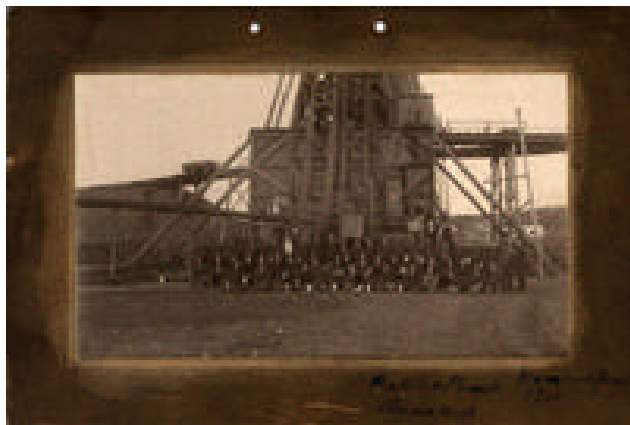


Amasa

The historical development of the village of Amasa, like the development of most of Iron County, is linked to the discovery of iron ore in the area, and the subsequent mining activities. Ore was unearthed along the Hemlock River in Hematite Township in 1888 by Matthew Gibson and his son Thorburn. The Hemlock Mining Company, a Pickands-Mather Company subsidiary, acquired property just west of the village site in 1889. It began full mining operations in 1890, after the completion of a railroad spur by the Paint River Railway Company connected the mine site to Crystal Falls, sixteen miles south.



The settlement which arose around the mining operations was known first as "Hemlock," but in 1892 the name was changed to Amasa. Confusion over the source of the name. County historian Jack Hill refers to it as that of Colonel Pickand's favorite son or that of Mr. Amasa Stone, the father-in-law. Havighurst refers to the name as that of Amasa Stone Mather, b. 1884, Yale graduate 1907, who was named for his grandfather, Amasa Stone, who had built the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad.

The initial growth of Amasa was rapid, spurred by the opening of five additional mines in the area by the early twentieth century, and also by the development of a thriving lumber industry engaged in harvesting the local stands of white pines. In the first half of the 1890s,

a township hall, a boarding house, the train depot, and several commercial structures were built. A post office was established in 1891. The fire department was organized in 1901, and gasoline street lamps were installed that same year. By 1905, the town boasted a water system.



Development of Amasa continued at a steady pace until the 1920s and 1930, when the ore mining industry gradually declined. The Warner Mine, the last to operate in the area, closed in 1940; Amasa has changed little since then. However, the lumber industry did not wane after the virgin pine stands were initially harvested. Large lumber companies began practicing modern forestry techniques, such as reseeded and selective harvesting, to insure the continued future of lumbering in the area. A school of forestry established at the Amasa High School in 1932 reflects the growing interest at this time in encouraging the wise use of timber from Amasa's forests. Today the lumber industry, while not encouraging growth, continues to sustain Amasa and the American Can Company and the Pine River Lumber Company are the major employers.

