



# **SPOOM**

## **Mid-Atlantic Chapter**

### **September 2007**



## **Report for 2007**

**-- Charles P. Ives, President**

- ∞ The Mid-Atlantic chapter has had a very productive 2007.
- ∞ We have increased our membership by 10% from 48 to 52 paid members and our bank account has increased by 22%. Jane Sewell has done a very good job as Secretary/Treasurer.
- ∞ We had two meetings during the year:
  - March 3, 2007 at Colvin Run Mill, Virginia
  - August 10, 2007 at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania
- ∞ Both meetings were very productive and both hosts provided very excellent programs and food for us beyond just providing a venue.
- ∞ At both meetings we discussed the best way to get our and SPOOM'S message out to the public. It was felt that a tourist rack brochure on mills of the Mid-Atlantic region would be best. Steve Spring agreed to work on some possible formats for the brochure and submit them to the board. The chapter is also developing a logo to be used for brochures and letterhead.

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☞ We also discussed visiting high schools, vo-tech schools, history groups and colleges to promote milling and SPOOM. We have issued several newsletters over the year and discussed how to improve it and get more information into it. Susan Langley has been doing a fantastic job as our newsletter editor.

☞ We discussed starting some fundraising programs to generate money for the chapter to provide small grants to mills in the Mid-Atlantic region for various projects.

☞ Ivan Lifriu, Special Projects Chairman, reported that we have kept in touch with several projects brought to us from mills in the region asking for our help and guidance:

Ellicott Mills, MD  
Leakin Park, MD  
Arentsville Mill, PA  
Springfield Mill, PA  
Morgan State University, MD



☞ The present officers of the board were retained for the next term, and a nominating committee for the next term was established, with Marge Lundegard as Chairperson. All officers will have served two terms which is the maximum consecutive service allowed under the Chapter's By-laws.

☞ It was agreed to have our next meeting on March 8, 2008, at Cooper Mill, New Jersey, as a result of the kind invitation offered by Joanne and Ivins Smith.

## **Chapter Meeting at the St. Vincent Gristmill, Latrobe, PA or, on the Road with Marge & Bob to the Saint Vincent Gristmill**

**--Marge Lundegard**

The SPOOM-MA Chapter meeting was held at the Saint Vincent Academy at Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Members from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey attended the meeting that was hosted by the St. Vincent Academy. A nearby town, Ligonier, was the gathering place for the members. This is an old historic town that was the summer place where the rich people of Pittsburgh came every summer. In fact, a railroad was built that connected Pittsburgh to Ligonier so that the summer residents had an easy access to their escape from the intense summer heat in Pittsburgh. The old train station is now being used by the city. The train no longer runs from Pittsburgh to Ligonier. The town is located on the site of an Indian village called "Loyalhanning". In fact, the Loyalhanning Creek is located along side of U.S. 30 and offers fishermen a challenge.

Arriving at Ligonier a day before the SPOOM-MA meeting offered an opportunity to visit some of the historic sites in the area. Frank Lloyd Wright has two of his unique houses in this area. The Fallingwater house was designed by Wright in 1935. The house rises above the waterfall and one corner of the house is cantilevered over the falls. The other Wright house, Kentucky Knob, is located atop a mountain and commands a spectacular view of the area.

We drove over to Saint Vincent Academy and our first stop was at the coffee shop that is located in an old part of the mill. We had anticipated that we could order a sandwich and a cup of coffee but only muffins were available.

We then went to the gift shop where we were able to view the grinding stones and some of the equipment in the mill. We then took a short tour of the campus and had a glimpse of the football field where the Pittsburgh Steelers practice. This is a lovely campus where students can relax and study.

We retraced our route back to Ligonier where we had dinner. A small Italian restaurant had been recommended. Small it was indeed and it was packed with local residents, including members of the police department. We were lucky to find one empty table and after carefully studying the menu we made our selections. I ordered a ziti pasta dish. What I got was a very large serving of ziti that had a baseball size meatball located in the middle of the pasta. Needless to say, most of the delicious pasta was not eaten.

