

Travels to Mackinac

SOURCE A: ALEXANDER HENRY, 1760-1776

Alexander Henry was the first English trader at Michilimackinac. He was taken prisoner during the battle of Michilimackinac in 1763. Henry wrote *Travels and Adventures* in 1809 and it became a classic on American Indian life and the fur trade during that period.



The canoes which I provided for my undertaking were, as usual, five fathoms and a half (33 feet) in length and four feet and a half in their extreme breadth, and formed of birch-tree bark a quarter of an inch in thickness. The canoes are worked, not with oars but with paddles, and occasionally with a sail. To each canoe there are eight men; and to every three or four canoes, which constitute a brigade, there is a guide or conductor. Skillful men, at double the wages of the rest, are placed in the head and stern. They engage to go from Montreal to Michilimackinac and back to Montreal again, the middle-men at 150 livres (\$25) and the end-men at three hundred livres (\$50) each.

We had not proceeded more than a mile when our canoes became full of water and it was not till after a long search that we found a place of safety. Treading once more upon dry ground, I should willingly have faced the wilderness and all its Indians than embark again; but my guide informed me that I was upon an island, and therefore had no choice before me. We stopped the leaks a second time and recommenced our voyage, which we performed with success, but sitting all the way in six inches of water. In this manner we arrived at the foot of the rapids, where the river was frozen all across. Here we disembarked upon the ice... made a fire and camped.

SOURCE B: ROBERT ROGERS, 1766

Robert Rogers was the commandant at Michilimackinac from 1766 to 1767. These are instructions to Captain James Tute, written September 12, 1766, about the expedition to find the Northwest Passage to the Orient.

You will, from where you winter, early this spring, endeavor to get some good guides from the Sioux and proceed with your party to the Northwest, and make what discoveries you can during the summer, and at the close of which you will fall in with your party to winter at Fort La Parrie, at which place you shall have sent to you a further supply of goods next fall, that you may take of them what is necessary to carry on the expedition.

SOURCE C: NAVAL DEPARTMENT, 1777

By 1777, eleven sailing vessels and one row galley navigated the upper Great Lakes region. All these vessels had been built at Detroit, except the *Welcome* which Askin constructed in 1775 at Michilimackinac. This is a Naval Department list of those vessels.

Schooner *Gage*,
Schooner *Dunmore*,
Schooner *Ottawa*,
Schooner *Hope*,
Schooner *Faith*,
Sloop *Wyaydott*,
Sloop *Angelica*,
Sloop *Felicity*,
Sloop *Welcome*,
Sloop *Adventure*,
Row Galley.



SOURCE D: PETER POND, 1773-1775

Peter Pond, originally from Connecticut, was a prominent trader in the Northwest. In 1778 Pond, Alexander Henry and the Frobisher brothers came together to form the famous trading North West Company.

There were two water routes to Michilimackinac from the east. Voyageurs traveling the northern route, which started in Montreal, headed up the Ottawa River, through Lake Nipissing, over the French River into Georgian Bay, then along the northern shore of Lake Huron to the Straits of Mackinac. Those taking the southern route left Albany on the Mohawk River and headed through Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron to arrive at Michilimackinac. Peter Pond used both routes, but describes the southern route here. This is an excerpt from Pond's journal describing his travels from New York to Michilimackinac.

In the first place, they were shipped from New York for Albany. From there they were taken up the Mohawk River to Fort Stanwix. There carried a mile by land with the boats and put into Woodcreek and from there through Oneida Lake to a small fort called Fort Erie on the northern side of Lake Erie. Then coasting along the south side of the lake til they come to the mouth of that river, then up to Detroit. From thence up those waters to lake St. Clair, a small one about 14 mile long. From thence cross these waters which come out of Lake Huron and Michigan. There was a British garrison where all the traders assembled yearly to arrange their affairs for the ensuing winter. This place is kept up by a Captain Command of British which were lodged in good barracks within the stockade, where there is some French buildings and a commodious Roman church where the French inhabitants and British go to Mass.



