

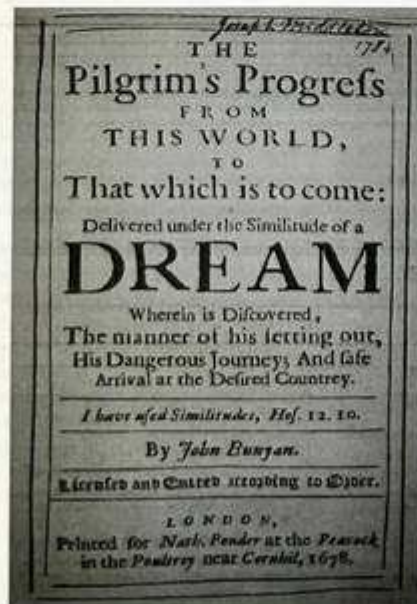
Dr Emory L. Kemp – a personal tribute
by Professor Roland Paxton, *Emeritus Member*



Emory commenting at Wheeling in 1999 ©Paxton

The eminent Industrial archaeologist and engineering historian Dr Emory Leland Kemp, born in Chicago on 1st October 1931, died from heart failure at Morgantown WV, on 20th January 2020. He is survived by his wife Janet and three children.

I first met Emory in 1976 through my PHEW activities. We corresponded and visited becoming firm friends. He was a devoted Methodist of a philosophical bent who equated his professional and academic life as analogous with the *Pilgrim's*



Progress. On seeing this copy he reflected on its pilgrim passing through the wicket gate and a series of adventures ending in the Celestial City, a destination he wrote he hadn't reached in a

professional way but in moving towards it he had 'gained great satisfaction in having made a commitment to academic life.'

From early in life Emory had a long-standing interest in science and mathematics and the creative aspects of building as represented in architecture and civil engineering. He entered the University of Illinois at the age of 16, graduating B.S. in 1952 with 'highest honors'. When there, during the Korean War, after first contemplating national service in the Navy, he served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as an Assistant Engineer from 1952-4. He was then awarded a Fulbright Fellowship [1954-6] for study at Imperial College, London, obtaining his D.I.C. in 1955. Whilst there, his interest in historical engineering was whetted by Prof. A.W. Skempton. Afterwards, while engaged on a thesis at the University of London [M.Sc.1958], he worked with Sir Bruce White, Wolfe Barry on Kut Bridge in Iraq and thin-shell roof structures. Then, with Ove Arup on the preliminary design of Sydney Opera House, including its pre-stressed concrete concourse beams with Sir Ted Happold, then back to the University of Illinois studying theoretical and applied structural mechanics and statically indeterminate structural analysis [Ph.D 1962].

From 1969-74 Emory was head of the Civil Engineering Department of West Virginia University and after, until 1989, directed its History of Science and Technology Program, then as Professor and Founder Director of its Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology until 2003. He taught classes in structural engineering, mechanics, history, industrial archaeology, sociology and humanities.

Emory's distinctions included election to the Order of Vandalia for Distinguished Service to West Virginia University, ASCE's prestigious *History and Heritage Award* and in 2000, a *Visiting Research Fellowship* at the University of Edinburgh for which, with Robert Vogel, I was pleased to support his nomination. In 2003, at an ASCE annual meeting in Nashville I was delighted to agree to provide international support to a nomination for Emory to be an *Honorary Fellow* [now *Distinguished Member*] of ASCE which was successful.

By the time Emory retired from full time work in 2003 he had more than sixty publications to his name in the history of technology and industrial archaeology, including five books as author or editor. As a preservation engineer he had been involved in 39 projects, a nationally significant achievement. He was particularly interested in the preservation of historic bridges and wrote about Capt. S. Brown's 'most impressive work' Union Bridge, Thomas Paine's pontification, and Charles Ellet and Wheeling Bridge. In 1996 he co-authored a paper on 'Edinburgh's First Water Supply, involving Desaguliers, a project he felt 'tantamount to a revolution in hydraulic engineering' [*Civ. Eng. Internl. Proc. ICE paper 11051, 1997, 45-49*]. Liaison on these subjects of mutual interest cemented our friendship!

For the anniversary of Wheeling Bridge, the world's longest span in 1849, Emory organised an international conference on Historic Bridges based on state-of-the-art research, at which I greatly enjoyed his authoritative presentation on 'Charles Ellet Jr. and the Wheeling Suspension Bridge' [*PHEW Newsletter 84*].

