

The Story of the Straits

Before people started to live in the Straits of Mackinac it was filled with trees, animals and fish. The water, wind and glaciers had formed the land into islands and peninsulas.



Many groups of people came to live at the straits area. First the American Indians came to Mackinac. They got their food from hunting, fishing, farming and gathering and made their houses from tree bark. They traveled on the lakes and rivers in birch bark canoes.

Next came the French. In 1634, many hundreds of years ago, a man named Jean Nicolet passed through the straits. He was looking for the Northwest Passage, a way to get to

FYI...

The Straits of Mackinac are a very important water passage. Straits are narrow waterways where two bodies of water connect.

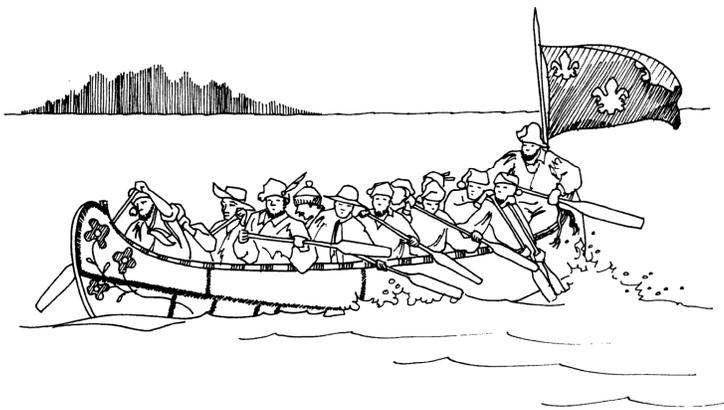
Before there were cars and airplanes, people traveled long distances in boats. Lakes and rivers were like highways are today. The Straits of Mackinac connect Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. It is a place where people can go from one lake to another.

The two peninsulas of Michigan are closest together at the Straits of Mackinac. This is important because it is the easiest point where people can cross to go from one Michigan peninsula to another. Today there is a bridge, but people used to cross the Straits in boats.

China by boat. He didn't find China but he saw many animals with fur. He told other European people and they came to get the furs.

This was the beginning of the fur trade. American Indian tribes caught and cleaned the furs in the winter. The French traders gave them items like cloth, blankets, knives, beads, kettles and other items for the furs.

The traders brought the furs to the Straits of Mackinac. Here they were loaded into very large canoes and sent to the cities in the east. From there the furs were shipped to Europe where they were made into hats and clothes.



The French built Michilimackinac in 1715 to have a place to exchange the furs and get supplies. After the American Indians and the French had been working together for a long time, the British soldiers and fur traders came. They were in charge of Michilimackinac after they won a war with France.

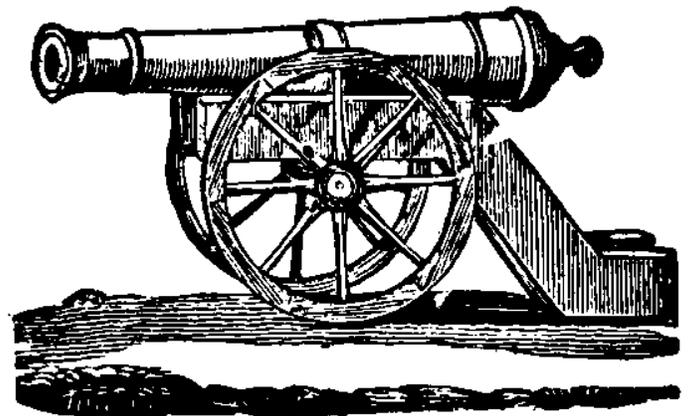
The American Indians weren't very happy about trading with the British instead of the French. The British did not keep up the tradition of gift giving like the French had, that were part of the American

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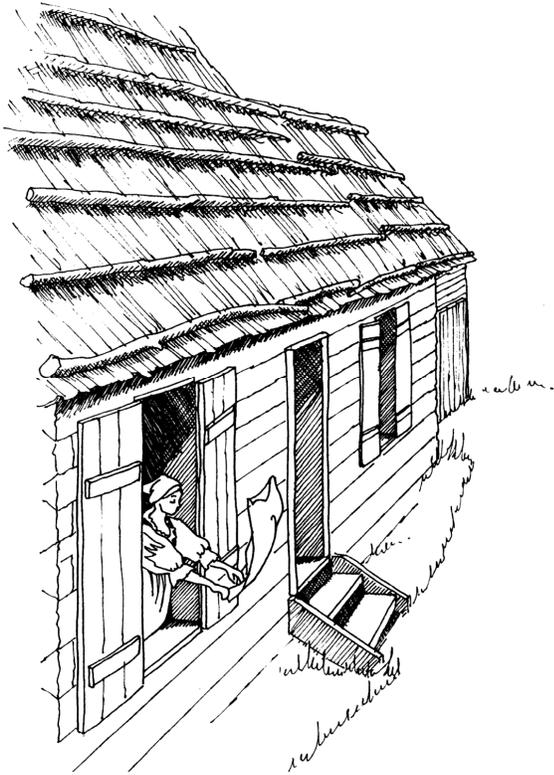
Three different American Indian nations have been living in what is now Michigan for hundreds of years. They are the Ojibwa (Chippewa), the Odawa (Ottawa) and the Potawatomi people. They are also called the Anishnabeg or the People of the Three Fires. The Ojibwa and Odawa live in the Straits of Mackinac

Indians' customs. They thought the British were not as generous as the French. The American Indians decided to have a war with the British.

Led by Chief Minavavana and Matchekewis, the Ojibwa, Sac and Fox nations of American Indians captured Fort Michilimackinac in 1763. They turned the fort back over to the French. About one year later, the British returned to Michilimackinac and they worked harder to get along with the American Indians tribes.



