A special behind the scenes preview of our new exhibit!

We are so excited to share our exhibit, Roebling Works, with you on October 1. In the meantime, here’s a little bit about who made it and how we got it done.

Making History By Hand

In creating Roebling Works in collaboration with the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program, the exhibit team has been hard at work. We have learned from the Smithsonian staff, learned from each other—as well as from our neighbors. Here are two stories of people who have contributed never-before-seen objects to the exhibit.

Women’s Work
Cindy Lippincott, a Roebling resident, donated a treasure trove of everyday household items from three generations of her family.

The Sovaks came from Hungary and settled on Second Avenue in Roebling in the 1910s. First, they were boarders in a house with another family. Picture a two-bedroom house with a father, mother, and teen daughter living there. Now add a father, mother and two toddlers! That’s seven Hungarians living under one small roof.

In 1920 James and Mary Sovak lived with their two young children in their own two-bedroom home on Second Avenue. They must have really liked a full house (or the money it brought in to pay the rent) because they took in six Hungarian boarders—men between ages of 22 and 50 who all worked at the mill.

Learn more about Mary Sovak and her work in our exhibit. A special thanks to Cindy Lippincott for donating objects and sharing the stories of her grandparents and aunt.

Putting a Face to a Name
Day-to-day documents about the lives of working-class immigrants rarely survive. But, thankfully, these were saved by historian Lou Borbi, and they are featured prominently in the new exhibit. Nearly 15,000 employment cards from 1919-1945 sat safely on a shelf in a garage in Roebling until 2021 when they made their way back to the building where they were made.

Among the employment cards we found doctor’s notes, letters, and memos. Almost all were addressed to a man named Thomas Callery. Who was Thomas Callery?

We found out when Grant Callery, a member of our exhibit fundraising team, sent along his grandfather’s employment record. In 1919, he was head of the employment office and that’s a big job. He hired the workers on the employment cards. Learn more about his work while sitting behind his desk in our new exhibit.
A Letter from the President

One of the many appealing things about the Roebling Museum, to me, is where it came from – its origin story, as they say in Hollywood. This museum was not built to showcase a millionaire’s personal art collection (hello Barnes Foundation), to memorialize a war (ahoy Museum of the American Revolution), or to tell a life story (we see you, Alice Paul Institute.)

The Roebling Museum came from the community it celebrates: people who grew up in the company town of Roebling, who worked in the mill, and who wanted to see their own history, and their contributions to the nation’s history, preserved. It is that rare thing, a true grassroots organization. A group of local residents—not much more than a handful of people—got together to save the Roebling mill’s 100-year-old gatehouse and, in 2007, turn it into a history museum.

That’s why it’s extra exciting, and very appropriate, that the next exhibit to open at the Roebling Museum will also be a grassroots, community-led effort. “Roebling Works” is the museum’s collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, which selected us as a partner for its “Museum On Main Street” program. All summer, a group of local volunteers—not much more than a handful—have been working to research, write and design the story of the many kinds of work in Roebling and all the different kinds of workers who made their home in the village. The volunteers are doing everything from reading century-old newspapers to tracking down vintage telephones to hammering two-by-fours into exhibit panels. It has been a labor of love, with pizza. I can’t wait to see the finished product – and more important, to see how museum visitors interact with the new galleries.

Of course, this community-led history would not be possible without the support—that means donations—from the larger community of Roebling Museum members and friends. Thank you, as always, for continuing to help the Museum explore the many facets of Roebling history. There is always something new to share.

See you at the Museum –

[Signature]

Martha Moore
President, Board of Directors
Roebling Museum

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Roebling Museum is to document, preserve, and exhibit the history of the John A. Roebling’s Sons Company, the Roebling family and the village of Roebling. The focus of the museum is both the industrial and technological achievements of the company and the unique social history of its workforce and the town it created. The museum connects a storied past to the present while also serving as a valuable resource for school curriculum enhancement and academic research. It is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to the accomplishments of the Roebling family, its businesses and workers and the engineering innovations of the company in Trenton and Roebling, New Jersey.

Membership at Roebling Museum has its privileges! Become a member and enjoy free general admission for a year while supporting all that we do, from education programs for local schoolchildren to conservation of nationally important art and artifacts.

Join or renew your membership at roeblingmuseum.org today, and help keep history alive and enlightening in this unique village!
**Who worked on Roebling Works?**

The exhibit team, the fundraising committee, historical advisors, staff, exhibit sponsors, volunteers—we would need a 10-page newsletter to thank everyone who put time and effort into this project! Read along to meet our exhibit work crew.

**Nuts and bolts**
Board member Pierre Lacombe built infrastructure for the exhibit. These sawtooth style walls are the entryway into the exhibit and will really catch your eye.

**Planning and Scanning**
Our newest staff member Katarina Ramos scanned documents and photos, researched newspaper articles, and prepared artifacts for display. She said, “while working on this project, I’ve learned so much about my own town’s history!”

**Ideas and Objects**
Exhibit team member Drew Baldorossi, chose artifacts and decided how to lay out the exhibit. Besides family photos, he is also contributing one of his Roebling history collections for display. You’ll have to visit to find out what it is!

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**A special thanks to:**

The unofficial pizza sponsor of the *Roebling Works* exhibit.

Everyone who spackled, picked paint colors, primed, and painted.

Everyone who got their hands dirty hoisting historic objects out of basements.

Everyone who brought their dogs to visit for moral support.

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**John A. Roebling and the rest of us at Roebling Museum want your help!**

At Roebling Museum, we couldn’t do what we do without the support and enthusiasm of our volunteers. They give tours, greet people at the front desk, work with the historical objects in our collections, and help our events run smoothly.

We are always looking for more folks to come and join us! If you or someone you know is interested in supporting the work of Roebling Museum through volunteer work, please be in touch—we’d love to hear from you!

Find more information at roeblingmuseum.org or by calling us at (609) 499-7200.
CURRENT RESIDENT OR

Upcoming Events

Roebling Bike Ride
Saturday, September 10, 2022 • 11 am - 1 pm • $10/person
Join us for an 18-mile bike tour on the new Delaware River Heritage Trail!

Virtual Program - Roebling Roadtrip: Roebling Bridges of Bucks County
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 • 6 pm - 7 pm • FREE (Registration is required)

Exhibit Opening
Saturday October 1, 2022 • 11 am - 4 pm
Be the first in line on opening day to see our new exhibit, *Roebling Works!* Gripping stories and never-before-seen objects reveal what it meant to work in Roebling—both in the mill and in the community.

Historic House Tour
Saturday, October 8, 2022 • 11 am - 4 pm • $15/person
On a guided walking tour of the company town, join us to explore five historic worker houses. You’re invited inside to discover the stories of workers who lived in the houses— from immigrant laborers to wealthy superintendents.

Check our website for information on upcoming *Ghost Tours!*

Roebling Museum is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the federal CARES Act.

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