

Mrs. Margaret Hoisington

“We do not profess to remember one hundred years, but it seems probable that we are nearing the centennial of the first settlement in this town, for I do remember distinctly hearing my father say that in 1833 when he xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx a boy of 12 years there were at least a dozen families settled along the Huron river and in the confines of this town; that these families were permanently settled; that they were clearing the land, making permanent homes and good settlers. They had a saw mill on the river about two miles southwest from here where they were sawing oak lumber for building purposes. Although they didn't have a grist mill or a post office, Mr. Luman Fuller had a team of horses and a wagon which he drove to Detroit for supplies.

When it was necessary for the settlers to go to mill they had to go to Ann Arbor with their ox teams, which most of them had, and it required the better part of three days to go and return. Oxen are not good roadsters. As for mail, they didn't expect any very often, but if they wanted it they must call for it when they got it and the post office was ten miles away. One family we heard of was ten miles away from the post office at Walled Lake. On one occasion they grew so anxious for news from their former home that they sent their boy 14 years xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx to Walled lake to see if there was a letter. There was. It had been there for two weeks. But there was 25c postage due on it, and as he had not a cent with him he had to return home without the letter. And still more, it was three weeks longer before the family could raise that 25c and send the boy back after it.

We were told of this same family that one season they received a present from friends—a barrel full of dried apples from New York, and to be divided between two families. That was a windfall. It happened in the fall and during the following winter every one who heard of it came to visit them. We suppose they had applesauce for dinner, perhaps venison and wild turkey, for there was plenty of that to be had if only you had a gun and could use it. Occasionally there were great flocks of pigeons and wild geese, and occasionally a bear. But changes in a few years were very great. Within twenty years settlers kept coming; the forest disappeared, and the deer and bear with it, also the wild turkey and geese.

Churches and school houses came; so did the citizens, and orchards, good buildings. These improvements came and in the fifties there was a village in this place. South Milford grew first, and there were three bridges across the strip of marsh and covered with dirt sufficiently to make a passable road, where later Dr. Mowry planted the willows—little willow switches pushed endwise into the marshy ground and left to grow as he said he hoped they would, into an ornament to the street and a memorial for him.