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HISTORY TOPICS: TRANSPORTATION: LIRR



VOLUME 14: LONG ISLAND RAILROAD SERVICE TO LONG ISLAND CITY'S AMERICAN STEEL WOOL

By Nicholas Kalis

Fourteenth 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.

American Steel Wool Mfg. Co., known today as Global Material Technologies, Inc., was founded in 1896. *Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings* on page 2 identifies American Steel Wool, located in Long Island City, as Spot 12. This 1966 publication puts American Steel Wool facing Yard A and far west of Queens Boulevard. The *Hyde Atlas, Queens Vol. 1*, updated through 1955, puts this building as bounded by Orchard Street on one side and Yard A on the other. The *Hyde Atlas* shows the previous occupant of this space as FADA Radio Co. According to Bill Myers, as of August 2000 *Filmtreat International Corp.* occupied this space known as 42-24 Orchard Street. Telephone directories establish American Steel Wool Manufacturing occupied this space during the 1940s - 1960s and had telephone number ST4-0464.



Street map of Long Island City with American Steel Wool location indicated by a red star. Credit: Yahoo!

This



Circa 1950, Fleet of Brenner Trucks with LIRR in background. American Steel Wool shared the same building. Credit: Rhonda Brenner Levenson Collecton

facility, occupied a white 5-story brick building topped by a red sign with white letters that read "AMERICAN STEEL WOOL", appears on page 5 of *Penn Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment*. It has a separate tall square smoke stack to its west side. Further to its west and fronting Queen Street, an adjacent, related, one-story building painted white had also been occupied by FADA Radio Co. The *Long Island Rail Road 2002 Calendar* (March) shows a box car spotted at this one-story building in the 1950s. In 1966, American Steel Wool shared both a building and siding with Brenner Paper Corp. Brenner's spot (12A) was to the east of American Steel Wool. That siding is not in service today.



American Steel Wool Building Credit: Long Island Railroad calendar

Long Island Railroad employee J. J. Earl believes American Steel Wool took boxcars of steel wool material for repacking and resale although the definitive answer may await a yard clerk coming forward with his experiences. J. J. Earl confirmed empties were largely shipped out of this plant as was the case with many other facilities located on the Long Island Rail Road. One unanswered question is - did American Steel Wool have any boxcars in dedicated service?

Modeling

Readers seeking to model American Steel Wool would be well advised to simply scratch build it. Use the Walthers catalog to find industrial windows that match the prototype. Embossed sheet styrene could be used to represent the brick construction. Be sure to paint your modeled bricks white. Don't forget the distinctive sign. The sign is available commercially. 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 Mrs. Rhoda Levenson of New York. Thanks also to Carl Fabrizi, and Bill Myers, all of New York. Assistance provided by Bob Miller, volunteer at the Queens Borough Public Library.

Bibliography

- Author Unknown *Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings* (Reprint) June 1966
- James Kinkaid *Penn Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment* Morning Sun Books, Inc.
- Long Island Rail Road 2002 Calendar*

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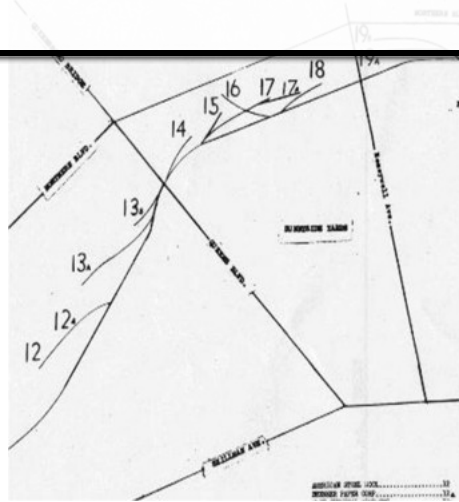
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About this capture



Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings 1966 showing American Steel Wool as Spot 12.

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