

# Glen Haven Village

Sleeping Bear Dunes  
National Lakeshore  
Michigan



A Publication of  
**Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes**

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Learn more about the ***Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes***, our mission, projects, and accomplishments on our web site. Support our efforts to keep Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore a wonderful natural and historic place by becoming a member or volunteering for a project that can put your skills to work in the park.

This booklet was compiled by Kerry Kelly, ***Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes***.

Some of the content for this booklet was taken from *Sleeping Bear, Yesterday & Today*, by George Weeks, which is available at the Park Bookstore at the Philip A. Hart Visitor Center or at Cottage Bookstore in Glen Arbor, Michigan. Other sources include research reports and photos from the National Park Service.

The National Park Service provided most of the photos.

Welcome to Glen Haven. This historic village on Sleeping Bear Bay is part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The National Park Service continues to restore the village to represent its condition in the 1920s.

Back when this area was first getting settled, there were no trains, and roads were just sandy ruts. Ships provided the main mode of transportation for people and freight between major cities like Chicago and Buffalo which was a gateway to the major cities on the east coast. Along the route, little villages like Glen Haven provided essential services for the ships. There would be a long dock out to deep water where the vessel could be loaded and unloaded. Wood would be stacked up for fuel, and a blacksmith could repair broken equipment. There would always be a general store where you could buy a hat to replace the one that blew off in the last storm, and a boarding house where dock workers, lumber jacks, and folks waiting for the next ship could find lodging.

These villages were just as essential to the shipping system as the sails, portholes, and steam engines. Today, many of those towns have disappeared like nearby Aral, Good Harbor, and Crescent City. Others grew into big cities with no trace of the old village. Not only was Glen Haven one of the busiest of these Great Lakes villages, but more importantly, it is the best remaining example of this type of settlement.



Steamer *Puritan* leaving the Glen Haven dock circa 1925.

Step back in time by walking through the village and imagining what Glen Haven might have been like when it was the center of D. H. Day's lumber business. Look out on Lake Michigan and the old dock pilings and listen to the waves lap up on the beach as you imagine a steamship, with a capacity for 2,000 passengers, docked at the pier. Listen to the activity of 30 men loading cord wood and cargo, while passengers head down the dirt road to the Sleeping Bear Inn. Who would ever have believed that this sleepy little village was once a bustling port?

Walk down to the beach by the Cannery, and I'll introduce you to Daniel Shauger, who came here in 1865, just about the time the dock and the first buildings were erected in what is now Glen Haven. He can take you through the village and tell you what it was like when he first arrived and how it has changed over the years.

### **Daniel Shauger**

"I'm pleased to meet you and have the chance to give you a little tour of my home town. I came to Michigan with my brother John and our brother-in-law Ebenezer Cobb in 1865 from Plymouth, Wisconsin. We were looking for work and a place to homestead. We had heard that there were jobs for woodcutters and lots of prime land, so we hopped a steamer in Milwaukee headed for Buffalo. When we got to the Manitou Passage, the ship docked to take on firewood (called cord wood). Steamers burned 100 to 300 full cords of wood on the trip from Chicago to Buffalo, New York. That would be as much wood as you could pack into your house if you filled up the whole thing right up to the ceiling! It's no wonder they had to stop along the way and load more wood, like you stopping to fill your car with gas on your trip up here.

There wasn't much to see when we got off the boat and walked down the dock. A new boarding house had just been built near the dock, called the Sleeping Bear Inn. The folks there said they were looking for strong young fellows like us to cut cord wood and load it on the steamers, so we decided to stay for a while to see if there might be some good land to homestead.



Glen Haven dock pilings near the Cannery.

We worked for a couple of years before we were able to get some land on what they now call Shauger Hill over by the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive. By 1867 we were able to bring our parents and six brothers and sisters here to join us.

That's enough about me. Now let me show you around. Look out at what remains of the old dock. When I first got here, the dock extended to the end of those old pilings, probably 100 yards from shore. It was plenty wide out at the end so that the cord wood could be stacked up there to load on the next steamer. Later, there was a tramway that brought wood out to the dock, and its tracks went right out to the end.



