Social and Sacred Aspects of German Milling in the 19th Century Shenandoah Valley

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Abstract

Drawing from architectural survey, participant observation, historic daybooks, mill ledgers, and oral history accounts, this thesis argues that milling landscapes of the Shenandoah Valley were interwoven with sacred aspects in addition to determining economic and spatial organization of European settlement in the 19thcentury. Although the primary roles of a mill were economic and agricultural, they were also semi-public spaces where clergy labored, where baptisms were performed, and were materially marked with folk-religious protective symbols. As regional milling declined over the 20th century, knowledge of these once-routine aspects of mills became obscured. This thesis focuses on three aspects of socioreligious milling: the Henkel's Plains Mill (of Rockingham County, Virginia) as a business that solidified social prominence and supported the extended family's religious activities, German Baptists, and their mills as places both of daily work and baptisms, and the apotropaic (protective) markings found within a sampling of mills in Virginia. These markings are discussed within existing scholarship on protective building strategies in England, German folk-art, and emerging studies in the United States.

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Introduction

Grist mills— buildings with machinery powered by water and equipped with millstones that ground grain into meals and flours, played a vital role in early American life. Agriculture, specifically wheat cultivation, was central to communities in the Shenandoah Valley, and the crop's success led to the rise of a relatively comfortable and egalitarian social class among its white residents. If this was "the world that wheat made," then grist mills were at the center of valley society.[1] By the 19th century, grist mills in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia influenced settlement patterns and anchored rural communities. Mills were significant places because of their essential services to the community. Here, nearby residents could obtain food, employment, and credit. By virtue of their centrality to daily life, mills became a key place to socialize, thereby reinforcing community ties.

This thesis explores social and sacred aspects of grist mills in the Shenandoah Valley's German-American communities in the 19th century. As rural industrial sites, mills were where business, community, and spiritual devotion intersected. Mills were tools used by families to ensure stability and success, which could afford them an unparalleled degree of social and religious influence. Mills were also the setting for baptisms and other socioreligious activities. Lastly, mills were materially marked by apotropaic markings, underscoring their inclusion in the spiritual landscape. These three interlocking aspects of life at grist mills in the 19th century demonstrates the complexity inherent at these sites.

Even in the early days of Colonial Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley emerged as a place apart. Life east of Blue Ridge Mountains was predominately shaped by Anglicanism

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[1] Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra, "Introduction: The World Wheat Made." *After the Backcountry* pg. xvii

and a hierarchical economy based on plantation slavery and the cultivation of tobacco, and later wheat.[2] In contrast, the Valley was Influenced by the migration of groups from Pennsylvania and places further north. Germans and Scotch-Irish began settling in the Valley, brought with them a diversity of non-Anglican faith practices that permeated their daily lives. Many people traveling down the wagon road would have been described as "dissenters," or practitioners of non-Anglican religions that emerged from the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Anabaptists, Baptists, Lutherans, Quakers, and Presbyterians were among the groups who navigated this new world of their creation. As they established themselves in a country where they could practice their religion with relative freedom, their spiritual belief, and religious rituals, such as mill-pond baptisms, became routine occurrences of rural life.

Many factors guided the trajectory of milling in Virginia in the 19th century. Perhaps the most significant of these was the publication of Oliver Evans' *the Young Mill-Wright's & Miller's Guide* in 1775. The guide was a synthesis of observations about milling and demonstrated how a mill could be "fully automated" using conveyor belts, Archimedes screws, and hoppers. These innovations and additions to the mill moved grain and flour vertically and horizontally with minimal human intervention. For example, in pre-Evans mills, freshly milled flour would be carried or hoisted to the upper floors, spread out on the floor, and raked to ensure quick and uniform cooling. This process was labor intensive and left the product exposed to pests. The Hopper Boy, invented by Evans and named after the individuals it was replacing, dramatically improved this process by directing hot flour into a

[2] It is paramount to recognize that the Shenandoah Valley was not a place free from slavery. European Americans in the Valley still participated in the enslavement of Africans and African Americans. While the distribution and scale of plantations in the Valley differed from those in east Virginia, the practice was not absent or even as minimal as previous scholarship has implied. Additionally, free communities of African Americans did exist in the Valley before emancipation. See Broomall, James J. "The Stars Fought from Heaven': Race and Slavery in the Shenandoah Valley from Early Settlement to Jim Crow"

basin and having a rake connected to the mill's machinery to move the flour.[3] The improvements outlined in Evans' text were quickly adopted by millers of the period. However, by the end of the 19th century, new roller mill technology was gaining in popularity. The process yielded a whiter, finer flour but required a complete overhaul of the mill's machinery. Hence, many old grist mills were gutted and retooled to fit the new rolling technology that used steel rollers to grind the endosperm of the wheat kernel into flour.

Within the world of milling, terms like *mill*, *miller*, and, to a lesser extent, *grist* have conditional definitions that can flex depending on the economy, scale, and status of the subject. Descriptors such as *merchant*, *toll*, *country*, *rural*, *industrial*, *city*, *flour*, and *grist* are added to "mill" to convey better the process or market they are involved with. However, many of these meanings are used interchangeably, to the confusion of all. Given the deceptive simplicity of this vocabulary, It is important to unpack and define these terms as they relate to this thesis, which is concerned with 19th-century grist mills in the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia.

"Mill," from the Latin *molere*, meaning 'to grind,' is a word that refers to both a place and a process. Historically, mills are places where grain was ground for human consumption, but over the years, the term has been applied to a variety of produces and processes that involve a degree of grinding. Mill can also refer to an industrial space that processes non-food products, such as fiber mills and paper mills.

Grist mills use millstones to grind wheat or corn into flour, middlings, or bran. These two products, when kept together make up what is today called "whole wheat flour" because they contain all parts of a wheat kernel. Finer flours are achieved by sifting or bolting the

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[3] Hazen, Theodore, "The Hopper Boy of Oliver Evans." *OLD MILL NEWS,* Summer 1995, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, Whole Number 92, pp. 8-9

ground grain product. Grist mills are water-powered, with an engineered waterway that powers a large waterwheel. This waterwheel runs a complex of gears and belts that power the millstone. Country mills have at least one, but usually two millstones, operated by 1-3 people. Large merchant mills required more labor; the 31-millstone facility Gallego Mills of Richmond, Virginia, depended on the labor of at least 80 enslaved individuals.[4]

The term *grist mill* also infers the size of the operation. Grist mills are typically smaller operations with at least one but usually two or more millstones in service. Grist mills that grind grain for local use are called toll mills. At toll mills, customers gather in the mill yard and are serviced on a first-come, first-served basis. After their grain is ground, the miller takes a portion of each customer's grist as payment or toll. This is a centuries-old practice, and the abuse of this toll-taking has contributed to an entrenched stereotype of the dishonest miller. While grist mills in rural settings during this time were typically toll mills, rural mills could also be merchant or export mills. These mills may grind local grain as a service but are configured to primarily process large quantities of grain, usually wheat, into flour that is then packed in barrels and transported to urban centers. Given their high production volume, these mills purchase wheat from nearby residents for credit that they can then use to buy dry goods or other items locally.[5]

The term "miller" has become a catch-all definition for all who work in mills. However, not all millers have equal social status or degree of ownership. A miller can be someone who owns but does not operate the mill, relying on the labor of others to perform daily milling. A miller can also be someone who owns and performs most of the daily labor

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[4] Rood, D., "Bogs of Death: Slavery, The Brazilian Flour Trade, and the Mystery of the Vanishing Millpond in Antebellum Virginia."

[5] Christopher Densmore, "Understanding and Using 19th Century Account Books." See also Hofstra, Warren, *The Planting of New Virginia* pg. 291-294

at the mill. A miller is also used to describe those hired to work in mills, either to assist a head miller or to work an additional shift to increase productivity, Lastly, a miller can be enslaved and work in the mill. An enslaved miller can either be immediately held by the mill's owner or can be leased to the miller.[6]

Much of the scholarship about grist mills is concerned with the economic and genealogical aspects of grist mills. Frequently, mill histories begin by unpacking terms and concepts to acclimate the reader. Next, there is usually a meticulous recitation of the land transfers that enabled the mill's construction. Lastly, figures are often produced to communicate the mill's scale. All this information is essential, but it is not always as captivating to the reader as it is to the historian or economist. Despite the common refrain that grist mills were centers of community, there are opportunities to deepen this understanding through exploration social aspects of these sites that are rarely pursued. An invaluable source about the social significance of mills is Janet Baugher Downs' *Mills of Rockingham County.* This four-volume series is where I found multiple mentions of mill-pond baptisms that inspired my second chapter. Oral histories are another place where this information is located but given the highly variable and syndicated nature of oral history archives, it can be challenging to identify these sources.

Given the wealth of primary source material on the Henkel family, writing about their mill in Rockingham County is long overdue. This large, multidisciplinary family has left behind a large body of primary source documents in the form of correspondence, daybooks, ledgers, and printed materials from their press. The activities of the Henkel family have led to

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[6] Hensley, Paul Brent, "Grist Milling in Eighteenth-Century Virginia Society: Legal, Social, and Economic Aspects," MA thesis, (William and Mary, 1969), also see Stewart, Nancy B. "How did the Slavery Business Operate in Shenandoah County?" Shenandoah County Historical Society.

scholarship focusing on early medicine, printing presses, German-American history, Lutheranism, hymnody, and Shenandoah Valley generally.[7] Additionally, there is a complete account of the construction of the second Plains Mill in Siram P. Henkel's daybook.[8] For this thesis, genealogical information about the Henkels was primarily informed by a family historian's report which, in addition to the Siram Henkel daybooks, drew from correspondence and family tradition. The self-published genealogy includes family trees, primary source documents, and transcriptions of some archival materials. While this material was invaluable source for research into this family, it is an important to recognize the curatorial aspect of the effort. As a family history, its objective is to present and preserve information rather than to analyze and scrutinize it.

The most impactful work in orienting my investigation into the sanctity of mill sites was John Ruth's article, "Only a House… Yet It Becomes." While this chapter mainly focuses on Mennonite conceptions of worship space, it includes a comparative look at how adjacent religious groups regarded their places of worship. Among Anabaptist and Pietist groups, these were places built for *community,* not merely for rote worship.[9] Similarly, Dell Upton's *Holy Things and Profane* argues that piety alone could not explain churchgoing in the Anglican-dominated colonial period of Virginia. Instead, the combination of holy and profane— or mundane elements were the church's and its parishioners' animating force. By laboring over the church's design, location, and construction, they created a space where they

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[7] Edmonds, Albert Sydney. "The Henkel Family of New Market, Va., Early Printers in the Shenandoah Valley." *The William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 16, no. 3 (1936): 414–16. https://doi.org/10.2307/1925214., Wust, Klaus. 1989. *The Virginia Germans*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia., Hewitt, *Where the River Flows, Finding Faith in Rockingham County, Virginia, 1726-1876,* Dolmetsch, "The Three Lives of Solomon Henkel"

[8] Henkel, Siram Peter. *Siram Peter Henkel Journals,* No. 10, 1846-1850

[9] Ruth, John L. "Only a House… yet it becomes": some Mennonite traditions of worship space," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (Vol. 73, Issue 2)

could work through difficult topics and digest change.[10] Similarly, communities constructed—, gathered, and performed religious rituals at mills. Therefore, the landscape of grist mills can like places of worship— be considered multi-use spaces essential to the well-being of the community.

Another avenue to demonstrate the spiritual significance of grist mills is in investigating the ways in which they are materially marked with apotropaic (protective) symbols. Although discussion has increased in recent years, the challenges of dating and interpreting these symbols has impeded the study of them. When apotropaic markings do make it into reports, it may only be a fleeting mention.[11] However, there is a larger body of scholarship on this topic within the English context. While the work of Timothy Easton and Matthew Champion is foundational,[12] there are core cultural and historical gaps when applying their work to evaluate American sites. Given that this thesis is concerned with German groups, I have supplemented their research with scholarship celestial imagery in Pennsylvania German folk art and protective building strategies from American Dutch communities in the northeastern United States. Sites in America often have a multi-ethnic component, which means that scholars have an opportunity to consider how these protective building strategies operate cross-culturally.[13]

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[10] Upton, Dell, *Holy Things and Profane,* pg. xxi

[11] Graham, *The Architecture of Domestic Support Structures in Southern Maryland* pg. 132, briefly discusses a hexafoil inscribed in an interior brick of a weaving house.

[12] Easton, Timothy, "Apotropaic Symbols and Other Measures," in Hutton, R. (eds) Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. Palgrave Macmillan, London; Champion, M. 2015. *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of Britain's Churches*. London: Ebury Press.

[13]Donmoyer, Patrick, "Hex Signs: Sacred and Celestial Symbols in Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Stars," [Exhibition Booklet] Glencairn Museum and Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, 2019, pp. 6-8; Donmoyer, Patrick J. "The Concealment of Written Blessings in Pennsylvania Barns." *Historical Archaeology* 48, no. 3 (2014): 179–95. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43491315; Wheeler, Walter Richard, "Magical Dwelling: Apotropaic building practices in the New World Dutch Cultural Hearth," in *Religion, Cults & Rituals in the Medieval Rural Environment,* editors Christiane Bis-Worch and Claudia Theune,

The first chapter of this thesis explores how a grist mill was used as an economic tool to obtain a degree of social and religious influence to a successful yet complicated German-American family. When Solomon Henkel purchased the Plains Mill in Rockingham County, Virginia, it was a tertiary business for him. Within ten years, he would pass the business to his son, who would enact a series of improvements to the site, including the construction of a new mill. This new mill signaled the beginning of a merchant milling venture that solidified the social control of the family in the area.

Chapter two argues for the consideration of grist mills as key elements of a sacred landscape in the Shenandoah Valley. Mills were semi-public, centrally-located, and well-known places, and therefore were regarded as an acceptable place to serve as the setting for baptisms. Among groups that practice open-water baptisms, mill ponds, and nearby creeks were regular locations for this important rite of passage. By presenting agricultural symbolism in Christianity, oral histories concerning mill baptism, and accounts of religious leaders laboring in mills, this chapter affirms the secular and religious centrality of mills.

The third chapter analyzes compass-drawn markings found within a sampling of mills in Virginia. Understood to be apotropaic (protective) markings, this chapter will, with the aid of German folkways, draw conclusions about their implementation and potential significance. Despite a handful of established scholars focused on this topic, the discussion of historic graffiti, and specifically about apotropaic markings is thin. This chapter also grapples with the field of historic graffiti research and in an appendix suggests approaches to adapt existing survey methods for efforts in the United States.

2017; Fennel, Christopher C. “Conjuring Boundaries: Inferring Past Identities from Religious Artifacts.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology,* Vol. 4, No. 4, 2000

Chapter One

Family: The Henkel's Plains Mill

Grist mills figured prominently in the settlement of the Shenandoah Valley. This was certainly the case of the Henkel family, who through the purchase of the Plains Mill not only solidified their social influence, but gained another revenue stream that could be bolster the extended family's participation in the growth of the Lutheran Church in the eastern United States. The centrality of mills in early Valley communities was conferred to the families who owned these mills. Such was the case with the Henkel family, who purchased the Plains Mill in Rockingham County. The Henkels were a large, dynamic family who made a name for themselves in the 19th-century frontier regions of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee by pursuing a variety of occupations. Serving as Lutheran clergy, German-language printers, pharmacists, and merchants, the Henkels chose occupations essential to life in the Valley in the 19th century. When Reverend Paul Henkel brought his young family to the area in 1790, he was among the first families to purchase lots in the newly formed town of New Market, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Despite situating his family in town, he continued to serve as a Lutheran missionary and traveled to frontier regions armed with German-language devotional materials printed by his sons in the family printshop.[14]

While most of Paul's sons followed his lead and became ministers. His eldest Solomon Henkel was a druggist and merchant by trade. He was also actively involved in the

[14] Wilson, Betty Karol, "Dr. Solomon Henkel," New Market Historical Society, 2010; Wayland, John Walter. A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia. Strasburg, VA: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1927. Wayland notes in his Table of Dates the incorporation of New Market in 1797.

Henkel Press and remained staunchly commitment to his family's brand of Lutheranism. When he purchased the Plains Mill property in 1829, he was already a well-known and successful member of the community. The purchase of the mill was strategic and allowed his business to expand to the rural hamlet a few miles east of New Market. This purchase also fixed his social position. As the head of this essential place of commerce, Solomon, and his son Siram who would succeed him, were afforded a great deal of social and financial control over the lives of their neighbors.

It may seem too bold a claim to suppose owning a mill could do so much. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Plains Mill was one of the many used by the Henkel family to support their many interests, spanning the domestic, business, and religious realms. Fastidious notetakers, the large collection of Henkel family archival materials gives modern audiences a singular and robust view of what life would have been like for enterprising newcomers to the Shenandoah Valley. As evidenced in their many extant daybooks and business records, Henkel's business pursuits were both shaped and strengthened by their family networks, and their personal and professional choices kept them at the center of the communities where they lived.

Solomon Henkel's foray into milling was not motivated by survival but instead was a social and business opportunity. By the time he purchased the Plains mill in 1824, the Henkel family had already invested five generations of their family in project of America. [15] In purchasing this mill, he inserted himself into the rural community surrounding Plains Mill. With the Henkel family at the helm, the Plains Mill was a point of entry for residents to the local economy. The ledger books for the Plains Mill store chronicle decades of nearby

[15] Pezzoni, Daniel, National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Plains Mill (VDHR File No. 082-5403)

residents selling goods, being hired for farm labor, and purchasing items on credit that were later worked off.[16] This commercial arrangement was common at the time and knit together communities in a web of debit and credit transactions that reaffirmed the interdependence of area residents.

Today, the core building of the Plains Mill is obscured by its many additions (figure 1). Four tall silo-like grain bins clad in glazed, terra cotta tile stand to one side, while low cinderblock rooms sprawl towards the east. Steel chutes connect new phases to old, and these components appear to orbit the 18th-century five-story aluminum-sided wooden structure, which makes up the heart of the mill complex. Due to the conversion of the mill from a grist mill to a roller mill in the 1920s, most of the internal machinery of the mill is from that era. The early history of the Plains Mill is further obscured because the first iteration of the Plains Mill was torn down during the construction of the current mill. Even though Siram and his father Solomon were excellent record keepers, few details are known about the old mill. These two iterations of the Plains Mill represent distinctly different eras of early Valley life: the backcountry era and what came after. The first mill was built by Colonel Matthew Harrison and his wife, Mary Wood Harrison, who were scions of elite Clarke County families sometime in the 1770s.[17] Little is known about this first mill, but given the time of its construction, it would have likely been smaller than extant grist mills built even twenty years later.

