JERSEY LILY

COLDWATER MILL HERITAGE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

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Looking down the colourful Coldwater River, flower petals are on the gone water and on the going. Autumn inaugurates a new phase at the Coldwater Mill, one full of monsters, shrieks, and laughter. This writing is a continuation of the original Jersey Lily newsletter, first published in 1999, and edited by Jim Angus. Thank you for taking a break from the daily grind to read up on the mill!

-Isaac Pearson



THE SEASON SO FAR

At the end of May, the mill hosted the drop location for Coldwater's annual Duck Race. Over 7500 rubber duckies were purchased in support of the Coldwater Lions Club, and were cast into the rapids of the Coldwater River. The beginning of the 2026 season was enjoyed with candy, inflatable axe throwing and ball games, vendors, a parade down Coldwater Road, and of course the suspense and excitement of the race.

While the Coldwater Mill resolutely stands in the face of time and change, this summer season was anything but run-of-the-mill. For five weeks in the summer, the staff welcomed children to our kids camp on Thursdays. Kids took part in craft making, nature tours, lots of games, and even a visit from some local ponies!



The mill also welcomed Super Natural Mysteries Inc. - a ghost hunting group. They were accompanied by directors from the mill as they braved the nighttime uncertainty and darkness. With the help of a medium, they used EMF reading devices and the Estes Method to perceive the presence of spirits. The Estes Method uses sensory deprivation to allow a person to concentrate on communicating with the other world. Multiple participants felt the cold touch of something on the upstairs of the mill. In the basement, there was even a being detected near a pile of haunted fungus.

Coldwater's annual Steampunk & Oddity Days festival took place on August 29th, and the Coldwater Mill was a the centre of it. Visitors, dressed in Victorian science fiction outfits, filed in for the costume contest, while vendors thronged the parking lot and yard. One could order some mead, or take a photo with a 19th century camera operator, while trying to stay out of the way of robotic pets and giant dressed up women on stilts.

Every Friday night in August the mill hosted music nights, featuring local artists like Upbeat Groove, Lil' Chill, Jakob Pearce, and D.A.M. Straight. In the tradition of the original 1866 Medonte musical barn, the mill property reverberated with song amid the glow of torches and campfire flame. The events were well attended, despite some rainy August nights, with around 80 people weekly.



Along with the Coldwater Studio Tour in June, the mill hosted a bingo and coffee event for seniors, and hosted a number of groups from the community, including: a Porsche car show, 2 bridal showers, a wedding, a weaving demonstration, a 5 week science camp for kids, and 2 campaign meet and greets. But there is more to come as the October season greets us with crackling leaves on cold grass.

