NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Grand Hotel

other names/site number

## 2. Location

street & number Grand Avenue ☐ not for publication

city, town Mackinac Island ☐ vicinity

state Michigan code MI county Mackinac code 097 zip code 49757

## 3. Classification

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| ☒ private | ☒ building(s) | 8 | buildings |
| ☐ public-local | ☐ district | | sites |
| ☐ public-State | ☐ site | | structures |
| ☐ public-Federal | ☐ structure | | objects |
| | ☐ object | 8 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

| Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) |
|---|---|
| Domestic/hotel | Hotel |

## 7. Description

| Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) | Materials (enter categories from instructions) |
|---|---|
| Queen Anne | foundation concrete<br>walls frame<br>roof shingles<br>other |

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

This large frame hotel has a magnificent setting on a 100-foot bluff overlooking the Straits of Mackinac, clearly visible from both Mackinaw City and St. Ignace. The Straits divide the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of Michigan and they connect Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Situated at the end of Grand Avenue, which runs from the Village, and boat landings, the hotel was built on a grandiose scale of "the finest white pine of Michigan's wood," called "The Wood Eternal," because no construction lumber was its equal.

The hotel was designed and built by a resort builder, Charles Caskey (1851-1933), and his brother-in-law, Alphonse Howe. Basically a plain Queen Anne style, the hotel has some Colonial-Revival details, especially on the enormous deep verandah, which is 628 feet long. Five stories tall, the building runs 900 feet along the facade and contains 286 rooms. The hotel is surrounded by 500 grassy and landscaped acres and is part of a 2,000-acre State Park on a three-mile-long island from which automobiles are banned. The hotel has a nine-hole golf course, clay tennis courts, a large swimming pool and a sandy beach.

Major additions to the hotel were made in 1897 and again in 1912. There are two outbuildings (Servants' Quarters) for housing the more than four hundred summer employees, a Superintendent's Residence, a Powerhouse, a Carpenter's Shop and a Stable for 50 horses with space for a number of wagons and carriages. The Maintenance Shop building was formerly a Servants' Quarters.

On the lobby level (street level), there are business offices, shops, a barber shop, a conference room and a museum. The floor above is the Parlor level, with some hotel rooms; a 100 foot x 100 foot theater; the Terrace room, 43 feet by 88 feet; the Audubon Bar; a small cottage restaurant; and a large parlor, 33 feet by 169 feet, looking out over the great porch and the lake below. At the eastern end of this floor is the very large dining room, now 48 feet wide and 207 feet deep. On the 100 level are mostly rooms except for a council room and the Brighton Pavilion (43 feet by 88 feet). The kitchen has a ceiling 2-1/2 stories high and includes a bakery, butchery, an ice cream plant, food storage and a number of pantries. There are also large general storerooms for household supplies, a linen room, a wine cellar, a room for uniforms, a baggage room, china storage and a print shop. There are five employees' dining rooms.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

[X] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [ ] A [ ] B [X] C [ ] D NHL # 4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) [ ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D [ ] E [ ] F [ ] G

| Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) | Period of Significance | Significant Dates |
|---|---|---|
| Architecture | 19-20th centuries | 1887 |

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder
Caskey, Charles
Howe, Alphonse

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

One of the last remaining large wooden frame hotels of the 19th century, the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island is the American dream of "a summer place." A huge structure on a bluff overlooking blue water, the white clapboarded hotel is graced by a great verandah filled with wicker furniture. The island was once an important fur-trading center and later was a key military site -- the British built a fort there guarding the Straits between Lakes Huron and Michigan in 1780. In the exuberant "gilded age" following the Civil War, the new-rich escaped city heat by travelling north to this rocky island that is free of swamps, mosquitoes and pollution. The first President to arrive, shortly after the hotel opened in 1887, was Grover Cleveland, followed by Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Often advertised as the "Newport of Western Resorts" or the "Gem Resort of the American Inland Seas," the Grand Hotel is one of the very few survivors of this great age of opulent resort hotels.

The idea of establishing a summer hotel of the "Grand" class, which meant a sizable hotel that was stylish with beautiful appointments, fine food, and excellent service, all in a lovely setting, was first proposed by Francis B. Stockbridge, a Michigan legislator. Leaving Michigan for the United States Senate, Stockbridge sold his hotel site to a railroad conglomerate.

