

CHSA

NEWSLETTER

Deadlines are a feature of all our lives I suspect and this is no different for a Society like CHSA. Our next major event, the 4th Biennial Meeting to be held in Minneapolis is just over one year away – more on that inside. Then there is the “Big One”, the International Congress in Chicago, 19 months away for which the planning is well in hand – again an update is included herein. Also go to <http://sicch.org/> where our first Save-the-Date posting is now active

We have added a new section in the newsletter to bring news on member's activities, appointments and the like. So please let us have any announcements plus images if appropriate.

Last quarter we mentioned the increasing level of local events. The latest was in Charlotte, NC in September where CHSA organized a session on construction history in conjunction with the SE Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) annual meeting. A short report is included within.

Volume 28 No. 1 (which implies there will be a No. 2) has been received from the UK and sent to all members in good standing. It includes nine high quality papers dealing with a wide range of American (North & Latin) subjects.

Brian Bowen
Chair, Management Committee

Don Friedman
Newsletter Editor

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Sears-Roebuck Building, Atlanta, GA

THANKS TO OUR INSTITUTIONAL AND CORPORATE MEMBERS

- * A. Ottavino Corp.
- * Altusworks, Inc.
- * Associated General Contractors of America
- * Canadian Centre for Architecture
- * Consigli Construction Co.
- * ConstellationCenter
- * Construction Management Association of America
- * Georgia Institute of Technology
- * Gilbane, Inc.
- * Gleeds USA, Inc.
- * Hoover Treated Wood Products, Inc.
- * Joel Silverman & Associates
- * John Canning & Co. Ltd
- * Kaese & Lynch
- * Levine Construction Company
- * LimeWorks.us
- * Minnesota State University, Mankato
- * National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
- * Paces Construction Co.
- * Texas A & M University
- * The Pepper Companies
- * The Whiting Turner Contracting Company
- * University of Oklahoma
- * Vertical Access LLC

SESAH CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHARLOTTE, NC

An emerging CHSA policy is to establish and improve our links with sister societies and to promote Construction History as a new field of research. Both of these initiatives were met when a group of our members put together a session at this conference in September. The session was moderated by CHSA management committee member Lee Gray* who explained that construction historians seek to understand not only physical objects forming the built environment, but also the processes and people who brought these together. Four 20-minute presentations then followed:

Construction History Research: A methodology using the 1926 Atlanta Sears Roebuck & Co. facility as a model. John Beach, Georgia Institute of Technology

This was presented as a work in progress. The first part detailed the research requirements needed to undertake a study of the construction history of any facility and the varied success to date of collecting this data for the Sears building from Atlanta and Chicago resources. A brief history of the 2.1 million sq ft facility followed with an overview of the current redevelopment of the building and site into a mixed-use project.

The Guastavino Vaults at the University of Virginia: Failure, Forensics, Tradition and Technology. Benjamin Hays, University of Virginia

Following a fire in 1895 the Rotunda at the University was being rebuilt to designs by Stanford White which included several Guastavino tile vaulting systems. During construction there were two structural collapses which were erroneously implicated to the Guastavinos. Using a thorough forensic approach by studying contemporary photographs, original drawings and historic accounts, Mr. Hays concluded that the fault should more properly be assigned to design and equipment failures. This demonstrated several overlapping and interrelated methodologies used by construction historians.



Collapsed beam – University of Virginia



Sears-Roebuck Building, Atlanta, GA

J.A.Jones Construction Company 1890 – 2003.
Darrell S. Jones, Georgia Institute of Technology

Construction historians are discovering that one of the forgotten corners in the field has been the memorializa-

tion of the industry's famous builders. One of these giants, J.A.Jones Construction, grew and flourished in Charlotte and the great-grandson of the company founder reviewed the company history. This started with modest masonry contracts moving to general building projects in the south-east. The company survived the depression with work overseas in the Panama Canal Zone and then grew exponentially during WW II with military contracts, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory and even with shipbuilding. The post-war years saw expansion nationwide and overseas and with large-scale civil and infrastructure projects. In 1979 the company was acquired by Philip Holtzmann and sadly became embroiled in that company's 2003 bankruptcy.



