

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2025
Michigan History Center
Board Room

Commissioners in attendance: Laura Ashlee, Tim Chester, Brian Egen, Delia Fernandez-Jones, Leslie Pielack, and Larry Wagenaar.

Excused Absence: Joe Calvaruso, and Eric Hemenway.

Staff: Stephanie Arwady, Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, and Steven Hilberg.

Public: Tony and Jeanne Krukowski, Grosse Isle; Carly Kalkauski, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) student intern.

At 9:34 a.m. Egen called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda: Ashlee moved to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Pielack and was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Fernandez-Jones moved to approve the April 25, 2025, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously adopted.

America250MI —The center and the Historical Society of Michigan lead the committee for Michigan's Commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The funds were appropriated as follows: \$3 million for local grants with \$1 million allocated to two legislatively designated projects; \$2 million for state programs with \$1 million of this designated to the center and the Archives of Michigan; \$150,000 may be used for administrative support.

A press release is scheduled to be released today, June 12, 2025, announcing the first round of winners for the America250MI grants. The awards support history in communities across the state. There will be a second round of grants in 2026. There is approximately \$800,000 that still needs to be designated for use toward state programs.

Clark stated staff is working with the DNR legislative liaison to have the press release shared with state legislators. Ashlee also suggested having each legislator share the information with constituents in their district/region.

Director's Report —The report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Clark shared that construction began on the Gchi Mshiikenh Deh Minising/Heart of the Great Turtle Island project. Clark is moving forward with seeking funding from the Mellon Foundation to cover the \$450,000 that was lost in the federal National Endowment for the Humanities grant cancellations.

Clark stated that the center and the Marketing and Outreach Division received a Natural Resources Trust Fund grant for exhibits at the Hartwick Pines State Park Visitor Center.

Clark noted that in response to an appeal by multiple state Attorney Generals, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction to restore the terminated Institute of Museum and Library Services grant to catalogue Michigan Woman’s Hall of Fame artifacts.

Ashlee asked if the broadband expansion project is still moving forward. Clark responded that it is.

Michigan Historical Marker Program

- **Public Comments on Marker Topics** —Tony Krukowski, Grosse Ile Historical Society, asked if the commission offers any financial support to help cover the costs to refinish markers that are beginning to look worn. Clark stated that there is a 60/40 Marker Repair/Replacement Program available to help with these costs and they are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Krukowski stated that Davis was very helpful throughout the entire process, and it was greatly appreciated.
- **Artifact Status Plans**
 - ◆ **Holland Harbor/Holland Harbor Lighthouse, L394, Ottawa County, Holland**
Wagenaar moved to approve artifact status for one of the two identical Holland Harbor/Holland Harbor Lighthouse markers; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved. The commission recommended selecting the marker with the best physical appearance to use as the artifact and to change the label to reflect that the marker is a “Michigan Historical Marker.”
- **Relocation Request**
 - ◆ **Brooklyn’s Founder, L29, Jackson County, Brooklyn**
Fernandez-Jones moved to approve relocating the Brooklyn’s Founder marker; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved. Clark noted the original two-post marker was damaged and is unable to be repaired. The format used on the original marker is no longer used. As a result, the text has been revised, and the marker will be replaced with a single-post marker with the same text on each side.
 - ◆ **Colonel Brodhead’s Office, L577, Wayne County, Grosse Ile**
Krukowski stated the marker has been in storage at the Grosse Ile Historical Society due to the current property owners’ objection to having the marker located on their property, which is the location of Colonel Brodhead’s Office. Krukowski stated that the Grosse Ile Historical Society wants to keep Colonel Brodhead’s story alive and in the forefront of the community’s mind to help preserve the future of the site. The Grosse Ile Historical Society has a highly visible area identified to display the marker at 25020 East River Road, Grosse Ile. Ashlee asked if the proposed site is a historical village where historic structures have been moved into it. Krukowski stated that there is a train depot that has always been there and then explained that a Customs House was moved off from the site many years ago and then ended up back at the site a few years ago. Wagenaar moved to approve relocating Colonel Brodhead’s Office marker; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved. The commission recommended adding details to the label stating that the ruins of Colonel Brodhead’s Office are located approximately 2.5 miles from the marker location.

- **Approval of Marker Applications** —Written background information was provided for five new marker applications. (Appendix A)
 - ◆ **Shepard House, Calhoun County, Charlevoix**
 - ◆ **Camp Daggett, Charlevoix County, Petoskey**
 - ◆ **Port Austin Air Force Station, Huron County, Port Austin**
 - ◆ **Stonecliffe, Mackinac County, Mackinac Island**
 - ◆ **Milford Presbyterian Church, Oakland County, Milford**

Wagenaar moved to approve the Shepard House marker application; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.

