



THE FRIENDS OF COL. JOHN TAYLOR'S GRIST MILL

Newsletter | Winter-Spring 2025

Taylor's Mill: A Survivor

Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill is a survivor. In Winter 2022, its corner was hit by a truck. In Summer 2023, vandals broke glass and grafitted the interior. In Spring 2024, an earthquake shook the mill and caused a portion of a wall to collapse. The mill held the line: surviving neglect, surviving adversity, surviving Mother Nature. Like the Revolutionary War veterans it helped feed, the mill soldiers on to its next chapter.



Timeline

- December 2024 – New Jersey Historic Trust approves preservation planning grant for \$34,290.23
- November 2024 – Hunterdon County Open Space Historic Preservation Trust Fund Grant awards Readington Township \$6,403.07
- August 2024 – Historic Preservation masons repair damage done by the April 5, 2024 Tewksbury earthquake
- June 2024 – Insurance supports claims for earthquake damages, enabling stabilization



The Latest

- ★ Readington Township received financial support in December for a critical next step in preserving Taylor's Mill. The New Jersey Historic Trust approved funding for a planning grant for the site that multiplies financial commitments from the township and the county.
- ★ Preservation masons reconstructed a corner of the mill damaged in the April earthquake. The temporary mortar gives the building stability while ensuring it can be removed easily when a permanent mortar is chosen.



“Perseverance and Spirit have done Wonders in all ages.”

[Letter from George Washington to Major General Philip Schuyler](#)
Camp at Cambridge, 20 August 1775

Historic Trust Triples Funding for Mill Plan

The New Jersey Historic Trust approved a grant of more than \$34,000 in December for a preservation plan for Taylor's Mill. Initial money committed by the township and the county through the Hunterdon County Open Space Historic Preservation Trust Fund was matched by the state at a 3-to-1 rate. The grant application was written by The Friends of Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill on behalf of and at no cost to the township.

The plan will assess what needs to be done to ensure the mill and surrounding site is stable. It will also provide important historical context related to other historic mills that no longer exist to suggest how it might be interpreted for the public. It will be developed by Hunter Research of Trenton which has expertise in building plans for mill sites.

The township could access grant money for Taylor's Mill because the site was placed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Only listed sites are eligible.

Masonry Work Stabilizes Taylor's Mill

Did you see this serious scaffolding in front of Taylor's Mill this fall (front page)?

Thanks to speedy work by Taylor Darin Claim Service after the April earthquake, preservation masons were able to rehabilitate parts of the mill facing the roadways that suffered damage. Here, they realigned the stones and secured them with new mortar.



Why "Preservation" Masons?

Masons are skilled tradespeople who build with concrete, brick, stone, and other materials like terra cotta. Much modern construction relies on veneers, cut units stuck to a wall covered in a cementitious mortar. It is primarily aesthetic.

Older construction requires an additional set of specialized skills/training because the masonry units are weight-bearing. They are structural. Work with the masonry units differs as does the mortar, which must be "softer" than the stones to prevent damage.

Thanks to the folks at Lewis-Graham, Inc. in Clark for their expertise!

Before & After

Note the temporary mortar in the "before" image repairing damage from the 2022 truck accident.



The Tewksbury Earthquake

It was a moment not many of us will forget! On April 5, 2024, a 4.8-magnitude earthquake centered in Tewksbury Township shook Central New Jersey. Reverberations were felt hundreds of miles away and brief aftershocks occurred for a week. Taylor's Mill was damaged in the process.

"This is a setback. But the mill itself is still standing and we build from here," noted Patricia Fisher-Olsen, Chair of the Readington Township Historic Preservation Commission, said at the time.

Portions of the front façade and the corner chimney stack partially collapsed. The rumbling accelerated damage to deteriorating mortar, making the need for stabilization critical. The Friends took the lead in contacting preservation engineers to do an assessment of the building.

"Old buildings are tough: they were built to last," said Matt Metcalf, historic preservationist and Friends Trustee. "There is damage, no doubt about that. But given how close the epicenter was to Taylor's Mill, a newer building might not have survived. This one did."



Earthquake Damage (2024)

Aftermath: Press Coverage

Damage to the mill created considerable press attention from both television and print outlets.

Check out a sampling of the coverage:

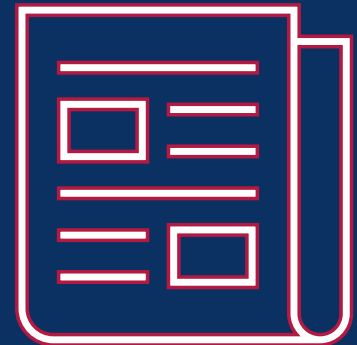
Hunterdon Review: [Historic Taylor's Mill Damaged by Too Close Earthquake](#)

NJ.com: [NJ Earthquake Damaged 264-Year-Old Mill That 'Fed Washington's Troops'](#)

WPIX-TV: [Historic Mill in Hunterdon County Sustain Damage from Earthquake](#)

Associated Press: [US East Coast Earthquake Rattles Millions, But Region Escapes Sweeping Damage](#)

WABC-TV: [4.8 Magnitude Earthquake in New Jersey, Aftershocks Felt Across NYC and Tri-State](#)





Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Thanks to the Readington Township Department of Public Works! They placed huge boulders on the street-facing sides of the mill to reduce the chance of a vehicle accident. The Stavola Oldwick Quarry, across from the mill, donated the stones to protect the mill. The image above shows stones knocked out of the corner of the mill from an accident. Thank you, DPW!

About The Friends

Taylor's Mill is "the mill that fed Washington's troops." Documentation provides a direct link between the requisitions of General Washington and the flour produced at the mill. John Taylor himself, a local carpenter and miller, served the Revolutionary Army in the 4th Hunterdon Militia and fought in the Battle of Trenton. This site bore witness to history: as the only remaining pre-Revolutionary grist mill in the state, it provides a tangible, local link to the Revolution, a story that defines us all. Taylor's Mill was featured as one of Preservation New Jersey's Most Endangered historic places in 2023.

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The mission of The Friends of Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill is to further public interest in the preservation, conservation, and education of our historic sites, which enrich our sense of place as told through the built environment. The Friends envisions that through advocacy, education, and fundraising, we support the work of Readington Township, Hunterdon County, the State of New Jersey, and nonprofit groups to preserve and interpret the mill site and surrounding cultural landscape with special emphasis on conveying their role in the American Revolution.

To learn more about the Mill, visit our web site www.taylorsgristmill.org and follow us on Facebook.

The Friends of Taylor's Mill is a 501(c)3 New Jersey Registered Charitable Organization that supports work to preserve and interpret this site in advance of America's Semiquincentennial in 2026. The group is accepting donations to support stabilization work.

The Friends of Col. John Taylor's Grist Mill
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