

Lumber Industry



Logging was the first industry to develop in Colchester, predating both the tanning, acid and bluestone industries by more than half a century.

Van Aken Sawmill—Long Flats



Cash Crop

It was the custom in the early days of Delaware County for farmers to keep only a few summer cows. Farm families might begin lumbering operations soon after haying and then spend the winter in the woods clearing the land and its valuable crop, at the same time making it more available for farm operations. The whole winter's work of cutting, skidding, and hauling logs to the river was focused on the final operation of rafting the logs and running them to market.



Downsville Sawmill

The Township was heavily timbered with pine and hemlock. Early pioneers opened water run sawmills to provide cut lumber for building their homes and farms. The first water run sawmill in Colchester was opened by William Rose in 1790. Sawmills expanded across Delaware County, increasing from 54 in 1820 to over 160 by 1860. A quarter of men were employed in the lumber industry by 1870.

