



# The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist

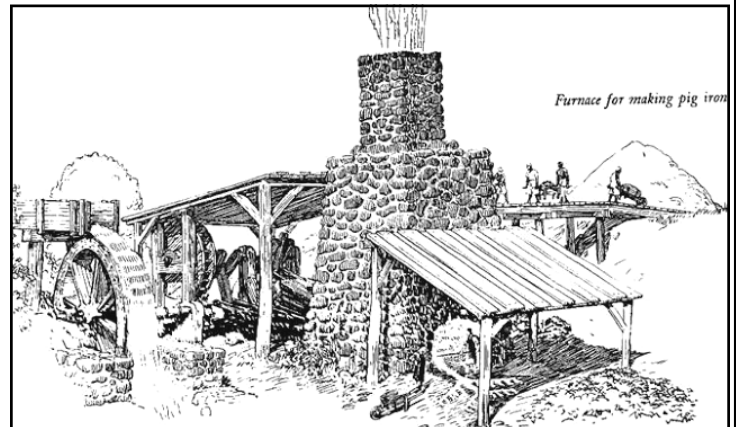
Spring/Summer 2021

## DELTA and LYNDHURST— FORGED TOGETHER

Delta was founded by Abel Stevens, who settled on the upper reaches of Plum Hollow Creek in February 1794 and was later granted the land over Delta in 1796. Although his initial goal was to create a Baptist community, including mills using the water power at Delta, he soon turned his sights to the iron and water power at Lyndhurst. In his third petition to the government in September 1794, Stevens stated: "in further exploring that County discovered a Bed or Vein of Iron Ore, and being desirous of Erecting a Bloomery [a primitive type of furnace] prays a Grant of One Thousand Acres of Land at the Falls." Stevens was not the original discoverer of iron in the area, the first request to the government to get the rights to mine the iron was made in 1784. But since mining rights were held by the Crown (literally, the King of England), the province could not at that time award these rights.

In 1798 that changed, with the Crown reserving gold and silver rights but allowing the province to award other mining rights, including iron. The story gets complicated at this point. Stevens was given the first opportunity to be awarded the rights to Lyndhurst with a six month deadline to submit a detailed proposal. The province wanted to make sure that whoever they awarded the rights to could in fact do the job. He got Mathew Wing involved, with Wing paying Stevens for his supposed rights to the area (which Stevens didn't have). Wing then petitioned the government and was given the same opportunity as Stevens, who was now late with his proposal. In the meantime, Stevens was in Vermont still trying to find backers and he brought in Ruel Keith, who in turn brought in Wallis Sunderlin, an iron master from Tinmouth, Vermont.

Wing didn't wait for government approval, but instead set up shop at Lyndhurst in 1800. Keith and Sunderlin arrived at Lyndhurst in the spring of 1800 only to find Wing at the site claiming ownership. Sunderlin cut a deal with Wing and returned to the U.S.



**Iron Blast Furnace**

This illustration shows a furnace of similar design to that at Lyndhurst in 1801. A waterwheel powers a pair of bellows blowing into the bottom of the furnace stack. Iron ore, limestone and charcoal are dumped in the top and liquid iron flows out the bottom to be cooled as pig iron which was then cast into useful items in the adjacent foundry. Illustration from *Colonial Living* by Edwin Tunis, 1957.

to sell his assets and gather a crew. However, Wing appeared to change his mind and proceeded by himself to erect a bloomery at the falls, without permission from the province. When Sunderlin returned with a crew of men ready to start building a blast furnace, he found Wing finishing his bloomery and no longer wanting a partner. To meet his deadline, Wing submitted his proposal to complete the bloomery at his own expense. He was dismissed by the government for erecting his bloomery without permission. Sunderlin submitted a proposal of his own with himself as the backer and was given permission to proceed.

In November 1801, magistrate Solomon Jones stated that "the Iron Works are erected and found things in the following order, a Furnace built the Bellows lying within the building, a good Saw Mill, a good Framed Bridge across the Stream well planked, a Forge erected whereby I saw two bars of Iron manufactured which appeared to

*Continued on page 5*

## President's Letter

After a long cold winter we are now into the month of May. It is lovely to see new life popping up all around us; however there are still a lot of uncertainties, mostly from the Covid-19 pandemic that is still affecting our lives a year later.

