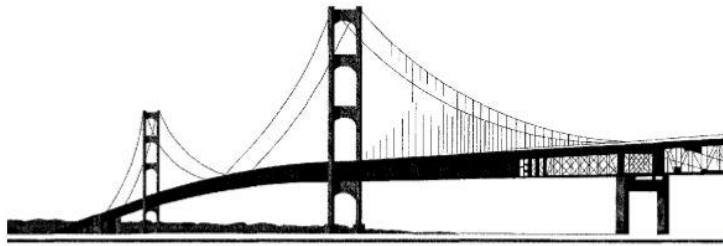




The Piece of Mac

The story of how I got my Piece of the Mackinac Bridge



Michael J. Compton with John Compton

5/29/17 – 5/30/17

One day I was surfing the web, like normal and I came across a story about how the Mackinac Bridge Authority was selling parts of the Mackinac Bridge on a government auction website.



My first challenge was transportation of the bridge pieces if I did win the auction bid. The bridge pieces being sold were 40 feet long and weighed approximately 5,000 pounds. It's not like you can put it in the back of a pickup truck.

I1-Grating at Mackinac Bridge Authority

But, I still threw caution to the wind, and started bidding on my piece of history. The bidding started off real slow, about \$25. I would check my bid about three times each day and always found myself having to increase my bid. Someone was always outbidding me. The bidding just kept getting higher. At one point, when the bidding had reached \$500, I thought, "what the heck are you doing?" For that kind of money, I could go out and buy a piece of bridge grating brand new, without the rust holes or the repairs that had been done on this part of the road decking.

I talked with my family and realized that I only had this one chance of buying a piece of Mac. It was laid in 1957 just two years after I was born, and I would not be around when the replacement grating would be laid again. So, I decided to stay in the bidding war.

Now that I was determined to win My Piece of Mac, that is when the bidding got out of control. \$600! \$700! \$800! I needed to stop looking at the price every day and just wait until the last day of bidding. The only bid that counts is the last one right? This Government auction was kicking my butt on the price. I didn't know who I was bidding against but he was not backing down. When I next

looked at the bidding, the price was now at \$899. I thought, this guy won't go over \$900. I started to question whether I was willing to pay more than \$900 for a rusty piece of the Mackinac Bridge. I answered my own question when I next bid \$925. Then the bid went to \$950. OK so now I know my opponent was willing to go over \$900, for sure, but would he go over \$1000? Would I go over \$1000? Neither of us would give up the fight. The bidding just kept going higher and higher. He wasn't stopping and neither was I.

To make a very long story short, I now own a Piece of the Mackinac Bridge.

So, now that I owned it, how was I going to get this thing home? I really didn't think this through very well, I was busy bidding on the Mackinac Bridge and never did think I would win my Piece of Mac.

After talking it over with family and friends, I decided the best way to get my Piece of Mac home was to rent a car hauling trailer, and strap it down well. I started my quest to find a trailer that I thought would handle the job at hand, but the only place I knew of that rented car trailers was U-Haul. When I looked at the trailer there, it was only 16 feet long. Even if I cut the 40-foot Piece of Mac in half, each piece would still be 20 feet long.

I decided to go shopping for a used trailer. I found a few used trailers for sale that I thought would do the job, but the tires would need to be replaced and I would need to go over it very well and check it out from a structure status. The Piece of Mac would be very hard on a trailer and I needed a good one. I did not want to break down on the way home from up north. I didn't know if buying a used trailer was the best solution.

I found myself in Milan, MI looking at new trailers. They had just what I needed to do the job. So I now own a real nice, brand new, car hauling trailer



I2-My new car hauling trailer May 15th, 2017

Next problem: How was I going to get my Piece of Mac onto the trailer? I called and talked to the Mackinac Bridge Authority and they said they could use the end loader to load it on the trailer but that they would not strap it down. That would be my job. I also asked them if they could cut it in half for me. Fortunately, they said “YES!!” I scheduled a date to pick up my Piece of Mac. I was excited because things were starting to come together.

Who can I get to travel with me up north to pick up my Piece of Mac? Well, I’m lucky enough to have my Dad around and he likes to ride in the car. So, Dad and I left on May 29th, 2017 to pick up my Piece of Mac from the Mackinac Bridge Authority in St. Ignace, Michigan. We booked a hotel room, drove up on Monday and were ready on Tuesday morning, May 30, 2017 to have the Mackinac Bridge Authority load my Piece of Mac onto my new trailer.

