



Society for Industrial Archeology · New England Chapters

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 2 1993

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Call for Volunteers

Industrial History Fieldwork

Interested in shoe factories, machine shops, textile industries, and print works? Ever work on field documentation, library research, or oral histories? If you're interested, you are needed!

The Manchester Historic Association is in the beginning stages of a project to survey the industrial environs of Manchester, New Hampshire. Specific components of this project which will investigate all aspects of the city's industrial past are now being organized. Volunteers are needed to help with documentation of existing industrial sites, archival and library research, inventories of machinery and artifact collections, and interviews of workers and managers.

The staff of the MHA is organizing these efforts to support the research and development phase of a major exhibit, *Made in Manchester*, planned for early summer 1994. *Made in Manchester* will explore the growth of an industrial economy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and investigate how these industries shaped social life in the region.

For more information contact John Mayer, Manchester Historic Association, 129 Amherst Street, Manchester, New Hampshire 03101, (603) 622-7531.

Call for Papers

Papers are invited for presentation to the Seventh Annual Conference on New England Industrial Archeology to be held on February 5, 1994 at Plymouth State College, New Hampshire.

The conference is an annual project of the Southern and Northern New England Chapters of the Society for Industrial Archeology which alternately sponsor and host its meeting. The purpose of the conference is to encourage the study of the material culture of our industrial past and exchange information on all aspects of our industrial heritage, particularly in New England.

Papers should be no longer than twenty minutes in length and my describe research and/or field investigations of structures, machinery, industrial sites, manufacturing processes, etc. Reports on efforts at conservation, re-use, public education or advocacy programs are also welcome. Those who wish to propose a paper should send an abstract no later than January 10, 1994 to Dennis Howe, 22 Union Street, Concord, NH 03301-4250. Fax: (603) 226-2548.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY Saturday, February 5, 1994

Plymouth State College
Plymouth, New Hampshire

President's Report, NNEC

This has been a very busy year for the Northern New England Chapter. In addition to the Spring Chapter Meeting in Newport, New Hampshire, and the Fall Meeting in Middlebury, Vermont, we have cooperated with the Southern New England Chapter on a recording project at the Iron furnace at Richmond, Massachusetts; we continued work on the mill system at Canterbury Shaker Village in New Hampshire; and Chapter members presented papers at the midwinter conference which the Southern New England Chapter hosted at Lowell, Massachusetts. Most notable, however, was our hosting the Society for Industrial Archeology's National Fall Tour.

The organization and planning for the tour was the work of Dennis Howe. It went off without a hitch. Dennis and those who worked with him are to be congratulated for having conceived, organized, and carried out a tour which did indeed demonstrate that the mill towns of Northern New England are one of the foundations which rest the development of American manufacturing.

By the time this newsletter is published the Fall Meeting will have been held, and the new officers for 1994 will have been elected. This is my last report as Chapter President. Serving as Chapter President for the past four years has been an honor, but I must tell you that in terms of the work necessary for the Chapter to grow and thrive the president is one of the least important of the Chapter's members. It is those who suggest the meeting sites, who lead the tours, who contribute to the newsletter, who take part in the midwinter conferences, who represent our Chapter at national SIA events, and who take part in recording projects who are responsible for the growth of our Chapter.

I hope to continue to be an active member of the Chapter, and I hope that our new Chapter president, Woody Openo, will have as enjoyable a time as I have had. Thank you.

Walter Ryan
Claremont, NH

President's Report, SNEC

Members of the SIA who wonder weather or not the organization's activities ever really help save any of our historic industrial heritage might take note of the recent activity in the Massachusetts town of North Attleborough over the threatened 1874 Attleborough Falls Gasholder House. The possibility of a property transfer that would lead to the demolition of this structure prompted lively municipal discussions, particularly after the owner offered the town first option on the property. The North Attleborough Historical Commission fought hard to get the selectmen to approve a bond issue to purchase the Gasholder House. Mary Pine's *IA* article, "New England's Gasholder Houses" (*IA* Vol. 14, No. 1), called this structure the "least altered" and the site "most beautiful" of the gasholders she surveyed. The article was widely circulated at town meeting and helped raise local consciousness about the importance of this *IA* resource. The bond issue ultimately went down to defeat, but the impending sale also seems to have stalled, so the Commission is still trying to find a way to purchase the gasholder. Members with any ideas should contact Ann Chapdelaine, Chairperson, North Attleborough Historical Commission, 43 South Washington St., North Attleborough, MA 02760, (508) 695-1835.

Lighthouse enthusiasts may have noted the wide news coverage given to the successful move of the Southwest Lighthouse on Block Island, Rhode Island. The U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers oversaw the relocation of the massive brick lighthouse and the keeper's house 350 feet back from its eroding cliff-side perch. The success here may bode well for other endangered lighthouses in southern New England, including Gay Head Light on Martha's Vineyard, Sankety Light on Nantucket, and Highland Light on Cape Cod. While relocation has been proven feasible, the high costs may still deter action given tight fiscal times.

Many members heard John Goff's Winter Conference presentation on the endangered Souther Tide Mill in Quincy, Massachusetts. John has formed the Souther Tide Mill Preservation Society (c/o John Goff, Box 8655, Salem, MA 01971). I understand that the mill is now at the top of the list of possible historic properties acquisitions by the state's Metropolitan District Commission.