Fernandez-Jones moved to approve the Camp Daggett marker application; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved. The commission recommended the marker be placed along the main road and not on a walking trail.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Port Austin Air Force Station marker application; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Ashlee moved to approve the Stonecliffe marker application; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.

Ashlee moved to decline the Milford Presbyterian Church marker application noting the structure lacks historical integrity and the historical narrative does not support an exceptional or significant impact of the congregation on the history of the community or the state; the motion was seconded by Pielack and was unanimously approved.

Fernandez-Jones recommended creating a draft letter template and talking points to use when a marker application is declined and volunteered to help do so. Ashlee and Pielack volunteered to help.

- **Approval of Marker Texts** —Draft marker texts were provided for the following seven markers:
 - ◆ **Holy Trinity Catholic Parish, Kent County, Comstock Park**
 - ◆ **Old Settlers, Mecosta County, Mecosta**
 - ◆ **Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary/St. Mary Academy, Monroe County, Monroe**
 - ◆ **The First Congregational Church of Greenville, Montcalm County, Greenville**
 - ◆ **Commerce Settlement/June Byers, Oakland County, Commerce Township**
 - ◆ **Clinton Griffey/Griffey Cottage, Oakland County, Rochester**
 - ◆ **Clark Park, Wayne County, Detroit**

Ashlee moved to approve the Holy Trinity Catholic Parish marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Old Settlers marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones and was unanimously approved.

Ashlee moved to approve the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary/St. Mary Academy marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to decline the sponsor written text for The First Congregational Church of Greenville marker, stating that it does not meet the standards and criteria for a marker text established by the commission; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved. The commission noted approval to decline the application if the sponsor is unwilling to work with staff to develop an acceptable text.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Commerce Settlement/June Byers marker text as amended with an exception to wave the rule that a person be deceased for twenty-years before being named on a marker in order to allow the mention of June Byers; the motion was seconded by Pielack and was unanimously approved.

Wagenaar moved to approve the Clinton Griffey/Griffey Cottage marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved.

Fernandez-Jones moved to approve the Clark Park marker as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved. Fernandez-Jones noted the significance of the Latino marker and one side being written in Spanish.

Ashlee commented that it is helpful to have the commission take action when there are difficult text negotiations going on between a sponsor and staff.

➤ **Reports**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting.
- ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Business Updates

- **Nomination of Officers** —Fernandez-Jones recommended the nomination of Wagenaar as president and Egen as vice-president. The nominations were adopted unanimously. Egen thanked everyone for their support during the past eight years and stated he will miss working directly with Clark and staff. Wagenaar commended Egen for being the bridge to a much brighter future at a time when it was truly needed by the commission. Egen was applauded by fellow commissioners and staff.
- **Mackinac Island Meeting** —Clark stated that the Heritage Trail designation will be part of the discussion at the Mackinac meeting in August. She asked that commissioners send Davis any topics they are interested in discussing at that meeting.

Public Comment —No public comments were provided.

Commissioner Comments

- Pielack stated that the Village of Oxford Downtown Development Authority will be submitting a Michigan Historical Marker application for Brace Beemer, the voice of the Lone Ranger.

- Ashlee noted that the budget proposed by the President and federal House of Representatives zeroed out funding for State Historic Preservation Offices and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. This could be devastating for communities
- Egen noted that the Monroe County Board of Commissioners has committed \$6.9 million towards a museum expansion in Monroe.

Wagenaar moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Fernandez-Jones; and the meeting adjourned at 11:26 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses
Michigan Historical Commission
June 12, 2025

Shepard House

Applicant(s): Hans and Alicia Stark

Location Address: 373 Riverside Drive, Battle Creek, Calhoun County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Person and Historic Building/Site

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post marker, different text on each side.

Criteria:

The Shepard House is associated in a significant way with the establishment and growth of the community of Battle Creek. It is also an archeological site that has yielded information important to understanding the history of the Underground Railroad in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Historical Summary:

Warren Bronson Shepard (1809-1875) moved from Erie County, New York, to Battle Creek, Michigan in 1833. He became Battle Creek's first schoolteacher in 1834, teaching classes in a single room log schoolhouse. Almeda Lewis came to Battle Creek from Cayuga County, New York, in 1837. Her and Warren were married in May 1839. Together they raised two daughters, Emily and Amanda.

Shepard taught at Battle Creek school for only one year. He soon worked as a brickmaker and a farmer. To sustain his nearly 120-acre farm, Shepard hired farm hands. Many people seeking freedom from slavery came to Michigan through the Underground Railroad. Freedom seeker Pompey Tucker came to Battle Creek through Niles in the late 1840s. He and his sons worked in the fields of Shepard's farm. William Wallace Crittenden began living with the Shepards in September 1843. Shepard paid his expenses and allowed him to attend school.

