



Logging Train

As the population grew, other buildings appeared: a post office, school, church, blacksmith shop, butcher shop, dry goods stores, jail. Cement sidewalks were built for the main streets. A favorite passtime for school girls during noon hour was roller skating from one end of town to the other and back again. Board walks were built for the back streets.

The Company provided electricity for the town. Lights were on from 4 A.M. until 9 A.M. and in the afternoon they were turned on just before supper and shut off at 10 P.M., except when there was a dance or party; then they were left on until midnight.

Lumbering operations began in earnest in 1902. At the far edges of the woods which extend for five miles on each side of town, lumber camps were built. Here the lumberjacks who sawed down the trees slept in the bun' house and ate in the cook shanty. Their long day was from daylight until dark. After the trees were cut and trimmed, teamsters would drag the logs out and load them on sleighs in the winter, or fasten them to the big wheels to be hauled to the Company railroad in the summer. Roads built from the woods to the mill were iced during the winter by a horse drawn sprinkler. At the mill the logs were piled ready to be sawed into lumber. Outside the mill was a water vat where the logs were washed before being taken up the elevator into the mill. The Company cut 30,000 feet of timber per average working day. The mill itself employed seventy-five to eighty men. Employees were paid every two weeks.

The first school in Johannesburg, built in 1903, was a white, two story building at the south end of town. At first it only went to the tenth grade. The first school bus, a horse drawn vehicle, driven by John Boyd, picked up students east of Johannesburg as far as Hetherton. During the winter months the bus was a canvas covered sleigh. A kerosene stove provided

warmth. On one occasion, the bus tipped over. Fortunately, the stove was righted in time to prevent a fire or explosion. Often the older students would get out to run behind the bus. This usually resulted in the driver's whipping the team to give those behind a merry chase. The first motorized school bus was a Reo.

School superintendent for many years was Sim J. Lewis. Once a week the whole school would assemble to sing from the "Nap Sac", Mr. Lewis standing in front waving the time. One of his innovations was to have the older students make cocoa to supplement the cold lunches brought from home. A well remembered teacher was Minnie Rankin. Boys weren't favorites with her nor she with them. She would try to shake them and, since they were bigger than she, would end up shaking herself.

For many years there has been no doctor in Johannesburg. The last doctor was "Old Doc Morgan." When called upon to deliver a baby, he would tie the cord with a string he carried for that purpose in the button hole of his coat lapel. When treating a wound he would wash it with his handkerchief dipped in a dirty wash basin. Many people in times of sickness were helped by Mrs. Alex Reush. When there was a new arrival in a family, she could be counted on to give mother and baby expert care.

The church of Congregational denomination was supported jointly by the Company and the community. Rev. Van Auken served as its pastor for many years. In later years regular services were discontinued and in 1954 the church was taken over by the township as a community building. Elections are held there, the town library is located in the building, it may be rented for special events and a small group still continues to worship there.

The drug store was first operated by Walter Nelson, who later established Nelson's Drug Store in Gaylord. For many years Otto Roesar was druggist.

Longtime postmaster was Vern Welch, who also worked as school janitor. Upon his death his wife, Dora, became postmistress and following her, their son, Stewart, served as postmaster until 1974. Stewart still lives in the "Burg."

Holidays in Johannesburg were occasions for special celebrations...especially the Fourth of July. People would come from miles around to participate in the picnic lunch, the contests, the baseball game and to enjoy the parade, the patriotic speeches and the fireworks. This tradition has carried over to the present. For one day in the year, July 4, Johannesburg is once again a "boom town."

After twenty-seven years the "inexhaustable" supply of company owned timber was exhausted. During those years 300,000,000 feet of logs had been cut. On August 1, 1929, the Johannesburg Manufacturing Company