The Great Falls Symposium took place on the warm and sunny Sunday of October 17, 2010. It was the thirtieth annual symposium and the first time that it was held in “the cradle of American industry”, known as Paterson, NJ. The Roebling Chapter attendees were welcomed by the Paterson Youth Corps into the city’s brand new International High School. In addition to citing archeological work done in Great Falls area, the event recognized the legacy of the legendary Roebling force of nature, Ed Rutsch. Ed passed away in 2003, but his connection with Paterson lives on in the spirit of the newly designated Great Falls national park.

The program began with an extensively researched presentation by Mark Zdepski, CPG, JMZ Geology. He rendered THE BALBACH SMELTING & REFINING COMPANY’S EVOLUTION and DEATH, a Newark-based business that operated the first electrolytic tank-house operation in the US, in business from 1859 to 1927.

Next, Kevin Bone, Professor, Cooper Union for Advancement of Science and Art offered a fascinating story with magnificently detailed images entitled NEW YORK CITY WATER: AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIRST SYSTEM AND THE FOLLOWING UPGRADE.

As if to relax in the nostalgia that Roebling members live for, Tom Flagg presented views entitled DECEMBER 2010 VOL. 19 NO. 4.

NEWARK BAY AND THE KVK: THE WATERFRONT SEEN FROM THE WORKING BOAT. In addition to being the annual symposium’s mastermind, Tom is known for rendering perceptively interesting commentary on the New York – New Jersey waterfront.

In a somewhat similar vein, Mitch Dakelman showed a HISTORIC FILM “VIA PORT OF NY” - made by the Port Authority in 1953. Anyone fortunate to have had a side-discussion with Mitch – as this reporter did – realized how engrossing is the world of industrial films and how extensive is Mitch’s collection.

After lunch, the Paterson Youth Corps was introduced. They made a slide-type presentation of their GREATEST SYMPOSIUM.

BY ALISON GREENBERG

CHAPTER EVENT

Transit Museum Tour

Friday, January 21, 2011
Bring Lunch at 12:45 Begin Tour at 1:30

Located at the corner of Boerum Place and Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn Heights. You can reach the museum via public transportation: #s 2, 3, 4 and 5 Subways to Borough Hall, M and R to Court Street, A, C and G to Hoyt-Schermerhorn, and A, C and F to Jay Street/Borough Hall.

For the latest on Upcoming Events
Watch the Roebling Chapter Web Site for Details
roeblingsia.org
activities around the Great Falls national park, including a trip to another great national industrial-related park in Lowell, Massachusetts. Their efforts bode well for what the Great Falls national park will become.

Bill Bolger, National Park Service and Gianfranco Archimede, Executive Director, Paterson Historic Preservation Commission, presented PATERSON’S INDUSTRIAL HISTORY and NPS PARK PLANS.

Patrick Harshbarger, Principal Historian, Hunter Research Corp. spoke on FACTORIES BELOW THE FALLS: Paterson’s Allied Textile Printing (ATP), the Site in Historical Perspective.

George Cress, Senior Archaeologist, URS Corp. & Jim Lee, Principal Investigator, Hunter Research delved into their topic entitled RACEWAYS, FLUMES, AND THE TEXTILE MILLS of PATERSON, Results of 2010 Archeological Investigations at the ATP site.

The presentations concluded with ED RUTSCH WORKING IN PATERSON consisting of photos found and shown by Ingrid Wuebber, Historian, URS.

On behalf of the Roebling Award Committee, Ingrid Wuebber conducted the PRESENTATION OF THE 8TH ANNUAL JOHN AUGUSTUS ROEBLING AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY. The Committee consisted of Chairman Clifford Zink, Ingrid and Anne Jennings. Because Clifford had done some fine work, including a great film, for the winning nominee, he recused himself from voting on the nominee. Jim Mackin substituted in this regard. The Roebling Award was presented to The Roebling Museum, Roebling, NJ. Executive Director, Patricia Millen, accepted the award and its $250 cash stipend. (Note: Jim and Janet Mackin delivered the award to Patricia Millen when they visited the Roebling Museum on Sunday, October 24th. An added treat was seeing a production of “Emily” about Emily Roebling and her role in building the Brooklyn Bridge).

