

# Ironworkers From Around Country To Celebrate Skills This Weekend at Mackinaw City

**Ironworkers:** From page 1  
the service in 1946, Mr. Sweeney helped ironworkers working at a paper mill in Battle Creek. He performed odd jobs such as providing tools to the workers and assisting them with anything they required. By the time he joined the Mackinac Bridge project, he was a journeyman ironworker.

As a foreman in 1954, Mr. Sweeney organized the sinking of the reinforced concrete caissons that were rest on the lake bottom and serve as foundations for the bridge towers.

Most ironworkers on the bridge worked on whatever was necessary, Mr. Stilwell said. He was responsible for transporting iron used from the bridge to wherever it was needed, and he also helped set the caissons in place in 1954.

Mr. Sweeney was no different, and joined a rivet gang in 1955 after he finished his work as a foreman. Most rivet gangs were comprised of four people, and Mr. Sweeney was responsible for driving rivets into place. One worker would heat the rivets in a forge to nearly 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit, then use long tongs to throw the red hot rivet to the catcher, who would catch it in a bucket, then position the rivet in the hole and hold it for the man with a pneumatic rivet gun, who would then lock the steel plates together.

A fourth man would work ahead of the rest, conducting preparation work so that the others could smoothly move to the next area.

Coordination was critical for riveting work, Mr. Sweeney said, and the process could change depending on where the riveting was done. If they were riveting inside of a structure, the catcher could shout into a long tube to tell the heater to stop or start sending rivets. If they were outside, the catcher could bang on the can to signal when he was or was not ready. Workers could be seriously injured if they were not paying attention.

The rivets were used everywhere on the bridge, from the roadways to the towers. More than 1,000 rivets



**Jim Sweeney with his wife, Marge, at the 2007 Mackinac Bridge walk. Mr. Sweeney worked on the Mackinac Bridge from the beginning of the construction project, and stayed longer to help paint the bridge upon its completion. (Sweeney family photograph)**

were driven into the bridge by his gang in one day, Mr. Sweeney said.

Both men continued their work as jacks-of-all-trades in 1956. Mr. Sweeney left the riveting gang after a year and began spinning cables for the suspension of the bridge.

Spinning the cables was accomplished by using a spinning wheel that would pull the cables from one end of the bridge anchorage, over the towers, and to the end of the opposite anchorage.

Workers on the anchorages would then bundle the cables up, wrap them together with several other cables, and use a machine to apply tension on the cables. An equal amount of tension had to be applied to each cable, Mr. Sweeney said, or else they could snap.

Why did the men do such dangerous work?

Money was the primary reason why Mr. Stilwell got involved with the building of the bridge in 1954. Workers were paid \$3.50 an hour

and were able to make \$300 each week, he recalled, while most people in downtown Mackinaw City made about \$75 a week at the time.

Mr. Stilwell discovered it was enjoyable work. Being able to work outside with his hands was a pleasure, he said, and he enjoyed the camaraderie he developed with the other workers. Working on the bridge allowed him to meet some of the best men in the world, he recalls today.

The bridge was completed in 1957, and Mr. Stilwell continued with other iron working projects throughout the country.

Mr. Sweeney lingered on the job a bit longer and helped paint the bridge until 1958. He would later work on the International Bridge linking the United States with Canada at Sault Ste. Marie.

The Mackinac Bridge project cemented each man's pride as an ironworker. Mr. Stilwell established the Mackinac Bridgemen Museum



**J.C. Stilwell of Mackinaw City stands in front of the spinning wheels originally used to spin suspension cable from one end of the Mackinac Bridge to the other. Mr. Stilwell worked on the Mackinac Bridge when construction started in 1954.**

in 1970 to preserve the history of the ironworkers involved in the project. The museum burned down in August 2005, and many of the items from the bridge were destroyed. Mr. Stilwell has since rebuilt the museum and has received equipment used during the construction of the bridge as donations.

The International Ironworkers Festival registration will begin Friday, August 7, at noon. A parade, skill competitions among ironworkers, and a live band performance will take place Saturday, August 8

and Sunday, August 9. The festival is open to the public, but only ironworkers and retirees can compete in the skilled events.

