

Friends of Colvin Run Mill

Summer—Fall 2021



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COMING EVENTS

Details/restrictions at web site:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill>

Mill Grinding: First and third Sundays, 12 to 3 PM., now thru October Reservations required for now.

Blacksmithing demonstrations; normally coincident with Grinding

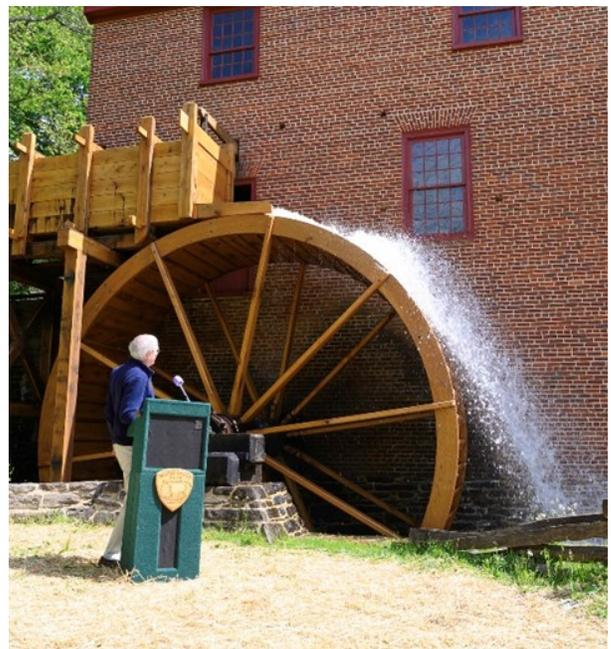
The Miller's In: See how the mill would look during Fall Harvest: Saturday's in October (2, 9 and 16) 11 AM to 3 PM.

Make your own Cider: Bring 50-100 apples of your choice and use an old -fashion cider press to make your own. Also bring sealable containers for carrying the cider. Sunday Sept 26 and Oct 10 and 24; Two sessions: 11 AM and 3 PM.

Run of the Mill: Learn the milling process and take home what you mill: two session (11 AM and 3 PM) on Sunday July 11, Aug 8 and Sept 12. Register on line; Fee charged.

Girl Scout Programs: Six planned if sufficient Scouts sign up. See Parktakes for dates/times and to register. Fee charged.

REPLACEMENT OF THE WHEEL AND FLUME IS COMPLETE!!



Tim Hackman giving the signal

THE GRAND OPENING!

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 3

Become an Official Friend

Membership Dues Changes

At the last Board of Directors Meeting in April, the Board approved new amounts for membership dues. The new dues levels are: Individual - \$35 a year, Family - \$55, Business - \$100.

If you join, in addition to receiving the Newsletters you will have opportunities for special tours, receive samples of stone ground grains at special events, and you will have the right to vote for members of the board of Friends of Colvin Run Mill (one vote for individuals and businesses and two votes for families). Best of all, your membership supports an historic treasure that continues to educate and inform and grind out fine whole wheat flour, not to mention cornmeal, grits, and buckwheat flour.

You can join now by completing the membership form on the Friends of Colvin Run Mill site (focrm.org/be-a-friend). If you have paid dues during 2020 or 2021, you will be official members through the end of 2021.

TEMPORARY SITE MANAGER IN PLACE

Despite county budget restrictions and the pandemic, the FCPA is in the process of selecting and assigning a full time manager to replace Mike Henry. Until that selection is made, temporary managers have been assigned to serve in that capacity while retaining responsibility for their formal assignments.

Assigned now is **Mary Olien** who retains responsibilities as Operations Branch Manager. We have been working with Mary as the site navigates its reopening under, at best, trying circumstances. Please welcome her to the site and pass on any suggestions you may have that might mitigate the challenges being faced.

NEW WEBSITE INSTALLED

Check out the upgraded Friends of Colvin Run Mill web site. It includes links to all kinds of useful information:

Bob Coblenz's Restoration Video

The Smithsonian's Air and Space "STEM in 30" video which highlights the use of the Mill's simple machines program

The site's simple machine program

And much more including recent photos of events occurring at the site.

<http://friendsofcolvinrunmill.org>

LOOKING AHEAD

Mills and the War of 1812: Learn the importance of mills to the US Navy in feeding the sailors. Sunday, November 11.

Holiday Preparations and Decorations: Tour the Miller's house and learn how residents, both white and enslaved, of similarly sized homes would have prepared for the holidays. Saturdays, November 6 and 20; and, December 11 and 18.

