

# The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill

## Restoration Progress Report 91 May 20, 2017

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This is the first Progress Report of 2017 and the ninety first one I have done since I joined the Friends. This year we did things a little differently, usually the restoration crew shuts down completely for the winter. This year we started meeting at my home workshop so we could complete our cupboard project before the school program started in May.

We had never built a piece of furniture before thus like so many of our projects this turned out to be a learning experience. My idea was that the log cabin would have had some furniture in it, a table, chairs, bed, etc. There would have been a cupboard of some kind so I designed one based on the appearance of ones that I had seen in antique stores.

The cupboard turned out to be a lot more work than I had imagined. It also turned out looking like what we wanted, simple yet not unattractive. We painted it an off white color and installed it in the cabin.



**The completed cupboard in the cabin.**

Another addition to the cabin is a feather tick mattress that Roberta House made for us. Roberta sewed the mattress from authentic material and stuffed it with real feathers. The mattress is now on the cabin's rope bed where visitors can now experience now the pioneers slept. To prevent damage when not on exhibit the mattress will be stored in the steamer trunk that is also on exhibit in the cabin.

When we opened the mill for the first time in April the first thing I noticed is that the mill looked a dirtier than in the past. I attributed the cause to be the warmer winter that allowed for more rodent activity than past years. The good news is that Durant High School sent a crew of students that gave the mill a good spring cleaning. The Durant students did an excellent job and they were not shy of working hard. Much thanks to them!

As in past years the mill's machinery started without any major problems. Our first job was to spend one day just lubricating all of the machinery. Thankfully unlike past years we did not have any chutes clogged with mouse nests.

Our other big 2017 season project is the installation of the new LED lighting system in the mill. Thanks to Tom Baston and the DNR for funding this project. The LED lamps are a conversion system that allows us to convert the existing florescent lamp fixtures to LED. That way we do not have to replace any wiring or install new conduit. So far the fixtures on the 3rd floor have been replaced and two replaced on the 2nd floor. As the season progresses all of the fixtures in the mill will be upgraded.

The next time you visit the mill you will notice that the lighting is brighter and that the new LED lighting has a pure white natural color. The LED lamps also use much less electricity than conventional florescent lamps.

Another pleasant surprise we had this spring is that when we opened the turbine gate the mill's turbine took off and ran. If we run it on a regular basis the water flowing through it keeps mud from building up in the turbine pit. Having the turbine running adds another exhibit for our visitors to see in operation.

One of the major issues at the mill is the deterioration of wooden parts and structures due to dry rot. The cause is the high humidity level in the mill's basement. When we tested the machinery we noticed a knocking sound coming from the steam engine. The cause appears to be a problem with the wood pulley. We will be investigating this issue further soon.

We are preparing new "Cabin Open" signs to direct visitors to the cabin's location. There is always something that needs to be done at the mill.

Two of the twelve Durant High School students that cleaned the mill for us this are cleaning windows.



Clarence Klauer is installing one of the new LED lighting fixtures on the mill's 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. This is the first time that all of the fixtures have worked at once that I can remember.

Hank Mann is tightening the bolts that hold the steam engine's flywheel together. It is very critical that none of them are loose!



Clarence Klauer is oiling the corn mill to get it ready to run for the season.



Hank Mann is installing the penstock gate's operating rod. The rod has to be removed every winter to prevent the creeks ice flows from damaging it.

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