CHAPTER EVENTS

LECTURE:
NY: THE PORT OF MANY PORTS:
HOBOKEN’S PIECE OF THE PIE

Sunday, June 28, 2009, 4:00 – 5:00.
Hoboken Historical Museum, 1301 Hudson St.
at 13th St., Hoboken, NJ.
This event is free for all.

Because of its archipelago form, the Port of New York and New Jersey was composed of many separate waterfronts, consisting of some 500 miles of shoreline. This resulted in the heavy use of local water transport, even by the railroads, which evolved into NY Harbor's characteristic "lighterage system" or "water belt line". This lecture will look at how Hoboken's single mile of waterfront participated in this system, but in ways that were unique to Hoboken. The lecture will be given by RCSIA member and author of several books on the lighterage system, Tom Flagg. This event is co-sponsored with the Hoboken Historical Museum. The museum is housed in the one remaining building of the Bethlehem Steel Shipyard on the Hoboken waterfront. The museum website is: www.hobokenmuseum.org.

D. Maldari & Sons, Maker of Pasta Extrusion Dies

Friday, July 24, 10:00 – 11:00. Meet at Maldari's place of business at 557 3rd Avenue (at 14th Street) in Brooklyn, NY.

There will be a tour of D. Maldari & Sons which is one of about a half a dozen makers of pasta extrusion dies in the world. The company started in Bari, Italy in the late 1800's and has been in operation in Brooklyn for 106 years. These specialized dies enable pasta (at pasta and food plants) to be squeezed through tiny spaces to create numerous pasta shapes. Maldari dies have been used in producing such well-known name products as Ronzoni, San Giorgio and Kraft Macaroni & Cheese. The Maldari business has received the attention of newspapers, NPR and the HISTORY CHANNEL. The company website is www.maldari.com.

Take the R subway to Prospect Av or the F or R to 4 Av-9 St stations. Work shoes and protective glasses are suggested.

Green-Wood Cemetery:
The Industrialists and Inventors

Sunday, September 20, 1:00-3:00. Meet at Green-Wood Cemetery Main Gate, 5th Ave at 25th St, Brooklyn, NY.

Green-Wood cemetery is amongst the greatest cemeteries in the world. Many of New York City's famous and infamous are buried there. Chapter member, and VP, Jim Mackin will lead a walking tour that pays particular attention to industrialists and inventors who are now at rest in Green-Wood. The rich historical, cultural and architectural aspects of Green-Wood will also be covered. Many well-known names, some lesser known ones, and a few pleasant surprises should make for an enjoyable tour through one of Brooklyn's most beautiful and significant places.

Take the R-train to the 25th Street station, walk uphill to Green-Wood. Parking and restrooms are available. There will be about one mile of walking with some up and down mild hills.

CHAPTER BUSINESS

Board meeting minutes, March 10, 2009
SUNY, 42nd Street, NYC

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM.

In attendance: Lynn Rakos, Jim Mackin, Aron Eisenpress, Kevin Pegram, Tom Flagg, Joe Macasek; Historic Preservation Committee: Mary Habstritt; Special Projects Committee: Gianfranco Archimede; Drew Symposium Co-Chair: Allison Rachleff.

1. Tom Flagg was voted in as 5th trustee.
2. Non-voting Trustees: Joe Macasek has volunteered.

Note: All events are FREE for RCSIA members unless otherwise noted. The fee for non-members is the price of membership, $20.00. We hope this will encourage non-members attending our events to join the chapter.
3. Treasurer – Pegram distributed the financial status of the chapter summarizing our income and expenses for the years 2006 – 2009. We are no longer losing money with the Drew symposium following registration increase. Our dues just went up to $20.00 and we have yet to see the impact of that increase. Our largest costs are printing and mailing the newsletter and our insurance.

4. Secretary – Eisenpress indicated that we have been maintaining our membership levels. So far there has not been a decrease in renewals despite the dues increase. He is sending out renewal reminders and dropping people who have not paid for two years.

