

Historic Mills of Wayne and Boston Townships, Wayne County, Indiana

By: Kisha Jennings

Honors Program

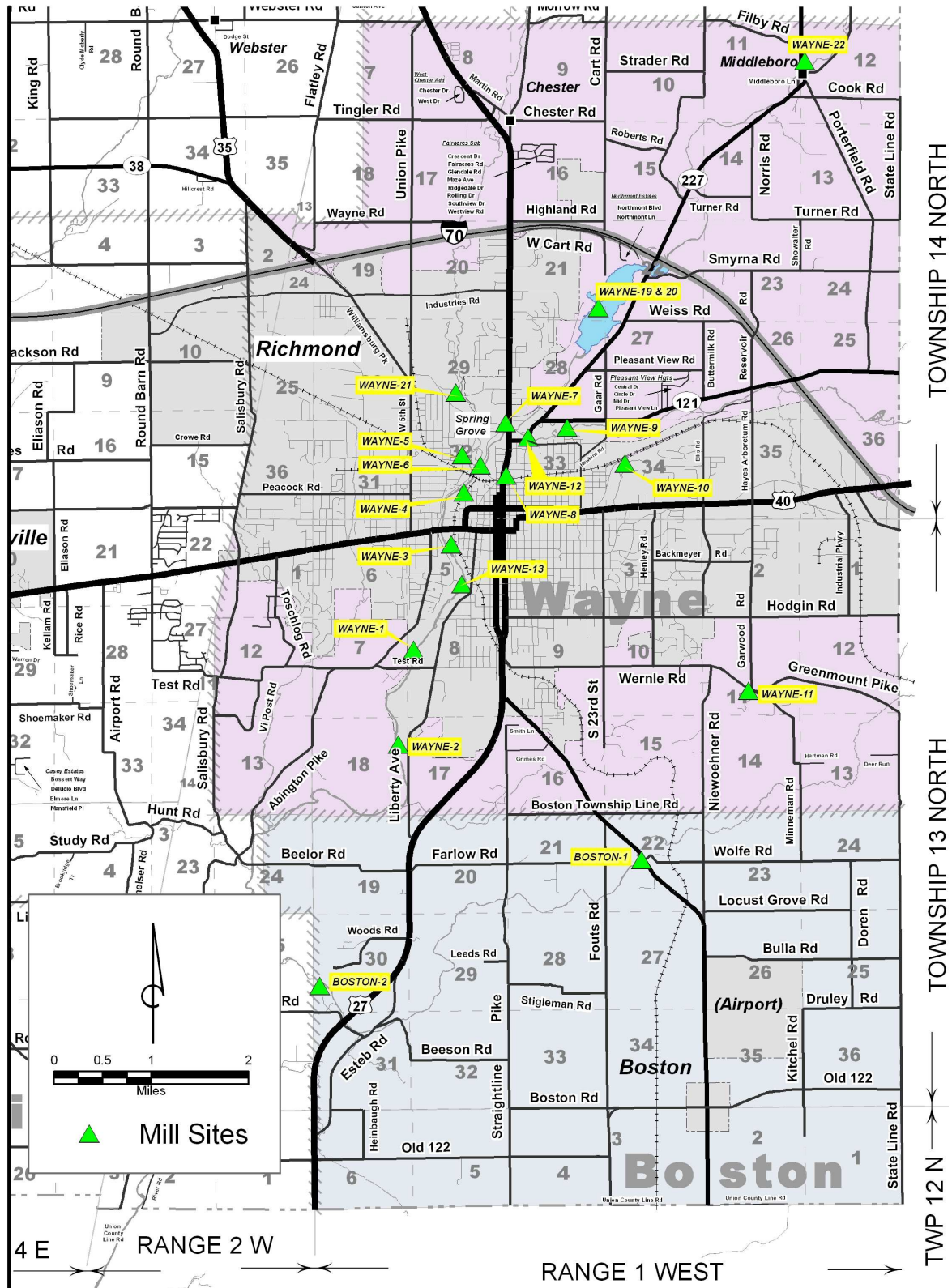
Indiana University East

Richmond, IN

2005

This project is dedicated to William (Bill) Frazier whose long interest in the mills of Wayne County, Indiana was a driving force behind this project.





Map of mills sites. Courtesy of Gunty Atkins.

## *Introduction*

I spent the summer of 2005 in the company of William “Bill” Frazier, a local mill enthusiast, who was an excellent resource and a wealth of information. He had spent many years of his life researching mills all over the country but mainly in his hometown of Richmond, Indiana. He knew where many of the mills had been located and had done extensive research on his own out of files of the Palladium Item, the local newspaper. Many of the articles that he had found are utilized in this paper. My Indiana University East faculty mentor on this project was Peggy Branstrator, Senior Lecturer of Biology. Her husband, Jon Branstrator, Professor Emeritus of Geosciences at Earlham College, also assisted during this research. We visited many of the mill sites, took pictures of remains if applicable, and also took GPS location readings.

Two books on Wayne County history held by the Morrisson-Reeves Library were important resources for this paper. Henry Clay Fox, a judge for the Wayne County Circuit Court, wrote Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana Vol.I and Vol.II in 1812. Another book, History of Wayne County, published in 1884 by the Interstate Publishing Company, contained a wealth of information. The author is unknown.

William O. Wissler wrote a paper on the history of the mills in the county in 1912. He cites as one of his sources the above mentioned History of Wayne County (1884). Since plagiarism was not stressed as much during this time period, it appears that much of what he wrote in this document was an exact duplication of information contained within the 1884 book. An attempt has been made to credit Wissler for only the information believed to be his own genuine research. However, some of this information may also be published within History of Wayne County. Wissler also wrote many of the articles used as references from the Palladium

Item. The authority of the research for these articles is unknown.

Two pictorial histories of the county written by Edwin and Walter Dalbey in 1896 and another in 1906 were also used. The Dalbeys wrote them as souvenirs for people visiting the county.<sup>1</sup> The editions are very similar and the 1906 edition was reprinted as a centennial souvenir.

The purpose of this research is to document the locations of the mills that existed in Wayne County in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This project is of great importance to conserve the history of Wayne County. Knowing more about the place that one calls home gives a sense of belonging, and pride in the hard work of many people to make Richmond and Wayne County what it is today. It is important to understand the past so that we know where we are going in the future. It is also important for possible preservation of the sites. This is a listing of the mill site locations, type of mills present, owners, and GPS locations of the mill sites which are listed by township.<sup>2</sup>

### *General Mill Information*

When the settlers first arrived in an area, they had to have a year's worth of supplies with them. Until the land was cleared and the first year's crops harvested, the settlers had no grain. Once the grain was harvested, the settlers had to grind it into flour. Some families brought hand grinders with them for their corn while others used a piece of tin perforated by nail holes to grind

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin Dalbey and Walter Dalbey, Pictorial History of the City of Richmond, Indiana (Richmond, Indiana: Nicholson Printing and Manufacturing Co., 1896), 1.

