

Lost In Michigan



History and Travel Stories
From an Endless Road Trip



Lost In Michigan

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Introduction

I have always loved traveling around Michigan and like most Michiganders, I would visit popular tourist destinations like Mackinac Island or Tahquamenon Falls. But I have a curious spirit and would always seem to see something along the way that would often create a sense of awe. A few years ago I decided to start finding out about these places of interest and began posting on the Web. Sometimes I would find some place by coincidence while out driving the back roads. Other times I would find an interesting bit of trivia while doing research, either way my curiosity continued to grow.

This book is a culmination of some of my favorite places and stories in the Mitten State. While I have done my best to find accurate information in books, newspapers, and the Internet, some stories are difficult to verify. In some instances the information I find contradicts different

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sources. Content I find on the Internet I tend to place in low regard unless it is from a trusted website such as an historical society.

Some of the locations highlighted could have an entire book written about them while other places the history and stories have been lost to time, and I could find little information, regardless it still is a fascinating place to me. I hope you enjoy reading the stories and are inspired to go out and explore Michigan for yourself.

The Selected locations in this volume start at the bottom of the state and then work towards the north. Each story is independent of one another and you can read them in any order you wish. I have done my best to give an address that you can use in a GPS to help you find each location. Some places have no address so, I have given a description of where they can be found. Most locations are on public property, but some may be privately owned. Whether they are public or private, they may not be open to visitors or they may be open at scheduled times, but most places can be seen from public roads. I don't trespass and I advise anyone against it. Please be respectful to the places you visit. I hope after reading this book you will take an interest in traveling the back roads of Michigan and seeing what you can find.

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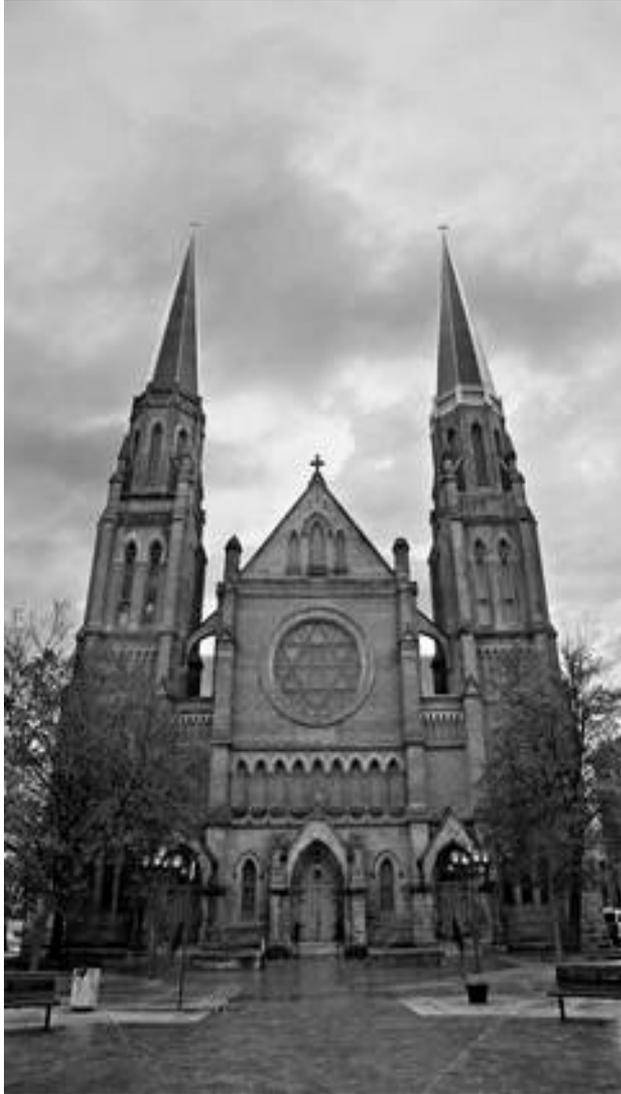
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Ste Anne De Détroit Church



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Location: 1000 Ste. Anne Street,
Detroit, MI 48216

While I am traveling around the state, driving through big cities or small towns, I notice the old churches that serve their communities, and I got to wondering, *what is the oldest church in Michigan?* A

quick and easy search on Google comes up with Ste. Anne De Detroit. Even though Detroit is not the oldest city in Michigan, (that distinction belongs to Saint Ignace) Detroit is the largest and most prominent city, so it would be no surprise that it would have the oldest church. What is surprising though is how influential the church has been in the history of the state.

