



Grosse Pointe Historical Society

L A K E S T E. C L A I R E

Local History Brought to Life!

Driving Tour of Grosse Pointe

Long before it became American in 1796, this land that curves southeast to edge the Detroit River at Windmill Pointe and then falls back along Lake St. Clair to Gaukler Pointe was known by the name of Grosse Pointe. Its woods and swamps were not conducive to travel or farming, but Indians came for fur trapping and the French had already begun to settle. What is now East Jefferson Avenue and Lake Shore Road was probably an Indian trail skirting the Grand Marais (Great Marsh) and following the shore line - the only access by land to Grosse Pointe at that time.

After the 1760 surrender of Detroit to the British during the French and Indian War, some French families left the town and joined Grosse Pointe's pioneer settlers there since the 1750s. These habitants built houses near the lake for access to good water and transportation, planted orchards and cultivated just enough land to supply their needs. Their properties, known as "ribbon farms," had in general three to six hundred feet of shoreline and extended inland for a mile or more.

Early Grosse Pointe settlers were relatively unaffected by the American Revolution. It was not until 1796 that the British left, and the Detroit area was taken over by the United States. Because of entangled Indian, French and English claims to land, the federal government had to establish a Land Board to define the ownership of land along the lake.

In 1887, an interurban street railway from Waterworks Park to Fisher Road reduced travel time to the Pointe. When Lake Shore residents objected to a trolley line along the shore, Grosse Pointe Boulevard was opened as a route for the tracks and a service road for the estates. At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the growth of Detroit and the advent of the automobile, Grosse Pointe grew into a year-round residential suburb. Two-lane Lake Shore Road was flanked by brick-and-board sidewalks and lit each evening by gas lights. Later, some would refer to the road as "Gasoline Alley" because of the numbers of newly rich automakers building mansions by the water.

Paving Jefferson Avenue from Waterworks Park to Fisher Road - the old toll road - greatly improved the Pointe's accessibility and accelerated the movement to the suburbs. In 1907, an orchard near Fisher Road was removed and replaced by an early subdivision, McKinley Place. As land became more valuable, subdivisions multiplied. The unusual pattern of short, unconnected streets, unique to Grosse Pointe, was a result of the successive "ribbon farms" and summer houses followed by estates and individual subdivisions. With a population increase, villages were organized and churches, schools, clubs, community organizations and modern city services were established.

The driving tour begins on Jefferson Avenue at the Grosse Pointe Park Municipal Building, and follows Lake Shore Drive to the Milk River.

Red italics indicate houses that have been demolished.

1. **Windmill Pointe.** Large point of land consisting in the 18th century of Presque Isle (Almost Island) formed by path of Fox Creek backed by large wooded marsh. Site of wind-driven stone grist mill.

2. **15115 E. Jefferson.** Grosse Pointe Park Municipal Building. Built in 1918. Grosse Pointe Park formed in 1907, was part of Grosse Pointe Township which in 1848 separated from Hamtramack Township which at the time, extended from Waterworks Park in Detroit to Gaukler Pointe.



3. **Trombley Road.** Named for Robert Trombley, Grosse Pointe Township Justice of the Peace and descendant of Trombley's, Grosse Pointe's first settlers.

4. **16004 E. Jefferson.** Voight-Kreit House. Probably designed by William Voight, Jr. for his parents (c. 1900) on land purchased from the Trombley family. Voight studied architecture in Germany, was an engineer and Detroit Board of Education member (1890); sister married Dr. Kreit.



5. **Three Mile Drive.** Traversed depth of a "ribbon farm" owned by Henry Russel which ran from lake almost to present day Harper Avenue.

6. **938 Three Mile Drive.** William B. Stratton House. Designed by architect Stratton and wife, Mary Chase Stratton, founder of Pewabic Pottery famous for iridescent glazes. Built in 1927. Reflects the Arts and Crafts movement with Spanish atmosphere.



7. **16109 E. Jefferson.** Buck-Wardwell House. Probably oldest brick house in the Pointes. Built c. 1849 of locally-made brick by William Buck, a prosperous farmer. Typical mid-19th century Michigan Greek Revival design. Owned 1912-1976 by Harold Wardwell. Wife was a daughter of Henry Russel.



8. **Grand Marais Boulevard.** Approximate edge of one-time low, swampy ground called Grand Marais (Great Marsh) by French settlers.

9. **Bishop Road.** At foot stood summer House (c. 1880) of Roman Catholic Bishop Casper Henry Borgess of Diocese of Detroit.