<sup>2</sup> GPS stands for Global Positioning System and is a method by which exact locations can be pinpointed on earth by use of satellites.



the corn before it was completely dry.<sup>3</sup> According to Seth Schlotterbeck, mills were built along streams of every size until there were many in operation. Mills became focal points of commerce and trade. Networks of roads were built to and around the mills. All of the larger towns had many mills in the immediate area and in almost all cases the presence of a mill led to a town being built nearby.<sup>4</sup>

Milling was an important industry in all of the settled parts of the state of Indiana and the entire United States. The settlement of the US followed water sources in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of this need for mills. Water was needed to consume and as a source of power. Water was the preferred and most efficient source of power at the time.<sup>5</sup> However, when water was not sufficient to run the wheel due to low rainfall, drought, flooding, or location, many mills relied on one-horse treadmills or multi-horse hitches to run the millwheel.<sup>6</sup>

Storage facilities of the time were not very sophisticated and raw materials stored better than the finished products. Therefore, many mills ran only a limited amount of time or not at all during farming season. Some of the mills in the Richmond area would have been considered “merchant mills.” This means that people from other places came to the area to have their grain ground when transportation routes increased.<sup>7</sup>

### *Types of Mills*

Grist mills ground many types of grain such as corn, wheat, and hominy into flour. Grist

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Clay Fox, ed., Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana. Vol.1, (Madison, Wisconsin: Western Historical Association, 1912), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Seth Schlotterbeck, By Old Mill Streams: A Commentary on the Mills, Streams and Cemeteries of Preble County, Ohio, 1986, Preble County Historical Society, Kee Printing, Eaton, Ohio, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Gerald E. Waite, “Grist Mills of Delaware County, Indiana,” *Indiana Magazine of History* (1999), 364.

mills usually ran by burh stones, a corn cracker, or a roller process. Burh stones are the typical flat, thick, round stones used for grinding grain. The top stone was the “running” stone and the bottom stone stayed stationary. These were called a “run of stones.” Each stone had a series of grooves that ran from the middle to the outside. These grooves were specific to the type of grain being ground. As the grain moved along these grooves, it was ground finer and finer. Burh stones wore down and left fine gravel in the flour. This would wear down the teeth of the people who ate it. Some stone types were better to use than others because they left less debris. Most stones used for burhs were imported from France and were very expensive to ship.<sup>8</sup>

A corn cracker, another types of grist mill, was a cheaper and simpler way to grind corn but it was neither efficient nor did it grind the grain very finely. A corn cracker consists of a small dam of logs in a stream with a spout to direct water. A trough was placed below it to collect the water. The trough was connected to a long pole with a pestle or “stomper” on the end of it. Below the pestle was a bin containing grain. When the trough filled with water, the pestle was lifted, and when the trough became full, it dumped over, releasing the water and pestle which slammed the pestle into the grain.<sup>9</sup>

All types of mills eventually converted to a different method as technology developed. As metals became more widely used and available, a roller process was invented that ground the corn vertically instead of horizontally as the burh stones had. Steel rollers became preferred for grinding corn because it ground the corn finer with no stone debris.

The dust from the grinding of grain settled on everything and filled millers’ lungs so that they typically died at an early age. This dust would also burn explosively with the smallest

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<sup>6</sup> Waite, “Grist Mills of Delaware County, Indiana,” 1999, 365.

<sup>7</sup> Waite, “Grist Mills of Delaware County, Indiana,” 1999, 364.

<sup>8</sup> William Frazier, interview by author, summer 2005.

spark. Almost every grist mill in the county burned at least once. Most were rebuilt after they burned to continue production, but often with a new owner.<sup>10</sup>

Nineteenth century mills also provided many other benefits for settlers. Flax seed mills produced oil, and the stalks of the flax plant provided fiber for linen. Woolen mills were also common in the area. Farmers brought wool to be spun into yarn and woven into clothing. The mill process was much faster and did not require hours of labor by someone behind a spinning wheel.

Woolen mills used various procedures for carding, spinning, and weaving wool. Combing and cleaning the wool was called carding. During spinning the wool was twisted together into yarn that could be woven into fabric. Most woolen mills had at least three stories to house all of the machinery needed for producing yarn and fabric.

Saw mills manufactured another useful product. They cut wood for lumber used for buildings. A saw called a “sash saw” was used for milling lumber. No other saw had been invented for the process at that time. A sash saw is a long saw with a blade that moved in an up and down motion over the wood. Some saw mills were run at night to leave the daylight open for farming.<sup>11</sup> Since grain could be hauled a longer distance than wood, saw mills were more common in the area than grist mills.<sup>12</sup>

All types of mills needed a water source. Most mills used water that flowed to the mill by the way of a millrace. A deep trench was dug, usually at a bend in the river, from one point in the river to the mill site, forming a channel called a mill race for the water to run to the wheel.

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<sup>9</sup> Schlotterbeck, *By Old Mill Streams*, 1986, 13.

<sup>10</sup> William Frazier, interview by author, summer 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Schlotterbeck, *By Old Mill Streams*, 1986, 3.

<sup>12</sup> William Wissler, “The Mills of Wayne County”, 1912, Unpublished typed manuscript, Morrisson-Reeves Library, Richmond, Indiana, 4.



Some of the indentations from former millraces can still be seen throughout Wayne County.<sup>13</sup>

Not all mills, however, were powered by water. Some mills converted to steam power, using coal or wood to run the wheel, at the start of the Industrial Revolution. Most mills converted to this form of power eventually. Some used both forms of power for a long time.<sup>14</sup> Grist, saw, woolen, and oil mills could all use steam power. However, this paper will focus primarily on the water powered mills.

### *Geological Background*

Wayne County proved to be an ideal area to locate water driven mills to meet the needs of the area's settlers because it had an abundance of swiftly moving water. The 25 foot drop at the falls of Elkhorn Creek provided a perfect location for the overshot wheel of Hunt's grist mill located there. The change in elevation from the northern half of the county, at about 1200 feet above sea level, to the southern half of the county, at about 900 feet above sea level, is 300 ft. This large elevation change gave tremendous water power potential to this area and supported many different types of mills.<sup>15</sup> Wayne County had 166 total mill sites with over 260 different mills on these sites.<sup>16</sup> According to William Wissler, this is the largest number of mills ever built in one county in the United States with the exception of Monroe County in the state of New York.

### *Settlement of Wayne County, Indiana*

The first white settlers to discover the Whitewater Valley were George Holman, Richard

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<sup>13</sup> William Frazier, interview by author, summer 2005.

<sup>14</sup> William Frazier, interview by author, summer 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*. Vol.1, 17.

Hue, and Thomas McCoy. They came from North Carolina and many were Quakers. David Hoover, who served as a judge in Wayne County for many years, and his father Andrew Hoover led the first band of settlers to Wayne County. John Smith and Jeremiah Cox, who built one of the first mills in the county, settled next. They were also natives of North Carolina.<sup>17</sup> According to Seth Schlotterbeck's publication, Jeremiah Cox moved to Preble County, Ohio planning on finding good mill sites. He was devastated when he found better water power in what is now Wayne County, Indiana and began his operations here.<sup>18</sup>

Early settlers to eastern Indiana and Wayne County had a very hard life. Clearing a space for a homestead was the first trial of pioneer life. Clearing land for farming became the next trial. It took the entire community working together to raise buildings and clear land for roads.<sup>19</sup> Settlers needed these roads for travel to Eaton or Germantown, Ohio to have their grain ground to flour. They carried their grain by horse and cart to and from the mill along treacherous routes. Lumber also had to be cut to build homes. Saw mills had to be built to fill this order. Therefore building a mill was an early priority when an area was settled.

In 1806, Charles Hunt and his four sons settled on Elkhorn Creek and built the first saw mill in the county. Jeremiah Cox built a grist mill soon after about three miles north of Hunt's mill, on the West Fork of the Whitewater River. This area was later occupied by the Starr Piano Company.<sup>20</sup> The settlers of Jay and Randolph counties came from as far as fifty to sixty miles away to have their grain ground at the mills in Wayne County.<sup>21</sup>

I have done my best to document those mills. However, I could only document those

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<sup>16</sup> Fox, ed. *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*. Vol.1, 27.

<sup>17</sup> Fox, ed. *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*. Vol.1, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Schlotterbeck, *By Old Mill Streams*: 1986, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Fox, *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Fox, *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 58.

with citable sources and with adequate information documented about them. The following is an annotated list of these mills by township and catalogue number.

