

ROEBLING CHAPTER

Society for Industrial Archeology

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THE GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM – 2011

The 31st GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM was held on November 5, 2011 in Paterson NJ. Tom Flagg coordinated a very full day of presentations at the International High School on a sunny day that featured industrial chimneys and a distinctive skyline nearby. Approximately 80 attendees found coffee, lunch and old friends along with the distinctive program for the day.

Roebbling Chapter President, Jim Mackin, welcomed fellow chapter members and attendees to “the cradle of American industry” location.

The first presentation was a blockbuster: HOBOKEN TERMINAL REBORN – THE RESTORATION OF HOBOKEN TERMINAL. Lynn Drobbin had no trouble capturing everyone’s attention with the details of the work her firm, Lynn Drobbin Associates, did on restoring the terminal. Better yet, she offered a comprehensive history of the ferry terminal complex with all the related Hoboken, railroad and waterway facets. The Hoboken Terminal and the connecting Lackawanna Railroad Terminal are unique in respects that are not to be taken for granted. In addition to the wonderful historical images, Ms. Drobbin showed “inside” photos of the work done. Before and after perspectives are not likely to be seen by many other than those fortunate to attend her presentation.

Next after a short break, John Laurence Busch entertained a presentation of his book STEAM COFFIN: CAPTAIN MOSES ROGERS AND STEAMSHIP SAVANNAH BREAK THE BARRIER. Some chapter members were familiar with STEAM COFFIN as Mr. Busch gave a presentation at the Webb Institute a few months back to Metalworkers and Roebbling Chapter attendees. The story is most compelling, but Busch makes it more so with all the historical implications. Better yet, he stayed well into the lunch timeframe for the multitude of questions that arose.

Nanci Batchelor planned for a tasty and wholesome lunch and, with Marcella Gross, enabled much camaraderie. Thanks to Steve Gross, attendees also found an incredible array of historical and industrial-related books, ephemera and postcards for sale.

Following lunch, the 9th annual Roebbling Award was to be presented. Some previous Roebbling Award-ees namely Captain Bill McKelvey, Gerry Weinstein and Tom Flagg were in attendance.

Chairperson of the Roebbling Award Committee, Ingrid Wuebber, made the presentation on behalf of her fellow committee members Anne Jennings and George Bulow to Clifford Zink. He received a check from the Roebbling Chapter for \$250 and an Award

Certificate that read as follows:

In recognition of Clifford Zink’s achievements in documenting and preserving industrial heritage in New Jersey, particularly of the John A. Roebbling’s Sons Company. From 1985 to 1996 Clifford was the founding executive director of the Trenton Roebbling Community Development Corporation that initiated the preservation and redevelopment of the Roebbling Works in Trenton. In 1992

ROEBLING CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING

Paterson Museum

Saturday, January 28, 2012 – A before the meeting tour is being planned.

Please watch the RCSIA web site for details. Meeting at 12:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the Paterson Museum located at 2 Market Street, Paterson, New Jersey on Saturday, January 28th, 2012, at 12:30 p.m. At the meeting, annual reports will be presented by the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the chapter. There will also be an election of officers. Members may also be asked to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

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FOR THE LATEST ON UPCOMING EVENTS

WATCH THE ROEBLONG CHAPTER WEB SITE FOR DETAILS

roebblingsia.org

he chronicled the company's history in his book, "Spanning the Industrial Age: The John A. Roebling's Sons Company, Trenton, N.J. 1848-1974." Clifford Zink's latest book, "The Roebling Legacy," published this year, incorporates new research that traces the family and business through more than 200 years of industrial growth, decline and redevelopment.

After the Roebling Award ceremony, past President of the Chapter and the National SIA, Mary Habstritt, presented A PARAGON OF PAINT: THE STORY OF A LONG ISLAND CITY MANUFACTURER. As usual, Mary's research uncovers much interesting and little-known detail. The tie-back to Union College in Schenectady was an especially surprising part of the story. Mary conveyed that Paragon might be a last manufacturing vestige of the Long Island City that we may only be able to remember.

Jim Mackin followed with some forty images of QUEENS: ITS INDUSTRIAL PAST. The general idea of Jim's presentation was to convey that industry in Queens was opportunistically broad in scope and the development of residential communities are "industry" in a sense.

