



Pine Mill News

Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill Spring 2017 Issue

President's Column

By Tom Hanifan & Heather Shoppa

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**Friends of the Pine
Creek Grist Mill
Meetings are the 2nd
Saturday at 9AM at the
Muscatine County
Extension office on the
North side of Isett Ave.
Come to the rear door
on the side of the
building.**

Friends of the Mill is beginning to gear up for a busy 2017. As spring spreads across the park, it's time for our volunteers and staff members to prepare the mill and the log cabin for the thousands of visitors we will welcome over the next six months.

The staff from Kohl's, located in Moline, IL, is organizing a work day for their employees, where they will come help us clean the mill, making it ready for our very first visitors. For more details on our restoration efforts, please read Dave Metz's column.

Interpretation Efforts

Springtime is crunch time for our interpretive staff. We will be welcoming hundreds of students from the region, as part of our ever-expanding field trip program. We also will start having the mill open on weekends, to welcome curious visitors, through the end of May. Our summer hours will begin in June, we hope to be able to keep the mill open through September, but that will hinge on securing adequate funding. For more details regarding our interpretive efforts, please see Heather Shoppa's column on page 10.

Funding Our Efforts

Many of our efforts are dependent on the funding we receive each year. We do our best to maintain the mill's equipment. We gladly invite students from area schools to come to the park for a fun filled day of hands on learning. And, we feel strongly about keeping the mill open to the public throughout the summer travel season. We receive no direct funding from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The mill is open to the public thanks to the generosity of our donors, both large and small.

We have tremendous support for our efforts, many of our donors have again been kind this year, and we are grateful for their contributions.

(Please see the list of donors who have made contributions since the last newsletter.)

This year, however, we may be facing a shortfall in funding. We may have to alter our scheduled hours or scale back our other efforts. We are continuing to look for additional sources of funding. If members of your family have found value in visiting the mill, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. We would appreciate your support.

Volunteer Opportunities at the Mill

We can always use more volunteers. There are many things volunteers can do, like helping with school groups or opening the log cabin. Helping with our Web site (we contract the technical work). Restoring and maintaining the mill. Or just contributing your time and ideas. Besides supporting Pine Mill, you are going to have fun! You can put in just as much or as little time as you want. Some volunteer work can be done from home. If you are interested in volunteering, contact one of our officers.

Treasurer

After 20 years, our treasurer, Gladys Mittman, is stepping down. She has done an amazing job, Friends of the Mill truly appreciated her giving so freely of her time and talents. Gladys will continue to stay involved with our group, she is an important part of our field trip program. Gladys is our expert on local history, she knows the whole story of Benjamin Nye and his family.

Log cabin

We are considering ways to open the log cabin, near the mill, to the public. Donors have given us many items to "furnish" the cabin, so it will represent what a pioneer's log cabin would have looked like. Roberta and Earnest House are making a feather tick for the log cabin's rope bed. We are looking for someone to demonstrate cooking and other household chores

Continued on page 3

Restoration & Cabin Report

By David Metz

Plans are already underway for the 2017 season at Pine Mills and our log cabin. Even though we are not at the mill in the winter there are things going on to prepare for the season. If this year is like past ones the weather will warm up around the second week in April. Traditionally this is the time we start to open up the mill to get it ready for the season.

What does it take to get the mill ready? The first thing we do is sweep up all the dead bugs off of the floors. Over the winter the mill collects a surprising amount of deceased Japanese Lady Beetles. So many of them that walking on the floors is like walking on popcorn. We sweep and vacuum most of them up (along with what I call raccoon reminders) to get the mill ready for the crew from Kohls department store that will do the serious cleaning.

While the preparatory cleaning is going on I do an inventory of the mill's supplies. What shape are the vacuum cleaners in? How many new filters do we need for them? What about the rest of the cleaning supplies? Do we need paper towels, garbage bags, sanitizer, wasp spray and new brooms? All of this has to be checked and the needed supplies purchased right away.



Shut down day last fall at the mill. Hank Mann is carefully cleaning all of the spoiled grist from an elevator boot.

Once we can walk around without crushing thousands of dead bugs the crew lubricates all of the machinery. This is absolutely vital to safely operating the mill. Most of the mill fires that I have read about (and they were common) occurred because of an over heated machine bearing. Some of the bearings are in difficult to find locations and we have to be certain that we get all of them oiled or greased as needed.

