



The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist

Spring/Summer 2017

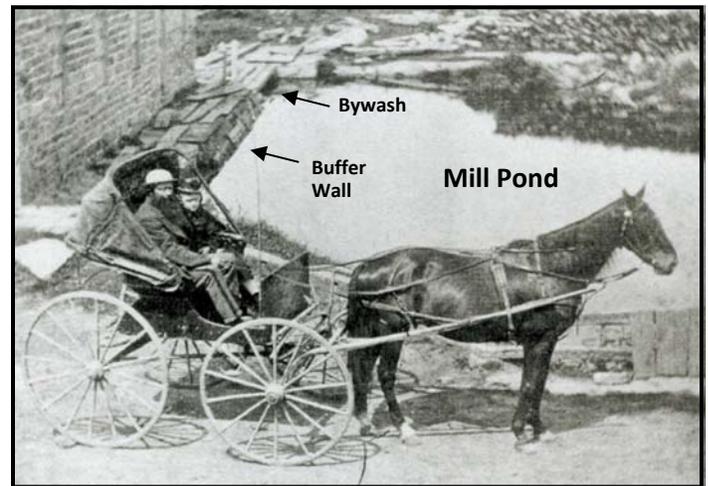
The OLD STONE MILL and CANADA

This year, as we celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, it is buildings such as the Old Stone Mill that remind us, in a very tangible manner, of our journey into nationhood. The mill, built decades before Confederation, speaks to early pioneers, American United Empire Loyalists and European immigrants, and to the development of community.

It was an American, Abel Stevens, a man loyal to the British Crown, who arrived in 1794 with several other families and settled in the area. He was attracted by the mineral potential of the area (iron) and the available water power. In 1796, once he'd been granted land in what is today Delta, he had the first mill built, which formed the nucleus of a small community. But it was William Jones and Ira Schofield who solidified Delta as a community when they had the Old Stone Mill built in 1810. The 3 ½ storey stone building, still impressive today, would have been an incredible sight to those early pioneers when first built. In 1816 we know that Delta consisted of about 20 buildings, mostly log cabins with a few more substantial buildings, but nothing that compared to the size and appearance of the mill.

Local road development was due, in part, to the Old Stone Mill, those roads facilitating access by local farmers to the mill. Flour was an essential component of daily life and all roads led to Delta since wheat needed to be ground into flour and the mill provided that service. The mill operated as a custom mill, taking 1/12 of the grain from the farmer and returning the rest to him as flour. In that early period, due to the mill, Delta was the only inland community of any significance in this area. Communities such as Athens and Elgin were yet to come.

In 1867, the mill was being operated by Walter Denaut who had purchased it in 1850. Delta now had a population of over 300, it was a bustling community. It was in the 1860s that Denaut had the turbine shed built, switching the mill from waterwheel power to turbine power. He'd also turned the mill into a merchant mill,



This c.1870s photo by R.E. Denaut is the earliest photo of the mill we have. It shows the mill pond and part of the north wall of the mill (left), with a buffer wall extending out from it. The water level of the mill pond is today's level of Upper Beverley Lake. The bywash (water bypass) is also visible. Out of sight is the wooden sawmill that was attached to the turbine shed. People in the photo are unidentified. Photo from "A History of the Old Stone Mill, Delta, Ontario" by Paul S. Fritz.

now buying the grain from farmers and grinding flour for general sale and export.

Today, visiting the mill allows us to step into our past. Its designation as a National Historic Site of Canada speaks to the importance of the mill as a significant part of our Canadian heritage. Former Auditor General of Canada, Sheila Fraser, said it best back in 2003 when talking about sites such as the Old Stone Mill.

"These places recall the lives and history of the men and women who built this country, and they foster awareness of how Canadian society evolved. They help us to better understand the present and prepare for the future. They contribute in important ways to Canadians' sense of belonging to their community."

Come out for a visit or three this year and transport yourself back to those early times.

