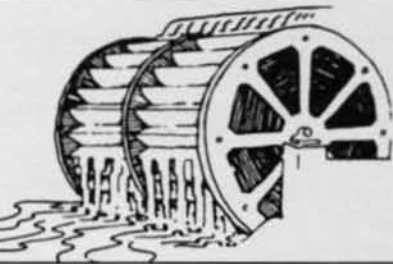


# MILLWORK



Fall, 1992

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Vol. 6 - No. 2

## Grants Necessary to Mill Operation

Hanford Mills Museum and its staff were recently awarded a number of grants. An Institute of Museum Services (IMS) General Operating Support grant was given to help support the museum's operations in the coming year. This is a prestigious national award. Of 1428 applicants, only about 443 received funding this year. This is an important award. We also received funding from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) to develop and publish a number of special topic booklets dealing with water power, mill employees and work skills needed at the mill. Our Gift Shop Manager, Stephanie Kovar, also won an award that will help her attend a museum store conference in Colorado where she can learn new ideas about gift shop management.



## Back in Business - 1900 Style

In the spring of 1900, the Hanfords started their broom and tool handle business. They sold various handles to companies from Ohio to New Hampshire. In past issues of **Millwork** you have read about our work to put the Heath doweling machine back in order to produce broom handles again. This summer, the museum received orders from various traditional broom makers who want handles that are authentic and American made. Let us know if you hear of anyone how needs broom handles or dowels.

## More to Come this Fall!

We hope you made it to our new events in 1992 - Arbor Day (free trees and information), our July Wood Crafts Weekend (how to carve, make Windsor chairs, Shaker boxes, brooms, cider press and timber frame) and our August Metal Crafts Weekend (black and tin smithing, babbitt bearings, antique engines and metal lathes were just some of the topics). We also hope you attended the Lumberjack Festival (burling or log rolling in the pond) in August.

You still have time to come to a Hanford Mills special event. Watch and listen to a multitude of gas and steam engines and the machines they run at our **Antique Engine Jamboree on September 19 and 20**. Come see the draft horses, watch the gristmill, ride a wagon, press cider and decorate a pumpkin at our **Autumn Corn Harvest on September 27**. Then try out another of our new events, the **Inventors Extravaganza on October 11**, where you can find out about East Meredith's own eccentric inventor, see local inventions (do you have one? If so, call the museum), and learn more about inventing and patents.

## What's New!:

We are already planning our next **MILLWORK**. Look for a report on visits by Hanfords & Pizzas, and what these owners' descendants added to our knowledge of the mill. They brought photographs, paintings, business receipts, home movies, 1860s magazines, and lots of information about their families.



## Charlie Haynes Remembers East Meredith

*Charlie Haynes, a Hanford Mills Museum trustee, was born in East Meredith in 1902 and has spent most of his life here. Not only has he let us make audio and video tapes of his memories, but Charlie often visits the museum to give us tips on how things were done or just to tell us a good story. In honor of all his help, we would like to print some of Charlie's memories of the mill and East Meredith. This year, at the age of 90, he moved to Oriskany with his wife Elsie, but we are sure they will be back to visit often.*

The following interview was conducted by Keith Bott and Drew Harty in October, 1991.

### ON BLACKSMITHS & AUTOS

*When did your dad come to East Meredith?*

CH - My dad, Jesse Haynes, was a blacksmith working in New Kingston, New York, and decided to come to East Meredith with my mother and sister in March of 1899. He was the blacksmith there until he died at the age of 101 [in 1974].

*What was it like being a blacksmith in East Meredith?*

CH - Well, the only mode of transportation at the time was the railroad and horse drawn vehicles. There was a livery in town. They usually had 6 or 8 horses for hire and the blacksmith's job was to keep the wagons and sleighs in repair and horses shod.

*When did you start working with your father?*

CH - Well, I had always worked more or less in the shop from an early age. I went to work full time in January at the age of 16 [1919]. I would be 17 in March.

*You told me your dad decided to send you to auto mechanics school?*

CH - Cars were becoming more popular and dad realized that they would in time replace the horse and decided that I should go to an automobile school,

which there were many. The one that was decided on was in Detroit. So we went to learn to become an automobile mechanic. Clayton Holmes and Ralph Bisbee, the three of us went to Detroit in September, 1919 until the following spring.

