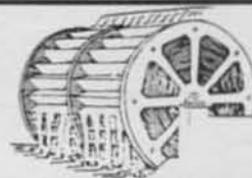


MILLWORK



Winter, 1995

Copyright 1995 Hanford Mills Museum

Vol. 9 - No. 1

WINTER EDITION

Hanford Mills Happenings A Year in Review

by David S. Godwin, Promotions & Advertising

1994 was a very productive year for Hanford Mills Museum. Many new and exciting things have happened over the last three hundred and sixty five days.

The first in a long string of Hanford Mills Museum's changes was the selection of new Executive Director, Jane Shepherd. Jane began her work at Hanford Mills on January 3, 1994. Since then, Hanford Mills Museum has been abuzz with activity.

In April, David S. Godwin and Roger Ree were hired to fill Promotions & Advertising and Museum Educator positions respectively. They, along with other staff, completed the team that would soon create a year to remember for Hanford Mills ("Happenings" Continued on Page 6)

"Don't Think You're Important..." Mill Worker Oliver Rathbone

by Caroline L. Meek, Curator

The Hanfords had a variety of people working for them. Some employees were full-time mill workers, men who had a special skill such as a sawyer or steam engineer. Others were farmers who worked at the mill because they needed to pay off a bill there or they needed a little extra cash. Some were men who needed a summer job or a few months of work to tie them over between other work. Although most to these men had a long history of employment with the Hanfords, some worked for only a short time. Oliver Rathbone was one of the latter. He was recorded as working only two days.

Oliver Rathbone was born to Lambert and Sara Rathbone in 1860. Little research has been done on his family in early life at this date, but their home does appear on an 1869 map of Delaware County, New York. Their farm was just outside the Village of West Davenport. This is where Oliver grew up. In 1887, at the age of 27, he married Ida Ellet.

At some point after their marriage, Oliver and Ida moved to East Meredith. Together they had three children, two daughters, Permillia (or Milly) or Sara, and a son, Merritt, whose birth was recorded in the diary of Elizabeth Hanford on July 29, 1894. The year after Merritt Rathbone's birth, his father, Oliver, bought a farm on Sheehan Road just west of the village of East Meredith. Before that date we are unsure where the family lived. The February 22, 1895 edition of the Delaware County Dairyman



Oliver Rathbone stopped to pose for Horace Hanford around 1905 at the age of 65. It looks as if he appreciated a good team of horses.

newspaper noted: "East Meredith people will move about quite extensively the first of March. ...R. Haslett [moves] to the house vacated by Turner. O. Rathbone will work the R. Haslett farm the coming year, moving there the first of March. ..." Oliver Rathbone and his family spent the next 27 years on this farm. Besides the regular farm work, they also kept a "sugar bush" - a stand of maples from which they made maple sugar and syrup in the spring. They had a large Greek Revival house with a ballroom on the second floor. This ballroom was the scene of many parties: "A social hop at O. Rathbone's last Friday night was attended by all the young people from his place, and a first class time was enjoyed by all." March 29, 1895, Delaware County Dairyman. (Unfortunately, this beautiful house was lost to a fire in 1934, when it burned on the coldest night that old timers remembered.)

("Don't Think" Continued on Page 7)

What's Inside

Winter Ice Harvest.....	Page 2
The Butter Business.....	Page 3
Board Members (Old & New).....	Page 4
A Busy Winter.....	Page 4
S.P.O.O.M. & S.W.E.A.T.	
Have New Home.....	Page 5
Folklore Grant.....	Page 8
Board and Staff Directory.....	Page 8

Winter Ice Harvest

by Jane Shepherd, Executive Director

Deep in the winter when the small village of East Meredith, New York is blanketed with snow, when Hanford Mills Museum's huge water wheel is silent and the mill machines are idle, there comes a day in February full of surprising and busy activity known as the Winter Ice Harvest. A hundred years ago villagers needed ice off the pond to store for use in the summer to keep milk and other foods cool. Just as we depend on our refrigerators today, they depended on their iceboxes and the blocks of ice used to cool them.

To get ice, people had to cut it themselves or they bought it from large companies, especially near major urban centers like New York City, which cut thousands of tons of ice to store in huge warehouses. When summer arrived, wagons traveled the streets throughout the city to sell ice for iceboxes. In rural areas like Delaware County, each family might cut their own ice or the people in a village would gather to cut enough for everyone, including the businesses.

