

## **TIME LINE & HISTORY for Sault Ste. Marie, MI**

Before and after 1600s\_\_Area is inhabited by Chippewa (or Ojibway), Ottawa and other Indian tribes for a summer gathering place and because of its excellent fishing grounds.

### **THE FRENCH PERIOD**

1600s to late 1790s\_\_Besides natives staying in vicinity French explorers, Jesuit missionaries, voyageurs and French and British fur traders visited and lived in the Sault on and off.

1623\_\_Brule passed through the rapids of the St. Mary's river into the lake of the north (Lake Superior). In his journal he named the Indians living there Saulters or dwellers of the rapids. In maps of this period the lake is known as Lac Tracy.

1641\_\_Father Isaac Jogues and Charles Raymbeult visited Ba-wating (Indian name for village or site) and established a small temporary mission. After spending some seven weeks in residence they returned to Huronia and soon met their death at the hands of the Iroquois Indians.

1668\_\_Father Jacques Marquette arrives in the Sault and builds mission for local Indians. It is the first permanent wooden structure built in the State of Michigan. Built of cedar posts it was 12 feet high and enclosed a chapel and residence. The site of the mission was between the Indian village and the rapids.

1669\_\_Father Marquette was transferred to the mission at Chequamagon Bay and was replaced at the Sault by Father Gabriel Druillettes.

1671\_\_Pageant at the Sault in which France laid claim to all lands of the vicinity. An excellent source of color and pageantry during early French times. Present at this pageant were: St. Lussion, representing the crown; Nicholes Perrot, the interpreter; Fathers Allouez and Dablon, representing the church. M. Cadotte (cadeaux) the father of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, came with this group and stayed in the vicinity afterward.

1750\_\_de la Jonquiers, the governor general of New France awarded a large siegny to his erst-while nephew de Bonne and soldier-of- fortune de Repetigny at the Sault. The purpose of this 6 square league award was to establish a post to intercept Indians going to trade with the English and the Dutch. This siegny consisted of over 214,000 sq. acres.

1751\_\_Fort de Repetigny - Repetigny established his small post near the rapids and named it after himself. His chief assistant was Jean Baptiste Cadotte, a local trader who was married to the daughter of the local chief (one of the first on record). The fort consisted of a 15 foot palisade which was 110 feet on a side.

Inside were: two buildings 25 feet by 20 feet, one building 20 feet by 30 feet, and a 12 feet by 12 feet redoubt, built of oak and 27 feet tall. The settlement was also supplied with animals from Fort Michilimackinac consisting of cows, bulls, oxen, horses and mares.

1758\_\_Repentigny left his fort to fight for the French government against the British in Quebec. He fought at Montmorency Falls and was present at the French government defeat at Quebec. De Bonne was killed in this later fight. Cadotte was left in charge much like a feudal tenant landlord.

## **BRITISH PERIOD**

1762\_\_Lieutenant Jemmet of the British Army was sent from Fort Michilimackinac to take over Fort Repentigny from the French. Cadotte continues to live at the fort after the British takeover and later in life becomes a strong British supporter. In December of that year a mysterious fire destroyed all the buildings except Cadott's house and a portion of the stockade. The British soldiers left at once for Michilimackinac leaving Cadotte, his wife and family, Lt. Jemmet and Alexander Henry at the Sault.

1763\_\_In January Lt. Jemmet, Cadotte and his family, and Alexander Henry leave for Fort Michilimackinac. Later that year Lt. Jemmet is killed in the Indian uprising at Fort Michilimackinac and Henry is taken prisoner. Cadotte and his family returned to the Sault early in the spring.

1763\_\_Indian warriors from the Michilimackinac massacre and holding Henry a prisoner are encountered by Cadott's' wife and are persuaded into releasing him to her custody. Henry is then brought back to the Sault. Later a band of Indians from the Niagara area report that peace has been made with the British and then helps to calm the local Indians.

