

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

October 2008

Happy Honeybee New Year!

News from the hives from Toni Burnham:

Hive minders call October 1 "The Beekeepers' New Year" because by that time all the honey should be harvested, the mite treatments should be chosen (if not completed!), and all the decisions should be made about combining and wintering-over hives. It's a good time to look back to assess whether it was a good year or a hard one, and to second guess choices made before it was clear how the nectar would flow.

After several years of beekeeping, it's become clear to me that there is no such thing as a "normal" year. This year, the pattern of heavy spring rains created an environment uniquely suited to swarming, when a hive decides to split in two, in order to become twice as many colonies.

While the bees consider this a great success, the beekeeper does not. Just as the bee populations were rising quickly inside the hives, and the spring nectar was coming in and being stored, our honeybees found themselves confined, in increasingly crowded conditions, by days of rain.

So let me cut to the chase: both of my hives swarmed in June. Beekeepers tend to look at the ground and shuffle their feet when they admit this to other beekeepers (though it seems to have happened to everyone this year). While I fervently hope that some other beekeeper caught those girls out there somewhere, and that they, too, are getting carefully tucked in for winter, what I confess is that the honey harvest is small again.

Sorry, Colvin Run Community. I keep hoping that



October 1st is "The Beekeepers' New Year."

"next year is the year!" and that these strong colonies with new local queens (haven't picked names yet – any suggestions?) will winter well and give us a better harvest in 2009.

On August 31, my two beehives at Colvin Run began their month-long progress toward winter. As I write this in early September, the temperature is once again 90,

Cont'd. on pg. 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Miller's Desk	2
On the Road in "Flour City"	3
More "Buzz" from the Bees	4
Photos from Tropical Storm Hanna	4
Beekeeper Patrick Standiford Reports	5
Birthdays	5
Arti-FACTS By Dawn	6

OCTOBER WEEKENDS:

Bread and Honey
Sunday, 10/5, 2–4pm
Meet the bees & sample honey
FREE

Scarecrow Making
Saturday, 10/11, noon-2pm
Sunday, 10/12, 1-3pm
\$6/scarecrow

Mill Run Dulcimer Band
Sunday, 10/19, 2-4pm
Free concert in the Barn

Boo Who?
Monday, 10/27, 1-2pm
Thursday, 10/30, 1-2pm
Hallowe'en program for 3-6 year olds. \$6/child

Grinding Grains
Sundays, conditions permitting
Noon—3pm



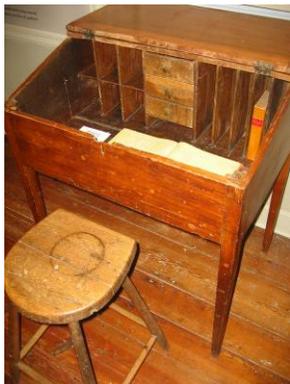
If we only had a place to put his brain!

We're collecting pantyhose for this month's Scarecrow Making event to make sure the straw folks can keep a good head on their shoulders. Bring clean pantyhose to the site office by 10/4 — no funky colors, please.



From the Miller's Desk:

Tilting at a Windmill in South Dakota



Colvin Run's miller Mason Maddox spent the first week of September in Milbank, South Dakota, helping millwright Ben Hassett get the Milbank Windmill up and running.

The Milbank Windmill was built in 1882 by Henry Holland, who ground wheat and buckwheat on two sets of buhr stones and operated a saw mill there.

The mill was abandoned just a few years after it was completed because of the many trees which grew up around it and blocked the wind. In 1912, citizens of Milbank bought the mill and moved it to a city park to preserve it. In 1978, the mill was given to the Milbank Mutual Insurance Company which moved it to their office grounds where it stood as the town's welcoming symbol and summer visitor center.

The original structure deteriorated badly, and much of the mill has been replaced by the city of Milbank. However, it still contains the original gears, grinding stones, upright power shaft, wind shaft, grain cleaner, bolter, one set of stairs and a single original timber.

While Mason was at the Milbank mill, he worked on its patent sails – wood frames with louvered canvas covers that open and shut, allowing the miller to regulate the wind power and control the speed of the grinding stones. He installed connecting rods for the sails and adjusted them for proper operation.

Mason helped Ben balance one set of buhr stones and make some adjustments to the millstone furniture that had been built by city workers based on a photograph in a book. He also prepared a "miller's punchlist" of things that need to be

done to make the mill more user friendly for a miller, and he wrote up a maintenance check-list for future millers to use before grinding.

Mason and Ben never got a chance to run the mill – there was not enough wind when they were ready to try it out, despite 30 mile per hour winds earlier in the week.

With their windmill nearly ready to operate, the City of Milbank has no miller. However, they plan to send some people here to Colvin Run Mill in the near future for hands-on miller training with Mason.



