In 2003, MARCH started working with community and cultural groups in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to save and interpret the abandoned Bethlehem Steel plant on the city’s south side. The historic core of the site is a 120-acre industrial brownfield with the last fully-integrated steelmaking plant still standing in the United States. Five twenty-story blast furnaces mark the skyline, along with Machine Shop #2, once the world’s largest industrial building and a testimony to the skill of Bethlehem’s machinists. A High House for annealing naval guns turned out artillery for both World Wars. A trestle for mixing ore, coke, and flux presides like a great MixMaster over one end of the site, linked to the blast furnaces by a trestle along which rumbled the filled ore cars. Welfare rooms where Bethlehem’s thousands of workers began and ended their shifts are filled with ghostly remnants of camaraderie and competition. And the surrounding community teems with important sites -- housing for workers and managers alike, often organized into ethnic enclaves, railroad tracks running to every compass point, supporting industries linked to steel or drawn to the workforce there, and the churches -- and bars -- where Bethlehem’s people found their choice of solace.

MARCH by no means initiated the effort to interpret this sprawling set of historic resources, but we have helped very materially by bringing disparate groups together around a shared vision for the site, supporting efforts to educate developers about the historic value of the remaining structures, and engaging individuals and organizations from far beyond Bethlehem in the fate of the industrial story to be told there. Through this project, MARCH is illuminating the contours of a general history of the industrial Mid-Atlantic, along with a strategy of public/private partnership capable of mobilizing that history to serve and rebuild regional communities.

Bethlehem Steel Corporation closed the plant in 1998 and went bankrupt in 2003. In 2005, a consortium of New York developers led by Michael Perrucci bought the site, intending to create a mixed-use, commercial and retail development incorporating the historic steel structures. The following year, they sold a majority interest in the consortium to Las Vegas Sands, and then competed successfully, despite considerable public opposition, for one of Pennsylvania’s coveted slots casino licenses. Awarding the license in December 2006, the gaming commission particularly cited the historic value of the property and the developers’ commitments to preserve and build upon that value, as a key reason for giving them a casino license.

The future of the site, and of interpretation, therefore links the city government, area cultural institutions, and a for-profit casino owner, an unprecedented mix of stakeholders that challenges everyone’s expectations, habits and values. Each group has its hands on an important but in no way decisive set of levers. The casino owners have all the rights of property holders, but their hold on the property depends upon the gaming commission, which wants to see the historic resources appropriately developed. The city holds all the zoning and permitting power, which it can exercise negatively to protect historic resources, but it also wants...
EXPLORING THE MID@LANTIC

Bethlehem Steel is one piece of a long Mid-Atlantic history of innovation and industry that begins with the great port cities and their networks of river and canals. When water power was the way to run the Mid-Atlantic, it was continuous and powered the region’s mills and factories. Oil, discovered in Pennsylvania in 1859, enabled continued prosperity right through the middle of the 20th century. The sites enumerated below are just a sample of important industrial history sites around the region.

Maritime and inland water trade:
South Street Seaport Museum, New York, NY www.southstreetseaport.org
Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia, PA www.phillyseamuseum.org

Industrial history sites:
Hudson River Sleep Channel, Peekskill, NY www.clearwater.org
Eric Canal Museum, Syracuse, NY www.ericcanal.com
National Canal Museum, Easton, PA www.canal.org
Susquehanna River, PA and MD www.usace.hq.dod.mil/ (bridges, industrial history)

Schenckville River National and State Heritage Area www.schenckville.org
Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area www.delawarereader.org
Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park www.chaddsfordhistory.org/history/

Manufacturing:
Boschong Mills, Shrewsbury, NJ www.boschongmills.com
Blues River (Paper) Mill, Cornish, NY www.bluesrivertap.org/region/forestvictoria.htm
Bollmann’s Mill (Branford Creek). Chalfont’s Ford, PA wwwдушachemicalhistory.org/history/mills/halfmills.htm
Moravian Industrial Quarter, Bethlehem, PA www.historybethlehem.com
Bosentoff Furnace National Historic Site, Elveron, PA www.nps.gov/hobh
Norwalk, Delaware, various sites http://norwalk.dec.state.de.us/DOCS/whatnew_research_history.html

Baltimore Museum of Industry, Baltimore, MD www.thefabri.org
Tr Polar Mills, Haverhill, Massachusetts, MA www.colorantshistory.org/history/treemillhistory.html

As tempting as it might be to relegate cultural groups to the periphery of these redevelopment processes, they have a pivotal role as well. In Bethlehem, when the current owners first heard the site had historic value, their response was a breezy “it took us in some gas lights.” It took much more to make the case for the sooty industrial structures as the source of architectural vocabulary for new construction. But in the end, the commitment to the industrial history became a signal competitive advantage for the developers. The cultural groups continue to offer important resources to both the municipal and commercial partners. We argue to the city that, like the steel company, one day the casino will most likely pull up stakes and move on, while the historic site and its cultural and economic value is a permanent asset. That perspective highlights where the city’s long-term interests diverge from those of the developers, clarifying how Bethlehem can best use the short-term economic boost represented by the casino to build a future for itself.

