

# Ghost Towns

If we could go back in time and meet the early inhabitants of our several ghost towns of Otsego County they would probably be hard working, hard living lumberjacks. They would be people who in some way were engaged in work in the woods or mills. Most of these towns were located because of the lumbering industry which flourished during the last quarter of the 19th Century and into the early 20th Century.

Were it possible to recapture the sights and sounds of a town of that era we would see hungry men gathered for a meal in the cook shanty or spending lively evenings in the bunk houses. We might hear the cry of "TIMBER," as the virgin trees fell prey to the woodsmen's axe and saw. There would be all the emotions of family living as in nearly every lumbering area there would be tar paper shacks which housed some of the workers' families. Birth, death, illness, happiness and disappointments were all woven into life then as now.

There was a settlement at Bradford Lake in 1876 which was moved to Waters in 1885. Southeast of Gaylord was Arthurville, 1898. Nearby was Klingensmith started in 1885 and discontinued in 1900. Near Vanderbilt was Brown's Corner, 1879, and discontinued in 1882. Mellens (Old Bagley), 1880, was discontinued in 1883. Cregoville was on the map about 1905-1912 but had no post office. Cornwall on the Pigeon River was located east of Vanderbilt in about 1905. Whitmarsh was located on the Sturgeon River.

Berryville is now a part of land owned by Mr. Grant but at one time it was a thriving lumbering town. John G. Berry, for whom Berryville was named, was in partnership with Barney Gagnier about 1878. They had a sawmill and a grist mill. The first mill was powered by water but after that burned another was built powered by steam. At its peak, there were about a dozen families living at Berryville. Much of the surrounding area was homesteaded by Civil War veterans. Mr. Berry operated a store, there was a resident doctor and a blacksmith. Joe Thiebolt, a carpenter, did most of the building. There was a school which had a three month term in the summer and another three months in the winter. Church services were held in the school house as were social events. The first Masonic Lodge of Otsego County was organized at Berryville.

The town of Hallock was organized about 1906 when the railroad was built. During its best years there were three stores, a chemical plant and sawmill located there. Shacks were constructed for about a dozen families and a livery barn for the horses. Two spurs from the railroad ran from Gaylord, one spur for chemical wood and the other for logs and potatoes.

There was no school so the children attended nearby Porcupine School.

Logan was a settlement between Gaylord and Vanderbilt. A Pennsylvania company, Rogers and Allison, built a sawmill and some railroad. To convey the logs, a short spur was built to the Michigan Central Railroad. The Yuill Brothers bought the mill and extended the railroad. There was a shingle mill at Logan, about twenty families living there and a Company store was operated for their benefit. The school house was located on the south side of an east-west road. The road was also the boundary line of the school district so the children who lived on the north side of the road were forced to walk several miles to another school.

About 1913 the Boyne City Railroad was extended east of Gaylord into the Sparr area. This could not be classified as a true ghost town as there is still a store and people living in the area. The settlement received its name from a man named Sparr who came there as a minister. At one time there was a post office, meat market, blacksmith shop and a school which served as a church on Sundays. The road was lined on each side with tar paper shacks.

The site of New Toledo was one mile south and seven miles to the east of Gaylord. When the post office was established the name was changed to Quick. It seems there was another New Toledo in Michigan at the time and government rules would not permit another community with the same name.

The Badger Lumber Company, Salling, Hansen and Batchellor Company were some of those who had lumbering operations in the Quick area. The general store was built by the Quick brothers about 1900. At the edge of the Cedar Swamp stood the shingle mill



Post Office at Quick,  
originally called New Toledo.