

## ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

### INTERNATIONAL CONTEST OF SEAMANSHIP

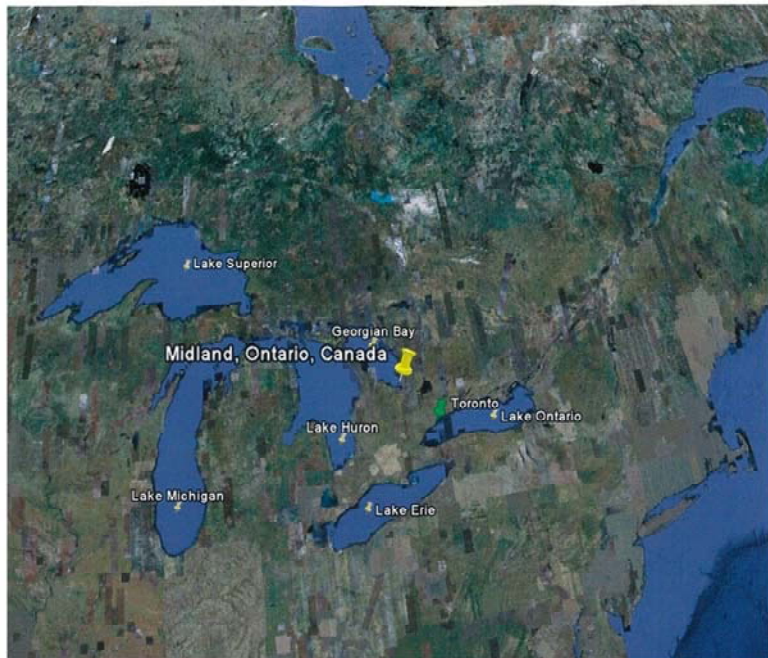


**Midland, Ontario  
Canada**

During the summer of 2010, Atlantic Challenge Canada will host The International Contest of Seamanship in Midland, Ontario, Canada. The event will run from July 24th to July 31st and crews from member countries will be housed locally during the contest at the North Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre and have an opportunity to experience the community and surrounding area during their stay.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, an event volunteer information night was held with great support from the community which was demonstrated by the 40+ people that attended.

The International Contest of Seamanship will be held on Lake Huron. Lake Huron is the second largest of five Great Lakes located on the border between the Canada and the U.S. Georgian Bay is a large portion of Lake Huron divided by the Niagara Escarpment from the main portion of the Lake. Midland Bay which is approximately 3.0km by 8.0km in size is located at the south end of Georgian Bay. The bay has a protected inner harbour where the gigs will be docked and spectator events held.



## Midland, Ontario, Canada – A Brief History

Located along the shores of Georgian Bay and surrounded by wooded hillsides, this was the ancestral homeland of the Wendat nation, a branch of the native Iroquoian family. The Wendat were a matriarchal society of good traders and skilful farmers who called their land Wendake which means “the land apart”.

French Jesuit Priests came to Wendake in the 17th century. As part of an international order from the Society of Jesus the Jesuits operated like an army dedicated to spreading Catholicism throughout the world. They believed, with their founder Ignatius Loyola, that the first step in saving one's neighbour was to educate him.

Encouraged by Samuel de Champlain, who saw conversion to Christianity as a first step in the colonisation of the North American native people, the Jesuits established themselves in Wendake. Over time the Jesuits endeavoured to perfect their knowledge of the Wendat language, and customs, eventually establishing a wilderness mission rose

on the banks of the Wye River in 1639. This mission was constructed by courageous laymen from France. The mission was named Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. “Hurons” is the French name for the Wendat people.



Hard work and dedication soon brought Sainte-Marie to virtual self-sufficiency, a miraculous achievement for a community 1,200 kilometres from Quebec. Sadly it only lasted ten short years. In the spring of 1649 under growing pressure and attacks from the Iroquois, Jesuit missionaries, their helpers and Wendat followers withdrew from Sainte-Marie and put it to the torch. They fled to nearby Christian Island where together they embarked to establish a new mission.



