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 - Bickfords and Peter F. Mallon
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 - Sternberger
 - National Casket
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HISTORY TOPICS: TRANSPORTATION: LIRR



VOLUME 10: LONG ISLAND RAILROAD SERVICE TO LONG ISLAND CITY'S NATIONAL CASKET

By Nicholas Kalis

Tenth 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.

(This article is a revised and expanded version of an article that appeared in the June 2001 Semaphore. I have included information that I received after this article in its original form went to press.)

Our series continues with the Long Island City area of Queens, New York and more specifically, Yard A. We now turn to National Casket which was Spot 16 according to *Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings* published June 1966. National Casket had its own siding, which diverged from the Stink Track and crossed over the siding shared by Louis Sherry, Web Offset, and Astoria Lumber. According to drawings by Robert Emery, this siding too entered into the building, which appears to be six-stories in height and of poured concrete construction with large industrial windows. An aerial photo from 1975 shows this building to be "U"-shaped. This building is marked by a large water tank on its roof resting on vertical legs. According to a Robert Emery map, a track entered into the building from the east side of the structure. This 1966 publication puts National Casket facing Yard A between Louis Sherry (Spot 17A) and Astoria Lumber (Spot 15). According to the *Hyde Atlas*, Queens Vol. 1, updated through 1955, this building was bordered by both Northern Boulevard (elevated New York City Subway tracks cover the boulevard here) and Yard A.

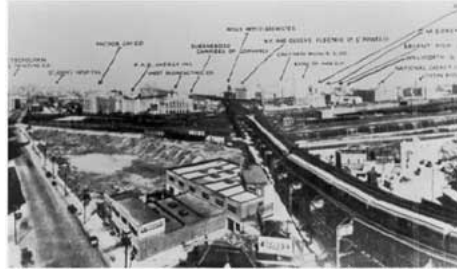


Today, 29-76 Northern Boulevard has been altered, according to Bill Myers and, apparently, the building is presently occupied by some unit of the **Metropolitan Transit Authority**. Prior to that 29-76 Northern Boulevard may have been home to **Walco Toys**.



By the 1970s, 29-76 Northern Boulevard was a warehouse operation, with no manufacturing taking place. All this facility shipped out were empties. It received box cars containing hardwood caskets from a National Casket Factory located in East Cambridge, Massachusetts and metal caskets from the National Casket Factory located in Lancaster, Kentucky. According to the October 1960 and October 1965 Official Guide to the Railways, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad was the only road providing service in Lancaster, Kentucky in the early 1960s. During this same time period, both the Boston & Maine and New York Central provided service to East Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Recalling the 1950s, Sam Berliner III recalls this Long Island City facility received empty fabricated metal casket shells, bare seamless copper or bronze shells (horrendously expensive), and tons of lumber, fabric, stuffing, hardware, and fittings. Wood caskets were made on the premises. Bases were made for the seamless caskets and gaskets fitted. Caskets were lined and trimmed inside and had decorations, hinges, inner and outer lids, catches, and handles fitted there. Plaques were shipped separately so they could be engraved before fastening.



National Casket Company appears in right background. Source: The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/The City University of New York

GAHS STORE

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MODELING

Readers seeking to model National Casket would be well advised to simply scratch build it. Use the Walthers catalog to find industrial windows that match the prototype. Sheet styrene could be used to represent the poured concrete construction. I would suggest a foam core mockup be constructed first. I have built a foam core mock-up of this building and am pleased with the results.

CREDITS

My thanks go to Brent L. Lambert, Research Specialist, Kalmbach Memorial Library, National Model Railroad Association for his assistance. Thanks also to Carl Fabrizi, Sam Berliner III, and Bill Myers, all of New York. Thanks also to Bob Miller of the Queens Borough Public Library in Jamaica, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Author Unknown *Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings* (Reprint) June 1966

Please send photographs that show how Extrin appeared in the 1960s and direct any comments on or corrections to this manuscript to:

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Any illustrations or maps contributed will be gratefully acknowledged.



Logo, Long Island Railroad

http://www.astorialic.org/topics/industry/lirr/volume10/volume10_p.php

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NOV

DEC






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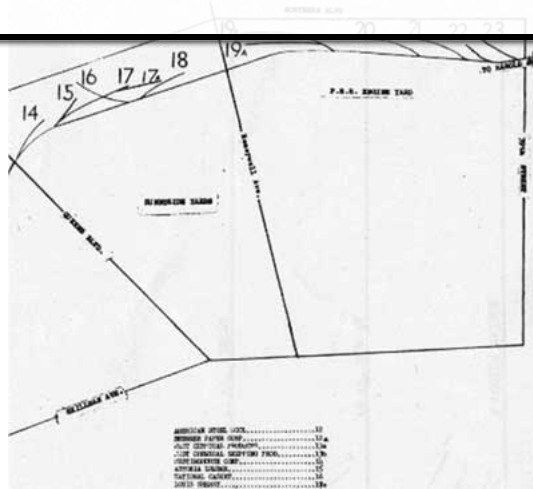
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Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings (Reprint) June 1966

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