The Delta Millers' Newsletter

The Gist of the Grist **Spring/Summer 2024**

THE 2024 SEASON

The core mandates of the Delta Mill Society are to preserve and present the Old Stone Mill and to collect and care for objects related to the mill. In addition, we operate our Blacksmith Shop to show that heritage art. Blacksmithing was integral to the building and maintenance over the years of the Old Stone Mill (we still have blacksmith-made wrought iron nails in the mill dating to its 1810-11 construction). The Old Town Hall houses much of our collections, archives and research files as well as our administration office. In addition, as a responsible member of the Delta community, we operate the Old Town Hall as a community hall since Delta does not have a municipally supported community hall. As part of that, we also provide public washrooms to the visiting public during our operating season.

Maintaining and operating three heritage buildings is a mammoth task, all done by volunteers (we only have summer staffing, which requires training and supervision by volunteers). Fortunately, our working board of directors is a wonderful group of volunteers, each person taking on a different aspect, from building maintenance to mill interpretation.

A very special mention here of **Anna Greenhorn**, our oral interpretation dynamo, who was recently recognized for **50 years** of continuous service to the Delta Mill Society. Wow! Thanks Anna!!

Anna Greenhorn—50+ years with the DMS

Nothing epitomizes the spirit of volunteerism more than our very own Anna Greenhorn, who received her Ontario Volunteer Award for 50 years of continuous volunteer service to the Delta Mill Society. Now into her 51st year with the DMS, Anna remains a volunteer dynamo. (Photo by Ken).

Mill Interpretation

As we enter the 61st year of the Delta Mill Society we are very excited with our plans for this year. We operate as a public museum and, as usual, we will have the mill open from Victoria Day long weekend to Labour Day, 10 am to 5 pm each day. To that end, we've hired 4 summer staff, including several university/college students who are very interested in history. These were selected from among the many applications we received this year by our summer staff selection team of Katherine Killins, Anna Greenhorn and Sally Wanless.

We have an extensive training manual for mill interpretation and we do several days of on-site training for summer staff prior to our Saturday May 18 opening. There is continued supervision throughout the season, to build on and improve their interpretation of the mill. The mill story spans many years, involving changing milling technology (i.e. waterwheel to turbines, millstones to roller mills) and the people (owners and millers) who were involved with the mill, many of whom also played significant roles in the development of the Village of Delta. It's a lot to learn.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday, June 17, 2024
11 am at the Old Town Hall

Ken continues to do heritage research to improve the historical accuracy of the information we present to the public and this is incorporated into our interpretation. We also continue to work at improving the physical presentation of the mill including visitor flow in the mill, interpretive signage and exhibits.

Collections Project

Our Collections Project is continuing, now into its 5th year. This has been a mammoth job of organizing and documenting our collections to museum standards, led by our Chair of Collections, Sally Wanless with Ken and now also Paul George (our former curator and now volunteer director) assisting. This year, in addition to the continued documentation work, we plan to digitize our collection files as well as work on new exhibits, using items from our collections. We are very fortunate to have our seasonal (April to October) staff person, Rebecca, back with us for a fourth year to help us with this large project.

Surplus Collection Items

Part of our Collections Project is to re-home objects that don't meet our mandate to another museum that will put them on display. Last fall we moved several items that had been stored in Art Cowan's barn since 2008, back to Delta. That move included this large and very heavy smutter. Here we see director Paul George by the smutter, with Gord French's loader in the background, preparing to move it into the Blacksmith Shop's storage area.

We already have a smutter on display in the mill and so we donated this one to Upper Canada Village. They picked it up this spring and plan on repairing it and putting it out on display. (Photo by Ken).

Milling Training

Last year, our miller, Chris Wooding, trained several of our summer staff in the basics of running the millstones. Training also included one of our directors, Jared Hayes, shown here receiving his certificate of completion from Chris. (Photo by Ken).

Milling

Our miller is Chris Wooding. Chris is also the farmer who supplies us with organically grown Red Fife wheat (www.ironwoodorganics.ca). Chris is also an expert on the genetics of wheat as well as innovative organic farming techniques. It's always interesting to listen to Chris' interpretive talk on a milling day. For those that haven't yet seen it, we have a video of his complete presentation on the photos page of our website: www.deltamill.org/photos.html — see "Milling Demonstration (20 min)" just below the links to the "Anna Explains" videos.

Our milling schedule is posted on our website and, as we did last year, we plan to train some of our summer staff in how to operate the millstones. This hands-on use of the stones to make flour provides the staff with a better understanding of how the millstones work for interpretation and allows us to demonstrate the milling process to visitors when Chris isn't available.

Blacksmith Shop

Our Blacksmith Shop is operated under the supervision of director and Blacksmith Shop Manager, Art Shaw. The shop received a significant $40,000 makeover in 2022 (rebuilding the forge, etc.) and is now

a wonderful spot for the visiting public to see the heritage art of blacksmithing using our coal fired forges.

In addition to the days that we have the shop open to the public (see the Events page on our website), we will be hosting another "hammer-in" by the Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association (OABA) on September 14 at the Blacksmith Shop. Last year's event proved extremely popular with that group (we also put on a pulled pork luncheon for them prepared by DMS director Lisa Martin). The OABA now wants to make it a yearly event.

Last fall, blacksmithing training courses in our Blacksmith Shop were introduced by Armstrong and Carter Ironworks (ACI) of Delta. ACI is Megan Carter and Mike Armstrong who also now volunteer with us. Due to demand, they also offer gift certificates for this training. They tailor the training to the person, a novice will learn how to make nails and hooks in their first session, those with prior blacksmithing experience can discuss with Megan and Mike about doing more advanced training. We have a link on our home page (www.deltamill.org) to ACI's training registration page.

Blacksmithing

Here we see blacksmith Megan Carter showing the heritage art of blacksmithing to an attentive audience during this year's Delta Maple Syrup Festival. Young blacksmithing volunteers such as Megan Carter and Mike Armstrong represent the future of the DMS Blacksmith Shop, hopefully providing public blacksmithing demonstrations for years to come. (Photo by Ken).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's membership renewal time. A membership form has been included. Your support of the Delta Mill Society is both needed and much appreciated. If you've lost your form or if someone new wishes to join, our membership/donation form is on our website.

Hi There

Director Liz Priebe manages events and rentals at the Old Town Hall. This is a very large job all on its own. It is through Liz's efforts that the Old Town Hall remains a vibrant community hall for the Village of Delta, hosting everything from weddings to community concerts. (Photo by Ken).

Old Town Hall

The operation of the Old Town Hall as a community hall is overseen by Liz Priebe, ably assisted by Moel Benoit. We host a wide variety of events, from weddings to Festival of Small Halls concerts. These involve planning, rental contracts, set-up and clean-up – it's a big job. Plus it involves looking after the general maintenance of the hall, from our commercial kitchen (which needs to remain in compliance with that commercial rating) to the washrooms.