I've recently come across the first issue of *The Tinman's News*, published by the American Tinsmith Museum, Box 581, Sturbridge, MA 01566. The Museum is located in the Coppersmith Factory Store on Route 20 in Sturbridge.

On Saturday, November 6th, the National Park Service and the Metropolitan District Commission offered a tour of the Bunker Hill Quarry in Quincy, Massachusetts, followed by a tour of the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown. The tours, led by MDC archeologist Tom Mahlsted, focused on the engineering and construction aspects of the Monument (based on Tom's own research), which is celebrating sesquicentennial of its dedication.

Hopfully you will have received or be getting a mailing soon on our fall SNEC meeting. We need to hear from members willing to serve as officers and to keep the chapter active!

Michael Steinitz
Somerville, MA

Article

The New Hampshire Iron Works Fanconia, New Hampshire 1805–1864

[Editor's note: The author of this article, Vic Rolando, recently received The Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History, and the Special Merit Award from the Vermont Book Publisher's Association for his book *200 Years of Soot and Sweat: The History and Archeology of Vermont's Iron, Charcoal, and Lime Industries*. See review by Dennis E. Howe in the previous issue (Vol. 13, No.1, 1993) of this Newsletter.]

Soon after iron ore was discovered atop Sugar Hill in the 1790s, a small blast furnace was put into operation about a mile south of Fanconia village. Pig iron from the furnace was shipped to a foundry farther north, called the Upper Works, where it was converted to blister steel. The Upper works burned in 1827 and was not rebuilt. But by then the successes of the furnace works near Fanconia had already caught the attention of Boston investors, who founded the Hampshire Iron furnace Factory Company in 1805 and built it about a mile downstream from the initial works on the outskirts of the village (see Figure 1). It became known as the Lower works and included a blast furnace. Charcoal was made at nearby Coal Hill, still identified by Coal Hill Road, southeast of the village.

Operations proved highly successful until the 1840s when the works closed. In 1859 new owners took over under the name "New Hampshire Iron Works." They continued to run the works through the Civil War period but closed again soon after, possibly for the final time. A stock company called the

"Fanconia Iron Company" was formed in 1881 but apparently nothing happened because the buildings fell to ruin. Three years later what was left, except for the blast furnace, was destroyed by fire.¹

In his 1856-1858 report on the iron industry, James P. Lesley acknowledged the existence of the Fanconia furnace with only a short "not doing much for several years."² William Neilson described the furnace in 1866 as being 36 feet tall with an 11-foot-diameter bosh. The works were then owned by William E. Coffin & Company of Boston. Warm and cold blast was available and was introduced through three 3-inch diameter tuyeres, blown by a turbine. Production was 293 tons in 1860, 433 tons in 1862, and 490 tons in 1864. No production was shown for all the other years between 1854 and 1865. In 1864 the works operated 11 weeks, consuming 780 tons of magnetic ore, 150 tons of flux, and 73,000 bushels of charcoal. The maximum annual capacity of the furnace was estimated at 3,000 tons, and capital investment was \$100,000. When run with warm blast, the furnace could

make 60 tons of iron a week. A rich magnetic ore was used, hauled 1-1/2 miles to the furnace. Limestone was obtained nearby, and charcoal was hauled 2 miles on average. The company owned about 3,000 acres of wood land, an on much of what they sold the mineral rights were reserved. At the time of the report, the furnace was not in blast, and the company's attention was drawn to a copper vein on the property (near the Easton town line).³

The old stack is twice blessed, which uniquely sets it apart from most other blast furnace ruins in the Northeast. The first is that this stack is not the usual four-sided (square) shape, but rather eight-sided (octagon). Curved arches are built into every other wall section. The stack was built of huge granite blocks, some up to 2 feet high by 3 feet long (see Figure 2). The sheer weight of these blocks has contribute toward maintaining the relative stability of its nearly 40-foot height. "S. Pet-tee, Jr. 1859" is chiseled over the north arch, possibly indicating the year this, the third and final stack was rebuilt. The date also coincides with the formation of the New Hampshire Iron Works.

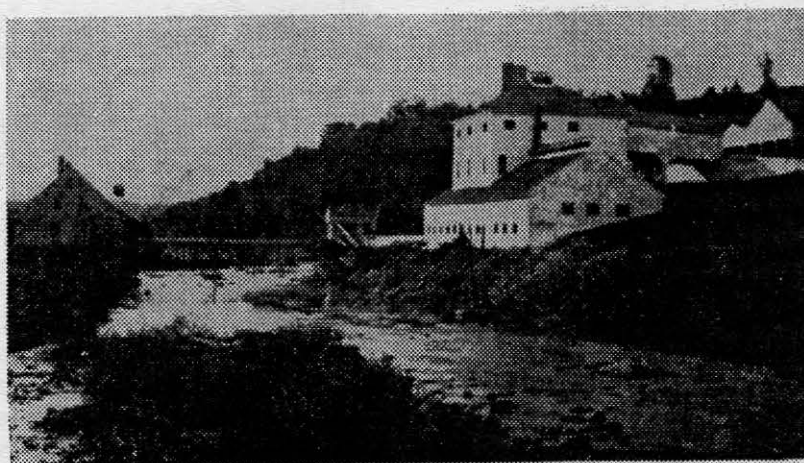


Figure 1. A ca.1875 photo of the New Hampshire Iron Works, approximately from today's Route 117 bridge from Franconia to Sugar Hill. The blast furnace stood under the tall structure at the right, next to the river. Note the dam on the river that (also?) provided waterpower to saw and grist mills on the left (Serafini, 1952; courtesy Frank E. Casey, Sr.).

