

# Milling About

News from the Friends of Peirce Mill

Summer 2015



Our new education consultant, Angela Kramer, at her table in front of the barn this summer. See article on page 2. *Photo by Steve Dryden*

## Dr. Stonestreet Returns for Heritage Day Oct. 10

The popular family doc from the 19th century – impersonated by Corky Hickey of the Montgomery County Historical Society – will head up the list of attractions at the mill's Heritage Day on October 10. Dr. S, based on a real Rockville physician, appeared at our opening festival in 2011. Dressed in undertaker black, Corky uses a mannequin to explain the gruesome medical procedures in the good old days before effective anesthesia and antibiotics.

Also up on Heritage Day: riffing on our flour-centric focus, we're also planning a demonstration by local cooks of Latino baking techniques (papas, empanadas, tortillas, etc) Music will be provided by local fiddler Kate Saylor and friends, the apple press will be operating, and we hope to have a few guys and gals doing blacksmithing, stone wall building and wood hewing. Hope to see you there!!

## ***A Special Fundraising Appeal***

### **HELP US HOIST THE BARREL**

An anonymous donor has given us \$5,000 toward a new restoration project at the mill -- and we need to match this to get the \$10,000 job done. The project is an extension of the 2011 restoration of the mill's core grain grinding apparatus and pump installation. The waterwheel and millstones, however, are only part of the mill's special "Evans system," named for Delaware inventor Oliver Evans (1755 – 1819), which automated the entire production process using only water power. We'd like to fix the barrel hoist system that moved containers with flour through a trap door on each floor. Re-starting this Evans system feature is a relatively low-cost improvement that demonstrates very visibly the labor-saving innovations that won Evans one of the first US patents.

**PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION  
USING THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE**

[www.peircemill-friends.org](http://www.peircemill-friends.org)

The Friends of Peirce Mill, Inc., is a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

## New Education Consultant at Mill



2015 summer interns (from left): Kieran Irwin-Leventhal, Will Swartz, Nick Mueller, Ava Zeichel, Gillian Page. *Photo by Steve Dryden*

We're fortunate to have found a very talented person to lead children's activities at the Peirce Barn this summer. Angela Kramer recently moved to Washington from Brooklyn, where – among many diverse gigs -- she ran educational programs about the historic Gowanus Creek tide mill. Dutch settlers in New York harnessed power using a water wheel moved by the rise and fall of the coastal tide.



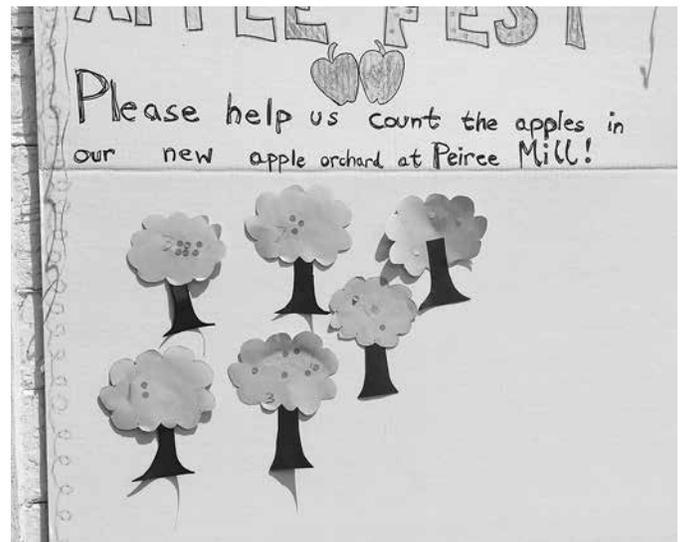
FOPM board member John de Ferrari talks to visitors about Washington County (the former name for the part of D.C. where the mill is located). *Photo by Deborah Dougherty.*

Angela has a master's degree from the Art Institute of Chicago, and has developed and led education programs at the Lefferts Historic House in Brooklyn, designed costumes for the theater and created an exhibition on children in Colonial America.

During one of her first Saturdays at the mill, Angela set up a table with materials to build a wind-powered wheel, using paper plates and wooden skewers. A reversible vacuum cleaner provided the "wind." Other workshops this summer featured nature and apple crafts.

On September 5, Angela will entertain our young visitors with old-time fun such as the "Game of Graces," which involves catching a wooden hoop in the air. She'll also be at the mill for Heritage Day on October 10.

