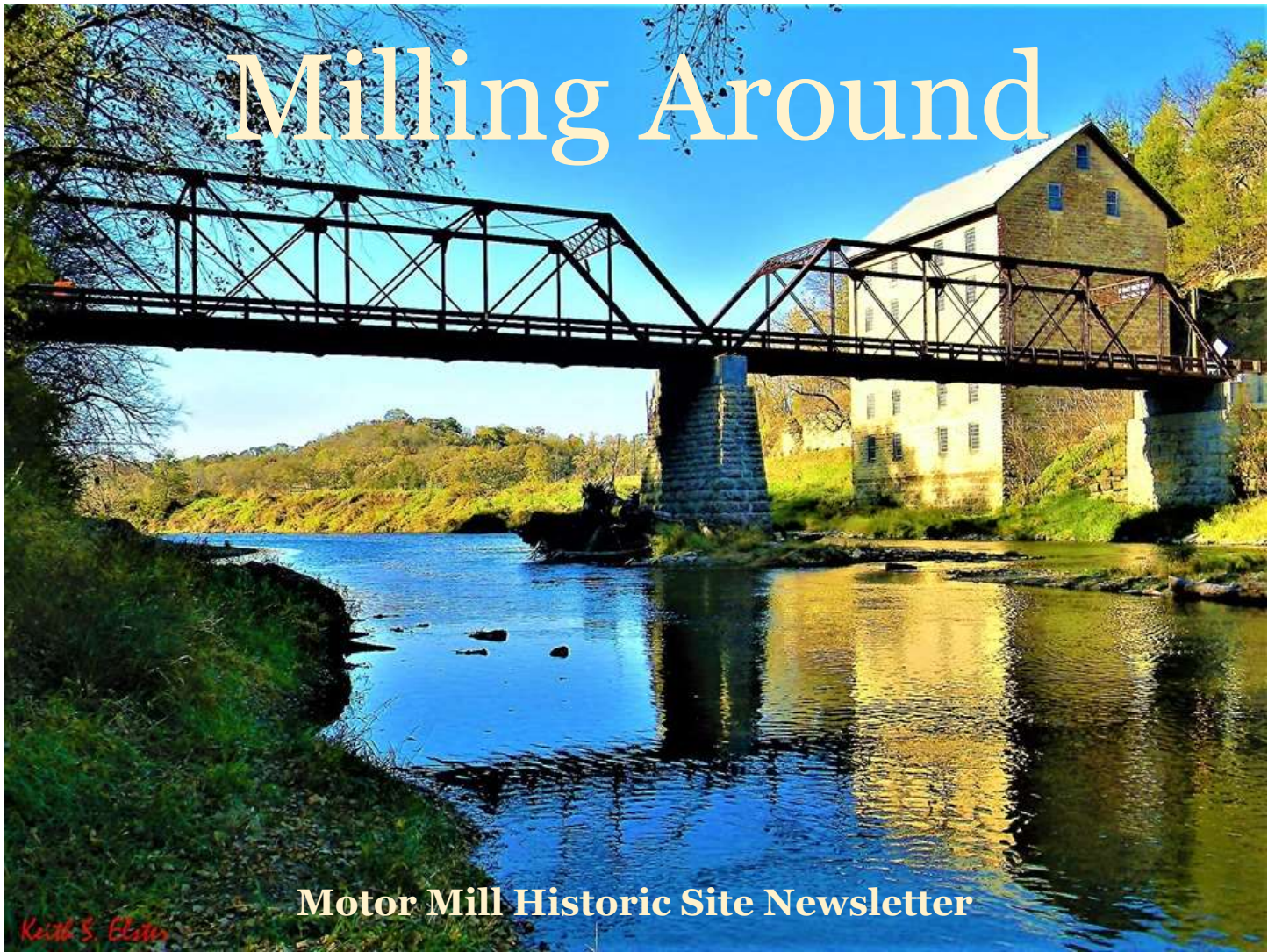


# Milling Around



**Motor Mill Historic Site Newsletter**

*Keith S. Elster*

## Milling Around is now digital.

The Motor Mill Foundation has gone digital with its newsletter. If you know someone who did not get a copy please have them contact us to be added to the e-mail list at [ccb@claytoncountya.gov](mailto:ccb@claytoncountya.gov) with "Milling Around" in the subject line.

Milling Around will also be available on our website: [www.motormil.org](http://www.motormil.org)

Clayton County Conservation Board  
 29862 Osborne Rd  
 Elkader, IA 52043





# Help Restore the Inn!

The Clayton County Conservation Board and the Motor Mill Foundation are excited to undertake the renovation of the Inn at Motor Mill so it can once again be used by visitors to Motor. Plans are to flood proof the lower level and make it a welcome center for the site. The two upper levels will be a retreat center that can be rented by a group or family. It will contain a kitchen, several bedrooms, and a gathering area for groups to use. The site will be perfect for family reunions, workshops, and educational retreats.

