



MRS. WHITE, her father and brother and brother-in-law taking a buggy ride in Cork Pines in 1905.

# 'Tomorrow's Saturday'

*Turn-of-the-century  
customs traced*

## FOREWARD

The following writing is a narrative form designed to depict and describe the social life and customs of the people of Gaylord and a typical adjoining farm area in Otsego County around the turn of the twentieth century.

It is the hope of the writer that those who read this paper will become acquainted with the color and culture of the time through the descriptions of the leisure-time activities after a week's work was done. The title is intended to convey the thought of how important the weekends were to these hard-working people of this time.

## BY SHIRLEY GLIDDEN

Nearly one hundred years ago, when Otsego County was young, the inhabitants of Gaylord and the surrounding farm lands were busily engaged in the struggle of life, providing shelter and food for themselves.

From Monday through Friday and through a part of Saturday it was work from "sun-up to sun-down," but they knew how to enjoy and participate in the diversions available in that day.

Near the end of the week anyone voicing the words, "Tomorrow's Saturday" was sure to evoke excitement in the listener. Except for holidays, which fell on any day of the week, the people of young Otsego County anticipated the socializing they made for themselves on Saturday and Sunday.

Let us set the stage for a glimpse of the customs and social life of those folk who came before us.

The men on the farms that nestled past the outskirts of Gaylord struggled to clear the land and raise food crops hoping for a surplus to sell for money, or to exchange for commodities they themselves could not

produce. There was little machinery but it needed to be kept in operation with care and repairing.

There were always buildings to build and maintain, land to be cleared, fences to set and mend along with other farm chores. The women on these farms, along with the children, did all they could to add to the available comforts of those times. There was soap to be made, lard to be rendered when a hog was butchered, and fruit and vegetable processing to be done in season so that the pantry shelves would be filled when the long winters began.

Meat from the butchering of the beef and pork animals had to be smoked, dried or canned. There were bare wooden floors to be scrubbed white, bedding to be washed and replaced when worn, and new clothes to be sewed or old ones mended. Everything that could possibly be done at home was done there and each task required a huge part of each woman's day. There were also the everyday chores of cleaning, cooking and baking which consumed the portions of the day that were left.

IN GAYLORD, the residents were pursuing the task of living as professionals, merchants, craftsmen and laborers offering their services to the people of Gaylord and those in the neighboring areas. In the homes the women were attending to their household tasks while the children were attending school or carrying out their assigned chores around the home.

The businesses, professional offices and the courthouse were at the heart of the village of Gaylord, lined up regally on the main street which ran east and west at right angles to the Michigan Central Railroad. As the village grew more streets were added, all running neatly in parallel lines with each other, east to west

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