

St. Ignace Historic Sign Walking Tour

THE FIRST MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MARKER

The first Michigan Historical Marker was placed on October 22, 1955 at Michigan State University to honor the college's centennial. Earlier that year, the Michigan State Legislature had charged the Michigan Historical Commission with the task of identifying and marking sites of "historical interest". Now, over 1400 exist.

Included here are more than just the local state historical sites. The St. Ignace area boasts National Historical Landmarks, some historic markers erected by local entities and other sites of historical significance.

There are also picture boards erected by the City of St. Ignace, along the boardwalk and at St. Anthony's Rock (at Central Hill and P. M. Brown Blvd).

Also of possible interest is an historic Saint Ignace walking tour along the Huron Boardwalk and a return trip through the downtown area along State Street's opposite side. You can travel quite comfortably through well over 300 years of history here in Saint Ignace.

This walking tour begins at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture (500 North State Street St. Ignace, Michigan). If you follow the complete tour in the downtown area, you will return to the museum at the end.

THE MEDICINE WHEEL

A basic medicine wheel is a set of symbols. It is a circle containing a cross with arms like spokes of a wheel. The four spokes make a path to the center, wherein sits the creator or self, depending on the user's context. From a Native American perspective, the circle is the principal symbol for understanding life's mysteries because it is evident throughout nature: we look upon the physical world with our eyes, which are circular; the earth, sun, moon, and planets are round, the rising and setting of the sun follows a circular path; the seasons recur in a repeating (circular) cycle; birds build circular nests; and animals work their territories in a circular pattern.

The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of ALL creation and the cycles of life. The circular shape of the wheel represents the earth, the sun, the moon, the cycles of life, the seasons, the four cardinal directions, the four sacred colors, and the four races of man. The Medicine Wheel represents the relationship between various aspects of the universe, both seen and unseen. It emphasizes how all parts of the world and all levels of being are interrelated and connected through a life force originating in the creation of the universe. According to the Ojibwe, there are seven sacred teachings within each quadrant of the Wheel, and each of those has sub-teachings. Each part of the wheel is important, and each depends upon the other in the cycle of life; what effects one effects all. In this way the Medicine Wheel teaches that harmony, balance and respect for all parts are needed to sustain life.

Movement around the perimeter of the Medicine Wheel is in a clockwise direction in keeping with the rotation pattern of the earth. The Medicine Wheel symbolizes the individual journey we must take to find our own path.

Medicine Wheel teachings are among the oldest teachings of First Nation People. The teachings found on the Medicine Wheel create a holistic foundation for human behavior and interaction; the teachings are about walking the earth in a peaceful and good way; they assist in helping individuals to seek healthy minds, strong inner spirits, inner peace, and strong healthy bodies. A Medicine Wheel can best be described as a mirror in which everything about the human condition can be reflected back. The Medicine Wheel and its sacred teachings assist individuals along the path towards mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical enlightenment.

By constructing a medicine wheel, one constructs a symbol for the universe in which everything is

connected in harmony. A Medicine Wheel is a way of creating a sacred space. It also provides a model for whom, we are as individuals. We have an intellectual self, a spiritual self, an emotional self, and a physical self. Strength and balance in all quadrants of the medicine wheel can produce a strong, positive, sense of well-being, whereas imbalance in one or more quadrants can cause symptoms of illness.

There are seven Sacred Directions. The four cardinal points on the Medicine Wheel are the four Sacred Directions, represented by the Ojibwe by the colors yellow, red, black and white. Blue represents Father Sky in the upper realm. Green represents Mother Earth below and purple represents the self, that spirit that journeys into this physical world, at the center of the wheel.

East (yellow) is the direction of the rising sun. It is the direction of the physical body. It symbolizes all that is new in the creation. Like the rising sun, a new day is brought to light. So it is with all things. The sacred medicine from this quadrant is tobacco. It reminds us to be grateful for all things. Life is a gift – to honor that gift we have been given tobacco.

South (red) is a continuation of our thriving life. This is the season of summer, where everything is ripening. Life is awake and dancing. Our bodies are strong. We have been given the gift of Cedar to help us in this direction.

West (black) is the direction of the setting sun. The sun setting signifies the death of the day. And so we die many deaths in a lifetime. So there is a constant change within us. The west is a time of full maturity and is a time of insight. The west also represents the heart, the evaluator of what's going on in our lives. We have been given the gift of Sage to help us keep our hearts balanced. When we smudge ourselves, we are given the gift of clearing our hearts, and minds, so that we may prepare well for the rest of our journey.

North (White) is the time of our elders. It is a time of wisdom. It is a time of purity and those things that are positive. We are given the gift of Sweet Grass in this direction. Sweet Grass is often burned to bring in positive energy, feelings, and thoughts to an individual or place. The four colors of the Medicine Wheel teach us that the four symbolic races –Red, Yellow, Black, and White—are all part of the same human family. We are all brothers and sisters living on the same Mother Earth. For Mother Earth to be in balance, we must also be in balance with each other.

“The life of man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is with everything where power moves. Our tipis were round like nests of birds, and these were always in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests, where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.”

---Black Elk, Oglala Sioux holy man and medicine man

“Nature.....(Nature has set us so well in the center, that if we change one side of the balance, we change the other also.)”

---Blaise Pascal

HURON INDIANS AT SAINT IGNACE

Some of the Hurons, who were driven from Ontario and the East by hostile Iroquois, finally found refuge in 1671 beside Marquette's new Saint Ignace Mission (also called Huron Mission). They remained here with the French and the Ottawas until 1701, when they joined Cadillac's expedition to Detroit.

Erected by the Saint Ignace Lions Club 1959
Approved by The Michilimackinac Historical Society

GRAVE OF FATHER MARQUETTE

Ñ Translation of the Latin text which appears on the monument

In Memoriam

Erected by the City of Saint Ignace in 1882, this monument marks the grave of Reverend Father Jacques Marquette, S.J., who died the 18th day of May 1675, at the age of 38 and was buried here, in 1677.
R.I.P.

THE JESUITS

BLACK ROBES OF THE WILDERNESS

In the 17th century, the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits) sent missionaries to the far reaches of Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Roman Catholic order was founded in 1537 by the Basque priest, St. Ignatius of Loyola. The mission of St. Ignace, which came to be an outpost of Jesuit efforts at the Straits of Mackinac, was named after him.

Jesuit priests, called "Black Robes" because of the long clerical cossacks they wore, believed that native peoples already believed in the Creator and that native cultures were inherently good. They also believed these peoples would benefit by Christian teaching. Therefore the priests gave up their family and friends and their social position in France, to live among Native peoples, risking privation and death in the New World.

Although closely associated with France's political aims, their religious conviction was their motivating force and at times, they differed with secular authorities about New World policies.

Probably the best known Jesuit in the United States history, Jacques Marquette was born in Laon, educated at Nancy and sailed for the New World in 1666 from LaRochelle.

JACQUES MARQUETTE

PRIEST, MISSIONARY, EXPLORER

Jacques Marquette was a well bred son of 17th century France. From an early age, he had one aim in mind-to become a Jesuit priest and go abroad as a missionary. His long awaited assignment came in 1666. Shortly after his ordination he sailed for the New World and then studied Native languages for two years near Quebec City.

Father Marquette's missionary career began in 1668 with an assignment to the Ojibwa mission at the Rapids of St. Mary (Sault Ste. Marie), then to the Huron at Chequamegon Bay, Wisconsin, and, in 1671, to the Huron who came to the Straits of Mackinac. He proved to be a gifted linguist and a diligent missionary priest.

Like so many other Jesuits, Marquette learned to be a chronicler, explorer and cartographer, functions he assumed in 1673 when he accompanied Louis Joliet on the exploration of the Mississippi River valley for France.

Marquette studied Native languages at Trois Rivieres before beginning his missionary career on the frontier.

THE MISSION A GATHERING PLACE

Hundreds of Huron and Odawa (Ottawa) people fled their homeland in Ontario, following their defeat at the hands of the Iroquois in 1649. They retreated through the Straits of Mackinac to Green Bay and later to northern Wisconsin on the shore of Lake Superior. There they met Father Jacques Marquette.

In 1671, hostilities had developed with the neighboring Lakota and the refugees were again forced to move. Deciding to relocate at the Straits of Mackinac, they first settled on Mackinac Island. When the island proved unsatisfactory for farming, they moved to this very site. A chapel was built at the head of the protected bay, and the Huron and the Odawa each constructed palisaded villages directly to the north.

The village and mission continued here for thirty years with the Huron becoming principal players in the fur trade. In 1701, Commandant Cadillac moved the French post to Detroit and convinced most of the Huron to go with him. The Jesuits maintained a presence among the Odawa who remained in the St. Ignace area, probably until Fort Michilimackinac was built across the Straits in 1714.

THE CITY A BUSTLING 17TH CENTURY TOWN

The Great lakes water system was the freeway of the 17th Century and St. Ignace was an important stop on the way to everywhere.

The Ojibwa had roamed the Upper Great Lakes for many years, setting up their portable wigwams wherever the hunting and fishing were good. French fur traders, missionaries and refugee tribes came, attracted to the strategic location of the Straits.

The Jesuit mission stood here, at the center of the community. To the north of the mission were the villages of Huron and Odawa. The Huron lived in huge longhouses, 20 feet wide and 100 feet long. They farmed, fished, traded with the French, and maintained a defensive footing against their Iroquois enemies.

