

KETTLEBY MILL

Built 1840 - Burned 1950



Since 1896 trouble has seemed to dog the footsteps of each new owner. At that time the mill was taken over by E. W. Love. A year later the mill dam was destroyed by a flood. Since then each new owner has lost heavily within a year of taking the mill over. The mill was purchased in April 1949 by its present owner H. Roy Denne of Newmarket.

During the previous 20 years the mill was operated by J. Frank Curtis of Kettleby. In 1934 he switched the mill to electricity when he lost the dam for a second time, through a cloudburst on September 13, 1934, an account of which is given below:

Bursting the Kettleby dam, tearing up roads, washing out bridges, inundating cellars and ripping down fences, heavy floods caused damage estimated at hundreds of thousands of dollars in King Township and adjoining municipalities. During the downpour and for some time after the many sideroads were racing rivers of muddy water, completely paralyzing traffic and washing down huge quantities of mud, gravel and other debris on to the roadways.

The storm struck most severely in the immediate vicinity of Kettleby, between the fourth and fifth concessions of King Township. The torrents of rain quickly turned the countryside into a series of miniature lakes and streams, the water flowing from the hills surrounding Kettleby into the valley. The water in the mill pond, fed by Kettleby Creek and scores of impromptu rivulets, arose rapidly until at six o'clock that night the pond had risen 10 feet and overflowed at each end of the long dam.

A gap nearly 20 feet wide was torn through at the east end of the dam, which had been heightened and strengthened during the past summer, and was rebuilt five years ago after the spring floods had burst through.

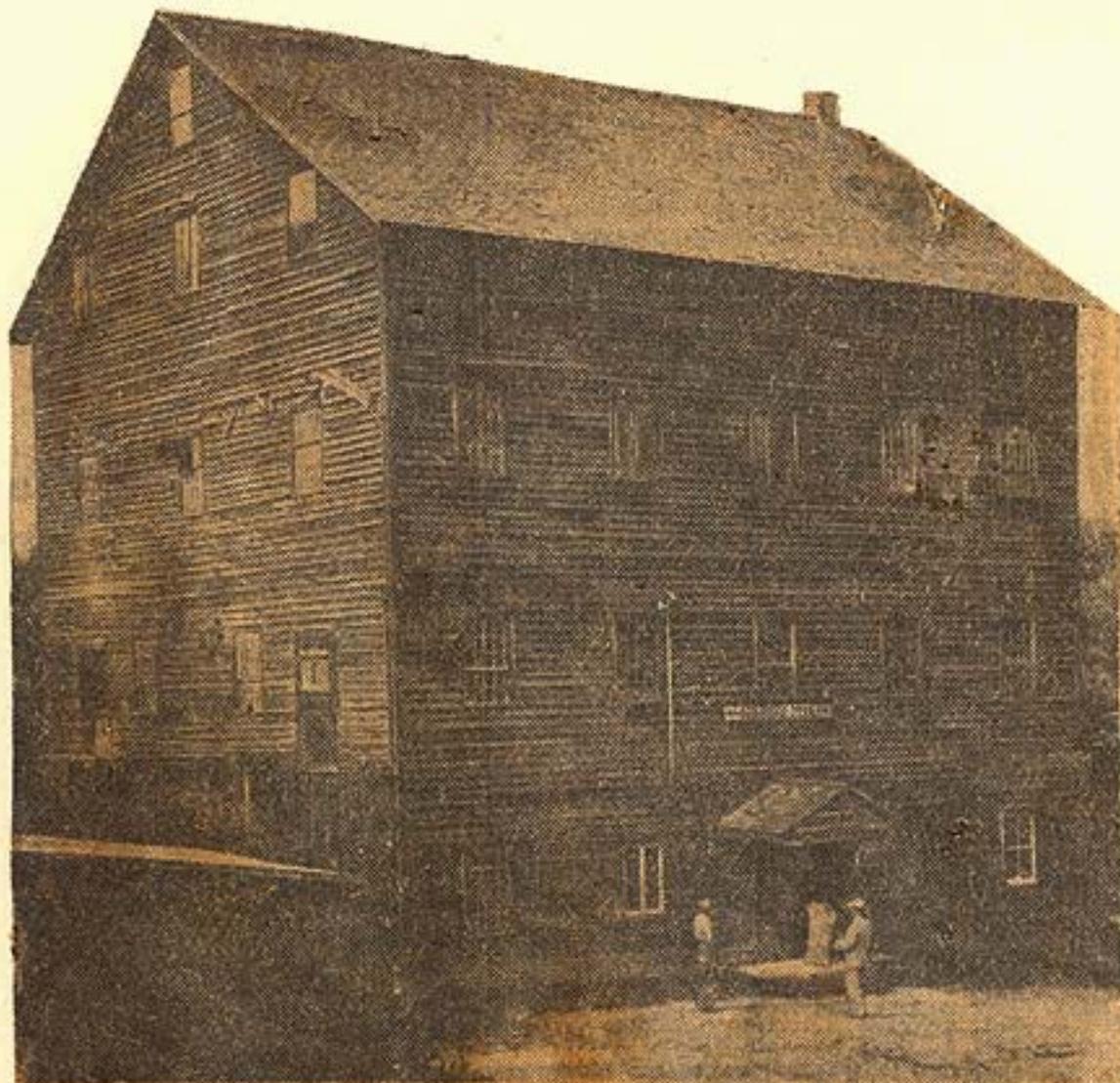
The racing water flooded down the road, tearing the gravel surface off to a depth of a foot, dug out the ditch several feet, swamped the cellar of the postoffice, home of Edward Williams, swept away his garden and found the creek again, tearing out the banks a distance of 20 feet in places.

