

GRIST FROM THE MILL

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

COLVIN RUN MILL
HISTORIC SITE

November 2009

More Fun Than a **BARREL** of Monkeys

by Dawn Kehrler

Three new reproduction flour barrels are now in place on the first floor of the mill. These barrels were made by Ron Raiselis, master cooper at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH. He has made barrels for many other museums and historic sites including The Smithsonian and the mill at Philipsburg Manor in Tarrytown, NY.

Ron custom made our barrels according to specifications in a 1787 Virginia law which stated that barrels should be:

“well made of good seasoned materials, tightened with ten hoops, sufficiently nailed with four nails in each chime hoop, and three nails in each upper bilge hoop; and the flour barrels shall be of the following dimensions, to wit, the staves shall be 27 inches in length, and the head 17 inches and a half in diameter...”

You can read the Virginia law specifying flour barrel dimensions and more about the barrels in the Mill Roomguide in the miller’s office.



In 2006, Ron wowed attendees at a Colvin Run Mill symposium with his coopering skills. **Joe Pruden**

was there and took the photos below.

We thank Susan Clark of the Historic Collections Management Section for providing the funds to buy these reproduction barrels. By 2011 (when we will be celebrating the mill’s 200th anniversary), we hope to have several more of these authentic examples of the cooper’s art in the mill.



NOVEMBER HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The site will be closed:

Veterans’ Day, Wednesday, 11/11 & Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, 11/26

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Grinding is Done—
Now What? **2**

Never a Dull
Moment **2**

On the Road to
SPOOM in Oregon **3**

WEEKENDS IN NOVEMBER:

Blacksmithing Demo, FREE
Sunday, 11/8, 11am—3pm
Watch blacksmith Pat McGuire fire up the forge and his creativity.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band Concert, FREE
Saturday, 11/21, 7—9 pm
Enjoy the last concert of the fall season in the Barn at Colvin Run Mill.





GRINDING IS DONE – NOW WHAT?

by Dawn Kebrer

Now that we have stopped grinding grain for the season, visitors sometimes ask what the miller did long ago when his grain stores were exhausted. I posed that question to our 21st century miller, Mason Maddox. Here are a few examples of the work a miller might have done in the winter long ago.

Mill maintenance:

- Repair and/or build new milling machinery and equipment such as making and replacing worn cogs or bolting cloth
- Millstone maintenance
- Clean the mill
- Repair tools
- Maintain gears
- Cut firewood

Keeping up with the latest technology:

- If the miller wanted to make the most profit from the best ground products, he needed to keep up with milling improvements through communicating with other millers or by reading printed material.
- Meet with traveling salesmen to learn about new milling products.

Other business:

Perhaps the miller was also a farmer or had another business. In that case, during the winter he could devote his time to other activities.

Personal preparations for winter:

- Butcher livestock
- Trap game animals
- Cut firewood
- Household maintenance
- Outbuilding maintenance
- Harvest ice
- Mend fences



COMING IN DECEMBER:

SAVE THE DATES



Children's Holiday Shopping

Saturday, 12/5, 10am-2pm

Sunday, 12/6, noon-4pm

Monday, 12/7, 1-4pm

Santa in the Mill

Saturday, 12/12, 3-6pm

Train Display

Saturday, 12/19

Sunday, 12/20

11am—4pm both days

Never a Dull Moment



Crystal Allison's far-flung family keeps her hopping. Back in July, she traveled to Chicago to welcome grandchild #5, Connor, to the clan.

Now, she and husband **Vernon**, are proud grandparents once again — this time a bit closer to home.

Hale Douglas Allison, Jr., was born on October 20, weighing in at 8lbs 11oz. He joins his parents Doug and Dana and big sisters Kaela and Kyree in South Hill, VA.

News travels f-a-s-t! Grandpa Vernon, currently deployed in Iraq, forwarded photos of the latest arrival the next day.



ON THE ROAD WITH BOB AND MARGE TO SPOOM IN OREGON

by Marge Lundegard

The 2009 Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM) meeting was held in Albany, OR, September 24—27. Seventy members and friends attended, including six members of the SPOOM Mid-Atlantic chapter.

Two pre-tours were given on the 24th. One was through the Columbia River Gorge and the other was to the Pacific Ocean. There was also a roller mill workshop presented by Phil Robertson of the SPOOM Great Lakes Chapter.

Friday the 25th was the mill touring day. We visited two operating sawmills. The first, called Wood Castle Furniture, makes custom furniture. Special maple woods such as the Pacific Coast maple, soft maple, sugar maple and cherry maple are used.

The second sawmill, Hull Oakes Lumber Co., was a very large steam powered sawmill. It uses the bi-products of sawdust and bark as fuel for two fire boxes located in a separate building and turn-of-the-20th-century boilers.

This mill, operated by the third and fourth generations of the family, can saw logs up to 72 feet using a band saw powered by a c.1906 450 horsepower Ames steam engine.

Lunch, served at Bell Fountain County Park, featured a picnic table 85' 10" long, 34" wide and 4" thick, cut from a single Douglas fir log at the Hull Oakes Lumber yard.

The next stop was Thomas Kay Woolen Mill established in 1889 by Thomas Lewis Kay. This is a three storey brick building that burned in 1890 but was rebuilt and operated until 1962. It is complete with all of its operating equipment. A Leffel turbine supplied water power to the looms and machine shop.

The last stop was beautiful Thompson's Mill located in a state park on the Calapooia River. This mill, built in 1847 by Robert Newell, is the oldest water powered mill in Oregon. It had two runs of burr stones and an extra run of small burrs for making chopped feed.

Over the years, the mill was sold many times. The Thompsons became the owners in 1891 at which time a turbine was installed. The mill produced flour and animal feed until World War II. After the war, the mill just produced animal feed until 2002.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department bought Thompson's Mill and its water rights in 2004. Restoration and purchase of the mill came from "lottery dollars" and the 20-acre site opened in 2007. The mill is 23,000 square feet and contains seven levels. Originally, the mill used a turbine to power the machinery inside the mill. Today, the mill can operate using electricity or water power.

Saturday was lecture day with a wide variety of topics from "Ghosts in the Mills" to "The Wooden Wind Mills of Poland."



Hull Oakes Lumber Co.



Thomas Kay Woolen Mill



Thompson's Mill

SPOOM 2010 will be at Yates Mill in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since this is nearby, you should plan to attend!

SPOOM 2011 will be hosted by Colvin Run Mill.



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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