As I write this letter we are in the midst of a 3<sup>rd</sup> COVID wave and are under a Stay at Home lockdown, presently scheduled to end on May 20<sup>th</sup> but that will of course depend on the COVID situation at that time. After much thought and consideration, the Board of Directors, on April 28, 2021, decided to not open our buildings to the public this summer season. We had been optimistic for an opening this summer, but the COVID variants, the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave, and the fact that 2 shot vaccination protection of a sufficient amount of the population won't happen until sometime this summer made the board feel that we couldn't ensure the safety of our volunteers, summer staff and the general public with a summer opening. Plus, unlike other institutions, a COVID opening is particularly difficult for an all volunteer organization that has no support staff.

Although it was a difficult decision not to open the mill for 2021, we feel it is the right one at this point in time. We are hopeful that we can host our Delta Harvest Festival on the last Saturday in September, but that will depend on the pandemic situation at that time.

Although not open to the public, we will be very busy behind the scenes just as we were last year. Last year our volunteers, with the help from 4 summer staff, did a huge amount of work. This included extensive work with our archives and artefact collections, getting those in order. We also did a lot of maintenance, building 10 benches in the mill, fixing many deteriorating window sills in the mill, internal painting, and a significant clean-out of the Old Town Hall. In addition we did a restoration project in the fall to the save our 210 year-old accordion lath & plaster ceiling on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. And to top it all, we completed a significant capital project to re-roof our leaking turbine shed, a heritage appropriate fix that should last for decades to come.

Earlier this year, we received word that the Five B Family Foundation provided a grant of \$20,000 towards our drive shed project (a grant organized by the Township of Rideau Lakes – thanks!). This is a project that has been on our books for many years, but we've never had the funding to start it. Now we do. We are extremely fortunate to have Art Shaw agree to be our volunteer project leader (thanks Art!!!). You'll find the details of this project in this newsletter.

This year we received summer staffing approvals from two granting agencies and are presently anticipating using those for 3 positions - one person to continue with the collections project (much work still left to do), a second whose time will be split between helping our interpretation team set up new displays in the mill and also helping with the archives project and a third as a maintenance position, to do work in the Old Stone Mill and the Old Town Hall. While our volunteers will be starting as soon as possible (hopefully June), these grant-supported staff positions will be for July and August.

When we decided to close in 2020, we had no idea how that would impact our finances since several of our normal revenue streams, including the gift shop, mill donations and events at the Old Town Hall, were now revenue zero. However with some grant funding and a few very special donations we managed to get through.

Total Revenues:	\$58,674.89 (includes Student Grant funding, other grants and donations)
Total Expenses:	<u>\$55,253.98</u> (includes Payroll, Materials for Projects, insurance)
Net Income:	<u>\$3,420.91</u>
Bank Account	<u>\$35,565.82</u> (as of Dec 31, 2020)

While this shows a positive net income, that's misleading since the turbine shed roofing installation cost of \$10,652.18 is not reflected in those numbers, that was paid in January 2021. Also, in the bank balance, is a reserve of \$11,749.40 from an earlier Small Halls grant that can only be used for improvements for the Old Town Hall. We plan to continue to use that funding this year to paint the tin ceiling over the stage, varnish the hall floor and other Old Town Hall maintenance work.

### CLOSED FOR SUMMER 2021

On April 28, 2021 we made the difficult decision not to open to the public for the 2021 tourism season. But we will be very busy behind the scenes. See adjacent President's Letter.

## The Delta Millers' Newsletter

This year we received grant funding support from the Township of Rideau Lakes of \$9,000. We have about \$15,000 in fixed costs each year (whether open or not), including our yearly \$8,000 insurance bill, and will apply the township grant to those costs. We also received a \$1,000 MHAC grant which we plan to apply as a start to improving lighting in the mill (a job long overdue). We are very thankful for this support from the Township.

