

Welcome to Harbor Country, a land for all seasons!

From the glistening white sands of Lake Michigan's beaches to the verdant and beautiful countryside, Harbor Country combines the best of two worlds. Rustic country charm is coupled with highly sophisticated shops, lodging, restaurants and galleries. There's fun, relaxation and discovery to be enjoyed year around.

In the summer, walk the beaches, play in the surf. Catch a fiery sunset's glow over the water. Relax beneath a star-jeweled sky with only the lapping of waves and a chorus of crickets to disturb the solitude.

The magnificent burst of fall foliage makes a striking backdrop for biking through the rolling countryside. Take advantage of a crisp autumn day with a trip to one of our pumpkin farms, or visit an area vineyard. Don't forget to pick your apples at a local orchard!

Winter's pristine whiteness presents a fairyland of ice-coated branches sparkling in the sunlight. Children gaily sled down snow-covered sand dunes or simply catch snowflakes on their tongues. It's another perfect day in Harbor Country when you cross-country ski, enjoy a sleigh ride at a tree farm to harvest the most wonderful tannenbaum ever, and leisurely holiday shop before settling down before a roaring fire.

Thousands of flowering fruit trees bloom here in the heartland's renowned "produce belt" in an enchanting prelude to summer. The heady fragrances of blossomtime make country drives exhilarating. Farms are filled with baby animals and the fruit stands burst with the freshest spring produce.

Harbor Country's magnificent natural attributes, along with small-town friendly charm and warm hospitality, promise to make every visit memorable.



About Our Communities

Officially, the term Harbor Country is a trademarked designation for the southwesterly portion of Berrien County, Michigan. Unofficially, it is a land sprinkled with charming hamlets, long stretches of beach, and friendly people. Harbor Country proper includes **Michiana, Grand Beach, New Buffalo, Union Pier, Lakeside, Harbert, Sawyer and Three Oaks**. Beginning at the Michigan state line, these tightly knit, yet individual, communities encompass a stretch of about 15 miles north along Lake Michigan and 6 miles inland.

Known as the Southwest Gateway to Michigan, **New Buffalo** is the cornerstone city and capital of Harbor Country. At the base of Whittaker Street is the public beach, lake and riverside parks, boat launch and transient marina. New Buffalo's harbor boasts the largest number of slips on the sunset coast at more than 1,100. Although most popular in summer, folks gather year round to enjoy the lake in her many moods, from her stormy tantrums, to her still serenity.

The Village of **Three Oaks** boasts a live performance theater, several galleries, eclectic shops, and a fine arts cinema. Between the Music in the

Park, the children's programming at the library, and "3rd Saturday Gallery Walk", there is always something to do! The village hosts the largest Flag Day celebration in the nation. And start training now for the Three Oaks Spokes Club's annual "Apple Cider Century" bicycle event when more than 7,000 cyclists enjoy 100 miles of Harbor Country trails.

The sleepy, hidden Village of **Michiana**, with its many charming log cabins, hugs the state line of Michigan and Indiana. The southernmost town of Harbor Country, it is the summer residence for a number of well known Chicago celebrities and is best known for its quiet, relaxing cottage neighborhoods that lie within earshot of the Lake Michigan surf. The community's developers honored the area's first residents, the Indians, by using names such as Pokagon and Seminole for the village's meandering roads. The most often heard question is "What stop are you at?" referring to the old bus route stations that still dot Lake Shore Drive. With very few street lights, and little traffic, Michiana beaches are the perfect place to star gaze.

The Village of **Grand Beach** is a resort community on Lake Michigan with a population of less than 150 year-round residents. Stately white gates have



welcomed visitors to Grand Beach since the early 1900s and the community's public golf course dates to 1911. Among the most famous visitors to Grand Beach are author Father Andrew Greeley and the Mayors Daley of Chicago, who have maintained vacation homes in the village for decades.