St. Ignace continued to grow when French fur traders and soldiers, in the 1680s, built Fort de Baude to the south of the mission. At its peak, the population here numbered at least 2,000. St. Ignace had established itself as the trade center of the Great Lakes Country.

MARQUETTE'S DEATH BURYING A BELOVED FRIEND

After Father Marquette's Mississippi voyage, he was determined to establish a mission among the Illinois Indians he had met, but he was plagued by an unnamed illness.

Finally arriving among the Illinois in the spring of 1675, his health worsened. Knowing he was dying, he asked his French companions to return him to St. Ignace. On May 18, 14 days before his 38th birthday, he died enroute, probably near present-day Ludington. His two companions buried him and brought the sad news to the St. Ignace community.

A returning party of Odawa Christians disinterred his bones two years later, placing them in a birch bark box and bringing them to St. Ignace. Marquette was reburied under the chapel floor on June 8, 1677. After Cadillac relocated his fort to Detroit and French life became centered across the Straits at Fort Michilimackinac, the location of Marquette's grave was lost. But stories persisted, especially among the Indians, that a great and brave white leader was buried at the head of the bay.

**GRAVE REDISCOVERED
A SUITABLE MONUMENT IS ERECTED**

In the spring of 1877, the bicentennial year of Marquette's burial in St. Ignace, a gardener working at this very spot discovered a limestone foundation. Suspecting he had found Marquette's chapel, he ran and told the landowner, who told the parish priest, who in turn told the bishop.

During a subsequent excavation of the site, all concerned came to the conclusion that the chapel and Father Marquette's grave had, indeed, been found. The monument which you see in this park was erected by the city five years later.

In 1881, the landowner deeded the small (36' x 40') grave parcel to a Jesuit priest who, 13 years later, deeded it to Detroit College (a Jesuit School now known as the University of Detroit). In 1901, the college marked the parcel with the limestone posts you see today and in 1975, deeded it to the City of St. Ignace.

Since the turn of the century, people have paused in this city park to reflect on Father Marquette's life, and the role he played in the history of the United States.

SAINT IGNACE MISSION

In 1671, the Mission of Saint Ignace was established so that the Christian message could be brought to several thousand Indians living on this shore. The founder was Father Jacques Marquette, the Jesuit missionary. In 1673, he left on his great journey to the Mississippi Valley. He never returned to his mission before he died in 1675. Two years later, his bones were reburied here beneath the chapel altar. In 1706, after French troops had abandoned the fort, the chapel was destroyed.

Father Marquette Burial Site (Marquette Mission Park and Museum of Ojibwa Culture)
S92 September 25, 1956; 1958 Michigan Historical Registered Site 92

U.S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY BENCHMARK

Elev. Feet Above Mean Sea Level

F 52

1934

For this medallion, look in the ground at the base of the arch.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PLAQUE

This church building, constructed in 1837, still stands because of the foresight and commitment of the St. Ignace Knights of Columbus.

Originally built on South State Street, the Old Mission Church served St. Ignatius Roman Catholic Parish for many years, and was used for numerous Native American and larger community activities.

Wishing to preserve the church building as a museum, the Knights moved it to this site November 7, 1954, and conducted extensive repair and preservation work.

The statue of Father Jacques Marquette, carved of marble by an Italian sculptor, and mounted on a base of Drummond Island dolomite, was commissioned by the Knights and dedicated in 1957.

In 1983, after the Knights had operated the museum for many years, they sold it to the City of St. Ignace. This plaque is raised by the city in gratitude to Council 2173, St. Ignace Knights of Columbus, for its dedication to preserving the Old Mission Church and the story of the life and work of Father Marquette.

**SAINT IGNACE MISSION HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A REGISTERED
NATIONAL HISTORICAL LANDMARK
1962**

Your tour now takes you across the street and into Kiwanis Beach Park.

WHAT'S IN THE WATER

The dark debris along the shoreline of this sandy beach is actually tree bark that has washed ashore. How did the tree bark get in the water in the first place?

From the 1870's to the mid 1900's, when the lumber industry was huge in Northern Michigan, commercial sawmills lined the shores of this bay. Logging companies used the bay area as a gathering place for logs prior to their processing in those mills. To keep the logs in place, they were chained together in large groups called "booms" (as shown in photo). While awaiting entry into the mills, the water's wave action caused the logs to bounce and rub together. This resulted in the bark being pulled from the logs and sinking to the bottom of the bay, where it continues to wash ashore to this day.

This photo depicts the Schooner *Mason* on a typical day placing the logs into booms.

STRUCTURES OF LOCAL NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE 1600'S

One of the oldest archeological sites in the country is located in St. Ignace at the Museum of Ojibwa Culture (across the street from here). The Huron village, which was located there, was believed to have looked like this in the 1600s. These large multiple-family longhouses were permanent structures, constructed of poles covered with bark and ranged from 60-70 feet in length. Four to six families lived in each longhouse with several warming fires within.

The Ojibwa living in this area typically lived in dome-shaped wigwams (wiigiwaam), made of birch bark, juniper bark and willow saplings. These wigwams were easily moved and could be set up by the women in a few hours. When it was time to move from one site to another, they merely removed the bark, leaving the framework in place for future use. The bark was then placed on the framework at the new site. This served their seasonally-nomadic lifestyle, allowing the Ojibwa to take advantage of the area resources in this harsh environment.

MICHILIMACKINAC COVE

Famous landing place for 17th Century adventurers, explorers, voyageurs, traders, courers de bois, soldiers and missionaries who followed Indian routes to this shore: Brule, Nicolet, Dablon, Marquette, Perrot, Jolliet, LaSalle, Hennepin, de Tonty, Duluth, Lahontan, Cadillac, making history here.

Erected by the Kiwanis Club of Saint Ignace 1959
Approved by the Michilimackinac Historical Society

Now proceed onto the Huron Boardwalk.

VOYAGE OF EXPLORATION

Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit priest, established a mission called St. Ignace here in 1671.

In May of 1673, Marquette, Louis Jolliet and 5 other Frenchmen left St. Ignace in 2 canoes on an expedition to find the river known as the “father of waters” in Indian stories.

Their goals were to discover if this river was a passage to the Pacific, to claim lands for the French Crown and to bring Christianity to the Indians.

The explorers turned back when they realized that the river flowed to the Gulf of Mexico because they feared a hostile reception by the Spaniards who occupied the South.

For Marquette, the journey of nearly 4,000 miles was filled with hardship and illness. He died near the present site of Ludington, along the river we call the “Pere Marquette,” exactly 2 years and 1 day after starting the expedition.

Marquette’s remains are presumed to have been returned to St. Ignace at a later date. To learn more about this explorer and his times, please visit the Marquette Among the Hurons Park and Gravesite, to your left and across State Street.

TWO CULTURES MEET

French traders established themselves in the Upper Great Lakes region after 1644 and were welcome among the Indians. They sought harmony with the native people, learning their language and respecting their customs.

The French adopted useful Indian products like snowshoes and canoes. At the same time, European trade goods slowly replaced traditional Indian wares. Cotton and wool supplanted buckskin and European glass beads replaced beads made of shell and bone.

Stone arrowheads gave way to iron arrowheads and eventually guns began to replace the bow and arrow altogether. To obtain such European goods, Indians traded furs to the French and began to function increasingly as trappers.

PEACE POLE

May peace prevail on Earth

Ma fred rada pa jorden

Puisse la paix regner dans le monde

Nah noo tah be-zon tam-got emak-ahkeeng gognik

COMMERCIAL FISHING

The history of the Straits has always been interwoven with the fishing resources of the Great Lakes. The abundant stocks of fish were a food staple for the native people and early European traders and settlers.

Commercial fishing expanded rapidly and gained economic importance after 1830 when sophisticated boats and equipment came into common use.

Life in St. Ignace was dominated by commercial fishing during the last half of the 1800’s and early part of the 1900’s. Fishing boats and gear lined the shore of this bay. Drying racks, like the one behind this display, were draped with fishing nets hung to dry and examined for damage and repaired.

The fishing industry still provides many jobs for residents of St. Ignace and the Straits. Modern management practices ensure continued “good fishing” for future generations of commercial as well as sport fishermen.

Note: These drying racks have been removed.

WATERY GRAVEYARD

The Great Lakes have swallowed up over 10,000 ships since the first trading ship was lost in 1679. Storm waves on the lakes are sharper than the roll and swell of ocean waves; a ship may not recover before being struck by another wave.

Lake ships must stay on course in the teeth of a gale to avoid the dangerous shoals that lie submerged outside shipping lanes. The narrow Straits of Mackinac have claimed many ships with swift currents and deadly waves.

The Straits were made a State Bottomland Preserve in 1983 to protect wrecks as an historical resource and recreational paradise for divers.

The *Cedarville* is the latest shipwreck in the Preserve and a popular attraction for divers. She sank, losing 10 lives, after colliding with a Norwegian freighter during a dense fog in 1965. Nearly 600 feet long, she lies on her side in 100 feet of water with her hull rising to within 35 feet of the surface.

OLD MILL SLIP

Michigan’s huge, untouched forests once seemed inexhaustible. Virgin White Pine often were over 5 feet in diameter and 200 feet tall.

