



PICKWICK MILL
DAM

Critical Need

A BRIEF HISTORY

For over 165 years, the Pickwick Mill Dam has made everything possible -- powering the mill, sustaining Lake LaBelle, and anchoring a National Register Historic District. Left unrepaired, that legacy -- and this community -- are at risk.

THE PROBLEM

In 2019, the Minnesota DNR put Pickwick Mill on notice -- significant seepage beneath the abutment, active water intrusion through the retaining wall, and steel supports pulling away from the masonry.

Pickwick Mill responded immediately, engaging Bolton & Menk, Inc. to develop repair plans now fully approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Minnesota DNR Division of Dam Safety, and the State Historic Preservation Office. The dam has held on. But it will not hold indefinitely.

BY THE NUMBERS

165

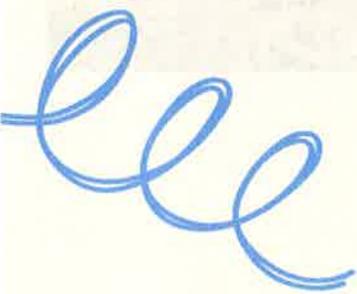
years of history

1970

year list on National Registry

\$84,126

already invested in engineering and approvals



The Consequences of Inaction

Impact 1: Loss of Lake LaBelle

The dam creates Lake LaBelle. No dam, no lake -- it is that simple. Lake LaBelle would drain, eliminating a beloved community landmark and permanently altering the character of Pickwick.

Impact 3: Fire Department Water Access Eliminated

Lake LaBelle serves as a water source for the local fire department. Its loss would eliminate that access, forcing the department to identify and secure an alternative source -- with no guarantee one exists at the same proximity or volume.

Impact 2: Flood Mitigation Disruption

The dam currently manages water flow through the community. Without it, the community of Pickwick loses a critical buffer against flooding, exposing homes and properties to significantly greater risk during high water events.

Impact 4: Unknown Landscape Changes

The dam has managed water flow in this valley for 165 years. Removing that control introduces unpredictable consequences -- altered creek flow, erosion, wetland disruption, and changes to the surrounding landscape that cannot be fully anticipated or easily reversed.



PICKWICK MILL MEMBERSHIP

Pickwick Mill has no affiliation with any government entity and is owned entirely by its membership. The Pickwick Mill is on both the state and national registries. We invite you to help us in the ongoing efforts to keep Pickwick Mill running by becoming a member of Pickwick Mill. Members receive the Daily Grind newsletter and are entitled to free tours of the mill. Memberships run from ~~May~~ ^{September} 1st to ~~April~~ ^{August} 31st. In order to become a member please complete the following form and mail it and your check to:

Pickwick Mill Inc.
39238 Mill Street
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Please print

