



## Millbrook Village



Today's Millbrook Village does not replicate the Millbrook of 1832 or 1900. Rather, it evokes the feeling of countryside hamlets where most of this nation's people lived until the end of the 19th century, and provides a landscape for the demonstration of the folkways of that era.

### A Village Grows

In 1832, Abram Garis, a local farmer, built a grist (grain) mill along the newly-finished Columbia-Walpack Turnpike where it crossed a stream known as "Van Campens Mill Brook." Van Campen's Mill (near today's Van Campens Glen) was no longer operating by then, and the Garis mill was closer for local farmers than the nearest mill in Flatbrookville. In time, the stream's name was shortened to Van Campens Brook, and the area's became known simply as Millbrook.

Quickly, Garis had neighbors. A Methodist congregation organized and in 1840 built a small church with a school in the basement. That same year, a store opened and a blacksmith set up shop — the town was on its way. The next generation benefited from a post office, a boarding house catering to farm workers and serving "spirits," a cider mill for the less spirited, and a much-expanded Methodist church.

### Living in the village

By 1875, Millbrook had reached a peak of 75 inhabitants and about 19 major buildings, stretched out in a line along both sides of the Turnpike. The approach to the town took a visitor through miles of cultivated fields. From 1880 onward, however, Millbrook suffered the decline of rural villages experienced throughout the country. Land values dropped steeply after the Civil War. Industrialization of farming made competition difficult for the independent small farmer, and isolation from railroad lines made produce from the Millbrook area difficult to market. In addition, the lure of cash wages for factory jobs in the cities was drawing the young away from the villages of their birth.

Garis mill closed just after 1900, and by 1950, only the blacksmith was doing business in town. In the 1950s, the Columbia-Walpack Turnpike was realigned to accommodate stream impoundments at Watergate, and the crossroads at the heart of the village was lost. Auto traffic now bypassed the village, following the paved route of today's Old Mine Road. By the 1960s, Millbrook had become the quiet home of summer residents and retirees.

### Saving the Buildings

The reservoir for the proposed Tocks Island Dam threatened to inundate low-lying valleys and their settlements. The National Park Service, with assistance from the Millbrook Village Society, moved significant structures to higher ground at Millbrook.

Over time, other structures were added as outbuildings. Today, Millbrook Village has about the same number of buildings that it had in 1900. The roadbed of the turnpike is now the main "street" running through the village.

### Visiting Today

Millbrook Village is staffed on weekends and other days in summer, and for special events the rest of the year. Costumed park rangers and volunteer craft persons demonstrate period skills, and several Millbrook structures are open for visits. School programs and tours are accommodated as staffing permits.

The village comes alive each year on the first weekend that is fully in the month of October for Millbrook Days. Volunteers of the Millbrook Village Society demonstrate crafts and skills of rural living in the young nation. For information about events and programs at Millbrook, call 908 841-9531 or visit [www.nps.gov/dewa](http://www.nps.gov/dewa).

# Village Map

(41.073683 -74.963117)



**Built at Millbrook in the 1800s**

1. Lester Spangenburg Cabin. Built here c. 1900 from pieces of an earlier cabin. Brochures available.
3. George Trauger House. Built here c. 1860. Open by tour. Picnic benches nearby.
4. Trauger barn. Built here c. 1860.
5. Hotel (boarding house). Built here c. 1850
12. Sylvester Hill House. Built here 1850s.
20. Elias Garis House. Built here c. 1850.
23. Garis barn (English style). Built here c. 1850
24. School. Built at Millbrook in 1840 as a Methodist Episcopal Church. Relocated here c. 1860 for use as a school



**Major Structures since 1970**

9. General Store/post office. Moved here 1973 to this site of an earlier store.
10. Grist mill. Built 1990s on site of Abram Garis' 1832 grist mill.
11. Methodist Episcopal Church. Reconstructed in 1973 to plans of 1860 church built on this site.
15. Depue Cabin. Prior to 1830. Moved here c. 1980.
17. Van Campen Farmhouse. Built 1800. Moved here in 1974.



**Other Structures since 1970**

These structures (not pictured) were reconstructed here out of materials from demolished local buildings, or were moved here from nearby locations.

2. Wagon shop. Moved here; restrooms added 1988
- 2a. Wagon storage shed. Built c. 2004.
6. Blacksmith shop. Moved here 1970s.
7. Sugar shack. Built here 1970s.
8. Cider mill. Built/rebuilt here c. 1980.
13. Smokehouse (for meats). Moved here 1970s.
14. Garden (fenced)
16. Dryhouse (fruits, vegetables). Built here c. 1980.

