

## ~ The Pioneer City Heritage Trail ~

### PALESTINE ILLINOIS

Palestine is one of the oldest towns in the state of Illinois still in its original location. Located four miles east of Rt. 1 on Rt.33, Palestine has a rich historical background. Palestine is reputed to be the oldest white settlement in Illinois. A French trading post was located near the present site of Palestine in the 1680's. In 1821, when the Federal Land Office opened in Palestine, Crawford County encompassed the territory North to Wisconsin, and much of the land where Chicago was built was purchased here for \$1.25 per acre. Fort LaMotte was built in 1812 to protect the early settlers in Crawford County from Indian attack. In 1830 when the Lincoln family, including 21 year old Abraham, moved to Illinois they stopped to rest at an inn near Heathsville and camped at Palestine a day later.

On a newly revived Main Street, quaint specialty shops, restaurants, the Fife Opera House, and a revamped Darby Caboose await visitors. Palestine is best known for its #1 Small Outdoor Rodeo held every Labor Day Weekend at the spacious Leaverton Park.

### TRAIL SAFETY

1. In case of an emergency, call 911.
2. Watch for traffic at all times.
3. Vehicles must follow all traffic rules.
4. Hike in single file and keep the group together.
5. Hike on sidewalks where applicable.
6. Where there are no sidewalks, hike on the left side of the road or street facing traffic.
7. Cross streets at intersections when possible,
8. Hike before dusk.
9. Follow any other rules or regulations your group may have.

### TRAIL ETIQUETTE

1. Stay on public property. Do not trespass.
2. Respect others. Do not damage or destroy private or public property.
3. Pick up litter you may find along the trail and dispose of it properly.
4. Leave nothing, and take only memories.
5. Act in a manner so that others are not distracted by you.
6. Wear your group's uniform when possible.

-TRAILHEAD-

1. Blue Star Memorial Highway (Marker)

(Outside front gate of Leaverton Park)

A tribute to the Armed Forces that have defended the United States of America.

-And-

Wabash River (Information Only)

(Approximately 1.5 Miles East of trailhead)

About 475 mi. (765 km) long, rising in Grand Lake, W Ohio, and flowing NW into Indiana, then generally SW through Indiana, becoming the Indiana-Illinois border before emptying into the Ohio River. It is the largest northern tributary of the Ohio. The native Miami Indians called the river "Wah-Bah-Shik-ka" meaning "pure white" for the color of its waters as they flowed across a bright limestone bed in the upper reaches. The French called it "Ouabache."

In 1678, Frenchman Jean LaMotte, from the La-Salle exploring party, traveled down the Wabash River and first gazed upon this region. In 1779, soldiers under Lt. Col. George Rogers Clark fought the only naval battle on the Wabash River during the revolutionary war, a short distance down river near Heathsville IL. In the early 1800's, settlers relied chiefly on the Wabash River to reach the best markets for the disposal of their surplus products. Flat boats loaded with grain, pork, hoop-poles, staves, etc., would navigate the Wabash every season by scores then down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. Many steamboats would come up the Wabash and load with grain and pork for the Cincinnati, Louisville and New Orleans trade. In the early 1900's the mussel beds, upriver near Hutsonville, were the discovery sites for many fine and expensive pearls. Pearls from here have found their way into Tiffany's showrooms and Queen Victoria's crown jewels. One became the favorite jewel in the famous Dagmar necklace of Queen Alexandria.

"Oh the moonlight's fair tonight along the Wabash.

From the fields there comes the breath of new mown hay.

Through the sycamores the candle lights are gleaming,

On the banks of the Wabash, far away,"

2. Fort LaMotte (marker) Update: Fort Lamotte has been reconstructed east of this marker.

(E. LaMotte & Leaverton)

About 1812 the settlers in this area built Fort LaMotte for protection from hostile Indians. The pioneers farmed the adjoining land but stayed within easy reach of the protective walls. After the War of 1812 the Indian threat diminished and the inhabitants of the fort became the nucleus of Palestine. Twenty-six families lived in the fort protected by 90 rangers under the command of Ensign and later Lieutenant David Gregg.

