



SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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SIA IN THE GREEN MOUNTAIN STATE REVIEW OF VERMONT FALL TOUR 2010

Bright, crisp days and hints of fall foliage color greeted nearly 100 SIA members who attended the SIA's Fall Tour in Vermont, September 16-19. But the star attraction wasn't the weather or the leaves, it was Vermont's IA heritage in the form of historic granite quarries, copper mines, and machine shops. The itinerary was rounded out by process tours of modern-day industries carrying out a range of craft-based manufacturing from exercise machines to dairy products.

Home base for the tour was Vermont's capital, Montpelier, with about half the participants choosing to take up economical housing in the dormitory of the Vermont College of Fine Arts on a hill overlooking downtown. A range of hotels and bed-and-breakfasts were available to those seeking more refined accommodations. From centrally located Montpelier, tours ranged up and down the I-89 corridor from Windsor to the southeast on the Connecticut River to Burlington to the northwest on Lake Champlain. This meant that most tours

were within an hour's drive of Montpelier.

The Thursday early bird tour traveled to the Windsor-Springfield area and featured an eclectic mix of historic sites and modern-day process tours. The first stop was the **American Precision Museum** in Windsor. We were met by Christopher Marston and John Johnson [both SIA] who led a tour of the recent findings of a Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) study of the building's wheel-pit and waterpower system [see full article in *SIAN*, Winter 2010]. The APM is located in the Robbins & Lawrence Armory, a classic brick New England mill constructed in 1846 for the manufacture of firearms and machine tools. Robbins & Lawrence is largely credited with developing machines that could do the repetitive tasks necessary to producing identical parts. Windsor and neighboring towns in the Connecticut River valley became a nationally renowned center for the machine tool industry for most of the 19th and 20th centuries. The APM commemorates this heritage

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Patrick Harschbarger

SIA members perch adjacent to the open shaft of the Elizabeth Copper Mine.

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**SOCIETY FOR
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CALENDAR

2011

Mar. 7-9: Iron & Steel Preservation Conference, Lansing, Mich. Paper sessions and hands-on workshops in riveting, welding, and other metals restoration processes. See article in this issue. Info: Vern Mesler, vernmesler@earthlink.net; (517) 614-9868.

Mar. 31-Apr. 2: Business History Conference, St. Louis, Mo. Info: Carol Lockman, (302) 658-2400, ext. 243; clockman@hagley.org.

Apr. 14-16: On the Surface: The Heritage of Mines and Mining, Innsbruck, Austria. Info: www.tourism-culture.com/conferences_and_events.html.

Apr. 20-23: Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Assn. and American Culture Assn. Joint Conference, San Antonio, Tex. Inclusive of paper sessions on topics of IA-related interest. Info: www.swtxpca.org.

May 31-June 4: Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Conference, Falmouth, Jamaica. Info: www.vafweb.org.

June 2-5: SIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SEATTLE, WASH. See article and call for papers in this issue. Info: www.sia-web.org.

June 20-26: National Railway Historical Society Annual Convention, Tacoma, Wash. Info: www.cascaderails2011.com.

Oct. 13-16: SIA FALL TOUR, QUINNEBAUG VALLEY, CONN. Info will be posted as it becomes available: www.sia-web.org.

Oct. 13-16: The 14th National Conference on Planning History, Baltimore, Md. Society for American City and Regional Planning History. Paper sessions and tours on architecture, planning, geography and landscape design. Info: www.dcp.ufl.edu/sacrph.

Nov. 17-18: The Life of New Materials Conference, Hagley Museum & Library, Wilmington, Del. Co-sponsored by the Chemical Heritage Foundation and Philadelphia Area Center for History & Science. See article in this issue. Info: www.pachs.net/newmaterials. ■