5. Drew Symposium – Scheduled for Nov 7th. Rachleff reported that 4 speakers have confirmed. [Since the board meeting all speaker slots have been filled].

6. Historic Preservation Committee: Habstritt reported that there is a lot of activity along the Gowanus Canal including proposed rezoning of neighborhoods adjacent to the canal by The NYC Department of City Planning. Individual projects on the canal are the Toll Brothers and Whole Foods developments. Habstritt has been undertaking review and providing comment to applicable agencies. Of particular concern is the Carroll Street Bridge, one of only 2 retractile bridges in NYC and one of just 4 in the country. She is also working with the Municipal Art Society on the Gowanus rezoning. [Since the board meeting the US Environmental Protection Agency has proposed adding the Gowanus to the agency’s Superfund National Priorities List which, if added, may impact future development along the canal]. Habstritt has also been working on several pier projects in Manhattan including South Street Seaport and Piers 40 and 57 where promised space for historic ships is decreasing as plans develop.

7. Special Projects Committee – The guidelines will be revised and an application form prepared. Mackin motioned that $2000 from the general funds be made available for 2009 to fund Special Projects. This was seconded and approved unanimously. The program will be announced in a future newsletter and on the SIA website’s RCSIA page.

As this is a committee of just one, Archimede, other committee members are being sought. [Since the board meeting, Dennis Furbush has agreed to serve on the committee. Thank you, Dennis!]

8. Nominations Committee – Bierce Riley, Beryl Goldberg and Tom Flagg served as the committee for 2008. Rakos indicated that she will not run again for 2010 so the search is on for a new board member. Rakos will ask Goldberg and Riley if they will continue to serve on the committee. [Since the board meeting, Goldberg and Riley have each agreed to continue to serve on the committee. Thank you, Beryl and Bierce!]

9. Tours – Suggested tours include Wolf Dress Forms in Englewood, NJ, Maldari & Sons pasta die makers in Brooklyn, deceased industrialists in Greenwood Cemetery, and Brooklyn Navy Yard. Co-sponsoring a tour w/ Morris County Parks will be followed up on. Tom Flagg will be giving a talk in June co-sponsored w/ the Hoboken Historical Society. The Centennial of several NYC bridges is happening this year and next. Rakos asked if anyone wanted to follow up w/ the celebration committees to see if RCSIA could be involved but no one opted to do so. Anyone interested in planning a tour please contact Rakos.

10. Newsletter/Website/Email list – Discussion continued about distributing an electronic newsletter. It was decided that we will first make a greater effort to collect email addresses from members though an appeal in the newsletter. We can eventually phase out the printed version except for those members who request a printed copy. The newsletter can be made available on a chapter website w/ all members receiving an email letting them know when a new newsletter has been posted (currently the newsletter is available electronically on the RCSIA webpage in the National SIA website). This brought up a brief discussion on “Constant Contact” the system that National SIA is using to communicate with members. Rakos has been in touch w/ Jay McCauley who
is the tech person for the national board, and their VP, to see how and if the chapter can piggyback on their system. Also discussed was the feasibility of a chapter website.

11. Old Business

501 (c) 3 status – We have retained a lawyer. Mackin will assist Habstritt on this issue.

Insurance: D&O – the lawyer retained to do the 501 (c) 3 work will determine our need for the D&O insurance. National no longer carries it but the need is determined by the state in which an organization is incorporated. RCSIA is incorporated in NJ.

12. New Business – It was brought up at the RCSIA annual meeting that it is unfair that a chapter member cannot vote for chapter officers unless the member is in good standing in both the RCSIA and the National SIA. This is stipulated in the chapter by-laws and comes from a requirement in the National by-laws. Habstritt reported that national SIA is looking into possibly changing the requirement (and therefore by-laws).

Meeting adjourned 8:45.