Waiting for the steamer to dock circa 1925

When a steamer came in, it got pretty busy around here. There would be 20–30 men unloading cargo and loading wood, and some of the passengers would get off the ship and walk around town. Back in those days, the steamers were the best way for people to travel from the east coast to Chicago or Milwaukee. It was also the cheapest way to send freight.

It is quiet here now standing here listening to the waves lap up on the sandy beach, but around the turn of the century, this place was filled with activity. Dock hands and lumberjacks were busy stacking wood and getting freight ready for the next steamer.

Look beyond the pilings now and you'll see two islands. To your left is South Manitou Island, and to your right is North Manitou Island. The water between the islands and the mainland is called Manitou Passage. Most of the ships traveling between Chicago and Buffalo sail through the Passage because it is the shortest route and most protected from the winds. The Passage could also be dangerous because of the shallow shoals and unpredictable weather on Lake Michigan. The islands were settled by Europeans before the mainland (about 1835) to provide safe harbor and cord wood to fuel the steamers. When the wood supply on the islands petered out, they started building "wooding stations" on the mainland, like this one here in Glen Haven. Just to the east of us was another dock at Glen Arbor, and beyond that was one at Port Oneida. This was a busy place back in those days!

With all of the ship traffic through the Manitou Passage, there were bound to be some accidents. Over the years, there have been about 80 shipwrecks in the Sleeping Bear area. In 1901 the Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Service Station was established about a mile west of here staffed with surfmen to patrol the beaches and rescue the crew and passengers of sinking or grounded ships. In 1931, they had to move it to its present site west of town to keep it from being buried by the drifting sand on the point. The men who worked at the station played an active part in the Glen Haven community.

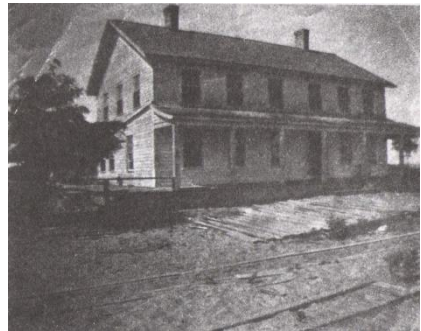
After we get done walking around Glen Haven, you can head over to the Life-Saving Station, now called the Maritime Museum, where you can see how the men lived and worked. It is representative of many similar stations located around the shores of the Great Lakes and the eastern coast of the U.S. There were also Life-Saving Stations on North and South Manitou Islands.

Now let's walk south down Main Street. You see that big red Glen Haven Canning Company building? Well, that wasn't built until the early 1920s. Nowadays, it's a museum, where you can learn about boats that were used on the Great Lakes. We'll talk more about the Cannery toward the end of our tour.

## **Sleeping Bear Inn**

On the west side of the road (on your right) is the Sleeping Bear Inn. When I first got here, it was called the Sleeping Bear House. It was used as a boarding house for the lumberjacks, dock workers and sometimes for passengers who wanted to stay overnight or get a meal. The dock and the Inn were built by Charles C. McCarty in about 1857, just before we got here. By 1871 there was quite a nice little logging village here. But then on October 9, 1871 the same night as the Chicago fire and at least 8 other major fires in Wisconsin and Michigan, Glen Haven burned. The fire started in the woods and consumed over 2,000 cords of wood and most of the buildings in the village. The Inn and General Store were saved as reported by the Traverse City Herald reported.

The back part of the building was added after we got here because there wasn't enough room for everybody. There was no enclosed porch like you see today — that was built on in 1928 — but there was an open porch across the front. It was probably after these renovations that the name was changed to the Sleeping Bear Inn. The rooms in the front of the inn were nicer than the ones in the back. They were more expensive and usually were rented to businessmen who were passengers on the steamers. My brother and I stayed with the other workers in the back section. There were three large bunk rooms in the back of the second floor, one on each side of a hall and another at the end of the hall. They'd jam as many of us in there as would fit! It wasn't unusual to have to share a bed with a complete stranger. I had to do it a few times myself. Usually you were so tired it didn't really matter since you fell asleep as soon as you lay down. It was a pretty rowdy place, and it didn't smell so good! Well, you didn't spend much time there anyway.



Sleeping Bear Inn circa 1890s. The tramway in front of the Inn was built in 1870.



Glen Haven workers on the porch of the Sleeping Bear Inn circa 1900 (Photo from D.H. Day III)

We worked 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, and when we had time off we'd usually be working on our homestead, clearing the land and building our houses. When we were at the Inn, we'd be down in one of the two parlors or in the dining room. That's where you could get the latest news and talk with the crew. The Management did their best to keep the workers and passengers separated. They even had two seatings for meals; one for us workers and one for the passengers. Most of us workers stayed there at the Inn, because we were either single or waiting to send for our families until we got some land and built a house. Some of the married workers lived in shacks along Main Street. As you walk south past the Blacksmith Shop, look for an example of a house which is made up of two of these little shacks joined together. See if you can spot it. Some of the other houses were built more recently.

D. H. Day, who eventually became the owner of Glen Haven and much of the land in the area, lived in a two-room suite upstairs in the Inn for over 10 years. He came to town in 1878 to be the agent for the Northern Transit Company (NTC) in Glen Haven, and when he married Eva Farrant, the daughter of the innkeeper, in 1889, they moved to the rooms above the General Store.

### **Wooding and Lumber Operations**

This was a busy stretch of the Great Lakes, as I said before. Charles C. McCarty was the first one to recognize a business opportunity here because of the protected harbor of Sleeping Bear Bay and the abundant supplies of hardwood. He built the dock in 1865 and started selling cord wood. In 1868 he built a sawmill on the shore of Little Glen Lake near where the picnic area is today. The first mill burned down, but he had another one going by 1869. NTC took over the dock and wooding operations from McCarty in 1878. They had a fleet



of 24 steamers that ran routes from Buffalo to Chicago and Milwaukee. Glen Haven supplied about one quarter of the wood for the fleet.

We cut trees around the lake and floated them over to the mill, where they were cut up and hauled on flatcars using the tramway to the dock. We used teams of horses to pull the flatcars. Back in those days, this was a dirt road, and the rails for the tramway ran along it all the way out to the dock. You could hear the horses straining at their harnesses and the creaking wheels of the flatcars loaded with lumber as they made their way through town to the dock. In 1907 D. H. Day bought a locomotive, and we moved the tramway so it came into town behind the Inn.

Look across the street, to where the restrooms are today. This area and the field behind it were the site of the old Ice House. That's where we stored blocks of ice that we cut out of Glen Lake in the winter for use during the rest of the year. These blocks were big — as much as 150 pounds! The blocks were stacked in the Ice House and insulated with sawdust to keep them from melting. We spent a good deal of time every winter cutting ice and hauling it on horse-drawn sleighs. That was one of the coldest jobs I can remember! But it was worth it. If you needed to keep something cool in the summer, you'd get a block of ice and put it in the ice box. A block would last you quite a few days before it melted. Of course you don't need that anymore — just plug in your refrigerator!

## General Store

Let's take a closer look at the General Store. This was one of the first buildings to be built here in Glen Haven. The lumberjacks and the men who worked the dock were paid with "scrip." It was like money, but you could only use it here at the General Store. The store carried just about everything a fellow needed:

food, clothes, and hardware. It worked out all right for most of us, but if you needed money, you could trade in some of your scrip at the store for cash.



Glen Haven Store circa 1920



Glen Haven Store circa late 1800s  
Photo from Glen Arbor History Group

The store was also the Ticket & Freight Office for the steamers and eventually became the Telegraph Office when D. H. Day built the telegraph line down from Leland. The store was the hub of the community where you could get caught up on all the latest news and visit with your friends and neighbors.





