

# CULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MASON COUNTY  
TASK FORCE

**The Mason County Cultural Trails**, developed by the Mason County Cultural Economic Development Task Force, provide an interactive experience for residents and visitors to celebrate the county's heritage, culture, and environment in multiple ways. Utilizing technology, each trail stop allows visitors to scan a QR Code with a smartphone or dial a phone number to hear stories narrated by historical characters.

For interactive maps and information about all of Mason County's Cultural Trails, visit:

[MasonCountyCulture.com/trails/](http://MasonCountyCulture.com/trails/)

## LUDINGTON MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

**The Ludington Loop of the Mason County Maritime Heritage Trail** was spearheaded by the Mason County Historical Society as the first area trail that incorporates illustrative panels at each of the 13 stops. The Mason County Historical Society wishes to thank the following trail sponsors:

John and Judy Thorp  
James and Sally Gunberg  
Rotary Club of Ludington  
Lake Michigan Carferry Service  
The Lunde Family



**The Mason County Historical Society** is a private, nonprofit educational organization that collects, preserves, and presents historically important artifacts, archives, and buildings in ways that promote and sustain an interest in history and preservation. The society operates two museums:



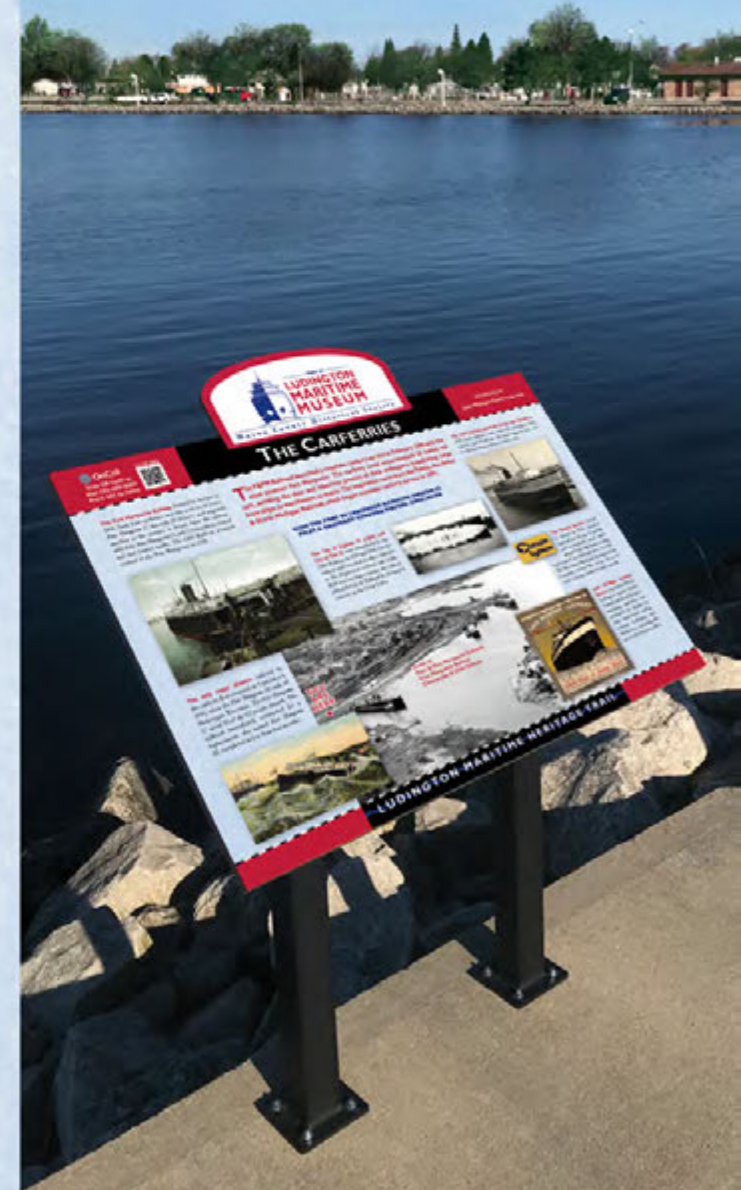
**The Port of Ludington Maritime Museum** brings history to life with digital storytelling, historic images, authentic artifacts, and interactive exhibits that entertain, enlighten, and inspire a deeper appreciation for the region's maritime history. Located in the former Coast Guard Station, now on the National Register of Historic Places, this family-friendly museum overlooks the Lake Michigan shore.



**Historic White Pine Village** offers a living-history, family-friendly, fun-filled tour of a late 19th to early 20th century pioneer village with 30 historic buildings and an authentic turn-of-the-century steam locomotive. Visitors come face-to-face with early settlers: first-person interpreters who interact and improvise with visitors in the persona of historical characters.

## MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

ENJOY THE BEAUTY OF  
LUDINGTON'S LAKEFRONT  
WHILE EXPLORING THE  
**RICH MARITIME HERITAGE**  
OF THE COMMUNITY



# LUDINGTON MARITIME HERITAGE TRAIL

**500** The **Salt Industry** began here when sawmill owners discovered massive underground brine wells. Ludington soon became one of America's top salt-producing cities.

**501** The **Carferries** were initiated in 1896 at Ludington by the F&PM Railroad. Today Lake Michigan Carferry Service carries on that tradition with the *Badger*.

**502** The **Commercial Port**, built for the lumber industry, later served the salt, sand, and chemical industries and established Ludington as a major Great Lakes port.

**503** The **Lumbering Era** flourished here with nine sawmills using the river to move cut trees from vast inland pine forests and Lake Michigan to ship out their milled lumber.

**504** **Commercial Fishing** began here in the late 19th century, and the area later became one of Lake Michigan's most popular sport fishing destinations.

