

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

October 2009

Celebrating Three Decades of Service

Two Colvin Run Mill volunteers were honored at the annual Resource Management Division (RMD) *Volunteer Excellence Awards* in September. RMD Director Cindy Walsh presented certificates for significant length-of-service milestones to:

◆ Marjorie Lundegard 20 years



Since retiring from a 30-year career teaching chemistry to Fairfax County high school students, Marjorie has continued her role as educator of local children. She is a dedicated teaching docent at our site, working one day each week with visiting school children.

On another day each week, she can be found behind the cash register in the General Store, adding a dash of history lessons to each sales transaction she makes.

Besides her regular schedule, Marjorie helps out with special programs, chronicles visits to mills in her *On the Road with Bob & Marge* series, and is a charter member of the Friends of Colvin Run Mill.

◆ Barbara Raymond 10 years



Barbara started out as a volunteer gardener, helping Jennifer Blackwood plan, develop and maintain the site's flower beds. It didn't take long for her to pitch in with weekend

programs — cranking ice cream, serving tea, helping kids with crafts, supervising teen volunteers at Scarecrow Making and Children's Holiday Shopping.

The list of Barbara's tasks at the site is almost as long as the list of interests she included on her original volunteer application. She enjoys quilting, hiking, biking, swing dancing and has trained with the Marine Archaeology Historical Society volunteer program for scuba divers.

Barbara fits her many interests into time off from work as an engineer for the Federal Highway Administration. Just last month, she said she wants to add to her mill list and learn to give tours for the public.

We look forward to working with Barbara for another busy decade!

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WEEKENDS IN OCTOBER:

Grinding Grains, \$4, \$5, \$6
Sundays, October 4 & 18
conditions permitting
Noon—3pm

Catch the Buzz, \$2 / person
Sunday, October 4, 2-4pm
Meet the beekeepers & see an observation colony from the Colvin Run Apiary. Enjoy honey on fresh cornbread & take home a sample of Colvin Run Mill cornmeal.

Scarecrow Making, \$6/scarecrow
Saturday, October 10, noon-2pm
Sunday, October 11, 1-3pm
Bring a shirt & pants to make a fall friend for your garden. We supply the stuffing and know-how.

Watershed Clean-up Day
Saturday, October 17, 9—11:30am
Lend a hand, learn some history, make a difference. Help paid and volunteer staff clean up along Colvin Run, across Rt. 7 from the mill.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band concert, FREE
Sunday, October 18, 2-4pm
Tap your toes and sing along with the band to your old-time favorites.

Volunteers
Power Our Parks



LEND A HAND!

Colvin Run watershed clean-up
October 17,
9—11:30 am

Watershed Clean-Up Day

October 17, 9-11:30am

by *Mary Allen, President*
Friends of Colvin Run Mill

Have you ever hiked across Route 7 from the mill and down the hill to find traces of the old dam, or followed the pumping system that diverts stream water under the road to the water-wheel?

On October 17 from 9-11:30am, Colvin Run Mill will host its first Watershed Cleanup Day. **Tom Milton** will be on hand to

greet registrants and sign up drop-ins.

Mason Maddox, Mike Henry and **Mike Moran** will lead volunteers to the Colvin Run stream on the other side of Route 7. Mason will point out traces of the old dam, the site of the current pumping system, and the route of the mill race as it heads to the mill.

This will be a community effort with individuals, students, families,

scouts and other groups asked to help collect debris from the Colvin Run watershed. By the end of the morning, the site will be cleaner and volunteers will know more about the other side of the mill site.

The Friends of Colvin Run Mill will supply bottled water for participants and **Bob Lundegard** is seeking interested groups to help with the effort.

For more information or to sign up, call the site at 703-759-2771.

WANTED:

Scarecrow Heads!

The annual pantyhose collection is underway to supply heads for scarecrows. Please bring them to the site office by 10/9.

No funky colors please.

Colvin Run Apiary's 2009 honey is now available.



8oz. bottles on sale in the General Store.

\$6 each

Welcome Pat Hill

Patricia Hill, an executive assistant at Raytheon in Reston, found out about volunteer opportunities at Colvin Run Mill from her company's employee volunteer website.