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[16] Henkel, Siram Peter, and Mildred Renalds Wittig. 2013. *Day Book for Solomon Henkel at the Plains Mills, Rockingham County, Virginia : This Book Was Kept by Siram P. Henkel, Son of Said Solomon Henkel, No. 1, Nov. 1st 1835*. Bergton, VA: Mildred Wittig.

[17] Pezzoni, Daniel, National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Plains Mill (VDHR File No. 082-5403), Mary Wood Harrison was the daughter of Colonel James Wood, the founder of Winchester.

The First Plains Mill

Before Plains Mill, there was just "The Plains." The area is identified on the 1755 Fry-Jefferson Map (figure 2), one of the few places identified by the map in the region that would become Shenandoah County. Located at the intersection of Lord Fairfax's Boundary Line, the Indian Road by the Treaty of Lancaster, and the Shenandoah River[18], this site location for this mill seems deliberately chosen. Could it have been for this confluence of real and imagined boundary markers? Or was this area singled out for its vast expanse of flat, arable land that gave this rural hamlet its name? Often, mills are catalyzing features for placemaking. This is an instance in which the inverse is true. The Plains was deemed significant enough to include on this early map of Virginia, even without a mill present.

Estimations for constructing the first Plains Mill are informed by period maps, road orders, and other municipal records. Because of their importance and visibility, grist mills were rural landmarks and some of the first places connected by roads. County road orders from this era can give insights as to when mills were built, with their owners petitioning for roads directly serving the mills to be installed. This is one of the ways that grist mills were directly responsible for how rural communities of this time were structured. Not only did grist mills serve as agricultural processing facilities and social gathering spaces, but the roads connecting them to larger thoroughfares and, ultimately, towns effectively "opened up" the countryside to further development. The Harrisons acquired the property that would eventually become Plains Mill via a land grant in 1773. Shortly after the land was granted to

[18] On the Fry Jefferson Map, The Shenandoah River in this area is also identified as Ben Allen's or North River.

the family, the mill is thought to have been built. A mill referred to as "Harrison's Mill in the Plains" appears in a 1784 Shenandoah County Road order.[19]

Henkel Family History

Before Dr. Solomon Henkel purchased the mill property in Plains Mill, he and his family were already well known on the 18th-century American Frontier. Solomon was the third generation of Henkels born in America but the fifth generation to find their way to this developing country. This is owed in no small part to his family's deep belief and participation in the Lutheran Church and its spread from Germany to America in the 18th century.

Solomon's father's great-grandfather, Reverend Anthony Jacob Henkel, was one of the first Lutheran Ministers to emigrate to the continent, arriving in Pennsylvania in 1718. Solomon's father, too, answered the call to ministry and was ordained in the Lutheran Church in 1792 by the Pennsylvania Ministerium. Five of Reverend Paul Henkel's six sons entered the ministry. Solomon was the only son who made his living through other pursuits.

Reverend Anthony Henkel came to Pennsylvania late in his life and brought seven of his adult children, including John Justus Henkel. By 1750, John Justus Henkel and his wife, Maria Magdalena Eschmann Henkel, traveled to an area being settled by other European-Americans in present-day Davie County, North Carolina, in 1750. Their 17-year-old son Jacob traveled with them. It was at the settlement on Dutchman's Creek that Jacob Henkel met his wife, Barbara Mary Dieter Henkel, and in 1754, Paul Henkel was born. Soon after,

[19] Pezzoni

the Henkels were among the many European settlers compelled to relocate as tensions stemming from the French and Indian War escalated.[20]

Deciding that traveling back north up the Wagon Road was their best bet, the Henkels made for the Allegheny Mountains with other German settlers from Dutchman's Creek. From there, the caravan left North Carolina and headed towards Staunton, where they could secure patents for tracts of land in the Alleghenies. Continuing north to Harrisonburg they heading westward through the mountains. Once they reached a cove that measured one mile long and six miles wide, they pitched their tents and began the German settlement of the area. Although they endeavored to create somewhat dispersed farmsteads, their proximity to what was termed the "Shawnee Indian Path" meant that continued unwanted interactions with Indigenous Peoples would impact this settlement.[21]

John Justus, Maria, and their twelve children built a blockhouse fort near the current town of Riverton in what is now called Germany Valley. Though taking a slightly different route, Jacob, Barbara, and their family eventually made it to the Alleghenies as well. Reverend Paul Henkel recalls spending multiple years orienting their daily lives around the protection of a fort. He also recalled his father, Jacob, who worked as a carpenter and cooper by day and made shoes in the evening to support his family. The movements of the Henkel family before their arrival in the New Market demonstrate the fraught possibilities of frontier life—but also their ability to mobilize as needed.[22] Paul's recollections of his young life in

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[20] Keever, Homer M. "Henkel, Paul" 1988 NCpedia.org/biography/Henkel-Paul; Witting, Mildred Renalds, Henkel-Renalds Connection. Broadway, VA: 2007, pg. 3

[21] Wittig, pg. 4

[22] ibid, pg. 4; Pendleton County Historical Society. "Germany Valley Historic Marker." Clio: Your Guide to History.,August 23, 2022. Accessed December 14, 2023. https://theclio.com/entry/156239 The trip from North Carolina to the German Valley west of the Alleghenies took over a year for the Henkel family to complete. They would often stop at various settlements to exchange work for food and shelter.

fort settings give some impression as to what ethic he would have been exposed to. His father performed multiple trades to support his family. While not uncommon among Europeans settling in the frontier areas, these experiences likely had some bearing on Paul's sensibilities, as well as what he would impress upon his children. Adaptability and flexibility were key to the early survival of this family. Furthermore, this movement primed Paul for his later work as a missionary, where he traveled as far west as Tennessee. For his missionary work, Paul relied on material printed by the Henkel Press; a printing firm operated by his eldest sons. These sons also had their businesses, and presumably, some of the proceeds from their dry goods business would be used to support the Henkel Press and, by extension, allowed for the religious tracts Paul relied on to be printed.

Reverend Paul and Elizabeth Henkel's first son, Solomon Henkel, was the only of their six sons who did not pursue a conventional religious occupation. He would remain involved with the Lutheran Church through his interests in the Henkel Press and occasionally being sent as a delegate on behalf of his father to conferences and gatherings despite never receiving religious training. Born in 1777, he traveled with his parents as they moved around the northern Shenandoah Valley. By 1790, they settled in New Market, a town that had just been laid out five years prior and would be incorporated six years later. Upon his arrival, Reverend Henkel positioned himself at the center of religious life in the town. He was instrumental in founding the Davidsburg Church, a Union Church whose congregation consisted of Lutheran and Reformed observants. This was a multiethnic effort, with German

and English-speaking settlers working together to cut timbers and build a log house to serve as the first church building.[23]

In 1793, Solomon Henkel and his brother, Philip Augustus Henkel, accompanied their father to Philadelphia for the Ministerium of Pennsylvania annual convention. At sixteen, Solomon was at the age where he ought to be thinking about work. His father, Rev. Paul, revealed in his journal that he brought his sons with him for this reason.

> "As [Solomon] made the acquaintance of a number of people. While I attended the session with the Synod, he received the suggestion from one of them to try the work of an apothecary. I agreed and left him with Dr. Jackson. I authorized Dr Helmuth to apprentice him to his master if he proved satisfactory."[24]

After completing his training, Solomon returned to New Market in 1802. Soon after, he built a two-story, 14-foot square building to serve as an apothecary (figure 3). It was often referred to as "Solomon's Temple" and was proximate to the lots owned by his other family members in town.

Although Solomon got his start early in the pharmacist trade, it was not his only line of work. Beyond serving as his father's proxy at various Lutheran conferences, he was heavily involved in the printing press that he and his brothers founded at their father's behest in 1806. Solomon would also operate a bustling dry goods business and serve as a postmaster. Just like Solomon's grandfather, John Justus, Solomon remained adaptable and eager to do what was necessary to support himself and his family. Historian Christopher Dolmetsch suggests while it wasn't uncommon for someone living in these developing areas to practice multiple trades as needed, Solomon Henkel is exemplary because he pursued

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[23] Wessinger, E.L., "History of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, New Market, Va." *Our Church Paper*, Volume 32, Number 30, 1904, Source says "German and English, " but it's possible that the author is referring to the Scots-Irish.
[24] Wittig, pg. 7

multiple occupations simultaneously and integrated them well.[25] Like his father, the Reverend Paul, Solomon was an influence in his son Siram's business affairs. Where Paul encouraged his sons to open a German-language printing press in New Market and relied on them to supply him with the religious materials his missionary work required,[26] Solomon purchased a mill outside of town that his eldest Siram took on as soon as he was married. Solomon Henkel would die before the second Plains Mill was finished. However, his influence in the construction of the second mill demonstrate a business acumen that did not diminish even in his final years.

The Second Plains Mill

In 1833, Siram P. Henkel took a trip to Baltimore. He brought with him a small memorandum book with a marbled cover. The book was slim and would fit neatly into a breast pocket. This diminutive book contained just enough pages to detail his trip, including his shopping lists, expenditures, and notes about the people he encountered. He was tasked with going from New Market to Baltimore to purchase goods for his father's store. The lists of items to be purchased are detailed and show a wide variety of goods required of Virginia's valley residents in the 1830s. Fabrics such as Irish linen, pink gingham, calico, and silk are listed. Seeds, plants, and farming tools are specified as well. There were lists of requested printed materials enumerated, including books, maps, and broadsheets. Children's "toy"

[25] Dolmetsch, Christopher, "The Three Lives of Solomon Henkel: Doctor, Printer, and Postmaster." 1979
[26] Discussion of Paul Henkel's concerns about the state of the Lutheran church in the region and mention of the Henkel press in Hewitt, pg. 135. History of the Henkel press in can be found in Edmonds, Albert Sydney. "The Henkels, Early Printers in New Market, Virginia, with a Bibliography." *The William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 18, no. 2 (1938): 174–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/1923497;For a comprehensive list of materials printed by Henkel press and other German printers, see Wust, Klaus, "German Printing in Virginia, A Checklist 1789 -1834).

bibles, maps of Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois, and dream interpretation guides are among the requests. Nearly all books on the order sheet are requested in amounts of dozens or half dozen. However, there appears only to be one title where a single copy is requested: a millwright's guide. While we can't know for certain if this book listed in Siram's daybook is an edition of Oliver Evans' *The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide,* the fact that there is only one copy requested implies that it is either a special order for a local resident or personal use.[27]

Oliver Evans' *The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide* is considered by molinologists as a pivotal text that dramatically changed the landscape of grist milling. The text combined Thomas Ellicott's[28] unpublished *The Young Millwright* with other sources (both practical and theoretical) and included detailed illustrations of the many inventions and innovations credited to Evans. A list of subscribers at the back of the publication shows a long list of subscribers, many of whom lived in Virginia. Through their subscription to the materials and presumed improvement of their milling operations to Evans' specifications, these ideas dispersed throughout the Valley.[29] The guide also contained an advertisement on behalf of the author, which advertises not only the sale of milling equipment but also a bill of services available to parties interested in building their own mill to Evans' specifications. The advertisement, dated February 23, 1795, boasts that Evans does not need to physically travel to a proposed mill seat to provide sufficient drawings:

> It is not necessary that he should see the seat but have only a slight draught of the situation of the stream, roads, height of the banks, &c. with the exact fall of the water,

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[27] Henkel-Miller Family Papers, 1793-1910, Accession #14434, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

[28] Thomas Ellicott is related to, but not involved with the mills of Ellicott City, there is an extensive discussion about this on Ted Hazen's site, https://www.angelfire.com/folk/molinologist/authorship.html

[29] Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Zirkle Mill (VDHR file No. 085-0122)

> and quantity, if scarce, as directed art. Those who choose to adopt any part of the improvements after this date may do so by sending a line directly to him in Philadelphia.[30]

He continues by listing a handful of men located from Albany, New York, to Georgetown, South Carolina, who are "legally authorized to grant the same [permissions to build according to these plans]."[31] This advertisement gives the impression that *The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide* was written for a broad audience. Surely, not every person endeavoring to build their millwork with Evans' specifications obtained a licensed plan or needed the author to source machinery for them, but these things could be obtained for a price. This, therefore, enabled aspiring entrepreneurs with little practical knowledge of milling to enter the industry.

When Solomon Henkel purchased the Plains Mill from the Harrisons in 1826, it was an operational grist mill three miles west of New Market. He quickly moved his dry goods business into a portion of the mill, and ten years later, his son Siram relocated his family from town to help run the business.[32] In 1846, Solomon and Siram began the process of building a new mill with the help of hired labor and tore down the old one in the process.

The second Plains Mill is the structure commissioned in the 1840s by the Henkel family (figure 4). Because not much is known about the first mill, it is impossible to determine the differences in design between the first and second Plains Mills. However, we do know that Oliver Evans' pivotal text on milling, *The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide,*

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[30] Evans, Oliver, and Ellicott, Thomas, *The young mill-wright & miller's guide. In Five parts –embellished with twenty-five [i.e., twenty -six] plates...* (Philadelphia: Printed for, and sold by the author, no. 215, North Second Street, 1795; Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011.)
http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N21765.0001.001

[31] Ibid, pg.

[32] Wittig, pg. 27

was published in 1790, at least fifteen years after the first mill was built. Thus, this first iteration could have been deemed insufficient for the business aspirations of the Henkel family. If they wanted to enter the realm of merchant milling, the first Plains Mill would have been inefficient compared to something built on an Evans plan (figure 5). Often, old mills could be improved or modified, but it's possible that the intended improvements were beyond the capacity of the existing structure. Or perhaps the structure was compromised by a flooding event—mills and their dependencies were constantly at the mercy of the waters that animated them. Regardless, the Henkel family, apparently determined to make a strong effort in the flour export business, began building the new mill in 1847.

It's possible that one of the mills was used for the storage of grain before the Henkels could mill it. There is mention of taking wheat from the 1847 harvest to a mill. What's unusual is that Henkel does not specify which mill this is. In his daybook entries, Siram P. Henkel is usually precise in place names and descriptions. He regularly discusses the "old mill" and the "new mill" and gives credit to the neighboring properties where they acquire construction materials. Therefore, it is odd that he does not define which mill he is taking this new crop into. According to details from other entries, the roof is off the old mill ("Buchanan hauled the last of the shingles up from the old mill to the wood pile.")[33] In the same month, Henkel records workers hauling rocks from the foundation of the old mill to the new one. Although a 1935 John Wayland sketch (figure 5) could be interpreted in a way that suggests that there was overlap in the existence of both mills, it conflicts with the information found in Siram P. Henkel's daybook.

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[33] Transcription of *Siram Peter Henkel Journals*, found in Janet Baugher Downs' *Mills of Rockingham County (vol. 2)*

Solomon and Siram Henkel had a diverse set of experiences and sources informing them as they began the construction of the second mill. Firstly, they had around twenty years of owning and operating a mill. Given that the first Plains Mill was built sometime in the 1770s, there was probably much that these men would want to change. Additionally, they acquired a book on milling in 1834. If this had been Evans' The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide, it would have had diagrams and guidance for millers who wanted to increase efficiency through automation. These advancements in milling technology required a verticality that earlier-built mills may have lacked. Lastly, in the time leading up to the construction of the second Plains Mill, Siram visits neighboring mills in nearby counties. Siram recorded visits to mills in neighboring Page and Augusta Counties to look at construction methods. In December 1846, he visited the "large mill (Globe Mills) above Waynesborough and took dinner with Mr. White at the mills from there."[34] A few months later, in February 1847, he writes, "… Mr. Isaac May, brother S.G. Henkel, and self, started to Page County this morning to look at the framing of different mills, we first went to Mr. George Kites mill, and from there we went to Mr. Jacob C. Kite's mill and stayed there all night. [35] The next day, they traveled to Mr. Samuel Gibbon's new mill near Luray and arrived back in New Market by nightfall.[36] These trips not only demonstrate where Siram was gathering information from but also show how mills are an appropriate setting for socialization.

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[34] Henkel, Siram Peter. *Siram Peter Henkel Journals,* No. 10, 1846-1850, *pg.31*

[35] Transcription of *Siram Peter Henkel Journals*, found in Janet Baugher Downs' *Mills of Rockingham County (vol. 2)*

[36] *Henkel Journals*, No. 10, Samuel Gibbons' mill near Luray is the Willow Grove Mill. The Willow Grove mill was one of the mills burned by Union Troops during the 1864 burning campaign.

The Henkels also relied on the skills and knowledge of the artisans they hired. When Solomon Henkel charged Jeremiah Clemmons with building the stone foundation of the mill, he was hiring an accomplished craftsman who came with his world of skills and experience. In this hiring conversation, Solomon Henkel sensed the end of his life, and tradition holds that he said, "I may not live to see it go up, but you are to do it."[37]

As the first mill was torn down, stones from the foundation were repurposed for use in the new mill's construction. Lumber was procured from neighboring properties, sawn by the nearby sawmill, and cured in the plank kiln. Siram P. Henkel kept detailed notes of the entire process, including whom he hired and their general movements. Siram Henkel's daybook is dense with information, which the following passage demonstrates. Not only does he record who he's hired and what job they're working on, but he also provides the origins of the lumber and what piece of the mill it will become. All the while, the regular wheat harvest is ongoing. An entry from June 16, 1847, reads:

> Eberlein, Dodson, and self hauled the three logs from Minick's land and then hauled the four yellow pine logs for the window frames. A.S. Miller, Halterman, and Buchanan cleaned up 47 bushels of wheat in the forenoon and took it to the mill, and after dinner, Dodson, Halterman and Buchanan cleaned up 46 ½ bushels and took it to the mill […] We hauled 57 wagon loads of saw logs in 14 day, we have 169 logs, which are all for the frame of the new mill.[38]

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[37] Solomon Henkel is quoted as saying this in Janet Baugher Downs' *Mills (vol.1)* I have been unable to locate a corroborating source for the statement For another example of Jeremiah Clemmons' work, see the Bethlehem Church in 10th Legion, built in 1844-1845.

[38] Transcription of Siram Henkel's daybook, June 16, 1847. Appears in Janet Baugher Downs' *Mills of Rockingham County* (vol. 2)

After nearly two years of construction, the new mill was in production, and Siram began exporting barrels of flour to Winchester. Even though the mill was in operation in January 1849, work was still ongoing to build a second water wheel for the mill. This second wheel does not survive to the present day.

