

Albion's woolen factory

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Our diagram with this article is taken from the 1857 Village of Albion map. It basically shows Brown Street running north with Caroline Street running east perpendicular to it. At the head of Caroline Street, just outside the village limits back then (dotted line), we see a mill pond and race way created by the West Branch of Sandy Creek. Next to the mill pond we plainly see a woolen factory on the south side and a sawmill on the north side. Note too, an office at the end of Caroline Street and that this property was owned by an A.V. Clark.

In an article written by L.H. Beach which appeared in the Orleans Republican in April 1922, we find the following bit of information on this establishment under the title: Dealing With Albion's Woolen Mill And Early Grist Mills.

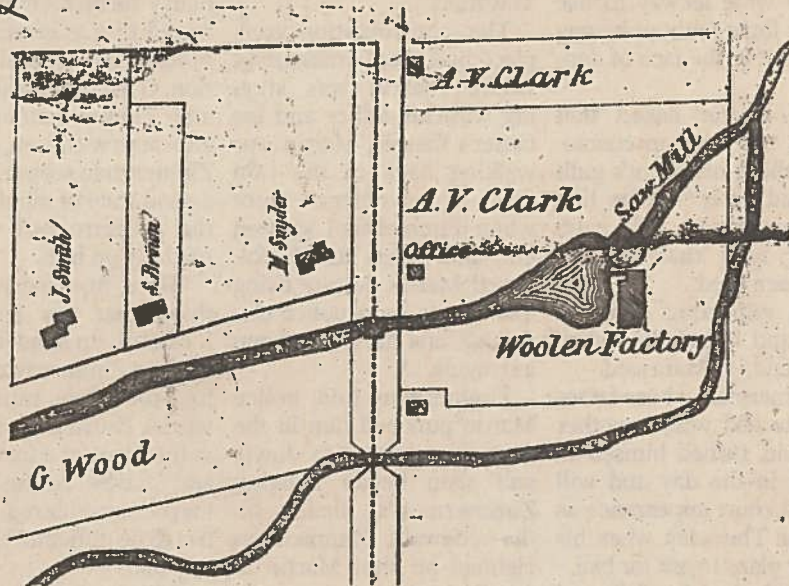
"In the earlier days of Albion's history a woolen mill did business at the east end of Caroline Street where the abandoned grist mill now is. It was built about 1836 by Nathaniel Braley, father of Bryon H. Braley, and was regarded as an essential industry at that time.

"The farmers brought in their wool and the mill produced the popular

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sheep's-gray-cloth-an honest-to-goodness virgin wool fabric such as would cost big money to duplicate in those days.

"In 1852 Mr. Braley traded the mill property with one R.A. Rice for a farm in Michigan and two of his sons went west to work it. Subsequently the ownership changed a number of times, and sometime in the early sixties the mill was burned, Orville Bennett then having title.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"The old mill stood to the west of the present grist mill, and on the south was a saw mill. Later this became a cider mill and was next converted into a grist mill by Jerome Lee. Robert VanStone operated it for a time with profit and the property is now held by a Mr. Miaski.

"The raceway on Caroline Street was constructed to give power to these mills. A few years ago the village bought this raceway, which had become a menace to the health of the locality, and it has been practically all filled in."

As L.H. Beach indicates, the property changed a number of times. A.V.

Clark was one of the subsequent owners.

In the mid-19th Century mills abounded in our country wherever water power could be stored in a mill pond or reservoir for generating purposes. Indeed, many of our present day hamlets were positioned near a water power source.

Here are a few: Shelby Center, Medina, Jeddo, Waterport, Lyndonville, Millville, Clarendon, Holley, Albion, Kendall Mills, Kenyonville, Oak Orchard-on-the-Ridge and Murray, formerly known as Sandy Creek. Flour mills, grist mills and saw mills were essential to getting the area settled in pioneer times.