Logging and timber were Harbor Country's major industries in the 1870s, requiring shipping piers along Lake Michigan's shoreline. One of those piers, **Union Pier**, gave its name to today's quaint lakeshore community, formerly named Townline. Union Pier's corner store, sweet shops, and ice cream parlor are complimented by unique antique emporiums, galleries, and grand old resorts that dot the countryside. Many fine bed & breakfasts have been welcoming repeat guests for decades.

At the turn of the century, **Lakeside** was home to some of the most famous Lake Michigan lakeshore resorts. Lakeside's history, like its Harbor Country sister towns, began with logging that fed nearby Chicago's insatiable need for lumber. This rural lakeshore location fostered the next economic chapter as a popular vacation destination for nearby Chicagoans beginning in the early 1920s. An active homeowners' association sponsors several events during the

year and fosters a strong sense of community.

In **Harbert**, visitors will encounter art galleries, antique shops and a wonderful variety of dining opportunities. Harbert has changed since the days Carl Sandburg roamed its wooded lanes, but has lost none of its appeal. The influence of the Scandinavian families who helped create this thriving resort community is still felt today. As the Harbert Business Association says, "Harbert is out of the ordinary, not out of the way." We couldn't agree more.

The northernmost community of Harbor Country, **Sawyer**, is graced with country vineyards, the occasional curio shop, fruit stands and a local art center that define this town's "hustle and bustle." Warren Dunes, with several hundred acres of dunelands, campgrounds and beaches is one of the largest state parks in Michigan. Visit Sawyers quaint downtown area which features the old fashioned hardware store, a classic soda fountain, and home & garden showplace.

The Story of Harbor Country

by the late Ron Miller

New Buffalo

Wessel Whittaker was having a miserable day. Bound for Chicago out of Buffalo, NY, Wessel and his crew, aboard the schooner Post Boy, thought the end might be near. A savage November storm in 1834 grabbed control of their vessel and hurtled it onto the Lake Michigan shore. Aground and breaking up, the Post Boy was lost. But Wessel and his crew managed to struggle ashore near the current village of Grand Beach. The New Yorkers, en route to St. Joseph to report the loss of their ship, came upon a harbor which Whittaker was certain could rival the port of Chicago. Captain Whittaker determined that he would return to the scene of his calamity and found his "New" Buffalo. Our courageous Captain, of course, wasn't the first visitor to New Buffalo.



The Lighthouse, a New Buffalo hot-spot that roared through the 1920s, often drew large crowds to see famous bands of the era including Guy Lomardo and his orchestra, Wayne King and many others.

The Miami, Iroquois and Potawatomi Indians all fought for control of the area. The Indians, and the game and fish they cherished, also attracted French traders and missionaries. But it was our Captain who first made New Buffalo into a permanent community. Whittaker, along with friends and relatives, returned in 1835 and began to develop and promote their dream. Saw mills were constructed and log buildings for every purpose were built. More settlers arrived from New York and the South with not dreams, but expectations, of riches to be harvested here. Soon these pioneers learned the value of tourists.

Land travelers between Detroit and Chicago meandered through New Buffalo and spent their tourist dollars here. But in the late 1840s, the Michigan Central Railroad Company completed the stretch of track between Niles and New Buffalo, making New Buffalo the end of the railroad line for travelers between Detroit and Chicago. An unprecedented scale of tourism quickly reshaped the town's character. Hotels, restaurants and numerous saloons selling whiskey at five cents a pint were established.

Although the railroad continued to contribute to the local economy, it was not until the 1900s and the age of the automobile that New Buffalo truly established its link to tourism. In 1934 the State recognized New Buffalo as "The Gateway to Michigan" and built a tourist information center here. The current Welcome Center on I-94 is the busiest in Michigan.

The dredging of New Buffalo's harbor began in the 1960s. By 1975, New Buffalo's safe harbor became a reality and the new Whittaker Street bridge was dedicated. Not quite a port to equal Chicago's, but Wessel's harbor was finally complete.

