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Gray's Mill: Email Correspondence Between Baker and Ralph Guild up to July 19, 2001

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Hi Ralph

I'm still looking forward to getting together with you sometime soon.

I have been to the mill twice since I last spoke with you and each time I get more excited. Because of you and your respect for history the mill is all still there, and now, having gotten deeply involved in doing a movie about small village mills, I realize how rare Gray's Mill is and what you have done to protect it.

I'm seeing the possibility of a very interesting documentary. I would love to get together with you to tell you more and hear your thoughts.

I also have some ideas for Gray's future.

When will you be up? I'll even cook you some jonny cakes, and of course by the Rhode Island method.

Pete

Great. Let's do it the week of the 4th. I'll be there the whole week. Call me when you have some time we'll plot and scheme, my favorite hobby.

A documentary sounds very interesting. Let's do it.

Ralph

(Got the money . Visited the mill with Ralph.and he decided to get things moving as follows)

In case you are free I have an appointment with a stonemason for Saturday at 9:00 at the mill.

If I don't see you I'll let you know if he seems like the right person to do the foundation.

I really enjoyed being at the mill with you today. You understand it so well that you could be the miller. OK forget it, but I can imagine you sitting up in your office, feeling a noise or movement that isn't quite right and coming down to correct who ever is running it.

I liked your assistant. She seemed to be excited about the mill.

Now all she needs is to top it off with some jonnycakes. Remember that great day we sat with John in his house eating jonnycakes on his card table while going over mill records in his leather bound account book.

Pete

See you there at 9. It's more likely that I'll be on time if you call the house at 8:30am....

You're right...forget me running the mill. I'll be happy to greet people on weekends between 10 and 11am (Saturdays only - and not ALL Saturdays.

Erin is very excited about the Mill and after her first Jonnycake she will be hooked forever.

I remember the morning at John's house and being shocked that he was using a Teflon pan to cook his Jonnycakes ... so incongruous.

It's going to be fun to bring the Mill back to life again even if we don't sell its meal. We can have it ground somewhere else and package it the same way. We should have done that years ago anyway. Maybe Kenyon's will want to grind for us.

See you Sat (if you call)

Ralph

Hi,

Since talking with you last night Connie and I have gone over all the steps that are necessary to remove the cement posts, install the granite posts and grade the area. From what he has seen he felt that the price would not exceed \$1650,00. However, to be on the safe side it is probably better to think \$2000.00.

If you decide to go ahead he can start next week. I asked him about payment and he prefers waiting until he is finished.

Ray Botelho had the perfect 2 granite stones. They were set aside for somebody that never picked them up. They are ours for \$350. each. The shorter stone, the one in the field we looked at first, makes a perfect third. It's \$75.00. The total is \$775.00. Delivery is free.

He will hold them for us, but I should let him know soon so he won't sell them to somebody else.

Other than that the brush cleaning has started. I've been over to take a look and now you can really see the stream.

Pete

I guess I have been in NY too long. Go for it.....Thanks again for your support. Most people start with 5 times a charge like that when they know you;re from NYC> It's Connie's relationship with you that's keeping this thing in perspective. It's really getting exciting.

Ralph

(More discussion about money)

Assuming the total cost for redoing the foundation to your standards will not exceed 5,000 dollars let's go ahead. I expect there to be a lot of projects like this before the mill is finished and I don't want to have it become a bottomless money pit. Thanks for your help in getting Grays back on it's feet (so to speak) again. I am getting excited about finding someone to run it on weekends and another to open a shop in the summer. Between the two there will be someone there to show people around the mill the we use to.

Ralph

This project is moving so fast I'm having a hard time keeping up with it, but I like the spirit. Although at some point I expect it will have a few stumbles.

This is what is happening. Ray (the stone guy) is bringing over the stones at 8 am on Saturday morning. Because he has excellent equipment to cut away the cement posts we decided that is what we would do, and then while he is there he can cut the granite ones exactly to length.. However, don't get up too early because Ray is famous for not showing when he says he will.

Also, I've been thinking that if you plan to have the mill running you will need some kind of power. I have been investigating stationary electric engines. This would be a good way to go as they are small and can be kept undercover. A new one, depending on its power, would be from \$800.00 to \$1200.00. I have a lead on a second hand one, but I still don't know enough, especially if Adamsville is wired for three phase electricity which would be required. I'm working on it and still need to talk to Paul Dumm at Kenyons to make sure what he thinks and if 15 horse power is enough. When I know all that we can take a look at the possibilities or other options for power.

