

ROEBLING CHAPTER

Society for Industrial Archeology

March 2010 Vol. 19 No.1

CHAPTER EVENTS

LiteBrite Neon

Thursday, April 8th, 2010, 11 AM 232 Third Street, Brooklyn NY 11215

Pounded in 1997 as a studio to help produce art objects of neon, the company has now expanded to produce its own line of neon lamps and fixtures for a worldwide client base. LiteBrite Neon has also branched into other areas, including illuminated and non-illuminated displays and art installations. The studio, which serves as a resource for artists and designers, is located in the Old American Can Company Factory which is home to Brooklyn's first on-going Maker's Market, where patrons can watch objects being made. For further information visit www.litebriteneon.com.

If time permits, we may visit the nearby Gowanus Canal and the rare retractile bridge at Carroll Street.

The Hall of Fame for Great Americans

Sunday, April 11th, 2010, 11 AM
Bronx Community College
2155 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453

Tour guides Susan and Art Zukerman will show off the our nation's first Hall of Fame and the incredible Gould Memorial Library. Find out which famous movies have been filmed here. The campus of the Bronx Community College including the Hall of Fame is most conveniently reached by car.

Go to www.bcc.cuny.edu/hallofFame for further information and to www.bcc.cuny.edu/directions/directions/directions.htm for directions.

Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler

Saturday, April 17th, 2010, 11 AM 6 Pennyfield Avenue, The Bronx, NY 10465

 \mathbf{F} ort Schuyler is one of a series of coastal fortifications built along the East Coast after the War

of 1812, when it became apparent that the U.S. was poorly defended against foreign naval invasion. Dedicated in 1856 and armed with a total of 312 seacoast and garrison guns, six field pieces and 134 heavy guns, Fort Schuyler is located at Throgs Neck (just east of the north bridge approach). This strategic point at the southeastern tip of the Bronx where the East River meets Long Island Sound would protect New York City from invasion by way of the Sound. It is now on the campus of SUNY Maritime College.

The Maritime Industry Museum was established in 1986 by a former professor of transportation and alumni, with a small collection of maritime artifacts. Since then, steamship lines, related maritime industries, and merchant marine historians have donated artifacts to become one of the largest collections of maritime industry materials in the nation. The late Walter Meseck (RCSIA) donated his WWII U.S. Maritime Service uniforms and artifacts from his namesake tugboat.

The museum collection also serves as a depository for maritime industry books, periodicals, documents, papers, prints, photographs, and steamship company records. The collection includes 1,250 ship models, including many delicately crafted passenger ship models by master model makers. One of the most striking displays is the intricately designed and thoroughly detailed model of the Brooklyn Naval Yard during World War II, an exhibit that took eight years to build. A brass ship's propeller is among large marine artifacts displayed on the lawns.

We may also go aboard the *T.S. Empire State VI*, the training vessel owned by the Maritime College. During the Summer Sea Term, the ship provides cadets with hands-on, real-life, at-sea training

The Museum is best reached by car, but the BX 40 bus, which crosses the Bronx and its subway lines, arrives at the entrance to Fort Schuyler. Bring a bag lunch and water. For further information and directions visit: http://www.sunymaritime.edu/Maritime%20Museum/index.aspx

Home Rubber Company

Friday, April 30th, 2010, 11 AM 31 Wolverton Street. Trenton, NJ 08611

Tour of 128 year-old Home Rubber Company which makes custom structures that are hand built of rubber, fabric, wire, cord, and metal, and then vulcanized in big autoclaves. Roebling Chapter member Chuck Taylor arranged for the tour. The factory is open 4 days a week, but is not in production on Friday. However, we will hosted by their President, Rich Balka, and we will also see a short video of operations. If time permits, Chuck will lead another tour of the old Star Porcelain factory at 101 Muirhead in Trenton, a short drive from Home Rubber.

See also www.homerubber.com

Home Rubber is right across the street from the Cass Street stop on the Light Rail which comes up from Camden and down from the Trenton train station.

