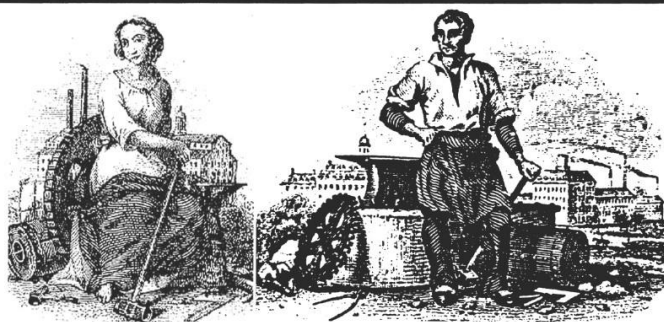




Society for Industrial Archeology · New England Chapters

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Contributors

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Northern Chapter Officers

Matthew Meuller, President
David Dunning, First Vice President
David Coughlin, Second Vice President
Richard Coughlin, Treasurer

Southern Chapter Officers

Leonard Henkin, Secretary
Sara Wermiel, Treasurer
Management committee: Betsey Dyer, Leonard Henkin, Ron Klodenski, Curtis Perrin, Saul Tannenbaum, Robert Timmerman, Sara Wermiel

Newsletter Editor

Sara Wermiel, swermiel@verizon.net

Newsletter editor wanted!

Your chance to contribute to IA history!

The Northern and Southern New England chapters of the SIA seek a volunteer to serve as newsletter editor

The NECs newsletter has been published semi-annually by the chapters since 1980. Members read and enjoy the newsletter: it's an important contribution to the field of IA. Now we need a new editor to carry on this valuable work. Whereas in the past, David Starbuck and Dennis Howe produced the newsletter together, the production process since David's passing has been different. Today, the editor has more support, it's a more collective effort. More recently, Robert Timmerman served as editor but can no longer continue in this role.

The duties of the editor are to call for, and ask people to write, articles; receive the articles (either via email or the chapter's Google drive); edit the articles for grammar, length, clarity; and arrange the order of articles and images with captions to appear in the newsletter. The editor will create final copy. She or he does not necessarily do the layout (unless they want to). Other people will do the layout, checking and final proofreading, and create a pdf, which each chapter prints for its own members. The newsletter is produced two times per year, so the editor should be available in April/May and October/November for this work. If you are interested in being editor, please contact Sara Wermiel, Treasurer, SNEC-SIA, at swermiel@verizon.net.

NNEC President's Report, Spring 2026

Matthew Mueller, President
NNEC-SIA chapter

On October 7, 2025, at the Northern New England Chapter annual meeting, Matthew Mueller was elected as the new president. Past president David Dunning agreed to remain on the board as vice-president.

A successful Spring conference was held in Concord, N.H. on March 28, 2026. All of the presentations from the conference can be found on YouTube – see the item below about how to access them. The 2026 spring tour was held in Claremont N.H.. I am happy to be taking on this new role and to see the chapter continue to thrive and grow.

NNEC President's Report, Fall 2025

David Dunning, then President
NNEC-SIA chapter

The fall tour was held on October 7th in Brunswick, Maine. The write-up and pictures are in this issue of the newsletter. At the annual meeting, which was held during lunch, Matthew Mueller was elected as the new president of our chapter. Matthew has been a member of both the NNEC and the national SIA. He is well qualified for leadership as the past president of a Walgreen's Pharmacy, in Maine. David Dunning was elected to fill the vacant slot for 1st vice president. The two will work together during the transition.

NNEC Treasurer's Report, Fall 2025

Rick Coughlin, Treasurer, NNEC-SIA

Bank Balance on April 1, 2025: \$2,887.94
Bank Balance on August 31, 2025: \$2,450.85
Thus, the bank balance has decreased \$437.09 in the past 5 months. The major expense during this time period was \$472.09 for the Spring 2025 newsletter.

2025 annual dues paying NNEC members (\$20/yr.) as of September 15, 2025 was 24. The number of life members is estimated to be 23.

