

THE MILLS OF WAYNE COUNTY by WILLIAM O. WISSLER June 19, 1912

The first grist-mill in Wayne County was built on Elkhorn Creek about one mile above its mouth by Charles Hunt and his sons and put in operation in the autumn of 1806. It was a bub-mill, covered by planting poles in the ground with forked at the upper ends to receive poled on which other poles called ribs were placed. On these clapboards were laid for the roof, and weight-poles were placed on these to hold them in position. This sheltered the hopper very well in dry weather. He afterward built another mill on the same site.

James and John Endsley built a saw-mill on the site of the Hunt mill in 1847 on the farm now owned by John Endsley, Jr., who tore it down in 1881. The machinery was taken to Green's Fork. It was a modern circle-saw mill and as the water supply was insufficient for power, an engine was installed in 1855.

Jesse Davenport built a grist-mill on the falls of Elkhorn Creek in 1817. A few years later he added a saw-mill. One of the first oil-mills of the county was also operated here. All were run by water power. The mill was rebuilt by Addington and Brown in 1859 and known as "Relief Mills". Samuel S. Brown, Wm. A. Elmore and John Wolfe were later proprietors. It then had both water and steam power. G. W. Ferguson and John Wolfe operated it until 1903 and Cyrus Cable continued it until 1909. It is now owned by the C. & O. R. R. Co. and they will make use of the water power.

A half-mile below, on Elkhorn, there was a carding-machine and a wollen-factory, and later a saw-mill was added. A man by the name of Wilcoxon may have built it about 1825. These were in operation a long time. The power was furnished by a tributary to Elkhorn.

James L. Harris built a saw-mill a half mile north of Boston. Wm. Coy owned it many years, and at one time the boiler exploded killing one man. He installed a new boiler and continued the business until he sold it to H. E. Williams in 1908. Mr Williams installed a new engine in 1912.

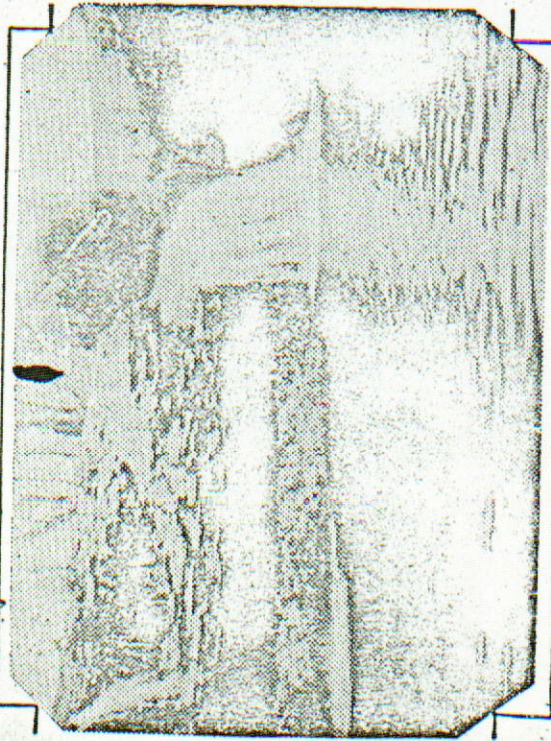
Eliphslet Stanley built a steam saw-mill at Boston in 1837. He soon sold it to Jacob Fisher and Wm. Fouts. Smith Rader and others were later owners.

The first sorghum-mill was built in 1857 by John Sedgewick and John Endsley, Sr., on the Liverty Pike, run by horse power.

In 1866 John Conley built a sorghum-mill near Boston. It had a capacity of one hundred gallons per day. About 4,000 gallons were made each season.

James L Hains built a steam saw-mill one-half mile north of Boston in 1866.

Second Mill at Elkhorn Falls Was Built by Clayton Brown



Editor's Note—In this article E. M. Hass completes the story of the Elkhorn mills.

The second chapter of the Elkhorn mill history began when Clayton Brown built the second mill at the falls. By this time there had grown quite a community about the falls. The Boston road was opened, and there were at least a dozen families within a close radius about the falls. A stone arch bridge was built just above the falls, a blacksmith shop and saw mill built just on the south and east side of the falls, and a lime kiln below the falls.

Brown did not take his water for power from the falls, but built a dam about half a mile east across the Elkhorn falls and brought the water through a race to the edge of the gorge below the falls and built a 33-foot overshot wheel, which quickly disposed of the water into the gorge.