After the machines are lubricated comes the first start up of the year. For the past several years after setting still for the winter the mill's machinery has started up with no

problems at all. We step start the mill when we do the first test, that is we have some of the machines disconnected so not everything starts at once. This greatly reduces the load on the motor and this allows us to pay close attention to the start up of the machines we are testing. Once we feel secure that there are no problems then we do a full automatic start up like the tour guides do for the final test.

With the mill running we can fill the wheat receiving bin in the basement. It supplies the wheat that circulates through the elevator and chute exhibit where the wheat goes up the elevator and back down to the bin in a circle. The last few years we have had problems with the chutes being clogged with mouse nests. Last year it took several hours of work to clean the nests out and get the exhibit running properly again. I suspect that we will have the same problem this year.

Because of all of the ice damage we have had in the past we now remove the penstock gate operating rod over the winter. To reinstall it requires lowering our extension ladder over the side of the wall above the dam. The ladder has to be tied to the railing with rope since there is nothing for it to sit on at the bottom but creek water. One of us then climbs down the ladder and reattaches the operating rod to the penstock gate.

Once the gate is operating again we leave it open to help wash the winter's accumulation of mud from the turbine pit. Even with the water flowing one of us will have to climb down into the pit and use hose and shovel to wash the remainder of the mud out so the turbine will turn for our visitors.

During the mill opening process Tom Hanifan and Heather Shoppa will be setting up the mill store and getting ready for the school program. Tom will have arranged for the Kohl's department store volunteers to come and do the mill's serious spring cleaning. The Kohl's crew are store employees that volunteer every year. Many of them have cleaned the mill in past years, they know what needs to be done and they save us a huge amount of work. . If you have never been at the mill for Kohl's cleaning day you should come out for it, you'll get a free picnic lunch.

Getting the cabin ready for the school program this spring will be a first time experience for us. In the past the cabin was always under construction. Now that it is completed except for a few small details we can furnish it for the first time. A lot of small items like pots, pans and dishes have been donated or purchased for the cabin. All of it has never been brought together in one spot yet, so I am not certain what we have that is useful or what additional items are needed. We will find that out when we set up the cabin for the first time.



The bottom half of the log cabin cupboard waiting to be completed in my home shop.

The restoration crew has been meeting at my home workshop completing the cupboard for the cabin that we started building at the mill last fall. We plan to have it completed in time for the school program in May. The cupboard is made from pine and it will have an oak working surface and doors covering the top and bottom storage shelves. Building a piece of furniture is a completely new project for the crew.

Completing the large furnishings in the cabin there will have the cupboard, trunk, rope bed, table and two chairs. That should be plenty considering the small size of the cabin.

Since cabin security is an issue, the small valuable furnishing items will not be left in the cabin. A motion sensing camera has been donated to us and it will be mounted in a nearby tree to record any possible vandalism. There are some other deterrents that we have in mind as well.

What projects are being considered for this season? The crew wants to build a replica non-functioning outhouse for the cabin. Yes it will have a quarter moon door and a box of corn cobs inside. I can't wait to hear how our interpreters explain its function to the school kids who have never seen one before!

The first thing the early settlers did on their new homesteads is to plant an orchard and a few vines to supplement their diet. During the mid 1800's up through the 1930's Muscatine County produced large crops of grapes and fruit. Dave Cooney will be helping us with the cabin property by supplying two fruit trees and a couple of Concord grape vines that will be planted near the cabin.

Last fall someone stole our supply of logs that are used for the Old Time Tools program for the kids. Rounding up a supply of the right kind of logs is not all that easy. To prevent future theft outside of the cabin we are going to build a bin with a lock on it for storing the logs.

Back at the mill new modern LED lighting is going to be installed. Our current fluorescent fixtures were old when we installed them and it is time to replace them with more reliable fixtures. The DNR has budgeted for twenty new direct replacement LED fixtures. To save the state a great deal of money the installation will be done by volunteers that are licensed electricians. Three of the new fixtures will be used to improve the lighting of the mill store.

Speaking of signs, we will also have three new folding portable signs to notify the public when the cabin is open. One will be placed on the mill deck on the days we have the cabin open and the others will be paths to the cabin. A fourth sign will be available to notify the public when Melpine School is open. All of the signs will have a white board on the backside so that the staff can use them for short term notifications as needed.



Two of the folding signs. They will be painted when we go back to work at the mill this spring.

President's Column Continued

at the log cabin. If you are interested in helping interpret the log cabin, please contact one of our officers.

Annual meeting and family potluck

The annual meeting & family potluck will be Saturday April 8th at 5 PM. We meet at the County Extension Office – 1514 Isett Ave. Guests are encouraged to come. Come for an evening of fellowship and good food. Please bring your own place setting, drink, and a dish to share. Elections of our officers will be conducted at this time.