The hall also hosts our own events, such as our "Ginormous Book Sale" held on the weekend of the Delta Maple Syrup Festival. This is a combined effort of the DMS and the Rideau Lake Public Library – proceeds are split 50:50. This is our single largest yearly fundraiser. It's a "ginormous" task to set up and take down. Liz and Moel have a team of volunteers that supports that effort (you'll find their names in the fall/winter 2023 newsletter – posted to our website).

Operating the hall is also part of our commitment to community engagement. For instance, in late May the hall will host a play put on the Rideau Lakes Public Library – the hall will be used for rehearsals for that as well as the

public presentations of the play (check the Library website for details). Liz already has a growing list of rentals for 2024 and we expect at least one if not two Festival of Small Halls concerts this fall, plus our Christmas Craft Sale (which we are coordinating this year with a craft sale at the Legion) and likely a Christmas concert put on by the Mensen family.

Exhibits

In addition to our primary exhibit, which is the Old Stone Mill itself, we do other types of exhibits such as the current "Mills and Stills" exhibit. It is located in our special exhibit space on the 3rd floor of the mill. We'd like to change that every few years as volunteer time permits. We will be working on new ideas this year, to develop a few new exhibits using items in our collection and other resources. It takes a lot of work (research, interpretation, set-up) to properly do. We're not short on ideas, we will pick a few to concentrate on and see what we can come up with.

In addition, one item that we got from Quebec and had stored in Art Cowan's barn since 2008, was a half height French burrstone. We plan to display this stone by the south wall of the Blacksmith Shop, to give those coming up King Street from the south a visual clue that there is a nearby heritage gristmill. Art and Paul are working out the details of how to display this heavy stone. We don't want to attach it to the wall (too heavy), so Art is looking into getting a stand made.

Many Talents

Many of our directors possess multiple skill sets. In this photo our Chair of Collections, Sally Wanless, is using her heritage interpretation skills to provide a tour of the mill during this year's Delta Maple Syrup Festival. (Photo by Ken).

A Little to the Left

The maintenance of heritage structures is an ongoing process. Here we see directors Moel Benoit (l) and Art Shaw (r) working in 2020 to stabilize what remains of our 1810 accordion lath and plaster ceiling on the 3rd floor of the mill. In 2024 we have several more maintenance projects on tap including replacing the door on the mill shop (completed in April), masonry sill repair in the Old Stone Mill and window replacement in the Blacksmith Shop (Photo by Ken).

Communications

Getting heritage information out to the public is fundamental to our mandate. While our behind-the-scenes work is important (such as care and documentation of our collections), the main point of everything we do is to share the rich heritage of the Old Stone Mill with the public. This is done in several ways, most obvious is our operation of the Old Stone Mill as a public museum. But we also do it through brochures, books, videos, our website and even this newsletter.

Ken looks after this aspect, you'll note the large amount of heritage information available on our website, including a couple of our books available as free PDF downloads. For 2024 this work continues with a refreshed information brochure (available for visitors to pick up at any time from a brochure holder outside the mill), a refreshed self-interpretation guide, some new interpretive

signage, new heritage articles in our newsletters, and more. We also have a donor board in the mill which lists the many people who have financially supported the DMS over the years. Ken updates this yearly with information from Treasurer Sharon Okum.

The events page of our website provides information to the visiting public about our milling and blacksmithing days as well as DMS sponsored Old Town Hall events. We also use Facebook and Instagram to promote events.

Ken is a photographer and has been taking photos of the mill and events since he started volunteering with the DMS in 1997. These are used on our website, Facebook, newsletter, books, tourism sites and more. He also dabbles in videography, posting these to YouTube (with links from our website). The most popular so far is a short 1 minute video of our millstones in operation, featuring director Moel Benoit, that was posted back in 2011. That video has had 99,335 views to date making Moel an Internet Star!

Maintenance

As the owner of 3 heritage buildings there is always maintenance to do – it's a never-ending job to properly maintain these structures. This year we've already replaced the door into the mill shop, as the old one had rotted out at the bottom. The front windows of the Blacksmith Shop all need replacement. Director Art Shaw is making heritage appropriate windows that we will install this year. In the mill, several masonry window sills on the 2nd and 3rd floor need repair, which we plan to do this year. We also plan to build a gable on the porch roof of the Old Town Hall to control issues we've had with snow and rain on our steps (a safety issue) and to improve the heritage appearance of the building. Several emergency lights were repaired by Moel this spring to ensure visitor safety. And the list goes on. Director Moel Benoit is our maintenance director – nipping problems in the bud himself or participating in work bees.

Helping as Needed

Our Secretary, Lisa Martin, like our other directors, lends her energy and enthusiasm to any job that needs to be done, such as bagging flour on a milling day. As an all volunteer group, we pitch in as needed to get jobs done. (Photo by Ken).

More Many Talents

Treasurer Sharon Okum (l) and Vice-President Katherine Killins (r) judging the bread baking contest, held as part of Delta's Harvest Festival. Katherine is the judge and to ensure fairness Sharon makes sure that Katherine doesn't know who baked each loaf by assigning a number to each loaf. She then reveals the names of the winners to Katherine at the end. (Photo by Ken).

Everything Else

The administration of the Delta Mill Society is a huge job given the many things we do. Key to this is our Treasurer, Sharon Okum, who not only looks after the accounting (assisted by volunteer Eva Wheaton), but also summer staffing grant compliance (lots of work for that), student employment requirements (payroll, etc.), CRA compliance and more. In addition, Sharon manages the finances of the mill shop (sales) as well as doing the scheduling of our summer staff. Grant

applications including Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ), Young Canada Works (YCW) and the small Ontario Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) are done by Sharon and Ken.

The health and safety of our volunteers, visitors and summer staff is of paramount importance to the DMS. We have a large health and safety manual which Ken updated for 2024. In addition to that information we also do monthly checks of the emergency equipment in our three buildings as well as regular safety audits of our operations. Thanks to volunteer Justin Okum for the monthly safety equipment checks and Director Jared Hayes, for the regular safety audits of our buildings.

The Delta Mill Society is a very large operation and requires a large amount of administration. Most of this work is non-optional if we want to stay open. To remain in government compliance as a non-for-profit charitable organization, takes a huge amount of volunteer effort. We also deal with things such as insurance. We had a risk assessment of the mill done by our insurer, Ecclesiastical, in January. While we got a clean bill of health regarding our management of risk, he upped our building valuations which increased our insurance costs to now over $18,000 per year.