Bierce Riley and Joe Macasek offered IRONWORKS AT SPLIT ROCK, ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP, NJ. Since much had happened over Split Rock Furnace's 85 years of operation, its story is varied and illustrative of changing technologies. Bierce and Joe rendered a well-integrated story with first-rate diagrams and illustrations. They also conveyed a sense of what we know them well for: field experience. Their presentation made you want to walk and explore the remnants of the Ironworks at Split Rock.

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NEW HOME FOR THE GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM

Rehabilitation of the Rogers Locomotive Works Storage Building in Paterson's Great Falls Historic District is moving right along, with the majority of exterior work now complete, including full repointing, roofing, windows, structural and facade restorations. The project is scheduled to be complete by next summer, and we are looking forward to not only having the building back in use, but to give it a whirl for the 2012 Great Falls Symposium. Together with its well-established site history, the Storage Building stands to represent the locomotive manufacturing industry in Paterson and close to a century of significant technological innovation and production. The 1881 building itself is now 130 years old and exhibits a high level of integrity as an example of late nineteenth-century mill construction. Look out for a featured article in the next newsletter about the history and significance this building and of the site. ■



Photo by Joe Macasek

Rogers Locomotive Works Storage Building in Paterson's Great Falls Historic District seen during the rehabilitation project. In the center foreground can be seen the drained upper power canal. When this raceway active water flows under the building.

TOUR OF PATERSON'S COWNTOWN COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Roebling Chapter members toured Paterson's Downtown Commercial Historic District on the sunny afternoon of Saturday, November 19th. Joshua Castano, who is a Historic Preservationist with the Paterson Historic Conservation Committee, conducted the tour. Chapter member Gianfranco Archimede, who is the Executive Director of the Committee in the City of Paterson, arranged for Joshua to give the tour.

Paterson has one the best-preserved historic downtowns in the country. Many downtowns of American cities have either suffered loss of historic buildings from "urban renewal" or outright change from growth and redevelopment. Although Paterson has lost some of its historic mills along its main rail corridor and even some along the Passaic River, the downtown is substantially as it was about 1900!

The crown jewel of Paterson's downtown is City Hall. Its tower is a reproduction of the Hotel de Ville (i.e., City Hall) of Lyon, France. By the way, the silk center of France is Lyon. Paterson, of course, was the silk capital of the United States. If the building seems generally familiar, it is because it is replicated to various degrees in cities all through the United States. If it seems all too familiar, it might be because it looks like the Hotel de Ville in Paris. The firm of Carrere and Hastings, that also did the New York Public Li-



Roebling Chapter members gather on Main Street to hear Joshua Castano talks about Paterson's architecture.

brary and many other Beaux Arts masterpieces, designed Paterson's City Hall.

Mr. Castano regaled the Roebling group with extensive details and insights of Paterson's architecture and history. His challenge was to parcel out attention to only the highlights. Downtown Paterson had much too much to offer. Two hours in Paterson could have been a relaxed week of study. There was no need to venture further than two city blocks to see so many other architectural gems. Included were the great bankbuildings on Market Street and the department stores or

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Above: Paterson Post Office – 1908

Left: Main Street Paterson – 1913

WORK CONTINUED AT MORRIS CANAL LOCK 2 EAST

HUGH FORCE PARK, WHARTON NJ

In mid-November workers turned their attention to the lower end of the lock. To start, a sand bag coffer dam was constructed to separate the lock from the adjacent water-filled section of the canal. However, before the digging could resume an inspector allegedly discovered that contaminated water from the lock was getting into the canal and from there into the Rockaway River. Work came to a halt.

Finally, in the beginning of December, after a two week delay, test results showed that no contamination had occurred. Work began again and by the end of the first week the lock was cleared from end to end. In the remaining fill, both miter gates were found,

one intact and the other broken. The iron bearings on which the gates turned

were still in place and the massive wooden sills against which the gates closed were still fastened to the bottom of the lock. In front of the lock, buried in the mud between the wing walls, workers found the rack and pinion mechanism that was used to crank the lower gates open and closed.

Next, all artifact were removed from the lock chamber. Even the massive miter gates were lifted out and carefully set aside. Now repair and reconstruction of the lock walls could begin. First, all loose stone work was removed from the top edge of the lock. Next, excavation work was done along the outside of the walls to expose the tops of the stone buttresses that hold up the wall from the outside. Both the buttresses and the lock walls will need to be built up together as top of the lock is rebuilt to its original height.

