

d o w n s t r e a m



Photo: Archives of Friends of Peirce Mill

It was a Cleanup Day at the mill, August 1, 1965. These Boy Scouts seem to be having a good time. The driveway, entry walk, and fences look different today. The stone lined headrace is visible to the left of the mill.



4305 38th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016



Milling About

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

Fall 2003



Annual Meeting and Open House at the Mill



Members welcoming guests at the front of the mill.

Our annual fall event—a combination membership meeting and open house—was held at the mill on Saturday, October 11th.

On a sunny morning, we began at around 10 AM with coffee and then the annual meeting.

We had a quorum—just barely!—of 13 members attending, so we could hold a valid election of board members and officers. All of the incumbent board members were re-elected and we added a new member, **Tom Blackburn**, bringing the board to the maximum of eight specified in our by-laws. Tom's functions will be to coordinate volunteer activities at Peirce Barn (see below). The group heard a report on fund-raising from **Richard Abbott** and **Sharlene Leurig**, and then **Philip Gaudette** spoke about plans for historical research (see below). Architect and Advisory Board member **Baird Smith** described plans for a recirculating pumped water system to drive the water wheel. Chief Park Ranger **Laura Illige** spoke



Musicians Karen Ashbrooke and Andrea Hoag entertaining visitors.

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Philip Gaudette speaks to members about historical research.

about upcoming work on the fish passage near the mill, and said that prospects for Federal funding of the mill restoration were beginning to look more positive. The group also heard a financial report from **David Lyman** and a membership report from **Sheila Ploger**. Finally, **Bob Day**, who was responsible for organizing the open house, reviewed the day's planned activities.

During the day roughly 120 people dropped in to visit the mill and adjoining Peirce Barn. Our guests, many of them first-time visitors to Peirce Mill, were able to tour all four floors of the mill, with explanations from our members, and to view the completed work on the beam and columns at the basement level. Outside the building, **Steve Ortado** worked on a damaged window from the mill as a demonstration of historic preservation methods. Board member **Arthur Fort** brought his

collection of woodworking tools and put together a box to demonstrate joinery techniques. In the afternoon, musicians Karen Ashbrook and Andrea Hoag entertained visitors with period music on the dulcimer, violin, banjo

and flute. Cider and cookies were available throughout the day. All in all, a very successful event — one that we hope that more of our members will wish to take part in next year. It is an excellent way to learn more about how your organization operates, how the restoration work is proceeding, and how we use the membership fees which you so generously contribute!



Progress of Work on the Mill Floors

Work began the week of November 10th on Column #3, the last of the basement columns needing repairs. Steve Ortado has moved lumber and equipment into the basement and will now begin installing the lifting gear into position to take the weight of the building off the column. Then repairs can begin to the cracked stone base beneath it. The picture shows the current condition of the column. The existing column and the concrete base and wooden blocks will be removed, and after the stone base is repaired a larger stone will be put in place to match the other columns and a new column of white oak will be installed.

Peirce Mill Research Papers

We are gearing up to sponsor and publish historical research in a series to be called Peirce Mill Research Papers. The papers can pursue any topic related to the mill that meets our criteria. They will likely contribute to the reports and documents needed for the reconstruction work, but that concern is secondary. The main goals are

discovering and capturing the story of this quaint corner of our community.

We particularly want to encourage interested students in history or engineering and other potential authors who might not otherwise find a forum. So the Friends will offer a small honorarium and the opportunity to be published in the appropriate paper and electronic media. An Editorial Board will establish criteria for authors and topics and will decide which papers are accepted in the series.

The hottest topic so far: a survey of Oliver Evans equipment in mills nationwide. We need this information to help establish the national significance of Peirce Mill, a prerequisite for some grants. As far as we can tell, our mill has one of the best collections of Oliver Evans equipment in the country. A paper that proves the point would be enormously useful.

Would you like to contribute some time? You could volunteer to serve on the Editorial Board to set editorial criteria and review submitted papers. That means taking on a serious responsibility, but it won't require a lot of time. You could help the Editorial Board with some startup tasks, such as writing an educational grant request and finding ways to reach potential authors. Or you could suggest some authors and topics for consideration.

