

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

September 2008

Back to School — Already?!

Summer has flown and it's time to welcome kids and their teachers for another year of school programs. This year, Fairfax County Public Schools has moved the simple machines curriculum back to 3rd grade. Our primary audience will be 8 year-olds who:

- are eager to explore new things;
- learn best if they are physically active;
- have a short attention span;
- are sensitive to criticism; and

- have a strong desire for attention from adults.

Our school program, with its focus on simple machines, always gets high marks from the teachers who bring their students here.

The teaching docents get the same rave reviews for their patience, enthusiasm and willingness to encourage children to get involved.

On pages 2 and 3 of this issue you will find tips for teaching kids in a museum setting and a refresher about the goals and strate-

gies for each part of the school program (mill, general store & simple machines).

It's a museum truism that school programs are more engaging than regular tours. Even if you are not a teaching docent, you will find some helpful hints for appealing to visitors of all ages.



RMD Volunteer Excellence Awards

Mona Enquist-Johnston and the RMD Volunteer Committee will provide a delicious brunch, creative activities and a memorable program to recognize outstanding volunteers at the 2008 Resource Management Division Volunteer Excellence Awards on Saturday, September 20, 9:30am to noon at Green Spring Gardens Park in Alexandria.



Kitty O'Hara will receive a Volunteer Excellence Award. She has served our site for 5 years as store-keeper, touring docent, teaching docent, special program assistant and collections care helper.



We will celebrate **Muriel Levin's** 10 years of commitment and contributions to our site's visitors, programs and operations.

Come applaud our excellent volunteers!
RSVP by September 12.

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SEPTEMBER WEEKENDS:

Celebrate Ice Cream
Saturdays, 9/13 & 9/27
Noon—4pm

Blacksmithing Demo
Pat McGuire at the forge
Sunday, 9/14, noon-3pm

Mill Run Dulcimer Band
Sunday, 9/21, 2-4pm
Free concert in the Barn

Grinding Grains
Sundays, conditions permitting
Noon—3pm

SPECIAL PROGRAM:
RMD Volunteer Awards
Saturday, 9/20, 9:30am-noon
Green Spring Gardens Park

RSVP to: terry.tomasulo@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-8750



Teaching Children in a Museum Setting

...the [Colvin Run Mill] tours were well-planned and related nicely to both our social studies and science curriculum. Many students commented on how much fun they had as well as how happy they were that hands on activities were provided for them. I agree...

The docents were very friendly and knowledgeable! It was a wonderful field trip!

Melissa Plum
4th grade teacher
McNair Elementary

Share your enthusiasm — it's contagious.

Be a guide — have fun, but be in control.

Introduce yourself — let everyone know you're glad they're here.

Get down to the kids' level — sit on a low seat to be closer to their eye level.

Use attention-getting techniques — ask everyone to look at the ceiling in the store and at the displays in the barn.

Use inquiry & discussion — ask questions and wait 3 seconds for an answer. Make sure your questions are in the kids' frame of reference. If their

answers are way off target, simplify your question.

Listen to & answer all sincere questions — questions show interest and your thoughtful reply respects that interest.

Repeat & reinforce your message — remember not everyone will hear or understand everything you say the first time.

Use compare & contrast — relate what you are talking about to everyday experiences. Many items from 100 years ago are the precursors of familiar things. Show history as a continuum.

Use hands-on activities — and allow plenty of

time for this. The *experience* is what people will remember best.

Be flexible — if what you are doing isn't working, try something else. Watch other docents to see how they handle similar situations.

Be realistic — each group and tour is unique. When challenges arise, smile and do your best. Talk with other staff to learn how they handle similar situations.

Relax & enjoy — every school program and public tour gives you a chance to see the site through the eyes of newcomers.

School/Site Partnership

For years, the Park Authority's history and nature sites have partnered with the Fairfax County Public Schools to ensure students and teachers have a meaningful field trip experience at the parks.

