

SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 38

Spring 2009

Number 2

AT LAST! PATERSON GREAT FALLS NATIONAL PARK

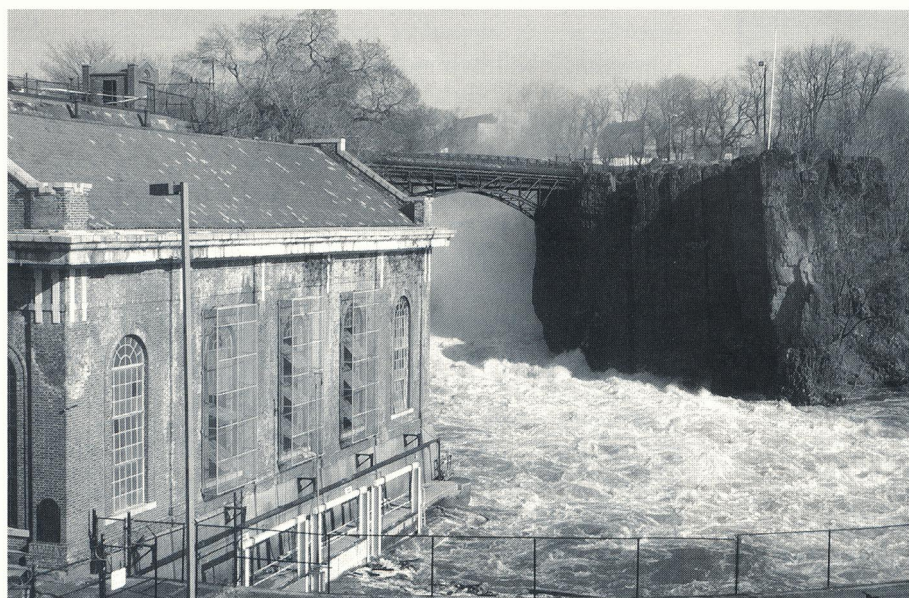
On March 30, President Obama signed the Omnibus Lands Act. A provision in the act creates the newest unit of the National Park System—Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park—headline news for IA and industrial heritage preservation in the U.S.! Over many years, Paterson, N.J., has been near and dear to SIA members. It was there in 1791 that Alexander Hamilton created the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufacturers (S.U.M.). His vision of tapping the waterpower in the 77-ft.-high Great Falls of the Passaic and creating a community overseen by a corporation devoted exclusively to manufacturing was far ahead of its time. It was also an expression of significant tensions in the early political development of the nation, since the Hamiltonian vision as embodied in the S.U.M. was at odds with the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian nation. The S.U.M. initially employed Pierre L'Enfant,

the same architect who laid out Washington, D.C., to lay out the waterpower system and Paterson's city plan.

While a great manufacturing city did eventually grow around the waterpower system, it was not exactly as Hamilton and the other founders of the S.U.M. had envisioned. The S.U.M. soon discovered that it did not have the resources to undertake the ambitious plan. The S.U.M. concentrated its resources on developing water rights and leasing land to entrepreneurs who then took on the financial risks associated with developing the mills and the diverse array of manufacturing technologies that went along with them. In many ways, this pattern of diverse, small-scale manufacturing was more typical of early American industrial development than the concentrated system of textile manufacturing employed at Lowell, Mass. Lowell National Historical Park became America's first national park with an industrial heritage emphasis nearly

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Martin Maver



Great Falls and the S.U.M. Powerhouse, part of American's newest National Park.

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