18. Van Campen barn. Built late 1800s. Moved/reconstructed here 1985.
19. Woodworking shop. Moved here 1986.
21. Saw mill. Reconstructed here 2004.
22. Machine shed. Built/rebuilt here 1980s.



**5** Hotel (boarding house)



**4** Trauger barn



**3** Trauger House



**1** Spangenburg Cabin



**9** General Store (Information)



**20** Garis House



**17** Van Campen Farmhouse



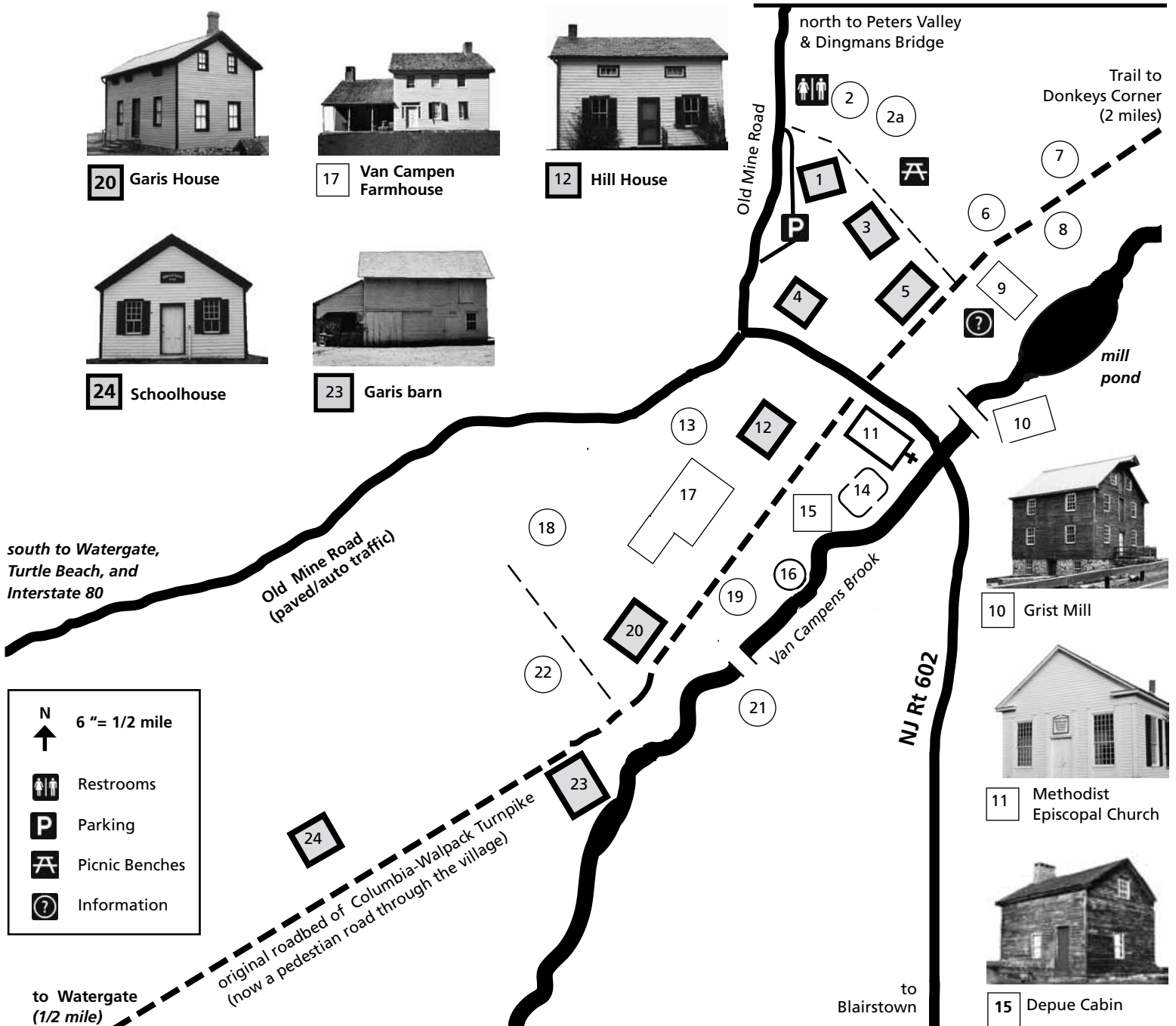
**12** Hill House



**24** Schoolhouse



**23** Garis barn



**10** Grist Mill



**11** Methodist Episcopal Church



**15** Depue Cabin