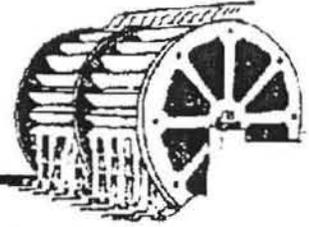


MILLWORK



August, 2006

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Vol. 19 - No. 3

What's News?

A Flood of Support. Challenging times bring out the best in people. - If the pages of this newsletter feel soggy it's because this newsletter is dripping with information about recent flooding and the ensuing flood recovery efforts at Hanford Mills Museum. Like so many homes and businesses throughout the region, the central part of Hanford Mills Museum's historic site was ravaged by extensive flooding in late June. When Kortright Creek and the Museum's mill pond could no longer contain the record rainfall, the overflowing waters met in the middle, flooding the Museum's most significant structure - the Mill building, and causing damage throughout the buildings and grounds of the site.

As the almost 9 feet of water in the lower level of the Mill subsided, it revealed debris and silt covering the floors, machines, and the Mill's historic power transfer system and vertical engine room. The soaked contents - Hanford era historic objects - and the lower level needed to be salvaged, cleaned, and dried as quickly as possible to avoid damage and deterioration.

As fast as the waters subsided neighbors of the Mill were helping with the recovery effort. Within days dozens of volunteers were hauling loads of silt and stone from the Mill building and methodically cleaning damaged tool handles. Over the weeks that followed the flood, over 50 volunteers spent more than 500 hours helping with the Museum's multi-faceted flood recovery effort: object cleaning and conservation, engine rehabilitation, mold mitigation, and plain old back-breaking hard work. Without all of this immediate volunteer support, and persevering leadership of the Museum's staff and interns, the Mill and its contents could have been permanently damaged.

Many thanks, also, to our friends who have supported the Museum's flood recovery efforts with financial contributions. Your support has helped the museum to fund the initial recovery efforts. The Museum is in the process of seeking flood recovery support for the major structural repairs from state and federal disaster relief funds.



Liz Callahan

In Memoriam

We are sad to report the death of James M. VanBuren on June 12, 2006 at the age of 79. Jim joined our board in the mid-1970s and continued to serve through the early 1990s. After he left the board, he maintained his membership with the Museum even though he was not able to visit often. Former Director Keith Bott remembers Jim as "a real gentle person and very supportive of the Mill."

Jim was raised in Hobart, not far from East Meredith. His family operated a feed-mill there. After a stint in the Navy and graduating from Colgate University, Jim worked for Life, Inc., rising to associate publisher of the Asia edition of *Life*.

Despite his experiences as a world traveler, Jim's heart was in the hills of his boyhood home. He was also director of the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development.

Boardmember Charlotte Hill remembers Jim as "a fun loving person who always had a smile for everyone." We'll miss Jim's friendly notes and voice on the phone.



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Floods: Then & Now (1892 & 2006)

by Richard Stinson & Caroline de Marrais

On the evening of June 27 into the morning of June 28, 2006 after record rainfall, Hanford Mills Museum experienced a major flood. Hanford Mills has flooded before in the past. We have records of floods in 1892, 1913, 1935, 1996, and now this year. There were probably many more.

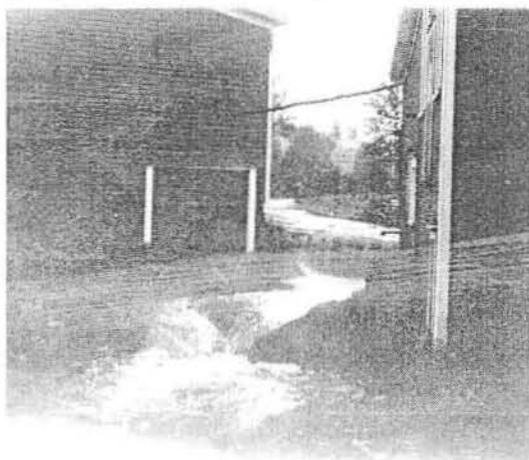
Our best account of a flood comes from an article that appeared in the May 13, 1892 edition of the Delaware County Dairyman Newspaper. It was written by East Meredith correspondent Richard Stinson. Richard may exaggerate a little, but his story appears to be fairly accurate (especially when compared with our experiences this year). The names have changed, but the 2006 flood affected East Meredith much the same way. Here is Richard's 1892 story (look for numbers that will lead you to related comments about this year's flood):

The rain storm of the 3rd raised the water in Mine Brook higher than it has been known before in 20 years.

M. Tobey's garden is completely destroyed, being covered with gravel and flood debris, and the bed of the stream where it runs through Mr. Tobey's land is changed, now running back of his barn through his hen park(1), taking away portions of the underpinning of the barn, a pile of ash lumber, undermining his blacksmith shop, and playing hob generally with Mc's posses-

sions(2). The highway bridge in front of N.C. Parris's meat market was also washed out. The Kortright was on a little bender too, washing out the private bridge of L.O. Hanford and damaging the public bridge and approach so that it is impassable(3).

Your "cor" was absent from



This 1935 photograph shows the same path the millpond overflow took between the Mill on the right and the Feedmill on the left. As can be seen, this results in deeply carved gullies.

home on that date but found things as described above when he returned.

For particulars, deeds of heroism, hair breadth escapes, etc., he is indebted to friends of a more or less imaginative turn of minds. George Connor's large stables were invaded by the flood, water running through them about two feet deep. The cows were securely stanchioned, consequently they were all there when the water went down(4). But Conner was not so lucky with his hog pen and calf house, for when the raging waters struck that the walls were knocked out, and the hogs

and calves being loose were washed away and carried down stream, but were all recovered, being found hung up in the bushes and trees; one four hundred pound hog being found unharmed hanging in a goose berry bush thirteen feet from the ground(5).

The lady members of D.J. Hanford's household fled across the street to the residence of N.C. Parris, who lives on the hill side(6). They took with them a copy of the history of the Johnstown flood and tried to borrow "Norm's" history of the Old Noah shower, but upon strict search N.C. found that the only copy of that historic event that he possessed had got mislaid.

George White who lives on the bottom on the Brooklyn side was surrounded by a perfect sea of water. But having gone to bed and being very deaf his family could not make him understand the situation. He was not going to be fooled out of his sleep, and he wasn't(7).

We are also told that undertaker Flower had strings put on all his caskets for towing purposes in case his shop went.

There were other flood notes reported to us but we think that these will do for this issue.

Note 1: While the Museum's garden remained high and dry, areas behind the John Hanford Farmhouse and the Gift Shop nature trail area were covered in "gravel and flood debris" just as Mr. Stinson described. Mine

Continued on page 3

Flood - con't from page 2
 Brook, just as it did in 1892, started to change its bed, widening out where it enters Kortright Creek.

Note 2: The water also played "hob" with the Museum's "possessions," tossing logs around the mill site, taking underpinnings and ground away from various buildings through the site (including the Mill and Feedmill), and undermining our reconstructed Forge (and exposing an earlier original forge most likely damaged or destroyed in the 1935 flood). Despite all the damage, though, the flood only took one of our lumber piles.

Note 3: Just as in 1892, the approach to the "public bridge," now County Route 10 crossing Kortright Creek into East Meredith from the north was made impassable. Road crews worked for about two weeks before the road was opened to traffic. Unlike 1892, the bridge over Mine Brook survived.

Note 4: While Hanford Mills Museum doesn't have cows, our blacksmith workshop teacher Patrick Grossi had 5 sets of blacksmith forges and anvils stored in our outdoor pavilion building. Their weight kept them "securely stanchioned" into a building where the floor was washed away, to a depth of two to three feet. We hear that the man who now owns Connor's farm had a similar problem with his cows, but all survived.



The flood certainly played "hob" with the Museum's possessions. Note the nearly two ton gasoline engine on its side (almost crushing a picnic table), and the forges in the back on the right. The light under the forges is about one foot of new air space under the back wall!

Note 5: Unfortunately, our temporary handicap ramp, stored behind the pavilion, was not secured and like the hogs and calves of the story, one piece was washed away and found hung up (not as high as 13 feet perhaps) in the

Depot, which he owns. The depot and garage are also situated picturesquely close by Kortright Creek. Like the lady members of D.J. Hanford's household, Sarah had to flee to the neighbors to avoid rising flood waters.

Continued on page 4



This view of the back of the Mill shows gullies cut behind the Mill. If you look at this photo along side the 1935 photo (see page 2) you'll see each flood cut the ground in nearly the same place.

trees behind the Hanford House.

Note 6: Intern Sarah Benway had a beautiful place to stay this summer, or so she thought. Museum member, Jonathan Collett, let her stay in his garage apartment built next to the East Meredith Railroad

Flood - con't. from page 3



This photo (left) shows historic Hanford-made tool handles tossed on the basement floor and into the tail race. Staff & volunteers spent hours cleaning these handles (see photo below).



Note 7:
Another Museum member, Heather Stevenson, now lives in George White's house. She was also surrounded by a "perfect sea of water", and she and her dogs had to be rescued.

The strange part of the 1892 account is the fact that damage to Hanford Mills was not mentioned at all. D.J. Hanford's aunt, Elizabeth, in her 1892 diary, barely mentions the flood at all, writing the day after: "A terrible thunder shower last night great flood much damage done the bridge near Mr Tobey carried off Our bridge to go to the Hemlocks gone & much other damage I took up my kitchen carpet & cleaned Paint Mrs Paine of Davenport Centre buried today." A letter from Fred Hagar in California to his friend, Horace Hanford, mentions that Horace's sister sent him a letter in which she said that they had "had a big wash out there."

It is highly unlikely that the Mill escaped unscathed.

In both the most recent floods, the Mill experienced silting in the pond and raceways, and washouts around the buildings. This year the high waters also broke through a mill wall, leaving

several feet of silt and gravel in the basement and tailrace.

The 2006 flood was the worst we've experienced in

recent years, but it isn't the worst ever. An undated penciled note on a mill wall states "from high water to top of fender sill 2 ft. 6 in." We measured in the mill. That note indicates the water was 12.5 feet deep in the tailrace. This summer's flood measured 9 feet deep. We don't know the date of that note, but their use of the term fender sill (referring to the up-and-down sawmill) and the note's location in the mill suggests it could be talking about the 1892 flood.

Because Hanford Mills is surrounded by water, it is likely we will experience flooding again. We will use what we learned in this past flood to prepare for future floods to avoid damage to the site. If you are interested in seeing more pictures of our flood damage, visit www.hanfordmills.org/flood.htm.

Continued on page 6



By June 30th, road crews with machinery were already at work repairing the flood damage to the County Route 10 bridge over Kortright Creek. The bridge itself is intact, but the flood washed away part of the road in front of the bridge. Note the bent guard rail on the right.

Up-Coming Special Events

Antique Engine Jamboree - Sept. 9-10

See ad at left → → → → → → → →

United Way Kick-Off Community Picnic - Saturday, September 16 - 10 to 1

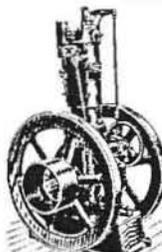
Please join us in celebrating the start of the United Way fall fundraising campaign. Tour the mill, enjoy some refreshments and spend the day with your family at this FREE event.

Miller's Harvest Festival & Down on the Farm Days - Sunday, October 8 - 10 to 5

Celebrate ingenuity and industriousness, and explore the skill of craftspeople and farmers at work. Guided nature walk, hands-on activities, steam power demos, agricultural machinery, information on buying direct from farmers, and 2 local farms will give tours.

Closing Day - Sunday, October 15

Hanford Mills Museum Presents:



The 23rd Annual Antique Engine Jamboree

Mill Tours, Vintage Engines, Antique Automobiles, Tractors, & Much More!



See both GAS & STEAM powered engines!

September 9 & 10, 2006
10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Davenport Fire Department
BBQ both days

NOTE: Although we are closed on most Mondays, we will be open on the Mondays of holiday weekends, including: September 4th and October 9th.



Upcoming Workshops

Quilting: Applique

[QA-1] - September 23 - 10 am to 3 pm

Learn the basics of hand appliqued quilting from talented quilter Anne Slatin. You will make a block to take home.

Fee: \$35 non-members, \$31 museum members, lunch included.

Boiler & Steam Engine Operation

[SEO-1] - September 30 & October 1 - 9 am to 5 pm each day

This workshop is designed for those who want to learn about steam boiler & engine operation. It is a hands on, run them yourself, ya' might get burned lesson in the reality of steam power.

Fee: \$125 non-members, \$112 museum members, lunch included.



Lace Making: Tatting [TL-1] - October 14 - 1 pm to 4 pm

Beginners will be introduced to tatting, the art of making lace using a shuttle & knotted thread.

Fee: \$25 non-members, \$22 museum members, (take \$5 off if you bring your own shuttle).

2006 Workshop Registrations

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____



Workshop Number	Fee
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
TOTAL FEE*	

*Don't forget your member's discount!

Register Today!

Return registration & fee to:
Hanford Mills Museum, P.O. Box 99,
East Meredith, NY 13757

For more information:

Call 1-800-295-4992 or E-Mail
hanford2@hanfordmills.org

Flood - con't. from page 4

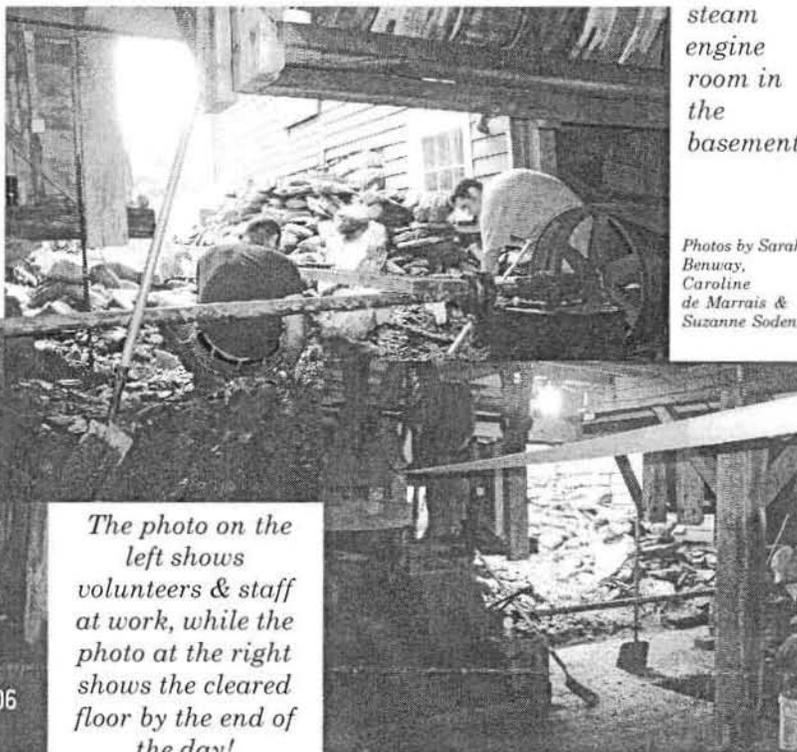
On a final note, we may have found an explanation for the large number of historic whiskey bottles we have found shoved into floor joists and foundation walls in the basement of the mill. We were hard pressed to explain why there were so many, but after collecting the water bottles of volunteer diggers from all over similar locations in the basement, I now have a

theory. Perhaps all those whiskey bottles were from the men who had to dig the mill basement out after floods in the past.

It is amazing what ten volunteers and staff members can do in a day with shovels, wheel barrows, and their own hands! The top photo shows the gravel and stones from the foundation that burst through the east wall of the mill into the

steam engine room in the basement.

Photos by Sarah Benway, Caroline de Marrais & Suzanne Soden.



The photo on the left shows volunteers & staff at work, while the photo at the right shows the cleared floor by the end of the day!



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MILLWORK is published by Hanford Mills Museum and distributed free to members. It is edited by assistant director / curator, Caroline de Marrais & printed with funds from the O'Connor Foundation.

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Hanford Mills Museum

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