

# NIC' IN TIME

N I C O D E M U S N E W S L E T T E R

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## HOOVER'S MILL

**B**UILT in the same year that Waynesboro was founded, Hoover's mill stood along the west branch of the Antietam, a quarter of a mile below Cold Spring Park. Since 1932 it had fallen into disuse. The wide gambrel roof, which had been its most distinguishing feature, was blown off in the sudden windstorm which struck this vicinity in the summer of 1943. Later the mill, becoming unsafe even for the tramps which made it their overnight home, was torn down. Only the ruins of the stone walls now remain. It is planned to put these stones into the walls of a new home to be erected by Eugene R. Arthur, a descendant of the Hoovers.

Mr. Arthur's grandfather, Mordecai Hoover, was the last man to operate the mill. His father, Jacob Hoover, had also run it. Mordecai always dressed the grinding stones himself, using hand chisels. He kept the mill going, chiefly alone, even after he was more than 80 years of age.

Mrs. Arthur, who was Margaret Riddlesberger, is the great-great-granddaughter of John Nicodemus, who built the mill on the plantation of his father Frederic.

According to the late Wm. H. Leshar, who lived near it for over 80 years, the mill at first had two overshot water wheels. It ground flour until the time of the Confederate invasion, but never afterward. Corn meal and feed became its

later products. The millpond covered the adjoining field, in the old days, and was a fine place to catch fish. Part of the early embankment can still be seen.

The drawing was made from the back of the mill, and shows the cooperage, which served also as a distillery. It had a big fireplace. Water for the distillery was brought through a wooden pipe all the way from a spring on the old Miller farm (now Shank's), around the turn of the road to the north. Mr. Miller was the grandfather of the late D. L. Miller, and of Mrs. S. D. Hockman.

Moderate whiskey drinking was very common in that era, some families serving it to all hands every day. There was a whiskey still on one farm in every six or eight. Surplus grain was made into whiskey because it brought more, pound for pound, on the eastern markets: in a time when freight had to be carried by packhorse or wagon, that was important.

The water wheels were finally replaced by a turbine, but many of the original shafts, pulleys, and gears, hand made of wood, served throughout the long life of the mill. A generation or two ago there was a schoolhouse in the valley, nearby; the children bought pencils and candy at a little store that was in the front room of the mill. The site was always a favorite with painters: pictures still exist of the mill at different periods of its history.

Copied From : Around Waynesboro with Pen and Ink

Drawings and Historical Notes by Terry Mitchell - 1947