1793\_\_John Johnston is considered to be first permanent white settler in the Sault. He came with his native wife who was the daughter of Chippewa Chief Waub-o-jeeg. Johnston had emigrated from Ireland and became a successful fur trader with the help of his wife's family connections. Johnston educated his children himself. Johnston assisted the British during the War of 1812 and as punishment his business was raided and burnt by U. S. forces. Johnston himself never became a U.S. citizen and his eldest son Lewis fought for Great Britain during the War of 1812 and was captured by Captain Perry during the battle on Lake Erie. His eldest daughter Jane, married Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who was sent to the Sault as the Indian Agent with the first U. S. troops. He became famous for his native American research and writing, much of it made possible with the assistance of Jane, at first as interpreter, and her family connections. Two other daughters also married prominent white men, Anna married James Schoolcraft, the brother of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and Charlotte married a missionary

missionary working in Canada named Mr. MacMurray. A son George worked as a fur trader for a while and also worked for Henry Schoolcraft in various roles for the Indian Agency. The youngest daughter, Eliza never married. Johnston had another son, John McDougall who settled on Sugar Island (an island along the St. Mary's river) across from Canada. John McDougall Johnston was also the last official Indian Agent in the area.

## AMERICAN PERIOD

1820\_\_Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan territory, visits the Sault with a group of explorers and military personnel, to confirm territory for United States and make a peace treaty with Indians. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft is a member of this group and this is the first time he meets the Johnston family. Mrs. Johnston plays a critical role in preventing bloodshed between a particular group of warriors who sought to do violence to the Americans. Except for them the rest of the Indians would prefer peace. They had supported the British during two wars and thus been on the losing side of two wars. Cass and his group continued their trip up along the shore of Lake Superior for quite a ways and then returned to Detroit via the Sault again.

1822\_\_Fort Brady I - American fort established by Col. Hugh Brady in the Sault on the shoreline of the St. Mary's river. The name "Fort Brady" was given to the fort in honor of its first commanding officer, as was the custom for frontier forts.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft arrives with them as the Indian Agent and remains in the Sault for over 10 years. At that time there are only a few families. Some of the soldiers were accompanied by their families, and thus brought the first white women to the Sault. Before there had been only white men living in the Sault or area and they usually married native women or daughters of mixed blood (half native and half white) offspring of fur traders or voyageurs.

1826\_\_A traveler described Fort Brady as picketed, without mounds, but defended by blockhouses and garrisoned by 200 men.

1828\_\_Rev. Abel Bingham of the American Baptist Missionary Society moved to the Sault and started his mission to convert the Indians.

1831 (Aug. 5)\_\_Alexis de Tocqueville visits the Sault hoping to meet an Indian and visit the frontier. The Sault was definitely frontier and extremely isolated. The only way of reaching it was via a sailing vessel up the Saint Mary's River. During the winter it was totally isolated for months at a time when the river froze over. Locals (mostly Native Americans) did travel by snowshoe and dog sleds but it was extremely dangerous because of the weather conditions, long distances, and virgin forests and this was how the Sault got their mail during the winter months.

1832\_\_Mrs. Anna Jamieson visits the Sault and the Johnston family. She is also the first white female to take a ride through the Rapids in a canoe manned by Chippewa Indians. She later writes a book about her travels.

1837\_\_Michigan is admitted as a state.

Early 1840s-1848\_\_Occupation of the post by U. S. troops was first interrupted during Mexican War. The federal troops were withdrawn and replaced by the First Michigan Infantry, under Lieut. E. K. Howard. In April 1848 the Michigan Infantry left the fort and it was temporarily abandoned.

1841\_\_Copper is discovered in the Keweenaw Peninsula of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

1845\_\_The steamship *Independence* was hauled around the rapids and thus became the first steamboat on Lake Superior. The *Julia Palmer* soon followed suit.

1846\_\_Rev. Abel Bingham started the first public school in the area.

1848\_\_Iron Ore is discovered in Negaunee, Michigan, also in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan near the Keweenaw Peninsula. During the fur trade and after the discovery of copper and ore, cargoes are portaged around the rapids.

1848\_\_The *Lake Superior Mining Journal* was established in the Sault and thus became the first newspaper here. It is now the daily Marquette, MI paper.

1849\_\_Fort Brady is again occupied by federal troops.

1850\_\_A portage tramway was build down present day Portage Ave. to transport goods and small boats around the rapids. Later cargoes and whole wooden ships were portaged on rails along the same route down Portage Ave.

1853\_\_Charles T. Harvey and the Sault Canal Company started work on the first lock at the Sault. A small lock had been built over 50 years before on the Canadian side by the fur companies of the area. It had long since been abandoned.

1853\_\_The First Presbyterian Church became established as a church in the Sault and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was one of the first members.

1854\_\_Population of Chippewa County is 528 people according to a sheriff census.

