

# Ironmasters Conference



*The Wheeling-La Belle Nail Company cut-nail plant was a stop on the Friday early bird tour. (Jack Boucher, 1990)*



*The 1836 Henry Clay Furnace, located at Coopers Rock State Forest, was a Sunday tour stop. (John Nicely, 1996)*

## Background

The Ironmasters is a loose confederation of amateurs and scholars who are interested in historic ironmaking. They usually meet each year at what is known as the Ironmasters Conference. Over the years, the conference has convened at various east coast locations, including New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts. The 1999 West Virginia conference was the first held west of the Alleghenies.

## Scope

In April 1999 the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, in association with the Three Rivers Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, organized a historic ironmaking conference at West Virginia University that included paper sessions, tours, lodging, and a banquet.

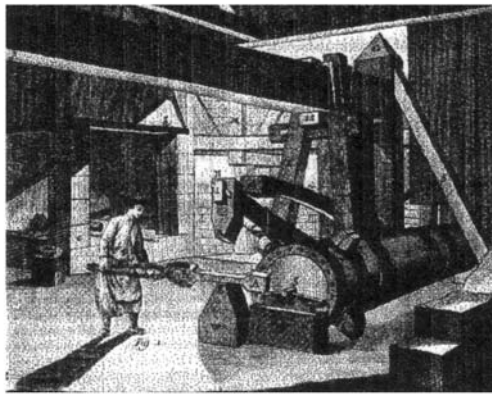
## Results

This Ironmasters Conference began with Friday tours of the Wheeling-La Belle Nail Company's cut nail plant (one of two remaining U.S. plants) and the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation's Steubenville North Works, viewing the basic oxygen furnace and rolling mill. Saturday's paper sessions presented topics ranging from early ironworks to site documentation and interpretation as well as to "Big Steel"; a Saturday evening banquet followed the sessions. A self-guided Sunday tour of northern West Virginia charcoal iron furnace sites, featuring the 1854 Virginia Furnace and the 1836 Henry Clay Furnace, concluded the conference.

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# 1999 IRONMASTERS CONFERENCE

April 23-25, 1999  
West Virginia University  
Morgantown, West Virginia



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*Cover of the 1999 Ironmasters Conference registration brochure.  
(Shelley and Lee Maddex)*