

# ROEBLING CHAPTER

## Society for Industrial Archeology

December 2007

Vol. 16 No. 4

### CHAPTER BUSINESS

*2008 Annual Meeting and Tour:*  
*Paterson Museum,*  
*2 Market Street, Paterson, New Jersey*  
*Saturday January 26, 2008*  
*(foul weather date: Sunday January 27)*  
*Historic District Tour: 10:30*  
*Museum Tour: 12:00*  
*Business Meeting: 1:15 – 4:00*  
*RSVP for historic district tour (917) 515-4154*

In accordance with our by-laws, which require us to hold a business meeting in January of each year, members are hereby notified that the meeting will take place at the time and location given above.

Weather permitting; this year's meeting will be preceded by a walking tour of Paterson's historic district, led by RCSIA member and Paterson Historic Preservation Commission Executive Director, Gianfranco Archimede. We will see industrial ruins, the waterfall, raceway system, and various mills along the way. Following our outdoor tour, Paterson Museum staff will give a tour of the museum. Exhibits include the Holland submarine, several fine specimens of textile machinery, a very fine Colt firearms collection, and two locomotives made in Paterson.

The business portion of the meeting will include annual reports from the President, Secretary and Treasurer, and election of officers. Plans for the upcoming year will be discussed and proposals invited. Feel free to bring your lunch or pick up something along the tour route. Beverages and light snacks will be provided.

As per RCSIA by-laws, four of the five members of the board are elected by the membership. The fifth member is appointed by the elected members. All current board members are eligible to run again: Lynn Rakos – President, Tolga Morawski – Vice President; Kevin Pegram – Treasurer; Aron Eisenpress – Secretary. Candidates may 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.

Tradition dictates that we also provide time for show and tell. If you plan to present please let Lynn know in advance if you can. Gianfranco will present a talk on

the planning process and future of the Great Falls State Park with an emphasis on the IA aspects of the project.

Tours and meeting begin at the Paterson Museum. Their website has a link for directions: <http://www.thepatersonmuseum.com>. The museum is some distance from the Paterson train station but taxis are available. Those who are car-less should try to find a buddy with wheels. Call Lynn for help with car-pooling (she will try her best!) or directions at the phone number above.

Following the business meeting, people may want to on their own visit Lambert Castle, an industrialist's grandiose home on the outskirts of Paterson. See <http://www.lambert-castle.com> for more details and directions.

### Minutes of Board Meeting

As per the RCSIA by-laws the minutes of all board meetings are to be published in the newsletter. The board meeting summarized below was held May 16, 2007 from 6:45 to 8:45 at The State University of New York on West 42nd Street, NY, NY. For or a full copy of the minutes please contact Lynn at [RCSIAprez@aol.com](mailto:RCSIAprez@aol.com) or (917) 515-4154.

In attendance: Lynn Rakos, Aron Eisenpress, Kevin Pegram, Tom Flagg. Historic Preservation Committee: Mary Habstritt. Special Projects Committee: Allison Rachleff, Gianfranco Archimede.

1. Tom Flagg voted in as 5th trustee.
2. **Insurance:** We need to ascertain if Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance is recommended for the chapter, as per NJ state law. Our general coverage premium is presently \$1700.
3. **Drew Symposium:** Increase symposium registration fee: The 2006 symposium lost approximately \$400. At the annual meeting in January there was a discussion that the fee might need to be raised as it has not been raised for about 10 years. Allison presented the budget for the 2007 symposium and indicated that at \$25.00/person we would just about break even. All were in favor of raising the fee to \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Last year's loss will be covered by funds in the RCSIA treasury.
4. **Budget and Budget Committee:** Kevin demonstrated, maybe not in exact numbers but close enough, that our income is about \$4,000 from dues,

Newsletters cost about \$2,300, and insurance is \$1700, therefore we break even at that point but the expense don't take into account the cost of the annual meeting, the Roebling Award, and other ancillary expenses. An annual budget is needed for the chapter and Kevin is working on this.