The Plains Mill is one of the handful of mills that survived the thirteen days of devastation wrought upon the farmers of the Shenandoah Valley in the fall of 1864. This period, commonly referred to as "The Burning," was a calculated strike by the troops under the command of Union General Philip Sheridan. For nearly two weeks troops ripped through the valley, destroying an estimated 1400 barns, 70 mills, multiple factories, iron furnaces, railroad buildings, and warehouses. Crops were destroyed in the fields, and thousands of livestock were driven off from their farms or killed outright. While this offense was critical in cutting off necessary supplies and routes for Confederate troops, it was at the expense of the Valley's rural residents, indiscriminately impacted because of geography rather than targeted because of allegiance.[39] However, not all agricultural resources were destroyed.. In some instances, mills were set alight, and owners and neighbors worked in earnest to put the flames out.[40] Stories also circulate about how mills that weren't burned were spared because the miller belonged to a particular fraternal organization or had some other shared characteristic with the Union Troops leader[41] It is unclear why the Henkel's mill was spared, especially with troops nearby. Siram Henkel records this near-miss in the back of a ledger book:

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[39] Heatwole, John L., "The Burning: The Fire and Sword of War," Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, https://www.shenandoahatwar.org/burning-article-1 ; see also Heatwole, John L. 1998. *The Burning: Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley*. 1st ed. Charlottesville, Va.: Rockbridge Pub.

[40] Edinburg and Breneman-Turner Mills

[41] This is mentioned across multiple entries in Downs, vol. 1

> General Sheridans Army came to town on Saturday 25th day of September 1864 numbered about 30000. And left on the 7th day of October 1864. They were up as far as Waynesborough.
> Burnt most all of the barns and mills and some dwellings and all hay and grain stocks from Staunton to Strasburg on their return.[42]

He also reflects on the experience in his daybook: "The Yankees went down the valley this morning, they burnt a great many barns in the Valley. Samuel Myers', barn they burnt yesterday evening. Loore's barns they burnt this morning. General Early's soldiers are near New Market tonight."[43] The Loores were not only neighbors, but regularly employed by Siram Henkel to assist in agricultural and domestic work at the farm and mill.[44]

After the war, Siram continued his interest in the mill until he died in 1878. Like his father before him, Siram continued to make plans. In the final years of his life, Siram drew the plans for a new house that was to be built across from the mill (figure 6). The plans also included future locations for the gardens and many dependencies, including an icehouse, smokehouse, and wash-kitchen oriented along a rear lane. His son, Henry, and his wife, Eugenia Henkel, would complete the construction of the house three years after his death. [45]

His nephew Silon Henkel would be the last of the family to own the Plains Mill. [46] Toward the end of his tenure, he converted the mill into a roller mill. This new process used all-metal machinery to produce finer flour that had a longer shelf life, which quickly became an industry standard.[47] In 1917, the mill was sold out of the Henkel family, and a succession

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[42] *Plains Mill Account Book*, 1860-1871, Henkel Family Records, Library of Virginia
[43] Henkel, Siram Peter. *Siram Peter Henkel Journals*, pg. 210
[44] *Plains Mill Account Book*
[45] Wittig, pg. 33, 215
[46] There is conflicting information about the name of this nephew. I've seen both Siram and Solon.
[47] Flour produced with roller mill technology is no longer "whole grain." In the roller mill process, the endosperm component of the wheat germ is ground into "white flour." The exclusion of the bran and germ from the flour product translates into a finer, whiter flour product. However, because the bran and germ contain valuable vitamins and minerals, these must now be added back into the product. This process is called "enriching [the flour]."

of owners added and updated the structure further to suit their needs. A larger office, machine shop, truck garage, and animal feed mill were added in subsequent years.

In his final years, Solomon Henkel commissioned two projects in his final years that encapsulate the guiding principles of the Henkel family. First, he began, with his son Samuel Godfrey, to have the *Konkordiaformel,* or *Book of Concord,* a foundational Lutheran text, translated from German into English. Despite having the Henkel Press at his disposal, this was a monumental task that required the cooperation of the whole family and was a severe financial drain. The translation was published in 1851 by Solomon D. Henkel & Brothers.[48] Secondly, he put into motion the construction of the second Plains Mill. Solomon died before either of these tasks were completed at age 69 in 1847. These two actions could be evaluated as complimentary directives. Even late in his life, he retained a vision and that continued to be strongly influenced by his religious beliefs and his earnest desire to remain at a place of centrality in the community. Even in his final years, he pushed for the success of not just his family, but of the communities to which he belonged.

[48] Wittig, pg. 13.

Chapter Two

Grist Mills as Baptismal Fonts

Agriculture and spiritual belief have been interwoven since time immemorial. The 19th-century Shenandoah Valley was no exception. The Shenandoah Valley emerged as a distinct cultural region strongly influenced by Germans from Pennsylvania, who were in sharp contrast to the Anglo-centric culture of Eastern Virginia.[49] While dispersed throughout the valley, settlers with German ancestry were concentrated in Rockingham and Shenandoah counties, their population increasing from over 50% in 1775 to nearly 70% by 1900.[50] Despite a common language and place of origin, Valley Germans were far from a homogenous group. During this period, Germans in the Shenandoah Valley belonged to various denominations, which had a direct influence on their livelihoods, relationships, and participation in broader valley life.[51]

In rural areas, the outdoor staging area of a grist mill called a "mill yard" was a place for neighbors to reinforce their relationships through conversation and cooperation. Those

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[49] Wayland, *German Element of the Shenandoah Valley,* pp. 20-22, Wayland goes into greater detail about the Germans who migrated to the Valley. While the majority came from or through Pennsylvania, German settlements further north, in Eastern Virginia, and North Carolina also accounted for Valley German families' origins. Scots-Irish settlers were the other ethnic group that dominated the settlement period of the Valley.

[50] Mitchell, *Commercialism and the Frontier*, pg. 43; Wayland, *The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley*, pg. 95. Both scholars derive these figures by tracking German surnames in census data. Therefore, the figures do not encompass all residents with German ancestry. Pages 98-101 discuss the Anglicization of German surnames and provide numerous examples of how surnames have changed over time.

[51] Wayland locates 18th and 19th century Valley Germans who are Catholic, Episcopalian, Moravian, Quaker, Anabaptist, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, and Jewish. pp. 104-133; Discussion of what occupations were permissible for Brethren and how this was determined can be found in Bowman, *Brethren Society: The Cultural Transformation of a "Peculiar People,"* pp. 100-101. With Anabaptists being concerned with their degree of "worldliness," there were naturally some occupations that were considered spiritually incompatible.

wanting their flour milled would have to wait in the mill yard for their turn at the stones. While waiting, farmers would socialize with one another, discussing everything from business to local gossip. These individuals were neighbors and likely worshipped together on Sundays. These same people may have belonged to religious sects that referred to their places of worship with words like *Gemeinhaus* (community house), *Versammlunghaus* (meetinghouse), and Love Feast House[s], rather than *Kirche* (church), thereby conveying the sanctity of community. [52] This is informed in some part by the book of Mark: "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."*[53] Thus, they were the church, not the building in which they met. This empowered groups to meet in homes, barns, and other common places to worship.

The mill was also a place for religious leaders to work. For traditions that relied on "free" or bi-vocational ministry, like the Anabaptist, it was common for ministers to farm during the week. Milling, as an extension of farming, would also be a suitable occupation for church leadership. Elder Charles Nesselrodt of Shenandoah County worked in his Uncle's mill on Stony Creek near the Stony Creek Church of the Brethren.

Commonly thought of as places of commerce, grist mills were also sites of transformation. Here, goods and labor were exchanged for credit; wheat brought to the mill would depart as flour. In a region with many farmers, wheat's significance manifested in a variety of ways. It was a high-calorie pantry staple, a valuable commodity, and a necessary ingredient for religious rituals in the form of communion bread. Wheat, like the places it was

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[52] Ruth, pg. 235 discusses the terminology used by American Mennonites to describe their places of worship. Moravians and Quakers similarly called their religious gathering spaces a Meetinghouse. In Bowers, pg. 61, early Dunker meeting houses were sometimes called "Love Feast Houses," purpose-built structures to gather for ritual worship.

[53] Mark 18:20 (KJV), German language bibles The King James Version of the Bible was chosen as a source because it would have been the second choice to the German-language Luther bible.

processed, contained an inherent sanctity that was entirely contextual. Mills also often served as places of spiritual transformation for religious groups who practiced open-water baptism; mill ponds, and the surrounding waterways became sites of this foundational religious rite.

Lastly, the waters surrounding grist mills were regularly used by groups who practiced open-water baptism. Although there is no overt religious significance for mills and their waters, they are made holy by serving as the setting for fundamental religious practices. One group in particular, the Dunkers, who would later be called the German Baptist Brethren, regularly used millponds and the millstreams for this fundamental ritual.[54] Despite mills being so central to the social and sacred life of the neighboring communities, scholarship about these aspects is limited.[55]

Using ethnographic, liturgical, and historical sources, I demonstrate how grist mills are central to the sacred landscapes in the Shenandoah Valley. This chapter will bring existing scholarship on the faith practices of historic communities together with accounts of grist mill sites in Shenandoah and Rockingham counties to draw connections that underscore the importance of grist mills in the spiritual lives of Valley residents. This chapter represents a preliminary foray into the interrogation of the sacred at grist mill sites. Grist mills, centrally important to the lives of German residents in the Shenandoah Valley, are a unique lens through which to examine the social, economic, and spiritual interactions of this community.

A sacred landscape can be defined as the embodiment of one's intangible beliefs in one's immediate environment. These landscapes often emanate from a central point of

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[54] Hewitt, Rob. 2003. *Where the River Flows: Finding Faith in Rockingham County, Virginia, 1726-1876*. Charlottesville, Va.: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

[55] Beyond extant structures and millworks, miller's account books are the most persistent artifacts associated with mills. These ledgers chronicle the mill's dealings and contain valuable information about economic and social interactions. Proper utilization of these sources could contribute to an understanding of the social networks in mill communities.

significance and are associated with religious, spiritual, or existential beliefs. Furthermore, sacred landscapes can operate in connection with one another and with other landscapes co-occurring. The economic importance of mills and the network of rivers and roads are part of a landscape layer that appears straightforward and mundane. However, the additional qualities of these landscapes, including the sacred activities occurring at points across the landscape, enrich the quality of the place. Human activity is layered across the landscape, and buildings, especially places of such importance as grist mills, are sites where meaning is concentrated. If mills belong to both the sacred and the mundane, then the mill serves as a feature that connects or pierces these two layered landscapes.[56] Now that the dichotomy of sacred and profane (or mundane) has been introduced, it should be made clear that such binaries can render places, particularly ones of daily labor, as invisible in a sacred landscape.[57] Consider the recollection of Mary Lea Simpkins, whose father operated a grist mill in North Carolina in the early 1900s:

> Sometimes, I've seen him go down there in the snow, and I've seen him grind at night with a lamplight. Sometimes while he was grinding, he'd sing hymns. He taught me songs. Daddy loved being a miller, and everybody liked Daddy's cornmeal, they did. I don't mean that bragging, but they did.[58]

Sites with spiritual significance can be interacted with daily and yet still be obscured due to the lack of a material marker that communicates their sanctity. Churches and meeting

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[56] Eliade, M. Eliade's conception of sacred space is helpful to a point. Concepts like an axis mundi or central place of significance are helpful ways to construct sacred landscapes, but Eliade's insistence on dichotomy and clearly defined borders do not map onto reality, especially when dealing with bodies of water.

[57] Eliade, M. 1958. *The sacred and profane: the nature of religion (Vol. 81) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.* Eliade's The Sacred and the Profane presents the "profane" or "mundane" as a foil to a sacred experience. Scholars have since argued against such a rigid dichotomy, yet the notion persists.).

[58] Mary Lea Simpkins, [Oral History], conducted by Rebeccah Cope and David Cecelski, March 28, 2001. https://www.ncpedia.org/listening-to-history/simpkins-mary-lea

houses are easy to spot as features on a sacred landscape. Houses of worship are purpose-built and while they can accommodate other functions, they are designed primarily as settings where religious worship takes place. Beyond signage that specifically indicates when a building is a house of worship, churches and meeting houses of this region are built in a style that would render them generally recognizable to someone unfamiliar with this building form. However, especially with religious communities in the Shenandoah Valley in the 19th century, spiritual devotion does not happen in a vacuum, and if a place of worship is one point on a map of a sacred landscape, what would the others be? Can the sacred extend to where communities gather to work, socialize, offer help to one another, or discuss local events? Would they be marked, and if so, how?

When sacred locations aren't legibly marked, their significance is obscured. This lack of "marking" belies their significance, and Ruth Van Dyke proposes a term that seeks to present a more inclusive, interconnected description of sacred sites. *Memory Anchors are* spaces that "connect across multiple spatial and temporal realities." These anchors can range from natural features like mountains to sites heavily altered by human activity, such as archaeological sites. [59] Whereas the waters surrounding the mills were the first connective features in the landscape, pre-dating grist mills, these mills grew into anchors that accumulated significance as years passed. Many who recall grist mills do so fondly and speak of the sites with reverence and warmth, even without an immediate personal connection.[60] They become sites potent with memory, meaning, community, and spiritual significance.

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[59] Van Dyke, R.M., 2017, "Sacred Geographies". In *the Oxford Handbook of Southwest Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 729.

[60] Refer to the oral histories collected in Janet Baugher Downs, et al., *Mills of Rockingham County (vol. 1),* 1997.

Reinforcing a Sense of Community

Trips to Andrick's Mill were a routine part of Lawrence D. Bowers, Sr.'s childhood. Born in in Rockingham County in 1907, trips to the mill were a routine activity for his family. Bowers recalls the attention his father would give to the flour supply at home, recalling "a filled flour bin seemed to give our father a sense of security as well as the satisfaction for providing well for his large family."[61] He uses his father's desire to provide for his family to describe their trips to the mill. A sense of duty and requirement motivated individuals to travel to the mills, and once there, they took part in activities that not only met these needs but also served secondary functions:

> It was always exciting to approach the mill. There she stood tall, unpainted, with dark weather-beaten sides. The mill race slowly found a way to energize the large mill wheel, and that daily set in motion many small wheels that put the mill in action. Usually at our arrival, we found several wagons waiting their turn in the loading area for their flour. Sometimes the waiting period lasted for a long time. This waiting period was used to socialize with our waiting neighbors.[62]

If going to the mill to turn grain into flour was the primary function a mill offered, the reinforcement of relationships that happened by waiting in the mill yard was secondary. In his accompanying poem, Bowers estimates the wait was about an hour. In the poem, Bowers also provides examples of the topics discussed among those waiting. From when the best times to plant and harvest crops to concerns of local, state, and political scale, all were discussed by those waiting to have their grain ground.[63]

Perhaps the yard at Glick's Mill (figure 7) looked like a scene that Bowers had recalled. This photograph of Glick's Mill illustrates how the mill functioned as a locus of

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[61] Bowers, Lawrence D., Sr., "Remembrances," in *Mills (vol. 1),* pg. 12
[62] ibid.
[63] Bowers, Lawrence D., Sr., "A Visit to Andrick's Mill." In *Mills of Rockingham County* Vol. 1, pp. 18-19

daily social activity as well as a place of commerce. Although this photograph was taken in the 1900s, it's unlikely that the significance or the social norms of the mill yard had changed much from the previous century. Traveling photographer Homer Thomas took the photograph during the same period.[64] This image is an example of what the mill yard could look like on any given day. Men and boys are seen sitting in wagons waiting for "their turn" at the mill. Women are gathered underneath an awning nearby. It is unclear if this is a sampling of a normal day at the mill or if news of this traveling photographer drew a crowd. Given that Glick's mill was a site of multiple industries, including a cannery, some of the individuals pictured may be workers at that facility. As Bowers had mentioned, those arriving to have their grain milled faced long waits. The grain the farmer brought to have milled was flour they left with; thus, the process of returning flour could only go as fast as the mill allowed.

Symbolism of Bread and Agriculture

Bread, an important staple food, is inextricably tied both to farms and mills. Seed must be cultivated to obtain a sizeable crop, and wheat must be milled into flour before it can be baked into bread. While this statement is both obvious and abbreviated, it bears repeating that bread is a multi-step agricultural product with great cultural significance. Farmers and millers engage in vital work, and its importance can be seen in how these activities and components are written about in scripture and song. It is also to consider the appropriateness

[64] Glick's Mill and Cannery was in the Dry River Valley near Montezuma, Virginia. See Downs (vol. 1) for more information about this mill complex, pg.12.

of spiritual leaders, such as Brethren Free Ministers, to take up farming and milling as their gainful employment.

Reinforcing bread's importance in historic foodways is mentioned over 200 times in the Bible. It is this foodstuff that Jesus himself uses to describe himself, saying, "I am the bread of Life" he that cometh to me shall hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."[65] While it is understood that Jesus referring to himself as the "bread of life" was metaphorical, Christians reference this metaphor through the consecration and consumption of bread products in ritual settings. Refer to figure 8, a document called "The Brethren's Card." First printed and issued in the late 1800s, these cards contained succinct descriptions of the core tenets and practices of the Brethren. Unsurprisingly, bread is mentioned. Holy bread is mentioned twice, once as a consumable ritual component (referring to the Lord's Supper, or communion), and secondly as spiritual nourishment (the Bread of Life). Again, this essential spiritual aspect of bread is echoed in the Lord's Prayer, which is a petition for those praying to be granted "their daily bread."

Christianity is rife with agricultural symbolism; it is therefore unsurprising that the religious calendar frequently overlaps with the agricultural one. The Bible uses concepts of planting, harvesting, and distribution of crops to convey guidance that is both practical and spiritual. In Genesis, time is divided into quarters, with seasons of seedtime and harvest, summer, and winter.[66] In the book of James, the patience of a farmer is held up as aspirational.[67]

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[65] John 6:35 (KJV)
[66] Genesis 8:22 (KJV)
[67] James 5:7 (KJV)

In the 19th and early 20th century Shenandoah Valley, farming was a necessary pursuit for many. While the nature of family farming has changed since the 1800s, agricultural themes are still a key component of the Brethren identity and worship. Continuing to use worship materials that reference farming and feature images of horse-powered implements communicates a shared heritage among congregants. This can be seen in the "related topics" section of Janet Baugher Downs' 1997 *Mills of Rockingham County, Volume 1.* After spending over 400 pages chronicling mills in Rockingham County, Downs includes a collection of liturgical materials and titles the section "Churches Celebrate the Grain Harvest." Prefacing this section she writes, "Every picture, document, and story in this book is a priceless gift of our heritage, and now it is time for the farmers to be thinking of "plowing their fields."[68] These materials tell the story of a community that still relies on agrarian imagery to express their faith. By choosing to present these materials alongside her accounts of mills in Rockingham County, she quietly demonstrates the spirituality inherent in milling—even if she never explicitly states it.

Perhaps the most interesting item in this "Churches Celebrate the Grain Harvest" is a reprinting of the Eleventh Commandment by Walter C. Lowdermilk. Lowdermilk was a soil scientist and penned this brief yet impactful piece after traveling globally in search of ways to stymie "man's practice of suicidal agriculture." [69] He hoped that this invented commandment would help to reorient humans to their relationship with the earth. In 1947, The Mill Creek Church of the Brethren chose to include this "new" commandment in their weekly church bulletin (figure 9). It is written in a style that emulates the original Ten

[68] Downs (vol. 1), pg. 450.

