



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

SMALL POINT COTTAGE  
CITY OF MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN  
January 2024

HISTORIC DISTRICT  
STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

SMALL POINT COTTAGE  
CITY OF MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN  
JANUARY 2024

CHARGE OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE

On August 3, 2022, the Mackinac Island City Council appointed a committee to conduct a study of the proposed Small Point Cottage Historic District, located at 6220 Main Street, Mackinac Island.

STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sam Barnwell, Mackinac Island property owner and business manager

Brad Chambers, Mackinac Island property and business owner

Mary Dufina, Mackinac Island property and business owner, member of Mackinac Island  
Planning Commission

Brian Findley, Mackinac Island property and business owner

Nancy May, Mackinac Island property and business owner

Past Perfect, Inc.

Jennifer Metz, Principal (36 CFR 61, Architectural History)

Rebecca Smith-Hoffman, Principal (36 CFR 61, History)

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Small Point Cottage Historic District comprises 7400 square feet containing the lot occupied by the Small Point Cottage, which is adjacent at the east of Mission Point Resort along Main Street (M-185).

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The proposed district contains one contributing historic resource, a two-story Gothic Revival style cottage constructed c.1870s; 100% of the district resources are contributing to its historic significance.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT

The proposed historic district is a single resource district located on Mission Point at the southeastern end of Mackinac Island. Small Point Cottage (now Small Point Bed & Breakfast) is generally bounded by the base of the East Bluff with forest to the north and east, Main Street (M-185) at the south, and the Mission Point Resort at the west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The historic district boundary includes Small Point Cottage and the 7400 square foot lot upon which it sits.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As Mackinac Island historian Phil Porter aptly observed, the Great Lakes Native Americans were Mackinac Island's first summer residents.<sup>1</sup> About 700 years before Europeans arrived on the island, the semi-nomadic people of the region that came to the island for the summer season to fish considered Mackinac a sacred place of great spiritual importance. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that the island's inhabitants have always clustered near Haldimand Bay.

The first European to come to Mackinac Island was the Jesuit missionary, Father Jacques Marquette, who arrived in 1670 with a Huron band displaced by the Iroquois Wars. Marquette briefly established a mission on the island, which was moved within a year to the north shore of the straits, where it became the permanent mission of St. Ignatias Loyola (now the city of St. Ignace). In 1683, the mission was fortified by the French and Fort DuBuade garrisoned.

By the 1680s, Fort DuBuade had become a base of activity for the Jesuits, fur traders, and the French soldiers that garrisoned the fort. In addition to the Jesuit mission, the community consisted of the cabins of French traders, as well as Odawa and Huron villages. The Straits of Mackinac was the heart of the trading pattern of the upper Great Lakes fur trade for 150 years.

In 1701, a depleted treasury due to the Iroquois Wars, a glut on the European fur market, and Jesuit complaints about Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, the commander of Fort DuBuade, resulted in the revocation of fur-trading privileges and the abandonment of the fort by the French. When French soldiers returned to the straits in 1714, the Jesuits and others had moved to the south shore of the straits, and there the soldiers built Fort Michilimackinac. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the French and Indian War/Seven Years War between Great Britain and France and their respective allies. Under that treaty France ceded all its territories in North America to the British, who then took command of Fort Michilimackinac.

With the outbreak of the American Revolution, British officials became concerned that the accessible, wood palisade of Fort Michilimackinac would not withstand an American attack. In October 1779, the new commander of Michilimackinac, Lieutenant Governor Patrick Sinclair, decided to relocate the fort to Mackinac Island, negotiated the purchase of the island from the Ojibwa, and began the move in the winter of 1779–80. Sinclair chose to locate the fort on the 150-foot bluff overlooking the harbor and south shore, with the village to be sited at the harbor. This plan left the fort vulnerable to attack from the higher bluff to the north, but it provided protection for both the village and harbor. The location of the village outside the fort walls, a departure from the situation at Michilimackinac, was intended to enhance military security. The village had wooden palisade walls of its own on the south, north, and west sides, with Haldimand Bay at the east. To encourage the villagers to move to the island, Sinclair ordered Ste. Anne Catholic Church to be shipped over the ice by oxen-drawn sleds. The church was then located at what is now the corner of Market and Hoban streets (it was later relocated farther west on Haldimand Bay). Other buildings were moved across the ice as well; the William McGulpin House (1575 Fort Street) may have been one of them. Although the British were in command,

---

<sup>1</sup> Porter, Phil. *Mackinac, An Island Famous in These Regions*, p. 4.

the civilian population of the village consisted predominantly of French fur traders, their Odawa and Ojibwa wives, and their Métis offspring.