In building the wheel, it was placed in a cut made in the solid rock of the cliff, so the wheel was absolutely protected from flood waters and ice in winter. The making of this cut was quite an undertaking, as solid rock had to be blasted, and at a depth of 30 feet to make room for the huge wheel.

The holes made by the drill in penetrating the stone are still visible. With this sort of a mechanical setting the mill was in position to operate without interruption from the elements throughout the year.

This mill was built in 1860, and Mr. Brown sold an interest to Benjamin Elmore. John Wolfe learned his trade here and in 1871 became a member of the firm. In 1874 Mr. Brown bought Elmore's interest, and in 1876 C. W. Ferguson purchased Brown's interest and Wolfe and Clem Ferguson became equal partners.

This brought new capital into the

This brought new capital into the company and it became known as John E. Wolfe & Co. It was first operated in the old-fashioned way with burrs. No doubt the stones now in the yard of the Wayne County Historical museum were in this mill from its beginning. As the stones are of native rock, it is likely that they were among the first in what is known as the Wolfe mill, also known as the "Relief Mills."

Later burrs were of the composition type, from foreign stones brought from France, and bound with steel bands. A fine specimen of this type could be seen in the yard of the old Wolfe home on the hill just east of the old mill site and as it was placed there by John Wolfe himself in his old age is not available at this time for the museum. This type of stone cost from \$300 to \$500 a piece when new. It takes two of them to make a mill.

Modernize Building
The main building of the Wolfe mill was 40 by 40 feet and three stories and one half high. Ferguson and Wolfe modernized it, put in four stones and installed a 20-inch turbine instead of the large overshot wheel, and also a 20-horse power engine. With all this new equipment, it could not be made to successfully compete with the modern rolls. They later installed the rolls also, but the company sold out finally to Cyrus Cable of Palestine, Ohio, for \$1,500. He operated it for a short time at a loss and then abandoned it as a mill. It had several owners later, and Mr. Holland of Edinburg was the last to try to operate it, but did not get farther than to install machinery to grind some corn when the C. & O. railroad wanted the water and purchased it and the mill was discontinued.

Richmond had to do with this last deal. The Chesapeake & Ohio railroad wished to close some streets in Beallview to accommodate their yards, but manufacturers of that section took it to the court and prevented the company from closing them. The railroad company decided to build its yards at Boston.

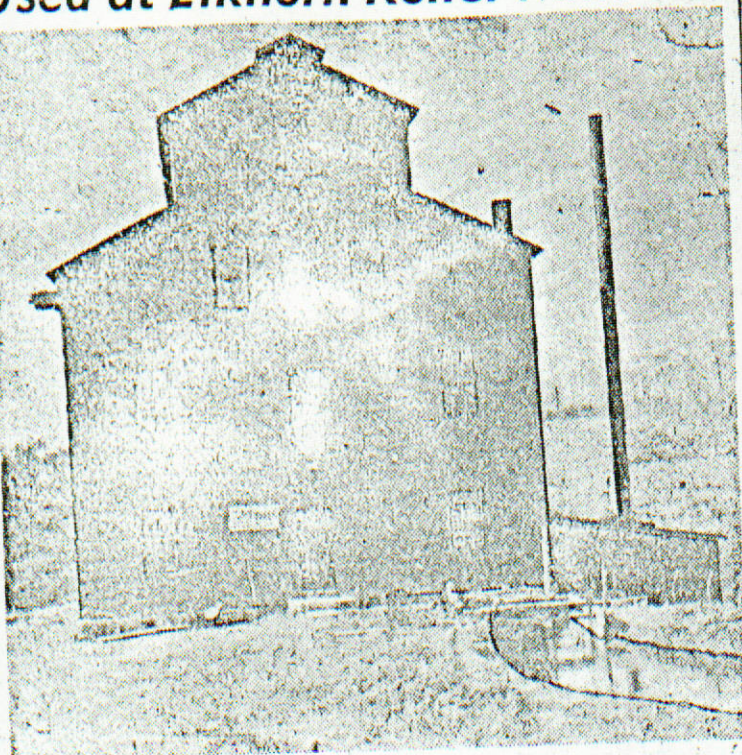
Gennett owns the old mill site now. The old mill building was finally sold to Dr. W. J. Smith of this city who has torn it down and hauled the timbers to his farm on the Foutz road. Nothing remains there now but the hole in the ground. The railroad company leased to the contractor of the Boston pike some ground on the premises and a quarry and stone crusher were placed hard by the falls, destroying much of the natural beauty. Elmer Hale has bought the stone crusher and moved it to his place for lumber and firewood.