### 3. Lincoln Memorial Highway (IL Rt. 33)

You are now traveling on part of the "Lincoln Memorial Heritage Trail". Born on February 12, 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln's early life was one of the most modest means. Life was hard for Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, and their children Sarah, Abraham and Thomas. The youngest son, Thomas, would die in 1812, and in 1817, after losing title to their land in Kentucky; the Lincolns would head to Indiana for a fresh start. Within two years, Abraham's mother Nancy would become ill and die. Abraham's father would later remarry, and Abraham would soon establish a strong bond with his stepmother, Sarah. The Lincoln family continued to be on the move, and in 1830, when Abraham was 21 years old, the Lincoln family emigrates to Illinois, crossing the Wabash River on March 6th near Vincennes Indiana. They stopped to rest at an inn south of Palestine near Heathsville and camped at Palestine a day later. They then stayed the night near the tavern at Bolivar, a now nonexistent town north of Palestine and just south of Hutsonville. Their milk cow died while they were there. On the 15th, they locate ten miles southwest of Decatur on the north bank of the Sangamon River, in what is now Lincoln Trail Homestead Park.

### 4. Rail Road (Lincoln & Perry)

The first railroad through Crawford County was completed in August 1875 by the Paris and Danville Railroad company. This was an extension of the Chicago, Danville and Vincennes Railroad and ran north and south through Robinson. The east and west road, after many ups and downs was built through Palestine as the Springfield, Effingham, and Southeastern narrow gauge railroad. Trains were put on it in the summer of 1880. A bridge was built across the Wabash River in December and trains began running through from Effingham to Swiss City.

The Illinois Central Railroad (IC) is the only major rail carrier in the United States still operating essentially under its own name without interruption since its founding. In 1906 the Indianapolis Southern Railroad, and Illinois Central subsidiary, completed a line from Effingham, Illinois, to Indianapolis, Part of the line was new construction and part was a rework of existing narrow gauge lines such as those that ran through Palestine. In 1906 a minor train wreck on the IC line in Vaughn, Mississippi, achieved worldwide fame when a song about the incident was written about the engineer, the only person killed. The engineer was John Luther Jones, nicknamed "Casey." The Palestine yard was a busy place back then with a roundhouse for turning locomotives around, water tanks, coal bins, maintenance buildings for doing repair work on the steam locomotives. The railroad helped the farmers get their grain to market, but was the undoing of the steamship on the Wabash.

## 5. Grain Elevators

(Pike & Perry)

The oldest continually operated business in the county is Reinbold & Sons. Opened in Palestine in 1852 by the Miesenhelder family. Grain Elevators house a number of storage bins where the farmers' grain is held prior to shipment. The grain is dumped into a pit from which it is carried up to the top of the elevator by means of the "leg," a continuous belt with carrying cups. From the top, the grain is dumped into a bin. To ship the grain, the bin is emptied into a hopper and back down into the pit where it is then carried back up the "leg" to the direct spout to the waiting rail cars.

## 6. Fort Foot (Marker)

(IL Rt. 33 Northwest edge of Palestine)

About 1813 the William Eaton family and other restless pioneers considered Fort LaMotte too crowded and therefore constructed a new stockade on a site several hundred yards north of here. A family trait of the Batons, long narrow feet, led to the name of Fort Foot.

## 7. Palestine, Illinois (Marker)

(IL Rt. 33, Northwest edge of Palestine)

This area reminded Frenchman Jean LaMotte of the land of milk and honey, Palestine. While a member of the LaSalle exploring party, he became separated from the group, traveled down the Wabash River, and first gazed upon the region in 1678. Other French settlers came during the 18th century. Then, by 1812, the westward moving Americans began constructing Fort LaMotte. As the palisade filled with settlers, those desiring more room moved a few miles to the northwest and established Fort Foot. The settlers in Fort LaMotte were the core of the town of Palestine. Platted in 1818 by Joseph Kitchell and Edward Cullom, the settlement served until 1843 as the Crawford County seat. The growth of the town lagged until a United States Land Office, opened in 1821, gave new importance to the community. People came to buy land, to attend court, for entertainment, and to have their grain milled. Others, like Abraham Lincoln in 1830, passed through the bustling town on their way to settle Illinois. The land office continued to give prominence to Palestine. Robert A. Kinzie came in 1831 to purchase 102 acres for \$127.68, an acre which became the nucleus of Chicago. Augustus C. French (1808-1864) served as a Receiver in the Land Office from 1839 to 1843. A native of New Hampshire, he was the first 'Yankee' to be elected Governor of Illinois. Chosen in 1846, French was forced to stand for re-election under the new constitution of 1848 and won.

## 8. Kitchell Cemetery

(West Harrison)

Othniel Looker was a Revolutionary War soldier and the only governor of the state of Ohio who fought in the American Revolution. He and several members of the Kitchell family are buried here. The Kitchells were very prominent in early Illinois State government as well as holding public offices in Palestine.

