Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

1939

TODAY

What's the Story?
Restoration Plan
Technically Speaking
Other Restorations
Automotive World

Milford Powerhouse

Historical Society and Village Partner to Restore Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

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Preservation Award for Powerhouse

Milford Historical Society's preservation work on the Pettibone Hydroelectric Station was recognized by Preservation Wayne, Detroit's oldest and largest architectural preservation organization, at their 2008 honor award dinner at Detroit's Gem Theatre.
Honored with a 'Regional Neighbors,' award, the Historical Society joined a distinguished list of honorees representing important preservation work including Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Film Theater, Detroit Athletic Club, New Center Council, Indian Village Homeowners Association, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation and Detroit's Book Cadillac, among others. For a full listing of the honorees and more information on Preservation Wayne, go to www.preservationwayne.org .

Preserving and Restoring the Powerhouse

Whether you're an architect, an engineer, a history buff, a factory worker, or kid who likes to watch water flow over a dam, you will want to visit the Powerhouse . . . and then you'll understand why the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station is becoming Milford's most important historical site.

The names Henry Ford (who built it) and Albert Kahn (the architect) certainly command attention. The potential to produce electricity in this renewable energy driven world is another reason. The impact the auto industry has had on all of us in Michigan is yet another.

The Milford Historical Society, through the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station Restoration subcommittee, acts as agent for the Village of Milford which owns the building. The goal goes beyond saving an old building from the wrecking ball. Phase I of the project, exterior restoration, was completed in 2005. Interior restoration, site work , producing hydroelectric power and telling the fascinating story of Henry Ford's "Village Industry" in Milford are all part of the committee's work toward optimal use of this resource for the community.

The Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station was designed by Albert Kahn
and built by Henry Ford in 1939.
Over time the station became known as Milford 's Powerhouse.

Completed in 1939 | State of disrepair 2004 | Current Condition

Partner Sites

Milford Historical Society

MotorCities Auto National Heritage Area

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1939

TODAY

What's the Story?

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Welcome to the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

(or what we call around here, the Powerhouse)

Milford's Powerhouse is the visible icon in the graceful Art Deco Style that reminds us there is a story to tell. Our little Powerhouse is part of a much bigger story about the origins of the world's automotive center and its impact on the world.

Welcome to a journey back in time that carries us into the future.

Henry Ford changed the world some 100 years ago, not because he built cars, but because he invented and refined a system the world had never seen before: the assembly line. This invention brought about an Industrial Revolution that impacted the world, dramatically changing the way things were manufactured, as well as the social and economic structure of society.

Milford Powerhouse

Why Milford?

Tranquil Hubbell Pond (at this point you would be looking at the Lower Mill Pond) before you and the sound of the water rushing underfoot remind us of how important water power has been in Milford's history. Milford boasted of its water powers since the early 1800's. Elizur and Stanley Ruggle built their primitive saw mill at the base of the Huron River, near the south end of Main Street. In the following years, a grist mill, a woolen mill, a tanner and a cooper shop were built along Milford's waterways. All in all, Milford soon had 14 mills. (There is an orientation marker on Main Street at Center Street Park downtown with a locator map of these mills.)

The Pettibone Mill on this site was originally built by W. E. Hubbard in 1846 as a flour mill. (There is a marker outside the Powerhouse describing it's history.) This site was the sole survivor of the mills in Milford's early history and Frank Hubbell was the last owner of the mill.

In 1892, some 60 years after settlement, a hydroelectric plant was built near the bridge on Peters Road at the east end of the present day Hubbell Pond. (You can access Peter's Road just west of here from Commerce Road and see another historic mill marker.) In the Peter's Mill, Joseph Wellman installed a 500 volt Dynamo for supplying electric current to the Wells Cultivator plant on the upper mill pond. Milford's enterprising citizen, Frank Hubbell conceived of the idea of using the surplus current for lighting the local stores in the evenings. and using the river's waterpower to electrify Milford's street lamps, long before Detroit Edison found its way to Milford.