*A List of Mills by Township, Order Researched, and Catalogue Number*

**Wayne Township**

Wayne Township contained more mill sites than any other township in the county due to the large number of water power sites along the Whitewater River. In 1857, Richmond alone, contained about twenty-two grist mills, twenty-four saw mills, two oil mills, two paper mills, and many woolen mills.<sup>22</sup>

**Wayne-1<sup>23</sup>—Test Woolen Mills (a.k.a. Mt. Vernon Woolen Mill, Richmond Woolen Mills)**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located on the main channel of the Whitewater River. It is located southwest of Richmond at the beginning of the Gorge Trail on Test Road.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 48' 33" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 54' 28" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0679075 4408451
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of NW corner of Section 8 Township 13 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Saw, Grist, and Woolen
<u>Date Erected:</u>	circa 1856
<u>Ceased Operation:</u>	1900
<u>Remains:</u>	Ruins of buildings can be seen

A saw mill and grist mill occupied this site before the woolen mill. Atticus Sidell owned

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<sup>21</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 4.

<sup>22</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana* Vol.2, (Chicago: Interstate Publishing Co. [1884]), 38.

<sup>23</sup> This is a cataloguing label used for paperwork and picture numbering. It has no other purposes for research.

the saw mill and Edward Wright owned the grist mill.<sup>24</sup> Both remained in operation until they burned in the early 1850's. Alpheus Test built a woolen mill on the site which was known as the Mt. Vernon Woolen Mill in 1856. The mill burned down in 1858 but Test rebuilt it in 1859 with a partner named Abijah Moffit.<sup>25</sup> Alpheus Test's nephews, Oliver, William, Rufus, and Lindley Test became owners in 1865.<sup>26</sup> The mill burned down again on November 29, 1866 but was immediately rebuilt.<sup>27</sup> In 1868 a stone dye house was built on the property and in 1871 carding and spinning rooms were added.<sup>28</sup> In 1882, William and Rufus became the sole owners. The Test family ran the mill site for more than forty years.<sup>29</sup> It burned down again in 1900. The city tore down the ruins of the building in 1904 because it deemed them unsafe.<sup>30</sup>

This site was also known as the Richmond Woolen Mills from 1885 to 1900.<sup>31</sup> It is more commonly referred to as the Test Woolen Mill by the Palladium Item articles of that era because of the owner's last names.

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<sup>24</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 84.

<sup>25</sup> Quaker City Telegram (Richmond, IN), 20 October 1859.

<sup>26</sup> Quaker City Telegram (Richmond, Indiana), 20 October 1859.

<sup>27</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 17 September 1952.

<sup>28</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 84

<sup>29</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 84

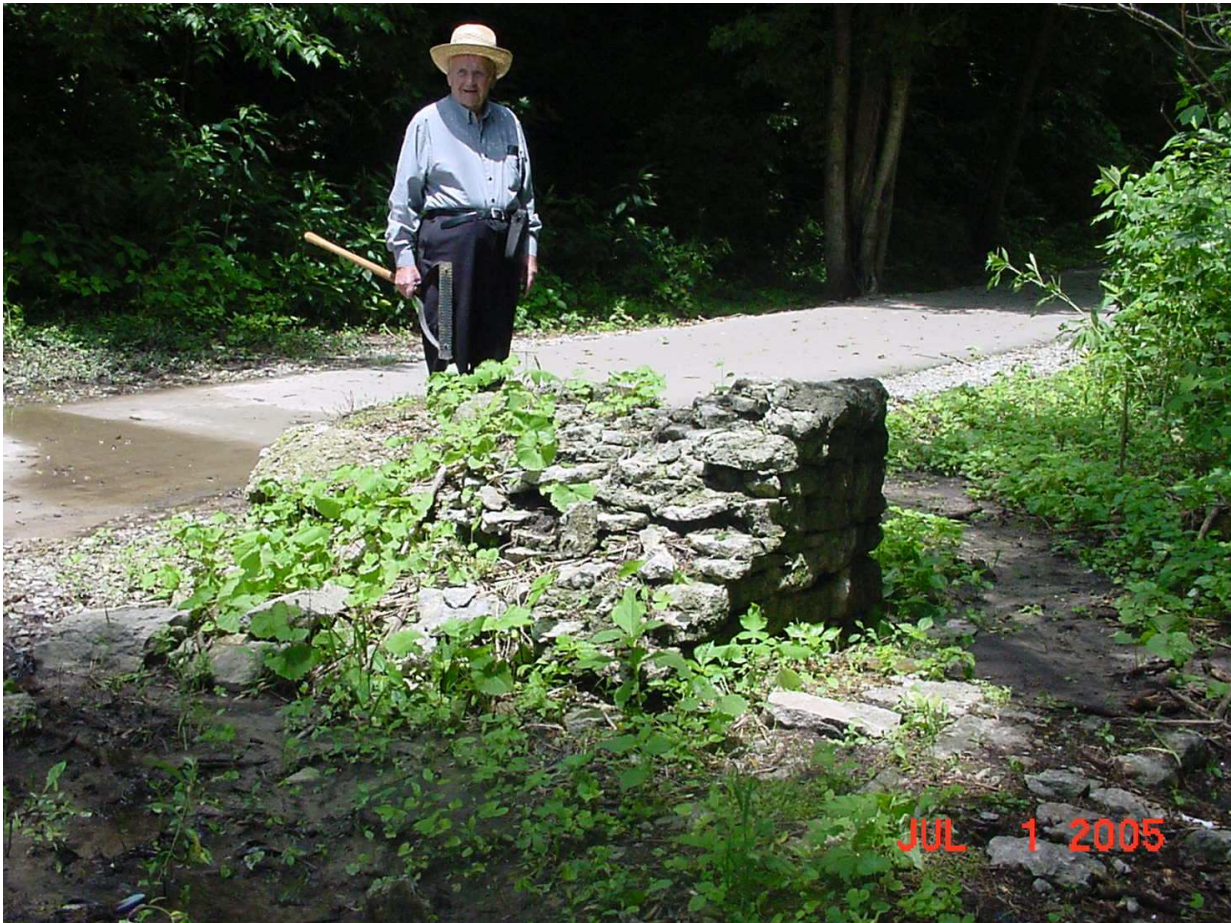
<sup>30</sup> Sun Telegram (Richmond, Indiana), 1 June 1904.

<sup>31</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 19.



Test Woolen Mill\* before being torn down in 1904. Photo courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

\*The building on the left was where the wool was dyed. The building on the right was where the wool was dried. The water between the two buildings was the original Richmond-Brookville Canal.



Bill Frazier and the Test Mill ruins at Gorge Trial trailhead on Test Road 2005. Photo taken by Peggy Branstrator.

**Wayne-2—Larsh Flour & Saw Mill (a.k.a. McFadden Sawmill, Canal Mill, Liberty Avenue Mill)**

Location: This mill was located on the Richmond-Brookville Canal on Liberty Avenue, south of Richmond.  
Latitude: 39 47' 44" N  
Longitude: 84 54' 39" W  
UTM: Unknown  
Township/Range: NE corner of NE corner of Section 18 Township 13 N/Range 1 W  
Mill Type: Saw and Grist  
Date Erected: 1868  
Ceased Operation: 1903  
Remains: None

Located on the Whitewater River about two miles below Richmond between Backmeyer and Beelor hills, was the McFadden saw mill, the first mill at this site.<sup>32</sup> In 1868, Leroy W. Larsh, with his son Lafayette, bought the property and built a flouring mill on the site. A disagreement over water supply temporarily halted its operation after only a few years.<sup>33</sup> The Larsh mill used water from the Richmond-Brookville Canal<sup>34</sup> which was never finished. This site was also called the Canal Mill because its water source. In 1874, Leroy retired and Corwin Larsh became partners with Lafayette under the name Larsh & Bros.<sup>35</sup> George Deuker bought the property from Larsh in 1899. He owned the mill when it burned down in 1903.<sup>36</sup> The townspeople commonly knew this mill as the Liberty Avenue Mill because of its location.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 19 May 1953.

<sup>33</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 19.

<sup>34</sup> This canal was built to connect Richmond to Brookville, IN for commerce.

<sup>35</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 19 May 1953.

<sup>36</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana*, Vol.2, 78.

<sup>37</sup> Palladium-Item Richmond, IN), 11 July 1903.





