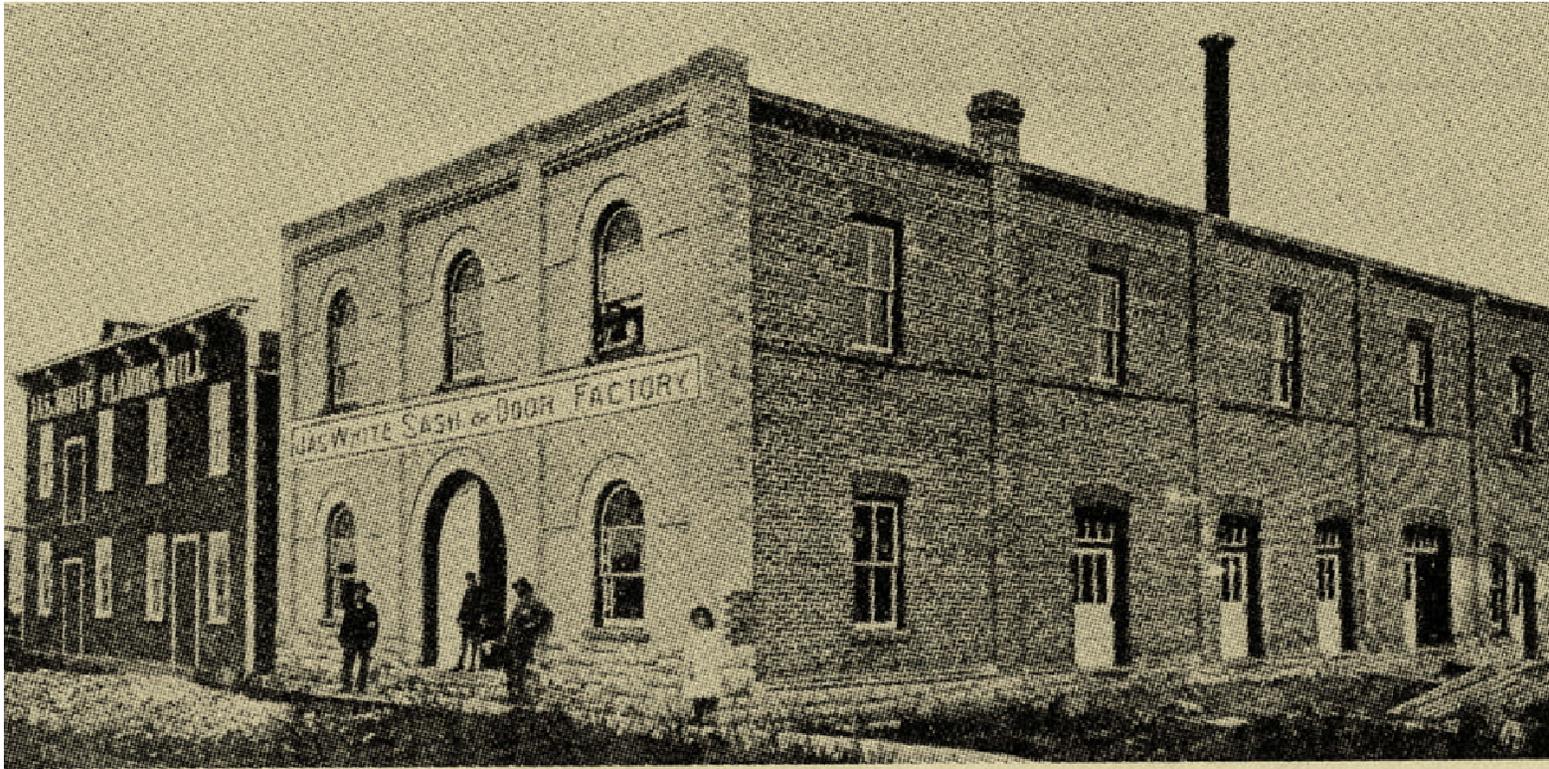


Planing mills employed a number of different workers who operated a variety of specialized machinery. Thick planks and timbers were sawn into boards on a large power driven band saw. A circular ripsaw would cut the boards to a prescribed width, cut next with a circular saw to preferred lengths. Rough lumber would be sent to the planer, where it was fed on rollers past revolving cutting blades which smoothed the surfaces of the board. To produce flooring, mouldings or siding, the boards were tongued and grooved or otherwise shaped by being forced against a revolving knife in a matcher or a molder, which ground it to the desired shape.

