



PIERCE MILL
Rock Creek Park
Washington, D. C.

From the office of
WILLIAM A. PURTELL
U. S. Senator
CONNECTICUT

. . . PIERCE MILL . . .

Last of the flour mills that operated along Rock Creek during the early nineteenth century.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Oscar L. Chapman, *Secretary*

National Park Service, Arthur E. Demaray, *Director*

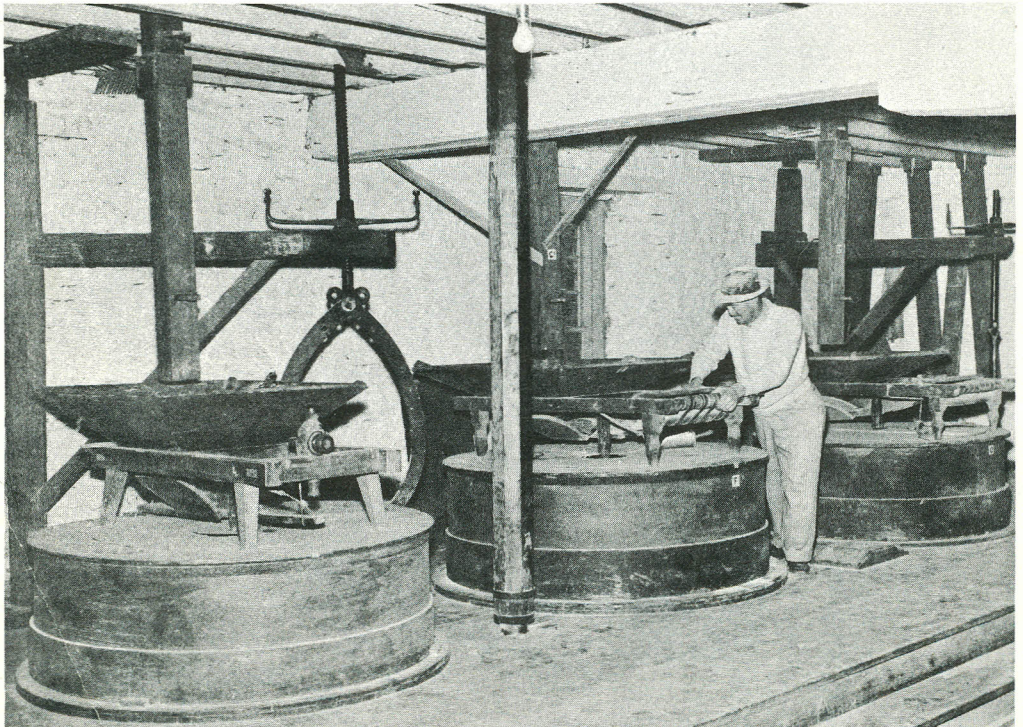
NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS



Old Pierce Mill, standing on beautiful Rock Creek, is an interesting industrial survivor of an era in the early nineteenth century when the mills and factories of America derived their power largely from small waterways. The type of water wheel still seen in operation here was once an important factor in the Nation's commerce and industry, and has been immortalized in stories, poetry, and pictures. In those unhurried days it was the custom of the farmer to sit about the mill and

discuss the affairs of home and country with his neighbor while his corn and wheat were ground under a barter agreement with the miller. Historians are unable to measure the effect of these debates on the molding of the country's political, economic, and social development, but there can be little doubt that a large cross section of early rural America discussed local and national problems amidst a setting similar to that preserved at Pierce Mill.

