



Deep in our hearts, most of us have memories of the old town or place

where we first went barefoot, go  
our first licking, bought our first  
penny candy, went skinny dipping, and  
then grew up and went away thinking  
we were too smart for that old place.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the many who  
gave their time, loaned their pictures, and shared their  
memories to make this book possible.

We dedicate this book to those who want to reminisce,  
and for generations yet to follow.



Site of Bill Williams Camp, Art McQuistan owner of oxen, about 1890. 3 miles east and 1/2-mile south of Grant.



Martin Oerly's Saw Mill, located where the Primary School now stands. This was a later saw mill, and lasted into the 1960's.

# The Beginnings of GRANT, MICHIGAN

## THE EARLY YEARS

Andrew T. Squire arrived in Bridgeton Township at the age of 18 and became a successful lumberman. In 1853, the Board of Supervisors of Newaygo County appropriated \$300,000 to build a bridge at Bridgeton, and the contract was let to Andrew T. Squire and David W. Squire. It was a covered bridge and received the name of Shingle Bridge.

Andrew T. Squire built a shingle mill in Section 18, East of Bridgeton store. It burned and then rebuilt; was destroyed again in 1872 and was never rebuilt. Andrew then moved his operation to Grant Station in Ashland Township and started building. This same year, the Grand Rapids, Newaygo and Lake Shore Railroad had reached Sparta by May 15. As the road was approaching nearer and nearer to Grant Station, Squire made a wager with D. P. Clay that his whistle would herald the beginning of his mill before Clay's whistle would blow for a station stop on the first trip. It was nip and tuck until the last few hours, and then Squire won. Squire's Mill was an important addition to Ashland Township. It had the capacity of 20,000 board feet of lumber and 30,000 shingles per day. By 1885, Squire was producing one million feet of lumber per year.

From the NEWAYGO REPUBLICAN, January 18, 1873:

"Samuel W. Peterson, Postmaster of Ashland, has received the necessary key and blanks for his office and will very shortly commence business. The office will be located at the point where the railroad crosses the State Road, about a quarter of a mile below the Buckhorn Tavern."

On his old State road outside of Grant, there was a post office called Lake, located in a stagecoach stop called the "Buckhorn Tavern", owned by an early Grant Township settler, Rensselaer Brace. In the year 1869, this stage ran between Grand Rapids and Traverse City. This "Buckhorn Tavern" was a rest stop for people and horses to spend the night and get a meal. The story is told of the Indians who came in to get their monthly checks at this post office.

Ashland Township was organized as the fifth one in Newaygo County in 1854. Grant Township was number 11 in organization, in 1867. Rice lake and surrounding swamp occupied one-fourth of the Township in 1867, the largest body of water in Newaygo County. The 1884 Atlas of Newaygo County states that the population of Grant was ninety men, women and children.

The main road through Grant came in on Elder, called Old State Road, past old slaughter house and onto Commerce and across what is now M-37, over railroad and by present Murray's Lumber Co., continued on Front Street and up hill, by Oppie's Excavating and around corner on Gordon and wound on to the High Bridge over the railroad again. This was the way to Newaygo.

In the near 1889, one couldn't fish or camp at Hess or Brooks Lake because of heavy timber. The only lake available close was Blanche Lake at Grant. Dorman's Crossing, a loading site, was located behind the area where Gerrit Eaton now lives. This road was opened by D. P. Clay, local lumberman at the time. Many picnics were held at this spot.

The brickyard just west of the City of Grant produced many bricks for building in this and the surrounding area. Business was slowly ending by 1922.

Alex McKinley, funeral director and early businessman, proposed to citizens of the village that they should have a cemetery. Early residents were buried at Hillside in Grant Township. Parkview was purchased from John B. and Sarah Train in March, 1919. In later years, their son Lawrence Train sold more of the property for the additional land in Parkview. The first burial there was Mrs. Cox in May, 1921. (Village records – Clerk, George Rosewarne)

The earliest recorded burial in Hillside was Mrs. Barber in 1868. Ashland records earliest burial as a Miss Clementia Betts in 1852. The Danish Cemetery had first burial in 1883.