We spoke of the dozen houses just around the falls. Most of these are beauty spots, some of them in very quaint settings, with log house and barns. Most all of these homes have flowing springs. Elmer Hale was an aged blacksmith just at the bridge. On Sunday he preached, as he was a licensed Quaker minister. He died several years ago. The Wolf home was just to the east on the brow of a hill, surrounded with stately trees and a beautiful lawn. The widow of Clem Wolfe, son of the late mill owner, resided there until she sold the property a number of years ago. To the north of the falls is the beautiful Davenport farm, now owned by Fred Gennett.

The falls, by erosion are grad-

When the railroad company tried to dig a well at the new yards the company could not find sufficient water so they bought the mill to get the water, and put in a pipe line at a cost of approximately \$10,000 and pumped the mill to Boston yards. Now since the pipe have been abandoned, and the water removed, the full flow of the water goes over the falls. Fred

The Best Equipment Available Used at Elkhorn Roller Mills



The Elkhorn Mill

Directly southeast of the Elkhorn falls, three and one half miles from Richmond on the Boston pike, a mill site was occupied continuously from 1810 to 1903. The early history is not available until 1860 when records show this mill building shown in picture 'was erected and operated by Clayton Brown and Bishop Addington. The pictures and the material were supplied by Mrs. Grace Klemann, 104 South Twenty-first street. Mrs. Klemann said:

In 1861, my father, John E. Wolfe, began serving an apprenticeship to the miller's trade with these men. Mr. Wolfe purchased a one third interest in the mill in 1871 and ran it in partnership with Messrs. Brown and Elmore for two years.

Then in 1873 a partnership was formed between Mr. Wolfe and Clement W. Ferguson, then the president of the First National bank here, leaving the operation of the mill to Mr. Wolfe. He was determined to keep it modern and as well equipped for work as any of its size in the state. The complete roller process and the best modern machinery to be obtained at that time was in use. The mill had a capacity of 50 barrels of flour per day and Richmond and neighboring small towns consumed the entire output.

About 1895 he installed a water-wheel in a deep pit underneath the mill, which was used when a plentiful supply of water was available. Otherwise the steam engine furnished the power.

He did a big farm feed business, such as bran and middlings, and ground corn for farmers for about a 12-mile radius south, southeast, and southwest of the mill.



John E. Wolfe

about 1898 or 1900. The office with its large cannon stove, provided a favorite loafing place for the community, especially during winter when farmers had time to spend leisurely.

Mr. Wolfe sold the mill in 1903 and retired. The mill stones seen in the Wayne County museum grounds were used in the mill.

Among the engineers of Elkhorn Mills was Frank Ray, father of the first Richmond man killed in the First World war, Harry Ray, in whose honor the Legion post here was named.

Carl Stigleman, first miller at the Richmond Roller mills, learned his trade from his uncle, John E. Wolfe.

In those days before rural mail delivery, the mill for many of the

P. O. box No. 22 and taken out by the driver of the mill wagon, which was drawn by a span of mules.

The residence of Fred Gennett is now located on the old mill property on a knoll, facing Elkhorn creek and the falls.

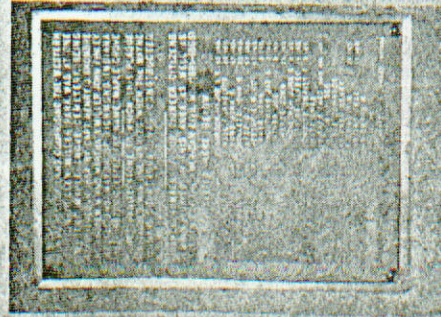
Mr. Wolfe and his family resided in a home just east of the mill, known then as "Cedar Hill." Upon Mr. Wolfe's death this home was purchased by his son, the late W. Clem Wolfe.

It is upon this property that a test oil well is being drilled at present.

Mr. Wolfe was the grandfather of John F. Klemann, foreman at the National Automatic Tool company, Robert C., in the U. S. Air forces, and Miss Elizabeth Klemann.

LAST WEEK'S

'WHERE IS IT?'



The plaque shown above seemed to be enough to stump many of the "Where Is It?" fans.

A few "regulars" were able to identify the location as being in the old Maple Grove cemetery site, off N. 22nd st. in Glen Miller park.