After a terrible winter of starvation and constant attack, the Frenchmen and the surviving Christian Wendat returned to Quebec. The Huron were settled on l'île d'Orléans, where a subsequent Iroquois attack devastated the community. The surviving Wendat eventually gathered at Jeune Lorette in 1697, and began to rebuild their Huron culture and their nation.

At Sainte-Marie, the remains of martyred Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant were first buried in an unmarked grave that has since become a sacred place of Christian pilgrimage.

The ruins of Sainte-Marie lay undisturbed for almost three centuries. Subsequent archaeological excavations and historical research provided data to support the reconstruction of many of the original mission buildings and Sainte-Marie rose again. The site can be visited for further cultural learning.



Settlement in the area in the 1830's and 1840's by farming families was known as Mundy's Bay and Hartley's Landing, Thomas Gladstone built a store during the spring and summer of 1871 and named the place Abedar. Later that same year, H. Cook began construction of a large lumber mill along the shore of Mundy's Bay complete with docks, boarding houses and a skilled work crew of 200 men. It was the largest and most modern mill for its time in Canada.

In November of 1871, officials from the Midland Railway Corporation selected this bay as the site for the western terminus of their railway. Aldolphe Hugel and George Cox hoped they would prosper operating such a line between Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay.

In 1872 a 400 acre village site was completed with large lots, wide roads and optimistic plans for the future. They named the new community "Midland City". With railway optimism, expanding lumber production, and a quickly growing commercial sector, Midland City's prospects looked very good. In 1875, a grist and lumber mill operation was established and Midland City reached a population of over 1,000 residents. In 1878 Midland City was legally incorporated into a village.

On July 1, 1879, Midland Railway completed construction of their road and the rail line was officially opened for commercial and passenger service. In 1881, the Midland Railway built the first large grain elevator and regular commercial grain shipments by ship and rail began.

Unprecedented commercial and industrial growth centered throughout the 1880's to the point that the "village" status was upgraded to "town" on January 6, 1890. The term "City" was dropped and the new community was simply called Midland.

By 1900, although still largely dependent on Georgian Bay's pine forests, diversification in such industry as iron founding and dredging, vastly improved the areas economic health. Success in the shipping, lumbering and the grain trade provided the capital to undertake even more industrial diversification primarily in the area of ship building and repair. In 1910, the Midland Drydock Co. began construction of a series of tugs and in 1916, this firm was reorganized in the Midland Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., complete with a large shipyard. In 1917, the company obtained a contract to produce three ships for the First World War effort.

Throughout the 1920's, Midland business boomed with continuous shipping contracts, the construction of two more grain elevators with a total capacity of over 8 million bushels, expanded retail and service sectors including hospitals, a library and a YMCA building.

The economic devastation of the Great Depression nearly destroyed the successful regional capital base in the 1930's. The shipyards closed in 1931 and worse yet, the great quantities of white pine which had sustained most of the Georgian Bay communities including Midland, for over half a century, finally ran out. Lumbering ceased to employ thousands. Some companies moved to Toronto, many simply went out of business and it took the Second World War to revitalize the shipyards and overcome the insolvency of the 1930's depression.

By 1948, Midland had a population of 7,000 people. Grain milling and shipping were the

primary sources of employment. In 1954, due to labour strife, the Midland shipyards were closed down and all equipment moved to nearby Collingwood. This was a major blow to the area but it forced the community to diversify its industrial manufacturing, commercial, and tourism base. By 1972, the population had expanded to 11,000 people. The current population of the Town of Midland is now over 16,000.

On the Town coat of arms is the Latin phrase "Persequi Qualitatem Vitae", which translates to "Pursuit of Quality of Life"

Approximately half the area population is between 20-59 years of age, with approximately 30% under 20 and approximately 20% over 59 making this the ideal place to raise a family and retire. In the summer months, the population of this area swells to over 100,000 due to the 8,000 cottages located on Georgian Bay.