KETTLEBY MILL

As the water rose visibly in the mill pond, owned by Frank Curtis, the ten sluices were opened by scores of villagers and farmers from the countryside, who worked in a frantic effort to free the rushing waters and prevent serious damage. The sluice gates held, but the water rushed over the top of the dam three feet deep, and tore around either end through the gap it had created.

To-day the mill pond is a wide muddy hole strewn with debris, logs and fence rails.

Two bridges were washed out on the fourth concession at the township gravel pit leaving two wide gashes in the roadbed. On the townline, between the fourth and fifth concessions, after the torrent had inundated the Kettleby district, it ripped the foundation from under a concrete bridge, causing it to sink nearly two feet. Fence posts were left dangling in the air.



One-hundred-and-two-year-old mill at Kettleby, once a thriving stage-coach stop, still operates daily. The mill wheel is gone, however; a wire from Niagara serves its power needs. Its hand-hewn timbers are

CENTURY OLD MILL SOLD 1949

J. Frank Curtis of Kettleby has sold his grist and flour mill to H. R. Denne of Newmarket. Mr. Curtis has owned and operated the mill for the past 20 years. Mr. Denne has had experience in the mill business and will take over on April 1st.

The mill was built in 1824 by Septimus Tyrwhitt to manufacture flour by the French Burr Stone process for export. The flour mill was an important grain market in those days and often farmers' teams would be lined up in queues nearly a mile long with loaded wagons waiting to be unloaded.

The first water power was produced from 20 foot overshot wheels, then water wheels of the undershot type were introduced. To increase power this was later replaced by a turbine which occupied little space and gave more power. Water power was replaced by steam as the streams failed to supply enough water and after the flood in 1934 water power was gone forever as the dam was swept away, and electricity was installed.