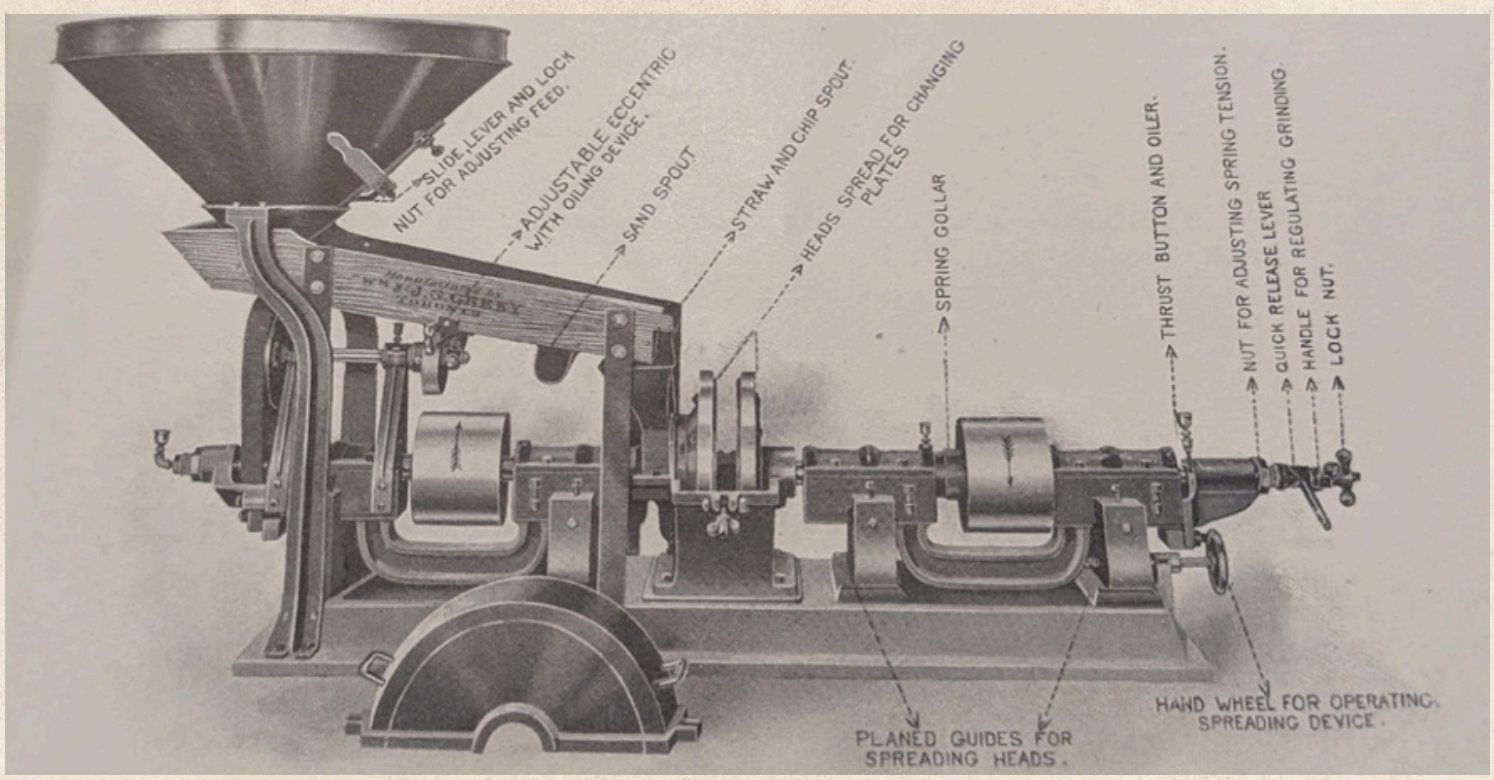


THE MACHINE IS ALIVE

The gears of industry do not turn like they once did at this historical mill. Nevertheless, thanks to the Friends of the Mill, many of our machines continue to operate to the fascination of numerous visitors. One of our functioning machines is this Robinson Grinding Mill. In 1925, the mill was purchased by Argyle Eplett and Aulden Robbins. The machine, known as a grinding mill or crusher, was brought here as the mill converted to producing animal feed for local farmers. In catalogues from the time, the machine was advertised for grinding oats, corn, barley, cereals, spices, sawdust, feathers, cork, and more.

This grinding mill contains two plates that can be adjusted or removed by a wheel at the end of the machine, while there is a handle for regulating the fineness of the grain. The grinding plates are attached to separate shafts which rotate in opposite directions at high speed. There is an eccentric attached to the shaking screen on the feeder. This eccentric operates similarly to a steam locomotive to create side to side motion in the shaking screen for filtering out sand, and large particles from the material. There were two 20 horse power motors - currently located under the outdoor shed - which drove the belts and shafts.





FALL AND WINTER PLANS

Beginning October 9th, the building will be shaken by the terrified shrieks of the Haunted Mill. Presented by the Scream Shack and founder Colin Laughlin, there will be a haunted house every Friday and Saturday from 6:00pm - 9:00pm. Tickets are $10 and will be available at the door. The Haunted Mill also coincides with the Coldwater Witches Walk on October 16th - where the town grabs their hats and brooms and gets into the Halloween spirit!

In November, the mill will hold two Christmas themed markets. The children's artisan market will allow kids from the community to sell their wares, while the adult market will feature the work of local artists and artisans. The adult market will take place on November 28th and 29th from 10:00am - 3:00pm. The children's market will be on November 21st from 11:00am - 2:00pm. Registration to have your work at these events closes on October 18th, and applications are available on the Coldwater Mill website under the artisan boutique section. Finally, on December 5th, Santa will be visiting the mill to take photos following the Coldwater Lions Club Santa Claus Parade.