[69] Lowdermilk, Walter Clay. The 11th Commandment. United States: Soil Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture., 1939.

Commandments, yet its language is striking all the same. It commands all to "safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation." Although Lowdermilk was not of the Brethren faith, this writing spoke to those at Mill Creek. Through this process, Lowdermilk's commandment reveals the values and concerns held by this group of people.

Living Waters – Stories of Baptism

In 1708, Alexander Mack, a miller by trade, gathered with seven others on the banks of the Eder River in Schwarzenau, Germany, for baptism. They were members of an emerging religious movement at odds with state-mandated religious organizations. A core feature of their spiritual practice is the "believers' baptism." This baptismal practice was based upon their interpretation of what Jesus commanded and required participants to be willing and cognizant of their commitment to their faith and community.[70] Thus, on this morning in 1708, Alexander Mack was first baptized by an unknown member of the group, and then Mack baptized the rest of those gathered by immersing them three times in the river. From then on, they referred to themselves as Brethren.[71] Here in this river, with a miller, is where the Church of the Brethren locates its origins. While Mack's profession may have been coincidental, it nevertheless cemented a permanent association between milling and spiritual leadership in Brethren communities.

Two hundred years after Alexander Mack gathered with a group at the river for

[70] "Practices," Church of the Brethren Accessed May 10, 2023. https://www.brethren.org/about/practices/.
[71] Sappington, Roger Edwin. The Brethren in Virginia: The History of the Brethren Church in Virginia. Harrisonburg: Committee for Brethren History in Virginia, 1973. Pg 1

baptism, Charles Nesselrodt did the same. A 1905 photograph (figure 10) shows Nesselrodt, a farmer and miller by trade, poised to submerge Catherine Hamilton Sherman in Stony Creek, located in Basye, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Congregants are gathered on a rocky outcrop behind them; Elder John F. Driver stands on the other bank, looking on. Located farther up the creek is the Stony Creek Church of the Brethren. Nearby is the Nesselrodt mill, operated by Charles' uncle, Jobe Nesselrodt.[72] Yet again, the multiple associations of mill sites are laid bare. As mentioned previously, mills were key social spaces for European transplants in the Shenandoah Valley. The water surrounding them was also the site of a religious ritual: baptisms. Photographic and oral history accounts confirm that this baptism at the hands of Charles Nesselrodt was not a singular occurrence. Mill ponds, mill races, and creeks adjacent to mills were utilized for the triune immersion required for a believer's baptism.

Other descriptions of baptisms in mill waters can be found in *Mills of Rockingham. County*. Downs' transcribed interviews with octo- and nonagenarians corroborate the casual sanctity of mill waters. Galen Royer Miller recalls the summer she was baptized in the mill race of Glick's mill, and Elizabeth Thomas Payne mentioned that her family would gather with others to watch the Montezuma Church of the Brethren hold their baptismal rites in one of the mill ponds at Glick's.[73] Mentions of millpond baptisms in oral histories are typically made without much elaboration. Similarly, when describing the various social activities at her family's mill in North Carolina, Mary Lea Simpkins recalls, "They used to baptize up

[72] Barkley, Terry One Who Served: Brethren Elder Charles Nesselrodt of Shenandoah County, Virginia. Third ed Staunton, VA: Lot's Wife Publishing, 2004., pg. 51
[73] Marguerite Glick and Elizabeth Thomas Payne, in Downs (vol.1), pp. 136-137

around there too. I was baptized there when I was about 13."[74] The casual mention of millpond baptisms can be interpreted a few ways. One is that it speaks to how routine the practice was and, therefore, is recalled without much explanation; the speaker presumes the interviewer shares this knowledge. Furthermore, it represents a possible missed opportunity for the interview to probe the speaker for additional information about this practice. However, if both the speaker and the interviewer view the activity as normal, this may not have occurred to either of them.

A rare descriptive anecdote of an almost-baptism also takes place in the mill pond at Glick's—this time in January. A local curmudgeon, "old Rufus Hildebrand," had expressed his desire to take part in the 'believer's baptism,' presumably by the Montezuma Church of the Brethren. According to the account, a large crowd, possibly with the Thomas family in attendance, had gathered out of curiosity to watch the ritual. Hildebrand was described as "not an evil man, but someone who lived life on his terms and was a prime candidate for redemption." Rufus and the minister waded out into the water, and when they were up to their thighs, he balked:

> [Rufus] shivered and asked the minister, "Couldn't we wait and do this when the weather warms up a bit?"
> The Preacher responded with a question of his own. "What if you died before then?"
> Rufus turned and made his way back to the shore. He called back over his shoulder, "Oh, the Lord has waited this long. I think He'll wait 'til spring."[75]

The story of Rufus Hildebrand's almost-baptism is rich with meaning. First, it demonstrates that baptisms were not dependent on a season. Baptisms could happen in the

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[74] Mary Lea Simpkins, [Oral History], conducted by Rebeccah Cope and David Cecelski, March 28, 2001. https://www.ncpedia.org/listening-to-history/simpkins-mary-lea
[75] John L. Heatwole, *Shenandoah Voices,* excerpt in Downs (vol. 1), pp. 137-138.

frigid winter as well as in the temperate summer months. Secondly, the story reveals the public nature of these mill-water baptisms anyone who wished to attend could simply show up. Thirdly, the general interest in Hildebrand's baptism among the community, as demonstrated by the onlookers, signifies the community's tolerance of him as an unbaptized neighbor, while also revealing their eagerness to witness and support his spiritual growth.

Preliminary inquiry into Christian scripture, liturgical materials, oral histories, and historical accounts present myriad avenues with which to knit sacred mill narratives together. Agricultural imagery in scripture empowers adherents to see everyday actions as sacred. Spiritual devotion could flow into all aspects of their daily lives, like water across the landscape.

Furthermore, having a larger collection of oral histories or oral history interviews guided by the desire to document the social and sacred elements of mill sites would yield rich information. This collecting work could extend into interviews with modern people who live in these landscapes now that many of the area mills are no longer in operation. The concept of the minister as the miller is exhilarating and deserves added inquiry. Determining how common minister-millers were would be useful in understanding this emerging association and could also inform future inquiry into studies about mill sites.

Even as many Shenandoah Valley mills sit silent, the waters that once powered them continue to flow. This is a testament to the symbolism inherent in baptism. Some aspects of life are temporary, while others span into the realm of eternity.

Chapter Three

Compass geometries: Evidence of the Intangible

"En gensfüs uf di schtalldïr mache halt die hexe draus."

"draw a goosefoot on the stable door to keep the witches out."

-Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans, 1915.[76]

In European folk belief, doors, and hearths were spiritually vulnerable points on a building. These were the points between represented a "thin place" between interior and exterior worlds. It was through these points where malevolent forces could enter a structure. Commonly described as witches, wizards, or demons, were thought to cause a variety of unexplained events. Witches slipped through chimneys and out keyholes, set fire to homes, and terrorized livestock. Sometimes individuals recalled specific interactions with these forces, seeing apparitions their home's hearths. Thus, devising strategies to protect these permeable places was paramount.[77]

Circular, compass-drawn designs, are often found around these structural openings. Either inscribed in plaster, wood, or brick, or drawn with pencil, these designs are commonly interpreted as an apotropaic (protective) strategy and are just one of many different protective symbols deployed in historic structures. Of these circular symbols, the hexafoil stands out as

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[76] Fogel, Edwin Miller, Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans, 1915.
[77] St George, Robert Blair. 1998. *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture*. Pp. 184-188; For an example of German folktales concerning witches and chimneys see Wintemberg, W. J. "German Folk-Tales Collected in Canada." *The Journal of American Folklore* 19, no. 74 (1906).

being easily recognizable. This symbol has been called a daisy wheel, a flower of life, or, to their detriment, a 'witch mark.' While concerns over witches and their ill effects are central to the histories of apotropaic markings, describing them as 'witch marks' can unduly sensationalize these markings in the eyes of the public. Research has shown that while there were concerns about witchcraft that may have necessitated these symbols, apotropaic symbols were also used to protect against lightning strikes or fire.[78] Therefore, following the example of Timothy Easton, these symbols will henceforth be referred to as multifoils or hexafoils.[79]

This chapter will provide an overview of the research on apotropaic markings and historical graffiti. I will expand on existing scholarship to argue for the inclusion of mills as places where apotropaic markings exist. I have consistently found compass-drawn circles and hexafoils at multiple mills in Virginia in locations comparable to where they are found in domestic structures, but also in new contexts within the structure. I'm not sure if I would have noticed these symbols as readily if I was not actively participating in activities at the mill. Sensory details that don't immediately reveal themselves can suddenly emerge after two hours of dusting. Having the opportunity to experience the mill in an unhurried manner afforded me a deeper understanding of place.

Scholarship about apotropaic building practices and comparable symbols in American, Dutch, and German communities will be put into conversation with English studies, which will suggest a familiar apotropaic visual language that manifests cross-

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[78] Easton, Timothy, "Apotropaic Symbols and Other Measures," in Hutton, R. (eds) Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

[79] Ibid., pg. 65, Easton asserts that there is no way of knowing what these symbols were called and considers the terms "daisywheel" and "witch marks" as misleading.

culturally. Lastly, I will evaluate survey and documentation efforts of historic graffiti in England and the United States and make suggestions that address the cultural and ethnic diversity of American historic sites. This chapter will be useful for historians and archaeologists invested in furthering the scholarly discussion of these symbols, especially those interested in enhancing this field of study in the United States.

The first place I came across apotropaic markings during my field research as at the Burwell-Morgan Mill. The Burwell-Morgan Mill in Clarke County was completed ca. 1785, and it is one of the oldest operating grist mills in the country. The mill has been in the care of the Clarke County Historical Society since the 1960s. From May to November, a dedicated group of volunteer millers grind local wheat and corn into meals and flour that are sold at the mill. At the beginning of each milling season, they host a volunteer miller training day where interested parties can spend a day at the mill learning the basics. After completing this training, volunteer millers are welcome to return to volunteer at the mill as their schedule allows. I attended the training session in May of 2023. This workshop provided an opportunity to experience a gristmill in a way most do not—by direct involvement in the milling process. Through first-hand experience of the mill as a place of labor, I internalized the sensory details of the space. Each aspect of milling, from the sluice being opened to the rush of water over the top of the wooden wheel causing the buckets to fill and turn, to the engagement of the gears, the grinding of the grain with stones, to the sifting, were steps each with their own distinct sound. The sound of footsteps on the wooden floors, the millers calling out to one another to adjust the machinery, and the conversations of those socializing all layered to create a sonic portrait of this place, one that— except for the cars passing outside, is likely fairly accurate to how a mill would have sounded over 200 years ago.

During a break in the volunteer session, I went up to the landing in the southeast corner of the mill, where the former mill office is located. Despite also being a location for work, it had a domestic feel, owed in part to the hearth and a small wall safe that is secured with a wooden door (figure 11). [80] What I discovered in this area of the building reminded me of something so important yet simple. That for as much as we can know about a structure, such as its materials, the techniques and tools used by the craftspeople, and the choreography of the space, it is much harder to ascertain how the space was regarded by past inhabitants.

Standing in the office of the Burwell-Morgan mill facing the hearth, I began noticing anomalies in the weathered plaster. Above and to the left of the hearth are concentric circles inscribed in the plaster on the wall (figure 12). Located nearby on another wall is a large circular inscription with six symmetrical petals (figure 13). These discoveries were thrilling and reactivated my interest in how folk religion and belief manifest in the built environment.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, I was observing apotropaic markings. [81] It is understood that these symbols are inscribed in key locations of a structure to ward off evil, ill-will, or witchcraft.[82] They belong in a cohort of protective building strategies, some of which are that are still used today-- topping out ceremonies, horseshoes nailed above thresholds, mezuzahs, and evil eyes are practices that are still practiced with the hope of discouraging negative influences and invite luck or positive aspects to a space.[83]

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[80] "Burwell-Morgan Mill." Clio: Your Guide to History. June 21, 2023. Accessed May 5, 2024. https://theclio.com/entry/169682; This wall safe was regarded as a safe place for nearby residents to stow their valuables when traveling because someone was always at the mill. Enslaved African Americans operated this mill, which, during the height of productivity, ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
[81] *Apotropaios*, which comes from the Greek word "to turn away from."
[82] Darvill, Timothy, The Concise Dictionary of Archaeology (2 e.d.), Oxford University Press, 2009
[83] Wheeler, Walter Richard, "Magical Dwelling: Apotropaic building practices in the New World Dutch Cultural Hearth," in *Religion, Cults & Rituals in the Medieval Rural Environment,* editors Christiane Bis-Worch and Claudia Theune, 2017

Evidence of building-scale geographies— the smoothing of wooden handles that have been gripped often and the concave of a stone threshold— give voice to the movement of people through the space. However, these details do not provide insight into their thoughts or feelings. Apotropaic markings and other forms of historic graffiti represent an opportunity to glimpse the inner thoughts of past inhabitants of the space. They are a visual language that at times can prove challenge, but not impossible to interpret.

One challenge of interpreting apotropaic markings is differentiating them from other commonly found markings in historic structures. The appearance of apotropaic markings alongside assembly markings such as roman numerals or quarry marks can contribute to this difficulty. Furthermore, those who are skeptical of the apotropaic qualities of compass-drawn symbols point to their use among historic craftspeople. Stonemasons, carpenters, and joiners are credited to the circular compass-drawn symbols, circles with a dot in the middle (figure 14), or circles with multi-lobed flowers (figures 15,16). However, these symbols appear in greater frequency and variation than what can reasonably be attributed to the work of craftspeople.[84] Some of these symbols are believed to be evidence of protecting building strategies—either deployed by the craftspeople or by the structure's residents.

Shapes made with fixed-diameter tools, like the daisy wheel, are the easiest and most accurate way to draw rectangular forms with minimal tools. As pointed out by devotees of practical geometry, these symbols were common tools of pre-industrial society. Proportion not measured calculation was the language for construction. Dividers and compasses were the epitome of craft. These tools bridged the connection between the inner eye or imagination

[84] Easton, Timothy, “Apotropaic Symbols and Other Measures,” in Hutton, R. (eds) Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. Palgrave Macmillan, London. pg. 39

of the craftsperson and the real world via their hands. Users could create and emulate existing proportional designs rather than arbitrarily selecting dimensions. One approach was for the age of human design, while the latter was adopted for efficiency and economy. While practical geometry is lauded for its intuitiveness and simplicity, its essential principles could not be adapted to meet the demands of mass production.[85]

After I visited the Burwell-Morgan Mill, I began in earnest to look for similar circular markings at the mills I visited that summer. Colleagues who were aware of my interest in these symbols would notify me if they came across one in their work. Through various conversations with historians and the public, it became clear that there was a general interest in these symbols. It was also clear that these markings, often called 'witch marks,' are susceptible to sensationalism. As I was searching for examples of hexafoils in my daily travels, I was also searching for a discussion of these symbols in scholarship. These symbols are found in decorative art, folk religion, mathematics, and traditional building practice, and despite their broad distribution, there is a marked lack of cross-disciplinary discussion. Nevertheless, there is a cohort of scholars and historians dedicated to further study of these symbols in a variety of contexts.

State of the Field

There is a dedicated cohort of scholars studying the historical ritual evidence in England. In 1987, British archaeologist and museum curator Ralph Merrifield published *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*[86], which surveyed ritual deposits of materials, focusing on historic England but also including examples from Continental Europe and Ireland. This is

[85] George R. Walker and Jim Tolpin, *By Hand & Eye. 2013. Fort Mitchell KY: Lost Art Press.*
[86] Merrifield, Ralph, *Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*

regarded as a major pioneering work and was written to signify to archaeologists and historians that the identification, preservation, and interpretation of ritual deposits were crucial to the holistic understanding of past cultures.

Despite Merrifield's efforts being held in such high regard, he devotes little attention to non-physical evidence of ritual and magic, specifically apotropaic markings, and historic graffiti.[87] Merrifield's work is supplemented with the edited volume, *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery, and Witchcraft in Christian Britain: A Feeling for Magic,* where Timothy Easton and Matthew Champion summarize their work documenting and interpreting apotropaic markings and historical graffiti. Timothy Easton, a contemporary of Merrifield's, has been studying apotropaic symbols in vernacular buildings and churches since the 1970s. In his chapter, he provides an overview of the types of inscriptions and markings made by tradespeople and building inhabitants in historic English structures. While he acknowledges the counter-argument that these symbols are nothing more than the marks of craftspeople, he does not dwell on this point and continues with his analysis of these symbols.[88]

Through his research, Easton finds that the frequency and location of inscribed symbols in structures and their persistence across the landscape of England demonstrates that craftspeople and their clients both believed in the efficacy of ritual markings and regarded them as a requirement for a new building, they were regarded as essential as a floor or roof. Easton's research on this topic is well-regarded; his many years of experience working with

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[87] Hutton, Ronald, "Introduction," *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery, and Witchcraft in Christian Britain: A Feeling forMagic.* Baskingstoke UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2016.pg. 1-6

[88] To learn more about the use of hexafoils in historic building techniques, see the work of Laurie Smith (https://historicbuildinggeometry.uk/shelter/). Architect Jane Griswold Radocchia also studies geometric proportions in historic architecture and is admittedly not convinced of the hexafoils' role as an apotropaic strategy. Nevertheless, her blog is an excellent exploration of the intersection of practical geometry and vernacular architecture, https://www.jgrarchitect.com/

these symbols have positioned him as an authority. However, he recognizes his geographic bias, as he works mostly with examples in the East Anglia region of England. Echoing what Violet Pritchard noted in the first full-length work on English historic graffiti[89], a large-scale survey is needed. In addition to building a substantial body of evidence to examine, broad survey efforts, especially currently, are crucial in the face of heritage loss. Thankfully, in the past ten years, survey efforts such as Matthew Champion's Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey have begun to address this need. While Champion and his project focus on the same region as Easton's, Champion has created a model that relies on the public to gather data. The survey and his methods will be discussed later in this chapter and will inform my proposals for comparable North American Survey efforts.

Focused on areas of the Northeastern United States called the New World Dutch Cultural Hearth (NWDCH), Walter Richard Wheeler's work shows both what is needed and what is possible in studying these practices in North America. Easton and Champion's work is on medieval and early modern England and therefore cannot be wholesale applied to American contexts, where there exists greater cultural diversity. Given the settlement patterns of America in the early modern period, there is an opportunity to examine apotropaic markings and protective building techniques in a culturally plural society. Not only does Wheeler depart from Easton and Champion's work by focusing on Dutch settler groups in America, but he investigates archaeological evidence of apotropaic practices associated with Indigenous and enslaved African peoples living nearby. Some of the findings discussed in his chapter are estimated to be from the late 19th century, thereby extending the arc of these apotropaic practices temporally and geographically.

