



SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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PETTY'S RUN

Significant IA Site to Be Preserved and Displayed in Trenton

In 2008-09 large-scale archeological excavations in Mahlon Stacy Park adjacent to the New Jersey State House in downtown Trenton uncovered extensive remains of several 18th- and 19th-century water-powered industrial facilities ranged along a minor tributary of the Delaware River known as Petty's Run. Chief among these remains are the foundations of the cementation furnace and furnace house of the Trenton Steel Works, ca. 1745-84, which represent the first archeologically documented evidence of a colonial and Revolutionary War-era steel manufacturing site in North America. Also found were traces of the Harrow/Yard plating mill, ca. 1731-77, and a short-lived cotton mill, ca. 1814-20, as well as rather more substantive remnants of the Front Street paper mill, ca. 1827-76.

The Petty's Run Archeological Site, as these remains are now collectively termed, is concentrated within a roughly 100-foot-square area and contains a complex sequence of

masonry footings and cultural deposits extending to depths as much as 20 ft. below grade. An especially strong visual element within the site is the channelized stream of Petty's Run, which exists today as an abandoned brick-arched culvert within Trenton's city-wide storm sewer system, descending the bluff edge in a series of three long steps. The run's 18-ft. drop over a linear distance of around 85 ft. is the reason this spot in the landscape emerged as a focus of waterpower development.

The survival of industrial archeological remains at this location had been suspected for many years. Archival research and occasional subsurface testing since the mid-1980s had offered glimpses of what lay hidden beneath the park lawn. The ongoing design of the new Capital State Park, an ambitious scheme that seeks to upgrade the State House surroundings and reconnect downtown Trenton to the Delaware River waterfront, provided an opportunity for fuller exploration of the Petty's Run site with a view to its

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Hunter Research, Inc., all photos

View of Petty's Run excavation site from State House roof.

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CALENDAR

2012

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

Mar. 31: SIA STUDENT TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS, DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS. 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.materialculture.udel.edu/emerging_scholars.html.

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

Apr. 18-22: National Council on Public History Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, Wis. Info: www.ncph.org.

Apr. 22-28: SIA STUDY TOUR, MALTA. Info: www.siahq.org/tours/malta/about.html.

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. Info: www.sia-web.org.

June 6-9: Railroad Station Historical Society Annual Convention, Baltimore, Md. Info: www.rshs.org.

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.

July 11-25: Society of Architectural Historians Study Tour, Saxony, Germany. See article in this issue for details on SIA member participation. Info: www.sah.org.

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

Sept. 19-22: Textile Society of America Biennial Symposium, Washington, D.C. Theme: Textiles & Politics. Info: <http://textilesociety.org>.

Sept. 20-23: Preserving the Historic Road 8th Biennial Conference, Indianapolis, Ind. Info: www.historicroads.org.

Sept. 26-29: Society for Commercial Archeology Annual Conference, Wildwood, N.J. Tours of resort architecture and historic transportation. Info: www.sca-roadside.org.

Sept. 29-Oct. 4: Assn. for Preservation Technology International Annual Conference, Charleston, S.C. Info: www.apti.org.

Oct. 4-7: Society for the History of Technology Annual Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark. Info: www.historyoftechnology.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.

Nov. 4-11: The XV Congress of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), Taiwan. Info: www.mnactec.cat/ticcih.

Nov. 6-11: Assn. of Railway Museums (ARM) and Tourist Railway Assn. Fall Conference, Montreal, Que. Hosted by Exporail, The Canadian Ry. Museum. Info: www.railwaymuseums.org. ■