

# MILL MUSINGS

A Publication of the Museum of Power and Industry, Inc.

Volume XXVI Number 1 January 2022

---



## HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

Despite the ongoing COVID pandemic, Falls Mill and Museum enjoyed a relatively successful tourist season, and even hosted a few school group tours in 2021. We are most appreciative of all the contributions made to the Museum and wish everyone a healthy and happy 2022.

## A NEW ROOF IS NEEDED FOR THE MILL

Our next restoration project is the replacement of the metal roof on Falls Mill. For many years we have endured roof panels flopping in the wind, numerous small leaks where nails have pulled up, and deteriorating and rusting metal. The upper roof was replaced in the mid-1970's and is approaching 50 years old. The two lower roofs were not replaced at that time and they are even older.

With the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mill rapidly approaching in 2023, we hope to accomplish the task of total roof replacement as soon as possible. We have obtained an estimate from All Things Home Renovations, Inc., John Bush's contracting company, for \$34,450, including materials and labor. We plan to utilize John's company and sub-contractors because of his experience with the mill building and roof from previous restoration projects.

We are now launching a fund raising campaign among members and supporters for the roof replacement project. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 with the museum budget covering the remaining expense. If you have an interest in donating to this project, please let us know. We will be very grateful for your support in helping prepare the mill for its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## GRANTS AND DONATIONS

The Museum of Power and Industry, Inc., at Falls Mill was most fortunate to receive a \$4,000 grant from the Estelle, Abe, and Marjorie Sanders Foundation in December. We submitted a proposal to the board of the foundation to request funds for the admission and travel expenses for Franklin County, Tennessee elementary schools to be able to visit the mill on field trips. Although we have many students from Huntsville, Alabama, city schools touring the site, very few classes from the local schools have been to the mill. We plan to meet with the school teachers and administrators in our county to develop a guided tour and field trip program to enhance the curriculum for the fourth grade students. The visit will include the guided tour of the mill and grounds, the blacksmith shop, and the recently completed one-room schoolhouse. We also received a \$2,000 grant from the Camp-Younts Foundation of Franklin, Virginia, thanks to long-time friend Laurie Atkinson of Huntsville and his nephew Hal Atkinson of Raleigh, North Carolina. The foundation has been providing this annual grant to the museum for over 20 years, and we are very grateful.

Over 75 individuals made donations of \$100 or more to the museum in 2021 and early 2022. All contributions are welcome and put toward restoration and exhibit development. We offer our sincere thanks to these friends and all the others who were kind enough to support the museum financially.

## WINTER STORMS

We were lucky to escape the damage from a nearby tornado on New Years Day, although it took off part of the roof of Steve Walker's house near Huntland. Steve is one of our museum members and volunteers. Fortunately he and his two daughters rode out the storm unharmed.

After that event, a 4-inch snow soon followed and brought down some trees below the mill, as well as a lot of limbs. Li'l Woody's Tree Service came out the next day and helped dispose of the debris. John saved logs from a large cedar tree that fell, hoping to get some lumber, but part of the tree proved hollow. He also managed to get a bad case of poison ivy from handling the logs.

As we are proofing this newsletter, snow is again falling. We were fortunate to obtain some good photos of the buildings in the earlier snow, and Stacy Story brought his drone out again and shot some nice images.



## RESTORATION OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY PARLOR STOVE

In the last newsletter we mentioned the donation by Mary Howe of Brownsboro, Alabama, of several artifacts from the collection of her late husband Norman Howe. Among other interests, Norman was a collector of early stoves. One of the stoves given to the museum is a very ornate parlor stove manufactured by the Eugene Munsell & Company of New York and New Jersey. This is a coal burning stove called the Gem Manhattan Number 95. It was almost complete when acquired, but missing one of the door knobs and the foot rails. Some of the mica in the doors was also needing replacement. John turned a new knob of wood to match the steel ones on the stove. He ordered and replaced the mica windows in the small doors. The stove originally had a foot rail on each side, for warming your feet. We knew this by a page from an old Munsell catalog illustrating the stove. The foot rails were mounted onto small brackets, and there was one bracket remaining. John sent a request out to stove collectors' Facebook pages to try to locate an identical stove, but no responses were forthcoming. However, a collector in Duluth, Minnesota, offered to take a foot rail off a similar stove to the Tomahawk Foundry in Wisconsin and have two cast for us. John sent the one remaining rail bracket to the foundry and they cast three more and sent them to us.

The stove had gone through a basement flood at the Howe's home, so needed rust removal and repainting. John wire brushed it and painted it black, with silver trim to match the original scheme. (The original silver parts were actually nickel plated.) Now the stove is complete and a beautiful example of late nineteenth century artistry and practicality.

