

SECTION SIX: Points of Interest

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These are just some of the places on and around Isle Royale with a short description and some history. This is by no means a complete list and is not meant to be. It is mostly made up of places I have mentioned in other sections of the book.

Most of the histories and other facts are from other places. I have credited the source and the text is in "*italics*".

About My Descriptions:

Detail Maps: The detail maps are captured from maps at 1:24,000 scale and reduced to 60%. When the larger linked map is opened, it is the same scale, but not reduced in size.

Google Earth™ View (if listed): Will link to a captured view of varying scale.

America Shipwreck

The S.S. America was a 182' passenger steamer built in 1898 owned by the Booth Company. It carried passengers and freight along the north shore from Duluth to Forth William with stops at Isle Royale docks from 1902 until 1928. The ship went down on the night of June 7, 1928, in the North Gap coming out of Washington Harbor. All crew and passengers were rescued with the only loss being a dog. It is a very popular site with divers as it lies only 4' below the water line. It can be seen from a canoe or kayak below the water. When it is calm, it is very clear.



Amygdaloid Island

Located on the north side of the island on the eastern side, it is a long narrow island facing directly into Lake Superior on its north side. There is a ranger station here and a day use dock. The ranger station is staffed from approximately June 1st through September. Crystal Cove is located on the far eastern side of the island.

History: Near the south end of Amygdaloid Island, tucked into a small bay fronting Amygdaloid Channel lays the fish camp of Conrad Scotland and Andrew Anderson, two Norwegian bachelors of no relation to other Isle Royale Scandinavian fishing families. The Amygdaloid Island Ranger Station occupies the site today with NPS personnel making use of the cabin built by Scotland and Anderson (Figure 5.17). [Source: "The Isle Royale Folkefiskerisamfunn"]

Amygdaloid Ranger Station. September, 2011



[Google Earth™ View: West end of island](#)

Bangsund Cabin

Located on the south side of Rock Harbor across from Daisy Farm Campground, it is the headquarters for the Wolf/Moose study on the island in the summer.

History: The Bangsund family operated a fishery at their cabin in the 1940's and 1950's until the coming of the Lampreys which killed off the lake trout population. Jack Bangsund died in his cabin in 1959 and the National Park Service granted permission to use the cabin for summer field operations of the Wolf-moose study and it has been used ever since. [Source: "A View from the Wolf's Eye"]

Moose Research Station from canoe.



Barnum Island

Also, once known as John's Island. It is located on the west end of the island at the mouth of Washington Harbor. It lies a short 270' northeast of Washington Island. It is about 1000' long by 300' wide at its widest point. There are several buildings including the Johns Hotel, two fish houses, three docks and five cottages among other structures, boats and fishing equipment. The island is still used by families so please respect their privacy.

On my last visit to this island in fall, 2012, many of the trees on this island and neighboring Washington Island had been blown down and the islands looked somewhat barren. This can be seen when comparing the panorama picture to the picture of John's Hotel.

History: George Barnum, a wealthy grain merchant from Duluth, was one of the first to establish a summer compound on Isle Royale. In 1889, Barnum visited the Island and stayed at the Johns Hotel. Barnum returned, and in 1902 he bought the Island, after having Johns and his son build him a cabin on the Western end of what he renamed Barnum Island. George Barnum then invited a number of his friends to build cabins on his island, employing his carpenter, Ole Daniels from Duluth. In relatively short order, Daniels built frame cabins for the Andrews, Ray, and Dunwoodie families, as well as a common dining room on the Eastern end of the Island. By the 1920s, Barnum Island was a busy place, and in that decade Daniels put up five more buildings, including the Ray Cottage and outhouse and two Andrews' cottages and privy. Barnum Island also has two boat houses, a large one built in 1910 and a smaller one in the early 1930s. [Source: "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context"]

History: An Archaeological Survey identified a Native American site on Barnum Island on the East end near the present location of the Johns Hotel. [Source: "Archeological Survey and Testing Isle Royale National Park, 1987-1990 Seasons".]



