

Elisha Atherton Coray Mill  
Exeter Township, Pennsylvania

HABS No. Pa. 216

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Ralph W. Lear, District Officer  
311-312 Dime Bank Building  
Wilkes-Barre, Penna.

ELISHA ATHERTON CURRY MILL  
EXETER TOWNSHIP, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Custodian

Mr. Simko, caretaker and custodian.

Date of Erection

1846

Present Condition

Very poor, not very well preserved,  
custodian indifferent. Almost en-  
tirely original.

Number of Stories

Four stories and basement in rear, one  
story in front.

Materials of Construction

Exterior walls, wood, stone foundations,  
original slate roof, somewhat patched.  
Floors, white oak.

## ELISHA AINSWORTH CORAY MILL

Exeter Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

In 1776, James Sutton, with James Hadsall as partner, built the first grist mill and saw mill on Sutton's Creek, now called at that place, Coray's Creek. There, the first grist was ground, and the first boards sawed. Hadsall was murdered by the Indians and the mill destroyed, during the Invasion of 1778. All that remains is an old crank preserved by the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

In about 1780, or several years later, Samuel Sutton, son of James Sutton built a second grist mill on the same site. This mill was constructed of hewn logs and had one run of stone, and had a sentry-box on the roof, from which the Valley could be overlooked and the movements of the enemy observed. This mill was swept away by the Pumpkin Flood in 1786. He operated this mill until he was drowned in the river. In 1846, E.A. Coray, having become owner of the site, erected the present grist mill. In 1900, Charles Miner stated that "the mill was in operation a few years ago, and may be now".

In the grist mill, the wheel lever was attached to the mill crank which drove a bevel gear. This gear turned the mill stones. Bear grease reduced the friction. The early mills had no "bolting cloth". The meal and flour were kept separated by large screens. From top to bottom, the mills were hand made. The mill wright had simple tools, the draw knife was most used. The mill stones were hammered from hard, gritty flint rock, but the original mill stones are still there. These were of Caen Stone and were imported from France.

The mill, which is situated in what is called "Coray's Glen" is in one of the most picturesque spots in this section of the country, through which Sutton's Creek runs to the Susquehanna, is of precious historical value, since it is entirely original. The present condition is very poor, as there are no improvements whatever, and it has not been used, except as a place of storage for many years.

The building is of wood on stone foundations and is 40 ft. by 54 ft., 6 inches in size. It has four stories and basement in rear, but has only one story in front, because of a retaining wall from the upper to the lower grade of the road. Although, the original slate roof is still on the building, it is somewhat patched. The interior frame work is of white oak, and the floors are of the same material. The whole building is very substantially built, but it has suffered both from the elements and from mischievous persons, and apparently, no attempt has been made to preserve it for its future historic value.

There is also a small solarium on the extreme south east corner of the mill, which seems almost incongruous in this particular type of building. Most of the double-hung windows are divided into small square panes of glass many of which are broken.

Possibly, the most interesting thing in the entire mill is the large wheel which is 9 ft. 2 in. in diameter. It contains one hundred and forty teeth, constructed of wood,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, the extreme end is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide and tapers back two inches making it  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches at that point. These teeth are driven in and are held by wooden pegs. The wheel is entirely hand made and is the original one. Water is taken from the dam about 500 feet up the road from the mill, down through the mill race (this is a wooden trough) then drops about 30 feet and passes through a 24 inch pipe into a turbine. This turbine is belted to the large wooden wheel, which turns on a wooden shaft, then the water goes out through a tunnel to the mill pond, and thence to the creek.

There is a very old scale made entirely of iron by the Fairbanks Company, which was used for weighing grain. This scale is still in good working condition.

When E.A. Coray bought this property it consisted of 140 acres, much of it carrying timber. Mr. Simko, the owner of the site now, intends to tear it down shortly, and replace it with a smaller building.

E.A. Coray spent his last days directly across the road from the mill, which he spent many years in making it a fine business. He is the man who is reputed to have started the Black Friday Panic, along with Jay Gould and Jim Fiske. This occurred on September 24th. He is reputed

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to have had \$1,000,000 in the morning, and to have been almost penniless twenty-four hours later. He owned mines between Minooka and Moosio, at Coray Hollow. He was a man of wonderful optimism and to the last, maintained an acute interest of the prime in things pertaining to financial and general affairs.

The old mill has little architectural style but it is a very good example of a mill of that period.

Historic Material obtained from: "Harvey's history of Wyoming Valley", "Scrantonian, 1930" "Annals of Luzerne County" and from Mrs. W.A. Coray.

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