There were many people living at Michilimackinac. The British military had officers and soldiers living at the fort. Some of them had families. The wives of the soldiers had jobs, like washing clothes for other families and the men. Michilimackinac didn't have a school but some children were taught by the priest that was also living there.



Many fur traders lived at Michilimackinac, especially in the summer. Some traders had families also. There were so many people living at Michilimackinac, they couldn't all live in the protection of the fort walls. They built houses outside the walls of the fort. This area was called the suburbs.

FYI...

Many of the French traders married Ojibwa and Odawa women. Their children, who were half French and half American Indian, were called Metis. The Metis people did some things like the French and other things like the American Indians. They continued the traditions of both groups.

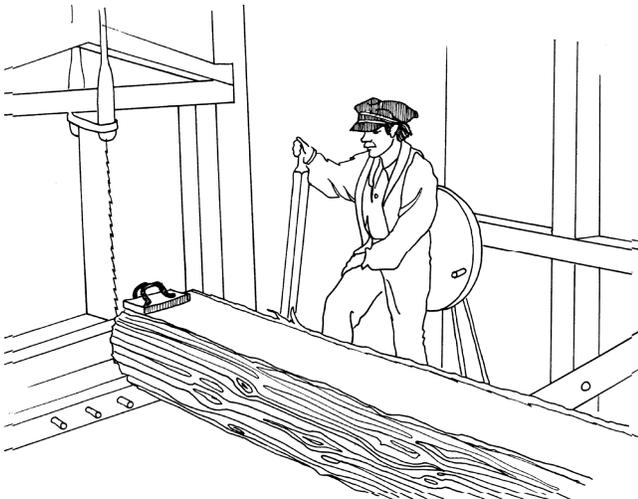
The Revolutionary War changed everything at Michilimackinac. It was difficult to trade during the war. Also, the British were afraid of being attacked by American or Indian forces.

They decided to move the fort to the high cliffs of nearby Mackinac Island. This would be a safer place for the fort. Cannons from American ships couldn't shoot high enough to hit the fort, like they could at Michilimackinac. From that height, the soldiers could see east, south and west for long distances and tell if enemy ships were coming into the area.

When the military moved to the island, so did all the people living at Michilimackinac. But only officers, soldiers and their families could live at the fort. The traders and their families made a village on the island, below the fort.

Some buildings at Michilimackinac were moved to the new fort and village on the island. All of the buildings that were left at Michilimackinac were burned down so no one else, especially the Americans, could use them. Some new buildings on the island were made of stone, where there is a lot of limestone. Most of the new houses and buildings were made from wood.

A lot of boards from trees were needed for all those buildings. Boards were usually cut in a saw pit with a double handled saw by two people. Robert Campbell had the good idea to build a saw mill at the creek near Michilimackinac.

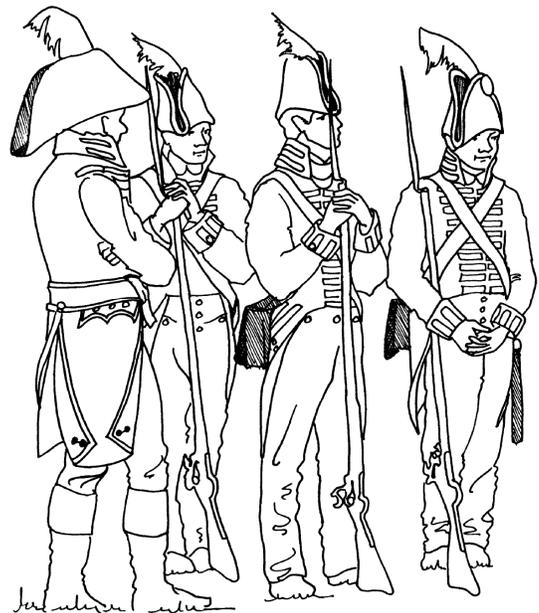


Campbell's saw mill cut boards faster than a pit saw. Instead of people operating the saw, the water in the creek made the power to cut the wood. They called the place where the saw mill was built Mill Creek.

FYI...

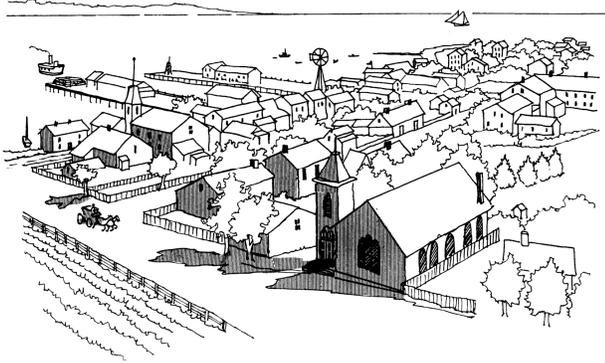
Many of the buildings on Mackinac Island were made from wood from Pine and Cedar trees. These trees grew well in the cool, damp areas close to Lake Huron, so they were easy to find.

By 1781, Fort Mackinac was finished. Soon after, in 1796, the British had to give it to the Americans because the United States had won the Revolutionary War. The fur trade started again, and now the Americans were in charge of the fort.



Fighting between the Americans and the British wasn't over though. During the War of 1812, the British took the fort back. When that war ended, the British gave Fort Mackinac back to the Americans for good.

After the fighting was over, the fur trade was very busy. Now Mackinac Island was the place where furs and trade goods were exchanged.