Although the 1783 Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution placed Mackinac Island under the ownership of the United States, British soldiers continued to occupy Fort Mackinac until the Jay Treaty of 1796 resolved issues remaining from the Treaty of Paris. During this time the population of Mackinac Island grew, expanding beyond the palisade walls of the original village. Reports of the number of buildings in the village between 1796 and 1802 vary, ranging from between fifty to eighty-nine. In the winter only about half of the houses were occupied, but the annual summer population of a thousand or more filled all of the houses and spilled over into tepees. Even after 1796 when the Americans took possession of the island, British merchants continued to control the economics of the fur trade, while French and Métis conducted most of the actual trading.

Not surprisingly, the early architecture of the village was French colonial in form and construction. Seven of these French colonial log buildings related to the fur trade survive on the island today. In 1811, John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company merged with the Montreal Michilimackinac Company, making Astor the first American with a share of the Great Lakes fur trade. As the westernmost of a line of forts on the border between the United States and Canada, the northernmost fort on the western frontier, and the grand depot for the fur trade, Fort Mackinac was a key defensive post.

In July 1812, in the first land engagement of the War of 1812, the British with their Canadian and Native American allies landed on the island at the site now known as "British Landing" and the outnumbered American garrison surrendered without a fight. The British maintained control, defeating an American attempt to recapture the island in August 1814. The Treaty of Ghent, signed December 24, 1814, ended the war and returned the island to the Americans, who reoccupied Fort Mackinac in July 1815.

After the war, Astor reestablished Mackinac Island as the base for the American Fur Company's interior operations and quickly came to dominate the flourishing trade. The scale and complexity of Astor's trading empire was unprecedented. Ramsey Crooks, Astor's partner and general manager, and Robert Stuart, resident manager, supervised the American Fur Company's Mackinac Island operation. Stuart's Federal-style house (7342 Market Street) functioned as the company's administrative headquarters and was an important venue in the social life of Mackinac Island's upper class. Some independent traders—including Michael Dousman and partners Edward Biddle and John Drew—had headquarters on Mackinac Island as well. The trading pattern was much the same as in the late seventeenth century. During the winter, French, Canadian, and Métis traders spread through the Great Lakes region trading for furs with Indian trappers. In the summer, traders returned with their pelts to the American Fur Company warehouse (7358 Market Street), where company clerks counted, sorted, graded, and packed the pelts for shipment to New York City, and the traders obtained a new supply of trade goods for the next winter's trading. During this summer rendezvous, the island's permanent population of about five hundred grew to about two thousand with visiting traders and trappers, as well as

Native Americans from many nations, who came to do business with the United States Indian Agent.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1830s, the decline of the fur trade ushered in a time of change for Mackinac Island. In 1834, Astor sold the American Fur Company to a group of investors led by Ramsey Crooks, who moved the company's inland headquarters west to LaPointe, Wisconsin, reducing although not eliminating, Mackinac's role in the fur trade. Crooks was initially successful, but in 1842 a combination of factors led him to declare bankruptcy.

To replace the fur trade some independent fur traders turned to fishing. Commercial fishing soon became the primary industry of the island, where a processing and shipping center for the northern Lake Michigan and Lake Huron region developed. Schooners and steamers transported the fish to markets in the region's growing villages and towns. Although the island never had the prominence in fishing that it had in the fur trade, the industry provided a strong economic basis until the Civil War. A dozen or more new docks were built in the 1840s and 1850s. Leading fish merchants included Michael Dousman, Biddle and Drew, William Scott, Toll and Rice, Bromilow and Bates, and James Bennett. The Bromilow & Bates building (7330 Huron Street) is one of few tangible remnants of the industry. Barrel-making and repair became an important subsidiary industry; more than thirty coopers—many of them from Scotland, Ireland, and Canada—worked on the island in 1850.<sup>3</sup> Among them was the Doud family of coopers from Ireland. The fishermen themselves were mostly Native American and Métis.