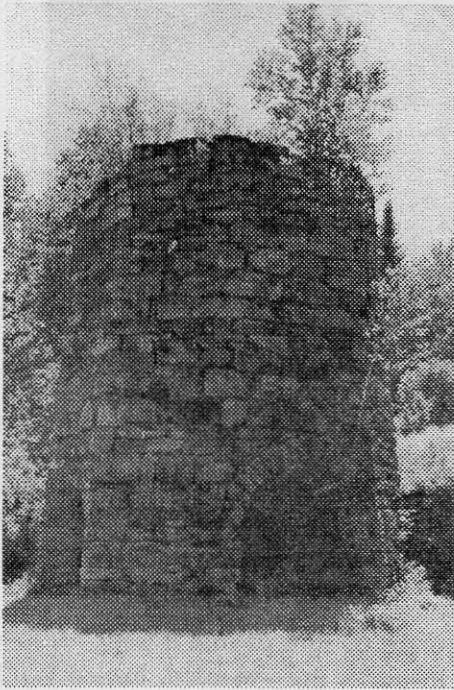


Figure 2. The furnace stack as shown on a 1970s postcard, looking much the same as it does today (except it is now surrounded by brush). Courtesy Olive P. Stannard.

The second unique aspect of the old stone stack was its owner, Fanconia businessman Frank E. Casey, Sr., who recognized the historical significance of the furnace when it was threatened with demolition just after World War II. Casey purchased the property in 1950, did some stabilization work on the stack, and cleared away the high brush and the trees that had hidden it from general view since the turn of the century. He focused public attention toward the stack by naming his restaurant "The Stone Stack Restaurant," and publishing a brochure containing a thumbnail history of the ironworks at Fanconia. He invited the public to visit the Old Stone Stack—a landmark of a forgotten industry.⁴ About the same time, the stack was also

book titled *Do You Know New Hampshire?* by Frances Ann Johnson (see Figure 3).

The Old Stone Stack can be seen today across the Gale River from Route 18, where a small parking area is identified by a state historic marker, thanks to Mr. Casey's foresight. The marker reads: "STONE IRON FURNACE - Due west stands New Hampshire's sole-surviving example of a post-revolutionary furnace for smelting local iron ore. The industry flourished during the first half of the 19th century, it produced pig and bar iron for the farm tool and cast iron ware, including famous 'Franconia Stoves'."

In 1985, when the author last investigated the status of the furnace, Frank E. Casey, Sr. had passed away, and the furnace and grounds were owned by Adelaide and Frank E. Casey, Jr.⁵ Due to the precarious nature of the stack, however, access to the grounds was limited by permission of the owners. From the parking area near the historic marker across the river, visitors may view, take pictures, and collect brightly colored slag from the river bed. The site is between Exits 37 and 38 of I-93 at Fanconia village.

This past summer, Bill Taylor of Plymouth State College was contacted by the Fanconia Area Heritage Council regarding interest in preserving the stack. The furnace is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin O'Brien, who live on the hill above the stack. The O'Brien house along with the furnace and grounds, totalling nearly 4 acres, is up for sale. The council would like to purchase up to a 2-acre parcel on which the furnace stands, and would like the Northern New England Chapter to help in saving the old stack.

Duncan Wilkie, while associate professor at Plymouth State College, and Jim Garvin, state architectural historian, inspected the furnace in 1989. Wilkie drafted an application for nomination to the Register of Historic Places which Garvin is now following up. In a letter to Jewell A. Friedman

of the Council, Garvin wrote "all of us in this office recognize the significance of the furnace and are eager to work with you to ensure its recognition and future safety and accessibility." But there appear to be no state or federal funds for preservation or purchase of the site. Brush has been cut from around the furnace, but the stack itself remains unprotected from moisture.⁶

The Council looks to the chapter for suggestions, recommendations, and an appraisal of the value of the property in the event they can buy the stack grounds. The owners presently want to sell the furnace, house, and grounds in a package deal. Active field members of the New England Chapters, fresh from recording 19th-century blast furnaces in two states (Forest Dale and Pittsford, Vermont, and Richmond, Massachusetts) are already familiar with these structures, what long-range preservation option exists, and what to look forward to regarding short-term preservation efforts. Whether the chapters would want to get involved in partially financing the purchase of a furnace ruin is up to the membership and officers, but this might tie the chapter too closely to one site in detriment of other valuable historical/archeological resources that New England has to offer. The chapters might rather remain in a cooperative, consultant posture, offering its membership for field recording and recommending preservation options.