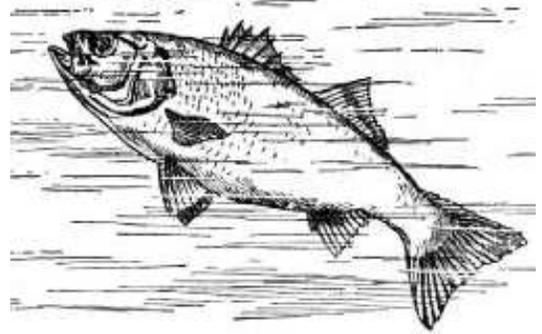


Magdaline LaFramboise was one of the traders on the island. She took over her husband's fur trading business after he died. She also taught some children who lived there. More people moved to the island and more buildings were built.

The saw mill at Mill Creek was very busy with all of these people moving to the island and buildings being built, and another mill was added. This mill ground up corn into cornmeal and wheat into flour. The cornmeal and flour were called grist. This mill was called a grist mill.

Fur traders had been in the Straits of Mackinac area a long time, collecting animal furs for almost 200 years. So many animals had been hunted that few were left for the trade. It was harder for people to

make money and Mackinac was not as busy as it once had been. The mills at Mill Creek were not used as much and they were closed.



Soon fishing replaced the fur trade as the main business on Mackinac Island. Fishermen working near the Straits of Mackinac brought their fish to the island. The fish were packed into barrels and sent to Chicago and Detroit.

When the Civil War started, Fort Mackinac's soldiers went to fight for the Union Army. There were no battles at Fort Mackinac, but it was still a part of the war. Three important Confederate officials were guarded and kept as prisoners at the fort.



After the Civil War ended, people started coming to Mackinac Island again. This time they were coming to visit, not to work and live. Tourists from the cities liked Mackinac Island because it was clean and beautiful.

The United States Government saw that people liked the natural beauty of the island. They decided to make the fort and parts of the island into a park in 1875. This was the United States' second National Park, after Yellowstone in Wyoming. The commandant, or commander, of the fort was in charge of the park. More soldiers were sent to Fort Mackinac to help take care of the new park.

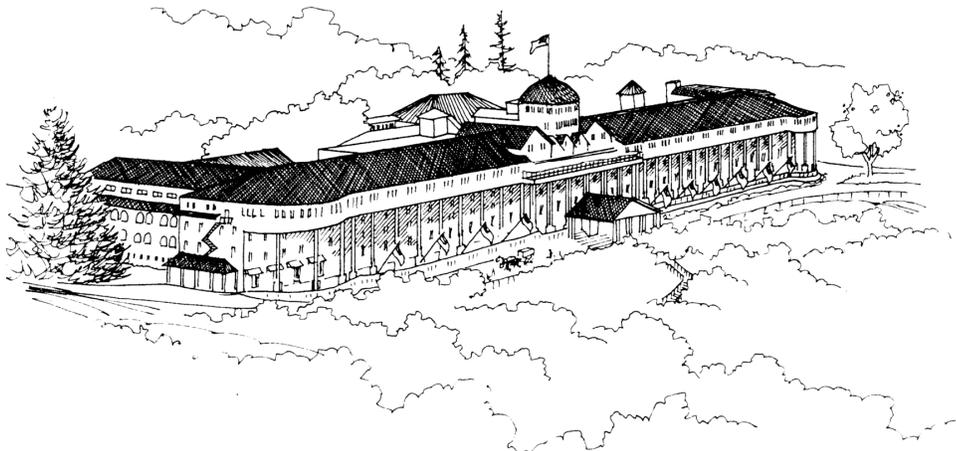
Twenty years later, in 1895, the government needed the Fort Mackinac soldiers sent to other places. They gave the National Park to the State of Michigan. It became Mackinac Island State Park, Michigan's first state park. The state continued to protect the natural beauty of the island.



FYI...

The Grand Hotel was built for all of the new tourists visiting Mackinac Island. It took 300 people only four months to build!

The people that ran the Mackinac Island State Park realized that the history of the island needed to be protected like the nature. They started to save and preserve older buildings and sites.



In 1892 the Old Mackinaw Point Lighthouse was built to help guide ships through the straits safely. Until the Mackinac Bridge was completed in 1957 this lighthouse led ships to a safe route at this narrow and difficult passage.



Today, history is preserved at Fort Mackinac, Colonial Michilimackinac, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, Mackinac Island State Park and Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. Many people visit the area in the summer, just like the fur traders, voyagers and fisherman did before. Fort Mackinac's buildings are all original to the times that the soldiers were living there. There are six original buildings from the time of the fur trade in the village area at Mackinac Island State Park. Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse is also original and tells about maritime history. At Colonial Michilimackinac and Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park there were no buildings left to save, but they have been rebuilt like they were in the past.

FYI...

It took three years to build the Mackinac Bridge, connecting the upper and lower peninsulas in Michigan in 1957. Before the "Big Mac" travelers had to take a ferry across the straits. During busy times, especially hunting season, cars would be lined up all the way to Cheboygan to get a boat. Kids from Cheboygan would sell sandwiches to the people waiting in their cars!

Exhibits show things found here and tell about the people who lived in these places. People dressed in historic clothes show what life was like in the past. When you visit you can hear people playing music, you can see from the heights of the lighthouse tower or the tree canopy bridge, you can smell the smoke from the guns and cannon, you can feel the vibration of the mill at work and you can taste the food cooking over the fire. The people doing all these things will also tell visitors about the history and nature of the Straits of Mackinac.

Trails at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Mackinac Island State Park give visitors a chance to enjoy nature. You can also learn by taking an adventure tour at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park. These areas teach about the environment and protect the natural history at the Straits of Mackinac.



