



LOWER TOWN'S FLOUR MILLS

On the site in front of you in 1860, William Sinclair built the flour mill shown above and circled in the birdseye on right. Lower Town founder Anson Brown had erected the first mill here in 1833. Brown dammed the Huron River upstream to create a millpond and raise the level of the water, which flowed down a millrace high above the river's north bank. This provided power for the

flour mill, a woolen mill, a paper mill, and other Lower Town industries.

Hydro power uses the energy of flowing water to do work. Water falling from a headrace creates enough force to turn the blades of the water wheels in the mill, before flowing out a tailrace to the river below. Main drive shafts transfer power from water wheels to a series of gears, shafts, pulleys, and

belts that operate millstones, sifters, grist elevators, grain cleaners, and other equipment.

Sinclair's earlier mill on this site was reported to have ground 800 barrels of flour weekly. Following the 1841 harvest, it shipped a record 8,112 barrels to New York via the Erie Canal. Under subsequent owners, the mill retained Sinclair's name. In 1894 the Ann Arbor Milling Company renamed it Argo Mills.

Argo shared the fate of earlier mills and was consumed by fire in 1904 (top inset). The owners built a small hydroelectric powerhouse on the site (lower inset) and sold it to Edison in 1905. A railroad spur had serviced the mill as well as the Agricultural Works across Broadway. Edison built their new power station here in 1914.