

Nothing Matches Colors Of Michigan's Indian Summer

By W. W. Edgar

Michigan in Autumn is sight to behold. History tells us that the explorers who discovered the state several centuries ago were attracted by the sheer beauty of the two peninsulas jutting out into the vast bodies of fresh water we now know as the Great Lakes.

One needn't travel far to confirm the beauty that lured our forefathers and which a few short hours from the metropolitan area one can almost become lost in the brilliance of the autumn colors.

From one end to the other, over hill and dale, these two peninsulas boast beauty at every turn and a variety that would please the most demanding. Like the barbers on the midway at the fair shouted, "There is something for everybody."

To confirm again what we always had been told, the Edgars spent the better part of the past two weeks in the role of gypsies moving around the state to drink in the beauty of a Michigan autumn.

Down through Hines Parkway—a thing of beauty at any time—we started and the marvelous tinting of the leaves in the morning sun was the first incentive to move on and on.

CAREFULLY disregarding the expressways, we traveled the "Old U.S. 12" and within a short time we were entering the Irish Hills.

There was no River Shannon flowing and we couldn't find the Lakes of Killarney, or Galway Bay. But the hills and dales, with the myriad of colors, were a sight to behold. While many claim the most beautiful sight in the world is the view of Shannon in the early morning sun as the plane descends for a landing and a tour of the Emerald Isles, the Irish would be pleased with what they saw on the road through Clinton and over to Jonesville in Michigan. Sticking to the back roads we found Nature at her best and in the colorful dress it seemed almost like a magic carpet we traveled until late in the afternoon we passed through Coldwater, Three Rivers and headed a bit north to Holland—and a surprise.

It never had been out of privilege to be in the tulip country before. It seemed like a bit of "The Netherlands" had dropped out of the sky as we watched the pretty maidens in their "Dutch" dresses, walking the avenues and even doing the "wooden shoe" dance.

Color ran rampant in Holland. Not only was Mother Nature jogged out in her finery, but the Holland Dutch take keen delight in their ability to raise flowers and there were bright blooms everywhere.

To add to the picture was the sight of the famed windmill that was brought over from The Netherlands several years ago and enshrined on an island in the park to lend authenticity to the Dutch motif of the community.

ONE WAS STRUCK by the cleanliness of the entire community along with the beauty of the landscape and the flower beds, especially at Windmill Point and the Little Dutch Village on the highway.

The entire setting gave one the impression of being in another country.

From Holland we headed north to Traverse City and the beauty along the way was almost breathtaking. Jack Frost was doing a fine job of helping with Mother Nature's fall dress and the sight of the colored leaves in the wooded areas amid the stately evergreens was a picture no artist could paint.

Mile after mile we traveled, just marveling at the color that ran from the gamut from the fall, ritually evergreens to the yellows and the gold and red and brown. Then, out of this, to the sight of Grand Traverse Bay. What a setting!

The myriad of color on one side and the jewel-like bay on the other. It was a sight that would satisfy even the coldest cynic.

We headed for Sutton's Bay on the west shore of the big bay, where, we had been told, beauty is at its best. And we weren't led astray.

WIATA PLEASANT journey over the winding highway, with the bay on one side and hills or mountains rising on the other, with here and there, the white steeple of a church shining in the morning sun.

We were especially interested in Sutton's Bay for several folks from the Plymouth area whom we know, are planning to live there. Among them are Jim

and Martha Ryder of Joy Road who have rehabilitated an old home just off the highway. Jim and Martha have been friends of long standing and we were eager to see the site they chose for retirement. It is a spot in the valley with hills both front and back that glowed with colored sumac and made quite a picture.

Further up the road we came to Northport. This is a colorful wooded area in the center of which Max Bowen, retired industrialist and former President of the Livonia Board of Education, is establishing a new

pattern of trailer parks. It is an interesting pattern with the area being designed in circles with a stipulated number of trailers in each.

It is an unusual fragment of the imagination. But it is proving to be a success for those who like to live close to Nature in the woods.

Returning, we circled the Bay and headed for Charlevoix and Petoskey—two of the finest resort areas in the western part of the state, if not in all of Michigan.

THE WINDING ROADS, the

numerous rock formations, and the sight of the sail boats on the lakes all combined to paint a picture one could never forget. And all along the way was the beautiful coloring of the leaves in Mother Nature's Autumn dress to offer a rich contrast to the calm blue waters of the bay.

It was a sight that will live on and on. Leaving the Lake and bay to our backs we headed inland through the forest areas to Gaylord, Grayling and Houghton Lake. And what scenery!

Through the thick of the

forests we drove, piercing a myriad of color, with here and there the sight of a deer, some stood as statues. Others were prancing and their white tails bobbing along through the thickets.

They seemed to be having a great time, too. Well they might. For in another month they'll be the target of thousands of hunters and many of them will wind up being nothing but a mounted head in somebody's den or on the back bar in a wayside saloon.

But on the day we saw them, they were a thing of beauty in

the shadows of a golden autumn afternoon.

NOTHING IS MORE colorful at this time of year than a trip through the forests and the winding roads in Michigan's north country lead a hand in perfecting the beauty. It is at the end of this road, on the northward journey, that one comes to the Straits of Mackinac and the famed Mackinac Island with its Grand Hotel.

It is from the 900 foot porch of this hotel—the longest porch in the world—that one gets what, to me, has always been the most beautiful sight of all.

FROM HERE, one crosses the straight, heads for Highway 27—the white ribbon of concrete that cuts through the center of the state—and the homeward journey. Even the white ribbon of concrete provides a picture as it cuts through the hills and dales of color. From Highway 27 we branch to U.S. 23 and then M-96 and home.

But there is one more breath-taking glimpse of color. It is the sight of Kensington Park, its colorful wooded areas and Lake.

What a finish to a great trip! One is inclined to agree with the man who wrote: "Michigan—My Michigan". Coming from a native of Pennsylvania, that's tops.

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