

= Mackinac Island =

Mackinac Island (/ ˈmækɪnəːk / MAK @-@ in @-@ aw) is an island and resort area , covering 3 @. @ 8 square miles (9 @. @ 8 km2) in land area , in the U.S. state of Michigan . It is located in Lake Huron , at the eastern end of the Straits of Mackinac , between the state 's Upper and Lower Peninsulas . The island was home to an Odawa settlement before European exploration began in the 17th century . It served a strategic position as a center on the commerce of the Great Lakes fur trade . This led to the establishment of Fort Mackinac on the island by the British during the American Revolutionary War . It was the site of two battles during the War of 1812 .

In the late 19th century , Mackinac Island became a popular tourist attraction and summer colony . Much of the island has undergone extensive historical preservation and restoration ; as a result , the entire island is listed as a National Historic Landmark . It is well known for its numerous cultural events ; its wide variety of architectural styles , including the famous Victorian Grand Hotel ; its fudge ; and its ban on almost all motor vehicles . More than 80 percent of the island is preserved as Mackinac Island State Park .

= = Etymology = =

Like many historic places in the Great Lakes region , Mackinac Island 's name derives from a Native American language . Native Americans in the Straits of Mackinac region likened the shape of the island to that of a turtle . Therefore , they named it " Mitchimakinak " (Ojibwe mishi @-@ mikinaak) meaning " big turtle " . Andrew Blackbird , an Odawa historian , said it was named after a tribe that had lived there . The French spelled it with their version of the original pronunciation : Michilimackinac . The British shortened it to the present name : " Mackinac . " Michillimackinac is also spelled as Mishinimakinago , Mʔshʔma ʔ kʔnung , Mi @-@ shi @-@ ne @-@ macki naw @-@ go , Missilimakinak , Teiodondoraghie .

The Menominee traditionally lived in a large territory of 10 million acres extending from Wisconsin to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan . Historic references include one by Father Frederic Baraga , a Slovenian missionary priest in Michigan , who in his 1878 dictionary wrote :

Mishinimakinago ; pl.-g. ʔ This name is given to some strange Indians (according to the sayings of the Otchipwes [Ojibwe]) , who are rowing through the woods , and who are sometimes heard shooting , but never seen . And from this word , the name of the village of Mackinac , or Michillimackinac , is derived .

Maehkaenah is the Menominee word for turtle . In his 1952 *The Indian Tribes of North America* , John Reed Swanton recorded under the " Wisconsin " section : " Menominee , " a band named " Misi 'nimäk Kimiko Wini 'niwuk , ' Michilimackinac People , ' near the old fort at Mackinac , Mich . "

In an early written history of Mackinac Island (1887) by Andrew Blackbird , an official interpreter for the U.S. government and an Ottawa chief 's son , he describes that a small independent tribe called " Mi @-@ shi @-@ ne @-@ macki naw @-@ go " once occupied Mackinac Island . They became confederated with the Ottawa from Ottawa Island (now Manitoulin Island) situated north of Lake Huron . One winter the Mi @-@ shi @-@ ne @-@ macki naw @-@ go on Mackinac Island were almost entirely annihilated by the Seneca people from New York , who were part of the Iroquois Confederacy . Only two of the local natives escaped by hiding in one of the natural caves at the island . To commemorate the losses of this allied tribe , the Ottawa named what is now Mackinac Island , as " Mi @-@ shi @-@ ne @-@ macki @-@ nong . " In 1895 Fort Mackinac 's John R. Bailey , M. D. published his history , entitled *Mackinac formerly Michilimackinac* , describing some of the first recorded presence on Mackinac of French traders . They arrived in 1654 with a large party of Huron and Ottawa heading to Three Rivers ; another visitor was an adventurer making a canoe voyage in 1665 .

= = History = =

== Prehistoric ==

Archaeologists have excavated prehistoric fishing camps on Mackinac Island and in the surrounding areas . Fishhooks , pottery , and other artifacts establish a Native American presence at least 700 years before European exploration , around AD 900 . The island is a sacred place in the tradition of some of its earliest known inhabitants , the Anishinaabe (Ojibwa) tribes , who consider it to be home to the Gitche Manitou , or the " Great Spirit " . According to legend , Mackinac Island was created by the Great Hare , Michabou and was the first land to appear after the recession of the Great Flood . The island was a gathering place for the local tribes where their offerings were made to Gitche Manitou , and it was the burial place of tribal chiefs .