In collecting local oral histories, Hanford Mills Museum learned much about ice harvesting at Meridale Farms in Meridale, New York. Lewis Quick, a former resident related that as long as there was ice, there was a harvest. "Often the entire pond was harvested three or four times a winter." Several men would score and cut the cakes of ice, others would float it up a channel and still others would load and haul the large cakes of ice to the ice houses. They used a power ice saw in later years at Meridale Farms, which made cutting much easier." The saw finally broke down and went into disuse, later it was sold at auction, today it is used at Hanford Mills Museum. Meridale Farms had three or four ice houses, according to Mr. Quick, which held enough ice to cool all the milk they produced. He remembered the dimensions of one ice house as being about 100' by 30' or 40' wide. "Most folks used sawdust to insulate their ice houses, but in the larger ice houses at Meridale Farms, hay was used." Sawdust was somewhat scarce in the winter and Mr. Quick remembered that many people used it for bedding [animals]. The very last time Mr. Quick remembered ice being cut at Meridale Farms was 1938 or 39. "Once coolers [refrigerators] came people quit cutting ice altogether."

Ice harvesting is referred to in many places in history. In the 10th century Before Christ, King Solomon reportedly used ice to cool drinks. In 356 B.C. Alexander the Great had snow stored in pits for later use. The Romans improved upon Alexander's pits by digging conical pits and lining them with hay. The Romans also traded with snow and had "snow merchants." References to ice can be found in European history from the 16th Century forward. In America "among the first icemen were George Washington, who personally supervised ice harvesting at Mount Vernon in 1786, and Thomas Jefferson, who had two small icehouses at Monticello. Commercial ice harvesting began at Boston about 1800 with vessels carrying ice to southern ports and soon even to England, and East and West Indies, Rio de Janeiro and India. (The Chronicle of Early American Industries Association, Inc. April 1971)



In the Hanford Mills Museum archives numerous references can be found to ice harvesting in East Meredith. Merritt S. Barnes, nephew of Horace and Will Hanford and bookkeeper for the Hanford Brothers business for many years, mentions ice harvesting on the millpond in several of his diary entries between 1910 and 1925.

- *December 29, 1910 - "Thaw. Rained. Ayer and McKinney put ice in creamery from the pond.
- *January 30, 1924 - "Farmers harvesting 12" ice."

Excerpts from Maude MacClintock's diary describe some of her husband Jay's experiences cutting ice between 1932 and 1937.

- *February 26, 1932 - "Ice saws went in the ponds at Norbergs and at the Empire Creamery pond today. Awfully thin ice."
- *March 11, 1932 - "Quite a mild day. A little snow fell. They got in a lot of ice today. The ice is 7 and 8 inches."
- *January 4, 1935 - "Everyone got in their ice this week off millpond."
- *January 28, 1936 - "Quite cold today. Getting warmer tonight. Worked at ice today. Jay packed alone this morning to let Tobey help on pond. Have ice house done. Will fill shed tomorrow."
- *March 1, 1937 - "Finished filling our ice house today."

Just as in days long ago, Hanford Mills Museum has a Winter Ice Harvest. When the mill pond is thick enough, usually in early February, the ice is scored and cut. The large blocks of ice are floated down an open channel and up a slippery ramp to the waiting bobsled. At the bidding of the driver the big draft horses pull the sled load of ten or more blocks of ice to the reconstructed ice house where museum staff and volunteers pack it in saw dust saved from the mill's summer work. There the ice will hold until summer when it is taken out, crushed and used to make homemade ice cream.

This winter Hanford Mills Museum will have its Winter Ice Harvest all day on February 4. Visitors will see how the ice work was done a century ago with old tools, a gasoline engine powered ice saw, several teams of draft horses and bobsleds. The Museum will have videos of historic ice harvests, plenty of warm soup and cocoa, snow games as well as parlor games for the children, and rosy cheeks for all who attend. Hanford Mills Museum's Winter Ice Harvest is one of the very few still recreated. The Catskill Mountain region and Delaware County has a rich heritage which comes to life once again each February in East Meredith, New York.



