INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

1) 425 W. Water St.-Atlas Mill ................................................................. 21
2) 714 E. Hancock St.-Appleton Wire Works ........................................... 21
3) 807 Olde Oneida St.-Appleton Street Car Co. ..................................... 22
4) 1004 Olde Oneida St.-Muench Brewery ............................................. 22
5) Hydroelectric Plant Replica ................................................................. 23
Historic Sites Survey
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Appleton Department of Planning & Development
425 W. Water St.- The Atlas Mill was founded in 1878 by the four founders of Kimberly-Clark and four Minnesota businessmen. It was one of the first paper mills in the Kimberly-Clark system. The original mill on this site was destroyed by fire in 1888. The present building was constructed that year. At the time of its construction it was one of the largest paper mills of its kind in the country. In the 1920’s it was the national leader in wall paper manufacturing. The mill is still owned and operated by Kimberly-Clark today.

714 E. Hancock St.- The Appleton Wire Works were founded in 1895 by William Buchanan, his sons Gustavus Buchanan and John Buchanan, and his brother-in-law Albert Weissenborn. All of these men were experienced wire weavers on the east coast. The Wire Works came to Appleton after Gus Buchanan overheard a paper manufacturer tell a representative of the Cheney-Bigelow Wire Works of Springfield Massachusetts that they should open a branch in the Midwest. That gave the Buchanan’s the idea that the time was right to start a plant. Appleton Wire Works is the largest manufacturers of wire cloth for paper making in the world. They also were granted several patents which aided in the development of wire weaving technology including looms that ran on compressed air and electricity. Today the Wire Works is a division of Albany International.
1004 Olde Oneida St.- Appleton’s first brewery was built in 1858 by a Mr. Fisher. His endeavor lasted only two years and was bought by Charles Muench, a foreman at the Joseph Schlitz Brewery. His brother George started a brewery on the corner of Walnut and State St. where the Police Station now stands, which was eventually bought by George Walter (see 821 N. Oneida St.) George Muench went into business with his brother after selling his brewery to Mr. Walter. The brewery was a very popular place among people in Appleton because of the beer garden in the back of the brewery where a German band played every Sunday afternoon. In 1900 the brewery was sold to Frank Fries and the name was changed to the Appleton Brewing and Malting Company. He produced the first bottle of Adler Brau Beer. In 1922 the brewery was sold to Venfline Dairy and was used as a warehouse. The building was renovated in 1977 and opened as a shopping center. Old brewing memorabilia from the brewery can be found in the main entrance of the shopping center.

Edison Center Building: This was the home of the first electrified commercial street car in the world. Started in 1885 under the leadership of the Hon. Joseph Harriman the Appleton Electric Street Car Company was successful until 1891 when it merged with the Appleton Edison Light Company to become the Appleton Edison Electric Company. The first tracks were laid between Riverside Cemetery and the corner of State and Prospect. The service, although vastly superior to the conventional horse drawn street car had many difficulties. The cars often jumped the tracks causing long delays in getting them back on. The cars also could not travel on snow so the tracks had to be shoveled by hand. Service to the railroad depot in the flats proved to be impossible because of the steepness of the hill going down to it. By the 1930’s, bus transportation overtook the streetcar causing Appleton to lose its inner city rail service.
Hydroelectric Plant Replica - The first commercially successful hydroelectric plant in the world was located in a shed just west of where Kimberly-Clark's Atlas Mill now stands. On September 30, 1882, this generator supplied the power for the William Rodgers home (Hearthstone), William Rodgers Mill, and the Telulah Mill. While this generator was the first successful one, it was soon replaced by one in its own building that was located near the corner of present day Vulcan and North Island Streets. The replica which now stands there is a copy of the second one which was located at the site where it is located. In 1932, the 50th anniversary of hydroelectric power, it was declared a National Engineering Monument.