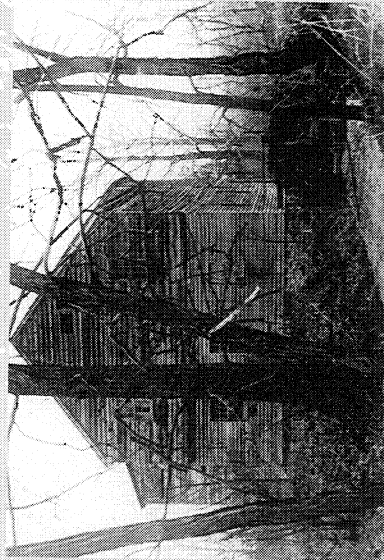
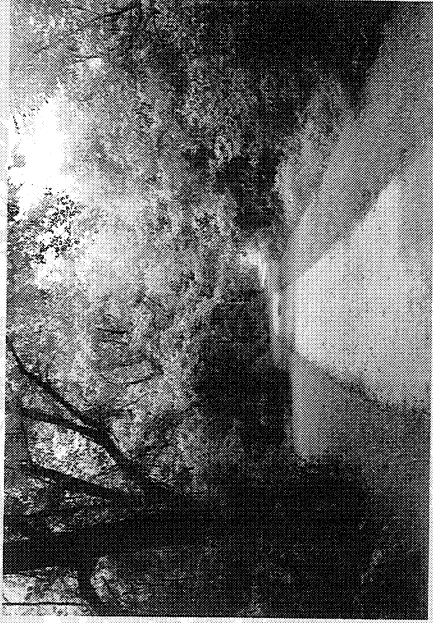
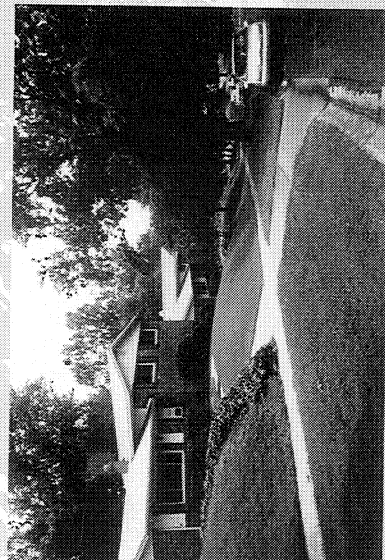


ROCK CREEK TRAIL BRIDGE, VEIRS MILL ROAD, PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES, Rockville, MD 2003

