



YATES MILL

associates newsletter

Summer 2004

Barrel Packer/Flour Press Installed

By William Robbins

Just inside the front door at Yates Mill, a vertical support post has held a curious bracket for many decades. The purpose of this bracket was often discussed but never fully understood until February 2003 when a visit to Colvin Run Mill in Virginia revealed its true purpose. Upon entering Colvin Run Mill, a similar post with two brackets and several other components was observed. These were assembled to form what is known as a barrel packer or flour press. Close examination of this device revealed its similarities to the parts that remained at Yates Mill and discussions with Colvin Run's miller, Mason Maddox, revealed its functions.

Research into the origins of the barrel packer/ flour press show that it was a vital component of Oliver Evans' 1795 patent for the automatic mill but it was actually invented by his brother Evan Evans and Thomas Clarke. It is believed that the function of this device was twofold. It was used to pack flour into a barrel and also to press the lid into the open end of the flour barrel. Research about flour barrels indicates that they measured 28 inches tall and held 196 lbs. Thomas Jefferson writes in his Farm Book, that "a cooper's task is 4 flour barrels a day from the rough" and that the cooper got to keep one barrel for every 31 that he sent to the mill.

Using photographs and a measured drawing prepared during a second visit to Colvin Run Mill and George Washington's Grist Mill at Mt. Vernon, which also has one of these devices, the construction of a barrel packer/ flour press for Yates Mill has been completed. The iron parts were hand forged and fashioned and white oak wood was selected and shaped. A duplicate of the original pine wood bracket was fitted into existing empty morticed slots in the vertical post, using the same type pegs as the original connection. An iron bracket was installed on the floor to support the heavy oak lever and metal arms. These arms are connected to a vertical member with a round block attached to its lower end. This round block travels down into the flour barrel, when the heavy oak lever is pivoted downward. A flour barrel of the correct size was also acquired to complete the installation.

The process of construction for the "Hopper Boy" is now underway. The proper woods have been acquired and the metal parts will soon be forged. Soon Yates Mill will be

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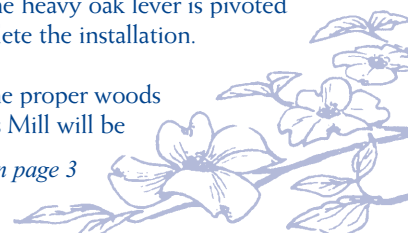
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Message From The President by Robert Rader

Eleven Months and Counting

As a child there was always a sense of excitement when NASA was about to launch another rocket into space. I shall never forget the television images of the Apollo space ships sitting on the launch pads at Cape Canaveral with smoke and fumes bellowing awaiting lift-off. It always seemed like we waited an eternity for the rockets to actually take off. The most exciting time by far was when the mysterious voice from NASA would cut into the programming and begin the countdown. "Mission Control we are at T minus 10 and counting9..8..7..6..5..4..3..2..1..we have lift-off!"

For those of us who have been involved in the restoration of Yates Mill it seems much like a NASA mission. Years of planning and work have gone into the restoration of the mill and design and construction of Historic Yates Mill County Park. Now we are only eleven months away from lift-off. Many assume that most of the hard work is now behind us and it is smooth sailing from here on out. In the words of those crazy Saturday Night Live comedians Garth and Wayne from Wayne's World "NOT!"

In fact, those involved with Yates Mill on a regular basis seem to be busier than ever. Preparing to open the park and mill to the public requires a tremendous amount of work and planning. Under the leadership of Board member Ed Hobbs, the business planning process is well underway. With 35,000 to 50,000 park visitors expected in the first year alone, the structure and frequency of mill tours is a primary issue being addressed. With tours obviously come the issues of recruiting, coordinating, and training volunteers to assist with the tours. Plans are also being made for staffing needs to meet the demands and adequately manage and maintain the site.

Preparing the site to open in eleven months also requires much time devoted to infrastructure issues. Rebecca Cope, Tim Maloney, and county officials continue to monitor construction of the A.E. Finley Center for Education and Research as well as the two pond boardwalks and the mill overlook on a daily basis. The Exhibit Design Committee is overseeing the development of educational exhibits for the new Finley Center as described in more detail in Rebecca Cope's article herein. Experts have been consulted on issues related to fire protection, security, safety and lighting at the mill in addition to handicap accessibility to the mill.

