

7347, 7315, AND 7355 MAIN STREET RESEARCH SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The scope of services as outlined for this project includes a brief historic context for the subject building and research into historic photographs. The building was built ca. 1900. It appears on maps and in a number of photographs, but no source clearly and conclusively shows the storefront facade before the current Trading Post application, which dates to ca. 1948.

BRIEF BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The subject building is located at 7347-7355 Main Street on Mackinac Island, Michigan (Figure 1-1). The building is sited on a rectangular lot south of the junction of Main Street and Astor Street. The rear (southeast) of the site abuts Lake Huron. The subject building is a ca. 1900, two-story wood-frame building with a rectangular footprint and three commercial storefronts. It is clad in wood and has a stone foundation with a flat, sloping roof. The cornice has decorative brackets. Windows are one-over-one, double-hung, aluminum-clad wood units. The building currently houses the Trading Post in the northernmost storefront, May's Fudge in the center, and Baxter's in the southernmost storefront.



Figure 1-1. Aerial view of the subject building within the red circle (Google Maps, 2023).

The Trading Post has rustic log cladding and a wide entrance with log supports. The door is a large-scale wood accordion door. The southern two storefronts have more traditional, early twentieth-century storefronts with wood or concrete bulkheads and large fixed-pane windows with transoms.

Known alterations include the log storefront, which dates to ca. 1948. The log cladding was extended to cover the stairway entrance to the south ca. 1998. Continuing to the south, the bulkhead of May's Fudge was replaced with cinderblock and other changes to the windows were made due to damage that occurred ca. 1960. The facade of Baxter's was altered for the filming of "Somewhere in Time" ca. 1980.

A storage building was constructed on the rear of the site in 1987. Other known changes to the building include an addition dating to ca. 1969 on the rear (southeastern) elevation, which was changed again with the wood porch and deck added in 1995. The interiors of the first-floor commercial spaces and the second-floor living spaces have been modified several times since the original construction.

METHODOLOGY

Research into the building was completed between September and October 2023. Historic plat maps and city directories, which may have informed the business history more completely, were unavailable. Many of the commercial buildings along Main Street on Mackinac Island have had significant alterations over time as tenants changed. Several fires have also affected the buildings along the street, many of which are wood-frame construction and located in close proximity to one another.

Additional research limitations included errors in the deed abstract and incomplete county records. An e-mail requesting further information from newspaper columnists Frank Straus and Karen Gould, both of whom have previously referenced the building history in various columns in the *Town Crier*, was sent October 23, 2023. At the time of writing there has been no response to the inquiry. An e-mail requesting information on historic building permits was sent October 24, 2023, to Katie Pereny, the Secretary of Building, Zoning, Planning and Historic District Commission at the City of Mackinac Island. The required Freedom of Information Request Form was submitted to the City Clerk, who provided known building permit records dating back to the 1990s. There are no known older records at the City pertaining to the building.

Repositories:

- Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives
- Mackinac Island Public Library
- Michilimackinac Historical Society
- City of Mackinac Island
- Mackinac County

Primary Sources:

- Deed abstract for subject property
- Mackinac County Assessor tax records
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1890, 1900, 1923)
- Historic aerials
- Historic photographs
- *Mackinac Island Town Crier* archives
- Interviews with Anthony Trayser

Secondary Sources:

- Brisson, Steve. *Downtown Mackinac Island: An Album of Historic Photos*. Mackinac Island, Mich.: Mackinac State Historical Parks, 2015.
- Brisson, Steve. *Wish You Were Here: An Album of Vintage Mackinac Island Postcards*. Mackinac Island, Mich.: Mackinac State Historical Parks, 2002.
- Petersen, Eugene T. *Mackinac Island, Its History in Pictures*. Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1976.
- North, Tom. *Images of America: Mackinac Island*. Arcadia Publishing, 2011.
- *Preliminary Historic District Study Committee Report for the Market and Main (Huron) Historic District*. 2011.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

In the early twentieth century, the business district on Mackinac Island began to develop along Main (Huron) Street. The 2011 Preliminary Historic District Study Committee Report for the Market and Main (Huron) Historic District describes the area during this time period using the subject building as a typical example:

The business district is composed predominantly of attached frame buildings one- to three-stories tall, often with false fronts, dating from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Most of the buildings are relatively plain, with decoration limited to a

Figure 1-2. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicating the building has not yet been constructed. The location of the future building is noted in red (Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives).