SOURCE E: CANOE CONTENTS, 1777

This is a list of the contents of one canoe making the voyage from Montreal to Michilimackinac in 1777. It was sent to David McCrea at Michilimackinac by William and John Kay. The original inventory listed the goods by bale, and contained details about color and type of cloth. The different items were distributed throughout the bale so that when the trader opened it, he had a wide range of goods for his wilderness customers.

128 blankets	1 slater's hammer
16 cloth strouds	1 pick axe
28lbs., 8 bunches of beads	2 barrels port wine
16 barrels, 950 lbs. gunpowder	8 gallons of spirits
168 lbs. of soap	1 barrel, 8 gallons of brandy
8 NW fuzils (trade muskets)	8 shot-bags
2 pint jacks	15 empty barrels
8 1/4 lbs. brass wire	1 fuzil case
24 cutteaux croches (knives)	1 soap case
5 sacks, ball	28 lbs. gum for canoe
3 qts. of shot	1 canoe and poles
1 basket copper kettles	1 axe for canoe
1 large canoe kettle	1 spunge and canoe awl
cod lines for canoe	122 lbs. Irish pork
11 ells sheeting for sails	800 lbs., 2 bags of biscuits
36 lbs. of hide leather	6 bags for biscuits
3 cod lines for bales	3 bags for pork
1 1/2 ps (pieces) hessen for bales	1/4 lb. of shot
1 skain Holland twine for bales	7 cutting knives
24 half axes	1 ps. Russia sheeting
2 augers	14 yards cotton



SOURCE F: CHARLES MORISON, 1801

Charles Morison was a fur trader. He was writing to John Askin, a merchant at Michilimackinac. Mr. Morison explained that Mr. Fraser, who was another fur trader, couldn't reach Mackinac Island. The straits froze over and the ships couldn't travel. He had to stay with Robert Campbell, owner of the mill at Mill Creek.

The ice closed the 22nd. Mr. Fraser had to stay at Mr. Campbell's 15 days before he got over here, which was the 24th Ulto.



SOURCE G: CHARLOTTE O'BRIEN, 1854

Charlotte O'Brien, wife of an Army chaplain, moved to Fort Mackinac in 1842. She lived there until her death in 1855. Charlotte kept a diary, recording her daily activities and thoughts. This section relates to the events of ships traveling to and from the island. The *E.P. Collins* and *Sultanta* are both boats that traveled the Great Lakes.

October 12, 1854: New of the loss of the E.P. Collins - Oh, how terrible.

October 13, 1854: No boat for below that Lyster could travel on - besides he is not quite well yet - dreadful news of the loss of the steamship Artic with 400 souls on board.

October 14, 1854: No boat. Dearest Mary and the Major left in the horrid Sultanta...May the Lord preserve my darling Mary.

October 27, 1854: No boat - no boat.



SOURCE H: STEAMBOAT ADVERTISEMENT, 1863

This advertisement appeared in local newspapers in 1863. The steam packets, *Meteor* and *Illinois*, stopped at Mackinac Island on their way to Lake Superior.

1863.  1863.

Cleveland, Detroit, and Lake Superior.

The Splendid Steam Packets **METEOR** and **ILLINOIS** will leave Cleveland and Detroit for Lake Superior, as follows:

METEOR, R. S. HYDER, Master, LEAVES CLEVELAND,		ILLINOIS, JOHN ROBERTSON, Master, LEAVES CLEVELAND,	
Wednesday, at 8 P. M.	July 8	Wednesday, at 8 P. M.	July 1
Tuesday, " "	" 21	Tuesday, " "	" 14
Monday, " "	Aug. 2	Monday, " "	" 27
Friday, " "	" 14	Friday, " "	Aug. 7
Wednesday, " "	" 20	Wednesday, " "	" 19
Tuesday, " "	Sept. 5	Tuesday, " "	Sept. 1
Monday, " "	" 21	Monday, " "	" 14
Friday, " "	Oct. 3	Friday, " "	" 26
		Wednesday, " "	Oct. 7

* Leaving Detroit on the day following those above named, at 10 A. M., sailing at Fort Hara and Sarnia the same evening.