Of course money is needed to make this happen, and fundraising has already begun. The preliminary cost estimate for the restoration is about \$450,000. So far the county has secured preliminary money on the project through the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs' and the State Historic Preservation Commission's Iowa's Rural Heritage Revitalization Grant for \$125,000. *Motor Inn Revival: Accommodating Agrarian Travelers Past and Present is being supported in part by a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.*

During the month of August we were able to raise \$6,000 in donations during A Community Thrives jumpstart campaign. We are also working on the Enhance Iowa CAT (Community, Attractions & Tourism) grant and others, but we have a long way to go to reach our goal. Your support can go a long way in making this goal a reality to open the Inn back up to visitors. [Donate Today!](#)



Photo by Dave Beck

**Inn History:** The Inn at Motor was built by Edgar Parch. Alex Falconer was hired as the Innkeeper and lived at Motor until his death in 1892. The next owner of the Inn was Louis Klink, who was bought the property in 1903 from James Crosby after renting it for about 7 years. For 80 years the Klink family owned the land which was also farmed by several tenants. Lawrence Beck rented the farm from Louis Klink from 1949 - 1977, followed briefly by Jim Folsom. Clayton County Conservation with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's help purchased the property in 1983 from Klink heirs Paul and Betty Johnson.



The Klink and Greve families stand in front of the Motor Mill Inn in early 1900. The inn was operated by Lewis and Elizabeth's daughter Klink.

Photos from the Beck, Johnson and Klink family collections.

# Alexander Falconer, Innkeeper at Motor

## Early Clayton County Pioneer

1805-1892

Born in Scotland, Alex Falconer left everything he knew and came to America in 1833 to seek his fortune. He worked for a bit building one of the first railroads out east before enlisting in the United States Infantry. He served 11 years in Company E, First Regiment under Captain A. S. Miller, achieving Orderly Sergeant and Drill Master. Much of that time was spent in Florida during the Seminole Wars, including the battle of Okeechobee, led by Col. Zachary Taylor, where he was injured. Alex Falconer was honorably discharged on February 9, 1846.

Soon after, he and his wife Mary MacGee set out for Clayton County, Iowa and purchased a large tract of land to settle on. They found the country and farming lonely and missed military life. When a local volunteer infantry was created at the beginning of the Mexican War. Mr. Falconer eagerly joined and moved for a while to Fort Atkinson. This was during the time when troops from Fort Atkinson moved the Ho-Chunk from the Iowa Neutral Ground to Minnesota.

When Fort Atkinson closed in 1849, the couple returned to Garnavillo and decided to try their luck at running the Garnavillo Hotel. They found themselves well suited to the hotel business and soon moved to the town of Clayton and bought The Clayton House. There they grew their reputation and business to become well respected in the county and known as some of the best hotel keepers around.

The next stage of their lives began when the new town of Motor needed a hotel keeper. Crosby and Thompson, founders of Motor, were able to convince the Falconers to leave Clayton to run the Inn at Motor. The Falconers can be seen right away on the 1870's census after relocating there. They were living with John Thompson's family as well as the schoolteacher, Mary Davis, and a servant, Elizabeth Bersell. Over time,

Thompson and Co. were unable to pay them as the town and mill struggled.

Times were tough at Motor for the Falconers. Alex and his wife eventually retired there and spent the rest of their days living in the Inn at Motor. Most of their savings were depleted and the Falconers struggled for years until Alex finally won his fight to get his military pension for service during the Florida and Mexican wars and for his injuries sustained in battle.

Securing his pension made his last few years at Motor a little bit easier.







Photo by Gloria Robbins

## Stable Renovations Underway

Imagine a family reunion, graduation party or reception inside this unique historic structure! If you have seen some activity at the stable, that is the start of renovations to turn the stable into useable space. Contractors have removed the dairy barn gutters and will pour an even concrete floor. Beams will be replaced to make the stable safe and beautiful for public use. Once this project is complete, we will be able to take reservations for special events. If there are no significant delays, the goal is to have this space available during the 2022 season. This project is made possible in part by the Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation.



# How You Can Help

**Donate:** Our grants require cash matches. Help us move forward with the Inn by donating today!

Donations of any amount help to maintain and enrich the architecture and beauty of the Motor Mill Historic Site. Any donation is appreciated and no donation is too small!

Donations to the Motor Mill Foundation or the Clayton County Conservation Board are tax deductible.



Photo by Larry Stone

**Volunteer:** Volunteers are greatly needed and appreciated since they are nothing less than the heart and soul of the Motor Mill Historic Site.

One way to volunteer is to become a tour guide. Tours are given every weekend during the tour season. Before you become a guide yourself, you will shadow another guide in order for you to get comfortable with the site and giving tours.

Another way to volunteer is to help with renovations by serving on the volunteer work crew. It is impossible to keep the mill up and running without the crew's help. Experience with construction or a similar area is preferred.

