



HALT! FOR YOUR LIFE!

The first person who reads this through to the end, will be entitled to the privilege of participating in the

GRAND EXCURSION!!

— Given by the —

GAYLORD CITY BAND

From Grayling, Otsego Lake, Gaylord, and Vanderbilt to Cheboygan, Mackinaw Island and return, on

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1883,

at the following low prices for the Round Trip: From Grayling, \$2.50; Otsego Lake \$2.00; Gaylord, \$2.00; Vanderbilt, 2.00

This Excursion has been started at the urgent request of many citizens and no pains or expense has been spared to make it the most enjoyable affair of the Season. A Special Train will leave Grayling at 5:00 A. M., Otsego Lake 5:45, Gaylord 6:05, Vanderbilt 6:25, arriving in Cheboygan at about 8:00 A. M., where the fast Steamer

MESSENGER,

will be in waiting. The steamer will arrive at the Island at about 9:30, where three or four hours will be spent in seeing the sights of this beautiful spot. The boat will then return to Cheboygan where the excursionists will remain until 8:00 o'clock, when the train will start on the return trip, thus fetching all home in good season.

Remember the Date!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29th.

⚡ The above price includes ride on the boat. ⚡

Tickets For Sale at the Several Depots and Post Offices.

Elmira: 'potato capital'

Elmira, located in a valley surrounded by hills, first saw life over 100 years ago. As with the other areas about, lumbering was the attraction. The village was called Windsor. A gap in records does not reveal when the name was changed to Elmira.

The Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad came through Elmira in 1873, bringing an influx of lumbermen who proceeded to clear the land and settle the village. The many trains that passed through refueled at the coal dock and filled their tanks with water from the Pump House Pond. A roundhouse was set up to repair the railroad cars and locomotives. Sidings were established at key points so cars could be loaded and unloaded. A spur ran south into Mt. Jack along the county line where freight cars could be lined up for over a mile.

The village grew rapidly and by 1892, a flourishing community was in operation. Businesses were constructed, two hotels housed the many transients, a post office was set up, a church, school and town hall were built. Four sawmills gave employment to the local residents. These mills were owned by Jerry Mahoney, Sam Schuyler, Albert Losey and M. Phiffer. They made barrel staves, cheese boxes and sawed lumber for building. Frank Gregg acted as postmaster while A. Brooks took command of the school. Four saloons were also in operation at

this time. A population of 400 supported this thriving community.

The early 1900's brought about a decline in lumbering as the virgin forests were depleted. Another source of income was necessary. The fertile land in the area proved to be excellent for potato growing. By 1920, most of the region produced potatoes, creating a need for warehouses. Men such as Thomas Buell, Frank Zaremba, Stanley Kwapis and Frank J. Polus erected buildings with scales to weigh the potato wagons in and out. Large storage bins housed the potatoes until they could be bagged and shipped to different parts of the state and country.

Certified seed potatoes were in great demand in the 1920's. Dr. Ernest Nixon (uncle of President Nixon) found the area around Elmira perfect for this purpose. He encouraged the people to expand in this line and as a result, Thomas Buell became the largest grower of certified seed potatoes in the state.

Fires destroyed most of the businesses in Elmira. The owners did not rebuild but moved on to other endeavors. In the year 1975, the village consists of a store, one tavern, the post office, a Catholic Church and a farm equipment dealership.

Frank Zaremba owned and operated a grocery store and saloon. When fire demolished the structure, he constructed a building to handle farm equipment.

His sons, Walter and Chester, have continued the business and today, they are the third largest International Harvester farm equipment dealers in Michigan.

Literary talent has been recognized among Elmira's citizens. Esca Rodger, sister of the well-known Dr. John R. Rodger, wrote a book about the area titled, "Year of Bitterness." A Catholic priest, who spent his childhood in Elmira, has written several books pertaining to the Catholic religion. Thomas B. Buell, a Naval Commander and grandson of the late Thomas Buell, has written a biography about a World War II Naval Admiral. He has received the Alfred Thayer Mahan Award for Literary Achievement.

The population, at this time, is about 150 but is again on the upswing. New businesses are locating in the vicinity, bringing in new families. Potato growing is still a major source of income. Families growing potatoes in large quantities are: the Walter Burdos, the Arthur Estelles, the Makarewicz's, the Casmer Polus family, the Joseph Ciszewskis and Louis Francis and his family. The times indicate steady growth for the community.



SALLING'S settlement along Otsego Lake in the early 1900's.

Many helped produce this edition

The Otsego County Herald Times gratefully acknowledges the assistance and cooperation from all persons who contributed to this special Centennial Edition. Many people provided information and photographs, along with time and effort, in helping produce this publication. Without their assistance, it would have been virtually impossible to publish a fine edition such as this. — James L. Grisso, Editor and General Manager