Shepard hired Morrison O'Neal to construct a Greek Revival style brick house between 1852 and 1854. Two barns, a garden, and other landscape elements also made up the farmstead. Emily and Amanda Shepard owned the family's property until 1925. After passing through several owners, the house sat unused for more than ten years. The Calhoun County Land Bank possessed the house after tax foreclosure in 2017. Hans and Alicia Stark purchased the house in 2019.

Historic Integrity:

Hans Stark and architect Cody Newman have repurposed the house into commercial office space.

Recommendation: Approval with the change of marker size to small, one-post marker, or one-sided large.

Proposed Marker Location: At the front of the house along Riverside Drive.



Figure 1. Location of the marker at the west elevation of the house along Riverside Drive.



Figure 2. The Shepard House at 373 Riverside Drive, Battle Creek, circa 1930s.



Figure 3. The Shepard House at 373 Riverside Drive, circa 1950s.



Figure 4. Image of the front (west) elevation of the Shepard House after repurposing, 2023.



Figure 5. Image of the north and west elevation of the Shepard House after repurposing, 2023.

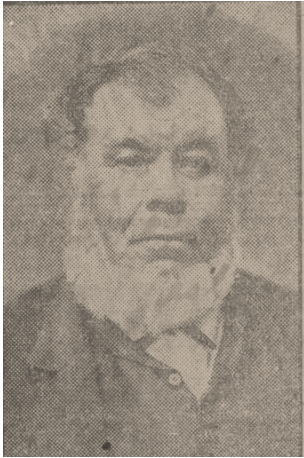


Figure 6. Photo of Warren Bronson Shepard, n.d.

Camp Daggett

Applicant: Abby Schroer | abbys@campdaggett.org; Julie Joles | julie.joles@campdaggett.org

Location Address: 3001 Church Road, Petoskey, Charlevoix County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Building/Site

Requested Marker Type: Large, two post marker, same text on each side.

Criteria:

Camp Daggett is associated in a significant way with the establishment and growth of recreation and education in the community of Petoskey, Michigan.

Historical Summary:

Organized camping grew in popularity in the United States in the early twentieth century. Family history says that Henry R. Daggett (1834-1901), a local business owner in Petoskey, often brought his Sunday School classes to his summer cottage on Walloon Lake in the late 1890s. Guidebooks like George Oliver Shields's *Camping and Camp Outfits* (1890) or Thomas Hiram Holding's *The Camper's Handbook* (1908) encouraged people to connect with nature and contributed to a rise in the popularity of camping. Recreational organizations like the American Camping Association (1910), the Boy Scouts of America (1910), and the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (1912) further encouraged organized youth camping.

Public interest in organized camping increased after World War I. By the 1920s summer camps presented an opportunity to educate and engage urban, middle-class, youth about nature, work, health, and moral uprightness. Following this trend, Walter "Mac" MacMillan, a physical education teacher in Petoskey public schools, conducted a summer camp for boys on his property, which was adjacent to Daggett's land, in 1923 and 1924.

At the Petoskey Rotary meeting of August 6, 1924, Harry Hinkley was appointed to secure a site for a boy's camp with the aid of Bert Cook. In October 1924 Harriet S. Harper, daughter of the former Petoskey businessman, Henry Daggett, donated her father's forty acres on Walloon Lake for the establishment of a permanent boy's summer camp. Camp Daggett officially opened in 1925 with MacMillan as camp director. Campers, as well as MacMillan and his family, stayed in surplus military tents used during World War I. Camp programming expanded to include girls in the summer of 1926.

The first permanent camp buildings were the kitchen and dining hall. The Petoskey Kiwanis Club financed and constructed the buildings in three stages from 1927 to 1929. With financial support from the Petoskey Rotary Club, Bert Cook financed and built the first of six cabins in 1930. The first main lodge was completed in 1932. Construction of an administration hut was completed in 1939, the same year electricity came to the camp.

The camp grew with the addition of land and buildings from 1950 to 1980. It transitioned into year-round programming in 1987. A three-phase renovation included the construction of a new

main lodge, dormitories, and classrooms and the overall winterizing of camp buildings. The original Mac Dining Hall was demolished in 1989, except for its fireplace, which, was incorporated into its replacement, the Mort Neff Center, in 1991.

Historic Integrity:

The 1930 cabins and administrative hut have also been demolished. The camp has continuously operated since 1925, only closing in 1945, during World War II, and in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation: Approve

Proposed Marker Location: Along Bear Cove Ln. (entry way leading into the camp).

