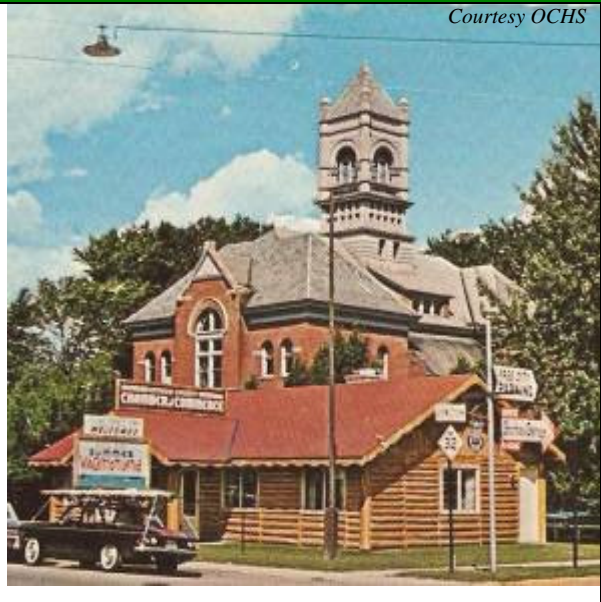


# 1950s

*Courtesy OCHS*



## Highlights from 1950 – 1959

Michigan State College became MSU in 1955

Staff changes during the 1950s include: Mrs. Rose Mary Head (office secretary) was replaced by Mrs. Carolyn Crittenden. During 1953, there were 4 different office girls on the job. Dorothy Prebble, the present secretary, also assisted the Chamber of Commerce which is housed in the same building. Miss Joyce I. Engel District Home Demonstration Agent began her assignment in Otsego, Cheboygan & Montmorency Counties on September 1, 1953. The office moved to the courthouse in 1956.

The 7 one-room schools at the beginning of the decade decreased to only 2 by 1959. In 1953, Gaylord Rural Agricultural School was approved as a Smith-Hughes school with a Vo-Ag department and FFA. Vanderbilt also constructed a new school building.

During this decade, several new ski resorts were built. Extension workshops for the tourism and resort industry were popular.

**1950:** Otsego County had its first 4-H saddle horse project. Three members of the Hayes 4-H Club carried the project

Tours for high school students were conducted to show results of improper land use and practices which are considered good land use.

A scrapbook contest “How To Save Our Soil” for elementary grade school children – Richard Widger and Ed Wilkie won the competition.

The first Zoning Commission was appointed by the Otsego County Board of Supervisors. The County Agent served as secretary.

**1951:** WATC radio station began airing the Extension farm program 6 days a week

**1952:** Noted as “one of the outstanding 4-H events of the year”, 225 4-H club members, leaders and parents attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Recreation Jamboree at the Gaylord 4-H camp.

By far, clothing was the most popular girls 4-H project. Mrs. Dittmer of Dittmer Clothing Store sponsored incentive awards for the 4-H clothing and knitting programs.

The Extension Service cooperated with Otsego County people and the University of Michigan in conducting an “Our Community Tomorrow” Institute in Gaylord.

**1953:** The Gaylord State Bank distributed 200 complimentary copies of the Farm Record Book developed by MSU Dept of Ag Econ.

**1954:** Potato production has declined from 90% to 15% of crops grown in the county.

Sixteen milk houses were constructed.

A half million trees were planted throughout the county as part of conservation efforts.

The Otsego County Fair replaced the Kiwanis 4-H Fair which had operated since 1943.

### 1954 Ag Census Snapshot

There are 350 farms and a total population of about 7,000 people. 328 farms reported having electric service. Only 26% have telephone service. There has been a 300% increase in numbers of items as telephones, home freezers, grain combines and milking machines since 1950. Pick-up hay balers and forage harvesters have increased from one to 51 and 31 respectively. There is now an average of 1.1 tractors and 1.2 automobiles per farm.

**1955:** First year that most farmers could start qualifying for Social Security. “Barnyard Economics” meeting conducted to explain the program in detail to local farmers.

A new program to encourage applying lime on soils that have a low ph was introduced. About 70% of cropland in Otsego County require from 1 – 3 ½ tons per acre of agriculture lime. Offering free soil tests and 75% cost sharing resulted in about four times as much lime applied as had been in any previous year.

Smith-Lever Act added Rural Development to the Extension Service mission statement.

**1956:** Christmas tree sheering and shaping demonstrations conducted.

**1957:** Allaire Schleicher, a member of the Johannesburg Busy Bee 4-H Club, was selected as an IFYE delegate to Uruguay.

**1958:** About half the farmers are employed off the farm to supplement the family income.