

APPENDIX

Left, Map of Mills in Montgomery County, 1783-1800. Unfortunately, very little documentation describes Veirs Mill, specifically. We do know that mills were very important to the early prosperity of Montgomery County, and Veirs Mill was a prosperous merchant mill that operated for 89 years.

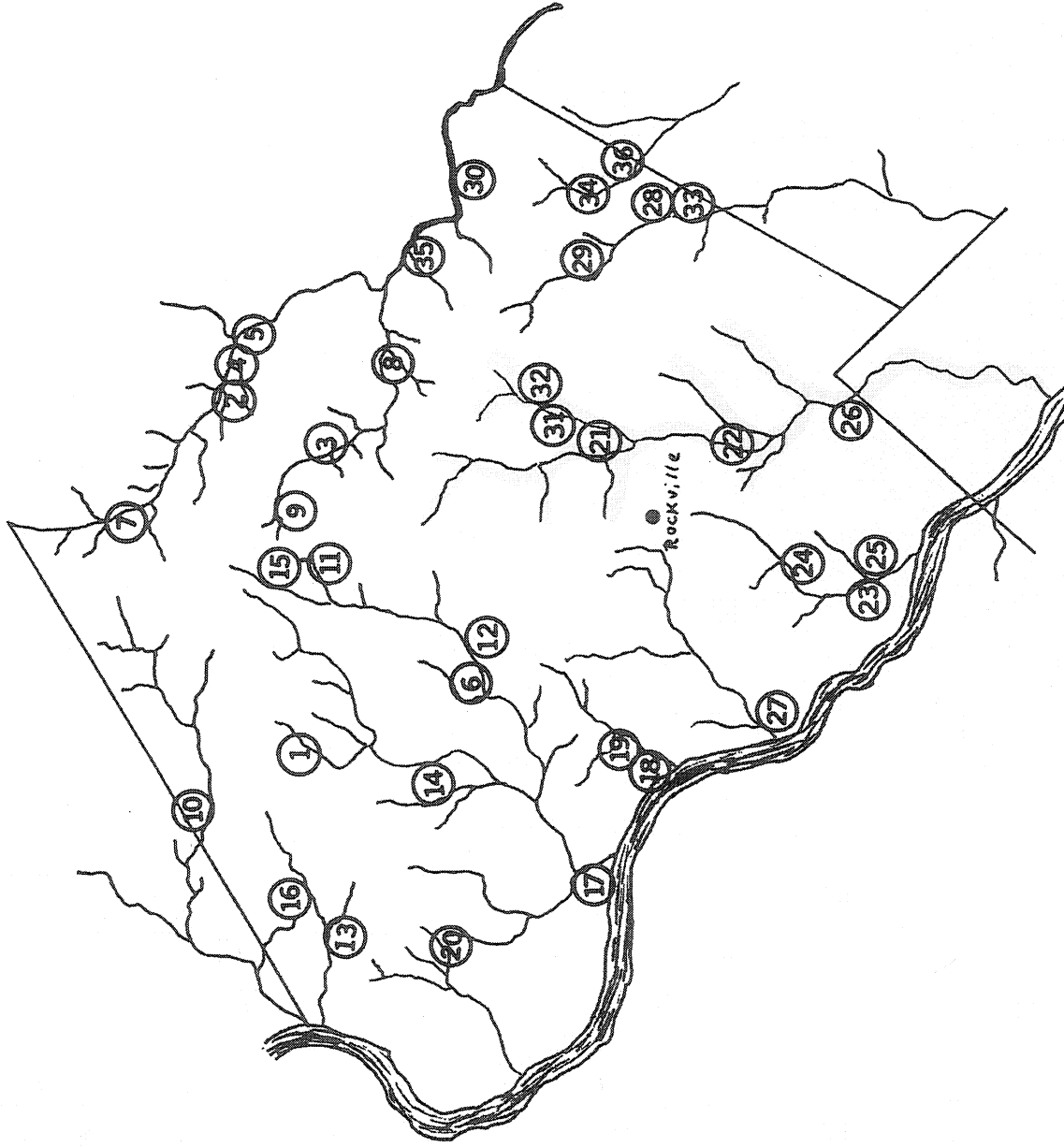
Samuel Clark Veirs purchased the property for Veirs Mill in 1838. The mill, along with the Veirs house, Meadow Hall, overlooking Rock Creek, was a landmark in its day. The property featured terraced grounds. Remnants of these terraces are still visible near the mill site.

"The Rockville Flour Milling Company, as advertised in 1880, sold flour under the brand name of Veirs Family and Bouquet. The 1880 census listed Veirs and Bro. Mill as worth \$230,000, with 14 employees and a 100 bushel per day capacity. The mill was driven by an overshot wheel nine feet broad which rated at 30 horsepower."

Rockville Newsletter, June 18, 1975

This map precedes Veirs Mill, but it does illustrate the wealth of mills in the area. Most likely, Veirs Mill is located somewhere near Mill 22: Bersheba/Dann/Newport Mills.

This map is courtesy of the Montgomery County Story: Early Water Mills in Montgomery County, by Eleanor M. V. Cook.



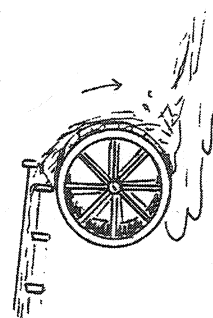
Mills in Montgomery County 1783-1800

Top, another map of Montgomery County Mills. Veirs Mill is marked in yellow.

