



SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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THE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

The SIA is the product of a conference held at the Smithsonian Institution on 16 Oct last, the intention of which was to bring together a group sharing a belief in the need to establish a means for exchanging information and views in the growing field of IA. First proposed by Paul E. Rivard, Director of Old Slater Mill Museum, and organized by Ted Sande, AIA, teaching fellow and doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, and Robert M. Vogel, Curator of Mechanical & Civil Engineering, Smithsonian Institution, the meeting was attended by approximately 50 architectural historians, historical archeologists, historians of technology, museologists, preservationists, students and even a few professed industrial archeologists—a good representative cross section of the sort of people involved in the field.

The discussion developed toward an enunciation of three principal goals, which were felt to be the basis for any common effort to be undertaken:

1. Interdisciplinary exchange of information on those working in industrial archeology and their projects; who requires and who can provide information; and the identification of useful outside sources.

2. As an adjunct to the above, the generation of bibliographical information having pertinence to the field.

3. Education: to create a public awareness of the need for preservation, surveys, and the other objectives of industrial archeology, through schools, museums, etc; and, by public and governmental lobbying, the effecting of such objectives as industrial preservation, appropriation of funds for surveys, etc.

Following extensive discussion on the various means by which these goals might be achieved, a poll of the meeting showed a heavy majority favoring establishment of an entirely new society for industrial archeology as the best solution, hence the SIA. As a means of fulfilling its aims, the Society would publish a newsletter and hold annual conferences.

To carry matters forward, an interim executive committee with the following membership was formed by voluntary selec-

tion, to serve until a formal election at the first full meeting.

Richard M. Candee
Old Sturbridge Village

Richard L. Deily
Iron Bloom

Chester H. Liebs
State of Vermont, Division
of Historic Sites

Vance Packard
Pennsylvania Historical &
Museum Commission

Paul E. Rivard
Old Slater Mill Museum

Edward S. Rutsch
Fairleigh Dickinson University

Ted Sande
University of Pennsylvania

Charles W. Tremer
Muhlenberg College

Robert M. Vogel
Smithsonian Institution

John G. Waite
New York State Historic Trust

R. John Corby, Curator of Industrial Technology, National Museum of Science & Technology, Ottawa, kindly agreed to act as the Society's Canadian Liaison.

Membership in the SIA is open to all who have an interest in IA, without regard to background, professional status or any other consideration. Full particulars on the Society and membership will be found in the accompanying prospectus.

Since the organizational meeting, the executive committee has met twice to work out organizational details. The interim officers are:

President—Charles W. Tremer
Vice President—Ted Sande
Secretary-Treasurer—Vance Packard
Editor—Robert M. Vogel

Incorporation (in the District of Columbia), bylaws, newsletter format, meeting arrangements, and other matters are currently being settled, all of which will be presented to the membership in April at our first conference.

The SIA Newsletter

Undoubtedly an industrial archeology society is long overdue, not only in the US, but probably on an international level as well. The principal reason for the general lag in productive work in IA—at least in this country—has been lack of a medium for the expeditious broadcasting of information on what is being done in the field. We have, for at least a decade—and in some cases for a great deal longer than that—been working very much like a lot of well diggers, each toiling at the bottom of his own pit without a clear idea of what is happening in the others, or if, indeed, there even were any others. If a list were made of all the isolated efforts that could be construed as industrial archeological over just the past five years, it would be, we suspect, of surprising length, variety and substance.

It is probable that much of this effort has been in duplicate or overly laborious for the simple reason that those involved have been unaware of similar efforts elsewhere. Less obvious, and perhaps more critical, because there has been no means of systematic information exchange in the field, many industrial artifacts, structures and sites have succumbed that might otherwise have been put to reuse, and worse, succumbed without having been documented. There have, of course, been the rudiments of an intelligence net in the form of various publications having an associated interest in IA—the National Trust's *Preservation News* is one splendid example—but, not surprisingly, the heart of the net has been the grapevine. Not to say that that medium is not an effective one, and it will probably always be the fastest