The challenge in upcoming weeks will be to complete the repointing and concrete work despite the onset of colder weather. ■

This view looking into the lower end of the lock shows the chamber cleared of earth and pumped dry exposing wood plank flooring. On the left, workers begin the task of repointing the stonework.



Photo by Joe Macasek

The heavy timbers at the bottom of the lock are the sills against which the lock gates rest when in the closed position. Beyond the stone wing walls at the end of the lock is a sand bag coffer dam that separates the lock from the water filled canal.



Photo by Joe Macasek

Photo by Joe Macasek



These gears are part of the rack and pinion the enabled the lock tender to crank both lower lock gates open and closed at the same time.

RCSIA ANNUAL MEETING

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Elections

As per RCSIA by-laws, four members of the board are elected by the membership. All current board members are eligible to run again: Jim Mackin – President, Joe Macasek – Vice President; Kevin Pegram – Treasurer; Aron Eisenpress – Secretary. The officers elect two trustees to represent each of the New Jersey and New York memberships. The Nominations Committee, consisting of Tom Flagg as Chair, Bierce Riley and Beryl. Candidates may also be nominated from the floor prior to the election and must be members in good standing of the National SIA and RCSIA. To vote for RCSIA officers, the voter must be a member in good standing of both the National SIA and RCSIA to as per the by-laws of both organizations.

Show & Tell

After the business meeting there will be an opportunity for members to give a short presentation at the Show & Tell. Jim Mackin and Bierce Riley & Joe Macasek are signed up. If you like to present please let Jim know in advance. You are encouraged to share with the chapter your current IA research.

Directions can be found on the RCSIA web site: <http://roeblingsia.org> or the Paterson Museum web site: <http://www.thepatersonmuseum.com>. Please let us know if you plan to come by trail. We will make a pick up at the train station for those how don't care to walk. There are also bus service from NYC. ■

THE GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM

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CATHEDRALS OF LIGHT: NY'S POWER STATIONS was the topic of NYC Transit Authority architect Radu Iliuiu. This fascinating part of NYC's history is how technology, politics and powerful personalities created the huge powerhouses to supply electrification for the city soon to become the largest in the world. Radu's expertise with NYCT's traction substations facilitated his emphasis on the engineering and architectural wonders that he highlighted.

There was much anticipation for the last presentation of the day, 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREENWOOD LAKE MAIL TRAIL: DID IT LEAD TO THE V-2?? !! Chapter member Steve Gross, an environmental consultant with the Highlands Iron Conservancy, revealed a most interesting tale! His especially great love of history of Greenwood Lake led him to discover that it received national attention in 1936 with mail planned to travel by rocket across the NY/NJ state line. However, the devil is in the details of all that happened. At a future chapter event (perhaps at the 2012 Great Falls Symposium), Steve will show a film of the actual event. But what a tale, what an entertaining presentation by Steve, and what a way to end our 31st Symposium! ■

TOUR OF PATERSON DOWNTOWN

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One real treat was a visit into the Hamilton Club on Church Street. Founded in 1890 by Paterson's Garret Hobart, who would later become Vice President under McKinley, it was designed by one of Paterson's great local architects: John W. Ferguson. We also saw the First National Bank Building, the Elbow, and other buildings designed by Paterson's other great local architect, Fred Wesley Wentworth.

After Joshua Castano's delightful tour, some Roebling members found a neat little restaurant in the Market section for a late lunch. An afterthought is the possibility for additional tours in Paterson beyond the Great Falls and Downtown areas. Some possibilities might be the Eastside Historic District, the Northside where the Wright-Paterson facilities were located, and Cedar Lawn Cemetery where there is much architecture of interest and where many Paterson notables were laid to rest. ■

ATTENTION MEMBERS!

*In the near future Roebing Chapter members will be getting more and more information about chapter activities and IA News via e-mail. However, we don't have e-mail addresses for everyone. Don't be left out. To sign up now please visit the chapter web site and use the **Sign Up for our Email Newsletter** box in the lower left corner of the screen.*

www.roeblingsia.org

UPCOMING EVENTS – 2012

January– RCSIA *January 28th*
Annual Meeting

Roebing Chapter SIA Officers

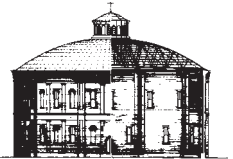
President	Jim Mackin
Vice President	Joe Macasek
Treasurer	Kevin Pegram
Secretary	Aron Eisenpress

You can contact the Roebing Chapter by E-mail at:
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.

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