# ROCK CREEK TRAIL BRIDGE



# PUBLIC ART



# & URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

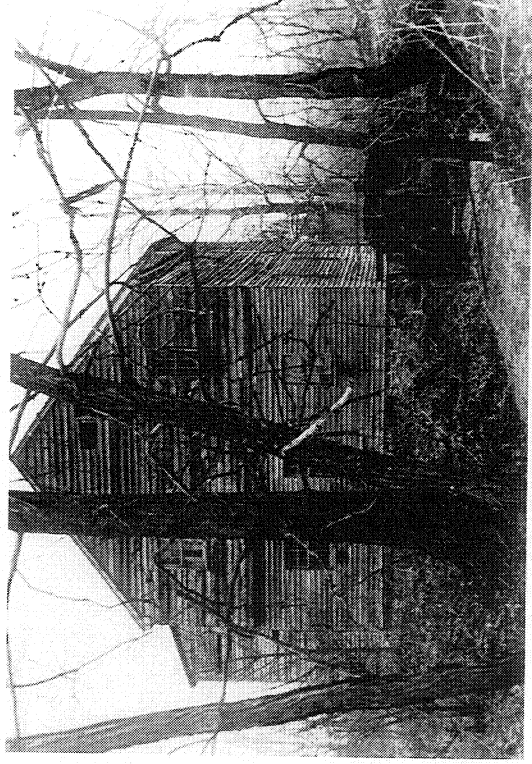
By Vicki Scuri SiteWorks

for Rockville County, MD

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*Veirs Mill was built by Samuel Clark Veirs in 1838. It was operated by Veirs and Co., or Veirs and Bros., for 89 years. Known by many as Rock Creek Mills, it drew customers from Rockville and Mitchell's crossroads (now Wheaton), through a route that became known as Veirs Mill Road. The water-powered grist mill and saw mill was powered by a 12-foot drop of water directed along a mill race from Rock Creek. The first story of the building was stone, and the second two stories wood. The mill was located on the west side of Veirs Mill Road and South of Rock Creek. The miller's house was on the northwest corner of Veirs Mill Road and Aspen Hill Road. Samuel Veirs lived nearby at Meadow Hall. Samuel Veirs was a prominent Rockville citizen, serving as a judge in the orphans court from 1864 until his death in 1872.*

#### FROM MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND PLANNING



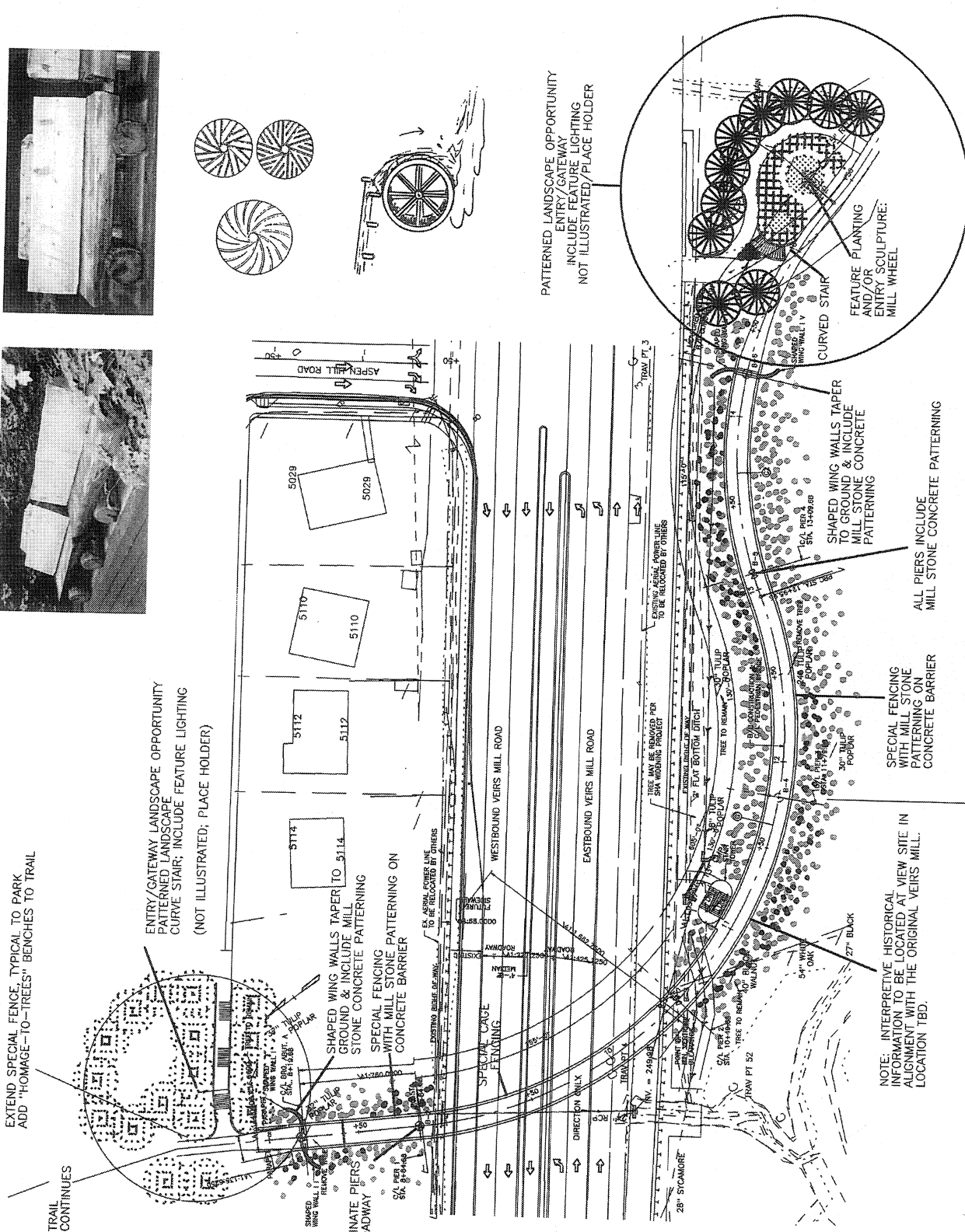
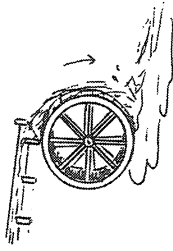
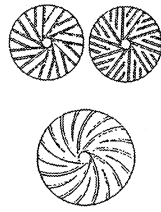
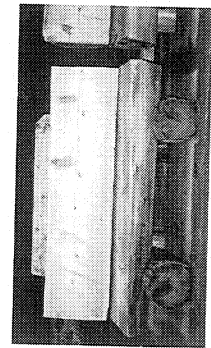
### Executive Summary:

- Inform the name: Veirs Mill Road, with reference to its historical roots and water mill activities along Rock Creek. Public art aims to strengthen these ties, linking past-and-present gestures in ways that are memorable, imaginative and informative, expanding our awareness of time and place.
- The public art and urban design components of the Rock Creek Trail Bridge connect the Victorian Era (1840-1900) of Veirs Mill through contemporary design motifs, that draw their inspiration from mill iconography and Victorian design and romanticism.
- The trees that are removed from the alignment, could be recycled into benches for Rock Creek Park, along the trail. Perhaps this "gesture of homage," could be accomplished by hiring the Park Service, to fabricate benches that note the type of tree cleared, bearing the name, leaf and seed pattern of the particular tree.
- Along the bridge alignment, native grasses, shrubs and trees could be replanted in sweeping strokes, to soften the impact of the bridge on the site and reinforce its gentle curves.
- At bridge entries, gateway landscapes featuring classical geometries, bold colors, textures and plant forms could be designed to reference the Victorian era of Veirs Mill. A mill water wheel could be recreated as a sculptural focus.
- Concrete patterning for piers, barrier walls, retaining walls, and walkways could reference mill stone motifs, informing and celebrating the era of water mills, and in particular, Veirs Mill.
- An interpretive plaque, siting the location of Veirs Mill, a picture of the mill house, and information about Samuel Clark Veirs, could be featured at a site along the bridge that aligns with the mill, creating an imaginary "look out."
- Fencing and lighting designs could reference Victorian design motifs and romanticism while providing sweeping views into the forest below and a pleasant walk through-the-woods-and-over-the-road. The timeless qualities of Victorian geometry could be updated and employed to mitigate the 600 foot linear crossing providing human scale, interest, and a playful historic reference to the era of Veirs Mill, and to nearby beloved landmark, Cabin John Regional Park, formerly a Victorian playground.



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EXTEND SPECIAL FENCE, TYPICAL TO PARK  
ADD "HOMAGE-TO-TREES" BENCHES TO TRAIL

ENTRY/GATEWAY LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITY  
PATTERNED LANDSCAPE  
CURVE STAIR; INCLUDE FEATURE LIGHTING  
(NOT ILLUSTRATED; PLACE HOLDER)

SHAPED WING WALLS TAPER TO 5114  
GROUND & INCLUDE MILL  
STONE CONCRETE PATTERNING  
SPECIAL FENCING  
WITH MILL STONE PATTERNING ON  
CONCRETE BARRIER

PATTERNED LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITY  
ENTRY/GATEWAY  
INCLUDE FEATURE LIGHTING  
NOT ILLUSTRATED/PLACE HOLDER

NOTE: INTERPRETIVE HISTORICAL  
INFORMATION TO BE LOCATED AT VIEW SITE IN  
ALIGNMENT WITH THE ORIGINAL VEIRS MILL  
LOCATION TBD.

