

***HERITAGE TOURISM
FIRST ZMPRESSZONS***

***HA YWARD...
HURLEK..
AND
HISTORY***

FIRST IMPRESSIONS TRIP TO IRON COUNTY HERITAGE AREA

Friday, March 17, 1995

Our family of four, two adults and two children, girl 9 and boy 7, left Lancaster at 8:30 AM. with short stops in Madison and Portage. Arrived in Mercer at 4:30 P.M.

Sunday, April, 1995

Second group of two adults arrived and stayed two days (April 30-May 1). The second groups comments appear in CAPITAL LETTERS.

I. What was my perception before visiting? What did I expect?

Assumed it would be a typical northwood town with several resorts, shops and taverns. Did not realize the extent of the winter tourism industry. I expected things to be very quiet.

"UP NORTH" ATMOSPHERE, LOTS OF PINES, ISOLATION, SMALL TOWNS, HOMEY PLACES AND PEOPLE, WILD ANIMALS (E.G. DEER SIGHTINGS, MAYBE BEARS). MORE HISTORIC "PRESENCE" OR IDENTITY BASED ON HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM.

II. The "five minute" impression:

When we entered the county the first thing that we noticed was the attractive new Heritage Area sign. Approaching the two most populated towns(Mercer and Hurley) was pretty much as we expected it to be. .

THE BEAUTIFUL "WELCOME TO IRON COUNTY" SIGNS SET A TONE AS **YOU** ENTER THE AREA.



EB 77

III. Driving ... evaluate EACH entrance.

Arrived in Mercer via Highway 51 north about 4:30 PM. There were several signs directing travelers to local establishments and accommodations.

Arrived in Hurley via Highway 51 north about 10:00 AM on Saturday, March 18, 1995.

- WELCOME SIGNS ARE PRESENT ON EACH HIGHWAY (EVEN COUNTY ROAD FF),
- THEY CREATE A "SENSE OF PLACE" FOR ALL THE REGION. It SEEMS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITIES HAVE NOT CAPITALIZED ON THOSE SIGNS. (E.G. WITH A REPEAT OF THE SIGN, PERHAPS SMALLER, WITH THEIR OWN COMMUNITY NAME AND FAME BENEATH.)
- HURLEY- ENTERING ON 77 E IS REALLY NONDESCRIPT-NO IDENTITY! (HIGHLINE CORP. BUILDING IS ATTRACTIVE-WHY DON'T THEY BRAG ABOUT OR AT LEAST IDENTIFY WHAT THEY MAKE?)
- NICE ADDITIONAL WELCOME SIGN ON THE BIG BLUE BUILDING
- TERRIBLY CONFUSING AND POORLY MARKED INTERSECTION WITH ROADWAYS IN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS AT THE BLUE BUILDING AND BELL CHALET CORNERS. SHOULD TRAVELER JOG LEFT AND THEN GO STRAIGHT, **TURN** LEFT OR RIGHT?
- IS A VERY DISCONCERTING APPROACHWAY AND NOT AT ALL WELL SIGNED FOR HIGHWAY #. AS YOU GO NORTH ON 51, AROUND THE LEFT CURVE PAST THE MOBIL STATION, YOU HAVE THE SENSE OF LEAVING THE TOWN BEHIND. WE ASSUMED THAT WE HAD MISSED THE MOTELS, OR THAT THEY WERE SOUTH OF TOWN.
- NICE IRONWOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT SIGN ON HWY 2
- COMING INTO WISCONSIN ON HWY 2 FROM MICHIGAN IS A BETTER HURLEY ENTRANCE.
- TUCKS TRAIL LOOKED JUNKY-THE REST APPEARED NEAT AND NICE

IV. (a) Driving ...evaluate the downtown business area:

Mercer- Did not seem to be any preservation efforts and no particular style. The downtown area was a hodgepodge of shops, restaurants, and taverns. A generally pleasant area.

Hurley- This downtown has attempted to strive for more of a theme(mining, logging)Some very interesting storefronts and names (The Iguana Factory).

- LOVED "THE LOONATIC" SIGN IN WINDOW- WHAT WAS IT?
- HURLEY-CLEAN, MOST OBVIOUS ATTEMPTS AT PRESERVATION EFFORTS
- LIGHTING WAS OK BUT NOT OUTSTANDING.
- CONGLOMERATION OF BUILDINGS (E.G. HARDWARE STORE APPEARANCE, EVEN WHEN OPEN GLASS WAS DARK **AND** LOOKED CLOSED.)
- NO UNIFYING LOOK OR COLLECTIVE PRIDE OF HERITAGE.
- LOVED THE IRON COUNTY MINER PRINTING SIGN!
- AS IN MANY AREAS, COMMUNITY CONDITIONS VARIED, BUT NOT ALL GOOD OR PLEASING. JUNKY BUILDINGS IN DISREPAIR SEND A VERY UNPLEASANT AND UNWELCOME MESSAGE TO VISITORS AND TRAVELERS.

IV. (b) Driving...evaluate other business areas.

Mercer-The Warehouse Store south of town was an interesting combination of craft supplies, sporting goods, some clothing and other dime store type merchandise. The body shop north of

town was in bad need of some paint.

Hurley- North of town two major chain type hotels, the Tourist Information Center and some other development(grocery store, liquor store and fast food)

IRON BELT- THERE WAS A TERRIBLE LOOKING JUNK CAR WITH "FOR SALE" ON IT IN FRONT OF THE BADGER MOTEL, RIGHT ON THE ENTRANCE HIGHWAY. DETRACTED BADLY FROM THE COMMUNITY IMAGE!



*Restored
Junk Car For Sale in front
Iron Belt - Badger motel*

MERCER-LOVED THE "SHIMMERING LOON" SIGN-WONDERFUL ID FOR TOWN BUSINESS.

-THE "CLOSED FOR SPRING CLEANING" ROADSIDE SIGN ON FLAMBEAU FLOWAGE BUILDING SENT A NICE MESSAGE OF EFFORT AND CARE.

