

SPOOM

Mid-Atlantic Chapter

The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills

*Fall 2021
Edition*

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- * TBD —Spring Chapter Meeting
- * 2021—National SPOOM Conference
Cancelled
- * April. 1—Spring Newsletter
Article Deadline

SPOOM-MA Chapter

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BOARD MEMBERS:

Dan Campbell, *President*

Susan Langley, *Vice President*

Judy Grove, *Treasurer*

Craig Sansonetti, *Secretary*

Robert McLaughlin, *President Ex-Officio*

Susan Langley, *Newsletter Editor*

Steven Childers

Charles Yeske

President' Message

By Daniel T. Campbell

Greetings and Happy Holidays to all Mid-Atlantic SPOOMers and other interested folks, who are visiting the pages of this newsletter. As I re-read my previous Presidents Message from January of 2020, knowing what we now know, I feel a sense of naivete, that when looking to the future with such enthusiasm, and a lack of caution, I was oblivious of what nature could throw at humanity, within such a short period of a month and a half.

At that time, we were anticipating our usual Spring 2020 semi-annual meeting, arranged in my adopted home area of Chester County, PA. Having worked here nearly 25 years and lived here the latter 17 of those, I am familiar with many local mills, and my travelling speech about them was to be part of our 3-day meeting. After postponing that meeting to the Fall, due to COVID, the Board decided to put that meeting's plans "on the shelf," due to the uncertainty of vaccines and gatherings at the time. Hopefully, we can return to that tour and meeting in southeastern PA, at some time in the future.

Top of my mind now, is realizing that the dedicated people of an organization, are what carry it through, during good times and troubled times, and that has never been more evident for SPOOM Mid-Atlantic. The strength of our board members has been a virtue for the chapter, over the past nearly 2 years. Starting with Judy Grove our treasurer, membership coordinator and webmaster - she is still the backbone

(cont'd)

Grist from Abbott's Mill

By Steve Childers

I became involved with Abbott's Mill about 20 years ago when it was being restored by the state and I was asked to make half a dozen wooden gear teeth. I knew nothing about grist mills but I said "sure," and it turned out to be quite a challenge. My wife works at the neighboring Abbott's Mill Nature Center, so I became more and more involved as I learned more and more about mills in general.

Abbott's Mill belongs to the State of Delaware's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs and the mill and the nature center are managed by the Delaware Nature Society, a leading environmental nonprofit organization in the region.

My wife actually suggested the blog idea last year as another way to promote Abbott's Mill and the nature center. I knew nothing about blogging but I did a lot of research and finally settled on the Wix free website builder. Even so, I probably spent a couple of hundred dollars getting a domain name (gristfromabbottsmill.net) and other start-up costs. I'm not begging for money but my domain comes up for renewal in December, so if anyone would like to throw a few



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President's Message *cont'd*

of our Board, performing all those tasks, while also contributing innovative ideas. Judy recommended that we meet in Fall of 2021 at an outdoor site for safer separation, resulting in our recent gathering in NJ (see the story below). As well, I acknowledge Craig Sansonetti, our secretary who records our meeting, while maintaining his important historic site (including a mill) in York County PA.

The Mid Atlantic chapter is thankful to those who have stuck to their posts during this difficult time and is also thankful for the people who have graciously completed their service to us. With our vice president Adam Sieminski on an overseas assignment, in 2019 Ivan LuFriu accepted nomination to the Vice President position. Ivan has been a long-time board member, and with his wife Marlene, hosted the Fall 2018 meeting around Baltimore, and at Union Mills near Westminster MD.

At the summer 2021 board meeting, Ivan requested retirement from Vice President and gratefully was replaced by Susan Langley, appointed by Board vote. We extend many thanks to Ivan and Marlene, for their decades of hard work for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. The Board is especially grateful for Susan Langley, who has stepped into the V.P. position and also agreed to be the editor of this newsletter, giving us the benefit of her past experience.

This past summer, examining our treasury, Judy recommended that SPOOM MA could afford to donate to the SPOOM national organization, a contribution to their grant program. SPOOM has an established grant application and selection process, which they have run for decades. That benefits small projects at non-profit mills, who match the grant with an equal amount of their own money. In recent years SPOOM has cut back on grants, but last year they were reinstated. Judy suggested that the SPOOM grant program would certainly benefit from a contribution of \$2,000 from SPOOM-MA. The SPOOM-MA Board met remotely in June and approved that annual grant contribution, plus a one-time contribution of \$1,000 for this year only. Stipulations are that the gift requires that SPOOM

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Grist from Abbott's Mill *cont'd*

bucks in my Paypal account I'll put it to good use.
(snchilders@comcast.com).

