



Grand Marais Tour

On the Road



Lagoon

Grand Marais

Lake Winnipeg

Please respect the privacy
of owners' property limits.

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2	The Point, Lake Winnipeg, Lagoon & Marsh	N 50.54200	W 096.62747	8
3	1950s Bungalow <i>33 Pinehurst Avenue</i>	N 50.54193	W 96.62480	10
4	Hendrickson Cabin <i>35 Pinehurst Avenue</i>	N 50.54194	W 096.62531	11
5	Bremont Cottage <i>13 Thorncliffe Avenue</i>	N 50.54398	W 096.62688	12
6	Stewart Cottage <i>275 Grand Marais Blvd</i>	N 50.54458	W 096.62817	13
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Community Name

It is said that one of the members of the famous La Vérendrye family, early explorers of Western Canada, gave this area its name – “Grand Marais” – the Great Marsh.

There does not appear to be any basis in the historical record for this claim. However, it is fact that Louis-Joseph La Verendrye (1717-1761; also called The Chevalier), traveled down the eastern shore of Lake Winnipeg in 1739.

La Verendrye was directed to examine all tributary rivers, topography and local Aboriginal peoples along the way, presumably to determine potential fur-trade opportunities.

Local Métis History

Before Grand Marais and Grand Beach were developed as major recreational destinations in the early 1900s, this area was home to many Métis people.

The community has its roots in long-ago Metis history when those earliest settlers arrived the 1870s to undertake fishing, farming and lumbering.

As the fur trade moved west in the 1800s, many French-Canadian fur traders married indigenous women, (Cree, Ojibway, Saulteaux). The children of these unions grew up with a combination of French-Catholic and Indigenous cultures and spiritual beliefs.

Community Layout

Initially, there was no community plan, however, that changed with the advent of the Grand Beach Park development in 1914 and in 1916 with the arrival of the first train. Very quickly Grand Marais took on a much more familiar community layout, as cabins went up and main streets and side streets were developed.

An aerial view of the community highlights the main thoroughfares which form a large figure eight, with the centre of the eight at the intersection of Grand Beach Road and Grand Marais Boulevard.

The original layout is still current, with tidy streets, beautiful trees and broad boulevards. One major change that altered the community dynamic was the loss of the old Canadian National Railway (CNR) line and then the alteration of the highway route into Grand Beach.

The old rail line ran along the present site of the main access highway and a vehicular road ran beside it along its southern edge. The old highway used to jog into Grand Marais and then straight along Grand Beach Road up to the old hotel and rail station.

When Grand Beach was transferred to the Province as a park in 1961, that access was eventually cut off (at Parkview) and now the two communities are separated.



1. *St. Jude's Anglican Church and Cemetery* Grey Avenue & Sunset Avenue

St. Jude's Anglican Church was built in 1896 on land donated by George Rupert and Alex Knott. The church is the oldest remaining building in the village with the strongest connection to the original Métis community that settled here.

The structure is architecturally significant due to the materials used in its construction: black poplar logs with dovetailed ends and local fieldstone with mortar. The log construction is covered with shiplap horizontal boards. This was a common construction approach for many pioneer log buildings. Building with logs was seen as primitive and unsightly, so builders usually covered the logs with cut boards.

St. Jude's is a modest example of the Gothic Revival style. Its clearest connection to the style is via its crenellated tower that rises from the front porch – this is a feature very common on old Medieval castles.



The church is surrounded by a garden cemetery that contains the gravesites of many of Grand Marais' earliest inhabitants: Linklater, Knott, Cook, Thomas.

A garden cemetery, popularized in Victorian England and Europe, saw fine headstones for loved ones placed in lush landscaped spaces, with lawns and trees. These garden cemeteries became popular places for walks and even Sunday picnics.

Grave markers, sometimes in marble and granite, displayed a wealth of sculptural and engraved symbols. The use of these symbols evoked a sense of the personality of the deceased.