10. **16638 E. Jefferson.** John B. Ford Jr. House. Member of the Ford family that established Michigan Alkali Company. Vital in reestablishing the Detroit Symphony after WWII. Built by Eddy family as a Shingle style house in 1914. Redesigned by architect Robert O. Derrick for Ford in 1927.



11. **16761 E. Jefferson.** Christian Henry Haberkorn Jr. House. Called "Lawn Leighton." Tudor adaptation designed in 1917 by Louis Kamper, well-known Detroit architect, for Haberkorn, a banker.



12. **Cadieux Road.** Frenchman Michael Cadieux bought the land in 1835.

13. Sycamore Place. Site of former *Wesson Seyburn House*, “The Sycamores.” Fence and gate pillars, like many along Jefferson, marked property boundaries of a former large estate.



14. Lakeside Court. Former location of the *Frank W. Hubbard House*. Built 1913. Georgian design by architect Alpheus Chittenden.



15. 16939 E. Jefferson. Isadore Cadieux House. White clapboard farmhouse built mid-19th century by son of Michael Cadieux. One of oldest remaining Grosse Pointe houses. Adaptive reuse project completed 1992.



16. Elmsleigh Lane. *Luther S. Trowbridge House* Site of the 1909 house, “Elmsleigh,” owned by Luther S. Trowbridge. Designed by Trowbridge & Ackerman.

17. Stratford Place. *Dexter M. Ferry Jr. House*. Fence and pillars fronted long driveway to mansion of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., founder and president of seed company, D.M. Ferry & Company. Designed by Trowbridge & Ackerman in 1915.



18. 266 Lakeland Avenue. Benjamin F. Tobin House. Tobin, president of Continental Motors Corporation and among many auto executives to move to Grosse Pointe in the early 1900s. Built “Rosecroft” in 1912. One of several auto baron homes and factories designed by architect, Albert Kahn.



19. 17315 E. Jefferson. Mrs. Arthur McGraw House. Georgian style house and gardens. Created in 1927 for a Detroit merchant’s widow by Charles A. Platt, nationally-known artist, architect and landscape designer.



20. 17449 E. Jefferson. Commercial Building. Has served many needs of residents since before WWI: doctor’s offices, hardware store, drugstore (Schettler’s 1918-1947), barber shop, beauty shop, Board of Health offices and bank (Grosse Pointe Savings Bank and Grosse Pointe Bank 1915-1954). Since 1954, branch of National Bank of Detroit, now Bank One.



21. Rivard Boulevard. Named for Jean Baptiste Rivard. Related to French settlers in Detroit by 1707. Pioneered this land by the early 1760s. Married daughter of neighbors, the Yaxs, the first German inhabitants in Michigan.

22. 251 Lincoln Road. Murray W. Sales House. Called "Edgeroad." Built in 1917 for Sales, a Detroit manufacturer, by architect Louis Kamper. Italian Renaissance style rural villa with Georgian windows and French doors added. Originally 17743 E. Jefferson.



23. Dodge Place. *Horace Dodge Jr. House.* Named for Horace Dodge, Jr., son of a Dodge Motor Car Company founder. Site of Kahn's 1905 Charles M. Swift House later owned by Horace, Jr.



24. Fisher Road. Property owned by Jane Fisher and her husband, Merritt. Operated (c. 1850), and later leased, a popular roadhouse just to the east.

25. Rose Terrace. *Mrs. Horace Dodge House.* Site of the second "Rose Terrace" built 1931-1934 for the widow of Horace Dodge by Philadelphia architect, Horace Trumbauer.



26. McKinley Place. One of Grosse Pointe's early subdivisions (1907); many of the houses date before 1915.

27. Higbie Place. Site of the former *Hugo Scherer House.*



28. 16 Lake Shore. Grosse Pointe Memorial Church. In 1894, the "*Little Ivy Covered Church*" built here on land given by Joseph H. Berry. By 1927, a new sanctuary and bell tower in stone with stained glass windows erected in English Gothic style. Additions and renovations in 1962 and 1997.



29. 32 Lake Shore. Russell A. Alger Jr. House. Grosse Pointe War Memorial. Built in 1910 for Russell A. Alger, Jr., a Packard Motor Car Company founder. Designed by Charles A. Platt in Italian Renaissance style with extensive gardens. Called "The Moorings." Following Alger's death it was a branch of the Detroit Institute of Arts (1936-1948) before becoming a community center.



