

Early Roßtal Area Mill History

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English Translation

-- History and Stories --

From old mills come some fascinating thoughts. Whether from the energy of the flowing water or by the power of the blowing wind, these mechanics shows that the human being very early on understood the forces of nature to use.

The water or wind power in conjunction with the mechanics of the grinding mill took over the previously laborious production of flour by grinding and crushing the cereal grains in mortars and pestles.

From ancient times are descriptions, especially the written evidence that survived, which give an insight with which the physical aspect was connected with the production of basic food flour, but also identify the existential importance for having the singular possession of a capability for the milling of cereals.

So, in the book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 24v6 "No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for that would be taking a life in pledge."

Over the centuries we already have learned from the Roman architect Vitruvius in the early era of the drive wheel described in the technique of grinding with the help of hydro power. This changes little until the 19th Century with the beginning of the industrial era when they became independent, of seasonal conditions with the constant-to-use forms of energy which displaced the water and the wind.

North of the Alps, the knowledge about the use of hydropower for the operation of mills on stream and river flows had generally been known since the 10th Century.

Mills were usually built outside the village. This is certainly not just because of the noisy working wheels, but mainly because many structural arrangements for the water supply to the drive was needed.

It brought with them, that the millers and their families would lead less of a life in the rural community. Since the miller also often was the wealthiest in the locality, he was frequently viewed by the farmers with certain distrust.

That troubled relationship between the millers and farmers may well be the result of the fact that the farmer did heavy physical work with the use of animal traction power, while he was dependent on the work of the miller, which already had a "mechanical plant" that was machine controlled.

(In a proverb from this period, comes the expression: "The miller is a noble child who has the water and wind working for him.")

So it is no surprise that what happened at the mills in and around the person of the miller himself was not always positive as subscribed stories, poems, and fairy tales emerged.

Mills were essential "utilities". The right to the use of hydro power was secured so early by the territorial rulers. They further determined that only a certain number of mills were to be built. This is because the individual miller should have his livelihood - how else can he pay his taxes - on the other hand there should be enough

mills so in poor years when a water shortage exists that enough cereals could be processed.

The limitations of the mill operation in poor water years, or in winter, when freezing of the water inlet to the engine of the mill, had the legal principle of "first come, first served."

Despite the availability of the water from small streams, one finds fewer mills in the area of Markt Roßtal which in some cases even worked up to a few decades ago.

The oldest in the ranks of the mills is found to be in Neuses.

The first news of it from the year 1310 states that it was sold to the Monastery of St. Clare in Nürnberg.

It follows the reference to the Kernmühle on the Bibert is in the book (Salbuch*) of the administrative office of Cadolzburg recorded in the year 1414.

Some of the old mill buildings in the Franconian countryside, including the Buchschwabach have survived the times. The sight of their long-abandoned water wheels, which now over the years have accumulated moss or already have disintegrated, leads one to thoughtfully feel wistful.

One remembers a time long past, often depicted in idyllic, glorified portrayal, but the hard-working miller certainly was less romantic, than the stories, songs, tales and poems that have survived him.

* The Salbuch is a book with lists of ownership rights of the lord of the manor and duties of his subjects. It also includes a record of taxes owed and paid by the subjects.