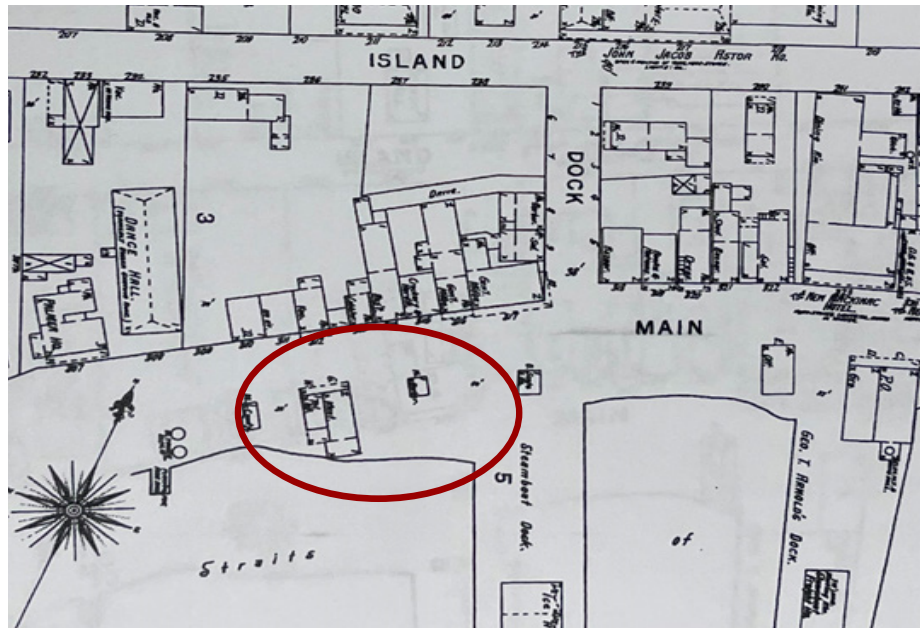


Figure 1-3. 1900 Sanborn Map showing what appears to be the buildings noted in red (Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives).

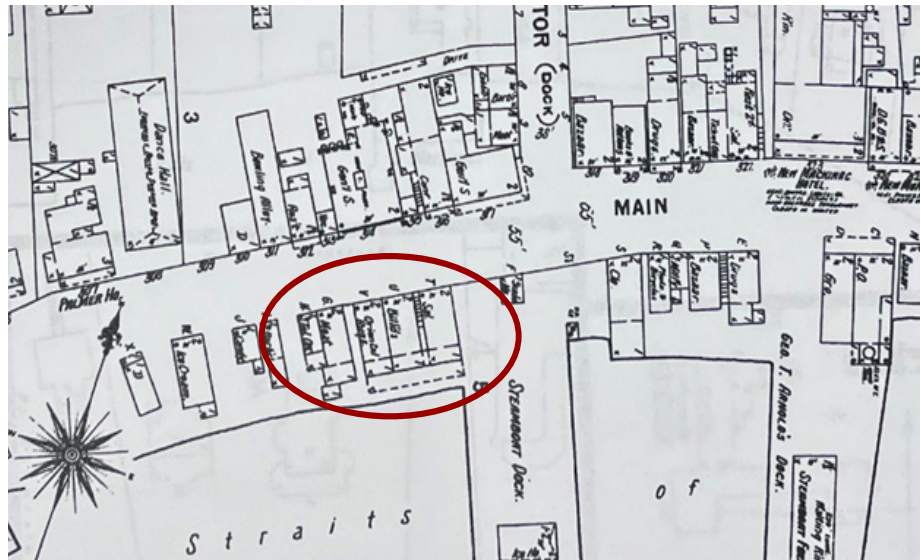


Figure 1-4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Mackinac Island, 1923, with what appears to be the building noted in red (Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives).



bracketed or dentillated cornice. The commercial block at 7347–55 Huron Street (ca. 1900...) is typical...¹

The earliest known detailed map of the location of the subject building is an 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.² The map depicts several small-scale low-rise (one-to-two-story) wood-frame buildings with wood shingled roofs in the approximate location of the subject building (Figure 1-2).

The 1900 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates that the subject building was constructed by this time.³ The three storefronts are labeled from northeast to southwest as “saloon”, “billiards” and “oriental rugs.” The roof is composite, as denoted by the black dot. There appears to be single-story back-of-house space in all three stores, and a covered porch or balcony on the rear (Figure 1-3).