Painting of the Larsh Mill by Edgar Schalk, date unknown. Photo courtesy of Jon Branstrator.

### Wayne-3—Richmond Woolen Mill (a.k.a. Brightwell Mill, Cox Mill)

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located on the main channel of the Whitewater River where the Starr Piano Company was located, near Main Street.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 49' 31" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 54' 03" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0679635 4410243
<u>Township/Range:</u>	SE corner of NW corner of Section 5 Township 13 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Grist and Woolen
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1807
<u>Ceased Operation:</u>	1870
<u>Remains:</u>	None

Jeremiah Cox built a grist mill below the Main Street Bridge, near the site of the Starr Piano Company, immediately on the bank of the river in 1807. This was the second corn

cracker<sup>38</sup> in the county.<sup>39</sup> Cox ran the mill until 1833 when he sold to Joseph Plummer, who then sold to James Mendenhall in 1835. The mill changed hands a few more times before Basil Brightwell became the owner in 1847. He built an entirely new mill, and turned the old one into an oil mill.<sup>40</sup> When the mill developed financial trouble, Brightwell, fearing humiliation, killed himself inside the mill. This led to rumors of it being haunted.<sup>41</sup>

A few years later in 1865, Jackson, Swayne, and Dunn bought the mill, enlarged it, changed it into a woolen mill, and named it the Richmond Woolen Mills.<sup>42</sup> The woolen mill burned in 1870 and the property was sold to Starr Piano Works.<sup>43</sup>

**Wayne-4—Richmond Roller Mill (a.k.a. Carpenter Mill, Richmond Feed and Grain, Richmond Milling and Grain, Green Street Mill)**

Location: This mill was located on the east fork of the Whitewater River on Sim Hodgkin Parkway.  
Latitude: Unknown  
Longitude: Unknown  
UTM: 16 S 0679805  
 4411051  
Township/Range: SW corner of SE corner of Section 32 Township 14 N/Range 1 W  
Mill Type: Grist  
Date Erected: 1864  
Ceased Operation: Unknown  
Remains: Ruins of buildings can be seen.

In 1864 Marmon, Nordyke, & Co built the Richmond Roller Mill and Elevator, also known as the Richmond Feed and Grain. H.C. Wright ran it as a grist mill until 1876 when it

<sup>38</sup> A corn cracker was another name for a method that ground corn to meal. Discussed previously in the text.

<sup>39</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN) 24 November 1943.

<sup>40</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 467. Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 29 November 1943.

<sup>41</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 24 April 1944.

<sup>42</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 24 November 1943.

<sup>43</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 20.

was purchased by Charles Carpenter. Water powered the mill until steam power was added in 1883.<sup>44</sup> Rollers were also added at this time. In 1890, the owners stripped the entire mill and added new machinery.<sup>45</sup> Charles Carpenter owned it in 1912.<sup>46</sup>

Curme, Coleman, and Co. purchased the mill in 1927 when Carpenter retired at the age of 92.<sup>47</sup> In 1929, the company faced an increasing demand for feed and opened a new state-of-the-art grist mill on the same property known as the Richmond Feed and Grain.<sup>48</sup> The mill caught fire and sustained massive damage in 1930, but was immediately rebuilt.<sup>49</sup> In 1933, G.L. and Joseph Clark purchased the mill and renamed it Richmond Milling and Grain. At this point the mill operated entirely by electricity.<sup>50</sup> This mill's production replaced the Metamora Roller Mill which had recently been destroyed by fire.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-Sate Publishing Co. [1884]), 76.

<sup>45</sup> Richmond Sun-Telegram (Richmond, IN) 19 December 1906.

<sup>46</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 512.

<sup>47</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 1 July 1928.

<sup>48</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 24 February 1929.

<sup>49</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 16 November 1930.

<sup>50</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 8 December 1943.

<sup>51</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 1 July 1933.



Ruins of an old building where Richmond Roller Mill was located. 2005. Photo taken by Peggy Branstrator.

### **Wayne 5—Richmond City Mills (a.k.a. Bush Mill, Newman Mill)**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located on Bridge Avenue below the hill at the end of Butler Street.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 50' 17" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 53' 53" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0679974 4411853
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of NW corner of Section 32 Township 14 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Grist
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1825
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	circa 1880
<u>Remains:</u>	None

In 1825, Thomas Newman built a grist mill on the west fork of the Whitewater River. He



operated it until his death in 1845. His heirs continued it until 1853 when they sold to Thomas Hunt & Co. It then passed to Timothy Thistlethwaite and then to David Bush.<sup>52</sup> Bush remodeled the mill in 1869. In 1877, Thomas and John Hunt again became the owners.<sup>53</sup> It caught fire in the 1880s.<sup>54</sup>

### **Wayne 6—Nixon Paper Mill (a.k.a. Richmond Paper and Bag Co., Richmond Paper Mills)**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond on what is now the corner of Bridge Avenue and Sim Hodgkin Parkway.
<u>Latitude:</u>	Unknown
<u>Longitude:</u>	Unknown
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0680088 4411554
<u>Township/Range:</u>	SW corner of NE corner of Section 32 Township 14 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Paper
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1830
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	circa 1931
<u>Remains:</u>	Raceway

Leeds and Jones built the Richmond Paper Mill in 1830. They then sold to Richmond Manufacturing & Trading Co. The mill changed hands again to the Nixon Bros. It burned completely in 1871 and they rebuilt.<sup>55</sup> The dam of the mill washed away in the spring of 1881. The mill ran on both steam and water at the time. The steam engines supplied the power until the dam was rebuilt later in the year and water could supply more of the energy (Richmond Telegram, 1881).<sup>56</sup> Thomas Nixon owned the mill in 1884 and converted it to full steam power around this time.<sup>57</sup> In 1902, the mill caught fire and the roof burned. This put the mill out of

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<sup>52</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 501.

<sup>53</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana*, Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 81.

<sup>54</sup> Henry Clay Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, (Madison, Wisconsin: Western Historical Association, 1912), 501.

<sup>55</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana*, Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 82.

<sup>56</sup> *Richmond Sun-Telegram* (Richmond, IN), 9 June 1881.

<sup>57</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana*, Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 81.

business for a time because of a lack of insurance on the building. In 1906, an effort to incorporate the business was made with the help of local business owners who wanted stock in the company, but apparently failed.<sup>58</sup> An incorporation effort started yet again in 1909.<sup>59</sup> In 1911 with incorporation efforts still unsuccessful, Nixon sold the mill to May Rittenhouse.<sup>60</sup> The city dynamited the remains in 1931 because it deemed them unsafe.<sup>61</sup>



Nixon Paper and Bag Mill located in Happy Hollow. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

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<sup>58</sup> Richmond Sun-Telegram (Richmond, IN), 9 June 1906.

<sup>59</sup> Richmond Palladium (Richmond, IN), 4 May 1909.

<sup>60</sup> Richmond Palladium (Richmond, IN), 7 August 1911.

<sup>61</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 6 March 1931.



Bill Frazier standing in the old raceway of Nixon Paper and Bag Mill. 2005. Photo taken by author.

### **Wayne 7—Spring Grove Oil Mill (a.k.a. Burson's Oil Mill)**

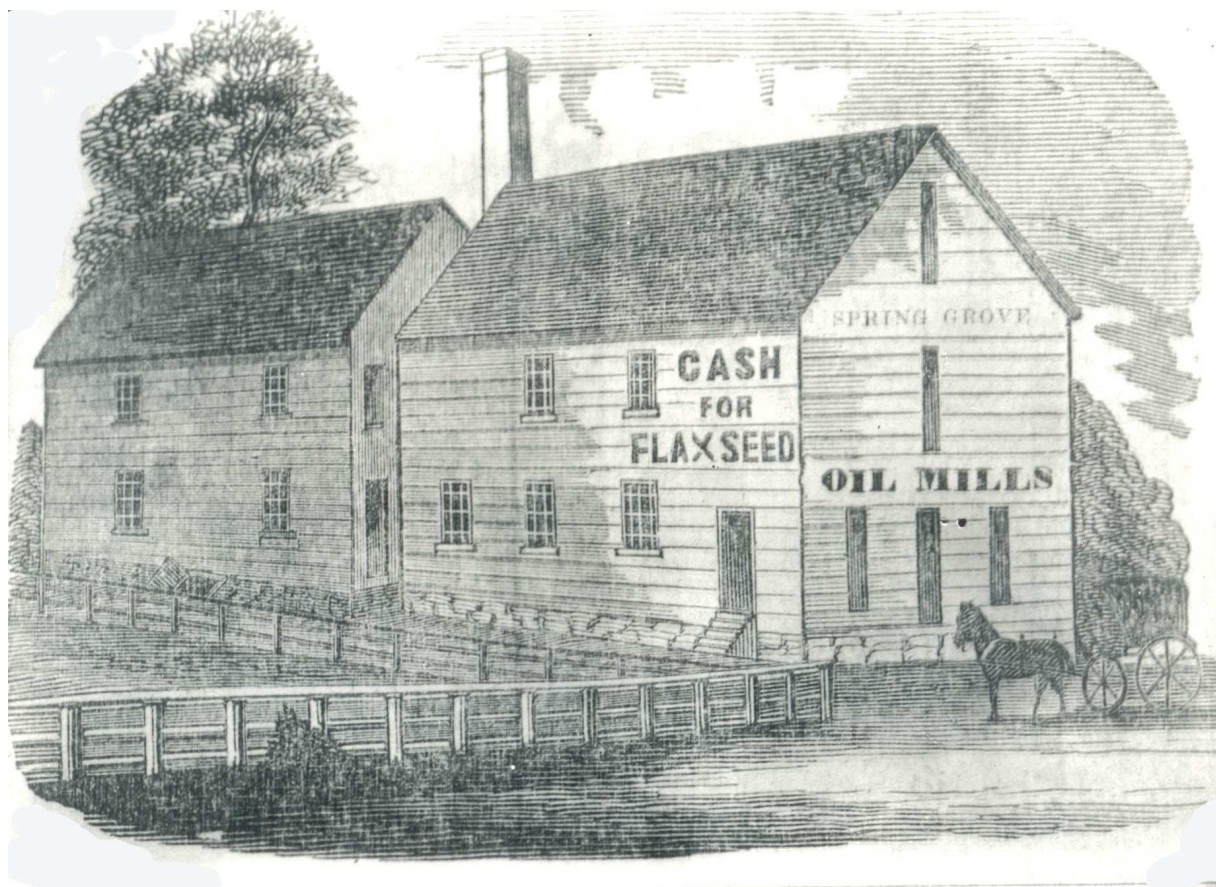
<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond near the intersection of Highway 27 (Chester Boulevard) and Sim Hodgkin Parkway.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 58' 38" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 53' 05" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0680599 4412348
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NE corner of SE corner of Section 29 Township 14 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Oil
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1853
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	circa 1877
<u>Remains:</u>	None

D.S. Burson and I.P. Evans built the Spring Grove Oil Mill in 1853. It manufactured linseed oil. In 1861, Burson became the sole owner. It burned in 1864. E.T. and J.W. Burson



rebuilt it and then sold it in 1871. Operation then ceased until 1876.<sup>62</sup> In 1876 Kendall and Barnes leased the building and in 1877 they sold to Evans, Ferguson, and Reeves. The mill closed soon after.<sup>63</sup> At some later date the building sold to a tobacco company that operated for many years.

This mill's official name was Spring Grove Oil Mill but many people knew it as Burson's Oil mill due to the primary owners' last names.



This is a drawing of the Spring Grove Oil Mill. The date and artist are unknown. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

<sup>62</sup> *History of Wayne County, Indiana* Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 88.

<sup>63</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 503.

**Wayne 8—Champion Roller Mill (a.k.a. Spring Valley Mill)**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond on Fort Wayne Avenue under the Highway 27 overpass. This was a steam powered mill and was not powered by the Whitewater River.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 50' 10" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 53' 22" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0681507 4412149
<u>Township/Range:</u>	SW corner of NW corner of Section 33 Township 14 N/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Steam Powered Grist
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1877
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	after 1912
<u>Remains:</u>	None

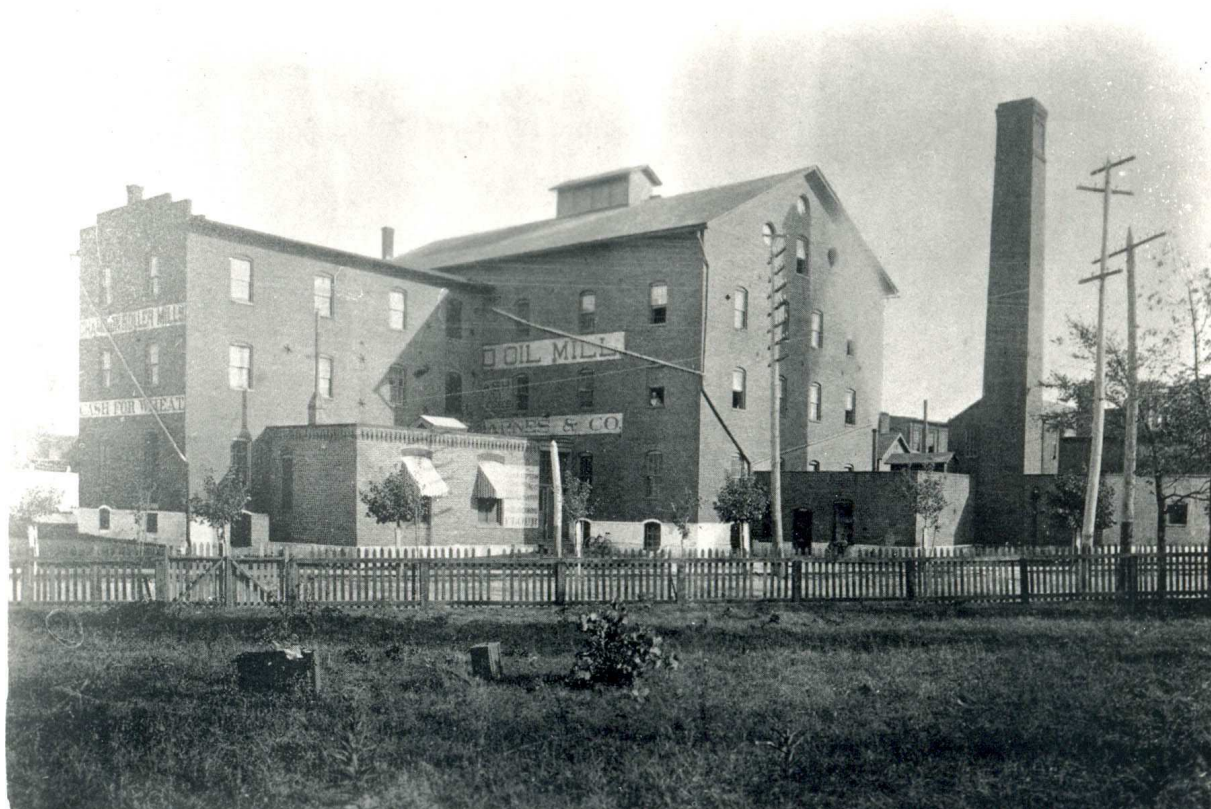
In 1877, the Champion Roller Milling Co. was built. It manufactured linseed oil. Kendall, Barnes, & Co owned it until 1882 when the name changed to Kendall, Reeves, & Co (the owners of Spring Grove Oil Mill for a short time). In 1883, they converted it to a grist mill with the famous patented roller process.<sup>64</sup> The Champion Roller Milling Co. became incorporated in 1883.<sup>65</sup> The mill was in operation in 1912 but the actual date that production ceased is unknown.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana, Vol.2 (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]) 69.

