

BAY, LAND AND PEOPLE

A Short History of the Grand Traverse Bay Region

For Later Elementary Students

**Prepared by a class in Writing Michigan Local History
Conducted in Grand Traverse County by
The Field Services Division
Central Michigan College**

1949

PREFACE

The men and women who live in the Grand Traverse Region today feel that there are many things that need to be done to make the area a better place to live. There are roads that need to be improved. The work of saving the forests and the streams needs to be carried forward. We must learn how to protect our soil from being worn out and from being washed away. The schools should be made constantly better. Better ways to earn livings must be found.

However, these men and women know that the Bay region is a fine place to live now. They know that the roads they now use, the schools they now have, the industries and the farms that are located in the area represent a great amount of work and planning by people who lived here in earlier years. The forests had to be opened. The land had to be cleared. The first business risks had to be taken. The beginnings of schools, of churches, of newspapers required real sacrifices from the generations that are now gone.

It is the hope of the people who cooperated in the preparation of this booklet that a real contribution has been made to keeping alive the knowledge and the appreciation of what was done by those who were the pioneers in the Grand Traverse Region and by the generations who carried on the development of the farms and towns. Only from such knowledge and appreciation can come the wisdom and inspiration that the people of today and tomorrow must have if the future is to bring increasing happiness and prosperity to the men and women and their families who live and will live in the Grand Traverse Bay Area.

The preparation of the material for this short history of the Grand Traverse Region was carried on by a class in writing Michigan local history. This class was conducted by the Field Services Division of Central Michigan College of Education with the cooperation of Mr. George Eikey, County School Commissioner

in Grand Traverse County, and was held in the Traverse City High School through the courtesy of Mr. Glen Loomis, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education.

The book was written especially for later elementary students. However, if others find it of value and interest the class will be more than pleased. It is only fair to state that in the editing it was found necessary to leave out much worthwhile material. Some of the contributions as here produced present significantly less than half of the writing originally prepared. It was felt that too many pages would defeat the primary purpose of the work. In a few instances no article appears under the name of certain members of the class. This does not mean that that person's work was any less worthy than that that is produced here, but rather that in the editing it seemed necessary to hold the amount of material within limits and some of the material couldn't be fitted into the final outline.

The members of the class were:

Martha Andresen	Rovena Hunt
Natalie Banks	Leslie Jamieson - ONE BOY
Irene Boyer	Maude Johnson
Maude Burkholder	Lillian Knapp
Marcella Butler	Eleanor McGarry
Bertha Champion	Luella McPherson
Martina Chaney	Maude Manns
Phyllis Dalton	Marion Maxon
Elizabeth Fischer	Gladys Maxwell
Zella Forton	Myrtle Moran
Doris Graham	Ina Noteware
Charlotte Groesser	Belle Payne
Mabel Henschell	Eva Puffer
Donna Hickey	George Burr Puffer. TWO BOYS

Ruth Raff	Agatha Steele
Elizabeth Rawlings	Dorothy Van Epps
Genevieve Reinhart	Gwendolyn Vassallo
Ivan Rogers	Mabelle Watson
Lucille Schowengerdt	Elizabeth Wood
Lorraine Smith	Hazel Maurine Wyatt

It would be impossible here to list all of the persons who helped the members of the class. However, the Public Library and the Traverse City Record Eagle deserve special recognition for the unstinting manner in which they made all of their resources available. Mr. William Votruba provided the facilities of the City Opera House for a presentation in which Miss Gladys Maxwell directed her fourth grade class in a program of 1890 variety. For these courtesies and the multitude that are not specifically mentioned here, the classes are deeply grateful.

The office of the Division of Field Services performed the drudgery of preparing stencils and doing the mimeographing. To Mr. Woodward Smith and his staff the class tenders its sincere appreciation. Mrs. Marcel Butler prepared the cover design. Mrs. Maude Manns, Miss Gladys Maxwell, and Mr. Burr Puffer assisted the instructor in editing the material.

Richard L. Wysong ✓

Central Michigan College

7-15-95
A TRAVERSE
CITY KID -
RETIRED A NUMBER
OF YEARS AGO
AS A FULL
PROFESSOR (HEAD
OF HISTORY DEPT.?)
DAD

Before Men Came to Michigan: A Geographic Introduction

Betty Rawlings

Michigan is a gift of the ice age. Centuries ago when the mighty ice sheet began to form in Labrador, the land of Michigan lay in the path of the great ice sheets that eventually covered the entire section and extended further south.

