

## **OUR BEGINNING -- A short history of the AWS New Jersey Section**

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Discussions to form a New Jersey Section of the American Welding Society began in late 1939. Then, in the early part of 1940, at the invitation of Claude J. Holslag, preliminary meetings were held at Electric Arc, Inc., Newark, NJ. On March 14, 1940, the organization meeting as held in the auditorium of the Public Service Company, Newark, NJ. The first elected chairman was F.C. Fyke, who was a Material Engineer for Standard Oil Development Company, Elizabeth, NJ. The first secretary was H.S. Card, who was a sales consulting engineer, also from Elizabeth. Initially, there were 56 members.

On March 21 and 22, 1941 a Welding Society Exhibit of the then Northern New Jersey Section was held at the Mosque Building in Newark, NJ. 4,000 people attended the event. In those early years, there was a great deal of welding activity in northern New Jersey. World War II caused a rapid growth of welding in the area. Shipyards, steel companies, and munition manufacturers required a whole lot of welding technology. The members of the New Jersey Section were heavily involved in that war effort. The need for welding technology spurred the growth of research and development activity, two of the world's great welding R & D laboratories were active in the area at the time, and for many years after. One was the Linde Air Products Company research and development laboratory located on Frelinghuysen Avenue in Newark, NJ. The other was the Air Reduction Company laboratory, located in Murray Hill, NJ.

The engineers, technicians, salesmen, managers, etc. of those two companies, as well as the other companies in the area found that the New Jersey Section meetings were a great place to meet and exchange ideas. It still is. During the next ten years those two laboratories gave birth to some of the world's great welding processes. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW) as it is known today, otherwise known as TIG (tungsten inert gas) welding or Heliard Welding, was developed at the Linde Labs. Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) as it is know today, otherwise known as MIG (metal inert gas) welding was

originally developed at the AIRCO labs. Both of the companies helped in the continued development of both processes. Each continued to develop variations of equipment, processes, materials and gases. These two companies helped develop the submerged arc process, flux cored wire welding, etc. The concepts of many of today's most versatile welding and plasma arc cutting (PAC), plasma arc welding (PAW), and the HOT WIRE welding processes, had their birth in the minds of the men that worked for these two companies, and who belonged to the New Jersey Section.

Section meetings, except for a few, were originally held at the Essex House in Newark, NJ. Declining attendance and a change in neighborhood led to relocation of the meetings to the Two and Campus Restaurant, Union, NJ. Now, meetings are located at Pantagis Renaissance/Snuffy's, Scotch Plains, NJ. Meetings were, and are still, held on the third Tuesday except for June, July and August. The monthly meetings are normally preceded by a business meeting and a dinner. It was, and still is, a goal of the Section to invite authoritative lecturers to speak on subjects related to welding and cutting. On occasion, changes in the format have been suggested and tried, but most of the original format survives today.

For many years, the Section had an annual picnic in September. During its peak, the attendance was over 1500 people. However, changes in the business climate in northern New Jersey caused a drastic fall in attendance. The picnic has been suspended. The Section maintains a technical library, which is open to the public, at the Kean College Library, Union, NJ. Another activity worthy of note is the Student Welding Contest. Over the years it has grown, until today it is one of the best run in the United States. The New Jersey Section has had several of its members advance to the position of President of the American Welding Society. These were J.J. Crowe (1935-36), C.J. MacGuffie (1959-60), C.E. Jackson (1963-64), and A. Lesnewich (1978-79).

The New Jersey Section has a proud tradition of accomplishment and has shown an ability to adapt to changing circumstances. That is why the Section is still a vibrant part of the American Welding Society.