My original intention was that I would write about the history of our mill every other week and our friend Paul Layton would write about the flora and fauna in our area. That has worked out fine for Paul but after about three months I ran out of fresh things to say about the mill, so I decided to start looking into all the other mills that were once in the area. OMG! Now I had to get off my a** and start doing real research. Luckily the Delaware Public Archives isn't far away and I've learned what a great help some on-line resources can be, such as ancestry.com and newspapers.com. Without the latter I'd have never found out that in 1928 a local mill owner was arrested for paying an employee to torch his mill so he could collect the \$10,300 insurance. Ancestry.com gives me access to the U. S. Census records that include, among other things, the person's occupation and very often the mill owner and the miller were neighbors, and thus were listed near one another.

After eight months of co-writing this blog I still really have no idea what I'm doing and I welcome suggestions and creative criticisms. (I've got a pretty thick skin.) But first I'd like to say that when researching old mills, I've usually not had a difficult time finding the names of previous owners. In Sussex County many of them became or had been governors. However, finding the names of the actual millers has usually been nearly impossible and learning the things that we SPOOMers would like to know, like what equipment was once in a long gone mill, is absolutely impossible. Suggestions? Advice? You are welcome to contact me at:
snchilders3@gmail.com.



Abbott's Mill Nature Center

<http://www.delawarenaturesociety.org/centers/abbotts-mill-nature-center/>

President's Message *cont'd*

would allow a SPOOM-MA member to be on their grant committee and that equally worthy projects from the Mid-Atlantic region (PA, MD, DE, VA & Wash DC) would get priority for selection.

Naturally the SPOOM-MA board chose Bob McLaughlin, our esteemed Past President, for the grant committee (Tony Shahan of Newlin Mill was already on the committee as SPOOM Archivist). Bob is very knowledgeable about M-A mills, and about nationwide mills, since he maintains the national SPOOM mill lists. Quickly, I proposed the donation arrangement at a national SPOOM Board meeting (via Zoom) and it was accepted by the SPOOM Board. By early October, the SPOOM grant committee had reviewed several applications and selected a mill in Georgia and one in Minnesota, for funding of their construction projects totaling \$4,250. Also, between two applications from Bucks County, PA mills, the committee chose Durham Mill to receive \$3,000, for an interior interpretation project. In the recent past, the non-profit at Durham has previously completed several projects from their own donor-collected funds, and they are well deserving.

Approaching 2022, we are still in a period of transition from our previous normal, to a future normal, which may require different approaches. One lesson of COVID has been to expect the unexpected, if and when it arrives. Add to that the increase in the earth's temperatures, with a direct result of more frequent and more intense stormy weather, which has directly impacted our already fragile historic mill buildings. Those are by nature located in flood plains, to obtain their waterpower, and many member mills have been impacted.

Over the past year we mourn the loss of John McGrain of Maryland in early May 2021. John was a long-time historian for the Baltimore City Historical Society, and a prolific author of books about historic sites in Baltimore County MD, including mill sites of grist, textile and iron production operations. With the passing of the

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Mid-Atlantic Fall Chapter Meeting

- Susan Langley

Through the amazing organizational skills of President Dan Campbell, our chapter was able to hold its first in-person meeting since 2019 at Batsto Village in Wharton State Forest, part of the beautiful Pine Barrens of New Jersey on October 2nd. Early arrivals enjoyed reuniting at a lively Meet-n-Greet at Rocco's in Hammonton, the night before the meeting.

The 1200 acres of Batsto Village are the result of properties assembled from the 18th through the early 20th-centuries. Two families of the several owners stand out. Under the Richards family from the late 18th century to the mid-19th century, it was predominantly an iron works, producing kettles and pots from local bog iron. When the foundry declined, it converted to glass production for a brief period. Under the Wharton family (1876-1909; then managed by a Trust until 1959), forestry and agrarian pursuits were the focus. The site was purchased by the State in 1959 and it is included in both the New Jersey and the National Registers of Historic Places.

