SEP 21 1976
Virginia Landmarks Register

29-8

VLR- 9/21/76 NRHP- 8/16/77

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED AUG 16 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Colvin Run Mill

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 10017 Colvin Run Road

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: X VICINITY OF Great Falls

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th (Joseph L. Fisher)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Fairfax CODE: 059

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X_PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X_PARK
X_STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X_EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Fairfax County Park Authority

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 236

CITY, TOWN: Annandale __ VICINITY OF STATE: Virginia 22003

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Fairfax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: 4000 Chain Bridge Road

CITY, TOWN: Fairfax STATE: Virginia 22030

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE: October 1969 __FEDERAL __STATE X_COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginiana Collection, Fairfax County Public Library

CITY, TOWN: Fairfax STATE: Virginia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Colvin Run Mill is a four-story brick and frame structure constructed between 1810 and 1820 and repaired and restored between 1969 and 1975. It is a simple rectangular structure, 50'3" long, 41'8" wide, and 47'6" high. The walls are brick, set in American common bond, with every fourth course in headers, and topped by a gable roof. Approximately 75,000 of the more than 200,000 bricks in the structure are replacements, all made by old methods to the exact size of the original bricks. The windows are double-hung sash, 12/12, except for those in the gable ends which are 12/8. The gable ends are covered with wood siding, 1'6", and 5" to the weather. The roof is covered with cedar shakes.

The mill was acquired by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1965. Then a disused grist mill, it was on a 30-acre site which also contained a miller's house, an old shed, and the remains of a milldam-millrace system. After much research and consideration, it was decided to restore the mill as a representative sample of the pioneering work of Oliver Evans, the inventor and technologist who helped bring the idea of the production line to America.

The mill's design follows the principles established by Evans, whose book The Young Mill-wright and Miller's Guide (1794) first demonstrated that grains could be transformed into meal by a single, continuous, automated process. According to Evans' revolutionary design, the machinery for receiving the power is generated by an overshot waterwheel located on the first floor. It transmits power to the millstones and all other moving machinery in the mill. The millstones are located on the second floor, along with facilities for receiving the grain and shipping the finished flour and meal. The "boulting chest," where flour and meal are sifted and separated by grades, is located on the third floor. On the fourth floor the freshly ground meal or flour is cooled prior to the sifting. Movement of the flour from one operation to another is accomplished by a complicated series of conveyor belts and hoists, all powered by the waterwheel.

When the mill was examined, it was found that because of its advanced deterioration, most of the major and minor structural members would have to be replaced. Some of the mill's machinery was found to be usable, but to ensure both historical and mechanical accuracy, nearly every major subsystem had to be specially constructed. Accordingly, most of the existing reconstructed mechanisms are made of wood as they would have been at the time of the mill's construction. The woods used are those stipulated by Oliver Evans: oak for structures of high stress; redwood and cypress for areas touching water; maple for pins and cogs. The overshot wheel was also designed according to Evans' calculations, as described in his book. (It should be noted that in a small number of cases, modern materials were utilized in place of Evans' suggestions in order to give greater strength to certain segments of the structure. In each case, these variations are indicated as such to visitors to the mill.)

Architectural historians who examined the mill determined that the walls of the structure had originally been made entirely of brick, although in 1965 the west wall (next to the waterwheel) had a wood siding. Through excavation, it was found that the original brick wall had collapsed in the mid-1800's and had hastily been replaced with wooden siding. Isolation of the cause of this collapse and correction of the original error were crucial to the success of the restoration. It was discovered that, as originally constructed, the west wall and southwest corner had been built on a soft clay and that these foundations were "floating" and thus unstable. In addition, the wooden frame for the gearing in the cog pit was in direct contact with the original brick wall, thus transmitting the vibrations from the moving machinery

(See continuation sheet # 1)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	X AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1810-1820 BUILDER/ARCHITECT *unknown*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Flour-milling was one of the most important of the services performed in colonial and early nineteenth-century Virginia. Some of the large plantations operated their own mills, but most people depended for their flour on one of the many water-powered grist mills scattered along the watercourses of Virginia.