Some common forms and symbols:

- Christian Cross - the key expression of faith
- Angels - emissaries between this world and the next
- Dove - the Holy Spirit, signifying the soul, purity and love
- hands clasped in prayer - showing devotion
- hands together/clasped - symbol of matrimony

The most common symbols were flowers and plants. The perfect symbol suggesting the poignancy in the cycle of life and death. Common flowers:

- Calla Lily - beauty, marriage
- Rose - beauty, purity
- Olive branch - forgiveness and peace
- Wreath - victory over death through redemption
- Ivy - immortality and fidelity



For a more detailed exploration of gravemarkers and symbolism in Manitoba, A Guide to Funerary Art in Manitoba, can be found at:

http://heritagemanitoba.ca/images/pdfs/tellTheStory/Guide_to_Funerary_Art_Heritage_MB.pdf

2. *The Point, Lagoon, Marsh & Lake Winnipeg*

GPS Coordinates: N 50.54200 W 096.62747

The Point, Lagoon and March

Turn south (left) from Pinehurst onto Grand Marais Blvd South to the bench on the beachside looking toward the lake. This part of the Boulevard and stretching north to Thorncliffe, is actually a large man-made dyke that protects current cottages from Lake Winnipeg waters. In older times these areas were often flooded in the spring.

Grand Marais is bordered by the Grand Beach campsite to the north, Lake Winnipeg to the west and a mixture of lagoon waters/marshes to the east and south. Beyond the lagoon and marsh is the Belair Provincial Forest.

The marshes that surround Grand Marais are located to the south via a thin peninsula called “The Point”. They are non-tidal, freshwater marshes and occur along the edges of sheltered, shallow waters along the boundaries of Lake Winnipeg. Most of the marshes are located alongside the lagoon.

Marshes sustain a diversity of life that is disproportionate with their size. Canada has over 127 million hectares of the world’s wetlands, a whopping $\frac{1}{4}$ of the world’s total. If the boreal forests are the lungs of our region, then wetlands are the kidneys – removing toxins from the ecosystem.

Unfortunately, people have often seen wetlands as wastelands or barriers to agricultural or residential development. Only recently, as our society recognizes the valuable role wetlands play both for our environment and economy new strategies to conserve and restore wetlands are being developed.

Lake Winnipeg

Lake Winnipeg is one of the world's largest freshwater lakes. It is the fifth largest lake in Canada and the tenth largest lake in the world by surface area. It covers just under 4% of Manitoba.

The Lake Winnipeg watershed is the second largest in Canada and includes parts of four provinces and four U.S. States. Lake Winnipeg, along with lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis are the last remains of glacial Lake Agassiz, a huge glacial lake.

More than 23,000 permanent residents live in thirty communities along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, including eleven First Nations communities. There are seven Manitoba Provincial Parks located to the south including Hecla/Grindstone, Beaver Creek, Camp Morton, Winnipeg Beach, Elk Island and Grand Beach.



3. 1950s Bungalow

33 Pinehurst Avenue

At the end of lot #33 is a 1950s bungalow that was the home of Frank Rogoski, Grand Marais' Police Constable for many years.

Policing at Grand Marais/Grand Beach was started in 1923 and continued during the war years. In 1945, there was a female Constable on staff, Miss Margaret Delaney. By 1950, the area was under the watchful eye of the RCMP along with four local volunteer residents. The Police Station was located on Grand Beach Road.



Constable Frank Rogoski, a towering man and well-known in the area, was always accompanied with his dog, a German Shepherd called Carmel. Frank had a spirited career. One local referred to his tenure as days when "...the Beach was really swinging and the Boardwalk was in bloom!" It was rumoured that the Rogoski Cottage had a "drunk tank" in its basement for local rowdies.



4. *Hendrickson Cabin*

35 Pinehurst Avenue

There are only a few sites left to recall the pre-cottage history of Grand Marais, when it was more of a fishing and farming locale.

The building at 35 Pinehurst Street was once the home of Karl Hendrickson. It is set further back from the lake as in earlier times when the lake was high, the water would have come close to this location. Fishing shacks and fish sales activities were, until recently, quite close to the western end of Pinehurst and along the Point.



5. *Bremont Cottage*

13 Thorncliffe Avenue

The early cottages of Grand Marais were quite distinct from cottages in other locations. CNR workers were the first to build summertime cottages with a design aesthetic defined by modest building sizes, rough-and-ready building materials, handyman construction and ingenious design features/details.

Called “Bremont,” the Whyte-Gibson Cottage, whose first summer dwelling was built around 1928, is an excellent example of the type of modest, informal cottages that defined Grand Marais in its early years.



The hand-made quality of the original cottage is expressed in various surviving features and details, like the overall rustic form, the rubble stone chimney, wooden window frames with shutters and original door.



Inside, the cottage retains much of its original physical integrity. Additionally, an older shed with large vertically-operated shutters and even the original wire fence are still present on the site. While the cottage has been added to over the years, new additions have been sympathetic to the original building.