**MILBANK WINDMILL
MILBANK, SD**

This is a six-sided, Norfolk-style smock mill. This style of windmill is unique because the staging area is around the outside of the cap rather than further down the tower.

Mason balancing one bedstone.



Connecting rods & the patent sails they control.





On the Road with Dawn in “Flour City”

Dawn Kehrler traveled to Rochester, NY, last month where she investigated the city's industrial heritage.

Rochester, New York's third largest city, was founded in 1803 and was home to many industries including flour mills. In fact, there were so many flour mills in Rochester it was once called “Flour City.” Today, Kodak and Wegman's supermarkets are headquartered there. Other interesting sites include Susan B. Anthony's home, the George Eastman home and The Strong National Museum of Play (America's #2 toy museum). And there is plenty of good food (I recommend Nick Tahou's Garbage Plate and the Dinosaur Bar-B-Que).

I explored Browns Race, a National Register Historic District and a City Preservation District that celebrates Rochester's earliest industrial area. In 1815, Matthew and Francis Brown created the area's first power canal here. The race was originally 1,221 feet long, 30 feet wide and 5½ feet deep. Water was diverted from the Genesee River to turn waterwheels and tubwheels and then flowed back into the river

through tailraces cut into the river gorge. At least nine of Rochester's 24 flour mills were situated on Browns Race. Today, you can still see the mill race, although concrete planks cover most of the raceway.

My walking tour included the Kodak Office Tower, small industries that have adapted old buildings for reuse, a former gristmill now housing a restaurant, a fire truck factory and the High Falls Brewing Company, maker of Genesee beers. At the beginning of the walk, the Pont de Rennes Pedestrian Bridge takes you to an unexpected and spectacular panoramic view of the High Falls of the Genesee River, a 96-foot waterfall and gorge. From the bridge, you can see tailraces carved into the rock under buildings.

I was specifically interested in the Triphammer Forge site, where visitors see a restored 24' by 8' breast waterwheel in a unique archaeological park. The building was originally built as a forge in 1816 and was occupied by the William Cobb Scythe and Tool

Factory. Waterpower raised and dropped a heavy triphammer to forge wrought iron tools. This waterwheel also supplied power to businesses across Browns Race via a metal shaft still visible in the race wall.

You can visit Brown's Race without leaving home, by using Google Maps on your computer. Type “Browns Race” in the address space and click on “street view.” Then move the little figure that appears on your map up and down the streets of the district and see photos of all the buildings in there.



Triphammer forge waterwheel, built by Jim Cricker of Rondout Woodworking, a familiar face at SPOOM conferences.



High Falls on the Genesee River.



Toni Burnham, continued:



Drew Foulis holds one of Toni Burnham's brood frames from the Colvin Run Mill Apiary.

cont'd. from pg. 1

but the bees aren't fooled. The days are shorter, the sources of nectar fewer, the number of new bees declining.

There were anxious moments this season: after the hives swarmed, I had to watch very closely to see whether the new queens would mate well and become productive moms – and it was a nail biter this time! It seemed that the rains might have interfered with opportunities for mating flights, and new eggs and baby bees did not show up for an awfully long time! But

they did in the end. It is a law of beekeeping that one hive is like a rocket ship, and its partner is like an old Jeep, but they are both making it over the bumps, so I am happy.

There were fun moments, too: often Ann Korzeniewski would stop by when I was working the hives, and sometimes I got other visitors, as well. When brave Drew Foulis visited I took his picture holding a frame of bees – with no veil! In August, a father and his two sons stopped by, and one little boy was

able to stick his finger into a frame of newly-capped honeycomb for a sweet taste! His smile made my day.

My wish for this winter's weather is this: right after Thanksgiving, the temperature should go down to 32 degrees and stay there except for every Saturday afternoon, when it should rise to 55 on a bright sunny day. That way the bees will stay safely huddled together on top of their food supply until I can check on them on an easy warm day. This may conflict with many of your plans, but it seems worthwhile to ask!

TROPICAL STORM HANNA

BROUGHT 9" OF WIND-DRIVEN RAIN AND TURNED THE PLACID TAILRACE POND INTO AGGRESSIVELY ADVANCING "LAKE COLVIN" FOR A FEW HOURS ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2008. BY THE NEXT DAY, ALL THE WATER HAD RECEDED AND THE WATERWHEEL COULD TURN AGAIN.



Waterwheel & foot-bridge over the tail-race submerged by "Lake Colvin."

Looking down on the water-wheel shaft from inside the mill.



Several feet of water came up through the stone floor of the gear pit, engulfing the lesser face gear.





Patrick Standiford reports:

Overall this season has been a mixed bag. Two colonies at my house are in their third season and did well in terms of growth, but only one produced a surplus of honey for me to harvest (about 45 lbs). The other is robust and has sufficient pollen and honey to over-winter but I'm keeping an eye on them just in case.

