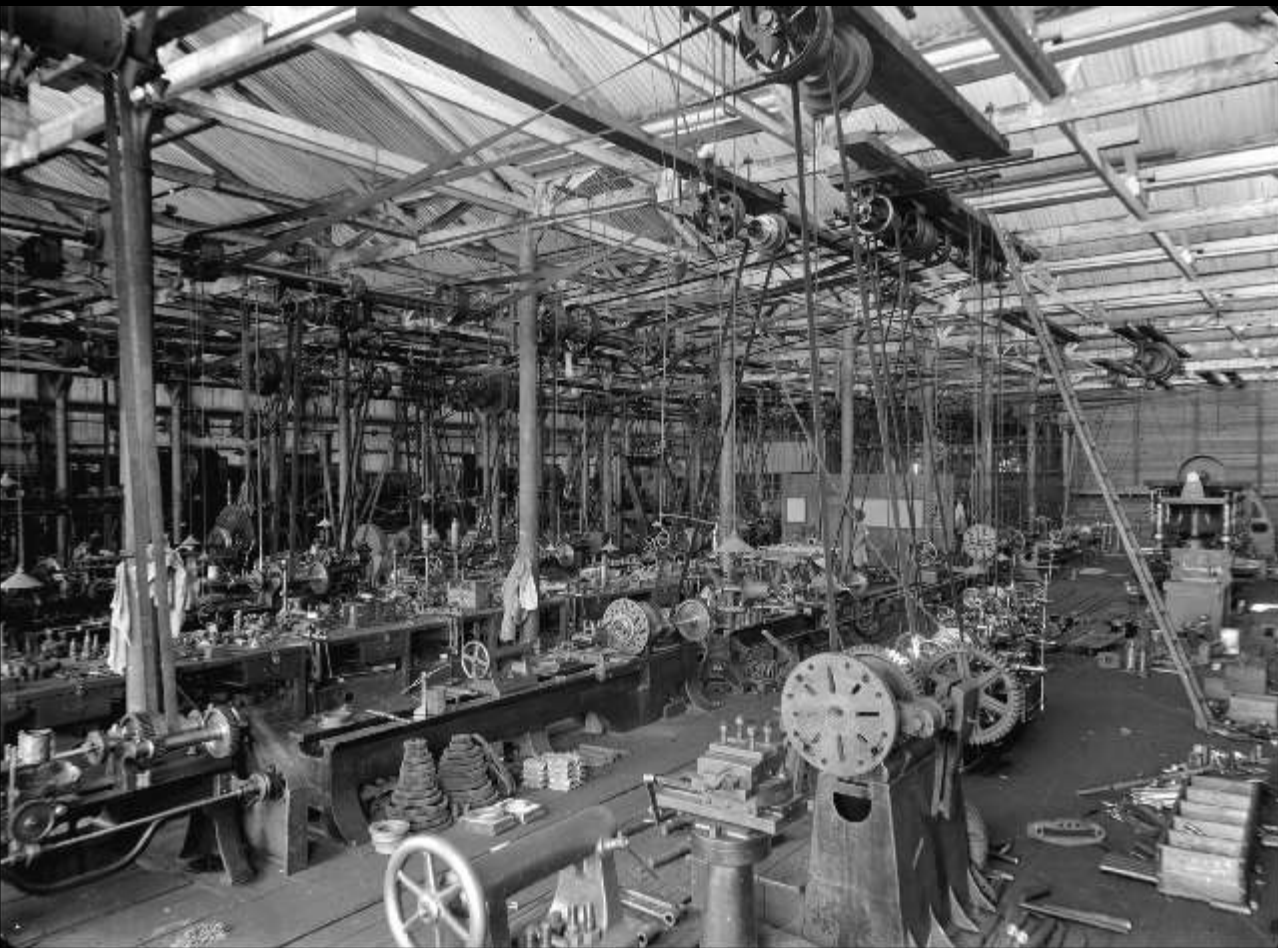


# NEIGHBORHOOD PEÑAROL - HISTORIC CITY CENTER



Garage, 1910



## Contacts:

Facebook: "Estación Peñarol"  
E-mail: [estacionpenarol@gmail.com](mailto:estacionpenarol@gmail.com)  
Phone number: + (5982) 355 91 47  
(Museum of Peñarol Station)

## Texts:

Manuel Esmoris

## Contributions:

Dr. Enrique Bianchi  
Architects: Alejandro Álvarez and Alejandro Berro

## Photographs:

Neighbors of Peñarol, Carlos Contrera,  
Alejandro Sequeira, Martín Atme,  
William Gianeto. File provided by AFE

## Coordination and production:

Press and Communication Service.  
Municipality of Montevideo.



