

Old Schwamb Mill · Works in Progress · Fall 2025

17 Mill Lane Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

781-643-0554

www.oldschwambmill.org

Taking the Mill on the Road

One important way that directors and volunteers get the word out about the Old Schwamb Mill is by giving talks in other locations. On October 21, 2025, **Doreen Stevens** delivered a lecture “April 19, 1775: The Road Where It Happened” to 60 attendees at the **Malden Historical Society**. As the principal researcher for the Mill’s exhibit showing Menotomy’s role in the battle that started the American Revolution, Doreen has given this talk several times, to Friends of the Mill, invited guests of area historical societies, and audiences outside the Mill. She will share her research again in a talk this spring for **Lifelong Learning at Regis College**.

These lectures encourage visitation of the Mill’s exhibit, **The Road Where It Happened: Revolution Comes to Menotomy**. The exhibit is reinstalled at the Mill December 6, 2025, to March 14, 2026. The Mill was honored to display the exhibit panels in fall 2025 at Arlington Town Hall.

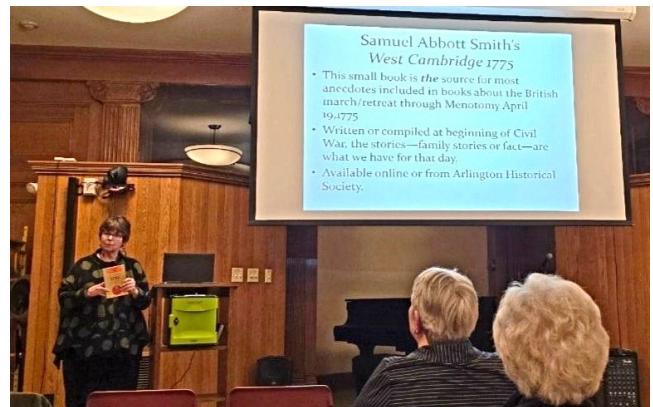
Talks on the the Old Schwamb Mill itself have been welcomed by historical societies and lecture series in many towns. In 2023, director **Dermot Whittaker** delivered a talk at **The Jenks Center** in Winchester, Mass., on the ways volunteer researchers have uncovered the history of the Mill. He recently spoke at a lunch-and-learn in Arlington’s **Workbar** about the Schwamb brothers and their three factories on Mill Brook. His focus was on the Theodore Schwamb Company in whose buildings the Workbar makes its Arlington home.

Some outreach is collaborative. Director **Robert Tanner** attended an open house at the **Hatch Mill** in Marshfield, Mass., this fall. He reported back on the restoration of that water-powered box board mill, a fifty-year story involving structural repairs, recreation of hundred-year-old machinery parts, and plans to revive nearby water power. The Old Schwamb Mill and the Hatch Mill have discussed exchanging lectures this coming year.

Another project awaiting a volunteer in 2026: Creating a list of all New England mill museums open to the public, and exchanging contact information with them. Each museum tells a different story, but the audience for one mill is often eager to see another. We hope that outreach from the Old Schwamb Mill, one of the oldest and most successful living-history museums, can bring lovers of the industrial past together.

Coming This Spring: Photographer Lou Jones and the panAFRICApject

The Mill is looking forward to exhibiting photos by **Lou Jones** as part of the **panAFRICApject** from March 28 to May 16, 2026. The mission of the panAFRICApject is to create a contemporary,



top: Dermot Whittaker with Tashi Pique, Arlington Workbar Community Manager. **below:** Doreen Stevens speaking at Malden Historical Society

visual portrait of modern Africa. The intention is to establish a repository of images that represent each of 54 countries in ways that avoid preconceived western notions of distress.

An exciting aspect of this exhibit will be interaction of the artist with students at Arlington High School. Director **Rose Austin** and AHS Visual Arts faculty member **Adam Gooder** are coordinating visits by students to the Mill's exhibit. This will be followed by a visit to the school by photographer Jones. The Mill is delighted play a role in this examination of the photography of today's Africa and the goals of the project's artist.

You don't have to wait until spring to learn more about the panAFRICAp project. See Lou Jones's work at panafricaproject.org.



Readyng the Mill's Archives for Research

The Mill's business archives are largely processed – safely housed and described – for the years 1904 to 1930. For the years 1930 to 1969, countless frame and moulding orders, patterns, customer card files, and account books are identified but not yet conveniently foldered and described. Two archives volunteers – **Marjorie Hilton and Sally Richter** – keep at this project week after week.

Why does it matter? Having a quick access to documentation lets us confirm research we want to pursue. Here are two examples.

A nationally known gilder with a career-long understanding of the frame designs of Stanford White spotted what looked to him to be uniquely White profile drawings on worksheet pasted to the Mill's walls. We were quickly able to confirm that two of the New York City galleries that he named as dealers in those profiles were clients of the Schwambs as early as 1904. Margie's index of those Schwamb clients allowed us to start a project to examine the exact moulding they ordered.

The transcribed Schwamb company board minutes named Ray Engineering as the firm that evaluated the Mill's steam plant in 1924 and recommended an increase in pressures. The company is still in business, and during a visit to the Mill this summer its owners **Bill and Todd Ray** were able to view and comment on our records of the boiler operations and the bill and expenses associated with their great grandfather's work. The brothers, in turn, shed new light on the steam system and possible reasons the Schwambs later made the transition to electricity.

Volunteers have made the history locked in the Schwamb's business records available to all of us preserving the Mill. Their work informs our understanding of everything from the Mill's structure to the final destination of its frames and mouldings.

Increased Accessibility to the Mill's First Floor

The shop floor of the Old Schwamb Mill is where master woodturner David Graf makes the Mill's oval frames. It is also the site of small concerts, poetry reading, and lectures on history and art. The directors are seeking ways of increasing access to the shop floor for those with mobility issues.

Directors **Ellen Cohen and Dermot Whittaker** recently met with **Nina Zannieri, Executive Director, Paul Revere Memorial Association**, to see first-hand the modifications that have given visitors access to both floors of the Paul Revere House. Zannieri generously shared resources and insights gained in serving the public both before and after recent modifications. The directors welcome input from friends and visitors about accessibility; email us at info@oldschwambmill.org.

You can contribute to the Mill's Annual Appeal securely online at www.oldschwambmill.org