



SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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SAVING STEEL *SIA Grant Helps Western Reserve H.S. Process Company Records*

The American steel industry has had a tumultuous history, with astounding peaks and devastating valleys. During the 20th century, the steel industry was one of the prime drivers of the economy, and in certain areas of the country, entire cities owed their livelihoods to the sprawling mills that dominated their skylines. By the 1980s, radical change was wracking the industry as longtime companies faced downturns, offshore competition, labor strife, increasing regulation, and complacent management. Storied companies disappeared into mergers or closed. While the industry seemed to right itself by the 1990s, it proved only temporary. Another downturn in the early 2000s resulted in the loss of still more companies that entered bankruptcy, closed, or were bought by foreign owners.

As these changes were playing out, being in the right place at the right time permitted the Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) in Cleveland to play a significant role in saving some of the proud heritage of the steel industry. During the late 1990s, WRHS had been building a relationship with LTV Steel to collect oral histories from retired workers for a proposed exhibit. After a time, the company's representatives saw that WRHS wanted to preserve the history of the steel industry in Cleveland. In 2000, LTV entered their second bankruptcy, and though company officials pledged to find a way out, longtime employees were skeptical and felt that the company would close.

One day while WRHS staffers were working with LTV's retirees at the headquarters of the company's Cleveland

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All photos courtesy WRHS

Republic Steel's Warren Works, ca. 1930. Hand-rolling silicon-steel sheets.

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CALENDAR

2008

Mar. 15: 27th Annual Canal Symposium, Easton, PA. Co-sponsored by the National Canal Museum and Lafayette College. Info: <http://canals.org>.

Apr. 10-12: Business History Conference, Sacramento, CA. Info: www.h-net.org/~business/bhcweb.

Apr. 28-29: The 8th Historic Bridge Conference, Columbus, OH. Info: [Hojjat Adeli, adeli.1@osu.edu](mailto:HojjatAdeli,adeli.1@osu.edu).

May 7-10: Vernacular Architecture Forum, Annual Meeting, Fresno, CA. Info: vernaculararchitectureforum.org.

May 8-10: Early American Industries Assn., Annual Meeting, Albany, NY. Info: www.eaainfo.org.

May 16-19: Railroad Station Historical Society, Annual Meeting, Charleston, SC. Tours, auction, banquet. Info: Ted Xakellis, 10208 Brunswick Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20902.

May 18: Design Histories of Everyday Objects Symposium, Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, DE. Info: Carol Lockman, clockman@hagley.org.

May 19-23: National Park Service Archeological Prospection Workshop, Fargo, ND. See article in this issue. Info: www.cr.nps.gov/mwac/.

May 29-June 1: SIA 37TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SAN JOSE, CA. Sponsored by the Samuel Knight Chapter, SIA. Info: <http://knightsia.org/sia2008>.

June 16-22: National Railway Historical Society Convention, Fort Worth, TX. Rail excursions and tours. Info: www.lonestarrails2008.com.

Aug. 5-10: Intl. Committee for the History of Technology Annual Symposium, Victoria, BC. Info: <http://icohtec.uvic.ca/>.

Sept. 1-4: First Chinese Intl. Conference on Industrial Heritage, TICCIH 2008, Chengdu, China. See article in this issue. Info: www.ticcih.org.

Sept. 11-14: The 6th Preserving the Historic Road Conference, Albuquerque, NM. Info: www.historicroads.com.

Sept. 11-14: Society for Commercial Archeology Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM. Paper sessions and tours of the Old Spanish Trail, Ozark Trail, and Route 66. In conjunction with the Historic Road Conference (see above). Info: www.sca-roadside.org.

Sept. 24-27: Textile Society of America Symposium, Honolulu, HI. Info: www.textilesociety.org.

Sept. 29-Oct. 4: 16th General Assembly & International Scientific Symposium of the Intl. Council on Monuments & Sites (ICOMOS), Quebec, Canada. Theme: The Spirit of Place between the Intangible and the Tangible. Info: <http://quebec2008.icomos.org>.

Oct. 9-12: Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) Annual Meeting, Lisbon, Portugal. Info: www.shot.jhu.edu.

Nov. 6-7: Automobility: A Conference on the 100th Anniversary of the Model T, Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, DE. See article in this issue. Info: Carol Lockman, clockman@hagley.org. ■

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