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We then took a driving tour of the city viewing the lovely early 1900's houses. The new school complex that included the Elementary school, the Jr. High school, and the High school is located on a hill top that overlooks the whole area. What a spectacular view the students can experience each day of school. It makes one anxious for school to begin, well, maybe not.

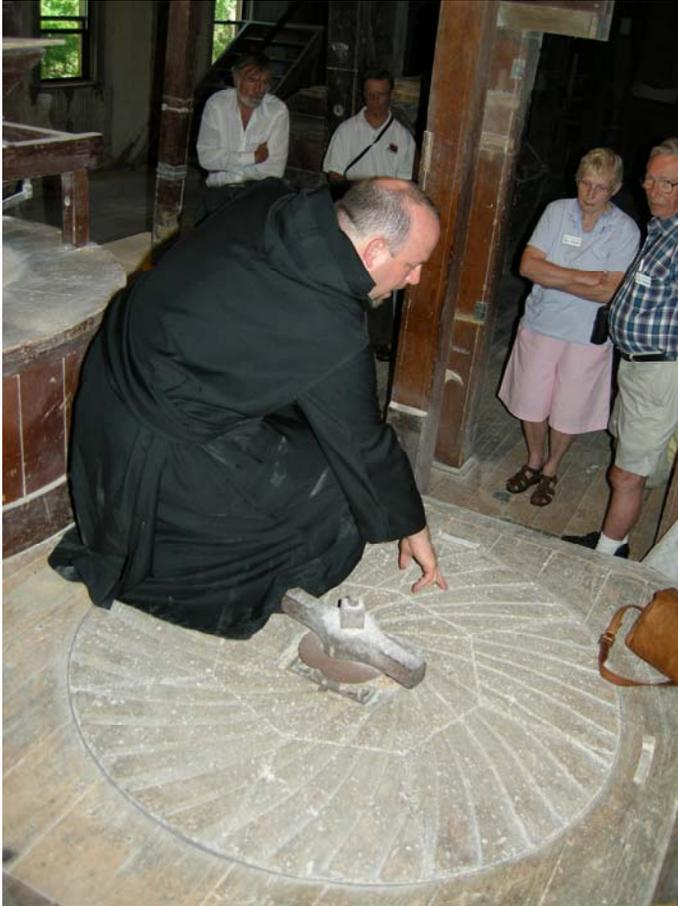
While driving around the city, we discovered two grinding stones in front of a house. They were surrounded by an old stone foundation. Was a mill located at this location? There were not any streams in the area. A local resident who is very much interested in the history of her home town informed us that there was a flour mill located where the Get-Go gas station is located today. When U.S. 30 was built the stream, Loyalhanning Creek, was relocated. Also, on the nearby hill across from the gas station, was a water powered lumber place. She did not know the origin of the stones we found in the town.

A 3 piece music group was performing at the town square. Many people had brought lawn chairs and were listening to the music. All around the square were vintage automobiles that brought back memories of yester year. Another thing on the list of things to see was Fort Ligonier that is an on the site reconstruction of the 1758-1766 original fort. There is a rare handwritten eleven page article by George Washington telling about his six dangerous years on the Pennsylvania frontier. In the museum there are 13 original paintings by famous artists. The painting by Rembrandt Peal depicts George Washington as he might have appeared at Fort Ligonier during the French and Indian War. During the month of October Fort Ligonier celebrates a very popular 3-day festival in honor of the battle fought on October 12, 1758 which was a key engagement of the French and Indian War.

The Compass Inn which is located three miles east of Ligonier on U.S. 30 is a restored 1799 stagecoach stop. Travelers on the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh turnpike stopped at the inn. The original structure was of log construction but in 1820 a stone addition was added.



