

'Tomorrow's Saturday'

(Cont'd from P. 3)

and north to south.

The majority of the businesses and hotels lay to the east of the railroad tracks as did the courthouse. On the west side of the tracks was a grocery, meat market, hotel and rooming house. The real center of activity was from the present Indiana Avenue to Elm Avenue including both sides of Main Street.

The face of Main Street received new make-up from time to time as new businesses were established in stores recently vacated, or destroyed by fire. Several fires swept stores away at this time in Gaylord's history. Arson for insurance gains was whispered and mostly suspected. Unsafe stoves and the dumping of hot ashes were more likely suspects.

Some new businesses began in other unexpected ways. Hazel O. Huntley, daughter of Drs. Elmer L. and Ruey O. Ford, tells of how her parents found themselves in the piano business. Hazel had started taking piano lessons from Mrs. Grace Inman Morford; two lessons a week at fifty cents a lesson.

They had an organ in the home but her mother felt she should have a piano on which to practice so one was purchased and placed in the drug store which was at the front of their medical offices. Besides using the piano for practice Hazel obliged the customers, purchasing sheet music which was strung on a line across the store, by playing through any of that music they wished to hear. There often was a demand by the customers to buy the piano in the store. In order to keep a piano on hand for Hazel her parents found themselves in the piano business.

Hazel tells an amusing anecdote related to one instance of a piano sale. Her parents had agreed that, upon the sale of the piano, Hazel would go to the customer's home every Sunday afternoon to accompany their son who played the violin. This family would invite the neighbors in for the concert and serve homemade ice cream and cake at its finish. It was a matrimonial attempt, but after a few Sundays of playing, the family discovered that Hazel was leaving to meet the boy in whom she was really interested. The Sunday concerts came to an end right then!

THE STREETS OF GAYLORD were unpaved; hard-packed and dusty in the summer and muddy after a rain. In the spring Main Street was an avenue of deep ruts as the frost left the ground. There was no plowing of snow in the winter as the sleds and horses kept it all packed down and the height of the street rose several feet due to the accumulation of snow.

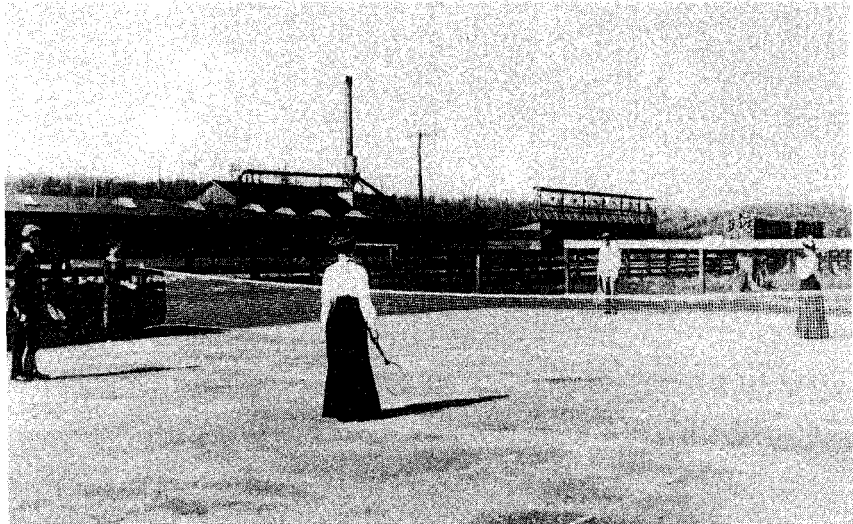
The strolling, carefree "Saturday" people walked on sidewalks of wooden planks until concrete ones replaced them around 1900. These sidewalks crossed the unpaved streets at all the intersections. In many places the walks were splintered from the nails in the bottom of the calk boots worn by the riverdrivers and the woodsmen. (Also, this is the reason saw-dust was sprinkled on the saloon floors.) As people moved along the street, close to the store fronts, they were covered overhead by wooden canopies. These were very much like those of 1971 which give the stores an Alpine look. This similarity gives us a feeling for that which was a part of Gaylord when it was yet very new.

In the summer there was a long drinking tank for horses across from the site of the present TownCrest restaurant and there were also two in the east end of town. There were iron hitching posts in front of every store. In the winter the horses were blanketed if it was to be a short stay. Otherwise livery stables were used.

Before electricity came to Gaylord, Main Street was lit by a few kerosene lamp posts. These were later replaced by carbon arc lamps at the street intersections. From the cupola on top of the courthouse these lamps were attached to four arms, each extending in a different direction.