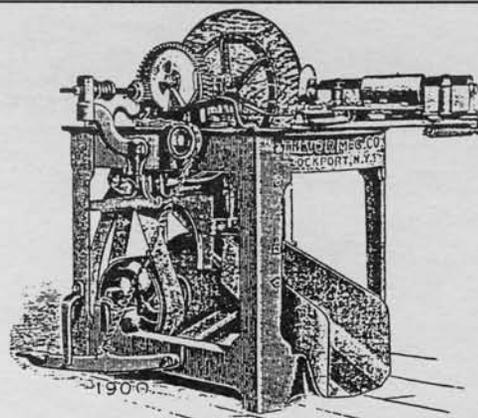
The Butter Business

by Caroline L. Meek, Curator

Sometimes it is hard to remember that the items made at Hanford Mills in the past were used by many people. Some mysterious worker did not just cut up a piece of wood and then leave it there for a museum to collect. Real people made the products in the mill, real people bought them, and real people used the products in their homes and businesses. Some visitors think the mill can be an interesting visit only for woodworkers - people who would enjoy watching old machinery and tools at work. Other people think it will be boring at best - watching big metal things that make small wooden things. Many forget that those "things," the wooden items the mill produced, were used by many people and there are many stories related to them. Of special interest to people interested in the dairy industry are the butter tub covers the Hanfords made from 1876 to 1916.

A butter tub cover is basically a barrel head made to fit a butter tub, which was a wooden container built by coopers to store butter for use and shipment. A butter tub was a wooden bucket-type container that could hold about fifty pounds of butter. A visitor can come to Hanford Mills Museum in East Meredith, New York, and see a butter tub cover made. A square piece of wood made into a round piece? Sounds fascinating, but how can these wooden "frisbees" be related to everyday life in the past? Information provided by research in Hanford Mills Museum's archives can help us place the butter tub cover in context within the butter business.

Originally, covers were made by hand by the cooper himself. As the industrial revolution progressed, machines were designed to do the job. While it still took quite a number of tools and a lot of skill to produce a butter tub, the covers could be made easily by anyone with the right machine. With wood left over from their other products, the Hanfords used a machine known as a matcher to put a tongue and groove joint on the edge of short boards so they could be held together to form a square blank. That blank was then inserted into a butter tub cover machine that turned the blank so a knife could cut a circle with beveled edges. The Hanfords first used a machine patented by William Mickel of Oneonta, New York in 1870. Later, in 1888, they bought a more mechanized piece of equipment from the Trevor Manufacturing Company of Lockport, New York. These machines were considered newsworthy and the last was mentioned in the county newspaper, the Delaware County Dairyman, "D.J. Hanford's mill ... [is] fitted with ... a machine for cutting tub covers with a capacity of 3500 covers per day. Mr. Hanford does an extensive business in tub covers." December 28, 1888. Special woods were required to avoid problems with leakage and flavoring of the butter. Ash and maple were the woods of choice. They were durable materials that expanded when damp to hold the head together without glue. Since butter tubs were not exact cylinders, two sizes of covers had to be ordered for a tub - a head or bottom about twelve inches in diameter with a cover or top about sixteen inches in diameter were needed for a fifty pound tub. Each cooper made a tub that was slightly different in size so top cover sizes varied between sixteen to sixteen and three quarters inches. In the Hanford's first year of



The "Trevor" Patent Square-Edge Heading Turner, 1900 Model.

Production, 1876, a little over one thousand covers were produced for about \$6.00 per hundred covers. By 1888, the mill was producing nearly 40,000 covers a year at a cost of about \$4.00 per hundred covers. Peaks in tub cover orders came in March and August when farmers were beginning to pack the most butter tubs (these two months corresponded to the beginning and the end of the milking season - in the middle summer months they tended to use firkins which were barrel shaped). The Hanfords offered discounts for cash. They also delivered covers, using the railroad, to a six county area in New York, and to New York City and Pennsylvania.