-"CENTURY FARM JOE LEDVINA" HAD NICE HISTORIC FEELING' WHY NOT HIGHLIGHTED, OR TIED IN WITH HERITAGE TOURISM SIGN?

-YUKON INN, TUBBY'S GARAGE, RED BUILDINGS ON LEFT (N ON HWY 51) BAD!

-JUNK GAS STATION IN AREA IS REAL DETRIMENT TO APPEAL.

V. Driving..comments on residential (Appearances, condition of historic homes, interesting historic residential districts, etc.):

Mercer- Did not seem to be any homes that were of historical significance.

Hurley-Some of the houses were obviously older but no special preservation efforts.

Pence- some very interesting log structures on Cedar and Hemlock Streets

THE VARIOUS SMALL COMMUNITIES DON'T SEEM TO BE UNIFIED IN THE HERITAGE TOURISM EFFORT; E.G. THE WONDERFUL VERTICALLY BUILT LOG BUILDINGS IN PENCE WHICH WERE UNIDENTIFIED AND SEEM DESERTED OR IGNORED.

VI. Driving ...Comments on :

a. street signs

Most street signs were visible and easy to read except in Kimball township. Several road signs were missing making it extremely difficult to find the Kimball Park Waterfalls.

-YOU ONLY SEE THE IRON COUNTY PARK LAKE OF FALLS DAM ROAD SIGN GOING WEST

-LIKED "HEART OF OUR HERITAGE" SIGN-NEEDED BETTER FOCUS!

-CHURCH SIGNS, ID SIGNS GOOD BUT TOO FAR BACK TO READ/SEE WELL

-WHAT DOES THE " OLD FLAMBEAU TRAIL" SIGN ON HWY 2 MEAN

-LAKE SUPERIOR PARK POOR DIRECTIONAL SIGNS AND IDENTIFICATION-

WE DROVE FOR 2 1/2 MILES ON GRAVEL ROAD-WHERE WERE WE?

-DOWNTOWN HURLEY WAS POORLY SIGNED AND CONFUSING

INCLUDING ATTRACTIONS AND HIGHWAYS.

-ROAD SIGN AT **TURN** THERE SHOULD SAY "TO HURLEY OR TO HWY 2" , NOT "TO CENTER DRIVE"-VISITORS DON'T KNOW WHY CENTER DRIVE!

-"POINT OF INTEREST" SIGNS WOULD BE A GOOD ADDITION TO AREA.

-THE POND, SOUTH OF **HURLEY** ON HWY 51 IS LARGE BUT UNIDENTIFIED.

b. traffic patterns/street conditions

Traffic flowed smoothly and the roads were generally in good condition. State Highway 122 between Upson and Saxton, this road was in very bad shape. (Possibly because of logging traffic) Due to the season, the streets were dirty. and covered with red mud in the communities.



-NO OBVIOUS TRAFFIC PATTERN FOR TOURS OR VISIBILITY OF SITES
-AT FF AND SWAMP CREEK "FF" SIGN LOOKED LIKE "FS"-NEEDS REPAIR
WHY ISN'T FF SIGNED AS WINDEY-CURVY?

c. welcome signs at entrances (Do they capitalize on the community's unique history?)

Mercer- There was a large sign welcoming you to the loon capital of Wisconsin near the Chamber office.

Hurley- Didn't see one

UPSON-"GATEWAY TO WHITECAP MNTS." WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?

-THE "WELCOME TO HURLEY" SIGN IN MONTREAL IS CONFUSING- THE SIGN ADJACENT TO IT SAYS "HURLEY 2 MILES". TOWNS RUN TOGETHER.



In Montreal - how "Welcome" if 2 m yet! picture 3

-MANITOWISH- HAS NO IDENTITY ON THE HIGHWAY
-SPRINGSTEAD-NICE SIGN AT HWY. 47/182
-MERCER-NEEDS A BETTER WELCOME SIGN AND IDENTITY
-THE "IRON COUNTY, MILES OF WILDERNESS, LOON CAPITAL" SIGN NEEDS PAINTING
-WHERE FF JOINS HWY 51 N, WHY NO "HURLEY ...MILES" SIGN?
-COMMUNITY MARKERS-NOT ENOUGH, NOT WELL FOCUSED

d. Direction signs to parks, attraction, museum, historic sites, accommodations, services (i.e. police, hospital), etc.

Mercer- No directional signing to the museum, parks or services. Plenty of signs for accommodations.

Hurley-There were signs directing travelers to the museum, services, and Chamber office. Also several signs for accommodations.

HURLEY- SURE GLAD I DIDN'T NEED THE POLICE STATION- ALMOST INVISIBLE.

-LIBRARY-NO GREETING OR WELCOME (STAFF AT DESK.) NEED WINDOW PICTURE.

-LOVED THE "FISH FRY" SIGN ON DRIFTWOOD AT THE DRIFTWOOD RESTAURANT

-SAXON,GURNEY HAVE LITTLE SIGNAGE ID- INTERESTING NAMES!

-POTATO RIVER FALLS OFF HWY 169 NEEDS "MILES TO" IDENTIFICATION

-NO SIGN TO LOWER FALLS VIEW POINT-NO DIRECTIONAL SIGN TO UPPER FALLS; CAMPGROUND VERY POORLY SIGNED(NOT AT ALL.)

-NO SIGNS FOR CITY HALL, POLICE,LIBRARY,MUSEUM OR CHAMBER OFFICE

-NEVER SAW HOSPITAL OR CARE FACILITY SIGN ANYWHERE- DID SEE SIGNS FOR CHIROPRACTOR,DOCTOR AND DENTIST OFFICES.

VII. Driving..comments on parks, picnic areas, play grounds, athletic facilities, etc.:

Mercer-Lions park east of town was well maintained with several swings and slides. There was also a little beach area on a small lake



Hurley-Did not see any signs and did not come across any parks driving around. Parks at **Kimball** and **Montreal** were very attractive especially the one at **Kimball** with the waterfalls above the picnic area. There **was** also a nice ball field at **Gile**.



"Dump? @ Montreal City Hall
x Entry Shi Trail Jocus! A

MERCER- PARK GARBAGE NEEDED PICKING UP

-THERE WAS A NICE MURAL ON THE OUTHOUSE-CLEVER USE OF SPACE
-GOOD MESSAGE ON THE IRON **COUNTY** PARK SIGN "ENJOY FOR YOUR PLEASURE BUT DON'T DESTROY"

MONTREAL- THE TURQUOISE PORT-A-POTTY AT THE PARK COULD HAVE BEEN MORE DISCRETELY PLACED

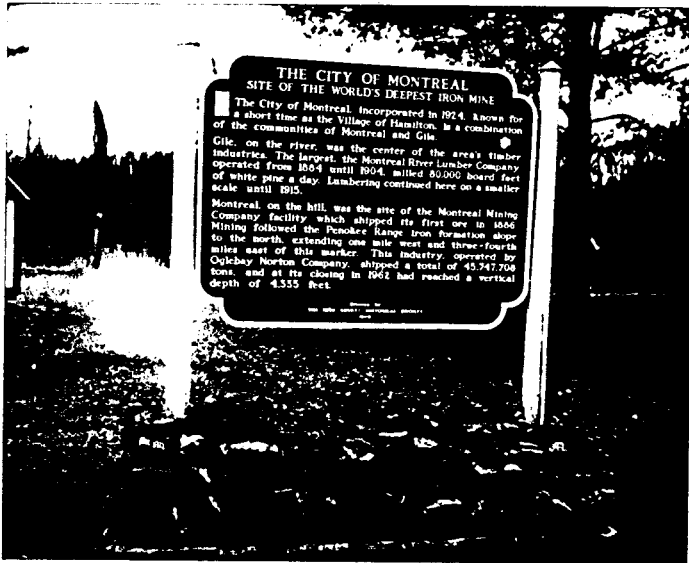
-GENERALLY LOOKED DISMAL-WAS IT THE TIME OF YEAR
-STROMBERG PARK NICE

VIII, Drivin...comts on other:

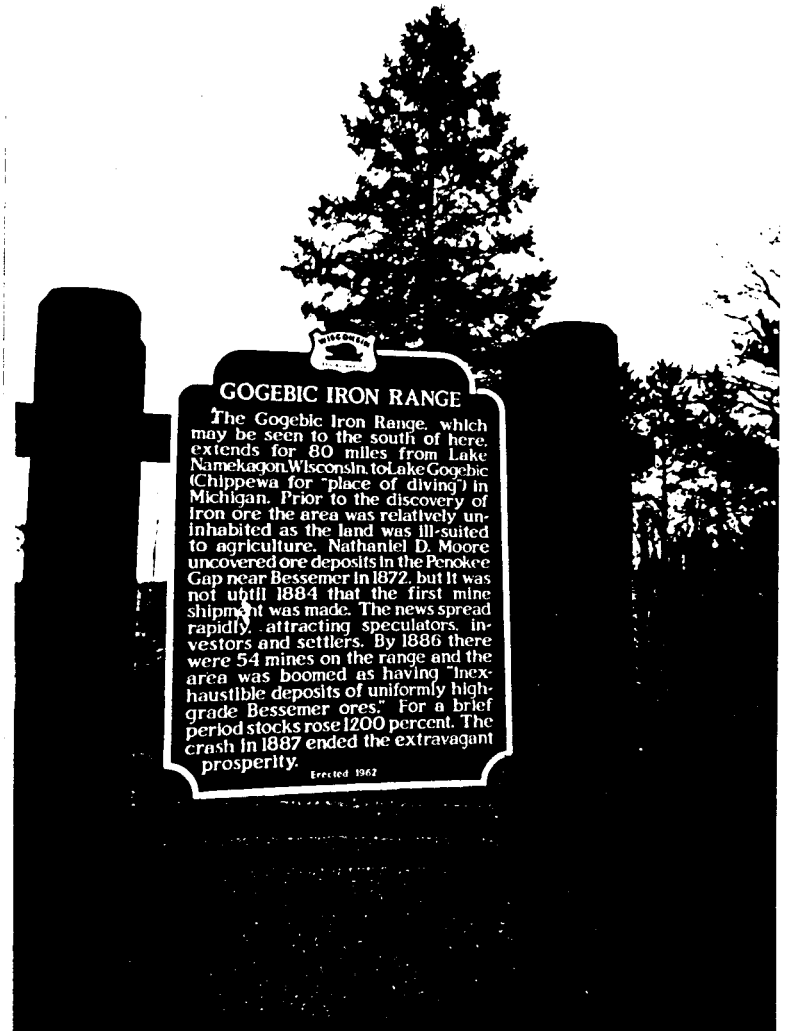
a. historic markers (Official state signs, national register plaques, community markers)

Sign between **Mercer** and **Hurley** indicates water shed divide(qualify for historical

Attractive Korean and Vietnam Veterans Memorials
 Nice marker in Montreal for the deepest mine (by historical society)



picture 4



Pretty view from Gogebic Historical Marker on Highway 2

"Domenic Giacomo Memorial" corner-downtown Hurley-what is the significance?
 (Signing carried to an extreme.)

- COMMUNITY MARKERS-NOT ENOUGH, NOT WELL FOCUSED
- HURLEY MUSEUM SIGN FALLING OVER ON HIGHWAY 51/IRON ST CORNER
- MISSISSIPPI WATERSHED DIVISION SIGN NOT WELL MARKED OR

IDENTIFIED-WHY NO STATE GEOGRAPHICAL MARKER NOTICE SIGN?
-UNAWARE OF HISTORIC DISTRICT, REGISTER PROPERTIES ETC.



*Montreal Park @ Mine
Marker - what is this?*

-THE HISTORIC CITY MARKER IN MONTREAL NEEDS MUCH BETTER VISIBILITY AND ATTENTION GETTING FOCUS' WHY IS THERE NO ID ON TREE PIECE AND CHAIN IMPORTANCE?

-WHY NOT SIGN THE MINE TAILINGS PILE BEHIND CITY HALL?

-AT EAGLE BLUFF OVERLOOK, WHY NO SIGN IDENTIFYING WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT AND THE DISTANCE TO THE HILL AND LAKE. WHATS THE SIGHT ON THE FAR RIGHT...HEADFRAME?

b. billboards/advertising (Are they helpful? do they detract from the heritage tourism theme being promoted?)

Signs detract a bit from the heritage theme.

-OUTSIDE OF "IRON COUNTY HERITAGE AREA" SIGNS, LITTLE FOCUS ON ID

-BILLBOARDS (E.G. POWDERHORN "ROOM AND BOARDS" WAS GOOD !)

-DIDN'T LIKE BLANK BILLBOARD NEXT TO MCDONALDS BOARD

-BIG BOY AND GOOD BEN FRANKLIN HOLIDAY ONE-ALSO BAD RIVER CASINO FOR INFO AND NEARBY LOCATION-MANY DESTINATIONS WERE LOCATED IN MICHIGAN BUT NOT IDENTIFIED AS SUCH.

-LIKED BUT QUESTIONED WHY GALLERY SAID "NOTHING LIKE IT IN NY"

-SPRING INN(BLUE) LOOKED NICE BUT WHAT IS IT? WHY SHOULD I STOP? WORD INN MEANS LODGING, BUT LOOKED LIKE RESTAURANT

-TRADING POST GAVE NO REASON TO STOP-BIG MUSKIE RESORT LOOKED NICE

-STUDIO IN WOODS AND PLACE OF ART HAD NICE BLACKTOP ROAD

UNTIL GRAVEL- NO CLOSED SIGNS EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE MILES INTO THE WOODS (WE WENT TO BOTH!) STUDIO MAN CAME AND OPENED FOR US. PLACE OF ART SIGN SAID SHE DOESN'T OPEN TILL THE 6TH
 -WAREHOUSE LIQUOR WAS OPEN BUT YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT, DARK FRONT AND NO CARS
 -MIDWAY CAFE SAID "NEW OWNERS" BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THE OLD ONES.'
 -LOOMS M STUDIO HAS A NICE SIGN BUT IT IS NOT PROMINENT ENOUGH. AS I RECALL, IT WAS AT AN INTERSECTION AND THE SIGN WAS SET BACK, NOT AT OPTIMUM VIEWING LOCATION. (AT 47 OR 182 OFF 51?)
 -EAST ON 77 BETWEEN PENCE AND MONTREAL THERE IS A SIGN FOR A TAXIDERMIST ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROAD. THE SIGN SAYS "NEXT RIGHT" BUT POINTS DOWN THE IMMEDIATE GRAVEL TRAIL.
 -THE INN B AND B SIGN IS NOT PROMINENT ENOUGH, AND YOU ARE PAST THE FACILITY BEFORE YOU REALIZE IT IS EVEN THERE.
 -ROSE WREATH HOME IS ATTRACTIVE.

c. Misc.

Outstanding snowmobile and ATV trail system. Do snowmobiles generate enough trade to support opening the Mercer Railroad museum?

Except for the interesting buildings in Montreal and Saxon, the other communities in the county did not have much to offer. In Springstead there was a tavern and the Trading Post Store. In Saxon there was the Bear Trap Inn. In Pence the log structures. In Iron Belt a motel and a couple of restaurants.

-IN SEVERAL OF THE COMMUNITIES, BUILDINGS NEED ATTENTION, REPAIR, RECONSTRUCTION OR REMOVAL. THE IMAGE CONVEYED IS ONE OF NEGLECT AND DISINTEREST, ESPECIALLY ON THE MAIN ROAD. IN CONTRAST, THE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS AT 145(?) WISCONSIN AVE. IN MONTREAL WERE ESPECIALLY ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING.

-NICE WAYSIDE SOUTH ON HWY 51.

-LOTS OF ROADSIDE GARBAGE ON HWY 47.

-OMA "COMMUNITY FOREST" SIGN MADE ME WONDER WHAT IS A COMMUNITY FOREST?

-IRON COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT FACILITY UGLY-COULD USE SCREENING FENCE.

MERCER-THE INTERSECTION BEFORE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS JUNKY!

-WHY ALL THE BIG ROCKS? WHAT DID "CAMP 1" MEAN?

- "SHOP" BUILDINGS AT DUL ROAD NEEDS SPRUCING UP

-BUILDINGS BY H T LINES BURNED, UGLY, JUNK CAR

-LOTS OF KAYAKS ON CARS ON HIGHWAY-NEVER SAW ANY SIGN OR IDENTIFICATION AS TO WHERE TO USE THEM?

IX. Walking around..comments on businesses (physical part): Appearance, displays, signs, information on the history of the business/building, etc.

Mercer-Did not see any displays or much in the way of historical information.

Hurley- Both of the restaurants that we ate at were very interesting. The Iron Nugget

had several mining displays as well as a large iron nugget. The Chalet restaurant had some great displays(copper fire place, still) and the menu gave the history of the original operators.Most of the establishments strived to maintain an interesting and pleasant exterior.

X. Walking around..comments on people: Were they friendly,did they know answers to question, did they try to help, appearance, were they informed and willing to share the history of the community? etc.

Mercer-People in general were friendly and helpful. The women at the Warehouse store did not know a lot about the things that we asked(hours of chamber office, museum) but referred us to the Tourist Info Center at Hurley. The operator of the Great Northern Hotel was very friendly but did not have much information. (how was fishing, museum), He thought that the museum was open. It's closed during the winter. **Hurley-** Everyone that we talked to here was very helpful. The guide at the museum directed us to the Iron Nugget for lunch. The waitress at the restaurant did not know much about the operation at the museum but found out the requested information and came back to answer our questions.Charlotte at The American Budget Inn recommended several restaurants for lunch, asked what type of food we were looking for. The hotel had several brochures available for different facilities available in the area, including Ironwood, MI. We asked the clerk at the Citgo gas station about the museum. (high schooler) She responded with a blank stare "Museum, what museum? If there is one I never noticed." At the museum we noticed a banner, signed by some second grade students, thanking the museum for the tour. This indicates that the museum is talked about at the schools but evidently only at the younger levels. A friendly Michigan resident stopped us in the gas station parking lot and told us there was a museum in Ironwood.

HURLEY- LITTLE HAUS STORE DIDN'T CARE WE WERE THERE-NO GREETING, NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-CLERK WAS NOT BUSY BUT WAS VISITING IN BACK. STILL NO NOTICE EVEN WHEN *MY* HUSBAND ENTERED STORE. BEAUTIFUL DISPLAY OF TAXIDERMY-WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SEE NAMES UNDER VARIOUS ANIMALS (E.G. MINK, FISHER)
-AMBULANCE AT VILLA MARIA-WE THOUGHT IT WAS A HOSPITAL.
-RESTAURANT PEOPLE EXPLAINED PASTIES AND HISTORY WELL
-NO RESTAURANT STAFF (IN 3 PLACES) MENTIONED MUSEUM TO SEE.
-GAS STATION ATTENDANT (ACROSS FROM CHAMBER OFFICE AND JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE MUSEUM) HAD NO SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES OR SIGHTSEEING-"NOTHING TO DO HERE!"
-SECOND MAN INSIDE DID SUGGEST MUSEUM. GROCERY STORE ALSO NOT AWARE.
-NONE SUGGESTED CHAMBER. ONE SUGGESTED STATE INFO CENTER.
-SEEMED TO BE NO OBVIOUS UNIFYING ELEMENT TO BUSINESS DISTRICT.
-AMERICAN BUDGET **I**" STAFF KNOWLEDGEABLE
-PEOPLE COMMENTED REGULARLY ABOUT THE WEATHER-"WE GET A FEW NICE DAYS HERE, THEN IT IS WINTER AGAIN" ONE SAID! "WE NEVER HAVE GOOD WEATHER HERE", ANOTHER SAID. WHEN I COMMENTED TO ANOTHER ON THE GREY DAY HE SAID " THEY ARE ALL LIKE THIS...WE HAVE AWFUL, CRUMMY WEATHER." (CITY HALL)

Hurley- received county map and regional map at the T.I.C. We were also pleased to find that Grant County maps and the farm trails brochure were stocked at the T.I.C.

-IRON COUNTY MAP OPENS BACKWARDS AND UPSIDE DOWN. IT IS NICELY COLORFUL-WHY NOT PLACE LEGEND AND LAND COLOR CODES CLOSER FOR EASIER REFERENCE- WHAT DOES "FOREST CROP LAW": AND "FOREST LAWS LANDS" MEAN TO CUSTOMER?

-IS THE TURTLE FLAMBEAU PIECE A MAP OR AN ADVERTISEMENT. ALSO OPENED BACKWARDS AND UPSIDE DOWN. MAP NEEDS BETTER LOCATORS WITHIN THE ENTIRE IRON COUNTY AREA SO CUSTOMER HAS REFERENCE POINT.

-REALLY LIKED THE "ORIGINAL LAKES" LOCATION INFORMATION!

-MERCER MAP NOT COLOR CODED-E.G. WHAT DOES GREEN SHADE MEAN?

-SPRINGSTEAD MAP- AD OR MAP? AGAIN BACKWARDS, UPSIDE DOWN. SHOW WHOLE AREA FOR PERSPECTIVE ON LOCATION. **WHAT** DO GREY CROSSHATCH AREAS INDICATE-NOT IN KEY. IF THIS IS PUBLIC HUNTING AND FISHING INDICATOR, WHY NOT SHOWN WEST OF SAND LAKE, E.G.? IF NUMBER USED ON MAP, PLEASE USE GRID LOCATOR NUMBERS ON OUTSIDE EDGES TO HELP CUSTOMER IN SEARCH.FOR #8, FOR EXAMPLE. BEAUTIFUL NATURE PHOTOS- CREDITS?

e. calendar of events (historical events highlighted?)

received a calendar prior to our visit -

-1-800-526-7669 FOR 24 HR REC REPORTS (UWEX BROCHURE) NO ANSWER!

-CALENDAR OF EVENTS ONLY FOR THEATER, WINTER-NO GENERAL?

f: accommodations directory-hotels\motelsand restaurants

The back of the county map and the Big Snow Country booklet very informative.

-WHY NO OFFICIAL TOURIST ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL (TODS) LODGING SIGNS (AT LEAST IN HURLEY?)

g. other (i.e. flyers, poster, kiosks, etc)

none available

h. what information was the most helpful in planning your visit? Did the printed information accurately describe your experience? What other information would have been helpful?

Although the county map was useful for accommodations it was difficult to use for navigating around the county. The paper describing the locations of the waterfalls allowed us to visit some beautiful sights. **All** of the information we received prior to our visit and the brochures we picked during our trip gave accurate descriptions of everything we visited. We were overwhelmed with printed information (requested the information from all of the sources listed in your hospitality manual!) Information particularly from the private businesses continued to filter in for over a month. (info. requested by Pat Wagner)

XII. City Hall\ County Courthouses...describe your visit:

a. appearance & facility, including signing

We honestly do not remember seeing the new courthouse or signing directing us to the courthouse. However, we knew it would be closed.

-APPEARANCE OF COURTHOUSE ATTRACTIVE, INNER LOBBY ART PIECE "MURAL?" STUNNING EFFECT, EVEN THOUGH HARD TO DISTINGUISH.

-NOT WELCOMING LOBBY-ALL OFFICE DOORS OPEN AWAY AND PEOPLE ARE OUT OF SIGHT. TOOK THREE TRIES TO FIND SOMEONE TO SPEAK TO (IN CITY CLERKS OFFICE)

-FRONT DOOR IS RECESSED-NEEDS BETTER VISIBILITY AND LIGHT.