5. **Annual meeting:** Due to the limited attendance at Drew coupled with the expense of the facilities at Drew, the topic of finding a new place to hold the annual meeting was discussed. The January 2007 meeting cost \$733.00. Gianfranco offered to check with the Paterson Museum or the Rogers Locomotive Complex to see if we can meet at one of those locations next year.
6. **Newsletter:** Lynn will attempt to produce shorter newsletters due to production and mailing costs. Talk of possibly emailing/downloading newsletters for those who would rather an electronic copy was brought up.
7. **Historic Preservation Committee:** Mary summarized some of her on-going work. She indicated that she can use some help.
8. **Special Projects Committee:** It was noted that there are no funds for Special Projects. Mary began the program when she was President as the chapter was carrying a fair amount of money given that we are a small not-for profit. We now need to think of ways to acquire the needed funding if we are to continue. It was suggested that we apply for grants from others that we could then parcel out. It was suggested that we might raise the dues to \$20 informing people that \$10 goes to dues and \$10 will go to special projects.
9. **Old Business:** The new logo design is finished. 501 (c) 3 status – Mary will continue to work on this for the

chapter. This might become more of a need if we begin to solicit donations for the Special Projects Committee as it will allow people to take a tax write off.

## The New Roebling Logo

By Mary Habstritt

The Roebling Chapter's new logo appeared on the last newsletter. It has already been applied to our stationery and will continue to be integrated into other chapter materials as they are revised. On items printed in color, the center of the logo is blue.

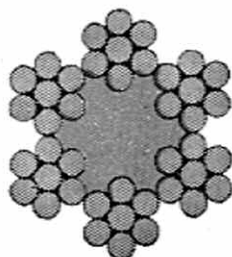
The need for a new logo grew out of concern about chapter use of the same gasholder logo as the national SIA. The national board felt there could be confusion between us, especially when the chapter took a position on a preservation issue. We had been using the gasholder since the chapter was separately incorporated in 1986, yet it did seem like a good idea to establish a separate identity with our own logo.

The new logo was designed by Martina Salisbury. Martina was a tenant in the Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse and helped launch the preservation battle for that building. She has been active in working to preserve other historic industrial sites in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. She and her husband own a company which designs and manufactures store displays in one of the former Eberhard Faber pencil factory buildings in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

As the basis of a new image we, of course, looked to the Roeblings, seeking something that would reflect membership in New York and New Jersey. The Brooklyn Bridge, for instance, was deemed to be too New York-centric.

The final logo is based on a cross-section of Roebling Coarse Laid Rope made with Blue Center Steel found in a 1930 John A. Roebling's Sons Company catalog. In addition to evoking one of the products of the wire rope works in Trenton, the logo references a company magazine for employees, Blue Center.

According to the 1964 *Handbook of Rigging: For Construction and Industrial Operations* by W. E. Rossnagel, "Wire rope is usually made up of a number of wires laid (not twisted) left-handed into a strand, then a number of strands, usually six or eight, laid right-handed around a hemp rope center to form the wire rope, or steel cable



### Standard Coarse Laid Rope

For Haulages and Transmissions

Composed of 6 Strands and a Hemp Center,

7 Wires to the Strand

“Blue Center” Steel

as it is frequently called.” It is described by indicating the number of strands, then the number of wires in each strand, so the rope in our logo would be a 6 x 7, that is six strands of seven wires each.

The Roebling catalog says that Coarse Laid Rope is much stiffer than standard hoisting rope and requires larger sheaves. Although the smaller number of wires meant a higher factor of safety needed to be observed in case of breaking wires, the wires were considerably larger in diameter and so could withstand more wear. It was designed for service under exceptionally severe conditions.

The *Handbook* goes on to explain that, “Most wire ropes are laid up with a hemp rope center to act as a cushion for the strands.” The trade name and colored hemp center of Roebling’s Blue Center wire rope was a way to identify it as made with improved plow steel, a grade of steel stronger and more abrasion-resistant than others used in wire rope making with a strength of 240,000 to 260,000 pounds per square inch. The Roebling catalog says that its Blue Center steel combined the highest strength with maximum fatigue and wearing qualities.

