

Aluminium Heritage

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Abstract

The history of Aluminium is a valuable mirror of changes in many areas, including technology, business, social habits and culture. The Institute for the history of aluminium (IHA) builds up a body of knowledge on those changes by bringing together specialists from several disciplines at the crossroads of industry and social studies. In parallel, the Institute coordinates and supports initiatives to protect and enhance the value of the Aluminium industry's heritage. Finally, it disseminates its work through an active policy of publications and events. For that purpose, the Institute advises companies in the aluminium sector on the conservation and use of their historical archives ; manages its own iconographic archives (approximately 50 000 photos) ; preserves three collections : the Jean-Plateau- IHA collection of objects illustrating the evolution of aluminium's various uses (25 000 19th and 20th century pieces) and the J.A Gregoire Automobile Collection illustrating the pioneering work of Gregoire to improve the use of aluminium in cars, and the collection of the aluchromiste R. Van Loo ; strive to make the public aware of the history of a material which is not well-known : publishes reference works, such as company, industrial site or organization histories (Aluminium de Grèce, European Aluminium), participation to international events such as the XIXth World Economic History Congress; provides documentary resources technical and historical expertise and loans of objects for temporary exhibitions ; provides to researchers a documentary resource center for information retrieval and manages a global internet portal for aluminium heritage.

Keywords: Institute for the history of aluminium, Aluminium Heritage, Aluminium companies' archives, Jean Plateau collection, Gregoire automobile collection.