

State Features Lakes Museums

There are hundreds of museums throughout Michigan, but five of them have a special appeal. They are devoted entirely to marine lore and history. Together, they offer more nautical lore than any other Great Lakes state, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

Their presentations are varied and also extensive. The largest is housed in a specially-designed building. Three are aboard former ships that once sailed the Great Lakes. The fifth is a lighthouse.

LARGEST among Michigan's marine museums and one of the nautical showplaces of the nation is the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle at Detroit.

The visitor to the Dossin Museum opens a modern aluminum door and steps out of the present into the museum's proudest and most outstanding display—a restoration of the Gothic room, once the ornate salon of the passenger ships that once plied the Great Lakes.

The City of Detroit III, built in 1911, belonged to the Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Co. fleet. She operated on overnight service between Detroit, Buffalo and Cleveland, making her last run in 1959.

Before the ship was dismantled six years later, its contents and furnishings were sold. A wealthy Cleveland banker bought entire interiors of rooms, and from this source the Great Lakes Maritime Institute, a non-profit organization, acquired the Gothic room after a successful fund-raising drive. Two years of restoration followed, directed by the museum's curator, Robert E. Lee, who worked personally

on the job with the aid of a small staff and volunteers. The present blue-brick Dossin Museum building, opened in 1966, is a dry-land successor to the schooner J.T. Wing, a floating museum until age forced her destruction by fire in 1956.

THE U.S. Corps of Engineers has designated the Dossin Museum and its flag mast as Great Lakes landmarks and included them in official navigational charts.

The Dossin Museum and its enthusiastic curator, who insists he was named after the steamboat and not the Confederate general, believe in making marine heritage come alive.

A youngster can grasp the wheel of a bygone ship. By pushing a button he can make the paddle wheels turn on a model of the Frank E. Kirby, a famous express steamer.

There is real ship-to-shore radio chatter. Another exhibit shows navigation light functions. There is a restoration of the entire interior of a turn-of-the-century pilothouse.

Among static exhibits are pictures, marine lithographs, models of famous ships, pieces of ships, house flags of ships and bells.

The museum is an in-

formation center for students of marine lore. Its files contain data on more than 20,000 ships, past and present.

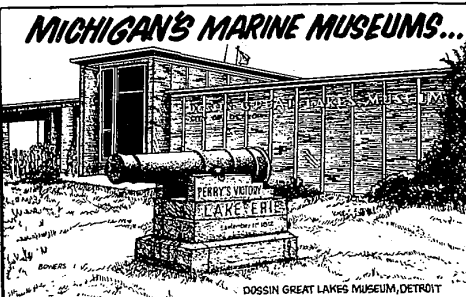
The Dossin Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Suggested admission is 50 cents for adults, 25 cents for children 12 to 17. Children under 12, senior citizens and organized groups are free.

THE SAUGATUCK MARINE Museum, which opened in late 1968, is aboard the S.S. Keewatin, a passenger ship now 64 years old, retired in 1965 by the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Beside the Keewatin is the Reis; one of the last of the steam-powered tugs.

The Keewatin is now open weekends only. It will reopen on full schedule next May 15. Admission is \$1 for adults, 50 cents for children 5 through 12.

In Sault Ste. Marie, near the famous Soo locks, is the 55-year-old Valley Camp, a retired coal-burning Great Lakes freighter.

ANOTHER UPPER Peninsula attraction, opened in 1971, is the Mystery Ship Seaport in River Park, Menominee. The museum is housed in an old sailing vessel, raised by volunteer and private enterprise from 110-foot depths of Green Bay.



... THROUGHOUT THE STATE ARE :
DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM, BELLE ISLE, DETROIT
SAUGATUCK MARINE MUSEUM, ABOARD FORMER PASSENGER SHIP, S.S.KEEWATIN, SAUGATUCK
S.S.VALLEY CAMP, RETIRED GREAT LAKES FREIGHTER, SAULT STE. MARIE
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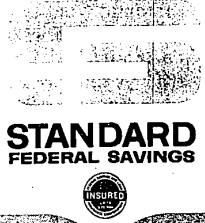
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