Furs and fish were not the only goods shipped through the Straits of Mackinac, which became a primary Great Lakes shipping lane. Prior to the development of railroads across Ohio, the water route was the only way for people and goods to reach the growing upper Midwest. Mackinac Island was the key stopping point and freight of all kinds was transshipped from the port on Haldimand Bay. As steamboats became more common, Mackinac functioned as a fueling station, selling wood at first and later coal. As commerce and industry expanded, it remained concentrated in the original village.

Another boost to the island's economy came from the 1836 Treaty of Washington. Under the terms of this treaty, the Ojibwa, Odawa, and Chippewa nations sold fifteen million acres of land in Michigan to the United States government in exchange for money, goods, and provisions to be paid over the following twenty years. The American Fur Company and other island merchants successfully convinced the United States government to make these distributions on Mackinac Island. The yearly distributions in late summer brought approximately four thousand Ojibwa, Odawa and Chippewa to the island to receive their annuities in cash, goods, and provisions. The construction of the county courthouse on Market Street in 1839 testifies to Mackinac Island's continuing importance as the county seat for all of the Upper Peninsula and the northern part of the Lower Peninsula.

The 1825 opening of the Erie Canal and the introduction of steamboats on the Great Lakes made travel to the region faster and easier, fostering increasing permanent settlement in the region, as well as bringing the first Euro-American tourists to the island. The arrival of the early tourists

---

<sup>2</sup> Porter, Phil, *Mackinac: An Island Famous in These Regions*, pg. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Porter, *Ibid.*, pg. 35.



contributed to the diversification of the economy. Intrepid travelers were beginning to seek resorts that offered scenic beauty, not just healthy water and air as was the custom earlier.

The prose and poetry of the Romantic Movement encouraged a deepened appreciation for the beauty of nature and wilderness landscapes, popularizing places like Niagara Falls and the Catskill Mountains. Mackinac Island, which combined the health advantages of the lakeshore with the rugged beauty of the wilderness, drew a number of writers to the island in the 1830s and 1840s, including Harriet Martineau, Alexis De Tocqueville, Anna Jameson, Margaret Fuller, and William Cullen Bryant. Their published descriptions helped to popularize the island as a tourist destination. The steamboats that were being used to transport fish and furs enabled travel to the island, although it was still a challenging journey. At this time island businesses catering to the tourist trade began to develop. The early tourists were either very adventurous or very rich, since travel largely remained a luxury until after the Civil War.

Mission Point, an area on the eastern end of the island generally between the Franks Street jetty and Robinson's Folly, saw early development when William Ferry, a Presbyterian minister, and his wife, Amanda, arrived on the island in 1823 as missionaries. The couple built Mission House in 1825 as a boarding school to educate indigenous children from the Great Lakes region, and where they also lived. Ferry held church services at Mission House until the construction of the Mission Church in 1829. Due to financial difficulties, the school and church closed and the Ferry family moved to Grand Haven, Michigan in 1837.\*

Edward Franks purchased the vacant Mission House in 1849, added a third story to the building, and opened the island's first tourist hotel. Operated by the Franks family as the Mission House Hotel, it housed visitors until 1939, when it was sold and converted to a rooming house. Other hotels soon opened on the eastern part of the island; the Island House was built in 1852 and the Lake View House opened in 1858. A horse-drawn omnibus offered tours of natural and historic sites as early as the 1840s, and shops in town began carrying "Indian curiosities."

Once the railroads reached upper Michigan following the Civil War, Mackinac Island became a well-known summer resort noted for its natural beauty, historic charm, and healthy climate. The creation of Mackinac Island as the country's second National Park by the United States Congress in 1875, three years after Yellowstone National Park was established, was intended to preserve and protect the island's unique historic character and natural beauty.

In 1881, the Michigan Central Railroad reached Mackinaw City, followed a year later by the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad. The Detroit & Cleveland Steam Navigation Company also began running its steamers on the Great Lakes in 1882. Once transportation provided easy and relatively inexpensive access, tourists came to the island in greater numbers to enjoy a day trip or a longer stay in the growing number of hotels. Well-to-do visitors often arrived via their private yachts.

---

\* Mission House and Mission Church were individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Both buildings are owned and operated by the Mackinac Island State Historic Parks.