While I was there today a guy came by who is very interested in mills. I told him that you were planing to get it running again, at least on summer weekends and for educational tours. He said that is just what the Wayside Inn is doing, along with a gift shop that relates to mills ---books about mills and milling,, packaged meal, (except there's is yellow corn), iron frying pans, the history of jonnycakes, photos, cards, etc. buttressed by an occasional special exhibit. I talked with Paul Gay who did that drawing of the mill. He said he had more views --cross sections, etc. which he would give me a copy of . These would be great to have for sale printed on postcards or what ever. Also videos for sale about mills and milling. I already have a great interview on film with Harry Records who grows the flint corn and am planing to get an "old timer" on film who is actually cooking them , and then there is the documentary we are making which you

have so generously agreed to contributed to. If you go on the web you will see that there is a big audience out there.

Call me when you get to Westport .

Pete

(Can't find his reply)

I called Tim to ask him about the stuff in the barn. He said the only thing he put in there was the corn sheller (in the back under the bicycles) and the large iron corn cracker that was next to it. He knows nothing about the engines or any of the other stuff. He suggested that perhaps Walter Cass might know or have put some stuff in there. I don't think we can throw anything away until we make sure who it belongs too.

Pete

It's easier to toss it and worry about the details later.

I'm sure the cost of the barn rental is more than the value of anything in it.

Erin will be there next week as you know and we'll deal with it then.

Hope the posts are in and the field is draining. It's comforting to see the Mill come along gradually. I can almost see the river in the distance and hear the stones grinding.

Thanks again for all you are doing.

Ralph

I think you are going to love it. The behind and under looks just like it should - as if the addition had always been there.

Ray brought the stones posts over and cut them to length. Jack's Wilkinson lifted them in place with his backhoe, and boy does he have a gentle touch. He works his machine as if he was having dinner at the White House. Connie made sure they were set just right and then we brought the area up to grade, first by putting back all the dirt that had been dug out for the cement posts and their footings. I don't know why but there wasn't enough fill. Perhaps some washed away in that terrible rain storm in April. Anyway we had to get two loads of loam tailings which is a combination of loam and small stones, which is really good to prevent wash outs. It looks good now, but I don't think it will after it is washed by rain, however it can be covered with loam incase you want to pretty the area up. Now that it is graded you really don't need steps to get down, but I still think 3 or 4 would be nice. When the back land gets beautiful again or when somebody is interested in seeing the gears, steps are nice as they invite you to take a look. Anyway see what you thing this weekend.

The next big news is that the tractor is out!

We are on the money with replacing the cement posts, however it is getting mixed up with the landscaping. Jack Wilkinson worked the 4 hours with us on the posts as figured, but the next 4 hours included two loads of fill, grading, and taking that big pile of brush to the dump. He gets \$100.00 an hour so that adds another \$400. The two loads of fill came to \$180 and the dump load to \$75. The total for the afternoon landscaping and finish around the granite posts came to an additional \$655.00. That might sound high but I'm not sure anyone else with a backhoe could of done what he did in that space, and so well.

I talked with Grayton Waite today. As Tim said the only thing Gray's Mill has stored in there are the corn cracker and the corn sheller. Grayton said that all that other stuff is his. He moved it over when he rented the opposite side to somebody who is storing appliances. So all we have to do is more those 2 pieces out. What a relief!!

Connie's guy, George, will continue to clean brush tomorrow. He is going to work on the area behind where the tractor was. But it will be a bit of time yet before the field is drained.
Pete

Thanks for the report. This is really exciting.
Happy news on the barn ... whew

Let me know to whom I should make out the checks and for how much so we can pay them promptly.

Thanks again. Now when Erin gets the Mill clean we will be able to start opening the place on weekends. I may get a chair and a desk and just sit there myself and read or do some work for a couple of hours mid-day. Who knows, I may get to like it.

Ralph

More brush cut today --behind the tractor and the grapevines hanging down the wall over the tailrace.
It is beginning to look like it used too.

I called Paul Dumm at Kenyons to find out more about the right kind of motor or engine to run the mill. He is unbelievably helpful. He will come over this weekend to talk to us. I wanted to pay him, but he said no as he was much more interested in helping you with the needs and ideas for running the mill, even if only a few times a year. So-o-o what is a

good time for you. If you are not too busy it might be a good idea to take him out for lunch. He seems so full of ideas that I felt he would like to sit down with you and talk. I told him I would call him tomorrow, Thursday, with a time so if you could email me as soon as you get this I can let him now Thursday night.

Pete

We are going over to Martha's Vineyard Saturday so I will not be able to see him this week. I appreciate his support and look forward to seeing him soon.

Can't wait to see the Mill today I may cry!!!!

Ralph