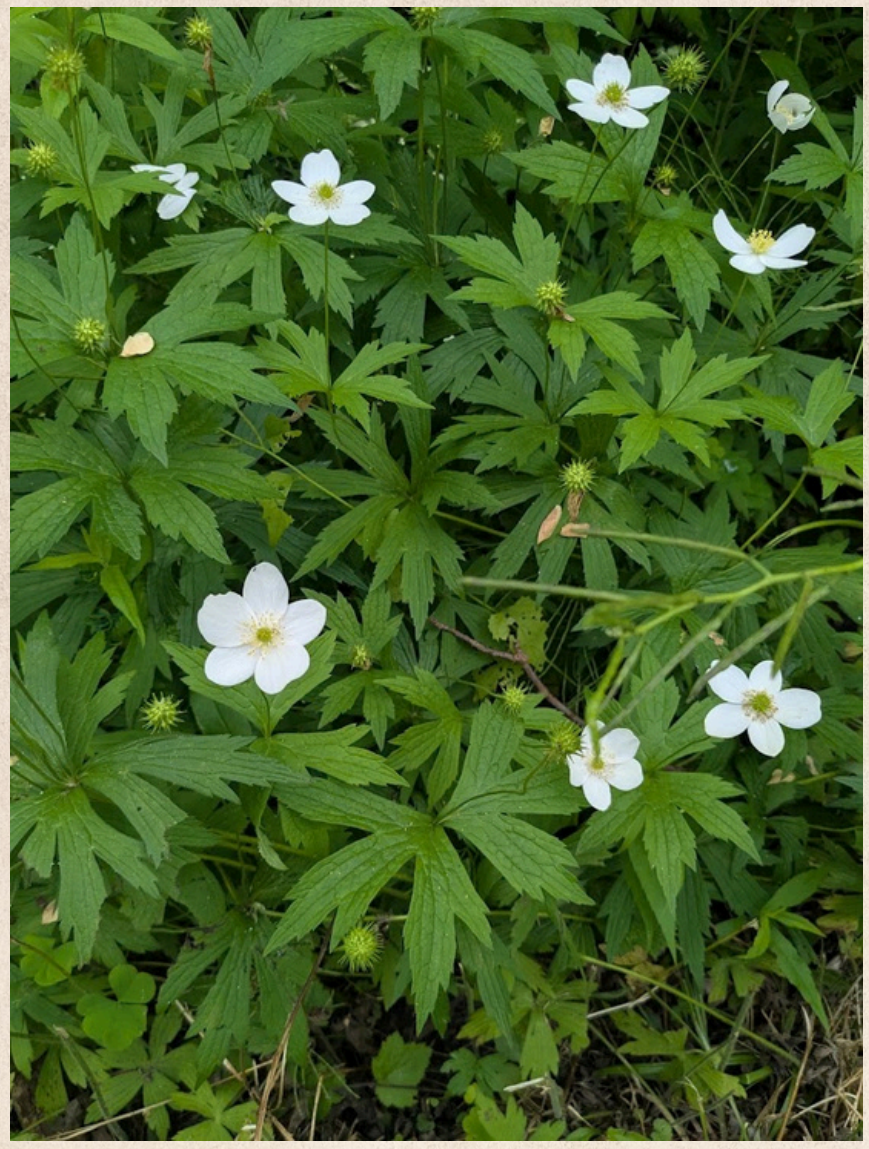
THE JOE TAYLOR TRAIL

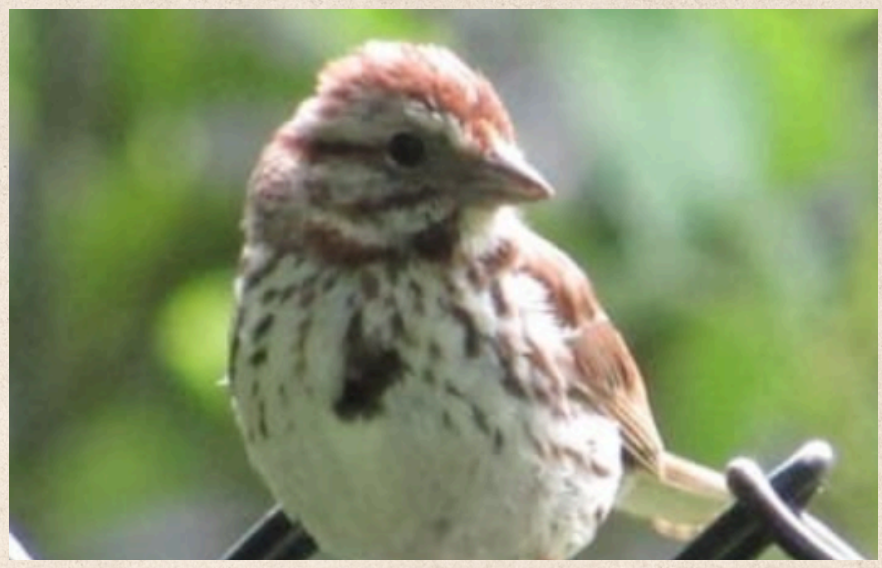
There is an ongoing project to revitalize the patch of nature behind the mill known as The Joe Taylor Trail. Most recently, mulch was laid along the trail, and new plants are growing up along its length.

Visitors are encouraged to stroll along this green space, accompanied by the slow moving Coldwater River. In spring and summer you can come observe Baltimore Orioles perched among the grey bark of the silver maples. The flowers of these trees are eager to bloom in the cold of early spring, and the piercing, inquisitive tone of the Orioles announces their arrival. You can let the rows of goldenrod guide you to a secluded spot to fish in the river. Spring is the season to catch rainbow trout in the shimmering river rapids. Or you can simply sit on a bench and listen to the Song Sparrows' delightful chatter under the shade of a white cedar.

While the trail is home to a group of Canada anemones and white trilliums - Ontario's provincial flower - the white cedar is also an important testament to Ontario. The oldest trees in the province are white cedar - with many reaching over 1000 years old, and the oldest currently standing for over 1300 years. Keep that in mind when you come and experience history inside the mill and down the Joe Taylor Trail.







ANECDOTES FROM THE OLD DAYS

I spoke with a man named Wray Burton over the summer. His father's name was William Burton, and the two were frequent customers of the Coldwater Mill up until the 1970s. As a living link to the past, Wray described to me how he and his father routinely drove their wagon down from their farm south of Foxmead to purchase concentrate from the hardware store attached to the mill - where the 4Age restaurant currently stands. According to Wray, Argyle Eplett was a wiz with numbers and was an honest man to do business with. They would also deliver feed to be processed by the grinding mill - or crusher. Wray recalled a molasses smell emanating from the mill. Molasses is mixed in with animal feed for its sweet taste, and to add simple, easily digestible energy for livestock. Additionally, it acts as a binder to keep the powdered feed together after grinding.