By 1887 Mackinac Island was one of the country's most famous summer resorts. Steamboat travel to northern Michigan was supplemented by several railroads that had pushed their tracks to the Straits. Although ordinarily fierce competitors for the tourist trade, three of these transportation companies, the Michigan Central and the Grand Rapids and Indiana railroads, and the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company joined hands to form the Mackinac Island Hotel Company. The result was the construction of one of the largest summer hotels in the world. Originally called "Plank's Grand Hotel" after its first operator, John Oliver Plank, an experienced manager from New England, it soon became known simply as the Grand Hotel. ...

[ ] See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

[x] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [x] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [x] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # 1937
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [x] Other

Specify repository: Hotel owners

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 74.4

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 16 | 684320 | 5080010 |
| B | | | |
| C | | | |
| D | | | |

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[x] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Claim 5 is the original plot on which the hotel was built.

[ ] See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By


name/title Ms. Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

organization History Division NPS date 2/14/89

street & number 1100 L Street, N.W. telephone 202-343-8166

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20013

A major refurbishing occurred in 1976-77. In the 1970's new water and electric systems were installed and, to correct a tilting of the mammoth porch and front facade, 24-foot diagonal wood trusses were anchored into a footing of 6 feet of concrete under the porch. When the hollow wooden columns on the porch needed replacing, they were lowered and steel stanchions put in place; the columns were then cut in half and used as framing for the steel supports. In 1987, the fifth floor, as well as part of the square cupola in the roof, were converted into a cocktail bar.

There are two structures adjacent to the hotel. The Dormitory is a 2-1/2 story frame building 13 bays long, with a hipped roof. The Maintenance Building nearby is square, two stories with a hipped roof and garage door.

The hotel is enhanced by two groups of late 19th-century frame houses on the East and West Bluffs, which form a very handsome ensemble of architecturally distinguished structures. They are not within the bounds of the proposed Grand Hotel National Historic Landmark, but do form part of the Mackinac Island National Historic Landmark, which encompasses the entire island.

Note on Contributing Structures:

The following structures within the boundary, in addition to the Hotel itself, contribute to the property's historic significance: the three buildings used historically as Servants' Quarters, the Powerhouse, the Superintendent's Residence, the Stable, and the Carpenter's Shop.

The Grand Hotel's opening in 1887 attracted wealthy and distinguished people from major midwest centers. From Michigan came such lumber barons as the Algers, Newberrys and Blodgetts. Adolphus Busch, the brewer from St. Louis, brought his family. Chicago was well represented by the Potter Palmers, Marshall Fields, and the meat packers, the Armours and Swifts. Later there were many ordinary mortals like the folk who assembled on the longest porch in 1910 to hear some selections by the hotel orchestra.

One 1895 visitor described his impressions:

> Upon entering the hotel we went to the parlors, which were on the main floor at one side of the large rotunda office. Near them were the reading, writing and smoking rooms and some parlor bedrooms for invalids. At the other side of the office was the dining-room. It occupied at least one third of the length and the entire breadth of the building and was two stories high. It could evidently accommodate many hundreds of guests at one seating.
>
> At the upper end was a balcony for the orchestra, of which the Grand is so proud. For my own part, the music was not needed to aid in disposing of the tempting viands which were regularly set before us, but it certainly added vastly to my enjoyment of the meal hours.
>
> We found the guest rooms large, airy and elegantly furnished. The elevator and call bells placed us in easy reach of the office and the electric lights and gas were quite metropolitan. The rooms were offered us at $3 to $5 per day and we chose those of the medium price, making special terms, of course, on account of our long stay.[1]

The Mackinac Island Hotel Company hired a resort builder, Charles Caskey, who settled in Harbor Springs, Michigan. Caskey was also commissioned to do a number of the cottages in Hubbard's Annex and had the reputation of building solidly and well. The Grand Hotel is not architecturally fussy, as was the fashion, but is rather classic, with its row of Doric columns across the great porch. Constructing the hotel was a mammoth job -- dozens of carpenters worked in the spring and summer of 1887. Thirty teams and wagons were used to haul building materials from the boat landing.

> Very practically, Caskey opened his own timber mill in St. Ignace, and the wood was hauled across the ice in the winter of 1886-87. He hired a steamboat in the spring to bring over all his work crews, the finishing wood, window glass and all tools. Then -- near disaster. Hours after arrival, some key workers announced their intention to strike for higher wages.