**505** The **Shipbuilding Industry** began here with the first schooner built in 1869. Local shipbuilders produced over 50 commercial vessels and dozens of pleasure boats.

**506** **Ghost Towns** were all that remained on the Buttersville Peninsula after the pine forests were depleted and lumber industry workers and fishermen relocated.

**507** The **Station Fleet**, consisting of eight different life-saving vessels, including the beloved 44-foot motor lifeboat, operated for 70 years at the 1934 Coast Guard Station.

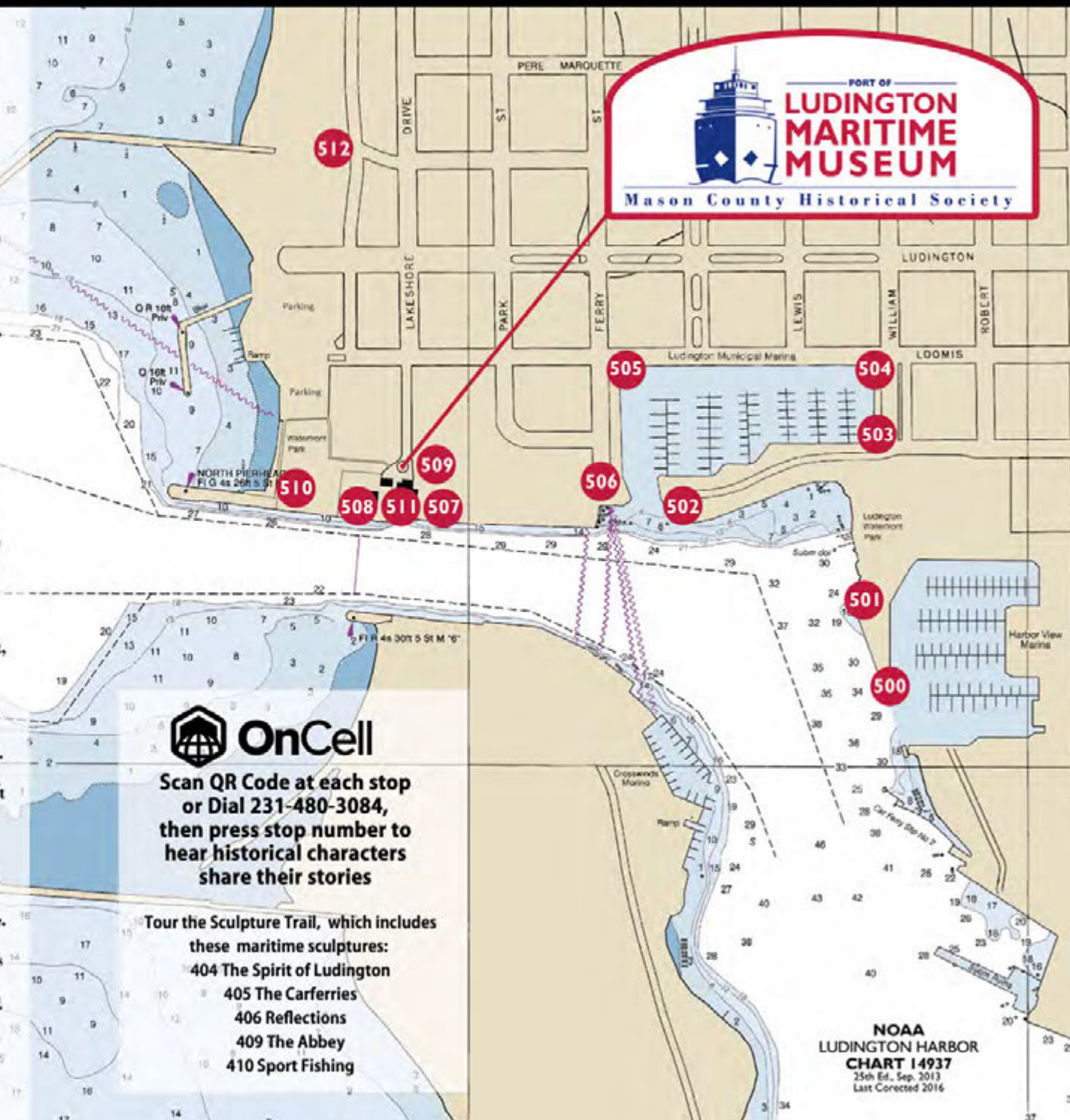
**508** The **Station Boat Launch** originally allowed rescue vessels to be winched into the boathouse for protection. As boats became larger, the ramp was replaced with a slip.

**509** The **1934 Coast Guard Station**, built during the Great Depression, was critical to serve and protect the year-round carferry operation at Ludington.

**510** **Developing the Harbor** began in 1860 to give vessels access into Pere Marquette Lake for efficient shipment of lumber. By 1914 improvements made it a harbor of refuge.

**511** The **Life-Saving Station**, built in 1879 on the channel's south side, was later relocated to the north side, then transferred to the Coast Guard in 1915 and used until 1934.

**512** The **North Breakwater Light**, built in 1924 as one of America's most distinct lighthouses, continues to stand sentinel over the busy commercial and recreational port.



Scan QR Code at each stop or Dial 231-480-3084, then press stop number to hear historical characters share their stories

- Tour the Sculpture Trail, which includes these maritime sculptures:
- 404 The Spirit of Ludington
  - 405 The Carferries
  - 406 Reflections
  - 409 The Abbey
  - 410 Sport Fishing

NOAA  
LUDINGTON HARBOR  
CHART 14937  
25th Ed., Sep. 2013  
Last Corrected 2016