Our Board

I'd like to thank our entire board of directors for the hundreds (and hundreds) of volunteer hours they put into supporting the mandate of the Delta Mill Society. From the protection and maintenance of our three heritage buildings to the presentation of the rich history the Old Stone Mill NHS represents, it is a combined effort, people selflessly volunteering their time and skills to achieve a common goal. We have an 11 member working board, each with a role as their skills and time availability permits. Many of our board members are what I call "super volunteers" since they are not only volunteer with The Delta Mill Society but with other heritage and community organizations. So, a big thanks to all: **Ken Watson** (President), **Katherine Killins** (Vice-President), **Sharon Okum** (Treasurer), **Lisa Martin** (Secretary), **Anna Greenhorn**, **Sally Wanless**, **Liz Priebe**, **Moel Benoit**, **Art Shaw**, **Paul George** and **Jared Hayes**.

For any member who is interested, we produce an Annual Report (11 pages long last year) which we table at our yearly AGM (in June). It lists (in great detail) all our activities throughout the year. It is available (PDF) to members upon request.

-Ken Watson, President

VOLUNTEER WITH US – we're always looking for new volunteers. Talk to a director or drop us an email.

Paul Fritz

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Paul Fritz on January 16, 2024. Paul, who had a PhD in history, had deep roots in the Delta area. He was born in Lyn Junction in 1938. His mother, Lura Vivian Green and grandfather, Robert Edward Green, were from Delta.

Paul Fritz
(photo by Ken).

Paul served for many years on the Board of Directors of the Delta Mill Society, including a few years as President. His sister, Myrla Saunders, was also very active with the Delta Mill Society and his life partner, David Russo, also served on the board. During his time with the Delta Mill Society, Paul conducted historical research on the mill and Delta in general. Our first book about the mill was written by Paul. Paul's "A History of the Old Stone Mill, Delta, Ontario" was published by the Delta Mill Society in 2000. Paul also wrote books about several of the local churches as well as a published lecture about the early surveyors and settlers into this region that he did in 1994 for the 200th celebration of the Township of Bastard and South Burgess.

In retirement, Paul and David developed the iconic Oak Leaf Gardens. Paul specialized in heritage roses and the gardens were judged second in Canada in 2008 and also featured on two PBS shows. Last year, Paul donated several boxes of his research files about the mill, Delta and other topics of local interest (i.e. Temperance) to the Delta Mill Society. He also donated a slide carousel of heritage photos of Delta taken by his mother and grandfather. We've already digitized many of these.

His contributions to the Delta Mill Society and the region in general will be remembered.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING—ISSUES and INEQUALITY

by Ken Watson

Ed Note: *This is being written to address the issue of the lack of municipal support for the Old Stone Mill and Old Town Hall. It starts off with some background about heritage advocacy in general and then goes into great detail regarding the issue of sustainable municipal funding (or rather lack thereof)—kww.*

Heritage Advocacy

I wear many hats and one of them is as a heritage advocate, in my case regarding two of my favourite National Historic Sites (NHS), the Rideau Canal and the Old Stone Mill (the only two in the township). It's an unfortunate reality these days that many of us who are engaged in heritage also have to be advocates. While a component of that has always existed, it's become much more pronounced in the 21st century. Like many other heritage people, I'd rather be doing heritage research and presenting that information to the public. In my case that's with books, websites, newsletters, talks, tours, photos, videos, and interpretive information such as information panels and brochures used on the heritage sites. But I can't in good conscious just bury my head in the sand, I feel that I have to be an advocate for government support of our Canadian heritage.

WOW!!

It's a wow moment for people who aren't aware of the Old Stone Mill when they drive through Delta and take in this magnificently restored stone structure. Even more wow when they realize it's open to the public and have a look inside. (photo by Ken).

I became a more vocal advocate for heritage in 2010 when I realized that Parks Canada was abandoning heritage on the Rideau Canal. They solidified this in 2012 by making a massive change in the management structure of their heritage canals which completely dropped the heritage component. If you've been wondering why the Blacksmith Shop and Sweeney House at Jones Falls are closed and will likely remain closed for a long time, it can be traced back to a change in Parks Canada in mid-2000s. I won't go into that here, for those interested have a look at: www.saveourrideau.ca (my article "The De-Evolution of Parks Canada" makes a good read).

This decline of heritage support by the federal government is not a political issue – the big heritage cuts to Parks Canada happened under one government in 2012 and have continued under the present government. The real problem seems to be an overall lack of interest at the federal level in Canadian heritage. But the article below is not about that, or about the lack of federal support of privately owned National Historic Sites (another major issue), it's about the lack of municipal support for the Old Stone Mill and the Old Town Hall – one a public museum (one of only two in the township), the other a community hall in a township village that doesn't have a municipally supported hall.

I trace this problem back to two things. One is the success of the Delta Mill Society over its 61 year history. The DMS is the largest and most active heritage group in the township and has been for decades. From the beginning, it has attracted high quality people to its 11 member working board. That's in part what attracted me back in 1997 when I started to volunteer with the DMS by building their first website. From a township perspective it seems like it's "what's the problem, you guys are doing great". Well, yes, but not financially, read the funding inequality section of this article to see the present problem.

The second is that I believe that township amalgamation in 1998 took away a sense of overall Township of Rideau Lakes heritage. We still have heritage people and councilors who are very ward centric and don't look at the township as an integrated community. I'm an outsider, I moved here in 1995 to

what was at the time South Crosby Township. As a geologist, heritage landscapes are of fundamental interest, and the Rideau Canal, the hows and whys of building it, and what was here before the Rideau Canal, became intriguing mysteries I wanted to solve. In exploring the area, my first drive through Delta produced a "what in the world is that!" moment as the Old Stone Mill came into view. This survivor from a bygone era was being carefully protected and presented by a group of keen volunteers. It was quite amazing.

Fast forward to the late 2000s when the funding writing was on the wall for the DMS (see next part of this article for details). That's when the DMS started making presentations to the Mayor and Council of the Township of Rideau Lakes (TRL) seeking municipal support. It was first done by people such as Paul George, our curator at that time and then by successive Presidents, Dann Michols and Cathy Livingston. None of what they did gained any traction with TRL councils. They tried hard to no avail. My conclusion is that we've had successive TRL Mayors and Councils who don't actually care about TRL heritage. Not all, there are councilors that do care about the highly significant TRL heritage the Old Stone Mill represents, but they clearly have never been in the majority. Support of public museums is a municipal responsibility and most municipalities do provide financial support, recognizing the economic and heritage importance of these places to the municipality. And now on to the details.

Open to the Public

How long can we keep the mill open to the public without proper municipal financing support? Time will tell. (photo by Ken).

Old Stone Mill & Old Town Hall – Issues and Inequality

The Delta Mill Society is not presently a financially sustainable operation due to several factors, primarily the lack of municipal financial support. If we didn't have a mill benefactor, the reality is that the mill would now be shuttered and not be open to the public. That would be an economic loss to Delta, to the Township of Rideau Lakes and to the general region since the mill is a tourism draw to this area. It would also be a huge loss to the presentation of our heritage. The mill speaks not only to our local heritage, it's also a National Historic Site of Canada representing a significant aspect of our Canadian heritage.