9. ICRR Caboose  
(Main & Harrison)

This 1950's caboose is a tribute to railroaders everywhere. While on Main Street, visit some of the most unique specialty shops in the Midwest.

10. Auntie Gogin's Store (Marker)  
(Main & East Grand Prairie)

On this block Mary Ann (Elwell) Gogin operated a general merchandise store in the late nineteenth century. One of the first women in Illinois to own and manage her own store, Mrs. Gogin was affectionately known as 'Auntie' to the residents of Palestine.

11. Fife Opera House (Marker) (National Register of Historic Places)  
(Main & Grand Prairie)

Construction of the Fife Opera House began in 1898, and was completed in 1901. David Fife built the three-storied brick structure from oak lumber grown on the Fife farm south of Palestine. The bricks for the building came from Linton, Indiana, and Hutsonville Illinois. The metal roof used for covering the 55 by 140 feet structure still remains. Mr. Fife first completed the ground floor where he operated a hardware business. The Opera House which was located on the second floor was finished in March 1901. Inside the Opera House seating was available for 700 people. The house measured 55 feet wide by 70 feet long. A raked floor with a rise of 4 feet 3 inches from the first row to the last row allowed audiences to enjoy the entertainment. The red leather seats were arranged with a center section and two side sections. The audiences were cooled by electric fans and kept warm in the winter by a coal furnace. On opening night the lights in Palestine were dimmed when the lights in the new David Fife Opera House were turned on. Two light fixtures of the latest design hung from the ceiling, and single lights spaced at two feet intervals adorned the edge of the ceiling. The single lights around the ceiling remain today. The stage was located on the west end of the house and was designed with a proscenium arch opening. The opening measured 25 feet wide by approximately 15 feet high, and the front curtain rolled up and down. The arch was outlined with twenty-five lights. On each side of the stage were two large paintings depicting river scenes.

Such entertainment as local talent shows, stock theatrical companies, band concerts, a lyceum series, special speakers, and commencements drew crowds from Hutsonville, Robinson, Flat Rock, and Merom. Today, the echoes of past performances remain from yesteryear.

12. Governor Augustus C. French (Marker)  
(South Pike & West Grand Prairie)

On this site stood the home of Augustus C. French (1808-1864) when he was elected the ninth Governor of Illinois. The early settlers in Illinois came mostly from southern states so that French, a native of New Hampshire, was the first 'Yankee' to be elected Governor.

13. United States Land Office (Marker)

(Main & Market. The Southwest corner of the old Palestine town square)

A United States Land Office was located at this site in 1820 and operated until 1855. At that time Palestine was the County Seat for an area that extended as far north as Canada. This made Palestine the most important town in the state except for the capitol which, was located in Vandalia from 1820-1837. Settlers from as far away as Chicago came to Palestine to file on homesteads. A 21 year old Abraham Lincoln, passing through Palestine in 1830 with his family in emigrant wagons, noticed a crowd standing before this land office.

14. Oldest House? Update: Harper House (National Register of Historic Places)

(108 N Lincoln)

This house was acquired by the Palestine Preservation Projects Society. It is an example of French architecture and could be the oldest house in Palestine. This location is on the east side of what was the original court house square and would have been a prime piece of real-estate in the 1800's.

15. Houston-Dickson Store (Marker)

(East Grand Prairie & Lincoln)

Two early residents of Palestine, John Houston and Francis Dickson, purchased this lot as the site for a combination dwelling and store about 1818. By 1820 their stock of merchandise provided nearby settlers with goods which they previously had to bring from Indiana.

16. Old Christian Church (Marker)

(East Grand Prairie between Lincoln & Jackson)

Built in 1874 by the members of the First Christian Church of Palestine. The steeple bell came from a steamboat which had sunk in the Wabash River. The building was used as a church until Oct. 1916. It was also used as the first indoor gym for Palestine Grade School during 1918-1919. The first indoor basketball game was played here that year. The building was purchased by Fred Todd in 1920 and used as the office for the Palestine Register until Dec. 31, 1964.

17. Cullom Homestead (Marker)

(208 S. Jackson St.)

Here stood the home of Edward N. Cullom who with Joseph Kitchell platted the village of Palestine in 1818. They donated to the county land including the public square for the county seat. Early court sessions were held in the Cullom house.