Meetings

We invite you to attend one of our monthly meetings. You will learn more about our mission, and you will have the opportunity to meet our volunteers and the park's staff. We meet at 9 AM on the 2nd Saturday each the month. Check our website for details. We meet at the Muscatine County Extension Office on Isett Ave. Come to the back door.

Industrial Archeology at Pine Mills

By David Metz

As I became involved with the restoration of Pine Creek Grist Mill I had no idea that there existed an academic discipline called *Industrial Archeology*. Or that we were practicing it at Pine Mills. When we think of an archeologist the picture that forms in our minds is of someone digging for the artifacts of some ancient civilization at the bottom of a dusty trench. That is not true at all, there is another branch of that science. The Society for Industrial Archeology based at Department of Social Sciences at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan, describes their mission as:

The mission of the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA) is to encourage the study, interpretation, and preservation of historically significant industrial sites, structures, artifacts, and technology. By providing a forum for the discussion and exchange of information, the Society advances the awareness and appreciation of the value of preserving our industrial heritage.

Thus at Pine Mills we found ourselves digging up information about a 19th century mill not an ancient tomb. We had to learn this art as we went along there being no books on the subject that I could find at the time. So where did we start in our mission to understand the mill as best we could? After all how could we restore it if we did not understand what it had been and how it had worked?



The top half of the smutter pokes up through the floor. The replica of the missing in-feed chute is the slanting gray metal part in front of the machine.

Consulting the available technical literature is always the best first step. I soon discovered a book that became our bible, D. W. Dedrick's *Practical Milling*. Published as a college text book in 1924 it covered the entire technical history of the processes and machinery used at Pine Mills. This book proved to be absolutely invaluable in understanding the mill. As the years went by I kept purchasing books on historic milling, all of them proved very useful.

This brings us to the reason we have this discipline called Industrial Archeology. It is very rare for there to be any record of industrial processes or the history of one particular business. For example when industry stopped manufacturing wooden flat belt pulleys no one recorded how they were made or what the machines that made them were like. This knowledge and a great deal more about the mill simply got forgotten as those that once had it passed away. The machines that made artifacts like wood pulleys were junked when they had no more use. Thus the Industrial Archeologist has to rediscover this lost knowledge and often reverse engineer existing machinery to determine what it did and how it functioned.

A prime example of this concerned a machine at the mill called the smutter. We first paid attention to it when we flow charted the mill. That is over a period of several days the crew mapped out how grist moved through the mill. We soon discovered that Pine Mills had three completely separate milling systems in it. The millstone system had two grain cleaning machines in it, one the cottle screen located in the basement. From the screen the buckwheat or rye flowed through a second cleaning machine called a smutter. Derick's book revealed that the smutter removed debris from the grain including a black fungus called smut, thus the machine's name.



The bottom half of the smutter hangs from the basement ceiling. Behind it can be seen the cottle screen and to the right one of the two slanting elevators. Due to severe dry rot problems Dick Clevenger totally restored the machine with all new wood.

At this point we had a pretty good idea of what the smutter did and how it did it. We also discovered that part of the machine, a sort of chute that metered the grain into it was missing. Once we knew this we dug into the machine's history deeper. We never found any further information on it, all records of its manufacture had apparently vanished. We had no illustrations showing the missing chute, all we had were the parts that once connected to it. The late Jim Tomasson took on the job of reverse engineering the machine to determine what the missing chute looked like. This forced him to make some assumptions, one that the chute had been made of sheet metal and second it had been mounted at an angle, had a right angle bend at one end and it had been shaken to force the grain to slide down it. With these scant details he fabricated a new chute and with the usual amount of fiddling got it to fit and function.

This brings the question is the replicated part the same as the missing original one? Chances are we will never know unless future research turns up new information on the smutter. We do know that the replica has to be close to the original because it functions. Therefore one role of the Industrial Archeologist is to determine as best as possible what the missing parts of any artifact had been like, that is filling in the missing gaps (and there are a lot of them) in our understanding.

There are still what I call "Mill Mysteries" at Pine Mills for the amateur Industrial Archeologist to solve. Here is a good example of how while we have learned something about a machine, we are far from knowing its full story. Up on the mill's second floor hidden between two elevators a small machine sits on the floor. It appears that the top half of the machine is missing. It is made mostly of wood and has a revolving wood dome in the center. There are two small wood pegs mounted on the edge of the dome. A tiny gap between the dome and the sheet metal cone that funnels down to it would allow some material to slip between the two as the dome rotated. A set of pulleys on a jack shaft beneath the dome had a belt that powered the machine from the line shaft above. Whatever the machine metered out went down a chute into one of the roller mills on the first floor.