Pat previously volunteered in the museum shop at Fort Ward Museum in Alexandria, but decided the distance was too far to drive. She thought the mill would be a good match for her since she lives nearby in Herndon and loves early American history.

Pat is especially interested in how things have developed in America from the early 1600s to the present. She knows that history repeats itself and she is fascinated when contemporary people do not recognize the patterns and don't seem to learn from what happened in the past. She is also interested in how society was different in the past and how people's attitudes towards each other have changed over time.

Pat is a practitioner of Reiki – a Japanese tech-



**New Sunday docent,
Pat Hill.**

nique for stress reduction and relaxation that promotes natural healing, overall health, peace and harmony.



Finally — An Office Fit For a Miller

Arti-facts
by Dawn Kehrer

The miller's office has been furnished! Hooray! After decades of showing only a desk, a chair and some items from the wrong time period, the miller's office is now furnished with artifacts appropriate for the function of the work space and correct for the time period 1810-1850.

Interpreting the Office

The northeast corner of the first floor of the mill is partitioned off to give the miller space to conduct business, keep records and speak with visitors. When necessary, the miller could shut the Dutch door, to give himself respite from the noise and dust of the mill and keep flour dust safely away from the office fireplace.

Here are necessities of everyday office life in the 19th century: fireplace tools, lighting devices, writing materials, shelf space for books and safe storage for other mill items.

I suggest that when you interpret the office, you

present how the office was used rather than speaking about each item individually, much as you already interpret the miller's house parlor. Allow visitors time to ask you about any item in particular.

- Please check the Mill Roomguide binder on the desk in the miller's office to identify each item in the office.
- Please do not handle any of the artifacts nor allow visitors to handle the artifacts.
- Please do not allow visitors to sit in the chairs or on the wooden chest.

For security, many of the smaller artifacts are tied together with fishing line. If one item is picked up, the items tied to it will follow.

For more security, please always shut the bottom half of both the exterior Dutch doors of the mill, on the first floor and basement level, when you leave the building.

Furnishing the Office

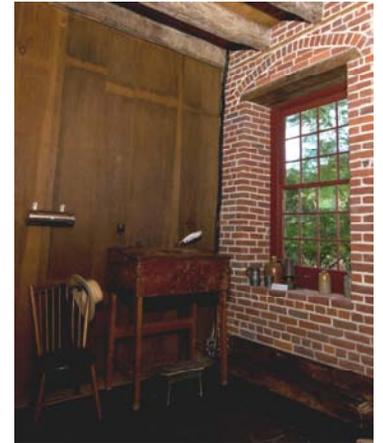
Most of the historic artifacts in the office have

been procured either as a new purchase or relocated from Fairfax County Park Authority Collections storage with the help of Susan Clark, Assistant Manager, Collections Management Branch.

"Thank you" to the Friends of Colvin Run Mill who provided funds to purchase reproduction clothing, the candle safe and two inkwells. Colvin Run's miller, Mason Maddox, has also been very helpful giving his insight into how a working miller would have arranged the furnishings in his office for maximum usefulness.

Future Furnishings

In the future, volunteer **Rich Thorpe** will build a cabinet to store stone dressing tools, a peg board to hang clothing and a shelf to hold books. We will also acquire a map, an account ledger, more writing materials, an almanac and a document box for safeguarding the miller's valuables to complete the look of the 19th century miller's office.



INTERPRETIVE EXTRAS!



Two **Interpretive Extras** are included in this month's newsletter:

In one, Dawn Kehrer provides specific information about the new furnishings in the **miller's office**.

In the other, Ann Korzeniewski (with help from Dawn and volunteer **Joe Pruden**) explains the portable **vertical burr mill** in the basement of Colvin Run Mill.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

19 Jim Hogan

25 Mary Dettra

INTERPRETIVE EXTRA!

The Miller's Office

by Dawn Kehrler, *Certified Interpretive Guide*

The Colvin Run Mill Furnishings Plan was completed in 2007. The plan not only specifies the milling machinery that should be in place on each floor of the mill, but also details plans for furnishing the miller's office and guides the acquisition of artifacts and reproduction items for the office.

