

MILL MUSINGS

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

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ACQUISITION OF BORDERING LOT

After 39 years of hoping, we were finally able to acquire the lot bordering Falls Mill on which the old white house is located. As of July 3, the property is now a part of the revocable trust. The property had been in the possession of the same family and their descendants for almost 140 years, but the house had been unoccupied for about seven years.

Our sincere gratitude to All Things Home Renovations, John Bush's construction company, for securing the property for us. John and his Project Manager, Savannah Schroeder, worked tirelessly and with great tenacity to finally close on the lot June 27. In the months ahead, we plan to assess the condition of the house, clean up the lot, and determine if restoration is a viable option.

Our friend and museum member Peggy Nickell, of the Tennessee Historical Commission, is assisting us with the dating of the house and planning. It is possible the house may date to the 1870s period, when members of the Rachielles family worked at the earlier textile factory on site and may have occupied the house. By 1884 the Lucas family took over ownership of the mill property, and by 1900 the house was referred to as the "Lucas house," and said to be "ideal." It was one of the first houses in the area to be electrified for lighting, provided by a direct current generator operated from a small water turbine at the rear of the present mill building (the water wheel was not used to run the generator).

If the house proves to be salvageable, we will need to undertake a fund raising campaign for its restoration. We will seek individual donations as well as investigate preservation grant options.

We are most grateful to Eric Mittman, a teacher at Sparkman High School in Huntsville, AL for photographing the original poster of the auction of the Fall Mills Property during the Great Depression. The house we purchased is pictured in the lower right hand corner of the poster.

AUCTION

J. H. Lucas Property, 12 Miles S. W. of Winchester, 3 Miles North of Beans Creek

110 ACRES
On Lynchburg and Beans Creek
Subdivided Into Lots and Acreages
FALL MILLS

WEDNES., MAY 28
AT 10 A. M. ON THE PREMISES

A wonderful water power, with two storage domes; large 3-story brick building, suitable for manufacturing plant; cotton gin; corn and feed mill; store building; stock of general merchandise; repair shop; scales; 2 splendid residences; several tenant houses; large 3-story bank; barn; business lots; home sites; acreage tracts. This property is being sold for division among the heirs. Investigate—it is a great opportunity! Immediate possession.

Lunch Served on Grounds by the Fall Mills Community Club

TERMS EASY!
For information, blue prints, or to be shown this property, see DON KEITH, on the premises.

GOOD MUSIC!

E. C. WHEELER AUC. CO.
Tel. 74 McMinnville, Tenn.

J. H. WALLS
NEW MARKET, ALA.

REPAIR WORK ON MILL

After completing the roof replacement on the mill building, John Bush's crew returned to replace the missing frieze boards at the top of the rear of the mill and repair eave damage. The work was subcontracted, and the workers set up a pump jack system, partly supported from the roof of the wooden addition and the observation deck. A 30 foot walk plank was placed between the two pump jack towers to allow the workers to traverse back and forth. It was a rather terrifying task, as the peak of the roof is about 75 feet above the creek level below the water wheel.



The frieze boards are wide flat planks laid against the brick wall directly under the eaves. They are intact on the front of the building, but had been missing for decades on the back. This work was accomplished in only two days, on January 26 – 27, 2023.



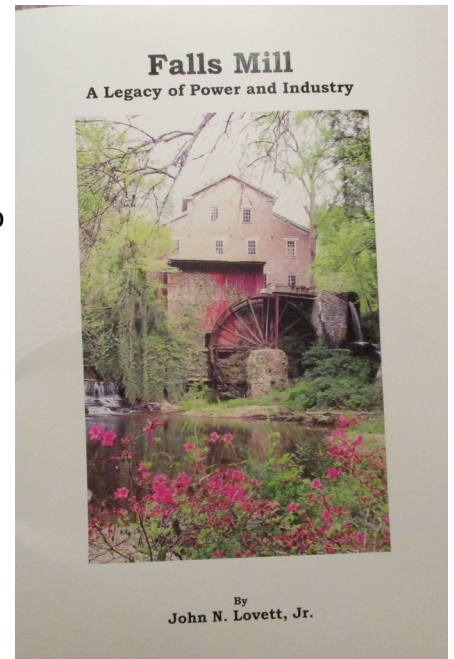
John Bush returned in mid-March to solve a problem we have wrestled with for many years – a drain system for the front of the mill building. Whenever a heavy rain was expected, we would have to sandbag the front door of the mill to prevent rain water from flowing inside onto the wood floor. This had happened in the past and created a terrible mess to clean up. The sandbags would usually work unless the rain was particularly heavy. John (Lovett) had designed a system to take the water from the front and channel it through a large underground pipe to the edge of the bluff, well away from the building. To accomplish this, John Bush dug a hole next to the mill entrance, and we sank a plastic stock tank with a metal grate over it, then attached the donated 12-inch pvc pipe to the tank and buried it underground. The pipe was donated by Rachel Holloway of Pipe Works Plus in Tullahoma. So far the system has worked well.



