

Automobiles Traveling Along Shore Signaled Trouble for the 'Mackinac Route'

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ever, the glamour of Mackinac Island service was a key factor in the D & M's self-image in the 1910s, with the railroad proclaiming itself to be the

"Mackinac Route."

Trouble for the "Mackinac Route" appeared in the same decade, as self-organized crews of enthusiasts began painting a standardized colored symbol on

roadside telephone, telegraph, and electric poles along the rough and earthen roads that connected Detroit and Mackinaw City. The men and women who did this were mem-

bers of the Detroit Auto Club and its local affiliates, and they were marking the first automobile route along the shore of Lake Huron. Soon the people of southeastern Michigan were convincing themselves to travel for pleasure by car rather than by train. An increasing number of Michigan men either worked in the car industry themselves, or had friends who did.

This was a challenge that the little Detroit & Mackinac, like other Michigan railroads, ultimately could not surmount. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, service quality declined and could not recover, especially north of Alpena. By 1943, the D & M's sole remaining steam passenger train, the "Fisherman's Special," stopped at Alpena. Remaining D & M service, including the Alpena-Cheboygan route, was provided by "motor trains," self-propelled railroad cars that were little more than buses on rails. The little railroad's remaining passengers started saying that "D & M" stood for the words "Defeated & Maltreated."

In 1949 the D & M petitioned the Michigan Public Service Commission for permission to abandon its last remaining passenger service. In an advertisement the railroad published to explain its position, the D & M did not hide its frustration at the failure of the railroad to win ticket-paying customers, and took the opportunity to lash out at its own service area. The railroad's management said that private autos and motorbuses had taken away their business, that their books showed that many of their runs had not sold a single paying passenger ticket, and "the short line railroad passenger business

[is] unwanted, unused, and obsolete, especially in a sparsely populated territory such as is traversed by the Detroit and Mackinac Railroad."

The turtle was snapping at its few remaining patrons. The last D & M passenger train ran in 1951. The railroad would continue to operate for an additional 41 years, but solely as a freight line.

In the 1970s, a strange turn of events provided the Detroit & Mackinac with a final opportunity to briefly enjoy some of the status that it had sought in its earliest years. The D & M had been humiliated at the beginning of the century by pushing its tracks through to Cheboygan and finding that the mighty Michigan Central, a subsidiary of the even more titanic New York Central, had reached that town before it. The little D & M could not hope to compete with the larger railroad, and had ended its expansion at that point.

As the result of a series of mergers, however, the Michigan Central main line had become a small part of the nation's largest railroad, the Penn Central combine. The Penn Central had then gone broke and plunged into a very traumatic reorganization; and as a result of this shrinkage, the D & M was offered the chance to buy ownership and trackage rights over various pieces of the old Michigan Central main line from Bay City north through Gaylord to Cheboygan and Mackinaw City. The 1976 purchase gave the D & M an alternate route from Bay City to Cheboygan, but also provided the small railroad with its first trackage into Mackinaw City. The D & M could finally make good the "Mackinac" in its corporate name. The proud little railroad created a new logo, "Mackinac Mac."

The opportunity to offer train service to Mackinaw City was not, however, what it had been at the beginning of the century. The venerable railroad car ferry *Chief Wawatam*, which carried trains and cars over the Straits to St. Ignace, was on its last legs. When the *Chief* was towed away to the scrapyard in 1989, there was no reason to offer freight train service to Mackinaw City any more. The D & M's trackage from Cheboygan to the northern Michigan resort town was torn up in 1991. The D & M itself soon followed the vanished tracks, leasing itself to the Lake State Railway Company in February 1992. The lease became a purchase in 1997, legally ending the existence of the Detroit & Mackinac Railway as an independent railroad.



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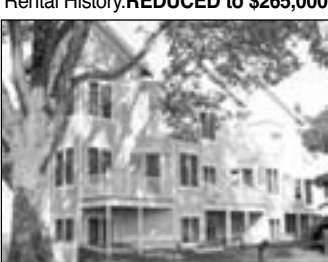


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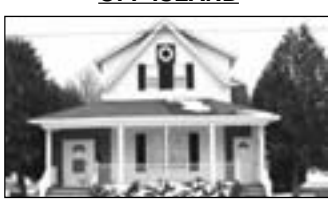


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Off-Island Lake Michigan Waterfront Lot - Beautiful lot, 17 miles West of St. Ignace in the Wildwood Sub. 100 ft.X 250 ft., nice sandy beach, very nicely wooded, and sits atop of a bank. Great views and very private area. **\$133,000.00**

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Charming Historic "Cottage" with spectacular waterviews! Fully furnished 4 BR, 3 baths, enclosed front screen porch. **\$999,950**



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TRILLIUM HEIGHTS HOME
3 BR, 1 bath, full basement, wrap-around deck. **\$388,000**



Charming Victorian home, completely furnished, near 17th hole at Woods Golf Course with 3 BRs, 2-1/2 baths, Jacuzzi, covered porches. **Priced to sell at \$459,000**



WOODS GOLF COURSE
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VACANT LOTS

StoneBrook Lot - Large Waterfront lot with fantastic views of Mackinac Bridge and sunsets. Only one available! **\$425,000**

Trillium Heights Lot - Approximately 1 mile from town close to Jewel Golf Course and Turtle Park. Lot #3 **\$119,900** Lot #11 **\$95,900** Lot #24 **\$79,900**

WOODBUFF SUBDIVISION
Nicely Wooded 2 with Waterviews. Near Woods. Golf Course & Stonecliffe.
Lot 14-\$120,000 **Lot 15-\$135,000**
Lot 25-\$315,000 **Lot 37-\$299,000**
Lot 21-\$119,900

STONECLIFFE MANOR GOLF COURSE COMMUNITY
Beautifully wooded homesites located on the Woods Golf Course at Stonecliffe Resort. Featuring lots of various sizes; also included are city water, sewer, electricity, and telephone. **Starting at \$59,900**

FOREST BLUFF, FOREST RIDGE & FOREST BROOK
Semi-wooded homesites located on the West Side of Island overlooking Lake Huron, Bridge & Straits.

Private Waterfront Lot - Approximately 2 Miles West of Town Near Stonebrook. **REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE \$275,000**



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SUMMER HOUSE SUITES at Stonecliffe Resort
Elegantly decorated, some waterviews, rental income potential.

Prices starting at \$167,500 to \$249,500

COMMERCIAL

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Sunsets are glorious from this beautiful 5 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath home with 133 feet of water frontage on the Westernmost shore of Mackinac Island. This stunning cottage boasts an expansive two story great room with fireplace and water views. The first floor master suite has a charming sitting room, bath with whirlpool tub and large walk in closet. Additional features include a large gourmet kitchen adjoining a bright, airy breakfast room and a formal dining room. The second level consists of 4 bedrooms with two full baths and a catwalk overlooking the great room below. You can begin to enjoy the magic of the island immediately as a majority of furnishings are included. **Call now for your personal tour! \$1,100,000.**