-CITY HALL-WAS NOT WELL MARKED. ONLY ID SIGN IS PARALLEL TO STREET, UNDER TREE

b. helpfulness & staff

-RECEIVED A PREDRAWN MAP TO HELP FIND THE CITY HALL LOCATION. STAFF AT CITY CLERK'S OFFICE TOLD ME IT WAS AT (OR NEAR) THE "OLD FOOTBALL FIELD"???

-CITY HALL- STAFF WAS PLEASANT- I ASKED WHY THERE WERE SO MANY ITALIAN NAMES ON PARKS, ETC. HE TOLD OF FINNISH AND ITALIAN HERITAGE, MINING, ETC. TOLD ME THERE IS "NOTHING TO SEE HERE." THEN CAME OUT TO THE CAR TO TELL ME ABOUT THE "HISTORICAL SOCIETY" (NOT THE MUSEUM.) HE GAVE GOOD DIRECTIONS TO FIND **THE** MUSEUM BUT NEVER MENTIONED TO LOOK FOR CLOCKTOWER! SUGGESTED I SHOULD STOP AND SEE THE NEW LIBRARY.

c. Did the local government officials\employees appear to be committed to preserving and promoting the history in the area?

XIII Chamber of Commerce...describe your visit

a. did people know where it was (or who to refer you to?)

Mercer- People did know where the office was but weren't sure about the hours. Stopped by on 3\17\95 at **4:30**. The Chamber Office was not open. A sign in the window indicated that it would open up again on May 15th. Wouldn't snowmobile traffic be enough to warrant keeping info center open. (Bartender at The Great Northern Motel said that they are booked up for next winter.) When the Chamber Office is closed visitors could possibly be referred to the **76** gas station or some other **24** hour business that would be willing to have information available.

Hurley- Visited on 3\18\95 at **10:30 AM**. The Chamber Office was also closed but there was no sign indicating when it would be opening up again. However, the State Tourist Information Center was open.

6. comment on information available..was there adequate information on historic sites?

-**HURLEY**CHAMBER-TOURIST INFORMATION SIGN IN BLACK AND WHITE AND NOT VERY INVITING.

-BROCHURES SHOULD IDENTIFY IRON COUNTY LOCATION RELATIVE TO STATE BOUNDARIES.

HURLEY-TIC- GOOD AREA AND STATE INFORMATION GIVEN (ALSO SUGGESTED MICHIGAN LOCATION)

c. comment on staff

Staff at the info center was extremely knowledgeable and helpful.(visited 3/18 at 2 PM).

d. Was the staff knowledgeable about the community and region?

Yes, very knowledgeable about the Heritage Area

HURLEY CHAMBER- STAFF HELPFUL, REFERRED TO MUSEUM AND TALKED OF EXHIBITS CHANGING EVERY SIX MONTHS OR *SO* "BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE FOR A YEAR OR MORE."

-SUGGESTED THEATER OPPORTUNITY FOR EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT!
HURLEY-TIC- STAFF SPOKE OF HERITAGE TOURISM AREA AND KNEW OF THE SW ~~WI~~ ONE- MENTIONED IT FOR *MY* INFORMATION SINCE I POINTED VAGUELY TO THAT AREA WHEN ASKED WHERE I WAS FROM.

e. other (Itours, appearance, location, etc)

Mercer- an attractive log type building, easily assessable from the main highway, distinctive giant loon located next to the building





Hurley- non-descript brick building, also easily assessable from the highway
Info center- an attractive stone building , life size miner mannequin display, sundial, easily assessable from the highway. There were winter scene prints available for free. The kids thought that these were great!

MERCER-THE LOON NEEDS PAINTING AND BETTER HIGHLIGHTING (E.G./ PARK OR BENCHES OR FOCUS!)
SORRY TO SEE INFO CENTER CLOSED AT 2:07 SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

HURLEY-SUNDAY CLOSED, NO HOURS SIGN ON DOOR. "BACK" DOOR SIGNED FOR TOURIST INFORMATION- STAFF PARKS AT "FRONT" OF BUILDING ON SOUTH SIDE (AS YOU APPROACH NORTHBOUND ON HWY 51) CHAMBER SIGN NOT AS VISIBLE AS COULD BE-TOO CLOSE TO BUILDING. BOXES ALL AROUND FLOOR INSIDE-LOOKED CLUTTERED, CONFUSING.

MONDAY MORNING-BUILDING LOOKS CLOSED DARK FROM OUTSIDE.

HURLEY-STATE INFO CENTER-WHY DOESN'T THE SIGN SAY **WI**? WHY NO MILEAGE TO IT?

-NO **INFO** HOURS OPEN SIGN ON DOOR.

-WONDERFUL DISPLAY OF MINER



10

-WALL MURAL DONE BY 6TH GRADERS IN THREE PARTS



11



12

(THERE WERE HOURS OF OPERATION ON THE MICHIGAN INFO CENTER, BUSINESS ITEMS DISPLAY AND INTERACTIVE INFO KIOSK AS WELL. BUT

OUR (WI) CORE SAMPLES WERE MUCH MORE BEAUTIFUL) WHY NO
SIDEWALK FROM THE CENTER TO THE SAMPLES?



XIV. Historic Sites/Tourism Attractions

a appearance, quality, signijkance of the site, etc

Mercer- The museum at the old railroad depot was not open and there was no sign to indicate when it would be open.



Hurley- The museum was open. The museum was located in the old county courthouse. The clocktower was extremely interesting and the active weaving demonstrations were a nice touch! The adoptive reuse of the courthouse also saved an important historic courthouse. The basement of the museum was closed due to work being done on the boiler. I would suggest redoing all of the descriptive text in the museum-type-set or print with a large bold font on the computer. (Back the paper with foam core.) Little Finland looked interesting but was not open.



HURLEY - WHY ISN'T BEAUTIFUL CLOCK OPERATING IN TOWER- ACCURATE?

- WHY NO WELCOMING SIGN IN THE FRONT YARD?

- PARKING POORLY SIGNED (E.G. SPACES IN FRONT AVAILABLE?)

- IRONWOOD, MI- REALLY ENJOYED SEEING THE **MINING** EXHIBIT IN THE PARK- THE TRAINS AND TOOLS, TREE AND SIGNAGE. NICELY DONE!

SIMILAR WOULD HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE FOR MUSEUM YARD?

b. hours of operation (were they convenient?)

Yes

NOT OPEN ON SUNDAY (MUST GO UP TO THE DOOR TO READ TINY POST-IT SIZE NOT TELLING ME **THIS**.)

- RETURNED MONDAY AM-10:15 TO FIND TWO LADIES LEAVING AFTER POSTING "WE'LL BE CLOSED" NOTE. NO EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE US AT ALL WE SAID WE HAD COME ALL THE WAY FROM SOUTHERN WISCONSIN TO SEE THIS MUSEUM, HEARD HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS. WE'D ONLY BE HERE TODAY, HAD COME ONCE ALREADY YESTERDAY; BEEN RECOMMENDED BY CHAMBER AND INFO CENTER AND

THE MOTEL. NOTHING MATTERED. "THERE WILL BE SOMEONE HERE TOMORROW MORNING" ONE FINALLY SAID..."BUT WE WILL BE GONE" I SAID. NO ONE CARED! (THERE WAS EVIDENTLY A FUNERAL OF A FRIEND INTERFERING WITH OPERATING HOURS, BUT ONE WOMAN WENT TO **THE** GROCERY STORE WHERE I SW HER WITHIN TEN MINUTES.) VERY DISAPPOINTING EXPERIENCE SINCE WE HAD DELIBERATELY MADE OUR PLANS TO STAY OVER MONDAY TO SEE MUSEUM!

c. Tour guides/staff (Knowledge of site/area, entertaining, friendly, etc)

The volunteers at the museum were very friendly. They gave a demonstration on weaving and explained the process. They had rugs and placemats available to purchase that had been woven at the museum. The kids received free pencils. While the volunteers at the museum were very friendly and helpful, the tour was self-guided. I would be very concerned about theft given the fact that visitors are not supervised.

d. How did the site meet or fail your expectations?

About what I expected. Some interesting materials but the interpretation and displays need some work.

XV. Scenic beauty (outstanding views, unusual natural features, etc.)

There were several lakes and rivers all along the road that were very well marked.

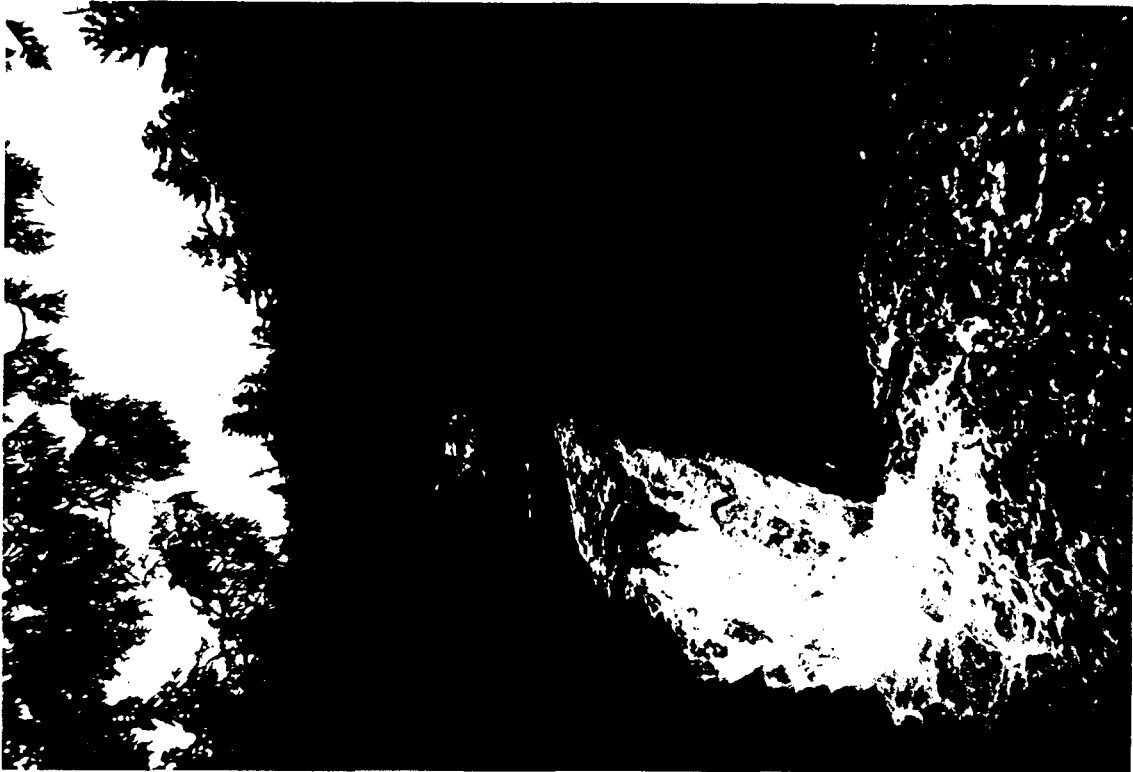
There was a very interesting barn and antique shop near Oma town hall.

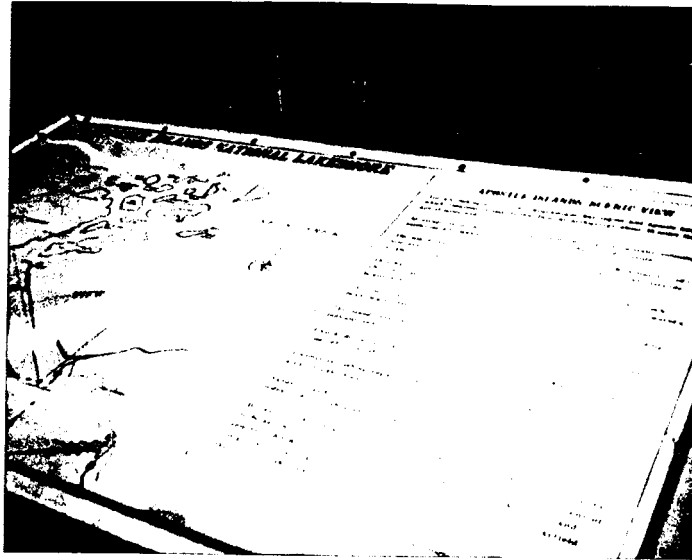
Some really beautiful waterfalls.