Those in the select list were Raymond Riddle, Russell Hirschfeld, Larry McNally, Ruth Kenworthy, Janice Smith, Mae Mariana, Joe Silvers and Raymond Edsall.

For plaque-reading buffs who would like to know what this one says, it says, as follows:

This tract of land,

Where Is It?



GRAPHIC Photo

HERE ARE what may be familiar objects to many. What are they? And does anyone know where they came from?

comprising the western addition to Glen Miller park, was at one time the Maple Grove cemetery.

The granite stone, to which this plaque is attached, was one unused when the Wayne County courthouse was constructed in 1893.

"Large numbers of our pioneer citizens remain buried in this area, as well as veterans of the American Civil war (1861-1865)."

The plaque then lists the veterans known to have been buried there.

Richmond—1840—1941:—

Elkhorn Falls Was Early Mill Site; Millstones at Museum

Editor's Note:—One of the old mill sites in Wayne county was the one at Elkhorn on the Elkhorn falls, a few miles south of Richmond. E. M. Hass, a local historian, has appeared in The Palladium item for a number of years presenting the following interesting history of the mill.

The placing of two of the old millstones in custody of the Wayne County Historical Museum has created interest in the history and traditions of the Elkhorn mills and falls.

Research establishes that these mills were among the first to be built in the county. Young, the historian, has it that they were on the Elkhorn, about a mile above the mouth, built by Charles Hunt; as this was a small tub mill, all traces of it have long since been obliterated.

The second mill was built the same year by Cox on the site of the Starr Plano Works. This has also been abandoned for many years. The third was time before Elkhorn falls some time. This site was the location of a mill for over a century, the last one to operate it was Holland who

used it to grind feed, and then sold it to the C. & O. Railroad company. Fred Gennett is the present owner.

The story of the building of the first Elkhorn mill reads like romance. The builder, Jesse Davenport, was one of the very early settlers of Wayne county. He was born with the nation, in 1776. He came only a year later, then first and Holman, who were the first white men to settle in the county, about a mile and a half west of the Elkhorn falls on Short creek, in 1805. Davenport came the same year that Andrew and David Hoover came to Richmond in 1806.

Just the exact location of the Davenport's first home is not ascertained, but as he was a builder, and interested in establishing a mill in the new settlement, he almost immediately began to hunt for a site.

Heard of Falls
Jesse Davenport heard of the falls, now known as Elliott's falls. He went to view the sight, and was sufficiently impressed with it that he at once decided to build a mill there. He bought the land on Short creek, which included the falls, and started for home to get ready to build.

As there were no roads in this section, he went on foot through the woods, and in coming over the ridge between the Elkhorn and Short creek, he heard the sound of roaring waters. He immediately set out to find the waters and soon to his great delight came on the site of the Elkhorn falls.

operated for a number of years, and to it was added a saw mill, but finally it was destroyed by fire, but we do not have the date of its destruction.

Site of House

Davenport built his home on the hill, just west of the falls and all that remains of it is a depression in the ground, which is pointed as the site of the house. He reared a family of 14 children and his grandchildren have been associated with the Elkhorn and Short creek valleys for the past century.

He was an expert mechanic, and assisted many of his neighbors in erecting their houses and barns. He was gifted in superintending the raising of buildings from the timbers that had been hewn and mortised ready for framing. He met a tragic death at one of these barn raisings, when he was but 50 years old.

When the Koons family, who owned the farm where the present Forest Hills Country club is located, was ready to have a barn raised, he was importuned to take charge of the crew that was to do it. He agreed to do so providing that there would not be the usual drinking of liquor. He was promised that there would be no drinking until the barn was up.

This was not complied with, but it is said that every man was drunk by the noon hour. He stayed with the job, however, and just as one big bent was going up, some one yelled, "There it goes," and the crew thought it was falling, all hands let go, and it fell to the ground, killing two men, one of whom was Jesse Davenport. This barn stood until it was wrecked by the Forest Hills Country club.

try club. We were told by the members of the club of the big timbers that were in the barn, of some of the best native hard woods.

The death of Davenport was a distinct loss to the community, to have one so useful meet his death at so early a date, at 50 years of age. He was among the county's best known citizens. He had been appointed by Gov. William Henry Harrison when Wayne county was still a part of Dearborn county, as one of its justices, and when the county was organized in 1810, he was again appointed an associate judge of the county, and sat in the first murder trial of the county, when Chryst was convicted and hung.