I bought some new straps, logging chain, and more straps. I was ready for the drive up North. The day came and Dad and I were on the road. It was a nice day to drive and I was ready to claim my Piece of Mac. We arrived in

St. Ignace Michigan, got into the hotel room and then enjoyed a nice white fish dinner together.

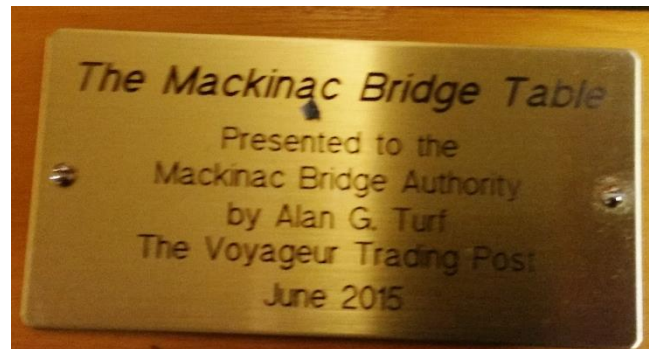
The next morning, it was difficult to get my Dad to leave the hotel. He was fascinated with the free waffles offered for breakfast. Finally, we drove to the Mackinac Bridge Authority located about four miles south of the hotel.

The Mackinac Bridge Authority staff was ready for us. They told us what happened with four other pieces of grating that had been sold on the auction site. Three of the five pieces sold stayed in the St. Ignace area. One piece was picked up a week before I drove up north. The man that bought it was in an accident on his way home. He was in a rollover accident as he was trying to pull his Piece of Mac home. He was 10 miles south of the bridge and lost the load and almost died trying to get it home. At the time I was up north, he was still in the hospital recovering. This may be why the Mackinac Bridge Authority has never had another sale of parts from the bridge.



While I was waiting I had a chance to see a table displayed in the Mackinac Bridge Authority Office. Someone made it from part of the bridge and gave it to the Mackinac Bridge Authority. Above is a picture of the table. Nice I should make one....

Before leaving, the Bridge Authority had me sign some paper work, bill of sale, and hold harmless form due to the possibility that the bridge grating may containing lead based paint.



With all the paper work complete, it was time to pull the truck and trailer into the yard and get my Piece of Mac loaded for the trip home. Below are some pictures of Dad, Mackinac Bridge Authority employees, and myself working on loading the trailer.



Cutting my part in half



Loading part 1 onto the new trailer. The Mackinac Bridge Authority guys did a GREAT Job, Thanks to all of them.



Loading part #2 onto the now used trailer.



Mackinac Bridge Authority employee's and Dad, note the shop rag for a flag on the back of the grading.



This is what the load looked like after it made it across the bridge and we stopped to get a few pictures.



*The bridge in the background with my Piece of Mac on the trailer.
Note the large amount of straps holding it down.*



Burger King stop on the way home. The guy we sat by in the restaurant ask what bridge the grading came off of. When I told him, we started telling the story of how I got it and by the time I got done, we have a small crowd around us.

We could only go about 60mph on the way home. That was the fastest I could go and feel safe with my Piece of Mac load. Our trip home was trouble free. We were home safe by 6:00 p.m. We parked my Piece of Mac in the driveway and called it a job well done. Thanks Dad for traveling with me and for all your help on my adventure.

Thanks for reading,

Michael J. Compton

What to do with it, now that I have it...

Now that I have my Piece of Mac, what to do with it. Well the first part was to have a little fun with it. When I tell people that I own a piece of the Mackinac Bridge that as me something like what part do you own, or did you buy a piece of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York also! Then when they figure out that I did really buy part of it, they ask, what are you going to do with it? I'm still trying to get my head around that one.

I have gotten a lot of idea on what I can do with it, like: Christmas Ornaments, small state of Michigan cut outs, just cut a chunk of it out and sell it, make a table with it, etc...



I have found cutting the bridge to be very difficult because it's made out of some tuff steel, they must have made good steel grating back in 1957. After I cut it up into smaller parts that I can pick up by hand, I take it to Caro, Michigan and have the cut out done with a CNC Plasma cutter. I then use a Co2 Laser and a dark Mahogany wood to burn the base of the stand.

I also plan on cutting out parts of the grating and sell it raw.

