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# MILLING AROUND

## Motor Mill Historic Site



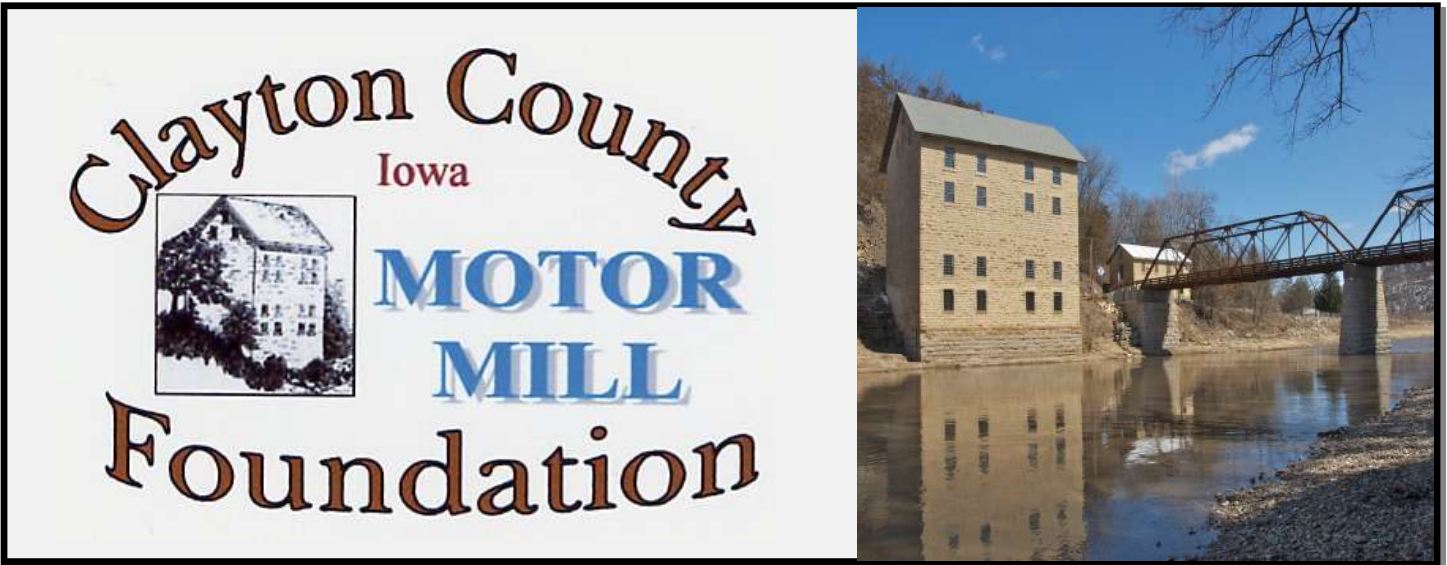
The mission of the Motor Mill Foundation is to protect and preserve the architectural integrity, history, natural beauty and serenity of the Motor Mill site and its surroundings and to develop appropriate uses and interpretations as a regional treasure for the benefit of future generations.

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Clayton County Conservation Board  
29862 Osborne Rd  
Elkader, IA 52043





Summer 2015

Motor Mill Foundation of Clayton County

No. 22

## *Milling Around Bridge Update*

Sweat, determination, support, and of course money were all driving factors in the successful completion of the Motor Mill Bridge. With work beginning on October 11, 2012, it took slightly less than 2 months –until December 6- to complete the construction of the bridge. To celebrate, admire and recognize the work put into the bridge, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on December 8, 2012. During this opening ceremony, local project partners were on hand along with neighbors and community members. This outpouring of support for the new bridge has continued to grow. Thank you to all Motor Mill enthusiasts in the community and beyond!



Since its completion, the new bridge has attracted a lot of attention. One favorite attraction takes place during the holiday season, the bridge becomes decorated with Christmas lights (shown on the left). At least one wedding proposal has taken place on the new bridge. The natural beauty and rustic image of Motor Mill has been used as a backdrop for many prom and senior pictures.