30. Edgemere Road. *Joseph H. Berry House.* Named for the 1880 Tudor manor estate, “Edgemere,” built nearby for Joseph H. Berry, a founder of Berry Brothers Varnish Manufactory. Designed by Detroit firm, Mason & Rice. Among first year-round mansions in Grosse Pointe. Several specimen trees he planted remain.



31. 59 Lake Shore. Henry G. Sherrard House. Possibly early Albert Kahn design. Built in 1892 by Joseph Berry for his daughter, Charlotte, and her new husband, a founder of Detroit University School (now University Liggett). Combines 19th century Shingle and Romanesque Revival styles.

32. 60 Lake Shore. *Dr. Edwin Lodge House.* Commissioned by Joseph Berry from Field, Hinchman and Smith in 1903 for his newly wed daughter, Alice and her husband, Dr. Lodge. House mainly Shingle style.



33. 71 Lake Shore. William A. McGraw House. Originally the 1884 Victorian Queen Anne summer home of McGraw, a Detroit merchant. Called “The Poplars” after a row of Lombardy poplar trees. Entrance redesigned for Percival Dodge in 1927 by Robert O. Derrick.

34. Newberry Place. *Truman Newberry House.* Site of 1914 estate of Truman Newberry, a son of founder of Michigan Car Works, largest railroad car business in country.



35. 147 Lake Shore. Alexander Lewis House. Now Parish House for St. Paul Catholic Church. Built before turn of century for Lewis, Detroit’s thirty-sixth mayor (1876). Son, Alexander I., resided in a twin house to east (demolished). Houses joined by a connecting two story classical portico.



36. 157 Lake Shore. St. Paul-On-The-Lake Roman Catholic Church. Completed in 1899 for a parish with a heritage dating to the 1820s. A Gothic Revival country church - pointed arches, flying buttresses and stained glass windows - built under guidance of Father John Elsen, whose funeral was first service in new church. Replaced an 1848 frame church where sermons were in French until 1880s. Grosse Pointe’s first Catholic church stood north of Vernier Road on the lake shore.



37. 171 Lake Shore. Convent of the Sacred Heart-Grosse Pointe Academy. Main four story building designed by William Shickel in 1885 for Academy of the Sacred Heart for Girls. Furnished with “modern” conveniences including steam heat. Chapel (1899) and classroom wing (1928) added later. Since 1969, a private co-educational school. The land extending east to beyond Moran Road first cleared by Commodore Alexander Grant, a British naval officer. Site of his large home, later called “Grant’s Castle,” built about 1775. Remained his residence until 1812.



38. Moran Road. Named for Louis Moran who bought the land from the Grant family in 1825. Related to French settlers who arrived in Detroit in the 1740s.

39. 207 Lake Shore. Strathearn Hendrie House. Site of the home of Strathearn Hendrie, hero of Spanish-American War. Son of George Hendrie, originally a railroad cartage executive, who helped to bring interurban trolleys to Grosse Pointe.



40. Harbor Hill. John F. Dodge House. Unfinished at his death in 1920. With brother, Horace E., built parts for the Model A Ford before opening their own car company. Land on lake side had space for boat-house.



41. 8 Carmel Lane. Philip H. McMillan House. Designed by Albert Kahn in 1912 for the director of and largest stockholder in Packard Motor Car Company. Georgian style stucco exterior with French doors opening to terrace with view of lake. Called "Elsinore." Originally 259 Lake Shore.



42. 276 Lake Shore. Henry B. Joy House. Crescent Sail Yacht Club. Designed by Albert Kahn after 1910 as boathouse for "Fair Acres," the home (demolished 1959) of Henry B. Joy, President of Packard Motor Car Company. Joy's 100-foot yacht berthed there. In 1934, leased to Crescent sailors in need of a clubhouse. Purchased by the club in 1958.



43. Kerby Road. Named for 19th Century local family with English origins. Name sometimes spelled "Kirby." First Protestant church located on the family farm at Kerby and Lake Shore Road.

44. 301 Lake Shore. Carl E. Schmidt House. Shingle style summer house with Tudor influences. Built in 1909 for board member of leather tannery in Detroit now known as "Trappers' Alley." Remodeled in the 1920s.



45. 337 Lake Shore. Grosse Pointe Pumping Station. Plant built in 1890s to dispense water to lake shore, and later inland, residents. Sold in 1905 to parent company of Detroit Edison which continued to provide water and light to the area but sold the water distribution system to Grosse Pointe Farms. Since the 1920s, owned by Highland Park.



