



# ROEBLING CHAPTER

## Society for Industrial Archeology

June 2011 – Vol. 20 No.1

### A GREAT TOUR AT LES METALLIERS CHAMPENOIS

**D**uring the morning of the Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 2011 some 40 members of the Roebling Chapter toured Les Metalliers Champenois, also known as LMC Corp. The company founder and President, Jean Wiart, set the tone for the tour by telling us that we could touch almost anything and talk to anyone in their shop. And the shop, like our tour guide, was truly incredible. LMC came from a longstanding firm in Paris to the United States in 1984 to recreate the Torch and Flame for the Statue of Liberty. We were shown a remnant of that work that the National Park Service had not yet reclaimed. LMC's metalwork is world-renowned and they are the only atelier of repousse works in the United States. We saw many metal gates and complex metalwork that would find their way mostly to private mansions and estates. Mr. Wiart explained many facets of their work in great detail, as he was an artisan in this realm. Our members reveled in taking many pictures of very unique tools and metalwork-in-process.



We learned that Jean Wiart also organized something called The General Society Artisan Series that is held at the General Society Library at 20 West 44th Street (Between 5th and 6th Avenues) New York City. Some Roebling members attended the series and found it quite entertaining and educational.

Gianfranco Archimede, the Executive Director of the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission, and an esteemed Roebling member, arranged for the tour. Should aliens take Gianfranco to another planet, we will fondly remember all his efforts for our chapter, the Great Falls Symposium, his champion work for Paterson, but especially for arranging the LMC tour. ■



#### The **GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM**

SATURDAY  
NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2011  
9:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

International High School  
200 Grand Avenue  
Paterson, NJ

*The Roebling Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology*

FOR THE LATEST ON UPCOMING EVENTS

WATCH THE ROEBLING CHAPTER WEB SITE FOR DETAILS

**roblingsia.org**

## UPCOMING TOURS

### **Webb Institute**

Saturday, September 24th, 2011

Tour at 1 p.m.

Multi-Media Presentation at 2:30 p.m.

STEAM COFFIN: *Captain Moses Rogers and  
The Steamship Savannah Break the Barrier*

The Webb Institute was founded in 1889 by the pre-eminent shipbuilder William Henry Webb and is pre-eminent for naval architecture and marine engineering. Our tour in 2009 was most memorable and included the renowned ship model basin.

The presentation after the tour will feature historian and author John Laurence Busch. He will attempt to re-calibrate your mind before showing why the proposition of making the first crossing of the Atlantic Ocean on a “steamship” was met with a mixture of skepticism and fear. See the website for the book:

[www.steamcoffin.com](http://www.steamcoffin.com).

If coming by car, meet in the Webb’s courtyard between the parking lot and the main building (Stevenson Taylor Hall). See the Webb Institute’s website for directions: [www.webb-institute.edu](http://www.webb-institute.edu)

If coming by Long Island Rail Road, we will arrange for volunteers with cars to pick-up the arriving passengers. ■

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### **The Two Book Road Standard**

By Jim Mackin

It occurred to me a few years ago that there were at least two books about the Lincoln Highway. This became my simple standard for acknowledging a significant road. To my knowledge, and not counting travel books, picture books and works of fiction, here is a list of roads that have at least two books written about them:

- The National Road (US 40)  
also known as the Cumberland Road – first federally funded road
- Route 66
- Natchez Trace Parkway

- Dixie Highway
- Highway 61  
especially as to blues history
- Merritt Parkway in Connecticut
- Route 1  
now from Key West, Florida, to Maine, including the Boston Post Road, which was also, called the Kings Highway
- Broadway in Manhattan  
also called Albany Post Road (Route 9)
- Fifth Avenue in Manhattan
- Park Avenue in Manhattan
- Riverside Drive in Manhattan
- The Grand Concourse in the Bronx  
thought to be the first road with 11 lanes

Here are some other very significant roads that, again to my knowledge, have only one book written about them:

- Garden State Parkway
- Eastern Parkway  
thought to be the first parkway in the world and the first use of the word “parkway”
- The Vanderbilt Motor Parkway  
thought to be the first paved, i.e. macadamized, road
- Route 20  
the longest road in the United States from Boston, Massachusetts to Newport, Oregon

How about roads for which no book has been written yet? Two acquaintances in Paterson educated me as to the historic Route 202, which extends from Maryland to Maine. They made the now-too-obvious argument that it was significant since Washington used it extensively. Route 202 was his way to travel through the colonies while being in-land and safely distant from the British. So here’s my wish list of roads that should be written about:

- Route 202
- First plank road – perhaps in New Jersey?
- First turnpike road?
- First public toll road?
- Historic Woodward Avenue (M-1) in Detroit
- First Boulevard?
- First freeway?
- First expressway?

# ROEBLING CHAPTER

## SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010

#### OFFICERS

President – *Jim Mackin*

Vice President – *Mary Lee Baranger*

Treasurer – *Kevin Pegram*

Secretary – *Aron Eisenpress*

Voting Trustee – *Tom Flagg*

Non-voting Trustee, New Jersey – *Joe Macasek*

Non-Voting Trustee, New York – *Sandy Needham*

#### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Secretary, *Aron Eisenpress*

Membership stands at 422, of whom 111 are paid for this year, 6 are paid for future years, 184 are paid for 2010, and 81 are only paid through 2009. 36 members have not renewed since 2008 and were dropped; an additional 1 or 2 members renewed after getting their final reminders.

By comparison, our membership last year at this time was 450 members, also after the drop for non-renewals, and the year before it was 452. This is the first year we've seen a significant drop. (I believe the reason is fewer new members, rather than more non-renewals. A few people have not renewed due to the cost, but not many.)

There are 40 "comp" members on the list (we review these name periodically). They are primarily National and other Chapter SIA officers, as well as organizations that can help us and benefit RCSIA endeavors.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

By *Kevin Pegram*

Balance as of Dec.31, 2009 was \$19,135.00.

Balance as of Dec. 31, 2010 was \$19,014.83.

#### TOURS AND EVENTS

Our first event was the 2010 Annual Meeting on January 23rd at the Paterson Museum in Paterson, NJ. Our annual meeting was preceded by a private tour of United Vacuum Corp. where we saw the assembly process and learned about the different vacuum pump technologies.

On April 8th Roebing Chapter members toured the LiteBrite Neon company in the Gowanus Canal area of Brooklyn. LiteBrite produces art objects of neon as well as its own line of neon lamps and fixtures. After the tour, a number of us walked over the Gowanus Canal on the Carroll Street retractile bridge, thought to be one of only four in the country.

On April 11th, a group of us visited the Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Tour guides Susan and Art Zukerman, treated us to the Hall's history. Infrastructure and comentary on many industeess including those from science and industry.

On April 17th, chapter member Bierce Riley arranged a visit the Maritime Industry Museum at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx. Captain Eric Johannson conducted the tour of the Museum and Fort grounds.

On April 30th, we ventured to Trenton for two tours arranged by chapter member Chuck Taylor. In the morning we visited the Home Rubber Company. President Rich Balka took us though the entire facility and its history as the oldest continuously operating rubber company in the United States. Home Rubber is extra special to us in occupying part of the older Roebing Wireworks facility. In the afternoon, Chuck lead a tour through the Star Porcelain facility which ceased operations a few years ago.

On May 15th, chapter members ventured to College Point, Queens, to see Aero Nav Laboratories. Walter Cienski, one of the owner-operators, conducted the tour of the company which conducts environmental simulation testing for mostly governmental entities.

On August 6th, members toured the Madame Alexander Doll factory in the Manhattanville section of Manhattan. The company manufactures approximately 500 different dolls for sale mostly in the United States.

Roebing Chapter  
**ANNUAL CORN ROAST**

SAVE THE DATE  
*Saturday, September 10, 2011 – 2 p.m.*

At Gerry & Mary Weinstein's  
1341 Albany Post Road  
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

After the tour, some members walked the immediate area to view the historic Sheffield Milk facility, a remnant of the 3rd Avenue Electric Cable Car line and some of the 130 foot girders of the Riverside Drive Viaduct.