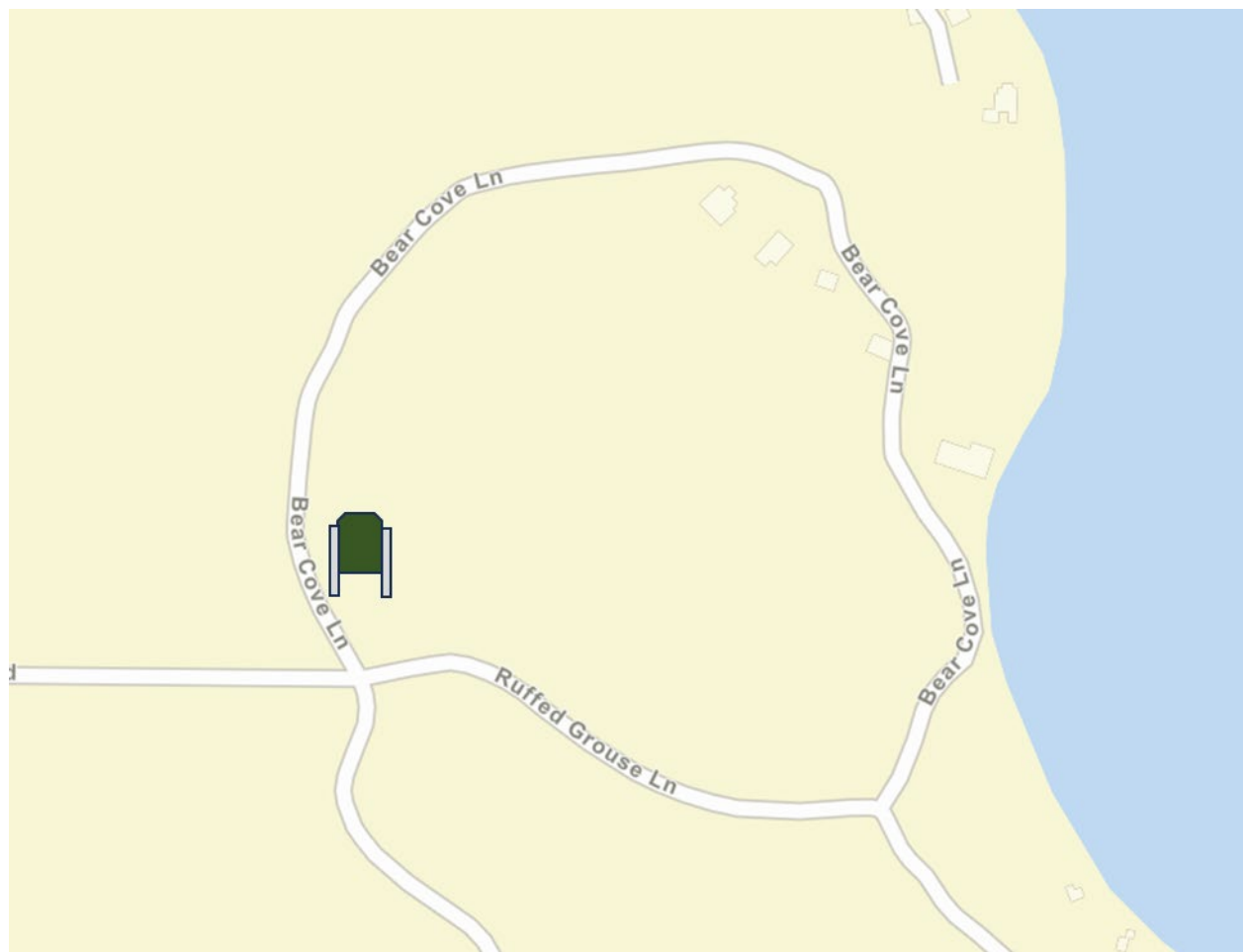


Figure 1. Location of the proposed marker at the camp's main entrance along Bear Cove Lane.



Figure 2. Photo of the first session on Walloon Lake, 1924.

Figure 3. The camp kitchen and dining hall, known as “Mac Hall,” was the first permanent building



on the property, built in 1927.



Figure 4. View of the original camp lodge from Walloon Lake, 1932.



Figure 5. Image of an early group of girl campers, 1928.



Figure 6. Architectural rendering of new Mac Hall and Mort Neff Center, ca. 1980s.