SPECIAL FENCING  
WITH MILL STONE  
PATTERNING ON  
CONCRETE BARRIER

ALL PIERS INCLUDE  
MILL STONE CONCRETE PATTERNING

SHAPED WING WALLS TAPER  
TO GROUND & INCLUDE  
MILL STONE CONCRETE  
PATTERNING

CURVED STAIR  
FEATURE PLANTING  
AND/OR  
ENTRY SCULPTURE:  
MILL WHEEL

NATURALIZED NATIVE PLANTS, TREES & ORNAMENTAL GRASSES  
ALONG ALIGNMENT TO SOFTEN IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE ON SITE

## Public Art Opportunities

The Rock Creek Trail Bridge provides an opportunity for safe passage and for a symbolic connection with Montgomery County's historic landscape: the era of water mills. Rock Creek Trail Bridge presents an opportunity to connect trails and neighborhoods, with county parks and open spaces, while relating the name of Veirs Mill Road with the history of its forgotten namesake: Veirs Mill. Recalling the milling activities that once dominated Rock Creek, Veirs Mill is a symbol of Montgomery's county early prosperity and dependence on water mills. Though only a trace of Veirs Mill remains, it has lent its name throughout the area. Connecting the name with its roots provides continuity and sense of place. It provides grounding in a society which is very mobile, and more often than not, cut off from its roots. Public art aims to strengthen these ties, linking past-and-present gestures in ways that are memorable, imaginative and informative, expanding our awareness of time and place.

As early as 1800, there were forty-four mills operating in what is now Montgomery County. Many of these mills were grist and saw mills. The word grist means "ground grain or about to be ground." Veirs Mill, purchased in 1838, is one of many located along Rock Creek. It was a successful merchant mill, a local landmark in its day. It's grain was marketed under the brand name of *Veirs Family and Bouquet*. Veirs Mill and the many others that shaped the waterways were economic and picturesque additions to the landscape. While their essential role was to assist with food, shelter and clothing, the mill pond was a romantic spot for winter ice skating, creating many fond memories. Similarly, the mill wheel and the mill stone, have become romantic icons of a former way of life that is nearly erased.

The public art and urban design components of the Rock Creek Trail Bridge connect the Victorian Era (1840-1900) of Veirs Mill through contemporary design motifs, that draw their inspiration from mill iconography and Victorian design and romanticism. The bridge, which punches through the woods, to cross busy Veirs Mill Road, illuminates a mix of contradictory human gestures and impulses. In order to provide greater mobility, safety and connection to neighborhoods, trails and open space, a swath of park trees must be cleared to create this vital linkage. While the Victorians celebrated an idealized version of "controlled nature," as they harvested their forests, harnessed their streams, built their homes and planted their gardens, we envision a restorative relationship with the land, a re-creation of pastoral landscape in an urban context. In essence, we

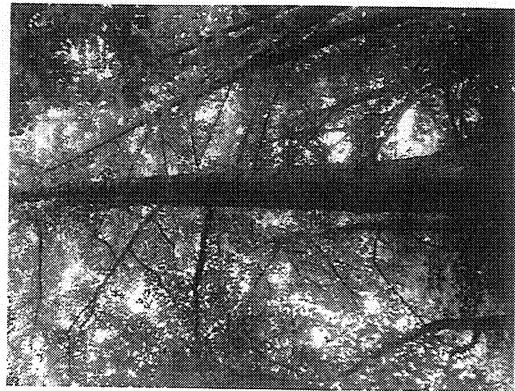
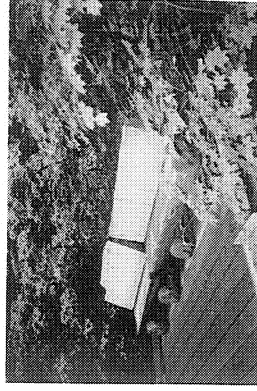
want it both ways. We want roads, bridges, and mobility. More so, we want the connection and the experience of being in nature and with our past. How can this happen?

