

Milford Times, 1932

From Potts Family History

Marshall Potts of Highland is a grandson of the William Potts who with his oldest son came here in '32, the mother and four children following in 1833. He remembers the old grist mill east of the depot [Armstrong flouring mill, 1839] and said of it at the pioneer banquet:

“There was a large dam on the river and this used to cause the river to overflow over the entire low ground as far back as Commerce Lake. In the spring of the year the low land would be a regular ocean. During the summer, when the rain fall was not so great, there was less water coming into the Huron river. The water would recede and then all the low land up the river would be nothing but a mud sea. It was impossible to even walk on it. Everyone within two or three miles of the Huron river would have the fever and ague every year just as regularly as came the months of July and August. I remember quite well when that dam was removed. On account of the sickness which it caused, the farmers used to beg of the man owning the mill to let the water go in the spring so there wouldn't be so much stench from the mud. He refused and finally the farmers thought they had endured that long enough. They came down and had a bee and took out his dam for him. He was away and when he came back home he had a mill, but it wasn't worth a dam!

The old mill stood there for several years after the dam was xxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxx xxxxxx. Any of you going on the diagonal road from the depot look in the river bank on the north side of the bridge you will see the remains of the old dam in the river bed today.

All of these pioneers had to experience the hardships and make the sacrifices related. My father's people had to go to Walled Lake for their mail. The only way was to take the old Indian trail across the country eight miles. And they didn't have any daily paper.

The first grain that my grandfather raised for wheat was obliged to be pounded out. Not having any fanning mill, it was necessary to raise the grain in the air and let the wind blow the chaff out of it. Later they loaded it in the wagon and went to Birmingham to the mill. It required a week before they could go there and back—a day to get there, and then they were often obliged to wait their turn, so they would stay over night, sleep in the mill, board with the miller and turn the oxen loose to feed. Then they would return in two or three days.”