

Sanford Carpet Company
(Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company)
10-28 Prospect Street
Amsterdam
Montgomery County
New York

HABS No. NY-6299

HABS
NY
29-AMST,
6-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN Buildings Survey

SANFORD CARPET COMPANY
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Location: 10-23 Prospect Street
Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York
Quad: Amsterdam, New York, 1:24,000
UTM: 18.566350.4754220

Present Owner: Industries For Amsterdam, Inc.
P.O. Box 823
Amsterdam, Montgomery County, New York 12010

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The existing manufacturing complex was built as Sanford Carpet Company from 1842 through 1935 and was used to manufacture floor carpet. It was one of the largest carpet plants in the United States at one time. Buildings #45, 46, 47, 48, and 50 were built from 1893 to 1900 and were used for Axminster Carpet weaving and wool yarn storage. The buildings were sold in 1929 and became Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company. They were sold again in 1955 to the Grossman Company and leased to Fab Industries and Lamatronics who made knitted cloth and artificial leather from 1959 through 1979.

These buildings are part of a larger complex consisting of approximately 80 buildings in total. They cover approximately seven acres of land.

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Historical Context of Sanford Carpet Company Complex:

The Sanford Carpet Company was started in the late 1830's by a man named William K. Green. During the early 1840's he formed a partnership with John Sanford. The partnership lasted only briefly and Mr. Green withdrew and entered the knit goods business. John Sanford continued in the carpet making business in a stone building at the corner of Prospect and Church Streets built in 1842. In 1844, John's son, Stephan, was called home from West Point to help his father in the carpet business. The founder, John, retired in 1855 and Stephan carried on. The Company known as S. Sanford & Sons prospered and Stephan continued to expand the mills along both sides of the Chuctanunda Creek and on the neighboring streets, Prospect, Church, Shuler, Williams and Park.

The following is a quote taken from the FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE 1889:

This mammoth establishment, which is the largest and most extensive carpet manufactory in the world, was established by Mr. Stephen Sanford in 1840. The business has grown steadily and the dozen and more mills owned by the Sanfords' cover several acres of ground, and are the most complete equipped mills in the world. Over 1,800 hands are employed in the various departments. The annual output of this mill is enormous. Over 12,000 pounds of wool, 1,000 pounds of jute, and 2,400 pounds of cotton are used daily. Wilton, velvet and various grades of tapestry carpets are made, and have a ready sale in all parts of the country.

Stephan's sons, William and John, entered into the family business when they came of age.

These industrial buildings were started in 1842 and completed by 1950. They were built along the Chuctanunda Creek because of the available water power. The number of buildings were increased as the business continued to grow. The final number were some 80 buildings on about seven acres of land. The industrial site influenced the surrounding environment as homes were built and commercial establishments were opened to accommodate the employees.

The site grew as America and the demands for carpet grew, beginning with the production of velvet and tapestry carpets progressing into wilton and axminster carpets.

The carpet making plant employed 3,000 people in the years 1916 through 1918. It was one of the major carpet making plants in the United States and Amsterdam, New York's largest industry.

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In 1929, S. Sanford & Sons merged with the Bigelow-Hartford Company of Thompsonville, Connecticut, and the corporate name became Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company.

In 1955, the Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company moved their operations out of Amsterdam to Thompsonville, Connecticut and the buildings were sold at auction to The Grossman Company, Inc.

These events, as stated above, all occurred in the existing buildings.

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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:
 - a. None
2. Secondary and published sources:
 - a. Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company, Inc. The Picture Book of Rug and Carpet Making. Copyright 1934. Montgomery County Historical Archives at Fonda, NY. Pages 8 - 11.
 - b. Donlon, Hugh P. Annals of a Mill Town, Donlon Associates, Amsterdam, New York, 1980. Section A, Page 7.
 - c. Robb, Alex M. The Sanfords of Amsterdam, The William Frederick Press, 1969. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 68-20175.
 - d. Al The Photographer. Page 6 and 7.
 - e. Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Trade 1889. Page 2.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was undertaken by the Amsterdam Urban Renewal Agency in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Amsterdam and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and is assisted by Community Development Block Grant funds.

Prepared by: E. Clark Devendorf
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Affiliation: Amsterdam Urban Renewal Agency
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