D. H. Day General Store (2006)

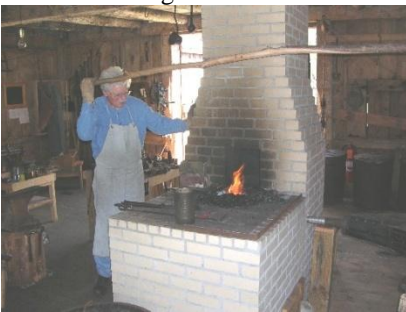
When cars started running the roads instead of horses, you could get gasoline at the store, too. The gas pump you see in front of the store is from the 1920s. The gasoline would fill up that glass tank on top and when you got enough, it would drain out into your car or a gas can. That way, “What you see is what you get”.

Later on, from 1935 to 1978, it was also the place to sign up for dune rides on the Dunesmobiles. These rides were operated by the Warnes family. Marion Warnes was the youngest daughter of D. H. Day. Today the store has been restored to pretty much what it was like in the 1920s. Take a few minutes to browse through the store and see the kind of the merchandise that used to be sold here. You might even find a book or snacks to buy.

The house right next to the store was built by D.H. Day in 1890 for his family to live in, but his wife, Eva liked living above the store and they never moved in. The house was used by Day’s foreman or operations manager. Today it is used for National Park Service staff. The garage next to the house was used as the Glen Haven Post Office for many years.

## Blacksmith Shop

See that red building ahead? That is the original Blacksmith Shop. It was one of the first buildings built here. These fellows made horseshoes and fixed chains,



Blacksmith working at the forge (2006)

anchors, pulleys, wagons, steam engines, and just about anything else that was made out of metal. The front yard was always cluttered with broken machinery waiting to be fixed. That old boiler that sits in the yard to the left of the Blacksmith Shop is similar to the one that was used to make steam to drive the old sawmill. They used boilers like this to run the steamships too. It wasn’t uncommon for a Blacksmith to be called in to repair a leak in one of these.

Today you can still hear the ping of the blacksmith’s hammer on a summer day. Volunteers staff the Blacksmith Shop to demonstrate some of the tools and techniques used to work metal in the past. Stop in and watch the blacksmith work, and ask him how important his work was to this village.

## Schoolhouse

If you were to keep on walking toward the intersection of M-109 and M-209, you'd come to the site of the old Schoolhouse. The building is gone now, but it was a one-room school where they held classes through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 1925 was made up of just five girls including Marion Day.



Glen Haven School circa 1920  
(Photo from Marion Warnes)

## D. H. Day

While we walk back toward the beach, you can imagine the transformation that this little town went through from the time I arrived here in 1865 until today. As I already mentioned, Glen Haven started out as a wooding station, supplying cord wood to the Great Lakes steamers that stopped here to take on fuel. In 1881 D. H. Day bought most of the NTC operations around the village of Glen Haven. By the early 1880s, coal was becoming the preferred fuel of the steamers. It was cheaper because it burns hotter and longer than wood. As the steamers converted over to coal, there was less demand for the wood, so fewer boats stopped by.

D. H. Day recognized the change in the market. He converted the sawmill to a hardwood mill and sold oak and maple boards to the building industry in Chicago for many years. He knew that without replanting the trees, the logging industry would soon fail; so he promoted reforestation, and by 1910 he owned more than 5,000 acres of managed forest. He also knew that, with the trees cleared, agricultural crops could be grown and easily shipped to market from the dock. By the 1920s Day had over 5,000 cherry and apple trees at the 400-acre D. H. Day Farm. The Day family never lived at the farm, because Eva preferred living above the store in Glen Haven. The farm is privately owned today and is not open for visitors.



D. H. Day Farm, located about 1 mile south of Glen Haven on M-109 (2006)

## Glen Haven Canning Company

By the early 1920s, D. H. Day had established the Glen Haven Canning Company on the shore near the dock. They shipped cherries and other fruits to market through various Great Lakes cities. With the improvement in roads and rail service, the importance of the Glen Haven dock faded, until the steamships stopped coming in 1931. It was used by private boaters for a few years until it fell into disrepair. The cannery operated until the early 1940s canning cherries from the local area and North Manitou Island.

