

CROSS VILLAGE
Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan

HISTORY: THE CROSS VILLAGE OF YESTERDAY

Harbor Light Newspaper

July 17, 2013

By Jessica Evans, News Manager

The small, picturesque town of **Cross Village** is largely known for sweeping panoramic views of the lake, authentic Polish food served at eclectic **Legs Inn**, and for artwork at **Three Pines Studio**. Often a destination for those taking the scenic journey through the winding tunnel of trees, the blink-and-you-might-miss-it village is tucked between **Harbor Springs** and **Sturgeon Bay**, a remote sand-swept beach located within **Wilderness State Park**.



Cross Village was once much larger than it is today. Shops, hotels, and homes sprawled across the town's bluff. A large Native American settlement and later, lumber mill and docks were located by the water. (Courtesy photo).

What many are not be aware of, however, is the **Cross Village** of yesteryear. It might surprise some to learn it was once the largest town in the region, and for a while, the largest settlement in the whole state. An extensive **Native American village** was situated at the water's edge, and according to local historian and **Good Hart** resident **Jane Cardinal**, tens of thousands of **Ottawa** (now **Odawa**) people lived along the shoreline from **Cross Village** to **Harbor Springs**. There is no exact date recorded as to when the settlement was established, she noted, but it is thought to be thousands of years old. The **Odawa** name for the village was **Anamiewatigoing**, or At the **Tree of Prayer**, **Cardinal** said. It was also referred to as **La Croix (The Cross)** and also **Village of the Cross** for the large cross positioned on the bluff overlooking the water that was likely put in place by **French** missionary, **Father Marquette** in the 1600s, while in the area.

According to **Cardinal**, the first recorded missionary in **Cross Village** was **Pierre Luc du January**, who served the area from 1734 to 1765. Several more would follow, but the area would largely remain a **Native American village** until **German** immigrant, **Father John Bernard Weikamp**, came to the area in 1855 to start up his religious order.

"Weikamp was either a scoundrel or a saint and probably a bit of both," Cardinal said with a chuckle. "He immigrated to Chicago in 1850 and started a church and religious society of nuns and brothers. He ended up selling the church, kept the money, and then hightailed it up here. He initially bought Harbor Point, then sold it, and came up to Cross Village and bought 2,000 acres."

With him, **Weikamp** brought a group of nuns and brothers and ended up building a convent which consisted of a chapel, dormitories, a school, a saw and grist-mill, carpenter and blacksmith shops, among other buildings. He had a large following and worked with the **Native American** people.

Following the **Civil War**, the **Homestead Act** was enacted, which opened land (typically 160 acres to each individual or family) across the country to citizens at little to no cost. This opened the area to settlers and began to change the landscape of the region. It was detrimental to the area's original inhabitants, as **Native Americans** were simply moved off their land.

The **Native American** population, already reduced due to diseases such as smallpox and diphtheria, became almost nonexistent after **Indian Removal Act** of 1830, which required all **Native Americans east** of the **Mississippi** be moved **west** of the **Mississippi**. Some **Odawa** lost hope and during this time, 200 members of the tribe moved to **Canada**.

From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, the lumber industry boomed in **Michigan**, and **Cross Village** was no exception. According to **Cardinal**, around the turn of the century, the town boasted three hotels, a hospital with three doctors, grocery stores, butchers, and numerous homes.

It wasn't long, however, until lumber was clear cut across the region, taking away the major source of industry in the area. Though **Cross Village** still had fishing to count on, it started down a path of economic decline. In 1918, a fire would break out that would seal the fate of the village.

*"A fire started in the **Atwood Hotel** after the proprietress left her kerosene lamp burning," **Cardinal** said. "It was September and everything was incredibly dry. In addition, there was a terrific offshore breeze and between these two things, up went the town. The only water they had was what they got out of the lake and brought up to the bluff by horse and buggy, so there was no way to put it out."*

The fire destroyed the hotel, in addition to numerous shops and homes. Bad turned to worse the next year when a nationwide influenza outbreak came to **Cross Village**. In addition to fire and illness, industry had all but died out, and there was no reason for anyone to stay, so much of the town was never rebuilt.

As for the **Native American** population, they faced the same hardships; it was difficult to survive there.

"The **Native American** people couldn't survive on making crafts and because they had lost so much land or had been swindled out of it; many headed south to find industry jobs where they could make some money," **Cardinal** said.

Today, the town has less than 100 residents, many of them with **Odawa** roots or families that can be traced back to early settlers in the area.

The town's rich history is being kept alive by several members of the community through the **Cross Village History Museum**. The museum depicts the history of the **Cross Village** area and has numerous artifacts from years gone by. The museum is open on May through October on Saturday from 1-3 p.m. Residents are encouraged to donate unwanted items and photographs of local historical interest to the museum.

For more information about the museum and the history of **Cross Village**, call **231-526-0906**.

CROSS VILLAGE, EMMET COUNTY, MICHIGAN



**Cross Village was once much larger than it is today.
Shops, hotels and homes sprawled across the town's Bluff.
A large Native American Settlement and later Lumber Mill and Docks
were located by the water.**

CROSS VILLAGE

'A-ha' moments in store for museum visitors

Petoskey News-Review
Saturday, January 8, 2014
by Aliana Knapp-Prasek
Saturday Contributor

For residents and tourists alike, the Museum of L'Arbre Croche History offers a look into the history of Cross Village. The museum is being renovated and revamped.

