

Mill News

Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill
Wildcat Den State Park
Muscatine, Iowa 52761



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Odds & Ends...

Mill Meetings:

9:00AM The 2nd.
Saturday each
month

Check our web
page for the
location

Notes From The President

By Tom Hanifan

As I write this, it is snowing again. Winter does not want to end. Despite the weather, Friends of the Mill is beginning to think about warm weather. The restoration crew will soon become active again. We are expecting thousands of visitors. The spring school field trips are nearly booked. In addition to Muscatine schools, we are expecting classes from Davenport, Blue Grass, Buffalo, and Louisa-Muscatine. If you have questions call Julie Whitehall at 563-263-2153 or Ken Hyman at 563-262-9040.

Ken Hyman has an article describing our interpretation program. Over 10,000 people visited in 2009. The interpretation program is possible because of our generous donors. However, we are financially challenged this year. Donations from our financial partners have totaled only \$7600 so far. It costs over \$12,000 per year to offer a comprehensive interpretation program. Plans have been made to reduce the number of public hours if necessary.

Projects are underway within the Department of Natural Resources that will improve the mill and the Park. The 1930s' era siding on the west (main entrance) side of the mill has been replaced. The remaining siding and trim will be replaced or repaired as needed. The old siding will be power washed to

allow a better color match between original and new siding. It will all be sealed for protection. New restrooms should be installed in the next few months. Components have been ordered and better weather is coming. A pleasant surprise is that the mill/school parking lot will be expanded and a 2nd entrance created. The lot is often full forcing visitors to park in the grass. The Park staffing budget seems to be better than had been feared. This will have a positive effect on the Park and for both Friends groups.

Thanks to Friends of Melpine School, there is a new concrete floor at the shelter. They financed it with pop can recycling income and did much of the work themselves.

Friends of the Mill was honored with the prestigious "Director's Award" this fall. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources awards this to the volunteer group that has contributed the most to the people of Iowa. We were given this award for 13 years of restoring the mill and educating the public about it.

We have sad news. Joyce Kemper has passed away. Joyce and her husband Paul are charter members who have given much to Friends. Among other things, they ran the food booth at Heritage Day for many years.

Restoration Report

By David Metz



Replica grist scoops. The original scoop donated to mill by the Missel family in the front.



The buhr mill donated to us by Potter's Mill. When restored it could be used to grind meal at Pine Mills.



We also have an antique Clipper seed cleaner that can be restored and used for programs. Kids love anything with a crank!

The restoration crew does not work at the mill over the winter. I do however work on some minor projects in my home shop. This winter I built three replica grain scoops for the interpretive staff to use. Their use will allow us to conserve the original historic grain scoop that dates from when the mill was in commercial operation. I also built two hand screens like the ones that the millers used to test grist coming from the millstones. The original ones we have are literally falling a part and need some conservation this year.

Depending on the weather we normally open the mill and start getting it ready for the summer season about the second week in April. The first job is to sweep up the piles of dead lady beetles and clean the mill. Next we inspect all of the machinery, lubricate it and start testing. All of this should be done before the school tours start in May.

Once the mill is up and running again, we can get back to our normal restoration work. I've been asked what we plan to do this season, as it appears that we are running out of machines to restore. First off the mill will always need some maintenance. Every Tuesday it seems that there is something to repair. There are still some things that need work yet. First off our storage container (located behind the park office) needs to be cleaned out. One of the lumber racks has broken and that needs to be repaired.

Located in the northeast corner of the basement are the

boots (bottom ends) of eight elevators that once served the mill's roller mill flour milling plant. All are in very poor condition due to wood rot. They all are missing the chutes that connected them to roller mills and other machines on the upper floors. The plan is to restore these and replace the chutes that will not be in the way of visitors when they move through that area.

The crew has also discussed going back and doing over some of our past work. There are things (like the idler pulley on the corn sheller drive belt) that can be done in a more historically correct way. Most of these jobs are small ones and along the way, we will be looking at ways to make all of the mill's machinery operate more reliably.