Aero Nav Laboratories, Inc. Saturday, May 15th, 2010, 11 AM 14-29 112th Street, College Point, NY 11356

Aero Nav is an environmental simulation testing company that offers a broad range of services including fungal growth, solar radiation, salt spray, transportation, shock, vibration, temperature, humidity, and many other conditions. The laboratory provides developmental testing, while the company also offers contract manufacturing and engineering services.

The facility is best reached by car. The Q65 bus out of Flushing stops nearby.

Go to www.aeronavlabs.com for further information.

Chapter Business

ROEBLING CHAPTER SYMPOSIUM 2010

By Tom Flagg

Archimede proposed that we move our annual Fall Symposium to Paterson. The ROEBLING SYMPO-SIUM would be in a brand new facility at no charge to us. Of course there will still be expenses for lunch, audio-visual and other incidentals, but we may be able to lower the fee. The facility, which is only a few blocks from the Paterson Museum where we have had our annual meeting for a number of years, has

both parking and access to public transportation. This would bring the ROEBLING SYMPOSIUM to a very appropriately historic place. In 1791, Alexander Hamilton and others capitalized on the waterpower of the Great Falls of the Passaic River to establish the first planned industrial district in the U.S., the Society for Useful Manufactures. Hope to see you in the fall, by the Falls.

Historic Preservation Committee Report

By Mary Habstritt

Historic preservation activity is reported below, roughly in reverse chronological order.

Domino Sugar's refinery in Brooklyn, once the world's largest, returned to the news just a few weeks ago. The developer has begun the public process of getting the site re-zoned from manufacturing to residential.

The three central buildings known as "The Refinery," were landmarked by the city last year and alterations including a glass addition to the top were approved. This month, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released. Unfortunately, the State Historic Preservation Office had already agreed that there is no alternative to demolition of all structures except The Refinery. The developer has said that if they do not receive approval for residential development, they will demolish everything except The Refinery and would build for light industry instead. Since they would not need federal permits or re-zoning to do this, there is no regulation over any of the non-landmarked structures.

The residential development promises 30 percent affordable housing, a carrot that the neighborhood cannot resist. The proposed 40-story towers will significantly impact many important industrial sites in the vicinity, including the Williamsburg Bridge. The developer claims that new, never-before-available views will be provided by the public waterfront esplanade to be built as part of the proposed complex.

Gowanus Canal. On November 12, 2009 at the behest of a concerned member, we wrote the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission about the S. W. Bowne Grain Storehouse on the Gowanus Canal in Red Hook. This 19th century bulk-storage

warehouse differs in configuration from the typical Brooklyn store and we supplied a report from Chuck Parrott, a National Park Service Historian at Lowell, MA, as supporting documentation. We received a reply that the building would be considered as part of a potential city-designated Gowanus Canal Historic District.

Last year we reported on the residential development that threatened the Carroll Street Bridge on the Gowanus. The City Planning Department was also pursuing a re-zoning of the entire canal corridor from manufacturing to mixed use with a portion retained for industrial uses. Since then, the economy declined and Congrewoman Nydia Velazquez pursued Superfund designation to assure proper clean up before large numbers of people lived along it. The This month, the Gowanus Canal was added to the EPA's Superfund National Priorities List.

Last March, we wrote to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation noting the potential for remnants of industrial history at the site that was to become a Whole Foods market. The DEC had found that decontaminating the site would have no impact on any archeological resources. Recent news stories indicate that Whole Foods is proceeding with remediation, but may not build a store.

Updates Our 2009 advocacy on behalf of the 1904 IRT Powerhouse on the west side of Manhattan, included testifying at the July public hearing on possible landmarking. (See Roeblong Chapter Newsletter, Vol 18 No 4) The Landmarks Preservation Commission has not yet made a decision.

We were defeated in our attempting to protect the Brooklyn Bridge from a new residential tower on Water St. in DUMBO, as well as our objections to the new Pier 15 design and its inhospitality to historic ships.

Just before last year's meeting, I wrote a letter supporting landmark status for Westbeth, the former Bell Labs/Western Electric complex just south of the meat packing district. Since then the complex has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. On January 16, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission held public hearings on landmark designation. The site seems well on its way to receiving protection at all levels of government.