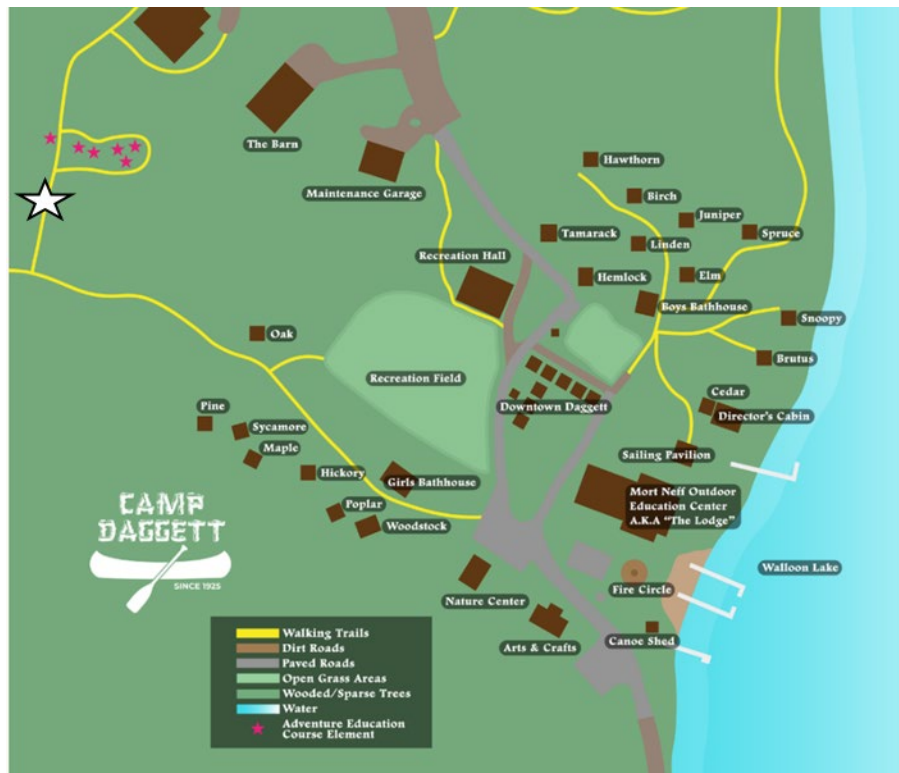


Figure 7. Map of Camp Daggett, 2025. Location of the proposed historical marker is starred.

Port Austin Air Force Station

Applicant: Drieka DeGraff, Vice President, Port Austin Area Historical Society

Location Address: 8255 N. Van Dyke Rd, Port Austin, Huron County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Building/Site

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post marker, different text on each side.

Criteria:

The Port Austin Air Force Station is associated in a significant way with the establishment and growth of the community of Port Austin, the state of Michigan, and the United States Air Force through such themes as post-World War II military history, social history, and science.

Historical Summary:

Port Austin Air Force Station (AFS) operated as part of the United States Air Force's Air Defense Command (ADC) network from 1951 to 1988. As tensions of nuclear war escalated between the United States and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, the United States government sought to enhance the country's air defense capabilities. Formed in 1946, the ADC organized an air defense system for the continental United States. In 1948 Major General Gordon P. Saville proposed a system of seventy-five radar station and ten control stations across the United States, called the "permanent network." News of the Soviet Union's successful detonation of an atomic bomb in September 1949 increased public interest in the project. In 1950 Congress granted the Air Force the authority to transfer money from other projects to expedite building radar stations.

Construction of Port Austin AFS began in 1950. In November the Headquarters of Eastern Air Defense Force issued General Order 28, which activated six officers and seventy-six airmen of the 754th Aircraft Control and Warning (AC&W) squadron. Operations of the 754th AC&W out of Port Austin AFS began in 1952. The facility's original two radars, an AN/FPS-3 search radar and an AN/FPS-4 height-finder radar, enabled the station to detect and track incoming aircraft. In 1962 the site was converted to perform the duties of a Long-Range Radar and Back Up Intercept Control (BUIC) North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) control center. This included the addition of an AN/FPS-24 radar as part of the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) program, used to produce a single image of the airspace over a wide area.

In 1970 the station reverted to a solely long-range radar facility under the command of the 23rd Air Division, Duluth, Minnesota. In 1979 the station came under Tactical Air Command Control. In February 1987, the Air Force announced that the station would close the following year. The station's closure put twenty-five civilians out of work and reassigned seventy-five military personnel. The radar was deactivated on October 1, 1988, and fifty-three military personnel and seventeen civilians were tasked with closing the station. The FAA radar site in Canton, Michigan, took over Port Austin's monitoring responsibilities. In 1989 Congress declared the station site to be excess federal property. In 1992 the United States deeded the property to Huron County at a cost of \$454,000. Since then, the property has been subdivided into small commercial and residential lots.

Historic Integrity:

The structures that housed the AN/FPS-26 finder radar and the AN/FPS-24 search radar remain standing as well as several other auxiliary station buildings.

Recommendation: Approve

Proposed Marker Location: The front lawn of the U & I Club, N Van Dyke Rd.



Figure 1. Location of the proposed marker at U & I Club on North Van Dyke Road.



Figure 2. Location of the proposed marker at U & I Club on North Van Dyke Road.



