

Mill Pond House presentation sponsored by WM Civic Association

Patricia Ogden, a docent at the Schifferstadt Architectural Museum, revealed her research into the ruins of a 1750's home in Worman's Mill by saying, "The third time must be the charm," referring to having her presentation twice rescheduled. In spite of the postponements, over 80 residents and guests filled the clubhouse.

Mrs. Ogden opened by thanking long time resident Jean Jones and her family for bringing Claggett Jones' hand built model of the Mill Pond House. Residents viewed the model's carefully etched and painted "cut stone" first floor and daub and wattle second story. Mrs. Ogden also recognized Dr. Roland and Mrs. Heather Steiner. Dr. Steiner is a direct descendant of Jacob Stoner, the original owner of Mill Pond House.

To trace the history of German immigrants to pre-Revolutionary War Maryland, Mrs. Ogden opened with a slide of a map from 1746, showing several large properties, one captioned 'Mill Pond' and another 'Bear Den'. In 1737, Jacob Stoner leased 292 acres including the Bear Den and Mill Pond tracts, and began clearing land, growing grains and building his mill. In 1748 his house burned to the ground. His eldest son, John, rebuilt the house, continued the farm, and married Catherine Ramsburg, from the nearby Schifferstadt house.

Much of the lecture focused on architectural similarities of the Mill Pond, Schifferstadt and many Pennsylvania German homes: the three room ground floor layout (kitchen, stuba (parlor) and bedroom; the large central fireplace and hearth; and the 30'x40' dimension of the homes that included one heavy, continuous beam extending the length of the roof; a warming stove heated by embers from the fireplace, a narrow, steep, twisting staircase to the second floor and a ladder in the kitchen leading to a vaulted cellar with a small square niche in one wall. Each detail was illustrated by a photograph Mrs. Ogden had taken in the Schifferstadt. A video made by friends of Claggett Jones was shared. It explored the stonework and cellar of the Mill Pond house which matched the described details of the vaulted cellar and niche.

The presentation covered wide ranging research into many related topics: the descendants of the Stoner family, techniques for building a daub and wattle structure, inventories of family possessions written, why Germans emigrated, how prosperous they were and whether they owned slaves.

This was an exciting and informative evening. The Civic Association thanks all of the residents who attended for their enthusiastic response to learning about the history of our community.

By Dedra Salitrik