6. *Stewart Cottage/Isaac Fence*

275 Grand Marais Boulevard South

Grand Marais' stone fences are one of its key heritage attributes. At one time there were at least 25 stone fences in the community; today, six remain. This example is perhaps the best known of its type in the community, which prides itself on the legacy of its stone fences and front steps.

Each of the remaining six fences has its own distinct architectural quality, as if designed with a historic architectural style in mind; all built by hand with materials sourced locally.

Stewart Cottage is a landmark built in 1928, with an impressive stone fence and fanciful cottage style. The building shows superior materials, features and fixtures with a Victorian lace design, sweeping curves and dainty posts.



7. *Barnfather/Garrioch Fence*

241 Grand Marais Boulevard South

There are many stories and even myths that have grown up over the years about the Grand Marais fences: that they were built by convicts from Stony Mountain Penitentiary; that they were built by World War I draft dodgers; that they were built during the 1919 General Strike by men who were stranded at Grand Marais by the cancelling of rail traffic.

Given the passage of time and the transfer of so many properties to new owners it is hard to know the origins. However, it is known that some of the remaining fences were built by Fred Orvis and Mr. Gillis.



Mr. Orvis (1883-1975) was well known as a farmer, fisherman, railway worker, boat builder, carpenter and stone mason.

The Barnfather/Garrioch fence is an example built in circa 1919 by the homeowners' great-grandfather, showing a "Gothic" appearance with

pointy/craggy top edges.



8. *Doyle Cottage/Oak Manor* 27 Oak Avenue

Built in the 1920s Oak Manor (also called the Doyle Cottage) is one the best local examples of traditional cottage form that can be found in many other Manitoba summer communities. With a shallow pyramidal roof and wide verandah, the shape is of an “A” type.

Inside, the original log construction is apparent in the exposed beams and rafters. The whole cottage, at nearly 100 years old, still has period siding, flooring, wall materials and stone fireplace.



9. *McQuade/Mulligan Fence*

190 Grand Marais Boulevard South

Built ca. 1921 by original site owner James McQuade, with assistance from later owners David and Pearl Mulligan, this fence has the feeling of an ancient Norman wall – monolithic, strong, impregnable, but with a dainty wooden gate in the centre. At 80 feet in length, this is a major feature along Grand Marais Boulevard.

Dave and Pearl Mulligan were two well-known figures in early Grand Marais history. Dave Mulligan (1893 -1981) was a long-time city councilor in Winnipeg (1950 - 60s) and was also Deputy Mayor. He was a CNR employee and was in charge of the old Grand Beach Hotel in the late 1950s. He and his wife Pearl (1900 -1969) were very active in Grand Marais and at Grand Beach in social and commercial situations.

Mr. Mulligan was awarded the Centennial Medal in 1970 and he and Pearl were noted as Scouts of the Buffalo Hunt, an honour of the Manitoba Historical Society. Dave and Pearl developed this site as Greenwood Place, one of the places throughout Grand Marais that offered cabins for rent during the 1950s and 60s.



Dave Mulligan and daughter Tannis, circa 1940



10. *Agricultural Past*

Grand Beach Rd and Grand Marais Blvd/Glenvale Ave

There are only a few sites left to recall the pre-cottage history of Grand Marais – when it was more of a fishing and farming locale.

The most obvious sites that recall an agricultural past are on Grand Beach Road – at the little farm site where Grand Beach Road intersects with Grand Marais Boulevard.

Here you can see the tell-tale building – a little barn with its distinctive barn roof. This type of roof is called a gambrel and was common for barn designs throughout western Canada. It allowed for more hay storage in the loft area.

The other site connected to local agriculture is further north on Grand Beach Road, at the intersection of Glenvale.

This was the old dairy/creamery.

Barn



Dairy/Creamery

11. *Back Lanes and Honey Wagons*

GPS Coordinates: N 50.54954 W 096.62986

One interesting physical feature that distinguishes the residential/cottage areas of Grand Marais from Grand Beach, are the back lanes.

From about the 1920s onward, cottages began to be separated by back lanes, a narrow alley just big enough for a truck to pass through and the occasional little outhouse. The lanes created access from the rear for garbage collection and other messy work.

Most cabins had outhouses that were strategically placed on the owner's property line between their yard and the back lane. Outhouses were equipped with back hatches which swung open and upwards. The sanitation workers, called "honey men", would arrive during the night, via the back lane, open the hatch, grab the pail, empty it and replace it back in the outhouse.