Membership income, annual expenses and bank savings do not balance in these reports. That is because paid membership is on an annual basis whereas the Treasurer's Reports are based on income/expenses at the time of the Spring and Fall reports. Also, we have generous members that make voluntary donations to the NNEC-SIA.

Likely due to COVID we no longer have attendance at our conferences as we have in the past, when on average 30-50 people attended. The past two SIA conferences that the NNEC-SIA hosted averaged 22 paid conference attendees. Let's hope the 2026 conference attendance improves.

SNEC Treasurer's Report for 2025

Sara Wermiel, Treasurer/registrar, SNEC-SIA

In 2025, the Southern New England Chapter of the SIA (SNEC-SIA) had 120 dues-paying members, an increase of 13 members from 2024. SNEC hosted the annual New England Conference on Industrial Archeology in 2025, and the conference attracted new members.

Income from dues and donations in 2025 came to \$776.00. SNEC also had income from conference fees: \$570.00. In addition, there was interest income from a money market account, CDs, and bonds: \$458.97. The sum of all income was \$1,804.97. Total expenses for the year, detailed below, came to \$1,220.29, meaning SNEC ended with an increase in its bank account; however, this was due to only one, rather two, newsletters being produced.

SNEC hosted the annual New England IA conference, held at the Attleboro Area Industrial Museum in Attleboro, Mass. The program included eight presentations on a range of IA topics (from geology to the first telephones in Walpole, Mass.), lunch (included in the conference fee), and a tour of the historic Dodgeville Mill, organized by the Attleboro Historic Preservation Society. Forty-

two people attended the conference, and the feedback from attendees was very positive. SNEC donated to the Attleboro Historic Preservation Society and the Attleboro Area Industrial Museum (which did not charge us a fee to use their facilities), with our thanks for their hospitality. The biannual website hosting fee will be paid in 2026. SNEC paid for printing and mailing one newsletter (the fall newsletter did not come out, regrettably) as well as for mailing announcements to members who don't have email, and membership dues for its two officers.

SNEC is currently led by the chapter's Treasurer/registrar, Sara Wermiel. Leonard Henkin is the chapter's Secretary. Chapter events and business are handled by a Management Committee with seven members: Betsey Dyer, Ron Klodenski, Curtis Perrin, Saul Tannenbaum, and Robert Timmerman, in addition to Sara and Leonard. The committee meets periodically via Zoom. This past year, committee members helped with putting out the newsletter; planning and organizing tours; and planning the 2025 New England IA conference. Betsey Dyer is the contact for tours and conference planning. Robert Timmerman edited the spring New England chapters newsletter and Ron Klodenski, Curtis Perrin, and Sara Wermiel helped with proofreading, layout, editing, and printing. Thanks to the members of the Management Committee! Three cheers for former SNEC member Marc Belanger, who continues to manage the NEC website and email distributions for the New England SIA chapters!

Presentations from the 2026 New England Chapters SIA Conference are Online
Ron Klodenski, SNEC

If you missed the March 28th NEC-SIA conference in Concord, N.H., or wish to re-watch any of the day's presentations, you can view video recordings on YouTube by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/NEC-SIA-Videos> or by

entering "nec-sia concord" in the YouTube search box.

This year's conference was hosted by the SIA Northern New England Chapter. It featured six presentations: steam railroad history in Berwick, Maine; a tour of the planned industrial town of Saltaire in England; an update on the Industrial History New England initiative and SIA efforts to support local chapters; the transformation of Rumford, Maine, from a wilderness to an industrial center; brickmaking in colonial New Hampshire; and the rise and fall of a tide mill town near Bath, Maine.

**NNEC Spring Tour Report,
Merrimack, N.H., May 30, 2025**
Dave Coughlin, NNEC

We had a nice day to see and hear about the history of Merrimack, N.H., and the many industries along the Souhegan river. Chuck Mower, a town historian, told us how land in Merrimack was given to soldiers of previous wars rather than cash payments. Originally the meetinghouse was located in the geographical center of town. This was a few miles from the Merrimack River, which as the years passed became an important way to transport goods. Over time the town spread along the Merrimack River. In the 1730's, a grist mill was built by the Souhegan River close to where it flowed into the Merrimack River.

