

A newsletter from  
The Motor Mill Foundation  
of Clayton County

Number 3. Summer 2006

### **Contact us:**

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

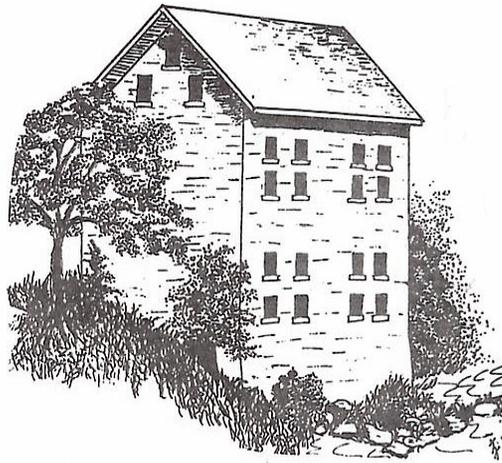
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of Clayton County,  
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Elkader, Iowa 52043  
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[cccb@alpinecom.net](mailto:cccb@alpinecom.net)

### **Thank You:**

We express sincere appreciation for the volunteers who are helping with the 2006 tours.

Your generosity enables us to speak with more visitors and brings broader perspectives to our presentations.

# Milling Around



### **Updates:**

- We are on the web! Look for us at: [www.claytoncountyconservation.org](http://www.claytoncountyconservation.org) & [www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org)
- New displays including historic plats, maps, photographs and donated stones from another mill are at Motor.
- Mark your calendars! The Big Blue Sky band will play at the Elkader Opera House October 14, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. Proceeds from this benefit concert will go toward Motor projects.
- Replacement of two stairways in the mill has started.

### **Living Memories:**

To capture and share oral histories of people who have lived at Motor, we will have a new, ongoing column. These will feature recollections of one or more former residents.

Myron Phelps lived with his family at Motor from 1960 until 1978 and shared stories from that time. He grew up farming with his brothers and sisters, playing in the mill, fields, woods and hills and hunting. They played tag on the upstairs beams in the mill, crawled in the "access tunnel" next to the mill and explored the land that was his home from age 2 until 19.

The current campground and the area across the road along the river were both farm fields, as were two open areas on the next bench above. Myron tells of bricks and broken dishes being turned up with tillage in the field near the river where buildings stood in the 1870's.

The mill's first floor and the upstairs of the cooperage, and the lean to on the icehouse all were used to hold hay. Grain was stored in the upstairs of the icehouse.

High water wasn't a problem at the white house or the stone house. Floods were not a common occurrence when he lived at Motor.

## **Living Memories:** Continued

However, slippery roads and being snowed-in were frequent experiences. Once or twice the school bus came down into the valley and was unable to leave. The bus driver called and got a ride out with someone who had a 4WD.

Cold winters meant cutting up to 20 wagon loads of wood to help heat the rock house. Even so, Myron remembers frost on the inside of the upstairs windows. They “dressed quickly” on cold mornings.

Summers included watching the Elkader “Sweet Corn Days” canoe racers on the Turkey River from the upstairs windows.

The family pastured cattle on the south side of the Turkey River, taking advantage of a pond in a back field to water the cows. When bringing the cattle home to the north side of the river, the boys would ride a horse across the metal bridge. The animals were usually calm, though sometimes, a passing motorist would be impatient and start honking their horn. The sound would make the horse and the cattle run across the bridge, making the bridge sway – but events like that were “just a fact of life at Motor”.

# **Tidying the Turkey River Clean Up Event**

Saturday, August 19th

10-3pm, Elkader to Motor Mill

Participants will help clean up the river  
and learn about the importance of watersheds.

Lunch will be provided along with a free promotional t-shirt.

**Registration Deadline: August 1st**

**563-245-1516**