Historic Timeline

United States History

Year

Michigan History

	11,000 years ago	Last glaciers leave the Straits of Mackinac region
	10,000 years ago	American Indian tribes first arrive to the area.
Jamestown is founded (Virginia)	1607	
House of Burgesses established	1619	
Pilgrims arrive (Massachusetts)	1620	
Puritans arrive (Boston, Mass.)	1630	
Maryland founded	1632	
Connecticut settled	1634	
Rhode Island founded	1636	
New Netherland becomes New York and New Jersey	1664	
	1670	Jean Nicolet visits the Straits of Mackinac Fur trading in the Great Lakes begins
	1671	Fathers Marquette and Dablon build a mission on Mackinac Island
Pennsylvania founded	1682	Mission at St. Ignace established
	1690	
	1698	Cadillac builds Fort DuBaude at St. Ignace
	1701	French leave the Straits of Mackinac
Benjamin Franklin's birth	1706	Detroit founded by Cadillac
	1715	
Benj. Franklin arrives in Philadelphia	1723	French return and build Fort Michilimackinac
Georgia founded	1732	
King George's War	1740s	
French and Indian War begins (Seven Years War)	1756	
	1761	Church of Ste. Anne de Michilimackinac built
French and Indian War ends	1763	
Proclamation of 1763	1764	British take control of Fort Michilimackinac Alexander Henry arrives (English trader) Ojibwa, Sac and Fox capture Fort Michilimackinac (Pontiac's Rebellion)
Stamp Act	1765	
Townshend Acts	1767	
British troops sent to Boston	1768	British return to Fort Michilimackinac
Boston Massacre	1770	John Askin arrives (English trader)
Boston Tea Party	1773	



United States History

Year

Michigan History

Intolerable Acts	1774	Captain Arent DePeyster assumes command of Fort Michilimackinac, 8th Regiment arrives and 10th Regiment leaves the fort and ends up in Boston
Lexington and Concord battles	1775	
Declaration of Independence	1776	
Valley Forge camp	1778	
	1779	Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair assumes command of Fort Michilimackinac
	1779-81	Michilimackinac is abandoned and moved to Mackinac Island
	1780s	Robert Campbell builds mill at Mill Creek
Battle of Yorktown	1781	
American Revolutionary War ends	1783	
	1796	Fort Mackinac turned over to the United States
Library of Congress founded	1800	
Louisiana Purchase made	1803	
Lewis and Clark expedition set to explore Louisiana Purchase	1804	
	1805-08	Grist mill built at Mill Creek
War of 1812 begins	1812	British capture Fort Mackinac (first conflict of the War of 1812)
	1814	American soldiers are defeated trying to recapture fort
Treaty of Ghent end War of 1812	1815	British return the fort to the United States
	1819	Mill and land at Mill Creek sold to island based Michael Dousman
	1822	Dr. Beaumont begins experiments on Alexis St. Martin
Monroe Doctrine	1823	First Protestant mission established on Mackinac Island
Andrew Jackson becomes president	1829	
Indian Removal Act is passed	1830	
Texas wins independence from Mexico	1836	Treaty of Washington signed—tribal land sold to United States (Michigan)
Charles Dickens publishes <i>Oliver Twist</i>	1837	Michigan becomes a state
Daguerre invents 1st type of photography	1839	Mills at Mill Creek close
	1830s	Fishing becomes main industry in Straits of Mackinac—fur trade declines
Oregon Trail leads settlers west	1840s	
California Gold Rush	1849	
South fires on Fort Sumter	1861	Fort Mackinac soldiers leave to fight in Civil War
Beginning of American Civil War		



United States History

Year

Michigan History

American Civil War ends	1862	3 Confederate officials guarded at fort
	1865	
	1860s	Tourism becomes an major industry on Mackinac Island
Yellowstone made 1st National Park	1872	
	1875	Mackinac National Park created
	1883	Harold Corbusier arrives at Fort Mackinac
	1887	Grand Hotel is built
First U.S. film created	1889	Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse fund appropriated
Indian Territory opened to settlement	1892	Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse built
	1895	Mackinac Island State Park created, Michigan's 1st state park
	1898	Automobile ban on Mackinac Island
Picasso begins new painting style Cubism	1907	Fog Signal built at lighthouse
	1909	Michilimackinac State Park created, Michigan's 2nd state park
WWI ends	1918	
Great Depression	1930s	
	1940s	Sugar rationed at island fudge shops
WWII ends	1945	
Korean War ends	1953	
Soviets launch Sputnik	1957	Mackinac Bridge finished, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse deactivated
	1958	Mackinac State Parks starts to save historic buildings, starts museum programs
John F. Kennedy elected president	1960	Colonial Michilimackinac reconstruction begins
Richard Nixon resigns from office	1974	
	1984	Historic Mill Creek opens
Ozone hole found over Antartica	1987	Michigan's Sesquicentennial Celebration
Berlin Wall falls	1989	
Internet expands with World Wide Web	1993	
	1995	100 year anniversary of 1st State Park
	2000	Lighthouse Information Center opens
Second Iraq War	2003	
	2004	Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse opens
Barack Obama elected president	2008	Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park New name and Adventure Tour
A recession hits the U.S. and World	2009	Centennial of Michilimackinac State Park and Golden Anniversary of Archaeology program
	2010	The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum opens



Lesson 1

Using Story of the Straits and Historic Time Line

☞ Read the “Story of the Straits.”

☞ Discuss the following questions with students during or after reading.

1. Who were the first people to live at the Straits of Mackinac?
American Indians lived here for centuries before Europeans came.
2. Why did Europeans, like Jean Nicolet, come to this area?
They wanted to find ways to travel to China. They did find furs.
3. What were the three major American Indian tribes of the area?
Ojibwa, Ojibwa and Potawatomi; also Three Fires or Anishnabeg.
4. Why did the French build Michilimackinac? How would that help them?
To have a place to exchange furs. Answers vary for the second question: could receive supplies and money from trading, they could build bonds with American Indians, etc.
5. Why did the American Indians attack Fort Michilimackinac?
The British weren't as generous with gift giving as the French were.
6. Who lived at Michilimackinac?
Soldiers, families, fur traders, priest, etc.
7. Why did the fort move to the island?
It was more defensible because of the higher land. Enemies couldn't fire at fort, etc.
8. Where were the boards made to build buildings on Mackinac Island? Who owned it?
The mill at Mill Creek; Robert Campbell.
9. What other wars affected Fort Mackinac?
War of 1812 - had a battle. Civil War - guarded prisoners of war.
10. What businesses developed after the fur trade?
Fishing; tourism.
11. What took over to guide ships when the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse was deactivated?
The Mackinac Bridge.
12. Why is Michigan's location so important to the different businesses that came to the Straits area?
The waterways are the main part of why businesses like the fur trade, fishing and tourism came to the Straits area. The lakes, rivers and creeks provided a transportation route for traders, a power source for a sawmill, a shipping lane for any other transportable materials and a vacationing area with scenery and water related activities.

GLCEs that may be reached in Lesson 1:

3-H3.02.3 Describe the casual relationships between three events in Michigan's past.

3-H3.0.6 Use a variety of sources to describe interactions that occurred between American Indians and the first European explorers and settlers in Michigan.

3-H3.0.10 Create a timeline to sequence early Michigan history.

3-G4.0.2 Describe diverse groups that have come into a region of Michigan and reasons why they came.

3-G5.0.1 Locate natural resources in Michigan and explain the consequences of their use.

3-E1.0.3 Analyze how Michigan's location and natural resources influenced its economic development.

4-H3.0.3 Describe how the relationship between the location of natural resources and the location of industries (after 1837) affected and continues to affect the location and growth of Michigan cities.

5-U1.4.3 Explain the impact of European contact on American Indian cultures.

Vocabulary Words:	straits	Jean Nicolet	peninsula
	traders	Michilimackinac	Anishnabeg
	fur trade	Revolutionary War	state park



Story of the Straits

1

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Read the story, then answer the questions.

1. Jean Nicolet passed through the Straits of Mackinac looking for:

- a. furs b. gold
- c. India d. China

2. Approximately how much time passed between the date when Jean Nicolet came to the Straits of Mackinac and the start of the 21st century?

- a. three centuries b. thirty-seven decades
- c. two centuries d. twenty-four decades

3. What major ethnic groups controlled Michilimackinac throughout its history?

- a. German, French, American Indians
- b. British, Spanish, American Indians
- c. British, French, American Indians
- d. British, French, Spanish

4. Who would you have most likely seen living at Michilimackinac when the British controlled the fort?

- a. a fur trader b. a farmer
- c. a logger d. a banker

5. What was the advantage for building the fort on the island?

- a. protection from raids by the British
- b. shelter from the storms in the area
- c. it was low, flat land to help in building houses
- d. it was high, steep land to protect against enemies

6. After the fur trade declined what became the next major business on Mackinac Island?

- a. tourism b. fishing
- c. logging d. mining

7. What was NOT one of the reasons the government started to make Mackinac Island a national and then a state park?

- a. the natural beauty of the island
- b. the history of the island
- c. the mining industry on the island
- d. the older buildings on the island

8. What does Mackinac State Historic Parks do to show people about the past?

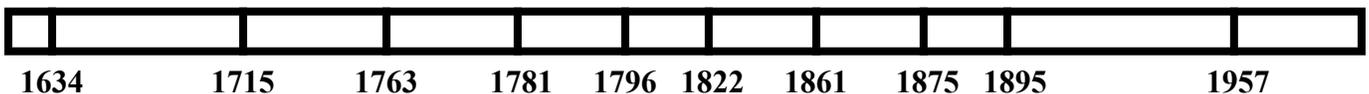
- a. fire a cannon b. run a saw mill
- c. cook over a fire d. all of the above

PUT IT INTO PLACE!

Put the following events onto the correct position on the timeline. Write the letter above the correct date.

- A. American Indians capture Fort Michilimackinac
- C. Jean Nicolet pass through the Straits
- E. The fort is moved to Mackinac Island

- B. Michigan 1st State Park is formed
- D. The Mackinac Bridge is finished
- F. The French build Michilimackinac