The Forest Dale furnace, for example, doesn't appear to have fared very well under ownership of the State of Vermont. On the other hand, Allen Hitchcock, a private owner, continues to plug away with small, yet productive projects, for the preservation of his Pittsford furnace and grounds. A third option is what has happened at the Richmond furnace, which is protected by a land trust. Is there a land trust system in New Hampshire that could purchase the Franconia furnace, or provide a tax exemption to the owners

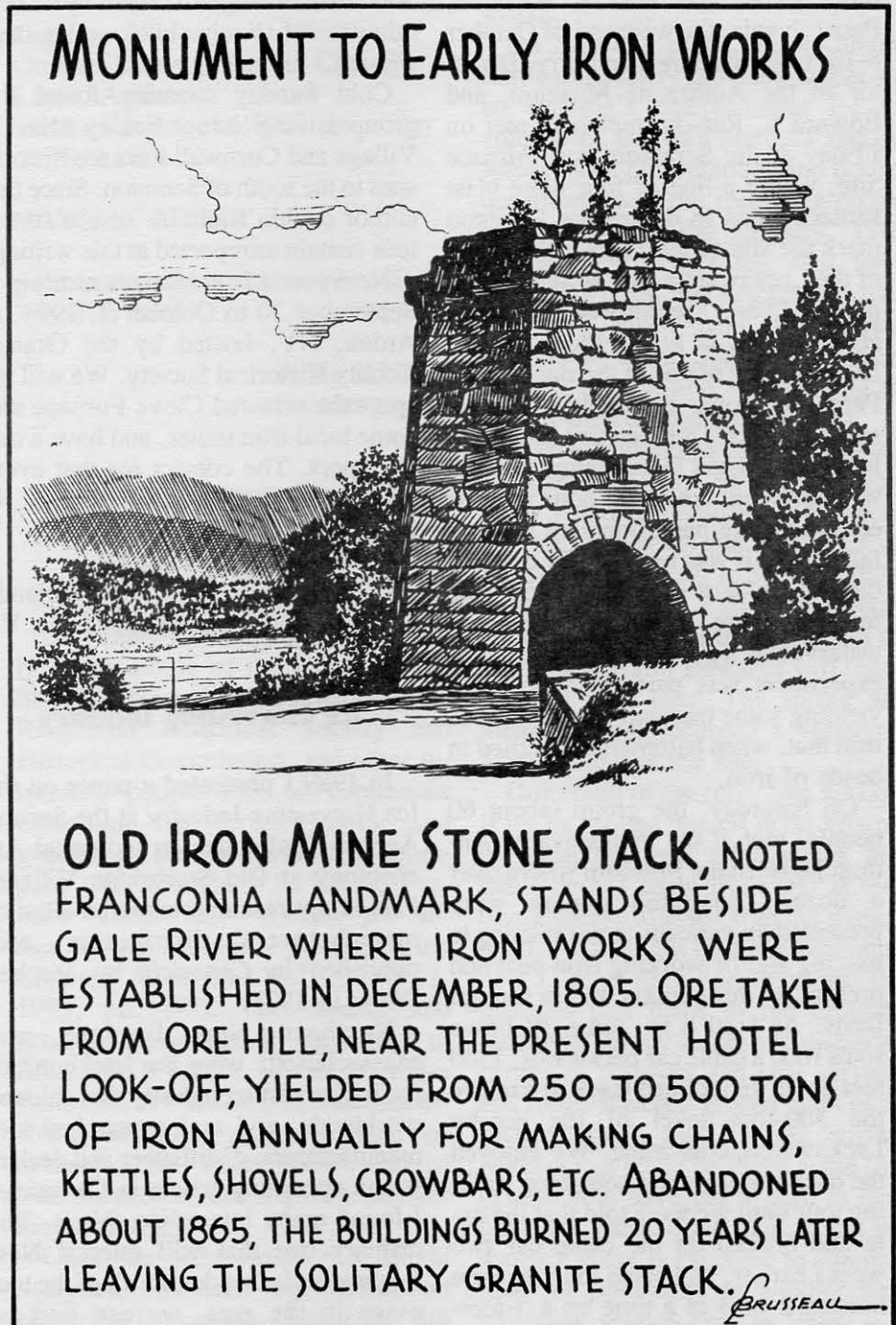
should they be induced to donate the property? Considering the number of chapter members in New Hampshire, we may be in a position to contribute several good options toward the preservation of the old stone stack. This author, at the least will try to work with the Council and New Hampshire state officials in whatever way assistance can be provided.

References cited:

1. Enzo Serafini, "Franconia's Forgotten Iron Industry," *White Mountain Echos* (Littleton: Courier Printing Company, Inc., Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 1952), pp. 15-18; and Katherine Blaisdell, *Over the River and Through the Years - Book Four: Mills and Mines* (Bradford and Woodsville: The Journal Opinion, 1982), pp. 42-45.
2. James P. Lesley, *Bulletin of the American Iron Association* [1856-1858], p. 76.
3. William Neilson, *Charcoal Blast Furnaces, Rolling Mills, Forges and Steel Works of New England in 1866* (American Iron and Steel Association, 1866), pp. 217-220.
4. Frank E. Casey, Sr., *Old Stone Stack* (brochure, 1950s).
5. Sylvia J. (Mrs. Frank E., Sr.) Casey and Adelaide P. (Mrs. Frank E., Jr.) Casey to Rolando, June 8, 1985.
6. Jewell A. Friedman to William Taylor, July 27, 1003.

Vic Rolando
Manchester Ctr., VT

Figure 3. A drawing from the series *Do You Know New Hampshire?* published by Frances Ann Johnson. The illustration was drawn by Claude L. Brusseau of Littleton, NH (*White Mountain Echoes*, Winter 1952, p. 11).



