Email interview with Society for the Preservation of Old Mills.

Interviewer: Hello, my name is Casey Harvey. I am trying to do research on a local mill/hydroelectric dam but I don't know where to start. I have started by contacting local libraries but there don't seem to be specific articles or books pertaining to the construction of the mill. I have also been talking with previous owners of the property as well as local residents but most of that information is local legend. How did your club manage to collect such extensive histories on mills? Thank you so much for your help.

Craig Wiley: That's a very good question, Casey. Much of the information we have on mills comes from owners and other interested local individuals that have taken the time to submit it to SPOOM's mill roster coordinators over the years. Also in the case our Great Lakes SPOOM website, the webmaster has compiled extensive information on her own over the years.

Many times the historical information comes from published local histories, so you were certainly looking in the right direction when you inquired about these. Too bad your local libraries haven't been able to find anything.

Old newspapers on microfilm are also an excellent source of information. Prior to about WWII newspapers usually featured columns from each of the small communities they served, always written by someone living close-by, and new construction-- especially big projects like a mill and dam--would nearly always make news.

If you would be willing to share the name of the mill you're researching and its location I might be able to better help you. Best of luck and please don't hesitate to contact me again if you have other questions.

Interviewer: The mill is currently called Burnshire Dam but I have also found it referred to as Triplett Dam. It is in Woodstock, Virginia.

Craig Wiley: [Email forwarded to Bob Lundegard, Interviewer Cc’d] Hi Bob, I'm forwarding this interesting query to you hoping you'll be able to provide some information. Thanks and best regards!

Bob Lundegard: Craig, this is the documentation from Marge's Book. Hope it helps.

[Attached File]

**STONEWALL MILL RUIN**

This mill was located two miles northeast of Woodstock on SR 663. The mill was located on the west bank of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The bridge over the river is just a slab of concrete with no side rails. The river is wide but rather shallow at this point.

In 1826 Henry Artz received permission to put up a milldam. The dam was of large logs, with small cedar trees laid at an angle and spiked to the logs on the upstream side, on top of which large stones were piled. The dam was about ten feet high. The millrace was about fifty feet long. The mill was built around 1830. In 1832 Jonas Burner owned the mill. By 1846 Henry Hottle and Andrew Hottle were the owners The flour was sold commercially and was shipped to Alexandria by flat boats that sailed down the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. Lemuel Painter and James M Hottle bought the mill in 1859. By 1858 the Manassas Gap Railroad was completed. A large barn was built at the Railroad siding with stalls for eight horses and a haymow above. There was a corncrib and a wagon shed to shelter the wagons when they came to the mill.

In 1878 the owners were William H. Smith and George H. Hottle. In 1884 the property was conveyed to W. T. Williams who sold the property to Joseph I. Triplett in 1886. This was one of the first roller mills that made very fine bleached flour. The flour was sold commercially. Triplett operated the mill until 1912 when he constructed a larger mill in Woodstock. After 1912 a dynamo was installed in the mill, using the waterpower to generate electricity for the town of Woodstock. When Joseph died in 1930 he left the mill and all of his other property as an endowment for a business school.

The mill was a two and a half storied stone rectangular structure that had a metal gambrel roof. The mill had two inside chimneys, one made of stone and one made of brick. The interior of the mill was torn out in 1908 when the mill ceased operations. There was a large post in the mill where the high water marks were shown. The winter of 1918-19 was one of the coldest on record in this area. The ice on the milldam was two feet thick. A warm rain in March caused the river to rise very fast, breaking the ice in the stream. There was an accumulation of ice as high as five feet behind the dam. A huge sheet of ice pushed over the dam. Every tree in the way was knocked flat by the huge sheets of ice. The road was flooded to a depth of four feet. Dynamite was used to break up the huge pieces of ice.

During the Civil War, General Sheridan burned mills in the valley but this mill was passed by. The barn and wagon shed at the mill were washed away during one of the many floods. People used to skate on the millpond in the winter and swim in the summertime. Young people used to ride the horses bareback into the water behind the milldam. Ice was cut from the millpond in the winter months to fill the ice houses of the surrounding areas.

The ruin is on private property that is posted. Only one corner of the mill wall remains today. In the yard, besides the ruin, is an old belt driven wheel. The dam is partially visible. The headrace has been filled in with dirt. The present owners have planted flowers around the ruin and keep the grass well mowed. Vines are growing over the ruins.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for finding this for me. Just to be sure, there was no other entry for Woodstock, Virginia?  Thanks again.

Bob Lundegard: Casey, The book is "Mills 7 Mill Ruins In Shenandoah & Warren Counties Virginia", by Marjorie Lundegard. The book can be purchased from the Friends of Colvin Run Mill for $7.50. Contact Nick Yannarell at [email removed]. The booklet lists 19 mills in Shenandoah County. The County seat is Woodstock. There is one other mill listed in Woodstock, French's Mill. This mill is in Woodstock. It was owned and operated by the French family.

Interviewer: Thank you, I will look into purchasing the book.  I know that some mills were converted over to hydroelectric power, would they no longer be considered "mills"?

Bob Lundegard: Casey, if a mill was a water powered grist mill that was converted, it would be considered an historic mill.