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

Miller \$1000+

Numbered print of the Mill
Plaque in the Mill

Millwright \$500

Plaque to the member
Plaque in the Mill

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

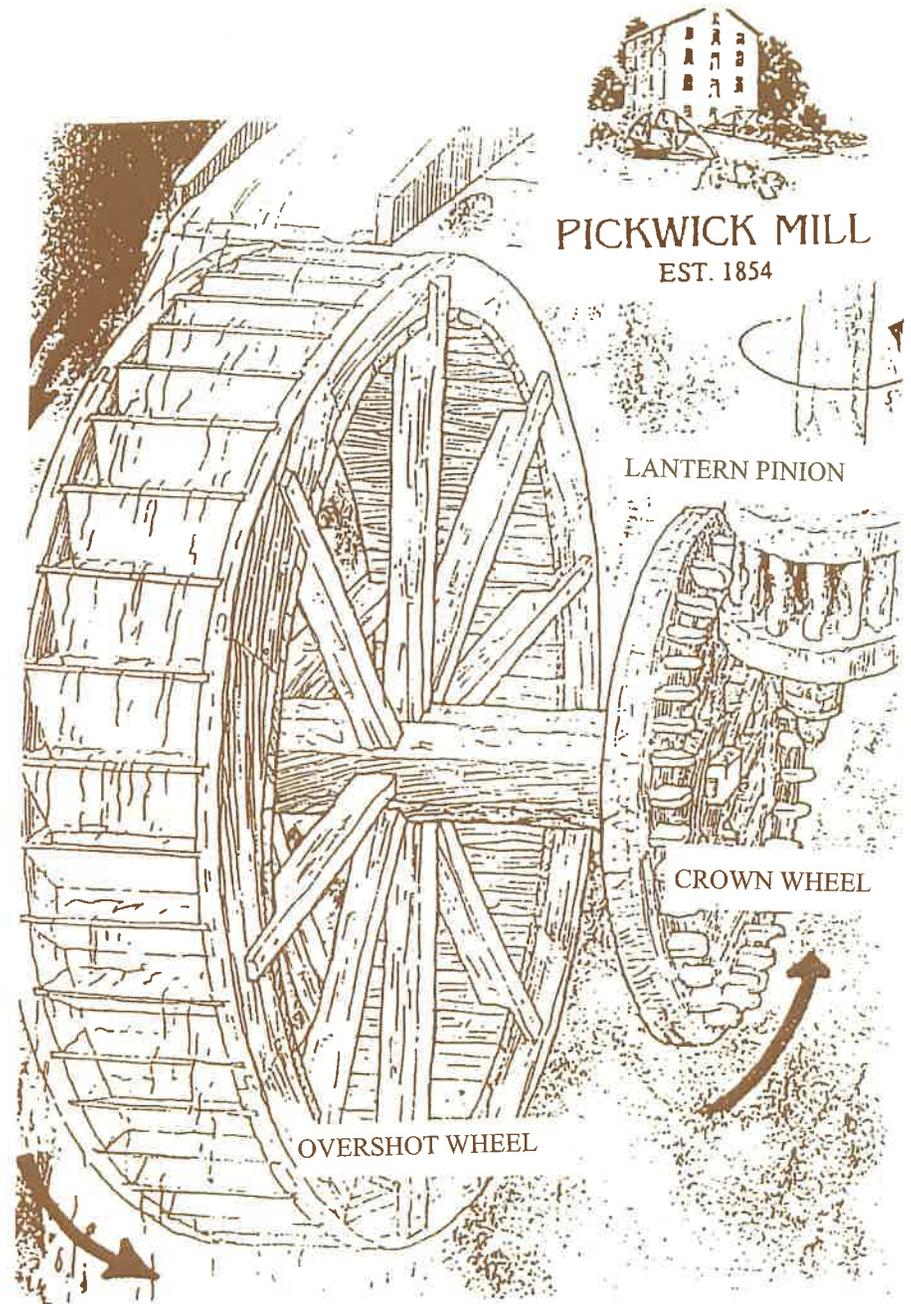
Cooper \$100

Family \$25

Individual \$15

Senior \$5 (65+)

PICKWICK MILL
Phone: 507-457-0499
Location: 24813 County Rd 7
Mailing: 39238 Mill Street
Winona, MN 55987
Website—pickwickmill.org



Pickwick Mill Location
24813 County Rd 7
Winona, Minnesota

HISTORY OF PICKWICK MILL

In 1854 the first settlers came to lovely Big Trout Creek Valley, now known as Pickwick. One settler was George W.T. Grant. Mr. Grant recognized that the falls of Big Trout Creek were an excellent water site and decided to construct a grist and saw mill in the area to utilize nature's power. By 1856 Wilson Davis and his father, Timothy, became associated with Grant, and they proceeded to build Pickwick Mill, the structure you see today. The mill was completed in 1858. It is six stories and measures 60 feet by 45 feet. The exterior of the mill is constructed of local limestone quarried nearby. The craftsmanship on the interior of the mill is remarkable. The locally cut and sawn timbers are notched and pieced into place. Only in the floor are nails used.

For its time and place, the Pickwick Mill was a very large "merchant" or commercial mill. It was driven by an overshot water wheel which turned millstones imported from France. The original millstones are located outside of the mill. Millstones which were from the same French area and time period are now installed inside the mill and are driven by a 20-foot diameter water wheel.

In its prime, the mill produced over 100 barrels of flour a day. Local farmers were hired to haul the barrels of flour by wagon to LaMoille (2 miles north by the river). From this location the flour was transported either by rail or boat to the eastern United States, Europe, or South America. During the Civil War, the mill was used to supply the Union Troops, and the mill itself ran day and night to meet the demand.

During the mid to late 1800's southeastern Minnesota was part of the wheat belt. Farmers from miles around brought their wheat to the mill by wagon over rough roads. At times, the farmers and their teams and wagons would be lined up for a mile down the road waiting to unload at the mill. Next to the mill, at the present site of the Pickwick Inn, a hotel was built to provide overnight lodging for those that could afford such a luxury.

During the last part of the nineteenth century, a revolution occurred in the milling of flour, called the "New Process". This process utilized machines called roller mills. Pickwick Mill kept

pace with these new changes and moved to become a "state of the art" mill. The mill today is unusual from most mills in that it contains milling machinery which represents these technological changes. Antique roller mills, separators and flour dressers are all in place and operate with the power from the water wheel. The original double turbine, which replaced the water wheel is on display outside in front of the mill.

The mill produced flour and/or livestock feed continuously. After nearly 120 years, the fate of the mill was undetermined until what appeared to be a disaster hit. On September 20, 1980 the valley experienced a rare flood which destroyed the dam and spillway of the mill. In addition, the mill experienced extensive water damage; and because of the damage, the owners of the mill considered felling the building.

Local citizens, however, refused to recognize that the mill was doomed and turned a possible disaster into a success story. They formed Pickwick Mill Incorporated and purchased the mill in 1982. These citizens, as well as other interested persons and organizations from around the world, have proceeded to restore the dam, spillway, and the mill itself. Today the mill pond provides a means of recreation for boating, swimming, and some of the best trout fishing in the county. In addition, the mill building is now repaired to its original glory. Visitors can step back in time and see a functional 20-foot water wheel, millstones turning, and working machinery from the various stages of milling history. They can marvel at the hand construction of the mill and appreciate the ingenuity of the designers and laborers.

The mill has a very nice museum on the 4th floor. While the mill is now structurally sound, it still needs the help and support of people who appreciate the value of maintaining our historical treasures. Ongoing machine repairs, restoration, and maintenance are costly.

If you would be interested in donating to the project, please contact us at 507-457-0499 and leave your name and number or complete the membership form on the next page.

Thank you for your interest in the Pickwick Mill. We hope you visit us again soon.