

Gaylord

"After the close of the Civil War such inroads had been made on the enormous supply of white pine in the valleys of the Muskegon and Saginaw Rivers that lumber operators began to see that they must find additional areas of standing timber if their very profitable business was to be perpetuated had a continual stream of lumber kept flowing to the areas where it was in such demand." The area to the north was the one considered. There were no settlements in the interior of the state nor were there rivers large enough for floating logs in large quantities. Hence, the railroad began to push northward through the center of the state.

The U.S. Government and the railroad, the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw, encouraged veterans of the Civil War to settle in the new country by offering a tract of one hundred and sixty acres to be "proved up" by homesteading. A veteran's time in service was deductible from the five years necessary for proving up. And so the first settlers arrived in what is now the city of Gaylord in 1873. "A village was platted at the head of the Grade by O.M. Barnes of Lansing, but shortly was renamed Gaylord in honor of the attorney Augustine Smith Gaylord, practising law in Saginaw and attorney for the railroad." While Mr. Gaylord never lived here, the law firm of Gaylord and Hanchett received a patent from the United States Government dated March 20, 1874 for forty acres of land in what is now Hayes Township. That property is now a portion of the Lake Horicon Corporation.

In the Fall of 1873 work began to extend the railroad from Otsego Lake to Gaylord; this was completed in 1874. There was one train a day between Gaylord and Bay City, consisting of one baggage car, one passenger car and two or three freight cars. The engines were woodfired and had great difficulty making the grade from Otsego Lake to Gaylord.

The original plat of the village is dated October 30, 1874 and recorded December 2, 1874. "That part of this plat lying north of Main Street was owned by the railroad company and the part lying south was owned by Orlando M. Barnes, secretary of the railroad." November 9, 1877 a warranty deed from O. Barnes and wife gave lots 15, 16, 17 and 18 of Block 10 for County use only. If in the future it was to be used for other purposes it would revert to Mr. Barnes or his heirs.

In the seven years from the date the railroad ended at Gaylord until it was extended to Machinaw the town grew from a population of thirteen families to a total of four hundred. Hotels, boarding houses, and business places appeared as fast as mushrooms to accommodate not only those waiting to finish new homes but also the

men working on the extension of the railroad.

Otsego Lake was the county seat at first. However, as settlement developed to the north because of better farm land, it was voted to move the county seat to Gaylord. A bitter feud ensued between those living to the south of Gaylord and those living in town or to the north. After a year of debate, the State Supreme Court issued a mandate compelling the southern supervisors to convene in Gaylord . . . the date November 10, 1877. On that date William F. Parmater, a supervisor, was appointed to select a site for the Court House in Gaylord and he and George Smith were appointed a committee to build a jail on the site. They decided to build on the land given by Mr. Barnes. The first circuit Court was held in Gaylord April 16, 1876, Sanford Green, presiding Judge.

As County Seat and a trading center, Gaylord kept pace with the growth of population developing new enterprises and services to meet their needs. Among the crafts catering to those needs were blacksmiths, who were also farriers, carriage, wagon and sleigh manufacturers, carpenters and harness makers. Professional men were moving in: doctors, dentists, attorneys, as well as optometrists and a chiropractor. In addition to these, there were stores selling items of



Portrait of A. S. Gaylord