Caskey was typically direct in response. He said in effect:

> I have to finish this job by a specified time for specified dollars. My contract with you is legal and fair, and you knew that full well, together with my terms and needs, when you signed on. If you strike, my responsibility for your comfort and safety on Mackinac Island ceases. My boat will not make a special trip back to the mainland for you. If you strike, you're stuck on the Island -- without a job, without any money.

The recalcitrant among the workers got the message. Construction of the hotel in the hands of the average builder would have taken two summers to complete. Caskey, using 300 workers and 1,500,000 feet of lumber, finished the job in just over three months.

This may have been a bit too quick. Inadequate foundations were laid for part of the building, and in time floors and window frames in a few places left their original levels. Some right angles in the building were gone forever. The building's stability has been made solid by modern reinforcements so the Hotel is now permanently firm.[2]

Although the plumbing was strictly 19th century and was not significantly changed until the 1960's, there were other Victorian amenities: anti-macassars on the furniture and cuspidors in the lobby.

The most impressive room in the hotel was the vast dining room with its attached parlor.

> All the Grand's large public rooms had windows of French plate glass with antique oak wood trim. Inside woodwork was all finished in oil and floors were of beautifully inlaid wood. The dining room announced itself in French with a wall sign, "Salle a Manger." This was a big, cheery place, 213 feet long, 80 feet wide, with a ceiling 27 feet high. Situated over the main entrance to the room, looking down over the tables, was a balcony for the musicians who played during dinner. Dinner and breakfast were eaten in two places. Left in the dining room entrance was a smaller room where the children ate, usually with maids or doting grandparents.

The Grand Rapids Daily Democrat goes on to describe the Salle a Manger in more detail:

> The ceiling, which rises to the height of two stories ... is divided into panels by trussed girders, the walls and ceilings being of a deep terra-cotta red, while the beams are of an exquisite tint of green. Down the center of the room runs a row of heavy wooden columns supporting the

> ceiling, which are finished in white and gold. ... The dining hall is magnificently lighted by day by large windows opening onto the portico and by night by gas and electric lights. The tables are small circular affairs, calculated to accommodate parties of six. They are each supported on a central iron pedestal and thus no legs crowd those that sit at them. The table linen, cutlery and glassware are first class and the service excellent, the tables being waited on by colored men.[3]

One of the great Victorian resort pastimes was showing off the latest fashion of bustles, high-necked boned blouses, long skirts and the enormous hats and parasols. There were several changes of clothing a day -- all dictated by the arbiters of fashion such as Constance Larymore who wrote in 1902: "Always wear corsets even for tete-a-tete home dinners or warmest evenings. There is something about their absence almost as demoralizing as hair in curling pins."

The Grand Hotel has had its ups and downs financially and a series of colorful managers. Following Mr. Plank in 1890 was James R. "The Comet" Hayes who ran a number of successful seasons. The famous verandah was used for promenading, concerts and, in the 1890's, a kind of Chautauqua with lectures and demonstrations. Lew Owens, a local agent from Edison Phonograph, explained and demonstrated that remarkable new machine. Hayes left the Grand Hotel in 1900 to be succeeded by other owners and managers until the long incumbency of J. Stewart Woodfill, who was a desk clerk in 1919 and served in many capacities until he bought the hotel in 1933. The present owner, Dan Musser, began as cashier in 1951, became a director in 1953 and purchased the hotel in 1979. Woodfill and Musser also publicized the hotel in every possible way and as a result two motion pictures were made here: This Time for Keeps (1949), an Esther Williams extravaganza with Jimmy Durante and Xavier Cugat and Somewhere in Time (1979) with Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour. Also extremely important to the hotel and Mackinac Village are the yacht races that attract large numbers of visitors. The oldest races were begun in 1898 by the Chicago Yacht Club (Chicago to Mackinac is 333 miles). In 1925, the Bayview Yacht Club of Detroit established the Port Huron to Mackinac race. About 3,000 people participate in these July regattas.

The hotel itself has most recently been refurnished by the noted decorator, Carleton Varney of Dorothy Draper, Inc. The rooms and public areas are brilliantly colored and new textiles and carpets have been installed. There were internal repairs as well, and architect/engineer Richard Bos began in 1976 what would be the work of a decade. Today the hotel is managed by the Musser family and is in pristine condition.

Remarkably few changes have taken place over the past 100 years. Passengers still come from the mainland by ferry, and are transported by horse and carriage

to the hotel, as there are no automobiles on the island. There are still "day-trippers" -- known as "Fugies" to the rocking chair clientele at the Grand -- who buy candy and souvenirs. The business of the island is no longer fur trading, it is History. Over half a million tourists arrive each summer. For those who stay for vacations, no hotel can match the Grand Hotel in service. It has a blend of 19th-century style and 20th-century convenience.

