

Kentucky Mountain Miller In No Hurry

By John F. Day

PACTOLUS, Ky.—The old mill pond in most parts of America has become the new swimming pool with a rustic touch, but here at Pactolus in the Eastern Kentucky hills is a mill pond that serves its stone-burred mill just as it did a century back.

Vinsons mill at Pactolus is probably the only water-powered corn mill in the Kentucky mountains that still operates regularly.

In the days when creek beds were the only roads and the resulting isolation forced the mountain people into a make-it-yourself-or-do-without economy, the mill was a necessary adjunct to family life. It was necessary that corn and wheat grown in the narrow valleys

principal means of exchange. Instead, he took a percentage of the grain or of the flour or meal.

KINDLY old Elmer Barnhill, a little man with a white mustache and twinkling blue eyes, still operates Vinsons mill on the per centage basis, although he will take cash if the farmer prefers. A can full of shelled grain, about

grown in the narrow valleys and on the rough hillsides be ground into flour or meal at or near home.

Rarely if ever was the miller paid in cash—a rare item in a country where barter was the

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one-sixth of a bushel, is the percentage fee. Ten cents a bushel is the cash charge.

How does he fare at this business? Well, to tell the truth he'd just about be on starvation rations if he weren't a farmer as well as a miller. During a good week he'll grind 50 bushels.

Vinsons mill—named for its owners, the Vinson brothers, who live in another section of Carter county—is located on the Little Sandy river, which flows into the Ohio near Greenup.

The great stone burrs between which the grain is crushed were first used by James A. Vinson, father of the Vinson brothers, in a mill he operated not long after the Civil War on Little Fork, a tributary of the Little Sandy.

The grinding process is slow, tediously so when one compares it to that in a modern roller mill, but then Elmer Barnhill, a true mountaineer, is in no hurry.