

HISTORY
OF
OTSEGO LAKE VILLAGE

By:

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OTSEGO LAKE VILLAGE

Michigan was once one of the greatest pine regions in the whole world. For twenty years she was the leading lumber producing state in the Union. As early as 1850, the lumber business was so large as to attract attention throughout commercial centers of the country and it grew with amazing rapidity. After the southern part of the state had been brought more or less under cultivation, lumbering was begun in the magnificent forests of the northern half of the "Lower Peninsula."

In that northern half lies "Otsego County," midway between the Grand Traverse region and the Lake Huron shore and its physical location near the head waters of the Manistee and AuSable Rivers, or the great east and west system of waterways through Northern Michigan. These advantages determined the permanent settlement of this section of the state. The eastern outlet to this region was Alpena, the terminus of the east-west railroad lines and the terminus of the old state road. The latter was out through the primeval forest in an attempt by the state government to encourage the settlement and development of the trackless wilds that comprised the northern counties at that time. This road was cut through the southern part of Otsego County in 1869 and 1870, passing through where the Village of Otsego Lake now stands, coming that far on a direct line from Mancelona, thence following the east shore of Otsego Lake to the present site of the State Park, thence easterly to State Road Dam, where it again strikes the south section line coming from Mancelona and follows it east to a point a short distance north of Lewiston, thence bearing northerly and eventually reaching Alpena.

Otsego County was not organized as a separate county at first. In 1840 it had been laid out and attached to Mackinaw County; later in 1853 it was attached to Cheboygan County, in 1858 to Alpena County, to Antrim County in 1863 and finally in 1875 it became what is now Otsego County.

The original townships were Elmira, Otsego Lake, Charlton and Livingston. Corwith and Hayes townships were organized in 1877, Bagley township in 1882, Chester township in 1889 and Sawyer township in 1923.

Otsego County in the spring of 1868 was an untrodden wilderness, the permanent home of wild beasts and the temporary home for three or four months during the winter of a few trappers who resorted here for the purpose of trapping mink and other small fur bearing animals, reported to be very numerous around the head waters of the Manistee and AuSable rivers.

In April, 1868, A.A. Dwight, the pioneer lumberman of Otsego County, fitted out a small expedition in Almont, in Lapeer County, consisting of six men, a foreman and one yoke of oxen. The crew literally hewed their way to the borders of what is known as Crooked Lake, along a hunter's trail and commenced to open up the forest, building log cabins and other buildings necessary. It does not appear from all accounts, that a great deal was done in the way of farming that first season. Of course the difficulties were great and many, the men were forty miles as their road ran from their base of supplies, Spencer Creek on Torch Lake. We are informed that much of their toting was done on the back of an ox. Sometime along toward winter they left in disgust, and the settlers at the west end of the route felt sadly disappointed by the supposed failure of Mr. Dwight to establish a new rendezvous for needy homesteaders when in want of a few day's work.

“In the spring of 1869, Charles S. Brink arrived with a crew of fourteen picked men, and that summer, although the wettest summer in a number of years, there was accomplished the clearing of twenty-five acres, all of which was put into crops, but early frosts ruined much of it.” The lakes in this section are still spoken of as Farm Lakes and the old halfway house stood on the shore of one of them until a short time ago.

In September, 1869 the state road extended from the farm to the center of Section 25-29-3, where a camp was established and operations conducted for clearing the river for log driving in the spring. The difficulties of this undertaking can be better understood when you are informed that snow began to fall on the eleventh day of October, and not only stayed on the ground, but it continued to increase in depth every few day. A dam was built at the outlet of Chub Lake and went out again with the first free head of water. Toward the close of 1869 the snow was two and a half feet deep on the level and by March 15th there were fifty-two inches of it in the woods and lumbering was seriously embarrassed.

In November Mrs. Brink arrived at the camp on Chub Creek, after a most tedious journey along the old hunter’s trail in a driving show storm. The team giving out about dark, the party was obliged to seek shelter from the storm in a little bark wigwam near a little lake and there to wait until relieved by a team from the farm about midnight.

I have spoken about “Chub Creek,” but it and the Chub Lake were not known by that name until the arrival of Mrs. Brink, she states, “Chub Lakes were named after my father, Charles Cartwright, nicknamed “Chub.” (Mrs. Brink had been Mrs. J. Cartwright before she married Mr. Brink.)

