

## THE OLD GRIST MILL AS RECORDED IN HISTORY

One of the greatest sources of anxiety to the settlers of Jackson County was the procurement of bread. When the first white people came here, they found none of the conveniences with which we are surrounded today. The county was without raids, ridges, or mills. Surrounded by the many annoyances which always attended the early pioneers, they erected their crude cabins and began their life's work.

One of the first means of obtaining bread was by pounding corn in a mortar. It was then sifted, the finest made into bread and the remainder into hominy. These mortars were frequently cut or burnt into the top of a stump, and the pestle, or the instrument with which the corn was pounded, was attached to a sweep, built after the fashion of the old-time well sweep.

One such old-time grist mill was once located near where Redbrush Park stood in Jackson County. It was built on Salt Creek below where the tree houses were located. Only one log remained in the creek bed, but today the heritage its builders brought to this county deserves recalling.

In 1832, Presley Thamoas and Katherine Waters Cordell traveled from their birthplace in the Cumberland Mountains of Virginia to Belmont County, Ohio. Presley drove a yoke of oxen, while Katherine carried their firstborn, William, the entire 200-mile journey to Belmont County.

In 1852, Presley, Katherine, and their family, which now consisted of eight children (3 boys and 5 girls) left Ohio by covered wagon and moved to Nashville, Indiana. The Cordell family noted that when they passed through Columbus, Indiana enroute to Nashville, Columbus consisted of only a few log cabins.

In 1854, the Cordell's moved again, this time to Jackson County. Presley bought eighty acres of government land on which Redbrush Park stood. They built a log cabin approximately a mile from the Redbrush Gate.

In 1855, Presley built the mill along Salt Creek. The mill, small and crudely built, was powered by an under shot wheel and could only be operated during rainy seasons when the creek ran steadily. Farmers would carry their grain on horseback or on their shoulders, as what wagons were around could not gain access to the mill.

While Presley built and then ran the mill, his wife was a very busy pioneer woman. Near their cabin, on their 80 acres of land, Katherine dug three wells, grubbed several acres of land, and planted an orchard. Katherine also split rails and fenced 40 acres of their land.

Family history relates that Presley would often bring his entire family with him to the mill as there were a few stray Indians still in the area.

Presley ran the mill about five years after which he went to work for C.L. Dunham in Honey town. Presley walked six miles each direction to work for 50 cents a day.

The site of the mill was marked for many years by a large beam which extended from the creek bank. The burr stones have been moved to a neighboring farm and are used as steps today.

Richard Rumph

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