<sup>65</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 507.

<sup>66</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 519.



Champion Roller Mill in its prime. Circa 1900. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

### Wayne 9—Fleecy Dale Woolen Mill

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond at the end of North 17 <sup>th</sup> Street off of North “J” Street.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 50’ 33” N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 52’ 02” W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0682547 4411577
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NE corner of the NE corner of Section 33 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Woolen
<u>Date Erected:</u>	Unknown
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	1888
<u>Remains:</u>	None

Fleecy Dale Woolen Mill, originally a saw mill, was located on the east fork of the



Whitewater River. The date that this mill was built is unknown. In 1825, Benjamin Hibberd converted it to a woolen mill. Benjamin Bond and Alpheus Test purchased it in 1849 and ran it for several years. They sold to Samuel Nixon and Ezekiel Aikin who ran the mill until 1867 when Nixon sold his half to Samuel Porter. This ownership continued until 1878.<sup>67</sup> After that the sole owner was Ezekiel Aikin until his death in 1881 when operation was continued by his son, James Aikin. In 1888 the mill burned down and was never rebuilt.<sup>68</sup>



Fleecy Dale Woolen Mill. Date unknown. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

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<sup>67</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 67.

<sup>68</sup> Richmond Item (Richmond, IN), 3 June 1941.

**Wayne 10—Hawkins Saw Mill**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond at the east side of the lake in Glen Miller Park.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 50' 10" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 52' 02" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0682547 4411577
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of SW corner of Section 34 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Saw
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1810
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	1870
<u>Remains:</u>	None

John Hawkins built the Hawkins Saw Mill about a mile downstream from its later Glen Miller Park location in 1810. Six years later Charles Moffit built a grist mill just below it. This backed up the water at the saw mill. This event raised the question of water rights. Since both men were members of the Friends Church, they let the Church committee decide the outcome. The Church deemed the products of the grist mill more in need and the saw mill closed. In 1820 Hawkins rebuilt on the present site of the lake in Glen Miller Park (Indianapolis Star, 1948).<sup>69</sup> John Hawkins, Jr. replaced the mill in 1849. It operated until 1870 when the city acquired the property for Glen Miller Park. When the lake was built, the first story was covered by the water, and the second floor became a bath house. The city later deemed it unsafe and tore it down in 1880 (Coate, 1943).<sup>70</sup> John Hawkins brother, Nathan, ran a turning lathe in Glen Miller Park. In 1856 he built a saw mill on the site of the old boathouse at the upper end of the lake and operation continued there until 1880.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Indianapolis Sunday Star (Indianapolis, IN), 2 May 1943.

<sup>70</sup> Coate ! ?????

<sup>71</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 22.



Hawkins Saw Mill after lake was formed. Picture taken before being torn down in 1880. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

### Wayne 11—Elliot Saw Mill (a.k.a. Cascade Mill)

Location: This mill was located in Richmond on Wernle Road near the intersection of  
Garwood Road.

Latitude: 39 47' 12" N

Longitude: 84 50' 34" W

UTM: 16 S 0684673  
4407932

Township/Range: SE corner of the SW corner of Section 11 Township 13 N/Range 1 W.

Mill Type: Saw and Grist

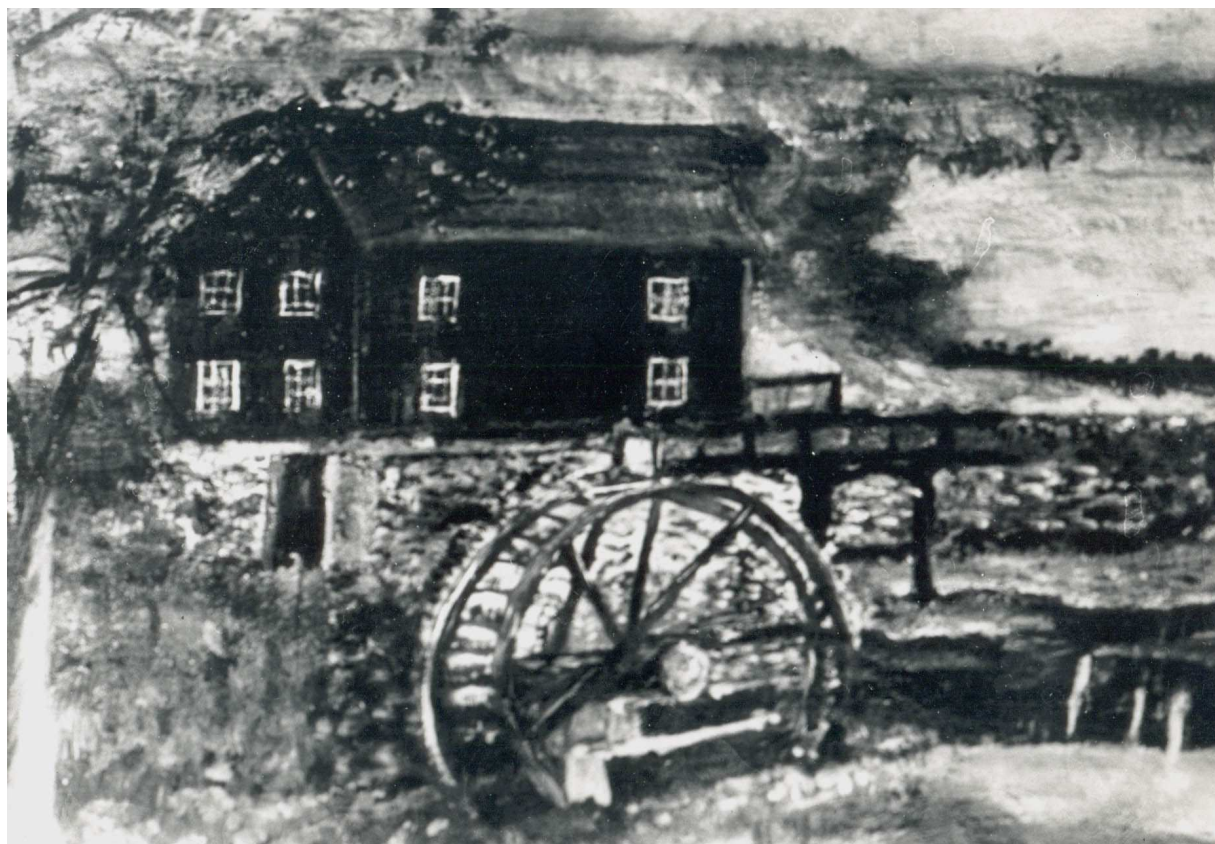
Date Erected: 1812

Ceased Functioning: 1884

Remains: Falls where wheel sat



In 1812, Jacob Fouts, Jr. built a saw mill at a site on Short Creek.<sup>72</sup> In 1818, Benjamin Moore purchased the mill site and operated it until he died 1850. William Elliot then built a grist mill with a carding machine attached.<sup>73</sup> In 1876, Hamilton Stigleman and Isaac Gause operated the mill until the death of Mr. Stigleman when Gause became the sole owner. The mill was known as the Cascade Mill until 1884 when production ceased.<sup>74</sup>



Elliot Saw Mill. Date unknown. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.

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<sup>72</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana Vol.2, (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 765.

<sup>73</sup> Palladium Item (Richmond, IN) 7 November 1952.

<sup>74</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 23.



**Wayne 12—Moffitt Flour Mill (a.k.a. F.H. Stafford Grist Mill, Quaker City Mill,**

**Richmond Corn Mill)**

Location: This mill is located in Richmond near the intersection of Highway 227 and Highway 121.

Latitude: 39 50' 28" N

Longitude: 84 53'07" W

UTM: 16 S 0680952

4412081

Township/Range: NW corner of the NW corner of Section 33 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.

Mill Type: Grist

Date Erected: 1815

Ceased Functioning: Unknown

Remains: This is one of only two standing mills in Wayne County as of 2008.