The three millstones where the grain is ground

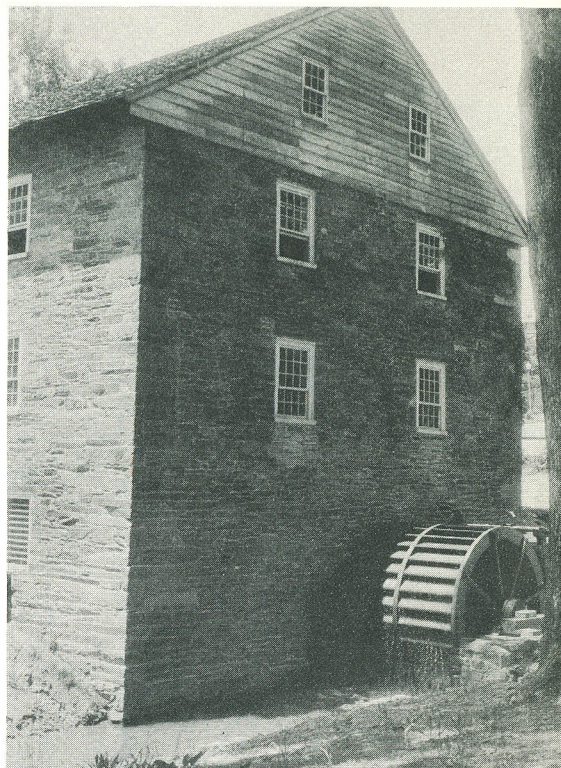




Regulating the flow of water in the mill race

Early History of the Site

Pierce Mill is situated on a tract of land which included portions of three early English land patents. One of these, known as "Re-Survey on New Seat," was patented to George Read in 1747. Another, known as "The Gift," was patented to Samuel Beall in 1762. It was conveyed later to William Deakins, a prominent Revolutionary patriot. Deakins deeded the land to Isaac Pierce in 1794. The third grant included in the immediate parcel of land surrounding the Pierce Mill was one patented to James White on March 18, 1772, and known as "Mill Seat." The southern extremity of this tract was a part of the land deeded by William Deakins to Isaac Pierce in 1794.



The water wheel in operation

The Mill

When Isaac Pierce first settled in what is now Rock Creek Park, he found a two-story frame mill very near the site of the present stone structure. This mill with its undershot water wheel was one of eight or more mills existing along Rock Creek during the early part of the nineteenth century. About the year 1820 (the exact date being controversial) Isaac Pierce, and his son, Abner Pierce, constructed a new mill which now bears the family name. A plaque on the south gable carries the inscription "BIP 1829." This date is thought to mark an alteration to the building, since the south gable is of stone while the north gable is of wood. Mr. Louis Pierce Shoemaker, a grandnephew of Isaac Pierce, states that the plaque is

to be interpreted as "Betsy and Isaac Pierce." Others believe it to mean: "Built by Isaac Pierce."

Isaac Pierce, who died in 1841, willed the mill to his son, Abner Pierce. Ten years later, upon the death of Abner, ownership passed to Pierce Shoemaker, a nephew. It was during the period of operation by the Shoemaker family that the mill enjoyed its most flourishing business. In 1890 the United States Government purchased the land along Rock Creek for the purpose of developing Rock Creek Park. Pierce Mill was included in these lands, but it continued to operate until 1897, when the main shaft of the mill broke and the mill ceased to function.

The Building and Dams

The building is constructed of blue granite quarried in the Rock Creek area.

The original dam is believed to have been located above the site of the present concrete structure, at a point near the bend of Rock Creek north of the mill. This dam was washed away during a period of high water in 1876, and was followed by several dams located between the original site and the present location. In 1904, when a wooden dam washed out, a new concrete structure was built producing a waterfall of about seven feet.

Restoration

Pierce Mill did not operate from 1897 until its restoration was completed on December 1, 1936. This project was accomplished under a public works authorization of July 15, 1934. Since 1936 the mill has been operated as an educational and historical exhibit, and produces corn meal and flour for use in the cafeterias located in the local government buildings.

Lubricating the old wooden mill machinery



Water-ground corn meal and flour may also be purchased by the general public at the mill.