Another area that I plan to do some work in is building new interpretive exhibits. To keep the mill interesting to repeat visitors, we need to freshen up our exhibits periodically. One project involves a nice platform scale was donated to the mill last year. It needs to be restored and set up so visitors can weigh themselves on it. We also had a small buhr mill donated to us last year that can be restored to working condition. I would like to motorize it and build a bolter for it. Once the mill is completed we would then have a way to grind food grade corn meal at the mill. If you have any ideas for new exhibits for the mill, I would like to hear them.

Other projected plans include improving lighting in the mill. If we can solve the problem of how to power it, we may even put one of the mill's double roller mills back into operation. We will have another good year of work at Pine Mills

Major Improvements at Pine Mills This Year

By David Metz

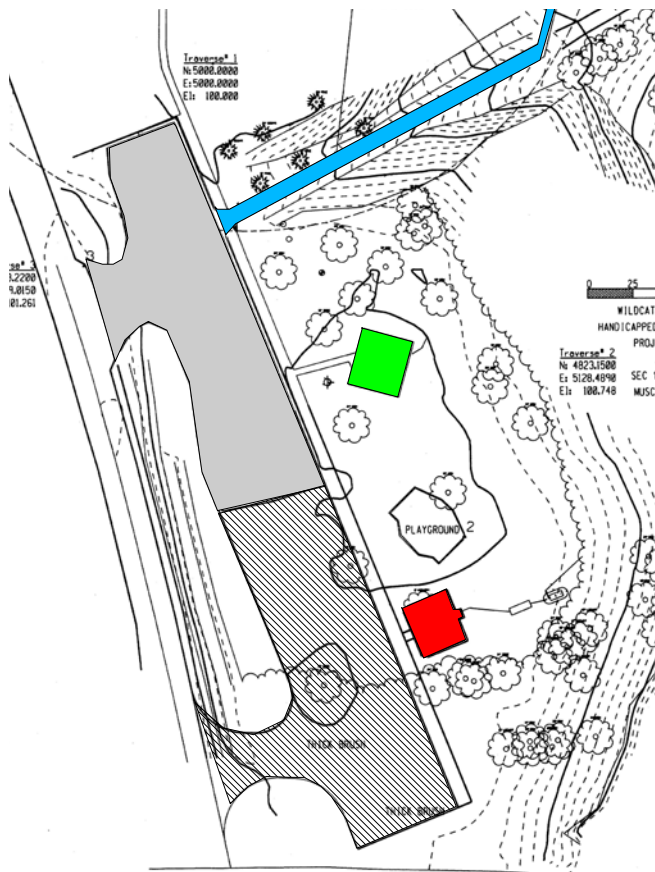
New Restrooms

One of the Friends long-term goals has been to have new restrooms at the mill area of the park. Thanks to the efforts of the Friends, Melpine School, our local state legislators and our supporters in the DNR, new restrooms will be built this summer. The restrooms will replace the current ones that are located under Melpine School. The new building is prefabricated and made from concrete. The concrete exterior will appear to be made from wood so the building will blend into the site.



New Siding on the Front of the Mill

This photo taken last fall shows the new siding on the front of the mill. The stain did not come out as dark as planned. This spring the contractor will restain the new siding so it matches the color of the rest of the mill.



Exactly when construction will start is currently not known. While the building has been purchased, there are delays due to problems with the soil on the site. The soil failed the critical percolation test that is part of the design of the septic field. Construction will begin as soon as the DNR engineering staff finds a solution to the soil problem. They expect that the restrooms will be completed no later than late summer.

The project also involves a major increase in the size of the parking lot. A second entrance will be built to allow tour buses easier access and egress without turning around inside of the lot.

The GRAY area is the existing parking lot. The gray hatched area shows the new addition to it. The RED square is the new restroom building. The GREEN square is the existing shelter and the BLUE line is the walkway that leads to the mill and the bridge.

2009 Volunteer and Visitors Facts & Figures

By Ken Hyman

Each year the Friends of the Mill try to keep track of the hours that people volunteer for the mill. During the past year, 2009, there were **4,612 ¼ hours** volunteered. That is a lot of hours!