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Welcome New Board Members

Yates Mill Associates would like to welcome our two newest Board members elected at the recent Annual Meeting. **Marcie Gordon** was elected as a member of the class of 2007. Marcie is a full time mom and community volunteer. Marcie has been extremely active as a member of the Junior League of Raleigh and the N.C. Museum of History Associates. Marcie's involvement with Yates Mill dates back to the first Wheels Are Turning event when she served as chair of the Publicity Committee.

Samuel Greene was elected as a member of the class of 2006 filling a vacancy created by the resignation of his cousin and long time YMA Board member Herman Greene. Sam is a counselor and Assistant Football Coach at Middle Creek High School. Sam has a passion for history and continues the tradition of the Greene family's presence on the Yates Mill Board. Both Sam and Herman are descendants of mill owner Phares Yates. Welcome Marcie and Sam! ■

Business Planning

By Ed Hobbs

Since we first mentioned business planning in the last issue of the newsletter, a lot of work has taken place. Here is a brief overview of what has been done, some preliminary findings and some of our planned next steps.

To assist us in determining what services the mill should offer, what resources in terms of people and money would be required and some ways to obtain these resources, we surveyed seven other operating gristmills.

In addition, we felt it was necessary to revisit what we are calling "infrastructure items." These include security, safety, handicap access, fire detection and fire suppression. While these areas had been discussed over the past several years, we knew that our use of the mill would be greater than initially expected and we felt that requirements and regulations may have changed. To obtain input and recommendations in these areas, we contacted the fire department and fire marshal's office, the sheriff's department, several Wake County departments and several North Carolina State Government agencies.

Some of our preliminary findings include:

- Adequate personnel resources and funding appear to be very significant "challenges."
- The use of trained and dedicated volunteers is essential to the success of the site.
- Site generated revenue will be essential to help fund personnel and mill related operating expenses.
- School groups are excellent sources of tour revenue and they are very interested in what we expect to offer.
- Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) may have an impact on the mill and surrounding area.

Our next steps include obtaining consulting assistance from experienced firms to help us develop options and alternatives in the infrastructure areas. We will then assemble all of these findings and in working session with Wake County Parks, Recreation & Open Space management, reach consensus on our direction. These recommendations will then be brought before the YMA Board of Directors for final review and approval.

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a complete example of the 1795 patented Oliver Evans automatic mill and a unique educational opportunity for all who come to see it. ■

pictured far right:

Restored barrel packer/four press

pictured right:

Original bracket for barrel packer



In Remembrance of J.W. "Willie" York

The 91 long and productive years of J.W. "Willie" York's life ended on March 2, 2004. Willie ("Call me 'Willie', my father is Mr. York" was a favorite expression of his) was a strong supporter of many causes in Raleigh and high among them was the restoration of Yates Mill. It is thus fitting that we honor him as a major benefactor of our project. He supported the YMA's efforts both financially and with his persuasive skills, often working behind the scenes.

In many ways Willie's approach to getting things done was the approach the leadership of YMA adopted. As a broker of real estate he was all about developing and fostering cooperative ventures between people and agencies so that all benefit. We are sure it did not always work that way on every deal but, for Willie, it did most of the time.

We have often said that the restoration of Yates Mill is a "Win, Win, Win" situation. The historic community gets a jewel of a working mill, right here in Wake County; North Carolina State University gets an exciting site to conduct its field research and teaching programs; and Wake County citizens get a superb park to learn about and enjoy the natural history of the area and historic preservation. These are not the only partners, the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences and many other groups will take advantage of the resources at the new Historic Yates Mill County Park to open next spring.

In one sense, Willie kicked off the preservation and restoration of Yates Mill when late in 1961 he was the broker for the sale of the A.E. Finley property on Lake Wheeler Road to N.C. State University. The details of that deal were as follows.

The news was out in the real estate community in the early sixties that NC State wanted to buy the approximately 1,000 acres close to campus for expansion of its agricultural research program. But budgets were tight then, just as now, and the University could not raise the \$1 million needed. Others were interested in the land but Mr. Finley and his associates, including me, wanted the University to have the land. One day, late in 1962 Mr. Finley called me and asked me to get in touch with Willie York and ask him to meet us at the College Inn on Western Blvd. We met and drove to the Lodge on the Fin-Crest Farms property and Mr. Finley said to Willie "You can get things done and we need to know if the University wants and can pay for this 1000 acres and the old mill." Willie said he would. He went to see W.D. "Billy" Carmichael, the chief financial officer of the Greater University System located in Chapel Hill and he got the money, \$200,000 in the first year and \$800,000 in the second year. Willie's dynamic personality and persuasive skills got the deal done.