## RESTORATION OF AN ANTIQUE PRINTING PRESS

John completed restoration of an antique printing press recently and now has it set up in the mill. This press was donated to the museum in 2002 by the late Beatrice “Bea” Collins of Winchester. When we picked up the press 20 years ago, it was in pieces and several parts had been lost in its moves. It remained in the mill and later in our barn until this past year.

This hand pulled Washington style press was manufactured by the Cincinnati Type Foundry and Printing Machine Works around 1885. In 1913 there were two newspapers in our county, the *Truth* and the *Herald*. Bea’s father, Harmon Alexander, bought both papers that year and combined them into the *Truth and Herald*. At the time of Mr. Alexander’s purchase, this old press was in one of those newspaper offices, probably the *Truth*, as it was the older paper of the two. The press was probably used for some years as a proofing press, to proof type before it was loaded into the main press for printing. Mr. Alexander had the foresight to save it, so it was eventually moved to an outbuilding at his home. Bea inherited it and continued to keep it in a shed.

Not long after the press was donated to us, John located an identical one, still in use, at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. John and Janie traveled down there and sketched, measured, and photographed all the missing parts necessary to complete ours. In the months following, John made wooden foundry patterns for the missing parts and had them cast at Bell Novelty Castings in Anniston, Alabama. Machining of the parts was accomplished by John and museum member Walter Clement. Tom Church turned a large wooden drum for the press. The heavy frame and other major parts were sandblasted and primed. Then the whole project ceased for many years while more pressing matters were tackled (no pun intended).

With the press assembled and placed in the mill, the next order of business was to locate appropriate type to make it operable. These presses found their niche in the early 1800’s producing, among other things, posters for circuses and hand bills. Since these needed large letters, metal type could not be used, as it had size limitations when cast. As a result, several wood type manufacturers came on the scene. Wood type could be made in any size, using pantograph routers to cut the letters and numbers. John set about searching for old wood type. He found five fonts in Massachusetts, each missing a few letters and numbers. Another 3-inch font was found on eBay. With the help of Gary Runyon, cherry wood was planed so that John could make the missing characters for each font. This has been accomplished, so the press is almost ready to put into service. A key donation of a trimmer saw was provided by Mr. Shannon Parker of Enquirer Printing Company in Hartselle, Alabama. This was used to make precise cuts necessary to produce wooden type, among other things, The saw worked great without any servicing other than a little oil, and proved an invaluable asset.



## NON-MONETARY DONATIONS

Several friends made non-monetary donations since our last newsletter. Carole Runyon donated a very nice dip pen with a feather on top for the schoolhouse. Gary Runyon planed and donated cherry lumber for John's wood type making. Melanie Burbage gave us a pressure washer, appliance dolly, and several tools belonging to her late father Jim Burbage. David Donovan donated a Rhino cart adjustable dolly. Patty Limbaugh and her sister Pam Zimmerman gave us an old railroad spittoon, a cobbler's hammer, and shoe stand belonging to their grandfather. John Baggenstoss contributed a hand bell used in one of the Tracy City schools. Janet Morris donated a beautiful photograph of the Falls Mill dam. Ted Garreston donated an old two-man crosscut saw and an unusual "self-cleaning" post hole digger. Kim and Jane Caulfield donated several woolen fleeces for our textile demonstrations. A printer's trimmer was donated by Mr. Shannon Parker (see article on the antique printing press). Wyatt Waters of Clinton, Mississippi, donated a copy of the beautiful watercolor painting he did of the mill. And of course we owe a continuing debt of gratitude to Gary Fillingham, who keeps our computers repaired. Finally we want to acknowledge the continuing support of Robyn and Jenny Glazner, Walter Clement, Gary Runyon, and Chris Brogdon for all their help.

## 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF FALLS MILL

As we mentioned earlier, 2023 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Falls Mill. We plan a celebration to commemorate this notable event. We want to update the Falls Mill history book by that time if possible. John first published the book nearly 20 years ago. Several changes have taken place since then and it is time to update the publication. If anyone has desktop publishing experience and is willing to help us with the book, we will appreciate the assistance.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO BROOK HILL DAVIS!

Our good friend and former mill/museum helper Brook Hill Davis has just been selected Franklin County School District Middle School Teacher of the Year. Brook teaches 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade science at Huntland School. No one deserves the award more!

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO BURTON MARSH AND LAURIE ATKINSON

We also extend our congratulations to longtime friends, museum members, and supporters Burton Marsh, on the occasion of his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, and Laurie Atkinson, who is now 94. Burton has a very large collection of antique machinery and other artifacts west of Huntsville, including two Stanley Steamer automobiles. Laurie has been a friend for more than 35 years and is instrumental in securing an annual grant for the museum from the Camp-Younts Foundation, as mentioned earlier.

**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! 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.**

**134 Falls Mill Rd.**

**Belvidere, TN 37306**