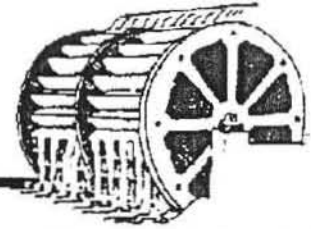


# MILLWORK



July-Aug., 2007

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Vol. 20 - No. 3

## The Dairyman

FRIDAY, - - - AUGUST 26, 1896

P. Butts' Son, of Oneonta, sold J.I. Roberts and Will Brownell a Deering corn harvesting machine. C.J. Elliott, general agent and perfecter of the harvester set it up and operated it. He was assisted by T.A. Geno, of Kingston; A.T. Lane, of Portland, Me.; C.E. Lazelle, of White River Junction, Vt.; C.R. Booran, of Cheshire, Ct. About thirty farmers were present in Brownell's and

Roberts' corn fields to see it work. The corn was extra heavy - most of it about twelve feet high. Some of it was blown down by the wind and had been tangled up by cows running through it, but the Deering Harvester did not seem to mind that. It separated the tangled corn, picked up the lodged and cut it up and tied it in to bundles better than could be done by hand. Every one present was well pleased with the working of this machine. It will supply a long felt want in corn raising, as with the immense acreage the average

farmer's back is not long enough nor strong enough to cut it with sickles or corn cutters. And until we get absolutely *free silver* he cannot afford to hire day labor to do it. One team of horses handled it with as much ease as they would a mowing machine. Farmers who wish to see this corn harvester work should visit Brownell's or Roberts', East Meredith, during the next week or two. It will pay you to do so. The boys will be glad to see you and will use you well. Mr. Baker, Mr. Butts' representative, was present at the trial.

## "Better than Could be Done by Hand"

By Richard Stinson & Caroline de Marrais



Corn Shocks

The short article above comes from the August 28, 1896 *Delaware County Dairyman* newspaper, talking about the first corn harvesting machine used in East Meredith. The occasion was so important that Horace Hanford brought his big box camera on a tripod. He set his camera up out in the field and took at least two photographs to celebrate the event (see one of the pictures above).

Machines like these were



the "Industrial Revolution" of agriculture. As Richard Stinson, who wrote the article, states, "the average farmer's back is not long enough nor strong enough to cut it with sickles ... [and] he cannot afford to hire day labor to do it." We have no records to show just exactly what it

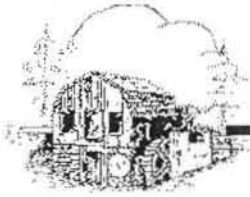
cost in time and money in East Meredith, but I once asked my own grandfather who cut corn by hand in the early 1920s in northern Indiana. According to him, as a teen he cut what he called

"10 row square" shocks of corn. This meant that he cut

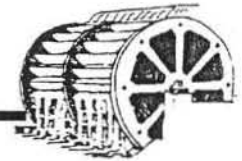
*Continued on page 4*

### In This Issue:

Corn Harvesting	Page 1
	Page 2
	Page 2
Up-Coming Events	Page 3



## What's News?



Hanford Mills Museum is not associated with a great historical event or a famous individual, but it - or a place like it - was important in almost every rural community. A hundred years ago you could find a version of this mill in almost every small town - the family owned business that made small town America work. The only thing that makes Hanford Mills unique is that it survived. Hanford Mills Museum gives people a chance to see the type of business that shaped life and work in many rural villages.

Thanks to the support of our generous members and friends, Hanford Mills Museum operates it's sawmill, gristmill, and woodworking shops with the original waterwheel and a newly restored steam power plant. Lumber is sawn from logs, animal feed ground, and milk crates and barrel heads made. Each year thousands of visitors, school groups, and tour groups experience the power of history at work at Hanford Mills Museum.

This year Hanford Mills will also have the honor of welcoming hundreds of members of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM). The Museum will host the organization's annual conference from September 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Conference attendance is not limited to SPOOM members, so we're encouraging all of the members and friends who share an affinity for Hanford Mill to register for the conference and learn more about many specialized aspects of the preservation, operation, and interpretation of historic mills.

On Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, the schedule features hands-on, interactive workshops in timber framing, steam operation, blacksmithing, and preparing food on a coal-fired cook stove. On the morning of Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, you can attend seminars on steam power, mill stones, the restoration of a waterpower sawmill, modern wind power, and mill interpretation. That afternoon attendees will tour the historic sawmill at Hanford Mills and a modern sawmill at Wightman's Lumber. Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, features a day-long bus tour of mill sites throughout the Finger Lakes. The SPOOM Conference also includes an amateur photography contest. Participating in a day of the conference, or the entire event, when it's hosted at Hanford Mills is a great way to learn more about mills with Hanford Mills' authentic and wonderfully preserved industrial complex as a backdrop. Visit [hanfordmills.org](http://hanfordmills.org) or [spoom.org](http://spoom.org), or call the Museum at 800-295-4992, for more information on the conference.



Liz Callahan

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# Up-Coming Special Events

## Antique Engine Jamboree - Sept. 8-9

See ad at right → → → → → → → →

## Quilt & Textile Show - Thursday, Sept. 20 to Monday, Oct. 8 (closed Mondays except holidays)

View historic and modern quilts, plus other historic textiles (including historic clothing) displayed throughout the John Hanford Farmhouse. If you have a quilt or textiles you would like to exhibit please call 1-800-295-4992 or email hanford2@hanfordmills.org.

## Miller's Harvest Festival - Sunday, Oct. 7 - 10 to 5

Celebrate ingenuity and industriousness, and explore the skill of craftspeople and farmers at work. Guided nature walk, hands-on activities, steam power and agricultural machinery demonstrations.