The new bridge also attracted the attention of the Bridgehunter's Chronicles. This is an online column devoted to historic bridges in the USA, Europe and elsewhere. The group held their annual conference in Eastern Iowa in August of 2013 and stopped by the bridge while on a driving tour of other sites in Northeast Iowa.

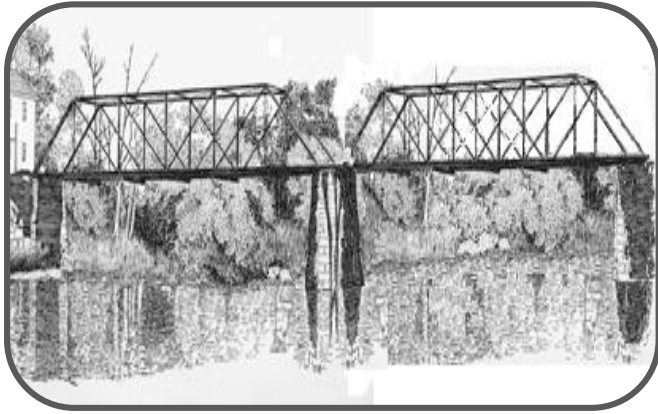
Completion of the bridge enhanced the quality of the Mill tours and accessibility for visitors but required a large amount of funding. Following the flood of 2008, the Clayton County Conservation Board worked closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to obtain federal disaster assistance to help pay for the project. A bronze plaque near the bridge acknowledges that partnership.



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# *Bridge Update Continued*

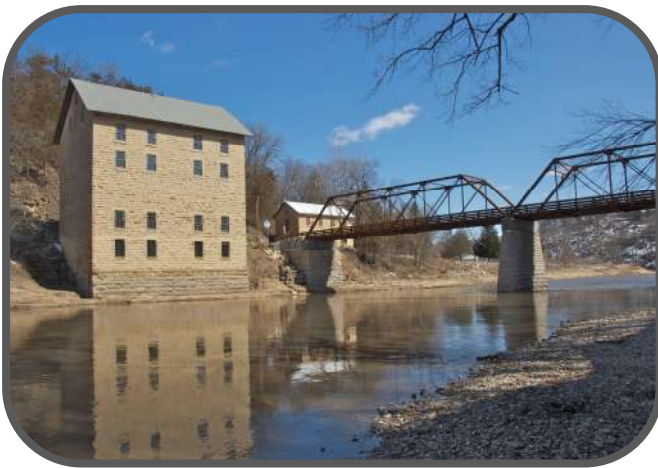
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**Painting of original bridge which was constructed in 1899**



**Half of bridge was destroyed during the flood of 1991, the other half was destroyed during the flood of 2008**



**Replacement of Motor Mill Bridge in December of 2012**

## **TOTAL BRIDGE COST \$1,089,765**

Funding for the bridge construction was secured through a FEMA grant along with grants from REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection), UMGC (Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation), Iowa Great Places, and the Capital Fund Campaign. An additional in-kind contribution was provided by the Clayton County Engineer Department during the process of construction of the bridge.

Minnowa Construction of Harmony, Minnesota, submitted the low bid of \$906,322—more than \$480,000 below the engineers estimate. With contingencies and additional pier work, the final cost was \$1,089,765. With the majority of the cost paid by grants, the Motor Mill Foundation still had to borrow \$85,986 from the Clayton County Conservation Board's Conservation Reserve fund.

Donations since completion of the bridge have reduced the debt amount to \$47,000—but the Foundation still is seeking donations and grant opportunities to finish paying for the project. Contributions are welcomed and they are tax deductible!

# Future Plans

## Replacing Main Level Floor

The main floor sometimes housed livestock during the Klink ownership of the Mill. The work crew is currently focusing on replacing the flooring that deteriorated due to livestock.