*When did you start driving a truck?*

CH - Well, we bought our first truck when we moved from the shop my dad was in from 1899 to 1924. We built a new shop on Main Street in 1923 and '24, and we bought a Ford ton and a half truck to haul materials for building the new shop. And later, along with the automobile repair business and the blacksmith business, we added the trucking business and we started hauling milk for the two creameries that existed in the village. We went to larger trucks in 1927, I think, that would haul about 80 40 quart

cans.

*When did you first drive an automobile?*

CH - I first drove an automobile when I was 12 years old.

*Was the horse replaced right away by the automobile?*

CH - Oh no. The farm horses weren't replaced as quickly as the road horses. The doctor, H.D. Hanford and the prominent men in the village and community who could afford an automobile immediately bought one. But the farm work was still done with horses. The farmer usually kept one light pair of horses which might be called road horses & also heavy horses for farm work.

### ON HORACE HANFORD

*How did Horace Hanford feel about your trucking business?*

CH - Well, I wasn't in the same league, of course, as H.D. H.D. had been top dog here so long that he [was wary of] anybody digging in.

*And you were digging into his milk delivery?*

CH - Yeah, and maybe that

*con't. on page 5*



*Charlie's father, Jesse Haynes, works in his brand new blacksmith shop, 1924.*

## Merritt Barnes - the Boss's Nephew

In 1894, Horace and Will Hanford's participation in the family business was recognized when the mill's name was changed to D.J. Hanford & Sons. By 1900, brother John took over the operation of the family farm. But the third generation was not as interested in the mill as the second. Horace's son became an electrical engineer and John's became an accountant. Only the boss's nephew, Merritt Barnes, had any lasting interest. Merritt was the son of the Hanford brothers' sister, Elizabeth.

We know quite a bit about Merritt's background and his work at the mill. Both his great grandfathers were farmers, John Hanford in Delaware County and Philip Barnes in Otsego County. As D.J. Hanford built up a lumber and feed business, Merritt's other grandfather, Simeon Barnes, became a lumber dealer. Since Simeon Barnes and D.J. Hanford were both in the lumber business and were doing business together since the 1870s, it isn't surprising that their children, Leslie and Elizabeth met. They were married September 14, 1880, and after a trip to Texas, shared their time between Leslie's parents in Colliersville, NY and the Hanfords in East Meredith. Merritt was born on January 6, 1883. He was the only child, for Leslie died only five weeks later of consumption (or tuberculosis as it is now known). Elizabeth moved back

to East Meredith and lived first with her parents and later with her brothers.

Merritt must have spent much of his boyhood around the family business because he often pops up in his Uncle Horace's photographs at the mill. He is seen posing before a log, in front of the new boiler's smoke stack, with his dog and sled in front of the mill, standing at the head gate and in



*Merritt playing with his dog, Old Ben, in front of the mill some time around the early 1890s. Photo courtesy of Jean Kelso.*

Sunday school groups by the millpond. Horace was only about 13 years older and Merritt probably idolized his young, active uncle.

Merritt had other interests. The local newspaper The Delaware Dairyman tells us a bit about his life outside the mill. A January, 1895 paper lists school examination grades. Merritt, who was in the 7th grade, received a 90% in geography, 88% in language, 85% in arithmetic and 84% in spelling. When he was 16, the paper reported this on March 3, 1899: "A hen belonging to Merritt S. Barnes of East Meredith, laid an egg the other day which

weighed 4 1/2 ounces, and measured 8 1/4 x 6 7/8 inches. Call at J. H. Henderson's store and see it."

By 1902, at the age of 19, Merritt was officially working at the mill. In 1904, the year his mother died, he attended a business college in Albany. When he returned in 1905, he became the mill's bookkeeper and one of its best paid employees. In May, 1915, he was earning \$10 a week when most of the other workers earned only \$9 a week. By the end of the year he received a \$5

a week raise! A letter to Merritt from Uncle Horace details the benefits of his job in 1918: "Twenty dollars per week with no deduction for an occasional day of lost time, two weeks vacation in each year on full pay, all goods purchased from us to be at cost price, occasional use of an automobile, and minor incidentals not mentionable."

