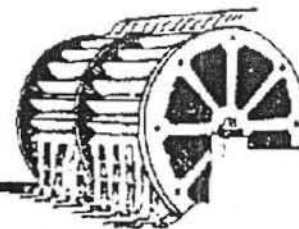


# MILLWORK



Sept.-Dec., 2006

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Hanford Mills Museum

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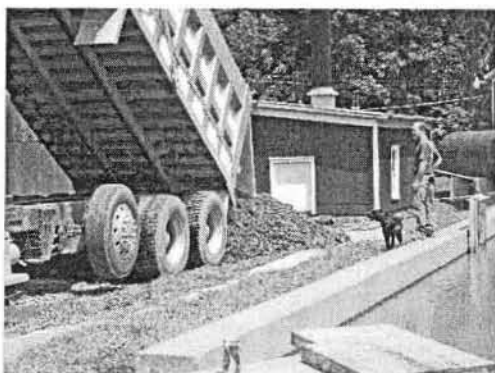
## What's News?

For over 150 years Hanford Mills has harnessed the awesome power of water for its operations. To this day, the Museum's sawmill, gristmill, and woodworking shops are powered as thousands of gallons of water spill over the 1926 Fitz overshot waterwheel.

In late June, the Museum was reminded of the ravaging and overwhelming power of unharnessed water when the Mill Pond and Kortright Creek overflowed and swept through the Museum's site. The flooding caused extensive damage to the lower level of the Mill building, and sections of the Mill's laid-stone foundation walls and millrace collapsed. On a positive note, the Mill building remained stable despite the flood. This is a testament to the importance of the support of members and friends for 30+ years of meticulous preservation efforts at Hanford Mills Museum. Much of the damage caused by the flood has been repaired. By next spring, flood recovery efforts will be finished.

Thank you for your patience and support in 2006. Many projects and plans were delayed as flood recovery became a priority. Your ongoing commitment to Hanford Mills Museum – through your membership, visits, volunteer time, and contributions – is essential as we continue to preserve and present the power of history at work! With your help, our efforts to stabilize, preserve and demonstrate the unique aspects of the Mill's history will continue.

We also value your feedback – drop us a note or give us a call with your comments and constructive criticism. Each year we use your feedback to improve all aspects of our operations. In 2007 we will focus on improving visitor services, enhancing our website, and adding an interactive educational component to the website. We will also install a new exhibit in the Feed Mill, begin the fabrication of a historically accurate horizontal steam engine, and prepare to host the annual meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills.



*Truck dumping dirt to fill erosion left by the flood.*

Liz Callahan  
Director

## 2006

## Donations

The staff of Hanford Mills Museum would like to thank the people listed below for donating items to our artifact collection this year. Donations ranged from items from the Hanfords and Pizzas, to books about trees, to kitchen equipment, to woodworking and logging tools, to a mantle clock, to a working Farmall tractor. Thank you everyone!

Phil Ashe  
Keith Ballard  
Keith Bull  
Audrey & Brud Dickson  
Stephanie Fenwick  
Donald Fuller  
Robert Grassi  
Patrick Grossi  
Donald Haarmann  
John Hedman  
Ruth Ellen Henderson  
Cynthia Kinsey  
Barbara MacClintock  
George Machala  
William Matthews  
Bob Ray  
Heather Stevenson  
Louise Storey  
George Sydlar  
Herbert Whipple



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## Anxious to Obtain an Education: Going Away to High School

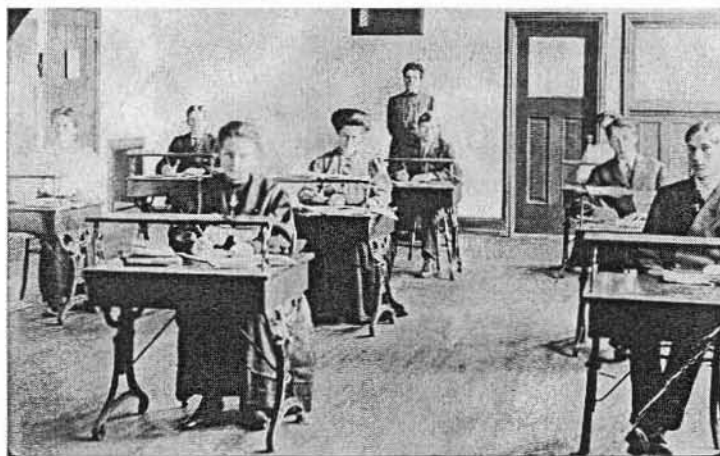
by Caroline de Marrais

All parents, at one time or another, have probably told their kids how easy they have it in school these days. They have a busses, computers, calculators, more vacation days. Kids today don't have to walk up hill to school – both ways. They don't even have to worry about moving away from home until they go away to college. Wait, you say. Kids had to live away from home before college? Yes, some did.

Like many village schools, the teachers in the East Meredith were only certified to teach children through the eighth grade. Getting an eighth grade education was fine for most students, but a surprising number of children were looking for more. In that case, they had to travel away from home to further their education and earn a high school diploma. That meant traveling to a local city school, coming home only on the weekends.

The earliest reference in the Hanford Mills Museum archives to a traveling student comes from Elizabeth Hanford's diaries. During the Civil War, in 1864, Elizabeth's son, Charlie attended Stamford Academy when he turned 14 years old. Charlie was a cousin of D.J. Hanford, the

mill owner. Charlie stayed in Stamford for the week, only returning home on the weekends. Unfortunately, Elizabeth does not write in her diary where Charlie stayed.