And some 25 years later it was Frank Hubbell who became friends with and brought Henry Ford to Milford.

What Interested Henry Ford?

In the early 1900's, the automotive industry was young and the early auto barons were bold, innovative men. Henry Ford was among the boldest! Between 1920 and 1940, Henry Ford built 21 Village Industries where parts and supplies were manufactured for the main production line at the Rouge Plant in Dearborn. Ford searched southeast Michigan for early millponds, in some cases restoring surviving mills and in others, building new to serve his purposes. All 21 sites Mr. Ford chose were within a 60 mile radius of Dearborn. Ford used his 'Mill in a Village' concept in response to the social and economic changes brought on by the rapidly growing automotive industry in Michigan and the worldwide Industrial Revolution. This 'experiment' led to the development of small industrial centers in these farming villages.

In March of 1935, Ford Motor Company acquired the rights to the water power of the Pettibone Creek and Huron River, flowage rights of Pettibone Creek and Moore Lake and lowlands between, as well as some Village properties and a considerable amount of farmland. On Main Street just north of Commerce there is another Auto Heritage marker at the Upper Mill Pond with an aerial view map illustrating this water way connection and including the factory we will talk about next. It was this carburetor plant that required the electricity generated here.

The Carburetor Plant

In January of 1938, Ford began construction of his 12th Village Industry, Milford's Carburetor Plant. The building, also designed in the distinctive Art Deco style by Albert Kahn, was a light colored one story structure that measured 60 by 200 feet. It was lit during the day by sunlight diffused through its tall, wide windows. Unique for its time, it was air conditioned throughout. The building cost about $600,000 to build. Coming at the end of the Great Depression, this was a significant investment in Milford. The factory began production in November 1938. The first day's output was 800 units and only about 80 men were employed. The only machines that were working that first day were the punch presses and the assembly line. (The manufacturing equipment in the plant was new and much of it was of special Ford design. The entire production line was first set up and tested in the Rouge Plant while the Milford Plant was being built. Then the entire line was moved from Dearborn to Milford.)

One year later, the plant was at full production. It employed about 350 men and women, over three shifts. The plant had added a complete tool room, a foundry and a heat treatment department.

Hey! What about the Power Plant?

Henry Ford was a man of many interests. He was especially interested in the production of electricity. With the new year, 1939, Ford was ready to begin construction of the two power plants that would generate electricity for his carburetor factory. The larger Huron River plant was constructed further southwest of the plant. It was the first to be completed using a typical river dam. This power plant was put into operation first. The building has been razed but you can access the site and another marker from the hike/bike trail off GM Road just west of South Milford Road.

The Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station was put into operation two weeks later. However, it was to be a showcase and it needed a good deal more engineering. The site of the original mill would not have enough water flow to consistently generate electricity. So, Ford used his ingenuity to create a water flow to meet his needs.

So How Did It Work?

Ford took full advantage of his new rights for Moore's Lake and the Pettibone Creek. He created a flume (4 foot in diameter steel pipe) which was buried underground and laid across the Upper and Lower Mill Pond beds, traveling 1 and 1/3 miles from Moore's Lake to this Powerhouse on

The Building

Albert Kan was a German architect who is sometimes referred to as the 'architect of Detroit' and was known as an innovative industrial designer. He had a genius for elegance in architecture. He is best remembered for his design of the Ford Rouge, Highland Park and

Liberty Street. He took advantage of the topography and also built a dam at Moore's Lake, creating a 50 foot headwater the force of which when released would power the generators at the Powerhouse.

Once inside the Powerhouse, the 48 inch diameter pipe was split to feed the water to the two hydraulic turbines in the basement. A shaft then connected each turbine to a generator located directly above on the main level. This power from the turbines comes in the form of mechanical energy and the generator's job is to turn that power into usable electricity. The generator panels were mounted on a large pully system (above your heads you can see the steel beams the panels were mounted on.) Panels could be moved in and out of use for repairs and for increased power generation. The two generators were rated at 75 and 62.5 KVA. When synchronized with the Huron River plant, the power was distributed to the carburetor plant via underground cables that ran across the lower mill pond.