Cottages on Barnum Island. Fall, 2012



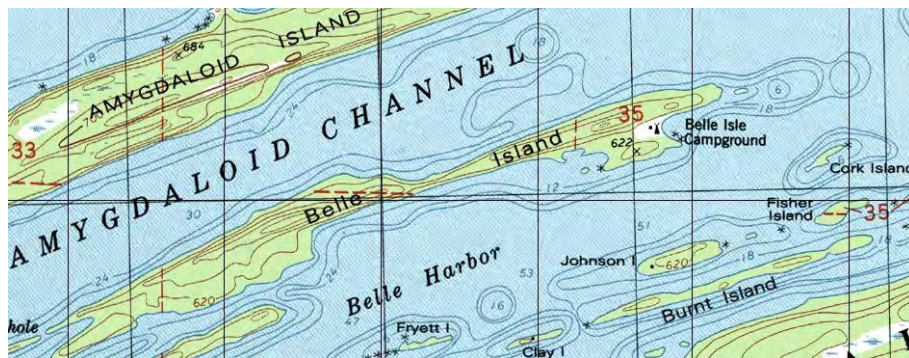
Barnum Island panorama. Fall, 2012.



[Google Earth™ View](#)

Belle Island

Located on the north side of the eastern end of the island, it is just south of **Amygdaloid Island** and northwest of Lane Cove Campground. It is the present site of Belle Isle Campground. There are old stone stairs (pictured right) between Shelter #6 and Tent Site #10 that lead up to a bluff with a nice view. There is also a cement foundation of some sort in front of the pavilion.



History: The name "Belle Isle" means beautiful island in French. Native Americans occupied the island for centuries. Europeans initially called it "Fish Island" and the Northwest Fur Company established a fishery here, probably before 1800. The American Fur Company established their first fishing station on Isle Royale here in, July 1837. Fisherman continuously occupied the island until the Schofield's established a resort here. It was Fred Schofield who changed the island's name to Belle Isle, in 1915 and named their resort the Belle Harbor Lodge. The resort included Isle Royale's only swimming pool (located in a protected cove just southwest of the dock) and golf course (where the shelters are now). The resort closed in 1946. [Source: "Place Names of Isle Royale"]

History: Schofield opened his lodge and four cottages in the spring of 1912. Eventually, Belle Isle Resort boasted twenty eight cabins, two bath houses with electric lights, hot running water, and indoor sanitary toilets. Schofield offered his guests a tennis court and shuffle board courts, the latter on cement pads. Lake Superior was far too cold for an enjoyable swim, but Schofield solved that problem by using rock walls to create a sheltered pool that could be warmed by the sun. His greatest effort went into constructing a small nine-hole golf course on top of what had been forest clinging to rock. Building this course required cutting and burning the trees and pouring cold lake water on the hot rock so that it could be broken up and removed and then hauling top soil "mined" from McCargoe Cove several miles away. Schofield successfully overcame these obstacles and the harsh winter climate of northwestern Lake Superior to create a nice little golf course. He wrapped comfort and recreation around the idea of wilderness and the strenuous life, and by all reports his guests enjoyed it very much. Belle Isle's fortunes eroded with the sinking of the America in 1928, compounded by the Depression and shifts in transportation away from lake steamers and towards personal autos, supplemented by railroads. Little remains of the once busy, rustically elegant, and popular Belle Isle Resort. None of the original buildings survive, with the exception of a single wood frame cottage. [Source: "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context"]

Old stairs, most likely from lodge.



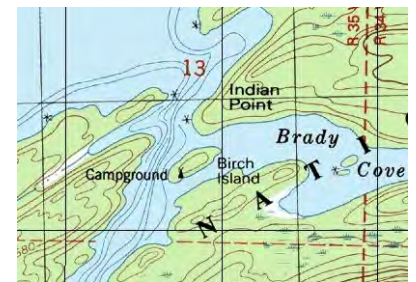
Cottage from Belle Isle resort. Now listed as a "Patrol Cabin"



Birch Island

Located at the entrance to McCargoe Cove. It is a relatively small island and the current location of Birch Island Campground. It was once the location of a fish camp run by John Linklater and his wife.