The tourist boom prompted the construction of hotels and boarding houses, as well as a growing interest in private summer cottages. In 1882, Gurdon Hubbard of Chicago provided the first large-scale opportunity for the construction of summer cottages when he divided property he had purchased in 1855 into one hundred twenty-nine building lots. *Hubbard's Annex* soon featured elegant summer cottages, as well as a private park and a communal dining hall.

The War Department, which oversaw the management of the National Park, also viewed summer tourists as an opportunity. Land flanking the fort on the East and West bluffs was surveyed and lots were platted to lease for building sites in 1885. That year three large cottages were built on the East Bluff, with the first cottage constructed on the West Bluff the following year. By 1891, all the lots on both bluffs had been leased. The War Department exercised strict control over building construction. Plans had to be submitted to the park superintendent, who forwarded them to be approved by the office of the Secretary of War.<sup>4</sup> Income from the leases was used to construct and maintain roads around the island.

The well-to-do owners of these cottages, who brought their families, servants, horses and carriages to summer on the island in style, conducted a lively social season based around the Grand Hotel that opened in 1887. These cottages still stand as well-preserved examples of nineteenth century resort architecture.

## SMALL POINT COTTAGE HISTORY

### *Alanson Sheley*

The biography of Alanson Sheley (1809-1892) is that of the typical “self-made” man of American legend. He grew up on his grandfather’s farm in Albany New York. At age 16 he took a raft of timber down the St. Lawrence River to be sold when he reached Quebec. While in his teens Sheley apprenticed to a stonemason and builder, eventually becoming employed in Canada. In 1831, he came to Detroit to ply his trade. The following year he was appointed by the United States government to supervise the construction of a stone lighthouse at Thunder Bay on Lake Huron, which is still standing. In 1834, he was the contractor for the construction of the First Presbyterian Church of Detroit, of which he was a lifelong member.

Detroit was an early center of anti-slavery activity prior to the Civil War and in 1837 the Detroit Anti-Slavery Society was founded to advocate for the end of slavery and to oppose the efforts of southern slave owners to recapture freedom-seekers who had escaped to Detroit. Alanson Sheley was a charter member of this organization and served on its executive committee.<sup>5</sup>

Sheley married Ann Elizabeth Drury (1811-1894) in 1835, the same year he became the general manager of the Black River Steam Mill & Lumber Company. When the company closed twenty year later, he entered into partnership as one of the firm of the wholesale and retail drug company, Jacob S. Farrand & Company, which sold first aid kits to the Union army during the

---

<sup>4</sup> Witter, Keith. *Mackinac National Park, 1875-1895*, pg. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Farmer, Silas. *The History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan*, pg. 346.

Civil War. The firm later became Farrand, Sheley & Company, then Farrand, Williams & Company, and eventually became part of the Rexall Drug Company.

Over his lifetime Sheley served the City of Detroit and State of Michigan in various official capacities, including two terms in the state senate. He was also a director of the First National Bank of Detroit, the Michigan Mutual Life Insurance Company, and the Detroit Fire and Marine Insurance Company. He had extensive real estate holdings in Detroit and Port Huron, as well as pine lands in northern Michigan.

Sheley was a director of and shareholder in the Detroit and Cleveland Steam Navigation Company. Although the company began offering overnight service between Detroit and Cleveland in 1850, regular trips to Mackinac did not begin until 1882; the company's elegant steamer, the *City of Mackinac*, made its maiden voyage to the island in 1883. In 1886, Detroit and Cleveland joined with the Michigan Central Railroad and the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad to form the Mackinac Island Hotel Company. Detroit and Cleveland was the prime mover of the project, hiring Detroit architects Mason & Rice to design the Grand Hotel.<sup>6</sup>

Sheley was familiar with the island, having spent summers camping there. In July 1877, he purchased 320 acres of land on Mission Point, named for the Protestant mission that operated there from 1823 to 1837. Sheley's land ran generally along the island's east bluff and encompassed an area between the Mission House Hotel and Robinson's Folly, below which Small Point Cottage is now located.

On this land Sheley had constructed one of the first large summer cottages on the island - the Gothic Revival style Cedar Point Cottage. The *Detroit Free Press* reported that the cottage was built in sections in Chicago and assembled on the site.<sup>7</sup> He hired William Byrd of Detroit<sup>8</sup> to build a second nearly identical cottage for his grandsons, Alanson, Stanley, and William Brooks and Emory Clark, between Cedar Cottage and the Mission House Hotel. This cottage later became known as Small Point Cottage.