"El Trompo" located in Aparicio Saravia and Newton



Coat of arms belonging to the first railway company in Uruguay, founded in 1866.

## TRAIN STATION



Inaugurated in 1891 together with the garage and conceived as stop for the line connecting east.

At the beginning, its activity was quite agitated due to the construction of the garages. It is located in the block delimited by Shakespeare, Aparicio Saravia, Coronel Raíz and the railroad, it being the center of the neighborhood. The architecture of its building is austere, tidy and scarcely adorned, with rural reminiscences. Originally, the outer walls were not plastered and they showed the bricks of the construction. The total surface covers 240 square meters. The station is still operating with freight and passenger services.



The surroundings, "the station square", constitute a 6 thousand square meters hereditary public space which was recovered in the year 2009 by Municipality of Montevideo, by mutual agreement with the State Railway Administration. Together with this works the building was refurbished and the Train Station Museum was installed in the same rooms and with the equipment as in the first decades of the 20th Century.



## THE GARAGES



Located in Aparicio Saravia between the railroad of Peñarol, Watt, Casavalle and Coronel Raíz streets, they were the largest, most complex and diverse in Uruguay. They included sheds for mechanics, ironworks, foundry, sawmill, woodwork, painting, printing, warehouses, candle-making (where canvas, called wax, were collected and repaired); apart from the office building and a circular remittance comprising 30 boxes for isolation of locomotives and the central rotating plate where their steering is still now changed. Both the premises and the sheds have several rail lines for running, maneuvering and parking locomotives and wagons, as well as kilometers of 50-centimeters-wide rails, called decauville, winding the surface inside and outside. They were used for moving freight wagons of hand-pushed objects. The garages fully operated until the early eighties. Then, they stopped their activity at printing, woodwork, sawmill, painting and candle-making.

These garages are half-empty with some machines and materials, thus representing ghostly traces of work and production of the past. The rest of the buildings still keep their services. According to the plans, the garage in its whole had, by the year 1910, 154 industrial machines installed, mostly powered by steam. The garages were equipped by boilers, lathes, rolling mills, pumps, boreholes, metal shears, chisels, milling machines, folding machines, foundry kilns, derricks, drop hammers, forges, marbles, rolling stock shuttles, saws for making wood from tree trunks, all the equipment of a carpenter's shop and a complete press. Attached to the inner structure of the machine building, about five meters high, we find the transmission axis, which, powered by electric engines (originally from the steam machine), transfer it, by means of pulleys, to the serial machines forming lines. At the sawmill and woodwork sheds, transmissions were established under the wooden floor.



By 1920, about 2000 people worked within this extensive territory of 14 hectares, with 27 thousand square meters built. In the seventies, the state capital built other 6500 square meters of the so called diesel garage. Since its setting up until now, around 12000 people are deemed to have worked there, mainly generations of residents of the neighborhood. Nowadays, only 150 officers work there.

The noise of the operating machinery did not allow oral communication among workers in a regular volume, what made them communicate with each other by signs or shouting. In order to indicate the entry and exit of workers, whistles were sound: at 6:15 am the small one, at 6:30 am the big one and at 2 pm just the big one. Its sound was heard in a radius greater than a kilometer. This is still present in the memory of the neighborhood residents as a constitutive part of it, especially in those who are 35 years old or more.





Whistles were recovered and are currently placed in the entry of the garage but they are not blown. The construction process of garages lasted through 1890 to 1907 and was carried out in stages. Each one corresponded to specialized sections, beginning with mechanics, whose floor is made of hard wood flagstones in order to prevent pieces from distorting due to possible falls.



