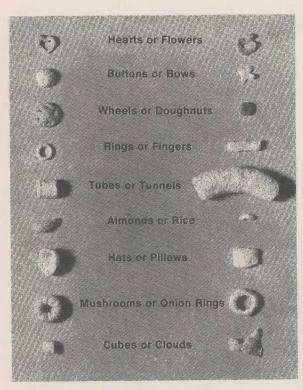


HISTORIC MILL This mill in Hillsville, Va., survived the devastation of the Civil war through a hoax. Yankee soldiers, were told that a lady was inside the building giving birth to a child. The soldiers thus spared the building. However, the mill did fall prey to fire in 1958. (The building in the foreground is an old foundry. Between the two buildings a third structure had been located. It was used as a woodworking shop.)



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Reader Tells History of Old Mill in Virginia

Knowledge that THE MILLER will suspend publication in July has brought about a small flood of reminiscenses from people in the trade, particularly from those who have received the publication all of their lives. A handwritten letter from Arthur M. Mabry, Austinville, Va., tells about the history of an old mill in his locality, and also about his own career in milling which covered a period of 32 years. He says he went from stone, to elevator to pneumatic system, and "I think often of the ancient days and the great changes that have taken place." He operated the mill from 1933 to 1940. It was a 25 bbl. mill with two sets of stones.

The old mill, built in 1859, was still relatively new when that part of Virginia was involved in Civil War hostilities. Northern soldiers marked the mill for destruction, but when told that a wife was in the mill giving birth to an infant, the men relented and spared the structure from fire. "I don't know whether this story is true", Mr. Mabry says in his letter, "but I don't have any reason to doubt it."

Mr. Mabry says the mill was owned by one John Wilkinson originally. The structure is described as being of fine craftsmanship, with its frame chopped with a broad axe. All joints were mortised and pin fastened, and some of the timbers used measured 12" x 12" x 42 ft.