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Father Paul at the bedstone; St. Vincent Gristmill (All Photos, unless otherwise specified: Steve Spring)

Of course the main event of the trip was the tour of the gristmill at Saint Vincent Academy. The Academy was founded by Boniface Wimmer, a Bavarian missionary monk, in 1846. Soon it became evident that for the Academy to be self sufficient a gristmill was needed to grind the grain grown on the farms. So, in 1854 a gristmill was built using red oak, white oak, and American chestnut woods. The millwright was George Washington Bollinger.

The grinding stones were fresh water quartz and were imported from France. In 1855 a sawmill was added to the west side of the mill. In 1883 additional storage space was added on the east side of the mill. The mill was originally powered using a steam engine that was fueled by coal. This was one of the earliest mills to use steam power. In 1952 electricity was installed. In 1997 new siding, new windows, and a new roof were added to the mill. Also, at this time the electrical system was upgraded. In 2001 a general store-gift shop was opened. A new driveway to the mill is being built. This is a wonderful place to spend some relaxing time.

On our drive to Latrobe, we selected U. S. 30 west that is currently undergoing some major repairs. However, if time is not important, one sees a piece of history often missed. The Pennsylvania turnpike offers a fast trip and the best views of the surrounding countryside.

## Mid-Atlantic SPOOM, August 9 through 12, 2007 St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, Pa.

-- Ivins Smith

The St. Vincent's Gristmill is one of the most outstanding mills I have visited. It is run by the Benedictine Monks and is part of the St. Vincent's Archabbey Monastery and St. Vincent's College. One of the things making this mill so exceptional is the hospitality of Father Paul, Brother Andre, Brother James and the other monks we met. Their warm, welcoming hospitality and friendliness is unsurpassed.

At the mill the Benedictine Monks have a coffee shop, gift shop and exhibit area for viewing the mill with a short video on the mill, its operation and its history. Two days a week, they still grind grain and bake bread for sale in the shop, and flour for use in the Abbey and college kitchen. Because of this, visitors are not allowed into the mill, but they can see the mill in operation through a large viewing window beside the millstones. The SPOOM members in attendance received an insider's tour of the mill with Father Paul. He was the miller for several years and gave us a deluxe tour of this beloved mill. Father Paul's enthusiasm, his interest, his love of the mill overflowed throughout the tour. Father Paul's presentation of the mill is one of the best I have ever experienced. If you are in the Latrobe or Ligonier area of Pennsylvania, I highly recommend stopping to see this mill and the Archabbey.

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St. Vincent Gristmill

Photo: Ivins Smith

Father Paul opens the meeting.

Photo: Steve Spring



Every mill is unique in its own way. No two mills are the same. They may have similarities, but all have their own distinctive features and attributes. St. Vincent's Gristmill is no exception. One of these features is an original vacuum chute at the top of the grain elevator to remove the chaff, dust, and light dirt as the grain exits the elevator and starts its journey through the mill into flour. I have never seen or heard of this in another mill. It is a good idea. From here the wheat goes through a cleaner and to the millstones. The mill has 3 run of stones, they are presently using one run. The 3 run of millstones are on the customary separate raised section of floor. But when one explores the hurst frame underneath, it is quite distinctive. Two of the 3 stones are supported on 6 posts, between the first 4 posts is the usual bridge going straight across dividing the square in half. For the 2nd run of stones, the bridge tree is set diagonally between the 4 posts, dividing the space into a triangle, very uncommon. I know of only one other mill with similar bridge trees, the White Hall mill near Allentown, Pa. The 3rd run of stones is separate from these and is unique using only 3 support posts, and is located against an inside stone wall. This also uses a diagonal bridge tree. All 3 run of stones use a more modern tentering system, similar to the one used by Cooper Mill for the 2nd run of stones. The whole wheat flour is elevated to the top floor and bolted. The design of the bolter is also distinctive; the top is arched instead of the expected flat top. The bolter reel and auger are driven by a set of interesting gears on the head end. Most bolters use a belt system. They produce a fine, white, flour which is bagged using the traditional miller's knot, tied a little different than we tie it at the Cooper Mill. I have now seen at least 3 different ways to tie the miller's knot, all resulting in basically the same knot. The mill uses a Purifier to sift the middlings. We have one at the Cooper Mill, but I knew very little of how it works. Through Father Paul's excellent description of its workings, I now know how ours works, and was able to explain to another SPOOM member the workings of the Purifier.