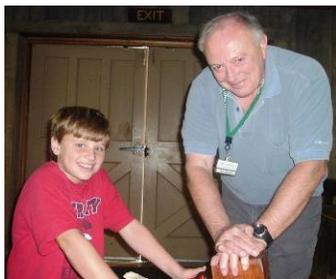
One way we do this is by teaching the teachers. Twice a year, a class of

elementary lead science teachers takes their own field trip to Colvin Run Mill. They learn about our school program, tour the mill and try out the hands-on simple machines activity we designed to complement their curriculum.

As the teachers go through each segment of the field trip, they see what their

students will see and understand how the information will be presented to them.

Along with a Learning Kit, they take away expectations for a memorable field trip at a great place that presents a unique combination of history and science.



Ryan Estep enjoyed his class field trip & learning from his granddad, Jim Hogan.



School Program Basics

MILL

Goal:

Children learn how a 19th century water-powered gristmill worked and about its role in the community.

Strategy:

Take students into the mill and explain how whole grain is ground into meal or flour. Stress the waterwheel as the source of power, the use of simple machines and Oliver Evans' automated system.

GENERAL STORE

Goal:

Children learn that the general store was an integral part of the rural community of Colvin Run, VA, and that it is now both a museum and a shop.

Strategy:

Have the children compare and contrast the general store with modern stores. Talk about items farm families would have bought and how the general store was also the post office and a place to get local news.

SIMPLE MACHINES

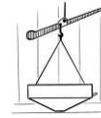
Goal:

Support FCPS's elementary level Standards of Learning for Force, Motion and Energy.

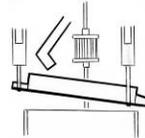
Strategy:

Identify the six simple machines:

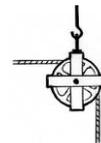
lever



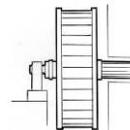
inclined plane



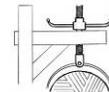
pulley



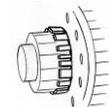
wheel & axle



screw



wedge

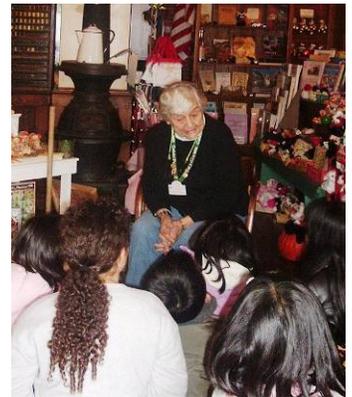


Discuss examples of each and provide experience at four hands-on stations.

Drawings by Lee Boyd



At the mill, Mike Moran shares his enthusiasm.



In the general store, Marge Lundegard compares & contrasts.



In the barn, Mary Dettra guides hands-on activities.

Presentation Details

While the intent is not to provide a rigid script for guides to follow, it *is* important that teaching documents always try to impart the same basic ideas teachers expect their students to learn on their field trip here.

You will find a step-by-step format for presenting each segment of the school program in a binder on top of the lunchroom bookshelf.



From the Miller's Desk



Miller's desk donated to the FCPA by the Morehead family.

Rather than news *from* the miller's desk, this month we have news *about* the miller's desk.

Last month, the Morehead family of Vienna, VA, made a permanent gift to the Park Authority of the miller's desk that is on exhibit in the Miller's House. Susan Clark from RMD's Museum Collections Management office legally transferred its title of ownership in July.

The desk has been on loan to us since 1973 from Laura Rosella Cockrill

Morehead, great-granddaughter of Addison and Emma Millard [and related by marriage to storekeeper Mark Cockrill's family].

When Mrs. Morehead died in 1988, her husband Dewey continued the loan. Mr. Morehead recently died, and the family decided their desk should become a permanent addition to the Park Authority's historic artifact collection.

Sharon Morehead Thompson, daughter of

Laura and Dewey, recalls that the desk came from Colvin Run Mill and had been in her parents' house since the mid-1950s — one of many antiques owned by her mother.

We are honored to be the stewards of the desk and greatly appreciate the Moreheads' generosity. This unique piece of local history offers visitors a tangible reminder of 19th century work and livelihood in Fairfax County.



Best wishes for a speedy recovery to storekeeper **Genie Davis**, recuperating this month from knee replacement surgery.