Iron Masters of SIA Meet at Scranton, PA

The 1993 meeting of Iron Masters (i.e., miners, colliers, forge and furnace hands, puddlers, founders and roll train hands) was held at Scranton, Pennsylvania, the weekend of October 8-10. Organized by Dan Perry, Director of the Anthracite Museum, and Edward S. Rutsch, members met on Friday at the Scranton Iron Furnace Site, where a line of four huge blast furnace ruins in downtown Scranton mark the site of the 1846-1902 works of the Lackawanna Iron & Steel Company. (The Steamtown National Historic Site is a city block away.) Near the base of one of the stacks, Dan Perry and some assistants worked a small, replica 18th-century bloomery for about 7 hours in an attempt to make wrought iron. About an hour into the operation, the hand-operated bellows failed, and it was replaced by connecting the exhaust of a watervac to the forge's tuyere, running the electric watervac by a portable generator. The experiment was partially successful, yielding some baseball-size chunks of iron that, when hammered, resulted in beads of iron.

On Saturday, the group (about 60 people) met at the Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum where over a dozen illustrated papers were presented on various topics relating to making and/or working iron past and present, in this country and in foreign lands. At 5:30 p.m. some 30 brave souls rode a cable car backwards, 1500 feet down an inclined track to explore the 300-foot level of the nearby Lackawanna coal mine. We enjoyed the dank underground hour-long walking tour until we were told that the axle had broken on the cable car two weeks earlier, and some tourists were hoisted 2 or 3 at a time up a 3-foot-diameter emergency air shaft in a small steel capsule, while others opted to walk back up the incline to the surface.

Saturday evening was a sort of "show-and-tell" at the museum in which participants showed "home movies" and special VCR iron programs (including one that featured Donald Duck smelting iron). This author also made a short presentation about researching, writing, and producing *200 Years of Soot and Sweat*, followed by a few minutes of lively book sales and signing.

Cold Sunday morning found the group driving to tour Eckley Miner's Village and Cornwall Furnace historic sites to the south of Scranton. Since this author couldn't join in, results of the tour remain unreported at this writing.

Next year's Iron Masters meeting is September 30 to October 2, 1994, at Arden, NY, hosted by the Orange County Historical Society. We will inspect the restored Clove Furnace and some local iron mines, and have a day of papers. The contact for that event is Ed Lenik, P.O. Box 437, Butler, NJ 07405-437 or call 201-492-8525.

Vic Rolando
Manchester Ctr., VT

Ice Harvesting Industry

In 1989 I presented a paper on the Ice Harvesting Industry at the Second Annual Conference on Industrial Archeology at Old Sturbridge Village. Part of my research involved a list of manufacturers, distributors, etc. published in *Chronicle* by Stephen White in 1977.

Northern New England and Massachusetts were the backbone of the ice harvesting industry that shipped worldwide, and as I researched tool manufacturers, distributors and dealers for an upcoming article in *Chronicle*, I found many interesting things. The primary one that will interest New Englanders is that despite all of the tool usage in the area, we can find no distributor or dealer in Maine or New Hampshire, and only one in Vermont. Massachusetts had not only the largest

manufacturers but also a large number of distributors. The following list is excerpted from the upcoming article and covers the four mentioned states.

Anyone who can add or correct this list in any form, shape or manner is invited to contact me at 303 Fisher Rd., Fitchburg, MA 01420, (508) 342-1350.

AMES PLOW COMPANY

Manufacturer & Dealer, Founded 1825
Farming implements and Machines
Contractors Supplies & Ice Tools
Quincy Hall, So. Market St., over Faneuil Hall Market, Boston, MA
53 Beekman St., New York
Factories: Worcester, MA (1906) and Framingham, MA
1837 Ruggles, Nourse & Mason
1856 Nourse Mason & Co.
1861 Oliver Ames & Sons
1864 Ames Plow Co.
Oliver Ames, President in 1913
Frederick B. Hill Treas./Genl. Mgr. 1913
Writer has letterheads from 1906-1919
In 1980s: Ames Plow Tavern at Quincy Market in Boston (same site?)

BRECK, JOSEPH & SONS (CORP.)

New England Agricultural Warehouse, Woodenware & Seed Store
47-54 N. Market St., Boston, MA
Established 1822
Agent for William T. Wood
Writer has copy of 1903 Catalog

GIFFORD-WOOD CO.

Est. 1814, Factories: Hudson, NY
NE Hq. 1915: 51-52 N. Market St., Boston
Western Hq. 1915: 123 N. Jefferson St., Chicago
Also mfg. coal elevating machinery
Cable address: "GIFWOOD,"

HUDSON"

Offices 1922: Electric Bldg., Buffalo, NY

24 Milk St., Boston

Offices 1926: 50 Church St., New York

565 W. Washington St., Chicago

222 State St., Boston

Peoples Bank Bldg., Pittsburgh

1274 Folsom St., San Francisco

Elihu Gifford estab. 1814 - foundry & machine shop

Later Gifford Bros. & Gifford-Wood Co. (1905)

Writer has copies of: Ice Tools Cat. -1026N

Ice Elevating & Conveying

Machinery & Ice Tools

Natural Ice Harvesting Equipment 1926, Cat. -1226

Ice Tools, Elevator-Conveyors 1915

Summer Bulletin of Ice Tools 1922

PARKER & WOOD

49 M. Market St., Boston

PARKER, HARRY J.