The Delta Mill Society owns and operates three heritage buildings in Delta; the Old Stone Mill NHS, the Old Town Hall and the Blacksmith Shop. The mill is operated as a public museum. A public museum is defined as a museum, open with regular days (ideally 7) and hours (ideally all day) during the tourism season. Accordingly, we operate the Old Stone Mill from Victoria Day Weekend Saturday to Labour Day Monday, 7 days a week, 10 am to 5 pm each day. We operate the Old Town Hall (OTH) as a community hall since Delta has no municipal hall (the OTH is the former municipal hall). We also have the OTH washrooms open to the public when the mill is open. In addition, we have the Blacksmith Shop open on several days through the season.

Maintaining and operating three heritage buildings is expensive. Each year we face an immediate fixed cost of about $30,000 (insurance, utilities, general maintenance, smoke alarm monitoring, etc.). That's a fixed number even if we remained closed and that number is increasing every year. To have the mill open to the public increases our costs to about $90,000 due to summer staffing and other costs related to being open. We try to offset the summer staffing costs with grants (see details later) but at present there is a $15,000 shortfall between staffing costs and the grants we receive. Add on top of that our need to do major maintenance work on our heritage buildings (which happens on a regular basis). We are frugal, the Old Stone Mill has no utilities other than lighting and we keep the Old Town Hall unheated in the winter, except for the kitchen and washrooms (minimally heated) as a cost saving measure.

Earlier this year, one of our directors got very upset when she learned that two organizations in the Village of Portland were sharing $38,000 from the township for the use of their facilities in lieu of a municipal community hall. The Village of Delta has no municipal community

hall. The DMS operates the Old Town Hall as a community hall, hosting all sorts of events and activities. Our compensation for this from the Township is toilet paper and paper towels for the public washrooms.

This issue is not new. The Township of Rideau Lakes provides the lowest financial support to its public museums (we only have two of those – the Old Stone Mill and Chaffey's Lockmaster's House Museum), of any community in the region. Add on top of that the lack of Township support for the DMS operating a community hall and public washrooms in Delta. Most municipalities financially support their public museums to a level where they can at least hire a manager. Some are much more generous in their support, Watson's Mill in Manotick for instance, received $231,666 in municipal support in 2022 (last reporting period). It's clearly an unfair system. It's the luck of the draw depending on the municipality the public museum happens to be in and how much that municipality cares about the public presentation of their local heritage.

As a reality check, this is what the DMS receives, outside of summer staffing grants (which are federal dollars available to anyone) in government support:

Federal Government = $0

Ontario Government = $1,148
(HODG grant via a complicated grant process)

Municipal Government = $18,000
(Community Grant (16.5K) + MHAC Grant (1.5K))

With the municipality, the community grant program (originally called "grants to others" – we apparently are an "other" in the township) is a cap-in-hand request to council each year. In recent years we've tied our community grant requests to our ever-increasing insurance costs, now at $18,000 per year. We are appreciative of what we get and thank council for that support. But it is far short of what is needed and what most municipalities provide to their equivalents of the Old Stone Mill (not to mention community hall support).

With most municipalities, support of public museums is a line item in the budget and that is what we need. While budgets are subject to council review, it would provide a more sustainable and predictable municipal funding model. Katherine Killins and myself made a presentation about this to the Mayor in January 2023 which I followed up with an 11 page letter to the Mayor. We will try again this year.

There is both an economic case and a heritage case to be made when it comes to municipal funding. The economic case is an easy one, even with our requested support, we will remain a net economic benefit to the township. The view of the mill is iconic, photos of the mill are featured on most tourism literature, making it a draw for people to come to this region. We have been, and will continue to be, key to the revitalization of the Village of Delta. We hire summer staff, most of whom are residents of the township. We provide those youth with meaningful employment in their own community.

But the real argument, and a significant reason most municipalities support their public museums, is a heritage one. The Old Stone Mill and the heritage interpretation of it done by the Delta Mill Society speaks directly to the founding of the township. Delta is the oldest community in the Township of Rideau Lakes (it is TRL's founding community). The mill is the oldest building still standing in its original form. The Delta Mill Society has invested more than 2 million dollars in restoration to make sure the building will be around for generations to come. We speak directly to the pioneer development of this area. We speak to the agricultural roots of the township, the growing of wheat. We speak to the development of community. "All roads lead to Delta" was a truism in the early 1800s. The mill was a lynchpin for other businesses with the farmers bringing their wheat to Delta to be milled and then spending that money in the village.

The list of heritage values goes on, including the mill's heritage value to Ontario (it is the oldest surviving pre-1812 stone flour mill in the province), it's Canadian significance as a National Historic Site of Canada, and its international heritage significance in its design as an Oliver Evans Automatic Mill. Suffice to say that the Old Stone Mill is one of the most significant heritage features in the Township and we present that heritage to the visiting public.

Our lifeblood, and the reason we are still open, is the generosity of our donors. Last year we received $39,264.90 in donations, representing 75% of our total non-government income. That number includes $29,600 in designated donations (mostly from a benefactor) to cover funding shortfalls. Even with that, we ended the year $4,500 short of break-even.

The reasons for our present lack of financial sustainability goes back 15 years. At that time we had

much lower operating costs (insurance, etc.), much better summer staffing grants, and we had a sustainable form of revenue in the form of charity bingo. Our bingo team from Delta would go to the charity bingo hall in Brockville twice a week. While it was a lot of volunteer work, it provided us with a significant year-round source of revenue. In addition, in the 2000s, we benefited from Trillium grants for the large projects we were engaged in. Those grants came with sufficient funding for staff, in our case a curator (Paul George - now back with us as a volunteer director) and an associate curator (Natalie Wood, now the Curator and Director of the Brockville Museum).

By the early 2010s the Government of Ontario had essentially killed both charity bingo and our ability to get Trillium grants. They brought in the charity casino model, which in no way benefits the Township of Rideau Lakes (and never will unless the Ontario government changes how they distribute the funds). The Ontario government also now heavily promotes on-line gambling, which also doesn't provide benefits to the Township (or the DMS). So, the gambling source of revenue is now long gone.

An Ontario MPP, during the Old Stone Mill's 200th anniversary celebrations in 2010, while taking credit for helping the mill via Ontario Trillium grant funding, essentially said: "that's it, the mill is now a wonderful public showcase, Trillium grants are not needed for the mill anymore". And he was true to his word, 2010 was the last Trillium grant we received for the Old Stone Mill. In 2011 we got a Trillium grant to support local food initiatives (since we had a local farmer organically growing and milling our heritage Red Fife wheat – we still do) and in 2012 we got a Trillium grant for work on the Old Town Hall, including making it accessible (porch, lift and accessible washroom). And that was it. Obtaining a Trillium grant is a long and complicated process and those grants only support projects, they do not support operating costs which is the type of funding we actually need.