## Ironworkers Festival Schedule of Events

Festival events take place behind Mackinaw City High School. The parade will be along Central Avenue.

**Friday, August 7**  
Noon to 5 p.m. - Registration

6 p.m. - Live Band and Dancing

## Saturday, August 8

10 a.m. - Parade  
11 a.m. - Kids Events  
Noon - Skilled Events  
6 p.m. - Live Band and Dancing  
10 p.m. - Raffle Drawing

## Sunday, August 9

10 a.m. - World Champion Column Climb  
"Old Timers Events" and an award ceremony will follow the end of the column climb.

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- 446 E Grove Street Cedarville - 350'** on Lake Huron-Les Cheneaux Islands, a darling cobblestone home w/6 WF rental cottages. The view & sunsets over Lake Huron are phenomenal. Enjoy an up North life style on lake living in historical modern stone home. **\$425,000 04-92569**
- 000 Krommiller Road, Cedarville - 530 ft** on Krommiller Rd with 26 x 34 storage building, electricity and circular driveway in place. Near Snow's Channel. **\$30,000 06-1285**
- 90 E M-134, Cedarville - Very desirable 12-unit motel.** Many updates. Lots of pride of ownership. Fantastic location. Also 3 bedroom, 2 bath immaculate home. Close to everything in Cedarville. Also includes a tanning business. **\$350,000 09-488**
- 2460 Forest Lane - 300 ft.** Lake Huron-beautiful vacant wooded lot, located on island conveniently connected by county road. Premier location has south east exposure, high elevation, deep water and is somewhat protected from prevailing winds. Tall mature cedars, evergreens and birch. Fantastic view and a great shoreline. **\$697,000 06-223**
- 1110 S. Park Avenue, Cedarville - 145 ft** of fantastic water frontage on Park Ave overlooking Snow's Channel. Tall evergreens, deep water, nice beach and flower gardens. Crib dock and unique boat house. Lot is beautiful. One of the few vacant lots available on the south side, main channel. Well, sewer, driveway in. The lot is ready for new construction. **\$299,000 08-344**
- 4104-4105 N St. Martins Pt. Rd - 106 ft.** lakefront on Lake Huron. Breathtaking sunsets & view of Mackinac Island. Also includes land on east side of road with 28x42 ft heated garage & adjoins federal land. Seller will consider split. Drive in is place & perc test is on file. **\$170,000 07-744**
- 000 N M-129, Cedarville - 40** heavily wooded acres. Heavy cedar covered. Great hunting. Property borders M-129, first 40 acres inside Mackinac County. Some low land, great place for hunting. Property is priced below SEV. **\$42,000 07-974**
- 000 Radisson Road, DeTour - Lots** of room to build on 1.81 wooded acres. 480 ft of waterfrontage with driven sheet pile dock. Dredged slip with boat basin about 4 ft deep. Tranquil and woody setting. Good driveway, great views and sunsets. **\$140,000 09-190**
- 000 Dumler Lane, Parcel 6, Cedarville - Great** wooded parcel with 400 ft beautiful waterfrontage. Pretty view of nature and water. Quiet peaceful setting. **\$100,000 (09-367)**
- 000 E Dumler Lane, Parcel 7 - Beautiful** wooded waterfront lot. Quiet spot-enjoy the water and the woods. New driveway. Quaint, quiet location. Clear crystal water. **\$128,800 (09-368)**
- 1400 S Lakeside Road, Cedarville - Very** clean, cute waterfront cottage, 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Nice tall trees, private location, rolling lawn & dock extending to Lake Huron. A comfortable cottage. 98 ft waterfront, 290 ft frontage on black top road. Building site for 2nd home has been approved. **\$164,900 (06-758)**
- Les Cheneaux Landing Condominiums - (7)** 2-4 BR cottages. 1/12 ownership of common area, includes use of boat slip & 250' waterfrontage on Snow's Channel. Wonderful waterfront view. Sandy beach. **(06-1143-06-1145 & 06-1147-06-1150) \$57,500-\$179,000**
