ROBERT CAMERON'S ABOVE MACKINAC



WITH TEXT BY PHIL PORTER

ABOVE MACKINAC

AND SOME OF ITS NEIGHBORS

by ROBERT CAMERON

A new collection of historical and original aerial photographs

with text by PHIL PORTER

Putting together a book like Above Mackinac can be enormously complex and requires the help of many friendly, even dedicated people. So, for their encouragement and expertise, I thank the following:

David Armour, Robert Burger, Robert Ekstrand, John Goy, Linda Henry, Tina Hodge, Jane Manoogian, Richard Manoogian, Mimi Musser, Carl Nold, Patricia O'Grady, William Porter, Lorone Porter, Robert Raisch and Susie Raisch.

Special thanks to Barry BeDour for expert piloting and consultation.

For assistance in researching the historical aerial photography, acknowledgement is made to Mackinac State Historic Parks for pages 20, 22, 24.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration for pages 60 and 70.



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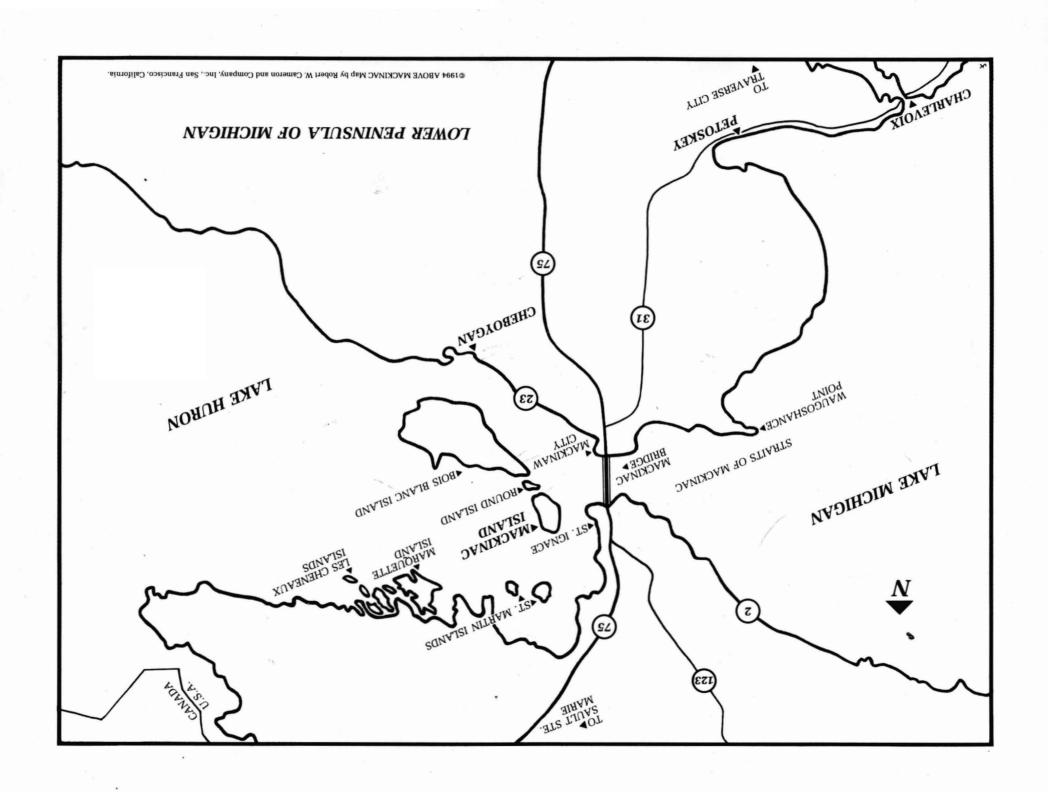
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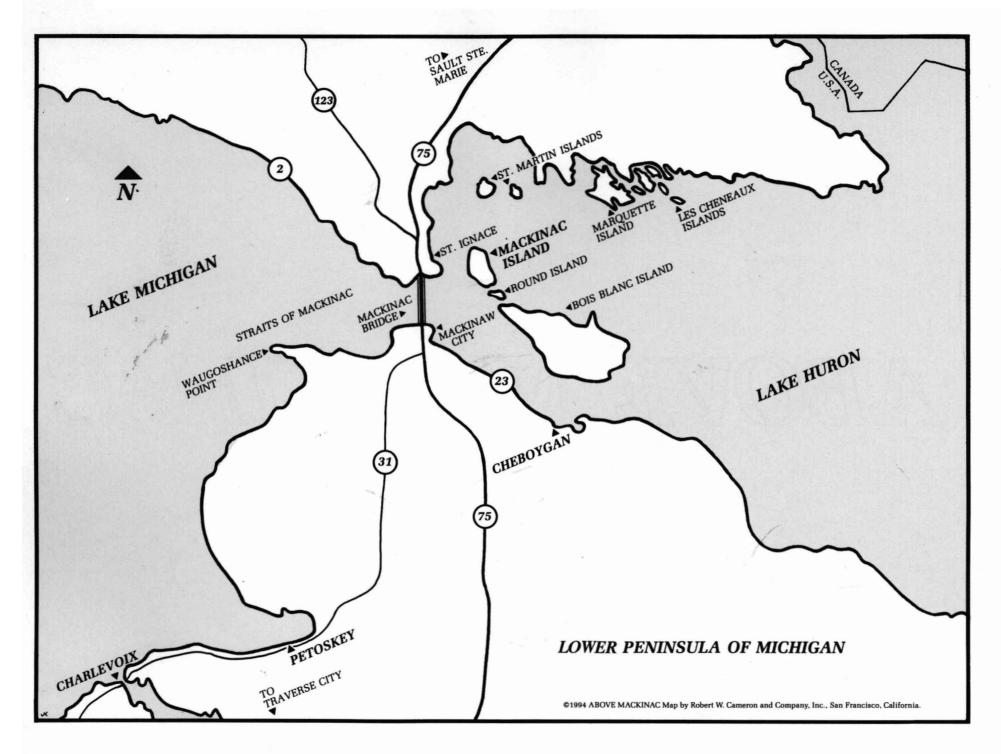
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ABOVE MACKINAC



