

People and Places: A Human History of the Apostle Islands

Historic Resource Study of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore



*Fred Hansen with grandson Fred Dahl, Sand Island, 1931.
Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Alma Hansen Dahl Collection.*

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PREFACE

At the northernmost tip of Wisconsin, the twenty-two Apostle Islands form an archipelago in Lake Superior off the shore of the Bayfield Peninsula. Apostle Islands National Lakeshore consists of twenty-one of the Apostle Islands and a narrow, 12-mile long strip along the northwest shore of the Bayfield Peninsula. Madeline Island, the largest of the Apostle Islands, is not part of the national lakeshore. The boundaries of the national lakeshore extend one quarter mile into Lake Superior from the mainland portion of the lakeshore and from each island. The national lakeshore contains 69,372 acres, of which 27,232 acres are submerged. However, the lakeshore is spread over a much larger area, encompassing 450 square miles. The Bayfield Peninsula along with Eagle, Sand, York, and Raspberry Islands are located within Bayfield County; the remaining islands are in Ashland County.

The U.S. Congress established Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970. The lakeshore originally included twenty islands; Long Island was added in 1986. As stated in the 1970 enabling legislation, the purpose of the lakeshore is “to conserve and develop for the benefit, inspiration, education, recreational use, and enjoyment of the public certain significant islands and shoreline of the United States.” The law recognizes the significance of the lakeshore’s natural, historic, scientific, and archaeological features for the purpose of protecting these features and making them available for public education and enjoyment. The dry language of the legislation doesn’t begin to capture the scenic beauty and historical interest of the Apostle Islands. Among the lakeshore’s significant natural features are picturesque sandstone formations, breeding habitat for more than 150 species of birds, and stands of virgin timber. The Apostle Islands have a rich human history beginning with Native Americans, especially the Ojibwe, who have remained in the region to the present. With the arrival of European Americans, the fur trade, shipping, fishing, logging, quarrying, farming, and tourism shaped the Apostle Islands. The lakeshore’s outstanding collection of lighthouses is its best known historic resource, but quarries, fishing camps, and other remnants of island history also teach and intrigue visitors. Forest regeneration following logging was so successful that in 2004 roughly 80 percent of the national lakeshore’s land area was designated as wilderness. The areas with the greatest concentration of historic resources, including Sand, Basswood, and Long islands, were purposely left out of the wilderness designation. Nevertheless, significant historic resources are within the designated wilderness area.

The purpose of this historic resource study (HRS) is to weave together the diverse themes of Apostle Islands history into a comprehensive history of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The study ends in 1970 when the national lakeshore was established. Because Madeline Island is not part of the national lakeshore it is not emphasized in this study. However, Madeline Island plays such a central role in Apostle Islands history that it frequently and necessarily appears in the historical narrative. The HRS discusses the historic resources in the national lakeshore within the context of Apostle Islands history as well as within the larger historic contexts of the Lake Superior region and the United States. It is intended to serve as a reference for interpretation and cultural resource management at the national lakeshore, and is written for the interested

public as well as for lakeshore personnel. The HRS will also provide a framework for evaluating the historical significance and National Register of Historic Places eligibility of resources in the national lakeshore.

Acknowledgments

Many people taught me about the Apostle Islands and assisted in creating this historic resource study. I couldn't have asked for a better project team. Professor Arnold Alanen, Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Wisconsin, provided guidance and ideas drawn from his own work in the Apostle Islands and his knowledge of landscape history, but was not above peering at microfilm when needed. Landscape architect Holly Smith was thorough, resourceful, and well organized in providing research assistance. The materials that Arne and Holly compiled added depth and detail to the study. Brenda Williams, landscape architect with Quinn Evans Architects, produced the cultural resource base maps and analyzed landscapes with skill and insight. Staff members at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore provided space, boat service, and all manner of assistance. Christy Baker, cultural resource management specialist, answered innumerable requests for information and photographs. Linda Gordon, contracting officer, ensured that the project moved smoothly. Also within the National Park Service (NPS), Don Stevens, senior historian at the Midwest Regional Office gave essential guidance and feedback. Jeffrey Richner with the NPS Midwest Archeological Center provided information and valuable perspective about archaeology in the Apostles.

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: NATURAL AND CULTURAL

All places where people have settled are shaped to some degree by the natural environment. In the Apostle Islands, nature has shaped history more than in most places. The abundant natural resources of the islands, especially the forests and fisheries, and the location of the Apostle Islands near the western end of the Great Lakes waterway have been the key elements affecting why and how people settled and used the islands. The various ways people have used these resources have in turn reshaped the island environment. The Native Americans who first came to the islands had little impact with their hunting and fishing camps. In the late seventeenth century the French established a trading post on Madeline Island to support the fur trade in the area. The British and then the Americans followed suit. By the time the Great Lakes fur trade ended in the 1840s, commercial fishing had begun in the Apostle Islands, and iron and copper were being mined on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Settlement grew on the western end of Lake Superior, lake shipping increased, and the first lighthouses were built in the Apostle Islands in the 1850s. During the second half of the nineteenth century, fishing, logging, and to a lesser extent sandstone quarrying became substantial commercial enterprises in the islands. Farming was limited, though at times was successful enough to produce commercial crops. In the early twentieth century the logging and fishing industries were reconfigured to exploit the resources that remained following the depletion of white pine and whitefish. By the 1950s, when a few small logging operations worked on forest remnants and the fisheries collapsed, tourism had become the mainstay of the island economy. Efforts to preserve the natural scenic and historic qualities of the Apostle Islands and to make them available to visitors culminated in the 1970 establishment of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

The Lake Superior Region

The Apostle Islands lie within the Lake Superior region, defined here as Lake Superior and the land area that surrounds it to the limits of the Lake Superior watershed. The outstanding feature determining the character of the region is, of course, Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world.¹ Lake Superior gives the region abundant fisheries and importance as a transportation route, shapes its climate, and contributes greatly to its scenic beauty. Lake Superior is 350 miles long, 160 miles wide at its widest point, and 1,302 feet deep at its deepest point, the deepest of the Great Lakes. It is also the coldest and clearest of the Great Lakes, with an average water temperature of forty degrees Fahrenheit and average underwater visibility of 27 feet. Lake Superior holds more water than the rest of the Great Lakes combined—10 percent of the liquid fresh water on earth. Because of its large volume, Lake Superior rarely freezes over completely.²

¹ As measured by surface area. Lake Baikal in Siberia is the largest by volume.

² Jack L. Hough, *Geology of the Great Lakes* (Urbana.: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 5; Douglas O. Linder, "Lake Superior Facts," *Lake Superior All-In-One Resource Center*, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/superior/superiorfacts.html>.

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The northern portion of the Lake Superior region is in Canada, and the southern portion is in the United States. The international boundary divides Lake Superior, following the Pigeon River to the western lakeshore, jogging north of Isle Royale, and exiting the lake at St. Mary's River. After decades of dispute, this boundary was established by the 1842 treaty negotiated by U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton, special envoy for Great Britain. The Canadian portion of the Lake Superior region is in the province of Ontario; the U.S. portion includes parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Lake Superior is a relative newcomer in the context of the region's geologic history. The lake lies at the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, the ancient core of the North American continent. The Canadian Shield is composed of rocks formed during the Precambrian era, dating from the beginning of the earth to approximately 600 million years ago. During the Precambrian era, periods of volcanic activity alternating with periods of erosion and sedimentation created deposits of iron, copper, silver, and gold in the rocks of the Lake Superior region and formed a lowland. Much more recently—during the Pleistocene epoch that began 3 million years ago—glaciers excavated the relatively soft sandstone of this lowland to form the deep Lake Superior basin. When the ice melted it left glacial drift—rock debris ranging from sand to boulders that the glacier carried with it—covering much of the Lake Superior region and formed a succession of glacial lakes in the Lake Superior basin. Superior and the rest of the Great Lakes assumed their present configuration about 2,000 years ago when the lakes began to flow into the St. Lawrence River.³

The climate of the Lake Superior region is determined by its location on the planet and by the presence of Lake Superior. The region lies in the middle latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, which means that it experiences distinct seasonal changes with warm summers and cold winters. The jet stream that is often over or near the region brings areas of low and high pressure (cyclones and anticyclones) and warm and cold air masses that can cause high winds, storms, and rapid changes in temperature. The region's position in the interior of the North American continent classifies its climate as continental—land heats and cools more quickly than water, resulting in greater temperature fluctuations than in the maritime climates of the coast. Lake Superior, however, gives the region elements of a maritime climate. Summer temperatures are cooler and winter temperatures warmer along the lakeshore than farther inland. Areas closer to the lake also have a greater number of days before the first frost in the fall. Lake effects include fog, clouds, breezes, wind and waves, and snow. The lake effect snow belt stretches along the south shore beginning east of the Bayfield Peninsula, wraps around Sault Ste. Marie, and continues north along the northeast shore past Michipicoten.

³ Gwen M. Schultz, *Wisconsin's Foundations: A Review of the State's Geology and Its Influence on Geography and Human Activity* (Madison: Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wisconsin, 1986), 2–3, 10–41, 139–89; Thomas F. Waters, *The Superior North Shore* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12–25, 87–90; Larry Lankton, *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5–6; Hough, *Geology of the Great Lakes*, 94, 184–193, 243–268, 284–296; Ronald J. Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 61–79; Gene L. LaBerge, *Geology of the Lake Superior Region* (Phoenix: Geoscience Press, 1994), 290–292.

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The greatest lake effect snow occurs in early winter. The most severe Lake Superior storms occur just before then, in November, with high winds and waves caused by both jet stream and lake effect.⁴

The forests that cover much of the Lake Superior region are key to the region's character. Two types of forest meet in the region. The boreal forest, or taiga, encompasses much of Canada, reaching the north-central portion of the Lake Superior shoreline. Before the logging era, black spruce was the dominant tree species of the boreal forest. White spruce, balsam fir, white birch, jack pine, and tamarack were also characteristic. South of the boreal forest, a band of mixed hardwood and coniferous forest called the Lake Forest reaches from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia through the upper Great Lakes. Before logging, white and red pine, hemlock, yellow birch, sugar maple, beech, red oak, aspen, and white cedar were characteristic trees of the Lake Forest. The forests of the Lake Superior region contain species of both forest types. Beginning in the 1880s, large-scale logging followed by forest fires transformed these forests. When the forests eventually regenerated, hardwoods, especially aspen and birch, replaced pine trees. Spruce trees were better able than pines to regenerate. Spruce-fir forests are now managed for long-term harvesting, and plantations of red pine have been planted. The Lake Superior region is once again covered by extensive forests, but these forests are quite different than they were in the seventeenth century.⁵

Before Europeans arrived, animals of the boreal forest included woodland caribou, black bear, wolf, lynx, wolverine, marten, fisher, red fox, porcupine, beaver, and snowshoe hare. Many of the same animals populated the northern part of the Lake Forest, but some were uncommon or absent farther south. Moose replaced caribou as the primary large game animal in the Lake Forest. Deer, bobcats, and mountain lions lived in the hardwood forests. Black bear, wolves, and beaver were typical throughout. Logging, trapping, hunting, human settlement, and climatic change resulted in dramatic changes in animal populations. By the early nineteenth century, trapping had severely reduced populations of fur-bearing animals. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, deer expanded their territory, moose moved northward, and caribou nearly disappeared from the region. Wolves, mountain lions, and black bears were hunted and mostly eliminated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now protected, wolf populations have recovered somewhat and black bears are common. Biologists have estimated that prior to European-American settlement, seventy-one species of fish lived in Lake Superior and its tributary streams. Most of these species remain today, despite overfishing, the impact of

⁴ Val L. Eichenlaub, *Weather and Climate of the Great Lakes Region* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 36–51, 80–214, 288–89.

⁵ Eric A. Bourdo, Jr., "The Forest the Settlers Saw," in *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History*, ed. Susan L. Flader (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 5–12; R. J. Bugar, "Forest Land-Use Evolution in Ontario's Upper Great Lakes Basin," in *Great Lakes Forest*, 180–181; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 57–60; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 106–110, 117–125, 134; Grace Lee Nute, *Lake Superior* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), 195, 203–04, 216; Clifford E. Ahlgren and Isabel F. Ahlgren, "The Human Impact on Northern Forest Ecosystems," in *Great Lakes Forest*, 35–48; Lynn Sandberg, "The Response of Forest Industries to a Changing Environment," in *Great Lakes Forest*, 198–202.

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logging on the watershed, and the accidental and purposeful introduction of exotic species.⁶

Despite its tremendous impact on the natural environment, the human population of the Lake Superior region has remained relatively small. Thunder Bay, Ontario, is the largest urban area in the region, with a 2001 population of 121,986 for the metropolitan area.⁷ The combined population of the twin ports of Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, was 114,286 in 2000, slightly smaller than Thunder Bay. The two Sault Ste. Maries—in Michigan and Ontario—lie just outside of the Lake Superior watershed but serve the eastern portion of the Lake Superior region. Their combined population was 91,108. After Sault Ste. Marie, urban population drops off sharply, with 19,661 in Marquette, Michigan; 11,333 in Houghton and Hancock, Michigan combined; and 8,620 in Ashland, Wisconsin. Smaller towns, mostly on the lakeshore, are scattered through the region. Nine Indian reservations ranged in size from 65 people on the Pays Plat Reservation in Ontario to 3,538 people on the L'Anse Reservation in Michigan. In 1990, the average population density for the U.S. portion of the Lake Superior region was 9.95 persons per square kilometer or 25.8 persons per square mile. By comparison, the average population density per square mile was 70.3 for the U.S., 55.0 for Minnesota, and 90.1 for Wisconsin. In 1996, the average population density for the Ontario portion of the Lake Superior region was 2.17 persons per square kilometer or 5.62 persons per square mile. However, the Ontario data are based on both land and water area, whereas the U.S. data is based only on land area. If water area were calculated as part of the U.S. data, the density would be 8.72 persons per square kilometer or 22.6 persons per square mile, still significantly higher than in Ontario.⁸

Given its sparse population, it is not surprising that less than 1 percent of the land in the Lake Superior region is considered developed. More than 80 percent of the region is forested. Much of the region is in the public domain. In the United States this includes state and national forests, state and national parks, and underwater preserves. In Ontario, publicly-owned lands include a number of provincial parks, Pukaskwa National Park, and other crown lands. Many of the region's forests, both public and private, are harvested for paper and other wood products. Agriculture accounts for a very small proportion of land use in the region, less than 2 percent. Of the sixteen U.S. counties in the Lake Superior basin, only Bayfield County, Wisconsin, and Carlton County, Minnesota, had

⁶ Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 58–60; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 80, 136–215, 222–41; David M. Gates, C. H. D. Clarke, and James T. Harris, “Wildlife in a Changing Environment,” in *Great Lakes Forest*, 62, 67–72; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 171–186; [David Fritz], “Special History Study: Family-Managed Commercial Fishing in the Apostle Islands during the 20th Century, with Background Information on Commercial Fishing on Lake Superior” (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 87–92.

⁷ Canadian population statistics for cities and reservations are for 2001 from Statistics Canada. U.S. population statistics for cities and reservations are for 2000 from the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁸ Population densities were calculated by the GEM Center for Science and Environmental Outreach based on the census subdivisions mostly closely approximating the Lake Superior basin. Kristine L. Bradof and others, “Baseline Sustainability Data for the Lake Superior Basin,” (Michigan Technological University, GEM Center for Science and Environmental Outreach, Houghton, MI, 2000), 13–14.

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more than 10 percent of their land in farms in 1992. In the remaining counties, farmland ranged from 0.1 to 8.4 percent.⁹

The Chequamegon Region

The Bayfield Peninsula juts out into Lake Superior toward the western end of the lake's south shore. Clustered around the northern end of the Bayfield Peninsula are the twenty-two Apostle Islands. At the base of the peninsula, the Ashland plain stretches south and east until it meets the highlands of the Penokee and Gogebic ranges. In between the Bayfield Peninsula and the Ashland plain lies Chequamegon Bay, about twelve miles long and—at its mouth—about ten miles wide. A narrow sand spit connected to the mainland on the eastern side of the bay protects the waters within. The northwestern portion of the sand spit forms Long Island, which has intermittently been separated from the eastern portion of the sand spit. The Chequamegon region consists of Chequamegon Bay and the lands that surround it—the islands, the peninsula, and the plain. Conveniently, the region is approximated by the boundaries of Wisconsin's Ashland and Bayfield counties.¹⁰

The bedrocks that underlie the Chequamegon region are sandstones deposited in the Lake Superior lowland during the Late Precambrian era. They are the youngest of the sedimentary rocks that formed in the lowland, a group of three sandstone formations known as the Bayfield group. Before the ice sheets arrived, river and stream erosion created valleys in the Lake Superior lowland, forming hills and accentuating highlands where the rock was more resistant. One such highland is now the Bayfield Peninsula, and it is likely that the Apostle Islands were originally part of that highland. When the ice sheet advanced, it overrode the Bayfield highland, deepening and widening the valleys and sculpting the hills at the northern end of the highland. After the final retreat of the ice, successive glacial lakes covered the Chequamegon region, and the partially submerged hills at the north end of the peninsula became the Apostle Islands. More recently, beaches, sandspits, cliffs, and caves have been formed by the actions of wind, ice, and water. The Chequamegon region is one of the few areas on the Lake Superior shore with sand beaches.¹¹

Temperatures in the Chequamegon region, especially near the lakeshore, are moderated by Lake Superior. In the cities of Ashland and Bayfield, average daily temperatures are eleven degrees Fahrenheit in January and sixty-seven to sixty-eight degrees in July. These temperatures are a bit more extreme than in other locations on the

⁹ Regional land use percentages, from the Center for Water and the Environment, appear to be based on the Lake Superior basin plus a fifty kilometer buffer zone. Center for Water and the Environment, Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota-Duluth, "Lake Superior Landuse and Bathymetry," 1999, *The Lake Superior Decision Support Project*, <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/lsgis/landuse.htm>; Bradof, "Baseline Sustainability Data," 55–57.

¹⁰ Lars Larson, *Chequamegon Bay and Its Communities I, Ashland, Bayfield, La Pointe: A Brief History 1659–1883* (Whitewater, WI: Lars Larson, 2005), 13–16; Schultz, *Wisconsin's Foundations*, 44–46, 51–53.

¹¹ Schultz, *Wisconsin's Foundations*, 40, 44–48, 151, 155–56, 165–67; Edward B. Nuhfer, *A Guidebook to the Geology of Lake Superior's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*, rev. ed. (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2004), 19–39; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 15.

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south shore. In Houghton, Marquette, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, January temperatures average thirteen to fourteen degrees Fahrenheit, and July temperatures average sixty-four to sixty-five degrees. Near the lakeshore and in the islands, the Chequamegon region averages 120 to 140 frost free days annually. The Chequamegon region is located west of the area of greatest lake effect snow. Annual snowfall averages 57 inches in Ashland and 84 inches in Bayfield, compared to 129 inches in Marquette and 116 inches in Sault Ste. Marie.¹²

Despite areas of agriculture and development, forests still cover most of the Chequamegon region. Before logging, pine, hemlock, sugar maple, birch, and red oak appear to have been the most common tree species, their distribution varying according to variations in soil and moisture. There were extensive areas of spruce and balsam fir. In 1857 an observer described the Bayfield Peninsula as “heavily timbered with the White and Norway pine, White Birch, Balsam, Sugar Maple, Soft Maple, Basswood, and Oak.”¹³ The tall red and white pines, although not the most numerous trees, dominated the forest landscape by virtue of their size. The prime objective of the first loggers, these tall pines were nearly eradicated by logging and then forest fires. Today, hardwood forests dominated by maples and birches are found throughout much of the region. Spruce-fir forests are located in northern parts of the region, especially along the lakeshore. Conifer swamps of black spruce, tamarack, and cedar are found in more southern areas. Pine trees are mostly red pine plantations planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. Wetlands are also an important component of the regional ecology. These range from sphagnum bogs to coastal wetlands such as the Kakagon and Bad River sloughs on the Bad River Reservation with their renowned beds of wild rice.¹⁴

With its diverse habitats, the Chequamegon region is home to a wide variety of wildlife. Black bear, fox, coyote, fisher, red and grey squirrel, snowshoe hare, chipmunk, porcupine, skunk, raccoon, ruffed grouse, hawks, and many species of songbirds are typical of the region’s forests. The population of white-tailed deer grew dramatically

¹² Canty & Associates, “Weatherbase,” <http://www.weatherbase.com>; Eichenlaub, *Weather and Climate*, 206. Weatherbase is a database of worldwide weather information containing data that is not available on NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center website. Weatherbase data is collected from a variety of public domain sources, including the National Climatic Data Center.

¹³ *Bayfield Mercury*, 22 August 1857, quoted in Charles Twining, “The Apostle Islands and the Lumbering Frontier,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 66 (Spring 1983):205–220, reprinted in *Historic Logging and Farming in the Apostle Islands* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National), 46.

¹⁴ Twining, “Lumbering Frontier,” 45–46; Center for Water and the Environment, “Pre-Settlement Vegetation,” and “Forest Service Classification,” 1998, *Lake Superior Decision Support Project*, <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/lsgis/psettle.htm> and <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/lsgis/fservice.htm>; “Ashland County, Wisconsin,” and “Bayfield County, Wisconsin,” *Wisconsin Online*, <http://www.wisconline.com/counties/ashland/> and <http://www.wisconline.com/counties/bayfield/>; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, “Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Selected Alternative Management Areas: Washburn-Great Divide Districts,” http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/final_forest_plan/maps/SA_Cheq_north_lge.pdf; Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, “Response to ‘Speaker’s Task Force on Forestry’ Questions,” Wisconsin State Legislature, <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm35/news/TaskForceOnForestry/Jan08usfsResponse.pdf>.

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with the spread of second growth hardwood forests following logging. Wolves returned to Wisconsin in the mid-1970s, and today there are several wolf packs in the Chequamegon region. Rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands provide habitat for otter, beaver, muskrat, herons, kingfisher, turtles, and numerous waterfowl. Beaver made a comeback in the aspen forests that replaced old growth forests lost to logging and fire. Numerous shorebirds and waterfowl inhabit the Lake Superior shoreline and coastal wetlands. The abundance of fish in the Chequamegon region is due in large part to the spawning grounds along the shores of the islands and mainland. Lake Superior fish in the region today include native whitefish, lake trout, and herring and non-native smelt, brown and rainbow trout, and coho and chinook salmon. Common fish in the rivers, lakes, and streams include rainbow, brook, and brown trout; musky; northern pike; walleye; largemouth and smallmouth bass; and panfish such as black crappie.¹⁵

The human population of the Chequamegon region is fairly sparse. In 2000 the population of Ashland County was 16,866 and Bayfield County was 15,013 for a combined total of 31,879. Between 1990 and 2000 population increased in both counties. In 2000 the population density was 16.2 persons per square mile in Ashland County and 10.2 persons per square mile in Bayfield County. By comparison, the average population density for the state of Wisconsin was 98.8 persons per square mile. Ashland, the county seat of Ashland County, is the largest city in the Chequamegon region with a year 2000 population of 8,620. Next in size is Washburn, the Bayfield County seat, with population of 2,280. The city of Bayfield is much smaller, with 611 people. The populations of the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations in 2000 were 1,411 and 1,078, respectively.¹⁶

Forestry and recreation are the primary land uses in the Chequamegon region. More than 80 percent of the region is forested. In 1996, 53 percent of this forested land was publicly owned, and 47 percent was privately owned. Public forests include approximately 207,000 acres of county-owned forests and 430,000 acres in Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Although much of public forest management is geared toward timber harvest or recreational uses, there are areas where protecting natural resources takes priority. In Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest these include the Porcupine Lake and Rainbow Lake wilderness areas. Outside of the public forests, Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1999 to conserve and restore a small but important area of coastal wetlands. Ashland County's two state parks—Big Bay on Madeline Island and Copper Falls—are used primarily for recreation. Agriculture is a smaller but significant land use in the Chequamegon region. In 2002 Ashland County had 227 farms totaling 58,746 acres, accounting for about 9 percent of land use in the county. Bayfield County had 468 farms totaling 111,851 acres,

¹⁵ National Park Service, "Final Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin," (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004), 53–55; Randy Moore, responsible official, "2004 Land and Resource Management Plan: Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests (USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region, Milwaukee, 2004), chapter 3; Wisconsin Wolf Advisory Committee, "Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan," (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Wolf Advisory Committee, Madison, 1999); Nute, *Lake Superior*, 181–82; USDAFS Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, "Fishing on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest," <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/rec/fishing>.

¹⁶ All population statistics are for 2000 from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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accounting for about 12 percent of land use in that county. Less than 1 percent of the land in the region is classified as urban.¹⁷

The Apostle Islands

Looking at a map of the Apostle Islands, it is easy to visualize how the islands once formed the tip of the Bayfield Peninsula. The twenty-two islands range in size from Gull Island's three acres to Madeline Island's twenty-four square miles (15,360 acres). Most of the islands are low lying and relatively level, rising less than 200 feet above the surface of Lake Superior. Oak Island is unusual among the Apostles with its elevation of 479 feet above lake level.¹⁸ Except for Long Island, all of the islands have a bedrock core of sandstone. Outcrops of these reddish brown Bayfield group sandstones often form cliffs on north and northeast island shores. Waves eroding shoreline outcrops create caves, arches, stacks, and a variety of sandscapes including beaches, sandspits, and tombolos, where a sandspit connects two islands. Waves have also eroded deposits of glacial drift into steep clay bluffs, especially on the west shores of the islands. The glacial lakes that preceded Lake Superior submerged most of the islands at various times, leaving remnant beaches and terraces and deposits of clay. Soil on the islands has formed from clay, drift, and sand. The landscape and especially the shoreline of the Apostle Islands are dynamic. Changes to the shoreline can occur gradually or suddenly during a severe storm. Steamboat Island, also called Little Steamboat Island, was destroyed by a storm in 1901.¹⁹

Before they were logged, most of the forests of the Apostle Islands were mixed hardwoods and conifers of the Lake Forest type, dominated by hemlock, white pine, sugar maple, and yellow and white birch. Boreal forest, consisting primarily of white spruce, balsam fir, tamarack, white cedar, birch, and aspen, covered an estimated 10 percent of the islands. Most of the forests on the islands were logged in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰ Today areas that were logged are mostly second and third growth forest dominated by white birch, sugar and red maple, balsam fir, and white cedar. The boreal forest, still a relatively small portion of the islands' forests,

¹⁷ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, "Watersheds of the [Superior] Basin," <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/gmu/superior/BasinPlan/Watersheds.html>; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, "Planners Toolbox: Smart Forestry for Smart Growth—Assessment Overview," <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/SmartForestry/toolbox/datahome.asp>; Center for Land Use Education, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, "Forest Planning for Wisconsin's Future: Ashland County," and "Forest Planning for Wisconsin's Future: Bayfield County," *Forest Planning for Wisconsin's Future*, <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/forestplanning/CountyPages/ashland.htm> and <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/forestplanning/CountyPages/bayfield.htm>; USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture, Wisconsin State and County Profiles," <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/profiles/wi>.

¹⁸ Except for Madeline Island, figures on island size and elevation come from Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Madeline Island size is from Joshua Calder, "Largest Islands of Selected U.S. States," *Island Information*, <http://users.erols.com/jcalder/USSTATESVI.html>.

¹⁹ Nuhfer, *Guidebook to Geology*, 30–41, 69; National Park Service, "Final Wilderness Study: Apostle Islands," 51–52; John Lindquist, "Steamboat Island: The Legendary Apostle Island That Went Missing in 1901," John A. Lindquist, <http://www.jlindquist.com/steamboatland.html>.

²⁰ National Park Service, "Final Wilderness Study: Apostle Islands," 52.

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retains the same mix of species as before logging. Stands of virgin timber including hemlock, pine, and sugar maple-oak forest are among the natural treasures of the Apostles. Canada yew was the dominant ground cover on most of the islands before logging. When the deer population grew along with the second growth hardwood forests, yew was browsed almost to extinction on some islands. Yew remains abundant on islands where deer have historically been absent or fewer in numbers. Outside of the forests, specialized plant communities inhabit sandscapes, clay bluffs, sandstone ledges and cliffs, and sphagnum bogs. Introduced non-native plants such as turf grasses, hay, and fruit trees are signs of former human habitation. Overall, more than eight hundred species of plants grow in the Apostle Islands, including nearly twenty species of orchids, and—importantly to animal and human inhabitants—a number of varieties of berries.²¹

The variety of wildlife on the Apostle Islands differs from that on the mainland because of the barrier created by Lake Superior. About 9,500 years ago when the lake level was low, the islands were connected to the mainland and populated with mainland species. Distinctions came about as a result of subsequent changes in climate and habitat and more recently because of human activities. Moose, bear, and beaver, present in the islands or nearby during the eighteenth century, were gone by the early twentieth century. Beaver established colonies on Stockton, Outer, Michigan, and Madeline islands after the 1930s, but more recently their population has declined as other hardwoods have replaced aspen. Black bears established a reproducing population on Stockton Island in the 1980s and more recently on Sand Island. Uncommon in the islands before the 1930s, the deer population peaked in the 1950s then dropped during the 1960s. Currently, deer are found primarily on Basswood, Oak, Sand, York, and Madeline islands. Other common mammals on the islands are red squirrel, snowshoe hare, deer mouse, and redback vole. Less common are fox, coyote, otter, and fisher. The Apostle Islands provide habitat for hundreds of species of nesting and migrating birds. During spring and fall migrations, the Apostle Islands are an important stopover for birds flying across the Great Lakes. In addition to birds and mammals, more than twenty species of salamanders, frogs, toads, and reptiles inhabit the islands. The abundance of fish in the spawning grounds off island shores is one of the most noted natural resources in the Apostles.²²

Madeline Island is the only one of the twenty-two Apostle Islands that is not part of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. In 2000 the permanent island population was 246, including the unincorporated village of La Pointe. Summer residents increase the population to between 2,500 and 3,000.²³ The economy of Madeline Island is based on tourism and recreation, and land use reflects that. Nevertheless, development is relatively limited. Despite a golf course on the island, tourism emphasizes natural resource-based

²¹ National Park Service, “Final Wilderness Study: Apostle Islands,” 52–53; Nancy Farm Mannikko, “Logging and Lumbering Sites in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form—Draft (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, n.d.), 13.

²² National Park Service, “Final Wilderness Study: Apostle Islands,” 53–55; Robert A. Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology at La Pointe in Lake Superior: An Overview,” *Wisconsin Archeologist* 73, no. 3–4 (1992): 189.

²³ U.S. Census Bureau; Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce, “About the Island,” <http://www.madelineisland.com/about.htm>.

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activities such as hiking, fishing, and camping. Big Bay State Park, which occupies 2,350 acres in the middle of the island, is geared toward recreational use, although the sand spit and bog area is designated a Wisconsin State Natural Area. Close to two hundred acres on the northern end of the island are part of the Bad River Indian Reservation. Within Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, approximately 80 percent of the land area—33,500 acres—was designated as wilderness in 2004.

The First Inhabitants

Native Americans were present in the Apostle Islands thousands of years before the first Europeans arrived. The earliest evidence of people in the Chequamegon region comes from a site on Chequamegon Bay and may date as early as 11,000 B.P. (before present). The site is affiliated with the Paleo-Indian tradition of big game hunters who are known for their distinctive fluted stone spear points and are usually considered to be the first people to inhabit the Americas. A single, isolated late Paleo-Indian projectile point was found on Manitou Island, but it is unlikely that much additional evidence of Paleo-Indians will be found in the islands. Paleo-Indian sites are small and uncommon, and fluctuating lake levels may have submerged sites that were once on the shore. The Archaic tradition succeeded the Paleo-Indian tradition as people adapted to the woodland environment that developed following the retreat of the glaciers. Archaic people were hunters and gatherers who made ground stone and chipped stone tools as well as tools and ornaments from copper mined in the Lake Superior region. On Stockton Island, a stemmed projectile point of the Archaic tradition was found at the Ebob site (47AS38), and chipped stone debitage, fire-cracked rock, and a worked copper blank were found with a cluster of charcoal at site 47AS41/42 at Quarry Bay. The latter yielded a radiocarbon date of 5,300 to 4,880 B.P. Other island sites that have not been dated might be associated with the Archaic tradition.

The Woodland tradition, distinguished by the manufacture of pottery, appeared in the Lake Superior region about 2,100 B.P. Although there is evidence of this phase of the Woodland tradition in northeastern Minnesota and north central Wisconsin, the earliest evidence in the Apostle Islands is affiliated with the Late Woodland tradition, which began in the Lake Superior region about 1,200 B.P. (A.D. 800). The National Register-listed Morty site (47AS40) on Stockton Island contains a Late Woodland component with hearths; a midden; and a range of artifacts including stone tools, pottery, and animal remains. The Morty site has been interpreted as a moose hunting camp. Several other small sites on the islands that have been identified as Late Woodland have a limited variety of artifacts consisting mostly of chipped quartz pebbles. These sites were probably temporary campsites for fishing and perhaps gathering plant foods and hunting. The Native American tribes in the Great Lakes region when the first Europeans arrived in the early seventeenth century were following the Late Woodland tradition. A number of interrelated but independent bands who spoke a common Algonquian language occupied a large area around the eastern end of Lake Superior. One of these bands was the *Outchibouec* or Ojibwe. North of these bands were the Cree Indians, also Algonquian speakers, and to the northwest were the Siouan-speaking Assiniboine. Both of these

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tribes came into the Lake Superior region to hunt and trade, as did the Dakota or Santee Sioux, whose territory extended close to the southwest end of the lake.

The International Fur Trade

The French were the first Europeans to explore the Lake Superior region. The first Frenchmen known to have visited the Chequamegon region were two traders named Medart Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and his brother-in-law, Pierre Esprit Radisson, who arrived at Chequamegon Bay in the fall of 1659 accompanied by Ojibwe and Ottawa Indians. After a short stay at Chequamegon Bay, Radisson and Des Groseilliers traveled south into the interior for the winter, returning to Chequamegon Bay in the spring of 1660. When the two traders returned to Montreal that summer they had accumulated a fortune in furs. On the pretext that the traders were operating without a license, government officials confiscated most of the furs, fined the men, and jailed Des Groseilliers. Despite their loss, Radisson and Des Groseilliers were soon looking for investors for a fur trading expedition to Hudson Bay. They took their plan to England, where they were instrumental in founding the Hudson's Bay Company.

Before Radisson and Des Groseilliers, French traders bought furs from Indian middlemen who came to Montreal. The abundance of high quality furs that Radisson and Des Groseilliers brought back to Montreal inspired other trading parties to travel to the Chequamegon region, shifting the focus of the French and Indian fur trade westward. The French adopted the Indian mode of trade as gift giving, an exchange that not only recognized the tangible value of furs and trade goods, but also established friendships and political alliances. The Jesuit missionaries who went with the traders aimed to convert Indians to Christianity, adding another element to the complexity of the fur trade. In 1665 Father Claude Allouez was the first Jesuit missionary to succeed in establishing a mission at Chequamegon Bay, where he found a "great village" populated by Indians from seven different nations, many of whom were refugees fleeing the attacks of the Iroquois in the east. The Ottawa Indians were the dominant tribe in the village, and to the north was a second large village of Huron-Petun. Allouez established his mission between the two villages. Chequamegon Bay remained the focus of the growing French fur trade until 1668 when it shifted to Green Bay, in part because of a temporary peace between the French and the Iroquois. A few traders remained in the Chequamegon region. Allouez stayed at La Pointe du St. Esprit until the spring of 1669; in the fall Father Jacques Marquette took his place. Warfare between the allied Ottawa and Huron against the Sioux disrupted Marquette's missionary efforts. Because there was peace with the Iroquois in the east, the Ottawa and Huron left Chequamegon in 1670 and traveled east, many of them to the Straits of Mackinac. Marquette followed them to Mackinac where he became head of the Mission of St. Ignace. In 1672 Allouez, using the knowledge of Lake Superior that he gathered during his travels, collaborated with Father Claude Dablon to publish a remarkably accurate map of the lake (figure 1).²⁴

²⁴ Conrad E. Heidenreich, "Maps," *Pathfinders & Passageways: The Exploration of Canada*, National Library and Archives of Canada, <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/explorers/h24-1404-e.html>.

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Figure 1. *Lac Supérieur* by the Jesuits Claude Dablon and Claude Allouez, 1672. Courtesy of National Archives of Canada.

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Competition and warfare between the French, British, and later the Americans; warfare between different Indian tribes; and shifting alliances would shape and reshape trade routes and relationships for nearly two centuries to come. During the 1670s the fur trade in the southwestern Lake Superior region was disrupted by warfare between the Sioux and the Ojibwe, who were expanding their territory westward from the Sault. In 1679 Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Dulhut, helped to negotiate a peace and trading agreement between the two tribes. By 1680 the Ojibwe had a village at Chequamegon, either on the mainland or on Madeline Island. The Lake Superior region regained its prominence in the French fur trade in 1689, when the outbreak of King William's War between England and France led the Iroquois—British allies—to once again close the Green Bay trade route to the French. About 1690 the French built a trading post at the opening of Chequamegon Bay on the sandspit that by then was known as La Pointe. In 1693 Pierre Le Sueur moved the trading post to a more defensible location on the southern end of Madeline Island, then known to the French as Isle Michel. The post served a large area south of Lake Superior, from the west end of the lake to the base of the Keweenaw Peninsula, with many trails and water routes into the interior. The fur trade flourished, creating a glut in the fur market, and in 1696 King Louis XIV revoked all trading licenses, closing La Pointe and the other trading posts.

During the years that followed, the French lost ground to the English in the fur trade. After a 1713 treaty ended yet another war between France and England, the French reopened their western trading posts. In 1718 the French reestablished the La Pointe post at a new location on the west side of Madeline Island. For more than forty years this post served as military outpost, trading center, and home to traders, voyageurs, and the military garrison. The name Apostle Islands, probably given by the Jesuits, came into official use during this time period; it appears on a French map dated 1744. A large Ojibwe village in the vicinity of the trading post may have housed as many as one thousand residents during the summer season. In the mid-eighteenth century this was the principal Ojibwe village and as such served as the gathering place for annual religious ceremonies. Warfare between the Ojibwe and the Sioux resumed during the 1730s and continued into the nineteenth century with far-reaching effects on life and trade in the upper Great Lakes. The Ojibwe fought for the French during the French and Indian War (1754–1760). Following their defeat, the French abandoned the La Pointe trading post. The British destroyed the post in 1765, and the Ojibwe abandoned their village on the island soon after.

In August 1765 British trader Alexander Henry arrived at Chequamegon Bay to reopen the fur trade on western Lake Superior. On the mainland near Chequamegon Bay, Henry found an Ojibwe village of seven to eight hundred people. Henry's partnership with French trader Jean Baptiste Cadotte of Sault Ste. Marie helped him to gain the confidence of the local Ojibwe. Other English traders who came after Henry followed his precedent and formed partnerships with French Canadians. Later on, however, traders came who did not trade according to Ojibwe ideas of exchange and alliance. As the number of traders increased, so did competition and conflict among them. In 1783 a group of traders and merchants decided to cooperate, entering into a formal partnership

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called the North West Company that soon dominated the fur trade in the Lake Superior region. Although the 1783 Treaty of Paris put the southern shore of Lake Superior in the United States, the British continued to control the fur trade there. By 1791 the North West Company had established a trading post at La Pointe, and by 1793 Michel Cadotte—son of Jean Baptiste Cadotte—was in charge of the La Pointe post. Cadotte built a home and trading post on the southern end of Madeline Island and married Equaysayway, daughter of Chief White Crane, who lived on Chequamegon Bay. Other Ojibwe came to live on Madeline Island in the vicinity of Cadotte's trading post.

After 1806 the Michilimackinac Company took over most of the North West Company's posts east of the Mississippi River, including La Pointe. In 1811 the North West Company and Michilimackinac Company partnered with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company to form the South West Company to handle trade south and west of the Canadian border, an attempt to avoid U.S. import taxes. The War of 1812 severed Astor's connection with the South West Company, and during the war furs and trade goods passed through the Lake Superior region untaxed. After the War of 1812 foreigners were prohibited from trading within U.S. boundaries, enabling Astor to purchase the South West Company's holdings at low cost. From then until 1834, Astor's American Fur Company dominated the U.S. fur trade. The American Fur Company employed many of the experienced French Canadian traders already working in the area, including Michel Cadotte at La Pointe. Canadian traders, however, competed with the American Fur Company on the south shore of Lake Superior by employing American citizens. In this capacity the brothers Lyman and Truman Warren began working in the Lake Superior region in 1818. Within a few years the Warrens switched to working for the American Fur Company and married two of Michel Cadotte's daughters. The Warrens prospered in the fur trade, and in 1823 Cadotte sold them his trading business. When Truman Warren died in 1825, Lyman Warren was left with the responsibility for all of the La Pointe trade.

The 1830s was a decade of many changes at La Pointe. In 1831 Reverend Sherman Hall arrived on Madeline Island to establish a Protestant mission, bringing a different version of Christianity than was practiced by the French Catholic traders. In 1834 Astor sold the American Fur Company, in part because of the declining number of fur-bearing animals. Ramsay Crooks was head of the group that purchased the American Fur Company's Northern Department, which continued to operate under the American Fur Company name. Crooks initiated a fishing operation on Lake Superior and moved the company's inland headquarters to La Pointe from Mackinac Island. The old La Pointe trading post had long been inadequate, and early in 1835 the company began building a new trading post on the west side of the island. In July of that year Father Frederic Baraga arrived on Madeline Island to establish a Catholic mission; his followers quickly outnumbered those of the Protestants. Meanwhile, the fur trade dwindled while the fishing trade grew rapidly. The population of La Pointe increased as fishermen and coopers came to the island. Crooks found evidence of mismanagement of the company's business at La Pointe, and in 1838 he fired Lyman Warren, replacing him with Charles Borup. While these changes were taking place at La Pointe, Ojibwe people signed the 1837 Pine Tree Treaty with the U.S. government, ceding approximately eleven million

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acres of land in north central Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. The cession did not include Ojibwe lands bordering Lake Superior—not yet. Annuity payments due under this treaty were made at La Pointe beginning in 1838, adding to the hustle and bustle of life in the village.

The Lake Superior fisheries continued to produce prolifically. In 1839 Charles Borup wrote to Ramsay Crooks about plans for a new fishing outpost in the Apostle Islands, enclosing a map with all of the islands named and numbered (figure 2). Several of the islands, including Madeline, Outer, Ironwood, Manitou, Oak, Otter, Bear, and Raspberry, bear their modern names. But the company was finding it difficult to market the fish in a depressed economy, and in 1841 it ended its commercial fishing operation. The fur trade was not faring well either, however, and the company's debts continued to mount. In September 1842 the American Fur Company went into receivership. While the company was struggling, both the Catholic and Protestant missions on Madeline Island were expanding. Then in 1842 came the Copper Treaty, whereby the Ojibwe ceded their lands along the southwestern shore of Lake Superior. The world in which the fur trade flourished was fast disappearing. La Pointe County was organized in 1845 with the village of La Pointe as the county seat. Wisconsin became a state in 1848. Although the American Fur Company was able to pay off much of its debt after its failure in 1842, the company ceased operations in 1847.

Villages and Settlement

In 1850 La Pointe was the only port in the western portion of Lake Superior. The 1850 federal census counted a population of 463 in the village of La Pointe—seventy-eight families living in sixty-seven dwellings. The names were predominantly French, including forty individuals with the surname Cadotte. Though the federal census identified the race of all but four individuals as white, other sources show that a large majority of them were métis of mixed French Canadian and Ojibwe ancestry. The census labeled four individuals as “civilized Indians” living in white households; other Indians were not counted. Of 130 men who gave occupations, the most numerous—73—were voyageurs. Other occupations were laborer (21), trader, carpenter, fisherman, clerk, cooper, blacksmith, shoemaker, sawyer, grocer, mail carrier, merchant, teacher, and clergy. The census taker described La Pointe County as thinly settled—fewer than 30 people lived outside the village—and inhabited primarily by individuals who spoke French or Ojibwe. Nevertheless, the village of La Pointe had two churches, a school, and a courthouse—all signs of settlement.²⁵

The 1850s was a pivotal decade, when the social dynamic of the Chequamegon region shifted from frontier to settlement. In 1852 U.S. General Land Office surveyors

²⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 61, 64, 66; Kathleen Grace, transcriber, and Maggie Stewart, editor, “1850 Federal Census LaPointe County, Wisconsin,” *USGenWeb Archives*, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~cenfiles/wi/lapointe/1850/pg1b.txt>; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 271; Ronald N. Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights: The Reserved Rights of Wisconsin's Chippewa Indians in Historical Perspective*, Transactions 79 no. 1 (Madison: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1991), 55; Hamilton Nelson Ross, *La Pointe: Village Outpost on Madeline Island* (1960; reprint, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2000), 80–82.

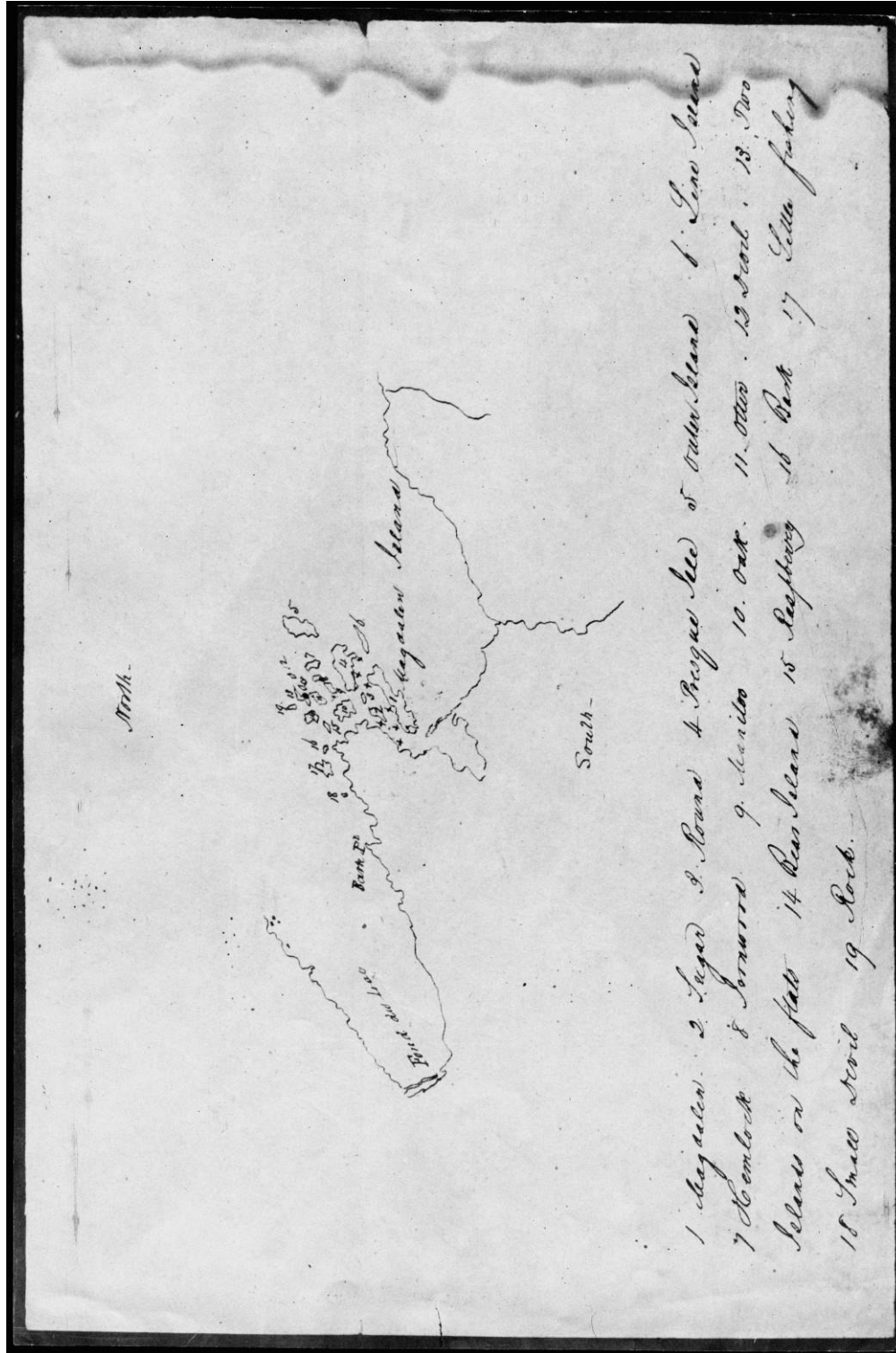


Figure 2. American Fur Company map of the Apostle Islands, 1839. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, box 1.

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arrived in the Chequamegon region to survey and divide ceded Ojibwe lands into townships and sections, a prerequisite for federal sale of these lands. In the same year Congress authorized the construction of a canal and locks to bypass the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie. The land office survey provided the means and the authorization of the Sault canal provided the motivation for a flurry of town founding and land speculation on the western end of Lake Superior. In 1853 a group of investors platted the town site of Superior, Wisconsin, at the head of Lake Superior. The following year the town of Oneota was incorporated, the first of several towns that would join together to become the city of Duluth. Investors envisioned these towns linked to St. Paul by railroad and growing to become leading Great Lakes shipping ports.²⁶

The men who founded Ashland similarly envisioned a city that would be a major port and railroad terminus. In July 1854 Asaph Whittlesey and George Kilborn came from Ohio and built a cabin at the head of Chequamegon Bay. Martin Beaser from Ontonagon soon joined them, and the three entered into a partnership to plat the town of Ashland. When a post office was established in 1855, the name Ashland had been taken by another Wisconsin town, so the settlement was called Whittlesey until 1860, when the name was officially changed to Ashland. Meanwhile, a second partnership consisting of Frederick Prentice of Toledo, David S. Lusk of New York, George R. Stuntz of Superior, and Captain John Daniel Angus of La Pointe established the town site of Bay City about a mile to the east of Whittlesey. Early in 1855 they were joined by Edwin Ellis, representing a group of St. Paul capitalists, who was instrumental in organizing and developing Bay City. By August 1857 Whittlesey and Bay City had two stores and thirty dwellings between them, and Ellis was building a hotel and steam saw mill.²⁷

In 1856 Minnesota politician Henry M. Rice and four Washington, D.C., bankers formed the Bayfield Land Company and established the town site of Bayfield on the Bayfield Peninsula. One of the founders of Superior, Rice presumably saw Bayfield as another good candidate for a thriving port city. Bayfield grew more quickly than Whittlesey and Bay City—in April 1857 the new *Bayfield Mercury* reported the population of the town at nearly six hundred. Even with a sizable reduction for hyperbole, Bayfield was clearly much bigger than Whittlesey-Bay City. Speculators also bought land in the Apostle Islands. Julius Austrian, a merchant who came to La Pointe in 1844, purchased thousands of acres on Madeline Island, including the land where the village of La Pointe was located. A group of investors headed by Kentucky Congressman John C. Breckenridge purchased land on Basswood Island.²⁸

The population of La Pointe declined as people left for new settlements on the mainland. In addition, La Pointe lost most of its Ojibwe population when the Treaty of

²⁶ Arnold R. Alanen, "Early Agriculture within the Boundaries of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: An Overview of Bear, Ironwood, Michigan, Oak, Otter, Raspberry, Rocky, South Twin and Stockton Islands and the Mainland Unit," (report prepared for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1985), 2, 6–7; Bill Beck and C. Patrick Labadie, *Pride of the Inland Seas: An Illustrated History of the Port of Duluth-Superior* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press, 2004), 25, 33–43, 52; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 92–100.

²⁷ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 112–21, 127–32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50, 69, 133–37.

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1854 established the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations. At the time of the treaty, Ojibwe constituted one-third of the population of the village of La Pointe, even though they were not counted in the federal census. Only a few stayed after the reservations were established. La Pointe's remaining inhabitants supported themselves by trapping in the winter, growing potatoes in the summer, and fishing—the type of multiple work strategy that would be characteristic of island living until the mid-twentieth century. La Pointe was isolated during the winter; the arrival of the first steamboat in the spring was a major event. When the ice froze solid, people could walk to the settlements on the mainland, but during fall freeze up and spring break up the isolation was complete. Two men lived on other islands during this time period. In the 1840s a cooper named William Wilson moved from La Pointe to the island that was thereafter called Wilson's or Hermit Island. In 1855 trader Benjamin Armstrong moved with his family to Oak Island, where he built a home and opened a trading post.²⁹

The opening of the Sault canal in 1855 brought a pronounced increase in traffic on Lake Superior. Ships carried settlers and supplies to the communities at the west end of the lake and began carrying exports—mostly barrels of fish—back east. Steamboats offered tours of Lake Superior, and hotels and boardinghouses opened in La Pointe and Bayfield, catering to tourists as well as settlers, investors, and surveyors involved in town building. In 1857 the first Apostle Islands lighthouse was placed in service on Michigan Island. The U.S. Lighthouse Board had intended this lighthouse to be built on Long Island, to guide ships into the harbor at La Pointe, but a local official changed the location of the lighthouse to Michigan Island. When the Lighthouse Board learned that the lighthouse was on Michigan Island, they required the contractors to build another one on Long Island. The La Pointe lighthouse on Long Island was placed in service in 1858, and the Michigan Island lighthouse was shut down. By that time, many ships were traveling from Duluth or Superior to Bayfield, approaching the Apostle Islands from the west. To guide these ships, the federal government purchased Raspberry Island for a lighthouse, which was placed in service in 1863.

The Panic of 1857 brought an abrupt halt to the growth of Superior, Duluth, Whittlesey, Bay City, and Bayfield. In 1860 the federal census counted a total of 67 people in Ashland (Whittlesey was renamed Ashland that year) and Bay City, with ninety-three vacant dwellings in the two towns. The panic added to the population decline in La Pointe, where the census counted 319 people in 1860. Bayfield lost people also—the 1860 census counted thirty-eight vacant dwellings, 31 percent of the total. But with a population of 353, Bayfield was the leading port in the Chequamegon region. In 1859 Bayfield's leaders managed to have the county seat of La Pointe County moved from La Pointe to Bayfield. In response, people in La Pointe, Whittlesey, and Bay City successfully petitioned for the creation of Ashland County out of roughly two-thirds of La Pointe County.³⁰ The Civil War boosted the national economy, but it siphoned more people away from the Chequamegon region. By 1863 Bay City was completely deserted. One family lived in Ashland, and they were only there in the summer. Some 250 people

²⁹ Ibid., 50–53; Ross, *La Pointe*, 115–18.

³⁰ In 1866 a portion of Ashland County was annexed to La Pointe County to create Bayfield County.

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lived in Bayfield in 1865, supporting themselves by fishing, logging, and catering to tourists. All of these activities were conducted on a small scale.³¹

The Late Nineteenth Century

When the Civil War ended, people began to migrate to the Chequamegon region. The Homestead Act of 1862 drew some people, but opportunities in logging, fishing, and quarrying proved to be greater enticements than farming. By 1869 there were four sawmills operating on the Bayfield Peninsula, including that of Robinson D. Pike in Bayfield. In 1870 the Boutin family moved their fishing business to Bayfield, complete with equipment, boats, and perhaps as many as one hundred fishermen and their families. In the same year, Strong, French and Company opened the first sandstone quarry in the Chequamegon region on Basswood Island, with a contract to supply stone for the new Milwaukee County Courthouse. Bayfield was poised for growth based on the exploitation of the region's natural resources of lumber, fish, and sandstone, much of which was obtained on or around the Apostle Islands.

The relatively early development of the lumber, fishing, and sandstone industries in the remote Chequamegon region was possible because these commodities could be transported to market on lake vessels before railroads reached the area. As the number of ships traveling to Bayfield from the east increased, the Michigan Island lighthouse was reactivated to guide them. Even more lake traffic passed north of the Apostle Islands, traveling to and from Duluth and Superior, and the demand grew for lights to guide ships around rather than through the islands. Lighthouses were placed in service on Outer Island in 1874 and on Sand Island in 1881. By that time a railroad line had been completed to Ashland, transforming the pattern of growth in the Chequamegon region. Ashland was virtually nonexistent when the Wisconsin Central Railroad announced in 1871 that the town would be its Chequamegon Bay terminus. As hundreds of workers arrived to build the railroad, Ashland became the proverbial boom town. Early in 1872 Ashland and Bay City were consolidated as the village of Ashland, and in July of that year the *Ashland Weekly Press* (recently moved to Ashland from Bayfield) estimated that there were seven hundred people in the village. Growth was erratic, however, as the construction of the railroad was plagued by delays due to financial and technical difficulties. In addition to such setbacks as the Panic of 1873, the difficult terrain on the thirty miles of railroad line between Ashland and the Penokee Gap required the construction of sixty-one bridges.³²

The building of Ashland and the building of the railroad provided new markets for lumber, fish, and sandstone; in addition lake vessels carried these commodities to Duluth, Chicago, Buffalo and other Great Lakes ports. The abundance of hemlock, pine, cedar, and hardwoods in the Apostle Islands, combined with the ease and economy of water transportation, created a diverse logging industry that supplied several niche markets. Most logging at this time took place on Oak and Basswood islands, relatively

³¹ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 52, 112, 114, 135, 137, 152, 186. The 1865 Wisconsin state census counted 269 people in La Pointe County, most of whom would have lived in Bayfield.

³² Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 186–94, 205.

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close to the mainland. Fishing became a major industry with the arrival of the Boutin family, the first large fish dealers in the Chequamegon region. Fishermen either worked for or sold their catch to the Boutins or one of the smaller dealers, who took care of processing, packing, shipping, and marketing. In the spring and summer fishermen generally worked from island fish camps, and dealers sent collecting boats to the camps to pick up fish and deliver supplies. This pattern of organization would prevail in the Apostle Islands fishing industry until the mid-twentieth century. Quarrying generated considerable excitement, but the development of the sandstone industry was not as steady as that of the lumber or fishing industries. From 1870 to 1872 the Basswood Island quarry flourished, but production diminished in 1873, and the quarry closed following the nationwide financial collapse in September. On Stockton Island, a quarry operated for several months in 1871.

Travel between the towns, light stations, logging camps, and quarry camps of the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay was mainly by water. There was no choice, of course, for travel to the islands, but people also preferred to travel by boat between Ashland and Bayfield in lieu of a slow and bumpy wagon ride. Small sailboats known as Mackinaw boats were the most common local watercraft, and they provided transportation service until steam-powered tugboats arrived in the 1870s. Steam tugs were faster, more reliable, and more powerful than sailboats, able to tow a barge of sandstone or a raft of logs as well as carry passengers. The first steam tug on Chequamegon Bay, the *Minnie V.*, arrived in 1870 and logged five thousand miles during her first season, carrying passengers and hauling freight, even taking pleasure excursions. Within a few years there were several steam tugs operating on the bay, providing regular ferry and freight service between Bayfield and Ashland and somewhat less regular service to La Pointe. Winter transportation across the ice was by dogsled or on foot; heavier loads were transported on sleighs pulled by teams of horses or oxen.

When the Wisconsin Central Railroad was completed to Ashland in 1877, it accelerated all aspects of growth and development in the Chequamegon region. In 1883 the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad was completed to Bayfield, but instead of locating its terminal in Bayfield as anticipated, the railroad company established the town of Washburn and built its terminal there. Within a few years Washburn had a grain elevator, coal dock, merchandise dock, and three sawmills, and it quickly outstripped Bayfield in population and commerce. In 1884 and 1885 two more railroad lines were completed to Ashland, and in the latter year Ashland began shipping iron ore from the Gogebic Range. By then there were five sawmills operating in Ashland, which rivaled Duluth-Superior as the leading port on Lake Superior. Although bulk cargoes such as lumber and sandstone were more economically shipped by water than by rail, the railroads expanded the market for these commodities by making it possible to ship directly to locations away from the Great Lakes. Freight could be shipped by rail in the winter when navigation was closed, and perishable foods such as fresh fish and strawberries could be shipped in the summer. Tourists could reach Bayfield or Ashland more quickly and cheaply by railroad than by lake steamer.

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Bayfield was already the leading fishing port on Lake Superior when A. Booth and Sons of Chicago—the largest fish dealer on the Great Lakes—expanded its operations to Bayfield in 1885. Booth, the Boutins, and other dealers used steam tugs for collecting and fishing, which increased productivity. Joseph LeBel established a substantial fishery on Long Island, and on Sand Island Frank Shaw developed his fish camp into a successful fishing business, farm, and summer home. Logging focused on the large-scale logging of white pine, as big lumber companies moved in from the east. Although the largest logging operations were on the mainland, pine and other woods were cut on Madeline, Stockton, Basswood, Sand, and Outer islands, at least. The 1882 reopening of the sandstone quarry on Basswood Island marked the start of the heyday of sandstone quarrying in the Chequamegon region. Four quarries were opened on the mainland between 1883 and 1886, when John and William Knight opened a new quarry on Stockton Island. In 1888 Frederick Prentice opened a mainland quarry at Houghton Point, and within a few years the Prentice Brownstone Company quarry was the largest in the Chequamegon region. The 1880s were also the heyday for big resort hotels in Ashland and Bayfield. The Wisconsin Central Railroad built the Hotel Chequamegon in Ashland in 1877, and the Island View Hotel opened in Bayfield in 1883. Camp Stella on Sand Island was the first resort in the Apostle Islands. Opened by newspaper publisher Samuel Fifield in 1886, Camp Stella offered rustic accommodations where guests could escape hay fever and experience nature.

The 1890s brought significant changes to the Apostle Islands. The fishing industry endured a crisis when the whitefish population crashed as the result of overfishing and habitat pollution. Fishermen shifted their focus to lake trout and herring, and the November herring run became a community event, when much of Bayfield turned out to pick, dress, and pack herring. On Sand Island the cluster of fish camps began to develop into a permanent community. Norwegian fishermen built homes and established farms to feed their families and supplement their fishing income, and Frank Shaw and his family began to live on the island year round. The sandstone industry was strong when the decade began. On Basswood Island two quarries operated in 1890, but one barely made it through the season, and the other largely shut down after the Panic of 1893. The Stockton Island quarry operated until 1897. In 1891 Frederick Prentice expanded his Houghton Point quarry operation to Hermit Island, where he also built a summer home called Cedar Bark Cottage. By 1897 both of Prentice's quarries had closed. By 1900 quarrying was over in the Apostle Islands, the victim of new construction techniques and changing architectural fashions. But the reddish brown sandstone can still be seen in buildings throughout the Midwest, and in Bayfield, Washburn, and Ashland the abundance of local sandstone gives the architecture of these places its distinctive character.

The logging industry continued on its course of cutting as much white pine as technologically possible and economically feasible, which was nearly all of it. In 1892 R. D. Pike began logging Oak Island for pine, continuing for the next ten years. Others cut pine on Stockton, Bear, Michigan, Outer, and Basswood islands. Island logging operations produced millions of feet of pine logs, and mainland logging operations produced even more. In 1892 sawmills in Ashland and Bayfield counties cut a total of

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285,500,000 feet of lumber. The 1890s saw Madeline Island begin to assume its place as one of Lake Superior's most exclusive resorts. The first summer cottages were built at La Pointe in 1894, and the Old Mission Inn opened in 1897. There were also new lighthouses on the islands. A temporary light was activated on Devils Island in 1891 and a permanent light placed in service in 1901. On Long Island, two new light towers were placed in service in 1897, and the 1858 lighthouse was remodeled as a duplex dwelling for the keeper and assistants.

The business leaders of Ashland and Bayfield achieved success by investing in multiple business ventures and exploiting a variety of resources. Merchants became fish dealers, fish dealers established logging operations, lumbermen opened quarries, and quarrymen cut timber. These same men occupied elected and appointed government offices. William Knight was perhaps the outstanding example of what an ambitious Chequamegon man could accomplish. Knight arrived in Bayfield in 1869, and over the next thirty years his business enterprises included a mercantile business; the Oak Island wood yard; pine logging; a sawmill north of Bayfield; the Stockton Island quarry; and the Island House hotel and Lumberman's Bank, both in Bayfield. He also served as justice of the peace, town chairman, county clerk, county supervisor, and county treasurer.³³ Workingmen also took multiple jobs, but for them it was a matter of necessity, not opportunity. Fishing, logging, or farming alone was not enough to make a good living and support a family, and those who lived on the islands faced additional constraints. Most of the men who lived on Madeline Island worked winters in logging camps. Homesteaders on the islands worked part of the year away from their homesteads—often fishing or logging—in order to earn income. Lighthouse keepers supplemented their pay with other work, frequently fishing, which they could do close to their stations. Virtually everyone who lived on the islands planted kitchen gardens and kept some livestock. Whatever food they did not produce or catch had to be transported by boat, a costly proposition that required careful advance planning. By the 1890s ferry boats made daily stops at La Pointe, and fish collecting boats visited many of the other islands a few times a week. In the winter island residents were not dependent on boats, but crossing on the ice was dangerous, and accidents were common. When the ice was unstable, island residents were isolated, not only from food and supplies but also from medical care.

In 1900 the communities of Chequamegon Bay presented a very different aspect than they did in 1860. Madeline Island was home to nearly three hundred people who supported themselves mainly by logging, fishing, and farming. Although the island's population was slightly smaller in 1900 than in 1860, it represented an increase since 1870 when the federal census counted just over two hundred people. People moved to Madeline Island when logging on the island increased toward the end of the nineteenth century. Ashland, with a population of about thirteen thousand, was one of the leading ports on Lake Superior, second to Duluth-Superior. With four railroad lines, three ore docks, and as many as nine sawmills, Ashland was a bustling transportation hub and lumber town.³⁴ The economy of Washburn was also based on shipping and lumber, and

³³ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 182.

³⁴ At the peak of Ashland lumbering in the 1890s the city had nine sawmills, but frequent fires resulted in equally frequent changes in the number of mills in operation.

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in 1892 the Bayfield county seat was moved there from Bayfield. In 1900 the population of Washburn approached seven thousand. Although Bayfield had only Pike's sawmill—compared to Washburn's four mills and Ashland's nine—the lumber industry was one of two supports of the village economy. The second was fishing, which connected Bayfield closely to the Apostle Islands. The village population was about twenty-two hundred. Official population counts for the Indian reservations in 1900 were 226 for Red Cliff and 714 for Bad River, but not all who were counted actually lived on the reservations. Lumber sales were the primary source of income for the Ojibwe, as logging on the reservations approached its peak. In addition to the overall population increase in the Chequamegon region, the mix of ethnicities and nationalities had changed significantly since 1860, when métis, French Canadians, and Ojibwe still predominated. The influx of settlers that began in the 1850s came primarily from the eastern U.S., the Great Lakes states, and Canada. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a larger proportion of European immigrants came to the region. In 1900 the largest immigrant group in Ashland County was the Germans, followed by Swedes, British Canadians, Norwegians, and French Canadians. In Bayfield County the largest immigrant group was the Norwegians, followed by Swedes, French Canadians, British Canadians, and Germans.³⁵

The Early Twentieth Century

By the early 1900s the fishing industry had recovered from the collapse of the whitefish population by shifting to lake trout and herring and increasing the scale and efficiency of fishing operations. Gasoline engines gave smaller fishing boats the advantages of steam tugs, but unlike steam tugs they were affordable to the average fisherman. The commercial catch was better in some years than others, but the overall trend was upward. More than one hundred independent fishermen operated out of Bayfield along with three to four fish companies. Meanwhile, the lumber industry was undergoing a similar transformation, as pine was depleted in the early years of the twentieth century. The giant lumber companies in Washburn and Ashland shut down their sawmills and moved to the southern and western states. The companies that remained turned to logging the hardwood, hemlock, and cedar that was abundant on the Bayfield Peninsula and in the Apostle Islands. The John Schroeder Lumber Company of Milwaukee became the largest lumber company in the Chequamegon region, with a sawmill in Ashland and extensive holdings of timberlands that had been stripped of pine. Schroeder's first major logging operation in the islands was on Stockton Island, where in the winter of 1914–15 three hundred men cut approximately ten million board feet of

³⁵ Michael J. Goc, ed., *On the Rock: The History of Madeline Island Told Through Its Families* (Friendship, WI: New Past Press and Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, 1997), 19, 23; Ross, *La Pointe*, 127; *Wisconsin Blue Book, 1917* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1917); "Washburn Through the Years," City of Washburn, <http://www.cityofwashburn.org/History.htm>; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1900* (Washington: Government Printing Office), 407; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 61, 63, 122–23, 141–42, 171–72, 176–77, 210–11; Arnold R. Alanen, with Patricia Filzen, Dean Proctor, and Ronda Dallman, "Historical Information and Background Data for the Northern Great Lakes Region," in *A Proposed Visitor Center for the Northern Great Lakes Region: Supporting Documents* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Extension, Co-operative Extension, 1989), 9–12; "Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880), Table XIV—native and foreign born population, by counties, Wisconsin State Archives.

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logs, the largest logging operation in the islands up to that time. Subsequently Schroeder logged Oak Island and Michigan Island, where the company built the first logging railroad in the islands. A number of smaller logging operators also worked in the islands during this period.

As the tempo of hardwood and hemlock logging increased, so did the expanses of forest that were reduced to stumps. The campaign to farm these cutover lands was waged by lumber companies, land companies, government agencies, and community boosters. William Knight led the local campaign to farm the cutover, planting more than 120 acres of fruit trees on the Bayfield Peninsula. Other lumbermen followed his precedent, including Elisha Brigham on Basswood Island. The campaign to farm the cutover gave rise to several speculative schemes to develop farms in the Apostle Islands. Only the Lake Superior Land & Development Company achieved even minor results—selling a ten acre tract on Hermit Island to a Minneapolis family who established a short-lived farm on the island. Attempting to combine farm and resort development, the company renovated Frederick Prentice's Cedar Bark Cottage and operated it as a resort hotel for several seasons.

The most extensive farm and resort development in the Apostle Islands was on Madeline Island. When the twentieth century began there was intensive logging on the island, especially on the north end. But logging declined rapidly and the population along with it—from just under three hundred in 1900, the island's population was reduced to just under two hundred in 1910.³⁶ Some of the lumbermen stayed, however, and established productive farms on their cutover lands. Fishermen-farmers made up a large segment of Madeline Island's population. The summer population grew as more people built summer homes on the island, and summer residents purchased produce, meat, and dairy products from island farmers. The large number of summer travelers to Madeline Island led to the establishment of motorboat ferry service between Bayfield and La Pointe, which helped to keep the island community viable.

The community that developed on Sand Island in the early twentieth century had much in common with the community on Madeline Island. On both islands the economy was based on fishing and farming with an important assist from tourism. At its peak in the 1910s, the year-round population of the island numbered about seventy people, most of them living at East Bay. The one room school built on the island in 1910 was key to enabling families to live there year round. In the years that followed, the Sand Island community acquired a post office, a cooperative store, and—briefly—telephone service to the mainland. The summer community grew also. Although Camp Stella closed after Sam Fifield died in 1915, it was a catalyst for summer homes on the island, including the Campbell home near Shaw Point, the West Bay Club, and a small enclave of summer homes at East Bay.

By the 1920s the hemlock, hardwood, and cedar resources of the Chequamegon region were greatly diminished, and the decline of the lumber industry was depressing the local economy. When the former Pike lumber mill in Bayfield closed in 1924 after more

³⁶ Goc, *On the Rock*, 23, 27.

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than fifty years of operation, the only large lumber mill left operating in the region was the Schroeder mill in Ashland. Although Schroeder ceased logging on Stockton Island in 1920, it continued on Michigan Island until 1923 and on Oak Island until 1929. When Schroeder finished on Michigan Island, the company dismantled the logging railroad and moved it to Outer Island, where it began logging in 1924. There were a few smaller logging operations in the islands during this time, notably on Manitou, Otter, and Rocky islands. The decline of farming was not as pronounced as the decline of logging, but a nationwide agricultural depression reduced prices for farm products and exposed the marginal nature of cutover farms. On Basswood Island, Elisha Brigham's family stopped farming after Brigham died. On Sand Island, most of the younger generation moved away when they became adults, not just because farming was difficult, but because the entire way of life was difficult. The school on Sand Island closed in 1928.

On Madeline Island about half of the population lived on farms, but the farm economy—like the entire island economy—was becoming more oriented toward summer residents and tourism. Lavish and expensive homes were built on Nebraska Row, which made national news in 1928 when President Calvin Coolidge visited there. Tourism was growing nationwide, and Bayfield's business and civic leaders tried to tap into the growing tourism industry to replace the declining lumber industry. Their most ambitious effort was the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant in 1924 and 1925, which generated publicity but not much money. Fishing played a larger role in the local economy than tourism, gaining importance as logging declined. Most fishermen still worked from island fish camps in the summer; two of the more popular islands for fish camps were Stockton and South Twin. But motorized fishing boats made fishing from the mainland more feasible, and the Hokenson brothers chose this alternative when they built a fishery at Little Sand Bay. Telephone communication and truck shipping affected the local fishing industry as well, making it possible for fishermen to sell their fish without going through a dealer. The beginning of trucking had no impact on the continued growth of Lake Superior shipping, however, as freighters transported massive quantities of iron ore and grain. In 1921 an automatic acetylene gas burner was installed at the Sand Island light, making it the first automated lighthouse in the Apostle Islands. A few years later the Sand Island lighthouse was leased to summer resident Gert Wellisch. An automatic acetylene light was also used for the long-awaited Gull Island light that was erected in 1929. At the same time a new light tower was erected on Michigan Island, nearly twice the height of the old Michigan tower. The Gull and Michigan Island lights together helped ships to navigate around the dangerous Gull Island shoals.

The Great Depression of the 1930s reinforced some trends and altered others. It hastened the decline of logging, slowed the growth of tourism, and sent people back to the land—and water—to grow and catch their own food. Schroeder's Outer Island logging operation ended in 1930, leaving marketable timber still standing, and Schroeder's Ashland sawmill closed in 1939. After logging ceased on Rocky Island in 1931, it appears that the only commercial logging in the islands during the decade was a small operation on Bear Island. The Depression also shook up the commercial fishing industry. The Boutin Fish Company went out of business after more than sixty years as a leader in the local fishing industry. The fishing, however, was better than ever, and

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whitefish again accounted for a significant portion of the commercial catch. Herman Johnson Jr., a second generation Sand Island fisherman, left Sand Island and established a fishery not far from the Hokensons at Little Sand Bay. A group of fishermen on South Twin Island moved their fish camps to Rocky Island after fellow fisherman Lenus Jacobson purchased South Twin and established new policies. The Manitou Island fish camp was heavily used for winter ice fishing, which enabled men who could not afford a fishing boat to earn some income, or at least catch dinner.

The back to the land movement of the Depression years brought some new farms to the Chequamegon region, but they were marginal in terms of productivity. The idea that farming was the best use for cutover lands was discredited, and government policy encouraged reforestation instead. The new forests were managed primarily for timber harvesting, but recreation was an important secondary use. Hunters were already coming to the islands to hunt the deer that flourished in the second growth hardwood forests. Trolling for lake trout grew into an important business for the two dozen or so charter boat owners operating out of Bayfield. On South Twin Island, Lenus Jacobson opened Trollers Home, renting the cabins that had been abandoned by the fishermen who moved to Rocky Island. During the hard times of the 1930s the business leaders of Bayfield and Ashland increased their efforts to develop the tourism industry. Their most ambitious idea was an Apostle Islands National Park that would bring thousands of people annually to the Chequamegon region. The park that they envisioned included part of Madeline Island and perhaps some of the smaller islands. In 1930 Congress authorized the investigation of a national park in the Apostle Islands, and the National Park Service sent landscape architect Harlan Kelsey to evaluate the national park potential of the islands. Horrified by the effects of logging and forest fires, Kelsey recommended against a national park in the islands. In 1936 the National Park Service ended its investigation of an Apostle Islands National Park.

World War II and After

The World War II and postwar years brought growth to the Apostle Islands in a number of ways. The Lullabye Furniture Company of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, began logging on Outer Island in 1942, when wartime demands created a favorable market for plywood veneer. After the war, Lullabye and others cut hardwoods for veneer and hemlock and spruce for papermaking. The 1940s were the golden years for the Lake Superior fishing industry, when the commercial catch reached its all time high. In 1946 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that 250 men were employed year round in the local fishing industry, which generated as much as half a million dollars in annual revenue. Tourism came back stronger than ever when the war ended, with an especially strong market for outdoor recreation. Lenus Jacobson sold South Twin Island and Trollers Home to Carl Moe and George Englund, who added a restaurant and opened Trollers Home Resort in 1946. In the same year Laurie and Grace Nourse opened the Rocky Island Air Haven with a restaurant and rental cabins. These and other island hunting and fishing camps catered to trollers and deer hunters. More summer homes were built on Madeline Island. At Little Sand Bay, Herman Johnson opened a tavern and general store at his fishery and built several housekeeping cabins for tourists.

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Farming, however, declined in the 1940s, a nationwide trend that was more pronounced within the cutover. On Sand and Madeline islands—the only Apostle Islands where there still were farms in 1940—the decline of farming was correlated with population decline. In 1944 the last three families living year round on Sand Island moved to Bayfield for the winter. After that the island was occupied only in summer, by fishermen and vacationers. On Madeline Island the year-round population decreased by 50 between 1940 and 1950, from 236 to 186. The number of farms on the island decreased from thirty-two in 1935 to twelve in 1950.³⁷ In all, the 1940s brought economic growth to the Apostle Islands, especially for commercial fishing and tourism, which emerged as the twin supports of the island economy. But for year-round island communities, the 1940s brought decline, and on Sand Island the end of a way of life.

Economic hardship returned in the 1950s, when Lake Superior's commercial fishing industry collapsed. The primary cause of the collapse was the parasitic sea lamprey, which preyed on lake trout and whitefish. Between 1950 and 1960 the annual lake trout catch for Lake Superior dropped by about 90 percent, and the whitefish catch dropped by more than 50 percent. The herring catch also declined in the 1950s. More and more commercial fishermen retired or found other work. Booth Fisheries, the last of the dealers to send a collecting boat around to island fish camps, stopped in 1958. Logging in the Apostle Islands expanded during the 1950s, but not enough to compensate for the collapse of the fishing industry. Postwar logging was smaller in scale than during the early twentieth century. The Lullabye Furniture Company, which ran the largest logging operation in the islands, cut four million feet of timber on Outer Island in its record 1955–56 season. By comparison, ten million feet of timber a year was not unusual for Schroeder in the 1910s and 1920s.

The development of the tourism industry became critical after the commercial fishing industry collapsed. Except for the trolling business, hurt by the decline of the lake trout population, tourism was thriving. Madeline Island had the largest summer resort community in the islands, and it was growing. The Madeline Island Historical Museum, opened in 1958, helped to preserve and interpret the island's rich history. Sand Island was home to a smaller summer population, most of them descendants of the people who summered or lived on the island in the early 1900s. South Twin Island became a private vacation retreat, as did the Michigan and Raspberry Island light stations, which had both been automated in the 1940s. Rocky Island Air Haven prospered, serving fish dinners to tourists on boat excursions and accommodating deer hunters in the fall. The boom in outdoor recreation appeared to many to be the key to alleviating economic depression in the Chequamegon region. In addition, recreation advocates looked to northern Wisconsin, including the Apostle Islands, to alleviate the shortage of public parks and forests with recreational facilities. The forests of the Apostle Islands had regenerated to the point where conservationists valued them as wilderness. In 1959 the Wisconsin Conservation Commission created Apostle Islands State Forest, a wilderness area on Stockton, Oak, and Basswood islands. Only Stockton Island was acquired by the state, however. Officials of Ashland County, which owned all of Oak and much of

³⁷ Goc, *On the Rock*, 43, 45, 63.

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Basswood Island, did not support an unmanaged wilderness area, advocating instead for a state park with well-developed recreational facilities to attract tourists.

The economic crisis deepened during the 1960s. Due to sea lamprey control and lake trout stocking programs, Lake Superior's lake trout and whitefish populations recovered to a large degree, but the commercial fishing industry did not. In 1965 there were twenty fishing boats operating in Bayfield and vicinity, compared to seventy-five to one hundred boats in the late 1940s. On Rocky and Manitou islands, fish camps were used primarily for recreation rather than commercial fishing. Lullabye stopped logging Outer Island, not because the timber was gone but because logging there was no longer profitable. There were only two other small logging operations in the islands during the 1960s, on Sand and South Twin. As for farming, there was one working farm left on Madeline Island in 1960. The regional economic depression was reinforced by the closing of the last iron mine on the Penokee-Gogebic Range and the Ashland ore docks along with it. Tourism was the only growth industry left in the Chequamegon region, and the direction that it would take was a matter of controversy. Big Bay State Park was established on Madeline Island in 1963, with low-impact recreational facilities for camping, picnicking, hiking, and similar nature-based activities. In contrast, a major new development of luxury vacation homes with a marina and golf course exemplified private development for the privileged few.

Into this context, the idea of an Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was introduced in the early 1960s. The movement to create a national lakeshore grew out of the same motives as the movement to create a state park in the 1950s—to protect natural resources, alleviate the shortage of public places for outdoor recreation, and generate economic development. The catalyst for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was a resolution passed by the Bad River Tribal Council on May 10, 1962, requesting the governor of Wisconsin and the U.S. secretary of the interior to study the feasibility of a national shoreline recreation area encompassing the Kakagon and Bad River sloughs on the Bad River Reservation. The federal investigation prompted by the Bad River resolution quickly broadened to include the Apostle Islands and Bayfield Peninsula. When Wisconsin governor Gaylord Nelson was elected to the U.S. Senate in November 1962, he worked toward creating Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and in September 1965 he introduced legislation to create the lakeshore to Congress. As proposed at that time, the national lakeshore consisted of three units: the Apostle Islands Unit, containing all of the islands except for Madeline; the Red Cliff Unit extending along the shoreline of the Bayfield Peninsula, mostly within the Red Cliff Reservation; and the Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs Unit, consisting of the marshlands and adjacent shoreline on the Bad River Reservation.

Between 1967 and 1970, multiple Congressional hearings on the proposed national lakeshore generated nearly one thousand pages of testimony. At the federal level the political climate was favorable, and national environmental groups supported the proposal. At the local level responses were mixed. Most business leaders, elected officials, and residents of the Chequamegon region supported the national lakeshore for the economic benefits that it would bring. People who owned property within the

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national lakeshore, with a few exceptions, were opposed. Ojibwe support for the national lakeshore wavered after the proposal was introduced to Congress, largely because of increasing conflicts between the Ojibwe and state officials over hunting and fishing. By 1969 both the Red Cliff and Bad River tribal councils stood in opposition to the national lakeshore. When it appeared unlikely that Congress would pass the lakeshore bill in the face of Ojibwe opposition, Nelson and others engineered a compromise. The Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs Unit was deleted, the Red Cliff Unit was reduced, and Long Island was removed. The amended bill moved forward and was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on September 26, 1970. In the 1980s the inclusion of Long Island in the national lakeshore was reconsidered, and on October 17, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed the bill adding Long Island to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

CHAPTER TWO NATIVE AMERICANS

Native Americans were present in the Apostle Islands long before the first Europeans arrived in the seventeenth century. Archaeologists have found evidence of pre-contact island campsites that native people used for hunting and probably for fishing. Ojibwe tradition tells of their ancestors' journey westward from the shore of the great salt water to Sault Ste. Marie and eventually to Madeline Island, which became their spiritual center. When French Jesuits established a mission at Chequamegon Bay in the 1660s, they found native people of several different tribes living by the bay. Many of these people were Ottawa, Huron, and Petun, refugees from Iroquois attacks, who left Chequamegon Bay and returned eastward in 1670. By the late seventeenth century the Ojibwe were the dominant tribe in the Chequamegon region, as they have remained to the present day. Through much of the eighteenth century Ojibwe lived in a large village on Madeline Island. Their economy was based on hunting, fishing, gathering, and some farming. Trade with the French created social and political alliances and supplied the Ojibwe with trade goods of metal, cloth, and glass. The dynamics of the fur trade and of Ojibwe and white relationships changed as the British and then the Americans took power. Through treaties with the U.S. government in 1842 and 1854, the Lake Superior Ojibwe ceded their lands and then moved to reservations. For the Ojibwe in the Chequamegon region, the 1854 treaty established the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations on the mainland and a fishing reserve on Madeline Island. The assimilation programs of the government and missionaries aimed to destroy traditional Ojibwe culture and were partially successful in doing so. The reservation system did not allow the Ojibwe to achieve a decent standard of living, especially when the courts failed to uphold Ojibwe treaty rights. In the 1930s and beginning again in the 1960s, new government programs and Ojibwe activism have improved living conditions on the reservations and helped to support the revitalization of Ojibwe culture.

Before Recorded History

Archaeologists divide human history in eastern North America (including the Midwest) before the voyages of Columbus into four traditions: Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian. Paleo-Indians, the first Americans who appear in the archaeological record, came from Asia, possibly crossing on foot on a land bridge from Siberia to Alaska or traveling by boat along the shore of the land bridge and continuing down the Pacific Coast. Based on the stone tools—including distinctive fluted spear points—and scattered sites that have been found, Paleo-Indians were hunters and gatherers who lived in small groups and established short-term campsites. Paleo-Indians reached the Great Lakes region about 12,000 B.P. Most Paleo-Indian sites in the region are located in southern Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario, usually on remnant beaches of the postglacial lakes that formed when the glaciers were retreating. The Valdres glacier covered the entire Superior basin with ice; when it retreated about 11,000 B.P., glacial

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Lake Duluth rose to more than four hundred feet above the current level of Lake Superior.¹

The earliest evidence of human occupation in the Chequamegon region comes from the Old Birch Hill site on Chequamegon Bay, a remnant beach from Lake Duluth, and may date to 11,000 B.P. Tools at the site are made from a flint-like stone called chert that originated outside the region, indicating trade or travel to obtain it. Several small habitation sites that archaeologist Robert Salzer identified in the North Lakes area of Wisconsin southeast of the Apostle Islands also suggest that Paleo-Indians inhabited the Chequamegon region. The stone artifacts at these sites include projectile points, scrapers, knives, and chipping residue. Salzer identified these sites as representing two late phases of Paleo-Indian occupation that he named the Flambeau and Minoqua phases; he estimated their dates at ca. 9,000 B.P. and 8,000 to 7,000 B.P., respectively. In the Apostle Islands, a single, isolated late Paleo-Indian projectile point was found at the P-Flat site (47AS47) on Manitou Island.² It is unlikely, however, that much additional evidence of Paleo-Indians will be found in the islands. Not only are Paleo-Indian sites small and uncommon, but lake levels have continued to fluctuate, so that sites once on shore may now be underwater.³

The Archaic tradition succeeded the Paleo-Indian tradition as people adapted to the woodland environment that developed in the Great Lakes region when the glaciers receded farther north and the climate grew warmer. About 7,000 B.P., new varieties of notched spear points appeared that were suited for hunting woodland animals such as moose and woodland caribou. Weighted spear throwers and ground—as opposed to chipped—stone tools such as axes, adzes, and gouges appeared later in the Archaic tradition. Presumably Archaic people had a variety of implements made of wood, bark, and basketry that have not survived. Excavated sites suggest that people continued to live in small groups but had a more diverse diet than their Paleo-Indian predecessors, consisting of big and small game; fish; and plant foods including seeds, nuts, and berries. They likely moved their camps in pursuit of seasonal food sources. During the latter part of the Archaic period, ceremonial burial practices are evident in graves that include tools, weapons, and ornaments, sometimes in large quantities and made of imported materials such as shell beads from the Gulf of Mexico and chert from New York State.⁴

¹ E. James Dixon, *Bones, Boats, and Bison: Archeology and the First Colonization of Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 19–43, 243–56; Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 13–14; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 81–126; George Irving Quimby, *Indian Culture and European Trade Goods* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 15–16.

² Jeffrey Richner, memo to author, 1 June 2007.

³ Jeffrey J. Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1979–1980” (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1987), 10–11; Robert J. Salzer and David F. Overstreet, “Summary Report: Apostle Islands Project, Inventory and Evaluation of Cultural Resources within the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore—Wisconsin,” (submitted to National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1976), 29–33.

⁴ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 16–18; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 126–199; Quimby, *Indian Culture*, 16–19.

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Archaic people of the Lake Superior region made an important contribution to the Archaic tradition by mining copper. Artifacts made from Lake Superior copper are found at sites throughout eastern North America. On the Keweenaw Peninsula and Isle Royale, archaeologists have found shallow mine pits where people used stone hammers to mine veins of copper. Residents of the upper Great Lakes made knives, spear points, axes, chisels, celts, awls, adzes, fishhooks, harpoons, bracelets, beads, and other artifacts of hammered copper.⁵ Copper artifacts are among those found at Archaic sites in the North Lakes area, where Salzer identified two phases of Archaic occupation. The Squirrel River phase may have begun about 7,000 B.P. In addition to copper tools, stone artifacts made of local and exotic stone include notched points, scrapers, drills, gravers, and wedges. A similar inventory of stone and copper tools represents the Burnt-Rollways phase, although there seems to have been greater use of local quartz. This phase is tentatively dated between 4,000 and 3,000 B.P., possibly later. In the Apostle Islands themselves, only a few artifacts have been attributed to the Archaic tradition. On Stockton Island, archaeologists found a stemmed projectile point at the Ebob site (47AS38), and chipped stone debitage, fire-cracked rock, and a worked copper blank with a cluster of charcoal at site 47AS41/42 at Quarry Bay. The latter yielded a radiocarbon date of 5,300 to 4,880 B.P. Other island sites that have not been dated might be associated with the Archaic tradition. Fluctuating lake levels, however, may have destroyed or inundated shoreline occupations on the islands. Archaic sites appear to be uncommon in other parts of the Great Lakes region as well.⁶

The Woodland tradition, distinguished by the manufacture of pottery, began later in the Lake Superior region than in the southern Great Lakes. Agriculture, another aspect of the Woodland tradition farther south, did not come to the Lake Superior region along with pottery. The Laurel culture initiated the Woodland tradition in the Lake Superior region about 2,100 B.P. The Laurel culture extended across the Lake Superior basin from Manitoba to the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan and persisted for about eight hundred years. Although archaeologists have identified a number of Laurel sites in the boreal forest north of Lake Superior, the largest sites are in the richer environment of the Lake Forest. Laurel sites seem to be most common on the Lake Superior shore, often at the mouths of streams or on shallow bays where spawning fish could be caught in season. A distinctive pebble net sinker; thin, hard-walled pottery decorated with rows of impressions; and extensive use of copper characterize Laurel sites. Habitation sites show repeated seasonal use, possibly by several related families, and archaeologists have also associated burial mound groups with the culture.⁷

⁵ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 18–19; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 181–199; Quimby, *Indian Culture*, 18; James A. Robertson, William A. Lovis, and John R. Halsey, “The Late Archaic: Hunter-Gatherers in an Uncertain Environment,” in *Retrieving Michigan’s Buried Past: The Archaeology of the Great Lakes State*, ed. John R. Halsey (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.: Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1999), 114–15.

⁶ Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands,” 12; Salzer and Overstreet, “Summary Report: Apostle Islands,” 33–34; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 133, 187–88; Jeffrey Richner, e-mail to author, 22 August 2007.

⁷ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 21, 23; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 259–60, 284–92; David S. Brose and Michael J. Hambacher, “The Middle Woodland in Northern Michigan,” in *Retrieving Michigan’s Buried Past*, 173; Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands,” 13.

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The Apostle Islands are midway between the Laurel sites of northeastern Minnesota and sites representing the Middle Woodland Nokomis culture in the North Lakes area of north central Wisconsin. Nokomis sites are located on small lakes, streams, and swamps rather than on the Lake Superior shore. Nokomis pottery is decorated with trailed lines and impressions from cord-wrapped paddles, and as in the Laurel culture there are numerous copper artifacts. Archaeologists have found copper-working areas with hearths, hammers, and copper scraps at Nokomis sites and documented a semi-subterranean house with associated midden and trash pits at one site. Yet despite the proximity of the well-documented Laurel and Nokomis cultures, archaeologists have not identified any Middle Woodland sites in the Apostle Islands. It may be that sites from this time period lack diagnostic artifacts, or that there was not much use of the islands at that time.⁸

The Late Woodland tradition began in the Lake Superior region about 1,200 B.P. (A.D. 800). A greater number of archaeological sites points to an increase in population during this time period. The archaeological record is also more complex, indicating more diversity in local cultures and their interrelationships. The Blackduck culture, known for its distinctive and long-lived pottery tradition, occupied the territory formerly occupied by the Laurel culture and extended farther east to northern Lake Huron. In the North Lakes area of Wisconsin, archaeologists have named Late Woodland sites the Lakes phase. Archaeologists have identified sites with Lakes phase characteristics in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, although other Late Woodland variations are found there as well. The Late Woodland tradition is characterized by widespread use of the bow and arrow, indicated in the archaeological record by small triangular projectile points. There is still no evidence for agriculture in either the Blackduck culture or the Lakes phase, in contrast to the southern Great Lakes where agriculture was an important part of the subsistence base. The Mississippian tradition of the Mississippi River Valley and southeastern U.S. had little impact in the Lake Superior region. Known for its large settlements with temple mounds and plazas, intensive agriculture, and elaborate pottery, Mississippian influence in the Lake Superior region is evident primarily in limited occurrences of grit- and shell-tempered pottery.⁹

Archaeologists have attributed occupations at several sites in the Apostle Islands to the Late Woodland tradition. The most important of these is the National Register-listed Morty site (47AS40) on Stockton Island, an undisturbed site representing multiple occupations. The Late Woodland component of the Morty site contains hearths; a substantial midden; and a range of artifacts including stone tools, Blackduck and Sandy Lake pottery, and animal remains. Based on the latter, archaeologists have interpreted the Morty site as a moose hunting camp. The P-Flat site (47AS47) on Manitou Island

⁸ Salzer and Overstreet, "Summary Report: Apostle Islands," 35–36; Richner, "Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands," 12–13; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 276–84; Brose and Hambacher, "The Middle Woodland," 173, 178, 182.

⁹ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 23–27; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 295–324, 350–371; Salzer and Overstreet, "Summary Report: Apostle Islands," 36–37; Susan R. Martin, "A Site for All Seasons: Some Aspects of Life in the Upper Peninsula during Late Woodland Times," in *Retrieving Michigan's Buried Past*, 221–227; John R. Halsey, "Upper Mississippian in the Upper Peninsula," in *Retrieving Michigan's Buried Past*, 272–278.

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and site 47AS41 on Stockton Island have also yielded pottery and animal remains. Other prehistoric sites that archaeologists have identified as Late Woodland include the Ebob site (47AS38) on Stockton Island, Champagne/Rain site (47AS49) on Bear Island, Luck of the Irish site (47AS48) on Otter Island, and Rocky Beach Road site (47BA20) on York Island. All are small sites with a limited variety of artifacts consisting mostly of chipped quartz pebbles that the occupants probably collected on site or nearby. Fire cracked rocks suggest that cooking took place at the sites. It appears that small groups occupied the sites for short periods of time. It is likely that fishing was an important activity, although without preserved bone that remains conjectural.¹⁰

The Early Historic Period

When the French first reached the Lake Superior region in the early seventeenth century, the native people there were continuing the Late Woodland cultural tradition. Efforts to connect historic tribes with cultures known from the archaeological record have been problematic, however. When Europeans arrived on the East Coast, they brought diseases and incited political and economic changes that altered settlement patterns well in advance of their arrival in the upper Great Lakes. Seasonal movement also complicates the association of pre-contact sites with historic tribes. Based on archaeological, anthropological, and historical evidence, scholars have associated the Blackduck pottery that is so widespread on Late Woodland sites in the upper Great Lakes variously with the Algonquian-speaking bands around the eastern end of Lake Superior, the Assiniboine to the northwest, and the Dakota Sioux to the west. Although some archaeologists attribute Blackduck pottery to one of these groups exclusively, others believe that the pottery was made by more than one people and was also shared as a result of trade and intermarriage. At present there is no single, agreed-upon point of view as to who made Blackduck pottery and how its makers are represented in historic tribal groups.¹¹

The Frenchmen who first came to Lake Superior found the bands that would later join together to become the Ojibwe tribe occupying a large area around the eastern end of the lake. These small, interrelated bands shared a language—part of the Algonquian language family—and culture but remained independent. One of these bands was the *Outchibouec* or Ojibwe who lived in the summer at the rapids, or Sault, between Lake Superior and Lake Huron and in the winter at their hunting grounds north and southwest of the Sault. The French called them the Saulteur—nation of the Sault. North of these bands were the Cree Indians, also Algonquian speakers, and to the northwest were the Siouan-speaking Assiniboine. Both of these tribes came into the Lake Superior region to hunt and trade, as did the Dakota or Santee Sioux, whose territory extended close to the southwest end of the lake.¹²

¹⁰ Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands,” 13–14, 19, 89–92, 104–110; Cathie Masters, “Morty Site,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places, 1988).

¹¹ Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 389–94.

¹² Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 6–10; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 86, map 1; Theresa M. Schenck, “*The Voice of the Crane Echoes Afar*”: *The Sociopolitical Organization of the Lake Superior Ojibwa, 1640–1855* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 19–20, 23; Robert E. Bieder, *Native American*

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Ojibwe tradition reaches back before contact with Europeans to tell of a time when their ancestors—the Anishinaabeg—lived in the east on the shore of the great salt water, and of their journey westward to Sault Ste. Marie and subsequently to Madeline Island. In the mid-nineteenth century William Warren recorded this tradition in his *History of the Ojibway People*. Born on Madeline Island in 1825, Warren was the son of fur trader Lyman Warren and Marie Cadotte, who was part Ojibwe. Warren's description of the migration journey corresponds closely to the way the journey is depicted on several Ojibwe birchbark scrolls. In addition, archaeology and linguistics support the origin of the Ojibwe in the east. As described by Warren, a great sea shell guided the Anishinaabeg in their journey, appearing at the places where they were to stop and dwell. The journey took many generations. The first stop was on the St. Lawrence River, at the site later occupied by the city of Montreal. The second stop was on the shore of Lake Huron. At the Straits of Mackinac the Anishinaabeg separated into three tribes: the Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. The Ojibwe continued to their third stop at the Sault rapids where they lived for many years. The tribe then separated into two divisions with a northern division proceeding along the north shore of Lake Superior and a southern division—the main body of the tribe—proceeding along the south shore. At the western end of Lake Superior the two divisions joined in warfare against the Sioux. During the journey along the south shore, the sea shell appeared for a final time at *Mo-ning-wuna-kaun-ing*, the place of the golden-breasted woodpecker (Madeline Island), establishing that island as the spiritual center of the Ojibwe people.¹³

Warren described a copper plate kept by an Ojibwe chief that as of 1842 recorded eight generations since the chief's family had arrived on Madeline Island. By estimating forty years as the duration of a generation, Warren calculated that the Ojibwe arrived on Madeline Island 360 years earlier or ca. 1490. (Warren wrote his history between 1849 and 1852.) Warren went on to describe the great village on Madeline Island that the Ojibwe occupied for three generations, or 120 years by Warren's calculation. At the end of this time the Ojibwe abandoned Madeline Island, dispersing in small bands on the mainland or returning east to Keweenaw Bay or the Sault. French accounts and archaeological evidence are consistent with the Ojibwe migration story, but not with Warren's dates. A generation is the length of time between the birth of parents and their offspring; given that Ojibwe men generally married at the age of eighteen to twenty, forty years is too long a span for a generation.¹⁴ Moreover, Warren tried to impose on Ojibwe tradition a Euro-American sense of time and a literal interpretation of the past that is alien to this tradition. The Ojibwe expect oral tradition to be dynamic, and they distinguish between events known from personal experience and truths that transcend history.

Communities in Wisconsin, 1600–1960: A Study of Tradition and Change (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 21, 30–31, 37; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 35–36.

¹³ Theresa Schenck, "William W. Warren's *History of the Ojibway People*: Tradition, History, and Context," in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1996), 242–246; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 8–10, 35; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, reprinted with an introduction by W. Roger Buffalohead (1885; reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 78–86, 96.

¹⁴ Schenck, "William Warren's *History*," 250.

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Warren's account of the history of the Ojibwe on Madeline Island reflects its importance to the Ojibwe who lived there.¹⁵

In the mid-seventeenth century, Indian refugees fleeing the attacks of the Iroquois populated a large area south of Lake Superior and west of Lake Michigan roughly to its southern tip—in other words much of what is now Wisconsin. Among these were Huron, Petun, and Ottawa Indians who came to the Chequamegon region. The Huron were a confederacy of four tribes who lived in fortified villages and based their subsistence on the cultivation of corn. Their homeland was on the southeastern end of Lake Huron's Georgian Bay. Although they spoke an Iroquoian language, the Huron were long-time enemies of the Five Nations of the Iroquois who lived south of Lake Ontario. They were skilled traders who quickly allied themselves with the French to become a key part of the fur trade. But the European diseases that came with the French devastated the Huron, reducing an estimated twenty thousand people before contact to less than half that number within twenty-five years. When the Iroquois attacked the Huron villages in the late 1640s, those Huron who were not killed or taken prisoner abandoned their villages and fled.¹⁶

The Petun ("Tobacco") Huron, also called the Tionnontate Huron, were closely related to the Hurons, culturally and linguistically. They lived just west of the Hurons at the southern end of Georgian Bay. The Petuns were a smaller group than the Hurons; their population before contact is estimated at two to four thousand. North of the Huron and Petun, the Ottawa Indians lived along the shores of Georgian Bay and on Manitoulin Island. The Ottawa spoke an Algonquian language and were closely related to the Algonquian-speaking groups farther west. Like these other Algonquians, the Ottawa were composed of independent bands with a shared culture. The Ottawa grew corn in addition to hunting, fishing, and gathering. The Ottawa had long been trading partners with the Huron, and like the Huron they became middlemen in the fur trade relatively early on. By 1650, the Ottawa, Petun, and Huron had all become refugees from their homelands as a result of Iroquois attacks. Survivors from the three tribes joined together, and most of them traveled westward, living at different locations until circumstances—sometimes Iroquois war parties—compelled them to move on. Chequamegon Bay offered several advantages to the group that settled there. It was beyond the reach of Iroquois war parties, offered an abundance of fish, permitted the cultivation of corn, and was well situated for trading.¹⁷

Pierre Radisson wrote an evocative account of his 1659–60 journey to Chequamegon Bay and the surrounding area. Unfortunately for historians, Radisson was

¹⁵ The Ojibwe of Fond du Lac told a migration story in which a great otter, rather than a sea shell, led the people, appearing for the final time at Fond du Lac. Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 81, 89–90, 95–112; Schenck, "William Warren's *History*," 242–43, 250–55; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 4, 32–34; W. Roger Buffalohead, "Introduction," in Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, xv.

¹⁶ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 11–13; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 81–85, 88–91; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 49; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 6–7, 21, 37.

¹⁷ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 80, 85–86, 98–99, 103; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 6–9, 37, 401; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 30–33, 48, 64–65.

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often vague about the identity of the native people he describes. It is clear that from the beginning of their journey Radisson and Des Groseilliers were accompanied by people of the “nation of the Sault,” i.e. the Saulteur, or Ojibwe. Originally Radisson and Des Groseilliers had planned to travel with two refugee Huron, but it is not clear whether this plan materialized. Early on in their journey the traders and their companions were joined by a group of Ottawa, increasing the size of their party to fourteen boats.¹⁸

As the trading party approached Chequamegon Bay, many of the Indians left to go to their families. The remainder left shortly after the group arrived at Chequamegon Bay. While Radisson and Des Groseilliers waited for their traveling companions to return, Indians “of many nations” visited and brought them food. More than four hundred Indians gathered to see the traders leave about two weeks later. Radisson did not indicate whether these people lived in a village at Chequamegon Bay. It is conceivable that the mixed village that Allouez described in 1665 already existed. Alternatively, Indians who lived in the area might have traveled to the bay to see the traders. After departing Chequamegon Bay, Radisson and Des Groseilliers traveled four days to a village of one hundred cabins by a lake, possibly Lac Courte Oreilles. With one exception, Radisson did not identify the tribes who lived there. Radisson recounted that at first the two traders lodged with a chief who came with them from Quebec, but they did not like the chief and moved in with a family of Menominee.¹⁹

When the villagers dispersed for the winter, the traders joined one of their small groups. After a winter of near-starvation followed by feasting and trading, Radisson and Des Groseilliers returned to Chequamegon Bay in the spring of 1660, accompanied by Ojibwe. Some of their party had gone ahead of them, so that when they arrived at the bay they found at least twenty cottages full. It seems likely that these cottages were occupied by Ojibwe, Ottawa, or a combination of the two. In addition to their own fort, possibly on Chequamegon Point, Radisson describes a fort that the Ottawa built “on the point that formes that Bay, which resembles a small lake.”²⁰

The French account of the Indians at Chequamegon Bay continues five years later. In the *Relations*—the annual reports—that the Jesuits sent to France, they reported on their missionary activities at La Pointe du St. Esprit. Father Claude Allouez founded the mission at La Pointe in October 1665 and spent more than three years there altogether before his final departure in 1669. Father Jacques Marquette succeeded Allouez at La Pointe, arriving in September 1669 and leaving after the Indians abandoned the area in 1670. Although Allouez and Marquette were primarily concerned with the Indians’

¹⁸ Pierre Esprit Radisson, *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson, being an account of his travels and experiences among the North American Indians, from 1652 to 1684*, ed. Gideon D. Scull (Boston: Prince Society, 1885), 174–178, online facsimile at <http://wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=12>; Germaine Warkentin, “Discovering Radisson: A Renaissance Adventurer Between Two Worlds,” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1996) 46.

¹⁹ Radisson, *Voyages*, 193–201.

²⁰ Radisson, *Voyages*, 201–221. Hamilton Ross has argued that the Ottawa fort was at Houghton Point, whereas other historians have placed it on Chequamegon Point. Ross, *La Pointe*, 23–25; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 43.

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religious practices, their descriptions provide information on other aspects of Indian life. When Allouez arrived there were two large villages near Chequamegon Bay. The village at the head of the bay was inhabited primarily by Ottawa from three different bands, the Kiskakon, Sinago, and Keinouche. It contained forty-five to fifty large cabins housing two thousand people, including eight hundred fighting men. North of the Ottawa village was a second village of Huron-Petun. In addition, members of other tribes came to Chequamegon to fish and trade, living in the villages or nearby. Allouez wrote that Chequamegon Bay “forms a sort of centre for all the nations of these regions, because of its abundance of fish, which constitutes the chief part of these peoples’ sustenance.”²¹ With the Ottawa and Huron-Petun, Allouez counted more than ten different nations.²² These included Potawatomi, Sauk, and Fox from the south; Sioux from the west; and Cree from the north.²³

The Indian people of Chequamegon were part of a society in transition. The villages were made up of fragments of tribes that had been decimated by disease and warfare and uprooted from their homelands. The three bands of Ottawa who had previously lived separately were combined in one village. The Huron and Petun, previously two distinct though related tribes, appear to have merged into one tribe. These people had to reshape their cultural traditions to fit the new physical and social environment. The Ottawa and Huron-Petun lived primarily on corn and fish at Chequamegon, but the growing season there was shorter than in their homelands by Lake Huron. During lean times they ate bark, moss, and ground fish bones. Another specter was the threat of warfare with the Sioux. Ever since refugees from the east had begun to encroach on Sioux territory in central and western Wisconsin, their relationship had been tense. In this tenuous situation, French missionaries and traders and their trade goods played an important role. The Ottawa and Huron resumed their roles as middlemen in the fur trade. It seems likely that those Ottawa and Huron who converted to Christianity did so at least in part to strengthen their alliances and trading relationships with the French.²⁴

When Father Marquette arrived at La Pointe in September 1669 he found the three Ottawa bands and Huron-Petun living in five villages with a total of more than fifteen hundred people. Approximately five hundred of these were Hurons, most of them baptized but not actively practicing Christianity. Marquette focused his ministry on the Kiskakon band of Ottawa, whom Allouez had converted to Christianity. The Kiskakon wintered by the mission chapel and were reportedly diligent in their attendance. Marquette stated that the Kiskakon had gained an upper hand and governed the three

²¹ Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610–1791* (Cleveland: Burrows Bros. Co., 1896–1901), 50:297, online facsimile at <http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations>.

²² Allouez may have counted the three bands of Ottawa as three nations. Although he grouped them together because of their common language and residence in one village, he distinguished them as three nations.

²³ Theresa Schenck, “Grant’s Point, Madeline Island, in the Historical Record,” (report for the Wisconsin Historical Society Historic Preservation Division, Madison, WI, 2003), 2–3; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 50:273, 297–301, 307, 51:10–11, 23, 52:205–207, 54:169–175, 55:171.

²⁴ White, *Middle Ground*, 16–19, 23–24, 42–46, 106; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 65–67; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 50:273, 51:73, 261, 54:151, 167; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 94, 96.

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other nations. Soon, however, the simmering hostility between the allied Ottawa and Huron against the Sioux erupted in warfare. The peace that the French had negotiated with the Iroquois meant that the east was now safer than western Lake Superior. The Ottawa and Huron left Chequamegon in 1670 and traveled eastward. The Huron and some of the Ottawa went to the Straits of Mackinac, and Marquette followed to head the Mission of St. Ignace.²⁵

Shortly before the Indians and Father Marquette left Chequamegon Bay, Father Claude Dablon described the Mission of Saint Esprit as “covering both the district known as Chagaouamigong point, and the neighboring Islands. Thither the Outaouacs, with the Hurons of Tionnontate, repair in the seasons suitable for fishing and for raising Indian corn.”²⁶ The lowest level of the Winston-Cadotte site on Madeline Island correlates with Dablon’s description. At this site, archaeologists found a clay floor from a type of house built by the Huron-Petun. They also found an assemblage of pottery types that is strikingly similar to an assemblage of pottery found at a site on Rock Island at the mouth of Green Bay. This is not a coincidence, as the refugee group of Huron, Petun, and Ottawa who lived at Chequamegon Bay in the 1660s had lived on Rock Island in the early 1650s. Additional evidence for Indians in the Apostle Islands during the early historic period occurs at the Morty site (47AS40) on Stockton Island, where archaeologists found a type of pottery known as Sandy Lake ware and dated it by thermoluminescence to between A.D. 1632 and 1738.²⁷ The lack of any European artifacts associated with the Sandy Lake pottery makes it likely that it dates to the earlier part of this range. Archaeologists believe that the Indians who made Sandy Lake pottery were Siouan speakers, either Dakota Sioux or Assiniboine.²⁸

The International Fur Trade Era

The first French reference to an Ojibwe village in the Chequamegon region dates to the late seventeenth century. French documents from this time period refer to the Ojibwe as *Saulteur* or by a variant of the Algonquian name *Outichibouec* (*Outichipoue*, *Outchipoues*, *Ouchipoe*). Later this became Ojibwe or Ojibway.²⁹ The British began using the variant Chippewa in the mid-eighteenth century, and later the U.S. government used Chippewa as the official name for the tribe. As was customary among Algonquian speakers, the Ojibwe referred to themselves as *Anishinaabeg*, meaning people. Those who have chronicled Ojibwe history have advanced several different interpretations for the origin of the name Ojibwe. One interpretation that is widely accepted by Ojibwe and others is that the name comes from a word meaning “pucker up,” referring to the puckered moccasins that the Ojibwe wore. Others have argued that the name is derived from the Algonquian word for “crane” and that the suffix *bwa* means “voice,” hence the

²⁵ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:167–83, 55:169–71, 56:115–17; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 96; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 66–67.

²⁶ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 55:97.

²⁷ This pottery date, from sample Alpha 860, was first published in Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands,” 14.

²⁸ Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 180–185; Mason, *Great Lakes Archaeology*, 400–404; Richner, “Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands,” 14–15; Masters, “Morty Site.”

²⁹ Pronounced “Oh-jib-way” and also spelled Ojibwa.

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name “voice of the crane.” This is supported by the animal names (bear, catfish, beaver, etc.) of the Algonquian bands that lived near the Ojibwe, as well as by the symbolic use of the crane by the Ojibwe.³⁰

The westward movement of the Ojibwe from the Sault to Chequamegon, described in the Ojibwe migration story, was part of a broader expansion and transformation of the Ojibwe people. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Ojibwe merged with or absorbed the neighboring Algonquian bands with whom they had long been allied through friendship and marriage. At the same time, they migrated southward and eastward into Michigan’s Lower Peninsula and eastern Ontario, intermarrying with the Ottawa and Potawatomi. Others migrated westward to the north of Lake Superior where they intermarried with the Cree. Moving westward along the south shore of Lake Superior, the Ojibwe fought the Dakota Sioux and advanced into Minnesota. Eventually some Ojibwe settled on the northern plains where they adopted buffalo hunting and other aspects of plains culture. By the late eighteenth century the Ojibwe had become one of the largest Indian tribes, surrounding Lake Superior and Lake Huron. In consideration of the cultural differences that developed within this widespread people living in very different environments, anthropologists have distinguished four divisions—southeastern, southwestern, northern, and plains—within the Ojibwe people. The southwestern Ojibwe live in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. As part of treaty negotiations in the mid-nineteenth century, the U.S. government further divided the southwestern Ojibwe into Mississippi and Lake Superior bands. The Ojibwe of Chequamegon fall within the Lake Superior division.³¹

In 1680 the Ojibwe lived in three main villages: at Sault Ste. Marie, on the Keweenaw Peninsula, and at Chequamegon. There were fifteen lodges in the Chequamegon village in 1683. In 1697 a Canadian merchant identified four bands (or clans) of Ojibwe living at Chequamegon.³² The Chequamegon village may have been on the mainland or on Madeline Island. Archaeologist Robert Birmingham believes that the late seventeenth-century Chequamegon village may be represented in the lower levels of the Winston-Cadotte site on the southern end of Madeline Island, but the evidence is not conclusive. A peace and trading agreement that the Ojibwe, aided by Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Dulhut, made with the Sioux in 1679 facilitated the settlement at Chequamegon. In the years that followed, the Sioux and Ojibwe intermarried and traded, although hostilities did not cease entirely. The Sioux obtained French trade goods from the Ojibwe, and the Ojibwe obtained furs from the Sioux and hunted on Sioux lands. About 1690 the French built a trading post at Chequamegon Point, then in 1693 moved it across the channel to the southern end of Madeline Island. In 1695 the French brought a Sioux

³⁰ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 17–28, 49; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 39–40, 86, Ross, *La Pointe*, 181; Harold Hickerson, *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Study in Ethnohistory*, revised edition with foreword by Charles A. Bishop and review essay and bibliographical supplement by Jennifer S.H. Brown and Laura L. Peers (1970; rev. ed., Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 44.

³¹ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 4, 34–35, 37, 51–54; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 102–03, 146–47, maps 1–6; Edmund Jefferson Danziger Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 7–8.

³² From French documents as referenced in Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 49–52 and Hickerson, *Chippewa and Their Neighbors*, 56–57.

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chief and an Ojibwe chief from Chequamegon to Montreal to affirm their friendship with the French and with each other. The following year the French government closed the trading post on Madeline Island because of a glut in the fur market.³³

In 1718 the French established a new trading post on Madeline Island, on the west side of the island. Archaeologists have excavated a large Ojibwe village at the Marina site in the vicinity of this trading post. Based on European trade goods including glass beads, cooking kettles, gunflints, knives, and Jesuit rings, archaeologists have dated occupation of the site from ca. 1718 to possibly as late as 1775. Native artifacts include stone projectile points, clay pipes, and bone needles and harpoons. Features of the settlement include postmolds outlining dwellings, storage and refuse pits, and hearth areas. A cemetery east of the village may contain several hundred interments. A French census of Indians taken in 1736 provides additional information on this village. The census counted 150 warriors at Point Chequamegon, suggesting a total population of about 1,000. By comparison, the census counted 40 warriors on the Keweenaw and 30 at Sault Ste. Marie, attesting to the importance of the Chequamegon village at this time. Although some of these Chequamegon Ojibwe may have lived on the mainland, archaeology shows that the village at the Marina site was substantial, suggesting that this was the great village on Madeline Island that William Warren described.³⁴

The Ojibwe were frequently in conflict with neighboring Indian tribes, and this conflict intensified during the eighteenth century. As the Ojibwe expanded southward they infringed on Fox Indian territory. By 1702 the Ojibwe and the Fox were at war and continued to fight for more than thirty years. Meanwhile, the tenuous peace between the Ojibwe and the Sioux fell apart. The sequence of events leading to war began when the French established direct trade with the Cree and Assiniboine, enemies of the Sioux, at Lake of the Woods on what is now the Minnesota-Canadian border. To appease the Sioux, the French established a trading post at Lake Pepin on the upper Mississippi River, in Sioux territory. The Sioux, however, were not appeased, and in 1736 a Sioux war party against the Cree killed at least twenty Frenchmen at Lake of the Woods. In response, the Ojibwe attacked the Sioux at Lake Pepin. The precise motivation for the Ojibwe attack is uncertain, but the underlying cause was that by trading directly with other tribes, especially the Sioux, the French reduced the Ojibwe role as middlemen in that trade and eliminated the motivation for peace between the Ojibwe and the Sioux. The two tribes fought for control of the hunting grounds that had previously been part of Sioux territory. Deaths led to quests for revenge and new attacks. Warfare also served an important social role by providing opportunities for warriors to distinguish themselves by their bravery.³⁵

³³ Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 182–85; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 49–50, 87–88; Hickerson, *Chippewa and Their Neighbors*, 56, 65–66; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 28–29, 36; Ross, *La Pointe*, 34–40, 46.

³⁴ Ross, *La Pointe*, 48; Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 179–80, 186; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 53, 103; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 27. For more information on the Marina site see R. A. Birmingham and R. J. Salzer, *The Marina Site Excavations*, monograph no. 1 (Milwaukee: Wisconsin Archaeological Society, 1986).

³⁵ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 53, 64, 88–90, 93; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 33, 36–37; Ross, *La Pointe*, 49; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 67–68; Hickerson, *Chippewa and Their Neighbors*,

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War between the Ojibwe and Sioux continued into the nineteenth century with far-reaching effects on Indian life in the upper Great Lakes. There are many Ojibwe, Sioux, French, British, and American accounts of battles and raids, with many differences in the telling. William Warren recorded numerous stories of battles between the Ojibwe and Sioux, including the battle of Chequamegon Point. As told by Warren, 150 Dakota Sioux warriors concealed themselves on the end of Chequamegon Point and ambushed two Ojibwe boys who went there to hunt. Hearing the yelling as the boys and Dakota fought, Ojibwe warriors hastened from their village on Madeline Island to Chequamegon Point. One group of Ojibwe landed below the Dakota and blocked the latter from retreating along the narrow sandspit. The Ojibwe killed all of the Dakota except two who swam to the shore of the mainland. Both sides suffered during the decades of warfare between the Ojibwe and the Sioux, but it was the Ojibwe who prevailed, driving the Sioux westward from northern Wisconsin and Minnesota and establishing their own villages at Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Sandy Lake, and Leech Lake.³⁶

The Ojibwe fought for the French during the French and Indian War (1754–60), the culmination of the French and British struggle for control in North America. Following the French defeat, France ceded to England all of her territory in Canada and east of the Mississippi River except New Orleans. In 1762 the last French commander left the fur trading post on Madeline Island. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Ojibwe abandoned their village on Madeline Island within a decade or two after that date.³⁷ In August 1765, when British trader Alexander Henry arrived at Chequamegon Bay to reestablish the fur trade under the auspices of the British government, he found fifty Ojibwe lodges there. Henry wrote: “Chagouemig, or Chagouemigon, might at this period be regarded as the metropolis of the Chipeways, of whom the true name is *O’chibbuoy*.” Henry built a house for himself and spent the winter among the Ojibwe hunting, fishing, and trading for furs. It is clear from Henry’s description that both his house and the Ojibwe village were on the mainland. He described Madeline Island (not by name) as “an island fifteen miles in length, and between which and the main the channel is four miles broad. On the island, there was formerly a French trading-post, much frequented, and in its neighborhood a large Indian village.”³⁸ It appears, then, that by 1765 the Ojibwe village had moved from Madeline Island to the mainland. With fifty lodges it was still a large village, probably housing about 700 to 800 people. By comparison, in the summer of 1767 there were fifteen lodges with seventy warriors at Lac Courte Oreilles, probably representing a population of 250 to 300 people.³⁹

66, 71; Eileen M. McMahon and Theodore J. Karamanski, “Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix,” A Historic Resource Study of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway (prepared for National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, NE, 2002), 16.

³⁶ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 64; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 37; Hickerson, *Chippewa and Their Neighbors*, 66–71; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 16–19; Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 102–04.

³⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 56; Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 189.

³⁸ Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776*, edited with notes and biography by James Bain (1901; reprint, Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969), 187–195.

³⁹ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 64–65.

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The American Revolution (1775–1781) had little immediate effect on the Lake Superior Ojibwe. After the war the British maintained control of the fur trade in the Lake Superior region even though they had ceded their territory east of the Mississippi River and south of the Canadian border to the United States. It seems that during these years the Ojibwe village at Chequamegon declined in importance relative to villages to the south and west such as Lac Courte Oreilles, Fond du Lac, Sandy Lake, and Leech Lake. When fur trader Michel Cadotte built a home and trading post on Madeline Island, Ojibwe settled nearby. Half Ojibwe himself, Cadotte married Equaysayway, daughter of Waub-uj-e-jauk, Chief White Crane, who lived on Chequamegon Bay. At the time of the marriage Equaysayway was baptized Madeleine, and her father decreed that the legendary home of the Ojibwe would be called Madeline Island. Cadotte built his home and trading post on the southern end of Madeline Island in the early 1790s; the remains of the post are still visible. East of the post, at the Winston-Cadotte site, artifacts dating to the late eighteenth and/or early nineteenth centuries are of Ojibwe and European-American origin. An Ojibwe cemetery is associated with this occupation. In 1816 the Americans, specifically John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, finally took control of the La Pointe trading post.⁴⁰ Cadotte operated the trading post for Astor, perhaps giving the illusion, for a time, that not much had changed.⁴¹

The Ojibwe economy was based on a seasonal round of hunting, fishing, gathering wild foods, and some farming. In early spring, bands that had dispersed to winter hunting grounds came together to make maple sugar. Describing his winter at Chequamegon Bay, Alexander Henry wrote: "In the month of March, the manufacture of maple-sugar engaged as usual their attention."⁴² Later in the spring when the ice broke up larger groups of people began to assemble along the Lake Superior shore. Fish was especially important to the subsistence of the Chequamegon Ojibwe given the rich spawning grounds for whitefish, lake trout, and sturgeon along the shore of the bay, in tributary rivers, and around the islands. The Ojibwe fished year round using spears and gill nets, but the spring and fall spawning periods were the most productive times. The Ojibwe stayed in larger groups through the summer for social reasons as well as to continue fishing, plant corn where the climate permitted, and collect berries. At Chequamegon, the extended growing season allowed residents to grow corn. In late summer the Ojibwe divided into smaller bands to harvest wild rice. They harvested the wild rice beds in the Kakagon and Bad River sloughs east of Chequamegon Bay in the nineteenth century and presumably before then. After the fall spawning season, bands went to their winter hunting grounds to hunt waterfowl and game such as deer, bear, rabbits, and beaver for food and clothing. Wild rice; dried foods including berries, corn, and fish; and smoked fish and meats also provided winter sustenance.⁴³

⁴⁰ By then the name La Pointe was used for the Chequamegon Bay area in general, although it was also used specifically for Long Island.

⁴¹ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 64–65; Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 179, 189–90; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 33; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 7–8; Ross, *La Pointe*, 59, 65, 67, 70.

⁴² Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 192.

⁴³ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 3, 34; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 11–13; Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 188–89; Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, reprint with

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The Marina site on Madeline Island and the P-Flat site (47AS47) on Manitou Island provide archaeological evidence for this seasonal round. The eighteenth-century Ojibwe village at the Marina site was occupied year round, but its inhabitants frequently abandoned the village to go to other locations where food was seasonally available. Floral and faunal remains at the Marina site show that the inhabitants fished; grew corn; and hunted moose, bear, waterfowl, and small fur-bearing animals. Archaeologists found a variety of berries and also hazelnuts, which would have been collected in early fall. The P-Flat site is a fall fishing camp that was occupied between the mid-seventeenth century and late eighteenth century. Artifacts recovered from the site include chipped quartz and chert; ceramic potsherds and tobacco pipe fragments; a brass “tinkling” cone; and copper, glass, and shell beads, the latter commonly known as wampum. Faunal remains include bear, beaver, and most of all fish, specifically lake trout, whitefish, and suckers. Although the evidence at the P-Flat site does not indicate the affiliation of the Native Americans who used the site, the location points to the Ojibwe, at least during the eighteenth century. The P-Flat site, which also contains a late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century commercial fishing camp, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.⁴⁴

The viability of subsistence based on this seasonal round depended on the ability to move to take advantage of resources when and where they were available, and on a sufficiently large territory to provide enough food to support the population. Even though they preserved food for later use, at times the Ojibwe were challenged to find enough food to survive, especially during winter. By the early nineteenth century populations of fur-bearing animals—and therefore sources of food—were declining, while the Ojibwe population was increasing. Surrounded by other Ojibwe to the west, the Sioux to the southwest, and European American settlers to the south, the Lake Superior Ojibwe could no longer move or expand their territory.⁴⁵

The Ojibwe began to trade with the French in the mid-seventeenth century. For the Ojibwe, this trade was an addition to the existing network of trade with other tribes. Trade along this far-reaching social, political, and economic network included many commodities in addition to furs. The Ojibwe conducted trade with the French in the same manner as they did with other tribes: the exchange of goods took place as an exchange of gifts. The exchange also represented social and political alliance—friendship and peace. The bonds between Ojibwe and French traders were strengthened when traders married Ojibwe women, a common practice. The children of these marriages were known as *métis*, or mixed-blood. The *métis* Cadotte family played a key role in the fur trade in the Chequamegon region.⁴⁶

introduction by Nina Marchetti Archabal (1929; reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979), 39–44; 119–31.

⁴⁴ Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 186, 188–89; Cathie Masters, “P-Flat Site,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places, 1988).

⁴⁵ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 4, 94–96.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 85–86; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 108–11, 175, 179.

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The fur trade was not all about relationships, of course; trade goods had tangible value. The Ojibwe supplied food and furs to French traders, who in return traded tools, weapons, cloth, and ornaments, particularly knives, axes, kettles, awls, needles, guns, gunpowder, lead shot, blankets, woven cloth, and beads. These objects of metal, glass, and cloth quickly replaced stone, pottery, and skin in Ojibwe material culture. When trade was interrupted, it created a hardship for the Ojibwe who had become accustomed to using trade goods. This does not mean that the Ojibwe were dependent on trade goods or on the French, nor does it mean that the Ojibwe abandoned their traditional culture. Rather, trade goods were integrated into the Ojibwe's traditional way of life.⁴⁷

Similarly, hunting was already an important part of Ojibwe life. Men achieved status by their skill in the hunt as well as by their bravery in warfare. They hunted primarily for meat, pursuing furs to the extent that it fit in with other priorities. Fortunately, many of the same animals that provided meat provided furs. Ojibwe participation in the fur trade was intermittent, depending on whether they needed trade goods and on the status of their relationships with other tribes. When they were occupied with warfare against the Fox or Sioux, the Ojibwe spent little time trapping furs, as evidenced by the French traders' complaints and peacemaking efforts.⁴⁸

The French and Indian War brought another hiatus to the fur trade. When the war ended the Ojibwe were eager to resume trade. British trader Alexander Henry, arriving at Chequamegon Bay in 1765, described the Ojibwe there as "almost naked" because of the trade interruption. He further related "the men declared, that unless their demands were complied with, their wives and children would perish; for that there were neither ammunition nor clothing left among them." In response, Henry advanced trade goods on credit against the upcoming winter hunt.⁴⁹ Certainly the Ojibwe were living less comfortably without trade goods, but their claims of desperation may have been strategic, designed to obtain the goods that they wanted more quickly.⁵⁰ It is also possible that their near-naked state was due to the hot summer weather. Henry partnered in this venture with French trader Jean Baptiste Cadotte, whose wife was Ojibwe and who had been trading with the Ojibwe for more than twenty years. The partnership benefited Henry and Cadotte and probably the Ojibwe as well. Later in the eighteenth century more traders came to the Lake Superior region, and there was more competition between

⁴⁷ Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 109–11, 175–76; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 85–86, 92; Jennifer S.H. Brown and Laura L. Peers, "The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Critical Review," in *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors*, 137–39. The idea that the Ojibwe became dependent on French trade goods seems to have originated with French fur traders and their misunderstanding of the Ojibwe. This idea was then perpetuated and expanded by historians and anthropologists. Thus Harold Hickerson, in his influential 1970 book, *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors*, wrote that the Ojibwe "were pawns in the trade, exploited, despoiled, and finally extinguished" (p. 119). Similarly, in *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (1978), Edmund Danziger wrote that the Ojibwe became economically and perhaps psychologically dependent on French fur traders, altering their hunting patterns to obtain furs and wasting summers hanging around trading posts, among other changes (pp. 31–32). More recent studies have revised this perspective.

⁴⁸ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 85–91, 93; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 176.

⁴⁹ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 188.

⁵⁰ Studies have shown that statements such as "pity us" or "we are starving" that Ojibwe made to fur traders were part of Ojibwe trading rhetoric, made in part to manipulate the traders, and should not be taken literally. Brown and Peers, "Chippewa and Their Neighbors," 137.

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them. The newer traders did not trade according to Ojibwe ideas of exchange and alliance, and few developed kinship ties with the Ojibwe. Trade in liquor increased significantly; the British, unlike the French, did not limit its use.⁵¹

The band, a group of people who lived together, was the basic social unit of Ojibwe society. During winter hunting season the Ojibwe divided into small bands that might contain only a single nuclear family. In the spring and summer these small family hunting bands came together to form larger extended family bands. Bands were patrilineal—they traced descent through the male line—and exogamous—women married outside the band and went to live with their husband’s family (virilocal). The summer village provided opportunities to make alliances through marriage and trade, perform ceremonies, and enjoy other social activities in addition to fishing, gardening, and other work. Bands had leaders, but their authority was limited in this egalitarian society where every man had an equal voice. Each band adopted an animal totem that served as a mark or symbol of its identity. When a band became too large to function efficiently, some members would split off and form a new band, retaining the same totem as a symbol of identity and kinship. In 1670 the Ojibwe probably consisted of two or three bands; their totem was the crane. At this point the Ojibwe may be called a clan, a group of people united by kinship but not necessarily living together in the same place. As the Ojibwe merged with other Algonquian bands, these bands became clans within the Ojibwe tribe. The Noquets, for example, became the bear clan. The name Ojibwe was reserved for the tribe as a whole, and the original Ojibwe people from the Sault became the clan of the crane. As the Ojibwe continued to expand, new bands adopted new totems and grew to become new clans. By the late eighteenth century there were several semi-permanent Ojibwe villages with two or three clans, each clan with its own leader or chief.⁵²

William Warren identified the crane clan as the founders of the Ojibwe village on Madeline Island. Because Warren’s Ojibwe relatives belonged to the crane clan, his history may have been biased in their favor. Nevertheless, French records that identify the “Saulteur” at Chequamegon in 1683 support the priority of the crane clan at Chequamegon. The crane clan held a leadership position among the Ojibwe, at Chequamegon and elsewhere, into the nineteenth century. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, however, Waub-uj-e-jauk (White Crane), chief of the crane clan at Chequamegon, yielded his position as first chief of the Chequamegon village to An-daig-we-os (Crow’s Flesh), chief of the loon clan. Waub-o-jeeg (White Fisher), a noted war chief, led a third clan at Chequamegon—the reindeer clan.⁵³

The Ojibwe spiritual belief system, in which the world was populated with spirits, had evolved from ancient times. It took nearly two centuries before the Christian religion began to usurp the place of these traditional beliefs. The Jesuits who established a mission at Sault Ste. Marie in the seventeenth century found few converts among the Ojibwe. They closed the Sault mission before 1700. Missionaries did not attempt again

⁵¹ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 90–95; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 131–33, 177.

⁵² Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 29–38, 52–58, 62–66, 71–79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 53, 61, 63, 75–78; Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 52, 220, 317.

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to proselytize the Lake Superior Ojibwe until the 1830s, when Protestants and Catholics established missions on Madeline Island. Before then, in the early nineteenth century, a new Indian religion challenged Ojibwe beliefs. Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, preached the new religion, calling on Indians to reject Euro-American culture by withdrawing from the fur trade and ceasing to use goods such as woven clothing, fire-making flints, guns for hunting (they were still used for war against Americans) and liquor.⁵⁴ Thus, Indians were to return to traditional ways. The Prophet redefined traditional religious practices, however, prohibiting certain songs, dances, and medicine bundles and introducing new songs and medicines in their place. The Prophet's messengers came to the Ojibwe on the south shore of Lake Superior and influenced many Ojibwe to follow the Prophet's teachings. The Ojibwe followers gathered at Chequamegon Bay, discarded their medicine bundles in the water, and performed the new ceremonies. One group plundered the fur trading post at Lac Courte Oreilles. Reportedly, 150 canoes of Ojibwe set out from Chequamegon Point to go to hear the Prophet in Detroit. Michel Cadotte met them en route, convinced them that the Prophet was a fraud, and persuaded them to turn back. The Prophet's influence among the Lake Superior Ojibwe waned, and he was discredited in 1811 when American soldiers destroyed Prophetstown and the Prophet failed to show the magical powers that he had claimed.⁵⁵

The Treaty Era

In 1820 Lewis Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory, embarked on an expedition to explore the territory, which included what would become Wisconsin. At Chequamegon Bay the group visited Cadotte's trading post on Madeline Island. Expedition member Charles Trowbridge wrote that Cadotte was away, but the Indians were very pleased to see them. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, geologist and mineralogist for the expedition, wrote a short description of Cadotte's trading post and of Ojibwe dwellings on the mainland: "Six miles beyond the Mauvais [Bad River] is Point Chegoij-me-gon, once the grand rendezvous of the Chippeway tribe, but now reduced to a few lodges."⁵⁶ In 1822 Schoolcraft became head of the new Indian agency at Sault Ste. Marie, which the U.S. War Department (where Indian affairs were handled) established to be responsible for relations with the Lake Superior tribes.⁵⁷ Two years later Secretary of War John C. Calhoun established the Office of Indian Affairs, more commonly known as the Indian Office, headed by Thomas L. McKenney.

In one of its first undertakings, the new office convened leaders from different tribes in the Michigan and Missouri territories, ostensibly to settle boundary disputes and

⁵⁴ Tenskwatawa's half brother, Tecumseh, headed the political side of this movement and organized a coalition of tribes to stop American expansion through military action.

⁵⁵ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 48–49; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 164–68; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 65–66; Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 320–26.

⁵⁶ Schoolcraft quoted in Sheree L. Peterson, "Village in the Shade of the Old Fur Trade: Traditions in Transition at La Pointe & Prairie du Chien, 1815–1854, Preliminary Research Findings, Part I, La Pointe: View Through a Prism," (report for the Madeline Island Historical Museum, La Pointe, WI, 1995); Nute, *Lake Superior*, 72–75.

⁵⁷ Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 13–14.

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negotiate peace. More than one thousand headmen and their families from the Ojibwe, Sioux, Potawatomi, Winnebago, Sauk, Fox, Iowa, and Menominee tribes met at Prairie du Chien in 1825 for negotiations conducted by territorial governors William Clark and Lewis Cass. The resulting treaty supposedly established peace between the Ojibwe and Sioux, established tribal boundaries, and placed the tribes under the supervision of the U.S. government. Another government motive was to weaken the bonds between the Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Canadian British. In addition, by establishing tribal boundaries, the government paved the way for land cessions in future treaties. One problem with the treaty, however, was that the Ojibwe were not a single nation, but rather were composed of numerous independent bands with equally numerous chiefs. Forty-one Ojibwe chiefs and headmen signed the document, but even they did not represent all of the Ojibwe people. Therefore, the treaty provided that another meeting between the U.S. government and the Ojibwe would take place in 1826 to explain the terms of the 1825 treaty.⁵⁸

The promised meeting took place at Fond du Lac on the western end of Lake Superior in August 1826. Governor Cass and Thomas McKenney from the Indian Office claimed that they met with the entire Ojibwe tribe. In the 1826 treaty, the Ojibwe agreed to the terms of the treaty at Prairie du Chien. They also granted the U.S. government “the right to search for, and carry away, any metals or minerals from any part of their country.” Although not a cession of the land itself, this provision would prove troublesome. Tug-waug-aun-e, chief of the crane band, and Peezhickee, or Buffalo, chief of the loon band, represented the La Pointe Ojibwe at the Fond du Lac council. Because of the traditional leadership role of the crane clan, Tug-waug-aun-e was one of the first speakers at the council, but he became flustered and yielded to Buffalo as the better speaker. In so doing, Tug-waug-aun-e acknowledged Buffalo’s place as first chief of the La Pointe Ojibwe (figure 3).⁵⁹

About the time of the council at Fond du Lac, Schoolcraft appointed his métis brother-in-law, George Johnston, to be his subagent on Madeline Island. Johnston’s grandfather was Waub-o-jeeg, chief of the reindeer clan of the La Pointe Ojibwe in the late eighteenth century. Johnston arrived on the island that fall and built a house close enough to the Ojibwe camp that he could hear their drumming. Johnston described the camp as beyond the old French fort, referring to the 1718 fort on the west side of the island. He described a second camp farther north on the west shore at Point au Froid, a noted fishing spot. In December the Ojibwe at Point au Froid moved their camp to the woods behind Johnston’s house, where they stayed until March when they moved to their sugar camps near the Bad River on the mainland. Johnston’s account shows that the Ojibwe still followed a seasonal round of hunting, fishing, and gathering.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 75–76; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 6–10; Patty Loew, *Indians Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 58.

⁵⁹ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 8–9; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 81–82; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 77–78.

⁶⁰ Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 12–13; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 77.



Figure 3. Chief Buffalo. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society (WHi-3957).

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Hostilities between the Ojibwe and the Sioux resumed soon after the 1825 treaty. In 1831 and 1832, Indian agent Schoolcraft traveled among the Ojibwe in an effort to stop the fighting. During his travels he took a population census of the villages under his jurisdiction. In July 1831 Schoolcraft counted 169 Ojibwe living at La Pointe, noting two bands—the crane band under Chief Tug-waug-aun-e and the loon band under Chief Buffalo. Several members of Schoolcraft’s 1832 expedition kept journals with interesting, if sometimes contradictory, descriptions of their stay on Madeline Island. On June 21, Lieutenant James Allen counted about 184 Ojibwe, including thirty to forty warriors, whereas physician and geologist Douglass Houghton counted 224, differences due perhaps to the bands’ mobility. Allen wrote that the Ojibwe were dispersed about the bays and islands in the vicinity of Madeline Island, and that they lived almost entirely on fish except during their winter hunts when the fur trader gave them corn and flour. The Reverend William Boutwell, however, wrote on June 21 that the Ojibwe were away from the island, working in their gardens at Bad River on the mainland. Apparently Allen missed this aspect of summer activity and diet. The La Pointe Ojibwe community was large enough to convince Christian missionaries to come to the area for the first time in 160 years. In 1831 Reverend Sherman Hall led a party of missionaries who established a Protestant mission and school on Madeline Island. In 1835 Father Frederic Baraga arrived on the island to establish a Catholic mission. The proselytizing and educational activities of the two missions and the competition between them for Ojibwe converts would have a profound effect on the Ojibwe community.⁶¹

In 1836 the La Pointe subagency, operated informally under Schoolcraft, became an official Indian Office subagency. Daniel P. Bushnell was the first subagent.⁶² Also in 1836 the Wisconsin Territory was organized with Henry Dodge as governor. In July of the following year, Governor Dodge summoned the Mississippi and Lake Superior bands of Ojibwe to treaty negotiations at the St. Peters Agency at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.⁶³ The government’s objective was to obtain Ojibwe lands for lumbering; thus the resulting treaty is known as the Pine Tree Treaty. The western bands arrived first but refused to agree to anything until the bands from Lake Superior and the Wisconsin interior arrived on the sixth day with subagent Bushnell and trader Lyman Warren. Even then, there were numerous chiefs representing multiple bands who lived on the lands that the U.S. wanted, and other chiefs who had a voice even though their lands were not under consideration. Add to the multiple points of view the use of language interpreters and the different ways that Ojibwe and Americans often understood the same statement—or written and verbal versions of the same statement—and the negotiations were full of opportunities for misunderstanding. When the treaty was signed on July 29, 1837, the Ojibwe ceded approximately eleven million acres of land in north central Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. This did not include the Chequamegon region or other lands bordering Lake Superior. The Ojibwe bands that ceded their land received in return: thirty-five thousand dollars per year in goods and cash

⁶¹ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 76; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 82; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 66; Peterson, “Village in the Shade”; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 48; Ross, *La Pointe*, 75–91.

⁶² Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 77–78. Bushnell was appointed in November 1836 but not confirmed until April 1837.

⁶³ Now located in the city of Minneapolis.

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for the next twenty years, one hundred thousand dollars in cash for their mixed-blood relatives, and seventy thousand dollars paid to traders to settle debts. In addition, the treaty guaranteed the right to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice on the ceded lands “during the pleasure of the President of the United States.” Three chiefs from the La Pointe band, including Buffalo and Tug-waug-aun-e, signed the treaty.⁶⁴

Schoolcraft, Warren, and others sympathetic to the Ojibwe found the selling price for the ceded lands to be absurdly low. Warren commented that the amount allotted annually for goods “would not exceed a breech-cloth and a pair of leggins apiece.”⁶⁵ Chief Buffalo sent a message to Governor Dodge stating: “The Indians acted like children; they tried to cheat each other and got cheated themselves. When it comes my turn to sell my land, I do not think I shall give it up as they did.”⁶⁶ The Ojibwe received their annuity payments at the La Pointe subagency, which had jurisdiction over the bands in the Wisconsin interior. In some ways the annual gathering on Madeline Island for socializing and ceremonies was reminiscent of the earlier gatherings for the Midéwiwin ceremonies. But whereas the Midéwiwin gathering supported traditional Ojibwe life, the annuity payments did not. The Ojibwe came for their payments in September, traveling long distances and often encountering delays once they arrived. This interrupted their fall rice collecting. Annuity goods were often poorly made or useless—such as the saddles that arrived in La Pointe in 1839 and again in 1840, despite Bushnell’s protests, for the forest-dwelling Ojibwe who had no horses. Unscrupulous traders and whiskey peddlers gathered at annuity time, taking the place of traders such as the Cadottes and Warrens who had long-term relationships with their Ojibwe relatives.⁶⁷

La Pointe was bustling in 1840, and the Ojibwe were very much a part of the activity. There was the Indian subagency conducting its business, particularly the annuity payments, and the missionaries with their activities focusing on the Ojibwe. Most prominently there was the American Fur Company, which had begun commercial fishing as a hedge against the declining fur trade. Bela Hubbard, assistant geologist on Douglass Houghton’s 1840 survey, wrote in July of that year that there were several hundred Indians camped near the American Fur Company fort, most of them employed in fishing for the company. Hubbard described about fifty birch bark Ojibwe lodges located in the town near the log dwellings of the French and métis. He noted that at annuity time there could be four thousand Ojibwe on the island.⁶⁸ But life for the La Pointe Ojibwe was about to change again. In 1841 the American Fur Company ended its fishing operation. Commercial fishing continued at La Pointe but on a smaller scale. Farther away but with greater long term impact, the discovery of copper on the Keweenaw Peninsula led the government to seek title to the Ojibwe lands bordering Lake Superior that were excluded from the 1837 treaty.

⁶⁴ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 13–31, 44, 155–57; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 87.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁷ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 23–24, 29–30; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 79–81.

⁶⁸ Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

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The Commissioner of Indian Affairs authorized Robert Stuart, formerly an agent for the American Fur Company and acting Michigan superintendent for Indian affairs, to negotiate a treaty for the cession of lands north of the 1837 treaty boundary, including the Chequamegon region. Negotiations took place at La Pointe in October 1842. Missionary Florantha Sproat described La Pointe as “one constant scene of excitement” with more than two thousand Indians present. In a letter to her father she wrote: “I wish I could give you their speeches—some of them are quite eloquent. They appear in full dress covered with ribbons and silver trinkets, their faces painted most hideously, with enormous head-dresses of feathers, otter skins—bear claws—some of them wear a pair of horns projecting on both sides.”⁶⁹ The terms of the 1842 treaty were similar to those in 1837. The Ojibwe ceded approximately twelve million acres in northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in exchange for \$31,200 in cash, goods, and services for twenty-five years to be divided equally between the Mississippi and Lake Superior bands; \$15,000 in cash for mixed-bloods; a \$5,000 agriculture fund; and \$75,000 to traders in payment of debts. Again the treaty guaranteed the right to hunt, fish, and gather food on the ceded land, but according to this treaty that right remained until the Ojibwe were “required to remove by the President of the United States.”⁷⁰

The Ojibwe were justifiably worried about the prospect of removal farther west, which was already taking place in the southern states. According to Ojibwe recollections of the negotiations as well as accounts by several white observers, Stuart assured them that as long as they remained on friendly and peaceable terms with the whites they would not be asked to leave for a very long time—a lifetime or more. Nevertheless, the Ojibwe, especially the Lake Superior bands, were reluctant to sign the treaty. Alfred Brunson, who was La Pointe subagent at the time, wrote: “The Indians did not act free & voluntary, but felt themselves pressed into the measure” because Stuart told them that the government would take their land whether or not they signed.⁷¹ Authorities soon relieved Brunson of his post as subagent for this and other statements he made regarding unfair treatment of the Ojibwe. Shortly after the treaty was signed, Chief Buffalo said that he was ashamed of it and accused Stuart of preventing him from speaking in opposition. Other Ojibwe chiefs reiterated that they only signed after they were assured that they would be able to remain in Wisconsin.⁷²

The La Pointe Ojibwe, along with the other Lake Superior bands, remained on their ceded lands and lived amicably with their white neighbors in the years following the 1842 treaty. In 1843 the La Pointe subagency issued a census of Ojibwe receiving annuities. At La Pointe the census identified three bands with a total of 390 Indians and 218 of mixed-blood.⁷³ Meanwhile, in Washington officials were discussing plans to remove the Lake Superior Ojibwe to northern Minnesota, despite assurances made to the contrary. In 1847 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent two representatives to the south shore of Lake Superior to arrange this removal. The Ojibwe ceded an additional

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 33–34, 44, 171–73.

⁷¹ Ibid., 38.

⁷² Ibid., 37–44.

⁷³ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 78.

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tract of land in Minnesota but refused to move. Late in 1848 a group of Ojibwe from the Lake Superior region traveled to Washington to try to end efforts toward their removal. In February 1849 they presented a petition to Congress requesting twenty-four sections of land encompassing seven of their villages, including La Pointe, for a permanent home. The group met with President James Polk and other officials, who were sympathetic to the petition. But state and national politics soon outweighed any sympathy.⁷⁴

On February 6, 1850, President Zachary Taylor issued an executive order revoking the hunting, fishing, and gathering rights of Ojibwe on ceded land in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula and ordering their removal to unceded land in northern Minnesota. Government officials stated that removal benefited and protected both the Ojibwe and white settlers. But Minnesota Whigs who helped Taylor win the election had advocated for removal in order to gain the patronage jobs that came along with the Ojibwe and their annuity payments. The Ojibwe were shocked by the order and held councils to plan how to resist. The Wisconsin legislature, missionary groups, regional newspapers, and local whites who had developed business and social relationships with the Ojibwe lobbied against removal. In the face of this opposition, Indian Office officials moved the fall 1850 annuity payment from La Pointe to Sandy Lake on the upper Mississippi River in Minnesota in order to lure the Ojibwe to the land designated for their removal. Sandy Lake was three to five hundred miles from Ojibwe villages in Wisconsin. Payment was scheduled for October 25, but subagent John Watrous did not arrive until late November, and then he did not have the cash annuity funds, which Congress had failed to appropriate in time. Watrous had not arranged for adequate food and shelter for the Ojibwe while they waited. As a result of hunger, illness, and exposure an estimated 170 died at Sandy Lake, and another 230 died during the December journey home. Anthropologist James Clifton has called the Sandy Lake episode the “Wisconsin Death March.”⁷⁵

The suffering that the Ojibwe experienced as a result of their forced journey to Sandy Lake strengthened their resolve and the efforts of their supporters against removal. In response to continuing pressure, in August 1851 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs announced suspension of the removal order. This did not, however, stop the efforts of Minnesota Territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey and agent Watrous to accomplish removal. In April 1852 Chief Buffalo, then in his early nineties and widely recognized as a great chief, led a delegation to Washington to present his people’s grievances. Trader Benjamin Armstrong, Buffalo’s adopted son and a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language, accompanied them as interpreter. The delegation arrived in Washington in June, overcoming numerous bureaucratic obstacles en route and in Washington, to meet at last with President Millard Fillmore. They presented their grievances along with a petition, signed by prominent white citizens from the Lake Superior region, asking that they be allowed to remain in Wisconsin. The next day President Fillmore agreed to rescind the

⁷⁴ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 39–52; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 88.

⁷⁵ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 53–59; James A. Clifton, “Wisconsin Death March: Explaining the Extremes in Old Northwest Indian Removal,” *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 75 (1987): 1–39.

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removal order, stop all efforts to remove the Ojibwe to Minnesota, and make all annuity payments at La Pointe.⁷⁶

Two years later, Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny appointed Indian agents David Herriman and Henry Gilbert to negotiate a treaty with the Ojibwe. The government wanted the Ojibwe to cede mineral-rich lands along the north shore of Lake Superior. The Ojibwe refused to negotiate until the government agreed that they could remain in their current homelands and that land would be reserved so that they would have permanent homes on those lands. The Ojibwe insisted that Benjamin Armstrong interpret the treaty proceedings for them. They also required that the government distinguish between the bands that lived west of the Mississippi River and those that lived in the Lake Superior region. Formerly the government would only deal with the Ojibwe people as a whole. In the treaty that they signed at La Pointe on September 30, 1854, the Ojibwe ceded the north shore lands. The treaty provided for annuity payments, but the emphasis was on the establishment of nine reservations in the Lake Superior region of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. For the La Pointe bands, the treaty described a tract of land on the Bad River plus about two hundred acres on Madeline Island. In addition, the treaty reserved a separate tract of land for Buffalo's band but did not establish its boundaries. Fourteen men signed the treaty for the La Pointe bands: Buffalo as first chief and thirteen others who were second chiefs or headmen.⁷⁷

The Reservation Era

The Bad River Reservation, roughly 124,000 acres, was by far the largest of the four Ojibwe reservations in Wisconsin. The government apparently intended that other Ojibwe would join the La Pointe bands at Bad River, as the treaty stated that the reserve was “for the La Pointe band, and such other Indians as may see fit to settle with them.”⁷⁸ At the mouth of the Bad River were 16,000 acres of wetlands with abundant fish and waterfowl and the wild rice beds of the Kakagon and Bad River sloughs, a critical food source. Most of the remainder of the Bad River Reservation was densely wooded. The Bad River area played an important part in Ojibwe life long before 1854. In addition to harvesting wild rice in the fall, the Ojibwe had sugar camps at Bad River in the spring, and planted gardens in the fertile river bottomlands in the summer. They called the area *gitigaaniing*, or old gardens. Because of these gardens, Protestant missionary Leonard Wheeler of La Pointe identified the junction of the White and Bad rivers as the ideal spot to establish an agricultural settlement and mission. In 1845 Wheeler built a new mission house on the site and named the settlement Odanah, after the Ojibwe word *odena* for village. Because of the mission, La Pointe Ojibwe who followed the Protestant religion moved to Bad River after 1854, along with those who adhered to traditional beliefs. By

⁷⁶ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 59–67; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 77; Benjamin G. Armstrong, *Early Life Among the Indians: Reminiscences from the Life of Benj. G. Armstrong*, dictated to and written by Thomas P. Wentworth (Ashland, WI: Press of A. W. Bowron, 1892), 16–31.

⁷⁷ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 68–69, 177–184; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 3–5, 89–92; Armstrong, *Early Life*, 34–47.

⁷⁸ Article 2 of 1854 treaty, reprinted in Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 181.

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1859 the Ojibwe had selected the two hundred acres on Madeline Island that were reserved as a fishing ground.⁷⁹

The 1854 treaty reserved four sections of land on or near the lakeshore for Chief Buffalo's band within the La Pointe Ojibwe. In 1856 President Franklin Pierce confirmed the four sections—approximately 2,500 acres—that the band selected at the tip of the Bayfield Peninsula. The new reservation, a traditional Ojibwe fishing ground, became known as Red Cliff about 1860. In 1863 the Indian Office proposed an enlargement of the Red Cliff Reservation to approximately 14,000 acres, but Congress did not confirm the enlargement until 1895. Behind the shoreline cliffs that gave Red Cliff its name, the reservation was heavily wooded. Indian agent C. K. Drew called Red Cliff “the most beautiful natural location on Lake Superior.”⁸⁰ Because Chief Buffalo had converted to the Catholic religion, Red Cliff was viewed as the reservation for those La Pointe Ojibwe who were Catholic, although the treaty did not make that distinction.⁸¹

The Late Nineteenth Century

Once the Ojibwe were living on reservations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)⁸² intensified its efforts to persuade them to abandon their traditional culture, live in permanent frame houses, and farm for a living. The Indian agents' primary tools in this effort were allotment, agriculture, schools, and Christianity. The 1854 treaty provided for allotment—the assignment of eighty acre tracts of land within a reservation to family heads or single adults for their separate use, apart from the community as a whole. Furthermore, the president (through the agent) could grant title to these tracts, with appropriate restrictions on resale. Indian agent Gilbert voiced the belief of many when he wrote that private property ownership offered “the main ground of hope for the speedy civilization of these Indians.”⁸³ In 1860 agent Drew reported that fifty Bad River Ojibwe had selected their eighty acre lots, and he asked for authority to issue their certificates of title as soon as possible so they would not become distrustful. In 1887 Congress passed the Dawes Act, or General Allotment Act, to encourage and hasten allotment. The act also defined circumstances under which Indians could sell their allotments. In 1900

⁷⁹ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 71, 181; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 85, 91; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 73; Ross, *La Pointe*, 111, 117; D. J. Jackson, “A Brief Bad River History/Description,” *Bad River Lodge & Casino*, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, <http://www.badriver.com/about.html>; Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., “Wisconsin: Bad River Reserve (Fishery),” *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Oklahoma State University Library, 928–30, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol1/HTML_files/WIS0928.html.

⁸⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1860* (Washington), 53.

⁸¹ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 182; Kappler, “Wisconsin: Red Cliff Reserve,” *Indian Affairs*, 933–36, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol1/HTML_files/WIS0928.html; Kappler, “Acts of Fifty-Third Congress—Third Session, 1895,” *Indian Affairs*, 568–69, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol1/HTML_files/SES0568.html; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 72; *Report of Commissioner 1860*, 51; James W. Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands: Nature, History, and Wilderness at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 138; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 91; Ross, *La Pointe*, 117.

⁸² The Office of Indian Affairs became known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs ca. 1847.

⁸³ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1855* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1856), 29.

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Indian agent Campbell reported 662 allotments totaling 51,884.02 acres on the Bad River Reservation and 205 allotments totaling 14,166.01 acres on the Red Cliff Reservation (the entire reservation).⁸⁴

BIA authorities expected Ojibwe families to build houses and plant crops on their allotments. To encourage this, agent Gilbert substituted farming implements and home furnishings such as cooking stoves, tables, bedsteads, and mattresses for the traditional types of annuity goods. Agents' annual reports described numbers of houses built; acres cleared, planted, and fenced; and quantities of different crops. Government farmers on the reservations planted crops and instructed and assisted the Ojibwe. But the dense forest cover, short growing season, traditional Ojibwe view that farming was women's work, and the men's preference for hunting and fishing as a means of subsistence were all obstacles to farming. Some years the crops failed. Occasionally there was surplus produce to sell for cash. In 1900 crops at Bad River and Red Cliff included oats, corn, potatoes, turnips, onions, beans, and pumpkins. Surprisingly, yields at Red Cliff were higher than at Bad River, which had the best soil among the Lake Superior reservations. In that year 754 acres at Bad River were under cultivation, a sizable increase over the 255 acres under cultivation in 1874. Yet in 1900, 754 acres represented less than 2 percent of the land that had been allotted.⁸⁵

Missionary churches were fundamental to assimilation programs. As agent Mahan wrote in his 1875 report: "Does it not speak in tones that will not be mistaken, in favor of carrying the Bible in one hand and the Christian civilizer, labor, in the other?"⁸⁶ The Catholics had an influential presence on the Red Cliff reservation from the time that reservation was established, and by 1871 (probably earlier) the Catholic Church identified most of the Ojibwe connected to the reservation as members. It appears that they attended church in nearby Bayfield. Odanah was the domain of Reverend Leonard Wheeler and his Protestant mission. In the early 1860s, reportedly eighty to one hundred Ojibwe attended Wheeler's Sunday services. In 1866, after more than twenty years of missionary work at La Pointe and Odanah, Reverend Wheeler moved away, leaving the mission and school at Odanah vacant. It may be Wheeler's personal popularity that stopped the Catholics from building a church at Bad River until 1868, although priests from La Pointe and Bayfield visited prior to that date. It is difficult to discern from official reports the real extent of Christian observance among the Ojibwe. In 1865 agent Webb wrote that the Lake Superior Ojibwe: "have been almost constantly engaged in grand medicine dances, jugglery, and conjuring."⁸⁷ Yet four years later agent John Knight wrote of the same group: "If they have not all been made intelligent Christians,

⁸⁴ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 182; *Report of Commissioner 1860*, 52; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 97; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 64; *Report of the Commissioner 1900*, 409.

⁸⁵ *Report of Commissioner 1855*, 31; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1856* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1857), 32; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 96–100; Patricia A. Shifferd, "A Study in Economic Change, the Chippewa of Northern Wisconsin: 1854–1900," *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 6, no. 4 (1976): 33; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1874*, (Washington: G.P.O.), 27; *Report of Commissioner 1900*, 409.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Shifferd, "Study in Economic Change," 27.

⁸⁷ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1865* (Washington: G.P.O.), 510.

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they have abandoned heathenism.”⁸⁸ Most likely there was no abrupt change in four years, and the reality of Ojibwe religious practice lay somewhere in the middle. In 1871 a Presbyterian group took over the Protestant mission and schools at Odanah. In 1879 Reverend Baird, head of this mission, wrote to the agent that the Bad River Ojibwe spent much time drumming and dancing, but predicted that these practices would die out as Christianity took a firmer hold. Baird reported encouraging attendance at Sabbath services, Sabbath school, and a weekly prayer meeting, in addition to huge enthusiasm at a fall camp meeting. In the 1880s the Presbyterians left Bad River and the Catholics took over their mission and schools. In 1895 the Indian agent reported that 455 out of 645 Bad River Ojibwe were church members, suggesting that Christianity was taking a firmer hold.⁸⁹

Protestant and Catholic missionaries ran schools for the Ojibwe with some financial assistance from the government. In the 1850s there were two schools: the Catholic school at La Pointe and the Reverend Wheeler’s Protestant school at Odanah. In 1859 the Protestants opened a boarding school at Odanah, with a curriculum that combined manual training with reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Catholic school at La Pointe relocated to Red Cliff in 1861. In 1883 the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration opened St. Mary’s School at Odanah. It appears that the success of St. Mary’s was at least partially responsible for the closing of the Presbyterian mission and schools at Odanah. By the 1880s the Catholics were also operating an Ojibwe boarding and day school in Bayfield.⁹⁰

Through the 1890s and in 1900, the Catholic Church ran all of the schools for the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe: three day schools—at Red Cliff, Odanah, and Bayfield—and two boarding schools—at Odanah and Bayfield. Educators and agents believed that boarding schools, by removing children from their home environments, were more effective than day schools for educating and assimilating Ojibwe children. For the same reasons, boarding schools were traumatic for the children. Separated from their families, students were subjected to unfamiliar food, clothing, and furnishings as well as a new language and curriculum. If they spoke their own language or lapsed into

⁸⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1869* (Washington: G.P.O.), 430.

⁸⁹ *Report of Commissioner 1871*, 600; Marquette University Special Collections “Wisconsin, Bayfield, Diocese of Superior”; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 108; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1868* (Washington, G.P.O.), 378; Marquette University Special Collections & University Archives, “Wisconsin, Ashland, Diocese of Superior, History of St. Mary’s/Our Lady of Seven Dolours Mission, Odanah,” Marquette University Special Collections & University Archives, <http://www.marquette.edu/library/collections/archives/NativeGuide/WI/M-241.pdf>; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1879* (Washington: G.P.O.), 165.

⁹⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1857* (Washington: William A. Harris, 1858), 29; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1859* (Washington), 75–76; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1861* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861), 76; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1871* (Washington: G.P.O.), 602; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1886* (Washington: G.P.O.), 257; Ross, *La Pointe*, 124–25; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 73; Marquette University Special Collections & University Archives, “Wisconsin, Bayfield, Diocese of Superior, History of Holy Family Church, Bayfield, and St. Joseph’s Church, La Pointe,” Marquette University Special Collections & University Archives, <http://www.marquette.edu/library/collections/archives/NativeGuide/WI/M-242.pdf>.

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familiar habits they could be punished. Not surprisingly, both boarding and day schools suffered from erratic and low attendance. In 1890 there were reportedly 138 school-age children at Bad River, of whom 110 were enrolled in schools. Average daily attendance for the year was 60. Attendance at Red Cliff was even lower, with 75 enrolled out of 128 school-age children and average daily attendance of 29. Attendance dropped when families gathered together for seasonal activities such as sugaring, berrying, and ricing.⁹¹

In the early years of the reservations, agents and missionaries viewed the dense forests as an impediment to their program of assimilating the Ojibwe. Forests, they believed, encouraged the Ojibwe to continue their hunting and gathering lifestyle. In addition, it took much hard labor to clear the land for agriculture. When a sawmill began operation at Red Cliff in 1861, trees gained new value as building lumber for Red Cliff and other reservations in the region. Then, during the 1870s, timber became a source of income. Agents encouraged the Red Cliff Ojibwe to cut logs for rails, fences, and sawmills, although they were usually paid in provisions, not cash. By then northern Wisconsin had entered its logging heyday, and commercial interests pressured the government to make available the rich timberlands of the reservations. In 1882, when the BIA established a policy allowing Ojibwe to cut and sell timber on their allotments, logging on the reservations began in earnest. The BIA closely controlled reservation logging. Among other rules, white lumbermen who contracted to cut reservation timber were required to use Ojibwe labor. By 1884, Ojibwe on the Bad River, Red Cliff, and Lac du Flambeau reservations had entered into eighty-eight contracts for forty-eight million board feet of lumber.⁹²

In 1885 James Gregory became head of the La Pointe agency with jurisdiction over the Lake Superior Ojibwe. Gregory disregarded the requirement that contractors use Ojibwe labor as well as other policies designed to protect Ojibwe interests. Logging increased dramatically after 1885. This was no coincidence—before he became Indian agent, Gregory worked for the Superior Lumber Company owned by William Vilas, who used his political influence to have Gregory appointed. In the winter of 1886–87, more than 23.2 million board feet were cut on the Bad River Reservation. At Red Cliff, however, logging was limited to the original four sections of the reservation, because the government had not formally approved or allotted the eleven thousand acres added in 1863. Questions regarding Gregory's actions led in 1888 to a Congressional investigation of lumbering on Wisconsin reservations. The committee's report stated that Gregory acted with "willful and deliberate disobedience of laws and orders, and gross

⁹¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1890* (Washington: G.P.O.), 239–40; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1895* (Washington: G.P.O.), 330; *Report of Commissioner 1900*, 408; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 105–108; David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

⁹² Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 100–102; *Report of Commissioner 1861*, 74; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862* (Washington: G.P.O., 1863), 88; *Report of Commissioner 1871*, 601; *Report of Commissioner 1874*, 188; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1876* (Washington: G.P.O.), 152; *Report of Commissioner 1879*, 162; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 138–42; Shifferd, "Study in Economic Change," 36.

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abuse of official power,”⁹³ and that logging practices designed for short term profits rather than long term benefit for the Ojibwe landowners had denuded the finest timberlands. In 1889 the BIA suspended timber sales on Wisconsin reservations pending development of new regulations. The sudden halt of lumbering meant that the Lake Superior Ojibwe nearly starved that winter. Despite the BIA’s paternalistic controls and widespread abuse of the system, by the late 1880s timber sales had become the most important income source for the Lake Superior Ojibwe.⁹⁴

Lumbering resumed on the Bad River Reservation in the early 1890s under a new system whereby one contractor purchased the right to log each reservation. Justus S. Stearns was the contractor for Bad River. The Indian agent regulated how the Ojibwe spent money from timber sales to ensure it would not be used for “whiskey and trifles.” Logging at Red Cliff was delayed until after 1895, when Congress approved the 1863 enlargement. Logging had not yet begun when a fire on the Red Cliff Reservation in October 1896 burned more than seven million board feet of pine. The remaining reservation land was quickly allotted, and salvage logging of the burned area began that winter. In 1897 Duluth lumberman Frederick L. Gilbert’s Red Cliff Lumber Company won the contract to log the Red Cliff Reservation. In 1900 agent Samuel Campbell reported that more than 28 million board feet of timber had been cut on the Bad River Reservation and approximately 8.6 million board feet on the Red Cliff Reservation during the previous year.⁹⁵

In addition to working for logging contractors on the reservations, many Ojibwe men worked for wages outside of the reservations. The growing towns of Bayfield and Ashland and the flourishing logging, fishing, and mining industries provided job opportunities. In 1864 agent Webb wrote that the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe “are constantly employed when possible to find work. They have labored in copper mines, saw-mills, as farm laborers, deck hands on steamers, & c., and in every instance have given satisfaction to the employer.”⁹⁶ Ojibwe worked making windows, doors, and barrels; as blacksmiths and carpenters; building railroads; and in a variety of logging jobs on and off the reservations. They played a large role in the fishing industry: an 1887 report estimated that one fourth of Chequamegon Bay fishermen were Indian or part Indian. But wage work was not always available; as agent Webb noted, the Ojibwe worked when it was possible to find work. Job availability depended on the health of the national and local economies and the ups and downs of specific industries.⁹⁷

Hunting, fishing, and gathering remained an integral part of life for the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe, although their relative importance as a source of subsistence declined over time. Fish and wild rice were dietary staples, followed by maple sugar,

⁹³ Quoted in Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 144.

⁹⁴ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 142–46; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 101–103; Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 34; *Report of Commissioner 1886*, 256.

⁹⁵ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 146–49; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 101–102; *Report of Commissioner 1890*, 239; *Report of Commissioner 1895*, 331–33; *Report of Commissioner 1900*, 410–12.

⁹⁶ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1864* (Washington: G.P.O.), 418.

⁹⁷ Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 36–37; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 94–95; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 167.

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game, and berries. The Ojibwe suffered when the wild rice crop failed. Agent Knight wrote in his 1870 report: “Owing to the heavy cold rains of the summer and fall of 1869 the rice was destroyed, and has not reappeared in the quantities heretofore found. Last winter they were without rice, and the severe cold weather and heavy snows killed the game, and many died during last winter from want of food and clothing. . . . No rice has been made this fall, and this winter again they will be compelled to scatter over the country and seek such assistance as accident may offer them.”⁹⁸ Knight expected that the Red Cliff and Bad River bands would fare better than other Lake Superior Ojibwe because the former could rely on fishing and also find employment in Bayfield. On the other hand, when income sources such as wage-earning jobs failed, the Ojibwe turned to wild food sources. Such was the case in 1890 when timber sales were suspended, and the Ojibwe increased their hunting, fishing, and gathering. When wild foods were abundant the Ojibwe sold them to the white population, especially fish, maple sugar, and berries. In addition to subsistence fishing and working for white fishermen, Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe undertook commercial fishing activities on their own.⁹⁹

The Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe did not confine their hunting, fishing, and gathering to the reservations, which were simply not big enough for that purpose. Moreover, the 1842 and 1854 treaties gave them the right to hunt, fish, and gather on ceded lands. In 1871 agent Clark wrote that one of the Red Cliff bands “has been for some years in the interior, living a roaming life, and only coming to the reservation at the time of the annuity payment.”¹⁰⁰ Contemporary documents rarely specify where the Ojibwe went to hunt, fish, make maple sugar, or collect berries. It is evident that these activities took place on the mainland, both on and off the reservations, but undoubtedly they took place on the islands as well. In the 1830s James Allen wrote that the Ojibwe were dispersed about the bays and islands in the vicinity of Madeline Island. Métis trader Vincent Roy and his family traveled to Basswood Island in the 1850s to make maple sugar. In the same decade government surveyors identified an Indian sugar camp in the middle of Oak Island; this sugar bush is still extant today. In *A Little History of My Forest Life*, Eliza Morrison (also métis) described her home at La Pointe in the 1870s. Her family lived mostly on fish and potatoes, caught and planted by her husband John. But they made maple sugar at a sugar bush on Madeline Island, and in the summer when the berries were ripe “we had plenty friends come and ask us if we was going out to the island to pick berries.” Perhaps this was Stockton Island, where twentieth century Ojibwe informants identified a strong tradition of blueberry picking.¹⁰¹

By the late nineteenth century sportsmen were competing with the Ojibwe for fish and game. Even on the Bad River Reservation, the *Ashland Press* reported white hunters

⁹⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1870* (Washington: G.P.O.), 309.

⁹⁹ Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 28–35; *Report of Commissioner 1890*, 237–38; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 167–68; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Report of Commissioner 1871*, 600–01. Clark expected the roaming band to come to the reservation the next spring to open farms.

¹⁰¹ “Biographical Sketch—Vincent Roy,” written ca. 1903, typescript in personal narrative files, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 10; Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 7; Eliza Morrison, *A Little History of My Forest Life: An Indian-White Autobiography*, edited by Victoria Brehm (Tustin, MI: Ladyslipper Press, 2002), 44–45, 85, 90–93.

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shooting hundreds of ducks in the Kakagon sloughs. The dramatic expansion of commercial fishing had an even greater impact. Not only did commercial fishermen compete with Ojibwe who were fishing for profit and subsistence, but the large catches began to impact fish populations. In an effort to stem the decline of popular fish species, the state of Wisconsin instituted regulations regarding such aspects of fishing as minimum fish size, length of fishing season, and specifications for nets. In the late 1880s the state began to enforce these regulations against the Ojibwe, both on and off the reservations. State authorities arrested several Red Cliff Ojibwe. In 1896 the Wisconsin attorney general opined that the state's Indians were subject to state fish and game laws, because the authority to regulate fish and game belonged to the state, not to the federal government, and that Ojibwe treaties made with the federal government did not exempt them from state laws. The battle for treaty rights had begun.¹⁰²

Of all the sources of income and support available to the Lake Superior Ojibwe, annuity payments were the least significant, amounting to only a few dollars per individual per year (figure 4). Even then, the government did not pay the full amount that was due. In 1864 a delegation of Wisconsin Ojibwe chiefs traveled to Washington to ask the government for overdue annuities and compensation for the use of inflated paper currency instead of the coin that the treaties specified. When the government did not pay the money owed, Ojibwe chiefs asked again to visit Washington and were denied. The agents' pleas on behalf of the Ojibwe were unsuccessful. After making the final annuity payment in 1874, the federal government made small annual appropriations to support reservation services such as schools and blacksmiths. In 1892 the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs reported with indignation that the federal government owed the Ojibwe more than ninety-two thousand dollars. There is no evidence that the government ever paid this money.¹⁰³

The reservation system diminished the authority of the chiefs and reduced the significance of bands, further weakening traditional Ojibwe culture. The Indian agent—a government bureaucrat—had more power over the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe than did their own chiefs. After Chief Buffalo died in September 1855 his descendents served as first chief at Red Cliff. In 1874 agent Mahan wrote: “The chiefs of this reserve are hardly known in the affairs of government; they are never consulted, and, with the exception of head chief Buffalo, are hardly known. Buffalo, however, takes an active part in all the business of the agency, and is one of the hardest working Indians I have.”¹⁰⁴ Chief Wa-bish-ke-be-nais, or White Bird, a chief of the crane clan, moved his family and band of sixty-five individuals from Madeline Island to the Bad River Reservation following the 1854 treaty. He was one of six chiefs who moved to Bad River at that time. After Wa-bish-ke-be-nais died in 1877, his oldest son, George Whitebird, became chief of the band. In addition to traditional duties such as settling internal disputes and representing the band at larger gatherings, George Whitebird and the other hereditary chiefs at Bad River petitioned the federal government to uphold its

¹⁰² Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 30–31; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 185–95.

¹⁰³ Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 21; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 75–77; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 96.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of Commissioner 1874*, 188–89.

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Figure 4. Annuity payment at Bad River, 1870. Photo by Charles Zimmerman. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society (WHi-48581).

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treaty obligations, established land allotment lists, and traveled to Washington in 1888 to inform the government about the abuses of reservation lumbering. Multiple chiefs meant, of course, that there were multiple bands associated with each reservation. Agent Gilbert reported in 1854 that the La Pointe Ojibwe were subdivided into ten smaller bands, which is consistent with the fourteen chiefs and headmen who signed the 1854 treaty. During the 1880s the BIA reports stopped referring to the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe as bands (plural) and started identifying each reservation as a single band. This does not mean that the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe viewed each reservation as a single band. But as hunting, fishing, and gathering diminished, the social function of the band diminished as well.¹⁰⁵

In 1900 agent Campbell reported the population of the Red Cliff Reservation at 226 and Bad River at 714. These numbers do not all represent reservation residents; at Red Cliff especially many of the Ojibwe associated with the reservation lived in Bayfield. The assimilation program of the agents and missionaries had made substantial progress in destroying traditional Ojibwe culture. All of the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe wore white people's clothing and lived in houses. Most of them could read and speak English and belonged to a church. Eliza Morrison had lived at Bad River in the 1860s; when she moved back to Odanah in 1895 Morrison wrote that three-fourths of the Bad River Ojibwe could speak English, whereas thirty years earlier about two out of twenty could speak English. She wrote further:

I say they are pretty well civilized. There is some here yet who follow the old style of dancing and pow wow and their medicine dance and other old habits. The Indians in this vicinity is selling their timber off their allotments. This enables them to build quite good homes. Not one family lives in a wigwam like they use to. There is a big saw mill here where they can buy lumber. Some of them has quite large fields, raise quite a large amount of vegetables which they sell to the whites. And their hunting and fishing and wild fruits in the summer and wild rice, what they call *ka ka gan* rice beds and it is a great place for hunting ducks in the spring and in the fall.¹⁰⁶

Eliza Morrison's description shows that traditional ways had not disappeared, and that is evident in the agents' reports as well. In the 1890s one agent distinguished two factions at Bad River as "progressives" and "vagabonds," the latter opposed to farming or other "civilized" pursuits.¹⁰⁷

In 1900 the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe derived their primary income from selling natural resources, primarily timber but also fish and other wild foods. Next in importance was wage labor; followed by hunting, fishing, and gathering; and finally

¹⁰⁵ Peter Lewis Whitebird, "Peter Lewis Whitebird: Whitebird History," *Peter Lewis Whitebird*, <http://www.peterlewiswhitebird.com/view/?pageID=150814>; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1854* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1855), 30.

¹⁰⁶ Morrison, *A Little History*, 145.

¹⁰⁷ *Report of Commissioner 1900*, 407; *Report of Commissioner 1874*, 188; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 104, 107–108.

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agriculture. This was a significant change from the beginning of the reservation era, when the Ojibwe subsisted mainly by hunting, fishing, and gathering. Sometimes when one income source failed another could be substituted, but overall it was a precarious and marginal existence. Income from timber sales provided some stability in the late 1890s, allaying the usual poverty. Diseases such as scrofula, syphilis, smallpox, malaria, pneumonia, and especially tuberculosis were common, exacerbated by crowded living conditions on the reservations. Alcoholism was chronic. By BIA standards, the La Pointe Ojibwe had made great progress by 1900. But if progress is measured by standard of living or quality of life, the reservation system did not bring progress.¹⁰⁸

The Twentieth Century

During the first three decades of the twentieth century the BIA continued its assimilation program. The entire Red Cliff Reservation—14,166 acres—had been allotted following the 1896 forest fire. At Bad River, the number of allotments increased from 662 for 51,884 acres of land in 1900 to 1,021 allotments for 80,629 acres of land in 1910. In 1920 the BIA reported 1,610 allotments at Bad River totaling 115,968 acres, roughly 90 percent of the land on the reservation. The Catholic Church continued to operate day schools at Red Cliff and Bad River and boarding schools at Bad River and Bayfield; attendance was still problematic. Children who lived far from the Indian day schools went to public schools. A contract between the BIA and an Ashland County school district specified that Indian students were to receive an education equal to that of the white students, that they would be instructed in English when needed, and protected from ridicule and insult. Intermarriage, mostly between white men and Ojibwe women, contributed to assimilation. Out of an enrolled population of 1,083 at Bad River in 1920, the BIA reported that 46 were full blood, 358 had more than half Ojibwe blood, and 679 had half or less Ojibwe blood. At Red Cliff, the BIA reported that only 2 out of 525 enrolled members were full blood.¹⁰⁹

Logging dominated the economy of both reservations in 1900, but the timber was soon depleted at Red Cliff. In 1897 when Frederick Gilbert's Red Cliff Lumber Company received the logging contract for Red Cliff, there were an estimated one hundred million standing feet of timber on the reservation. The company worked quickly, removing an average of 7 million board feet of pine a year. In the 1902–03 season their harvest peaked at 12.3 million board feet, of which more than 10 million feet were pine. The following year's harvest was less than half that amount, and in 1904–05 they cut approximately 1.5 million board feet, mostly hemlock. When the Red Cliff sawmill burned in 1906, Gilbert elected not to rebuild it and defaulted on his contract to cut the remainder of the marketable timber on the reservation. Small-scale logging of

¹⁰⁸ Shifferd, "Study in Economic Change," 19, 29; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 93–94, 104–105; *Report of Commissioner 1861*, 82; *Report of Commissioner 1874*, 188–89; *Report of Commissioner 1890*, 240; *Report of Commissioner 1900*, 410.

¹⁰⁹ BIA population figures cannot be considered entirely reliable, as the bureau sometimes altered data to suit their purposes. Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 111, 123–27; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1920* (Washington: G.P.O.), 73, 85; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1905* (Washington: G.P.O.), 374–75; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1906* (Washington: G.P.O.), 394–95.

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what little marketable timber remained at Red Cliff continued into the 1920s, with property owners arranging individually for logging on their own allotments.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, the Stearns Lumber Company was removing huge amounts of timber from the Bad River Reservation. In the winter of 1904–05 they cut more than 53 million board feet. The following year's harvest of 47 million board feet was smaller but still substantial. Samuel Campbell, head of the La Pointe agency since 1898, managed the money that the Ojibwe received from these timber sales. Like many before him, Campbell did not believe that the Ojibwe were capable of managing their own money, but Campbell took over that management to an unprecedented degree. He invested Ojibwe timber profits in interest-bearing accounts in different banks, giving monthly allowances to those who were infirm and allowing withdrawals to others who would use the money for farming or other property improvements. Campbell's critics accused him not only of improperly withholding Ojibwe funds, but also of using those funds to benefit himself and the Stearns Lumber Company. The BIA dismissed Campbell in 1912. Although he was later pardoned and it does not appear that he was guilty of using the funds for personal profit, Campbell's actions resulted in lost interest and costly legal entanglements for the Ojibwe. Meanwhile, the timber harvest at Bad River continued to decline in the 1910s, from 29 million board feet in 1914–15 to 24 million board feet in 1919–1920. When the Stearns Lumber Company stopped logging at Bad River in 1924, they had removed one and a quarter billion feet of timber in twenty-eight years and paid seven million dollars to Bad River Ojibwe in profits and wages.¹¹¹

For decades, reservation logging was the primary source of income and jobs for the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe. Campbell wrote in 1906: "The sawmills on the Wisconsin reservations provide work for all the able-bodied Indians who desire it, at the same wages and on equal terms with white employees."¹¹² In 1914 the Stearns Lumber Company employed fifteen hundred men at the Bad River Reservation, one-third of whom were Ojibwe. In 1920, wage work accounted for 14 percent of total reservation income at Bad River, compared to 56 percent at Red Cliff. At that date, Bad River still derived about a quarter of its income from timber profits, compared to 2 percent at Red Cliff. Most Red Cliff wage workers were employed in fishing and logging. Farming took a back seat during the logging era, but the BIA continued to encourage farming, which it believed would provide a living for the Ojibwe once the timber ran out. Much of the La Pointe agency's energy focused on Bad River because of its superior (for the

¹¹⁰ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 149–50; *Report of Commissioner 1905*, 377; *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 395–98; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1907* (Washington: G.P.O.), 72–73.

¹¹¹ *Report of Commissioner 1905*, 376–77; *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 394–95, 398; Sheree L. Peterson, "Camp Stella: Meeting Place of Kindred Souls," (report for the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1997), 76, 86–94; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 102, 112–13; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 149; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1915* (Washington: G.P.O.), 172–73; *Report of Commissioner 1920*, 160–61.

¹¹² *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 395. There is some question whether the wages and terms were the same. One of the complaints against the Stearns Company was that they paid white workers in cash but paid Ojibwe workers in credit coupons redeemable only at the company store. Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 149.

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region) farmland. From 1913 to 1921 the agency assisted Bad River farmers in presenting an agricultural fair. There was more emphasis than earlier on dairy farming, which was better suited to the local climate and soil than were crops such as corn. At Bad River in 1920, a reported 175 Ojibwe cultivated 2,540 acres of land and had 250 horses and mules, 250 cattle, and 65 sheep and goats. At Red Cliff, reportedly 35 Ojibwe cultivated 375 acres of land and had 42 horses and mules and 98 cattle. The Ojibwe achieved this degree of agricultural success under difficult conditions. Logging cleared the land partially, leaving dense undergrowth and stumps that were expensive to remove. Lack of roads left many allotments inaccessible until the mid-1920s. Sadly, not long after more roads were built, farmers who were left impoverished when timber monies ran out were forced to sell their stock and equipment.¹¹³

The Ojibwe also derived some income from products that they made or gathered, what the BIA termed native industries. Agent Campbell wrote in 1906: “The Indians of this agency are indefatigable berry pickers, make large quantities of maple sugar, are very successful hunters and fishers, and their bead work and birch-bark work find a ready sale all over the country.”¹¹⁴ Ojibwe women were noted for their beadwork and birch-bark work, and sales of these crafts became a relatively small but reliable source of income. For 1920 the BIA reported that twenty-five Red Cliff Ojibwe (and one from Bad River) were engaged in native-run commercial fishing operations. The Ojibwe continued to hunt, fish, and gather to feed themselves as well as to earn income. But increasingly Ojibwe hunters and fishermen came into conflict with state fish and game wardens. Two important court cases involved Ojibwe from the Bad River and Red Cliff reservations. In 1901 a state warden arrested John Blackbird for setting a fishing net within the Bad River Reservation. When Blackbird was convicted in municipal court he refused to pay the fine and was sentenced to thirty days hard labor. Blackbird appealed to the U.S. district court, where a federal judge ruled that the state did not have the authority to enforce state fish and game laws on reservations. Blackbird was released from jail. Then, in 1907 state authorities arrested Michael Morrin for setting nets in Red Cliff Bay, just off the coast of the reservation. Despite the federal ruling in the Blackbird case, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the state had the authority to enforce its hunting and fishing laws against Indians both on and off the reservations. This ruling would restrict Ojibwe hunting and fishing rights for the next seventy-five years.¹¹⁵

The standard of living on the reservations was low even when timber profits were relatively high. A 1913 inspection of Odanah, where three-fourths of Bad River residents lived, reported rotting sidewalks, open privies, and backyards filled with stagnant water and refuse. The annual floods of the Bad River spread sewage from privies throughout the town, and houses were overcrowded—conditions that fostered disease. Alcoholism was rampant. Following the lead of the nationwide temperance movement, agent

¹¹³ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 110, 112, 114–17; *Report of Commissioner 1920*, 116–17, 122, 184; *Report of Commissioner 1905*, 376; *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 395.