Footnotes:

1 Eugene T. Petersen, Mackinac Island, Its History in Pictures (Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1973), p. 56.

2 John McCabe, Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island (Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.: Unicorn Press, 1987), pp. 27-30.

3 Ibid., p. 36.

Bibliography

McCabe, John. Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan: Unicorn Press, Lake Superior State College, 1987.

Peterson, Eugene T. The Preservation of History at Mackinac. Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, No. 2. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1972.

_____. Mackinac Island, Its History in Pictures. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1973.

_____. Guidebook for Mackinac Island Visitors. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1983.

_____. Mackinac in Restoration. Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, No. 9. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1983.

Porter, Phil. View from the Veranda. Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, No. 8. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1981.

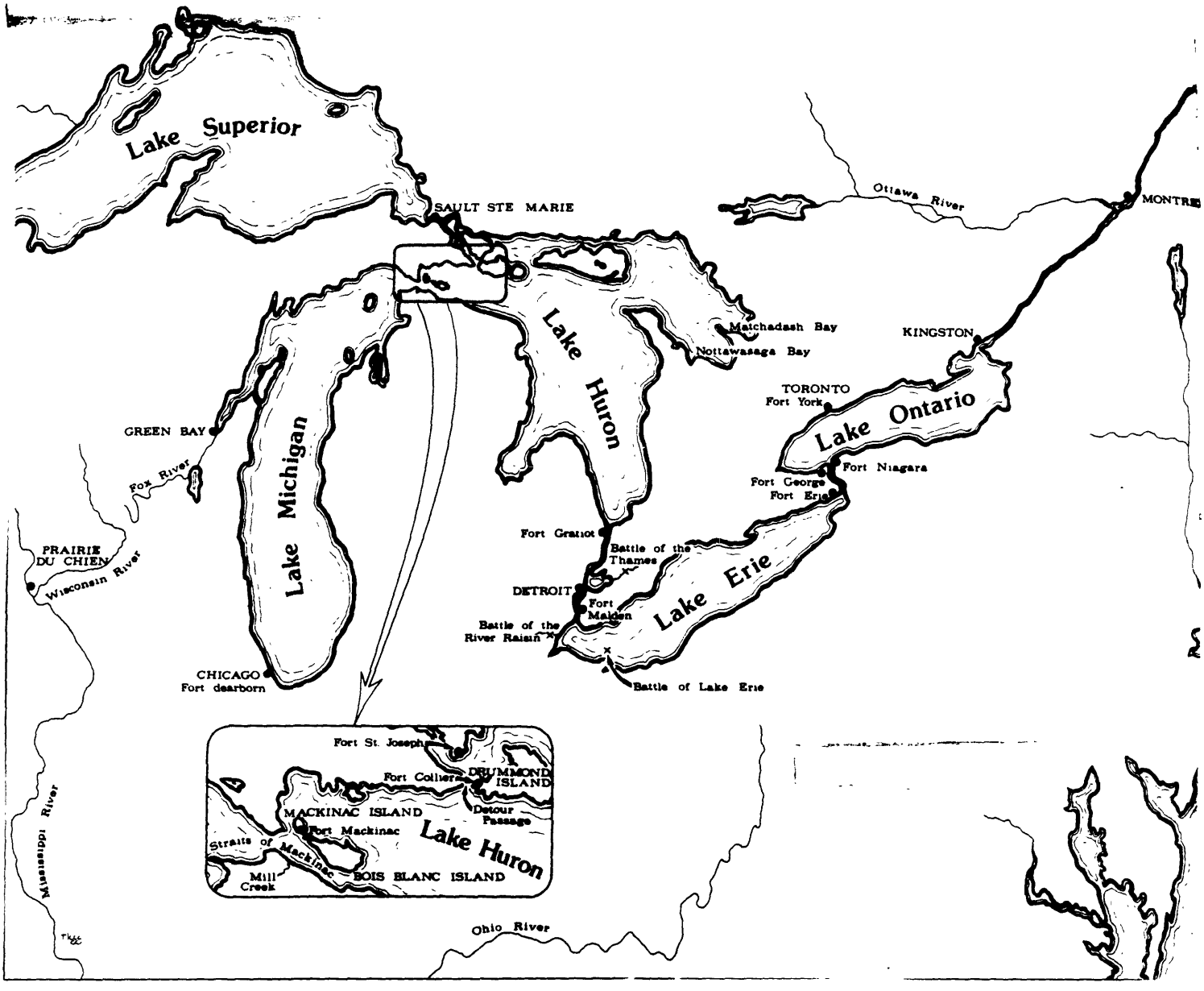
Prahl, Earl J., and Mark Branster. "Archaeological Investigations on Mackinac Island, 1983." Archaeological Completion Report Series, No. 8. Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1984.