The society pages in both the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* regularly mention Sheley, and his family, and later his grandsons and their families, as among the many members of Detroit society who "took the steamer to Mackinac Island" for the summer season. The Sheleys were well-known for their generous hospitality and their entertainments were regularly mentioned in the society pages. The August 15, 1891 issue of the *Detroit Free Press* featured a lengthy article about Sheley's 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday celebration at Cedar Cottage, including the names of all the guests.<sup>9</sup> The obituary of Sheley's great-granddaughter, Margaret Brooks Goodenough VanDusen mentions her memories of the cottage: "In many ways Mackinac Island remained her heart's home throughout life. Every year of her youth, she returned to Cedar Point, the first summer cottage on the island, built by her grandfather Alanson and Ann Sheley."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> *The Detroit Free Press*, 2 August 1886, pg. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *The Detroit Free Press*, 26 August 1934, pg. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Per Brian Findley, owner, Small Point Bed & Breakfast.

<sup>9</sup> *The Detroit Free Press*, 15 August 1891, pg. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Obituary: Margaret B. Van Dusen, 2011.



## *The Gothic Revival Style*

Alanson Sheley may have been inspired to build in the Gothic Revival style by Bela Hubbard, a fellow Detroit real estate developer, whose daughter Zaidée married Sheley's grandson, Alanson Brooks. In 1856, Hubbard engaged Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892), the country's leading Gothic Revival architect during the 1840s and 1850s, to design a house on his eighteen-acre Detroit estate, *Vinewood*.<sup>11</sup> Hubbard convinced his brother-in-law, John C. Braughman, to also commission Davis to design a house for himself nearby. Both houses reflected the picturesque Gothic Revival style that was Davis' specialty, sited in a naturally designed landscape. Unfortunately, both houses have been demolished.

Alexander Jackson Davis, along with his friend and colleague, Andrew Jackson Downing, designed several Gothic Revival style cottages, as well as large manor houses and grounds, in Central New York beginning in the 1840s. Various interpretations of the style remained popular until the early 1880s. A subtype known as Carpenter Gothic, which applied the Gothic Revival style to wood-framed and sided buildings, was popularized by *Cottage Residences*, the 1842 pattern book by Downing and Davis. This and other pattern books inspired the creativity of local carpenters and builders around the country. The subtype is distinguished by the use of board and batten siding, decorative bargeboards, jig-sawn detailing, pointed-arch windows, and a steeply pitched roof, along with a steep central gable and a one-story porch.

Although Cedar Cottage has been lost, Small Point Cottage, which was nearly identical, survives as a late example of the Carpenter Gothic subtype, exhibiting the most striking elements of the style.

The prominent steeply pitched central gable is flanked by smaller steeply pitched dormers, each with a raised decorative motif over square-topped windows. Dormers have a lace-like crown finial. The central gable has elaborately detailed cross-bracing and is topped by a decoratively turned finial. From a distance it appears like the crown of a wedding cake. Beneath the central gable are a pair of pointed, double hung windows.

The board and batten siding reinforces the strong verticality of the structure, with diagonal stick work that foreshadows the Stick style. A raised wrap-around front porch has square posts and spindles; flattened arches below the fascia have cut-out detailing. Side elevations have two, double-hung pointed-arch windows with small steeply pitched dormers above them, as well as attic dormers with pitched roofs. A two-story addition at the rear was constructed in 1906-07 to accommodate bathrooms. A one-story ell at the rear has a shed roof.

After the deaths of Alanson Sheley and his wife, Ann Elizabeth, in 1892 and 1894 respectively, Cedar Point Cottage went to the grandsons. Alanson, Stanley, and William Brooks owned Cedar Cottage, and Emory Clark owned the secondary cottage.

---

<sup>11</sup> "Proposed Hubbard Farms Historic District Final Report," pg. 3.

### *Subsequent Ownership*

By 1934, the three Brooks grandsons had died and Cedar Point was inherited by William Brooks' daughter, Margaret Brooks Goodenough (1913-2011). She continued to own the cottage and land until it was sold to the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) organization c. 1955.