29th Annual Drew Symposium

The Best Ever

By Jim Mackin and Lynn Rakos

The 29th Annual Drew Symposium on Saturday, November 7, 2009, was cited by many attendees as the best ever. The New York – New Jersey Roebling Chapter, Society for Industrial Archeology, and the Drew University Anthropology Department co-sponsored the program for some 100 attendees. Allison Ratchiff and Tom Flagg introduced the day's proceedings and welcomed everyone.

Meisha Hunter, FAAR, the Senior Preservationist with Liz Saltzman Architects in New York City kicked off the program with a presentation entitled "Stewardship and Sustainability of Historic Waterworks Infrastructure". She proposed usable alternatives as feasible alternatives to abandonment and demolition. Examples include, NYC's Highline, the reuse of some Croton Aqueduct buildings, and the popularity of the Walkway Over the Hudson by Poughkeepsie. In summary, there is a need to establish uniform guidelines to accomplish the balance between the need for drinking water and preservation of its heritage.

Next, Carol Siri Johnson, PhD, Associate Professor of Science & Technology Studies at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark offered her insights in exploring certain mines in what is known as the Reading Prong. Her topic entitled "Ironmaking in the Highlands Region in New York and New Jersey, 1765-1954" offered an "in-the-field" perspective of two mines: the Sterling and the Ringwood. Extraordinary views of mine entrances and structures, with insightful commentary founded on Carol's extensive historical perspective, made for a most compelling presentation. She left us with the concern that much knowledge, though known locally, is unpublished and may be lost without continuing attention and documentation.

Ian Burrow, PhD, RPA, and Principal in Hunter Research, Inc. in Trenton, spoke to his topic "Steel Away – the Trenton Steel Works and the Struggle for American Manufacturing Independence". His subject constituted the first examination of an early steel operation in the United States. Mr. Burrow reviewed the history and how it developed despite a prohibition by Parliament in 1750. Some of the

details obtained from the site excavation, especially about the operation, remain a matter of conjecture. But there is tremendous value in understanding pre-Bessemer steelmaking in the United States by this endeavor. Mr. Burrow gave credit to an associate for the pun in his topic title (Steel vs. Steal), but we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge his most humorous commentary. Who knew there were such tender feelings between the American colonies and Mother England?

Next came a favorite of this reporter: the preeminent Architectural Historian of New York City, Andrew Dolkart. He is the Director of the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia University and it was our treat to have him lecture on "Building New York's Garment District, 1919-1929". Professor Dolkart gave a mini-history of the garment industry in NYC and the factors that placed it where it is, He showed images of buildings that were notable to the story, but emphasized that they are not cited in the AIA Guidebook and their architects are not generally known. The general principles that applied to the development of the Garment Center were summarized: economies of space, large scale, larger lower floors and windows, and limited ornamentation. Professor Dolkart's summary point was that in the history of New York City no area was ever transformed so rapidly.

After lunch, the national President of the Society for Industrial Archeology, Mary Habstritt, announced the upcoming conferences in the Spring 2010 at Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the Fall Tour in Vermont.

The presentation of the Roebling Award was, as always, the highlight of the Drew Symposium. Chapter President Lynn Rakos thanked the members of the Award Committee; Ingrid Wuebber, Beryl Goldberg and Sandy Matler for their diligent work in determining the rightful recipient. Ms Wuebber then presented the 2009 Roebling Award to WALK-WAY OVER THE HUDSON. Representatives of the group thanked the Roebling Chapter and offered perspectives on their effort and the experience since the bridges opening on October 3rd.

The afternoon presentations began with Peter Stott, the Preservation Planner of Massachusetts Historical Commission. Peter spoke about his mas-

terwork "Industrial Archeology in Columbia County, New York: A New Model for IA Inventories". (Full disclosure: this reporter and his fellow SIA member wife, Janet, having a country place in Columbia County for 30 years, counts the book as his favorite this year). M. Stott posited that the County's economic story is its story. With this, he recounted early railroad and other history and how he collected data for his book. Al Trojanowicz deserves special mention for his question that drew out Mr. Stott's connection to his family textile business and the town named Stottville in the county.

