

Friends of the Stockdale Mill

Summer 2010



Around the Mill

Susanne & Dwight Fouts

It is now August 2010 and we have the pleasure and responsibility of again bringing you up to date with the “goings on” at the Stockdale Mill – the only mill still standing proudly on the Eel River. Once upon a time there were 13 operating mills: South Whitley, Collamer, Liberty Mills, North Manchester, Laketon, Stockdale, 1 mi below Stockdale, south of Pettysville, Chili, Denver, Mexico, below Mexico at county line, and Logansport. This perseverance has only been possible due to volunteers: skilled workmen, guides, contributors, supporters, media, visitors, and divine guidance.

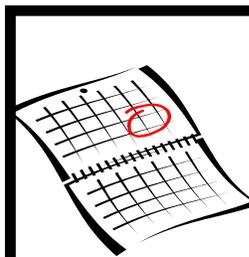
This year has seen new projects started and old projects finished and improved. With the discovery of a blueprint for our flour packer, we have been able to complete its restoration. We are now using ash reeds to hang the big swing sifter (oak was too stiff, poplar was too weak). The small gyro-sifter on the second floor (used to sift out wheat germ/cream of wheat) is now running. Also on the second floor the line shafts on the west side are operational. New belting has been purchased and is being applied as needed.

The wheat elevator that took wheat from below the basement to the top floor has been completely restored. This required a new “boot” and pulley at the bottom where wheat is received from the drag chain, and a completely new belt to hold the old “buckets” (cups that scoop up the wheat). Improvements were made to the drag chain. Additional flour material elevators are also now working.

The Visitors Center has improved ventilation; the corn crib has been organized and cleaned; and safety improvements have been added. Of

course, this summer there was a lot of mowing! You’ll need to see the mill again to believe the changes!!!

As in the past, we would like to acknowledge the year’s volunteers. How we have been blessed (and I mean *blessed*) for the last 10 years with these dedicated and beautiful people!!! A relic of the past; a way of living from days of our ancestors; an interesting day’s visit; a 160 year old challenge – how else would you describe the Stockdale Mill?



Regular tour hours are
Saturdays
Noon to 4PM
May through October

**Special tours may be arranged for
your family group or organization.**

Founders Day Picnic

Calling all volunteers. If you have ever donated your time, materials, equipment, etc., you and your guests are invited to join in our Founders Day picnic at the mill on October 17 at 1:00.

Beverage will be provided – bring a covered dish if you can ... or just come!

Water Over the Dam

*from an interview with Bud and Joan Rife by
Dwight & Susanne Fouts, August 2010*

Bud Rife is one of our guides at the Stockdale Mill and also worked at the mill in the 1950's. We wondered how he happened to work at the mill. Now, as Bud tells the story.....

"I was just out of high school a while in 1953 and almost 17 years old (I doubled up 5th and 6th



grades at East Side School in one year before passing on to 7th & 8th grades at Chili), and I needed work. I painted

all the summer. I was 17 and was in love. Our family had always gone to the mill, besides Grandpa worked there between 1890 and 1900 hauling flour. My mother would tell stories about hauling flour to Peru, Wabash, and North Manchester. Addison Krom needed help at the mill because he was hauling marl and gravel from a gravelworks at Laketon, which he liked to do so he could be outside.

"I needed a steady job because I wanted to get married to Joan Zook from Greentown, but wondered how we could make it on 50 hours a week at \$1 an hour. After marriage, we lived three and a half miles west of the mill paying \$20 a month rent – no inside plumbing and no hot water. We thought we could make it on that." Bud continues with a laugh, "Divorce was not an option – it was either love or murder."

Joan commented, "My dad had always gone to our local mill. My sisters and I would go along with 'orders from Mother' to get a certain color or print of feed sacks to make dresses for the girls. One sack would make one dress." Dwight: I guess that would depend on the size of the female, right?