Journey Through Time

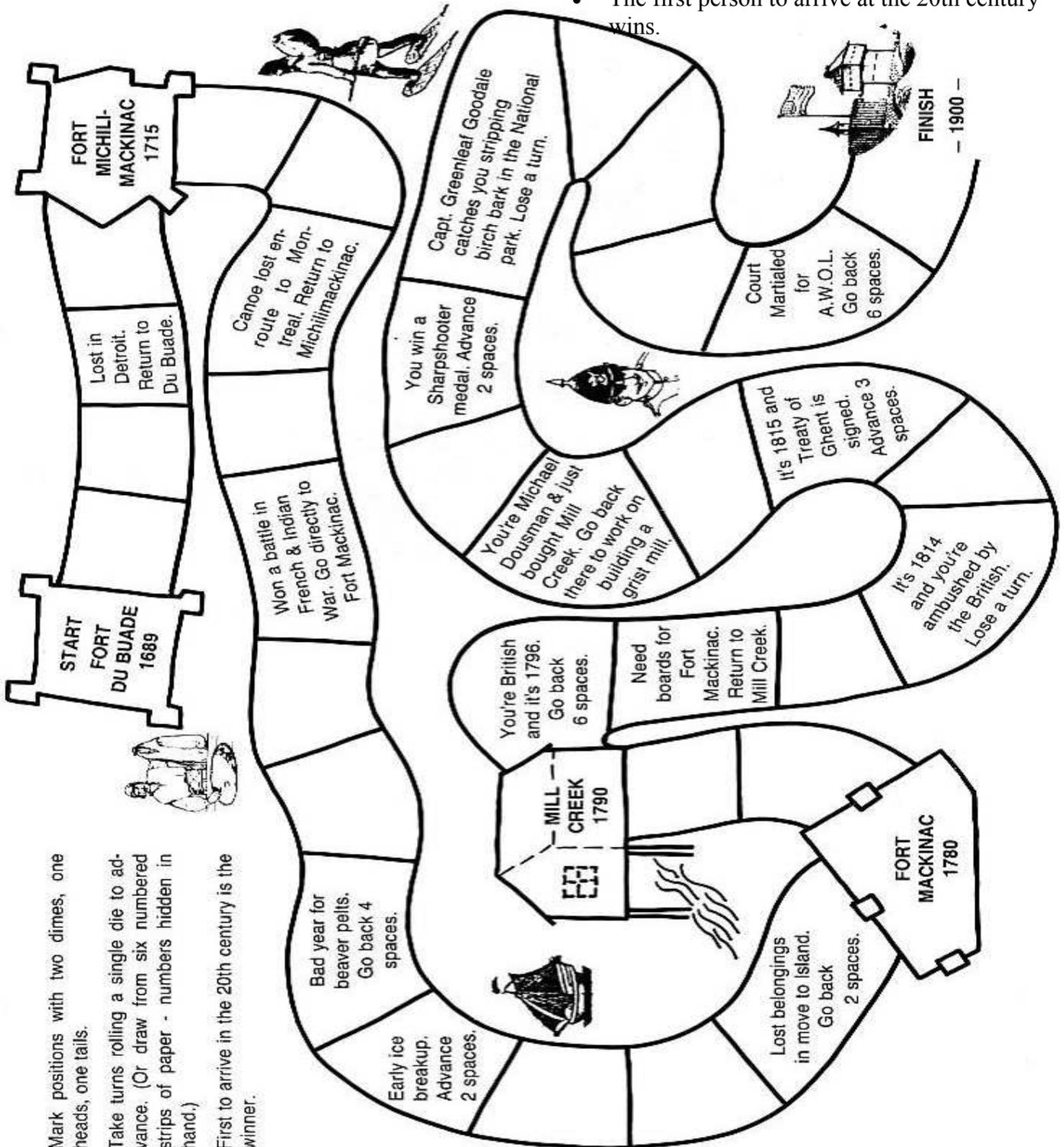
Play this game to travel through time at Mackinac.

You will need:

- die or numbered pieces of paper (1 through 6)
- two dimes or markers

To Play:

- Mark positions with two dimes: one head, one tails
- To go forward, take turns rolling a die or draw from numbered pieces of paper
- The first person to arrive at the 20th century wins.



Mark positions with two dimes, one heads, one tails.

Take turns rolling a single die to advance. (Or draw from six numbered strips of paper - numbers hidden in hand.)

First to arrive in the 20th century is the winner.



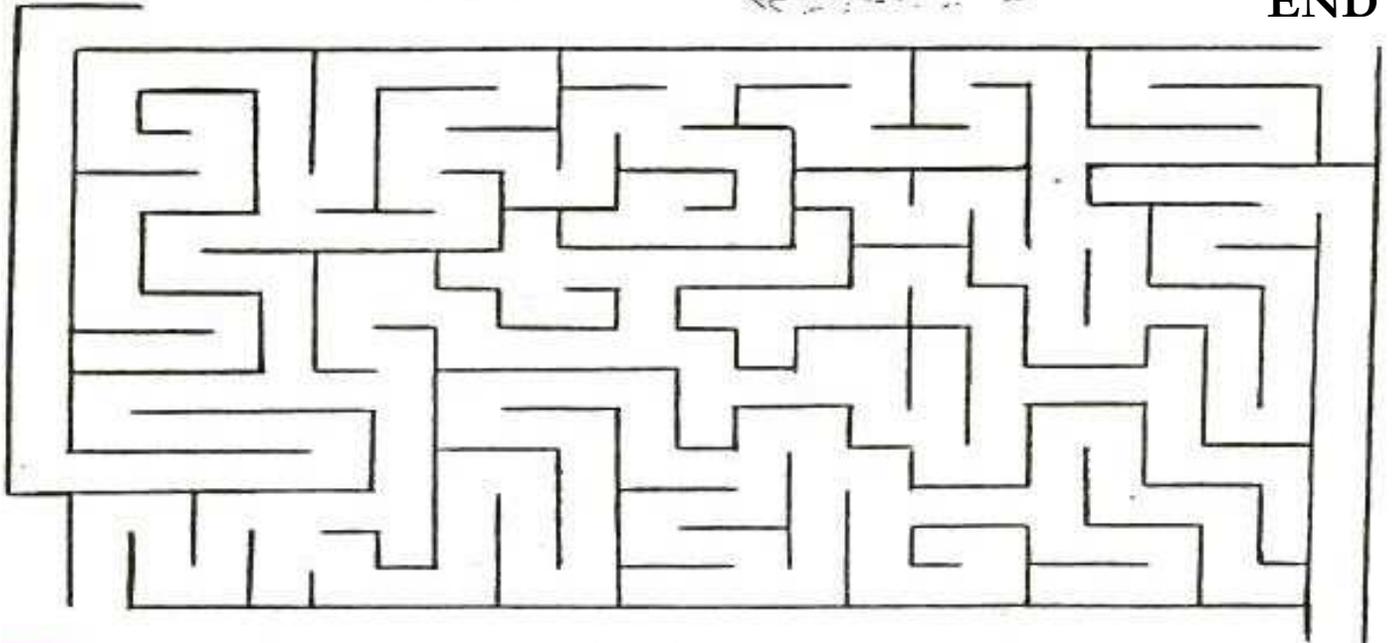
A-MAZE-ing Move

3

It's 1780 and the military and civilian communities of Michilimackinac are moving. See if you can find your way to the new location of the fort and village on Mackinac Island!