So far the only conclusion I have come to is that the machine had a hopper on top that held the material that it metered into the roller mill below. The revolving dome and its pegs could have been used to break up any clumps and ensure that the flow was not interrupted. Our clues to what the hopper must have looked like are that it had to have been square so it fit between the elevator legs and been keyed so it fit the machine base tightly. Just to add to the challenge the mystery machine appears to be homemade and not built in a factory.

What did it do? The milling experts I have contacted have had no ideas. Nor have I found anything like it in the historical milling literature that I have. From the design of the remaining parts I am sure that it metered something into

the roller mill system but what? Did it feed in lumpy flour or low grade flour for redressing (sifting)? Or add some ingredients such as salt and baking powder to make self rising flour? At this time I am not sure. What happened to the missing hopper? Where did it go to what exactly did it look like? Another question is why did the mill's owner Hermann Huchendorf install the machine in such a difficult to gain access to location between the scalper bolters and the elevators? Maybe some day one of us will take on the job of investigating this machine further and answer some of these questions. Till then it remains a mill mystery



The wood dome of the mystery machine can be seen above. If you look close the pulleys for its flat belt drive can be seen to the rear. On either side is an elevator leg. The location of the machine makes photographing it difficult.



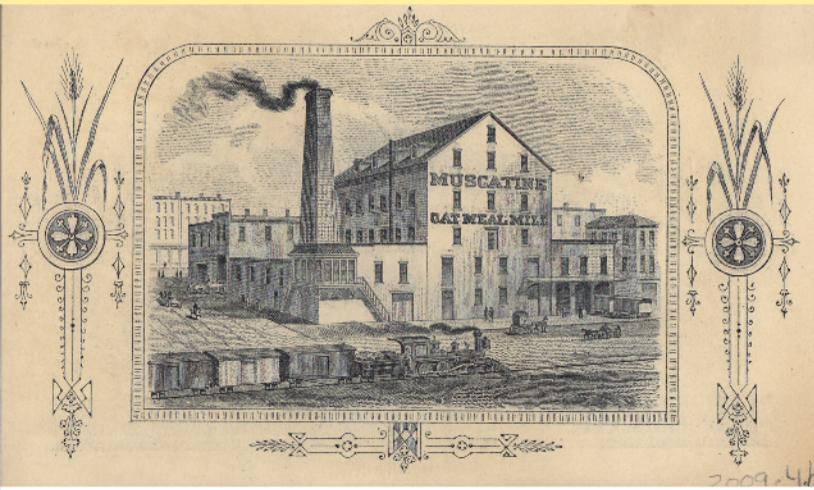
SOCIETY FOR
INDUSTRIAL
ARCHEOLOGY

Are you
interested in
learning more
about Industrial

Archeology? Go to the web site of the Society for Industrial Archeology to learn more.
<http://www.sia-web.org/>

The Society publishes a newsletter four times a year and a the one hundred page plus Journal once a year. Subjects covered are bridges, mines, canals, manufacturing plants, power plants, studies of historic manufacturing sites and social studies of industries. The Society also sponsors tours of historic and modern industrial facilities.

Back issues of the newsletter can be downloaded for free at the Society web site. Individual membership is \$50 per year.



This issue we bring you the story of the Muscatine Oatmeal Company, Muscatine Counties largest mill and explain its connection with today's Quaker Oat Co.

While Muscatine and Iowa were once known for its wheat fields and flour production the cities largest and most successful mill made oatmeal. The Muscatine Oatmeal Company had a complex and often confusing history. A good place to start is the building it occupied. Joseph Bennett constructed the five story brick mill building on Muscatine's river front in 1851 to house his new flour mill. In those days Iowa served as America's bread basket, Iowa farmers depended wheat for their cash crop. The Mississippi River provided the only way to transport Iowa's crops to markets in the east. Muscatine's excellent landing on the river made it the area's shipping port for flour, salt pork and other farm commodities.

In 1868 J.B. Hale purchased the flour mill and changed its name to Muscatine Mill's. It continued in operation until 1875 when it closed. In 1876 the two Huttig brothers whose name is well known to Muscatine's residents set up a sash

and door works in the mill building. Perhaps they outgrew the mill building or saw a better use for it for in 1879 they moved their sash and door works to a new location.