Sometime in May the first log drive started, but as the dam was inadequate, it only reached a point eight or nine miles below by the road where the building of another dam was commenced now called Number Two. The drive was there abandoned and the crew adjourned to the first of September next, leaving the flies and mosquitoes in peaceable possession. In the fall of 1870, Number Two Dam was strengthened and Number Three and Four built and the river cleaned for driving to the forks of the AuSable. During the following winter another stock of logs was added to those already in the river and in the spring the whole drive was successfully carried on the following winter 1870-71, the farm at Crooked Lake at the time furnishing a part of the supplies.

In the fall of 1872 the village of Otsego Lake was established, the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad being at the time under construction. Building were erected and invitations extended by Smith, Kelly and Dwight to men of families under promise of the choice of a building lot to remove to Otsego Lake and erect dwelling houses or rather cabins. Three parties availed themselves of the offer and proceeded to build their cabins: George A. Finch, Adam Assal and Blackford Smalley, the latter preferring to wait till spring before bringing his family.

The winter of 1872-73 was unusually sever, great hardships were endured owing to the hasty erection of the cabins. The Company’s boarding house was that winter managed by J.M. Groat and family. On the second of February, 1873, an accident which might have resulted fatally, but miraculously did not, happened when two men let a large tree fall across the cabin of Adam Assal, flattening the roof. The tree broke and two of the pieces landed in the center of the table which was at the time being set for dinner. The family escaped with a few slight bruises.

Lumbering was carried on that winter at Otsego Lake by Alfred Stewart and at Chub Creek by C.S. Brink. About this time the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad was completed, as far as track-laying was concerned, to the north line of town 29-3, just to the south side of the sink hole and supplies arrived by train.

In the spring of 1873 the railroad being in tolerable condition, lumber was shipped in and the erection of building commenced. At this time the foundation of the Otsego Lake House, the first hotel in the county was made. This was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Brink. A building of single thickness of boards was put up and used as a schoolhouse a district having been organized.

Page one of the "Record of Proceedings of District Meetings" for that year reads as follows:

"To John. B. Smalley:

Sir: The School Inspectors of the township of Otsego Lake, have formed a School District in said township, to be known as District No. 1 One and bounded as follows---etc."

"The first meeting of said District will be held at the house of Jacob M. Groat, in the Village Otsego Lake on the twenty-eighth day of April A.D. 1873, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon---etc."

"Dated this eighteenth day of April A.D. 1873."

Adam Assal --- Clerk of Board of School Inspection

Following this was a record of the meeting and business transacted. It ended with:

"Voted to hold three months school during the Summer."

May 27th 1873

"Contracted with Lois E. Finch to teach the summer term of School for three months, at six dollars per week."

In the summer of 1874 a large two story schoolhouse was built in the north end of the Village by J.C. Hooker. A large addition was also built to the Otsego Lake House during that summer. The winter of 1873 was very dull and owing to the panic, no lumbering was carried on, but was again resumed in 1874-75 and in the spring ground was broken for a mill. The mill was located at the head of Otsego Lake and was built by Dave Buell, father of Frank Buell, well known lumberman of recent years. It was the first mill in the county. Mrs. Buell had a homestead near the lower coal kilns. Later Mr. Buell met with an accident which caused his death. While he was slaughtering a beef at the Colonel Dickinson place in Bagley, his knife slipped and an artery was severed in one of his legs, causing him to bleed to death.

The town now (in 1875) contained a sawmill, post office, barbershop, hotel, a couple of stores, a saloon and some 50 or 60 people. The saloon in question was just outside the Village limits as there was a clause in every deed given by Smith, Kelly and Dwight to purchasers of lots which stated that no liquor was to be sold on said lot, or land would revert to Company. Should anyone disregard this, mills would be elsewhere. Nor purchaser broke this agreement but a young lady (a friend of the Smith family) received a lot as a wedding gift from the Smith's and some time later sold it for a saloon site. The clause had been left out of the deed as it was a gift. Mr. Smith proceeded to move the shingle and planing mills to AuSable, leaving only the saw mill.