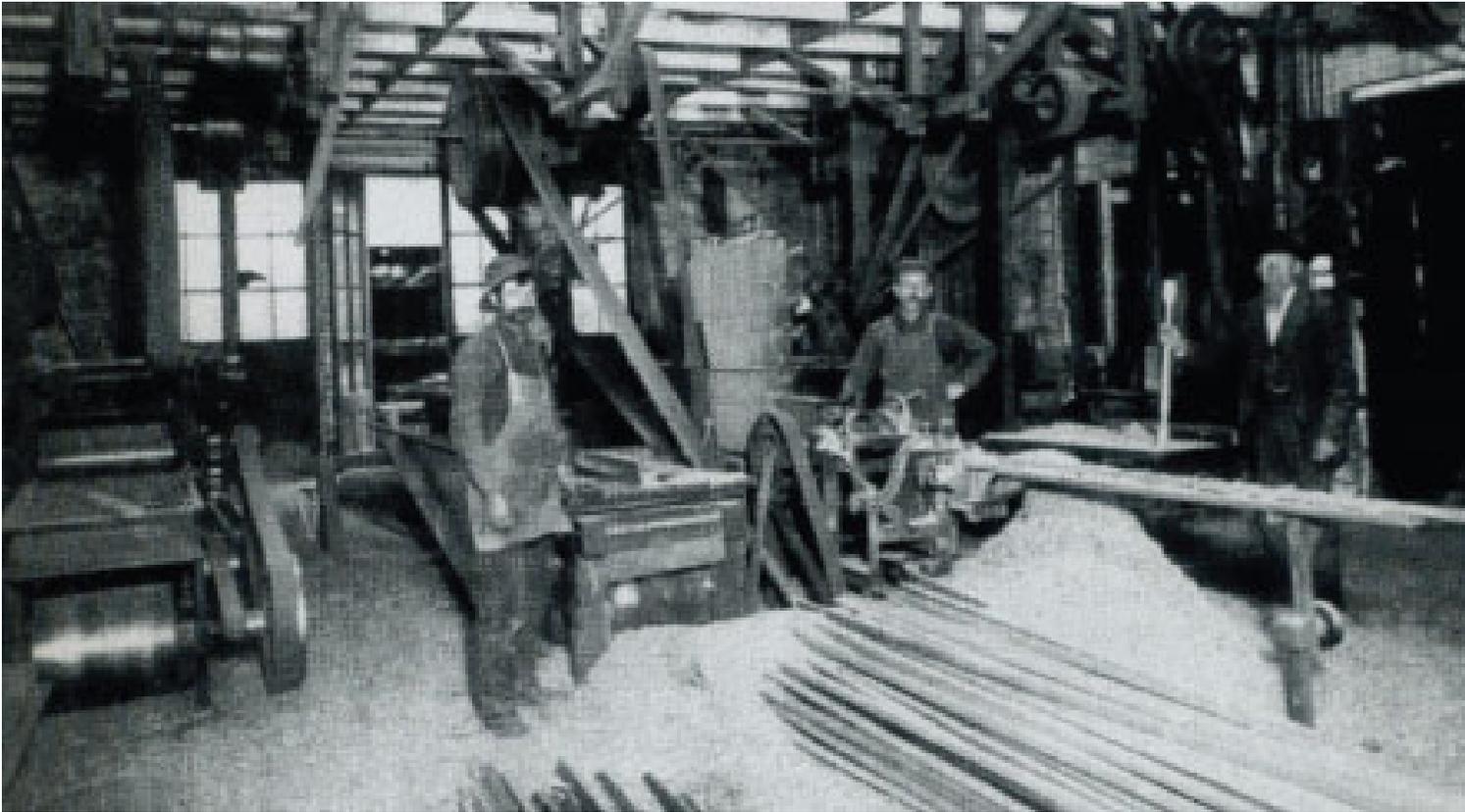
It is certain that many of the manufactured items that came out of the Carberry Planing Mill were used in Carberry and Carberry-area buildings. And it is even likely that some of this wood was even grown and cut in the northern Manitoba lumber mills that were operating around the same time. So it would not be stretch to observe that some of the community's older wooden buildings may be entirely "made in Manitoba."



