The restoration crew had a slow month this May. Because of illness and our personal obligations we were short staffed and missed one Tuesday work day altogether. Like last month we concentrated on the normal maintenance that the mill needs every week and on developing new interpretive exhibits. Our planned major projects for this year will have to wait until we have a full crew available again.

**Restoration & Repair Work**

Down in the basement we got to work on restoring the shelled corn bin. If you look close at the floor on the first floor by the corn mill elevators you will see a small hatch. If a farmer brought shelled corn to the mill to be made into feed or meal it was fed into the milling system here. The corn filled a small tapered bin in the basement and then fed into the elevator that took it to the cleaning screen on the 2nd floor and to the corn roller mill.

Like so many chutes and bins in the mill many of the joints bin and elevator chute had been pulled a part due to the building settling. We replaced the broken wooden parts and put all of it back into order again. If someone ever brings in shelled corn for milling again, we can now accommodate them.

One of our favorite interpretive exhibits is the “mini-mill” built by Ken Hyman a few years ago. Kids love to spin the heavy runner stone grinding corn in this mill. The ball is a steel bearing that the runner stone rotates on. On a full sized millstone the ball is held in the stone by pouring molten lead around it. On the mini-mill epoxy was used to glue it in place. Some of the stone around the ball chipped away allowing the ball to break free. We chiseled out the stone pocket to square it up and re-epoxyed the ball back in place.

**Interpretive exhibits**

Part of our plan for this year is to develop some new interpretive exhibits. Eventually exhibits in a museum mill like ours grow stale for the public. Thus new exhibits need to be developed and put on display to keep the mill experience fresh for visitors. This has led me to start digging through some of the farm and milling related artifacts that we have laying about the mill going unused.

One of the first items put on display with new interpretive signage is a pair of threshing flails. They are simply two wooded dowels, one longer than the other, fastened together with a leather thong. These were used by the early settlers to thresh there wheat. That is breaking the wheat berries out of the husk on the wheat stalk. Some settlers did this by driving horses or cattle over the wheat as it lay on the threshing floor, simply a hard pounded bare piece of earth. Others beat it with flails like the one we now have on display on the 2nd floor.

The next exhibit being developed is one of our timber framing boring machines. We have repaired one of the boring machines that we use for the kids programs and made interpretive signage for it. When this exhibit is fully completed it will show how a log was converted into a wood beam like the ones used in the mill. The boring machine will be exhibited showing how it drilled the holes that became the beams mortis and tendon joints.

The third exhibit in the works is the restoration of our International Harvester “Keystone Pony” hand cranked floor model corn sheller. It has been sitting in the corner of the mill unloved and slowly falling to pieces for some time now. The missing parts are being replaced and all the wood joints tightened up so it can function again. This will be another “kids love a crank” exhibit most likely sitting behind the corn roller mill when it is completed.

We still have plans to repair the penstock gate structure and install the steam engine drive motor. We may even start work on one of the stands of double roller mill soon. The work on the gate structure will have to wait until the water goes down in the creek. The motor project is waiting for Clarence Klauer to return so he can begin running the conduit for the electrical wiring.
Jerry Kieth is mounting the threshing flails on the 2nd floor. The interpretive sign is right above the flails.

Dick Klauer is doing some stone masonry on the base of the mini-mill runner stone. He is squaring up the depression that the bail is set into.

Jerry (behind the post) and Dick are cutting out broken wood that needed to be replaced on the shelled corn receiving bin in the basement.

The hand cranked corn sheller exhibit under restoration by Dick Klauer and Jerry Kieth. The body of the machine is being glued back together and the rusted parts cleaned and painted.

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