

Mill Descriptions

Bark	Bark was stripped from trees (oak and hemlock were often used, but all hardwood trees can be used) for use in tanneries. The bark was soaked to remove the acid tannin and the tannin was used to soak hides. See "Tannery."
Carding	Sheep fleeces were combed between large rollers with teeth. The fleeces were removed and placed onto rollers with finer teeth to create clean, wool fibers. The fibers were then turned into yarn by women using spinning wheels or drop spindles.
Clover	Once the clover went to seed, the seeds were cleaned out and used for cattle feed. Clover was also used for erosion control.
Fulling	A process of softening wool fabric or fibers and can include the felting of wool.
Grist	Using water power, heavy stones would grind grain, such as wheat and corn into flour. Some mills had several sets of stones, each one making the grain finer and finer. The finer the grain, the finer the texture of food stuffs (bread). A grist mill is the first mill the early settlers needed to meet their food needs.
Potash/pearlash	Lye is made from the ashes of broadleaf trees. Boiling down lye produces potash. Carbonate of potash was used in the manufacture of glass, soap and fertilizer. It was also used as a baking aid, similar to baking soda.
Saw	Early saw mills used water from the rivers and brooks to run saw blades. These blades cut trees into lumber which were used in building barns and houses for the early settlers. Saw mills later were run by steam power.
Tannery	Tanneries turned animal hides into leather. Tannin is a liquer made by mixing wood bark (such as oak or hemlock) and water. Large pits were dug and hides were immersed in the tannin for up to 8 weeks.