At some point Emory Clark sold the second cottage to the Faren family (date of sale unknown) and it became known as Faren Cottage. According to Brian Findley, current owner of Small Point Bed & Breakfast, Keith and Nancy Borgenson purchased the cottage in 1937. Reverend Norman Schwab, who purchased the cottage in 1948, named it Small Point Cottage, having recently sold the family's house in Small Point, Maine. The cottage became the Schwab's year-round residence.

In 1959, Schwab donated the land on which the cottage stood to the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) group for the construction of a film studio as part of the organization's development of its headquarters and conference center and the cottage was slated for demolition.

Moral Re-Armament was founded in England by American Lutheran minister Frank Buchman in 1938 to provide a religious response to the growing militarism of the 1930s. Following World War II, the influence of MRA spread and it soon became an international right-wing moral and spiritual movement

Mrs. Henry Ford, a personal friend of Mr. Buchman, suggested Mackinac Island as an ideal place for the MRA summer conference planned for 1942. Mrs. Ford personally contacted Michigan Governor Murray van Wagoner to arrange for the use of the Island House, which became the group's first conference center. In the following years, a number of other island buildings acquired or leased for MRA use included Mission House, Bennet Hall, Stonecliffe, Bonnie Doon, Chateau Beaumont, Pine Cottage, La Chance Cottage, Maple View, and other houses near Mission Church.<sup>12</sup>

The increasing popularity of its conferences led MRA to acquire property on Mission Point to construct permanent headquarters and a conference center. All of the existing structures east of Mission House were demolished, except Small Point Cottage. Between 1955 and 1965 MRA constructed nine new buildings on the site.

### *Moving Small Point Cottage*

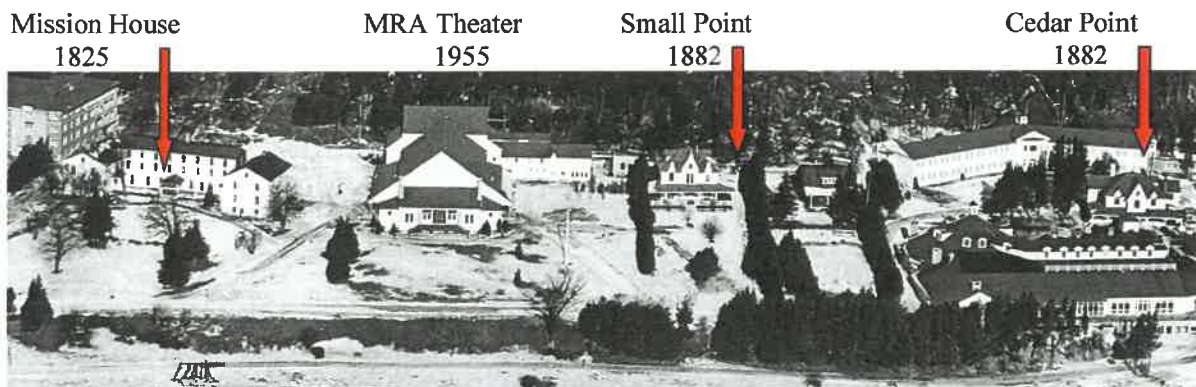
Public outcry against the demolition of Small Point Cottage resulted in MRA moving the cottage. "Small Point was placed on wheels and moved . . . down to the Lakeshore road, and back toward the eastern tip of the island where it now rests at the foot of the huge bluff known as 'Robinson's Folly'."<sup>13</sup> (See photographs below).

---

<sup>12</sup> Hadden, Frances Roots. "An Informal History of Mackinac Island," Mackinac State Parks Archive

<sup>13</sup> Hadden, Frances Roots. *Ibid.*

The photograph below shows the Sheley cottages still standing on Mission Point in 1958, where MRA buildings already surround Cedar Point Cottage. <sup>14</sup>



Small Point's wrap-around porch was removed to facilitate the move. At the new site the cottage was placed on a concrete block foundation and basement, and a new porch was constructed. The wrap-around porch duplicates the original, but it is somewhat shorter at the sides. The backdoor was removed at the time of the move, but current owners intend to replace it. In 2018, the retaining wall behind the cottage was completely reconstructed to protect Small Point from erosion.

#### *Subsequent Ownership, Post-move*

The MRA continued to own Small Point Cottage until deeding it in 1965, along with its headquarters and the Mission House, to Mackinac College, a private co-educational liberal arts college connected to MRA, which opened in 1966. The first class of freshmen students used the MRA *Peter Howard Memorial Library* (demolished) as classrooms until college facilities were completed. Small Point Cottage was initially intended to be used as the Chancellor's residence, but was instead used for faculty housing and a student coffee house. Twenty-nine students were awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees in June 1970, and the college closed soon after due to financial difficulties.