The work of the ice and water on the land in this glacial period is well known. The "old land" which was the accumulation of ages was swept bare of its soil. Where conditions were suitable lake basins were gouged out thus reshaping the landscape and dumping boulders, gravel and soil to the depth of many feet over the whole area. Through the succeeding ages came great forests which provided shelter for the furbearing animals. The territory was laced by inland lakes and waterways which provided ways of transportation for prehistoric man and the Indian Tribes that followed.

The oldest part of the surface of Michigan is in the western half of the Upper Peninsula. The entire portion of this section of the Upper Peninsula is broken and rocky, rugged and wild in its beauty, breath-taking in its dimensions. Here are cradled many cascades and water falls, marvelous shorelines, beautiful forests. The glacial drift in the valleys affords good soil for agriculture.

When the retreat of the glacier left Michigan exposed to the sun, air, rain and snow, only rock debris and lakes and streams covered the surface. From the rocks came the soil. Bare rock, moraines, till plains, outwash, lake beds and sand dunes came to cover the whole state from one end to the other. There were flat areas, smooth rolling areas, knolls, hills, and low mountains. The soil was sand here and clay there, stones and gravel covered other parts. Glacial drift was mixed up in hit and miss fashion out of varying quantities of granite, sandstone, and shale. That was the beginning of our Michigan.

Thousands of years later the French fur traders paddled their canoes along the lakes and rivers to begin the white man's use of what the glaciers had left.

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Chapter I

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVERS AND LAKES OF THE GRAND TRAVERSE REGION

Maurine Wyatt

The first white man ever to see the Grand Traverse area was Henri Tonty who coasted down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan on his way to join LaSalle at the mouth of the St. Joseph River in the year 1679. He undoubtedly went by canoe as he followed the shore line, thus seeing the two arms of the Grand Traverse Bay reaching deep into the virgin timber.

Tonty's canoe was not the first to dare the waters of Lake Michigan. The Indians, mostly the Ottawas, used the bays to get to Lake Michigan, hence to Mackinac Island and other trading posts. The Frenchmen, the voyageurs, who worked for the great fur trading companies must have come into this region looking for the furs they received in trade for their wares.

Many rivers and lakes were used by the red-man, too, in his search for food, furs and fun. Antrim County's Chain of Lakes was widely used as a winter resort as the Indians fished through the ice and trapped. The surrounding hills were rich in game for the hunter's bow or rifle. The Boardman River that runs through Traverse City to the bay, was a very popular winter home for the Indians of this region. Every winter there would be a large settlement of wigwams on the eastern shore of Boardman Lake. Why? The pickerel grew large in the lake and the Indians speared them through holes in the ice, much like our fathers and brothers do today. The braves could go up the river valley to find deer and other animals for food and material for clothing.

This went on for many years. The Indians and fur traders cruised the rivers and lakes to get about much as we use the roads today. The brave and locally famous Reverend Dougherty came in May of 1839. He came in a Mackinaw boat, one of the most important boats used by early flocks that traveled the Great Lakes. It was a flat-bottomed boat with a pointed prow and a square

stern that used either sails or oars. This boat had four men at the oars. All of this missionary party came with Reverend Dougherty by way of the bay.

When other white men saw the wealth of this area and settled here, they depended on water for transportation and power. One of these, Captain Boardman, in 1847 bought land from the government and set his son Horace up in the lumbering business right here in Traverse City. All of his supplies and the settlers that helped him came from Mackinaw by schooner. They built a mill on what is now Asylum Creek down at the Brook dance hall. The stream furnished power to run the small mill that began pouring out pine lumber.

John Leru arrived in 1847 by boat at one of the Manitou Islands where he built a wharf for use in furnishing fuel to the steamers that came after lumber and passengers. Thus Leelanau County used the waterways to get started. At the mouth of the Betsie River, Joseph Oliver lived by trapping and hunting until he could erect a small river mill. Settlers came into Glen Arbor by boat and also to Cat Head Point. They moved into Northport and then put Carp River to use for running a mill.

In Antrim County, a Mr. Wadsworth in 1847 came by boat from Mackinac. He settled first in Old Mission, then moved to Elk Rapids where he built a mill on Elk River. He manufactured pickets and lathe. In summer his supplies came by water; in the winter he hauled them over the ice. So the settlers followed him into the region and they found jobs or began farming on the lands they had to clear.

