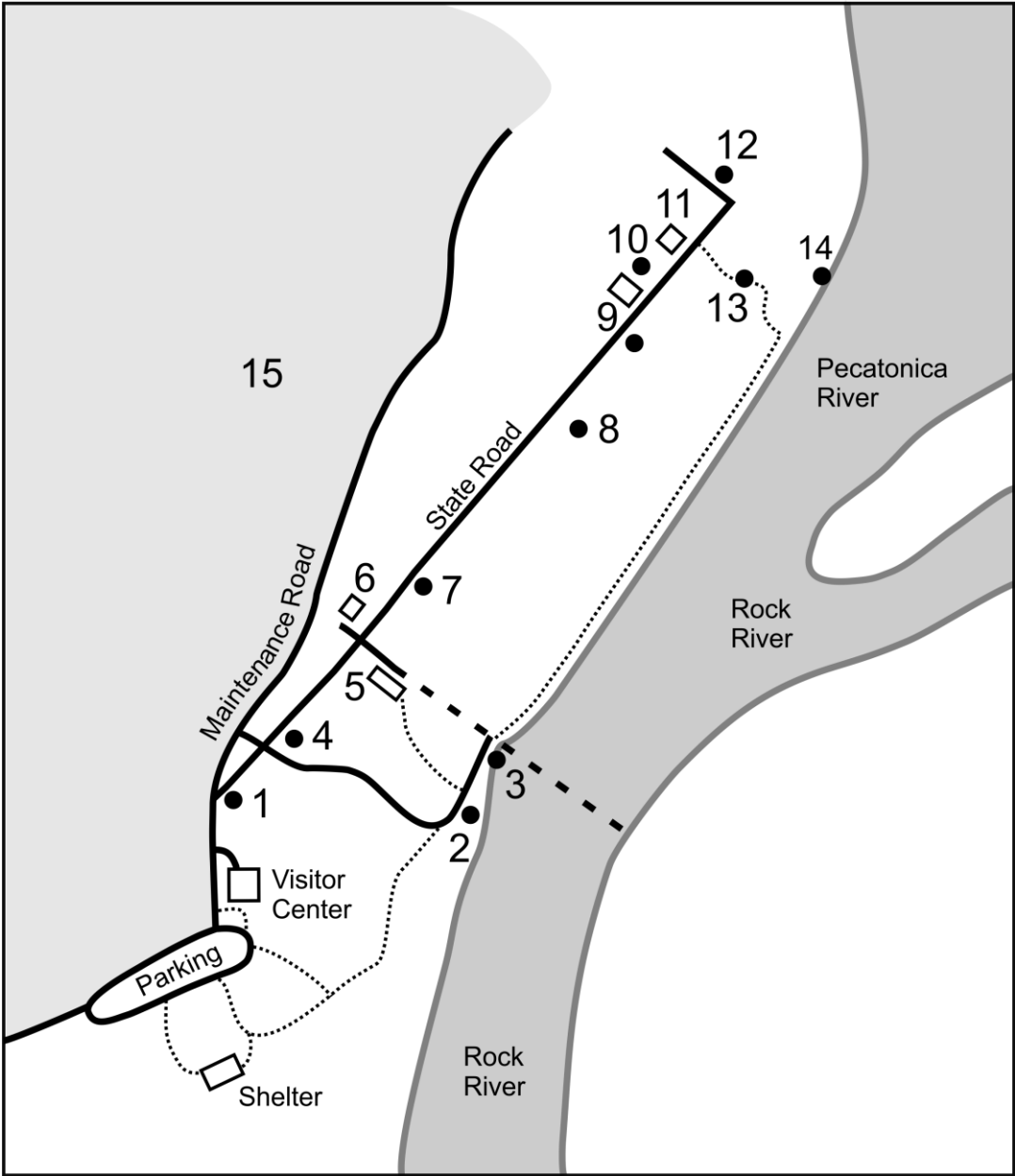


Macktown Living History Walking Tour Guide

Welcome to the 13 acre Macktown Historic District, part of the settlement known in the mid 1800s as Pecatonic, the first pioneer settlement in Winnebago County. The gravel road running through the settlement was once a bustling thoroughfare known as State Road. This guide will direct you to natural, prehistoric and historic points of interest.



