



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **MANISTEE COUNTY OFFERS VIRTUAL TOURS OF MORE THAN 100 HISTORIC SITES PLUS OTHER THEMED VIRTUAL TOURS**

*More than 20 Videos Highlight Manistee, Michigan's Most Prominent Sites in Eight Themed Virtual Tours Narrated by Manistee Native and Hollywood Actor Toni Trucks*

MANISTEE, Mich. – March 31, 2020 – From the [theater where James Earl Jones got his acting start](#), to the [world's oldest continuously manned operating fire station](#), to the [largest wooden suspension bridge in the Lower Peninsula](#), you can visit them all virtually from the safety of your living room along with 100 other sites on the [Manistee Historic Sites Tours](#).

In this new era of social distancing, Manistee County on the shores of Lake Michigan is giving armchair travelers a virtual tour of 100 historic sites through eight themed tours. The [Manistee Historic Sites Tours](#) also serve as a local history lesson about one of Michigan's oldest cities, Manistee, that celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2019 and was once a lumber boomtown with the most millionaires per capita in the United States.

The Manistee Historic Sites Tours feature historic and current-day photos, written narrative, plus 25 videos showcasing the interior and exterior of Manistee's most prominent historic sites. Manistee native and Hollywood television/film actor Toni Trucks, starring in the CBS drama "Seal Team," provided voice-over for the videos. Two other self-guided virtual tours ([Natural Wonders](#) and [Bridges & Dams](#)) provide additional online travel and learning opportunities.

"During this unprecedented time when people can't travel to Manistee County for an in-person visit, you can experience our region's broad and deep history virtually – from our origins as a lumber and salt-mining town; to our industrial wave with boat building, sand mining, garment making and chemical production; to our tourism heritage when Chicago residents vacationed at area resorts still in operation," said Kathryn Kenny, executive director of the Manistee County Visitors Bureau. "We invite everyone to armchair travel to our historically rich county, and hopefully visit these beautiful places in person someday soon."

#### **Eight Themed Tours Tell Manistee's History**

Developed by the [Manistee County Visitors Bureau](#) with close collaboration from the [Manistee County Historical Museum](#), the [Manistee Historic Sites Tours](#) is the county's most comprehensive tourism project in its history, indexing more than 100 sites across the county with historic significance and organized into eight themed tours – from churches and homes, to museums and industrial sites. Fifteen of the sites are on the National Register of Historic Places (including more than 50 in Downtown Manistee) and 20 are on the list of Michigan State Historic Sites.

While the tour initially served as a driving route, the information can be accessed online by clicking on each "pin" on the respective maps of each tour. Most tours also feature downloadable PDFs with information, including QR Codes that can be scanned with a smart phone to access a video if available. Or visit YouTube for the comprehensive [list of Manistee Historic Sites Tour videos here](#).

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Following are the eight Historic Sites Tours:

- [Churches](#) – 12 historic churches and one historic cemetery in Manistee County
- [Downtown /Commercial District](#) – 27 historic buildings and two bridges in Manistee’s central business district, including the [Ramsdell Theatre](#), [Manistee Iron Works](#), and [Manistee Fire Hall](#) recently named the “[Oldest Continuously Manned Operating Fire Station](#)” by Guinness World Records
- [Destination Sites](#) – Seven historic sites featuring bridges, lighthouses and dams
- [East Homes](#) – 15 historic homes in the east historic district of downtown Manistee
- [West Homes](#) – 21 historic homes and one in Manistee’s west residential district
- [Industrial Sites](#) – Overview of the area’s industrial history – from sand and salt, to sawmills and boats
- [Museums](#) – Eight museums, from the [Manistee County Historical Museum](#) to the [Kaleva Bottle House Museum](#)
- [Riverwalk Sites](#) – 25 historic markers highlight the history of the region and the importance the Manistee River played in the foundation of the community

### **Other Self-Guided Virtual Tours**

In addition to the Historic Sites Tours, the Manistee County Visitors Bureau has assembled a few other self-guided themed tours that also feature video:

- [Natural Wonders](#) – Nine natural wonders plus man-made creations put in place to enjoy the beauty of Manistee’s natural landscape – from the [artesian wells in Onekama](#), to the picturesque views atop [Old Baldy](#)
- [Bridges and Dams](#) – Seven historic bridges – including three vehicular, three railroad and one massive pedestrian bridge – plus two hydroelectric dams and one egg-take/salmon harvest weir

“Manistee may be the first county in Michigan to showcase its historic assets to this level of depth and detail,” said Mark Fedder, executive director of the Manistee County Historical Museum. “It’s important to document these structures not just from a tourism angle, but from an historic preservation angle as well. When you virtually tour these residences, churches, buildings and bridges, you discover their beauty and craftsmanship and learn how Manistee residents used to live and work.”

### ***About the Manistee County Visitors Bureau***

Incorporated in 1997, the Manistee County Visitors Bureau is the official travel and tourism organization to promote Manistee County as a travel destination and build the local tourism economy through overnight visits. The visitors bureau is a partner in the Pure Michigan campaign and member of the West Michigan Tourist Association, Circle Michigan, Michigan Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Michigan Lodging & Tourism Association and the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call 877-626-4783 or visit [facebook.com/ManisteePureMichigan](https://facebook.com/ManisteePureMichigan), [@ManisteePureMI](https://twitter.com/ManisteePureMI) on Twitter, [@manisteepuremichigan](https://instagram.com/manisteepuremichigan) on Instagram, and [visitmanisteecounty.com](https://visitmanisteecounty.com).

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