During the months of July and August, the above Steamers will make

GRAND PLEASURE EXCURSIONS,

Leaving Cleveland on their regular days. On these trips they will carry good BANDS AND STRING BANDS, and every effort will be made to secure the comfort and convenience of passengers. Each point of interest on the route will be visited, giving pleasure-seekers an opportunity to fully enjoy the best, most healthy, and instructive trip on the Continent.

For further information, regarding Freight and Passage, address,
H. GARRISON & CO., Agents,
 No. 1 River Street, Cleveland, Ohio
WILLIAMS & CO., Agents,
 Foot of First Street, Detroit, Mich.

J. T. WHITING & CO.,
COMMISSION AND INSURANCE AGENTS,
 Also Agents for
LAKE SUPERIOR STEAMERS,
 Foot of First Street, Detroit, Mich.

Detroit and Cleveland Steam Navigation Co.

THE PALATIAL SIDE-WHEEL IRON STEAMERS,

CITY OF MACKINAC 

— AND —

CITY OF ALPENA 

FLY BETWEEN

DETROIT

AND THE FAMOUS

MACKINAC ISLAND

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE

SUMMER RESORT IN AMERICA,

AND NOW EASILY REACHED IN A FEW HOURS.

We cannot describe the fascinations of this wonderful Island, the residence of MUDJIKKEWIS, the birthplace and hereditary kingdom of his son HEAWATHA, by Longfellow made immortal.

DAVID CARTER, Gen'l Manager,
DETROIT, MICH.

SOURCE I: STEAMBOAT ADVERTISEMENT, 1880s

The principal line to serve Mackinac Island from Detroit and lake sites east was the Detroit and Cleveland Steam Navigation Company. Although it operated locally in Lake Erie and the Detroit River as early as 1850, it was not until 1882 that modern boats began to make regular trips to Mackinac Island. Its fleet included the *City of Alpena* and *City of Mackinac*.

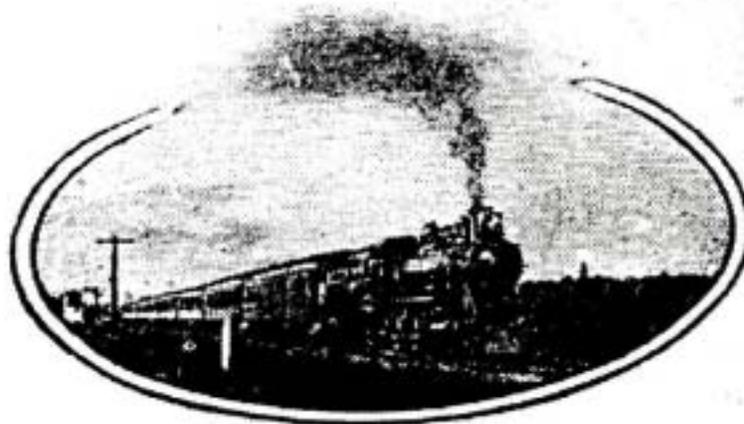


SOURCE J: RAILROAD ADVERTISEMENT, 1880s

In 1881, the railroad reached Mackinaw City and the lake boats had more competition from them. The Grand Rapids and Indiana offered passage from Chicago to the straits for \$16.80 round trip and from Detroit for \$15.70 round trip.

Grand Rapids & Indiana Ry.

THE FAVORITE LINE TO
MACKINAC ISLAND
AND ALL OTHER
NORTHERN MICHIGAN
SUMMER RESORTS



During the Summer months solid vestibuled trains are operated with
through Pullman Sleeping Cars and Dining Cars from

CINCINNATI INDIANAPOLIS
LOUISVILLE ST. LOUIS
CHICAGO DETROIT
and GRAND RAPIDS, to the North.

Send two-cent stamp for beautiful illustrated booklet

"MICHIGAN IN SUMMER"

a descriptive of all the famous Northern Michigan Summer Resorts, and
containing 200 photographs, list of hotels, maps, and other interesting
information, to

C. I. LOCKWOOD, G. P. & T. A.



Lesson 11

Using “Travels to Mackinac”

➤ Read “Travels to Mackinac”.

This can be a reading section for all students, split into groups of students or sources split up among all the students.