All the partners are learning on the job, as there are few models to follow. Humanities professionals face two challenges in constructing and participating in such partnerships. The first is to articulate the added value that cultural interpretation brings to sites of municipal and private investment. Beyond attracting tourists, cultural advocates must address valuable intangibles like how pride and optimism spur entrepreneurship and help keep promising local youth, and the way civic engagement around culture stimulates participation in other arenas of public life. Secondly, humanities professionals need to get to the deep-seated unease about working with private investors. In the same spirit that humanities organizations reach out to new audiences, they must embrace the challenge of channeling private investment into cultural work. Mission clarity, management confidence, and local credibility are all essential strengths and provide important resources to both the museum and Regional Planning in Portland, Maine in October. In the same month, Sharon Ann Holt explored with the Calumet (IL and IN) Area Heritage Partnership how communities can create high quality industrial history, even without control of surviving sites.

March Happenings

Working with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, MARCH received a second year of funding from the We the People program of the National Endowment for the Humanities to repeat its successful Bard College Clemente course in Camden, New Jersey. Camden area residents whose finances have kept them from entering college can earn six Bard College credit hours for successfully completing the 28-week interdisciplinary course. Fifteen students received credits in August 2007 at the end of the first Clemente course. The 2008 course will be directed by Diane Turner, director of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University.

In November, MARCH director Howard Gillette accepted the New Jersey Historical Commission’s Richard P. McCormick prize for best scholarly publication for his 2006 book, Camden on the Fall. In December, Gillette’s book will be the subject of a roundtable discussion on the future of post-industrial cities at the University of Michigan’s Taubman School of Architecture and Planning.

More than 100 people gathered at the Museum of the City of New York in October for the launch of the Harlem portion of the MARCH-supported web site, www.invinciblecities.com. Area residents responded to MARCH regional fellow Camillo Vergara’s presentation of Harlem’s changing landscape, expressing hopes that reinvestment in the area could be captured for the benefit of long-time residents, a number of whom face the prospect of displacement.

John R. Seiter has been named director of the South Jersey Tourism Corporation, based in Camden, replacing long-time director Judi Landon. A former director of the Camden County Historical Society, Seiter managed the funding for “Walt Whitman and His Invincible City,” a heritage tour of Camden researched and developed by a MARCH team in 2006.

Margaret Burke, executive director of the Maryland Humanities Council, will be leaving the Council on December 1 to become Director of Foundation Development for WGBH in Boston. Over five years, Burke led the Council to redefine its mission around a central commitment to community engagement and dialogue. See Cross Ties, Winter 2006, “Going to the Well,” for Burke’s discussion of that new mission. Burke’s husband, Dennis Foi, left the Maryland Historical Society in 2006 to become president of Massachusetts Historical Society.

Sharon A. Smith has accepted the post of executive director at Philadelphia’s struggling Civil War and Underground Railroad Museum. Ms. Smith, former director of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania, will begin working to move the Museum to a new location, define a new mission, and build support for the Museum and the importance of the Civil War in Philadelphia.

Regional Roundup

The Historical Society of Washington, DC has appointed Sandy Bellamy as its new executive director. Bellamy will succeed Bell Clement, who, as interim director, helped restore the Society’s financial stability and ensure its future. Bellamy was recently director of the Regional F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. Before moving to Baltimore, where she also spearheaded a drive to create Baltimore’s Heritage Walk, she spent many years as a lawyer in Washington, with the Smithsonian Institution, the Walters Art Museum, and Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts. She earned her BA and JD from Howard University.

John Seiter

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Exploring the Mallwalks, continued from page 2

Schenectady Industrial Archive
(General Electric), Schenectady, NY
www.schenectadyhistory.org/gp/index.html
Industrial New York (Photos on industrial sites, principally in NYC and Rochester)
www.industrynewyork.org
Workshop of the World, 90 minute video on
Cincinnati/Philadelphia industrial world
www.dipshop.org
Lakeview National Historic District, Costaline, PA
www.lakeviewhistoricdistrict.org/photos.htm
Rests of Steel National Heritage Area, Pittsburgh, PA
www. rests of steele.com
Spawrers Point Stateparkers, Baltimore, MD
www.spawacerspointstateparkers.com
U.S. Labor and Industrial History World Wide
Web Audio Archive
www.march.rutgers.edu
Menlo Park Laboratory, (orig. in Menlo Park, NJ,
Home of Benjamin Franklin, National Park
Steamtown National Historic Site, Scranton, PA
www.albany.edu/history/LaborAudio
Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum, Altoona, PA
www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/edison/
Eckley Miner's Village, Eckley, PA
www.albany.edu/history/LaborAudio
Batsto Village, Batsto, NJ  (Bog iron, salt, also
Steve Hawley, National Park website)
U.S. Labor and Industrial History World Wide
Web Audio Archive
www.mmuseum.rutgers.edu
Schenectady Industrial Archive
(General Electric), Schenectady, NY
www.schenectadyhistory.org/gp/index.html
Industrial New York (Photos on industrial sites, principally in NYC and Rochester)
www.industrynewyork.org
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Web Audio Archive
www.mmuseum.rutgers.edu