- 2577 S Coryell Island, Cedarville - This** charming woody cottage is located on historical Coryell Island where one can enjoy the morning side. 168 ft of deep water lake frontage and a 156 ft crib dock. A seasonal cedar cottage, cathedral ceilings, spacious wrap around deck. Cottage is elegant with hardwood floors, fireplace, large loft and a unique deck. One of Les Cheneaux's premier cottages. **\$319,900 (07-306)**
- 1933 S Crow Pointe Lane, Cedarville - 200 ft** of waterfrontage with deep water and crib dock. Spacious 3 brm, 1.5 bath home, large dining room, nice kitchen, big deck over looking Lake Huron plus a covered deck, 3 car garage with upstairs, ideal work shop, beautiful tall trees. Great value. **\$289,000 (07-347)**
- 1253 S White Road, Cedarville - 3** Summer Cottages. 100' waterfrontage, storage bldg, deck on shoreline to relax plus nice decks on each cottage. Furnished and can be enjoyed this spring. Trees, private and really cute. **\$215,000 (08-76)**
- 1496 S Forest Lane, Cedarville - Premier** waterfront home, exclusive waterfront point location, approx 785 ft M/L of waterfrontage, fantastic views, 4 brm, 4 bath, 4 fireplaces, custom designed lovely home, executive kitchen and master bedroom suite. Truly one of Les Cheneaux's finest. Garage has workshop, gym and guest apartment upstairs. **\$1,450,000 (08-93)**
- 2105 S Forest Lane, Cedarville - Beautiful** home with 150 ft of waterfront. Master suite brm on first level. Another master suite brm on second level overlooking Lake Huron. 3rd brm is on second level. 2 1/2 bathrooms, fireplace, bright kitchen and living room, cozy den and much more. 1 covered porch, 2 spacious decks, 3 car garage and lots of decorative pavers. Beautiful sand beach, dock and woods. **\$537,000 (08-370)**
- 2125 S Forest Lane, Cedarville - Fantastic** Arrow custom log home and 3 car log garage on 150 ft of waterfrontage with one of Les Cheneaux's most charming boat houses with living quarters upstairs. Home has 3 massive stone fireplaces, master brm is really unique with bath and jacuzzi tub. Everything is done 1st class. Covered porches plus beautiful big deck. Storage garage. Some personal property available. **\$1,295,000 (08-376)**
- 1504 S Forest Lane, Cedarville - 608 ft** of WF over looking Cedarville and Gov't Bays. A fantastic 4100 sq ft home. Everything is immaculate. 3 brm, 2.5 bath, 700 sq ft family room, stone fireplace, massive windows, great kitchen with Viking stove and sub-zero refig. 2 car attached garage. Addition in 1995. 1104 sq. ft. storage building. 960 sq ft car port. 200 ft Floating/trestle dock. **\$775,000 (08-446)**
- 1569 E M-134 Hwy, Hessel - 2** bedroom, 1.5 bath waterfront home with 320 ft. on Pine River. Beautiful grounds, wood deck, garage and guesthouse. Great home or cottage with fantastic view. You can boat right out to Lake Huron or Mackinac Island. **\$195,000 (08-675)**
- 859 S Hill Island Road, Cedarville - Great** style, comfortable home--fireplace, lower level, really cute and custom. 3 brm, 3 bath, attached garage. 200 feet of waterfrontage plus a big deck. **\$249,000 (08-711)**
- 3962 St Martin Point Road, Hessel - Waterfront** cottage. Fantastic views. Sand Beach. 2 brm, 1 bath, attached garage. Nicely furnished, ready for your enjoyment. Big windows, deck on waterfront, big cedars and pine trees for privacy. Property being surveyed for exact lot size. **\$176,500 (08-779)**
- 2042 S Forest Lane - Wonderful-woody-beautiful** year around home with 210' of WF. Fantastic home! Uniquely styled with many special touches. Fantastic kitchen, skylights. Great deck overlooking Government Bay. Custom boathouse built 14 years ago. Third bedroom is presently being used as an office. Half basement has bedroom, bathroom and family room. Workshop in second detached garage. Boatport on side. Crib dock. **\$725,000 (08-799)**
