

CHSA *Construction History Society of America*

August 2024 Newsletter



Mark your calendars!

The 9th meeting of the Construction History Society of America will be held from **June 19th through 21st, 2025 at the University of Virginia**. Two days of paper presentations will be followed by a day of site visits to local construction and historic sites. Be on the lookout for the Call for Abstracts in the coming weeks!





Covered wooden bridge on the "St Gallen Bridge Hiking Excursion"

Highlights from 8ICCH

Ben Hays and Tom Leslie attended the [8th International Congress on Construction History](#) in Zurich, Switzerland in June. Nearly 150 papers on construction history from across the globe were complimented by site visits to buildings and bridges in and around Zurich.

Upcoming Events, Calls for Papers, and Other opportunities

Coloquio Mexicano de Historia de la Construcción

Hybrid meeting: Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía (ENCRyM)
Ciudad de México, CDMX, Mexico

October 23-25, 2024

<https://www.facebook.com/ColMexHistConst>

Associated Schools of Construction 61st Annual Conference

Theme: Innovation in Construction built on the foundation of Applied Education and Research
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary, Canada

April 22-24, 2025

abstract submissions due November 15, 2024

visit the [conference website](#) and the [Call for Papers](#)

Fall Webinar Bridges: Historical Innovations

Friday, November 1, 2024, 12:00-1:00pm Central Time

In the wake of the catastrophic, accidental collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, CHSA invites you to attend our next webinar focused on innovative bridge construction in years past.

Moderated by Peter Hilger, past President of CHSA, and sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the webinar will be headlined by Robert Dermody, Roger Williams University, discussing early suspension bridges; Katherine Haun-Schurring, Minnesota Department of Transportation Historian discussing an upper Mississippi River crossing; and Ulrich Boeyng, a retired German historian discussing an early, innovative Rhine River crossing. Until then, we keep you "in suspense!"

Save the date, and watch for more information to come

Recent Awards & Publications in Construction History

CHSA member **Thomas Leslie's** book ***Chicago Skyscrapers 1934-1986: How Technology, Politics, Finance, and Race Reshaped the City*** has won the prestigious Pattis Family Foundation Chicago Book Award!

The award, sponsored by the Newberry Library and The Pattis Family Foundation celebrates works that transform public understanding of Chicago, its history, and its people and comes with an impressive \$25,000 prize. The Pattis Family Foundation Chicago Book Award is open to writers working in a variety of genres, including history, biography, social sciences, poetry, drama, graphic novels, and fiction—all relating to Chicago. The award demonstrates the breadth and depth of construction history scholarship. As Astrida Orle Tantillo, President and Librarian of the Newberry, describes it, "Thomas Leslie's book is a wonderful example of a work that helps readers better understand Chicago...At first glance it is a book about architecture—a topic of great interest to many Chicagoans. Chicago Skyscrapers is much more than that, however. It tells a compelling story about the politics, technology, and personalities behind the construction of some of Chicago's most iconic buildings and helps us better appreciate the history of how our city grew."

CHSA member **Ernesto Bilbao** recently contributed a chapter to the book *Modern Architecture of Quito: Global, Local, and the In-Between*, edited by Christian Parreño.

Bilbao's chapter, entitled "**Architecture for Pan-Americanism: Local Aspirations, Regional Interests, and the (Unrealized) Inter-American Conference of Quito of 1959**," recounts the architecture of a promising but frustrated event, the XI Inter-American Conference of Quito of 1959. For Ecuador, the designation as host of the meeting represented an opportunity for gaining leadership in regional affairs; it also constituted an excuse for Quito to transform its built environment, with a new Legislative Palace, a structure for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a university residence, a grand hotel, and an airport with a state-of-the-art terminal. Ernesto Bilbao shows that, although the conference was eventually cancelled, its preparation, which entailed geopolitical interests and ambitions of prestige, along with the construction of ostentatious edifices, changed the mood of the nation.