46. Moross Road. Named for French farming family which purchased the property in 1836. Sometimes spelled their name, "Morass."

47. 365 Lake Shore. John Wynne, Jr. House. Victorian Queen Anne style summer house built about 1896 for Wynne, a Detroit attorney. Land acquired from his client, Theodore P. Hall.



48. Tonnancour Place. *Theodore P. Hall House* (1880). “Tonnancour,” a summer house and early literary center. Fuger home on Tonnancour Place only remaining house of those built on the property by his three married daughters.



49. Windemere Place. *Roy Chapin House.* Site of Georgian style house designed by nationally known John Russell Pope in 1927 for Roy Chapin, President of the Hudson Motor Car Company. Later home of Henry Ford II. Demolished 1983.



50. Provencal Road. Pierre Provencal House. Named for Pierre Provencal who built a typical French farmhouse on the land in 1823. Later summer home of daughter and her husband, Judge James Weir. House moved c. 1914 to 376 Kercheval Avenue.



51. Deeplands Road. *Henry D. Sheldon House.* Named for the estate of Henry D. Sheldon, Built between 1911 and 1915. Horse chestnut trees running south from Deeplands Road fronted the Sheldon property.



52. Stonehurst Road. *Joseph B. Schlotman House.* Named for the estate of Joseph B. Schlotman. Built between 1911 and 1915.



53. Clairview Road. *Harry N. Torrey House.* Named for the estate Dr. Harry N. Torrey. Built between 1911 and 1915. The Torrey property was location of “Claireview” Jersey stock farm owned by George S. Davis, partner in Park-Davis & Company.



54. 2 Clairview Road. Ford Ballantyne House. Colonial Revival house with classical details. Built in 1914 for secretary-treasurer of Michigan Alkali Company. Adjoining residence, “Fairholme,” owned by Ballantyne’s mother, Mrs. Speck, who, with sisters Mrs. Schlotman and Mrs. Torrey, was a granddaughter of Captain John B. Ford.



55. Webber Place. Oscar Webber House. Named for Oscar Webber, nephew of J.L. Hudson and vice president of J.L. Hudson Company. His house, designed in 1927 by Leonard Willeke, and surrounding garden originally occupied this property.



56. 625 Lake Shore. Harry Mulford Jewett House. White clapboard Colonial Revival house built in 1909 by Walter MacFarlane for Jewett, the head of Paige-Detroit Motor Car Company, which produced Paige and Jewett cars. Originally used as a summer cottage.



57. 635 Lake Shore. Emory W. Clark House. Built in 1934 for Clark, then president of First National Bank of Detroit. Designed in Georgian style by architect Hugh T. Keyes, one-time Albert Kahn associate. Regency flavor of bow-fronted wings with delicate window guards.



58. Renaud Road. Named for Joseph Renaud, a late 18th century French settler.

59. Lochmoor Boulevard. Scottish words for “lake” and “level area.” Also original name (1927-1939) of Grosse Pointe Woods.

60. Belle Meade. *Dudley B. Woodbridge House.* Named for Victorian summer home called “Belle Meade” built in 1866. Owned by Dudley B. Woodbridge, son of early Michigan governor and later among first year-round residents.



61. 755 Lake Shore. Joseph Harris House. White clapboard farm house completed about 1880 by Harris for his wife, Catherine Vernier Harris. Though greatly altered, Queen Anne style trim on the front gable remains. Part of the structure may date from the late 1770s when Vernier family first settled on this property.

62. 788 Lake Shore. Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. Began as an iceboating group in 1914. Clubhouse designed by Boston architect, Guy Lowell opened July 4, 1929. Mixture of Venetian and Gothic styles. One hundred eighteen-foot flagpole floated to Club by barge from “Rose Terrace,” Mrs. Horace Dodge’s estate, just before it was demolished.



63. Vernier Road. Named for the Vernier family which originally owned the property. Operated roadhouses in vicinity from 1888 to 1915.

64. 795 Lake Shore. Grosse Pointe Shores Municipal Building. Designed in 1915 by Albert Kahn with Federal style arched windows and intricate brickwork. Renovations in 1983 including glass stairwell and elevator. Property purchased from Henry Ford. Area to east of building known as Ford Park.



65. 874 Lake Shore. W. Hawkins Ferry House. International style design by Detroit, William Kessler. Three walls sheathed in cypress, the fourth, on the east, enclosed by glass windows overlooking Lake St. Clair. Built in 1964 for Ferry, son of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. and author of *The Buildings of Detroit, A History*.



