

from the coming of the Northern Railway in 1875. (Gravenhurst was to be the end of steel in the Muskoka district for the next 10 years.) A large proportion of the logs cut throughout the lake region was floated to the Gravenhurst saw mills, and then travelled by rail to points south.

Tourists and settlers entering the Muskoka district likewise were more or less obliged to pass through Gravenhurst because of this convergence of rail and steamship transportation. Gravenhurst hotels and retail stores reaped the benefit of the trade of sportsmen, campers and other vacationers, who were mostly attracted from Ontario and the United States.⁴ However, even before the coming of the railroad, and as early as the 1860s, tourists had found their way into the region. They were not very numerous until a quantity of books and pamphlets promoting Muskoka as a vacation spot and a "sportsman's paradise" began to be circulated in the 1870s. Muskoka's healthy air was also a selling point. (It was being advocated for consumptives in the 1890s.)⁵

Of course, farming was another important Muskoka industry, though the region was hardly ideal for this enterprise.

4 In fact, one pamphleteer writing in 1874 (one year before the coming of the railroad) surmised that tourism was Gravenhurst's sole means of support. He described the settlement as "a very languishing village which but for the summer tourists would probably soon have to put the shutters up."

5 An 1894 publication declared that "Consumptives do well under proper medical management [in Muskoka], many being entirely cured, while others meet with considerable improvement." The Muskoka Cottage Sanitarium was opened in 1897.