Also, in 1875, Chas. L. Fuller of Owosso began the publishing of the "Otsego Herald" at Otsego Lake. It must have been the true spirit of the pioneer which led Mr. Fuller to that village of only a few score families to found a newspaper. Otsego lake was organized until 1872, but here we find only 3 years later Chas. Fuller toting an old fashioned printing press from the old crusader plant at Owosso into that tiny hamlet and setting up a newspaper and printing establishment. Otsego Lake thrived and the newspaper prospered.

In the spring of 1878, a county seat was resulted in the county seat being moved to Gaylord. Mr. Fuller moved his plant to that place where he continued to own and operate it for a number of years.

The first county officers were Judge of Probate, Nathan L. Parmeter, Sheriff, Paul Livingston, (Livingston Township named after him.) Because the latter did not qualify, C.C. Mitchell replaced him. County Clerk, Chas. L. Fuller, who was also Register of Deeds; County Treasurer, Elijah C. Morse; Pros. Attorney and Circuit Court Commissioner Wm. R. Kendrick; Surveyor, Alfred Stewart, Coroners, C.C. Mitchell and Judson Hooker. Adam Assal was appointed Supt. of poor for three years. The first meeting of the Board of Supervisors was held May 1, 1875 in the Chas. Brink boarding house at the Otsego Lake Village. At this meeting the board bargained with the Otsego Lake School District for use of the upper part of the schoolhouse for two years to be used as county building. A building committee was also appointed to look forward to the erection of suitable county buildings. Later a site was bought of Smith, Kelly and Dwight for \$1,000 for which the county was bonded in case the county should be moved, the site was to be deeded back to Smith, Kelly and Dwight except 2 lots and S. Knoll donated \$1,000 toward erection of County buildings in case site was returned. These two lots are now the site of what was formerly Reid's Inn and have never been deeded to anyone by the County (this was recently discovered.) The people of Otsego Lake offered to give Sheriff Mitchell a lot if he would make that place his home. He moved there but only stayed one year.

The following is a copy of the one day's proceedings of Board of Supervisors of Otsego Co. Pursuant to call the Extra Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Otsego Co. convened at the place designated (Viz) was called to order, the roll was called and there were present Charles T. Davis of Elmira, Reuben Murray of Otsego Lake, George H. Smith of Livingston and Thomas G. Woodard of Charlton. The following business was transacted on motion of Supervisor Smith seconded by Davis. Supervisor Murray was elected chairman of the board. Murray then took the chair and spoke a few words of thanks for the honors. Supervisor Smith presented the following series of resolutions which were adopted. Resolved that the office of County Clerk and Register of Deeds of Otsego county be and are declared as one office. Resolved that the salary of County Clerk and Register of Deeds of Otsego County be and the same is hereby declared to be during his term of office \$1,200 for the years of 1875 and 1876 and that he be allowed in addition all necessary board and traveling while transcribing the records of the county of Otsego said salary shall be paid quarterly and shall be in full compensation for all service rendered in the discharge of such office and such Register of Deeds and Court Clerk shall keep a full account of all fees and records by him and at the quarterly settlement with the

County Treasurer said accounts of fees shall be filed with said County Treasurer and the amount of said fees shall be paid in to the County funds.

Resolved that the salary of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County shall be \$800 for each of the years 1875 and 1876 which salary shall be in full compensation for all service rendered as county counsel for all County and Township Officers.

Resolved that the salary of Judge of Probate of this County shall be and the same is hereby declared to be \$250 for each of the years of 1875 and 1876.

Resolved that the salary of the County Treasurer be and the same hereby declared to be \$550 for each of the years 1875 and 1876. Resolved that the salary of the Sheriff of this county be and the same hereby declared to be \$250 for each of the years 1875 and 1876. Resolved that the salary of the each of the coroners shall be \$25 for each of the years 1875 and 1876. Resolved that all necessary expense incurred by the several county officers in the discharge of their accounts audited by the Board of Supervisors.

Resolve that the sum of \$1,000 be borrowed for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings for a county jail and offices and that County Bonds bearing interest at 10% be issued for this amount and made payable one year from this date and that the amount so borrowed shall be assessed and levied upon the taxable property of the several townships of Otsego County and the same spread upon the tax rolls for the year 1875.

Upon motion the meeting adjourned until Monday a.m. at 8 o'clock.

Monday forenoon.

Board meet pursuant to adjournment. Roll call present, Supervisors Davis, Murray, Smith and Woodard. All present. Minutes and resolutions of least meeting read and approved.

