

Windmill Use on the Farm

During the 1890s, the windmill became popular for the farmers. There was no electric at that time so the windmill would do various jobs around the farm. In the picture on the left, John Doebler with the beard is standing by the buzz platform, on the left side of the picture. His brother-in-law standing on the platforms by the wheel is Arthur Schultz. The children are their families.



My dad, Herb Doebler, told me then his dad (John Doebler) purchased a 14-foot Star windmill on March 31, 1989, from Star Windmill. It was mounted on the west end of the roof of his large barn. This windmill saved him a lot of work or "elbow grease" as he called it. He told me that it used to take him an hour in the morning and evening to pump water for the cattle and horses. With the windmill, all he had to do was shift a little lever and the windmill did the pumping.

He also said that in the spring and fall, many hours were saved plowing. By putting the mill on a belt driven grindstone he could sharpen the plow point very quickly and he could plow for four hours without resting their three horse team. If the point was dull, the horses had to work harder and they had to be rested more often. I asked how old he was and he said around 12-years-old. Dad said he was too small to harness the horses so his dad John would do it, then my dad would plow all day. Child labor? Sure, according to today's standard. In his time you worked the farm to eat and make a living. When there was no work on the farm, bad days and winter, you went to school.

No more using a cross cut saw to make cord wood. (No chain saws in those days.) Put the mill on the buzz saw platform and buzzed the buzz wood (buzz wood is what remains after small limbs have been removed) trees into cord wood for the stoves to heat the house. A cord is wood that has been cut 16" in length, and piled in a row 8' long and 4' high, 4 x 8 x 16.

About 20-25 years later, along came a guy named Tom. He made the mill obsolete. His name was Tom Edison.

Listed below is a copy of the memo John Doebler wrote to his Star dealer.

Flint & Walling Mfg. Co.
Kendallville, Indiana

Dear Sirs:

Allow me to express my entire satisfaction with the 14-Star power mill purchased from your agents, Ameis, Gerlach & Houghton, last fall. I can do much more with my outfit than I expected, and certainly a good deal more than you advocate. The photograph above scarcely does the outfit justice. I have sawed more than one hundred cords of wood (photo shows about fifty cords), ground all my feed, cut my fodder, pumped water, shelled corn, sawed wood, and run a grindstone. One thousand dollars would not buy my outfit if I could not get another. Anybody wishing reference.

Yours truly,
John Doebler