In Charlevoix County the first settler, Richard Cooper, came on a schooner, the Elizabeth Caroline. It let him and several fishermen off at Pine River, now Charlevoix River, and left some salt for the Indians. Cooper moved on to Leelanau County where he fished that summer, then he returned to Little Traverse. Many people fished along the shore of Lake Michigan in that area. They salted their catches and sent them out by small vessels that sailed between these fishing villages selling supplies and picking up the salted barrels of

fish. Do you see how important these fish were? They were the money these men earned to use for their food and clothes.

So, you see, during the early days of settling and the later days of lumbering, our rivers and lakes were the arteries of the region. They were used to carry the men and supplies back and forth to settlements and camps. They were needed to float the logs to mills, to furnish the power to run the mills and to ship away the finished lumber to Buffalo, Racine, and Chicago.

When the pine and hardwoods dwindled out new use was made of our rivers and lakes. As early as 1883 wealthy people from Chicago were spending their summers on the shores of the bays.

Gradually, as the forests were cleared, cottages and summer homes were built on the many lakes and rivers in this region. Traverse City served as a port of access for summer visitors that used to come by excursion steamer. Now many people spend all the warm months living in these homes or camping so they may swim and fish as they please. Captain Webb, one of the old colorful sea captains, had a smart fleet of three boats, the Cummings, the Crescent, and the Columbia, that traveled with passengers and supplies back and forth around the bay area. Until 1920 most of the summer people came to Leelanau County by steamer from Chicago. The Northern Michigan Transportation Company had four fine boats in operation: the S.S. Illinois, the S.S. Puritan, the S.S. Missouri and the S.S. Manitou. These were used to carry both cargo and passengers. Since 1920 the roads have improved so that people prefer to use their automobiles rather than come by water. Then too, there are now the air and rail services.

There were regular excursion boats on Elk Lake until in the 1920's they became unprofitable. Many of your parents will remember excursion boats on various lakes and the bays.

The use of the bays for transportation has changed a great deal. After the canoes and Mackinaw boats, the sloops and schooners, the steamboat and now the diesel ship bring in the few supplies that come by water. These supplies are now mostly gasoline and coal. Once in a while a cruiser will anchor in the bay but the breakwater is in bad condition and the harbor has filled in.

Today recreation is the principal use of our lakes and streams. The Boardman River is famous for its German brown trout. All the small lakes are well supplied with fish and many have fine beaches for swimming. Its a fine thrill to hire a cabin cruiser to try for the big lake trout (from five to fifty pounds) out in the bay. The chain-of-lakes in Antrim County appeals to the canoeist as does the Boardman River with its eighty miles of beautiful scenery.

The Boardman still furnishes much of Traverse City's electrical power. The old dam erected on the river about five miles out, was built in 1894 and it still is in operation. Since this time three other power dams have been built to supply current not only to the city but to the surrounding area. Elk River helps supply power to Elk Rapids and there are several other small power plants in operation.

You can see, then, that rivers and lakes have been very important to the history and building of the Grand Traverse region. People entered by way of the bays and Lake Michigan, used the rivers to get into the interior, and used the rivers to furnish power, and now depend on the appeal of the many lakes and streams to bring the tourist and fishermen and hunters. They help keep the region prosperous.

Chapter II

THE AMERICAN INDIANS OF THE GRAND TRAVERSE REGION

Part 1.

The History of the Indians

Zella Forton

The American Indians probably are a branch of the mongoloid race. They were an uncivilized people found on the American Continent by the first white men who pilgrimaged here.

There were ten main nations or stocks comprising this race in the United States. We are concerned only with the Algonquin nation, the branch tribes of which, the Ottawas, the Chippewas and a few other tribes, were located partly in the Grand Traverse region.

There were large colonies of Indians located on practically all shores of Grand Traverse Bay and the chain of inland lakes.

Indians inhabited the Grand Traverse area many centuries before the white men came. Deep trails at Old Mission, near Round Lake and other places, clearings at Cat Head Point, old tree scars and stories of old Indians prove this.

It is roughly estimated that there were about 12,000 Indians in the lower peninsula and about 3,000 in the upper peninsula in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Ottawas were in the west, the Potowatomies in the south, Chippewas (Ojibways) in the east and Menominees in both peninsulas. The French made friends with these tribes, ate food with them, lived peaceably and intermarried with them. As a result the French easily obtained their cooperation in warring against the English.

Religion

The first missionaries to work among the Indians in close proximity to this region were probably at Cross Village. Many years later when other whites came the old large wooden cross that had been erected by them was still standing to mark the landscape of a high bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. It has