

Interview Ron Dickerson

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Keywords

CCC

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Businesses

Civic Leaders

Fox School

Saunders

WPA

Potatoes

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Gaylord Creamery

Fox

Recreation

Townsend

Ron came to Otsego County when he was about 5 years old. This would be in 1933. He and his brothers, mother and dad came because his dad joined the CCC in 1933 and was assigned to the Bear Lake Camp at Johannesburg. He was a foreman for a road crew. He was also a surveyor. They built roads throughout Otsego County. For example, Turtle Lake Rd. This road has curves every 500 ft. because it was designed as a scenic highway and by having the curves so frequently it made traffic slow down.

After a year or so Ron's dad was finished with the CCC enlistment and he moved to Gaylord where he worked as a meat cutter for the Golden Rule Grocery run by Rev. Starks and later, Melvin Clute. His pay was \$15.00 a week.

Later he quit the grocery store and farmed. He owned a farm where N. Ohio St. is, just south of Fairgreve Rd. and to the east of the freeway. 120 acres. Later became an auctioneer. "crying a sale". Bought a horse for \$.50. Raised potatoes, corn, horses. Did not have a tractor. Boarded 32 horses. Worked horses in winter in the woods so they were conditioned for summer work. Harrowed with an eight team horses. Worked farm until WWII was going strong, then employed by draft board. After the war he tried to get returning servicemen to fill out paperwork if injured during war so they could get benefits. Became first Veterans Officer. Worked for county.

In 1942 he was made a clerk for the draft board. He would take the draftees to the train station. The depot for train was at corner.

Ron was 17 when he joined the Navy. He spent the next four years as a n electrician for the Navy. When his enlistment was up he returned to Gaylord and enrolled in GHS to finish high school (senior year). Ron had married Amy Lee Fox prior to returning to Gaylord and the first day of his senior year he became a father. Graduated in 1949. Attended school during day . Other older boys were also attending after time in service was over. Had 6 children. Went to Cuba to Guantanamo Bay where there was a naval base. Rough place.. After Cuba went

to Puerto Rico and became an aviation electrician.

Airport 40 acres no hangers just field

Dickerson road - they were only residents on road when road was built in 1950's.

Businesses - bank was in building where Main Street Shoes is. Quay barbershop was where Fifth Third Bank is. Post Office was where Stained Glass store is, newspaper office next to Isabella's, A & P store where Chocolate Haus is.

Civic leaders included Norm Glasses from Gaylord Bank, Frank Wilkinson, road commissioner, Herb Hutchins, Floyd Lake, mayor and barber,.

Recreation- hunting and fishing, skiing, tobogganing on Round Top located at what is now Hidden Valley or Townsends run to Clifford Lake. Popular place., Could also skate on lake. Townsends charge \$.50 a person.

Began driving when 10 - drove truck while haying. Truck hauled loose hay. Horses worked pulleys to put hay in mow. No bales until 50's or 60's.

Big farms - McKenzie's at Johannesburg, Shipp by Elmira, Beckman.

Potato harvest- School vacation so students could pick farmers potatoes. Paid .03 a bushel. Worked at Shipp's farm on Shaff/Theisen Rds. Ron organized a strike of students calling for .10 a bushel. Mr. Shipp agreed to new wage. Other farmers followed suit.

Ron worked first for road commission when he was 16 years old, unloading boxcar of bricks for new road commission building. Received .50 an hour. County garage was where the Auto Factory was. The drove a bulldozer, moving railroad cars, etc. Later worked at Wilbur's, then Standard Products, then open own garage fixing cars.

Dr., Saunders - had a ranch where John Cleveland was caretaker. Past Sparr, off Saunders Rd. Cattle ranch. Had a cabin on river. Cleveland made his own electricity.

Fox School - corner of Townline and Hallenius Rds. Mr. Fox made butter at Gaylord Creamery and sold milk, butter and dairy products. Delivered house to house using horses, wagons and in winter, sleighs.

Potato Warehouses

Spud Warehouse is where the Farmer's Coop was; Knoch had warehouses
All by railroad tracks.

WPA - upgraded sewers in Gaylord. Had been wooden pipes clapped together.

Movie Theatres - One on Main Street and drive in at corner of McCoy and 27 South First movie he saw was "The Last of the Mohicans"