We also seek out foundation grants and TRL has helped us with some of those. Recent examples include painting the trim on the Old Stone Mill (needed maintenance) and renovating the Blacksmith Shop (50% funded with a foundation grant). But again, like Trillium, these are project specific grants and they don't help us with operating costs. Plus most also involve volunteer time. Our Blacksmith Shop renovation project in 2022, which cost $42,000 ($20k foundation grant, $22k DMS funding), involved an estimated 740 volunteer hours to support that project.

DMS local fundraising, via events and retail sales, doesn't even come close to providing sustainable funding. It never has and we've tried all sorts of things, including at one point running two gift shops (one in the mill, one in the Old Town Hall). Name it and we've probably tried it. It's the reality of our location including the low tourist visitation to Delta and TRL in general and the limitation of what we can do in our tiny mill shop. We've been lobbying the Township to step up its promotion of tourism. The County doesn't do much (more concerned with business development) and the Ontario government, through its regional tourism organization (RTO9 in our area), does very little for our region. But even if visitation to Delta is greatly increased, while it would certainly help other businesses in the village and help us to serve one of our core mandates, the public presentation of the mill, it still wouldn't provide us with a sustainable source of revenue.

One of our largest costs, outside of our fixed $30,000+ operating costs (whether open or not – insurance, maintenance, utilities, etc.) is summer staffing. To operate as a public museum requires summer staffing. Tourists hate arriving to a locked door and pass on that bad experience to friends and family. So, it's important, simply from a positive tourist experience perspective, to be open for the full season, 7 days a week. That cannot be done by volunteers alone (no public museum can). We first opened the mill for a full public season in 1985 and have been soliciting summer staffing grants since that time. We are presenting a significant part of TRL heritage to the public, allowing them to see, understand and touch an important part of just not local heritage, but Ontario and national heritage.

We get summer staffing grants through two federal programs, the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program and the Young Canada Works (YCW) program. In the past, the combination of those two programs supported our summer staffing with only a small shortfall that we could cover ourselves (i.e. bingo). But by 2015, we faced larger shortfalls than we could cover with operating revenues, initially a $5,000 shortfall. We covered that with a special fundraising campaign that year. The summer staffing shortfall today, even if we received all the grants we apply for, is closer to $15,000. This is

because the grants are harder to get and with CSJ for instance, they keep shrinking the number of weeks it covers (now down to 8 weeks – the tourist season is 15 weeks long).

The YCW grant is complicated and requires compliance throughout the season. The YCW program is a collaboration between the National Trust for Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Program delivery is overseen by the Canadian Museum Association (CMA). We were fortunate last year to have a YCW evaluation visit done by the CMA. The CMA evaluator was so impressed with the Delta Mill Society, in how we present the heritage of the Old Stone Mill NHS, and in how we properly train our summer interpretive staff in heritage presentation, that he encouraged us to apply for a second round of funding. We initially only received 1 of 2 YCW grants applied for in 2023, but after our second request, we received the second grant. YCW can only be applied to students who are returning to their studies at the end of the grant period and it only covers 75% of costs.

The CSJ program is for anyone unemployed between the ages of 15 and 30. It is open to all, both the non-profit sector and the for-profit sector. It is subject to the whim of the federal government in terms of priorities, which are usually urban priorities, putting the rural community of Delta at a disadvantage. The local MP, in our case, Michael Barrett, has the power to adjust CSJ ratings that come from the bureaucracy since the bureaucracy isn't aware of local needs. Last year, when we only received 1 of the 4 CSJ grants that we applied for, we contacted Mr. Barrett asking why Delta and TRL were not being supported. We didn't get a good answer to that question. This year we applied for 3 x 10 weeks and only received 2 x 8 weeks. I did write to Mr. Barrett but have not received a reply.

Our calculated shortfall this year, with the grants we received (including TRL's), is $40,000. The Delta Mill Society has over 60 years of history of making things happen, including financial support of the mill, and we will continue with that. Our board members have concluded that we are victims of our own success in terms of lack of municipal support. We have people passionate about the mill and the heritage it represents to Delta, to TRL, to Ontario and to Canada. Those people, including a benefactor, support the DMS though both their volunteer efforts and financial support. It's the reason we remain open to the public and continue to move ahead, including operating our newly renovated Blacksmith Shop in addition to the Old Stone Mill and Old Town Hall. In 1970 our bank account stood at $400 (equivalent to $3,100 today) – we have come a long way since then. Our unofficial motto is "Onward and Upward" (Anna's favourite saying) – and that is the attitude our entire volunteer board of directors takes.

However, a positive attitude and thousands of volunteer hours can only take you so far, we need to have sustainable municipal financial support for operating the Old Stone Mill as a public museum, operating the Old Town Hall as a community hall, and for providing public washrooms for Delta. We will keep working on achieving that goal.

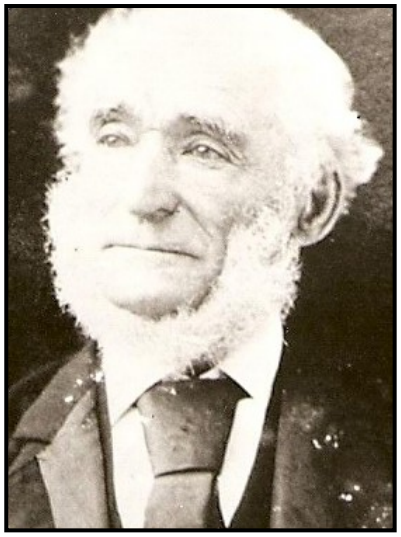
Ken Watson

President, The Delta Mill Society

History of the Mill Part 2 – The Denaut Era

***Ed Note**: See the Fall/Winter 2023 Newsletter (on our website) for part 1 of the story of the mill (up to 1850).*

In 1850 the Old Stone Mill was essentially bankrupt. The previous owners, James and Amelia Macdonell struggled and now with James gone (d.1847), James' son Alexander and Amelia were still struggling, unable to pay off the debts the mill had accumulated. The mill was carrying three mortgages and not making a profit. On James' death, the mill went to his son, Alexander, who made Amelia the owner of record until the mill could be sold. In February of 1850 it was sold to a resident of Beverley (Delta), Walter Henderson Denaut, a wealthy landowner and entrepreneur.



