

### Pigeon Roost News

# Old Water Grist Mills Have Passed From Banks Of Creek

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The old water wheel corn mills that stood on the banks of Pigeon Roost Creek are now only a memory.

Older Pigeon Roost community residents recall seven such mills. Constructed of hewed logs and the floor were clapboard.

Small "tub" mills were first built and two kinds of wheels called overshot and undershot operated the mills.

When these mills were in operation anglers often fished in the mill ponds, were in many instances, fish were plentiful.

Mills for grinding corn have been so essential ever since the first settlers took up homesteads.

One of the mountain people's few restricted diet is corn meal and it can be prepared in so many various ways that it remains literally indispensable. Corn mush it is said in early pioneer days proved very special eating when put warm in sweet milk. Hog crackling corn bread is also good.

Bread has always been called the staff of life and corn bread called corn pone in older days is still a favorite by about most everybody in the hill country.

Corn was the first chief money crop and remained tops until burley tobacco took the name some several years ago. Corn never did bring a very high price here but many farmers soon learned to feed it to livestock which could be driven on a foot to market places. Hauling corn the long trip to market in wagons over rough mountain roads proved on the very start to be unprofitable as it was always impossible to take very many bushels.

Besides the several small corn mills that were built on the main and tributary streams of the Pigeon Roost area it is recalled that on two occasions the larger mills developed.

The old corn mill at mouth of the creek that was first established by the "three Bennett Gals" daughters of Jake Bennett, with Cinda the oldest girl doing most of the corn grinding. When the mill was purchased by Charlie Johnson, Sr., and he turned it into a "roller" flour mill and when his son Charlie, Jr., took over the mill he added to the old water wheel an outfit to pull a circular saw where he sawed lumber.

Then there was the Ike Lewis big overshot water wheel corn mill located at mouth of Left Hand Fork Creek and at foot of Hatterock Hill, which was also fitted to the old wheel a circular saw where his three sons Henry, Earve and Valley learned sawmilling which they took the job as practically their lives work. Mr. Lewis with his first wife, Alice learned from Wm. Honeycutt how to operate their first corn mill at an old water wheel corn mill far back in the mountains on Left Hand Fork Creek.

The corn mill that stood at mouth of Pate Creek on Pigeon Roost was owned and operated by several different people. I know of this mill being repaired and furnished with two different wheels which was the over-

shot kind. A few of those who owned the mill were: Levi Edwards and later his son Elbert, Charlie Barnett and two sons Ed and Paul, who were the last known owners.

There was and is still sign where a mill stood on the banks of the creek just below the place where is known as the Jim Whitson farm on the headwaters of Pate Creek. Who established and operated this mill has not yet been fully decided by the writer which we could only get meager information about this. However, one old-timer said the man was a Miller, which may be exactly right but I do not know for sure yet.

Back to the oldest remembrance of a water wheel corn mill was the one owned and

operated by aunt Ellen Miller Arwood that was washed away in the May flood in 1901. This mill was located on land now owned by the late Eason Bennett's three sons.

Aunt Ellen's son the Rev. John H. Arwood learned to be a miller at his mother's mill and after the mill was destroyed by the flood waters he built an undershot type water wheel corn mill at his farm at Leatherman's Fork, where he and his wife operated the mill for many years. It appears that there was about as many women who operated the old mills as men did.

After Arwoods old corn mill was no longer in operation his son Robert fitted to the old wheel a dynamo outfit which furnished electric lights to the

two Arwood families until the F. B. Electric Co., extended their power line here. We understand that Arwoods old mill wheel is still standing as well as part of the dynamo machine is intact.

This mode of grinding corn—the mill being pulled by a water wheel—the pioneer way of life has disappeared entirely from Pigeon Roost hills. But corn is still being ground by a corn mill with a gas driven motor that is owned and operated by two brothers Park and Conway Hughes and is located on Byrd Creek at Pigeon Roost. The corn mill is housed in a building on the same site where Charlie Byrd first established a water wheel corn mill several years ago. The two Hughes brothers own their picks for furrowing and grinding stones and Conway the youngest one sharpens the grinding stones. He has to sharpen them about every four or five months. He said it took over a day to sharpen a set and it is awful tedious work.

### ABOUT YOUR HOME

## Color Important In Quarters Of A Child

Color is one of the most important considerations in decorating a child's room. Bright, clear colors are preferred. It seems children are not too inhibited about color as adults.

Parents have made pink and blue popular for babies. However, if a baby is given a choice between pink or red, he will choose red every time. It has long been known that primary colors appeal to youngsters.

The seven and eight-year-olds will have very definite ideas concerning color. It is wise for parents to encourage these ideas. It is only natural that as they grow older, approaching high school and college,

they will begin to like more sophisticated color combinations. These colors usually have a much gayer tone than their former choices.

Be as practical as possible in the choice of rugs and fabrics. The do-it-yourself ideas are perfect for paint or a piece of furniture he can help build will encourage a child's individuality.

Frame some of the child's original paintings for the walls if the idea pleases him. Encourage him to take an interest in decorating his room and it will follow that his pride in the room will cause him to take care of the furnishings.

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### Fond Memories Of Tatum Cabin

Mrs. Minnie Robbins gazes fondly at Tatum Cabin located on the Horn in the West Grounds. She has a special reason for fond memories of the cabin. She married Cicero Miller in front of it in 1895 at the age of 17. The cabin was then located at Todd, N. C., and Mr. Tatum was the Justice of the Peace. Mrs. Robbins says she was too shy to go inside for the ceremony, therefore Mr. Tatum came outside to perform the wedding. After living in the Todd community for a number

of years, the Millers came to Blowing Rock where Mr. Miller was a merchant and school teacher. The Millers had three daughters who still reside in Blowing Rock; they are Mrs. A. K. Buxton, Mrs. G. C. Robbins and Mrs. Blanche Ward. After the death of Mr. Miller, Mrs. Robbins was married to Thomas C. Robbins, who is also deceased. Now, at the age of 87, Mrs. Robbins spends her time doing handiwork and delights in recalling the early years of her life.

### C Of C Notes

The Boone Chamber of Commerce Membership meeting was held at the Daniet Boone Inn, at 12 noon, Tuesday.

Herman Wilcox gave a very interesting program on Travel and Tourism. He gave some most valuable information on growth trends, the urgent need for the entire county to co-ordinate its total resources and efforts in a common cause to meet the demands we will be facing within ten years. A full report is published in the Watauga Democrat this week.

Dear Sirs: Retirement has caught up with me and we are now in the process of looking for that perfect place in which to retire.

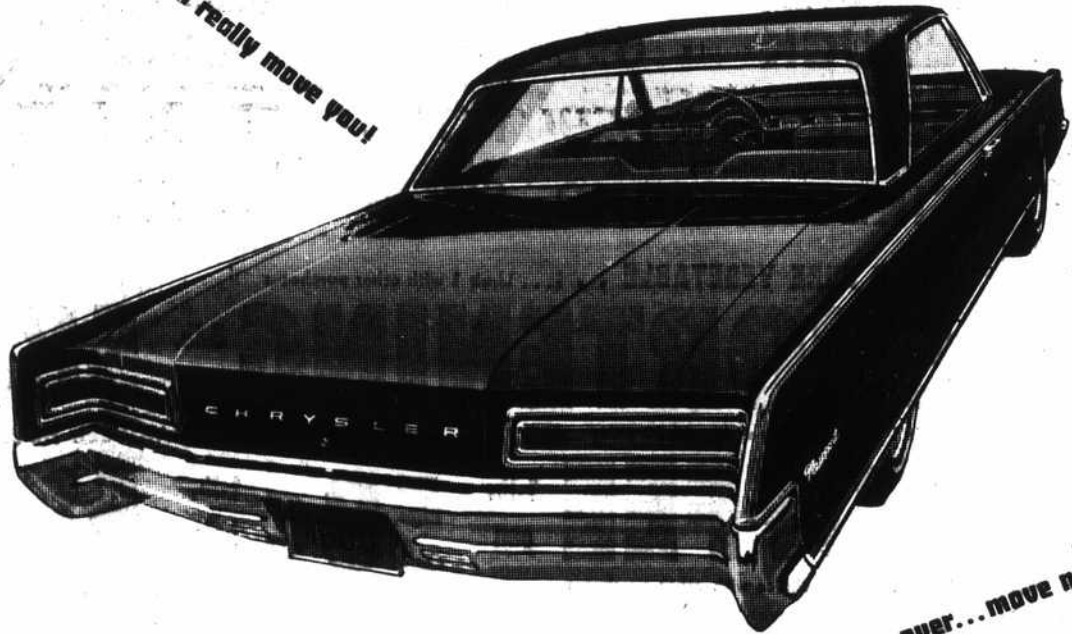
Many communities have been suggested as the ideal place, so I am writing asking that you send me information and brochures that will acquaint me with your city and area.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon, I am,  
Yours truly,  
John T. Clough  
Princeton, N. J.

Disguised As Nun  
London—Gina Tonelli, a maid, invited a nun with a collection plate into the house. The visitor shed her nun habit, bound the maid, and let two men in who helped ransack the house. The thieves fled with more than \$1,500 worth of her employer's jewels.

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