We do the best we can keeping track of hours but not all hours are reported. If someone spends the day repairing a pulley in the mill to get the mill running they are not inclined to call me up at the end of the day and report their hours. When I talk to them later they may report 7 hours of work when they really worked 6.5 or maybe 7.5 hours. But if someone spends 45 minutes calling people trying to solicit donations they will report ¾ hour. Also, many hours go unreported. Heritage Day is a very hectic day and the last thing we think about on Heritage Day is recording everyone's volunteer hours, so many hours are overlooked when we add up the volunteer hours several days later.

People volunteer to help the Friends of the Mill in a variety of ways, everything from standing in mud and cold water helping load kids into canoes on a school field trip, or sticking their head into an old piece of machinery and scooping out years of accumulated raccoon poop, to slaving over a computer organizing field trips for 1,000 school kids.

Last year the restoration and maintenance crew volunteered 1,056.5 hours. This is the crew that keeps the mill running by rebuilding pulleys, adjusting line shafts, oiling the mill bearings and sometimes just putting around to figure out a problem and then a solution. They also pick out a piece or two of machinery every year and restore that machine. So year after year the mill is improved and runs better and additional machinery is restored and can be run. (These are the guys who handle the old raccoon poop)

The interpretive crew volunteered 923 hours. With over 1000 school kids and associated parents and teachers visiting the mill on school field trips it takes a lot of effort to keep things organized. About the half the presenters that talk to the kids are paid by the Friends of the Mill and about half are volunteers.

The other big bunch of volunteer hours is 1,610.75 hours volunteered to organize and host special events. Our special events are Hoover Days, the Wildcat 5K Race, Ghosts of Pine Creek and of course Heritage Day.

The Old Mill had a great year in 2009. More machinery was repaired but the big news is the number of visitors. The Friends of the Mill hosted a record number of visitors to the mill – 10,406 people. That was a lot of people. Many days the tour guides were just swamped with people. In 2009 the mill was open on regular hours for 102 days. During our regular open hours we had 7,763 people, breaking the old record by many hundreds of people. Those 7,763 people represent an average of 18.9 people per hour coming through the door.

To hire the tour guides and keep the doors open it cost the Friends of the Mill \$6,470.00. The mill is FREE, we do not charge anything, so you can see that to keep the doors open it is a struggle. We do receive a few hundred dollars in donations in the donation box in the mill but that falls far short of what is needed. To make up the rest of the needed funds we are always trying to solicit donations. YOU can help. It cost only \$100 to keep the doors open on a weekend. If you fund a day you will be recognized in the mill as keeping the doors open that day. The contact for donations is Tom Hanifan, president of the Mill Friends, at thanifan@machlink.com.

Our school field trip program was, once again, a big success. We had 17 school (and other youth) field trips to the mill with a total of 1,351 people participating. We gave 360 presentations of at least half a hour each to the kids – that's a lot of talking. About half our presenters are paid and half are volunteers so this outreach program in 2009 cost the Friends \$3,027.50. This is another fine reason to help out the Friends of the Mill.

Also, of course, we have two special events that bring in more visitors to the mill. Heritage Day saw at least 1,117 people go through the mill just on that one day. Ghost of Pine Creek saw 175 participants. When all the visitors are added up it comes to: 10,406 Visitors – Wow!

The Traveling Miller

By David Metz

Franklin Creek Grist Mill

About a two hour drive from Pine Mills sits a completely new operating reproduction of a historic gristmill. Reverend Joseph Emmert and his son-in-law Christian Lahman built Franklin Mill in 1847. The mill ground the local farmers corn and wheat until 1897 when it closed due to decreased water flow in its creek.. The mill soon vanished, remembered only in a few photographs by the local community.

The construction of the modern mill began in 1992 by local volunteers. Thousands of hours of work later and hundreds of thousands of dollars of donations and the mill existed again. The construction of the mill is faithful to the originals appearance on the exterior. On the inside you will find traditional post and beam construction along with such modern amenities as an elevator for the handicapped and excellent restrooms.

