

# Century-Old Steeple Represents Less Than Half of Parish History

Recent news accounts indicate that Ste. Anne's Parish Church, on Mackinac Island's Main Street, needs a new steeple. The Gothic Revival steeple has been a landmark of the Island's Mission Point since 1890.

In one respect, rebuilding the Ste. Anne's steeple will not be as easy as building it was. The original steeple was built during the period of old-growth timber harvesting. A similar late-1800s steeple from Dubuque, Iowa, was offered for sale recently by an architectural salvage firm. The Iowa steeple is based on heavy beams measuring eight-feet by eight-feet, with an interior frame of two-by-sixes.

Not so many sawmills appear to be cutting new eight-by-eights anymore. A recent Internet search for eight-by-eights in Michigan found a source who wrote last October that he was willing to sell some, but he was a man who was tearing down a barn near Detroit. Other sources can be found all over the United States, but almost all of them are selling recycled pieces. In salvage situations like this, the buyer has to find the wood and move it to its new home; and many of today's builders are reluctant to use century-old dimensional lumber for



## A Look at History

BY FRANK STRAUS

### Ste. Anne's Church



Looking toward Fort Mackinac from near Bennett Hall. The 1874 Ste. Anne's Church, visible at right, before steeple was erected in 1890, is the one that stands on Main Street today. (Photographs courtesy of Tom Pfeiffelmann)

load-bearing purposes.

The Ste. Anne's challenge will remind us that different Mackinac Island churches have different steeples and spires. It was the custom of the Catholic Church in Europe to place a

cross on top of its steeples, so for some years many (but not all) Protestant churches tried to avoid doing so. In New England, Protestant churches often raised weathervanes on top of their churches so that farmers and boatmen could use wind directions to get an idea of approaching weather. The Mission Church (1829), built in the New England tradition, has a weathervane spire; bikers can look at it when they pass the church and push off for a ride around Mackinac Island. The church and spire were built with lumber milled at Old Mill Creek, near Mackinaw City.

Unlike the New England churches, the Anglican Communion preserved apostolic succession from the Twelve Apostles, through the Catholic Church, when King Henry VIII ordered his bishops to follow him rather than the Pope. Mackinac Island's Trinity



The Mission Church.

Church (1882) reflected this heritage by placing a multi-branched cross on top of its unadorned steeple.

The simple Ste. Anne's cross, different in design from that of Trinity, was raised in 1890. In Ste. Anne's case, its carpenters built a Gothic Revival spire and then placed an unadorned cross atop it.

The Union Congregational Church (1904), in keeping with the name that almost everybody uses, "Little Stone Church," raised Mackinac Island's smallest steeple cross atop its shingled bell tower.

Although the Ste. Anne's Church building, and its steeple, are more than 100 years old, the building is the home of a parish that is more than 300 years old,

founded in 1670 by Father Claude Dablon. While the first 25 years of the parish registry appear to be lost, the Ste. Anne's parish registry is still one of the oldest records in the central United States of the celebration of key Christian sacraments such as baptism and marriage. The current registry contains entries dating back to 1695. Earlier records may have been lost when the Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, the commander of Fort de Buade in St. Ignace, transferred the garrison and most French activity at the Straits of Mackinac to Detroit in 1706.

An earlier version of Ste. Anne's Church was built at Fort Michilimackinac, Mackinaw

*\*Please turn to page 16*

**CHARMS...**

- Horse & Buggy**  
14K Gold \$99  
Exclusively Ours
- Grand Hotel** 14K Gold
- Round Island Lighthouse**  
14K Gold with a Diamond
- Victorian Buggy**  
14K Gold with moving wheels
- Turtle Pendants & Charms**  
Handmade on Mackinac Island

**MACKINAC LAPIDARY LTD.**  
LOCATED IN CARROUSEL SHOPS

**Watch Batteries**

(906) 847-1040 Winter 847-6373  
Visa & MasterCard Accepted  
P.O. Box 1218, Mackinac Island, MI 49757





# JOANN'S FUDGE


*"The one most people prefer"*


## Fresh Dairy Cream and Butter In Every Batch!

Ask Us About Our Customized Wedding or Corporate Favors

### Fast Mail Order Service

P.O. Box 460  
Mackinac Island, Michigan 49757  
(906) 847-3707  
www.joannsfudge.com






# Main Street INN & SUITES

www.mainstreetinnandsuites.com

P.O. Box 178  
Mackinac Island  
906.847.6530



BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED DELUXE GUEST ROOMS AND SUITES  
CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN THE HEART OF HISTORIC MAIN STREET

Featured Amenities:

- Air-Conditioning • Elevator • Private Baths
- Handicap Accessibility • Secure Bike Storage
- Ceiling Fans • Daily Newspaper • Pillow Top Mattresses
- Cable Television • Internet Access • Pool Table & Games
- Refrigerator • Microwave • Coffee Maker • Telephone
- Deposit Box • Turn Down Service • 24 Hour Front Desk