The lumber era boomed in Michigan between 1880 and 1900. Giant trees were cut in winter and floated to sawmills during the spring thaw to be cut into lumber and shipped via lake or rail transport to Chicago and the treeless plains beyond.

Opposite you, on the point of land across East Moran Bay, was a major sawmill. Lumber milled here was used to build one of the largest resort hotels of the time – The Grand Hotel – and was hauled over the ice to Mackinac Island by horse and sleigh during the winter of 1886-87. When spring broke, over 30 teams of horses and wagons were needed to transport building materials from the Island dock to the hotel site.

Although the virgin pine were cut by the early 1900’s, natural reforestation and modern forest management has allowed the wood products industry to remain an important part of the northern economy.

NATIVE AMERICAN LAND LOSSES

Man, in search of game, first entered North America during the Ice Age by crossing the Bering land bridge that once linked present-day Siberia and Alaska. Beginning about 9,000 B.C., melting glaciers raised the sea level 300 feet, flooding the land bridge and separating the continents and people.

While Europe evolved toward its Renaissance and Asia produced the great Chinese dynasties, native North Americans – living in harmony with nature – also stair-stepped their way to impressive cultural, political and artistic achievements. When Columbus reached the “New World” in 1492, an estimated 4 to 8 million people (speaking over 200 languages) lived in what is now Canada and the U.S.

With the European fur trade of the 1600’s, Native American groups began to compete for lands to trap beaver, which were traded for manufactured goods. By the 1650’s many native groups moved off their homelands to escape conflict and warfare. A small Huron group fled Ontario and resettled at St. Ignace from 1671 to 1701.

In 1671, when Father Marquette established the St. Ignace Mission, there were only a few thousand Europeans thinly scattered across North America. In the Great Lakes Basin, Montreal and Quebec were the

only significant European settlements in the vast area inhabited by the Native American culture groups shown on the map.

In the 1800's, the U.S. government enforced a policy of removing all Native American groups from east of the Mississippi River. Most Great Lakes groups, in particular, were forced off their lands and onto reservations in the West by 1860. Only the Ottawa and Chippewa found the economic and political means to allow them to stay within this region, but on a greatly reduced land-base.

While the past 300 years have not been kind to Native Americans, they have survived the overwhelming onslaught of European culture, which continues to challenge them. Today, a resurgence of cultural pride has renewed the Native Americans' determination to maintain their heritage...their journey through history has not ended.

MACKINAW BOAT

The Mackinaw Boat was unique design of Great Lakes vessel developed by the French and based on the Indian design of the Birch Bark Canoe. It was characterized by identical tapered pointed ends, high sides, narrow beam and gaff-rigged sails. This design was used on boats from 18 to 40 feet in length.

The Mackinaw Boat played a historic role in Great Lakes fishing, trading, and transportation. Developed at a time when harbors and docks were scarce, this boat could easily be beached and its 2 masts could be removed and used as rollers to pull the boat up a sloping shore.

Behind you, under the shelter along the boardwalk near State Street, is a Mackinaw boat relic called the "*Edith Jane*". She was built in St. Ignace in the late 1800's by the Chenier family.

MACKINAC OR MACKINAW?

Both are pronounced (Mak'o – no'). The first is the French/Indian spelling and the latter is the English version.

MACKINAW BOAT EDITH JANE

The loose term "Mackinaw Boat" originally referred to any small sailing craft used in the Straits of Mackinac. The rather flat bottom and shallow draft allowed Mackinaw Boats to be pulled up on the beach, making them an ideal workboat when harbors and docks were scarce.

Mackinaw Boats were remarkably seaworthy and were used to transport people or trade goods, to service commercial fisheries, for mail carrying and for carrying messages between steamships passing on the Straits. One story traces "Mackinaw Fishing Boats" back to the French fur traders, saying construction had been taken over by Indians and the design had been handed down by them from generation to generation.

The '*Edith Jane*' was built in St. Ignace about 1899 by the Chenier family, who settled in this area about 1830. She is 18'8" long, has a 6'4" beam and a 1'6" draft at post. She is carvel planked with ¾" pine oversawn oak frames, displays a plumb stern, a strong sheer and sharply raked sternpost.

A typical Mackinaw Boat, the '*Edith Jane*' was originally rigged as a gaff-ketch; she was fitted with a centerboard and a jib set on a plank bow-sprit. She had a short foredeck. Later she was converted to power and her gaff-ketch rig, bow-sprit and jib were stripped, her centerboard case was replaced with an engine bed and an inboard engine was installed. The tow ring was added at that time.

Donated to the City of Saint Ignace by the Michilimackinac Historical Society

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

By the 1930's, most of the Eastern Upper Peninsula's virgin forest had fallen under the axe and saw of the early loggers. Fires further ravaged the cut-over areas, leaving a barren landscape. Timber production plummeted just as the whole country was plunged into the Great Depression.

In an attempt to reclaim and rehabilitate the timber resources of the eastern U.P., the Marquette National Forest was established in 1931. In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps to assist in natural resource work and provide jobs for unemployed young men.

With manpower provided by the C.C.C. between 1933 and 1942, the Forest Service undertook an extensive program of tree planting, fire fighting, road building, campground construction and wildlife habitat improvement. The results of this effort still remain in the former Marquette National Forest, which is now the East Unit of Hiawatha National Forest.

LEGACY OF THE WHITE PINE

Following the Civil War, the nation's westward expansion demanded wood and minerals. The upper Great Lakes region supplied both wood and minerals in large quantities. Timber from northern Michigan helped build cities in the midwest and farmhouses on the treeless Great Plains. In the 1880s, Michigan produced not only more lumber than any other state, but also more copper and iron.

The White Pine provided most of this lumber, but logging plunder left a cutover wasteland. After great fires swept across most of the region, it took generations for the land to recover. Today's forest covers 18 million acres and yields one-half billion dollars of wood products in Michigan alone.

19TH CENTURY ST. IGNACE

The barter economy of Native Americans trading with European immigrants continued into the 1800's at St. Ignace. The opening of the Erie Canal, in 1825, brought great changes to the nation and the Straits of Mackinac. By 1900, North America was transformed from a rural, agrarian society into an emerging industrial economy concentrated in large midwestern cities.

As easterners and new immigrants pushed westward, St. Ignace expanded to serve these travelers. Great docks were built to accommodate the many ships passing through the Straits. Large hotels and boarding houses along the waterfront provided shelter and food. Where State Street presently lies, a wooden boardwalk kept the travelers' feet dry. In winter, teams of men shoveled snow off the boardwalk and docks until the Straits froze, halting boat traffic. In 1875, Congress named Mackinac Island our second national park, 3 years after Yellowstone became the first. Soon tourism became a major economic force at the Straits of Mackinac.

MERTEL FURNACE

The Industrial Revolution reached St. Ignace in the late 1800's. To exploit the availability of iron ore from the western U.P. and plentiful wood from local forests, the Mertel Furnace was constructed here in 1885-1886. With about 100 employees, the furnace began converting ore into iron bars in 1887. It was fired by hardwood cut from the forests between St. Ignace and Trout Lake, and hauled by railroad to the furnace site near the present Coast Guard Station. Lake freighters brought iron ore from Escanaba, where it had arrived by train from mines near Marquette.

The Mertel Furnace had a short lifespan. With ever larger lake freighters, and depletion of the forests, it became cheaper to ship ore to Detroit or Cleveland, where coal fired the furnaces. By World War I, most iron furnaces in the U.P., including the Mertel Furnace, had ceased operation.

Note: The name of the company was Martel Furnace.

MOORING FACILITIES

The four large cylindrical shaped structures that you see in place out in the bay are called “mooring dolphins”. A dolphin is a “man-made marine structure that extends above the water level and is not connected to shore”. These particular dolphins were built in 1957 to provide a mooring facility for Great Lakes tanker ships carrying jet fuel to the area to be offloaded.

Connected to one of the mooring dolphins was a pipeline that traveled underwater and carried the jet fuel from the tanker ships to storage tanks previously located on the St. Ignace shoreline. The jet fuel was stored in, and pumped from these onshore storage tanks through an underground pipeline directly to the now defunct Kinross Air Force Base (also known as Kincheloe Air Force Base) located 37 miles north of St. Ignace. The Air Force Base was used for national defense, as a refueling base for Alaska-bound aircraft and a base for the defense of the Locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Note: This same sign also appears at one other location along the boardwalk.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

1600 TO 1825

Seeking the legendary Northwest Passage to the Orient, the French explorer Jean Nicolet canoed through the Straits of Mackinac in 1634, eventually reaching Green Bay. By the late 1600’s French voyageurs from Quebec and Montreal regularly paddled to Fort Michillimackinac, via the Ottawa River and Georgian Bay, to trade for furs. After the British defeated the French and took control of the Great Lakes in 1761, the fur trade expanded north and west. Until the 1820’s travel and settlement on the Lakes were limited to the fur trade, which nearly brought the beaver to extinction. During this era, the Colonies had not spread beyond the Appalachians. After the American Revolution, westward expansion initially followed the Ohio River. For many Easterners thoughts of the Michigan Territory were: *“Don’t go to Michigan, that land of ills: the word means ague, fever and chills.”*

1825 to 1959

In 1800, the Straits of Mackinac had more people than Detroit, Chicago, Green Bay and Duluth combined. Then, in 1825, the Erie Canal cut across New York State and unlocked the Great Lakes Region. Canoes gave way to sailing ships and steamboats. In the 1850’s railroads began pushing west from Detroit, Chicago, Green Bay, Duluth, and Port Arthur (Thunder Bay, Ontario). Construction of the Soo Locks in 1855 gave ships direct access to Lake Superior. Hundreds of thousands of Easterners and new immigrants sailed through the Straits to meet westbound trains. Returning ships brought western grain from Chicago, lead from Wisconsin and iron ore from the Upper Peninsula and Minnesota. From the 1870’s to the 1890’s, northern Michigan was the leading timber producer in North America, shipping lumber and pre-cut houses south and east across the Lakes. Wider markets opened with the Welland Canal, linking Lakes Erie and Ontario in 1932. By the end of World War II an industrial powerhouse, connected by water transportation, stretched from Duluth to Kingston, Ontario.