The building is depicted on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map in 1923 with three storefronts separated by a wood frame wall, similar to today’s configuration.⁴ The storefront at 7355 Main Street (Baxter’s) is noted as a Western Union Telegraph location. The other two businesses are not named but are noted as stores (labeled with the “S”) (Figure 1-4).

An undated property tax map provided by Anthony Trayser shows the building location as the “Bogan Block”. An article published in 2011 in the *Mackinac Island Town Crier*, written by Karen Gould, indicates that the subject building was constructed by the Bogan family in 1926 and known as “The Majestic”.⁵ While it seems likely the building was constructed by the Bogan family, the additional information in the newspaper article could not be verified by any other source and conversations with several long-time local residents and Anthony Trayser did not indicate any knowledge of this. An October 23, 2023, e-mail requesting more information from Karen Gould about the source for this information has not received a response by the time of this document. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and historic images from the 1920s indicate that the building was in all likelihood constructed ca. 1900 rather than the 1926 date.

¹ Preliminary Historic District Study Committee Report, Market and Main (Huron) Historic District, 2011, <https://www.mackinacislandnews.com/wp-content/uploads/styles/MarketMain%20District%20Study%20Report.pdf>

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Mackinac Island City, 1895, Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives.

³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Mackinac Island City, 1900, Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives.

⁴ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Mackinac Island City, 1923, Mackinac State Historic Parks Archives.

⁵ Nancy Gould, “New Design Guidelines Provide Blueprint for Island Buildings”, *Mackinac Island Town Crier*, May 28, 2011.

Figure 1-5. Looking northeast at Main Street from closer to Hoban Street, with the subject building on the right. The Western Union sign is visible. Ca. 1920 (Mackinac State Park Archives).



Figure 1-6. Similar view looking northeast at Main Street from closer to Hoban Street, with the subject building on the right. Again the Western Union sign is visible, but the building to the south has changed. Ca. 1920 (Mackinac State Park Archives).



Figure 1-7. Sutton's linen store in the subject building on the left side of the image. Ca. 1945 (Mackinac State Park Archives).





Figure 1-8. Looking east at the Trading Post facade. Ca. 1950 (Mackinac State Park Archives).



Figure 1-9. The Trading Post facade ca. 1990 (Mackinac State Park Archives).

There is a newspaper reference to a Western Union located on the island in 1930, though it does not indicate the exact address.⁶ Both ca. 1920 photos of the building depict the Western Union in the southeastern storefront (Baxter's) (Figure 1-5 and Figure 1-6). In one of these photos (Figure 1-6), longtime tenant Murdick's candy store is clearly visible in the current May's Candy Shop storefront.

Based on the historic images and interviews with Anthony Trayser, Sutton's linen shop was located in the Trading Post storefront in the mid-to-late 1940s (Figure

⁶ "Looking Back", Mackinac Island Town Crier, May 29, 2010, <https://www.mackinacislandnews.com/articles/looking-back-74/>.

1-7).⁷ According to the deed abstract, the Bogan family sold the property to Henry Sutton in 1944. The Traysers purchased the building from Sutton ca. 1947 and changed the Trading Post facade to its current appearance ca. 1948.

In the ca. 1950 photograph in Figure 1-8, the door to the stairway south of the Trading Post did not have the current log cladding application. The stairway appears on the 1900 Sanborn (Figure 1-3) and was likely simply excluded from the 1923 Sanborn drawing (Figure 1-4). Based on this, the stairway door is likely what is visible on the right side of Figure 1-7. In 1998, the log cladding was extended to incorporate the stair entry (Figure 1-9).

CONCLUSION

Research indicates the building was constructed ca. 1900, likely by the Bogan family. It has always had three distinct commercial storefronts, likely with residential or office space on the second floor. The earliest businesses included a saloon, billiards room, and oriental rug shop. Other known businesses in addition to the current businesses include the Western Union, Murdick's candy store, and Sutton's linen store. While the building appears on maps and in historic photographs, a clear image of the building as it was originally constructed has not been found. However, due to the style and use of the subject building and block, a series of alterations over time is expected because of frequent ownership and tenant changes.

⁷ Anthony Trayser's conversations with the author and Devan Anderson of Quinn Evans, September–October 2023.