The mill uses an alarm system on the hopper to let the miller know when the hopper is getting empty. I have read about these, but never seen one. The system consists of a flat board inside the hopper. This connects by a chain to a weight and also to a bell. The

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Interpretive Sign for St. Vincent Gristmill  
(Photo: Steve Spring)



weight of the grain keeps the board down. When the grain gets too low, the board rises and rings a bell on the upper floors, an ingenious alarm system.

The St. Vincent's Archabbey Monastery was founded in 1846 by Boniface Wimmer, a Bavarian monk. The Monastery wanted to be self sufficient, and built the gristmill. It was completed in 1854 at a cost of \$3,000. The mill was very up to date using a steam engine for power. The coal for the engine was acquired from a small coal mine on the property. In 1963 the engine was abandoned and electric motors were installed to power the mill. Today it is still powered by electricity; the steam engine was removed years ago. Through the course of the trip, I had the opportunity to go on 4 site tours. These tours help hone my interpretation skills, what to do and what not to do. Father Paul loves his mill, and it shows through his presentation of the mill to the public. He gives a very friendly, down-to earth tour, which is full of enthusiasm. A technique Father Paul used when asked a question about a topic related to the tour, but not usually included, was to say, "Thank you for asking that question". I liked this approach, and will use it during tours also.

The following are some of the situations I experienced on site tours during this trip, aside from St. Vincent's. One tour guide used humor and comparisons with modern day things to liven up history and help the visitor understand the period of time being interpreted. This guide spoke about stage coach travel and asked "How comfortable do you think it would be to ride with 3 people across on each seat? Would you like to travel like that today for several hours? This was the good way to travel then." She let us look into the stage coach on exhibit. This is a good way to bring the audience into history. Another consideration is to wait for the slower members of your group while moving from place to place. Start your presentation or answer questions when the entire group is assembled. This avoids answering the same question twice, or repeating parts of the tour. When you have items on display for visitors to pick up and examine, give ample time for visitors to do so. Remember your visitors are very important. If they like the tour they will tell others. This is your best publicity.

On Saturday morning we had the business meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SPOOM. The main topic of discussion was promoting the mills in the Mid-Atlantic region. We also discussed fund raising for our mills and the group. Mid-Atlantic is interested in creating a grant for mills in our region to get money to hire consultants. Distributing a newsletter for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SPOOM was also discussed. I

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volunteered to host the next meeting at the Cooper Mill. The date will be March 8, 2007.

After networking with conference attendees associated with the Wallace-Cross Mill near York, Pa., I was motivated to stop at this site on the return trip. This quaint mill has one run of stones and several original machines powered by a reproduction metal overshot waterwheel. The mill no longer grinds grain, but they turn the millstones and some of the machines by water pumped from the tailrace onto the waterwheel. A flood washed away the dam several years ago. The mill has a grain cleaner, cob crusher (just like the one at the Cooper Mill), two vertical mills (one is open allowing visitors to see inside), a hominy mill, an interesting bag hoist mechanism (not completely together yet), as well as other features of a country mill. The mill uses a reddish conglomerate millstone from Lancaster area, called a "Calico" stone. A unique feature of this mill is the wooden screw for the stone jack. The mill also has several different styles of wooden pulleys. The array of belts and shafts was fascinating to try to figure out.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend this very informative SPOOM gathering. As usual, a wealth of new information gleaned from this trip will enhance the Cooper Mill experience for our visitors.



Photo: Nick Yannarell

## TIMS-AMERICA FALL MEETING

--Marjorie Lundegard

The TIMS-America chapter met on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the Mount Vernon George Washington Gristmill and Distillery. Over twenty members attended the meeting. The new officers were introduced: Jon Joyce is the new president, Lance Braun the new secretary, and Nick Yannarell the new board member.