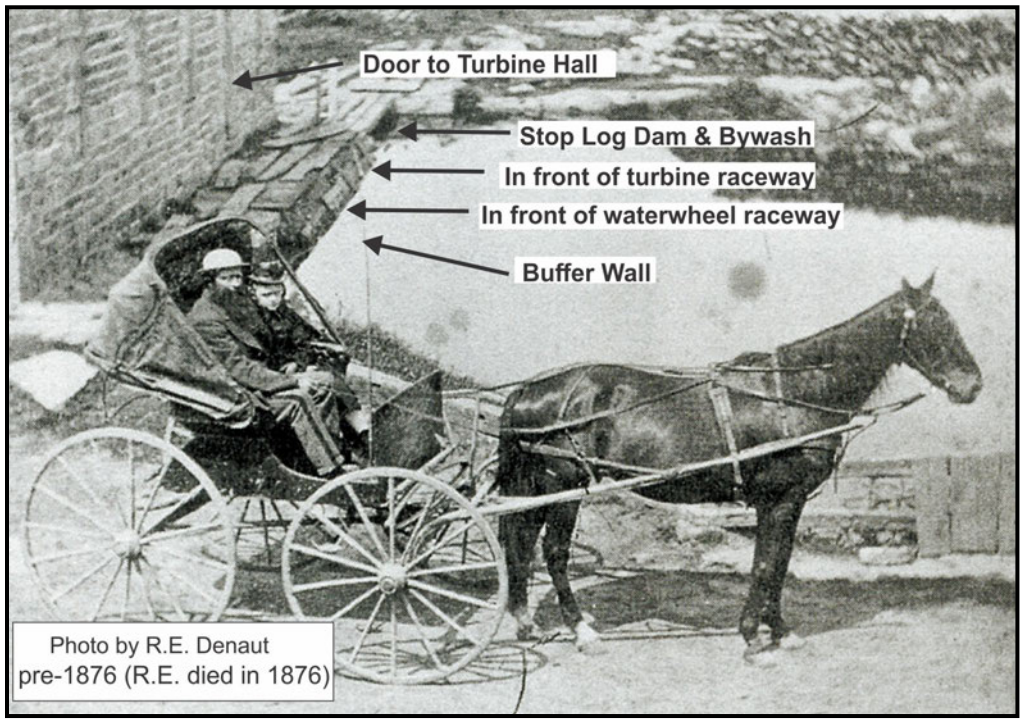
Walter H. Denaut

DMS photo archives, photographer and date unknown.

Walter Denaut was born on September 10, 1807 in Edwardsburgh Township. When Walter was 16 (1824), he worked in the general store in Stone Mills (Delta) run by J.K. Harwell and James L. Schofield. He would have known William Jones, owner and operator of the Old Stone Mill at that time. We next see Denaut in Brockville working for William's cousins, Henry and Sidney Jones, owner of H & S Jones, a shipping company. Henry would later become the owner of the Old Stone Mill (1832 to 1836). Denaut also took on the job of deputy collector of customs for William Jones, who was the Collector of Customs for Brockville until his death 1831.

Walter clearly remained in Brockville subsequent to Jones' death, since in 1832, we see Walter H. Denaut charged in Brockville, along with four other men, with "cantering horses through the public streets." They were acquitted and Denaut must have redeemed himself since he was appointed a special constable in Brockville in 1833. There is conflicting information on exactly what Denaut did prior to moving back to Delta. Some information shows him involved with Dr. Elnathan Hubbell, who built a grist mill in Brockville in the 1830s (later owned by James L. Schofield). Others have him partnering with James Crawford who was involved with the construction of the Beauharnois Canal (opened 1843) and the Galop Canal (opened in 1845).

One source has him moving to Beverley (Delta) in 1839 which perhaps conflicts a bit with the anecdotal story of his involvement with Crawford and canal building. But he is certainly in Delta in the 1840s, operating a general store and



First Photo of the Mill—c.early 1870s

This is the first image we have of the mill. It shows several features including the buffer wall protecting the north face of the mill. A stop log dam in front of the bywash controlled the level of the mill pond. That level of the pond in this photo is the level of Upper Beverley Lake today. The mill closed in 1960 and in 1962, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) built a new stop log dam upstream of the road bridge and removed the mill's stop log dam. They also removed part of the buffer wall at that time with the remaining part removed during later mill restoration. The people in the photo have not been positively identified. Photo by Roderick Denaut (Walter's son), pre-1876.

starting to purchase properties in Delta. In 1844 he married Julia Easton (b.1821). In 1849 he built a palatial house in Delta, known today as the Denaut Mansion. In February 1850, he purchased the Old Stone Mill from the Macdonells and paid off the three mortgages on the mill. The 1851 census give us a sense of the state of the mill. In that census it shows "W.H. Denaut, Merchant". It notes that he owned "1 Grist Mill, unfinished or under repair. 1 run of stones in operation by water power. Will cost when finished £2,600. Producer for the last year £250". So it wasn't making much money but clearly Denaut was planning to put a great deal of money into fixing up and improving the mill.

The 1851 census shows that he also owned 320 acres of agricultural land with 60 under cultivation, 30 for crops and 30 for pasture. In crops he only had 2 acres of wheat, producing 25 bushels, and 2 acres of potatoes, producing 66 bushels. In terms of animals he had 1 bull or ox, 3 milk cows, 2 calves, 17 horses, 9 sheep and 14 pigs. An 1851 directory shows W.H. Denaut as a general merchant with grist, saw, and carding mills. An early (1817) reference to the mill shows that there was a carding machine in the sawmill so yarn making was always part of the business. We see him with the same listing in the 1857-58 directory with the added note that he was also the postmaster.

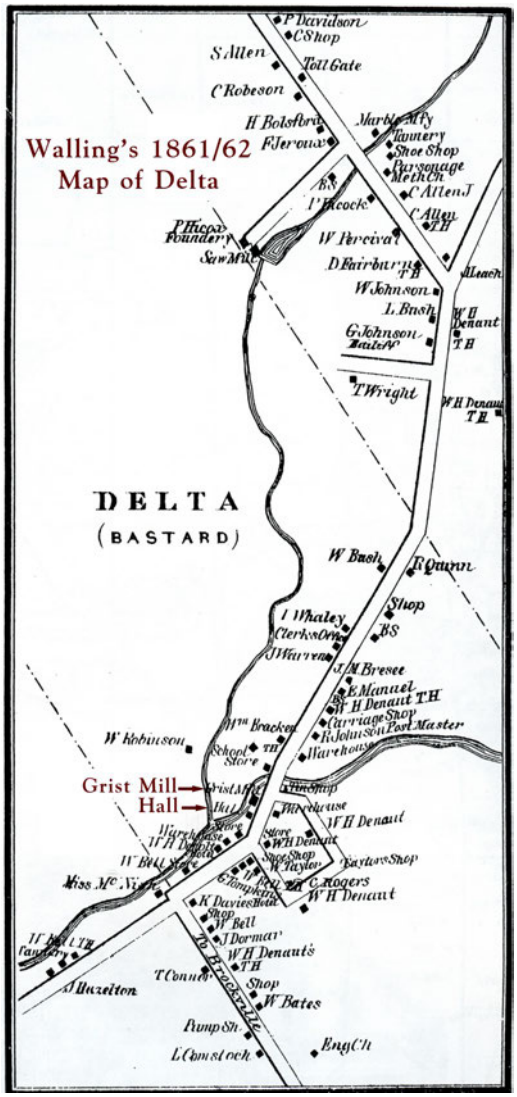
Denaut, in addition to his clear business acumen, took over the mill at a good time. Wheat production in the region was increasing as was the demand for flour. We don't know exactly what improvements Denaut made in the 1850s but in that period he built a community hall adjacent to the mill. It was built with a stone carriage shed foundation designed to support a very impressive brick hall upper storey. Denaut appears to have liked brick, the servants quarters on the Denaut Mansion were constructed of brick and at some point, perhaps in the 1850s, he replaced the original wooden headers over all the windows and doors in the Old Stone Mill with brick.

