

HISTORY OF NORTH MAIN & NORTH MILFORD ROAD AREA

Although Milford was first settled in 1832 south of the Huron River, and shortly after that north of the Huron, the area along present North Main Street and North Milford Road, north of Commerce Street, did not develop until the 1840's.

The Upper Mill Pond was developed in 1846 by Phillip Wells and William Bradford Hebbard, creating a new water power and the first industrial park in North Milford Village, and having a strong effect on the increase of manufacturing concerns in later eras. A dam was built on Pettibone Creek opposite the present-day intersection of Detroit Street and North Milford Road, and a raceway that split and went under Summit Street just east of where the railroad is now. It flowed beneath the new mills and emptied into the new mill pond. Traces of these raceways are still to be seen under North Milford Road. Hebbard built the Pettibone Grist Mill in 1846 just below the dam, and a woolen mill on the east side of the Upper Mill Pond in 1850.

In 1854 Ibrook Tower and Edwin Tenny built a woodworking mill on the east side of the mill pond, just south of Summit Street

The Pettibone mill was important to a wide area of farmers for six decades. In pre-railroad days the flour was drawn by team to Detroit where it was sold and the wagons returned with much-needed supplies for Milford merchants. The Upper Mill Pond mills are gone, but their sites are known and have been marked with a metal historical marker.

Phillip Wells, in partnership with Charles Holmes, built a foundry on the east side of North Main Street just south of Detroit Street, facing the flatiron formed by the divergence of North Main Street and the angling road now known as North Milford Road. This foundry was the first metal-working mill in Milford.

The Detroit Autodash Company was built on the west side of the Upper Mill Pond and was succeeded by the Ford Carburetor Plant, still in existence under different ownership.

The present angling road known as North Milford Road did not exist until long after 1872. The mills on the east side of the Upper Mill Pond must have been accessed from North Main Street. The new pocket park area was earlier a part of the "flat-iron" formed when present N. Milford Road was created, diverging at an angle from N. Main Street.

The two blocks of homes on North Main Street between Commerce Street and Summit Street were built after the establishment of the Upper Mill Pond, and were owned, for the most part, by people connected with the mills on the pond. The 1847 brick house at 514 N. Main, the first brick building in Milford Village, was built by George Dunning and occupied by the Schoenemann family who ran a cooper shop just north of the house. The house at 532 N. Main was built in 1852 by Oliver Lamphere, a partner in the Milford Foundry. The 1858 house at 645 N. Main and the 1861 house at 629 N. Main were built by Edwin Tenny, a partner in the planing and woodworking mill. The house at 605 N. Main was built by Daniel Trump, a cooper.