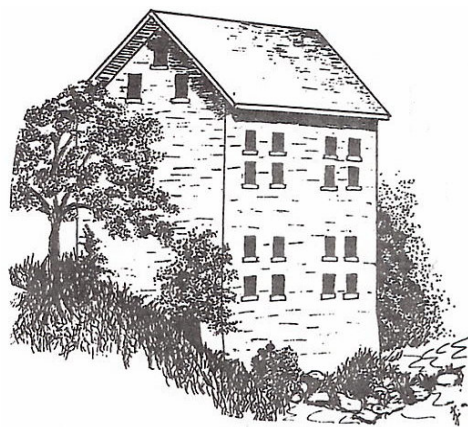


A newsletter from  
The Motor Mill Foundation  
of Clayton County

Number 11 Summer 2008

# Milling Around



## Join us:

The Motor Mill Foundation is made up of dedicated volunteers from diverse backgrounds. They meet regularly for planning or work projects.

Nested within the foundation is our Friends of Motor Mill group (FMM). Our friends share information, gain support for and help on various endeavors. To sign up:

## Contact us:

Motor Mill Foundation  
of Clayton County,  
29862 Osborne Rd.  
Elkader, Iowa 52043  
563-245-1516. Email:  
[cccb@alpinecom.net](mailto:cccb@alpinecom.net)

Milling Around is available electronically. Email addresses are welcomed to save postage. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

Look for photos and current happenings at:  
[www.claytoncountyconservation.org](http://www.claytoncountyconservation.org)  
& [www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org)

## Updates:

- Funds are currently being raised to replace the windows in the Cooperage. The Foundation is looking for sponsors for the 12 windows to be replaced at \$200 each. If you would like more information you may contact the Osborne Center.

- Fund raising has begun for a Historic Site Preservation Grant received in 2007. The grant is for the replacement of the Mill and Inn roofs and the two chimneys on the Mill. The Foundation needs to raise \$55,400 of match money.

- P. Buckley Moss prints of Motor Mill are available!!! The cost is \$225 with 50% of the funds going toward the Motor Mill Restoration efforts if the prints are purchased through the Foundation at the Osborne Center. Please call to reserve a print as we have a limited supply.

## Turkey River Flooding at the Mill

The wet spring, saturated soils and some very untimely heavy rains in the upper reaches of the Turkey River Watershed was a recipe for disaster up and down the Turkey River in early June of 2008. The Motor Mill received record flooding in the early hours of June 9 and high water levels held for several days.

When the water finally receded and the damage could be seen, the devastation to the entire Motor Mill Park was nothing short of phenomenal. Seven and one half feet of water was recorded in the Inn. The mill itself had an inch or two, which has never happened before, the north span of the bridge was found in the riverbed a short distance downstream and a “new” rock wall was uncovered just upstream from the mill.

Additionally, the road past the mill was eroded to the point of impassable, the restroom, campground and water supply was destroyed and the canoe ramp was buried in silt. The white residential house received a basement full of water, an inch or two of water on the main floor and flood waters went over the top of the well cap. In short, the destruction was hard, abrupt, and thorough.

But at a second glance, what are the possibilities?

## **Motor Mill Possibilities**

What are the possibilities? Let us start at the top of the list. The Turkey River has flooded causing significant damage to the area numerous times since the early 1990's. Will it happen again? We can only plan on it and prepare to mitigate for that possibility.

In 2007, the Motor Mill Foundation developed a Long-Range Visioning Plan for the Motor Mill Site. In that plan they laid out Immediate, Intermediate and Long-term Needs and Projects.

Some kind of flood protection was placed in the intermediate needs column. But we basically have to deal with that issue now. We literally have a clean slate to work with; between the Conservation Board and Motor Mill Foundation, long-term solutions will be sought to work with the river, the landscape and the site.

This may include moving the campground to higher location, or looking at other possible solutions. It may be removal of the residential house and constructing a residential facility on higher ground. It may even include using the town of Motor's surveyed plot to establish cabins, camping pads or other amenities as they were planned for in the 1870's. The possibilities can be endless.

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## **Flood Reveals Rock Wall**

As mentioned earlier, a rock wall upstream from the mill has been unearthed by the flood. The wall, like the mill, is very well constructed and additional flooding will most likely not hurt it further.

The rock wall is believed to be part of a foundation wall that was laid at the time the mill was built. In an advertisement for investors for a woolen mill put out by Thompson and Crosby dated August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1869, they state "The foundation of the proposed Woolen Mill is laid, being the flume wall of the Flouring Mill..."

The now exposed wall supports the advertisement and opens the door to additional research and more answers as to how the Motor Mill operated its flume, water source and turbines. The proposed Woolen Mill was never built, by the way.

Professional assistance is being sought to give advice on how to proceed with the rock wall. In the coming weeks, several professionals involved with preservation of historic sites will tour the site and lay out the possibilities of preservation and interpretation of the wall.

Stay tuned to upcoming changes and preservation efforts at the Motor Mill.