



Thompson's Mills State Heritage Site



Welcome
to Oregon's
last surviving
water-powered mill.



For more information:
Thompson's Mills State Heritage Site
32655 Boston Mill Drive
Shedd, OR 97377
Telephone: 541-491-3611
oregonstateparks.org



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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

Write to OPRD: 725 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR 97301;

or call 1-800-551-6949 (Oregon Relay for the hearing impaired: dial 711).

Prosperity prevails over setbacks

A fire destroyed the mill in 1862, but farmers weren't forced to travel to distant mills for long. Mill owners immediately began rebuilding, and reopened, probably in 1864. Placed along early travel routes, the mill was a convenient stop for travelers and pack trains looking for supplies. The business continued to prosper by adopting new milling methods that increased production.

The town of Boston began a slow decline after 1871, when the Oregon and California Railroad was built 1½ miles west. Boston residents moved closer to the railroad stop, Shedd's Station, and a new town grew. The railroad opened new markets to Thompson's Mills. Soon, Oregon flour was shipped all around the world—to China in 1912 and to Belgium during and after World War I.

19th century life

Few buildings were more important to white settlers than a flour mill. In 1858, farmers drove their horse-drawn wagons filled with the summer's grain harvest to a new, local mill. After catching up with news from neighboring farms, the settlers returned to their homes with flour that would keep them fed through the coming year. First named Boston Mills, the mill became a bustling business. The town of Boston sprang up next door.



Platted Boston Townsite 1861-1871

Townsite extends onto private property to the west and south of park boundary

Franklin Street

Washington Street

← To Shedd

↑ Entrance

Boston Mill Drive

- Parking
- Non-flush toilet
- Park boundary

Mill adapts to a changing world

The mill owners made a dramatic shift in operations in the 1940s. Flour milling ended and the mill switched to producing animal feed. American families who had baked their own bread now opted for the convenience of “store-bought” bread. Wheat supplies also diminished as local farmers shifted to growing grass seed. Forty years later, in the 1980s, the mill added another product to make ends meet. The water that for generations had powered the milling machines now generated electricity and was sold to a local utility.



Thompson's Mills today

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department bought the mill, its water rights, the mill keeper's house and related buildings in 2004. The 20-acre site opened in 2007.

Interpretive panels tell the story of the lives of the mill keepers and area farmers, historic water rights and the intricate system of waterways, dams, and control gates that bring the Calapooya River to the millrace.

The park is open daily. For mill tour information, please call (541) 491-3611.



Help preserve Thompson's Mills

The Thompson's Mills Preservation Society helps to interpret the agricultural, commercial, industrial and social life at Thompson's Mills from 1858 through the present.



We invite you to join us. Please visit our website at tmpsonline.org for more information. The Thompson's Mills Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