¹¹⁴ *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 395.

¹¹⁵ *Report of Commissioner 1905*, 376; *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 395; *Report of Commissioner 1915*, 118; *Report of Commissioner 1920*, 111–12, 117; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 83–85; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 195–97.

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Campbell convened a group of brewers, clergymen, lawyers, and businessmen in Ashland to try to persuade the more than fifty local saloonkeepers from selling to Ojibwe. Yet despite arrests, confiscations, and twenty-four hour patrols by Bad River Indian police, liquor was smuggled into the reservations in grocery boxes, under clothing, by white loggers, and by other means.¹¹⁶

Poverty deepened when timber profits declined. At Red Cliff, where timber ran out first, per capita income for fiscal year 1915 was \$114, compared to \$347 at Bad River. In 1920 per capita income was about equal at the two reservations: \$276 at Red Cliff and \$283 at Bad River. By comparison, per capita income for the farm population in Wisconsin in 1920 was \$496.¹¹⁷ The economy was depressed at Bad River and Red Cliff well before the stock market crash of 1929. Indian tribes across the country shared the plight of the La Pointe Ojibwe. In 1926 the federal government commissioned a study of the economic and social condition of American Indians. Completed in 1928, the Meriam Report showed that the majority of Indians lived in extreme poverty and were not full participants in the dominant white social and economic system. Allotment had not succeeded in integrating them into white society or in enabling them to earn a decent living. In addition, allotment brought about the alienation of a large amount of reservation land. Many Ojibwe sold their allotments, often for less than the properties were worth; others lost their allotments for failing to pay taxes; and the government declared some reservation land surplus and sold it. By 1934, 55,408 acres had been alienated from the Bad River Reservation and 10,739 from the Red Cliff Reservation.¹¹⁸

The Meriam Report was part of a movement among white Americans to reform Indian policy. In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed John Collier, the leader of this movement, as commissioner of Indian affairs. Collier's program to restore Native American culture and tribal political authority became known as the Indian New Deal. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 was the centerpiece of this program. The IRA ended allotment, improved the Indian educational system, established a ten-million dollar revolving loan fund for community development, and enabled a new system of limited tribal self-government. The IRA encouraged tribes to adopt constitutions and by-laws that established elected tribal councils to govern tribal affairs and further community interests. The act also encouraged tribes to organize as federal corporations to promote economic development. Both the Red Cliff and Bad River bands adopted constitutions in 1936. The Red Cliff band incorporated in 1936 and Bad River in 1938. The election of tribal councils reduced the role of hereditary chiefs, but it appears that these chiefs maintained their leadership roles both by carrying on Ojibwe traditions and serving the

¹¹⁶ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 119–23; *Report of Commissioner 1915*, 140–41.

¹¹⁷ Per capita income for the non-farm population in Wisconsin in 1920 was \$689. Maurice Leven and Willford Isbell King, *Income in the Various States: Its Sources and Distribution 1919, 1920, and 1921* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1925), 274, 276.

¹¹⁸ *Report of Commissioner 1915*, 118; *Report of Commissioner 1920*, 116–17; Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 128–31; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 72–75, 78; Charles F. Wilkinson, *To Feel the Summer in the Spring: The Treaty Fishing Rights of the Wisconsin Chippewa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Law School, 1990), 17–18; Indian Land Tenure Foundation, "Allotment Information for Midwest BIA Region," Indian Land Tenure Foundation, <http://www.indianlandtenure.org/ILTFallotment/specinfo/si%20Midwest.pdf>, 3.

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new tribal governments. Martin Buffalo was the first chairman of the Red Cliff Tribal Council, and at Bad River Peter Whitebird and his son Albert were tribal council officers.¹¹⁹

Collier worked with other federal agencies to bring jobs and relief to the reservations. Many impoverished Bad River farmers had sold their stock and equipment in the late 1920s. When the Depression began and off-reservation jobs disappeared, the unemployed came back to the reservations where it was cheaper to live. By the early 1930s half of the residents of the Bad River Reservation were destitute. During the winter of 1933–34, the Civil Works Administration employed about 360 Ojibwe at the Red Cliff, Bad River, and Lac du Flambeau reservations, where they repaired buildings, installed wells, and performed other community improvement tasks. Although this program ended in 1934, for nine years the Indian Division of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC-ID) provided jobs ranging from draining ditches to seeding wild rice. In 1937 the CCC-ID employed an average of 43 men per month at Bad River alone. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) also provided jobs. By the end of 1937 the WPA had sponsored projects worth \$297,306 at Bad River and \$139,403 at Red Cliff. The Bad River and Red Cliff Ojibwe made extensive use of the IRA revolving loan fund to assist individual and community business ventures. Most loans were for seed, livestock, boats, nets, and other equipment needed for farming and fishing. The BIA's rehabilitation division offered some relief funds and jobs. In 1937 BIA rehabilitation funds and WPA labor built a new community hall at Odanah, which still faced problems of overcrowding and poor sanitation. The Bad River band was heavily dependent on federal assistance, which accounted for 87 percent of their income in 1938. Only 37 of 235 families on the reservation farmed their land, and fewer did so profitably. Red Cliff seemed to be a little better off; 78 percent of the band's income came from federal assistance in 1937. The incidence of disease was also lower at Red Cliff, which did not have the drainage and flooding problems that were prevalent at Bad River.¹²⁰

The Chippewa Indian historical project that the WPA conducted at Bad River from 1936 to 1942 shows how much the government's Indian policy had changed. Sponsored by the BIA, the project was directed by Sister Macaria Murphy of St. Mary's Indian School, one of the institutions long devoted to dismantling traditional Ojibwe culture. The project left a rich record of legends, history, religious beliefs and rituals, foodways, clothing, games, and other traditional practices as carried on or remembered by Bad River Ojibwe at that time. There are detailed descriptions of hunting, fishing, rice gathering, sugaring, and berry picking, sometimes distinguishing between former and current practices. There is little mention of the islands, only brief references to Madeline Island and Long Island. One informant, Florina Denomie, described blueberry picking as the most important income-producing industry after farming and lumbering. She recounted that in July 1938 the relief agencies told people to go to the berry fields

¹¹⁹ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 131–36; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 78; *Constitution and Bylaws of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Wisconsin*, approved June 1, 1936 (Washington: G.P.O., 1936), online at <http://thorpe.ou.edu/IRA/rccons.html>; “Red Cliff's Centennial Was Colorful Event,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 9, 1954; Whitebird, “Peter Lewis Whitebird.”

¹²⁰ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 110, 119, 137–43, 145–49.

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because no more relief would be available for some time, but that many people would have gone regardless, as they had done for centuries. The berry fields Denomie described were near Washburn.¹²¹

Researchers did not ask Ojibwe people specifically about their use of the islands until after the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Marvin DeFoe was born in Bayfield in 1928 to an Ojibwe father and white mother; he was affiliated with the Red Cliff band and lived on the reservation for a time. DeFoe remembered tribal members picking blueberries on Stockton Island and hunting on Bass Island. He also recalled people going to the sugar bush on an unnamed island, but he did not go because of school.¹²² Joe Duffy provided more detailed, personal memories of hunting, fishing, picking berries, and collecting other wild foods on the islands. Duffy is a commercial fisherman who has lived all his life at Red Cliff, where he was born in 1939 to a white father and Ojibwe mother. Duffy's description of blueberry picking during the 1940s confirms and supplements that of Denomie. They picked for a month, first two weeks at the barrens near Washburn and then two weeks on Presque Isle (Stockton Island). Practically the whole reservation went to Stockton Island, where they hunted deer and ducks for food and cooked and ate communally. Duffy's mother canned 100 to 150 quarts of blueberries; the sale of the remainder was an important source of cash. Duffy thought the berrying trips continued to the late 1950s. He also remembered picking blueberries on Otter Island and cranberries on Outer Island. He recalled eating fiddleheads and other wild plants during island camping trips, and collecting hazelnuts in the fall. Regarding hunting, Duffy said "either you hunted or you starved." They hunted deer on Hermit and Basswood islands and trapped beaver on Outer and Stockton islands. They ate the beaver meat and sold the furs, another important source of cash. Duffy said he had fished all over the islands. During the 1940s families had their "own" places on the islands where they traditionally went to camp, and the property owners didn't mind others camping there.¹²³

During World War II many Ojibwe enlisted in the armed forces, including more than one-third of the able-bodied men from the Bad River Reservation, and more moved to cities to work in war industries. As in the nation as a whole, the war effort boosted the economy on the reservations. But the war effort also shifted federal resources away from the BIA and ended the CCC, with negative effects on reservation jobs and infrastructure. After the war the federal government returned to its pre-New Deal goal of assimilating Native Americans into the American mainstream with a policy known as termination. Under this policy, the BIA terminated its responsibility to many tribes. The BIA Relocation Bureau encouraged and supposedly assisted tribesmen to move to urban areas, but it did not provide adequate job training or other needed assistance to the people who relocated. Although the BIA did not terminate its responsibility to the Ojibwe, programs

¹²¹ Works Progress Administration, "Chippewa Indian Historical Project Records (microform), 1936-42," Northern Great Lakes Center Area Research Center, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Ashland. Florina Denomie, "Blueberry Picking Among the Chippewas," in envelope 16.

¹²² Virginia and Marvin DeFoe, interview by Janet Stockhausen, January 9, 1984, tape recording with written summary, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files.

¹²³ Joe Duffy, interview by Holly Smith, March 1, 2005, tape recording with written summary, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files.

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such as the revolving loan fund that continued from the 1930s were inadequate to alleviate reservation poverty. A substantial increase in tourism in the Chequamegon region after World War II provided opportunities for economic development, but mostly it meant more sport hunters and fishermen competing for fish and game. The collapse of the Lake Superior fisheries in the 1950s followed by new regulations to allow fish populations to recover brought greater urgency to the conflict over treaty rights.¹²⁴

In the 1960s federal anti-poverty and housing programs brought some relief to Ojibwe on the reservations. Beginning with the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, these programs directed money to reservations, resulting in noticeable improvements in employment and living conditions. Importantly, tribal councils were responsible for managing these programs on the reservations. Through the Wisconsin Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, local tribal councils worked cooperatively to seek funding for community programs. Off the reservations, the American Indian Movement (AIM) founded in Minneapolis in 1968 represented a more militant approach to seeking Indian rights. Activism would pay off for the Ojibwe in 1983, when a federal court ruled for them in a class action suit against the state of Wisconsin, upholding their right to hunt, fish, and gather on ceded lands for the first time since the Morrin ruling of 1908. In succeeding years federal courts further defined Ojibwe treaty rights. In the 1990s Wisconsin Ojibwe opened gaming casinos on their reservations, bringing in income for tribal programs and infrastructure. These legal and financial successes have helped to support the revitalization of traditional Ojibwe culture.¹²⁵

In the meantime, the movement to create Apostle Islands National Lakeshore posed a dilemma for the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe. The catalyst for the national lakeshore movement was the Bad River Tribal Council's 1962 resolution requesting the governor of Wisconsin and U.S. secretary of the interior to study the feasibility of a national shoreline recreation area on the Bad River Reservation. The tribal council was seeking sensitive development that would provide economic opportunity on the reservation while preserving natural resources and cultural traditions. As the proposal took shape, the national lakeshore included all of the Apostle Islands except for Madeline Island, the Kakagon-Bad River sloughs on the Bad River Reservation, and all of the shoreline on the Red Cliff Reservation. The federal government would purchase or lease Ojibwe land, or trade it for other federal land. In addition to reserved treaty rights, the proposal gave the Ojibwe privileges such as preference in employment and concessions in the national lakeshore. At first the Red Cliff and Bad River bands supported the proposal, but in the face of new arrests by state game officers they became increasingly concerned about how well the federal government would protect their right to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice. In addition, many tribal members did not want to give up more land. By 1969 the Red Cliff and Bad River tribal councils had solidified their opposition to the proposed national lakeshore. When the government continued with a proposal that

¹²⁴ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 155–61; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 78–80; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 89–93; Kris Visser, "Fish and the Red Cliff Chippewa," *Wisconsin Natural Resources* 6 (May–June 1982): 10–11.

¹²⁵ Danziger, *Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 165–70, 190, 204–205; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 80–83; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 93–100.

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included reservation lands, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) became involved as an advocate for the local Ojibwe. Finally, in 1970, the sponsors of the national lakeshore bill agreed to exclude all lands owned by Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe, either tribally or individually; this was stated explicitly in the bill that President Nixon signed on September 26.¹²⁶ In protecting their tribally-owned lands from inclusion in the national lakeshore, the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe set national precedent in the relationship between Native Americans and national parks. In 1986 the Bad River Tribal Council opposed the addition of Long Island to the national lakeshore, citing the island's spiritual significance and the negative environmental impacts that could result from increasing recreational use on and around the island. After the National Park Service strengthened its plans to protect Long Island's cultural and natural resources, the Bad River Ojibwe withdrew their opposition.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ A small exception, specified in the bill, allowed the federal government to buy two Red Cliff allotments on Sand Bay if the owners were willing to sell. The mainland unit of the national lakeshore included additional land within the boundaries of the Red Cliff Reservation, but it had long ago been sold to non-Indians.

¹²⁷ Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, *American Indians & National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 3–16; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 366–70.

CHAPTER THREE THE INTERNATIONAL FUR TRADE

For nearly two hundred years, the lives of Europeans, Canadians, and Americans in the Chequamegon region revolved around the fur trade. Throughout this time, competition, warfare, and shifting alliances among white and native peoples shaped and reshaped trading networks. The French were the first Europeans to trade in the Chequamegon region; beginning in 1659, they maintained control for the next hundred years. The French adopted the Indian mode of trade as gift giving, an exchange of furs and trade goods that also established friendships and political alliances. In 1693 Pierre Le Sueur built a trading post on Madeline Island, establishing the island as a regional administrative center for the French trade. The British took over the Lake Superior trade under the 1763 Treaty of Paris. The first English traders formed partnerships with French Canadians and followed French trading customs. As the number of traders increased, so did competition and conflict among them, and newer traders were more likely to ignore established trading customs. To reduce injurious competition, a group of traders and merchants entered into a formal partnership called the North West Company, which soon dominated the fur trade in the Lake Superior region. By the 1790s, métis trader Michel Cadotte was head of the North West Company's trading post on Madeline Island. The War of 1812 ended British control of the fur trade on the south shore of Lake Superior, and the Americans took over. For the next thirty years the American Fur Company largely controlled the upper Great Lakes fur trade, engaging many of the French-Canadian traders who had worked for the British. Michel Cadotte headed the La Pointe trade until he sold his business to his son-in-laws Lyman and Truman Warren in 1823. During the 1830s Protestant and Catholic missionaries helped to create a growing white community at La Pointe. By then the fur trade was waning; the American Fur Company's attempt at commercial fishing brought more people to La Pointe but did not revive company finances. In 1842 Ojibwe land cessions opened the way for white settlement, and in 1845 La Pointe became the county seat of the newly-organized La Pointe County. Two years later the American Fur Company ceased operations. Although trade in furs did not end completely, it became relatively minor as permanent settlements grew and new types of resources were exploited.

The French

As the first Europeans to trade in the Lake Superior region, the French established a pattern for the international fur trade in the region that would largely persist into the nineteenth century. Historians generally identify Etienne Brule as the first Frenchman to travel to Lake Superior, during a journey he took in 1622 or 1623. An interpreter for Samuel de Champlain, Brule was exploring on Champlain's behalf—looking for furs and a water route to the Pacific. French historian Gabriel Sagard-Theodat recounted Brule's trip, and Champlain's depiction of Lake Superior on his 1632 map of New France is believed to have drawn on Brule's account, as Champlain never saw the lake himself. Jean Nicolet, another interpreter for Champlain, may have stopped at the east end of Lake Superior on his way to Green Bay in 1634. In 1641 two Jesuit missionaries, Charles Raymbault and Isaac Jogues, visited the rapids between Lake Superior and Lake Huron

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and named them Sault de Sainte Marie—the Rapids of St. Mary. Six years later, the first known written reference to the lake as “superior” appeared in the Jesuit *Relation*, the annual report that the Jesuits of New France sent to Paris. Strictly translated, “le lac superieur” means upper lake.¹

Fur traders Medart Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and his brother-in-law, Pierre Esprit Radisson are the first Frenchmen known to have visited the Chequamegon region. The two applied to the governor of Quebec for a trading license but balked at the requirement that they take government agents and a Jesuit priest along with them. Radisson and Des Groseilliers left without a license and traveled west accompanied by Saulteur—the French name for the Ojibwe who lived at Sault Ste. Marie—and Ottawa Indians.² Radisson described their arrival in the fall of 1659 at Chequamegon Bay.

As we came to the other sid we weare in a bay of 10 leagues about, if we had gone in. By goeing about that same point we passed a straight, [strait] for that point was very nigh the other side, which is a cape very much elevated like piramides. That point should be very fitt to build & advantageous for the building of a fort, as we did the spring following. In that bay there is a chanell where we take great store of fishes, sturgeons of a vast bignesse, and Pycks of seaven foot long. Att the end of this bay we landed.³

Radisson and Des Groseilliers stayed twelve days at Chequamegon Bay, while the Indians who had accompanied them went onward in search of their families. During that time the two traders built a fort, hunted, fished, and “had the company of other wild men of other countreys that came to us admiring our fort and the workmanship.”⁴ Radisson described how they built their fort of stakes, surrounded it with tree boughs, and tied bells to a cord to serve as an alarm. The fort apparently was by the lakeshore, as the doorway was near the water. After their Indian traveling companions returned, the group traveled south into the interior for the winter, possibly to Lac Courte Oreilles. The traders and their companions nearly starved during the harsh winter. When the famine ended they participated in the Feast of the Dead with “eighten severall nations.” Radisson and Des Groseilliers returned to Chequamegon Bay in the spring of 1660. Based on Radisson’s earlier reference to the point, some historians believe that the fort that the two traders built that spring was located on Chequamegon Point. It appears that there was no gap between Long Island and the remainder of the sandspit at that time, so that the island was part of Chequamegon Point.⁵

¹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 14–18; John O. Holzhueter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region* (1974; reprint, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 11–12; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 9, 19–21; Wisconsin Historical Society, “A Young Interpreter Skirts the Shores of Lake Superior about 1622,” *Turning Points in Wisconsin History*, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=52>.

² Ross, *La Pointe*, 19; Grace Lee Nute, “Radisson, Pierre-Esprit,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioID=35174>; Warkentin, “Discovering Radisson,” 46; Radisson, *Voyages*, 173–176.

³ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵ Ross, *La Pointe*, 20–25; Nute, “Radisson, Pierre-Esprit”; Warkentin, “Discovering Radisson,” 49–50, 52, 57–58; Radisson, *Voyages*, 195–221; Vergil E. Noble, “The 1992 Archeological Survey of Long Island,

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When Radisson and Des Groseilliers returned to Montreal in the summer of 1660 they had accumulated a fortune in furs. Estimates of the value of these furs range from \$120,000 to \$400,000. On the pretext that the traders were operating without a license, government officials confiscated most of the furs, fined the men, and jailed Des Groseilliers. Not incidentally, the confiscated furs probably saved New France from bankruptcy. After failing to find redress in France, Radisson and Des Groseilliers embarked on a new endeavor. During their trip to the Lake Superior region they had learned about the abundance of beaver in the Hudson Bay area. They tried to interest officials and investors in New France, France, and New England in a fur trading expedition to Hudson Bay without success. Radisson and Des Groseilliers took their plan to England, where they were instrumental in founding the Hudson's Bay Company, chartered in 1670.⁶

Before Radisson and Des Groseilliers, French traders bought furs from Indian middlemen who came to Montreal. The abundance of high quality furs that Radisson and Des Groseilliers brought back to Montreal inspired other trading parties to travel to the Chequamegon region. Shortly after Radisson and Des Groseilliers returned to Montreal in 1660, a group of seven traders and a Jesuit priest, Father Rene Menard, left for Chequamegon Bay. The traders sought to emulate the success of Radisson and Des Groseilliers, and Father Menard hoped to minister to the Indians living by the bay. Part of the group, including Menard, wintered at Keweenaw Bay while the others traveled on to Chequamegon Bay. In the spring of 1661 Menard left Keweenaw Bay, but accounts differ as to whether he reached Chequamegon Bay. Either before or after arriving at Chequamegon Bay, Menard became lost or was abandoned, possibly somewhere near the Chippewa River. The exact location and circumstances of his death are unknown. In 1663 the traders returned to Montreal with a cargo of furs, not enough to show a profit but enough to generate more interest in the Chequamegon region.⁷

Father Claude Allouez was the first Jesuit missionary to succeed in establishing a mission at Chequamegon Bay. Allouez left Three Rivers, Quebec on August 8, 1665 with six traders and more than four hundred Indians. On October 1, with far fewer Indians, he arrived at "Chagouamigong," which he described: "It is a beautiful bay, at the head of which is situated the great village of the savages, who there cultivate fields of Indian corn and lead a settled life. They number eight hundred men bearing arms, but are gathered together from seven different nations, living in peace, mingled one with another."⁸ Scholars have advanced several different definitions as the original meaning of the name Chequamegon or "shagwaumikong." The most widely accepted definition follows Ojibwe historian William Whipple Warren, who gave "soft beaver dam" as the

Lake Superior, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 47 (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1996), 5, 8.

⁶ Ross, *La Pointe*, 25, 28; Nute, "Radisson, Pierre-Esprit"; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 21–22; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 16.

⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 28–30; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 16–17; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 23–25.

⁸ Jean Claude Allouez, "Father Allouez's Journey to Lake Superior, 1665–1667" in *Early Narratives of the Northwest, 1634–1699*, ed. Louise P. Kellogg (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 107, online facsimile at <http://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-047/>.

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Ojibwe meaning of the word. This referred to the Ojibwe legend that Nanabazhoo built the sandspit (Chequamegon Point) to impound a giant beaver. The beaver broke through the spit and created the entrance to Chequamegon Bay; hence “soft” beaver dam. The French used the Indian name Chequamegon but also gave the bay a French name—La Baye du St. Esprit or Bay of the Holy Ghost. The sandspit at the opening of the bay became known as La Pointe du St. Esprit.⁹

The Ottawa Indians were the dominant tribe in the great village at the head of the bay, which also included Potawatomi, Illinois, Sauk, Fox, and Cree. North of the Ottawa village was a second large village of Huron-Petun. Between the two villages Allouez built a bark covered chapel. The mission took its name from La Pointe du St. Esprit—Mission of the Holy Ghost. In 1666 Allouez moved his chapel to the Ottawa village, but some angry Ottawa destroyed the chapel and Allouez barely escaped alive. After enduring two winters with little success in converting Indians to Christianity, Allouez left La Pointe du St. Esprit in the spring of 1667 and went to Quebec seeking additional help. The fur traders who had accompanied Allouez also left that spring. Allouez traveled to Quebec via the north shore of Lake Superior, becoming the first known European to circumnavigate the lake. After just two days in Quebec, Allouez left for Chequamegon Bay with Father Louis Nicolas and another group of fur traders. Unfortunately, Nicolas provided little assistance, mired in his hatred of the pagan Indians and the hardships of mission life. He returned to Quebec as soon as the ice broke up the next year. After a third winter at St. Esprit, Allouez told the Indians that because they were unwilling to embrace Christianity he was going to the mission at the Sault. Following this announcement, one of the three Ottawa bands decided in council to become Christians. So Allouez stayed a fourth winter at La Pointe du St. Esprit, leaving in 1669.¹⁰

From 1660 until 1668, Chequamegon Bay had been the focus of the growing French fur trade. In addition to traders licensed by the French government, unlicensed traders sold furs to the English or through the black markets in Quebec and Montreal. In 1668 the French shifted the focus of their trade southward to Green Bay, in part because of a temporary peace between the French and the Iroquois. The route to Green Bay, once freed from Iroquois attacks, was easier than the route to Chequamegon via Sault Ste. Marie, and from Green Bay traders could travel via the Fox and Wisconsin rivers to the Mississippi. A few traders remained in the Chequamegon region. The Jesuits continued their missionary effort at La Pointe du St. Esprit, sending Father Jacques Marquette there in September 1669. Marquette attempted to continue the work that Allouez had begun with mixed results. Warfare between the allied Ottawa and Huron against the Sioux disrupted his efforts. Because the Sioux were attacking them from the west and there was peace with the Iroquois in the east, the Ottawa and Huron left Chequamegon in 1670 and

⁹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 21, 29; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 10; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 23; Robert Mackreth, “Island Names,” fact sheet (Bayfield: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore); Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:129.

¹⁰ Ross, *La Pointe*, 30–31, 33; Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 181; Allouez, “Journey to Lake Superior,” 115–16; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 17–18; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 25–26; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 52:199–209.

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traveled east, many of them to the Straits of Mackinac. Marquette followed them to Mackinac, where he became head of the Mission of St. Ignace.¹¹

War between the Sioux and other tribes, including the Ojibwe, was an obstacle to trade in the Lake Superior region. In September 1678 Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Dulhut, traveled to Sault Ste. Marie, beginning the first of several trips intended to negotiate peace between the Sioux and their enemies and thus improve conditions for trade, and to explore the western Lake Superior region. Dulhut was successful in many respects, developing friendships with the Ojibwe, negotiating peace agreements between the tribes (although maintaining peace would require ongoing effort), claiming land for France, identifying a route to the upper Mississippi River, and building several trading posts west and north of Lake Superior. Dulhut spent the winter of 1679–80 on Chequamegon Bay but unfortunately left no record of his time there. Dulhut's success in opening trade on Lake Superior gained importance with the outbreak of King William's War between England and France in 1689. The Iroquois sided with the British, once again closing the southern route through Green Bay to French traders. Meanwhile, the Sioux were disrupting trade at French posts on the western end of Lake Superior. About 1690 the French built a trading post at a more defensible location—Chequamegon Point—by then known as La Pointe. The French also used the names La Pointe and Chequamegon, alternately or together (La Pointe du Chequamegon), to refer to the larger Chequamegon region, a practice that continued into the nineteenth century. In addition to being defensible, Chequamegon Point was strategically located at a juncture between the Great Lakes water highway and numerous rivers and streams that drained southward from Lake Superior into the interior, giving access to the St. Croix and Wisconsin rivers and via those rivers to the Mississippi.¹²

War between France and England impeded the French fur trade. In 1693, Count de Frontenac, governor of New France, sent Pierre Le Sueur to the Chequamegon region accompanied by soldiers and traders to reopen the Lake Superior fur trade once again, and to cement alliances with the Indians against the English. When Le Sueur arrived at the trading post at Chequamegon Point, he assessed the situation and decided to move the post to the southern end of Madeline Island, an even more defensible position than Chequamegon Point. At that time the French knew Madeline Island as Isle Michel. In pursuit of his mission to reopen trade, Le Sueur established additional posts to the west, near Upper St. Croix Lake and on the upper Mississippi River.¹³

The southern end of Madeline Island, today known as Grant's Point, has lost considerable land area since the seventeenth century, and some of the evidence of early occupation is underwater. Archaeologists have not located the site of the 1693 trading post, but Madeline Island's premier historian Hamilton Nelson Ross recounted that

¹¹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 32–34; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 23–27; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:167–83, 55:169–71, 56:115–17; Cleland, *Rites of Conquest*, 96; Bieder, *Native American Communities*, 66–67.

¹² Ross notes that the 1690 date for a post at Chequamegon Point is uncertain, and that the first definite evidence of a post there dates to 1692. Ross, *La Pointe*, 34–37, 43; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 28–31; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 52–54; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 2; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 10; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 44.

¹³ Ross, *La Pointe*, 37–45; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 31–32; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 4.

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Edward Wheeler, son of missionary Leonard Wheeler, showed him the site of the post in 1898, when Ross was a boy. At that time there were cornerstones and fireplace stones in place, subsequently removed. The trading post contained a storehouse for furs and trade goods and was probably protected by a palisade as was customary. It served as a trading center for a large area south of Lake Superior, from the west end of the lake to the base of the Keweenaw Peninsula, with many trails and water routes into the interior.¹⁴

The string of western trading posts that included La Pointe marked a transition in the way that the French conducted the fur trade. Earlier in the seventeenth century, Indian middlemen who traded with native hunters brought the furs to Montreal where furs and trade goods were exchanged in annual trade fairs. But beginning with Radisson and Des Groseilliers, an increasing number of traders traveled westward into the *pays d'en haut*, or upper country, around the Great Lakes. Traders usually left Montreal in the spring with canoes full of trade goods, spent the winter in the interior trading, and returned to Montreal with their furs in the summer. Traders might obtain furs from an Indian middleman or directly from an Indian hunter. Either way, traders were assuming a larger role in fur trade activity, the trade was becoming more individualized, and the center for trading was moving farther west. The French government sought to maintain control of the fur trade by issuing a limited number of licenses and punishing those who traded without a license. The punishments did not prove to be a deterrent to numerous unlicensed traders or *coureurs de bois*, literally runners of the woods. The French government was also struggling to maintain control of the fur trade in the face of competition from the British to the north and south. To the north, the Hudson's Bay Company, founded in 1670 with assistance from Radisson and Des Groseilliers, traded primarily with the Assiniboine and Cree for the rich furs of the far north, but also attracted Indians from the upper Great Lakes. The posts that Dulhut built north of Lake Superior were intended to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company. To the south, the Iroquois-British trading network extended through the lower Great Lakes and the Ohio River Valley.¹⁵

Although the French traders' westward movement diminished the role of Indian middlemen, the latter remained important, bringing furs to Great Lakes trading posts from tribes who lived farther west. Following the 1679 peace agreement between the Ojibwe and Sioux, the Ojibwe acted as middlemen between the Sioux and the French. This arrangement broke down when the French established direct trade with the Sioux in the 1730s. The Sioux and the Ojibwe resumed warfare, which continued into the nineteenth century and often disrupted trade networks.

At the heart of the fur trade was the exchange of goods and furs and the relationship between the two traders—Indian and French—who made the exchange. The

¹⁴ Ross, *La Pointe*, 40–44; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 4; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 34.

¹⁵ Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, reprint of 1956 revised edition with new introductory essay by Arthur J. Ray (1956; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Carolyn Gilman, *Where Two Worlds Meet: The Great Lakes Fur Trade* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1982); White, *Middle Ground*; Bruce M. White, “Grand Portage as a Trading Post: Patterns of Trade at ‘the Great Carrying Place,’” (prepared for National Park Service, Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Marais, MN, 2005), 27–35.

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French adopted the Indian mode of trade as gift giving. Traders often began the exchange with ceremonial gifts before exchanging gifts of trade goods for gifts of furs. When Radisson and Des Groseilliers arrived at the village by the lake, they participated in several days of gift-giving ceremonies, feasts, and dances to renew their friendship with the Indians. The two traders brought gifts with symbolic meaning for men, women, and children. Knives for the men showed that the French were great and mighty; rings and bells for the children showed that the French would always protect them and give them what they needed to make merry. In turn, the children should remember the French when they became men.¹⁶ The French, of course, had a profit motive in the exchange that was not a motive for the Indians, although for the latter trade goods had functional as well as symbolic value. For both French and Indians, the exchange was important in establishing friendships and political alliances. Marriage between French traders and Indian women also created alliances. At first the liaisons in which Indian women provided sexual companionship, housekeeping, and other support for French traders were casual and temporary. But by the end of the seventeenth century marriages, usually “in the fashion of the country,” as described by the French, or according to Indian custom, became more common. During the eighteenth century such marriages became an important means of establishing and maintaining trading relationships, and the métis, or mixed-blood, offspring of these marriages became prominent in the fur trade. Some marriages lasted only as long as a trader remained in the area; others lasted a lifetime.¹⁷

The French trading system was so productive in the mid-1690s that an overabundance of furs depressed the fur market in New France and France. Because of this, in 1696 King Louis XIV issued an edict revoking all trading licenses and forbidding the shipment of trade goods to the interior. French traders vacated La Pointe and the other trading posts, and Indian traders shifted their business to the Hudson’s Bay Company. Some *coureurs de bois* continued to trade, but overall the French lost ground in the fur trade to the English. King William’s War ended in 1697, but a new war between the English and French, Queen Anne’s War, began in 1702 and again disrupted trade. Queen Anne’s War ended in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, which gave Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Hudson Bay region, with its lucrative fur trade, to Great Britain. France moved to reestablish its trade by reopening its western trading posts, beginning with Fort Michilimackinac in 1714. Next the French reopened three posts in the Lake Superior region: at Kaministikwia on the north shore in 1717, at La Pointe in 1718, and then on Lake Nipigon, north of Lake Superior.¹⁸

Captain Paul le Gardeur, Sieur de St. Pierre, came to command the La Pointe post. He chose a new location at Sandy Bay on the west side of Madeline Island, about one mile north of Grant’s Point. This location offered a better harbor and larger lagoon than at the previous fort. In 1826 George Johnston described the remains of this fort: “I went

¹⁶ Radisson, *Voyages*, 199–200.

¹⁷ Gilman, *Where Two Worlds Meet*; White, *Middle Ground*; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*; White, “Grand Portage,” 5–44.

¹⁸ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 32–34; Ross, *La Pointe*, 46–48; Phil Porter, *Mackinac: An Island Famous in These Regions* (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac State Historic Parks, 1998), 10; Alan R. Woolworth, “The French Presence on Lake Superior and at Grand Portage, 1650–1750,” (Maplewood, MN: Woolworth Research Associates, 1996), 77.

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and visited the Indian camp beyond the old French fort, which is twenty eight yards or steps in length & twenty four broad, there is also still visible the place of the bastions & houses, & c. The stone where the chimneys stood, and also an excavation for their cellar, the fort stood between the lake shore, and a pond or marsh behind & c.”¹⁹ Schoolcraft left a similar description when he visited the site in 1831, noting also the site of a blacksmith shop and a location for canon to the north of the fort. Using a map in the Schoolcraft papers, archaeologists recently located the site of this fort adjoining the Ojibwe village at the Marina site.²⁰

This La Pointe trading post was active for more than forty years. Unfortunately for historians, most of the reports from the post were destroyed during the French Revolution, leaving few details of life and trade there. During most of this time a military commandant headed the post and its garrison of soldiers, a response to the fighting between the French and British and the Ojibwe and other tribes that frequently disrupted trading. The post, therefore, served as military outpost, trading center, and home to the soldiers who were stationed there. During the 1730s about thirty soldiers were stationed at the post. French traders would have lived in or near the post intermittently, and voyageurs, who provided the manual labor to transport trade goods and furs, would have stayed there temporarily. Sometimes commandants had family members with them; St. Pierre brought his youngest son. Ojibwe lived in a large village near the post. Louis Denis, Sieur de La Ronde, commandant from 1727 to 1741, wrote letters that provide a few tantalizing glimpses into life at the La Pointe post. La Ronde encouraged the Ojibwe to garden, resulting in additional food to sustain them during the winter and fresh vegetables for the soldiers at the post. La Ronde also imported horses and built a dock and gristmill.²¹

Merchants who backed St. Pierre financed his trip and provided trade goods. In reestablishing the fur trade in the Chequamegon region, St. Pierre had to deal with war between the allied French and Ojibwe against the Fox Indians, which disrupted hunting and trade in the interior south of Lake Superior. St. Pierre also had to persuade the Indians to trade with the French rather than the British, who paid more for furs but whose trading posts were farther away. When he arrived at La Pointe, St. Pierre advanced trade goods to the Ojibwe against the furs that they would hunt that winter. Some historians have portrayed this as a humanitarian gesture, as the Ojibwe had been without new trade goods for more than twenty years, but it also served to bind the Ojibwe to St. Pierre in a trading relationship. St. Pierre was in command for two years. In 1720 Rene Godefroy, Sieur de Linctot, who had come with St. Pierre as an ensign, took command and remained in charge until 1726.²²

¹⁹ Quoted in Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 12.

²⁰ Ross, *La Pointe*, 47–49; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 5, 15–16; Robert Birmingham, e-mail to author, 21 January 2005.

²¹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 46, 48, 50, 52; Peter A. Rathbun and David W. Vannoy, “Special History Study: Fur Trade Activity in the Apostle Islands—Draft,” (Springfield, IL and Hollandale, WI: Rathbun Associates for the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 1987), 102; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 34; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 46.

²² Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 99; Ross, *La Pointe*, 48–50.

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Louis Denis, Sieur de La Ronde, commanded the La Pointe post from 1727 to 1741, the longest tenure of any of the French commandants. Like St. Pierre before him, La Ronde formed a partnership with merchants who provided financial backing and shared in profits. La Ronde was an active commander who undertook initiatives to boost the fur trade and improve the post, as noted above. La Ronde also spent quite a bit of time away from La Pointe, exploring for copper in the Ontonagon region of the Upper Peninsula. La Ronde found numerous copper specimens and built a sailing ship—the first decked vessel on Lake Superior—near Sault Ste. Marie to carry this heavy cargo. La Ronde sent specimens to France that prompted the French government to send two miners to assist him in opening mines. However war between the Ojibwe and Sioux caused fur hunting to decline so greatly that La Ronde returned to La Pointe to try to negotiate peace. In 1741 La Ronde was on his way back to La Pointe after traveling to Quebec to try to revive his mining venture when he became ill and died.²³

Philippe Louis Denis La Ronde succeeded his father as commandant at La Pointe, remaining there until 1743, when his mother, Madame La Ronde, succeeded him. In appreciation for the services of her late husband, the French government allowed Madame La Ronde to lease the La Pointe post for three years, giving her exclusive rights to the trade at La Pointe during that period. A number of other posts were also leased out at that time. Although we do not know how much authority Madame La Ronde had in administering the post, her position was certainly unusual for a woman at the time. But war between the Ojibwe and Sioux continued to hurt trade in the region, and Madame La Ronde complained repeatedly that there was no profit from the post.²⁴

By the 1740s, probably earlier, the islands were known as the Apostle Islands, as documented by a 1744 map labeling them “I. des 12 Apotres.” They are similarly labeled on maps from 1755 and 1766. There is no evidence that early French visitors to the region thought there were only twelve islands. Historians believe that the Jesuits named the islands the Apostle Islands according to their practice of giving holy names to new places.²⁵

Madame La Ronde left La Pointe in 1748. In 1749 Joseph de la Margue, Sieur Marin, became commandant at La Pointe, but he stayed only one season before taking charge of the post at Green Bay. Joseph Gaultier, Chevalier de la Verendrye, was commandant from 1751 to 1755. The last military commandant at La Pointe, Pierre Hertel de Beaubassin, arrived at the post in 1756. By then the ongoing fighting between the British and French had escalated into the French and Indian War. In 1758 Beaubassin left La Pointe with a company of Ojibwe to join French troops in fighting the British. In that same year Sieur Corne de la St. Luc leased the La Pointe post for eight thousand *livres*. Although St. Luc held a commission in the French army, he was at La Pointe as a civilian. St. Luc reportedly stayed at La Pointe following the French surrender of Quebec (1759) and Montreal (1760) and the French withdrawal from the upper Great Lakes,

²³ Ross, *La*, 50–52; Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 101; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 161.

²⁴ Ross, *La Pointe*, 52–53; Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 103–104; White, *Middle Ground*, 97; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 107–108; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 90–91.

²⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 16–17; Mackreth, “Island Names,” Ross, *La Pointe*, 52.

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finally departing in 1762. In 1765 the British destroyed the abandoned fort at La Pointe to ensure that it would not provide a haven for French or Ojibwe resistance.²⁶

During its forty plus years of existence, the French post at La Pointe de Chequamegon seems to have been moderately productive, with a larger trade than other posts on Lake Superior but a smaller trade than the posts at Green Bay, Detroit, and Michilimackinac. In 1750 La Pointe produced 250 packs of furs, compared to 60 to 70 at Kaministikwia, 80 to 100 at Nipigon, 500 to 600 at Green Bay, and 600 to 700 at Michilimackinac. Beaubassin, commandant at La Pointe from 1756 to 1758, wrote that the post produced about 200 packs of furs annually. The value of trade goods sold at La Pointe in 1761 was approximately 80,000 *livres*, compared to 30,000 at Nipigon, 100,000 at Green Bay, 250,000 at Michilimackinac, and 350,000 at Detroit. Beaver remained the most desirable fur, but the supply of beaver was beginning to dwindle as the animal was overhunted. Chequamegon, Michilimackinac, and Green Bay were the only three posts in the upper Great Lakes to maintain a substantial trade in beaver in the 1730s. A letter written in 1746 describes how voyageurs encouraged Indians to winter farther west where there were more beaver. Of the “Pointe de Chagouagmigon” post the letter states: “if they do not engage the Indians to winter on the tongue of land which is between this post and the Sioux or in that which separates the country of the West from Lake Superior, and which is frequented by the Crees and the Sioux, they will remain to hunt in the places more convenient or they will live on moose and bear.”²⁷ The tongue of land referenced in this letter is likely the Bayfield Peninsula, which would indicate that beaver were still numerous in the Chequamegon region at this time. The high frequency of beaver bone among the animal remains discovered at the Marina site supports this. Considering that a beaver weighs thirty to eighty pounds, these animals must have been killed nearby, but whether nearby included the islands is difficult to say. Of the pine, hemlock, sugar maple, and birch trees that dominated the islands before logging, beaver eat only birch and prefer aspen, which was uncommon. But there may have been enough food to support beaver populations on at least some of the islands.²⁸

The British

By the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Britain took control of the Lake Superior region along with the remainder of France’s former territory east of the Mississippi River, except for New Orleans, which went to Spain. From then until 1815, the British controlled the fur trade in the Lake Superior region. During this period the number of traders increased while the number of fur-bearing animals decreased, leading to more competition and conflict between traders and subsequently to the dominance of large companies. At the beginning of the British era, Indian resistance to the British takeover culminated in the violence of Pontiac’s Rebellion. During these turbulent times the

²⁶ Ross, *La Pointe*, 53–56, 61; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 22, 24; Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 105; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 109.

²⁷ Quoted in Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 102.

²⁸ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 100; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 91; White, *Middle Ground*, 124–25; Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 189; Robert Birmingham, e-mail to author, 28 September 2005.

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British government restricted trade to a few major posts; for the Lake Superior region this was Fort Michilimackinac. In 1765 the commander of Michilimackinac granted a license for exclusive trade on Lake Superior for three years to British trader Alexander Henry and his French partner Jean Baptiste Cadotte. Henry was an experienced trader who survived the Ojibwe attack on Fort Michilimackinac and learned Ojibwe ways by living for nearly a year with his adopted Ojibwe brother Wawatam. Cadotte was well established as a trader at the Sault where he had married an Ojibwe wife, and his command of the Ojibwe language led to his position as chief of the local Ojibwe band. When the British took over the Sault, Cadotte soon made himself indispensable with his language and negotiating skills. In June 1765 Cadotte led eighty canoes of Ojibwe to Michilimackinac for one of the peace councils that ended Pontiac's Rebellion. When these Ojibwe requested that traders be sent to Lake Superior, the commander at Michilimackinac wrote to Sir William Johnson, superintendent of northern Indians: "I propose to let Mr. Caddot go to Lapoint in Lake Superior, and to let a few English Merchants go to other Places, as Mr. Caddot will be near the Center, am Convinced that all the Indians will remain in our Interest."²⁹

In July, Henry set out for Chequamegon Bay with four canoes of trade goods and a crew of twelve men. Cadotte remained at the Sault. Henry arrived at "Chagouemig" in August and stayed until the following spring. He described his experiences there in his memoirs, published in 1809. When Henry arrived at Chequamegon, he advanced goods on credit to the Ojibwe because, he wrote, they were so impoverished. But by then it was customary to advance goods against the winter hunt, and for traders to winter with the Indians to insure that the debts would be paid. Henry built a house on Chequamegon Bay, and he and his men caught two thousand trout and whitefish, which they dried for their winter food. During the winter, Ojibwe hunting parties came with furs to pay their debts and buy more goods. In May more than fifty canoes of Ojibwe returned; they had engaged the Sioux in battle but had not neglected their hunting. When Henry had traded all his goods he had 150 packs of beaver, each weighing one hundred pounds, and 25 packs of otter and marten skins. Henry left for Michilimackinac accompanied by fifty canoes of Ojibwe with 100 more packs of beaver that Henry had been unable to purchase.³⁰

Despite his success at Chequamegon, Henry conducted his trade at other locations on Lake Superior in succeeding years. In 1767 the government relaxed its restrictions on trading, and even before Henry's exclusive license for the Lake Superior trade expired in 1768, the number of traders on the lake grew noticeably. These first English traders typically followed the Henry-Cadotte precedent and formed partnerships with French Canadians, who were more knowledgeable about trading routes and customs. Henry and Cadotte continued to work together at least until 1778. The primary rendezvous for

²⁹ Quoted in Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 92; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 38–39; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 62; Ross, *La Pointe*, 59; David A. Armour, "Henry, Alexander," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioID=37033>; David A. Armour, "Cadot (Cadotte), Jean-Baptiste," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioID=36424>.

³⁰ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 168, 172, 174; Armour, "Henry"; Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 187–95; Gilman, *Where Two Worlds Meet*, 55.

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traders on Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior was Michilimackinac, where traders stopped to reorganize, trade, and obtain supplies as needed on their way to or from Montreal. In the late 1760s the focus of the fur trade began to shift to the vast, rich region northwest of Lake Superior, and Grand Portage, on the northwest shore of the lake, emerged as a major trading post.³¹

As more men traded in the Lake Superior region and northwest of the lake, competition and conflict between them increased, resulting in financial losses and sometimes violence. Newer traders were less likely to trade according to Ojibwe ideas of exchange and alliance and to develop kinship ties. Alexander Henry went to Grand Portage to trade in 1775 and wrote that the traders were “in a state of extreme reciprocal hostility, each pursuing his interests in such a manner as might most injure his neighbor. The consequences were very hurtful to the morals of the Indians.”³² The American Revolution disrupted trade farther south, driving more traders to the region. In addition, although trade in the northwest brought good returns, travel was difficult and expensive. For these reasons, a group of Montreal merchants and their partners in the interior decided about 1779 to cooperate, entering into the first of a number of agreements that were renewed regularly until the North West Company was formally organized in 1783. Unlike its major competitor, the Hudson’s Bay Company, the North West Company was a partnership, not a corporation. The North West Company developed Grand Portage as its primary trading post, where voyageurs from Montreal and traders who had wintered in the interior met at a huge rendezvous in July. The route between Montreal and Grand Portage bypassed Michilimackinac, but Sault Ste. Marie gained importance as a provisioning point. With smaller posts surrounding Lake Superior, the North West Company quickly came to dominate the fur trade in the region.³³

Although Henry and Cadotte traded at Grand Portage, they did not participate in the organization of the North West Company. In the 1780s Henry settled in Montreal and became a general merchant, remaining involved in the fur trade. From his base at Sault Ste. Marie, Cadotte continued to trade in the western Lake Superior region. By 1772 Cadotte had a trading post at Ance Bay on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Cadotte maintained only this post and his post at Sault Ste. Marie (although he traded elsewhere) until his sons, Jean Baptiste and Michel, returned in the early 1780s from their studies in Montreal and joined him in business. By 1786 the three were operating as Messrs. Cadot and Company with posts at Sault Ste. Marie, Ance on Keweenaw Bay, Lac Courte Oreilles, Folle Avoine on the headwaters of the St. Croix River, and Crow Wing on the Mississippi River. In 1787 the senior Cadotte retired from active trading. Jean Baptiste Jr. concentrated his trading in the upper Mississippi River Valley, whereas Michel was active between the St. Croix and Chippewa rivers, south of the Bayfield Peninsula.

³¹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 60–61; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 38–42; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 62–67; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 167–69, 206–07; Armour, “Cadot.”

³² Quoted in Nute, *Lake Superior*, 40–41.

³³ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 40–45; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 194–200; Alan R. Woolworth, “The Great Carrying Place: Grand Portage,” in *Where Two Worlds Meet*, 111–113; White, *Middle Ground*, 477–78; Armour, “Henry.”

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When trader Jean Baptiste Perrault wintered near the Chippewa River in 1788–89, he found that the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe were trading primarily with Michel Cadotte.³⁴

The 1783 Treaty of Paris clearly put the southern shore of Lake Superior in the United States. Nevertheless, the British continued to control the fur trade throughout the Lake Superior region. Traders had probably been coming to Chequamegon since the 1760s, but documentation is scarce. In November 1784 Jean Baptiste Perrault found three traders, Messrs. Laviollet, Caillarge, and Graverot, wintering at La Pointe. It was All Saints Day and the three were having a drunken party. In June 1785 Perrault was again at La Pointe, where “le gros pied” and his family helped Perrault’s trading party. Perrault’s narrative is unclear as to whether he meant La Pointe as a specific location on Chequamegon Point or Madeline Island or as a reference to the general area.³⁵

By 1791 the North West Company had established a trading post at La Pointe. An account of the fur trade for that year lists La Pointe as one of seven company posts on Lake Superior. La Pointe produced twenty bundles of “fine peltry” consisting of beaver, otter, marten, and wildcat. By comparison, five of the other posts produced between twenty and forty bundles, while Grand Portage produced fourteen hundred bundles.³⁶ That fall, Irish emigrant John Johnston arrived at La Pointe for his initial venture into the fur trade. In Montreal, Johnston met directors of the North West Company who recommended that he trade at La Pointe. It appears, however, that Johnston came to La Pointe as an independent trader. When he arrived, Johnston found some French Canadian trappers there.³⁷ The trappers persuaded Johnston’s voyageurs (except one) to desert him, taking all of his food and part of his trade goods. In addition, Michel Cadotte, who was trading in the area, advised Johnston to trade a keg of mixed rum for six plus beaver—too high a price. By the time Johnston met trader Perrault in May, Johnston had no trade goods left. On a more positive note, during the winter Johnston met Shagowashcodawaqua, Woman of the Green Glades, daughter of noted war chief Waub-o-jeeg, or White Fisher. Johnston departed La Pointe in spring 1792, but before he did he asked to marry Shagowashcodawaqua. White Fisher cautiously suggested that Johnston wait and come back to La Pointe the following spring if he was sincere. When Johnston returned the next spring, the two married and moved to Sault Ste. Marie, where they raised eight children and Johnston had a successful career as a trader. Their daughter Jane married Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and their son George served as Schoolcraft’s subagent on Madeline Island in the 1820s.³⁸

³⁴ Armour, “Henry”; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 93–94; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 6–7; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 20; Ross, *La Pointe*, 62.

³⁵ Ross, *La Pointe*, 61.

³⁶ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 266. Innis cites *La Rochefoucault-Liancourt’s Travels in Canada 1795*, which in turn cites Count Andriani’s account of the fur trade in 1791.

³⁷ If the French Canadians were indeed trappers and not traders, this is local evidence of a trend in the fur trade toward whites trapping as well as trading. This occurred because of increasing competition in the trade and put additional pressure on animal populations.

³⁸ Ross, *La Pointe*, 63–65; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 7; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 48–49; Louis R. Masson, “Mr. John Johnston—An Account of Lake Superior 1792–1807,” *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1890), 2:138–168, transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

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In 1809 Johnston wrote a description of Lake Superior as he knew it in the 1790s and early 1800s. He described *Chagowiminan* or *La Pointe* as a “fine strand” in front of the Bay St. Charles (Chequamegon Bay), and opposite La Pointe “to the north-east, is the island of Montreal, one of the largest of those called Twelve Apostles. On the main land, the Indians had once a village amounting to two hundred huts, but since the traders have multiplied they no longer assemble at *Netoungan*, or the Sand Beach, but remain in small bands near their hunting grounds.”³⁹ For Johnston, then, La Pointe was Chequamegon Point, and he added Montreal to several previous names for Madeline Island, including St. Michel, Michel, St. Esprit, Isle Detour, La Pointe, and La Ronde. Johnston related that from a mountain on the mainland he was able to see twenty-six islands, including islands too far off to be visited by the Indians and unlikely to be visited by the North West Company’s vessels. Johnston’s count of twenty-six is puzzling. It suggests that some current underwater shoals were once islands, but even from the highest point on the mainland it may be impossible to see all the islands. Perhaps Johnston was exercising some literary license.⁴⁰ Of the nearer islands, opposite La Pointe, Johnston wrote: “ten or twelve have been visited by the Indians, some of which have a rich soil covered with maple and beech, with deep water and fine trout fishing.”⁴¹ Johnston did not describe the location of his home and post during the winter of 1791–92, or indicate whether it was on Montreal Island or the mainland. When Thomas McKenney visited the area in 1826, he wrote that the house of his old friend Mr. Johnson [*sic*] was on the mainland, about four miles west of Madeline Island. He heard that the remains of Johnston’s houses and gardens were still visible. When Schoolcraft visited Madeline Island in 1831, he noted that Johnston had lived on the mainland directly opposite the site of the old French fort.⁴²

By 1793 Michel Cadotte was working for the North West Company, which gave him charge of trading at La Pointe at that time.⁴³ Cadotte’s account book contains a May 1793 list of the trade goods from his initial venture at La Pointe, including black and blue handkerchiefs, white flannel, blue and white wool, gun parts, cotton and linen cloth, vermillion, hunting knives, wood and horn combs, flints, steels, fish hooks, and mirrors. At or about this time, Cadotte established a trading post at Grant’s Point on the southern end of Madeline Island, near the location of the 1693 French trading post. The remains of Cadotte’s post are visible today. Immediately west of the post, the Winston-Cadotte site contains artifacts representing both Euro-American and Ojibwe occupation dating to the late eighteenth and/or early nineteenth centuries. These artifacts include trade silver ornaments, British-style gunflints, beads, awls, iron fishing spears, English dinnerware,

³⁹ Quoted in Nute, *Lake Superior*, 56.

⁴⁰ In 1832 Michel Cadotte told Reverend William Boutwell that there were twenty-four islands. Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

⁴¹ Quoted in Nute, *Lake Superior*, 56.

⁴² Masson, “Mr. John Johnston”; Ross, *La Pointe*, 43, 64–65; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 7, 11, 16.

⁴³ In his book *La Pointe*, Hamilton Ross wrote that the North West Company absorbed the Henry-Cadotte partnership about 1787, ending Henry’s active participation in the fur trade (p. 63). However, in 1787 Henry was no longer working with Cadotte; he was trading at Michilimackinac and his home was in Montreal (Armour, “Henry”). Ross’s documentation comes from a secondary source. The 1793 date for the beginning of Michel Cadotte’s trading at La Pointe under the North West Company is documented by Michel Cadotte’s account book for 1793 to 1823, which Ross cites from a private collection (Ross, *La Pointe*, 67).

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white clay pipes, and a birch bark container (figure 5). Kinship ties strengthened the Ojibwe's trading relationship with Cadotte, who married Equaysayway, or Traveling Woman, daughter of Waub-uj-e-jauk, Chief White Crane. Cadotte's connection with the prestigious crane clan would serve him well in his business. When Michel Cadotte and Equaysayway married at Sault Ste. Marie, Equaysayway was baptized Madeline. When they returned to La Pointe, Chief White Crane decreed that the island would be called Madeline Island, but it would be a number of years before that name became customary. Even with a post on Madeline Island, Cadotte may have continued to move seasonally with his Ojibwe relatives.⁴⁴

Fond du Lac was the North West Company's primary post for the southwestern Lake Superior region at that time; La Pointe would have been its subsidiary. In May 1798, geographer and explorer David Thompson surveyed the southern shore of Lake Superior for the company. Thompson saw Cadotte, who was living with White Crane's band. Thompson divided the area along the south shore by the number of Ojibwe families living there, calculating that each family's hunting area was approximately 206 square miles. From this area a family produced sixty to seventy animal skins a year. By comparison, northwest of Grand Portage at Rainy Lake, a family needed 150 to 180 square miles to produce sixty to seventy skins. Though environmental differences may partially account for the lower productivity on the Lake Superior shore, a decrease in fur-bearing animals is probably the larger reason. According to Thompson, bear skins were the most valuable, equal to two beaver skins, whereas muskrat skins were the least valued, requiring eight to ten to equal one beaver skin.⁴⁵

Competition among traders increased as the numbers of beaver and other fur-bearing animals declined. Some of the North West Company's competitors combined in 1798 to form the New North West Company, also known as the XY Company. Rivalry between the two companies led to even more competitive trading as they undercut each other's prices and traded more rum. American officials, trying to exert their authority along the poorly-defined Canadian border, added to the pressure. Between 1801 and 1803 the North West Company moved its headquarters from Grand Portage to a location at the mouth of the Kaministikwia River that was clearly in Canadian territory, soon to be named Fort William. Michel Cadotte continued to work for the North West Company. On July 16, 1803 he entered into a three year agreement with the North West Company for the trade of Point Chagouamigon, Riviere du Sauteux, (Chippewa River) and Lac des Courts Oreilles. A year later, however, XY Company traders were competing for furs within Cadotte's territory. Francois Malhiot, the trader in charge of the North West Company post at Lac du Flambeau, described the competition in his journal. A trader named Lamarche competed against Cadotte at La Pointe, while Simeon Chorette, with a trading post at Lac du Flambeau, traded along the Chippewa River. On one occasion Chorette's men fired at Cadotte when Cadotte passed them on Lake Superior; Malhiot

⁴⁴ Ross, *La Pointe*, 65, 67–68; Rathbun and Vannoy, "Fur Trade," 112; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 8; Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 179, 190.

⁴⁵ Schenck, "Grant's Point," 8; Richard Glover, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative, 1784–1812*, new edition with added material, edited with an introduction and notes by Richard Glover (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1962), 217, 219; Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 65, 91, 95; Rathbun and Vannoy, "Fur Trade," 113.



Figure 5. Artifacts from Winston-Cadotte site, Madeline Island. Courtesy of Robert Birmingham.

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assumed the men were drunk at the time. The competition was not usually violent; instead traders used arguments, trade goods, and large quantities of rum to engage Ojibwe hunters. In October 1804, Malhiot wrote that he did not have enough trade goods or men to trade against Chorette in the Chippewa River country, and he sent a message to Cadotte that Cadotte would have to send his own man. The following April Malhiot wrote that rum was flowing like water on both sides. “For eleven years that I have been wintering among the Savages I have never known a competitor trade as cheaply as Chorette. I think Lucifer brings him his goods from London as he needs them.”⁴⁶ The competition continued until the XY Company and North West Company merged, and Chorette and the others became employees of the North West Company. Malhiot did not receive news of the November 1804 merger until the following May.⁴⁷

In July 1804, on his way to Lac du Flambeau, Malhiot stopped at “La Pointe, Mr Cadotte’s Fort.” He spent the day there so his men could make themselves shoes for the portage, and he traded tobacco with the Ojibwe for whitefish. Later, Cadotte’s youngest son, Michel Jr., came to spend the winter at Lac du Flambeau. “Little Cadotte” taught Malhiot the Ojibwe language and acted as interpreter, while Malhiot taught Michel Jr. to read French. In June 1805, Malhiot stopped again at La Pointe so that he and Cadotte could travel together to Kaministikwia with their furs.⁴⁸ Trade at Cadotte’s La Pointe post was relatively small compared to trade at the larger post at Fond du Lac. In 1805 the North West Company shipped 81 packages of trade goods and 42 packages of provisions to La Pointe, compared to 268 packages of trade goods and 134 packages of provisions sent to Fond du Lac. In 1806, Cadotte shipped 71 packs of furs to the company’s headquarters at Kaministikwia, compared to 182 packs shipped from Fond du Lac.⁴⁹ By then, American taxes on foreign goods entering the United States were hurting the North West Company’s business. In 1806 British traders organized the Michilimackinac Company and entered into an agreement with the North West Company whereby Michilimackinac took over the North West Company’s posts east of the Mississippi River, except for Fond du Lac. The company’s purpose was to smuggle goods into the United States in order to avoid taxes. Thus, Cadotte was now working for the Michilimackinac Company. Cadotte suffered a major business loss in 1807 when a group of Ojibwe influenced by the Shawnee Prophet plundered his warehouse at Lac Courte Oreilles.⁵⁰

The next organizational maneuver took place in 1811, when the North West Company and Michilimackinac Company partnered with John Jacob Astor’s American

⁴⁶ Francois Victor Malhiot, “A Wisconsin Fur Trader’s Journal, 1804–1805,” *Wisconsin Historical Collections* 19 (1910): 210, transcription online at *Digital Time Travelers*, <http://www.marshfield.k12.wi.us/socsci/discovery/malhiot/default.htm>.

⁴⁷ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 186, 245, 263–69; Ross, *La Pointe*, 67–69; White, *Middle Ground*, 478–79; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 69–70; Woolworth, “Great Carrying Place,” 113; Malhiot, “Wisconsin Fur Trader’s Journal,” 170–211.

⁴⁸ Malhiot, “Wisconsin Fur Trader’s Journal,” 175, 189–90, 214–15.

⁴⁹ Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 116–17, citing North West Company records.

⁵⁰ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 184–87; Ross, *La Pointe*, 69–70; Theresa M. Schenck, “The Cadottes: Five Generations of Fur Traders on Lake Superior,” in *The Fur Trade Revisited*, ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W. J. Eccles and Donald P. Heldman (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 195.

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Fur Company to form the South West Company to handle trade south and west of the Canadian border. John Jacob Astor was a German-born New York City merchant. He was already profitably involved in the fur trade in 1808 when he organized the American Fur Company with a twenty-five year charter from the state of New York. The South West Company took over the Michilimackinac Company's posts, and because Astor was an American citizen the trade at those posts was "legally" exempt from import taxes. In July 1812, the outbreak of war between Britain and the United States cut short this arrangement. The war severed Astor's connection with the South West Company, which maintained control of the Lake Superior posts, including La Pointe. With the British in control of Fort Mackinac (the successor to Fort Michilimackinac), furs and trade goods passed through untaxed. Trade was profitable for the South West Company in 1812 and 1813.⁵¹

The Americans

By the 1814 Treaty of Ghent, British soldiers and traders withdrew to Canada, giving Astor another chance to establish himself in the upper Great Lakes fur trade. Astor was instrumental in persuading Congress to pass a law in April 1816 prohibiting foreigners from trading within U.S. boundaries. Then he purchased, at low cost, the South West Company's holdings, and by the end of that year had taken over the company's posts, La Pointe included. From 1816 until 1834 Astor's American Fur Company dominated the U.S. fur trade. The scale and complexity of his trading empire were unprecedented. Astor used partnerships, pools, and mergers to limit competition and control trade across the continent. Although he was never able to establish a monopoly, most of his competitors eventually ended up working for him. At the Lake Superior trading posts, Astor succeeded by following the precedent that the British set earlier when they partnered with French Canadian traders. Astor engaged a number of established traders who formerly worked for the North West Company, including Michel Cadotte.⁵²

The American Fur Company was organized into divisions called departments or outfits. Individual trading posts were subsidiary to these larger divisions. La Pointe was apparently part of the Lake Superior Department until 1823, when the company reorganized the upper Great Lakes region as the Northern Department.⁵³ Mackinac Island was the interior headquarters for the company and served as the central depot for all of the trading posts. Each summer traders came to Mackinac with their packs of furs

⁵¹ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 187; Ross, *La Pointe*, 70; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 27–28.

⁵² Ross, *La Pointe*, 70; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 70; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 28–29; McMahon and Karamanski, "Time and the River," 35.

⁵³ On 22 July 1818, Robert Stuart on Mackinac Island wrote to Astor in New York: "Most of the Traders have arrived; with very indifferent r[e]turns. The Fond do Lac & Lake Superior departments may probably pay, notwithstanding the strong opposition they had to contend with..." American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 11, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen, Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service. The Fond du Lac Department extended north and west from the western end of Lake Superior. In 1823 the American Fur Company was reorganized into three departments: the Northern Department, the Detroit Department, and the Western Department.

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and left with a new supply of trade goods. Ramsay Crooks, Astor's partner and general manager, oversaw the operation on Mackinac Island.⁵⁴

From his La Pointe trading post, Cadotte traded exclusively with the American Fur Company, though he was not a company employee. His trading area was likely the same as under the North West Company: the Chequamegon region, Chippewa River Valley, and Lac Courte Oreilles. At one point, however, Ramsay Crooks reprimanded Cadotte for trading at Lac du Flambeau. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was unimpressed with Cadotte's trading post when he visited there in 1820. He wrote: "Three miles farther west [of Chequamegon Point] is the island of St. Michael, which lies in the traverse across Chegoimegon Bay, where M Cadotte has an establishment. This was formerly an important trading post but is now dwindled to nothing. There is a dwelling of logs, stockaded in the usual manner of trading houses, besides several out buildings, and some land in cultivation. We here also found several cows and horses, which have been transported with great labour."⁵⁵ That summer Cadotte shipped \$1,151.28 worth of furs to Mackinac. In 1822 the value of Cadotte's fur shipment dropped to \$793.69, but in 1823 it increased to \$1,227.22. Muskrats were by far the most common skin, followed by marten. Silver fox was the most valuable at \$8.00 a skin (there was just one in 1822); bear and otter skins brought \$5.00 apiece. By comparison a muskrat skin was worth only thirty-five cents.⁵⁶

In 1823 Cadotte sold his interest in the La Pointe trading post to Lyman and Truman Warren. The Warren brothers came from a Massachusetts family that traced its ancestry to pilgrim Richard Warren. They arrived in the Lake Superior region in 1818 and began working as traders for George Ermatinger, an independent trader at Sault Ste. Marie who was affiliated with the North West Company. Because he was a Canadian citizen, Ermatinger needed American citizens to work for him in the United States. Lyman Warren worked at Leech Lake, which was subsidiary to Ermatinger's Fond du Lac post, and Truman Warren worked at Ermatinger's Lac du Flambeau post. Thus Ermatinger, and the Warrens, were working in direct competition with the American Fur Company's posts in these same areas. Within a few years the Warrens decided that they were better off working for the American Fur Company. In 1821, as independent traders, the Warrens entered into an agreement to sell their furs to the American Fur Company. This arrangement proved so profitable for the brothers that in 1822 they purchased the company's Lac du Flambeau outfit. Following this purchase the Warrens worked for the American Fur Company on a salary basis, Truman at Lac du Flambeau and Lyman at Fond du Lac.⁵⁷

About this time the Warrens came to know Michel Cadotte, whose sons worked for the American Fur Company at Lac du Flambeau. In 1821 or 1822 Lyman Warren

⁵⁴ Porter, *Mackinac*, 27–28; John Denis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor: Business and Finance in the Early Republic* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 188, 217–19, 225–26.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Peterson, "Village in the Shade."

⁵⁶ Schenck, "The Cadottes," 196–97; Rathbun and Vannoy, "Fur Trade," 119, 121.

⁵⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 73–74; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 13; Theresa Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," (University of Wisconsin-Madison, ca. 1989), 1–2.

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married Cadotte's daughter, Marie, and Truman married the youngest daughter, Charlotte.⁵⁸ Thus, Michel Cadotte sold his trading business to his sons-in-law. In 1823 the Warrens purchased George Ermatinger's trading post at Lac du Flambeau. Although they were working for the American Fur Company, the Warrens continued to do business with Canadian traders and were purchasing part of their trade goods from Canadians. The American Fur Company did not approve of this, and soon forced the Warrens to buy all of their trade goods from the company, at higher prices. Nevertheless, the Warrens appeared to be prospering when Truman died of a pulmonary ailment in July 1825. Lyman Warren was now responsible for two families as well as all of the La Pointe trade, encompassing Lac du Flambeau, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Folle Avoine on the headwaters of the St. Croix River.⁵⁹

In July 1826 Thomas McKenney, head of the Office of Indian Affairs, stopped at "Michael's island" on his way to meet with the Ojibwe at Fond du Lac. McKenney wrote a romanticized but informative description of Cadotte and his trading post:

We were received by this worthy French trader with great cordiality. His houses were thrown open for us, and all he had was put freely at our disposal. He has an Indian wife, a worthy, well disposed woman, and several children, several sons and two daughters, grown. His daughters both married traders. This is the only spot that has brought gladness to my heart, the associations of home and of civilized society, during a voyage of four hundred miles—since we left the Sault. It looks like a fairy scene, and everything about it is enchantment. Yet the houses are of logs; but are lathed and plastered.⁶⁰

McKenney's description suggests that Cadotte remained a figure of authority at the trading post, even though he had sold his business to the Warrens. This is corroborated by other sources. After spending the night at the post, McKenney described the surrounding landscape:

A beautiful morning! This, together with the green slope of the island, and its fences, and fields—some twenty acres of it being cleared—its comfortable houses; its picketed garden, where cabbages, and potatoes, and onions, are growing; *and where a few peas are just beginning to blossom*; and where I see horses and cows, and chickens, and hear the 'cock's shrill clarion,' and the songs of the birds, and see 'the straw built shed,' makes the intelligence which I have just received [that their departure would be delayed], grateful....⁶¹

Two months after McKenney's visit, George Johnston arrived on the island as subagent for Henry Schoolcraft, Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie. Johnston's duties were

⁵⁸ The exact marriage dates were not recorded because no clergy were present.

⁵⁹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 73–74; Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 2–5; Rathbun and Vannoy, "Fur Trade," 122–123. When George Johnston arrived on Madeline Island in September 1826 he found that the Warrens had gone to the Folle Avoine post for several months. See Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 7.

⁶⁰ Thomas L. McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes* (1827; facsimile, Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1959), 262.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 263.

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to observe and report on the conduct of both the Ojibwe and the traders. Robert Stuart, the American Fur Company's resident manager on Mackinac Island, warned Lyman Warren: "at all events be strictly on your guard not to deviate from the regulations governing the Trade, for you know how whimsical the man is, and what a trifling dispute might make him report you, and perhaps cause a great deal of trouble and expense."⁶² Despite Stuart's apprehension, it appears that Johnston developed a friendship with the traders and their families. In his journal Johnston wrote of fishing expeditions, maple sugar camps, and other social activities with the Cadottes and Warrens.⁶³

Meanwhile, Lyman Warren's interest in the Protestant religion had been growing. During the Warren brothers' summer trip to Mackinac Island in 1824, Truman met with the Reverend William Ferry, head of the newly-established Protestant mission there. Truman shared the religious tracts that Ferry gave him with Lyman. After Truman died the following summer, Lyman gave further time and thought to religion and seriously considered leaving the fur trade for missionary work. When John Hudson, Ferry's assistant, mentioned to Lyman that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was interested in opening new missions, Warren immediately suggested Madeline Island and offered the use of his property: "I have a house 60 ft. by 24 containing 3 large rooms and 5 bedrooms, a considerable storehouse and other buildings that are at your service until you wish to build."⁶⁴ In 1827 Warren arranged a land transfer so that he could give land for a mission and school to the American Board of Commissioners. Warren and the Cadottes accomplished this transaction during their annual summer trip to Mackinac Island. Before the deed was drawn up, Reverend William Ferry married Lyman Warren and Marie Cadotte in a church ceremony. The first part of the deed described the conveyance of the southern portion of "the island called Magdalen" to Magdalen Cadotte by the "Chippeway" living on and adjacent to the island. This is the first recorded use of the name Magdalen (Madeline) Island. The second part of the deed described a tract of land of approximately two thousand acres within Magdalen Cadotte's land that the Cadottes deeded to Lyman Warren. The deed stated that Warren would convey not less than one quarter nor more than one half of his two thousand acres to the American Board of Commissioners. About this time, the American Fur Company reorganized its Northern Department, and Lyman Warren became one of six partners in the Lake Superior Outfit. His headquarters remained at La Pointe.⁶⁵

At first Warren was unsuccessful in convincing the American Board of Commissioners to send a missionary to La Pointe. Other traders working from La Pointe, with their own school-age children, joined Warren in his petition for a mission and school. As evidence of their sincerity, the traders pledged not to use liquor in their trade with the Ojibwe. In March 1830 missionary Jedediah Stevens spent three weeks at La Pointe at Warren's invitation, conducting prayer services and talking with the Warrens

⁶² Quoted in Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 6–7.

⁶³ Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 7.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 5.

⁶⁵ Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 4–8; Schenck, "Grant's Point," 13–14.

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and Cadottes. In his diary, Stevens described the buildings, population, and crops on the island:

There are six or seven dwelling houses on the Island. Mr. W. has a large store & there are several other buildings barns and out houses & c. about 40 souls reside on the Island & 30 men Indians belong to this Post, 150 souls near 2/3 year on the Island. The Island is a clay soil and rather sterile, yet it produces potatoes peas oats barley almost all kinds of garden vegetables.⁶⁶

Stevens was more interested in the people's religious convictions. He found Lyman Warren to be uncertain in his faith, and was even more concerned with Marie Warren, her sister Charlotte (who had remarried), and their father Michel Cadotte. Stevens was unable to sway them from their Catholic beliefs. Though there had been no Catholic mission in the Chequamegon region since Marquette left in 1670, French and métis traders and their families maintained a Catholic presence that proved an obstacle to the American Protestant newcomers. When Lyman traveled to Mackinac that summer he was formally received into the Protestant Church but was disappointed to find that the American Board of Commissioners had still not assigned a missionary to La Pointe. Frederick Ayer, a lay teacher at the mission school on Mackinac Island, returned with Lyman to La Pointe to teach school there.⁶⁷

Lyman Warren's summer 1831 trip to Mackinac was a turning point in his life. Warren brought \$35,076 in furs; his trade would decline in the years that followed. The trip was also eventful in the Warren family's religious life. Marie and Charlotte were baptized as Catholics at Ste. Anne's Church. Lyman Warren enrolled his oldest son, William Whipple, in the Protestant mission school on Mackinac Island. And finally, after Warren's four years of effort, the Reverend Sherman Hall, a Presbyterian minister from Vermont, had arrived to establish a mission and school on Madeline Island. On August 5 the Warren family left Mackinac Island with the Reverend Hall and his wife, Betsey; Frederick Ayer; and Elizabeth Campbell, the Ojibwe wife of a Sault Ste. Marie trader, who would act as interpreter for the missionaries. During the journey Hall wrote to his father that he feared trouble from the Catholic boatmen more than from the Indians. When they arrived at La Pointe on August 30, Hall wrote that he was "agreeably disappointed in finding the place so much more pleasant than we had anticipated."⁶⁸ The Halls lived first in the house that George Johnston had previously occupied. By January they were living more comfortably in the Warren home, where they occupied two rooms with fireplaces and small adjoining bedrooms.⁶⁹ Sherman Hall wrote to his brother of their indebtedness to Warren: "He charges no rent for the house or furniture. We are almost daily receiving some new measure of kindness from him, though he has given \$100 to this mission for this year, besides many things of which he has made no account.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Schenck, "Grant's Point," 15.

⁶⁷ Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 7-9; Ross, *La Pointe*, 75.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Ross, *La Pointe*, 76.

⁶⁹ Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 10-11; Ross, *La Pointe*, 76.

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We ought to be peculiarly grateful that God has given us such a friend in him. Were he against us, he would counteract nearly all our influence with the Indians.”⁷⁰

Hall displayed the ethnocentric perspective of the missionaries when he described the difficulties of trying to minister to the “heathen”:

They are in a wretched condition, both as to their spiritual and temporal interests. They are destitute of all the comforts of life and have barely its necessaries. . . . As to their spiritual and intellectual condition they are no better. They have little knowledge of the Christian religion, and when told that they are accountable beings and destined to the judgment, they are little affected, and often listen to what you say with as little interest as if they heard you not.

Hall concluded that it would take much time and labor to turn the Ojibwe to the Lord, and asked for the prayers of their friends at home.⁷¹

When Lieutenant Allen visited La Pointe with the Schoolcraft expedition that June, he confirmed that Hall was not reaching the Ojibwe. Allen noted that the twelve students in the mission school were very young and mostly mixed-blood, because the Indians were unwilling to enroll their children. According to Allen, the Ojibwe who lived on the island left when they learned of Hall’s motives.⁷² Because the Ojibwe refused to come to church, Hall visited them in their lodges, where they received him hospitably but failed to heed his counsel. Allen did not blame Hall personally for his failure; rather he blamed Protestant missionary methods. He did not believe that “teaching, preaching, and advice” would persuade the Indians to abandon their own deeply-rooted customs. Allen advocated teaching the Indians to farm, after which “civilized” behavior and perhaps Christianity would follow. Some of the missionaries would soon adopt Allen’s method, which would later underlie the reservation system.⁷³

When Allen visited in 1832, La Pointe was the only mission to the Ojibwe west of Sault Ste. Marie. Several different teachers, ministers, and interpreters came and went at the La Pointe mission in its early years, but the Halls were its mainstay. When Edmund Ely stopped at La Pointe in August 1833 on his way to establish a mission at Sandy Lake, Hall thought it a good opportunity to organize the church formally. On August 20, eleven mission members and other “professors of religion” met for this purpose. According to Ely, the La Pointe church was 350 miles northwest of any other Protestant Church. Reverend Boutwell, who had been at La Pointe since the previous August, and Ely left the next day to establish their new missions, Boutwell going to Leech Lake.

⁷⁰ Sherman Hall to Aaron Hall Jr., 9 January 1832, Sherman Hall Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Considering that the Halls arrived on August 30, it is likely that the Ojibwe left the island to harvest wild rice and then went to their winter hunting camps.

⁷³ Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

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These and other new missions in the interior were subsidiary to Reverend Hall and the La Pointe mission. Hall, meantime, was working on plans for a new mission building.⁷⁴

The mission and the two Schoolcraft expeditions brought more visitors and residents to Madeline Island in the 1830s, leaving more descriptions of life on the island, which was still known by a variety of names. Allen wrote: “This island has some three or four names on the maps; as, Montreal, St. Michael’s, Middle island, & c., but is called the ‘island of La Pointe’ by all the traders and voyageurs, and any change from this name would only lead to confusion and is improper; the name is taken from La Pointe Chegoimegon, a long point that runs out from the main land, from the south, to within about a mile of the island, the name of which is abbreviated, and called “La Pointe.”⁷⁵ Despite Allen’s contention that La Pointe was the only proper name for the island, Hall, Boutwell, and Ely all referred to it as Magdalen Island. Hall noted that the trading post on Magdalen Island was called La Pointe.⁷⁶ Perhaps the missionaries used the name Magdalen Island in deference to Lyman Warren and Magdalen Cadotte and the land they donated for the mission.

Visitors commented on the village-like appearance of the trading post and associated homes. According to Allen:

Mr. Warren has lived for a number of years at his present residence on the island of La Pointe, and has given to this little spot an appearance of civilization. He has built a large, comfortable dwelling, a storehouse, and eight or ten outhouses, which, with the houses of Mr. Cadotte and family, and those of the subagent formerly at La Pointe, make almost a village. All the buildings are handsomely situated, on a rise of ground, about two hundred yards from the lake, and immediately back of them are cultivated and enclosed fields, in which oats, peas, beans, potatoes, & c. were growing finely.⁷⁷

Ely noted that the buildings were built in the Canadian manner with sides and roof covered with bark.⁷⁸

Several people described meals on the island. During Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s 1831 expedition, his secretary, Melancthon Woolsey, wrote to Jane Schoolcraft, Henry’s wife and George Johnston’s sister: “I am now seated by the side of a good table in your brother’s house, and surrounded by comforts and conveniences that would be no discredit to a place less out of the world than La Pointe. We have luxuries that even the inhabitants of St. Mary’s might envy. Our table groans beneath its load of white-fish and trout, veal and pigeons, rice-puddings and strawberries, all of which are served up *a la*

⁷⁴ Ibid.; Schenck, “Lyman Marcus Warren,” 11–12; Ross, *La Pointe*, 76–78, 80, 83–84; Grace Lee Nute, “The Edmund Franklin Ely Papers,” *Minnesota History Quarterly* 6 (December 1925): 344–45; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 91.

⁷⁵ Lieutenant James Allen, Journal, 6 June to 26 August 1832, transcription online at [no title], *Digital Time Travelers*, <http://www.marshfield.k12.wi.us/socsci/discovery/allen/default.htm>.

⁷⁶ Undated manuscript in Sherman Hall Papers, copy courtesy of Theresa Schenck.

⁷⁷ Allen, Journal.

⁷⁸ Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 15, 17; Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

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*mode.*⁷⁹ This abundance, no doubt, was for the benefit of Schoolcraft and his party. But Sherman Hall described their everyday diet in detail, not only to convey its novel aspects but also to reassure his family that they had enough food. Hall wrote that their diet was simple and wholesome. Fish, usually fresh, was their staple—boiled, broiled, or fried. They followed local custom and ate two meals a day, eliminating the midday dinner. When the crop did not fail they had potatoes and other garden vegetables. They imported flour, corn, lard, tallow, salted meat, and cheese. They got milk from a cow that Warren gave them and made a small amount of butter, but rarely had fresh meat. Their fruit was wild berries, especially cranberries and blueberries. They used maple sugar from the Ojibwe and occasionally ate wild rice.⁸⁰ Despite the absence of familiar foods and comforts, Hall's letters and journals reveal that he and his wife missed their families and friends most of all. Hall's journal entry of May 22, 1832 reveals their loneliness: "This morning Mr. Ayer and Mrs. Campbell left us on their return to Mackinaw. The traders are also gone, and my wife and myself are left alone, with none to converse with in our native tongue and no one to interpret for us."⁸¹

Hall wrote a succinct description of the regional organization of the American Fur Company: "This [La Pointe] is the name of the trading establishment on Magdalen Island, near the Southern Shore of Lake Superior. It is the head quarters of one of the Departments of the American Fur Company. Another Department has its center at Fond du Lac; and another at Prairie du Chien. The principle traders connected with the department at Magdalen Island, are Messrs. Warren, Dingley, Oaks, Ashmun, Holiday & Butterfield. Warren's post is at the Island; the others are from 100 to 200 miles distant."⁸² Allen's 1832 description complements that of Hall, with additional information on the types and values of furs:

Their present trader is Mr. Warren, a gentleman of the American Fur Company, who makes this his residence, and the head quarters of an extensive department and district, embracing the extent of country S. W. of La Pointe, between Snake and St. Croix rivers, and Lac Courte Oseille [*sic*] and Chippewa river. The value of his trade, annually, is as follows: At the post of La Pointe \$2,000 or 250 beaver skins, 500 martens, 50 bears, 1,000 to 1,500 rats, and 20 to 30 Otters, all of excellent quality. At the posts on the St. Croix, \$4,000 principally rats, bears, and otters, with a few martens, raccoons, deer skins, foxes, fishers, and beaver. At Snake river post \$1,000 same furs as at St. Croix river. At Lac Courte Oseille and Lac Chetac \$1,500 principally bears, otter, martens, rats, fishers, and minks. At Chippewa river and Lac Vassale \$2,500, same furs as the last, but more beaver. The furs of Chippewa river and Lac Courte Oseille are of a better quality than those farther towards the Mississippi, as of the St. Croix and Snake rivers. The whole seven posts under Mr. Warren yield annually about eleven thousand dollars

⁷⁹ Quoted in Peterson, "Village in the Shade."

⁸⁰ Hall to Hall, 9 January 1832; Sherman Hall to Aaron Hall Jr., 30 September 1832, Sherman Hall Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁸¹ Sherman Hall, "Journal of Rev. S. Hall, May 22, 1832 – July 28, 1832," *Digital Time Travelers*, <http://www.marshfield.k12.wi.us/soesci/discovery/hall/part1.htm>.

⁸² Undated manuscript in Sherman Hall Papers, copy courtesy of Theresa Schenck. This appears to have been written shortly after Hall's arrival, probably late 1831.

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worth of furs; but each post requires a clerk and some men, and consequent expense, insomuch that the trade is by no means as profitable as it would at first seem to be.⁸³

When Allen submitted his journal—which served as his report on the Schoolcraft expedition—to his commanding officer, he noted that he obtained information about the fur trade mostly from Messrs. Holiday, Warren, Oakes, and Aitken (head of the Fond du Lac operation) of the American Fur Company. This would explain Allen’s detailed and specific description.⁸⁴ Though the annual value of eleven thousand dollars in furs is an estimate and not a count, it is substantially lower than the thirty-five thousand dollars worth of furs that Warren brought to Mackinac the previous year. This correlates with observations by Allen and others on the decline of the “furred and large animals of the country” ranging from Sault Ste. Marie to Leech Lake.⁸⁵

When the American Fur Company charter expired in 1833, John Jacob Astor began the process of selling the company. Astor’s astute business judgment made him one of the wealthiest men in the history of the United States. In 1833 he saw that fur-bearing animals were declining in his company’s territory and that fashions in Europe were changing—silk, rather than beaver and muskrat, was becoming the material of choice for hats. These were the biggest of a number of challenges facing the fur trade. That year Astor executed a purchase agreement to sell the Northern Department of the American Fur Company to a group headed by Ramsay Crooks. In 1834 the new company was reorganized in New York State under the American Fur Company name, and at the end of the year Crooks and his associates formally took ownership. Lyman Warren held ten of the company’s one thousand shares. Astor sold the Western Department, based in St. Louis, to Pratte, Chouteau, and Company.⁸⁶

Soon after Ramsay Crooks took over management of the new American Fur Company, he began planning to add commercial fishing to the company’s fur trading business. William Aitken was helping Crooks prepare for this venture when he wrote to the latter early in 1835: “With regard to the fisheries as you say they will be the most valuable part of our business, that there are good Fisheries in Lake Superior there Can be no doubt.”⁸⁷ Crooks also planned to use schooners to provide faster and more efficient transportation on the lakes than the Mackinaw boats then in use. One schooner on Lake Superior would transport goods to and from Sault Ste. Marie; a second schooner would operate on the lakes below the Sault rapids. Schooners would save money because they required fewer boatmen than were needed for Mackinaw boats. But Crooks was

⁸³ Allen, Journal.

⁸⁴ Warren was away on his annual trip to Mackinac Island when Allen stopped at La Pointe, but they could have met at Sault Ste. Marie or another location on Lake Superior.

⁸⁵ Allen, Journal.

⁸⁶ Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, 235–43; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 70; Grace Lee Nute, “The Papers of the American Fur Company: A Brief Estimate of their Significance,” *American Historical Review* 32 (April 1927): 521–22; 524–25; Ross, *La Pointe*, 78; Schenck, “Grant’s Point,” 18; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 30.

⁸⁷ Aitken to Crooks, 26 January 1835, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 1, William Aitken Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen.

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concerned that the unemployed boatmen would go to work for the company's competitors; thus he planned to employ them as fishermen. In addition, fish would provide an additional profitable cargo for the schooners. In relation to all of these plans, Crooks moved the inland headquarters of the company from Mackinac to La Pointe, which would become the center for the company's fishing operations. Warren remained in charge at La Pointe.⁸⁸

For a number of years the trading post at the southern end of Madeline Island had been inadequate for the growing trade conducted at La Pointe. When La Pointe became the company's inland headquarters, it was essential to move the trading post to a location with a deeper harbor that would accommodate the new schooners. As the French had done in 1718, Warren chose the protected harbor of Sandy Bay on the west side of the island. The new La Pointe was built where the present village of La Pointe is located, north of the site of the French fort. Early in 1835 the company began building the new La Pointe trading post, which included a wharf, storehouses for fish and furs, and employee housing. It appears that construction was mostly complete by August 3 when the company launched its new schooner, the *John Jacob Astor*, on Lake Superior. Warren shipped 280 packs of furs from La Pointe that month. He began fishing in the Chequamegon region in November, and on January 2, 1836 reported to Crooks that he had 320 barrels of fish on hand.⁸⁹

In the fall of 1834, while the new trading post was in the planning stages, Sherman Hall began constructing a mission building. He built it on property that Warren gave to the mission, about halfway between the Cadotte-Warren trading post and the 1835 trading post. The two-story building was constructed of logs, with clapboards on the exterior, and finished with clay plaster on the interior. It housed all of the mission activities—school, worship, and residence. The Halls moved into the new mission building in February, though it was not quite completed. The Halls continued to operate their school, and Sherman Hall translated the New Testament into the Ojibwe language. Reverend Granville T. Sproat came in 1835 to assist Reverend Hall.⁹⁰

In July 1835 Father Frederic Baraga arrived on Madeline Island to establish the first Catholic mission in the area since 1670, beginning a rivalry between Protestants and Catholics for Ojibwe converts. Baraga was born in Austria to a wealthy family of Slovenian descent. He was well educated—speaking German, French, and other languages—when he entered the seminary in Austria. Baraga came to the United States in 1830 under the auspices of an Austrian missionary society. His first mission was to the Ottawa in northern Michigan. He requested a transfer to Lake Superior, specifically to La Pointe, to counteract the work of the Protestant missionaries. Baraga wrote to the bishop in Detroit: “The Protestant ministers are so active in deluding the poor Indians of

⁸⁸ Grace Lee Nute, “The American Fur Company's Fishing Enterprises on Lake Superior,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 12 (March 1926): 486–87, 493–94; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 72, 173–74, 177; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 31; Schenck, “Grant's Point,” 18.

⁸⁹ A barrel contained two hundred pounds of fish. Ross, *La Pointe*, 74, 78–82, 91; Schenck, “Grant's Point,” 18; Schenck, “Lyman Marcus Warren,” 13; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 32; Peterson, “Village in the Shade”; Nute, “American Fur Company's Fishing,” 493–95.

⁹⁰ Ross, *La Pointe*, 77–78; 83–87, 97.

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that place [La Pointe] into *damnable errors*; and we Catholics, we defer going to these good children of nature from one summer to the next to instruct them in the eternal truths?!”⁹¹ When he arrived at La Pointe, Baraga impressed the Ojibwe by blessing them in their own language. Within two weeks Baraga had baptized fifty Catholics, and his followers had constructed a log church about one-quarter mile north of the Protestant mission. They dedicated the church on August 9 as St. Joseph’s Chapel and soon added a house and school. By October 1, Baraga had baptized 148 Catholics. By comparison, during the thirty-four year span of the Protestant mission at La Pointe and Odanah, seven or eight métis or Ojibwe joined the church. Baraga’s engaging and energetic personality only partially accounted for the Catholics’ success. Catholics required little preparation for baptism and admission to the church and were relatively accepting of traditional Ojibwe cultural practices. In contrast, the Protestants required rigorous study, a higher level of acculturation, and a confession of faith prior to church admission. Numerous French Canadian and métis voyageurs and traders were Catholic, and they welcomed and supported Baraga. In addition, Ojibwe tradition honored the memory of the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries, the Black Robes. In reaction to Baraga’s activities, the Protestant missionaries—Hall, Ayer, Boutwell, and Ely—wrote to Indian agent Schoolcraft protesting Baraga’s encroachment on their mission territory. They prevented Baraga from receiving government money for his mission, but they were not successful in forcing him to leave. Baraga did leave temporarily, in 1836, when he returned to Austria to raise money and find assistants to help with his mission.⁹²

The fur trade at La Pointe continued to decline in 1836, while the fishing business grew.⁹³ In August, Warren shipped 203 packs of furs from La Pointe, compared to 280 packs the previous year.⁹⁴ The population of La Pointe grew as former boatmen came to the island to fish, and coopers came to make fish barrels. Trader Charles Oakes built a house that was imposing and refined compared to others at La Pointe. Though only one story tall, the long, symmetrical house was built of frame construction on a stone foundation.⁹⁵ In 1837 Warren accompanied Indian subagent Bushnell and the Lake Superior Ojibwe to the council that resulted in the Pine Tree Treaty. The treaty included a provision to pay twenty-eight thousand dollars to William Aitken and twenty-five thousand dollars to Warren on behalf of the American Fur Company for debts that the Ojibwe owed them. The American Fur Company was doing well during this time: it paid a dividend of 10 percent in 1836 and 15 percent in 1837.⁹⁶

Father Baraga returned from Austria in October 1837 with more money and two assistants. Andrew Cesirek, Baraga’s body servant, could not adjust to frontier life and

⁹¹ Quoted in Ross, *La Pointe*, 89.