Colvin Run Mill is built according to the principles of Oliver Evans, the inventor and technologist who revolutionized grist mill construction and helped bring the production line to America.

Tobacco reigned as the undisputed king of crops in the agriculture of the Northern Neck during the first century following its settlement. By 1740, however, declining annual yields of tobacco from the exhausted soil indicated the necessity of diversification of crops. Corn and wheat became increasingly popular because they were staples which helped feed the farmer's family and his dependents. Moreover, the accessibility of the Northern Neck farms to the Chesapeake Bay meant that the crops could be shipped either as grain or as milled flour to ports along the coast, to the West Indies, and to Europe.

Thus, Northern Virginia began to develop "merchant mills" producing flour for a wider market than that which the large number of small neighborhood mills had served. In addition to grinding for a "toll" or fixed percentage of the grain brought to him, the merchant miller purchased wheat and corn from the farmer, storing it in his mill until the flour market was favorable. Then he would grind it, pack it, and haul it to a port where it could be used by local bakers or shipped either as flour or ship's bread.

Merchant milling became increasingly important to Northern Virginia's economy during the last half of the eighteenth century, and continued to provide the area's major means of earning credits in the markets of other regions until the centers of wheat production and flour milling shifted westward in the 1830's and 1840's.

Lacking good roads, inland mills not on or near navigable watercourses had been restricted to serving local areas. But by the 1820's and 1830's, several turnpike roads crossed Northern Virginia from the Shenandoah Valley to Alexandria, Georgetown, and Dumfries. Along these roads the grain farmers of the valley could send their grain or flour to the coastal markets. Wagon transportation, however, was still expensive, and flour was cheaper to haul than grain. Therefore, it was common practice for those farmers who had no mill at their point of departure to stop at a mill along the way and convert the grain into flour or meal.

Also, by 1830, milling methods generally were improving, due in large part to the writings and inventions of Oliver Evans. It was he who designed and equipped many mills, including one in which grinding and processing flour was carried on without the use of manual labor. Most of the principles which

(See continuation sheet # 2)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Netherton, Ross D., Colvin Run Mill, Fairfax, Va.: Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1976.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7.52

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	301095	4315700
B	18	301190	4315810
C	18	301505	4315400
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Colvin Run Mill property is listed in the Fairfax County Deed Books as parcel 18-2 ((1)) 7 and part of 18-2 ((1)) 24. The original maps are located in the County Division of Mapping, 4100 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Elizabeth S. David, Historic Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION
Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning

DATE
August 6, 1976

STREET & NUMBER
4100 Chain Bridge Road

TELEPHONE
(703) 691-2101

CITY OR TOWN
Fairfax

STATE
Virginia 22030

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Julius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 21 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892-453

into the wall and creating the instability which led to the wall's collapse. In the reconstruction process, the mill foundation was stabilized through subterranean concrete injection, and the cog pit framing was rebuilt and separated from the reconstructed wall; it was for the reconstruction of this wall that most of the 75,000 new bricks were designed to match the size and appearance of the original bricks. The mortar, too, was carefully chosen for its visual and mechanical compatibility with the existing nineteenth-century mortar.

In addition to the major work on the mill structure, the millrace from the Colvin Run had to be re-excavated, lined with concrete, faced with stone, and routed through a 100'-long culvert constructed beneath the Leesburg Turnpike (U.S. Highway Route 7).

Also on the park site is a two-story red brick structure which for many years served as the residence of the miller and his family. According to architectural historian Blaine Cliver, the house is of early nineteenth-century style and probably dates from about the same time as the mill. After a modest restoration, the structure is now utilized in an adaptive use program to display exhibitions of art work, photography, and the like. In addition, there is an old dairy shed which has been adapted to use as an eighteenth/nineteenth-century carpentry shop and is an active interpretive center open to the public. A recent addition to the site is the c. 1890 Cockerill general store which was formerly located across from the mill on Colvin Run Road but was moved to the park property in 1973. It serves as a museum facility by showing an early twentieth-century general store and is a functioning post office.

