

MILL MUSINGS

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THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES

One of the main topics of conversation and concern these last several months has of course been the COVID-19 virus. With some hesitation we opened the mill and museum as planned on March 16, but closed two weeks later. We remained closed throughout April, and all the school group tours scheduled for the spring were canceled. This meant an estimated loss of admission revenue of nearly \$4000. Fortunately our mail order business during the winter and early spring kept us going. Folks who were isolating at home were baking more and grits, cornmeal, and flour products were shipped out daily. As you may know, the revenue from sales of store items and flour and meal products as well as the bed and breakfast log cabin rentals fund the operating expenses of the mill. *All admission charges and donations to the museum go toward restoration and the development of educational exhibits.*

With the national pressure to reopen businesses and help the struggling economy, we chose to open the museum on Saturdays only in May. We were very careful to limit the number of tourists allowed in the building at one time and visitors who had been housebound for several weeks really appreciated a place for a quiet getaway. Although we only rented the cabin two nights in April, we are now booked almost every weekend for the rest of the year. Extra precautions are being taken with cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces in the cabin between guests.

Starting in June we opened the museum for tours on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. We have been averaging between 80 and 150 visitors each weekend. Folks have been very helpful with social distancing and depending on the crowds will opt for the outside tour if too many people are inside. So far this has worked quite well. Large groups are still prohibited from touring together. On July 3rd the descendants of mill builder Robert Newton Mann were in town for their annual family reunion. We were able to accommodate their request for a guided tour by separating them into two groups.

As of this writing (July 8), the number of COVID-19 cases are increasing in Tennessee. This disconcerting news could influence our operating schedule. Any changes will be posted on the Falls Mill Facebook page and on the contact and calendar page of the website fallsmill.com.

PICNIC CANCELED

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the spread of the virus, we thought it best to cancel the museum members annual picnic this year. Originally scheduled in May, we had considered changing to early October. However, at this point it doesn't appear things will improve by that time. Hopefully we can gather again in 2021!

On a positive note John was elected president of the Franklin County Historical Society for 2020. With the COVID-19 outbreak his tasks have been limited since most of the meetings and the annual picnic for the Society were also canceled. John will be giving a presentation on the one room schoolhouses in the county when the group is once again able to meet.

PROGRESS ON THE SCHOOLHOUSE

When folks ask how we spent our time during the lockdown we feel very fortunate that we were self-isolating on 90 acres. We were able to make significant progress on the construction of the one-room log schoolhouse during this time. On January 7, work began on the foundation for the schoolhouse. Local contractor Tim Smith and crew excavated the site and poured the concrete footings, completing work the next day. The concrete block foundation was completed on January 28th. Despite heavy rains in February and March, John was able to do some log repair, build a log carrier and lifting derrick, and pick up the veneer stone for the block foundation. Lumber was attached to the top of the block walls and during the first week of April, John placed the old hewn sill logs on the foundation and installed the floor joists. The 2 x 10 floor joists were donated by Ken Wilson of Wilson Lumber Company in Huntsville, a longtime friend of the mill and museum.



On April 6, John placed the log lifter onto a temporary floor inside the foundation and began the slow process of lifting the logs into place. Janie helped by washing the logs in between rain storms. You may recall that most of the logs were donated by B & W Growers. The structure originally was on their property near Kelso, Tennessee. Travis Gamble of Huntland helped John disassemble the old corn crib Memorial weekend of 2018. By April 10 John had four of the logs installed. The log positions had to be re-shuffled from their original scheme, and some had to be rejected due to deterioration. However, with a great deal of re-notching and constant effort to keep the corners as level as possible, John progressed slowly until the last major log was put in place on May 21. The cedar lifting pole for the derrick, donated by Paul and Melissa Holloway, picked up every log (even those weighing 500 pounds) without fail. The derrick had to be disassembled to remove it from the building.



While reconstruction plans were being drawn up, local contractor and museum member John Bush had expressed interest in helping with the schoolhouse project. In early spring John Bush and his crew put in drainage lines around the foundation and ran a water line to a new hydrant. They began installing the roof rafters on May 26, completing them a few days later. Construction continued with framing in the gables and covering them with weatherboard, building the eaves and soffits, and installing the beadboard ceiling. Meanwhile, John (Lovett) attached the buck plates for the six windows and the short logs in between. He then built the window frames for the window sashes that John Bush had donated. John Bush also donated a very old door for use at the rear of the schoolhouse. John (Lovett) plans to build the front door himself. The bell tower, funded by Alice Bogle Lyons, will be constructed and put into place soon.



The stone veneer, paid for by a gift from David Donovan, was applied to the foundation the first week in July. Lumber from Davie Ashley Sawmill in Elora, Tennessee, will be used on the front porch of the schoolhouse. Our goal is to complete the project before the end of the year and furnish the schoolhouse. By then, hopefully, there will be a vaccine for the virus and we can schedule school group programs for 2021.



DONATIONS FOR THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Many gifts have been made to the museum for the schoolhouse since we dismantled the log building in 2018. In the winter newsletter, we made a specific request for donations to help the museum fund the reconstruction of the schoolhouse. *The people whose names are listed below have made contributions in 2020.* Our members have been very generous, and we have received \$14,230 so far this year. Names are not in alphabetical order. We tried our best not to omit any names.

Donations of \$1000 or more in 2020:

Bernard and Kathleen Schroer
John and K.M. Ofenloch
Gregory and Stacy Mullins.