The large tank here is 13 feet in diameter and 22 feet high. It stands 42 feet from the ground to the top. The tank is connected to the flume in the basement and acted as a surge suppressor to absorb the shock of the moving water when the turbine gates were closed. The top of this tank is exactly the same height as the water level established at Moore's Lake, thus taking advantage of water's unique property of reaching its own equilibrium and cutting off any further surges of water from the lake. Both hydroelectric plants could be operated from a control room in the carburetor factory. They could be operated independently or together. Their electricity arrived at the plant to the tune of 4600 volts. It was directed to a third powerhouse inside the carburetor factory where it was reduced to 220 volts and fed into the machinery. The Carburetor Plant was later equipped with a 375 horsepower steam engine for generating electricity in the event water levels dropped too low.

Willow Run Plants and the Gem Theater and General Motors Building in Detroit. So Henry Ford commissioned Kahn to design this building. Kahn had to keep in mind Henry Ford's vision of an attractive building, in which the machinery inside could be visible, and that would complement the area surrounding it.

The building itself is octagonal in shape and small in size, only about 39 by 24 feet. Besides the wide glass windows on the main floor, there were Pewabic Pottery tiles lining the inside walls. The tower was made attractive by the addition of 2 panels of glass block running up each side. Rows of Elm trees were planted along both sides of Liberty Street and the grounds were landscaped. Albert Kahn's design stood out as unique in Milford, with its sleek design, glass block, curved wings and large window openings, all elements of the Art Deco style. At the time, Milford's streets were lined with Italianate designed buildings, with their ornate cornices, window caps and elaborate trim.

The large glass windows were an integral part of Ford's vision. He wanted the public to see the machinery at work. While there was a full time maintenance man at the plant all the time it was operating, he would only go inside when switching or repairs were needed. The noise of the rushing water underneath, the turning of the turbines and the shafts, was deafening.

The Restoration

Several years after the death of Henry Ford, Ford Motor Company choose to end the Village Industries experiment. In 1953, the powerhouses were decommissioned . The carburetor factory was shut down and production of the carburetor was moved to Rawsonville.

The Huron River Hydroelectric Station was demolished in 1977. The carburetor factory was razed in 2001. There remained only one building left of Milford's part in the Village Industry experiment.

The Village acquired the property in 1970, but with a deed restriction which required it to be used for park or recreational purposes only.

Time was not kind to this beautiful building, and between the weather and vandalism, the Powerhouse became an eyesore and liability to the Village.

In 1999, the Village Council set aside $60,000 to demolish the building. The Milford Historical Society stepped up to the plate, and established the Powerhouse Restoration Committee. They were able to use the demolition money, in addition to a $25,000 Americana Foundation Grant, to hire an historic architect to guide them in the planning process and restoration of the building. The Michigan Department of Transportation recognized the importance of this building with the largest funding grant. Years later, with the help of the many donors you see listed here, the restoration work was completed.

As the Powerhouse sits in the Village's National Historic District, all restoration work had to conform to the historic standards. So, as the building now stands, the outside appears as it did when the Powerhouse was put into use in November of 1939.

So What Made the Village Industry in Milford so Unique?

- The factory employed about 350 men from the surrounding farms. Besides making a record setting $6 an hour, a side benefit to being steadily employed was that the workers had the opportunity to cultivate gardens. Two of the workers continued to work their 200 and 400 acre farms while working full time!
- Built at the end of our country's Great Depression, steady work was welcomed. Milford High School graduates, both men and women, were first in line to secure a job at the carburetor factory. One June, the Carburetor Factory employed every male graduate of Milford High School that year.
- The plant produced the entire Ford carburetor which consisted of 150 parts. It was the only plant in the U.S. which was independent and in a position to make and assemble an entire product.
- The end of the assembly line featured testing equipment which measured the efficiency of the parts as they worked with each other and how the carburetor would function in the entire variety of conditions which it would meet in a Ford engine. And thus was created Quality Control!
- The carburetor plant had to be run steadily to supply the Rouge plant and the assembly line branches. But there were a few operations that produced parts faster than the assembly lines could use them. Ford used his ingenuity once again. With careful coordination, it was possible to continue some operations in manufacturing parts for other Village Industries and the Rouge plant. The spring winding machine that produced springs for the carburetor was also used to wind springs for cigar lighters. And the iron foundry was kept busy with the production of small bearings for the Rouge plant.