1 Native Gardens

To your right is a Native American Woodlands **Medicine Wheel Garden** with the four color flags representing the four directions of the earth. Plants in each section correspond to the colors. Many plants have healing qualities.

To the right of the Native American Medicine Garden is a **Three Sisters Garden**. Its name comes from the three staple crops, all Native American in origin, that are planted together. The first crop, corn, is planted in a mound. A few days later beans are planted and will grow using the corn for support. The third crop is squash, which will vine along the ground.

2 Stone Quarry

Just past the Native American area you will see a road leading toward the river and an old **stone quarry**. The layers of dolostone in this small local quarry may have provided the stone for the Whitman store and residence. Dolostone and limestone were formed in the shallow sea which covered a large portion of northern Illinois during the Paleozoic period millions of years ago. Numerous fossils of plants and animals are present in the stone. Several quarries started up in this area in the early 1800s, many, like this one, small and for local use. Production of building stone in the 1800s depended on hand labor and the quarrymen's skill and experience. Today this old quarry is the site for black powder shooting demonstrations during Macktown historic reenactments.

3 Ferry and Bridge Crossing

Jesse Blinn plied a ferry across the Rock River providing a north/south access to early travelers and settlers. In 1842 Stephen Mack built a bridge across the river. The bridge was washed out by a flood in 1851. No trace of the bridge has yet been found.

4 Native Village

Back along the state road is a representation of part of a Woodland culture native village prevalent in this region just before pioneer settlement. Area tribes, such as the Ho-Chunk and Potawatomi, lived in wigwams. Please look inside and visualize how life was with a whole family living and sleeping in that small area. Outside the wigwams you will find fire pits, a summer kitchen, drying racks and stretched hides being processed. These items give you a sense of the daily life of Native Americans who lived in this area.

5 Whitman Store and Residence

The State Road leads to a limestone building that served as the Whitman family house and the Whitman store (aka the **Trading Post**). The house and store were built around 1846 as two gable end structures later connected by a one-story segment. The fact that the end closest to the river is not set on bedrock, like the one nearest the road, has caused the building to lean severely over the years. Each large iron "S" connects to a rod which helps stabilize the building. The building was used as a store and dwelling until 1851 or 1852.

The store sits at the intersection of two principal roads through the village. One led to a bridge across the "Rocky River" built in 1843 by Stephen Mack, using his own funds. The bridge replaced a ferry run by Jesse Blinn. There is a sign by the river telling modern-day visitors what it cost to take **Blinn's Ferry** across the river. Stephen Mack, anticipating much steamboat traffic, built his bridge with a draw of 37 1/2 feet. Unfortunately, only two steamboats ever came up the river and neither stopped at Pecatonic. After Mack's death in 1850 the bridge was washed out in a flood.

6 Barn

This horse barn is not original to Pecatonic. It was built in 2015 to conceal Macktown's modern electrical box and water pump. It is also used for special events and storage. The Aaron Shores house once stood in this area. It was destroyed by fire in 1851.

7 William Shores House

William Shores, his wife, his son Aaron and his family moved to Pecatonic from the New York by way of Pennsylvania, Indiana and southern Illinois in the early 1840s. William's house was across from the Whitman store and the road leading from the river to the State Road. William was a blacksmith and a possible foundation for his workshop was found to the rear of his property. A large cistern was found closer to the State Road, but the house foundation has not yet been found, possibly because of roadwork for old forest preserve roads. In 1852 William sold his property to Sylvester Stevens who had married Aaron Shores daughter Louisa. The couple lived there for a few years before moving to Rockford.

8 Bates House

Returning to the State Road you will notice oak trees planted to help restore the original oak savanna. The abundance of oak trees that greeted the settlers helped them build and heat their homes. This and the availability of fresh water and river travel, enticed new settlers. At one time, Pecatonic boasted 200-300 residents. One of those residents was **Henry Bates**. On your right is a sign showing where his home and shop stood. Although no evidence remains above ground, archaeological digs have revealed the stone foundation and cellar. Bates was a cobbler by trade. A letter it mentions that "...*he had a nice framed house and shop and made boots and shoes. There were steps cut in the bank to get down to a spring...*" The Bate family came from Pennsylvania in 1840, and lived in Pecatonic until 1851. Son, Erastus, fished with Mack's Native American wife, Ho- no-ne-gah. She would sit in the canoe's bow with a fish spear while he paddled from the stern. Henry Bates' descendants still live in the vicinity.