AND HE'S BACK!!

SAVE THE DATE:

SANTA AT THE MILL: SUNDAY

DECEMBER 11, 2021

ROUTE 7 WIDENING

In case you haven't been to the mill lately, getting there can be a little delayed.

The Route 7 construction is moving apace but will impact accessibility for some time to come. But, the good news is that there is to be a tunnel under Route 7 permitting access to site land on the southwest side of the road. See Dan Dyke's article on this on page 4.



GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW WATER WHEEL AND FLUME

Members of the community and local leaders gathered at Colvin Run Mill on Sunday, May 2, 2021, to celebrate the official opening of the new waterwheel and flume. Following remarks that celebrated the mill's rich history, attendees counted down for miller Stephen Golobic to officially open the flume, release the water and allow the great wheel to start turning. Special guests on hand included descendants of Goldie Millard, who was the first of the Millard children born in Virginia (March 5, 1884). The Millards owned and operated the mill from 1883-1934.

The mill is the sole surviving example of a 19th century mill in the D.C. area. The renovation project included removal of the mill's old wood wheel and the wood flume that carried water to the wheel. Both had deteriorated after years of use, and a new wood wheel and flume were fabricated and installed. The \$382,000 project was funded through voter-approved Park Bonds.

Pictured from left to right are: Sarah Oberther, Acting Manager, Colvin Run Mill; Mary Olien, Operations Branch Manager, FCPA Resource Management Division; Heather Lynch, Project Manager, FCPA Planning & Development; Carole Herrick, Dranesville Representative, Fairfax County History Commission; Jane Edmondson, Chief of Staff, Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust; Gene Bacher, Friends of Colvin Run Mill; Kathy Hummer, family of Goldie Millard; Ed Hummer, family of Goldie Millard; Timothy Hackman, Dranesville District Representative, Park Authority Board; Dan Dyke, President, Friends of Colvin Run Mill; Mike Henry, Former Colvin Run Mill Manager and member of Friends of Colvin Run Mill; Maggie Godbold, Sully District Representative, Park Authority Board; Sara Baldwin, FCPA Acting Executive Director; Stephanie Leedom, FCPA Director of Planning & Development; Kelly Millard, family of Goldie Millard.

Taken from the Fairfax County Park Authority Web site.

President's Message: How we get here.....

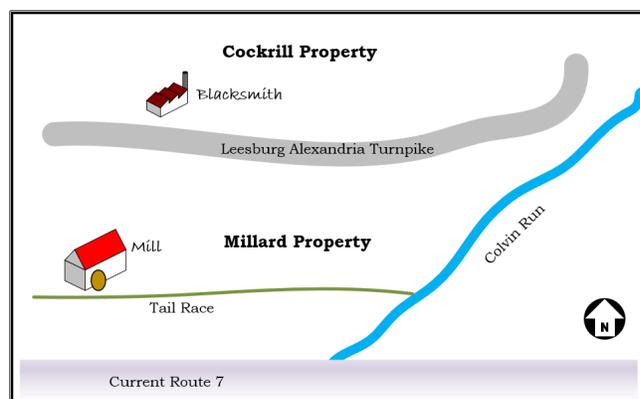
The highway to the south of the mill, Route 7, is currently being widened. While we look forward to the construction being completed, the noise, potential effect on surrounding property and the inconvenience of the construction reminds me that road work is certainly not new to the mill.

When the mill was first built, the main road running from east to west was situated on the north side of the mill; what is now Colvin Run Road. It was a dirt road that was situated there because that was the easiest location to cross Difficult Run stream to the east of the mill. This road, called the Main Road at the time, made it possible to bring grain to the mill and take flour to markets in Alexandria.

In 1840 the road was extended to Leesburg and was named the Leesburg/Alexandria Turnpike. It was a major route to the west and provided better access to the mill for farmers west of the mill.

By 1903, the turnpike was flooding when heavy spring rains came, overwhelmed the roadside ditches and hampered traffic. Apparently, the roadside ditches were unable to drain all the water. The County proposed digging a culvert under the road opposite the mill to divert the water so it would flow through the meadow near the mill and drain into the tail race.

That didn't sit too well with the mill owners at the time, Sam and Emma Millard. They sued the County Surveyor and Chairman of the County Road Board. They asserted that the culvert would cause the tailrace to fill with mud and that each time they cleared the mud, it would cost \$5. They, and a number of neighbors, testified that the existing ditches alone didn't drain the water because Mr. Cockrill had plowed the drainage ditch on his side of the road and planted crops there. The court ruled in favor of the Millards and granted an injunction against building a culvert. The court also noted that both the Millards and the Cockrills had built fences within the 50' right-of-way on their respective sides of the road and would have to move them.