Besides bookkeeping, Merritt picked up other skills that were useful. According to records, Merritt worked with electric and phone lines. Until 1926, the mill sold electricity to most of East Meredith and Merritt did much of the wiring. The Hanfords were involved with the local telephone system and Merritt installed the telephones for houses on the line. With all these activities, Merritt did not fit the stereotype of the quiet, timid bookkeeper.

Merritt was also active outside his work. He played the coronet in the East Meredith band (or "orchestra," as they

*con't. on page 8*



## A Saw Mill Operated by a Lady

*Editor's note: You may be interested to know, the sawmill was not entirely a man's domain. We found the following article in the February, 1890 edition of **The Wood Worker**, a periodical that identified itself as "a monthly journal devoted to the interests of wood-working industries."*



Down in the southern part of West Virginia, writes a correspondent of the "Timberman," Miss Eliza Jane Easter is looked upon as a heroine, because she owns and operates a steam saw mill and is supposed, by the people in her vicinity at least, to be the only woman saw mill operator in the world. While traveling in Boone county, I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Easter, and when I say pleasure, I mean it, for it is really a pleasant thing to meet a woman who in the face of the fact that she is refined and ladylike in every sense, and thoroughly well educated, will work with her hands, and enforce discipline among a force of male employes.

Miss Easter's mill is located on Camp creek, in Boone county near the southern edge of Scott district. Before I got into the county I heard of her and went to see her. I found her at the mill, quite a well constructed and for that country a complete and modern concern (I meant the mill). She (Miss Easter) was dressed in a close fitting gray woolen skirt, tight jacket, straw hat, and a dainty pair of big boy's boots. She wore a broad collar, and showed her natural feminine weakness for flowers by a small bunch of mountain violets which were pinned at her throat. When I came in sight she was manipulating the

engine, and was drawing a log up from the creek on an incline, and though she is large and muscularly built, she looked quite pretty.

When the log was up she called to the men to roll it on the carriage and then took her position at the saw. She watched the steam gauge and tried the water in the boiler with the dexterity and precision of an old timer, and kept the log moving at a rate that would insure profit. It was nearly noon when I arrived, and with true Virginian hospitality she invited me to take dinner at her father's house, half a mile away, which invitation I accepted more through curiosity and a desire to know her better, than anything else, for I had my dinner and horse feed with me.

Her father, Michael Easter, justice of the peace for Scott district, is a jolly old fellow, and as we enjoyed a frugal boiled dinner of ham, potatoes, cabbage, bread, butter, honey and milk, he took delight in telling me how much pluck and enterprise his daughter is blessed with. She was a school mistress at seventeen years of age, and by saving her money and making several small speculations on her own account was able to lend \$2,000 on what seemed good security a few years ago. But the man to

whom she loaned it was not a good saw mill manager, and after a few months she had to pay some other debts and assume control of the mill to save herself. She at first tried to continue her teaching and hire help to run the mill, but as the squire expressed it, "The ingen' was always bustin' herself, or the boiler a bustin', or the saw gittin cracked, and it seemed as if somethin' was happenin' every day."

Whenever these breaks would occur they would go to the school house for her, and she would dismiss school and go to superintend the repairing. Finally, when the school term was out, she took charge herself and since then the plant has worked very nicely and has proven quite profitable. She has become thoroughly acquainted with the details of the work and likes her new place much better than school teaching, and is making much more money out of it than she could make even if she had a fairly good position in some city school. She looks upon it all as merely a matter of fact, and was surprised and did not know whether to be pleased or otherwise when I said she was quite a remarkable woman, and had earned a reputation.



*Interview - con't. from page 2*

shouldn't be said. There are many good things to say about Horace Hanford. He was a good businessman and he was good in the community. I never knew him to foreclose on a person that was unable to pay his bills. I don't think he ever did. He worked in the woodworking part of the mill quite a little. He was quite expert in making window frames & things like that and seemed to like to do it. He bought one of the first automobiles and he had the first of everything because he could afford to and he more or less liked you to know that he knew it.

#### **ON THE MILL**

*Could you tell us how the mill employees were called to work?*

CH - The steam whistle, of course, was blown - it was steam from the boiler - at 5 minutes of 7 in the morning when the workmen went to work in the mill and also at 12 o'clock noon and 5 minutes of one. 10 minutes were made each day which allowed the Saturday night closing to be 5 o'clock instead of 6.

*How far could you hear the whistle?*

CH - The whistle could be heard probably for a distance of between two and three miles.

*When did they stop using it?*

CH - As long as I can remember, the whistle was blowing four times a day and I don't know

when it stopped. I guess when they condemned the boiler. I guess that was the end of the whistle.

*Did it blow on Sundays?*

CH - No, only on work days.

*Do you know whose job it was to blow the whistle?*

CH - Oh yeah, the fireman. The fireman was there for many years probably. There were two men that worked almost their entire life. One would be the fireman who was William VanAlstine and the miller who was George Oliver. William VanAlstine who fired the boiler, it was his job to blow the whistle.

#### **ON LIFE THEN & NOW**

*Was life better before or after automobiles?*

CH - I think if you ask about how the community lived in the horse days in comparison to present day living, you'd get ten different opinions. It was so different that they're hard to compare. I think the changes are so great that I guess when you talk to an old man like myself, when you reminisce about the days when you were 20 years old, they seem much less complicated. And the community life was entirely different although we probably wouldn't want to go back to it. I'm sure we wouldn't and, of course, we wouldn't know how to go back to it if we wanted to.

## **Volunteer Corner: The Heavy Metal Band**

Hanford Mills Museum is deeply indebted to its many volunteers, without whose generous help we would not be able to do all that we do. From time to time, Millwork would like to highlight some of our many industrious friends. This issue, entitled the heavy metal band, focuses on those volunteers who like to help us with our big projects.

One such longtime volunteer is Dan Rion. If you have been to our Antique Engine Jamborees, you might remember Dan with his retinue of beautifully restored gas and steam engines. Dan Rion is probably the only exhibitor who has never missed an engine show in the last 10 years. As a matter of fact, one of his early volunteer activities was helping the museum organize the engine show. Dan has also restored a number of the engines in our collection, including the Witte that powers our buzz saw, the John Deere driving the drag saw, and, most recently, the gas powered ice saw (see last newsletter). We can also rely on Dan in an emergency, like the time he repaired the rocker arm for our Sta-Rite engine overnight. Dan can also be counted on to help with the less exciting work, and has provided the transportation for various large donations, such as our 1947 Ford truck and the power ice saw. We must say that without Dan Rion's restoration skills, the museum would be a quieter but "duller" place. Thanks, Dan.

Another longtime friend is a man known as O.K. Peck. Running old machinery can be hard on individual parts and we don't want to break original

*con't. on page 7*



## "In the Horse Days"

You never had to worry about leaving the lights on and killing the battery. The muffler never fell off, the oil never ran low and the body never rusted through. You did have a "fine pair of grays," "as fine a pair of steppers as go the road," "one of the sleekest specimens of horse flesh that ever kicked a mile of road under a buggy axle," or "a nag that when he goes can make milestones look as numerous as telephone poles." All of these descriptions are from the local newspaper, the Delaware County Dairyman, in the 1890s. Perhaps the best description is Horace Hanford's horse from a March 27, 1896 edition: "When Horace's gray appears on the avenue it is no skeleton that pushes the atmosphere one side, but a clean-limbed, fleet-footed, well-groomed nag with the capacity of dropping the miles behind that is the envy of all horsemen." Ahh ... those were the days! Or were they?

Dairyman articles tended to romanticize the horse, but Elizabeth Hanford told a different story in her diaries. August 5, 1890: "Sam Heatherington had his legs Broke his horses ran away" May 27, 1892: "Lewis Figger thrown from his waggon horses ran away he quite badly hurt" June 25, 1902: "Funeral of Mr Kimballs Child that was killed by Horses

running away & run over with a Stone boat broke its neck & other[s] were injured". Admittedly, Elizabeth mentions only one death, but she did describe some rather violent accidents. Her best and longest description tells about a woman's accident on August 18, 1897: "Mrs Frank Parmer [actually Palmer] had an accident. She undertook to drive Oll[iver] Rathbones fast Horse. it commenced to run as soon as she started & could not Controll it it run down the hill by Hills as it turned on the othe[r] road the Waggo[n] Capsized no bones Broken. Waggon Smashed." Depending on which way the horse turned, the wagon could have "capsized" right in front of Elizabeth's house.

