



# SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

## NEWSLETTER

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Left. Overall view of lower-race section, Grant Locomotive Works yard.

Right. Archeological observer Budd Wilson cleaning section of Morris Canal barge found during demolition of DL&WRR Station in path of highway construction. Remains of canal wall are at the left (6-ft. scale).



### PATERSONIAN ARCHEOLOGY

Paterson, NJ's historic industrial district (SIAN 1:5, 2:1, Suppls 2 & 3) is the scene of a salvage archeological project sponsored by the Great Falls Development Corp, which is receiving financial support from the state and federal depts of transportation. The work began with 16 weeks of excavation, which ended 1 Nov, to be followed by two years of artifact analysis, historical research, oral history, and compilation of a comprehensive salvage report.

The work to date has attempted to rescue information and artifacts from the path of NJ Route 20, in its original plan to have destroyed half of the district's industrial structures. GFDC has been able to persuade the highway planners to consider the historical merit of the area before further contracts are let. The present project is salvaging material from the path of a large (56" dia) storm drain being laid through the district to relieve possible flooding due to previous highway construction. Here, partial success can be reported, as the NJ DOT has agreed to review alternate tunnel design possibilities that would avoid damaging historical material. Though no final decision has been made, GFDC is hopeful that the road builders have realized the value of what has been unearthed and will move to save the site from destruction.

The finds that have led to this thoughtful revision of plans are in a deeply stratified site that chronicles American industrial development from the 1790s to the present. A long, long-covered tail race, serving a 1000' block of mills on Market St, was found intact. It had been, we think, roofed over with brownstone blocks and brick vaulting in the mid-19thC, allowing locomotive works to be built over it. This "lower raceway" has been entered and four cross channels that discharged into it from the middle race have been located. Each has evidence of a wheel or turbine pit, although none contain original equipment.

Remains of early 19thC mills also have been exhumed. Built over these earlier walls are the parallel bays of a locomotive erecting shop, with a double row of brownstone footings for interior columns. A layer of coal ash was found over the bays, which I believe was used to level off the building's ground floor. Above this remnants of a wooden floor were

found, revealing, probably, an adaptation of the erecting shop building for a textile mill. For the past 70 or 80 years the mill was closely identified with the textile industry, especially silk, for which Paterson was famous.

Although no careful description or analysis of features or artifacts has yet been done, we can note several significant finds. The presence of many files, for instance, suggests that locomotive construction in the 19thC required a great deal of hand fitting. Of singular interest is a round brass manufacturer's plate, 8" diam, bearing the legend "New Jersey Locomotive and Machine Co., Paterson." Although that company was on the site between 1850 and 1857, the building was identified with the Grant Locomotive Co during most of its use.

Other excavations, in various stages, include a profile cut of the middle raceway, providing information on the race's construction and original position, and an excavation along the largest erecting shop of Rogers Locomotive Wks, revealing a cellar that had long been covered by 5 ft of slag and fill. We are now testing an area where research suggests a RLW smith shop and a separate hammer shop were located. The smithy may have contained 50 forges.

A salvage archeological precedent was set in this project: the departments of transportation supporting research by an archeological observer, whose work entailed observing highway excavation near, but not in the nationally recognized district. Budd Wilson (SIA), known for his glass-house site dig at historic Batsto Village in South Jersey, is the observer. He has shown that much useful information can be gleaned through such last minute observation. Although he had authority to halt construction, the cooperation of S J Groves Constr Co's crew made this unnecessary. Most importantly, the Lackawanna RR station was recorded before demolition. Beneath the RR embankment, portions of the Morris Canal's sandstone walls were unearthed. Canal muck, full of artifacts, was exposed after some 70 years. As the excavation expanded, major elements of a partially burned canal barge emerged.—Edward S Rutsch.

*Mr Rutsch will report further. He invites those interested or who have pertinent information or questions to contact him at the GFDC lab, 15 1/2 Van Houten St, Paterson 07510, (201) 278-2800.*