

The Thumb Pointed Fingers

See Where it Happened

I will give you directions to the places mentioned in the book but you may plan your tour by whatever works best for you. Since Ubly (described at the end of this paper) is so close to Tyre, you may want to begin there or do it between the first and second farms. As of last year there was a nice little restaurant in downtown Ubly** – on the south side of E. Main.

First of all, we'll start in Tyre. One way to get there from Macomb is to take M-53 north to M-46. Go east on 46 until you reach Route 19. Go north on 19 to the Bay City/Forestville Road and turn right onto it. Continue east until you come to the intersection of Bay City/Forestville and Verona Roads. You may want to park on the south side of Verona Road to avoid heavier traffic on the Bay City Road. At that intersection (there are railroad tracks) the following information is:

If you are looking north from the intersection, the land to the left belonged to Old Pete Sparling – the tracks run through his property. Further up that road, still on the left, was the first farm of J.W. and Carrie Sparling. Across Verona Road on the right side is roughly where Little Pete Sparling's farm was located. All three farms are on the north side of the Bay City/Forestville Road. On the south side of that road is where my great-grandfather's (Big Pete Sparling) farm was until he moved to Bad Axe. It was on the same side of the road where Old Pete and J.W.'s farms were located. Further south and west is where my aunt Violet lived. There are no farms left to even suggest what it was like over 100 years ago so I can't pinpoint the boundary lines of each farm. It's all grown over. I was told that the house belonging to J.W. was burned on a Halloween night. Probably a good thing because it was falling apart.

To reach the cemetery, you can go north on the Verona Road until you reach the Huron County Line Road. It is gravel. Turn left and go until you see the Tyre Cemetery on your right. Last time I was there it was being kept up beautifully for a defunct cemetery. The tombstones of J.W. and the baby are toward the back and left as you enter the cemetery.

To find the second farm, you can continue west on the Huron County Line Road toward route 19, BUT I've been warned it is not in good shape – especially after a rain. Another way to get to that farm is to leave the cemetery (going west), staying on the Huron County Line Road until you reach the Tyre Road, maybe a mile or less). Turn left and you'll enter the village of Tyre. Hard to imagine there was a hotel and two general stores there at one time. The general store in the book was located by the railroad tracks. Again, everything is overgrown and there's no sign of a store ever having been there.

Continue south on the Tyre Road until you come again to the Bay City/Forestville Road and turn right – going west. You'll come back to route 19 and should go north to the Huron County Line Road. (This part of the county line road is passable; still gravel but not as bad as the section I mentioned from the cemetery.) Go left on it for 2 ½ miles. At the 2-mile point, you will see a crook in the road (called the Devil's Elbow). Continue on for ½ mile and you'll be in the vicinity of the second farm which was on your right. Again, it is all fields and windmills now - no sign of a farmhouse.

After leaving the second farm location, continue west on the Huron County Line Road to the Bad Axe Road. Turn right, going toward Bad Axe. As you come into the town, just at the main intersection, there is a building on your left. Look carefully and you'll see steps going up to the second level at the back of the building. This building is across from a "fish" store (at least it used to be). It is also in front of a bar/restaurant called "Cousins" (if it's still there). The building used to be the Huron Tribune paper and as you've read, the trial was held upstairs. The upstairs now is broken into apartments but my daughter and I went up – just to say we'd been there.

If you turn left at the light at that intersection you will come upon Boomhower's house. It is the last house on the right as you leave town. It is just before the high school and is white with blue shutters. Depending on time, you may want to save this for last as you leave the area to come home. You can take 53 south toward Macomb.

**Ubly is the location of the Doctor's house and the church where Carrie attended. If you are coming from Bad Axe you need to go east on route 142 (toward Harbor Beach) until you reach route 19. Go south on it until you come to Ubly where you will turn left on East Main Street. The house the doctor used is very run down and across from a hardware store. It's on the north side of E. Main. Last time we were there, there were 4-5 mailboxes in front of his house and one number was 184. There is a red barn at back seen from the road and I feel it is the barn from that time. There was also a trellis like thing on the front porch area. The Presbyterian Church is on the south side of E. Main. That is where Carrie attended and where Rev. Hurd asked people to stand if they felt Dr. MacGregor innocent. If you are coming from Tyre, you need to get back on route 19 and go north until you reach East Main Street. Go right and you'll be in the village.

I've not visited these areas since 2012 so things may have changed. However the locations of the farms etc will be the same. I hope you can find these places easily and that you enjoy the road trip.

Places to eat

Nice little restaurant in Ubly (described above)

In Bad Axe there are several fast food places north on M-53. There is also a Big Boy Restaurant along that road on the right. Just north of the main intersection in Bad Axe is Peppermill which has okay food.

Going east out of Bad Axe about a mile or two is the Franklin Inn, which has good food.

Or you may want to take a picnic lunch – don't forget the lemonade!