While the land was used for agricultural and ecological research, the mill stood unused until 1989 when YMA began its restoration efforts. The rest is history. ■



Endowment Fund

Barbara Howell

*In memory of Dee Stephenson Smith
& Steele Stephenson Howell
(descendants of David & Charity Stephenson)*

James Peacock

In memory of Samuel & Laura Pearson

J.D. "Dick" Thompson

In memory of J.W. "Willie York"

Jim Graham Hopper Boy Fund

J.D. "Dick" & Doris Thompson

A.E. Finley Foundation, Inc.

John & Barbara Vandenberg

In memory of J.W. "Willie York"

Elizabeth R. Stoker

In memory of Jim Graham

Preparing A New County Park For Its Grand Opening

By Rebecca Cope, Manager of Historic Yates Mill County Park

Historic Yates Mill County Park is planned to open to the public in May 2005, depending on the actual time it takes to finish park construction, which could be affected by weather and other factors. If all goes as planned, in about eleven months time Wake County residents and visitors will gain access to 574 acres of diverse natural areas and open spaces, and will be able to experience a rare piece of American history firsthand through the preservation, operation and interpretation of Yates Mill – one of oldest water-powered mills established in Wake County and now the county's only remaining gristmill.

There is a lot yet to do to prepare the historic mill, its 20-acre pond and the surrounding natural areas for public debut as a county park next spring. Construction of several notable park features is progressing. The 10-foot wide, approx. 400-foot long wooden boardwalk that crosses the headwaters of the pond is almost finished, while the upstream wetlands boardwalk (of similar design) is just starting to take form. Construction of both boardwalks, and that of the Monk Perry mill overlook deck near the mill, should be completed by August 2004. Construction of the 16,000-square foot park center - the A.E. Finley Center for Education & Research - is expected to be complete by March 2005, at which time interpretive exhibits built by Malone Design/Fabrication of Atlanta will be installed in the building.

Wake County is working with Malone Design/Fabrication and an 11-member, volunteer design committee to develop approx. 2,200 square feet of interpretive exhibits and displays for the park center. The exhibits focus primarily on the mill's history and operations, as well as on millpond and park ecology. As part of the exhibit design and development process, exhaustive inventories were produced of the park's diverse archival collections including artifacts, artwork, audio- and videotapes, books, interpretive costumes, historical documents, recorded interviews, old newsletters and newspaper articles, photographs, slides, nature objects and more. Many of these items will be on display in the park center's exhibit hall.

The 12 members of Historic Yates Mill County Park's founding Advisory Board held their first meeting in March 2004. Four regular board meetings have been held to date. Wake County, NC State University (NCSU) and Yates Mill Associates (YMA) each appointed four of the twelve board members. Ed Hobbs was elected as Chair of the Advisory Board, while Phil Rea was elected to serve as Vice-Chair. Among other subjects, the board is exploring issues related to the recreational and educational uses that the new park grounds and facilities will support, and how the site's natural and cultural resources can best be managed through the ongoing public/private partnership effort.

Once construction of the park center is complete and Wake County Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) is granted occupancy of the new building, staff will outfit the center's interior facilities (i.e., reception/exhibit hall, classrooms, indoor amphitheater, resource room, etc.) for public use. Staff is working with its partners in a variety of ways to prepare for the park's grand opening. For example, PROS is working with NCSU's Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management to develop an operations and maintenance manual for the park's grounds and facilities. YMA is developing a similar plan for operation and maintenance of the historic mill and its machinery. PROS and YMA are working with teachers and curriculum specialists from the Wake County Public School System to develop school-based programs for the park. These programs are planned to begin in fall 2005, while programs and special events for the general public will be offered at the time of the park's grand opening.

Preparations are underway for the grand opening celebration. Please plan to join us in May 2005 for the festivities. Be sure to check for future announcements about the grand opening event. Updated information on new park programs and special events will be posted in both the YMA quarterly newsletter and the PROS' Parks Quarterly newsletter, as well as on the Wake County website (www.wakegov.com). Please also feel free to call park staff at (919) 856-6675 for more information. ■



Park Center Education Wing



Park Center Exhibit Hall South Entrance



Pond Boardwalk From West



Wetlands Boardwalk From East

"Business Planning" continued from page 2

We are confident that this process will result in a direction that will build on all the work that has taken place over the years to get us to where we are today and will ensure that Yates Mill will be here and successful for many, many years to come. ■

15th Annual Meeting Held At J.C. Raulston Arboretum

by Robert Rader

More than fifty people attended the Annual Meeting of Yates Mill Associates at the J. C. Raulston Arboretum on May 5, 2004. The reception and meeting were held in the spacious J.W. York Auditorium in the new Ruby C. McSwain Education Center on the grounds of the arboretum. The gathering provided a wonderful opportunity for many to get their first glimpse of the new McSwain Center and to enjoy the natural beauty of the site by touring the arboretum grounds.

