

A Short History of the Van Patten Mill

James Duane built his first saw mill and grist mill along the Normanskill Creek in Duanesburg where Depot Road crosses this stream. He built a dam to capture the water to turn the water wheel which powered a saw for cutting lumber. Additionally the water wheel turned the grind stones which ground various grains into flour. By the time of the American Revolution, this area of town was actually more populated than almost any other.

At this location there were many buildings and much activity, including farm buildings, ice houses, the mill itself, and two stone quarries. There were two water towers to supply water for the train engines, a depot where hay and straw were loaded for shipment and where coal and feed were delivered by the freight trains.

The mill pond which formed behind the mill dam was a site for picnics along the shore, for boating, swimming and fishing in the summer and for skating and ice harvesting in the winter.

By the middle part of the 20th Century, local mills, powered by water, were no longer used to produce flour and lumber. The Van Patten Mill, named after the family which owned and operated it for many years, fell into disrepair and was torn down in the mid 1960's. A few years later, the dam washed out and the old mill pond disappeared, as well. To remember the importance of the old mill and its role in the growth of Duanesburg, the nearby Town Park was named the Van Patten Mill Park.