



NEWSLETTER

Our usual plaintive cry to those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, please look after it now. Otherwise this will be your last newsletter and you will be losing out on other membership benefits.

Copies of the third issue of the Construction History Journal (#28) are slowly being mailed out to 2013 members and we are assured of at least two issues being published this year – another benefit missed if you have not renewed. The third volume covers the keynote presentations given at the International Congress in Paris in 2012, which included papers by two of our members, Susan Webster (Colonial Quito) and Ledlie Klosky (French influence on American engineering).

By now you should have received the Call for Abstracts for the American Society’s biennial meeting in Minneapolis in November and for the 5th International Congress to be held in June 2015. Both can be accessed at the website www.constructionhistorysociety.org

Within a very short time the website for the Chicago congress will be operational at www.5icch.org and we will keep you up to date as that expands over the next year and more. Melanie Feerst has been hired to act as administrative assistant to the various organizing committees. More about her inside.

Brian Bowen
Chair, Management Committee

Don Friedman
Newsletter Editor

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Minnesota State Capitol

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CALHOUN COUNTY HISTORIC BRIDGE PARK

The Historic Bridge Park in Calhoun County, Michigan, is the first historic bridge-theme park in the United States (see Figure 1). This park is the home of five historic truss bridges that have become insufficient for use in their original locations (see Table 1). The restored bridges are placed in the park to serve not only as part of pedestrian paths but also as a hands-on exhibit of Michigan’s significant history in transportation and metal fabrication industries. The objective of restoring historic trusses in the park was to maintain as much of the original bridge material as possible and to replicate any parts that required replacement. In addition to providing the historic trusses for the enjoyment and education to visitors, the Historic Bridge Park is a fully functional park with running water restroom facilities, picnic and playground areas, and paved trails for pedestrians and bicyclists.

One of the bridges located in the park is the Charlotte Highway Bridge. This bridge was built by H.P. Hepburn Engineering and Construction in Cleveland, Ohio in 1886. It is a 173-foot single span wrought iron Pratt through truss with pinned connections, and it is one of the only three Pratt through trusses with double-intersection in Michigan (See Figure 2). In 2001, the Charlotte Highway Bridge was removed from its original location in Portland, Michigan. This bridge was well preserved and the only major restoration required was

the replication of ten riveted floor beams. In 2005, the Charlotte Highway Bridge was moved to the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park and in 2007, reassembled at the park entrance as the fifth historic truss bridge (See the red bridge in Figure 1). Other than the five bridges situated in the park, the park has acquired several historic truss bridges for preservation. These bridges are now stored in a specially-prepared storage area in Marshall, Michigan. Already disassembled, they are available for interested communities.



Figure 1. Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park (Source: <http://www.historicbridges.org/info/bridgepark/>)

Table 1. Truss bridges in the Calhoun County Historic Bridge Park

Name	Structure Type	Span	Width
20 Mile Road Bridge	Pony truss, Rivit-connected	64 feet	15.4 feet
133rd Avenue Bridge	Pony truss, Pin-connected	66 feet	14 feet
Bauer Road Bridge	Through trusses, Pin-connected	89 feet	16 feet
Gale Road Bridge	Through trusses, Pin-connected	118 feet	14.4 feet
Charlotte Highway Bridge	Through trusses, Pin-connected	173 feet	14.4 feet



Figure 2. Charlotte Highway bridge at its original location
(Source: <http://www.historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=truss/charlotte/>)

More information can be found at the following links:
<http://www.historicbridges.org/info/bridgepark/>
<http://www.calhouncountyroads.com/parks/historic-bridge-park/>

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FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE CONSTRUCTION HISTORY SOCIETY, QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

This was held in April with a good attendance and a program of over 40 papers presented. We are waiting to hear if these may be accessed. Tom Leslie attended on behalf of CHSA and joined representatives from the UK, France, Germany and Spain featured below.



From L to R: Robert Carvais (France), Werner Lorenz (Germany), James Campbell (UK), Santiago Huerta (Spain), Tom Leslie (USA)

DID MY GRANDFATHER WORK FOR UTAH CONSTRUCTION?

This simple question from my wife recently led me on an exciting journey through the worlds of family records, old photographs, genealogy and construction history. My wife never knew her maternal grandfather, Wilbur Cole, because he died soon after she was born. But the Cole family lore was always that he had worked for Utah Construction Co. in the building of Hoover Dam. As a civil/geotechnical engineer, that story sounded like it had some potential for being true. I knew that Utah was one of the “Six Companies” that had the construction contract for Hoover (then Boulder) Dam. I knew that a Jim Fogg, who married one of Wilbur’s daughters, had been a vice president and managing director of Utah Construction’s operations in Australia. So maybe it was Utah Construction that originally connected the two men and their families.

Using the internet and genealogy sites, I was able to easily obtain the usual genealogical information sources, such as Federal and State census records, to trace the Coles back from California (where my wife was raised), to Iowa (where her parents grew up together), to Wisconsin (where Wilbur and his two brothers were born), and beyond to Illinois and New York (which earlier generations of Coles called home). Some of the source records I was finding began to convey the construction background of the all three Cole brothers. Their occupations on census forms included “time-keeper, railroad construction,” “contractor, roads and bridges,” “general contractor,” and “contractor, dredging.” They also seemed to move around a lot, living all over the country, which seemed to fit with a contractor’s life.