KETTLEBY
MILLS

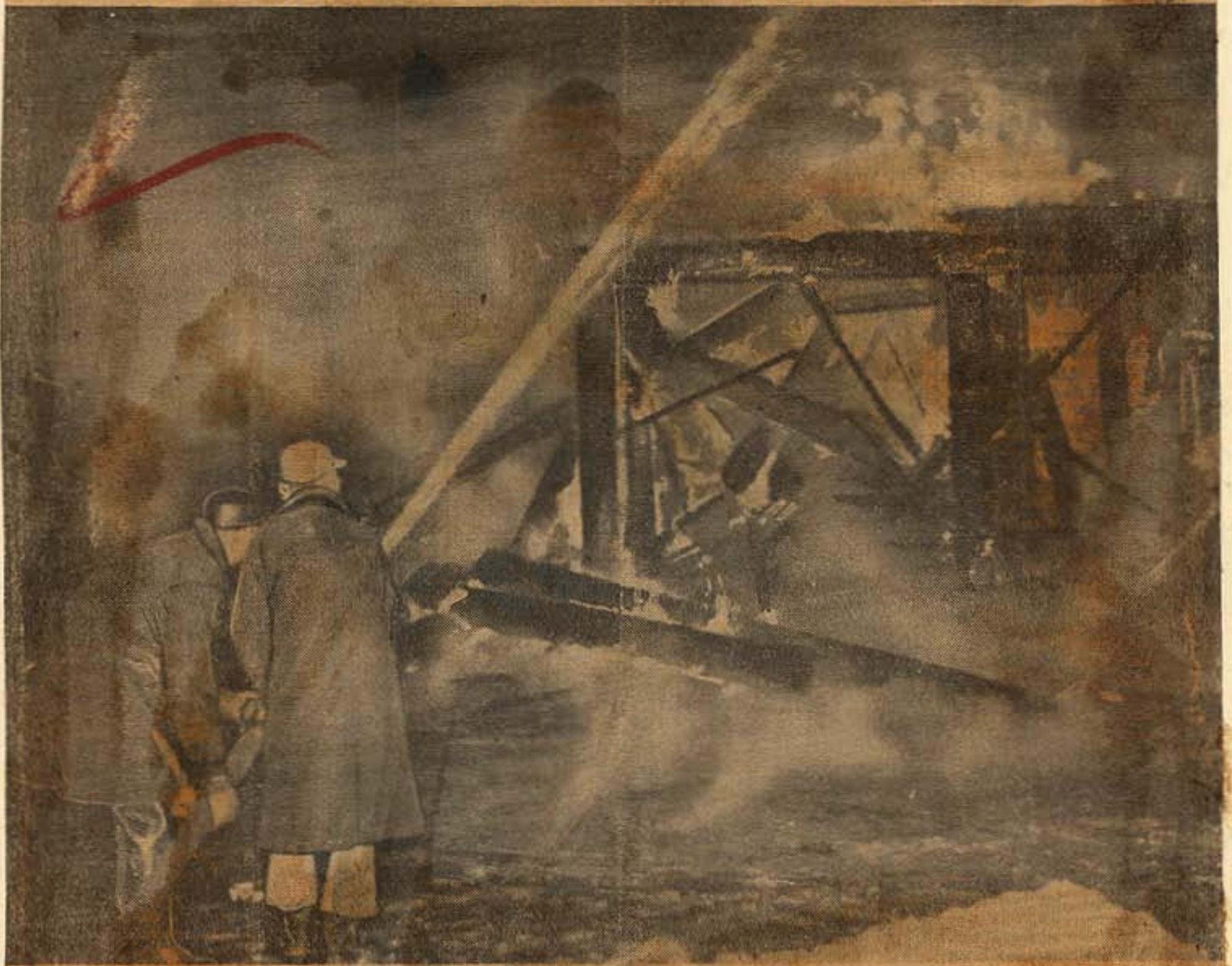


OVER CENTURY OLD MILL SOLD AT KETTLEBY - 1949.

Mr. J. F. Curtis of Kettleby has sold his grist and flour mill to D. H. Denne of Newmarket. Mr. Curtis has owned and operated the mill for the past 20 years. Mr. Denne has had experience in the mill business and will take over April 1st. The mill was built in 1824 by Septimus Tyrwhitt to manufacture flour by the french burr stone process for export. The flour mill was an important grain market in those days and often farmer's teams would be lined up in queues nearly a mile long with loaded wagons waiting to be unloaded. The first water power was produced from twenty foot overshot wheels, then water wheels of the undershot type were introduced. To increase power this was later replaced by a turbine which occupied little space and gave more power. Water power was replaced by steam as the streams failed to supply enough water and after the flood in 1934 water power was gone forever as the dam was swept away; electricity being installed.

