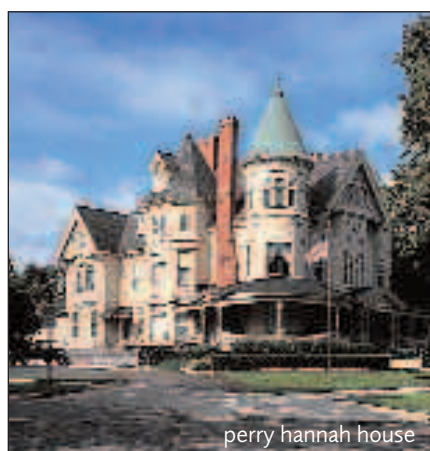


# A Rich and Varied Heritage

Thanks to its abundant network of bays, rivers and other waterways, Traverse City has always been a busy place. Ancient native peoples settled in the area thousands of years ago and around A.D. 1400 the ancestors of today's Ottawa and Chippewa Indians began hunting, trading and farming here.



perry hannah house

In the early 18th century they were joined by French-Canadian traders who traveled the coast in huge canoes to bring shipments of furs and other goods to market. (It was they who named this area “La Grande Traverse” because of the long five-mile crossing they had to make at the mouth of Grand Traverse Bay.) During the 19th century, the area's rich timber resources and ready access to water made Traverse City a thriving mill town, attracting lumberjacks from Maine, Canada and Scandinavia and skilled woodworkers from Bohemia to the Traverse City district still known as “Slabtown.”

Hundreds of schooners, steamships and other vessels thronged the crowded Grand Traverse waterways in those days, and the area still has its share of romantic shipwrecks. Even more romantic are the lonely lighthouses at Old Mission and Cathed Bay that once warned mariners away from the deadly shoals.

By the 1880s, new settlers from Ireland, Poland and the eastern U.S. had turned the rough-and-ready frontier settlement of the Boardman River into a prosperous farming and resort community. The discovery that the sheltered hillsides along the bay were perfect for growing cherries and apples brought agricultural wealth to the region, while weary city dwellers from Detroit, Chicago and Cincinnati were drawn by its scenic beauty, fresh air and clear water. The stately buildings and colorful Victorian homes built in that era have been lovingly preserved by their owners.

Equally impressive are the castle-like buildings of the former State Asylum, where unfortunate souls who suffered from what was then called “mental distraction” came to find relief in an atmosphere of serenity, peace and healthy outdoor exercise. That huge 19th century facility is now the Grand Traverse Commons, a growing retail and residential community set amid acres of forests and hills.



grand traverse commons

## A Historical Timeline

**1839** At the invitation of local Indian leaders, the Rev. Peter Dougherty arrives in what is now the village of Old Mission and establishes a church, school and settlement there.

**1851** Chicago businessmen Perry Hannah and Tracy Lay buy Boardman's mill and 200 acres of adjacent land, lay out a street plan on it, and name the place Traverse City. Over the next 35 years they harvest over 400 million board feet of lumber from the area.

**1852** After planting the first cherry trees on the Old Mission Peninsula, Rev. Dougherty and his Indian neighbors move across the bay to the Leelanau Peninsula to get away from the increasing number of settlers.

**1924** Over 3,000 people attend the first “Blessing of the Blossoms” celebration – the ancestor of today's National Cherry Festival.

**1928** National Music Camp opens at Interlochen.

**1970** Congress creates the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, preserving over 64 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline.

**1976** Guessing that the Traverse City climate might be good for grapes, college librarian Bernie Rink opens Boskydel Vineyard and sparks the explosive growth of Traverse City's famed wine industry.

**1980** The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians is formally recognized as an Indian tribe and assumes an increasing leadership role in the local tourist economy. Today the tribe owns the Leelanau Sands and Turtle Creek casinos as well as the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa.