

## FOREWORD

The Society for Industrial Archeology is pleased to publish this valuable guide prepared by one of its members, Victor C. Darnell. Industrial Archeology is the study of the surviving structures and artifacts of the industrial past. Bridges are among the most significant examples of industrial design, yet there has been little previous research on the American bridge builder of the nineteenth century. With the exception of great builders such as the Roeblings, the men who erected the bridges that linked American communities and regions have remained largely unknown. Mr. Darnell's work goes far to remedy the unfortunate neglect of this important part of American social, business, and technological history.

As industrial archeologists, the members of the Society are concerned with the preservation of the physical record of American industrial development, a record which includes the products of our nation's bridge builders. Mr. Darnell's meticulous documentation will provide essential information for surveys of bridges and for historical investigations of particular structures. Knowledge is a powerful weapon in the continuous fight to save threatened but still functional bridges.

The dissemination of scholarship through publication is one of the services provided by the Society for Industrial Archeology. The Society publishes an annual journal, IA, a quarterly Newsletter, and occasional special publications. Local chapters of this international organization also produce publications of their own. For information about the Society, its activities, and publications please write to SIA, Room 5020, National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. 20560.

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Past President, SIA

### THE AUTHOR

Victor Darnell received a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1943 and then spent three years in the U.S. Navy assigned to construction and repair of naval vessels. He then joined the Berlin Construction Company, Berlin, Connecticut, retiring in 1977. For much of that period he was Chief Engineer, responsible for most of the major design projects, and had the opportunity to inspect bridges and work with the erection department.

While active in business he also took part in civic organizations and still is a Trustee of the New Britain Museum of American Art where he had been Chairman for nine years. Since retiring, Darnell has intensified his study of the development of bridges in which he combines an interest in history with the training and experience of a professional engineer and steel fabricator. His article Lenticular Bridges from East Berlin, Connecticut appeared in IA, the journal of the SIA, and he contributed to Connecticut—An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites.