

MILLWORK

THE NEWSLETTER OF HANFORD MILLS MUSEUM

Volume 22, Issue #1

Summer/Fall 2011

Upcoming Events

28th Annual Dan Rion

Memorial ANTIQUE

ENGINE JAMBOREE &

POWER FEST

Saturday, Sept. 10th
10:00 – 5:00

MILLER'S HARVEST

FESTIVAL &

FOLKWAYS FAIR

Sunday, Oct. 9th
10:00 – 5:00

ICE HARVEST

Saturday, Feb. 4th, 2012
10:00 – 4:00

SAVE THE DATE!

Upcoming Workshops

So Easy to Preserve

Food

Sat. 9/17

Presented by Cornell
Cooperative Extension
9:30a.m. – Noon
\$10 Members,
\$15 non-Members

Timberframing

Sat. & Sun. 9/17-18

With Wayne Ford of
Rondout Woodworking
9 a.m. – Noon
\$135 Members,
\$162 non-Members

Pre-registration
required for all
workshops.

Call 1-800-295-4992
or visit
www.hanfordmills.org.

Welcome Back to *Millwork!* By Elizabeth A. Callahan, Executive Director

If you are a long-time member of Hanford Mills, you may remember enjoying earlier volumes of the Museum's newsletter, *Millwork*. If you are a new friend of the Museum's, I guarantee that this and future editions of *Millwork* will be a welcome addition in your inbox or traditional mail box* (*please let us know if you would like it delivered via email). Either way, this and future issues of *Millwork* (in this new design format) – like earlier

volumes of *Millwork* – will explore the significance of the unique and innovative historic research, documentation, preservation, stewardship and interpretation happening at Hanford Mills Museum.

This issue of *Millwork* explores the parallel "The Hanford Photographs" and "Our Hometown" exhibits now open at Hanford Mills. Future issues will feature news about the

Museum's expanding interpretation of sustainable resources, the ongoing re-integration of steam power and water turbine-power in the Mill complex, and highlights of the Museum's strategic, interpretive and multi-year exhibit plans. The Museum's cutting-edge preservation and interpretation activities continue to evolve in many ways – watch for new initiatives and details in each edition!

THE HANFORD PHOTOGRAPHS



By Alan R. Rowe,
Research & Preservation
Coordinator

Visitors to Hanford Mills Museum have long enjoyed water and steam powered machine demonstrations presented amidst a carefully preserved tableau of historic buildings and natural features. The Museum is less well known for its extraordinary collection of photographs. The photograph collection preserves a visual record of the life, work, and landscape of East Meredith and its people. The core of the photograph collection is the work of Horace D. Hanford and his son, James Ralph Hanford (also known as J. Ralph or Ralph), taken from the early 1890s to the early 1920s. This May, the Museum opened an exhibition of forty photographs from the collection that represent the themes of people and family, life and work, and change over time.

The bulk of what is called the "Horace Hanford Collection" came to the Museum in 1976 as a donation by Ralph Hanford. The donation included 105 dry glass plate negatives that range in size from 3¼ x 5½, 4 x 5, 5 x 7, and 6½ x 8½ inches square. These dimensions refer to the size of each glass plate, with each plate bearing a negative image that Horace Hanford would have used to make a photographic print.

An additional donation of glass plate and flexible film negatives came to the Museum a few years later, care of Ronald and Grace Kent. Ron and Grace purchased Horace Hanford's old house, and discovered a box in the attic containing 65 glass plate negatives, five 3¼ x 5½ inch flexible negatives,



Merritt S. Barnes next to a log wagon, ca. 1895. The Horse Barn can be seen behind the horses. Photo by Horace Hanford.

and 191 120-size roll film negatives. The glass plate negatives and five flexible negatives were determined to be the work of Horace Hanford, and were added to the Horace Hanford Collection, and the 120-size roll film negatives were grouped into a "Ralph Hanford Collection" category after the subject matter of the photographs linked them to Horace's son, Ralph.

Continued on pg. 2 →

The Hanford Photographs (cont.)

Horace D. Hanford, born in 1870 and the elder photographer of the Museum's collection, was the third child of David Josiah and Ann Elizabeth Hanford. Horace's parents purchased the saw mill and farm property in 1860 that forms the nucleus of the Hanford Mills Museum site today. Horace married Mary Hamilton in 1897, and in 1902 their son James Ralph was born. James Ralph graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, in 1924 and later made his home in Metuchen, New Jersey working as an electrical engineer.

Horace and Ralph Hanford participated in the great transformation of photography from a mainly professional endeavor to a hobby



*Building the foundation of the East Meredith Presbyterian Church, June 1895.
Photo by Horace Hanford.*

embraced by enthusiastic amateurs across the country. One of the factors responsible for the change was the development of the so-called "dry plate" negative, where photographers could purchase glass plate negatives pre-treated with a silver-gelatin emulsion. By the time Horace took up the hobby in the early 1890s the dry-plate negative was an established part of a modern photographer's supplies.

Although still quite expensive even by current standards, people in America's growing middle class found the cost of a camera and its required equipment reaching prices that were deemed acceptable. In 1896, The Rochester Optical Company sold their 5 x 7 "Standard" model for \$12, or around \$300 today. Add to this cost the necessity of a tripod, lens (often not included), plate holder, and a focusing cloth, and the cost for a camera outfit would top \$19, or well over \$400 in 2011. Horace also developed his glass plate negatives and made his own prints, thus adding the cost for developing chemicals, photographic paper, and other supplies to the total.