Our to-do list for 2021 is quite long, we have the big Blacksmith's Shop project (see separate write-up), the completion of window sill replacements in the Old Stone Mill, setting up new interpretive displays in the mill, mill maintenance and cleaning, lighting improvements, Old Town Hall maintenance and continued work with our collections. We will be very busy, turning public closure to advantage as we did last year.

We will continue to apply for grant funding as it pertains to our mandate. We are also counting on the generosity of our members and donors as we saw last year to help us get through these difficult times. Your board continues to have its normal onward and upward attitude when it comes to the protection and presentation of the Old Stone Mill National Historic Site. We feel that this work will prepare us for our grand opening again in 2022, we hope!

Our AGM, normally held in June, will be put off until sometime in the fall. We look forward to seeing you in the near future and we hope that you will continue to be a member of the Delta Mill Society. We appreciate your continued support. Take Care! Be Safe!

*Cathy Livingston, President, Delta Mill Society*

### The Delta Mill Society

Our board of directors is a working board of 11 people. Our board members all bring different skills to our volunteer organization. We take our role as owners, protectors and presenters of the Old Stone Mill National Historic Site very seriously. The following is just a brief list of roles. While each person has several specified roles, there is much cross-linking with everyone pitching in to help as required. Decisions by the DMS are made by consensus (usually after much discussion). This co-operative effort keeps us moving, as Anna always says, Onward and Upward!

#### **2020-2021 Board of Directors**

**President, Cathy Livingston:** grants, legal, DMS organization

**Vice-President, Ken Watson:** heritage research, interpretation, exhibits, newsletter/website

**Treasurer, Sharon Okum:** finances, membership, grants

**Secretary, Lisa Martin:** advertising, membership, tours

**Moel Benoit:** maintenance (chair), events

**Art Cowan:** maintenance

**Anna Greenhorn:** secretary emeritus, tours (chair), exhibits

**Jared Hayes:** collections, tours, exhibits

**Katherine Killins:** cultural integrity (chair), gift shop, exhibits

**Liz Priebe:** events (chair)

**Sally Wanless:** collections (chair), tours.

#### **Volunteers at Large**

**Chris Wooding:** Miller, milling & agriculture interpretation

**Art Shaw:** Blacksmithing Coordinator

**John Cain:** Resident Blacksmith



A Pandemic Board Meeting: a socially distanced, in-between lockdowns, board meeting in the large open hall of the Old Town Hall in 2020. L to R—Liz, Moel, Lisa, Cathy, Anna, Sally (behind column), Katherine. Sharon, Jared & Ken out of view (photo by Ken). Recent meetings have been held via Zoom. We look forward to being able to return to in-person meetings in the future.

**Featured Member/Volunteer Q&A**

***Liz Priebe***

Liz has been an active board member of the Delta Mill Society since 2017. Growing up in Ottawa and with a family cottage in the Gatineau Hills, nature and history are a big part of her life. While in Ottawa, Liz worked with the City of Ottawa as a Human Resource Officer. After starting a family, she took a leave of absence from her work to care for her children. Eventually life changed directions and late 1999, she and her partner moved to Delta to start an organic market garden. Since 2001, she has been employed by the Rideau Lakes Public Library as the primary librarian in the Delta branch. She also worked for KEYS Job Centre, as a employment counsellor, assisting unemployed and under employed people find meaningful work. She retired from this position in 2016.

Liz offers her organizational skills to the Mill, with her primary focus on the Old Town Hall for special event bookings. In 2002, she launched what has now become an important fundraiser for the Mill, the annual 'Ginormous Book Sale'. Also, by rounding up teams of dedicated volunteers for help during hall events, she has been a huge benefit for the Mill.



**Liz Priebe volunteering at the Old Town Hall**  
photo by Ken Watson

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

My partner Moel Benoit has been involved in the Mill for a long time and while I was very interested in the Mill, I just didn't have the time to commit while working two jobs. Since retiring from my full-time position in 2016, I was able to find the time to help out. About 2010, the hall had been transformed from The Museum of Industrial Technology back to its original purpose, a community hall. So here was the opportunity to use my organizational skills to help book concerts and other special events, bringing in much needed cash injection to the Delta Mill Society.