PROJECTS TO WATCH

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania launched its PhilaPlace initiative this fall with events in South Philadelphia and the Northern Liberties. PhilaPlace, a neighborhood history and culture project, won major grant support from the Heritage Project at the Pew Charitable Trusts, in addition to other grant funds. For information about PhilaPlace, contact Joan Saverino, Assistant Director for Education, at 215-732-6200 ext 246, or by email at jsaverino@hsp.org.

Congratulations to PhilhISTORY for winning Philadelphia Magazine’s Best of Philly award as 2007’s best local site. PhilhISTORY is the Philadelphia City Archives’ online database, hosting thousands of historic photos, searchable by location, address, year and more. The Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) also recognized PhilhISTORY as an “exemplary” effort to make valuable government information available to the public. PhilhISTORY has recently released PhilhISTORY Mobile (http://mobile. philhISTORY.org), offering a whole new level of access.

The Good, the Bad, and the Tidious: Tackling those Pesky Grant Proposals

The intimidating stack of grant proposals now being reviewed here on my desk may be an excellent starting point for discussing how we, as funders, differentiate a strong grant proposal from a weak one. The New Jersey Historical Commission’s grant program, like any other, has particular priorities and, for a start, every strong proposal clearly meets them. What seems an obvious point does actually come with some subtleties attached. I know how tempting it is to try every source of funding, however remote to your project. But I can tell you, the Commission’s grant reviewers instantly spot proposals that simply graft New Jersey history elements onto unrelated programs or strain to magnify some minor connection. The moral here is that if you know in your heart-of-hearts that your project doesn’t comfortably match a funder’s priorities, best resist the impulse to make it fit. It’s not easy money, because not only will reviewers sniff out your game but also you risk departing from your primary mission.

That first principle leads right to a second one: always read all of the guidelines for any given program thoroughly, well in advance, and when fully awake! I point out such a basic principle of grant-writing because, well, we regularly receive applications marked by extreme guideline-avoidance behavior. Submissions that follow formars revised two years ago, omit crucial attachments, or even bear language clearly developed for another funder won’t impress us at all.

Strong applications are much more fun to talk about. One of my early professional mentors described grant applications that “sing” and that is absolutely true: some grant proposals do sing, and very sweehty. These proposals are clear, concise, and impassioned. Reviewers always appreciate absolute clarity on the essentials – what’s

Jacobs’ Chapel A.M.E. Church in Mount Laurel Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, has completed a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Jacob’s Chapel congregation, formed as early as 1812, worshipped in the current building on Elbo Lane starting in 1859. Albert Jacob, a local Quaker, donated the site to the congregation. James Still (1812-1882), known regionally as the “black doctor of the Pines,” was a member of Jacob’s Chapel. Many descendants of early congregants live in the township today. In the late twentieth century, Jacob’s Chapel became the epicenter of a grassroots movement for national reform in housing and zoning policy. Ethel Lawrence (1926-), married to Albert Jacob, a local Quaker, donated the building on Elbo Lane starting in 1859. Albert Jacob, a local Quaker, donated the site to the congregation. James Still (1812-1882), known regionally as the “black doctor of the Pines,” was a member of Jacob’s Chapel. 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On September 26, The New Jersey Historical Society opened the exhibit, “What’s Going On?” Newark and the Legacy of the Sixties.” More than 10 years in the making, the exhibit, designed by Kent/Paetth/Casey in Boston, focuses on the civil rights disorders that shattered the city forty years ago. A conference and extensive programming accompanies the show, which runs through August, 2008 in Newark and will then travel.

A new exhibit linking coal, canals, and railroads to the region’s 19th-century economic development is open at Independence National Historical Park thanks to the collaboration of the Park with The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Areas. This exhibit permits visitors to the Park to glimpse the history of the area in the years after the Constitution was signed in Philadelphia.