The careful attention to detail and high standards of workmanship in the restoration of the Colvin Run Mill have been given both local and national recognition. In 1973, the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects presented a first-place award "to Colvin Run Mill for achievement of excellence in historic preservation and architectural design." In 1975, the American Institute of Architects presented an Honor Award for Craftsmanship to the Fairfax County Park Authority "in recognition of the distinguished accomplishment in preservation craft technology in the program of restoration (1973) of the Colvin Run Mill."

29-8

Form 10-445
(5/62)

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

1. STATE Virginia
COUNTY Fairfax
TOWN -- VICINITY Colvin Run
STREET NO. 10017 Colvin Run Road
Great Falls, Virginia
ORIGINAL OWNER Philip Carper
ORIGINAL USE Mill
PRESENT OWNER Fairfax Co. Park Authority
PRESENT USE Under reconstruction
WALL CONSTRUCTION Brick
NO. OF STORIES 4

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INVENTORY

2. NAME Colvin Run Mill
DATE OR PERIOD 1820
STYLE --
ARCHITECT Unknown
BUILDER Probably Philip Carper

3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE

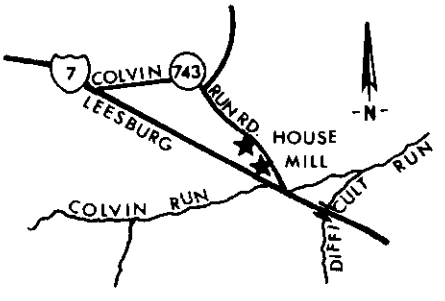
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION

OPEN TO PUBLIC When restoration is completed

The mill is located on Colvin (formerly Colvill's) Run in the triangle of land formed by Leesburg Pike and Colvin Run Road. The latter was formerly a right-of-way for the Alexandria-Leesburg Pike, which was built between 1810 and 1820, generally following the route of the earlier Eastern Ridge Road. The mill was a custom or merchant's mill which ground grain commercially and stored both grain and flour. Local tradition holds that the mill was built in 1794. It is claimed by descendants of Philip Carper that he was the builder of the mill. This would place its construction sometime after 1811, when Carper bought the 30-acre property from William Sheppard. The deed of that transaction, however, includes a mill, mill house, dam, race and appurtenance. Quite possibly an earlier mill existed on the same site. Part of the west wall of the mill is stone and could be a remnant of the earlier mill. E. Blaine Cliver, restoration architect, claims that the style of the present mill would place its construction in the 1820-1830 period.

The mill was constructed so that the south brick wall was laid on logs and loose rocks placed in mud. Through the years, this wall gradually sank and eventually collapsed, at which time it was temporarily replaced with clapboard siding. The exterior walls are laid in common or American bond with flat brick arches over the windows and doors. According to Clifford Currie, millwright engineer in charge of the restoration, the mill brick size is smaller than average making it necessary to hand-make replacement bricks by old-fashioned methods. A few large timbers from the Kinsley Mill, in Prince William County, have been used in the reconstruction. There are corner fireplaces on the first and second levels. Three pairs of stones were used for grinding flour, the French stones having been imported in 1795 according to a former owner named Millard. The mill has been known at various times as Carper's, Powell's, Millard's, Millard Brothers', and The Brick Mill.

5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered No Interior Undergoing Restoration Exterior Undergoing Restoration



6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)

7. PHOTOGRAPH Unknown, c. 1940

8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages)
INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.
See Virginiana Collection files, Fairfax County Public Library
Ross D. Netherton, The Colvin Run Mill, manuscript, 1969.