As for my two colonies at the mill, one is doing well but the other is not building up winter stores or a strong brood pattern for a good stock of bees to over-winter. I've begun feeding them sugar syrup to stimulate the queen to lay more, so we'll see over the next few weeks if they

respond.

My other colony, out at Clyde's Restaurant's farm at Willow Brook in Ashburn, is doing well on all accounts with a strong build-up of bees and plenty of winter stores. It's my success story of the summer. However, as I do with all new colonies, I will let them keep this year's honey and see how they over-winter. I can always harvest it next spring if we get an early nectar flow.

In talking with other beekeepers, it seems like this has been a hit or miss summer. It looked good in the spring, but then all the rain in June wiped out much of the blossoms that the bees frequent for

nectar. So there wasn't the strong and continuous flow that we hope to see in May and June. The dry weather in August means the fall blooms, goldenrod, etc., will also be slim opportunity for the bees to have another shot at building up reserves. Probably plenty of pollen but not much nectar — and they need both.

Each time I've gone to the mill, both of Toni's colonies have shown plenty of activity. Hot summer evenings found "the girls" fanning themselves out on the front stoop in large



Beekeeper Patrick Standiford tends one of his Colvin Run Mill colonies.

October Birthdays

19 — Jim Hogan and his wife Karen *were* planning to visit Aachen and Cologne this month, but according to Jim, "The price of airfare has doubled and the dollar-to-euro ratio is outrageous, so we're not going." However, and they are still planning to go London in June for the Queen's Birthday/Trooping the Colour.



25 — Mary Dettra's whole family (18 strong) is heading to the cabin in Fort Seybert, West Virginia where the cabin, newly constructed bunk-house and tents in the yard will be packed with birthday revelers. Mary's NOT cooking or cleaning — she's having a "queen's birthday" including hosting local relatives.

Bread & Honey

Want to learn more about beekeeping in Northern Virginia?

Come to the Colvin Run Barn to meet the beekeepers, see an observation colony of bees and sample honey on fresh-baked cornbread.

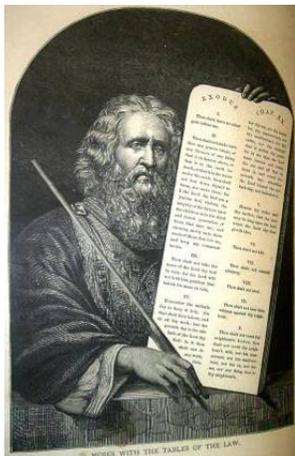
Sunday, October 5, 2—4pm, FREE





Arti—FACTS by Dawn

The Millard Family Bible



Moses with the Tables of the Law

The Millards' large black Bible lies open to reveal the birth pages in its case in the Parlor of the Miller's House, but there is much more to see in this family heirloom.

This Bible was published in 1875 in Philadelphia by A. J. Holman & Company. According to the Holman company, now known as B & H Publishing Group, they are America's oldest Bible publisher.

The Bible's cover is leather veneer that has worn in some spots, but you can still see the impression of Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman. The Bible includes the old and new

testaments, several full-page prints of Biblical events, an index, concordance, birth, death and marriage pages, an apocrypha, and a table of measures and weights. There are no maps in this edition.

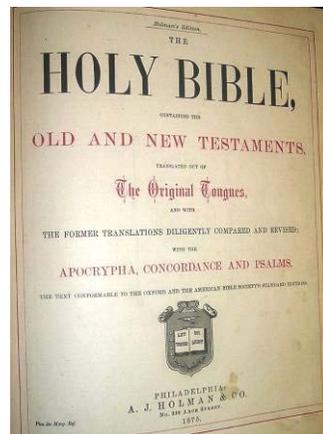
Inside, the initials A.B.M. are written on one of the front pages. We presume these initials stand for Addison Bidwell Millard. Next to the initials there is a shadow of a dried flower that I found elsewhere in the book.

On this same page, someone has stamped with red ink the name Lulu Millard. There is a middle initial, but I can't read the letter and we don't have a record of her middle name. Whoever was stamping had a great time imprinting Lulu's name five times up-

side down and right-side up.

Looking through the pages, I saw no marks that indicated favorite verses or sections.

If your visitors are curious about the inside of the Bible, the Room Guide shows the Birth and Death pages as well as the title page and an engraving.



Title page of the Millard family Bible.

HOW MUCH FLOUR CAN COLVIN RUN MILL PRODUCE?

Visitors often ask this "stump-the-docent" question. According to Mason Maddox:

One set of stones in Colvin Run Mill could grind **600 pounds of wheat** in one hour and produce about **510 pounds of whole wheat flour**.

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE:

The mill's shaking sieve can only handle a maximum of 200 pounds of flour per hour, which greatly reduces the mill's potential output.



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

FOR REASONABLE ADA
ACCOMMODATIONS, CALL
703-324-8727

A PUBLICATION OF
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA
AND
COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE



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.

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