



MILLWORK

Winter 2017-2018

THE NEWSLETTER OF HANFORD MILLS MUSEUM

2018 EVENTS

February 3
Ice Harvest Festival

July 4
Independence Day Celebration

September 8
Dan Rion Memorial Antique Engine Jamboree & Powerfest

October 13
Woodsmen's Festival

For more information please visit
www.hanfordmills.org
Or call 607.278.5744

Note from the Executive Director

Hanford Mills Museum has taken great steps forward in 2017! The Museum opened an innovative and engaging Learning Lab, enjoyed record program attendance and site visitation, expanded our outreach offerings to serve schools in four counties, and continued to receive consistently positive feedback from the visitors and educators we serve.

Over the past several months the Board and staff have thoughtfully drafted strategic goals and objectives which will guide the Museum's stewardship and interpretation through 2020. The successful Strategic Planning process was led by the Museum's calm and steady President, Dr. Jack Tessier. Jack and trustee Sarah Kijowski have also contributed to the Museum's interpretive growth during their tenures on the Museum's Board. Their terms on the Board ended in December 2017. Their wisdom and their passion for the Museum will be missed.

We have accomplished many things in 2017 and we are looking forward to the Museum's 45th Anniversary in 2018! We will celebrate this milestone in many ways, including a campaign to add \$45,000 to the Museum's Endowed Trust in 2018. The O'Connor Foundation is matching donations to the Endowed Trust dollar-for-dollar. Consider donating \$4.50... \$45... \$450... and watch your donation become a \$9... \$90... \$900 addition to the Endowed Trust. All contributions to the Endowed Trust will help to insure that Hanford Mills Museum's authentic interpretation of "the power of the past" reaches future generations! Donate today!

Liz Callahan



The mill pond's first thin coat of ice.

**EXPLORE
THE
POWER
OF THE
PAST**

HMM Celebrates 45th Anniversary Season in 2018

Hanford Mills will celebrate its 45th anniversary season as a museum in 2018. Since 1973 the Museum has interpreted and preserved the site's history as a home to milling, manufacturing, farming and business activities that thrived and supported the East Meredith community. Since 1846 the site's survival has depended on maintenance and preservation work, and the history of the Museum's restoration work will be a highlight of the anniversary celebration.

Because the site has functioned in different ways throughout its history, the owners and stewards of the property have used different approaches to maintaining and preserving the site, buildings, and equipment. When the Hanfords and Pizzas owned the property, the profitability of their operations was their major goal. They made decisions about maintenance, technology, and product lines based on the local market and their efforts to anticipate and react to changes in the broader economy. They maintained and repaired machines to keep them in good working order, and they replaced machines when it made good financial sense for the business. Sometimes, in the case of the steam boiler system, they let the system go unused when it no longer made financial sense to put money into its upkeep.

Ken Kelso, a local farmer with deep family ties to the East Meredith area, recognized the value of preserving the Mill as its business years came to a close. He purchased much of the Mill's equipment as it was auctioned by the Pizza brothers, and eventually he bought the site and the adjacent railroad right-of-way. From the time that he purchased the property until he sold it to the newly formed non-profit organization ("Old Mill at East Meredith, NY"), he maintained the site, buildings, and equipment that became Hanford Mills Museum. His foresight and work saved the mill from the demolition or slow decay that became the fate of so many other small mills around the country.



Two boilers: The Mill's original steam boiler arrived by horse-drawn wagon in 1895 (above). A nearly identical reproduction boiler was installed in 2003 and surrounded by historic bricks from the former Oneonta Roundhouse (below).



Now that Hanford Mills is operated as a museum, the organization has shifted priorities to preserving and interpreting the historic activities that have taken place at the site throughout its history. Sometimes this focus on preservation means continuing to use and fix historic machines and systems, sometimes it means limiting how often we use equipment, and sometimes it means finding similar pieces of equipment from other mills. Projects include fixing walls and foundations that have deteriorated, restoring machines and equipment in the Mill to working order, and recreating the steam plant with a combination of a new (but historically accurate) boiler and a rehabilitated historic horizontal steam engine. If we cannot fix things or replace them with other historic

materials, we occasionally have to replace parts of machinery and buildings with modern materials in a way that thoughtfully reflects what was here historically.

Moving forward, HMM will continue to prioritize the site's stewardship—of the Mill, water system, and other buildings—as part of its three-year strategic plan that looks ahead at 2018–2020. The Museum will highlight some of the Museum's restoration and preservation projects as part of its new exhibit that will open in the summer of 2018. Watch for more details as we make plans to celebrate this 45th museum season.



Rotted beams were removed and replaced on the Mill's main floor during restoration work in 1982.

2018 Season at HMM

Hanford Mills has a full set of events planned for its 45th anniversary season!

