

The village plat for Otsego Lake was officially recorded on June 12, 1875.

Many official records of Otsego Lake and the County were lost or destroyed in 1877 when the County Seat records were surreptitiously removed from the Court House. The following spring a county seat war developed, so the story goes, when some "gentlemen" from the more populous northern townships in the County hired a number of woodchoppers from Petoskey to come over to work in Livingston Township, gain a resident vote and thereby the northern part of the County won in the spring election and the County Seat was permanently located at Gaylord.

Dr. N.R. Gilbert purchased a lot in Otsego Lake in 1879 and may have been the first doctor in town. There are later records of a Dr. Warner and Dr. Leighton being available from 1884 to the middle 1890's.

Smith, Kelly and Dwight continued to operate the mill until about 1882. When they closed out their operation the mill was leased to several smaller businessmen, one being Frank Buell. He logged many small parcels near Crooked Lake (now called Manuka) and Buell Lake (now called Arrowhead) and continued to log until the late 1890's.

Other lumbering operations, large and small, were carried on in and around the village by many including: David Ward Lumber Company, Dodge Shingle Company, Thomas Tooley, Fred Smith, Blade, Hopkins and Smith, and Sage and McGraw.

For the first few years Otsego Lake was the most important trading center of the County and the most populous; in 1884 approximately 800 people had homes there. However, as the lumbering operations slackened in the 1890's and early 1900's, many residents moved elsewhere to find work. Several buildings burned causing the insurance companies to cancel all insurance in the village. By 1912 only ten families remained in the village. The railroad station became a "flag stop" except for a mixed freight and passenger train. There was one grocery store and only fourteen children attended the school. During the 1930's the population dropped to seven families with five children attending school.

About 1947 there began an awakening of interest in the community once again and since that time there has been a gradual building up of permanent homes and summer residences.



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