Figure 3. Image of Port Austin Air Force Station, 1978.



Figure 4. Image of remaining structures of Port Austin Air Force Station, 2022.

Stonecliffe

Applicant: Patrick Conlon | General Manager

Location Address: 8593 Cudahy Circle, Mackinac Island, Mackinac County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Building/Site

Requested Marker Type: Small, one-post marker, different text on each side.

Criteria:

Stonecliffe is associated in a significant way with the establishment of Mackinac Island as a summer resort destination. It also embodies the distinctive characteristics of Tudor Revival style architecture and represents the work of architect Frederick Wainwright Perkins.

Historical Summary:

In 1904 Michael Cudahy (1841-1910), a wealthy meat packer from Chicago, purchased thirty-seven acres of land on Mackinac Island. Cudahy, one of three brothers, two who already had summer homes on Mackinac Island, hired architect Frederick Wainwright Perkins (1866-1928) to design a summer cottage. Perkins had designed the Lawrence Young cottage (what is presently the Governor's summer residence) in 1902. Patrick Doud completed the construction of Stonecliffe in 1905.

Alvin T. and Sallie Aley Hert purchased the property from the Cudahy family in 1915. One year later, they hired Doud to construct the "Ballroom," a detached lodge also designed by Frederick Perkins that is now Woods Restaurant. The Herts purchased and added the adjacent 157-acre private claim granted to Simon Champaign in 1823 to the cottage estate in 1917. The Cudahy and Herts families were the only owners to use the cottage and property as a residence. Sallie Hert deeded the property to the Episcopal Cathedral Foundation in 1948.

In 1949 the Oxford Group Moral Re-Armament purchased the property. They deeded the property to Mackinac College in 1966. After the college closed in 1970, a group of investors opened Stonecliffe as a hotel. In 1971 televangelist minister Rex Humbard purchased the property and repurposed it as a ski resort; naming a ski hill on the property's southwest bluff "Mt. Humbard." The Stonecliffe Development Company purchased the property from Humbard in 1977 and opened the house as a summer hotel.

Historic Integrity:

Stonecliffe retains its original materials and has not been altered by additions or the removal of original elements.

Recommendation: Approve

Proposed Marker Location: Near main entrance at the Inn's north elevation.



Figure 1. Photograph of the south elevation, 1910.



Figure 2. Photograph of the south elevation, 1927.



Figure 3. Woods Restaurant, designed in 1916 by Frederick Perkins.

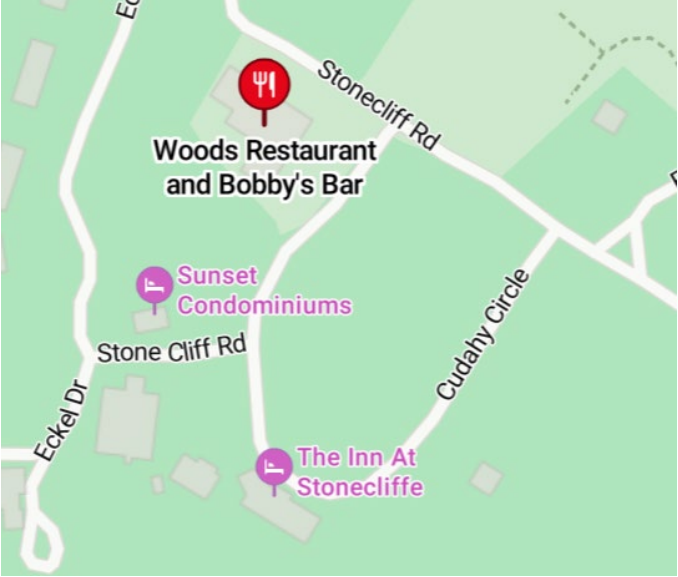


Figure 4. Location of Woods Restaurant in proximity to The Inn at Stonecliffe.



Figure 5. Photograph of the south elevation, 2025.



Figure 6. Photograph of the north elevation with proposed marker location.

Milford Presbyterian Church

Applicant: Jackie Swenson | jacquelyn.swenson@gmail.com

Location Address: 238 N. Main Street, Milford, Oakland County

Historic Resource(s): Historic Building/Site

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post marker, different text on each side.

Criteria:

The establishment of the Milford Presbyterian Church is unusual in its combining of two protestant denominations. The core exterior of the church building is an example of early twentieth-century Romanesque architecture; however, it is enveloped in modern additions.

Historical Summary:

On September 2, 1835, the Organization of Detroit Presbytery approved the admission of a church at Milford. Established a year after Michigan became a state, the church was organized by six charter members in the village schoolhouse in 1838 with the Reverend Albert Worthington serving as the first pastor.

