

Thoroughfare Gap History

Thoroughfare Gap is a natural break in the Bull Run Mountains, through which Broad Run flows east with an 87 foot descent. The Gap has been an important East-West thoroughfare since it was used by migrating buffalo and traveling Indians.

Mention of the Gap was first recorded in 1697 by a group of Marylanders in search of the Piscataway Indians. Farmers used the Gap as a transportation corridor for grain and goods from the fertile Shenandoah Valley.

In wartime, the Gap's use became even more strategic:

- 1754-1763: Escape route during the French and Indian War.
- 1775-1783: Route east to take up arms during the Revolutionary War.
- 1861-1865: An active passageway for both the Union and Confederate armies.
- 1898: 10,000 American troops during the Spanish-American War were stationed at the Gap to avoid a typhoid epidemic in Falls Church, VA.

Today, Inter-state 66 and Route 55 move thousands of daily commuters to their work in metropolitan Washington, DC.

Chapman/Beverley Mill

Jonathan Chapman and his son Nathaniel were from an enterprising, well-connected colonial family. In 1748 Nathaniel Chapman was a Charter member of the Ohio Land Company which triggered the French and Indian War. The Chapman family founded the city of Alexandria in 1749.

By 1742 Jonathan and Nathaniel had completed a 2 ½ story quartzite, stacked stone structure. In 1759 Chapman Mill was the boundary for the new Fauquier County created from the older Prince William County. In the early 1800s the prosperous gristmill was enlarged to 4 ½ stories in height.

For one hundred years Chapman Mill fostered the development of small family farms in the Shenandoah Valley rather than tobacco plantations dependant on slave labor. The Mill's central location playing a critical role in the processing and distribution process; corn and wheat was moved by wagon and after 1852 by the Manassas Gap Railroad, between the Valley, the Mill and the port of Alexandria, where Chapman Mill's products were shipped to Europe and South America.

In 1858, John Chapman raised the Mill to eighty-three feet, with seven floors of the latest agricultural technology.

Chapman/Beverley Mill provided American troops with ground cornmeal and flour during eight wars: French & Indian War (1754-63), War of 1812 (1812-15), Revolutionary War (1775-83), Mexican War (1846-48), Civil War (1861-1865), Spanish-American War (1898), World War I (1917-18) and World War II (1941-45).

In the late 1940's, Beverley Mill ground wheat that was exported to Russia.

The Civil War

By July of 1861 the Confederates had turned Chapman Mill into a meat curing warehouse and distribution center. Herds of cattle and pigs were enclosed in large pens and more than two million pounds of Confederate meat were stored on the site. On March 9, 1862 Confederates

leaving the area, burned the meat and the Mill to keep them from the advancing Northern troops.

On August 28, 1862 Union General Ricketts was ordered to occupy Thoroughfare Gap to prevent Generals Lee and Longstreet from marching through the Gap and joining Confederate troops gathering for the Second Battle of Manassas. Historians say that if Ricketts had prevailed at the Battle of Thoroughfare Gap, which took place in and around the Mill, the Second Battle of Manassas would never have taken place and the war would have ended in weeks.

During much of the Civil War, Col. John S. Mosby and his Raiders traversed Thoroughfare Gap as they sought to disrupt the movement of Union provisions to their armies in the South. Unfortunately, John Chapman due to the constant siege and destruction of his Mill business by both armies spent his last years in the Lunatic Asylum in Staunton, VA.

By 1878, the Beverley family had restored the ruins to a successful milling operation and the Mill took their name.

Chapman/Beverley Mill Today

On October 22nd, 1998 Chapman/Beverley Mill was arsoned. Turn The Mill Around Campaign (TTMAC), a 501 (c) (3) non profit organization obtained ownership of the property and began the stabilization and interpretation of the Mill ruins.

- Cintec installed an internal anchor system reinforcing 4 walls, 65 windows and 4 doors, and an interior steel beam reinforcement of the seven stories.
- On-going historic & archeological research, and collection of oral

histories regarding the many facets of the Mill's history.

- Public events to commemorate Mill history
- Continuing campaign to raise necessary monies for site development and visitor amenities.

The Mission of TTMAC is to:

- *Preserve the structure of the Mill*
- *Provide public access*
- *Develop interpretive programs on significance of the Mill and Thoroughfare Gap*
- *Raise funds to carry out these goals*

Plans call for pedestrian pathways around the Mill and along the head race providing views of the millpond, flume, sluice gate, forebay, and 29 foot wheel and tail race. Visitors can now enter the Mill to appreciate the enormity of the Mill and the beauty of the stone work. Interpretive signs will explain the milling process, the impact of the industrial site on the 18th Century economy of the area, and its Civil War history. The Stone Mill Store, later Broad Run Post Office, will be restored and re-commissioned as a Chapman/ Beverley Mill information outpost.

Chapman/Beverley Mill site is open weekends 9-5

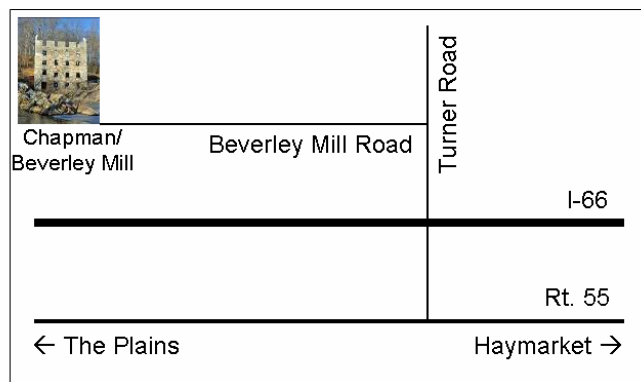
Look for our events!

Chapman/Beverley Mill Acknowledgements

- Said to be the "Tallest stacked stone building in the U.S." (Historic American Buildings Survey)
- National Register of Historic Places
- Virginia Landmarks Register
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area
- Chapman/Beverley Mill Historic District
- Virginia Civil War Trails Site
- Thoroughfare Gap Battlefield Historic District



Photo Credit: PWC Fire & Rescue



Chapman/Beverley Mill: 300 Years In American History

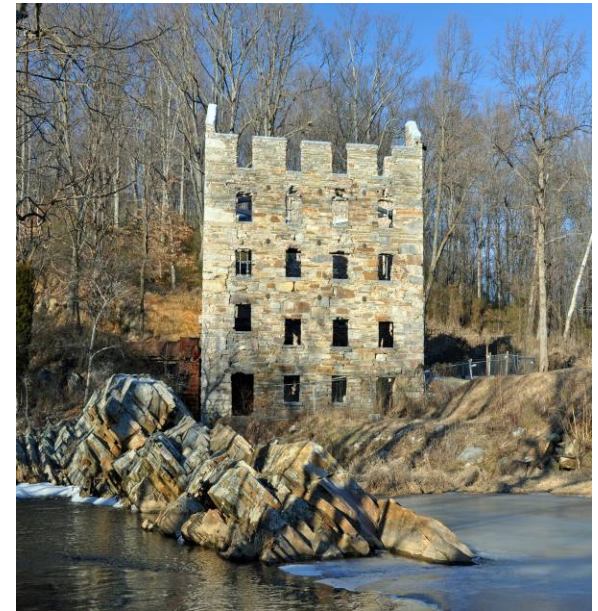


Photo Credit: Tom Miller

Turn The Mill Around Campaign
 P.O. Box 207
 Broad Run, Virginia
 20137
 540-253-5888

Chapmansmill.org