Next came John Vetter, who has been connected with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency in the NYC Region and Adelphi University as Chair of the Anthropology & Sociology Department. John's topic was "Roebling Steel and Historic Preservation at a Contaminated Site in New Jersey". He illustrated the dramatic transition of the Superfund site to a showcase museum. A poignant vignette to his presentation was how Roebling's operations stopped so abruptly, that years later a former worker pointed to a pile of wire and said "That's Verrazano Bridge".

"The Spicer Manufacturing Company and Its Universal Joint: Creating an Automotive Industry Revolution in South Plainfield, New Jersey, 1903-1929" was presented by Eugene J. Boesch, PhD, RPA. Clarence Winfield Spicer developed a universal joint that became essential to the growing automobile industry. The South Plainfield company's history was uniquely interesting, especially as to enlightened, although paternalistic management of some 700 employees at their peak production of 200,000 universal joints. Gerry Weinstein and Tom Flagg, both former chapter Presidents, photo-documented the Spicer facility under the auspices of Gerry's Photo Recording Associates. Gerry shared the opportunities and travails of such documentation, and showed the power of good depth-of-field digital photography. Let us also acknowledge Gerry's exceptionally wry wit, evidenced by such musings as "I prefer to remain still; especially when you are in a toxic site" and "It's good to be married to a librarian!"

With a bulky reel-to-reel projector and a large 16" reel of film, historian Lance Metz provided a spectacular end to the symposium. He showed a rare film from the Bethlehem Steel Archives about the Williamsport Wire Rope Company. The film will not likely be seen for some time after he placed it back in the archives.

Central Railroad of New Jersey Station

Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ

Bill McKelvey presented a brief summary about proposed restoration work at the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJRR) train shed terminal in Liberty State Park. He provided a handout itemizing numerous reasons for supporting the restoration and he challenged us to provide any additional ones.

2009 in Review

By Lynn Rakos

For the venue of our 2010 annual meeting and tour we extend thanks to:

- Gianfranco Archimede, Executive Director of the City of Paterson Historic Preservation Commission
- Giacomo DeStefano of the Paterson Museum.
- Patrick Harshbarger historian and editor of the national SIA Newsletter

Tours and Events

Our first event in 2009 was the Annual Meeting on January 24th at the Paterson Museum in Paterson, NJ. The annual meeting was preceded by a tour of United Vacuum Corp. where we saw the assembly process and learned about the different vacuum pump technologies. During the year we held 11 more tours and events.

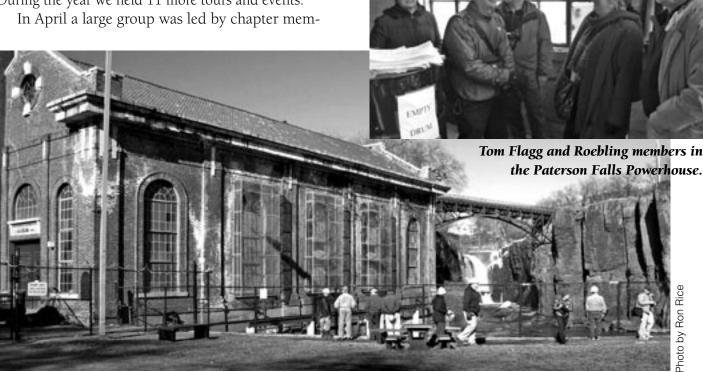
ber Craig Nunn on a lengthy trip through Industrial Passaic, NJ. We saw the Dundee Dam, traces of the Dundee Canal, and many components of the textile-industry-related landscape that defined Passaic and surrounding communities from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries.

In June, Tom Flagg gave a lecture entitled "NY: The Port of Many Ports: Hoboken's Piece of the Pie." Tom's talk was co-sponsored by the Hoboken Historical Museum.

An small group made a Friday morning trip in July to the D. Maldari & Sons plant in Brooklyn. The company is one of about a half-dozen makers of pasta extrusion dies in the world. The company started in Bari, Italy in the late 1800s and has been in operation in Brooklyn for 106 years.

Vice President Jim Mackin led a large group around Green-Wood Cemetery, also in Brooklyn, to see the resting places of the many industrialists and inventors buried there. It was a gorgeous September day and Jim's narration was terrific.