The convenience of back lane access, and outhouse placement, made their jobs faster and more efficient. Additionally, the back lane ensured no one saw them at night and that they did not have to carry pails long distances and through very visible front yards.

Now with indoor plumbing and septic tanks, the outhouse is a relic of the past, but there are still some here and there.

In Grand Marais, the local municipality employed workers to empty and replace the outhouse buckets. Known as night men in England, these workers were referred to as the “honey men” in Grand Marais, although the task was carried out by females and males alike over the years.

The system of municipal bucket toilet collection was widespread in Australia where “dunny cans” persisted well into the second half of the twentieth century. The workers who emptied these buckets were called “dunny men”, an obvious rhyming word with honey. However, a bucket toilet has also traditionally been called a honey bucket, an English moniker. A honey wagon is a slang word for the modern vacuum truck, which vacuums waste from septic tanks and delivers it to waste management sites.

One solution to keep outhouse odours to a minimum was to rely on Mother Nature and hope for a strong summer breeze from Lake Winnipeg. In these earlier times sawdust, ashes from bonfires or creosote were placed in the bottom of the outhouse. Today, creosote clinkers can be found in some yards in Grand Marais, generally a good clue as to where an outhouse once stood.

Eventually, however, ashes, tar and creosote gave way to strong disinfectants. The honey men wore black protective rubber wear and respirators while emptying sewage pails, which provided perfect camouflage for working at night.

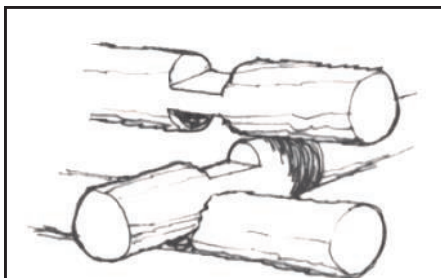
Many humorous memories and stories are associated with the outhouse and it doesn’t require much probing to find them among cottage goers. As well, many people came to look fondly on their bathroom retreat and giving them names such as Moldy Manor, The Moon Room, Lou’s Loo and The Thunder Room.

12. Broken Tree Cottage / Kurtz Cottage 77 Grand Marais Boulevard

Broken Tree Cottage or the Kurtz Cottage, is a major Grand Marais landmark. Built in the 1920s, this is the largest and most ambitious of the several distinctive log cottages and cabins that still stand in the community. Features to note are the saddle notch log construction, stone chimney and original interior details.



Saddle Notch Construction Detail

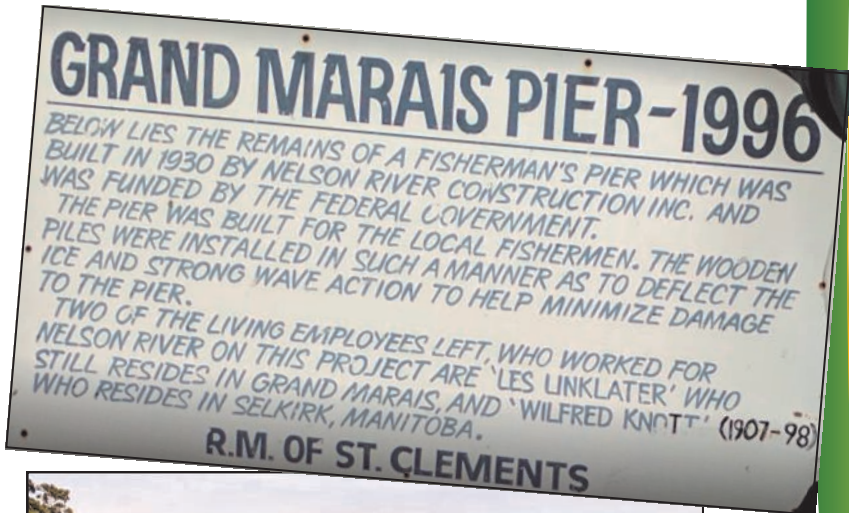


13. Government Pier

At the Lake and the Head of Central

Located on the lake and at the head of Central Ave, this large pier was once a major piece of construction, with huge boulders stretching out into the lake.

It was used by commercial fishermen and bargemen, as well as for pleasure-craft. It has since been abandoned and over time has started to disappear.



14. 1960s Cabin

83 Hillbrow Avenue

Towards the southern end of Hillbrow Avenue and on the right-hand side sits a circa 1960s cabin. The floor plan is circular which gives the cabin a slightly space-shippy appearance.

