



**W**elcome to Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project's first newsletter! Ever since the old sawmill shut down in 1964 it has been our dream to see the old mill fire-up again on steam. This mill and its artifacts embody more than its physical history. It calls back a simpler time of honesty, trust and loyalty when a man's handshake was as good as today's detailed contracts.

What all of us on the Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project Board of Directors notice is the same values existing in all of the volunteers helping to bring this rare working museum back to life. Ideas and suggestions are put into action and the results will be apparent to all who visit the mill on the following run dates:

## 2007 MILL RUN DATES

Bankers Hours 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Each Day  
Saturday & Sunday, May 19th and 20th  
Saturday & Sunday, July 28th and 29th  
Saturday & Sunday, September 29th and 30th

We'll be firing up the boiler then and if you live within five miles of the mill, you'll be able to hear the steam whistle blow! We'll have a full head of steam and you'll be able to see the magic of water being converted to steam, powering the old engine.

The reciprocal action of the steam pistons produces the rotation power driving the antique saws and equipment, many from the late 1800's. You'll see how logs are cut into lumber. You'll hear sounds; perhaps you've never heard, from the past. The steam engines sound more like a human breathing, and they are hypnotic to watch. Come watch moving history and maybe you'll want to help us achieve our goals with a tax deductible donation.

## OUR GOAL

Our goal is to become a working museum that showcases 19th century technologies, physics, work ethics, values and grit. Our incremental goals are to stabilize the mill so it may survive for generations yet to come. The non-operational old trucks and pieces of equipment need to be brought back to life. Fire suppression and visitor-friendly history issues need to be addressed. Construction of cat walks and observation decks will allow handicapped visitors, school children, history buffs and steam heads to move safely from one observation/interpretation point to another. Our loyal working volunteers cannot be expected to provide their skills, labor and cover the restoration costs as well, so your donations will be appreciated.



## HISTORY OF STURGEON'S MILL

The history of Sturgeon's Mill flows back to the Korbel Brothers' Sawmill at the present site of Korbel Champaign and winery cellars near Guerneville, California.

The 1880's Joshua Hendy Head Rig and Carriage were on the cutting end of the mill. The power for the saws came from an 1890's Atlas steam engine. We are told it originally powered the San Francisco Mint.

By 1912, the mill and equipment had passed from the Korbel Brothers to a Mr. Sugarman of Santa Rosa who in turn sold it to Occidental's Boss Meeker, who after saw milling with it, sold the equipment to Wade Sturgeon for \$700.00 in 1913. Wade had the mill up and cutting at a location in Coleman Valley by 1914. In 1923, timber ran out in Coleman Valley, and Sturgeon's Mill was relocated to its present location in 1924. Wade Sturgeon continued to operate the mill and began developing an incredible flower garden that had international acclaim. Wade communicated with Luther Burbank and they visited each other's gardens.

The next generation to run the mill was Wade's son, Ralph, and his Analy High School friend, James E. Henningsen. They began their 20-year partnership on a handshake. During this period, upgrades replaced old slow equipment and by 1964 the old mill could



for the next 30 years.

In the 1980's Roots of Motive Power proposed to Ralph Sturgeon to move the mill in its entirety to their museum in Willits. Ralph's partner Harvey vetoed the move and the mill stayed put at its present location.

no longer compete with "modern" mills of the time so it was shut down. Through the loving care of Ralph S. Sturgeon, the equipment, hand tools, rolling stock and sales records were saved for us so that today we can walk through Sturgeon's Mill and see these monuments to the Industrial Revolution past for ourselves.

In the '60's, James E. Henningsen passed his half of the partnership in the mill onto his son, Harvey, who became Ralph's partner in the slumbering mill



**C**OME JOIN US ON ONE OF  
OUR RUN DATES AND STEP  
BACK INTO HISTORY!

*Your financial support is needed*  
**PLEASE SEND DONATIONS TO:**

Sturgeon's  
Mill Restoration Project  
2150 Green Hill Road  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
[www.sturgeonsmill.com](http://www.sturgeonsmill.com)  
707-829-2479

# A HISTORY OF THE STURGEON'S MILL RESTORATION

In the late summer of 1993, after an historical 30-year reunion of former mill workers, seven gents circled around Ralph (Sonoma) Sturgeon's 1949 GMC pickup and cemented their restoration commitment by each tossing a \$100 bill on the green truck's hood to create a \$700 working fund. Thus began the restoration of straightening and shoring up the mill. That original group was Ralph, Bob & Dan Sturgeon, Richard Trevicheck, John Barber, Virgel Shaw and Harvey Henningsen.

Since that evening the restoration process has moved forward. Sometimes the progress has been agonizingly slow, but look at us now; running on steam for the first time since 1964, the year they banked the furnace and boiler for the last time and put the mill to sleep. It has slumbered for the last forty years, interrupted only by jacking, shoring, rehabbing, retrofitting and patching it back together. We've run the mill with air compressors in past years, but it's not the same as running on live steam. Welcome back to life old girl, you are rare and unique in our 21st century.