Administration and Visitor Service

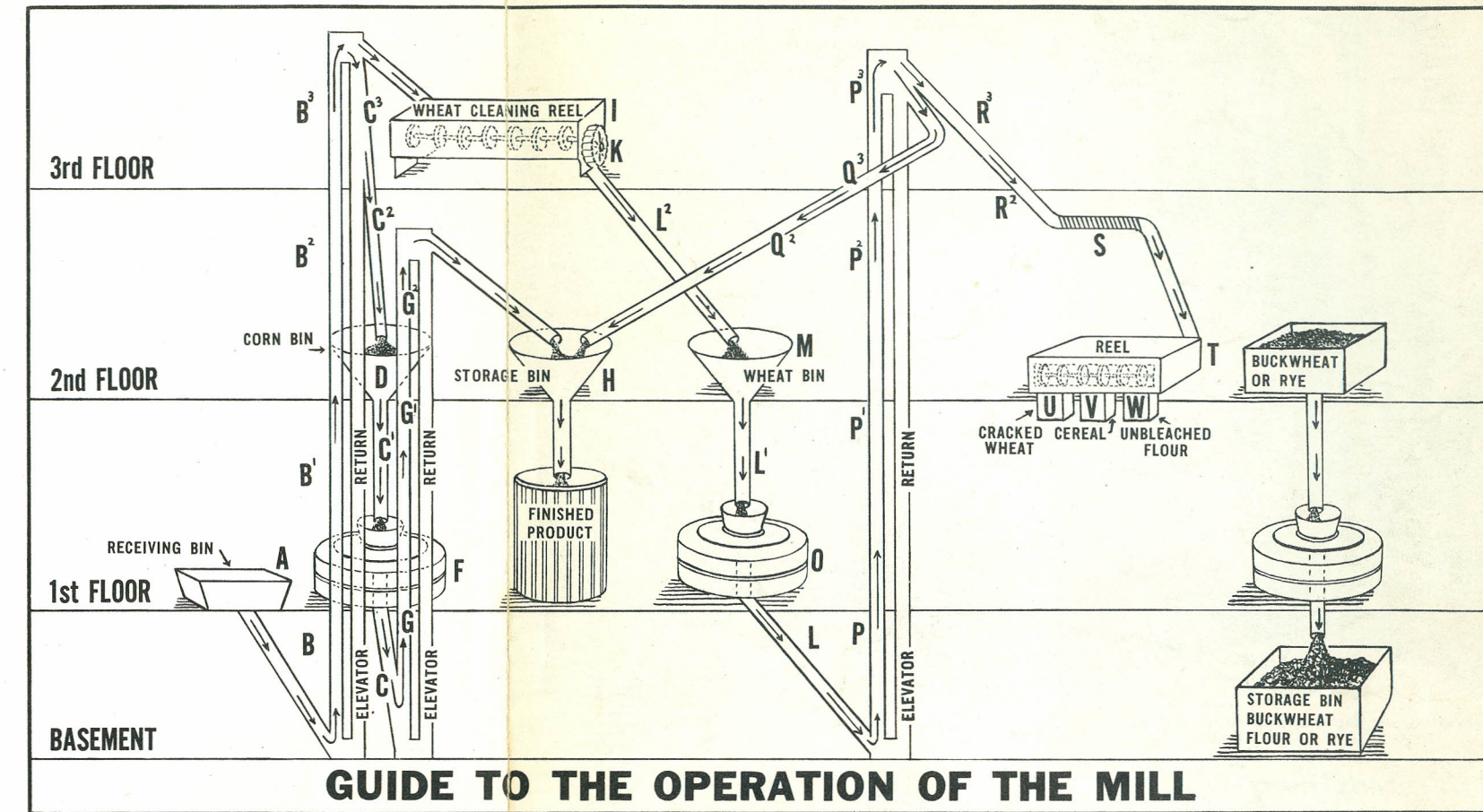
The Pierce Mill is a unit of National Capital Parks and is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. All inquiries should be addressed to Edward J. Kelly, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, Interior Department, Washington 25, D. C.

The mill is located in Rock Creek Park at the intersection of Beach Drive and Park Road. The building is open to the public from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 1 p. m. to 5 p. m. on Sunday. There is no admission fee.

How the Mill Works

CORN MEAL

By referring to the illustration above, it may be observed that the whole corn is poured into receiving hopper (A) and falls down chute (B). It is caught in the small buckets of the elevator and carried up to (B³) where it is poured down the chute (C²) into the corn bin (D) to be stored. The corn is released from the corn bin through chute (C¹). It falls through a hole in the top millstone (F). The top stone revolves, grinding the corn between it and the lower stone, which remains stationary. The corn meal works to the outer edge of the stones and drops into chute (L²) into the wheat bin (M). It is released from the wheat bin through chute (L¹), into millstone (O), and is ground in the same manner that the corn is ground, then drops down chute (L), is carried up to (P³) by the elevator, and falls down chute (Q³) and (Q²) into the



WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

The whole wheat is poured into hopper (A), it falls through chute (B), and is carried up the elevator to (B³). It is poured down a small chute into the cleaning reel (I). The revolving reel screens out the dirt and small grains. The wheat then falls past the fan (K) which blows off the dirt. The wheat then falls down chute (L²) into the wheat bin (M). It is released from the wheat bin through chute (L¹), into millstone (O), and is ground in the same manner that the corn is ground, then drops down chute (L), is carried up to (P³) by the elevator, and falls down chute (Q³) and (Q²) into the

storage bin (H). It is released from the storage bin through a chute to be bagged for use.

UNBLEACHED FLOUR, CEREAL, AND CRACKED WHEAT

In producing these three items, the wheat goes through the same process as for whole wheat flour up to the point where the ground wheat reaches elevator (P³). From (P³) the ground wheat falls down chute (R³) and (R²), is pushed horizontally through screw (S), and drops into reel (T). The revolving reel shakes the ground wheat out through the small openings in the covering. The un-

bleached flour shakes through the smallest openings and drops through chute (W) to be bagged. The cereal shakes through the intermediate openings and drops through chute (V) to be bagged. The cracked wheat shakes through the largest openings and drops through chute (U) to be bagged.

BUCKWHEAT FLOUR AND RYE

These products are ground on a third set of stones. The buckwheat or rye is placed in the storage bin. It falls through a chute into the stones where it is ground in similar manner to the corn or wheat. The flour then falls through a chute into the storage bin in the basement.