He was also foreman of the first grand jury, and participated in the formation of the state of Indiana. Men of his ability were very useful. His son, Warner Davenport, was three months old when his father died in 1826. Warner became the son-in-law of Richard Rue, a first settler, the owner of the Rue home on Short creek, and was the father of our well-known citizens, Elwood, Richard William, Alonzo, and Davenport.

Davenport was well known to the writer, and we heard him tell many stories of pioneer life, when he called for his weekly Palladium, as farmers around Richmond came to the newspaper office instead of the post office, when we were first employed at The Palladium more than 40 years ago.

(Another Article Follows)

He at once recognized the value of the power, and as the volume of water going over the falls was much greater than that of the Elliott's falls, he decided to abandon his first decision and build on this beautiful spot.

Whether Davenport was the first white man to see the falls is not known, but he was the first to realize its economic value. The present volume of water going over the falls is small compared with what it must have been in those days. Since that time the lands have all been ditched, and the timber cut so that the flow has been greatly reduced, but there is still ample water to operate a good sized mill, but the coming of the large commercial mills, has made these small custom mills unprofitable, and as there were at one time more than 20 mills in and around Richmond, there is not one flour mill remaining at the present time.

Davenport built the first mill on the west side of the gorge below the falls and took his water direct from the falls, by building a slight dam on top of the falls. This plan developed difficulties because high waters and floating ice jammed the inlet, and required several men all day and night on such occasions to prevent damage to the mill, and stoppage of power. The mill was operated for a number of years, and to it was added a saw mill, but finally it was destroyed by fire, but we do not have the date of its destruction.

Site of House

JOHN E. WOLFE, EARLY MILLER, DIES AT HOME

John E. Wolfe, aged 73 years, a pioneer miller of Wayne county, died at his home, on the Boston pike four miles south of the city, Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock. He had been in failing health for some time.

One of the family of eleven children of William and Mary Burton Wolfe, John E. Wolfe was born one mile east of Elkhorn, May 30, 1843. He spent practically all his life in that neighborhood. He was a miller by trade and was perhaps the first operator of a roller process mill in Wayne county. He retired from active business several years ago.

Belonged to Friends Church.

The deceased was a member of the Orange Friends church from childhood. He was also a veteran of the Civil war having enlisted with the One hundred and thirty-third Indiana infantry at the time of the rebellion. He was especially well known in the southern part of the county.

Mr. Wolfe leaves a widow, Mary E., one son, W. C. Wolfe, assistant civil engineer Richmond division of the Pennsylvania railroad; two daughters, Mrs. Herbert Rosencrans, of Chicago; Mrs. Charles E. Kleman, residing at the home; one brother, Elza Wolfe, of Fountain, Colo.; four sisters, Mrs. Josiah Feasel, Mrs. Carrie Scarce, Mrs. Sarah Stiggleman, Mrs. Mary Goodwin; and a grandson.

The funeral will be held from the Orange Friends church Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock. The Revs. Hinckle and Davenport will officiate. Burial will be in Elkhorn cemetery.

Sketch of a Pioneer.

Mrs. Nancy A. Evans, of 47 South 17th street, is now in her eighty-second year. She was born in Boston township, near the Elkhorn, on the 9th of November, 1820. Her parents, Jesse and Rebecca Deavenport, came to this county at a very early day, and entered the land where the old Elliot mill site now is, and Mr. Deavenport there erected the first mill in that part of the county. One of his horses getting lost, he went in search and came upon the Elkhorn Falls, where the Wolfe mill now is, and beheld them, probably the first time they had been seen by any white man. He was struck by the scene and upon returning home took measures to enter the land about the falls, which he did in a short time after, and moved his mill and residence to that place. He and his wife reared a family of fourteen children, of whom Nancy was the eleventh child, and her brother, Warner Deavenport, who still lives immediately

youngest. Mrs. Evans being the eleventh child, her oldest brother was much older than she, and she has two nieces who are much older than she is.

Mrs. Evans married in the year 1836 to Dr. David S. Evans, who practiced medicine for many years in Boston and was a sergeant in the 169th regiment in the Civil War.

They reared a family of five children, three of whom are living. The eldest, Dr. W. H. Evans, who practiced medicine for many years at Boston, Ind., and now lives at Sanford, Florida, where he has been elected Mayor of the city for the fifth term, and O. D. Evans and Mrs. Henry Jones, who at present make their home with their mother. Mrs. Evans has nine grand-children living and six great grand-children. She is remarkably preserved in health of mind and body, and is yet engaged in many of the active duties of life.

DAY EVENING, JAN. 29, 1917.