After the business meeting Steve Bashore, the director of the George Washington Distillery and Gristmill, gave a very educational and interesting history about the distillery. It is said that the Washington Distillery was the largest in America and produced 11,000 gallons of whiskey in 1799. The reconstructed distillery is now open to the public. In the Colonial Period, rum, whiskey, and other spirits played an important economic and social function.

The present gristmill building is a recreation of the mill George Washington built and operated for almost three decades. Washington operated the mill during most of his adult life, including his eight years as the first President of the United States. Milling was one of the several enterprises of George Washington. On the ground level of the mill is where the breast-shot water wheel, the master gear, the power gear, and the hub gears are located. Above the gear pit are two sets of millstones. **(cont'd...)**



Washington's Grist Mill (Photo: Steve Spring)



Sifting occurred on the second floor and the hopper boy was located on the top level of the three and a half storied stone structure. This is a fully operational Oliver Evans mill that operates today using reproductions of the original machinery. Paid personnel are used to operate the mill.

After the mill tour we all met at the Mount Vernon Inn where an excellent lunch was served and stimulating conversations were experienced by all.

After the lunch, the members were free to either return to the mill and distillery or enjoy exploring the Mount Vernon complex. Since the new George Washington Museum had recently opened, many spent several hours learning new and old tidbits about George Washington.



Washington's Distillery (Photo: Steve Spring)

## ✳ Union Mills Homestead ✳

### Maryland Microbrewery Festival

Sanctioned and legislated by the State of Maryland as an official State event, The Union Mills Homestead will sponsor the second annual Microbrewery Festival on the grounds of the Homestead. Located seven miles north of Westminster on Route 97, Union Mills provides a beautiful setting for brewers, vendors, and continuous entertainment.

**Saturday, September 29, 2007 11AM to 7PM**  
**\$18 to sample beer, \$12 for non-drinkers.**

### All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast

The historic Shriver Grist Mill will provide the fresh stoneground flours for making: Buckwheat, Cornmeal and Wholewheat Pancakes. Also being served is: country sausage, juice and coffee.

**Saturday, October 20, 2007 7AM to 11AM**  
**Adults \$6.00, Children \$3.00.**

### Directions:

Union Mills Homestead, 3311 Littlestown Pike,  
Westminster, Maryland 21158  
The Homestead is located on Rt. 97, seven miles  
north of Westminster, MD.  
Call: 410-848-2288 or go to [www.UnionMills.org](http://www.UnionMills.org)

## Report on the SPOOM Annual Meeting at the Hanford Mills

--Robert Lundegard

At the request of Chuck Ives, I attended the SPOOM Board meeting on Thursday September 20, 2007. In addition to the Mid-Atlantic chapter, there was only one other chapter present and the only one that submitted a written report. I sat through most of the meeting, including dinner, since the chapter reports were not given until the end of the several committee reports. It was an opportunity to learn about the business part of SPOOM. I was encouraged by the conduct of the meeting and the preparation that went into all the reports.

The only disturbing news was the continuing loss of members; at this point there are about 1200 members; this total is about ½ of what the membership was several years ago. In my remarks, I referred to this situation as serious, and indicated that the regional chapters might be called upon to direct their energies to bringing information on historic mills to the attention of outsiders, through a systematic education program, and to promoting new memberships. The Mid-Atlantic chapter was asked to contact all chapters and explore how to do this. On behalf of our chapter I accepted the assignment and agreed to report back on the results of this exploration at the 2008 meeting.

In presenting Chuck's report [which leads off this Newsletter], I highlighted the contributions of the individuals identified in the report, summarized our recent meeting at Saint Vincent's College, and emphasized our chapter goals of helping mill owners with technical guidance and expanding public awareness and appreciation of historic mills.



## Mill Notes & News from the Mid-Atlantic Region

-- Jeff Donat

### Maryland

**Rock Run Mill** (MD-012-009, Harford County) (right) in the Susquehanna State Park is once again in operation. A new waterwheel was installed in June, 2007, the gears were turning and corn was being ground as of the first week in July.

