



MARKTOWN UPDATE

A publication of the Marktown Preservation Society

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Neither the celebration of Labor Day nor the concept of a bicycle tour or even a race are new concepts to the Pullman Landmark District in Chicago.

Just one year after the celebration of Labor Day began in 1883, the Pullman Palace Car Company suffered a two month strike of its workers. The strike came about when, after having to reduce the employees wages the company failed to lower the rent on their homes in the Pullman neighborhood.

And as for their relationship to the bicycle, this Labor Day marked the 120th anniversary of the first Chicago to Pullman bicycle race. That historic race began at Adams and Michigan Avenue at what is now the Art Institute of Chicago and ended at the modern Pullman neighborhood just outside of Chicago. So you see, combining the celebration of Labor Day and bicycles was a natural event.

For the third consecutive year, the Pullman Civic Organization sponsored the Pullman to Marktown Labor Day Ride, a ride that will be well remembered by all. The chairperson this year was once again Patty Oyervides who spent countless hours making sure that everything went just right for this 40+ mile excursion.

The weather was perfect for the ride this year. No rain and no 90 degree temperatures until well after we returned to Pullman in mid afternoon. Patty Oyervides explained the route to us from the front steps of the Hotel Florence. From there we were off and running at just a bit after 9:00 AM. Our first stop for the day was to be the Market Square building just east of the Hotel Florence, and while it



ABOVE: Participants prepare to depart the Hotel Florence in the Pullman Landmark District in Chicago.

BELOW: The group of nearly 100 riders begin arriving in the Marktown Historic District in East Chicago, Indiana



was well marked on our maps, we somehow missed the stop and the lecture by architect Michael Shymanski.

We regrouped briefly on 122nd Street between Stoney Island and Torrence where we learned about the wetlands on either side of the road. For those at the front of the tour we spotted a Great Blue Heron in the marshlands to the north.

From there we made our way to the old union building on South Avenue O. It was the site of the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre at Acme Steel where innocent women and children were killed in the mayhem that broke out when over zealous security guards decided to break up the picnickers that had assembled seventy years ago. Kevin Murphy, playwright, author and historian provided an outstanding but brief lecture on the tragedy.

From there it was off to the west side of Wolf Lake and the William Powers Conservation area for a presentation by Mike Boos, Executive Director of the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative. Mike explained some of the early history of the lake. His presentation detailed the building of the dikes those many decades ago and the present restoration work that is being done.

The next stop on the ride was the site of the Cline Avenue bridge collapse 25 years ago this past April when 14 highway construction workers lost their lives in what was then the largest construction accident in U.S. history. Paul Myers, who worked for the Safety Department of LTV Steel at the time of the accident presented a brief but poignant presentation based upon his first hand knowledge of the event.

Paul explained that the cause of the accident was attributed to undersized footings under the scaffolds that supported the concrete forms and the actual bridge, and an unapproved change in the design of the scaffolds that were used. It was also noted that the total fine for the 14 deaths was less than \$12,000.00.



ABOVE: Riders make their way over the Torrence Avenue bridge.

Below: Kevin Murphy, author and historian provided an outstanding lecture on the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre at the Acme Steel site on Chicago's South Side.



From the Cline Avenue site it was but a short ride to the midway point in our journey, as the Marktown Historic District was just down the street.

The group assembled at Paul's home in Marktown. Once there his six room home was opened for visitors. Paul discussed the history of industrial housing in the Midwest and the specific designs used in Marktown. Patty Oyervides arrived with one of the SAG vehicles and provided fresh fruit, fitness bars and bottled water for the riders.

Once the lecture was concluded and the questions answered, the group was off to our



Mike Boos, Executive Director of the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative discussed the history and biodiversity of Wolf Lake. His presentation was made at the William Powers Conservation Area on the west side of Wolf Lake.

last stop: Whihala Park in Whiting, Indiana.

Upon our arrival, John Pastirik of the South Side gave a brief lecture on the economic history of Lake Michigan, both past and present. What once had been a much needed tool for industrial expansion 100 years ago is now a tool for quality of life issues and the economic growth of Calumet Region. He also discussed the bird sanctuary at the western end of the park, just past the Hammond Marina.

After using the washrooms at the county park, we remounted and headed for the bridge at Horseshoe Casino and our trip back to the Hotel Florence in Pullman. Once there, lunch was a welcomed site for all present and a variety of homemade side dishes supplemented the hearty sandwiches and fried chicken. Following lunch a group of local musicians entertained riders and residents alike. It was by all means the best tour yet.

Special thanks must go to the



Paul Myers, who rode the entire route this year, explained the tragic occurrences that lead to the death of 14 highway construction workers on the Cline Avenue ramp 25 years ago this past April 15th.

Chicago Police Department for providing an escort on the Illinois side of the tour. To Patty Oyervides for chairing the event once again. To Tony Dzik for having designed the map, posters and



The turn around point for the tour was once again the Marktown Historic District. Participants had the opportunity to take a much deserved break in the ride and to hear a brief lecture on the history of Marktown and the labor movement that facilitated its construction 90 years ago. Paul's home was also opened so that participants could see the inside of one of the historic homes in Marktown.



John Pastirik for not only leading the tour but also serving as a docent at Whihala Park in Whiting. He explained the integral role that Lake Michigan played in the industrialization of the Calumet Region and our need to restore the lake as a recreation asset for generations to come.

other support materials. To John Pastirik for leading the tour and serving as a docent at Whihala Park. To Mike Boos, Kevin Murphy, Mike Shymanski, and Paul Myers for also having served as docents at the various stops along the way. To those who set up the registration table at the beginning and those who prepared and served the lunch afterwards. We must also thank the outstanding rock band members who once again provided the entertainment after our return to Pullman. And last but not least, our thanks must go out to the riders who made this event possible. For those of you who missed it: see you next year!



Above: Riders returned to the Florence Hotel in Pullman for a much deserved lunch in the park.

Below: Participants and residents alike enjoyed the rock music provided by local musicians.

Bottom photo: Mike Boos and Patty Oyervides take a brief moment for a photo before heading back to Pullman.



The Times Names Seven Wonders of NW Indiana....



Historic Crown Point Court House



Munster War Memorial



Munster War Memorial



Illiana Motor Speedway



Last month, The Times sponsored an on-line survey to nominate and name the Seven Wonders of Northwest Indiana. The concept of doing so is not new by any means. The first such list was that of the ancient world and was compiled some 2,200 years ago by Callimachus of Cyrene. An updated list was completed in the Middle Ages, and most recently a modern list was assembled earlier this year. Not to be left out of the fun, it should be noted that nearly all of the states have also assembled their own list of seven wonders. So, here it is, the NW Indiana edition of Seven Wonders: **The Historic Crown Point Court House** and commonly called "Grand Old Lady" this magnificent structure stands today as a tribute to the early years of Lake County government. Built in three separate stages, this magnificent structure comes to us from 1878 in the height of the Victorian era and is an outstanding example of both Romanesque and Georgian styles.

What is probably most notable of the structure is its more recent history, for it stands today as one of the earliest and most important examples of historic preservation in all of Lake County. With the lower lever dedicated to retail and the upper floors occupied by a museum, the city court, offices and banquet facilities, this great old building is more useful today than it ever was as a government build-

ing. **The Munster War Memorial** is by far the most modern of the Seven Wonders of Northwest Indiana. This magnificent nine acre park was created in just three years at a cost of \$3.2 million dollars.

More than 100,000 visitors from 40 U.S. states and nine foreign countries visited the park that first year in 2003. This outstanding park is one of the most interactive memorials in the country and features separate memorials for each of the major U.S. conflicts of the 20th century.

The Illiana Motor Speedway on U.S. 30 is the only commercial venture that made the list. One of the oldest remaining short tracks in the Midwest, it was first opened in 1947 and was called Harry's Half Mile where fans paid to see motor cycles circle a dirt track.

The first full-fledged stock car season was in 1950. The track remained as a dirt track until it was paved in 1962. It still has a full racing season and is well known for such fan pleasers as the Figure 8 Bus Race (no passengers). This two day event attracts spectators from across the country.

Notable drivers from the past who drove the track include Mark Martin, Rusty Wallace and Tony Bettenhausen.

Ford Hangar in Lansing is probably one of the only noted aviation buildings in the Region. Built by Henry Ford in 1926 on 1,400 acres



.....Marktown Historic District Included On List

of land, it was originally designed to be the home for the manufacture of the famed Ford TriMotor airplane. Unfortunately, the Great Depression halted those ambitions and only about 200 of this famed aircraft were ever built.

In the 1920s the airport was visited by the likes of Henry Ford, Charles Lindberg, Amelia Earhart and Wiley Post in their continued efforts to promote the aviation industry in the U.S. Now known as the Lansing airport, the facility attracts nearly 60,000 flights each year and is also home to a Veterans Memorial on the NW corner of the property.

Indiana Dunes State Park and National Lakeshore not only made the cut for NW Indiana but is also included as one of the seven wonders of the state of Indiana. More than 100 years ago and long before the industrialization of NW Indiana, residents of Chicago and Hyde Park fought to establish what we now enjoy as the Indiana Dunes State Park (est. 1926). That effort was spurred on again in 1966 when a U.S. Senator from Illinois fostered the establishment of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. This movement added an additional 8,300 acres to this most remarkable ecosystem. The Indiana Dunes is by far one of the nation's most revered national parks and often overlooked by those of us who live in the area and take it for granted.

Wicker Memorial Park located

on Indianapolis Blvd. and Ridge Road was established in 1925 when a group of local men purchased the 300 acre oak savanna for a community park. Just two short years after the purchase the park opened to the public with a dedication ceremony conducted by President Calvin Coolidge.

The park now hosts a 18 hole golf course, a three mile exercise track, a spray park for the children and more picnic groves and beach volleyball courts than any other park in the county. It is open year around and frequented by thousands each year.

Marktown Historic District is pleased to have been added to this most prestigious list of NW Indiana attractions. Born of steel and tempered in oil, this most unique and isolated of neighborhoods has also been listed on Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana's 10 Most Endangered list. The neighborhood has also been referred to as the **Brigadoon of Industrial Housing rising out of the mists of industry every few years**. While tiny Marktown has not been restored to its former glory, the potential and opportunity still exist for this one of a kind neighborhood on East Chicago's far north side. Whether or not Marktown is ever restored is uncertain. What is certain is that it merits our attention and deserves to be restored to its former glory, keeping the tenants of historic preservation as the foundation of its future.



Ford Hangar in Lansing



Wicker Memorial Park



Indiana Dunes



Cowles Bog at the Indiana Dunes



Nirvana in Northwest Indiana

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE BATTAGLIE
TEXT BY MOLLY WOULFE

Sssh.

Tread softly here.
Listen to the silence.

Photographer Natalie Battaglia and reporter Molly Woulfe set out in search of unsung treasures that define the region. What they found were dreamscapes; havens of peace and calm existing amid steel mills, farms and strip malls.

Some are man-made, some natural wonders. All are startling in their beauty.

Stop.
Look.
Reflect.

Welcome to the quieter side of Northwest Indiana.

*This outstanding article and accompanying photographs first appeared in the **lifeStyles** section of **The Times** on Sunday, August 5, 2007.*



TALLTREE ARBORETUM & GARDENS, VALPARAISO



MARQUETTE PARK, GARY



MOUNT BALDY, MICHIGAN CITY



MARKTOWN, EAST CHICAGO



GIBSON WOODS NATURE PRESERVE, HAMMOND

Choose a path, any path; the half-mile “short” trail; the self-guided mile, or the two-mile “long” route. Each begins with a raised boardwalk and leads through sun-dappled prairies, the kind that dominated the Calumet Region in pre-settlement days. Watch for the rare Karner blue butterfly and endangered Franklin’s ground squirrel, two of the 100 wildlife species that call the 178-acre sanctuary home. Founded in 1981, the county-owned preserve also shelters fragile wetlands and savannas. This is Nature’s garden; walk softly, listen to songbirds, and gape at what must be the biggest robins in Northwest Indiana.

Hours: Nature Center, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. (through Oct.); trails, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at, 6201 Parrish Ave., Hammond

MARKTOWN, EAST CHICAGO

Step back into time in historic Marktown. Architect Howard Van Doren Shaw based this 1917 company town on an English village complete with narrow 16-foot streets. Many of the 200 Tudor Revival stucco cottages are crumbling, but some boast fresh paint and picket fences. As for residents, a sense of community pervades their run-down Brigadoon in the shadow of Mittal Steel. All insiders park on the sidewalks and use the streets for foot traffic, a quirk recorded by Ripley’s Believe It or Not. “Everybody knows everyone,” says Alexis Gutierrez, 17, who calls a sloped-roofed duplex home. Adds Rick Lopez, 21, “There ain’t no other place like this in Indiana.”

Marktown Preservation Society, 405 Prospect Street, East Chicago. Call Paul Myers for information or to request a tour, (219) 397-2239.



MARQUETTE PARK, GARY

Follow Grand Boulevard as it winds past the statue of Father Jacques Marquette. Admire the canopy of oaks overhead and the 1920s Aquatorium to the right, a one-time “bathhouse” that now houses the Aviation Museum. Keep going, parking outside the brown-brick Marquette Park Pavilion. Take a side path through waist-high Queen Anne’s Lace and make your way to the old

wooden Japanese bridge. Cross it, navigate around a toppled tree and step on to the resting-but-sturdy suspension bridge over the lagoon. Wait. A white heron cries and beats its wings, the only sounds within miles. Forget to breathe. Wait again, for the stillness to re-descend.

Hours: 9- a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Take U.S. 12 to east of Lake Street and Grand Boulevard in Miller Beach.

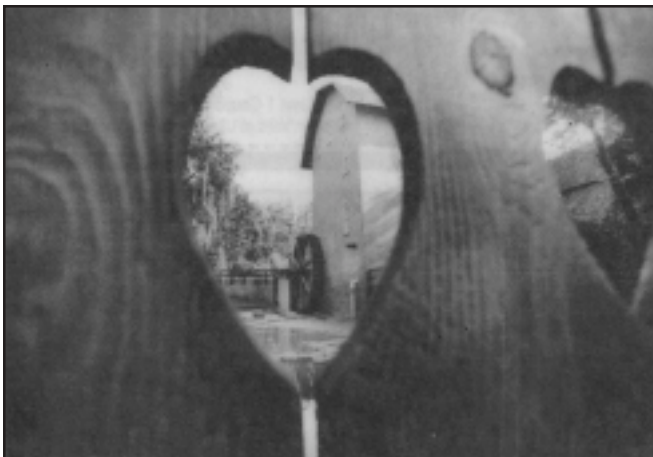




MOUNT BALDY, MICHIGAN CITY

A breeze ruffles dune grass on Mount Baldy, the pride of the National Lakeshore. The famous “living dune” is super-sandy, steep and semi-out of bounds. A magnet for tourists, beachgoers and track teams, the 123-foot high giant is shifting inland at such a alarming rate that it may cover its own parking lot in seven years. Since foot traffic speeds erosion, the National Park Service has fenced off Baldy — so dubbed for its bare top — and mapped out a new route to the summit. Head up the wooded trail about 100 yards to the west of the original path to scale this refugee from the Sahara. The reward: A panoramic view of the Michigan City Lighthouse, the mills and the distant Chicago skyline.

Hours: 8 a.m. to dusk daily. Take U.S. 12 about two miles just east of Michigan City.



DEEP RIVER COUNTY PARK, HOBART

The entrance to this 1,400-acre park is easy to miss — watch for the white, wood-frame visitor’s center/gift shop and the wedding gazebo. Both are big draws, but Wood’s Mill is a historic showpiece. A red-brick relic of a bygone era, the 1876 grist mill houses a two-ton grindstone semi-powered by a genuine waterwheel. Watching the wheel turn in its silty pond is mesmerizing; you are compelled to buy two-pound bags of stone-ground cornmeal (\$1.50 apiece). Nearby attractions include an old sawmill and Grinders Field, a grassy clearing where the Deep River Grinders play vintage baseball by 19th-century rules.



TALTREE ARBORETUM & GARDEN, VALPARAISO

The mighty oak rules at Taltree, Porter County’s 360-acre living-tree collection and top bird-watching destination. The bur oak serves as mascot, but the preserve is home to more than half-dozen varieties plus hickory, hawthorn and wild cherry. Hiking down the Bluebird Trail (1.5 miles) is a near-religious experience due to the cathedral-life hush. Steal quietly to Heron Pond to glimpse Big Blue Herons and Little Green Herons fish for their supper and to Buttonbush Swamp to watch migrating flocks. The drone of an unseen plane is the only reminder that life exists outside these woodlands.

Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Wednesday; 5:30 a.m.-7 P.m. Saturday; 5:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday through Oct. 31 . The grounds are at 450 West 100 North, Valparaiso.