== 17th through 18th centuries ==

The first European likely to have seen Mackinac Island is Jean Nicolet , a French @-@ Canadian coureur de bois , during his 1634 explorations . The Jesuit priest Claude Dablon founded a mission for the Native Americans on Mackinac Island in 1670 , and stayed over the winter of 1670 ? 71 . Dablon 's fall 1671 successor , the missionary and explorer Jacques Marquette , moved the mission to St. Ignace soon after his arrival . With the mission as a focus , the Straits of Mackinac quickly became an important French fur trading location . The British took control of the Straits of Mackinac after the French and Indian War and Major Patrick Sinclair chose the bluffs of the island for Fort Mackinac in 1780 .

The Jesuit Relations (1671) contains a long description of Mackinac Island :
its fisheries , its phenomena of wind and tide , and the tribes who , now and in the past , have made it their abode . A favorite resort for all the Algonkin tribes , many are returning to it since the peace with the Iroquois . On this account , the Jesuits have begun a new mission , opposite Mackinac , called St. Ignace . Thither have fled the Hurons , driven from Chequamegon Bay by fear of the Sioux , ? the Iroquois of the West . "

The Relations also indicate the tremendous strategic importance of Michillimackinac / Mackinac Island as " the central point for all travel on the upper Great Lakes , and for a vast extent of wilderness and half @-@ settled country beyond " to First Nations and Europeans (prior to the arrival of railroads) . The tribes who had inhabited Mackinac Island had been driven away by the Iroquois , leaving the island practically deserted until 1670 . The Huron people from Lake Superior , in fear of the Sioux , retreated to the shore north of Mackinac Island . Here Marquette continued his missionary labors with them , at the site of the present St. Ignace . Denonville ' s memoir of 1688 claimed that the French had inhabited the area since 1648 . A small French garrison was sent there some time between 1679 and 1683 .

The name of Michillimackinac (later abbreviated to Mackinac) was applied generally to the entire vicinity , as well as specifically to the post at St. Ignace . Later it was applied to the fort and mission established on the south side of the Strait of Mackinac .

Although the British built Fort Mackinac to protect their settlement from attack by French @-@ Canadians and native tribes , the fort was never attacked during the American Revolutionary War . The entire Straits area was officially acquired by the United States through the Treaty of Paris in 1783 . However , much of the British forces did not leave the Great Lakes area until after 1794 , when Jay 's Treaty established U.S. sovereignty over the Northwest Territory .

== 19th century to present ==

During the War of 1812 , the British captured the fort in the first battle of the conflict because the Americans had not yet heard that war had been declared . The victorious British attempted to protect their prize by building Fort George on the high ground behind Fort Mackinac . In 1814 , the Americans and British fought a second battle on the north side of the island . The American second @-@ in @-@ command , Major Andrew Hunter Holmes , was killed and the Americans failed to recapture the island .

Despite this outcome , the Treaty of Ghent of 1815 forced the British to return the island and surrounding mainland to the U.S. The United States reoccupied Fort Mackinac , and renamed Fort George as Fort Holmes , after Major Holmes . Fort Mackinac remained under the control of the United States government until 1895 and provided volunteers to defend the Union during the American Civil War . The fort was used as a prison for three Confederate sympathizers .

John Jacob Astor 's American Fur Company was centered on Mackinac Island after the War of 1812 and exported beaver pelts for thirty years . By the middle of the 19th century , commercial fishing for whitefish and lake trout began to replace the fur trade as the island 's primary industry . As sport fishing became more popular in the 1880s , hotels and restaurants accommodated tourists coming by train or lake boat from Detroit .

Following the Civil War , the island became a popular tourist destination for residents of cities on the Great Lakes . Much of the federal land on Mackinac Island was designated as the second national park , Mackinac National Park , in 1875 , just three years after Yellowstone was named as the first national park . To accommodate an influx of tourists in the 1880s , the boat and railroad companies built hotels , including the Grand Hotel . Souvenir shops began to spring up as a way for island residents to profit from the tourists . Many wealthy industrialists built summer " cottages " along the island 's bluffs for extended stays . When the federal government left the island in 1895 , all of the federal land , including Fort Mackinac , was given to the state of Michigan and became Michigan 's first state park . The Mackinac Island State Park Commission appointed to oversee the island has limited private development in the park and requires leaseholders to maintain the island 's distinctive Victorian architecture .