- kwv

President's Letter

Welcome to the 2017 season of activities in the Old Stone Mill and the Old Town Hall. We have a full calendar of interesting, even exciting, events planned (see back page), some of which have already happened. We had our first dinner on April 8th featuring amazing local foods from Wendy's Country Market. On Easter weekend, the Society participated in the Delta Maple Syrup Festival with good turnout at both the Mill and the gargantuan book sale in the Old Town Hall.

I encourage you to join us at some or all of these events. I also encourage you to sign up as volunteers. We can always use help – planning and assisting at events, guiding visitors on tours of the Mill, maintaining the facilities, helping with promotion and communications, or doing some of the curatorial work which needs to be done on our collections and in our archives. We can satisfy everyone's needs for community involvement and would really appreciate the assistance. Besides, it's fun.

On that note, I need to announce that I have stepped down as President. Louise and I have lived in the area for 17 years but have decided to move back to Ottawa for the next phase of our adventures. I have enjoyed tremendously the opportunity to work with the DMS volunteers in their efforts to preserve and present the Old Stone Mill National Historical Site. It is a wonderful old building and deserves full care and attention. The members on the Board of Directors and other volunteers have worked hard over the years to ensure that the Mill and the Old Town Hall survive to showcase and interpret an extremely important piece of Canada's history. But more than that, the activities that the DMS presents each year have become a focal point of Rideau Lakes life.

I will miss the long hours of organizing but most particularly, I will miss the people I worked with and came to know. I wish the organization the best of good fortune and I urge all the Society members and potential members to continue to support this worthwhile community and national endeavour.

Thank you.

Dann M. Michols, Past-President, Delta Mill Society

"New" Benches

Enjoy a contemplative sit in front of the Mill or Old Town Hall this summer on our newly refurbished benches, thanks to the efforts of Doug Bond—thanks Doug!

Thanks Dann

Dann Michols, who is leaving us for the big city (Ottawa), assumed the Presidency of The Delta Mill Society in 2010. It was our 200th anniversary, an extremely busy year. It also marked a time when our staffing support grants ran out, forcing us by 2013 to drop all staffing, except for summer students. Dann led us through that difficult transition, supported by a very active board of directors, all volunteers who put in hundreds of hours each year, working together to keep the mill open to the public.

We are a self-funded organization. Each year we start with a minimum of \$15,000 of expenses ahead of us – insurance for the Mill and Old Town Hall eats up over half of that, then there is heating for the Old Town Hall, electricity (not inexpensive), yearly maintenance work on these old buildings, dollars needed to cover a shortfall in summer student grants and other expenses.

A portion of those expenses is covered by a generous grant from the Township of Rideau Lakes, who recognize both the heritage and economic value (attracting tourists into the township) that the Old Stone Mill represents. The rest has to be raised from the generous financial support from our members, visitor donations, and our fundraising events.

It's a volunteer team effort – people passionate about the Old Stone Mill and Delta, people such as Dann. It can be a bit busy at times, but always rewarding and every year we somehow succeed. We wish Dann all the best with his new endeavours and also look forward to welcoming keen new volunteers.

Instagram

To help reach out to a new generation, we are now on Instagram, with a younger volunteer (thanks Tanya!) posting photos about the mill and Delta. For those who Instagram, you'll find us there as [deltaoldstonemill1810](#)

Tour and History Guide

We started this winter to develop a little tour guide primer for our summer students and volunteers. It has since morphed into a much larger document, incorporating more of the history of the mill. While not intended as a public document, we will have it available as a PDF. If you are interested in a copy, just let us know.

Featured Member/Volunteer Q&A by Mariska Kriebel

Cathy Livingston

Cathy is a born and bred Delta resident. Apart from being a member and volunteer with the Delta Mill Society she also currently serves as acting-President of the society. Cathy also volunteers her time to many other local organizations. She manages these volunteering roles in addition to her position as a Councillor for Bastard and South Burgess within the Township of Rideau Lakes.

Her long-term dedication as a volunteer in the village and her kind and loving nature brings people and ideas together in Delta.



When and how did you become interested and involved with the Delta Mill Society?