Copied from the Banner

HISTORIC KETTLEBY MILL REDUCED TO CHARRED RUINS



—Star Photo by Ted Leonard

HISTORIC LANDMARK, the Kettleby water mill was destroyed by fire early today, causing \$20,000 damage. Built of hand-hewn red pine in 1840, the mill was the principal industry of the 100-person community near Aurora. One thousand bushels of wheat were lost in the building which blazed for two hours. Firemen are shown trying to save place

A seeming jinx which has manifested itself five times to succeeding owners last night struck in the form of a fire completely destroying the 110 year old Kettleby mill. Although spotted almost as soon as it started, the blaze swept through the four storey frame building before Aurora firemen could pour water on it. Within 20 minutes the building collapsed.

The mill was a landmark and subject of many artists. A product of pioneering community spirit, it stood as a symbol of the thriving past to the present residents of the village. Erected in 1840, it was built of heavy hand-hewn pine.

MILL RAZED AS HUNDREDS OF RATS FLEE

Kettleby, March 22nd, 1950:

One of the oldest landmarks in King Township, the 110 year old grist mill here, was burned to the ground early to-day. Hundreds of rats came streaming out ahead of the blaze and ran frightened among the feet of the onlookers.

Firemen could do nothing to save the building, which was razed in two hours. They were able to confine the flames to the mill and nearby homes were only scorched. Built of hand-hewn red pine, the mill was five storeys high and stood on the banks of Kettleby creek. Only recently it was converted to electric power. Generations of nearby farmers had brought their wheat to be milled there.

The alarm was turned in by William Max, who called Aurora firemen. The owner, H. Roy Denne, did not know the mill was on fire until wakened at his home in Newmarket when firemen returned. He said he left the mill at 5 p. m. He said no fire had been lit in the stove yesterday. Cause of the blaze has not been determined.

Mr. Denne estimated the loss at \$20,000. There were 1,000 bushels of wheat stored in the mill, and flames shooting from the dry structure could be seen 30 miles away.

The only industry in Kettleby, the old mill was all that was left of the once prosperous lumber industry which thrived in Kettleby when it was known as Smoky Hollow. The creek that fed the old mill is now almost dry and the hamlet has shrunk to about 100 citizens.

"Toronto Daily Star"

A TRAGIC HAPPENING AT KETTLEBY MILL

WRITTEN TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN MILTON VANHORN
- born June 9th, 1830 - died April 26th, 1854

JOHN MILTON VANHORN was born in Penn, Wyoming County, June 9th, 1830, and died by a dreadful accident on April 26th, 1854. His end was a most affecting proof that we stand in jeopardy every hour. He was young, healthy, remarkably amiable, tenderly beloved by a large circle of friends, and but lately married to the much beloved object of his youthful affection. Everything about him indicated a long and happy life. But, alas, while the flower was wet with the dew of youth - exhibiting its loveliest tints, and exhaling its sweetest fragrance; whilst admired and prized by all that gazed upon it, it was crushed! The wind passed over it and it is gone - gone, thank God to bloom in a fairer clime, and to bloom there forever.

His death was occasioned by being caught upon the shaft of a small machine in a mill in which he was engaged, in the village of Kettleby, King Township. The shaft was an upright one, revolving nearly 300 times a minute. Near it stands a hopper into which it appears our brother had been emptying a bag of wheat. He threw the empty bag across his arm, and having to pass near the shaft, which, unfortunately, was exposed it is thought the strings of the bag were drawn by the current of air created by the rapid motion of the shaft, and thus the bag and the arm were in an instant wound around the shaft, and Mr. VanHorn was whirled around in a most frightful manner. His legs came in contact with the hopper, and one foot was literally wrenched from the leg, and hurled to the far end of the mill. Both of his legs and thighs were broken in several places; and coming in contact was an iron pin in the adjoining wall, the ribs of the left side were torn from the spine. It is thought he was upon the shaft two minutes and must have gone around with lightning speed more than 1000 times, and yet strange to say, he retained his senses, survived the shock an hour and half, and was rational to the last. The last words he said were, "Glory be to God" several times.

He was brought to God with a number of other young persons of whom I am thankful to be able to say that they remain ornaments of Christian society.

Author Unknown