- 1912 Dutcher Lane, DeTour - Wow!!** Wait until you see this beautiful "Arrow" log home. Both home & waterfront are really wonderful! Custom log home is most unique w/high cathedral ceilings overlooking decks, hot tub, dock, woods & water. Tall cedar & evergreens--How Tranquil! A special balcony, new kitchen and great fireplace. Plus newly finished lower level! 215' of deep clear beautiful waterfrontage with your own 40' dock. **\$414,000 (09-27)**
- 1914 Dutcher Lane, DeTour - 3** brm, 2.5 bath home on 151' of beautiful wooded WF w/dock. Naturally landscaped w/beautiful trees and pathway to shoreline with big rocks and oh so pretty! Deep water for boat & protected harborage. Cottage/home has a great UP NORTH feeling by using cedar shakes, stone & tile to create an atmosphere of quaintness and privacy. Cozy fireplace in living room w/lots of windows. **\$299,000 (09-29)**
- 562 E Grove Street, Cedarville - Great** home/cottage with 99 ft of waterfrontage--wonderful view of Cedarville Bay from the spacious windows on the south side and from the open floor plan. Walk to downtown Cedarville, school within 3 blocks, 2 bedrooms, 2 bath with lower level. Spacious open main floor with walkout onto a large 2nd level deck with unique gazebo. 2 car garage. Lots of room for storage. **\$255,000 (09-38)**
- 2452 S Woodland Road, Cedarville - This** amazing home, one of Les Cheneaux's finest on one of the best locations! Inside and out looks like new, only 1 previous owner! Spacious 3 brm, 2 bath home, lovely living room and kitchen. Inside has beautiful finished cedar, granite, fireplace, glassed in sun room. Being sold completely furnished except for personal items. Trestle dock. Please do not drive down road without a realtor. **\$825,000 (09-87)**
- 1570 S Lakeside Road, Cedarville - WOW!** What a beautiful custom 3 brm, 2 bath, cottage/home with beautiful workmanship on 93' of waterfrontage. First class windows, cathedral ceilings, lots of custom cut pine inside. Completely remodeled 2003. 2-level composite deck across the front and on side, spacious front yard, flotation dock & boat shelter. Deep water for your boat. Really cute 1 brm, 1 bath guest cottage and nice garage. **\$395,900 (09-207)**
- 2045 S Hill Island Road, Cedarville - Fantastic** home. Custom stick built, big and beautiful. Lots of unique and special qualities such as: wine cooler, 2 refrigerators, 2 electric ovens & 2 water heaters, large master brm and spacious bath. Beautiful windows, unique kitchen with lots of cupboards, big porches, covered deck for "Bar-B-Que. Natural setting. Big garage. Woody with 200 ft of waterfrontage. Deep water. Dock. **\$725,000 (09-245)**
- 2163 S Crooked Tree Lane, Cedarville - Located** in Les Cheneaux's Woodland Park. Log style custom home/cottage, cedar inside and out, many large windows overlooking tall cedars and Lake Huron. Boat dock is included. Great boating through islands. 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 2 fireplaces, a unique Up North style home in a fantastic location. **\$659,000 (09-264)**
- 616 E Grove Street, Cedarville - Two** bedroom waterfront home with attached garage. Master bedroom has water view. U shaped crib dock. Split stone fireplace and a beautiful view of Lake Huron/Cedarville Bay. Within walking distance to post office, downtown Cedarville. Turn key except for personal effects. Come and enjoy the summer in Cedarville. **\$257,000 (09-487)**
- 326 S Coryell Island, Cedarville - WOW!** What a cutie!! Cottage, guest cottage, boat docks and boat shelter, facing south side of Coryell Island with deep water. Cottage is mostly furnished and is oh so special. The view is awesome!! Tall evergreens, cedar and birch trees. Sellers are able to give quick occupancy. Included in sale is a SeaRay boat, plus a fishing boat and motor. **\$198,000 (09-528)**