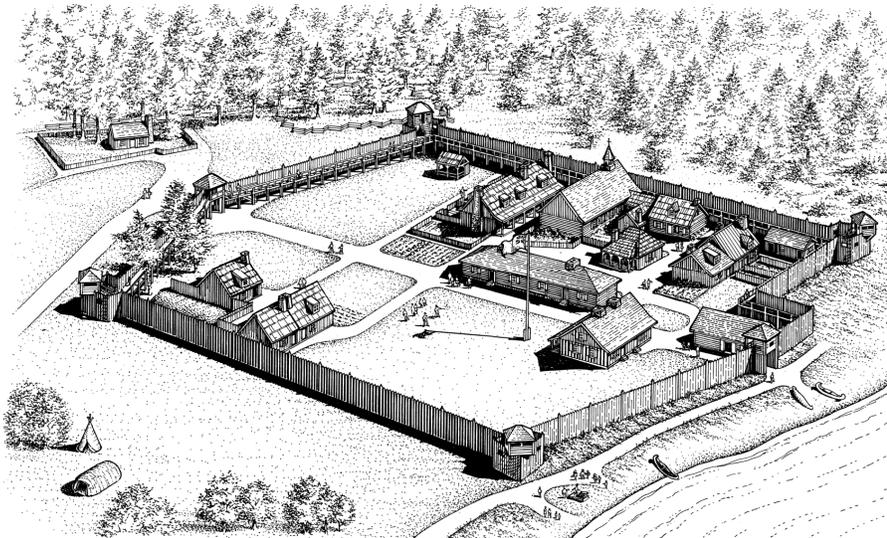


Fort Mackinac, Mackinac Island
END



START

Fort Michilimackinac,
Mackinaw City



Mackinac Mobile

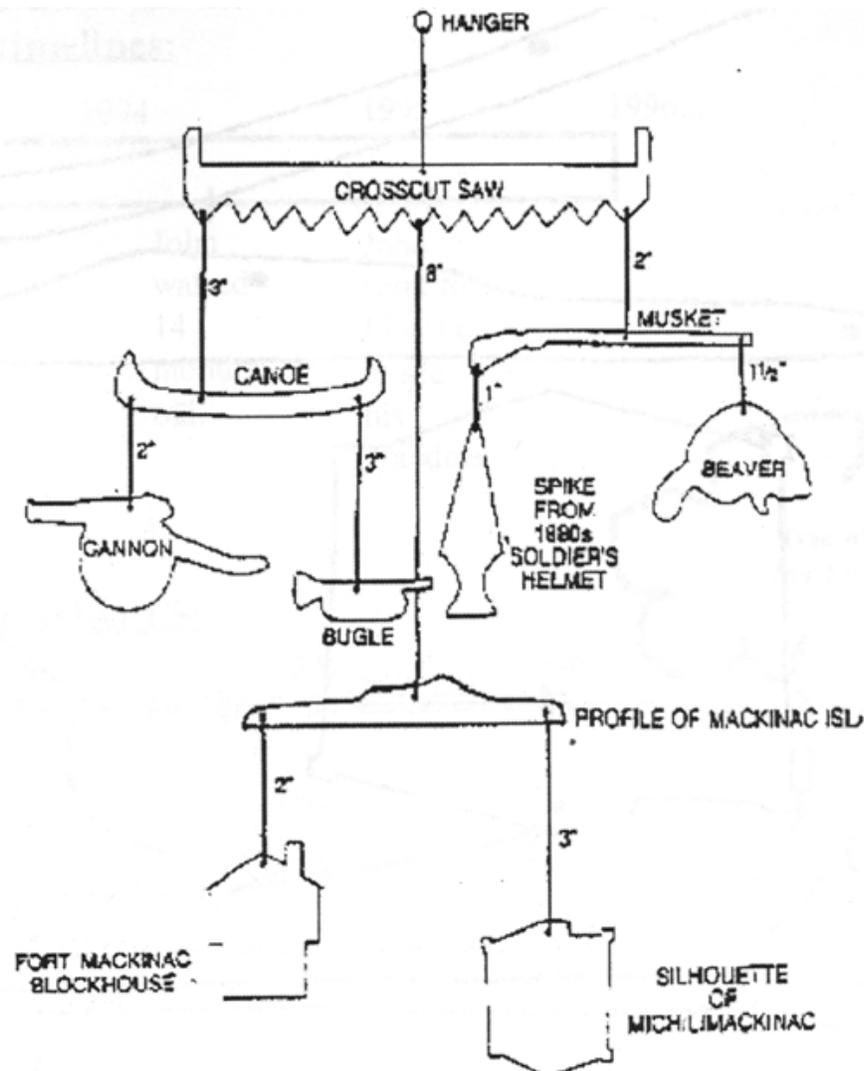
Make a mobile of Mackinac items.

