



"Ropewalk: A Cordage Engineer's Journey Through History"

February 5, 2009

[www.StoryOfRope.org](http://www.StoryOfRope.org)

Dear ASTA member,

The American Sail Training Association and the Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation are excited to be sending you an award-winning educational DVD that will help you "show the ropes" in your educational programs dealing with ropes and splices.

"Ropewalk: A Cordage Engineer's Journey Through History" is a documentary film about the history and process of rope making from the traditional ropewalks through industrialization, globalization, trust busting, and the changes from American-grown hemp to imported fibers to synthetics.

The film features extensive interviews with Bill Hagenbuch, retired president and chief engineer of the Hooven & Allison Co, one of the last natural-fiber rope making companies in the USA. It is illustrated with vintage film clips from the 1940's and 1950's, and numerous photographs from inside the H&A factory.

Created by independent filmmaker Steve Fetsch, with an original musical soundtrack by folk musician Bruce Dalzell, Ropewalk provides an entertaining and educational look inside the historical, present, and a possible future of rope making.

Shown in its entirety, the one-hour film effectively interprets the nearly-forgotten history of the rope making art and technology. Or, individual short chapters may be used to demonstrate the specifics of rope for teaching marlinspike skills.

Suggested chapters for teaching the structure of rope include:

2. What makes a rope - fiber, yarn, strand, rope
6. Inside the blue heart - construction of rope
7. Fiber around the world - hemp, sisal, manila fibers
8. Locking in the twist - twisting fibers, friction, strength
12. Ropewalk animation - how rope was made before industrialization
13. H&A T tour: Doing the twist - S & Z twist

Watch your mailbox in the next week for the Ropewalk DVD. Meanwhile, we invite you to explore the companion website, [www.StoryOfRope.org](http://www.StoryOfRope.org).

The website includes a film trailer, pictorial synopsis, photo galleries, the complete vintage films, and numerous links to rope making and knot-tying resources. Together, the DVD and [www.StoryOfRope.org](http://www.StoryOfRope.org) preserve and interpret a little-known history of an item essential to sailing - rope.

ASTA members will receive one complimentary copy of Ropewalk in the mail. Additional copies may be purchased through the website.

Best regards,

Otto Loggers  
Education Director  
American Sail Training Association

Charles Allport  
President  
Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation