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### WEEKENDS IN FEBRUARY

**Maple Syrup Boil-Down  
Sundays, 2/7 and 2/14**  
Noon—2pm \$2/person

Watch as maple sap is  
boiled down into delicious  
syrup over an open fire.

Sample maple syrup on  
cornbread made from  
Colvin Run Mill cornmeal.

## Sam Millard's Daughters Reminisce

by *Muriel Levin*

*This is the first of two articles Muriel has written after delving into the site's files. Her second article will appear next month.*

In November 1972, shortly after the grand opening of the newly restored Colvin Run Mill, Dana Gumb sat down to talk with Sam Millard's elder daughters, Louise and Emma. Their younger sister, Virginia Millard McGavin, also was present but said very little. In fact, Louise did most of the talking during the interview with Emma adding side comments and corrections. What follows are snippets from the 50 page transcript as well as some information gleaned from newspaper articles covering the mill's historic re-opening. [The transcript can be found in the site's research files.]

### School Days

Sam Millard was educated mostly in Dickerson, Maryland, where the

Millard family lived before his father, Addison, bought and moved his family to what is now known as Colvin Run Mill. Sam also attended The College of William and Mary for a while. Sam's wife, Olive Dyer, was born and went to school in Fairfax County. After they married, they lived in "a little frame house three houses up from the mill" [near the present honeybee hives].

Sam and Olive's older children seemed to have attended the same schools as their mother – the one or two-room Clark's Crossing for grade school and Herndon High School (which then started at the sixth grade). They walked to Clark's Crossing, "down through the field, a woodlot and whatnot, wouldn't take you too terribly long, just a nice stroll." To get to the high school, they walked to Clark's Crossing where they caught the electric

train (aka trolley) and rode to Herndon. Also, while attending high school, at least some of the children lived some of the time not at home, but with friends or relatives closer to the school. Later, a grandmother (which grandmother was not specified) bought the family a car and some of the children were driven to the high school. The roads at that time were in terrible shape, often with muddy ruts so deep the car would get stuck and you'd lose your boots walking on the road.

The daughters chatted a bit about their teachers – which ones they liked – about their school subjects, and also about their lack of choice in

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The Virginia Association of Museum's 2010 conference, "**Museums Driving Change,**" will be held March 14—16 in Richmond, VA. For more information and to register, go to [www.vamuseums.org](http://www.vamuseums.org)



## Mr. Cockrill's Store

by Virginia Millard McGavin

I remember going to Mr. Cockrill's store when I was a young girl — probably six years old [c.1923]. It was a big deal for me to go with my brother to make some purchases for my mother. I was in charge of picking out the items and my brother carried the money.

On the right side of the store, just inside the door, was the counter with the slanted looking candy bins with lots of luscious pretty candy. Mr. Cockrill stood behind this counter. I would tell him what mom wanted (sometimes baking powder, salt, thread or fabric). Mr. Cockrill got all of these things. As I followed him farther back in the store, I especially remember the smell of rubber and leather; boots and shoes stood here. Also there were household items like kerosene lamps, lamp shades, lanterns, etc.

On the wall opposite those candy jars were the bolts of cloth. As I remember

them, they mostly were cottons in pretty designs (usually floral prints and plain fabric). The thread was here also.

The big iron stove was in the middle of the store surrounded by a few empty nail kegs which were used as seats and usually occupied by neighbors catching up on the news.

My shopping now completed, I would go out on the porch and call my brother in. (He had been pitching balls with some boys.) He would pay Mr. Cockrill and then Mr. Cockrill always gave us each a piece of candy. He was a very nice man.

I almost forgot, way back in the store, I remember items which I would now associate with a veterinarian. I especially remember one powder that mom mixed with water, producing a purplish color that was put in the containers of water for the chickens, ducks and geese [possibly gentian violet, an antifungal].

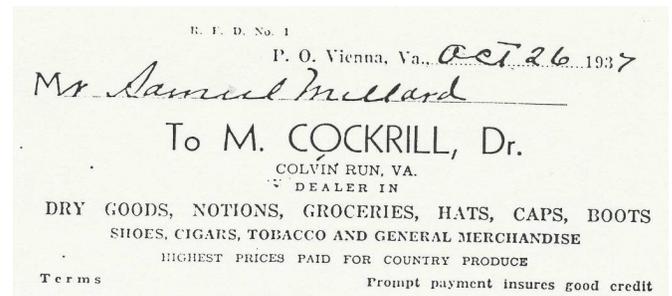
Virginia Millard McGavin, daughter of Sam & Olive Millard, died in December 2009.

Among her childhood memories, she left this description of a shopping trip to Mark Cockrill's general store [now the Colvin Run General Store].



Mark Cockrill's store, c. 1933.

Photo donated by Milton Chamberlain, Cockrill's great-grandson.



MARGE LUNDEGARD is getting used to getting around on a new knee.



Condolences to KITTY O'HARA, whose mother passed away in California at the end of January.



## Changes in the Miller's Office

by Dawn Kehrer

After more research on lighting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, I have made some changes in the miller's office, extrapolating information from the book *Recreating the Historic House Interior* by William Seale. He states that a historic room should generally have dim lighting, and having dim lighting would probably mean that there are few lighting devices.

When we first furnished the office, there were six lighting devices in one room along with two large windows for natural light. Six lighting devices would seem to be too many if I were following Seale's advice.