Angela is being assisted this summer by a half dozen interns from DC's Woodrow Wilson High School. One intern, Ava Zeichel, came up with a great idea for all the corn meal we aren't allowed to sell. She showed youngsters how to dye the meal with food coloring and to make sand art designs glued on paper plates.



One of Angela's activities was to ask young visitors to count the number of apples in our orchard and put them on this tree poster. *Photo by Deborah Dougherty.*

## Meet the New Park Chief of Interpretation

We'd like to introduce Lee Snook, the (almost) new chief of interpretation at Rock Creek Park. Lee is the person on the park staff with whom we work most closely, and it's been a pleasure to do that since she started her new assignment last October.

Before arriving here, Lee served for five years as the West District interpreter at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington state – which is about as far away from Washington DC as you can get in the continental US.

Lee began her career with the National Park Service at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Since then, her work as an interpreter and manager has taken her to nearly every corner of the country; Capulin Volcano National Monument in New Mexico, Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, and the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Texas.



“I am happy to have the opportunity to serve at Rock Creek Park,” Lee said. “The diversity of the resources is endless. I find something new and interesting about the park each day and I am very excited to be a part of the park’s 125th Anniversary celebration” this year.

Lee is a native of upstate New York and graduate of Syracuse University, though the Pacific Northwest has been home for a good portion of her life. Lee, her wife Pam, daughter Kate, and Chuck, the dog, are excited about their new adventure in the nation’s capital.

## School Trips Set Record

The mill received 14 school visits this spring, with participation by close to 800 students, teachers and chaperones. It's the most visits recorded in one season since the mill re-opened in 2011.

## Thank You !!

This is the last issue of *Milling About* put together by our graphic designer, Victoria Anderson. Many thanks, Vicki, for your many years of assistance.

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## *Assuring the long-term future of Peirce Mill*

Help us ensure that Peirce Mill is well-maintained and will run for future generations.

## *Remember the Friends of Peirce Mill in your will*

For further information, please contact Program Manager Steve Dryden at 301-512-5899, or [jsdryden@comcast.net](mailto:jsdryden@comcast.net)

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# a look back



The older Oliver.

As much as we admire the genius of Oliver Evans, who is credited with inventing the complete automated milling process of which the barrel hoist (see page 1) is just a small part, we do recall that poor Evans went to grave a bitter man, convinced he never realized the full financial benefits of this technological breakthrough. He spent

much of his later years angrily pursuing mill owners whom he believed owed him for violating his patent rights (he had received the third patent issued by the US government, in 1790).

Much of this drama was played out in Maryland courts. In 1813, the *Weekly Register*, a leading Baltimore newspaper of the day, published accounts of these legal proceedings. It makes fascinating reading on the complexities of claiming originality for the purpose of a patent. Outraged that the courts didn't always support him, Evans went to the U.S. Congress for relief, and got it, through a limited extension of his patent. The act, signed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1808, is reprinted below.

More than a few mill owners believed Evans used the extension for what amounted to extortion, charging substantially inflated patent fees.

Note: Evans died in 1819, a decade before Isaac Peirce completed the mill that still stands today. Peirce, who had operated a previously existing mill on the same site for many years, does not appear as a defendant in the *Register* documents, though a Montgomery County mill owner, Charles Jones, does (his mill gave Jones Mill and Jones Bridge Roads in Chevy Chase their names).

## AN ACT FOR THE RELIEF OF OLIVER EVANS

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That it shall and may be lawful for the secretary of state on application in writing by Oliver Evans to cause letters patent to be made out in the manner prescribed by the act entitled, "An act to promote the progress of useful arts and to repeal the act heretofore made for that purpose," thereby granting to said Oliver Evans, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, for a term not exceeding fourteen years, the full and exclusive right and liberty making constructing, using and vending to be used his invention, discovery and improvements in the art of manufacturing flour and meal, and in the several machines, which he has discovered, invented, improved and applied to that purpose: *Provided*, That no person who may have heretofore paid the said Oliver Evans for license to use his said improvements shall be obliged to renew said license or be subject to damages for not renewing the same: *And provided also*, That no person who shall have used the said improvements, or have erected the same for use, before the issuing of the said patent, shall be liable to damages therefor.*

**J.B. VARNUM**

*Speaker of the House of Representatives*

**GEO. CLINTON**

*Vice President of the United States and  
President of the Senate*

January 21, 1808

Approved,

**TH. JEFFERSON**

*[Laws of the U. States, vol 9, chap xiii, p 20]*

*The Weekly Register, Addenda To Vol II, P 7*

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