COMPLETION OF MILL HISTORY BOOK UPDATES

We are happy to report that the updates to our book *Falls Mill: A Legacy of Power and Industry*, have been completed and the book is at the printers. Museum member Kyle Dugger in West Tennessee had performed all the new formatting for the book, using the software Adobe InDesign, and inserted 204 photos and illustrations for the new edition. John wrote three new chapters to bring the narrative to the present. Kyle was also able to include an index this time.

Starkey Printing Company in Chattanooga was recommended to us by museum member Latham Davis of Sewanee, who had a recent book printed by them. Janie and John traveled to Chattanooga to meet with Robin Bailey, who agreed to provide 250 softbound and 50 hard bound copies for the museum. Sales will benefit our restoration projects. We hope to have the book available at the museum members picnic on September 10.



EVENT DAYS

The first event day at the mill, commemorating our 150th anniversary year, was held May 6. This featured several textile artists from the area. John Lovett and Gary Runyon operated the 1830 wool carding machine several times during the day. Special thanks are offered to Carole Runyon for helping us get the word out to the area fiber guilds.

The second event on June 10 was very well attended. It featured Gary Runyon in the blacksmith shop and Steve Walker with his historical cowboy campground and interpretive program. We estimated about 150 visitors came that day.

Our annual museum picnic will be held on Sunday, September 10. Please check the insert for details. The last event for the season will be a one-room schoolhouse interpretation on October 14. Christy Anderson, Sunday Perkins, and John Lovett will be dressed in period costumes and interpret what students in 1890's would have studied. The Flat Creek Dancers will also participate.

CLEANUP DAY AT THE MILL

We are very grateful to all who volunteered to help get the mill ready to open on Cleanup Day, March 18. Several volunteers cleaned all three floors of the mill and the schoolhouse. There was still debris in places left over from the re-roofing of the mill, so that was all tidied. Another crew worked outside trimming branches and weeds on the grounds. The crew finished the day by cutting up a large fallen tree on the farm property behind the mill. We opened to the public on April 1, and hosted busloads of school children 3 days a week through the end of May. We try our best to schedule the guided tours on the days we are closed to the public, that way the students get our full attention and have exclusive use of the mill and grounds.

LOSS OF SIX FRIENDS AND MUSEUM MEMBERS

It is always with great regret that we announce the loss of friends since the last newsletter. We learned of the death June 7 of Jim Moore in Pierce City, Missouri. Jim died one month short of his 99th birthday. Jim was an architect from Missouri who worked for many years in California. John Lovett had helped with the restoration work on Jolly Mill, an old mill that Jim purchased when he retired. Jim enjoyed a very successful career, his area of expertise being design of hospitals. He had numerous passions including operating classic cars and boats.

Another museum member, Bill Plehal, passed away in Florida on April 14, at the age of 85. He had a career in the U.S. Air Force and was later a pilot for Northwest Airlines. His wife Chyree, who preceded him in death, was the sister of our friend Gary Fillingham of Winchester, Tennessee. Gary keeps our computer systems in repair. Bill and his wife were longtime supporters of our museum here at Falls Mill.

We also learned of the death of Jeanne Bigger in Winchester. Jeanne had been a friend for as long as we have owned the mill. Jeanne was an historian and certified genealogist, and was always interested in the history of Falls Mill and the county. She was very active in the Daughters of the American Revolution, and was instrumental in the establishment of Project Preservation in Franklin County, an ongoing effort to sort and catalog the historical records of the county. Jeanne was 98 years old, and preceded in death by her husband Tom Bigger.