After a lengthy deliberation concerning the erection of a county jail and providing for a courtroom and county offices the board adjourned meeting at 2:00 p.m.

At 2:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by the Chairman. Roll called, present Davis, Murray, Smith and Woodward.

The people of Gaylord conceived the idea of making that place the county seat in 1876, but it was not definitely settled until the spring election of 1877, when by the prodigious exertion on the part of some who hired a lot of Petoskey Indians to come out and cut wood so as to vote at Gaylord, did they succeed in getting it located at Gaylord, much to the dismay to the Otsego Lake people. It is reported that the Indians not only voted, but voted several times, as it was hard to distinguish one from the other. "Penny" Smith, a woodcutter hired the Indians.

Also the people of Otsego Lake hired a man to electioneer in their favor at Gaylord. Gaylord residents hired Ed Howard to pick a quarrel with this man, a fight resulted and both were thrown in jail, so the electioneering came to an end.

At one time the Board of Supervisors was divided – one half at Gaylord, the other half at Otsego Lake. The Supreme Court settled the controversy by compelling the Southern members to convene at Gaylord.

Otsego Lake was by reason of its lumbering operation, a very thriving community and at one time more than a dozen lumber camps, some of them employing upwards of 40 men, were cutting the tall pines down and shipping them to Bay City and Saginaw. One pioneer said it was a sight to behold when the various tote teams started out in the morning.

In 1888 the village boasted 800 population, but with the decadence of the lumbering operations the population dwindled.

The first minister in the county was R. Kirkland sent by the home missionary society of the Congregational Church. He lived at Otsego Lake Village. In her letter Mrs. Jennie McKim states – “The first Church (a Methodist) and the school were held in the same building.” This was later explained by another pioneer...

“When they couldn’t get a Congregational minister, they hired a Methodist.” She went on to say that everyone attended, regardless of creed. She said that one of the children who attended Sunday School with her told her a few years ago that she had never received the comfort in any other church that she had received in that little community church in Otsego Lake. This person was one of the many Catholic children who attended. This same pioneer has a picture of the interior of the church, the minister and a group of children and discussed creeds. This group may or may not have been representative of the whole – they had been gathered together the day the photographer came – but the majority were Catholic.

It is evident that the little church was fortunate in its choice of ministers. Those men undoubtedly understood pioneers, particularly the kinds that inhabited these early lumbering towns. “They accepted conditions as they were, tried to improve them, but were wise enough not to make too radical changes.”

“So many Gods – So many creeds, So many ways that wind and wind, while just the art of being kind is all this sad world needs.”

Dr. Gilbert was probably the first physician in the county, although Dr. H.L. Parmeter was close second. Dr. Gilbert never practiced north of Otsego Lake Village.

In February 1876, this resolution appears in the “Record of Proceedings of District Meetings.”

The following preamble and Resolution was presented by A. Assal: “Whereas the public welfare requires that a competent physician reside within this county, and whereas N.R. Gilbert, M.D. has proved himself as such fully during his stay at Otsego Lake, and whereas N.R. Gilbert has also proved himself an eminently competent teacher of the primary school of this District and whereas the practice is insufficient to maintain a competent physician properly.

Therefore, resolved by the legal voters of said District at a special meeting called for the purpose of ascertaining the wishes of said District, that the public welfare of not only the School District but of the whole township and county demand that the said N.R. Gilbert at the expiration of his six month term of school be engaged to teach the remaining four months and that the District Board of said School District No. 1 be and are hereby earnestly requested to engage the said N.R. Gilbert for the remaining months, if he be found willing to enter into any contract with the District Board for the remainder of the appropriation of \$200 and that the course of instruction pursued by said N.R. Gilbert be and is hereby fully endorsed.

On motion of Nathaniel Buell and seconded by Charles S. Brink the above preamble and resolution was unanimously adopted.

Moved by O.H. Kelly and seconded by R.G. McNaught that N.R. Gilbert be engaged for the summer term. Carried unanimously. On motion, meeting adjourned.

Further in the “Record of Proceedings” is this notice:

“The School Board met at the Director’s Office to consider the property of adopting McGuffey’s Eclectic Series of School Books as fast as the pupils need to buy new books.” Adopted – O.H. Kellogg, Director.

