

## Millard Reminiscences Continued

by *Muriel Levin*

*This article continues to highlight information gleaned from the 1972 interview with Sam Millard's daughters Louise and Emma, and also from newspaper articles written about the mill's grand reopening.*

### Fun at the Mill

Before the building of Route 7 in the early 1940's reduced the mill pond to a sad sliver of its former size, the pond was a large, many-acre source of not only energy for the mill and ice for the ice house, but also for many community social activities. There were swimming and fishing in the warm weather along with ice cream making, and gala skating parties that lasted long into the cold winter nights. Lanterns were placed around the edge of the frozen pond to outline the boundaries for the skaters and bonfires were lit to warm shivering bodies. Hot chocolate was served and taffy pulling was offered.

The Millard family was quite musical and always

had a piano. Many of the children and grandchildren played musical instruments. [Louise's violin is currently on long-term loan with the Park Authority.] Other social activities enjoyed by the family included attending dances at the local community center (which was once a schoolhouse), although Sam had reservations because of "frequent trouble down there."

The schools had active sports teams and orchestras, and McLean organizations regularly sponsored McLean Days, a multi-day event filled with booths, dancing, music, games, food and jousting on horses. Louise also talks about often taking the trolley into Washington, DC, for the evening when she was teaching and living in McLean and "thinking nothing about coming home at midnight."

### Around the Mill

Life at the mill was busy and varied. Besides the mill and multi-purpose mill pond, there was the

big brick "miller's" house, a large garden, orchards, cattle pasture and barn, and an ice house and pump to help with dairying. Some of the married children lived in houses very close by. Sam Millard and his family lived three houses up from the mill (near today's bee hives) before moving into the big "miller's" house years after Addison's death.

The Millards also ran a store (probably near the present Colvin Run General Store site) where they sold poultry supplies, fence wire, and roofing materials. Across the road from the mill was the general store/post office owned by Mark Cockrill, and blacksmithing and carpentry activities were also carried out nearby.

The mill used 100-year old French buhr stones for grinding grain, and in the 1920's was selling its flour not only to local stores but also to customers in Ohio,

*continued on page 3*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Prince Albert in a Can 2

March Birthdays 2

Electronic Calendar 2



### SCHOOL PROGRAMS RESUME

**Week of 3/1**



**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME RETURNS**  
Sunday, 3/14, 2am

### WEEKENDS IN MARCH

**Maple Syrup Boil-Down**  
Sunday, 3/7, noon-2pm  
\$2 / person

**Blacksmith Demo**  
Sunday, 3/7, 11am-3pm

**Mill Run Dulcimer Band Concert**  
Sunday, 3/14, 2—4pm  
FREE



## Do You Have Prince Albert in a Can?

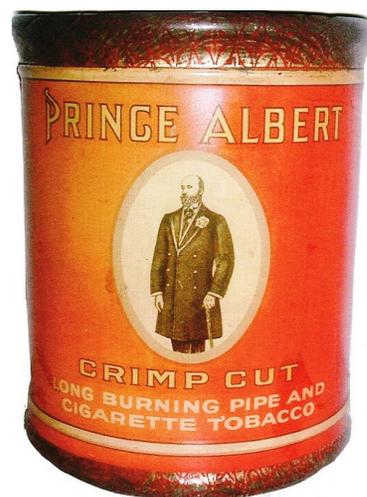
If you're over 50, you know this old chestnut. This question is also the title of the latest artifact exhibit in the Colvin Run General Store.

Tin cans have a long history as containers for both food and non-food items. Displayed in the case are items specially chosen from our collection of tin cans from the past.

Do you need to change your intestinal flora? Reach for the large orange can labeled Lacto-Dextrin which contains yeast that you add to your food. It was used at the historic asylum, the Kellogg Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan. Stomach distress? Mix up some Seidlitz Powders. Cough due to

cold? You can't be without the small orange tin of Y&S Licorice wafers.

You will also see Prince Albert himself in the exhibit patiently waiting to be let out of his can.



### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Karen Hogan
- 4 Terry Tomasulo
- 12 Muriel Levin
- 16 Joe Pruden
- 19 Pam Gennari
- 20 Debra Gee  
(perennial "spring chick")



We send our best wishes to **Donna Maddox** (wife of our miller Mason) who is recuperating from heart surgery last month.

## Electronic Calendar of Events

### We're going green!

Beginning now, the Colvin Run Mill Historic Site quarterly calendar of events will no longer be printed and mailed out.

An electronic version will be e-mailed to anyone

who requests it and sends their e-mail address to be added to the mailing list.

We had been sending out more than 600 paper copies of the events calendars, four times each year. From now on, we will save on copying and postage costs

and everyone will receive a full-color pdf brochure.

To add your name and address to the site list, contact Ann Korzeniewski at [ann.korzeniewski@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:ann.korzeniewski@fairfaxcounty.gov).



## Reminiscences, continued

*continued from page 1*

Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, and Kentucky. Wagons pulled by teams of two to four horses would haul full loads to the Washington and Ohio Railroad Station at Hunter Mill – three trips a day being considered a very good day's work. Occasionally, the Millards would also custom grind flour for small farmers – an event that usually took all day and included much schmoozing as well as a stop at the general store for candy. A later teaching colleague of Louise's fondly remembered those outings with her father from their home in the Chesterbrook area of McLean.

### Sam Millard

When Sam was the miller, he used to get up at 4:00am to grind because then there were nothing to distract him. Night-time storms would send him flying down to the mill to open the flood gates of the mill race so the mud banks would not be washed away. Some-

times his efforts failed and rebuilding the banks was a long, hard, messy job.

And speaking of distractions, one day a friend of Sam's was visiting with his 9 year-old son who got tired of hanging about while the adults chatted and went off to explore on his own. Soon, Sam heard the most awful screaming and raced to find the boy somehow precariously wedged between the mill wall and the turning waterwheel. The rescue was made and the story had a happy ending, but Louise said her dad was shaking for a long time afterward. Incidentally, the adventuresome little boy went on to become a Brigadier General.

Sam bought a safe to secure his valuables and important papers and generously let friends and neighbors store their important documents in it for free. After the mill was sold, the safe was moved to Sam's living room and when the safe was opened after Sam's death, some of his friends' papers were found still in the safe.

In the early 1940s when Route 7 was to be built, Sam was concerned that the new highway would cut off his cow pasture from his barn. The state highway department built Sam's cows a tunnel under the road but they would never use it. (The cow tunnel still exists today and can be seen in the median as you travel in the east-bound lanes of Leesburg Pike.)

In 1951, just before he died, Sam asked Louise to take him to see the mill. By that time, it was in a sorry state with weeds growing all around its tumble-down walls. They sat on the millrace bank contemplating the ruin, and were sad.

Today, 60 years later, Sam's mill has been beautifully restored and we are happily planning for its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our 21<sup>st</sup> century miller, Mason Maddox, and his helpers are regularly grinding once more, and children and visitors eagerly learn about milling and the Colvin Run community of yesteryear.



Sam Millard, c. 1940



## COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE

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Don Sweeney, FCPA



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