The mill is operational and is powered by a 12' diameter Fritz type water wheel on the outside of the building. Waterpower comes from a local spring that feeds a 2.5 acre pond and a half mile long millrace. The mill has a set of 48" millstones and cornmeal ground at the mill is available for sale



at the mill. There is a meeting room on the second floor of the mill and a learning center on the third that tells the story of the mill's construction. The mill is located in Franklin Creek State Nature Preserve, part of the State of Illinois Park system. There are picnic grounds and hiking trails in the park. Be sure to hike the trail that leads to the spring that feeds the millpond.

Location: Franklin Creek State Nature Preserve,
Franklin Grove, Illinois
Web Page: <http://www.franklingroveil.org/grstml.htm>
Phone: 815-456-2878

Directions: If you are traveling on Illinois Toll Road 88 the only exits are at Dixon on the West and Rochelle to the East. I'll warn you, the exits are few and far between on the toll road. It is best to get off early and take state highway 38 that parallels the toll road about a mile to the North of it. Take 38 to the town of Franklin Grove. Take 38 to the Northwest side of town and follow the signs to the Nature Preserve. It's a twisty road that turns West and eventually goes right to the mill.

Milling Around on the Web

If you are interested in old gristmills you can find an amazing number of resources on the Internet. There are a surprising number of old mills that have web pages you can visit, videos you can watch and even entire books on milling that you can download for free. Perhaps the best place to start at is our own web site www.pinecreekgristmill.com. You can find all of our recent newsletters there; progress reports and our two-part video visit to the mill.

While reading about mills is fun, seeing them in action is even better. On the internet YouTube has a surprising number of interesting milling videos available. You can view them by going directly to the YouTube web site at: <http://www.youtube.com/>. The easy way to find the ones you want is by using YouTube's search function located at the top of the web page. These videos will give you a chance to see the many other types of mills other than our own Pine Mills, their equipment, locations and how they work.

A good starting place is to type in a search for "Meadows Mills." Meadow Mills is a company that manufactures new stone milling equipment (along with things like Christmas tree palletizers). The search function will return a menu of Meadows Mills videos. A good one to start with is entitled "Living Grains The Meadows Mill Stone Burr Mill Story Part 1." This video shows among other things a new millstone being laid out and dressed. It also shows stone mills in operation. Part 2 of the Living Grains video shows more of Meadows modern stone mills. Of more interest is the portion of the video that shows their grain cleaners, bolters and mixers in operation in working mills. Meadows has several other videos showing how to restore their mills and dress the millstones. All are very interesting.

On the same search menu with Meadows, you should find "Schech's Mill Caledonia Grinding Corn." This video shows the operator of Schech's Mill starting the mill's turbine and grinding corn meal. Like many YouTube videos it is short but still interesting to see. Another interesting mill video is "Morningstar Mill Operating water powered historic grist mill." Morningstar Mill is located in Canada. The video shows the mills machinery and its millstones being hand dressed.

Next do a search for "George Washington's Mill" to see the newly restored mill at Washington's Mount Vernon estate. You will see an example of an early American Oliver Evans type mill. If you are interested in waterwheels look at "Trying the Wheel." It shows the first trial of the newly restored overshot waterwheel at Shelsley Watermill in England. The waterwheel is the Fritz type, the most efficient possible design.

Did you ever wonder what Benjamin Nye's sawmill would have been like? You can get a good idea by watching "Water powered vertical saw mill in Norway." The silent video shows a restored sawmill that uses a flutter type waterwheel for power. It also has a vertical sash and frame saw like Nye's mill would have used.

Lastly the video "Our Ohio - Bear's Mill," shows a mill very much like Pine Mills in operation. This Ohio mill was built the same year, 1848 as Pine Mill was. It is surprising how much alike the two mills are. This video like our own Pine Mill video was professionally produced. It shows the mill in operation and has interviews with the people that saved the mill and restored it.