Ste. Anne's is the second oldest continuously operating Roman Catholic parish in the United States, with parish records dating back to 1704. Founded on July 26, 1701, Ste. Anne's original church was the first building constructed in Fort Pontchartrain Du Détroit, which later grew into the city of Detroit. The original church was destroyed in 1714 by the people of the fort to keep the Native Americans from using it during a war they were having with them.

The current Ste. Anne's was built in 1886, but it's more than just a beautiful old church, the impact one of its most prominent priests had on Michigan can still be seen today.

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While pastor at Ste. Anne's Father Gabriel Richards, along with Chief Justice Augustus B. Woodward, started a school of higher education in 1817 *Catholepistemiad of Michigania* that became the University of Michigan in 1821. Father Richards owned the first printing press in the young city of Detroit and Published *The Michigan Essay* and *Impartial Observer*. Between 1823 and 1825 Father Richards was Michigan Territory's delegate to the United States Congress. As a delegate, he was instrumental in gaining support for the Territorial Road, which linked Detroit and Chicago.

I think the historic and noble church is not well known to Michiganders because it's not on a heavily traveled road in the heart of downtown Detroit but stands tall in a quiet west-side neighborhood overlooking the houses surrounding it, like a shepherd looking over its flock of sheep. If you are ever the neighborhood behind the old Michigan Central Railroad station, look for the twin steeples rising into the sky and take a drive over to look at the magnificent and historic old Church.

TRIP TIP: The old Detroit firehouse Engine House No. 4 is on the east side of the church on 18th Street and Michigan Central Station is a few blocks to the north.

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The King of the File Folder's Mackinac Island Cottage



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Location: 8009 West Bluff Road
Mackinac Island

Coming into Mackinac Island on the ferry there is an excellent view of the Grand Hotel that looks out over Lake Huron. To the west of the iconic hotel is a row of stately old summer homes on what is known as the West Bluff. One of those cottages was owned by the man who invented the file folder.

The first house built on this lot in 1886 was constructed by William Westover Jr., a lumber baron from Bay City, Michigan. He sold the cottage to Chicago businessman William Amberg, who was the inventor of a file folder system and with his great fortune, he and his wife, Sarah Agnes Ward, purchased the West Bluff's Westover cottage on Mackinac Island. They demolished the cottage in 1892 and built the one still standing today calling it, Inselheim which is German for "Island Home", but eventually renamed it to Edgecliff Cottage. Some referred to it as the Wedding Cake Cottage because of the decorative woodwork that resembles cake icing.

Mr. Amberg was known as "King of the File Folders" as owner of the Amberg File & Index Co. In 1868, he devised a system of flat folders and filing drawers to store the folders, acquiring 30 patents and over 600 copyrights.

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Before his invention, papers and documents would be rolled and tied up with a ribbon and placed in slot that became known as “pigeon holes.” Amberg's company prospered until 1897 when another company started making a similar folder, and after an argument was made in court where the judge ruled that William Amberg did not own the sole rights to the file folder system. Although the king was dethroned, he must have still made out pretty well on his folders to have such a beautiful place on Mackinac Island.

Trip Tip: To get to the west bluff of Mackinac Island, you have to walk around behind the Grand Hotel on Algonquin Street. The staff at the hotel will not let you pass in front of the hotel unless you are a guest.

MichiFact: Michigan governor G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams built a mansion on the west bluff, now known as the Foundation House. He is laid to rest in Protestant Cemetery on Mackinac Island.

Middle Village



Location: 23 North Lamkin Road,
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Half way between Harbor springs and Cross Village on M-119 is Middle Village. It can be a little tricky to find but if you turn onto Lamkin Road near the Good Hart General Store it will take you back to the village where you will see the beautiful little country church of St Ignatius.

Rows of simple wooden crosses marks the Odawa Indians laid to rest in the Middle Village Cemetery. The village

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started in 1741 as a settlement of Jesuit Missionaries and Native Americans, who called the area “Apatawaaing,” or Middle Village.

Next to the church is a trail that leads to Middle Village Park Beach on Lake Michigan. The park also has an overlook that is open all year long.

The village is along the " Tunnel of Trees" route that follows the shore line of lake Michigan and is a popular route for tourists, especially during the autumn season.

Trip Tip: Lamkin Road south of Middle Village becomes narrow and steep, it's recommended that you come in from Good Hart and head back out that direction.

