

## Interpretation Planning Project

The results are in from the interpretation planning project mentioned in the last edition of Millwork. Experts in the areas of social history, interpretation, folkways and industrial history met for two days at the museum in August. They toured the site, explored the mill, reviewed training materials, and participated in discussions concerning how the museum is presented to the public.

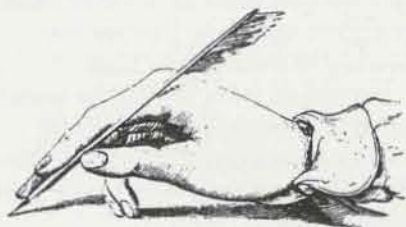
The consultants suggested that we consider augmenting the current approach of tours and demonstrations with more research (which will serve a variety of ends), increase the options visitors have for touring the site, and begin to broaden the interpretive focus to include areas such as the environment, managerial skills, the role of the Hanford's workers, and the role of women in the community.

The consultants also discussed ways of implementing these changes. A series of thematic self guided tours was proposed. These tours would give return visitors the chance to see the mill and its environs in a new light. Themes for these tours ranged from a natural resources tour to a look at the energy sources that power the mill.

To address the visitor's need for more in-depth information about the Hanford business, a series of monographs was proposed. These could explore a wide variety of themes including mill employees, industrial history and related areas.

Other suggestions included holding seminars, conducting new special events, creating a hands-on exhibit about water power, and producing videos about the machinery. Look forward to some of these changes during the next few years as the museum continues to expand its research and interpretation programs.

We would like to know what you think about Hanford Mills. What do you like most? What changes would make the museum more interesting to you? Drop us a line and let us know.



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## Meet George P. Hill

At Hanford Mills Museum we talk a lot about the Hanfords. It is important to remember, though, that others also worked here. In this edition, you will be introduced to mill worker George P. Hill.

George Hill came to East Meredith, or Brier Street as it was called, as early as 1848. He purchased land but did not live on it until sometime later. When he moved into town, he lived in a little four-room house on the road to Meridale, near present day Sheehan Road. He shared it with his wife and their three children.

George first appears in the Hanford records in 1865, buying lumber. In 1866, he bought lumber and paid for it with cash, hay, pork and work (a dollar a day). Our records show that George worked on and off through the 1860s and 70s, usually to pay off his bills for lumber, flour and feed. Unfortunately, the records do not show what he did.



George Hill was best known as an inventor. As early as 1875, he wrote the Stamford Mirror to say he had invented a perpetual motion machine...that worked! In the 1890s, he invented at least two more machines. An 1896 newspaper article describes a unicycle with "bob-sled attachment." Elma Mitchell's History of East Meredith mentions a "walking machine" called a "scootin' devil" which is probably the same as what an 1897 article described as the "perfected...Traveler's Aid." This last one is better described, "...by setting well back in the breeching he can let himself down a hill...only just to hang to the throttle. In going up a hill all he has to do is to throw the reverse lever clear over, drop her in the lower notch, pull the throttle clear out and put it in his hip pocket...." The museum has this piece, no longer complete, in its collection.

He also seemed to be a man who liked to talk. In 1866, he lectured in the hall above Levi Hanford's store, about what, we do not know. An 1897 newspaper mentions that George published his own "newspaper," which he pinned up on the bulletin board of a local store. According to the paper, this was George Hill's "way of getting even with hard hearted editors who will not use his copy."

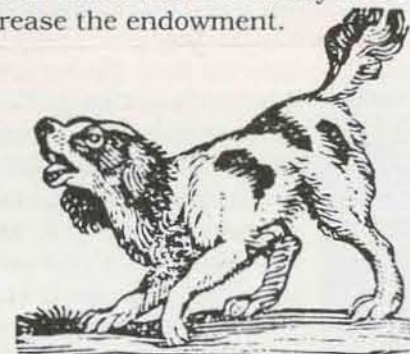
These few pieces of information give a fascinating glimpse of one of East Meredith's more interesting residents. George P. Hill died in 1907, but not much more is known about him. If you have any information about George Hill, or any other people who worked at the mill, please contact the museum. You can be very helpful in assisting us with research of the mill's past. [Next time: Meet sawyer, George Gunn.]