Motor vehicles were restricted at the end of the 19th century because of concerns for the health and safety of the island 's residents and horses after local carriage drivers complained that automobiles startled their horses . This ban continues to the present with exceptions only for emergency and construction vehicles .

= = Geography = =

Mackinac Island is about 8 miles (13 km) in circumference and 3 @. @ 8 square miles (9 @. @ 8 km²) in total area . The highest point of the island is the historic Fort Holmes (originally called Fort George by the British before 1815) , which is 320 feet (98 m) above lake level and 890 feet (271 m) above sea level . According to the 2010 United States Census , the island has a year @-@ round population of 492 . The population grows considerably during the summer as hotels , restaurants , bars and retail shops , open only during the summer season , hire short @-@ term employees to accommodate as many as 15 @, @ 000 visitors per day .

= = = Geology = = =

Mackinac Island was formed as the glaciers of the last ice age began to melt around 13 @, @ 000 BC . The bedrock strata that underlie the island are much older , dating to Late Silurian and Early Devonian time , about 400 to 420 million years ago . Subsurface deposits of halite (rock salt) dissolved , allowing the collapse of overlying limestones ; these once @-@ broken but now solidified rocks comprise the Mackinac Breccia . The melting glaciers formed the Great Lakes , and the receding lakewaters eroded the limestone bedrock , forming the island 's steep cliffs and rock formations . At least three previous lake levels are known , two of them higher than the present shore : Algonquin level lakeshores date to about 13 @, @ 000 years ago , and the Nipissing level shorelines formed 4 @, @ 000 to 6 @, @ 000 years ago . During an intermediate period of low water between these two high @-@ water stages , the Straits of Mackinac shrank to a narrow gorge which discharged its water over Mackinac Falls , located just east of the island (beyond Arch Rock) , into Lake Huron .

As the Great Lakes assumed their present levels , the waterfall was inundated and Mackinac Island took on its current size . The steep cliffs were one of the primary reasons for the British army 's choice of the island for a fortification ; their decision differed from that of the French army , which

had built Fort Michilimackinac about 1715 near present day Mackinaw City . The limestone formations are still part of the island 's appeal . However , tourists are attracted by the natural beauty rather than the strategic value . One of the most popular geologic formations is Arch Rock , a natural limestone arch , 146 feet (45 m) above the ground . Other popular geologic formations include Devil 's Kitchen , Skull Cave , and Sugar Loaf .

= = = Nature = = =

Mackinac Island contains a wide variety of terrain , including fields , marshes , bogs , coastline , boreal forest , and limestone formations . The environment is legally preserved on the island by the State Historic Park designation . About half of the shoreline and adjacent waters off Mackinac Island , including the harbor (Haldimand Bay) and the southern and western shore from Mission Point to Pointe aux Pins , is protected as part of the Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Preserve , a state marine park . As it is separated from the mainland by 3 miles (4 @ 8 km) of water , few large mammals inhabit the island , except those that traverse the ice during the winter months . Rabbits , fox , raccoons , otters , mink , gray and red squirrels , and chipmunks are all common as is the occasional beaver and coyote . Bats are the most abundant migratory mammals as crossing the water is no obstacle for them . There are many limestone caves serving as homes for the bats and many insects on the island for the bat to prey on . The island is frequented by migratory birds on their trips between their summer and winter habitats . Eagles and hawks are abundant in April and May , while smaller birds such as yellow warblers , American redstart , and indigo bunting are more common in early summer . Near the shoreline , gulls , herons , geese , and loons are common . Owls , including snowy owls and great grey owls , come to the island from the Arctic to hunt in the warmer climate . Other birds , such as chickadees , cardinals , blue jays , and woodpeckers , live on the island year @-@ round . Toads have also been found .