I also spoke with Murray Lovering this October. Murray is a water colour artist, and a descendant of Henry Lanxon Lovering, who owned the mill with Joseph Sheppard from 1880 - 1925. In those days, the mill was industrialized with roller mills and a turbine replacing the water wheel and buhr stones respectively. Murray mentioned that one could hear the machines in the mill grinding for miles around. This increasing productivity produced a boom in Coldwater, as the flour and other materials were exported abroad. He explained that Henry Lovering was a shrewd businessman, and chose the name Jersey Lily for his flour brand to appeal to wider demand. Lillie Langtry, or "The Jersey Lily," was a prominent English actress with a controversial reputation. She wrote plays that featured women as central characters in dramas that were deemed too risque by some local governments at the time. The name of this provocative, feminist actress was entwined with the Coldwater Mill brand, and is the inspiration for the name of this mill newsletter, which first ran in the late 90s.

Lovering also spoke about Hurricane Hazel. The hurricane brought devastation to the Severn area in 1954, and caused irreparable damage to the river dam at the mill. Murray described how farmers' crops were destroyed in the flooding, and cattle were in perilous danger of drowning. He and his father piloted a boat from their farm and proceeded to lasso the cattle horns and drag them to the safety of higher ground. For families like the Burtons and the Loverings, the Coldwater Mill was a focal point for the larger farm community.

If any readers have stories to share about life related to the Coldwater Mill and area, we would be grateful to speak with you!

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