Bottom, an illustration with text on mill wheels, excerpted from The Montgomery County Story.



As the population and agriculture increased, there was a demand for mills of greater capacity. A dam was built to provide a more reliable source of water power and to allow the use of an overshot wheel, which was far more efficient than the undershot. The paddles of an overshot wheel were formed into buckets and 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 in the buckets fell.³ While there were other types of wheels, flutter wheels, breast wheels and turbines, it is overwhelmingly the overshot wheel that is mentioned in Montgomery County records.



ROCKVILLE MILLS



Mrs. Wootton's Mill

Photo courtesy of the Columbia Historical Society

the creek, and was probably built by Jeffrey Magruder before 1786. The mill was destroyed by Joseph Edgar before 1772. Edgar and his brothers originally from Philadelphia, constructed several mills in the Milton Farm and in the neighboring area. Edgar probably built the Muncaster Mill, for example, about 1820 and gave it a 15 foot diameter overshoot wheel. Most 19th century mills were powered by overshoot wheels, in which the weight of water conducted through the race to the top of the wheel caused it to turn with about three times the efficiency of an undershot wheel.

The two mills closest to Rockville are good examples of the two different types of mill that were operated. Mrs. Wootton's saw and grist mill was a local or custom mill. Custom mills were small. They ground the owner's grain and, upon the payment of a toll, that of his neighbors. Typically such mills had but one run of stones and were sometimes located on streams of such trifling flow that one wonders how they could induce any sort of wheel to turn. One answer was that the miller saved water behind his dam at night to have enough to run the mill during the day. In addition to the single run of stones, such a mill would have an up-and-down saw out back and operation would be seasonable at best. Wootton's Mill may have been built as early as the 1770s - there is a somewhat cryptic reference to a mill that might be this one in a document dated 1779. Wootton's Mill is described in the (Rockville) Maryland Journal of July 31, 1844, as to be offered for auction on September 27 of that year. It is shown on Martenel and Bnd's maps of 1855 as located on Watts Branch at two hundred yards down stream from the present Rockville. The accompanying photograph (1930) from the collection of the Columbia Historical Society shows what we have come to expect as typical of such mills throughout this

followed the establishment of transportation networks, the locations of towns in early Maryland was often determined by the presence of suitable mill sites on creeks and rivers. Aside from animals, wind and water were the only prime-movers available to the colonists. Milling grains were vital to the diet, and transportation was poor at best until well into the 19th century. The grains grown locally had to be milled locally. Within a six-mile radius of the Courthouse in Rockville, there are recorded the sites of eleven grist mills. Here, on the Piedmont, water mills were the rule. On Maryland's Coastal Plain, where there are no waterfalls, wind mills were constructed.

Of the eleven mills mentioned only two were operated on the undershot principle. In undershot operations, the flow of the stream under the wheel caused it to turn. One such mill, Bowie's Mill, the mill nearest the headwaters of Rock Creek, was located where Bowie's Mill Road

This article is another in a series of articles about Rockville's past brought to you by the Rockville Bicentennial Commission. This article was written by Robert Braumberg, who has been involved locally in industrial archeology for a number of years. The Montgomery County Historical Society quarterly THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY STORY will soon carry a more extensive discussion of this topic by Mr. Braumberg. He gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Michael F. Dwyer (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission), John W. McGrain (Mollinography of Maryland), Robert Truax (Columbia Historical Society), and the Montgomery County Historical Society library.

The local mill was vital to American agrarian life in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Before the revolution, there were virtually no large industrial centers in America. Even iron was made locally in small furnaces located anywhere that the raw materials could be obtained. Just as settlement patterns

area. The second class of mills is represented by the Rockville mill. Veirs soon after he built the mill property in 1806. The mill, although overlooked the creek, was a landmark in the area. Merchant millers were in their operations on streams that could be counted upon to turn their wheels most of the year. They did custom milling, and they also bought grain from local growers and sold flour. The Rockville Flour Milling Company, as advertised in 1880, sold flour under the brand name of Veirs Family and Bouquet. The 1880 census listed Veirs and Bro. Mill as worth \$230,000, with 14 employees and a 100 bushel per day capacity. The mill was driven by an overshoot wheel nine feet broad which rated at 30 horsepower.

After the coming of the railroad in 1873, the improved transportation opportunities made the local mills less of a necessity. Some millers improved their efficiency by converting their water powers to turbines; others such as Bowie's went to steam power. Few were able to effectively meet the competition of large regional milling centers far into the 20th century.

The other mills within a six mile radius of Rockville were Glenwood on Muddy Branch at Turkey Foot Road, Belt's Old mill at the mouth of Watts Branch, Belt's Mill at Seven Locks Road at Democracy Boulevard (on Cabin John Creek), Magruder's Fully powered mill on Rock Creek at River Road, Muncaster Mill Road, Muncaster's grist mill on Piney Branch near Glen Road, and two ancient (and, I date unlocated) sites of Eigan Mills on Rock Creek between Horner's and Muncaster's mills.

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Left, an article, from the Rockville Newsletter, June 18, 1975, which features a story on early Rock Creek mills, including several paragraphs about Veirs Mill.