J.A.Jones 1869 – 1950

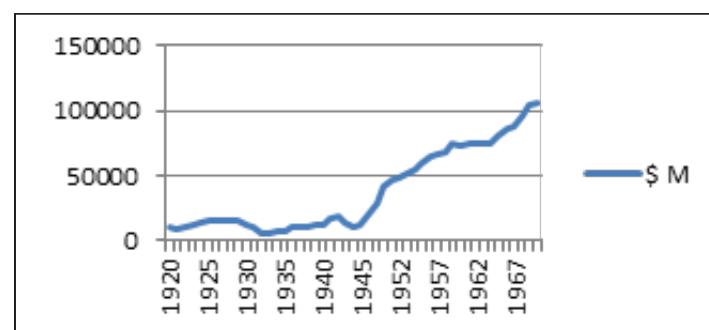
The American Construction Industry of the 1950's and 1960's – an Industry poised for Change.

Brian Bowen, Georgia Institute of Technology

An important feature of construction history is the study of how the industry's practices have evolved over time and what factors have led to change. The period following WW II to the end of the 1960's was one of continuing economic expansion with a few minor corrections, leading to the growth of construction from \$12 to \$106 billion. These figures however hid a growing problem in the industry of uncontrollable price escalation and reductions in productivity, mostly

driven by aggressive union action and material price increases, following wartime controls. Eventually in 1969 the owners, the buyers of design and construction services, revolted and formed the Construction Users Anti-inflation Roundtable, starting a period of reformation within the industry still with us today.

*Lee is to be the new incoming President of SESAH for 2014.



US Construction Activity 1920 - 1970

SAVE THE DATE. 1

2014 CHSA 4th Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN
Mid-November, 2014 (dates to follow)

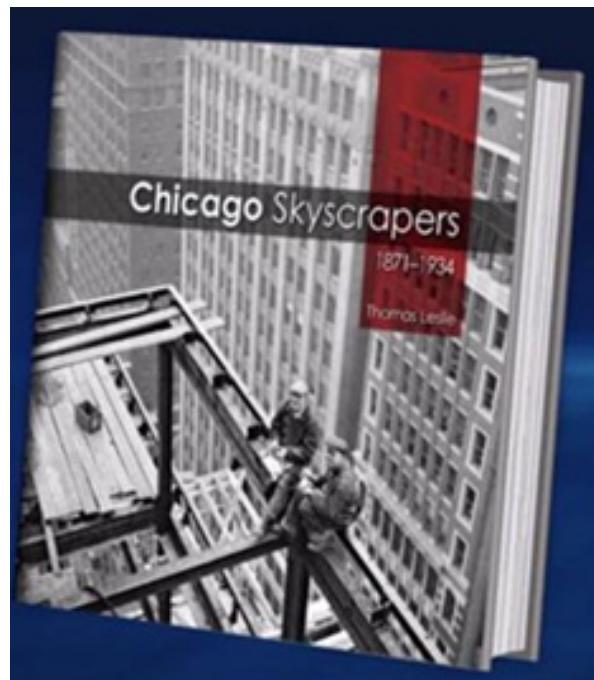
Following meetings in Atlanta, Philadelphia and Cambridge, our fourth meeting will move West to Minneapolis. A Call for Papers will be issued shortly. Peter Hilger and Meghan Elliott are the local organizers and are working on the details. These will likely follow our previous format of a day and a half of paper presentations, local tours and one or more keynotes, with plenty of time for interaction with old friends and colleagues. The meeting will be held in conjunction with AIA Minnesota which is a bit of a departure for us, but gives us access to first class conference facilities and organization. If you would be willing to help Peter and Meghan, please contact them at hilger@rylaur.com

BOOK REVIEW**CHICAGO SKYSCRAPERS 1871-1934**

Thomas Leslie, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2013, 234 pages

Walking along the downtown streets of the Loop in Chicago one notices the large buildings which frame the city streets. The buildings have a history which dates back to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Tom Leslie tells us the story beginning in 1871 and concluding in 1934, at the height of the Great Depression, of the history and development of these historic structures. Having been involved in the renovation of some of these historic structures I was fascinated by the comprehensive examination this book provides of how the buildings came into being. We are given an in depth examination of the entrepreneurs, banks, retailers and financiers, who developed and financed the buildings. The author provides us with the names of the major contributors to this portion of the commercial development of Chicago, and how the architects, engineers and builders took on a prominent role in the design and construction of the Skyscraper. The book chronicles and reveals the daily struggles, technical breakthroughs, and negotiations that produced these magnificent buildings. Moreover, Leslie goes into great detail examining the development of the foundations, structures, façades and other systems integral in the creation of the Skyscraper. We are given a close look at the development of the Chicago Building Code and its revisions related to zoning, height and bulk. Mr. Leslie provides over one hundred photographs and illustrations of the buildings beginning with design renderings moving through development of detailed steel and curtainwall sections, working drawings and culminating with many in-progress construction and final building photos. The book is well researched and provides a thorough resource list consisting of an Appendix (listing 330 skyscrapers built during the period covered), Notes, Bibliography and Index. Mr. Leslie's writing style is smooth and easy to follow for those not schooled in technical jargon.