While there were some pretty serious accidents, the majority were not deadly. These were the type of accidents the East Meredith newspaper correspondent liked to write about. Most of the stories were almost silly - April 8, 1898: "James Davidson, of Irish hill, had quite an exciting ride recently. His horse ran away, leaving James sitting in the mud. No damage done. Horse ran as far as the post office and got the Irish hill mail and a pound of red hook, and went back, meeting Mr. D." December 20, 1895: "A.J. Parris' team ran away last Saturday. They came

up Kortright street on a good stiff run, made the wheel into Main all right and were heading for the county seat [Delhi], when J. H. Thompson stepped in front of them and called out Oats, and pointed towards his barn. When A.J. came panting up from the mill he found his team in Wizard Thompson's barn. Great man that Thompson; don't take him over a month to size up a runaway team."

The best and longest account is a continuation of the March 27, 1896 story about Horace Hanford's horse: "... as our friend was driving up the Kortright road and listening to the sweet conversation of his companion ... and had just taken his left hand from the reins in order to hear better as he was rounding the bluff above M.J. Tobey's, a snow bank showed itself under his off wheels, and a florid faced young man, a pale faced young lady and an astonished horse, in fact the whole outfit took a tumble of about 50 feet down - down, bringing up in a barbed wire fence. Our informant was not near enough to catch the expletive that issued in the excitement of the occasion from Horace's lips, but he has taken it all back since and says when he goes out again it will be in a solid vestibule train... No one was seriously injured, but the buggy will look better when Abe Squires gets through with it."

So remember the noble steed fondly, but don't forget that he had his problems just like any form of transportation. Leaving a horse standing at the side of the road was like leaving an Audi running and in park. You can never be sure when its going to slip into drive.



Oliver Rathbone, c. 1905. Oliver always kept "sleek specimens of horse flesh."



*Volunteers - con't. from page 5* machines. O.K. has helped us out by machining many replacement parts so the Hanford originals can be preserved. He has also done work on our sawmill and sawn lumber for a special event. O.K. has even taken time out to help staff learn a little more about metal working. When you come to the mill and see a small butter tub cover made or a handhole for a crate, remember it wouldn't be o.k. without O.K.

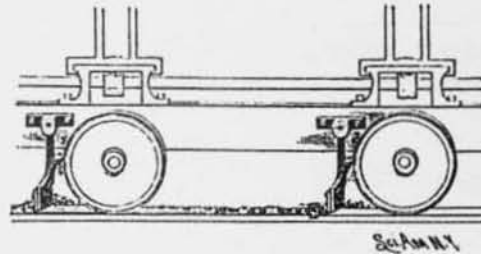
The mill also can't forget Fred Pugh. He helped us by using his skill to pour babbitt bearings for the mill. Pouring babbitt bearings is a dying art so we appreciate Fred's help in keeping us running. In addition, he has always kept an eye out for machinery that the mill can use and has donated machines, including a butter tub cutting machine and a cheese box maker.

The museum has to say good-bye to another pair of longtime volunteers, Don and Phyllis Lane, and when we say "longtime" we mean it. Don and his wife, Phyllis, helped organize the museum's archival collection over ten years ago. Much of what you read in *Millwork* comes from these historic papers. Don also took time out, with his friend, Bob Hunt, to restore the mill's 1910 Fairbanks gas engine, electric dynamo and the early 1900s DC lighting system in 1982 and 83. More recently, he helped to get the 1947 Ford truck running. Both Don and Phyllis helped wherever they could at special events, and we will miss their capable assistance.

Before you get too sad, *Millwork* would like to introduce two new heavy metal volunteers. The first is new board member John Hamilton. In the cold weather of April, John brought his tractor and his son down to the mill and moved

## A Scraper For Sawmill Carriages

*Editor's note: To go with our woman sawyer article, we found this little invention for the sawmill in a **Scientific American** from July 9, 1892. Next time you are at Hanford Mills take a look at our sawmill carriage rails. They are usually covered with compacted sawdust. Since the Hanfords didn't use a device like this, we have to remove sawdust by hand.*



CRONKHITE'S SCRAPER FOR SAWMILLS.

