

## 7 AROUND THE SHORE

*Bicycle, 1 ½ to 3 hours*

It is possible for a well-conditioned, strong-legged person to run the 8.2 miles around the Island in about 45 minutes. Of course, that does not include stops to look at the sights. For your tour, plan to take 1½ to 3 hours. It is best to bicycle as the road is flat and paved. From the Visitor's Center you can head in either direction. We suggest that you head east as the mile marking system that begins at the Visitor's Center proceeds in that direction. Notice the "0" mile post. Double sided posts indicate the distance from this point as you go east around the island. For a safe trip be sure to observe the rules of the road. Keep Right; No Speeding; Do Not Park on Roadway.

### THE EAST SHORE

After passing the Island House, Ste. Anne and Mission churches and Mission Point Resort (see Tour 3), you reach the southeast corner of Mackinac Island and the State Park boundary. High above is **Robinson's Folly**, named for an officer of Fort Mackinac who built a home on the top only to see it tumble down in the relentless erosion process. Here you can best see the exposed hillside where sliding rocks removed all trees and shrubbery, leaving a bare and pitted surface which now houses birds and bats.

Across the road from the cliff is the water treatment plant. Intake pipes, located several hundred feet out in the lake, bring water to the plant to be chlorinated and pumped to a reservoir near Fort Holmes. From there the



water flows by gravity to supply the needs of the community.

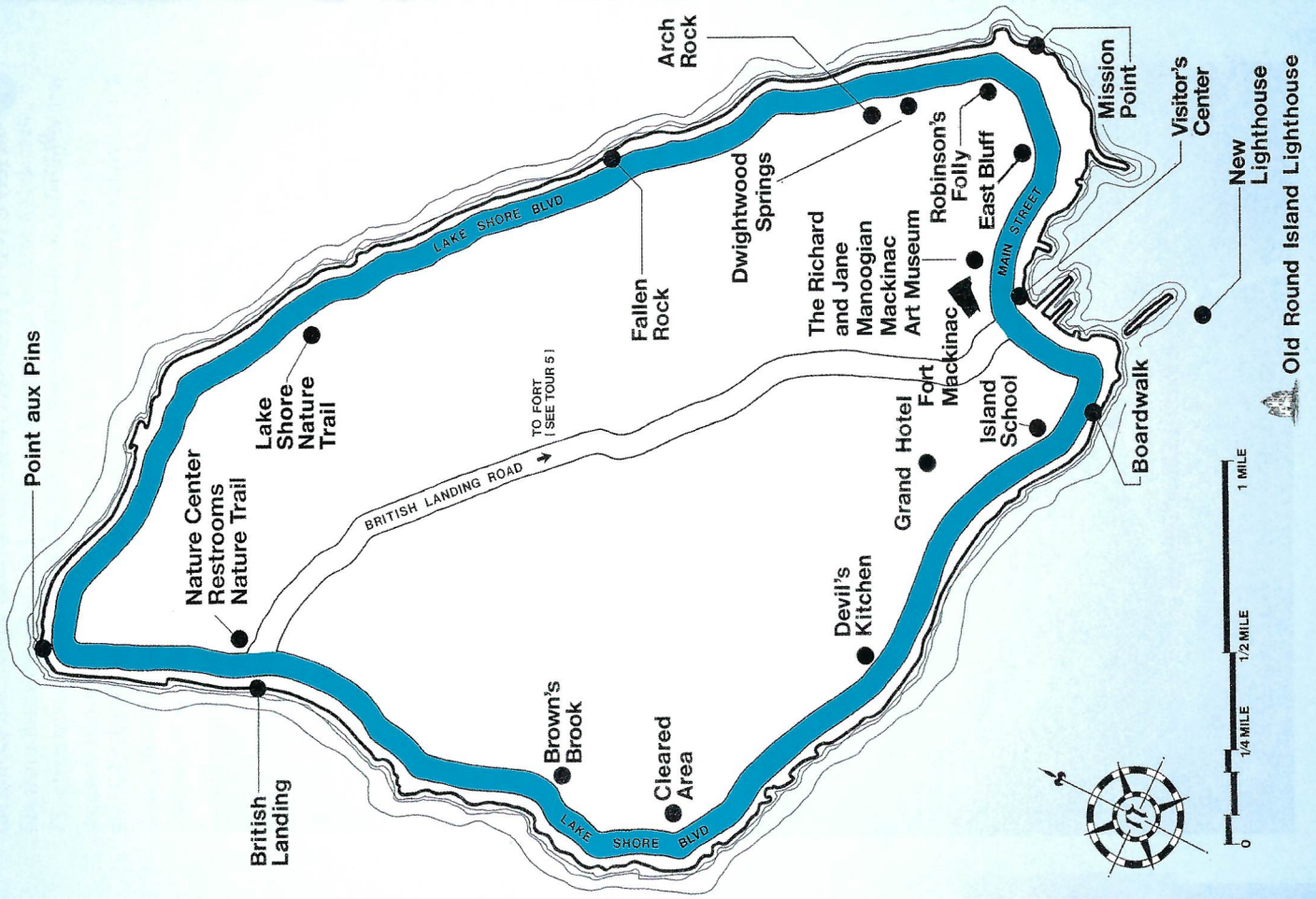
You will soon come to **Dwightwood Springs** on the left, the most famous of the natural flows of clear, cold water that dot the island. Named in honor of Dwight Wood, son of an early summer cottager, this spring originates deep in the bluff, not far from Arch Rock. Although popular as a place to quench one's thirst in the early days, the water does not meet today's health standards and is not recommended for drinking. If you want to view Arch Rock from the top (see Tour 5), you can park your bike and climb the stairway and trail.

Further along you will want to stop off the road at the base of the **Arch Rock** formation. Although less spectacular when viewed from here than from the top of the bluff, this perforated breccia mass is impressive. Near the base is the smaller Sanilac Arch, which is not visible from above. Towering as it does 146 feet above the water, Arch Rock is one of the natural wonders of the Midwest and still attracts sightseers as it has for a century and a half.

At the base of the Arch are several large boulders which have eroded from the bluff. The bluffs take a pounding by wind and water during winter storms from the east. Erosion is constantly at work. About a mile further note one very large breccia mass rock which broke loose from the bluff in September, 1977, mowed down everything in its path, bounced on the road and rolled out into the water.

You pass a few parcels of privately owned land. Eighty percent of Mackinac Island is state owned, but there are a number of private holdings scattered through the park. When you reach the Lake Shore Nature Trail, park your bike and explore. Interpretive displays introduce the wildflowers of the island. A 300-yard trail leads around the pond and through the forest edge.

At **Point aux Pins** (point of pines) congratulate yourself, as you are almost halfway around the island, about four miles from town. The road rises slightly and you can see the St. Martin Islands and the mainland beyond, which is about the northernmost point of Lake Huron.



## BRITISH LANDING

At this point you are a little more than halfway around the island. If you choose, you can take gently rising British Landing Road through the center of the island to Fort Mackinac, from which it is a short walk downtown. (See Tour 6.) If you decide to continue along the shore, **Brown's Brook nature area** is not far down the road. While you make the decision, visit the nearby state park **restrooms**.

If you have time to explore the natural history of Mackinac, walk the interpreted ½ mile **British Landing Nature Trail**. Twenty nature displays and nineteen identified trees will give you a greater appreciation of Mackinac's rich natural heritage.

British Landing itself is a good place to stop, look across the water and contemplate the history which abounds here. Although the American Revolution secured the independence of the new United States, tensions between the young country and Great Britain remained. Frustrated by British trade restrictions and eager to avenge what they perceived to be attacks on American national honor, Congress and President James Madison declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. Unfortunately, the declaration of war did not reach the isolated American outpost of Fort Mackinac. The British, meanwhile, quickly mobilized their forces in Canada to capture Mackinac Island. On July 16, Captain Charles Roberts loaded his British troops, Canadian militiamen, and their Indian allies into boats on nearby St. Joseph Island. After paddling through the night, they landed at this spot in the early morning hours of July 17 and moved up the road towards Fort Mackinac. By dawn, Roberts occupied the strategic high ground above Fort Mackinac and sent word to Lieutenant Porter Hanks to choose between death and surrender. Badly outnumbered and surprised, Hanks chose surrender. It was the first major loss in the war for the United States. Despite a valiant attempt to recapture the island two years later, the Americans were unable to regain control. *Historical Marker*

Across the water is St. Ignace, the closest point on the mainland. Site of the first permanent settlement at the Straits in 1671, it is now the gateway to the Upper Peninsula. When the ferries stop running in early January, the only transportation to and from Mackinac Island is by small charter plane from the Mackinac County Airport in St. Ignace. Usually late in January the Straits freeze over, and island residents use Christmas trees to mark a safe snowmobile route over the ice. Electrical power for the island is supplied by underwater cables from the Cloverland Electric power station on the mainland.

## THE WEST SHORE

The small stream called **Brown's Brook** is Mackinac's only year-round stream and is fed by one of the island's many underground springs. A large cleared area on the bluff below Stonecliffe is the site of Mackinac's unsuccessful ski program of the early 1970s.

The five-mile **Mackinac Bridge** with its 550-foot towers and immense concrete anchorages joins Michigan's two peninsulas. Below one of these towers, lying on her side, is the *Minneapolis*, a combination steam and sail vessel that went down during an ice storm in 1894. This was not the only casualty of fierce storms in the Straits. Toward Mackinaw City, a series of white and blue cone-shaped buoys mark the 1965 grave of the limestone carrier *Cedarville*, which sank with ten of her crew in heavy fog after being sailed open by a Norwegian cargo ship. The Straits of Mackinac has been designated an underwater preserve to protect 25 known wrecks.

Continuing along the shore we are now heading southeast. The beach is rocky, like most straits' shorelines. Although the water is clear and inviting, you will not see many swimmers as the temperatures range from solid ice in February to 70 degrees in August. Since 1860 when modern record keeping started, the highest levels for Lake Huron were recorded in 1987.

Along the shore you will notice rows of large boulders put there to protect the road from wave action caused by violent fall storms out of the west. Along the road is **Devil's Kitchen**, another gouged-out breccia formation that eroded at some prehistoric time when lake levels were higher.

As you approach the city business section, uninhabited **Round Island** comes into view separated from Mackinac Island by a narrow but very busy channel. Ferry boats from Mackinaw City and St. Ignace, high-bowed foreign freighters, long and squat limestone and iron ore carriers and a multitude of pleasure craft from sailfish to cabin cruisers all share the narrow, 35-foot deep passage.



*Devil's Kitchen, Lake Shore Boulevard, ca. 1905*