⁹² Ross, *La Pointe*, 86–91, 117; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 91–92; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 45–46; Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archeology,” 191;

⁹³ For further information on the American Fur Company’s fishing business, see chapter five.

⁹⁴ The number of furs in each pack and their value would depend on the types of animals.

⁹⁵ The house became known as Treaty Hall after the 1854 treaty was signed in front.

⁹⁶ Schenck, “Lyman Marcus Warren,” 14–15; Ross, *La Pointe*, 95; Nute, “American Fur Company’s Fishing,” 495; Crooks to Aitken, 30 April 1836, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 12, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 156; Nute, “Papers of American Fur Company,” 523.

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left in 1838. Baraga's sister came with him to keep house. She stayed for two years, until poor health required her to leave. With the money he had raised Baraga enlarged his church in 1838 and decorated it with eighteen oil paintings that he brought from Austria. A painting over the altar showed the Holy Family in St. Joseph's carpenter shop. In addition to working among the La Pointe Ojibwe, Baraga traveled across the Lake Superior region, particularly to Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and L'Anse, where he established missions. He sometimes traveled on the *John Jacob Astor*, but often went by canoe in summer and by snowshoe in winter. His energy became legendary.⁹⁷

The Protestant mission grew in June 1838 when Reverend Sproat returned from his trip to Massachusetts to marry Florantha Thompson. While Reverend Sproat assisted Reverend Hall, Florantha Sproat took over teaching the mission school. Despite their animosity, the two missions cooperated in the matter of schooling, with Catholic children attending the Protestant mission school. Baraga made it clear, however, that this arrangement would last only as long as the Protestants limited their classes to reading and writing and did not teach religion.⁹⁸ Baraga wrote to his bishop: "I have warned them well that if they meddled with religion I would order all the Catholic children to leave their schools; and I am watching strictly this observance."⁹⁹ Florantha Sproat wrote to her family in October 1838 that there were twenty-six children in their school. She had just prepared them a supper of rice pudding and pumpkin pies. "It was surely an interesting sight to see so many children of the wilderness standing in perfect order by the large table with happy looks and lighthearted eating, as if they loved it."¹⁰⁰ The following June she wrote to her mother that during the winter their school had been filled to overflowing because the chief favored it and advised his band to send their children. But Florantha remained aware that school attendance was not equivalent to religious enlightenment. "With regard to the prosperity of our missionary efforts I hardly know how to write. To persons with the sanguine belief that the only obstacle in the way of Christianizing the Indians is their lack of knowledge of gospel truth, and that we have only need to point them the way to Heaven and they will walk in it, would find themselves sadly disappointed. For the human heart is the same here as in our favored and enlightened land, where many will pass their lives unconverted beneath the full blaze of Gospel light."¹⁰¹

In 1838 the Sproats encountered a bigger and busier La Pointe than the Halls found in 1831. Not only the American Fur Company's inland headquarters and center of fishing operations, La Pointe was also the site for the government's annuity payments to the Ojibwe, beginning that September. Florantha wrote to her mother that in the three months since their arrival her primary job as a missionary had been to entertain strangers. (They had three houseguests at the time.) On October 8 she wrote that she was expecting

⁹⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 96–97; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 92–94.

⁹⁸ Ross, *La Pointe*, 97;

⁹⁹ Quoted in Ross, *La Pointe*, 97.

¹⁰⁰ Florantha Sproat to Mrs. Cephas Thompson, 7 October 1838. Florantha Sproat's letters were inherited by her granddaughter and published as "Documents: La Pointe Letters," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 16, no. 1–2 (September–December 1932): 85–210. Transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

¹⁰¹ Sproat to Thompson, 23 June 1839, transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

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Ramsay Crooks and several other gentlemen for evening tea. For this occasion she was serving thimbleberry pie, a cake of whortleberries [blueberries] and dried cherries, and warm biscuit. Florantha worked hard doing her own housework—making butter, cheese, and soap; scouring candlesticks, knives, and tin pans; and other tasks. Even more difficult, she lost her stillborn daughter in May 1839.¹⁰²

Archaeological excavations at the Marina site provide additional evidence of life at La Pointe, supplementing the descriptions of Florantha Sproat and others. Both Catholics and Protestants built their missions on the site of the eighteenth-century Ojibwe village, and archaeological evidence dating from the 1830s through the 1850s provides insight into mission life. Artifacts from the site include clay and stone marbles, a jew's harp, scissors, iron awls, white clay and red pipestone pipes, medicine bottles, iron hoes and adzes, an Indian Office axe, gun parts and shot, a metal projectile point, iron fish hooks, fragments of brass and tin containers, bone-handled knives and forks, glass beads, a glass candlestick holder, rosary beads, and crucifixes. Ceramics include numerous remnants of refined earthenware bowls, teacups, and other dinnerware in a range of decorative styles available at the time. Many of these artifacts demonstrate the efforts of the missionaries to bring their New England lifestyle to the frontier. Blackboard slate fragments with Indian students' drawings represent the mission school. Archaeologists have identified remnants of a cabin floor and a wooden storage feature as part of Baraga's mission, and have linked a religious medallion to Baraga himself. Few artifacts associated with the missions represent native technology, not surprisingly given the mission goals.¹⁰³

For the American Fur Company, La Pointe was a trouble spot in 1838. The winter hunt had been poor, furs shipped in June were counted incorrectly, and the August shipment contained only twenty-eight packs. Many barrels of fish had spoiled because they were improperly packed. Late that summer Ramsay Crooks came to Lake Superior to investigate. Charging carelessness, extravagance, and mismanagement, he fired both William Aitken (at Fond du Lac) and Lyman Warren, replacing Warren with Charles Borup. In addition, government authorities arrested Warren for trading privately with the Ojibwe while employed by the American Fur Company. Apparently such private trading was common practice, but the animosity of the local Indian subagent, Daniel Bushnell, led to Warren's arrest. In 1839 both Warren and Borup (who was still working for the American Fur Company) were tried and fined for private trading. Warren moved to Chippewa Falls, where he was partner in a sawmill, and set up trading there.¹⁰⁴

At the end of his Lake Superior tour, Crooks wrote to Stephen Halsey in the company's New York office that "until Muskrats get again into favor, our dependence for profits in the trade of Lake Superior will mainly be determined by the results of the

¹⁰² Sproat to Thompson, 20 September 1838, 8 October 1838, 23 June 1839, transcriptions in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

¹⁰³ Birmingham, "Historic Period Indian Archeology," 180, 192–93.

¹⁰⁴ Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 15, 17–20; Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 497–98; Ross, *La Pointe*, 97–98.

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Fisheries.”¹⁰⁵ At the center of this fishing operation, the village at La Pointe was thriving. The fisheries were so productive, however, and the economy so depressed that by 1839 the American Fur Company was struggling to develop new markets for all of the barrels of unsold fish sitting in its warehouse in Detroit. The company continued to trade for furs in the Lake Superior region, but Borup shipped only 129 packs of furs from La Pointe that year. Annuity payments at La Pointe interfered with the fall hunt. On the other hand, the American Fur Company received fifty-three thousand dollars under the 1837 treaty for its claim of unpaid debts against the Ojibwe. At this point the treaties were a mixed blessing for the American Fur Company, but before long they would contribute to the company’s demise.¹⁰⁶

In 1839 the Protestant missionaries began building a church in the village of La Pointe, about two hundred yards southeast of the wharf. Completed in 1840, the church, like the mission building, was built of logs with clapboard on the exterior walls and clay plaster inside. It seated 150 to 200 people.¹⁰⁷ When Douglass Houghton’s expedition visited Madeline Island in July 1840, assistant geologist Bela Hubbard described three clusters of settlement on the island. The first was at the American Fur Company’s trading post, known as the fort, consisting of “2 large stores which are painted red, a long storehouse for fish at the wharf & a row of neat white buildings, embracing room sufficient for half a doz. families, erected for the use of the Co. These, with the two red stores, form opposite sides of a broad street, in the center square of which is the large flag pole. The white buildings are a story & a half high, framed with logs inserted in the framework, making the walls snug & warm. Upon this street, which runs parallel to the bay, are erected the small, unpainted log dwellings of the French & half breeds” (figure 6).¹⁰⁸ The second cluster of buildings centered on the two missions:

At the distance of 1/2 mile from the fort are situated the protestant & Catholic missions. The former has a good frame mansion of 2 stories & a church erecting near the fort. A school is attached to the mission which numbers from 15 to 30 scholars. The Catholic mission has a church & numbers a large no. of followers among both the half breeds and indians. At this point are also a small congregation of dwellings.

Houghton and Hubbard counted fifty permanent buildings at the mission and fort together. In addition there were “an almost equal no. of indian lodges, irregularly disposed in vacant spaces.” About half a mile south of the mission buildings stood

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Nute, “American Fur Company’s Fishing,” 498.

¹⁰⁶ Ross, *La Pointe*, 99, 105; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 179; Nute, “American Fur Company’s Fishing,” 498; Charles Borup to Ramsay Crooks, 13 March 1839, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1839, Box 2, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen; *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1944*, vol. 2, Calendar of the American Fur Company’s Papers, Part 1: 1831–1840 (Washington: GPO, 1945), 698; Nute, “Papers of American Fur Company,” 529; Schenck, “Lyman Marcus Warren,” 20.

¹⁰⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 100. In 1901 the church was moved to a site just south of the Protestant mission house, where it stood until it collapsed in 1943. Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Peterson, “Village in the Shade.” Charles Penny, another member of Houghton’s expedition, wrote that forty-six voyageurs had built dwellings at La Pointe. Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 32.

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Figure 6. View of La Pointe, ca. 1843. Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society (WHI-42457).

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Cadotte's trading post, the "old fort, consisting of half a doz. substantial buildings. These are occupied at present as farm houses."¹⁰⁹

Hubbard noted another significant presence on the island: "The ground on which the village at the mission stands has been granted by the indians to the Cleveland Fishing & Trading Co. & the latter has 2 small storehouses."¹¹⁰ The American Fur Company was accustomed to competitors, but this may have been the first time that a competitor established a trading post on Madeline Island. The Cleveland North Western Lake Company, as it was also known, announced that it would engage in fishing and fur trading and launched a schooner, the *Algonquin*, on Lake Superior in 1840. Borup wrote to Crooks in June that the "Northern Lake Company has arrived, bringing cargo of salt, provisions and few goods. Do not consider this rivalry of serious consequence."¹¹¹ Despite Borup's statement, the Cleveland company was a source of anxiety and some loss to the American Fur Company until it left La Pointe in 1844.¹¹²

The Protestant mission grew again when five new missionaries arrived in 1841: the Reverend and Mrs. Leonard Wheeler, the Reverend and Mrs. Woodbridge James, and Miss Abigail Spooner. The Reverend and Mrs. James did not stay long. Abigail Spooner worked for many years as a teacher in the mission school. The most important of the new missionaries was the Reverend Wheeler, who gained the Ojibwe's confidence to a degree that Reverend Hall never managed. Wheeler believed that it was necessary to raise the Ojibwe's standard of living before it was possible to convert them to Christianity. To this end Wheeler would soon introduce agricultural training. Wheeler also worked well with Hall, even though Wheeler was Congregational and Hall was Presbyterian.¹¹³ With the Halls, Sproats, Wheelers, and Abigail Spooner, the Protestant mission became a much more social and supportive community than it was earlier. Florantha Sproat wrote to her family of sleigh rides and tea, church services and missionary meetings, and taking turns with Abigail Spooner staying with Mrs. Wheeler after the latter gave birth to a stillborn child. Her letter of April 1, 1842 illustrates the camaraderie:

Husband is in Mr. Wheeler's chamber singing with him and his wife, and it sounds as if they were enjoying it much. . . . In the morning Miss Spooner and myself took a walk among the hills and ravines back of the mission. I came home, stewed some cranberries, and commenced making Mrs. Hall a cap for her journey out. Then I made a large loaf of bread and baked it, and then made for our supper a small parsnip stew. Mr. Hall had, the day before, brought me 5 or 6 small parsnips, and I assure you my stew was very nice.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Peterson, "Village in the Shade."

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Ross, *La Pointe*, 101.

¹¹² Ross, *La Pointe*, 101; Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 502; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 121; George Simpson to Ramsay Crooks, 24 December 1844, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 6, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen. Rathbun and Vannoy state that about this time (1840–44) there is mention of an independent trader on Sand Island but provide no further information or documentation. Rathbun and Vannoy, "Fur Trade," 134.

¹¹³ Ross, *La Pointe*, 101–102.

¹¹⁴ Transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

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More by manners than by numbers, the missionary community was instrumental in transforming La Pointe from a métis and Ojibwe trading post to a white settlement.

Father Baraga countered the new Protestant church and additional missionaries by building a new, larger Catholic church in the village of La Pointe, on a hill behind the trading post. Completed in 1841, the church contained forty benches for worshippers and was decorated with the paintings from Austria. It incorporated a chapel that was part of the 1835 church and living quarters for Baraga and his successors. Baraga built a school nearby. The church originally had two corner towers (figure 6), but they shook so badly in the wind that they were removed and replaced with a central steeple.¹¹⁵

During this time, the American Fur Company was trying with little success to sell its surplus of fish. In 1840 the company scaled back its fishing operation and in 1841 ceased commercial fishing altogether, confining its business to furs and skins. The merchandise (materials, goods, provisions) that the company charged against the La Pointe post declined in value from \$45,000 in 1840 to \$20,000 in 1841, evidence of La Pointe's declining business. The company's debts continued to mount as the depression continued in the United States and furs fared poorly in international markets. Despite a mild winter that resulted in a poor hunt, a large stock of furs remained unsold. On September 10, 1842 the American Fur Company suspended payment on its accounts and bills payable and was placed in the hands of a receiver. That year the value of merchandise charged against the La Pointe post amounted to only \$13,000.¹¹⁶

On October 4, 1842, less than a month after the American Fur Company's failure, the Ojibwe ceded their lands along the southwestern shore of Lake Superior. Robert Stuart, formerly the American Fur Company's resident manager on Mackinac Island, negotiated the treaty on behalf of the U.S. government. Out of the \$75,000 that the treaty allocated to pay debts, \$23,696 went to John Jacob Astor, \$12,565 went to the American Fur Company, and thousands more went to current and former American Fur Company employees. This included \$1,566 to Lyman Warren, who witnessed the treaty at La Pointe. With the treaty of 1842, the Lake Superior Ojibwe joined their relatives to the south and west who had ceded their lands and were receiving annuity payments. The dwindling fur trade increasingly forced the Ojibwe to rely on annuities rather than trading for income and trade goods, even though the annuities provided a meager living. Travel to and waiting for the September payment disrupted the fall hunt. The Indian subagent took the place of the traders as liaison with the government and the white community. Annuity payments also attracted whiskey peddlers, contributing to the breakdown of the social and economic order.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ross, *La Pointe*, 103–104, 164. This church burned in 1901 and was replaced by the church currently on that site.

¹¹⁶ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 179–80; Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 498–501; *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1944*, vol. 3, Calendar of the American Fur Company's Papers, Part 2: 1841–1849 (Washington: GPO, 1945), 1047, 1235; Ross, *La Pointe*, 105; Nute, "Papers of American Fur Company," 537–38.

¹¹⁷ Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 30, 171–76; Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 21.

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The land cessions opened the southwestern shore of Lake Superior to logging, mining, and settlement. The American Fur Company's 1842 treaty payment may have helped with their immediate financial difficulties, and in 1843 the U.S. economy improved, allowing the company to pay off part of its debts and sell the remainder of the fish in its Detroit warehouse. In the following years the company continued to pay off its debts while trading on a reduced scale. But the world in which the fur trade flourished was fast disappearing. La Pointe County was organized in 1845 with the village of La Pointe as the county seat. In 1846 it appears that the American Fur Company reorganized to operate as a commission house, marketing furs for other companies. The company ceased operations at the end of 1847, although the name persisted. In 1848—the year that Wisconsin became a state—Charles Borup moved to St. Paul where he later became involved in banking.¹¹⁸

Catholic and Protestant missionaries continued their work in the Chequamegon region in the 1840s, but with less emphasis on the village of La Pointe. Father Baraga moved to the mission at L'Anse, Michigan in 1843, continuing to oversee the missions at La Pointe, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage. In 1845 Father Otto Skolla came to La Pointe to assist Baraga there and at the western missions, remaining until 1853. Although Baraga remained devoted to the Ojibwe, the copper and iron miners of the Upper Peninsula increasingly occupied his time. When the Catholic Church made Baraga a bishop in 1853 he moved to Sault Ste. Marie. He traveled constantly and wrote prolifically, including both a grammar and dictionary of the Ojibwe language.¹¹⁹ In 1857 Baraga sent Dillon O'Brien and his wife Elizabeth to La Pointe to teach at the Catholic school. In 1861, with the population of La Pointe dwindling, the O'Briens relocated the school to the Red Cliff Reservation. Baraga moved from the Sault to Marquette in 1865. He died in 1868 and remains today one of the most famous Catholic missionaries.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, the Reverend Wheeler was busy establishing a mission at Odanah, where he completed a new mission house in 1845.¹²¹ The Ojibwe had long tended gardens at this site, and Wheeler hoped that they would be able to support themselves with the improved farming methods that he would teach them. When the treaty of 1854 established the Bad River Reservation, Odanah became the main settlement on the reservation. The Reverend Hall and his family went to Minnesota in 1853, anticipating the Ojibwe's departure from Madeline Island, and the Protestant mission on the island

¹¹⁸ Ross, *La Pointe*, 108–110; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 45; Nute, "Papers of American Fur Company," 538; Wisconsin Historical Society, "Dictionary of Wisconsin History," Borup, Charles Williamwulff, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=1128&term_id=1&term_type=text&letter=B.

¹¹⁹ Among Baraga's published works are *Jesus o Bimadisiwim (The Life of Jesus)*, in Ottawa (1837); *On the Manners and Customs of the Indians*, in Slovenian (1837); *Gagikwe-Masiniagan*, a sermon book in Ojibwe (1837 and 1859); *Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the Otchipwe Language* (1850); and *Dictionary of the Otchipwe Language* (1853).

¹²⁰ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 93–96; Ross, *La Pointe*, 110, 113, 121–22, 126, 191; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 79; *Report of Commissioner 1861*, 76; "Frederic Baraga," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (Robert Appleton Company, 1907), online at New Advent website (K. Knight, 2003), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02282b.htm>.

¹²¹ The Sproats left Madeline Island that year.

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was abandoned. The Reverend Wheeler ran the mission school and church at Odanah until he retired and moved to Beloit in 1866. Upon his departure he recorded a church membership of fifteen. This small number does not reflect Wheeler's influential role in the lives of the Bad River Ojibwe. Certainly, as a missionary Wheeler aimed to convert the Ojibwe to Christianity, but he also sincerely tried to raise their standard of living and acted as an advocate on their behalf.¹²²

The end of the American Fur Company did not mean the end of the fur trade in the Chequamegon region. The fur trade was no longer the engine that turned the local economy, nor the institution that structured the lives of most residents. But there were still independent traders working in the region. The 1850 federal census for the village of La Pointe lists six or seven "Indian traders." In addition there were four clerks and seventy-three voyageurs living in the village, at least some of whom would have been active in the fur trade.¹²³ Among the La Pointe traders in the 1850 census are Vincent Roy Sr. and his son Joseph; the census lists Vincent Roy Jr. as a clerk. In 1845 Vincent Roy Sr., a métis fur trader from the Rainy Lake area, moved his family to La Pointe where there were amenities such as school and church. Vincent Roy Jr. worked for Leopold and Austrian in their general merchandise and fur trading business, managing their trading posts at Fond du Lac and Vermilion Lake.¹²⁴

Benjamin Armstrong is the best known of the traders who were working in the Chequamegon region in the 1850s. Born in Alabama in 1820, Armstrong came to the St. Croix River Valley in 1840. With his trade based in the St. Croix area, Armstrong often traveled to Lake Superior where he befriended Chief Buffalo, married Buffalo's niece, and was adopted by Buffalo as a son. In 1852 Armstrong traveled to Washington as interpreter for Chief Buffalo's delegation protesting against removal of the Lake Superior Ojibwe to the west, and in 1854 he again acted as interpreter for the treaty proceedings at La Pointe. Sometime in the early 1850s Armstrong established a store at La Pointe. In 1855 he moved with his wife and four children to the southwestern shore of Oak Island, where they built a house, barn, and dock and cleared forty acres, five of which they cultivated.¹²⁵ At his Oak Island home and trading post, Armstrong sold hardwood fuel to steamboats and traded with the Ojibwe. In 1861, when the government appointed Armstrong to be interpreter to Indian agent Webb, he moved with his family to Bayfield. Armstrong later moved to Ashland where he held several government offices and where he died in 1900.¹²⁶

¹²² Ross, *La Pointe*, 86, 110–11, 118, 124–25; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 91; Grace Lee Nute, "Notes and Documents: The Letters of Sherman Hall, Missionary, to the Chippewa Indians," *Minnesota History Quarterly* 7 (March 1926): 62–63.

¹²³ Grace, "1850 Federal Census LaPointe County"; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 64.

¹²⁴ Although contemporary writings refer to these two men as Vincent Roy Sr. and Jr., they are more properly Vincent Roy II and III, as Vincent Roy Sr.'s father was also Vincent Roy. "Biographical Sketch—Vincent Roy," 1–4; Ross, *La Pointe*, 111.

¹²⁵ Armstrong's house, dock, and clearing were described by the General Land Office surveyors in their 1856–57 survey notes.

¹²⁶ On page 56 of his *Reminiscences*, Armstrong states that Oak Island was his home from spring 1855 to spring 1862, but on page 65 he states that he moved to Bayfield when he was appointed interpreter in spring 1861. Armstrong, *Early Life*, 16–31, 33–48, 56–65, 79, 92, 115, 198, 211, 227, 261–66; tax records, church records, and obituaries compiled by Sheree Peterson, e-mail to author, 19 February 2006; Robert

The International Fur Trade

William Wilson, though not a trader in the Apostle Islands, came there because of the fur trade. Wilson was born in Canada ca. 1791 and worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. He arrived at La Pointe in 1837 as a cooper for the American Fur Company. In the mid- to late 1840s he moved to the island labeled Round Island on the American Fur Company's 1839 map. Accounts differ as to why Wilson chose the solitary island life. According to one account, it was the death of a wife sometime in his past; according to another it was the consequence of a fist fight between Wilson and John Bell, another La Pointe cooper. Wilson built a cabin on the island, grew a garden and hay, and kept chickens. He continued work as a cooper, selling barrels to local fishermen, but kept unwanted visitors away with a gun. Wilson was found dead in his cabin in 1861, murdered according to some accounts. Among many legends that developed after Wilson's death, the most common told of hidden money, leading treasure seekers to dig around the cabin site. The island became known as Wilson's Island or Hermit Island, the latter its name today.¹²⁷

In addition to those who identified trading as their livelihood, Apostle Island residents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often made trapping part of their subsistence strategy, combining it variously with farming, fishing, and logging. C. D. O'Brien, who lived in La Pointe in the late 1850s, described a livelihood based on fishing, trapping in winter, and growing potatoes and other root crops. BIA reports for 1868 and 1869 describe furs as an important source of income for the Lake Superior Ojibwe but do not identify specific reservations. While logging on Stockton Island in 1909, Earl Brigham set traps in his spare time and trapped three martins and a fox. The *Bayfield County Press* reported his good fortune at trapping the martins, which were worth fifteen dollars apiece. Bounty hunting became significant in the late nineteenth century, with bounties on animals such as wolves, bobcats, coyotes, and foxes that were perceived as dangerous or a nuisance. Also in the late nineteenth century, state game laws began regulating hunting and trapping. Several fox farms were established in the Chequamegon region in the 1920s and 1930s, but they did not become as common as they were in southern Wisconsin. After the 1930s, beaver proliferated in the Apostle

Mackreth, "The Incredible Journey of Benjamin Armstrong and Chief Buffalo," National Park Service, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, <http://www.nps.gov/apis/historyculture/armstrong.htm>; Arnold R. Alanen and William H. Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore: Agriculture and Horticulture on the Apostle Islands, 1840–1940," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 79 (Spring 1996): 162–203, reprinted in *Historic Logging and Farming in the Apostle Islands* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National), 6; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 68.

¹²⁷ The 1850 federal census for La Pointe County lists Wilson as a fifty-nine year old cooper, born in Canada, with five hundred dollars worth of real estate. The census lists Wilson in the Fond du Lac village division of the county. Before Wisconsin became a state in 1848, La Pointe County extended into Minnesota, but it is not clear what the Fond du Lac village division refers to in 1850. It is likely that Wilson resided on Wilson's Island at that date. Grace, "1850 Federal Census LaPointe County"; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 6; Ross, *La Pointe*, 95, 123; Robert Mackreth, "On the Trail of the Island Hermit," *Apostle Islands Scrapbook*, <http://www.bobmackreth.com/Scrapbook/hermit.htm>; Armstrong, *Early Life*, 206–210; Guy M. Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country in History and in Story* (Ann Arbor: Browzer Books, 1975), 128–29.

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Islands in the second growth aspen forests that followed logging. Joe Duffy remembered beaver on most of the islands and that trapping was a way to make good money.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 270–72; *Report of Commissioner 1868*, 379; *Report of Commissioner 1869*, 427; “Successful Trapping,” *Bayfield County Press*, March 26, 1909; Rathbun and Vannoy, “Fur Trade,” 138–43; Duffy interview. Since Duffy was born in 1939, he would be referring to the 1950s and after.

CHAPTER FOUR SHIPPING AND LIGHTHOUSES

Lake Superior forms the western end of the Great Lakes water highway that was so critical to the settlement and development of the United States. During the fur trade era, canoes, bateaux, and Mackinaw boats transported trade goods and provisions westward and furs eastward. British fur traders began using sailing ships on Lake Superior in the late eighteenth century. Cargoes of iron and copper took the place of furs when mining began on Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the 1840s. As mining grew, and shipping and settlement along with it, settlers and investors agitated for a canal and locks to bypass the bottleneck created by the rapids at Sault Ste Marie. Even before the Sault locks opened in 1855, new towns were founded on the western end of Lake Superior in anticipation of the growth of shipping and commerce. Shipping grew as anticipated or even faster. In the 1850s schooners dominated shipping on Lake Superior, but by the 1890s they had been surpassed by steamers. Grain, lumber, iron ore, and coal were the primary cargoes. The Apostle Islands were both refuge and hazard for the burgeoning lake traffic, and lighthouses were built to guide ships through and around the islands. The first and last lights were on Michigan Island: the first began operating in 1857 and the last in 1929. Light stations were also built on Long, Raspberry, Outer, Sand, and Devils islands. For many decades the lights were operated by lighthouse keepers with help from their families and assistants. This laborious, sometimes dangerous, but rich tradition ended when the lights were automated beginning with the Sand Island light in 1921 and ending with Devils Island light in 1978. At those light stations not yet automated, Coast Guard personnel replaced civilian lighthouse keepers beginning in 1939. Notwithstanding the lighthouses, there were many shipwrecks in the Apostle Islands. Today the underwater remains of these shipwrecks are a cultural legacy.

Shipping

Fur traders moved their cargoes by water as much as possible to avoid the difficult overland trails. Trade goods were shipped west from Montreal and later from New York; furs were shipped east. French traders adapted the Ojibwe birch bark canoe, which they built in different sizes depending on where it would be used. The largest birch bark canoe—the Montreal canoe—was used on Lake Superior. The Montreal canoe was thirty to forty feet long, could weigh two hundred pounds empty, and carried up to four tons of cargo. Eight to twelve voyageurs usually paddled a Montreal canoe. At a portage such as Sault Ste. Marie, half the men would carry the canoe while the other half carried the cargo. The French also used bateaux—flat bottomed wooden boats similar in shape to canoes but heavier, designed to be rowed, poled, or sailed. Sherman Hall traveled by bateau from Mackinac Island to La Pointe in 1831 and wrote a description for his father:

A bateau is a boat about 35 or 40 feet in length, eight or ten feet in width at the widest place which is the center on the top. From the center they run off in a curve till they terminate at each extremity in a point. These are rowed by six or eight men. They have sails which they use when the wind is favourable. These

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carry three or four tons weight. They have no deck nor covering. The loading is first put into them which fills them within six or eight inches of the top. Then an oiled cloth is spread over it. This forms a kind of deck flooring, on the top of which is placed the light baggage, such a[s] traveling trunks & c. of the traveler. These form his only seat. Here [he] is obliged to stay from morning to night, and usually suffers no small inconvenience from being crow[d]ed into one of these small boats with from a dozen to 20 others.¹

The Mackinaw boat was a small sailboat ranging from eighteen to twenty-six feet long, equipped with oars as well as a sail. Although the origin of the Mackinaw boat has been much debated, it probably developed in the eighteenth century from the bateau. During the early nineteenth century the Mackinaw boat was commonly referred to as a Mackinaw barge or simply as a barge. By 1825 the Mackinaw boat had generally replaced the Montreal canoe on the south shore of Lake Superior.²

The first sailing ship, or decked vessel, to sail on Lake Superior was built by Louis Denis, Sieur de La Ronde at Pointe aux Pines near Sault Ste. Marie about 1735. La Ronde built the ship to carry copper from his mines at Ontonagon; its fate is unknown. The next sailing ships on Lake Superior were built by the British in the 1770s. Although they did not replace Montreal canoes and bateaux, sailing ships were a welcome addition with their larger capacities and faster speeds. The North West Company's *Athabasca*, built at Pointe aux Pines in 1786, had a capacity of 40 tons, compared to a maximum of 4 tons for a canoe or bateau; the *Otter*, built in 1793, had a 75 ton capacity. Between 1770 and 1840 the fur companies, British and American, employed at least sixteen sailing ships on Lake Superior. Most of these were two-masted schooners, defined by their fore-and-aft rigging, and ranged from 20 to 135 tons. The American Fur Company began building schooners in 1835 to replace their Mackinaw boats.³

The rapids at Sault Ste. Marie posed a huge obstacle to shipping on Lake Superior. A mile of white water marked the twenty-one foot descent from Lake Superior

¹ Sherman Hall to Aaron Hall, 22 August 1831, Sherman Hall Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

² Nute, *Lake Superior*, 113–116; White Oak Society, "Canoes,"

<http://www.whiteoak.org/learning/canoes.htm>; Canadian Canoe Museum, "Our Canoeing Heritage,"

<http://www.canoemuseum.net/visitingartisans/>; J. B. Mansfield, ed., *History of the Great Lakes*, vol. 1

(Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1899), chapter 23, "Development of Lake Vessels," transcription by Walter Lewis and Brendon Baillod for *Maritime History of the Great Lakes* website,

<http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c023>; Minnesota Historical Society, "Minnesota's Inland Shipwrecks: Vessel Types on Minnesota's Inland Waters,"

<http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/shipwrecks/mpdf/incraft.html>; Wisconsin Historical Society, "Dictionary of Wisconsin History," Mackinaw boat,

[http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=316&search_term=](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=316&search_term=Mackinaw+boat)

[Mackinaw+boat](#); Margaret Beattie Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783–1933*

(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 40–41; Minnesota Historical Society, "Lake Superior

Shipwrecks: Discovering the Past," <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/shipwrecks/past.html>;

Gordon Ramsey, "The Ulster Drontheim Boat and the Wooden Fishing Boats of the Great Lakes and the

Columbia River: A Tradition Continued," *J. McClelland Boatworks, Vancouver Island*,

<http://www.genoabay.net/DRONTHEIM.html>.

³ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 117–21, 161; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 21.

Shipping and Lighthouses

to Lake Huron. Cargo that was shipped between Lake Superior and the other Great Lakes had to be portaged around the rapids. Watercraft were either built on Lake Superior and stayed there or were portaged around the rapids as well. Some ships built on Lake Superior ran the rapids to Lake Huron, sometimes successfully but often to their destruction. In 1797, on the Canadian side of the Sault, the North West Company built a canal with a lock big enough to accommodate Mackinaw boats and Montreal canoes. The Americans destroyed this canal during the War of 1812. The state of Michigan began trying to build a canal at the Sault in 1839 but was repeatedly denied federal aid, despite successful canal building projects elsewhere on the Great Lakes. The Erie Canal connecting Albany on the Hudson River to Buffalo on Lake Erie was completed in 1825. The Welland Canal eliminating the portage around Niagara Falls was completed in 1829. But it was not until the discovery of copper and iron in the Upper Peninsula in the 1840s that Congress saw the need for a canal at Sault Ste. Marie. In 1852 Congress approved a bill authorizing a canal and locks at the Sault. The bill granted 750,000 acres of land, ceded by the Ojibwe in 1842, to the state of Michigan to help pay construction costs. The St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal Company began building the canal in 1853; it was completed on schedule in 1855. On June 18, 1855, the steamer *Illinois* was the first ship to pass through the canal.⁴

Before the opening of the Soo, as the canal was popularly known, the Lake Superior shore was sparsely settled. In 1850 La Pointe, with a population of 463, was the major settlement west of Sault Ste. Marie. The city of Marquette was not founded until 1849. In 1850 Houghton County, which encompassed most of the Keweenaw Peninsula at the time, had a population of 708. There were even fewer people on the north shore. The primary settlement was at Fort William, Ontario, which languished after the North West Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. But when Congress authorized a canal at the Sault a flurry of town founding took place. Superior, Wisconsin was the first. At the western end of Lake Superior, at the mouth of the St. Louis River, was what some called the finest natural harbor on the lake. Savvy investors envisioned a town at this site linked to St. Paul by railroad, making the town a key link between the Minnesota interior and the Great Lakes waterway. Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas and Minnesota politician Henry M. Rice partnered with other investors to stake claims at the Superior town site on the Wisconsin side of the harbor in 1853. A speculative land boom followed, but there was also real settlement and growth. Superior quickly began to function as a port. At first cargoes were transferred to different vessels at La Pointe, but within a few years ships were coming directly to Superior from other Great Lakes ports. In the meantime, the Ojibwe ceded the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior in 1854, and the land boom extended to the Minnesota side of the harbor. Oneota was incorporated as a town site in 1854, the first of several towns that would join together to become the city of Duluth. The Panic of 1857 followed by the Civil War temporarily halted the rapid growth of Superior, Duluth, and environs. People moved away and the population declined. But the 1860s saw the beginning of major harbor improvements, and by the time a railroad line was completed from St. Paul to Duluth in 1870, Duluth was a boom town once again. Construction of the Duluth Ship Canal in 1871 gave Duluth its own passage from Superior Bay to Lake Superior. Superior obtained its first direct rail line in

⁴ Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 21, 23, 26–31; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 118–22, 235–36.

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1883. Despite rivalry between the two cities, the twin ports complemented each other and together would become the leading port on Lake Superior by the turn of the century.⁵

The settlers who founded Ashland had similar motivations to those who founded Superior; in some cases they were directly inspired by Superior. Asaph Whittlesey was the brother of geologist Charles Whittlesey, who discovered iron in the Penokee-Gogebic Range. Following his brother's advice, Asaph established the settlement that became Ashland in July 1854 at the head of Chequamegon Bay, which both recognized as a likely port for shipping iron from the Penokee Range nearby. Martin Beaser, who arrived about a month later, explored the area around Superior before settling at Whittlesey's new town site. Shortly thereafter, a group of investors established a town they named Bay City about a mile to the east. They too were inspired by events at Superior. All of these early settlers envisioned a port city, connected by rail to major cities, which would prosper by shipping iron ore from the Penokee Range. But the Panic of 1857 halted growth of the two towns, and soon people began to leave. By the mid-1860s the towns were virtually abandoned.⁶

Meanwhile Henry M. Rice, one of the founders of Superior, organized the Bayfield Land Company and established the settlement of Bayfield in 1856. The natural harbor at Bayfield was better than that at Superior, and presumably Rice saw Bayfield as another good candidate for a thriving port city. A railroad to Bayfield was part of Rice's plan from the beginning. Bayfield grew faster and larger than Bay City and Ashland. Although Bayfield lost population following the Panic of 1857, the drop was not as drastic as at Ashland and Bay City. La Pointe's population also declined, in part because of the panic but also because people were moving to the new settlements in the region. By the early 1860s, with La Pointe declining and Ashland-Bay City nearly abandoned, Bayfield had become the leading port for the Chequamegon region. Then in 1871 the Wisconsin Central Railroad announced that its Chequamegon Bay terminal would be in Ashland, and once again the settlement became a boom town. In 1872 Ashland and Bay City joined together as the village of Ashland. The railroad was finally completed to Ashland in 1877. The *Ashland Weekly Press* reported a good shipping season in 1878, with 405 vessels, steam and sail, visiting the port. In 1883 the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad was completed to Bayfield, giving Bayfield its first direct rail connection. A branch line connected to Ashland. But Bayfield would not regain its place as the leading port on Chequamegon Bay. In 1884 and 1885 two more rail lines were completed to Ashland, and—most importantly—Ashland shipped its first iron ore in 1885. The iron mines of the Penokee-Gogebic Range at last established Ashland as a major port that for some years would rival Duluth-Superior.⁷

With the opening of the Sault canal, shipping on Lake Superior increased dramatically. In 1846 there were a dozen vessels on Lake Superior. In 1855 there were

⁵ Arthur W. Thurner, *Strangers and Sojourners: A History of Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 64; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 275–81, 285, 311; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 25, 33–43, 52; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 92–100.

⁶ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 112–16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 133–37, 151–61, 186–201; Ross, *La Pointe*, 120–131, 137, 143; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 261–62.

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193 passages through the canal by vessels carrying a total registered tonnage of 106,296. By 1870 the number of passages had increased to 1,828 and registered tonnage to 690,826. The decrease in shipping costs was equally dramatic: the cost of shipping a ton of iron ore in 1858 was 40 percent what it cost in 1855. The volume of traffic soon made the existing canal and two locks inadequate. Beginning in 1870 the canal was deepened and a third lock—the Weitzel Lock—was completed in 1881. The Canadian government began building a canal and lock on the north side of the Sault in 1888; it opened in 1895. In 1896 the U.S. completed the Poe Lock, which replaced the original locks. In that year there were 18,615 passages through the locks, Canadian and American, with registered tonnage of 17,249,418; actual freight tonnage was recorded as 16,239,121.⁸

The cargoes recorded at the Sault were grain, flour, iron ore, manufactured and pig iron, copper, silver ore and bullion, coal, lumber, building stone, salt, and unclassified freight. Iron and copper mining on the Upper Peninsula were the catalysts for building the Sault canal and were among the most important cargoes shipped on Lake Superior. However copper was shipped from the Keweenaw Peninsula eastward through the Sault, so it did not impact the Apostle Islands. Similarly, for three decades beginning in 1846 all of the region's iron was mined in the Marquette Range, and most ore was shipped from the port of Marquette. When mining began on the Menominee Range in 1877 ore was shipped from Escanaba on Lake Michigan. Not until 1884 was a successful iron mine opened on the Gogebic-Penokee Range. In 1884 the first 1,022 tons of iron ore from the Gogebic Range were shipped from Marquette. In 1885 the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railroad built an ore dock in Ashland, and 119,563 tons of Gogebic iron ore were shipped from Ashland that year. Two years later Ashland shipped 1,040,727 tons of iron ore, more than any other port on Lake Superior. In 1893 the *Ashland Daily Press* boasted "Iron is king, and Ashland is its capital."⁹ But by then Ashland's days as iron shipping capital of Lake Superior were numbered. Iron ore shipments from the Vermilion Range in Minnesota began in 1884, most going through Two Harbors. In 1892 the first iron ore was shipped from the Mesabi Range, the great range that would overshadow all the others. Most Mesabi iron ore was shipped through Superior and Duluth. In 1896 Duluth alone shipped 1,988,932 tons of iron ore, compared to Ashland's 1,566,336 tons. Two years later Duluth shipped 2,630,610 tons of iron ore, compared to 2,391,088 tons from Ashland. Ashland was no longer first on Lake Superior, but it was still shipping a large volume of iron ore. Ashland had three ore docks in 1898, and its harbor had been improved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Looking at the whole of Lake Superior, 11,706,980 tons of iron ore were shipped through the Sault in 1898, compared to 11,597 tons in 1856, the canal's first full season in operation.¹⁰

⁸ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 121–22, 136, 236; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c014a>.

⁹ "Ashland and its Ore Shipping," *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition, 1893*, reprinted in Marjorie F. Benton, ed., *The Golden Days of La Pointe, Bayfield, Ashland, Washburn* (Ashland: AAUW, 1972).

¹⁰ Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," and ch. 30, "Iron Ore and Iron Industries," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Burton H. Boyum, *The Saga of Iron Mining in Michigan's Upper Peninsula* (Marquette: Marquette Historical Society, 1977), 13, 19, 22, 25; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 61–69; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 151; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 200–201.

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Small quantities of grain and flour were shipped through the Sault in 1856, but grain did not become an important Lake Superior cargo until 1870 when the first rail line was completed to Duluth. This and subsequent railroads connected Duluth and Superior to the rich farmlands of Minnesota and the Dakota Territory where much of the nation's wheat was grown. The first wheat was shipped from Duluth in 1870, and the city's first grain elevator was built the same year. Grain shipments from Duluth grew from 101,378 tons in 1879 to nearly 700,000 tons in 1887. The first grain elevators in Superior were built in 1886. In 1891 Duluth and Superior combined handled more than one million tons of grain. Meanwhile on the north shore, the Canadian twin ports of Fort William and Port Arthur had emerged as a major point for grain shipment. The Canadian Pacific Railway connected the two ports to Canada's great wheat producing provinces in the west. The first grain was shipped from Fort William in 1881; in 1886 three million bushels of grain were shipped from the twin ports. Shipments from Fort William and Port Arthur did not pass near the Apostle Islands, but they contributed to the volume and importance of grain shipping on Lake Superior. In 1898, 62,339,996 bushels of wheat were shipped through the Sault, compared to 18,596,351 bushels ten years earlier. In addition to wheat, 26,078,384 bushels of other grains and 7,778,043 barrels of flour were shipped through the Sault in 1898.¹¹

Lumber was among the first cargoes shipped through the Sault canal in 1855. Shipments increased gradually until the late 1870s, when logging on the south shore of Lake Superior came into its heyday. Lumber shipments through the Sault grew from 44,539 million board feet in 1880 to 361,929 million board feet in 1890 to 895,485 million board feet in 1898. Ashland, its waterfront lined with sawmills, was the primary lumber port for the Chequamegon region in the 1880s and 1890s and one of the leading lumber ports on Lake Superior. But as timber was depleted and logging operations continued their relentless movement westward, Duluth-Superior took its place in the mid-1890s as the leading lumber port, not just for Lake Superior but for the entire Great Lakes. Not only did logging increase in the Duluth lumber district, the disposition of the lumber changed direction. Before 1890 most of the lumber logged in the Duluth district was shipped westward by rail, but with the depletion of forests in the lower Great Lakes, lumber was shipped through the Sault to meet the demands of Ohio and points east. J. B. Mansfield wrote in his 1899 *History of the Great Lakes*: "The handwriting is on the wall for Ashland, Wisconsin, as it was some time since for Escanaba and Ontonagon; but Duluth will be for years a large lumber center, for she has back of her yet immense resources in the forests of the Northwest."¹²

Coal was the fourth major cargo shipped on Lake Superior. But unlike iron ore, grain, and lumber, coal was shipped from the lower Great Lakes to Lake Superior. Coal

¹¹ Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," and ch. 28, "Grain Traffic," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 45–52; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 315–17.

¹² Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," and ch. 27, "Lumber Traffic," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 197–200, 261; "Ashland and the 'Soo' Canal," *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1891–92*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 73–80.

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shipping on Lake Superior was relatively small in scale before the 1880s. Coal shipments through the Sault canal exceeded 100,000 tons for the first time in 1875; in 1886 shipments exceeded 1,000,000 tons. In 1898, 3,776,450 tons of coal were shipped through the Sault. By the 1880s coal was the primary fuel used in American cities and industries. The vessels that carried grain and ore to the lower Great Lakes increased their profits by carrying coal on return trips, most of it from ports on Lake Erie.¹³

Two other commodities that did not rank as major cargoes for Lake Superior overall had great importance for the Chequamegon region: fish and sandstone. During the 1830s the American Fur Company made fish the first major cargo other than fur to be shipped from Lake Superior. Most of this fish was shipped by schooner from La Pointe to Detroit. When commercial fishing became an important Lake Superior industry in the late nineteenth century the Apostle Islands was one of the leading fisheries on the lake. Although Ashland was the main port for most cargoes shipped from the Chequamegon region, Bayfield was the leading port for shipping fish. Before the railroad was completed to Ashland in 1877, fish was salted, packed in barrels, and shipped by boat to ports on the other Great Lakes. Following the arrival of the railroads the amount of fresh or frozen fish that was shipped by rail grew steadily.

The first sandstone shipped on Lake Superior was quarried on Basswood Island and shipped by schooner to Milwaukee in 1870. Outcrops of the reddish brown sandstone that was so popular for building in the late nineteenth century occur along the south shore of Lake Superior from Duluth east to Munising. Chequamegon Bay, Keweenaw Bay, and Marquette emerged as the three main centers for sandstone quarrying. The shoreline location of the quarries made it possible to ship the stone to market before railroads reached the area. Once the railroads arrived, sandstone was shipped both by water and by rail. The height of sandstone quarrying was from the early 1880s to the early 1890s. This is reflected in statistics for building stone (i.e. sandstone) shipped through the Sault, which began at 2,917 tons in 1870, peaked at 47,973 tons in 1890, and declined to 4,670 tons by 1898. Sandstone quarrying on Lake Superior ended in the early 1900s.¹⁴

Although the first steamer appeared on Lake Superior in 1845, sailing ships dominated shipping on the lake until the 1870s. Ten out of the twelve vessels on Lake Superior in 1846 were sailing ships, specifically schooners. In 1864, the first year that the numbers of steamers and sailing vessels passing through the Sault canal were recorded, there were 1,045 passages by sailing vessels and 366 passages by steamers. In 1874 the number of steamers passing through the Sault surpassed the number of sailing vessels for the first time: 901 steamers and 833 sailing vessels. At mid-century the labor-

¹³ Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," and ch. 29, "Coal Traffic," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 57–61; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 141.

¹⁴ Kathleen Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries of the Apostle Islands: A Resource Management Plan," (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1983), 4–10, 87–103; Kathryn Bishop Eckert, *The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 18–19, 31, 61, 85–87; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c014a>.

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efficient schooner remained by far the most popular sailing ship on the Great Lakes, particularly for bulk cargoes such as grain, ore, lumber, and coal. Schooners became even more economical during their heyday in the 1860s, when they grew in length to 150 to 160 feet and in capacity to more than two hundred tons. In the early 1860s the consort system was introduced in Great Lakes shipping. In this mode of shipping, a tugboat or steam barge towed two or more barges. The first barges were old steamers or sailing ships that were converted to barges. By the early 1870s truncated “schooner barges” with short masts were built specifically to be towed as consorts. During the 1870s, with larger ships and more competition, shipping rates fell and individual schooners did not carry enough freight to be profitable. The consort system grew in popularity, especially for shipping lumber. Few fully rigged sailing ships were built on the Great Lakes after 1880. Most of the schooners that still sailed had either been cut down to use as barges or built new as schooner barges. By the 1890s even schooner barges were becoming obsolete in competition with bulk freighters, although at the turn of the century shipbuilder James Davidson of Bay City, Michigan built several giant schooner barges that were more than 300 feet long.¹⁵

The first steamboats on the Great Lakes were the side-wheelers *Ontario* and *Frontenac* on Lake Ontario in 1817. But steamboats were expensive, and only about two dozen were built on the Great Lakes before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. With the completion of the canal, rapid growth of the lucrative passenger traffic on the Great Lakes led to construction of more steamers, which were faster and more reliable than sailing ships. Steamers remained expensive, however—in 1837 the steamer *Cleveland* cost \$22,500 to build plus \$50,000 more for its machinery. By comparison, a large schooner at that time cost \$6,000 to \$10,000. Steamers were also more expensive to operate, requiring more fuel and larger crews than schooners required. Because of these costs, steamers were used to carry passengers and more valuable package freight rather than bulk freight. The design and machinery of side-wheel steamers left limited space for cargo, another disadvantage in relation to schooners. In addition, side-wheelers were so wide that they could not fit through the narrow Welland Canal. In 1841 the *Vandalia*, the first screw propeller steamer on the Great Lakes, was launched on Lake Ontario. Unlike the side-wheel steamers, the *Vandalia* and subsequent propellers fit easily through the Welland Canal. Propellers were also cheaper to build than paddle-wheel steamers, operated with smaller crews, and required less fuel. With freight rates in between those of side-wheel steamers and schooners, propellers began to compete with schooners for the bulk cargo trade.¹⁶

¹⁵ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 121, 125; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, “Commerce Through St. Mary’s Canals,” and ch. 23, “Development of Lake Vessels,”

<http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Minnesota Historical Society, “Minnesota’s Lake Superior Shipwrecks: History and Development of Great Lakes Water Craft,” adapted from the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Minnesota’s Lake Superior Shipwrecks, A.D. 1650–1945,” by Patrick Labadie, Brina J. Agranat and Scott Anfinson, <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/shipwrecks/mpdf/mpdf2.html>; David J. Cooper and John O. Jensen, *Davidson’s Goliaths: Underwater Archeological Investigations of the Steamer Frank O’Conner and the Schooner-Barge Pretoria* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1995), 11, 15, 26.

¹⁶ Minnesota Historical Society, “Great Lakes Water Craft”; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 23, “Development of Lake Vessels,” <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>.

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In 1845 the propeller *Independence*, 105 feet long with a capacity of 262 tons, became the first steamer to sail on Lake Superior. It took seven weeks to haul the *Independence* on rollers around the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie. The *Independence* stopped at La Pointe, where, according to one crew member, “we gave the natives a dreadful scare with the appearance of our craft, and the noise of our steam whistle.”¹⁷ The *Independence* continued to operate on Lake Superior until her boiler exploded at Sault Ste. Marie in November 1853. In addition to the *Independence*, at least half a dozen more steamers were portaged around the Sault rapids to Lake Superior before the canal opened in 1855. The first vessel through the locks when the canal opened in June 1855 was the steamer *Illinois*. Steamer traffic on Lake Superior grew more rapidly after the opening of the Sault canal, although the larger side-wheel steamers could not fit through the canal. This first generation of steamers burned wood for fuel. Fueling stations at intervals along steamer routes sold wood by the cord—a stack measuring four by four by eight feet. The Apostle Islands were a logical stop on the route to Duluth and Superior, and wood yards supplied with cords of wood—or cordwood—were established on Oak and Basswood islands. Benjamin Armstrong was selling cordwood on Oak Island in the late 1850s. By 1870 Chapman and Knight’s Oak Island wood yard had a four hundred foot dock, and loggers worked through the winter cutting wood for the shipping season. Coal began to replace wood for steamboat fuel after the Civil War.¹⁸

When shipbuilding resumed on the Great Lakes following the depression of the late 1850s, propeller steamers had superseded side-wheel steamers. Specialized types of propellers became common beginning with tugboats, designed to tow other ships. Package freighters, built without passenger cabins in order to hold more cargo, became popular after 1870 and reached their height about 1890. Railroad companies owned most of the package freight lines, and on Lake Superior they ran primarily to Duluth. The introduction of the consort system was one of the most important developments in Great Lakes shipping, and the steam barge was developed in the mid-1860s specifically for use in this system. The steam barge was a small propeller steamer, usually about 135 feet long, designed to tow at least two barges, usually three or four. Used primarily to ship lumber, steam barges also carried their own cargo—three hundred thousand board feet of lumber on the average. Steam barges were also known as lumber hookers or “rabbits,” and nearly six hundred of them were built on the Great Lakes between 1870 and 1900. Additional propellers were converted to steam barges, which were numerous on Lake Superior at the height of lumbering in the late nineteenth century.¹⁹

¹⁷ Quoted in Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 15, “Early Navigation on Lake Superior,” <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c015>.

¹⁸ Minnesota Historical Society, “Great Lakes Water Craft”; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 15, “Early Navigation on Lake Superior,” and ch. 23, “Development of Lake Vessels,” <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp>; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 122, 125; Mannikko, “Logging and Lumbering,” 5; Kathleen Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: A Resource Management Plan,” (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1984), 35–37.

¹⁹ Minnesota Historical Society, “Great Lakes Water Craft”; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 82–83, 86–93.

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The popular steam barges were sometimes used to ship grain or iron ore, but they were not well suited for these cargoes as they carried much of their cargo on deck, whereas ore and grain needed to be carried below and kept dry. Captain Elihu M. Peck of Cleveland designed a variant of the steam barge suitable for grain and ore, with a double deck to keep cargo dry and larger deck hatches for easier loading and unloading. Peck's *Robert J. Hackett*, launched in 1869, was the first bulk freighter. Built of oak reinforced with iron straps, the *Hackett* was 210 feet long and had a capacity of twelve hundred tons. The propeller *Merchant*, launched at Buffalo in 1862, was the first iron-hulled commercial steamer built on the Great Lakes, but most Great Lakes steamers continued to be built of wood in the 1860s. The 287 foot *Onoko*, launched in 1882, was the first bulk freighter built of iron and for ten years carried the largest cargoes on the Great Lakes. The *Spokane*, launched in 1886, was the first Great Lakes freighter built of steel, which soon after became the norm in Great Lakes shipbuilding. Although steel ships cost more to build, they were stronger, lasted longer, and were easier to maintain and repair than oak. Steel construction allowed freighters to grow to sizes previously unimaginable, and with larger sizes came greater profits. By the end of the century there were freighters 500 feet long with capacities exceeding six thousand tons. In addition, each freighter was designed to tow at least one consort barge of similar size and capacity.²⁰

The whaleback steamer was an innovative steel ship built to carry bulk cargo. Unlike a conventional ship, the whaleback was round in cross section and pointed at both ends. Conceived by Captain Alexander McDougall of Duluth, the whaleback steamer was strong, stable, efficient, and inexpensive to build. The first whaleback, a barge, was greeted with skepticism when McDougall launched it in 1888. But during the ten years that followed more than forty whalebacks were built, most of them in Duluth and Superior, including barges, freight steamers, one passenger steamer, and one tugboat. The last whaleback was built in 1898. One reason for ending whaleback construction was that the small hatches required on whalebacks could not accommodate new ore unloading machinery introduced about that time. But some of the sturdy whalebacks were still in service in the 1950s.²¹

Lake Superior shipping continued to grow in the twentieth century. On one day in 1903 the Devils Island lighthouse keeper counted 120 vessels in sight, and he did not think that number unusual. In 1910 there were 20,899 passages through the Sault canal compared to 18,615 passages in 1896. The number of passages through the Sault peaked at 25,407 in 1916 and then declined, but the number of tons that were shipped through increased. The Sault canal was enlarged with construction of a second channel, so that upbound and downbound vessels did not have to wait for opposing traffic to pass through. The Davis Lock opened on the new north channel in 1914 and the Sabin Lock in 1919. On the south channel the MacArthur Lock, built to speed wartime shipments of iron ore, was completed in 1943, replacing the Weitzel Lock. In 1946, 77,766, 000 tons

²⁰ Minnesota Historical Society, "Great Lakes Water Craft"; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 55; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 23, "Development of Lake Vessels," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c023>.

²¹ Minnesota Historical Society, "Great Lakes Water Craft"; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 112–18.

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of freight were shipped on Lake Superior compared to 16,239,121 tons fifty years earlier. By 1950 freight shipments had grown to 92,595,000 tons and they continued to grow, to 98,744,000 tons in 1955.²²

Duluth-Superior was already established as the leading port on Lake Superior by 1900. With harbor improvements completed in the early 1900s and a wealth of iron ore coming in from the Mesabi Range, shipments through Duluth-Superior grew rapidly, from ten million tons of freight in 1900 to more than twenty-nine million tons in 1906 to more than fifty-two million tons in 1916. By the end of World War I, Duluth-Superior was not only the leading port on the Great Lakes, it followed only Philadelphia and New York in the United States. By the 1930s Duluth-Superior had surpassed Philadelphia and was second only to New York. Although no other Great Lakes port compared to Duluth-Superior in shipping volume, the port of Ashland prospered in the early twentieth century. The value of Ashland's marine commerce grew from roughly \$18,400,000 in 1915 to \$46,755,107 in 1920. Ashland was known for having one of the finest harbors on the Great Lakes. Guy Burnham—Ashland newspaperman, historian, port customs collector, and booster—pointed out that even the largest Great Lakes vessels needed no tug to dock at Ashland, whereas tugs were a necessity at Duluth-Superior. During the 1920s about one thousand vessels per year touched at the port of Ashland, which had a municipal dock, four ore docks, two coal docks, and several lumber docks. In 1925, 8,215,000 tons of freight were shipped through the port of Ashland.²³

Iron was by far the most important cargo shipped on Lake Superior. America's industrial might was built on iron and steel, and throughout the twentieth century the Lake Superior region was the leading producer of iron ore in the country. In 1906 iron ore constituted three-fourths of more than forty-one million registered tons of cargo shipped through the Sault. In 1942, the peak of World War II iron production, slightly more than ninety-two million tons of iron ore were shipped from the Lake Superior iron ranges, most of it shipped on Lake Superior. Two-thirds of the ore shipped during this record-breaking year was shipped through Duluth-Superior. During the late 1940s, following the war's end, an average of fifty million tons of iron ore per year were shipped from the Lake Superior iron ranges. At that time Ashland ranked third among iron ore shipping ports on the Great Lakes, following Duluth-Superior and Two Harbors, Minnesota. Ashland was the primary port for ore from the Penokee-Gogebic Range. The city's shipping business closely followed the fortunes of mining on the Penokee-Gogebic Range, which reached peak production in 1920.²⁴

Grain continued to be one of the most important cargoes shipped on Lake Superior. During the 1920s and 1930s the twin ports of Fort William-Port Arthur shipped most of the grain grown in the Canadian prairie provinces. In the U.S., Duluth-Superior was second to Chicago in shipping grain from America's breadbasket on the

²² Ross, *La Pointe*, 145; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 122, 136; Alanen, "Historical Information," table 2.

²³ Alanen, "Historical Information," 15; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 104–106, 123, 135–36; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 137, 261; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 229–40;

²⁴ Alanen, "Historical Information," 18–19; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 107, 162–63, 175; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 151–52, 260–61; Boyum, *Saga of Iron Mining*, 35.

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plains. By 1939 Fort William-Port Arthur had thirty-two grain elevators with a storage capacity exceeding ninety-two million bushels. About the same time, Duluth-Superior had twenty-four grain elevators with a capacity of nearly fifty thousand bushels. Like iron, grain production was part of the World War II defense effort. In 1944 the twin ports of Duluth-Superior shipped nearly 3.5 million tons of grain—a record for the two cities. Coal maintained its place as the usual return cargo in the vessels that transported iron ore and grain from Lake Superior to the lower lakes. In 1935, 8,225,056 tons of coal were shipped from ports on Lake Erie to ports on Lake Superior. The largest proportion of this coal—6,667,167 tons—went to Duluth-Superior. Fort William-Port Arthur followed, receiving 598,832 tons, and Ashland was third with 351,762 tons. After World War II, however, the U.S. began to change from coal to oil as its primary energy source, and coal shipping on Lake Superior began to decline. By 1958 coal shipments to Duluth-Superior were one-third of the amount shipped in 1946.²⁵

When the twentieth century opened, Duluth-Superior was the leading Great Lakes port for lumber shipping. Lumber shipments from Duluth reached their peak at roughly 462,000,000 board feet in 1899. But as the white pine forests of northern Minnesota were depleted, lumber shipments dropped precipitously. In 1906, 446,950,000 board feet of lumber were shipped from Duluth. Just two years later shipments had dropped to 218,886,633 board feet, of which 182,886,663 feet were shipped by boat and the remainder by rail. By 1919 lumber shipments from Duluth had dropped below 100,000,000 board feet, and in 1923 they amounted only to 12,500,000 board feet. In Ashland, the John Schroeder Lumber Company's hardwood logging activities in the Apostle Islands and elsewhere in the Lake Superior region kept lumber shipments coming from Schroeder's sawmill for more than two decades after the pine in the area was depleted. Schroeder ended its Apostle Islands logging in the early 1930s and closed its Ashland sawmill in 1939. While pine logging was declining in Minnesota, spruce logging was gaining momentum along the north shore. Spruce was logged for pulpwood to make paper. Tugboats towed rafts of pulpwood across Lake Superior to pulp and paper mills in Ontario, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Ashland received its first pulpwood raft in 1910. The huge pulpwood rafts could not fit through the narrow entries into the Duluth and Superior harbors, but they entered Ashland's harbor without any problem.²⁶

The bulk freighter dominated Lake Superior shipping in the twentieth century. With improvements in design and technology, freighters continued to grow larger. The first 600 foot freighter was built in 1906. By the early 1940s this was the average length for bulk freighters, which had an average carrying capacity of eleven thousand tons. By 1958 freighters reached 730 feet in length. In 1908 a self-unloading freighter was introduced for use at ports that did not have automatic unloading machinery. By 1936 there were sixty-five self-unloading freighters on the Great Lakes.²⁷

²⁵ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 138–41, 315–18; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 164, 175–76.

²⁶ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 137, 200–201, 203, 261, 318; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 80–81; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 123–34; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 230; Mary T. Bell, *Cutting Across Time: Logging, Rafting and Milling the Forests of Lake Superior* (Schroeder, MN: Schroeder Area Historical Society, 1999), 75.

²⁷ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 133–35; Minnesota Historical Society, "Great Lakes Water Craft."

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An engineering monument, the St. Lawrence Seaway opened on April 25, 1959, making it possible for ocean-going vessels to sail the Great Lakes. Eight days later the first overseas vessels arrived in Duluth. Before the seaway opened, much of the grain shipped on Lake Superior had been exported overseas. With the opening of the seaway, Fort William-Port Arthur and Duluth-Superior became international ports. In Duluth and Superior new grain firms opened and old ones expanded. In 1959 grain shipments from Duluth-Superior grew to 3.8 million tons, 1 million more than in 1958. Grain shipments continued to increase, to 4.36 million tons in 1960 and up to 5.7 million tons in 1966. In that year nearly two-thirds of the grain shipped from the twin ports went overseas and to Canadian terminals on the St. Lawrence River. The St. Lawrence Seaway and other navigation improvements led to even larger freighters on the Great Lakes. Between 1958 and 1964 the channels connecting the lakes were deepened to the twenty-seven foot depth of the seaway. In 1969 a new Poe Lock, twelve hundred feet long, opened at Sault Ste. Marie. The new lock made it possible for thousand foot freighters to sail the Great Lakes; the first was launched in 1972.²⁸

Despite the opening of the seaway, shipping on Lake Superior during the 1960s declined from the record highs of the 1950s. In 1965, 73,878,000 tons of freight were shipped on the lake. Shipping grew to 76,153,000 freight tons in 1970—still well under the tonnage shipped during the 1950s. Although grain shipments grew during the 1960s, iron ore shipments declined as many Lake Superior iron mines closed, especially in Michigan. The last iron mine on the Penokee-Gogebic Range closed in 1966 and along with it the Ashland ore docks. After that, Ashland's harbor operated only as a receiving port for coal and limestone. Where iron mines remained open, mostly in Minnesota, there was a shift in the type of ore that was mined. As high grade iron ore was depleted, mining companies developed a way to concentrate low grade taconite ore into pellets. The first pellets were shipped in 1956, but from Minnesota's north shore rather than from Duluth or Superior. Taconite pellets required new equipment for handling and shipping, and the mining companies built those facilities on the north shore, closer to the mines. This did not affect overall iron ore shipments on Lake Superior, but it did affect shipments from Duluth-Superior. In 1965 the first ore docks in Duluth were converted to handle taconite pellets, and by 1969 pellet shipments from Duluth-Superior exceeded those from the north shore facilities. Duluth-Superior retained its position as the number two port in the U.S., second to New York.²⁹

Light Stations

F. Ross Holland, leading historian of American lighthouses, called these sentinels of the Apostle Islands “the largest and finest single collection of lighthouses in the

²⁸ Harlan Hatcher and Erich A. Walter, *A Pictorial History of the Great Lakes* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1963), 154, 315, 325; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 189–91, 198, , 203–206, 210, 217.

²⁹ Alanen, “Historical Information,” 15, 18–19, table 2; Boyum, *Saga of Iron Mining*, 35–36; David J. Cooper, ed., *By Fire, Storm, and Ice: Underwater Archeological Investigations in the Apostle Islands* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1991), 29; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 206–10; Hatcher and Walter, *Pictorial History*, 157.

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country.”³⁰ The six light stations of the Apostle Islands contain nine standing lights among them, but this impressive number is not the only reason for their significance. With the exception of the first La Pointe lighthouse, which is in ruins, all of the permanent lights built in the Apostle Islands are extant, documenting 150 years of lighthouse history. Moreover, the light stations of the Apostle Islands contain not only towers and keepers’ dwellings as is often the case, but also numerous other buildings and structures that tell a more complete story of navigational aids and shipping on Lake Superior. These include fog signal buildings, oil houses, privies, sheds, boathouses, docks, tramways, stairways, sidewalks, and other structures and landscape features. On Raspberry Island the gardens created by the keepers’ families have been restored.

Congress authorized construction of the first lighthouse in the Apostle Islands in 1852, the same year that they authorized construction of a canal and locks at Sault Ste. Marie. The lighthouse was to be built at La Pointe, whose inhabitants had been requesting a lighthouse to guide ships into their harbor. At that time there were more than seventy U.S. lighthouses on the Great Lakes, including five on Lake Superior. The first two lighthouses on Lake Superior, at Whitefish Point and Copper Harbor, were placed in service in 1849. These were followed during the next three years by lighthouses at Manitou Island,³¹ Eagle Harbor, and Ontonagon. All of these lighthouses were placed to guide ships to the copper mines on the Keweenaw Peninsula. The Marquette lighthouse, built in 1853, served the iron mines of the Marquette Range. Thus in 1852 when the Lighthouse Board recommended building eleven lighthouses on the upper Great Lakes including six on Lake Superior, this represented a substantial increase in navigational aids for Lake Superior. The La Pointe lighthouse was the only one of the proposed Lake Superior lighthouses that was not located so as to aid shipping from the copper and iron mines.³²

The building campaign for the upper Great Lakes was one of a number of initiatives undertaken by the newly-created Lighthouse Board in order to upgrade the U.S. lighthouse system. The first American lighthouses were built by colonial and local governments beginning in 1716 with a lighthouse at Boston harbor. By act of Congress in 1789 the federal government took ownership of and responsibility for all U.S. lighthouses and other aids to navigation, and the Lighthouse Establishment was placed under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department. In 1820 the fifth auditor of the treasury, Stephen Pleasonton, was given supervision of the Lighthouse Establishment, which by that time had grown to fifty-five lighthouses including two on the Great Lakes. Pleasonton was a bureaucrat who was more concerned with economy than quality, and he had many responsibilities in addition to the Lighthouse Establishment. Pleasonton had

³⁰ F. Ross Holland Jr., *Great American Lighthouses* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), 256.

³¹ This is not the Manitou Island in the Apostle Islands; rather it is located off of Keweenaw Point at the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

³² Nancy Farm Mannikko and Robert W. Mackreth, “Apostle Islands Light Stations,” National Historic Landmark Nomination—Draft (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, n.d.), 21–22; Charles K. Hyde, *The Northern Lights: Lighthouses of the Upper Great Lakes* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 16, 161, 175–77; Peter A. Rathbun, “Special History Study: Light Stations of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore—Draft” (Springfield, IL and Hollandale, WI: Rathbun Associates for the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 1988), 44–45.

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no maritime or engineering experience, and for technical matters he relied to a great extent on the advice of Winslow Lewis, who manufactured lighting apparatus for lighthouses. Pleasonton favored Lewis for government contracts, and Lewis had a vested interest in using his own lamps and reflectors rather than the far superior Fresnel lens perfected in France in 1822. Complaints about U.S. lighthouses and especially about the lights multiplied, and in 1838 Congress sent Commodore Matthew Perry to Europe to buy two Fresnel lenses. After they were installed in twin light towers at Navesink, New Jersey, even Pleasonton had to admit that they were superior. But he made no move to order more of the lenses, and by 1851 only two additional Fresnel lenses were in use in U.S. lighthouses, both authorized directly by Congress. Also in 1838, Congress assigned naval officers to inspect all U.S. light stations. Their reports showed that there were serious defects in roughly 40 percent of the lights. Congress undertook some remedial actions such as additional inspections but did not undertake the comprehensive reforms that were needed. Both the number of complaints and the number of lighthouses continued to grow. There were more than three hundred U.S. lighthouses in 1851 when Congress finally initiated a comprehensive investigation of the facilities and operations of the Lighthouse Establishment. The investigating board issued a 760 page report detailing all that was wrong with the U.S. system of navigational aids and the way they were managed. Their recommendations included a complete reorganization of the Lighthouse Establishment under the aegis of a nine member Lighthouse Board and the use of Fresnel lenses in all new lighthouses. Congress accepted the investigating board's recommendations and appointed a Lighthouse Board in 1852.³³

The Lighthouse Board transformed the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment from an inferior system of navigational aids into the largest and most advanced system in the world. They divided the country into twelve administrative districts with two of the districts encompassing the Great Lakes. Each district was supervised by an inspector who was either an army or navy officer. Within a few years the responsibilities of district administration proved too much for one man, and both an inspector—a naval officer—and an engineer—an army officer—were appointed for each district. The engineers were responsible for construction and maintenance, and they developed standardized designs for lighthouses and other structures, saving money on design that could be better used elsewhere. Supplies were distributed from a central depot on Staten Island to depots in each of the districts and from there to the light stations. The depot for the eleventh district, which included Lake Superior, was in Detroit. In 1857 the Lighthouse Board began operating a fleet of lighthouse tenders—first schooners and later steamers—to service and supply its Great Lakes lighthouses. The Lighthouse Board administered the Lighthouse Service, as it came to be called, until 1910 when Congress replaced the board with the Bureau of Lighthouses, headed by one man. By then the U.S. Lighthouse Service had nearly fourteen hundred major lights, and administration by a board of nine men was no longer efficient. In addition, personnel under the Bureau of Lighthouses

³³ Francis Ross Holland Jr., *America's Lighthouses: Their Illustrated History Since 1716* (Brattleboro: Stephen Greene Press, 1972), 8–35; George Weiss, *The Lighthouse Service: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1926), 1–12; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 12, 15–19.

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were almost all civilian, eliminating the military character of the Lighthouse Service and the division of authority within each district between naval and army officers.³⁴

As initially proposed in 1852, the La Pointe light was to be at La Pointe Harbor on Madeline Island. However when the district inspector, Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, inspected the site, he observed that a light at the harbor entrance would be visible only after a ship had passed through the South Channel, rounded Grant's Point, and was directly opposite the harbor. In other words, by the time the crew could see the light they would no longer need it. Sitgreaves recommended that the light be placed instead across the South Channel on Long Island, where it would be visible to ships as they approached the channel from the lake. The Lighthouse Board accepted this recommendation and established a 152-acre lighthouse reservation on Long Island. The light continued to be known as the La Pointe light for its original location. In 1854 the contract to build the La Pointe lighthouse and ten others on the upper Great Lakes was awarded to the Milwaukee firm of Sweet, Ransom, and Shinn. Detailed specifications called for a stone lighthouse with a tower sixty-five feet tall and walls four feet thick at the base and two feet thick at the top. The cost was forty-five hundred dollars. But when the construction foreman arrived at La Pointe in 1856 to begin work, Abraham Smolk, representing the Lighthouse Board in the Lake Superior region, instructed him to build the lighthouse not on Long Island but on Passage (Michigan) Island. The contractors (now Sweet, Ransom, and Smith) protested, but they followed Smolk's instructions and built the lighthouse on the southwestern end of Michigan Island. Whereas the Long Island site was low lying and close to the village of La Pointe, the Michigan Island site was atop eighty foot clay bluffs and located seventeen miles from La Pointe, where materials and supplies were obtained. When completed in October, the cost came to more than twelve thousand dollars, nearly three times the budgeted amount. The lighthouse was placed in service in June 1857.³⁵

Soon after the Michigan Island light began operation, Smolk's superiors discovered that the lighthouse had not been built on Long Island. The district engineer rejected the Michigan Island lighthouse, stating that the contractors had failed to comply with the terms of the contract. The Lighthouse Board ordered the contractors to build a lighthouse on Long Island at their own expense. The contractors complied, but instead of a stone lighthouse with an attached tower they built a relatively inexpensive, one and one-half story wood frame keeper's dwelling with a short square tower on the roof, much like a schoolhouse in appearance. The La Pointe lighthouse on Long Island was placed in service in 1858, and despite its modest appearance served for almost forty years. On Michigan Island, the lighthouse was taken out of service and its lens removed. Sweet, Ransom, and Smith petitioned the government for compensation for the cost overruns

³⁴ Holland, *America's Lighthouses*, 36–37; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 23, 28–32, 39–41; Weiss, *The Lighthouse Service*, 12–21.

³⁵ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 22–23; Judith B. Williams, "The Cultural History of Long Island, Wisconsin" (report for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1995), 18–22; Bob Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," *Lake Superior Magazine* (August–September 2002): 18; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 44–47.

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that they incurred in the Apostle Islands and elsewhere as a result of changes in plans made by government agents, but it appears that their appeals were fruitless.³⁶

Much had changed on western Lake Superior during the interval between the authorization of the La Pointe lighthouse in 1852 and its activation in 1858. With new settlements at Superior, Duluth, Ashland, and Bayfield, there was an increase in traffic on the western end of the lake. Ships traveling from Duluth or Superior to Bayfield approached the Apostle Islands from the west and passed through the West Channel between the Bayfield Peninsula and the inner Apostle Islands. The fueling station on Oak Island was another reason for steamboats to travel this route. Ships' captains and interested businessmen, Henry Rice prominent among them, advocated for a light to guide ships into the West Channel. In 1859 President Buchanan established a lighthouse reservation encompassing all 296 acres of Raspberry Island, and Congress appropriated six thousand dollars to build a lighthouse on the island's southern end. The Raspberry Island lighthouse was completed in 1862: a two story wood frame keeper's dwelling with a four story square light tower in the center of the building, rising above the roof. The lighthouse was not placed in service until July 1863 due to a delay in shipping the lens. By then Bayfield had surpassed La Pointe to become the leading port in the Chequamegon region, while Ashland was nearly abandoned. More ships were coming into the Apostle Islands between Michigan and Madeline islands and approaching Bayfield via the North Channel west of Madeline Island. To assist these ships, in 1867 the Lighthouse Board asked for funds to reestablish the Michigan Island light, and in 1868 Congress appropriated six thousand dollars for this purpose. During the eleven years since its abandonment the Michigan Island lighthouse had been stripped and neglected—the district engineer reported that hardly anything remained of the structure but the bare walls. But the engineer devised plans to renovate the lighthouse for the amount appropriated, and in September 1869 it was again placed in service.³⁷

Meanwhile, patterns of settlement and shipping on western Lake Superior continued to evolve. Ships traveling to and from Duluth and Superior increasingly passed north of the Apostle Islands without stopping, and demand grew for lights to guide ships around rather than through the islands. In 1868 the Wisconsin legislature petitioned the Lighthouse Board for a lighthouse on Outer Island, noting “this island is the Easternmost of a dangerous group of islands lying off a point right on the course of vessels bound in and out of the important and much frequented harbor of Superior.”³⁸ However, at that time the inspector for the district did not think that the harbor of Superior was all that much frequented, and he recommended against establishing a lighthouse on Outer Island until “the channels of commerce are established and the

³⁶ Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 23–24; Williams, “Long Island,” 22–25; Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 18.

³⁷ Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 24; Quinn Evans Architects, “Historic Structure Report: Raspberry Island Lighthouse,” (Ann Arbor, MI: Quinn Evans Architects, 2000), 9–13; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 48–49, 51; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse, 1867–1869*, transcribed by Terry Pepper, 2001, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; David L. Snyder, “A Compendium of Written Communication of the Light House Board for the Twelve Light Stations of the Midwest Region, National Park Service, 1839–1881” (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1992), 70, 72–74.

³⁸ Snyder, “Compendium,” 69.

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country better developed.”³⁹ This did not take long—in 1870 a railroad line was completed from St. Paul to Duluth and the twin ports were on their way to becoming the leading port on the Great Lakes. In 1871 the new district engineer, Major Orlando M. Poe, recommended establishing lighthouse reservations on Gull, Outer, Sand, and Devils islands in recognition of the rapidly growing traffic to Duluth. He placed priority on a lighthouse on Outer Island, and in 1873 Congress appropriated forty thousand dollars for that purpose. Construction began in 1873, but in June 1874 Major Godfrey Weitzel, who succeeded Poe as district engineer, discovered that the foundations for the structure had been laid in the wrong location.⁴⁰ Weitzel ordered the work torn out and begun again in the correct location. To complicate things further, James Chapman and John Knight instigated a petition to have the lighthouse moved off the reservation entirely, to land that they owned on the northeastern tip of Outer Island. Chapman and Knight had purchased this land in 1869, apparently anticipating selling it to the government for a lighthouse reservation. When the government purchased land on the northwestern portion of the island for the reservation, Chapman and Knight claimed that a lighthouse in that area would be inadequate. Their petition was denied. When finally completed and lit in October 1874, the Outer Island lighthouse was a commanding structure with a tower ninety feet tall and a more powerful light than those in the other Apostle Islands lighthouses. The conical brick tower, painted white, was one of a group of light towers known as Poe towers because they were built during Orlando Poe’s tenure with the Lighthouse Board. During this time the Lighthouse Board paid more attention to aesthetics than they had earlier. The Italianate style influence on Outer Island and other Poe towers is evident in the hooded, arched windows on the tower and curved brackets below the lantern. The two and one-half story brick keeper’s dwelling has a clipped gable roof and is connected to the tower by a short passageway. The Outer Island light station included the first fog signal in the Apostle Islands.⁴¹

In 1871, when Poe recommended a lighthouse on Outer Island to mark the eastern edge of the Apostle Islands, he also recommended a lighthouse on Sand Island to mark the western edge of the islands. The Lighthouse Board duly asked Congress for an appropriation of eighteen thousand dollars for a lighthouse on Sand Island, repeating its request for the next three years. In 1877 the board renewed its request, explaining that “in coming from Duluth the Raspberry Island light is not visible until abreast of Sand Island, and there being no coast-light in this distance of 80 miles, causes much distress and danger to the increasing commerce of the west end of Lake Superior.”⁴² Congress finally appropriated the funds, and construction of the lighthouse began in June 1881. The one and one-half story keeper’s dwelling with tower attached at the corner was built of sandstone quarried on the island. As on Outer Island there was attention to aesthetics, but on Sand Island the stylistic influence was Gothic Revival, seen in the steeply pitched roof and wooden trim on the house and in the buttresses on the tower. This distinctive

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁰ Two of the locks at Sault Ste. Marie were named after Poe and Weitzel in recognition of their long and distinguished service to the Lighthouse Board and in building the Sault locks and canal.

⁴¹ Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 11–12, 24–25; Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 20, 22; Snyder, “Compendium,” 12–14, 111, 116–22, 141–67; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1871–1875; Hyde, *Northern Lights*.

⁴² *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1877.

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design was used for a number of lighthouses on the upper Great Lakes from the 1860s to 1880s. Work proceeded quickly, and the tower was placed in service in September 1881.⁴³

Although Poe had recommended in 1871 that a lighthouse reservation be established on Devils Island, no action was taken until 1889 when Congress appropriated \$15,000 to build a light station on the island, followed in 1890 by an additional appropriation of \$5,500 for a fog signal. These appropriations, however, were insufficient to build an adequate light station on the strategically located and remote Devils Island. The Lighthouse Board asked for an additional \$22,000 and in the meantime erected a temporary wooden skeleton tower housing a smaller lens. This light was activated in September 1891. By 1892 the Devils Island light station included a two story brick keeper's dwelling, oil house, fog signal building, boathouse, dock, and pump house. But there was another problem in addition to the lack of funds—the government had never established a lighthouse reservation on the island, and it had to condemn the property in order to gain title. In 1894 the board reported that the condemnation was complete and the government owned Devils Island. In 1895 Congress appropriated the additional \$22,000 and plans were made for a permanent tower. By then many lighthouse towers were strictly functional structures of iron and steel: the Devils Island tower is a cast iron cylinder eighty-two feet tall. The tower was constructed off site and shipped in sections to the island, where it was erected in 1898. Then another delay ensued while waiting for a lens, which arrived at last in 1901. The permanent tower and light were placed in service that year (figure 7).⁴⁴

Changing traffic patterns on the lake led to construction of two new light towers on Long Island in 1897. This was a noteworthy change from the status of the La Pointe lighthouse in the early 1870s, when there was so little traffic through the South Channel that the inspector for the district recommended taking the light out of service. In his annual report for 1871 the inspector wrote: “The relighting of Michigan Island renders the maintenance of La Point [*sic*] Light House unnecessary. Its discontinuance is recommended. The Michigan Island Passage is shorter, equally safe, furnishes a lee sooner, and is preferred by navigation.”⁴⁵ At that time most ships going through the Apostle Islands were going to Bayfield. But with the completion of three railroad lines to Ashland and the opening of the Gogebic Iron Range by the mid-1880s, the volume of shipping traffic to Ashland demanded improved navigational aids on Long Island. The 1858 La Pointe light was not in the optimal location to be seen either by ships on the lake or by ships in Chequamegon Bay. Per the Lighthouse Board's report: “The present light is not clear enough to the inner point to serve as a good guide to clear it, and it is too far from the course of vessels outside to be of the best advantage.”⁴⁶ The board recommended replacing the 1858 lighthouse with a new tower near the fog signal

⁴³ Snyder, “Compendium,” 16–17, 121–22, 237–38, 245–46, 250, 257–64; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1871–1877, 1881; Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 22; Hyde, *Northern Lights*.

⁴⁴ *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1891–1904; Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 25; Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 18; Bob Mackreth, “Apostle Islands Lighthouse Chronology” (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2002); Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 23.

⁴⁵ Snyder, “Compendium,” 124.

⁴⁶ *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1890.

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Figure 7. Devils Island light station, temporary tower in front, permanent tower in rear. Ca. 1903. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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building built in 1891, about three-fourths of a mile east of the lighthouse, and adding a tower at the end of Chequamegon Point, to the west of the lighthouse. In 1895 Congress appropriated ten thousand dollars for this purpose. The government purchased land at Chequamegon Point from fisherman Joseph LeBel, and two metal towers had been partially erected by October 1896 when work was halted for lack of funds. Congress appropriated an additional fifteen hundred dollars in June 1897, and both lights were lit on October 11 of that year. The new La Pointe light tower, a cast iron cylinder within an iron and steel skeletal framework, was manufactured by Chamblin S. Scott of Richmond, Virginia. It stands sixty-seven feet tall, compared to the thirty-five foot height of the 1858 light tower. The Chequamegon Point light is smaller, standing forty-two feet high—a pyramidal skeletal tower of iron and steel manufactured by the Fulton Iron and Engine Works in Detroit.⁴⁷ The tower and lantern were removed from the original lighthouse, the light moved to the Chequamegon Point tower, and the building remodeled as a duplex dwelling for the keeper and assistants.⁴⁸

The most important part of a lighthouse was, of course, the light. In 1852 most U.S. lighthouses used an Argand lamp and reflector system developed and manufactured by a former ship captain named Winslow Lewis. Lewis's lighting system was better than the spider lamp system that it replaced, but it could not compare to the Fresnel lens perfected in 1822 by French physicist Augustin Fresnel. The Fresnel lens consists of a series of glass prisms that magnify and refract the light to produce a bright, concentrated beam. European countries quickly adopted the Fresnel lens, but Lewis's friendship with the fifth auditor mostly blocked their use in the U.S. This changed with the establishment of the Lighthouse Board in 1852, and Apostle Islands lighthouses benefited from the board's commitment to converting the U.S. lighthouse system to the Fresnel lens. The lenses are ranked in size from the smallest sixth order lens to the largest first order lens. The lenses used in Apostle Islands lighthouses ranged in size from a fifth order lens in the Raspberry Island light to third order lenses at Outer and Devils islands. The largest lens used on the Great Lakes was a second order lens, and there were only five of those. In 1892, 23 out of 219 lights on the Great Lakes used third order lenses, indicating that the Outer and Devils Island lights were among the most powerful on the lakes. A single oil lamp with one to four concentric wicks was used with a Fresnel lens. Several variations were in use; in the Apostle Islands both Funck and Franklin lamps were used. In the late 1850s when the first Apostle Islands lighthouses entered service, the Lighthouse Board was looking for an illuminant to replace the sperm oil that had become so expensive as sperm whales were hunted nearly to extinction. By the late 1860s lard oil was the most common illuminant and was used exclusively in the larger lamps. By the mid-1880s kerosene had replaced lard oil as the predominant illuminant. Barrels of oil were stored in oil houses, designed to minimize damage and danger in case of fire or explosion. Oil houses became more necessary once kerosene came into use, and in the 1890s and early 1900s they were added to the older Apostle Islands light stations. Oil houses were built

⁴⁷ In 1987 this tower was moved about one hundred feet back from the water's edge because beach erosion threatened the foundations.

⁴⁸ Snyder, "Compendium," 179, 208; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1890–1899; Williams, "Long Island," 32–45; Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 20; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 6–8.

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like powder magazines with brick walls and metal doors, shelves, and vented roofs. Most of the Apostle Islands oil houses are extant.⁴⁹

Fog signals were not needed at all light stations, but they were important on the Great Lakes. In addition to the fog that results from the lake effect, smoke from forest fires was a frequent problem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Apostle Islands light keepers often noted in their logs that they were sounding for smoke. Several different sound devices were used for fog signals. The most commonly used on the Great Lakes and in the Apostle Islands was a steam locomotive whistle. The whistle was powered by a coal fired boiler and was both labor and fuel intensive. Assistant keepers were hired to manage the boilers and signals, and the Lighthouse Board's annual reports noted how many hours each whistle was sounded and how much coal it consumed. The first fog signal in the Apostle Islands was on Outer Island and was first sounded in November 1874. However the fog signal building was apparently built into a bank that caved in around it, and it was rebuilt in a new location the following year. In 1891 a fog signal was built at the new light station on Devils Island and one was added to the old La Pointe light station on Long Island. When the new Chequamegon Point light tower was completed in 1897 it included a fog bell that was run by clockwork. A fog signal was added to the Raspberry Island light station in 1903. All of the fog whistles in the Apostle Islands had duplicate boilers and engines so that there was backup in the event of problems, which were not infrequent. The fog signals were housed in one story brick or frame buildings constructed from stock designs; three of the four buildings are extant.⁵⁰

Light stations required frequent maintenance to repair the damages wrought by Lake Superior and her weather. Stations also continued to be updated with new technology. Between 1913 and 1915 the wick lamps in the larger Apostle Islands lights were replaced with incandescent oil vapor lamps. In the latter, the kerosene was vaporized into a gas that burned a mantle, much like today's Coleman lamp, giving a much brighter light than a wick lamp. However a wick lamp was in use on Raspberry Island as late as 1932, while the first electric light in any of the Apostle lights had been installed in the new Michigan Island light tower in 1929. The La Pointe light station was the next to convert to electric light: in 1934 a battery operated winter light was installed in the La Pointe tower, then in August 1937 both the La Pointe and Chequamegon lights were converted to electricity. Outer and Devils islands followed, and finally the Raspberry Island light was converted to electricity in 1941. Electricity for the lights was supplied by generators on each of the five islands, although Long Island was eventually connected by cable to the electrical network on Madeline Island. Meanwhile, the Sand Island light had been taken in a different direction with the 1921 installation of an acetylene gas burner regulated by a valve that opened and closed according to the heat of

⁴⁹ Holland, *America's Lighthouses*, 14–23; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 13, 17, 26–28; Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 18–26; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 3–15; Snyder, "Compendium," 92, 233–34; Williams, "Long Island," 41; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1890–1902.

⁵⁰ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 9, 12, 16, 26; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 28; Snyder, "Compendium," 212; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 54–57; "Outer Island Light Station Keeper's Log," original in National Archives, transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1891–1904; Williams, "Long Island," 33–36, 44; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 13.

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the sun. Thus Sand Island became the first automated lighthouse in the Apostle Islands, and the island's keeper was transferred to another lighthouse. The acetylene light was monitored and periodically serviced by the Raspberry Island light keeper.⁵¹

Fog signals were also improved with new technology. One of the problems with a steam whistle was that it took about an hour to build up a head of steam. When a fog came up suddenly vessels could and did run aground before the whistle was sounded. The air diaphone, a compressed air horn powered by an internal combustion engine, offered a fog signal that could be activated more quickly. Air diaphones came into widespread use on the Great Lakes in the 1920s; the first in the Apostle Islands began operating at the La Pointe light station in 1925 and was driven by a diesel engine. The *Bayfield County Press* waxed eloquent on the new signal: "Have you heard it yet? I mean that new fog horn situated over at the light station on Long Island. It sure is a dandy and when workin [*sic*] right it ought to be sufficient to scare the navigators of most any boat plying the lake out of about 10 yrs. growth. . . . It starts its blow with a long drawn out high-pitched sound, ending up in a deep-throated, quick spasm, something like wha-o-o-o-o-yah!"⁵² Air diaphones driven by diesel engines were subsequently installed on Outer and Raspberry islands. But even before then the next advance in fog signal technology was installed on Devils Island—a radio beacon. With a radio beacon, a light station sends out a radio signal that serves as a soundless fog signal and allows a vessel to determine its position. When installed in 1925 the Devils Island radio beacon was one of the first on the Great Lakes. At first the radio beacon was powered by batteries but these were soon replaced by a diesel engine and generator. Radio beacons followed on Long and Michigan islands. During the 1930s and 1940s all of the Apostle Islands light stations were equipped with radio receivers and radiophones.⁵³

The new light and fog signal constructed on Michigan Island in 1929 incorporated the new technology. The 1856 lighthouse on Michigan Island had never been completely satisfactory. Located on the southwestern end of the island, the tower was too low to be visible to ships approaching the island from the northeast, as most did, until they had nearly "run over" the island, as ships' captains complained. This was especially hazardous because of the Gull Island shoals northeast of Michigan Island. Major Poe had recommended a light on Gull Island as early as 1871. When the *William E. Corey* ran aground on the Gull Island shoals in November 1905, and the *Ireland* went aground in nearly the same location a year later, mariners and local business interests renewed with

⁵¹ Rathbun, "Light Stations," 34, 64, 68, 74, 77; Williams, "Long Island," 54–55, 58, 81; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1913; Holland, *America's Lighthouses*, 23; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 27–28; "Outer Island Log"; "Raspberry Island Light Station Keeper's Log," "Michigan Island Light Station Keeper's Log," and "La Pointe Light Station Keeper's Log," originals in National Archives, transcriptions in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 42; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 26–27.

⁵² "W-H-A-O-O-YAH! IT'S GOOD!" *Bayfield County Press*, June 4, 1925.

⁵³ Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 38–39; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 34–35, 71, 75, 77; "La Pointe Log"; "New Fog Signal Operating at Long Island Station," *Bayfield County Press*, June 4, 1925; "Outer Island Log"; "Raspberry Island Log"; Williams, "Long Island," 56–59; "Radio Beacon Being Put on Long Island," *Bayfield County Press*, October 20, 1927; "Long Island Beacon Now in Commission," *Bayfield County Press*, November 3, 1927; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 42.