1959 to PRESENT

The modern era of water transportation on the Great Lakes began in 1959, when the U.S. and Canada jointly opened the St. Lawrence Seaway. This series of locks enables ocean-going vessels to reach ports over 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) inland and unload Japanese cameras, Swiss watches and German cars. More importantly, wheat and other products from the Midwest can be shipped directly to foreign ports without costly off-loading at Buffalo and reloading onto “salties” in New York. Ever larger lake freighters ply the Great Lakes, providing economic benefits to our region. Sadly, the grand passenger and cruise ships of the past are

gone. The advent of modern highways made auto travel both faster and safer. Only a few islands, such as Mackinac, still have passenger boats to ferry the new breed of travelers to their tourist destinations.

A maritime world in the heart of the continent, the Great Lakes deserve their name, extending 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from east to west, these inland freshwater seas are a watery highway to the interior of North America.

DIVING INTO HISTORY

Strewn across the bottomlands of East Moran Bay, particularly off this beach, are fascinating artifacts discarded from canoes, schooners, and steamboats for more than 300 years.

Commercial vessels-from Indian and French canoes to modern ore carriers-have plied these waters for centuries, maintaining a vital link between the natural resources of the region and markets to the east, south, and west. Passengers of all sorts have passed through the Straits on their way to Indian villages, European trading posts, commercial docks and resorts.

Today, skin and scuba divers enjoy prowling the bottomlands to discover anchors, tools, bottles, machinery and other items that were lost from passing ships. Strict laws-largely written by sport divers themselves-forbid divers from removing these artifacts, so they will continue to intrigue drivers of other generations. In this way, our maritime heritage is preserved for others to enjoy.

MICHIGAN STATE FERRY

1923-1932

Michigan State Ferry St. Ignace Terminal

Built and operated under the supervision of Grover C. Dillman, State Highway Commissioner, as a link of the state highway system.

Ferry service first opened 1923- under the supervision of Frank F. Rogers, State Highway Commissioner
1913-1929

Original terminal known as Chambers Dock purchased 1923. Reconstructed as present terminal 1932.

ST. IGNACE

Pere Marquette established, in 1671, the mission of Saint Ignace. French troops soon after built Fort [de] Baude. The state's second oldest white village guarded the Straits while serving as the most important French fur post in the Northwest. By 1706, the fort and mission were abandoned. Only in the nineteenth century did lumbering and fishing revive the town.

Saint Ignace S41 July 19, 1956; 1957

The next two sites are inside the ferry terminal located on this dock.

SIEUR DE LA SALLE AND THE GRIFFON

Text by F. Clever Bald

Canada had its beginning as a colony of France on July 3, 1608, when Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec on the great rock above the St. Lawrence River. Eager to learn the geography of the interior and hopeful of finding a water route to the Pacific, he made friends with the Indians and sent explorers west on the mighty river to discover what might lay beyond. Like others of the period, he had high hopes of finding a waterway across the continent to the Pacific. By 1615 explorers had reached Georgian Bay, and one of

Champlain's men, Etienne Brule, reached Sault Ste. Marie and Lake Superior in 1622. In 1634, Jean Nicolet was in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and continued on to Green Bay, Wisconsin.

In 1671 Francois Daumont, Sieur de St. Lusson claimed the interior of North America for Louis XIV in a ceremony at Sault Ste. Marie. But claiming territory was easy; holding it against hostile Iroquois and the English required forts and soldiers.

Louis de Buade, Count Frontenac, who became governor of Canada in 1672, recognized the necessity. In Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, he found a man who was eager to defend the territory of the King of France against all enemies.

LaSalle had come to Canada in 1666. Educated, intelligent, ambitious, robust and courageous, he soon acquired a seigniorship on the St. Lawrence above Montreal. Because of his urge to explore and his constant talk about finding a waterway to the Orient, his seigniorship acquired the name La Chine (China).

He had set out in 1669 with two Sulpician priests to seek the Ohio River. At the western tip of Lake Ontario, they encountered Adrien Jolliet and an Indian who had come from Sault Ste. Marie by way of Lake Huron and Lake Erie on their way to Quebec. Theirs was the first recorded journey by this route. Jolliet drew a map and urged the travelers to follow the waterways north. His assurance that many Indians were ready to receive Christianity convinced the priests. La Salle, however, was not to be turned from his purpose. He obtained an Indian guide and set out for the Ohio, which he probably discovered.

In 1673, Frontenac built a fort on the site of Kingston, Ontario, where Lake Ontario joined the St. Lawrence, to hold the Iroquois in check and to serve as a center of trade. Recognizing the ability and dedication of La Salle, the Governor recommended him to the King, who granted him the fort and the surrounding territory as a seigniorship. La Salle named the post Fort Frontenac, and he and Frontenac shared in the profits of the fur trade.

Profits, for La Salle, were simply a means for supporting his grandiose plans. Using Fort Frontenac as his base of operations, he intended to descend the Mississippi, establish forts at strategic points, and close the mouth of the river against possible occupancy by England or Spain. Thus would he extend and protect the territory of the King and support the whole operation by trading in furs.

LaSalle went to France in 1677, and lay his plans before the King. His enthusiastic presentation and the support of Count Frontenac and of influential friends at the court won the King's permission to explore, to build forts, and to carry on trade in the vast valley of the Mississippi.

In 1678 he returned to Canada and borrowed money to carry out his plans. Gathering men and supplies at Fort Frontenac, he sent some men west to establish forward bases. To carry the great quantities of furs which his agents were ordered to collect for him, he decided to build a sailing vessel above Niagara Falls. With the party of thirty men sent in December to accomplish this task was the Recollect, Father Louis Hennepin, who became the principal historical of the expedition.

He was born in Belgium in 1640. With a strong urge to travel, he visited a number of countries in Europe and at one time he was an army chaplain. His desire to travel and serve his order in Canada resulted in winning the consent of his Father Superior to sail in 1675. Appointed one of the chaplains at Fort Frontenac, Hennepin was happy to be assigned to LaSalle's expedition. Accompanying the advanced detachment, he wore the grey robe of his order. On his head was a pointed hood and about his waist was a knotted rope from which hung a rosary and a crucifix. On his back was a portable chapel and under his arm he carried a blanket and a mat of rushes.

From the portage beside the Niagara River he saw the falls. Excited by this natural wonder, he described it as "a vast and prodigious Cadence of Water which falls down after a surprising and astonishing manner, insomuch that the Universe does not afford its Parallel." Its height, he wrote, was 500 feet. This over exuberant description (the height of the Falls is 167 feet) was published in Europe and was typical of Fr. Hennepin's writings. Besides exaggerating the size of natural features, he made himself the principal actor on various occasions, and even wrote of an imaginary voyage down the Mississippi. His books were translated

into several languages and were very popular during his lifetime. They are still interesting and, despite exaggeration and flights of fancy, contain much useful information.

LaSalle selected a site for the shipyard above the Falls where Cayuga Creek flows into the Niagara River. Bark-covered huts were built and a similar structure was provided as a chapel, where Fr. Hennepin officiated. The master carpenter set men to work building stocks. White oaks were felled. Some were whipsawed into planks while others were shaped by adz and broadaxe into timbers, keel and ribs. When the keel and some other pieces were ready to be joined on January 26, 1679, LaSalle drove the first pin.

Many difficulties impeded the progress of the builders. The winter was severe and food was scarce. The neighboring Iroquois looked with suspicion on LaSalle's project and several times threatened to burn the ship on the stocks.

Distressed by word that a careless pilot had wrecked the ship carrying equipment for the vessel he was building, LaSalle had to return to Lower Canada. There he learned that rumors had been spread casting doubt on the success of his project and, as a result, his creditors had seized much of his property.

During his long absence, trying to rearrange his affairs, the shipyard was left in charge of Henri de Tonty, an Italian officer who had been recommended to LaSalle during his recent sojourn in France. Tonty became LaSalle's most trusted lieutenant. Courageous and energetic, he never wavered in his loyalty to his commander. This attachment was almost unique, for LaSalle could not win the affection of his men. Keeping his own counsel and driving himself to the limit of endurance, he expected them to follow him blindly. Few were willing to do so.

As soon as the vessel would float, she was launched to protect her from threats of burning by the Iroquois. Fr. Hennepin led in singing the *Te Deum*, three guns were fired in salute while workmen and some friendly Indians, enlivened by an issue of brandy, shouted and whooped approval as the ship slid into the water. The whole workforce moved into the ship because they felt safer there than on land.

