

VILLAGE OF PLAINFIELD.

Numerous Indian trails crossed each other at or near the site of Plainfield, and the locality seemed to be a favorite camping-ground among the red men. Cranberries abounded here, and this fact doubtless had its weight. The chief best known to the settlers of this region was "Toag," whose followers could not be kept in hand, and were generally thieving and drunken. Instances are related of their entering houses when the men were away from home, and scaring the women into giving them food, and even clothing.

Some time in 1835, Jacob Dunn and Levi Clawson started together for the West, from Newton, N. J. Mr. Clawson stopped in Ohio, while Dunn came to Michigan, purchased land and settled upon it, being the first to locate on the site of Plainfield. During the following winter Mr. Clawson came to the same place and purchased, and found Dunn living in a log house on the south of his (Dunn's) farm. He learned afterwards that the road was to be laid on the section line north of him, and moved his house to it. Dunn was the only man living at the place when Clawson entered his land. The latter returned to Ohio, and in May, 1837, removed with his family to his place at Plainfield, where he has since resided.

In the mean time Fleet Van Sickel bought land at Plainfield, but soon sold to Philip Dyer, who became the second settler at the place. Dyer was also from New Jersey, and located here in 1836. He and Dunn both kept taverns. The place was originally known as Dyersburg, but upon the establishment of a post-office the name, Plainfield, was given by Mr. Dunn, after a town in New Jersey. John Cool and family came with Dyer and located west of the village, where two of his daughters are now living. Samuel Townsend settled in the fall of 1836 on the farm now occupied by John Van Sickel, who married one of his daughters.

Philip Dyer's youngest son, John Dyer, occupies his father's old farm. A daughter of Mr. Dyer is now the wife of A. L. Dutton, living on section 16.

David Dutton, from Oneida Co., N. Y., came to Michigan in 1834, and after a short stop in Scio, Washtenaw Co., settled at Lima, in the same county. In May, 1837, he moved to the farm, half a mile northwest of Plainfield, now occupied by his son, D. O. Dutton. He died May 29, 1867, and his widow makes her home most of the time with her children at Eaton Rapids, Eaton Co., although her sons, D. O. and A. L., in Unadilla, have her company at times.

When Fleet Van Sickel sold his place at Plainfield to Mr. Dyer, he paid the money to his brother, Samuel F. Van Sickel, who purchased land southeast of the village, where his son, Edgar Van Sickel, now lives. S. F. Van Sickel came from New Jersey in company with Levi Clawson, and after a short stay in Ohio proceeded to Dexter, Washtenaw Co., Mich., finally locating in Unadilla. One other of his sons, David, lives near Edgar, southeast of Plainfield.

Samuel Wasson settled northeast of Plainfield in 1837. The old farm is divided between his two sons, Myron and John, who reside upon it. Mr. Wasson came from a locality about thirty miles from Buffalo, N. Y. .

The first physician in the neighborhood was Dr. Morgan, who came at an early day from Ohio, with his family, accompanied by Mr. Tuttle and family. This was previous to 1839. The doctor was much esteemed by his acquaintances, and ranked high as a physician. After the death of his wife he removed to Indiana. He was the only physician who ever lived here any length of time. He had an extensive ride, ranging into the township of White Oak, Ingham Co. The vicinity of Plainfield was always noted for its healthfulness, and Dr. Morgan once remarked that "if it were not for White Oak he should *starve to death!*" Dr. D. M. Greene located here in the spring of 1879.

Albert G. Topping, from Cleveland, Ohio, settled in Plainfield in November, 1839, living for a short time in a house on Philip Dyer's place, while building a log house for himself. That structure occupied the ground upon which now stands the residence of his son, Morris Topping. When not busy on his own place, Mr. Topping was employed by Dyer. He died in 1844, from the effects of the amputation of his leg, rendered necessary by a white swelling. His son, Morris Topping, in the spring of 1853 built the store he now occupies, and began business in October of the same year, having continued in the same place since that time. He is now the oldest merchant in the place; has also a large stave-factory and coopering establishment, manufacturing about 20,000 barrels per annum. This business was started about 1864.

