

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

In early 2018, the ASHRAE Historical Committee proposed multiple projects in celebration of ASHRAE's 125th anniversary. Many suggestions were made as to the coverage, format, and possible authors for the work; and, these projects eventually included writing articles for the ASHRAE Journal, creating a historic calendar, and compiling biographical information on men and women who had made substantive contributions to the art and science of the industry that ASHRAE serves. ASHRAE even created a lapel pin for members who wanted to join in the celebration **(right)**. Society President Chuck Gulledge, in the 2020-2021 PAOE categories, create two Presidential Initiatives to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration. This article is one way to achieve these points. I hope you enjoy it.



### ASHRAE and Industry History – The Beginning

Until about 1890, the science of heating and ventilation was not well understood. Most of the work was done by Contractors and very few of them were educated or had any formal training in engineering. Installations of heating and ventilating systems were based upon the ancient rule of thumb and relied heavily on calculations related to data in fan manufacturers' catalogues. Stewart A. Jellett **(right)**, a charter member and the second president of The American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (ASHVE) believed "the general public was getting poor return for its money" with the installation of some of the heating and ventilation systems being applied. He stated that many of the heating and ventilating engineers were generally ignorant on the subject, with 75 percent of them fakers, who had patented schemes who designed the heating systems with thoughts on fuel expense. The results were systems that were unsatisfactory and were not favorable for business for legitimate businessmen. "It was the stress of competition, the commercial side of the business, that finally forced the recognition of the necessity for more scientific consideration, both in regard to the manufacture of the apparatus and in its application for regular work".



The Master Steam and Hot Water Fitters Association was formed in 1889 to protect the interests of the contractors. About this time more sophisticated scientific approaches to heating and ventilation were being imported from Europe and particularly from England. Some members were interested in learning more about these scientific approaches and so a few technical papers were presented at the Association's meetings. However, since the majority of the association's members were business and sales men, they were not particularly interested in the arts and sciences of heating and ventilation and only primarily wanted to discuss business matters.



During the Association's 1894 National Convention, three technical papers were scheduled to be presented by David M. Nesbit, of London, England; Edward P. Bates, of Syracuse **(right)**, was ASHVE's first President), New York; and Arthur Walworth, of Boston, Massachusetts. The attendance and discussion on these papers was considered disgusting; and, at the end there was a resolution passed that, in the future, papers must only take ten minutes to read.



Hugh J. Barron, a member at the time, wrote a critical article about the situation and submitted it to a Mr. Louis H. Hart **(right)**, who was the business manager of Heating and Ventilation. After it was published in the July 15, 1894 issue, a meeting to discuss the article's publication discussed the possibility of forming a society to consider engineering matters connected with heating and ventilation only. After many more



discussions and getting positive feedback from fifty to seventy-five engineers known to be interested in this chosen line of work, it was determined that an organization should be formed.

As a result, 25 invitations were sent to engineers in New York City to attend a meeting at the offices of Heating and Ventilation on Thursday, August 2, 1894. Sixteen people attended and they became known as the Committee of Sixteen. This initial group formed a Committee on Organization who worked over several weeks and eventually sent out invitations, and circulars explaining the necessary qualifications, to 157 engineers to become a charter member of the new organization. A Mr. Fred P. Smith was elected temporary chairman to run the meeting, and Mr. Louis Hart was elected temporary secretary. The Committee worked on drafting a constitution and by-laws, and held the first regular meeting, which was purely a business meeting, at 3:00 p.m. on September 10, 1894 at the Broadway Central Hotel, in New York, New York. There were seventy-five people who accepted the invitation and became charter members. Mr. Smith chaired the meeting, and Mr. Hart was secretary.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Smith defined the objects, advantages and policy of this proposed society. He spoke about the importance of good fellowship to the society's success, especially with respect to discontinuing the practice of discrediting another engineer's work when presenting a competitive bid. "It is only through the united efforts of the members of the society that we may expect to attain that improvement for which we are looking," said Mr. Smith. "There is no reason in the world why the society cannot, if properly managed, aid us in raising a high standard of work, and regulate the price we ought to get for our work.

The first order of business was to choose a name for this new society. The debate that followed was long and spirited. Discussions included whether to stay just in America or to include "International" in the name since foreign engineers had been invited to become members. It was finally decided that the heating and ventilating engineering required in America alone would be a sufficient task for the society for many years. It was decided to call the society be called **"The American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (ASHVE)."**

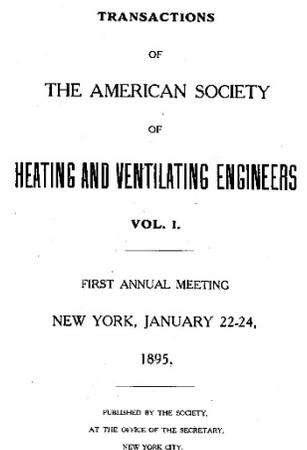


Much more discussion occurred on the proposed Constitution and By-Laws section by section. Section 4 in Article 1 of the Constitution clearly stated eight objects of the Society that would guide its work in years to come:

- The promotion of the arts and sciences connected with heating and ventilation, and to encourage good fellowship among its members.
- Improvement in the mechanical construction of the various apparatus used for heating and ventilation.
- The maintenance of a high professional standard among heating and ventilating engineers.
- To establish a clearly defined minimum standard of heating and ventilation for all classes of buildings.
- To favor legislation compelling the ventilation of all public buildings in accordance with the standard of this society.
- To encourage legislation favorable to improvement in the arts of heating and ventilation, and to oppose legislation inimical to the business of the engineer.
- The reading, discussion, and publication of professional papers, and the interchange of knowledge and experience among its members.
- To establish a uniform scale of prices for all professional services.

The final order of business was to elect officers to serve until the annual meeting. The Constitution and By-Laws stated that the affairs of the Society would be managed by a Board of Managers and a Council that would review membership applications.

The Society was incorporated in the state of New York on January 24, 1895. To comply with the laws of this state, the date of the annual meeting was specified



in the Constitution as the last week in January. Accordingly, the charter members agreed to have their first annual meeting in January 1895, at which time papers on heating and ventilation topics would be read and discussed. The Constitution also specified that the Society would have a Semi-Annual meeting as well, though the first one would not occur until 1897. The dates of January 22-24, 1895 were confirmed for the first Annual Meeting, and President E.P. Bates called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m. on January 22, 1895 in the hall of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), 12 West 31st Street, New York.

Secretary Hart reported that the Society had seventy-five members, and it was reported that since its founding, the Society had received \$750.00 and had expended \$256.82 for a total of \$493.18 cash on hand. The Constitution and By-Laws established four levels of membership: Members, Honorary Members, Associates and Junior. Members and Associates were required to pay an initiation fee of \$15.00 and annual dues of \$10.00. The initiation fee of Junior members was \$10.00, and their dues were \$10.00. A Junior member, being promoted to full membership, paid a further initiation fee of \$5.00. Honorary Members were defined as “distinguished persons elected by the society.” Within two years, membership rose from 75 to 109 members

**Please note:** Information excerpted from information available from ASHRAE website through the Historical Committee links - “Proclaiming the Truth” – Chapter 1.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
Randy Schrecengost, Historian