You will also see that as you go from one video to another, YouTube brings up new titles on the menu bar on the right hand side of the page. Some may be of interest to you and others not. It pays to scroll through them just to see what comes up. Note that when you do a search on YouTube, you usually come up with things that you are not interested in. For example our search for Meadows Mills also brings up videos from a Pontiac car dealership!

Not all videos are well done. Amateurs do most of them and they may be badly exposed, the camera may shake or the video may consist mostly of meaningless close-ups. There are however many jewels among the dross and it is worthwhile to sort through them. Some videos, like one I found showing how to build a floating mill from empty soda bottles are just plain silly. Silly can be fun to, so fire up the computer and start touring the worlds gristmills!

Your Donations Keep the Mill Open!

We have come to call this page of the newsletter the "begging" page for obvious reasons. Since the Friends receive no money from the State of Iowa to keep Pine Mill open to the public, fund raising has to be a continuous process for us. The Friends depend totally on your donations to continue our interpretive, school and restoration programs at the mill. In this issue you can see the serious investment the DNR is making to Pine Mill by residing the building. We need to keep fulfilling our end by keeping our Friends programs at the mill going.

Your membership pays for this newsletter and what is left over, goes to fund our programs as well. Simply put, we cannot continue to exist on memberships only. Your donations make a big difference! Pass this newsletter on to your friends and encourage them to join the Friends of the Mill and to make a donation to keep the mill open in 2010.

There can be tax advantages to donating to the Friends. Have you considered making Pine Mill's endowment fund part of your estate planning? We ask that you contact the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine for advice. If you wish, the Foundation can also make your anonymously gift available to us. Contact Director Judi Holdorf at 563-264-3863. Keep in mind that your donation of historical items, supplies or other material may be tax deductible as well. ***Don't forget that the Foundation is a major supporter of the Mill.***

Thanks to the Following 2010 Donors

Wal-Mart, Kohl's, Pizza Ranch, Muscatine Foods, Stanley Foundation, Butterworth Clocks, Central State Bank, MUSCO Lighting, SSAB, WTC Communications, First National Bank and all of the families and individuals that have made donations.

Our officers are:

Tom Hanifan, President
563-263-4818

David Metz, V.P.
563-263-4222

Ken Hyman, V.P.
563-262-9040

Agnes Digney, Secretary
319-726-5983

Gladys Mittman, Tres.
563-263-2451

Would you like to sponsor a special day, week or month at the mill? Please fill out and return this card with your donation. Please indicate the date(s) and your name will be posted at the mill as sponsor. F.O.M. has been granted 501(c)(3) status by the Internal Revenue Service.

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Date(s) you wish to sponsor _____
 Person you wish to honor _____
 Amount donated \$ _____



Make your check to:
 Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill

 Mail to:
 Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill
 C/O Mr. Tom Hanifan
 Box 1205
 Muscatine, IA 52761

A Miller's Tale of True Grist

By Geraldine Schwarz

This month we bring you the true story of the struggles of Herman Lidtke to transport new millstones to his mill. His mill still stands today at the town of Lime Springs in northern Iowa

ON THE BANKS OF THE UPPER IOWA, fifty-five miles upsteam from Decorah, stands the Lime Springs Mill. A sign on the front of the brick veneered building proclaims it was estab-shed in 1857. For over a hundred years, this mill was a busy center of activity, but by 1960 portable mills and the steel structure in town had cut so deeply into its business that it was closed.

During the last forty-two years of its operation, Herman Lidtke owned and ran the mill, spending his days grinding buckwheat flour or stock feed and his evenings running the electric power plant connected to the mill, which served Lime Springs and Chester. Now nearly ninety, he speaks with enthusiasm and pride about those arduous days.

Explaining how he became a miller, he says, "I was just sort of a one-horse farmer when I got into this. I married the daughter of the man who owned it, and she was the only kid in the family and the mill went with the deal. " He chuckles and adds, "That was the sad part of it."

