

AUDUBON'S HOME

Good day everyone. . . it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Situated high over a rise overlooking the Perkiomen Creek in Montgomery County, Mill Grove offers the visitor an awareness of a rich, historical past, amid a beautiful, tranquil setting. Here, on this 13-acre estate lived John James Audubon, the noted artist and naturalist, a man well ahead of his time in the study and drawing of wildlife in America. Audubon was the first to portray birds and other wildlife in a natural and realistic manner. His famous engravings, published between 1826 and 1838, show his innovative style, in life-sized pictures of American birds. His father was a French sea captain, and bought the home from John Penn. In 1804, Captain Audubon sent his 19-year-old son to Mill Grove to live, and supervise the estate which included a lead mine. It was here that he gained his first impression of American birds and wildlife while taking trips through the forests surrounding the estate. As to the history of Mill Grove, it eventually passed into the hands of the Wetherill family, who sold it to Montgomery County in 1951. It is now preserved as an outstanding memorial to a great man. John James Audubon was born in 1785 in San Domingo and lived his early years in France. He spent the Mill Grove years roaming the wooded hills along the Perkiomen and the Schuylkill; hunting, observing, collecting and sketching. And it was here that he gathered the early experience that turned his fascination for wildlife into a

life-long pursuit. Fortunately, the Montgomery County folks have maintained and presented Mill Grove as a museum and wildlife sanctuary. George Harding, a prominent mural artist was retained to develop the interior of the mansion as a tribute to Audubon. The murals which Harding painted tell the story of Audubon's adventures and depict scenes of bird life in a southern swamp, a western prairie and the bird rocks of the St. Lawrence River--favorite Audubon haunts. The attic of the home has been restored to a studio and taxidermy room, as it was when it was Audubon's working quarters. Nearly six miles of trails wind through the sanctuary. There are feeding stations, nesting boxes, and plantings of shrubs and trees attractive to birds. More than 175 birds and some 400 species of flowering plants have been identified here. You are welcome to tour the mansion and walk the trails. It is a lovely place converted into an historic park area, designed to remind us of Pennsylvania's John James Audubon, who gave America artistic beauty and brought to us an awareness of the brilliant bounty of our beautiful birds.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.