

## **RAIL OFFICIALS PROMISED LAND TO ASSOCIATION**

Bay View, with its 400 cottages, assembly and summer university, had its source in the camp meeting movement which swept the country in the nineteenth century.

In the last half of the century it was estimated there were more than 600 camp meetings in the country and the movement to establish such an organization in Northern Michigan gained momentum.

The Rev. J. H. McCarty, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Jackson, and one of his parishioners, S. O. Knapp, were the men who laid the groundwork for Bay View.

Mr. and Mrs. Knapp spent the summer of 1874 in Petoskey, seeking a place where she might regain failing health. They discovered the woods northeast of Petoskey and spent many hours exploring them.

In September, 1875, both the Detroit and Michigan Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church named committees to act jointly in selection of grounds for an annual camp meeting.

An organization meeting was held in Jackson and the Rev. E. H. Pilcher was selected as president. On January 20, 1876, at a meeting held in Grand Rapids, the Petoskey location was formally approved, although there was considerable support for sites in Otsego Lake, Mullet Lake, Burt Lake, Cheboygan, Traverse City and Ludington.

The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad was much interested in the project and promised to furnish the land. H. O. Rose, of Petoskey, and a representative of the railroad toured the north country in the winter of 1875-76 obtaining deeds from the Indians and others who held the title.

Mr. Rose and C. J. Pailthorp, a young Petoskey attorney, obtained pledges from Petoskey residents to pay for the land – an amount around \$3,000.

On April 13, 1876, the trustees were given a contract which provided for furnishing a warranty deed to the land on the condition that the association would within five years make improvements on the grounds to the extent of \$10,000 and would conduct a camp meeting on the grounds for at least 15 years.

The warranty deed was executed May 22, 1876, and on October 11, 1890, the company gave the association a quit claim deed, indicating the original condition had been met.

The first meeting held on the grounds was on May 2, 1876, when the trustees inspected the property. The first camp meeting of the Michigan Camp Ground Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as Bay View was then known, opened August 1, 1870.

On August 2 the first regular annual meeting of the association was held in the woods with members sitting on a fallen hemlock tree.

January 30, 1877, the trustees officially adopted the name Bay View and on July 29, 1898, the corporate name was changed to The Bay View Camp Ground Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church. On August 7, 1919, the present name was adopted – The Bay View Association of the Methodist Church.

The first cottages were built in Bay View in 1877 and the Bay View House was started the same year. Located where Sunset Park is now, the Bay View House, operated for many years by George W. Childs, burned in September 1929.

The Bay View Assembly and the Summer University were launched in 1886 under the direction of John M. Hall. The next year an auditorium was built and in 1888 it was enlarged to seat 2,500.

The John M. Hall Auditorium, which is still the center of Bay View programs, was dedicated on July 18, 1915. Mr. Hall, who gave the auditorium, had three years previously given the recreation building at the waterfront in Bay View.

Thomas Gordon, Jr. presented the association with the pipe organ, which was installed in the auditorium.