

FINAL



Large two-sided marker  
Different text each side  
2" caption  
1 1/2" text  
Mackinac Co.  
Mackinac Island  
Side One

1 Jean and Jeanne Bonga, a Black couple,  
2 began Mackinac Island's long tradition  
3 of hospitality by opening a tavern and  
4 inn on or near this site sometime in the  
5 late 1780s. The earliest documented  
6 history of the Bongas on the island is  
7 the baptism record for their daughter,  
8 Rosalie, on July 22, 1786. This record  
9 ties the Bongas to Captain Daniel  
10 Robertson, the commander of the  
11 British garrison on Mackinac Island  
12 from 1782 to June 15, 1787. It is  
13 unclear whether Robertson employed  
14 or enslaved the Bongas. Later accounts  
15 suggest Robertson had enslaved the  
16 Bongas and freed them upon his  
17 departure from the island. Jean and  
18 Jeanne Bonga were married in the  
19 Catholic church of Ste. Anne de  
20 Michilimackinac on June 24, 1794. The  
21 record of their marriage is the first  
22 direct reference of the Bongas being  
23 free residents of the island.

File No. MD24036048(H)

Exhibit C

Date 7.30.24

Initials KP

Michigan Historical Commission ~ Michigan History Center  
Registered Local Site No. 2366  
This Marker is the Property of the State of Michigan, 2023

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# FINAL

Large two-sided marker  
Different text each side  
2" caption  
1 ½" text  
Mackinac Co.  
Mackinac Island  
Side Two

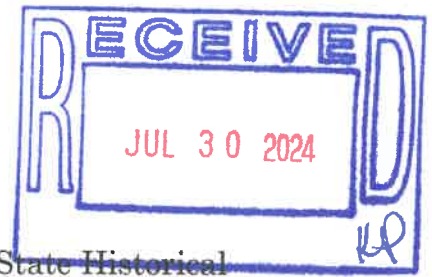
## BONGA TAVERN

1 Lieutenant Dwight Kelton's annotated  
2 transcription of the Ste. Anne Church's  
3 register in the 1882 edition of the  
4 *Annals of Fort Mackinac* states that the  
5 Bonga Tavern was "the *first* hotel on  
6 the Island of Mackinac." Jean and  
7 Jeanne Bonga operated the tavern and  
8 inn at least until Jean's death on  
9 January 20, 1795. He was buried in the  
10 island's Catholic cemetery two days  
11 later. Several of the couple's children  
12 and grandchildren maintained their  
13 connection to Mackinac Island and  
14 were involved in the Great Lakes fur  
15 trade throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The  
16 Bongas' grandson George Bonga  
17 worked as a voyageur, interpreter, and  
18 merchant for an Anishnaabek com-  
19 munity in Minnesota into which he had  
20 married. The site of Jean and Jeanne's  
21 tavern was purchased by Henry Overall  
22 in 1859. He operated a saloon and  
23 billiard hall there into the 1890s.

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## Bonga Tavern Historical Marker



This request is for final approval for the installation of an official State Historical Marker commemorating the Bonga Tavern. The text of the marker is attached separately.

The location was chosen in January with city officials and the approval of Mayor Doud. It is to be located adjacent to the Visitors Bureau information booth, in the grassy area to the northwest. A picture is attached.

Note that, as with all markers, they are owned by the Michigan Historical Commission. In this case, the Mackinac Island State Park Commission is the marker's sponsor. We funded the marker and will maintain it in the future, including repainting and replacing the posts in the future if needed. Park staff will install the marker.

File No. MD24-036048 (H)

Exhibit B

Date 7.30.24

Initials KP



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JUL 30 2024

File No. 1404-036-045(H)  
Exhibit D  
Date 7.30.24  
Initials KP

