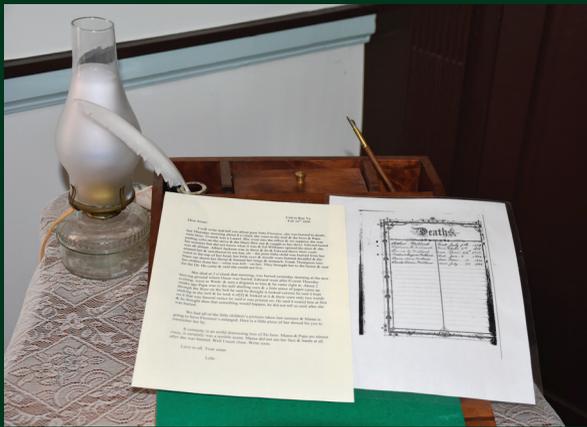




Miller's House Exhibit

Brings the 1800s to Life



Immerse yourself in 19th century history with a new, interactive Miller's House exhibit at Colvin Run Mill. The fully restored ground floor is the culmination of nearly five years of historical detective work and now gives you a rare and historically significant glimpse of how the middle class lived in the 1800s.

"At that time, about five percent of the population was gentry, 80 percent was in farming, and the 15 percent in between included millers, skilled artisans and shop owners," said former park manager Mike Henry during the early restoration process in 2018. "There are plenty of examples of gentry and farming homes from that timeframe, and only a few like this that represent those who would become middle class."

The Miller's House exhibit gives you a hands-on opportunity to explore nearly 100 years of history and social norms through the eyes of two families who lived here, the Carpers and the Millards. Although few records exist about how they lived, historians were able to find clues about specific types of furnishings that each family used.

"We know from census records that Philip Carper owned the property and two mahogany tables and chests," said former restoration project manager and historian Kathryn Blackwell. "In oral histories, the Millards, who were Methodists, talk of having a piano and singing songs of praise and worship for 20 minutes every night."

The Miller's House features a hall with a staircase flanked by two identical rooms now filled with historically accurate Federal and Victorian period furnishings. One room is trimmed in brown and likely served as the family room. The other room is trimmed with expensive Prussian blue paint and was probably used for entertaining, offering another clue about the home's curious past and each middle-class family's social evolution.

"From the 1810s to the 1890s we see evidence of the burgeoning middle class with a mix of mahogany furniture and expensive paint that they enjoy showing off to visitors," Blackwell said. "Lace curtains in the 1890s were used in the summer to let in light, while heavier drapes were used and kept drawn in the winter to keep in heat, and slipcovers also changed with the seasons."

Once nearly condemned, the Miller's House at Colvin Run Mill now serves as an important link to the past with historical secrets yet to be discovered.

Be among the first to explore the new, hands-on exhibit by signing for a family program. Details are in the History section.