This illustration of a door jamb shows the kind of refined moulded wood products that would come out of a planing mill.



The planing mill section of the James White operation is seen to the left of the main brick building. Where the sash and door factory was carried out in the Romanesque Revival style, the planing mill exhibits Italianate design flourishes, especially with the use of the cornice and wooden brackets.



This interior view of a small planing mill (from Quebec) suggests what the Carberry Planing Mill might have looked like. Notice the belt-driven saws and planers, the gentleman at the left holding a spindle, a likely product of the operation, and especially the pile of shavings and sawdust that were the inevitable by-products of this kind of factory.

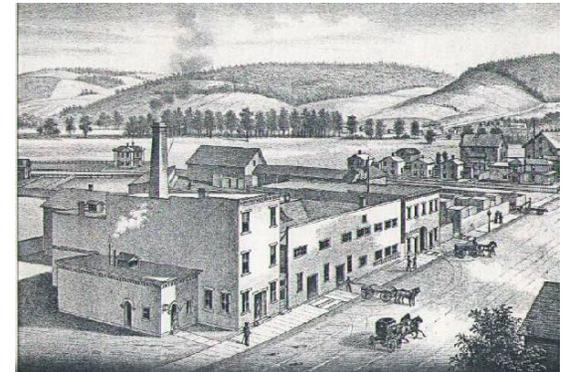
SASH AND DOOR FACTORIES

While many communities had local entrepreneurs who developed sawmill and planing mill facilities, only a few were able to support a much more sophisticated operation – a sash and door factory.

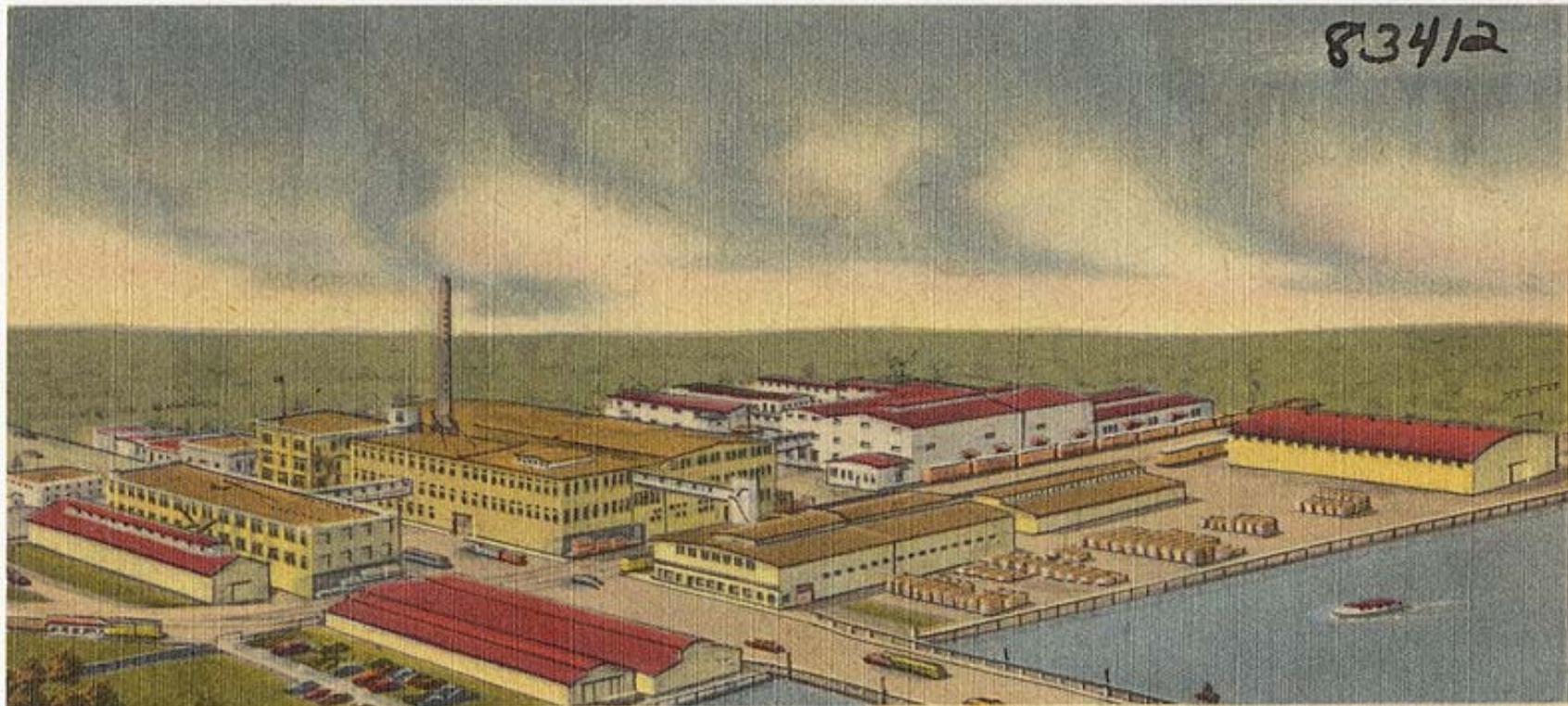
By the turn of the twentieth century the most ambitious operations of eastern and mid-western North America had attained massive size, with amazing production, pumping out the two key parts of a building that were required for comfort and decorative appeal, and which could not readily be produced by a carpenter on site – doors and windows. Windows by this time had come to be called sashes, which technically was a wooden framework that held panes of glass, but gradually meant a window that usually was openable with one panel sliding vertically over another.