**Donations may be sent to:**

**Motor Mill Foundation**

or

**Clayton County Conservation Board**

29862 Osborne Rd  
Elkader, IA 52043

Or online at:

[www.motormill.org/donations/](http://www.motormill.org/donations/)

## **For More Information**

**Phone:** 563-245-1516

**E-mail:** [cccb@claytoncountya.gov](mailto:cccb@claytoncountya.gov)

**Website:** [www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org)





# 2021 Motor Mill



## “Stories in Stone” Tours: Noon – 5:00 pm

- Every **Saturday** Memorial Day to Labor Day
- September 11<sup>th</sup>
- September 25<sup>th</sup>
- October 9<sup>th</sup>

## Upcoming Events

- September 30 – Date Night at Motor Mill
- November 20 – Bridge Lighting Event



Visit [www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org) or call 563-245-1516 for updates and more information on these and other events.



## Have you seen the basement yet?

Last year's biggest accomplishment was the silt removal in the basement of the mill, made possible by C. J. Moyna and Sons. During the project, the beautiful pillars and stone foundation were revealed and 4 wooden turbines were discovered. A new viewing platform and new lighting allow visitors to see how the Mill was built into the bedrock. If you haven't visited the mill this season, there is still time to come for a tour.

# Old Style Recipes

*Early recipes often did not give detailed directions or amounts.*

## Oatmeal Cracknels - Bannocks

Recipe from Elkader Register 1878

*"Bannocks the Scotch call them - are excellent made as follows..."*

Oatmeal

Barley water (*Liquid from simmering 1 part barley/10 parts water or use regular water.*)

Pinch of salt

Wheat flour

### Directions:

Take the best quality of oatmeal, and stir in barley water enough to wet through: add a pinch of salt. Let it stand for ten minutes to swell: then roll out the mixture to 1/4 inch in thickness, first flouring the surface and rolling pin with wheat flour. Cut with a biscuit cutter.

Bake in a moderate oven, as cakes will burn quickly, and only require to be of the lightest brown. They will snap easily between the fingers, and are delicious for lunch, requiring no butter to make them palatable. If put into a closed jar, they will keep for several months. In the Highlands of Scotland, they preserve their bannocks in a barrel of oatmeal and can keep them a long time."

## Bran Bread

Recipe from Elkader Register 1878

*"This is a capital recipe for the bread keeps fresh for a long time and is easily made"*

2 1/2 lbs brown flour (wheat flour-bran not removed)

1/4 lb white flour

1/2 oz soda

1 nut size lump of baking ammonia\*

4 tsp tartaric acid (Cream of Tartar)

1 1/2 pints milk and water mixture (or water)

### Directions:

Bake in a tin at moderate temperature.

*\*(substitute equal part baking powder) Baking ammonia, or ammonium bicarbonate, was commonly used before baking soda and baking powder became popular. It is a chemical leavening agent originally made from the horns of deer. Because the word 'hart' is an old term for deer, baking ammonia is also known as hartshorn.*

# Friends of Motor Mill

## Membership Levels

Apprentice (youth).....\$5.00

Stone Cutter.....\$25.00

Carpenter.....\$50.00

Stone Mason.....\$100.00

Cooper.....\$250.00

Miller.....\$500.00

Become a friend of Motor Mill to help with the ongoing restoration and educational programs offered at the site which are funded through sponsorships, donations, and grants. The Membership Endowment Fund is used for the long-term operation of the Motor Mill Historic Site.

You can find yellow donation envelopes at the mill and at the Osborne Nature Center.

# Our Partner Organizations



• **Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area** preserves and tells the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities of the area. [www.silosandsmokestacks.org](http://www.silosandsmokestacks.org)

• The mission of the **Clayton County Conservation Board** is to promote the health and general welfare of the people; and to encourage preservation, conservation, education and recreation through responsible use and appreciation of our natural resources and cultural heritage. [www.claytoncountyconservation.org](http://www.claytoncountyconservation.org)



• 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 interpretation as a regional treasure for the benefit of future generations. [www.motormill.org](http://www.motormill.org)

• The **Turkey River Recreational Corridor** provides several outdoor activities, like land and water trails, that people can enjoy along the Turkey River. The scenic river connects the towns of Elgin, Clermont, and Elkader offering various business and historic attractions as well. <https://turkeyrivercorridor.com/>



• The **Great River Road National Scenic Byway** follows the course of the Mississippi River for 3,000 miles from northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. The scenic route passes through 10 states and hundreds of river towns. The Great River Road is arguably the longest and most important scenic byway in America. [www.experiencemississippiriver.com](http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com)

• The **River Bluffs Scenic Byway** stretches throughout both Clayton and Fayette counties. This scenic route extends for 109 miles and passes through “Bluff Country”, an area in Northeast Iowa known for its rolling hills and valleys, towering bluffs, and a beautiful green landscape. [www.traveliowa.com/trails/river-bluffs-scenic-byway/11/](http://www.traveliowa.com/trails/river-bluffs-scenic-byway/11/)

