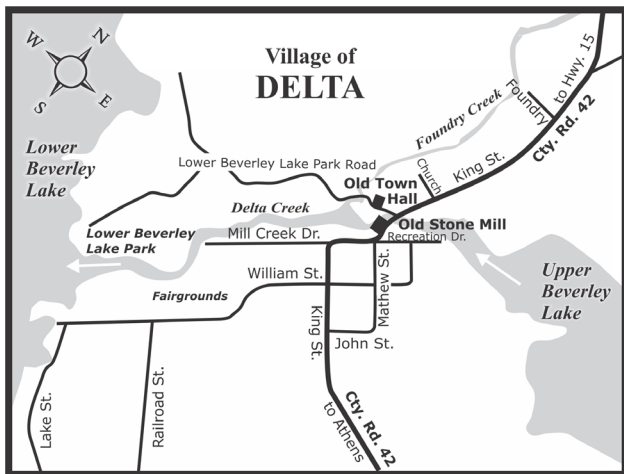




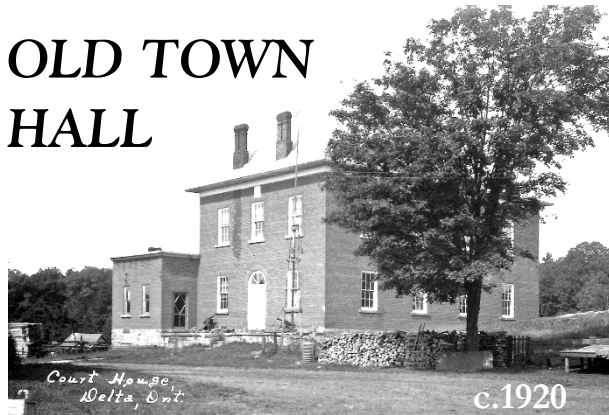
DELTA

Delta was founded by Abel Stevens who led a group of settlers from Vermont to this area in February 1794. In June 1796, he was granted the land on which Delta sits today. He built a wooden sawmill below a small set of rapids in the stream that connected Upper Beverley Lake with Lower Beverley Lake, later adding a wooden gristmill. Delta was the first inland community in this region.

In 1808, Stevens sold a portion of this land, including his mills, to William Jones. Jones and his business partner, Ira Schofield, built the Old Stone Mill in 1810-11, on solid bedrock about 50m (160ft) north of Stevens' mills. The site of Stevens' original mills is now buried under Delta's streets.

With the Old Stone Mill, Delta, then known as Stone Mills, became the business centre for the region. All roads led to Delta – farmers would come in from all over, delivering their grain and purchasing items from local merchants. In 1816 there were 10 buildings in "downtown" Delta, by 1828 there were about 30. Population peaked in the late 1800s at about 500 people. Today the quiet village is home to about 300 people.

OLD TOWN HALL



The Old Town Hall was built in 1879/80 on a spot that formerly hosted a stone schoolhouse. The hall was built as a joint venture between the Township of Bastard & South Burgess and a Masonic Lodge (Harmony Lodge #370). The bricks for the building were made locally by Jasper Russell.

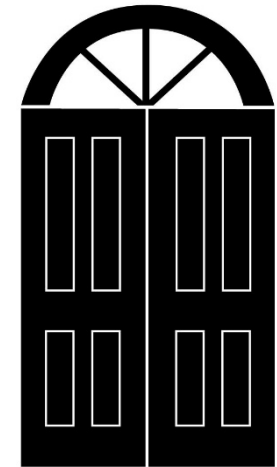
The Masonic Lodge occupied the 2nd floor and the main floor served as the Municipal and Court offices and as a courthouse (with a jail in the basement).

The original building is the rectangular main portion. It exhibits the symmetry desired in architecture at that time. In the early 1900s a brick side addition was built which then housed the municipal offices. A vault was also built inside the building. In the 1960s a washroom and kitchen area was added.

In 1979, the municipality and lodge vacated the building. It was then used for a time by the Delta Lion's Club. In 1994, it was purchased by The Delta Mill Society and repurposed to house a portion of our artefact collections and to provide an office for the DMS.

The DMS used the main hall as a museum from 1999 to 2011. In 2012, the DMS restored the hall to its former glory and made the building and washrooms accessible. We host many events in the hall and offer it as a community hall for Delta.