Hanford Mills Museum's archives provide us with a large collection of business records dealing with the mill's interaction with the coopers who bought these covers for their tubs. The Hanfords dealt with nearly 120 different people in the 40 years of their tub cover business. The mill was not a manufacturer of the tubs probably because of the specialized skills, tools, and later, machinery that was required to produce such items. Very little research has been done on these cooperage shops. Perhaps the most interesting information comes from a cooperage that was located in nearby Oneonta, New York. Harvey Barnes, one of the first coopers in Oneonta, was also one of the Hanford's first customers and continued as a faithful client until his death in 1898. At that point, Harvey's daughter, Adaline (a fifty year old spinster), took over the business for a year, until her brother stepped in. On June 17, of 1898 she wrote a letter that brings many questions to mind: (this is her own spelling) "I never saw such poor covers in all my life you never sent Father such trash ... now don't think for one moment that because you are dealing with a woman that we don't know good covers ..." Were the Hanfords discriminating against a woman in business, or was she over sensitive? Why did Adaline leave the business to her brother after less than a year of running it? Records such as these illustrate the many facets of the business dealings between the Hanfords and coopers. Letters and other business papers show how the Hanfords dealt with payment problems, how coopers viewed each other, and some of the mistakes that could happen in the butter tub production businesses. These records also bring up many inquiries, questions like the one Adaline Barnes' letter brings to mind. (*"Butter" Continued on Page 7*)

Hanford Mills Museum Names New Officers and Trustees

by Jane Shepherd, Executive Director

Hanford Mills Museum named to its Board of Trustees a new slate of officers and six new Trustees at its winter Board Meeting and Members Christmas Party. On a very cold and blustery day just before Christmas the Board of Trustees of Hanford Mills Museum met to review the year and make plans for the coming season. A highlight of the business agenda was the welcoming of new Board Trustees and Officers. Hanford Mills Museum will have as its Board President, Gretchen Sullivan Sorin of Springfield Center, New York. Ms. Sorin has worked as a consultant to more than 200 museums and historical organizations since 1980 as an exhibition curator, educator and interpretive program planner. She has served as a peer reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Council for the Humanities, the Institute for Museum Services and as a manuscript reviewer for Syracuse University Press. She has particular expertise in the development of exhibitions which address issues of American diversity and which seek to reach broad community audiences. Ms. Sorin has served on the Hanford Mills Museum Board of Trustees for a number of years and is well acquainted with the site, the staff and the community.

Stepping down as Board President but remaining on the Board another year is John Willis of Oneonta. Willis is the Director of the Audio-Visual Department at Hartwick College and has served as the Hanford Mills Museum Board Chairman for six years. During his Presidency a five year long-range plan was implemented and carried to fruition. This plan included improvements in all facets of the museum. Highlights of the plan were restoration of the mill's dam, flume, forebay and water wheel; laying of a new foundation under the Feed Mill building; and acquisition of adjoining properties for expanded interpretation. At the resignation of long time Director, Keith Bott, Willis was instrumental in the search for new Director, Jane Shepherd who has been with the Museum one year.

Two Vice Presidents were named; John I. Smith, Jr. of Delhi, jeweler and merchant, and Bill Oles, Jr. former Delaware County Clerk. Both Smith and Oles are World War II veterans and have served on the Hanford Board for a number of years. Oles reports that he loves the "Old Mill" and is "trying to donate a little time to it, but it seems to be turning into a lot of time." Continuing as Secretary to the Board is local resident and long time Board Member, Grace Kent. The Board's new Treasurer is Howard Nichols of Bloomville, New York.

Seven new Board Trustees have been appointed to the Hanford Mills Museum Board. Gordon Roberts of Oneonta became a Trustee during the summer months. Roberts is the owner of Roberts Insurance Agency and was named Otsego County Citizen of the Year for 1993. Coming on the Board at the December meeting was Craig Boyko of Howes Cave, New York. Craig is the owner and operator of Caverns Creek Grist Mill. He has a background in promotions and advertising and is associ-

ated with the *Society for the Preservation of Old Mills*. Bill Tramosch, of Cooperstown, is the Executive Director of the Farmer's Museum and the New York State Historical Association. Tramosch will be on the Hanford Board until he takes up his new position in New Zealand as Director of Museum Resources for the new National Museum of New Zealand. Bill Brophy of Oneonta is Director of Public Relations for Hartwick College. Walter Gladstone of Andes is a retired farmer and Director of the National Bank of Delaware County and former long time Delaware County Supervisor. Al Hall of Oneonta is the Dean of Continuing Education and Public Service at SUCO, a member of the Board of Directors of United Way and the Private Industry Council of Chenango, Delaware, and Otsego Counties. Eric Olsen of Delancy is a retired teacher and a leading authority on and collector of antique tools, he is associated with the Antique Tool Collectors organization.