Charles Moffitt moved to the Richmond area from North Carolina in 1811.<sup>75</sup> In 1815 he built one of oldest grist mills in the county just outside of the limits of the city at that time. This was the only mill in the county that was run by an undershot wheel. Hugh Moffitt rebuilt the mill in 1873. Benjamin Fulghum owned half of the interest in the company at this time. They then sold to Kenworthy & Fulghum whose company name was changed to Kenworthy & Son. Ezra Hill and Henry Wetherald then purchased the mill. The company name became Hill & Stafford when Wetherald sold his share and it ran under this name until 1879 when it became F.H. Stafford. Fire destroyed the mill in 1883. Stafford rebuilt it but went bankrupt in 1884. D. W. Marmon, the grandson of Charles Moffitt, bought the site in 1890. He replaced the buhr grinding stones with rollers.<sup>76</sup> According to *The History of Wayne County* (1884), this mill was also called the Quaker City Mill.<sup>77</sup> People as far away as Indianapolis and Fort Wayne visited the mill.<sup>78</sup> This is one of the only two mills still standing in the county in 2008.

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<sup>75</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 25 April 1944.

<sup>76</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 500.

<sup>77</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 80.

<sup>78</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 22.



Moffitt Flour Mill a.k.a. Richmond Corn Mills. Date unknown. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.



Moffitt Flour Mill. One of the two mills still standing in the county. 2005. Photo taken by Peggy Branstrator.

### Wayne 13—Finley's Mill (a.k.a. Mering Mill, Richmond Valley Mill, Underwood Mill)

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond under where the "G" Street bridge now stands.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 49' 02" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 54' 05" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0679639 4409373
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of the SE corner of Section 5 Township 13/Range 1 W
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Grist and Woolen
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1830
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	1890
<u>Remains:</u>	None

John Underwood had a grist mill below the Starr Piano Works in 1830.<sup>79</sup> William Bancroft then converted it to a woolen mill in 1846. It subsequently had many ownership changes.<sup>80</sup> Some owners converted the mill back to a flour mill again.<sup>81</sup> John Finley, Daniel Jones, Jacob and Thomas Wright, and William Higgins all owned the mill between 1846 and 1856. Jacob Mering bought the site in 1856. His brother, Luther, then bought it from him 1857. The mill burned down in 1883.<sup>82</sup> The mill closed in 1890.<sup>83</sup>

### **Wayne 19 & 20—Chandler and Crawford Grist Mill/Bulla Saw Mill**

<u>Location:</u>	These mills were located in Richmond under where the Middle Fork Reservoir is now located.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 51'37" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 52' 21" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0682010 4414224
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of the SW corner of Section 22 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Grist/Saw
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1808
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	Unknown
<u>Remains:</u>	None

In 1808, William Bulla built a saw mill very close to Burson's Oil Mill on the Middle Fork of the Whitewater River.<sup>84</sup>

One mile north of this mill, Robert Chandler built a grist mill. Benjamin Crawford was one of the last owners. Fire destroyed the mill.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>79</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 83.

<sup>80</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 19.

<sup>81</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 83.

<sup>82</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 83.

<sup>83</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 501.

<sup>84</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 21.

<sup>85</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 21.

**Wayne 21—Thistlethwaite Mill**

<u>Location:</u>	This mill was located in Richmond across from Springwood Park by Thistlewaite Falls on Waterfall Road.
<u>Latitude:</u>	39 50' 59" N
<u>Longitude:</u>	84 53' 57" W
<u>UTM:</u>	16 S 0679831 4412705
<u>Township/Range:</u>	NW corner of the SW corner of Section 29 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.
<u>Mill Type:</u>	Grist
<u>Date Erected:</u>	1854
<u>Ceased Functioning:</u>	Unknown
<u>Remains:</u>	Unknown

According to a plaque at the top of Thistlethwaite Falls in Spring Grove on Waterfall Road, this was the location of a grist mill built by Timothy Thistlethwaite with his brother-in-law in 1854. This information was confirmed by William Frazier based on a document that he owns that he believes was given out at the dedication ceremony when the plaque was put installed. However, none of this information could be verified by any published documentation. It is known whether remains of a foundation on the location were part of the mill structure.



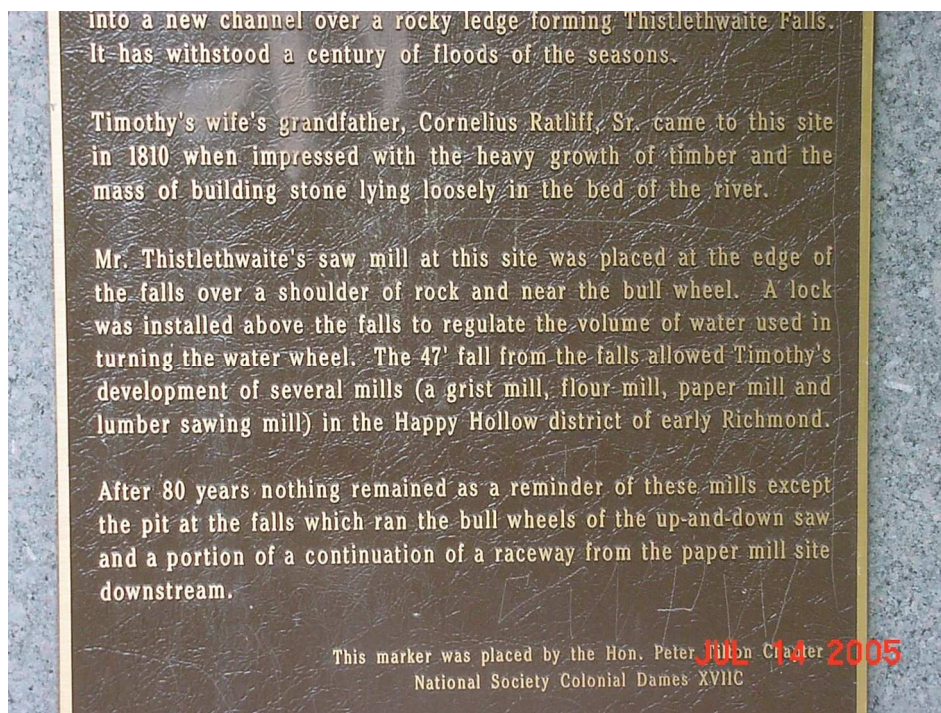
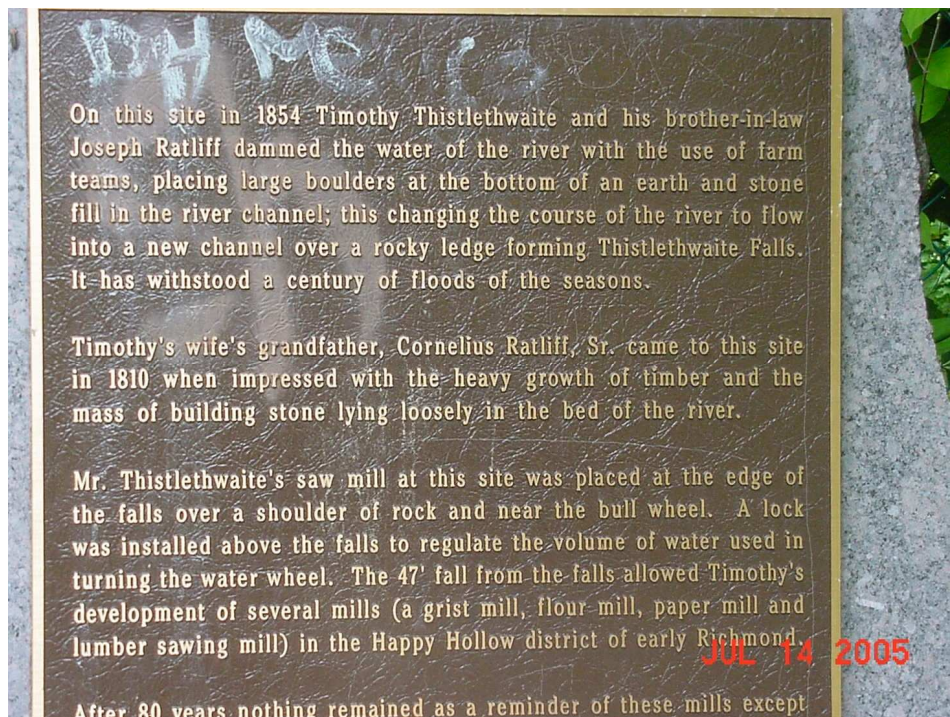


Photo of plaque at top of Thistlethwaite Falls. 2005. Photo taken by author.