One census in particular (1920) peaked my interest. At that time, Wilbur was living in Dayton, Ohio, where my wife’s mother was born. His brothers were living in Middletown, Ohio, about 20 miles away. Wilbur’s occupation was listed as “contractor – railroads,” and his brothers’ as “contractor – dredging” and “railroad

contractor, owner construction company working for Miami (Ohio) Conservancy.” It was then that the light bulbs began to go on. Through various searches, I came across the Miami Conservancy Bulletin (1918-1920), which described the work of the District to design and construct the Miami Valley Flood Control Project, from 1914 to 1920, in response to the Great Dayton Flood of 1913. It has several references of the Cole Brothers Construction Co.’s channel dredging and levee construction work at Middleton. I then found a 1922 article in *The Earth Mover*, which described a railroad project near Albany, New York, under contract to Walsh Construction Co. Subcontractors included Kahl Construction Co. and the George W. Condon Co., both of whom had had been subcontractors to Walsh on a railroad relocation project near Dayton that was part of the Miami Conservancy work. On the New York project, Condon had associated with Roy Cole, from Green Bay, Wisconsin (one of the Cole brothers).

Searching the internet now for “Cole” and “Condon Construction” I was soon able to place Wilbur Cole in Neola, Iowa, as a part owner of the Condon Co. of nearby Omaha, Nebraska; building roads, bridges and flood control works throughout the Midwest in the 1920s and early 1930s. In the late 1930s Wilbur and his family were living in San Diego, California. A newspaper article, and a Yuma, Arizona city directory, suggested that he had been involved in construction of Imperial Dam, from 1936 to 1938. Imperial Dam and the associated All-American Canal were major components of the Boulder Canyon Project, which included Hoover Dam. The contractor for Imperial Dam was a three-firm consortium that included Utah Construction. Was it then that Wilbur was working for Utah Construction? And, who was James Fogg, who had also been mentioned in the newspaper article (as being “from Imperial Dam, Yuma, Arizona”), working for?

Turning to the US Bureau of Reclamation website to

learn more about Imperial Dam and its contractors, I learned of the Hoover Dam Construction Worker Genealogical Database, compiled by Judith Sattler Irons in 2008. Covering the years 1929-1936, the database includes the names of workers and their families who came to build Hoover Dam, and the businesses, contractors, government employees, and organizations involved with Hoover Dam's construction. I contacted Ms. Irons to obtain a CD of the database, hoping to confirm one way or another, whether Wilbur Cole and/or Jim Fogg worked on Hoover Dam with Utah Construction. It turns out they did not. But with Ms. Irons' help, as she is now compiling a database of the workers on the Imperial Dam and All-American Canal projects, I determined that Wilbur was in charge of the earthwork for Imperial Dam, as a subcontractor (with the Condon Co.) to the Utah Construction consortium.

Wilbur Cole went on to form his own construction companies, working in California and Oklahoma after leaving the Condon Co. He died in 1945 in Omaha, where my wife had been born a year earlier. Jim Fogg worked for Wilbur in 1938-1939 on various projects. He then married a Cole daughter and built dams in Colorado and Montana. In 1948-1950 he was the project manager for construction of Bonny Dam, near Hale, Colorado, with – at last – Utah Construction. He must have done well, because that propelled him (according to the Utah Construction Co. Archives at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah) into his career with Utah in Australia, where he remained until he died in 1986.

One final note about the value of old family photographs. These often include the dates, locations and people featured in the photos and can help supplement information from other sources. Several were available in the family archive and helped fill in some gaps in the story of Wilbur Cole.

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5TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The first step in developing a technical program for the Congress has been the issuance of a Call for Abstracts which has now been widely distributed in the US and overseas. In addition an international Scientific Committee is being finalized, whose first task will be to review the abstracts received. We shall be using the Easychair software to manage receipt and review of the abstracts. Keynote speakers have been identified and are being approached.

A more robust website for the Congress is close to launch at www.5icch.org and will be under constant updating as events unfold.

We welcome Melanie Feerst as administrative assistant to the various Congress committees. After graduating with a Masters of Fine Art from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Melanie held various positions at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, most recently as the Senior Administrative Director. She left recently to pursue her interests in art glass. She lives and has a studio, in Chicago.



CHSA BIENNIAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 12-14, 2014, MINNEAPOLIS

You should have received the Call for Abstracts for this our fourth biennial meeting. This will be unusual in that it will be combined with the AIA Minnesota annual conference to be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The program will include a mixture of peer-reviewed presentations and organized sessions with a focus on subjects of local interest, such as the State Capitol Restoration. In addition there will be several tours and visits.

Go to www.constructionhistorysociety.org/events for the latest information on registration, accommodations and further program information as it comes available.



Minnesota State Capitol

FIRST METAL ROLLING OVERHEAD DOOR

We have had an enquiry asking if any of our members know when this might have been installed in the US?

Please reply directly to <mailto:m.kilgore@columbiarestaurants.com>

FUTURE EVENTS CHSA

2014

November 12-14 Minneapolis, MN CHSA Biennial meeting

2015

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

2016 Austin, TX CHSA Biennial meeting (date tbd)

FUTURE EVENTS OF INTEREST TO CHSA MEMBERS

2014

May 7-10 Nr. Atlantic City, NJ Vernacular Architectural Forum – Down Jersey:
From Bayshore to Seashore, at Stockton Seaside Resort,
www.vernaculararchitecturalforum.org

Aug 7-9 Canandaigua, NY Historic Construction Equipment Association,
Annual Convention
www.hcea.net

Oct 26-29 Quebec City, Canada APT International Annual Meeting
www.apti.org

Oct 29-Nov 1 Fayetteville, AK SESA Annual Conference
www.sesah.org

2015

Apr 15-19 Chicago, IL Society of Architectural Historians Annual Conference
www.sah.org
Call for Abstracts is due June 6th 2014 at:
<http://www.sah.org/docs/conference/cfp-2015-sah-annual-conference-in-chicago-april-15-19.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

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

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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.

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