Rock Creek Trail Bridge provides an opportunity to celebrate the complexity of who we are and where we are:

- To begin, the trees that are removed from the alignment, could be recycled into benches for Rock Creek Park, along the trail. Perhaps this "gesture of homage," could be accomplished by hiring the Park Service, to fabricate benches that note the type of tree cleared, bearing the name, leaf and seed pattern of the particular tree.
- Similarly, along the bridge alignment, native grasses, shrubs and trees could be replanted in sweeping strokes, to soften the impact of the bridge on the site and reinforce its gentle curves..
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- Fencing and lighting designs could reference Victorian design motifs and romanticism, while providing sweeping views into the forest below and a pleasant walk through-the-woods-and-over-the-road. The timeless qualities of Victorian geometry could be updated and employed to mitigate the 600 foot linear crossing, providing human scale, interest, and a playful historic reference to the era of Veirs Mill, and to nearby beloved landmark, Cabin John Regional Park, formerly a Victorian playground.

Top, a log bench from Mt. Rainier National Forest, *The Walk of the Patriots*, for inspiration.

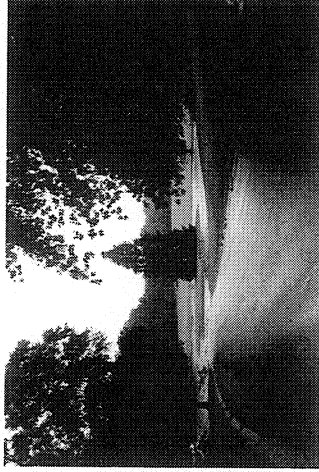
Below, a tree along the alignment of Rock Creek Trail Bridge, that will be removed. Trees sited for removal could be recycled into benches, as an homage to the trees.



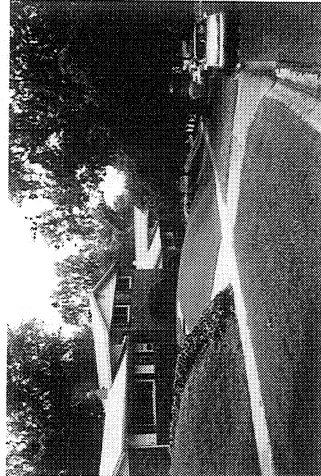
Top left, Veirs Mill Road at Aspen Hill Road, is a busy intersection, with bumper-to-bumper, heavy traffic patterns.



Top right, the entry to Aspen Hill Park, a destination along Rock Creek Trail.

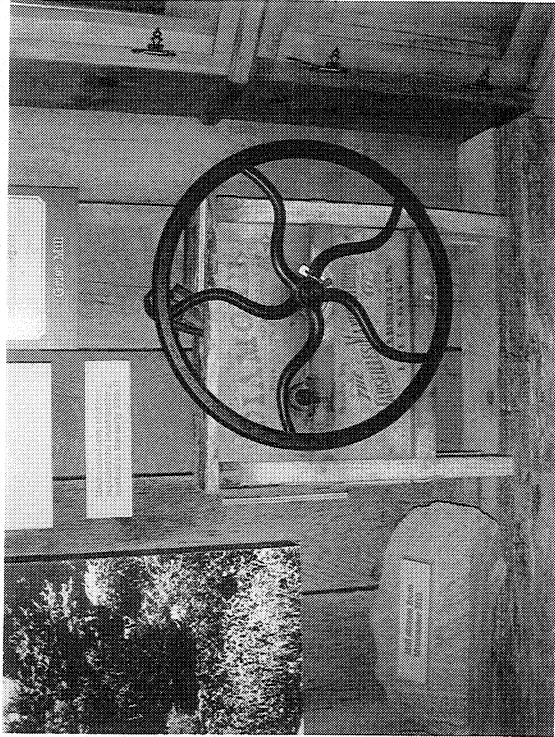


Below left, Aspen Hill is a popular suburban neighborhood, that flourished after World War II, providing many returning GI's and their families with affordable, attractive housing, a piece of the American dream.