The Big Picture

The northeast corner of the first floor of the mill is partitioned off to give the miller space to conduct business, keep records and speak with visitors. When necessary, the miller could shut the Dutch door to give him respite from the noise and dust of the mill and keep the flour dust safely away from the office. Here are necessities of everyday life in the 19th century office: fireplace tools, lighting devices, writing materials, shelf space for books and safe storage for other mill items. This area was cooled by windows looking out on the north and east sides of the mill and warmed by the fireplace built into the northeast corner. The fireplace retains its original design, but its brick walls were rebuilt during the mill renovation. The hearth flooring is original. **The office does not represent a particular year, but rather the time period from 1811 to 1850.**

What's New? (Please refer to the Miller's Office Roomguide for photos of all the new items.)

As you enter the office and look to your left, you see on the wall a tin **candle safe** for keeping tallow candles safe from rodents. I have placed a few faux candles in the safe. All the candles in the office are made of baked clay. Wax candles would bend and melt in the heat of the mill. You'll also see a **chair**, a **footstool** and the **miller's desk**. With the desk in this position, the miller can use the natural light from the window and see visitors coming from the upper site. On the desk are a **Betty lamp**, a **candle snuffer**, and an inkwell and **quill pen**. The snuffer cut the "snuff," or burned wick, from candles. The Betty lamp oil container gimbals (when the lamp was carried, the container would sway with the motion) and wouldn't spill oil.

On the windowsill of the north window are two **tankards**, a **jug** to hold a beverage and a **pot on a portable oil stove**. The miller could pour a drink for himself and for a visitor. What would the miller drink? We don't know for sure, but early 19th century beverages other than water included cider, tea, coffee, lemonade, hot chocolate, whiskey, wine and beer. The two **clay jars** on the windowsill might have contained olive oil or red "paint" used with the millstone dressing tools. Under the same window is a **wooden case** that contains a stone dressing tool called a proof staff.

The fireplace tools include **tongs**, **andirons** and a **broom**. Burning wood supplied heat and light and a possible place to heat a branding iron to mark flour barrels. On the wall just left and above the fireplace is a **wall sconce** with a fancy reflector and a large faux candle. On the right side of the fireplace hearth is a **coal carrier** to bring coals from one location to another, a **lantern**, and a **mortar and pestle**. The miller mixed red oxide powder with water to make a "paint" called tiver that was used with the paint staff. The mortar may have served as a mixing bowl.

A window in the east wall allowed the miller to see visitors coming from the Alexandria-Leesburg Turnpike. Farmers coming to the mill to sell grain to the miller would have used this road. Another **lantern** and **Betty lamp** are placed on this windowsill to use when needed. Several **weights** similar to the kind used with a beam scale are also here. The weights are from a variety of sets of weights that have been calibrated for different scales, so they do not work with each other.

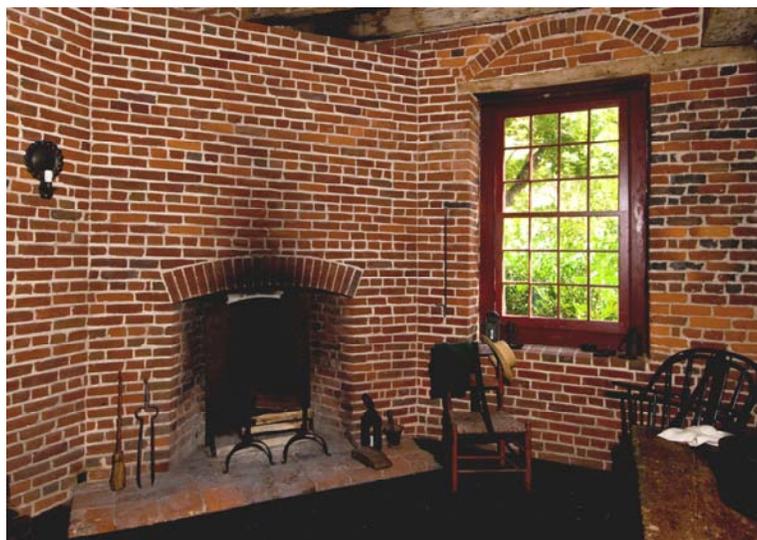
The large **red chest** against the south wall gave the miller a flat place for a variety of items. Here we show a few **pewter plates** that the miller may have eaten from and an **adjustable candleholder**. During busy times, the miller may have had food brought to him so he didn't need to interrupt his milling operations. A one-peck grain measure is on the chest. The chairs in the room could be used by the miller's visitors.

