

Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill

Wildcat Den State Park, Muscatine, Iowa

Progress Report No. 54

Where we stand October 10, 2009



With the advent of fall and with Heritage Day over for 2009, restoration work at Pine Mills has slowed. Most of the major restoration work at the mill (with the exception of the boiler) has been completed. More and more we are turning to improving past restoration work and doing maintenance. With that in mind we have been discussing possible future projects. I am also proud to say that thanks to improvements we made in 2009, we had no mechanical problems at the mill during Heritage Day.

The Pulley Machine

We completed work on the Pulley Turning Machine this summer and used it to true up two of the mill's most troublesome pulleys. It worked exactly as expected. The problem now is where to house the machine. Currently it is in my garage. I never intended for my garage to be its permanent home. Originally our plan was to move it to a permanent location in a storage building owned by Joe Clark. With Joe moving out of the area, the machine is now homeless. We need to find a new home for it. Ideally somewhere with 220 volt power that is sheltered enough to keep the machine clean and dry. This move needs to be made before the onset of winter.

Plastic Bead Problems

We have had problems with the elevator exhibit leaking plastic beads. After Heritage Day the restoration crew devoted a full day to searching out the leaks and repairing them. The beads have a wondrous ability to find and escape from the smallest crack in the chutes that they fall through! Most of the problems were on the third floor in the elevator head area. The beads were escaping there and then trickling down to the first floor through the various openings in the floors. We also found problems on the second floor as well. I can only imagine the mess real grain made back when the mill actually ran every day.

Jerry Kieth crawled back behind the elevator heads into a very confined space and repaired the third floor leaks. While he worked in this area Bob Willis and Peter Allenger worked on the leaks on the other floors. In-between every test of the system, we had to carefully vacuum up every bead on the floors so we could detect any further leakage. It got to be a fairly tedious task. Eventually we got all the leaks repaired (we hope).

Future Restoration Projects

There are several projects, some old, some new, that we are planning to work on. We need to build two new pulleys to replace badly deteriorated ones on the main line shaft. The elevator boots for the wheat roller mill plant that are located in the basement all need restoration. The chutes that once connected them to the roller mills on the first floor need to be replaced. The frame that holds the idler pulley for the steam engine drive belt needs to be replaced (Scott Gibbs has started work on this project). The steam engine exhaust pipe needs to be fabricated and installed. We have the pipe on hand and we only need to cut it to length and have the ends threaded. The corn sheller drive belt idler needs to be replaced with a historically correct one. On the third floor the missing ductwork between the middlings purifier and the dust room needs to be replaced.

The boiler still needs extensive work. We are still debating what to do about the deteriorating brick that surrounds the boiler. Until we decide what to do about that problem, we can work on the replacement smoke box for the front of the boiler. New doors need to be cast and before the castings can be made, the wood patterns for the castings need to be fabricated. All in all, we have enough work to keep us busy in 2010.



Peter Allenger and Scott Gibbs are stringing the cable and installing the PA speakers for Heritage Day.

Joe Clark is touching up the paint on the boiler feed pump.



Peter Allenger is sweeping up what seemed like a endless supply of plastic beads that had leaked out of the elevator system.

Jerry Kieth is caulking a seam on the third floor elevator heads where the beads leaked out.



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