## **27th Annual Drew Symposium**

*By Allison S. Rachleff & Thomas R. Flagg,  
Drew Symposium Co-Coordinators*

**T**he 27th Annual Drew Symposium was held at the Drew University Hall of Sciences in Madison, New Jersey on Saturday, October 27, 2007. Like its predecessors, it proved to be an intellectually stimulating day. The symposium featured seven presentations, many of which were devoted to urban waterfront preservation issues in New York Harbor. The John Augustus Roebling Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology was also presented at the symposium.

The morning session opened with a presentation by Jonathan Pera, PE, PP, a structural engineer and senior project manager with NJ-based engineering firm Keller & Kirkpatrick. Mr. Pera’s talk was entitled “The Rehabilitation of the Elm Street Lenticular Truss Bridge over the South Branch of the Raritan River, Branchburg and Hillsborough Townships, Somerset County, New Jersey.” Mr. Pera described in detail the challenges of rehabilitating the last remaining lenticular thru-truss bridge in New Jersey. The bridge was originally erected in 1896 by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of East Berlin, Connecticut. The bridge was stiffened in 1932; rehabilitated for continued use in 1984; and underwent multiple remedial repairs to preserve it in an operational state. The bridge is both National Register-eligible and contributes to two historic districts. Recently, Keller & Kirkpatrick was hired to oversee rehabilitation of the

bridge in accordance with the “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.” Mr. Pera described multiple aspects of this fascinating project, including inspection and survey techniques; design philosophy; truss strengthening; stability analysis; methods of repair; new materials; and construction. A highlight of the presentation included two time-lapse videos that documented deconstruction and reconstruction of the bridge in 2006-07. The bridge is now restored and opened to traffic and bridge admirers.

Joe Macasek and Bierce Riley presented a talk entitled “Archaeology at Leddel’s Forge, Somerset County, New Jersey.” While the New Jersey Highlands once had more than 100 bloomery forges, there has been very little archaeological examination of the remains of this once-important industry. In the fall of 2005, excavations at Leddel’s Forge, a late-18th century bloomery situated on private property in Somerset County, New Jersey, yielded an extraordinary collection of wood artifacts. The examination of these artifacts made it possible to understand the construction of the forge’s water wheels and the arrangement of the massive timber underpinning of the forge hammer and anvil. Mr. Macasek and Ms. Riley indicated that the information gleaned from the site will expand our knowledge of 18th century iron making. The presentation featured a short overview of the bloomery process, and a thorough examination and analysis of the artifacts discovered at the site.

Carter Craft, Director of Programs & Policy at the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance (MWA) in New York City presented the third talk of the morning session entitled “Does the Waterfront Still Work? The Industrial Waterfront of the Port of New York.” Mr. Craft described the work that the MWA is doing in New York City to open the waterfront to a variety of users. He noted many obstacles to this goal including polarized perceptions of the waterfront; equating industrial uses of the waterfront with pollution; and failing to consider industrial use of the waterfront in rezoning schemes, especially the recent rezoning of the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront in Brooklyn. Mr. Craft indicated that MWA is leading an effort with other like-minded organizations in the New York City region to synthesize existing plans and “big” ideas and distill and disseminate the ideas to the public and politicians running for office in upcoming elections. MWA goals include realizing the goals of the Clean Water Act for swimmable, fishable water; “Aquitecture” - designing for the waterfront and the water; Harbor education - interpreting the waterfront and waterways as a learning environment; Mass water transit; Waterfront play – embracing public space and active and passive use of the waterfront and water. Mr. Carter’s presentation served to remind attendees about the importance of advocating to preserve a variety of uses along New York City’s waterfront.

The afternoon session opened with the presentation of the annual John Augustus Roebling Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology. The award was presented by award committee member Ulana Zakalak to the Water Works Conservancy. The conservancy was honored for its preservation of the New Milford Plant of the Hackensack Water Company in Oradell, New Jersey (see write-up by George Bulow, below). The award was accepted by conservancy board members Anne Reynolds and Linda Besnick, and Wendy Dockray, executive director.