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

When my partner and I arrived in Delta in 1999, with restoration just beginning, the Mill was pretty much a disaster site. I remember peeking in the front door and, seeing that the floor was removed here and there, I realized that much work needed to be done to restore the beautiful mill. There isn't another building like it and it had a committed group of volunteers who have worked so hard over the years. I wanted to be involved. I could see the value to our little village both for tourism and preserving our local heritage. After all, it is a National Historic Site and very few rural towns can boast of such a thing.

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

Yes I do! Growing up in Ottawa was the perfect place to live to experience national museums. As a kid, I spent many a Saturday morning at the Museum of Natural History on McLeod Street, visiting the rocks and mineral and dinosaur displays and watching the nature movies shown in the beautiful theatre space. I also love art and remember when the National Gallery of Canada was located in the Lorne Building on Elgin Street. When it was relocated to its present location on Sussex, I had the pleasure of attending the Grand Opening event. Did you know that as a user of Rideau Lakes Library, there are museum passes for all the National museums located in Ottawa? We will soon be able to visit again, once the pandemic is under control, so remember you should be able to borrow these passes for free access in the near future.

***Thank you Liz!***



*Delta and Lyndhurst —continued from page 1*

be of good quality ...” The furnace was a crude blast furnace, 22 ft square by 26 ft high but it doesn’t appear to have operated in 1801. Sunderlin seems to have put Wing’s bloomery (Jones’ forge reference) into working order to produce the first iron bars. Those bars were the first iron produced from native ore in Upper Canada, and on the basis of that success, Sunderlin was granted 1,200 acres of land for wood to produce charcoal for the furnace.

It’s unclear how well Sunderlin’s blast furnace worked. Recent archaeological work indicates that it may have failed to reach high enough temperatures to liquify the iron and that the bloomery was used to produce most of the iron. In 1811 the whole complex, consisting of the furnace, forge, sawmill and a grist mill, was destroyed by fire. Sunderlin’s family returned to USA in 1811 and he followed in 1812, only to die a few months later.

The connections between Delta and Lyndhurst, which began before either of them had a name, continued for another century, beginning with the likelihood that iron made at Lyndhurst was used in the construction of the Old Stone Mill. Ephraim Jones (William Jones’ father) became a half owner in the iron works by loaning money to Sunderlin to finish the blast furnace and by buying most of the 1,200 acres of land Sunderlin was granted. In 1808, when Sunderlin built a grist mill at Lyndhurst, William Jones became the miller there, before he went on to build the stone mill at Delta in 1810. After the deaths of both Wallis Sunderlin and Ephraim Jones in 1812, William’s brothers Charles and Jonas Jones inherited their father’s interests including all the land surrounding the falls at Lyndhurst and a half interest in the water power. In 1815, when the British Navy was hoping the iron works would reopen, William Jones supported Ira Schofield, his partner in the Old Stone Mill, in a proposal to re-open the iron works. But this never happened.

*- Art Shaw & Ken Watson*

**Further Reading:** A more detailed version of this article, along with Art Shaw’s History Report of the Lansdowne Iron Works NHS (Lyndhurst), can be found on the History Page of our website.



**Art Shaw**

Art working to convert the Drive Shed into a Blacksmith’s Shop. Photo by Mariska Kriebel

## **The Blacksmith’s Shop Project**

We are at long last embarking on a project to turn part of the Drive Shed into a public-friendly Blacksmith’s Shop, where we can demonstrate the heritage art of blacksmithing and tell the story of blacksmithing and iron making as it relates to the Old Stone Mill. This project has been a long time in the making. At a strategic planning meeting in the early 2000s this proposal was put on the table and endorsed by the board. But at the time restoration work on the mill was just being completed and our strategic focus was to have the mill “operational” by our 200th anniversary in 2010. By the time we achieved that goal, with millstones turning for the first time in 100 years in October 2010, our main sources of funding were starting to dry up. That culminated in 2013 when we had to let our last staff go and turned back into an all volunteer, no staff, organization. Our focus in the next few years was simply to keep the mill properly maintained and open to the public while keeping the Delta Mill Society solvent.

