

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

Fall 2010

Our Volunteers are Classic!

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE AWARDS RECEPTION

Saturday, September 18, 2010
10:00am - 11:30am

Green Spring Gardens Park

4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria 22312
703-642-5173



Activities • Continental Breakfast • Awards Presentation
Please dress for the weather



RSVP by September 6
703-324-8513

terry.tomasulo@fairfaxcounty.gov



Cruise on over and applaud Colvin Run Mill's own
2010 Distinguished Volunteer, **Bing Tsing**
20 year veteran **Lee Boyd**
10 year veteran **Pat McGuire**

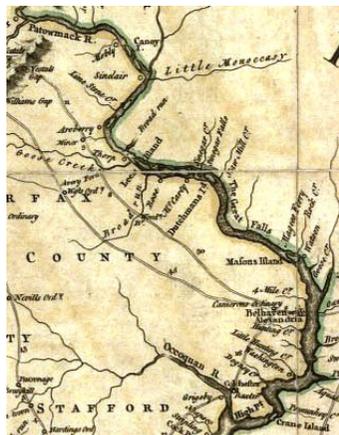
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Mill Mapping Project



As planning for Colvin Run Mill's 200th anniversary progresses, you will be hearing more about the **Mill Mapping Project**, which was proposed by Mason Maddox and initiated by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of SPOOM (SPOOM-MA). It will provide geo-spatial identification for the many mills that were located in the Mid-Atlantic region, c.1830, and ultimately create digital maps covering various watersheds in the Mid-Atlantic states.

Work on the first map — the Shenandoah-Potomac watershed — is already underway thanks to a partnership between the Friends of Colvin Run Mill (FOCRM) and the Northern Virginia Community College's Geospatial Studies Program, headed by Dr. Mike Krimmer.

The first phase, which is expected to be complete in time for the 2011 SPOOM Conference, will be a hard-copy map, developed from a geo-

database, showing mill locations and photos, roads, buildings, streams, lakes, rivers and canals. This geo-database will be embedded in a digital Geographic Information System (GIS) computer framework.

The GIS software and underlying base topography is being compiled by the NoVA students while the preparation and input of mill data will be done by FOCRM members.

Deciphering Family Photographs

by Dawn Kehrer

Do you have unidentified relatives hiding in your closet? Maybe they are in shoeboxes or tucked away in photo albums. Don't panic! There is help for you and your anonymous ancestors.

Maureen Taylor, a nationally known genealogist, has written a book titled *Uncovering Your Ancestry Through Family Photographs*, published by Family Tree Books, that will guide you in identifying your name-

less faces in a systematic way.

To begin with, you must learn to look at your photographs in a new way. Ms. Taylor provides a worksheet to fill in as you look at each photo. Using a magnifying glass, examine the picture as if you have never seen it before. Note identifying marks, such as photography studio and city, costume description, type of image, props and backgrounds.

If you know the name and place of the photography studio, you may be able to date the photo according to records of the studio found in city directories or newspapers, among many other resources.

Examine the clothing. Maureen provides a chapter describing the types of clothing for men and women for many decades. Compare your subject's clothing to Maureen's guidelines.



Could this be Uncle Henry?

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Louise Millard's Violin and Bow

by Dawn Kehrer

Among the treasured historic artifacts owned by the Millard family and exhibited at Colvin Run Mill are Emma Millard's apron, the miller's desk, and the milk pitcher given as a wedding present from one Millard sister to another.



I am very pleased to say that another special piece has been added to our Millard collection. **Virginia Rita**, granddaughter of Sam Millard (miller at Colvin Run until 1934), donated her aunt Louise Millard's violin and bow to the Fairfax County Park Authority. Louise was a teacher at Franklin Sherman Elementary School and McLean High School in McLean, VA, in the early 1900s.

While I am not sure of the date of the violin, its maker is J.A. Baader of Mittenwald, Germany. The back and top are made of maple and spruce and the bow is made of pernambuco wood, a Brazilian wood typically used for bows. The frog (the piece near where the bow is held) is

made of ebony with inlaid mother-of-pearl.

The violin was conserved at a local violin shop where the conservator fitted it with a new bridge and post (the strings pass over the bridge and the post sits under the bridge inside the violin).

The violin has its original tailpiece (which anchors the ends of the strings), but was given a new tailgut (the piece that attaches the tailpiece to the end of the violin).

The violin has been re-strung with new strings. However, the violin case contained strings and a receipt for them from the Hugo Worch store in Washington, DC, dating from 1944. The pegs that tighten the strings and all other parts of the instrument are original.

Finally, the violin and its case were cleaned and polished. The bow was cleaned and rehaired. Did you know that the hair on a bow is from horses? Our bow is rehaired with white horsehair.

The violin is ready for a performance, but we have retired it and will display it, along with the bow, in a case in the Miller's House parlor.



Louise Millard

Thanks to Susan Clark, RMD's Historic Collections Section, for funding the conservation of this special piece.





Deciphering Photos, continued

Continued from page 2

Knowing the type of image you have will also point you to a particular time period. Maureen explains the differences among tintypes, daguerreotypes and paper prints.

Props, especially those provided by the subject, can be significant. They may tell you about a person's employment or personal characteristics. Painted backgrounds, which first appeared in the 1840s, often included furniture or architectural pieces. These may be appropriate to the personality of the subject as well

as providing clues to the time period with furnishing details.

Real life backgrounds can give you a wealth of knowledge about the city, time period or special occasion that will guide your identification.

Some other ways to identify subjects are to look for family resemblance, ask other family members, consult a library's resources, post on a website, or use the myriad website databases for special collections such as military or special localities. I have mentioned only a few of the ways to determine your ancestor's

name. Please consult Ms. Taylor's book for much more information.

I recently used her tips to identify a Millard family photograph that we do not have a copy of in our Millard files. By comparing the architecture of a house and the clothing of the family, I could determine that the photo was taken the same day as another photograph that we already have. I could also identify some family members by comparing their faces to other identified photos.

www.maurentaylor.com



Goldie Millard & Edward Clark

We could use Goldie's distinctive hat and jacket to help date this photo of her and her fiancé.

Luckily, someone has labeled it October 1906.



We know this photo shows Sam and Olive Millard at a picnic, but we don't know the location or year. The cars, clothes, dishes, and outdoor setting offer tantalizing clues.

THANKS!

Mike & Pam Pahner dug up and donated two 'extra' crepe myrtles from their garden across the road from our park.

Rich Thorpe happened by one Sunday and quickly set about planting them. One is in the flower bed between the brick entry path & general store, the other is in a bed on the opposite side of the barn.



COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE

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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/crm



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.

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