

# THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

## Report on Appleton Ruins – Statement of Cultural and Historical Value or Interest

### **Historical Person/Family:**

The village of Appleton was settled and developed by members of the Teskey family who came to Ramsay Township in 1823 from southern Ireland. Among less than a dozen Protestant families in this largely Roman Catholic government-sponsored emigration were John Teskey, his wife and nine children, from Rathkeale in Limerick. Joseph, the eldest son, had obtained his hundred acre lot at the location then known as Apple Tree Falls on the Mississippi River. On the strength of attractive natural assets and the initial enterprise of three Teskey brothers, a small community developed in the next thirty years, known for a time as Teskeyville and then as Appleton Falls (now Appleton). With a population of about seventy-five persons by the middle 1850s, it contained Joseph Teskey's grist mill and Robert Teskey's sawmill equipped with two upright saws and a public timber slide.

Robert Teskey (born 1803), a magistrate for over forty years, built in 1862 a four storey woollen mill of stone construction. He retired a year later and lived until 1892. This Appleton woollen mill, later doubled in size, was operated by his son John Adam Teskey (1837-1908), with the assistance for a time of his brother-in-law, William Bredin, and his brother Rufus Teskey. Before the depression of the 1870s, when the Appleton mills had been leased for a period of years, the village had two firms manufacturing tweeds, flannels and blankets.

### **Community Significance:**

The ruins of the “Mississippi Woollen Mill” represent the only example remaining of a woollen factory in the former Ramsay Township and stand as a landmark signifying the important contributions made by the woollen industry to the economic progress of Ramsay Township. In 1950, the mill was largely destroyed by fire.

Over time, the site of these ruins has come to represent a picturesque setting for those viewing it from the opposite side of the river. Many tourists and artisans have taken an artistic interest in its tragic beauty.

Although only a footprint of the ruins remain as of September 2006, the site itself still has significant community heritage value for the reasons listed above.

### **Architectural significance:**

The Mississippi Woollen Mills in Appleton was a classic example of early nineteenth century mill design, and its footprint is the only example which still exists of a woollen mill in the former Ramsay Township.

#### Original

The Teskey mill was a 6-bay, 3-storey building of squared, split face limestone laid up in courses, with raised gables finished with cut raking copings, terminating at projected kneelers or corbels at the eaves. Chimney stacks were located at each gable, flush with the walls, and a cupola was located in the centre of the roof. Window sills were of cut stone and the flat arch window heads of split face voussoirs. A two-storey, 6-day addition in a similar style of masonry abutted the main building at its south gable end.

#### Remains

As of September 2006, only a footprint of approximately 10 feet on all sides remain. Rubble from the ruins portion described below are still found within and around this footprint, and are considered significant from both the community and architectural heritage perspectives.

As of January 2006, the ruins were as follows:

East Wall: Five bays of masonry exist up to the level of the eaves, complete with all window sills and heads. The condition of the inner wythes of the masonry spandrel panels between windows as well as the state of the wooden lintels above fenestration show clear signs of deterioration. The level of the second floor will likely have to be demolished as it is badly deteriorated and poses a hazard to anyone working in the vicinity.

North Gable Wall: The wall is intact up to the eaves level with the exception of two openings to the east. On the west side, the gable rises to approximately half of its original height. The kneeler exists, but nearly all the coping has been lost.

West Wall: The west wall has not survived, other than at the returns to the gables which service to locate the positions of the first openings at either end.

South Gable Wall: The gable wall is essentially complete up to the lines of the eaves. Kneelers and some form of protective coping are visible at the southwest corner.

Extension: The extension to the south has fared less well and only masonry to the first floor has survived. Most of the window heads and sills have been lost, so that spines of masonry, the vertical panels of stonework between the openings is all that remains.

A thorough photographic record exists and supports the written description of the former buildings on this site. The remains of the stone structure of the Appleton woollen mill still stand on this site, and represents cultural heritage value and interest to our Town.

Any other structures or land on this lot, outside of the island on which the ruins rest, are not considered part of the cultural heritage value or interest to the Town.

**Conclusion:** The Appleton Ruins site represents significant cultural, historical and architectural significance to the Town of Mississippi Mills for all the reasons listed above.

Source material from:

- Howard Morton Brown's book entitled "Lanark Legacy" published in 1984
- "A Conservation/Preservation Feasibility Study: Mississippi Woollen Mill Ruins" by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management, December 2005)