The Eagle Bluff Scenic Outlook was nice- could use mile marker on the Hwy. 2 sign.

Great view of Lake Superior from Saxon Harbor.

Nice tree buffer on Highway 51.





- LIKE THE APOSTLE ISLAND OVERLOOK ON HWY 2 W. THE "VIEW " DEFINITION ON THE EXPLANATION DESCRIPTION IS A NICE ADDITION. I DON'T BELIEVE THERE WAS A "YOU ARE SEEING XXX MILES AWAY" THOUGH
- REALLY ENJOY THAT PERSPECTIVE ON OVERLOOKS.
- INTERESTED IN VARYING COMMENTS ON WATERFALL CONDITIONS. ONE INFO PERSON SAID THAT THEY WERE "SPECTACULAR NOW". THE CHAMBER PERSON SAID THAT THEY WERE "NOTHING RIGHT NOW" THE LIST OF THEM WAS NICE TO HAVE. AS WERE THE DESCRIPTIONS, BUT SIGNAGE COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER AT EACH LOCATION!
- NICE TO HAVE THE MI-WI "TOUR".
- GLAD TO SEE THE PIKE LAKE IDENTIFICATION SIGN ON HWY 51 S.
- LAKES/RIVERS NOT ALL MARKED OR IDENTIFIED.
- EAGLE BLUFF SCENIC OVERLOOK-SIGNS NEEDED TO BETTER ID ON HWY 2 W.

XVI. Other Stuff

a. public restrooms (available, condition, etc)

Didn't notice any. There were restrooms available at the T.I.C. that were nice.

SAW FEW PUBLIC RESTROOMS

b. payphones (working, phonebook intact, etc)

Checked two different pay phones(Citgo gas station and Iron Nugget Restaurant in Hurley) both worked but neither had phone books.

OK

c parking

Ample parking everywhere we visited.

OK

d waterfountains, benches, lanhcaping, etc

Nothing noticeable

e. Misc

Streets were covered with red mud and grit from the winter months.

REGIONAL

WRAP UP

A. Using your "senses"...

1. What does the region TASTE like? (Specialty bakery, unique foods, local cuisine, ethnic foods, etc.)

Several bakeries in the area offered pasties. The Iron Nugget had Rock Miner Salad on the menu. Restaurants seem to be capitalizing somewhat on the mining theme.

PASTY WAS REASONABLE AND ACCURATE EVEN TO THE RUTABAGAS.
INTERESTING ITALIAN INFLUENCE (E.G. BELL CHALET.)

2. What did the region SMELL like?

Did not notice any particular smells.

SMELLED LIKE SOUR PULPWOOD IN SEVERAL SPOTS- SMELLED LESS
PINE AROMA THAN I EXPECTED FOR THE NUMBER OF TREES.

3. What SOUNDS did you hear?

Typical small town sounds. Traffic, conversation.

QUIET AND SMALL TOWN CONVERSATIONS...NICE!

4. What did the region feel like (emotional response, i.e. cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting etc. or physical response, i.e. rough streets, etc.)

The area seemed to be fairly busy around the Hurley area(skiers) but it did not seem crowded. In general it was a peaceful feeling. I was actually surprised by the amount of visitors given the lack of snow. (There was still some at the downhill skiing areas.) We waited an hour to be seated for dinner at the Bell Chalet in Hurley on Saturday night. (worththe wait!)



-Consider publishing a separate brochure highlighting the historical attraction in the region.

I WOULD CAPITALIZE ON THE "TRAIL IDEA TO MAKE IT INTERESTING FOR THE VISITOR TO MOVE ABOUT THE COUNTY FOR GOOD REASONS.

E. What will you remember most about the region six month from now:

Beautiful waterfalls
Great deal at the Great Northern Motel.

Trying to find the Plummer Iron Mine Headframe- (an ATV trail?)

-MY DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE TREATMENT WE RECEIVED AT THE MUSEUM.

-THE UNOPENED STORES, RESTAURANTS-WHICH CREATED AN UNWELCOME, UNIMPORTANT FEELING IN ME.

F. Did you notice any historic "themes" that were repeated or found within the entire region?

A general theme of mining and logging but not any consistent effort.

G. Did anyone in the region talk specifically about "heritage tourism"?

-The guide at the museum in Hurley was somewhat knowledgeable about heritage tourism when asked. He knew about the proposed directional signing for the region.

- The staff member at the Tourist Information Center was extremely knowledgeable about the concept.
- Most people did not know anything about heritage tourism. Some thought it had something to do with "indian trails"

H. Other comments (that just didn't seem to fit anywhere else!)

- Great bear habitat sign south of Hurley on Hwy. 51



- Ran into Kathy Voss from Extension at the desk of the American Budget Inn. (a ski bum)
- You did an outstanding job in developing the Iron County Hospitality Manual. However, I never saw a copy used by employees. Everyone could have benefitted from having this manual at the fingertips of employees.

THE CREATIVE CONCEPT OF **THIS** PROGRAM, AND THE HEIGHTENED AWARENESS I DEVELOPED AS A VISITOR. ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS TO BE EASIER TO BE CRITICAL, AND FIND FAULT WITH PROBLEMS, THAT SAME FOCUS SHOULD MAKE **ME** A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADER.

Accommodations:

The Great Northern Motel was an outstanding bargain at **\$29** a night (included a pool, 2 hot tubs, a great room , and had a decent fish fry buffet). Are off season rates like this common? We were told by the bartender that the facility was already booked for

the '95-96 snowmobile season!

The facilities at the American Budget Inn in Hurley were also nice but rates had not dropped. They were still busy with downhill skiers.