Construction Engineer, Marblehead, MA

1923 Specialist in ice and coal elevators and conveyors. Coal pockets and ice houses designed
Writer has letters

SIMONDS SAW CO.

Fitchburg, MA

Made regular ice saws and insert tooth

STAFFORD & HOLDEN MFG. CO.

Barre, VT

WOOD, WM. T. & CO.

Est. 1834. In 1905 united with Gifford Bros. under corp. name

Gifford-Wood Co.

Factory in Arlington, MA

1892 Address: 49 N. Market St., Boston

Boston warerooms: Joseph Breck & Sons, dealers in agricultural implements & seeds, 51 N. Market St. Cable "WOODICE, BOSTON"

Complete stock carried in Boston, New York, Albany, Detroit, Gaginaw, Chicago, St. Paul, Omaha, Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis, Atlanta

Writer has original 1902 cat.; copy of 1892 cat.

WYMAN, ABNER

Sold business to nephew Wm. T. Wood in 1845

Philip Whitney
Fitchburg, MA

Richmond Furnace Recording Project

May 21-23, 1993

On Friday morning, May 21, nearly 30 members of the Northern and Southern New England Chapters, the Richmond Historical Society and Historical Commission, and other interested people met to commence recording the furnace stack and grounds of the Richmond Iron Company (see Rolando, "Richmond Furnace: 1829-1923" *Society for Industrial Archeology - New England Chapters Newsletter* Vol. 13, No. 1, 1993, pp. 3-5). The furnace and grounds are located in the village of Richmond Furnace, about 10 miles southwest of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Volunteers for the project donated one to three of their weekend days to assist with the project, coming from all over the Northeast.

Under the field direction of David Starbuck, assisted by Richmond Historical Commission Chairman Bill Edwards, workers divided themselves between physical measurements of the furnace stack and grounds,

measurements of visible foundation holes, roads, and waterpower systems, and interpretation of the many stone walls, holes, and pieces of hardware found about the grounds. Also recorded were surface remains of mill sites in the vicinity of the grounds which might have operated contemporary with the works.

On Saturday night, the Richmond Historical Society provided supper and an evening's entertainment for the volunteers, at which Starbuck and Edwards made presentations and floored questions about the recording project and history of the industry. (This author, who hadn't felt well for a number of days, was stricken that morning and taken from the furnace grounds to nearby Hillcrest Hospital, missing the evening's events and the rest of the recording weekend.)

A second weekend of recording was accomplished July 30 and 31, when many volunteers returned to recheck a few measurements and continue from where things left off in May. Included this weekend was a small excavation at the base of one of the corners of the stack, which Bill Edwards will report on at a later date. The author also measured and recorded a variety of bricks found at the site.

One result of the recording sessions is the increasing interest in the grounds by local residents after seeing how many people came from afar at their own expense to assist with the work at hand. Another has been the generation of a 77-page draft document that includes plot plans of the grounds, theodolite survey angles and distances, results of compass and tape surveys, and rough-sketched ground maps of the furnace stack and all the surface features that could be found at the site. (Those who have yet to turn in their field data, please do so soon, to Bill Edwards.) Work is expected to continue with the possibility of another field recording session here in 1994.

Vic Rolando
Manchester Ctr., VT

NPS Photographs Cos Cob Power Station

The Historic American Building Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HEAR), a division of the National Park Service is documenting the Cos Cob, Connecticut, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Power Station. As the team works it is discovering unique artifacts that illustrate the technology of early twentieth century electrification. In the days before featureless "black boxes" and integrated circuits took over, engineers used mechanical timers, knife switches and notching relays to control and condition the enormous amounts of power from Cos Cob that were needed to run the nation's first electrified railroad. The plant's subterranean vaults hold turn-of-the-century steam engines, condensers, pumps and coal transport systems that are of exceptional interest to historians of technology, science and engineering.

Occasional evidence of the men who ran the plant turns up. An abandoned steam-powered clothes washing machine and centrifuge gives evidence of an unusual "fringe benefit." The workplace laundry is even equipped with pants stretchers to get a "just ironed" look. In a remote corner, far beyond the foreman's watchful eye, there's a comfortable reclining lounge chair. It marks the spot where a weary worker caught a bit of rest and relaxation.

The facility has now been photographed by Jet Lowe. Mr. Lowe is author of *Industrial Eye*, a pictorial collection of America's industrial past. Mr. Lowe is one of the few field photographers in the United States who works in large format (at least 5 by 7 inches). Some of his cameras look like they were borrowed from the Smithsonian; there is a faint air of Matthew Brady, Duguerre and Fox-Talbot about him.

Lowe normally works in damp and dim areas packed with the rusting hulks of massive steam hammers and towering steel rolling mills. He photographs the peeling paint of abandoned blast furnaces or the shimmering golden coils emerging from a brassworks with the same meticulous sense of artistry that Ansel Adams had for the wide open spaces.

His labors have taken him from the cable saddles at the pinnacle of the Golden Gate Bridge towers to the cavernous spaces of the Goodyear blimp hanger. Mr. Lowe, architects and an archeologist have photo-recorded the Cos Cob plant from its Ludowici rook tiles to the foggy depths of its condenser gallery. Their work will provide a permanent archival record of a trailblazing and largely successful chapter in the history of American transportation.