Although the names of Fuller, Griffiths, and Ericsson, major builders/general contractors are briefly listed, other names such as Thompson-Starrett, and Lanquist & Illsley are strangely missing. As a construction historian, the exceptional contributions by these and the other builders are not given as much exposure in Leslie's book as were the architects and engineers. I hope to see the sequel in Mr. Leslie's next book, which would detail more of the actual day to day building process.



This book is a must for architects, historians, students, developers, builders, and anyone interested in the process of developing and building a skyscraper during the latter part of the industrial revolution in a major metropolitan city.

Review by Marvin J. Levine P.E., F.ASCE

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

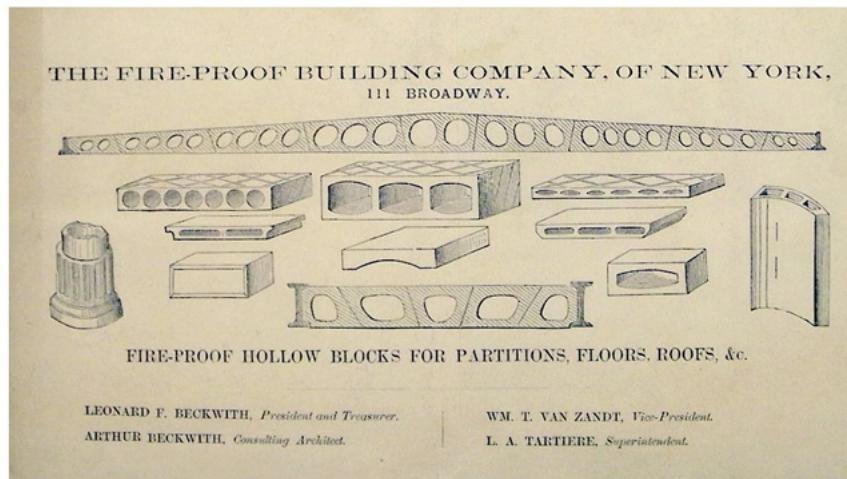
Anat Geva, Architect, Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, former vice chair of the Construction History Society of America, was promoted to a full professor of architecture, effective September 1, 2013.

Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla

He has joined the architecture faculty at the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Ibarra-Sevilla will continue his studies on Construction History focusing on Latin-American buildings of the sixteenth century. He will also contribute to the Historic Preservation program and will be co-director of Studio Mexico, a design studio that will explore adaptive reuse of historic buildings in Mexico.

Benjamin is also working on a Spanish version of the CHSA website which we will be adding soon.

Sara E. Wermiel, construction historian and historic preservation consultant, published an article about Leonard and Arthur Beckwith, founders of the Fire-Proof Building Company of New York, one of the first companies in the U.S. to make structural hollow blocks, and also to use cast concrete made with hydraulic lime. Her article is online at the Association des Centraliens website -- the alumni association of the École Centrale Paris, an engineering school from which the brothers graduated in 1866. The article is in English as well as French. To see the Centraliens website, click <http://centrale-histoire.centraliens.net/#!> (see link, towards the bottom of the page). For a link directly to the article, click <http://centrale-histoire.centraliens.net/stories/rev627.pdf>



Please let us have your announcements for future newsletters at chs@coa.gatech.edu

APTI CONFERENCE, NEW YORK, OCTOBER 2013

The Association for Preservation Technology International (APTI) held its annual convention in New York on October 11th through 15th. The convention included three two-day workshops, 29 field sessions, and multiple paper sessions. This year's theme was "Preserving the Metropolis" and, appropriately, more than 800 people attended, including many CHSA members.

As the APTI's name suggests, the organization's focus is on the physical work of restoration, rather than strict historical research and interpretation. However, preservationists and the architects, engineers, and contractors engaged in preservation work use the history of the built environment in their work, creating a large overlap between the interests and membership of the APTI and the CHSA.