This was the home of a major Grand Marais character, Harry Blake-Knox. Mr. Blake-Knox was active on local council, publisher of the local newspaper, *The Spotlight*, and founder of the Grand Beach Electric Company.

He was also responsible for Harry's Hideout, an important movie and dance emporium active in the 1950s and 1960s. The Hideout offered evening movies in the summertime twice a day and dances on Saturday night.

In 1992, the 125th anniversary of Canada, Harry was awarded the Commemorative Medal for his contribution to his fellow citizens and community.



15. Oakleigh Lodge/Watt Cottage

36 Hillbrow Avenue

At what appears to be the northern end of Hillside there is actually a stony public path that leads up to a whole other section of Hillside – this is marked by a street sign.

The Oakleigh Lodge or Watt Cottage has been a landmark in the community since its construction in the 1920s. The site of the local magistrate's office for many years, the cottage has also a strong physical presence.

Facing onto Parkview and set into a hillock, the cottage is placed on a tall stone foundation. The large building has many exterior qualities from its earliest days, as well as many features and fixtures inside, including a large stone fireplace, wooden floors and ceiling and many intact windows.



16. *Summerhill/Taylor Stone Fence* 32 Central Avenue

Summerhill fence is located at the mid-point of Central on the east side. This very long fence dates to the late 1920s.

It was built by hand, and likely formed by stones taken from the nearby beach shore. One can imagine a human chain throwing stones along a line and finally to the fence construction site



17. *Ashgrove Cottage*

31 Central Avenue

Ashgrove Cottage is one of the best remaining sites recalling how Grand Marais cottage owners often developed small complexes of buildings for rental purposes.

A fine main cottage, from 1922, dominates the yard. Behind it are several outbuildings that were once used by guests. One of these still reveals the modest and distinctive wooden pole construction that was used.

Throughout all of the buildings are excellent intact examples of handmade, ingenious features and details that define the cottage character - summery, whimsical and durable.



18. Local Trails

As people walk through Grand Marais, they often find strange little side paths and crooked trails that do not seem to be part of the existing grid street system.

It is thought that these footpaths could have been small parts of larger pathways for large-scale tribal migrations to and from Ojibway hunting, fishing and berry-gathering places.

The footpaths begin at the end of St. Clements Row and extend through an area of scrub bush, alongside cottages, where they end at Hillbrow Avenue. A small footpath leads to several cottage frontages which do not have street access on Hillbrow Avenue. These are not private paths and are open to the public.

There are also several footpaths that connect Grand Marais to the Grand Beach Campsite and a well-known footpath that leads from Grand Beach to Spirit Rock.



For many years cottagers used these footpaths as a type of thoroughfare that is intended for use only by pedestrians. The trails are narrow and no other forms of traffic such as motorized vehicles and horses would be able to access them.

The footpaths at Grand Marais are still used today as shortcuts and shaded routes that provide a natural respite, away from traffic on hot summer days.

19. Old Commercial Strip

GPS Coordinates: N 50.552997, W 096.631671

From the 1920s and well into the 1960s, Grand Marais was a major commercial nucleus, with scores of businesses along Grand Beach Road and Parkview Avenue. Many of these businesses were seasonal – open from late May to early September. While others were only open for July and August, when school was closed for summer holidays.

Many of the businesses were either small restaurants or convenience stores – with names like: Mama and Papa Joe's, The Blueberry Patch, Hilltop Restaurant, Mike's BBQ, Fingold's, Lou's, Campers and Playland, which had a ferris wheel behind the building. There was and still is a lumber yard located on the highway, as well as the presence of little cottage/motels.

Lanky's Hot Dog Stand is the last remaining site along Grand Beach Road that recalls the line of commercial establishments that once dominated this strip. Lanky's, which was built in 1950, still expresses that fun summer-time resort atmosphere.

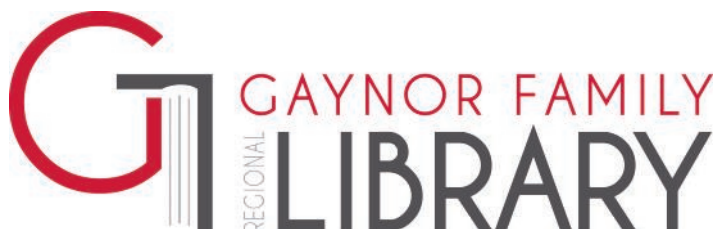


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For more detailed information, please visit
<https://redrivernorthheritage.com/>
Grand Marais Walking Tour Project