Background

Cos Cob Powerplant Significance:

The facility was built between 1905 and 1907 to furnish power for the New Haven Railroad's New York Division. It was the first main-line, long distance, electrified railroad in the United States. Technologies that influenced development of electrified rail systems worldwide were developed here.

Objectives:

Architectural technicians are measuring the building and producing large-format photographs and interpretive drawings. The historical archeologist is studying Cos Cobs history, power generation equipment and the technology that was developed for the project. The team's documentation will be deposited in the Library of Congress with duplication copies provided for the State of Connecticut archives and the Town of Greenwich.

Project Sponsors:

The Connecticut Historical Commission, The Town of Greenwich and the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record.

Personnel:

The team members are: Robert Grzywacz, project supervisor, a New Haven, Connecticut architect in private practice; Thomas Cirillo, architect technician (New York Institute of Technology); Dale Waldron, illustrator (Rhode Island School of Design); Robert Stewart, historical archeologist, (Central Connecticut State University); and photographer Jet Lowe from the Historic American Engineering Record - Washington office.

Page Belting Company to Vacate 19th Century Facility

Faced with a diminishing demand for leather power belting and other leather products, and increasing overhead costs, the Page Belting Company of Concord, NH, will move its manufacturing operations to a smaller, modern building early next year.

The company is one of only about twelve remaining in the United States that produces leather power transmission belting. It is the only one which continues to operate a curry shop that prepares leather for belting application. The Page Company has occupied its curry shop and belt shop buildings since their construction in 1892-93.

The 1894 product catalog announced that "These new buildings were built upon the most improved plans for mill construction. they were provided with electric motors, lighted by electricity, and furnished with the best known methods of protection against fire. The complete works contain 173,353 square feet of floors."

The future of the buildings which are for sale is uncertain. There is some local concern for their historical significance, and it is hoped that any development of the site will be sympathetic to the existing architecture. Although it has not been verified by



Figure 1. The familiar, landmark tower of the Page Belting Company's belting shop.

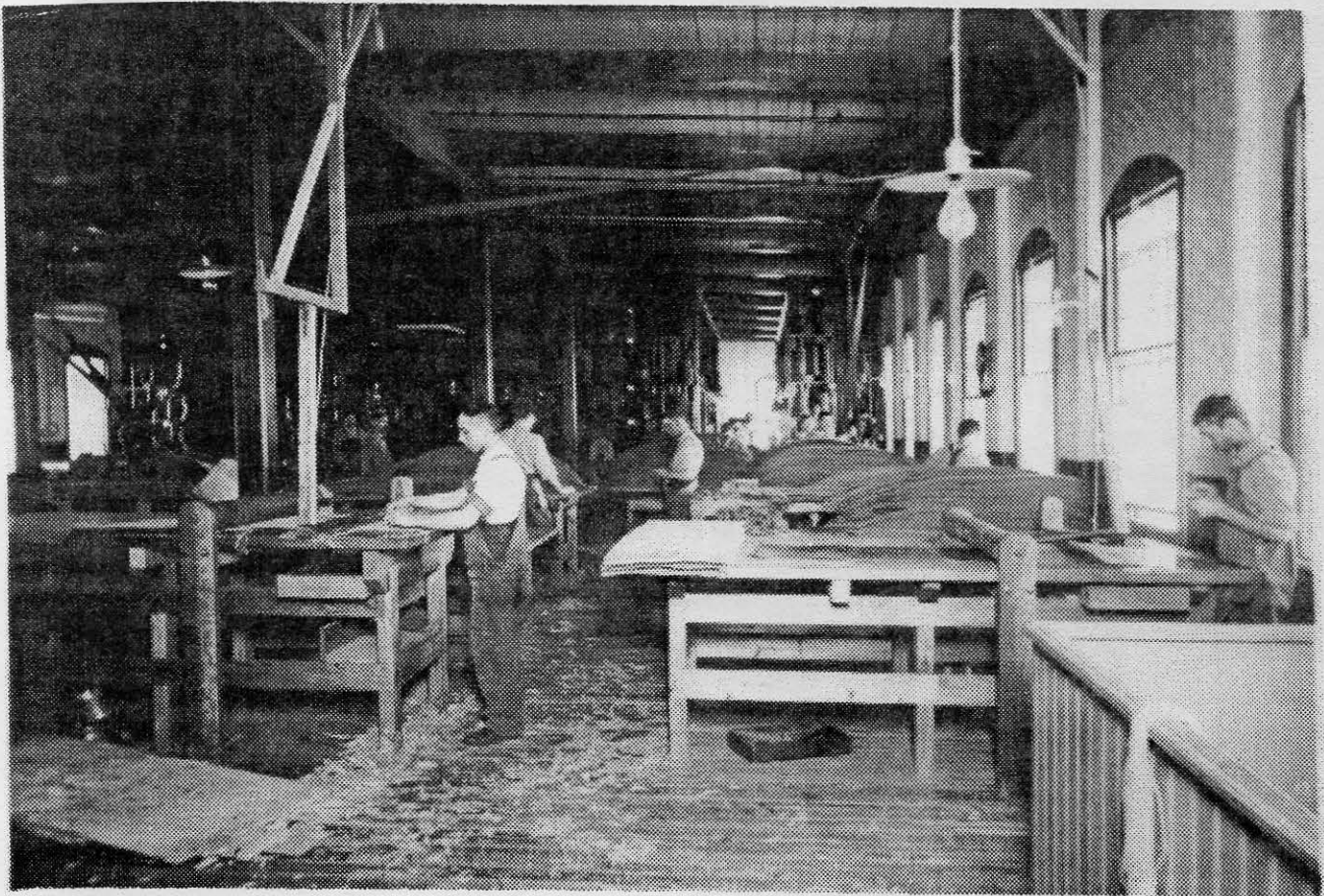


Figure 2. A c.1894 view of a Page Belting Company "fitting room" where belt sections were scarfed and matched.

research, it is quite likely that these buildings were the first to be constructed in New Hampshire with wiring for electric lighting, and with electric motors as prime movers for the power shafting.