September Birthdays



5 — **John Dettra**, no doubt helped by wife Mary, will host all the family (now 18 members strong) for a meal with his favorite foods (meat loaf, spice cake & ice cream) and a day with lots of fun and pictures.

10 — **Jennifer Blackwood** is skipping her birthday this year. She says from now on, she'll only be celebrating the "big" ones.

24 — **Barbara Raymond** plans to take the day off work, relax and go out for a special dinner.



Arti—FACTS by Dawn

Paisley – A Timeless Pattern

In the Miller's House parlor there is a piece of woolen cloth draped over the back of the settee. Look at the pattern that is woven into the cloth. The pattern is called *paisley* and the cloth piece was once part of a larger shawl. While the cloth was not owned by anyone who lived in the Miller's House, it represents a popular late 19th century fashion.

Paisley is still a popular pattern in modern clothing such as men's ties or ladies' apparel and the design can also be found on everything from guitars to clocks to dinnerware and even "Fido" can sport a paisley collar. The paisley pattern has traveled through the fabric of time from ancient civilizations to today. Let's discover how the pattern came to us by starting with the history of shawls.

Shawls were woven as early as the 11th century in Kashmir, a country north of India and were originally worn as narrow waist girdles or wider mantles by noblemen who received them as prestigious gifts. What we refer to as the Kashmir shawl probably began during the 15th and 16th centuries. Travelers brought them back to the west where they were

highly desired for their beauty and warmth by women, however, not by men.

The core of the paisley pattern is the *buta*, a curved teardrop shape, which appeared as long as 3,000 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia, now modern day Iraq. No one knows for sure what the *buta* represents, according to Valerie Reilly, Keeper of Textiles at the Paisley Museum in Paisley, Scotland. Reilly believes it probably represents the date palm shoot which Babylonians considered the Tree of Life. The *buta*, says Reilly, "came to be symbolic of the renewal of life itself." In the late 1500s, the *buta* found its place on the classic Kashmir shawl.

In the late 1760s, travelers from the east brought versions of the Kashmir shawl to Britain where ladies made it a fashionable, and expensive, accessory—an imported shawl could cost as much as a small house! Weaving companies in many European cities tried to copy the shawls at affordable prices but it was weavers in Paisley,

Scotland, who finally learned how to make the shawls at a lower cost. It was at this time that the *buta* pattern became known as "paisley" after the city where the shawls were made most successfully.

American ladies emulated the Europeans and soon thought of the shawl as a fashionable necessity – it was unladylike to appear in the streets without a scarf, shawl or mantle. The shawl grew in size as it did in popularity. In the mid 1800s, the average shawl was about 11 feet by 5 feet. But fashion changes. Soon, the bustle was the norm and ladies shook off the large shawls to show off their rear finery.

Today paisley shawls are revered and are treasured museum pieces. The Textile Museum in Washington, DC, has hundreds in its collection and several years ago exhibited many of their shawls. There are many more interesting facts to know about the paisley pattern and Kashmir shawls. Explore online, visit your library or take a trip to The Textile Museum in Washington to learn more.



"The buta came to be symbolic of the renewal of life itself."



**Valerie Reilly
Keeper of Textiles
Paisley Museum
Paisley, Scotland**



New in the Parlor



We hope Emma Millard would approve of the new additions to the Miller's House parlor. You can find more information about the new items in the room guide notebook on the parlor windowsill.

☞ At the window:

The gray mini-blinds and muslin curtains were out of place in the recreated Victorian parlor, and Dawn Kehrer recently purchased more appropriate window treatments to replace them.

She researched late 19th and early 20th century parlor windows and found

modern equivalents: a dark green pull-down blind and Baltimore Lace curtain panels that might have graced the Millard family's parlor.

☞ Above the mantel:

Our "new" c.1900 three-panel gilt mirror comes from Historic Sully, where it hung for many years. Sully will now display a more appropriate mirror from the Early Federal period.

In the 19th century, over-mantel mirrors were placed behind lamps to reflect light back into rooms.