Our next snapshot of the mill is 1861 where the census that year indicated that Denaut put $20,000 of improvements into the mill. That was a huge sum of money and it has been interpreted that the work involved converting the mill from waterwheel to turbine power and the power transmission from direct connect wooden gearing to belt and pulley technology. We are fortunate that he decided to situate the turbines in an addition onto the mill, the turbine hall, leaving the original 1810 mill, including the original waterwheel raceway, fully intact. Columns within the mill were moved to accommodate the new method of distributing power (we refer to them today as "Denaut columns").

Barrel Head Stencil

This is the stencil Denaut used for his flour barrels. In Denaut's time only fine flour could be exported. The legal requirement was a barrel that contained 196 pounds of "superfine" flour.

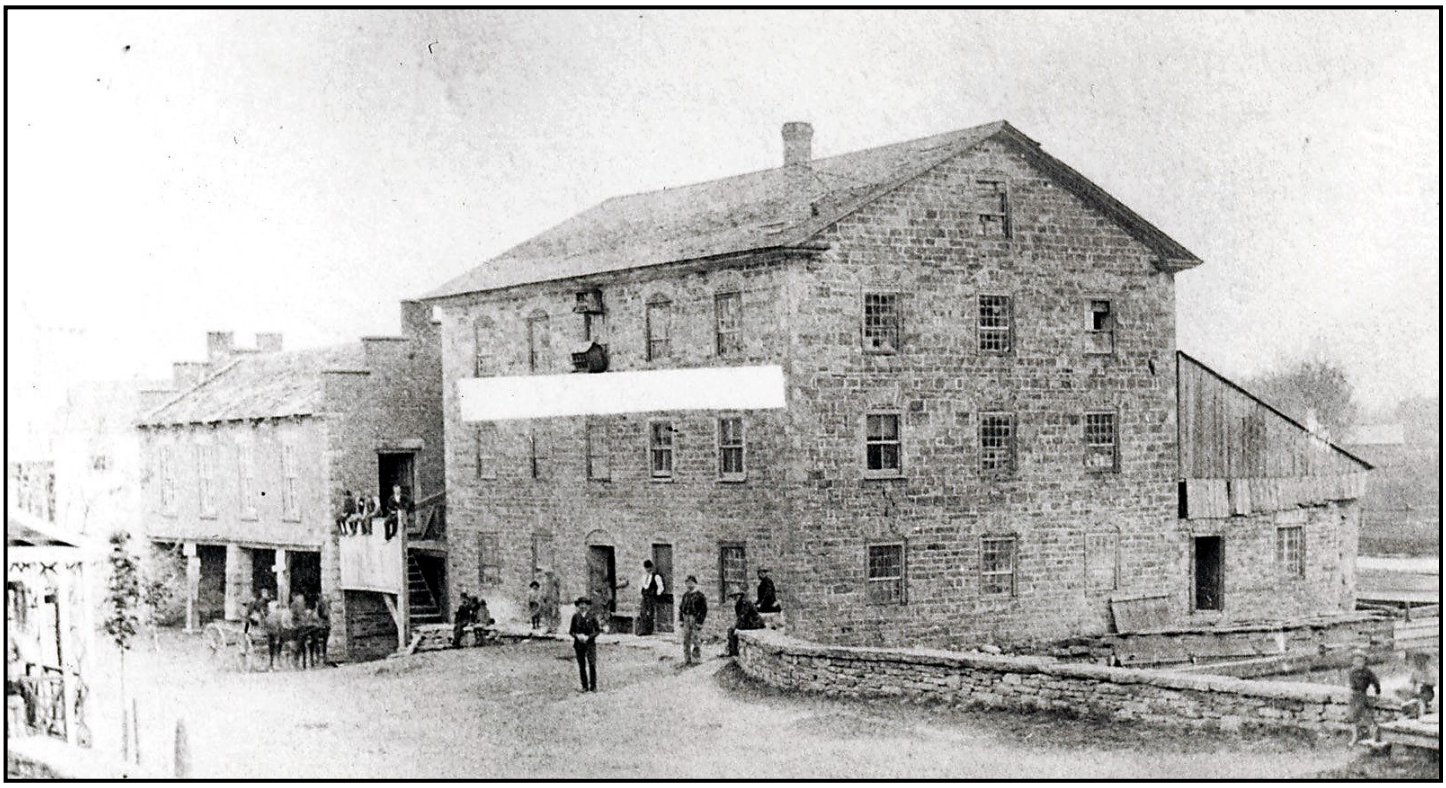
Turbines were a new technology, Denaut used a pair of Swain turbines, designed in 1855, a rare example of the use of this type of turbine (perhaps on the only ones in Ontario). They were much more efficient than a waterwheel. A calculation by William Trick in 1996 shows that each turbine could produce about 35 HP running at 75 RPM with a 7 foot head of water. We don't have figures for the original breastshot waterwheel, but each turbine provided at least the same, if not more power than originally was generated by the waterwheel.



Count the Denauts

This c.1861 map of Delta shows many of Walter H. Denaut's holdings, including the Old Stone Mill and the magnificent brick upper storey Denaut Hall.

H.F. Walling's Historical Atlas of Leeds & Grenville, 1861-62.



The Mill c.1880

This is the first full view we have of the mill. Adjacent to it is Denaut Hall. The white bar is in the original copy, likely meant as a caption space. We can see all the features of the mill including the buffer wall and stop log dam. Of interest are the three 2 over 2 pane windows, which Walter used for his new (c.1850s) second floor office, presumably since they allowed for a better view than the original 12 over 8 pane windows. Today we call his 2nd floor office the "Miller's Room" and have it displayed as it might have looked in the 1860s. Note the two birdhouses above the caption bar. We still have one of those birdhouses in our collection. DMS Photo Archives, photographer unknown, c.1880.