In 1870's the production of oatmeal was a regional business. Small mills purchased their raw oats from nearby farms and sold their product to local markets. Quick cooking rolled oats had just been developed by Akron, Ohio millers in 1876. This new more convenient form of oats caused sales to boom. A Muscatine business man S.G. Stein saw all this and he knew the Huttig brothers and of the old mill building being available, this led to his organizing the Muscatine Oatmeal Company in partnership with other Muscatine businessmen including the Huttigs.



S. G. Stein

At this point it is appropriate that some of the story of Simon Gerberich Stein be told for he is one of the most important men in Muscatine's history.

Of German descent he was born in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania where he spent his childhood on the family farm. An ambitious young man he moved to Ohio and then to Moline, Illinois where he found employment at the Sears Flour Mill. In 1849 he rode a lumber raft to Muscatine starting a business selling lumber for the retail trade. His business interests rapidly expanded, he opened a furniture store on the corner of Pine Street & 2nd. He founded what became the First National Bank of Muscatine becoming its president. He also served as president of the Muscatine Water Works when it was a private company and had investments in railroads and even the Mississippi River ferry boat at Muscatine. He became so respected for his good judgment



A rare relic of the oatmeal mill. These stone edge runners were used to make rolled oats. They are located at Muscatine's Weed Park.

that he was asked to serve as one of the commissioners in charge of building the new Iowa State capitol building. He served two terms as mayor of Muscatine. Remarkably for one term he was nominated by the Republican Party the second term by the Democratic Party!

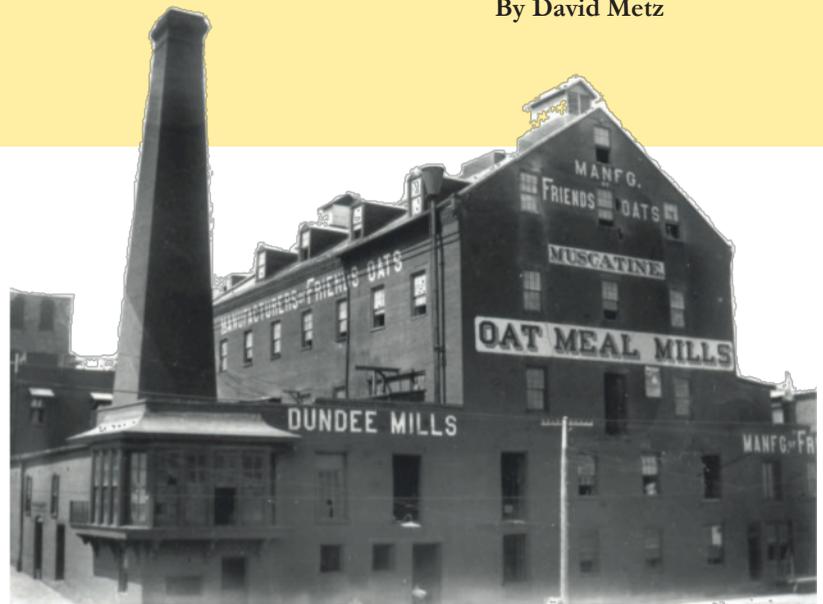
Stein had worked as miller as a young man and now being able to command considerable capitol this put him in the perfect position to start the new oatmeal company. The Muscatine Oatmeal company produced all three kinds of oatmeal, the flour used for porridge oatmeal, steel cut oatmeal and the new rolled oats.

The Sanborn fire maps give us some clues on what the factory was like. Like all of the industrial buildings in Muscatine at the time the exterior was brick and the interior all wood. The southwest corner held the power plant consisting of two boilers with a 80' brick chimney, an 80 horsepower steam engine and twelve vertical oat kilns. On the second floor sat the oat huller(s) and the mills for oat flour production. The third floor held machinery for the production of steel cut oats and the forth and fifth floors held the bolters.

From the west side of the building coming off of Pine Street a passageway passed through the building to the alley to the north. This allowed horse drawn wagons to bring oats and coal to fuel the boilers into the mill. In 1891 the mill is listed as "running night and day" with thirty employees. Each day 5,000 bushels of raw oats were processed into 300 barrels of finished oatmeal. Across Front Street on the river bank sat the mill's elevators that had a capacity for 100,000 bushels of oats and the mill's shipping warehouse with its long railroad dock.