OLD TOWN HALL



INFORMATION BROCHURE

*The Old Town Hall is
owned and operated by
The Delta Mill Society*



*A self-funded, non-profit
volunteer organization*

www.deltamill.org

The Women of Delta Save the Old Town Hall

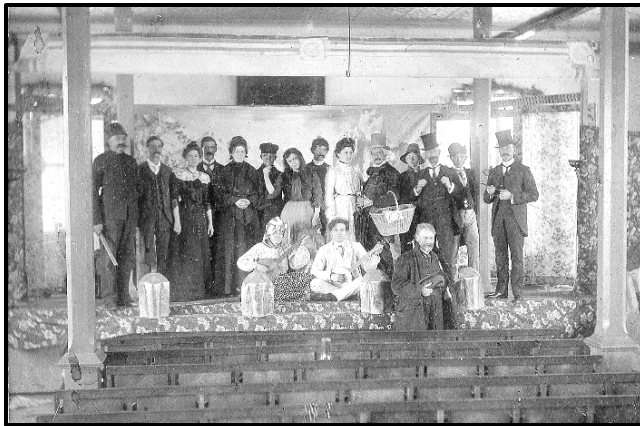
On Friday, February 24, 1888, fire broke out inside the town hall. The following is a description of the event from the Farmerville (Athens) paper:

"Shortly after the hour of noon today fire broke out in the Division Court's office in one of the rooms in the lower flat of the town hall. As soon as the alarm was given there was a general movement towards the scene of the fire but the building was filled with such dense smoke that any attempt to save its contents seemed to be impossible and the fire had such a hold on the building that attempts to extinguish it looked like madness in the absence of any modern apparatus for putting out fire. But the people of Delta are not easily driven to despair and in a few minutes, everyone was at work with organized attacks upon the fire in which Walter Beatty took the lead and direction.

The hall was a large two-storey brick building and the fire was found to be raging under the first floor among scraps of lumber and rubbish left by the builders. Two lines were formed to the creek and the men and women pulled up pails of water while children passed them back to be refilled. In this way, a perfect deluge of water was directed at the fire and the effort was soon apparent in a decrease of the volume of smoke making ingress into the building possible. Willing hands were soon

engaged in the work of salvage and nearly all the contents of the lower storey as well as furniture and paraphernalia of the Masonic Lodge in the upper flat were removed. A great deal of it however was damaged by water.

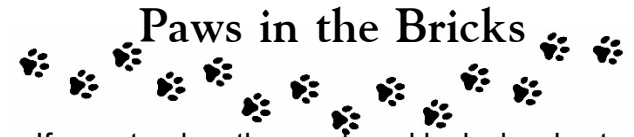
In the meantime, the fire had been creeping up the walls and spreading to all parts of the building and the determination of many had given place to a willingness to be beaten and we believe that shortly after two o'clock every man in the crowd began to relax his effort and wanted to quit. Then the women exhibited the stuff they were made of by counselling a continuance of the fight and a redoubling of their own efforts. Thus, the men were shamed into a display of renewed energy and by half past 4 the fire was extinguished leaving the building gutted but with walls standing and roof intact."



Cast of Delta's annual New Years' Day amateur play in the Old Town Hall. Early 1900s.

Today, evidence of the fire remains in the form of charred wood, hidden behind walls and under the floor. The Old Town Hall continues to serve the community with the Delta Mill Society operating the hall as a Delta community hall. We can do this because of those women back in 1888 who were instrumental in saving the building.

Paws in the Bricks

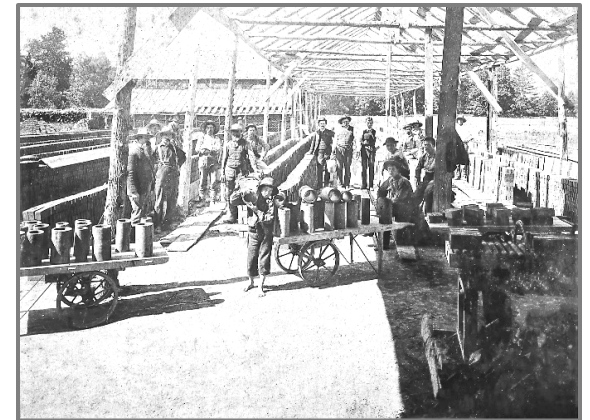


If you stand on the porch and look closely at the bricks near the front and side doors, your keen eye may pick out cat paw prints. This is because when the bricks were stacked on their side to dry in 1879, a cat walked over them leaving a permanent imprint in the brick.

The bricks were made at the Jasper Russell brickyard, located close to the Old Town Hall in an area behind today's Post Office. Russell charged 4 cents per 1,000 bricks.

A quote from that period said that "the clay was mixed by a horse going around, attached to a pole and upright log on the bottom of which there were projections to mix the clay." The clay was pressed into moulds by hand and then stacked and allowed to dry.

And, as we can see today, back in 1879, at least one cat walked over some of those bricks while they were still drying.



Jasper Russell Brickyard c.1915

More Information

Our website, www.deltamill.org, contains all sorts of information about the mill, including a full history of the mill and information about when we are open. Donations are always welcome.

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