

ARCH ROCK ON MACKINAC ISLAND

Ottawa

Arch Rock is a natural rock bridge above the eastern shoreline of Mackinac Island in northern Michigan. From certain angles, the arch, which is about 150 feet above the lake, appears to be suspended in the air. This mythical explanation of its origin was recorded in 1850.

Many, many winters ago, the sun descended into an immense hole every evening, as soon as the stars appeared in the sky. This hole was thought to be somewhere off in the distant west.

One time a chief of the Ottawa nation committed a shameful act. It was so shameful that the Master of Life was greatly offended and angered. In punishment, he sent a powerful wind upon the earth. The rocky hills trembled because of the wind, and the waters surrounding the hills roared with a dreadful roar.

For one whole day this turmoil lasted. Even the sun was disturbed. It shot through the heavens with an unsteady motion, and when it reached the center of the sky, it stood still. It seemed to be astonished at the wickedness of the chief.

All the people of the Ottawa nation were greatly alarmed. While they stood gazing at the sun, they saw it gradually change to the color of blood. Then they were horrified to see it fall from the sky. With a terrifying noise, it struck the eastern shore of Mackinac Island.

When the frightened Indians dared to look again, they saw that some rocks had been hollowed out so as to make an arch. It hung high above the waters of the lake. The sun had gone through the opening and on down below the surface of the earth. Next morning it came out of the earth in the east, and then made its usual journey across the heavens.

Many winters have passed since that awful day when the sun stood still and fell from the sky. But even now, not even the bravest Ottawa people will walk over that arched rock. Indeed, they seldom dare to approach the place.