

2 FOOTSTEPS OF THE FUR TRADE: A WALK ALONG MARKET STREET

Walking or bicycle, 1 to 2 hours

Perched high above the small village, Fort Mackinac had an important role in protecting the fur trade. From 1780 to about 1835 Mackinac Island was the principal summer depot and supply center for the upper Great Lakes fur trade. Pelts gathered at Mackinac were shipped to eastern United States and European markets. During the golden age of the American Fur Company, great wealth was produced on Market Street.

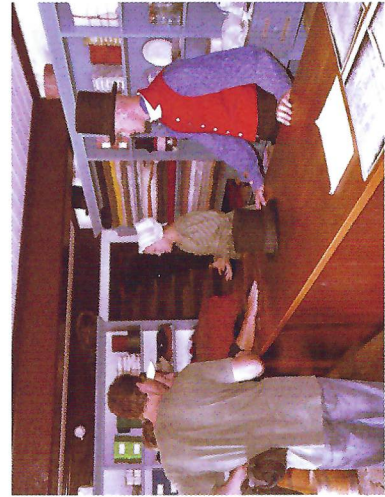
Admission to Historic Downtown Mackinac, which includes Biddle House, Benjamin Blacksmith Shop, American Fur Company Store and Dr. Beaumont Museum, McGulpin House, and Mission Church, is included with admission to Fort Mackinac or The Richard and Jane Manooogian Mackinac Art Museum between mid-June to late August. Tickets can be purchased at the Mackinac Island State Park Visitor's Center, the Marquette Park kiosk, Fort Mackinac, or The Richard and Jane Manooogian Mackinac Art Museum.

MCGULPIN HOUSE

From the Visitor's Center it is a short walk up Fort Street to the McGulpin House on the east end of Market Street, one of the island's oldest structures. It dates from 1780, or possibly before, and was restored with the support of Mackinac Associates. The building was moved to this location during restoration in 1982. Once the home of William McGulpin, a baker for the American Fur Company, this structure is an excellent and rare example of early French Canadian domestic architecture.

AMERICAN FUR COMPANY STORE AND DR. BEAUMONT MUSEUM

This building was the American Fur Company Store, selling a variety of general merchandise. It was here, on June 6, 1822, that French Canadian voyageur Alexis St. Martin was accidentally shot in the stomach from a distance of three feet. Fort Mackinac surgeon Dr. William Beaumont managed to keep



St. Martin alive, but the hole in his stomach never properly healed. Through this hole, Dr. Beaumont conducted experiments, observed the workings of the human stomach and discovered much about the digestive process. Exhibits explain the fateful accident and Dr. Beaumont's experiments and a period setting recreates the store scene where St. Martin was shot. Admission by Fort Mackinac or The Richard and Jane Manooogian Mackinac Art Museum ticket. *Historical Marker*

ROBERT STUART HOUSE

Further down Market Street, past the U.S. Post Office, is the Robert Stuart House (1817). When the War of 1812 ended, John Jacob Astor established the northern departmental headquarters of the American Fur Company on Mackinac Island. Robert Stuart served as the company's resident manager and used this house as his home and office. In Stuart's capable hands the business prospered, shipping over \$3 million in furs in 1822. Astor became America's first millionaire and the richest man in the country. He left a fortune estimated at \$20 million when he died in 1848. Stuart's share in the lucrative fur business was much more modest, but this large and impressive house enabled him and his wife, Elizabeth, to be the social leaders of the island. Today the restored building is owned and operated as a museum by the City of Mackinac Island.