## Loft Area

Originally the loft area was used for storage. The loft area floor boards and floor joists were removed many years ago when the Mill was converted for barn uses. During this time, the flooring and floor joists were repurposed to be used in the barn, and in several other buildings near the Motor Mill site. The Foundation has plans to reconstruct the loft area of the Mill by implementing new floor joists and new flooring.

## Roof Repairs

In 2009, the Mill roof was replaced with asphalt, following guidelines of the State Historical Society. A wind storm in 2014 blew off several shingles but we are making arrangements to have repairs done. We also plan to replace the roofs on the Cooperage and Icehouse, pending approval by the State Historical Society and availability of funding.

## Basement Silt Project

For several years the goal has been to remove the 15 feet of silt that remains in the basement of the Mill but no action has been taken at this point due to issues with various agencies. More information regarding this project will be shared in the near future.



Future project to complete loft area



Working on flooring and basement discoveries

## Motor Mill Open Weekends

*Tours Offered Noon-5p.m.*

<b>May 2-3</b>	<b>May 23-25</b>
<b>June 6-7</b>	<b>June 20-21</b>
<b>July 11-12</b>	<b>July 25-26</b>
<b>August 8-9</b>	<b>August 22-23</b>
<b>September 12-13</b>	<b>September 26-27</b>

For more information visit:  
[www.claytoncountyconservation.org](http://www.claytoncountyconservation.org) or Mo



# Succession To Success

The following is a list of accomplishments of the Motor Mill Foundation listed with the project years:

Motor Mill Advisory Committee- 2002  
Continued Motor Mill Research - On going  
Feasibility Study- 2004  
Motor Mill Foundation- 2004  
Robert Grau Memorial Savanna- On going  
Mill Open for Tours- 2005  
Establish a Newsletter- 2005  
Received 501c3 status- 2006  
Established a Website- 2006  
Long Range Visioning Plan- 2007  
Replace Joists and Flooring- 2007-2009  
Replace Mill and Inn Roof- 2009  
Replace Mill Windows- 2007-2010  
Long Range Education Plan- 2010  
Replace Mill Stone Floor Support- 2010-2011  
On Facebook- 2011  
Bridge Replaced- 2012  
Stories in Stone Fundraising- Began- 2012  
Grand Opening of Bridge- 2013  
Replaced Windows in Cooperage- 2013  
Created Stair Rails- 2014  
Safety Improvements- 2014  
Closed in the Stairwell- 2014



Previous to 2007 floor replacements



Gap in peak before 2009 joist and roof replacement

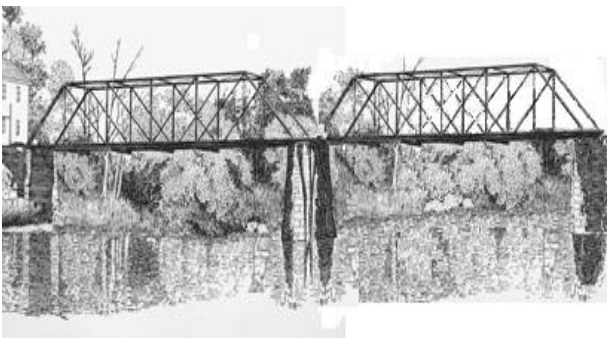


Previous to major window replacement

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## Motor Memories

*Fact, Fiction, and Rumor*



This story has been documented in the Motor Mill files but is not listed with a date.