According to Susan Clark of RMD's Museum Collections Management office, mirrors like this were "show-off pieces, usually hung in formal public rooms like the dining room or parlor."



NEEDED! A FEW WEEKEND HOURS.

If you have a few extra weekend hours to share we can always use help with tours on Saturday & Sunday afternoons.

Short shifts from 1pm to 4pm are available.

**Contact
Jennifer Blackwood
to sign up.**

Waiting, Waiting, Waiting...

Have you ever seen a snake on the path but weren't able to identify it?

Do you know the story behind the man we think built Colvin Run Mill?

Do visitors ask about tools in the blacksmith shop and you haven't a clue what that funny shaped thing does?

What did General Stores generally sell? What happens to old mills if they don't grind anymore? Oliver Evans was a prolific

inventor — what other innovations did he devise?

Time flies when there are tours to lead, but when visitors are scarce, you may feel like you are watching grass grow.

Don't despair! Be happy! These slow periods can be very productive if you investigate the bookshelves in the volunteer room that are filled with information to broaden your knowledge and brighten your mill tour.

Dawn Kehrer has specially selected several books and put them on top of the bookshelf that will answer the questions posed above, including a binder with many *Arti-Facts* articles from past newsletters. There is also a concentration of milling publications on the bookshelf outside the kitchen.

Please enjoy your wait with a book and satisfy your inquiring mind. Dawn will change out her selections regularly.



On the Road with Bob & Marge: Hamilton Mill in Loudoun County, Virginia

by Marge Lundegard

This mill is known as the Loudoun County Milling Company and is located on SR 704 at the junction with VA Route 7, Leesburg Pike, as one approaches Purcellville. This is the last of the Loudoun County Feed Mills.

The first owner of this property, Samuel Edgar Rogers, owned the old Hamilton Milling Company at the end of the 19th century. He owned a string of mills along the Southern Railroad, now known as the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad. The railroad had reached Leesburg by the 1860's, and by 1870 the railroad passed by the Hamilton Station. There was a fork in the railroad line after leaving this area. One fork went to Georgetown and the other went to Alexandria. Rogers saw the big outlet for grain and flour in the Washington area.

By 1922, the Rogers family had bought the remaining three mills on the Southern Railway: Bluemont, Hirst, and Jenkins. First, they bought the Bluemont Mill from Earl Iden. Clarence L. Robey also made a bid for this mill, but Rogers won out. In 1894, the family next bought the

Smith and Hirst Mill at Paconian Springs. They later took over the old Jenkins operation.

The first mill at Irene, later called the Hamilton Mill, had a one-cylinder diesel engine. To start the engine, one had to walk the flywheel and if it backfired, one better get out of the way in a hurry. After the diesel engine, the mill converted to electrical power. This mill has always been a feed mill, although there were stones in the mill that were used to grind corn into cornmeal. White corn was ground at this mill.

Today, the mill is a big feed producing facility. Stone is crushed in one part of the complex. The old mill building has several metal silos adjoining. One of the storage towers is about 60 feet tall.

We met Leroy Fields, one of the workmen at the mill. Leroy started working at the mill when he was eight years old. His job was to clean the burlap sacks. He lived in a house adjacent to the mill which no longer exists. Leroy said that his salary was \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week. From his salary, he was able to buy his school



clothes and books. He said that he even had a little left over that he gave to his mother. By age ten, he had a charge account at the local department store. By age 17, Leroy was driving a truck and delivering feed.

Leroy, now age 69, is still working and is driving a big feed truck. He currently has no plans to retire. He enjoys his work and the people he meets. I say—"Right on, Leroy."

Driving toward Purcellville on Route 7 approaching the exit to Purcellville, the mill is visible from Route 7. The Rogers family has been manufacturing animal feeds here for over 100 years. The mill has gone from producing feed for cattle to producing feed for horses as Loudoun County has changed from a dairy farming community to an equestrian lifestyle.

If you are ever in the area, be sure to stop by and talk to Leroy.



**COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE**

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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm

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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

Programs, Volunteer Scheduling & Sales: Jennifer Blackwood

Jills of All Trades: Crystal Allison & Pam Gennari