In 1941, the Virginia Dept. of Highways began relocating the main road to where Route 7 now runs south of the mill. Route 7 was to be built between the mill and the mill dam located to the south of the mill. The engineers proposed installing a pipe under the road to allow water from the dam to continue on the race to the mill wheel.

The owner of the mill at the time, Bernard Bailey, objected to the plan and brought a court case to the Circuit Court and the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. He argued that the proposed pipe would clog with debris and affect the mill's operation. Mr. Bailey lost and Route 7 was constructed. The water does not naturally flow to the head race anymore.

The mill currently uses powerful pumps to pump water under Route 7 to our mini mill pond so that we can operate the mill for public demonstrations.

The widening of Route 7, now in progress, while it has caused some consternation, will result in one benefit for the mill. A tunnel will be installed under the highway connecting the mill property north of Route 7 to the mill property the south. Once completed, it will give us walking access to the historic race and remains of one of the original mill dams. We are planning tours that combine mill history with nature on these guided walks along the race and we hope you'll join us once they are announced.

Dan Dyke, President, Friends of Colvin Run Mill

Carper of Carper's Farm Way

By Jim Wallar, Secretary, Friends of Colvin Run Mill

Have you noticed that when you approach the mill from Route 7, signs point to Colvin Run Road in one direction and "Carper's Farm Way" in the other? Friends of the mill will recognize Carper as the surname of Philip Carper who purchased the mill 210 years ago and sold it thirty years later. But where did he come from? Who did he love? What else did he do? Where did he go?



Philip was born in 1773 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. His father, Frederick, a blacksmith, had married Maria Margaret Wolfersberger from Germany and served in the Revolutionary war. Frederick's father had stepped off the sailing vessel *Samuel* in August 1732 in Philadelphia with his name recorded as Niklas Kerper. Records in his home area around Darmstadt, Germany and elsewhere spell the name with variations: Jacob Nicolas Cöber/Köber/Kerper. Jacob Niklas was a blacksmith and married Anna Margarethe Barbara Marsteller, also from the Darmstadt region and arriving in America in 1732.

When his father died, his land and blacksmith tools went to Philip's oldest brother. Still, Frederick had accumulated some wealth so when the rest of the estate was distributed to the other children in 1779, Philip inherited a tidy sum of \$1,325. With no land, Philip gravitated south as many other Pennsylvanians of German and Scots-Irish descent did at the time, travelling on the Great Wagon Road to the Shenandoah Valley and further south.

In the Middletown Valley in Maryland, southwest of Frederick, and about 100 miles from his birthplace, Philip took up learning the milling trade from Jacob Drill, according to family lore. Jacob had immigrated from Germany and married a local, Eva Stone.

In October 1797 Philip married the miller's daughter, Catherine. He set up his own mill near where Catocin Creek flows into the Potomac River (not far from Brunswick, Maryland, about 35 miles upriver from Great Falls), close to Drill's mill. Their mills were not a novelty. In 1808 about 67 mills drew their power from Catocin Creek and its tributaries. They were not only for grinding wheat, but also for sawing timber and pressing apples for cider and linseed for oil. None of these mills exist today.

Philip seemed to be successful since he acquired more land. But in 1810 disaster struck. Days of downpour caused massive flooding in the Middletown Valley and wiped out Philip's mill (and the Chain Bridge on the Potomac). He must have been aware that other opportunities awaited because the Frederick newspaper carried advertisements for mills for sale in Loudoun and Fairfax counties. He settled on the mill by Colvin Run for which he paid \$5,500 in cash.

Business seems to have been good. Philip purchased farm land around the mill as well as tracts along Horse Pen Run (north of Dulles Airport) and Sugarland Run, northwest of the mill. On the latter his son Frederick built the Carper family home known as *Bloomfield*. Philip was industrious. He added a general store in 1818 and secured a license to sell spirits in 1822. He was the appraiser and executor for many estates, a commissioner for roads (he promoted a road from the mill to Georgetown Pike), and an Overseer of the Poor for his precinct.

His wife Catherine passed away in 1832. After he sold the mill in 1841 Philip moved in with his eldest daughter Betsy. She had married John Coleman, a rather well-to-do farmer who called his place *Hayfield* which was located on Horse Pen Run. Philip passed away on March 11, 1855.