Exterior and Interior Renovation

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What's the Story?
Restoration Plan
- **Exterior**
- Interior
- Site Work
- Hydro Repair
- Interpretation

Technically Speaking
Other Restorations
Automotive World

Milford Powerhouse

Exterior Renovation Complete

The 1939 Art Deco structure has undergone extensive brick repair, asbestos abatement, window flashing repair, massive new window and sill installation, new glass block and power washing of the entire exterior.

In 2005 with support from the community, private and government grants, Phase I was completed with the $246,000 exterior restoration of the building to U.S. Department of Interior Standards for Restoration and Preservation. No longer a bricked-up, graffiti marred façade, the Powerhouse now stands as a distinctive reminder of Henry Ford's Village Industry and his association with the renown architect, Albert Kahn. It will be a focal point of pride in Milford's Central Park and offer an opportunity to tell the little known story about automotive history in a rural community.

"The success of the project to this point was only possible because of a three-way partnership and a broad base of community support," explains Ann Barnette, DDA Director. "The partners, Village of Milford (owner of the building), the Milford Historical Society and Milford's DDA shared the vision that gave the project momentum," she adds. From that base, the financial support to complete Phase I-Exterior Renovation came in many forms, from a $200,000+ grant to the children and families who donated $40 each to "Paint- a- Tile" for the Powerhouse.

Exterior Restoration Pictures

04-29-05NewWork011

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1939

TODAY

Interior

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Milford Powerhouse

Interior Renovation Planned

Interior restoration, has also been started. To date a new quarry-tile floor has been installed and observation windows on the floor as well as a new guardrail on the stairwell and some temporary electrical lighting. We are seeking funds (or in-kind donations) for the following:

Interior Restoration & Site Work

Handrail & Guardrail at Main Stair (Completed)	$5,200
Handrail & Guardrail in Basement **(Unfunded)**	$5,000
Electrical Service & Interior Electrical Work **(Unfunded)**	$33,000
Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning **(Unfunded)**	$15,000
Plumbing **(Unfunded)**	$10,000
Toilet Room Construction **(Unfunded)**	$10,000
Painting **(Unfunded)**	$5,000
Trash Rack at Intake Structure **(Unfunded)**	$10,000
Turbine & Piping Repairs **(Unfunded)**	$11,000
Water & Sewer Service **(Unfunded)**	$40,000
Natural Gas Service **(Unfunded)**	$5,000
Site Work **(Unfunded)**	$10,000

Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

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Site Work

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Milford Powerhouse

Site improvements

Secured

- Concrete removal & grading
- Concrete sidewalks
- Irrigation system
- Plantings (some)
- Site lighting

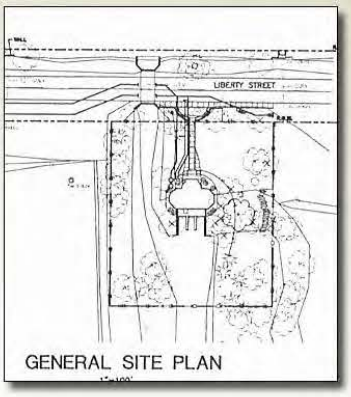
Unsecured

- Grindstone stairs
- Brick paving

Future

- Boulder retaining wall
- Benches

Site Virtual Tour from December 2006



PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1939

Preservation of The Milford Powerhouse

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Milford Powerhouse

Restoring the Milford Powerhouse

The project includes several phases:

- exterior and interior restoration;
- site improvements;
- interpretation of Milford's place in early automotive history; and
- hydroelectric power generation.