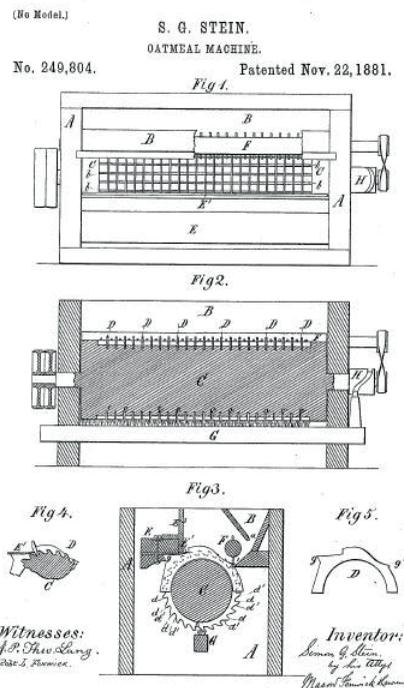
The Muscatine Oatmeal Company took great pride in that it bought only the highest quality oats grown in Eastern Iowa. A newspaper story from the 1890's stated that the demand for oats had become so great that it taxed the area's farmers to produce enough to supply the mill. The company also stated in its advertising that it belonged to no price fixing trusts and that its customers always got the best value for their money.

There are clear indications that the management of the oatmeal company were progressive in their thinking. They had eliminated dangerous oil lamps from the mill replacing them with an Edison electric plant and light bulbs. They also



The use of the Trade Mark Friends Oats places this photo sometime in 1912. Note how the office hung out over the sidewalk.

developed their own steel cutting machines. In November of 1881 three patents were granted by the U.S. Patent office for machines for cutting oat groats (dehulled oat berries) by steel knives. The object of the machines being to cut accurately the groats lengthwise cleanly while producing as little oat debris as possible.



Stein's patent for a machine for steel cutting oatmeal.

Two of the patents were granted in the name of the company's general manager S. P. Sawyer and one in Mr. Stein's name. It is not known if they were directly involved in the design of the machines or if they were granted in their names since they were officers of the corporation. It does show that the management of the oatmeal company put considerable effort into improving their products quality and manufacturing efficiency.

No business operates in a vacuum and The Muscatine Oatmeal Company was no exception. Powerful business forces were forming that would greatly affect its future. One would be Akron, Ohio's the well known F. Schumacher Milling Company. The other thing that would greatly affect the Muscatine Oatmeal Company's future would be not a business, but its logo. A small oatmeal mill on a river at Revenna, Ohio had adopted the likeness of a jolly Quaker man as its logo and brand name. That brand name would soon be more valuable than the mill that owned it.

Schumacher had no interest in involvement with other mills until a disastrous fire that destroyed his mill in Akron. He had a market without a mill to supply it and worse no insurance to cover his losses. Akron's bankers Knowing the

The Muscatine Oatmeal Company Continued



A rare photo of the interior of the mill. In the 1900's the oatmeal cartons were shipped in wooden boxes made right in the mill building.

value of Schumacher's brand and market forced him to combine his business with several other mills. From the ashes of his mill in 1891 rose a milling giant to be called The American Milling Company that in time purchased the Quaker Oats brand.

Not all the Akron millers wished to be part of the new combine. In 1883, John F. Seiberling had opened his new mill in Akron marketing his oatmeal under the brand name "Mother's Oats." To be competitive with the new American Milling Company Seiberling along with several other Midwestern mills including the Muscatine Oatmeal Company combined to form a new corporation, The Great Western Cereal Company. Thus in the early 1900's the two combines competed for the oatmeal market.

In 1901 the Great Western Cereal Company approached the Muscatine firm with an offer to join their combine. The board of directors agreed and Muscatine Oatmeal's manager S.P. Sawyer became the manager of the new company with S.G. Stein president of the Muscatine firm and member of the board of Great Western. Thus the Muscatine plant came to use Great Western's Mother's Oats brand name.

Great Western had plants with established markets in ten cities, most in Iowa and Illinois. The organizers hoped that this combine would give Great Western the size to compete successfully with American Cereal's Quaker brand. Between the late 1890's and 1905 the Muscatine plant expanded. The oat elevators on the river front were expanded and a warehouse with a long railroad dock for shipping was built directly across Front Street from the plant. To move the oats from the elevators to the factory three tunnels were driven under the railroad tracks and Front Street. Two had conveyors for oats and the third a conveyor to carry coal from the rail warehouse to the mill's boilers.

American Milling also continued to grow, the firm successfully developed and marketed new cereal products such as puffed wheat and puffed rice. The Quaker Oats brand proved to be such a powerful marketing tool that in 1907 after a corporate reorganization the American Cereal Company became known as the Quaker Oats Company with Quaker being a holding company for the assets of the old American Cereal.