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vigor their advocacy for a light at that location. In 1908 Congress appropriated two thousand dollars to prepare a cost and feasibility study for a light and fog signal station on either Gull Island or the northeastern end of Michigan Island. For several years the Lighthouse Board vacillated about where to place the light and signal. In 1917 they arrived at the plan that was implemented: to erect an unattended acetylene light on Gull Island and to elevate the existing light on the southwestern end of Michigan Island and add a fog signal at that location. The new Michigan Island light tower was originally erected in 1880 as a range light on the Delaware River in Pennsylvania. When the river was straightened the light was no longer needed, and in 1918 it was disassembled and shipped to Michigan Island. There it waited until 1929 when it was reassembled and erected near the old lighthouse. The tower is a cast iron cylinder within a metal skeletal framework, similar in appearance to the Devils Island and La Pointe towers but with some added decorative touches: the tower rises from a small, classically-styled cast iron building with arched windows that are repeated in the tower. Nearly twice the height of the old tower, the new Michigan tower was lighted by an electric light. On October 29, 1929, Keeper Ed Lane wrote in the station log: “Started up New Tower at Sunset. Everything in good shape but Station looked odd. The Old Tower being dark the first time during Navigation in 72 years. NEW TOWER IN COMMISSION TONIGHT.”⁵⁴ The Gull Island acetylene light, in a pyramidal steel tower, was placed in service a month earlier and was tended by Michigan Island personnel. The radio beacon on Michigan Island began operating on November 3.⁵⁵

The story of Apostle Islands lighthouses is not only about equipment and buildings; it is about the lighthouse keepers and their families. The light stations were manned through the navigation season, which was usually from April to December; sometimes they were manned through the winter. The Lighthouse Board, and later the Bureau of Lighthouses, issued written instructions that delineated the keeper’s duties, procedures for operating and maintaining the lighting apparatus and other equipment, and rules for proper conduct. The keeper’s primary duty was to keep the light burning and clearly visible from sunset to sunrise. This required watching the lamp through the night and periodically changing the chimneys and trimming the wicks. During the day the keeper was instructed to clean and polish the lens; clean and fill the lamp; trim the lamp wicks and replace them if needed; dust and clean the lighting apparatus and other utensils; clean the windows, walls, floors, and balconies of the lantern; and dust and sweep the tower stairway. Keeping the light operating properly did not require a great deal of skill but it required some skill. The board’s written instructions covered lamps in detail, and a new keeper might also receive instruction from the district inspector or lampist. When the Outer Island light was placed in service in September 1874, the lampist set up the lighting apparatus and showed Keeper O. K. Hall how to operate it, then Hall tried it out for himself: “I ran it one-half day to see if I could handle the critter.

⁵⁴ “Michigan Island Log.”

⁵⁵ Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 18, 20, 24; Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 3–6, 27–28; “On Gull Island Reef,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 7, 1906; “To Help Navigation,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 13, 1906; “Light for Gull Island,” *Bayfield County Press*, January 25, 1907; “Lighthouse Bill Passes Senate,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 17, 1910; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1902–1920; Mackreth, “Lighthouse Chronology”; “Michigan Island Log.”

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I put on a good light, but my overflow was too great which I remedied. After a good deal of sweat and anxiety I conquered the kicking critter.”⁵⁶ With an incandescent oil vapor lamp there was no wick to trim, but the kerosene had to be heated until it vaporized, chimneys had to be cleaned, kerosene tanks pumped up, and nozzles replaced.⁵⁷

Once the lighting apparatus was prepared for the coming night, the keeper performed routine maintenance and minor repairs. Major repairs and construction were handled by a crew that served the district. Nevertheless, some keepers undertook repairs and improvements that were more than routine. On Long Island, Keeper Joseph Sexton undertook many construction projects including sheds, breakwaters, a wall, a smokehouse, and building and rebuilding the docks and wooden walks. Raspberry Island Keeper Louis Wilks built kitchen cabinets and made screens for the front porches (ca. 1930). Keepers were allowed to engage in other work as long as they did not leave the station unattended or neglect their duties. Fishing was a practical and common source of secondary income. All of the lighthouse families kept gardens to supply their own tables, but several also sold produce and eggs. Most notable among them was Roswell Pendergast, keeper on Michigan Island from 1869 to 1874. Pendergast planted extensive orchards on Michigan Island and was renowned for his nursery stock.⁵⁸

Although there were slow periods at the light stations when keepers had time for leisure pursuits or other business, there were other times when an assistant was needed to keep the light operating properly, especially during bad weather. It was also useful to have a back up in case of illness or emergency. In 1887 Keeper Francis Jacker was living on Raspberry Island without his family or an assistant keeper. On September 13 a gale came up and Jacker tried to move the boat to safety but was blown over to Oak Island where the boat was wrecked and Jacker was stranded, without food or fire. Fortunately, on the second day his family came to visit, lit the light, and organized a search for Jacker who was found on day three. Shortly after that an assistant keeper was appointed. But for the first few decades, keepers on Long, Michigan, Raspberry, and Sand islands often worked without an assistant. When there was no assistant (and sometimes when there was), wives and sons often assisted with lightkeeping duties. On Sand Island, Ella Luick frequently took charge of the station when her husband Emmanuel made overnight trips to Bayfield. In November 1901 Emmanuel Luick became ill and was confined to bed for nearly three weeks. Ella Luick took care of the station, the light, and her sick husband, and on the day of their departure for the season wrote in the lighthouse log: “Mrs. Luick inspected the Station. Everything in order for the winter.”⁵⁹ After this the Lighthouse Board authorized an assistant keeper for Sand Island, and Ella served officially as temporary assistant keeper at times when no other assistant was available. Some other wives were appointed as assistant keeper for longer terms, among them Helen Pendergast

⁵⁶ “Outer Island Log,” 17 September 1874.

⁵⁷ Holland, *America’s Lighthouses*, 43–45; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 54–56; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 29–30, 34; Snyder, “Compendium,” 92.

⁵⁸ Holland, *America’s Lighthouses*, 45; Williams, “Long Island,” 46, 48; “La Pointe Log”; Quinn Evans, “Raspberry Island Lighthouse,” 41; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 54; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 29, 33; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 13–16.

⁵⁹ Emmanuel and Ella Luick, “Sand Island Light Station Keeper’s Log,” original in National Archives, transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files, 30 November 1901.

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and Matilda Rumrill on Michigan Island, Ann Larson and Mary Snow on Raspberry Island, and Fannie Hall on Outer Island.⁶⁰

Once a station had a fog signal, at least one assistant keeper was essential. Devils Island had two assistants from the start, and eventually all of the Apostle Islands light stations except Sand Island (which had no fog signal) had two assistants. With a steam whistle signal, tending the boiler required muscle to keep the boiler supplied with coal and skill to regulate the pressure properly. If the pressure was too low the whistle would not work; if too high the boiler could explode. A daughter of Long Island Keeper Joseph Sexton remembered her father and both assistants sleeping in the fog signal station so that they could get the signal operating as quickly as possible if there was a fog. Generally keepers and assistants got along well together, but on Outer Island Keeper O. K. Hall and assistant keeper John Drouillard hated each other. After six months of working with Drouillard, Hall wrote to the district's superintendent of lights in March 1875 asking for Drouillard to be removed because he had a violent temper, lied, and was quarrelsome. Hall stated: "I have had a great deal of trouble with him, as he abuses me with the most profane language a man can utter, from no cause or provocation, and threatened to give me a thrashing. I caught him asleep on his watch and since then he has lived in one part of the house and I in the other."⁶¹ Shortly thereafter Hall took it upon himself to discharge Drouillard, who presented his side of the story to the district inspector: "I wish to state that I feel it my duty to report that he [Hall] gave away some oil in a two gallon jug, quantity I know not how much, on or about the 20th OCT. 1874. He allows his son to wind up the clock and clean the lamp and his son has scratched the light, this was done on or about the 8th OCT. 1874. He also uses the towels for cleaning [the] lamp, as dish cloths and the camel hair brushes he uses to grease the griddle. He has reported that he could not get along with me but if we have had any trouble, it has been on his account."⁶² Hall was able to give a satisfactory explanation for the oil, and the Lighthouse Board confirmed Drouillard's removal.⁶³

The installation of electric lights, air diaphone fog signals, and radio equipment eliminated the labor of tending kerosene lamps and shoveling coal. But keepers spent more time and required more skill in order to maintain, repair, and operate the engines, generators, diaphones, and radio equipment. The Raspberry and Michigan Island keepers also had responsibility for the acetylene gas lights on Sand and Gull islands; though automatic, these required frequent service. Keepers shared with the lighthouse tenders responsibility for servicing the gas buoys that marked shoals in the area. In an article about the new radio beacon on Long Island, the *Bayfield County Press* commented: "A visit to that island light house quickly convinces one of the complicated machinery necessary to make possible the government's aids to navigation. Also it dispels the idea that many may have, that the life of the men stationed there is one of ease and little to

⁶⁰ "Raspberry Island Log," September–November 1887; Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 20, 22, 24; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 62–63; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Snyder, "Compendium."

⁶¹ Snyder, "Compendium," 184.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 185.

⁶³ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 26; Williams, "Long Island," 33–36; Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 20; Snyder, "Compendium," 184–86, 221.

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do.”⁶⁴ Although rescue was not part of a lighthouse keeper’s job, there were times when keepers took heroic action to save lives. In 1885 the steamer *Prussia* caught fire near Sand Island during a storm. Using a small rowboat, Keeper Charles Lederle rescued seven crew members whose lifeboat was being carried out into the lake. During a northeaster in 1905, the *Pretoria* sank off of Outer Island and the lifeboat with the crew capsized. Keeper John Irvine waded into the surf to pull to safety the men who clung to the overturned boat. Keepers often assisted fishermen who were stranded or in danger.⁶⁵

When the first light stations were built in the Apostle Islands, keepers were usually appointed based on their political connections rather than their qualifications. The appointment of the first Raspberry Island keeper is a good example. Andrew Cramer was a resident of the town of La Pointe. His application for the position of keeper was supported by a petition signed by a long list of prominent citizens and officials of La Pointe, Bayfield, and vicinity. J. W. McMath, collector of customs at Sault Ste. Marie, duly recommended Cramer for the position in January 1863. But in October McMath wrote to the chairman of the Lighthouse Board: “Andrew Cramer, the man lately appointed keeper of the Light House on Raspberry Island, Lake Superior does not give his personal attention to the duties of his office. He lives at La Pointe, 15 miles from the Lt. H., and remains there, employing another man to take charge of the Lt. House. I recommend that he be removed and that William Herbert be appointed in his place.”⁶⁶

The Lighthouse Board instituted procedures to base the keeper’s position on merit rather than politics. They established minimum qualifications, foremost among them that keepers had to be at least eighteen years old and able to read. The latter ensured that keepers could read the board’s written instructions detailing how they should perform their jobs. Failure to perform their duties or conduct themselves properly was grounds for dismissal, and the district inspector conducted regular, unannounced inspections to see for himself what was going on at the stations. When inspector W. P. McCann conducted his inspections in 1875 he reported that the keepers on Michigan and Raspberry islands were performing their duties well, noting the particularly fine care given to the grounds. But on Outer Island the fog signal whistle was obstructed and water was low in the boiler, the illuminating apparatus was neglected and the revolving machinery was broken, and a new boat had been wrecked. The keeper, O. K. Hall, was frequently absent from the station and when present was inattentive and incompetent. This was just a few months after Hall had fired Drouillard; at that time McCann had noted that Hall was too inexperienced for the job of keeper. This time McCann wrote: “The apparatus and machinery is too valuable to entrust to such worthless keepers. The removal of Mr. Hall is recommended.”⁶⁷ Of the La Pointe light station McCann reported: “The keeper of this station treats with contempt the instructions of the inspector and

⁶⁴ “Long Island Beacon Now in Commission,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 3, 1927.

⁶⁵ Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 27–29; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 34–35; “La Pointe Log”; “Michigan Island Log”; “Outer Island Log”; “Raspberry Island Log”; Luick, “Sand Island Log”; James M. Keller, *The “Unholy” Apostles: Tales of Chequamegon Shipwrecks* (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Island Press, 1984), 35–37.

⁶⁶ Holland, *America’s Lighthouses*, 39–40; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 48; Snyder, “Compendium,” 61–65; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 49–50.

⁶⁷ Snyder, “Compendium,” 191.

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lampist as to the management of the light. The lens, lamp, burners, oil butts and c. are very dirty. In bad order last year, and worse, if possible, this year.”⁶⁸ The keeper, John D. Angus, had been warned the year before; McCann recommended his removal. Both Angus and Hall were removed from their positions soon after, notwithstanding that Angus was a La Pointe resident and former ship captain who was well respected in the community.⁶⁹

The Lighthouse Board established a three month probationary period at the end of which a keeper had to pass an examination before his appointment became permanent. As time passed, individuals increasingly made the Lighthouse Service a career and rose through the ranks. Joseph Sexton began his career with the service in 1886 as second assistant keeper on Outer Island. Two years later Sexton was promoted to first assistant, then in the spring of 1889 he was transferred to Long Island where he began his probationary period for the position of keeper. In the fall Sexton passed his examination, and he remained as keeper on Long Island for the next thirty-two years. In 1896 the keeper’s position was made part of the classified civil service. From then on applicants had to pass a civil service examination, and positions could only be filled from a list of qualified applicants maintained by the local civil service board.⁷⁰

Even after lighthouse keeping became a career service, keepers often started their careers in the Apostle Islands; otherwise they typically came to the Apostle Islands from another lighthouse on the upper Great Lakes. If they had vocations before entering the Lighthouse Service it was usually as a commercial fisherman or seaman. Joseph Sexton was born in the Upper Peninsula in 1849 and came to Bayfield as a young man. In 1877 Sexton and his wife Mary filed a homestead claim for 140 acres on Michigan Island. Sexton fished and farmed and improved the property, receiving title in 1883. The family left Michigan Island when Sexton began his lighthouse career in 1886. Sexton later purchased a home in Bayfield that he moved to permanently when he retired from the Lighthouse Service in 1921. Emmanuel Luick was another long term Apostle Islands lighthouse keeper, serving as keeper on Sand Island from 1892 to 1921. Born in 1866 in Cleveland, Ohio, Luick later made his home in Iron River, Wisconsin. Before he joined the Lighthouse Service Luick worked as a fisherman and wood turner. In 1887 Luick was appointed second assistant at the Outer Island light station; in 1891 he was promoted to first assistant and the following year promoted and transferred to Sand Island. When the Sand Island light was automated, Luick was transferred to Grand Marais light station in Minnesota where he served until he retired from the service in 1936. Luick also worked as a professional photographer and had a studio in Iron River in the early 1900s.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid., 192.

⁶⁹ Holland, *America’s Lighthouses*, 39–40, 44; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 50, 56–57; Snyder, “Compendium,” 189–93; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 55–56.

⁷⁰ Holland, *America’s Lighthouses*, 40–41; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 50, 52, 58; Williams, “Long Island,” 74.

⁷¹ Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 52; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 31, 33–34, 72; Williams, “Long Island,” 72, 74, 78; Alanan and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 16; “Sand Island,” National Park Service, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, <http://www.nps.gov/apis/planyourvisit/upload/Sand-Island.pdf>; Luick, “Sand Island Log”; “Outer Island Log”; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, 4 July 2006.

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In addition to the responsibilities of operating the light stations, keepers and their families faced the challenges of island life. Most of the keepers and many of the assistants were married, and their families lived at the light station with them at least during the summer. School age children usually came out when school was finished in early summer and departed when school started in the fall. Sometimes wives left the islands with their children; other times wives stayed on while the children stayed with relatives or boarded in town. The labor and expense of maintaining two households was one of the burdens that weighed on keepers' wives. It also took extra work to maintain an island home, and island life was often lonely and sometimes dangerous. Cecelia McLean, whose husband Alexander was keeper on Devils and Raspberry islands in the early 1900s, told a newspaper reporter: "I hate lighthouses. They are so lonely. . . . When a woman marries a lighthouse keeper, she gives up everything else in the world. If I had my life to live over again, it would not be in lighthouse stations."⁷² Other wives might not have expressed themselves as strongly, but such feelings seem to have been widely shared. Yet at least some wives were happy at the island light stations. Elizabeth Lane raised three children on Michigan Island where her husband, Ed, was keeper from 1902 until he retired in 1938, the longest term of any keeper at a single Apostle Islands lighthouse. Elizabeth Lane was known as a superb gardener. Coast Guard Chief Walter Parker, who knew the Lanes, said of Elizabeth: "How she used to love to get up to that island and get at that garden of hers. That whole station was one mass of flowers."⁷³ Children's memories of life at the light stations are happier overall than their mothers' memories. Island life offered opportunities for play that amply compensated for the chores they had to do and the lack of creature comforts.⁷⁴

The first lighthouses on Michigan and Long islands had one and one-half story dwellings with one story kitchen wings, providing modest accommodations for the keepers and their families. The dwelling at Raspberry Island lighthouse was larger, with two full stories and a one story kitchen wing. While these lighthouses at times housed both a keeper and assistant keeper and their families, the Outer Island lighthouse appears to have been the first in the Apostle Islands built specifically to accommodate two families. The brick dwelling on Outer Island is two and one-half stories with a one story kitchen ell. Before the first year was over, however, a second assistant keeper had been appointed, and all lived in the same dwelling. By the 1910s, separate assistants' quarters, each with its own kitchen, had been established on the upper floors. Sand Island lighthouse is smaller than the Outer Island lighthouse—one and one-half stories with a one story kitchen ell—though nicely detailed in the Gothic Revival style. By the time the Devils Island light station was built in the 1890s it presented quite a contrast to the first

⁷² Robert Mackreth, "I Hate Lighthouses!" *Apostle Islands Scrapbook*, <http://www.bobmackreth.com/Scrapbook/mcclean.htm>.

⁷³ Walter Parker, interview by Kate Lidfors, April 8, 1982, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files.

⁷⁴ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 29–31; Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 22, 24; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 36–40, 66–67; Frances M. Platske, untitled reminiscence, typescript in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Mackreth, "I Hate Lighthouses"; Robert Mackreth, "The Heroine of Michigan Island," *Apostle Islands Scrapbook*, <http://www.bobmackreth.com/Scrapbook/heroine.htm>; "Michigan Island Memories," fact sheet, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore; "Michigan Island Log," December 5, 1932; Williams, "Long Island," 77.

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lighthouses in the islands. Devils Island was planned from the start to have two assistant keepers, and two brick houses were built—one for the keeper and one for the two assistants. Except for a kitchen ell that is on the keeper's house only, the two houses are identical in form but varied in detail. With irregular massing, porches, patterned brickwork, decorative shingles, and details such as oval windows and brackets, the houses are restrained versions of the Queen Anne style. They were more spacious than any other keepers' dwellings in the Apostle Islands, yet even so a third house was built, giving each family its own dwelling. Smaller than the other two, the one and one-half story frame house housed the second assistant keeper and his family; it was demolished by the Coast Guard in 1956.⁷⁵

Beginning in the 1890s, dwellings at the older light stations were enlarged or added in order to accommodate the growing number of people who lived there. When the two new light towers were erected on Long Island in 1897, the tower and lantern were removed from the 1858 lighthouse. The building was raised, and a brick first story was added to create a two and one-half story dwelling that was divided by a center wall into a side by side duplex. In 1938 this dwelling was replaced by a triplex that the Public Works Administration built near the La Pointe tower. The two story frame building was divided into three apartments, each with a kitchen and living/dining room on the first floor and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. The Raspberry Island lighthouse was remodeled in 1906. The front wall was removed to extend the building, the light tower was moved to the front and flanked by porches, a full basement was excavated, a hipped roof replaced the old gable roof, and wings were constructed on both ends. The remodeled lighthouse was divided into two side by side dwellings. For a number of years the second assistant lived alone in a small one story house, but eventually separate quarters for the second assistant and his family were constructed in the main dwelling. On Michigan Island, a one and one-half story frame house was built for the assistant keeper and his family in 1927. Before then, all lived together in the old stone lighthouse—a cozy arrangement. When the new light tower was erected in 1929 a new keeper's dwelling was constructed as well. The two story brick house with front and rear dormers and a full width front porch appears much like a bungalow, only taller. The original lighthouse then became quarters for the first assistant, and the frame house was occupied by the new second assistant.⁷⁶

Housekeeping at the light stations was much like it was at an isolated rural farm during the nineteenth century, with some additional constraints imposed by the island locations. Food and supplies had to be brought in by boat or else produced or collected on the island. When fish collecting boats began making regular trips to island fish camps

⁷⁵ Rathbun, "Light Stations," 54–55, 60–61; Snyder, "Compendium"; "Outer Island Log"; Fran Carpenter Platske, interview by David Snyder, July 7, 1989, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1891–1896; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 3–17; Parker, interview by Lidfors; Robert Mackreth, "Excerpts from U.S. Coast Guard Log, Devils Island Light Station" (Bayfield: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2004), 31–32.

⁷⁶ Williams, "Long Island," 45–46, 59–61; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 41; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1906–1907; "Raspberry Island Log"; "Michigan Island Log"; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 3–17.

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in the 1870s, lighthouse families could obtain some groceries and supplies from the boats. The introduction of motorized boats in the early twentieth century helped even more by making possible more frequent trips to the mainland. On Michigan, Raspberry, Outer, and Devils islands, tramways helped the station occupants to haul supplies up from the dock. A tramway is a small inclined railway with a set of tracks and a wheeled tram car that travels on the tracks. At first people had to push the tram cars, but later they were powered by engines. Cutting wood to fuel heating and cook stoves occupied a lot of time. Edna Lane Sauer, daughter of Ed and Elizabeth Lane, said she would never forget the huge woodbox in the kitchen of the old lighthouse on Michigan Island, because it was the children's job to keep it filled. Their father would cut the wood and they would take it to the woodshed and stack it. In 1930 the new keeper's house on Michigan Island was furnished with an oil cook stove. The house was already wired for electricity and had indoor plumbing. In fact, the pipes froze in November 1929, barely two months after the Lanes moved in. Before then, outhouses and baths taken in a wash tub were the order of the day. Walter Parker recalled that when he was a youth on Devils Island they would take their Sunday morning baths in holes in the rocks that filled with water. Once generators were operating at the light stations the dwellings were wired for electricity, but the tower light used a lot of power, and the supply for the dwellings was limited.⁷⁷

The men at the stations supplemented their families' food supply by hunting, trapping, and fishing. Berry picking expeditions supplied blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and other varieties that were both canned and sold. Families usually kept chickens and some kept cows also. There were vegetable gardens at all of the light stations, although the lack of soil on Long and Devils islands limited gardening at those locations. On Michigan Island, Roswell Pendergast planted apple, cherry, peach, plum, and pear trees in the 1870s, and in the twentieth century the Lanes maintained and expanded the orchard. Not all was about necessity, for there were flower gardens on the islands also (figure 8). Large areas of land were cleared around the light stations so that the lights would be visible from the lake. When the Devils Island light station was established, the Lighthouse Board reported: "Ten acres in the vicinity of the station were cleared of trees and brush, in order that the light might be more clearly seen."⁷⁸ Edna Lane Sauer recalled her father burning the meadow over every spring. Outside of these clearings, the forests on the lighthouse reservations supplied fuel for heating, cooking, and fog signals and lumber for construction projects such as docks.⁷⁹

Even with all the time required to manage a light station and an island home, there was time for leisure activities. Hunting, fishing, berry picking, and gardening provided recreation as well as food. From lighthouse logs and interviews with former residents, it

⁷⁷ Rathbun, "Light Stations," 35–43, 52; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 3–17; "Michigan Island Memories"; "Michigan Island Log"; "I Hate Lighthouses"; Parker, interview by Lidfors; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 42; Platske, interview.

⁷⁸ *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board*, 1892.

⁷⁹ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 30–31; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 40; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 13–15; Platske, interview; Parker, interview by Lidfors; "Michigan Island Memories"; "Michigan Island Log"; "La Pointe Log"; "Outer Island Log"; "Raspberry Island Log"; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 137.

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Figure 8. Garden at Raspberry Island light station. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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is evident that flower gardening was a favorite pastime of many of the women and men. Croquet was popular—several of the light stations had croquet greens. When the inspector came he left books and magazines to replace the books and magazines left during his inspection the previous year. In the twentieth century, phonographs and later radios provided home entertainment. Children went swimming, rowed boats, hiked, picked berries, and played the usual children's games. On Outer Island, Fran Carpenter had a log cabin playhouse. A swing on Raspberry Island is still there today. Grant Kirkendall, whose father was an assistant keeper on Michigan Island, remembered "Although there might not be other children around, if you had an active imagination, you were never alone."⁸⁰ Visiting was a popular activity, even when opportunities were limited. Robert Carlson was assistant keeper on Outer Island in the early 1890s. His wife Anna remembered that after her housework was done, she and her husband would often go to visit the one fisherman who had a summer camp on the island. In later years, when there were two or three families at a light station, there were more social opportunities for both children and adults. On Thanksgiving Day in 1931, Ed Lane wrote in the Michigan Island station log: "Keeper and Assistant Keeper had a chicken dinner with all the trimmings for all hands at the First's dwelling. Mr. Parker cooked and served the meal. We also included 5 fishermen who are on the Island. All voted the pumpkin pies 'Very Good.'"⁸¹ Motorboats made it easier to visit off the island. Friends and family came to the light stations to visit, but the lighthouse families had an active social circle of their own. Marjorie Benton, whose husband Lee served for fifteen years on Devils and Raspberry islands, described the keepers and their families as an island community (figure 9).⁸²

Sand Island light station presented different circumstances because there was a year round community of fishermen and farmers on the island beginning in the 1890s. Although Emmanuel Luick and his family were somewhat set apart, both physically and socially, from the mostly Norwegian families of Sand Island, the Luicks took an active part in community life. The Luicks visited back and forth with the Moes, Johnsons, Hansens, Hills, and others, and people provided mutual assistance when needed. Fred Hansen, who had come with his family to Sand Island from Norway, was an especially frequent visitor to the lighthouse around the turn of the century. Then a teenager, Hansen would sometimes read the newspapers at the lighthouse or listen to Ella Luick play the parlor organ. After Fred Hansen married in 1904 he visited the Luicks with his wife, and in 1906 he visited with his wife and baby, but by then Ella Luick was gone. She left the island one day in 1905, and in 1906 the Luicks were divorced. Emmanuel Luick remarried in 1911; his second wife, Oramill, later described her social life on the island: "My only neighbors were the wives of fishermen. But we stuck together. We organized a sewing circle, and we sewed for the Red Cross and other things. We met twice a month

⁸⁰ Quoted in Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 24.

⁸¹ "Michigan Island Log," November 26, 1931.

⁸² Rathbun, "Light Stations," 39–43; "Michigan Island Log"; "La Pointe Log"; "Outer Island Log"; "Raspberry Island Log"; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Parker, interview by Lidfors; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 14; Platske, interview; Williams, "Long Island," 77; "Michigan Island Memories"; Platske, untitled reminiscence; Mackreth, "Scrapbook: Heroine."

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Figure 9. Ed Lane's family and others at old Michigan Island lighthouse, 1910–15. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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at each other's houses, and got up nice little parties, besides. We made much of our birthdays, and baked birthday cakes, and made most of everything we had."⁸³

More people, motorboats, and radios reduced but did not eliminate the isolation that was a defining characteristic of life at the island light stations. Boredom, monotony, and loneliness were corollaries of isolation. After Sand Island light was automated and Emmanuel Luick was transferred to Grand Marais on Minnesota's north shore, Oramill Luick told a newspaper reporter: "We have had our isolation. Now we are back to civilization."⁸⁴ Perhaps only someone who had lived on an island would describe remote Grand Marais as civilization. A more serious consequence of the isolated locations of the light stations was lack of access to medical care. Children were born and sometimes died at the light stations without professional medical assistance. On April 10, 1876, Outer Island Keeper Henry Kuchli wrote in the station log: "At 4 AM the 3rd Assistant arrives, a boy, weighs 8 ½ lbs. troy weight. This is an important event, at least to me. Mother and Babe are doing well." A sad counterpoint occurred on the island five months later when the first assistant's baby daughter died. Minor injuries and illnesses became more serious when medical care was so far away. One day when Emmanuel Luick was in Bayfield, Ella wrote in the Sand Island log: "Nothing happened until about one o'clock this afternoon when as I was sewing at the machine I run the needle through the end of my second finger on my left hand tearing about half the nail off and cutting my finger through in two places. It was not very painful but I fainted twice from nervousness."⁸⁵ Even when motorboats and radio communication became available, the distance from medical care was still a problem. In 1939 sixteen year old Marjorie Bard was scrubbing the stairs in the keeper's dwelling on Devils Island when she fell and fractured her hip. Her father, Keeper James Bard, used the radiophone to call for help. The accident occurred at 4:30 p.m.; the Coast Guard cutter arrived at the island at 11:00 p.m. Marjorie was placed on a bedspring and carried a mile down a trail to the boat landing. At 6:00 a.m. the cutter arrived at Bayfield, and Marjorie was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Ashland, where she was treated and eventually recovered.⁸⁶

Isolation was greatest early and late in the navigation season when ice was breaking up or forming and navigation by boat was difficult to impossible (figure 10). The 1919 season got off to a bad start: storms delayed the keepers in getting to the stations by a week or more. But the end of the season proved even more challenging. Gales, cold, and snow beginning in September caused the bay to ice over early. Storms prevented the lighthouse tender *Marigold* from reaching the Apostle Islands until the second week in December, by which time it had to break ice four to seven inches thick in

⁸³ Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Oramill Luick quoted in Mackreth, "I Hate Lighthouses."

⁸⁴ Quoted in Mackreth, "I Hate Lighthouses."

⁸⁵ Luick, "Sand Island Log," September 18, 1899.

⁸⁶ Mackreth, "Lighthouses of the Apostles," 24; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 29-31; "Outer Island Log"; Robert W. Mackreth, "Getting Hurt on the Apostle Islands," draft (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2000), 13; Robert Mackreth, "Rescuing the Keeper's Daughter," *Apostle Islands Scrapbook*, <http://www.bobmackreth.com/Scrapbook/mbard.htm>.

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Figure 10. Sand Island lighthouse in winter, before 1921. Photo attributed to Emmanuel Luick. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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places to get to the islands. The tender arrived at Raspberry Island just before the people there ran out of food and coal. When the *Marigold* still had not come to Devils Island a week later, the keeper and assistant walked eighteen miles across the ice to Bayfield. Devils Island Keeper Frank Marshall said that fall was the worst he had experienced in twenty-one years of lighthouse service. During the nineteenth century keepers sometimes wintered on the islands. In 1894 Michigan Island Keeper Robert Carlson decided to winter on the island with his wife Anna, their three young children, and Robert Carlson's brother who was assistant keeper. Years later Anna Carlson told a newspaper reporter the story of how one day Robert Carlson and his brother went ice fishing and were trapped on drifting ice floes. Fearing that the men were dead, Anna Carlson forced herself to tend to her chores and take care of the children for four days and nights. Meanwhile, the men walked across the ice and jumped from floe to floe until they came to Madeline Island. In a fisherman's shanty they found wood to make a fire and flour to make gruel. They also found a boat that they were able to row eight miles back to Michigan Island. On the fourth day, in Anna's words: "I was doing some task about the kitchen that afternoon when I heard my husband's voice. 'I'm all right, Anna,' he called to me. 'Don't be afraid.' The next moment I was in his arms, sobbing and laughing in real hysterics." The Carlsons never spent another winter at an island light station.⁸⁷

In 1939, as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's Reorganization Act, the Bureau of Lighthouses was eliminated, and the Lighthouse Service became part of the United States Coast Guard within the Treasury Department.⁸⁸ The Coast Guard had been created in 1915 through the merger of the Revenue Cutter Service and the Life Saving Service. The 1939 reorganization completed the initiative begun in 1915 by uniting all federal maritime activities in one agency, thus eliminating duplication and improving efficiency. The Coast Guard already had a presence in the Apostle Islands when it took over the light stations in 1939. Working from a station in Duluth, the Coast Guard enforced maritime and customs laws, helped vessels in distress, and conducted lifesaving operations. Beginning in the mid-1930s, the Coast Guard stationed a lifesaving detail on Madeline Island from late fall to early spring because of the large number of ice-related accidents. During World War II the Coast Guard was moved from the Treasury Department to the United States Navy; in 1946 it returned to the Treasury Department, where it remained until it became part of the new Department of Transportation in 1967. The Coast Guard was organized into thirteen districts. The Great Lakes constituted the ninth district and had district headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. The ninth district was further divided into eleven groups. The headquarters for the western Lake Superior group was at Duluth. A Coast Guard station in Ashland was subordinate to the Duluth station and had jurisdiction over the Chequamegon region, including the Apostle Islands light stations, the Ashland

⁸⁷ Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 30; Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 64–65; "Lightkeepers Had Strenuous Time Closing Season," *Bayfield County Press*, December 12, 1919; "Lightkeepers Forced to Walk Long Distance on Ice," *Bayfield County Press*, December 19, 1919; "La Pointe Log"; "Outer Island Log"; "Raspberry Island Log"; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Mackreth, "Scrapbook: Heroine."

⁸⁸ In 1903 the Lighthouse Service had been moved from the Treasury Department to the Department of Commerce and Labor.

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breakwater lighthouse built in 1915, and the winter Coast Guard detail on Madeline Island.⁸⁹

In 1946 the lifesaving detail that had been on Madeline Island was relocated to Bayfield, where it had offices on the second floor of Gruenke's Restaurant. Then early in 1947 the Coast Guard announced that its area headquarters would be moved from Ashland to Bayfield. A Quonset building was erected near the Coast Guard pier, the men moved into the new building at the end of March, and the radio transmitters were moved there from Ashland. Chief Walter E. Parker, the officer in charge of the Coast Guard's operations in the Chequamegon region, was instrumental in arranging the move to Bayfield. Parker's family had a long history of working in lighthouses. His father, Walter F., and his brothers, Les and Robert, all served at light stations in the Apostle Islands. Parker started his career with the Lighthouse Service, serving at the Au Sable Point lighthouse in the Upper Peninsula and also working on several of the Great Lakes lighthouse tenders. He transferred to the Coast Guard when it took over the Lighthouse Service and in 1946 was sent to the Chequamegon region. When Parker was transferred to Florida in 1951, Bayfield citizens circulated an unsuccessful petition asking that he remain in Bayfield. The Coast Guard was an important presence in the Bayfield area and Apostle Islands. Coast Guard cutters broke the ice on the lake to open navigation in the spring and again in the fall if ice formed before the navigation season ended. The Coast Guard radio station provided weather forecasts and warned of approaching storms. Lifesaving and emergency response services saved many lives and were not limited to maritime situations. When fire destroyed the Red Cliff school and convent, the Coast Guard led the response and was credited with saving the church from being destroyed as well. No lives were lost.⁹⁰

When the Lighthouse Service became part of the Coast Guard, Lighthouse Service personnel were given the option of retaining their civilian status or joining the Coast Guard at the same pay. Apostle Islands keepers went both ways. Those who retained their civilian status were replaced by Coast Guard servicemen when they retired. Instead of keepers and assistant keepers, light stations were staffed by boatswain's mates, seamen, enginemen, and firemen, the latter two specializing in operating the mechanical equipment. Three to five men were assigned to each light station, and one of them was designated as officer-in-charge. Men were as likely to come to the Apostle Islands from Virginia or Florida as from the upper Great Lakes, and they were moved around more

⁸⁹ Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 44, 46, 186; T. Michael O'Brien, *Guardians of the Eighth Sea: A History of the U.S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes* (Cleveland: U.S. Coast Guard, 1977), 65–67, 71–72, 79; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 77–79; "Coast Guard Detail Takes Island Post," *Bayfield County Press*, December 5, 1940.

⁹⁰ "Coast Guard Setting Up Office for Bayfield Area," *Bayfield County Press*, December 26, 1946; "Summary of Our History During 1946," *Ashland Daily Press*, December 31, 1946; "Area Headquarters of U.S.C.G. Will Be Established at Bayfield," *Bayfield County Press*, January 23, 1947; "Actual Construction Is Started on Bayfield Coast Guard Station," *Bayfield County Press*, February 27, 1947; "USCG Moves Into New Quarters; Install Transmitters This Week," *Bayfield County Press*, April 3, 1947; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 79; Parker, interview by Lidfors; Walter Parker, interview by Roy (no last name or date on transcript), written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; "Chief W. E. Parker Leaves to Accept New Assignment," *Bayfield County Press*, June 21, 1951; "Red Cliff School and Convent Are Totally Destroyed by Fire," *Bayfield County Press*, April 3, 1947.

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frequently than under the Bureau of Lighthouses. For a time, families were still permitted to live at the light stations, but this was discouraged and later prohibited. Dwellings were set up like barracks with bunk beds and continued to be modernized with electricity, indoor plumbing, and updated heating systems. The men took turns cooking. They worked for three weeks then had a week of shore leave, when the weather permitted them to go ashore. Fishing remained a popular pastime, and softball took the place of croquet. Television was installed at the light stations during the 1950s.⁹¹

The Coast Guard undertook many improvements to the Apostle Islands light stations including harbor improvements, road building, erosion control, and building and rebuilding docks and breakwaters. The mechanical and radio equipment were frequently updated. Ultimately, technological improvements led to automation. The Michigan Island light was automated in 1943. In 1947, the Raspberry Island light was converted to a battery operated electronic flashing unit, and the diaphone fog signal was replaced by an automatic CO2 bell striker. The Raspberry, Michigan, and Sand Island lighthouses were leased out or sold as vacation homes, and the Coast Guard crew on Devils Island serviced the lights and signal equipment when needed. The next light to be automated was Outer Island, in 1961, followed by the two lights on Long Island in 1964. Devils Island continued to be staffed due to its strategic location, spacious accommodations, and superior landings until 1978, when it too was automated. Electronic aids to navigation such as radar and satellites have reduced the need for lights and fog signals and many lights have been deactivated. In the Apostle Islands, all of the historic light stations remain in service using solar-powered lamps.⁹²

Shipwrecks

Light stations helped to reduce the number of shipwrecks in the Apostle Islands, but light stations were not a failsafe against natural and man-made hazards. The islands offered shelter from the worst of the waves and winds that a storm could produce on the open lake; there were times when waves literally pounded ships to pieces. Conversely, a vessel that sought refuge in the islands risked running aground on rocky shoals and coastlines when visibility was poor and the vessel difficult or impossible to control. In 1893 the *Ashland Daily Press* interviewed Captain John Daniel Angus, resident of La Pointe, who had commanded many early vessels on Lake Superior. Angus stated “There is far more danger on the lakes than on salt water. Many a time I have headed a gale instead of running for shelter, while those who attempted the latter failed to reach harbor

⁹¹ Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 46; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 78–81; Williams, “Long Island,” 61, 63, 83–87; Parker, interview by Lidfors; Parker, interview by Roy; “Outer Island Log”; Mackreth, “Devils Island”; Ben Hudak, interview by Marjorie [Benton], written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narratives files; Quinn Evans, “Raspberry Island Lighthouse,” 42; *Ashland Daily Press*, September 4, 1958; “USCG Notes,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 15, 1948; “Coast Guard Cutter Woodrush Cuts Ice Bridge; Keepers Man Light Stations on the Islands,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 6, 1961; “Introducing La Pointe Light Station,” *Bayfield County Press*, May 28, 1964.

⁹² Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 79–82; “CG Work at Devils Island Will Be Done in Two Weeks,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 14, 1947; Quinn Evans, “Raspberry Island Lighthouse,” 42; Mackreth, “Devils Island”; Williams, “Long Island,” 63; Mannikko and Mackreth, “Light Stations,” 32; Mackreth, “Lighthouse Chronology”; Mackreth, “Lighthouses of the Apostles,” 26.

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and went on the rocks. There is not much danger so long as a boat keeps in the open water.”⁹³ The islands rank high in their share of Lake Superior shipwrecks. Storms pose the greatest danger to vessels on the Great Lakes. Climatic conditions cause the worst storms in spring and fall; 68 percent of storm-related maritime losses on the Great Lakes have occurred in September, October, and November combined. The gales of November are justly feared, often bringing snow and ice in addition to wind and waves. Lake Superior is known for the suddenness and severity of her storms. Iron miner Philo M. Everett wrote of Lake Superior in 1845: “The lake is one of the most boisterous in the world. I have seen it when our sails would not flop and in fifteen minutes blowing a gale and the seas in a few moments more running as high as a house.”⁹⁴ It seems surprising that Lake Superior has fewer shipwrecks than most of the Great Lakes, ranking fourth out of the five lakes. In part this is because Lake Superior has less traffic than the other lakes. In addition, Lake Superior’s large size gives ships more room to maneuver without running aground. Between 1878 and 1898 there were an estimated 6,000 shipwrecks on the Great Lakes. During the same period there were 137 major shipwrecks on Lake Superior. However 18 percent of the 6,000 shipwrecks were total losses, whereas 60 percent of the Lake Superior shipwrecks were total losses.⁹⁵

Other hazards to Great Lakes vessels include fog, ice, fire, and collision. Fog occurs frequently on Lake Superior, especially during the summer, reducing visibility to little or nothing. During the logging era in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, smoke from forest fires was also a frequent cause of reduced visibility. Ice was a hazard to spring and fall shipping. Ice floes on the lake sometimes gashed ships, and quick forming ice could trap them. At freezing temperatures a ship could become encased in ice by passing through a fog frost or by waves freezing as they washed over during a storm. Layers of ice added dangerous weight to a vessel. Freezing temperatures and frigid water often killed those who survived a wreck. Fire was a man-made hazard, most common on steamers. Boilers could overheat, run dry, or explode, and the fires that heated the boilers were often the cause of accidental fires. Flammable substances such as kerosene and gasoline also caused fires. Collisions between ships took place when visibility was poor but also during good weather as a result of human error. In 1910 at Ashland harbor, the steamer *C. O. Jenkins* accidentally backed into the *Harold B. Nye*; the damage to the *Nye* was repaired. Although shipwrecks loom large in the historical record, most ships did not meet a violent end. Vessels were abandoned when they became worn out or obsolete, or sometimes when their owners faced financial hardship. Like any busy shipping area, the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay have their share of abandonments. Sometimes the stripped vessels were simply left to deteriorate; other

⁹³ *Ashland Daily Press*, April 22, 1893, transcript in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files.

⁹⁴ Quoted in John and Ann Mahan, *Lake Superior: Story and Spirit* (Gaylord, MI: Sweetwater Visions, 1998), 196.

⁹⁵ Eichenlaub, *Weather and Climate*, 286–89; Mahan, *Lake Superior*, 196–206; Hatcher and Walter, *Pictorial History*, 95.

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times they were scuttled. Some lie in Ashland or Bayfield harbor, while others were towed to more out of the way locations such as Red Cliff Bay.⁹⁶

Between 1870 and 1940 there were more than five hundred accidents or losses involving maritime vessels in the Chequamegon region.⁹⁷ The first documented shipwreck in the region occurred in September 1874. The schooner *D. R. Owen* carried lumber for the Ashland Lumber Company, which built Ashland's first sawmill. On Thursday, September 6, the *Owen* delivered a load of lumber to Isle Royale and set sail for Ashland. That night the *Owen* was in the middle of the lake when she encountered a northeaster. Unable to steer the damaged ship, the crew lashed themselves to the masts and rigging so they would not be blown or washed overboard. Fortunately the storm blew the *Owen* to the southwest, and on Saturday afternoon washed it ashore east of Chequamegon Bay near the mouth of the Bad River. The entire crew survived, but the *Owen* was a total loss.⁹⁸

When the *Lucerne* went down near Long Island in November 1886 she was considered one of the sturdiest vessels on the Great Lakes. Launched near Buffalo in 1873, the *Lucerne* was a large schooner, nearly 195 feet long, built to carry grain. In 1886 a group of Cleveland industrialists acquired the *Lucerne* and refitted her to carry iron ore. On the evening of Monday, November 15, the *Lucerne* departed Ashland with a load of iron ore destined for Cleveland, her last trip of the season. The *Lucerne* had been towed to Ashland but her commander, Captain George Lloyd, decided to sail the schooner back to Sault Ste. Marie on her own. By Tuesday morning the *Lucerne* was traveling along the exposed Michigan shoreline in a northeaster with snow squalls and gale force winds. In the evening the *Lucerne* turned around and headed back to Chequamegon Bay. Captain Lloyd dropped anchor near Long Island, presumably hoping to ride out the storm but not realizing how close they were to shore. The ship struck bottom and was battered by waves until it sank. On Friday morning the La Pointe lighthouse keeper found the wrecked ship off the Long Island beach with three frozen bodies lashed to the rigging. Two more bodies later washed ashore, leaving four crew members unaccounted for. The *Marine Record* reconstructed the end of the *Lucerne*: "She simply pounded to pieces there on the beach, and the terrific weather rendered the crew perfectly helpless. The continuous washing of the icy seas effectually prevented the men from getting ashore. The sailors who took to the rigging probably tried to escape the sea, but they only succeeded in running into the jaws of death in another shape than drowning."⁹⁹ Much of the *Lucerne* remains at the wreck site today, her hull unusually

⁹⁶ Eichenlaub, *Weather and Climate*, 103–15; Mannikko and Mackreth, "Light Stations," 26; Mahan, *Lake Superior*, 196, 204–209; Hatcher and Walter, *Pictorial History*, 109–12, 115; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 138, 143–49.

⁹⁷ Out of approximately forty known shipwreck sites in the Apostle Islands and vicinity, three are within Apostle Islands National Lakeshore boundaries, which extend one-quarter mile into the lake.

⁹⁸ Toni Carrell, "Submerged Cultural Resources Site Report: Noquebay," Southwest Cultural Resources Center Professional Papers No. 7 (Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Santa Fe, 1985), 8; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 23–25; A. T. Andreas, comp., *History of Northern Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 69.

⁹⁹ *Marine Record*, December 9, 1886, quoted in Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 37–38.

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intact and her hold still full of iron ore. Numerous artifacts recovered from the site reveal information about the crew and their life and work aboard the ship.¹⁰⁰

The *R. G. Stewart* was a small screw propeller steamer. In 1899 she was operating as a packet steamer, carrying passengers and freight along the south shore of Lake Superior. On June 3 the *Stewart* was en route from Ontonagon to Duluth with a crew of eight men, a cargo of cattle, and three passengers. At night and in a heavy fog, the *Stewart* ran aground on Michigan Island. In the morning Captain Cornelius Flynn, owner of the *Stewart*, fired up the engine in an effort to back the ship off the point where it was stranded. After repeated tries the boiler overheated and the deck above it caught fire. The crew tried unsuccessfully to fight the fire before they were forced to abandon ship. They untied the cattle and pushed them overboard to swim. Passengers and crew boarded a small boat, but the last man, wheelsman George McKenna, capsized it as he jumped in. Nevertheless, all (including cattle) made it to shore except McKenna, who drowned. The *Stewart* burned to the waterline and was a total loss. The *Stewart* wreck site today contains no visible structural remains, although the lower hull may be buried on the lake bottom. The site contains a wealth of artifacts, mostly metal, including ship fittings, parts of the hull, tools, galleyware, and personal effects. Some examples are nails, screws, steam pipes, cast iron stove parts, pliers, wrenches, dinner forks, and the backplate of a clock.¹⁰¹

The steam tug *T. H. Camp* was well known in the Apostle Islands in the late 1800s. Built in 1876 in Henderson, New York on Lake Ontario, the *Camp* was among the earliest steam tugs built specifically for Great Lakes fishing. The *Camp* came to Lake Superior in 1880, and for a number of years she operated at the A. Booth Packing Company's Rocky Island fish camp. Local steam tugs were called on for many tasks in addition to fishing, and on November 16, 1900 the *Camp* was carrying a load of supplies to a logging camp on the north end of Madeline Island. Nearly twenty tons of supplies were on the *Camp*'s deck. When the *Camp* was between Basswood and Madeline islands, Captain John Swanson saw a sailboat that he hoped would help carry the logging supplies to shore. Captain Swanson put the tug in reverse, causing the *Camp* to heel over and list. The top heavy load shifted toward the side, the list increased, and the boat began taking on water. The sailboat picked up the four man crew just before the *Camp* sank, all in a matter of minutes. Due in part to her relatively gentle sinking, the *T. H. Camp* wreck is exceptionally well preserved. The tug sits upright about 180 feet below the surface of the lake, her smokestack intact and her pilot house windows unbroken. Investigation of the *Camp* and her cargo is expected to yield new information about fish tugs, fishing, and logging in the Apostle Islands.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 31–58; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, “Lucerne,” *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_lucerne_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 39–44.

¹⁰¹ Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 59–81; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 59–62.

¹⁰² Keith N. Meverden and John O. Jensen, “T. H. Camp,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places, 2004); Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 69–71; Wisconsin Historical Society, “Vessel Detail Information for: T. H. Camp (1876),” *Wisconsin Historical Society Shipwreck Database*, http://www.maritimetrails.org/research_shipwrecks_details.cfm?VESSELID=597.

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Launched in West Bay City, Michigan, in 1889, the *Fedora* was a prime example of a bulk freighter of the time—282 feet long with a capacity of 1,477 tons. The well known shipbuilding firm of F. W. Wheeler constructed the *Fedora* of oak and iron. She was considered one of the best built and safest vessels on the Great Lakes and reputedly carried more grain out of Duluth than any other ship in her day. On the night of September 20, 1901, the *Fedora* was on her way from Duluth to Ashland to pick up a load of iron ore. As she passed between Basswood Island and Red Cliff Bay, a kerosene lamp exploded in the engine room. The fire ignited cans of oil stored in the engine room and quickly spread through the ship. The firefighting pumps were also in the engine room—a fatal flaw in the *Fedora*'s design. With the engine running unattended at full steam and the ship blazing, Captain Frank A. Fick steered toward shore and ran the *Fedora* aground north of Red Cliff Bay. The seventeen crew members and two passengers escaped safely and watched the ship burn to the waterline. Afterwards, sightseers came to see the wreck, which was described in the *Ashland Daily Press*: “Her frame remains a twisted and contorted mass of ribbons and beams, a most gruesome sight indeed. Her great engine stands erect, towering above the warped and shapeless iron boiler house. . . . The loss is complete, in fact there are few wrecks recorded on the Great Lakes, where so little of value to the wreckers remain.”¹⁰³ Today, mainly the lower hull survives at the *Fedora* wreck site, providing valuable information about wooden freighter construction.¹⁰⁴

The 1905 shipping season was the most deadly in Apostle Islands history. The disasters began on the night of Friday, September 1, 1905 as an early northeaster gathered force. The freighter *Sevona* left Superior that evening, bound for Erie, Pennsylvania with six thousand tons of iron ore. The *Sevona* was built by F. W. Wheeler & Company, the same company that constructed the *Fedora*, but the *Sevona* was built of steel. When she was launched in 1890 the 300 foot freighter was one of the largest on the Great Lakes. In 1905 the *Sevona* was cut in half and 72.5 feet were added to her midsection. On board the *Sevona* the night of September 1 were twenty crew members, two of their wives, and two women who were guests of the ship's owners. At 2:00 a.m., about seventy miles from Superior, the *Sevona* was riding in a gale with driving rain, fog, and waves breaking over the bow. Captain Donald S. McDonald decided to turn the ship about and seek shelter in the Apostle Islands. Unable to see the Sand Island light or much else, the *Sevona* ran hard aground on Sand Island Shoal, breaking the ship into two pieces. Sand Island lighthouse keeper Emmanuel Luick heard the *Sevona*'s distress signal and saw the ship break up but was powerless to help. Seventeen people in the aft section of the ship evacuated in two lifeboats. One boat managed to get to Sand Island and the other to Little Sand Bay on the mainland. Captain McDonald and six men were stranded in the forward section of the ship with no lifeboat. As the *Sevona* sank they attempted to reach

¹⁰³ *Ashland Daily Press*, September 23, 1901, quoted in Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 86.

¹⁰⁴ Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 83–92; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, “*Fedora*,” *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_fedora_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 73–76.

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Sand Island on a makeshift raft, but the waves destroyed the raft and the men drowned. In the days that followed, Luick explored the wreckage and recovered bodies.¹⁰⁵

Less than a week after the *Sevona* sank, sightseers were visiting the wreck and taking pieces of the ship as souvenirs. This was not unusual, but interest in the *Sevona* proved more enduring than usual and her story has become an oft-repeated part of local history. The most unusual tribute to the *Sevona* was the Sevona Memorial Cottage that Sam Fifield built at Camp Stella on Sand Island using hatch covers from the wreck. Other salvage efforts were more conventional, removing valuable equipment and hundreds of tons of scrap from the wreck. In 1909 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had the remains dynamited because of the hazard they posed to navigation. Although little except the lower hull of the *Sevona* remains at the wreck site today, that portion is relatively intact and provides information about early steel shipbuilding in the Great Lakes. The *Sevona* site is the only known surviving example of a metal freighter wrecked in Wisconsin waters.¹⁰⁶

The *Bayfield County Press* called the September 2 storm the worst since 1873. Before it ended, the storm took another ship and five more lives in the Apostle Islands. The schooner barge *Pretoria* was one of the largest wooden vessels that ever sailed the Great Lakes. The *Pretoria*'s builder, Captain James Davidson of West Bay City, Michigan, was renowned as one of the best as well as one of the last builders of wooden ships. When the *Pretoria* was launched on July 27, 1900, the *Saginaw Courier-Herald* reported: "The schooner *Pretoria*, the largest wooden boat ever built, was launched at Davidson's shipyard this afternoon, in the presence of a vast multitude. The *Pretoria* will carry 5,000 tons of iron ore, 175,000 bushels of wheat, or 300,000 bushels of oats. . . . she is very strong and substantially constructed in every way."¹⁰⁷ The marine insurance companies gave the *Pretoria* their highest rating. On September 1 the *Pretoria* took on a load of iron ore at Superior, at the same dock where the *Sevona* would take on her cargo shortly after. The *Pretoria* left Superior in the tow of the steamer *Venezuela*, also carrying iron ore, and the two ships began their journey to South Chicago. Despite the storm that night the *Venezuela* and *Pretoria* continued onward, passing the Apostle Islands. At about 7:30 a.m. they were thirty miles northeast of Outer Island when the *Pretoria*'s steering gear failed. The *Venezuela* tried to turn the *Pretoria* about, but the towline between the two vessels broke away.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 117–24; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, "Sevona," *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_sevona_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 95–106.

¹⁰⁶ Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 125–31; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, "Sevona"; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 95–106; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 262–63; Peterson, "Camp Stella," 38.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Cooper and Jensen, *Davidson's Goliaths*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ "Terrible Storm Sweeps Over Lake Superior," *Bayfield County Press*, September 8, 1905; Cooper and Jensen, *Davidson's Goliaths*, 49–50; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, "Pretoria," *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_pretoria_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 107–108.

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As the wind and waves carried the *Pretoria* away, the *Venezuela* lost sight of her and finally sought shelter in Ashland harbor. Waves pounded the *Pretoria*, inflicting more and more damage, while the storm carried the ship toward Outer Island. The *Pretoria* was about a mile and a half from Outer Island when she began to sink, forcing Captain Charles Smart and his nine crew members to leave the ship in a lifeboat. As they neared shore a wave capsized the lifeboat, throwing some of the men ten feet into the air. Five men drowned; the others were rescued by Outer Island Lighthouse Keeper John Irvine who dragged them one by one to shore. The *Duluth News Tribune* recounted the rescue: “Captain Irvine, who, though sixty years old, is still hale and strong, started to their rescue. By almost superhuman effort, while his life was endangered every minute, he brought the five who still clung to the lifeboat safely to shore.”¹⁰⁹ The *Pretoria* was a total loss for her owner, the Davidson Steamship Company, and was reportedly the first loss that James Davidson incurred in more than forty years of shipping. Subsequently parts of the wreck were salvaged, including the cargo of iron ore. Although these salvage efforts damaged the wreck, the hull and associated artifacts that remain at the site provide insight into the construction and use of one of the last and largest wooden vessels on the Great Lakes. The *Pretoria* may be the most accessible surviving example of James Davidson’s remarkable schooner barges.¹¹⁰

In October the *Noquebay* was destroyed near Stockton Island, but this time the cause was fire, not storm. The schooner barge *Noquebay* was built in Turner, Michigan in 1872 to carry lumber and coal. On October 6, 1905 the steam barge *Lizzie Madden* towed her consorts *Noquebay* and *Mautenee* out of Bayfield, bound for their home port in Bay City, Michigan. The *Noquebay* carried 600,000 board feet of hemlock lumber. The ships were about twenty miles from Bayfield and the crew of the *Noquebay* was eating lunch when they smelled smoke. A fire had started in the forward part of the ship, apparently in the donkey boiler room; by the time it was discovered the fire was too far advanced to fight.¹¹¹ The *Lizzie Madden* turned toward Stockton Island, intending to beach the burning ship in shallow water. The crew was able to dump some of the lumber overboard before being forced to abandon the *Noquebay* and board the *Lizzie Madden*. The *Noquebay* burned to the waterline, coming to rest in Stockton Island’s Julian Bay. A few days later Captain Cornelius Flynn of Duluth, former captain of the *R. G. Stewart*, salvaged the *Noquebay*’s anchors and approximately 175,000 board feet of lumber that the crew had dumped overboard. Today, the well preserved hull of the *Noquebay* lies in Julian Bay. The ship’s donkey boiler, windlass, and steering wheel remain. Numerous small artifacts range from nails and steam pipes to a cast iron cooking pot.¹¹²

Before the 1905 shipping season came to a close, Lake Superior endured the worst storm in its history—one of the worst in Great Lakes history. During the

¹⁰⁹ *Duluth News Tribune*, September 5, 1905, quoted in Cooper and Jensen, *Davidson’s Goliaths*, 52.

¹¹⁰ Cooper and Jensen, *Davidson’s Goliaths*, 50–63; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, “Pretoria”; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 108–112.

¹¹¹ A donkey boiler supplied steam to a donkey engine, a small auxiliary engine used for tasks such as raising anchors and working pumps.

¹¹² Carrell, “Noquebay,” 16–29, 37–77; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, “Noquebay,” *Wisconsin’s Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_noquebay_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 91–93.

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northeaster of November 27 through 29 temperatures dropped below zero and winds blew more than seventy miles an hour. Thirty ships were damaged on Lake Superior; nineteen of these were damaged or destroyed. At the Sand Island lighthouse, Keeper Luick wrote in his log that it was the heaviest sea and storm he had seen during his sixteen years working at lighthouses. On the second day of the storm Luick recorded eighteen inches of snow and winds at eighty miles an hour. The storm washed away the bank and walk in front of the lighthouse, two boats, and the above-water remains of the *Sevona*. Two ships in the Apostle Islands were casualties of the storm—the *William E. Corey* was stranded and the *Ira H. Owen* was lost. Just a few months old at the time, the *William E. Corey* was the largest of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company's fleet of steel freighters. When the storm hit, the *Corey* was bound for Duluth and sought shelter in the Apostle Islands, running aground on Gull Island shoal. More than 150 men, four steamers, and three tugs worked to free the ship, which was released at last twelve days after it was stranded. No lives were lost, but the *Corey* incurred one hundred thousand dollars worth of damages.¹¹³

The freighter *Ira H. Owen* was built in Cleveland in 1887, one of the first steel ships on the Great Lakes. On the morning of November 28 the *Owen* left Duluth with nineteen crew members and 116,000 bushels of barley on her final voyage of the season. The storm was already wreaking havoc but Captain Joseph Mulligan decided to go on. About forty miles east of Outer Island, during the height of the storm, Captain Alva Keller of the *Harold B. Nye* sighted the *Owen*, struggling and blowing distress signals. The *Nye* was struggling herself—she lost one man and was badly damaged by the storm—and was unable to assist the *Owen*. A snow squall obscured the *Owen* from view; when it lifted two hours later Keller looked for the *Owen* but she was gone from view. Three days later when the *Sir William Siemens* arrived in Ashland, her captain reported that twelve miles east of Michigan Island he sailed through wreckage including chairs, the top of a cabin, and life preservers marked “S.S. Ira H. Owen.” No bodies were ever found.¹¹⁴

The *Ottawa* was one of the tugboats that salvaged the wreck of the *Sevona*. Built as a tow tug in 1881, the *Ottawa* was later converted to a wrecking tug and purchased by James Reid & Son of Sarnia, Ontario, one of the first professional wrecking and salvage operations on the Great Lakes. As vessels on the Great Lakes increased in size and value, salvage and wrecking became increasingly important. Because freighters were so large and heavy, wrecking tugs needed to be powerful and heavy. In 1909 the *Ottawa* was the largest and most powerful tugboat on the Great Lakes. In November 1909 the *Ottawa* and another Reid wrecking tug, the *Manistique*, came to the Apostle Islands to free a stranded freighter. During a storm on November 13, the engines of the *James H. Hoyt* became disabled while she was passing the Apostle Islands. The *Hoyt* was carried

¹¹³ Julius F. Wolff Jr., *Julius F. Wolff Jr.'s Lake Superior Shipwrecks*, Thomas R. Holden, contributing editor (Duluth: Lake Superior Port Cities Inc., 1990), 112–19; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 113, 135; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 125; “Storm Sweeps Over Lake,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 1, 1905; Luick, “Sand Island Log.”

¹¹⁴ Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 113–16; Benton, *Golden Days*; Wisconsin Historical Society, “Vessel Detail Information for: Ira H. Owen (1887),” *Wisconsin Historical Society Shipwreck Database*, http://www.maritimetrails.org/research_shipwrecks_details.cfm?VESSELID=294.

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toward the islands and went aground on a shoal two miles northeast of Outer Island. After local tugs tried unsuccessfully to free the *Hoyt*, the ship's underwriters contacted Reid. It took the two wrecking tugs and a third tug a week before they finally pulled the *Hoyt* free. That night the *Hoyt* and the *Ottawa* were resting in Red Cliff Bay. The *Ottawa's* crew of nine men went to bed early but was awakened soon after by a fire, blazing beyond control by the time it was discovered. All of the men escape by jumping over to the *Hoyt*, which was tied up alongside. They cut the lines connecting the two boats, and the other tugs separated the *Hoyt* and the *Ottawa*, which burned to the waterline and sank. The cause of the fire was never determined; it may have been caused by spontaneous combustion in the coal bunkers. The *Ottawa's* engine and some of her machinery were later salvaged. Even though the *Ottawa* burned, most of her hull exists at the wreck site today, with many features intact. The *Ottawa* is important for the information it can offer on early construction of large tugboats and their adaptation to wrecking operations.¹¹⁵

The last major shipwreck in the Apostle Islands occurred in October 1927. The Canadian barge *Ontario* ran a regular route hauling pulpwood from Port Arthur, Ontario, to Ashland. On Wednesday, October 12, the *Ontario* left Port Arthur in tow of the tug *Butterfield*. The *Ontario* was heavily loaded with eleven hundred tons of pulpwood and, reportedly, ten cases of smuggled scotch. A high wind blowing when the boats left port became a gale when they were in the open lake. The *Ontario* began taking on water and finally her boilers gave out, leaving the barge without operable pumps or steering power. With difficulty the *Butterfield* continued towing the barge, but early Thursday morning the *Ontario* began to sink. Captain Ralph Fromholtz ordered the crew to send distress signals to the *Butterfield* and to prepare the lifeboat, but waves washed the lifeboat overboard. At 2:55 a.m. the *Butterfield* received the distress signals and her crew began taking in the towline between the two vessels. The *Butterfield* pulled alongside the *Ontario* and pulled four men aboard. A lifeline was thrown to Ernest Ludwig, the last man, who cut the towline just before the *Ontario* sank beneath him. Ludwig managed to resist the suction of the sinking boat and hold onto the rope, while the men on the *Butterfield* used all their strength to pull him aboard. The *Butterfield's* Captain Ryerse signaled full speed ahead but was unable to move until the suction from the sinking barge subsided. The *Ontario* sank ten minutes after the *Butterfield* received her distress signals.¹¹⁶

Apostle Islands shipwreck sites are both informative and evocative of the area's history. Seven sites—the *Lucerne*, *R. G. Stewart*, *T. H. Camp*, *Sevona*, *Pretoria*, *Noquebay*, and *Ottawa*—are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.¹¹⁷ Of more than five hundred accidents or losses in the Chequamegon region between 1870 and

¹¹⁵ Cooper and Jensen, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 103–16; Wisconsin Historical Society and University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, "Ottawa," *Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks*, http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/explore_ottawa_intro.cfm; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 117–120.

¹¹⁶ Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 125–28; Wisconsin Historical Society, "Vessel Detail Information for: Ontario (1891)," *Wisconsin Historical Society Shipwreck Database*, http://www.maritimetrails.org/research_shipwrecks_details.cfm?VESSELID=480.

¹¹⁷ The *Lucerne*, *R. G. Stewart*, and *Noquebay* are within Apostle Islands National Lakeshore boundaries, which extend one-quarter mile into the lake.

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1940, nearly seventy-five are believed to have left physical remains on the lake bottom. To date more than forty shipwreck sites, including both losses and abandonments, have been documented in the Apostle Islands and vicinity. Clearly, many sites are yet to be discovered.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Carrell, "Noquebay," 8; Wisconsin Historical Society, "Search Results: Lake Superior Region," *Wisconsin Historical Society Shipwreck Database*, http://www.maritimetrails.org/research_shipwrecks.cfm?TRAIL=superior; Cooper, *Fire, Storm, and Ice*, 145.

CHAPTER FIVE COMMERCIAL FISHING

Fish was perhaps the most renowned natural resource of the Apostle Islands. The entire Lake Superior region was rich in timber, but few places on the lake could equal the Apostles for fishing. Native Americans and fur traders fished for subsistence and trade, but fish was not exploited on a large scale until the American Fur Company began its fishing operation in 1835. When the American Fur Company stopped fishing six years later, commercial fishing continued on a smaller scale. In the 1870s and 1880s, commercial fishing in the Apostle Islands grew into a major industry. Large fish dealers, notably N. & F. Boutin Company and the A. Booth Packing Company, began operating in Bayfield. During the 1880s Bayfield had more fishermen catching more fish than any other location on Lake Superior. In the summer many of these fishermen worked from seasonal fish camps in the Apostle Islands. More fishermen, when combined with improved methods for catching, preserving, and transporting fish, led to bigger harvests and greater pressure on fish populations. In the 1890s the whitefish population crashed. Fishermen turned to lake trout and herring instead of whitefish, and the fishing industry prospered in the early 1900s. Island fish camps grew larger and more substantial, and on Sand Island the fish camps grew into a year-round community. In the 1930s the whitefish population recovered, aided most likely by the state's stocking program. Then the parasitic sea lamprey arrived in Lake Superior, and in the 1950s it destroyed the whitefish and lake trout populations. The herring catch declined also, further impairing the fishing industry. Aggressive programs to destroy the lamprey and to protect and restore whitefish and lake trout led to the recovery of these fish. Commercial fisheries reopened in the late 1960s, but they never regained their former prominence.

Fish and Furs

Compared to the other Great Lakes, Lake Superior is relatively poor in fish, with an environment that is low in the nutrients that support fish populations. Yet explorers and traders who came to Lake Superior in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often remarked on the lake's abundance of fish. This was because Native Americans had identified the places in shallow waters and tributary rivers where fish were concentrated, especially during seasonal migrations. The falls at Sault Ste. Marie and Chequamegon Bay were two of these places. Father Claude Dablon wrote in 1670: "At the point of saint Esprit, Chagaouamigong, where the Outaouaks and the Hurons live, there are caught at all times of the year great numbers of Whitefish, Trout, and Herring. This manna begins in November, and lasts until the ice comes; and, the colder the weather becomes, the more fish one catches."¹ Observers also remarked on the great size of the fish. Native American fishing was relatively light in its impact on fish populations, allowing fish to live long lives and grow to large sizes. Sturgeon commonly lived for more than fifty years and could weigh over two hundred pounds. John Johnston, living

¹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:151.

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on Chequamegon Bay in 1791–1792, saw a fifty-two pound trout taken off the shore of Madeline Island; in 1872 trout typically weighed five to fifteen pounds.²

Fish played an important role in the fur trade of the Lake Superior region, forming the mainstay of the traders' diet as it did for the Ojibwe. Traders exchanged trade goods for fish and also learned to fish for themselves. Alexander Henry, arriving at Chequamegon Bay to trade during the winter of 1765–1766, described how he procured a winter's supply of food: "With the assistance of my men, I soon took two thousand trout and whitefish, the former frequently weighing fifty pounds each, and the latter commonly from four to six. We preserved them by suspending them by the tail in the open air. These, without bread or salt, were our food through all the winter; the men being free to consume what quantity they pleased, and boiling or roasting them whenever they thought proper." After the bay froze in December, Henry amused himself by spearing trout, sometimes catching one hundred a day, with an average weight of twenty pounds.³ Others did not fare as well as Henry: at Lac du Flambeau during the winter of 1804–1805, Malhiot and his men were unable to catch or trade enough fish to keep them from going hungry. On the north shore and around Isle Royale, the North West Company fished intensively to feed its employees at Grand Portage and Fort William.⁴

American Fur Company employees undoubtedly fished to feed themselves and their families. Then in 1834 Ramsay Crooks and his agents on Lake Superior began planning a commercial fishing venture that was unprecedented for the region. Crooks planned to establish fishing stations at different locations around Lake Superior, to ship the barrels of salted fish in schooners to Detroit, and to market the fish in Ohio, Michigan, and other places south and east. The fishing venture meant investing in new equipment and supplies, including salt, nets, and barrels. It meant relocating existing employees and hiring new ones. And it meant building a completely new trading post at La Pointe, with the facilities to serve as the center of operations for Lake Superior fishing. In undertaking this venture, Crooks not only reacted to uncertainties in the fur market, but also took advantage of new opportunities in Great Lakes shipping and commercial markets.⁵

The American Fur Company began commercial fishing in the Chequamegon region while exploring other potential fishing outposts on Lake Superior. In January 1836 Lyman Warren reported that he had 320 barrels of fish from fishing in the La Pointe vicinity since the opening of the fall fisheries in November. In fall of 1836 the company established a fishing station at Grand Portage, and by the end of that year the company

² Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 136–39, 143; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 56; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 154, 158.

³ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 190.

⁴ Malhiot, "Wisconsin Fur Trader's Journal"; Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 488; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 174–75.

⁵ Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 483–503; Schenck, "Lyman Marcus Warren," 13; Correspondence, 1834–1841, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen; Peter A. Rathbun, "Special History Study: Commercial Fishing in the Apostle Islands—Draft," (Springfield, IL and Hollandale, WI: Rathbun Associates for the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 1987), 29–32; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 29–33.

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had shipped about one thousand barrels of fish to Detroit. The ice broke up later than usual in spring 1837, giving the fishing year a poor start, but the company established another fishing station, on Isle Royale, and by the end of the year had shipped two thousand barrels of fish to Detroit. In addition to the primary fishing stations at La Pointe, Grand Portage, and Isle Royale, there were secondary stations at Fond du Lac; Isle Encampment, north of Fond du Lac; Ance on Keweenaw Bay;⁶ Montreal River; Whitefish Point; and Grand Island. At Sault Ste. Marie fish were taken in the rapids. The yield increased each year, from more than four thousand barrels in 1838 to roughly five thousand barrels in 1839.⁷

Lake whitefish and lake trout constituted the bulk of the company's catch. Whitefish has always been the most desirable eating fish from Lake Superior and thus the most valuable in commercial fishing. The Reverend Ely, en route to La Pointe in summer 1833, wrote in his diary one evening: "I broiled a piece of Whitefish on a forked stick for my supper, which was delicious."⁸ Ely's opinion was widely shared. Whitefish live in shallow water near the shore, moving in schools and eating small fish, mollusks, and crustaceans off the lake bottom. These habits make whitefish easy for fishermen to catch. When whitefish spawn in the fall they move into shallower water and connecting rivers and then are even easier to catch. The largest shallow water area in Lake Superior surrounds the Apostle Islands, making it prime fishing grounds for whitefish. In contrast to whitefish, lake trout live in deeper water, move independently rather than in schools, and live primarily on other fish, including whitefish. In the fall, lake trout move into shallow water to spawn and then may be caught in large numbers. The Apostle Islands is an important lake trout spawning ground. The siscowet, a very fat and oily subspecies of lake trout, was also fished by the American Fur Company. At that time it was believed to be a separate species of fish. American Fur Company fishermen caught herring and pickerel as well.⁹ Most of the company's fishing was done with gill nets, which were set from boats in deep water. The nets were suspended in the water, with weights at the bottom and floats at the top. Fish were caught by their gills in the mesh when they tried to swim out of the net. Different mesh sizes were used depending on the type of fish sought; smaller fish could swim out of nets with larger mesh.¹⁰

Fishermen, boatmen, and coopers were the primary workers in the American Fur Company's fishing operation. Some of the fishermen did double duty as boatmen, including a number of voyageurs. Fishermen and boatmen were mostly French Canadian, métis, or Ojibwe. Some were wage workers and others were paid by the barrel

⁶ Nute ("American Fur Company's Fishing," 493) identified Ance as Keweenaw Point, but primary sources indicate that Ance, also L'Ance or L'Anse, was at the head of Keweenaw Bay.

⁷ Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 489–498; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 179.

⁸ Edmund F. Ely and Family Papers, 1833–1904, journal no. 1, transcript of original in collections of St. Louis County Historical Society, Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, University of Minnesota-Duluth, copy courtesy of Theresa Schenck.

⁹ The name pickerel is commonly applied to both walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*) and northern pike (*Esox lucius*). Both are native to Lake Superior; it is not clear which fish is being referenced here.

¹⁰ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 180–81; Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 490–95; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 38–40, 150–55; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 159–62; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 139–42.

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or pound for the fish they caught. Ojibwe women helped to dress the fish. Coopers earned higher wages than fishermen or boatmen. The company brought coopers from Canada, including John Bell and William Wilson, who would figure importantly in Apostle Islands history. Each fishing station had its complement of fishermen, boatmen, and coopers. La Pointe served as the administrative center for the company's fishing operation as well as being an important fishing station in its own right. Most of the company's fish were shipped through La Pointe. In 1837 Lyman Warren was appointed as a government fish inspector, so the fish were not delayed for inspection at the Sault. In 1839 the American Fur Company had thirty-six employees at La Pointe, compared to twenty-five at Isle Royale, fifteen at Fond du Lac, and three (not including Indians) at Grand Portage.¹¹

In addition to their main post on Madeline Island, the American Fur Company found it useful to establish fishing outposts on other islands in the Apostles. On Stockton Island, long known as Presque Isle, the General Land Office survey in the 1850s identified a small fish house that had been built by the American Fur Company. In March 1839 Charles Borup wrote to Ramsay Crooks describing a trip to the islands to identify locations for fishing and a new fishing outpost: "I started with a number of men and Indians for our Islands to look for a suitable place for establishing a new fishing post, and at the same time to try whether we could take fish. . . . For your information I enclose a small draft of the Islands and their names— our new Fishery will be on Island No 13 (flat Island) on a beautiful Land Point well sheltered against all winds. The timber is all drawn on the spot 1 Store 80 feet by 20.— 1 House 20 by 24 1 Small Store 20 x 18— 1 Coopers Shop 20 x 18 (figure 2).¹² Their fishing went well, and Borup marked an X on the map at the places they tried. The map shows a pair of islands—the islands today called Rocky and South Twin—as number thirteen; they are labeled "Two Islands in the flats." Considering that the lumber to build the outpost was in place in March, it seems likely that the outpost was constructed for the 1839 fishing season. It may be the outpost described in the *Bayfield Press* in 1871: "On the south end of Ironwood Island, are the remains of several buildings erected many years since by the American Fur Co. One, probably used as a warehouse, was some seventy feet in length by twenty in width, indicating a large business at that point."¹³ This seemingly clear description becomes obscure upon trying to identify which island was known as Ironwood Island in 1871. On Major Whittlesey's 1871 map of the Apostle Islands, none of the islands is named Ironwood; the island known today as Ironwood is labeled Higgin's Island. On other maps dating from the 1840s to the 1890s, the name Ironwood is given at different dates to the islands known today as Ironwood, Otter, Rocky, and North Twin. The dimensions of

¹¹ Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing," 489–93, 496; Ramsay Crooks to Lyman Warren, 18 February 1835 and Ramsay Crooks to William Aitken, 30 April 1836, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 12, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen; Ross, *La Pointe*, 95, 122.

¹² Borup to Crooks, 13 March 1839, American Fur Company Papers, 1808–1849, Box 2, Minnesota Historical Society Archives, transcribed by Thomas D. Thiessen; map is in William Aitken Papers, American Fur Company Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Archives.

¹³ *Bayfield Press*, June 3, 1871.

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the warehouse described by the *Bayfield Press* are tantalizingly close to the dimensions of Borup's large storehouse, suggesting that the buildings were on Rocky Island.¹⁴

Fish were preserved for distant markets by salting (pickling) and packing them in barrels. They were shipped by schooner to Sault Ste. Marie, where another schooner took them to the company's warehouse in Detroit. The company launched the schooner *John Jacob Astor* on Lake Superior in 1835; more schooners were added as the fishing business grew—the *Madeline* in 1837, the *William Brewster* in 1838, and later the *Siskawit*. Sometimes fish spoiled as a result of improper packing or handling. In response to criticism that fish were mishandled at La Pointe, Borup wrote to Crooks that it was essential that the barrels be stored away immediately when they arrived at the Sault, “and that the Cooper there over look each load, so that if any barrel has leaked its pickle it may instantly be opened and repacked.— The same is the case in Detroit.— Many of our fish have started from Lapointe in good order, which from some accidents onboard the Schooner or at St Marys have spoiled on their way down.”¹⁵

The 1830s were the first years of significant growth for Great Lakes commercial fishing. Improvements in Great Lakes shipping and growing settlement along the lakeshores combined to make a commercial fish market viable. The American Fur Company was one of many to venture into commercial fishing during this time. The Hudson's Bay Company began commercial fishing on Lake Superior shortly after the American Fur Company. Detroit emerged as the primary market for Great Lakes fish. William Brewster, the American Fur Company's agent in Detroit, managed all of the commodities that the company shipped through Detroit. In 1839 he described the new warehouse built to store the company's burgeoning catch of fish in a letter to Ramsay Crooks: “All of our Fish on hand at this time are Stored in our new ware House, which is quite a Sight, as the first floor is entirely filled, three Bbls deep.”¹⁶ Unfortunately for the developing fish market, the Panic of 1837 initiated one of the worst depressions in U.S. history. Fish prices fell and sales slowed. In 1839 the American Fur Company moved aggressively to develop new markets in New York City, the Midwest, or the South. The company attempted to market fish in New York City, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and in the South. But farmers weren't able to sell their own produce let alone buy fish. The company continued to fish on Lake Superior because of its contracts with fishermen and coopers, but in October 1840 Borup wrote to Crooks: “At present we are engaged in fishing, and I try to get as few as possible.”¹⁷ In April 1841 Crooks instructed Borup to abandon fishing at La Pointe and confine business to trading in furs and skins. By July, Borup had ended fishing operations except for a few boats at Isle Royale. From then until it went out of business, the company fished only as needed to feed its employees.¹⁸

¹⁴ Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 7, 14–15; Jon R. Cowan to Kate Lidfors, 5 September 1980 and letter to Edgar S. Oerichbauer, 20 October 1981, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical subject files; Martha Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There? History and Resource Management at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore,” (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1993), 25–26.

¹⁵ Borup to Crooks, 13 March 1839. Nute, “American Fur Company's Fishing,” 493–96; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 120–21.

¹⁶ 17 December 1839, quoted in Nute, “American Fur Company's Fishing,” 494.

¹⁷ Quoted in Nute, *Lake Superior*, 180.

¹⁸ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 29–33; Nute, “American Fur Company's Fishing,” 493–501.

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Although the historical record is fragmentary, bits and pieces of information document the commercial fishing industry in the Apostle Islands in the three decades following 1841. The Cleveland North Western Lake Company remained at La Pointe until 1844, although how much fishing it did is unknown. The copper rush to Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula began following the 1842 treaty with the Ojibwe, and in 1844 iron was discovered on the Marquette Range. The growing mining camps provided a market for Lake Superior fish, and in 1848 one thousand barrels of fish were shipped from La Pointe. Geologist David Owen, exploring the south shore of Lake Superior in 1849, wrote that La Pointe was unrivalled as a fishing station, and that "the bays and creeks of the numerous islands and main shore, distant only a few hours' run, are amongst the best grounds on the whole lake."¹⁹ The 1850 federal census identified four fishermen and three coopers at La Pointe. Some of the voyageurs listed in the census were likely fishing as well.²⁰

After Bayfield was founded in 1856, some of La Pointe's fishermen probably moved their home port to the mainland. Reverend James Peet, who served as minister for Bayfield's Methodist Church, provided glimpses of the local fishing industry in his diary. On one occasion Peet went out with a boat of commercial fishermen when they took up their nets, catching four or five barrels of fish. In December 1857 he recorded the number of fishing boats on Chequamegon Bay—seventeen boats on December 5, twenty-three boats on December 6, and twenty-nine boats on December 14. Peet wrote that the weather was unusually warm and that the fishermen were getting very good hauls. The *Bayfield Mercury* reported that year that several shipments of fish were sent to cities on the southern Great Lakes. The 1860 federal census counted seventeen fishermen, five coopers, and four boat builders at La Pointe. Two of the coopers worked for Julius Austrian and produced six hundred barrels a year. Boat builder Antoine La Moreau, with two employees, built twenty-five boats in 1860. Even though some of the individuals listed as fishermen in 1860 were listed as voyageurs in 1850, the 1860 census appears to show growth in the local fishing industry.²¹

A Major Industry

In 1870 the N. & F. Boutin fishing company moved to Bayfield, beginning the period of greatest growth for the area's commercial fishing industry. In December of that year the *Bayfield Press* reported that 250 men were constantly employed in the fish trade, and that total production for that year was fifteen thousand half barrels (1,500,000 pounds) of whitefish and trout. These figures sound high, and they may indeed be exaggerated; the *Bayfield Press* was more interested in promoting Bayfield than in accuracy. Nevertheless, the local fishing industry was growing and thriving, and with

¹⁹ Quoted in Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 50.

²⁰ Ross, *La Pointe*, 108–113; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 50, 64; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 40.

²¹ Although the 1860 census does not list any fishermen in Bayfield County, it seems likely that some of the fishermen who Peet saw on Chequamegon Bay had their home port in Bayfield. Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 10–11; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 104; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 158; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 64, 143; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 40–41; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 51; Grace, "1850 Federal Census LaPointe County."

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lumbering it was one of two mainstays of the local economy. In the late 1870s the Boutins alone (not including smaller companies and independent fishermen) employed between seventy and one hundred men and shipped about eleven thousand half barrels of fish per season. In 1880, according to an outside agency, at least 130 fishermen lived in Bayfield and 30 more lived in Ashland, out of 414 total on Lake Superior.²²

In 1885 the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries collected detailed information on the commercial fisheries of Lake Superior. The study showed Bayfield to be the leading fishing community on the lake. One hundred and eighty-two fishermen made Bayfield their home port, far more than any other Lake Superior port. About thirty of these fishermen lived in La Pointe but sailed from Bayfield, and about twenty more sailed from Ashland. The Bayfield fish industry also employed twenty-seven men who collected, prepared, and shipped the fish, and six who made barrels and fishing boats.²³ Bayfield's production for 1885 was 2,192,000 pounds of salted fish and 640,000 pounds of fresh fish for a total of 2,832,000 pounds, nearly one third of the total for Lake Superior. A total commercial catch of 8,825,980 pounds for Lake Superior that year made 1885 one of the most productive years on record.²⁴ The fisheries did not maintain this high level in the 1890s. In 1890 the commercial catch of Bayfield and Ashland combined was 1,555,079 pounds, compared to 3,159,500 in 1885. The catch for 1899 was slightly higher than in 1890, although it fluctuated during the years in between. In part this decline was due to the sharp decrease in the whitefish population.²⁵

Whitefish was the most important commercial fish caught in Lake Superior through the 1880s. In 1885 the fishermen of Bayfield and Ashland accounted for nearly half of the whitefish caught in Lake Superior—2,251,800 of the lake's 4,571,947 pounds, a record high. Whitefish accounted for 73 percent of the commercial catch for Bayfield and Ashland and 52 percent of the commercial catch for the lake as a whole. But by then whitefish populations had already declined significantly in the lower Great Lakes and there were signs of stress on whitefish in Lake Superior. In 1890 Bayfield and Ashland fishermen caught 1,082,394 pounds of whitefish, about half the amount they caught in 1885. The overall whitefish catch for Lake Superior declined as well but not as sharply. A number of factors in addition to the health of the fish population can affect the commercial catch, including weather and the numbers of fishermen, nets, and boats. As part of its program to try to stop the whitefish decline, the state closed Chequamegon Bay to nets from 1887 to 1891, which likely reduced the local catch. But in the 1890s, when the whitefish catch continued to decline, it was clear that the fish were disappearing. In 1899 Bayfield and Ashland fishermen caught 61,322 pounds of whitefish, 6 percent of the amount they caught in 1890. The whitefish catch for Lake Superior was 693,191 pounds in 1899, 22 percent of the catch in 1890. In Chequamegon Bay and the Apostle

²² Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 14–15; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 160, 164; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 157.

²³ Other information indicates that there were far more than six men making barrels in 1885. Perhaps the number six refers to the number of barrel and boat making operations.

²⁴ Statistics for Lake Superior here and in the following pages refer only to the U.S. fishing industry. Commercial fishing on the Canadian side of Lake Superior, while significant, developed later and operated on a smaller scale than in the U.S.

²⁵ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 16–18; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 174–80.

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Islands, once the most productive whitefish fishing grounds on Lake Superior, the decline was greater than in other parts of the lake. In addition to the pressure caused by intensive fishing, the nets used in spawning grounds caught small fish that were too young to sell but were discarded and thus removed from the reproducing population. Spawning grounds were also polluted by the sawdust that sawmills dumped into the lake.²⁶

When the decline in the whitefish population became pronounced in the 1890s, Lake Superior fishermen shifted their focus to lake trout. In 1899 lake trout accounted for 61 percent of the commercial catch from Lake Superior, compared to 40 percent in 1885. The Apostle Islands provided good fishing grounds for lake trout, which were caught individually in the summer from the deepwater ledge surrounding the islands, and in large numbers in the fall when they swam to shallower water to spawn. In 1885 Bayfield and Ashland fishermen caught 632,700 pounds of lake trout, constituting 20 percent of their commercial catch. By 1899 the Bayfield and Ashland trout catch had increased to 707,622 pounds, but its relative importance had increased more as it constituted 45 percent of the commercial catch.²⁷

Herring are small fish that are naturally abundant in Lake Superior but had little market value before whitefish declined in the 1890s. In addition herring spoiled quickly until improved methods of handling and preserving them were introduced in the late nineteenth century. Herring feed primarily on plankton, and in turn herring are a primary food for lake trout and other predatory fish. During most of the year herring prefer shallow water. In mid-summer they migrate to deeper water, then in the fall they return to shallow water to spawn. At this time they gather in schools that number in the millions and are readily caught in nets. The shallow waters of the Apostle Islands made the islands prime habitat for herring as they were for whitefish. New methods of salting and smoking herring were introduced in the 1870s, and steamboats and railroads made it possible to transport frozen fish to market. In 1885 herring was still insignificant in the Lake Superior fish market, although it was already of major importance on Lake Erie. In that year herring accounted for about 5 percent of the commercial catch for Lake Superior and less than 1 percent for Bayfield and Ashland. But the 70,000 pounds of herring that Bayfield and Ashland fishermen caught in 1885 represented 22 percent of the total herring catch for Lake Superior. In 1890 herring accounted for 6 percent of Bayfield and Ashland's commercial catch. The 696,959 pounds of herring caught from Bayfield and Ashland in 1899 constituted 44 percent of the local commercial catch, nearly as high a proportion as lake trout. In that year Bayfield and Ashland's herring catch represented 62 percent of the total for Lake Superior. Bayfield and the Apostle Islands, Lake Superior's preeminent whitefish fishery in the 1880s, had become the lake's preeminent herring fishery in the 1890s.²⁸

Whitefish, lake trout, and herring combined accounted for more than 90 percent of the commercial catch in Bayfield and Ashland. The remaining commercial fish species included sturgeon, pike, and suckers. Most of the fishing was done with gill nets

²⁶ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 175–85; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 150–53.

²⁷ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 160, 177, 179, 204.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 177, 179, 205–208; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 155–57.

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or pound nets. Gill nets were used by the American Fur Company in the 1830s and by the Ojibwe long before then. The crew of a gill net fishing boat consisted of two or three men who usually worked with four gangs of gill nets, having three gangs in the water at a time. A gang consisted of two or more nets that were fastened together. A crew would set a gang of nets in the lake, return a few days later to haul in the nets and pick out the fish, set new nets, and take the wet nets to shore to dry on reels. New nets could be set in the same location or moved to another location that seemed likely to produce a better catch. Gill nets were used year round—from the break up of ice in the spring to the end of the fall fishing season and through the ice in the winter. In 1885 Bayfield fishermen were using two thousand gill nets.²⁹

Pound nets were developed in Scotland, brought to North America in the 1830s, and probably first used on Lake Superior in the 1860s. Pound (or pond) nets were more complex than gill nets and more expensive to use, but where conditions were right for their use they were more productive. Pound nets were attached to stakes driven into the lake bottom and therefore were limited to shallow water—usually thirty to fifty feet deep. Pounds nets also required a lake bottom of sand or clay, not rocks or gravel. A team of men using a scow fitted with a pile driver set the stakes, usually in May. Because of the labor involved in setting the stakes, pound nets were rarely moved once set. The opening of a pound net was a long leader net that led fish into a heart-shaped enclosure. From the heart the fish passed through a tunnel into a square enclosure called the pot. A fishing crew in a flat-bottomed pound net boat entered the pot every few days to collect the fish. A crew of three men could tend two to five pound nets, which were used mainly for summer fishing. About half of the nets were removed by the beginning of August and the remainder by the end of September. In May 1871 the *Bayfield Press* reported at least nine fishing crews working twenty-five pounds nets in Ashland Bay. In 1885 Bayfield fishermen, with 124 pound nets, were the leading pound nets users on Lake Superior, while Ashland fishermen had 20 more. Outside of Bayfield and Ashland there were 86 pound nets in use on the remainder of Lake Superior. The shallow waters and abundant whitefish of the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay made them ideal for pound net fishing in the 1880s. The marketable catch from a typical pound net was 90 percent whitefish, 7 percent trout, and 3 percent sturgeon. Many more unmarketable sturgeon and small whitefish caught in the nets were thrown away.³⁰

In the early 1870s the Mackinaw boat was the most commonly used fishing boat on Lake Superior. N. & F. Boutin used their schooner, the *Alice Craig*, to collect fish from island fish camps. The first steam-powered fishing boat appeared on Lake Superior in 1871, and some Bayfield fish dealers were using steam tugs by 1877. In 1879 the Boutins bought the steam tug the *N. Boutin*, which they used in conjunction with the *Alice Craig* for collecting. In 1884 Boutin & Mahan (N. & F. Boutin split into two firms in the early 1880s) bought a second collecting steamer. By 1885 there were four steam tugs docked in Bayfield. Steam tugs allowed Bayfield's fish dealers to keep more regular

²⁹ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 161–63, 175, 179; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 18–19; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 180.

³⁰ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 38–40; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 17–22; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 161–63; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 49–50.

