

FELTEN'S MILL  
S side of Brush Creek,  
E SR 2029 and TR 386 Junction  
Breezewood vicinity  
Bedford County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-351

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

FELTEN'S MILL

HAER No. PA-351

Location: S side of Brush Creek, E of Junction of SR 2029 and TR 386 Breezewood (vic.) Bedford County Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1852

Present Owner: Emma Felton

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: Felten's Mill is a typical mid-nineteenth century flour and grist mill found throughout the southwestern Pennsylvania's agricultural communities. This water-powered mill operated more than 80 years, closing in 1936 as a result of a severe flood. Nonetheless, the mill retains much of its nineteenth century machinery.

Historian: Elaine J. Will, 1992

Project Information: The results of the study of Bedford County were published in 1994: Kim E. Wallace (ed), Bedford County and Fulton County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service). The contents of the publication were transmitted to the Library of Congress as individual reports. Research notes, field photos and copies of historic photos collected during the project were transmitted to the AIHP Collection, Special Collections, Stapleton Library, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

This three-story, three-by-four-bay, wood-frame mill rests on a raised, rough stone foundation. On both sides and the rear, the cellar level is exposed, and these parts of the stone foundation walls have been covered with the same clapboard siding that covers the rest of the mill. Much of the milling machinery remains in place, including three sets of millstones, elevators, and the mechanical power transmission gears and line shafts. In addition, a wood lathe, powered by line shafting, remains as does the enclosed overshot water wheel that powered the mill. The building contains six-over-six-light, double-hung sash windows, many of which are broken. A one-story porch on the front elevation has a shed roof with no supports; a rear entrance to the cellar is covered by a pediment roof. The building's gable roof (with extended front gable) is composed of embossed, tin shingles and is not original to the building. The race from Brush Creek (no longer visible) entered the mill on the north side to turn the completely enclosed, overshot waterwheel, and then exited through the opposite side of the mill. A covered bridge crosses Brush Creek just south of the mill.

Felten's grist mill on Brush Creek was built by brothers Henry and Frederick Felten in 1852. Henry eventually assumed complete ownership of the mill, and later operated it with the assistance of his sons George, Hiram, and Silas. Producing burr flour, buckwheat flour, cornmeal, and chop for feeding livestock, Felten's Mill was once the center of a busy community that also boasted "a harness shop, sawmill, bone mill, blacksmith shop, post office, and general store."

In the early 1900s Silas became sole owner of the mill, which he operated until his death in 1934. After that time the mill ran only sporadically, and was shut down permanently when a flood wiped out the mill dam in 1936. Although idle for over fifty years, Felten's Mill still contains most of its milling machinery.

Sources:

[Note: The property is currently owned by Silas' daughter, Emma Felton, who resides in the nearby miller's house. Felton is Emma's married name; her maiden name was Felten. The similarity between the two names often causes confusion concerning the correct spelling of the mill's historic name, which is actually Felten.]

Felton, Emma. Telephone interview, November 5, 1991.

The History of East Providence Township.

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Office of Historic Preservation. Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form. Prepared by M. L. Miller, 1980.

Waterman, Watkins & Co. History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties, Pennsylvania. Chicago: Waterman, Watkins & Co., 1844.