



SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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THE QUINEBAUG-SHETUCKET VALLEY 2011 SIA FALL TOUR REVIEW

About 75 SIA members attended this year's Fall Tour to the Quinebaug-Shetucket Valley in the northeast corner of Connecticut, straddling the border with Massachusetts. This 1,085 sq. mi. valley has been called "The Last Green Valley" because of its surprisingly rural character, wedged in between the metropolises of the Northeast U.S. In 1994, Congress designated the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, recognizing the valley's special natural and historic resources, not the least of which is a strong industrial presence in 19th-century mill towns and small cities, such as Southbridge, Willimantic, and Mansfield. Tour participants enjoyed learning about the valley's IA, from old mills to modern industries that are carrying on with the region's tradition in manufacturing.

On Thursday, Oct. 13, the Fall Tour kicked off with an afternoon at **Old Sturbridge Village** in Sturbridge, Mass. Old Sturbridge is celebrating its 65th year as one of the

nation's premier open-air museums. Its focus is life in the 1790s to 1840s when profound technological progress and economic growth were transforming New England into a center of American manufacturing. Curator Tom Kellerman greeted our group in the museum's auditorium with a slide-illustrated presentation on the history of Old Sturbridge. Of particular interest was a discussion of the museum's founding family, the Wells, who built their fortune with the **American Optical Co.** in nearby Southbridge. Fittingly, the tour hotel was the Southbridge Conference Center, located in the company's former headquarters and main factory. Tom explained how the Wells family, particularly George B., turned a hobby of collecting antiques into a passion for New England history. In the late 1930s, he bought land on which to keep his ever-expanding collection, which eventually came to include entire buildings. Today, the museum preserves more than 40 buildings, almost all of them saved and moved to the site to illustrate

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Patrick Hansbarger, all photos

SIA members get in some exercise at the Connecticut Eastern RR Museum.

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CALENDAR

2012

Jan. 30: SIA CALL FOR NOMINATIONS OF OFFICERS DEADLINE. See article in this issue. Info: Rachael Greenlee; rhfctr@gmail.com.

Mar. 1: SIA INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION GRANTS, DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS. See article in this issue. Info: www.sia-web.org/grants/about.html.

Mar. 5-6: Iron & Steel Preservation Conference, Lansing, Mich. Paper sessions and hands-on demonstrations of historic fabrication and repair techniques. See article in this issue. Info: www.lcc.edu/manufacturing/welding/ISPCConference.

Mar. 16-18: Ephemera Society of America Annual Conference, Old Greenwich, Conn. Info: www.ephemerasociety.org.

Mar. 28-31: American Society for Environmental History, Madison, Wis. Info: <http://aseh.net>.

Mar. 29-31: Business History Conference Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, Pa. Info: BHC2012@hagley.org or Carol Lockman, (302) 628-2400, ext. 243.

Mar. 31: PAPER PROPOSALS DUE FOR SIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. See article in this issue. Info: Justin Spivey, secretary@siahq.org.

Mar. 31: SIA STUDENT TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS, DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS. See article in this issue. Info: Patrick Harshbarger, phsianews@aol.com.

Apr. 14: Material Culture Symposium for Emerging Scholars, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Del. Object-based research expanding the current scholarship of the history of architecture, design, technology and other subjects. Info: www.udel.edu/materialculture/emerging_scholars.html.

Apr. 18-22: Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting, Detroit, Mich. Info: www.sah.org.

Apr. 19-22: National Council on Public History Annual Conference, Milwaukee, Wis. Info: www.ncph.org.

Apr. 22-28: SIA STUDY TOUR, MALTA. Info: sia-events@siahq.org.

May 16-19: Early American Industries Assn. Annual Meeting, Solomons Island, Md. Info: www.eaiainfo.org.

May 31-June 3: SIA 41st ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CINCINNATI, OHIO. See article in this issue. Info: www.sia-web.org.

June 5-8: Re/theorization of Heritage, Inaugural Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden. See article in this issue. Info: <http://heritagestudies.org/conferences.shtml>.

June 6-10: Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Meeting, Madison, Wis. Info: www.vernaculararchitectureforum.org.

June 7-10: Mining History Assn. Annual Conference, Prescott, Ariz. Info: www.mininghistoryassociation.org.

June 18-24: National Railway Historical Society Annual Convention, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Info: www.nrhs.com.

July 3-7: 4th International Congress on Construction History, Paris, France. Info: www.icch-paris2012.fr.

Aug. 10-16: The Assn. for Industrial Archaeology Annual Conference, Chelmsford, Essex, England. Info: www.industrial-archaeology.org.

Oct. 18-21: SIA FALL TOUR, UTICA, N.Y. Tours of industrial sites in the Mohawk Valley and the Adirondacks. Info: www.sia-web.org. ■