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[89] Pritchard, Violet, *English Medieval Graffiti,* 1967

On a trip to the Plains Mill in December 2023, I documented three occurrences of multifoils in two locations. At least two were inscribed on the top portion of the wooden Dutch doors that served as one of the main entrances while the Henkel family owned the mill (figures 17, 18 The second multifoil was found on the staircase wall between the first and second floors (figure 19). While the multifoil on the stairs appears to be an isolated inscription, there are other scribed marks on the door, including initials.[90] The Henkel family, having been well established in America by the time this mill was completed in the 1840s, still maintained a connection to their German heritage.[91] Just as Wheeler looked to culturally specific examples of protective building strategies in the NWDCH, the folkways of Pennsylvania Germans ought to be examined for insight into the significance of apotropaic markings and multifoil designs.

Answers Written in the *Schtanne*

The Pennsylvania Dutch, or Pennsylvania Germans,[92] are descendants of German-speaking immigrants from central Europe, arriving in several waves throughout the long eighteenth century. First settling in Germantown, Pennsylvania, these agrarian people migrated into much of eastern Pennsylvania, with subsequent generations migrating to the Shenandoah Valley, the Midwest, and into Canada. Another complication of understanding

[90] In oral tradition, this has been attributed to Lillian Henkel (1880-1965) however her middle initial was an M. Possible L.P. Henkels include Siram and Margaret's eldest son, Lewis Philip Henkel (1887-1904).
[91] Henkel, Siram Peter. *Siram Peter Henkel Journals,* April 5, 1845, pg. 28
[92] Yoder, Don, "'Pennsylvania Dutch" ...Or 'Pennsylvania German'?" *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*, May 1950. Don Yoder is considered to be the "Father of the American Folklife Movement," and was responsible for a robust collection of scholarship on Pennsylvania Dutch history. In this article, he indicates that there is some debate as to which term is correct. Despite the confusion to modern audiences by calling Germans "Dutch," he asserts that because "Dutch" was used historically and is the decidedly "folk" name of this group, and should to continue to be used to describe them.

this group identity is that today, Pennsylvania Germans are strongly associated with sectarian Anabaptist and Pietist groups like the Amish, Mennonites, Moravians, and Brethren. These groups represented a small fraction of the Pennsylvania German cultural group, while those who were Lutheran and Reformed made up most of this group. However, because the latter two groups were quicker to assimilate than the plain communities, they have been rendered less visible as members of the Pennsylvania German cultural group.[93]

One of the most closely associated visual aspects of Pennsylvania Dutch culture is the circular "hex signs" or barn stars. Given that they look like and are made with the same principle as multifoils, it is essential to consult scholarship on this practice. Despite drawing from a long lineage of visual culture and belief, these symbols have been misinterpreted since the early nineteenth century, when the emerging tourist industry began advertising these symbols as *hexefoos* or witches' feet. While there is a kernel of truth to this claim, it unfairly maligns the artform and its makers as a backward, superstitious people.[94] Nevertheless, it is important to discuss this manifestation of belief to understand the contours of this visual culture better.

Anticipating an "imminent disappearance" of certain aspects of their folklife, Edwin Miller Fogel collected superstitions and idioms from Pennsylvania German groups in Pennsylvania in the early 1900s. In *Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans,* Fogel captured sayings, idioms, and beliefs not just in dialect, but in *Hochdeustch* (High German) and English. This approach preserves the dialects of these groups but also demonstrates how the phrases may have changed over time or by region.

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[93] Donmoyer, Patrick, "Hex Signs: Sacred and Celestial Symbols in Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Stars," [Exhibition Booklet] Glencairn Museum and Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, 2019, pp. 6-8
[94] Ibid.

According to Fogel, the superstition *"En gensfüs uf di schtalldïr mache halt die hexe draus"*[95] or *"draw a goosefoot on the stable door to keep the witches out."* was collected in Berks, Carbon, Dauphin, Lehigh, Lancaster, Northampton, and Snyder Counties. It corresponds with a superstition found in Jakob Grimm's *Deustche Mythologie* that says,*"Macht man ein trudenfuss an die tür, so müssen die hexen fern bleiben."*[96] Although the dialect is different (Grimm's example is in *Hochdeustch*), it translates to "if you draw the *trudenfuss* on the door, the witches have to stay away."

Through this phrase it's clear that the Germans and German-descent groups are aware of a symbol one can place around one's home and barn that can discourage ill forces. But what is a *Truden*? A *Gans*? What can this name suggest about the shape of this symbol? *Gans*, which translates to geese, are birds with three distinct toes. Hexafoils, made of six lobes, is a multiple of three. Other superstitions in Fogel's book, similar in nature, speak of toad's feet, another creature with separate yet webbed toes.[97] The *Trudenfuss* symbol is discussed with greater frequency, even if it is less clear what exactly a *Truden* is. This confusion is owed in part to dialect and language differences across a region that held similar beliefs and anxieties. Generally, a *Trude* is an entity that could be described as an elf, demon, or witch who ranges from mischievous to malevolent. It's thought they are responsible for nightmares and other household maladies.[98]

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[95] Literally, "make a [*gansfüss*] on the stall door to stop the witches out."
[96] In both German supersitions, *machen* is conjugated to *macht* or *mache*. This verb translates to "to do" or "to make," and while not a direct translation to "draw," is a better fit than words expressing that a physical object is being hung or nailed to the door.
[97] Fogel, p. 137, "To keep away witches, draw toads' feet with chalk on the bedstead or in the room above the window or door."
[98] Mahr, August C. "A Pennsylvania Dutch 'Hexzettel." *Monatshefte Für Deustchen Underricht* 27, no.6 (1935): 215-25. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30169065, there is also further discussion of toad vs. goose and possible reasons for the linguistic shift between language groups

The illustrations in Karl von Leoprecting's 1855 collection from the Lechrain Region[99] of Germany make an undeniable connection to the geometric shapes found scribed in historic buildings and superstition. Von Leoprecting writes of the *Trudenfuss* (figure 20) that it is *"*a most mysterious sign, full of wonderful power that can be used against any kind of magic. It is usually drawn in one of two ways, [as a six-pointed star, or as a five-pointed star]." The six-pointed star is the older of the two forms. This apotropaic symbol is made from and inscribed on "all sorts of materials," but it is suggested that making it out of red wax is preferred.[100]

Based upon this information, these "feet" symbols do seem to have a protective quality to them. They are put in place deliberately to protect against ill forces. Conversely, Patrick Donmoyer's exploration of celestial motifs in Pennsylvania Dutch folk-art show supports the claim that these symbols are "abstract images of the heavens, refined by generations of artistic interest in geometry and agricultural interest in the stars"[101] The movement of stars, planets, and the moon, dictated when agricultural tasks, household chores, and even marriages should take place. Essential rhythms of life were dependent upon these heavenly bodies, often represented as variations of circular, compass-drawn images. Consider the concentration of circular inscriptions in figures 21 and 22. Could these clustered arrangements be alluding to the night sky? Multifoils, specifically hexafoils, are incorporated into house and barn blessings, on birth certificates, and incorporated into everyday household objects and tools. Donmoyer holds that this broad distribution of celestial motifs speaks to the "appreciation of the mundane that is essential to Pennsylvania Dutch culture."

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[99] The Lechrain region is in Southern Germany, located between Swabia and Munich.

[100] Leoprecting, Karl von, Aus dem Lechrain: zur Deutschen Sitten-und-Sagekunde, München: Literarisch-artistiche Anst.1855, pp. 25-26

[101] Donmoyer, pg.9

Furthermore, it helps to break down the false dichotomy of the sacred and the mundane. Daily labor is essential for survival, but it is also sacred.[102]

Discussion of Findings

Now that apotropaic markings have been observed in mills in Virginia, what does this mean? First, the appearance of these symbols in mills—places so central to the sacred and social lives of Valley residents means that like homes, churches, and agricultural buildings, mills required the similar levels of spiritual protection or blessing. Mills are vulnerable to a variety of threats. Flour dust is highly combustible; when mills are in use, these wooden structures were vulnerable to the threat of fire. Given the height of mills, they would also be susceptible to lightning strikes, and floods could rapidly devastate mills and dams. Additionally, mills processed an essential foodstuff that was vulnerable to spoilage. Theories about hexafoils appearing on butter molds, pie safes for the symbol's protective qualities could apply here.[103] If a hearth exists in the mill, like in the case of the Burwell-Morgan mill, it will need to be secured in the same way that hearths in domestic structures were.

In addition to presenting examples of how hexafoils and other celestial imagery manifest in German folk art, help to make a convincing argument that the appearance of these symbols in American mills is evidence of ethnically-bound folk belief. However, I will echo the caution of other scholars working with material evidence of supernatural belief and ethnic associations. It is not enough to say that because the millers were German and context for these symbols can be found within German folk practice that their occurrence at a mill can be attributed to a particular ethnic group without the caveat that these were semi-public

[102] Donmoyer, pg 25.
[103] Hoggard, Brian. 2019. *Magical House Protection : The Archaeology of Counter-Witchcraft*. Pp. 79-81.

sites where a diversity of people gathered. The Plains Mill, where multiple hexafoils have been found, also has a high instance of graffiti attributed to people visiting the space.[104] Furthermore, it was common for mills to change hands, and craftspeople hired to do work in the buildings are equally suspect for inscribing these markings. Thus, it is often impossible to know who was responsible for affixing these symbols to the structures or when. Lastly, as I note in figure 23, it is possible that building materials where these symbols have been observed could have been reused. Questions of material repurposing present an entirely new host of questions. If a beam with apotropaic markings is removed from its original context and used in a new structure, does the protection transfer with the material? Do the symbols have to be reapplied?

The very reasons that make studying apotropaic markings in America exciting are also what complicate this work. Cultivating an American arm of the study of historic building practices will require researchers to be aware of the probable overlap of practices between ethnic groups. This can already be seen with the hexafoil—the symbol has been found at sites associated with English, Dutch, and German groups. By beginning to assign these findings to ethnic groups, a referential type of shorthand is reinforced, which can diminish the integrity of scholarship This can become particularly perilous when working with sites associated with African Americans, where concerned archeologists and scholars caution against unsophisticated interpretations of archaeological evidence ritual or folk religious practices. Furthermore, arbitrary association of artifacts to a particular ethnic group at a possible multi-group site flattens any discourse on how artifacts may have been interacted with by both groups and if the practices transferred from one group to another. Christopher Fennel

[104] 20th century graffiti is penciled on to a metal surface in the mill. Visitors signed their name, date, and often included a brief statement.

cautions, “If we are to learn more about ethnicity, we also need to relate explicitly our interoperative questions about such folk religion objects to relevant theoretical frameworks concerning the formation and main of ethnic identities, the signaling of identities, and the social functions of conjuration.” [105] It’s not enough to call something a “ritual object” anymore, there needs to be an earnest effort to interpret it and accept that “ethnic markers” are not absolute proof.[106]

Taking all of this into consideration, the fact that apotropaic markings have been observed in mills is a testament to arguments made in the previous chapters. Grist mills were layered with social and sacred significance for Shenandoah Valley residents. As scholars work to expand the field of historic graffiti and apotropaic markings, mills must be included in their surveys. Documenting apotropaic markings in mills presents an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of these markings, and to reinforce the fact that mills were integral to the sacred landscape of the Shenandoah Valley.

[105] Fennell “Conjuring Boundaries…” pg. 309
[106] Deetz, quoted in Fennell. Pg. 309

Conclusion

In the 19th century Shenandoah Valley, grist mills were central to the development and economic well-being of the communities they anchored. However, as semi-public spaces, they became enriched with meaning as people gathered for social and religious activity. As mills fell out of use over the course of the 20th century, these key elements of mill history became obscured. This thesis represents an effort to present social and sacred aspects of milling that complement the existing mill scholarship.

Dell Upton said, when speaking of colonial Virginians, "To build a church was to build the world."[107] But the same could be said for 19th century residents of the Shenandoah Valley. Mills, like churches, became crucial sites for social and religious activity. Like churches, mills were place where the public gathered regularly, and engaged in routine behaviors that reinforced community and deepened spiritual devotion. As a place of gathering, mill yards were a key place to reinforce social ties. The nearby waters were sites of public baptisms. The buildings were materially marked with protective symbols that called back to entrenched cultural beliefs and strategies to protect structures from adverse effects. Mills were beloved, vibrant places that fulfilled a variety of needs in these communities.

Research with this thesis began with visiting a handful of mills in Virginia. These mills were in various states of preservation and operation, and each told a unique story. The volunteers that worked at these mills, whether it be giving tours, staffing the gift shop, or teaching others how to operate an 18th-century water mill, demonstrated a profound commitment to process and place. Some individuals had long family ties to the area and

[107] Upton, *Holy Things Sacred and Profane*

considered it a duty to steward this community resource. Others had deep familial connections with milling and participated in the upkeep of the mill to honor their ancestors. Some people lived nearby, and others drove hours to make their visit. Others still, just enjoyed gathering with like-minded individuals in a familiar and comfortable space. Even in our modern age, mills continue to draw people to them to fulfill various needs.

Spending extended periods observing grist mills and the people interacting with them informed core questions addressed in this thesis. A mill cleaning session led me to observe the constellation of compass-drawn symbols surrounding the milling floor (figures 21, 22). I first observed these symbols after I had spent two hours dusting cobwebs out of every conceivable surface of the mill's first floor. Part of me regards this discovery as the mill's way of rewarding me for my attention and care. In this way, I am creating my own spiritual understanding of mills. Based on the informal conversations I've had with others who make it a point to visit mills, I'd wager that they share a similar animistic understanding of these places. This could be an exciting line of inquiry for future scholarship.

Scholarship about the history of Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, German Americans, 19th-century religious life, and mills already exists in varying amounts. Often, the burden of wanting to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic at hand is in opposition to drawing connections to the other thematical elements, a problem I became acutely aware of when writing the first chapter of this thesis.

Regarding future work, there is enough material to reconstruct (on paper) the landscape surrounding the Plains Mill site. For example, the Plains Mill had multiple dependencies associated with it, including a cooperage, blacksmith shop, a 'free waggoner's

shantee.'[108] Other dwellings existed nearby, both lived in by the Henkels and rented out to laborers. These are referenced in the daybooks of Siram P. Henkel, and this, combined with historical photographs of the area and interviews with residents who are familiar with these structures,[109] could yield a promising reconstructive effort. Furthermore, Siram's daybooks could be combed for additional information about the daily lives of residents in the area, especially African Americans whom Henkel hired to help with farming and domestic tasks.[110] Whereas I use the example of the Henkel family to describe how a family could use a mill to further their religious and social interests, further study of the Plains Mill ledgers could show to what extent this social and economic arrangement shaped the area.

I hope this work will spark more interest in documentation and research of historic graffiti and apotropaic markings in the United States. Specifically, creating a database or a network of databases for these findings will allow researchers to work with a larger body of data, which will, in turn, yield richer interpretive results. Additionally, collecting measurements and contextual information when documenting apotropaic markings is essential for the proper documentation of these symbols. By treading carefully, yet deliberately, knowledge of these symbols and their spiritual implications can be incorporated into existing structure reports and scholarship. It is simply no longer good enough to shy away from the study of apotropaic markings because it is challenging to determine when or how they were made and their meaning and ethnic association. They are vital components of

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[108] Henkel, Siram Peter. *Siram Peter Henkel Journals, No. 11*

[109] The cooperage and blacksmith shop were located on adjacent property to the mill and were torn down recently, per interview with Zach Grandle, current owner of the Plains Mill.

[110] When Siram Henkel writes about African Americans in his daybook entries, he provides descriptors such as 'man of color,' or '[B]lack' in parentheses after their name In one instance, he refers to an enslaved man that he is leasing from, Book 10, July 2, 1847, pg. 104. Nancy B. Stewart compiles information about free and enslaved African Americans hired by Siram Henkel in her article, "How did the Slavery Business Operate in Shenandoah County."

the built environment that especially when located in mills and agricultural outbuildings, are highly vulnerable to loss. Through careful study of these symbols, there is potential to unlock deeper understandings of the interactions between people, belief, and place.

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Appendix A: Suggestions for Further Studies of Historical Graffiti and Apotropaic Markings

It should be clear by now that groups interested in architecture, history, archaeology, historic trades, local history, the occult, religion, and folk art would benefit from a substantial and detailed body of data about historic graffiti in the United States. The ability to solicit help from the public, conduct surveys, and present information is aided by social media and the internet generally. This pioneering documentation of historic graffiti in the United Kingdom and Ireland furnishes a useful model for possible future efforts in the United States. A hallmark of the success of these projects is the public involvement. Apotropaic markings and historic graffiti sit at the intersection of the everyday and the occult. The former affirms that as "everyday people," the public can (and should) be experts on this topic, and the latter invigorates the research by promising a greater insight into the arcane. Once cast as serious threats to the health and safety of communities, witches and magic have become pop culture phenomena in the United States. Again, while the focus of this chapter has been apotropaic markings, there is plenty of non-mystical, historic graffiti that is equally in need of study.[111]

Matthew Champion's Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey (NMGS) has been at the forefront of efforts to record medieval graffiti in the United Kingdom. Although focused on the County of Norfolk, this volunteer-led public archaeology effort has inspired groups in other English Counties to follow their model. NMGS was established in 2010 as a volunteer-led community archaeology project. The two-year pilot program involved a full survey of

[111] For an example from the Western United States, The Historical Graffiti Society is a Washington State-based nonprofit that focuses on Hobo-era (late 18s00s through 1940s) historic graffiti. Their work takes them to mines, railyards, and across the country in search of graffiti related to prolific "tramp," Tex King of Tramps, Leon Ray Livingston. https://www.historicgraffiti.org/

10% (65) of Norfolk's medieval churches in search of pre-reformation graffiti. Despite being a community archaeology project, NMGS strives to meet the highest professional standards in their surveys, recording, and cataloging of finds.[112] They present their findings on the NMGS website and pass along records to church authorities and Historic England's Historic Environment Records (HERs).[113]

The activity of these county-level groups prompted Historic England (Historic Building and Monuments for the Commission of England), the non-departmental public body of the British Government concerned with protecting the historic environment of England, to host a survey on their own. On Halloween 2016, Historic England asked the public to help identify and record apotropaic markings. Despite a recent uptick in groups and researchers engaging with the study of these markings—sometimes called "witches marks," Molyneux shares that they are not widely understood. This call for help yielded over 600 responses from the public. By using the hashtags #witchesmarks and #apotropaicmarks, respondents were able to categorize their findings on social media for Historic England staff to collect. Additionally, by posting their findings on their respective social media pages, they increased the visibility of their efforts and possibly contributed to a greater awareness of these everyday phenomena.[114]

Earlier that year, Historic England funded a detailed study of historic graffiti in St. Oswald's Church in Filey, where 1482 legible graffiti marks were identified at this site alone.