Of course major Manitoba urban centres, like Portage la Prairie, Brandon and Winnipeg, had such operations—Winnipeg had at least a dozen—but there were some smaller places that also boasted of this important and sophisticated aspect of the Manitoba’s developing building industry.

A review of local histories and newspapers reveals that sash and door factories operated at least for a time in Gladstone, Manitou, Hartney, Morden, Minnedosa, Neepawa. And Carberry. In fact the three operations in Minnedosa, Neepawa and Carberry, all within 50 miles of each other, offer the most salient information about small-town sash and door factories from a review of the historical record.



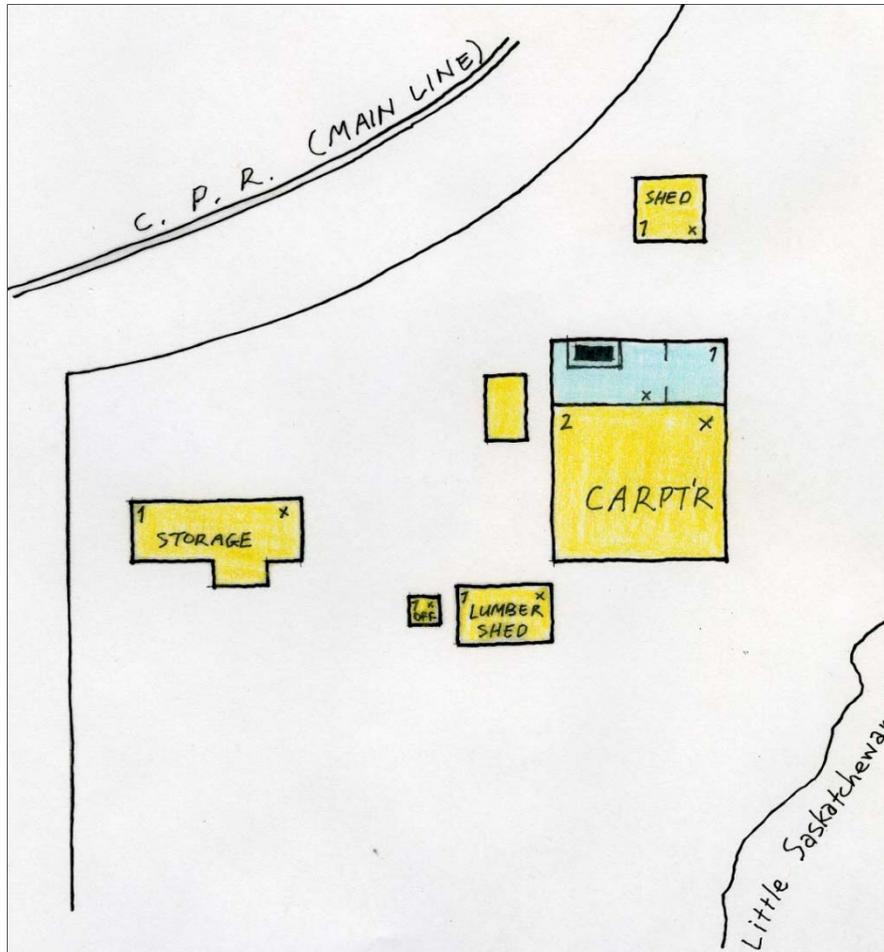
Steubenville Ohio Sash and Door Factory, a sizable operation from around 1880.