Michiana-Grand Beach

Unlike nearby Harbor Country communities, Michiana and Grand Beach were solely founded as resort communities. The Long Beach Development Company began subdividing and building Michiana in the 1920s.

A famous Michiana landmark was a Signal Oak at the corner of Michiana and Powhattan Drives. Early surveyors marked the tree's trunk to signal the Indiana-Michigan state line. The area that is now Michiana (Michigan side) and Michiana Shores (Indiana side) was originally called Michiana Shores.

Stately white gates have welcomed visitors to Grand Beach since the early 1900s. The community's golf course dates to 1911 and was a huge attraction for Chicagoans who arrived three times a day on the Michigan Central Railroad. Frank Lloyd Wright built homes in Grand Beach, but the village's most famous architectural offering was the 175-room Golfmore Hotel. Opened in 1921, the Golfmore offered concerts, movies and a huge, at least for the Midwest, ski jump located on a dune behind the hotel. But the Golfmore was destroyed in 1939 by a spectacular fire.

The Grand Beach Inn was once The Pinewood Lodge and served as the training camp for James Braddock as he prepared for his prize fight with Joe Louis. Perhaps the most famous visitors to Grand Beach, however, are author Father Andrew Greeley and the Mayors Daley of Chicago, who have maintained a summer home in the village for decades.

Union Pier

Union Pier was founded on an ethic of hard work without visions of a port to rival Chicago as was Wessel Whittaker's notion in New Buffalo. There was nature's bounty to be harvested here. Tree trunks measured five feet and more in diameter. Trees rose 60 feet to the lowest branches. Squirrels, we are assured, ran through the community without ever touching the ground. There clearly was no Sears Tower to be seen on the horizon across the Lake, but everyone in what is now Union Pier understood that timber was the fuel which would fire the growth of Chicago. Boards could be bucks. And so, a group of men built a "Pier in Union" at the foot of Berrien St. It was constructed as a 600-foot edifice jutting into Lake Michigan. A 130 ton schooner was built on the adjacent beach. Tracks were laid to Three Oaks and mule-driven cars brought in lumber from saw mills along the route.

Soon there were brick and tool handle factories sending their wares to Chicago and beyond. The Chicago Fire of 1871 only increased the demand for Union Pier's natural bounty. But, Chicago was rebuilt, Union Pier's pier washed away and a new economy had to be established.



Red Arrow Highway, looking north near the Galien River bridge, early 1930s.

In the 1900s, tourism replaced timber, bricks and fishing as Union Pier's major industry. Union Pier became the United Nations of tourism. Eastern Europeans, African Americans and Jewish vacationers all established homes and resorts in the community. Olympian Jesse Owens had a home here. Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, ultimately the victim of an assassin's bullet, brought guests to his summer home by yacht. John Dillinger even stopped for gas at the Prusa Resort service station which is now the Wine Sellers on Red Arrow Highway. But, still, it's the lake and its sunsets that attract us all.

Three Oaks

Imagine this: the President of the United States makes his way to a tiny Michigan village to dedicate a war memorial. He's greeted by a fellow who has turned turkey feathers into a worldwide industry and declared "Three Oaks Against the World." Edward Warren shook the hand of President McKinley in 1899 at the Three Oaks train station and heard President McKinley eloquently dedicate the Dewey Cannon Monument to the good people of Three Oaks and their contribution to the Spanish-American War. The campaign Warren waged against every other city and village in the nation to raise the most per capita contribution for the war effort and its veterans was yet another victory for a most incredible businessman and benefactor.

Three Oaks was linked to the rest of our current Harbor Country communities by the timber and bricks which were shipped to Chicago and other Great Lakes cities. And, of course, there was the railroad. The crews aboard the Central Michigan Railroad passing through the village recognized there were three oak trees which appeared to be one because of their mass and proximity. Everyone on board recognized the three oaks, as did the local residents. Want to name a town?

