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HISTORY TOPICS: TRANSPORTATION: LIRR



VOLUME 3: LONG ISLAND RAILROAD SERVICE TO LONG ISLAND CITY'S BICKFORD'S AND PETER F. MALLON

By Nicholas Kalis

Third 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.

Bickford's (45-31 Court Square and telephone ST6-4400) and Peter F. Mallon, Inc. (45-29-31 Court Square according to Dun & Bradstreet), each located in Long Island City, were known as Spots 10 and 11 respectively according to page 2 of Maps of Freight Stations and Private Sidings published in June 1966. What remains to be answered is whether switching crews actually used these spot numbers to identify these industries. This 1966 publication puts Peter F. Mallon and Bickford's facing Yard A and sharing a building and a siding with each other. According to the Hyde Atlas, Queens Vol. 1, updated through 1955, this building, then known as "Metropolitan Life Insurance Printing" was situated to the immediate west of Thomson Avenue. It is a triangular-shaped building that fills the block formed by Thomson Avenue, Court Square, and Yard A.



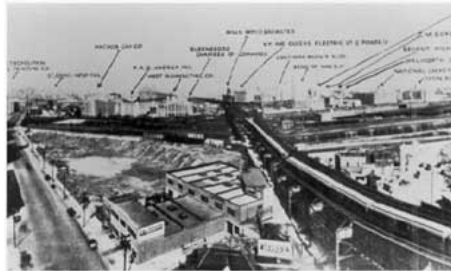
By 1973-74, Bickford's was no longer listed in the local phone directory. According to Bill Myers, this building is currently Eagle Electric Manufacturing Co. Inc. Plant Number 8 at 45-31 Court Square, Long Island City. Louis Ludwig founded Eagle Electric in 1920. The firm moved to Long Island City in 1941. In 2000, Cooper Industries, Inc. acquired Eagle and made it a division of the newly enlarged firm.



Peter F. Mallon at bottom of photograph

Given the uses made of this building, both historically and contemporaneously, Bickford's was likely a printing business and not to be confused with the famous Bickford's food business of local fame. Bickford's/Mallon is a five-story daylight factory building with large industrial windows of reinforced poured-concrete construction. According to a Robert Emery map, a track entered into the building from the east side of the structure and still does to this day, although this track appears to be out of service.

In 1950, Bickford's was listed as 45-29 Court Square and telephone IR6-5858. Bickford's was in business at 45-31 Court Square from 1955 - 1971. I have been unable to discover what commodities were shipped into this facility by rail although I can guess they were carried in box cars. Nor was I able to uncover from whence they came. Mallon was a printer and sometime publisher and Bickford's products were paper but only empties likely left this facility by rail. It seems most industries in LIC with a railroad siding served the metropolitan New York area with merchandise leaving in trucks.



Panoramic photograph showing Metropolitan Life Insurance Printing Co. cut off to the left. Credit: LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/The City University of New York

MODELING

I have built a foam core mock-up of this building. Can anyone suggest what window parts I should choose to model this structure?

CREDITS

Thanks to the Queens Borough Public Library, Carl Fabrizi and Bill Myers of New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Please send photographs that show how 45-31 Court Square, Long Island City 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.

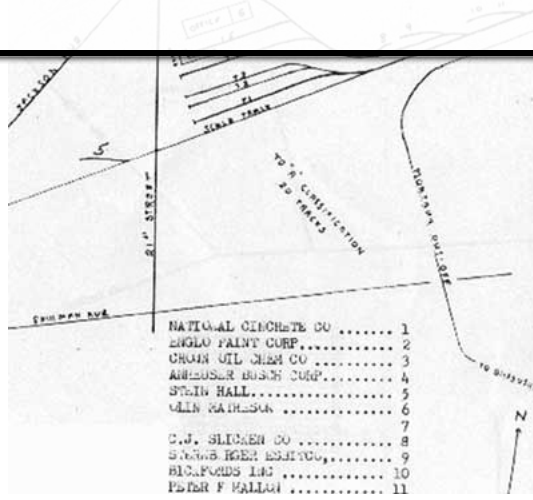


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