The following year Mackinac College sold the property to television evangelist Rex Humbard's *Cathedral of Tomorrow*. Humbard's efforts to revive the college and to operate a resort were not successful and he ceased operations in 1973. At this time the Mission House, which had been used by Mackinac College as a dormitory, was purchased from Humbard by the Mackinac State Parks Commission.

John and Lois Findley initially rented Small Point Cottage when they moved to Mackinac Island in 1971 to teach at the school for a year. When the cottage was offered for sale in 1973, they purchased it from Humbard. As their children left home, the Findley's began to rent bedrooms to

<sup>14</sup> By Spcorcoran - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=31251442>

tourists, which eventually lead to the creation of the Small Point Bed & Breakfast in 1978. Their son and daughter-in-law, Brian and Christina Findley continue to operate the business.

The MRA headquarters and conference center, which occupied much of the property owned by Alanson Sheley, now form part of the Mission Point Resort complex.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Michigan's Local Historic District Act, PA 169 of 1970, as amended, requires local historic district study committees to be guided by the evaluation criteria used for the National Register of Historic Places in evaluating the significance of historic resources. The act also requires study committees to be guided by a criteria established or approved by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (Section 3(1)(c)). In 2022, the State Historic Preservation Office issued criteria that elaborate on historic district boundary determinations and single resource districts.

In accordance with these legal guidelines, the study committee has determined that the Small Point Cottage Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion C, for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an architectural type, period, and method of construction.

The historic structures and resources on Mackinac Island generally fall within these time periods and contexts - Island settlement and patterns of trade and tourism (pre-1870); Island Resorts and Parks (1870-1930); Mid-century tourism and investment at Mackinac (1930-1973).

The proposed Small Point Cottage Historic District is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a fine interpretation of the Carpenters Gothic subtype of the Gothic Revival style, and a rare example of the style on the island. It is further significant as a well preserved example of the grand resort architecture that developed in the late nineteenth century for which the island is so well-known in the context of Island Resorts and Parks (1870-1930).

The proposed district maintains six of the seven aspects of integrity: design, setting, materials, workmanship, association, location, and feeling. The cottage was moved from its original location in 1959 to save it from demolition to make way for the construction of a film studio as part of the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) headquarters and conference center (now the Mission Point Resort). The current site of the cottage abuts the east border of the resort and occupies part of the original plot of land purchased by Alanson Sheley in 1877 and is similar in general feel to the cottage's original location.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “Alanson Sheley’s Birthday; How it Was Celebrated at His Summer Home Yesterday,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 15 August 1891.
- “Alanson Sheleys Were Vivid Figures During Past Century,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 26 August 1934.
- “A Grand Summer Hotel at Mackinac Island,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 2 August 1886.
- “August Promises to be Lively at Mackinac,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 18 July 1909.
- Brisson, Steven C. *Downtown Mackinac Island*. Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 2015.
- Busch, Jane C. “Mackinac Island National Historic Landmark Nomination.” Washington, D.C.: National Historic Landmarks Survey, 1999.
- Busch, Jane C. and the Historic District Study Committee. “Market and Main (Huron) Historic District Study Report.” Past Perfect, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2011.
- Farmer, Silas. *The History of Detroit and Michigan or The Metropolis Illustrated*. Detroit: Silas Farmer & Co, 1884. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/>
- Farmer, Silas. *The History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan*, New York: Munsell & Co, 1890 <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micounty/bad>
- Findley, Brian, Owner Small Point Bed & Breakfast, Personal Interview. 12 May 2023.
- “Four Grand Excursions (to Mackinac Island)” *The Detroit Free Press*, 24 August 1882.
- Gollanek, Eric, “Historic Context Report, City of Mackinac Island Downtown Study Area,” Past Perfect, Inc., Grand Rapids, 2011.
- Hadden, Frances Roots. “An Informal History of Mackinac Island,” Mackinac State Parks Archive, 1973.  
<https://www.foranewworld.info/material/articles/informal-history-mackinac-island>
- Historic Designation Advisory Board, “Proposed Hubbard Farms Historic District Final Report,” City Council, City of Detroit, 1995.
- “Mackinac College Inaugurated at Impressive Island Ceremony,” *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, 2 October 1966.
- “Mackinaw (sic) Mecca As Summer Comes,” *The Detroit Free Press*, 15 July 1917.