ADMIRAL’S ROW

Admiral’s Row consists of ten historic mansions within the Brooklyn Navy Yard that were used by naval officers from the 1840’s through the 1960’s, and a timber shed dating back to 1838. The mansions and the timber shed have been deemed eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The timber shed was deemed a contributing building as the last industrial building of its kind in the United States. Unfortunately, they now face demolition to make way for a supermarket and other development. Recently, the National Guard Bureau declared some of the historic buildings and the timber shed to be in such poor condition that they might not be salvageable. That finding is subject to further debate and inquiry.

The buildings have been described as a “small piece of beauty amidst a bustling industrial neighborhood.” According to SHPO, the timber shed dates back to 1838 and maintains its pre-Civil War brick masonry, with a gable roof and clerestory (a wall with a clear bank of windows at the top) constituting “a rare surviving example of its type that tells the story of the former shipbuilding activities at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.” SHPO opined in 2008 that the timber shed should be on the State and National Registers as contributing resources within the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The timber shed is an important remnant of industrial activity in the area from the late 1830’s through the 1960’s.

SHPO archeologist Douglas Mackey reported in 2008 the following details of interest from an industrial perspective:

- Historic maps suggesting that the Seasoning Bay boundaries changed over time. There may have been a walled structure but the 1848 map shows that the Old Mill Pond area had natural appearing boundaries.
• The SHPO archeologist also wanted to determine the boundaries of the Seasoning Bay for potential Revolutionary War period shoreline data.
• Another area of interest to SHPO was to determine when public water and sewer access was provided to the area, replacing privy and cistern systems.

Sometime in 2008, the National Guard Bureau determined that Admiral’s Row was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a “National Register-eligible historic district with a period of significance that spans the earliest construction of the 1840’s through the Cold War Period.” A contributing element was Building 198, a historic shower house. However, NGB determined that demolition of Building 198 was required to comply with federal toxic clean-up regulations. NGB asked SHPO to sign a memorandum of agreement permitting the demolition with recommended mitigation measures.

Groups such as Brooklyn’s Other Museum of Brooklyn (“BOMB”) continue to advocate for legal protection, such as federal landmarking, to preserve and protect Admiral’s Row. Scott Witter, the curator of BOMB’s Admiral’s Row museum, offered history and insight.

Les Métalliers Champenois (LMC Corp.) is a fully US owned and operated atelier, continuing in America the ancient European and American tradition of fine ornamental metalwork. In addition to handling such landmark restoration with projects like the Chateau de Versailles and the ornate gates on the Place Stanislas in Nancy, LMC recreated of the Torch and Flame for the Statue of Liberty, which now stands with A. Bar-
tholdi’s original vision of a gilt torch that had never been realized. The LMC atelier is equipped with modern machinery, old age hand tools, hot forging gas and coal furnaces and anvils. The atelier of repousse works – one of the few still existing in the world – produces the delicate – and time-consuming – rosettes, water and acanthus leaves that constitutes the trademarks of outstanding metalwork. See their website at: http://www.l-m-c.com/.

If you plan to go on the tour please RSVP by calling or leaving a message with Gianfranco Archimede at 973-357-1911.

UPCOMING EVENTS – 2011

JANUARY 29 Roebling Chapter Annual Meeting
Paterson, New Jersey

June, 2 – 5 National SIA Annual Meeting
Seattle, Washington

October 13 – 26 National SIA Fall Tour
Northern Connecticut

ROEBLING CHAPTER NEWSLETTER is published four times per year by the Roebling Chapter, Society for Industrial Archaeology, c/o Jim Mackin, 370 Riverside Drive #2B, New York, NY 10025, e-mail: RCSIAprez@aol.com.