Mackinac Island contains over 600 species of vascular plants . Flowering plants and wildflowers are abundant , including trillium , lady slippers , forget @-@ me @-@ nots , violets , trout lily , spring beauty , hepatica , buttercups , and hawkweeds in the forests and orchids , fringed gentian , butter @-@ and @-@ eggs , and jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ pulpit along the shoreline . The island 's forests are home to many varieties of trees , such as maple , birch , elm , cedar , pine , and spruce .

= = Media = =

The island 's newspaper is the Mackinac Island Town Crier . It has been owned and operated by Wesley H. Maurer Sr. and his family since 1957 as training for journalism . It is published weekly from May through September and bimonthly during the rest of the year .

= = Transportation = =

The island can be reached by private boat , by ferry , by small aircraft , and in the winter , by snowmobile over an ice bridge . The airport has a 3 @, @ 500 @-@ foot (1 @, @ 070 m) paved runway , and daily charter air service from the mainland is available . In the summer tourist season , ferry service is available from Arnold Transit Company , Shepler 's Ferry , and Star Line Ferry to shuttle visitors to the island from St. Ignace and Mackinaw City .

Motorized vehicles have been prohibited on the island since 1898 , with the exception of snowmobiles during winter , emergency vehicles , and service vehicles . Travel on the island is either by foot , bicycle , or horse @-@ drawn carriage . Roller skates and roller blades are also allowed , except in the downtown area . Bicycles , roller skates / roller blades , carriages , and saddle horses are available for rent . An 8 @-@ mile (13 km) road follows the island 's perimeter , and numerous roads , trails and paths cover the interior . M @-@ 185 , the United States ' only state highway without motorized vehicles , makes a circular loop around the island , closely hugging the shoreline .

The island is the location of Mackinac Island State Park , which covers approximately 80 percent of

the island and includes Fort Mackinac as well as portions of the island 's historic downtown and harbor . No camping is allowed on the island , but numerous hotels and bed and breakfasts are available .

The downtown streets are lined with many retail stores , candy shops , and restaurants . A popular item at the candy shops is the locally produced and nationally known Mackinac Island fudge , leading to tourists sometimes being referred to as " fudgies " . Many shops sell a variety of fudge , and some of the confectioners have been operating for more than a century . The popularity of the fudge has led to the sales and marketing of Mackinac Island fudge not only throughout Michigan but outside the state as well .

= = Architecture = =

Most of the buildings on Mackinac Island are built of wood , a few are of stone , and most have clapboard siding . The architectural styles on the island span 300 years , from the earliest Native American structures to the styles of the 19th century . The earliest structures were built by the Anishinaabe and Ojibwe (Chippewa) tribes before European exploration . At least two buildings still exist from the original French settlement in the late 18th century . Mackinac Island has the only example of northern French rustic architecture in the United States , and one of few survivors in North America .

Mackinac Island also contains examples of Federalist , Colonial , and Greek Revival styles . Much of the island is built in the later style of the Victorian era which includes Gothic Revival , Stick style , Italianate , Second Empire , Richardson Romanesque and Queen Anne styles . The most recent styles used on the island date from the late 19th century to the 1930s and include the Colonial and Tudor revival styles .

= = Points of interest = =

All of Mackinac Island was listed as a National Historic Landmark in October 1960 . In addition , because of the island 's long history and preservation efforts starting in the 1890s , eight separate locations on the island , and a ninth site on adjacent Round Island , are listed in the United States National Register of Historic Places .

The entire island , Haldimand Bay , and a small shipwreck form a historic district .

Fort Mackinac was built in 1780 and was closed as a fort in 1895 as it no longer had any strategic purpose . It has been restored to its late 19th century state through efforts beginning in the 1930s .

The Biddle House , one of the oldest structures on Mackinac Island , was built about 1780 and is interpreted in its role as a prosperous family home during the height of the fur trade in the 1820s .

The McGulpin House , a working @-@ class home possibly constructed prior to 1780 , is interpreted as a frontier working @-@ class home .

The Agency House of the American Fur Company was built in 1820 as the home for the company 's Mackinac Island agent , Robert Stuart . It is now open to the public as a fur trade museum .

The Mission House was built on Mission Point in 1825 by Presbyterian missionary William Montague Ferry as a boarding school for Native American children . It became a hotel in 1849 and a rooming house in 1939 . It is restored and now houses State Park employees .