Exterior restoration was completed in 2006, funded by local, state and national donors (for a list of donors, see How to Help on this site). The work was completed to U.S. Department of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation: all materials duplicate the original as closely as possible. The existing asbestos was abated, window flashing repaired, new windows, sills and glass block installed, and extensive brick work done. As part of this phase, a new quarry-tile floor and observation windows were installed where the origianl generators stood .

Interior restoration has begun with the installation of new iron stairwell railing and hand rail . At this point the directive from Milford Village Council (the Village owns the Powerhouse building) is to ready the building for a tenant whose business is compatible with parks and recreation zoning requirements.

A professional plan for site improvements has been rendered that will compliment the simplicity and stature of the building and provide a sponsor supported brick signature walk to the building.

Interpretation of the building's use and place in history, locally and regionally, is an important aspect of preserving the building. Interpretive signage, map/brochures, guided tours and other materials are being developed to tell the many stories related to the building: Henry Ford's Village Industries, Milford workers, the Art Deco architectural style and hydroelectric power generation.

To again be able to produce electricity where Henry Ford first demonstrated the possibilies of renewable energy is a goal that is timely as well as economically important. To this end a hydroelectric feasibility study has been done and experts in the field are working with the committee to realize this goal.

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

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How the Hydroelectric Station Works

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Milford Powerhouse

Station Operation

All of Henry Ford's Village Industries were built where water power existed and had been used by early settlers. Ford improved the waterpowers in each case, but Milford's site was unique. Here a flume or penstock (4-foot diameter steel pipe) was buried under ground and laid across the Upper and Lower Mill Pond beds, traveling almost 2/3 of a mile to the hydroelectric plant on Liberty Street. Ford took advantage of the topography and also built a dam on Moor Lake, creating the 50-foot headwater that powered the generators.

Once inside the building, the 48 inch diameter pipe is split to feed two hydraulic turbines in the basement. A shaft then connected each turbine to a generator located directly above on the main level. The two generators were rated at 75 and 62.5 KVA. When synchronized with the other hydro plant Ford built on the Huron river, the power was distributed to the manufacturing plant via underground cables across the lower mill pond. Both hydroelectric stations could be operated from the control room in the manufacturing plant.

The large tank in the tower of the Pettibone station is connected to the flume in the basement and acted as a surge suppressor to absorb the shock of the moving water when the turbine gates closed.

The Pettibone station was decommissioned around 1953 and acquired by the Village of Milford in 1970. Since it's retirement, much of the original equipment has been removed or vandalized. Presently there is water flowing through the flume and turbine casings from Moor Lake and is discharged into the creek below the station.

Other Restoration Projects

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Milford Powerhouse

Power Plant, Brooklyn, MI

Below are a few restoration pictures from a power plant in Brooklyn, Michigan.

This plant was also built by Henry Ford in 1939 where 80 workers were employed to produce car horns. The similarity between this building's form and design and Milford's Powerhouse is striking.

The key source of power at the Brooklyn plant was hydropower from the nearby dam on the Raisin River. After years of disuse, the building's electrical generating system was restored by a private owner over several years.

The generator is similar to the two generators that were once housed at the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station in Milford, just a little smaller.

The governor controls the speed (water flow) of the turbine/generator.

Restoration Photos

Henry Ford Powerhouse Plant, Brooklyn MI

Det Freep, 11.18.07

Volunteer Generates Electricity in Restored Mills

In 2006 Bill Stockausen joined the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station Restoration Committee when a Milford resident and friend asked him to come and see what we were up to. In fact, Bill had visited the Powerhouse in the 70's when he and his family were looking to buy a historic mill.