Growing up and living in the village it has always been in my sight, literally. There always has been a connection. As a family we used to live in a house across from the Mill. My grandfather Gordon Gray owned the drive shed. As a young lad my dad worked at the Mill and was there in 1949, the last year that it operated, helping to do the very last feed grain grinding before the Mill changed to simply being a feed store due to economic conditions. I made a decision to become more involved with the Delta Mill Society 5 years ago after my job was relocated and I had more time available to devote to my volunteer activities.

What do you find most rewarding about being a volunteer?

The most rewarding aspect is that I can give back for all the things I have been blessed with while growing up here. We learned from our parents to take part and be part of the community from an early age onwards through volunteering. Both my parents coached baseball in Delta and so did I and my siblings.

The other rewarding aspect is when things get accomplished and progress is visible. It looks like this area is on the verge of some good changes. We have many people retiring to this area and they bring their skills and knowledge. This also applies to a lot of summer residents who volunteer and help out during the season. I hope we can attract and retain the younger people in the future as well. An additional bonus is that volunteering has been proven to be one aspect of longevity!

What do you consider the most significant historical aspect of the Old Stone Mill?

The overall architecture is very appealing to me. Especially the stonework and the original rafters and millstones. Also the fact that the stones used to build the mill were quarried nearby. Last year during the Settlers trek when we were all standing in front of the Old Stone Mill I felt humbled by the fact that the building was here when the Settlers came through in 1816.

Why do you think it is important to preserve the Old Stone Mill?

It is very important and of great value for our community to preserve this building and its history for the future. It is a site that teaches us about our history and attracts many national and international visitors.

Beside the Old Stone Mill do you have any other favourite museum?

Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg and Fort Henry in Kingston would be my other favourite museums. They all represent our past.

Thank you Cathy!



2017 Special Events at the Old Stone Mill

(see www.deltamill.org for more details and updates)

OLD STONE MILL 2017 Milling Schedule (starting at 1 pm)

Day	Date
Saturday	May 27
Saturday	June 10
Saturday	July 1
Saturday	July 15
Saturday	July 29
Saturday	August 5
Saturday	August 19
Saturday	September 2
Saturday	September 30

DELTA FAIR Thurs-Sun, July 27-30

We will be participating in the annual Delta Fair. The millstones will be turning on Saturday July 29. Lots of activities throughout Delta—come and celebrate one of Ontario's oldest fairs—see www.deltafair.com

DELTA HARVEST FESTIVAL Saturday, September 30

Our 3rd Annual Delta Harvest Festival will celebrate the bounty of the fall harvest. More details in our next newsletter.

CANADA
DAY
Saturday,
July 1



Join us for a very special Canada Day celebration in Delta with a **Period Costume theme** celebrating Canada's confederation.

Fashion Parade—meet at 11 am in period costume in Russell Park (by the bridge) for a fashion parade through the village.

Pot Luck Picnic Lunch in Russell Park (lemonade and water provided)

Old Fashioned games in Stone Mills Park

Victorian Tea on lawn at 60 King Street (small donation appreciated).

Rideau Lakes DOORS OPEN Sat & Sun, Aug. 19-20

We'll be open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm for Doors Open with blacksmithing and milling demonstrations taking place on Saturday.

SPIRITS of the MILL Saturday, October 28

We'll tour the Old Stone Mill where some of Delta's intriguing characters from the past will be waiting. Then return to the Old Town Hall for "spooky refreshments and stories."



SEASON OPENING Saturday, May 20

The mill will be open for tours from 10 am to 5 pm daily until Labour Day.

Brockville & 1000 Islands DOORS OPEN Sat & Sun, May 27-28

We'll be open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm for Doors Open with blacksmithing and milling demonstrations on Saturday.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Tuesday, June 20, 7 pm Old Town Hall

Our AGM will feature our miller, **Chris Wooding**, who will explore the *connections of growing of heritage wheat varieties and the complex relationship to soil nutrients, soil organic matter, and the implications of climate change.* Chris is a great speaker and it promises to be very interesting.

Everyone is welcome!!

CELEBRATING THE SEASON Saturdays, Nov. 18, 25 and December 2, 9, 16

GINGERBREAD FAIR Saturday, December 2

Bring your kids to the Old Town Hall from 3 to 5 pm to have fun decorating Gingerbread cookies (supplies are free).