We spent the morning enjoying tours of the mansion, an interesting literal amalgam of two manor homes, and exploring many of the structures related to the site's industrial past. Some of the latter include a company store, quaint donkey barn, and one of the four oldest operating post offices in the nation. The latter has never been assigned a zip code and will hand-cancel cards during the Christmas Season. Of course the presence of two mills; a grist mill and a sawmill, were particular attractions for our Chapter. Unfortunately, recent damage resulted in the grist mill being closed, but the sawmill was a veritable candy store for our members. All too soon we had to depart for lunch and our meeting.

For more information about this fascinating site, visit: <http://batstovillage.org/>.

Batsto

A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

(cont'd on P. 7)

President's Message cont'd

old guard, we are reminded of the importance of the stepping-up, of a younger generation. In your day-to-day lives, please spread the word to your historically interested friends, that the world of old mills and historic milling is a short distance away, on our website, in this newsletter, and future tours in our MA Chapter region.

I offer my thanks for the continued service of our Board, and participation from our membership. We look forward to events and activities toward preserving old mills and providing education and fellowship for our members. I hope to see you on the next mill tour!

Dan Campbell

Daniel T. Campbell

President, Mid-Atlantic SPOOM



Leaving our mark at the Batsto sawmill
(Credit: D. Campbell)



Visiting the Batsto sawmill
(Credit: D. Campbell)

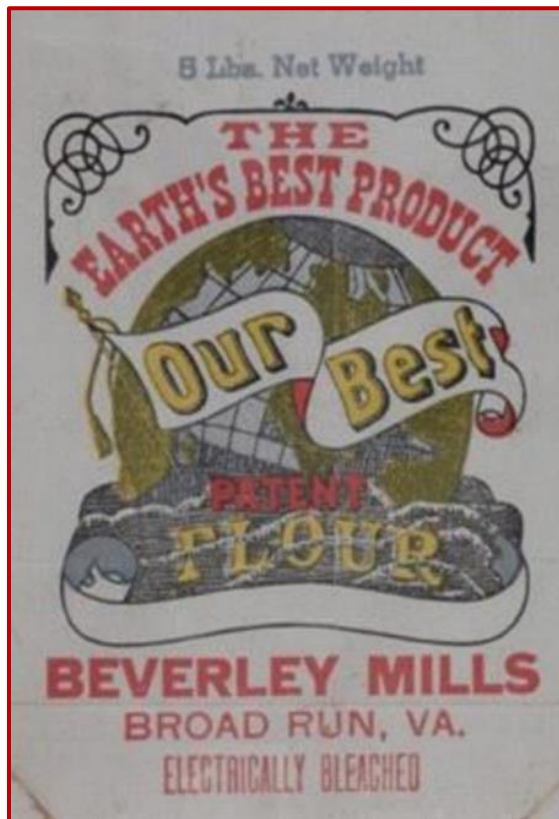
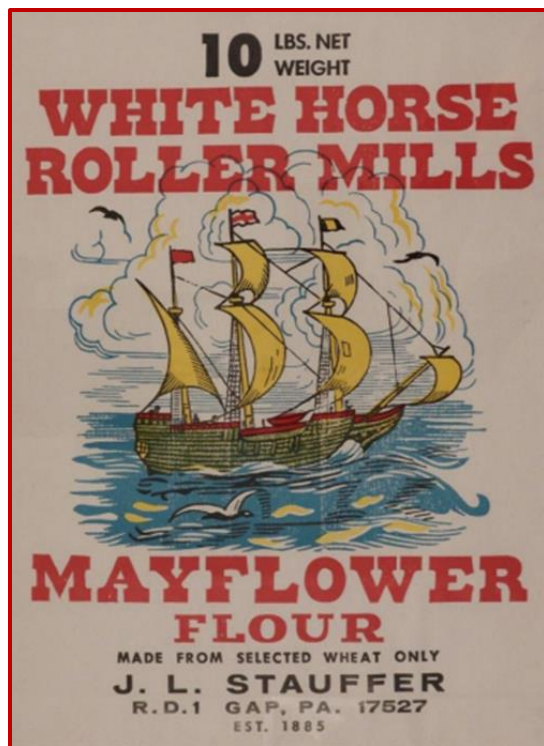
Flour Bag Collection

By Susan Langley

Is your mill re-opening to visitors? Do you need a new exhibit? The SPOOM Mid-Atlantic Chapter has received a collection of 40 beautifully matted and framed flour bags from 10 States, donated by Rudolph K. Hershey. Materials from the Hershey Collection are available for loan for exhibit purposes. Many thanks to Bob McLaughlin for organizing the images and text into a catalog format.