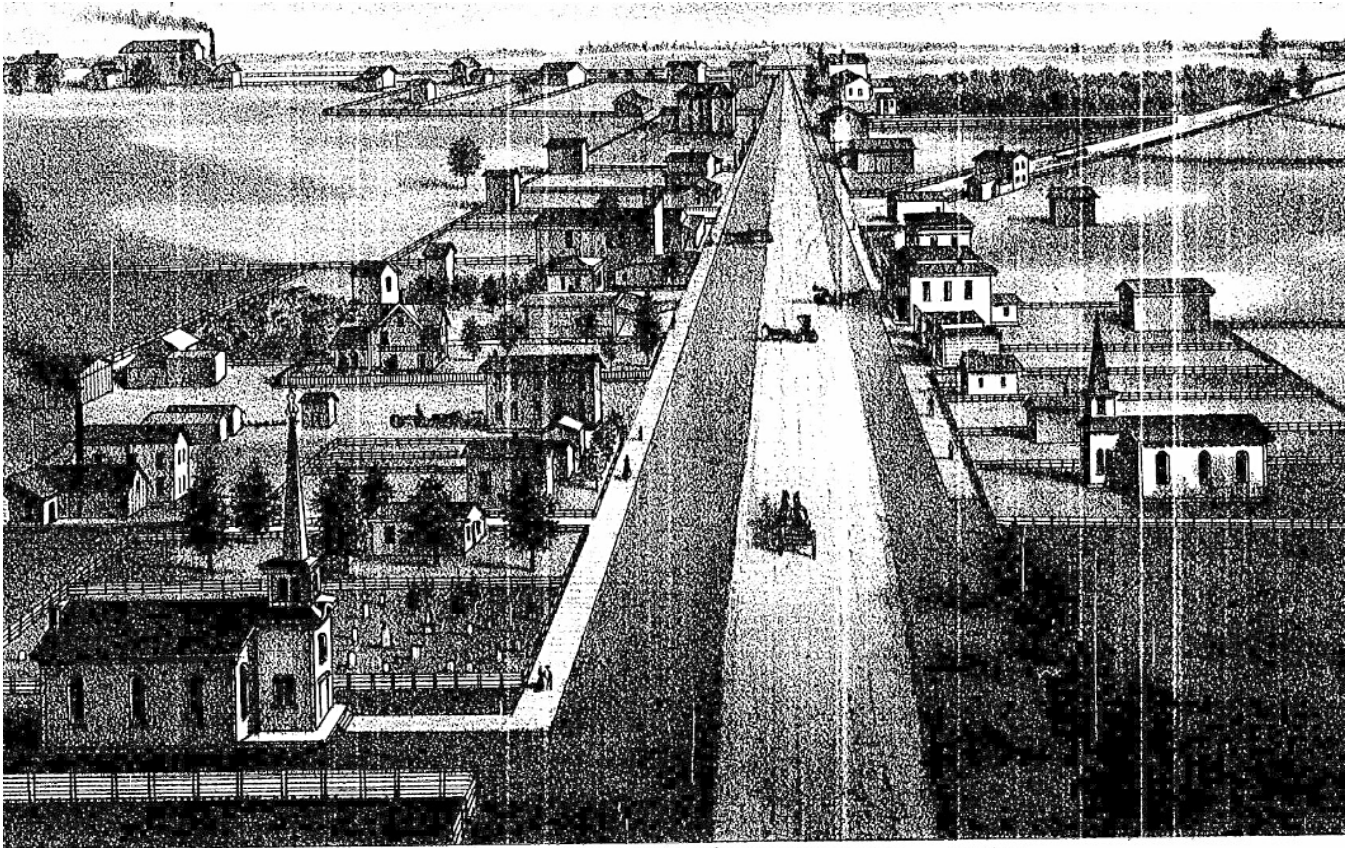
Mr. Topping built his stave-factory first, subsequently adding a saw-mill, and finally a grist-mill. All were burned about 1875, but the stave-factory and grist-mill have been rebuilt. Steam is the motive-power used; the grist-mill has three runs of stone, and does both custom and merchant work.

E. T. Bush has a planing-mill and cider-mill, which have been in operation about ten years.

The first store in the village was established by Rice A. Beal, since prominent in his connection with the State University at Ann Arbor. He first appeared as a peddler of clocks, etc., but finally built and stocked a store and managed it a number of years. He went afterwards to Howell, where he owned a fine establishment, and finally removed to Ann Arbor, where he now resides. His father, Emery Beal, settled at Plainfield about 1837.

Plainfield post-office was established about 1837-38, with Emery Beal as postmaster, and was kept in the latter's house. Mail was brought from Milan (Unadilla post-office), the route extending from Ann Arbor, *via* Dexter, to Unadilla and return. Some mail was afterwards brought in from Mason, Ingham Co. A tri-weekly mail is now received from Fowlerville, the route extending from Fowlerville to Unadilla. A man named Burnett, who lived east of Plainfield, held the office a short time, succeeding Beal. Rice A. Beal was subsequently appointed. In 1853, when Morris Topping established himself in business, he received the appointment of postmaster, which position he has since retained.

The present hotel at the village was built in 1876 by Morris Topping, and its first landlord was William Oxtoby. The present proprietor is A. D. Spaulding, who has occupied it since the fall of 1878. The building is a frame structure, and the first regular hotel in the place.



VILLAGE OF PLAINFIELD, MICH.