The 19th-century process for manufacturing power belting at Page is the subject of an article in an upcoming issue of *IA*. While some of the equipment and machines have been replaced with improved versions, much remains the same in the current process of manufacture. It is probable that more changes in the process will occur after moving to new facilities.

The Northern New England Chapter has generously agreed to support some of the cost of photo documenting the

components of the belting manufacturing process before their removal from the buildings. In addition, historic photographs and documents held by the company will be accepted for curation by the New Hampshire Historical Society which will insure their availability to researchers in the future. Oral history recording is also planned.

Dennis Howe
Concord, NH

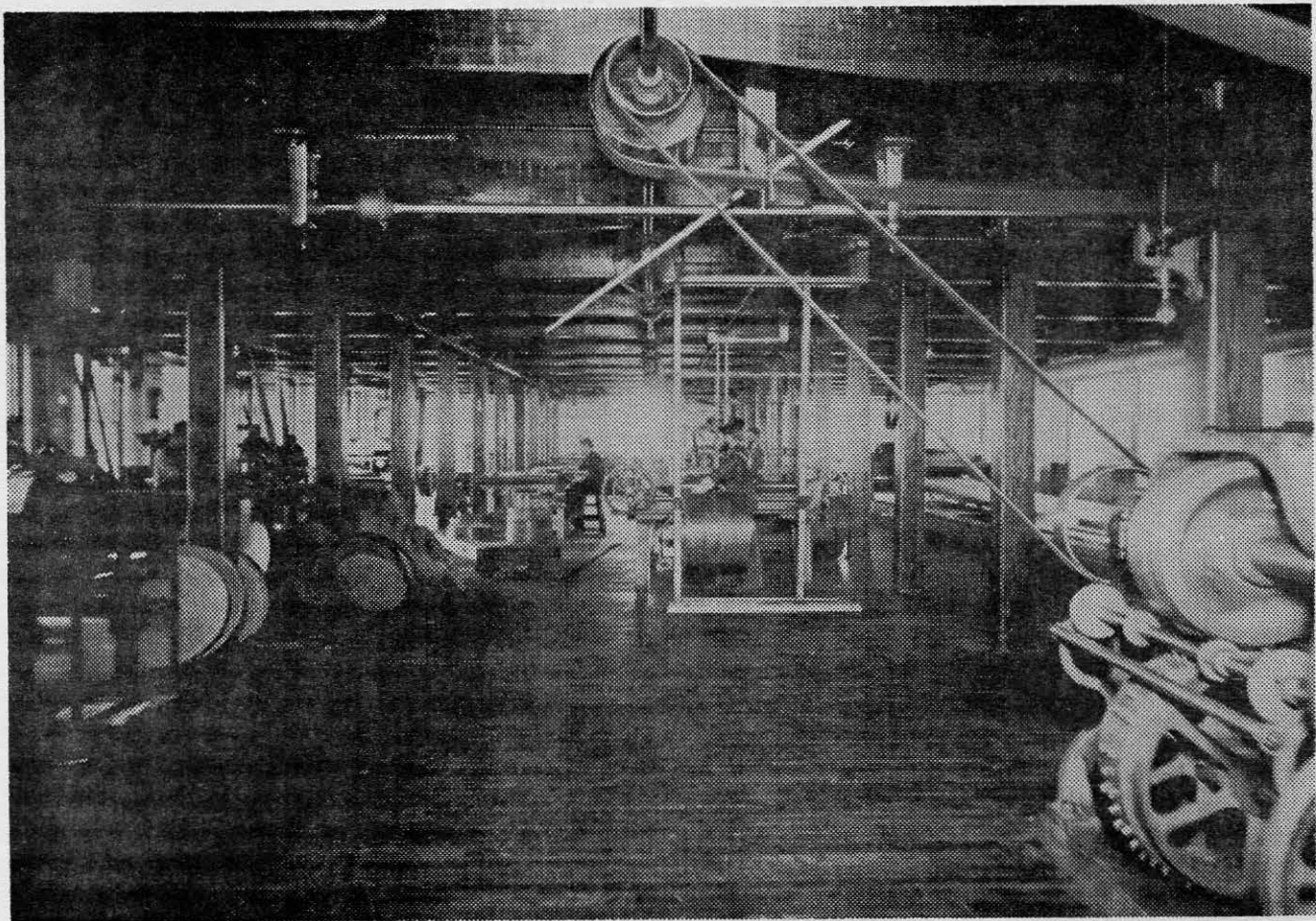


Figure 3. A c.1894 view of the "finishing room" at the Page Belting Company.



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