One by one I reevaluated each device. The wall sconce looked great, but it probably belonged in a house and not a mill office. Candles were mentioned in Oliver Evans book, so I definitely wanted to keep the candles. The candles were in the adjustable candle holder (which allowed the user to burn every bit of the candle) and in the two lanterns. The adjustable light could be used on the desk and the lanterns seemed appropriate because they could be carried about the room or the mill or to light the miller's path in the dark. The two betty lamps, although correct for the time period, would not be needed along with three other lighting devices and two windows.

I have taken photos of the new arrangement and placed them in the mill furnishings guide.

When you visit the office, you will also notice that the miller has been eating a little meal. If the miller were not able to leave the mill for a meal, one might be brought to him. Our miller has enjoyed some chicken, beaten biscuits, walnuts and an apple. I have specially prepared real chicken bones and walnut shells for this exhibit. The bones were cleaned, dried and sprayed with acrylic spray. The walnut shells were cleaned and also sprayed with acrylic spray. The biscuits are made out of modeling clay, soaked in coffee to give them a baked color and the apple is artificial.



Our miller has enjoyed some chicken, beaten biscuits, walnuts and an apple.

### Thanks FOCR M!

The Friends of Colvin Run Mill (FOCRM) provided money for the site to buy *Early Lighting: A Pictorial Guide* by the Rushlight Club.

This book shows lighting devices from ancient times to the first practical light bulb. It is an authoritative reference to identify and authenticate our lighting collection. It shows photographs of each example along with a description noting the name, a brief history, time period and origin. This book will be very useful for research for lighting artifacts exhibited at the mill.

Dawn Kehrer,  
Collections Coordinator



### Why, that looks good enough to eat!

Back in December, the Yannarell family's Christmas feast included this gorgeous cake created by Nick and Tina's daughter Mary Yannarell Pearson.



(continued from page 1)

the curriculum. Louise definitely did not like the compulsory Latin, found it hard to learn, and would perhaps have liked to be able to take French. Louise was proud that she was in the school orchestra and enjoyed being part of a small group from the band that often played at intermission at the local movie theatre and at many other local events. [In January 2010, Virginia McGavin Rita gave Louise's violin to the Park Authority on a long-term loan.] The school also had basketball and other sports.



Muriel Levin, author & CRM volunteer

**Louise becomes a teacher**

A good portion of the interview involved Louise's teaching experiences. After completing two years of study in the early 1920's, Louise marched into the Fairfax School Superintendent's office and asked for a teaching job in Vienna. The superintendent told her to go see the principal of the grade school in McLean. Louise wanted to teach fourth grade since that is what she had done in her practice teaching, but the only opening available was for second grade. So she followed the principal's orders and brushed up on her second grade skills at summer school. The school principal seems to have had a strong personality like Louise. When Louise demurred telling the principal about her practice teaching grade because "she didn't want to sound too boastful," the principal pinched her until she acquiesced.

Louise seems to have had a good sense of humor and felt occasional hi-jinks by kids was normal. Part of the McLean teachers' responsibilities involved supervising the students waiting at the local grocery store after school to catch the trolley home. Not only was there the usual scuffling at the store, which annoyed the storekeeper, but the children often used parts of the grocery orders they were taking home to harass riders on the trolley. Bopping fellow passengers on the head with loaves of bread was not uncommon!

Later on, Louise relates her reaction to a common student prank. Somehow, the kids managed to get an old Model T Ford up the two long outside flights of stairs and into the school lobby. Louise said she joined other students and teachers in laughing at the practical joke. The principal, however, was not amused and the car was shoved back down the steps!

The McLean grade school then was in the bustling center of the town, close to the library (where they regularly went since there was no library at school), the post office, and a variety of stores and offices. Yet large farms were close enough so that the children could indulge a favorite pastime at recess – watching the cows. One day, the children were loathe to return after recess and excitedly told the teachers that a cow was giving birth. So Louise joined her students and watched the process, commenting that she was never good at sex education anyway.

Early in her teaching career, Louise took night and summer courses at American University in order to complete her bachelor's degree in education. She taught at several schools and relates her first experience with an integrated class at Spring Hill School. Her first black student went on to gain notoriety as the first female manager of the football team. Louise officially retired from teaching in 1972, but true to form, then brushed up on safety and gave talks on the subject.



**FEBRUARY  
BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Pat McGuire
- 22 Bob Lundegard



## COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE

10017 Colvin Run Road  
Great Falls, VA 22066  
Phone: 703-759-2771  
Fax: 703-759-7490  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm)

FOR REASONABLE ADA  
ACCOMMODATIONS, CALL  
703-324-8727

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COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE



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*Sap collecting bucket*



The mission of Colvin Run Mill Historic Site is to maintain and interpret its historic buildings and collections for the enrichment of Fairfax County residents and visitors as they relate to the themes of technology and community in 19th century rural northern Virginia.

**Manager:** Mike Henry

**Assistant Manager/Newsletter Editor:** Ann Korzeniewski

**Miller:** Mason Maddox

**Historic Collections Coordinator:** Dawn Kehrer

**General Store Operations & Programs:** Terry Tomasulo

**Miller's Assistant:** Kim Whitacre

**Jill of All Trades:** Pam Gennari