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and frequent collection schedules; they were also used for gill net fishing. During the late 1880s the A. Booth Packing Company had a gill net steamer based at Rocky Island and later added another based at South Twin. Steamers allowed fishermen to travel much longer distances from their home ports than they could with a Mackinaw boat. Steamers could also carry more nets—an average of twenty-nine linear miles of netting compared to an average of six miles on a Mackinaw boat. Mechanical net lifters on the steamers allowed fishing at greater depths. Net lifters were manually operated until the steam-powered net lifter was introduced about 1891. Gill net steamers made gill net fishing more competitive with pound net fishing. When the whitefish fishery collapsed in the 1890s and fishermen shifted their emphasis to lake trout they shifted to gill nets as well. Although herring was fished in shallow water, herring nets were a variation on gill nets with smaller mesh, and steam tugs with steam-powered lifters helped greatly to bring in the huge, heavy hauls of fish. Thus, by the late 1890s the use of pound nets had declined greatly.³¹

Other methods of fishing were used to a lesser extent than gill nets and pound nets. Seine nets experienced a revival in popularity in the 1870s due to the abundance of whitefish near the shoreline. In 1885 Bayfield fishermen operated eight seine nets, but ten years later seining had mostly disappeared along with the whitefish. Hook and line fishing through the ice in winter, popularly called bobbing, was practiced primarily by the Ojibwe but also by some white fishermen. The Ojibwe fished both for subsistence and for the commercial market. The Ojibwe also speared herring and lake trout through the ice in winter, making the Chequamegon region the only location on Lake Superior where fish was speared for the commercial market.³²

The rhythm of the fishermen's year was based on the weather and the behavior of the fish. Relatively little commercial fishing was done during the winter, although gill net fishing through the ice could be productive. One crew of two to three men working forty to fifty nets typically caught about twelve hundred pounds of fish in a four day work week. The winter gill net fishing season began in early January and continued for six to ten weeks. However in the winter of 1884–85, only ten crews worked out of Bayfield and some only for a short time. For the most part, the fishing season began when the ice broke up, usually around April 1, and gill net fishermen began fishing for whitefish and trout. Pound nets were set in mid- to late May. When pounds nets were at the height of their popularity in the 1880s many gill net fishermen would switch to pound nets at this time, joining additional pound net fishermen. The primary pound net season ended by the end of July and fishermen began taking up the nets and returning to gill net fishing. Usually all of the pound nets had been removed by the end of September. In October the lake trout moved to shallow water to spawn, beginning the major lake trout fishing season. The whitefish spawning season, which followed lake trout spawning, was not as critical because whitefish could be caught in shallow water year round. The fishing

³¹ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 40, 49, 258; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 163, 169–70, 172–74, 204–205, 208; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 14–15, 17–18; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 51; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 34–35.

³² Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 21; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 64; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 167–68.

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season ended with the two to three week herring run beginning in mid- to late November, so labor intensive that it became a community event. Boats went out on overnight runs to net herring, which were so numerous that a catch of more than ten tons was not unusual at the height of the spawning season. A newspaper reporter on a herring boat described the scene when the nets were raised: “Over on the ‘for’d’ deck the fish are being heaped up, and the work grows more exciting as the nets come over the side filled with the little fellows, occasionally squeaking a protest at leaving their native element. After a time nearly all of the space ‘for’d’ of the wheel house is stacked up with a squirming mass of fish and the deck room on the port side of the engine room is filled up until the tug lists over 20%, when the men make another tack and fill the starboard side.”³³ The boats transported the nets full of herring back to the docks where many extra hands, including schoolchildren, were enlisted to pick fish out of the nets. The docks were covered with temporary houses to supplement the regular packinghouses, which also hired extra workers to dress and pack herring.³⁴

Herring season was exciting and also dangerous, because the worst Lake Superior storms occurred in November. After relating how a November blizzard trapped members of the Boutin family on an island for five days, the *Ashland Press* concluded: “Such is a fisherman’s life. They doubly earn every dollar received for their labor.”³⁵ The Boutins escaped unharmed, but in November 1893 the *Bayfield County Press* reported: “Early Wednesday morning, during the severe snow storm, M. H. Johnson and Gust Hendrickson, two experienced sailors and fishermen, left this port in a small sail boat to lift their herring nets which were set about two miles from this place towards Madaline [*sic*] Island and it is supposed that they got lost in the storm and either swamped and perished or were driven out on Lake Superior.”³⁶ Such reports were not unusual. Storms, not only in November, took away nets, boats, docks, and lives. Ice posed a hazard in winter, when fishermen were liable to fall through weak ice or become trapped on ice floes.

State government sought to stop the decline of fish populations, evident on Lake Michigan by the 1870s, by passing regulatory laws. In 1874 the state legislature created the Wisconsin Fish Commission and charged it to address the decline. In 1879 the legislature passed the first regulatory laws, establishing a minimum weight for fish that were sold and setting a minimum mesh size for nets. Although wardens were appointed to enforce the laws, enforcement remained ineffective for many years. In 1887 the state closed Chequamegon Bay to all fishing nets in an attempt to protect this important whitefish spawning grounds. The unpopular law was repealed in 1891, but in that year the state established closed seasons for both whitefish and lake trout during which fishing for these species was prohibited. Chequamegon Bay was closed again to nets in 1895 in response to the collapse of the local whitefish fishery. Subsequent laws established a

³³ “The Herring Fishers: A Night on the Dark Waters of Lake Superior,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 10, 1898, reprinted in *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 20 (Fall 1999): 2, 8.

³⁴ Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 17, 19–20; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 155–56, 160, 188, 207–208; Nute, “American Fur Company’s Fishing,” 490–91; “Herring Fishers,” 2, 8; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 93, 97–98.

³⁵ *Ashland Press*, November 30, 1872, quoted in Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 75.

³⁶ “Two Fishermen Lost,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 25, 1893.

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minimum weight for lake trout, increased the minimum weight for whitefish, and extended the closed season. In the late 1890s the state appointed additional wardens, enough to enforce the laws, and the number of arrests and convictions increased accordingly.³⁷

In addition to regulating the fishing industry, the state also sought to restore fish populations through propagation. The Wisconsin Fish Commission began its stocking program first in Lake Michigan. They began stocking Lake Superior in 1885, when 2.25 million whitefish fry (recently hatched fish) were released into Chequamegon Bay. More whitefish fry were released at other locations on Lake Superior in the years that followed. Meanwhile, in 1877 Bayfield lumberman Robinson D. Pike had constructed a private fish hatchery on land that he owned south of Bayfield. In 1895 Pike offered to donate his hatchery and several hundred acres of land to the state of Wisconsin, and prominent local businessmen Isaac Wing and William Knight offered adjoining parcels, bringing the total to six hundred acres. The state accepted the donation and appropriated twenty thousand dollars to build a new hatchery, the Salmo Hatchery, which opened in 1898. At that time the hatchery raised primarily whitefish and lake trout. Supplied by the Salmo Hatchery, the state released millions of whitefish and lake trout fry in the Apostle Islands. Fisheries experts believed strongly that stocking programs helped to increase whitefish and lake trout populations, although there is no evidence to support this.³⁸

Fish dealers were integral to the Great Lakes fishing industry by the 1870s. Dealers employed fishermen to fish for them for wages or shares—a percentage of the catch—and also purchased fish from independent fishermen. The dealers then processed, packed, stored, shipped, and sold the fish. N. & F. Boutin, which began operating in Bayfield in 1870, was the town's first large fish dealer. Nelson and Frank Boutin headed the family business, which included six more of their brothers. The French-Canadian family moved from Canada to Detroit in 1837 and then to various locations on Lake Michigan, engaging in fishing. Manitowoc was their last stop before moving to Ashland, briefly, and then settling in Bayfield. N. & F. Boutin was already a large operation when they moved to Bayfield; they reportedly brought with them 550 gill nets, 12 pound nets, the schooner *Alice Craig*, a number of small boats, and one hundred fishermen and their families. The Boutins opened a barrel making factory and a dry goods store to sell supplies to their employees and quickly became the largest employer in Bayfield.³⁹

N. & F. Boutin remained the largest fish dealer in Bayfield through the 1870s. Their fishermen fished mostly from the Apostle Islands, but some of their crews went as far as Isle Royale. The brothers also continued to fish themselves. The company sent their schooner and later their steamer out to the fish camps to collect fish and drop off barrels and salt. By 1880 N. & F. Boutin was doing two hundred thousand dollars of business a year and handling about fifteen hundred half barrels of fish in the summer and

³⁷ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 35, 42; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 186–192.

³⁸ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 199–203; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 23–24; Sheree L. Peterson, "State Fish Hatchery at Salmo," *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 7 (March 1986): 1.

³⁹ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 35–38; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 158–59; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 12–13; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 46–47.

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one hundred tons of fresh fish in the winter. They shipped most of their fish to markets on the Great Lakes. In the early 1880s the Boutin brothers split into two firms: Nelson Boutin partnered with Samuel E. Mahan to form Boutin & Mahan, and Frank Boutin went into business under his own name. In 1882 Boutin & Mahan built a four hundred by forty foot dock and a warehouse with a capacity of five hundred tons. Boutin & Mahan was the largest fish dealer in the Chequamegon region when Booth arrived in 1885.⁴⁰

The A. Booth Packing Company was the giant of the Great Lakes fish dealers. Born in England, Alfred Booth opened a small fish and vegetable store in Chicago in 1850. From this beginning Booth created a major wholesale food business, what one writer called “the most extensive oyster, fish and fruit dealers in the West” in the mid-1880s. Booth employed fishermen and purchased fish on the southern part of Lake Michigan until whitefish there became insufficient to supply his market, then he moved to the northern part of the lake. By 1885 he was ready to expand to Lake Superior. The rich fishing grounds of the Apostle Islands combined with the recently completed railroad to Bayfield made Bayfield his first choice. A. Booth and Sons, as it was known at the time, began operating in Bayfield on a trial basis in 1885. The Bayfield Businessmen’s Association wooed Booth, donating a lakefront site in the center of town for a dock. Booth stayed in Bayfield and built packinghouses, net sheds, ice houses, and a freezing plant. Booth’s two gill net steamers based in the Apostle Islands expanded the scale of fishing there; Booth’s Rocky Island operation became the largest wage labor operation in the islands. Their collecting steamer collected fish from island fish camps. Many fishermen fished for Booth on shares or were in debt to Booth; they were unable to sell their fish to other dealers who might give them a better price. The fishermen called this being “tied up to Booth.” After Bayfield, Booth established fishing operations at Sault Ste. Marie, Whitefish Point, Duluth, and Port Arthur and by the early 1890s controlled the largest share of the Lake Superior catch in both Canada and the U.S. Following the Panic of 1893, Booth bought additional fish dealerships that had failed. In 1898 Booth incorporated as A. Booth and Company, a \$5.5 million corporation commonly known as the “fish trust.” The following year Booth incorporated its Canadian operations as the Dominion Fish Company. In many Great Lakes fishing ports fishermen had to sell to Booth because Booth was the only dealer in town. But in Bayfield there were always a few other dealers, albeit smaller.⁴¹

Boutin and Booth dominated but did not monopolize the Bayfield fish trade. In 1870 William Herbert had a fish house, five boats, and employed twelve men; he marketed his catch in Detroit and Milwaukee. J. B. Bono was fishing in the early 1870s and shipping fish to St. Paul by dogsled. In the late 1870s Shaw and O’Malley were fish dealers in Bayfield but on a much smaller scale than the Boutins. In 1882, Frank Boutin, Boutin & Mahan, and Fred Fischer, in that order, were Bayfield’s largest fish dealers. Frank Boutin shipped 940,000 pounds of fish to market, Boutin & Mahan shipped 766,956 pounds, and Fred Fischer shipped 206,800 pounds. Three years later, the two

⁴⁰ Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 13–15, 18; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 160, 163–66, 169; Rathbun, “Commercial Fishing,” 47–48, 57–58; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 158, 160.

⁴¹ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 59–65, 72–73, 264; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 170–73, 209.

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Boutin firms were still among the city's leading fish dealers but Fischer was not. Booth's 1885 arrival altered the scale and balance of the fish trade for the long term. In 1885 A. Booth and Sons and Boutin & Mahan were Bayfield's two top fish dealers. With two additional firms, Frank Boutin and Rich & Atwood, they controlled most of the Ashland and Bayfield fish trade. Rich & Atwood was a Minneapolis-based fish dealer that began operating in Bayfield in 1883. They had twelve fishing boats, a schooner, and employed forty to fifty men.⁴²

At least 130 fishermen lived in Bayfield in 1880 according to an outside agency report. In 1885, per the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, 182 fishermen made Bayfield their home port. Considering that the federal census counted a population of 495 for the village of Bayfield in 1880 (564 for all of Bayfield County), fishermen were clearly an important element of the population. Often fishermen worked part time at fishing, combining it with logging, farming, or mining. With the Boutins employing between seventy and one hundred men (mostly fishermen) in the 1870s, a large proportion of the fishermen had to be working for dealers, either for wages or shares of the catch. Other fishermen worked independently, selling their catch to whoever offered them the best price. However, some independent fishermen were bound to dealers by debt. For example, if a dealer sold a fisherman a pound net on credit, then the fisherman had to pay off his debt in fish. Fishermen usually worked in crews of two or more—lifting nets and other tasks were difficult or dangerous to do solo. Independent fishermen typically worked with brothers or sons, or if relatives were unavailable they entered into partnerships or hired help. Larger independent operations might have a number of hired hands.⁴³

Most of the fishermen in the Chequamegon region in the 1870s and 1880s were Canadian or American. French Canadians were the dominant ethnic group. Some of them, like the Boutins, had arrived recently. Other French Canadian families had come to the region several generations earlier to work in the fur trade. After the Boutins, the most prominent of the local French Canadian fishermen was Joseph LeBel, who established a family fishing business on Long Island and became the leading pound net fisherman in the region. Born in Quebec, LeBel came to the Chequamegon region about 1869. The newspaper named LeBel among the pound net users in Ashland Bay in 1871. In 1880 LeBel purchased the western tip of Long Island where he built docks, a house for his family, and a number of buildings for his fishery. Over time the residential and fishing complex came to include shanties for seasonal workers; a fish house, where fish were dressed and salted; twine shed/ice house; root cellar; and smokehouse (47AS193). LeBel used a pond on the island to hold fish when prices were low. In 1885 LeBel had twenty-one pound nets set along the shore of Long Island and more at Presque Isle (Stockton Island). When a joint U.S. and Canadian commission investigating the Great Lakes fisheries interviewed LeBel in 1894, he was operating sixteen pound nets and

⁴² Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 48, 57–58; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 15, 18; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 164–66, 170; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 158, 160.

⁴³ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 160, 166; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 18; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 176; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 46.

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employed twenty fishermen. LeBel defended the use of pound nets, which were taking much of the blame for the demise of whitefish in the Chequamegon region.⁴⁴

The Ojibwe were the second most numerous ethnic group among the local fishermen. Fishing was, of course, a traditional pursuit for the Lake Superior Ojibwe and an important part of their subsistence. Ojibwe from Bad River and especially from the Red Cliff Reservation continued to fish for subsistence, but they also worked for wages and fished independently, selling their catch to fish dealers. In 1885 Frank Boutin estimated that one fourth of the fishermen working in the local fisheries were Indians or mixed-blood. The question of whether state laws regulating the fisheries applied to the Ojibwe, especially when they were fishing for the market and not for subsistence, became an important issue by the end of the century.⁴⁵

During the 1890s Scandinavians replaced French Canadians as the most numerous ethnic group among fishermen in the region. The reporter on a herring boat in 1898 wrote: “Captain Nogglegard and several of the crew are Scandinavians, as also are most of the men engaged in the fishing business at this point.”⁴⁶ It appears that Norwegians were the dominant group in Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. Reputedly the first Norwegian to come to Bayfield was Hans Austad, who arrived in 1880. During the 1890s Austad was fishing at Outer and Rocky islands and built a fish camp on the latter. Austad’s abilities became legendary among fishermen, including stories that he could lift a barrel of salt and that he slept standing up. Charlie Benson and Louis Moe came to Bayfield in 1891; Moe subsequently moved to Sand Island and Benson to South Twin Island. By 1895 there was a concentration of Scandinavian fishermen on Sand Island. Describing Sand Island for the *Ashland Weekly Press*, Sam Fifield wrote: “There is a settlement of Swede and Norwegian fishermen-farmers on East bay, which bids fair to increase in numbers and prosperity.”⁴⁷ The Norwegian fishermen who populated the Chequamegon region were part of the second and largest wave of Norwegian immigration to the United States, which began in 1879 and continued into the 1890s. Most of them came from coastal towns and had been fishermen or fishermen-farmers in Norway. They left Norway because it had become difficult to make a living there by fishing or farming. They came to the Chequamegon region because it offered a familiar environment and the opportunity to engage in work that they knew. Once the first Norwegians came, others followed their friends and relatives.⁴⁸

Most fishermen lived from spring to fall at island fish camps. Some stayed in fish camps for winter fishing as well, on islands closer to the mainland that could be reached

⁴⁴ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 166; Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 17; Williams, “Long Island,” 87–89, 94–96; Rathbun, “Commercial Fishing,” 49; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 64.

⁴⁵ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 167–68; Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 17; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 80–81.

⁴⁶ “Herring Fishers,” 8.

⁴⁷ Sam S. Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon,” *Ashland Weekly Press*, December 21, 1895.

⁴⁸ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 273–75; Katy E. Holmer, “A Superior Summer: A Landscape History of Rocky Island, an Apostle Islands Fishing Community,” (master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003), 71–73; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 26; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 38–39, 46–52.

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by walking on the ice. The Apostle Islands offered some of the best fishing grounds on Lake Superior, and nearly all of the islands had fish camps. Camps eliminated the need to take time consuming daily trips back and forth to Ashland or Bayfield. The fishermen lived in “rude shanties” and rarely owned the land where they camped. Some made periodic trips to the mainland; others stayed out all season. Fish dealers sent their collecting boats to the islands to pick up fish and deliver supplies and provisions. The P-Flat site on Manitou Island demonstrates that fish camps had a long history as a useful approach to island fishing. Indians used the site for fall fishing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and commercial fishermen used the same location in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁹

When Booth stationed a steam tug at a camp on Rocky Island it raised the bar for fish camp operations. Booth stationed the *T. H. Camp* for gill net fishing at Rocky Island about 1888, establishing a camp that became the largest wage labor fishing operation in the islands. Fifield described the camp in 1895 as “one of the most important fishing stations of the Booth Packing Company. There is a dock and warehouse, while scattered along the sandy beach is a number of rustic huts, the homes of the fishermen. This station is occupied all the year round, in winter by gillnetters who fish on the outside reefs using dog teams with which to haul in their catch.”⁵⁰ In addition to Booth’s company camp, some individual fishermen had fish camps on Rocky Island in the late nineteenth century.⁵¹

The fish camp that Frank Shaw established on Sand Island developed in a different direction than Booth’s Rocky Island camp. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Francis (Frank) Shaw moved to Sandusky, Ohio, in the late 1860s where he married his wife Josephine. In 1870 Shaw came to La Pointe, apparently to investigate establishing a fishing business, and purchased thirty-seven acres of land along the southeastern shore of Sand Island.⁵² In May 1871 Frank Shaw was setting pound nets in Chequamegon Bay, but in the winter the Shaws returned to Sandusky. For the next several years it appears that the Shaws maintained homes in both La Pointe and Sandusky until they left Sandusky permanently in the mid-1870s. During this time, Frank Shaw was developing his Sand Island fish camp. But unlike other fishermen with camps on Sand Island at that time, Shaw owned the land. In the early 1880s the Shaws moved their primary residence from La Pointe to Bayfield. About this time the Sand Island property began to serve as a summer home for the family, while Frank Shaw stayed out from spring until fall. By the mid-1880s, perhaps earlier, Shaw was planting crops on the island. Fishing, however, remained his primary occupation. During the 1890s Shaw maintained a fishing fleet of more than four boats and usually hired at least three men to assist him. In 1895 Fifield wrote of “Shaw’s Landing”: “Captain Frank Shaw has a good snug farm at this point, where he has been for the past twenty years engaged in fishing and farming.”⁵³ In 1897

⁴⁹ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 164–65; Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 16–17; Masters, “P-Flat Site,” sec. 8, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁰ Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon.”

⁵¹ Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 34–40; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 172–73.

⁵² Later purchases increased Shaw’s land holdings on Sand Island to 183 acres.

⁵³ Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon.”

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Frank and Josephine Shaw began to live on Sand Island year round. As Frank Shaw developed his fish camp into a home, farm, and expanded fishing operation, he built a log building (the first house) on the shore, a log and frame house farther inland, a root cellar, workshop, smokehouse, and additional buildings. In 1898 he expanded his dock, which had a fish house at the end. A number of these buildings survive today as part of the National Register-listed Shaw-Hill farm.⁵⁴

Louis Moe (Lars Eliason) was one of the first Norwegian settlers on Sand Island. Moe had been a fisherman in Mo-i-Rana, Norway. In 1893 he filed a homestead claim for an inland parcel on Sand Island, but soon afterwards he purchased a farm and fishing complex on East Bay that had been developed by another Norwegian. Peter and Dorothea Hansen and their children Frederick and Christine emigrated from Norway to Sand Island shortly after Moe settled on the island. The Hansens knew Moe in Norway and fished for him on Sand Island until they earned enough money to buy their own boat. Christine married Peter Johnson, another island fisherman who had emigrated from Norway. In June 1895 the Wisconsin state census taker counted forty-six residents on Sand Island. This did not include the Shaws, who were listed in the village of Bayfield, but it did include lighthouse keeper Emmanuel Luick and his wife Ella. Nineteen of the forty-six were men living alone. It seems likely that most of these men occupied fish camps although some may have had more permanent establishments like that of Louis Moe. The census counted eleven females in seven households, indicating that there were families on the island. Although the Sand Island men were fishermen first, those with families grew at least enough food to feed them. About a third of the residents were Scandinavian-born; the remainder were born in the U.S. In 1899 Louis Moe traveled to Mo-i-Rana to get married, returning to Sand Island with his wife. Peter Johnson's brother Herman arrived from Norway at about the same time. With the Shaws, the island's permanent population slowly began to grow, establishing a base for the twentieth century community.⁵⁵

Methods for preserving and shipping fish, like other aspects of fishing technology, changed dramatically in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Until the late 1870s when steamboats and railroads arrived in the Chequamegon region, all fish was packed in a salt brine in barrels and shipped by boat as the American Fur Company had done forty years earlier. Barrel making was an important local adjunct to the fishing industry. Sawmill owner R. D. Pike was making barrels by 1870. The Boutins opened

⁵⁴ Arnold R. Alanen, "The Shaw-Hill Farm Site on Sand Island (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore): Biographical and Site-Related Information," (report prepared for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1990), 4–11, 28–31; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 23–25; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 268–70, 283; *Bayfield County Press*, November 27, 1897, September 9, 1899; Herschel L. D. Parnes, "Shaw Farm," National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places, 1975).

⁵⁵ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 26–27; William H. Tishler, Arnold R. Alanen, and George Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development of the Apostle Islands," (report prepared for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, WI, 1983), 34; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 273–75; manuscript schedule for the 1895 Wisconsin census of population, Bayfield Township, Bayfield County, Wisconsin State Archives; "Herman Johnson Played a Big Part in Sand Island Life for Nearly Half a Century," *Bayfield County Press*, January 27, 1955.

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their own cooperage shortly after they arrived in Bayfield, and in 1871 the Red Cliff sawmill manufactured more than 340,000 oak barrel staves for the Boutins. In 1874 Indian agent Mahan added a cooperage to the Red Cliff sawmill. By 1881 Louis Bachand employed about thirty men at his Bayfield Barrel Factory and made twelve thousand barrels a season; Fred Fischer employed about twenty men and made ten thousand barrels a season.⁵⁶

The introduction of steamboats and railroads made it possible to ship fresh fish to market. Freshly caught fish was packed on ice and picked up by steamer. Some was taken by steamer to market in one of the port cities, but most was transported to a railroad depot and shipped to market in a refrigerated rail car. After the Wisconsin Central Railroad completed a line to Ashland in 1877, Bayfield and Ashland fish dealers began to ship significant amounts of fresh fish to market. In 1882 Bayfield's two largest fish dealers—Frank Boutin and Boutin & Mahan—shipped a total of 364,456 pounds of fresh fish to market. All but 10,000 pounds of this was shipped by the Wisconsin Central Railroad. By comparison, the two dealers shipped 1,342,500 pounds of salted fish that year. With an additional 206,800 shipped by Fred Fischer, who dealt in salted fish only, Bayfield's three largest fish dealers shipped 1,549,300 pounds of salted fish in 1882. The following year, the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad completed a rail line to Bayfield. With a direct rail connection to markets, Bayfield's prolific fish dealers increased their shipments of fresh and frozen fish. In 1885 three of Bayfield's leading dealers—Boutin & Mahan, Frank Boutin, and Rich & Atwood⁵⁷—shipped more than 600,000 pounds of fresh and frozen fish and 2,200,000 pounds of salted fish. Although the proportion of fresh fish would continue to increase, salted fish remained important for many years. Mining and lumbering camps provided a steady market for salted fish. In addition, salting was a faster and easier method of preservation. Using ice to preserve fish fresh or to freeze it meant investing in new equipment and facilities. During the winter fish dealers harvested three to four hundred pound blocks of ice from Chequamegon Bay and stored the blocks in ice houses. The ice was flaked and delivered to the fish camps to keep fish fresh. Freezing fish required additional expense—in 1880 it cost eight thousand dollars to build a freezing plant. Thus the freezing plant that Booth built shortly after its arrival in Bayfield demonstrated the company's financial strength as well as giving it a market advantage. Fish were frozen in airtight pans that were packed into a freezer. The four freezers at Booth's Bayfield plant had a capacity of nearly one million pounds and allowed Booth to freeze up to 10,000 pounds of fish a day. When fish prices were low, Booth could keep the frozen fish until prices improved.⁵⁸

Before the railroads arrived in Ashland and Bayfield, most fish was shipped to Great Lakes ports including Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Buffalo, especially the latter two cities. Most fish continued to be shipped, by boat or rail, to Great Lakes ports

⁵⁶ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 98, 139, 165; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 17; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 47, 52; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 82.

⁵⁷ It appears that Booth had not arrived in town when the Commission of Fish and Fisheries compiled data for their report.

⁵⁸ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 165–66, 169–72; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 15, 17–18, 61; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 51.

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after the railroads arrived. But the destination for fresh or frozen fish shipped by rail seemed to depend on which rail line was used. The entire forty thousand pounds of fresh fish that Frank Boutin shipped from Ashland by the Wisconsin Central Railroad in 1882 went to Chicago or Milwaukee. Much of the fresh fish shipped by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad from Bayfield in 1885 went to Minneapolis and St. Paul. The railroad also made it possible to market salted fish in inland cities; in 1882 Fred Fischer shipped a portion of his salted fish to Minneapolis and vicinity. Booth, of course, had a nationwide marketing system based in Chicago by the time the company established its Bayfield operation. It appears that sometimes local dealers traveled to market cities to sell their fish while at other times dealers from those cities came to Bayfield. In September 1885 the *Bayfield County Press* reported: “A Buffalo fish dealer held forth in town several days this week, endeavoring to purchase a quantity of salt whitefish and trout. The PRESS understands that he succeeded in securing several hundred barrels at an average price of \$4.75 per hundred.”⁵⁹

Recovery and Prosperity

By the early 1900s the Lake Superior fishing industry had recovered from the collapse of the whitefish population. Recovery was enabled by shifting from whitefish to more numerous fish species and by increasing the scale and efficiency of fishing operations. State regulations restricted the catch to some extent, in the interest of preserving fish populations. There were more than nine hundred American fishermen on Lake Superior in 1903, compared to just over four hundred in 1885. In 1903 the total U.S. commercial catch for Lake Superior was 13,265,613 pounds, compared to 8,825,980 pounds in the banner year of 1885. The commercial catch for Bayfield and Ashland combined was 4,783,566 in 1903, compared to 3,159,500 in 1885. Bayfield and Ashland accounted for 36 percent of the U.S. Lake Superior total in 1903. Thus the Apostle Islands area retained its importance as one of the most important fisheries on Lake Superior. In evaluating Bayfield’s industries in 1905, the *Bayfield County Press* identified fishing as second to lumbering in the local economy, boasting “the fishing industry has given a name and fame to Bayfield all over the United States.”⁶⁰ The *Press* reported that four fish companies plus one hundred individual fishermen working in the Bayfield fisheries had a combined capital of three hundred thousand dollars and an annual catch worth one hundred thousand dollars. Yet, in 1905 when the *Press* counted fishing second to lumbering, the most valuable lumber—pine—was depleted. Lumbering continued but on a downward spiral. In contrast, the fishing business prospered over the next several decades. The *Press* aptly described the fishing business: “There are lean and fat years in this business like all others. Still, the catch averages well.”⁶¹ There were wide fluctuations in the annual commercial catch from Lake Superior, but the overall trend was upward to an all time high of 25,500,000 pounds for all of Lake Superior,

⁵⁹ Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 15, 17–18; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 165–66; Rathbun, “Commercial Fishing,” 48; *Bayfield County Press*, September 26, 1885.

⁶⁰ “Bayfield 1905—Her Industries and Agricultural Resources,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 10, 1905.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

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including both Canadian and American fisheries, in 1941.⁶² The 1940s were the golden years for the Lake Superior fishing industry. In the Chequamegon region, the ups and downs of the local fishing industry mirrored that of the lake as a whole. In 1946 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that 250 men were employed year round in the local fishing industry, which generated as much as a half million dollars in annual revenue. In 1949 the catch for Bayfield County was 5,430,000 pounds.⁶³

The whitefish population did not recover for many decades after it collapsed in the 1890s, and the commercial catch would never reach the levels of its heyday in the 1880s. In 1903 the U.S. whitefish catch for Lake Superior was 794,022 pounds, only 6 percent of the total commercial catch. The whitefish catch for Bayfield and Ashland that year was 128,877 pounds, less than 3 percent of the local commercial catch. From the mid-1880s until 1920 the whitefish catch from Lake Superior declined steadily. In 1920 the whitefish catch began to grow slowly. As always, there were cyclical fluctuations, but the overall trend was upward. In 1922 the U.S. whitefish catch for Lake Superior was roughly 380,000 pounds and the Canadian catch was 300,000 pounds. By 1940 the U.S. catch had increased to 692,174 pounds and the Canadian catch had increased to 385,024 pounds. In 1936 the Chequamegon Bay whitefish harvest was more than 100,000 pounds and in 1948 it exceeded 700,000 pounds. Several reasons have been suggested for the whitefish recovery, including the end of logging and the resultant pollution of spawning grounds, stocking programs, regulatory laws, and less use of pound nets. None of these reasons, however, have been proven as the cause for recovery.⁶⁴

Through the first half of the twentieth century, lake trout was the leading commercial fish from Lake Superior. Whitefish brought the highest price but quantities were limited; herring was caught in greater quantities but it was worth less money. The lake trout catch for 1903 was the highest on record: 4,954,830 for the American side of Lake Superior and roughly 7,532,000 for the lake as a whole. The lake trout catch for Bayfield and Ashland in 1903 was 1,043,226 pounds and accounted for 22 percent of the local commercial catch. Except for cyclical fluctuations, the lake trout catch remained fairly steady from the 1900s through the 1940s. In 1922 the U.S. lake trout catch for Lake Superior was roughly 2,833,000 pounds; in 1940 it was 2,677,176 pounds. On the Canadian side the lake trout catch was roughly 1,495,000 pounds in 1922 and 1,261,211 pounds in 1940. There is, however, evidence that lake trout populations were declining during the 1930s and 1940s, and that increased fishing both caused and compensated for the decline.⁶⁵

⁶² To compare apples with apples, the combined Canadian and American commercial catch for Lake Superior in 1903 was roughly 17,000,000 pounds. A. H. Lawrie and Jerold F. Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History of the Lake and Its Fisheries," technical report no. 19 (Ann Arbor: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1973), 31–32.

⁶³ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 174, 177, 179; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 80–82; Ross, *La Pointe*, 170. Although most of the Apostle Islands are in Ashland County, most of the fish caught in the islands were taken to Bayfield and counted there.

⁶⁴ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 177, 179, 211–12; Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 47–48; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 185–86.

⁶⁵ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 177, 179; Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 40–41; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 185–86.

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Herring continued to be a phenomenon, both for the remarkable size of the catch and for the drama of the herring run each November. Cyclical fluctuations in the herring catch were much sharper than for lake trout or whitefish, but overall the herring catch increased from the beginning of commercial herring fishing in the 1880s to the record high of more than 19,000,000 pounds for all of Lake Superior (American and Canadian) in 1941. In 1903 the U.S. herring catch for Lake Superior was 4,742,805 pounds, 36 percent of the U.S. commercial catch. That year the herring catch for Ashland and Bayfield was 3,046,025 pounds, 64 percent of the local commercial catch. This was up from 44 percent of the Ashland and Bayfield commercial catch just four years earlier. In addition, the Chequamegon region accounted for 64 percent of the U.S. Lake Superior herring catch in 1903. Herring was more important for the American fishery on Lake Superior than for the Canadian fishery. In 1922 the U.S. herring catch for Lake Superior was roughly 7,394,000 pounds compared to 604,000 pounds for the Canadian catch. In 1940 the U.S. catch had increased to 17,116,902 pounds compared to a Canadian catch of 1,441,515 pounds.⁶⁶ These statistics underscore the leading role of the Chequamegon fishing industry in Lake Superior herring fishing, as well as the importance of herring in the Bayfield economy. The herring run involved the whole community in three weeks (more or less) of intense work. John B. Chapple captured the spirit of the herring harvest in early December 1944, when Bayfield was even more frenzied than usual due to the wartime labor shortage. “Bayfield, right now at the peak of the heaviest herring run in years, is like a gold mining boom town at its wildest, and it will remain so for the next few days until the herring suddenly depart into deep water and the run is over.” About two hundred fishermen were out on thirty to forty fishing boats, bringing in four to five tons of herring per load. Four hundred more men were on the docks to handle the fish as it was unloaded. Most of the population of the Red Cliff Reservation along with most of the Bayfield High School students were picking herring from the nets or working in the processing plants. Five students who belonged to the Bayfield High School glee club sang three part harmony while they picked. A typical fishing boat would earn about fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars profit over the three week run. Chapple concluded: “When the rush is over, and the sea gulls have flown away, there’ll be lots of money left jingling in the pockets of those who took part in Bayfield’s 1944 ‘herring boom.’”⁶⁷

Other species of fish were less important commercially than whitefish, lake trout, and herring, which together accounted for 88 percent of the commercial catch from Bayfield and Ashland in 1903. The deputy state game warden’s report for 1909 listed (in order of value) pike, suckers, siscoes, sturgeon, and pickerel as the other species that made up Bayfield’s commercial catch that year. There were five species of cisco, or chub, in Lake Superior. The different chubs were difficult to distinguish from each other and were often confused, or simply lumped together. The 1909 report may refer to the

⁶⁶ Lawrie and Rahrer, “Lake Superior: A Case History,” 53; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 177, 179, 207; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 185–86.

⁶⁷ John B. Chapple, “‘Herring Boom’ at Bayfield: Bayfield Like Boom Town in the Gold Rush Days,” in *The Wisconsin Islands, The Famous Apostle Islands at the Top of Wisconsin* (Ashland Daily Press, 1945), reprinted in *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 20 (Fall 1999): 3–6.

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bluefin or blackfin cisco, one or both of which were popular for smoked fish and intensively fished in Bayfield and other locations on Lake Superior beginning about 1900. As a result they had practically disappeared by 1915. Rainbow smelt, native to the Atlantic Ocean, migrated or was accidentally introduced to Lake Superior where it was first reported in 1930. In April 1946 there was a run of smelt in Chequamegon Bay, the first in the region's history. But this was an isolated event; overall the Lake Superior smelt population remained low and had little effect on the commercial fisheries until the 1950s.⁶⁸

Improvements in fishing equipment and technology played an important role in keeping Lake Superior's commercial fisheries growing. Of all the innovations introduced in the twentieth century, the use of gasoline engines to power fishing boats was probably the most important. In 1899 fishermen in Marquette, Michigan were the first to attach a type of gasoline engine to a sailboat. Others soon adopted the idea, and by 1903 thirty-five fishing boats on Lake Superior, including five in the Apostle Islands, had gasoline engines. By the 1910s gasoline engines were predominant for fishing boats and had made inroads into collecting boats, although steam tugs remained popular for a longer time for large collecting boats. Gasoline engines gave smaller fishing boats the advantages of steam tugs—the ability to travel farther, carry more nets, use power net lifters, and better withstand bad weather. The average fisherman could afford to buy a gasoline motorboat, whereas the larger steam tugs—more expensive to buy and maintain and requiring a larger crew—were beyond the means of most. Without sails in the way, enclosed cabins similar to those on steam tugs began to appear on motorized fishing boats. An early version of a cabin was made by stretching canvas over steel hoops. By the 1920s an enclosed wood cabin amidships with open forward and stern decks was standard. By the late 1930s the typical Apostle Islands fishing boat had an enclosed pilothouse amidships and completely enclosed forward deck. Diesel engines and steel hulls were introduced in the 1920s but did not become common until the 1940s. For ice fishing, walking and dogsleds were replaced by motorized transportation including automobiles, trucks, motorized toboggans, and airplanes.⁶⁹

Gill nets were the predominant commercial fishing method during the first half of the twentieth century, although pound nets were by no means uncommon in the Apostle Islands. The game warden's report for 1909 counted 830 gill nets for trout, 364 gill nets for herring, and 36 pound nets in use in Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. Describing a boat trip in the Apostle Islands in the early 1940s, Grace Lee Nute wrote: "Pound nets are visible here and there along the coast and near some of the islands. They can be distinguished immediately by the pole supports that project above the water. This region is one of the best on the lake for pound fisheries, having shallow water close to shore,

⁶⁸ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 179; "Something Doing in Our Fisheries," *Bayfield Progress*, January 6, 1910; Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 48–52, 55; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 149, 393–94; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 185; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 64; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 148–49, 164; "First Smelt Run Busies Ashland," *Duluth News-Tribune*, April 16, 1946.

⁶⁹ Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 258; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 210–11; Harvey Hadland, "The Evolution of Fish Boat Design at Bayfield, Wisconsin," Harvey Hadland and Bob Mackreth, *Fish Tugs of the Greatest Lake, Bayfield, Wisconsin*, 2002, <http://www.harveyhadland.com/history1.htm>; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 73–74.

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with very deep water in the immediate vicinity.”⁷⁰ Mrs. Leo Hokenson explained that the Hokenson brothers preferred pound nets, which corralled fish, as opposed to gill nets, which caught fish by the gills and often damaged them as they struggled (figure 11). Gill nets, however, were more versatile than pound nets. Mechanical gill net lifters powered by gasoline engines reduced labor and increased productivity, making it easier to move nets and set them at different depths. Other refinements in gill net fishing also boosted productivity. Cotton fish nets were introduced about 1930 and were widely used during World War II, when there was a shortage of linen. Cotton nets, however, lasted only two to four years compared to ten to twelve years for linen nets that were cared for properly. Both linen—used for gill and pound nets—and cotton had to be treated to prevent rotting and dried in between uses. Nylon fish nets were introduced in the 1940s but did not become common until the 1950s.⁷¹

Hook and line fishing for trout gained popularity during the early twentieth century. Fishermen used a new system of hook gangs in which hooks were tied to four foot lines and the lines were fastened to a heavy cord that could be several miles long. The cord was either fastened to the bottom or floated. A hook gang often contained 2,500 to 3,000 hooks. The 16,500 hooks on 180,000 feet of line being used in Bayfield and the Apostle Islands in 1909 were presumably part of hook gangs. During the 1920s there was a resurgence of the older method of trolling, or angling, with a single baited hook and line. Early tourists had angled for trout on Lake Superior in the nineteenth century, but renewed interest reportedly began in July 1926 when William Brown tried this technique off the shore of Munising, Michigan, and caught nearly fifteen hundred pounds of lake and rainbow trout in five hours. Trolling became an important part of the summer tourist business on Lake Superior, and Bayfield was a center for this activity. On one hand, sport fishermen competed with commercial fishermen for trout, but on the other hand commercial fishermen made sport fishing a part of their business by taking trollers out on their boats. Catches were so high that typically the first one hundred pounds went to the anglers and the remainder was marketed commercially.⁷²

While improved fishing technology and technique helped fishermen to catch more fish, regulatory laws restricted the catch to some extent. State fishing laws continued to establish minimum sizes (weight or length) for fish, minimum mesh sizes for nets, and closed seasons. Beginning in 1909, fishermen were required to purchase licenses. Stocking programs at the Salmo Hatchery and others continued to raise fry and fingerlings and release them into Lake Superior. The hatcheries also raised game fish such as brook trout and walleye for streams and small lakes. During the 1910s and 1920s

⁷⁰ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 264.

⁷¹ “Something Doing in Our Fisheries”; “Scrapbook of a Fisherman’s Wife,” *Wisconsin REA News* (October 1953), 12; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 258–59; Lawrie and Rahrer, “Lake Superior: A Case History,” 31, 54; John B. Chapple, “Gill Net Fishing with Carl Dahl a Real N. Wis. Thrill,” *Ashland Daily Press*, July 10, 1944; “Good Fishing,” Monday, September 19, 1949, *Time Archive, 1923 to the Present*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,800709,00.html>; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 56.

⁷² Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 258; “Something Doing in Our Fisheries”; Lawrie and Rahrer, “Lake Superior: A Case History,” 41–42; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 95; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 186; Ross, *La Pointe*, 171.



Figure 11. Hokenson brothers lifting pound nets between Little Sand Bay and Sand Island, probably 1938. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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the Salmo Hatchery emphasized trout that lived in streams, then in the 1930s and 1940s it focused on lake trout and whitefish. Fishermen participated actively in the stocking program, collecting eggs and milt (from male fish) during the spawning season and distributing fry and fingerlings. During closed seasons in the fall, the state issued special permits to fishermen to collect, fertilize, and deliver eggs to the hatchery. The fishermen were allowed to market the fish once the eggs and milt were removed.⁷³

As the twentieth century began, the large fish companies, especially Booth, still dominated the local fishing business. In 1905 the *Bayfield County Press* identified four fishing companies operating in Bayfield: the A. Booth Packing Company, the Dormer-Boutin Fish Company, the Jacob Johnson Fish Company, and the Independent Fish Company. The companies continued to do business as they had for decades, both employing fishermen and buying fish from independent fishermen. Booth had a number of employees stationed at its fish camps on Rocky, South Twin, Stockton, and Cat islands. Then in 1908 Booth filed for bankruptcy, and in 1909 it reincorporated as the Booth Fisheries Company. The new Booth no longer operated fish camps. Many, if not all, of the fishermen who had worked at Booth's camps purchased equipment from Booth and worked independently, selling their fish to Booth and others. Booth continued to employ some fishermen, but focused its business on collecting, processing, and marketing fish. Booth and other companies sent their collecting boats around to the island fish camps on a regular schedule. The collecting boats picked up fish; delivered ice, gasoline, groceries, and mail; and carried passengers. Booth's collecting boats, especially, became a fixture on the lake—the *S. B. Barker* in the early 1900s, the *C. W. Turner* from about 1912 to 1937, and the *Apostle Islands* from 1938 to 1958.⁷⁴

In 1910 Bayfield's two major fish companies were the S. L. Boutin Fish Company, run by Sollie Boutin, and the Booth Fisheries Company.⁷⁵ That November the *Bayfield County Press* identified the H. Johnson Company as an important new factor in the herring business. Norwegian emigrant Henry Johnson came to Bayfield in the late 1890s and worked as a fisherman on gill net steamers. In 1910 Johnson built a dock and two story fish house equipped with electric lights and other modern equipment. Johnson employed forty-one men for the herring harvest that season; by comparison Boutin employed about seventy men. Johnson would continue to operate his fish company for the remainder of his life (to the mid-1950s), but it never gained the stature of Boutin or Booth. The Bodin family's fish company was a family fishing business that expanded

⁷³ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 197–98, 200–201; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 24, 44–46, 73–80; Peterson, "State Fish Hatchery," 2; John B. Chapple, "Fishermen Start Trout Out in Life," in *The Wisconsin Islands, The Famous Apostle Islands at the Top of Wisconsin*, (Ashland Daily Press, 1945).

⁷⁴ "Bayfield 1905"; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 271–72; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 209–10; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 35, 52–55; "In Days Gone By: Forty Years Ago, from the News-Tribune of Sept. 6, 1905," *Duluth News-Tribune*, September 8, 1945; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 58–59; Harvey Hadland and Bob Mackreth, "Fishing Vessels of the Great Lakes, 1880–1999," Hadland and Mackreth, *Fish Tugs of the Greatest Lake*, <http://www.harveyhadland.com/roster0.htm>; *Bayfield County Press*, April 29, 1899.

⁷⁵ In 1910 Jacob Johnson sold his fish company to Sollie Boutin and moved to Seattle. Frederick H. Dahl, ed., *Diary of a Norwegian Fisherman: The Collected Diaries of Frederick A. Hansen, April 1913 through December 1938, Sand Island, Wisconsin* (Jacksonville, FL: Paramount Press, 1989), ii; "Former Resident is Buried Here Friday," *Bayfield County Press*, December 18, 1930.

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into processing and marketing, becoming one of the leading companies in the region. The company was in business by ca. 1920 and appears to have been headed by brothers J. O. and Elmer Bodin, though other brothers and sons were part of the business. Based in Washburn and Houghton Point, Bodin Fisheries was the only major fish company in the region outside of Bayfield.⁷⁶

Howard W. Elmore established the Bayfield Fish Company in 1926, giving serious competition to Booth and Boutin. Elmore was a Chicago businessman who had a summer home in Bayfield. He began his fish business tentatively by leasing facilities in Bayfield. In 1928 he built a forty thousand dollar warehouse and refrigerator plant of fireproof construction. Local fisherman Harry LaPointe managed the company for Elmore. The Bayfield Fish Company seems to have prospered for a time, but sometime during the 1930s it was purchased by the LaPointe brothers. The Boutin Fish Company also failed during the 1930s. In 1930, with business doing poorly, the Boutins moved to Chassel, Michigan. In 1932 they returned to Bayfield with a load of lumber to repair their dock and buildings. But by the late 1930s, after more than sixty years in Bayfield, the Boutin Fish Company was out of business. Individual family members continued to work as fishermen. In the mid-1940s the two largest fish companies in Bayfield were Booth Fisheries Corporation and the Otto L. Kuehn Company, the oldest and the newest companies, respectively. Based in Milwaukee, Kuehn came to Bayfield in the early 1940s. In 1945 the all-steel boat *Penguin* was built for Kuehn, serving as their collecting boat until 1956. LaPointe Fisheries and the Hadland Fish Company were the other leading fish companies in town, though operating on a smaller scale than Booth and Kuehn. LaPointe Fisheries, which succeeded the Bayfield Fish Company, was run by brothers Philip and Ernest LaPointe. Irving Hadland, owner of the Hadland Fish Company, had fished most of his life by the time he entered the wholesale fish business about 1940. Hadland owned a fleet of boats for gill and pound net fishing; his collecting boat was the *Fish Hawk*.⁷⁷

In 1920 the U.S. Department of Commerce counted 345 fishermen in Bayfield County, more than in any other county bordering Lake Superior.⁷⁸ Another indication of the number of fishermen is the number of fishing boats. The game warden's report for 1909 counted fifty-five boats in use in the Bayfield and Apostle Islands fishing industry. In 1947 there were seventy-five to one hundred fishing boats operating in the area. After Booth's reorganization in 1909, fewer fishermen worked for the large companies than before. However there were still fishermen who worked for Booth or other dealers, and

⁷⁶ "Herring Harvest Is Now On," *Bayfield County Press*, November 18, 1910; Harvey Hadland and Bob Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen of the Bayfield Area," Hadland and Mackreth, *Fish Tugs of the Greatest Lake*, <http://www.harveyhadland.com/men01.htm>; Hadland and Mackreth, "Fishing Vessels"; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 68; Williams, "Long Island," 91.

⁷⁷ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 54, 58, 81; Hadland and Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen"; Hadland and Mackreth, "Fishing Vessels"; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 68; Chapple, "Herring Boom," 3-4; "Fishing is 'Big Business' in Bayfield Area," *Bayfield County Press*, April 17, 1947.

⁷⁸ The total number of American fishermen on Lake Superior in 1920 was 1,348. Alanen, "Historical Information," 13-14.

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other fishermen who were “tied up to Booth” by debt.⁷⁹ Although technological advances such as gas-powered boats and net lifters made it easier for fishermen to work alone (at least for gill net fishing), it was still safer and more efficient to work in pairs or teams. Most fishermen continued to work with relatives or hired men or both. One fisherman described hired men as fishermen without boats. Another way that fishermen worked together was by forming an organization to further their interests, particularly with regard to regulatory laws and conservation. In February 1927 Bayfield area fishermen formed the Northern Wisconsin Commercial Fishermen’s Association. J. O. Bodin was elected president. In 1928 the group selected two delegates to attend a regional meeting on fishing in the Great Lakes held in June in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. All of the Great Lakes states and the Canadians sent representatives. The Bayfield association chose Bodin to represent pound net fishermen and Charlie Benson to represent gill net fishermen.⁸⁰

Many fishermen continued to combine fishing with farming or logging or some other work to make ends meet. Norwegians were clearly the dominant ethnic group among Apostle Islands fishermen by the early twentieth century. In 1910 nearly 30 percent of Bayfield County fishermen were born in Norway, followed by 20 percent Native Americans, 10 percent Swedes, 10 percent born in the U.S., and the remainder born in Russia, Finland, Britain, Canada, Ireland, and Germany. In 1944 a newspaper reporter noted that practically all Apostle Islands fishermen were of Norwegian extraction. Commercial fishing was a major source of income for Ojibwe from the Red Cliff Reservation. In 1920 twenty-five Red Cliff Ojibwe (and one from Bad River) worked in native-run commercial fishing operations. Many more Ojibwe worked as hired hands for white fishermen.⁸¹

Fishermen were an important element of the community on Madeline Island, where the population had dwindled to 193 by 1910. At that time the island economy was much like it had been in the 1850s. The lumbering boom was at its end and tourism was growing but still relatively minor, leaving fishing and farming as the means for most year round residents to make a living. During the 1930s the north end of the island was described as a distinct community with half a dozen fishing boats. Each fisherman had a dock, fish house, ice house, and net reels. A number of fishermen fished from Big Bay on the east side of the island. The best known of the Madeline Island fishermen was John Hagen, a native of Finland who came to the island in the 1890s and was fishing there from before 1900 until he retired in 1964 at age eighty-two. Hagen fished from Big Bay

⁷⁹ Some histories state that after 1909 all fishermen worked independently of the large fish dealers, however primary sources make it clear that the dealers employed some fishermen to fish for them, and not only during herring season. For example, in October 1933 when the *Bayfield County Press* reported on two fishing boats that were washed ashore during a storm, it identified one of the boats as part of the Bayfield Fish Company’s fleet and the owner of the other boat—Seivert Teigen—as a fisherman for Booth Fisheries. “Fishing Boats Washed Ashore During Storm,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 26, 1933.

⁸⁰ “Something Doing in Our Fisheries”; “Fishing is ‘Big Business’”; Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 45–46, 57–58, 64, 74–75; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 54, 57; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 47–49.

⁸¹ Alanen, “Historical Information,” 13; Chapple, “Gill Net Fishing”; *Report of Commissioner 1920*, 111–12.

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Point and for a time partnered with his brother William as Hagen Brothers. In a good year Hagen sold twenty-five tons of trout to Booth Fisheries.⁸²

In the early 1900s Sand Island grew into a community, with enough families living there year round to support a school, a post office, and a cooperative store. Norwegian fishermen and their families settled at East Bay. Louis Moe's home and farm included buildings for fishing, farming, and logging. Peter and Dorothea Hansen and their son Fred formed another household until 1904, when Fred, at age twenty, married Agnetta (Nettie) Johnson, daughter of Jacob Johnson. Fred built a house on the waterfront not far from his father. When Peter Johnson and his family moved to Washington State about 1900, his brother Herman purchased his house and fishing rig (boat and equipment). Herman Johnson married Hattie Hovland in 1906, establishing another family at East Bay. Harold Dahl came to Bayfield in the early 1900s and by 1910 had moved with his family to Sand Island. Sand Island's Norwegian fishermen sold their fish to Jacob Johnson's fish company, sometimes working for the company directly. Jacob Johnson lived in Bayfield and operated the Jacob Johnson Fish Company from 1898 to 1910, when he moved to Seattle. Although Johnson's primary residence was Bayfield, he had a house at East Bay and reportedly amassed considerable land holdings on Sand Island that he sold when he left the area. Moe, Dahl, the Hansens, and the Johnsons were fisherman who farmed secondarily to supplement their food supply and sometimes their income. Between 1909 and 1912 promoter Edwin Bonde persuaded several Norwegian families from Minneapolis and St. Paul to come to Sand Island to establish farms. In addition to Bonde, the Loftfields, Norings, and Palms all built homes on or near East Bay, though not all were successful at farming. Swen Bergstrom, a carpenter, was the only Swede living on the island during this period.⁸³

Meanwhile, at Shaw Point, Frank and Josephine Shaw lived year round in their Sand Island home until November 1905, when they moved to Bayfield for the winter due to Josephine's poor health. For the next few years the Shaws moved to Sand Island in the spring and wintered in Bayfield until fall 1908 when Josephine Shaw became seriously ill. In 1910 Frank Shaw sold his fishing rig and Sand Island property to his son-in-law, Burt Hill. Josephine Shaw died in 1911 followed by Frank Shaw in 1914. Burton (Burt) Hill was born in Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1871 and in 1888 moved with his parents to La Pointe, where his mother opened an eating house and later a hotel. In 1889 Hill became an apprentice in a printing shop, and from 1891 until 1910 he worked for the *Bayfield County Press*, most of that time as foreman. When Burt Hill and Anna Mae Shaw were married in November 1894, the *Bayfield County Press* printed a list of more than one hundred wedding gifts given to the popular couple. Before 1910 the Hills spent part of each summer on Sand Island with the Shaws. When Hill purchased Frank Shaw's Sand

⁸² Goc, *On the Rock*, 27, 38, 41, 74; Hadland and Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen"; Chapple, "Herring Boom," 4-5; Rebecca Sample Bernstein and Tricia L. Canaday, "Madeline Island Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey," (prepared for the town of LaPointe, Madeine Island, WI, 1993), 24.

⁸³ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 26-31; "Frederick Alfred Hanson," *Bayfield County Press*, December 28, 1939; Dahl, *Diary*, ii, iv; "Herman Johnson"; "Harold Dahl Drowns Near Sand Island," *Bayfield County Press*, May 3, 1928; "Former Resident"; "Navigation Open," *Bayfield County Press*, April 12, 1902; "Local Marine Notes," *Bayfield County Press*, May 6, 1904; "Bayfield 1905"; "Herring Fishing Begins," *Bayfield County Press*, November 19, 1909; "Gill Net Fishing."

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Island home, farm, and fishing rig it was timely for both of them. Suffering from diabetes and “printer’s ink disease,” Burt Hill was looking for a healthier lifestyle that seemed to be available on Sand Island. In 1910 Burt and Anna Mae Hill made Sand Island their year round home, and Burt Hill learned pound net fishing from his father-in-law.⁸⁴

In January 1911 Louis Moe, on a visit to Bayfield, reported that there were fifty-six people living on Sand Island. In January 1920 the federal census counted forty-four people, more than 90 percent of them Norwegian or Norwegian-American. Considering that several families moved to the island after 1911 and more children were born, it seems likely that the 1920 census missed some people. On the other hand, Elvis Moe’s recollection that more than one hundred people lived on Sand Island following World War I may be too high. The one room school built in 1910 was key to enabling families to live on the island year round. Before the school was built, families with school-age children often moved to Bayfield for the school term. Children in grades one through eight attended the Sand Island School; there were sixteen students in the first year, 1910–11, and twenty-seven students at its peak. The school also served as a center for community events. Moe reported that all fifty-six island residents attended the Christmas party and chicken dinner that took place at the schoolhouse in December 1910. Today, only the schoolhouse foundation remains.⁸⁵

In 1911 Burt Hill organized the Shaw Post Office on Sand Island, completing the application and taking the postmaster’s examination. Hill was appointed postmaster in June. Mail delivery was relatively easy when the lake was open—S. L. Boutin’s collecting boat delivered the mail three times a week when it picked up fish.⁸⁶ During the winter Hill had to walk across the ice and rendezvous with the mail carrier from Bayfield. He stuck it out for nearly five years before resigning in February 1916. The Shaw Post Office closed officially in May. Before then, in 1915, Hill and other island residents began working toward bringing telephone service to Sand Island. After more than two years, the Sand Island Telephone Company was organized in April 1918 with fifteen thousand dollars worth of stock that had been raised by island residents. Burt Hill, Louis Moe, and A. H. Wilkerson were elected directors of the company. An underwater cable connecting Sand Island to Bayfield was completed in October, and regular telephone service began in December. However the cable was soon severed and was too costly and difficult to repair, ending telephone service to Sand Island.⁸⁷

The Sand Island Cooperative Association, also organized in 1918, lasted longer than the telephone company. The cooperative was organized in June with Fred Hansen

⁸⁴ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 25–26, 32; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 10–15; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 32.

⁸⁵ “A Growing Community,” *Bayfield County Press*, January 13, 1911; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 27, 32–33; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 33; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 288; Bill Noring, interview by Norma Lien and Jan Moran, December 16, 1980, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files.

⁸⁶ Sollie Boutin was married to one of Anna Mae’s sisters—Kathleen Shaw Boutin.

⁸⁷ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 33–34; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 21–23.

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as president, B. K. Noring as vice-president, Herman Johnson as treasurer, and Burt Hill as secretary and manager. In July they opened their cooperative store in the lean-to attached to Frank Shaw's original log house, next to the Shaw-Hill dock. The store sold such essentials as flour, sugar, coffee, and penny candy. Hill was chosen as manager because he was honest, meticulous, and—having stopped fishing—available. As manager, Hill received a 5 percent commission on sales, which he said came to about eighty to one hundred dollars a year. However, some members of the cooperative apparently believed that Hill was making “a fortune” and voted to shut down the store in the early 1930s. Jonette Loftfield operated a small convenience store near her house through the late 1930s.⁸⁸

Sand Island was foremost a community of fishermen, and fishing permeated community life. Fred Hansen's diary offers an invaluable picture of his own life as a fisherman and of life in the Sand Island community. Hansen wrote in his diary every day from April 1, 1913 to December 31, 1938.⁸⁹ Most of the entries are short and factual with little detail, but taken together they are much more than the sum of their parts. In the summer Hansen spent day after day lifting nets of fish. In the winter he spent day after day mending nets. He also planted and harvested crops, mowed and hauled hay, hauled and sawed wood, butchered animals, and performed other tasks related to fishing, farming, and caring for his home and family. Hansen's diary provides many examples of community members working for and with each other. On various occasions Hansen helped Mrs. Palm do chores, lifted nets for Harold Dahl, helped Burt Hill put up ice, and hauled hay for Bert Noring. Hansen hauled wood for Johnson, Moe hauled wood for Hansen, and Hansen and Dahl sawed wood together. Some of these instances represent neighbors helping each other out, whereas other times services were exchanged for other services or goods. Work was more likely to be compensated with fish or other provisions than with cash.⁹⁰

Burt Hill also wrote a diary of his years on Sand Island, but Hill's diary is more of a combination journal and memoir than a daily record. Hill gave up fishing in 1919 to pursue farming full time, but he also worked as a maintenance man for summer residents and had a workshop and forge where he repaired objects of all kinds, including tools, boats, and motors. Hill's neighbors described him as a man who saved everything, could fix anything, and always had a pipe in his mouth. He used some of the odds and ends that he salvaged to make toys, and on Christmas the Hills would take a load of toys to East Bay. Anna Mae Hill served as the island's practical nurse, setting bones and treating fevers, but she is remembered best as an excellent cook. Burt and Anna Mae Hill were loved by those who knew them; they were the center of the Sand Island community (figure 12). In addition to their hired men, the Hills boarded summer residents and fishermen, including large crews of herring fishermen in the fall. The Hills performed

⁸⁸ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 28, 34; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 23–25.

⁸⁹ Hansen was twenty-eight years old when he began his diary. He died of cancer on December 26, 1939 at age fifty-five. Dahl, *Diary*, ii, 184.

⁹⁰ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 32, 39; Dahl, *Diary*; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 289–90.

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Figure 12. Burt and Anna Mae Hill at home on Sand Island, ca. 1930s. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Alma Hansen Dahl Collection.

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numerous jobs to make ends meet, but Louis Moe may have had the most ambitious work program of all the islanders, fishing and farming in the summer and logging in the winter. Moe began logging on the island in 1897 and continued for more than twenty years. He employed eight to ten loggers each season, most of them from Bayfield but some of them from Sand Island.⁹¹

Despite long days of hard work, Sand Island residents made time for fun. It appears that weather and the demands of work more than the day of the week determined when they took time off. Fred Hansen often rested or visited neighbors on Sundays but there were also many Sundays when he worked. Conversely, social activities were as likely to take place on a weekday as on a weekend. Island residents frequently went to Bayfield for both business and pleasure; they visited Ashland also though not as often as Bayfield. Other off-island social activities included trips to Superior, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul; camping and hunting trips; and picnics, especially on Raspberry and York islands. But most social activities took place on Sand Island, including parties, picnics, dances, and dinners. On Thursday, February 24, 1916, Hansen wrote “Had dance here. Elegant time”; the next day he wrote “Mended. Pretty tired after the ball.” Often islanders simply visited each other. Fred Hansen saw the Hills nearly every week at least once, sometimes for work or other business but usually to socialize. Playing cards seems to have been the favorite island pastime and whist the favorite card game. From January through March 1913 Hansen and his friends carried on some type of whist tournament or marathon. On January 13 they played nine games; on January 16 they played ten games; they played ten more on January 23 and so on. On Saturday, January 30, after mending nets during the day, Hansen went to Norings in the evening and played sixteen games of whist. On Sunday he wrote: “Came home at 6 in the morning. Slept most of the day.” When summer residents and the lighthouse keeper and his wife were on the island they were included in many of the social activities. But year round residents had more social events during the winter when they were less occupied with work and less able to travel. Burt Hill wrote in his diary for the beginning of 1929: “To start the New Year off we attended a party given by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hansen and on January 3, we were at a party at B. K. Norengs visiting in this manner we kept up all during the winter months.”⁹²

When misfortune came to a Sand Island family it reverberated through the community. In 1914 Herman and Hattie Johnson’s six year old son, John, fell off their dock and drowned. Fred Hansen’s diary entries were terse, in his typical style. On June 28 he wrote: “Lifted. John Johnson drowned today.” The following day he wrote: “Went to town for casket—had funeral in afternoon.” Burt Hill wrote in his diary: “On June 28, 1914, Johnny Johnson fell off the Johnson dock and drowned. He was the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Johnson, Sr.” After recording the weather for June 28, lighthouse

⁹¹ Burt Hill, “Diary,” transcription in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 15–19; Herman Jensch, interview by Carol Ahlgren, November 21, 1987, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 278–79, 282.

⁹² Dahl, *Diary*; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 290–91; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 26–27; Hill, “Diary.”

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keeper Emmanuel Luick wrote in the keeper's log: "Mr. Herman Johnson lost their oldest boy, age 6, by drowning, falling from their fish dock in East Bay at 2:00 P.M." On June 29 he wrote: "Mr. H. Johnson buried their boy at 4:30 p.m., everybody on the East side of the Island turned out. Had a large and well conducted, Norwegian funeral." The Johnsons buried their son on the island near their home.⁹³ There were other deaths within the community, but when fisherman Harold Dahl drowned while fishing it hit especially hard. On April 18, 1928, Dahl, Herman Johnson with his son Herman Jr., and Louis Moe with his son Alvin went out together but in three separate boats to set their nets for the first time that season. While they were out a severe northeast sleet storm blew in. The Johnsons and Moes returned with difficulty to Burt Hill's dock; they could not reach their own docks at East Bay. When last seen Dahl was having engine trouble; neither he nor his boat were ever found. Burt Hill wrote in his diary that Harold Dahl's disappearance was the saddest thing to happen while the Hills lived on Sand Island. Fifty years later Herman Johnson Jr. said he could remember the incident as if it were yesterday. Fred Hansen, as usual, did not reveal his emotions when he wrote on April 18: "Launched boat. Bad storm and snow. Dahl lost."⁹⁴

The Sand Island community began to decline in the 1920s as residents moved away or died. In 1923 Sigurd and Katherine-Maria Loftfield and their children, after more than ten years on the island, moved to Detroit where it was easier to make a living. Magnus and Anna Palm and their children, who came to Sand Island in 1910, left in the 1920s when Anna developed tuberculosis and went into a sanitarium. Only a few members of the younger generation opted for the laborious, isolated lifestyle of their parents. The Sand Island School closed in 1928 because there were not enough students. Louis Moe died in 1929, Olaf Loftfield (Sigurd's father) in 1930, and Fred Hansen in 1939. In 1942 Burt and Anna Mae Hill moved to Bayfield where they could be closer to medical care, especially for Burt who was suffering from complications of diabetes. In 1944, the year the Hills celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, Burt had a leg amputated. He died in 1946, followed by Anne Mae in 1952. The year 1944 was also when the last three families living year round on Sand Island moved to Bayfield for the winter. Carl Dahl, son of Harold Dahl, had married Fred and Nettie Hansen's daughter Alma; they had five children. Jacob Hansen was the only surviving son of Fred and Nettie Hansen; his household included his wife Francine and son Paul. Both Carl Dahl and Jacob Hansen were commercial fishermen and second generation Sand Island residents. Bert and Birgit Noring had come to Sand Island in 1912 and established one of the most successful farms on the island. Their children had moved away except for Bill, who stayed and fished commercially. After 1944 Sand Island was occupied only in the summer. Carl Dahl, Jacob Hansen, Elvis Moe (son of Louis), and Bill Noring continued to use the island as their summer base for commercial fishing. Other summer residents maintained vacation homes on the island.⁹⁵

⁹³ The family later removed the body when they left the island.

⁹⁴ Dahl, *Diary*, 9, 104; Hill, "Diary"; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; "Herman Johnson"; "Harold Dahl Drowns"; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 20; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 70.

⁹⁵ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 26, 28-29, 31-32; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 300-301, 307; Hill, "Diary," 1927, 1941; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 27-28, 36; "Sand Island Utterly Deserted, 1st Time in Half a Century," *Ashland Daily Press*, October 17, 1944; Chapple, "Gill Net Fishing"; "Weddings, Nelson-Hanson," *Bayfield County Press*, October 24, 1940.

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Sand Island fishermen built docks, fish houses, twine sheds, and ice houses in order to carry out their fishing operations. Nets were stored in twine sheds for the winter; every fisherman who had a fishing rig needed at least one twine shed. There were fewer ice houses—three on the island, at the Hill, Moe, and Noring farms. Fish houses were on the docks, which were built of planks laid on top of rock-filled log cribs. Because they were in the lake, docks were vulnerable to storms and even the ordinary actions of water and ice; they frequently needed maintenance and rebuilding. At the end of November in 1905, lighthouse keeper Luick recorded a storm that he described as the worst he had seen in his sixteen years working at lighthouses. When he checked East Bay he found that the fish houses and docks of Herman Johnson, Peter Hansen, and Louis Moe had all been carried away, leaving only the cribs. In August and September 1916 Fred Hansen spent several weeks rebuilding his dock and fish house. No docks remain today from the East Bay fishermen—all have been lost to erosion although the remains of the cribs are visible when lake levels are low. The dock currently at Shaw Point was built on the cribbing of the previous dock. Burt Hill wrote in his diary that in 1924 he tore down the fish house that Frank Shaw had used to dress and salt fish and used the lumber to cover the log part of their house.⁹⁶

The ice house and workshop at the Shaw-Hill farm, used in part to support the island's fishing industry, are extant today. The most intact group of buildings that survives to represent Sand Island's fishing heritage consists of the house and five outbuildings used by Fred Hansen and his family. Carpenters Clyde Nyland and Nels Anderson built the house for Fred Hansen in 1936. The lower level is constructed of flat hewn logs with dovetail joints. Fred Hansen took part in the work—digging foundation trenches, hewing logs, and staining and painting among other tasks. He and Nettie collected the stones for the living room fireplace. The house was the third for the Fred Hansen family, larger and more comfortable than other houses on the island, reflecting Fred Hansen's success at fishing. Sadly, Fred Hansen died of cancer at the age of fifty-five, three years after the house was built. East of the house, facing the lake, are a twine shed for storing nets and a building that the Hansens called the "Boar's Nest" where they mended and seamed nets (figure 13). Later Jacob Hansen converted the Boar's Nest into a cottage. Also on the property are a root cellar of log construction, another storage building that was probably a combination woodshed and hired man's quarters, and a privy.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Bill Noring interview; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Dahl, interview by William Tishler, September 13, 1981, tape recording with written summary, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Melvin Dahl, interview by Carol Ahlgren, November 12, 1987, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Elvis and Marguerite Moe, Alma (Hansen) Dahl, and Fred Dahl, interview, June 21, 1988, tape 36, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 34–36; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 33; Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Dahl, *Diary*, 23; Hill, "Diary," 1924; Parnes, "Shaw Farm."

⁹⁷ Dahl, *Diary*, ii, vi, 158–61, 184; Moe, Dahl, and Dahl interview; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 285; Herman Jensch interview; tract file 06-102 (Westhagen), Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Currently known as the Westhagen property, the property has recently been occupied under a retention of use agreement. When the property was appraised in 1978, a barn and henhouse were extant in a clearing to the

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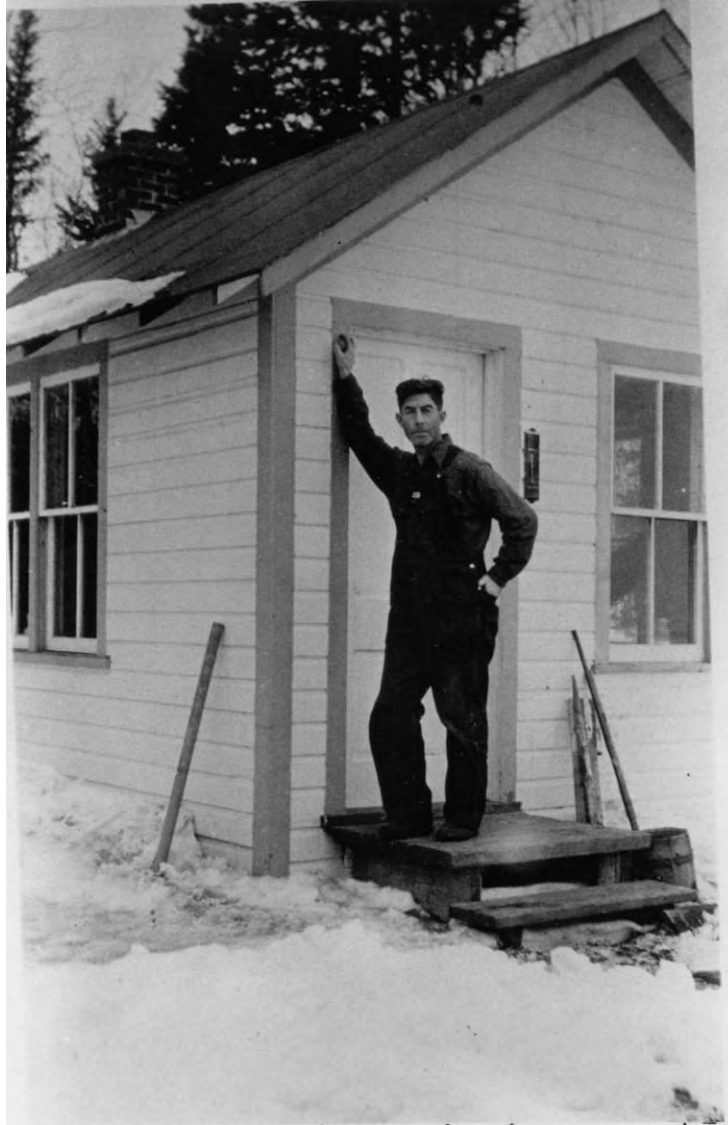


Figure 13. Fred Hansen at the Boar's Nest, Sand Island, ca. 1935. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Alma Hansen Dahl Collection.

north of the house; we did not visit this area in 2004. Because of shoreline erosion, the Boar's Nest and twine shed overhang the lakeshore bluff and are in danger of being lost.

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Many fishermen who did not live in the islands fished from seasonal island fish camps during the summer, even though motorized fishing boats made travel between the mainland and fishing grounds faster and more dependable than in the nineteenth century. Some fish camps were occupied during the winter. In April 1925 the *Bayfield County Press* described preparations for the fishing season: “One little realizes the magnitude of the commercial fishing business in the vicinity of Bayfield until a visit is made to the docks when the many fishermen are engaged in preparing their various assortment of equipment for the usual spring migration to fishing camps and locations on the Apostle Islands.”⁹⁸ Booth Fisheries and the Boutin Fish Company were readying their collecting boats, the *Turner* and *R. T. Roy*, respectively. The *Press* listed the names of twenty-four fishermen with the names of their boats and where they would be fishing from, noting that except for three or four “lone fishermen” each fisherman employed one to two others. In addition to those fishing from the mainland, Sand Island, and Madeline Island, thirteen fishermen were fishing from fish camps on Presque Isle (Stockton), Willey’s Island (South Twin), Rice’s Island (Rocky), Outer Island, Bear Island, and Gull Island.⁹⁹

Stockton Island had one of the larger concentrations of fish camps in the islands. In 1925 John Nelson, John Gonia, and Carl Ludvigsen were fishing from Stockton Island. Additional fishermen had camps on Stockton Island in the 1930s and 1940s. John Nelson worked as a shoreman at Booth’s Stockton Island fish camp in the early 1900s. In 1909 Nelson established his own fish camp on Bear Island, which he used until he relocated to Stockton Island in 1919. When he built his Stockton Island camp Nelson moved the former Booth shoreman’s cabin to Julian Bay; he also took boards from buildings at the recently abandoned Trout Point logging camp. Later Nelson moved a cabin from Michigan Island to his Stockton Island camp. Julian Nelson, John’s son, recalled an incident when his father and Carl Ludvigsen had a difference of opinion about their community room for nets. Without speaking, Ludvigsen sawed off “his” half of the building, and without speaking, Nelson watched him. Later John Nelson built a new wall to enclose the building. When John Nelson retired in 1938, Julian Nelson bought his father’s fishing business and fished from the camp on Stockton Island until he moved to Rocky Island in 1947.¹⁰⁰

South Twin Island’s protected harbor established the island as a favorite location for fish camps by the 1910s, when Charlie Benson, John Fried, Olaf Edwards, Henry Johnson Sr., Lenus Jacobson, and John Duva all fished there. Charlie Benson was shoreman at Booth’s fish camp on South Twin; he set up his own camp when Booth closed its fish camp there about 1908. Lenus Jacobson came to South Twin as a hired man for Olaf Edwards, later taking over Johnson’s fish camp after the latter stopped fishing from the island. The fishermen either occupied their camps as squatters or paid a

⁹⁸ “Fishing Industry Takes On New Impetus,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 9, 1925.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; “Presque Isle Memories,” fact sheet, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore; Julian and Marie (Muhlke) Nelson, Martha (Nelson) Benson, interview, April 16, 1988, tape 13, Julian and Marie Nelson, interview, April 16, 1988, tape 14, Eleanore Frostman, Norma Chape, interview, August 3, 1990, tape 122, videotapes with written summaries, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 52, 81; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 83.

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nominal rent to the Willey family who owned the island. Then in 1931 Lenus Jacobson traveled to Minneapolis and purchased South Twin Island from the Willeys for \$975. Jacobson either started charging or raised rent, told the other fishermen where to set their nets, and overall behaved in a manner that led the others to refer to him as King Lenus. Jacobson's policies and behavior led Benson, Fried, and Edwards (Duva had left the island earlier) to move to Rocky Island.¹⁰¹

When the exodus from South Twin Island began in 1931, Louis Olsen, Mike Hendrickson, and Hendrickson's stepson Philip Winslow were fishing from Rocky Island. John Fried was the first to move from South Twin to Rocky, followed by Olaf Edwards in 1932 and Charlie Benson in 1936. More fishermen established camps on Rocky Island in the late 1930s and early 1940s—Christian Hadland, previously on Stockton Island; Martin Erickson and his son Mel, who had been fishing from Port Wing on the mainland; and Ole Olsen, who had been fishing from Bear Island. In 1943, when hired help was difficult to obtain, Christian Hadland's sons Harvey and Cliff, ages twelve and nine, began fishing with him. Ted Nies and his three sons came to Rocky Island in the late 1940s after farming on Madeline Island. Julian Nelson moved his fish camp from Stockton Island to Rocky Island in 1947 (figure 14). When Benson, Fried, Edwards, and Martin Erickson retired from fishing during the 1940s, their camps were used by their sons or by other fishermen.¹⁰²

Although some earlier fish camps had been located on the southern end of Rocky Island, the community of fish camps that began in the 1930s was on the island's eastern shore. Like the fishermen, the fish camps on Rocky Island came together from different places. When building and using the camps, fishermen frequently salvaged, reused, moved, and altered older buildings. When he first moved to Rocky Island, John Fried lived in the paymaster's office of the recently vacated logging camp. Later Louis Olsen purchased the logging camp property and used the cook shack as his main cabin. The Ericksons purchased the property from Olsen, and Mel Erickson lived in the paymaster's office for a number of years. Now used as a storage shed, the paymaster's office is the only extant building from the logging camp; the others were scavenged for lumber. Charlie Benson dismantled a cabin built earlier on Rocky Island by the Bayfield Fish Company and rafted it from one end of his property to the other. Olaf Edwards attempted to move a hired man's shack and an outhouse from South Twin; only the shack arrived intact. Christian Hadland moved a cabin from Outer Island to Rocky, and Julian Nelson moved two cabins from Stockton Island. Rocky Island fishermen built cabins to house their families and hired men; fish houses; storage sheds for nets and other equipment; outhouses; and docks. Five fish camps survive on Rocky Island today, forming a linear grouping along the island's eastern shoreline. Many buildings and docks survive in

¹⁰¹ John Duva's log cabin, built in the 1910s, is the only extant fish camp on South Twin Island. NPS uses it for storage. Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 35, 46–47, 52, 58–62, 129; Christine C. Baker, Robert W. Mackreth, and Katy E. Holmer, "Rocky Island Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Bayfield, WI.: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2007), sec. 9, p. 30.

¹⁰² Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 47, 62–69; Holmer, "Superior Summer," 69–70, 77–83.

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Figure 14. Julian Nelson and hired man June Thompson with net reels on Rocky Island, 1940s. Photo by Marie Nelson. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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addition to landscape features such as net reel yards and pathways. Net reels—used to dry gill nets—and skiffs left at some of the camps are reminders of fishing. At the Nelson camp, a sign over the doorway of a storage building reads “Ya vi har det godt en Amerika. And it could be better.” The Norwegian translates to “Yes, we have it good in America.” The Rocky Island fish camps are an evocative remnant of the fishing heritage of the Apostle Islands. The Hadland fish camp is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and the entire fish camp complex has been nominated to the National Register.¹⁰³

During the summer the fishermen’s families joined the men at their camps. Wives cooked and kept house. Every summer Fredrekke Benson took two cows to South Twin Island where she made butter and cheese and sold milk to other families. Boys helped with fishing and performed other chores; girls helped with cooking and housework. Olive Edwards Laessig remembered sweeping out the hired men’s shanty and making the beds, fetching water from the lake, and helping with cooking. Boys and girls picked berries that were canned for winter; Stockton Island was the favorite location for picking blueberries. Children also had time to play—swimming, boating, fishing for fun, building houses out of fish boxes. Families entertained visitors from the mainland and visited each other, on their own island and others.¹⁰⁴

The Manitou Island fish camp was different than most in that it was used most heavily in the winter and occupied only by men, most of them single. Fishermen began to use the Manitou camp in the early 1900s, occupying a log cabin built ca. 1900 by Swedish loggers. John Hanson was a Swedish logger who remained on Manitou Island to fish, adding a twine shed and smokehouse to the camp. Hanson fished on Manitou with several partners during the 1920s and early 1930s. On November 7, 1935, Hanson and his partner Albert Ditto of Washburn left for Manitou Island in an open boat that was having engine trouble; they were never seen again. The Manitou fish camp entered a new era in 1938 when brothers Hjalmer and Ted Olson, sons of Rocky Island fisherman Louis Olson, purchased the camp and forty-seven acres from the Frenzel Land Company.¹⁰⁵ The Olsons moved a log bunkhouse from Ironwood Island to the Manitou camp and built an additional twine shed, a breakwater, and a windlass. They planted a large garden with turnips, onions, beans, peas, and potatoes. While the Olsons used the fish camp year round, numerous other fishermen stayed at the camp for shorter periods of time, especially during the winter. Men who could not afford a boat could fish during the winter and earn some income with little capital outlay. They transported their catch to the mainland on sleds that were pulled by dogs or by the men themselves; the trip took three hours or more. The Olsons also used a horse that they stabled in a twine shed. By the 1940s autos and trucks were used. The Olsons asked those who stayed at the camp to help with chores but rarely charged rent. The popular Hjalmer was called “Governor” by

¹⁰³ Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 62–69, 80–81; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 77–83, 136–69; Baker, Mackreth, and Holmer, “Rocky Island.”

¹⁰⁴ Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 69–80; Julian and Marie Nelson, Martha Benson, interview; Eleanore Frostman, Norma Chape, interview; “Presque Isle Memories.”

¹⁰⁵ The spelling Olson is used in Manitou Island reports, whereas the spelling Olsen is used in Rocky Island reports.

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the others. Today the Manitou fish camp looks much as it did during the 1930s. The two log cabins and two twine sheds remain along with a frame cabin, smokehouse, two outhouses, windlass, and boat skids. The National Park Service rebuilt one of the docks. Hundreds of objects including tools, fishing equipment, and cabin furnishings that were left at the camp remain there today or have been preserved off site and reproduced. The park service has restored the camp and uses it to interpret fish camp life. The Manitou fish camp is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁰⁶

A few fishermen used their fish camps as year-round homes. Seivert Teigen, who grew up on Madeline Island, lived and fished alone in camps on Gull, Michigan, and Stockton islands successively in the 1920s and 1930s. At first he wintered in Bayfield, but when he moved to Michigan Island he began to live at his camp year round. After more than ten years of fish camp living, Teigen built a home on Madeline Island and later married. The most famous of the solitary fishermen was Martin Kane, known as the king of Oak Island. Kane came to the Chequamegon region before the turn of the century and worked as a logger, fisherman, and fishing boat captain. At different times he and his wife lived in Bayfield and on Oak and Sand islands. Kane's wife persuaded him to move to the West Coast, and during World War I he worked in the Seattle shipyards. When his wife died Kane returned to the Apostle Islands, living alone in the islands from about 1920 until he died in 1947. For awhile Kane lived on Manitou Island in a cabin a short distance from the Manitou fish camp, but most of the time he lived on Oak Island. Kane made his home in the filer's shack of one of the abandoned logging camps and used the blacksmith shop for storage. He sold fish to Booth but for the most part was self-sufficient, living on vegetables from his garden, apples from his orchard, bear meat, venison, and fish. This diet, however, proved insufficient nutritionally, and one winter Kane developed anemia. He managed to hitch his dogs to a sled, and the dogs pulled him to the mainland. He was hospitalized in Ashland for several weeks and afterwards gave himself injections of liver extract. Although Kane chose to live alone he was sociable. He was hospitable to visitors and was well liked in Bayfield, where he went periodically for supplies.¹⁰⁷

As a seasonally occupied, island based fishing operation, the LeBel fishing complex (47AS193) on Long Island would be considered a fish camp, but it was more substantial than other camps (figure 15). In 1904 Adolph LeBel purchased the property from his father, Joseph, and carried on the family fishing business along with his brother Nelson.¹⁰⁸ Although there was contention at times between the LeBels and the government over fishing privileges, the LeBel family was friendly with the lighthouse

¹⁰⁶ Ronald W. Johnson, "The Manitou Island Fishing Camp: A Special Study, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," (National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1984); Jeffrey J. Richner, "Archeological Excavations at the Manitou Fish Camp, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1983," (Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 4 (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1991), 1-4, 21-25.

¹⁰⁷ "Herring Fishers," 5; John B. Chapple, "There's Still a King in U.S.; He's Martin Kane, the King of Oak Island," in *The Wisconsin Islands, The Famous Apostle Islands at the Top of Wisconsin* (Ashland Daily Press, 1945), 35; Eleanor Knight, "Martin Kane 'King of Oak Island,'" *Bayfield County Press*, March 6, 1958; Johnson, "Manitou Island Fishing Camp," 11.

¹⁰⁸ Nelson passed away about 1920. Williams, "Long Island," 93.

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Figure 15. Adeline LeBel at LeBel fishery, Long Island, ca. 1924. Buildings, left to right: smokehouse, twine shed/ice house, shanty (storage and boys' quarters), fish house. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Adeline LeBel Winslow Collection.

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keepers' families and the children played together during their summers on the island. In July 1926 the *Bayfield County Press* noted that Mr. and Mrs. Adolph LeBel entertained a large party of friends from Ashland at their "summer home" on Long Island. After Adolph LeBel died in 1930 his older sons continued the family business. By the late 1930s Joe, Francis, and Irvin LeBel had shifted some of their emphasis from commercial fishing to the tourist business, renting their boats to trolling parties. During the 1940s Joe LeBel made a name for himself locally by inventing automatic equipment to process herring—a conveyor belt system to transport herring from the fishing boats to fish boxes on the docks, and another belt system with machinery to behead, gut, split, and wash the fish. He continued to use his boat, the *Fair-Lady*, for both commercial fishing and trolling.¹⁰⁹

Motorized fishing boats made mainland based fishing operations feasible by shortening the time and removing much of the uncertainty of travel to fishing grounds. The number of mainland fishing operations increased over time. Only five of the twenty-four fishermen listed in the *Bayfield County Press* in 1925 were based on the mainland: Otto Kuntz at Red Cliff Bay; John Wicksten, Louie Olson, and Martin Erickson in Bayfield; and Oscar Nelson in Cornucopia. It appears that the *Press* reporter missed some boats in Cornucopia at least; other sources put the number of fishing boats in Cornucopia during the mid-1920s at three or eight. Whether one or eight in 1925, there was a substantial increase after that date, as in 1941 there were twenty-three fishing boats in the village. Cornucopia was founded in 1902 as an agricultural settlement, but by 1911 the Jones brothers were already collecting fish from neighboring fishermen. The Joneses remained the leading fishing family in the village. In July 1940 Thomas Jones and Sons of Cornucopia broke a local record when their family boats caught more than 60,000 pounds of fish in three days. Overall, the fishermen of Cornucopia shipped a record breaking 2,711,913 pounds of fish in 1940, compared to 923,089 pounds in 1926.¹¹⁰

Port Wing was also known as a fishing village, at least from the time that Booth built a fish house and dock there in 1910. Two well known local fishing operations were established near the tip of the peninsula at Little Sand Bay by the Hokenson brothers and Herman Johnson Jr. Eskel, Leo, and Roy Hokenson were born in Bayfield Township in the 1890s to Swedish immigrants Peter and Amanda Hokenson. Peter Hokenson worked primarily as a carpenter but also engaged in several other occupations including dairy farming. The brothers took over the family farm after their father died in 1910. During World War I, Eskel and Roy enlisted in the army while Leo stayed home to look after the farm. After the war, with limited success farming, the brothers began to fish part time to supplement their diet and income. They purchased land on Little Sand Bay and in 1927 began building a fishery that soon included a dock, ice house, twine shed, and herring

¹⁰⁹ Williams, "Long Island," 91–98; *Bayfield County Press*, July 29, 1926; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 81; "Joe LeBel's Brain Child at Work: May Speed Up Herring Harvest," *Bayfield County Press*, November 27, 1947; "Lake Trolling is 'Big Business': 21 Boats Are Large Investment," *Bayfield County Press*, June 12, 1947.

¹¹⁰ "Fishing Industry Impetus"; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 273; "Cornucopia Fishing Hits New Records," *Bayfield County Press*, November 27, 1941; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 273; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 34, 38, 48, 55–57.

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shed. Some of the lumber for the buildings and dock came from the Hokenson farm and was cut at the Hokensons' sawmill. Their cousin Halvor Reiten was a boat builder, and they worked with Reiten to build their fish tug, the *Twilite*, launched in 1937. During bad weather the brothers took turns sleeping in the ice house to watch the *Twilite*, until 1940 when Roy and Irene Hokenson built a house next to the fishery. About this time they stopped farming.¹¹¹

The Hokensons fished primarily with pound nets, which they preferred because pound nets did not damage the fish as gill nets did (figure 11). They also participated in herring fishing and in the winter fished through the ice for fun and personal use. When the Hokensons entered commercial fishing they sold their fish to Howard Elmore's Bayfield Fish Company, but they received such a poor price from Elmore that they soon began marketing their fish through the cooperative in Cornucopia. As their fishing business expanded the Hokensons hired help; during herring season they employed as many as seven men to help dress and salt the herring. A Norwegian immigrant and former logger named John Nelson worked for the Hokensons from the early 1930s into the 1950s. Nelson was known for his skill as a woodsman and for his great strength. When he built his log cabin home at Little Sand Bay, Nelson not only felled the trees himself but also hauled them to his home site himself using a harness and chain. Nelson built his cabin with hand tools only. Completed ca. 1938, the cabin stands today as an example of fine craftsmanship and symbol of self sufficiency. Nearby, the Hokenson fishery has survived with all of its major buildings, structures, and landscape features, such as the chute used to slide fish boxes down the slope to the dock. The fishery, including the *Twilite*, has been restored by the National Park Service and is used to interpret commercial fishing. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Hokenson fishery is the most intact family fishery on Lake Superior and possibly on the Great Lakes.¹¹²

Herman Johnson Jr., known as Hermie, was the son of Sand Island fisherman Herman Johnson Sr. Hermie Johnson grew up on Sand Island and began fishing there with his father. In the late 1930s Johnson built a log cabin to the east of the Hokenson fishery at Little Sand Bay. He followed the cabin with a dock, fish house, ice house, and twine shed. At the same time he built a general store and tavern; Burt Hill noted in his diary the grand opening of the tavern (and the blizzard that night) on March 15, 1941. All of the second generation Sand Island fishermen moved to the mainland in the 1930s

¹¹¹ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 273; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 33, 38–40, 42, 65; Katy Holmer "Catch of the Day: The Cultural Landscape Associated with the Hokenson Fishery at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," edited by Arnold R. Alanen (National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, NE, 2001), 12–46; Nancy Farm Mannikko, "Revised NRHP Documentation—Hokenson Brothers Fishery—Draft," (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, n.d.), 6–8; Bob Hokenson, interview, September 28, 1990, tape 127, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library.

¹¹² Holmer, "Catch of the Day," 15–24, 43–44; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 54–55, 65, 82–84; "Scrapbook of a Fisherman's Wife"; Bob Hokenson, interview; Bob Mackreth, "Little House in the North Woods," (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2000), typescript in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Mannikko, "Hokenson Fishery," 1–9; National Park Service, "Draft Revised Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment for Little Sand Bay, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore" (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), 42–43.

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and 1940s. However Johnson differed from Elvis Moe, Carl Dahl, Jake Hansen, and Bill Noring in establishing his fishing business at Little Sand Bay instead of returning to Sand Island in the summer to fish. While he developed a tourist resort around the tavern and store, Johnson continued to operate an active commercial fishery. Fishermen commonly undertook other work to supplement fishing, but in the mid-twentieth century the other work was more likely to be trolling parties than farming or logging. Johnson's resort took the tourist business a step further. Hermie Johnson's tavern and store was not only a center for summer recreation, but also a gathering place for the Hokenson and Johnson families.¹¹³

Despite the advantages of modern technology, especially gasoline engines, fishing remained a dangerous occupation. Probably every fisherman experienced several close calls during his life, and sometimes lives were lost. Motor-powered fishing boats were a great advantage during a storm, enabling fishermen to travel to safety under conditions that would make a sailboat useless. But a bad storm could still cause a fish tug to founder. And when a boat's engine failed, it literally left men powerless. John Hanson and Harold Dahl were not the only fishermen who were having engine trouble when they were last seen alive. A spectacular failure occurred in November 1917 when a broken fuel line caused the *Herring King* to go up in flames. The *Herring King* was one of the Boutin Fish Company's collecting boats. In 1910 she had been rebuilt, lengthened, and given a new engine that the *Bayfield County Press* expected would make her the fastest boat of her size on Chequamegon Bay. On November 29, 1917, John Gordon and Clarence Russell were on board the *Herring King* off the shore of Sand Island where they were picking up fish. Apparently gasoline had run down the boat from a broken fuel line and was ignited. The uncontrollable fire engulfed the boat, driving the two men to the bow. The crew of the packet steamer *Goldish* heard the *Herring King*'s distress signal and came as near to the burning boat as they dared. Russell managed to get to a lifeboat, which was adrift with no oars, and was taken aboard the *Goldish*. When Gordon finally dropped off the burning boat he swam towards a life buoy but went under a few feet away. The *Herring King* burned to the waterline. That evening, Louis Moe attached a line to the boat and towed it to Sand Island to be salvaged. Summer resident Christian Aabel made the hull of the *Herring King* into a cottage that still exists, though in a ruined state. Burt Hill mounted the *Herring King*'s bell on a pole and used it to call guests to meals; the bell is there today, next to Hill's house.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ National Park Service, "Little Sand Bay," 43; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore photograph collection, negative numbers 1466 #19A(20), 1466 #28A(29), 1466 #30A(31), 1467 #4, 1467 #5, 1467 #16, 1467 #18; Hill, "Diary," 1941; [unnamed son of Leif Erickson], "Life As I Remember It at Little Sand Bay," Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files, John Nelson file; Holmer, "Catch of the Day," 28.

