

Orange Road Auto Heritage Tour

by Gateway Lodge

Boulder Junction to Presque Isle to Winchester

This Heritage Auto Tour was part of the areas 2000 Centennial Celebration. It was Copyrighted by Gateway Lodge in 1999.

The following was downloaded from www.gateway-lodge.com/map/orange.htm in 2005.

1. Chamber of Commerce

Location - Hwy. M, just south of Boulder Junction.

The Chamber's attractive log office makes a great starting point for the Orange Road Heritage Auto Tour. Using trees from Trout Lake's Cathedral Point that were blown down in a 1956 storm, the Chamber office was built entirely by volunteers. It opened to visitors in the summer of 1957, providing all sorts of valuable tourist information, including maps, calendars of events and accommodation vacancy referrals. Visitors will also find a friendly staff ready to give directions, answer any questions and make you feel "Welcome."

2. Community Building

Location - Just 150 yards north of the Chamber of Commerce building on Hwy. M.

The Community Center houses the town offices, rest rooms, and library. The library is home to an excellent collection of local and regional history. Don't miss the opportunity to browse through the recently published Boulder Junction - The Early Years: 1880's - 1950's. Visitors will also find a small temporary display area, which features changing historical, photographic, and craft exhibits. The grounds in front of the Community Building are known as "Dr. Kate Newcomb Memorial Park" - a tribute to our pioneer doctor, who was known affectionately as "The Angel on Snowshoes."

3. Main Street

Location - Less than 0.5 mile north of the Community Building. Turn left at the "T" intersection onto Main Street.

Notice the width of the street. This area was once the site of the railway line, depot and railway sidings. "~~Georges Steakhouse & Store~~," is a landmark. Originally Paquette's, it dates from 1912 or 1913. It has been remodeled, added on to, and changed names and owners, but it has survived and still serves the public well. Farther along the street, in front of a store in the middle of town, is a statue of legendary fishing guide, Porter "Barefoot" Dean.

4. Site of Former Railway Bridge

Location - At the flagpole, turn right onto Hwy. M and head north.

Approximately 0.5 mile north is a new concrete bridge, which has a special snowmobile/bike lane. Pull off the road into "Headwaters," a popular watering hole since the 1920's. Just upstream of the present bridge, the remains of pilings from the original railroad crossing are still evident. The old steam engines stopped and took on water here.

5. Hwy. B to Presque Isle

Location - Continue north another 2 miles to the intersection of Hwys. M and B. To continue on the Orange Road Auto Heritage Tour. Alternatively, you can turn right and pick up the Purple tour toward Land O' Lakes.

6. Presque Isle

Location - Travel west approximately 9 miles from the intersection of Hwys. M and B to the town of Presque Isle.

At the turn of the century, John J. Foster operated the local sawmill, so the area was then known as Fosterville. In 1910, it was changed to Winegar, for the local lumber baron of the same name. It became Presque Isle in the 1950's.

7. Walleye Ponds

Location - Stay on Hwy. B (passing Hwy. W on your left) and drive up the hill through town.

When the booming lumber cutting and milling days came to an end, over 30 acres of mill pond lay idle for many years. In the 1940's, it was transformed into a successful fish rearing pond - at one time, the largest in the state. In creating the rearing ponds, tons and tons of sawdust and trash from the former mill site were removed. Views over the Walleye Ponds are available from a number of vantage points around town.

8. Shanty Boy Hill Cemetery

Location - Follow the signs to Presque Isle's new Community Building and Library. Leave your car and it's a short walk to the Shanty Boy Cemetery.

This is a burial place and a memorial to those who lived in rough shanties in the woods - those who chopped, sawed, skidded and rode the giant logs down the river. Many lost their lives in some of the most dangerous jobs in the early days of logging.

9. Hwy. W to Winchester

Location - Return to Presque Isle's Main Street, then drive down the hill in the direction from which you came.

At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto Hwy. W and drive south approximately 8 miles to the intersection of County Hwy. W and Old County O, just over 0.5 mile past County O. Turn right onto Old County O, follow the road to "the narrows" between North and South Turtle Lakes. In 1893, "The Divide" resort was established here.

10. "Tartown" and Community Park

Location - Just under 1 mile from County Hwy. W is Town Site Road. Turn left and on your right is a pretty park and picnic area, nestled on the bank of the Turtle River.

Around 1905, this area was known as "Tartown," so named for the many tar-paper-covered shacks and shanties. The Turtle Lake Lumber Company was established in 1902 (with Walter Winchester among the founders), but it was 1906 before the mill began to operate on this site.

11. 1910 School House/Community Building

Location - Approximately 0.5 mile up the hill from the park.

During the glory years of lumber production, the town of Winchester boasted 55 homes, a large mill-owned boarding house, a bandstand and a community building. In 1910, a two-room school was built. Turn left onto 2nd Street at the top of the hill, to find this building. Today, it serves as a community center and library.

12. The Discovery Center

Location - At Hwy. W, turn right and continue to the intersection of Hwys. W and K. Then continue on Hwy. W for one more mile.

A former Youth Conservation Camp, the Center is a community-oriented, interpretive and educational center. It explores the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources through demonstrations, workshops, field explorations, and static displays.

13. Logging Dam at Hwys. K and H

Location - Hwy. H, 200 yards south of intersection with Hwy K.

At the intersection of Hwys. K and H (immediately after you cross the Manitowish River), turn right onto Hwy. H, past the small wayside and picnic area. Just past the turn-off to Nichols beach, you will see a small parking area on your right. Leave your car, walk to the water, and view the remains of an old logging dam.