Garages at Peñarol were the result of moving and extending what originally was in Bella Vista, next to Carnelli Station. The architecture combines industrial functionality with a sober but really pleasant esthetics, emphasizing the presence of bricks and metal. The shed outline gives away the "saw teeth" in the roof which uses the sheet metal leaning planes as coverage and the vertical windows for letting in natural light. Already in the 21st Century, the conjunction of architecture and equipment of original transmission axis, machinery and tools which still exist, is of huge hereditary value since they allow explaining and experiencing what a garage was in the late industrial revolution, with the steam machine as generator center of movement and energy. This is the best chance Uruguay has to expound the jobs and group of workers initiated by industrial capitalism.

## HOMES FOR WORKERS



As a synthesis or essence of the historic city center of Peñarol, there is Rivarola Street, of one block long, between Carlyle and Aparicio Saravia, leading to the entry of the garage. Many residents traditionally call it "the street of the middle" since it is separated by two blocks from the "Company homes for workers". There are in total 44 houses, 20 with three bedrooms in the block looking towards Estrella del Sur and 24 with two bedrooms in the Lincoln block.

The pace of their gaps, the ornamental simpleness, the absence of trees, and the fact that their front has been grey for more than a century, gives them an outstanding and unique nature in Uruguay and quite an exclusive one around the world; thus recreating the metaphysical and scenographic atmosphere of typical Chirico's paintings. When observing the perspective of their frontage, John Ruskin's sayings do come true: "any series of equal things work out to be beautiful".





They are comfortable even nowadays, but it was more meaningful when they were first built according to the dominant standard for worker's houses in those times. This is shown by their spaciousness, building quality, lighting and ventilation.

The roofs in the main bedrooms are made of pot and their floors made of wood. The original kitchen was made of light material, sheet metal and wood, including a small skylight or laylight, as well as the chimney for connecting the firewood supplied kitchen (cooking range). The original bathroom was small and in order to access it you needed to walk through the backyard. Most of it has been object of inner modifications although main bedrooms still last just as the first design. It covers 5700 square meters in total.

The occupancy of the houses was assigned by the firm according to an activity related to the garage or train station. Employees paid a low rent.



In case they were cut off from such activities or they quit the firm, they should abandon it leaving it for another railway family. At first, they were occupied by English men who worked and taught trades, such as machinists. Current residents are railway man, both in activity and retired, and from a legal point of view, they are possible buyers. Just a few houses keep their feature of temporary house or some other use. One of these houses deserves to become a museum, with its early 20th Century equipment, in order to show everyday life of a working family.

## HOMES FOR HIGH- OR MEDIUM-RANKING STAFF



8 are "the houses for the company high- or medium- ranking staff" located in Sayago Avenue between Aparicio Saravia and Schiller.

Both houses in the northwest side, the ones belonging to high- ranking staff- have the establishment and form of a residential neighborhood, small town type, Victorian cottage, surrounded by gardens. One of them had stables, a kitchen garden and a tennis court. They are built up with face brick and little ornamentation. English men lived there: in the biggest, the one in Sayago and Schiller, the mechanic engineer; on the corner of Saravia and Sayago, the storehouses' chief.

In the opposite lane, facing southeast, there are 6 semi-detached houses forming a line with regular gardens to the front. They were occupied by medium- ranking Englishmen of the garage. They have fewer surface than the ones belonging to high-ranking staff, but their construction is as tough as the latter: with thick walls, wooden floors, firewood heaters, lapacho counter

frames and gaps, kitchen and storerooms. The back faces the railroad.

Regarding style, a combination of industrial elements takes place: the brick and the outline of some gaps, bearing features of moderate and Victorian historicism, typical of English houses of that era. It covers 2850 square meters. In the contemporary process of reassessing Peñarol's heritage, it will be necessary to find other uses for the small town-like houses, in order for the legacy to be adequately kept and exhibited.





## PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Built and established in 1925. Before that, there were “the little stairs” which allowed pedestrians to go down from the embankments of Morse and Carlyle to the railroad to cross it. Upon a few fatal accidents with schoolchildren, the railway company built the bridge. There is only one similar bridge in all Uruguay, the one in Colón.



