

Whip Is an Extension of the Arm When Controlling and Training Horses

In the past two weeks I hope that I've informed readers of the basic function of traditional riding attire. Part and parcel to this are a rider's "accessories," a set of spurs and a riding crop or a bat. Sometimes these items bring to mind a sense of cruelty in their application to horses. Certainly, their misuse has been the case many times, and for many years. Yet, used the correct way, and with circumspect logic, the spur and the whip are actually an extension of the leg and the arm when it comes to controlling and training horses. The idea of the whip extends to keeping the horse in line. We even see that idea taken on in politics by the use of the term "whip." The term "crop" is more specific to show jumping, and hunt seat. A bat usually refers to that short stick jockeys use, but in this column, "whip" is my generic term for use with carriages.

Perhaps the most common sights on Mackinac Island when it comes to horses are the standard horse-drawn taxis, tour buggies, and drays people see when they first arrive off the ferry dock, or are picked up at the airport. Every one of these vehicles, as well as rental and private carriages, carries a space on their dash for a horse-whip.

The buggy whip is a necessary part of driving a horse. Whips are long, stick-like,

flexible devices. There is a small bit of leather or cord at the end called the "tail" or the "popper." Sometimes the whip is made of single-strand or plaited material, usually leather. The handle of the whip is stiff and fits into a small holder next to the driver.

Whips on carriages are used to give commands to the horses. These are by touch, and the idea is that they're a "wake-up" signal to the animal, not meant to cause pain but, of course, they can and do if improperly used. The end tail of the driving whip is also called a lash, and most of these don't have the popper at the end of them; an exception is a long whip used to ground drive a horse in circles or on the straight.

Most people these days have never really considered that crafting buggy whips was once a thriving industry in the United States. Whip making is one business that has almost disappeared. In economic and marketing classes, the demise of the whip industry following the rise of the automobile has been cited, noting that need has almost disappeared.

One small town that has a demand for the product is Mackinac Island.

Westfield, Massachusetts, is still manufacturing buggy whips, and is known around the world as "Whip City." Today Westfield is a community of more than 40,000 people with a sense of pride. It was established in 1669. It is home to the only remaining whip manufacturer in the United



HORSE TALES

by Candice C. Dunnigan



Arrowhead Carriages employee Raymond Miller shows off a horsewhip Monday, May 28. Horsewhips are aids used for driving or handling horses.

States, Westfield Whip. The building is near the river, at 360 Elm Street, and is now on the National Historic Register. The town was the capitol of whip making in 1865, with 30 active companies based there. It has been estimated that 95% of America's market was located in and around the environs of Westfield. These companies

peaked in 1893, when 80% of the residents of Westfield worked in the trade.

By World War II, only two whip makers were left. The remaining Westfield Whip actually was begun in 1946 as a second career by the town's former mayor. His daughter and her partner run the company now, making jockey whips,

riding crops, English hunting whips, and buggy whips. Many of these whips have found their way to Mackinac Island. The company still uses a plaiting machine that braids the threads around a wooden core. This machine dates from the 1860s, and is much like the tire machine still used by Mackinac Island Carriage Tours.

Whips were traditionally made by wrapping buckskin leather around a shaped wooden handle. The most common wood used was hickory. Whips often are made with a strong, natural thread. The Westfield Whip Company closely guards its exact manufacturing process. A good whip will last for decades, as long as it's stored properly in a rack or a holder, and is not allowed to remain wet. Not far from the city, in the Berkshires, is a museum devoted to the harness and whip manufacturing industry of the New England areas.

Westfield's other "turn-of-the-century" contribution is that it was the home of the Columbia Bicycle headquarters.

If you want to see a bit of that town in use, in this town, remember to take a look at the buggy whip the driver is holding or resting in its holder in the carriage.

Candice Dunnigan is an active member of the American Equestrian Association, the Waterloo Hunt, and the Mackinac Horsemen's Association. Seasonally she resides at Easterly Cottage.

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Contest Winners For the 2009 Calendar Are Announced

Winners of the 25th annual photograph contest for Mackinac Island Recreation Development's 2009 Seasons of Mackinac calendar have been announced. The annual contest was held during the Island's Winter Festival Sunday, February 4.

A record 289 photographs were entered for this year's 25th anniversary year by 52 photographers from Mackinac Island and 11 states. The number of entries broke the previous record of 222, which was

set in 2002. Contestants were judged by those attending the festival, and 115 votes were cast.

The following are the winning photographs, in order by month:

Front Cover - "Gateway to Mackinac's Historic links - Wawashkamo," and "Winter entry to Wawashkamo Golf Club," both by Sam Garrow of Marquette;

January - "Frosty Mackinac delivery service," by Jewel Geyer of Mackinac Island;

February - "Stately summer cottage adorned in white winter finery," by Greg Main of Mackinac Island;

March - "Straits of Mackinac 1948 lighthouse stands witness to 59th spring ice flow," by Marcia and Tom Tomlinson of Mackinac Island;

April - "Unique view from

150 feet above the Island's east shoreline," by Sam Garrow of Marquette;

May - "Tours and tulips, time slows to enjoy the beautiful Island spring," by Jane Arndt of Big Rapids;

June - "Lilacs in full bloom on the Straits of Mackinac shoreline," by Andrea Rodriguez of San Antonio, Texas;

July - "Reflective evening harbor during annual yacht races," by Greg Main;

August - "Opalescent sunset blankets a Mackinac Bridge view," by Lynn Leone of Macomb;

September - "Eight Mile Run Around the Island makes it's pass through Main Street," by Greg Main;

October - "Bikes and more bikes all in a row come each fall," by Mike Hart of Mackinac Island;

November - "Grand Hotel dusted by an early snow," by Sara D. Chambers of Mackinac

Island;

December - "The Huron decked out for the holidays," by Mike Hart.

MIRD's 2008 calendar is now available at various businesses on Mackinac Island for \$10 each. Proceeds support community recreation on Mackinac Island.

The photograph contest for the 2010 Seasons of Mackinac calendar will be held at the Island's next Winter Festival in February 2008, usually the first weekend of the month.

Photographs that are to be submitted to the contest must be at least 8.5 inches by 10 inches and in color. A fee of \$2 is assessed for each photograph to allow MIRD to return materials back to the owners. Be sure to mark what season each photograph depicts, spring, summer, fall, or winter.

Photographs can be sent to MIRD at P.O. Box 421, Mackinac Island, Michigan 49757.

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Daughters of Isabella Meet June 4

The Daughters of Isabella, an international Catholic women's charitable organization, will hold its biannual state convention at Grand Hotel Monday, June 4, through Thursday, June 7.

The Ronald McDonald House of Michigan is the group's current state project. A check for approximately \$6,000 will be presented during the convention to representatives from Ronald McDonald

Houses.

More than 130 members and guests are expected to attend the event, said Helen Anonick, state convention coordinator. Also attending the convention will be International Regent Elaine Leger and International Director Susanne Suchy. State Regent Mary Tomaszewski will be the presiding officer.

The organization has members in the United States, Canada, and Japan.