18. Du Bois Tavern (Marker)

(309 S. Lincoln)

Here stood the Dubois Tavern. Jesse K. Dubois, a close friend of Abraham Lincoln, was an official in the United States Land Office in Palestine from 1841-1842 and from 1849-1853 and later became Auditor of Public Accounts for Illinois. His son, Fred T. Dubois, became a Senator from Idaho.

19. Kitchell Grist Mill (Marker)  
(IL Rt. 33, South Jackson & Vincennes Ave.)

In this area Joseph Kitchell, who settled here in 1817, erected a grist mill and distillery which eliminated the trip to Shakertown, Indiana where the farmers had previously taken their grain. Horses were used for power; grain was taken in pay, converted to whiskey and sold to settlers.

20. Colonel Clark Lagow Gravesite  
(S Leaverton, Palestine Cemetery, 2nd row west of flag pole, 6th grave from North end)  
Clark Breeding Lagow was born November 7, 1828 at Palestine Illinois, He is best known for his position on the staff of Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Clark Lagow was a merchant in Palestine until the time of the Civil War when he joined Company 1, 21st Regiment of the Illinois Volunteer Infantry. In 1861 Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant appointed him as his aide and in 1862 Lagow was made a Colonel.

Colonel Lagow retired in December 1863 and was appointed Brigadier General by Brevet for gallant and meritorious service during the war. Col. Lagow was instrumental in Grant's plans for the capture of Vicksburg. He was with Grant at the Battle of Shiloh, and gave Grant a horse, named "Kangaroo" which was used by Grant during the Vicksburg Campaign.

21. Pioneer City Rodeo Arena (Update: Fort LaMotte Reconstruction Site)  
(North Side of Leaverton Park)

The Pioneer City Rodeo and Festival take place Labor Day Weekend in Palestine, Illinois. The Labor Day festival began around 1950 as a railroader's picnic. In 1967 the first professional rodeo was held in a makeshift arena on the men's baseball diamond. Since that time the event has grown to become one of the finest rodeos east of the Mississippi River. During Labor Day Weekend the Village of Palestine will host well over 20,000 visitors as they enjoy the street fair, Chuck Wagon Breakfast, carnival, parade, free entertainment, clown lunch, and performances of the award winning PIONEER CITY RODEO.

-TRAIL'S END-

For More Information:  
[www.pioneercity.com](http://www.pioneercity.com)

Palestine Chamber of Commerce  
220 S Main  
Palestine, IL 62451  
Phone: (618) 586-2222  
[www.pioneercity.com](http://www.pioneercity.com)

Palestine Preservation Projects Society (PPPS)  
Phone: (618) 586-9418  
[www.fifeoperahouse.org](http://www.fifeoperahouse.org)

The Crawford County Historical Society and  
Museum  
P O. Box 554  
Robinson, IL 62454-0554.  
Phone: (618) 544-3087  
The museum is open most Sunday afternoons  
from 2 to 4.

**Resources:**

Crawford County Tourism Council  
Palestine Chamber of Commerce  
Palestine Preservation Projects Society  
The Crawford County Historical Society  
“History of Crawford and Clark Counties,  
Illinois” - Edited by William Henry Perrin  
“Historic Palestine 1811-1995”  
    Edited by Carol Sue Maddox, Palestine  
Preservation Projects Society  
“Crawford County Illinois Still Making History”  
Crawford County Tourism Council  
Illinois State Historical Society markers

