



MSTR 2021 Michigan One Room Schoolhouse Grand Tour

Better start brushing up on your readin', writin', and 'rithmetic, because this year the MSTR Grand Tour returns with a tour of one room schoolhouses. It is estimated that at one time there were over 7,200 one room schoolhouses in Michigan. Basically, every township had one or more schoolhouses. Today, many no longer exist, having been torn down or burned down. Many still do exist, however, and can still be found (with some searching) still standing in their original locations or having been moved to new locations. Some stand empty today; some are now used as residences, offices, hunting lodges, or studios; some are now used as township halls; some are museums; and some are still involved in education as storage for school districts in which they formerly provided space for educating students or even with children still present as private schools.

I found a website for The Michigan One Room Schoolhouse Association (MORSA) that has members around the state who have researched their local townships and counties to find records of old schoolhouses. Some have provided information about the schools through their memories of their days attending school at one or more of the former schools. MORSA has a directory of over 7,000 of these one room schoolhouses that is searchable by county or by school name. You can visit the website by typing www.miorsa.org in your browser or by clicking on the link. They also have a newsletter called "The Slate" that provides some interesting reading and insights into some of the schoolhouses that still exist today, or used to exist.

Don't worry, you only have to visit 14 schoolhouses that I was able to locate using the information from the MORSA website on Google Earth for our checkpoints. However, as you ride through the countryside, you will likely see many more schoolhouses, as most (6 miles square) townships had several schoolhouses so that the children would be close enough to walk to and from school (usually through 3 feet of snow, up-hill, and undoubtedly BOTH WAYS!).

With that tidbit of information I hope to have triggered your curiosity about one room schoolhouses enough that you, too, will decide to go for a nice ride through Michigan on your motorcycle to see what sights, sounds, smells, and history you can find while searching for these 14 schoolhouses. Who knows, you might even find a few other pieces of Michigan history, culture, culinary, or scenic beauty along the way.

To sign up for the grand tour, simply send your *name, email, and telephone number*, to Keith Danielson at keithmdanielson@gmail.com, or sign up at any one of our meetings in Ionia for the west side, or Novi or Livonia for the east side, and I'll send you the information package to complete the tour. The grand tour is done at your convenience as your schedule permits any time between now and November 21. It provides you with an excuse to go for a ride with a destination and purpose in mind. The checkpoints can be done in any order. Whether you do all 14 with a bunch of extras, or if you only do one, it doesn't really matter. The only thing that really matters is that you get out on your motorcycle and enjoy a nice ride. To qualify for a finisher's award, you need to send your picture proofs to me no later than November 21.

I hope you will find this year's grand tour interesting and educational, even if your readin', writin' and 'rithmetic are a bit rusty.