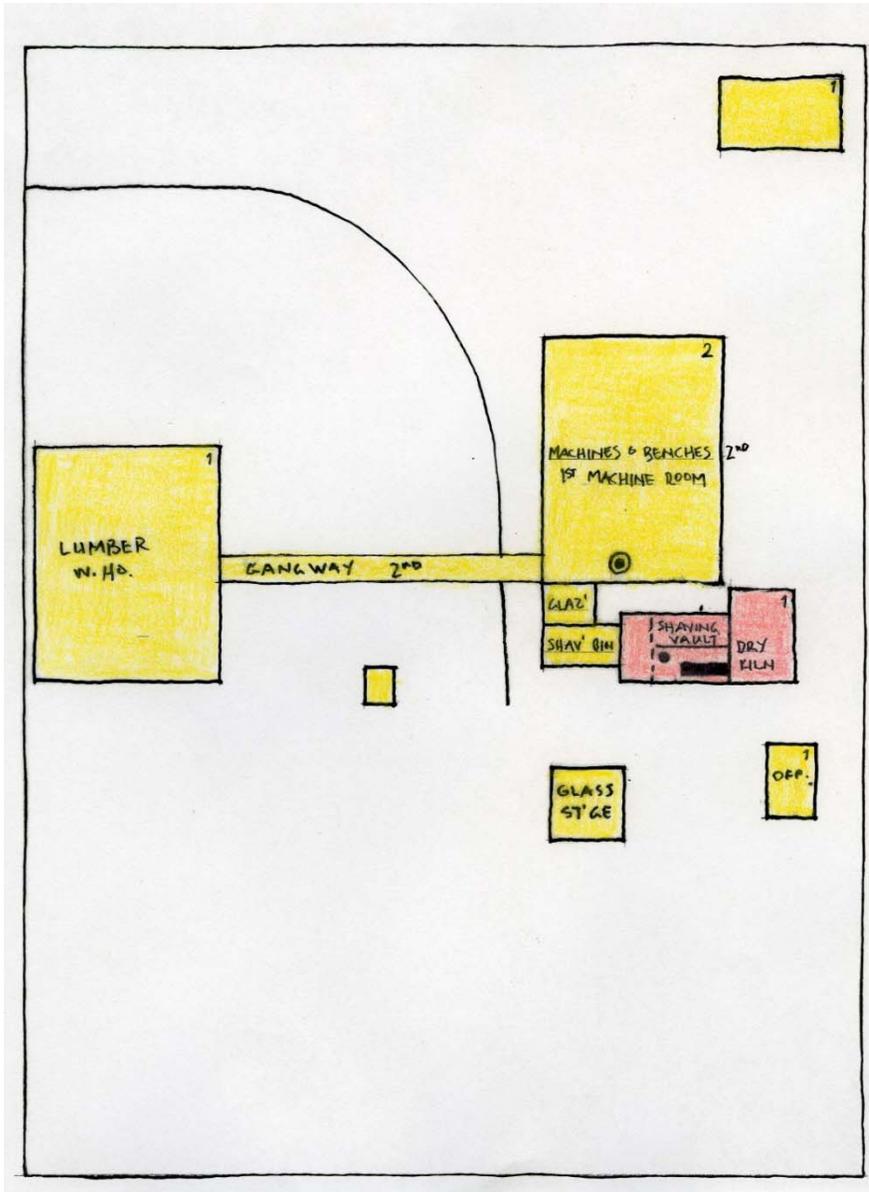
The Morgan Company Factory of Oshkosh Wisconsin, ca. 1900. This postcard from around 1900 boasts of the company's quality woodwork since 1855, and notes production of doors, windows, blinds, mantels, cabinets, trim, stairwork and corner cabinets. Major operations like the Morgan operation eventually spelled the doom even for sash and door factories in Winnipeg. The Morgan company was one of the predecessors that came to form Jeld-Wen Industries, a major contemporary North American manufacturer of windows, doors and related building products.

