

When GMC meant Gaylord Motor Co.

BY MIKE VON STEENBURG
Herald Times Staff Writer

GAYLORD — At 10 a.m. on Sept. 29, 1974, Ivan Polus and his family turned a crank on an old machine that took he and his family on a trip back into time.

Polus is a Montana resident whose great-grandfather settled in Gaylord over a century ago. The machine that took him on his journey to the past that fall day seven years ago also had ancestors originating in Gaylord — 93 of them, to be exact.

Polus is the man who's responsible for the restoration of "Old 94," the last of its kind from an era when the letters "GMC" on a radiator meant "Gaylord Motor Company" and not "General Motors Corp."

Soon, if everything goes according to plan, "Old 94" will be coming home to the community that still remembers the role it played in Gaylord's early years. The Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce has pledged to raise \$16,000 from private donations to buy the car and bring it back from Kalispell, Mont., where it's been located.

The car sat unused for years, buried in the back of an area garage until Polus found it and decided to undertake the task of resurrecting it. Now completely restored, from rag top to spoked wheels, the Gaylord is one of 400 built at the old assembly plant on Grandview Boulevard, between 1910 and 1912. Each car manufactured carried a number on its nameplate that indicated how many Gaylord's had been produced.

"Old 94" hadn't run in nearly a half century when Polus turned the crank and brought it chug-chugging to life, but it passed that first test drive with flying colors and has been driven on a somewhat regular basis since then.

Powered by a 30 horsepower Buick engine, the 1911 model is an improvement over the previous model year's 20 horse Oswald powerplant. With an old-style, "L" shaped head, overhead valves, and a Bosch magneto oil and splash system, the motor is one of as many as six different engines tried by the company.

The Gaylord rides unusually high for cars of its day, a result of being built and sold in an area where logging was still a major activity and where stumps and brush were obstacles commonly encountered on local thoroughfares.

A transmission system that connects directly to the rear



TESTING THE GAYLORD — The Gaylord Utility Car, one of two styles of the Gaylord automobile, is shown being taken for a winter test run on Feb. 20, 1912. Only about 400 Gaylords were produced at the old assembly plant building which now houses Jobbers Warehouse Service, on Grandview Boulevard. The Gaylord Car Company folded in 1912.

end and is shifted by long connecting rods is another feature that set the Gaylord apart from other gas buggies of the day.

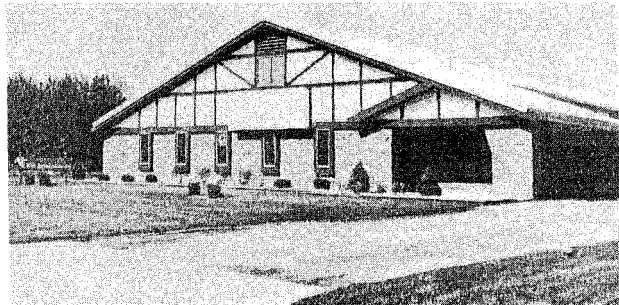
the Gaylord Motor Company was the same thing that bankrupt dozens of other car manufacturers at about the same time. If that factor had to be summed up in two words, those words would be "Tin Lizzy."

PERHAPS the biggest factor leading to the demise of

(Cont'd on P. 13)

Making advances for industry

We pride ourselves on keeping up with the state of the art in electronic testing equipment for the automotive industry. We design most of our equipment to customer specifications. Our Manufacturing Engineering Staff has processed, designed tooling and supervised complete plant set-ups for manufacturing everything from caskets to airplanes. Headed by an excellent management team, we're working hard to make advances for industry.



Serving industry since 1960 with

- Manufacturing Engineering Services
- Diversified Production Tooling
- Custom Electronic Quality Control Devices



Kay Enterprises Co.

Gaylord Operation

P.O. BOX 1236
1484 O'ROURKE BLVD.
GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735
(517) 732-6244