Under the Plan of Union doctrine adopted by the Connecticut General Association in June 1801, Presbyterian and Congregational churches often formed one society in newly established communities. Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Milford merged into the United Presbyterian and Congregational Church of Milford in 1845. The church remained in this unity until 1957, when the Congregational part of the name was dropped, and the church officially became the Milford Presbyterian Church.

In 1844 construction began on the original church building located at West Huron Street. It was completed and dedicated as the United Presbyterian and Congregational Church of Milford in 1846. The “Little White Church” or “church over the river” as it was referred to underwent extensive repairs in 1877 and 1881. It was abandoned in 1900.

To accommodate the growing congregation, the Detroit architecture firm Spier and Rohns designed a new Romanesque Revival style church. The church was dedicated on April 8, 1900, and remains standing at the corner of North Main Street and East Liberty Street.

The new building underwent two phases of additions, beginning in 1957 with a one-story Midcentury Modern style section on the building’s south and west sides, completed in 1962. The second phase added a second floor over phase one and was completed in 1965. In 1984 the entrance was remodeled to better reflect the original church building.

Supplemental Information:

During World War II the members of the church formed a wartime service committee and raised funds to send postage and Christmas gifts to soldiers. During the 1967 Detroit Uprising, the

church acted as a collection center for goods. The church also organized members to help with cleanup efforts in areas damaged by the uprising.

Historic Integrity:

DNR historical architect Robbert McKay concluded that the building “lacks sufficient integrity of design either as an example of Romanesque Revival or Midcentury Modern religious architecture to warrant recognition.”

Recommendation: Approve

Proposed Marker Location: Corner of N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street



Proposed location of marker at corner of North Main Street and East Liberty Street.



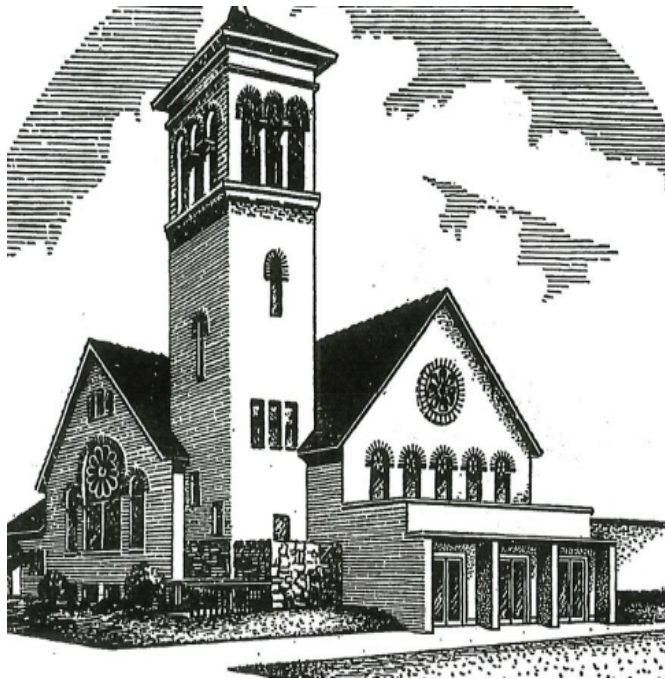
Corner of N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street looking towards the proposed marker placement.