## THERE'S LOTS HAPPENING AT THE MILL, THANKS TO:

- ☞ Architect/Film Maker Boone Morrison of Volcano, HI for his vision in filming and producing the video "Sturgeons Sawmill" and his federal certification of our restoration plans and drawings.
- ☞ With a donation of a used boiler from Bay City Boiler's Mr. John Greco, we now have steam! Thank you Mr. Greco!
- ☞ Bob Sturgeon and Tom Schaeffer performed reconstruction miracles.
- ☞ John York, a machine shop owner in St. Helena, breathes new life into the 100-year-old steam engines and equipment and has donated a 1800's planer to the mill.
- ☞ Jimmy Larson of Sebastopol 0donated a large working forklift.
- ☞ John Allen has been a resource, benefactor, and liason with Bay City Boiler.
- ☞ Chris Christiani has been our guiding light in getting the controls on the boiler working again.
- ☞ Tom Schaefer and Harvey Henningsen welded two smoke stacks into one.
- ☞ Lawrence Todd was the smoke stack doner.
- ☞ Pat Poundin donated his crane services to put the smoke stack up with Bob Sturgeon and Tom Schaeffer doing the rigging.
- ☞ Wes Brubacher, a certified steam instructor with the Root of Motive

Power in Willits, is a knowledgeable can-do guy.

- ☞ Thanks to a grant from the Department of Fish and Game, the creek bed that runs by the mill has been restored, and the Department has renamed that section of the creek “Sturgeon’s Creek”.
- ☞ We have extended the roof line of the mill to cover the 1924 Doris logging truck and a new garage has been constructed to cover the 1927 Federal lumber truck and our new/old Gerlenger forklift.
- ☞ Weeks Drilling’s Chris Thompson donated fuel tanks and 300 gallons of diesel to fire our boiler
- ☞ Bob Sturgeon and Bob Skover built the new observation deck.
- ☞ Wayne Floyd and friends for rebuilding the old mill office.
- ☞ Sebastopol Hardware’s Mark Sell and Mike Bishop helped us with parts and fasteners. Thank You!
- ☞ Bob Maddocks for displaying his steam tractor at the mill.
- ☞ Guy Smith donated his Peterbuilt truck and trailer to haul the donated boiler from South San Francisco to the mill site.
- ☞ Guy Davis and Bob Nielsen worked on aligning the headrig with the log carriage and lined up the top saw.
- ☞ Mike Bresnyan of Eyeball Engineering in Sonoma amazed us with his perfect cuts and welds as we installed new 4” steam lines from our boiler to the steam engines.
- ☞ Harold Lapham for helping mediate with Ralph Sturgeon the rehabilitation of the mill.
- ☞ Jewel Chenoweth for lumber and artifact donations.
- ☞ Wes Mitchel, formerly a steam engineer with Barlow Company, has given us lots of advice.
- ☞ Skip Buttke and family of H & M Building Supplies for rock and cement donations.
- ☞ The Canellus family of Austin Creek Concrete for concrete donations.
- ☞ Teamsters Jim Lerum, Stuaart Schroeder and Mike Ferguson take us back to the 18th and 19th centuries with their working horse teams, pulling logs and ferrying guests to and from their cars.
- ☞ Don and Marcia Hallberg family donated artifacts and a steam engine.
- ☞ Steve Parmeter for loaning his steam donkey yarder to the mill and for hauling in redwood logs for us to cut during demonstrations.
- ☞ Dan and Denise Thompson of Thompson Sandblasting in Santa Rosa donated their huge air compressors to run the mill during post demonstration runs.
- ☞ Jack Gardner donated logs to the mill.
- ☞ Thanks to the Black Bart Hoo Hoo Club for adopting our mill.

# STURGEON'S MILL RESTORATION PROJECT FOUNDERS, VOLUNTEERS, DOCENTS, MILL CREW AND FRIENDS

Jack Gardner, Dwight Ontiveros, Bob Davis, Dan Sturgeon, Sylvia & Barry Fisher, Bud Chenoweth, Warren Welsh, Joe Lunardi, Rick Caldwell, Bill McMillen, Wayne Floyd, Dan Davis, Denny Gaya, Dave Welsh, Ilya Patrick, Ron Sturgeon, Walt Taddeucci, Bob Maddocks, Steve Parmeter, Boone Morrison, Beverly Henningsen, Scott Fisher, Terry Davis, Maureen Ontiveros, Lavonne Sturgeon, Essie Doty Sturgeon, Harvey Henningsen, Bob Sturgeon, Tom Schaeffer, Connie Sullee Sturgeon, Jim Lerum, Stewart Schroeder, Mike Ferguson, Gary Galeazzi, Steve & Terry Beck, Brock & Vicki Hiner, John Barber, Richard Trevechick, Cam Kendra Parry, Bill Stillman, Jewel Chenoweth, Harry Lapham, Lawrence Todd, Chris Baldo, Craig Hoefler, Jimmy Larson, Dan & Denise Thompson, Bob Skover, Jim Lewman, Jason Elder, Nick Schaeffer, Dwight Allen, Stuart McGill, Ellen Jori, Jeff Lee, Gene Malm, Hal Skinner.

**T**hank you to our significant benefactors G. K. Hart Trust, All Coast Forrest Products, Warren and Phyllis Welsh, Skikos Family (Andy's Produce), Karl C. Hallstrom (Zip-O-Logs), Steve and Terry Beck, Schmidbauer Lumber Co., Bond Family Trust, Miller Consolidated L.L.C., Burgess Lumber and the Black Bart Hoo Hoo Club.

We want to thank the Margaret and Merl Sturgeon Family for allowing the mill to co-exist along their adjoining property line and a donation of an early 1900's planer and access to Wade Sturgeon's diary.

## STURGEON'S MILL RESTORATION PROJECT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project*

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STURGEON'S MILLS OCCIDENTAL, CAL., JUNE, 1914.

PHOTO BY FLYGGARD.