Long time Trustee, East Meredith resident and advocate of the Museum, Charles Haynes was named Trustee Emeritus. Two long time Board Trustees, Jonathan Collett and Barbara Wilder will be departing after two consecutive terms as required in the By-Laws. Other Board Trustees of the Hanford Mills Museum Board of Trustees are James Van Buren, Robert Bishop, Charlotte Hill, John Hamilton, Betty Bergleitner, Jane des Grange, Michael Getman, and Craig Van Cott.



A Busy Winter

by Roger Ree, Museum Educator

Winter is often viewed as a down time for museums, almost a time of idleness. Though our winter season is slower than the other three, it is by no means idle. The water has ceased to flow over the Fitz waterwheel for the season and the mill is in hibernation, but childhood antics and children's voices are not far away. During the winter, children come not to see the mighty Fitz wheel, but to see the quiet and still pond, now frozen over with a thick layer of ice. Our winter program for school groups is called Ice Harvesting because that is exactly what they do. In this program students pick up and use historic tools to harvest that necessary refrigerant called ice, which helped to preserve food and made that delicious treat called ice cream!

While we are very busy around here making final preparations for this program and though the program itself may be nearly over by the time you read this, it is important to remember that Spring and Summer are just around that proverbial corner. Plans are already underway, and reservations for school visits are being made for the upcoming seasons. As always, and particularly at this time of year, we are working to

hone and sharpen existing programs while at the same time develop new programs that will be available in the months and years ahead.

One of the newest additions is Summer Day Camp known as the Summer Apprentice Workshop or SAW. This program is designed to interest children who would like to go beyond the few hours offered by a school visit. Held for one week during the summer, each day's activities encourage children to explore history through visual stimulation and hands-on activities. Nothing seems to assist learning more than participation, whether it involves using a hammer, a sad iron, a cant hook, or a cross-cut saw. Participation is not only a key element, but makes a good summary for the SAW program.

There are many details to be worked out for the upcoming seasons and though the winter weather has created a certain stillness outside there is anything but stillness under that outer shell. If you have any questions or if you are interested in further information please feel free to contact the museum. 

Hanford Mills Museum National Headquarters S.P.O.O.M. & S.W.E.A.T

Two international organizations now call Hanford Mills Museum home. *The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills* and *The Society of Workers in Early Arts and Trades* have both requested that Hanford Mills Museum become their service center and be known as their Headquarters. This recent announcement went out to all SPOOM members, "Beginning January 1, 1995, the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills will have one mailing address and telephone number. This long delayed, but much anticipated, boon comes via Hanford Mills Museum. The Director and Staff of this rustic, 19th century woodworking factory and grist mill are excited to commit, on a long term basis, to the Society. They will be answering telephone inquires, redirecting all mail, and caring for the Membership accounts."

Hanford Mills Museum co-hosted the 1994 SPOOM Conference with Caverns Creek Grist Mill and Rondout Woodworking last summer. The Society was much impressed with Hanford Mills Museum and its staff. They felt that the site represented much of what they want to project; preservation, milling both grist and lumber, and sharing with others the old technology. Tom Freestone, of Whitleyville, Tennessee reported that the SPOOM Board was "over the moon excited" to have Hanford Mills Museum for its Headquarters.

The *Society of Workers in Early Arts and Trades*, known as SWEAT, heard about the SPOOM headquartering and requested a similar situation. A large number of SWEAT members live in New York and were excited to learn of the changes. SWEAT had been based in Florida.

Beginning immediately all mail and telephone calls are being directed to Hanford Mills Museum. From here inquires, articles, requests, donations and advertisement information or requests, and membership business will be routed to the proper

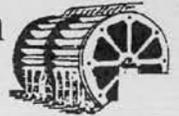
Winter Ice Harvest

Hanford Mills Museum
Saturday, February 4, 1995
10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Help cut blocks of ice from the Mill Pond and store them into the Ice House. Watch as they are put on horse drawn bobsleds and transported across the site for storage. Stored ice will be used to make ice cream in the summer. Soup, hot dogs, HOT cocoa and other refreshments will be available.