(Opposite) The Straits of Mackinac is the crossroads of the upper Great Lakes where the crystal blue waters of Lake Huron and Lake Michigan flow together beneath the mighty Mackinac Bridge.



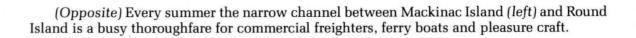




The century-old Grand Hotel is the most dramatic example of Mackinac Island's rich architectural heritage.



Only eight miles in circumference, Mackinac Island is filled with great natural beauty, unparalleled history and every imaginable flavor of fudge!









Dominated by the stone walls of Fort Mackinac and lined with quaint, white clapboard houses, Mackinac Island's harbor is among the most picturesque in America.

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INTRODUCTION

Mackinac Island has been my summer home since childhood and a part of my family for generations. Growing up on the island my summer days were filled with unique experiences — exploring ancient sea caves, playing golf on a War of 1812 battlefield and galloping horses (after I mucked out their stalls!) on cliff-side bridle paths. While in college and graduate school I worked as a tour guide at historic Fort Mackinac and upon graduation I became a full-time historian and curator for Mackinac State Historic Parks. After twenty years of research and interpretation, Mackinac's rich and varied history still fascinates me.

The Straits of Mackinac appeared over fifteen thousand years ago as the glaciers of the last ice age withdrew to the north. Mile-high floes of ice scoured deep ravines into the earth's surface and filled them with melting waters — the Great Lakes were formed. At the center of the upper Great Lakes the Straits of Mackinac, with its spectacular islands and deep, cool waters, emerged to connect lakes Michigan and Huron and separate Michigan's two peninsulas. The earliest settlers migrated from the south and these waters became busy highways during the warm summers and abandoned, frozen wastelands in winter — a pattern that continues at the Straits today.

For centuries, Native Americans paddled fragile birch bark canoes to the Straits every summer in search of whitefish and lake trout. So plentiful was their catch, that they called these waters "the home of the fish." The native people were particularly attracted to the hump-backed island with curious rock formations that they called "Michilimackinac" or Land of the Great Turtle. Today Ojibway and Odawa people still revere Mackinac Island as a sacred place of great spiritual importance.

Drawn by the Native settlements, French missionaries and fur traders came to the Straits of Mackinac in the 1670s. Jesuit Priest Jacques Marquette established the mission of St. Ignatius Loyola on Mackinac Island in 1670 and moved it to the north side of the Straits (today St. Ignace) the following year. French fur traders also established their headquarters at St. Ignace which soon became a strategic summer depot connecting the rich fur lands south, west and north of Mackinac with the commercial markets of the east coast and Europe. To protect the lucrative fur trade, the French constructed Fort de Buade at St. Ignace in 1690. For the next 250 years fur traders, with the help of the military, continued to use the Straits of Mackinac as the central supply station and transshipment point of upper Great Lakes fur trade.