Ultimately, they bought another building, an 1854 historic relic in Bellevue, Michigan, for $3,000. They restored the building and converted it to hydroelectric power generation.
http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071118/CFP02/711180387

And now it's on to the next . . . and the next after that. With the worldwide interest in green energy growing, their timing is perfect. The Stockhausens are looking for another restoration project . . . to put their technical knowledge, past experience and passion to work demonstrating the feasibility and benefits of hydroelectric power generation. **http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071118/CFP02/711180492**

We are very fortunate to have Bill on our team as we explore the possibility of again producing electricity at Milford's historic plant.

$29.95

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1939

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Automotive World

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Milford Powerhouse

MotorCities - All Things Automotive

This site is as exciting as the organization itself: **http://motorcities.org**
Auto history, auto racing, auto tours and cruises. Find where it is happening in Michigan.
MotorCities National Heritage Area is an affiliate of the National Park Service.

Their Mission: MotorCities-ANHA is dedicated to preserving, interpreting and promoting the region's rich automotive and labor heritage in ways that are meaningful and relevant to contemporary society. We work in partnership with others to provide educational opportunities to our citizens, increase tourism, encourage economic development and improve the quality of life in our region.

Vision Statement: MotorCities-ANHA will help our citizens appreciate how the automobile changed Michigan, the nation and the world – making this rich heritage a source of pride for our communities and a positive influence on our region's future.

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1939

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Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station's Place in History

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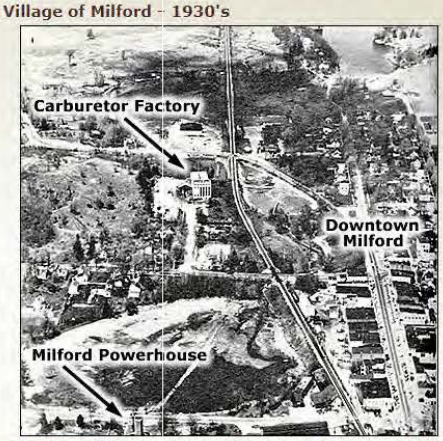
Village Industries
Significant Architecture
Milford Times Articles

Milford Powerhouse

Aerial View of Village of Milford - 1930's



Milford's Upper Mill Pond, created by a dam in 1845, became the site of the 12th Ford Village Industry when the Ford Carburetor Factory was built in 1938.

Milford's Powerhouse, historically the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station, is one of only a few buildings in southeast Michigan that remains from this interesting experiment. The striking silhouette of this restored Art Deco building will stand to tell an important story of local and regional history.

The Powerhouse project is associated with the National Auto Heritage, which was created by an act by the U.S. Congress in 1998. Milford's Powerhouse is part of the National Heritage mission to preserve and interpret the region's automotive heritage as well as encourage tourism to southeast Michigan.

PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

Village Industries

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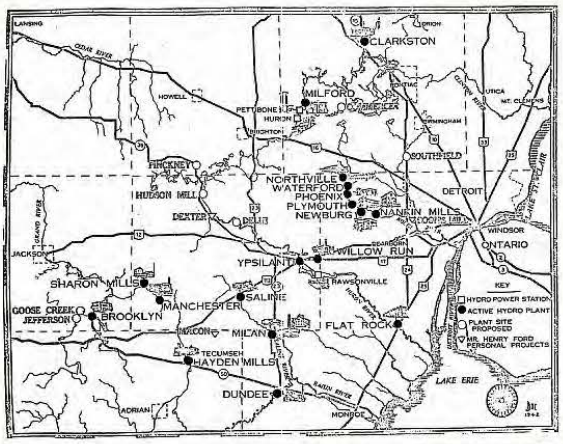
Milford Powerhouse

Henry Ford (1863 - 1947): A Visionary

In the early 1900's the automotive industry was young and the early auto barons were bold, innovative men. One of Henry Ford's pioneering ideas was the coexistance of technology, modern production and farming. Workers would have "one foot in agriculture,,,and the other in industry."

Ford began developing his vision by creating "Village Industries." He chose sites in southeast Michigan that included Milan, Brooklyn, Saline, Northville, Macon and Milford where early waterpowers still existed. He restored existing historic mills or cnostructed modern buildings, creating small industrial complexes in these rural settings.