## Closing Day - Monday, October 15

*NOTE: Although we are closed on most Mondays, we will be open on the Mondays of holiday weekends, including September 3<sup>rd</sup> and October 8<sup>th</sup>, & on our last open day, October 15<sup>th</sup>.*

Hanford Mills Museum Presents:

# The 24th Annual Antique Engine Jamboree



Mill Tours, Vintage Engines, Antique Automobiles, Tractors, & Much More!



September 8 & 9, 2007  
10:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Davenport Fire Department  
BBQ both days

**See both GAS & STEAM powered engines!**



## Upcoming Workshops

### Advanced Wood Carving [WC-2]

Sat. & Sun., August 4-5 - 9 am to 2 pm - For people who've taken our beginners class or you know a little wood carving, but want to know more - this class is for you

Fee: \$75 non-members, \$67 museum members, bring lunch.

### Cookstove Cooking [A13]

Saturday, August 18 - 9:30 am to 2 pm - Participants will create a 1920s farm meal on the coal-fired range to eat in the house's dining room.

Fee: \$40 non-members, \$36 museum members.

### Timberframing [TF-1]

Sat. & Sun., Sept. 15-16, with a free bonus day Mon., Sept. 17 - 9 am to 5 pm - Get a hands-on intro. to building a timberframe structure.

Fee: \$150 non-members, \$135 museum members, drinks included, please bring a bag lunch.

### Quilting: Appliqué [QA-1]

Saturday, October 6 - 10 am to 3 pm

Learn the basics of hand appliqued quilting from talented quilter Anne Slatin. You will make a block to take home.

Fee: \$35 non-members, \$31 museum members, bring lunch.



Return registration & fee to:  
Hanford Mills Museum, P.O. Box 99,  
East Meredith, NY 13757

For more information:  
Call 1-800-295-4992 or E-Mail  
hanford2@hanfordmills.org

### 2007 Workshop Registrations

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_



Workshop Number	Fee
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>TOTAL FEE*</b>	_____

\*Don't forget your member's discount!

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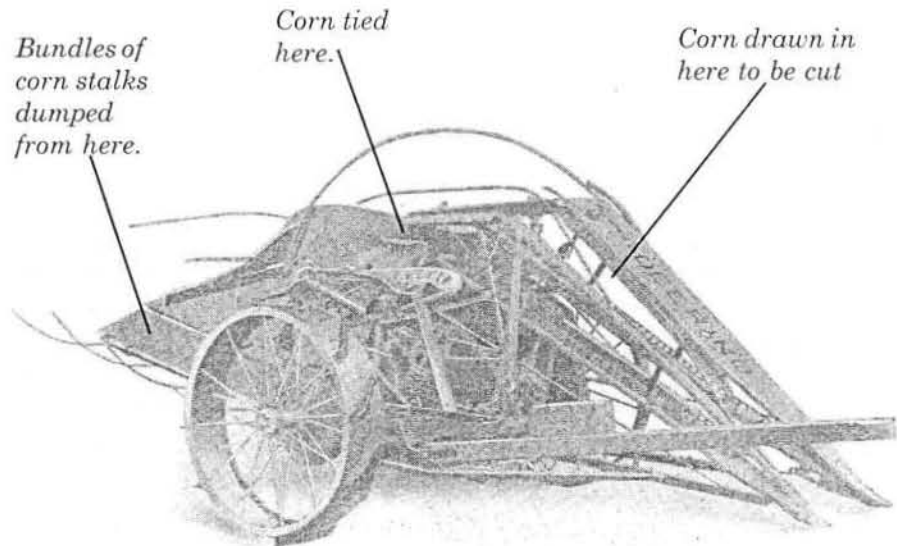
10 stalks from 10 rows each to make a shock, with a total of 100 stalks of corn per shock. He made 10¢ a shock and he could cut 50 shocks in a day. That equaled \$5.00 which was pretty good pay for the 1920s. He said his own father could cut 80 to 100 shocks in a day (making \$8 or \$10)!

Let's do a little math. According to a modern publication on growing corn, a low end for production of stalks on an acre of land would reasonably be 16,000. That's 160 shocks of corn from an acre, which equals \$16. Now if you had 40 acres planted in corn and hired men to harvest it, it would cost you \$640 in the 1920s. That's a lot of money. Of course, it would have cost less in 1896 in New York, but you can see why the local farmers were interested in this new machine. Hanford Mills recorded its first corn harvester sale in 1912. It was sold for \$110. That was a lot of money to lay out at one time and in 1896 the machine likely cost a little more, but as you can see from the article, two farmers Joe Roberts and Will Brownell (cousins) bought the machine as partners. As reported in the article, the work was done so quickly and easily it would not be a hardship for a couple farmers to share the use of the machine. Also, \$110 for a machine is also a whole lot less than paying workers \$640 or more for a harvest done by hand.

Today, corn harvesters not only cut corn stalks, but will also pick and husk the ears or chop the whole plant into silage (animal feed). If you

visit Hanford Mills Museum today, you can see an early corn harvester like the one Roberts and Brownell bought. It is in open storage in the Pavilion. It was once used by

the local draft horse club to harvest the Museum's fields, and hopefully some day again, it will be at work in our fields.



*This image of a corn harvester comes from the 1906 Deering Catalog.*

*The main wheel not only helps transport the machine, but it also provides power for the chains that draw the corn in to be cut and the binder that ties corn stalks together so they can be stacked in a shock.*

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Hanford Mills Museum

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