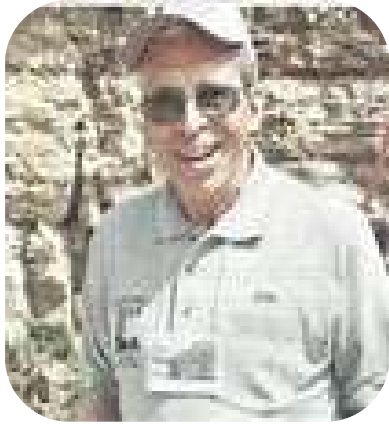
### **Drunk on Motor Bridge during high water:**

Long ago, during high water, a very tipsy man stopped his car on or near the Motor Mill Bridge. He got out of his car and laid with his arm hanging off the side of the bridge. Many of the neighbors were anxiously watching as they debated on what they should do. Too worried about the surge, none of the neighbors went to bring him off the bridge. They watched as the crest came and surged up towards the drunk man. He could just touch the water with his fingertips. This was the highest the 3rd and 4th generation residents of Motor had ever recalled seeing the Turkey.

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# *Meet the Foundation*

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## **John Nikolai, *President***

John and his wife, Mary Fran, moved to Clayton County from the Chicago suburbs in April 1997. Originally from Moline, IL., John had a career in water transportation. He became aware of Northeast Iowa when he managed a barge terminal and scrapyards on French Island in LaCrosse, WI in the 1970's. In 2000 when the Clayton County Supervisors held listening posts throughout the county to get ideas for future growth John spoke out about the historical potential of developing the Motor Mill as a historical tourist destination. He is a founding member of the Motor Mill Advisory Committee established in 2002 and serves as President of the Motor Mill Foundation.



## **Jon de Neui, *Vice President***

Jon, a Highway 13 resident, originally resided in Cedar Rapids. He moved to the Clayton County area after completing his degrees in History and Biology. With these degrees, he taught for 5 years and then went on to build houses with his father. Later in life, Jon taught farm construction at Kirkwood for 10 years and then worked for the Amana Colonies where he was the mastermind behind their barn restorations. Jon's construction experience and interest in restoring historic buildings led him to Motor Mill. He partakes in many duties at the Mill and is referred to as the "visionary". Jon has served on the Motor Mill foundation for 11 years.



## **Chuck Morine, *Treasurer***

Chuck, an 81 year old go getter, and his wife Syd both serve as tour guides for the Mill. Chuck first became involved with the Mill when he saw the sad condition it was in. He helped with the Mill roof repair several ago and can be found helping with renovations at the Mill each week. Chuck has his Masters in Science from the University of Illinois and taught vocational agricultural for three years. Chuck also served our country in the Army. Chuck returned home to farm for over 40 years. He and his wife moved to Clayton County when Chuck retired in 2001. When he is not volunteering with the Mill, Chuck enjoys flower gardening and is part of the Iowa Master Gardener Program. Chuck has served on the Motor Mill Foundation for 13 years.



## **Larry Stone, *Secretary***

Larry Stone first saw Motor Mill in 1974, when he and his wife, Margaret, moved to Clayton County. An avid canoeist, Larry regularly paddled on the Turkey River, and a trip that included Motor Mill was always a highlight. More than 40 years later, canoe/kayak floats involving Motor are still a favorite activity for Larry and his family, which includes a son and daughter and four grandkids. Larry worked as an outdoor writer/photographer for the Des Moines Register and as a freelance writer/photographer. He's made thousands of images of Motor, and has written several stories about the site. Moving near Motor increased Larry's interest in the site even more. When he was appointed to the Clayton County Conservation Board about 15 years ago, Larry's interest expanded to how the board could use and improve the site. Larry has served on the Motor Mill Foundation for 13 years.

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# *Meet the Foundation*

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## **Lee Lenth, *Board Member***

Lee Lenth, who currently resides in Littleport, served with the 101st Airborne Arterial Unit for two years. Lee's family farmed for several generations and after completing his service, Lee returned home to work on the family farm. During this time he also married his wife. He and his wife moved to the Communia and Littleport area in 1975 and have lived in Clayton County now for over 75 years. Lee currently works with the Amish where he helps with family construction and taxi services. Through his work on the farm and work with the Amish, Lee has grown to love anything related to carpentry or construction. Lee's knowledge of construction and carpentry are what drew him to Motor Mill and his love for the area has kept him here. Lee has served on the Motor Mill Foundation as a Board Member for 8 years.