Here is the link to the web page which has highlighted links to the Catalog and to the Loan Form: <http://spoommidatlantic.org/flour-bag-collection>. The catalog lists the materials alphabetically by State and includes the overall framed size as well as the size of the portion that is visible

Here are examples of bags from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.



Bobb's Mill Restoration

- This article, by Lisa Mitchell, is reprinted with permission from the MediaNews Group

The Boyertown Area Historical Society recently celebrated the restoration of a historic building near Barto, Bobb's Mill, which dates to the early 1730s.

"On Forgedale Road in Barto stands a building that is filled with history. The building was recently dedicated after being refurbished from many years of neglect," said Luann Zambanini, treasurer of the Boyertown Area Historical Society in a release.

The refurbishing project was thanks to Andreas Coelo and his group of investors, Jose and Laura, as well as the craftsmen of Pennsylvania Craftsmen Construction Co. for the restoration. "Eugene Kehler, Rick Pepietro and John Pepietro spent over 12 weeks rescuing the structure and roof of this old mill. Without these major renovations the structure would have not survived Another winter," said Zambanini.

Historical Society President Racheal Kehler explained the history of Bobb's Mill during the dedication ceremony.

The mill was built by hand labor in the early 1730s. "Each stone was carved and laid by hand. Each beam came only after a tree was chopped down and hand hewn into the length and shape needed," Kehler said.

The mill was operated by seven different families through the years. Christian Beilder, builder of the mill, sold it to Conrad Bobb in 1740. Conrad ran the mill for 16 years until his death.

Daniel Bobb then purchased the mill. In the early 1800s, Daniel built a family home on the property, which still stands. A date stone is still visible on this family home and it includes Daniel and his wife Catharina's initials. Daniel passed the family property down to his son Daniel Jr.

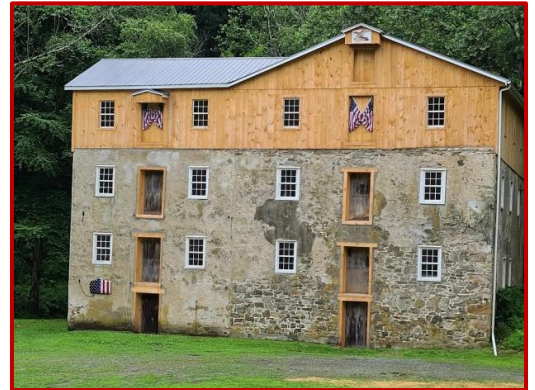
The Bobb Family would own and operate the mill for 129 years.

After the Bobb family, the mill continued in operation through

Top photo: Jim Miller in 1992 from

<http://millpictures.com/mills.php?millid=471>

Remaining Photos courtesy of Luann Zambanini, Boyertown Area Historical Society



(cont'd)

Bobb's Mill Restoration *cont'd*

several families for almost 100 years. Clayton Saylor was the last to operate the mill.

"A plaque was unveiled at the dedication for future generations to remember the hard work of the gentlemen of the Pennsylvania Craftsmen Construction Company who lovingly restored this amazing part of history," said Zambanini.

Food and entertainment were provided for attending guests as well as musical entertainment. The Boyertown Area Historical Society helped with the historical research aspects of the mill and was proud to participate in this dedication event.

[Additional Information – Ed.]

The website, MillPictures.com,

<http://millpictures.com/mills.php?millid=471>

refers to the property as Bobb's/Latshaw's/Saylor's Grist Mill. Individuals upload photos and comments. Some of these, by descendant Robert Kinsey (2006), include:

"...My 6th great grandfather, John (Johann) Conrad Bobb bought it from Beidler in 1744. Daniel Bobb Sr. (who fought in the Revolution), one of Conrad's sons, bought it from his mother after the death of his father. It then stayed in my family from 1744 through 1876 or thereabouts. Some of my cousins might have even more information."

"My cousin, Hyde Ballard, bought the mill from Mrs. Saylor who was the last operator in the 1960's [?]. The mill shut down in the 1950's do [*sic*] to either lack of business or because the building was no longer structurally sound. There are some major cracks in the stone walls and walking on the first floor is like walking on a waterbed."

"The mill was expanded to its present size about 1902 and updated to water turbine power. A flood the following year plugged these turbines full of mud, so it ran off steam power from then after. The engine and engine room to produce steam power are no longer there, but most of the other equipment remains. Ballard sold the property in the early 1980's. Andrew Mackay 07/12/2005." [Presumably, Mr. Mackay provided this information to Mr. Kinsey, who posted it.]

