

ANDREW PORTER

Andrew Porter, a Pennsylvania teacher, started the community that became Petoskey when he came to the Indian community of Bear River to bring education and religion to the natives.

The Rev. Peter Dougherty, then in charge of activities at Old Mission in Grand Traverse Bay, recommended to the Presbyterian Board of Missions that a school be established on Little Traverse Bay.

Mr. Porter and his mother and his sister arrived in the bay in June 1852, aboard the vessel "Eliza Caroline." They spent their first days here at the home of Daniel Wells, leader of the Bear River Indian group. Lumber had preceded Mr. Porter and was piled on the shore.

After exploring the area carefully, Mr. Porter selected a site on a hill south of the present Porter Street as the location for his mission school. Indians moved the lumber from the beach to the site and the school was built.

For a few years the mission was supported by the Presbyterian organization but later was taken over as a government school. In 1871 support was withdrawn from both sources and the mission was discontinued. In 1875 Mr. Porter went back to Pennsylvania but he returned here to spend his last years. He died February 8, 1899.

Four children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Porter but only one, Reuben, lived to maturity. He studied dentistry and practiced in Petoskey until his death in 1926.