¹¹⁴ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 69–71; Mackreth, "Getting Hurt," 7–8; *Bayfield County Press*, December 8, 1911; "Find Body of Lost Herbster Fisherman," *Bayfield County Press*, June 25, 1931; "Lost Fisherman Is Found Safe Wednesday," *Bayfield County Press*, December 29, 1938; Keller, *Unholy Apostles*, 121–23; "Marine News of the Week," *Bayfield County Press*, April 8, 1910; "Life Lost as Boat Burns," *Bayfield County Press*, November 30, 1917; Hill, "Diary," 1917; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, 10 June 2006.

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Winter fishing brought with it the hazards of ice and blizzards. Boats that were still out fishing in late November and December risked being trapped in ice as it formed. The most treacherous times were early and late in the winter when the ice was weak and people were in danger of falling through or being stranded by drifting ice floes. As an indication of how frequently this happened, in January 1944 a newspaper referred to the “first” drowning of the ice fishing season. Martin Kane twice fell through the ice but managed to roll out of the water and back onto the ice. By the 1940s old cars and trucks were commonly used instead of dogs and horses to haul fish to the mainland. This was a great labor and timesaver, but the heavier vehicles were more likely to go through weak ice.¹¹⁵

When it came to preserving fish, refrigeration and freezing continued to gain market share. The large dealers installed mechanical refrigerator and freezer plants. In 1928 Howard Elmore installed a twenty ton refrigerator from the Frick Company of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, a leading manufacturer of commercial refrigerators, at his new Bayfield Fish Company plant. The Frick refrigerator kept two sharp-freezing rooms at subzero temperatures and an ante-freezing room at a temperature well below freezing. By the 1940s Bayfield’s leading dealers—Booth, Kuehn, Hadland, and LaPointe—all had mechanical refrigerators and freezers. Kuehn’s freezer was reportedly capable of producing thirty thousand pounds of ice a day. Kuehn also installed a locker plant, where individuals could rent lockers for storing frozen fish. Nevertheless, ice harvesting remained important. Fishermen such as the Hokensons and Hermie Johnson who processed and preserved their own fish could not afford the large, expensive mechanical refrigerators, and dealers continued to use ice from the lake in addition to mechanically produced ice. Even with his new twenty ton refrigerator, in 1928 Elmore employed as many as twenty-five men for several weeks to harvest eight hundred tons of ice. Booth employed forty men to harvest twenty-two hundred tons of ice. The ice harvest took place late in winter. Blocks of ice weighing several hundred pounds were cut from the lake’s surface at a distance of a few hundred feet from shore. The blocks were then rafted through a channel that the workmen cut in the ice to an ice house, where horses pulled them up a chute, and men inside the ice house skidded them into place.¹¹⁶

Despite the growth of refrigerated and frozen fish, salt fish was by no means obsolete. The continued prominence of salting in Bayfield was related to the large proportion of herring in the local catch. Salting remained the fastest and most reliable method for preserving herring, which was more liable than other fish to spoil. In 1910 the Boutin Fish Company packed about 540 half barrels, or 405,000 tons, of salted herring, compared to 60 tons of fresh frozen. Booth canned a portion of its pickled herring in 1904, and in the 1940s was again packing some of its herring in tins. But most salted herring was packed in barrels or small wooden pails. In 1914 Booth opened a

¹¹⁵ Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 46–51; “Last Fishing Boat Reaches Bayfield, Wis.,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, December 14, 1937; “Fisherman Drowned at Oak Island Sat.,” *Bayfield County Press*, February 26, 1931; Mackreth, “Getting Hurt,” 8, 15; Chapple, “Martin Kane,” 35; Johnson, “Manitou Island Fishing Camp,” 21.

¹¹⁶ Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 41, 54, 60, 65–66; “Fishing is ‘Big Business’”; Chapple, “Herring Boom,” 6; Rathbun, “Commercial Fishing,” 81.

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cooperage in a building in Bayfield that was previously used to pack and store fish. In 1915 the cooperage was expected to produce fifty to seventy-five thousand barrels. As the only cooperage in the area, the Booth Cooperage supplied barrels to all of the area fishermen as well as to Booth fishermen across Lake Superior. The cooperage operated into the 1950s, although the number of coopers employed there dropped from five to three to two as the amount of fish that was salted diminished. By the 1940s Bayfield's fish dealers were using automatic machinery to dress herring. At least some of these machines were designed locally: in addition to Joe LeBel's conveyor belt system for dressing herring, Percy Chape, Booth's foreman, designed a revolving cylinder to remove scales. Smoking was a popular method for preserving herring and other fish, especially siscowet and chubs. However smoking was labor intensive and therefore expensive, and smokehouses tended to catch fire after prolonged use. For these reasons smoked fish production was limited and was done mostly for family and friends or for the local market.¹¹⁷

Railroads remained the dominant mode of transporting fish to market in the early 1900s. Salt fish was shipped in barrels and fresh and frozen fish in refrigerator cars, primarily to the major railroad distribution centers in Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul. By the 1920s roads in northern Wisconsin had been improved enough to make trucking a viable means of transporting fish to market. Of particular importance was Route 13, which passed through the villages along the shore of the Bayfield Peninsula and connected to the main road to Duluth. Route 13 was completed by 1925, but little of it was paved. Road improvements continued, however, and the proportion of fish that was shipped by truck grew larger. Trucks were able to transport fish to market more quickly than railroads, giving a competitive edge to the seller and fresher fish to the buyer. Trucking also afforded greater flexibility in marketing, as fish could be picked up almost anywhere and transported to a larger number of market cities. Wire and telephone service also helped to expand the market for the region's fish. During the 1940s fresh fish from the Apostle Islands was marketed throughout the Midwest and as far east as New York. Salt fish went primarily to the southern states, especially to the coal mining districts there and in Pennsylvania.¹¹⁸

While fish dealers availed themselves of the advantages of trucking, independent fishermen benefited even more, as trucking made it easier for them to market their fish without going through a dealer. The fishermen of Cornucopia collaborated with Hermann Ehlers, owner of the town's general store, to form a marketing cooperative in 1926. Ehlers would telephone the Chicago market to learn the current prices for fish and arrange to have the fish shipped by truck to Ashland and from there by truck or by rail to Chicago. For this service, Ehlers took a 3 percent commission, leaving the fishermen a greater profit than they received if they sold their fish to one of the Bayfield dealers. The

¹¹⁷ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 35, 37, 61, 66–69, 80–81; Chapple, "Herring Boom," 6; "Fishing is 'Big Business'"; "The Booth Cooperage at the Foot of Washington Ave., Bayfield, Wisconsin" (Bayfield, WI: Bayfield Heritage Association, n.d.); "LeBel's Brain Child"; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 81; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 185.

¹¹⁸ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 41, 52–54, 57; "Fishing is 'Big Business'"; Bob Hokenson interview.

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cooperative was likely responsible in part for the large increase in the number of fishermen in Cornucopia in the late 1920s and 1930s. The Hokensons also joined the cooperative during that time.¹¹⁹

The Sea Lamprey and After

During the 1950s and 1960s the commercial fishery of Lake Superior was transformed by the struggle against the sea lamprey. The parasitic lamprey preyed on large fish such as lake trout and whitefish, attaching to fish with its sucker mouth and sucking out the fish's body fluids. It was several years after the initial 1938 sighting of the lamprey in Lake Superior before its effect on fish populations became pronounced. Lake trout was the most important commercial fish in Lake Superior in the 1950s. There is evidence that the lake trout population was already declining due to the increase in intensity of both sport and commercial fishing, but the proliferation of the lamprey was the primary cause of the precipitous lake trout decline in the 1950s. The annual lake trout catch for Lake Superior (American and Canadian) dropped from 4.7 million pounds in 1949 to 371,000 pounds in 1961—a 92 percent decrease. The whitefish catch dropped from more than a million pounds in 1950 to less than 500,000 pounds in 1960, a decrease of more than 50 percent that can only be considered moderate in comparison to the astounding drop in the lake trout catch.¹²⁰

By the time the lamprey began to affect fish populations in Lake Superior it had already devastated those in the other Great Lakes, and efforts at lamprey control were underway. A lamprey control program began on Lake Superior in 1953. For several years efforts focused on stopping lamprey reproduction by placing electrical barriers in spawning streams, but these proved ineffectual. Meanwhile, more than six thousand chemicals were tested in the attempt to find one that would kill lamprey larvae without significant harm to other fish. In 1958 the most effective chemical compound was identified, and it was systematically applied to lamprey spawning streams. By 1961 the lamprey population in Lake Superior had been reduced by 87 percent. With the lamprey under control, authorities effectively closed commercial lake trout fishing on Lake Superior in 1962 to give the trout time to recover. An intensive stocking program accompanied the lamprey control program, and large numbers of hatchery-reared trout were released in the lake beginning in the 1950s. By the late 1960s the lake trout population had substantially recovered. Commercial lake trout fishing was reopened in 1967, but with a strict quota system in place. Whitefish fishing was not restricted by the quota system imposed for lake trout, and the whitefish catch grew rapidly during the 1960s, remaining, however, below the yields of the 1940s.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 53–57, 83; "Cornucopia Fishing Records"; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 273; Holmer, "Catch of the Day," 19, 22.

¹²⁰ Warren Downs, *The Sea Lamprey: Invader of the Great Lakes*, The Great Lakes Alien Series No. 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, 1982), 3; Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 33, 40–42, 47; Richard L. Pycha and George R. King, "Changes in the Lake Trout Population of Southern Lake Superior in Relation to the Fishery, the Sea Lamprey, and Stocking, 1950–70," technical report no. 28 (Ann Arbor: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1975), 2, 5–12, 29–30.

¹²¹ Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 33–34, 40–45, 47–48; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 84–87; Michael J. Hansen, ed., "A Lake Trout Restoration Plan for Lake Superior" (Ann

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The decline of the herring population in Lake Superior was as troubling as the decline of lake trout and whitefish, and more mysterious, as herring were too small to serve as prey for the sea lamprey. During the 1950s the annual herring catch from the lake averaged around twelve thousand pounds, compared to catches typically between fourteen and sixteen thousand pounds during the 1940s. During the 1960s the herring catch dropped more sharply. The herring decline seems to have been caused by overfishing combined with competition with smelt for the zooplankton that both fish ate. It appears that the decline was greater in some parts of Lake Superior than in others, and that the Apostle Islands was one of the places where the decline was greater. In hindsight this is not surprising, considering that herring had been fished intensively in the Apostle Islands since the 1890s. The herring run was of such importance not only to the region's fishermen but also to so many others who earned money picking, dressing, and packing fish, that the decline was particularly hard on the local economy. The excitement that had characterized newspaper stories about the herring run for so many years was replaced by gloom, and hope that things would change. Meanwhile, the rainbow smelt that had first appeared in Lake Superior about 1930 had become abundant by the 1950s. At first Lake Superior fishermen had no interest in smelt, which they viewed as a rough fish unfit for human consumption that fouled their nets. But in 1952, recognizing a growing market, commercial fishermen on Lake Superior began systematically fishing for smelt. The annual yield grew from forty-five thousand pounds in 1952 to more than two million pounds in 1964. Smelt fishing, however, does not appear to have played a major role in the commercial fishery of the Chequamegon region. Even where smelt fishing was more actively pursued on other parts of the lake, it did not compensate for the decline of lake trout, whitefish, and herring. From a high of 25,500,000 pounds in 1941, the catch of commercially valuable fish from Lake Superior declined to about 8,000,000 pounds in 1968. It was a disaster for Lake Superior's commercial fishing industry.¹²²

During this period new and improved fishing equipment helped fishermen to fish more effectively. More powerful motors meant faster fishing boats and the ability to cover more territory. The nylon nets that replaced cotton and linen during the 1950s and 1960s were significantly more effective at catching fish and also saved labor in net care and maintenance. But such improvements could not offset the decline in fish populations; ironically, they contributed to the reduction of those populations to levels that were not sustainable. Another advance that aided fishermen, particularly with regard to safety, was ship to shore radio. A local ship to shore radio station was licensed in 1948, and later the Coast Guard provided this service. Thus in March 1956, when three fishing boats tried to get an early start on the season and were trapped in ice, they called the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard cutter *Woodrush* worked through the night to free the boats from thick ice. The same issue of the *Bayfield County Press* carried a story about a

Arbor; Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1996), 1; Pycha and King, "Lake Trout Population," 3, 22–29, 32.

¹²² Lawrie and Rahrer, "Lake Superior: A Case History," 31–32, 53–55; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 87–92; "Cautious Optimism Prevails among Fishermen as the Lifts of Herring Increase from Day to Day," *Bayfield County Press*, November 29, 1956; "Bayfield Students Get 'Herring Break,'" *Bayfield County Press*, November 29, 1959.

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motorized ice sled accident that killed one man and injured another. The *Press* called for regulation of power sleds and repeated the age old warnings about misjudging Lake Superior and taking unnecessary chances.¹²³

With the fish disappearing, most commercial fishermen in the region either retired or found other work. In 1965 there were twenty fishing boats operating in Bayfield and vicinity, down from seventy-five to one hundred boats in the late 1940s. A *Chicago Tribune* writer described Bayfield harbor in 1965: “A large dockside building, once a fishery, is marked: For Rent or Sale. And fishing boats with names that sang of high hopes or adventure, or honored a lady, lie askew in a kind of graveyard-by-the-lake, overgrown [by] sandspit grass and spiky magenta knotweed.”¹²⁴ Christian Hadland, Louis Olsen, Ole Olsen, Mike Hendrickson, and John Hagen were among those who retired in the 1950s and 1960s. Leo Hokenson died in 1957; the surviving brothers Roy and Eskel retired in mid-1962, when the government closed down commercial lake trout fishing. Many fishermen went to work on the iron ore boats. Julian Nelson fished until the mid-1960s then worked for the Madeline Island ferry; he later said he had stayed in fishing five years too long. Mel Erickson stopped fishing in 1963 and became caretaker for the Raspberry Island lighthouse. Among the minority who stayed in business longer, Hermie Johnson continued fishing until he retired in the 1970s, and brothers Cliff and Harvey Hadland fished from their Rocky Island camp until they retired in 1988. Mel Erickson’s son John did not retire from fishing until the late 1980s, and his son Marty is one of a small number of non-Indian commercial fishermen in the Apostle Islands today. As the number of white fishermen diminished, the Ojibwe presence in the industry became more prominent. In 1975 there were sixteen commercial fishermen on the Red Cliff Reservation, although most of them fished part time and on a small scale.¹²⁵

Fish dealers also closed up shop as the fishing deteriorated. Booth Fisheries was the last of the dealers to send a collecting boat around to the island fish camps, and it ended this service in 1958. For several years after that Booth continued to deal in herring. In 1959 Booth was one of four firms shipping herring from Bayfield; the other three were Otto L. Kuehn, Henry Johnson (operated by Henry Johnson Jr.), and Hermie Johnson.¹²⁶ But the market for herring had changed: by the mid-1950s most of the herring catch went to fox and mink farms where it was ground and used for feed. When the price of fur dropped, the number of fur farms declined and with it the market for herring. As for Booth, the Great Lakes had long ceased to be an important part of the

¹²³ Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 56; Duffy interview; Lawrie and Rahrer, “Lake Superior: A Case History,” 31, 53–54; Pycha and King, “Lake Trout Population,” 1, 6–8, 29; Rathbun, “Commercial Fishing,” 80–81; “Coast Guard Cutter Woodrush Cuts Ice Bridge; Keepers Man Light Stations on the Islands,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 6, 1961; “CG Cutter Woodrush Rescues Three Boats,” “Sled Accident Kills Steve Butterfield, Red Cliff; Earl Russell, Bayfield, Hospitalized by Mishap,” “Among Other Things . . . Regulation Needed,” *Bayfield County Press*, March 15, 1956.

¹²⁴ Jeanne Barry, “Apostle Islands: Wild, Beautiful,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 21, 1965.

¹²⁵ Hadland and Mackreth, “Commercial Fishermen”; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 66–67, 83–84, 114; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 86–87; Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 93, 96; Duffy interview; Julian and Marie Nelson interview.

¹²⁶ Although the Hokensons were still fishing they were no longer fishing for herring. Fritz, “Special History Study: Fishing,” 83.

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company's business, which ranged from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. During the 1960s Booth closed its Bayfield operation. Conversely, Bodin Fisheries, formerly of Washburn and Houghton Point, opened for business in Bayfield in the early 1960s. Today Bodin is the only wholesale fish dealer operating in Bayfield.¹²⁷

The end of collecting service dealt another blow to the island fish camps. With faster fishing boats, most of the remaining fishermen based their operations on the mainland. By the late 1960s only the Hadland brothers still fished commercially from Rocky Island. Many of the other fishermen's families summered on Rocky Island, but they came for recreation rather than for work. On Manitou Island the Olsons and others used the fish camp intermittently, mostly in winter. Although the Manitou fish camp was used by men rather than families, the nature of activities there also shifted from work to recreation, both recreational fishing and deer hunting. Since the 1960s licensing has limited the numbers of commercial fishermen, and quota systems have limited the number of fish they are allowed to take, making it more difficult to make a living by fishing. Both licensing and quotas favor sport over commercial fishing. Ojibwe fishermen are not subject to licensing. In 1972, in *State v. Gurnoe*, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that under the 1854 treaty the Ojibwe had the right to fish in Lake Superior within a mile of the Red Cliff Reservation. The court stated, however, that the state could regulate Ojibwe fishing if needed to protect fish populations. Subsequently the Red Cliff Ojibwe and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources agreed to a fish management program that recognized both treaty rights and conservation needs.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 34; "Bayfield Students"; Hadland and Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen"; "Cautious Optimism"; Bob Hokenson interview; Duffy interview; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 272.

¹²⁸ Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 56, 84, 114; Holmer, "Superior Summer," 87; Johnson, "Manitou Island Fishing Camp," 9, 14–15, 28–30; Fritz, "Special History Study: Fishing," 94–100; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 351–53.

CHAPTER SIX LOGGING

More than any other human activity, logging transformed the landscape of the Apostle Islands. Commercial logging took place on most of the islands. When the logged forests regenerated, it was with different species that altered both the ecology and the human utilization of the islands. The first sawmills erected in the 1840s and 1850s produced lumber for local building needs. Logging for a broader market began on Oak Island during the 1850s, when Benjamin Armstrong began cutting hardwood for steamboat fuel. In 1869 Robinson D. Pike built a shingle and sawmill in Bayfield that was instrumental in the growth of the region's logging industry. Logging gained momentum during the 1870s, and during the 1880s and 1890s large-scale operations focused on white pine, the most marketable timber. But the location of the islands and characteristics of island forests resulted in a diverse logging industry that also included hemlock, cedar, and hardwoods. By the early 1900s pine was rapidly being depleted, and logging entered a new phase in which hemlock and hardwoods were the primary woods. The John Schroeder Lumber Company dominated this phase of Apostle Islands logging, and in 1919 the company introduced railroad logging to the islands. After Schroeder ceased logging in the Apostle Islands about 1930, small logging operations harvested hardwood for furniture and veneer and pulpwood for paper. These late logging operations used chain saws and tractors. There was still some logging in the islands when the national lakeshore was created in 1970.

Early Logging

Madeline Island's early inhabitants cut wood for fuel, construction, and fish barrels. As a result, much of the island's forest was second growth aspen and birch by the 1830s.¹ Because there was no sawmill in the area until the 1840s, most of the buildings were constructed of logs. The American Fur Company built the first sawmill in the Chequamegon region in about 1845, a water-powered mill on the mainland opposite La Pointe. With the demise of the American Fur Company, Julius Austrian, La Pointe's leading landowner and entrepreneur, acquired the mill. In 1855 Elisha Pike from Toledo, Ohio purchased the mill, a log house, and eighty acres from Austrian. When Pike moved his family into the house they became the first settlers on the Bayfield Peninsula, and the mill creek became known as Pike's Creek. In 1856, shortly after Bayfield was platted, the Bayfield Land Company erected a steam sawmill to supply lumber to build the town. The mill was rebuilt after it burned and was later sold to Samuel S. Vaughn, one of Bayfield's early settlers and most successful businessmen. In 1861 the government completed a sawmill on the Red Cliff Reservation that supplied lumber for building at Red Cliff and other reservations in the Lake Superior region. Then in 1866 Captain Robinson D. Pike, Elisha's son, returned from service in the Civil War and purchased a shingle mill that had been built several years earlier on Pike's Creek. When that mill burned Pike built a shingle mill in the village of La Pointe. The steam boiler in that mill exploded on May 17, 1869 with tragic results: one man was killed, several others were seriously injured, and much of the village of La Pointe was destroyed by fire. Pike

¹ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 6; Peterson, "Village in the Shade."

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elected not to rebuild in La Pointe; instead he built a shingle mill in Bayfield, followed shortly by a sawmill that he named “Little Daisy.” In 1870 Pike’s mill was one of two shingle and sawmills operating in Bayfield, each employing twenty-five men; the other was Vaughn’s Bayfield Mill Company. A third steam-powered sawmill at Bark’s Point on the western side of the Bayfield Peninsula employed thirty-five men until it burned in October of that year. Elisha Pike’s sawmill was still operating on Pike’s Creek. The Red Cliff sawmill had been idle for several years, but it was back in operation in 1871.²

The wood for these first sawmills came primarily from Oak and Basswood islands. Not only did desirable timber species grow on these islands, the short distance that the logs had to be hauled to shore and then the short distance from the islands to the mainland made it economical to log these locations. Oak Island, the highest of the Apostle Islands, especially lent itself to logging, with steep terrain and many ravines that aided in moving the logs to shore. The first commercial logging intended for a market beyond local building needs began on Oak Island in the late 1850s, when Benjamin Armstrong began cutting hardwood for steamboat fuel. James Chapman either took over Armstrong’s wood yard or established another one nearby. Like Samuel Vaughn, Chapman was an early Bayfield settler and prominent businessman. In 1870 he entered into a partnership with William Knight, recently arrived in Bayfield, to expand the wood yard. By the end of that year Chapman and Knight’s Oak Island establishment included a four hundred foot dock and a logging camp with a large dwelling, barn, and several smaller buildings for loggers to use as they worked through the winter. In April 1871 the *Bayfield Press* reported that Chapman and Knight had more than twenty-two hundred cords of wood at their yard, a cord measuring four by four by eight feet. By the end of 1872 William Knight had apparently taken over sole ownership of the Oak Island wood yard, but by 1880 references to Knight’s wood yard had disappeared from the newspapers. Most likely the wood yard closed because coal had replaced wood as the primary fuel for steamboats. However cordwood was still being cut in the early 1880s on Basswood Island, where there was a wood yard for this purpose by 1870.³

The cordwood industry on Oak and Basswood islands illustrates how the particular characteristics and location of the islands shaped the local lumber industry. Because hardwoods do not float, they are not suitable for river drives and therefore were not logged at inland locations until railroads came to an area. But on Oak and Basswood islands, the plentiful hardwoods had only to be hauled a short distance to shore, where steamboats traveling to and from Bayfield, Ashland, or Duluth provided a ready market. Hardwood is better than pine for fuel because hardwood burns longer. In addition pine was the premier building lumber and was too valuable to burn for fuel. Although other markets did not come to the islands the way that steamboats did, softwoods could readily

² Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 131, 133–34, 138–39, 153, 163–64, 183; Ross, *La Pointe*, 119, 126; “Saw Mill Historics,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 9, 1889; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 90–91, 103; *Bayfield Press*, October 29, 1870; *Report of Commissioner 1861*, 74; *Report of Commissioner 1862*, 88; *Report of Commissioner 1868*, 380; *Report of Commissioner 1870*, 309; *Report of Commissioner 1871*, 601.

³ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 92, 94–95; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 35–37, 81; Mannikko, “Logging and Lumbering,” 5; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 181–82; “Oak Island, Farming, Etc.,” *Bayfield Press*, October 27, 1870; *Bayfield Press*, April 8, 1871; *Bayfield Press*, December 17, 1870.

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be assembled into rafts and hardwoods loaded onto barges or scows and towed to mills on the mainland. The ease and economy of transportation combined with the abundance of hemlock, pine, cedar, and hardwoods on the islands created a diverse Apostle Islands logging industry that supplied several niche markets. Before they were logged, most of the forests of the Apostle Islands were mixed hardwoods and conifers dominated by hemlock, white pine, sugar maple, and yellow and white birch. Red oak grew in well drained areas and white cedar grew in the wetter lowlands. Because it is durable under wet conditions, cedar was the preferred material for roof shingles, an important product of the Chequamegon region's early lumber industry. A shingle mill, later purchased by R. D. Pike, was built on Pike's Creek in 1860. In October 1870 the *Bayfield Press* reported that so far that year Pike's Bayfield shingle mill had produced one million shingles while Vaughn's shingle mill had produced six hundred thousand shingles. Both mills supplied the local market and also shipped shingles via the Great Lakes to Duluth and to markets in the east.⁴

Railroad ties provided another market for cedar as well as for hemlock and tamarack that grew in the islands. In 1872 the *Bayfield Press* noted that Michigan Island had an abundance of timber suitable for railroad ties. Railroads used large quantities of ties: an average of twenty-seven hundred ties or 125,000 board feet of lumber for each mile of new railroad. Because so many ties were needed they had to be cheap, and often wood was used because it was available even if it wasn't suitable for that purpose. Apostle Islands cedar was ideal, as it was resistant to rot and decay and could be shipped inexpensively by boat. For these reasons railroad ties from the Chequamegon region were used not only for railroads in the region, but were also shipped to Chicago where they were sent west for the railroads that extended across the treeless plains. The same qualities that made cedar suitable for railroad ties made it suitable for the mine timbers used to support the tunnels and shafts of the Lake Superior copper and iron mines. Hemlock was the basis for another aspect of early lumbering in the islands—the harvesting of hemlock bark for tanning, the process of turning animal hides into leather. Hemlock bark was the source for the chemical tannin, a necessary ingredient in the tanning process. Because of its extensive and accessible hemlock forests, Wisconsin had emerged as a center for the tanning industry by the mid-nineteenth century. Hemlock bark was being harvested in the Apostle Islands by the early 1870s, and much of the bark was shipped to tanneries in Duluth.⁵

Hardwood had uses in addition to fuel. Poorer grades were used for charcoal, whereas finer grades, particularly birch and maple, were used for furniture. Oak had an important local application in the manufacture of the fish barrels that were used for packing and shipping salted fish. Sawmill owner R. D. Pike was making barrels by 1870, and the N. & F. Boutin fishing company opened a cooperage in Bayfield at about that time. By the 1870s lumbering had become integral to the economy of the Chequamegon

⁴ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 88–93; Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 44–49; Ross, *La Pointe*, 126.

⁵ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 93–98; Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 50–52; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," A-20; Theodore J. Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 83–84; *Bayfield Press*, April 6, 1872; *Bayfield Press*, March 2, 1872; *Bayfield Press*, July 3, 1880.

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region. In November 1877 the *Bayfield Press* noted: “Bayfield is settling down to its regular winter’s business. Cord wood, pine logs, oak timber, steamboat wood and fish are the staple products, and the supply is unlimited.”⁶ Production at R. D. Pike’s Bayfield sawmill provides a useful measure of the growth of logging during this time period. Pike’s output grew from three hundred thousand board feet of lumber in 1870 to five million board feet in 1880.⁷

The Pine Era

Hemlock, cedar, and hardwood continued to be cut in the 1880s and 1890s, but those decades were defined by the large scale logging of white pine—the mainstay of the American lumber industry that began in New England and worked its way west. White pine is the ideal wood for building: tall, straight, lightweight, durable, and easy to work. Buoyancy was key to the economic viability of white pine, as it could be floated on the rivers to the mills. Pine was so important that the mixed hardwood and coniferous forest of the north woods was known as the “pinery,” even though a pineland was defined as a tract of several hundred acres with an average of one or two large pine trees per acre. As pine diminished in the Northeast, the big lumber companies moved to the upper Great Lakes states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota seeking new profits. Lumbering in these states also grew to supply building material for the rapidly growing towns and cities of the central Midwest, where there was no white pine, and then for settlers on the Great Plains, where there were no trees. By the time of the Civil War, lumber production in the upper Great Lakes exceeded that in New England and New York. Within the upper Great Lakes region, logging progressed from east to west and also from south to north. Large scale pine logging was well underway in northern Michigan and north central Wisconsin by mid-century but was not notable on the south shore of Lake Superior until the 1880s. A number of prominent lumbermen in the Chequamegon region arrived in the area as government agents and town builders. Others were lumbermen who migrated westward with the timber. Early in 1886 the *Bayfield County Press* reported: “Michigan lumbermen are becoming numerous in this neck o’ the woods.”⁸

The 1880s and 1890s were years of great growth for lumbering in the Chequamegon region. R. D. Pike’s mill, the only sawmill in Bayfield during this time, increased its production from 5,000,000 board feet in 1880 to more than 35,000,000 board feet in 1899. Ashland’s first sawmill was built in 1872; by 1885 there were five. Washburn’s first sawmill was built in 1885, and two more followed in 1886. In 1885 the *Bayfield County Press* estimated the capacity of Ashland’s five sawmills at 52,000,000 board feet, Washburn’s mill at 5,000,000 board feet, and Pike’s Bayfield mill at

⁶ *Bayfield Press*, November 28, 1877, quoted in Twining, “Lumbering Frontier,” 49.

⁷ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 98, 105–106; *Bayfield Press*, January 27, 1872; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 157–58.

⁸ Robert F. Fries, *Empire in Pine: The Story of Lumbering in Wisconsin, 1830–1900* (1951; rev. ed., Sister Bay, WI: Wm Caxton, 1989), 4–23; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 87, 91–92; Michael Williams, *Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 160–61, 176–78, 193–200, 228; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 195; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 23–49; *Bayfield County Press*, January 2, 1886.

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10,000,000 for a regional total of 67,000,000 board feet.⁹ Seven years later, in 1892, sawmills in Ashland and Bayfield counties cut a total of 285,500,000 board feet of lumber. With these incredible figures, it is no wonder that the lumber industry ranked high, perhaps first, in the region's economy during these decades.¹⁰

The largest logging operations in the region took place on the mainland. A. A. Bigelow & Company of Chicago was the biggest of the big operators. Bigelow conducted logging operations in Michigan prior to purchasing timber rights to forty thousand acres of pineland west of Washburn, containing an estimated 450,000,000 board feet of lumber. Bigelow began logging there in 1886 and at its peak cut between 30,000,000 and 40,000,000 board feet of logs per year. Between 1889 and 1899 the Cranberry Lumber Company logged more than 200,000,000 board feet of pine near the mouth of the Cranberry River. In 1892–93 they cut 20,000,000 board feet of logs. The company's lumber camp developed into the town of Herbster, named for the camp cook. The Cranberry Lumber Company logged in Michigan prior to Wisconsin and subsequently logged in Minnesota—a typical progression. Other companies in the Chequamegon region operated at a scale comparable to Cranberry, including the Stearns Lumber Company on the Bad River Reservation. The large scale operations and corporate organization of these companies was characteristic of the American logging industry of the time. Nevertheless, there was still room in the region for smaller logging operations, and the Apostle Islands were particularly suitable for this purpose. On the islands it was not necessary to build extensive road systems or improve the waterways for river drives, activities that could require large amounts of capital. Smaller islands also favored smaller logging operations, as the marketable lumber on these islands could be cut in one or two seasons.¹¹

Robinson D. Pike's logging operation on Oak Island was modest by mainland standards but large for the islands. Pike was a key figure in the development of the lumber industry in the Chequamegon region. He was seventeen years old when his father moved the family to a cabin on Pike's Creek. He soon left to pursue his education and then to fight in the Union Army, returning permanently in 1866. Built beginning in 1869, Pike's mills, docks, and warehouses eventually covered twenty blocks of the Bayfield waterfront. In 1893 Pike organized the R. D. Pike Lumber Company as a stock company. Pike was involved in a number of business endeavors in addition to lumbering, and as one of Bayfield's leading citizens he held several public offices. His Little Daisy sawmill

⁹ An estimate in George Hotchkiss's *Lumberman's Directory* the following year was ten million feet less for Ashland and Bayfield. Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 53–54.

¹⁰ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 158, 189; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 106; "Washburn Through the Years"; Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 54; "Lumber Shipments for 1892," *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition, 1893*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*.

¹¹ Kurt Larson, "6th Avenue Mill Site," *Washburn Logging and Lumbering*, <http://members.tripod.com/battleaxcamp/6thavenue.htm>; "Ashland, and Its Neighbor, Washburn," *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1891–92*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*; Kurt Larson, "Cranberry Lumber Co. Railroad," *Washburn Logging and Lumbering*, <http://members.tripod.com/battleaxcamp/cranberry%20Lumber.htm>; "Bayfield's Lumber Record," *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition, 1893*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 110–112; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 219–20.

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in Bayfield not only bridged the transition from early settlement to industrial logging, but the expansion of his lumber company was also instrumental in the growth of the local lumber industry. Pike obtained logs for his lumber mills by purchasing them from independent loggers as well as by conducting his own logging operations. For the latter, Pike purchased both timber rights and timber lands. He purchased extensive timber rights on the Bayfield Peninsula, taking part in one of the largest timber sales in the region's history when he and a St. Paul financier purchased three hundred million board feet of standing timber in the central Bayfield Peninsula from the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad. Pike hired a jobber—a logging contractor—to cut the wood for him. On Oak Island, Pike purchased timber land rather than timber rights, and by the early 1890s he owned much of the island. He began logging the island for pine in 1892 and continued for the next ten years. During the 1893–94 season Pike banked about 1,500,000 board feet of Oak Island logs.¹²

John H. Knight and William F. Vilas were responsible for extensive logging on Stockton Island, the second largest of the Apostle Islands. Knight and Vilas were among the largest landowners in northern Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century. Born in Delaware, Knight attended law school in Albany, New York and practiced law until the outbreak of the Civil War, when he organized an infantry company. He served with distinction during the war and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the army, which sent him to Bayfield in 1869 to serve as Indian agent. His tenure in that office was brief but his stay in the Chequamegon region was not. In 1871 Knight was appointed registrar of the U.S. General Land Office in Bayfield. Later Knight moved to Ashland, where he was elected as the first mayor after Ashland was chartered as a city in 1887. Meanwhile, William F. Vilas, a wealthy attorney and influential politician in Madison, took a tour of Lake Superior in 1873 and renewed his friendship with his Albany law school friend John Knight. Shortly after this visit the two began buying timber lands in northern Wisconsin, making lucrative investments based on the knowledge that Knight gained from his position in the land office. As Vilas gained prominence in state and national politics, these investments came under scrutiny. Though they were not found guilty of illegal activity, suspicion followed Vilas as he served successively as U.S. Postmaster General, Secretary of the Interior, and a U.S. senator.¹³

Knight and Vilas purchased much of their extensive land holdings for speculation, but they also engaged in logging and milling. In 1881 they organized the Superior Lumber Company with a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars and built a sawmill in Ashland. Before they disbanded the company and sold the mill in 1889, their yearly output at times exceeded ten million board feet. Knight and Vilas began buying land on Stockton Island in the mid-1880s, continuing in the 1890s until they owned most of the island. Logging began later on Stockton Island than on Oak and Basswood islands because Stockton Island was farther from the mainland. In April 1878 the *Bayfield Press* reported that a party of lumbermen went to Presqueisle (Stockton Island) to see what kind

¹² Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 85; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 183; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 102–105, 111; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 23, 38; *Bayfield County Press*, December 17, 1892, November 25, 1893, December 2, 1893, January 6, 1894, November 24, 1894.

¹³ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 216; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 117–119.

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of timber grew there. In the mid-1880s an independent logger named William Knight worked for several seasons on Stockton Island, banking about three hundred thousand board feet of high quality white pine each season. When Knight hired a timber scaler in 1891 to assess the timber on Stockton Island, the resulting estimate of less than three million board feet of white pine was due in part to Knight's logging in the 1880s. The island was rich in hemlock, but hemlock was far less valuable than pine. Knight and Vilas debated the most profitable way to dispose of their Stockton Island land and timber. They hired contractors to log pine and hoped that a tannery would be built in Bayfield and cause the value of the hemlock to increase. But the partners did not profit from the island's hemlock until 1905 when Vilas (Knight died in 1903) sold the timber rights for all of their Stockton Island land to John Schroeder. Knight and Vilas also owned most of Bear Island and had a contractor cutting pine there in 1892.¹⁴

William Knight came to Bayfield in December 1869 to supervise the Indian agency temporarily while his older brother John was away. Knight remained in Bayfield where he became involved in virtually every aspect of local business and industry. But for several decades his primary business was as a dealer in timber lands and lumber. Shortly after his arrival, Knight became a partner in James Chapman's Oak Island wood yard, later becoming sole owner. By the time the wood yard shut down, Knight was conducting extensive logging operations on the mainland. An 1883 publication about industry in Bayfield reported that in the previous year Knight had cut five million board feet of lumber, selling four million feet as logs and sawing the remaining one million himself. He employed fifty men at his sawmill at Roy's Point, just north of Bayfield. Knight also owned York Island and may have logged there.¹⁵

Fred Fischer was another prominent area lumberman who logged in the islands. Fischer came to Bayfield from St. Paul in 1873, first opening a saloon and later a general store. In 1879 he went into the fishing business and in 1882 was one of the leading fish dealers in Bayfield. Fischer was harvesting hemlock bark on Basswood Island as early as 1881. In 1883 Fischer and Wing shipped the first carload of lumber from Bayfield on the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad. Fischer's partner, Isaac Wing, came to Bayfield from Hudson, Wisconsin, in 1870 to serve as receiver in the U.S. Land Office. In 1882 Wing left that position for the real estate and lumber business and made a fortune. In December 1885 Fischer and Wing were engaged in a major logging operation near Houghton Point and expected to bank between four and five million board feet that season. It seems that by then Fischer had shifted his interest from fishing, as he was no longer listed among Bayfield's fish dealers. Fischer and Wing dissolved their partnership in 1889. Fischer cut five million board board feet of logs on his own during the 1892-93 season. In 1895 and 1896 Fischer logged land that he owned on Michigan Island, with crews working during summer and winter. In September 1895 the *Bayfield*

¹⁴ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 198; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 112-126; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 13, 46, 76; *Bayfield Press*, April 10, 1878, February 28, 1885, December 17, 1892; W. G. Nohl, *Ashland County Plat Book* (1898).

¹⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 182; "Historical Sources Shed Light on Life of William Knight, Lumberman & Horticulturist," *Bayfield Courier* 39 (November 1998): 2; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 37; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 295; A. E. Doenitz and M. Rettinghouse, *Map of Bayfield County, Wisconsin* (Doenitz & Rettinghouse, 1906), 46.

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County Press reported that James Stewart had just finished putting in half a million board feet of pine on Michigan Island for Fischer. In 1900 Fischer was preparing to log Otter Island, where he expected to cut one and a half million board feet of pine.¹⁶

Like Fischer, members of the Boutin family expanded their business interests from fish to lumber, although fishing remained their primary business. In April 1883 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that Boutin & Mahan (Nelson Boutin and Samuel Mahan), then the largest fish dealer in the area, had hauled more than one thousand cords of wood to Bayfield from Madeline and Basswood islands. In the following year Nelson Boutin's nephew, Frank Boutin Jr., partnered with F. V. Holston in a logging operation on Sand Island. In December 1884 the tug *Currie* transported men, horse teams, and supplies to Boutin & Holston's Sand Island logging camp. The estimated log cut for that season was 2,500,000 board feet. In November 1885 Frank Boutin Jr. reestablished the camp to clean up the remaining pine, expecting to log on the mainland when that was finished. In 1887 Boutin was logging at Siskiwit Bay, but in 1897 he was back in the islands, putting in a camp on Outer Island. Boutin expected to log 900,000 board feet that winter, but his crew under foreman Jim Stewart cut 1,200,000 board feet that were rafted to Bayfield in April. The *Bayfield County Press* described them as the finest logs that had been brought to Bayfield for some time, averaging three logs to 1,000 board feet.¹⁷

George Best was an independent logger who began logging on Outer Island in 1883, possibly the earliest logging operation on that island considering its distance from the mainland. Best contracted to deliver 700,000 board feet of lumber to build iron ore docks at Agate Bay on the Minnesota north shore. By late October he had delivered 400,000 board feet. In late May 1884, Best shipped another 86,000 feet to Agate Bay. He had a setback in June when a log boom broke and the wind drove 150,000 feet of logs out into the lake. But the docks were completed, and the first Minnesota iron ore was shipped from Agate Bay that year. Agate Bay later became part of Two Harbors, one of the great iron ore ports on Lake Superior. While he was working on Outer Island, Best secured a tract of black birch that he intended to log for manufacturing purposes. In 1885 Best was on the mainland, logging six million board feet of pine on the Bayfield Peninsula for Rood & Maxwell, who owned a sawmill in Washburn. During the 1892–93 logging season, Best cut 4,000,000 board feet of logs on his own account and another 10,000,000 board feet working in partnership with Frank Boutin, who cut another 2,500,000 board feet of logs working on his own. Such mixing and matching of partners and trades—combining lumbering and fishing, for example—was typical as people took advantage of opportunities at hand to make a living or earn their fortune.¹⁸

¹⁶ Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 84; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 184–85; *Bayfield County Press*, July 23, 1881, December 5, 1885, January 26, 1889, September 21, 1895, May 9, 1896, May 30, 1896, May 19, 1900, November 10, 1905; “Bayfield’s Lumber Record”; Nohl, *Ashland County Plat Book*.

¹⁷ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 270; *Bayfield County Press*, April 7, 1883, December 13, 1884, December 20, 1884, February 14, 1885, April 4, 1885, November 28, 1885, November 26, 1887, November 13, 1897, April 30, 1898.

¹⁸ *Bayfield County Press*, September 1, 1883, September 22, 1883, October 6, 1883, October 27, 1883, December 1, 1883, January 12, 1884, March 8, 1884, May 31, 1884, June 21, 1884, December 5, 1885; Waters, *Superior North Shore*, 95; “Bayfield’s Lumber Record.”

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Charles Rudd combined logging with farming on land that he owned on Basswood Island. Colonel Rudd, as he was known, came to Bayfield from Kentucky and invested in the original Bayfield town site in the 1850s. In 1883 Rudd purchased several hundred acres of land on the west side of Basswood Island. That winter Rudd employed a crew of men for the dual process of clearing the land for farming and cutting cordwood for sale as steamboat fuel. In 1884 Rudd built a dock for a steamboat fueling station that supplied both cordwood and coal. By the summer of 1885 Rudd was fully engaged in harvesting hemlock bark on his Basswood Island property. In September he shipped more than 100 cords of tanbark to Duluth in addition to 50 cords of wood to Ashland. In July 1886 Rudd had 230 cords of hemlock bark and 250,000 board feet of hemlock logs on skids. His logging endeavors were not confined to cordwood and hemlock, however. During the 1890–91 and 1891–92 seasons Rudd cut about 1,600,000 board feet of pine logs. Clearly, Rudd was taking advantage of the variety of timber resources on his land. He also had a small crew cutting cedar at Iron River on the mainland.¹⁹

Elisha K. Brigham's logging activity on Basswood Island led him to subsequently buy a farm on the island. Brigham and his partner A. J. Mussell came to Bayfield from central Michigan in 1885 and formed a company to log along the Sand River. In October 1885 they were busy clearing out the river, building camps, and cutting roads in preparation for logging that winter. The following spring, Brigham and his family became permanent residents of Bayfield. During the 1892–93 season Brigham & Mussell cut one million board feet of logs. Brigham also formed a lumber company—the Lumber & Supply Company—and leased Pike's planing mill. It appears that shortly after that Brigham and Mussell went their separate ways. In the fall of 1893 Brigham had a crew cutting hemlock on Basswood Island. Mussell, for his part, had a logging camp on Outer Island in 1897.²⁰

Winter was the main logging season because it was easier to transport logs over snow and ice. Each lumberjack performed a specialized task. An undercutter used an axe to cut a notch in the tree, then sawyers used a two-man crosscut saw to cut through. When the tree was down the sawyers sawed the trunk into logs. Swampers cut off the branches and removed the bark on one side to create a smooth surface for skidding. When the trees were cut close to shore, roughly a quarter of a mile or less, the logs were skidded to the landing using a team of horses pulling a go-devil, a simple sled that lifted the front ends of the logs off the ground. Logging roads were built after the trees near the shore were gone and it became necessary to log farther inland. In that case the logs were skidded to a skidway where they were decked for loading onto a sleigh. Cant hooks were used to help roll and position the logs. Teamsters drove the large sleighs, which were pulled by teams of four to six horses and could carry ten to fifteen thousand board feet of

¹⁹ "Death of C. P. Rudd," *Bayfield County Press*, April 10, 1897; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 18; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 23–24; *Bayfield County Press*, November 24, 1883, December 29, 1883, March 29, 1884, September 26, 1885, March 7, 1891, February 6, 1892.

²⁰ *Bayfield County Press*, October 10, 1885, December 5, 1885, April 10, 1886, September 9, 1893, December 18, 1897, February 16, 1923; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 19; "Bayfield's Lumber Record."

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logs. Good roads were essential to a successful logging operation. A *Bayfield County Press* reporter praised the roads of the Fischer and Wing logging operation near Houghton Point as “graded to almost a perfect level and having more the appearance of being intended for a race track than any other purpose.”²¹ Road crews created ice roads by using a water tank and sprinkler to make a layer of ice. To help keep the sleighs on track, a rut-cutting sled cut ruts as wide as the sleigh runners into the road surface. The teamsters drove the loaded sleighs to a landing on the lakeshore, or on a riverbank for some mainland operations. At the landing the logs were banked—stacked into piles—to await the spring thaw.²²

In contrast to other logging operations, hemlock bark was harvested from May through July when it was easiest to remove the bark from the logs. Before a tree was cut, a cushion of small trees was laid on the ground to protect the bark when the tree fell. Once the tree was down and the branches removed, the bark was split and then peeled off in four foot sections. Bark peeling was considered one of the most difficult jobs in the woods, not only because of the skill required to remove the fragile bark intact, but also because of the black flies and mosquitoes in the woods at that season. In June of 1886 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that Colonel Rudd had fourteen men peeling hemlock on his property. Slides or chutes were frequently used on the islands to slide the slabs of bark down to the lakeshore. The slabs were then dried before they were stacked into cords. Although the bark was the more valuable product, hemlock logs were not wasted. In the summer, a set of big wheels was used instead of a go-devil to drag logs short distances. Big wheels consisted of a pair of wheels measuring ten to fourteen feet in diameter and joined by an axle. One end of a log was fastened to the axle, allowing a team of horses to drag two to three large logs at a time.²³

Whether summer or winter, logging was dangerous and accidents were frequent. Any mishap when working with the heavy logs could result in broken arms or legs or worse. Men were crushed when trees fell in unexpected directions. They were cut by saws and axes. Even a skilled teamster could lose control of a loaded sleigh on a steep, icy road. Piling and loading logs at the skidways and landings was particularly dangerous, especially for the top loader who stood on top of the pile to guide the logs into place. According to logging historian Robert Fries, when a top loader was killed no one asked how he died, only where he was crushed.²⁴

The final task of logging—transporting the logs to the mills—took place in the spring when the bays were free of ice. On the mainland, where there were suitable rivers, river drives were conducted to bring pine logs to the lakeshore. At the shore, hardwood

²¹ *Bayfield County Press*, December 5, 1885.

²² Nute, *Lake Superior*, 207–211; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 24–34; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 67–68; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 88–89.

²³ Twining, “Lumbering Frontier,” 49, 51–52; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 97; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 24; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 85; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 182.

²⁴ Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 30–32; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 211; Mackreth, “Getting Hurt,” 4–5, 9; *Bayfield County Press*, December 5, 1885, February 20, 1914, July 16, 1924; August 20, 1924, May 27, 1926, September 8, 1927

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logs were loaded onto barges or scows that were towed to the mills, while pine and hemlock logs were assembled into rafts that were towed. In 1885 two Bay City, Michigan lumbermen devised a type of raft known as a bag boom, created by chaining large logs together to form a floating fence that enclosed the other free floating logs. When towed, the raft took on the shape of a bag or balloon. This type of raft became the norm on the Great Lakes and could contain several million board feet of logs. Rafts were an economical means of transport. Their main disadvantage was that storms or accidents could break them up, resulting in a loss to the lumber company and a hazard to ships. Newspapers frequently reported broken and lost rafts and the problems they caused. A contractor who collected stray logs among the islands and along the mainland shore in 1899 took about three hundred thousand board feet of logs to the mills in Washburn.²⁵

Logging railroads made it possible to extend logging operations into forests that were too far from the lakeshore or from a navigable river to be logged otherwise. Railroads also made it possible to log hardwoods away from the lakeshore, and removed the need to log in winter when logs could be moved over snow and ice. In 1886 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that logging by rail was the chief topic of conversation among the Michigan lumbermen who were becoming so numerous in the area. But at a cost of between \$1,900 and \$7,600 per mile to build, logging railroads required substantial capital investment, justifiable only for large logging operations. A. A. Bigelow and Company of Chicago built the first logging railroad in the Chequamegon region, opened in 1887. Extending westward from the Bigelow sawmill in Washburn, the railroad eventually had about sixty miles of track. The Ashland, Siskiwit & Iron River Railway, owned jointly by the Ashland Lumber Company and the Keystone Lumber Company, was built beginning in 1890. The tracks began on the lakeshore at Nash, near the mouth of Whittlesey Creek, and extended to the northwest, covering much of the central Bayfield Peninsula. From the railroad dock at Nash, most of the logs were rafted to the two companies' mills in Ashland, but some were rafted to mills in Washburn and Bayfield. The Cranberry Lumber Company's logging railroad was also begun in 1890. The railroad hauled logs to the company's lumber camp on the lakeshore at what is now Herbster; from there the logs were rafted to mills in Washburn, Ashland, and Duluth. In the mid-1890s both Bayfield and Ashland counties passed bonds to construct logging railroads. Ashland County's railroad extended from Ashland about twenty-three miles to the south, with a spur to the northwest through the Bayfield Peninsula. Bayfield County's railroad connected Washburn and Iron River, but a planned spur to the village of Bayfield was never completed. The Bayfield Transfer Railroad began operating in 1898, with sixteen miles of tracks extending from Bayfield northward. In 1899 the *American Lumberman* stated that the Chequamegon Bay lumbering district had the greatest system of logging railroads in the country. On the islands, however, logging

²⁵ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 100; *Bayfield County Press*, October 10, 1885; Minnesota Historical Society, "Lake Superior Shipwrecks: Niagara, Log Rafting and the Lake Superior Timber Industry," <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/shipwrecks/niagara/nialr.html>; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 75–77; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 206–208; *Bayfield County Press*, September 23, 1899.

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railroads would not be built for two more decades, when higher prices for hardwoods and hemlock made island railroads cost effective.²⁶

Logging camps corresponded in size to the size of the logging operation. In the St. Croix River Valley to the west of the Chequamegon region there were logging camps with three hundred men. During the late 1880s A. A. Bigelow had 175 men in the woods west of Washburn, though not all necessarily in one camp. But there were other logging operations on the Bayfield Peninsula at the same time with as few as 20 men. Logging camps on the islands tended toward the smaller size: Rudd had 15 men on Basswood Island in February 1892, Brigham had 20 men on Basswood in September 1893, and there were 30 men cutting cedar on Bear Island in August 1899. During the 1880s many of the loggers were probably from the immediate area. A reporter described the Fischer and Wing camp at Houghton Point in 1885 as made up mostly of Bayfield “boys.” The cook was Johnnie Baxter, who had a homestead on Michigan Island and supplemented his farm income by cooking at logging camps. He had previously cooked at Frank Boutin’s logging camp on Sand Island. Baxter’s assistant was Henry Bono, previously with the Fountain House hotel in Bayfield. Harvey Nourse, whose parents were early Bayfield settlers, recalled several local men who were well known teamsters or foremen, including Judd Currie and Hank Conlin who worked at times in the islands. According to Nourse, some of the Ojibwe were “splendid canthook men, crack top loaders and were employed in the same camp from year to year.”²⁷ In the logging camps as in the fish camps, there was a late nineteenth century shift away from American and Canadian born loggers toward more European immigrants, especially Scandinavians, not only in the Chequamegon region but throughout the upper Great Lakes. This trend can be seen in the federal census listings for a Basswood Island logging camp in 1900. Ten of the twenty-seven men in the camp were American born. One of the ten was born in Maine; the other nine were from the Midwest, including three born in Wisconsin. Of the seventeen foreign-born men in the camp, ten were from Sweden, four from Canada, two from Norway, and one from Ireland.²⁸

Loggers typically worked from dawn to dusk six days a week. Accounts of logging camp life emphasize the importance of food, which had to be plentiful to keep men physically fit for the hard labor required of them. But food also had to be good in order to attract workers and keep them contented and working well. The newspaper reporter who visited Fischer and Wing’s Houghton Point logging camp wrote that he

²⁶ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 79, 108–109; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 211–16; *Bayfield County Press*, January 2, 1886; Kurt Larson, “Railroads,” *Washburn Logging and Lumbering*, <http://members.tripod.com/battleaxcamp/railroads.htm>; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 197–98; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 226, 275.

²⁷ Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 295.

²⁸ Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 218–19; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 130; Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 89; Larson, “6th Avenue Mill Site”; *Bayfield County Press*, November 26, 1887, February 23, 1889, February 6, 1892, September 9, 1893, August 26, 1899, December 5, 1885; Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 22; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 295; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 207–208; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 104–106; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 204; John G. Franzen, “Northern Michigan Logging Camps: Material Culture and Worker Adaptation on the Industrial Frontier,” *Historical Archaeology* 26, no. 2 (1992): 83–84; manuscript schedule for the 1900 federal census of population, La Pointe Township, Ashland County, Wisconsin State Archives.

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“partook of a dinner the equal of which can be found no where outside of a lumbering camp.”²⁹ During the brief interval of leisure time after supper and before bedtime, men might read an old newspaper, play cards, or write a letter, but the most popular pastime was to talk. The loggers dried their damp clothes on lines above the heating stove, resulting in a memorable odor. They slept in bunk beds, two to a bed (four to a bunk). If logging camps were noted for their food, they were notorious for bedbugs.³⁰

Nineteenth-century logging camp buildings were usually built of logs. Most essential were the bunkhouse, where the men slept; the cookhouse with kitchen and dining area; a barn for the horses; and privies. Larger camps had additional specialized buildings such as an office and store, blacksmith shop, and saw filer’s shack. Remains of nineteenth-century logging camps are difficult to find in the Apostle Islands, in part because they were often obliterated by later camps on the same site. Logging camps were built where there were good landings, and good landings were limited in number. Pike undoubtedly used the Schroeder camp sites on Oak Island before Schroeder used them. Similarly, Quarry Bay and Presque Isle Bay on Stockton Island both offered easy access to some of the best white pine on the island and likely saw early and repeated use for logging in the nineteenth century. In addition, abandoned logging camps were scavenged for lumber. Nevertheless, a few logging camp sites have been identified in the islands that appear to date to the nineteenth century. On the sandspit at the south end of Cat Island, building foundations and artifacts have been discovered at a site that local sources have identified as a very early logging camp. Frederick Prentice—who engaged in logging in addition to his quarrying operations—owned most of Cat Island in the late nineteenth century and probably cut pine and hemlock there. Prentice did not, however, own the southern end of the island where the camp site is located. Since the sandspit was the best landing site on the island, Prentice may have arranged with the property owner to put his camp there.³¹

On the west side of Manitou Island, archaeologists discovered a logging camp site (47AS348) with three features that appear to be the remains of buildings. Artifacts from the site, including bottles, tin cans, and ceramics vessels, date between ca. 1880 and 1906. In addition to its early date and undisturbed condition, the camp is of interest for its possible relation to the Manitou fish camp on the southern end of the island. The fish camp was established ca. 1900 by Swedish loggers who came to the island to log cedar and stayed on to fish. The west side camp may represent this cedar logging operation. A logging camp site (47AS230) on the sandspit at the southern end of Otter Island contains the remains of at least three structures and a midden. Some late nineteenth-century bottles found at the site suggest a late nineteenth century date. The site may represent Fred Fischer’s logging operation on Otter Island beginning in 1900. On Basswood Island, submerged dock cribs and a large clearing with possible building remains are at

²⁹ *Bayfield County Press*, December 5, 1885.

³⁰ Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 120–22; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 208–209; Franzen, “Northern Michigan Logging Camps,” 79–82.

³¹ Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 218; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 89; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 208; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 116–17, 130; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 46, 76, 87–88.

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the site of Charles Rudd's farm (47AS69). Investigation may uncover evidence of the logging operations that Rudd conducted at the farm. Just south of the Rudd farm site, building foundations at the Dock site (47AS68) may represent a hemlock and cordwood logging operation conducted by Robert Pew during the 1880s.³²

Most of the logs cut in the Apostle Islands went to sawmills in Bayfield, Ashland, and Washburn to be sawed into lumber. Mainland logging operations fed these mills as well as other mills on the lakeshore and inland. As the mills grew in number and capacity, Chequamegon Bay came to resemble a giant mill pond. In Bayfield, Samuel Vaughn's sawmill closed in the early 1870s, leaving R. D. Pike's Little Daisy sawmill as the only sawmill in Bayfield for the remainder of the lumbering era. Pike began his Bayfield milling empire in 1869 with a shingle mill, followed it with the sawmill and then in 1871 added a planing mill. Initially the mill used both steam and water power, each producing 30 horsepower; in 1880 the mill was powered solely by a 115 horsepower steam engine. At that time Pike employed an average of thirty-one men during the seven month milling season from May to November. Pike continued to expand the mill and add more modern and efficient machinery. He installed a lath mill in 1884 and added his first band saw in 1893. Improvements and expansions resulted in a large increase in the mill's output, which grew from five million board feet in 1880 to more than thirty-five million board feet in 1899. Although Pike operated the only sawmill in Bayfield, two other companies manufactured wood products during the late 1800s. The Bayfield Woodenware Company, opened in 1886, made boxes, staves, and decorative woodwork out of oak, birch, maple, basswood, cedar, and pine. Ten years later the company spent about four thousand dollars on new machinery and building repairs, but in 1897 it closed and in 1899 the building burned.³³

Although Ashland lagged behind Bayfield in constructing its first sawmill, it grew into a full-fledged lumber town with sawmills lining the waterfront. Van Dyke, Parsons and Moore and Anson Northrup built Ashland's first two sawmills in 1872. Northrup's mill was apparently short lived, but the Van Dyke, Parsons and Moore mill flourished—first as the Ashland Lumber Company and later as the Doherty mill. Also in 1872, George White built the first of several sash, door, and blind factories in the city. In 1880 there were two sawmills operating in Ashland with a third under construction. The Ashland Lumber Company sawmill was powered by a sixty horsepower steam engine and employed forty men. The Union Mill Company sawmill, built in 1878, was powered by a seventy-five horsepower steam engine and employed another forty men. By 1885 there were five sawmills operating in Ashland; when the industry peaked in the 1890s there were nine sawmills. The giants of Ashland milling in the 1890s were the Chequamegon Bay Shores Lumber Company and the Keystone Lumber Company. Headed by Eugene Shores, the Shores Lumber Company cut 48,750,000 board feet of lumber in 1892, exceeding the output of any other sawmill on Chequamegon Bay. The

³² Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 50–53, 79–85, 88–89; Richner, "Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands," 84–85, 100, 108, 145.

³³ Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 44; "Saw Mill Histories"; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 82; Feldman, 98, 102–108; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 157–58, 160, 163–64; *Bayfield County Press*, July 19, 1884; "Work of the Flames," *Bayfield County Press*, June 10, 1899; "Bayfield's Lumber Record."

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Keystone Lumber Company sawmill cut 30,000,000 board feet of lumber in 1892.³⁴ Previously in Pennsylvania, Keystone purchased John Knight's Superior Lumber Company sawmill in 1889 and became Ashland's most famous lumber company. Keystone's president, J. W. Cochran, came from a Maine lumbering family. Total output for Ashland's eight sawmills in 1892 was 161,500,000 board feet of lumber.³⁵

Washburn's first sawmill was built in 1885, two years after the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad founded the town and built its terminal there. By the end of 1887 there were three large sawmills operating in Washburn, establishing lumber as the leading industry in this thriving industrial and shipping town. Each of the big mills was equipped with lath and shingle mills, and other manufacturers made wood products such as excelsior, boxes, window sash, and doors. Early in 1885 Irish & Hulbert built a sawmill on Eighth Avenue for S. G. Cook, a Minneapolis lumberman who also built a sawmill in Ashland. The mill began operating in April. In December 1885 Rood & Maxwell, a St. Paul lumber company, began building a sawmill on Tenth Avenue; this mill began operating about June 1, 1886. After Cook's mill was destroyed by fire in October 1886, Rood & Maxwell acquired the site and built a second, larger sawmill. However Rood & Maxwell suffered several losses in 1887, the company failed, and both mills were sold. Cook acquired the Eighth Avenue mill and operated it as the South Shore Lumber Company. The Tenth Avenue mill was purchased by C. C. Thompson, whose company owned a large lumberyard in Chicago. With the purchase of the mill in Washburn, Thompson discontinued the Chicago lumberyard and used Washburn as its distribution center. Meanwhile, in the summer of 1886, A. A. Bigelow & Company of Chicago began building one of the biggest sawmills on the Great Lakes. Two steam engines, one 500 horsepower and the other 150 horsepower, supplied the power. The machinery consisted of two circular saws, two gang saws, two double edgers, one splitter, and two trimmers. The mill employed about 130 men. The *Northwestern Lumberman* said of the Bigelow mill: "The blue ribbon may be tied around the smoke stack, and that it will represent the premium plant will never be successfully disputed."³⁶ In 1892 Bigelow cut 47,000,000 board feet of lumber, the South Shore Lumber Company cut 38,000,000 board feet, and C. C. Thompson cut 21,500,000 board feet for a total of 106,500,000 board feet of lumber. In 1898 John A. Jacobs, one of Washburn's first residents, built a fourth sawmill in the town.³⁷

Although Ashland, Bayfield, and Washburn all had rail connections by 1883, lake shipping remained the cheapest way to transport lumber to market. Docks were an

³⁴ By comparison, Pike's sawmill produced 17,500,000 feet of lumber in 1892. "Lumber Shipments for 1892."

³⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 189, 192–201, 207–208; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 69; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 225–27, 264; Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 54; Edith Mahnke, "Ashland's Waterfront," *Ashland Historical Society Museum*, http://www.ashlandhistory.com/new_page_4.htm; "Lumber Shipments for 1892"; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 197.

³⁶ *Northwestern Lumberman*, September 18, 1886, quoted in Larson, "6th Avenue Mill Site."

³⁷ Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 271, 275; "Ashland, and Its Neighbor, Washburn"; Kurt Larson, "Sawmills," *Washburn Logging and Lumbering*, <http://members.tripod.com/battleaxcamp/sawmills.htm>; "Lumber Shipments for 1892."

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important part of a mill's facilities. The *Ashland Daily Press* called dock building a "hobby" of R. D. Pike, who had nearly ten thousand linear feet of dock space by 1893. Bigelow had three docks, each more than one thousand feet long, with a total capacity of ten million board feet of lumber. In 1871 Pike built a steamer, the *Mocking Bird*, to tow rafts of logs and carry finished lumber to market; in the 1880s he owned a fleet of boats for these purposes. Bigelow's fleet consisted of two steamers and four barges in the late 1880s. The Ashland mills contracted with vessels to carry their lumber until 1892, when the Shores Lumber Company became the first to purchase its own fleet consisting of two steamers and three barges. Much of the lumber from the Chequamegon region was shipped to Chicago; Bigelow shipped to Chicago almost exclusively. Dealers in Chicago transshipped the lumber by rail to locations in the Midwest, Great Plains, and beyond. Canada was another important market. Lumber was shipped to Duluth for transshipment to the central and western Canadian provinces and was also sent eastward to dealers in the St. Lawrence River Valley. Lumber was shipped to Buffalo and other U.S. ports on the lower Great Lakes. In May 1896 a schooner with 750,000 board feet of Pike's Oak Island lumber departed for Buffalo. Railroads allowed the Chequamegon mills to ship directly to markets outside of the Great Lakes. In 1885, for example, Pike shipped seventy-five carloads of lumber to Missouri.³⁸

The Schroeder Era

Pine logging continued for a few years after the turn of the century. Bigelow cut its last logs, sawed its last lumber, and sold its Washburn sawmill in 1902. Pike finished logging pine on Oak Island about the same time. The pine harvest on the Red Cliff Reservation peaked in the 1902–03 season and on the Bad River Reservation in 1904–05. When the pine was depleted, hardwood, hemlock, and cedar became the primary products of the region's forests. Hardwood was used for lumber, furniture, and flooring. Hemlock bark continued to be harvested for tanbark, while the logs were used for lumber, railroad ties, mine timbers, and, increasingly, for pulpwood. Cedar was used for shingles, railroad ties, paving blocks, utility poles, and posts. The *Bayfield County Press* contained the following assessment in 1905: "Tributary to Bayfield there's enough standing hemlock and hardwood timber to keep her saw mills running for the next fifteen years. This is true only of the Bayfield district, for the Washburn and Chequamegon bay have all but cut the standing pine and hemlock in their territory and as a result, these mills are being dismantled preparatory to being relocated to saw the yellow pine of the Gulf states and the white pine of the Pacific slope." Logging on the reservations largely ended with the pine, and with it the primary source of income and jobs for the resident Ojibwe.³⁹

³⁸ "Bayfield's Lumber Record"; Larson, "6th Avenue Mill Site"; "Saw Mill Histories"; Twining, "Lumbering Frontier," 48–51; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 158; "Lumber Shipments for 1892"; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 69, 82; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 275; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 104; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 178; *Bayfield County Press*, May 23, 1896.

³⁹ Larson, "6th Avenue Mill Site"; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 38, A-20; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 93–94, 150; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 83–84, 186–89; *Bayfield County Press*, March 7, 1891, August 26, 1899; *Report of Commissioner 1905*, 376–77; *Report of Commissioner 1906*, 394–95, 398; "Bayfield 1905—Her Industries and Agricultural Resources," *Bayfield County Press*, November 10, 1905.

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The John Schroeder Lumber Company dominated the new era in Apostle Islands logging, purchasing the forests that had been stripped of pine and embracing the opportunities that they offered. Born in Germany in 1827, John Schroeder immigrated with his family to the U.S. and settled in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1846 Schroeder moved to Milwaukee, and in 1866 he established the Schroeder & Seyfried Lumber Company in partnership with Martin Seyfried. When Seyfried retired in 1872 Schroeder continued the business on his own. In 1881 the company was incorporated as the John Schroeder Lumber Company with John Schroeder and his three sons as shareholders. The company's Milwaukee operations consisted of three lumberyards, a hardwood floor manufacturing plant, and corporate offices, with a total of 75 to 125 employees and average annual sales of eighteen million board feet of lumber, lath, shingles, pickets, and posts. In addition Schroeder had a sales office in Chicago. The Schroeder Company was known for honesty, excellent service, and high quality products.⁴⁰

In 1895 Schroeder purchased thirty-six square miles of white pine lands on the Cross River on Minnesota's north shore and began a logging operation there. In 1901 Schroeder purchased the Pope Lumber Company sawmill (previously the Sutherland mill) in Ashland, a relatively convenient destination for its Cross River logs. The company's fleet of tugboats, steamers, and barges transported logs and finished lumber. Schroeder's sawmill, producing an average of fifty million board feet a year, was extremely important to Ashland's economy during this period when other sawmills were shutting down. In 1905 Schroeder finished logging Cross River. By then the company had purchased timberlands and timber rights in Bayfield and Ashland counties, on the mainland and on the islands; in Iron County; and in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Logs from these locations and others fed Schroeder's Ashland sawmill for roughly thirty more years. During most of that time Schroeder's Apostle Islands logging operations dominated logging in the Chequamegon region. After John Schroeder died in 1908 his sons ran the company. The Schroeder Company was one of the largest lumber companies in the Midwest, with logging operations in Florida, Oregon, and Ontario in addition to those in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota.⁴¹

Stockton Island was the first of the Apostle Islands that the Schroeder Company logged extensively.⁴² By 1905 Schroeder had purchased much of the northeast corner of the island. In December of that year Schroeder entered into a twelve year lease with William Vilas for timber rights for all of the Knight and Vilas lands on Stockton Island, that is, most of the island. Schroeder was logging on Stockton Island as early as 1909, but the company's main campaign for the island's timber began in the fall of 1912 with the construction of three logging camps on the island. That winter nearly 250 men

⁴⁰ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 128–29; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 183–88; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 3, 6–7, 53; Angus L. White, *A History of John Schroeder and the John Schroeder Lumber Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin* (Lanesboro, MN: Forest Resource Center, 1990), 1–3; Mannikko, "Logging and Lumbering," 8.

⁴¹ Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 7–13, 26, 34–35, 38–48, 54, 56, 67–78; White, *John Schroeder*, 1–4, 7–8, 13–36; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 225; Mannikko, "Logging and Lumbering," 8; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 126.

⁴² In 1902 and 1903 Schroeder rafted logs from Madeline Island to its Ashland mill. White, *John Schroeder*, 2, 19.

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worked in these camps. They logged hardwoods, hemlock, and cedar, primarily in a winter sleigh haul operation although there was some summer logging also. In spring and summer hemlock logs were rafted and hardwood logs were scowed to Schroeder's Ashland mill. During the winter of 1914–15 the company harvested approximately ten million board feet. In that season three hundred men worked in the three camps, establishing Schroeder's Stockton Island logging operation as the largest in the islands up to that date.⁴³

The scale of Schroeder's Stockton Island logging operation exacerbated the usual hardships and hazards of winter living and logging on the islands. The most difficult times were in early and late winter when ice prevented boats from traveling to the island but was not thick enough to support safe travel. Given the frequency of accidents in logging, lack of access to medical care was a problem. In mid-January 1913, two men suffered broken limbs when log skid supports gave way. Because of poor ice it took several days to fetch a doctor and return to the island. Many men quit their jobs because of the difficulty in obtaining timely medical care. In response, the Schroeder Company hired a physician to stay on the island for two to three weeks in early and late winter when the mainland was inaccessible. Another problem was maintaining a sufficient supply of food to feed so many men; transporting food to the island was impossible during transitional periods and laborious at other times. To supply fresh meat to the logging camps, Schroeder transported several hundred hogs and cattle to Stockton Island where they were allowed to roam freely and slaughtered as needed. In 1917 Schroeder purchased 569 head of cattle to add to those already on the island.⁴⁴

Five logging camp sites that have been identified on Stockton Island were probably all used by Schroeder: Camp 4, Bluff Top Clearing (47AS62), Quarry Bay (47AS41), Presque Isle Bay (47AS222), and Trout Point (47AS218). Three of the camp sites are located on the island's north shore and two on the south shore. All were large camps, and it appears that at times of peak activity three camps were in operation at one time. The Quarry Bay logging camp site (47AS41) is located at a prime landing on the south shore of Stockton Island. The site contains foundations of twelve structures, a large pit of sawn cattle bones, and other dump areas. The Presque Isle Bay logging camp site (47AS222) is located in a large clearing on the south shore of the island. The site includes several building foundations, trash dumps, dock cribs, and a network of drainage ditches.⁴⁵

⁴³ In February 1914 the newspapers reported that there were five hundred men working for Schroeder on Stockton Island; this may be an overestimate. "Difficulty in Crossing from Island," *Ashland Daily Press*, February 5, 1914; Jeffrey J. Richner, "An Archeological Evaluation of the Trout Point Logging Camp," Midwest Archeological Center Occasional Studies in Anthropology #17 (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1986), 8–10; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 13–15; *Bayfield County Press*, August 13, 1909; "Woodsman Killed," *Bayfield County Press*, August 20, 1909; "Establishes Logging Camps," *Bayfield County Press*, September 13, 1912; "Men Hurt on Presque Isle," *Bayfield County Press*, January 10, 1913; "Fractures Leg," *Bayfield County Press*, July 4, 1913; "Stockton Island Camps Were Busy," *Bayfield County Press*, March 12, 1915; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 128; Parker, interview by Lidfors.

⁴⁴ Richner, "Trout Point," 9–10; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 131–33; "Men Hurt on Presque Isle"; "Difficulty in Crossing"; "Graze Cattle on the Islands," *Bayfield County Press*, April 30, 1915.

⁴⁵ Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," figure 1, 44–49, 74–78, A-6; Richner, "Trout Point," 9–10.

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The Trout Point logging camp site (47AS218) on the northeast shore of Stockton Island has been investigated more thoroughly than other logging camp sites on the island. Archaeological surveys and test excavations in 1982 showed the Trout Point site to be highly intact with undisturbed features and artifacts in their original contexts. This is in contrast to most mainland logging sites, which have been disturbed by collecting and other activities. The thirty-six features that archaeologists identified at the Trout Point site take the form of a variety of depressions, some of them enclosed by embankments that are the remains of building walls. Buildings that have been identified include a kitchen, dining hall, root cellar, two bunkhouses with space for fifty-six men in each, filer's shack, and office/store. The buildings were constructed of logs, and nails, window glass, and hardware have been found in association with their remains. Other features include a well, privies, trash pits, and drainage ditches. Many artifacts from the site relate to preparing, serving, eating, and storing food including bottles, jars, table settings, pitchers, and stove fragments. Animal bones show that the loggers ate more beef than pork. Personal items range from buttons to part of a harmonica. Numerous tobacco tins and snuff cans attest to extensive use of these substances. Tools were too expensive to leave behind; the few examples found include a cant hook, saw, and wedge. Artifact dates indicate occupation of the camp between ca. 1912–20, which correlates with the historical record. The planned layout of the camp suggests that most of it was constructed at one time. Archaeological evidence dates this construction to ca. 1912 and indicates that the camp was occupied for several seasons. The Trout Point logging camp has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places for the wealth of information that it holds on an important phase of logging in the Lake Superior region.⁴⁶

The Schroeder Company ceased logging on Stockton Island in the spring of 1920 because the timber was exhausted. The 1920 federal census, taken on the islands in January, counted fifty men on Stockton Island, an indication that logging there was winding down. By comparison, the census counted two hundred men on Oak Island. Schroeder had purchased most of Oak Island from R. D. Pike by 1905 and began logging on the island in 1917. Oak Island was a winter sleigh haul operation. Schroeder logged there until the spring of 1929, contracting out the work to W. C. Smith of Bayfield for the last two or three seasons. In twelve years Schroeder logged eight thousand acres on Oak Island and cut more than one hundred million board feet of hemlock and hardwood. When logging ended there in 1929 the equipment was removed to Outer Island.⁴⁷

The five logging camps that Schroeder operated on Oak Island were all located on the shoreline at good landing sites and were connected to the interior and to each other by logging roads. At least three camps were in use during the 1919–20 season: the 1920

⁴⁶ Richner, "Trout Point," 1, 37–101; Cathie Masters, "Trout Point Logging Camp," National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Register of Historic Places, 1988); Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 15–18. Since 1982, when archaeologists conducted test excavations at Trout Point, the site has deteriorated due to encroaching vegetation and shoreline erosion.

⁴⁷ Richner, "Trout Point," 10; "This Winter Ends the Presque Isle Operations," *Bayfield County Press*, February 27, 1920; manuscript schedule for the 1920 federal census of population, La Pointe Township, Ashland County, Wisconsin State Archives; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 23–24, 38–39, 63–65; "Logging Operations Over on Oak Island," *Bayfield County Press*, March 14, 1929.

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census lists fifty-three men in Camp 1, sixty-four men in Camp 2, and eighty-three in an unnamed camp or camps. Most of the occupations are those that would be expected, including many sawyers, teamsters, cant hook men, and swampers, and smaller numbers of foremen, cooks, cookees, blacksmiths, carpenters, filers, timekeepers, and clerks. A number of occupations are described as general work or laborer. Some of the men were farmers, supplementing their summer farm income. A few of the “men” were washerwomen. The Oak Island loggers were a multinational community—slightly less than half were born in the U.S.; the rest were born in Canada or Europe. No single nationality predominated. French and English Canadians, Poles, Swedes, Finns, Norwegians, Danes, Germans, Austrians, Scots, Irish, Lithuanians, Russians, Croatians, and others were represented. Among those born in the U.S., more than 80 percent were born in Michigan, Wisconsin, or Minnesota.⁴⁸

Located on the west side of Oak Island, Camp 2 (47AS71) today retains much evidence of its lumber camp past including the remains of twelve buildings along with artifacts such as bottles, animal bones, and wagon parts. Several trash dumps are located nearby. Camp 3 (47AS64) is located on the southwest corner of Oak Island on a bank above the sandspit, the best landing on the island. This was the location of the wood yards and steamboat fueling stations operated by Benjamin Armstrong and Chapman and Knight in the mid-nineteenth century. R. D. Pike undoubtedly operated a camp at this location when he logged pine on the island at the turn of the century. At some point the Stearns Lumber Company used Camp 3, possibly leasing it from Schroeder to log land that Stearns owned nearby. After logging ended, Martin Kane lived in the filer’s shack and used the blacksmith shop for storage. Archaeological surveys of the site have identified numerous historic features including twelve possible structures, but further investigation is needed to determine the functions and dates of these features. On the southeast corner of Oak Island, archaeological survey of Camp 5 (47AS77) identified a large camp site that is exceptionally well preserved. The site contains the ruins of sixteen large buildings and several trash dumps. A short corduroy road leads from the camp to the shoreline, where a rock-filled crib remains from the camp dock. Artifacts found on the surface of the site include kerosene lanterns, tin cans, jars, bottles, barrel hoops, bed parts, pails, coffee pots, and two cast iron stoves. Camp 5 is the most complete logging site pre-dating 1930 that remains in the Apostle Islands.⁴⁹

Schroeder contractor W. C. Smith used Camp 6 and Camp 1 on the north end of Oak Island during Schroeder’s final season of logging on the island, 1928–29. Over the winter Smith’s crew cut slightly more than three million board feet of hardwood and hemlock. When compared to the ten million cut during the previous winter, it is evident that this was a wrap up operation. The *Bayfield County Press* noted that the break up of Camp 6 (preceded by the break up of Camp 1) was probably the last break up of a large lumber camp in the region. Fortunately the newspaper found this significant enough to

⁴⁸ Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 22; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 56–57; manuscript schedule for the 1920 federal census of population, La Pointe Township.

⁴⁹ Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 22, 34–40, 90–91; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 94–95; Patrick E. Martin, “An Archaeological Evaluation of Two Sites in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore” (submitted to National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE, 1981), 23–25, 39–40.

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provide some details. Camp 1 had a crew of twenty-five men and five teams of horses; Camp 6 had a crew of eighty men and twelve teams of horses. Provisions for the men in the two camps cost more than ten thousand dollars for the season, about half of which went for meat, milk, butter, and eggs. Archaeologists have identified multiple structures at Camp 6 site (47AS66), but the site is overgrown and has not been adequately mapped, thus its extent and significance are unknown. The camp is located above a wide sandy beach that would have provided a good log staging area. A large ravine leads down to the beach. The loggers reportedly rolled large quantities of logs into Oak Island's ravines, dammed the mouths, and then dynamited the dams after spring meltwater had filled the ravines so that the meltwater carried the logs in a rush down to the lake.⁵⁰

Michigan Island's location on the outer edge of the Apostle Islands archipelago required Schroeder to take a different approach to logging than on Stockton and Oak islands. The strong currents of the open lake often kept solid ice from forming around Michigan Island, preventing travel to the island during the winter. To make summer logging practical Schroeder built a railroad on the island. Railroads had been used for logging on the mainland since the 1880s, but the expense of transporting rails and engines and constructing a railroad for such limited use had delayed their use in the islands. By 1919, however, increased demand for lumber resulting from World War I combined with depletion of timber elsewhere made it profitable for Schroeder to build a railroad and log Michigan Island. The Schroeder Company purchased most of the island, excluding the lighthouse reserve, and in 1919 built a railroad that ran the island's three and-one-half mile length, with a lumber camp at the southwestern end. Logging began that summer, and in the winter the crews were transferred to Stockton and Oak islands. In 1923 Schroeder finished cutting the marketable timber on Michigan Island, and the logging railroad was dismantled and transported to Outer Island. In 2005 archaeologists identified a site (47AS354) at the southwestern end of Michigan Island that may be Schroeder's logging camp. Located next to the railroad grade, site features include a well-preserved root cellar and a dump with numerous tin cans.⁵¹

By 1920 the Schroeder Company had purchased the timber rights to Outer Island, again excluding the lighthouse reserve, in anticipation of logging there when Michigan Island was completed.⁵² As on Michigan Island, lake currents often kept solid ice from forming around the outermost Apostle Island; during most of the winter there was usually no ice at all. In the fall of 1923 Schroeder's tug *Ashland* towed the logging equipment on Michigan Island to Outer Island. By the end of November, Schroeder had constructed a

⁵⁰ Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 61–65; "Logging Operations Over on Oak Island."

⁵¹ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 83–84, 109, 134; *Map of Ashland County, Wisconsin* (New York: J. W. Day & J. O. Forss, 1917), 33; White, *John Schroeder*, 29; "Road Materials Taken to Island," *Bayfield County Press*, June 6, 1919; "Summer Logging is Suspended," *Bayfield County Press*, July 2, 1920; "Schroeder Company to Log on Outer Island," *Bayfield County Press*, November 30, 1923; Jeff Richner and Karin Roberts, "Trip Report: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Site Condition Assessments, August 15–19, 2005" (National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, NE).

⁵² On April 27, 1906, the *Bayfield County Press* reported that Schroeder had transferred its logging outfit and crew from the mainland to Outer Island for summer logging. However in 1908, D. M. Maxey of Washburn acquired the Outer Island land and timber from the R. D. Pike estate and sold the timber rights to a Wausau group. *Bayfield County Press*, March 20, 1908.

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five mile railroad line running the length of the island, ending at a 650 foot dock. Spurs from the main line accessed remote areas. In the opinion of the *Bayfield County Press*: “Outer Island is one of the most beautiful of the Apostle group, and the addition of the dock and railroad adds very much to its natural attractiveness.”⁵³ Schroeder began logging on Outer Island in the summer of 1924. Two standard gauge locomotives were used on the island; typically a locomotive pulled eight to ten cars stacked with logs (figure 16). Walter Bender, who worked as an engineer on Outer Island, later recalled: “It was a very dangerous job. There was an unloading dock on Lake Superior, that held 10 cars. In the two miles from the camp to the unloading dock, the grade dropped 196 feet, and there were only hand brakes on the cars. The engineer who ran the engine before I did could not get along with the brakeman and had many runaways. Sometimes he would get as far as the dock before he got the train stopped.”⁵⁴

Schroeder’s Outer Island logging camp was located by the railroad line in the interior of the island, unlike other island logging camps that were located on the shorelines. With only one camp to house two hundred or more men working on the island at a time, the camp was much larger than those on Stockton and Oak islands. Limited survey of the camp site (47AS356) has identified several structures and other features such as a timber-lined watering trough, a water pump, and trash dumps. Numerous artifacts at the site include bedsprings, tin cans, pottery, a stove, the camp safe, and large pieces of equipment and machinery. Railroad logging camp sites are common on the mainland, but virtually all have been compromised by collecting and other activities. In contrast, Schroeder’s Outer Island logging camp is undisturbed, amplifying its importance.⁵⁵

In 1930 the 225 men working for Schroeder on Outer Island cut six million board feet of timber. That year Harlan Kelsey of the National Park Service visited the Apostle Islands to evaluate their potential as a national park. The scale and intensity of Schroeder’s Outer Island logging operation contributed strongly to Kelsey’s recommendation against a national park in the islands. But it appears that 1930 was the final year of logging on Outer Island. The newspapers regularly reported logging accidents and other incidents on the island, but there were no stories in 1931. When Schroeder moved logging equipment from Oak Island to Outer Island in 1929, the company planned to cut timber on Outer Island for five more years. Economics may have forced Schroeder to halt the costly Outer Island logging operation early; the company’s business undoubtedly suffered when construction dwindled during the Depression. The locomotives were reportedly left standing on the Outer Island dock until the late 1930s when they were cut up, taken to Duluth, and sold as scrap. To the extent that the Ashland mill operated after 1930 it would have used logs brought in from other areas. In 1939 Ashland County acquired the tax deed to the Schroeder mill. The Schroeder Company bought back the buildings, machinery, and other personal property

⁵³ “Schroeder Company to Log.”

⁵⁴ “Summer Logging Suspended”; “Schroeder Company to Log”; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 61–62; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 27–30. Bender quoted in Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 62.

⁵⁵ Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 27–28, 31; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 61, 78; White, *John Schroeder*, 33. Encroaching vegetation threatens this and a number of other logging camp sites.

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Figure 16. Schroeder logging on Outer Island, 1930, from Kelsey report. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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from the county, and announced plans to reopen the mill on a smaller scale. But these plans did not materialize; the John Schroeder Lumber Company was liquidated that year.⁵⁶

Schroeder dominated but did not monopolize logging in the Chequamegon region during the first few decades of the twentieth century. In March 1907 the *Bayfield County Press*, reporting on the spring break up of the logging camps in the Bayfield vicinity, estimated that there had been a thousand men in the woods that winter. The *Press* named nine operators, each of whom had multiple camps: A. H. Wilkinson, Boutin-Johnson Lumber Company, Bayfield Mill Company, William Knight, E. K. Brigham, A. J. Mussell, Finch-Bell Company, Red Cliff Lumber Company, and Wachsmuth Lumber Company. The newspaper noted that there were also others doing a little individual logging in the area, naming C. B. Simpson on Wilson (Hermit) Island and George Wilkinson on Madeline Island as examples. As in the nineteenth century, the islands offered attractive locations for smaller logging operations. In addition to Madeline and Hermit islands, Bear, Oak, Basswood, Outer, Sand, Michigan, Otter, Manitou, Stockton, Cat, Rocky, and probably other islands were logged between 1900 and 1930. William Knight, who began his lumbering career on Oak Island in the 1870s, had a camp on the island in 1906–1907.⁵⁷

Newspaper reports of the island logging camps were generally brief, noting when camps were established and broke up; movement of men, supplies, and timber to and from the camps; accidents and injuries; and the occasional trouble such as a strike or a murder. But in February 1905 an anonymous contributor to the *Bayfield County Press* described a visit to a logging camp owned by “Mr. A” that appears to have been on the north end of Madeline Island.⁵⁸ The main building at the camp was the large cook shanty, furnished with a long table, tin plates and cups, and benches. On the opposite side of the room were stoves and shelves, and in a corner there were a couple of bunks, presumably for the cook and cookees. One end of the cook shanty was partitioned off to form an office, where Mr. A. and the scaler slept. At the other end a door led to the men’s quarters, with rows of bunks on each side, benches, and a big sink. Other camp buildings were a blacksmith shop, barn, and several store and warehouses. The visitors observed the men cutting, sawing, skidding, and sleigh hauling logs to the landing. The second day of their visit was Sunday, and some of the men went ice fishing. The writer

⁵⁶ Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 7, 61, 78; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 30–31; “Logging Operations Over on Oak Island”; White, *John Schroeder*, 15, 36; Mannikko, “Logging and Lumbering,” 9.

⁵⁷ “The Brakeup [sic] Starts,” *Bayfield County Press*, March 29, 1907; *Bayfield County Press*, March 30, 1901, May 25, 1901, March 22, 1902, September 6, 1902, January 17, 1903, March 20, 1903, November 13, 1903, February 19, 1904, November 11, 1904, May 11, 1906, June 1, 1906, November 2, 1906, January 25, 1907, September 13, 1907, September 27, 1907, January 31, 1908, August 6, 1909, November 1, 1912, August 22, 1919, January 2, 1920, May 27, 1921, February 16, 1923, September 8, 1927, March 8, 1928, January 23, 1930; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 30–31.

⁵⁸ The camp was nine miles across the ice from Bayfield, and Michigan Island was visible to the right from one of the landings. Most likely this was the camp of O. G. Anderson, whose Madeline Island camp was mentioned in the *Bayfield County Press* on December 16, 1904.

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noted that the camp was clean and neat; this may have been for the benefit of the writer and her companion, the camp owner's wife.⁵⁹

After Schroeder, the Wachsmuth Lumber Company was the largest lumber company logging in the islands during this time period. During the 1902–1903 winter season Wachsmuth operated nine camps—eight on the mainland and one on Basswood Island. Henry J. Wachsmuth called it the best winter he had witnessed since he entered the logging business; as of March 20, 1903 the company had banked between twelve and fourteen million board feet of timber, mostly hemlock. That summer Wachsmuth logged cedar on Otter and Michigan islands. During the winter of 1903–1904 Wachsmuth was again logging on Basswood Island, then from fall 1904 to spring 1906 on Manitou Island. One of Wachsmuth's mainland logging camps at that time was at Mawikwe Bay,⁶⁰ a few miles east of Cornucopia. By 1915 Wachsmuth was using a steam hauler at the bay to transport logs out of the woods. Uncommon in northern Wisconsin, the steam hauler resembled a locomotive but had tracks in back and sled runners in front (figure 17). One steam hauler could pull a string of fourteen loaded sleighs, equivalent to the work of fourteen teams of horses. With the help of the steam hauler, Wachsmuth had nearly seven million board feet of hemlock banked at the bay in March 1915. Wachsmuth's logging camp may be represented by the camp site at Saxine Creek, near the shore of the bay, although other loggers worked in this location as well. The Saxine Creek site (47BA528) is overgrown and has not been tested, but remains of buildings, roads, and possibly a skidway are evident. It is the only mainland logging camp site that has been identified within the national lakeshore.⁶¹

On Basswood Island, Elisha Brigham continued the logging operation he started in the 1890s. Early in 1902 Brigham used a team and sleigh to haul his wood across the ice from the island to Bayfield. He had hauled almost all of his wood across by late March when his sleigh went through the ice with four cords of wood; the horses, fortunately, were saved. But Brigham lost his entire logging outfit in April when fire destroyed the buildings on the former Rudd farm where the outfit was stored. Nevertheless Brigham was again logging on Basswood Island the following winter. By summer 1903 Brigham and his son Earl were logging on Stockton Island. From fall 1907 to spring 1909 the Brighams were logging a tract of land on the northeast corner of Stockton Island, one of few places on the island where Schroeder did not own the land or timber rights. However the Brighams may have used the Trout Point logging camp on Schroeder land just west of the tract where they were working, as there is no other logical place for a large logging camp on that part of the island. In December 1908 Brigham sold his timber rights, banked logs, and his logging and rafting outfit to J. B. Matthews and Company, wholesale grocers in Ashland, perhaps in payment of a debt. The logging

⁵⁹ "A Visit to a Logging Camp," *Bayfield County Press*, February 10, 1905.