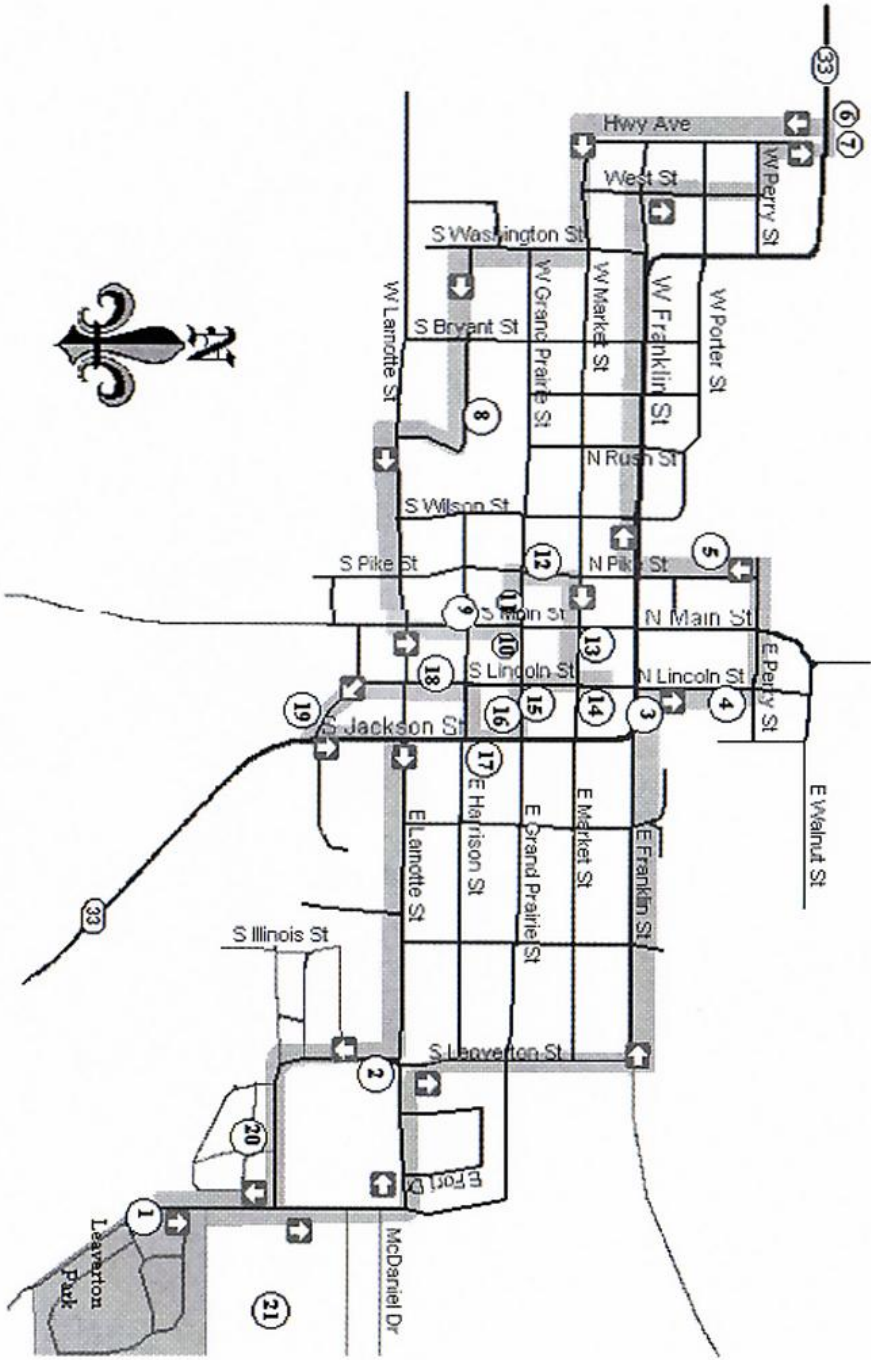
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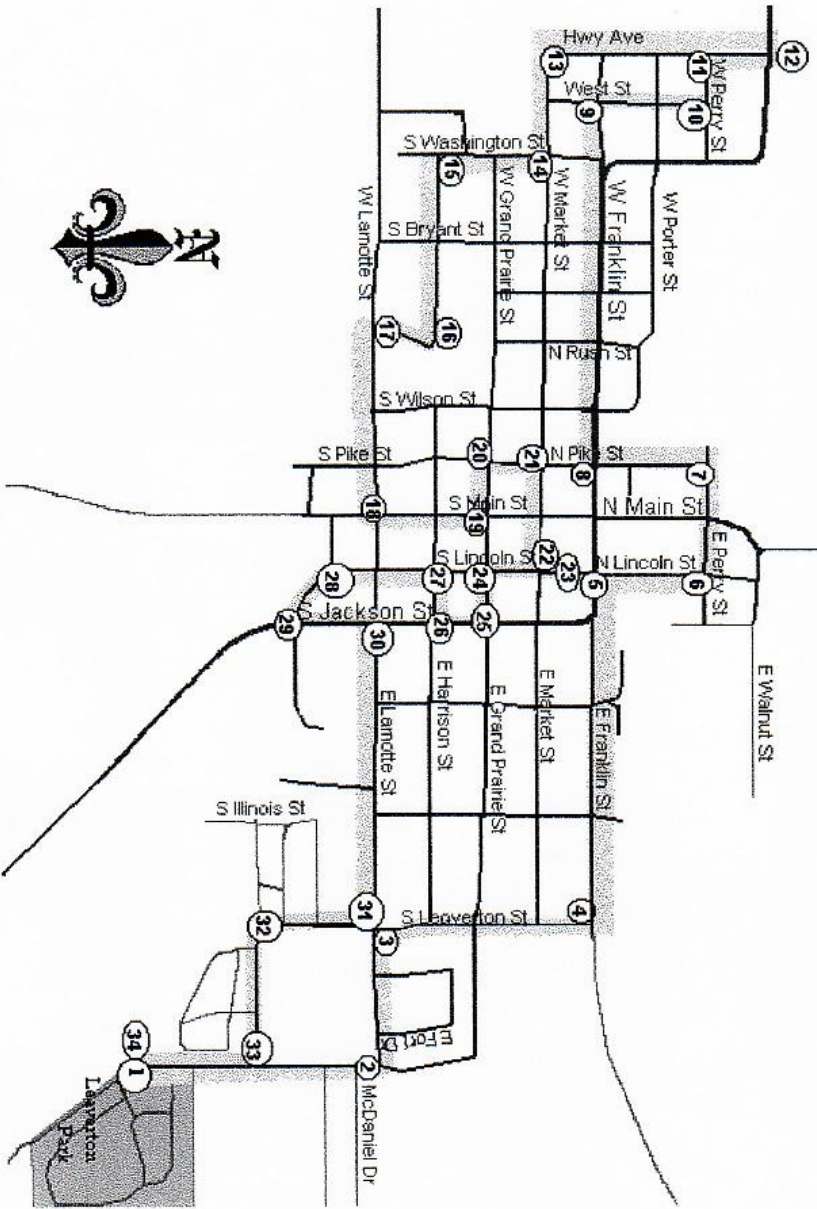
Participation patches and medals may be purchased online, after completing the trail either by foot, cycle, or automobile. For those hiking the trail more than once, repeat pins may be purchased to affix upon the patch or ribbon of the medal.