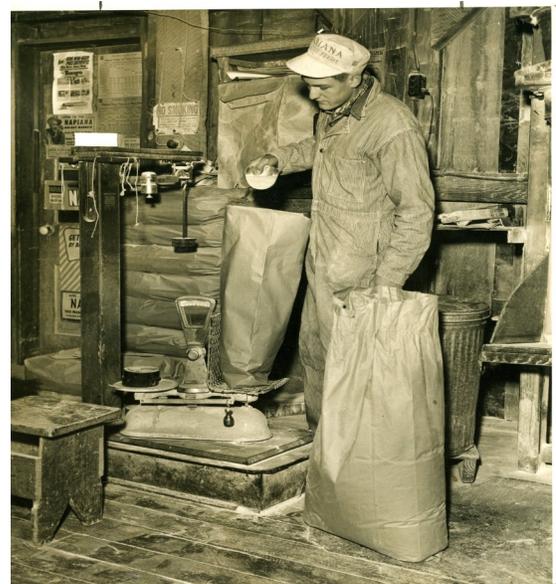
Bud continues, "I worked night or day depending on when the humidity allowed milling without the system caking-up. I never worked on Sunday and neither did Addison. I can't remember ever minding going to work during those two and a half years. Sometimes I wouldn't see Addison for two weeks. Ninety-nine percent of the customers were super. I couldn't wear gloves in the winter because I had to tie flour sacks and feed bags with a miller's knot (this simple knot held well and could be opened with one pull) as well as sew bran bags with a large needle. It was dry in the mill so I could dress for the weather and also get next to a "pot bellied" stove in the office. Old Tom, the mill cat, stayed in the office. The water under the mill kept it cool during the summer, but it was a very cold place in the winter.

"Joan would go with me sometimes when I had to work at night so I wouldn't get lonesome. She would do some cleaning, sweeping and tidying up. The only way I could get away from her those nights was to ride the elevator up to the top floor because she was scared of it (just a little humor).

"In those days I never bothered putting the money till away when I went home for lunch or dinner – when I came back it was always like I left it."

Joan adds, "Truth is always better than fiction."

below: Bud at work



Our mill has long been a point of interest. Here we will share some old photos.

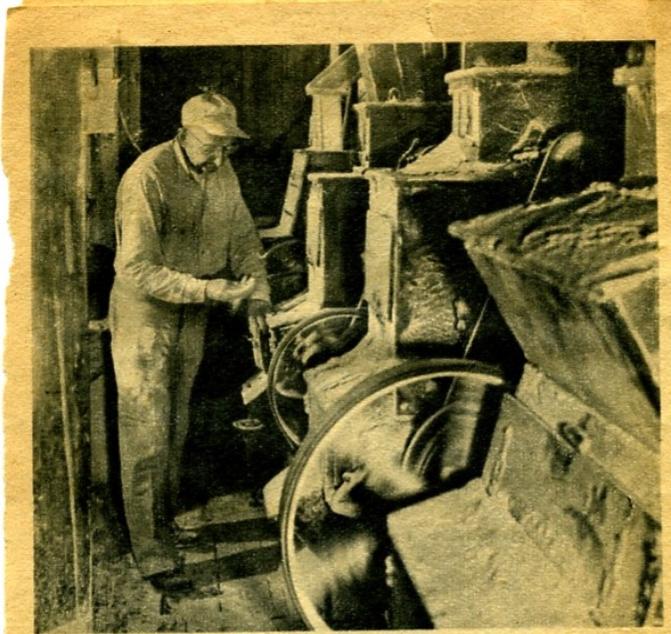
This “Old Stockdale Mill” postcard may be from around 1905. Fishermen are standing in front of the wooden dam.



Arial view from 1954. The former Stockdale Odd Fellows lodge is seen in the upper portion. The lodge was moved from the corner of County Line and River Road. It was lowered to serve as a barn. Only the barn foundation remains.

Initial work on the “new” SR16 bridge is shown in 1970. The old three span “barrel vault” is said to have been the longest of that style when built.





The miller takes a flour sample from the breakers, checks its quality. The mill is a one-man operation.

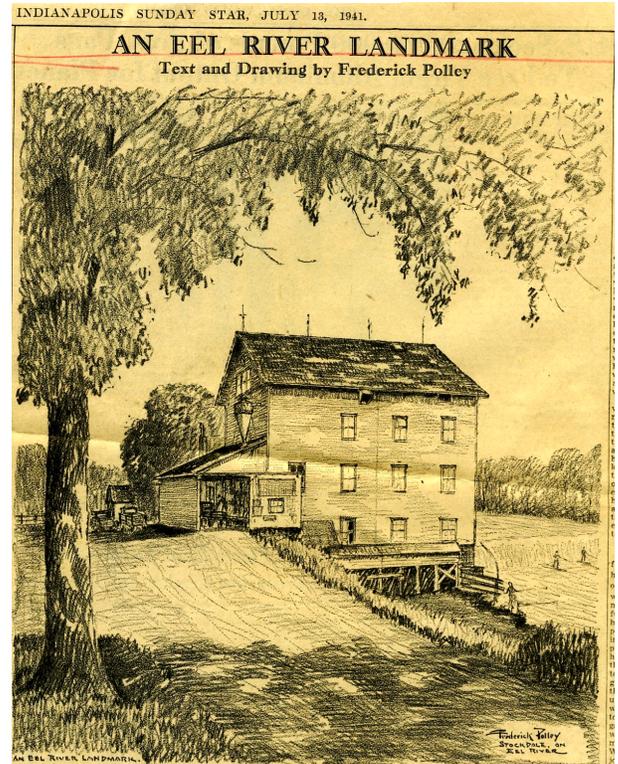


Deck watches gauge across room as he unleashes the power of a turbine. This sets machinery in motion.

