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CHERRY LANE MALL SOUTH AIRPORT

## Grand Traverse Autumn 19



A lumber camp crew is pictured at dinner. George Lutman, the foreman, is seated at the far end of the table. This photo and those on pages 20-22 are courtesy of the Pioneer Study Center.

## Lumberman took TC editor on tour

By LARRY WAKEFIELD  
Special to the Record-Eagle

One crisp winter day more than 125 years ago, two Traverse City men paid a visit to the lumber camps and the great pineries along the Boardman River. They made the 40-mile round trip in a sleigh drawn by two fast ponies.

One was Perry Hannah, the legendary lumberman who founded Traverse City. The other was Morgan Bates, life-time friend of Horace Greeley, who came to Traverse City in 1858 to establish the region's first newspaper, the *Grand Traverse Herald*.

This was Bates' first visit to the pineries; and on Feb. 18, 1859, he published an account of it in his newspaper. The piece was entitled: "A Visit to the Pineries."

"On a very pleasant day last week," he wrote, "in company with the Hon. Perry Hannah, we visited the extensive pineries of Hannah, Lay & Co., on the Boardman River, to get a glimpse of camp life in the pine woods in winter."

They skimmed over the first two miles of level plain along the borders of Boardman Lake, he wrote; and before they got fairly settled under the buffalo robes they were ascending the elevation to the table land. It extended 12 miles southeast through a beautiful forest of sugar maples, beech, rock elm, basswood and white ash. Approaching the pineries, they followed a ridge "just wide enough for the road at an elevation of three hundred feet above the river."

The view was magnificent. "On our right, the Boardman River like a silvery serpent winds its way through the narrow valley for miles. On our left, at nearly the same distance below lies a chain of beautiful lakes, studded with small islands. These are four or five in number, extending about eight miles.

"The first indication that we are in the lumber region is a large stable on our left, a small booth for the 'marker,' a log

rollway on our right, some 300 feet long, and a winding road down to the river."

At the foot of the hill was Canfield's shanty, but they passed it up because of the steep descent and drove a mile farther to Nelson's shanty on the opposite side of the river.

"Captain Nelson himself stood ready to 'take a line,'" Bates wrote. "The shanties are log houses fitted up with bunks, tables benches, stoves and all the other conveniences for housekeeping. We dined sumptuously. The fare was first rate and the cooking excellent. Those who imagine that the lumbermen have a hard time of it in the woods are mistaken. They are well fed, well housed, well worked, and lead a jolly, free-and-easy life."

From Nelson's shanty they went on half a mile to Raney's camp. "The log slide at this shanty is about two hundred feet long," Bates wrote. "And the descent to the river is very steep. The loaded teams came in from the woods a few minutes after our arrival, and we were just in time to witness the descent of the logs to the river. After the logs are measured by the 'marker' and the chains are loosed, they go thundering and crashing down the slope, plunge into the river, emerge and plunge again like a school of huge porpoises on a frolic at sea, throwing the spray twenty feet into the air." The river, he explains, never freezes over.

In one respect, Bates was disappointed in the pineries. "They did not present the somber and gloomy appearance we expected," he wrote. He explained this by saying that much of the forest was Norway pine, which grows on an "open, sandy plain with little or no underbrush. The white pine is more scattered and of much larger growth. We saw some logs three feet in diameter, all clear."

The pineries, Bates wrote, were six miles wide on both the north and south sides of the river and extended 15 miles to the east. He praised the Hannah, Lay

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