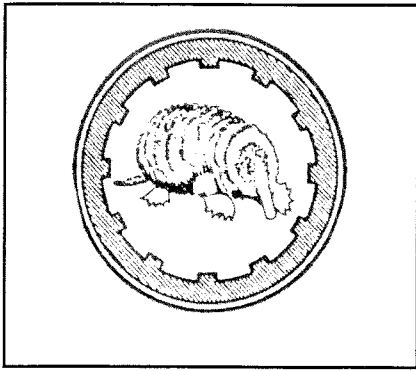


The Moles

Founder of the
MOLES SCHOLARSHIP FUND in
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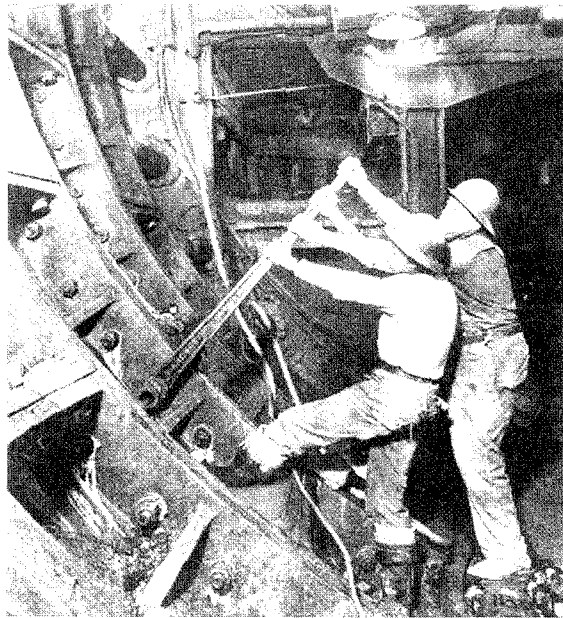


They've been called "crazy men in a crazy industry." They gamble their fortunes and reputations, and often times their lives, against the challenges they meet. Often working underground, this group of men changes the face of the earth by building dams, highways, tunnels, and bridges.

In October 1936, a small group of these men who had worked together between 1914 and 1919 on projects under Newark Bay and on the waterfront at Port Newark held a reunion in Jersey City. They enjoyed reminiscing about their experiences and discussing their work so much they were inspired to form a permanent organization. That autumn evening saw the birth of what was to become the most prestigious heavy construction group in the world: the Moles.

A special committee met the next year to set up guidelines. The Moles was selected as an appropriate name, membership would include all members of the engineering and contracting professions and those supplying materials to the field, and the venue would be moved to New York City.

In January 1938, the 32 original members and guests attended the first Moles dinner. A



Sandhogs tightening bolts in cast iron lining in Queens Midtown Tunnel, February 1939. (Photo courtesy of Triboro Bridge and Tunnel Authority)

fraternal spirit was created that has become the hallmark of the group. Later that year, the group's first annual clambake was held, an event that continues to today, and hundreds of members boarded a chartered boat to sail to a Long Island port.

In 1941, the group started its annual awards program that recognizes outstanding achievements in heavy construction by two men—one a Moles member and one a non-member. The first member recipient was John S. Macdonald, cited for his enterprise and courage, notably in building the Queens Midtown Tunnel.

"None of us will ever forget Jack's setting out in a rowboat in a partially flooded tunnel to survey the damage following the disastrous fire which occurred while the tunnel was under construction."

The first non-member to be honored was Robert Moses, a master builder who was the guiding force in the creation of the system of recreational areas, parkways, bridges, and highways of Greater New York. In 1950, the non-member awardee was former President Herbert Hoover, who was labeled the "Grand Old Mole" for his engineering expertise.

In an effort to encourage young people to consider heavy construction as a career, the Moles in 1956 held a seminar for college engineering undergraduates. The success of the seminar encouraged members to have a regular education program. Each spring since, the Moles have hosted a field trip to a major heavy construction project in the New York metropolitan area for students from participating schools to see firsthand the work in progress.



Students on an annual spring field trip.

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