Over the next 250 years, the mill pond was enlarged, power canals were built, and numerous industries were established in this area. Cotton and woolen mills, a tannery, carpet factory, shoddy mill, shoe factory, leather mill, nail mill, excelsior mill, and other mills were located there. By the year 2000, all these mills had been demolished. The area was designated a hazardous waste site and surrounded by a chain-link fence. In 2008 the dam was removed and soon after the Watson

family donated money to rehabilitate the site into a nice town park.



Old power canal (Chip Wheeler)

We met at the park to start the day and walked through where the power canal runs under the Chamberlain Bridge, which carries Rt. 3 over the Souhegan River. Built in 1921, this bridge, along with a sister bridge in Wilton, N.H., were the last stone arch bridges built in the state. At this site, there are four large, metal display panels with old pictures showing what the area once looked like. It's surprising the large mill size and the number of mills once located at this site along a rather small river. We could see foundations of mills and the decaying remains of old tanning vats.

From there we went to Chuck's old barn, and he explained how he makes Windsor chairs and the chair's history. As the story goes, King George III was traveling in heavy rain and stopped in Windsor, England. He sat in a chair made by a local craftsman and said the chair "pleased him," which was enough for the design to become very popular and spread throughout England and later the colonies. Chuck has been making Windsor chairs for over 50 years. The seat is made first with white pine which is easy to shape. Then maple or birch legs are added. The back requires a flexible kind of wood, such as ash, for bending, which is done by steaming.

Merrimack is a town with four villages, none of which was the original location of the town. The center of Merrimack today, with its town hall, library, police and fire station, etc., are close to where the mills were along the Souhegan River. This is called Souhegan Village. Two villages were located near ferry crossings of the Merrimack River. These are Reeds Ferry and Thornton Ferry. The fourth village is called South Merrimack and is located where the train from Nashua to Milford once stopped. Once the train from Nashua to Concord was built in 1842, there were stops at Thornton Ferry, Souhegan Village, and Reeds Ferry.

Just a few houses down from Chuck's brick 1815 colonial house on Depot St. is the former location of Reeds Ferry. There's a small parking lot where the once busy double-tracked train depot was located. Both passenger and freight service served the area. A wooden kiosk sign has pictures and tells the history of the depot. Head down a path to the river and you come to the old Reed's Ferry landing. In the 1700's and 1800's, the town of Litchfield across the river was closely linked with Merrimack by ferry. Farmers would have land on both sides of the river and would cross to go to church or visit with friends and relatives. The ferry landing was also the site of a canal boat landing. Oxcarts with bricks made in Merrimack would be loaded onto canal boats for shipping down to Lowell to build the mills there. Lumber, granite, hay, grains, etc., went down the canals to Lowell and Boston.

As we departed this area, we saw an old mill building with a tall brick chimney. This was once the site of Fessenden and Lowell Cooperage, located along the railroad tracks. Today the buildings are still used for a variety of new industries.

After lunch in the park, we went down Railroad Ave. to look at the only remaining original (from the outside) railroad station in Merrimack. Used as a business office in the

past, it now appears to be rented as an apartment. The railroad line today is used commercially to bring coal to the Bow power plant and other products to Laconia. We were surprised at the poor condition of the tracks, with many rotted ties and loose spikes.

The next stop was Thornton's Ferry, the town's southernmost crossing of the Merrimack River. The ferry's original owners were from Litchfield, since that town was settled first. The same was true of Reed's Ferry. Both of these ferries were in operation from the middle to late 1700's until the early 1900's. In time, Matthew Thornton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, became owner of this ferry and moved to Merrimack from Litchfield. He is buried close by at a small cemetery along Rt. 3. The land around Thornton's Ferry is very undeveloped and mostly forested. It's now a quiet, hidden area, so different from what it once was, busy loading people, horses, wagons, products, etc., on boats to cross or float down the river.

