

in the middle of the clearings, supported by immense chimneys of rough stones, which opened in the dwarf interiors fire-places nearly as large as one side of the enclosure. The chinks in the logs were stuffed with moss and clay, and the stones were cemented by nothing stronger than the soil from which they had been gathered. Night and day fires were kept roaring in the hearths; the precincts gradually widened in the snow as trees fell under the axe, and the interior of the cabins began to take on an air of rude comfort as, one by one, rough articles of furniture were knocked together by the light of the fire." \*

The harvest of 1785 was gathered in with the sickle and the scythe, was threshed with flails, and winnowed, and finally the grain was crushed, usually in the hollow scooped in a hardwood stump—a rude kind of mortar. It is related that cannon-balls were frequently suspended by cords from the end of a pole which was balanced like a well-sweep and used to pound the grain into flour, for there were as yet no mills in the country.

Meanwhile the women of the family learned tanning from the Indians, spun thread from the fibres of the basswood bark, and made clothing of deerskin, trousers and smocks and petticoats such as would last for years, even amid the rough usage of their frontier life. Stockings were unknown, for there were no sheep and consequently no wool, but when it became possible to obtain leather, the men made shoes for their families. Handlooms and spinning wheels were also constructed during the winter, by means of which the women would be able to weave into cloth the prospective wool and flax which they hoped to raise. Kitchen utensils were carved out of wood—plates, bowls, spoons and forks, for "necessity is the mother of invention," and the necessity of the newly-arrived colonists was great indeed.

### The First Grist Mills

As settlement took place along lakes and streams, some water-power gradually became available for the grinding of the farmers' grain, and by degrees this method of grinding

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\* Duncan C. Scott: *Life of Sir John Graves Simcoe*, page 62.