


Student Handout 2: Picture and information on millstone

The Mill Stone		
Basic Vocabulary of the Mill Stone		Fast Facts:
Runner Stone: The top stone		Average weight- 1500 pounds
Bed Stone: The bottom Stone		Average diameter- 4.5 feet
Dressing: To re-groove the stones		Average thickness- 8 inches
Furrows: Grooves on the grinding face of stone that did the actual grinding	Furrows, land, stitching, and cracking are all clearly in evidence on this bed stone.	
Land: The flat spaces between the furrows		
Stitching and Cracking: The small parallel lines that stretched from furrow to furrow on the land		
Spindle: Screw-like device that allowed the miller to lift the stone for dressing		
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Between the late 17th century and late 19th century, grist mills played an active role in American society. They not only provided communities with flour, that the millstones had ground from the grain brought by farmers, but also served as a social center within the town. The millstone was what ground the grain into flour and a miller had to sharpen it usually every week to two weeks. This often took the whole day to complete. Because millstone dressing was a specialized skill, the millstone became a symbol of the art of milling.