

Vanderbilt

The site of Vanderbilt was established when the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad decided to go north from Gaylord instead of northwest through Berryville. Virgin hard and soft timber of that area attracted timber buyers from all over the country. The Cornelius Vanderbilt family of New York was among them and after they had cut off and shipped out the timber, they gave the land to the people living there. Thus, the town became Vanderbilt in 1875.

When H.L. Bonner learned, in 1879, that the railroad was coming through Vanderbilt, he built the first store. He also had the first post office and was the first Post Master. Later in 1881 H. C. Peckham was appointed Post Master. The first house was built by Peter Nelson and John Gulburg in the east part of town; this building later became the town ice house. Mr. Gulburg made the original plat and subsequent additions were made by John G. Berry, A. C. Robinson, D. C. Warren and Mr. Dudley.

The railroad was surveyed in 1880 and completed in 1881.

During the seasons of 1882-1883 the village grew rapidly and a large number of houses, businesses and mills were erected, including a two story, four room school house on the east side of the village which operated as a ten grade school. Two churches were erected: the Congregational with Reverend Abram VanAuken as pastor and the Methodist led by Reverend A. J. VanCamp.

Main Street was two blocks in length with a windmill in the middle of the street. Stores and businesses of varying types were established. John G. Berry, founder of Berryville, who had moved to Vanderbilt when the

Berryville mill, store and other buildings had burned in 1880, had a general store, A. Glazer Clothing and Dry Goods Company, General Store run by George Long, Hardware, Farm Implements, Tools and Buggies owned by D. M. Sly, M. Karlake owned the Furniture Store and Mortuary, Gibson Furniture and Mortuary, Frank Campbell Hotel and Saloon, George Farrand, Poolroom and short orders, Barber Shop operated by Elwood Olney and the Drug Store by F. A. Baldwin and Dr. S. E. Woodruff. Dr. Woodruff and Dr. J. T. Lester were the two doctors in 1883. Three other hotels were in business at this time: the Vanderbilt House owned by A. Herrick, the Commercial House owned by J.R. Parker and the Anchor House owned by H. Brandt. Other businesses were run by George Shelton, the French Brothers (O. F. and Seth), D. E. Roberts, Charles Caryl and John H. Hixson.

Manley and Olds manufactured barrel staves and lumber in large quantities. Vanderbilt Manufacturing Company made wooden bowls in a mill said to be the best equipped in the state. Early mills were owned by Brown and McGregor, and Gilson and Zickgraf. George Kirkpatrick operated a blacksmith shop and built wagons. A weekly newspaper edited by G. H. Miles, THE VANDERBILT REVIEW, was printed between 1884 and 1885.

In 1883, where the railroad went through a cut south of the overpass, the train hit a herd of cattle owned by Tom Connor of Logan. All except one of the cattle were killed. The engine blew a hole in one of its cylinders. The crew cut a sapling and made a wooden plug to fit the hole so the steam would not escape, and the train went on.



Early Vanderbilt Mail Delivery