The vessel, which carried a cargo of 45 tons, had two masts rigged with square sails, and was armed with five small cannon. According to Fr. Hennepin, the figure of a griffon, a legendary monster half lion and half eagle, was carved on the prow in honor of Count Frontenac, whose coat of arms was supported by two such creatures. The ship was named the *Griffon*.

Although she was ready to sail in the spring of 1679, LaSalle did not return until August. On the seventh of that month, with all sails set and with twelve men ashore straining at cables to overcome the current of the Niagara River, the *Griffon*, the first sailing vessel on the upper lakes, proudly entered Lake Erie. LaSalle, pacing his own quarterdeck, must have felt elated that his great design was now within his grasp. Aboard were thirty-four men, passengers and crew, including Fr. Hennepin, two additional Recollect priests and the pilot Luc, a great blustering hulk of a man, proud of his years of experience on the Atlantic.

The *Griffon* sailed across Lake Erie and into the lake which Fr. Hennepin named Sainte Claire. He was delighted with the country. "The banks of the Straight (Detroit River) are vast Meadows, and the Prospect is terminated with some hills covered with vineyards. Trees bearing good Fruit, Groves and Forests so well disposed that one would think Nature alone could not have made, without the Help of Art so charming a Prospect." The land, he averred, was full of bears, deer, turkeys and swans, and the hunters killed so many that the rigging of the ship was covered with carcasses. In his exuberance the priest exclaimed: "...those who shall be so happy as to inhabit that Noble Country cannot but remember with Gratitude those who have discovered the way..."

At the head of the St. Clair River, the current was so strong that twelve men ashore with cables helped warp the *Griffon* into Lake Huron. Sailing boldly into the vast inland sea, the ship proceeded northward along the Michigan shore. A sudden squall struck terror to passengers and crew alike. All fell to their knees in prayer and only Luc, the pilot, refused to join the supplicants. Instead of prayers he swore cursed LaSalle for bringing him to "perish in a nasty Lake and lose the Glory he had acquired by his long and happy Navigations on the Ocean." He remained at the helm, letting the ship run with the wind. Finally the storm abated, and on August 27 the *Griffon* dropped anchor at Michilimackinac on the Straits of Mackinac. From the deck, LaSalle

could see the Huron and Ottawa villages and the Jesuit mission of St. Ignace, from which Louis Jolliet accompanied by Father Jacques Marquette, had set out in 1673 to discover the Mississippi.

The *Griffon* announced her arrival by firing a salute from her cannons. Startled Indians turned out, astonished both by the man-made thunder and the sight of the big canoe. LaSalle, dressed in a scarlet cloak laced with gold, paid a visit of courtesy to the Indians, and Fr. Hennepin celebrated mass for them. They were friendly, and LaSalle, in order to satisfy their curiosity, permitted some of them to climb aboard the *Griffon*.

At St. Ignace, LaSalle found four of the men he had sent ahead to gather furs. Six others had deserted, and he ordered Tonte to Sault Ste. Marie to apprehend them and join him at the southern end of Lake Michigan. Setting sail, the *Griffon* passed through the Straits and anchored at Washington Island, in the mouth of Green Bay. There his agents had accumulated a great quantity of furs. They were loaded aboard the ship, and on September 18 she sailed on her return journey to the Niagara River. LaSalle ordered Luc to pick up materials for a ship which he intended to build on the Illinois River and to rejoin him at the mouth of the Miami River, now the St. Joseph, in Michigan.

LaSalle and his men in four canoes paddled south along the western shore of Lake Michigan. After weathering storms and escaping near-starvation, they rounded the southern bend of the lake and entered the St. Joseph River on November 1, 1679. There on the site of St. Joseph, Michigan, he built a fort which he named Miami. Tonte with twenty men, including two of the deserters, joined him on November 20.

Eager to establish a shipyard, and base on the Illinois River, LaSalle and his party paddled up the St. Joseph, portaged to the Kankakee and into the Illinois. On the site of Peoria they pitched their camp. There they built Fort Crevecoeur and began getting out ship timbers.

LaSalle dispatched two Frenchmen and Father Hennepin to descend the Illinois and ascend the Mississippi River on a scouting expedition. Captured by roving Sioux, they were taken to the site of Minneapolis-St. Paul, where Hennepin named the Falls of St. Anthony. The great explorer, Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Duluth, hearing that three Frenchmen had been taken prisoner, immediately hastened to their rescue. Vigorously he denounced the captors for having violated the treaty he made with the Sioux. The Indians meekly released the captives, and Duluth conducted them to St. Ignace and then to Quebec.

At Fort Crevecoeur, LaSalle was worried by lack of news of the *Griffon*. He returned to Fort Miami where there was still no news. Deciding that she was lost, he crossed lower Michigan in the spring of 1680 on foot, and by canoe reached Fort Frontenac to make new arrangements.

Father Hennepin returned to France, where in 1683 he published his first book, *A Description of Louisiana*. In 1697, after LaSalle had been dead ten years, he published *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*. In it he claimed not only to have explored the upper reaches of the Mississippi, but also to have preceded LaSalle in descending the river to Gulf of Mexico. His material was taken from a book which had been suppressed by the King. Rejected by his order for his mendacity and unreligious conduct, Hennepin died in obscurity.

Meanwhile, what had become of the *Griffon*? Indians later reported that she had anchored off northern coast of Lake Michigan. They declared they had urged the pilot to sail close to shore. Nevertheless, he boldly steered out into the deep, sailing eastward. A violent storm soon broke, and nothing more is known of the fate of the first sailing vessel on the upper lakes. LaSalle believed that the pilot scuttled the ship after having removed the valuable cargo of furs. Another theory is that Indians lured the crew ashore, murdered them, took what they wanted from the ship and set it afire. From time to time the wreck of an old wooden ship has been hopefully identified as the lost *Griffon*, but indubitable evidence has not yet been produced.

LaSalle returned to Fort Miami in 1681 and by canoe reached the Mississippi, and at length the Gulf. There on April 9, 1682, he claimed possession of the great valley for France and named it Louisiana in honor of

his King. Part of his task was accomplished. In 1683, he returned to Paris in triumph and easily won permission of Louis XIV to make the region safe from occupancy from England or Spain.

LaSalle's expedition set out from Rochelle on July 24, 1684. He had four ships laden with soldiers, colonists, and supplies. In the West Indies, one ship was captured by pirates. Sailing into the Gulf of Mexico, LaSalle, unable to find the mouth of the Mississippi, finally landed on the coast of Texas. One ship returned to France, and soon the other two were wrecked. Exploring parties were unable to find the great river and more than half of the company died.

At last, after aimless wanderings, debilitated by disease, discord, and frustration, LaSalle was assassinated on March 18, 1687, by two of his treacherous men. Thus ended the brave dream of a prosperous colony over which he would preside. In spite of LaSalle's boundless enthusiasm, fortitude and persistence, it was a dream impossible of fulfillment. France had neither men nor resources to occupy so great a territory.

PHOTOS

Car ferry Ariel

Car ferry Vacationland

Car ferry Mackinaw City

Car ferry Sainte Ignace

Car ferry City of Cheboygan

Car ferry The Straits of Mackinac

Railroad ferry *Chief Wawatam* and her specifications

MISCELLANEOUS

Chief Wawatam Certification of Inspection 1965

Chief Wawatam Engineer's log February 1963 – November 1964

Exit the terminal and proceed to the right...along the boardwalk to the shoreline deck for the next site.

ROUND ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

The Round Island Lighthouse is a familiar landmark of the Straits of Mackinac and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1895, it guided vessels through the narrow and treacherous passage between Mackinac and Round Island until 1947. In 1958, the lighthouse was transferred to the U.S. Forest Service. Round Island is part of the Hiawatha National Forest and is managed to preserve its scenic, historic and natural character. Over a million visitors a year pass by the lighthouse as they travel by ferry to Mackinac Island.

Ice, wind, storms and high water levels have threatened destruction in recent years, but cooperative efforts of the Hiawatha National Forest and concerned citizens have succeeded in restoring and protecting this historic structure.

Turn around—go back toward the street...turn left on the Huron Boardwalk.

STATE FERRY SERVICE

This dock and the auto ferries which landed here were once the Upper Peninsula's "highway" to lower Michigan.

In the early 1900's, the few cars which reached the Straits crossed on railroad ferries, at a cost of \$40 each! Better roads brought a surge of traffic and in 1923 the Michigan State Ferry service was established to transport autos between here and Mackinaw City at the reasonable cost of \$2.50.

During the first year 10,351 vehicles made the crossing, weather permitting, in 1 hour. In 1936 winter service began. By 1950, over 600,000 vehicles rolled onto this dock each year. Summer weekends, holidays and the deer-hunting season brought line-ups of several miles and wait of 6 to 12 hours.

In 1952 the State Ferries began landing at a new dock to the south. The Mackinac Bridge replaced the Ferry Service in 1957, after its 8 ships had safely carried more than 12 million vehicles.

Ariel (1923 – 1926)

The first state ferry was a wooden hulled ship built in 1881, which carried 16-20 cars. Its low profile prevented operation on stormy days when waves were high.

Straits of Mackinac (1928-1957)

Built specifically for the Straits with upper deck loaded by an elevator on the dock. Collided with the ferry "City of Cheboygan", in 1937, resulting in one fatality when a large kettle of boiling soup fell on the ship's cook.

