

## = Fabyan Windmill =

The Fabyan Windmill is an authentic , working Dutch windmill dating from the 1850s located in Geneva , Kane County , Illinois , just north of Batavia , Illinois , off Illinois Route 25 . The five @-@ story wooden smock mill with a stage , which stands 68 feet ( 21 m ) tall , sits upon the onetime estate of Colonel George Fabyan , but is now part of the Kane County Forest Preserve District .

In 1979 , the windmill was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Dutch Mill . The following year , the windmill was selected to be on a U.S. postage stamp , as part of a series of five windmills in a stamp booklet called " Windmills USA . " It originally operated as a custom grinding mill .

## = = History = =

During the mid @-@ 19th century , the Fabyan Windmill was constructed by German craftsmen , Louis Blackhaus , and his brother @-@ in @-@ law Freidrick Brockmann , on a site at Meyers Road near 16th Street in York Township between Elmhurst and Oak Brook , Illinois ( now Lombard , Illinois ) .

By the early 20th century , the windmill had fallen into a state of disrepair . In 1914 , George Fabyan purchased the disused windmill for approximately \$ 8 @,@ 000 from Mrs. Fred Runge . He then had it moved to its present location in Geneva Township on the east side of the Fox River , close to Illinois Route 25 in July 1915 . Fabyan spent an estimated \$ 75 @,@ 000 to have it moved , reconstructed , and restored .

The Edgar E. Belding Company of West Chicago was contracted by Fabyan to move the windmill from York Center . It was slowly dismantled piece by piece , with Roman numerals carved into the beams and braces to facilitate correct reconstruction . Some of the largest beams had to be hauled by a team of mules .

The windmill was reassembled on its present site by a Danish millwright named Rasmussen , with the assistance of John Johnson and six others from the Wilson Bros. Construction Co . After nineteen months , the relocation and reconstruction were completed . The mill was a wonder in its day , because it is thought to be the only fully automatic wind @-@ driven mill of its type .

George Fabyan died in 1936 , and his wife died two years later . The estate was then sold by the executors of the will to the Kane County Forest Preserve District for \$ 70 @,@ 500 .

## = = Structure = =

The giant cypress wood beams , trimmed with black walnut , are all hand joined and doweled with wood dowels . In fact , there are no metal nails used inside the structure . Even the original gearing was handmade of hickory and maple , with all five floors containing different mechanisms .

The windmill was a functioning mill used by the Fabyans for grinding several types of grain , including corn , wheat , rye , and oats . It also served as a grain mill for Fabyan 's herd of prized Jersey cattle .

At the mill 's top , or cap , is a huge cogged wheel called the brake wheel , which was turned by wind blowing against the sails . The sails are covered with canvas sailcloths to help catch the wind . The sails had to be entirely reconstructed by Rasmussen and John Johnson , because they were missing when Fabyan bought the mill . The sails span 74 feet 4 inches . The brake wheel , located in the cap , rotates an upright shaft running the height of the mill . This shaft supplied power to all of the mill 's operations .

There is a set of belt @-@ driven elevators , remarkable for its time , that moved the grains from chutes to hoppers , and even from floor to floor , making the mill almost fully automatic . Most other mills required workers to hand shovel materials between operations .

During its reconstruction , the Colonel had a new foundation poured , which created a basement . In the basement , he had ovens installed whose vents and chimney extended underground beneath Route 25 to a structure that once stood on the other side . In addition to the ovens , marble slabs

and cooling racks were also installed . It is thought that at one time , the windmill basement was an operating bakery . During the flour rationing of World War I , the bakery supposedly produced bread for the Fabyan family and even for their two bears , Tom and Jerry . However , the extent of use of the mill 's bakery is debatable due to an inadequate oven draft .

= = Significance = =

The wind @-@ powered mill is a type that was rarely built in the United States , where grist mills are usually powered by water . Its wooden gears and nail @-@ less construction techniques are of interest both technically and architecturally . The mill is also an example of an America folly , a structure built primarily to enhance the landscape or view . In this case , George Fabyan , a wealthy merchant , purchased and moved the by @-@ then inoperative mill to beautify his estate , but maintained it as a private mill with no commercial value .

= = Today = =

Kane County considered the windmill 's demolition as early as 1990 when it became structurally unsafe for public inspection . However , local citizens began fighting to keep the mill intact . In 1997 , the Forest Preserve District contracted third @-@ generation Dutch windmill maker Lucas Verbij to fully restore the windmill for a cost of over \$ 900 @, @ 000 . It made its public debut in June 2005 .

The Fabyan Windmill is the best example of an authentic Dutch windmill in the United States , actually it 's a treasure and would be the most popular windmill in the Netherlands ( we currently have 1000 windmills ) .

The grinding mechanisms to make flour have been restored and are in use today by mill volunteers who do demonstrations to the public .

Even now , the varnish from 1915 is in near perfect condition because the climate inside the mill varies little from season to season due to its superior construction , and the Roman numeral markings carved into the beams used in original reconstruction are still visible .