A fourth friend and museum member who recently passed away was Joan Alexander, age 96. Joan was a sister to James Gammill, in whose house we lived for 16 months before we completed our home at Falls Mill. Joan's husband R. E. Alexander celebrated his hundredth birthday before he died just a few years ago.

Also, we are saddened to report the death of another longtime friend, Carole Sheppard, of Huntland, Tennessee. Carole was the only child of the late "Dick" and Christine Wilce. Each spring Dr. Michael Hill sponsors a wildflower show at Falls Mill in memory of Christine. Carole's ancestor had actually worked at Falls Mill in the late nineteenth century when it was a textile factory.

Finally, as this newsletter was nearing completion, we learned that Burton Marsh, one of our oldest museum supporters, had died at the age of 98. Burton lived west of Huntsville and had a very large collection of steam and gasoline engines, outboard motors, antique farm machinery and automobiles, Native Americana, and various items of memorabilia. Burton always enjoyed hosting his many friends for his annual birthday celebration, held close to New Years Day. Each of these lost friends held a special place in our hearts, and we will miss them greatly.

RECENT DONATIONS

Monte and Kris Schroer of Wheaton, Illinois, donated a large number of collectible glass pieces for us to sell in the store. Monte is the brother of Museum member Bernie Schroer. These were a small part of the Schroer's extensive collection of vintage glassware. Sarah Furr Zimmerman donated a high spinning wheel from her family, which is currently on display on the first floor of the mill. Rufus Van Horn of Tupelo, Mississippi, donated a set of cotton hand cards and an old loom reed from his family.

VOLUNTEERS

We would like to thank Melissa Holloway for helping us on days when we have guided tours, and also for her supply of homemade goat milk soap that we sell at the mill. In addition, Vickie Davis has been volunteering. Vickie and John knew each other from their days at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga back in the late 70s and early 80s. Also, Tristan Hammond of Huntland has helped us a couple of times as a part of her community service work for her scholarship at Motlow College.

PRESENTATION TO EQB GROUP AT SEWANEE

At the request of Cheryl Lankhaar, John and Janie presented a program about Falls Mill and Museum to the EQB Group at Sewanee on March 8. The program included lunch and was held in the St. Mary's Retreat Center within the Domain of the University of the South. EQB stands for *Ecce Quam Bonum*, Latin for "Behold How Good." We met many interesting people, and Vickie Davis, who attended that day, has become a museum volunteer. *If you would like your civic group or organization to hear the mill and museum presentation, please let us know and we will try to accommodate. We prefer to schedule our speaking engagements during the months the mill is closed, December through March.*

SOCK KNITTING MACHINE DONATION

On Saturday afternoon, July 8, John and museum member Kyle Dugger left for eastern North Carolina to pick up a sock knitting machine donated by Tom Stallings of Macclesfield. The machine was formerly in a knitting mill in Pinetops, NC, then resided in a house museum. When the museum closed the machine was due to be scrapped unless it could be accepted for donation. This Banner Sock Knitting Machine was made by Hemphill Company of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, circa 1925 – 1930. We are presently researching the machine and seeking anyone who has experience to help us try to return it to operating condition. On the trip over, John and Kyle had time to stop at Grovewood Village in Asheville, NC, where they visited the former woolen textile factory. The preserved machines on display there include fly shuttle looms, four spinning mules, and several carding machines. The plant last operated in 1981.

CHECK YOUR MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP CARD, AND IF IT'S 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 39 YEARS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP _____ \$25.00 PER YEAR

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE MUSEUM DONATION: _____ \$50.00 _____ \$100.00 _____ OTHER

I WOULD LIKE TO BE A PART-TIME VOLUNTEER AT FALLS MILL. CONTACT ME AT THE FOLLOWING

PHONE NUMBER TO FIND WHEN I MIGHT BE AVAILABLE: _____



Museum of Power and Industry, Inc.

134 Falls Mill Rd.

Belvidere, TN 37306

Falls Mill

**Museum Membership Picnic
Sunday, September 10th
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**



**Musical entertainment by
Gabe Larose,
Guitarist, Huntsville, AL**

**Celebrating 150 years!
1873-2023**

R.S.V.P. by September 1st. Call or text (931) 469-7161

**The picnic will be catered this year so just your smiling face is requested.
We hope you will be able to join us for the celebration.**