roto-Broil
- Walworth Craftsman, Westinghouse
- Slicklen Paper
- Sternberger
- National Casket
- Brenner Paper
- Louis Sherry
- Speed Queen
- American Steel Wool
- Web Offset
- Astoria Lumber
- West Chemical
- Blissville Yard
- Jacobson & Son
- Stoll Metal
- Marlyn Warehouse
- Yard A
- Dutch Kills Lift Bridge
- Carbona Products
- Centre Lumber

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HISTORY TOPICS: TRANSPORTATION: LIRR



A Research Series on the History of Long Island City

VOLUME 1: LONG ISLAND RAILROAD SERVICE TO LONG ISLAND CITY'S VAN IDERSTINE CO.

By Nicholas Kalis

First in a series of glimpses into industries or warehouses that made for interesting freight operations on the Long Island. Information presented has included, where available, a brief history of the firm, how it was served by the LIRR, and what commodities were received or shipped from this facility.

In 1963, Darling-Delaware Company, Inc., an out-of-town rendering firm, bought out Van Iderstine founded by Peter Van Iderstine in 1855, in New York. The firm's name had later become Peter Van Iderstine and Sons, no doubt as Peter's sons joined the enterprise. By 1908, two Van Iderstine brothers and the Morris and Alling interests incorporated the Peter Van Iderstine Company. The Blissville, Long Island City plant operated at least as far as 1966 and was closed sometime earlier than 1983. Some time after the 1920s, the city began delivering dead animals to Van Iderstine. Van Iderstine's customers were mostly small batch feed mixers. These blending plants received Van Iderstine's inedible tallow by train. Customers were both large and small operations. All, however, were located in rural areas. Van Iderstine's output was primarily destined for poultry feed. As the hog business in the east was small, little of Van Iderstine's output was destined for hogs.

According to a telephone directory Van Iderstine was at Railroad and Greenpoint Avenues and had telephone number RA9-7500. Van Iderstine, located in Blissville, was known as Spots 5a, 5b and 5c according to page 7 of Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings published in June 1966. These tracks had capacities of six, six and nine cars respectively. Spots 5a and 5b were at 37-32 Review Avenue.

Van Iderstine took truck deliveries of meat scraps and carcasses. Van Iderstine South Track took box cars for loading of processed material and on the north side cars were loaded with animal feed. According to Al Schneider, the building on South Track at Spot 5c was located at 37-31 Railroad Avenue. According to CR4 published by the LIRR, Van Iderstine was 1.41 miles distant from the Long Island City Passenger Station. In 1924, it was handled by the agent at Laurel Hill (S2) in an attempt to spread the paper work. CR 4 labels this siding as "For Individual Use" which means "only place cars for Van Iderstine on these tracks". Even though Van Iderstine's paper work is handled at S2, CR4 refers to this industry as under Freight Station S1.

Bliss Yard Drill, which required three brakemen as one was dropped off as a flagman at Bliss when its crew worked up # 2 Montauk (eastbound), switched Van Iderstine. At Bliss interlocking, Van Iderstine North at 37-30 Review Avenue processed animal feed from bone meal piped across the tracks from its rendering plant. Van Iderstine shipped out tank cars carrying inedible tallow used in the manufacture of various products. J. J. Earl recalls that three (3) of these tank cars were stored in what is now Allied Extruders. Bliss Yard Drill would return to Yard A at the end of an 8-hour trick. Bliss Yard also had a later 3:00 PM Drill. Bliss Yard Drill used no hack for its one-mile trip to Blissville Yard.

Earl recalls these tank cars were black single domes typical of the 1940s. According the April 1964 Official Railway Equipment Register, these tank cars had reporting marks VICX. The left hand side of these tank cars was marked "The Van Iderstine Co" in white upper case letters. Beneath the name and to the right of its reporting marks was in smaller caps "Long Island City" and beneath that in caps was lettered "New York". These cars were numbered as follows: 1001 to 1009 inclusive. On the right hand side of the car in white letters was what appears to read "Manufacturers of all grades of tallow ...[illegible]" These tank cars were AAR type TM and had an 8,000-gallon capacity. All of the nine cars were equipped with heater coils. Carl Fabrizio has a photograph of one of these tank cars, which appear to be riveted, that bears out Earl's recollection. Carl's photograph is dated February 20, 1980. It might be possible to model these cars using the Intermountain ACF Type 27 Riveted 8,000 gallon tanks cars made from 1919 through 1923. These tank cars were later pressed into maintenance of way service with the LIRR.