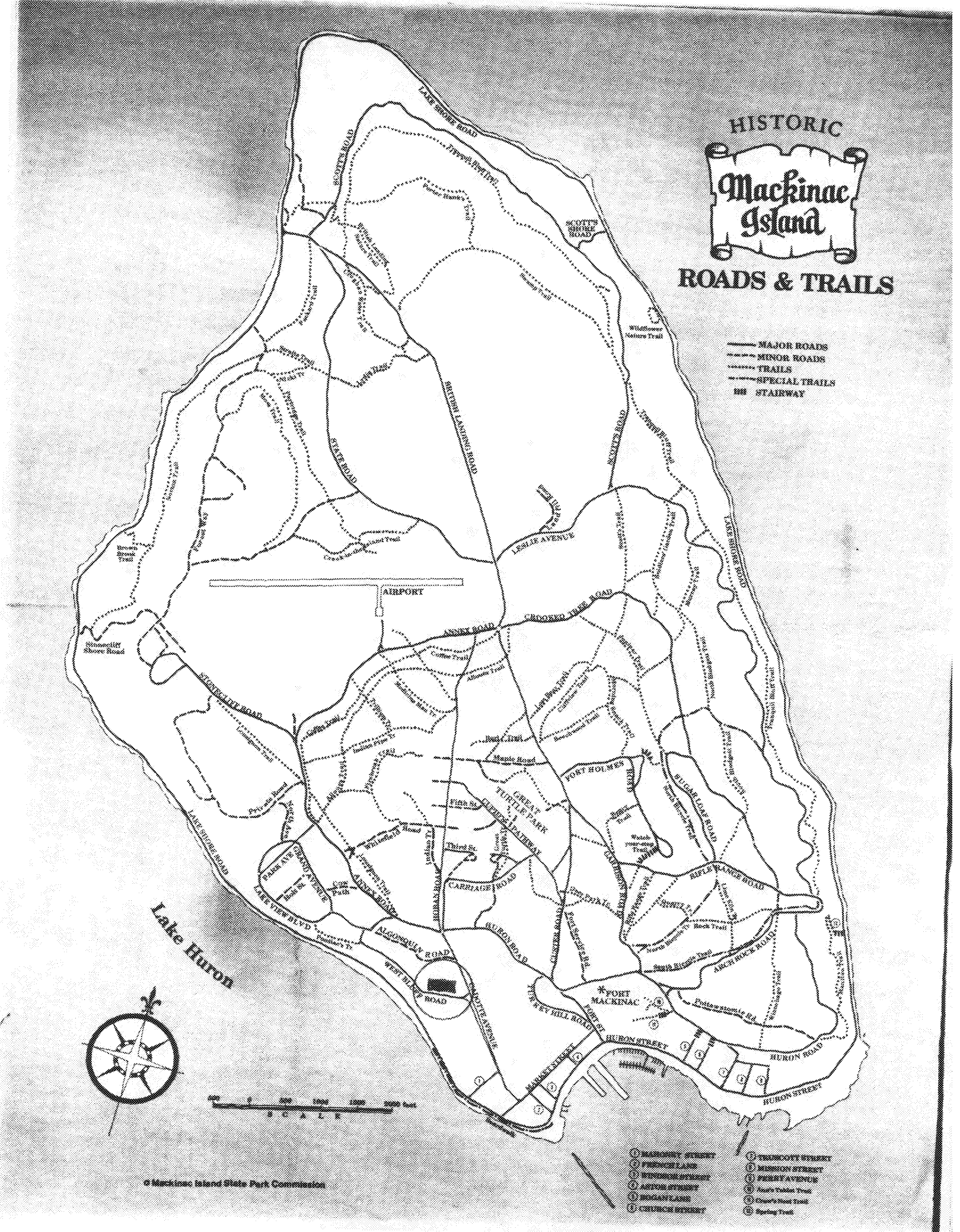
Stone, Lyle. "Archaeological Site Survey in the Mackinac Straits." Lansing, Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1975.