On September 12th, some members took an Urban Oyster bus from the Brooklyn Historical Society to tour the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

On September 26th, Mary Habstritt and Gerry Weinstein hosted the Roebing Chapter and other guests to their traditional Corn Roast at their special place in Croton-on-the-Hudson. The highlight, as usual, is Gerry's Engineerium which this year included the topping lift hoisting engine from the crane barge "Monarch" that was engaged in raising the ill-fated "General Slocum".

On October 3rd, Jim Mackin conducted a tour (similar, but different, to the tour of last year) of Brooklyn's Green-wood Cemetery with an emphasis on people related to industry.

On January 20th, this past week, some chapter members visited the Transit Museum in Brooklyn and received a delightfully in-depth tour.

Some future tours that we are looking into: a sculpture foundry in Astoria, Queens, a walking tour (or tours) of Paterson designed by Craig Nunn and me, a tour of the Vertical Urban Factory exhibition at the Skyscraper Museum in Manhattan (Mary Habstritt talk on Feb 23/28?), the Merchant Marine Academy on Long Island, and others. Mary will be speaking at the Skyscraper Museum on Feb. 23rd, focusing on some of the NYC factories and talking about the processes and how they influenced the architecture.

### THE GREAT FALLS SYMPOSIUM

Some 30 years ago, there was the RCSIA Fall Symposium, which became the Drew Symposium and is now the Great Falls Symposium. The Great Falls Symposium was held all day on October 17th at Paterson's International High School, a short distance away from the historic and newest National Park: the Great Falls. This was our 30th symposium and it was chaired by Tom Flagg. Unfortunately, the attendance at the symposium was down from the prior year, due in some part to a change in location. We are optimistic about having the Symposium in Paterson for a number of reasons. One is that Paterson has an industrial history that is so significant that it is widely known as "the cradle of American industry". Second,

we understand that there is planning to convert a historic industrial building across the street from this building (that houses the Paterson Museum) into a "convention center" that we would use for the Symposium. Based on some very constructive feedback that we have received those who attended the Great Falls Symposium, we expect to make some adjustments that should make the Great Falls Symposium in 2011 the best Symposium ever.

The morning session began with Roebing member Mark Zdepski's presentation on "The Balbach Smelting & Refining Company's Evolution and Death". It was followed by Cooper Union Professor Kevin Bone's offering entitled "New York City Water: An Overview of the First System and the Following Upgrade". Next, Tom Flagg gave commentary to views entitled "Newark Bay and the KVK (Kill Van Kull): The Waterfront Seen from the Working Boat". Mitch Dakelman finished the morning by showing a film made by the Port Authority in 1953, "Via Port of New York".

The afternoon session began with a slide-type presentation of the Paterson Youth Corps that showed their efforts with the development of the Great Falls National Park. Bill Bolger of the National Park Service and Gianfranco Archimede, the Executive Director of the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission, offered "Paterson's Industrial History" and "National Park Service Plans". Then Patrick Harshbarger, who in addition to being a Roebing member and editor of the SIA newsletter, is a Principal Historian with the Hunter Research Corp. Patrick spoke on "Factories Below the Falls: Paterson's Allied Textile Printing (ATP), the Site in Historical Perspective". Following, George Cress, Senior Archeologist, URS Corp. and Jim Lee, Principal Investigator, Hunter Research, presented their topic entitled "Raceways, Flumes, and the Textile Mills of Paterson". The final part of the days presentations showed images of the late Ed Rutsch, a never-to-be forgotten force in industrial archeological endeavors.

Bill Bolger, Project Director of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park treated a number of us to an impromptu tour of the Great Falls area.

### ROEBLING AWARD

The Award Committee consists of Clifford Zink, Chair, Ingrid Wuebber and Anne Jennings. Ingrid present-

ed the 8th annual John Augustus Roebing Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology to the Roebing Museum. Patricia Millen, the Executive Director, accepted the award on behalf of the Museum.