Most of Otsego Lake history lives in the memory of those remaining few who lived there. Much of their reminiscing was of a rambling sort, but there was such information (from Mrs. McKim) as: “there were five hotels and a boarding house at Otsego Lake, not to mention several saloons, a company store, a general store, hardware store and clothing store.”

Charles Blanchard chuckled as he told about his escapades in school. “I remember the day the teacher thrashed sixteen of us for not coming in when the bell rang. We were too busy having a snowball fight. When he rang the bell a second time, we went in. He sent someone up to the hill to get some blue beeches and then he started on us. It took him until recess to get around to all of us – I was the last.”

He told of seeing flocks of passenger pigeons that migrated to the north each spring to breed. There were millions of birds in the air and there was a sound like thunder as they approached. They flew in flocks that extended from east to west as far as you could see, and the flocks were so thick they obscured the sun. One gets some idea of the size of the flocks from Mr. Blanchard’s, “It took as much as an hour for a flock to fly over,” he said, “The men would snatch their guns and fire at them and get a lot of them. And my! were they good!”

There was a wicked gleam in his eye when his conversation drifted to the pleasures and orgies of the lumberjack. He told of their wild excesses of drinking, fighting and carousing – after payday. There was always at least on dive operating. One story Mr. Blanchard told was about the shooting of Mr. Sartamour by a lady from one of these brothels. She was sitting outside cleaning a revolver as he passed by. He stopped, bent over and said, “See if you can hit that.” She fired and killed him. She received a three year sentence.

Bert Schott of Ovid is another old pioneer who likes to talk about the past. He told of cutting two foot wood for 87½¢ a cord and sixteen inch wood for 75¢ a cord. Wood cutters had to add an extra tier for good measure. He said the lumber companies did not depend on lumber alone to bring their fortunes and work for the men. They built enormous ice houses and filled them with ice, which they shipped during the summer months.

He also told about the passenger pigeons, adding that carloads were shipped from Traverse City. However even the large numbers slaughtered did not account for their sudden disappearance, said Mr. Scott, “A storm must have caught them as they crossed the lake.”

He remembered there were five saloons, and even remembered the names of the saloon keepers.

He told of Charley Grant, a frequent visitor at one of the dives, who always said that where “Old May” (who operated it) wouldn’t come to terms he’d drag her to the lake, hold her head under water for five minutes and then she’d be pretty good for a couple of weeks.

Some of these places were not content to get money from Lumberjacks for value received, Mr. Scott says he is reasonably sure the remains of many a lumberjack lies

buried in the sandhills back of the village. If it was known that a lumberjack had a sizable stake he very often conveniently disappeared. Because he was just a transient, no one bothered to check.

Mr. Scott remarked about the pock-marked appearance of the floor at the Brink Hotel caused by the calked boots of lumberjack guests.

Edward Warner now in his 91st year likes to tell about his hunting exploits. He had some very interesting experiences in which he actually lived with the Chippewa Indians for some weeks learning to speak their language and to hunt deer their way. He hunted deer for the Otsego Lumber Company for some time at three cents a pound for the meat. He said that he carried a 45-70 muzzle loader! "Truest shooting gun he ever saw, could drive a nail with it. Kick? Oh Gosh! There were some fourteen lumber camps then with eighty men per camp and five men were engaged in hunting deer for camp use.

"In those days we really had excitement;" Mr. Warner said, "Joe Wilks, a big fellow and Isaax Van Childs jumped a lynx at night fall when they were hunting deer near Lovells in a swamp. One yelled for help but when they found him he had already been killed by a lynx."

Mrs. Carrie White who still lives in one of the original village houses (it is a well-built house and has been modernized) enjoys talking about her father who built the house. He came to Otsego Lake in 1871 after his sailing vessel carrying a load of lumber went down near Lundington. There was a great demand for lumber that fall because of the Chicago fire. Mr. Smith did not have insurance on his vessel as the shipping season was over. He took a chance and lost. Almost penniless he came to Otsego Lake and worked for a dollar a day, but thrift and ability soon took him out of the ranks of wage earners. He began doing small jobs of lumbering on his own. Mr. White showed me a picture, taken at his camps and his crews unloading logs on the AuSable.

Mrs. White's sisters were domestically inclined and stayed at home to help their mother, but Mrs. White, when she wasn't in school, was her father's right hand man driving him about the country. She has always loved horses and at one time when there was a girls camp on the west side of Otsego Lake, she was riding teacher there.