"It's hard to imagine what there was when there is very little left to see," said Jane Cardinal, Museum of L'Arbre Croche History Historic Research and Exhibit volunteer. "We have little to offer, but quiet 'a-ha' moments for those willing to drop in and read the stories we've displayed. If someone wishes to know the treasures of the rich history that roots the visual beauty of this area, you will be rewarded. Your perspective will deepen and be forever changed."

The museum was founded in 1995 by The Rev. Albert Langheim OFM, the former pastor of the Holy Cross Church.

"His fascination turned into reading," stated Cardinal. "He spent hours in the Michigan Room in the Petoskey library. Folks gave him keepsakes and true historic treasures from their families. When eyesight and health debilities overwhelmed his ability to continue as pastor, he approached a few of those he knew held similar interests and asked us to take care of his 'museum.'"

One of those who The Rev. Albert Langheim OFM approached was Frank Francis, current curator of the museum.

"I had some significant items for donation to the museum. In the fall of that year, 'The Rev. Al' called me to the museum for a meeting. He told me that the diocese of Gaylord was retiring him and that he wanted to leave the museum in good hands," explained Francis. "He handed me the keys to the museum and said take care of it."

And, the museum has been taken care of. Each room has been repainted and carpeted to fit that particular room's theme. To give a more sophisticated museum look, decorations and track lighting have been installed.

"The museum has four rooms and a main hall," said Francis. "As you enter the museum, you're in the Main Hall that depicts the great fire that burned down Cross Village in 1918. Story boards hang on the walls that relate the story of the event with pictures."

Rooms in the museum include the Odawa Room, The Weikamp Room, the L'Arbre Croche Room, The Pioneer Room and The Research Library. Each room has a different story and weaves together the history of the area.

"The Odawa Room displays artifacts from the First Nation, and relates things in the L'Arbre Croche area," Francis detailed. "The Weikamp Room has items from the time The Rev. Weikamp ruled the area. The L'Arbre Croche Room depicts the lumbering era that dominated Cross Village during the mid to late 1800s. On display are tools of that era."

The Pioneer Room contains donations of farm implements used locally after the land was opened to homesteaders. Cardinal points out that Cross Village was the "Gateway to Emmet County" in those days. Because of the thick forests, the only way to find the land you had selected was following the blaze marks on the trees.

The Weikamp room is currently under renovation. At one time, there was the Baraga Room. Now, the Story of Bishop Frederic Baraga display has been moved to the wall adjacent to the Main Hall. The display contains a series of flash cards he used and left behind to instruct the Christianized Indians in the faith.

This past season, that former Baraga Room was transformed into the Research Library Room.

"In addition to the materials collected by Father Al and bound in notebooks by Frank Francis, Dr. Dave Frurip of Dow Chemical has donated several bankers boxes of historic material written about the area. He collected copies from museums, library collections and religious archives," said Cardinal. "These are being organized and retyped from microfilmed copies. In a few years, this will develop into a wonderful resource center."

"We have a lot of people who come to our museum to look up family records and do research about the area," said Francis. "Area residents support the existence of the museum and tourists that stop by as they pass through town have written in the guest book about what a unique museum and how it is sort of a hidden treasure in the area."

The Museum of L'Arbre Croche History is located in the parish hall on the grounds of the Holy Cross Church at 6624 North Lakeshore Drive in Cross Village. The museum is open from mid-May until October on Saturdays from 1-3 p.m. Special arrangements can be made for group tours and school field trips. For more information or appointments, call 231-526-0906, write P.O. Box 169, Cross Village, MI 49723 or email ffrancis@people.pc.com.

CROSS VILLAGE
'A-ha' moments in store for museum visitors
Petoskey News-Review
Saturday, January 8, 2014
by Aliana Knapp-Prasek
Saturday contributor

Right: Cross Village is noted for many things, especially its cross.

Below: This is how the business district looked prior to the fire of 1819. Note the wooden plank sidewalks.



**CROSS VILLAGE
EMMET COUNTY, MICHIGAN**



CHIEF THUNDERCLOUD
MARQUETTES CROSS
CROSS VILLAGE, MICH

The Ottawa's called this area, from Cross Village to Harbor Springs Waganakisi {Crooked Tree} while white traders called just this Village L'Arbre Croche {Crooked Tree}
When the Jesuit missionaries erected a large cross on the bluff at Cross Village {Rev. Gabriel Richard mentions seeing it on his tour of the missions in 1799}, the Indians called the village Anamiewatigoing {At the Tree of Prayer or Cross}; it was called Old L'Arbre Croche to distinguish it from New L'Arbre Croche which the missionaries built at Harbor Springs About 1830; the name La Croix {The Cross} was used from 1847 to 1875 When it was changed to Cross Village; Amos T. Burnett became The first postmaster of Cross village on Oct. 31, 1870. {Mary Belle Shurtleff, whose grandmother became PM here in 1873}
Information extracted from Michigan Place Names by romig, L.H.D.



39 Cross Village, Northern Michigan

6A-12575

POST CARD

*Cross Village, Northern Michigan
Mrs. C.C. Graham, Petoskey, Michigan, Publisher Undated*

INDIAN FIRE PLACE
Cross Village, Emmet County, Michigan