In 2017, we dusted off the Blacksmith’s Shop proposal and got a quote for what it would take to do the work. That came in at \$62,000. We slapped a contingency amount on top of that and started to look for grants in the \$75,000 range to do all the work. At the same time we also had a huge (literal) problem, the fact that three-quarters of the space in the Drive Shed is stuffed full of artefacts. Most of those, such as a

bunch of big and heavy cheese box making equipment, not related to the Old Stone Mill. That needed to exit the Drive Shed before we could do any significant work on converting it into a Blacksmith's Shop. It is a policy of the Delta Mill Society that artefacts that don't meet our collection policy be first offered to another museum, local if possible, but if not, to any museum with the intent that they be cared for and put on public display. We had a nibble from the Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum in 2018 but couldn't reel them in at that time. They are biting again and Art is working hard to try to finalize the transfer of those artefacts to that museum.

In 2020, with the likelihood that someone was going to give us \$75,000 near nil, we looked to a Plan B, could we piece out the work in smaller chunks? In consultation with our expert, Art Shaw, it was felt that we could section off the work, including much of the internal work such as opening up the space, rebuilding the main forge and installing a training forge, as separate components of the job if required due to budget constraints. Plus, that portions of the work could be done by volunteers rather than contractors in order to stretch out a smaller budget. In the spring of 2021, we were pleasantly surprised with the news that \$20,000 was coming our way from the Five B Family Foundation, part of a \$100,000 grant given to the Township of Rideau Lakes. Art Shaw agreed to be our volunteer project manager.

For the few of our readers who might not know, Art Shaw is one of the Delta Mill Society's "Super Volunteers." Back in 1984 when he was busy leading the charge in protecting the Lyndhurst Bridge from demolition, he was recruited by Paul Fritz into the Delta Mill Society. Art brought many skills to the table including his physical skills in carpentry and blacksmithing, mental skills in his love of history and deep heritage knowledge of the area, and organizational skills with a "get it done" attitude. It was Art, as President of the Delta Mill Society, that led us through the massive 1999 to 2003 restoration of the Old Stone Mill. Art in recent years has been our official "Blacksmith Coordinator." He has a group of volunteer blacksmiths, the Deltacentric Forge Friends, who have, for years, shown up at events to demonstrate heritage blacksmithing at the forge in the Drive Shed. Our current blacksmith, John Cain, is one of Art's volunteers.

Art has been distracted in the past few years organizing and leading the archaeological dig of the iron works at Lyndhurst, which, as described in the lead article, has close ties to Delta and the Old Stone Mill. He has also been trying to complete a book (one of two apparently). It's a huge understatement to say how much we appreciate Art agreeing to be our volunteer project leader. It is another understatement to note that this project is no easy task.

We've already hit our first major snag. Any work we do must of course be fully compliant with provincial regulations, so we brought in the Township building inspectors to have an on-site look at what we plan to do. Our planned work has triggered a part of the building code that requires both an architect and an engineer to review and sign off on the project. In addition to the difficulty of finding such people (all very busy these days), it has the potential to eat up a significant portion of our \$20,000 budget. Art has been trying to stretch out the budget as much as possible with volunteer help (much his own). Presently the costs for those professional services are unknown.

We will work at overcoming the hurdles placed in our way and while perhaps not this year, in the fullness of time we will have a wonderful public space where the art of heritage blacksmithing can be demonstrated and the story of iron and the Old Stone Mill can be told. The completed shop will, as a tourism draw, be a boon to Delta and the township in general. If you would like to help (in any capacity), please contact Art Shaw([artshaw@ripnet.com](mailto:artshaw@ripnet.com)).



### **Deltacentric Forge Friends**

The present forge in the Drive Shed may date to the 1920s/30s or so. We've been using it to demonstrate blacksmithing, using Art's many forge friends. In this photo we see blacksmiths Amanda, Josh and John working away. Photo by Ken Watson.