But, back to this Warren fellow. One day he noticed a store clerk fix a broken whale bone corset stay with a turkey feather quill. An industry was born at that moment. Turkey feather quills were becoming garment stays and buggy whips, as well. The Three Oaks economy was booming. The Warren Featherbone factory still stands in Three Oaks.

The biggest events in Harbor Country occur in Three Oaks every year. The "Oakers" claim they have the biggest Flag Day Parade in the States. Certainly no one will dispute that it's one great party. But, the biggest event is the Apple Cider Century bike ride which draws some 7,000 riders from across the country. No buggy whips required.

Lakeside

Soon after Wessel Whittaker founded New Buffalo, newly arriving pioneers must have thought the village was a bit congested. Perhaps they simply wanted less expensive land. Whatever the reason, the area's expansion moved north across the Galien River to what is now Lakeside. An original settler named the new community "Chikaming," an Indian word meaning "at the shore of the sea."

As with the other towns developing at the time, one of the first orders of business was to establish a saw mill. But it wasn't until the 1850s and the arrival of the Wilkinson family when real progress began. The Wilkinsons bought 2,500 acres of land along the lake shore. They focused their energies on the area that is now the intersection of Lakeshore Road and Pier Street. A trading post, boarding house and assorted other enterprises were established. But the jewel of the village, naturally called Wilkinson, was a 600-foot-long pier. The Wilkinson family's schooner, Enterprise, took lumber and bricks



The Rio, New Buffalo's famous restaurant on the beach. The entire building was destroyed by fire in 1959.



Hepplers "Royal Blue" grocery store located at 105 North Whittaker St., New Buffalo, September 1953.

to Chicago and returned with supplies for the now thriving trading post. Wilkinson was renamed Lakeside in 1874.

In the late 1800s, with a train now stopping in the community, Lakeside's tourist industry began to flourish. The early visitors were often administrators and faculty members from the University of Chicago. In the 1920s, the Chikaming Country Club was established. A replica of Shakespeare's birthplace was dismantled in Chicago and transported to Lakeside where it became the Country Club's Shakespeare House.

As Lakeside was developing, and the current Red Arrow Highway was constructed, the original Wilkinson Trading Post was moved from its lake location to its current home on Red Arrow where it was eventually restored as Wilkinson Village and now houses an interesting museum which traces the history of Lakeside.

The Lakeside Inn is probably the village's most historically romantic site. Movie stars were wined and dined there. And during Prohibition, the tale goes, Al Capone along with a variety of Chicago politicians used the Inn as a favorite drinking and gambling spot.

Harbert-Sawyer

The emergence of the railroad secured the founding of Harbert. John Glavin, an engineer on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, noted the area's barren land on one of his runs between Chicago and Detroit. Glavin investigated and found the land affordable. Glavin had a new career. But while Glavin founded the community in the 1850s, a Chicago industrialist who was instrumental in building the town's train depot, aced out Glavin when it came to naming the village.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the Harbert economy. Orchards and vineyards were established. All of the town's products would be gathered at the Harbert depot for transport to Chicago and Detroit.

The community's most famous visitor and resident was Carl Sandburg. Much of Sandburg's Pulitzer Prize winning account of Abraham Lincoln was written at his Harbert home. The Sandburgs lived in Harbert for 15 years. An Ohio judge, Silas Sawyer, grew weary of the court room and decided he would join the westward migration in the mid-1800s. Sawyer bought 100 acres and after clearing half of his land planted it with fruit trees. He continued logging the area and hauled his timber on a horse-driven railroad to Fuller Pier where Warren Dunes State Park is now. The town grew as an agricultural center and eventually established an open air market where buyers transported their products by train and truck to population centers.

In the 1920s, John Flynn arrived and started his Palm Tea Room as well as the Flynn Soda Grill. The Flynn Building became Sawyer's most famous and for many years also housed the Flynn Theater which staged live productions.

Sawyer is home to the well known Tower Hill Camp which was founded in the 1920s by the Congregational Church.