

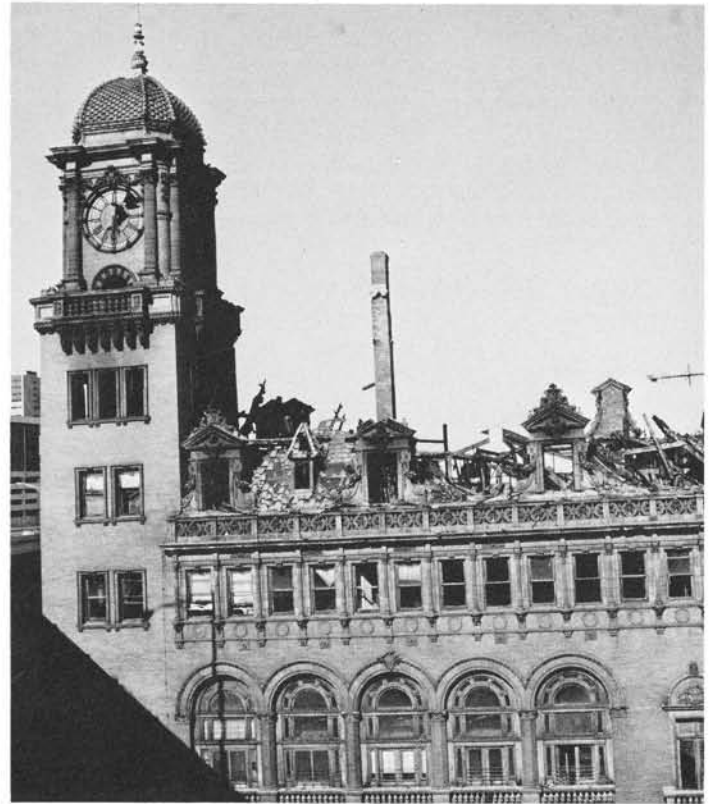
# SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

## NEWSLETTER

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### FIRES RAVAGE RICHMOND DEPOT, MINNEAPOLIS MILL



Richmond's 1901 Main Street Station, before and after the October fire. Jack Boucher photograph for HAER (L), Richmond Newspapers, Inc. photograph (R).

Fires continue to incinerate significant historic industrial structures with mind-numbing regularity. Since Paterson's devastating blaze was reported in the last *SIAN*, fire has damaged or destroyed a railroad station in Richmond and mills in New Hope, Pa., and Minneapolis, including a flour mill viewed during last spring's SIA Annual Conference.

Perhaps most shocking was the damage to Richmond's spectacular **Main Street Station** [NHL], a 1901 French Chateausque depot of the Seaboard Airline/Chesapeake & Ohio RR. The six-alarm blaze on Oct. 7 destroyed the five-story building's top floor and roof and badly damaged the fourth floor. SIA members will be relieved to hear that the adjacent, long span, metal, trussed-roof trainshed was untouched.

Main Street Station was documented by HAER in 1971 and closed to rail service in 1975. Its significant trainshed was among the group of surviving LSMTR trainsheds that received landmark designation in 1975 [*SIAN* Sept./Nov. 76:2]. HAER documentation probably will be used during the structure's restoration, according to Eric DeLony [SIA].

A \$10-million renovation project to convert the depot into an

outlet shopping mall with restaurants and more than 70 shops was expected to move ahead. National Park Service approval for a 25 percent tax credit had been received only a week before the fire, and developers speculated that the fire damage might offer increased tax advantages.

On a Friday evening exactly two weeks later, Oct. 21 (and a mere football field's distance from another significant trainshed), the **Crown Roller Mill** (1880) in Minneapolis was gutted by an awesome four-alarm fire whose flames reached 45 ft. above the 100-ft. building. To the historian-observer, the orange-red nighttime scene appeared as an uninvited living history reenactment of the 1878 Minneapolis Mill Explosion which ripped apart the same industrial neighborhood. The next day's gaping ruin was startlingly similar to photographs of the earlier disaster.

Annual Conference attendees will recall the square, cream-brick flour mill from their walking tour of the West Bank Milling District, part of the city's St. Anthony Falls Historic District [NR] on the Mississippi River. The Crown is one of the five surviving flour mills in the historic waterpower milling district, and is located

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