Christopher Marston, Architect, Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), presented the first talk of the afternoon session entitled "HAER on the Hudson: The Henry Hudson Parkway Project." The Henry Hudson Parkway runs from West 72nd Street to the northern boundary of New York City in Riverdale, the Bronx. Constructed by Robert Moses as a scenic parkway in the mid-1930s, it allows motorists to pass city parks with views of the Hudson River. HAER began a documentation project in 2005, and completed a contextual history and illustrated inventory of structures as part of the potential development of a Corridor Management Plan in coordination with New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC).

Marston's presentation illustrated findings from the HAER report on the evolution, construction, and current condition of the parkway. It discussed the development of Riverside Park and Riverside Drive in the early 20th century, and how the parkway was integrated into it. It also discussed the challenges met by Moses and his team in creating a linear parkway at the edge of the city along the Hudson River waterfront. It also discussed current challenges, such as landscaping, safety, signage and billboard issues, and how local groups are working to improve the parkway's future.

Lance Metz, Historian, National Canal Museum, presented a video and film from the National Canal Museum's Bethlehem Steel archives. Mr. Metz indicated that his organization has been working closely with Newmark, the developer who will convert the former Bethlehem Steel plant in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania into a casino. The developer has made commitments to save multiple industrial structures and incorporate them into the casino. Mr. Metz shared a brief video with attendees that documented the steel-making process at the Bethlehem plant in the summer of 1995 prior to its closure. Mr. Metz also shared archival film footage from Bethlehem Steel that documented the repair of the Swedish cruise ship *Stockholm* in the New York Harbor following its collision with the *Andrea Doria* in the Atlantic Ocean in 1956. He indicated that the silent film was intended to be made into a documentary film

about the ship repair process, but the project never came to fruition. Mr. Metz noted that this was the first time that the film had been screened in public, and he chose to unveil it for the RCSIA symposium because of the film's urban waterfront theme.

The sixth presentation was given by historian Robert Mohowski who shared a work in progress entitled "Standard Oil Pumping Stations on the Olean to Bayonne Pipeline." In February 1996, the US Environmental Protection Agency was notified by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection of an oil sheen on the Pequannock River in Jefferson Township, Morris County, New Jersey. The pollutant proved to be crude oil--where had it come from? It turned out the oil had probably long ago sunken through the earthen bottom of an oil buffer storage tank used by a long-distance pipeline. These events recalled to the presenter's memory articles that had appeared in multiple historical publications about oil pipelines; a road sign indicating "Oil City" on NJ Route 284; and the brick walls of an industrial structure along NY Route 97 at Cochection. All had to do with a pioneering pipeline which brought crude oil from New York and Pennsylvania to metropolitan refineries. In the 1880s, Standard Oil Company built what is generally regarded as the first long distance oil pipeline in the United States. The line extended from Olean, New York to Bayonne, New Jersey, with a branch to Long Island. For the greater part of its length, the line was laid along railroad beds. Eleven pumping stations propelled the oil through the pipes. Evidence concerning the number of pipes laid along the route has been contradictory, as are the dates for period of operation. It generally appears that the line was shut down in the early 1920s when barge and water transportation proved more economical. The highest capacity of the line was over 50,000 barrels per day through four parallel, six-inch lines.