66. 880 Lake Shore. C. Goodloe Edgar House. Built in 1910 by Albert Kahn for president of Edgar Sugar House, dealers in sugar and molasses. Has Italian Renaissance influences and is similar to the Russell Alger, Jr. House.

67. 888 Lake Shore. Hermann C. Rohns House. One of several turn of the century one-time summer cottages in vicinity. Brown shingle style built for Rohns in 1904. Includes Craftsman influences popular at time. Has matching carriage house.



68. 900 Lake Shore. George Osius House (now demolished and replaced). Built in 1911 for Osius, prominent landowner and chemical manufacturer. Served as first president of Grosse Pointe Shores. Municipal Park named for him. Grounds include trees imported and planted by Osius.

69. 1080 Lake Shore. Pauline Van Antwerp House. Center section one of the oldest structures in Grosse Pointe. Built c 1849 on farm purchased from the Robertjean family. Several additions to the house since then.



70. 1100 Lake Shore. Edsel And Eleanor Ford House. Main house and gatehouse reflect the style of English Cotswold area. Albert Kahn design completed in 1929 for Edsel Ford, only son of Henry and Clara Ford. His wife, Eleanor Clay Ford, a niece of J.L. Hudson. Interior paneling of 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Estate bequeathed in 1976, together with a trust for its maintenance, for public tours and special events by Mrs. Ford. Gaukler Point property purchased in 1914 by Henry Ford, who, after electing to build "Fairlane" in Dearborn, sold the land to son, Edsel, in 1926. Present grounds, lagoon and protective peninsula designed by renowned American landscape architect, Jens Jensen. Land to east sold in 1947 by Mrs. Ford to Grosse Pointe Woods for its Lake Front Park



69. Milk River. Now only open as it passes under Lake Shore Road. Most of its path now underground including the low, inland area of the once swampy Black Marsh Ditch. Drains to the north just as Fox Creek drains to the south. Used by Indian and pioneer canoes as an inland passage alternative to Lake St. Clair during storms.



Windmill Pointe

In the 1700s, several wood or stone windmills lined both shores of the Detroit River. There early settlers and Indians brought their grains for grinding. It was soon after 1750 that a grey stone mill was erected on the west shore of le Detroit (The Strait) referred to as Presque Isle (Almost Island) and now known as Windmill Pointe. Because it was most easily approached by water, farmers and Indians usually would paddle their canoes to reach it. There are conflicting stories as to the exact spot where the mill stood.

The mill was built on historic ground - the scene of a 1712 battle between the French supported by their Indian allies and the Fox Indians backed by the Mascoutins, in which an estimated one thousand Indians lost their lives. Later Indians believed that the spirits of those massacred haunted the site. The mill lay idle at times due to this and other local superstitions. A French "habitant" legend said that one night, during a heavy thunderstorm, lightning split the mill in two and a satanic figure, who had made a pact with an owner, was seen in the neighborhood.

The one-and-a-half ton granite millstone may still be seen in the trial gardens of the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. The stone, of French origin, was brought here in the 1770s and has a history in itself, having been pushed into the lake to keep the British from using the mill during the War of 1812. After the war, it was purchased by the Lauhoff family, whose descendant, George Lauhoff presented it to the Grosse Pointe War Memorial in 1952.

Gaukler Pointe

That point of land jutting into Lake St. Clair and marking the northeast end of the Grosse Pointes is now known as Gaukler Pointe. The French called it Pointe a Guignolet after a black cherry used for making liqueur, while the British knew it as Milk River Point. Chippewa and Huron often camped there for weeks after receiving their pensions at the government post in Detroit. In later years, Indian graves containing silver ornaments and archaic stone spear points were said to have been discovered there.

Since about 1876, it has been called Gaukler Pointe for Jacob Anthony Gaukler, a prosperous merchant in Roseville north of Grosse Pointe. His family had come to the area from Germany in 1853. In 1869, he married Josephine Weber and later purchased the point for a new home. After his death, Mrs. Gaukler added to this property where she spent many summers in her cottage beside Lake St. Clair.

Holiday seekers came by horse-and-buggy or interurban for a day at Gaukler Pointe. There, in the early 1900s, Matt Kramer's Road House would have offered them frog legs or chicken dinners and an orchestra for dancing.

In 1914, Josephine Gaukler, intending to establish a Catholic school in Canada for her daughter's religious order, sold her three hundred acres at Gaukler Pointe to Henry Ford.

Grosse Pointe Historical Society

www.gphistorical.org