9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER
Mrs. Ross D. Netherton
Fairfax County Division of Planning
4100 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
DATE OF RECORD 10/10/69

were used in his mill had been developed earlier, but Evans combined them into a single system in which the grain and meal were moved from one part of the mill to another by the use of leather and wood conveyor buckets attached to canvas or leather belts. Mechanical scoops or rakes were also used to move grain and flour through troughs and chutes, to stir grain in the hopper, and to spread meal evenly over the floor of the meal loft so that it would cool and dry. Originally a man or boy was employed in the mill to attend to the stirring in the hopper or the meal loft. Evans invented a mechanical device to perform these tasks which, not surprisingly, became known as the "hopper boy." He also developed elevators to move grain from one floor to another at a rate of 300 bushels of grain or meal per hour.

Evans also improved the design of millstones, and in 1796 received the third patent issued by the United States Patent Office for a process of manufacturing stones which could be balanced and sharpened to grind grain to any desired size. Coming as they did at a time when normal imports of French buhrstones were interrupted by revolution in France and blockades by the British Navy, the inventions and innovations of Evans went far toward giving American industry its own foundations. In later years, as the importance of his work became appreciated, Evans was referred to as the "father of mechanized flour milling."

The first recorded survey of the site on which Colvin Run Mill stands is dated June 8, 1739, shortly before the land was granted to John Colvill by the proprietor. Colvill later sold the land to William Fairfax who, in turn, willed it to Bryan Fairfax, from whom George Washington purchased it in 1763. Washington kept this tract until his death, and letters written during the War for Independence speak of his intention to build a mill on Difficult Run. There is no further documentation, however, to support the conclusion that he had this specific site in mind or that he carried through his plan.

According to architectural historian Blaine Cliver, the Colvin Run Mill was probably built between 1810 and 1820. In 1811, Philip Carper had purchased some 30 acres of land on "Colvill's branch" of Difficult Run. Carper's descendants claim that he built the mill and this is certainly consistent with Cliver's estimate of its date of construction.

Philip Carper owned the property from 1811 until 1842, a period of steady growth in the mill's value. The next owner, John Powell, held the property from 1842 to 1883, a time of great change in Northern Virginia. Agricultural prosperity came to an end when the Civil War interfered with normal farming and milling. An indication of the postwar economic depression in Northern Virginia was the declaration of bankruptcy of John Powell.

(See continuation sheet # 3)

