



AMADOR SAWMILL AND MINING ASSOCIATION

P. O. BOX 1062, PLYMOUTH, CA. 95669, PH (209) 245-3448, FAX (209) 245-5097

E-mail, INFO@AMADORSAWMILL.ORG Website, WWW.AMADORSAWMILL.ORG

A 501 (c) (3) tax exempt non-profit Ca. corporation

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 7

FEBRUARY 15, 2004

Alan Langmuir, new cub reporter

Bill Braun, our Association President, asked me to help out on the newsletter. If you have any news please call me at (916) 685-5143 or e-mail me at alangmuir@jps.net. I live in Elk Grove and help out at fair time with my 1947 Gibson tractor and trailer cleaning up the slash around the mill, and also help as an off bearer during the shows.



Me & the Gibson

I interviewed Bill to see what has happened since the last newsletter in June. He wanted to remind us of our mission as stated in our bylaws, so keep this in mind as we review the past year's activities and our future plans:

“The primary objectives and purposes of this corporation shall be for public purposes: acquiring, restoring, and preserving authentic historic working sawmill and hard rock mining equipment for public education through display and demonstration, together with related activities.”

RECAP OF 2003 AMADOR COUNTY FAIR:

CEDAR CUT: During the 4 day fair, 35 volunteers produced approximately 11,000 board feet of lumber. The 21 cedar logs donated by Oneto Lumber Co. were cut for use by the Plymouth Playground Association. Sawdust was every where and the smell was aromatic but what a mess to clean up after! The playground with its cedar fence has been completed and is a beautiful addition to the town.



Plymouth Park Playground

DOUG FIR CUT: 18 Douglas fir logs donated by Wetzel Oviatt Lumber Co. were cut and sent to the Historic Kennedy Mine in Jackson. The lumber will be used to restore the water tower at the mine site in Jackson, CA. See their web site at www.kennedymine.com

KIOSK: Cathy Braun, Dorothy Jenkins, Vera Headd & Jim Jarrett worked the educational kiosk and took in \$800 in donations including \$143 received from the auction of the duck and porpoise hand carved from madrone by Dorothy.



Jim the "arm twister" (he makes them pay up)

CURRENT HAPPENINGS:

The November 1st Association pot-luck dinner went well and was well attended. Generous amounts of excellent food were on hand. It was a fun event for the crew, their families and invited guests. The plan is to have a pot-luck near the 1st of November again this year. Thanks to all the helping hands and great cooks.

In December of 2003 we received word from the port of San Francisco of their donation of steam piledriver #2 and #3 to the sawmill Association. These historic drivers have been retired after 53+ years of operation and replaced by diesel units. Each of the triple-drum winch and boiler units are state inspected and pass all codes for their operation. They last ran in 2003. We will remove the winch/boiler units from their respective barges and transport them to Bill's shop for conversion to logging donkeys. No small feat since each winch unit

weighs 10-12 tons and is 12 feet high. After cleaning them up we will mount them on skids and connect one up to the Corliss to power the mill for start up at the 2005 fair. Bill has been contacting crewmembers for the work parties. If you have not been contacted and want to help, give Bill a hoot (phone).



A Steam Donkey loading a rail car.
Courtesy Roger Titus collection

Acquisition of the drivers has also fulfilled the matching funds requirement of the Amador Community Foundation grant of \$3000 approved last May 2003. The Foundation is a local non-profit organization dedicated to supporting local charities which benefit the people of Amador County in arts, cultural, education, and historic preservation. Thank you, Bill, for getting this grant and pursuing the piledriver acquisitions.

The receipt of this grant brings our restoration fund up to \$6,500 so we can start some serious restoration work!

PLANS FOR THE 2004 AMADOR FAIR:
The Amador County Fair is this July 22-25.

Along with the fully restored and operational historic sawmill (circa 1890's) powered by a 1910 60 hp Case steam traction engine, we will display some of the 60 hp Corliss steam engine parts that are being restored at Bill's machine shop.



Corliss frame and governor column

We hope to also have one of the steam donkeys with the triple-drum logging winches mounted on wooden skids. The association has an agreement with the fair that any new improvements we make at the fair after the year 2000 are owned by the association. Having the equipment on skids as they did in the old days will allow us to move equipment around as we grow and acquire more exhibits.

RESTORATION PROJECTS:

Volunteers are needed to come to Bill's shop and the fair grounds and help out at monthly work days. The work days will start February 28, and then run every third Saturday of the month thereafter, so mark down Feb. 28, March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19, and July 17. Bring coveralls, gloves and a lunch and help with the restoration work. The shop opens at 8am.

Some projects for work days:

A. Start construction of the Corliss engine foundation at sawmill site. This will be a 16ft. x 8ft. x 12in. reinforced concrete slab.

B. Make further repairs to the sawmill carriage to improve the alignment of the carriage so that we cut straight lumber instead of wedges.



Carriage receiving new wheels, axles & deck in 2003

C. Tow the two newly acquired historic steam piledrivers from San Francisco to a harbor in Antioch, CA. This will be a great outing and field trip! There have been numerous delays but this may happen as early as March or April.



Piledriver #2

D. Help disassemble and photograph the two piledriver barges once they are tied up at a dock in Antioch, CA., then transport the steam winches to Bill's workshop. This will be major "farkeling" undertaking of the first order. The wooden "A" frame towers are over 82 feet high and the boilers and winch are affixed to 80 foot by 35 foot barges. Lots of crane and hard hat dirty stuff. Fun!

E. Help needed to reassemble with new parts the 1950's Schramm four cylinder engine and air compressor donated by Mike Gould, and then set it up on its trailer for use in sand blasting projects.

F. Help needed to machine the new piston and piston rod for the 1904 Corliss steam engine. The cylinder has been bored out to 9.175 inches and honed at John Tower's machine shop by John Broglio & Bill Braun, a major milestone in its restoration. We need your volunteer help to complete the task.



Corliss cylinder

IN CLOSING:

Thanks to John Tower for the donation of the single axle box trailer we use for storage and drying of the lumber we cut at the fair and generous use of his shop along with the expert help of machinist, John Broglio.

Thanks to Bob Lewis, my next door neighbor, for the donation of over 100 pounds of general purpose grease and a beautifully restored hand crank bulk oil dispenser.

With Wetzel-Oviatt Lumber Co. out of business, the Association will be working with the Amador Fair management to acquire logs this year from Sierra Pacific Industries (they purchased Wetzel assets) with the aim to continue the 33 year tradition of donating saw logs to the Amador Fair Sawmill.

The Association is also in need of a used working VCR for use at the display Kiosk for this year's fair. Call Bill if you know of someone who wants to donate a VCR. Our web site www.amadorwawmill.org will have this newsletter posted along with other photos taken in the last few months of ongoing projects. Please send me copies of photos you think are interesting that have sawmill or mining related activities for the web site and the newsletter. This includes any information that will help our efforts to educate the public about forgotten skills before they are lost. Steam driven sawmills are fascinating!

We have a lot on our plate this year and ask that you talk up your friends to get in on the fun of “farkeling” with historic machinery. We can all help with our different backgrounds. Our focus is on sawmill and mining activities. We are just trying to answer the public’s question, “How did they do that back then?” Our answer is, “Watch over here and you will see and hear how it was done back then”. Come donate your time and skills to help preserve the history & stories of the past.



2003 Sawmill Crew (partial)
This issue is dedicated to the
Bullhackers, Cat Skinners, & Timber Beasts
of the past.

Alan Langmuir, Editor

All rights reserved, Amador Sawmill & Mining Association 2004