In 1715 French missionaries, soldiers and traders moved to the south side of the Straits where they constructed Fort Michilimackinac (today Mackinaw City). At first a simple and quiet outpost, Fort Michilimackinac flourished as a prosperous trading village after British authorities took control in the 1760s. A nearby village of more than one hundred houses – known as the "subarbs" – developed when the fort walls could no longer hold the expanding population.

The American Revolution had a lasting impact on the Straits of Mackinac. Fearful of a possible American gunboat attack, British commander Patrick Sinclair moved his garrison from the mainland to the protective bluffs of nearby Mackinac Island in 1781. The "subarban" civilians and fur traders followed the soldiers and established the village of Mackinac Island below the fort and around the island's natural harbor. British soldiers were still hewing logs and splitting shingles for the new fort when they learned of the American victory at Yorktown. Two years later the Treaty of Paris deeded the Straits of Mackinac to the young United States. American troops did not occupy the fort until 1796 and promptly lost it to the British at the outbreak of the War of 1812. But the treaty ending that war again granted the Straits area to the United States and

American troops returned to Fort Mackinac in 1815.

John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company flourished on Mackinac Island following the War of 1812. In the 1820s, millions of dollars worth of furs flowed through the company's buildings on Market Street before they were shipped to eastern markets. Mackinac furs made Astor America's first millionaire. By the early 1830s the trade declined as the region's fur-bearing animals were trapped out and European styles changed. Islanders turned to fishing to support their families and Mackinac Island became an important upper Great Lakes fish processing and shipping center.

After the Civil War trading and fishing gave way to tourism as the main economy of the Straits of Mackinac. Mackinac Island, with its delightful combination of natural beauty, historic charm and healthy environment, became a summer destination for travelers from throughout the country. In response to the island's growing popularity, the federal government established Mackinac National Park in 1875 and Fort Mackinac's commandant became the park superintendent. This was the country's second national park, created only three years after Yellowstone Park in Wyoming Territory. Steamboats and railroads extended their service to the Straits of Mackinac and transported thousands of tourists north each summer. Soon the face of Mackinac began to change as local entrepreneurs remodeled old fur warehouses and fish shanties into resort hotels, curio shops and confectionery stores.

The swell of visitors in the 1880s crowded the dusty streets and overwhelmed the island's modest hotels. Construction of the magnificent Grand Hotel in 1887 resolved the room crunch and forever changed the character of Mackinac Island. The elegant hotel attracted prominent socialites from Detroit and Chicago who transformed Mackinac into a Midwestern Newport. Mackinac Island

was the most fashionable summer place in the upper Great Lakes and visitors of great wealth were eager to be seen promenading along the Grand Hotel's classical, columned porch. Not all summer visitors were content staying in a hotel, even one as luxurious as the Grand. Those who wanted more permanent roots built opulent summer homes along the cedar-lined bluffs overlooking the Straits of Mackinac.

Mackinac Island was a flourishing resort when the federal government decided to remove the soldiers from the fort and transfer the national park to Michigan in 1895. The fort and public lands became Michigan's first state park and, in many ways, the island hasn't changed much since then. The preservation programs of the Mackinac State Historic Parks and the 1896 ban on automobiles are responsible for the island's unique turn-of-thecentury character.

Although Mackinac Island is the focal point, it shares this rich history with many of its neighboring islands and towns. From Cheboygan on the east to Waugoshance Point on the west, the Straits of Mackinac has a long and fascinating history. Like Mackinac Island, the northwestern Michigan cities of Harbor Springs, Petoskey, Charlevoix and Traverse City, have been popular summer resorts for more than a century. To the north, Sault Ste. Marie is Michigan's oldest city, and one that has been inextricably linked to Mackinac since the earliest days of fur trade and missionary activity.

Bob Cameron's aerial photographs have reinvigorated my sense of wonder and excitement about the Mackinac region of northern Michigan. From his lofty vantage point Mr. Cameron has beautifully captured the natural beauty and awe-inspiring combination of lake, land and sky in this place we call Mackinac.

Phil Porter