## NEWSLETTERS

First of all, the most recent newsletter has an article on the Great Falls Symposium that is attributed to Alison Greenberg. Alison did not write that article, but did write the one on Admiral's Row. My apology to Alison, as it was my error.

We issued 4 newsletters this year. Newsletters are posted to the website soon after mailing. Many thanks to Joe Macasek who coordinates the production and mailing of the newsletter. In the future, we will employ Constant Contact for distribution of announcements, news items, and the newsletter.

## WEBSITE

Ruth Lowell is the Roebing member who designed our website more than a year ago with Lynn Rakos and me. The website address is: [www.roeblingsia.org](http://www.roeblingsia.org).

## 501 (C) (3) STATUS

We hope to become an official tax-exempt, organization. This is known as 501 (c) (3) status in accordance with IRS regulations. With the assistance of an attorney with expertise in this area, we have applied to the IRS for tax-exempt status. I am pleased to report that we are close. They have asked us amend the Roebing Chapter's Certificate of Incorporation relating to the purpose of the chapter and the method of distribution of the chapter's assets upon dissolution.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Mackin, President, RCSIA 2010, with input from Aron Eisenpress and Kevin Pegram. ■

## Vertical Urban Factory Tour

On Saturday, March 5th, Roebing members were treated to a tour of the VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY exhibition at the SKYSCRAPER MUSEUM in downtown Manhattan. Nina Rappaport, who is an architectural critic, curator, educator and publications director at the Yale School of Architecture, conducted the tour.

Ms. Rappaport consulted with our past Roebing and National SIA President, Mary Habstritt, for parts of the exhibition.

## NEW JERSEY EVENTS

### INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE WALK

#### **Boonton Historic District**

Saturday, July 16

#### **High Bridge – Union Forge**

Saturday, August 13

#### **Long Pond Ironworks**

Saturday, September 17

#### **Waterloo Valley Trail**

Saturday, October 8

#### **Chester Furnace**

Sunday, November 6

For Information or to sign up for a walk please e-mail: [macgraphics1@verizon.net](mailto:macgraphics1@verizon.net)

### WATERLOO HERITAGE DAYS

**July 9 & 23    Aug 13 & 27**

**Sept 10 & 24    Oct 8 & 22**

*Waterloo is a preserved Morris Canal town with a long industrial and transportation history, located just off I-80 in Sussex County New Jersey.*

Heritage Days offer a wide range of activities including:

- Gristmill **Tours (New this Year)**
- Boat Rides on the Canal
- Canal Walking Tours
- Canal Museum
- Smith Canal Store
- Blacksmith Shop
- Rutan Cabin
- Exhibits
  - Canal History & Technology
  - Canals of New Jersey
- Lenape Indian Village

– FREE ADMISSION –

For more information and directions please e-mail:

[macgraphics1@verizon.net](mailto:macgraphics1@verizon.net)

The exhibition shows how modern factories developed in cities with a strong vertical thrust. Although factories by their nature might always be understood to be “assembly lines”, the force of cities and creative architecture and design change them in new, practical and very interesting ways. Ms. Rappaport’s explained this extensively with insights related to what she wanted to emphasize in the exhibition. Yet it is obvious that VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY explains itself and profoundly so with spectacular photographic images. The films in the exhibition feature historic factory processes in action – the stuff that we in the SIA live for.

## Roebling Chapter SIA Officers

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

You can contact the Roebling Chapter by E-mail at:  
[RCSIAprez@aol.com](mailto: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).

Design: Joe Macasek, MacGraphics

## UPCOMING EVENTS – 2011

- September 10** Annual Corn Roast
- September 24** Webb Institute Tour
- October 13 – 16** National SIA Fall Tour  
Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers  
Valley in Mass. & Conn.
- November 5** The Great Falls Symposium

There is a wall that displays the chronology (with images) of factories through all of history. It should be studied again and again. If you missed the tour (or not), you can see VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY at the SKYSCRAPER MUSEUM until June 26th. ■



AN OFFICIAL CHAPTER OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

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