Milford's Upper Mill Pond, created by an early 1845 dam, became the site of the 12th Village Industry when the Ford Carburetor Factory was built in 1938. Albert Kahn designed the factory and two hydroelectric stations, one on the Huron River and one on Pettibone Creek to supply the factory with power. The Milford Powerhouse (Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station) is the sole survivor of the three buildings and five dams that comprised Milford's village industry. The larger Huron River Hydroelectric Station was demolished in 1997; the carburetor factory was razed in 2001.

"Milford's Powerhouse," observes Prof. David L. Lewis of the University of Michigan, "is one of the most distinctive of Ford's village industries buildings, located in a most picturesque setting. Ford history enthusiasts are delighted to learn that is to be restored!"

The Powerhouse has an important story to tell about Milford's place in the early development of the auto industry, an industry that changed the world.

Flat Rock Plant, 1922

Manufacturing plants in Flat Rock and Ypsilanti , Michigan, though built during the same time period, are not generally considered to be one of the 19 Ford Village Industries: ". . .they reflect hybrid characteristics, combining traits of the huge Rouge Plant complex and the newer village sites. . . Ironically, Ford Motor Company officials themselves could not decide whether or not these were truly Village Industries" (from "Henry Ford and Field and Factory," by John Robert Mullin from the collections of Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Research Center).

As in Milford, the Flat Rock **Ford Motor Company Lamp Factory**, depended on a newly built dam for hydroelectric power and was a significant source of employment for locals and income to the village. Following is a link to an article with historical perspective on the Flat Rock plant built in 1922:

1939

TODAY

Village Industries
Significant Architecture
Milford Times Articles

Milford Powerhouse

Significant Architecture

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Albert Kahn (1869-1942) Made His Mark on This World.

The architecture on Milford's Main Street is classic late 1800's, from a time when the town was booming. The popular style of the day, Italianate, included ornate cornices, window caps and elaborate trim. By 1939 when the Powerhouse was built, architectural styles had changed dramatically. Modern designs were more streamlined and new building materials were available.

Albert Kahn's work stands out as unique in Milford with it's sleek design, glass block, curved "wings" and large window openings, elements of the Art Deco style. Kahn was an innovative and award winning industrial designer. The Powerhouse is an example of his genius for elegance in architecture and Milford's most prominent and significant example of the Art Deco style.

Currently (2007) there are only three other remaining Art Deco buildings in Milford, not so easily recognizable.
Can you find them?

Albert Kahn also designed the Ford Carburetor Factory on Milford's Upper Mill Pond and another hydroelectric station on the Huron River. They have both been demolished. Ford's 12th Village Industry was comprised of these two buildings plus the Powerhouse which now stands as a reminder of Henry Ford's influence on this small farming community.

So respected by the Fords, Albert Kahn was commissioned to also design Ford's huge Highland Park, Rouge and Willow Run plants, as well as the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shore, the Fisher and General Motors Buildings in Detroit and some notable University of Michigan buildings.

Village Industries
Significant Architecture
Milford Times Articles

Milford Powerhouse

Milford Times Articles

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Hometown Coverage of Henry Ford's 12th Village Industry

The excitement caused by the auto baron's presence in Milford is evident in the detailed reporting of his every move as Henry Ford builds his 12th Village Industry in Milford.
This section, still under construction, presents The Milford Times articles as they record the important event in Milford's history.