James Scott Castle



Location: 81 Peterboro Street, Detroit, MI 48201

I know it's cliché to take “ruin porn” photos in Detroit, and I prefer to take photos of places that show the beauty of the motor city, but I am also fascinated with castles in Michigan. This old mansion built by James Scott near Wayne State University in Midtown has the look of an old medieval castle in Europe, and I could not resist taking a photo of it. James Scott was a prominent businessman, making his fortune in real estate development in Detroit. When he died in 1870, he gave his fortune to his

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son, also named James Scott. The younger Scott was not well liked in Detroit society and was a Victorian era “millionaire playboy.” In 1897, when he went to purchase the two lots on the corner of Peterboro and Park, the owner of the south lot refused to sell it to him, and out of spite, he built the house three stories tall and without windows facing to the south. The massive three story house blocked out the sun to his neighbor whom he despised.

When he died in 1910, he left the city \$200,000 to build a fountain and stipulated that there needed to be a statue of him on it. Because he was not well liked, many of the citizens did not want to build the fountain because of the stipulation and felt he was not worthy of a statue. Some pointed out that he apparently never worked a day in his life and was best known for the time he spent in downtown bars. Eventually it was decided to spend his money and expand Belle Isle and build the fountain that he desired. His request was granted and a statue was placed on the fountain, but on the backside of the fountain, instead of on top where Mr. Scott would have wanted it.

The castle-like home was eventually converted into apartments then suffered from a fire in the 70's and was left abandoned. A developer is in the process of converting it into condominiums. I am looking forward to getting an "after" photo of the restoration to go with this "before" pic from a few years ago.

Trip Tip The Masonic Temple is just a couple of blocks to the south east.

Quincy Dredge Number 2



Location: North of Houghton and Hancock on M-26

If you are traveling through the Keweenaw Peninsula on M-26 you will come across this giant metal monster, rusting away on the shoreline of Torch Lake. This is one of those places you have to visit and see for yourself. A photograph can't convey the enormous size of the dredge.

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After copper was discovered in the Keweenaw Peninsula, many mining operations began to extract the valuable metal from the ore mined in the region. Stamping mills were built to crush the ore and separate the copper. The ore that was pounded down to sand was washed out into a nearby lake or river. The Quincy Mining Company Stamp Mill built in 1888 near Torch Lake (the one in the Keweenaw Peninsula not the one near Traverse City) was one of several stamp mills in the area, and as the mills became more efficient, the sand in the lake was reclaimed and reprocessed to extract the copper that was missed in earlier processing. The Calumet and Hecla Mining Company had the dredge built in 1914 to retrieve the sand from Torch Lake for their mill in the city of Lake Linden. In 1951, the Quincy Mining Company purchased the dredge and named it Quincy Dredge Number Two since they already owned another dredge. During the winter layup in 1967, the dredge sank and with the company struggling to make a profit, they just left it where it sank and it still sits there to this day. In 1978, the state declared it an historic site.

Trip Tip: The Quincy Mining Company Stamp Mills Historic District, with the remains of Stamp Mill Number One, are across the street from where the abandoned dredge rests.

Rattle Run Church Murder



Location: The corner of Rattle Run Road and Gratiot Road in St Clair county (the town and the church are no longer there)

The long forgotten town of Rattle Run, and the church that the townsfolk once worshiped inside has been gone for a long time. Most Michiganders have forgotten about it, but one of Michigan's most gruesome murders took place in the old church. The town, named after the nearby rattling rapids of Columbus Creek, was located in Columbia Township southwest of Port Huron. In January of 1909, the church caretaker made a shocking discovery of blood in the snow. When he looked inside the the church, it was in complete disarray, and there was blood splattered everywhere. He contacted Sheriff Waggensell in Port Huron. Upon investigating the scene, human body parts were found in the wood stove used to heat the church. The minister at the church, Rev. John Haviland Carmichael was nowhere to be found. A few days after the murder, a man by the name of John Elder showed up in the town of Carthage, Illinois. For a man traveling, he did not carry any baggage, and rented a room at a boarding house

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run by Mrs. Hughes. He told her he was a cabinet maker passing through town. Mr. Elder was acting very strangely, and when Mrs. Hughes gave him dinner, he said he was fasting and would not eat anything. The next morning she made him a large breakfast figuring he would be hungry. Instead of eating, he simply gathered what little he had, paid his bill, and said he was leaving for a job twelve miles away. A few moments later, she heard a noise in the shed and was afraid to look for herself. She called a neighbor, but they were not home. Then, a mailman walked by, and when he looked in the shed he found Mr. Elder lying on the floor with blood gushing out of his neck and a knife in his hands. He was still alive, but died shortly after. The local sheriff in Carthage found two letters; one addressed to Mrs. Carmichael in Rattle Run and the other to Sheriff Waggensell in Port Huron. Both letters were almost identical, and were published in several newspapers across the country.