MANITOBA SASH AND DOOR FACTORIES

The Neepawa and Minnedosa sash and door operations, compared with the Carberry factory of James White, were much more industrial. Fire insurance plans from 1912 reveal their characters, based on site and basic building plans.



In this tracing from the original plan, we see at the Minnedosa plant a large two-storey building labelled CARPT'R, divided into three discrete spaces. The northern part of the building is coloured blue to denote metal cladding; all other buildings are colour-coded yellow on the original plan to indicate wood-frame construction. A DRY KILN, where lumber would have been dried in anticipation of planing and moulding, is adjacent, to the left (west). A large one-storey STORAGE building is further left, with a small OFFICE and one-storey LUMBER SHED to the south. A SHED is to the north on the site. A spur line of the Canadian Pacific Railway curves to the north of the facility, presumably offering easy access for raw materials and finished product. The whole operation was situated next to the Little Saskatchewan River, which provided water for the power plant, noted on the insurance plan as being steam. The plan also notes that the plant had no heat or light and was fuelled with wood and coal.



The Neepawa sash and door factory, called Fusee-McFeetors, was even larger than the Minnedosa operation, with five outbuildings and a main production facility composed of five linked structures. The fire insurance plan (formally dated October 1912) shows the main operational feature labelled to include a planing mill (with machines and benches) sheathed with metal, a (wood) shaving vault, a glazing area, the power site and a dry kiln (the pink colour denoting brick construction). To the south of the main building unit was an office of one and half storeys and a building of slightly larger size for glass storage. A large coal shed was located to the north of the main complex, where a railway spur was also situated, with another line curving down into the main area of the factory. A large lumber warehouse was to the west (left) of the main buildings, and it was noted on the plan that a long raised gangway connected this building to the planing mill section of the main site. This was a major operation.

THE JAMES WHITE SASH AND DOOR FACTORY

The James White Sash and Door Factory operated from 1902 to 1910. And we know that an earlier owner, who had the building erected in 1900, but is presently unknown to us, also operated it with this specific function, and with a planing mill adjoining it (which burned in 1907).

This building (opposite, in an archival image), now used as the Carberry Plains Museum (shown on following pages), is a very special Manitoba site – the last remaining connection to an important and interesting aspect of Manitoba’s early small-town industrial history, and to the fascinating mechanical ingenuity that attended this kind of Victorian-era manufacturing operation.

Unfortunately, because it ceased its sash and door production function more than a century ago, with the loss of all its equipment and related interior features, it is nearly impossible to recreate accurately the James White Sash and Door Factory.

At the same time, however, the building can still give us a great deal of evidence to suggest some important original qualities. And with the aid of important old photographs, and insights from knowledgeable local historians, it has been possible to develop the following several pages that we hope will at least give some sense of this amazing place, now so quiet and reverent – once so loud, dusty and productive.



