

Milford, Its Location, Manufactures, etc.

To the outside world the little village of Milford is hardly known, it being only one of the many villages which dot our fair state. The village is very pleasantly situated on both sides of the Huron river, which is here a stream of about two or three rods in width, and which furnishes several excellent mill sites. The Pettibone creek also passes through the village and is the outlet of several small lakes which lay to the north of the village. Coming into the village from the south, it appears to be located within an amphitheatre of hills, and the first impression of a stranger is one of surprise at the beauty of its location. The first settlement of the village was on the south side of the river, and for a number of years all the business was transacted on that side. As the water power afforded by the Pettibone creek became improved, the business naturally followed, and at the present time a large share of the business is transacted upon the north side of the Huron. Before the Detroit and Milwaukee railroad was extended beyond Pontiac, Milford was a place of considerable importance as a trading point, and a large amount of business in the mercantile line was transacted. Upon the completion of that road, however, this trade was drawn to other points and from that time until quite recently Milford has made no progress. The great want of the village has been an outlet by which the surplus products of the rich farming country which surrounds it might be carried to market, a want which has retarded its growth and completely paralyzed its energies. This want is now about to be supplied by the Holly Wayne and Monroe railroad which was commences some five or six years since and which has been dragging slowly along until within the past year, when its franchises passed into the hands of the Flint and Pere Marquette company, by whom it has been built, and which in a few weeks will be in active operation.

The village numbers about one thousand inhabitants. It has four churches—Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Catholic. The Methodist church is the oldest in the place, having been built some 27 or 28 years ago. The Presbyterian and Baptist are of more modern date. The Catholic church is a new edifice and being situated upon a high hill is a conspicuous object and can be seen at a great distance. The educational interests of the village are represented by a Union School of which Prof. P.M. Parker is Principal, assisted by a corps of talented and efficient teachers. Under the Principalship of Prof. Parker this school has attained a high reputation and is second to none in the state. The school building occupies a splendid location in the northeast part of the village and overlooking the town, and is surrounded by a pleasant grove of native oaks. The building has recently been enlarged and thoroughly renovated, and the grounds improved by grading and building an ornamental fence on the south and west sides.

With rapid growth of the village which will follow the advent of the locomotive, the present school accommodations will soon be found inadequate to meet the wants of the rising generation, and our citizens will soon be called upon to afford the means to supply the want. A primary school building is even now urgently needed on the south side of the river to accommodate that portion of the village, and in justice to that section it should be built at once.

The literary wants of the village are supplied by two Newspapers, the Milford Times and the Milford Weekly Era, the latter of which has just started. The various branches of mercantile business are also well represented, the village containing six general stores, three drug stores, two hardware stores, one merchant tailor and clothing store, seven grocery stores, one bakery, two millinery stores, two meat shops, one hotel, four wagon shops, four blacksmith shops, two harness shops, two jewelry stores, one photograph gallery, besides six physicians, and one lawyer, Messrs. Tenny and Grieg carry on an extensive business in the manufacture of cabinet ware. They also manufacture sash, doors and blinds. The firm is composed of young men, of great energy and perseverance. It was their misfortune nearly two years ago to lose their factory by fire, entailing upon them severe loss, it being uninsured; but undaunted by their misfortune, they at once commenced rebuilding their factory, and now have a building better suited to their wants, and affording greater facilities for carrying on their large and increasing business. The power by which their machinery is propelled is derived by the chain of small lakes extending some four or five miles north, the water of which is brought to the factory by a race, and which also drives the

machinery of the large Woolen Factory owned by Mr. Geo. Davis. The goods made at this factory have a high reputation and none better are made in the state. The factory has one set of machinery, but the water power is sufficient to drive a much larger amount. The large flouring mill of Hon. J.L. Andrews is located but a few rods from the factory of Mr. Davis. This mill has lately undergone extensive repairs, and has been enlarged. Its milling capacity is about one hundred and twenty barrels per day. The flour manufactured at this mill has a very high reputation. The power which drives the machinery of this mill is obtained by damming the Pettibone creek, which gives a fall here of twenty six feet. Near the above mill is the Hall of Messrs. Tenny and Grieg, who use the lower floor as a furniture ware room. The second story is used as a public Hall, and the third is devoted to the use of the Masonic fraternity. Fifty or sixty rods below the flouring mill, the Pettibone is again dammed, and another mill site is obtained equal in all respects to the one above. The fall here is somewhere near twenty feet, and the power is but partially used to drive the machinery of a saw mill. From this point to where the creek empties into the Huron, the fall is several feet, and would afford another site for manufacturing purposes. The Pettibone creek being the outlet of several small lakes which are fed by springs, is not affected by drouths, and the volume of water is constant and uniform.

At the point where Main street crosses the Huron, the river is raised by a dam, and the power gained is used by the Wells Brothers to drive the machinery of their Foundry. A large amount of work is turned out at this place during the year. Castings of various kinds are here furnished, suited to the wants of the farming community. They also manufacture plows in large numbers, which find a ready sale in the surrounding country. The Wells Bros. also manufacture the celebrated Vowles cultivator, a large number of which are made and sold at this establishment. These cultivators have an extended reputation and are rapidly succeeding all others. Some distance below the foundry of Wells bros. is located the extensive Flouring mill and Woolen factory of Mr. Jacob Peters. The mill has been remodelled and renovated throughout within the last two years, and is now one of the finest mills in this part of the state. The flour made at this mill is of the best quality and has a high reputation, always bringing the highest market price. The flouring capacity of the mill is over one hundred barrels a day. A few rods north of the mill stands the woolen factory. Here a large business is done in carding and spinning for the farmers of the surrounding country. A large amount of wool is also yearly made up into cloth which finds a ready sale. A short distance below the mill and factory of Mr. Peters is another mill site equal in all respects to that which drives the machinery of the mill and factory and which at present is entirely unimproved. On the north side of the river and near the Railroad crossing is located the Pump Factory of Mr. A. Phillips who makes an endless quantity of pumps and water drawers of various kinds, which find market in the surrounding country. A few rods north is also located the factory of Mr. I. Tower, who has conferred a lasting benefit upon the wives and daughters of Oakland County by introducing and manufacturing for their use the "Ladies Friend" washing machine, designed to relieve them of the hard work and drudgery of washing day. That he has succeeded in doing so, the large number of these useful machines which he has disposed of fully attests.

Milford also does quite a large business in the manufacture of farm wagons, carriages, etc. At P.C. Sloughter's shop buggies and light wagons are mostly made and the large number turned out and disposed of at this shop is the best guarantee of the quality of the work. The shop of Mr. Joseph Vowles is located on Commerce st. where all kinds of light and heavy farm wagons are made. Mr. Vowles is also inventor and proprietor of the Celebrated Vowles Cultivator, which he also manufactures, and if the number of these machines sold is any criterion to judge by they must be superceding the use of all other cultivators. The Stephens brothers are also engaged in the business of wagon making and repairing, their shop being on Liberty street.

A. Wakelee, on the south side of the river also carries on this branch of business, turning out all kinds of work in his line. We have thus given a sketch of the business and manufactures of Milford, and may have inadvertantly omitted some. That our village is destined to be a place of considerable importance, as a manufacturing point, does not admit of a doubt. With the splendid water power a portion only of which is improved and the magnificent farming country which surrounds, the future of our beautiful village cannot but be a bright and prosperous one.

(There follows here a glowing description designed to attract people to settle in Milford, which I have not copied.)