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SOAP FACTORY BURNS IN LONDON, ONTARIO



LONDON SOAP CO. Above: In 1980. Left: In ruins, following the devastating fire on April 2. Chris Andreae photographs.

NEW WAYS TO RAISE IA \$

Rock concerts at an Alabama iron furnace and sales of old foundry patterns in New York, both novel fund-raising ventures for IA projects, have successfully raised needed dollars.

Some 900 rock-music devotees gathered in the East Cast Shed amphitheater on June 29th in a musical benefit entitled "Save A Smokestack" at Sloss Furnaces Nat'l Historic Landmark in Birmingham. Aided by five local rock bands who donated their services, the museum earned \$2,742 toward the preservation of the furnace smokestacks.

The amphitheater at Sloss is a popular Birmingham gathering place. On July 4th more than 2,400 attended a concert by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and less than two weeks later on July 13th a rock music benefit for African famine relief attracted 1,700 fans.

A massive 17.4-acre complex erected 1927-29, Sloss is one of the best surviving sites representing early 20th-C ironmaking technology [HAER; SIAN Summer 82:6-9, Spring-Sum. 83:16] and will host the upcoming SIA Fall Tour, Oct. 24-27. Concert fund-raising and Fall Tour details are available from Director Randall G. Lawrence [SIA], Sloss Fur., P.O. Box 11781, Birmingham AL 35202 (205-254-2367).

In New York state, selling old foundry patterns raised over \$5,000 in April for the Preservation Coalition of Erie Co. The large and small patterns for pulleys, gears, bearings, etc., were from Bethlehem Steel. The proceeds will fund a guide to the industrial heritage of the Buffalo River and Erie lakefront. Interior designers and antique dealers elbowed aside TV, radio, and newspaper crews to get inside where a former pattern maker and Coalition members were being interviewed. The first five hours saw sales of \$1,400, and one man hauled out \$450 worth. The incredible interest overwhelmed volunteers who had to make an emergency pick-up and complete washing of an additional truckload of patterns. To find out how they did it, contact PCEC, 20 Angle St., Buffalo NY 14214.

The c1873 building that once housed the London Soap & Cosmetic Co. on South St. was destroyed in a fire in April. Soap had been manufactured on or near the site since the mid-1860s. Additions had been made to the original two-story brick building up to 1916. In 1980 the property was acquired by the City of London and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority with plans to continue soap-making, intending to maintain the building as an operating museum. Disputes between owner and tenant brought the end of manufacturing early last year. The Ontario Soc. for IA had been one of the few groups allowed to tour the plant (in 1982), and members' photos may be its last record. They will assemble this material, along with documents found after the fire, for the London Archives. OSIA president Chris Andreae [SIA] was unable to get the city to undertake an operation to save machinery in the ruins. However, negotiations with the demolition contractor have resulted in the salvage of some equipment. If OSIA cannot find a museum to receive the artifacts, they will be scrapped. The city later agreed to support OSIA plans to retain a four-ton toilet-soap milling machine on-site as an industrial monument. Thus far, OSIA has donated considerable time and funds in the ongoing preservation effort. A c1885 soap factory, similar to the London plant, still operates in Guelph, Ont.



A BLAST AT SLOSS! Rock band "The Cast" raises needed cash during the "Save A Smokestack" benefit concert at Sloss Furnaces, Birmingham. Sloss Furnaces photograph.