



# SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

## NEWSLETTER

Volume Two Number 3

May 1973



**THE SOUTH WILL RISE AGAIN**  
Tredegar Restoration Begins

One of the great industrial "non-preservation" mysteries of all time has been the gradual near-total collapse of the Tredegar Iron Works buildings in Richmond—despite the fact that from Tredegar came nearly all the heavy ordnance that gave the Confederacy any chance for supremacy in the Civil War; and that Richmond, and Virginia traditionally have shown a deep concern for their history. The Tredegar Rolling Mill was formed, 1836, and in the 1840s production of federal armaments began. When the works was confiscated by the South in 1861, it was expanded to become the seat of their heavy arms manufacture. Last used for RR rail specialties and wheel production, the plant was closed in 1957 when purchased by Albemarle Paper Co (now Ethyl Corp) and has since, building by building, slowly become ruinous.

Last June's Agnes floods advanced the deterioration, and the city demanded razing of certain especially hazardous portions. This apparently triggered a benign impulse within the Ethyl heart, with the result that they undertook full restoration of one of the CW period shop buildings (left, above) *despite the fact that no particular use was planned for it*. The work is now in hand, under the sympathetic, able supervision of properties mgr R E Johnson. Another structure of the same period will be retained, plus fragments of several others.

Ethyl, in joining with Reynolds Metals Co, which has restored a section of the James River & Kanawa Canal on its property just downriver from the Tredegar site (SIAN 1:2), is participating in a new era of corporate responsibility that we greet with elation.



**SALVATION OF CROWN & EAGLE**

Finding sympathetic adaptive uses for New England's hundreds of disused 19thC textile mills and factories has been one of our most challenging and frustrating industrial preservation problems. Many have, indeed, been usefully re-employed as schools, colleges, warehouses, professional offices and factories. In addition, a common proposal has been 'housing': for the rich, the poor, the elderly, the retired, et al, but for one reason or another—mostly financing hurdles—until recently none of these have materialized.

Now, it seems, one may, happily, in the case of the Crown & Eagle Mill, N Uxbridge, MA (visited on the Oct 1972 SIA tour), which since 1967 has been the focus of intense interest by practically every individual and organization having the least concern for the history of the textile mill in the US, being widely regarded as the architecturally finest and historically purest cotton mill in the region. The Crown Mill (with belfry) was built c1825; the Eagle c1829 and the brick connector 1851. Operations ceased in 1924 and the mill has been vacant for most of the time since. In 1967 it was recorded by HABS/Smithsonian, later was entered on the Natl Register, and has been the subject of endless preservation-adaptive use plotting. Recently the Framingham, MA architects and planners, Healy, Healy & Brown, have purchased the mill and under their *Millhaus Program* are subdividing the interior into 30 one bedroom and 22 two bedroom apartments. It is gratifying to note that the exterior and park-like grounds will be left essentially intact. HH&B has completed 2 other Millhaus projects—conversion of factories to apartments at Mansfield and Upton, MA.

### Where is the *Belle of Dixie*, Now That We Need Her?

The Kingston, Ontario *Whig-Standard* on 6-7-8 July is sponsoring in Navy Bay what they bill, if we can believe our eyes, as the world's First Great Steamboat Race [their caps] to be administered by the Frontenac Society of Model Engineers (SIA). FSME and Pumphouse Steam Museum (SIAN 1:6 &

**1974 ANNUAL CONFERENCE.** In the immediate aftermath of the Troy Conference, it is not too soon to start thinking of next year's: **Pittsburgh, PA, Sat & Sun, 27 & 28 April.** Mark the date now. *Other organizations please note to avoid conflict.* Nor is it too soon to begin thinking about papers. A formal call will appear in the July *SIAN*. A number of interesting and stimulating activities already have been planned.