Our final stop was the only typewriter repair shop in New England. Matt, the owner, had previously worked at Cambridge Typewriter in Massachusetts. That shop closed, and last fall Matt and his wife opened the South Merrimack shop. He showed us typewriters going back to the early 1900's and their different designs. There were a couple of very basic "depression" typewriters with no outside frames that sold in the 1930's. And a few other unique designs that were never successful. Today, many young people are interested in typewriters. I sold Matt my 50-year-old portable college typewriter. After cleaning he sold it to a high school student. Some towns still use typewriters for permits, and he cleans and maintains them. If you have a typewriter to either sell or clean, New England Typewriter is a great place to go, and you can learn about the history of typewriters too. (Update: New England Typewriter closed permanently at the end of 2025.)



New England Typewriter, display of old typewriters (Chip Wheeler)

Industrial History Research Material at the Fitchburg Historical Society

Susan Navarre, Executive Director
Fitchburg Historical Society

Despite its small size today, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, was an important manufacturing hub from the early 19th to the mid-20th centuries. It started with textile manufacturing in 1807, powered by the Nashua River, a tributary of the Merrimack. But its industrial base soon diversified to include paper manufacturing, metal industries, engine and boiler manufacturing, rattan and furniture, shoes, bricks and granite, and scythes and saws. The Fitchburg Historical Society was founded in 1892 by the same generation that had founded the factories, and its collections

include records from many of Fitchburg's manufacturers.

In some cases, the industrial records extend to many archive boxes and photography files. The larger collections held by the Fitchburg Historical Society include records from Crocker Burbank Paper (later James River Paper), the Fitchburg Paper Company (later Litton Industries), Burleigh Rock Drill, Union Machine Company, Putnam Machine Works, D. M. Dillon Steam Boiler Works, Fitchburg Railroad (later incorporated into Boston and Maine Railroad), Iver Johnson Gun and Cycle Works, Simonds Saw and Steel Manufacturing, Fitchburg Machine Works, Parkhill Manufacturing Company, Fitchburg Yarn, Fitchburg Woolen Mills, and Manning Maxwell and Moore (later General Electric.)

Fitchburg Historical Society has collected many thousands of photographs, including over 1,000 glass slide negatives from city offices and other sources. It is also currently cataloging two other substantial collections: dozens of blueprints from Putnam Machine Works and the office archives of the Fitchburg architectural firm, H. M. Francis and Sons. The Putnam Machine Works blueprints date from the late 19th century and early 20th century, and deal with the design of its lathes, engines, and other machines. The collection of architectural records from the offices of H. M. (Henry Martyn) Francis and Sons, the most prominent architect in Fitchburg, is still being cataloged and has not yet been fully studied by architectural historians.

A great example of a design by the Francis firm is the Phoenix Building at 781 Main Street in downtown Fitchburg. Originally built in 1893 for the Fitchburg Mutual Fire Insurance Company, it now houses the Fitchburg Historical Society, which purchased the building and renovated it in the early 21st century. You can visit the Historical Society's exhibition hall and research library Mondays through Wednesdays or by appointment

(director@fitchburghistoricalsociety.com or call 978-345-1157). For more information about the Fitchburg Historical Society, please see our website

<https://www.fitchburghistoricalsociety.com/>



**NNEC Fall Tour Report,
Brunswick, Maine, October 7, 2025**
Matthew Mueller, President, NNEC

Thirteen members of the New England chapters of the SIA met at TechPlace in Brunswick, Maine. We were greeted by Jaimie Logan, the Director of TechPlace, a manufacturing technology incubator. There are over 30 small manufacturing firms operating there. Their website "TechPlace, Brunswick Landing Technology Incubator" says they "support the business development needs of early-stage companies in a shared workspace. TechPlace gives entrepreneurs a place to network with others, research and develop ideas, build prototypes, test products, assemble, grow, and become successful manufacturing and technology companies."