The following week Mary and Gerry welcomed us, once again, to their home in Croton-on-Hudon and to the Engineerium where Gerry continues to bring more



The Powerhouse and the Great Falls of Paterson, New Jersey

steam engines on-line. Before the corn roast there was a morning hike to Bull Hill Quarry led by chapter members Tom Flagg and Mark Zdepski.

A rainy November day found us exploring the Kill Van Kull, Newark Bay and Shooters Island on a 3- Hour NY-NJ Harbor Cruise co-sponsored by the Working Harbor Committee. Chapter members George Bulow and Tom Flagg narrated, along with members of the Working Harbor Committee. We thank Bernie Ente for organizing the trip.

In December, we had a fantastic tour of the Webb Institute of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, in Glen Cove, NY. The tour was led by James Swan, SIA member and Webb Institute Engineering Laboratory Technician and Machinist. A highlight of the tour – apart from the gorgeous architecture and setting – was the 100-foot long towing tank where ship models and propellers are tested.

We had two tours this year that were not announced in the newsletter due to timing issues. People on our e-mail list were notified.

The first was of Hennington Press in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Hennington Press was a small printing shop that opened in 1912 and closed in the winter of 2009. In January, David Harris, whose family opened the shop had us in to see the old printing equipment – he was sadly at work packing up the pieces of his family's life and business.

The second tour was in July when we were invited to see the Petty's Run archaeological excavation, located between the State House and the Old Barracks in Trenton, NJ. The tour was led by Richard Hunter and Ian Burrow. The archaeology there has exposed a fascinating slice of our country's early industrial history. Remains of an 18th century steel furnace, a mid-18th century plating mill, a 19th century paper mill and more have been uncovered. Some of this was covered in a paper at the Drew symposium.

Drew Symposium

For a detailed account of the day's activities please read the story on p. 3.

Newsletters and Mailings

We had five newsletters last year, one more than necessatated by our by-laws. Some were very short and sent to announce chapter events.

Thanks to Joe Macasek who continues to donate

his design services. And thanks to Aron for getting the labels where they need to be. Thanks to all who provided articles for the newsletter.

The concept of an electronic newsletter is still on the table and may well happen in time. Newsletters are posted to the website soon after mailing.

Business Affairs

Our business affairs this year were essentially "Old Business" as several issues remain from last year.

Old Business

501 (c) 3 status – We have retained an attorney to bring us through this process and get us to being a 501 (c) 3 organization. We received an anonymous donation from a member to use for our legal fees. We are certainly grateful for this donation and will be there soon. The attorney retained for our 501 (c) 3 will investigate our need for Directors & Officers Insurance.

Website

We have had progress on our website! Thanks to Ruth Lowell, a web designer and member who volunteered to assist us. Jim Mackin also helped with the website. We met a few times and did a lot of work through email. Member John Bendel also provided some support. Joel Moskowitz long ago got us our domain name, RoeblingSIA.org, which has now been transferred to us. Thanks to Joel for securing that name. Don Durfee at SIA HQ updated our website that was on the MTU server for many years.

We plan to have a gallery page where members can submit photos of chapter events to post. Please have a look at our website and give us some feedback: www.roeblingsia.org.

Other Business

This year we added new trustees to the board: Joe Macasek from NJ and Mary Lee Baranger from NY. E-mail list – update your info in the back of this newsletter.

Public Outreach & Consulting

We continue to be contacted by the NJ Historic Preservation Office and by consulting firms soliciting our comments or guidance on matters related to our region's historic industrial resources.

The board was invited in April to tour the Borden Avenue Bridge emergency repair project on Dutch Kills in Queens. NYC DOT is working on repairing a failing abutment and the consulting firm of Histori-

cal Perspectives is involved in the archeological and historic preservation aspects of the work. Through the NY State Historic Preservation Office, they got DOT to allow a small group of Roebling chapter board and bridge experts to visit the site.

Secretary's Report

Our membership stands at 450, stable for the past two years. Included are 40 complimentary members, primarily National and other Chapter SIA officers, as well as organizations that can help us and benefit RCSIA endeavors.

Treasurer's Report

Kevin Pegram reported on the activity for the period and that the fund balance had increased slightly.

Committee Reports

Historic Preservation Committee Report

For the latest Historic Preservation Report please see the story on pages 2-3.

