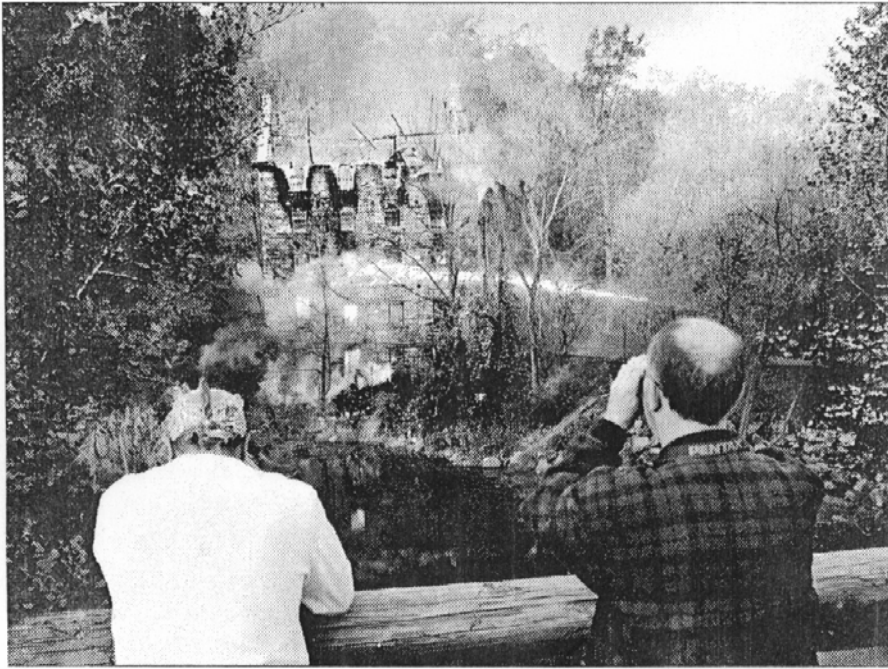


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BULL RUN REG LIB

Prince William Public Library  
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THE WASHINGTON POST HISTORIC SITE FILE  
BEVERLY'S MILL



PHOTOS BY TRACY A. WOODWARD—THE WASHINGTON POST

Passersby on the westbound side of Interstate 66 stop to watch the fire at Beverly's Mill, which gutted the six-story wood and stone structure. Firefighters from Prince William, Fauquier and Loudoun counties fought the blaze.

# Pr. William Landmark Destroyed

## 18th-Century Mill Is Gutted by Fire

By LEEF SMITH  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Fire swept through an 18th-century mill in Prince William County yesterday, destroying one of the county's most historic landmarks.

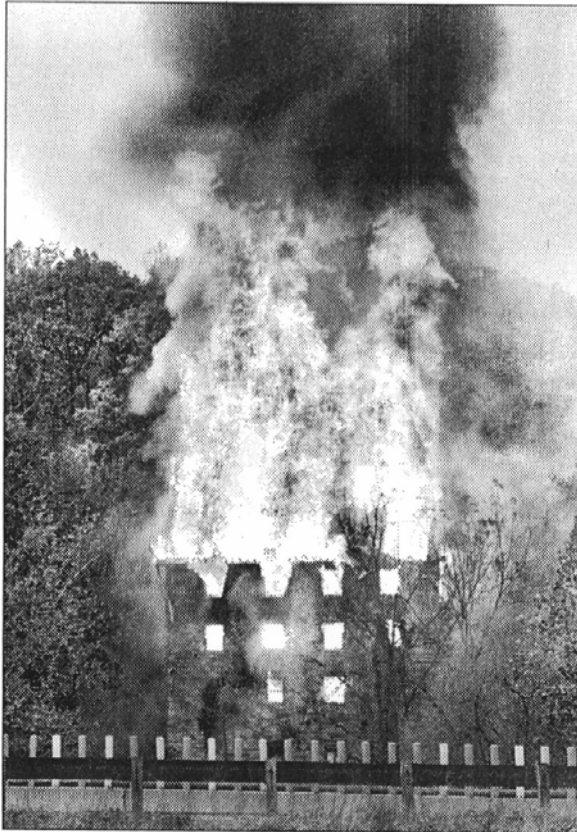
Officials said last night that they were still investigating the 4:12 p.m. blaze, which gutted the once-imposing six-story wood and stone structure and set fire to wooded hillsides next to Interstate 66 just east of the Fauquier County line. The exterior walls of Beverly's Mill were left standing, with the roof caved in.

Dozens of firefighters from Prince William, Fauquier and Loudoun counties converged at the site on Beverly's Mill Drive. Concerned that the structure might collapse, officials stopped train traffic on tracks behind the mill. A Norfolk Southern train was delayed for almost an hour as firefighters assessed the structure.

Sources familiar with the investigation said officials suspect the fire was set. Earlier this year, the mill was the site of another blaze, which investigators believe was set by teenagers.

"One of the firemen told me that it's obvious that this was an arson fire," said Emily Morgan, executive director of the Friends of Bull Run, which maintains the area north of the mill. "I can't imagine it could have been started any other way."

Morgan said the mill has long been a gathering place for teenagers, some of whom believe it is haunted. Despite heavy smoke damage from the fire, graffiti still could be seen on the



"It's hard to believe the mill survived the Civil War but it couldn't survive this," said Prince William police officer Scott C. Belleseuille, who patrols the area.

building's blackened walls yesterday.

The mill was built in 1742 and was initially used to grind limestone for making plaster. It is best known as the site of the Civil War's Battle at Thoroughfare Gap, which occurred Aug. 28, 1862, the day before the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Union troops occupied the mill in an effort to stop Confederate soldiers on the route to Manassas but could not hold the position.

"It's hard to believe the mill survived the Civil War but it couldn't

survive this," said Prince William police officer Scott C. Belleseuille, who regularly patrolled the area.

The mill has an out-of-state owner. A local caretaker could not be reached for comment last night.

When the mill closed in 1940, it was being used to grind grain. Morgan, whose office is next to the mill, said many of the mill's original machines were still intact before the fire.

"It's a tragedy," she said. "It could have been opened as a museum just like that."