Historic Preservation Committee Report

By Mary Habstritt, Chair

A new effort is underway to designate the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Powerhouse a New York City Landmark. The effort is being led by The Powerhouse Group, an organization modeled on the Friends of the High Line and headed by Jimmy Finn and Paul Kelterborn. The powerhouse, at 59th Street and 11th Avenue in Manhattan, has been considered by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) twice before. This time a coalition that includes the Roebling Chapter, Historic Districts Council, Municipal Art Society, The New York Landmarks Conservancy, Landmark West!, Friends of Terra Cotta, and more has flooded the LPC with letters of support. A new public hearing on the designation is scheduled.

The IRT Powerhouse was the largest steam-driven powerhouse in the world when it opened in 1904 to drive New York’s first subway. It contained the largest reciprocating steam engine generators ever installed and the largest ever built in this country. (One larger set of generators was built for the Greenwich power plant in England, but never installed. Concerns about transmitting vibrations to the delicate instruments at the Greenwich Observatory killed the project and these generators were scrapped.) Power plants were already switching to turbine generators and this technology soon replaced engine generators.


One mark of the significance – and size – of this equipment is that the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution holds key moving parts salvaged from the plant, including a piston, piston rod, crosshead, and connecting rod from one of the vertical low-pressure cylinders of the Allis-Chalmers/Westinghouse engine alternators. To accompany and interpret these parts, a model of the engine generators was commissioned by SIA founder, Robert Vogel, when he designed the NMAH power hall, opened in 1963. It is still on display in the newly renovated museum.

The powerhouse is also architecturally significant. Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White volunteered his services to the IRT. He helped develop the exterior design and select the materials used. It is of the French Renaissance style resulting in the choice of light-colored materials. The base of the walls is finished in cut granite with buff brick above. The brick is enhanced with buff-colored terra cotta in the pilasters, window surrounds, entablatures and in the cornice (since removed). Terra cotta also encircles marble medallions on the Eleventh Avenue facade, which is topped by a title panel reading “Interborough Rapid Transit Company.”

ConEd now owns the powerhouse and uses it to generate steam for district heating and cooling. The company has no plans to leave the building or to get out of the steam generation business. Recently, ConEd removed the last of the original stacks from the powerhouse. This and the fact that the company uses only a small portion of the plant has raised fears that the building will go the way of the Kent Avenue Powerhouse and Waterside 1 and 2. ConEd contends that landmarking a still-functioning facility is untenable and will prevent it from making alterations to the building in case of emergencies.
Support requested by the Union Forge Heritage Association

The Union Forge Heritage Association (UFHA) is raising money for the stabilization of structures at the former Taylor Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) site in High Bridge NJ. The chapter toured the site last October.

Founded as Union Forge Iron Works in 1742, TISCO was America's oldest continuously operated foundry when it closed in 1971. The TISCO Complex received a Certificate of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. Other historic structures that are part of this important industrial landscape are Solitude House which was built in 1725 and home to five generations of the Taylor family. The Lake Solitude Dam is eligible for the National Register. It was built in 1909 to replace an 1858 crib dam and increase hydroelectric power to the plant. The TISCO Complex was selected for Preservation New Jersey's 2007 list of 10 Most Endangered Sites and the Dam was on 2008's list due to their deteriorated condition.

The most urgently needed repairs are to the roof of the Office Building in the TISCO Complex as rainwater has damaged the building's interior. The UFHA is applying for a restoration grant from the New Jersey Cultural Trust that will hopefully fully fund the roof restoration project. The long-range plan is to re-use the vacant structure as an extension of the High Bridge borough library and administrative offices. Funds are also being sought to re-build the three badly deteriorated porches on Solitude House.

The UFHA has taken on this project because the Borough of High Bridge, which owns the TISCO Complex, does not have funds to save this historic and worthwhile building from ruin. The UFHA is working to prevent demolition by neglect. The chapter has written a letter in support of the UFHA's efforts.

Donations to the cause can be sent to Solitude House Museum, Attn: Mike Gronsky, President, P.O. Box 174, High Bridge, NJ 08829. Requests for more information can be sent to Mike at solitudehouseum@hotmail.com or 908-638-8605 (days).

The Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge: Soon-to-be “Walkway Over the Hudson.”

By RCSIA member, George Bulow

Anthracite coal built the Poughkeepsie Bridge. In the mid-19th century, New England and the rest of the industrializing United States needed anthracite coal, all of which emanated from a cluster of mines grouped around Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. While a low-value added commodity such as anthracite coal could be shipped by barge in large quantities at a relatively low price on an extensive canal system
throughout the Northeast (and in fact was, for almost one hundred years), in winter such channels froze solid, limiting all shipping and depriving urban markets of needed materials. The railroads could move goods all year long and eclipsed the canals for hauling freight.

No two mightier railroads existed in the northeast than the Vanderbilt-led agglomeration of rail lines known as the New York Central System and its arch-rival, the Pennsylvania Company, whose principal asset was the Pennsylvania Railroad. Over time, and dominating all transportation in New England, which throughout the 19th century was the industrial “heartland” of the U.S., was the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company (New Haven R.R.) and its myriad subsidiaries. Each of these three systems was a virtual monopoly in its major areas of influence and each tried to maneuver around its adjacent rivals to gain economic advantage.

The New York Central had a lock hold on land-based, rail-access to Manhattan, which conveyed it enormous advantage. With railroad tracks straddling both banks of the Hudson River from Manhattan to Albany, any competitor wishing to ship goods to New England from the Midwest or vice versa, had to contend with the Vanderbilts and their economic stranglehold over commerce moving through their bailiwick.

Early attempts, some going back to the 1850s, were made to circumvent the Vanderbilts and their power. With the railroad scene as chaotic as it was in the mid-19th century, no local companies could really take them on. Moreover, a number of nascent railroads developed bridgeheads on the banks of the Hudson between New York City and Albany, where they established docks to handle railcars which needed to cross the river. They faced two types of immediate and continuing problems: First, each winter, when the river froze, cross-river freight movements disappeared. Second, to disassemble a multi-car freight train, move individual cars on specially built barges across the river in small groups and then re-assemble the same train for routing to its ultimate destination was a slow, cumbersome, labor-intensive and expensive enterprise. Costly enough to damp customer demand, leaving the economic prospects of substantial further growth somewhat limited. In order to assure shippers of constant, year round service at economical rates, a bridge over the Hudson below Albany which connected in a more direct manner to the anthracite mines and to the Midwest was needed.

The Pennsylvania Railroad, eyeing the New York market and desirous of a means to both reach New England directly and circumvent any need to interchange freight with its rival New York Central, sought a solution. In the wake of earlier failed attempts by others to bridge the Hudson south of Albany, Edgar Thompson, the far-sighted and charismatic leader of the Pennsylvania Railroad invested a great deal of money to join others seeking to build a bridge. This structure would link the high cliffs over Poughkeepsie on the east...
bank of the Hudson, to Highland, on the ramparts along the west bank.

Their entity, called the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company, chartered in 1871, failed in the Panic of 1873, after the initial granite piers had started to be constructed in the riverbed. The reorganized company, then renamed the Manhattan Bridge Building Company, was financed largely with funds supplied by such backers as Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick. They, too, wanted to find a means of entry for their steel into New England, without having to depend upon either the Pennsylvania or New York Central Railroads. Construction on their bridge (known today as the "Poughkeepsie – Highland Railroad Bridge") commenced in 1886 when steel was placed above the piers. The actual builders of the bridge had already successfully constructed a multi-span cantilever bridge for the Michigan Central R.R. over the Niagara River.

The Poughkeepsie Bridge was considered a technological "wonder" of its day. Completed in 1888 at a cost of about $2.5 - 3 million, regular rail service on it commenced in January 1889. It was a Warren deck truss cantilever bridge with a total length of 6,767 feet, including approaches. For a time, it was the longest bridge in the world. Its deck, lying a dizzying 212 ft. above mean water level, sits atop three river-crossing cantilevered spans of 525 ft., two anchor spans of 525 ft. and shore spans of 2,200 ft., with an approach span of 2,654 ft. from the eastern bank (which lies lower than the western bank of the river).