In October, the United States Colored Troops Living History Association gathered to mark the 150th anniversary of the American-Indian War. In Charleston, SC in 1839, Catto became a highly educated and well-respected scholar, teacher, politician, and civil rights leader. Inducted into the Franklin Institute for his intellectual achievements, Catto was also justly famous as founder, coach, and star shortstop of the Pythian Baseball Club. His active and vocal lifelong foe of racial oppression, Catto lobbied hard for ratification of the 15th amendment in 1870, which gave African-American men the right to vote. Having worked hard to turn out new, mostly Republican, voters in the city, Catto was shot dead on election day – October 10, 1871 – by a white Democrat named Frank Kelly. Catto’s memory and courage were honored with a ceremony in Eden cemetery, Collingsdale, Pennsylvania.

In October, the United States Colored Troops Living History Association gathered to mark the tree of Octavius Valentine Catto, an important 19th century African-American leader. Born free in Charleston, SC in 1839, Catto became a highly educated and well-respected scholar, teacher, politician, and civil rights leader. Inducted into the Franklin Institute for his intellectual achievements, Catto was also justly famous as founder, coach, and star shortstop of the Pythian Baseball Club. His active and vocal lifelong foe of racial oppression, Catto lobbied hard for ratification of the 15th amendment in 1870, which gave African-American men the right to vote. Having worked hard to turn out new, mostly Republican, voters in the city, Catto was shot dead on election day – October 10, 1871 – by a white Democrat named Frank Kelly. Catto’s memory and courage were honored with a ceremony in Eden cemetery, Collingsdale, Pennsylvania.

The New Jersey Historical Commission in November presented the Richard I. Hughes award for lifetime achievement to Thomas Fleming, the author of more than 40 books, including Forgotten History: The Battle of New Jersey. Also honored with awards of recognition were Charles Eckhardt and Robert McAvoy, Monmouth County Archives, Morris County Park Commission, Historic Sites Division, Friends of the Herford Inlet Lighthouse/Herford Inlet Lighthouse Commission, Trenton Downtown Association, and Professor Richard Veit of Monmouth University. For details, see the Commission’s press release at www.nj.gov/state/divisions/historical/news/2007/11/newjerseyhistoricalcommission_fallawards_release_110907.pdf.

At its annual meeting in September, The Philadelphia Cultural Alliance released findings on the economic impact of the arts and culture sector. Entitled The Economic Impact of the Arts and Culture Sector: Philadelphia, the report indicates that the region’s non-profit cultural sector generates 40,000 jobs and $158 million in tax revenue ($5 back to the city and $2.50 back to the state for every dollar invested). The report is available online at http://philabiz.org/membership/2007/meeting.htm.

Congratulations to the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association on receiving the 2007 Sarah F. Fiske Award from Preservation New Jersey. Kevin Tredwell, Marguerite Chandler and Kathleen R. Litvack accepted the award, which recognizes the Crossroads Association for “longstanding commitment to raising public understanding of the importance of New Jersey’s Revolutionary War heritage while promoting open space conservation, historic preservation, community revitalization and heritage tourism.”

The Upstate (NY) History Alliance offered online courses in collections care this past fall, with other topics to follow. Courses charge only modest fees and are available to non-members. More information can be found online at www.upstatehistory.org.

About the Commission of the Revolution, the 2007 Fiske Award and Preservation New Jersey Awards, Maggie D. Thompson, Preservation New Jersey.

The Albert B. Corey Award, named after a former president of AASLH, recognizes primarily volunteer-operated historical organizations that display exceptional qualities of rigor, scholarship, and imagination. The Hillsborough (NJ) Historical Society won the 2007 award for preserving Hillsborough’s historic Manahan-Phillips-McCulloch Photographic Collection. Not content to just preserve this collection, which documents small town daily life from 1866 to 2002, the museum also offered numerous related interpretive programs to the public.

Finally, the AASLH gives an Award of Distinction to individuals recognized nationally as leaders in state and local history in recognition of long and very distinguished service. The committee gives this very special award based on an exhaustive creative review process. The Awards Program is truly a national grassroots effort that takes a full year to complete. Nominations are due to the state AASLH chair by March 1, to be reviewed at the state level by a team of museum professionals and historians, and at the regional level by a regional chair. The regional chair then brings the competitive nominations to a national review committee. Organizations that participate not only get the benefits of assembling the nomination but also receive dedicated attention and helpful feedback at every level. In the end, the profession can celebrate an impressive slate of award winners. Their commitment to excellence in the field of state and local history reaffirms the importance and potential of all our work in the humanities as we chronicle the evolution of this grand experiment we call the United States of America.

For nominating information go to http://aaslh.org/aaslh_awards.htm.

Kenneth C. Turino, Robert F. Zuur, Barbara E. Kuhlman, Robert F. Zuur, American Association for State and Local History Awards Committee; Todd Collier, Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History; Donald F. Zuur, Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History; Corpus Christi, Texas.
MARCH thanks Stevie and Ted Wolf for their long-standing support and particularly for their generosity in making this newsletter possible.