Widder, Keith R. Mackinac National Park 1875-1895. Reports in Mackinac History and Archaelogy, No. 4. Lansing,: Mich.: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1975.

Boundary Description

The lot, piece, and parcel of land, known as Private Claim Five (5) of the Private Claims on the Island of Mackinac, including the premises designated as Lot Number Five (5) on the connected Plat of Private Claims on said Island, and including all the land described in and conveyed to the Mackinac Island Hotel Company by a deed made by David Carter and Fannie L. Carter, his wife, dated August 9, 1887, recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of said County of Mackinac on September 1, 1887, in Liber S of Deeds on page 571, together with any and all buildings, improvements, machinery, and appurtenances ...


Lake Superior
SAULT STE MARIE
Ottawa River
MONTRE
Lake Huron
Matchadash Bay
Nottawasaga Bay
KINGSTON
TORONTO
Fort York
Lake Ontario
Fort Niagara
Fort George
Fort Erie
GREEN BAY
Fox River
Lake Michigan
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN
Wisconsin River
Fort Gratiot
Battle of the Thames
DETROIT
Fort Malden
Lake Erie
Battle of the River Raisin
Battle of Lake Erie
CHICAGO
Fort dearborn
Fort St. Joseph
Fort Collier
DRUMMOND ISLAND
MACKINAC ISLAND
Detour Passage
Fort Mackinac
Lake Huron
Straits of Mackinac
Mill Creek
BOIS BLANC ISLAND
Mississippi River
Ohio River


HISTORIC
Mackinac Island
ROADS & TRAILS
MAJOR ROADS
MINOR ROADS
TRAILS
SPECIAL TRAILS
STAIRWAY
LAKE SHORE ROAD
SCOTT'S ROAD
SCOTT'S SHORE ROAD
Wildflower Nature Trail
SCOTT'S ROAD
STATE ROAD
SRUTISH LANDING ROAD
LESLIE AVENUE
AIRPORT
CROOKED TREE ROAD
ANNEX ROAD
Stonecliff Shore Road
STONECLIFF ROAD
Coffee Trail
Alpine Trail
Maple Road
FORT HOLMES
SUGAR LOAF ROAD
GREAT TURTLE PARK
Fifth St.
Third St.
CARRIAGE ROAD
RIFLE RANGE ROAD
Rock Trail
ARCH ROCK ROAD
Pottawatomie Rd.
HURON ROAD
HURON STREET
FORT MACKINAC
FORT ST.
TURKEY HILL ROAD
ALGONQUIN ROAD
WEST BLUFF ROAD
LAKE VIEW BLVD
LAKE SHORE ROAD
Lake Huron
SCALE
MAHONEY STREET
FRENCH LANE
WINDSOR STREET
ASTOR STREET
BOGAN LANE
CHURCH STREET
TRUSCOTT STREET
MISSION STREET
PERRY AVENUE
Anne's Tablet Trail
Crow's Nest Trail
Spring Trail
© Mackinac Island State Park Commission

Mackinac Island
PRINCIPAL ROADS AND LANDMARKS
TOUR
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
SCOTT'S CAVE ROAD
BRITISH LANDING
RESTROOMS & NATURE CENTER
NATURE TRAIL
BATTLEFIELD/ GOLF COURSE
STATE ROAD
LESLIE AVENUE
POST CEMETERY
AIRPORT
CROOKED TREE ROAD
STONECLIFFE
PROTESTANT CEMETERY
SUGAR LOAF
POWER PLANT
CATHOLIC CEMETERY
FORT HOLMES
SKULL CAVE
HOBAN ROAD
GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE
SUGAR LOAF ROAD
CARRIAGE ROAD
RIFLE RANGE RD
HUBBARD'S ANNEX
ARCH ROCK
RESTROOMS
ARCH ROCK ROAD
DWIGHTWOOD SPRINGS
WEST BLUFF ROAD
DEVIL'S KITCHEN
GOLF
SCOUT BARRACKS
MACKINAC HOTEL
GRAND HOTEL
HURON ROAD
MISSION POINT
MISSION HOUSE
ISLAND SCHOOL
MISSION CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ST. ANN'S CHURCH
INDIAN DORMITORY
TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BUSINESS DISTRICT
MARQUETTE PARK
BARK CHAPEL
FORT MACKINAC
VISITOR CENTER
RESTROOMS
0
1/4 MILE
1/2 MILE
1 MILE