Given his participation in the bicycle craze then sweeping the land; it is clear that Horace enjoyed immersive "hands-on" hobbies that

engaged the mind and body. The act of packing and transporting his camera and supplies to hillsides overlooking the hamlet of East Meredith and his mill property must have satisfied his craving for physical engagement, and the act of framing the shot, manipulating the various settings on the camera, and then navigating the developing and printing process provided abundant mental exercises and calculations for an individual known for his interest in technical matters.

The photographs that Horace and Ralph Hanford made are far more important than a mere roll-call of names and places. Horace and Ralph sought to preserve the memories of the individuals who populated their daily life. By recording sweeping vistas of the hamlet of East Meredith from adjacent hillsides Horace demonstrated a keen sense of the often subtle ways that the world around us changes over time. These themes, including a focus on the changing rhythms of life and work during the Horace and Ralph Hanford's time are the focus of "The Hanford Photographs," the exhibition on view in Hanford Mills Museum's Feed Mill through October 15th.

Dear Members and Friends,

It's been a great season at the Mill this year. Thanks to all of you who continue to support this great place by visiting, coming to talks and workshops, sending your young folks to SAW camp, becoming members, making a donation, or volunteering. Your interest and energy helps to bring the stories, tools and buildings to life. And, speaking of energy, the Museum's staff and board members worked throughout the winter and spring to draft a new mission statement. In June the Board of Trustees approved the Museum's new mission:

Hanford Mills Museum operates an authentic water and steam-powered historic site. We inspire audiences of all ages to explore connections between energy, technology, natural resources and entrepreneurship in rural communities with a focus on sustainable choices.

With this new mission the Museum will focus its programs and offerings on Wood, Water, Energy and Community as the core of the stories of Sustainability and Ingenuity for our operating historic mill. Stories such as these couldn't be more timely for us today. The more we discover about the choices that the Hanford's made in supporting their community and changing their business and power sources to meet changing needs, the more we may find creative solutions that ring true today.

Watch for more new programs that will help us explore not only sustainable power of the past, but also innovative power generation technologies for the future. Watch for ways that our new mission statement can be experienced in your visits to the museum. And, with fall coming so fast, there are many great seasonal events and programs at Hanford Mills to enjoy. Come visit often, and bring your friends and neighbors. Help us celebrate the power of the past as we envision power for our future.

Katie Boardman, President
Board of Trustees

Our Hometown: Photographs by CROP Students

By Kevin Gray,
Program Coordinator

For three years Hanford Mills Museum will be working with students in grades 5-8 who take part in the ONC BOCES Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership (CROP), in a photography project that we're calling *Our Hometown*. These students from Otesgo and Delaware Counties will use disposable 35mm cameras to record the towns they live in.

The idea is simple: students are asked to photograph the people, places, and activities that are important to their sense of home and are integral to the lives of the townspeople. This can include historic buildings, important and familiar people, activities at school gathering places, special

events, common jobs and workplaces, and much more.

Each student receives three cameras over the course of the school year to take their pictures. After each round of pictures is printed, the Museum's Program Coordinator (and photographer) Kevin Gray meets with the students to do a critique of the pictures. They discuss the artistic quality of the pictures including composition, color, and content, as well as the meaning of the pictures and why particular objects and activities were photographed. With this information, the students then go out with another camera to record some more.

In the spring, the students are asked to look through the many pictures they

have taken and select three that will be framed and exhibited at Hanford Mills Museum during the summer. These three photos should be the best choices to illustrate the story each student wants to tell about their hometown. The students also write a short essay explaining their selections, what the photographs depict, and what they learned about their town while doing the project.

Students from South Kortright, Andes, Edmeston, and Milford Central Schools took part in this program during the 2010-2011 school year. They did a fantastic job. Their photos and essays can be seen in the Hardware Store and Retirement Office through October 15th.



Photo by Danielle Ashe,
Milford Central School

See the
photographs by
students from
South Kortright,
Andes,
Edmeston, and
Milford Central
Schools through
Oct. 15.

Visit the Museum Shop!

The Museum's admissions and shop have moved to the Post Office building. We are very excited about the new location of these visitor services. We offer many enlightening books and educational toys and feature many locally made products, including:

- Maple products by Smokey Hollow Farm, Schenevus
- Pottery by Brier Street Pottery, East Meredith
- Baskets by Martha Bremer of Otego and Betty Jayne Spinney, Stamford
- Wood Soaps by TS Pink, Oneonta
- Hand painted wooden boxes by Bob & Joan Seager, Woodgate
- Hand painted gourds by Liz Hoheusle, East Meredith
- Bluebird Houses by Bob Adair, Maryland
- Mill-made products including crates, birdhouses, and toolboxes

Stop in and browse through all the wonderful items for sale!



Hanford Mills Museum
County Routes 10 & 12
East Meredith, NY 13757
1-800-295-4992
www.hanfordmills.org

Follow us on Facebook &
Twitter!

Hanford Mills Museum

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Current Resident or:

"Life Imitates Art"

A tremendous round of thanks to all of the people who came to the May 13th preview of "The Hanford Photographs" exhibit. The photograph below was made during the preview with a large-format film camera and printed in a darkroom, in much the same way in which Horace Hanford printed his photos. Horace's darkroom still exists in the Mill. Next time you stop by, ask the guide to show you where it is!