The social life of Otsego Lake came in for a bit of conversation.

"I think we had better times then than now," said Mrs. White. "There were dances that every one old enough attended. There were masquerades and socials, and occasionally a minstrel show or a play was given at the town hall. Of course I was too young to attend dances for some years, but it was fun listening to my mother and sisters tell about them."

She said she and her brother Lou loved to explore the woods. One day they discovered an Indian mound. They told no one, but that evening after the chores were done, they slipped up to the woods and started digging. It began to grow dark however, and their courage evaporated, in fact they were downright scared. "We hurried home and didn't go back. We told no one of our discovery for a long time. Then Lou told some people who were interested in that sort of thing and they finished the digging. They found a skeleton in kneeling position together with a number of Indian relics."

"The numerous lakes of the county were probably all frequented by Indians but careful survey of several days was practically negative except in the vicinity of Otsego Lake. There were three mounds upon the west side of the lake near the end and four at

different points upon the east side south of the middle. (It was one off the later the Smiths found.) A trail led from two miles south of the north end of Otsego Lake, west side, to the mouth of the Manistee River, a distance of eighty-five miles. She talked about the people who had lived on their street among them the Lewandowskis who lived at the end. People went there to drink and carouse, play cards, and goodness knows what else, day or night. One day just at twilight the place burned. A Mrs. Kersky, who had been seen going into the place was never seen again. They hunted through the debris after the fire but they found no trace of human bones. Some thought she might have been completely burned, but that didn't seem logical, as they found the bones of a cat, and even the skeleton of a rat. But the fact remains Mrs. Kersky was never seen again. What became of her remains a mystery.

Mrs. White showed me pictures of some of the old houses, one of them the Manning house, which was later bought and moved by my husband's father to his farm east of Waters. A description of another house comes to mind and this paragraph might have been applied to the Manning house.

"A little ostentatious in its mid-Victorian embellishment, but wholly understandable and even lovable when one remembers that it is the pioneer strain flaunting its second generation of pride over the settler's seemingly insurmountable trials."

It was painted white and there were wide verandas on two sides. The front door, which had a fanlight, opened into a long front hall. A staircase with a mahogany rail led to the upper rooms. Two doors opened from the hall into the front parlor and at the end of the passage a door opened into a large high ceilinged sitting room, which looked even larger than it was because one wall was composed almost entirely of tall windows. I remember this room contained an old secretary. A large kitchen as big as some modern houses opened out of the sitting room. It was used as a kitchen and dining room. It was rather inconvenient as the stove and worktable stood at one end and the buttery or pantry at the other.

The house burned some years ago and was replaced by a smaller one.

There were other large houses in Otsego Lake. In the November 2, 1888 edition of the "Otsego County Herald" appears this advertisement: "A bargain at Otsego Lake. For Sale – A good dwelling house at Otsego Lake containing 13 large rooms, together with two lots and a good barn. Well on premises. Price \$4450. One half down and balance in two years. Inquired of A.D. Marshall, Gaylord, Michigan.

Mrs. White also mentioned Reid's Inn, which was the original Court House with a bar room added when Reid began business. A man who helped build the bar room told me he never had any money coming because he was only paid 10¢ an hour and occasional drink and his dinner took it all.

Reid's Inn was the favorite gathering place of much of the population of Otsego Lake and Waters for several years. During Prohibition such places fell into disuse. It was never opened again as a tavern, but of late years it has served as a summer hotel.

Some of the pioneers have never left Otsego Lake and never will. They lie in the little cemetery on the hill back of the village. It is a fitting resting place, for it is surrounded by pines and a few pines inside the enclosure drop their cones on the scattered graves. I saw such inscriptions as these on the stones.

Harry Bahel, Died August 5, 1881 (Their father was the village druggist.)

Clarence Bahel, Died August 11, 1881

Jane M. Brink, 1837-1899

Katie C. Cartwright, Died 1894 – 18 years old

Chas. Brink, 1827-1921

George E. Murcheson, Died July 6, 1886. Mrs. White said the latter died from an infection caused by falling on a nail. She said he liked to sit by the window and watch her Father's driving horses as they passed. At Mrs. Murcheson's request, the horses George loved so well drew his body to the cemetery.

Leonard Smith, Died 1883

Louisa Smith, Died 1905

Frederick Smith, Died 1911

The first was Mrs. White's brother and the latter two were her parents.