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[112] "The Survey," Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey, http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/page3.html

[113] "Historic Environment Records (HERs)," Historic England, https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/information-management/hers/, HERs, sometimes called "Sites and Monuments" records, are held by local authorities, but can also be held by joint services, and national parks. HERs are the essential core of historic mapping and environmental services. The information is usually presented through a GIS (Geographic Information System) digital mapping system.

[114] Molyneaux, Nicholas, "Discovering Witches' Marks," https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/features/discovering-witches-marks/

Categories include initials and names, marks related to gender, dates, places, declarations of love, as well as hands, shoes, ships, and religious imagery. Traces of additional graffiti marks were observed but were "unreadable." In addition to a 77-page report systematically documenting and discussing the graffiti marks observed at this site, technicians took multiple overlapping high-resolution images and stitched them together with Structure from Motion (SfM) photogrammetry to create a three-dimensional photomosaic of the roof structure.[115] This photomosaic is a strategy for cultural heritage preservation and provides an invaluable visualization of data for future researchers. Interestingly, this graffiti-dense site does not appear to have any apotropaic markings. Perhaps this roof is not the place for such things—many of the entries read like tourist travel entries, and the high instances of boat-related graffiti reflect Filey's seaside location. This site is a reminder that not all historic graffiti is mystical, and further systematic and thorough studies of historic graffiti in general can better underscore this.

Unsurprisingly, historic graffiti survey projects have begun to emerge in the United States. The Early American Graffiti Project (EAGP), Founded by Michael Emmons, an Architectural Historian and Ph.D. candidate in Preservation Studies at the University of Delaware. His project is concerned with any markings made in the 17th through 20th centuries, of which apotropaic markings are just one of many forms. The project has a Facebook page that shares updates,[116] and a Google-hosted map that currently displays 131 points of historic graffiti. Emmons organizes the graffiti into the following categories: Ship Graffiti, Apotropaic/Circular Markings, Pictorial, Graffiti (general), and Datestones. Most of

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[115] JB Archaeological Services, Historic England, "Historic Graffiti on the Tower of St. Oswald's Church, Filey, North Yorkshire: Recording and Interpretation," 2016, [they also created a model with laser scanning; the SfM images were of higher quality]

[116] Historic American Graffiti Project, https://www.facebook.com/earlyamericangraffitiproject

these data points are concentrated in areas near the Atlantic coast. Credit is given to those who provided information for map entries, and some identifying details are obscured to protect the privacy of the current property owners. This map is an exciting first step in building historic graffiti survey networks in the United States, and I hope it continues to be updated.

The current iteration of the Early American Graffiti Project's map highlights a need for in-depth surveys at a smaller scale, either at the state or county level. I recognize that the EAGP's current approach is a response to the overwhelming need for such a survey in the Americas. However, there is still much latent potential for creating a survey apparatus and way to share findings for North American sites. There is a need for systematized survey of apotropaic markings and historic graffiti in the United States. Taking cues from how English survey projects manage their projects, a comparably robust network of historic graffiti findings could take shape in the Americas. NHGS has already created systems and training materials that could be adapted to American sites. For example, NHGS offers a volunteer handbook that lists tools required, ideal lighting conditions, medieval graffiti typology charts, templates, and directions for how to submit survey work (figure A). There is also an apotropaic symbol typology and basic interpretation guide (figure B). The NHGS approach stresses best practices in documentation, including the use of photographic scales and recording everything at the site—even things the survey volunteer may not deem significant. The simple yet thorough approach empowers volunteers so that they can complete this essential work while not getting bogged down with overly technical requirements or notation. By adapting the tools created by Matthew Champion and NHGS to an American audience, local historical societies could begin to survey already well-known historical sites in their

area. The adaptations to the guides would be minimal, such as changing example locations, dates of significance, and types of graffiti encountered.

If a local or county-level historical entity is unable to spearhead an effort like this in their locality, a more general survey would still be meaningful if conducted at the state level. Following the lead of Historic England, State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) could collect responses from the public to enrich their programming and complement existing historic structure reports. These offices perform many of the same functions as Historic England and are an analogue to Historic England in the United States. Just as results submitted to the Historic England survey were used to enrich HERs, these findings could similarly enrich Historic Register entries for sites across the state.

Another core component of work like this is recognizing the need for back-end management of the data. The database for NHGS is under construction, but the website currently lists 18 sites surveyed by the group. Under the "catalogue" section of the website, each site has a page with contact details for the church and links to the Historic England National Heritage List Entry and the county's HER. This effort would be enhanced with a map, which will hopefully be included when the database is complete. Even if this project relies on volunteer researchers, the time spent managing and presenting the data and the cost of hosting dense web maps could present a stumbling block for groups wishing to get this off the ground. Funding would have to be secured for data hosting, at the very least. However, once funded, local groups could also put together survey kits for volunteers to check out. This would increase the standardization of survey results and increase the equity of this

effort. These kits could contain printed forms, clipboards, pencils, photographic scales, supplementary lighting, and devices with photographic and LiDar capabilities.[117]

[117] LiDar, Light Detection and Ranging, or Laser Imaging, Detection, and Ranging, refers to technology that uses laser imaging to yield detailed, accurate, 3d models of sites "photographed." This technology is now available on the latest versions of digital tablets and cell phones.

8.0 Completed Survey Sheet - Notes

Site survey sheets and photo record sheets need to be filled out for every church examined - even if the church contains no obvious early inscriptions. All the forms can be freely downloaded from the website.

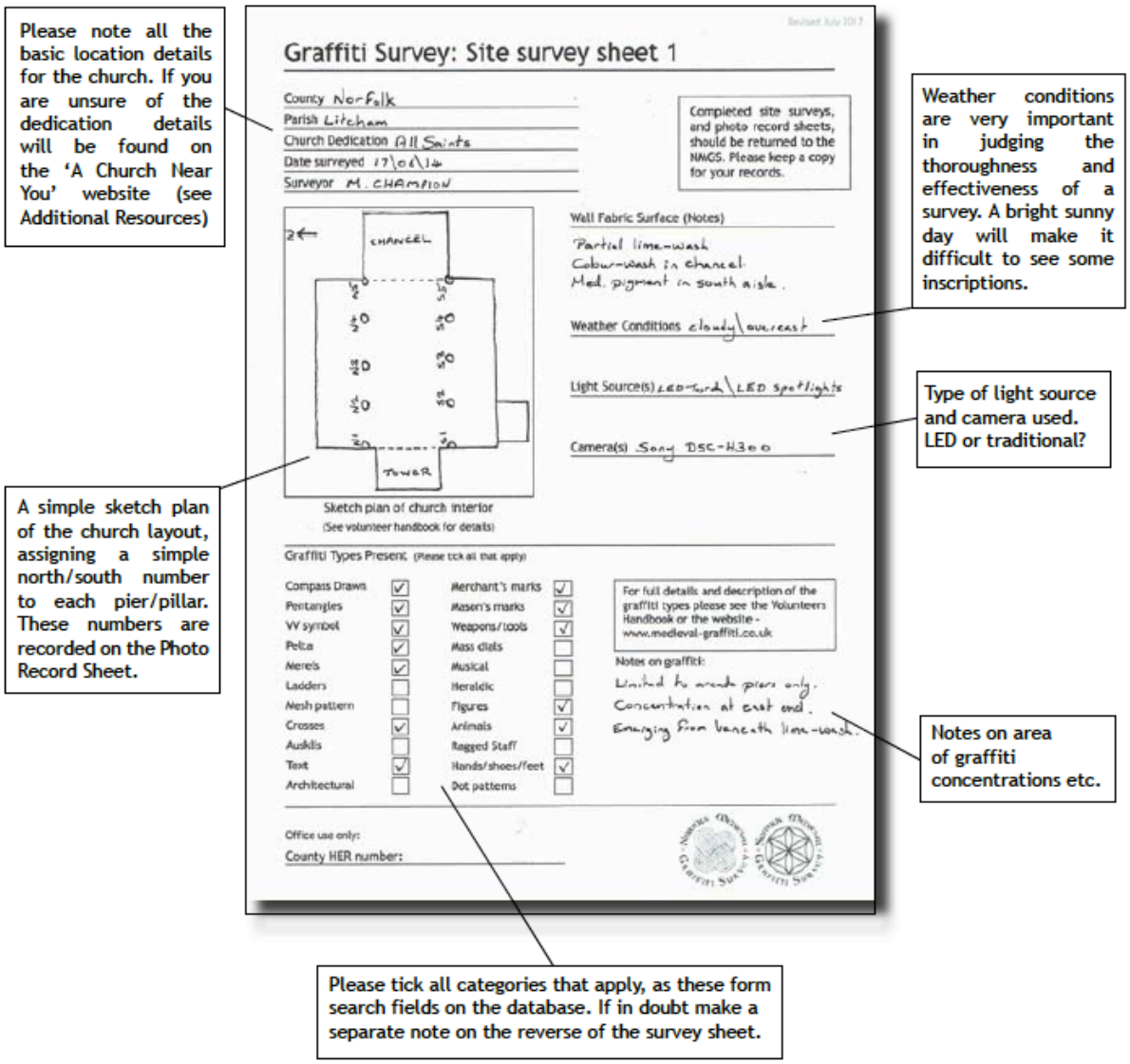


Figure A. This is an excerpt from the Medieval Graffiti Survey Volunteer handbook. Also included in the handbook are survey best practices, graffiti typologies, interpretation of symbols, and instructions on how to upload information to a digital repository. A PDF of the volunteer handbook can be found on the Volunteer Resources page for the Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey, accessed May 2024, http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/page11.html

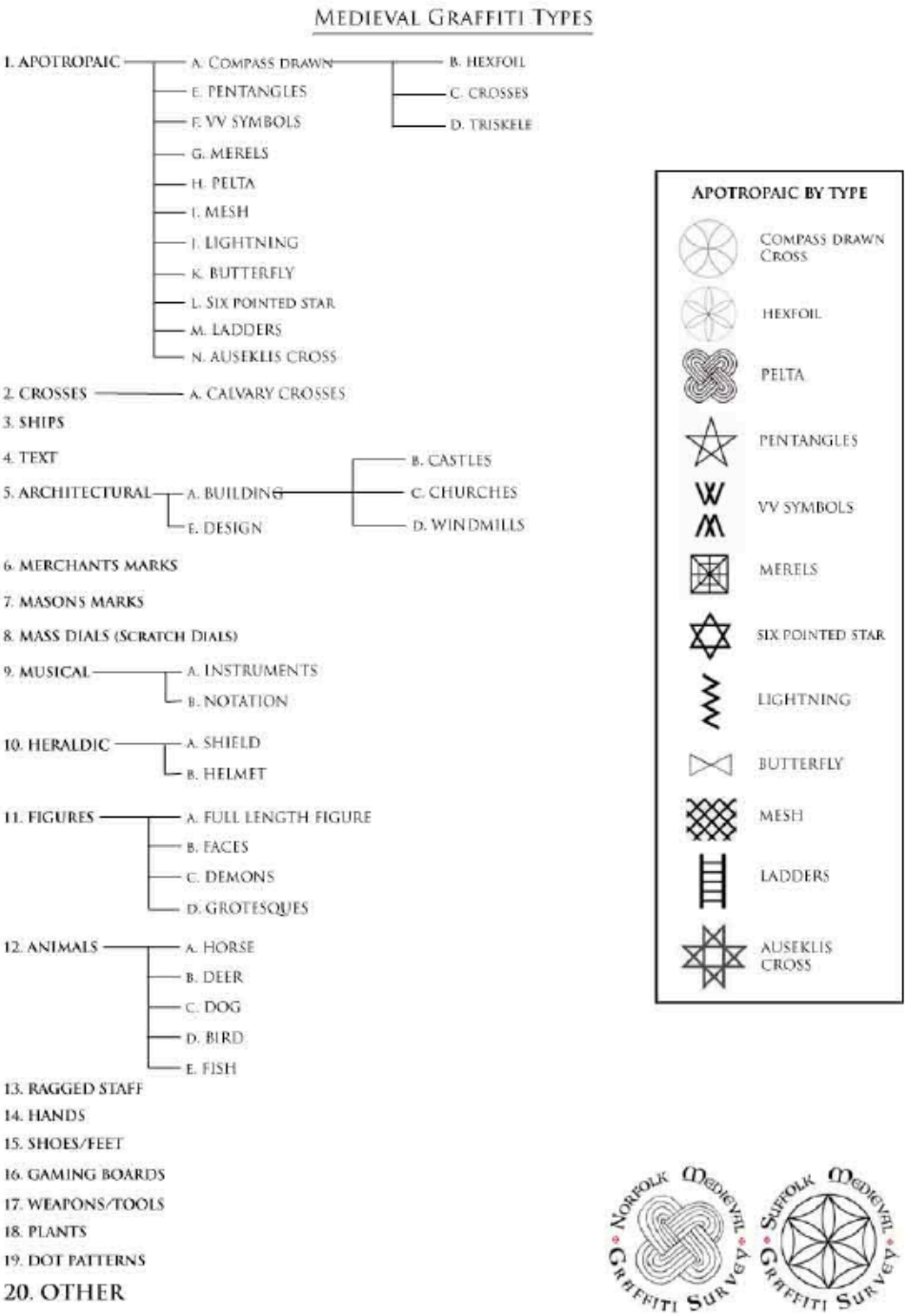


Figure B. This is an excerpt from the Medieval Graffiti Survey Volunteer handbook showing the types of medieval graffiti in England. A PDF of the volunteer handbook can be found on the Volunteer Resources page for the Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey, accessed May 2024, http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/page11.html

Illustrations

Figure 1. Photograph of the Plains Mill taken in 2005. The 19th-century core structure is visible behind the 20th-century additions. Kinsey, Robert T., “Plains Mill/Arbogast Grain Elevator” 2005, Millpictures.com, Accessed December 13, 2023, https://millpictures.com/mills.php?millid=1404

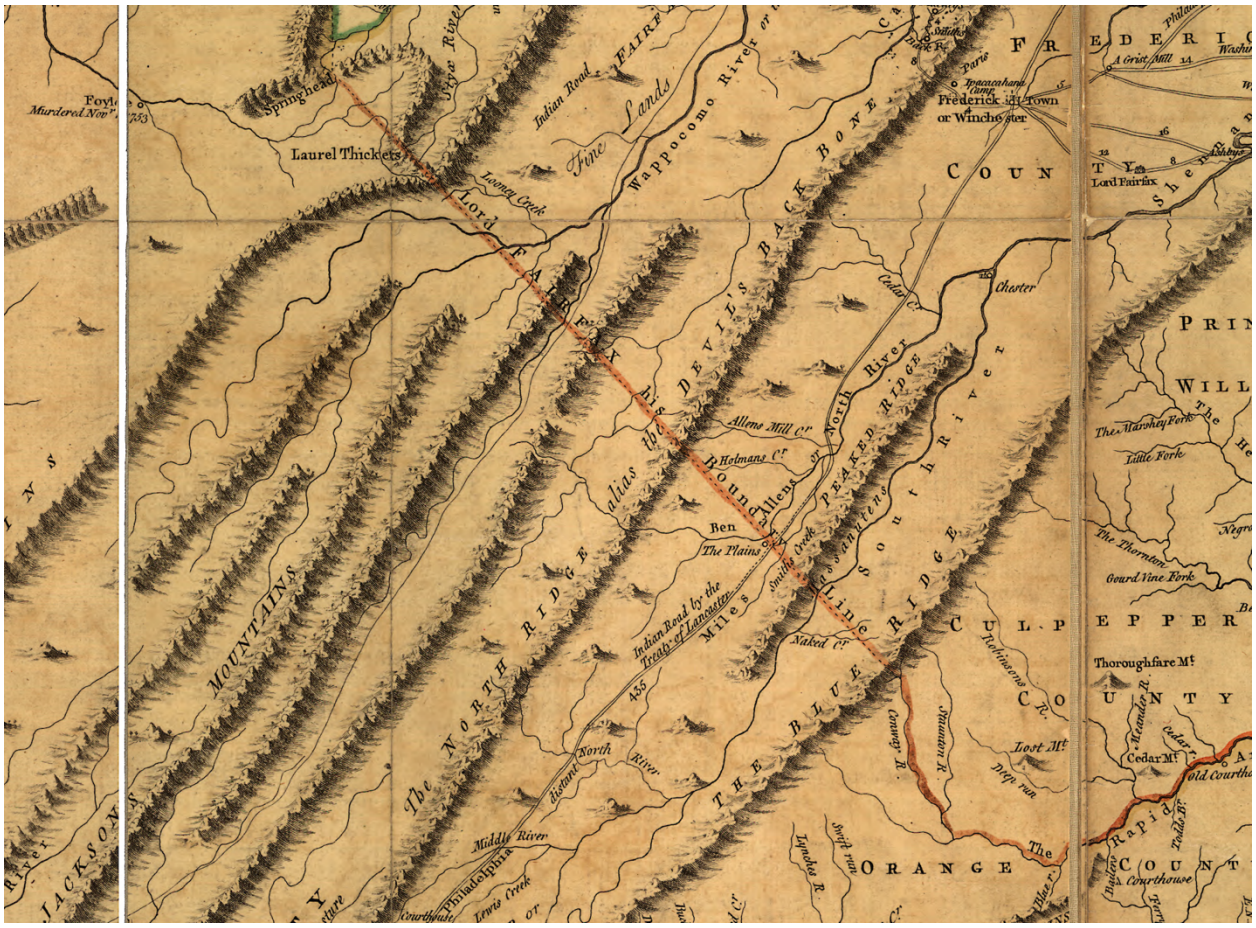


Figure 2. Fry, Joshua, Approximately, Peter Jefferson, and Thomas Jefferys. *A map of the most inhabited part of Virginia containing the whole province of Maryland with part of Pensilvania, New Jersey and North Carolina*. [London, Thos. Jefferys, 1755] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/74693166/.

