

The Clifford Township Historical Society Newsletter

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Yarns Cider Mill Renovation Project

The year 2014 promises to be an exciting year for our society. We can hardly believe the progress that was made on the cider mill renovation project since our last newsletter. We never expected the amount of donations and volunteer labor that made this progress possible. The parking area was prepared and installed with the volunteer time of Prestys Excavating and Barhite Excavation. Kochmer Quarry and Eastern Industries donated truck loads of stone for the project, hauled by Prestys free of charge. A matching grant from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region helped cover the expenses so far. Another layer of stone, a handicap accessible area, a bike rack and signage will complete the parking lot.



In early September reconstruction work on the mill began. New concrete footers and foundation walls were poured to replace the old stone foundation that had collapsed many years ago. New sill beams were put in place. Four-by-eight studs were then installed, making the building stronger than ever. Ray Swingle, who by the way is 90 years old, collected trees and sawed them into all the lumber needed for this part of the rebuild. The Prestys brothers again were an immeasurable asset volunteering days upon days of backhoe, skidder and excavator work. Fourteen volunteers provided labor while Jerry Lewandowski lent his expertise at a minimal price so the work was done with a professional outcome.

Kevin Cobb then dismantled all the cribbing and steel beams that had been installed last fall. He was so impressed with the project, he donated all the boards and batten that were then nailed to the framework.

The old dirt floor is being replaced with concrete donated by Masters Ready Mixed Concrete of Kingsley.

According to David Wilmot's internet search, the old press, a "Boomer and Boschert" power screw press with steel beams, was manufactured in Syracuse in the late 1800's. This year we will try to revive the mechanisms and, hopefully, get the *old girl* running once more. A new apple chute, receiving hopper and turntable will have to be constructed.

One of our major expenditures will be either a drilled well or water trucks to supply water when the mill is operational.

Donations for this renovation project have been just wonderful. Donors will have their names engraved in stone and placed in a stonewall near the mill. The sign on the site now lists the folks who have so generously given of their time and money toward this project.



Ray Swingle, with help from a few friends, cut, shaped, debarked, drilled and split the posts and rails for the fence along the parking lot.



In October, Peter Maloney, for his Eagle Scout project and with the help of Scout Troop 98 members, planted apple trees along the split-rail fence that was designed and installed by Ray Swingle and several community volunteers. Ray Swingle and Al Kaz Construction donated the locust posts and ash rails for the fence.

The Winefest held last October at the Creekside Grove was a great success and helped fund the work done on the Cider Mill, along with our jelly and apple butter sales.

We plan to have an open house this spring so the public can inspect the project and see what has been accomplished.

The cider mill project has progressed with a total of \$18,000 in cash spent so far. Our original estimate for the entire project was \$52,000. At the present time we need \$5,000 to match the rest of the \$10,000 we received from Endless Mountains Heritage Region. That will finish the parking area.

A rough estimate of \$15,000 will renovate the cider press back to operating condition. The museum portion of the mill building will require labor of several thousand dollars. The water will be a major expense down the road. Of course, we are looking for any help available to complete the project. We are always on the lookout for grants and other sources of funds.

Donations from local residents, past and present, have made this project possible. We hope that kind of generosity continues so we can spend our time actually working to accomplish our goals instead of constantly fundraising.

It has been suggested that we contact a large manufacturer of cider in New Jersey to sponsor the cider mill project, not unlike what major sports arenas do, but the directors of our society would like to keep the funding of the mill local, if possible.

Our other major goal is the continued work in the Local History Museum. Michelle McLain, who painted the mural behind the canoe display, is completing a painting of the view from atop Elk Mountain, a view that the fire tower guard would have scanned for smoke during the dry seasons. The mural will complement the fire tower map and alidade now in the museum.

Future plans for the museum include helping the township supervisors improve the hallway of the Community Center by adding wainscot along the walls and displaying framed items of local history above the wainscot, giving the hallway a truly "museum feel." Also, we plan to build a replica of Lott's Blacksmith Shop to display the bellows from that original blacksmith shop. The bellows was donated to us by the Spedding family.

The local history museum is another large undertaking for our small society. The canoe display took several thousand dollars, but has received many compliments. Currently we are required to match a \$10,000 grant for the hallway renovation. Donated materials and labor will count toward at least half of that amount.

Our new mural of the view from atop Elk Mountain will give the second museum room the same professional touch as the canoe mural.

Slowly our museum will become a high quality place to experience the lifestyles of our forefathers, including many hands-on exhibits.

Again this year, the Hoover School will be open to the public the third Sunday of each month, May through October from 1 to 4 pm. The museum is open year round the third Sunday each month 1 to 4 pm and also on election day.

We will be exhibiting local history at the Clifford Firemen's Picnic, July 24, 25 and 26. We hope you will stop by and share your memories of our beautiful township.

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| <i>Yarns Cider Mill Project Donors over \$1000</i> | |
| <i>Adams Cable Service</i> | <i>Kevin Cobb</i> |
| <i>Michael and David Prestys</i> | <i>PPL</i> |
| <i>Ray Swingle</i> | <i>Jim McAndrew</i> |
| <i>David Adams</i> | <i>Masters Concrete</i> |
| <i>Eastern Industries</i> | <i>Panorama Inc.</i> |
| <i>Barhite Excavating</i> | <i>Charles Watkins</i> |
| <i>Al Kaz Construction</i> | |

See more photos and read more about our society's activities at: www.cliffordpa.com

Clifford Township Historical Society 2014 Membership

Levels: Individual \$10 Family \$25 Lifetime \$100

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