- “Mission Point Began as a Conference Center and College,” *Mackinac State Historic Parks* Mackinac State Historic Parks. April 24, 2015.  
<https://www.mackinacparks.com/mission-point-began-as-conference-center-and-college/>
- Obituary: Margaret B. Van Dusen, Chadwick & McKinney Funeral Home, Grosse Pointe, MI  
<https://www.chadwickmckinney.com/obituaries/MargaretB-VanDusen-518#!/Obituary>
- “Ohio Cathedral to Take Over Closed Campus,” *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 April 1971.
- Porter, Phil. *Mackinac, An Island Famous in These Regions*. Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1998.
- Porter, Phil. *View From the Veranda*, 2nd ed. Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinac Island Michigan, 2006.
- Small Point Bed & Breakfast History. <http://www.smallpointmackinac.com/history>
- Stiles, Susan and Lea Ann Sterling. *Historic Cottages of Mackinac Island*. Traverse City, Michigan: Arbutus Press, 2001.
- Tanner, Helen Hornbeck, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma for The Newberry Library, 1987.
- “Travels to Mackinac,” Mackinac Island State Park Commission,  
<https://www.mackinacparks.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Travels-to-Mackinac.pdf>
- United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-c.1955, Alanson Sheley land acquisition, Mackinac Island, 31 July 1877.  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2074276>
- Whiteley, Helen Labaron, “Mackinac Season is Gayest in Years,” *The Detroit News*, 6 September, 1925.
- Widder, Keith R. “Mackinac National Park 1875-1895,” *Reports in Mackinac History and Archaeology, Number 4*. Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1975.



Photographs of moving Small Point Cottage are from the collection of Brian Findley



Cottage in original location.

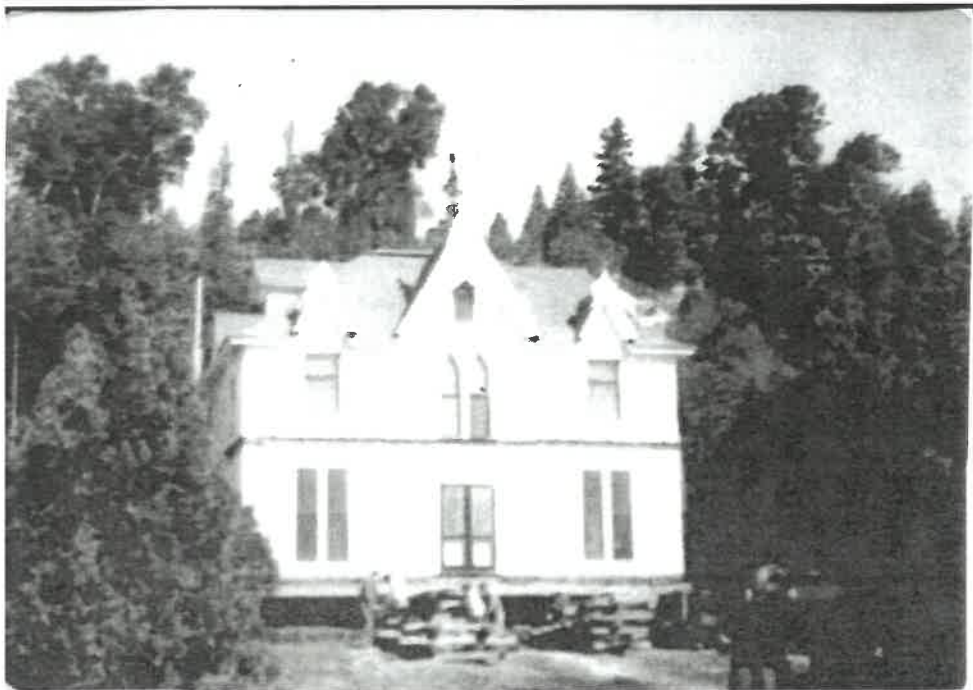
Truck used to move cottage can be seen in foreground.



Cottage in  
process of move.



Rear elevation  
of cottage.



Cottage in  
original location

