

Extracted from an Historic Structure Report completed for Bucks County Commissioners and Parks Department by Jenkintown architects Hottle and Kwait in June 1975

DURHAM MILL Durham Road and Cook's Creek, Durham, Pennsylvania

The original mill has been changed many times for various reasons over its long history but most of these alterations cannot be precisely dated due to a lack of authentic documentation. There are, however, photographs taken from the late 1800's to the present time which help to establish the sequence of changes that have occurred to produce the complex which exists today.

The original mill building was built in 1820 by Judge William Long. This three-story grist mill was constructed on the foundation walls of the historic Durham furnace (iron works) which gave its last blast in 1789.

In 1888, George H. Riegel took over the mill and built the barn and wagon shed (extant) to the northeast of the mill.

Sometime later his son Harvey K. Riegel became the owner of a wheelwright shop which was annexed to the north wall of the mill. This two-story frame structure was later destroyed to make way for The construction of the brick warehouse annex built in 1912.

The original office was located in the northeast corner of the first floor of the mill. The original safe built into the north wall still remains. A photograph also shows a chimney at this corner of the building -- indicating the probable location of an office stove.

Sometime in the 1890's or at least before 1912 a wood framed mill office (since demolished) with shed roof was built adjacent to the mill at the south east corner.

In 1912 the brick warehouse with gambrel roof was constructed on the north wall of the mill. At the same time the post office (still used today) was constructed at the north corner of the west wall of the mill. This new addition also served as the office for the mill. In the 1940' s this office was enlarged on the south end to provide a private mill office adjacent to the post office.

Also in 1912 or shortly thereafter a free standing, one story wood frame blacksmith shed was constructed on stone foundation walls (remnants existing near highway) a short distance northwest of the brick warehouse. The blacksmith shop has since been demolished.

In the mid 1940's a rail siding located alongside the east wall of the warehouse was removed. In the early 1950's the grade was raised at the warehouse door and the existing concrete ramp and truck shed were constructed.

The last addition to the complex of mill buildings was the one car garage attached to the west wall of the mill sometime in the 1960's.

The wall construction of the mill is stone rubble laid up on the old foundations and parged with a crude stucco which was then whitewashed. The warehouse addition is all brick construction and was also whitewashed.

Both buildings are post and beam with timber and plank interior. The mill, being much older, is cr1lde and has seen heavy service indoors from the work of grinding various grist. The warehouse, being of more recent construction, is in very good condition within and without.

Located in the wheel housing below the first floor in the southeast corner of the mill, a 14 foot diameter wooden water wheel, which powered four millstones, was driven by water from the race leading from Cook's Creek about 3/4 of a mile east of the mill. The water reached the overshot wheel originally via a wooden trough covered with planks to permit traffic above. This trough has since been replaced by a large-diameter pipe (date unknown). In 1932 a new 16-foot diameter steel wheel replaced the wooden wheel increasing the power by about 20%.

The exterior of the mill (original part) has remained generally unchanged over the years with the following exceptions:

- a. The small door on the south side of the mill was enlarged to its present size in the 1930's to allow installation of machinery which was too large for the original opening.
- b. At the east corner of the south side of the mill the window on the first floor was enlarged to its present size to serve as a door to the wood frame office shed. In more recent times -- 1960's -- glass block was used to fill the enlarged opening.
- c. The first floor door of the mill at the outdoor hoistway on the east wall was modified and the windows on that level to the north of that door were also changed. Glass block and louvered glass were installed in existing openings .
- d. The roof was changed from flush gable and eave condition to an overhanging eave and gable end condition which still exists at the present time. This change probably occurred before 1912.

The brick work on the east wall of the warehouse shows lines of change where the gambrel roof of the warehouse met the north wall of the original mill. Both structures were modified and reroofed at some time -- probably in the 1930's

when the dormers were added. Remnants of cutaway framing, sheathing, slate nails, and slates are still visible in the mill roof under the present connecting roof.

- e. A large painted advertisement for Ceresota Flour was painted on the east wall of the warehouse.