To Mr. Waggensell (Sheriff of St. Clair County)

Port Huron, Mich.

dated Jan. 9, 1909

Carthage, Illinois,

Honored Sir: I write this letter to explain in connection with a Columbus Creek tragedy. I am guilty only because I am a coward. The man (Amos Gideon Browning) had such a hypnotic influence over me that I felt that something must be done. I felt greatly ashamed that a

man said to be short minded should be able to compel me to yield to his will.

At first he said:" It's all right, elder, don't be afraid". Then he began to talk about how we two could get rich. Three times he came to the rear of my barn and talked to me. Twice he was at the river when I went to water my stock, and each time I felt that he was doing something he was proud of.

Once when I was going out to Columbus he was on the pike, near the pink school-house, when I overtook him, he asked to ride, which I could not refuse. He asked me if ever I had driven the pike to Port Huron, to which I answered no. Then he said: 'Come on, lets drive up to Port Huron,' which I resented, but he kept on until he persuaded me to go.

He got out and stood at the corner while I went to the barn with the rig. Then later we had been at the restaurant, for which he paid. He gave me a half dollar and said he wanted me to go there and buy a small hatchet for his boy to play with. I began to tell him to go and do his own buying, he set his eyes upon me with the queerest sort of a look, something like a look of a snake's eye.

All the while I felt his influence tighten on my mind, so I went. Intending to go into the store and out the back way to get the horse and rush off for home. When I turned to close the door he stood looking upon me through the window and I just bought the hatchet and came out again, but by that time he had disappeared, I

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went into the barn, got my rig, and started for home, when as I made the turn onto Military street he was at the corner to get in.

He rode as far as South Park, where he got out to take the car, and he took the hatchet with him and said nothing, nor did I think anything at the time about it.

When at the depot at Adair, he came out of the house and compelled me to walk the rails. All the while I felt as small as a bantam chicken. When he arranged with me about the wedding he wanted, he would go to Port Huron and get the license and meet me on the road between that place and the church.

I thought that he really meant to get married when he engaged my services, but when we met in the road and he was alone I began to feel uneasy, but he said it was all right, the others would come in a carriage. When we went into the church I wanted to light a lamp, to which he dissented, saying; "No, elder, no light unless they should come". But, presently, he said "maybe we better have a little fire". So I went out and passed wood to him through the window.

When I had put in what I thought would be enough, he said: "now, elder, the moonlight is shining right on the front-door, and if you go around there to come in some one may see you. Just pile up some wood here and come in through this window." I brought a few sticks and laid them across each other, from the top of which he helped me into the building. he let the window

nearly down again and we kept looking out through the opening to see if the others came down the state road.

He took a big hearty laugh and said: 'There ain't no use looking, for there ain't going to be no wedding.' He was sitting where a gleam of light shone on his face and his eyes were so brilliant that I was thrilled through and through. Queerest sort of feeling. I asked him why, then, he had made the present arrangement, when he said:

Well, elder, I just wanted to have a little fun. You consider yourself an educated man and look down on a poor ignorant fellow like me, and I just thought I would show you. I knowed if I could handle you I could handle other men and make a big thing out of it. Now if I say, raise your hand, up she goes. See, that is no dream, and I felt my hand raising without any effort whatever on my part.

Then he said: If I say let down your hand. down it goes.' and I felt it going down in. a singular manner. By this time I was so alarmed that I was in a cold sweat. I then leaned over to see if any one might be on the road, when he began to laugh again, and I saw that he was holding a weapon up his sleeve. Instantly I made a grab for it and got the hatchet from him and asked what he meant to do with that, and he said: "I will show you. and from his overcoat pocket he drew out a knife with each hand.

He came at me striking with both hands. I backed across the church, down the side aisle and across the front, but I did not dare to turn about to the front

door. Then I threw the hatchet and struck him and he fell. I then turned to open the door, when he grabbed me by the leg and threw me down where my hand came upon the hatchet.

There was a desperate struggle in which I used the hatchet until he lay quiet and still. I cannot recall all that happened after that. I was wild to dispose of the body. I was in a horrible terror, I began pulling off his garments that I might drag the body away somewhere and hide it. When he woke up and grabbed me again. Then for a while I used that hatchet until I was sure he was dead.

I waited until I saw the fire was hot enough to make a stove pipe red nearly to the elbow I grabbed him and dragged him down there and began cutting him to pieces, putting in each piece

This ends the sample

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