Form No 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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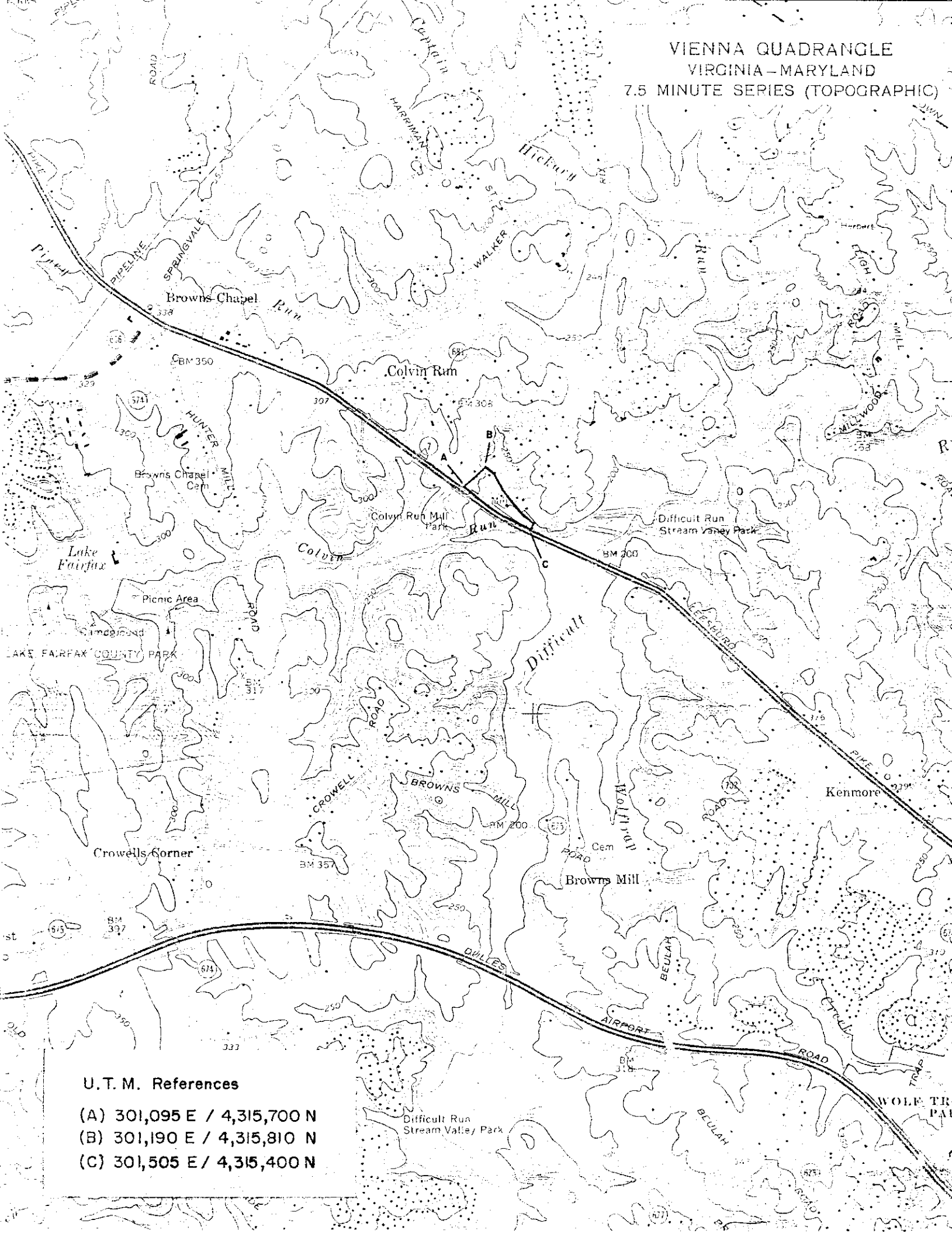
The purchase of the mill in 1883 by Addison Millard ushered in its most prosperous era. The Millard family operated the mill until 1934 and turned it into one of the earliest roller mills of the area. During this time, a cluster of neighborhood services such as a blacksmith shop, several saw mills, a general store and post office were located across the old road from the mill, and the mill area became the center for social activities and exchange of local news.

During the ownership of Bernard Bailey (1934-1965), the activity of the mill was seriously hampered by the state highway department's relocation of Route 7 to a new alignment south of the mill. Although the new road straightened the highway, it crossed between the mill and the milldam in a deep cut, meaning that water for the mill had to be carried through concrete pipes under the highway. Affected both by this development and the changing economic needs of the area, the mill gradually fell into disuse and deterioration. The efforts to save the mill led to its acquisition in 1965 by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The property thus acquired included the mill, the miller's house, a dairy barn, and the remains of the milldam and millrace.

Over the next several years, the mill was painstakingly restored by the Park Authority, and today it stands as a monument both to the skills of its early builders and millers and to the craftsmanship of the twentieth-century artisans who accomplished its restoration. In 1972, the Fairfax County Government recognized the importance of the mill by establishing a historic district to protect the property and its environs.


VIENNA QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA – MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
Browns Chapel
Colvin Run
Colvin Run Mill Park
Difficult Run Stream Valley Park
Lake Fairfax
Picnic Area
Campground
LAKE FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK
Crowells Corner
Browns Mill
Kenmore
Browns Chapel Cem
Cem
BM 350
BM 308
BM 317
BM 200
BM 357
BM 397
BM 318
A
B
C
U.T.M. References
(A) 301,095 E / 4,315,700 N
(B) 301,190 E / 4,315,810 N
(C) 301,505 E / 4,315,400 N