Millstone Crane

This crane, which we have in our Dressing the Millstone display, was in use in the mill during Denaut's time. It has some signatures on it, including that of Denaut's miller, Walter Bush. Check it out when you visit the mill. Photo by Ken.

The Old Stone Mill is a rarity in that it shows large transitions in technology through its operating lifetime. It was built in an era when the power source was a waterwheel and that rotational power was distributed to machines throughout the building using direct connection wooden gearing. Belt and pulley technology started to come into use in mills in Canada the 1840s and cast iron turbines were also developed at that time. Denaut made that transition in the mill in the early 1860s. Denaut clearly saw the economic advantage in moving to new, more efficient technologies, the change to turbines and belts and pulleys was a mammoth undertaking and huge capital investment.

Another change made by Denaut, once the waterwheel had been removed, was to extend the husk, the foundation for the millstones, over the waterwheel pit area so that a set of stones could be located closer to the turbines. While the millstones were powered by gearing coming directly off the turbines, two slits in the west wall of the original mill (still in place today) allowed a belt from the upper turbine to power a vertical shaft that provided rotational power to machinery on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

During Walter Denaut's ownership, the Old Stone Mill was known as Denaut's Mill. He had several employees, and early on we see Walter Bush as the miller. Bush left Delta (went to the U.S.) in 1867 and after that we see Charles (Charlie) VanLuven as the miller. In addition to the millers, he had labourers and millwrights, usually 3 to 4 employees at any given time. At some point, perhaps

as early as the 1850s, Denaut converted part of the 2nd floor into his private office, today's Miller's Room. It was beautifully done with a plastered interior and "modern" 2 over 2 pane windows replacing the original 12 over 8 pane windows. In addition to clearly being a horse lover (the 17 horses shown in the 1851 census), he apparently liked birds, since the earliest photo we have of the front of the mill (c.1880) shows two birdhouses affixed to the middle window on the 3rd floor.

In Walling's map of Delta, published in 1861, we see Denaut owning 6 houses in Delta, with 4 showing as tenant houses. He also owned a hotel, a store (likely 2), a warehouse, a hall and of course, a grist mill. He was clearly the dominant force in the village. The magnificent looking brick hall, located adjacent to the mill, served as a space for town hall meetings, concerts and dances, and as a court house. Its use diminished somewhat after the building of the Old Town Hall in 1879/80.

In his personal life, he had 4 children with Julia Easton; sons Roderick Easton (1845-1876), George Crawford (1847-1874), Walter Henderson (1850-1903) and a daughter, Julia Easton (1854-1928). His wife Julia died in 1855. While there is conflicting genealogical information, it appears he married Harriet Jones of Brookfield, Connecticut, perhaps in 1856. She died on July 30, 1858. On May 17, 1859, he married Caroline Amelia Dunham (1832-1907) of Brockville and they had seven children, Erastus (1860-1861), Edward D. (1861-1862), Matthew Stevenson (1863-1928), Caroline Elizabeth (1866-1947), Henry Duncan (1867-1904), Sarah (1869-1937) and James Lancaster (1870-1952).

Walter's Headstone

Robertson Cemetery, Delta. Photo by Ken

The mill appears to have been a continued success for Denaut. In 1861, the mill produced 6,000 barrels of flour for sale. That would have been "superfine" flour, the only type of flour allowed for export at that time in standard barrels containing 196 pounds of flour. Like millers before him, Denaut was selling the coarser components of the flour (coarse middling, shorts and bran) to local farmers as animal feed and perhaps even using it himself for his own livestock. This was early days for animal feed, the purpose manufacturing of animal feed started in the late 1800s. But Denaut may have looked at this as another source of revenue, particularly as the flour market became more difficult for small mills in the 1880s with the import of western grain and the introduction of factory flour mills (using roller mills).

Carolyn Amelia Dunham Denaut

DMS Photo Archives, photographer and date unknown.

Denaut also had a revenue stream from his sawmill and carding mill. It is this diversification, plus his various rental and retail assets in Delta that ensured his continued success. Walter Denaut died on March 16, 1889 at the age of 81 ½.

> Delta, March 19 [1889] – The oldest resident of Delta, Walter H. Denaut, died on Friday last. A very large crowd collected to pay respects to his remains and to his afflicted family. The town hall was appropriated for the funeral service, the churches being too small to accommodate all. The hall was draped in black. Rev. Mr. Howard, of Elgin, preached the sermon. Four other clergymen assisted with the service. A special train brought out a number of sympathizing friends and relatives from Brockville to assist at the funeral.

Ownership of the mill went to Walter's wife, Caroline, and their son, James L. Denaut, operated the mill until its sale in 1893 (after which he moved to the U.S. and became a doctor). On October 5, 1893, Caroline sold the Old Stone Mill to George Haskin, ushering a new era for the Old Stone Mill, to be continued in the next newsletter.

- Ken Watson

2024 Special Events

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

OLD STONE MILL
2024 Milling Schedule
(starting at 1 pm)

Day	Date
Saturday	**May 18**
Saturday	**June 1**
Saturday	**June 15**
Saturday	**June 29**
Saturday	**July 13**
Saturday	**July 27**
Saturday	**August 10**
Saturday	**August 24**
Saturday	**August 31**
Saturday	**September 28**

BLACKSMITH SHOP

Day	Date
Saturday	**May 18**
Saturday	**June 29**
Saturday	**July 13**
Saturday	**August 24**
Saturday	**September 28**

10 am to 2 pm

Saturday, September 14 will be the ***Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association (OABA) Hammer-In***, with blacksmiths across the province attending.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday, June 17, 11 am
Old Town Hall

We will have a business AGM starting at 11 am on Monday, June 20.

Everyone is welcome!!

SEASON OPENING
Saturday, May 18

The mill will open for the 2024 season, 10 am to 5 pm daily until Labour Day. We will have a milling demonstration starting at 1 pm and the Blacksmith Shop will be open.

DELTA FAIR
Thurs-Sun, July 25-28

The Old Stone Mill will be open as Delta hosts the 194th annual Delta Fair. See www.deltafair.com

LEEDS HERITAGE DAY
Saturday, May 25

The Old Stone Mill and many other area museums will be open as part of Leeds Heritage Day. See: leedsheritage.ca

Let There Be Books!!

Our "Ginormous" used book sale is held annually in the Old Town Hall as part of the Delta Maple Syrup Festival. This is a scene from this year's book sale (photo by Ken)

DELTA HARVEST FESTIVAL
Saturday, September 28

The Delta Harvest Festival will celebrate the bounty of the fall harvest. Details TBA.

MUSIC at the Old Town Hall

Friday, October 18, 7:30 pm—Festival of Small Halls Music Event—artist TBA.

More Events & Event Updates

We're always working on new things including more music at the Old Town Hall. We'll have information about these, as well as updates on our current events, on the events page of our website and on Facebook.

www.deltamill.org or **www.facebook.com/DeltaMill/**