Dr. Bob Lyons, Arboretum Director, welcomed those in attendance and reflected on the partnership and strength of the relationship that has developed over the years between Yates Mill Associates and N.C. State University. YMA President Robert Rader introduced special guest Jamie Jones, a 12th grade student at Enloe High School. Jamie was recognized for his painting of Yates Mill that recently received an Honorable Mention in the Wake Education Partnership Pieces of Gold Art Competition, a county wide competition with entries from all public schools. The painting, which was on display, was a Gold Key Finalist (regional winner) in the National Scholastics Art Competition. Jamie was presented a Yates Mill tee-shirt and a one year free membership in YMA.

Board Member J.D. "Dick" Thompson delivered a moving tribute to his long time friend Willie York who passed away in March of this year. Dick pointed out that it was especially fitting that the Annual Meeting was being held in the J.W. "Willie" York Auditorium in memory of Willie who did so much to promote Yates Mill. Dick recounted personal stories and highlighted Willie's early efforts to assist with fundraising and secure support for the project from university and county leaders.

The state of the art technical capabilities of the York Auditorium provided a wonderful venue for presentations during the business meeting. Rebeccah Cope presented a power point presentation on park construction complete with current photos of the on site work. William Robbins provided an update on the mill restoration work including an amazing video of all the interior machinery operating simultaneously. The video was a true crowd pleaser! Ed Hobbs followed with a power point presentation on the business planning process currently underway.

The Annual Meeting culminated with presentation of the Henry Marshall Award to Carolyn Solomon for her many years of service to Yates Mill. Many in attendance commented that it was the best Annual Meeting in years. Certainly all left with a renewed sense of excitement about what has been accomplished and what is yet to come. ■

Carolyn Solomon Receives Henry Marshall Award



Henry Marshall presents Carolyn Solomon with the Henry Marshall Volunteer of the Year Award

by Robert Rader

The 2004 Henry Marshall Award was presented to Carolyn Solomon during the recent Annual Meeting of Yates Mill Associates. For many years Carolyn has served faithfully as the Special Events Chair coordinating the logistics for numerous Yates Mill events. She was instrumental in planning and coordinating Wheels Are Turning III that proved to be a huge success. Carolyn has facilitated fund raising receptions, gatherings for elected-officials at the mill site, a pond refilling ceremony, annual meetings, quarterly Board of Directors meetings and many, many more.

In her role as Special Events Chair, Carolyn Solomon has been an integral part of the Yates Mill Executive Committee that meets monthly. Carolyn's continuing input and involvement has substantially contributed to the success of Yates Mill. Having given up her role as Special Events Chair in May, Carolyn is now utilizing her design experience as the YMA representative on the Exhibit Design Committee charged with ensuring that the exhibits at the new A.E. Finley Center for Education & Research are successfully and creatively developed and constructed.

The Henry Marshall Award has been presented each year since 1995 to one individual for outstanding contributions to the restoration and promotion of historic Yates Mill. The award is named in honor of Henry Marshall, a dedicated and tireless volunteer whose individual efforts for many years while serving as University Farm Superintendent saved the decaying mill from an early demise. Henry was on hand to present the award at the Annual Meeting. Congratulations Carolyn on this well deserved honor! ■

YATES MILL ASSOCIATES, INC. Membership Application and Renewal

MEMBERSHIPS

- New
- Renewal

- Associate \$25
- Family \$35
- Student \$20
- Patron \$100
- Sustaining Patron \$500

VOLUNTEERS

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- Newsletter
- Special events
- Photography

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Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Is it time to renew? Please check the date on your mailing label. Thanks for your support.

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"Message from the President" continued from page 2

Finally, the planning process has also begun for the grand opening celebration. Plans are being made for a special Yates Mill gala event. As you can quickly see, there remains a lot of work to be done in a relatively short amount of time. Rest assured that it will be done and our mission of providing the citizens of Wake County with one of the finest historic and environmental education parks in the country will be accomplished.

So, we are at T minus 11 months and counting. Just remember that when lift-off occurs in May 2005, the sky's the limit! ■

Enloe High School student Jamie Jones is recognized at the YMA Annual Meeting for his award winning painting of Yates Mill.



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