The final talk was presented by John Krevey, owner of the Lightship *Frying Pan* docked at Pier 66A at 26th Street in Manhattan. The *Frying Pan* is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as it is one of 13 Coast Guard lightships remaining from more than 100 built. The *Frying Pan* was launched in 1929 and so named because she was anchored at Frying Pan Shoals, a pan-shaped shallows off Cape Fear, NC. The ship was decommissioned in 1964 and was eventually abandoned and sunk. In the late 1980s, John Krevey found it and dragged the hull out and embarked on a restoration. Until recently, she had been docked at Pier 63 at 23rd Street in Manhattan. In addition to the *Frying Pan*, the ca. 1945 Erie Railroad Carfloat No. 41 was also docked at Pier 63. Mr. Krevey had purchased the car float from an owner in Staten Island and restored it. With the suc-

cessful restoration of the *Frying Pan* and Carfloat No. 41, Pier 63 became a magnet for industrial vessel preservation. Eventually, the *Frying Pan* and Carfloat No. 41 were joined at Pier 63 by the Fireboat *John J. Harvey*, and a vibrant historic maritime community was born.

Mr. Krevey indicated that eventually construction of the new Hudson River Park required him to move away from Pier 63. He joined forces with Tom Flagg and others to find a new home for the vessels. Flagg had earlier assisted maritime advocates and local residents to preserve a ca. 1954 timber float bridge constructed by the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad docked at a pier four blocks north of Pier 63 that was at risk of being removed. The agencies rebuilding the highway along the waterfront obtained a Department of Transportation grant to rehabilitate the float bridge for recreational purposes. It was removed to Staten Island, restored, and returned to the foot of 26th St., where it was now called Pier 66A and is situated along the Hudson River greenway overseen by the Hudson River Park Trust. This seemed a very logical place to tie up a carfloat! Thus, Carfloat No. 41 was moved to the float bridge, and the *Frying Pan* and other vessels are once again tied up to the barge.

***The Roebling Chapter thanks Tom Flagg and Allison Rachleff for their dedication and success in planning another great symposium! Many thanks to Nancy Batchelor for feeding us all!***

## ***2007 John Augustus Roebling Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology***

*By George Bulow, Award Committee Chair*

Each year, a Committee comprised of three members who rotate through the process over a three-year period, consider nominees for the John Augustus Roebling Award for Contributions to Industrial Archeology. Award nominees are considered for their efforts to preserve the industrial heritage of the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, within the Roebling Chapter's boundaries.

Our Winner of this year's Award is The Water Works Conservancy, Inc.

All too often we take for granted the clean water we drink. In areas where such water must be drawn from muddy rivers, the issues of filtration and lifting are often overlooked, as well.

In the late 19th century private businesses and public works were created to supply clean water to surrounding towns and cities. The Hackensack Water Company was in the forefront of such efforts. The company was a

pioneer in the filtration of pure, potable water and built an innovative and highly important complex of buildings, along with a settling pond, on Van Buskirk Island, situated at the tidal head of the Hackensack River.

The Milford Pumping Station, as it is known, was first constructed in 1882. Whereas earlier water works, such as Fairmount in Philadelphia and Louisville, were designed in the Classical style making them look like small, civic "temples", Charles Brush, the architect of Milford, decided to construct the complex in the Romanesque style, with thin brick walls, large windows and doors capped by arches, along with slate roofs trimmed with copper and protruding eaves. Subsequent to Milford, this became the predominant style of waterworks architecture. The New Milford Plant, including the Filtration House and Settling Basin along with its Operating and Pipe Galleries, Chemical Tanks, Mixing and Machinery Rooms, Filters and Laboratory is a rare remaining example of an intact pre-WWI waterworks with both purification and delivery.

Our Chapter's own Conrad Milster, has described what makes the steam engineering of the Pumping House so distinctive: "*New Milford has a unique, unparalleled collection of machinery which is not only impressive in its own right but traces the technological development of water supply.*" Built in 1882 and expanded an additional five times over 30 years, the building was originally host to a 3 million gallon per day Worthington steam driven pump, driven by an Allis Chalmers reciprocating steam engine. The Pumping House, according to Conrad "... *represents all the major steps in the development of pumping machinery - an ideal collection (illustrating) the importance of water supply to the public.*"

The entire site was operated by the Hackensack Water Company for over a century. In 1990, however, operations on-site ceased. The Company donated the entire site to Bergen County along with a \$1 million gift. In 1996 The Water Works Conservancy, Inc. was incorporated as a (501)(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation to work with local political officials to develop a plan for the use of the site and for the preservation and restoration of the complex. After a few years of discussions and plans in 2001 it emerged that the financial resources needed to stabilize and preserve the site were beyond the resources of the Borough of Oradell. This was a serious blow as Oradell was designated as the municipal body who would take over financial responsibility for the site in the event that the Conservancy could not proceed with preservation. Funds then available were \$766,000 of the original \$1 million donated, as well as a preservation grant to the County of \$575,000 from the New Jersey Historic Trust. At the time, the Bergen County

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Executive was also averse to preservation and sought to have the complex demolished and the site sold to private developers, with only a few artifacts kept on-site, by applying to the state's Historic Sites Council for implementation of this plan.

In the interim, during 2001, while these events were taking place, the New Milford complex was designated an "American Treasure" by Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In addition it was listed in the Register of Historic Places at both a national and state level. Ultimately, the State Department of Environmental Protection denied the County's application. The successor regime has been more favorable to the complex, but funding has been both slow and inadequate to properly preserve the site. The Conservancy is continuing its efforts by both publishing books and presenting oral histories on the site and its importance as well as actively seeking, through public outreach, to build a sufficient consensus to fund preservation of the site, its enhancement as a public resource and its status as an important industrial landmark.

In recognition of these efforts, the Augustus Roebling Awards Committee has unanimously voted in favor of designating The Water Works Conservancy, Inc. as its Designee for 2007.

*The Roebling Chapter thanks George Bulow, Ulana Zakalak and Sandy Malter for their work on the Award Committee and for their service to RCSIA!*

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

### *The Eberhard Faber Pencil Company: A Short History*

*By Mary Habstritt*

**T**he Eberhard Faber Pencil Company, whose historic factory buildings still stand along West St., Kent St. and Greenpoint Av. in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, was founded in Germany in the 18th century. Now a part of the A.W. Faber-Castell graphic arts equipment conglomerate based in Germany, Eberhard Faber has been part of the U.S. manufacturing scene since the 1860s.

The company had its origins--quite literally--as a cottage industry that was founded by Kaspar Faber in Stein near Nuremberg. Pencils were made one at a time by hand, by smelting "Spanish lead" (graphite) into strips and sawing them into pieces that fit into grooved wooden casings. By the 1840s, having survived difficult times in the early part of the 19th century, the family-owned

company began to slowly modernize its operations.

A French process for combining graphite with clay that yielded a better-writing pencil was adopted, and production was mechanized. Machinery was used to cut and groove the wooden slats into which the leads would be inserted and the graphite-and-clay mixture was extruded in long strips from presses (square to fit square grooves). These improvements allowed the House of Faber to grow and begin exporting pencils.

One of the principal reasons for the move to America in 1849 was probably to secure a supply of cedar for the German plant. All major pencil makers used cedar from Florida, and there was competition for a dwindling supply of this wood. A.W. Faber purchased a large tract at Cedar Keys on Florida's west coast and established a sawmill there.

All graphite had originally come from a mine in England that had been discovered in the 16th century. This source had become exhausted by the 18th century, necessitating the creation of a process to combine scarce graphite with clay. By the 19th century, graphite deposits had been found in Siberia, Norway, Spain and Ceylon, as well as in the U.S.

By mid-century, Faber had become synonymous with pencils, making a consistently fine product. This was facilitated by their gaining exclusive rights to a newly discovered (1856) deposit of graphite in Siberia, which proved to be as fine as the English graphite.

A number of factors induced A.W. Faber to open a pencil-manufacturing plant in the U.S. High demand was accompanied by high tariffs on foreign pencils. In addition to the tariffs, freight and marine insurance costs rose during and after the Civil War.

A.W. Faber already had an office in New York at 133 William St. represented by Eberhard Faber, Lothar's youngest son. One of the principal purposes of his move to America in 1849 was probably to secure a supply of cedar for the German plant. All major pencil makers used cedar from Florida and there was competition for a dwindling supply of this wood. Faber purchased a large tract at Cedar Keys on Florida's west coast and established a sawmill there.

