
A self-guiding tour of

a century old village

**MILLBROOK
VILLAGE**

To Blairstown Road

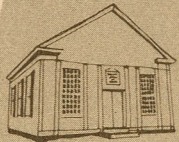
Mill Brook

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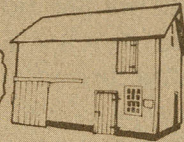
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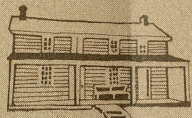
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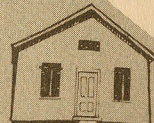
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MILLBROOK VILLAGE

14

Parking

To Peters Valley

River Road

To Delaware Water Gap

Millbrook was at its peak a hundred years ago. Farmers from the surrounding countryside came here for their economic, religious and cultural needs. The village briefly prospered, then slowly died.

The Millbrook you see now has been put together by the National Park Service. While some of the buildings were here originally, others were brought in and some were rebuilt. This scene presents the many "Millbrooks" that last century dotted the landscape and played a special role in the growth of our country. Here we remember a way of life followed by millions of Americans until they abandoned it for an urban existence.

1 The log cabin which is adjacent to the parking lot was erected by **JAMES SPANGENBERG**. He apparently dismantled a log barn located along the Blairstown Road and used the materials to construct this residence. It is one of the few log cabins remaining in the general area.

2 The original **TRAUGER HOUSE** sits behind the hotel on the Old Flatbrookville Road.

As in other communities, the prosperity of the families of Millbrook varied. George Trauger, a successful farmer, could afford to live in more comfort than some of his neighbors. The Traugers lived in Millbrook immediately after the Civil War. Then the village could boast of 75 people and 19 major buildings. However, the Traugers, like most of their neighbors, eventually left Millbrook for communities offering more opportunities and services.

3 The **MILLBROOK HOTEL** is used as a residence and is not open to the public. The building was used as a residence a century ago, but farm laborers could board here and occasionally travelers would stay overnight. It is said that one could always purchase spirits at the hotel.

4 The reconstructed **BLACKSMITH SHOP** stands opposite the hotel. Early craftsmen came to Millbrook and provided services for farmers bringing grain to the mill. The blacksmith was among the first craftsmen to set up shop. Regardless of the summer heat, he stood all day next to a hot fire, working the metal with heavy tools. He alternately held the iron in his flaming forge, and then hammered the

red-hot metal into shape on the anvil. He repaired tools, sharpened blades and turned bars of iron into hinges, horse-shoes, and other items for the community.

5 The **GENERAL STORE** is located across from the blacksmith shop. No original Millbrook store remains. This structure was brought in from elsewhere.

The store was vital to the community's economic life. The merchant bartered with his neighbors. His customers picked their necessities and their pleasures from his shelves filled with hardware, groceries, dry goods, medicines and over 400 miscellaneous items.

6 Cross over the brook to get to the site of the **GRIST MILL**. Here Abraham Garris built a mill in 1832, thereby founding the community. The mill allowed valley farmers to get their grain ground into flour without a difficult trip over the mountains. Garris dammed the brook upstream diverting the water to run the machinery that turned the millstones that ground the grain. Eventually more efficient mills were built nearer the railroad. Like Millbrook's other businessmen, the miller lost many of his customers, and, as the village declined, the mill stopped running.

7 To get to the **CHURCH**, recross the brook and follow the road to the left. Be careful with young children on the road. In the early 1800's, before the village existed, Methodist ministers included this area in their circuit. As the community began growing, regular Sunday services were held in a private home. Soon the villagers built a church but replaced it in 1860 with a structure identical to the reconstruction you see here.

8 Opposite the church is the **HILL** house. Sylvester Hill, besides being a carpenter, ran a combination tavern and store for a while in the village.

The Sylvester Hills and their neighbors combined work with social affairs. Quilting, sewing, and corn-husking were get-togethers for exchanging the local news. Spelling bees and recitations at the school provided further entertainment.

9 **VAN CAMPEN FARMHOUSE**, an 18th-century farmhouse, was originally located two miles south of Millbrook. The house was moved here in 1978. Abraham Van Campen, an early settler, arrived in the Upper Delaware Valley probably in 1732. Millbrook is named from the water powered mill be built along the stream about 2 miles south of here. Eventually he accumulated 10,000 acres and he and his descendants became some of the leading citizens in the vicinity.

10 Across the street you can visit the DePue house recently moved into Millbrook and furnished as a **SHOEMAKER'S HOUSE**.

The shoemaker made leather shoes on foot-shaped forms called lasts. Philip Garris started as a shoemaker and later operated a general store. The ledger he kept from 1874-76 affords an interesting glimpse into the past.

A cabinetmaker, and a carriage maker along with coopers, wheelwrights, stone masons and weavers provided their services around Millbrook during the latter half of the 19th century. Often necessity forced these craftsmen to hire out as farm laborers in addition to working their regular skill.

11 Down the lane you will come to the **E. GARRIS HOUSE**. Garris was a common name in Millbrook. Elias' wife was the daughter of Abraham Garris, the miller. Millbrook women had no modern appliances to ease their chores. They washed with scrub boards, ironed with heavy flat irons, churned butter, made soap, tended vegetable and herb gardens, canned and dried food, cooked on wood-burning stoves, and sewed their families' clothing from cloth bought at the general store.

12 Next take a look at the so called **E. GARRIS BARN and POND**. Although the barn and pond are named after Garris, they were actually constructed by a more recent resident than him.

A hundred years ago there was little paving and roads were often muddy. People lived in a wetter world. Ponds, streams and bogs were a part of the daily scene.

13 From the Garris Barn the road passes through the woods approximately 300 yards to the **SCHOOL**. Eager for education, the villagers held school in the basement of the first church. After the new

church was built, the old building was moved here and became a one-room schoolhouse. The children learned to read, write and spell. The older students also studied arithmetic and geography. This was their preparation for the future, which would take many of them far from Millbrook both in miles and in life style.

14 In the **CEMETERY** on the hill above the school, look for the names still visible on the old gravestones of early residents of Millbrook.

These people lived a life very different from our own. With increasing agricultural specialization, small farms could no longer compete with the larger operations. As the area surrounding Millbrook lost its farm residents, the craftsmen moved to communities having more customers. Millbrook declined. Its fate was shared by similar villages throughout the country. Rural America was changing into urban America.

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