* Benjamin Blacksmith Shop

Stuart House

Astor Warehouse

County Courthouse

Post Office

* American Fur Company Store and Dr. Beaumont Museum

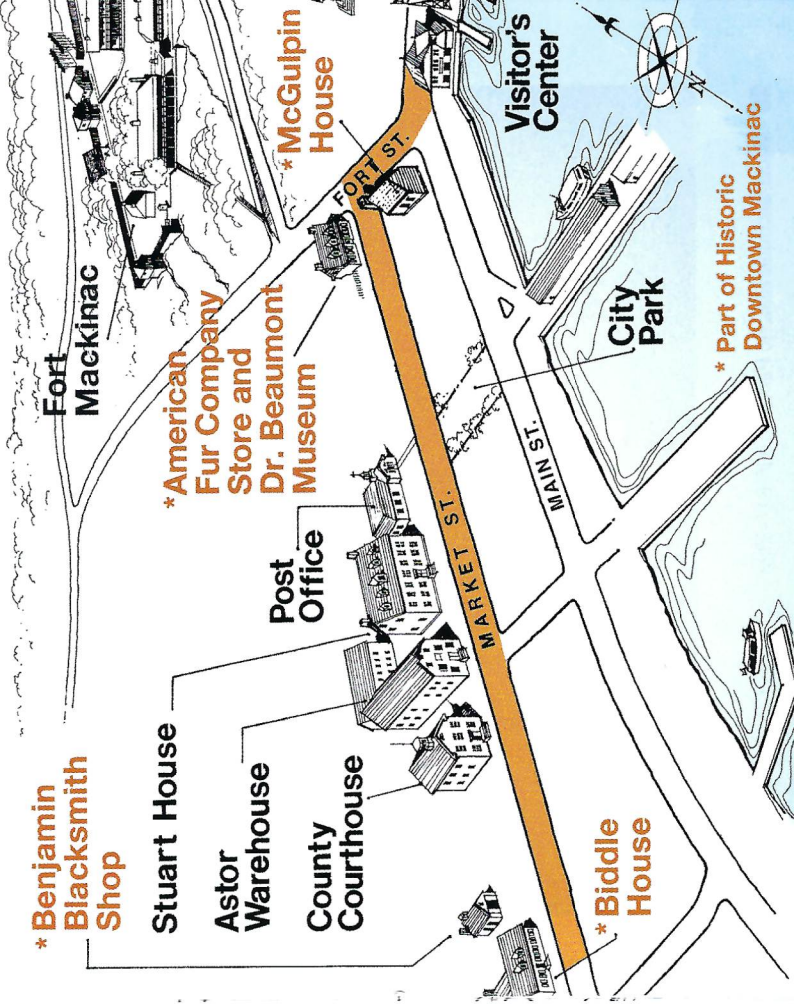
* McGulpin House

Visitor's Center

City Park



* Part of Historic Downtown Mackinac



AMERICAN FUR COMPANY WAREHOUSE

The American Fur Company Warehouse (1810) is where a small army of clerks processed fur pelts such as mink, muskrat, otter and especially beaver. The furs arrived from the winter trading grounds in late spring and were brought here to be graded as to size, fineness of fur and shade of color. The furs were then cleaned and pressed into bales for shipment east. Today this building houses the community hall on the first floor and City of Mackinac Island offices on the second. *Historical Marker*

MICHILMACKINAC COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The old Michilimackinac County Courthouse (1839) now serves as the Mackinac Island Police Department and jail and houses the historic City Council chambers on the second floor. Although most legal battles were petty squabbles and minor criminal acts now lost in antiquity, one trial here established legal history. In the case of the People v. Pond, the defendant was convicted of murder for killing a man who was in the act of destroying one of Pond's outbuildings. In the appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court, Augustus Pond was freed because, in the words of the court, "A man's house is his castle," and he is entitled to use forceful means to protect it. *Historical Marker*

BIDDLE HOUSE

Edward Biddle was from a prominent East Coast family and took up residence on the island after the War of 1812. He married Agatha de la Vigne, a local Odawa-French Canadian woman, and together they raised their family in the log home. Biddle was an independent fur trader, businessman and held offices in the community. The Biddle House



(ca. 1780) is restored to the 1830s era and historic interpreters demonstrate the domestic life of Mackinac's fur trade era. Admission by Fort Mackinac or The Richard and Jane Manooagian Mackinac Art Museum ticket. *Historical Marker*

BENJAMIN BLACKSMITH SHOP

Originally built in the 1880s, Robert Benjamin and later his son, Herbert, ran a blacksmith shop into the 1960s. The contents of the shop were moved to the reconstructed building in 1970. The Benjamins fixed carriage wheels and shod horses in the



early days and repaired lawnmowers and maintained yacht motors in later years. Following in the Benjamins' footsteps, a blacksmith demonstrates and explains traditional blacksmithing techniques like forming hot iron into fireplace tools, hinges and household items. Entrance through the Biddle House. Admission by Fort Mackinac or The Richard and Jane Manooagian Mackinac Art Museum ticket.

MACKINAC ISLAND MEDICAL CENTER

We hope you will not need to visit the Medical Center but if you do, you will find a well-equipped clinic located two doors west of the Biddle House and behind the Cloghaun Bed and Breakfast. (906-847-3582; Medical emergencies after hours 906-847-3962.)