## Annual Appeal

Our 1990 Annual Appeal, launched last November 28th, has been very successful so far. Nearly \$10,000 has been received from members, friends, trustees, and staff. An additional \$8,000 was provided through a grant from the James A. and Jessie Smith Dewar Foundation. Also, since this year's Appeal has been once again dedicated to increasing the endowment, the O'Connor Foundation has matched all contributions, bringing our 1990 Annual Appeal total to \$36,000!

Building the endowment has been the museum's major capital project for the past several years, and the level of success achieved has been gratifying. Not long ago, less than 2% of the museum's budget was raised through endowment and investment income. Today, the endowment supplies nearly 10% of operating budget revenues.

Contributing to the endowment is still an excellent way to support the museum. The 1990 Annual Appeal is still going on and the O'Connor Foundation is still matching contributions 1 for 1, doubling the value of every gift. So, if you have not yet had the opportunity to give to the 1990 Appeal, please do so today. The long term success of Hanford Mills Museum depends, to a great extent, on our ability to continue to increase the endowment.



## Security System Added

Country Home Security has begun installing a security system at Hanford Mills Museum. This system will provide all buildings at the museum with fire and burglary alarms monitored twenty-four hours a day. The project is funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Heritage Preservation Grant and a New York State Council on the Arts Capital Initiative Grant. With their help, the museum has been able to take a step forward in providing for the safety of its collection and buildings.



## In Memoriam

We are sad to report that Pete Svegl died December 27th, 1990 at the age of 84. Many will remember Pete as an interpreter at the mill. Pete was born in Kansas City, KS, but moved to South Kortright. As a farmer, Pete did business with the Hanfords, and later, as an interpreter for 15 years, he always had stories to tell about the mill. Pete retired from the museum after the 1989 season. He is survived by his wife, three children, and numerous grandchildren. Pete will be missed.

Quite a bit is known about the accomplishments of the Hanford men. D.J. bought a mill and farm which his sons worked in and improved. It is a familiar story, but there was more to Hanford history than the men's accomplishments. We know less about their wives, but their stories are also be interesting.

Ann Elizabeth Flower, who was sometimes known as Analize, was born in August of 1835 on Federal Hill near Delhi, N.Y. She was one of nine children in the Flower family. Analize married D.J. Hanford, of Kortright, in January of 1858, and in 1860, they moved to East Meredith to buy a business and start a family. Together they had four children: Ann Elizabeth (1861), Herbert Willis (1863), Horace D. (1870) and John (1872). Analize died in 1875, 2 months short of her 40th birthday.



Two years later, probably looking for a mother for his two youngest, D.J. married Helen Augusta Harlow, affectionately known as Gus in the diary of D.J.'s aunt, Betsy Hanford. Gus was born some time around 1845 and was eleven years younger than D.J. Sadly, they were married only four years when Gus died on March 23, 1881, during her first pregnancy. In the nineteenth century, pregnancies were not openly discussed in diary accounts. Accordingly, Betsy Hanford only records that Gus took ill and "had fits" on March 22nd, then died the next day. She was about 36 years old.



D.J. waited two more years and then married his third wife. She was Sarah Jane Stewart from Crumhorn Mountain in Otsego County near Oneonta, N.Y. Sarah was born in 1850, and at the time of their marriage, she was 33 and D.J. was 49. Since more diaries and newspaper accounts exist from this later period, we know more about Sarah.



She was involved with the East Meredith Lady's Aid Society, and acted as its president for at least three years. The Delaware Dairyman newspaper, in a humorous 1892 article about a local flood, tells how Sarah "fled across the street" to a neighbor's house with her step-daughter to borrow a history of the "Old Noah shower."