- 484 S Hill Island Rd, Parcel C, Cedarville - Beautiful** sandy beach, good swimming. 3 seasonal cottages on Lake Huron. Cottages on village sewage system and black top road. A pretty and natural woody setting. Southern exposure, fantastic view. Included are 2 outbuildings. **\$299,000 (04-92170)**
- 484 S Hill Island Rd, Parcel B, Cedarville - Bring** the whole family. 100'crib dock w/70' flotation extension. 40' x 32' pole barn and 3 outbuildings. 5 vacation cottages right on the sandy shore of Lake Huron. Southern exposure and a beautiful location. **\$599,000 (04-92172)**
- 484 S Hill Island Road, Parcel A, Cedarville - WOW!** Southern exposure. Main home plus 3 guest cottages! Location-Location-Location. Approximately 660' of water frontage. Views of Cedarville Bay & Government Bay from the deck of the cottages. Enjoy the sandy beach and the sunsets. **\$599,000 (04-92173)**
- 1719 M-129, Cedarville - Many** updates both inside and out. Plenty of space in remodeled kitchen. 4 bedrooms for family. Really big garage and heated workshop. Plenty of space in back yard for everybody to play, work and have a great time together. **\$148,000 (08-13)**
- 557 E Nordquist Road, Cedarville - pacious** house, 15 acres, pole barn, Private. House can be either 5 bedrooms with den, kitchen and bath or could have an apartment in lower level. Great kitchen and dining area, woody view with sliding glass doors out to deck. View from living room is wonderful. Lots of pride of ownership. Super move-in condition. **\$149,900 (08-50)**
- 1576 E M-134, Cedarville - Spacious** year around home. Close to town but with big trees and natural setting. Beautiful porch and 2 big out buildings. 3 bedroom, 1 bath home with full lower level that has a great room with beautiful bar, also a wood furnace and wood storage room. Attractive decks and a private woody setting. Lots of privacy on this spacious corner lot. **\$178,900 (08-183)**
- 117 N Greenwood Drive, Cedarville - 3** bedroom, 2 bath, stone fireplace, strong well built home--well cared for!! Attached 2 car garage. Recently remodeled attractive kitchen! Nice dining room. Bedrooms are spacious. Master bedroom and bathroom on main level. 2 brms and bath on 2nd level. Screened in room overlooks approx 2 wooded acres. "Better Look Quick!!" **\$149,800 (08-331)**
- 2899 E Muscoe Road, Cedarville - Great** family home!! Beautiful condition. 3 brm, 2 bath, family room, storage and garage in lower level. Nice View. Private land scape backyard. Just 13 years old. Quality throughout! **\$145,000 (08-426)**
- 475 E Grove Street, Cedarville - Really** cute 3 bedroom, 1.5 baths, stick built home with view of water. Deck on back and several tall spruce trees. Close to everything in Cedarville. **\$134,900 (08-579)**
- 684 W Nordquist Road, Cedarville - Your** custom home in the woods! 70 acres including an approximate 12 acre pond. This unique home is special in every way, styled tastefully using wood, stone, and slate. Master bedroom suite has bathroom and a private covered deck. Both house and grounds are meticulously and beautifully landscaped. Excellent hunting property for deer, bear, grouse, ducks, geese and rabbit. 5 minutes from town. **\$299,000 (08-661)**
- 98 S Lakeside Road, Cedarville - Darling** vertical log home with 3 bedrooms, 2 bath.Home has guest apartment and studio(1344 sq ft). Double car detached garage has 672 sq ft. Everything on 5.5 acres, beautiful woods, fantastic landscaping-natural!! Wonderful!! Unique home--handcrafted inside and out. Walk in horse paddock for your horse. Greenhouse. **\$145,000 (09-363)**
- 41 E Pine Street, Cedarville - Remodeled** 3 bedroom, 1 bath home in 2008. Ramp to front door. Walk to everything in downtown Cedarville. 2 car attached garage. 2 decks, really cute. Zoned commercial. **\$72,000 (09-434)**