## “THE TRADING”

Located in Monterroso, it operated as a general store for railway employees. Natives called it “The Trading” due to the name of the chain with subsidiaries all around the country: The Montevideo Trading & Co. After nationalizing the railway, it turned into a consumer cooperative for workers of the State Railway Administration, which stopped operating in the eighties. It covers 230 square meters built.



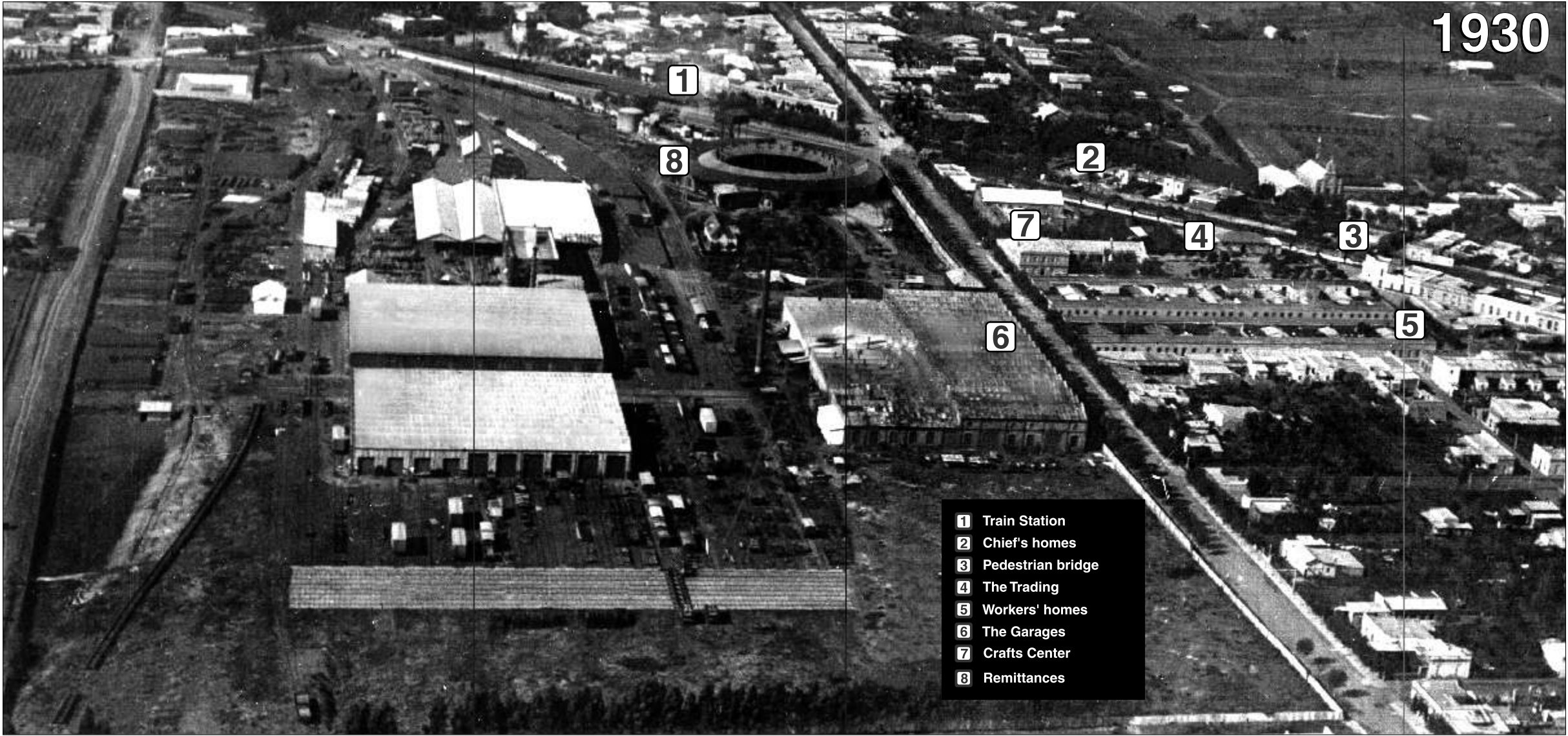
## CRAFTS CENTER

The garages that came from Bella Vista also came along with the place where social activity took place. The Crafts Center was located in front of the garage premises, in Aparicio Saravia, between Monterroso and the railroad. It covers 894 square meters built. It had a strong activity. It was the place for recreational, social and sports practices. It also held the first public school in the area between 1894 and 1903, until in 1904, the state owned original building was built opposite to it.