Jamie gave a brief history of the Brunswick Naval Air Station and the development and growth of the site after the Air Station closed in 2011. We toured the facility observing the shared conference and meeting rooms, break rooms, and other offices. Walking through the building we saw the diverse collection of

tenants that were housed there, most which were using advanced technology in a diverse array of industries. A large portion of the facility was housed in an abandoned airplane hangar and repair shop, made available after the base closed. We were able to speak with an employee of Salmonics, a company that made a groundbreaking discovery about the unique hemostatic and pain-relieving properties of salmon fibrinogen and thrombin. Their research shows that salmon thrombin provides longer-lasting pain relief for fractures, burns, and surgeries than morphine. By using the untapped resource of salmon blood, Salmonics is driving innovations in wound healing, pain management, and beyond. We finished the tour by seeing the shared machine work, Bio-Works Shared Lab, the Composites Layup Facility, extreme temperature freezer and oven locations, as well as other assets that tenants had at their disposal.



Two photos, touring TechPlace (Chip Taylor)

Lunch was held at the Sea Dog Restaurant, which is located in the historic Pejepscot Paper Mill in Topsham, Maine. The mill sits on the banks of the Androscoggin River. Built in 1868, the building is one of the oldest surviving paper mills in the state of Maine. At lunch, the Northern New England chapter held their yearly meeting and election of officers: Matthew Mueller was unanimously voted in as the new President, while outgoing President, David Dunning, was agreed upon by all to take on the 1st Vice President position, to help in the transition to the new presidency.



Pejepscot Paper Mill behind construction of the new Brunswick-Topsham Bridge (Rick Coughlin)

After lunch and pleasant conversations, river historian Scot McFarlane, an expert who has published articles about the industrial history of the Androscoggin River, gave an informal lecture. Scot said the Androscoggin was the most important river in Maine. The Androscoggin used to be one of the most polluted rivers in the U.S., a condition that encouraged the drafting of the 1972 Clean Water Act. The history of the river began during the age of the Paleo-Indians and continued through the 1900's, when it powered many mills and factories. Currently there are 16 hydroelectric generating dams still active along the river.

Fort Andross, a rehabilitated textile mill, was seen and discussed. Located on the

Androscoggin River, this is a unique and historic mill complex that dominates the foot of Brunswick's downtown Maine Street. The mill had been an active textile mill since 1809 when it became the first cotton mill in Maine. The mill went through many building and ownership changes prior to closing in 1941.

After the lecture, we took a short walk with Scot to the historic Androscoggin Swinging Bridge, a pedestrian suspension bridge built in 1892. On one side of the bridge was a sign commemorating the Franco-American workers who used to cross from the side of the river where they lived, to work at the multiple textile mills which were active in Brunswick during the 1800's and 1900's.



Two photos, historic Androscoggin Swinging Bridge (Rick Coughlin)

Afterwards, members walked back to their cars and many comments were shared about how enjoyable the day had been.

Want more iron in your diet? Tune in for monthly talks on iron and steel!

Anthony Meadow, board member, national SIA & chair, Iron and Steel Heritage Forum

SIGs are a new kind of activity for the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA). Two years ago, we launched the first Special Interest Group (SIG) for the SIA: the Iron and Steel Heritage Forum.

The Iron and Steel Heritage Forum

The purpose of Iron and Steel Heritage Forum (ISHF) is to bring together people, as well as museums, historic sites, and archives, to create an active and vibrant community focused on the history of iron and steel. Our main activities for the last two years have been:

(a) Our monthly online talks covering a broad range of topics including histories of companies and steel mills, making of charcoal and coke, unions, the stories of how steel museums were created, industrial archeology of the West Point Foundry and more. Our talks are open to anyone.

(b) Our mailing list (email) where we announce details of our talks, post announcements from museums and historic sites, hear from members who suggest speakers and more. Our list is open to anyone.

We have plans for other activities in the future. If you interested in iron and steel and want to join our email list and tune in to talks once a month, just send me an email <tmeadow@ferrumwest.com> and I'll add you to our list.

More Special Interest Groups Coming Soon

The concept of SIGs is to bring together people who share a common interest, as opposed to the geographical focus of SIA

chapters. SIGs are another activity of the national organization and are not separate organizations.