Special Project Committee Report

We had a slow year with Special Projects and there is not much to report. Gianfranco Archimede remains the chair and Dennis Furbush agreed to serve on the committee.

Elections

The Nominations committee consists of Tom Flagg, Chair, Bierce Riley and Beryl Goldberg. Nominees must be members in good standing of the chapter and the national SIA.

Nominations were made, voting was conducted and the following were elected:

PresidentJim MackinVice PresidentMary Lee BarangerSecretaryAron EisenpressTreasurerKevin Pegram

Parting Comment from the Past President

It has been an honor to serve you all as president for the past three years. It was fun – and at times – stressful. I thank you all for your support. I have received e-mails, phone calls and hand written notes from many of you giving me information to share with the chapter, ideas for tours, or sometimes just a simple and very welcomed Thank You, which was much appreciated.

Of course, I could not have done my work for the chapter without support. Thinking about my time as president, Joe Macasek turns up as a guy who I often was bothering with last minute changes to the newsletter under tight deadlines. Joe does the design and handles the printing of our newsletters. Thanks, Joe, for being patient – or at least there with me to get the newsletter out!

I think of how Aron too was often harassed by me about sending labels as well as being quizzed regularly to see if so-and-so is still a member or if

OTHER EVENTS Industrial Heritage Walks

By Joe Macasek

This year's Industrial Heritage Walk are about to start on Saturday March 27 with a tour of Oreland, Morris County NJ's only ghost town. These walks are lead by Joe Macasek & Bierce Riley and are sponsored by the Morris County Park Commission. There are eleven walks on this year's schedule, including five new ones, plus a 3-day demonstration charcoal burn in July. For information and reservations please call (973) 292-2755 or e-mail me at macgraphics 1@verizon.net for a complete description of the walks. Registered participants will be e-mailed a map with detail and direction for each walk

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March 27	Oreland Morris Counties Only Ghost Town
April 10	Split Rock Iron Furnace
April 24	Shippenport (New)
May 8	Fort Hancock (New) Homeland Security 1895
June 19	Ledgewood's Morris Canal Inclined Plans
Fri/Sat/Sun July 16 -18	Cooper Mill Charcoal Burn
July 24	Mt Hope Mineral Rail Road (New)
August 7	Milltown & Hackelbarney Mines
August 14	Raratan Power Canal (New) Water Power & Bridges
September 11	Waterloo Canals & Railroads / Iron & Ice
October 16	West Point Foundry (New)
November 6	Edison Mines

Visit the National SIA web site at: www.siahq.org

dues were received. He quietly got it all done for me.

Even more quietly, Kevin would get our financials in order. And was very prompt on reimbursements when I had to mail those newsletters!

Of course there is Mary who kept our preservation buzz going. She also provided sound advice when asked and she listened to the occasional presidential grumblings by me!

Jim has also stepped in this year to help me with tours and other chapter business as we prepared to transition to him as president. He also was a big help with the website.

Ruth Lowell gets the kudos for the website. She worked diligently to get it into shape. She faced some challenges in getting our domain name transferred but got it done. She is persistent – which is a quality that we needed to get the thing done!

Tom, of course, has been organizing the symposium for many years and we thank him profusely. Allison stepped in since 2006 and brought her own

cachet and professional twist. I extend many thanks to her too. And of course, thanks to Nanci Batchelor for all the food for all those years!!!

Roebling Chapter SIA Officers

President Jim Mackin
Vice President Mary Lee Baranger
Treasurer Kevin Pegram
Secretary Aron Eisenpress

You can ontact the Roebling 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.

Design: Joe Macasek, MacGraphics

An Offical Chapter of the Society for Industrail Archeology



ROEBLING CHAPTER NEWSLETTER is published four times per year by the Roebling Chapter, Society for Industrial Archeology, c/o Jim Mackin, 370 Riverside Drive #2B, New York, NY 1002, e-mail: RCSIAprez@aol.com.

ROEBLING CHAPTER SOCIETY FOR IUDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

c/o Aron Eisenpress, RCSIA Secretary 235 West End Avenue, Apt. 14-C New York, NY 10023 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED FIRST CLASS MAIL