



NEWSLETTER

Being the summer issue, we'll keep the content short and light. First we would like to thank those of you who have renewed your membership since the last appeal, to bring our renewal rate to over 75%. And of course we welcome the new members who have joined recently. Finally please let us know of any friends or colleagues to whom we can send information about the benefits of joining CHSA.

Copies of the CHS Magazine, published by our British colleagues, have been mailed to all members in good standing. Please let us know if you did not receive your copy.

Inside you will find an update on the preparations for the Congress in Chicago in 2015 where the big news is that we are in the process of signing a contract to hold the event at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel from June 3rd to 7th, 2015. A 1913 postcard picture of the second version of the hotel completed in 1875, appears on the right. Since then the Palmer House has been through one major re-build and many upgrades.

Also good to report is the number of local events taking place this year. Two gatherings sponsored by CHSA in June are covered by Tom Leslie (Chicago) and Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla (Oaxaca, Mexico). Two more are scheduled for Charlotte (September) and Minneapolis (November).

Finally, we are always seeking short articles to include in this newsletter, plus information on future events that would be of interest to our members.

Brian Bowen
Chair, Management Committee

Don Friedman
Newsletter Editor

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

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Palmer House Hotel, Chicago, 1913

- * 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

BOOK REVIEW

A BETTER WAY TO BUILD: A HISTORY OF THE PANKOW COMPANIES

Michael R. Adamson, Purdue University Press, 2013

Many of us in CHSA have lamented the lack of good histories of construction companies. Of the few that exist, many were written on the occasion of an anniversary and frequently seem designed solely to grace the company's reception coffee table.

This book is different. It is an extraordinarily well researched and documented history of an innovative construction company of relatively recent vintage. Charles Pankow was born in 1923 and after finishing military service and a civil engineering degree at Purdue, he joined the Peter Kiewit Company on the west coast in 1951. Kiewit was (and still is) one of America's leading contractors with a focus on civil work. Charlie (as he preferred to be called) developed a building division which did not receive strong support within Kiewit. So in 1963 he struck out on his own forming Charles Pankow Inc.



Charlie Pankow (second from right) visiting one of his building sites

Charlie was a concrete man to the point of obsession. As far as this reviewer could discern, he never built in any other material and he built a lot. His engineers and crews were skilled in using what today we would call 'lean construction' techniques and perfected the use of slip-forming, pre- and post-tensioning and pre-cast-

ing. He built a reputation mostly on the west coast and Hawaii, for fair-dealing and delivery speed.

He was also a strong proponent of integrated design and construction and rarely took a job where he would not have some say or control over design. As Design-Build became an increasingly popular alternative project delivery method in the late 1980's, the firm was instrumental in the formation of the Design-Build Institute of America in 1992.

Charlie died in 2004 but his firm continues to this day. During his building career he had also been a successful developer of office properties and together with the proceeds from an art collection he had assembled, funded the Charles Pankow Foundation, the only non-profit dedicated to building innovation.

The author uses illustrated projects from the company archives and oral histories of employees and colleagues to tell the company story in a well researched and written book.

Reviewer: Brian Bowen, School of Building Construction, Georgia Tech.

JOURNAL AT JSTOR AT LAST!

We have heard that JSTOR have finished scanning all previous Construction History Journals from the first issue (now long out of print) up to the 2010 edition. The link is:
<http://www.jstor.org/action/showpublication?journalcode=consthistory>
 Of course you need to have an institutional access to carry out a search

2013 SKYSCRAPER SYMPOSIUM IN CHICAGO—RE-STAGING THE “GREAT DEBATE.”

On June 22, the Western Great Lakes Chapter of the Association of Preservation Technology and the Construction History Society of America co-hosted an afternoon-long event entitled *Skyscraper History: Looking Back While Looking Up*. Presenters included preservationists and contemporary engineers and architects working at the cutting edge of skyscraper design, all emphasizing the continuity between the towers of the nineteenth century and those of the twenty-first.