Photo of indentation in falls where mill wheel sat. 2005. Photo taken by author.

## Wayne 22—Cox Mill

Location: This is located in Middleboro, north of Richmond, on Highway 227. A smaller mill building is also located on the property and that was where the mill was housed until it outgrew that building.

\*Main mill building\*

Latitude: 39 53' 54" N  
Longitude: 84 49' 50" W  
UTM: 16 S 0685370  
 4418255

\*Smaller mill building\*

Latitude: 39 53' 53" N  
Longitude: 84 49' 51" W  
UTM: 16 S 0685435  
 4418245

Township/Range: SW corner of NW corner of Section 12 Township 14 N/Range 1 W.



Mill Type: Grist  
Date Erected: 1820  
Ceased Functioning: 1920  
Remains: This is one of only two mills left standing in the county.

Robert Cox built the fifth mill in the county at Middleboro in 1820. In 1828 he built a much larger mill building on the property.<sup>86</sup> He built an extended portion of the basement off of the back of the building for the wheelhouse. It served three different purposes. The outer wall supported the outer bearings of the wheel shaft holding the wheel, protected the wheel from becoming coated in ice in the winter, and protected the wheel from drying out in the summer sun.<sup>87</sup>

The mill operated continuously from 1860 to 1920. It then sat abandoned until 1953 when it was purchased by Grimsley Hobbs, an associate professor of philosophy at Earlham College. He and his wife began making restorations to the property in hopes of getting the mill up and running again, possibly on a small commercial scale. However, the dam from the Whitewater River that once provided water to the mill no longer existed and the raceway was just a grass covered groove in the ground, so they ran the burh stone by a gasoline engine.<sup>88</sup>

The Hobbs sold the property in 1962 to Richard McKees, who had hoped to put an antique store on the property. McKees then sold to Donald Martings who wanted the property for a gun shop. In 1973 the ownership of the mill building changed to Eric and Gay Smith who hoped to get the mill in working order once again.<sup>89</sup> John and Gayle Backmeyer bought the property from the Smiths in 1981. They sued the former owners for selling the property under

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<sup>86</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 500.

<sup>87</sup> Schlotterbeck, *By Old Mill Streams* 1986. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 19 July 1953.

<sup>89</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN) 15 July 1973.

false pretenses (Palladium Item, 1981).<sup>90</sup> The property had a pest problem and was not in the condition previously stated. In 2008, this mill is still occupied as a residence by Dr. Dariece Senderak DVM and is one of the only two mills still standing in the county.



Photo of original Cox Mill building. 2005. Photo taken by Jon Branstrator.

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<sup>90</sup> Palladium-Item (Richmond, IN), 14 April 1981.





Photo of back of original Cox Mill building from rear where wheel would have sat. 2005. Photo taken by Jon Branstrator.



Photo of larger Cox Mill building. One of two mills still standing in the county. 2005. Photo taken by Peggy Branstrator.





Photo of original raceway leading to mill. 2005. Photo taken by Peggy Branstrator.





Photo of enclosed mill wheel building added to protect from weather. 2005. Photo taken by Jon Branstrator.

## **Boston Township**

### **Boston 1—Elkhorn Falls Mills (Wolfe Mill)**

Location: This mill was located south of Richmond in Boston Township on Highway 227.

Latitude: 39 46' 41" N

Latitude: 84 51' 51" W

UTM: 16 S 0682916  
4405099

Township/Range: NE corner of the SW corner of Section 22 Township 13 N/Range 1 W

Mill Type: Grist

Date Erected: 1817

Ceased Functioning: 1909

Remains: A piece of the grist stone is still located on the property. A portion of the falls is still there.

In 1817, Jesse Davenport built the mill at Elkhorn Falls. The rock in this area created a vertical wall in which the water fell over 25 feet.<sup>91</sup> Davenport later added a saw mill on the same site. One of the first oil mills in the county also operated on this site.<sup>92</sup> Addington & Brown rebuilt the mill in 1859 and the mill was then known as Relief Mills.<sup>93</sup> Later, Samuel Brown, William Elmore, and John Wolfe became owners. Both water and steam ran the mill at this time. The mill then switched hands to G. W. Ferguson and John Wolfe who operated the mill until 1903 when it was sold to Cyrus Cable. He continued the mill until 1909 when he sold to C & O Railroad Co.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 19.

<sup>92</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 23.

<sup>93</sup> History of Wayne County, Indiana (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co. [1884]), 270.

<sup>94</sup> Wissler, "The Mills of Wayne County," 1912, 23.





**Wolf Mill at Elkhorn Falls**

Elkhorn Falls mill before being torn down circa 1909. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society.



Photo of mill stone found on property of Elkhorn Mill. 2005. Photo taken by Jon Branstrator.





Photo of blasted out space where Elkhorn Mill wheel sat in its raceway. 2005. Photo taken by Jon Branstrator.

### **Boston 2—Hunt Mill (a.k.a. Endsley Mill)**

Location: This mill was located south of Richmond in Boston Township near Endsley Road.

Latitude:

Longitude:

UTM:Township/Range: SW corner of the SW corner of Section 29 Township 13 N/Range 1 W.Mill Type: GristDate Erected: 1807Ceased Functioning: 1881Remains: None

Charles Hunt and his sons built a grist mill on Elkhorn Creek one mile from its mouth in 1807. This was the first mill built in the county. Before this mill was built, the settlers had to pack their grain to Miami, Ohio or Brookville, Indiana to have it ground (Fox 1912, 58).<sup>95</sup> In 1847 James and John Endsley built a saw mill on the same site. In 1881, in order to make room for growing crops, the mill was torn down.

*Conclusion*

Wayne County and the city of Richmond, Indiana exist as they do today because of the tremendous water power of the Whitewater River. This water power was vital to the lives of the European pioneers who settled this area. Mills created an enormous industry which started Richmond's foothold into American expansion. Everyday necessities could not be taken for granted as they are today when something as simple as a loaf of bread could take a trip of over one hundred miles to get. Flour sometimes had to be carted to distant towns to be ground to flour. Flax seed (a.k.a. linseed) oil from the oil mills was used for as a wood preservative, soaps, and as glazing putty for glass.. The homes were built from logs cut at the saw mills. Yarn could be spun and woven into cloth locally instead of shipped from far away or being hand-made.

Mills either ceased functioning or converted to steam power around the turn of the century. The Industrial Revolution brought about new technologies and new processes for fulfilling everyday needs. Manufacturing facilities could be located anywhere with this new

technology. These other power sources were more reliable so water powered mills could no longer compete.

Mills were the foundation of the economy of early settlement in Wayne County because of the unusually large number of suitable sites for mills. Large sums of money were put into the mills to give the people of the county the services they desperately needed. It is evidence of the important role that the mills played by how many times some of them were rebuilt after burning down. The large number of local mills also indicates their importance. Hundreds of mills occupied the county at certain times. Mills were one of the largest reasons why Richmond, Indiana is on the map. Knowing the history of our remarkable county will help us to appreciate the hard work that many people put into making Wayne County great.

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<sup>95</sup> Fox, ed., *Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond, Indiana*, Vol.1, 58.



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