

Ichabod T. Williams & Sons:
Sawmill and Veneer Plant
Roosevelt Avenue at Carteret Avenue
Carteret
Middlesex County
New Jersey

HAER No. NJ-28

HAER
NJ,
12-CART,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
NJ,
12-CART,
1-

Ichabod T. Williams & Sons
Sawmill and Veneer Plant

NJ-28

Location: On the Kill Van Hull at Roosevelt Avenue and Carteret Avenue, Carteret, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Date of Erection: Adapted 1922-25

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The Ichabod T. Williams & Sons Sawmill and Veneer Plant was at one time the nation's leading firm for the manufacture and distribution of fine domesticated and foreign hard woods. The Williams family participation in the lumber business goes back as far as 1838, when Thomas Williams, a cabinetmaker, formed a partnership with Isaac E. Smith and established a lumber yard in New York City. The firm of Smith & Williams continued until 1870 under Thomas' son Ichabod. He then formed his own company under the name of Ichabod T. Williams in that year. Two sons became partners in 1880 and 1882 (with two more to follow in the early 1890's) and the name became Ichabod T. Williams & Sons.

The company had a history of problems with finding adequate facilities for their ever expanding production. In 1885 their Eleventh Avenue site in Manhattan was condemned for Municipal pier construction. The company retained only their general offices, veneer storage space and showrooms. The production facilities were moved to a half-mile of waterfront property on Staten Island. In 1919 the Staten Island property was condemned to make way for Municipal docks. The present site in Carteret, New Jersey, was then purchased and adapted for use by the lumber company. Construction was initiated in 1922 and completed in 1925. The site covers 70 acres with 1300 feet of deep water frontage. It includes a slip for lighters; a reinforced concrete dock; direct rail connection with the Central Railroad of New Jersey; an 850 ft. frontage timber basin of 10 acres; storage for more than 15 million feet of logs; two 30 ton oil burning, steam driven, locomotive cranes; and four electric derricks. The facilities allowed discharge of three large steamers at one time, with rail spurs leading directly to the sawmill. The entire plant encompasses 121 buildings with a floor area of 300,000 square feet (seven acres).

(continued)

The site dates from pre-1900, and it was formerly used as a plant to supply castings and forgings to the railroad trade. All buildings were on the site except for the sawmill, constructed of corrugated iron on a wood frame. The wooden structure is massive, as all machinery is on the second floor.

The plant was closed in 1972 upon the death of Thomas Resolved Williams, when the heirs to the company decided to no longer continue the business.

Transmitted By:

Kevin Murphy, Historian HAER, May 1984.

ADDENDUM TO:
ICHABOD T. WILLIAMS & SONS SAWMILL & VENEER PLANT
Roosevelt Avenue at Carteret Avenue
Carteret
Middlesex County
New Jersey

HAER NJ-28
HAER NJ, 12-CART, 1-

COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001