



Millbrook Village

Living in the village

In 1832, Abram Garis, a local farmer, built a grain (grist) mill along the newly-built Columbia–Walpack Turnpike where the turnpike crossed a stream known as Van Campens Mill brook. Van Campen's mill (near today's Depew Recreation Site) was no longer operating by then, and the Garis mill was clearly more convenient for farmers than the nearest mill in Flatbrookville. In time, the stream's name shortened to *Van Campens Brook*, and the area 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 smithy 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.

By 1875, Millbrook had reached a peak of 75 inhabitants and about 19 major buildings. The village stretched out in a line along both sides of the Columbia–Walpack Turnpike, a popular alternate route for those not taking

Old Mine Road. The approach to the town took a visitor through miles of cultivated fields. xx

From 1880 onward, however, Millbrook suffered the decline of rural villages that was experienced throughout the country. Land values dropped steeply after the Civil War. Industrialization, especially of farming methods, made competition difficult for the independent small farmer, and isolation from railroad transportation made produce from the Millbrook area particularly 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 one mile south 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

Then, the reservoir for the proposed Tocks Island Dam threatened to inundate several low-lying valleys on the New Jersey side. To save significant structures, the National Park Service, with assistance from the Millbrook Village Society, moved the structures to higher ground at Millbrook. Some structures replaced original buildings that were long gone, and, in the 1970s, other structures were moved here as outbuildings for the village.

Today, Millbrook Village has about the same number of buildings that it had around 1900. The roadbed of the old turnpike is now the main “street” running southwest to northeast through the village.

Thus, Millbrook Village today does not replicate the appearance of Millbrook in 1832 or in 1900. Rather, it evokes the feeling and folkways of the countryside hamlets where most of this nation's people lived until 1900.

Visiting today

As an historic site within Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Millbrook Village is staffed on Saturdays and other days in summer, and for special events the rest of the year. Park rangers and volunteer craftspersons in period costume demonstrate period skills, and several original Millbrook structures are open for visits. School programs and tours can be accommodated as staffing permits. Each May *Historic Activities Days* are scheduled just for school groups.

The village comes alive each year on the first weekend that is fully in the month of October for *Millbrook Days*, when more than 150 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.

**Village map
on reverse**



Millbrook Village Map (41.073683 -74.963117)

MAJOR STRUCTURES
Original to Millbrook

1. **Lester Spangenburg Cabin.** Built here c. 1900 from pieces of an earlier cabin. Exhibit. Brochures.
3. **George Trauger House.** Built here c. 1860. Picnic benches nearby.
4. **Trauger barn**
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.**
24. **School.** Built at Millbrook in 1840 as a Methodist Episcopal Church. Relocated here c. 1860 for use as a school

OTHER STRUCTURES
Built here or moved here

These structures were either reconstructed here since 1950 out of materials from demolished local buildings, or were moved here from nearby locations to save them from inundation by the proposed Tocks Island Reservoir. (Front page.)

2. **Wagon shop.** Restrooms, water.
- 2a. **Wagon storage shed**
6. **Blacksmith shop**
7. **Sugar shack**
8. **Cider mill**
13. **Smokehouse** (for meats)
14. **Garden** (fenced)
15. **Depue House** (a shoemaker's cabin)
16. **Dryhouse** (for fruits and vegetables)
18. **Van Campen barn.** Built late 1800s. Reconstructed here.
19. **Woodworking shop**
21. **Saw mill.** Reconstructed here 2004.
22. **Machine shed**



1 Spangenburg cabin



3 Trauger House



4 Trauger barn



5 Hotel (boarding house)

MAJOR STRUCTURES
Moved here or reconstructed

9. **General Store/post office.** Moved here 1973 to this site of an earlier store. Books and postcards for sale when village is staffed.
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.
17. **Van Campen Farmhouse.** Built c. 1800. Moved here 1974.



11 Methodist Episcopal Church



20 Garis House



17 Van Campen Farmhouse



12 Hill House

Old Mine Road (paved/auto traffic)

south to
Watergate, Depew,
& Interstate 80



24 Schoolhouse

Trail to
Watergate (1/2 mile)

original roadbed of
Columbia-Walpack Turnpike
(now a footpath through the village)

N
6" = 1/2 mile