With obvious respect and admiration, Mr. Lidtke talks about his father-in-law, D. W. Davis. "Even if he was my dad-in-law, I'd have to say he was more of a go-getter than the average fellow. He was always looking over the heads of the crowd, down the road, trying to see a better way of doing things. And he always had to have the best." As with all other things that his life touched, Davis wanted the Lime Springs Mill to be the very best.

Aside from being a miller, Davis was also a stock buyer, and the farmers he dealt with told him that stone grinding was the best for hogs because it made more meal. So when he heard



Lidtke's Mill and Dam, Photo Credit: Lime Springs Herald

that the French buhr millstones that had been in Governor Larrabee's mill at Clermont were available, he decided he must have them for his mill.

He knew that French buhr was the best material for millstones since it is a stone that when quarried still has "quarry sap" in it. This makes it easily sawed and cut. After exposure to the air, a chemical change in the stone makes it extremely

Reprinted from Geraldine Schwartz, *A Miller's Tale of True Grist*, *Annals of Iowa*, 43:3, Winter 1973. Copyright State Historical Society of Iowa. Used by permission of the publisher.

Lidke's Mill is located in the town of Lime Springs on the upper Iowa River. Directions – 1 mile north of Lime Springs, between U. S. Highway 63 and County Road V36

Hours – 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday, Memorial Day – Labor Day
Phone – (319) 566-2827

hard. He also knew that these stones had been brought over from France by ship especially for Governor Larrabee's mill and that Larrabee was the most respected miller in this area at that time—his reputation as a miller had, in fact, contributed to his success in politics.

So it was that in 1917 when Davis heard that these millstones were being offered for sale by a man in Colesburg, where they had been taken after being in the mill at Clermont, he sent his son-in-law, Herman Lidtke, to get them. The following is Mr. Lidtke's story of that week-long trip from Lime Springs to Colesburg and back.

"I went from Lime Springs to Postville the first day and then from there to Colesburg. It was 105 miles down there. I slept in the hotel at Postville and put the team in the livery barn. I got down to Colesburg towards evening and then I stayed there the second night.

"The fellow that had the stones was running the mill there and of course it was easy enough to find him as long as he was living right there; I could inquire where he lived. My dad-in-law had taken care of paying for the stones. I didn't have anything to do with that. Just a rough guess, I'd say maybe he paid a hundred dollars—things were cheaper then. I think Larrabee got them shipped from France in 1855. See they did have stone here but it was a different stone and it was all one piece. They'd quarry a great big stone out of the quarry and then they'd round it up. But this was all in sections like bricks. The millstones are joined together by "keying in" the stones, similar to archstones over a doorway, and held by iron bands.

"So then the next day we loaded the stone; it took us until three o'clock or later. We just had to pry it and use bars and keep sliding it along. I got started then from Colesburg about three in the afternoon and then I stopped at Littleport, I think it was, or Elkport, for the night. I got started early in the morning and I only had to go a short ways and go up a hill and I was stuck right away. The team couldn't pull it. And, gee, it made me sick, you know—wouldn't it you? And I blocked the wheels and unhooked the team and I see some fellas down the hill going to milk so I just walked down there to see if they wouldn't help me up the hill. "Nope,"

they said. "The boss is gone and we wouldn't hitch up his horses." So then I had to walk clear up the hill to the next farmer and he was just getting up and his horses was in the pasture. 'Yah,' he'd help me. So he helped me up the hill.

"And then when I got up the hill I was on the ridge quite a while on the level, and really that's awful pretty country, you know. You're up on the ridge and you can look down, I believe, as far as from here to Lime Springs (one mile) . . . farm houses all along there. My granddaughter lived down there in Elkader not very long ago—she's a nurse. We went down to see her and then we took a ride and went down to different parts of the country from there. I enjoyed that more because I was just sitting in the back seat and watching the sights. And really, it's pretty country.

"The people down there was real nice. You know after you get down there to Colesburg and Elkader—that's old settled country down there and lots of great big brick houses. But one night I thought I was cornered; I started to stop for the night and pretty near every place I stopped, the people was gone. So I didn't know what I was going to do for a while, but I did finally find somebody just come home. Oh, they was all real nice.