Contact Philip Gaudette by email p.gaudette@verizon.net or phone (evenings) 202 882-2341.

Filming the Restoration of Peirce Mill

Thanks to the efforts of Lummy Hagner and Steve Dryden, a short DVD film about the mill restoration is currently being shot by a professional documentary film producer and writer, Mike Dolan. Some of you may have seen his article in the *City Paper* back in 1995 in which he wrote about the Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness area, including Peirce Mill and the old Bureau of Standards area which was once the property of Mrs. Hagner's ancestors. Mike has already filmed Steve Ortado describing work on Column #3. We expect to use copies of the DVD in our fund raising efforts as it will show graphically why we need funds and how they are being used. Mike is contributing his time and materials for the film at no cost to FOPM.

Our Most Generous Members

We greatly appreciate the support of the 76 individuals or families (108 persons in all) who regularly send us their \$20 and \$30 membership fees. These funds covers our routine expenses, including printing and mailing this newsletter, the costs of special events at the mill, insurance, phone, postage, and so forth, so you can be sure that your money is put to good use. At this time, however, we would like to honor those (other than board members) who give at a higher level to the Friends of Peirce Mill. Here they are:

Master Millwright (\$500 and above):
Mrs. Randall H. Hagner, Jr.

Millwright (\$200 and above):
Sanders H. and Sally Berk
Kenneth H. Faulstich and Claudia C. Wright

Miller: (\$100)
Stephen and Helen Low
Joshua Levin
Mark Strattner
Gregory R. New
Mr. and Mrs. B.N. Hoover
Brooke Henley and Tom Garnett
Mr. and Mrs. Denman McNear
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nurmi
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Koteen
Anna Fierst
Elizabeth A. Allaben
Jennifer and John Owens

FOPM Officers and Key Individuals

President Richard Abbott
Vice President Steve Dryden
Secretary/Treasurer Sheila Ploger
Business Manager David Lyman
Archivist Philip Gaudette
Legal/Tax Affairs Gene Hines
Chair, Proctors Committee Mrs. Randall H. Hagner, Jr.
Assistant Chair, Proctors Committee ... Mrs. I. Townsend Burden
Special Events Coordinator Robert Day
Board Member Arthur Fort
Board Member Tom Blackburn

We Reach a Fund-Raising Milestone

Good news on the fund-raising front: **We have now raised over \$300,000 for the restoration of Peirce Mill!** Over the past few months, we went back to the foundations that have already given us grants, and the result was \$32,000 in new grants and pledges. The Kiplinger Foundation has pledged \$25,000, of which \$15,000 will be received this year and \$10,000 next year. The Clark-Winchcole Foundation sent a check for \$5000 and the law firm of Dahlgren & Close gave us \$2000. The Kiplinger Foundation is now our biggest single donor, with grants and pledges totaling \$75,000.

With the help of new member **Sharlene Leurig**, we've done some research and compiled a list of some 25 additional foundations and corporations that make grants of the types we are seeking. We have applications pending with several of them already, and our fund-raising committee is now making inquiries with others to determine if applications are being accepted.

We Have a New *Milling About* Editor and Website Manager

This issue of the newsletter and the previous one were produced by our new publisher, Vicki Anderson of Desktop, Etc. We think readers will be pleased with the quality of her work. We have also engaged a new web site manager, Pam Sheary. Pam's firm, QualityIT Works, will be making some changes to the site and updating it, so in a couple of weeks, log on and see how it looks!

Tell Us Your Story

Do you have an interesting story to tell...a photo of the Mill you found in the attic...a favorite memory of Peirce Mill from your childhood?

Share your story ideas or vintage photos with other Mill friends. Submit your contribution to Friends of Peirce Mill c/o Richard Abbott, 4305 38th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016, or e-mail to abbott1229@erols.com. We'll try to get your submission into the next issue of *Milling About*. Thanks!