

Fall 2018

# Historical Journal



**LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

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## *Compass/Rome Mill*

*By Charlene Van Brookhoven*

As you leave Lititz heading east on Rt. 772 toward Rothsville, you pass the Rome Mill on your left. Is it the Rome Mill completed in 1769 as a hemp and oil mill? or is it the Compass Mill completed in 1757 as the Moravian settlement's grist mill?

As early as December 1756 a Moravian Brother from Bethlehem, Pa. arrived in Lititz to determine a plot of land to build the new town mill. A spot was chosen approximately one mile east of town. In January of 1757 George Klein sold a little piece of land to the Moravians in order to build a grist and saw mill. Later that month Klein made plans and suggestions for the future mill as the townspeople were anxious to reap the benefits of this endeavor.



Throughout 1757 Moravians from Lititz and Bethlehem were involved in the tedious construction of not only the new mill but also the mill race extending from Carter Run. Lime stones had to be quarried and used for the base of the mill and the race way. Timber had to be cut from the area and milled in the old, shabby sawmill built several years before.

In November the mill ran for the first time with great success. The flour ground from the first run of the grindstones was used for bread served at Lovefeast to the Lititz Moravian Congregation.

From its beginning, the mill was referred to as the Lititz Mill. However, because of its alignment with the cardinal points of the compass - north, south, east and west - it was named the Compass Mill. Unfortunately in 1775 a fire destroyed the mill. A new mill, on the same foundation as the old, was built the next year.

*Above: The 1757 Compass Mill. .Continued on page 3 inside...*

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## The Extra Give is November 16th!

This year, the Lititz Historical Foundation is participating yet again in the annual Extraordinary Give—Lancaster County's Largest Day of giving!

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For a 24-hour period, online donations can be made to the Lititz Historical Foundation through a special website. Our goal this year is to raise \$5,000 during this extra special event. With your help, we CAN achieve this goal! On November 16th beginning at 12am, online donations can be made to our special website here:

<https://www.extragive.org/organizations/lititz-historical-foundation>

**For your convenience, online donations can also be made at our museum that day!**

Remember, online donations can ONLY be made that day. Thank you so much for your generosity, and for your support of local history!



One hundred years ago, Gochenaur's store was the place downtown to purchase items such as farm machinery, plows, gasoline, bailing wire, and other goods. The business, which has been gone for decades, was once located at 47 North Broad Street in Lititz.



*Compass Mill/Rome Mill Con't:*

The Rome Mill is located on Lititz Run Road on the eastern end of town. The name originated because of its location in Rome, a large area east of the settlement of Lititz in Warwick Township. This mill was built in 1769 as a hemp and oil mill by Johannes Hess.

In 1790 the mill began operating as a gristmill and served many people living outside of the Moravian community.

In 1884 the mill was destroyed by fire and rebuilt the next year. Fire was a commonplace occurrence in early settlements because of lack of safety knowledge. Grain was milled there until 1900 after which it was used mainly for storage.

Today the Rome Mill is owned and preserved by the Hess family, descendants of the 1769 builder Johannes Hess.

How and when did the 1757 Compass Mill become known as the Rome Mill?

Residents living in the eastern end of Lititz regarded their location as Rome. A mail route was established in the 1920's including Rome as a mail route even though Lititz, Pa. was the official address.

The original name of Compass Mill was forgotten and Rome Mill has become the identifying name.

Another qualifying reason for the mistaken identity of the two mills took place in the 1970's when Sylvan Brandt purchased the Compass Mill and its surrounding area.

He built a unique tourist village including the mill, a restaurant and outbuildings and named his endeavor The Rome Mill and Restaurant.

This commercial business, which has since closed, cemented the name Rome Mill into the present and future history of Lititz.



*Above: The 1769 Rome Mill.*

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***Upcoming Fall 2018 and Winter 2019 Events******Mark your calendars! Summer may be over, but we're just getting started with many of our events!******All events are FREE and open to the public***

September 22—Free Museum Day at our Johannes Mueller House in conjunction with the Smithsonian. 10am-4pm

November 9 - Learn about flax processing with guest Paul Miller. 6-8pm in the Lititz Museum.

November 10—Annual meeting at the Lititz Library featuring a lecture on “The Caves of Lancaster County.” 1:30pm.

November 16—We take part in the Extraordinary Give, Lancaster County’s largest day of giving!

December 13— Annual Carol Sing at Moravian Church Square. 7pm.

December 14— Annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of the Johannes Mueller House. 5-9pm.

***Our Annual Meeting is November 10th***

Join us for our annual meeting at the Lititz Library on November 10<sup>th</sup>! After a few brief items of business, we will welcome special guest speaker Clifford Zeller, who will present the program “Caves of Lancaster County, PA.” A teacher and resident of Central Pennsylvania, he is also an explorer who creates exploration videos of his adventures. He operates the YouTube channel “The Wandering Woodsman” which has earned him over 5,000 subscribers so far.

Through this outlet, he has created nearly 400 different videos created all over Pennsylvania. From caving to hiking to haunted places and fossils and everything in between, Zeller will bring his vast knowledge of Penn’s Woods to Lititz on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

The program is free and open to the public, and will begin at 1:30 p.m. The Lititz Library is located at 651 Kissel Hill Road, Lititz.



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## *Museum Day is September 22!*

We are very excited to partner with the Smithsonian for Free Museum Day! On Saturday September 22, visitors may take a complimentary tour of our 1792 Johannes Mueller House.

Our friendly and knowledgeable costumed docents will lead visitors through this 1792 home, offering a captivating glimpse at what everyday life was like for an 18th century tradesman and his family in a closed Moravian settlement. The house retains its original architectural character and has been carefully restored with hundreds of traditional items from the late 1700s and early 1800s.

While you're visiting, next door, be sure to visit the Lititz Museum, located in the 1793 Christian Schropp House and shop our gift shop.

Lastly, take a stroll through our gorgeous Mary Oehme Gardens, located behind our 18th century buildings.

Download your FREE ticket below. The Museum Day ticket provides free admission for two people on Saturday, September 22, 2018.

**\*\*As a member of the LHF, your tours are always free....so why not pass this great information on to a friend or family member?**

**Help us spread the word!**

**Ticket link: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/venues/museum/lititz-historical-foundation/>**



## DID YOU KNOW...?



*40 years ago, on August 21, 1978, world renowned boxer Muhammad Ali stood at the entrance of the Wilbur Chocolate Factory building on North Broad Street. He was in town to promote his newly-introduced Crisp Crunch candy bar produced by Wilbur.*

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