Proceedings of
an International Conference
on Historic Bridges
to Celebrate the
150th Anniversary of the
Wheeling Suspension Bridge

October 21-23, 1999



From time to time Emory gave lectures in the UK at PHEW's invitation, one at the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1992, 'Early Iron Suspension and Timber Covered Bridges in the USA and their restoration' being particularly instructive and memorable.



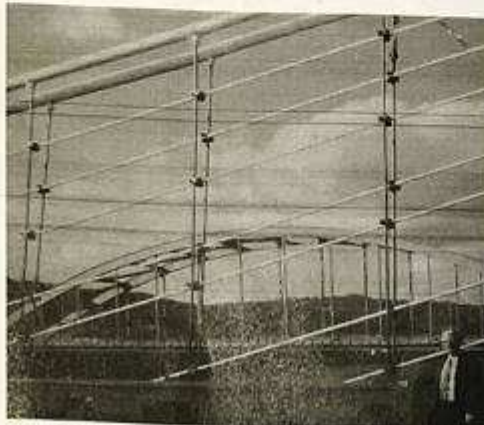
Most of my contact with Emory was from 1989 to 2003 when he was Director of the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology. During this period two periodicals that he directed and edited, fulfilling and exemplifying the Institute's remit and its activities, were its 'Review' and 'Field Notes' of which he sent me copies for many years.

Emory was supportive of PHEW's work and the extension of its recording remit 'to encourage excellence in conservation of the finest examples.' Also, its role in the £1.1m restoration of Jessop's Leigh Milton Viaduct [the world's oldest on a public railway; the *Kilmarnock & Troon*]. He was amused that before work started the ruinous viaduct was bought from its former owners for £2! Later, Emory visited Bo'ness Foundry where its 1996 plaques were cast [PHEW Newsletter 86]. He welcomed Heriot-Watt University's support for engineering history and for hosting ICE Scotland Museum with its unique displays of historic water supply, railway and bridge items.

Emory's letters are evocative of his busy life. In 1996 he wrote, 'Even though our plans for 1997 are incomplete, we are projecting a trip to do research on moveable dams and also to visit England and Scotland. In the meantime Janet and I will be going to Australia for a lecture tour, our only holiday of any length this year. At present I am trying to complete a large manuscript on navigation on the Great Kanawha River a

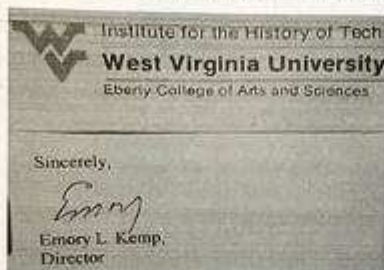
principal tributary of the Ohio River and one of the major waterways carrying coal in the USA. I also have a number of consulting projects in restoration, the most interesting of which is a complete restoration of Chenoweth's 1853 covered bridge (Phillipi). We hope to have documents ready for letting a contract later in the summer before I leave for Australia.'

Two of Emory's projects of particular interest to me were his \$2m restoration as chief engineer of Phillipi Covered Bridge WV (1851) by 1991 after its 60% destruction by fire. Also, his restoration plan for Wheeling Bridge that preceded its \$2.8m restoration which I enjoyed inspecting with him in 1999.



The author at Wheeling Bridge after its restoration © Kemp

Though these words can only give an idea of Emory's life and work, I feel he would have been delighted to sign them off!



From a letter to the author dated 4 October 1999

Select list of Dr Emory L. Kemp's published books:

(editor) *Industrial Archaeology Techniques* (Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing Co. Inc., 1995)

History of the Great Kanawha Navigation (Pittsburgh Univ. Pr., 1998)

(with) Beverly L. Fury. *The Wheeling Suspension Bridge. A Pictorial Heritage* (Pictorial Hist. Publications. Co., WV, 1999)

American Bridge Patents - The First Century, 1790- 1890 (Morgantown, West Virginia University Press, 2005)

Essays on the History of Transportation and Technology (Morgantown, West Virginia: West Virginia Univ. Pr., 2014)

Taming the Muskingun (Morgantown, WV Univ. Pr., 2016)

Heriot-Watt University - Institute for Infrastructure and Environment
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