Former Van Iderstine. Tall building is the mill where rendering and processing takes place. Vertical Tanks are storage tanks where finished products, fats, and oils are stored. Triplex Oil would be horizontal green tanks. (Spot 6) per Huneke 1998 Camera looking West Credit: Carl Fabrizio



Former Van Iderstine Spots 5a and 5b also known as North Side or new plant. Camera Looking geographically West. Shot taken from Review Avenue 1998 Credit: Carl Fabrizio



Tank Car VICX 1002, early 1963, Art Huneke shot the tank car in 1963 on Van Iderstine Spot s 5a and 5b [the building that appears in photos 4 and 8]. At that time Van I[derstine] had buildings on both sides and they were connected by an overhead conveyor belt which was either only partially covered or was in such bad shape that a sawdust-like substance continually fell and blew everywhere. It was sickening. Probably ground bones or dried fat or a combination. " Credit: Arthur Huneke Collection



Van Iderstine Spots 5a and 5b (beyond the vertical tanks) at right side of photograph (photo looking West). Spot 5c is on left side of photograph, past switch. Greenpoint Avenue Bridge in background. Vantage point is furthest East of all photos appearing in this article. Arthur Huneke, September 10, 1982, Color Slide, Credit: Arthur Huneke Collection



Note SS sign at left of photograph. Building on the right may be Stoll Metal (Spot 2) or Spot 3 not Van Iderstine. Overhead conveyor belt is gone. Greenpoint Avenue Bridge in background. Camera looking West. Arthur Huneke Color Slide, September 10, 1982. Credit: Art Huneke Collection



LIRR Photographer, Van Iderstine (old plant/South Side?, camera looking East. March 16, 1929, Wooden structure in the right foreground is Bliss Tower. Bliss tower was built as number 3, renamed BX, and renamed BS. Credit: Art Huneke Collection

To better understand LIRR operations at Van Iderstine, lets start at the beginning. Tallow or animal fat is a tan-colored, "liquid" grease that will change to solid form if left too long. Inedible tallow is that tallow unfit for human consumption. Inedible tallow is sold to firms

...ments. Dead animals bound for a rendering plant were often picked up by a crane with a large winch and a heavy cable.

Perhaps three factors will bear up to scrutiny as leading to Van Iderstine's demise. One may be that environmental laws in New York State of the 1960s and 1970s made operations there disadvantageous. A second reason may be that the urban slaughter houses that once were located in places like the outer boroughs of New York City, had simply closed and moved to rural areas that allowed them to be built as single-story facilities offering greater efficiency.



LIRR Photographer, July 30, 1936 slide, buildings of Standard Oil in the distance, to the left. Van Iderstine is west of Standard Oil on both sides. 5a and 5b would be to right of tracks and 5c, the old plant would be to left of tracks. Camera is looking West. Credit: Art Huneke Collection

Once neighboring slaughterhouses or meat packing facilities closed, Van Iderstine would have lost its cheap source of animal carcasses. J. J. Earl also cites a dramatic fire, helicopter rescue, and building collapse in the early 1970s as having, perhaps, hastened Van Iderstine's demise. A track plan revised August 1970 shows Van Iderstine as an existing LIRR customer.

MODELING

Those wishing to model the Van Iderstine facility would benefit from consulting the four photographs contained in *Darling-Delaware Centenary 1882-1982* Chicago: Darling-Delaware Company, Inc., 1981. Anyone wishing to help this author model Van Iderstine on his HO scale layout is encouraged to contact him with any offers of assistance.

CREDITS

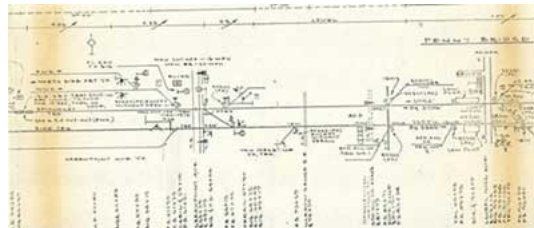
Credit for this material lies with Jim Klug of Bowling Green, Ohio and J. J. Earl and portions of which have appeared previously in *The Semaphore*. Thanks to Brent L. Lambert, Research Specialist at the Kalmbach Memorial Library and to LIST members Carl Fabrizi and Bob Sturm. Special thanks are due to Thomas Cook of the National Renderer's Association in Alexandria, Virginia and to Art Huneke of New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

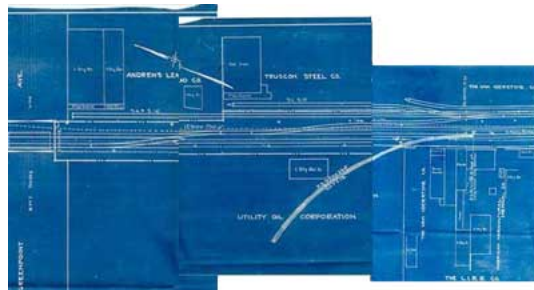
- Author Unknown *Darling-Delaware Centenary 1882-1982* Chicago: Darling-Delaware Company, Inc., 1981
- Author Unknown *Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings* (Reprint) June 1966
- Author Unknown *Official Railway Equipment Register* April 1964
- Long Island Railroad C.R. 4 1924



VI South Side or old plant (Spot 5c) 37-31 Railroad Avenue (or is it Review Avenue?) was of nineteenth-century brick style and was on Newtown Creek. After a fire which required a helicopter rescue it was torn down according to J.J. Earl who retired in 1995. (click to enlarge)



Blueprints from Art Huneke Collection (click to enlarge)



Van Iderstine appears to the right. The 1981 book *Darling-Delaware Centenary 1882-1982* refers to the new Van Iderstine Plant and the old plant Old plant (Spot 5c) would be at bottom of blueprint
Blueprints from Art Huneke Collection (click to enlarge)

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