



# City of Gaylord Historic Context Study

Prepared for the  
City of Gaylord, MN

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*We live not alone in the present, but also in the past and future. We can never look out thoughtfully at our own immediate surroundings but a course of reasoning will start up, leading us to inquire into the causes that produced the development around us, and at the same time we are led to conjecture the results to follow causes now in operation. We are thus linked indissolubly with the past and the future.*

*If, then, the past is not simply a stepping-stone to the future, but a part of our very selves, we cannot afford to ignore, or separate it from ourselves as a member might be lopped off from our bodies; for though the body thus maimed, might perform many and perhaps most of its functions, still it could never again be called complete.*

- Charles S. Bryant

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# City of Gaylord's Historic Context Study

## Purpose of the Historic Context Study

This historic context study of Gaylord was commissioned in 2012 by the Gaylord Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the City of Gaylord. The study was conducted by Smith & Main, a planning firm that specializes in historic preservation and economic development, working under contract with the EDA.

The City of Gaylord and the EDA both recognize that as the heart of the community, the well-being of Gaylord's downtown is paramount to the economic success of the City. To that end, the City and EDA have undertaken a number of planning projects to ensure the continued success of Gaylord's downtown. In 2008, the City commissioned the Minnesota Design Team to complete a design charrette of the downtown and present the team's recommended findings to the community. In 2000, the City Council adopted the City's Comprehensive Plan. This included a year and half of public input including interviewing members of various commissions, boards, and departments, conducting a community survey, and soliciting input from various community members. The community's main goal for Gaylord's downtown is stated in the Comprehensive Plan – "An overall design framework should be established that celebrates Gaylord's history and small town character. This framework should be established on the principle of a walkable downtown, where cars and traffic are accommodated but pedestrian comfort and safety are dominant."

Most recently, the City has commissioned a planning consultant to complete a Downtown Plan to prioritize the community's resources and projects in an effort of increasing the vitality of the downtown. In addition, as a method to celebrate Gaylord's history and strengthen the City's small town character, the City and EDA want to complete the City's first Historic Preservation Plan.

The City of Gaylord plans to engage the City's residents, business owners and policymakers and create a historic preservation plan, which would explain the different aspects of historic preservation, identify the preservation issues present in Gaylord, determine preservation goals for the City, and prioritize preservation efforts. As part of the public participation process of developing a historic preservation plan, the City envisions using an appointed Task Force to help steer the planning process, conducting several Open Houses to solicit community feedback, working with the local newspaper and highlighting the planning process and dates of the Open Houses, and also monitoring the planning process on the City's webpage.

However, as part of the background information for developing a historic preservation plan, the City of Gaylord is completing this Historic Context Study. As stated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning, any decisions regarding a Historic Preservation Plan are best made when the relationship of individual properties to other properties within the City are understood through a historic context study.

## The Importance of Historic Contexts

A historic context study is a document used in planning for a community's historic resources. It identifies the broad patterns of historic development of a community and identifies historic property types (or resources) - such as buildings, sites, structures, objects, or districts, which may represent these patterns of development. Likewise, the purpose of this historic context study is to explain Gaylord's historic development through several major historic themes. These themes help explain the economic, social

and political influences that have shaped Gaylord's development and construction of their historic buildings.

As a planning document, the context study is intended to be a dynamic document, evolving as community needs and desires change. The context study is based primarily on historical research and has not involved a comprehensive inventory of buildings, structures, and landscapes. Future inventory and evaluation will further assist in determining which properties relate to specific contexts, possess historical significance, and retain historic integrity.

Preservation planning, as developed by the National Park Service for organizing activities for preserving historic resources, is based on the following principles:

- Significant historic properties are unique and irreplaceable.
- Preservation must often go forward, even without complete information.
- Planning can be applied at any scale.
- History belongs to everyone.

The contexts developed for Gaylord reflect certain statewide historic contexts developed by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. These statewide contexts include:

- Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940
- Urban Centers, 1870-1940
- Minnesota Farms, 1820-1960

The geographical limits of the study are Gaylord's city limits and the surrounding countryside since farming has played a significant role in the development of the community. The time period analyzed in this historic context study is between pre-history and 1965.

### **Preservation Planning Projects to Date**

National Register of Historic Places – Sibley County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence and Jail (1988).

National Register of Historic Places – Gaylord City Park (2012).

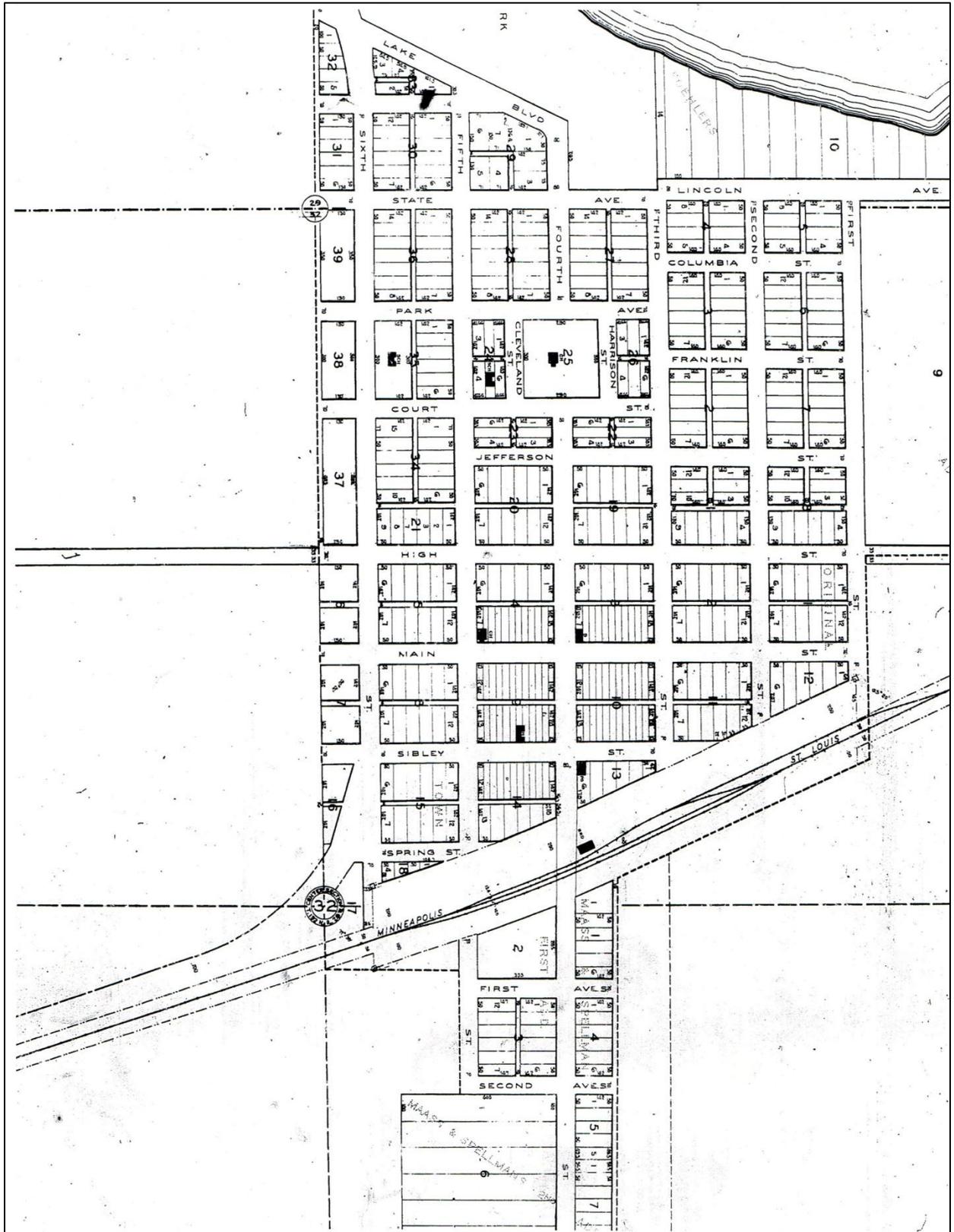
The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) completed a Historic Properties Inventory of 23 buildings in Gaylord in 1987.

## Timeline

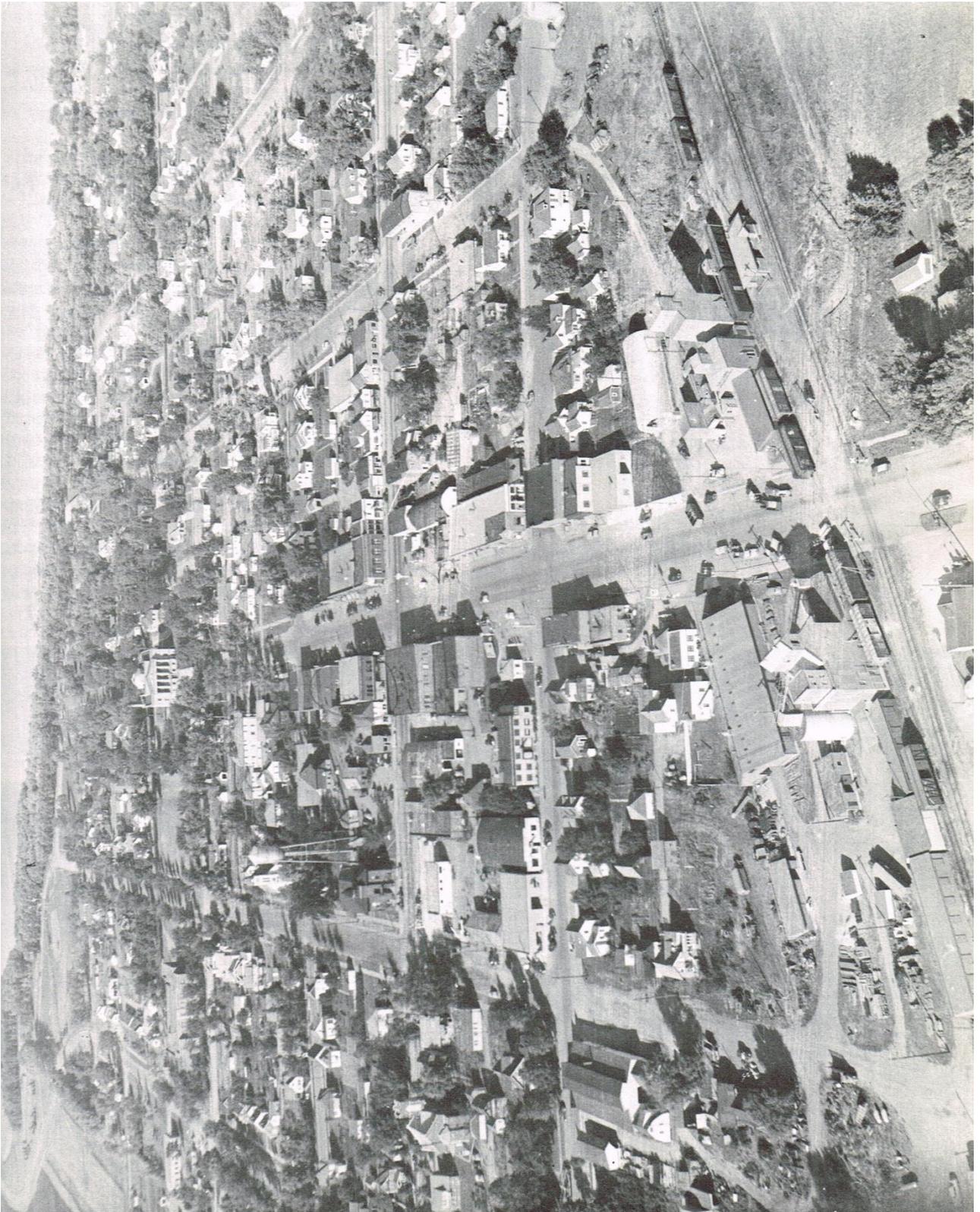
### Gaylord

### U.S./Minnesota

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <b>1820</b>                             |   |
|  | <b>1830</b>                             | 1825 – Fort Snelling is completed   |
|  | <b>1840</b>                             | 1837 – Treaty with the Ojibwa opens lands east of the Mississippi for settlement  |
|  | <b>1850</b>                             | 1849 – Congress establishes the Minnesota Territory<br>1850 – 6077 white settlers living in Minnesota   |
| Dryden Township officially organized – 1858  | <b>1860</b>                             | 1851 and 1855 – treaties of Traverse des Sioux allows settlement in certain areas west of Mississippi<br>1858 – MN becomes 32 <sup>nd</sup> State   |
|  | <b>Civil War<br/>1861-65</b>            | 1862 – First train arrives in St. Anthony (Minneapolis)<br>1862 – U.S./Dakota War<br>1862 – Homestead Act becomes law   |
|  | <b>1870</b>                             | 1870s – Recession   |
| Minneapolis & St Louis Railroad reaches Gaylord – 1881<br>Village of Gaylord incorporated - 1883                 | <b>1880</b>                             |   |
| Council financially assists in construction of flour mill – 1887<br>Gaylord constructs first Village Hall – 1891 | <b>1890</b>                             |   |
| Village purchases land for Gaylord’s Cooperative Creamery-1897<br>City’s Electric Light Plant opens – 1898       | <b>Recession<br/>1893-98</b>            | 1893 – Cleveland Recession  |
|  | <b>1900</b>                             |   |
|  | <b>1910</b>                             | 1908 – Model – T Ford automobile introduced   |
| County Seat moved to Gaylord – 1915  | <b>1920</b>                             | 1917 – Ford Motor Co. introduces the Fordson tractor, the first mass produced tractor<br>1920 – Census shows for the first time most Americans live in urban, not rural areas<br>1920 – Babcock Amendment creates MN’s trunk highway system<br>1924 – The Farmall tractor introduced; widespread tractor use begins |
|  | <b>Great<br/>Depression<br/>1929-40</b> |   |
|  | <b>1940</b>                             |   |
|  | <b>US in WWII<br/>1941-45</b>           |   |
| Community votes to change Village of Gaylord to City of Gaylord - 1947   | <b>1950</b>                             |   |



1936 State of Minnesota Plat Map for Gaylord



*Gaylord Aerial – 1953 (Gaylord –Hub of Sibley County)*

## Brief History of Gaylord

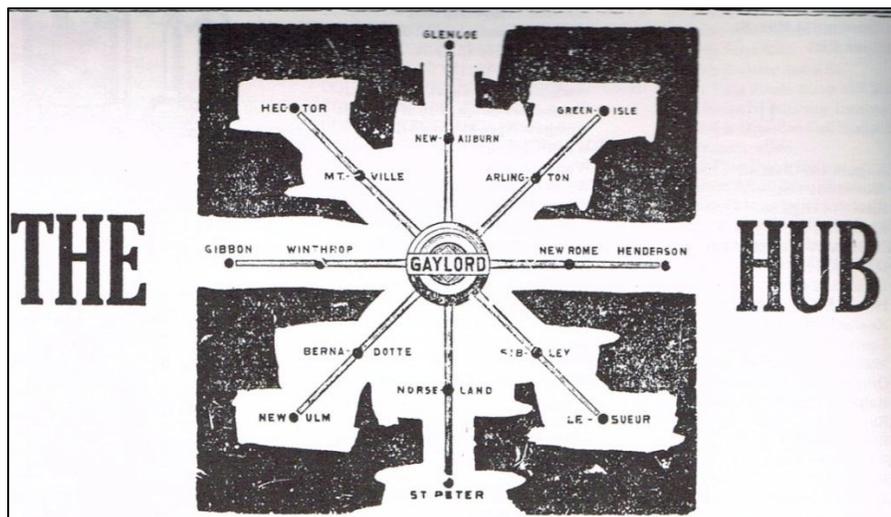
The founding of the village of Gaylord is credited to William Washburn who extended the Minneapolis and St. Louis (M & St. L) railway from his flour mills in Minneapolis to South Dakota. Washburn established train stops along the way (typically every seven miles) and platted the towns along the railway. In October of 1881 M & St. L finally reached the village of Gaylord, which was named after E. W. Gaylord, a highly respected man working Mr. Washburn's railroad company (Gaylord never actually lived in the area or town of his namesake). Two years later, in 1883, the first city elections were held and a petition was approved that incorporated Gaylord as a Village (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 2). Gaylord remained a village until 1947 when the community approved changing it to a city of the fourth class.

The founding of Gaylord is summed up nicely in the *Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County* book,

*While Gaylord was being built, western Minnesota and the Dakotas were just being opened. [Dakota Chief] Sitting Bull was still a power west of the Missouri River, and hostile Indians further west were a hindrance to settlement. Gaylord was a part of this western frontier territory. The routing of the M & St. L through the area and the founding of Gaylord were logical developments as a more centrally located trading point was needed in Sibley County (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 76).*

The continued existence and growth of Gaylord was dependent on the railroad. The presence of the railroad in Gaylord meant attracting more settlers and business people, having a means of shipping agricultural products to larger markets, bringing much needed building supplies to the community, and providing faster mail service and telegraph communications. On the other hand, promising settlements like New Rome, Mountville, and Eagle City began to disappear completely when the railroad bypassed their towns (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 64).

Gaylord was the prototypical small town of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, being the agricultural trade center where townspeople's livelihoods were dependent, directly or indirectly, on supporting farm trade territories and selling goods to farmers.



*Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County*

In 1915, the residents of Sibley County approved moving the county seat from Henderson, which is located on the eastern border of Sibley County, 15 miles west to Gaylord, which is more centrally located in County. As the table below shows, this had a dramatic effect not only on the development of Gaylord but also Henderson, in an adverse way. In 1910 the population of Henderson, Arlington, and Winthrop all exceeded Gaylord's population. It was not until the county seat was moved in 1915 that Gaylord's population started to catch up and eventually surpass that of its neighboring towns. The population of Gaylord increased 28% during the decade that the county seat was moved to the city. Meanwhile the M & St. L railroad bypassed Henderson, which has experienced a rather slow declining population (the M & St. L bypassing Henderson was another reason for the moving of the County Seat).

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Gaylord</b> | <b>Henderson</b> | <b>Arlington</b> | <b>Winthrop</b> | <b>Minnesota</b> |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1890        | 387            | 909              | 417              | 438             | 1.3M (+68%)      |
| 1900        | 608 (+57%)     | 904 (-1%)        | 712 (+70%)       | 813 (+85%)      | 1.7M (+34%)      |
| 1910        | 610 (+1%)      | 753 (-20%)       | 733 (+3%)        | 1043 (+28%)     | 2.0M (+19%)      |
| 1920        | 783 (+28 %)    | 766 (+2%)        | 776 (+6%)        | 1147 (+9%)      | 2.4M (+15%)      |
| 1930        | 812 (+4%)      | 672 (-12%)       | 915 (+25%)       | 1037 (-1%)      | 2.6M (+7%)       |
| 1940        | 1049 (+29%)    | 820 (+22%)       | 1122 (+23%)      | 1195 (+15%)     | 2.8M (+9%)       |
| 1950        | 1229 (+17%)    | 762 (-8%)        | 1313 (+17%)      | 1251 (+5%)      | 3.0M (+7%)       |
| 1960        | 1631 (+33%)    | 728 (-5%)        | 1601 +22%)       | 1381 (+10%)     | 3.4M (+15%)      |

If the railroads built and shaped the towns in Minnesota's western prairies, then the automobile changed them. Starting in 1910, Federal, state and county roads were improved to meet the demand of the new automobile. Soon people were entering Gaylord not at the depot, but instead along highways at the outskirts of town. As a result, businesses began searching for development opportunities along the highways leading into town, instead of locating near the depot, eventually creating the familiar commercial strips, similar to that on Trunk Highway (TH) 5 on the east side of Gaylord.

## **Context 1 – Early Archeological, Native American, Early White Settlement**

The City of Gaylord is located in section 32 in Township 113 North, Range 28 West (Dryden Township), in the central part of Minnesota, about 70 miles southwest of Minneapolis. Located in the center of Sibley County, Gaylord is the county seat. Surrounded by rolling prairies the only existing natural woods are found around Lake Titloe to the north and around the Minnesota River seven miles to the east.

Gaylord's vital agricultural economy is the result of the rich soil that has been about two million years in the making. That is when glaciers began molding the surface of the state. The temperatures cooled and warmed four times causing glaciers to make four incursions and retreats across the state. With each of the four glacial movements, the glaciers leveled rocky ridges, scoured hills and deposited fertile pulverized limestone, the rich subsoil. Formation of fertile, black topsoil began about 10,000 years ago when centuries of prairie grasses grew, died and decayed. The clay-loam soil of Sibley County is among the most productive in the world. Moreover, the gentle rolling topography causes few problems with erosion and makes nearly all the land tillable (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 193).

The movement of the glaciers and the melting of the last glacier also created Minnesota's undulating surface and its 10,000 lakes, including Gaylord's Lake Titloe. There are several theories to the origin of the name of Titloe Lake. The most commonly accepted theory is that the lake is named for James Titloe, who is said to be one of the first pioneers of the area. Property records, however, do not verify his presence in the area under any spelling (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 14).

The melting of the last mountain of ice left the huge Lake Agassiz in the Red River Valley area. The overflow of Lake Agassiz created the great River Warren, which carved out the Minnesota River valley with bluffs more than a mile wide and 200 feet high.

"Minnesota," the name the Dakota Indians gave to the river before the whites arrived, means the river of the bleary water. As early as 1700 French fur traders called it the St. Pierre or St. Peter River. In 1852 Martin McLeod asked the territorial legislature to change the name contending that, "Minnesota is the true name for this stream, as given to it in ages past, by the strong and powerful tribes of aborigines, the Dahkotahs, who dwelt upon its banks...." (Neill p. 168).

### **Native American Settlement**

In 1975 Gary Sommers, a Gaylord High School student found pieces of clay pots on Lake Titloe's largest island. Scott Anfinson, a Minnesota Historical Society archaeologist was requested to investigate the site. In March 1977, Anfinson found more shards of pottery similar to those Sommers had found two years earlier. Anfinson reported that the pottery indicated that the island was home of prehistoric Woodland People 1,500 to 2,000 years ago. Anfinson also found waste flakes of stone from making spears and arrowheads, a hoof of a bison, bones and parts of turtle, muskrat, and fish, giving some idea of the diet of these early island dwellers (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 9).

According to Anfinson, the Woodland People were hunters and foragers, not farmers. They like to live on islands because the surrounding lake waters provided protection against prairie and forest fires that would regularly sweep through the area from the northwest. Prairie wildfires would typically burn around lakes, and in Lake Titloe's case, fires coming from the northwest may have caused the lack of

trees on the northwest side of Lake Titloe while remnants of the Big Woods remain on the southeast side.

Anfinson stated that the Woodland People may have inhabited Lake Titloe Island as a continuous settlement for as long as 2,000 years. Anfinson believes that the Woodland People moved northwest toward the Dakotas in the mid-1700's when Dakota Indians moved into this area. The Woodland People eventually migrated to the Rocky Mountain area (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 9).

The Dakota were the last Native Americans to control the Sibley County area. Originally from the Great Lakes region, the Dakota moved to western Minnesota after being pushed out by the Ojibwa. The Dakota lived in villages in the summer, and broke up into smaller groups in the winter to follow deer and other animals. The Dakota nation occupied most of present-day Minnesota, and parts of the current states of North and South Dakota. There were originally seven tribal groups in the Dakota nation: Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Yankton, Yanktonais, and Teton.

In 1851, the Dakota signed two treaties with the U.S. government: the Traverse des Sioux and Mendota treaties. The accumulative result of the two treaties was the relocation of the Dakota to two adjoining reservations stretching 150 miles along the Minnesota River. Encompassing a strip of land 10 miles wide on each side of the river, the original reservations reached from northwest of New Ulm to near the present-day border of South Dakota.

Under the terms of the two treaties the Dakota agreed to give up approximately 35 million acres of land in exchange for "perpetual peace," \$1,665,000 to be paid out over 50 years and services that included blacksmiths, doctors, schools, carpenters and training on how to become farmers. Although the Dakota had been hunters for generations, the federal government pressured them into becoming farmers instead. Any Dakota that did not cooperate was denied food or money promised to them through the treaties.

The U.S. – Dakota War of 1862 (also known as the Sioux Uprising) broke out in part as a reaction to events a thousand miles to the southeast. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the federal government redirected funding and attention to troops fighting the Confederates, as a result, the Dakota's promised supplies came months late. The Dakota War effectively ended after the Battle of Wood Lake in September 1862. Even though the Dakota War only lasted only a year, the panic it caused among the white settlers took years to overcome.

At least 500 white settlers were killed during the conflict; it is unknown how many Dakota died. The Dakota paid dearly, though. As Little Crow, leader of the Dakota, had predicted, "Kill one, two, or ten, and ten times ten will come to kill you." Those that were not killed, lost their land, forfeited all payments due to them, and were moved into camps and reservations far from Minnesota. The largest mass execution in U.S. history was a result of the Dakota War. Originally, over 300 Dakota men were sentenced to be hanged, but President Abraham Lincoln commuted most of their sentences to prison. On December 26, 1862, 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato. Little Crow finally said, "We are only little herds of buffalo. The great herds that covered the prairies are no more" (Minnesota Travel Companion p. 125).

Even with the banishment of the Dakota Indians from the state, the settlers feared the Dakota who roamed from time to time back to their old hunting grounds. Few settlers understood the Dakota culture, let alone respected it. It was a case of two cultures with two different needs and philosophies

competing for the same space. The simple, hardworking immigrants, who were looking for a new life, could not allow the Indian to stand in their way. They had sacrificed everything to make a new life. It was a matter of survival, but to the Dakota it became a matter of survival as well.

### **Early White Settlement**

A temporary stockade was built in 1862 in what was to become the town of Gaylord on what is now the north side of High Avenue between Seventh and Eighth Streets. It served as a haven of protection for the settlers in the area during the Sioux Uprising. Citizen soldiers were garrisoned at the frontier fort. Fortunately no hostilities occurred anywhere in Dryden Township. The settlers' primary enemies before the Dakota War were not the Dakota Indians, but "poverty, weather, disease and discouragement" (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 16). While the presence of the Dakota caused some anxiety for the early settlers, for the most part the two groups were friendly toward each other. Settlers commonly exchanged sugar, salt, and corn bread with the Dakota for fresh fish and other game.

After the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862, large tracts of the former Sioux reservations were turned over to white settlers. Speculators and settlers came by steamboats following the major rivers and their tributaries - the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. The Minnesota River on the eastern boundary of Sibley County became a major tributary for passage into the Dakota Territory. It brought many early visitors into this area who led the way for settlement to begin and for towns to be established in the wilderness.

Development of the area was slowed due to the lack of understanding of farming the prairie. While prairie soil is especially productive compared to the ground under forests, early settlers did not know that. They believed that if trees did not grow in the grassland areas, then the soil would not be good for crops either. Settlers who came late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century moved westward from the river town of Henderson and soon realized the productive potential of the rich soil beneath the prairie. The prairie also had an advantage over land in the big woods because it was ready to plow and there were no trees to cut down or stumps to pull out with oxen (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 193).

However, the prairie sod was tough for the first settlers to cultivate. They had to have a breaking or sod plow with two or three pair of oxen to pull it to break through the prairie sod. Although the prairie did not offer trees to build the settlers' first houses, the prairie did provide tough sod that imitated the durable qualities of brick. Settlers cut the prairie sod with a spade and used the sod as bricks or blocks without mortar to make sod shanties. It has been noted that the sod shanties would stand for years. Because of the lack of wood around the Gaylord area, very few of the shanties had board floors. Instead hay or carpet was just laid over the dirt. Settlers would identify their property by digging ditches around their fields.

Charles Grochow was one of the first settlers in the area. He built a log shelter four miles northwest of present-day Gaylord in the early 1850's. His son, Herman, recalled his father and other settlers in the area had to travel to St. Paul with oxen for supplies as the nearest town, Henderson, was not equipped to meet the needs of the large influx of settlers. Settlers crossed the Minnesota River on a ferry at Henderson and followed the Old Indian Trail, which today is approximately the same route as State Highway 169. Gradually a community system was formed for obtaining supplies. One farmer would make the difficult trip to St. Paul and bring back large quantities of goods, which would be divided among the neighbors (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 17).

Dryden Township, which encompasses Gaylord, was officially organized on May 11, 1858. The township was first called Williams, but was shortly renamed Dryden in honor of the celebrated English poet and dramatist, John Dryden (1631-1700). Dryden is also the name of villages and townships in Maine, New York, Virginia, Michigan, and Arkansas. The township name reflects the British heritage of the New England Yankees who took the first claims in Dryden (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 18).

The settlers in Sibley County were predominantly of German decent, more than twice any other ethnicity. Based on the 1900 United States Census, 58% of the settlers of Sibley County were of German decent. The other top three ethnicities were Swedish (23 percent), Irish (6 percent) and Norwegian (3 percent).

### **Early Townsite Development**

It was not until 1881, though, that William Drew Washburn declared that his Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway (M & St. L) would begin construction of a main line that would run from his flour mills in Minneapolis to the western boundary of the state. Farsighted capitalists began homesteading properties in the Dryden Township area in the hopes of selling property to Washburn for his new railway. The exact location of Gaylord was ultimately determined by whichever land speculator or farmer would accept W. D. Washburn's offer to buy 40 acres of land that was needed for his train depot, grain elevator and new village. After negotiations failed with three different land speculators, Washburn found William Maass willing to sell approximately 40 acres of his farm for the future site of the Village of Gaylord (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 72).

Some early residents wanted to name the village Maassville after August and William Maass who came to the area about 1871 and the sold land that would eventually become the Village of Gaylord. But the M & St. L railroad company was to determine the name of the new village, and it was Washburn who chose the name Gaylord in honor of Edward W. Gaylord who worked for the M & St. L Railway for six years and was its superintendent from 1878 – 1880, even though Gaylord never lived in the area or village of his namesake (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 71).

Gaylord was platted in 1881, a month before Maass and Washburn signed their purchase agreement. Like many towns in Minnesota, Gaylord was platted in a gridiron scheme in a north/south, east/west orientation, with the railroad running through the south side of the village. The grid scheme was an advantageous one in many ways: it could be easily laid out by anyone who could work with survey equipment; since land was a major commodity, the grid pattern facilitated the ease of both sale and resale of land as well as the preparation of the necessary legal descriptions.

In October of 1881 M & St. L finally reached Gaylord. Two years later, in 1883, the first city elections were held and a petition was approved that incorporated Gaylord as a village, and Julius Henke was voted as first mayor (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 2). Like many railroad towns, Gaylord started to become the center for the agricultural community, serving a growing population of farmers whose needs were varied and numerous. It was not long until businesses started to provide services and equipment needed by farmers, facilities such as a flour mill to process the harvested crops, and saloons and churches to meet the farmers' socialization needs.

## Context 2 – Agriculture and Agribusiness

“While the railroad was vital to the beginning and growth of Gaylord, agriculture was the real base for the economy of the whole area. Production agriculture or farming was the essential renewable resource that fed the other small industries and businesses of Gaylord.” - John W. Peterson, Sibley county Agricultural Agent, 1957 - 1986

The agricultural industry has had the most significant impact on the physical and economic development of Gaylord, some of which are still evident today from farm buildings to local roads. During the village’s infancy (1860-1900), agriculture was the leading export industry, bringing the most wealth into the community. The local businesses like the blacksmiths, general stores, saloons, harness shops, hardware stores, banks and bakeries all initially relied on the success of the local farmers. The farmers have made significant investments in mills, grain elevators, creameries and their farms that helped shaped the landscape of Gaylord and the surrounding country side.

### Early Agriculture

In the 1850’s, when agriculture was undertaken in earnest in Minnesota, farmers ignored the rich prairies and instead chose areas such as those along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, which had wooded valleys and hills. Clearing the Big Woods of eastern Minnesota to farm was time consuming work, but early farmers were wary of land where trees did not grow, where water was obtainable only by digging deep wells, and where cyclones and prairie fires were a periodic menace. “It was not until after immigrants had followed the railroads across the State, and had proved the richness of this prairie country, that they realized their mistake” (WPA p. 69).

The area which was to become the Gaylord community offered the best of both wooded and prairie areas. Lake Titloe was a source for fish, game birds and trees for building primitive shelter and to use as fuel for heat during the winter months. The prairie was open so that crops could flourish without the back-breaking labor of grubbing out tree stumps and roots (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 197). It only took three years to prepare the prairie for farming compared to twenty years to prepare woodland of the Big Woods for crop production (Drache, p. 22). Once established, most farms began on a subsistence basis. Early settlers planted vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, corn, onions and cabbage.

Breaking the native prairie was still no easy task for the pioneer farmers. For centuries, the roots of the native grasses had grown together to form an impenetrable layer of knots several inches deep. Strong as oxen were, it sometimes required four to eight animals hitched together to haul the plow through the virgin soil. Herman Grochow, the son of Charles Grochow who was one of the first farmers of the area, related what early farming was like in the 1870s in a 1925 interview, “The iron plows used then didn’t scour very well, and sometimes there were words used that wouldn’t sound well in a church” (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 197-199).

In 1862, during the Civil War, President Lincoln signed the Homestead. To take advantage of the Homestead Act, settlers had to be over 21 and must never have borne arms against the U.S. (i.e. not fought for the Confederate Army during the Civil War.) The Act promised 160 acres of land, which would be owned outright by the settler after five years if he built a home, made improvements and farmed the land. The land could also be bought outright for \$1.25/acre.

Northern politicians wanted the land west of the Mississippi be made available to independent farmers, rather than wealthy plantation owners who would develop it with slaves, and force yeomen farmers onto marginal lands. The Homestead Act was critical in allowing immigrants of modest means the opportunity to own a sizeable farm and use their financial resources to improve the land rather than paying a mortgage. But even with free land, a farmer often had to borrow money to get started (house, barn, fences, tools, animals, seed, etc.) (Gilman p. 125).

In addition to their crops, nearly every farm had a few hogs, sheep, dairy cows, and a small flock of chickens. A few farms had beef cows. Eggs and butter were traded for household needs. A trip to the village to exchange produce for supplies established the term “trade area” which is still used today.

### **“King Wheat”**

Market demand, population growth, technological innovation and transportation improvements all enabled farmers to move from subsistence farming to profitability for the first time during the 1870s and 1880s. Wheat was the first crop grown commercially on a large scale in Minnesota. Wheat was considered a frontier crop because it is dependent on abundant and inexpensive land. It had arrived in Minnesota in 1859 after moving westward along the U.S. frontier. Wheat was “the premier lazy man’s crop, taking relatively little labor (and little expertise) to produce,” according to historian David Danborn (Danborn p. 147).



*“Lunchtime in the wheat field” Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County*

Wheat was the main crop in the late 1800s and early 1900s for Gaylord and Sibley County farmers. Not only was wheat easy to grow but it was also easily stored, transported and graded so as to become an article of trade earlier and for longer distances than more bulky and more perishable products. Grain could also be converted into money the same year it was grown (Larson p. 25-26).

New machines and techniques that were introduced in the Minneapolis mills in the early 1870s made Minnesota wheat viable for flour for bread as high-quality wheat grown elsewhere. Moreover, the railroads enabled farmers to ship their wheat to Minneapolis’ Mills and Duluth’s shipping ports (Larson

p. 118-119). This led to Minnesota moving from fifth to first rank in wheat producing states of the Union during the 1880s.

The introduction of the threshing machines and mechanical reapers in the 1850s also assisted in moving farmers past the subsistence level of farming. An 1850 threshing machine could thresh 24 bushels an hour compared to six men who could manually thresh two bushels an hour. During the 1890's communal farming reached its peak in Sibley County as the large threshing machines and steam engines were too expensive for every farmer. So owners of the few around would travel the area and the area farmers would help each other harvest their wheat fields.

All of the grain that Minnesota farmers were growing could not be turned into flour as soon as it was harvested. Thus, the grain elevator was introduced to store all and sell all the grain streaming in from the Minnesota prairies. Large grain elevators soon distinguished Minnesota's rural skylines as every railroad station had a grain elevator associated with it.

Shortly after the arrival of the M & St. L railroad in Gaylord, four grain elevators were constructed within the railroad right-of-way as wheat was the principal crop for the early farmers. The first grain elevators were typically made of wood and covered on the outside with sheets of iron to prevent fire. They later were often made of steel or concrete.

Gaylord's first elevator, located north of the tracks between Second and Third Streets, east of the present Sommers Elevator, was owned by the Pacific Elevator Company. The distinctive round structure was constructed in 1882 but razed in 1910. A second Pacific Elevator was lost to a fire in 1916. A third Pacific Elevator, 100 feet tall, was constructed the following year in 1917. It was the largest on the M & St. L line and was used as a central plant for cleaning and mixing grain bought by the Pacific chain (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p.232).

The second elevator in Gaylord was built by the Bean and Company in 1885 and was probably located west of Fourth Street, north of the tracks, where the A&B elevator presently stands.

The Mulford Company Elevator built Gaylord's third elevator in 1886 most likely on the east side of Fourth Street, south of the tracks. In 1888 it was moved to the north side of the tracks. In 1896 it was called the Western Elevator, and then it became the Great Western Elevator. In 1922, the old elevator was torn down and replaced with the present structure. Now it is the A & B Grain and Feed elevator (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 233).



*M & St. L Elevator, original 1886  
elevator located in the middle (2012)*

Gaylord's fourth elevator was the M & St. L Elevator, built in 1886 east of Fourth Street and north of the railroad tracks. The east annex to the original elevator was erected in 1949. (In 1964 the company's name changed to Sommers Grain and Feed and they constructed the west annex in 1972). Seven grain storage bins, which were erected in the 1950's, are scattered along the south side of the tracks. The original 1886 elevator, located between the east and west annexes, has the distinction of being the oldest building in Gaylord still in use for its original purpose (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 234).

In 1887, the firm of Herman Thoele & Son started Gaylord's fifth grain elevator. The location of their 20 x 28 foot elevator is unknown. In April, 1917, the building was razed and the salvaged lumber was used to rebuild the Pacific Company elevator after a fire destroyed that elevator (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 235).

William Washburn's plan of developing a railroad (in Gaylord's case the M & St. L) to transport all of this grain to his Washburn-Crosby Milling Company in Minneapolis was coming to fruition. Minneapolis, called Mill City, was reaching its peak of flour production by 1916. To help market his product, Washburn financed the WCCO radio station, which carried the first singing commercial in 1926 for Washburn's Wheaties cereal (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 235).

By the early 1900's Minnesota was no longer a state of subsistence farmers who struggled to put food on the table. A vast expansion of farmland and the application of modern technology had turned this state into one of the nation's leading producers of wheat, giving Minnesota the nickname, "King Wheat."

### **Diversification**

While years of growing wheat exclusively and the associated deteriorating of soil quality prompted farmers to diversify their crops, the financial boom for farmers during the 1910s enabled many to erect big dairy barns. From 1920 to 1929, the market for wheat dropped 50 percent in the Gaylord area as farmers switched to other crops for animal feed (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 208).

Corn was an important livestock feed, but harvesting it was hard work. Farmers walked corn rows and picked ears off dried stalks with a husking hook strapped to one hand. Once the cobs were broken off they were tossed into a wagon. Speed and accuracy were matters of pride to local farmers as many southern Minnesota towns sponsored popular annual corn picking contests which gave farmers the opportunity to demonstrate their skills before large crowds (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 210).

New varieties of corn were being introduced into the State, and an influx of Iowa farmers with experience in corn raising started the swing away from cash to feed crops. It was because of this that corn acreage pushed into first place at the turn of the century surpassing wheat (WPA p. 70).

Diversification was beneficial to the farmers. It protected farmers from being completely wiped out by the failure of a single crop. Farmers could earn regular “egg money” and a “milk check” instead of relying on a single payment for the grain harvest in the fall. Livestock and poultry made better use of the family’s total labor pool, including children, and spread farm labor more evenly throughout the year. Diversification also made good use of farm by-products. Livestock could eat crop residue missed during harvest, and excess milk could be fed to young pigs and calves. Fields could be naturally fertilized with manure, and untillable land could be used for pasture (Granger p. 3.29).

The effect of diversification on the built environment on farms surrounding Gaylord was profound. Livestock farming, and especially dairying, required farmers to make significant capital investments for new buildings and equipment. Silos (air tight structures that preserved green fodder for the winter months) allowed farms to feed dairy cows nutritious green material year-round, which encouraged more milking through the winter. A silo alone could increase the livestock-carrying capacity of a farm by more than one-fourth. (Wayne p. 30-37). Two-story barns (usually housing animals below and feed such as hay above) and silos became a significant part of Gaylord’s rural landscape. Diversified farming dominated Minnesota agriculture until the late 1950s (Granger p. 3.29).



*Farmstead outside of Gaylord (2012)*

By 1928, dairying had become the chief agricultural industry in Sibley County.

## **Industrialization**

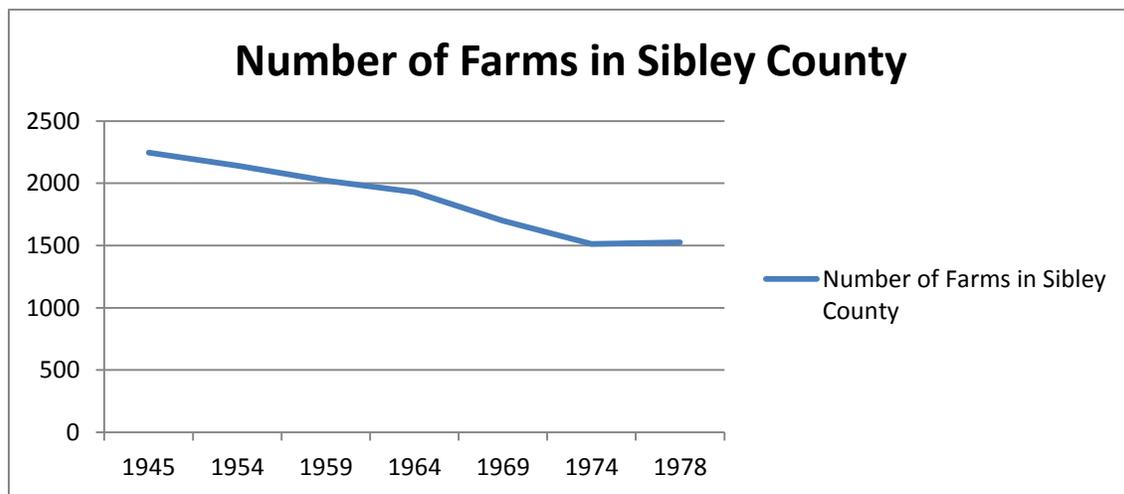
It was during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Minnesota farmers “began to shift to intensive production, employing technology and scientific methods to increase the output of their land and labor – a process some call industrialization.

Gasoline tractors first appeared in about 1910. At that time, no one anticipated how they would transform the agricultural landscape. Tractors worked faster than horses, did not grow tired and did not eat. Fields once needed for hay and oats to feed horses could be used for other crops. However, most farmers kept a team of horses for certain jobs, even when they had a tractor (Gilman p. 160).

About this time, Congress promoted the Agricultural Extension Service, which was a federal-state partnership with the federal government funding the placement of an extension agent in each county seat. Working through state colleges, the service agents told farmers how to make more money by using “scientific” methods. Among these were new kinds of crops, new fertilizers, chemicals to kill insects and plant diseases – and, of course, more machinery. To be successful, the agents told farmers, they had to produce more – just as other non-agricultural industries did (Gilman p. 161).

World War I brought greater demand for food and high prices. The government urged farmers to help the country win the war by raising more food. Between 1917 and 1919 many farmers bought tractors to keep up with the demand. Gasoline tractors and efficient machinery, such as mechanical manure spreaders, corn binders, and hay loaders, made the farmer more proficient and self-reliant. More efficient machines enabled a farmer to plant and harvest his crops faster by himself without help of his neighbors as his father and grandfather did. This efficiency also allowed farmers the opportunity to buy and farm more land (Danbom p. 142).

Eventually, farmers were caught in the tide of industrialism. After WWI, too much food was being raised causing crop prices to fall. To make money at the lower prices, each farmer had to grow even more. Many small farmers gave up through hard times in the 1920s and 1930s. They could not afford the new machines and could not keep going without them. Their fields were taken over by others who could. So year after year, Minnesota counted fewer but larger farms, a trend also experienced in Sibley County (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 161).



*Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County*

World War II increased the demand for power machinery as sons of farmers and hired men left the farms for the war. After the war, many veterans found a new way of life off the farm which began the exodus to cities and suburbs. (Gaylord also experienced this exodus from farms as the City’s population increased 33% between 1950 and 1960.)

This period of industrialization of farming marked an unparalleled growth in agriculture, both locally and nationally. Dairy cattle numbers dropped in Sibley County from 22,500 in 1950 to 16,500 in 1980, but production per cow increased from 6,000 to 11,000 pounds of milk during the same period. The number of chickens raised went from 389,000 in 1950 to 635,000 in 1980. The county’s annual egg production, mostly from the Gaylord area, of 154,300,000 eggs was surpassed by only one other county, Stearns, which is 100 miles north of Gaylord (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 212).

### **Agribusiness**

The farming community is of utmost importance to the Gaylord economy since many agricultural businesses have developed in Gaylord as a direct result of the surrounding farming community.

### ***Flour Mills***

With several elevators located in Gaylord, community leaders took action to attract related industries. In 1887 the Village Council agreed to help finance the construction of a flour mill. In 1896, W. W. Strickland and Hubert Schroers accepted the Village's offer and constructed a steam-powered flour mill, officially named the Minnesota Milling Company but was popularly referred to as the Superior Mill, probably because the owners were from West Superior, WI. The mill was constructed on the north side of the railroad tracks, west of the present Gaylord Feed Mill. The brand name of flour manufactured was Pride of Gaylord. The mill burned in 1917.

In 1919, Henry Byers of New Ulm had a three-story cement block mill erected on the remaining foundation of the old mill. Within a year of completion this mill was also destroyed by a fire. The Commercial Club (a forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) purchased the land of the ruin mill, and in 1932, J. J. Johnson of Cokato began construction of a new mill, the Gaylord Milling Company, again using the foundation and basement of the previous mills. Brand names were Old Master Flour in 1933 and Lily White Flour in 1934. By 1943 the Gaylord Milling Company name was still in use, but the firm started milling livestock feed instead of flour (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 236).

### ***Feed Mills***

In January of 1954, a fire destroyed all but the office and warehouse of the Gaylord Feed Mill (former Gaylord Milling Company flour mill). Clayton Johnson rebuilt the mill for the fourth time (which is still in operation under the Gaylord Feed Mill name).

### ***Creameries***

The first creamery in the village, Thoele & Son Creamery, was in operation for 26 years, from 1884 to 1910. Operated by H. F. Thoele and his son, the creamery was very productive with 2,300 pounds of butter being churned in one week in 1897. (The creamery was built on the site of the Fullerton Lumber Company warehouse, which was razed in 1981 in order to construct the Prairie House Restaurant – southwest corner of Fifth and Sibley.) A second creamery, Mueller Bros. Creamery, was in operation for 5 years, from 1891 until 1896, which has been razed.

Community leaders organized the Gaylord Co-operative Creamery Association in 1897 with William Maass as president. Within two months, the Village purchased a parcel land, donated it and a wood-framed creamery was constructed and open for business. A fire destroyed the Gaylord creamery in 1914, and it was replaced with a brick structure and new equipment in 1916. In 1929, the creamery had 200 patrons and produced 551,741 pounds of butter valued at \$230,995, most of which was shipped to New York City and Philadelphia. When long-time butter maker E. J. Doering retired in 1960, butter making was discontinued. (In 1972 the building was razed and the parcel, located on the north side of High Avenue between Seventh and Eighth Streets, was divided into residential lots) (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 239).

### ***Poultry***

Beginning in 1900, Gaylord residents and area farmers began an infatuation with chickens to the point where "almost everyone with space for a hen coop was in the chicken business." This fascination was

mostly the result of chickens being relatively inexpensive to raise while providing eggs and “egg money” for the family. They are housed in cheap chicken coops and could be fed table scraps with a bit of grain or ground corn. By 1930 area farmers had won national chicken contests, and Golden Buffs, a national poultry magazine, claimed “Gaylord is Home of the Finest Chickens in the World” (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 242).

Gold Medal Hatchery opened for business in 1927, first in the former H.F. Thoele residence in the lower floor of the IOOF building then it moved to a building behind the Home Oil Company station. The hatchery closed in 1947. Snow Hatchery also opened in the village in 1935 in a building located on the southeast corner of Main and Third Streets until 1951, when L. H. Kading purchased the building and remodeled it for his plumbing and heating business.

Julius Rosenberg and his two sons (Avron and Charles) started the Rosenberg Premium Egg Producing Company in 1956, which consisted of three large laying houses and an office building just east of Gaylord. In 1972 the Rosenbergs merged with Nathan’s Produce of Silver Lake and Rodgers and formed a new corporation called Crystal Foods, Inc. and work on an egg production plant was begun on the east side of Gaylord. By 1978, Crystal Foods was supplying about 75% of the fresh eggs consumed in the Twin Cities, and the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce named Gaylord the “Egg Capital of Minnesota,” and adopted the egg as the official trademark of the city. In addition, “Eggstravaganza,” which began in the late 1980’s, is the City’s largest annual festival held over three days in the summer (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 243).

### **Expected Property Types**

- Barns
- Creameries
- Farmhouses and farmstead structures
- Feed mills
- Flour mills
- Grain elevators and bins
- Offices of trade, farming, and related organizations
- Other factories
- Seed and nursery companies
- Stockyards
- Warehouses, agricultural
- Warehouses, industrial

Houses of individuals associated with the context

### **Recommendations and Future actions**

Conduct a cultural resources survey to identify and evaluate all resources in the city relating to the agricultural and agribusiness context. Further specific recommendations should be based on the findings of the survey.

## Context 3 - Commerce

This historic context examines the commercial development of Gaylord, including the internal and external forces that have influenced the commercial development pattern of Gaylord from 1880 through 1965 - the period covered by this Historic Context Study.

### Original Plat

N. B. Evarts, an engineer for the M & St. L platted the village in 1881, a month before William and Mina Maass agreed to sell a portion of their farm site to William Washburn for part of his railroad right-of-way and the area that would become the Village of Gaylord. Evarts platted the village so that the commercial district would begin at the location of the railroad depot, go two blocks north along Fourth Street and include two blocks along Main Street (between Third and Fifth Streets). The plat resulted in a commercial district in the shape of a cross with the main intersection at Main Street and Fourth Street. Platting the commercial area next to the train depot was typical for towns founded by railroad companies in the 1870s and 1880s as most people arriving in the village traveled by train.

Commercial lots were originally platted 25 feet wide and 142 feet long, which was also typical during this period. Platting the commercial district into small lots advanced the development of the downtown as it created flexibility for the prospective business owners. Entrepreneurs were able to buy an individual lot and inexpensively construct a narrow commercial building, or they could buy multiple lots and combine them and develop a business block, which typically describes a large, ornate commercial building that features a combination of stores, shops, offices and apartments. Similar to Gaylord, early commercial buildings comprising only one commercial lot were clad with wood, while the business blocks typically had a brick veneer.

### Early Businesses

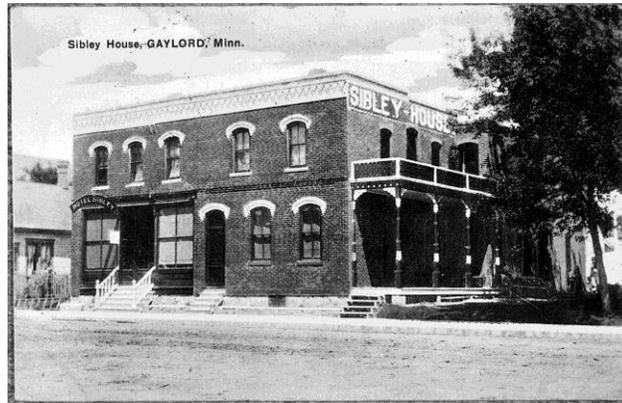
The economic environment in the United States during Gaylord's infancy was one of great prosperity. "The prosperity of the country was so great – and importations from foreign countries were so large that the public monies derived from the duties accumulated in the treasury until the Government actually had more money than it knew what to do with" (Gaylord Hub, p. 75). While this prosperous economic environment for the country may have psychologically encouraged the investors in the new village, starting a new business was still challenging as money was scarce on the frontier. Pioneers of the village had to risk their own investments.

Initial businesses in the village catered to the railway workers and the farm families in the surrounding countryside. The first business building erected in the village was that of Henry Boettcher. In late 1881, shortly after the village was platted, Boettcher constructed a wood-frame building on the southeast corner of Main and Fourth Streets to house his general merchandise store and the village's first post office.

That same year, the second business to open in Gaylord was a saloon that was built adjacent to Boettcher's mercantile store. Within just the first two years, multiple businesses were established to service the new village, including a harness store, a tin shop, a lumberyard, a blacksmith, two hotels, and a hardware store.

The first significant commercial building constructed, in terms of size, was located on the prominent southwest corner of Main Avenue and Fourth Street. In 1882, Hans Mansfield constructed the Mansfield Block on two commercial lots. The building, however, was destroyed by a fire in 1907.

Six small hotels were erected between 1881 and 1888 to house the businessmen, laborers and families brought to Gaylord until private homes could be built. Dining rooms and saloons were usually a part of each facility. The last hotel to be opened was the Sibley House in 1888. The Sibley House was Gaylord's only hotel from 1900 until it closed in 1980.



*Sibley House – 1888 (MHS)*

“The city and surrounding area are primarily one of family-owned and operated small businesses and farms. The production of food and fiber is the leading enterprise of the immediate area, and Gaylord and area businesses are largely those providing necessary goods and services to the agricultural community,” Duane Wilson, State Commissioner of Agriculture 1961-1964 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 231). This statement is true throughout Gaylord's entire history.

A review of the business directory published in the Gaylord Hub on January 27, 1894, reveals an economy supporting the construction trades and agricultural businesses: a bank (Bank of Gaylord), four general merchandise stores (Thoele & son; Swenson; Bonne; and Mueller Bros.), a druggist (Boreen), two Harness Shops, four agricultural implements dealerships, five saloons, five grain elevators, two hardware stores, two creameries, five carpenters, two brick masons, three painters, a watchmaker & jeweler, a millinery, two dressmakers, two blacksmiths, a lumberyard, two shoemakers, an attorney, a restaurant, two meat markets, a cigar factory, a tile factory, a brickyard, a wagon shop, two barbers, a draymen, a storage house, a flour & feed exchange, a liveryman, a furniture store, two hotels (Sibley House and Dakota House), two physicians, and three contractors.

### **Cleveland's Depression of 1893**

Cleveland's depression of 1893 (or Panic of 1893) was the result of the collapse of the railroad overbuilding and shaky railroad financing which set off a series of bank failures. U.S. gold reserves fell below \$100 million, a fifth of the face value of printed money. The outcome to the nation was the closing of 600 banks, 15,000 businesses, and the Northern Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroads, representing one-third of all the railroads in the US. About 17% - 19% of the workforce was unemployed at the Depression's peak. Many people could not meet their mortgage

obligations and had to abandon their homes; thus, popularizing the image of the Victorian haunted house.

The Depression of 1893 was the worst economic depression the United States had ever experienced at the time, and Gaylord did not escape its effects. Area farmers were particularly hit hard as crop prices did not keep up with rising costs, while being at the mercy of bankers, railroads, and grain buyers (Gaylord –Hub of Sibley County p. 205). Meanwhile, construction in Gaylord’s downtown virtually halted until the U.S. economy began to recover in 1897.

The one exception was the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) building that was constructed on the southeast corner of Sibley Avenue and Fourth Street in 1896. The I.O.O.F.’s meeting hall was located on the second floor while the Thoele and Son general merchandise store occupied the main floor.



*I.O.O.F. – 1896 (MHS)*



*I.O.O.F. (2012)*

### **Construction Boom (1899 – 1920)**

As the U.S. economy regained its balance in the late 1890’s, Gaylord entered an unprecedented construction boom that lasted until 1920. Most of the buildings built during this time were constructed with brick and located on Fourth Street, effectively turning this street into Gaylord’s “Main Street.” The end of Gaylord’s significant growth spurt coincided with the bursting of the bubble of prosperity in the summer of 1920. Food exports and farm prices fell sharply, and a 20-year agricultural depression began that would not end until World War II.

### ***Drug Store***

Julius Henke, a German immigrant and Gaylord’s first mayor, built the building at 414 Main Ave (Northwest corner of Fourth and Main). While Bonne Mercantile may have occupied the first floor for the first 18 years, the building is best known for the location of Gaylord’s Drug Stores. The East side of the Henke Block contained a Drug store for over 100 years. Swan Boreen owned Novelty Drug Store for 25 years, and then Dr. A. C. Lestico and Robert Mathwich owned the Gaylord Drug Company, for only 14 months. After that, George Mueller operated Mueller Drug Store for 14 years, until 1940 when Cy Renner of New Ulm, bought the drug store and named it Renner Corner Drug Store. Renner operated the drug store for 33 years, until Keith Anderson took the drug store over in 1973. Anderson operated it until 1984 when he constructed a drug store across the street at 335 Main Avenue.



*Henke Block 1899 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley Co)*



*Henke Block (2012)*

The local newspaper, the *Gaylord Hub* started renting the second floor of the Henke Block in 1922 (above the drug store) and remained there until the present Hub building was built in 1955.

**Banks**



*First State Bank – 1920 (2012)*

The First State Bank, also known as the Bank of Gaylord, was established in 1882 in the first brick structure in the village. The bank was located on the northeast corner of Main Avenue and Fourth Street, until a new structure was built on the same site in 1920. In 1930 the Minnesota Commissioner of Banks closed the First State Bank, and the following year the Citizens State Bank purchased the building and moved into the vacant building (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 267). (In 1984, the Citizens State Bank moved into its new quarters at 320 Main Ave. This building then became the home of the Gaylord public library until it moved to the former Gaylord City Hall site in 2008. It is now City Hall.)

The Citizens State Bank constructed the building at the northeast corner of Fourth Street and Sibley Avenue in 1904, becoming the second bank in Gaylord at the time. The bank remained at this location until 1930 when it moved into the First State Bank building described above. After that the building was home at various times to the Gaylord Bakery, Hueur’s Café, and Elmer’s Café. In 1952, attorneys Bob Williamson and Kenneth Bull bought the building and practiced law there. Bull left the firm in 1961 to take a probate judge



*Citizens State Bank – 1904 (2012)*

appointment. When Williamson died in 1963, William Scott bought the practice and the building. (Raphael Miller bought the practice and the building from Scott in 1967 and continues to practice law out of this building.)

### ***General Merchandise***

The Gaylord Mercantile building was constructed in 1905. The one-story brick building had large display windows to present their merchandise and a cornice with brick detailing similar to the Citizens State Bank building next door. The building is also notable because it extends the half-length of a city block. The building was home of the Gaylord Mercantile for 56 years until it closed in 1961. The business is fondly remembered for having a bench by the front door where wives and children could wait to meet their husbands or fathers for a ride back to the farm.

In 1916 Charles Busch built the Busch Block located at 123 Fourth Street. Charles Bonne first ran a general merchandise store in the east half of the building. In 1924, Busch purchased Bonne's business, and the Busch family has operated a merchandise business out of the building for over 46 years. (In 1972 the exterior was remodeled.)



*Busch Block – 1916 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County)*

### ***Car and Implement Dealership***

The surrounding farmers created such a demand for farm machinery that at its peak, from 1944 to 1956, Gaylord could boast of five implement dealerships. While many of the early hardware stores would carry some farm machinery, the earliest building that is associated with the implement business is the Mueller Building located at southwest corner of High Avenue and Fourth Street. In 1912 Erhard and Henry Mueller built a brick building on this site and sold Maxwell cars and farm implements. The building burned in 1914, but they built the existing brick building on the same site the following year.



*Mueller Building – 1915 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County)*



*Mueller Building (2012)*

### ***Groceries***

The building at 214 Fourth Street was built in 1920 by Herman and Gustav Doering. They operated a Dodge car dealership at this location until 1933. Herman Fenske the mortgage holder on the building had the Doering name chipped off the façade and his own name incised into the stone, but traces of the original name are still visible. Since the Doerings went out of the car dealership business in 1933, the building has been the home to various grocery stores over the years. (In 1996, The exterior of the building has been remodeled with financial assistance from the Gaylord EDA through Tax Increment Financing.)



*Fenske Building (2012)*



*Fenske Building 1920 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley Co)*

## ***Restaurants***

The longest running location for a restaurant in Gaylord was in the lower level of the IOOF building on the southeast corner of Sibley and Fourth streets. In 1901 Diedrich Thoele purchased the City Restaurant from his son, Herman, and moved it from Sibley Street to the IOOF building. In 1905, George Deis purchased the restaurant and named it the Dainty Restaurant. The restaurant changed ownership several times over its 75-year existence, but it was always a popular spot for residents of Gaylord to meet and socialize (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 338). (The café closed in 1980.)

## ***Gasoline and Service Stations***

The proliferation of gasoline and service stations in Gaylord is an example of the dramatic physical changes that have occurred since the switch in the primary mode of transportation from train to automobile, which is described in more detail in the Transportation chapter below. Below is a list of redevelopments in Gaylord for gasoline and service stations.

- In 1928, Standard Oil purchased the Dickmeyer Café at the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Main Avenue, razed the building and built a new Standard Oil station. The station closed in 1960 and building was razed.
- Community Service Station built a bulk tank facility on lower Fourth Street in 1920.
- In 1920, construction was started on a Community Service Station on the southeast corner of Fourth and High Streets.
- In 1930 the Cities Service Oil Company bought and removed the two-story Reimer saloon building on the northwest corner of Fourth and Sibley street and erected a gas station.
- In 1925, Home Oil Company gasoline filling and service station opened on Fourth Street between Pinske Meat Market and Fullerton Lumber Company (now Erin’s Body Shop and Auto Repair).
- in 1931 Sinclair built a gas station on the northeast corner of Sixth and Court. The station was razed to make room for the 1937 school addition.
- In 1932 a Webb station was constructed on the northeast corner of Sixth and Lincoln.
- In 1932 a Standard Service Station and restaurant was built on Block 17. (The Station became a Mobil in 1971 and closed in 1973).
- In 1934 a White Eagle Service Station was building on the northeast corner of Sixth and Park.

## **Expected Property Types**

### ***Retail***

Auto Dealerships  
Breweries  
Butchers  
Cigar  
Clothing and Shoes  
Drugs  
Dry good stores  
Feed stores  
Furniture  
Groceries

Hardware  
Implement Dealers  
Jewelry  
Lumber  
Other commercial buildings

***Service***

Auto repair shops  
Banks  
Blacksmith shops  
Builders and Contractors  
Business offices  
Carriage shops  
Dance halls  
Funeral homes  
Gas stations  
Hotels  
Livery stables  
Newspapers  
Painters  
Plumbers  
Restaurants  
Saloons

***Professional***

Clinics  
Offices of doctors, dentists, and lawyers

**Recommendations and Future actions**

Gaylord's commercial boom period (1899-1920) is physically evident through the significant number of historic brick buildings along Fourth Street constructed during this period. Moreover, it is to Gaylord's benefit that three of the most impressive historic buildings are located at the three corners of Gaylord's main intersection of Fourth Street and Main Avenue. Preservation of these buildings along Fourth Street should be sincerely considered. As historian Thomas Harvey said, "the solid blocks of two-story brick buildings that are so much a part of Main Street imagery are rare and thus worthy of preservation where they are found. Years of neglect, alterations, and fires have left few commercial streets intact" (Minnesota in a Century of Change p. 111).

- The City should complete a historic survey of all the buildings in the downtown area.
- The City should complete design guidelines for the downtown area.
- The City should consider designating the downtown commercial core as a historic district.
- The *Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County* book is a wonderful resource documenting the different businesses in Gaylord over the years. However, the City should create a comprehensive data base that cross-references past businesses and buildings in a more systematic order.

## Context 4 - Transportation

Settlement of the fertile prairies of Minnesota was a slow process for a variety of reasons. First, during the years of the Civil War from 1861 to 1865, immigration from Europe to the United States almost stopped as European immigrants were naturally weary of the Civil War. The effect on Minnesota was profound as many European immigrants were farmers looking for cheap land on the frontier to start their lives. Second, even though the fighting during the U.S. - Dakota War of 1862 lasted only six weeks, it took several years before immigrants became comfortable settling the western section of Minnesota where the Dakota Indians were living.

The most important impediment to settlement, however, was the lack of an efficient transportation system. The earliest towns were founded along a navigable river, such as the Minnesota River, which allowed settlers to float their products to markets. However, rivers were usually icebound four or five months every winter, and were sometimes too low for navigation during the summers. Primitive roads complemented transportation by river, but transportation by land was expensive as the condition of the roads prohibited the amount of building supplies that could be carried to the settlers and, likewise, the amount of grain and other goods from the settlers that could be brought to market (Larsen p 237-38).

The most important of these primitive roads through Sibley County was the Fort Ridgley Trail from Henderson to Fort Ridgley, which is approximately 10 miles from the western boarder of Sibley County. Located on the Minnesota River, Henderson was the launching point of settlers and explores into the new country. The Fort Ridgley Trail was the first east-west road through Sibley County. It is possible that the path of this road was determined by buffalo migrating from the prairies to the Big Woods for shelter in the winter and then back to the prairies for spring, avoiding wetlands along the way. As early as 1852, the Fort Ridgley Trail passed by the southern shore of Lake Titloe through what is now the Gaylord city limits. Thus, 30 years before the village even existed, the area provided a stopping point for travelers on the first east-west spoke of the hub that would develop in the middle of Sibley County (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 48).

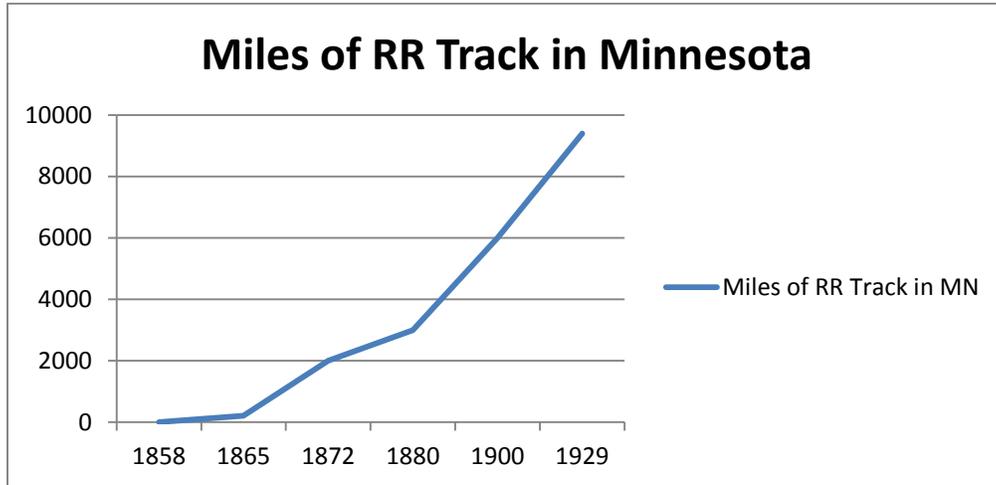
Until an efficient, and therefore economic, means of transportation of goods to market and building supplies to the frontier was developed, settlement of the prairies would continue to lag. "The frontier country was united in a desire to find a cure for the barrier of distance which discouraged settlement in the rich but isolated western lands. Without navigable rivers, the one practicable means of making such lands accessible was the construction of the railroads"(Larsen p. 238).

### **Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad (M & St. L)**

The railroad had a profound impact on the City of Gaylord when it finally reached Gaylord in October of 1881. The location of the village, the name of village, the design of village, the mere existence of the village, and the growth of the village all depended on the existence of the M & St. L Railroad.

Construction of the railway network through Minnesota was retarded first by financial panic in 1857, then the State foreclosing on all railroad properties in 1860, and the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. But once the railroads were underway, the system developed at a lively speed. The first tracks to be laid in Minnesota were between St. Paul and St. Anthony in 1862. Just three years later trains were operating on over 200 miles of tracks in the state. With the end of the Civil War, construction of the railroads

began in earnest. By 1866, trains from the cities reached St. Cloud. By 1871 trains from Minneapolis reached the Red River Valley. By the end of the decade the railroad mileage had increased to more than 3000, and by the end of the century that figure had more than doubled. The mileage of railroad track peaked in 1929, when the automobile was becoming popular, at nearly 9,400 miles.



(Larsen)

For several years rumors were rampant about when a railroad would reach the Gaylord area. However, it wasn't until 1881 that William Drew Washburn declared that his Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway (M & St. L) had the financial wherewithal to begin construction of a main line that would run from his flour mills in Minneapolis to the western boundary of the state.

The exact location of Gaylord was determined by whichever land speculator or farmer would accept W. D. Washburn's offer to buy 40 acres of land. When the coming of the railroad was assured, land speculators began buying land along the possible routes. In 1881 W. D. Washburn entered into negotiations with three different land speculators for land in the vicinity of Lake Titloe. Each time negotiations terminated when the speculators and Washburn could not agree on a price. Washburn then found a farmer, William Maass, willing to accept his proposal. William and Mina Maass sold a portion of their farm (approximately 40 acres) to Washburn which became the site of the Village of Gaylord. The Maass' farm home, which has undergone remodeling through the years, is located at 218 First Street (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 72).



Gaylord Depot (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley)

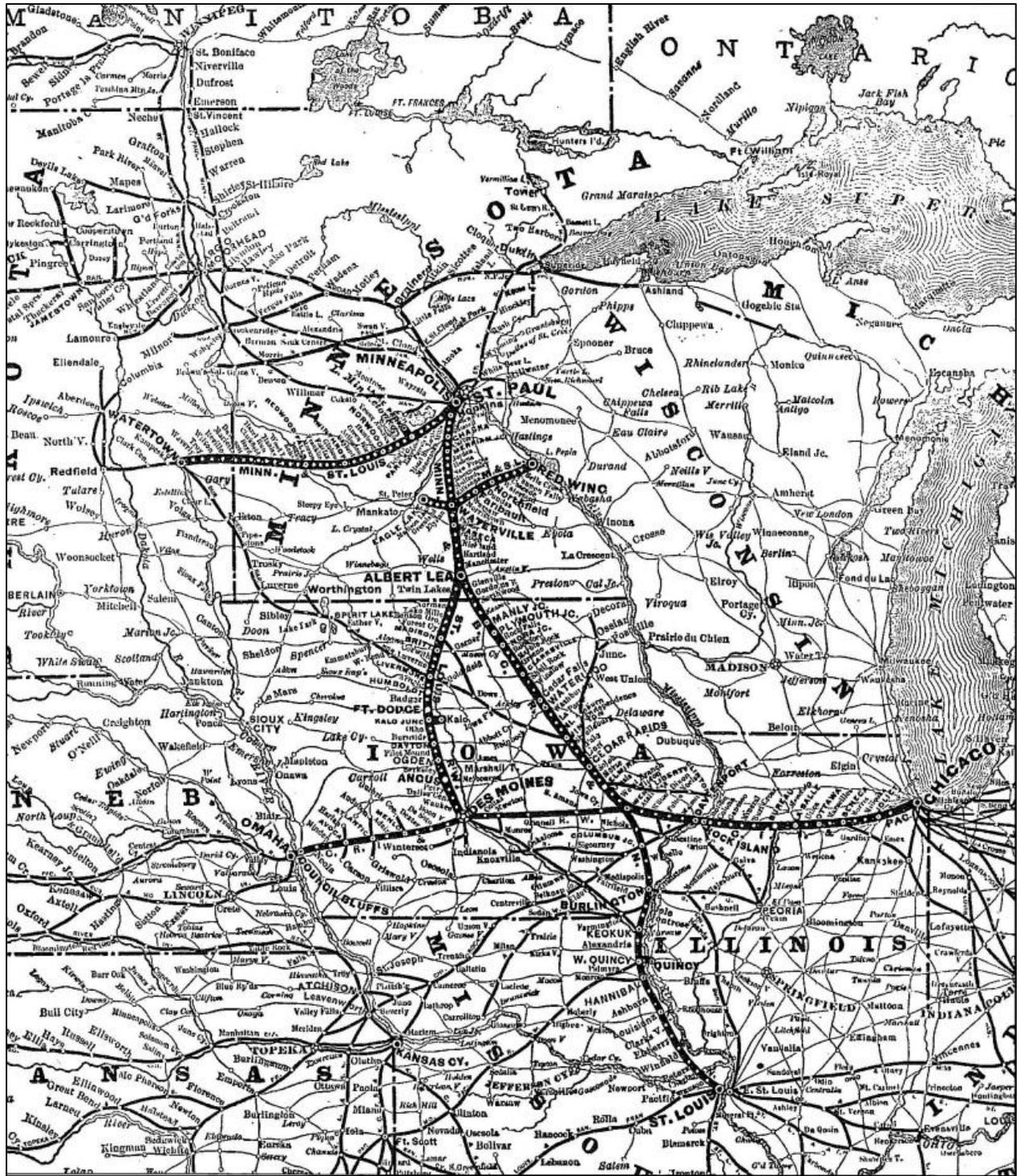
The continued existence and growth of Gaylord was dependent on the railroad. The existence of the railroad in Gaylord meant attracting more settlers and business people, a means to ship goods to larger markets bringing much needed building supplies to the village, and faster mail service and telegraph communications. On the other hand, promising settlements like New Rome, Mountville, and Eagle City began to disappear completely when the railroad bypassed their towns (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 64).

The village name of Gaylord was also determined by the M & St. L railroad company. Washburn chose the name Gaylord in honor of Edward W. Gaylord who worked for the M & St. L Railway for six years and was its superintendent from 1878 – 1880 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 71). The naming of Gaylord followed a trend in Minnesota. Towns established prior to the 1880's typically were given Indian or "back-home" names. After 1880 easy-to-pronounce names of railroad men and dynamic businessmen became the norm (examples include, Brainerd, Crookston, Staples, Moorhead, Morris, Warren, Willmar, Tracy, and Aldrich) (Gilman p.25)

The layout of Gaylord is very familiar to the layout of other railroad towns located in the Minnesota prairies. Unlike towns in southeastern Minnesota that were settled in the steamboat era and have a layout and setting of an eastern flavor, western Minnesota towns like Gaylord were platted by railroad companies and were laid out in broad checkerboard squares with their main streets parallel or perpendicular to the railroad (Francaviglia p. 59). N. B. Evarts, an engineer for the M & St. L, laid out and platted the lots, blocks, streets, and alleys of Gaylord (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 72).

By 1882, both passenger and freight trains were operating and Gaylord had more business than any other town on the line. The "Louie," as the M & St. L was nicknamed throughout the Midwest was extended to Watertown, SD in 1884 and Aberdeen in 1907, ultimately operating in four Midwestern states: South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 65-67).

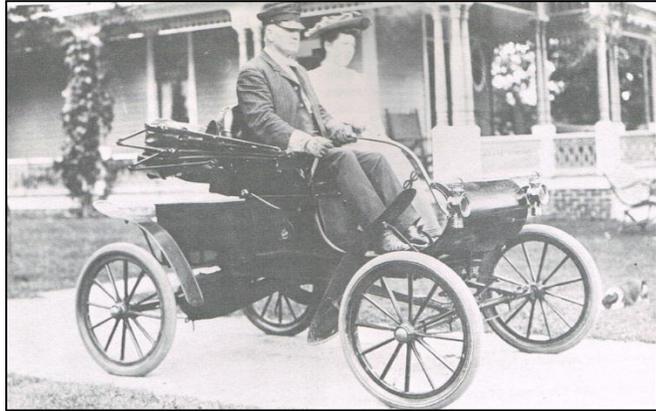
Even during the start of the Great Depression, from 1929 to 1931, the M & St. L Railway company invested in new equipment that greatly increased its facilities for handling grain, flour, and machinery shipments. Steam engines were eventually replaced by diesel power in the 1940's. However, by the late 1950's an increase in semitrailer trucking contributed to the reduction of railroad service in the Gaylord area. Despite protests by local businessmen, the depot closed in 1967, and the Gaylord and Green Isle depots consolidated in Arlington. In 1968, the depot building was offered for sale to the highest bidder who would remove it (it is currently owned by a local farmer) (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 67).



Map of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (Hofsommer)

## Automobile

If the railroads built and shaped the towns in Minnesota's western prairies, then the gasoline engine helped change them. People were very intrigued by the horseless buggies. In the 1890's people were trying to attach engines to bicycles, wagons, and buggies. By 1910 Minnesotans had more than 7,000 automobiles. The first automobile to appear on the streets of Gaylord was owned by Dr. D. N. Jones, a 1903 Oldsmobile.



*Dr. Jones in his 1903 Oldsmobile (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley Co)*

By 1909 the *Gaylord Hub* published an article titled, "Automobilites Has Grip on Many Gaylordites." Predicting popularity in automobiles following the trend throughout the state, the article states, "Gaylord will have quite a bunch of autoists this year. Dr. D. N. Jones has had the field pretty much to himself for several years past, but present indications point to an increase."

However, cars could not replace horses until better roads were built. There were no highways and many roads still had a grassy ridge in the center between two parallel paths. Travelers took the train if they were going more than a few miles. Railroads were made possible by the American people giving the railroad companies land. Along those same lines, Americans made automobiles possible by paying taxes to build highways. Minnesota was one of the first states to tax gasoline and use the funds only to build roads. The state also started a system of numbered highways that the whole country followed (Gilman p. 162).

About 1910 the demand for better roads was being expressed locally. In 1912 petitions to the county board asked for use of state road aid for Highway No. 1 from the Twin Cities to cross Sibley County west to Redwood Falls. In 1919 the Pershing Way, now Highway No. 22, was built and telephone poles were marked with bands of red, white, and blue with a large letter "P" on the wider white band. The section of the highway through this area was a part of a new multi-state project that made it possible for tourists to travel from New Orleans to Winnipeg following the road markings which honored the WWI hero (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 59).

W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) funds in the 1930s and 1940s paid for the general improvement of many country roads, the building of county garages, and the placing of culverts, riprapping, grading, and graveling. In December 1946, the Gaylord city council approved the construction of Trunk Highway No. 5 over Main Street (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 59).

The impact of the ever increasing use of automobiles and trucks and the development of the highways, especially after 1920, heightened the competition between towns. Residents and farmers were able to travel farther to shop, leading to the growth of larger trade centers as they absorbed services from small ones. The increase in the number of tractors on farms and the expansion of the average farm size shrank

the trade area for towns, also contributing to the increased competition between rural towns (Gilman p. 109).

### **Increasing Popularity of the Automobile**

The evolution of the primary mode of transportation moving from the railway to the automobile has had a dramatic impact on the built environment of Gaylord in two significant ways:

First, as the automobile became more attainable and popular during the 1920s, federal, state and the county road systems were expanded to keep up with the demand for better roads (Gebhard p. 14). Increasingly one entered a town via the automobile, not the train. Investment followed the mode of transportation as new industrial and commercial businesses located on the outskirts of town where land was plentiful and inexpensive (regulation of development on the outskirts of Gaylord did not occur until the City adopted its first Zoning Ordinance in 1981). Eventually such activities created the familiar commercial strip similar to Gaylord's on the east side of town along TH 5.

Second, there was the removal of pedestrian-oriented buildings in the downtown in favor of developments more oriented to the automobile. Commercial buildings constructed prior to 1920 were designed for pedestrians (e.g. large display windows, buildings adjacent to the sidewalk, entrances facing the sidewalk, and potentially a new business every 25 feet making shopping easier). Typically, buildings developed after this period catered to the automobile with parking lots placed between the building and the sidewalk and the need to demolish several smaller businesses in order to provide off-street parking. (The best example of this scenario in Gaylord, but outside of this Context's period, is the construction of the new Citizen's Bank Building in 1984 at 320 Main Avenue. Seven commercial buildings all constructed on 25-foot wide lots were demolished to accommodate the new development.)

### **Bus Transportation**

The Interstate Transportation Company of Minneapolis provided daily auto bus service between Gaylord and Minneapolis beginning in 1922, and ultimately replaced the stage coach. In the 1920's the depot for bus service changed between the Sibley House Hotel (no longer standing) and the Gaylord Drug Store (in the Henke building on the corner of Fourth Street and Main Avenue). Community leaders were afraid that bus service would ultimately end railroad service. In 1928 the Gaylord Commercial Club voted against the proposed Greyhound bus line in an attempt to protect railroad service. The demand for bus transportation, however, increased so much that there were no less than eight buses each weekday servicing Gaylord, and as many as 12 to 15 on Saturdays. In addition to the Twin Cities, buses connected Gaylord with Glencoe, New Ulm, Mankato, Pipestone, Redwood Falls, and Canby and points between. The Green Lantern Café, located on the south side of Main Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets, was the next bus stop until the 1970's. (The café was razed in 1978.) Buses became Gaylord's only form of public transportation when train passenger service was discontinued in 1960 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 63).

### **Expected Property Types**

Railroads

Bridges

Depots, passenger and freight

Railcars

- Railroad offices
- Section Houses
- Shops and roundhouses
- Tracks

Roads and Bridges

- Bridges
- Roadbeds
- Highway signage
- Stop lights
- Traffic signs

**Recommendations and Future actions**

Conduct a cultural resources survey to identify and evaluate all resources in the city relating to the transportation context. Base further specific recommendations on the findings of the survey.

## Context 5 – Religion

Religion was very important to the pioneers for a variety of reasons. The spiritual faith lifted the spirits of the early settlers who faced difficult and uncertain lives. Churches also played a role in the acclimation of the pioneers as early settlers found their own language and traditions. Like most communities, Gaylord had a range of congregations that reflected the ethnicity of the early settlers. Churches also were significant in the social lives of Gaylord's first residents, especially to the farmers who spent most of their waking hours working on their farms. Early settlers did not let the lack of a church or minister prevent them from getting together to worship. Many congregations were formed and services held in homes, as soon as settlers built their first homes (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 127). A familiar theme among the congregations in the Gaylord area is the constant need to construct new church edifices to accommodate the growing congregations.

### ***St. John's Lutheran Church (Mountville)***

Just two years after Minnesota received its statehood in 1858, St. John's Lutheran Church in Mountville started with Pastor P. Rupprecht of Arlington Township conducting services in the homes of the early settlers, many of whom came from Pomerania in Germany. Mountville is located five miles northwest of Gaylord. The congregation built its first church, a little log chapel [Blockkirche], in the spring of 1863 (razed). As membership grew, the congregation voted to build a brick house of worship in 1892, which is still in existence (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 128).



*(Sinell)*

### ***Trinity Lutheran Church (ALC)***

In the early 1850s, settlers of German descent living in this area were served by traveling missionaries. One of these missionaries, the Reverend Gottlieb Fachtmann, helped organize another rural church, the Trinity Lutheran Church, which incorporated on September 30, 1867 and served German immigrant farmers. Located southeast of Gaylord, a log structure was first built about 1869 and served the congregation until 1885 (razed), when a new and larger house of worship was built. The tall steeple, typical of churches at that time, was damaged by a cyclone in 1925 and was replaced by a bell tower. The first parsonage was a small log house (razed). The second one, a six-room, two-story frame house, was built in 1887 (razed). In 1938 the congregation voted to build a modern eight-room, two-story frame house (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 129).

### ***Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church***

In 1881 the Norwegian Grove congregation was organized. The first building to house this congregation was located adjacent to their cemetery on land donated by Ole Overson in 1884 (razed). In 1929, the congregation decided to build the present church on property donated by Jeanette Foss four miles south of Gaylord (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 131).

### ***Immanuel Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) and School***

Since many German Lutheran families were arriving in Gaylord and the impassable roads and distance to St. John's Lutheran Church in Mountville made attendance difficult, German families in the village started to worship together in 1880. As the congregation grew, no house was large enough to accommodate the congregation so Henry Boettcher offered to hold services in his store. In 1882 the Immanuel Lutheran Church was organized in order to build a new church. A chapel was constructed on the northwest corner of High and Fifth Streets in 1882. The little steepled structure served the congregation for 6 years until 1888, when a second house of worship was constructed. The original church building, which was too small for the growing congregation, was moved three blocks east to 209 High Street. The new church was 36'x60' and included a 95-foot high bell tower. Lightning struck the church steeple on June 3, 1944, damaging the structure of the bell tower. Over the next 15 years, members of Immanuel became increasingly concerned about the weakening structure of the building. That concern, along with a growing congregation, led to the building of a third church, the present one, on the same site of the 1888 church edifice, which was razed. It was dedicated on March 24, 1963 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 136-137).

In 1884, E. L. Kretschmar came to Gaylord to be the pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church. The following year he was teaching classes to 45 students in addition to his pastoral work. During the depression of 1896 and 1897, Immanuel Lutheran congregation built its first schoolhouse. In 1914 a brick building was erected at 417 High Avenue (razed) in order to provide more room for the growing student population. In 1938 a second school building was built at 516 High Avenue. In 1951 an addition was added to the school building. (The four-room school has served the congregation until 2011, when the 1938 school building was razed to make room for a new building) (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 154-155).

### ***St. Michael's Catholic Church***

The fact that Gaylord has only one Catholic Church can be traced back to John Ireland, who served as archbishop in Minnesota from 1875 until his death in 1918. During these formative years of Minnesota, many religious groups were establishing churches specific to their ethnicity. Immigrants tended to associate with people from their original country and service was usually spoken in the parishioners' native language. This is why many towns have more than one Lutheran church. Archbishop John Ireland, on the other hand, insisted that the Catholic Church must become American and welcome people from all ethnic backgrounds with services spoken in English. Thus, Gaylord's Catholic Church consisted of parishioners of all ethnicities, but mainly Irish and Germans.

In the early 1860's, priests from surrounding communities often visited the homes of Irish and German Catholics to say mass. In 1872, after Mountville was platted and became a village, a small church was built. By 1881, however, when the anticipated railroad to Mountville did not materialize, Mountville began to fade and people moved to the Village of Gaylord. In 1882 a church was built on High Street

between Fifth and Sixth Streets. The church edifice existed until 1957 when it was torn down and the current church was built on Fifth and Court Streets (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 133-134).



*St. Michael's 1882 – 1957 (Gaylord Hub)*



*St. Michael's (2012)*

### ***St. Paul's Lutheran Church***

In 1883 a group of men met in Gaylord to organize the Freie German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gaylord. The following year the congregation erected a wood frame edifice at 513 Main Street. In 1905 the decision was made to change the name of the church to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. A growing congregation realized a new church building was required, and in 1916 the 1884 church edifice was torn down and a new brick structure was constructed on the same site (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 135-136).



*St. Paul's Lutheran Church (2012)*

### ***United Church of Christ***

In the early years, most of the services in the two Lutheran churches were in German. Several German families wanted regular worship in English, so in the late 1890s they met in various homes on Sundays until they could find a pastor. In 1899 the Congregational Conference of Minnesota sent Reverend Fellows to serve these families. That same year they organized the First Congregational Church of Gaylord. For the first few years, regular services were held at the city hall. In 1902 the first church structure was erected on the present site, the southeast corner of Fourth and Jefferson Streets. Clergy and their families lived in rented homes until a parsonage was built south of the church in 1922. (In 1977 the parsonage was moved to its present location at 82 High Avenue and the 1902 church edifice was razed to make room for the new church at 318 Fourth Street, which was dedicated in 1978). In January, 1961, the name was changed from The First Congregational Church of Gaylord to the United Church of Christ (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 136-137).

**Expected Property Types**

Churches  
Parsonages and rectories  
Parish Halls  
Cemeteries  
Parochial schools

**Recommendations and Future actions**

Conduct a cultural resources survey to identify and evaluate all resources in the city relating to the religious context. Base further specific recommendations on the findings of the survey.

## Context 6 – Civic Services

### Communication

Because the telegraph was not available and telephone had not been invented when Gaylord settlement began, the first order of business for the infant village was to establish a post office to connect the community with the rest of the country. Henry Boettcher erected the first building in the village on the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Main Avenue. The first post office was located in his general store and he was named acting postmaster in 1881.

Like many other small towns, the post office moved several times in the early days. Quite often, new presidents would appoint new postmasters as a reward for people in their political party. Locations for Gaylord's post office included a tin shop, general store, print shop, Union Hotel, the Clausen building, and Cornelius Thoele's building (from 1893 to 1914) on the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Sibley Avenue.

It was not until 1914 that the United States Postal Service built their own building in Gaylord. The new facility was constructed as an addition to the south side of the Odd Fellows' lodge building. This served as the post office for 30 years. Due to increased volume the post office moved to the south end of the Busch Block, 124 Fourth Street in 1944. In 1954 the postal service was relocated to the Fenske Building until the present structure was built at 311 Main Street in 1960 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 101-104).

Similar to the post office, it was important from the beginning for the new village to establish a newspaper. The *Gaylord Register*, in operation by 1883, was the second paper to be established in Sibley County, preceded only by the one in Henderson (*The Democrat*). It is unclear when the *Register* was suspended, but Gaylord's second newspaper, the *Blizzard*, was first published in December of 1885. Publication of the *Blizzard* soon ceased, and the first issue of the *Gaylord Hub* was printed on March 13, 1886.

The Sibley County Telephone Exchange, organized in Arlington on July 31, 1897, was the result of a cooperative effort by the businessmen of Henderson, Arlington, Gaylord, Winthrop, and Gibbon. The first phone in Gaylord was in Nelson's restaurant on Main Street, and the second telephone was in the First State Bank. By 1905, the Gaylord telephone directory contained 74 phone listings (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 106). In the early years, the telephone office moved around – the cigar factory, Kropp's jewelry store, Swan Boreen drug store and the second floor of the Henke building. In 1920, the telephone office moved to the upstairs in the Busch Block on the southwest corner of Main and Fourth. The office remained there until the dial system with 1,260 phones was installed in 1955 at 312 Sibley Street (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 107).

### Public Utilities

Less visible than the stores and businesses, but vital in establishing a town's image, have been the public utilities. Running water, gas lines, and sewers vastly improved the quality of life for those who could afford them. But electricity was the ultimate symbol of urban success for early towns. In 1898, the Village Council issued bonds to construct an electric light plant directly north of the old village hall. By December of that year, the electric light plant was completed and lights were turned on for the first

time in Gaylord on Christmas Eve. In 1916, Northern States Power was awarded a contract to light the streets of Gaylord with a power line from its plant in Mankato. As a result Gaylord's electric light plant closed the following year in 1917 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 99). (The electric light plant was razed and is now the public library parking lot.)

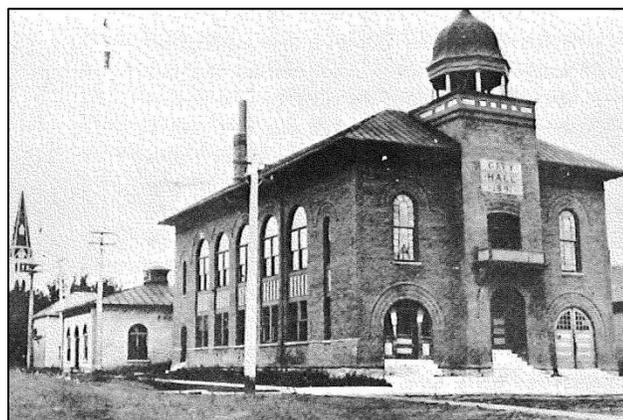
Lake Titloe, Rush River, and other small lakes and creeks were the first sources of water for the pioneer settlers. In 1886, the Village of Gaylord approved the construction of two public wells for fire purposes. Gaylord's current public water system was started in 1917 when a 500-foot-deep well was drilled north of the city hall. The water tower was erected in 1934. In 1940 a new well was drilled to 400 feet. This well is the present source of Gaylord's water supply (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 96).

In 1917, the first major sewer line extended from the courthouse area through the center of town to a septic tank near Mud Lake. In 1921 the remainder of the town was handled by a new branch which went to a new septic tank near Lake Titloe (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 97). (A treatment plant, located a mile south of the village, was constructed in the mid 1980's.)

### **Public Buildings**

In 1891 Gaylord constructed its first village hall with police station, jail and fire station. An editorial by Chick Deis in 1955 explained how valuable the old village hall was to the community,

*Once known as the Gaylord Opera House, it was the scene of many home talent productions, all of the high school plays until 1937, traveling road shows, as well as our first movie house. It was the home of Gaylord's famous 1926 state basketball champions....it served for 64 years as the center of practically all civic and social activity...council chambers, band practice room, jail house, fire hall, banquet hall, basketball court and voting headquarters. When the public school burned in 1905, it was used for a school room, and again for school when Immanuel built their new school...served as Sibley County Court House in 1915 and as the Gaylord Municipal Liquor Store, from 1946 to 1955 (Gaylord Hub, April 29, 1955).*



*City Hall 1891 (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County)*

However, by the 1940's the village hall was deteriorating, and a new city hall was constructed in 1955 on the same site as the village hall, on the northeast corner of Main Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 1955 city

hall also contained the fire station and police department. (In 1981, the 1955 city hall was razed to make room for the new city library.)

In 1884, the Village Council granted a petition to organize the first fire company. The first fire equipment available was the rudimentary water buckets deployed by the bucket brigade. In 1886, the council officially created Gaylord's Fire Company No. 1, purchased hoses, ladders, water pumps and a shed to store the new equipment. When the village hall was built in 1891, the fire department moved its equipment into the lower north part.

## **County Seat**

The territory that was to become Sibley County was inhabited by the Dakota Sioux prior to 1851. After the Indian treaties were ratified in 1852, more settlers moved into the Sibley County area looking for land to farm. With no railroad servicing the area yet, stage coaches were the main source of transportation between the 1850's and the 1880's with routes intersecting at the center of the county, and branching off at several angles from the main Fort Road in what would become the Village of Gaylord. Thus, when the county was settled, the new village at its center (Gaylord) was nicknamed Hub City (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County p. 433).

On August 23, 1852, Joseph R. Brown, "Father of Sibley County," came to the site, which he later named Henderson, to manage the construction of a road across the wilderness to Fort Ridgley. During the 1852 legislative session, Brown proposed to designate and name this area Sibley County. The legislature established Sibley County the following year. As the oldest town in Sibley County, Henderson was naturally the home of the county offices; however, there was opposition to constructing a courthouse in Henderson, primarily due to its extreme eastern location in the county and because the Minnesota River and surrounding rugged hills made access to the town difficult. However, in 1879 a two and one-half story brick courthouse was constructed in downtown Henderson (still extant).

Just six years after being incorporated, Gaylord's Village Council approved \$30 for the village attorney to explore a county seat petition. In 1895 both Arlington and Gaylord had petitions to relocate the county seat to their towns. In 1897 the State Supreme Court ruled that Arlington had the right to petition moving the county seat. In 1898, the following year, County residents voted to keep the County Seat in Henderson. The citizens of Gaylord again petitioned the moving of the County Seat in 1902, but were defeated. Gaylord made another petition in 1915, and this time won by a small margin over the necessary 55 percent of all votes cast, and the county seat was declared changed to Gaylord. Similar to Sibley County, many counties in Minnesota experienced battles that took decades to resolve. Carlton, Grant, Houston, Lac qui Parle, Wright and other counties all experienced a county seat battle. The Sibley County struggle took 25 years to resolve (Sibley County Court House National Register Nomination).

Moving the county seat from Henderson to Gaylord was a major catalyst to the growth of the community. Gaylord's population grew by 28% during the 1910 decade. Sewer and water systems were improved. New businesses started and existing businesses expanded as the new court house brought many people to Gaylord to shop and use professional services while in the village for their government functions. Construction boomed with over \$250,000 spent in 1916, the largest annual amount in Gaylord history. Besides the new court house, other buildings completed in 1916 were the Busch Block, Mueller Bros. storage and garage, Midland Lumber Company, Gaylord Lumber Company, the band pavilion, and 14 new homes.

Designed by the Minneapolis firm of James A. Burner and William K. Macomber, Sibley County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence and Jail were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. The Courthouse is situated on a square block of land that was designated for the courthouse by the Village of Gaylord in 1895 when the village began its official fight for the county seat. The three story building is located at the terminus of Fourth Street (which functions as Gaylord's main street). The courthouse is designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, based on the Greek and to a lesser degree on the Roman architectural orders. It is constructed of poured concrete and steel and faced with Indiana limestone. The Sheriff's Residence and Jail, which is located just north of the Courthouse, is two stories in height and constructed of a light gold brick. It has a low hipped roof covered with red tile and several other decorative features reminiscent of the Spanish Colonial Revival style (e.g. half-circles of decorative brickwork above the first floor windows, a brick belt course running under the second floor windows, and slightly projecting rounded overhangs above the side and front entrances). Sheriffs and their families lived at the residence up until 1960. The space is now used for additional office space for the Sheriff Department (Sibley County Court House National Register Nomination).



*Sibley County Court House – 1916 (MHS)*

## **Parks**

“The majority of MN’s villages and towns were parsimonious in setting aside parkland and places for public buildings. Few of them, at least during the early years of their existence, sought to utilize lakes, streams and riversides as public amenities, “ (Gebhart p. 7). Railroad towns typically platted parks near the railroad stop as a way to impress visitors and prospective businessmen. Gaylord, on the other hand, established its public park farthest from the train depot, but on the most scenic site in town: on the south shore of Lake Titloe. In 1897, the village purchased the park property from John and Dorothea Mueller, German immigrants who were among the earliest settlers of Sibley County. The combination of

the grove of oak trees and sweeping vista of Lake Titloe has naturally drawn residents to the park area. Gaylord City Park (NRHP 2/6/12) has become Gaylord’s “front lawn” hosting public celebrations, family picnics, sporting events, religious gatherings, traveling circuses, and political speeches.

The Great Depression had a major impact on Gaylord’s park, as it did on public parks throughout the country. Use of public parks dramatically increased, as families had little money for commercial recreation and travel, and instead patronized public parks. New Deal work relief agencies like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built new sports fields, grandstands, tennis and basketball courts, skating rinks, swimming pools, beaches, parks, and playgrounds, which towns would not otherwise have been able to obtain. Federal spending on local recreation during the New Deal was surpassed only by local road and street construction (Gaylord City Park National Registration Nomination).

The Gaylord City Park benefited from several New Deal era government programs. In 1934, workers from the Civil Works Administration (CWA) planted around 400 trees in the park. CWA workers built a new baseball grandstand. Emergency relief funds also helped to build an outdoor ice skating rink, a new concrete boat dock, and replacement of the bridge over the ravine (Gaylord City Park National Registration Nomination).

## Recreation

During the years between 1910 and 1930, public dancing grew in popularity, most likely because of the introduction of the phonograph and radio. In addition, the increasingly popular automobile provided a means of transportation for audiences – especially young people – to attend dances in nearby towns. According to one historian, by the 1920’s, “dancing was nation’s second most popular form of recreation – surpassed only by baseball” (Nye).

Reflecting this trend, dance pavilions sprang up across the country during the early decades of the twentieth century, often situated in rural communities. The Gaylord Pavilion was typical of the period. Built in 1916, during the boom years of public dancing and dance pavilions, it was located next to a lake – a common phenomenon in the days before air-conditioning. The dance pavilions generally had large screen windows to take advantage of the lake breezes and to cool the dancers. Similar to Gaylord’s pavilion, these pavilions were often simple wooden buildings with modestly sized dance floors, and small stages (Gaylord City Park National Register Nomination).

Organized in 1882, the Gaylord Cornet Band built the pavilion in the park. The band was an important part of the life of the community as it regularly participated in the city’s public events, featured in parades, dances, and concerts. As the Gaylord Hub (edited by band member Charles Wallin) said, “A good up-to-date band is one of the most useful things a town can . . . possess. It is one of the best advertisements a town can have. . . . A



*Built by WPA in 1940 (2012)*

good band will make all roads lead into town a beaten path.” (Gaylord *Hub*, July 21, 1916; July 6, 1917) Their first bandstand was constructed in 1888 and was located just off Main Street. In 1916, however, they decided to build a more permanent home and constructed a new pavilion in the city park. (Gaylord’s City Park was listed in the National Register for Historic Places in 2012.)

Immediately following the war, the popularity of public dances began to wane, and the Pavilion no longer tried to schedule regular dances. Instead, roller-skating became the building’s primary function, and the dance floor was covered with Masonite panels. (The Pavilion is still used as for roller-skating, public meetings and private functions.)

Baseball has provided the Gaylord community a common source of excitement and civic pride since the village was founded. The very first issue of *The Hub* in 1886 made reference to the organization of a ball team. Writing about the role of baseball, Historian Ross Bernstein said, “in small town America, being on a team was like being royalty. It gave communities a sense of pride and helped them to form a sense of identity. Summers were planned around the teams’ schedules, and their games were front page news” (Bernstein, p. 74).

“Gaylord baseball teams often played to overflow crowds, followed by newspaper stories reporting the results in great detail with a profuse use of adjectives about exploits of the local team” (Gaylord City Park National Historic Register Nomination). The first baseball game at Gaylord City Park took place in April 1901 after local volunteers made improvements to the field. A grandstand, financed by local contributions, was built in 1905. Based on the crowds attracted by the league games, in 1934, a new grandstand was erected with the aid of the Civil Works Administration. (The current grandstand was built in 2002.)



(2012)

## Schools

The United States was the first country in the world to offer a system of public education to all of its citizens. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 made rules for creating new territories and states, and called for support of education. “Religion, morality, and knowledge,” it said, are needed for “good government and the happiness of mankind” (Gilman p. 148). The Northwest Ordinance gave each new territory some public land for schools – one section in every township. Then-congressman Henry Sibley got Congress to grant Minnesota twice the usual amount of public lands because Congress thought that this climate made the land almost worthless (Gaylord - *Hub* of Sibley County, p. 145).

Education was important to the early settlers for in 1882, a year before incorporation, a two-room school building was built in Gaylord (which is now a family dwelling on the northeast corner of Fourth and High). In addition, three rural school districts were established in the surrounding vicinity of

Gaylord. The District No. 73 school building in Dryden Township still stands on the north side of Hwy No. 19, east of Gaylord. One source said it was built in 1901 but an earlier plat map indicates its origins might be before 1900 (Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County, p. 149).

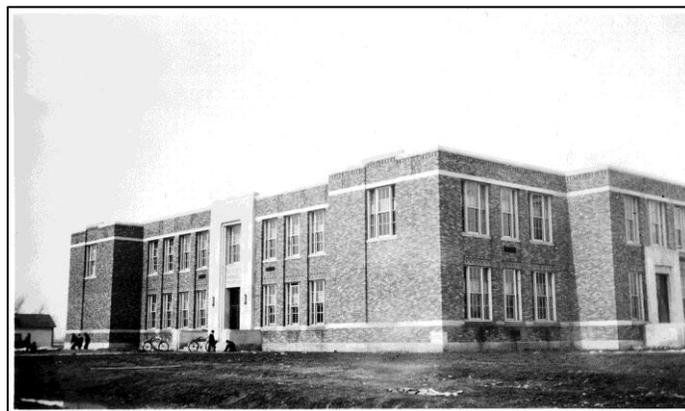
As the population of the early village increased during the boom years of the 1880s, the original school building became too crowded, and a larger brick building was erected in 1893 on the approximate site of the present elementary school and playground. The new school was 2 1/2 stories high with a cupola on top. There were four classrooms and a principal's office. It had a seating capacity of 250 students. The school burned down in 1904.

It was replaced in 1905 with a building that the Hub described as "a magnificent building and one of the largest and most substantial structures of its kind in this part of the state." It was rebuilt of solid brick on the same site. The 1937 building was significantly larger and contained more advanced classrooms than the 1905 building, measuring 72 x 91 feet in size, and containing 12 rooms (10 classrooms, a principal's office and a boiler room).



*1905 School House (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County)*

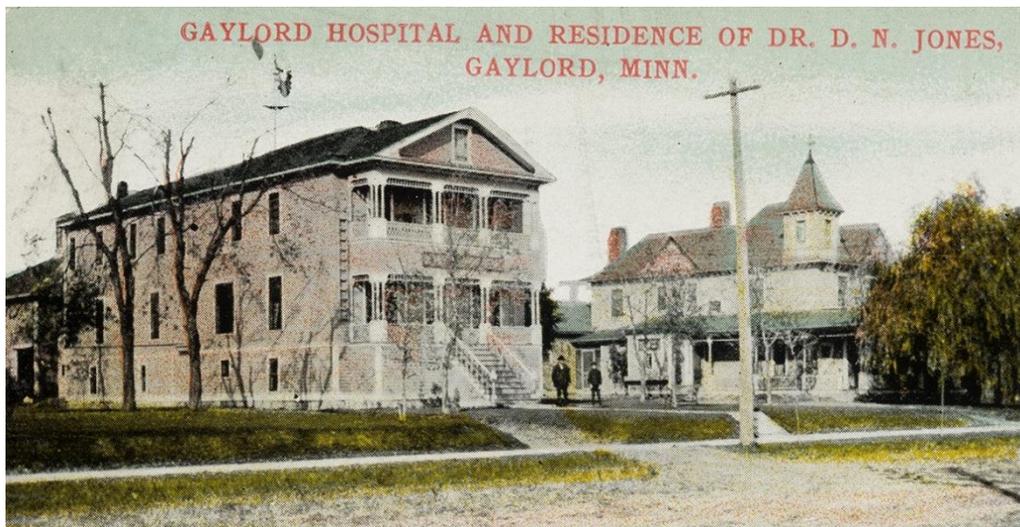
This building was used until 1937, when the school moved to a new, larger building. The new building was built with WPA assistance near the end of the depression. One of the requirements of using WPA funds, however, was that the old building be demolished. The bricks from the 1905 school building were used to build the schoolhouse in District No. 49 in Transit Township and the Green Lantern Café, which was razed in 1978.



*1937 School Building (MHS)*

## Hospitals

The offices of Dr. D. N. Jones, located at the southwest corner of Fourth Street and Sibley Avenue, were enlarged to become Gaylord's first hospital in 1902. Dr. Jones' house was on the adjacent lot of the hospital and had five bedrooms. Quite frequently, recovering patients who did not need continuing attention were transferred to Dr. Jones' house before being discharged. The hospital was enlarged in 1907 from 10 to 19 rooms. Dr. Jones operated the hospital until 1914. Dr. W. P. Olsen and his son Dr. Duane Olson operated the hospital until 1952, when the Gaylord Community Hospital was constructed on the south side of Lake Titloe (Gaylord – Hub of Sibley County p. 301-302). (Dr. Jones' hospital and residence have been razed.)



*Gaylord Hospital – (MHS)*

## Organizations

When Gaylord was established, opportunities to socialize and work for the common good led to the variety of organizations which developed through the years (a partial list of the longer lasting groups includes Daughters of Rebekah, Sons of Herman, Thusnelda Lodge No. 2, Modern Woodmen of America, Red Cross, Alfsborg Home Management Club, League of Women Voters, Rotary Club, American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and Gaylord Area Jaycees). Other groups quietly went out of existence. Through the years, Gaylord and its residents have benefitted from the social, educational and philanthropic opportunities that these service organizations have provided.

In 1895 a prominent business group, the Board of Trade, was organized. From 1896 to 1897, they were influential in establishing a new creamery and the first flour mill in Gaylord, as well as investigating the cost of an electric light plant. Membership faltered and the Board of Trade dissolved in 1906 and was replaced by the Commercial Club.

The Commercial Club was very active with a list of committees that included parks, public works, manufacturing and mercantile interests, markets, advertising, legislation, utilities, and public entertainment. Some of the Commercial Club's initial issues included road improvement, improving the electric light service, building a railroad station platform, expanding the telephone service, better quarters for the post office, clearing and planting trees in the park, and the possibility of a new dam

across part of Lake Titloe. The Commercial Club has since evolved into the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce, which focuses more on the retention of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses to the community.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) was one of the first organizations in the village. It was chartered in 1888. The IOOF is part of a global altruistic fraternal organization which came into existence in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The command of the IOOF is to "visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and educate the orphan." In 1896, Gaylord Lodge No. 140 constructed a two-story building with a cast iron front façade on the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Sibley Avenue. They held meetings on the second floor while the Thoele General Store occupied the first floor. (The Gaylord IOOF was active until 1981 when they disbanded.)

### **Sites Currently Designated**

The following sites are currently designated to the National Register of Historic Places:

- Sibley County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence and Jail  
400 Court Street, 319 Park Avenue  
Criterion A and C - continued the significant growth of Gaylord and are architecturally significant as prominent public buildings
- Gaylord City Park  
Veteran's Drive and Park Street  
Criterion A – played prominent role in the social history of Gaylord

### **Expected Property Types**

#### Government/Municipal Services

City Halls  
Courthouses  
Fire stations  
Hospitals and clinics  
Jails  
Police Stations  
Post Office  
Sewage treatment plants  
Social service buildings  
Utility plants  
Waterworks  
Water towers

#### Other Public Improvements

Bandstands  
Bridges  
Parks  
Picnic Areas  
Playgrounds and sports facilities

- Prominent natural features
- Recreational structures
- Sidewalks
- Statuary and monuments

Education

- Public schools
- Parochial Schools (See also Religion context)

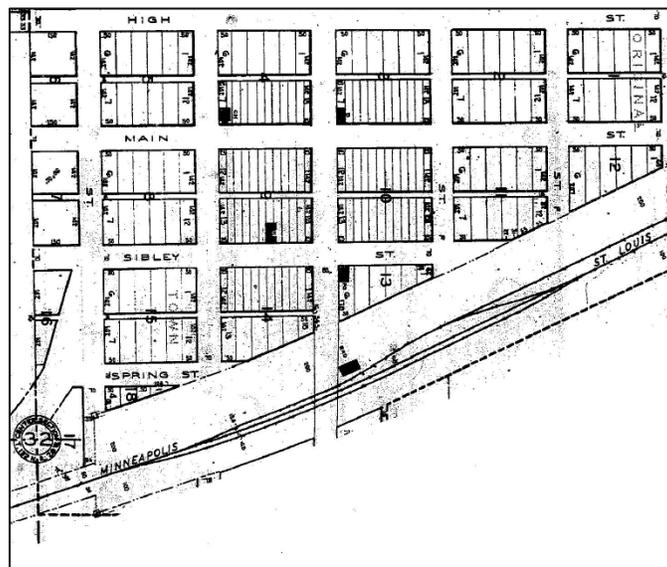
**Recommendations and Future actions**

Conduct a cultural resources survey to identify and evaluate all resources in the city relating to the public and civic life context. Base further specific recommendations on the findings of the survey.

## Context 7 - Residential

### Original Plat and Early Housing

Similar to other towns located on the prairie, the original plat of Gaylord was designed in a grid pattern, oriented north to south. The original plat included 18 square blocks, measuring 300' x 300'. The original plat included the blocks south of High Street and north of the M & St. L Railway right-of-way, from First Street to Sixth Street. The east/west streets were named High, Main, Sibley and Spring, while the north/south streets were numerical (First, Second, Third, etc.) Commercial lots were centered in town along Main Street and Sibley Street and platted 25'x142'. Residential lots surrounded the business area and were platted 12 lots per block at 50'x 142'.



Alleys were platted east/west in the original plat (south of High Street), resulting in most homes having a north or south orientation and fronting an alphabetized-named street. Gaylord's Second Addition was north of High Street, between First and Sixth Streets (date of the plat is unknown). Direction of the alleys was shifted to north/south in the Second Addition, thus changing the orientation of most houses to an east and west orientation and fronting the numbered streets.

The first residential buildings built in Gaylord were hotels/boarding houses located along Sibley Avenue to house the newly arriving railway workers and entrepreneurs. However, the development of Gaylord continued the Victorian era preference of having a single family home as the predominant residence. Contrary to the residence above a shop model, the detached single-family home offered more privacy and space, centered on the family nucleus, and separated work and residential space. The concept of a single house on a lot also enabled families to own outbuildings for raising animals. The detached, single-family home became attainable for early settlers as land was plentiful and inexpensive, and labor cheap.

## Development Patterns

The housing development pattern in Gaylord represents a synopsis of not only the rate of residential growth in Gaylord but also the location of that growth. Residential blocks were not developed all at once. The first single family homes were dispersed between Third and First Streets on the east side of the village; however, there were a handful of early houses that had been built along Main Avenue on the west side of the village. This sporadic development pattern gave the village a more open appearance in its infancy. As time passed the vacant residential lots of the original plat were ultimately developed at different times which resulted in a mixture of architectural styles from different time periods.

As in most nineteenth-century communities, early houses in Gaylord were interspersed with commercial buildings and industrial sites, as evident with the presence of single-family homes along Sibley Avenue between the commercial downtown to the north and the more industrial area to the south around the railroad depot and grain elevators. Over time, commercial, industrial, and residential areas became increasingly differentiated, as post WWII houses filled in the remaining vacant lots and created their own neighborhoods east and west of the city.

As the community grew over the years, the new residential areas to the west and east continued the grid pattern established by the original plat. The only area that disrupts this grid pattern is in the northeast corner of the city where two cul-de-sacs are located (The Kar-Mil cul-de-sac was built in the 1950s, and the Meadow Wood cul-de-sac was developed in the 1990).

## Community Growth

Gaylord experienced an initial growth spurt after the arrival of the railroad. Between 1890 and 1900, Gaylord grew 57%, from 387 residents to 608 residents. There are a fair number of single family residences remaining from these boom years prior to 1900.

The United States experience a recession during the first decade of the 1900s and residential growth in Gaylord similarly came to a standstill with only a one percent increase during those 10 years. The second population spurt came after County residents approved moving the County Seat from Henderson to Gaylord in 1915. Houses built during this period were scattered throughout most of the old section of Gaylord (between First and Sixth Streets). Some of the more affluent residents combined two or even three village lots to make a larger building site. During the 1920's, housing construction slowed precipitously as Gaylord's population increased only four percent during this decade.

**Construction Year of Housing**

| <b>Period</b>                         | 1939 or earlier | 1940-1949 | 1950-1959 | 1960-1969 | 1970-1979 | 1980-1989 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Percent of Total Housing Units</b> | 28.1            | 6.8       | 19.7      | 17.7      | 21        | 5.6       |

*Gaylord Comprehensive Plan*

Residential growth again mushroomed from 1930 to 1960, with the population of Gaylord doubling from 812 to 1631 residents as soldiers from farms returned from the war and moved into the village. Houses constructed between 1930 and 1950 continued to fill in the vacant lots of the original two plats and the area south of the railroad. Gaylord experienced its greatest growth on record during the 1950's. This

corresponded with close to 20% of all the housing in Gaylord being constructed during this decade. Moreover, it was not until the post war population bubble did Gaylord start platting the newer residential areas to the east and west (“West Addition”).

## **Architectural Styles**

It is important to understand the different architectural styles present in Gaylord in order for the community to appreciate the rich diversity of housing styles in Gaylord. Residents are more likely to undertake preservation efforts individually if they first understand how their own houses play a part in defining Gaylord’s historic context.

Folk houses are utilitarian in design because they are built by builders who lack specific architectural training, but instead follow designs and construction methods that have been handed down through the generations. In Folk houses function often dictates the design. Academic architecture, on the other hand, describes buildings that are designed by trained professionals. Style and aesthetics are as important as function, with the goal as a balance of all elements. Because the emphasis on style and fashion is so great, architectural styles grow in popularity, evolve, and fade over time. Often, early examples of a style are quite different from late examples.

Both Folk style and academic architecture are represented in Gaylord. The City has an excellent sample of the popular architectural styles from 1880s – 1860s (I-Houses, Italianate, Gabled-Ell, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and Ranch style). While some pure styles exist, most houses in Gaylord were designed with a blend of architectural styles.

The houses of Gaylord were most likely constructed by one of the several independent contractors living in Gaylord. The designs of the homes in Gaylord were determined by the residential contractors rather than architects. Residential contractors most likely used “pattern-books” specifically aimed at the middle class.

Most of the housing in Gaylord constructed prior to 1930 uses wood clapboard siding. Very few houses have stucco siding and brick veneer did not become common in Gaylord until after 1930 when the Tudor housing style became popular. The Edward J. “Knute” Gladitsch home, at 460 First Street, was built in 1883 but had stonework that was done by Gladitsch in the early 1940s with stone brought from Morton. Construction lumber most likely came from the two lumber yards in town, both of which were located near the railway to ease transportation.

Below is an overview of the architectural styles found in Gaylord and examples of houses that best exhibit the characteristic features of the different styles of architecture.

## ***I-House***

***Predominant period 1820-1900***

One of the oldest Folk styles, the I-House was a common house type in England and English settlers first brought this house type to the American Colonies. As railways made lumber accessible, the two-story design spread east. It became popular in the Midwest where the relatively long and confining winters made large houses a necessity. It is called the I-House because of its popularity in rural areas of Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois.



*460 First Street -1880 (2012)*

Defining characteristics

- Two stories with a side gable
- One room in depth but often with a rear addition for additional space

## ***Italianate***

***Predominant period 1840s to late 1880s***

Inspired by paintings of rural villas of Italy, Italianate was promoted as a romantic alternative to classical Greek and Roman architecture. Because the style was more easily adapted to narrow urban lots, it became the dominant style for residential and commercial architecture from c. 1855 to c. 1880. It continued as a popular style for commercial buildings to the turn of the century. The only remaining example of this architectural style in Gaylord is the Julius Henke house located at 1119 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Henke was Gaylord's first mayor, charter member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, an original school board member, constructed the Henke Block building on Main and Fourth, and was influential in getting the County Seat moved to Gaylord. He originally constructed the house on the northwest corner of Fifth and Main. (It was moved in 2000 to make room for the Jerry's Mall commercial development.)



*Henke House at 1119 8<sup>th</sup> St (2012  
- front porch was added in 2000)*

Defining characteristics:

- Two or three stories (rarely one)
- Single or paired decorative brackets under wide cornices
- Balanced, symmetrical rectangular shape
- Tall, narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above
- Projecting door and window crowns/hood moldings

### ***Gabled-El***

***Predominant period 1865 - 1920***

Gable-front houses descended from the Greek Revival style, placing an emphasis on the gabled end of the house reminiscent of a pediment. Another Folk style, Gabled-El houses are a variation of the Gable-front houses by adding a side-gable wing at a right angle to form an L. With the coming of the railroad supplying abundant lumber and the introduction of balloon frame construction, Gabled-El houses first became popular in rural areas in the Northeast and Midwest. For the first time families were able to inexpensively build two-story dwellings. These prevalent rural homes became common for the urban working class for its simple and utilitarian design.

Defining characteristics:

- Minimal architectural detailing
- Two stories with a wing of equal height added at a right angle creating an L.
- A shed-roofed porch placed within the L made by the two wings

Examples in Gaylord include:

712 Main Ave

302 First St

106 High Ave



*112 Main with Italianate-style windows – 1900 (2012)*

### ***Stick***

***Predominant period 1860s to early 1900s***

The Stick style is a transition from the preceding Gothic Revival style to the subsequent Queen Anne style. All three styles are free adaptations of Medieval English building traditions. However, the defining characteristic of the Stick style is the use of the wall surface as the principle decorative element.

Defining characteristics:

- Gabled roof, usually steeply pitched
- Steeply pitched cross gables
- Overhanging eaves, usually with exposed rafter ends
- Decorative trusses in gables
- Horizontal and vertical bands, raised from exterior wall surface for emphasis (stick work)
- Wooden construction – clapboard, shingle or both



*358 Third St – 1917 (2012)*

**Queen Anne**  
**Predominant period 1880 – 1910**

The elaborate style known as Queen Anne became an architectural fashion during the 1880s and 1890s. The industrial revolution during this period enabled ornate spindle work to be mass produced and the expanded railway network made the decorative trim easily available throughout the country.

Defining characteristics:

- Steep roof with a front-facing gable
- Complicated, asymmetrical shape with round or square towers
- One-story porch that extends across one or two sides of the house
- Differing wall surfaces textured with decorative singles, patterned masonry, or bay windows
- Ornamental spindles or brackets



*452 Second St – 1911 (2012)*

Examples in Gaylord include 521 Third Street

**Colonial Revival**  
**Predominant period 1880 – 1955**

As a clear reaction against excessively elaborate Queen Anne architecture, the Colonial Revival became a popular house style from 1880 to 1955. The Colonial Revival refers to the return of interest in the Federal and Georgian house styles found on the east coast. Reflecting American patriotism and a desire for simplicity, the Colonial Revival house style was the most popular historic revival style in between World War I and II.



*413 Linden Ave – 1937 (2012)*

Defining characteristics:

- Symmetrical façade with central entrance
- Accentuated front door with decorative crown supported by pilasters
- Sometimes the entry way has a projected portico supported by slender columns
- Double-hung windows with multi-pane glazing

Other Examples in Gaylord include 314 Sixth Street

***Dutch Colonial Revival***  
***Predominant period 1910 – 1955***

Dutch Colonial Revival was a widely popular variant within the larger Colonial Revival movement. The unique gambrel roofs of Dutch Colonial architecture provided an interesting focal point for houses of medium or small size and allowed for more headroom in the second story without the expense of constructing a full second story. Front-facing gambrel roofs were dominant in the style to about 1915, while side gambrel roofs, often with full shed dormers, are most common on later examples. Decorative details are similar to the Colonial Revival style.



*415 Linden Ave -1938 (2012)*

Other examples in Gaylord include 615 Sixth St.

***Tudor Revival***  
***Predominant period 1920s – 1930s***

The Tudor Revival style is based on a variety of late Medieval English influences. The earliest Tudor style houses date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and tended to be architect-designed landmarks. It was not until after World War I when masonry veneering techniques made brick and stone facades of English prototypes affordable. The style quickly faded from fashion in the late 1930s.

Defining characteristics:

- Steeply pitched roof, usually side-gabled
- Front façade dominated by one or more prominent  
Cross gables
- Tall narrow windows with multi-pane glazing
- Massive chimneys
- Most made with brick, stucco and/or stone  
with decorative half-timbering
- Steeply pitched gable dormers



*514 High Ave – 1936 (2012)*

Examples in Gaylord include:

- 352 First Ave
- 354 First Ave
- 513 Lincoln Ave

## **Craftsman**

### **Predominant period 1905 – 1935**

The most popular historic house design in Gaylord is the Craftsman Bungalow. The Craftsman style was a product of the British Arts and Crafts movement. As a reaction to the industrial revolution and the excesses of the Victorian era, emphasis was placed on simple design, honesty in construction, and fine craftsmanship. In America, the Arts and Crafts movement was led by furniture maker Gustav Stickley who began promoting the style in 1903 through his magazine, *The Craftsman*. The style was further advanced by California architects and brothers Charles and Henry Greene, who were influenced by Prairie and Oriental architecture. Numerous house plan books, architectural magazines, popular magazines (e.g. *Good House Keeping*, *House Beautiful*, and *Ladies Home Journal*) and manufacturers of pre-fabricated "kit houses" such as Sears, Roebuck and Co. further popularized the style.

Though Craftsman buildings and two-story houses are plentiful, the most common expression of the Craftsman style is the "bungalow." This term came from India (via England), and refers to a low house surrounded by porches or galleries. Bungalows are one or one-and-a-half story houses of modest size with low-gabled roofs and wide porches, which are often integrated into the structure. Because of their affordable size, yet fashionable appeal, Craftsman Bungalows were widely popular in America's growing middle class neighborhoods of the early twentieth century, such as Gaylord's.

#### Defining characteristics:

- Low-pitched gabled roof
- Deep eaves with exposed rafters
- Decorative beams or knee braces under gables
- 1 – 1 ½ stories
- Large, covered front porches, supported by square or battered columns



*511 Fourth St. -1916 (2012)*



*513 Third Ave – 1916 (2012)*



*114 Franklin St. - 1914 (2012)*

The two houses pictured below are good examples of Craftsman architecture while not being classified as Bungalows because they have the defining characteristics of the Craftsman style but are not one or one and half stories in height, which defines a Bungalow.



609 Fourth Ave -1916 (2012)



214 Main Ave- 1910 (2012)

### ***Ranch***

#### ***Predominant period 1935 – 1975***

The most popular house style in Gaylord is the Ranch style, which represents the community's greatest period of growth between 1940 and 1960 when the population of the city grew 55 percent. The Ranch style originated in California in the mid-1930's but did not gain in popularity elsewhere until the 1940's. The "rambling" Ranch style became the dominant style throughout the country during the 1950s and 1960s.

The popularity of this style was made possible by the country's switch in transportation preference from streetcars to the automobile. Houses built prior to WWII were relatively compact structures on narrow lots as people walked to places of employment or to streetcar lines. However, as the automobile replaced the streetcar and busses as the primary mode of transportation, sprawling houses could be built on wide residential lots, typically twice the size of lots platted prior to WWII.

The Split Level Ranch became popular during the 1950s as a multi-story variation to the Ranch house. The Split Level incorporated an additional story to split three family functions on three separate levels: the wing (quiet living area), the lower level (noisy living and garage), and upper level (sleeping areas.)



*97 Lincoln Ave – 1960 (2012)*

Defining characteristics:

- Single-story residence with a strong horizontal orientation
- Low pitched gable and hipped roofs
- Clad with wooded or brick exterior materials, sometimes in combination that would emphasize the horizontal design.
- Wide use of “picture windows” with or without flanking side windows



*711 Main Ave – 1963 (2012)*

Examples in Gaylord include:

310 Eighth St. (split level)

716 High Ave

## **Multifamily Dwellings**

The earliest apartments were located above the stores in the commercial district, as several early businesses had upstairs rental rooms. The number of apartments located on the second floor of commercial buildings increased in later years as businessmen moved out of the apartments over stores and sought quarters that offered more space and privacy and did not have long flights of stairs.

There were no apartment buildings in Gaylord until a housing shortage occurred when servicemen returned after World War II. The citizens of Gaylord organized and purchased from the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) a former military officers’ dwelling, which was trucked from Nebraska to Gaylord and placed on the southeast corner of Highway No. 22 (Sixth St) and Lincoln Avenue. (Although Otto Zarnott later became the private owner of the apartments, the extant apartments have been known as the “Veteran’s Housing” for years.)

## **Sidewalks**

Concrete sidewalks tended to be installed throughout the village prior to the emergence of the automobile when the majority of the people walked to their jobs (1880s – 1920s). Areas platted and developed after this period did not include sidewalks as increasing automobile ownership changed the primary mode of transportation and eliminating the apparent need for sidewalks.

## Outbuildings

Residential outbuildings are also included in the residential development context for Gaylord as many early residents kept chickens, goats and other livestock at their homes in various outbuildings. Several of these original outbuildings exist today. The need, and therefore presence, of these outbuildings declined as the village developed and increasingly single and double car garages took their place in newer developments. (The City banned livestock living within city limits in 1979.)



## Expected Property Types

Single family dwellings

Multi-family dwellings

Duplexes

Apartment Buildings

Garages

Gardens

Driveways

Fences

Outbuildings

Sidewalks

## Recommendations and Future Actions

- The first step in any preservation effort should be to fully survey the entire residential housing stock of Gaylord. Among other findings, the survey should determine if any catalog or Sears houses exist in Gaylord.
- The City should consider establishing historic conservation districts for the residential area of Gaylord, or locally designating a particular housing style like Craftsman Bungalows that are significant to Gaylord, or locally designating individual residences that would preserve the architectural variety found in Gaylord.
- The City should encourage house owners of Craftsman style houses to join the Twin Cities Bungalow Club, which is an excellent resource for maintenance information for this style of housing.
- The City should consider establishing a Paint-A-Thon or Rebuild Together, a national effort that assists low-income homeowners and seniors in maintaining their homes.

## Preservation Planning Recommendations

Over the past 100 years, the City of Gaylord has lost a few significant historic resources. However, a fair number of historic residential and commercial buildings remain that physically tell the story of the celebrated development of Gaylord. In addition, these historic buildings have demonstrated their importance to the City in general and the downtown in particular, with their adaptability and durability over the past 100 years. Not only should Gaylord explore future historic preservation activities for the sake of preserving these valuable resources but also because historic preservation has proven to have a positive economic impact on communities that undertake preservation efforts.

The primary purpose of historic contexts is to develop an understanding of Gaylord's historic development in order to evaluate its historic resources and to determine which preservation efforts the City may want to evaluate further. Specific planning recommendations are listed in the individual context chapters. Below are the more general preservation activities that Gaylord may want to explore implementing in the future.

- **Historic Preservation Plan** – is usually the first step in a city's preservation efforts. A historic preservation plan reviews all the preservation tools in more detail, provides a public forum to decide which preservation efforts should be used, explains historic preservation's terminology, outlines the legal basis for historic preservation, and prioritizes the community's preservation goals.
- **Survey**- examines in more detail all residential, commercial and industrial buildings to determine their historic significance.
- **Historic Preservation Ordinance** – should be tailored to the needs and desires of the particular community. They cover the spectrum from being lenient (providing only recommendations) to being stringent (determining paint colors). Just like any planning effort, the community determines where on the "regulation" spectrum they would prefer to be positioned. Preservation ordinances also establish nomination standards and procedures.
- **Nomination to National Register** – The National Register of Historic Places honors buildings and places that have a national historic significance. Buildings listed on the National Register may be able to receive a Federal and State tax-credit for major improvements.
- **Local Historic Register** – Resources that are of local importance should be listed on a Local Historic Register. Historic Preservation Ordinances only affect buildings on a Local Register, not the National Register.
- **Design guidelines** – Prepared by historic preservation architects, design guidelines give city officials and building owners ideas on the best preservation practices for building improvements.
- **Certified Local Government** – Being a CLG brings many benefits to a community such as preservation grants, technical resources, and networking opportunities. However, one of the requirements is that a separate Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) be established. There may not be enough preservation activities for a separate HPC in Gaylord, but a good first step

may be expanding the responsibilities of the City's Planning Commission and changing its name to the Preservation and Planning Commission.

- **Education** – The City should use the Historic Context Study as an educational resource for all Planning Commission members.

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# Appendix A – Research Design

## Introduction

This Research Design describes the objectives and methodology of the historic context study completed for the City of Gaylord. The City commissioned Smith & Main to complete the study. The project began in June, 2012 with the consultant meeting with Kevin McCann, Gaylord's City Administrator, and Gloria Sinell.

## Objectives of Gaylord's Historic Context Study

Ultimately, the City of Gaylord plans to engage the residents, business owners and policymakers and create a Historic Preservation Plan, which would explain the different aspects of historic preservation, identify the preservation issues in Gaylord, determine preservation goals for the city and prioritize preservation efforts. As part of the public participation process of developing a historic preservation plan, the proper procedures for identifying, evaluating, registering and treating historic properties will be discussed. However, as part of the background information for developing a historic preservation plan, the City of Gaylord is completing this Historic Context Study. As stated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning, any decisions regarding a Historic Preservation Plan are best made when the relationship of individual properties to other properties within the City are understood through a Historic Context Study.

A principle goal of the project is to excite residents, business owners and policymakers into wanting to pursue further historic preservation projects.

This project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning by explaining: What aspects of geography, history and culture significantly shaped the physical development of Gaylord.

1. What important property types were associated with those developments.
2. Why those property types are important.
3. What characteristics do the property types need to have to be considered an important representation of their type and context.
4. The study is organized into the different development themes and contexts of the city. A narrative for each context describes the nature of each context or theme. Representative buildings, structures, and area for each context are referenced. In addition to describing the themes which illustrate the patterns of Gaylord's development, the report also places the city in the larger context of Minnesota's early settlement, particularly with regard to early agricultural and railroad towns. A time table with important dates of U.S, Minnesota and Gaylord's history is also included to help place the development of Gaylord within the context of the development of the nation, generally, and the State, specifically.

Recommendations and/or note of any special situations related to the resources: ownership patterns, existing conditions, etc. are provided. In addition, the report concludes with a list of general historic preservation planning programs that the city should discuss during their historic preservation planning process.

A final presentation to the community was given at the Economic Development Authority's meeting on November 19, 2012. The PowerPoint presentation illuminated the highlights of the study, and discussed the next steps in the planning process.

## **Methodology**

### *1. Identifying the concept, time period and geographical limits for the historic context.*

The Historic Context Study examines the general historic development patterns of the community. The geographical limits of the study are Gaylord's city limits and the surrounding countryside since farming has played a significant role in the development of the City.

This historic context study describes the historical and architectural development of Gaylord between pre-history and 1965.

### *2. Assembling the existing information about the historic context.*

The study process began by meeting with Kevin McCann, Gaylord's City Administrator, and Gloria Sinell, member of the Sibley County Historical Society and local historian, to identify prominent local resources, sites and priorities. The local newspaper, Gaylord Hub, also printed an article describing the Historic Context Study process and solicited stories about Gaylord's history.

Archival research and fieldwork have formed the basis of the context study. These sources included state, county, and local histories, land use and other historic maps, archival materials such as those found in local collections (most notably the Gaylord Public Library) at the Minnesota Historical Society, and state contexts on file at the State Historic Preservation Office. Primary sources such as historic photographs, historic plat maps, and city directories were also studied. Immensely helpful was the Gaylord history book, *Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County of Sibley County*, written by the Gaylord History Committee in 1982.

Field work included a thorough reconnaissance of the city's existing building types and architectural styles. The Minnesota Historical Society does not have any Sanborn Fire Maps on file for the City of Gaylord. Therefore, historical photographs and maps have been particularly useful in determining the historic development of Gaylord over the time period covered by the context study.

Oral histories have also been used to supplement the archival research and fieldwork by the consultant.

Historic photos are from the *Gaylord - Hub of Sibley County* book, Gloria Sinell's personal collection, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), Gaylord Hub, and *A History of Minnesota*.

### *3. Synthesizing the information*

The narrative of the Historic Context Study covers the history of Gaylord and identifies important patterns, events, persons and/or cultural values that shaped the development of the community.

#### *4. Defining the property types*

Groups of property types are identified that link the relationship between the historical narratives of the context study with the actual historic properties that illustrate that narrative. Aerial photographs and fieldwork have determined the locational patterns of the different property types.

#### *5. Identifying information gaps*

The original plat of Gaylord is not recorded at the Minnesota Historical Society or at City Hall. In addition, Sanborn Fire Maps are not available for Gaylord, thus having to rely on secondary sources such as the County's Assessor's Office for construction dates of historic buildings.