The 108 ft. tall glassed @-@ in Mission Point historical museum has five floors of historical exhibits and spectacular views of the Mackinac Straits . Exhibits include the maritime history of Mackinac Island , Great Lakes lighthouses , shipping , and shipwrecks , Mackinac Bridge construction , and the film Somewhere in Time , which was primarily filmed on Mission Point property .

The Mission Church was built in 1829 and is the oldest surviving church building in Michigan . Restoration efforts have returned the church to its 1830s appearance .

The Indian Dormitory was constructed under direction of U.S. Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft after the signing of the 1836 Treaty of Washington , as a school and a place for Native Americans visiting the island to stay when receiving yearly allotments . The building was restored in 1966 and converted to a museum , which was closed in 2003 . On July 2 , 2010 , the building reopened as

The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum . It showcases Mackinac art from prehistory to the present , and includes a kids ' art studio .

The Matthew Geary House was built in 1846 , was added to the register in 1971 , and is now available for vacation rentals .

The current Sainte Anne Church was built starting in 1874 . It replaced earlier parish churches in use on Mackinac Island and the adjacent mainland ; the parish register lists sacraments performed starting in 1695 .

The Grand Hotel is a Victorian @-@ style structure that opened in 1887 . The 1980 film Somewhere in Time was shot on location at the hotel .

The Round Island Lighthouse is located just south of the island on the small , uninhabited Round Island . The light was built in 1894 and automated in 1924 . Extensive restoration efforts began in the 1970s and the exterior and structure have since been repaired .

Wawashkamo Golf Club was laid out in 1898 as a Scottish links @-@ type course and is now the oldest continuously played golf course in Michigan .

The Michigan Governor 's Summer Residence was built overlooking the harbor in 1902 and was purchased by the state for use as a governor 's residence in 1943 .

Anne 's Tablet is an Art Nouveau sculptural installation added to a blufftop overlook in 1916 .

There are several children 's parks on the island . The most popular ones include the playground on the schoolyard ; Marquette Park ; and the less known Great Turtle Park , which includes a baseball field , skate park , barbecue area , and a play set .

= = Culture = =

= = = Events = = =

Mackinac Island is home to many cultural events , including an annual show of American art from the Masco collection of 19th @-@ century works at the Grand Hotel . There are at least five art galleries on the island .

Since 1949 , the island 's residents have been celebrating the island 's native lilacs with an annual 10 @-@ day festival , culminating in a horse @-@ drawn parade that has been recognized as a local legacy event by the Library of Congress .

= = = Scout Service Camp = = =

Every summer , Mackinac Island accommodates up to 54 Michigan Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and their leaders over alternate weeks . These scouts serve the state park as the Mackinac Island Governor 's Honor Guard . The program began in 1929 , when the State Park Commission invited eight Eagle Scouts , including young Gerald Ford , to serve as honor guards for the Michigan governor .

In 1974 , the program was expanded to include Girl Scouts . The program is popular , selective , and a long @-@ standing tradition . Scouts raise and lower twenty @-@ six flags on the island , serve as guides , and complete volunteer service projects during their stay . These scouts live in the Scout Barracks behind Fort Mackinac .

= = = Sailing = = =

Mackinac Island is the destination for two sailing races . The island has a sailing club , the Mackinac Island Yacht Club . It serves as the finish line for both the Port Huron to Mackinac Race and the Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac . The races run a week apart , in July . They are both among the longest freshwater sailing races in the world and attract over 500 boats and 3 @, @ 500 sailors combined . Both races are historical events , having been run every year since the 1920s .

= = = Filming location = = =

The swimming pool at the Grand Hotel is named for Esther Williams , who starred in the 1947 film This Time for Keeps which featured many of its scenes on Mackinac Island .

The majority of the 1980 film Somewhere in Time was filmed at Mission Point on Mackinac Island . Several landmarks are visible in the film , including the Grand Hotel and the lighthouse on nearby Round Island . The film 's director said he needed to " find a place that looked like it hadn 't changed in eighty years . "

Mackinac Island was featured on two episodes of the mid @-@ 2000s TV series Dirty Jobs , with host Mike Rowe as a Mackinac Bridge maintenance worker , and a horse manure and garbage removal / composting collector .

= = Notable people = =