1855\_\_The first lock is completed which allows ships to move directly from ore fields on Lake Superior to the markets on the lower lakes. The first lock is 350 ft. long and 70 ft. wide. This first lock was operated by the State of Michigan for two years and then control was turned over to the federal control. Because of this it is usually referred to as the State Lock.

- 1857\_\_Federal troops from Fort Brady were sent to Fort Snelling to quell an Indian uprising. Fort Brady is cared for by caretaker until after Civil War, for all purposes Fort Brady I was out of existence.
- 1866\_\_Fort Brady II - Federal troops (Company D, 4<sup>th</sup> U. S. Infantry) arrived to take over remains of fort and Fort Brady II came into existence. Much of the fort had to be rebuilt. Main function of garrison was to protect the State Lock (which had been built in 1855) from invasion or destruction.
- 1873\_\_A new lock is constructed due to increased shipping demands. The new lock is 515 ft. long, 80 ft. wide, and a depth of 12-16 ft, and constructed to the south of the first lock. So both locks are operating at the same time.
- 1874\_\_Sault Saint Marie, Michigan becomes a village.
- 1878\_\_Establishment of the *Chippewa County News*, currently the *Sault Evening News*.
- 1880\_\_Population of entire county (Chippewa County) increases to 5,250 by 1880 census.
- 1881\_\_The Weitzel Lock is constructed on the site of the first lock. It has a width of 60 ft. at the gates, 80 ft. in the chamber, a length of 515 ft. and depth of 12.6 ft.
- 1885\_\_St. Mary's Falls Water Power Co. was organized and partially constructs a canal, but ceased work in 1889 due to financial problems.
- 1887\_\_Sault Ste. Marie becomes a city.
- 1892 (September) \_\_Fort Brady III - Fort Brady was moved to a commanding hill-top location of seventy-five acres under General Phillip Sheridan. There were two companies: Company F and Company B (U. S. Infantry). Reasons for moving: 1.) Weitzel Lock was constructed in 1881. 2.) The value of property increased along the river front and was needed for commercial shipping purposes. 3.) Poor facilities and continued problems with sanitation. The original buildings built for the new fort were not completed until 1895.
- 1893\_\_Buildings of Fort Brady II are auctioned off and moved to other locations in the city. Part of the grounds for Fort Brady was retained by the federal government for use as a park.
- 1894\_\_Fort Brady was a military reservation rather than a fort. It became the only fort in the north of Michigan when Fort Mackinac was closed and its soldiers were sent to the Sault. After Fort Mackinac closed the closest fort in the Midwest was Fort Wayne at Detroit, Michigan.

.1896\_\_The Poe Lock is constructed on site of second lock. It is 800 ft. long by 100 ft. wide and 18 ft. deep. (This is the first Poe lock.)

1898\_\_Over 2,000 troops are stationed at Fort Brady. They went through basic training before being sent to Cuba during the Spanish-American War. After the war it became apparent that the structures were inadequate for troops in such numbers and plans were formulated to build more permanent and functional buildings.

Corporation called Michigan Lake Superior Power Co. Purchases shares and right of way of foreclosed canal company, under the leadership of Francis H. Clergue. The route of the canal is shortened, the canal is completed and a power house built at the lower end of the canal. Much of the canal is cut through a bed of red sandstone which is used in the construction of the powerhouse, donated to several local churches being built at this time and probably sold for use for the construction of homes and other businesses constructed at that time.

1890s-1914\_\_During this time period the shipping channel in the St. Mary's river is being changed and deepened with dredging to accommodate the larger ships being built and the increased traffic, causing a need for additional locks.

1900-World War I – Construction seemed to be the main focus of the fort. In 1903 a fire destroyed the original Fort Brady barracks. During the period, two brick barracks were built to replace the one destroyed by fire (each could contain 2 companies of men) and two streets of married housing were constructed, along with a headquarters, office building, mule barn, bakery, guardhouse, hospital and fire hall. During World War I the fort again became a beehive of activity. All of the buildings were built of local brick.

After World War I and the war excitement died down, the fort again returned to being a quiet military area and a social night at the fort was looked upon in anticipation.

1903\_\_The name of the city officially becomes Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Before, it had been spelled various ways.

1904\_\_Construction of the Power Canal and Power House are completed. With the advent of cheap power new industries come to the area such as a carbide plant, tannery, woolen mills, and pulp mills to name a few. This is a booming and prosperous time for the city.

1905\_\_Semi-Centennial of Locks is celebrated and held on the grounds of the Fort Brady Park.