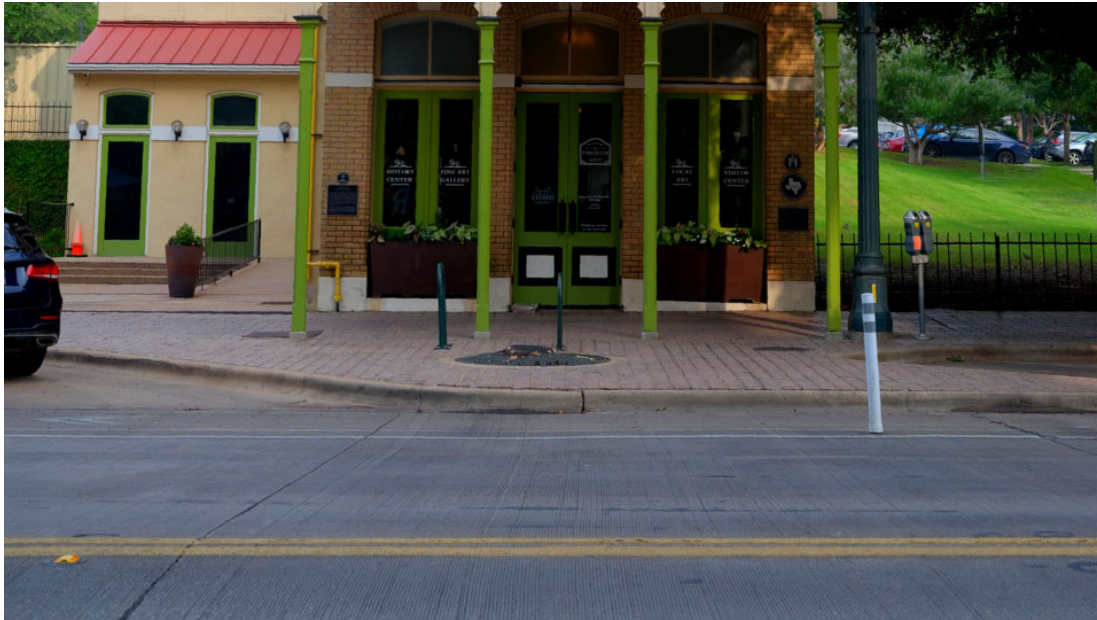
Check out CHSA member **Mónica Silva Contreras** recent book project ***Aproximaciones a la historia de la construcción en México*** with Dirk Bühler, Francisco Omar Escamilla González, and Leopoldo Rodríguez Morales

This book recounts the breadth of research revealed in the colloquiums on construction history held in Mexico since 2014. It brings together eighteen original and unpublished works presented in a temporal order (from pre-Hispanic times to the twentieth century). The authors' areas of interest are divided into four sections: a first group is composed by those works that deal with traditional materials and techniques in Mexican architecture; another is devoted to the description of the construction process of a particular building, given its technical and historical value. Of great interest is also the group of chapters devoted to the analysis of built ensembles and infrastructural works and, finally, there is a small group of three chapters focused on the individual and social history of technical or guild actors. Each essay is well illustrated and supported by an individual bibliography that contributes to future research.

Dirk Bühler, Francisco Omar Escamilla González, Leopoldo Rodríguez Morales y Mónica Silva Contreras (coord.) ***Aproximaciones a la historia de la construcción en México***. México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2024