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

SOURCE A: What do you think it was like to paddle in a voyageur’s canoe? Was it hard work? Was it fun?

Answers vary. To give a students a sense of what it was like to be a voyageur, try this: On the floor of a large room, mark a 40’ by 5-6’ section on the floor, tapered at the ends. Have nine students (eight crew and one guide) sit in this space on their knees. Voyageurs paddle about one stroke per second. Have students paddle that quickly and sing “Pull on the Oars”. You can also pretend to haul bales of fur or supplies on portages.

SOURCE B: Why couldn’t explorer’s keep exploring in the winter?

Why couldn’t they take all the supplies needed for the whole trip, instead of having more sent to Fort LaParrie?

Travel was dangerous and difficult in the winter. Some waterways froze over and people could not get through with boats. It was wiser to stay in one place and wait for spring. Because travel in even good conditions took a long time, many supplies were needed. It was not practical to carry all the supplies that would be needed, so a supply stop was necessary.

SOURCE C: Compare routes of Peter Pond to that of Jacques and Pierre from “Adventures with Jacques and Pierre”.

SOURCE D: Since canoes carried furs and trade goods, what do you think these ships were used for?

The ships were used to transport supplies and people to the remote areas of the Great Lakes. Most came from Detroit.

SOURCE E: What are three things found in the canoe that would have been used by an Ojibwa woman? A British soldier? A child living at Michilimackinac?

Each of these people would use a variety of objects from blankets to kettles. The Ojibwa woman would most likely use things like beads for ornamentation of clothing and kettles and knives for cooking and preparing foods and furs for the winter. The British soldier would need the powder and shot for hunting and guarding, blankets for sleeping, the large quantity of pork for meals in the guardhouse and barracks and paint for maintenance of the fort. The child might use the food, blanket for sleeping and soap for the long awaited baths!

SOURCE F: Why did the ice forming on the lake mean Fraser had to stay with Campbell?

The ships couldn’t travel through the ice, but the ice was too thin to travel on.

MEAP Objectives reached in Lesson 11:

I.1.LE.1 Measure chronological time by decades and centuries.

I.2.LE.3 Recount the lives and characters of a variety of individuals from the past representing their local communities, the state of Michigan and other parts of the United States.

I.3.LE.1 Use primary sources to reconstruct past events in their local community.

II.1.LE.1 Locate and describe cultures and compare the similarities and differences among the roles of women, men and families.

II.3.LE.4 Describe some of the major movements of goods, people, jobs and information within Michigan and the United States and explain the reasons for the movements.



SOURCE G: Charlotte talks about two shipwrecks in October. Do you think she had a good reason to worry about her daughter Mary on the “horrid” Sultana?

Travel by ship was dangerous sometimes, just like travel today can be. Charlotte had good reason to be worried since there were two shipwrecks, but usually ships were a reliable mode of transportation.

SOURCE H & I: Both these advertisements are for steamships trips to the upper Great Lakes. What is the major difference between the two? How many decades are there between them?

In the earlier advertisement, Mackinac is not listed as a destination, though ships did stop there. In the later advertisement, Mackinac Island was the destination. Mackinac Island became the popular tourist spot after the Civil War and was extremely popular in the 1880s.

There are two decades between the two advertisements.

SOURCE J: Steamships that travelled to Mackinac usually left from Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago or some other large city. The trans left from those places, but small towns inbetween as well. What did this means for tourism in the Straits area?

It was easier to get to Mackinac from smaller towns and cities without travelling to the larger cities. It was easier for more people from the smaller areas to come to Mackinac.

➤ **Use Activity 22 to further support the ideas in “Travels to Mackinac”.**



Answer the questions using the different sources from **Travels to Mackinac**. Not all sources are used for each question.

1. People traveled to Mackinac for many different reasons. List the sources where the travelers are involved in:

Exploring _____

Fur Trading _____

Visiting/Tourists _____

2. There were many different types of transportation to the Straits of Mackinac in the 18th and 19th century. What were the different types and what source did you find them in?

TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION	SOURCE(S)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

3. List some of the ways travel to the Straits of Mackinac has changed over time. What ways has it remained the same over time? Has the purpose of coming changed?