"Anyway then I got down to Elkader again toward evening or middle of the afternoon and I had some stuff that I could unload and ship through—there was the piece of shaft and the bearings where the shaft would go through, they were big heavy iron bearings—it was about 600 pounds that I could ship through. So I put my team in the livery barn there to feed 'em and there was a fellow there just hitching up his team and I asked him where the depot was and he told me, 'Why?' he says. And I says, 'I got some stuff I'd like to ship out. I've got too much of a load.' 'Well,' he says, 'throw it on the wagon and I'll take it up for you.'¹ Anyway started out then and I says, 'I ain't gonna get out of Elkader al all without help.'¹ There was some fellers plowing corn down to the bottom of the hill there, and I asked them if they'd help 'Yah,' they'd help. One feller had a big team of mules and we hooked them on ahead of my team, and those two teams, we had to rest them several times just to get up the hill.



Herman Lidtke is standing next to one of the millstones described in this story. The millstone is mounted in the wall of his house. Photo Credit: "Lime Springs Then & Now (1968 Centennial Book).

"And going down the hill I had a chain on the reach that long enough that I could chain one wheel and then I'd slide going down the hill; that was the brake because they could never hold that load. From Elkader I stopped at a farmhouse and quite a storm come up and right there was quite a hill, too. So I way there for dinner and horse feed and then it kinda quit raining and all he charged me was fifty cents and he helped me up hill. I don't know, it wasn't much of a hill but it was a new graded! road and it was kind of a clay soil and it just seemed like the wheels would pretty near slide sideways like they do in snow.

"Well, then when I got on top of the hill there again ! got into Postville and I rested my team there, and I thought, 'Well, I'll get to Calmar and stay there tonight.'¹ And oh boy, that was a long road from Postville, and the team was getting slower and it was getting dark and it started to thunder and lightning. And I asked some fellers I met how far it was to Calmar. 'Well about four or five miles yet.'

"I made it to Calmar all right . . . getting

late . . . and then I was looking for a livery barn and the fellow said, There's no livery barn here but there's a feller that's a horse buyer, he can sometimes let someone put his horses there.' So I found out where his place was and he let me put the team in and I says, 'Where's the hotel?' And so he told me where it was. 'It's a poor one,' says, 'you can sleep in the barn here if you want to.' Because in those days the livery barn would hire out teams and they'd gone half the night and they'd have to have someone in the bar all night, so they'd have a cot and everything to sleep on. So stayed in there. And that storm finally come up and, boy, it thundered and lightninged and rained, and that darned office there where the cot was leaked and I'd get up and move the cot here— drip, drip—move it there. And then finally the electric lights lit up, and I thought, 'Holy Cats, is the barn on fire?' But it was funny, the water must have come down on the wire and kind of shorted it enough so the bulbs lit up.

"From Calmar I went to Ridge way, and then east of Cresco I stopped and rested the horses and fed them, and then when I pulled through Cresco it was maybe six or a little more and the sun was way up, you know it was the last of June, and I thought 'Oh gol, I'll get home.' But I got this side of Bon Air and the team was just out. There was a farmer living there and I drove in and said, 'I wonder if maybe I could put up with you for the night?'¹ And he said, 'Yah, I got plenty of room for the horses but I ain't got no room for you.' And here he had a bigger house than we did. So I said, 'I don't give a damn about myself, it's the horses that are out.'¹ So I slept in the barn that night. Of course if I'd a thought, you know, I could have called home and had somebody come and get me— just for the night, then I could a come back in the morning. But I never thought about that at all.

"Then the next morning I pulled up there to where my wife's folks lived and boy, they looked to see the way that team was a pulling. So I says Monday morning I was going to weigh that before I unload it. And by goll, it weighted 5,600 pounds with the wagon and me and all. That was the weight

of what the team was pulling. They was Clydes, great big Clydes. I had them all shod all around before I left. They lost a lot of weight on the trip. The fellow that worked for my dad-in-law in the stock yard there, when he seen the team Monday morning—he was a good Welshman, you know, he had kind of a brogue—he throwed up his hands and said, ‘Well, indeed I never thought a team could fall away that much in a week.’”