1910\_\_Chase S. Osborn, owner of the *Evening News* (a local newspaper) and resident of the Sault was elected to a 2 year term as Governor of Michigan.

1914\_\_Davis lock opens and is 80 ft. wide, 1,350 ft. long between the inner gates and 24 ½ ft. deep. Early in the construction of the Davis lock a survey of shipping needs indicated that another lock was needed and construction started on it before the Davis lock was completed. This now meant that three locks were operating and able to handle the increased shipping needs, created by the First World War, of ore for the making of steel.

1919\_\_Fourth lock opens and is called the Sabin Lock. It is a duplicate of the Davis Lock and thus has the same dimensions.

1922\_\_Fort Brady garrisoned by the Third Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion remained at Fort Brady until March 1941.

1930s\_\_It became apparent that the U.S. was again possibly headed toward war and more building ensued in preparation. A barracks for WACS (Brady Hall) was constructed as well as a Gym and other necessary buildings, and ammunition bunkers are developed south of the fort. A gunnery range was also developed near Racó.

Ski Troops - Intuitive 3d Battalion commanders felt soldiers should be able to fight in winter conditions. Known as the "Northern Army" hand picked troops trained at Fort Brady, Michigan, as well as other northern U.S. border forts, with flat-topped skis, toe-straps and no heel harnesses. Lt. Col. Hayes A. Kroner, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry was in charge of this special training.

Fort Brady organized a 50-piece band in 1931. It was a Citizen's Military Training Camp Band (C.M.T.C. Military Band). Those selected as band members would incur no expense to play in the musical organization. Uniforms, instruments, board, lodging, laundry, and even railway fare to and from Ft. Brady, MI was paid by the government.

1940\_\_Population of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan in 1940 was 15,874.

World War II – Before WWII the army kept about 600 troops at Fort Brady. After war was declared, the total number of troops at Fort Brady increased to around 12,000 during the war. With the advent of the war security was increased with the building of a heavy security fence that was placed around the fort and access was limited to one main gate. A tent city was built on the brow of the hill at Fort Brady to help house additional troops and other temporary wooden structures were built to serve as various warehouses, shops and offices.

Defense preparations at the Soo Locks began as early September, 1939, and by mid-1942 a mixed combat force of 7,300 soldiers was stationed at Fort Brady. Barrage balloons were above the river, big artillery guns were installed near the locks, guards were posted at Locks and railroad bridges and the Locks park was closed to the public and tourists. The entire city became civil defense and security conscious. Serious sanitation and housing problems soon developed,

food and medical care became scarce, and the incidence of juvenile crime rose.

1940\_\_ Ski and snowshoe troops - 200 men are completely equipped for fighting in cold and snow. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. R. F. Edwards, has been designated as the test group for winter warfare during 1940-1941. A total of \$20,000 has been allotted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion for the continuation of its winter maneuvers. Plans called for 200 men to be completely outfitted for winter warfare. Lt. Charles Nelson, a native of Madison, WI and a professional ski jumper, is instructor of ski troops. Sgt. Percy Nash, a snow shoe expert, is instructor of the snowshoe soldiers. Skis are used by combat units and the snowshoes are used by supply units for pulling toboggans, etc.

1942\_\_ Kinross Auxiliary Airfield is constructed by the Air Force during World War II – It was used as a refueling base for Alaska-bound aircraft until its deactivation at the close of the war.

1942\_\_ 702<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Battalion leaves Fort Brady.

1943\_\_ The MacArthur Lock was built to replace the outmoded Weitzel Lock and was completed in one year. (MacArthur Lock still in use today.)

By early 1943, the threat of attack on the Soo Locks had become so improbable that the Army announced plans to reduce the size of the Fort Brady garrison.

1944\_\_ March 1 - Fort Brady is reclassified as a Class I installation from Class II.

1944\_\_ April 5 - Declared a surplus fort.

1944\_\_ August 31 - Hospital area was out-leased to the State of Michigan.

1944\_\_ November 25 - Fort Brady, Michigan is placed in an Inactive Status.

1945\_\_ October - Fort Brady, Michigan including the Fort Brady Target Range near Rexford in Chippewa County, Michigan is placed in the category of surplus.

1946\_\_ September - Sault Branch of Michigan College of Mining and Technology (Houghton) started with 272 students.