Beatrice Kennedy, Died October 12, 1900 and the Kennedy's ran the first resort on Otsego Lake. It is now Compton's Resort.

Claude Wilson, Died December 26, 1878

There were several Dishows buried here, and Dave Buell.

There were three soldiers graves.

Miller

Capt. Douglas and his daughter with her baby were buried together. His daughter and baby died first and he followed them almost at once, also Capt. Wilcox, whose father and daughter lay near him. The grandfather had attacked his granddaughter with an axe when she threatened to leave him and go back to husband. In Adam Assal's journal is this entry –

Monday, August 17, '91

"Was called out last Wednesday to assist at Inquest over Old Wilcox who shot himself after trying to kill his granddaughter.

Sunday August 30, '91

"Minta Wilcox died yesterday morning."

Other entries in the journal are –

Wednesday morning Sept 9, '91

"School meeting passed off quietly – Only 5 being present and no kicking.

Thursday Sept 11, 1890

"There was an Aurora last night and there is again tonight. I have decided to announce myself as a candidate for Register of Deeds and have received a good deal of encouragement from Hilton who will run against Buell for Sheriff. Of course, I will have to go back on Buell. The caucus will take place tomorrow night and if we get on the right men for delegates, my nomination will be pretty near a sure thing.

Friday Feb. 17, '88

"Had to go to Dam 2 this morning and take the old lady out to nurse Emma. We got word yesterday by McQuire who walked out purpose that Emma was very sick and not expected to live. We found her in bed without any fire nor wood split to make one, but no worse. The weather has moderated again and I think the worst of the winter is over. We cut wood yesterday and the day before, but it is very slow business, but a man

must keep doing something or be denounced as a d----d loafer and yet a man eats just as much as if he were engaged in booming business."

Thursday Feb 9, '88

"Returned from Dam 2 yesterday wit \$8.50 after cutting 27 cords in just ten days. Well the "Local Option" turned out in favor of prohibition by 223 majority in the count. I think now there will be just as much liquor sold as before, only it will be sold by the bottle and jug instead of by the glass and the town will get nothing for it. Otsego Lake will go to the devil as the woodsmen will carry their money down to Roscommon and Grayling.

Friday Feb. 10, '99

"Ten bbls. of whiskey at the station tonight. So much for "Local Option".

Adam Assal, too is buried in the little cemetery, but the wooden marker is gone. He was a graduate of Bern University, in Switzerland. A man who might have made his mark in the world, but who chose to live out his days in the little Hamlet of Otsego Lake.

The old time lumberjack has disappeared and lumber is no longer harvested around Otsego Lake. The last log drive went down the AuSable in 1910 and closed the book on that period of Otsego Lake history.

For a time it seemed that might be the end as the light sandy soil was not suitable for farming.

But of late years the water resources have provided the basis for substantial resort and recreational development. There is concentrated resort development around Otsego Lake and the Village is being rebuilt. There are now three stores and a restaurant in operation.

It may well be that in the not too distant future, Otsego Lake may be the thriving village it was in the 70's and 80's.

"THE END"

REFERENCES

Wrote to:

Michigan State Library
Michigan Historical Commission
Mrs. Jennie McKim, three times, Flint and Otsego Lake
Mr. Lon Assal, Essexville, Michigan

Interviewed:

Mrs. Laura Waldie	Otsego Lake
Mrs. James White	Otsego Lake
Edward Waner	Gaylord, Michigan
John Amthor	Gaylord, Michigan
Mack Sowers	Gaylord, Michigan
Chas. Hilton	Gaylord, Michigan
Chas. Blanchard	Gaylord, Michigan
Herbert Hutchins	Gaylord, Michigan
Bert Scott	Gaylord, Michigan

The Story of Michigan, Copyright 1924
By Claude S. Larzellere
Record Supervisors Proceedings, 1872-1878
Journal of Adam Assal
Record School District No. 1, Township of Otsego Lake 1873-1890
Otsego County Herald, November 2, 1888
Old Newspapers, filed in Gaylord Court House
Old Newspapers, belonging to Mrs. Sowers of Gaylord, Michigan
Also Mrs. Schuyler of Elmira, 1924-1925
Articles about and by Pioneers

Visited:

Otsego Lake County

Time:

Sixty Hours (60)