City of Petoskey (1940-1957)

A converted railroad ferry, with a capacity of 105 cars. After retirement, she was used as a floating potato warehouse near Chicago.

PEOPLE AND THE GREAT LAKES

THE PAST

10,000 years ago the last Pleistocene glacier retreated across this region, leaving behind the Great Lakes and their drainage basin. The first human inhabitants arrived soon thereafter, living off abundant game, fertile soil and clean water. By 1,600 A.D., the native population of the Great Lakes Basin exceeded 100,000. It was composed of distinct and widely scattered tribes, who spoke one of three common languages, Iroquoian, Algonquian or Siouan. Each tribal group gathered seasonally in villages of 100 to 500 people.

In the 1600's European exploitation began, changing forever the native people and the Great Lakes.

THE PRESENT

Today, about 37 million people live within the Great Lakes Basin, comprising 10% of the U.S. population and 25% of Canada's. One of the world's largest concentrations of industry generates a level of human activity that has drastically altered the region and its ecosystem.

When the first Europeans arrived, vast stands of hardwoods dominated the southern Great Lakes. In the north, dense evergreen forests were interspersed with clean lakes and rivers. Now only a few, small vestiges of the original forests remain. Toxic air and water pollutants are found even on isolated Isle Royale.

While we exploit our natural resources, we are damaging the capacity of the ecosystem to renew itself, thus destroying life within it—perhaps including ourselves.

THE FUTURE

Disruption of the Great Lakes ecosystem will continue in the foreseeable future. However, major reductions were made in water pollutants during the 1970's, resulting in cleaner water throughout the lakes. The citizen involvement and government actions that brought those improvements provide hope that acid rain, air pollution, toxic and nuclear waste problems can also be solved. Future generations depend on us to do so!

"Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of the people alive today, but the property of the unborn generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander." Theodore Roosevelt-1915

WILLIAM H. BARNUM

This rudder came from the shipwreck of the *William H. Barnum*, a wooden steamer lost April 3, 1894. While carrying a cargo of corn, the aging *Barnum* was blocked and cut open by ice. No loss of life occurred.

William H. Barnum

Length: 218' Beam: 35' Depth: 50'-75'

Type: Wooden Steamer Lost: April 3, 1894 Built: 1873, Detroit, Michigan

Location: Lake Huron, 5.5 miles southeast of Mackinac Bridge

Present Condition: She is upright and partially intact. The bow still has parts of two decks, which can be penetrated. The stern is collapsing but a large boiler and propeller are in place.

NORTH GRAHAM SHOAL BUOY

The buoy lying next to the rudder came from North Graham Shoal located in the Straits of Mackinac on the northeast side of the Mackinac Bridge. At 30' in length and 7' in circumference at its center, it is known as a "large nun" buoy. This type of buoy was constructed of the best quality charcoal iron and the plates were put together with hot rivets, making the joints watertight. The construction called for the creation of several individual watertight compartments, which prevented the buoy from sinking if it was damaged by a passing vessel and began to take on water. The use of this particular type of buoy was discontinued in 1899 and although it has signs of red paint on it still, due to a change in buoy coloring system recommended by a League of Nations subcommittee in 1936, the buoy now located on North Graham Shoal is green.

Cross the grassy park toward the marina and you will reconnect with the Huron Boardwalk.

G.P.S. REFERENCE POINT

Latitude: 45D 52.0145' N

Longitude: 84D 43.2049' W

Elevation: 592 Feet

Provided as a public service by the Michigan Society Of Professional Surveyors
and Mackinac County Land Surveys

STATE FERRIES 1923-1957

July 31, 1923 marked the beginning of a Straits ferry system, when the converted riverboat '*Ariel*' landed twenty automobiles at the Saint Ignace center. Annual traffic increased to about one million cars, requiring 470 employees, new docks and a fleet of larger boats- the '*Vacationland*', an ice breaker of 150 car capacity being specially built.

Erected by City of Saint Ignace 1961

Approved by the Michilimackinac Historical Society

HERITAGE OF FISHERMEN IN THIS AREA

The Great Lakes are known for delicious freshwater fish.

Before the white man came, Native Indian tribes supplied their needs with fresh and dried fish from these lakes.

Later, others joined in the fishing business, many of them from the Scandinavian countries.

In the 1800s, sailing ships transported hundreds of barrels of salted fish from nearby Saint Helena Island to Chicago and Detroit.

In the early 1900s, passenger ships stopped at Saint Ignace and picked up fish for their guests. Daily trains also picked up tons of fish to deliver on their routes to New York.

Now in the 2000s, commercial fishing is still carried on, mostly by Native American fishermen.

These men from Mackinac County lost their lives while commercial fishing.

1851	Michael McCann, 36	Mackinac Island
1936	Louis Hart, 28	Epoufette
1936	Robert Goudreau, 33	Epoufette
1936	Jim Dishaw, 47	Epoufette
1937	Carl Mattson, 28	St. Ignace
	Ray McLean, 30	St. Ignace
1945	Teddy Paulson, 17	Naubinway
1946	Frank L. Brix, 38	Naubinway
1954	John G. Ellison, 63	St. Ignace Township
	John J. Ellison, 29	St. Ignace Township
1964	Art Stiebe, 31	St. Ignace
1969	Terry Halberg, 16	St. Ignace
	Melvin Frazier, 51	Naubinway
1977	Alvin Gustafson, 67	St. Ignace
	Gary Gustafson, 37	St. Ignace
1980	Cliff Bigelow, 22	Epoufette
	Mike Bigelow, 24	Epoufette
1983	James Converse, Jr, 28.	Naubinway
	Edward Moses, 27	St. Ignace
1986	Edward E. Perkins, 47	Naubinway
	Rusty G. King, 31	Naubinway
	Kirk J. Peterson, 28	Naubinway
1993	Robert Rickley, 23	St. Ignace
	Rick Wessel, 35	Mackinac Island
1999	Roy C. Frazier, 25	Naubinway

THE FRENCH COME TO THE STRAITS

The Straits of Mackinac has been a gathering place for hundreds of years. An abundance of whitefish, lake trout and sturgeon attracted Native people who established seasonal villages on Mackinac and Bois Blanc Islands as well as on the mainland. During the seventeenth century, aggressive Iroquois warriors forced Huron and Ottawa people out of southern Ontario. These refugee bands resettled at the Straits.

French fur traders followed the Huron and Ottawa and established a small trading village on the north shore of the Straits. For the next 200 years, Mackinac served as the summer depot for the vast upper Great Lakes fur trade.

FRENCH EXPLORERS

In the 1620s, French explorer Etienne Brule became the first European to set eyes on the Great Lakes. In 1634, Jean Nicolet passed through the Straits of Mackinac searching for a water route to China. By 1658, traders led by Medard Chouart des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson plied these waters in search of furs in Michigan and Wisconsin.

FRENCH MISSIONS

In the 1640s, French missionary priests brought the Christian gospel to the people of the upper Great Lakes. In 1671, Father Jacques Marquette established a mission on Mackinac Island. After a few months, Marquette moved the mission to the north side of the Straits and named it St. Ignace in honor of the founder of his Jesuit order St. Ignatius Loyola.

Around 1715, the Ottawa moved their village to the south side of the Straits and the mission followed. Fur traders and soldiers built the nearby village of Michilimackinac and Jesuit priests ministered to both the Ottawa and the growing French population. In the 1740s, the Ottawa migrated to L'Arbre Croche (Cross Village) and priests divided their time between the Ottawa mission and the French church at Michilimackinac, named in honor of Ste. Anne, patroness of voyageurs. In 1779 during the American Revolution, Ste. Anne's Church was relocated to Mackinac Island where it is an active parish today.

MARQUETTE AND THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Father Marquette was eager to take his message to distant tribes. In 1673, he accompanied Louis Jolliet on an exploratory trip that led to the European discovery of the Mississippi River. During the return trip, Marquette died in 1675. A few years later, his bones were respectfully disinterred and brought to the Mission of St. Ignace for reburial.

FORTIFYING THE STRAITS

In order to regulate the traders and establish imperial control the French government built a fort at St. Ignace in 1690. Soldiers protected French civilians from occasional hostile tribes and also kept out English traders who ventured to the Straits.

The new fort, named DeBaude after the governor of New France, housed soldiers for only a few years. In 1697, the soldiers were withdrawn. When they returned in 1715 they followed the Indians to the south side of the Straits where they constructed a new fortified village called Michilimackinac. French troops remained until Canada surrendered to the English in 1760.

FRENCH MARINES AT MACKINAC

Soldiers of the Compagnies Franches de la Marines (Independent Company of Marines) served at the Straits of Mackinac beginning in the late 1600s. In 1715 French Marines began a 45 year period of service at Fort Michilimackinac. Here they protected the community and supervised the fur trade. French officers also

recruited Native American warriors at Michilimackinac to fight against British forces as far away as Ohio and New York.

FRENCH CULTURE AND INDIAN WAYS

French settlers blended the cultural traditions of their European homeland with the practices of upper Great Lakes Native Americans. They built homes, cooked meals, sang songs and practiced law and religion as they had in France. They also learned the advantages of traveling in Native American birch bark canoes, using snowshoes and wearing moccasins. Indian foods such as corn, fish and game became a major part of their diet.

