

SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

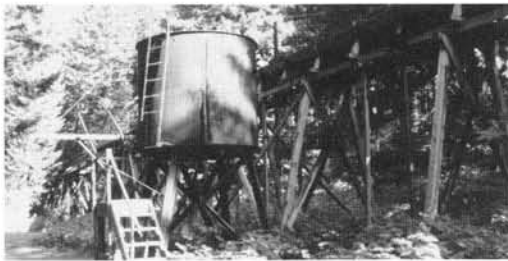
NEWSLETTER

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FINAL DAYS FOR FAMOUS FLUME



BROUGHTON FLUME. Over the road and through the woods, the historic lumber-carrier makes its nine-mile way through Columbia Gorge. *George Rappole photographs.*



Opened in 1913, the Broughton Lumber Co.'s nine-mile-long wooden flume in Washington's Columbia Gorge will be shutting down in Dec. 1986. Never meant for logs, the flume carries rough-sawn lumber (cants) from the sawmill at Willard to Broughton's remanufacturing plant and shipping point at Hood, a 1,000-ft. vertical drop.

The old operation requires large-diameter logs, now in short supply in the Northwest's new-grown forests. A new mill would need to process at least 200,000 bd. ft. per day to be economical, and the flume's capacity is only 125,000. Over the years the flume became well known and was featured in a Walt Disney movie, "Charlie the Lonesome Cougar," and a Lassie TV show, among other things. George Rappole [SIA] took the accompanying photos in Oct., capturing some of the operation's last days.

The trough is constructed of Douglas fir for durability, while the supporting structure is cedar to withstand rot. The flow is about two ft. deep in the trough, which is metal-lined only along the sharper curves. The whole structure is built in 16-ft. sections, so a rock-slide would damage only a limited number of sections.

A warning system, consisting of a seven-volt line, runs from a bell system at Hood to a dumping system 4½ miles up, where water can be dumped into a lake in an emergency. This is done because water crashing from a flume break may wash away more of the hillside than a small slide. A 12-in. walk board runs the full nine miles and has been patrolled weekly by workers wearing special calked boots with sharp points on the sole.

Lumber is loaded automatically in the top end by feed chains. Boards over 32 ft. have been trucked down, but trucking the whole production was considered too expensive. The closing includes the entire Broughton Co., not just the flume. There are 95 workers. The company manager reports that the flume may be preserved.

MAY 28-31

Turn on to Troy for 16th Annual Conference

Sweet sixteen and back in Troy again! The SIA makes a triumphant return to New York's Hudson-Mohawk region, coming back to the site of the Second Annual Conf. in 1973. Long-time members need not fear that they saw it all the first time. There are more than enough sites in the Albany-Troy-Schenectady triangle to occupy three conferences.

Itineraries are still pending but will feature at least four process tours, including Albany Int'l, a major manufacturer of paper-makers' felts and paper-mill supplies, the N.Y. State Barge Canal Shops and dry dock, and Waterford's flight of five locks. Conf. participants also will visit the Harmony Mill complex and power canal system in Cohoes, GE's enormous Schenectady works, one or more of the area's numerous historic hydroelectric plants, the Port of Albany, and Troy's 1873 Gasholder House (now world-famous, via HAER drawing, as the SIA logo; for the full story, see *SIA* Spring '84:1).

Troy Holiday Inn will be the conf. HQ. Paper sessions on Sat., May 30, will be at Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst.'s spacious, well-equipped Communications Center. *Plan now* for an awesome schedule.

Paper & session proposals are due by Jan. 31 to David Starbuck, Dept. of Sci. & Tech. Studies, RPI, Troy NY 12180-3590. General info. avail. from Duncay Hay, N.Y. State Museum, 3097 Cultural Ed. Center ESP, Albany NY 12230 (518-473-1746).

Registration materials, including programs, tour itineraries, and papers, will be mailed to members during the first week in April.