Hanford Mills Museum

County Routes 10 & 12
East Meredith, NY (607) 278-5744



Society officers. Hanford Mills Museum will be caring for the membership accounts and records of both organizations. Beginning in the spring HMM will be producing the SWEAT newsletter known as *The Rag*, and both organizations *Directories*

A double Ribbon Cutting and Reception is planned for June 10. Hanford Mills Museum will host its first SWEAT Meet that weekend calling it "Heritage Craftsman Days". There will be blacksmiths, tinsmiths, spinners, weavers, candle-dippers, and many more on hand to demonstrate the historic art or trade they study and recreate. Members of Hanford Mills Museum will want to be on hand for this proud occasion and event. Each of these two organizations have a membership base of over 2,000 and are international. 

Hanford Mills Museum Volunteer Corp.

Seeking Recruits

If you are interested in Museum operations and want to be a part of the task force at Hanford Mills Museum

We want you.

Grounds, buildings, clerical, telephone, special events, concessions, promotions, housekeeping, gift shop, computer, woodworking, gardening, helping with group tours and much more.

Call the Museum Office (607) 278 5744

("Happenings" Continued from Page 1)
Museum.

After co-hosting the S.P.O.O.M. conference in September, Hanford Mills Museum was contacted and asked to become national headquarters for S.P.O.O.M. (Society for the Preservation of Old Mills) and S.W.E.A.T. (Society of Workers in Early American Trades.) We naturally accepted.

Promotions and Advertising has taken a dramatic turn for the better this year. We have not only increased our promotion of Hanford Mills Museum, but have also received many sponsors for advertising this year. We would like to extend our thanks to Thompson Insurance Agency, Unadilla Silo, Northern Eagle Beverages, New York Power Authority, Hidden Inn Restaurant, Country Club Chevrolet and many others for their dedication to the promotion of Hanford Mills Museum.

The 1995 Schedule of events is now in the works for the new season and will be available during the Winter Ice Harvest on February 4. The new Calendar of Events has many exciting changes and additions that are sure to create hours of enjoyment for all who attend.



Hanford Mills
Museum
Presents:

ANTIQUE TOOLWEAR

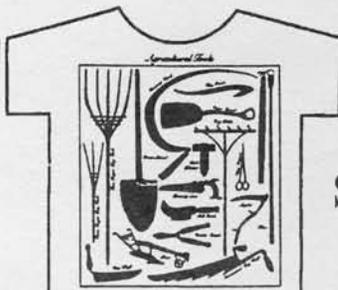
Please Make Checks Payable To Hanford Mills Museum



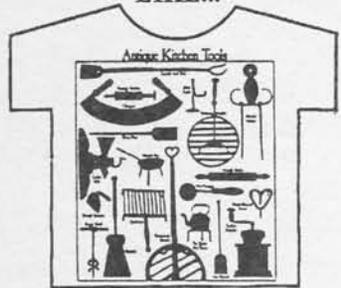
THERE'S NO TOOL
LIKE...



HE WHO DIES WITH
THE MOST...



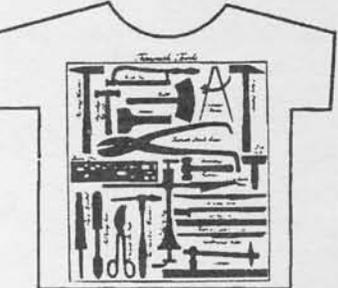
AGRICULTURAL TOOLS



ANTIQUE KITCHEN
TOOLS



TOOLS OF THE
MILLWRIGHT



TINSMITH TOOLS

T-Shirt Sizes &
Prices

S., M., L., & XL

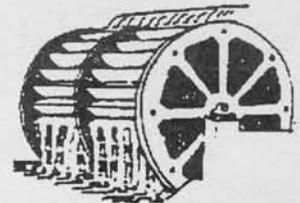
\$15.00

XXL

\$20.00

XXXL

\$25.00



Hanford Mills Museum

P.O. Box 99 County Routes 10 & 12 East Meredith, New York 13757

(607) 278-5744

("Don't Think" Continued from Page 1)

In 1922, Oliver and his wife decided to retire from the farm, leaving it to his daughter Milly and her husband, Merton Roe. Oliver and his wife bought the cement block house across from the millpond (see "A 'Good Fellow' - Mill Worker William E. Cain" in the Summer, 1994 edition of *Millwork*). At about the same time, Oliver worked his two days for the Hanford brothers, first on April 17, 1922 and again on September 30, 1923. Why did Oliver work only those two days and what did he do? We may never know why he only worked two days, but we can get a little idea about what he did. Oliver earned \$3.17 for each of the days he worked. Of the ten employees at the mill on both those days, half earned what Oliver did. The engineers, sawyer and book-keeper earned progressively more. There was also at least one other person who made less. So whatever Oliver did, it was not a highly skilled position, nor was it a job with little or no skill.