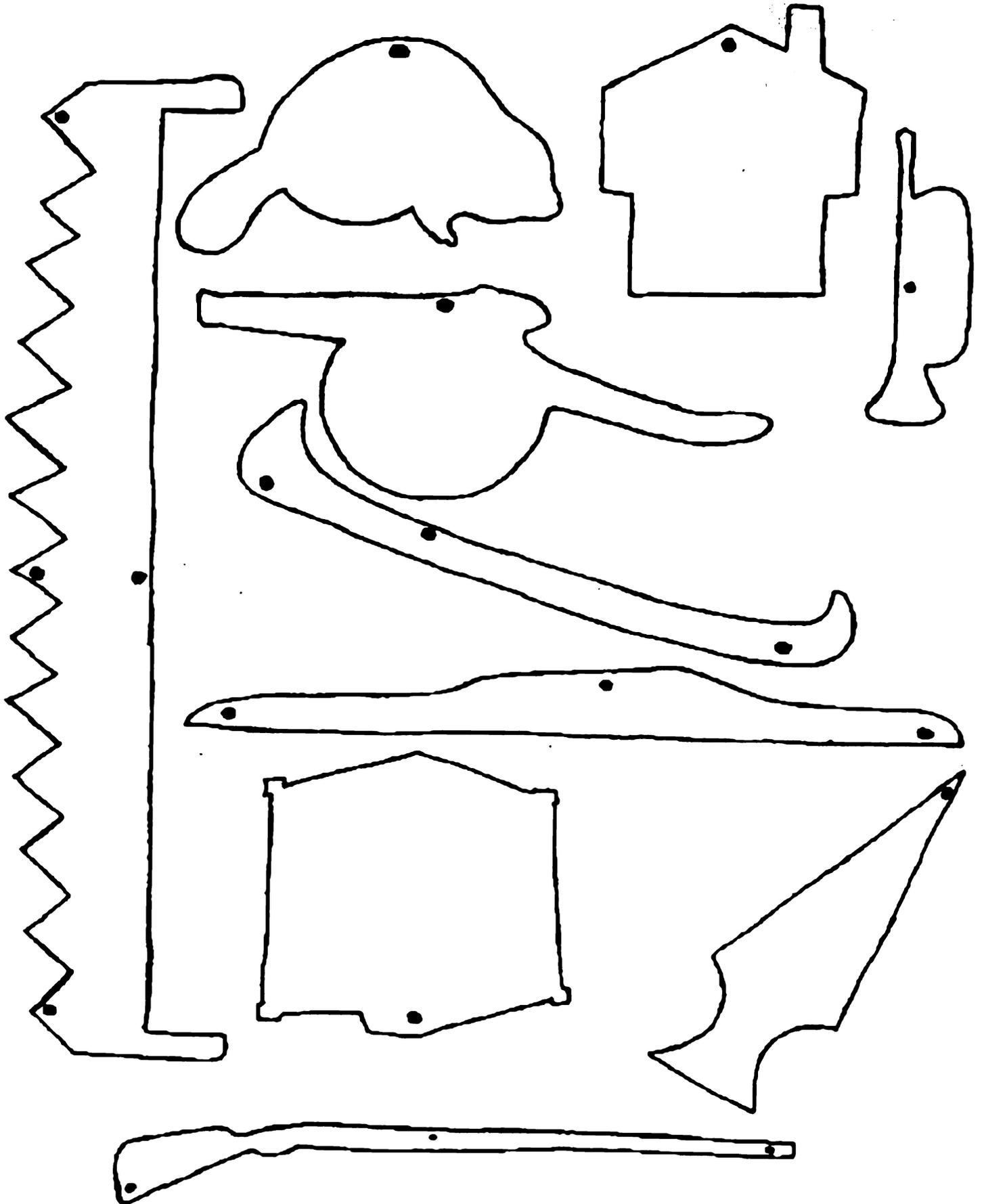
You will need:

- cardboard or paperboard
- scissors
- decorations (markers, crayons, etc.)
- Thread

Instructions:

1. Paste sheet to a piece of stiff paperboard or cardboard.
2. Carefully cut out each silhouette.
3. Punch holes where indicated.
4. Color or decorate each piece (be careful not to add weight or mobile will not balance).
5. Use thread to tie the mobile together (see picture).
6. Bits of beeswax or modeling clay can be used for fine balancing.





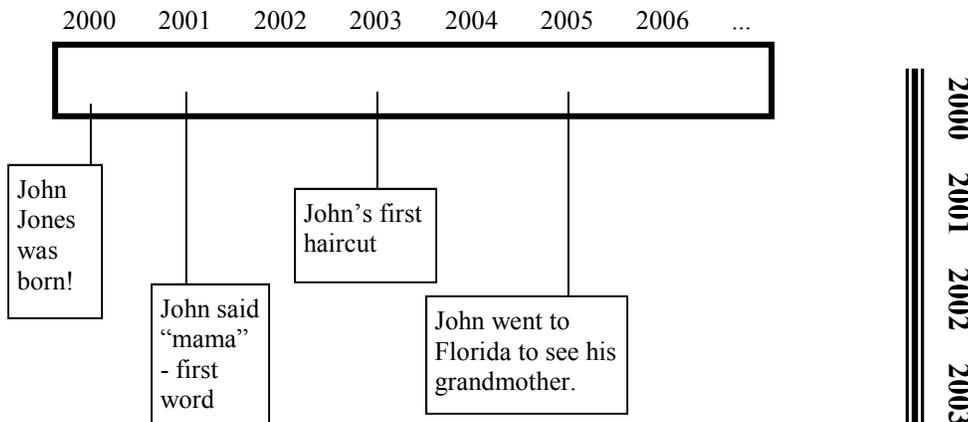
Using the Timeline...

The timeline shows major events in the history of Michigan and the United States of America. What important events have happened in your life? What can you compare them to in Michigan and United States history? Here are some examples of different forms of timelines and important events you may want to put on your timeline.

Important events in YOUR life (examples):

- * When were you born?
- * When did you learn to walk? Say your first word? Other events when you were a baby?
- * When did you start school?
- * Did you go on any vacations?
- * Did you celebrate something special?
- * When did you learn to read?
- * Think of other questions you might ask for important events in your life!

Some examples of timelines:



Use different shapes!