## **Les Klink, *Board Member***

Les Klink from Communia, IA is personally connected to Motor Mill. Les Klink's grandparents bought the Motor Mill in 1903. Their names were Louis L. Klink and Elizabeth (Wistrick) Klink. During this time the Klink family used the mill for farming. After his grandfather died, he and his father farmed all of the land at Motor Mill as well as the farm he lives on now. He remembers his grandfather sitting on a big rock and talking to people as they came down the river and also remembers being unaware that there was a tunnel in the basement until his teenage years. His fondest memories of the Mill are from his younger years when he helped with farm work at the Mill and threshed oats with his father. Les has served on the Motor Mill Foundation since it first formed in 2002.



## **Jeanette Muller, *Board Member***

Jeanette was raised in Clayton County on her family's dairy farm. She graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelors degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. After college, she spent 15 years doing invasive species control, wildlife, fisheries and plant inventories and restoration projects in parks across the Western portion of the country. In 2004, she returned to Iowa to care for her Mom and shortly after became an AmeriCorps Naturalist where she served as the only Mill tour guide in 2005. During her time at the Mill, she made copies of mill function diagrams to share with other guides, created large packets of world history, and in 2006 trained several other guides. Since spring 2008, she works as a season Biological Science Technician at Effigy Mounds. Jeanette has served on the Motor Mill Foundation Board for 7 years.

## **Thank You to Our Current Volunteers**

Steve Beaumont, Rick Dennler, Fred Stroschein, Greg Beisker, Roger Buchholz, Sandy Refle and Dean Refle.

These volunteers have shared their time, talent and love for the Mill by volunteering in numerous ways this year and in past years. We thank each of you for helping to move the future of Mill of forward and for sharing your skills with both the Foundation and our visitors.

# Ways to Get Involved

## Donate

Donations of any amount help to maintain and enrich the natural beauty Motor Mill has to offer. Your donations allow for renovations such as repairing the roof, refinishing the main level of the mill and reconstructing the 6th level loft. Any donation will greatly help to preserve the beauty of Motor Mill for years to come.

Donations can be sent to:

Motor Mill Foundation

OR

Clayton County Conservation  
29862 Osborne Rd  
Elkader IA 52043

Donations to the Motor Mill Foundation, a 501c3 organization or the Clayton County Conservation Board are tax deductible.

## Volunteer

There are two ways to volunteer with Motor Mill.

The first option is to share the story of the Mill by becoming a tour guide. Tour guides are the heartbeat of the Mill. Without volunteer tour guides we would be unable to continue showing the historic beauty and charisma of the Mill. Tours are given two weekends each month and are divided between our volunteer guides. An informational tour guide handout is provided, all you need to do is bring your smile. Please help us continue sharing the story of Motor Mill by becoming a tour guide.

The second volunteer option is to help with renovations by serving on the volunteer work crew. The work crew has taken on projects such as replacing flooring, floor joists, windows, and will be starting the large project of replacing the main floor and loft area in the near future. Experience with construction or related areas is preferred.

For more information or to become a volunteer please contact the Clayton County Conservation Board at (563) 245-1516.

## How to find us

From Iowa HWY 13: South of Elkader take X3C (Grandview Road) east 3.5 miles; turn left on Hazel Road and immediately take a hard left on Galaxy Road, about 1.5 miles of gravel to Motor Mill.

Or, take gravel road C1X (Grape Road) east from Hwy 13 at Elkader; follow Grape road 4 miles, turn south on Galaxy Road, go 3 miles to Motor Mill.

For more information contact:  
Clayton County Conservation Board  
(563) 245-1516  
[www.claytoncountyconservation.org](http://www.claytoncountyconservation.org)  
[www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org)