A cheap and simple device to be attached to the carriage of any kind of a sawmill, to scrape the track and the wheels, so that both will be kept clean and the carriage will run smoothly, is shown in the accompanying illustration. The improvement has been patented by Mr. Charles M. Cronkhite, of Kimball, Wis. Near each wheel and to one side of the carriage is secured a hanger from which the body of the scraper is suspended, upon a pin extending through a vertical slot in the upper end of the body, allowing for the vertical movement of the scraper. On the front face of the lower end of the

body is a steel wear plate having a beveled lower edge, adapted to run upon the track and scrape off sawdust, pitch, etc., the plate being adjustably fastened in position by screws, so that its position may be changed as it becomes worn. On a projecting ledge of the body is also secured a similar wear plate adapted to bear against the face of one of the wheels. When the carriage is moved forward the scrapers bear upon the track and wheels, and when it is moved in the opposite direction the scrapers swing freely on their pivots.

artifacts - BIG artifacts. He helped clear out the space in the feed mill we now use as a theater. He brought a thresher to the White Barn (the last time it changed locations it took at least 4 people and a pickup truck to move), and helped rearrange the other large objects inside. John Hamilton also helped us get the Witte engine and drag saw in place for the summer season. We couldn't have done it without you, John. You might want to keep an eye out for John this summer because, as it was said of sawyer George Gunn 100 years ago, John will "handle the levers that control the saw in Hanford Bros.' mill."

The machinery involved in

planting trees certainly qualifies Al Dubreuil and his Susquehanna Valley Tree Service of Milford, NY as a new heavy metal volunteer. Last year, Al brought his men to clear up the mess left by a lightning-struck Hemlock on site and even gave us some logs to saw. This year, using a large hydraulic tree planter, Al planted a beautiful maple that he donated. You will find this tree on the John Hanford house front lawn (on May 3, 1992, the museum dedicated it to the memory of Doctor Charles Jones). We can't thank Al Dubreuil enough for helping out us with our tree problems.

Before this article is finished,

*con't. on page 8*

*Barnes - con't. from page 3*  
called it) and was active in the local church. Merritt was probably the first person in town to buy a motorcycle, an "Indian" bought on May 6 1911. Three years later, on July 4, while on a trip to Saratoga, he was hit by an automobile, knocked off his cycle and his leg crushed. Merritt was unable to return home until December 6.

The motorcycle accident didn't keep Merritt down. In November, 1916, he married (or, as some say, eloped with) Margaret Hetherington. She was from East Meredith, though she was working as a stenographer for Morris Brothers of Oneonta, the Hanford Brothers' supplier of feeds and grain.

*Volunteers - con't. from page 7*  
Hanford Mills would like to thank all its volunteers - we appreciate what every one of you has done for us. Hanford Mills would fall short of its goals without the help of so many people. And, as a final

That same year, Merritt built the first cement block house in East Meredith, each block molded to look like rock. Then in 1917, during World War I, he went to military engineering training at Camp Humphreys in Virginia. When the war ended in 1918, Merritt had not completed his training so he never saw active duty.

After the war, Horace Hanford lured Merritt back to work as the mill's bookkeeper until the early 1930s. The mill had passed its heyday, and perhaps as bookkeeper, Merritt saw no future in the business. In 1931, he moved to Unadilla to take over a cousin's real estate and insurance company. By 1933, he moved to Oneonta and

died there in 1953, five years before Uncle Horace.

Merritt Barnes left a strong and lasting impression on Hanford Mills. His childhood presence is felt and seen in photographs and the initials that he left (look for "MSB" in our White Barn). As an adult, Merritt became one of the Hanford's most valued employees. His neat handwriting can be found in mill order-books and business diaries. Merritt brought the world to East Meredith with his electricity and telephone wires. What would the mill and East Meredith be without the "Boss's Nephew"? Next issue: Read about another Hanford Mills employee.

plug, if you think it might be fun and interesting to join our volunteer team - maybe help at special events or help with a special skill you think we might need - call Todd Pym at the mill (607) 278-5744. We'll welcome your help.



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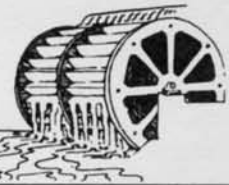
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# MILLWORK



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