The Fisher Building in Chicago

Shankar Nair from Chicago-based EXP discussed the century-and-a-half long evolution of the commercial office tower, showing how technology and design have

influenced one another. More provocatively, Nair discussed how technological developments might project forward, noting that there was currently no structural reason that skyscrapers of 36,000 feet couldn't be built. At the opposite end of the chronology, Ed Gerns from WJE discussed that firms' work preserving well-known examples from the early years of skyscraper construction.

A real highlight, and a presentation that tied the two eras together, was an overview of restoration work on Mies van der Rohe's 860-880 Lake Shore Drive apartments by Mark Sexton of Krueck and Sexton. Preserving a skyscraper whose aesthetic relies on precise, minimalist detailing, and Sexton was able to highlight both how the original buildings were constructed, and how contemporary standards had to be gently shoe-horned into the Mies building. The goal, he noted, was for the project to be utterly invisible. Carrying on the Miesian tradition, though with decidedly more formal invention, Aaron Mazeika from SOM discussed how the firm uses digital technology to solve complex formal and functional problems.

The late afternoon session was devoted to a debate staged among three members of CHSA. Thomas Leslie, Donald Friedman, and Meghan Elliott respectively put forth arguments for Chicago, New York, and Minneapolis as the true home of the skyscraper, building on a long history of debates among historians of architecture and technology. While concluding that there was no real answer to the question, the panel raised important questions about historiography and what, precisely, defines a skyscraper. The audience—a partisan crowd, to say the least—voted predictably, but if anything the debate showed that the commercial office tower has a wildly diverse parentage, and thus the broadest possible homeland.

2013 SKYSCRAPER SYMPOSIUM IN CHICAGO—RE-STAGING THE “GREAT DEBATE.”

Rachel Will of WJE and APT coordinated the event, which brought together practitioners, academics, and the general public, and was featured online by Curbed: Chicago later that week. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago hosted the event in the new Leroy Neiman Student Center, located on the ground floor of Holabird and Roche’s Champlain Building. This will undoubtedly be one of many locales for social events in June, 2015, when CHSA hosts the Fifth International Congress on Construction History at the Palmer House Hotel, just a block away.

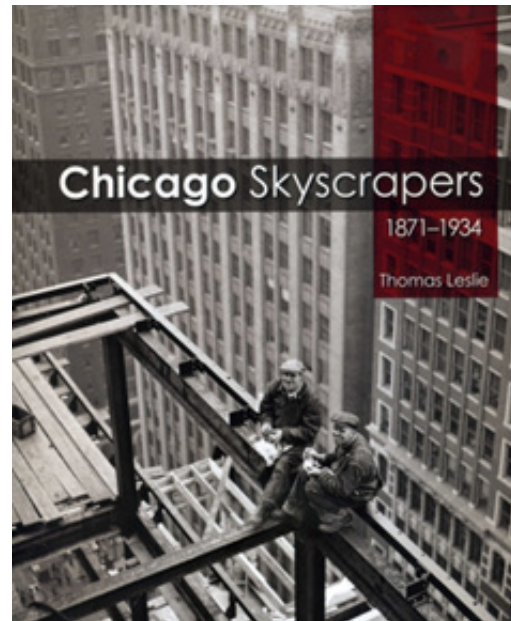


The National Shoe and Leather Bank in NYC

BOOK REVIEW WANTED

Chicago Skyscrapers 1871-1934, Thomas Leslie, University of Illinois Press, 2013

We need a review of this recently published book by one of our members and the Society’s Secretary. Contact chs@coa.gatech.edu if you wish to prepare one.



Construction History Society Conference
April, 2014, Cambridge, UK

You should have received an e-mail we sent out earlier attaching the Call for Papers for this event. If you did not receive this and would like a copy, please contact Atefe at atefe.makhmalbaf@gmail.com

REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON BUILDING TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FROM EUROPE TO MEXICO DURING THE 16TH CENTURY.

