

## "A Glimpse of the Times"

This account of early farming was given by an old man from this section. Picture what farming might be today had not modern inventions eliminated much of this routine toil.

A description of farming methods of that day may help to show the struggles of our forefathers. Their farming tools were few and rough - plow stocks were made by hand as iron was scarce and blacksmiths few, hickory grubs were often used for plowshares. The foot piece was hewed down, and plows fastened on with iron bands, wedged to tighten. Bridles were made of ropes, and ropes were used for traces. Mulberry bark was used for hamstrings. There were no wagons in those days for hauling corn and other products. It was done on sledges which were boxed up when used for the above named purposes.

Their crops consisted of corn, cotton, wheat, and tobacco. The farmers planted, on the average, about five acres of corn. When he stopped plowing his horse or ox at twelve, he would bell him and turn him out to graze. In those days, there were no pasture fences. Cotton was raised on a small scale. It required two persons to plow one row, one on each side, scraping the ridge. They never chopped through or thinned the cotton. The seeds were picked by hand from the lint. The lint was worked into cakes and dried before the fire. The men usually picked the seed out while the women prepared, corded, and spun the lint into thread. It was then woven into cloth on hand looms. Woolen cloth was made by a similiar method.

Wheat was one of the principal crops. This was harvested with reap hooks. It was thrashed at a treading yard, a place made by digging the surface to the clay, and packed down with mauls. The wheat, hauled in on sledges, was placed on this yard and tramped down by horses. They took away the long straw by hand, seried the wheat to remove the fine straw, fanned it with a sheet to remove the chaff. On windy days, a man would stand up on a stump and pour measures of wheat on a sheet, the wind blowing away the chaff.

The early generations were almost all farmers. Before 1880, or thereabouts, this was the expected occupation of nearly everyone. Even those who followed a profesion, had a skilled trade, or were merchants, also farmed - Land owners were called planters, while non-landowners were called farmers, overseers, or laborers.

During the 1750's Pennington built a Fort on Indian Creek, Newberry County to which a number of settlers of other counties repaired when they found their own fort inadequate to withstand the attacks of the Cherokee Indians - Presbyterians and Quakers met with Baptists or "indifferences" at Pennington's Fort.

The manners and dress in the 1760's and 1770's of these early settlers must have been quite primitive. Their dress was as follows: hunting shirt, leggings and moccasins, adorned with buckles and beads. The hair was clubbed and tied up in a little deerskin or silk bag. At another time they wore their hair cued and rolled up in a black ribbon or bear's gut dressed and dyed black. Again it became the custom to shave off the hair and wear white linen caps with ruffles around. The women's dress was long-eared caps, Virginia bonnets, short gowns, long gowns, stays, stomachers, quilted petticoats, and high wooden heels.

There is some evidence that in the sparsely settled up-country, human companionship was important enough to overcome the difficulties of travel.