For the next ten years the Larrabee stones served the Lime Springs Mill. But they were man-killers and slow, according to Lidtke. Each day he got farther and farther behind, sacks of grain to be ground piling up around him. Each night he ran

the power plant and at the same time lifted one of the huge stones sharpened it, first with a many-pronged pick that roughened the stone, later with an air hammer equipped with chisels that cut grooves into it. There must be an easier way to grind feed he told his dad-in-law. So the stones were replaced with a Bowers Brothers gristmill.

One stone is now a front step to Mr. Lidtke’s house, the other 11 embedded in the side of his house with a brass plate in its center stating. “This stone installed in Gov. Larrabee’s Mill, 1855, Clermont, Iowa.” The stones remain a monument to an earlier era in milling, and to the millers who used them.

What is the Mill’s Proper Name?

We all call the mill “Pine Creek Grist Mill,” but is that its correct historic name? During the mill’s operating life contemporary publications refer to it as “Pine Mills.” The area around the mill was also called Pine Mills. During the period when the Missel family owned the mill they also called it Pine Mills. For the location of the mill, they referred to it as being at Pine Mills, Iowa. Another indication that at the time Pine Mills was considered a community is that the road we now call the New Era Blacktop was called in the 1890’s Pine Mill Road.

There are also references to the mill being called “Pine Roller Mills.” The word roller in the name being an indication to customers that the mill used the latest roller milling technology. Perhaps it was good marketing to

By David Metz

make the mill sound as up to date as possible.

Why was *Pine Mills* plural used as the name instead of *Pine Mill* singular? If a gristmill had only one milling plant, then it was referred to as a mill. When a mill had more than one milling plant (Pine Mills has three separate plants), then it became known as *mills* plural.

Pine Creek has also had some variations on its name. The earliest settlers called it the Pine River! Perhaps when the early settlers viewed the creek’s broad mouth on the Mississippi river they found it easy to imagine it to be a river. Somewhere along the line the *river* got downgraded to a much more modest *creek*! I can imagine this happening when someone walked a mile inland and found that the *river* could soon be jumped across.

Pine Creek Grist Mill Hours For 2010

May: Saturday & Sunday 12:30 PM to 4:30PM

June, July, & August:

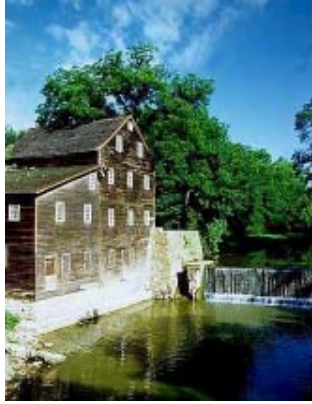
Wednesday through Sunday 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Milling demonstrations at 1:30 PM & 3 PM

September: As above till mid month, then weekends only.

Melpine School 2010 Hours

Don’t forget to visit Melpine School, a fully restored early 1900’s Iowa one room school house. The school is located in the same area of the park as Pine Creek Grist Mill.

The school is open on Sundays only from 1 PM to 4:30 PM starting on June 6th and ending on September 26th.



Pine Creek Grist Mill is on the Web!

See us at:
www.pinecreekgristmill.com

Don't want to receive this newsletter anymore?

Contact David Metz at
563-263-4222 or
davemetz@machlink.com

Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill

Pine Creek Grist Mill is located in Wildcat Den State Park, Montpelier Township, Muscatine County, Iowa.

"The mission of Friends Pine Creek Grist Mill is to restore, operate and maintain the Mill and to share the historical significance of the site through educational programs, public tours, and events."

Friends of the Mill Membership

2010 Membership

Membership is only \$20.00 per year, membership includes:

One year basic membership

Newsletter

An opportunity to learn more about a local historical treasure

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone number (_____) _____

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Send this application and your check to:

FOM C/O Mrs. Gladys Mittman

323 Main Street

Muscatine, Iowa 52761

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