- **Special Events:** Hanford Mills Museum's special events will kick off with the **Ice Harvest Festival on February 3**, and continue with the **Independence Day Celebration on July 4**, the **Dan Rion Memorial Antique Engine Jamboree & Powerfest on September 8**, and the **Woodsmen's Festival on October 13**. The staff is already hard at work planning and preparing for all of these events and we're looking forward to welcoming returning and first-time visitors to the site for our festivals.
- **Family Saturdays:** Enjoy a field trip for families with hands-on activities as well as tours and demonstrations in the water-powered sawmill, gristmill, and woodworking shop. And don't forget to explore the Learning Lab, which features hands-on, play-based learning for young children. HMM will announce the 2018 Family Saturday dates in the spring.
- **45th Anniversary Exhibition:** In June HMM will open a new exhibit celebrating the Mill's 45th anniversary. The exhibit will highlight some of the major preservation and restoration work that has kept the Mill and site operating and thriving through its years as a working business and then as a museum.
- **Workshops:** HMM will host a series of workshops for adult learners which will include Cooking on an Historic Wood-fired Cookstove, Coopering, and Steam Power 101 – look for more details and schedules on our website and in spring/summer newsletters and emails.
- **2018 Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM) Conference:** HMM will host the annual conference for the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM) on October 17–20, 2018. The conference will feature millers' training at Hanford Mills, bus tours of other mills and historic sites in the area, and presentations that will bring together mill enthusiasts from around the country. More information about the conference will be available by mid-2018 at www.hanfordmills.org and www.spoom.org.

Ice Harvest Preparations are Underway

In mid-October Hanford Mill Museum's staff began preparing for our largest event, the Ice Harvest Festival, which will be held on February 3, 2018. HMM is one of the few places in the country where visitors young and old can participate in traditional ice cutting, a really "cool" example of hands-on history.

An annual favorite of visitors from across the northeast, the Ice Harvest has grown in past years. It routinely attracts over 1,000 visitors to our humble historic site, and last year's festival shattered all previous records with over 1,600 people attending the event. With this surge in attendance, the staff has been working hard to make sure that our site can meet the needs of all our visitors. We're planning for more food and vendor options, space for all our activities to safely take place, and, of course, as the ice on the pond thickens we will begin grooming the ice field and we are readying the ice house to store the harvested ice.

Our Mill Operations Manager, Rob Dianich, is making sure that the saws and other tools are ready for use, and the rest of the staff are coordinating volunteers, getting donations, and arranging vendors while working to make sure that everything is set for the event.



Visitors, staff and volunteers cutting and breaking ice blocks off the pond at the 2017 Ice Harvest.



Volunteer Becca Hotaling using ice tongs to load blocks into the ice house.

Visitors are the engine that powers this event, and we're working hard to make sure that everyone who comes to the festival has an unforgettable experience. Whether you're cutting ice, taking a horse-drawn sleigh ride or enjoying our soup buffet, our dedicated volunteers and staff will be there to help enhance your visit.



Horse-drawn sleigh rides are an annual favorite Ice Harvest activity.

Collections Update: IMLS Grants Another Round of Funding to Hanford Mills



Have you noticed that many of the objects around the Museum now have numbered tags attached to them? In addition to its anniversary celebrations, Hanford Mills is also celebrating another achievement with its second consecutive collections-related grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The inventory team is wrapping up its work this winter on the first Museums for America grant for Collections Stewardship. The curatorial staff and volunteers have documented over 41,000 objects on the site.

Thanks to the additional grant funding of \$140,000, work can continue on the second phase of the project, which will involve doing more in-depth research. Some of this work will include making sure that the objects in our education collection, which we keep specifically for us to use with our visitors and with school programs, are properly marked so that they won't be confused with the objects in our permanent collections. The funding will also enable the Museum's Collections Technician, Aaron Graham, to continue working on the second phase of the project. Without IMLS funding, the Museum would only have made a fraction of the progress we have made on this collections initiative in the last two years.

The IMLS Museums for America program is the agency's largest competitive grant program. A total of 132 projects were selected from 558 applications. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's approximately 120,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Its mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. The agency's grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov.



Thanks to Lisa Wisely from Delaware County Tourism for sharing these photos from the Woodsmen's Festival.



HMM STAFF

Elizabeth Callahan
Executive Director

Robert Dianich
Mill Operations Manager

Aaron Graham
Collections Technician

Kajsa Harley
Education & Curatorial
Initiatives Manager

Peg Odell
Communications
Coordinator

Brendan Pronteau
Interpretation Coordinator

Beth Rafter
Finance Manager

2017 Seasonal Staff

Robert Allers
Liz Brown
Pamela Cooley
Valerie Crilly
Ginette Day
Sara Evenson
Scott Gravelin
Emily Gutierrez
Ashlee Lanier
Karyn Wendrow
Karl Wietzel

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HANFORD MILLS MUSEUM

51 County Highway 12
P.O. Box 99
East Meredith, NY 13757

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**THE REGION'S COOLEST
TRADITION CONTINUES!**

Ice Harvest Festival
Saturday, February 3, 2018
10 am - 3 pm

Harvest ice from the Mill pond using
historic tools, enjoy a hot soup buffet, take a
horse-drawn sleigh ride, and more!

The mission of Hanford Mills Museum is to inspire audiences of all ages to explore connections among energy, technology, natural resources and entrepreneurship in rural communities with a focus on sustainable choices.



**Council on
the Arts**

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Mills Museum