*Lyle Henderson sent this to his mother in East Meredith in 1908. He asks on the back "How is this picture?" The photo was likely taken in the newly built Oneonta High School on Academy Street. Lyle Henderson may be the second student back in the row on the right.*

She does note that he often brought friends home for a weekend visit.

By the turn-of-the-twentieth century, most East Meredith students looking for a high school diploma traveled to Oneonta. Students usually found a relative to live with during the week. In 1917, Will and Maude Hamilton sold their farm and moved to Oneonta, providing housing for at least seven East Meredith students through the years: Ralph Hanford, Andrew Haynes, Sarah Haines, Ferris Hanford, Maurice Adair, Elma Hetherington, and Jean Henderson. Many of the children were relatives. On

Friday night or early Saturday morning a relative or parent would pick the student up to come home for the weekend. They usually returned Sunday night.

Florence (Waters) Rickard taught in the East Meredith school. In an interview one of her students, Jean (Henderson) Kelso talked about her teacher Miss Waters:

We were at least as well prepared when we got into high school as any of the city children, although we came from this small school. [We] all did well.

Once a student passed the Regents, a competency test required by the state of New York, they were eligible for high school. This worked well for most children, but Alyce (Hetherington) Roberts was not ready even though she easily passed her Regents:

I went to Oneonta high school in the middle of the year, which I never should have done. They thought it was great if you were young and could pass your Regents. I must have been 12. I was very unhappy because I was scared to death. And because I had passed my Regents, I must go to high school. But I panicked. It was terrible, and I can

*Continued on page 3*

# Up-Coming Special Events

**Members' Holiday Party - Saturday, December 9, 2006, 1 to 4 pm**  
See invitation included in center.

**Winter Ice Harvest - Saturday, February 3, 2007, 10 am to 4 pm**

Let's hope and pray there will be ice this year. Come out to join in the harvest. See ad → → → → →

**Volunteer Clean-Up Day - Saturday, April 28, 2007, 10 am to 3 pm**

Come out and help get the Museum site ready for another fun-filled year. We have inside and outside clean-up jobs to suit what you want to do, and we'll feed you lunch, too!

**Opening Day - Tuesday, May 15, 2007**

*Education - con't. from page 2*

remember that people just said 'She has got a terrible disposition.' I once had a terrible tantrum. But after, I got used to it. It is one of these things you do, I guess.

In the end, Alyce adapted to the new school and went on to the Oneonta Normal School (college) to earn a teaching degree. Jean and Elma did the same.

East Meredith children had more education choices in the Oneonta High School. The school was large enough, so students could choose what they wanted to study. By 1900, the school offered business, technical, Normal entrance or college entrance programs. They offered several different language classes. Ralph Hanford, son of mill owner Horace Hanford, won a physics prize from the Oneonta High School while he was attending. He also remembered

I started off in high school studying German and then the First World War came

along and they stopped teaching German so I had to change to French.

Ralph eventually went on to study electrical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute in Albany, NY.

By about 1930, there were enough students to warrant renting a bus. At first, parents contracted with the Oneonta Bus Lines, which also picked up students in Davenport Center. Within a year or two, East Meredith resident and garage owner, Harry Beames purchased a bus. Jean (Henderson) Kelso once talked about her memories of one of these busses:

It was the worst old trap. We called it a chicken house ... The seats were just along the edges along the outside. It was the worst looking old thing. You wouldn't expect kids to be transported in that now days.

No matter how rickety it was, it was a better option than living in Oneonta. Of course, some students had trouble behaving – temptation was

too strong. Eric Meyerhoff remembered:

I think I walked to Oneonta as many times as I rode. Pulling pranks. Those days they could kick you off the school bus for a week, and then you'd walk to school and walk home. I usually got a reserved seat up front, or otherwise I was walking. ...pick up a snake ... then put it down the girl's neck ... and that usually was a good walk home.

The "good" walk, by the way, was at least 10 miles!

While the bus was an improvement, it did cause some unforeseen problems for some students. Shirley (Adair) VanDeusen stated,

Well, high school didn't benefit us ... Because you went there, got there when it was time for the first home-room and then you left after the last class. And unless you could stay down [in Oneonta] you couldn't participate in intramurals and things like that, so that was kind of a drawback with that.

*Continued on page 4*

## End of the Year

Another tax year is drawing to a close. This year's flood set back Hanford Mills Museum's work and affected its funding. If you would like to help, please fill out the coupon below and send it to the Museum with your donation. Thank you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Amount donated \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed  Credit Card   
 Visa  MasterCard

Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Hanford Mills Museum,  
 P.O. Box 99, East Meredith, NY  
 13757

*Education - con't. from page 3*

Even by the 1930s, most parents were not willing to make the long trip to Oneonta in the evening so a child could participate in after school activities.

Then in July of 1935, East Meredith experienced a flood. Harry Beames' bus was stored in a garage near Mine Brook. Harry's daughter, Florence Wiedeman, remembered:

After the flood ... we lost the garage that was built across the creek. And my Dad lost his bus that he carried the school kids in ... the bus was clear down almost to the little bridge [near the John Hanford House].



East Meredith's School House

Elma (Hetherington) Mitchel recalled that the bus was "all smashed up" and Harry Beames had to buy another.

Daily trips to Oneonta High School came to an end in 1939 when the Charlotte Valley Central School was formed. The vote was fairly close with 249 votes for and 207 against the centralization. Now students from Davenport, Harpersfield, Kortright, Meredith, and Summit could go to one school located in the village of Davenport - kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. That school, built in 1938/39 is still in service and today East Meredith students attend Charlotte Valley Central School. East Meredith's little schoolhouse is now a private home. So let your kids or your grandchildren know they do have it easy. Imagine having to live away from home to go to school!

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## Hanford Mills Museum

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