

The Ol' Hoosier Farmer — July 20, 1977

By Jim Jones

We been spendin' th' hot days this last week buildin' a cider mill. Figgered th' cider on th' market wuz too high priced and besides we wanted to say we did it ourselves. So last winter we bought th' metal parts an' finally got started on th' wood workin' a few days ago after most of th' crops wuz laid by.

All th' wood in this mill came off th' farm. It's made out of hard maple an' poplar so it should be around fer a long time. Took most of a day jest to lay out an' cut the frame, an' another day to put it all together. Th' pressin' tub took a couple evenin's work since it's made out of some 26 wood slats held together with metal bands which are screwed to th' wood.

Lou mentioned it looked like we wuz turnin' back th' calendar a few years since here we wuz makin' a cider press next to th' ol' model A Ford. He's right, of course. Although we did have th' advantage of electric saws an' drills an' such, th' wood was old, havin' been growin' fer years and which wuz cut off th' place an' sawn in th' ol' sawmill. So our mill has th' look of age to a degree since rough-sawn lumber looks a lot different frum store-bought stuff.

We're anticipatin' a little juice this fall supposin' we can find some apples. Fruit is short due to the spring frosts but we have lined up 2 or 3 trees an' will take advantage of what nature has to offer therewith. If we gets enough cider we may let some go to vinegar since homemade cider vinegar is about th' best fer picklin' etc. Th' good wife come out an' looked at our work an' allowed that thing will probably make tomato juice too. She's right. Probably the fastest tomato juice we will make since over a half bushel will fit th' pressin' tub an' hundreds of pounds of pressure can be brought to bear on it. So a press comes in handy fer lots of things aroun' th' place.

With th' dismal outlook fer corn this year, sweet corn that is, due to seed layin' in th' ground fer weeks before sproutin', we tuk it on ourselves to try to get a late crop. So on the Fourth of July we planted 4 rows of sweet corn. May not get nothin' before frost but we had th' seed an' it didn't take long to plant. Th' stalks will be good fer th' soil regardless if we gets any corn so we can't lose much.

Combined wheat out at Lou's this week an' laid by several bushel fer cereal an' wheat flour this winter. Cellar's startin' to look like a warehouse. But it will taste good this winter when it's cold out an' we can set back an' enjoy th' fruits of our labors.

We wuz blest with a safe an' sane Fourth of July. Spent most of th' time in th' garden and th' rest of it on th' cider mill. Duz a feller good to spend time workin' th' soil an' seein' stuff grow. Th' flower beds are puttin' forth their best show about now an' th' birdhouse gourd vine on th' back fence has several gourds growin'. Th' summer deepens an' fall can't be too fer off. Better git yer barn painted.