1949\_\_ Army decides it wishes to reestablish facilities at Sault. It threatens to close the Michigan Technology's Sault Branch which had taken over Fort Brady property. Did close the State Hospital which was renting former Fort Brady space.

1950\_\_ Army establishes Camp Lucas in the Sault to protect the Locks and was home of an anti-aircraft artillery battalion.

1952\_\_ Air field at Kinross is reactivated as Kinross Air Force Base. In October, the

468<sup>th</sup> Air Base Squadron was activated at the base; the following month the unit was re-designated as the 91<sup>st</sup> Air Base Squadron. It was in-activated on Feb. 10, 1953.

1953\_\_ February 16 – the 534<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Group was activated; activation of the 438<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Interceptor Squadron followed on April 27, 1953. The first jets at the base, F94B Starfires, arrive in July 1953, Kinross Air Force Base became part of Air Defense Command.

1955\_\_ Soo Woolen Mill, with a payroll of 50 is closed.

1955\_\_ August 15 – At Kinross AFB the 534<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Group was inactivated and the 507<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group (Air Defense) was activated. Its mission is to maintain maximum combat-ready aircraft, provide trained air defense of the continental U. S., and maintain and operate the base.

1956\_\_ Sault Ste. Marie, MI is hit hard economically with the closing of several major companies: Cadillac Soo, employed 150; Lock City Machine and Marine, employed 260; and Retailer's Wholesale Bakery, employed 50.

1958\_\_ Economy in Sault Ste. Marie, MI is hurt again with the closing of a tannery, Northwestern Leather, which had employed more than 1,000 during World War II.

1958\_\_ Construction increases at the base with a major expansion of the airfield runways to handle bombers and of base housing and facilities to handle the planned increase in base personnel.

1959\_\_ July 1 – the 4239<sup>th</sup> Strategic Wing was activated by SAC at the base although only two men were initially assigned. It is expected to add about 1,500 men at the base.

1959\_\_ September 25 – Kinross Air Force Base officially became Kincheloe Air Force Base in honor of Captain Iven C. Kincheloe, Jr., who was lost in a test flight at Edwards Air Force base, California, on July 26, 1958.

1960\_\_ Camp Lucas is closed by the Army.

1960\_\_ Plans are initiated for the construction of a new Poe Lock which will be 1000 ft. long, 100 ft. wide and 32 ft deep. It is to be constructed on the site of the original lock which opened in 1855, which was replaced in 1896 by the first Poe Lock. The Poe lock is named for Gen. Orlando Metcalf Poe, U. S. Army Engineer, a Michigan Civil War hero and one time engineer in the Sault.

1961\_\_ Demolition of old Poe Lock is started.

- 1961\_\_ Kincheloe AFB experiences huge expansion of its facilities to accommodate the arrival of its largest tenant unit, the Strategic Air Command's 4239<sup>th</sup> Strategic Wing with its Boeing B-52 Stratofortress bombers and Boeing KC-135 Stratotankers.
- 1962\_\_ Kincheloe AFB's Strategic Air Command's 4239<sup>th</sup> Strategic Wing joins other SAC units as a combat ready striking force. (Wing is redesignated the 449<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing in February 1963.)
- 1963\_\_ The last of Sault Ste. Marie, MI's major employers, Union Carbide, leveled its plant and 350 more jobs were lost.
- 1968\_\_ Kincheloe AFB is placed on a possible closing list and many of the units are transferred to other bases. By fall the B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers are the only remaining operational aircraft at Kincheloe. Air Force announces plans to close Kincheloe AFB by 1970.
- 1968\_\_ September – Poe Lock construction is completed and the lock is filled with water for first time. It opens to freighter traffic in October. (This is the only lock (of the four) able to handle freighters that are 1,000 feet long, which is the maximum length the newest freighters have reached.)
- 1969\_\_ June 26 – Date of formal dedication of the Poe Lock.
- 1971\_\_ Pentagon announces that Kincheloe AFB to remain operational indefinitely. Occupancy of personnel at Kincheloe AFB varies but usually includes full occupancy of 1,515 family units on the base, plus up to 150 families living off the base and roughly 1,060 single officers and airmen in the bachelor quarters on the base. The base employees 436 civilians, although 96 of these are seasonal employees hired in winter for snow removal and equipment upkeep.
- 1976\_\_ Pentagon again announces that Kincheloe AFB is slated for closing
- 1977\_\_ Kincheloe AFB officially closes.

(Compiled by Mary M. June, 3-17-2000, revised 1-28-2002)