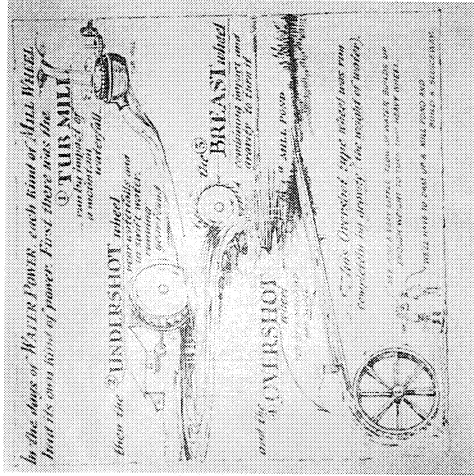
Below right, a cyclist, about to enter Rock Creek Trail. Rock Creek Trail is a popular recreational route. When fully realized, it will link to park lands as far north as Needwood Mansion Park, and as far south as Meadowbrook Stables.





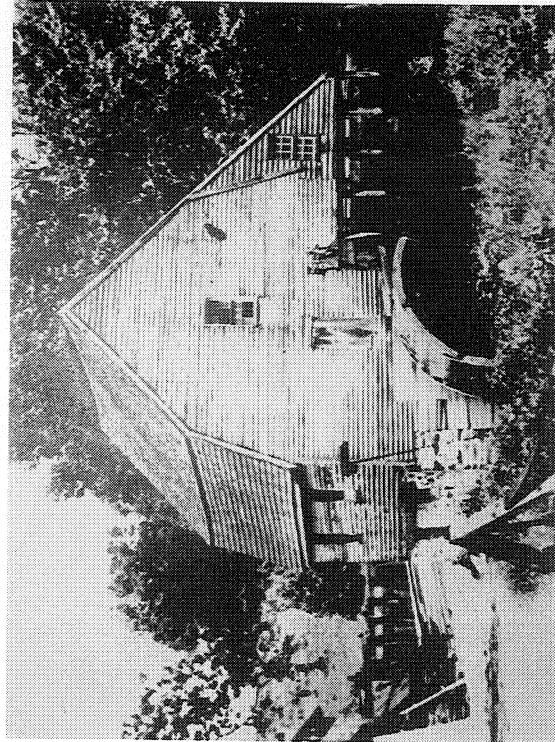
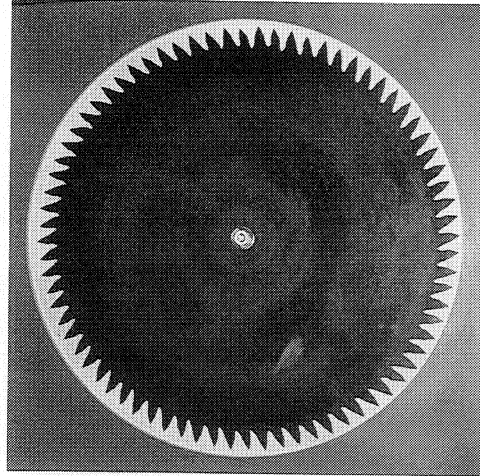
Top left, Mill relics (a piece of mill stone and a wheel) from Muncaster Mill, one of the 19th century mills that once worked Rock Creek.

Top right, an illustration of water power. As population and agriculture increased, there was a demand for more reliable water power. Often, a dam was built to allow the use of an overshot wheel which was far more efficient than an undershot wheel. The paddles of an overshot wheel were formed into buckets. When the water struck the upper blades it turned the wheel not only by the force of the water, but by the force of gravity as the water fell. The overshot wheel was most typical in Montgomery County, and in particular, it is the type of wheel that was used at Veirs Mill.



Below left, Muncaster Mill, was within a six-mile radius of Rockville, located north from Veirs Mill, on Rock Creek at Muncaster Mill Road. Muncaster Mill is well documented and celebrated at Meadowside Nature Center.

Below right, a circular saw blade. Many of the mills in Montgomery County were grist and saw mills.







Top left, this pedestrian bridge crossing Rock Creek features overlooks to the woods and creek below.

Top right, a good example of historic preservation. The train trestle is retained as a historic reference to railroad history along Rock Creek. Gradually, the advent of the steam engine and the competition from Mid-Western flour, mass produced, stored in grain elevators and shipped by rail, closed the mills in Montgomery County one by one.

Below left, Rock Creek.

