



PRESS RELEASE

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ORIGINS WALK DEDICATED AS CENTERPIECE FOR HISTORIC SITES PROJECT

Sculpture Walk and Accompanying Guidebook Highlight the People who Shaped Manistee History

MANISTEE, Mich. – Oct. 13, 2022 – Origins, a historical and educational sculptural walking experience that tells the story of Manistee from its roots with the Anishnaabek people of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, to the arrival of European settlers, through its industrial growth and modern era, was dedicated Thursday. The piece, at the west end of the Riverwalk near First Street Beach, is the centerpiece of a comprehensive historical tourism project that began back in 2014.

Spearheaded by the [Manistee County Visitors Bureau](#) in close collaboration with the [Manistee County Historical Museum](#) and the [Little River Band of Ottawa Indians](#) Historic Preservation Department, the Origins Walk and accompanying 148-page guidebook is the final piece of the Manistee Historic Sites project, the most comprehensive tourism venture in Manistee County's history.

In all, Origins includes a sculptural display of 20 statuesque silhouettes of the most influential people who made Manistee and five sculptural elements and corresponding colonnade with information plaques that tell the community's story about water, life, settlement, industry and sustainability. About 8,000 pounds of steel was used to create this engaging sculptural walk at the west end of the Manistee Riverwalk, at First Street Beach.

"Origins is a wonderful example of placemaking, destination marketing and cultural tourism," said Sammie Lukaskiewicz, executive director of the Manistee County Visitors Bureau. "This represents a lot of collaboration and teamwork by an incredible amount of people over a number of years. We are making and displaying history with Origins, and we hope it will serve not only as a focal point for visitors, but serve as a sense of pride, enlightenment and community for all of Manistee to enjoy and learn from."

The site and interpretive experience was conceived and designed by the creative teams at Rightside Design Group in Manistee and Engine Creative in Ludington. The silhouettes and sculptural elements, which is made up of three-eighths thick core-ten steel manufactured and laser cut by Alro Steel in Grand Rapids and welded by Epic Manufacturing in Ludington, will naturally patina over time for at least 150 years. The shadows cast by the sun on the steel silhouettes and the arcs and placement of the dune grass and stones among the trees in the natural setting of the beach near the Riverwalk is part of the sculpture walk itself. Each piece is meant to provide an inclusive history, from the early geological formation of the area to what is seen today and follows the natural pathways, sidewalks and trees of the existing Douglas Park of First Street.

Plaques on each of the silhouettes highlight that person's life and the historical and cultural impact they had on Manistee. Some of the influential people depicted in the walk will include tribal water protectors, tribal traders and tribal elders; as well as community and civic members, entrepreneurs and business leaders such as T.J. Ramsdell, Louis Sands, Fannie Fowler and Nels Johnson, along with the Stronach, Filer and Canfield families.

"As our region continues to grow and evolve, Origins and the Historic Sites Series is here as a reminder of our past, designed to be a place where we can reflect on what has come before us. It is a strong statement that shows we value and own our history," said Brandon Jensen, owner of Rightside Design Group, who managed the

visionary for the project. “We hope the dedication of this site is not just the end of a project, but a centerpiece in our community in an ongoing effort to continue collaboration, to share ideas and to tell our community story.”

Supported by grants from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and matching funds and in-kind donations from the visitors bureau and other local and creative businesses, Origins includes route signage with information on the foundational beginnings of the area, as well as a comprehensive 148-page, interactive guidebook that showcases Manistee’s history with more than 150 historic sites along eight themed tours. Stories about the founders and influential people of Origins, as well as others, are featured in the book. Future plans are being developed to include audio narration of many of the sites included in the guide, which will all be made available through our website at: VisitManisteeCounty.com.

Residents may pick up a copy of the book at the Manistee County Visitors Bureau at 310 First St. and the Manistee County Historical Museum at 425 River St. Due to demand for the book, books are limited to one per household.

The Manistee County Visitors Bureau officially began the Manistee Historic Sites Tours project in 2014 after receiving a grant from USDA Rural Development. The bureau partnered with the Manistee County Historical Museum, who identified more than 100 sites across the county with historic significance for the tours and organized them into [eight themed tours](#) (all located at visitmanisteecounty.com), with fifteen sites on the National Register of Historic Places, including more than 50 sites in one designation – Downtown Manistee. Twenty of those are on the list of Michigan State Historic Sites. The 25 most prominent sites feature an accompanying video voiced-over by Manistee-born actress Toni Trucks, with other sites visually represented through photos.

About the Manistee County Visitors Bureau

Incorporated in 1997, the [Manistee County Visitors Bureau](#) (also known as Visit Manistee County) is the official destination marketing organization promoting Manistee County to grow the local travel economy. The visitors bureau is a member of the West Michigan Tourist Association, Michigan Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association, Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan and the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce. Learn more at VisitManisteeCounty.com, [facebook.com/ ManisteePureMichigan](https://facebook.com/ManisteePureMichigan), [instagram.com/ manisteepuremichigan](https://instagram.com/manisteepuremichigan) and twitter.com/manisteePureMI.