

The Blacksmith of North River Mills

The official population of North River Mills, West Virginia is recorded as zero. But perhaps the official census has overlooked one long time resident who has maintained a residence and presence in the community since the days of antebellum America.

The Civil War wreaked havoc on Hampshire County. In addition to the military engagements, there were personal and family disputes over the conflict that created lasting emotional scars. One such dispute occurred in the Frederick Kump family of North River Mills. Frederick Kump, the son of a blacksmith by the same name, resided in a log cabin less than a mile from Cold Stream Road. The younger Frederick sided with the minority of local residents when he supported the Union during the Civil War and later enlisted in the Federal Army. The elder Frederick, reportedly a southern sympathizer, begged him not to disgrace the family by fighting against his country—the state of Virginia. The son would not be dissuaded, so the father sadly returned to his cabin, removed the family Bible from the mantel, and scratched out his son's name. The younger Frederick was later killed at the Battle of Halltown and his body was never recovered.

If tragic separations result in unquiet spirits, it is not difficult to imagine the grieving father may still be wandering the hills around North River Mills.

A recent owner of Kump's cabin reported a strange incident that occurred with the visit of a friend. After walking into the downstairs section of the cabin the friend was startled by the presence of an older individual dressed in a leather apron, typical attire for a blacksmith. The male visitor did not speak but wandered outside where he disappeared before the owner could make contact. Other North River Mills residents have felt the restless spirit and reported similar incidents.

Frederick Kump has not been spotted often since the North River Mills population has moved or died. But remember when visiting North River Mills, disquiet spirits move about in strange ways.



The cabin above was built in 1812 by blacksmith, Frederick Kump. His blacksmith shop was a short distance from the cabin, but after he died it was moved and added to the back of the cabin and used as a kitchen. Frederick Kump is buried on the property; his tombstone can be seen in the foreground, but it is said his unquiet spirit still wanders around North River Mills.

ACS 2012 WINNER
 FIREFLY FARMS
 CABRA LA MANCHA
 FIREFLY FARMS
 FRESH
FIREFLY • FARMS
Creamery & Market
Handmade Goat Cheese from
Mountain Maryland
 Cheesemaking daily:
 Peek through our windows!
 Taste cheese & wine!
 107 S. Main St., Accident, MD
 301-746-8188
 www.fireflyfarms.com
 Mountain Top Bleu
 ACS 2012 WINNER
 Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube