

Michael Gay

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Michael Gay was born 10-15-1819 in Canada and married Elizabeth Shane of Grand Rapids in August, 1845. She was from what is now known as Windsor, Ontario. Elizabeth died in November, 1892.

In June 1847, Horace Boardman arrived to represent his father who had bought land at the mouth of the Boardman river to erect a sawmill. On the 20th of June, a week or more later, Michael Gay sailed Boardman's boat, Lady of the Lake, into the harbor, accompanied by a man named Dunham who acted as pilot. Gay was employed by Boardman.

Around June 20, Gay sailed to the Manitou's to pick up some employees and returned the 5th of July. Also on board were Gay's wife, about 15 or 16 and her 4 month old baby. Mrs. Gay did not see a white woman again, except for the two that had come with her until the summer of 1849 when she heard that a woman was in the camp of the federal surveyor, Risdon.

On May 15, 1849, Matilda Josephine Gay was born, the first white child born at Traverse City. She married Charles W. Smith on 8-27-1864.

In the winter of 1851-52, parties were organized at Traverse City and Michael Gay, a fiddler of sorts, was asked to play as often as every couple weeks.

In the spring of 1852, Abram Wadsworth laid out lots in Elk Rapids and sold them for \$25, James McLaughlin buying the two where the town hall is now. Michael and his family arrived that spring and he became an employee of the mill.

Michael bought land from Mr. Wadsworth in Section 4 and lived there while his health permitted. As time went by, he added three additional 40 acre parcels and some fractional parcels on the shore of Elk Lake.

Mary Elizabeth was born circa 1860 and married Neil Morrison in 1877. She died in 1931.

William was born in 1861. In 1888 William was severely injured when his horse ran away. It was not thought at the time that he would live but he survived and lived until 1935.

In 1878, the oldest house in Traverse City, built by Michael and used as a stable, according to one source, and as a logging camp according to another, burned down.

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Michael died of pneumonia on 2-18-1904, at the home of his son, William, in Whitewater twp. He was 84. The lot at the Elk Rapids cemetery where he is buried originally belonged to Richard Bagot who later sold it to William Gay. If memory serves well, Mr. Bagot's first wife is buried in that lot as well.