Initially, there was no western terminus connecting to other railroads in the west. A few years later, what was to become known as the Maybrook classification yard was built about six miles from the western end of the bridge. It served as a major interface with a variety of anthracite railroads who transferred their freight to other railroads in the west. A few years later, what was to become known as the Maybrook connection was allowed to interchange with rivals (which would necessitate a sharing of such revenue). The Maybrook connection was therefore of sharply diminished value as by that time the only railroads left were two rivals: the Erie-Lackawanna, composed of most of the former anthracite roads to the west of the Hudson, and the Lehigh & Hudson River R.R. Following the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, both lines also slid into bankruptcy. In the wake of the complete demise of all the Northeastern railroads, Conrail was created.

As railroads declined in the northeast through the mid-20th century, the volume of rail freight over the bridge also dropped sharply. With creation of the Penn Central and its forced absorption of the New Haven, existing railroads in the Northeast were increasingly reluctant to share diminishing freight revenue by having to interchange with rivals (which would necessitate a sharing of such revenue). The Maybrook connection was therefore of sharply diminished value as by that time the only railroads left were two rivals: the Erie-Lackawanna, composed of most of the former anthracite roads to the west of the Hudson, and the Lehigh & Hudson River R.R. Following the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, both lines also slid into bankruptcy. In the wake of the complete demise of all the Northeastern railroads, Conrail was created. The Poughkeepsie River Bridge was deemed redundant and the route no longer used. Traffic from the Midwest was to arrive in New York on almost exclusively on the West Shore Line along the Hudson, from the Selkirk classification yard southwest of Albany. The entire Maybrook line was formally abandoned in 1981.

Thereafter, the question remained. What to do with this wonderful, but no longer economically needed structure in dire need of rehabilitation? Many years of financial weakness by its former owners had rendered the span unsafe for passage, even by pedestrians. After a number of false starts, among them the indictment, conviction and imprisonment of one of its new "owners", the towns of Poughkeepsie and Highland ultimately seized the bridge and its approaches to satisfy enormous, unpaid tax liens on the property.

After a number of false starts, with a bridge built to "last forever" beginning to fall apart, the Dyson Foundation
stepped forward in 2007, donating $2.1 million to pay for an assessment of just how damaging time and neglect had been. To the surprise of many, the bridge was found to be in excellent condition and could be restored with relatively little structural repair. Then the quest of who would pay for its rehabilitation began.

Ultimately, funds were found by creating a new, linear state park to be known as the “Walkway over the Hudson.” The local Congressman, Maurice Hinchey was able to secure a good deal of federal funding for the rehabilitation, which combined with a substantial contribution from the State of New York, as well as foundations and local businesses, provided the necessary pool of funds to hire the engineers needed to do the renovation. Bergman & Associates committed to have the “Walkway Over the Hudson” open to the public in time to celebrate the quadricentennial of Henry Hudson’s discovery of the river which bears his name. They succeeded. As part of the 400th Anniversary celebrations this year, the Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge, with its pedestrian walkway traversing the river below will take place at the beginning of October 2009 (see www.walkway.org for details).

OTHER IA EVENTS
Northern New Jersey IA Events

The Morris County Park Commission will sponsor a number of industrial archeology focused events this summer and fall. IA tours include the Clinton and Waywayanda Iron Furnace, Oxford Iron and Railroads and the Edison Mines. A charcoal burn will be staged the weekend of July 17-19. This year’s Wharton Canal Day will held on Saturday, August 22nd at Hugh Force Park, along West Central Avenue in Wharton, NJ. Many of these events are run by RCSIA members Bierce Riley and Joe Macasek. For a full schedule and information call 973-285-6542.