We received our beautiful Blanche Lake Park from Chester and Katherine Love. It was purchased in 1919, and the deed states it must always remain a park. (from register of Deeds Office)



Finkbeiner's Saw Mill (portable) on the Jim Sharp property west of Grant. Jim Sharp is the man standing alone in a suit at the right. Finkbeiner disappeared from the community, and it is still a mystery what happened to him.



LOADING LOGS ON A CART

The Citizens' Band of Grant was the successor to the old Citizens' Band of Ashland, which was organized and played in the 1890's. This band was very popular, and they were called upon to play at every social event. Many men who formed the later band learned the way from these faithful men. The Citizens' Band of Grant played through the 20's and 30's, and then disbanded around 1940. Director of this band was Fayette Crawford, who played cornet. Other band members and their instruments are as follows: Axel Kjolhede, cornet; Ted Kjolhede, Baritone; Claud Crawford, Snare Drum; Emorey Grilley, Bass Drum; Elmer Gregg, Saxophone; Jay Crawford, Cornet; Cleo Hyatt, Bass; Pete Christensen, Clarinet; Ferris Gregg, Snare Drum; Jerry DeKoning, Cornet; Archie Smith, Cornet; Hans Rasmusen, Cornet; Tom Smith, Trombone; Audley Smith, French Horn; John Decker, Clarinet; John Triber, French Horn; Loren Voight, Cornet.

These men practiced some on week nights in the top part of the old Fire Barn on Maple Street. This band entertained every Saturday night, and for all parades and celebrations. Grant built a band stand which faced Saur's Hardware on Main Street. In the early 1930's it was moved to Blanche Lake, where it was finally torn down.

The Bell Telephone Company Office was located in a little building south on Front Street when first in Grant. Fayette Crawford was operator. He was succeeded by Mr. George Cole. A Mr. Cruzan followed for a while, and then Mrs. Mattie Love became the chief operator until the dial system came into Grant.

The story is told that John Sharp owned the first automobile in Grant. Claud Crawford tells he went to Detroit and drove it back to Grant for Mr. Sharp.

Orley Rhodes made crates at Orley's Saw Mill, located across from the elementary school. The building or barn still stands today. Mr. Rhodes built the first onion storage in Grant, and sold stock in order to build.

Our Community Center was started with a gift of \$10,000.00 by Mrs. Frank Squires (nee – Marietta O'Hare). This gift had to be matched by Village of Grant and surrounding area, and center was to be completed in three years or the money gift reverted to her heirs. The Village was bonded for \$8,000.00, and the remaining \$2,000.00 was donated in money and labor. The building was completed and dedicated in 1924. (Village Records – Clerk, George Rosewarne)

FROM NEWAYGO REPUBLICAN – November 2, 1923: HAVE STARTED WORK ON HIGHWAY M-54

#### NEAR GRANT

The New Era Construction Co. has started work Monday on three and one half miles of State Highway M-54. Work will commence at the south Village limits of Grant, and the road will be of concrete, 20 feet wide, from the limits to State Road Ave., and gravel for the rest of the distance.

When the work is completed, traffic can go directly through Grant without crossing the Pere Marquette Railway.

October 2, 1924: The cement work on M-54 south of town will be finished in about a week. The road must then lay twenty-one days to harden properly before being open to traffic.

November, 1925: The State Highway Department announced Saturday that all road construction work at present uncompleted, will be held over until spring. As a result, M-54 between Grant and Bailey will remain closed during the winter.

All this road work on M-54, which later was changed to M-37, was accomplished with horses and wagons and wheelbarrows, and many men working on different sections of this at a time. This was a very great undertaking for the area in these years.

FROM GRANT INDEPENDENT – 1904

H. W. Morley, Publisher

William A. Hudson, President; Thomas H. Smith, Clerk; Jens Hemingsen, Treasurer; Harver W. Morley, Assessor; William A. Burdick, Hans Carlson, Henry C. Hemingsen, Sylvester E. Hicks, Suel Smith, James A. Tyler – Councilmen; Dr. Peter Drummond – Health Officer; Henry I. Brown – Street Commissioner; Benjamin F. Davis – Constable and Marshall.

During the seasons of 1872-73, nine million feet of logs were drawn to Grand Rapids, mostly from Ashland Station, at the rate of 100,000 a day. Burnett Fulkerson of Casnovia was conductor on that train, and the crew had many a hustling time to fill the contract of delivering the required scale each day. This was the first log train in central or northern Michigan.