Later, it turned into a neighborhood club, and in its last years it ended up succumbing just as most of the railway installations in Uruguay. Already in hands of Municipality of Montevideo, the premises are awaiting financing in order to turn into a city center posting sports, social and cultural activity for the inhabitants of the new Local Council G. Its architecture is clearly industrial, although in the thirties the upper part of its frontage received art deco ornamentations.

1930



- 1 Train Station
- 2 Chief's homes
- 3 Pedestrian bridge
- 4 The Trading
- 5 Workers' homes
- 6 The Garages
- 7 Crafts Center
- 8 Remittances

## THEATER AND CINEMA



Located adjacent to the building of the Crafts Center with a 580 square meter surface. It is the oldest stage kept up in Montevideo after Teatro Solís and the third one in Uruguay, after Larrañaga in Salto. Its capacity is of 450 seats. In the beginning, by 1900, it was just a place for stage, theater, music and comic opera arts.

As from the thirties, it also offered movies so a projection room was necessary: the part of the building standing out from the construction. A project in the Municipality of Montevideo in agreement with AFE, is restoring it towards the reopening, so as to receive neighbors from Local Council G and visitors near Peñarol.



José Luis Hernández, excellent telegraphist, at the Museum of Peñarol Station. January, 2010.






## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The industrial and railway historic city center in Peñarol, within the humankind history, constitutes an expression of changes introduced in the world by the industrial revolution, which started in Great Britain between 1780 and 1800. The industrial revolution was a process by which humankind changed from their agricultural and craft economy to another ruled by industry and mechanization. Eric Hobsbawm, British historian says: "it was the largest event of world history since the invention of agriculture and cities". In order to be more aware of the meaning, we need to remember that humankind begun to be nomadic, domesticate animal, plant land and build the first cities in Kurdistan, Asia, around 7000 B.C.

The most menacing technological change introduced by the industrial revolution in the first period was the steam machine. In 1874, James Watt improved models designed by others. Born in coal mines for the extraction of water from wells and galleries, it was first applied in textile factories, substituting energy caused by animals, wind or water streams. Then, new sources of energy were created, which were also used in industry, transportation and communications: first electricity (1880) and then the industrial combustion engine (1900).

## THE INVENTION OF THE RAILWAY

The steam machine used for extracting water from coal mine galleries made us think of other uses such as manufacturing a means for transporting such production.



In 1825, when the freight train travelling on rails, with horse-pulled wagons was already invented, George Stephenson managed to run the first railway dragged by a steam locomotive, transporting coal between the towns of Stockton and Darlington.

"No other invention did so dramatically reveal to man, the strength and speed of the new era. The locomotive throwing steam plumes into the air through countries and continents, embankments and tunnels, bridges and stations, made up a colossal group against which pyramids, Roman aqueducts and even the Great Wall in China turned out pale and provincial. The railway constituted the great victory of men by means of technique", Eric Hobsbawm said. The world then rapidly got incessantly smaller with the admixture of the railway, Fulton's steam ship (1807) and Morse's telegraph (1832).

## PEÑAROL WAS PART OF BANDA ORIENTAL

This side of the world, around the springs of Miguelete lake, is called Peñarol since the end of 18th Century, when Juan Bautista Crosa, born in the city of Pinerolo (Piedmont, Italy), opened a food store. The storekeeper wanted to be called by its city of origin. Nickname and business -place for social meeting, ways for wagons, errands, people on horse and walking- made natives and visitors refer to the store and its surroundings, in the same way Pinerolo is pronounced in Piedmont dialect: Peñarol. Juan Bautista Crosa of Peñarol, died in 1790 and was buried in the parish graveyard next to his store. His remains rest in a common ossuary located in Coronel Raíz street and Route 102 (perimeter), very close to the original destination in the area nowadays known as old or rural Peñarol.



