



morris county park commission

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Cooper Mill Papers: Finding Aid

Overview of Collection

Creator: Various
Title: Mill Papers
Date: 1882 to 1988
Quantity: 2 boxes, 0.5 linear feet

Restrictions

Important Information for Users of the Collection

This material is open for research with limited restrictions under the conditions of the Morris County Park Commission archives access policy. Records may be copied for use in individual scholarly or personal research; however, as with all materials in the Morris County Park Commission, researchers are responsible for obtaining copyright permission to use material from the collection.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Cooper Mill Papers, Courtesy of the Morris County Park Commission.

Acquisition Information

These records were found in the Collection in December 2011 and during the 2018 Inventory Project. No provenance information is known.

Processing Information

Described by Lynn Laffey, December 2011, and Katie Humphreys, December 2018

Historical Note

Cooper Gristmill, located on 14 acres, was built in 1826 and is one of the remaining restored water-powered mills in New Jersey. It is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and is a living example of the state's transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Cooper Gristmill was once the heart of a thriving industrial community, Milltown, and played a vital role in the area's development during and after the American Industrial Revolution. The stretch of the Black River on which the Cooper Gristmill is situated is well-suited for the operation of water-powered mills. Throughout the 19th century, the gristmill ground primarily wheat, but also corn, and other grains. With four sets of millstones connected by elevators to grain cleaners

and flour sifters, the mill ground up to 10 tons of grain each day. This mill remained in operation until the early 20th century. Modern turbines installed in the 1870s replaced the mill's two original wooden waterwheels. Today, the mill is run by an all-steel Fitz Company waterwheel.

The Morris County Park Commission acquired Cooper Gristmill in 1973, and opened it to the public in October 1978. During late 2005 to the early 2006, James Kricker of Rondout Woodworking conducted repairs, fabrication, and installation of historic mill machinery on the second and third floors of the Cooper Gristmill with the goal of restoration and installation of the historic machinery to show and interpret the complete mill process from grain receiving, to cleaning, grinding, sifting, and finally bagging. This main work included the installation of the main drive and the power-train equipment that powers the machinery.

Scope and Content Note

The Mill Papers are a collection of business papers and commercial paper goods concerning general milling information and mill equipment information produced during the Cooper Mill's period of significance or surrounding the Park Commission's ownership and restoration of the buildings and surrounding property. The collection contains exemplars of advertisements and receipts as well as oral histories taken of staff and former residents of Milltown.

Associated Image Collection

[Cooper Mill Image Collection](#)

The Cooper Mill Image Collection contains just over 60 photographs primarily chronicling the Cooper Gristmill and the Miller's house which was located across the street from the Gristmill. All images contained within this Collection are available on MCPC's online database.

Arrangement

The Mill Papers are organized into 3 series: General Milling Information, Cooper Gristmill Information, and General History.

Series 1: General Milling Information

Material in this series relates to milling equipment and/or milling information. Material covers general subject matter and is not specific to processes or equipment used at the Cooper Gristmill.

Series 2: Cooper Gristmill Information

Material in this series relates to information about the Cooper Gristmill property and buildings. Material within this series relates to the subject matter and is not specific to the Cooper Family. Additional information regarding the Cooper Family can be found in the Cooper Family Papers.

Series 3: General History

Original material that is relevant to the history and interpretation of Cooper Gristmill and the lives of its occupants and employees but does not have a direct connection to the site or one of its occupants, ca. 1837-1946. When applicable these materials will be immediately digitized and made accessible for educators and may be assigned Cooper Mill Working (CMW) accession numbers.

Container List

Series 1: General Milling Information

Box Folder

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Pamphlet, "Burnham's Standard Turbine Wheel" (CM2011.003.0001) |
| | 2 | Pamphlet, "H.M.Deal & Co Smutter, Separator and Scourer Combined" (CM2011.003.0001) |
| | 3 | Pamphlet, "The Garden City Mill Machinery and Louis Gathmann's System of Milling" (CM2011.003.0001) |
| | 4 | Pamphlet, "Leffel Turbine Water Wheels Bulletin #62" (CM2011.003.0001) |
| | 5 | Pamphlet, "Monarch Grain Cleaning Machinery, Section C, No. 115" (CM2011.003.0001) |

Series 2: Cooper Gristmill Information

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|--------|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | Report, "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological and Historical Research conducted on the Black River Park Area" (CM2011.003.0002) |
| No Box | | Oral History, Ivins Smith and Betty Mills, Interview conducted 4-11-2013, by Becky Hoskins (CM2014.001) – <i>located in FF Archives Room with other Oral Histories</i> |

Map Case Drawer 9 – Cooper Mill Restoration Plans (1968-1970s)

Series 3: General History

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|---|----|--|
| 1 | 7 | 1885 Excelsior Diary (CM2018.1.1)
Parsippany Barn Dance Book, December 11, 1903 (CM2018.1.10) |
| | 8 | Receipt from W. Kent of Montclair, NJ (CM2018.1.3)
Receipt from Watching Mill Scales, F.A. Wheeler & Co. January 30, 1883 (CM2018.1.4)
Receipt Fairbanks Standard Scales January 4, 1882 (CM2018.1.5)
Receipt Orange City Scales N.G. Lindsley January 23, 1883 (CM2018.1.6)
Bill J. C. Smith, Jobber and Dealer in Flour, Grain, Hay, Straw, etc. April 26, 1882 (CM2018.1.7)
Receipt Troy Hills Hay Scales BLANK (CM2018.1.8) |
| | 9 | Booklet, Chemical and Clover
Pamphlet, Manures for Grains and Grasses
Leaflet, 1938 Agricultural Conservation Program |
| | 10 | Booklet, "How Inspect Foes and How to Destroy Them" (CM2018.1)
Excelsior Bedbug, Cockroach, and Rat Paste advertisement (CM2018.1) |
| | 11 | "Iron Turbine Wind Engine Expressly for P. P. Mast & Co." advertisement, newsprint. (CM2018.1)
Pamphlet, Avery's Rotary Engine for Sawmills (CM2018.1) |
| | 12 | J. Jacob Hockenjos Advertisement (CM2018.1)
Safe Deposit Registering Savings Bank Advertisement (CM2018.1) |
| | 13 | "Centennial Exhibition Guide with map and complete description of all the buildings." (CM2018.1.11) |

- 14** Transcription, Oral History with Rockefeller Twins Mable Hoffman and Mae Conklin, conducted by the Chester Historical Society on January 11, 1988 (**CM2019.1.1**)

Oversized Box

“Stylish House Dresses”/ “Katey’s Letter” Sheet Music newspaper (**CM2018.1.2**)

Related Collections: Cooper Family Papers and Wortman Mill Papers