Following the national conference in May, two new SIGs are in the process of being formed. The first is the Bridges and Infrastructure SIG. Bridges are a subject with a long history within the SIA: the Historic Bridge Symposium was held as part of our annual conferences for more than twenty years, but alas this ended several years ago. This new SIG will likely begin by offering online talks and eventually (fingers crossed) restart the Historic Bridge Symposium. Second, the Industrial Heritage Museums SIG seeks to bring people who manage or work for industrial museums or historic sites. They will work to strengthen these organizations, which preserve so much of our industrial history and heritage, as well as help them tell stories about this history to the public and support research and scholarly work.

When these new SIGs start having activities, they will be announced within the SIA. If you want to know more about them sooner than that, please contact me.

Tony Meadow, tmeadow@ferrumwest.com,
510-334-8161 (Mountain time zone)

**Union Pacific's "Big Boy" Train Engine
Tours the Northeast for First Time in
Honor of America's 250th Anniversary**
Gerry DeMuro & David Dunning (NNEC)
(With permission from Union Pacific)

Only 25 of these massive steam locomotives were built. They hauled heavy WWII freight up and over the Rocky Mountains. SIA train enthusiasts will enjoy reading more details on the web, but here are a few facts to whet your appetite.

The Big Boys are 133 feet long and weigh 1.2 million pounds. Due to their great length, the frames of the Big Boys are "hinged," or

articulated, to allow them to negotiate curves. They have a 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement, which means they have four wheels on the leading set of "pilot" wheels to guide the engine; eight drivers on the first engine; another set of eight drivers on the second engine; and four wheels trailing that support the rear of the locomotive.

No. 4014 was retired in December 1961 after traveling 1,031,205 miles. Union Pacific re-acquired it from the RailGiants Train Museum in Pomona, California, in 2013 and relocated it back to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a multi-year restoration. It returned to service in May 2019 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad's Completion. For more information type "Big Boy" in an online search engine and follow the many links.



Big Boy No. 4014 (Union Pacific)

IA Tours Needed!

The SNEC seeks members to organize tours!

Summer and fall are here, a time to be outside and visiting IA sites in the region! Do you have a favorite IA site that you would like to show and interpret for interested New England SIA chapter members?

SNEC relies on volunteers to suggest and organize tours. Please propose your ideas for a tour. Please contact SNEC tour coordinator Betsey Dyer bdyer@wheatonma.edu. She will help you with planning.

Upcoming Tour – SNEC-SIA

Hearthside House, a historic mansion and site in Lincoln, R.I., is organizing a tour for SNEC members (NNEC welcome too). It will include a tour of the mansion house, which has historic looms in the attic that were used to make reproduction colonial textiles, and the 1812 Moffett Mill, which in 1850 became a machine shop serving the rural neighborhood. We anticipate this tour will take place in the fall of 2026.



Moffett Mill interior, part of Great Road Heritage Campus, Lincoln, RI (Hearthside House)

The Big Curtis Steam Turbine On Boulder Drive, Fitchburg, MA Fitchburg Historical Society

The Fitchburg Historical Society (FHS) has received requests for information about the great big, blue steam turbine located at the edge of the old General Electric parking lot. We needed expert help, so we have reached out to the Historical Commission Chair Keith Chenot, our longtime researcher David Gordon, David Streb and Richard Beck. We have also gathered information from the members of the members of the Central Mass. Steam, Gas and Machinery group.

As a result, FHS is planning to have a casual program about it sometime this fall or winter. In the meantime, if you know more about it, or are interested in helping with the research, please get in touch with us, at welcome@fitchburghistoricalsociety.com or call 978-345-1157.

Newsletter articles needed! **IA events announcements needed!**

It's not too early to send articles for the fall newsletter. Please send articles (text in Word, images as jpgs) to Sara Wermiel, swermiel@verizon.net. Sara is temporarily filling the editor position until someone volunteers to take up this important role. Also, please send announcements of IA-type events to Sara, so these can be publicized to members via email.