## THE RAILWAY IN URUGUAY

In 1866 the Uruguayan state gives some native capitalists the granting for building and exploiting a railway lined between Bella Vista (nowadays Carnelli) and Durazno. The firm was called Ferrocarril Central del Uruguay (F.C.C.U.) [Uruguayan Central Railway].


In 1869 the first train run was performed between the towns of Bella Vista and Las Piedras.

In 1878, due to the lack of local capital for expanding the firm, it was sold to English investors and these translated the name as Central Uruguay Railway (C.U.R.), although the original is kept in Spanish as the trademark. In 1949 railways are nationalized and in 1952 the State Railway Administration (A.F.E.) is created.

## FROM RAILWAY TOWN TO ECOMUSEUM

In 1890, Central Uruguay Railway (C.U.R.) or Uruguay Central Railway (F.C.C.U.) initiates the construction in Peñarol of the train station and garages, thus starting to render services in 1891. The activity of such installations created a town which, with the growing of Montevideo, would end in one more neighborhood of the capital city. The railway buildings of the historic city center of Peñarol cover 33500 square meters built and represent 10% of Montevideo registries which are National Monuments (legal figure for appointing and protecting a hereditary asset).

These properties, mainly still in use, together with compiled testimonies of people who are still alive and some that are not, plus documents and other national and foreign legacies, contain the historic meaning from which to interpret and tell:



- Incorporation of late industrial revolution in Uruguay.

- Globalized British capital of 19th Century and practices and lives of their owners and representatives.

- The labor world, both national and international, as social and daily life group.

- Uruguayan State actions related to market, foreign capital, railway and industrial life.

- The story of the Uruguayan railway and its world connection.

- Science, engineering and techniques applied both to industrial production and railway operation and practices of suitable professionals.

- Architecture and urbanization of industrial enclave, originated in Britain, just as Peñarol.

- Stories of generations who lived and still live in Peñarol and who lived tightly linked to the railway.

- For current young generations and the ones that shall come, the possibility to understand in situ the meaning of the world before information contemporary society.

All the above constitute an “ecomuseum” or a “place museum” where the past is explained. For its materialization, Municipality of Montevideo is working in agreement with the State Railway Administration, in order for the hereditary activation to create a social, economic development pole, gathering visitors and tourism (inner and foreign) and students of the formal educational system.



## WORLD HERITAGE SITE?

Eusebi Casanelles Rahola, president of the Industrial Heritage International Committee, organism which advises UNESCO, visited Peñarol city center on September 6th, 2006. The next day, the radio station El Espectador, manifested the following:

"I am not a railway expert, but I am sure in Europe there is no railway station and garage as these here; a place where transmission bars are operating, where buildings have a unique inner material, I really doubt there is still another place like this one in Latin America.

At the beginning, these places were either abandoned and had everything removed from the inside or are still operating and have been totally renewed, said Casanelles, and emphasized that in the case of Peñarol it is different because the enclave is kept the same as it was[...] as fossilized years ago.

It is something unique and it could be transformed into a place explaining what this very interesting garage center was at a world level [...]. You would have a world level monument".

Just a summary is transcribed, the complete intervention may be found in: [http://www.espectador.com/1v4\\_contenido.php?id=73366&sts=1](http://www.espectador.com/1v4_contenido.php?id=73366&sts=1)

In March 2010, Municipality of Montevideo and the Ministry of Education and Culture submitted the candidature of "Neighborhood Peñarol historic city center and railway industrial landscape" with UNESCO, with the ambition to be considered world heritage. The most important thing of this action is that it compromises the whole country, its conservation, research, administration and disclosure.



## ABOUT THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE\*

The industrial heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture of historical, technological, social, architectonic or scientific value. These remains comprise buildings and machinery, garages, mills and factories, mines and places for processing and refining storehouses and deposits, places where energy is created, transmitted and used, means of transport and all its infrastructure, as well as places where social activities concerning industry are developed, such as housing, religious worship or education.

The most interesting historic period lasted from the beginning of industrial revolution, second half of the 18th Century, until now.