Donations between \$500 and \$1000 in 2020:

Frank Fogle	Alice Bogle Lyons
Clive Kileff	Jayne and Mark Russell
Susan Stoltz	Vivien Allen Kubricht
Kyle and Betsy Dugger	Jenny Glazner

Donations between \$100 and \$500 in 2020:

Burton Marsh	Frederick and MaryMac Saunders
Jerry Limbaugh	Linda Smith
John and Carolyn White	Kurt Johnson
Tom Rozier and Virginia Clark	Patricia Cahill
Helen Cahill	William Plehal
Douglas Cunningham	Mark and Marian Stewart
Frank and Anne Cahill	Susan Church
Pam Zimmerman	Walter Zimmerman
Karen Talford	Edna McKee
Kyle Warren and Robert Ahrold	Cynthia Bruner
Lois Bruner	Milo and Betty Metcalf
Carole and Gary Runyon	Cecilia and Gary Brodioi
Richard and Mary Ann Austin	Ben Hassett
Stephen Moss	Carole Rosenfeld
Randall Cunningham	Joe and Jane Fogle
David Donovan	

There were almost 50 additional donors. Many asked that their grants be used for specific parts of the schoolhouse and its furnishings. We received a \$2,000 grant from the Camp-Younts Foundation of Raleigh, North Carolina, and this was used to help purchase educational materials for the schoolhouse programs. John and Janie Lovett donated approximately \$2,000 to collect artifacts and furnishings from the late nineteenth century for use in the schoolhouse.

We have accomplished a great deal on the funds received so far. We still need to purchase molding and chinking materials and fund the labor costs related to their installation. There will also be a good deal of earth moving and landscaping necessary after construction is complete. We welcome your contributions to this worthwhile venture. As always, your donation is tax deductible. We appreciate your financial support.

NON-MONETARY DONATIONS

We have mentioned the donations for the schoolhouse, including those of B & W Growers, Paul Crabtree, Wilson Lumber Company, and Paul and Melissa Holloway, as well as considerable time donated by John Bush. In addition, Larry George of Lynchburg, Tennessee, donated old chimney stone for the porch piers on the schoolhouse. Carole Runyon donated ink pens and nibs for the school kids to practice with, as well as a Victorian clothes dryer. Additional items recently donated include: A Carbine Miners Head Lamp by Frank Turpin.

A signed original drawing by Alex W. Bealer, author of *Old Ways of Working Wood* and *The Art of Blacksmithing*, by Betsy and Joe Hamilton.

A collection of textile related books and pamphlets, by Carole Rosenfeld.

Antique model steam engine donated by Jon Ashley

Newspapers from 1912 donated by Jerry Case

THE KEROSENE LAMP

On the recommendation of friends Walter Clement and Greg Hatcher, John traveled to the Bell Buckle, Tennessee, antique mall to purchase a rare Miller kerosene hanging lamp, also known as a store lamp. This type of lamp was used in stores, schools, and industrial buildings in the 1890's. The remarkable lamp, the largest built by the Edward Miller Company of Meriden, Connecticut, was in excellent condition but had been electrified. John wasted no time removing the light socket, and discovered the lamp was missing its flame spreader. After a worldwide search (via the internet) from the U.S. to Australia and parts in between, a vintage flame spreader was discovered on eBay in Minnesota. All we need now is a wick, then we can once again fire the lamp on kerosene. The lamp is rated to give off light equivalent to a 235-watt bulb, and we plan to use it in the schoolhouse to supplement natural light from the 6 windows.



FRIENDS' MARRIAGES

Some good news during this very difficult year: two couples with ties to Falls Mill have recently married. Robin Fazio and Regan Phillips had scheduled their wedding at the end of June, but due to the COVID-19 disruption, had a quiet ceremony earlier at Baylor School in Chattanooga where they both teach. You may recall that Robin was the farmer who raised the wheat that was milled here. Lindsey Knoer, who worked at the mill several years ago, married Matt Stanley at the Sacred Stone wedding venue in Fayetteville, Tennessee, on June 20. We were able to attend their wedding. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to these newlyweds.

PIANO TUNING AND PINION GEAR

The Aeolian player piano in the country store is one of the most popular and well used artifacts in the museum. We recently hired Mr. Mark Newman to tune the piano in the store and also the one at our home. Mark, though blind from birth, has perfect pitch and has made a career of piano tuning and repair. Bill Williams is his friend and driver and helps him with the repair work as needed. Mark's brother-in-law, Ernest Finney, recently completed the mounting of our spare water wheel pinion gear on its shaft at his machine shop in Hillsboro, Tennessee.

NECROLOGY

We regret the passing of two dear friends and longtime supporters of the museum, both from Huntland. Mary Frances Neal, mother-in-law of Carla Neal, who works at the mill, succumbed to cancer after a five-year battle. We have known Mary Frances and her husband Jim Neal and their family for 35 years. Another friend of many years, Jim Burbage, who helped us with repairs of various kinds, also died from cancer at the age of 92. Jim joined the U.S. Army just in time to be sent to Nuremberg as a guard during the Nazi war crimes trials. We extend our sympathy to his daughter Melanie Burbage of Huntsville.

We also report the death of Janie's aunt Eileen Furlong in Philadelphia at the age of 96. Eileen and her late husband Joe, Janie's mother's brother, were Janie's godparents and helped with the purchase of Falls Mill in 1984.

Check your museum membership card, and if it is time to renew, please join us at the Museum of Power and Industry, Inc., at Falls Mill for another year! Your membership fee and any donation you care to make are so important to us in continuing the work we have undertaken these last 35 years. Thank you for your contribution.

Check the contact/calendar page of the website fallsmill.com for special events.

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY MEMBERSHIP \$25.00 per year _____

TAX DEDUCTIBLE MUSEUM DONATION \$ _____



Museum of Power and Industry, Inc.

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