

## Brief History of Mackinaw City

### Native Americans

Remains of 3,000-year-old fishing communities have been found along Mackinaw City's northeast shoreline from Colonial Michilimackinac to the Maritime Park. These earliest Mackinaw City residents lived a maritime existence based on subsistence fishing in the summer and a retreat to southern Michigan during the winter.



### French

In 1715 the French, the first white residents of Mackinaw City, founded Fort Michilimackinac. This military trading post was the repository for furs collected from the watershed of the western Great Lakes. Here the lucrative cargo was rebundled before being shipped to Montreal and, finally, to the European market.

### English

At the end of the French and Indian War, in 1761, the victorious British took control of the fort and fur trade. In less than 20 years the Revolutionary War made the local garrison nervous and the fort was moved to a better defensive position on Mackinac Island.

### Americans

Cincinnati businessman Edgar Conkling renewed interest in the area when he platted Mackinaw City in 1857. The Civil War delayed his development plans but in 1881 the arrival of railroads finally brought economic growth. Lumbering, fishing, tourism, railroads and ferries built the economy. Now Mackinaw City is a tourism and fishing community.

### Today

Mackinaw City is a village with a year-round population of around 900 which swells in the summer to around 15,000. This area is routinely rated the #1 tourist destination in Michigan. The village is surrounded by countless recreational opportunities: hiking, bicycling, fishing, boating, camping, hunting, sailing, swimming, skiing, ice fishing, and snowmobiling. But most popular of all is stone skipping! Residents and visitors enjoy Mackinaw summer, fall, winter or spring.

## Living History - Making History

We invite you to discover the history and character of Mackinaw City on our 3-mile Historical Pathway. The scenic Straits of Mackinac and the breathtaking Mackinac Bridge provide a beautiful backdrop to our historic markers. Learn about Mackinaw City's past as "The Crossroads of the Great Lakes."



### Historical Kiosk Tour

Explore all of our historic kiosks by following the numbered trail. Our Historical Pathway starts at the cobblestone municipal building on the corner of Central Avenue and Huron Street. Go south on Huron to the State Dock, then wind back north along the shoreline of the Straits of Mackinac to Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and Fort Michilimackinac. Finish your tour by strolling down Nicolet Street and Central Avenue, where you can explore the village's business district.

### Mackinaw City Audio Tour

You can hear about additional historical and natural features in Mackinaw City by using our free cell phone tour. There are tour locations along the Historical Pathway, at the Icebreaker Mackinaw, and on the west side of town at the Historic Village, Headlands, and McGulpin Point Lighthouse. Dial  
**231-486-0003**

and listen for instructions. Photos and a map of the audio tour locations and a download of the audio content can be found at

<http://MyOnCell.mobi/12314860003>

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our fascinating history and hear "the rest of the story." We hope your stay is the best it can possibly be!

#### For more information contact:

Village of Mackinaw City 231-436-5351  
[www.mackinawcity.org](http://www.mackinawcity.org)

Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce 231-436-5574  
[www.mackinawchamber.com](http://www.mackinawchamber.com)

Mackinaw City Visitors Bureau 231-436-5664  
[www.mackinawcity.com](http://www.mackinawcity.com)

Emergency dial 911

# MACKINAW CITY HISTORICAL PATHWAY MAP & GUIDE