French men often married Native women. An Indian wife provided an important connection between the European trader and the native peoples. Her family ties were essential because Indian people wanted to trade with merchants they could trust. Their children bridged both cultures and were known as *metis*. *METIS* were the majority population of the Straits of Mackinac into the early 19th century. Today, French descendants remain in the Straits area.

THE VOYAGEURS

The French civilian population included several hundred voyageurs who paddled birch bark canoes to Mackinac each summer. One group traveled to and from Montreal in large 35' canot de maitres. Others in smaller canoes came and went to the north, west and south connecting Mackinac with distant winter trading posts and hunting sites. These hard working canoemen were the backbone of the fur trade, traveling thousands of miles every year to bring furs from the wilderness to eastern markets.

DISCOVERING THE FRENCH PRESENCE

The story of the French at Mackinac is not well known. Handwritten documents from the eighteenth century are scattered in Canada and France and many researchers have difficulty reading old French. To correct this problem, Mackinac State Historic Park historians are searching out and translating French language documents to recover exciting stories about the French at the Straits.

Archaeologists are also exploring French remains in the area. Excavations at Marquette Mission, Gros Cap Cemetery and the Lasanen Site in St. Ignace and Colonial Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City have unearthed objects used by the French in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Currently some of these items are on display at the Marquette Mission and Museum of Ojibwa Culture, the Marquette Memorial and Colonial Michilimackinac. A visit to these museums will help you discover more about the French at Mackinac.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT MICHILIMACKINAC

Archaeologists have unearthed much information about the French community at Michilimackinac in the eighteenth century. Excavations reveal the buildings they constructed, food they ate, merchandise they traded and tools they worked with. Every feature and artifact, from the 1740s water well to tiny rosary beads, tells us more about the French presence at Michilimackinac.

Stay on the boardwalk-you can walk through the park on your way back.

THE CHIEF DOCK

The boardwalk on which you are standing is constructed on what is affectionately referred to by local residents as the “Chief Dock”. It is the previous home to the *Chief Wawatam* (Wa-wa’-tem), a hand-fired, coal burning train-car ferry built by the Toledo Shipbuilding Co. for the Mackinac Transportation Co. and launched on August 26, 1911. At 338’ in length and a beam of 62’, her main business was to transport train cars, carrying up to 26 at a time, across the Straits of Mackinac between Michigan’s upper and lower peninsulas. Because the ‘*Chief*’ loaded and unloaded her cars at the bow, the sea gate had to be raised to permit the cars to be pushed on or off the dock’s train deck.

The A-frame structure, that you see still in place, has counter-balances hanging on either side, which were used to level the apron of the dock with the deck of the ship. It was crucial that the deck of the ship and the edge of the apron meet exactly or the cars would be derailed. The original A-frame structure had a large bell on top to help the ‘*Chief*’ find the dock in fog or storms. The ‘*Chief*’ operated between St. Ignace and Mackinaw City until 1984, but in 1988, despite the efforts of preservationists, she was sold to a company in Ontario, Canada for \$110,000.

Note: Time and nature collapsed the loading apron in August 2011.

MOORING FACILITIES

The four large cylindrical shaped structures that you see in place out in the bay are called “mooring dolphins”. A dolphin is a “man-made marine structure that extends above the water level and is not connected to shore”. These particular dolphins were built in 1957 to provide a mooring facility for Great Lakes tanker ships carrying jet fuel to the area to be offloaded.

Connected to one of the mooring dolphins was a pipeline that traveled underwater and carried the jet fuel from the tanker ships to storage tanks previously located on the St. Ignace shoreline. The jet fuel was stored in, and pumped from these onshore storage tanks through an underground pipeline directly to the now defunct Kinross Air Force Base (also known as Kincheloe Air Force Base) located 37 miles north of St. Ignace. The Air Force Base was used for national defense, as a refueling base for Alaska-bound aircraft and a base for the defense of the Locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Note: This same sign also appears at one other location along the boardwalk.

CHIEF WAWATAM PARK (KIOSK)

Railroads Across America

Railroad construction across America boomed in the second half of the 1800s, spurred on by technological improvements and demand for distant products.

Railroads were completed to both sides of the Straits of Mackinac in 1881. The railroad companies were picking up the products of the northern states such as western wheat and Michigan iron ore.

To cross the 5-mile wide Straits of Mackinac a ferry boat system was implemented. The railroad cars were shuttled back and forth while the heavy locomotives remained on land to position and then haul away the freight and passenger cars.

There were several vessels designed for this purpose but the *Chief Wawatam* was the longest lasting. This dock is known as The Chief Dock.

Chief Wawatam
1911-1984

The Chief was owned by the Mackinac Transportation Company, a partnership of three railroad companies.	Pronunciation: Wa-wá-tum Meaning: Little flashes or reflections of light Namesake: Local Ojibwa chief and medicine man
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Special Design

For ice breaking she had a bow propeller that sucked the water from the ice to weaken it. Her hull was cut away at both the bow and stern so she could ride up on the ice and crush it with her weight.

She was also designed for fast loading and unloading with railroad tracks that aligned with the dock. She had a sea gate that lifted out of the way so she could be loaded from the bow. She could carry up to 26 small rail cars or 18 large ones.

The state auto ferries could not run through the ice so the *Chief* transported automobiles in the winter.

The V-shaped steel is the sea gate. It was raised as shown in this photo so cars could roll on and off. But it was lowered when underway to keep the waves from entering the car deck.

Special Duties

She was built by three railroad companies to carry railroad cars across the Straits of Mackinac year-round. But she was also contracted out to serve as an auto transport, passenger transport, and ice breaker. She served as a major employer and an icon of the Straits.

The End

Ferry use dropped drastically in 1957 with the opening of the Mackinac Bridge. In 1984 the dock in St. Ignace collapsed and the ferry stopped running. In 1988 she was sold and converted to a barge that worked until it was scrapped in 2009. The A-frame, which controlled the landing apron collapsed on August 3, 2011. Special thanks to the Burgtorf family for the use of the photos from the book **Chief Wawatam – The Story of a Hand-Bomber** by Frances D. Burgtorf.

The Chief Dock

Docking

The boat crew aligned the boat exactly with the track on land. The winds and currents in the Straits of Mackinac made docking the *Chief* a difficult task. Once inside the breakwall it was precision work done by maneuvering the engines through the Chadburns and dock lines, not the wheel. In fact, the wheelsman left the pilot house and worked the starboard winch.

The apron was raised so the boat could snug under it before being attached.

When the apron touched down on the boat deck it was securely latched, then the weights were released. The apron and boat were now free to rise and fall as one unit during the process.

Loading

The railroad cars were loaded in a precise order to keep the boat level and safe. Heavy cars containing iron ore were always kept on the inner tracks. This work was done by the railroad crew not the boat crew.

Crew members monitored a list gauge to make sure the boat stayed level during loading. Every car was secured by blocking the wheels, lifting the car body with four jacks to keep it from swaying on its springs, then cabled down so even if the boat rolled over the cars would not move.

Only train cars, not the engine, were transported across the Straits. To keep the heavy locomotive off of the boat they used two flat cars, called idlers, between the locomotive and the loading cars.

Powering up the Chief

Making Steam

The *Wawatam* used coal for fuel to heat boilers to make steam. The steam drove the engines.

This was a hand-fired boat meaning the coal was shoveled by hand. This was dirty, hard work. The black smoke you see in the photos is from the burning coal; the white smoke is actually steam. When she was running 24 hours a day the *Chief* used 40 tons of coal a day.

The Hole

The firemen shoveled coal into two doors for each boiler. There were two boilers for each of the three engines, for a total of six boilers. In normal conditions it took one fire, or 40 shovels of coal, to cross the Straits.

Reading and adjusting the fire was an art. The coal needed to be placed evenly or heaped a bit on the edges so it could roll toward the center, and all of the grates had to be covered. The crew had to adjust the air flow, clean the flues, rake the fire, blow the ashes, and make adjustments for the quality of coal. They tried to be careful about blowing soot out of the stack and saved tasks most likely to be offensive for when they were away from the dock.

The fire was cleaned with these tools. The residue included clinkers that had to be removed from the bed and ash that fell down into the ash tray. The ash was blown overboard using high pressure water.

Making Power

The *Wawatam* had three powerful triple-expansion steam engines rated at a total of 4500hp.

The two main propulsion engines were in the main engine room. The third engine was forward and powered the bow propeller that was used for ice breaking. The crew commented that these engines were not noisy.

The steam was reused as it cooled. The hottest pushed the big piston, medium pushed the middle and coolest pushed the small piston. This maximized the work extracted from the steam.

The Pilot House

In its glory the *Chief Wawatam* made as many as six round trips across the Straits daily. She ran year-round, 24 hours a day. The runs were mainly routine.

In the early years the greatest concern was getting stuck in the ice and being carried along with an ice floe in the strong currents of the Straits. After the Mackinac Bridge was built the ice did not move as much therefore ice floes were not the main worry. Instead, the main worry was the growing summer ferry traffic to and from Mackinac Island.

The Whistle

At 8-feet tall the whistle had a magnificent deep sound and was used to signal dock arrival and departure and for emergency notifications.

The whistle was mounted high on the forward stack. Normally this stack belched black smoke; the white steam blast from the whistle stood out.

