Matherton

Matherton, which is in both Ionia and Clinton counties, was founded in 1842-3 by Asaph Mather and Norton Beckwith. Mather planned to build a mill on Fish Creek. That land had been purchased by James R. Langdon. The three men decided to go into business together.

They cleared 10 acres, built a dam, and a sawmill which began operating in 1843. Much of the lumber was sent on rafts down the Maple River to the Grand River and into Lake Michigan. From there it was taken to Chicago.

During the early days only a few mill workers lived in Matherton.

In 1846 Mather bought out his partners and became the owner of the village site and mill. Mather added a gristmill in 1849. That same year the village began to grow. Dr. W. Z. Blanchard and his son Hiram started a trading business near the mill. Asaph's brother William Mather moved to Matherton and began a medical practice.

Matherton received a post office in 1850 with weekly delivery from Lyons. The next year the village of Matherton was platted (streets laid out).

It's likely the first school started in 1846 when Mather brought his family to live in Matherton. A schoolhouse on the hill was built by 1854.

The town grew with Joseph Brown building the stone store in 1853. The next year Marcus Smith established a tavern and also sold some goods.

A woolen mill was built in 1864. They made woolen clothing, yarn, and other products. Unfortunately, it went out of business four years later.

Fire was also a cause of the town's problems. The foundry was destroyed by fire in 1872 and the gristmill and sawmill in 1880. At that point much of the town moved east to Hubbardston Road. At that point, Hubbardston, on the other side of the river, became the much more successful town.

The Matherton School closed and joined the Pewamo-Westphalia District in 1966. The old school building closed and the students were bused to Pewamo.

Additional photos <u>can be found here</u>.

Matherton in early 1900's

Matherton Cornet Band

Clinton County Historical Society

Matherton School 1907

Matherton Stave Mill