Field Notes: Students document one of Austin's oldest buildings





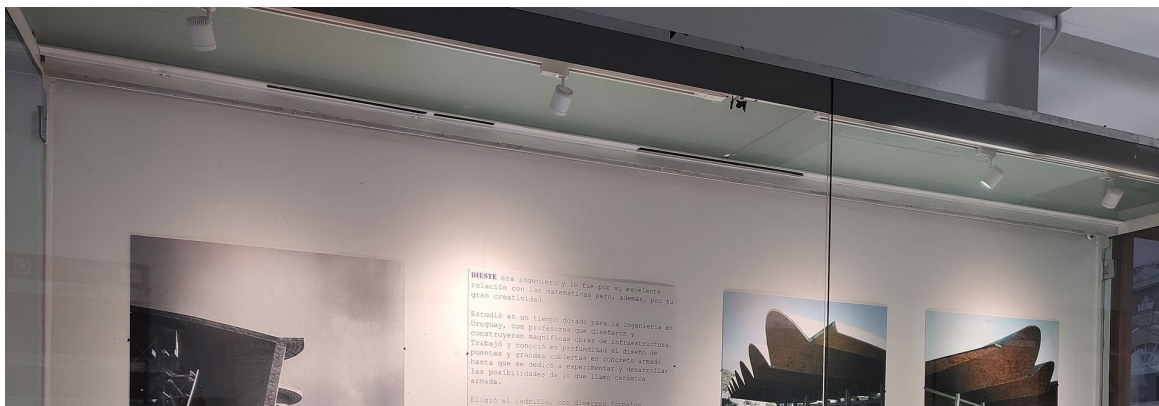
The Historic Preservation Program at the University of Texas at Austin recently undertook a comprehensive Historic Structure Report (HSR) project focusing on the old Bakery building, one of Austin's oldest and most historically significant structures. This detailed study, conducted by faculty and students, meticulously analyzed the building's construction materials and the various stages of its development over time. The project revealed invaluable insights into the architectural techniques and materials used during different periods, shedding light on the building's historical and cultural significance.

The old Bakery building stands as a testament to Austin's rich heritage, serving as a tangible link to the city's past. Its preservation is crucial for understanding the evolution of local architectural practices and maintaining the community's historical narrative.

For the students involved, this project has been an unparalleled learning experience. They have gained hands-on experience in archival research and material analysis and documenting and interpreting historical data. This practical involvement enhanced their technical skills and deepened their appreciation for the importance of the history of construction. The project exemplifies the program's commitment to integrating academic learning with real-world applications, preparing students for future historic preservation and conservation careers.

Exhibition Review: Exposición Eladio Dieste, Ingeniero

Departamento de Arquitectura, Urbanismo e Ingeniería Civil. Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City
Curatorship and design: Dr. Mónica Silva-Contreras
Digital edition: Maite Illescas





On view from January to March 2024 at Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México, this exhibition was the result of work on two projects carried out between 2015 and 2017: the Dieste Educational Project for the social dissemination of the engineer's work in Uruguay, and the drafting by a magnificent team of 50 international professionals of the *Conservation and Management Plan for the Cristo Obrero Church in Atlántida*, currently inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Current pictures, essential data, and brief texts of the works were complemented with reproduction of sketches, construction plans and photos from the archive of the firm to show about twenty-one works built by the firm established by Eugenio Montañez y Eladio Dieste. Some of them are quite well-known buildings due to their structural form and dimensions, but the greater part are almost unknown warehouses or industrial buildings.

From the works of the firm Dieste & Montañez was established a structural typology demonstrating the possibilities that Dieste was able to extract from reinforced tile. A plate with this "structural family" was one of the center points of the exhibition. Reproductions of sketches, construction plans, and photos of towers in different parts of Uruguay, including the tallest of them for the transmission antenna of a local television station, occupied a case next to documentation of Eladio Dieste's iconic work, the parish church of Cristo Obrero y Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, in Estación Atlántida.

Of the most beautiful images, it is worth highlighting those of the prototype built by Marcelo Sasson for rural schools - of which 228 were built all over Uruguay - whose history, more than its self-supporting vaults of very modest dimensions, demonstrates the social projection that Dieste gave to reinforced tile. Its construction involved the training of parents and teachers, who built the schools on lands donated by the owners of different "chacras," farms or haciendas. Local horneros made "country bricks," often burned on site, made of clay and organic material, using the necessary minimum of steel bars and cement. These rural schools show, behind the brick, the protagonist of the exhibition and of Dieste's intelligence, the country from whose limitations emerged the "cerámica armada," a composite material with enormous possibilities.

Join CHSA or Renew your membership

All enthusiasts of construction history are invited to [join the membership](#) of CHSA, or if you are a current member, don't forget to [renew your membership](#) by January 1, 2025. Active members receive a copy of [Construction History](#), the peer reviewed journal published twice a year by the UK Construction History Society.

Renew Now!

This message was sent to you by the Construction History Society of America
 If you no longer wish to receive these emails, you can [unsubscribe](#) at any time