The *Chief Wawatam* originally had a 3-chime whistle. It was replaced by this whistle from the pier in Ludington by Capt. Robertson for sentimental reasons.

“The Chadburn” or Engine Order Telegraph

Can you hear me now?

The pilot house contains the eyes and ears of the ship. The captain makes navigational decisions and needs a reliable way to communicate with the engineer five floors below. The Chadburn was a mechanical relay used for this purpose. The order was given by moving the handle to the desired engine speed and direction on the dial. The engineer confirmed by moving the handle on his.

Since the *Chief* had three engines, it had three Chadburns in the pilot house. Moving the handle moved cables and chains that relayed the setting. A bell rang at both ends to call attention to the change.

If a Chadburn failed, the backup was a steam whistle in the engine room that was activated by pulling up on an emergency handle. There was a code – 1 blow meant stop, for example.

Fast and Furious

During ice breaking the boat might need to move back and forth as quickly as possible. The Chadburn

might be too slow. Using the telephone, an arrangement would be made for the engineer to rock the boat. The captain could monitor the direction using the tattle-tale.

The tattle-tale told the captain how the engine was being run. The vent on the side pushed a puff of air when going forward or sucked air when in reverse. A crew member could place his hand alongside and feel the pulse of the engine. This allowed them to re-ring the engine room to fine-tune the direction or speed.

The Life

In the years when passenger trains were part of the train service, the *Chief's* crew consisted of 54 people including "hotel services staff". The *Chief* ran 24 hours a day. She could carry 348 passengers and had comfortable lounges for men and women. The crew lived aboard.

In the later years, when there were few runs and no passengers the ferry operated with about 24 crew members, 16 to run the boat and the rest as night watch. The boat was strictly a work place, no longer home. Sleeping

The boat had bunks for 54 crew, with bunks four high. Officers had better quarters. During ice breaking they might be gone from home for 2 weeks.

Eating

During the height of passenger service the boat carried maids, cooks, then porters.

In 1966 the galley was closed and free meals were replaced with lunch buckets from home. This was the dining room for the captain and officers. There were two mess decks for crew. The food in all three was the same but service was better in the dining room.

The main meal was served at noon. It took an experienced cook to get the pies bakes before the boat began lurching back and forth during loading.

Friends

The crew of the *Chief* worked together for many years. They were nearly all St. Ignace residents and friends. They had respect for each other and helped cover during times of illness and distress.

Paperwork

Both the pilot house and engine room crew kept logs. The purser ordered supplies.

Cleaning

There was always something to clean, including the equipment, bilge, brass, general floors, and personal gear.

This is the crew's washing machine. It consists of a barrel, with water, soap, and dirty clothes. A plunger runs up and down inside driven by chains and eccentrics running off of the engine.

Laundry was dried by hanging on a line over the engine room, a nice warm space.

Here two crew members are standing by the aft emergency steering gear with their brooms, ready to sweep. These wheels were never used and were finally removed. On occasion the crew used the space to hold square dances.

Near the kiosk, see the Railroad Bell

This antique railroad bell with its classic ring is from a coal-fired, steam-powered locomotive that was popular in the late 1880's in the hard rock mining and logging industries.

Donated by Clarence "Clancy" Kalmer in honor of his parents, Willis and Helen Kalmer. Willis worked for the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic Railroad from 1917-1967 in St. Ignace and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

This tour will now leave the Huron Boardwalk. Exit this park at the first opportunity – to your left – follow the shore to American Legion Park (pass by the two boxcars – red and yellow – head toward the circle of flags).

JAMES (JIM) MONTCALM~PLAQUE ON ROCK NORTH OF GAZEBO

This memorial is placed in recognition of James “Jim” Montcalm for his love and devotion to his family and his dedication to scuba diving and the divers who enjoy diving in the Straits of Mackinac Underwater Preserve. Placed with affection and gratitude on the 12th day of August, 2007 by his family and friends.

In Memory
James “Jim” Montcalm
1949-2006

AMERICAN LEGION PARK ~ ROCK WITH PLAQUE NEAR GAZEBO

**IN COMMEMORATION OF THE THOUSANDS OF GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECKS
AND MICHIGAN’S UNDERWATER PRESERVES**

Great Lakes shipping played a significant role in the settlement and growth of Michigan and surrounding territories as early as the 1700s. Brutally unpredictable weather and underwater dangers claimed many an ore, lumber and passenger ship. More than 6000 ships rest in the Great Lakes.....nearly 2000 in Michigan’s territorial waters. The State of Michigan has designated several concentrations of these shipwrecks as underwater state preserves to save this chapter of Michigan’s rich heritage. Several of the 80 shipwrecks in the Straits of Mackinac Bottomland Preserve could be seen from this site if they were to be raised today. Members of the Michigan Outdoor Writers Association suggest you visit a library or bookstore to learn more about the fascinating history of Michigan’s shipwrecks and underwater preserves.

A MICHIGAN HERITAGE MEMORIAL, DEDICATED JUNE 1994 BY THE MICHIGAN OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION, ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY.

MICHIGAN BOTTOMLAND PRESERVES

Note: This is for information only – not on any sign.

Created in 1980, Michigan’s eleven underwater preserves include nearly 2,300 square miles of Great Lakes bottomland, an area nearly twice the size of the State of Delaware. The underwater preserves protect some of the region’s most sensitive underwater resources.

The vast expanse of the Great Lakes provided a natural transportation system into the interior of the United States, as our nation expanded west. Historically, the inland waterway through these Great Lakes provided the most dangerous shipping waters in the world. The destruction of thousands of schooners, steamers and barges was the result of sudden storms, fog, heavy traffic and the shipping companies' demands that captains stay on schedule, no matter what the weather. The Great Lakes bottomland is littered with these time capsules from when our nation began to emerge as a world power. These shipwrecks, artifacts and natural features attract divers from all across the United States. They come to explore and observe how the cold, fresh water of the Great Lakes preserves history.

STRAITS OF MACKINAC SHIPWRECK PRESERVE

Note: This is for information only – not on any sign.

The 148 square mile Straits of Mackinac Underwater Preserve is located at the confluence of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, under and around the five-mile long Mackinac Bridge.

The Straits have always had a reputation as a dangerous area for ships. Storms originating in the lower lakes can funnel through the Straits, magnifying wind and waves. Over the years, a number of ships foundered or were driven ashore.

Some known and diveable wrecks in this area are: *Cedarville, William H. Barnum, Sandusky, C.H. Johnson, William Young, Eber Ward, Maitland, Minneapolis, St. Andrew, Northwest and Martin Stalker.*

AMERICAN LEGION PARK

AT CIRCLE OF FLAGS

REMEMBER

The young men and women who were torn from their homes, families and friends to serve their country in its time of need. Some came back as they left, others returned disabled, scarred physically and mentally and many gave their last full measure of devotion. To all these, this park is dedicated in memory of their sacrifice for the preservation of freedom and peace.

Thomas F. Grant Post 62
The American Legion, Saint Ignace

There are a few more stops on the way back to the Museum of Ojibwa Culture.

You may want to cross State Street and head north along the store-side.

SAINT ANTHONY'S ROCK IN PARKING LOT AT CENTRAL HILL STREET

Saint Anthony's Rock is one of several sea stacks in the Straits area. It's made of Mackinac Breccia, a type of stone formed 350 million years ago when the roofs of deep caves collapsed into stacks of fragmented rock. Calcium carbonate in circulating groundwater cemented the limestone, dolomite and chert into much harder formations than surrounding unbroken limestone. Much later, glaciers covered this area, and then began melting 12,000 years ago. Wave action in the resulting lakes eroded the adjacent soft stone leaving Saint Anthony's Rock exposed by 2000 B.C. Sometimes called Goudreau Rock after a prominent Saint Ignace family,

this formation is better known as Saint Anthony's Rock. This name may well have been given it by Father Hennepin or the famous Great Lakes explorer Sieur de La Salle.

On August 26, 1679, the Franciscan priest was aboard La Salle's famous ship, the *Griffon*, when it encountered a violent storm in Lake Huron. Father Hennepin writes, "At this time, the Sieur de La Salle adopted in union with us Saint Anthony of Padua as the protector of our enterprises and he promised God if He did us the grace of delivering us from the tempest, that the first chapel he should erect....should be dedicated to that Saint."

Upon safe arrival at the thriving center of Saint Ignace, the men may have named this rock, dominating the landscape, after Saint Anthony. The Italian priest would have likely suggested an Italian patron and, in fact, assigned the name to the falls in Minneapolis.

La Salle's *Griffon*, the first European trade ship on the upper Great Lakes, sank in Lake Michigan in 1679 and has never been found.

FORT DE BAUDE

AT CITY HALL, 396 NORTH STATE

This fort was built by the French near here within a decade after Marquette had established his mission in 1671. Its name was that of the family Frontenac, the French governor of North America. Until Detroit was founded in 1701, this was the most important French post west of Montreal. The fort's commandant had charge of all other forts in the West. Also known as Fort Michilimackinac, it was the first of three forts which were to bear this name in the Straits area.

S98 - September 25, 1956; 1958

Continue north to Museum of Ojibwa Culture. This concludes the walking portion of this tour.

Note: A second tour option is available - to drive to near-by areas, viewing other historic signs.
St. Ignace Area Historic Sign Driving Tour

Updated 12-2014