Order securely online using PayPal or mail your order to:

Pioneer City Heritage Trail  
Palestine Chamber of Commerce  
220 S Main  
Palestine, IL 62451



# Waypoints



Pioneer City Heritage Trail Orienteering Coordinates

Waypoint	N Latitude Degrees			W Longitude Degrees			Compass Heading to next Waypoint	Distance in Feet to next Waypoint
	Minutes	Seconds		Minutes	Seconds			
1	38°	59	42.1	87°	35	58.0	360°	1,669
2	38	59	59.2	87	35	58.8	270°	939
3	38	59	57.5	87	36	11.2	360°	1,435
4	39	0	13.1	87	36	11.9	270°	2,441
5	39	0	14.9	87	36	40.5	360°	746
6	39	0	20.8	87	36	42.7	270°	716
7	39	0	21.9	87	36	49.9	180°	758
8	39	0	12.1	87	36	51.8	270°	2,470
9	39	0	15.9	87	37	18.4	360°	733
10	39	0	20.5	87	37	20.4	270°	366
11	39	0	21.8	87	37	23.8	360°	463
12	39	0	28.1	87	37	27.2	180°	1,565
13	39	0	8.5	87	37	25.9	90°	721
14	39	0	13.9	87	37	17.0	180°	714
15	39	0	4.8	87	37	18.4	90°	1,260
16	39	0	7.7	87	37	1.0	180°	344
17	38	59	59.7	87	37	2.0	90°	1,102
18	38	59	58.7	87	36	47.5	360°	731
19	39	0	8.1	87	36	46.9	270°	358
20	39	0	7.9	87	36	50.5	360°	308
21	39	0	11.3	87	36	50.8	90°	763
22	39	0	8.7	87	36	41.0	360°	163
23	39	0	11.8	87	36	39.0	180°	483
24	39	0	3.4	87	36	42.0	90°	390
25	39	0	7.4	87	36	36.8	180°	428
26	39	0	2.9	87	36	33.4	270°	418
27	39	0	2.4	87	36	41.9	180°	765
28	38	59	55.1	87	36	42.6	120°	432
29	38	59	50.9	87	36	39.8	360°	720
30	38	59	59.8	87	36	37.1	90°	2,102
31	38	59	57.0	87	36	10.9	180°	915
32	38	59	49.8	87	36	9.4	90°	900
33	38	59	50.2	87	35	59.5	180°	830
34	38	59	43.1	87	35	58.2		

Compass Readings based upon zero (0°) degrees declination.

29,148 Feet    5.52 Miles    8.88 Kilometers