Some of the sessions were directly connected to CHSA interests. For example, one of the workshops included hands-on construction of new Guastavino vaults. Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla, a board member of the CHSA, was a speaker at that workshop. Three full-day field sessions included tours and descriptions of the history and construction of sites in the Hudson River valley, the Seventh Regiment (Park Avenue) Armory and the TWA Terminal at JFK Airport, and Modernist landmarks on Long Island. Paper sessions with significant historical content included "The World Beneath Our Feet: Typology and Preservation of the Pedestrian Infrastructure," "Hanging On: Masonry Facade Preservation," "Curtain Wall Preservation: Technical Considerations," "Preserving Schools for the Modern World: 1945-1975," "Urban Constraints On Preservation Design and Construction," and "Industrial Structures and Urban Infrastructure: Preservation for Use and Reuse."

The overall theme of historic preservation in cities was an obvious one for a conference held in New York. It also has the effect of forcing discussion of context for preservation: urban buildings are more affected by neighboring buildings and infrastructure, more regulated, and more heavily used than their rural counterparts. These aspects of context all have counterparts in historical discussion: the development of building types and neighborhoods, the development of building regulation, and history of use. This kind of correlation between preservation and history could be seen in nearly every field and paper session and is typical of APTI conferences.

The next APTI conference will be held October 26-30, 2014 in Quebec City.



Completed vault at end of workshop



Gabriel Pardo Redondo, APTI and CHSA member, working on a Guastavino vault

FUTURE EVENTS CHSA

2013

- November 12 -15 Minneapolis, MN Construction History session in conjunction with AIA annual state convention.
Will include three CHSA presentations on:
- Gothic Barns in the Mid-West
- Elevated Water Tanks – from iron to steel
- General Contracting in 19th c. America
A CHSA reception will follow. Registration details at www.aia-mn.org

2014

- November Minneapolis, MN 4th Biennial meeting

2015

- June 3-7 Chicago, IL 5th International Congress on Construction History

FUTURE EVENTS OF INTEREST TO CHSA MEMBERS

2014

- Jan 29-31 Paris, France 2nd Congres Francophone d'Histoire de la Construction
<http://2cfhc.sciencesconf.org>
- Feb 7 Boston, MA APTNE Annual Meeting & Symposium
admin@aptne.org
- April 9-13 Austin, TX Society for Architectural History Annual meeting
www.sah.org
- Apr 11-13 Cambridge, UK First Construction History Society Conference
www.constructionhistory.co.uk

SAVE THE DATE. 2

2015 5th International Congress on Construction History, Chicago, IL
June 3rd-7th at the Palmer House Hotel.

Now just over 18 months away, preparations are continuing on all fronts to make sure that this Congress will live up to the standards set by previous international construction history congresses.

We have set up a placeholder "Save the Date" website – check it out at <http://sicch.org/>; a more comprehensive one is in the planning stage.



WHO WE ARE

The Society is dedicated to the study of the history and evolution of all aspects of the built environment—its creation, maintenance and management. It is a forum for scholars and professionals in the field to share, meet and exchange ideas and research.

Membership is open to a wide range of construction related disciplines involved in the planning, development, design and construction of buildings and engineering infrastructure, in addition to those concerned with their operation and preservation.

Members share a passion for examining how our existing structures were planned, designed and built, with the purpose of using this knowledge to better preserve what we have and to guide us in determining future directions.

The US branch of the Construction History Society is a distinct entity catering to the historical studies and interests of its members here in America. Membership in the US branch includes full benefits in CHS at large, including receipt of the Society's Journal and newsletter and links to scholars in the field worldwide.

CORRESPONDING SOCIETIES

Public Works Historical Society, www.pwhs.net

Historical Construction Equipment Association, www.hcea.net

Society of Architectural Historians, www.sah.org

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Brian Bowen (Chairman), GA Tech, Atlanta, GA

Tom Leslie (Secretary), Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Jeff Beard, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

Jenn Cappeto: Higgins Quasebarth & Partners, New York, NY

Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla, University of Texas, Austin, TX

Lee Gray, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC

Peter Hilger: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Donald Friedman, Old Structures Engineering, New York, NY

Marvin Levine: Levine Companies, Deerfield, IL

Construction History Society Representative

James Campbell, Cambridge, UK

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John Ochsendorf, MIT, Cambridge, MA

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER AND THE ONLY VEHICLE WE HAVE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ONE ANOTHER.

SO PLEASE USE THIS TO LET US KNOW:

- * your interests in construction history, your current research, précis of recent lectures, etc.
- * books, texts & articles that your fellow readers should know about
- * names and e-addresses of colleagues and friends that we can include on our mailing list
- * if you are willing to write a brief article for us.