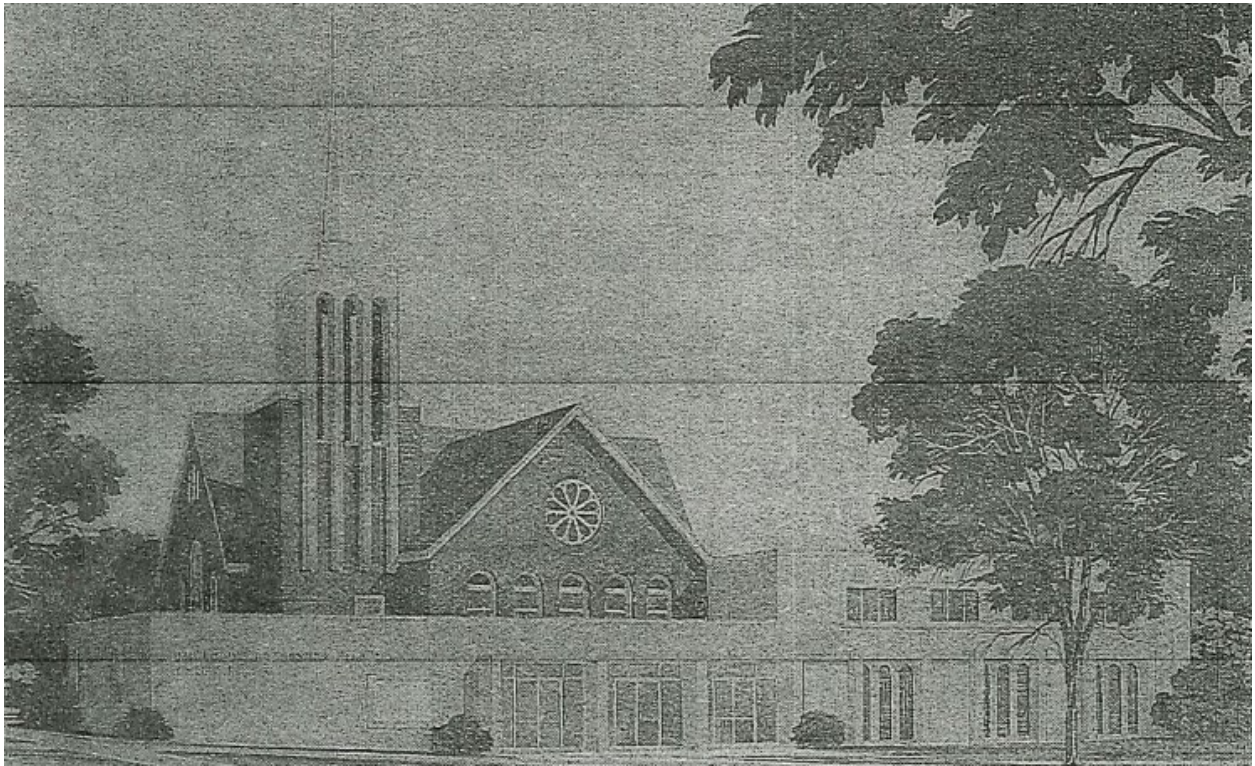
Northwest corner of the original building at N. Main Street and E. Liberty Street shortly after its completion in 1900. The original entrance is believed to be near the bell tower.



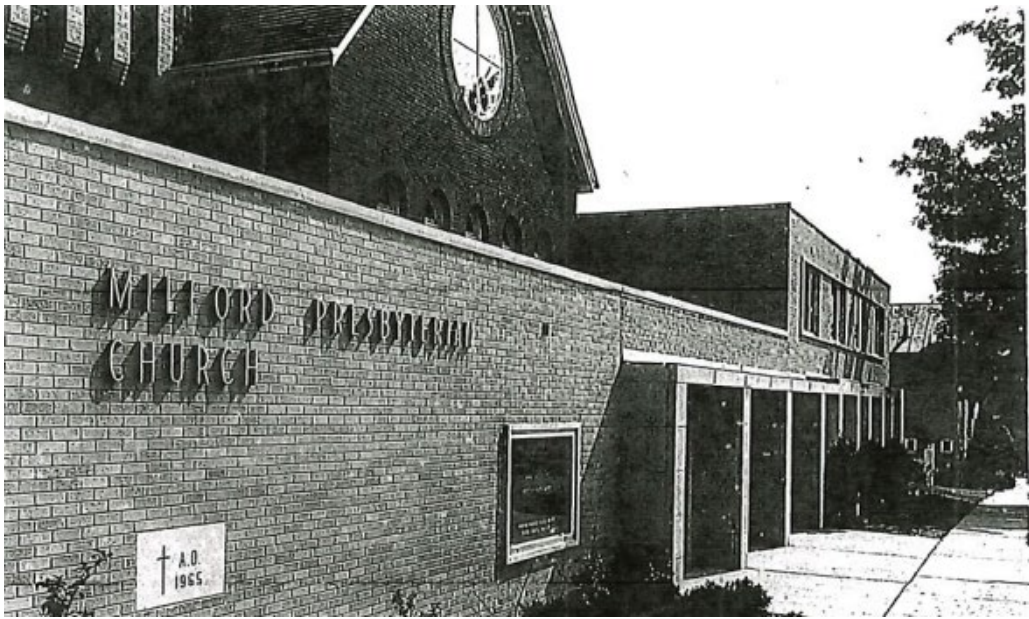
Southwest corner of the original building where the 1960s additions stand.



Sketch of phase I of the 1957-1962 remodel. The main entrance has been moved to the west and follows a Midcentury Modern design.



Phase I sketch from the Milford Times in 1957 including the remodel of the bell tower and the addition of Sunday School facilities and a Chapel in the Midcentury Modern style. It was completed in 1962.



This shows the completed Phase I entrance on E. Liberty Street as well as the Phase II addition of the second floor completed in 1965.



Architectural rendering of the 1984 entrance remodel. Designed by the firm Total Concepts Corporation the new entrance replaced the Midcentury Modern style entrance with one that more closely resembles the original church building. This structure remains as the main entrance.



Current exterior of the church, including the original sanctuary (brick facade, left) with the 1962 and 1965 addition visible on the right.



Exterior photo from January 2024.