

Mill played important role in Hoosier county's history

SCOTT, Ind. — The historic Scott Mill, one of the oldest landmarks in LaGrange County, was destroyed by fire in 1968. Before it left the scene, however, it played an important role in farm and industry of the county.

The mill was built in 1835 by three Martin brothers, two years after they purchased 280 acres of land from the government. The mill was located in VanBuren Township, on the Pigeon River.

The original mill race was dug in the 1830's, using oxen. The race ran over half a mile.

It was operated as a grist mill a year before the community of Scott was platted, the settlement previously known as Van Buren.

While still a grist mill, it was owned and operated by Joseph Ritzer, who bought the property in the 1800's. His granddaughter, Mrs. Hilma Bellaire, lives at 502 Sturgis Ave., in Sturgis.

In 1904, Frederick Boehmer purchased the mill and the property. He was Mrs. Bellaire's father. While Boehmer owned the mill, it was used as a saw mill, later converted into a flour mill.

In 1921, the mill wheel was

connected with generators when area farmers near Scott contributed \$100 each for construction of electric lines to their homes and businesses.

Frederick Boehmer passed the lines of ownership to his son, Edwin, who sold the old home, mill and other land to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Game.

Northern Indiana Public Service Co. purchased the mill rights and its power lines in 1936 to use the plant as a booster station.

Allen Kistler managed the mill at the time of the fire. He and his family lived in the former Boehmer home on the east side of the mill.