Sarah also had more than her fair share of deaths to deal with. In a five year period both her parents, two brothers and a brother-in-law died. Then, in 1897, D.J. was crippled by a paralyzing illness, probably a stroke, and he died in 1899. Five

years later her step-daughter, Ann Elizabeth died. Even with all these problems, Sarah took an active interest in D.J.'s family. When D.J.'s son, John, wanted to buy his father's farm in 1900, she lent him the money. He was careful to pay it back the next year. She also took in her step-grandson, Merritt Barnes, when his mother, Ann Elizabeth, died in 1904. Sarah also made a home for her widowed sister. She outlived her husband by 23 years, dying in 1922.

In 1880, the first of D.J.'s children, Ann Elizabeth Hanford, or Libbie, married Leslie Barnes of Colliers (now Colliersville) near Oneonta, N.Y. Leslie suffered from tuberculosis, or consumption as it was then known, so by the spring of 1881 the couple had gone to Texas for his health. Texas must have been a big change for Libbie Barnes. We don't know anything about her life in



the south or how she felt about it, but they returned to East Meredith by the end of 1881. In January of 1883, Libbie gave birth to their first and only child, Merritt, and just over a month later Leslie died. They had been married a little over three years. Libbie never married again. She returned to her parents' home, and when they moved in 1894, she probably stayed to take care of her brothers in the old house (presently located one lot north of the John Hanford House) on the family farm. In those years, the newspaper tells us that Libbie did a lot of visiting throughout the area. She also presided at the dinner given for the Presbyterian Church's dedication in 1895. Her brother John was married in 1894 and Horace in 1897, so in 1900, when John purchased the family farm, Will and Libbie had to move out. That year, Will had his own house built (now used as the Museum administration building), and he and Libbie moved in. Four years later, Libbie died, at the age of 43. According to the next year's state census record, Will, who never married, had moved in with Horace. Merritt lived with his grandmother.

The next of D.J.'s children to marry was John. In 1894, he married Elizabeth Williamson, or Lizzie, a local girl. Two years later, they were living above the meat market that John had bought. At the time, they had one son, Earl, born in 1895 and then Josephine was born in 1897. In 1900, the family moved to their farm. Early in 1905,



Lizzie's last child, Ferris, was born. In November, John and Lizzie lost their first son to a ruptured appendix. Since the closest medical facilities were nearly 15 miles away

in Oneonta, it isn't surprising that he died. The Hanfords continued to farm, and Lizzie is known to have walked to her parents' house in town every day to help them with house work. When John died in 1938, Lizzie maintained control of the farm, renting it first to Joe Pizza and then to Russell Aldrich. She also took in her widowed sister, who was blind. Lizzie lived in East Meredith until 1945, when her failing health, at age 72, forced her to sell and move to Oneida with her daughter. She died seven years later in 1952.

Horace was married in 1897 to another local girl, Mary Hamilton, known as May. She was the only girl in her family, with Arthur, her twin brother, and Willis. May was always involved in local activities. She was one of the organizing members of East Meredith's Christian Endeavor Society in 1893. Perhaps her interest in the church



prompted Horace to join the local church in 1896. The newspaper in that year was also hinting about Horace's possible marriage, mentioning the improvements he was making in his old home. May's name was not mentioned, but next year Horace built a new house (now owned by the Kent's, this house is just south of the museum's white barn) and he and May were married. Together they had two sons, James Harold who was born the day before D.J.'s death in 1899, and James Ralph who was born in 1902, two years after his brother died.

According to the local newspaper, Horace and May were "away up in the social swim of this place." They hosted parties and get-togethers, and they often travelled, including a trip in 1910 to Seattle, Washington and the Alaska-Yukon Exposition. Records in the Hanford archives suggest that May believed in some independence in handling her own affairs. She had her own bank account, and dealt with sizable sums. May died in 1931 at the age of 57, leaving Horace alone until his death in 1959 at the age of 89.



None of these women led a particularly remarkable life, but they were important contributors to both their families and their community. Getting a small view of their life histories gives us some feel for the common history of families in East Meredith. Events in their lives give indications of the importance of family, their strengths and community interests. History would be duller if we forgot their part in its everyday events.

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