Interpreting the Office: Talking to Visitors

As a docent, one of your main responsibilities is to protect the property of Colvin Run Mill. Please do not handle the artifacts and ask your visitors also not to touch. Many of the items are tied together with fishing line – so if one item is picked up, the others will follow. Please do not allow visitors to sit in the chairs or on the chest. There is a bench outside the office if a visitor needs to sit down.

When you bring your visitors into the office, first explain the main functions of the space. Allow visitors to ask questions about the various items. If a visitor has a question about one of the artifacts, please check the Mill Roomguide where each item is described.

With the additional furnishings, the small office space seems smaller still. If you have a large group, consider your visitors' comfort. You can introduce the office outside the room and then invite visitors inside to see it.



INTERPRETIVE EXTRA!

The New Williams Burr Mill

According to the website www.meadowsmills.com, the company now known as Meadows Mills, Inc., began in 1902 at Pores Knob, North Carolina, when a mechanically inclined Baptist minister, Reverend William Calloway (W.C.) Meadows, designed and built a burr mill with stones mounted vertically rather than horizontally. He began to manufacture burr mills, obtained a patent on his design, and in 1907 he formed the W.C. Meadows Mill Company.



In 1908, a group of local men bought the W.C. Meadows Mill Company, built a factory in nearby Wilkesboro and continued manufacturing stone burr mills. Production reached its peak during the early 1920s. In 1924, the company expanded when the owners acquired the New Williams Company (manufacturers of vertical stone burr mills since 1912) and the W.J. Palmer Company (sawmill manufacturers). The expanded company was called Meadows Mills Company. In 1990, a group of investors purchased Meadows Mills Co. and formed Meadows Mills, Inc.

Our New Williams Burr Mill (with thanks to Joe Pruden & Dawn Kehrer)

In 2002, the Friends of Colvin Run Mill purchased the bright yellow, portable, vertical stone burr mill so milling operations could continue at Colvin Run Mill while the waterwheel, shaft and flume were being rebuilt. Since then, the 900-pound mill has also traveled to Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon and the U.S. Botanic Garden on the National Mall in Washington, DC, for grinding demonstrations.



Judging by its serial number, this mill was probably made between June and December 1917. However, since it has been reconditioned, pieces may have been taken from other mills that do not date to the same time. The beautiful wing-nuts were custom made for this mill by CRM's blacksmith Pat McGuire, who copied the fastener design from Oliver Evans' hopper boy drawings.

The stone burr mill is a multi-functional machine with a pair of 20" brown granite vertical grinding stones. The runner stone turns about 700 revolutions per minute and needs eight to 10 horsepower to operate. It can be run by an electric motor, a gasoline engine or by a tractor's power take-off wheel. A belt drive transmits power from the power source to a 12x6 pulley.

The mill produces whole wheat flour, cornmeal, grits and animal feed. A square hopper sits above the millstones to direct grain seeds down across a pierced inclined metal oblong "shoe" and through an enclosed fan that cleans the grain before it reaches the millstones.

Grain then falls down onto a metal screw that extends through the runner stone and moves the seeds into the machine where they are ground against the surface of the bed stone. The ground flour or meal pours out of the mill through a wooden spout.

Interpreting the New Williams Mill

Stopping at the Williams Mill is not part of the basic mill tour; however, if visitors ask about it, briefly describe it and note that it is similar to a grinding station. If time allows, you can point out that the stones on the yellow Williams Mill that *can't* be seen are similar to the stones on the old red mill that *can* be seen next to it. The red mill is in its original condition.



COLVIN RUN MILL HISTORIC SITE

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FOR REASONABLE ADA
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A PUBLICATION OF
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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.

Manager: Mike Henry

Assistant Manager/Newsletter Editor: Ann Korzeniewski

Miller: Mason Maddox

Historic Collections Coordinator: Dawn Kehrer

Programs, Volunteer Scheduling & Sales: Jennifer Blackwood

General Store Operations & Programs: Terry Tomasulo

Miller's Assistant: Kim Whitacre

Jill of All Trades: Pam Gennari