By 1912 it became apparent that even with ten mills in operation the Great Western Cereal Company could not compete with Quaker Oats. One problem that Great Western had is that it had eight mills serving the Iowa region. Some rationalization was needed, thus the board of Great Western decided to sell out to Quaker Oats. Quaker already had the large former North Star Mill in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The Cedar Rapids mill had a great deal of land available to expand its facility on, something that the Muscatine mill did not have. The Muscatine mill being in downtown Muscatine found itself boxed in on all sides by city streets and other business properties limiting its possible future expansion.

Quaker management seeing the Muscatine mill as being redundant closed it in 1913. Quaker did not single out just the Muscatine mill for closing. They also closed, the former Great Western mill in Akron, Ohio as well. What other mills were closed is not known. Nor is it recorded where the Muscatine Mills production was sent or what happened to the mill's machinery.

The mill complex had various uses after the mill closed. The Iowa Pearl Button Company used part of the complex for storage and Hahn Produce occupied another portion for many years. The power houses portion on the corner of Pine and Front Street became an automobile garage and eventually a Humble auto dealership.

In 1946 Clarence Chare started the manufacturing of tungsten carbide metal cutting tools in the old mill building. Muscatine's pearl button factories had used saws made from carbon steel since the industries inception. These dulled quickly requiring the button cutters to frequently hand sharpen them with files. Chare's first marketed his carbide cutters to the local button works. His new carbide tools far outlasted the old fashioned steel cutters currently in use.

Clarence also started the Ronda Button Company in the mill building. There he used not only his carbide cutters; he also designed, built and installed the first modern button cutting machines. While the Ronda pearl button company eventually closed due to pearl buttons no longer being competitive, Schmarje's tool and machine shop business continued for many years. Eventually his son sold the business to new owners. Today the old mill building still stands with a busy machine shop occupying it.

Muscatine Oatmeal Advertising

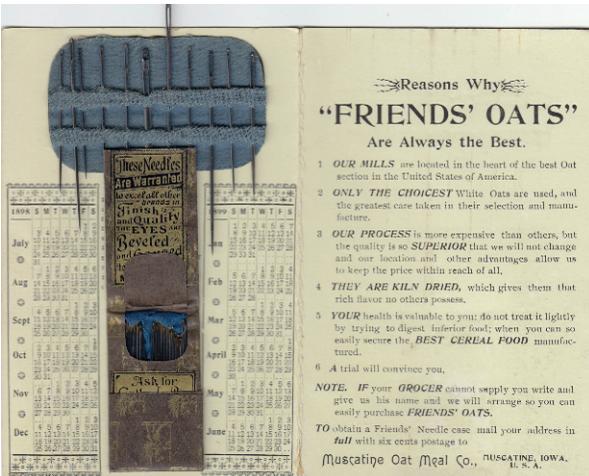
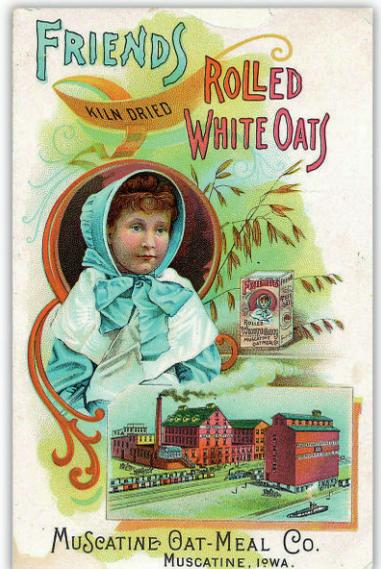
Just as today a pretty girl sold oatmeal. Muscatine Oatmeal's advertising was always bright and colorful.



What would be better to get a mother's attention then paper dolls packed with the oatmeal?



The Muscatine Oatmeal Company took advertising very seriously. Besides premiums, magazines and direct mail the company employed teams of young ladies they called the "Quakeress." They went from town to town accompanied by a chaperone and a salesman. Dressed in plain Quaker garb they went door to door giving out free samples of oatmeal. A newspaper account of the times stated that they were a welcome sight in any town. Their coming would be announced in the local newspaper. While the girls gave out the oatmeal samples the salesman made sure that the town's stores placed orders to meet the soon great demand.



Above is one of the premiums that Muscatine Oatmeal distributed. The housewife got a package of needles, a handy calendar for 1898 and a sales pitch.

At right we are reminded how a bowl of hot meal will taste after a cold winter's day of sledding. Just in case you have never cooked rolled oats instructions are given. Plus the Mrs. Sawyer, the manager's wife gives her best brown bread recipe.