Mid-Atlantic Fall Chapter Meeting *cont'd*

We reassembled for an outdoor lunch and meeting at the Sweetwater Marina and Riverdeck overlooking the sparkling Mullica River. It was clearly the place to be on a beautiful Saturday afternoon and ensured our efficiency as we completed the meeting during a break between sets of the live band.

As a gentle reentry to in-person meetings, the Board determined that a one-day meeting would test the waters for the comfort level of the membership. With 24 members participating, it was clearly a success and bodes well for the next meeting, for which venues are currently being considered. Suggestions are welcome, please feel free to send them to: info@spoommidatlantic.org.

Minutes from this meeting will be available for the Spring Meeting.



Batsto Grist Mill ▲
(Credit: D. Campbell)

In the Batsto Saw Mill ▼
(Credit: D. Campbell)



(*cont'd*)

Mid-Atlantic Fall Chapter Meeting *cont'd*

We are especially grateful to Wes Hughes, Paul Purcell, Janice Dispoto and Betsy Carpenter for providing excellent interpretation of the site, as well as to The Batsto Citizens Committee, Inc. for hosting our meeting.

While it was unfortunate that we were not able to tour the grist mill during this meeting, its restoration was discussed in 2020 in the *Old Mill News*; see "Restoring Batsto's Gristmill to Preserve History" *OMN* Fall 2020 Vol. 47(4):12-13. All the more reason for a return visit.



Grist Mill ▲ & Mill Stone ►
(Credit: S. Langley)



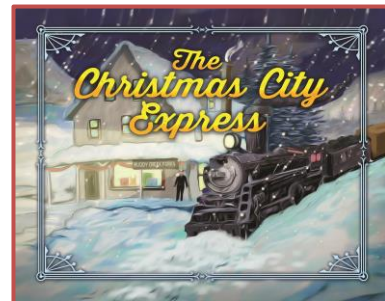
Left to Right: Craig Sansonetti,
Dan Campbell & Robert Hemler
(Credit: S. Langley)



Piggery (left), bog iron ore (foreground) & manor house (right rear)
(Credit: S. Langley - 2 photos grouped)

Upcoming Holiday Activities

December 4-5, 11-12, 18-19: Ma & Pa Heritage Village – Christmas City Express. Hours are posted online:
<http://maandparailroad.com/calendar.php#christmas>



Ticket Purchase Online Only:

http://www.dynamicticketsolutions.com/mapa/index-responsive.cfm?pgfn=calendar&template_ID=0&CalMonth=12&CalYear=2021

December 16, 5:00 pm: CCHPN Virtual Series - Christmas Unfolds at Anselma Mill. Free, but Pre-Registration is required:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/cchpn-virtual-heritage-series-christmas-unfolds-at-anselma-mill-tickets-168790122801?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>



Grist Mill Gifts

Looking for interesting mill-related gifts? I found this website on Etsy last year and was very pleased with my purchases (millstone-shaped soaps and tree ornaments) –Ed.
http://www.etsy.com/shop/gristmillgifts?ref=simple-shop-header-name&listing_id=890272904



Castle Valley Mill

Some of you may have had the opportunity to visit this mill previously with SPOOM-MA. If so, you may have had the chance to try some of their diverse products. If you are like me, you have a freezer full of bags of different flours. **Castle Valley offers pages of recipes** that will help find interesting ways of using your stash:

<http://castlevalleymill.com/Recipes.html>
<http://www.castlevalleymill.com/blog/>



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please enroll me as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Society for the Preservation Of Old Mills

Please Print

Name: _____

Milling Connection: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ E-mail Address _____

(newsletters are emailed or posted in web site when possible to save postage)

Subscription ☐ New ☐ Renewal

Please Check One:

☐ Individual, Member of SPOOM - \$10.00

☐ Individual, Not Member of SPOOM - \$15.00

☐ Sustaining Membership - \$25.00

☐ Organization Membership - \$50.00

Please indicate level of membership and mail this form with your check or money order to **Membership Manager, 613 Green Valley Road, York PA 17403. Please make your checks out to Mid-Atlantic Chapter.** Online membership payment is available through the membership page of our website www.spoommidatlantic.org as well. The Mid-Atlantic Chapter is a member in good standing of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills and serves MD, DE, PA, VA, and DC.

Attach
postage
here

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