Staten Island Cruise

The Working Harbor Committee (www.workingharbor.com) will host a Staten Island Circumnavigation Cruise this summer. Probable date is Saturday, August 8th. The 5+ hour cruise will offer Manhattan and Staten Island departure points. For more information, or to be placed on the waiting list, contact Tour Chairman Bernard Ente, (RCSIA member): bernard@workingharbor.com.

14th Annual Waterloo Canal Day

Once again Waterloo Village will come to life with the Canal Society of New Jersey’s 14th Annual Waterloo Canal Day, held on Saturday, June 27th between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. In the event of heavy rain on that day, Canal Day will be held the next day on Sunday, June 28th at the same time and with the same participants. This year’s Canal Day has even more attractions that highlight the fascinating heritage of the Morris Canal, which gave birth to the historic canal town of Waterloo and promoted its growth.

Obituary: Isabel Emerich

Sadly, we report that that Isabel Emerich passed away. Her daughter Lucy and son David each contacted the chapter to let us know of her death. Both expressed how much their parents, Isabel and Charlie, enjoyed the SIA and the many friends they made through the SIA and Roebling Chapter. Isabel and Charlie, who died in 1997, initiated what is now a tradition - our annual corn roast - and hosted the annual event at their farm in Randolph, NJ for many years. Isabel died on Friday, May 1, 2009 at the Columbus Hospice in Columbus, Georgia, following complications of a stroke. Mrs. Emmerich was born in Maywood, New Jersey, on March 21, 1913. The following is from the obituary provided to the chapter by her family.

Isabel graduated from South Side High School in Rockville Centre, New York, in 1932. She received an A.B. degree from Middlebury College, in Middlebury, Vermont, in 1936, and later studied journalism and library science at Columbia University in New York City.

In 1941 she married Charles Acker Emerich, an engineer. They made their home in Baldwin, New York, until 1954, when they moved to their beloved “gentleman’s farm” in Randolph, New Jersey. The farm and gardens were always open to friends and family and will be remembered as the site of many joyous occasions. It is now known as the Emmerich Fields.

In Randolph, their wide circle of friends included members of the Society for Industrial Archeology, fellow volunteers in the local historical society, members of St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church in Succasunna, N.J., and other gardeners, writers, poets, chemists, and engineers. A lifelong Episcopalian, Isabel was proud to help “plant” St. Nicholas Church in Hamilton when she moved to Georgia after Charles died in 1997.

Many of you knew the Emerichs well and without doubt have fond memories of them. We let Lucy and David know that their parents had a great and lasting impact on the Roebling Chapter and expressed our sincere condolences.
Canal boat captain John Hummel will once again be spinning his yarns about life laboring on the canals in the good ole days and our pontoon boat and crew will be providing mule-towed boat rides for the public on the village's section of the Morris Canal. Live period music will help cast the spell of the canal era. The event is free.

For more information call 908-722-9556 or visit our web site at www.CanalSocietyNJ.org

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**June 28**
Lecture: “NY: The Port of Many Ports: Hoboken’s Piece of the Pie”

**July 24**
D. Maldari & Son Pasta Die Makers

**September 20**
Green-Wood Cemetery: Industrialists and Inventors

**October 2-4**
Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge Walkway opening

**November 7**
RCSIA Annual Drew Symposium on Industrial Archeology

**Roebling Chapter SIA Officers**

- **President** Lynn Rakos
- **Vice President** Jim Mackin
- **Treasurer** Kevin Pegram
- **Secretary** Aron Eisenpress

The Roebling Chapter official telephone number is the cell phone of the President: (917) 515-4154, or contact the Roebling Chapter by E-mail: RCSIAprez@aol.com.

Membership is $20.00 per year, payable to RCSIA, c/o Aron Eisenpress, 235 West End Avenue, Apt. 14-C, New York, NY 10023.

A downloadable chapter membership form and general information about the SIA are available at [www.siahq.org](http://www.siahq.org).

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**AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY**

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