Beginning at the end of April, and running through the fourth week of May, Friends of the Mill will be hosting 14 different school groups, all of whom will be participating in our annual Spring Field Trip Program. More than 1,000 schoolchildren will take part, with some groups coming from as far away as Marion, and Riverside, Iowa.

The learning activities offered by Friends of the Mill amounts to more than just a day away from school for students; we actually send them to another school, the one room schoolhouse, Melpine School, which is just up the hill from the mill. Students learn to appreciate the differences between attending school in the later part of the 19th century and the early part of the 21st century.

Prior to Iowa being opened to pioneer era farm families, many people in the region made their living in the fur industry, trapping animals in the wild and selling their hides. Friends of the Mill volunteer, Ralph Jeambey, shows students animal hides from animals native to our region.

Friends of the Mill volunteer, Gladys Mittman, talks to students about the life and death of Benjamin Nye, the man who built the Pine Creek Grist Mill. Students gather in the Nye Cemetery to read the names and dates on the monuments located there, adding the personal side of the story of the mill's first owner to the complete history of the mill.

Students gather in the yard next to the log cabin to try their hand at using pioneer era tools, like the 2-man saw, the shingle maker, and the post drill.

Learning about the grains that were ground at the mill, and the food that was produced from those products, is an important stop during a field trip. Students utilize different methods of grinding grain by hand, then they sift and measure the amount of flour they produced. Friends of the Mill volunteer, Karen Christiansen, prepares silver dollar sized pancakes, from a recipe calling for corn flour, for students to sample. Students also make their own butter, at another stop, which they can enjoy with their pancakes.

Students are given a bottom to top tour of the mill, and they have the chance to see the mill in operation. Explaining how the power, which was originally generated with a waterwheel, and later a water turbine, was transferred to the milling equipment, through the use of line shafts, belts and pulleys is key to understanding how the mill operated successfully for many years prior to the availability of electricity.

Educators love the lessons presented during the field trips. Students are exposed to 19th century technology, Iowa's pioneer era history, and multiple disciplines of science. Students love all of the hands-on learning opportunities, and the chance to develop a deeper appreciation for a local historic landmark.



The late Ken Hyman once said, “Kids love a crank!” One of the kids favorite hands on exhibits at Pine Mills is the pioneer mini-mill that Ken built. Many a child has learned that when mom told him to grind enough corn meal for the family supper that was going to be a lot of hard work.

New Bridge Interpretive Sign

At right is the design of the new interpretive sign that will be installed at the Pine Creek bridge. The sign will tell the story of the historic Pratt Truss Bridge and how important its construction by Muscatine County was to Pine Mills success.

The sign was designed by DNR staff member Michelle Wilson. The sign will be the same design as the existing signs at the mill parking lot and it will be placed near the bridge.



The generosity of donors makes it possible for us to host visitors and provide our school program in 2017. Since the last newsletter many donors have contributed. We hope you were not missed. In addition to those listed below, many people have donated important smaller amounts.

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The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill officers are:

David Metz edits your newsletter, contact him if you have any questions about or material for the newsletter.

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Pine Creek Grist Mill is on the web and FaceBook! Get downloads of our publications and see photos of the latest happenings. See us at:

www.pinecreekgristmill.com

Do you have something for the newsletter? To keep your newsletter interesting we need your ideas, photos and editorial submissions. Contact editor Dave Metz with your ideas, comments or questions about the newsletter: davemetz@machlink.com or 563-263-4222

Donation Form

The Friends Need Your Help

The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill is a volunteer organization. To do the many programs we have like this newsletter, school programs, fund raising, restoration and more we need more help. If the Friends are to continue we need more active members. Regardless of your prior experience there is something for you to. How much time and energy you devote is up to you. This is your chance to help your organization. Our projects are fun and the fellowship with other members is great. Contact Tom Hanifan or Dave Metz (contact information is above) if you are interested.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

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Zip _____ Dates you wish to sponsor _____

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

Mail it to:
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Muscatine, Iowa 52761

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The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill

Pine Creek Grist Mill is located in Wildcat Den State Park in Muscatine County one mile north of highway 22 between Muscatine and Davenport, Iowa.

The mission of the Friends of the 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.

The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill Membership

2017 Membership

Membership is only \$20.00 per year. Your membership includes
One year membership in the Friends
Newsletter three times a year
An opportunity to learn about and participate in a local historic treasure

Name _____

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Send this application and your check to: FOM C/O Mrs. Gladys Mittman
2906 Provence Lane
Muscatine, Iowa 52761