The late Ken Kelso, first owner of Hanford Mills Museum, left us with the most vivid memories of Oliver Rathbone in his later years. Ken was a teenager when he remembered watching his father and Oliver Rathbone working out on the ice in the millpond one early spring day. They were cutting ice with a power ice saw when they hit a thin spot and Oliver and the machine went through into the water, and he was trapped beneath the machine. Ken remembered watching Oliver's beard floating up in the water. Ken's father reacted quickly and somehow they pulled the ice saw off the older man. Did that stop Oliver Rathbone? No. He went home across the road, got changed and came right back to work in the ice. Ken also remembered what Oliver told him once, "Don't think you're important. Jesus Christ was important and the world got along without him. It can get along without you, too." Oliver Rathbone probably thought it was an important point to get across to a teenager.

Well, the world may be getting along just fine without Oliver Rathbone, but in one small part of the globe, he is not forgotten. He may have worked only a few days at Hanford Mills, but Oliver Rathbone is a part of the history of East Meredith and the mill.



("Butter" Continued from Page 3)

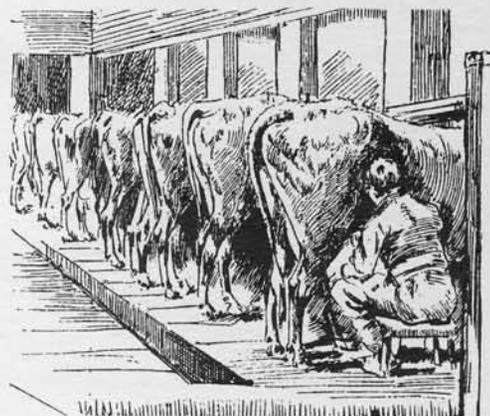
Finally, no discussion of butter tub covers would be complete without the farm and the product that was made there, butter. In the late 1800s, local farms tended to have Jersey-type cows, and rather than shipping milk or cheese, Delaware County, New York was known for its butter. Local diaries tell us much about this part of the dairy business. Butter making was most often the job of the farm wife who used dog power to separate the cream from whole milk and churn that cream into butter. Larger farm creameries made use of steam power to drive butter making machinery. The butter was packed into fifty pound tubs in the spring and fall, and firkins in the summer. Spring butter was sold immediately, while summer butter was saved to sell with fall butter, either in the fall or in the following winter, depending on butter prices. Since farmers did not usually milk their cows through the winter, butter was often in low supply and high demand through those months. Butter often sold for higher prices after

the first of the year. In a local diary, one farm wife noted that she made \$500.17 off the sale of the butter she produced from their ten cows in 1882. East Meredith was far enough from the butter markets in Albany and New York City that most farmers made use of a Commission Merchant to sell their product. These merchants received the butter off the train, sold it and returned most of the money to the farmer, keeping shipping costs and a five percent commission for themselves.

Much of this information has been forgotten today because of the change in the butter business in East Meredith. The introduction of the refrigerator car on railroads made it more cost effective to ship milk instead of butter. Local bottling plants and other dairy factories or creameries which could handle large amounts of milk took over much of the work of the product processing that the farmer did in the past. New agricultural technologies increased milk production by using better breeding, feed systems and energy sources. All of these factors, as well as others, combined to finish the butter business in Delaware County, New York, and with it the butter tub cover business of the Hanfords. It did not spell the end of the mill however, as the Hanfords switched from tub cover production to milk crate construction. As the local economy shifted from butter to milk, the Hanfords followed and remained a viable business.

With this information, Hanford Mills Museum hopes that people will become aware that the mill did not stand alone. It was part of the local butter business, taking its place with coopers, farmers, farm wives, commission merchants, railroads and consumers. Together, they took the products of local farms and distributed them beyond the little village of East Meredith to consumers in the larger urban centers such as Albany and New York City. So, when you visit the museum, it is important to remember why a butter tub cover might have been significant and think about the fact that these butter tub covers had meaning for more people than just the millworker who made them.