The James White Sash and Door Factory, ca. 1902 (Courtesy Carberry Plains Archives). The building is seen here in all its glory. It is likely that James White himself is at the far left, with his son Charles in the doorway and daughter Ettie at the right. The wood-frame planing mill from the late 1890s is just visible at left (west).

So, what in fact does the building now tell us?

First, it was fairly large, at least as big as many of the stores on Main Street, measuring 41 feet across the main face and 74 feet long (fire reduced that length to 65 feet in 1937, with the loss of the last bay). That's about 3,000 square feet – on each floor. Thus certainly big enough for lots of goings-on.

The building's walls are 18 inches thick, suggesting a double width of brick-wall construction. Buttresses along the front and sides reinforced the wall structure. The main facade is of a different brick than the sides – presumably more expensive.

And while museum displays within now attract the eye, it is also clear that the two floors were unencumbered by interior partitions – all wide open space. The present cast-iron columns on the main floor are original – spaced irregularly, and with two at the front and a row down the centre towards the back. The posts on the second floor are not now so easily discerned, but one clearly visible at the back reveals hefty 10 x 10-inch timbers.

Clearance on the main floor provides about nine and half feet of headroom. The second storey's flat roof slopes towards the back, for drainage, resulting in a height of about 10 feet at the front and eight and a half feet at the back.

It's a big building, sturdy and imposing. But it is also quite elegant, fancier than one would imagine a factory might be. Of course there is no way of knowing the reasons for this – perhaps as simple as the original owners were determined to make a statement about their enterprise; perhaps the location might eventually come to rival Carberry's Main Street, and this was to be a symbol of that aspiration.

Whatever the reason, this is certainly as up-to-date as a commercial building could be at this time. Carried out in the Romanesque Revival style, very popular for brick buildings because it could show off the many decorative qualities of brick – through

round-headed arches, labels, surrounds, and corbel tables – all seen here, and all to great effect. And make no mistake – this was an expensive building.

It is also worth considering at least for a moment the possibility of a clever and deliberate connection between the building's style and the actual function. For in this building, where windows and doors were manufactured, it is interesting to observe the very fine windows and especially the many doors along the east and west facades. It's almost as if the building itself was a marketing device for the goods within.



The James White Sash and Door Factory, now the Carberry Plains Museum, seen in 2014.

At top is the main face of the building, still revealing its handsome brickwork and round-arched windows, albeit now fitted with single-pane units with wooden arched insets.

The lower image shows the east face of the building, with slightly redder bricks, and segmentally-arched window and door openings – all of the latter closed in with faux door panels, but originally all opening to a large clear spaces on either sides.

There was originally another bay at the back of the building, lost to fire in 1937.