Figure 3. “Solomon’s Temple,” the Second Apothecary building of Solomon Henkel. Built in 1802, it replaced the small one-story wood building built in 1798. Photo by Richard Harkness. Appears in Wilson, Betty Karol. “Solomon Henkel Biography” 2010. New Market Historical Society. http://www.newmarkethistoricalsociety.org/Solomon_Henkel_bio_for_NMHS_website.pdf

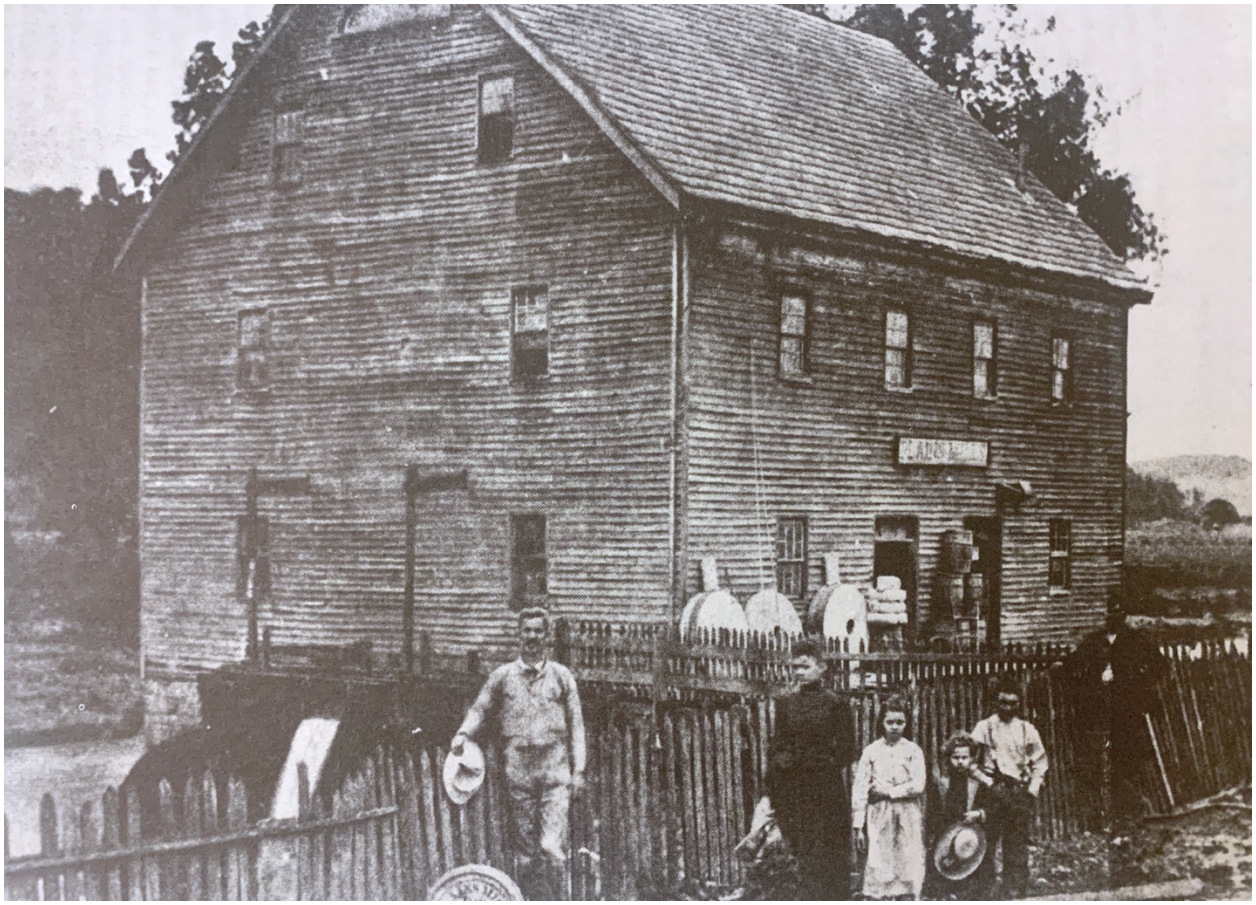


Figure 4. 1898 Photograph of the Plains Mill with Silon Henkel (left), nephew of the mill's builder, Siram P. Henkel. Other persons are identified as Margaret Henkel, Lillian Henkel, Annie Funkhouser, and Harry Henkel. At far right is Mart Minnick, believed to have been hired help at the mill [from *The Daily News Record,* October 26, 1927] "Plains Mill," Downs, Janet Baugher, *Mills of Rockingham County.* 1997. Rocktown Historical Society

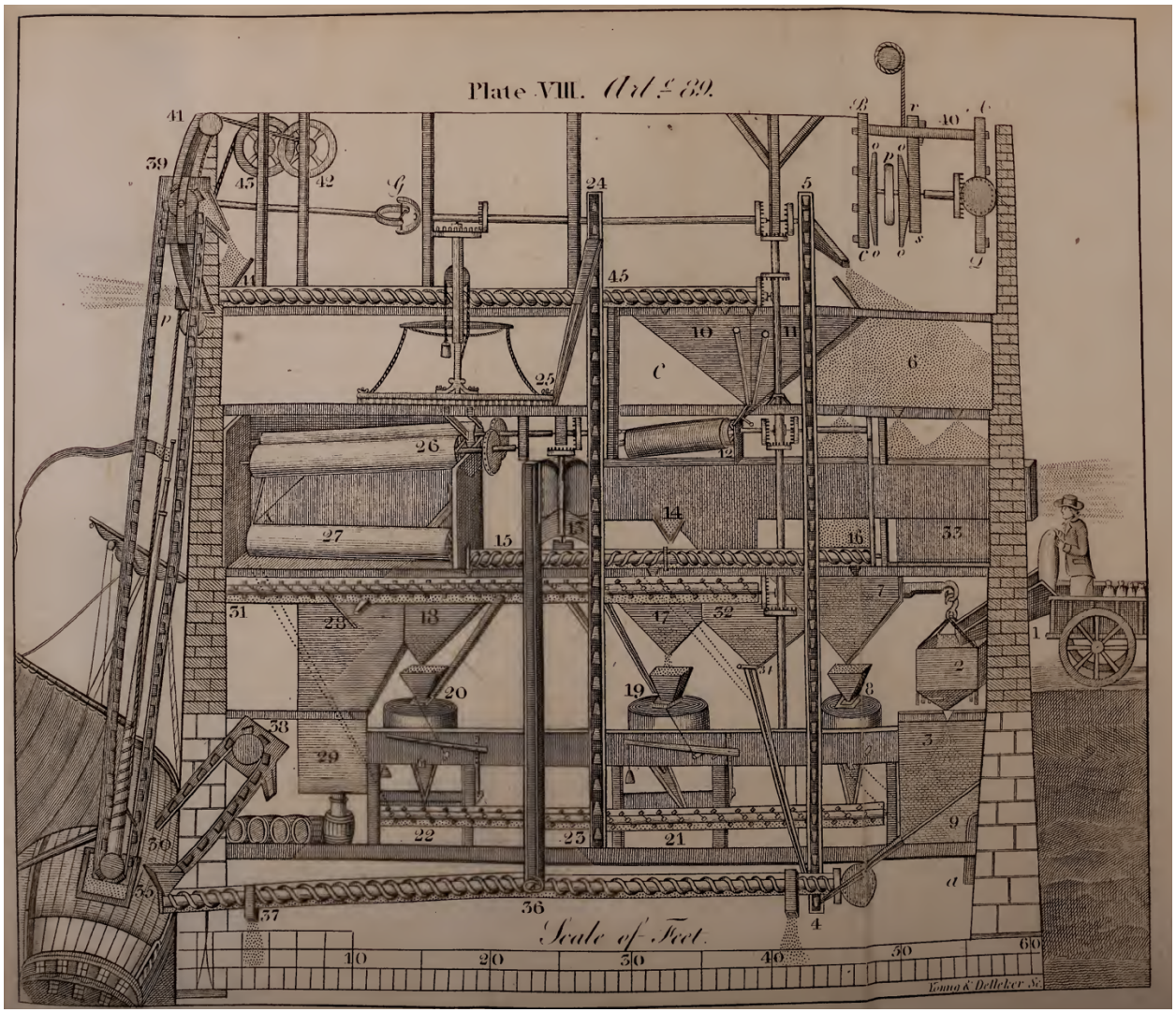


Figure 5. Plate VIII from Oliver Evans' *The Young Mill-Wright & Miller's Guide,* depicting a mill fitted with his labor-saving improvements.

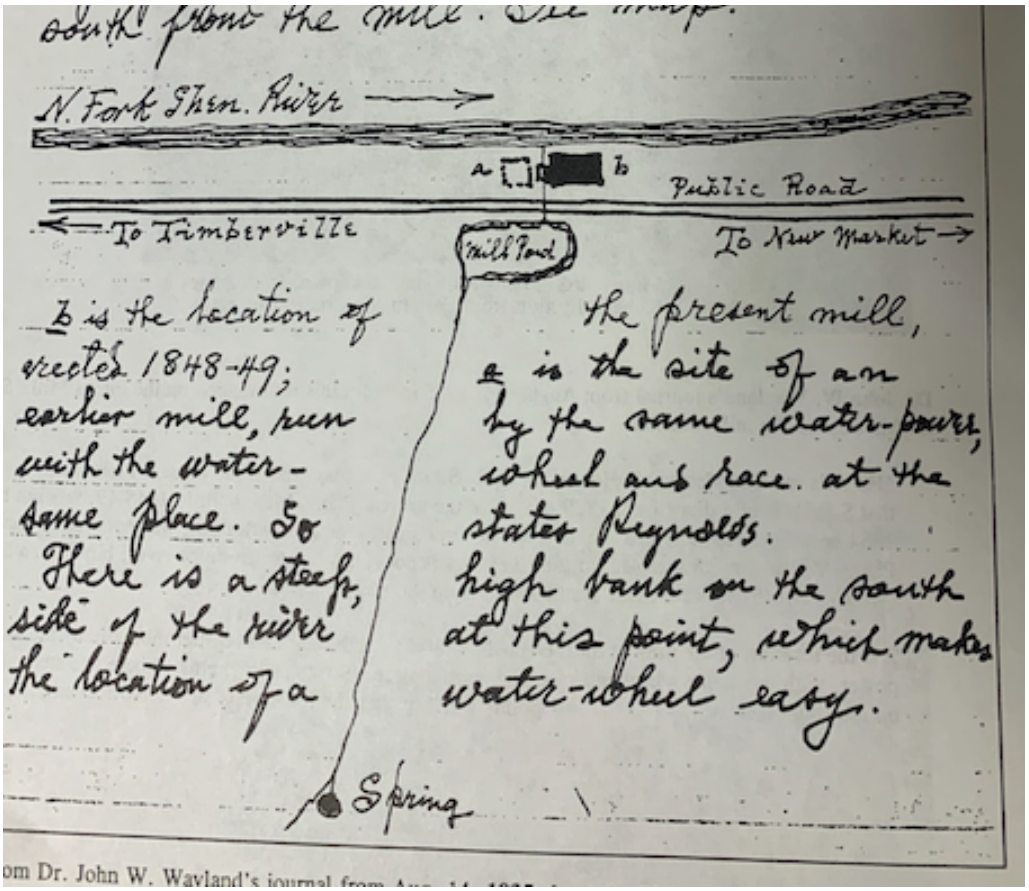


Figure 5. Page from John W. Wayland's journal dated August 14, 1935. Included in Janet Baugher Down, *Mills of Rockingham County Vol.2*

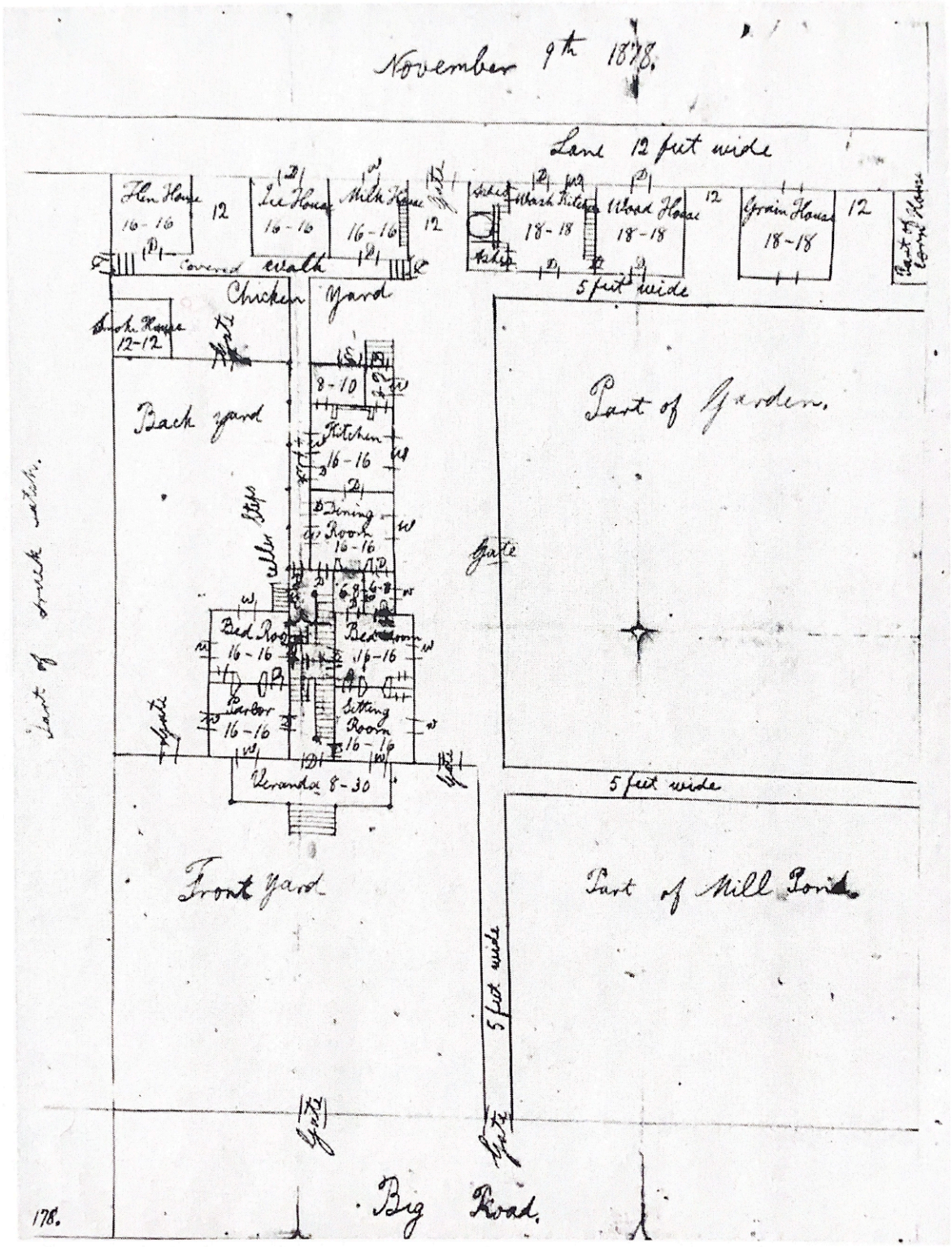
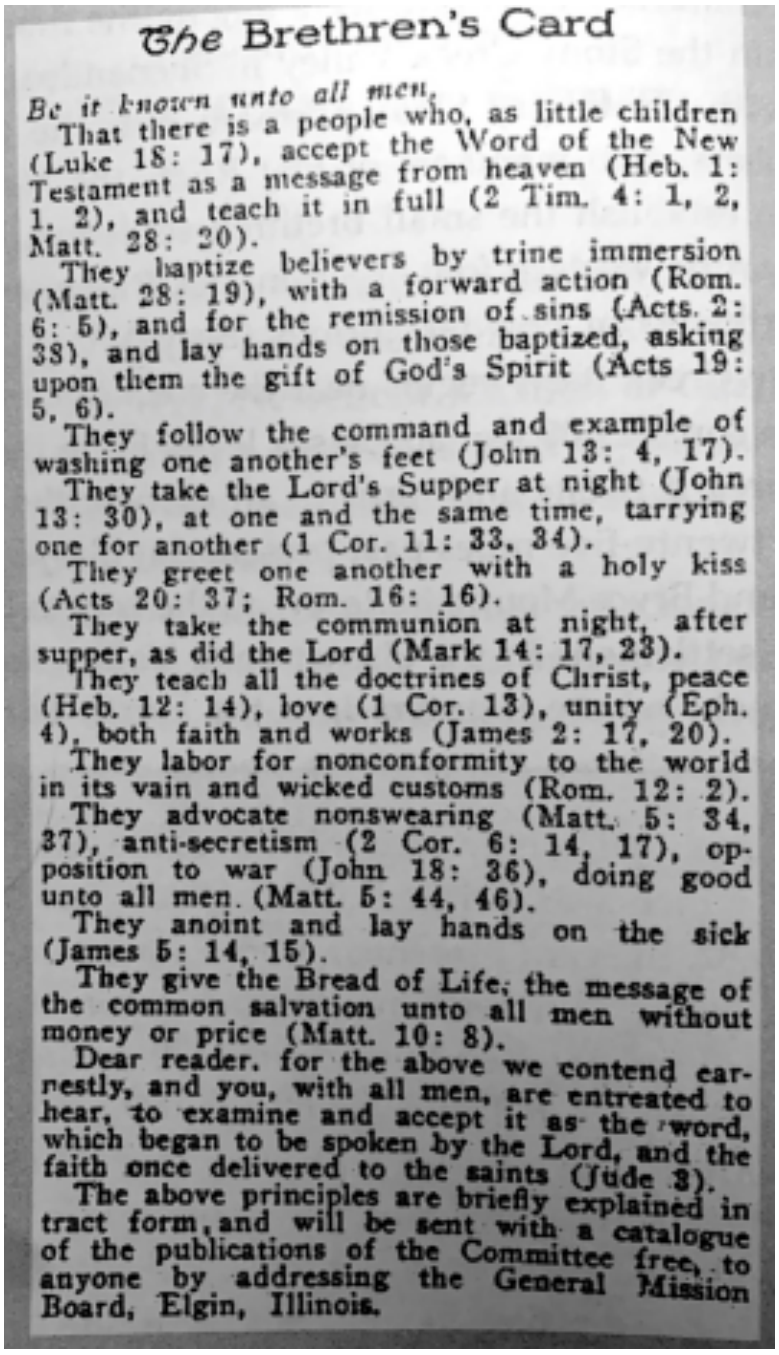


Figure 6. Plan of house and yard across from Plains Mill. Attributed to Siram P. Henkel, ca. 1875. Appears in Janet Baugher Downs, *Mills of Rockingham County, vol.2*

Figure 7. Scene outside Glick's Mill, Rockingham County, Virginia. Photograph taken by Homer Thomas, circa 1900. Janet Baugher Downs, *Mills of Rockingham County, Vol. 1*



The Brethren's Card

Be it known unto all men,

That there is a people who, as little children (Luke 18: 17), accept the Word of the New Testament as a message from heaven (Heb. 1: 1, 2), and teach it in full (2 Tim. 4: 1, 2, Matt. 28: 20).

They baptize believers by trine immersion (Matt. 28: 19), with a forward action (Rom. 6: 5), and for the remission of sins (Acts. 2: 38), and lay hands on those baptized, asking upon them the gift of God's Spirit (Acts 19: 5, 6).