Photos of James H. Deck accompanied an article in the Indianapolis Star in 1951.



Addison Krom is shown repairing wooden cogs on a turbine shaft in 1953.



In 1941 the Indianapolis Star Sunday magazine printed this lithograph by Frederick Polley. The cottonwood tree now measures 18 feet around.

Mill Memories

Bob Janick

At the Stockdale Mill we have a very good group of tour guides who also man the visitor center. The group of restoration people also from time to time get involved with conducting tours through the mill.

I was taking a tour through one time and there was an elderly lady who was quite excited to be in the mill. She said that she had not been in the mill in many years. It turns out she had grown up on a farm around Peru. Her father used to bring grain to the mill and, because of the length of the trip, stayed overnight and returned home the next day with the wagon loaded with the finished products. While her father looked after the horses, wagon and paperwork, she played with her friends in the area and splashed around in nearby Squirrel Creek. As she talked, the tears were running down her cheeks. She said that those days were the most cherished memories from her childhood.

That day I realized that the mill was more than a dusty old building that ground and stored wheat and corn. It also held memories for a lot of people for a lot of reasons and was a source of pride for the people of the area. I now count myself as one of those people.

Anita Krom

I think a lot of people visit the Stockdale Mill because for them it's a way to step back into time for a while and to relive what life was like in a rural community 'back in the good old days'. And if they are old enough, they have lots of "Why, I remember when....." stories to share. The mill has certainly seen many changes over the years. Lifestyles have changed immensely, and living on a farm nowadays ain't what it used to be! I remember mom's Maytag wringer washing machine, sun dresses made out of feed sacks, using the outhouse, the pot-bellied stove that burned hard coal, and taking cream to the creamery in Laketon to trade it for butter. I grew up on an 80 acre farm in Paw Paw

Township. My dad, Leo Alger, started out with a 2 row corn planter, then later got a 4 row planter. My brother Archie remembers that we used to have a 1 row corn picker that was pulled behind the tractor. Later dad and grandpa got a bigger 2 row picker that mounted on grandpa's Allis Chalmers. Now, they were really moving up in the world! On hot summer days, an umbrella graced the tractor to provide cool shade for the driver. Grain was hauled by putting sides on the wooden hay wagons, and the scoop shovels were always all banged up and worn razor thin from all the use. I remember my dad taking grain to the Roann Roller Mills and bringing back flour or cream of wheat. My brother remembers riding with Grandpa in his old pick up to take grain to the mill. And my Grandpa did business at the mill at least 20 years before that. Hanging on our living room wall, is a receipt showing that my Grandpa Hugh Alger bought 24 pounds of flour from James H. Deck on January 21, 1935. Because Grandpa paid cash, he received a \$.02 cash bonus, so he ended up only paying \$.88 for his purchase. Now, those were the good old days!!! 75 years after that \$.88 purchase, life still goes on, but the mill no longer serves the community in the same capacity it did then. Now, it serves as a living history museum and as a tribute to all the hard working laborers who made our community what it is today. It's a relic that has withstood over a century and a half of changes, and a place where you'll frequently hear someone fondly reminisce, "Why, I remember when....."

P.S. In 1935 when my grandpa made that 88 cent purchase, he had no way of knowing that 32 years later one of his granddaughters would marry one of the grandsons of that miller!

SPECIAL HOURS

Roann Covered Bridge Festival
tour hours:

Saturday	Sept 11	10-6
Sunday	Sept 12	12-4

Stockdale Mill Foundation
c/o Dwight Fouts
310 W 550 N
Kokomo, IN 46901

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The Stockdale Mill Foundation is a non-profit Indiana corporation with the purpose of preserving the Stockdale Mill. All donations are used 100% for historical preservation and restoration. We invite you to come experience what our dedicated volunteers have prepared for your visit.

Stockdale Mill Foundation
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(765) 457-9507

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* * DONATION CARD * *

To: Stockdale Mill Foundation

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Note :

The Stockdale Mill Foundation is a 501©(3) organization, enabling donors to deduct contributions.

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*** **SUMMER 2010** ***