That's the way it was in this period of Gaylord's history, and this was the setting for the happening.

THE FIRST TWINGES of excitement must have begun on Friday with the whispered words,



TENNIS was part of the recreation back in the early 1900's, too. From the courts looking west were New York Central tracks and even further was the planning mill and woods.

"Tomorrow's Saturday." Perhaps it was only a silent realization that the next day would provide an exciting respite from the week's labors.

There was a quickening of steps and a hurrying of chores as Saturday drew closer and the anticipation of that special day grew until the excitement could hardly be contained. What did Saturday offer to the people in Gaylord and the families on the farms nestled in the outlying areas of Gaylord?

In the farmhouses on Saturday mornings chores were finished early and a tub bath was a necessity before donning "dress-up" clothes. The wagon or straw-filled sled, depending on the season of the year, was made ready and any produce to be sold was loaded into the vehicle. Once a month wheat was taken along to be left for grinding at the grist mill in Gaylord. Each child was given five cents for spending money and the trip to town was made shorter as the children dreamed of what their nickel would bring. It might have been exchanged for a tablet and pencil for school, a big dill pickle, jacks, a yo-yo, rubber ball, or perhaps a rubber, or china-headed doll.

Once they had reached downtown Gaylord the children were cautioned to stay close, out of the street and away from strange horses. When they were in the stores they could look but not handle. Mrs. Glen Noiro, who as a child was Irene Olund, recalls that her family and other families from the farms in the Five Lakes area would meet in front of the Shepherd and Martindale grocery store. This grocery store was originally the Sanford S. Buck grocery and is now the next building west of the present Rexall Drug Store.

The men would talk of crops, farm operations, news events and exchange stories. The women, with children in tow, would window shop, exclaiming over the latest in fashions to wear or make, and the most recent devices available for adding to the comfort of their homes. They met and talked with friends, ordered the food supplies that were needed and helped the children decide on how to make the most of their spending money.

As the day shortened they sought out their wagon or sled, picked up the purchased supplies and said their good-byes. It was best to get home before dark and then, too, there were the evening chores to be done. It had been a glorious day and another one was only six days away!

In Gaylord it was mainly the women and children who felt the excitement of Saturday and a trip "downtown." The men, whether they were laborers, merchants or professionals, worked at their labors on Saturday as well as Mondays through Fridays.

It was not customary for the women and youngsters to go downtown during the week. The women were too

busy at home and the children came right home from school to take care of their chores and work at their lessons. During summer vacation they were required to stay near home.

MRS. THORA SUMMERS, the daughter of the R. D. Baileys, tells of the flurry of excitement on Saturday morning as they hurried to finish their tasks, make themselves ready and fidget until their mother had finished the baking for the next week.

They enjoyed the window delights and relished the many displays and even the smells of the merchandise peculiar to each store. There was the meeting of friends with the exchange of greetings, social event happenings, church work, recipes and news.

Many town folks would leave their grocery order on Saturday and the grocer would deliver it on Monday in a one-horse grocery cart. When the order was placed, the previous week's order was paid for. Upon payment of the bill there would be a candy treat for the children.

The women and children returned home to prepare the evening meal. After eating the men would stroll downtown to do their bit of shopping and seek out friends.

Lumberjacks, in the area harvesting the magnificent hardwoods, added their own particular kind of robust fun and humor. On pay days they came to town with empty gunny-sacks thrown over their shoulders. They crowded the stores and streets, spending their pay, filling their sacks with supplies, making the shopkeepers happy and the saloon-keepers rich.

The rowdy element among the lumberjacks made the women and children walk gingerly by the saloons.

To the people who worked inside the stores Saturday was an exciting time, too, though it was a grueling day. Stores opened at 8:30 a.m. with strict punctuality required of all help. Some of the stores were open at 6:30 a.m. to catch the millworkers on their way to work. The blacksmith shops were busy places and opened early, too. In anticipation of a busy day store owners hired extra help. The eight-hour day was unheard of and the women clerks worked the same hours as the men. Mrs. J. M. Deadman worked at Cook's department store for fifty-four years and her recollections of a Saturday as a clerk brings the past to the present.

Many times the stores did not close until 11 p.m. or after, with one hour off at noon and one hour off for supper. Saturday was a long, hard day. All merchandise had to be folded in the original crease and the counters cleared before the clerks could leave. Lady clerks were paid six to eight dollars per week; an experienced one might get twelve dollars. Men clerks

(Cont'd on P. 5)