## VALUES OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE\*

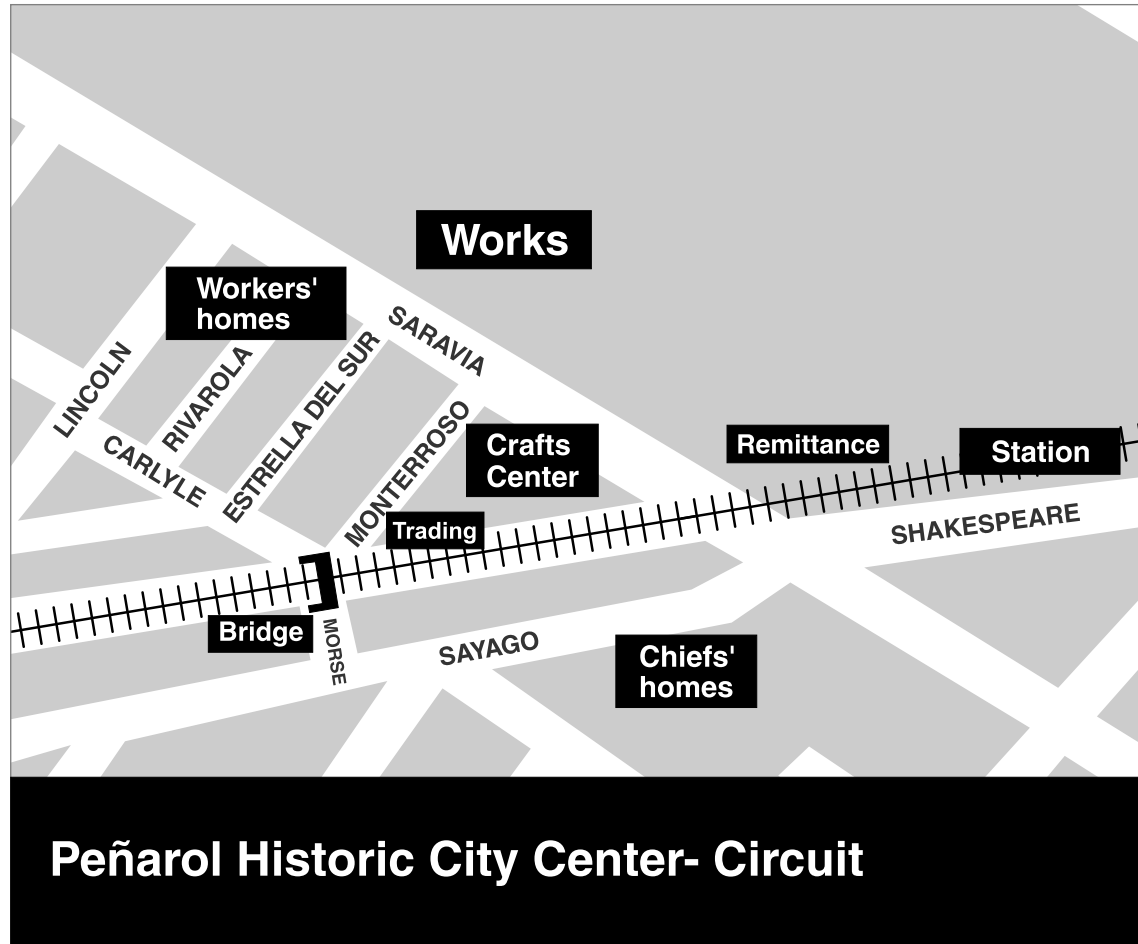
**1-** Industrial heritage has a social value as part of the register of common man and woman lives, and as such it provides a huge feeling of identity. It has a technological and scientific value in the history of production, engineering, construction, and may have a significant esthetic value due to the quality of its architecture, design or planning.

**2.** These values are inherent to the same place, its framework, its components, its machinery and functioning; they exist in the industrial landscape, in written documentation and also in immaterial registers of industry stored in the memories and customs of people.

*\*Fragment of letter by Nizhny Tagil regarding Industrial Heritage. Year 2003. International Committee for Industrial Heritage Conservation (TICCIH).*



Industrial heritage has the value as part of the register of common man and woman lives.



From left to right: "Tato" Marquicio, Ruben Bertoloti and Raúl Brasesco in the garage. 1950.