They follow the command and example of washing one another's feet (John 13: 4, 17).

They take the Lord's Supper at night (John 13: 30), at one and the same time, tarrying one for another (1 Cor. 11: 33, 34).

They greet one another with a holy kiss (Acts 20: 37; Rom. 16: 16).

They take the communion at night, after supper, as did the Lord (Mark 14: 17, 23).

They teach all the doctrines of Christ, peace (Heb. 12: 14), love (1 Cor. 13), unity (Eph. 4), both faith and works (James 2: 17, 20).

They labor for nonconformity to the world in its vain and wicked customs (Rom. 12: 2).

They advocate nonswearing (Matt. 5: 34, 37), anti-secretism (2 Cor. 6: 14, 17), opposition to war (John 18: 36), doing good unto all men. (Matt. 5: 44, 46).

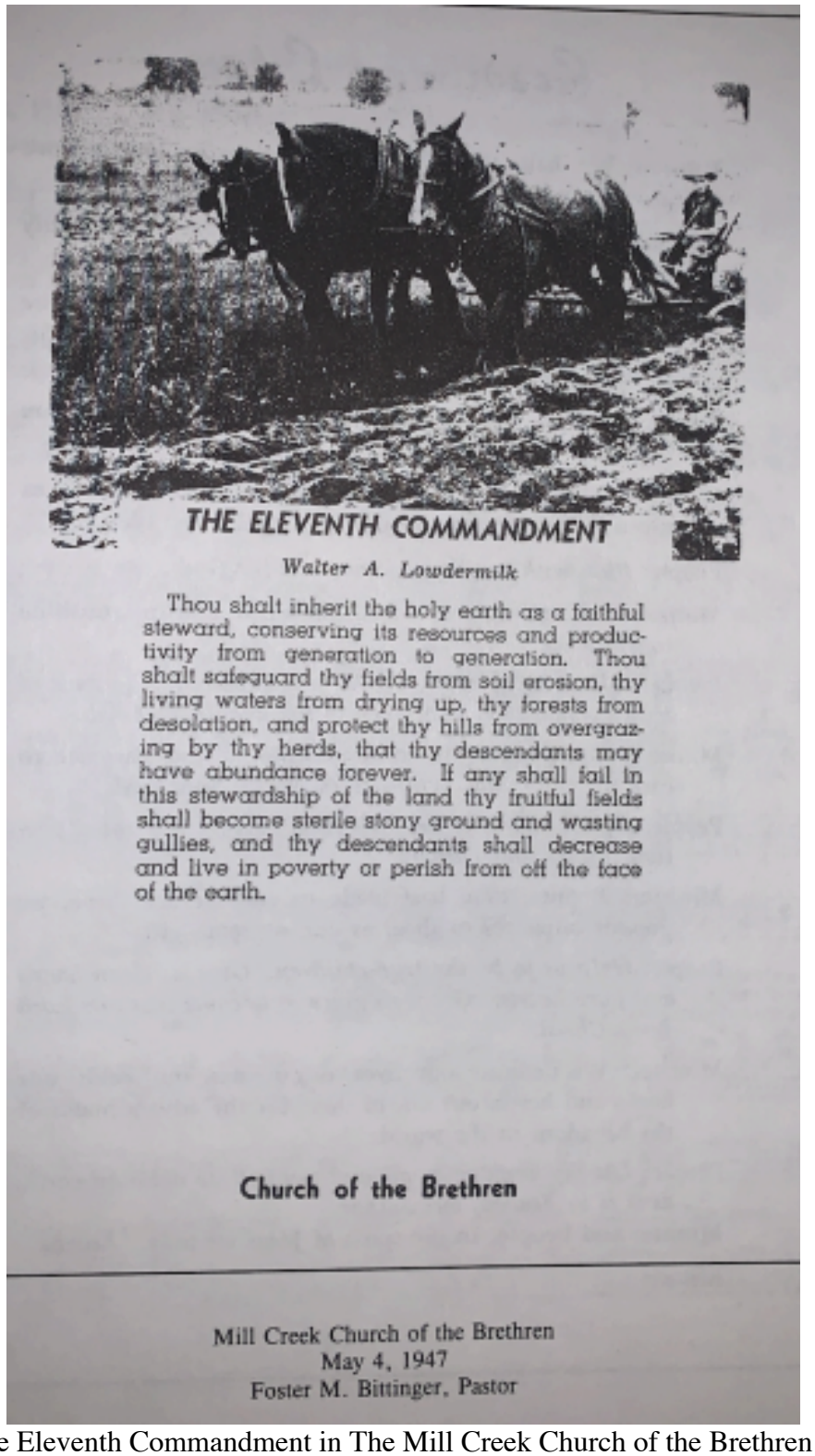
They anoint and lay hands on the sick (James 5: 14, 15).

They give the Bread of Life, the message of the common salvation unto all men without money or price (Matt. 10: 8).

Dear reader, for the above we contend earnestly, and you, with all men, are entreated to hear, to examine and accept it as the word, which began to be spoken by the Lord, and the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The above principles are briefly explained in tract form, and will be sent with a catalogue of the publications of the Committee free, to anyone by addressing the General Mission Board, Elgin, Illinois.

Figure 8. Brethren's Card. Ca. 1900s. Included in Janet Baugher Downs, *Mills of Rockingham County, Vol. 1*



THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Walter A. Lowdermilk

Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or perish from off the face of the earth.

Church of the Brethren

Mill Creek Church of the Brethren
May 4, 1947
Foster M. Bittinger, Pastor

Figure 9. The Eleventh Commandment in The Mill Creek Church of the Brethren Bulletin. Included in Janet Baugher Downs, Mills of Rockingham County, Vol. 1

Figure 10. Charles Nesselrodt baptizing congregant in Stony Creek, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Photograph taken by William L. Mumaw, 1905. Appears in Barkley, Terry One Who Served: Brethren Elder Charles Nesselrodt of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

Figure 11. Location of scribed circles above the hearth in the Burwell-Morgan Mill in Clarke County, Virginia. May 2023. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 12. Historical concentric circle graffiti above hearth in Burwell-Morgan Mill. May 2023. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 13. Large hexafoil on wall in Burwell-Morgan Mill. Other graffiti is present. May 2023. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 14. Inscribed circle with dot in middle. Breneman-Turner mill, Rockingham County, Virginia. June 2023. (Photograph by Author)

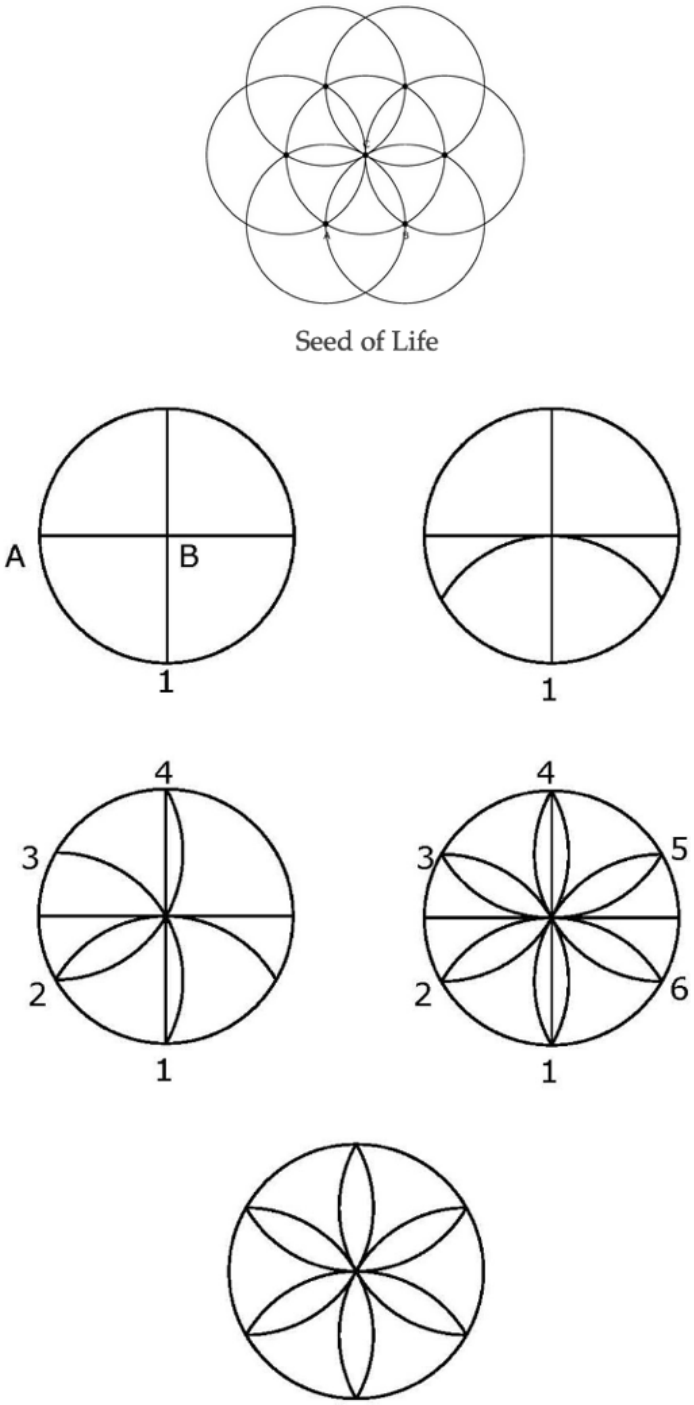


Figure 15. “From Euclid’s Elements” Drawing by Sim Ayers, SBE Builders, 2010, *A Lesson in Applied Geometry and Euclidean Geometry.* November 2010. http://www.sbebuilders.com/tools/geometry/treatise/Applied-Geometry.html

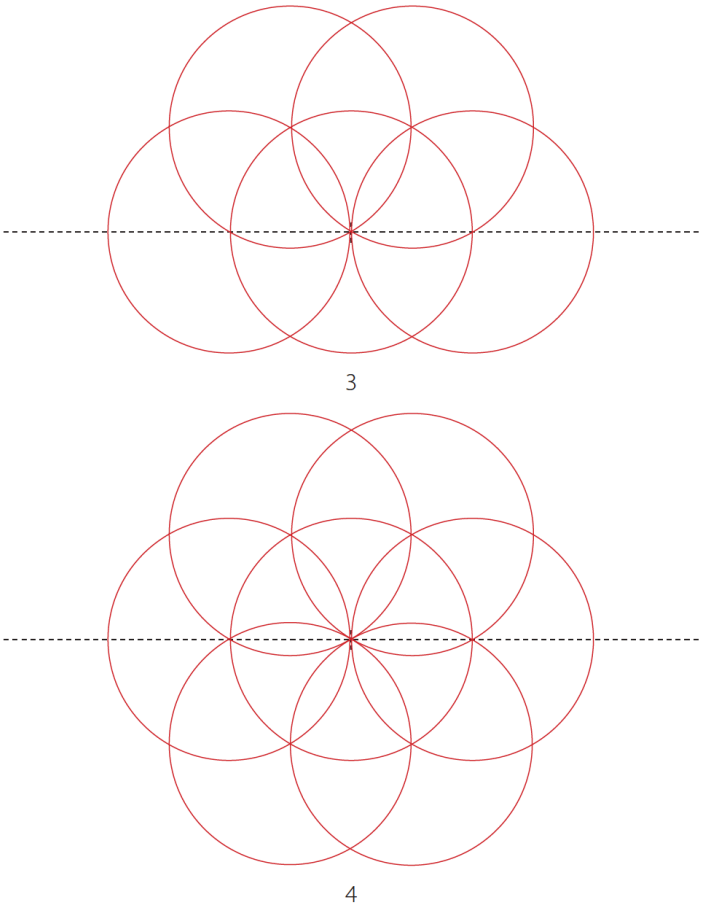
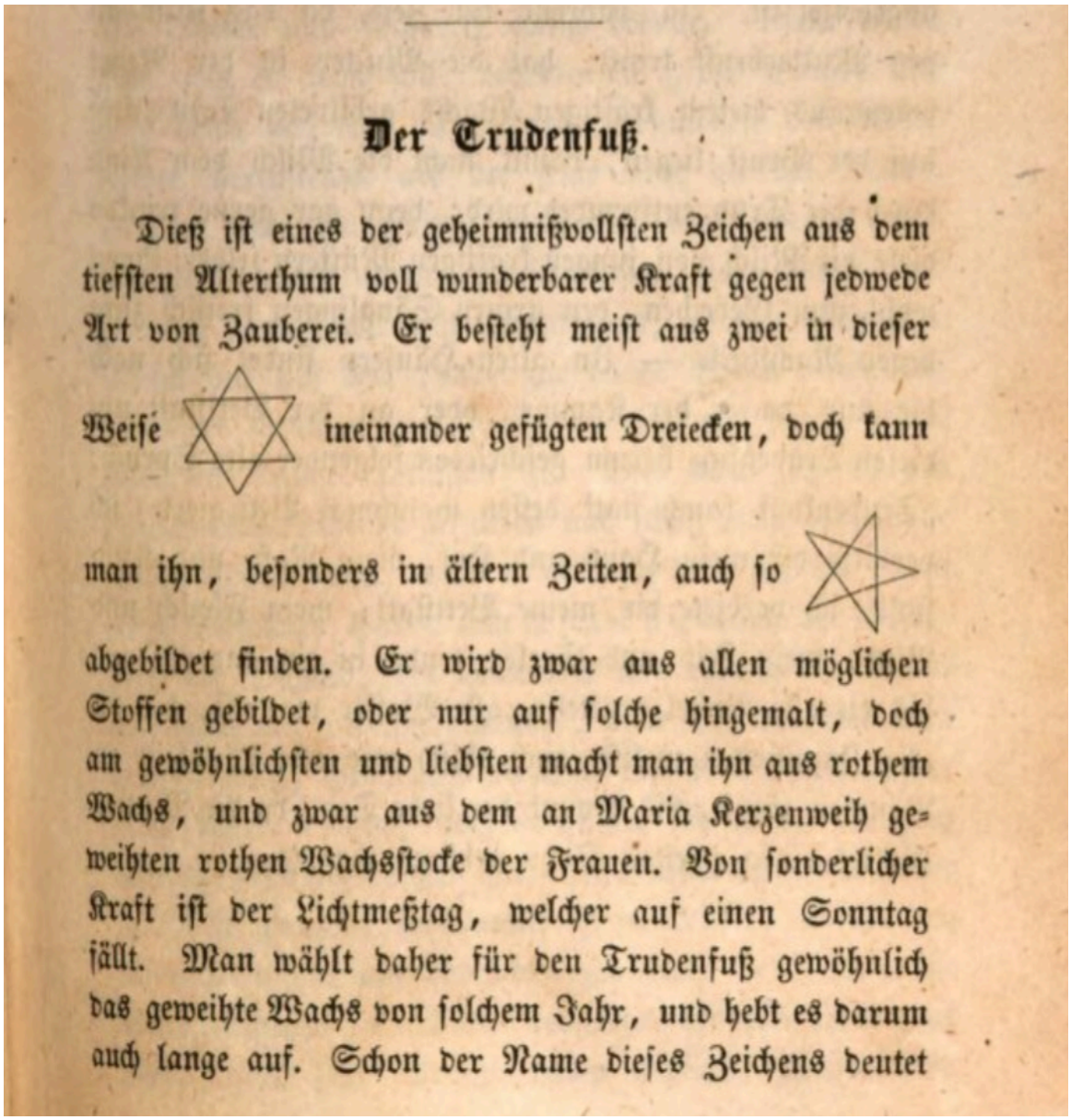


Figure 16. A different approach to drawing a daisy wheel. From Laurie Smith's "Drawing the Daisy Wheel, 4 Point Rectangle, 6 Point Rectangle, Square, and Double Square." 2014.

Figure 17. Location of two hexafoils on top half of the Dutch doors in the Plains Mill in Rockingham County, Virginia. This is one of the main entrances to the mill. Additional chalk graffiti is present. December 2023. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 18. Same area of door highlighted in figure 17. In this image, the two inscribed hexafoils have been outlined to increase legibility. December 2023. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 19. Hexafoil on the staircase wall of the Plains Mill. Rockingham County, Virginia. December 2023. (Photograph by Author)



Der Trudenfuß.

Dieß ist eines der geheimnißvollsten Zeichen aus dem tiefsten Alterthum voll wunderbarer Kraft gegen jedwede Art von Zauberei. Er besteht meist aus zwei in dieser Weise ineinander gefügten Dreiecken, doch kann man ihn, besonders in ältern Zeiten, auch so abgebildet finden. Er wird zwar aus allen möglichen Stoffen gebildet, oder nur auf solche hingemalt, doch am gewöhnlichsten und liebsten macht man ihn aus rothem Wachs, und zwar aus dem an Maria Kerzenweih geweihten rothen Wachsstocke der Frauen. Von sonderlicher Kraft ist der Lichtmeßtag, welcher auf einen Sonntag fällt. Man wählt daher für den Trudenfuß gewöhnlich das geweihte Wachs von solchem Jahr, und hebt es darum auch lange auf. Schon der Name dieses Zeichens deutet

Figure 20. *Der Trudenfuss* in two forms. From Karl von Leoprecting, *Aus dem Lechrain: zur Deutschen Sitten-und-Sagekunde, München: Literarisch-artistiche* Anst.1855, pp. 25-26

Figure 21. Compass-drawn circles on stair stringer at Woodson's Mill, Nelson County, Virginia. September 2023. These markings face the area where the millstones are located. Inscriptions are outlined for legibility. (Photograph by Author)

Figure 22. Cluster of Compass-drawn circles on upright timber support Woodson's Mill, Nelson County, Virginia. September 2023. This member faces the area where the millstones are located. (Photograph by Author)

Location	Symbol	Location	Notes
Burwell-Morgan Mill, Clarke County, VA	Large hexafoil	Office	
Burwell-Morgan Mill, Clarke County, VA	Concentric circles (2)	Upper left of hearth	
Woodson's Mill, Nelson County, VA	Circles with central points, some with nails driven in center	Vertical beam that faces hurst frame (milling area)	Secondary location; possible material re-use
Woodson's Mill, Nelson County, VA	Circles with central points	Stair stringer facing the hurst frame (milling area)	Secondary location; possible material re-use
Plains Mill, Rockingham County, VA	Hexafoils (2)	Main entrance door	
Plains Mill, Rockingham County, VA	Hexafoil (1)	Wall of stairway leading to second floor	Same size as hexafoils on door
Breneman-Turner Mill, Rockingham County, VA	Circle with central point	Wall of office; faces milling area	

Figure 23. Summary of apotropaic markings observed in mills in Virginia while conducting research for this thesis. These notes were taken while conducting field research and before I encountered historic graffiti survey projects. Future field notes of historic graffiti and apotropaic markings should include measurements and additional contextual information. May-December 2023.