History: A photo album in the Isle Royale archives in Houghton, Michigan, with annotations by Weston Farmer, Pete Edisen, and Roy Oberg dated September 20, 1975, offers a brief and poignant history of the buildings and the people on Birch Island. A black and white image of a three-building grouping framed by birch or aspen trees shows a one-room, one-story log cabin with a smaller storage-type building to the left and what appears to be a privy in back of the cabin. There is a handmade table and bench in the foreground, which was overgrown by weeds and looking unused at the time the image was taken in the late 1930s. The caption reads: "Monuments to hope, hard labor, and thrift. Old peeled-log cabin on Birch Island, McCargo Cove. Occupied by Capt. Francis, then by John Linklitter & wife Chicawis. Their son married owner Hanson's daugh[ter]". A second picture depicts a one-room, gable-front, log cabin with a covered, full width porch. A smaller storage-type addition appears to be attached behind, and a well-worn path traces a gentle curve through the overgrown yard to the front door. The caption mourns its fate: "A popular and substantial shelter on Birch Island, taken about the time NPS took over. Left



Pair of shoes near the shelter in Spring, 2012.



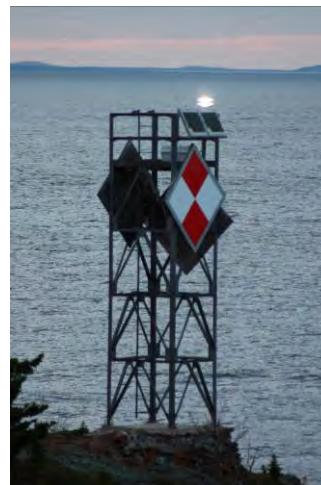
to dereliction by the first 'planners,' a modest investment could have restored the treasure". [Source: "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context"]

History: Captain Robert Francis, a fisherman who used pond nets in McCargoe Cove, built a log cabin here in the early 1900's. John Linklater and his wife Tchi-ki-wis lived here in the 1920's and early 1930's. [Source: "Place Names of Isle Royale"]

History: In the middle of the 1970s, the Park Service burned the Linklater's cabins in an effort to create wilderness. Timothy Cochrane observes that "the last material remnant of an Ojibwe home on Minong was gone." [Source: "Minong the Good Place"]

Blake Point

Located at north-east most end of the main island, it is marked by a light and a sign as pictured. Since it is where two sides of the island meet, it is notorious for strong currents that can change quickly. It is extremely rocky and would be very difficult to climb if needed. I have walked out to it from Merritt Lane campground along the shore and it is not easy, but possible. In the springtime, it may not be possible as there are many gorges that may have running water in them.



Booth Island

Located on the east side of the main island, Booth Island is at the entry to Washington Harbor, a cluster of islands. It is only about 900' by 350' in size, but played a very important role in the fishing industry on the island. It was the hub of most of the fish leaving the east end of the island and the Booth Companies had contracts with most of the fisherman in the area. The company would give credit to the fisherman at the start of the season and carry an account with them all year. Similar to the mining industry, little money if any, was actually exchanged as the amount owed to the company usually equaled the amount given for the fish.

In recent years, due to the lower lake levels, it is basically attached to Grace Island and it is easy to walk between them.

History: A. Booth and Company built a warehouse on the island in the 1890s. H. Christiansen Sons bought the Booth properties on Isle Royale following the sinking of the America in 1928, and continued on Booth Island until the 1940s. In 2007, only scattered surface debris and the submerged cribs of the dock remained at Booth Island to mark the important role that it played in Isle Royale's commercial fishery for decades. The hill side was more barren and free of trees than in a 1932 photo, likely the result of burning by the National Park Service, and Timothy grass grew as a reminder of the hay that once must have been shipped in to feed work stock or milk cows. The fishery on Booth Island was atypical in the Isle Royale experience in terms of its size and scale of operations. [Source: "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context"]

History: "Unfortunately, for many years, this was the only company that bought fish from the fishermen all along the north shore and on Isle Royale. I expect it is unnecessary to add that there were no wealthy fishermen. Each fisherman's supplies and freight were delivered on account at the beginning of the season. As the fisherman sold fish to the company through the season, his credit was merely deducted from his account. Rarely did the fisherman or his family see cash. He was considered fortunate if his catches for the season covered the account of supplies laid in for the summer." Ingeborg Holte [Source: "Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783-1933"]



[Google Earth™ View](#)