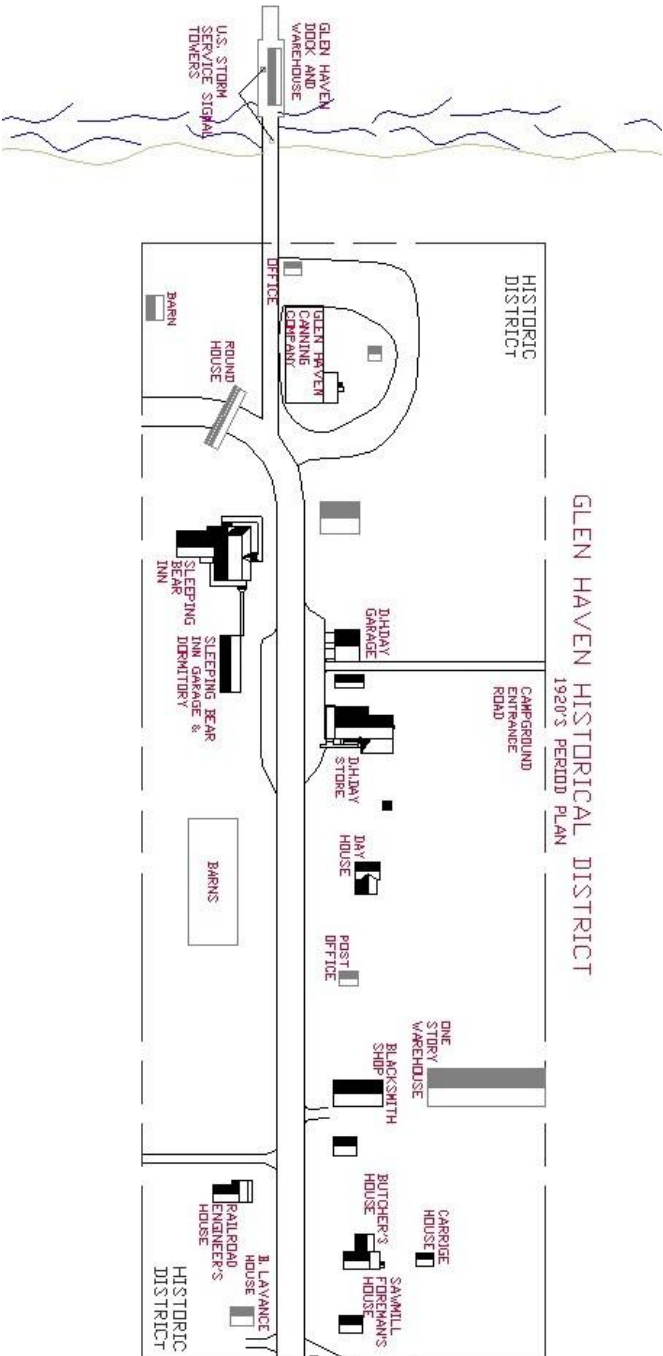


Glen Haven Canning Company building (2006)

D. H. Day realized that the beauty of this area would provide a popular vacation spot. In 1922 he sold a large portion of land between Lake Michigan and Glen Lake to create a real estate development, called Day Forest Estates, on what is now Alligator Hill. The development was supposed to include an 18-hole golf course, air strip, and clubhouse, along with building lots. However, because of the Depression in the 1930s, Day Forest Estates was never developed. The golf course was open for a few years, and if you hike the Alligator Hill trail, you can see evidence of the fairways and greens.

D. H. Day was also the first chairman of the Michigan State Parks Commission, and he donated 32 acres along the Lake Michigan shore just east of Glen Haven to become one of the first State Parks in Michigan. It is now the D. H. Day Campground of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

Well, it sure was fun taking you around town and reliving a little Glen Haven history. I hope you enjoy the rest of your visit here at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Be sure you visit the U.S. Life-Saving Station about ½ mile west of here and see how the surfmen lived and worked. If you have time, pick up a Port Oneida Driving Tour book and explore the Port Oneida Rural Historic District of the Park. You'll learn about the agricultural history of the area. There are a lot of other things to do in the Park. I'm sure you won't have any trouble finding something interesting and fun to do."



GLEN HAVEN HISTORICAL DISTRICT  
1920'S PERIOD PLAN