9 Mack House and Cemetery

Born in Vermont, Stephen Mack worked with his fur trader father as a young man in Michigan, and then in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin for the American Fur Company. When told by French Voyageurs that the Rock River Valley was rich in furs, he came first to the LaSallier fur trading post at Dixon, IL where he met and married the young Ho-no-ne-gah; he then established a post in what is now the Hononegah Forest Preserve before he built the Pecatonic house in which he and his wife would raise nine children. The timber-framed Greek Revival house was painted when new, a luxury at the time, and also had a full basement. A cistern in the basement made stored rainwater available by hand pump. The two additions currently at the back of the house are not original. Outbuildings existed when the Macks lived here, including a privy and a threshing barn built between 1844-1847.

Across the road from the Mack house is the quiet little fenced cemetery where Mack, Ho-no-ne-gah, and their son Henry are buried. This is not their original resting place. At the time of their deaths, they were buried near the present-day Macktown Golf Clubhouse. After Pecatonic declined, the area was farmed, and the farmer made it known that the bodies would have to be moved or he would plow over the graves. Friends of the Macks had the bodies disinterred and moved to the Philips Cemetery about 5 miles to the southwest.

The headstones you see were paid for by these same friends. Years later, after the property was purchased by the Winnebago Forest Preserve District, people decided that the family should be back where they had lived. So, for a second time, the bodies were disinterred and moved. Oddly enough, Stephen Mack's father (who helped found Pontiac, MI, and is buried there) was also disinterred and moved. What are the odds of that happening to both father and son!

10 Heritage Garden

The **Heritage Garden**, next to the Mack House, features vegetables, herbs, and flowers grown from heritage seeds common to the mid 1800s. The garden is tended by volunteers and the produce is used in Macktown programs. Thomas Jefferson's favorite apple tree, *Albamarle Pippin*, was planted in 2008 is next to the garden. A Johnny Appleseed Tree is planted on the other side of the Mack house.

11 Sylvester Stevens Building

Past the garden is the Sylvester Stevens' Residence and Woodworking Shop. The timber-framed structure was built and owned by Stephen Mack who used the upper level to store grain and as a **schoolroom**. This school was the first in the area, and open to settler and Native American children alike. Mack paid for the first teacher from his own pocket. After Pecatonic's decline, this building was moved across the river to Rockton, where it stood for 150 years. It was donated to Macktown Living History in 2007. Volunteers disassembled the building and numbered the timbers. Some of these timbers are exposed for view inside this reconstruction built in 2015. An original beam signed by Stephen Mack is on display in the Visitor Center. Past the Stevens' residence, just before the gravel road makes a left turn, stood the general store built by Stephen Mack and operated by him and his cousin Merrill Mack.

12 Hayes Tavern

The **Hayes Tavern** stood across the road from the Mack store. This double timber-frame cabin was also built by Stephen Mack, but the first residents were Eli and Sophronia Hayes. The cabin was not a tavern in the modern sense of the word, but was

called that because of the Hayes' willingness to house and feed travelers. After the Hayeses, the Blinn family lived there as did William Whitman before he built his stone house and store.

13 **Prehistoric Camps**

The terraces above the Rock River were used intermittently by Native Americans from the Middle Archaic through the Late Woodland periods. Excavations conducted by university and college field schools have uncovered complex, overlapping living floors and pits containing food remains, pottery and stone tools used in daily life.

14 **Shell Midden**

On the riverbank in front of the Mack Home is a prehistoric shell **midden** (a heap of freshwater mussels and other shells). It is near the confluence of the Rock and Pecatonica rivers. The midden is silent evidence of thousands of years of Native American presence...days spent digging the mussels (clams), opening them and discarding the shells. It is one of the largest existing shell middens in the Midwest.

15 **Golf Course**

The golf course south of the 13-acre Historic District was part of Mack's plan for his settlement. Some houses, barns, a school house, the original cemetery and possibly other structures were located there. Remains of these structures may still exist underground.

We hope that you have enjoyed your walk back in time and we invite you to the Center to see the many historic and prehistoric artifacts and architecture. Check out our website www.macktownlivinghistory.com, follow Macktown on Facebook, or call 815-624-4200 for more information on tours, classes and events.