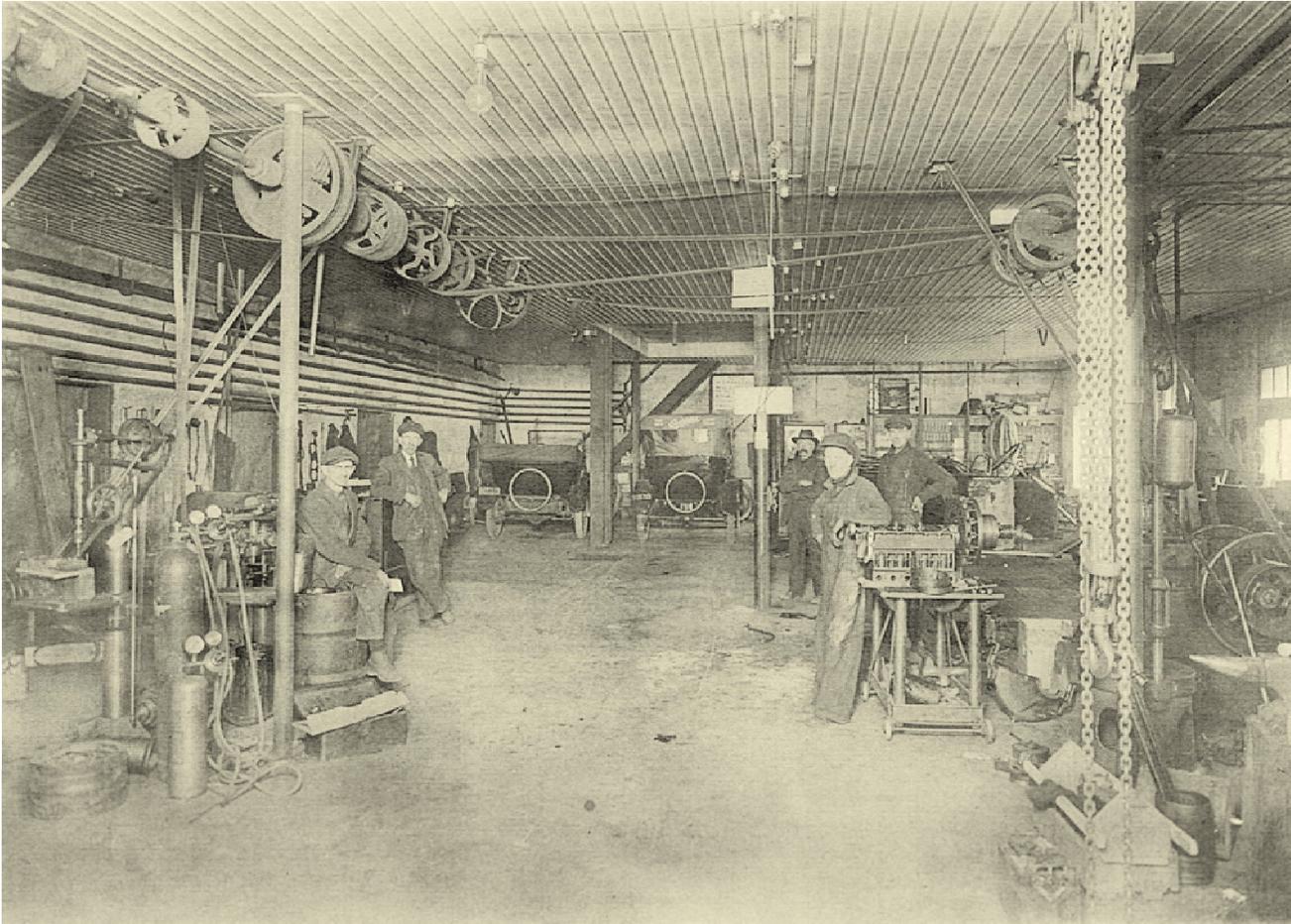
The next important piece of evidence to consider is an old photograph (right), showing the interior of the building, and made shortly after the old sash and door operation was discontinued and James White re-purposed the place as an automobile repair shop.

In this very significant image (where incidentally we see James White, second from left, leaning against some equipment) we glean these facts: the unobstructed open space is confirmed, with the few cast-iron columns supporting the upper floor. More importantly we see the line shafts at ceiling level, on both left and right sides, with their several sheaves (wheels) and even some surviving belts that would have been used to power the many pieces of equipment required for the production of windows and doors. This fascinating aspect of the operation—the power source and the machinery—will be discussed in more detail in following entries.

We also observe at the back of the shop a staircase and just in front of that an opening in the ceiling. It is known that a lift was situated here that allowed automobile parts to be moved to the second floor, and apparently this feature was also present during the sash and door operation, used to carry materials and finished products to and from the main and second floors.

The ceiling of the space is covered with siding. And towards the middle of the image one can see an array of knobs that remind us that at this time the building would have been powered and lit with electricity (using standard knob and tube wiring). Before that, as an aside, it is interesting to note that Carberry had an acetylene-gas power plant that would have provided light to the building; anyone interested in this fascinating subject should consult a report developed by the Manitou Culture and Heritage Committee that details this long-lost technology, once so common in small-town Manitoba.

Finally, we can see that the several doors on the west (left) side of the building have been closed in, while the doors on the east (right) are still functioning, or at least not closed over, and thus allowing light in.



Interior view of the Carberry sash and door factory in its incarnation as an automobile and engine repair shop. The photograph reveals key aspects of the original function, especially the location of the drive shafts that would have run a number of machines on the main floor, as well as a belt that pierces the ceiling to attach to another drive shaft on the second floor.