Professor Benjamin Ibarra-Sevilla (University of Texas at Austin) organized an international symposium on Building Technology Transfer from Europe to Mexico during the 16th Century in the world heritage city of Oaxaca, Mexico. The symposium sponsored by the University of Minnesota and San Pablo Cultural Center took place from June 28th to June 30th. This event brought together some of the most prominent figures in the current studies of vaulted structures, stereotomy, and the processes involved in the social and political change that occurred in Mexico during the sixteenth century. Professor Enrique Rabasa and Jose Calvo (Spain) spoke about the building techniques and ancient Spanish manuscripts. Archeologist Nelly Robles (Mexico) presented the techniques involved in pre-Columbian monumental building construction while Professor Magdalena Vences (Mexico) talked about the historic context in early sixteenth century in Mexico. Professor John Ochsendorf (US) gave a lecture on vaults mechanics and Professor Ibarra-Sevilla (US) closed the sessions with his research on three sixteenth-century ribbed vaults in Oaxaca. Speakers and people attending the symposium had the opportunity to visit a nearby quarry and stonemasons shops and learned about current processes involved in the work of limestone in the region. They also visited the churches of San Pedro and San Pablo Teposcolula, Santo Domingo Yanhuitlán, and San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca where they could observe these rare cases of late-gothic vaults in the Americas. The symposium was prepared as the closing event for the traveling exhibition Indigenous Stonecutting Artistry also curated by Professor Ibarra-Sevilla. This exhibition will be open in the National Autonomous University of Mexico from September to December and at the University of Minnesota from August to October of this year.



5TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

On July 9th the CHSA Management Committee authorized the signing of a contract with the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago as the venue for this event in 2015 from June 3rd to 7th. The hotel is located on the corner of State and Monroe Streets in the Loop and is convenient for visits to many historic of Chicago's sites. The building itself is an important piece of Chicago construction history having gone through three major phases of development and innumerable renovations. First constructed in 1871 by Potter Palmer it opened in September of that year only to burn down 13 days later in the great fire. Reconstructed in 1875 as pictured below, it was subject to a major reconstruction and expansion in the 1920's to the designs of Holabird & Roche.

A local organizing committee is now working on the many details involved in an event of this scale and a program committee is in formation. Volunteers are always welcome.



Palmer House Hotel, Chicago, 1913 (<http://chuckmanchicagonostalgia.wordpress.com>)

ALTUSWORKS, INC. – NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

AltusWorks is a technically oriented architectural design firm which applies a high level of expertise to the creative problem solving required for the restoration, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and expansion of existing and historic structures. The firm was founded in 2003 based on the concept that existing buildings are renewable assets that contribute to the economic development of communities through their revitalization. We have expanded to add expertise in Retail to build upon that foundation.

Ellen Stoner is the founder and principal of the firm and can be reached at 773-545-1870 and at 4224 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60641



ALTUSWORKS

FUTURE EVENTS CHSA

2013

September 25-28 Charlotte, NC CHSA panel included in SESAH Annual Meeting Program

November 12 -15 Minneapolis, MN Construction History session in conjunction with AIA annual state convention.

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

2013

August 16-18 Wilmington, IL Historic Construction Equipment Association
www.hcea.net

August 25-28 Chicago, IL Public Works Historical Society, in conjunction
With the American Public Works Association
Meeting www.apwa.net/pwhs

September 25-28 Charlotte, NC SESAH Annual Meeting
www.sesah2013-charlotte.org

October 9-12 Madrid, Spain VIII National Congress of Construction History
sanitago.huerta@upm.es

October 11-15 New York, NY Association for Preservation Technology,
Preserving the Metropolis
www.apti.org

2014

Jan 29-31 Paris, France 2nd Congres Francophone d'Histoire de la Construction
<http://2cfhc.sciencesconf.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

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

COMMITTEE ADVISORS

Frank Matero, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

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.

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