[**Rolandville Mill** (MD- ? - ? , Cecil County) long in disrepair, collapsed in a storm in August, 2007 and was razed by the MD Dept. of Natural Resources. – Susan]

[**Wye Mill** (MD-017-005, Queen Anne County) is seeking volunteers. Email: [oldwymill@goeaston.net](mailto:oldwymill@goeaston.net) or call 410-827-6909. –Susan]

### New Jersey

**Pralls Mill** (NJ-010-011, Hunterdon County) is used by the Delaware River Mill Society as a banquet/meeting hall on two floors. A variety of displays to interpret milling history are planned for the mill and adjoining grannery. A saw mill on the property is slated to be rebuilt. Damage and clean-up from three major floods in the last four years has slowed progress.



### Pennsylvania

**Maple Grove Mill** (PA-036-043, Lancaster County) was gutted by fire in the autumn of 2006, arson is suspected. Only the stone walls remain.

**Wagner Grist Mill** (PA-048-002, Northampton County) used by Hellertown Historical Society for the past 20 years to collect and display local memorabilia, is planning a display to interpret milling history. In 2006, a new separate building was built to be used as a museum, many non-milling items were removed from the mill.

## **Pennsylvania** (cont'd...)

**Helfrich Springs Grist Mill** (PA-039-012, Lehigh County), built by Peter Grim in 1807, is celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Whitehall Historical Preservation Society unveiled a historical marker at the mill on April 29<sup>th</sup> to begin a celebration leading to a “200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival” on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Food, fun, music and a variety of displays were held at the mill and the Peter Grim homestead. The mill also be open Saturdays 10am-2pm in July and August.

**Haines Mill Museum** (PA-039-014, Lehigh County) is back in operation demonstrating 1909-era roller mill technology. The mill sat idle for 2006 when a sagging floor was discovered above the turbine bay. Rotting timbers gave way stressing the gearing system driven by the turbine. It is believed that the water level in the headrace was kept too high, actually touching the bottoms of the wooden beams. The Lehigh County Historical Society opens the mill for tours weekends 1pm-4pm April through September.



## **Pennsylvania** (cont'd...)

**Romig Grist Mill** (PA-039-015, Lehigh County) was razed in June, 2006, along with a number of structures on or near the property. Some timbers and pieces of machinery were put aside to be sold by the contractor. Local historical societies were offered a chance to salvage items from the mill but the upper floors were found to be in very poor condition and collapsed in some areas. An amusement park owns the property, it has been rumored that the land will be used for more parking. Over 40 years ago the mill's turbine was kept in good condition, used as a water outlet from the millpond to replenish water to the park's sea lion and pedal boat ponds.

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## **Pennsylvania** (cont'd...)

**“old grist mill”** (PA-054-009, Schuylkill County) The old grist mill in Klingerstown is in poor condition and is likely to be razed. The original structure was built of logs ca. 1807 by Fred Leitzel. Known as Romberger’s mill when a large wood frame addition was built in 1930 with turbine and steam power to run roller mills. The mill closed around 1950. A main beam is fractured above the first floor of the structure along with collapsed areas on the second and third floors. It is not known if equipment remains on the upper floors because it is too dangerous to investigate.

**Romberger’s Mill** (PA-054-006, Schuylkill County) has been in the process of being restored by a group of six investors, including two Romberger family members. In the past seven years a collapsed wall has been rebuilt, and the roof and first floor boards have been replaced. All of the windows are now being restored. Long range plans are to restore the mill to operating condition and show it as a museum. The 1856 mill is 3 ½ storeys of brick and very photogenic with unique design features in the gearing system.

## **(Romberger’s Mill cont’d)**

Much work is yet to be done, the turbines, races and dam are not in good condition. Efforts to gain a name and phone number of a person to contact for SPOOM members to view the mill have not been successful. Located in Valley View, from the west end of town, turn north off Rte. 25 onto Old Mill Rd., a church is at the corner. The mill is about one mile down the road to the right.



Haines Mill