

Doud's Grocery Store Reopens, Representing 100 Years of Service



A Look at History

BY FRANK STRAUS

Doud's Market

General stores operated by the Doud family have sold goods for more than 100 years on Mackinac Island. When the first Doud's opened, small grocery stores selling mixed goods were fixtures throughout the United States. Today, Doud's is one of the remaining small grocers in Michigan.

The Doud family, of Irish heritage, traces its ancestry back to Stephen and Bridget Doud. The Douds have been involved in virtually every enterprise on Mackinac Island, including hotel ownership, construction, curio shops, and groceries. One branch of the family is tied by marriage to the Chambers family, and the Chambers' and the Douds are two of the oldest Irish families on Mackinac Island. They are living memories of the famine years of the 1840s, when millions of Irishmen and women had to leave their homeland to seek a new life in America. Stephen and Bridget were two of these immigrants to the New World.

The mid-19th century was a good time to try to find a job on Mackinac Island. The glamorous but exploitative American Fur Company was gone and its place had been taken by small businesses engaged in the workaday life of fishing, steamboat supply, boarding-house keeping, and various crafts associated with these businesses. The life of Patrick Doud, one of Stephen's sons, is typical of this pattern. Before becoming one of Mackinac Island's principal builders, he was a professional barrel-

maker who shaped pieces of wood into stout containers for the shipping of salted fish.

Patrick and his brother, James Doud, together founded Doud's grocery store at the head of the Arnold dock about 1884. This was right after the first railroads were built up to Mackinaw City on the mainland, and Doud's could sell not only local foodstuffs but also packaged goods shipped from far away. The 1880s was the first decade in which packaged foods began to come into the lives of rural Americans. Some readers will remember Laura Ingalls, the heroine of the "Little House" books, enjoying her first taste of canned fruit. Food cans were made from steel, thinly plated with tin, and the 1880s was also a decade when the shipping of iron ore sharply increased on the Great Lakes. It was a decade of great and fast-moving changes; it's a mistake to think of the Mackinac Island past as something static and frozen, like a fly caught in a bead of amber.

Hardworking families like the Douds thrived in this environment. Doud's delivered groceries directly to Mackinac Island boarding houses and cottages from a horse-drawn grocery wagon. The grocery market was competitive; before World War II, there were two grocery stores on Mackinac Island. The Davis family sold foodstuffs from what is now the "Big Store" building on Main Street, and Patrick and James Doud from what is now the little park at the land end of the Arnold dock.



This postcard shows the former location of Doud's store at the head of the Arnold Line dock. (Postcard courtesy of Tom Pfeiffelmann)

Different Islanders patronized each store.

"There were 'Davis' families, and there were 'Doud's' families," recalls longtime cottager Lorna Puttkammer Straus.

When the last Davis grocer retired, everyone on the Island became a Doud's family. Patrick Doud also retired from the grocery business, leaving Doud's to James and his descendants.

For James Doud, the Arnold dock location was convenient for picking up shipments from the boats; but in 1943, the Doud's store at the Arnold dock burned. After closing for one winter, the Doud family acquired the historic building at the foot of Fort Street on Main Street, and expanded their market share to cover the whole Island grocery market. Under the leadership of James' son, Francis, and his wife, matriarch Helga Doud, Doud's thrived for decades. Francis and his son, Stephen Doud, were leaders of the Island's business community. Although small, Doud's was a full-service grocer. For example, during the months with

ferry service, a butcher's shop sold cuts of meat sliced to order.

To have a grocer on Mackinac Island is a great convenience to visiting families in the summertime. Doud's, unlike many of Mackinac Island's buildings, has a full cellar. The grocery can store supplies in fall and sell them in winter. This ability has been an under-appreciated part of the Doud's service tradition. In the cold seasons, a working grocery on Mackinac Island is an essential element of local quality of life. In many winters, when there is no ice bridge, Islanders are unable to get to the mainland. Unless they've planned ahead, they have to get their groceries somewhere.

During and after World War II, American technology produced a wide variety of foodstuffs with long shelf lives. Some of these rations had originally been invented for use by soldiers in combat, but they proved to be ideal for Mackinac Island winters. For example, a process was invented that evaporated cow's milk down to a dry powder that could be sold

in cardboard boxes and reconstituted for drinking. Many young Islanders grew up eating canned foods and powdered milk bought at Doud's.

During the 1980s and 1990s, however, the grocery business changed. The canned goods and other long-shelf-life goods that had been a staple of grocery store sales nationwide since the 1880s were declining in popularity. Grocery distributors did not know as well as they used to how to help smaller stores, the size of Doud's, stock their shelves. After Steve Doud's death, and under new ownership, Doud's responded to changing times by increasing the amount of shelf space allotted to alternate items such as fresh sandwich supplies and videos offered for rent.

More remodeling took place in the winter of 2006-07. Under Andrew Doud, the great-great-grandson of Stephen and Bridget Doud, Doud's has reopened to renew its tradition of service to the people of Mackinac Island. The meat counter has reopened, and the Doud's wagon will soon roll again.

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Dr. Jennifer Tucciarone Is New Resident Doctor

Dr. Jennifer Tucciarone has come to the Island as part of the summer resident physician rotation program at the Mackinac Island Medical Center. She arrived May 27 and will conclude her rotation June 8.

Originally from Reno, Nevada, Dr. Tucciarone attended medical school at Ross University on the Caribbean island of Dominica, where she met her husband, who is going into cardiology.

"It was interesting," Dr. Tucciarone said. "Most people think of a nice Caribbean Island. It's more of a third world



Dr. Jennifer Tucciarone begins her residency at Mackinac Island Medical Center.

country."

Like other third world countries, Dr. Tucciarone said it has limited technology and a small hospital. Dr. Tucciarone now works as a family medicine resident at Beaumont Hospital in Troy.

Along with her husband, Dr. Tucciarone is accompanied by her 21-month-old son during her visit to the Island.

"As far as work goes, I think it's a great environment to improve on clinical skills and diagnostic skills," she said of the experience.

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