Milford Times Articles

1937

4-23-1937 Razing Pettibone Creek Plants

4-30-1937 Factory Site Staked

6-11-1937 Town Waits for Ford Start

6-25-1937 Plant to Make Carburetors

7-23-1937 Town Waits

8-6-1937 Steam Shovel Arrives

8-13-1937 Clearing of Factory Site

8-20-1937 (1) Photo

8-20-1937 (2) Factory Site Clearing Continues

9-3-1937 Old Concrete

9-10-1937 Cleanup Nearing End

9-10-1937 (1) Developing Waterpower Fulfills Dream

9-10-1937 (2) Continued from above

9-10-1937 (3) Continued from above

9-24-1937 Factory Site Ready

10-8-1937 Contract Let for Plant

10-15-1937 (1) Factory Construction Started

10-15-1937 (2) Continued from above

10-22-1937 Plant Basement Excavated

11-5-1937 Waiting for Ford Building

11-12-1937 Building West Liberty Street

11-12-1937 Building Activities

11-19-1937 Union Labor Required

11-19-1937 Continued from above

11-26-1937 Local Men Back on Job

12-3-1937 Basement Walls Up

12-24-1937 Project Idle

12-31-1937 Contract Let for Moore's Lake Dam

12-31-1937 Continued from above

1938

Click here for "Milford Times" articles from 1938 (on the Milford Historical Society website for now)

12-16-1938 Work Begins on Pettibone Station (Flume location)

1939

1-6-1939 Jerome Utley Co. of Detroit Ready to Begin Construction

1-13-1939 Work to Start Monday on Huron Power Station

1-27-1939 Front Page: "Milford Waters"

1-27-1939 Photos

1-27-1939 Article continues

2-3-1939 "...Publicity...Milford, 12th Village Industry"

2-24-1939 Specifications Here for 2 New Spillways

3-17-1939 Ford Power Plant Construction Moves

3-17-1939 Huron Dam Construction Photo

5-5-1939 Pouring Cement for Huron River Spillway

5-26-1939 Landscaping Plans Beautify

6-9-1939 Power Plant Brick Work; Foundry Factory

6-23-1939 Huron Power Station Taking Shape - Photo

6-23-1939 Huron Power Station Taking Shape

7-7-1939 Pettibone Station "Surge Tank"

7-14-1939 Huron River Plant Near Completion

7-28-1939 Near Finish on Huron Plant

8-4-1939 Miscellaneous Work

8-11-1939 Miscellaneous Work

8-25-1939 90 Man Lay-off

9-8-1939 Power Plant Near Completion

10-6-1939 "Ford News" Article Quoted

10-13-1939 Huron River & Pettibone Plants Photos

10-13-1939 Huron River Plant Producing Electricity

10-27-1939 Lower Mill Pond Refilled

11-24-1939 The Factory, One Year Later - Output, Operations

12-1-1939 Henry Ford Visits

1940

3-22-1940 Employee Age Persentages

Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

How You Can Help

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Milford Powerhouse

Saving a local landmark from "demolition by neglect" depends on help from many sources.

- Preservation grants
- Local business support
- Community support

By utilizing these three sources of financial revenue and professional skill we have completed Phase I of the project.

Now it's time to chip away at the rest of the plan.

You can be a part of Milford's history and Restoration of the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station Project in a number of ways:

MAKE A DONATION **BUY A BRICK** **BECOME A MEMBER**

Partners in the Project

The below organizations are partners in the Milford's History and Restoration of the Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station Project

- Village of Milford
- Milford Historical Society
- Milford DDA

Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station

Meeting Minutes

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April 1, 2008
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December 11, 2007
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November 14, 2007
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October 10, 2007
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PETTIBONE CREEK HYDROELECTRIC STATION

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Milford Powerhouse

This project wouldn't have been possible without the many generous donations we have received.

Non-local Funding $285,000

M-Dot /Federal Highway Admin.
Americana Foundation
Community Development Block Grants
MotorCities/National Heritage Areas
Evans Memorial Fund
International Questers
Johanna Favrot Fund/Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation
Detroit Area Art Deco Society

Local Funding $149,327

Village of Milford/Downtown Development Authority
"Milford Beauties"
Milford Historical Society
Milford Township
Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce
Hines Park Ford
Milford Garden Club
Denise and Lyle Tyler
Read Between the Lines Book Store

In-kind...Locally Solicited $45,000.00

Newton & Crane Roofing
Siplast/The Icopal Group
Colley Electrical Systems
Western Waterproofing
Integrated Engineering Associates
Dan Christie, Graphic Artist
AccuNet Web Services