

Courtesy of Midwest Living *October 1995

Excerpt from:

Dining Out

HACK-MA-TACK INN

Cheboygan, Michigan

Boaters plying Michigan's 30-mile-long Inland Waterway know to dock beside the historic Hack-Ma-Tack Inn on the banks of the Cheboygan River, just east of the tip of the Lower Peninsula. Landlubbers, on the other hand, twist and turn through shady forests near Mullett Lake on a 4-mile drive south from Cheboygan before reaching this century-old hunting and fishing lodge.

Beginning in 1894, avid sportsmen bunked at the log lodge, built from and named for sturdy tamarack (also called hack-ma-tack) pine.

"Vacationers liked to escape the heat here, too, in those sweltering days before air conditioning," says Mike Redding, who owns this secluded north-woods eatery with his wife, Sue.

The couple still rents a few rooms upstairs, but the main attraction is the downstairs fare. Flaky baked whitefish from Lake Huron, only 8 miles north, usually stars as the catch of the day. Mike and Sue serve it simply, with dill sauce and a tangy lemon wedge. Additional fresh favorites: lake perch, salmon and walleye.

Prime rib and other beef entrees also claim a loyal following. And every day, you can choose a different delectable dessert such as pecan ice cream pie.

Big picture windows along the dining room's log walls face a colorful parade of boats. Canoes and tow 45-foot rowing sculls dangle from the ceiling. They join other mementoes such as fishing lures and brightly painted decoys, which recall the lodge's earlier years.

In 1980, Mike and Sue moved from Detroit to buy their restaurant. It stays open through the fall-foliage season, then closes for winter around October 31. In spring, says Sue, "We open up again when the parking lot thaws out."