Recently, much of my Hanford Mills research related to the butter business as it connects to the mill, the cooper and the farmer has been published in a book called *The Butter Business*. It uses a simple butter tub cover to link the many facets of life related to butter, its production and sale. This book can be obtained from Hanford Mills Museum, P.O. Box 99, East Meredith, NY 13757. I would also welcome any comments, suggestions and corrections for future editions.



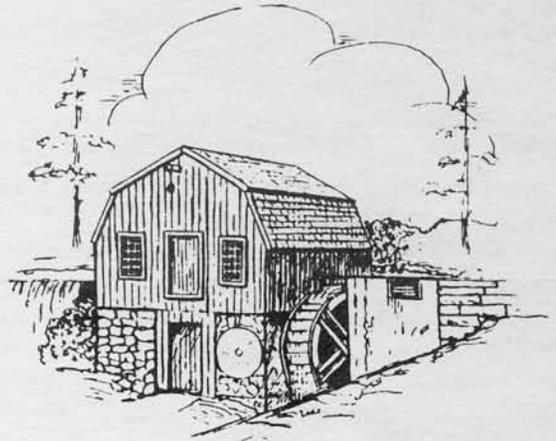
New York State Folklore Grant

by Jane Shepherd, Executive Director

The New York State Folklore Society has awarded Hanford Mills Museum for a mentoring project. Traditional miller/millwright Robert Grassi of Purling, New York has been selected by Hanford Mills Museum as the mentor. Robert will spend two days at Hanford Mills working closely with our new mill foreman (yet to be hired) in the grist mill portion of the mill. This mentoring project is part of an effort to emphasize the grist mill portion of Hanford Mills in interpretation, to train our new foreman, and to orient all interpreters and staff on gristmilling. Robert Grassi, a Member of Hanford Mills Museum, is employed by Ronout Woodworking in Saugerties, New York, a company that specializes in preserving old mills. He has worked in the Hanford grist mill as a guest interpreter on several occasions and was part of the Rondout team that did restoration work at Hanford Mills.

The "Mentoring Program for Folklife and the Traditional Arts" offers opportunities for technical assistance and professional growth to organizations and individuals engaged in or planning folklife and traditional arts programs in New York State. The project provides consultant fees and travel costs for one or two day consultations between clients and mentors. The intent of the New York State Folklore Society is to enable staff or folk artists to develop or improve skills that will help them be more successful in their work.

During this Mentoring project Mr. Grassi will instruct the new foreman in operating knowledge of mill stones versus attrition mills, belting procedures, shaft and storage operation and cleaning, repair and maintenance of the milling equipment, use of elevators, knowledge of grains and mixes for animal feed and human consumption, and the history of grist milling from querns and millstones to roller mills. By training our mill foreman and interpretation staff we will be able to enhance that section of the mill, involve school groups and the general public more in that portion of our history, and more accurately show that most mills were both wood and grain mills and not just one or the other.



Board of Trustees

President: Gretchen Sorin
 VicePres: John Smith, Jr.
 VicePres: Wilbur Oles, Jr.
 Treasurer: Howard Nichols
 Secretary: Grace Kent

John Willis Robert Bishop
 EdDorr Charlotte Hill
 Gordon Roberts James Van Buren
 Walter Gladstone Bill Tramosch
 Michael Getman John Hamilton
 Craig Van Cott Craig Boyko
 AlHall Betty Bertleitner
 Jane des Grange Charles Hanes
 Bill Brophy Eric Olson

Trustee Emeritus: Dr. Frank Cyr
 Trustee Emeritus: Charlie Haynes

Museum Staff

Director: Jane Shepherd
Curator: Caroline Meek
Museum Educator: Roger Ree
Promotions & Advertising: David S. Godwin
Bookkeeper: Barbara MacClintock
Mill Foreman:
Head Interpreter: Bill Brindle
Interpreters: Sheilah Hamilton Darren Dolezel
Museum Store: Judy Wood
Grounds: Shiloh Benton

MILLWORK



Winter, 1995 Copyright 1995 Hanford Mills Museum Vol. 9 - No. 1

Hanford Mills Museum

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Permit No. 2
 East Meredith, NY 13757

East Meredith, NY 13757

Telephone: (607) 278-5744