The factory opened in Manhattan at the foot of East 42nd St., the current site of the United Nations, in 1861. It was cited by King's Handbook of New York City as the "first lead pencil manufactory" in this country. New York was closer to the cedar supply, but further from the Bavarian clay and graphite. It was decided that leads made in Stein would be shipped to America to be assembled near the Florida cedar groves, with machinery being used to offset the higher cost of New York labor.



**Eberhard Faber Factory:** This engraving from Asher & Adams' *Pictorial Album of American Industry*, 1876, shows the factory of Eberhard Faber (then still a branch of A. Faber) shortly after its move to Brooklyn in 1872. Later, the company's yellow star within a diamond trademark was added to the pediments of the buildings, unifying a complex that eventually occupied several blocks. Courtesy ArchiveofIndustry.com.

American ingenuity, combined with German experience, soon resulted in a number of entirely new machines developed to mass produce pencils, more cheaply and with a better and more uniform finish than ever before. The Manhattan factory was destroyed by fire in 1872. An urgent need for a new plant resulted in the company buying several existing buildings in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

A.W. Faber had several U.S. competitors by the middle of the 19th century. Prior to that time, nearly all pencils had been imported; however, it was only when German companies like A.W. Faber began establishing factories in America that they started making pencils in earnest.

The Joseph Dixon Crucible Co. of Massachusetts which made graphite liners for crucibles got into the pencil manufacturing business as early as 1827, opening a factory in Jersey City in 1846 to meet the demands of the Mexican-American War. By the early 1870s, they had introduced a good quality American pencil, having patented a wood-planing machine to facilitate mass production to meet the increasing demand created by the Civil War.

In 1873, Dixon purchased the American Graphite Co. of Ticonderoga, New York, which gave its name to the yellow pencil that the company still makes today. Their plant in Jersey City still stands, and has been converted to apartments. High-quality lead pencils were also being made by the American Lead Pencil Co. at their factory in Hudson City, NJ with graphite from Georgia. By the mid-1870s, the manufacture of “lead” pencils had become a flourishing business in the U.S.

A.W. Faber and its subsidiary in Brooklyn continued to manufacture on both sides of the Atlantic through the last decades of the 19th century. However, at some point, there was a falling out between the German and American branches of the family, and the company was incorporated in the U.S. as the E. Faber Pencil Co. in 1898, under the direction of Eberhard Faber. It was re-incorporated in 1904 as the Eberhard Faber Pencil Co. after several lawsuits between it and A. W. Faber over the use of the family name. The plant in Brooklyn became the company headquarters.

By 1956, the Greenpoint plant was obsolete and the company moved operations to Wilkes-Barre PA. In

1988, Eberhard Faber was sold to the A.W. Faber-Castell Corporation, re-uniting the two competing branches of the family.

In the next newsletter - the pencil making process.

**Preservation Update!** On October 30, The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) voted unanimously to designate the five remaining buildings of Brooklyn's pencil factory the "Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District." Although it was too late to save two of the smallest buildings which were torn down last spring to make way for a boutique hotel, this designation saves the central structure on Greenpoint Avenue that sports yellow terra cotta pencils on its facade. Also saved is the original building occupied by the company and depicted in the engraving. The City Council and Mayor still have to approve the designation before it is final, but in the meantime no demolition or alteration permits can be issued without the approval of the LPC.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**2008**

January 27    RCSIA Annual Meeting – Paterson, NJ

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### Roebing Chapter SIA Officers

President	Lynn Rakos
Vice President	Tolga Morawski
Treasurer	Kevin Pegram
Secretary	Aron Eisenpress

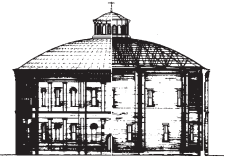
The Roebing Chapter official telephone number is the cell phone of the President: (917) 515-4154. Please leave a brief message on the answering machine.

Membership is \$10.00 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

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



**ROEBLING CHAPTER  
SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY**  
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