⁶⁰ See area map for location of Mawikwe Bay. Historically it was known as Squaw Bay, until the National Park Service initiated the name change because the historic name is offensive. The park service suggested the term "mawikwe," or weeping woman, because of historical references to the bay as Mourning Squaw Bay.

⁶¹ *Bayfield County Press*, November 1, 1902, March 20, 1903, February 5, 1904, November 18, 1904, January 6, 1905, February 2, 1906, May 11, 1906; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 52, 68–71; "The Brakeup Starts"; "Camps Have Closed," *Bayfield County Press*, March 12, 1915.

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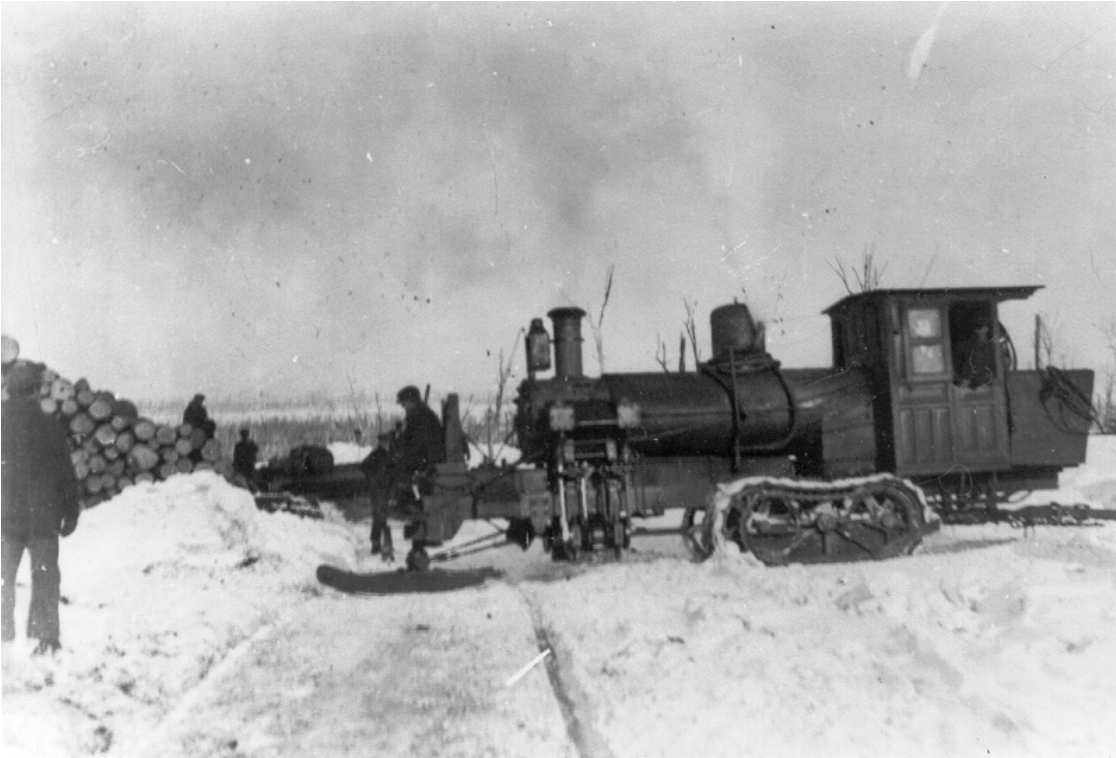


Figure 17. Steam hauler near Saxine Creek on the Bayfield Peninsula. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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outfit contained equipment for eight teams and sixty men, including 120 pair of camp blankets. Four sets of logging sleighs and a water tank and heater—used to create ice roads—attest to winter logging operations. Two lumber wagons and two sets of big wheels were used for summer logging. The Brighams completed the logging season; after that Elisha apparently devoted himself to his Basswood Island farm.⁶²

Farmers commonly engaged in logging during the winter, working in a logging camp or independently. Frank Shaw, for example, cut cedar on Sand Island. However Louis Moe's long term Sand Island logging operation was unusually large for someone who was a full time fisherman and farmer. Moe began logging in 1897 and continued intermittently into the 1920s. On his East Bay farm, Moe built a blacksmith shop and a camp building to house his crew of eight to ten men.⁶³ The crew members were mostly Norwegian; Moe also hired some Ojibwe. Among the Sand Islanders employed in Moe's logging camp were Carl Dahl, Bill Palm, Bill Noring, and his mother Birgit Noring, who worked as camp cook for a season. Farm cows supplied milk and meat that helped to feed the logging crew. Most of Moe's logging took place on the west side of Sand Island, where he acquired both land and timber rights and cut hemlock, cedar, tamarack, and hardwoods.⁶⁴

During the late 1920s Eli LaPointe logged Manitou, Otter, and Rocky islands. LaPointe and his brothers Harry, Ernest, and Philip were fishermen. Eli LaPointe was logging Manitou Island in 1928 when he partnered with J. H. Deniston to purchase the timber rights to Rice's (Rocky) Island. The Rocky Island logging camp employed twenty-five men, many of whom were local, to cut railroad ties and hardwood veneer. The outfit was equipped with a tractor and portable sawmill, and camp buildings included an office, blacksmith shop, barn, and cook shack. Fishermen began to occupy the abandoned camp buildings shortly after logging ended in 1931.⁶⁵

The decline of lumbering in the Chequamegon region can be traced through the closing of the sawmills, one after another. In Washburn, Bigelow sold its sawmill in 1902 to the Hines Lumber Company of Chicago, reputedly the largest lumber company in the world. Output remained high for a few years after the turn of the century—in 1903 Washburn's sawmills cut 105,940,897 board feet of lumber, almost as much as in 1892. That year the Jacobs mill burned down and was replaced by two small mills that operated

⁶² *Bayfield County Press*, January 25, 1902, March 22, 1902, April 12, 1902, March 27, 1903, July 10, 1903, November 13, 1903, March 26, 1909, August 6, 1909; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 13–14; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 127.

⁶³ The camp building was dilapidated but still standing in 1981. Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 36.

⁶⁴ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 281–83, 305; *Bayfield County Press*, September 21, 1895, March 13, 1897, January 17, 1903, September 27, 1907, November 5, 1909, April 28, 1916, March 12, 1924; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 34–35.

⁶⁵ Hadland and Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen"; "Otter Island Man is Badly Cut with Axe," "Rescue Two Marooned on Island without Food or Shelter," *Bayfield County Press*, December 9, 1926; *Bayfield County Press*, September 8, 1927; *Bayfield County Press*, March 8, 1928; "Eli LaPointe Will Log Rice's Island," *Bayfield County Press*, August 9, 1928; "Got Blood Poison at Rice's Island Camp," *Bayfield County Press*, January 16, 1930; *Bayfield County Press*, January 23, 1930; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 31; Holmer, "Superior Summer," 70–71.

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only for a short time. The former South Shore mill, then Akeley & Sprague, burned in 1905, and the Hines mill burned in 1906. Mill fires were common; when the mills were profitable they were rebuilt. In the case of the Hines mill, plans were underway to dismantle it and move it to the South when it burned. Hines installed a small portable mill for a wrap up operation that ended in November 1906. Thompson closed and sold its mill in 1907. The Stearns Lumber Company acquired the Thompson mill, updated and expanded it, and operated it from 1909 until 1917 when it closed for good. Also in 1909, the M. H. Sprague Lumber Company built a new mill on the Akeley & Sprague site. This mill would be Washburn's last, operating under successive owners until the early 1920s, cutting timber primarily from northern Michigan and Minnesota's north shore.⁶⁶

In Bayfield, Henry J. Wachsmuth bought the R. D. Pike Company lumber mill and much of its timberlands following Robinson D. Pike's death in 1906. Logging operations in the region supported the mill successfully for a number of years; in 1911 the mill cut forty million board feet of lumber. In 1919 three hundred men were employed in the Wachsmuth mill and lumberyard. By 1924, the final year of operation, the mill and lumberyard employed about ninety men. The mill's capacity in 1924 was about one hundred thousand board feet per day. Henry Wachsmuth thought there was enough timber left on the Bayfield Peninsula and Apostle Islands to support a small mill with a capacity of ten thousand board feet per day. The *Bayfield County Press* was philosophical about the mill's closing, noting that Bayfield had developed other resources in preparation for the end of the lumber industry, and that few of the mill employees would need to leave town. Nevertheless, the *Press* was nostalgic about the end of an era, waxing eloquent on the sights and sounds of milling and logging. "The smoke [of the logging train] will no longer be seen rising in vast clouds, the whistle will no longer resound along the lake and through the hills; the thunder of the logs as they plunge into the bay and the sounds of the woodsman's axe and saw as he fells the lofty pine and cedar may be spoken of in verse and story, but will be known only in memory."⁶⁷ On September 9, 1924, fifty people watched the last hemlock log go through the Wachsmuth mill, while the mill whistle sounded for nine minutes to mark the occasion.⁶⁸

When the Wachsmuth mill closed in 1924, the Schroeder mill in Ashland became the last of the large lumber mills operating in the Chequamegon region. Schroeder took over two mill properties for its mill and lumberyards when it came to Ashland in 1901. Some of the other Ashland mills were replaced by coal docks when they closed or burned. As the big mills closed, small portable sawmills were set up as needed for small logging operators and others, such as farmers, who needed timber sawn. Portable sawmills had been used in some mainland and island logging camps in the late nineteenth

⁶⁶ Larson, "Sawmills"; "Hines Company Quits," *Bayfield County Press*, November 30, 1906.

⁶⁷ "Lumbering Industry Through in Bayfield," *Bayfield County Press*, August 27, 1924.

⁶⁸ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 129–30, 153; *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 24 (April 2003); "Lumbering Industry Through."

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century. According to a Bayfield County booster publication from 1919, timber for fuel, fence posts, or market could be hauled to one of many portable sawmills in the county.⁶⁹

Late Logging Operations

Schroeder's Outer Island logging operation and LaPointe's Rocky Island logging operation ended in 1930 and 1931 respectively. Both had started before the onset of the Great Depression, which appears to have halted logging in the Apostle Islands until the late 1930s, when James Peterson began logging land that he owned on Bear Island. His son, Morgan, was camp foreman. The Petersons cut maple, basswood, oak, and hemlock, bridging old and new technology by using both horses and a bulldozer. Archaeologists have identified a bunkhouse, wash house, smithy, and barn among the ruins of eight structures at the Peterson camp site (APIS 75). In the mid-1980s some of the structures still had standing walls. During World War II the Lullabye Furniture Company began logging Outer Island and continued for two decades, the largest of several postwar logging operations in the islands. Postwar logging on both mainland and islands tended to be smaller in scale than during the early twentieth century. Pulpwood such as hemlock and spruce and hardwood for veneer were the primary products. Motor vehicles and chain saws transformed the logging process, making high yields possible with just a handful of men. Caterpillar tractors with gasoline engines were introduced in the early 1900s, but early models were difficult to maneuver and tended to break down with heavy loads of logs. By the 1940s tractor design and construction had been improved to the point where they were widely used to skid logs out of the woods. Heavy logging trucks also become predominant in the 1940s, replacing logging railroads and sleighs and horses. The portable gasoline-powered chain saw was invented in Germany in 1927; however early chain saws were heavy, unreliable, and difficult to use. After an Oregon logger developed an improved, lightweight design in 1947, chain saw use spread rapidly. In the mid-1950s, one saw man at the Lullabye camp on Outer Island was able to cut, limb, and top eighty to one hundred trees a day using a chain saw.⁷⁰

In 1936 the Lullabye Furniture Company of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, purchased Outer Island—the entire island outside of the lighthouse reservation—with eight thousand acres of standing timber. The Lullabye Furniture Company was founded in 1897 by John J. Bukolt to manufacture an automatic cradle that he invented. In 1904 the company was incorporated as the Automatic Cradle Company. By the 1920s the company had gained national distribution for the cradle and expanded its product line to include a variety of children's furniture and also toys such as pedal cars and wagons. In 1929 the company name was changed to Lullabye. When Lullabye's Stevens Point sawmill burned in 1936, the company purchased a lumber mill in Butternut, in southern Ashland County, so production would not be interrupted while the Stevens Point mill was

⁶⁹ Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 225–27, 264; *Bayfield County Press*, November 26, 1887, February 21, 1891; manuscript schedule for the 1900 federal census of population, La Pointe Township; *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 24 (April 2003).

⁷⁰ Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 8, 85–86; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, 23 August 2006; *Bayfield County Press*, January 24, 1939, April 25, 1940; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 315–19; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 244–47; "Life on Outer Island—'Flying Lumberjacks,'" *Timber Producers Bulletin* no. 156 (May 1956): 7.

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rebuilt. The Butternut mill included a veneer plant, which Lullabye then operated as a subsidiary, Northern Hardwood Veneers, Inc. Lullabye purchased the Outer Island timber for veneer manufacturing at the Butternut plant.⁷¹

Although the timber was purchased in 1936, Lullabye did not begin logging Outer Island until spring 1942 when wartime demand created a more favorable market. Plywood veneer had many wartime applications; one of Northern Hardwood Veneers's products was plywood for the fuselage on bombers. The premature end of Schroeder's logging operation left an estimated forty million board feet of virgin hardwood and hemlock on Outer Island. Lullabye planned to cut five million board feet of select timber during its first season. In anticipation of a crew of seventy-five to eighty men, the company chartered Ernest LaPointe's collecting and supply boat, the *Chinook*, to bring supplies on a daily basis. Logging equipment included several caterpillar tractors. The Halberg brothers of Wakefield, Michigan were Lullabye's first contractors on Outer Island. When they established their logging camp they dragged buildings from the Schroeder camp to the island's eastern shore, a more suitable location for truck logging. Subsequently the camp was moved north along the shore to its present location.⁷²

In 1946 Lullabye purchased a surplus World War II landing craft tank (LCT) from the U.S. Navy to haul logs from Outer Island to Ashland. Originally named the *Pluswood* for another Lullabye subsidiary, the LCT was later renamed the *Outer Island*. Recently the *Outer Island* was the subject of the public television show *History Detectives*. The detectives verified that the *Outer Island*, still in use in Bayfield, was indeed an LCT but that it had not been used in the June 1944 Normandy invasion per local folklore. The *Outer Island* was, however, used in the August 1944 Operation Dragoon invasion of southern France, the second largest landing of World War II. Designed to carry tanks and artillery, the *Outer Island* was well suited to carry logs across Lake Superior. Its capacity was six boxcar loads of logs. Ed Erickson—whose father, Martin, and brother, Mel, fished from Rocky Island—operated the *Outer Island* with a crew of seven men including a cook. When the *Outer Island* was fully loaded the trip from Outer Island to Ashland took six hours. From Ashland, the logs were shipped by rail to the Northern Hardwood Veneers mill in Butternut. Northern Hardwood Veneers sold veneer on the open market as well as to Lullabye.⁷³

⁷¹ Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 56; Milo Quaife, *Wisconsin: Its History and Its People, 1634–1924* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924), 3:307; "Lullabye Corp. to Be Acquired by Simmons Co.," December 26, 1967, "Lullabye—Ownership of Point, Butternut Firms Separated," August 24, 1963, clippings from unidentified newspapers, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files.

⁷² "Outer Island Timber to Be Logged Again," *Bayfield County Press*, April 30, 1942; "Lullabye—Ownership Separated"; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 56–57; notes from a visit with Ed Erickson to the Lullabye logging camp on Outer Island, July 23, 1993, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; Mannikko, "Logging and Lumbering," 11.

⁷³ *History Detectives*, transcript for episode 3 2004—LCT 103, Bayfield, Wisconsin, www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/pdf/203_LCT.pdf; notes from Ed Erickson; Ed Erickson, interview, April 17, 1988, tape 18, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; "Lullabye—Ownership Separated."

Logging

By the 1950s Lullabye's Outer Island logging operation was fully mechanized. Ed Bush, from Ladysmith in Rusk County, Wisconsin, was the logging contractor for most of the decade. The logging crew—thirteen men in 1956 including Bush—came from northern Wisconsin, mostly from Rusk County (figure 18). Bush's equipment inventory included three heavy trucks, two pickup trucks, three caterpillar tractors, a motor patrol grader, a construction grader, and two cranes. The men used old cars to travel around the island. Although chain saws and heavy machinery can be dangerous, they greatly reduced the risk of accidents in logging. In five years there were two accidents of consequence on Outer Island, one when a man jumped off a tractor and broke his leg. The injured man was flown to Ladysmith in one of the four planes that the crew members used to commute to the island. When Bush started logging Outer Island he constructed an airfield with two runways and a hanger, five miles distance from the camp. On weekends half the crew flew home, so each crew member commuted every other weekend. When machines broke down Bush flew in new parts. Bush ran a winter logging operation on Outer Island, so the planes were more than helpful—they were essential.⁷⁴

Fuel was also essential for this mechanized logging operation, not only for all of the vehicles and machines, but for the diesel light plant and hot and cold water pressure system in the camp. Fuel was brought over on the *Outer Island*—diesel fuel in the bilge and gasoline in one thousand gallon tanks. On the island diesel fuel was stored in old tanker truck bodies. In the fall Bush stocked up with 8,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 7,500 gallons of gasoline. Electricity and hot and cold running water helped to make a logging camp that was far more comfortable than during the early 1900s. A recreation room in the bunkhouse was equipped with a pool table and television set. A wash house and sauna were attached to the cook shack. Indoor plumbing only went so far, however—the toilet was a three hole outhouse. Instead of a barn there was a garage where the men worked on the trucks. From 1951 to 1956, Bush's crew cut fourteen million board feet of timber, both hardwood and hemlock. The hardwood went to Northern Hardwood Veneers and the hemlock to Consolidated Papers in Wisconsin Rapids. During the 1955–1956 season the Lullabye crew cut a “record” four million board feet of timber. By comparison, ten million board feet of timber a year was not unusual for Schroeder during the 1910s and 1920s, although during its last year on Outer Island Schroeder cut only six million board feet.⁷⁵

By the 1950s Lullabye had become one of the largest manufacturers of children's furniture in the U.S. During the late 1950s Lullabye extended its Apostle Islands logging to Otter Island. Lullabye purchased most of the island and sold it to Northern Hardwood Veneers, which cut about two million board feet of yellow birch, hemlock, and cedar in 1957 and 1958. Northern Hardwood Veneers built roads for logging trucks and other heavy equipment. The logging camp site (47AS48) is located on the sandspit, just north of the ca. 1900 logging camp site (47AS230). Lullabye ended its Outer Island logging operation in 1963, not because the timber was gone but because logging there was no longer profitable. In that year the Lullabye Furniture Corporation and Northern

⁷⁴ “Life on Outer Island,” 6–7; notes from Ed Erickson.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

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Figure 18. Lullabye logging crew, Outer Island, 1956. Cook Otis Steindorf standing on left. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Clarence Buck Clausen Collection.

Logging

Hardwood Veneers separated, with Edmund Bukolt remaining president of Lullabye and his brother Victor remaining president of Northern Hardwood Veneers. In 1967 Lullabye was sold to the Simmons Company of mattress fame. Two years later Simmons sold Lullabye to Questor Corporation, a manufacturer in Toledo, Ohio. Under its new owners, Lullabye continued to manufacture high quality children's furniture in Stevens Point. Meanwhile, when Lullabye finished logging Outer Island, Ed Erickson bought the *Outer Island*, which he continued to use to haul logs and other cargo to and from the islands. When the camp was abandoned the loggers left behind vehicles, machinery, storage tanks—even dishes on the table in the cook shack. Among the artifacts at the site are tin cans, pipes, drums, washing machines, a cook stove, a Plymouth station wagon, and a sawmill made from an old Chevy engine. In 2004 the buildings were dilapidated but still standing. Representing the final phase of logging in the islands, the Lullabye logging camp on Outer Island is significant as the only extant logging camp in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and one of few that remain in the upper Great Lakes. In addition, the camp is exceptionally intact.⁷⁶

Small lumber companies and independent operators logged a number of the Apostle Islands in the decades following World War II. Ed Erickson recalled hauling logs from York, South Twin, Cat, Madeline, Sand, and North Twin islands in addition to Otter and Outer islands. Jim Miller and his father hauled logs from the islands on the scow *Finn McCool* in the 1940s and early 1950s. Miller described the beautiful curly maple, bird's eye maple, and yellow birch veneer logs that they hauled from Ironwood Island. Brothers Robert and William Harrison bought much of Basswood Island about 1950, built a camp at the Dock site (47AS68), and logged the island for several years (figure 19). The Harrisons used both modern equipment and horses, the latter so unusual by that time that they had to wait a month for collars for the horses to be custom made. There is also evidence for logging on Manitou Island. On Sand Island, a thousand acre tract that was formerly the West Bay Club was owned successively by three lumber companies in the 1950s and early 1960s: Chequamegon Logging, Penoque Veneer Lumber Company, and Budvic Timber. Penoque Veneer had a logging crew of twenty to thirty men on the island; Budvic was a smaller operation, with six to eight men. Both companies used the West Bay Club lodge as their logging camp. Budvic Timber was owned by Howard "Bud" Peters. After two seasons on Sand Island he partnered with John Atwood to cut veneer logs on South Twin Island. Peters took part in the final two logging episodes in the Apostle Islands—in 1973 he cut timber on his land on Sand Island and in 1974 he was the contractor for Alden Allen on York Island.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ "Life on Outer Island," 6; Mannikko, "Logging and Lumbering," 17; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 50–56; Howard "Bud" Peters, interview by Nancy Mannikko, July 30, 2002, written summary, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; "Lullabye—Ownership Separated"; "Lullabye Acquired by Simmons"; "Ohio Firm Planning to Buy Lullabye Furniture," October 2, 1969, clipping from unidentified newspaper, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; Ed Erickson interview, April 17, 1988; notes from Ed Erickson.

⁷⁷ Ed Erickson, interview, June 24, 1988, tape 20, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; Jim Miller, interview, September 29, 1990, tape 131, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; "Conservation Department Issues a Special Bulletin Covering Island Regulations," *Bayfield County Press*, October 13, 1960; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, October 18, 2006; Mel Ellis,

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Figure 19. Harrison brothers logging camp, Basswood Island, early 1950s. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

“Bayfield Brothers Making Resort Dream Materialize,” *Milwaukee Journal*, n.d., clipping in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical files; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 8, 79, 82; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 306, 325; Peters interview; Thomas Gerstenberger, “Island Hideaway: The West Bay Club,” *Lake Superior Magazine* (December–January 1992): 53–54; “York Island to Government,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 6, 1974.

Logging

In the late 1940s and 1950s the Coast Guard conducted minor logging operations on several of the lighthouse reservations. The keepers had always cut timber on the reservations for fuel and construction at their own stations; the Coast Guard broadened the scope a bit. Chief Walter Parker authorized cutting white pine on Michigan Island and jack pine on Long Island to build the Coast Guard dock in Bayfield. Parker also supervised the cutting of about four hundred cedar spar buoys on Raspberry Island. In 1957 Coast Guard personnel on Devils Island cut several rafts of logs that they towed to Bayfield, presumably for Coast Guard facilities there.⁷⁸

The legacy of more than a century of logging is evident on most of the Apostle Islands. The greatest impact was on the islands closest to the mainland—Madeline, Basswood, and Oak—all logged early and repeatedly. In contrast, only minor logging took place on small and remote North Twin Island.⁷⁹ Lighthouse reservations were protected from commercial logging, although by the time the Devils Island lighthouse reservation was established in 1894 the island had already been logged for pine.⁸⁰ Logging reduced forests to acres of stumps and piles of slash—the branches cut off from the logs. When the National Park Service sent landscape architect Harlan Kelsey to the Apostle Islands in 1930 to evaluate their potential as a national park, Kelsey was dismayed by the effects of logging on the islands. He wrote in his report: “What must have been once a far more striking and characteristic landscape of dark coniferous original forest growth has been obliterated by the axe followed by fire. The ecological conditions have been so violently disturbed that probably never could they be more than remotely reproduced.” Kelsey recommended against a national park in the islands.⁸¹

As Kelsey noted, fire as well as cutting reduced the island forests. Cutover forests were highly combustible, with piles of slash acting as tinder for fires set accidentally—perhaps by a spark from a railroad—or on purpose by farmers clearing land. When drought conditions prevailed in summer and fall, forest fires were widespread, claiming hundreds of lives and millions of acres. The Peshtigo, Wisconsin fire of 1871 was the worst forest fire in American history, with twelve hundred people killed and four million acres burned. Forest fires became commonplace in Bayfield and Ashland counties during the logging era. September 1894 was among the worst times, when concurrent fires burned Port Wing and part of Washburn, surrounded Ashland, destroyed the village of Marengo and homesteads nearby, and killed eight people in the village of High Bridge. Similar, if less extensive, fires occurred year after year. The Apostle Islands were

⁷⁸ When interviewed by Kate Lidfors, Parker expressed regret at cutting the “beautiful white pine” on Michigan Island, explaining that the Coast Guard had no money to build the Bayfield dock, but it had timber. Parker, interview by Lidfors, transcript, 3, 26; “Timber on Michigan Isle Being Cut for Use in Cribs,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 5, 1950; Mackreth, “Devils Island,” 34–36.

⁷⁹ Ed Erickson, interview, June 24, 1988.

⁸⁰ Walter Parker, who was on Devils Island ca. 1917 when his father was assistant keeper, recalled a skidway of logs that was left to rot when the government bought the island. Parker, interview by Lidfors, transcript, 5–6.

⁸¹ Parker, interview by Lidfors; Harold C. Jordahl Jr., “A Unique Collection of Islands: The Influence of History, Politics, Policy and Planning on the Establishment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore” (University of Wisconsin-Extension for the National Park Service, 1994), 180–82.

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protected by water from mainland fires but experienced their own fires. Fifty-nine men fought a fire, reportedly started by berry pickers, on Stockton Island in 1934, and two years later another large fire burned part of Outer Island. The largest island fire, on Oak Island in October 1943, burned an estimated 80 percent of the island. Fifty men fought the fire for five days without success; rain finally put the fire out. At the time of the fire Oak Island was mostly second growth forest. Eventually all of the island forests regenerated, but the second and third growth forests are dominated by birch and maple instead of hemlock and pine. The regenerated forests support different plant and animal species than were found in the virgin forests; as Kelsey predicted, the original ecology has not been reproduced. Within these new forests, numerous logging camp sites remain—relatively undisturbed and unusually well preserved—a record of the past for scholars and visitors.⁸²

⁸² Robert Mackreth, “Fire!” fact sheet (Bayfield: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2000); Wisconsin Historical Society, “Dictionary of Wisconsin History,” forest fires in Wisconsin, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=10463&search_term=fires; “Wisconsin Still Burning,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1894; Kurt Larson, “8th Avenue Mill Site,” *Washburn Logging and Lumbering*, <http://members.tripod.com/battleaxcamp/8thAvenue.htm>; “Forest Fire Burns Oak Island,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 14, 1943.

CHAPTER SEVEN QUARRYING

Sandstone quarrying was not as extensive or as long term as logging, but it was one of the Chequamegon region's leading industries during the late nineteenth century. In 1870 Strong, French and Company opened the first sandstone quarry in the Chequamegon region on Basswood Island, with a contract to supply stone for the new Milwaukee County Courthouse. The Panic of 1873 and the depression that followed put an end to this pioneer quarry operation, but the quarry reopened in the early 1880s under new management. The heyday of sandstone quarrying began at that time, when a strong market and growing economy supported capital intensive quarry operations. Robinson D. Pike opened a quarry at Van Tassell's Point south of Bayfield in 1883. Of at least three quarries opened at Houghton Point, the Prentice Brownstone Company became the largest producer in the Chequamegon region, and Frederick Prentice extended his quarrying activity to Hermit Island. John and William Knight began quarrying on Stockton Island in 1886. Sandstone from the region's quarries was shipped to cities throughout the upper Midwest. Then the Panic of 1893 caused the failure of banks, railroads, and many thousands of businesses nationwide, ending this period of prosperity. Business competition along with new architectural fashions and building materials contributed to the demise of quarrying. By 1900 the island quarries were closed; some of the mainland quarries operated on a reduced basis for a few more years. Today, quarry openings remain visible on Basswood, Stockton, and Hermit islands, and buildings built of Apostle Islands sandstone still stand in midwestern cities.

The Apostle Islands sandstones are part of a band of sandstones that crop out along the south shore of Lake Superior from Duluth, Minnesota to Munising, Michigan. In the east, the Jacobsville formation extends from the Keweenaw Peninsula eastward to Munising. In the west, the three formations of the Bayfield group extend from the head of Chequamegon Bay westward to the St. Louis River between Superior and Duluth. The Chequamegon formation is the uppermost of the Bayfield group, with the Devils Island formation beneath and the Orienta formation at the bottom. Ranging in color from red to brown, the sandstones of Lake Superior's south shore were known as Lake Superior sandstone, brownstone, or redstone. The Lake Superior sandstones were well suited to building—strong, durable, and easily worked. As geologists began to explore the Lake Superior region they recognized the economic potential of the local sandstone. In reports of their 1840 survey, geologists Douglass Houghton and Bela Hubbard described the sandstones of the Upper Peninsula and noted their value as a building material. Several years later geologist David Owen described the red sandstone ledges of the Apostle Islands and likewise noted the stone's potential as a building material. Owen wrote: "The color is pleasant—not too red." Owen's comment reflects another selling point for Lake Superior sandstone—it was beautiful according to the aesthetics of the day.¹

Brownstone had been used in New York City since the eighteenth century and was well established on the East Coast as a fashionable building material by the mid-

¹ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 31–39, 48–49; Nuhfer, *Guidebook to Geology*, 18. Owen quoted in Eckert p. 37.

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nineteenth century. Quarried in New Jersey, Connecticut and elsewhere, brownstone gained popularity with the Romantic movement that took hold in the U.S. in the 1840s. Influential tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing railed against the white of the Greek Revival style, urging the use of colors from nature such as brown and green. Brownstone was well suited to the predominant Italianate style of architecture, seen in villas for the wealthy and row houses for the middle class, including the famous New York brownstone fronts. In rapidly growing midwestern cities, wood was the most common building material, but stone conveyed substance, permanence, and status and was the material of choice for local landmarks such as banks, courthouses, city halls, and mansions. The introduction of steam-powered machinery for quarrying made stone more affordable. Following the Great Fire in Chicago in 1871 and destructive fires in other cities, the demand for sandstone increased. Many cities passed ordinances requiring that buildings in central business districts be constructed of brick or sandstone. The 1880s saw the rise in popularity of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, a massive and colorful style derived from the designs of Henry Hobson Richardson, one of America's greatest architects. Richardson's own works were typically executed in rock-faced granite and sandstone. No architectural style conveyed strength and permanence more than Richardsonian Romanesque.²

Lake Superior sandstone met the physical and aesthetic requirements for building stone for midwestern cities. Moreover, the stone was easily extracted, and the lakeshore locations of the quarries meant that stone could be shipped to markets by water before railroads reached the area. Sandstone for local buildings was quarried near Marquette and Munising in the 1860s. But the breakthrough in establishing a broader market for Lake Superior sandstone came about when Basswood Island sandstone was selected in 1869 for the Milwaukee County Courthouse. The initial plans for the imposing Renaissance Revival style courthouse specified construction of brick with stone ornamentation. When the county board of supervisors indicated that they would prefer stone construction, the architect recommended facing the brick building with Lake Superior brownstone. After a fifteen month search, a group of Milwaukee men selected a quarry site on Basswood Island, but they encountered skepticism regarding the quality of the untried stone. Samples of Basswood Island stone were submitted for examination and testing to prominent scientists including Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The scientists pronounced the stone strong and durable. When it was completed in 1873, the Milwaukee County Courthouse stood as a testament to the beauty and utility of Lake Superior sandstone.³

By the 1880s quarries were strung out along Lake Superior's south shore from Duluth to Munising, with the greatest concentrations around Marquette, Keweenaw Bay, and Chequamegon Bay. Railroad connections opened new markets, while lake shipping kept prices competitive in Great Lakes ports. At least ten commercial quarries operated in the area around Chequamegon Bay—five on the mainland between Bayfield and Washburn, two on Basswood Island, two on Stockton Island, and one on Hermit Island.

² Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 10–14, 20; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 21–27, 37; Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 189–92, 202–06.

³Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 17–19, 25, 61–62; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 4, 16, 20, 87.

Quarrying

The stone from the Chequamegon Bay quarries came from the Chequamegon formation. On the west side of the Bayfield Peninsula, four more quarries were opened to extract stone from the Orienta formation. Operated primarily by companies based in Superior and Duluth, these quarries were not as successful as those at Chequamegon Bay, in part because their harbor facilities were inferior.

Many of the quarries changed hands at least once. Some were owned by investors outside of the Chequamegon region, particularly in Milwaukee and Chicago, bringing in outside capital for local development. Other quarry companies were based in Ashland and Bayfield. The involvement of leading local entrepreneurs R. D. Pike and John and William Knight illustrates not only the importance of quarrying but also the interrelationship of the sandstone and lumber industries. In 1892 seven quarries in the Chequamegon Bay area produced 2,313,000 cubic feet of stone. Each quarry usually employed from ten to one hundred men depending on the season and the volume of business. As with the owners, some of the workers came from outside the region while others were hired locally. Companies often purchased materials, supplies, and services from local businesses, an added boost to the local economy.⁴

The quarry on the southern end of Basswood Island had the longest operating history of any in the Chequamegon region. With at least three companies extracting stone on and off over a period of twenty-five years and numerous partnership changes, the quarry's history is a tangled web. In 1854, Beriah Magoffin, Congressman John C. Breckenridge, and Paul Rankins of Kentucky and George Becker of St. Paul purchased land on Basswood Island that contained the future quarry location. In 1868 Becker sold his one quarter interest in the property to Alanson Sweet, one of the Milwaukee men who selected Basswood Island sandstone for the Milwaukee County Courthouse. Trained as a stone mason, Sweet had been a partner in the construction company that built the first Michigan and Long Island lighthouses. After Basswood Island sandstone was approved for the courthouse, Sweet and other Milwaukee and Chicago investors formed a company to undertake quarrying operations. Soon after, Alanson Sweet transferred his interest to his son George, who then sold it to the other partners. Strong, French and Company, also known as the Bass Island Brown Stone Company, began quarrying on the island in the spring of 1870.⁵

Forty men worked at the Basswood Island quarry during the summer of 1870, and a smaller force continued work through the winter. By the end of 1870 more than two thousand tons of stone had been shipped by schooner to Milwaukee for the courthouse. In April 1871 Dean Monaghan, the quarry supervisor, hired about a dozen men in Bayfield in preparation for the summer season, and thirty more men came from Chicago by steamer. In early June a work force of at least sixty men was producing sixty tons of cut stone a day. By the end of June the courthouse contract was nearly completed, and by August stone was being shipped to Chicago. Following the Great Fire in Chicago in

⁴ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 30, 61, 78–80, 223–34; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 20.

⁵ Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 87–88; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 18, 223–24; Nancy Farm Mannikko, “Apostle Islands Brownstone Quarries,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination—Draft (Bayfield, WI.: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, n.d.), 7–8.

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October, the quarry owners telegraphed Monaghan, instructing him to keep a large force of men working through the winter to supply stone for the Chicago market. At least twenty men were working at the quarry in December; the estimated output for 1871 was roughly forty thousand cubic feet. In March 1872 the *Bayfield Press* reported that the quarry had produced the largest block of stone ever quarried on Lake Superior—110 feet long and 8 ½ feet thick. When navigation opened in May, fifteen hundred tons of stone were ready for shipping. The quarry's output for 1872 was an estimated sixty-five hundred tons. Production fell off in 1873; only twenty-five men were employed at the height of the summer season. Work was suspended following the nationwide financial collapse in September. Output for 1873 was an estimated three thousand tons of stone, less than half of the output the year before.⁶

Strong, French and Company hired Judge Joseph McCloud as caretaker for the idle quarry. An early Bayfield settler who served as the town's first postmaster, Joseph and his brother Richard "West" McCloud owned property and farmed on Basswood Island. According to one account, the quarry reopened under a new lease about 1879. However local newspapers, which followed the local quarries closely, did not report any quarry activity until summer 1882. At that time the Basswood Island quarry was producing stone for buildings in Bayfield and Ashland, McCloud acting as the company's agent. Basswood Island sandstone regained its prominence when it was selected for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Milwaukee. In July 1882 the architect and engineer for the church traveled to Basswood Island with Edwin Hyde, a well known Milwaukee stone merchant and contractor, to select stone for the church. Shipment to Milwaukee began soon after.⁷ The quarry closed for the season in November, but the following spring it was leased by Hyde with his partner Thomas Cook and went into full operation. Partners since 1858, Cook and Hyde were among the largest building contractors and consumers of Lake Superior sandstone in the upper Great Lakes region. They leased the Basswood Island quarry to supply their stone yards in Milwaukee and Minneapolis. F. C. Bailey came from Milwaukee in May 1883 to direct quarry operations. Cook and Hyde improved the Basswood Island quarry, installing new machinery and extending the dock. In June the company was awarded the contract to construct the new Bayfield County Courthouse in Bayfield; the cut stone for the building came from the Basswood Island quarry. In the fall Cook and Hyde partnered with R. D. Pike, who had recently opened a quarry south of Bayfield, to ship a load of stone to St. Paul to demonstrate its quality. The demonstration helped to secure additional contracts for Chequamegon sandstone. Cook and Hyde quarried stone on Basswood Island from April to November through

⁶ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 6, 88–93; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 18–21; *Bayfield Press*, February 25, 1871, March 11, 1871, April 1, 1871, April 22, 1871, April 29, 1871, June 3, 1871, June 24, 1871, July 15, 1871, August 5, 1871, August 26, 1871, September 2, 1871, September 9, 1871, September 23, 1871, October 7, 1871, October 21, 1871, November 4, 1871, November 11, 1871, December 2, 1871, December 16, 1871, March 16, 1872.

⁷ Apparently some of the sandstone for the church was quarried on Sand Island, as the *Bayfield Press*, August 5, 1882, reported in August that a vessel was taking stone from the quarry on Sand Island for the new Episcopal church in Milwaukee. Stone was quarried on Sand Island for the lighthouse there, built in 1881.

Quarrying

1887. Early in 1888 they renewed their lease and began preparing for the coming season, but there is no record of their quarrying on the island that year.⁸

In 1890 a new contractor operated the Bass Island Brown Stone Company quarry for a brief time, shipping 5,000 cubic feet of stone. In the same year a new quarry was opened to the northeast of the original quarry, on land owned by the heirs of John Breckenridge. Nearly twenty years earlier the Kentucky investors had filed a complaint against Strong, French and Company, resulting in a court ordered partition of the contested lands. The new quarry was on lot three, which had been awarded to Breckenridge. A group of Duluth investors leased the property from the Breckenridge heirs in return for royalties. After building housing and preparing the site, the company attempted to extract the stone by blasting with gunpowder. After two or three shipments of broken stone, the quarry was abandoned. At the Bass Island Brown Stone Company quarry, activity increased in 1891 when the Superior Brownstone Company was organized in Ashland and leased the quarry from the owners, who no longer included either Strong or French (figure 20). F. C. Bailey, formerly with Cook and Hyde, was superintendent for the Superior Brownstone Company. In 1892 the company employed twenty-five men and reportedly quarried 310,000 cubic feet of stone, but the Panic of 1893 largely ended work at the quarry except for clean up operations.⁹

On Stockton Island a quarry was opened about a year after quarrying began on Basswood Island. Late in 1870, Willard, Mercer & Co. of Duluth contracted to repair the breakwater at the port of Ontonagon, Michigan, a thriving shipping point for copper and lumber. The Duluth company subcontracted the quarrying to Captain Tyler of Bayfield, who anticipated quarrying 300 cords (38,400 cubic feet) of stone. The quarry was located at “Sand Point” on Presquisle (Stockton) Island. The 1871 government survey map of the Chequamegon region shows the quarry and pier on the island’s south shore, on the point of land to the east of what is now called Quarry Bay.¹⁰ Work began at the quarry in late March, and stone was being shipped to Ontonagon by May. By mid-June more than 150 cords of stone had been quarried, and Tyler expected to complete the Ontonagon contract in a few weeks. In July the *Bayfield Press* reported that Tyler had received an order for stone for a large store near Duluth. The next mention of the quarry was in August, when Captain Healy of the *Chaska*, one of the schooners that had been transporting stone to Ontonagon, was hiring men to quarry stone to fulfill a new contract

⁸ Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 92–94; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 19–21, 48; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 82–84, 103–105, 186; *Bayfield Press*, July 1, 1882, July 15, 1882, August 26, 1882, September 30, 1882, November 4, 1882, May 5, 1883, May 12, 1883, June 2, 1883.

⁹ Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 92–95; *Bayfield County Press*, November 8, 1890, August 8, 1891, May 13, 1893, August 5, 1893; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 233, 275.

¹⁰ This map, known as the Whittlesey map, identifies Stockton Island as Vaughn’s Island and labels the quarry and pier as Vaughn’s quarry and pier. When the *Bayfield Press* published the map on June 3, 1871, it identified this quarry as the source of stone for the Ontonagon breakwater.



Figure 20. Superior Brownstone Company quarry, Basswood Island, 1893. *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition, 1893.*

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for additions to the Ontonagon piers. There is no indication that the quarry was worked in 1872.¹¹

Several schemes to recommence quarrying on Stockton Island came to naught until June 1886, when John Knight and William Vilas purchased land on the island's south shore to the west of Quarry Bay. At that time Knight and Vilas were rapidly acquiring timberlands on Stockton Island. By July, John Knight had opened a quarry on the property in partnership with his brother William, who served as quarry manager. The success of this initial operation led the Knight brothers and D. A. Kennedy, superintendent of John Knight's Superior Lumber Company sawmill in Ashland, to organize the Ashland Brown Stone Company. In 1887 the company employed twenty men at the quarry and produced twenty-five thousand cubic feet of stone. The Knights planned to expand their operation in 1888, and the number of their contracts suggests that they did. But despite the profitability of the quarry, John Knight's interest in the property remained primarily speculative. As he wrote to William Vilas: "I am inclined to the belief that we will very soon be able to sell the stone lands at very nearly as much as we can get for all the balance of the lands."¹² In 1890 the Knight brothers sold the quarry with all the quarrying tools and machinery, a tugboat, and two scows to a group of Chicago investors headed by J. G. Bodenschatz.¹³

Bodenschatz and his partners kept the name Ashland Brown Stone Company and made major improvements to the quarry. They extended the quarry dock, cut a new quarry opening directly on the shoreline (the first opening was set back), added machinery, and purchased a new tugboat, the *J. W. Ward*. Under the direction of foreman Frank Bell, the quarry became the largest producer and the most financially successful quarry in the Apostle Islands. In October 1892 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that the quarry was averaging 900 feet of dressed stone a day, and additional stone was being set aside to be dressed during the winter. Shipments for 1892 totaled 200,000 cubic feet of stone.¹⁴ In the panic year of 1893, shipments fell to 175,000 cubic feet, but in the following year they increased, reaching a peak of 285,000 cubic feet in 1895. In 1896 shipments fell to 240,000 cubic feet, and in 1897 the company suspended operations.¹⁵

Railroads provided the impetus for quarrying on the mainland, initially as a consumer of sandstone. During the summer of 1872, stone contractor C. Fletcher had thirty-five to forty men working at a quarry at Houghton Point, extracting stone for the

¹¹ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 100; *Bayfield Press*, December 10, 1870, January 7, 1871, April 1, 1871, April 15, 1871, May 6, 1871, May 13, 1871, May 27, 1871, June 3, 1871, June 10, 1871, July 1, 1871, August 19, 1871, January 27, 1872.

¹² Quoted in Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 120.

¹³ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 100–101; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 223; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 225–26; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 119–20.

¹⁴ Depending on the market, stone might be quarried but not shipped until a later date. Nevertheless, the *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition 1893* report that the Ashland Brown Stone Company produced 683,000 cubic feet of stone in 1892 may be an exaggeration. The shipment figures are from a report by the state geological survey. Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 275; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 102–103.

¹⁵ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 101–103; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 223; *Bayfield County Press*, March 7, 1891, May 30, 1891, October 1, 1892.

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Wisconsin Central Railroad's bridge over the White River. Used for the piers and abutments of the iron bridge, the stone was transported by scow to Ashland and from there by wagon to the White River crossing, about six miles to the south. In November the *Ashland Press* reported that the stonework for the bridge was nearly completed, and Fletcher was quarrying rock for the piers and abutments of the railroad bridge over Silver Creek. But completion of the White River Bridge was delayed when construction of the railroad was suspended in December. When work resumed the following April, the railroad tracks from Ashland to the White River crossing were in place, so the stone was transported part of the way by train. During the summer of 1873 Fletcher had twenty-five to thirty men working at Houghton Point, quarrying stone for the Silver Creek Bridge. Construction of the bridge began in August and was quickly completed. The White River and Silver Creek bridges were the largest of sixty-one bridges on the thirty miles of railroad line between Ashland and Penokee Gap, a few miles south of the present city of Mellen. The spectacular White River Bridge—1,560 feet long and 102 feet above the river—became one of the famous sights of northern Wisconsin.¹⁶

It was ten years before another quarry operated on the mainland, and then the catalyst was the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad to Bayfield. With the railroad under construction, interest grew in a mainland quarry that could ship stone directly by rail. Van Tassell's Point, located about three miles south of Bayfield on Pike's Bay, was an ideal location—the Omaha railroad tracks crossed the point, and Pike's Bay offered an excellent harbor for lake shipping. By June 1883, R. D. Pike was quarrying brownstone at Van Tassell's Point for the Bayfield County Courthouse.¹⁷ Pike kept a crew of twelve men working during the winter, and early in 1884 shipped stone to Washburn, Ashland, and Bayfield. In April, Pike increased his work force to fifty men, and his business continued to grow—in November he shipped 106 carloads of stone. In 1885 Pike sold an interest in the quarry to Elias F. Drake and family of St. Paul and used the additional capital for improvements and expansion. Operating as the Bayfield Brown Stone Company, the company remained successful into the 1890s: production was 102,000 cubic feet in 1889, 77,473 cubic feet in 1890, and 105,000 cubic feet in 1892. In that year Pike, Drake, and two Bayfield investors organized the company as a stock company. Pike used his influence in local business and government to advocate for building with local sandstone. In some cases he donated building stone from his quarry; Holy Family Catholic Church in Bayfield was one of his beneficiaries.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Ashland Press*, June 29, 1872, July 6, 1872, November 9, 1872, December 21, 1872, January 11, 1873, February 8, 1873, April 5, 1873, June 21, 1873, July 12, 1873, July 26, 1873, August 9, 1873, August 16, 1873; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 190–91, 205; Ross, *La Pointe*, 128–30, Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 255.

¹⁷ Pike supplied the rough stone for the courthouse, while Cook and Hyde supplied the cut stone from their Basswood Island quarry. *Bayfield County Press*, June 30, 1883.

¹⁸ *Bayfield Press*, October 28, 1882; *Bayfield County Press*, March 3, 1883, June 9, 1883, June 30, 1883, July 7, 1883, November 3, 1883, November 10, 1883, January 12, 1884, February 2, 1884, March 22, 1884, April 5, 1884, May 10, 1884, May 17, 1884, May 24, 1884, June 7, 1884, September 13, 1884, December 13, 1884, January 25, 1885, March 7, 1885, March 14, 1885, April 25, 1885, August 8, 1885, August 15, 1885, September 5, 1885, September 19, 1885, October 10, 1885, November 7, 1885, November 14, 1885, November 21, 1885, December 12, 1885, January 9, 1886, January 30, 1892; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 189, 230.

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With the success of the Bayfield Brown Stone Company, additional quarries soon opened on the mainland. In 1884, H. Hartley of Minneapolis was operating a quarry on leased land at Houghton Point. At the end of the year Hartley purchased 110 acres of adjoining property from Samuel Vaughn for a new quarry. In August 1885 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that Hartley's work force numbered fifteen men, and that he had shipped 125 carloads of stone so far that season. In December Hartley was erecting a sawmill to saw stone in the coming year. Hartley's quarry followed a typical pattern—between 1889 and 1892 it produced more than 300,000 cubic feet of stone, then in 1897 it was idle. But in 1885 the future was bright for quarrying, and another quarry was opened at Houghton Point that year by the Washburn Stone Company, owned by C. W. Babcock and W. H. Smith of Kasota, Minnesota. As with the other quarries, production was strong in the late 1880s and early 1890s, increasing from 105,000 cubic feet in 1889 to 185,000 cubic feet in 1892. The quarry supplied the stone for the new Bayfield County Courthouse built in Washburn in 1895. At Van Tassell's Point, Cook and Hyde opened a quarry in 1886 on a sixty acre site just north of Pike's quarry. For two seasons Cook and Hyde operated their mainland quarry simultaneously with their Basswood Island quarry; in 1886 they employed one hundred men at the two quarries. In 1888 Cook and Hyde ceased operating on Basswood Island, and early in 1889 they sold their property and machinery from both quarries to Frederick Prentice, stating their intention to purchase stone from Prentice to supply their stone yards in Milwaukee and Minneapolis.¹⁹

Frederick Prentice, the most famous quarryman in northern Wisconsin, epitomized the resourcefulness and enterprise that made fortunes on the frontier. Born in 1822 in what later became Toledo, Ohio, Prentice was in his early teens when his father was disabled, and Frederick became the provider for his family. At the age of eighteen, Prentice had a monopoly on supplying wood to steamboats on the Maumee River. He invested in land and timber and went to California with the 1849 gold rush. In 1854 Prentice was one of four men who established the town site of Bay City, later part of the city of Ashland. Three years later Prentice purchased land at what was then known as Prospect Point and platted a town he named Houghton, but the Panic of 1857 halted the development of Houghton before it started. Prentice returned to Toledo to salvage what he could of his investments. This was not the last financial crisis that Prentice would face, but overall his fortune grew as he invested in land, timber, oil, coal, and silver mines. Among his investments were timberlands on Madeline, Stockton, and Cat islands.²⁰

In 1887 Prentice returned to the land he had purchased thirty years earlier at Houghton Point and began preparing a site for quarrying. In 1888 he organized the Prentice Brownstone Company with investors from New York City and Ashland, including Eugene Shores, owner of the Shores Lumber Company. By October 1888 one hundred men were working at the quarry. By 1890 Prentice employed more than two hundred men at the quarry, making it by far the largest in the Chequamegon region. At

¹⁹ *Bayfield County Press*, November 22, 1884, December 13, 1884, August 22, 1885, November 7, 1885, December 5, 1885; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 82–83, 192, 197, 225, 227, 234.

²⁰ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 113, 128–29; Ross, *La Pointe*, 116; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 248; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 80; F. Prentice, advertisement, *Ashland Daily Press*, June 13, 1888.

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last there was a town of Houghton, with workers' cottages, boardinghouses, general store, and blacksmith shop. Prentice built a sawmill for lumber in addition to the quarry sawmill for cutting stone. The quarry produced 383,887 cubic feet of stone in 1889 and 623,334 cubic feet in 1890.²¹

With his Houghton Point quarry flourishing, Prentice purchased Hermit Island in 1890 from Elias Drake, the St. Paul capitalist who owned an interest in Pike's Bayfield Brown Stone Company. Wilson's Island, as it was then known, had changed hands several times in the preceding decades. In 1885 Cook and Hyde purchased land on Hermit Island with the intention of opening a quarry, but their plans changed and the land reverted to the previous owner, Julius Austrian, who sold it to Drake. Prentice's Excelsior quarry began operating on Hermit Island in May 1891. In June a cargo of seven thousand cubic feet of stone was shipped to Buffalo, the first of three vessel loads and five barges of stone that were shipped that year. Before long Prentice had spent \$150,000 developing and improving the quarry and employed one hundred men there. E. E. Davis of Ashland was foreman and William Knight (having sold the Ashland Brown Stone Company) was assistant foreman. In 1892 Prentice devised plans to promote his sandstone on a grand scale by quarrying a giant monolith for exhibit at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. At first the monolith was to be taken from the quarry on Hermit Island, but in the end it was quarried at Houghton Point. Shaped as an obelisk, the monolith was 10 feet square at the base, 4 feet square at the top (below the point), 115 feet tall, and weighed more than four hundred tons. It was designed specifically to be taller than the Egyptian obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle in New York City. The monolith was too large to be shipped in any lake vessel or railroad car of the time, so plans were made to ship it in a specially designed scow. The Panic of 1893 put an end to this expensive proposition, but Prentice was not completely deterred. Instead of the obelisk, he sent four 25 foot monoliths to the exposition: a statue of an Ojibwe chief, a statue of a Wisconsin badger, and two bas relief African American heads. The giant monolith was eventually cut up for building stone.²²

Prentice made a more personal commitment to Hermit Island when he built a dwelling there for himself and his young bride (not his first). The picturesque three-story dwelling with Romeo and Juliet balconies and an attached observation tower was reportedly built only of materials from Hermit Island (figure 21). Four carved fireplaces and chimneys were made of brownstone. The house was clad in cedar shingles and trimmed with cedar, some with the bark on, giving it the name Cedar Bark Cottage. According to legend, Mrs. Prentice took one look at the cottage and refused to live there. Meanwhile, the Excelsior quarry produced 150,000 cubic feet of stone in 1892, and Prentice's Houghton Point quarry produced 750,000 cubic feet that year.²³ About twenty-five men worked at the quarry over the winter of 1892–93, and foreman E. E.

²¹ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 80–82, 204, 232; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 129.

²² Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 82, 85, 226; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 97–98; *Bayfield County Press*, March 14, 1885, March 21, 1885, July 2, 1892, September 10, 1892, December 24, 1892; Eleanor Knight, "Wilson Island Rebuffs March of Civilization," *Bayfield County Press*, November 16, 1953; Ross, *La Pointe*, 148; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 340–41.

²³ Production figures are from the *Ashland Daily Press—Annual Edition 1893* as quoted in Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 275.

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Figure 21. Excelsior quarry on Hermit Island, workers' houses on left, Cedar Bark Cottage on right, 1890s. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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Davis was pushing for an early start that spring. But in May the country's finances collapsed, and the Prentice Brownstone Company became one of thousands of businesses nationwide facing bankruptcy. In June, Prentice and four other stockholders—among them Samuel Fifield—organized the Excelsior Brownstone Company. Prentice conveyed to the company much of the land he owned in the Apostle Islands, including all of Hermit Island except for Cedar Bark Cottage and the surrounding fifty acre park.²⁴ The Excelsior Brownstone Company faltered at first—in August 1893 the quarry shut down, throwing twenty men out of work. But the company apparently recovered, as the Excelsior quarry produced an average of 220,000 cubic feet of stone per year from 1893 to 1895. By 1897 work at the quarry had ceased, and the Excelsior Brownstone Company defaulted on its mortgage. Hermit Island was sold at auction for ten thousand dollars. Cedar Bark Cottage was operated sporadically as a resort hotel during the 1910s; in the 1930s the deteriorating building was demolished (47AS61).²⁵

The first steps in opening a quarry were to clear trees and other vegetation from the surface and remove soil and any other stone above the sandstone. Wood cut during site clearing was used for construction or fuel. When quarrying began on Basswood Island in 1870, stone was extracted using manpower and horsepower. Workers used drills, pick axes, sledgehammers, and wedges to remove the stone, first creating an initial quarry opening, then cutting holes and channels to guide the cracking of the stone into large blocks. Wedges and sledgehammers were used to break these blocks into smaller blocks that were finished by hand, either smoothed or left with a rock-faced finish. These dimension blocks were the main product of the quarries. At their final destination a builder or contractor would cut the blocks to fit into position in a building or other structure. Rubble stone, left when the dimension blocks were removed, was sold cheaply for dock cribs, breakwaters, and foundations. Derricks were used to lift the blocks and load them onto vessels, and tramcars moved the blocks around the quarry as needed. Island quarries tended to be well located for loading; the *Eau Claire Free Press* wrote of the Basswood Island quarry: “So convenient is the situation, that the side of the quarry forms a dock for the vessels to load at, and the blocks are delivered from the quarry immediately on board the vessel.”²⁶ Strong, French and Company added a steam drill for their second season on Basswood Island, although much of the work was still done by hand. Once the steam drill was installed and then repaired after it broke down, the *Bayfield Press* reported: “The steam drill makes a hole 3 inches in diameter, 6 feet deep in 5 minutes. It saves a great amount of hand labor and is considered a success.”²⁷ Of four derricks at the quarry in 1871, two operated by horsepower and two by hand.²⁸

²⁴ Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 98; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 84.

²⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 129; Ross, *La Pointe*, 154–55; Knight, “Wilson Island”; *Bayfield County Press*, December 10, 1892, December 24, 1892, March 18, 1893, May 13, 1893, August 26, 1893; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 84–85, 226, 232; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 6, 98–99; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 21–22.

²⁶ Quoted in *Bayfield Press*, July 29, 1871.

²⁷ *Bayfield Press*, May 13, 1871.

²⁸ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 40–48; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 4, 88–91; *Bayfield Press*, March 11, 1871, July 29, 1871.

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When quarrying resumed on the islands in the 1880s more steam-powered machinery was used. On Basswood Island Cook and Hyde were using a stone sawmill for finishing in 1883, and in 1884 they installed two new steam drills and a steam derrick. When the Superior Brownstone Company succeeded Cook and Hyde in 1891 they installed four steam derricks, including a revolving steam derrick to load and unload vessels. The most important advance was the introduction of the steam channeler, a locomotive, or self-propelled steam engine, that moved on tracks and carried one or two gang drills to cut channels into the stone. William Knight ordered a channeler when he commenced quarrying on Stockton Island in 1886. In the late 1890s the Ashland Brown Stone Company quarry on Stockton Island was equipped with two steam drills, five steam derricks, four channelers, and one engine; the Excelsior Brownstone Company quarry on Hermit Island was equipped with three channelers, four steam derricks, and an engine; and the Superior Brownstone Company quarry on Basswood Island was equipped with two channelers, three steam derricks, one hand derrick, and two engines. All of this steam machinery required plenty of fuel, so logging accompanied quarrying operations. In 1891 a portable wood sawmill was set up on Basswood Island to facilitate cutting wood for fuel.²⁹

The seasonal cycle for quarrying was opposite that of logging. Quarrying took place mainly from April to November, because too much moisture or frost when the stone was quarried could prevent it from weathering properly. Companies often kept a small crew working over the winter to get ready for the coming season by preparing the surface, stripping rubble, or installing machinery. Although Strong, French and Company cut stone on Basswood Island during the winter of 1871–72, that was an unusual situation in response to the Great Chicago Fire. Quarrying seems to have been somewhat less dangerous than logging, perhaps because blocks of stone were more predictable than falling trees or rolling logs. Nevertheless, accidents were not uncommon. Fingers were smashed by stones and severed by machines. At the Basswood Island quarry a block of stone fell on a worker's foot and cut off three of his toes. With steam engines, heavy machinery, cutting tools, and tons of stone, the risks were many.³⁰

The federal census of 1870 recorded the identities of the region's first quarry workers. On June 1, twenty-three quarrymen lived on Basswood Island along with three wives who were cooks. Six children of Dean Monaghan, the quarry supervisor, lived with their parents; the oldest boy worked in the quarry. Eleven of the quarrymen came from Ireland, three from England, and one apiece from Scotland, Bavaria, Sweden, and Canada. The remaining five quarrymen were born in the United States, including one born in Wisconsin. At age forty-three, the Irish-born Monaghan was one of the oldest of the quarrymen. The *Bayfield Press* reported that he had eighteen years of quarrying experience. The following year it appears that there was a higher proportion of Swedes among the Basswood Island quarry workers. The *Bayfield Press* noted salutations of

²⁹ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 6, 93–94, 101; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 48, 186; *Bayfield County Press*, February 2, 1891, August 8, 1891.

³⁰ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 42; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 88–90; *Bayfield County Press*, May 13, 1871, August 5, 1871, June 1, 1872, September 10, 1892, December 10, 1892, December 24, 1892, March 18, 1893.

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“yaverly, labona, Stockholm and King Georgia” when the men came to town, and in the spring of 1872 a “party of Swedes” left Basswood Island and took up homesteads on the mainland. Strong, French and Company brought some workers in from Chicago or Milwaukee and hired others locally. It seems likely that companies based in Bayfield or Ashland hired most of their men locally.³¹

Quarry workers lived quite differently than loggers. Instead of bunkhouses they occupied cottages and boardinghouses, and often their families lived with them. Strong, French and Company built a number of houses for quarrymen’s families on Basswood Island in the fall of 1870, and eight to ten more were scheduled for construction in the spring. In the interim a baby boy was born on the island to one of the quarrymen’s wives. In June 1871 the company was planning to erect three large buildings at the quarry, bringing the total number of buildings there to about fourteen. This would have included such structures as stables, blacksmith shop, and other utilitarian buildings in addition to housing, and gives an idea of the extent of the physical plant at the quarry. When a boardinghouse burned at the Basswood Island quarry in December 1883, the newspaper described the building as a long, low, rambling log structure. At the time of the fire the only resident was Joseph McCloud, who was taking care of the quarry for the winter; he was not injured. On Stockton and Hermit islands quarry workers and their families were accommodated in boardinghouses and cottages (figure 21).³²

Although many of the quarry workers lived with their families in individual houses, the employment of cooks indicates that they ate communally. Three wives cooked for the quarry crew on Basswood Island in 1870. Finnish immigrant Sophie Lundstrom, later a resident of Madeline Island, came to the area in 1891 and worked in the kitchen of the quarry camp on Stockton Island. In the early 1870s, Strong, French and Company shipped supplies for the Basswood Island quarry from Milwaukee and Chicago. One cargo received in July 1873 included tea, crackers, pickles, flour, barley, prunes, peas, hams, and potatoes. These were supplemented by fresh vegetables from West McCloud’s farm on the island. With children living at the quarries, education was a concern; in 1893 quarry workers’ children attended school at La Pointe. As far as social life, paying visits and trips to Bayfield figured importantly as they did for all island residents. On Stockton Island, the island community was numerous enough in the early 1890s to warrant a column in the *Bayfield County Press*—“Presque Eelers,” penned by “The Eel.” In August 1892 some community members formed the Presque Isle Harrison and Reid musical band, named for Benjamin Harrison and Whitelaw Reid, candidates for U.S. president and vice president, respectively. The newspaper reported: “The whole Island is for Harrison and Reid and protection to American industries.”³³ In October a

³¹ Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 88–90; manuscript schedule for the 1870 federal census of population, La Pointe Township, Ashland County, Wisconsin State Archives; *Bayfield Press*, March 11, 1871.

³² Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 88, 95, 97; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 82; Ross, *La Pointe*, 131; *Bayfield Press*, December 10, 1870, February 24, 1871, March 4, 1871, June 24, 1871, November 20, 1878; *Bayfield County Press*, December 22, 1883, November 29, 1884, March 7, 1885, July 23, 1892, November 9, 1895; “Mrs. W. Barningham Dies Tuesday Night,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 1, 1932; Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon.”

³³ *Bayfield County Press*, August 13, 1892. Although Harrison was the incumbent he lost the election to Grover Cleveland.

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fortune teller visited the island, and the H. & R. Band “turned out last night in three new white plug hats and serenaded Miss Mand Bryer on her 16th birthday.”³⁴ The column also included news of logging camps on the island.³⁵

The Bayfield newspaper duly noted when residents of the quarry communities visited Bayfield, especially when the visitors got a little rowdy. “A number of the stone quarry hands from Basswood Island were in town Saturday ‘having a little fun with the boys.’ Result—One paid \$8.25 for lodging in the ‘cooler,’ and two others carry badly bruised faces.”³⁶ One Christmas shopping trip ended in a tragedy that typified the danger of crossing the ice in the winter. Mrs. D. F. McCrae and Mrs. B. Conlin walked from Basswood Island to Bayfield to buy Christmas presents for their children. They began to walk back to the island about 3:00 p.m. but were caught in a blinding snowstorm and became lost. When they did not return by dark, Mr. McCrae went looking for them with a lantern and compass. He found the party, but his wife was too weak to walk back to the island. Mr. McCrae went back to the island for help and returned again to bring his wife home, but she died before reaching the island.³⁷

One of the great advantages of the Apostle Islands quarries was their accessibility for lake shipping. This allowed the quarrying industry to begin early, before railroads reached the area, because stone could be shipped by water to customers in Milwaukee and Chicago. After the railroads arrived, lake shipping remained the most economical means of shipping the large and heavy blocks of stone. In the early 1870s sailing vessels carried most of the stone to market. The schooners *Youtell*, *Chaska*, *Madison*, and *Pierrepoint* and the brig *Starlight* carried stone from the Basswood and Stockton Island quarries to Milwaukee, Chicago, and Ontonagon. Stone was also shipped on barges or scows towed by tugboats. In August 1871 the tug *Minnie V.* towed a barge load of sandstone from Basswood Island to Ashland for a schoolhouse foundation. Over time schooners were supplanted by tugboats and their tows, following the general trend in Great Lakes shipping, although as late as 1892 the schooners *E. B. Palmer* and *Monterey* carried stone from Stockton Island to Cleveland and Chicago, respectively (figure 22). Occasionally a steam barge—a small steamer that typically carried lumber and towed other barges—would pick up a cargo of stone. As business grew, companies acquired their own vessels for lake shipping. In the spring of 1873, Strong, French and Company purchased the bark *D. A. Van Valkenburg*. In the 1890s the Excelsior Brownstone Company owned a tug and one scow, and the Ashland Brown Stone Company owned a

³⁴ *Bayfield County Press*, October 15, 1892.

³⁵ “Who’s Who in Bayfield, ‘Know Your Neighbor,’ Mrs. Sophie Lundstrom,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 1, 1946; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 90–92; *Bayfield Press*, November 25, 1871; Goc, *On the Rock*, 19; *Bayfield County Press*, July 23, 1892, August 13, 1892, October 1, 1892, October 15, 1892.

³⁶ *Bayfield Press*, October 14, 1882.

³⁷ The newspaper reported that Mr. and Mrs. McCrae had been residents of Bass Island during the past year and that Mr. McCrae was employed by the Bass Island Brownstone Co. Presumably Mr. McCrae was part of the small crew that carried on minor work at the quarry following the panic that began in May 1893. “Perrished [*sic*] in the Blizzard,” *Bayfield County Press*, December 30, 1893.



Figure 22. Schooner loading sandstone at Basswood Island, 1889. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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tug and two scows. The Superior Brownstone Company purchased a tugboat in 1891 but apparently sold it after their business declined.³⁸

When railroads reached Ashland in 1877 and Washburn and Bayfield in 1883, the prospect of convenient shipping by rail to new markets stimulated quarrying activity. Railroad shipping was most advantageous for the mainland quarries—the Omaha railroad tracks crossed Pike’s quarry property, and the railroad built a side track to Prentice’s quarry at Houghton Point. But the island quarries also made use of rail connections to expand their markets. Cook and Hyde sent a demonstration shipment of stone to St. Paul, resulting in a contract to supply stone for the German National Bank in that city. Railroads made it possible to ship stone when navigation was closed. In February 1885, for example, “F. C. Bailey, of Milwaukee, arrived in the village the first of the week and pressed all the idle teams in town into service of drawing stone from the Bass Island quarry to the railroad depot. In this lot he will ship four carloads, two to Madison and two to Milwaukee.”³⁹ To facilitate shipping by rail, the Ashland Brown Stone Company leased a dock in Ashland from the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Prentice owned a dock for shipping stone in the same city.⁴⁰

Much of the stone that was shipped was designated for specific building projects, but companies also maintained stone yards in cities such as Ashland, Superior, Milwaukee, and Chicago. The main market for Chequamegon sandstone was the Midwest, especially the upper Midwest. Chicago and Milwaukee were the most important outlets, but other destinations included Duluth, Eau Claire, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Toledo, Detroit, Cleveland, Des Moines, Kansas City, Lincoln, and Omaha. Frederick Prentice sent several shipments of stone to New York State. On December 12, 1885, the *Bayfield County Press* published a precise account of stone shipments from Pike’s Bayfield Brown Stone Company quarry for that year:

<u>Points Shipped To</u>	<u>No. of Cords</u>
Minneapolis	575
St. Paul	30
Chicago	55
Davenport, Iowa	37 ½
Helena, Montana	75
Hayward, Wisconsin	5
Washburn	1,523 ⁴¹
Ashland	1,098
Bayfield	52 ½

³⁸ *Bayfield Press*, April 1, 1871, May 6, 1871, May 13, 1871, May 20, 1871, May 27, 1871, June 10, 1871, June 24, 1871, July 29, 1871, August 5, 1871, August 12, 1871, September 2, 1871, October 7, 1871, May 25, 1872, June 1, 1872, June 8, 1872, June 29, 1872, September 28, 1872, May 24, 1873; *Bayfield County Press*, June 16, 1883, July 14, 1883, July 21, 1883, September 15, 1883, May 31, 1884, July 26, 1884, March 14, 1885, May 16, 1885, October 17, 1885, July 23, 1892, October 1, 1892, October 15, 1892; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 6, 89–94, 98–102.

³⁹ *Bayfield County Press*, February 7, 1885.

⁴⁰ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 81, 84; Lidfors, “Sandstone Quarries,” 93, 98, 102; *Bayfield County Press*, April 19, 1884, April 4, 1885.

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The stone shipped to Washburn and Ashland was used in large part to build docks in those cities. The shipment to Davenport was to build Kemper Hall, a boys' preparatory school, and the Helena shipment was used to trim the new courthouse.⁴²

Brownstone was used most often for churches; banks, railroad stations, and other commercial buildings; and public buildings such as city halls, schools, and libraries. The Tribune Building in Chicago was an early coup for Strong, French and Company. In 1871 the Great Fire destroyed the two year old "fireproof" Tribune Company office building. Thus the fireproof qualities of Basswood Island sandstone favored its use in the new five-story, \$250,000 Tribune Building completed a year after the fire. In Detroit several prominent buildings were constructed of Chequamegon sandstone. The original J. L. Hudson Department Store (1891) was a broad, eight story building of brick trimmed with sandstone from the Ashland Brown Stone Company quarry. The lower stories of the twelve story Detroit Chamber of Commerce (1895) were clad with sandstone from the Excelsior quarry. In Cincinnati, the massive Richardsonian Romanesque city hall was completed in 1893 for the sum of \$1.5 million. Architect Samuel Hannaford combined Missouri granite, light colored sandstone from Amherst, Ohio, and Bayfield brownstone to create a richly patterned and textured wall surface. The brownstone came either from the Ashland Brown Stone Company quarry on Stockton Island or the Prentice Brownstone Company quarry at Houghton Point.⁴³

Within the Chequamegon region, the high proportion of brownstone buildings lent a distinctive character to Bayfield, Washburn, and Ashland. The Bayfield County Courthouse in Bayfield was the first building in the region constructed entirely of sandstone. In February 1883 fire destroyed the existing wooden courthouse built in 1873. The Bayfield County Board of Supervisors and the Bayfield Businessmen's Association immediately began planning for a more prominent and imposing courthouse built of local sandstone. In the ensuing months Frank Boutin Sr., William Knight, Fred Fischer, and R. D. Pike ran for and won seats on the county board with a new courthouse as their campaign platform. Pike was elected chairman of the new board. In April, John Nader of Madison, Wisconsin, was selected as architect and in June, Cook and Hyde were awarded the construction contract. Construction began soon after, with Cook and Hyde supplying the cut stone from their Basswood Island quarry and Pike supplying the rough stone from his quarry south of Bayfield. When the new, Italianate style, thirty-one thousand dollar courthouse was completed in July 1884, it had more than the usual connotations of substance and prestige, for it symbolized the value of local sandstone and the success of local industry. Over the next fifteen years, two schools, a church, a commercial building, and a power house in Bayfield were built wholly or in part of local

⁴¹ The newspaper reported shipments to Washburn as 15,228 ½ cords, but based on weekly newspaper reports of stone shipments the correct amount is 1,523 cords.

⁴² Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 20, 83, 85–86, 261–67; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 16, 94, 103; *Bayfield County Press*, January 25, 1885, March 14, 1885, June 27, 1885, August 15, 1885, October 10, 1885, November 7, 1885, December 12, 1885.

⁴³ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 20–25, 83, 85, 253–67; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 14, 94, 103. The Tribune Building was destroyed in 1902 and the J. L. Hudson Department Store was destroyed in 1998 after a long battle to save it. The other two buildings are extant.

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sandstone, which was also used for numerous foundations and retaining walls. In nearby Salmo the state fish hatchery was built of sandstone and wood shingles, the former from Pike's quarry and the latter presumably from Pike's sawmill. The Bayfield Carnegie Library was completed in 1904, with walls of yellow brick with brownstone trim and a full height portico with brownstone columns that gave it a presence exceeding its small size. A year later the First National Bank became the last sandstone building constructed in Bayfield. The building included a new office for R. D. Pike, and the stone undoubtedly came from Pike's quarry.⁴⁴

In the late 1880s Washburn was quickly growing to be the leading community in Bayfield County. When fire destroyed nearly thirty buildings in the center of Washburn in September 1888, the village rebuilt rapidly. Among the new buildings were the Union Block, the Bayfield County Bank, and the Washburn State Bank, all built of sandstone from quarries at nearby Houghton Point. In 1892 the Bayfield county seat was moved from Bayfield to Washburn, and the county government vacated the eight year old courthouse in Bayfield. The first monument that the community constructed as evidence of its new stature was the Walker School, a large, picturesque Richardsonian Romanesque pile of sandstone ornamented with turrets, towers, and parapets. At the school's opening ceremonies a graduating senior spoke on "The Age of Brownstone," identifying the new brownstone school as the beginning of a new era for students, leaving the old wooden Pioneer School behind.⁴⁵ By the time Walker School was dedicated in May 1894, plans were underway for a new county courthouse. The monumental classical brownstone building was designed by Fremont D. Orff and Edgar E. Joralemon of Minneapolis and built by John Halloran of Washburn. Where the courthouse in Bayfield had a clock tower, the Washburn courthouse had a dome, and instead of a modest projecting pavilion, the entrance to the Washburn courthouse was contained in a giant portico with Corinthian columns. Two more brownstone commercial buildings and a church were built in Washburn after the courthouse, which was completed in December 1895. Washburn's last brownstone building was the Free Public Library, dedicated in April 1905. As in Bayfield, the library was built with funding from Andrew Carnegie, and both libraries were designed by the same architect—Henry E. Wildhagen of Ashland, the leading architect in the Chequamegon region at that time. The two classical library buildings are similar in form, but instead of brick walls and brownstone columns, the Washburn library has brownstone walls and columns of a light colored stone. The *Washburn News* wrote of the library: "The building is of a beautiful brownstone, taken from the local quarries, and two huge pillars adorn the entrance. . . . It is one of the ornaments to the city which will always be shown with conscientious pride to strangers who visit here."⁴⁶ Stone for all of Washburn's brownstone buildings came from the quarries at Houghton Point.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 183–91, 256–57; Whitney Gould and Stephen Wittman, *Brownstone and Bargeboard: A Walking Tour of Historic Bayfield* (Board of Regents/University of Wisconsin System Sea Grant Institute, 1998), 13, 20, 26, 34, 35.

⁴⁵ Despite its sandstone construction, Walker School was destroyed by fire in 1947.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 201.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 191–201, 257.

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Ashland was undergoing tremendous growth in the 1880s and 1890s, when the region's quarries were at their peak of production. In 1880 the population of all of Ashland Township was 951; in 1890 the population of the city of Ashland (incorporated in 1887) alone was 9,956 and still growing. The city's physical growth corresponded to its population growth, and quarries on Basswood, Stockton, and Hermit islands and on the mainland all contributed to the building of Ashland. Between 1886 and 1905, seven commercial buildings, five schools, three banks, two churches, a library, a railroad station, a sanitarium, a post office, and a Masonic Temple were built in Ashland of local sandstone. Architects Allan D. Conover and Lew F. Porter, Madison architects who opened a branch office in Ashland in 1887, designed several sandstone buildings in the 1880s. Five of the eight buildings built after 1894 were designed by Henry Wildhagen, who opened an office in Ashland in 1893. Noted Ashland stone mason Archie Donald also helped to shape, literally, Ashland's sandstone architecture. The largest and showiest of Ashland's sandstone buildings was the Knight Block, a commercial building with stores, offices, and a hotel. John Knight built the Knight Block as a business investment, an advertisement for stone from his Stockton Island quarry, and a monument to himself. Designed by Conover and Porter, the Knight Block took two years to build and reportedly cost more than two hundred thousand dollars. The building was four stories tall with a five story tower over the main entrance and measured 140 feet on Second Street and 100 feet on Ellis Avenue.⁴⁸ Seven months after the Knight Hotel opened in January 1892, construction began on the Ashland Post Office. Though it was more modest in size and budget (one hundred thousand dollars) than the Knight Block, the post office represented a triumph for Ashland in its own right. The people of Ashland lobbied to have the federal post office and government office building built in their city. The selection of Ashland recognized the city's importance and gave an added boost to the local economy. When Willoughby J. Edbrooke, supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury Department, chose to execute the building in sandstone from the Prentice Brownstone Company quarry at Houghton Point, Ashland's triumph was amplified. The Ashland Post Office (now Ashland City Hall) is a restrained Richardsonian Romanesque design, two and one-half stories tall with a corner tower, a symbol of Ashland at its peak of prosperity.⁴⁹

The Panic of 1893 precipitated the end of the Lake Superior sandstone industry, but it was not the only factor. Twenty years earlier the sandstone industry had recovered following a depression, but when the depression of the 1890s eased, new construction techniques and architectural fashions left brownstone behind. Steel and concrete were replacing traditional masonry construction. Where stone was used, architects favored light colored stones such as marble and limestone instead of the colorful sandstones. The White City of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago ushered in the new architectural fashion. Competitive business practices used by quarry companies and a campaign against stone undertaken by brick manufacturers also hurt the industry. Building stone shipments through the Sault locks document the decline of the Lake Superior sandstone industry from a peak of 47,973 tons shipped in 1890 to 4,670 tons in 1898. By that date the quarries on Stockton and Hermit islands had shut down, and

⁴⁸ The Knight Block was demolished in 1974.

⁴⁹ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 201, 210; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 190, 200–213, 255–56, 284–85.

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quarrying on Basswood Island was limited to stripping the surface for rubble. Some of the mainland quarries continued operating on a reduced basis, supplying stone for about a dozen buildings in Ashland and Bayfield counties in the early 1900s. One quarry on the west side of the Bayfield Peninsula was still operating sporadically into the 1920s. In an epilogue to the sandstone industry, sand and gravel were hauled from the islands during the twentieth century for use in construction. At least some of this sand and gravel was used to manufacture concrete, one of the materials that took the place of stone in building. In 1909 and 1910 tugboats with scows from Duluth and Superior made several visits to Oak Island to load sand and gravel. In 1948 sand and gravel were hauled from the islands to build a new industrial dock in Ashland.⁵⁰

Today, quarry openings on Basswood, Stockton, and Hermit islands are dramatic reminders of a chapter in Apostle Islands history that contrasts vividly with our own low impact use of the islands. The main opening at the Bass Island Brown Stone Company quarry (APIS 83) is approximately four hundred feet long, three hundred feet wide, and forty feet deep. Although it is partially overgrown and filled with water at its deepest point, exposed quarry walls with readily discernible excavation marks rise twenty-five feet above the water. Pieces of sandstone, including two dimension blocks, are scattered about the site along with metal artifacts such as cables and spikes. Surface surveys and shovel testing have identified remains of structures and artifacts related to both work and domestic life at the quarry. At the Breckenridge quarry (APIS 86) there are two small rectangular quarry openings with visible drill marks in the quarry faces. On Stockton Island, two openings remain at the Ashland Brown Stone Company quarry—a smaller opening slightly inland that was worked by the Knight brothers, and the main opening on the shoreline that was worked by the Chicago group. The walls of the main quarry opening exceed sixty feet deep in places, and piles of rubble are nearly that tall. There are a number of metal artifacts in and around the quarry. On Hermit Island, the Excelsior quarry (APIS 84) consists of two openings and many features including ledges, stone machinery mounts, cut dimension blocks, and pieces of equipment. Late nineteenth-century bottles and ceramics found in and near the eastern quarry opening suggest the proximity of structural remains. Rock filled cribs from the quarry docks remain at all three islands. The visible remains of the quarries are impressive. But the buried remains of industrial buildings and worker housing, undisturbed, have tremendous potential to reveal information about quarry work and life that is absent from written sources. The Bass Island Brown Stone Company quarry is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and a nomination for all four quarries has been drafted.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 10, 14, 94, 99, 102; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 27–28, 86–87, 256–57; Mansfield, *Great Lakes*, vol. 1, ch. 14, "Commerce Through St. Mary's Canals," <http://www.halinet.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/HGL/default.asp?ID=c014a>; Ross, *La Pointe*, 149; "Historic Sites of Bayfield County," *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 19 (Fall 1998): 3; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 32; *Bayfield County Press*, July 2, 1909, July 23, 1909, August 13, 1909, August 20, 1909, May 27, 1910, June 3, 1910, July 29, 1910; "Tug Bayfield to Haul Sand and Gravel," *Ashland Daily Press*, June 29, 1948.

⁵¹ Mannikko, "Apostle Islands Brownstone Quarries," 1–2, 11; Lidfors, "Sandstone Quarries," 20–21, 28–35, 48–51, 59–61, 80–83.

CHAPTER EIGHT FARMING

Agriculture was never a major industry in the Apostle Islands, but farming was integral to the lives of many island residents. On Madeline Island, Native Americans and then fur traders grew vegetables as part of their subsistence strategy. As more settlers came to the islands toward the mid-nineteenth century they typically grew some of their food. Henry Rice and other investors promoted farming in the islands, but the Homestead Act of 1862 was more successful in encouraging people to establish farms. In 1865 Richard McCloud filed the first homestead claim in the Apostle Islands, for a homestead on Basswood Island. Other homesteaders followed McCloud on Basswood, Michigan, Madeline, and a few other islands, some of them successful and others not. On Michigan Island, Roswell Pendergast began farming under different circumstances—while working as lighthouse keeper he established a nursery that became renowned throughout the region. Some who came to the islands not to homestead but to log or fish or tend the lighthouses supplemented their food supply and income by farming. On Sand Island, Frank Shaw's farm became the nucleus of a thriving community comprised mostly of Norwegian fishermen-farmers. Promoter Edwin Bonde attracted additional families to Sand Island after 1909. Such promotional schemes were common in the upper Great Lakes in the early 1900s, as land speculators tried to attract farmers to the cutover pinelands, but they had slight success in the Apostle Islands. By the 1920s the only island farms were on Basswood, Sand, and Madeline islands. By the end of World War II farms remained only on Madeline Island, and the number was diminishing.

Early Farming

Lake Superior's moderating effect on temperature has been a key element in the history of farming in the Apostle Islands. Because the lake cools more slowly than land, the onset of the first fall frost is later by the lakeshore than at locations farther inland. Near the lakeshore and in the islands, the Chequamegon region averages 120 to 140 frost free days a year, about 40 days more than some inland locations, allowing a significantly longer growing season. Island soils, formed by glaciation, are a mixture of sand, clay, silt, and organic matter over a bed of clay. Rocks and boulders left by glaciers were an obstacle to farming, and the forest cover was an even bigger impediment. Native Americans were the first farmers in the Apostle Islands. When Jesuit missionaries arrived at Chequamegon Bay in the 1660s they found bands of Ottawa and Huron-Petun growing corn on the mainland and islands. The ability to grow corn was one reason why these fugitive tribes settled at Chequamegon Bay rather than farther inland. With a minimum requirement of 120 frost-free days, corn was a marginal crop in the Chequamegon region. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence shows that the Ojibwe grew corn and possibly squash at their village on Madeline Island during the eighteenth century. By the 1830s Ojibwe who lived on Madeline Island were cultivating gardens in the rich soil of the Bad River floodplain on the mainland. After Euro-Americans

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introduced potatoes these became a staple crop, as they were better suited than corn to the local climate.¹

Gardens were almost a necessity for the fur traders who lived on Madeline Island if they were to have sufficient food. Little is known of life at the French trading posts on Madeline Island. When Sieur de La Ronde was commandant he encouraged the Ojibwe to farm, and they provided fresh vegetables for the soldiers at the post. Unlike the French soldiers, Michel Cadotte made Madeline Island his home as well as his trading post beginning in the 1790s. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was not impressed with Cadotte's establishment at the southern end of Madeline Island when he visited there in 1820, but he noted that Cadotte had land under cultivation and kept several cows and horses. Thomas McKenney was more enthusiastic and informative in describing his visit to Madeline Island in 1826. By then the Cadotte compound included the families of Lyman and Truman Warren, although Truman had died the year before. McKenney was overjoyed to obtain milk from Cadotte—it tasted like nectar, he wrote. McKenney described twenty fenced acres of cabbages, potatoes, onions, squash, and peas, and chickens in addition to horses and cows. Potatoes were the bread of the traders, he wrote, and “where the trader is a Frenchman, there is sure to be some garlic.”² When missionary Sherman Hall arrived in 1831 he thought there were forty to fifty acres under cultivation. Subsequent visitors noted crops of potatoes, beans, peas, beets, carrots, squashes, cucumbers, turnips, melons, oats, wheat, and barley. Lyman Warren grew grass to feed his horses and cows, and in 1832 he was raising 1/5 acre of corn as an experiment.³

After the American Fur Company moved their Madeline Island trading post from the southern end of the island to the current location of La Pointe, the company established a large fenced garden and orchard in back of the trading post and village. In addition to vegetables the garden contained grapes, cherries, crabapples, currants, and strawberries. Protestant missionaries also planted an orchard. The 1850 federal census listed only one farm on Madeline Island—that of missionary Sherman Hall, with 20 acres under cultivation. For that year Hall produced 300 bushels of potatoes, 25 bushels of oats, 15 tons of hay, and 100 pounds of butter. But other accounts indicate that farming or at least gardening was commonplace on Madeline Island at that time. C. D. O'Brien, whose parents taught at the Catholic school at La Pointe in the late 1850s, recalled that people lived by trapping in winter, fishing in summer, and raising potatoes and other root crops. There were one or two cows in the village and two or three horses. O'Brien described the former American Fur Company garden, surrounded by a high stockade fence and producing apples, cherries, currants, and all of the ordinary vegetables. By then this garden was presumably owned by Julius Austrian, who purchased the former American Fur Company property on Madeline Island in the early 1850s. The 1860 federal census showed Austrian as owner of 4,000 unimproved acres and 150 improved

¹ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 3–5; Eichenlaub, “Weather and Climate,” 206; Robert Gough, *Farming the Cutover: A Social History of Northern Wisconsin, 1900–1940* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 12–14; Birmingham, “Historic Period Indian Archaeology,” 189.

² McKenney, *Tour to the Lakes*, 261–64.

³ Schenck, “Grant's Point,” 8–11, 15, 17; Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

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acres in La Pointe Township.⁴ Seven other farms in the township together totaled 180 improved acres. Potatoes were the leading crop—Austrian produced 300 bushels on his farm, while the other seven farms produced 1,467 bushels. Other crops were oats, peas, beans, corn, wheat, and hay, and the farms also produced butter and maple sugar.⁵

Perhaps the earliest farming activity on an island other than Madeline took place on Hermit Island when William Wilson moved there in the 1840s. Wilson's agricultural endeavors included a large garden, some fruit trees, and a large flock of chickens, reportedly as many as one hundred. When he came to town for provisions, Wilson sold produce from his garden. He also sold hay that he grew in a meadow behind his house. Sam Fifield found the remains of Wilson's root cellar when he was exploring the island in the 1890s. Wilson was still living on Hermit Island when Benjamin Armstrong established a home and trading post on Oak Island in 1855. Armstrong cultivated five of the forty acres that he cleared. In 1860 a Bayfield newspaper praised Armstrong's crops: "We have been presented with the tallest specimen of rye yet brought to Bayfield. It measures seven feet six inches, and was raised by Ben. H. Armstrong, Esq., at Oak Island. He also brought in a splendid lot of the King Phillip corn."⁶

Towns and farms are two hallmarks of settlement; many of the men who came to build the towns of Bayfield and Ashland in the 1850s also established farms. Among the founders of Ashland, Asaph Whittlesey, Martin Beaser, and Edwin Ellis were also among the largest landowners in the township. Beaser's farm was the largest by far—4,372 acres in 1860, of which 100 acres were improved. Elisha Pike, Bayfield County's first settler, purchased eighty acres from Julius Austrian in addition to a house and sawmill. By 1860 Pike's 387 acre farm, with 25 acres improved, was the largest in Bayfield County. Samuel Vaughn, an early Bayfield settler and leading entrepreneur, owned 232 acres in 1860 with twelve acres improved. Also during the 1850s, the government established agricultural programs on the new Bad River and Red Cliff reservations. In 1855 the Ojibwe on the Bad River Reservation were already cultivating more than 100 acres under the auspices of Reverend Leonard Wheeler's Protestant mission at Odanah. By 1859 the Bad River Ojibwe had more than 200 acres planted with potatoes, corn, oats, wheat, barley, rye, rutabaga, turnips, peas, beets, carrots, parsnips, and other vegetables. More than 150 fruit trees, mostly apple, had been planted on the mission premises. When conditions were favorable the Bad River Ojibwe sold surplus produce in nearby towns. Farming was not as advanced on the Red Cliff Reservation. In 1860 the federal census counted ten farms with a total of 1,985 acres in Bayfield County and ten farms totaling 7,192 acres in the town of Bayport in Ashland County, exclusive of the reservations.⁷ Out of the total of 9,177 farm acres, 485 acres, or about 5 percent, were improved. Individual farms had from 3 to 100 improved acres. These figures suggest that much of

⁴ La Pointe Township consisted of the Apostle Islands but most of the activity was on Madeline Island.

⁵ Ross, *La Pointe*, 80, 160; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 50, 65; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 270–72; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 6.

⁶ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 6; Fifield, "Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon"; *Bayfield Press*, May 18, 1872. Armstrong's house, dock, and clearing on Oak Island were described by the General Land Office surveyors in their 1856–57 survey notes.

⁷ Bayfield County was called La Pointe County until 1866. The town of Bayport included the settlements at Ashland, Bay City, and Odanah; however the enumeration of farms did not include Odanah.

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the so-called farmland, especially the large holdings of people like Beaser, was bought for speculation. Nevertheless, considering the labor involved in clearing land and removing stumps, even 3 acres under cultivation was not insignificant. As on Madeline Island, potatoes were the leading crop, with oats, peas, beans, corn, wheat, and hay grown in lesser quantities. Wheat was a relatively minor crop, in contrast to southern Wisconsin and the St. Croix River Valley to the west, where wheat was an important cash crop. The farms included small numbers of horses, cattle, and oxen. They produced butter and maple sugar, with Bayfield County leading in the latter—6,800 pounds compared to 800 pounds in Bayport Township and 5,500 pounds in La Pointe Township.⁸

The Homestead Era

In 1862 Congress passed the Homestead Act, a testament to the twin ideals of farming and landownership. The Homestead Act allowed an individual to claim up to 160 acres—a quarter of a section—of federally owned land. In order to claim a homestead an individual had to be at least twenty-one years old; either independent or the head of a household; and had to build a home on the land, live there, and farm for five years. When the homesteader was ready to “prove up” the claim, he or she submitted a document of proof with a description of improvements and the testimony of two witnesses. The total amount paid to the government was eighteen dollars in fees. Alternatively, after residing there for six months and making the required improvements, a homesteader could buy the land for \$1.25 an acre. The first homestead claims in the Chequamegon region were filed after the Civil War, but the growth of farming, as of the population generally, came slowly at first. When William Vilas visited Bayfield in 1873 he wrote that the soil was “quick” and productive of kitchen vegetables but there was no agriculture. In fact, Bayfield County was not completely devoid of farms; at the very least Elisha Pike was still farming on Pike’s Creek. Nevertheless, farming declined during the 1860s along with the population. By 1880 Bayfield County’s population and economy had largely recovered from two panics (1857 and 1873) and were growing. The 1880 federal census listed seven farms with a total of 1,845 acres in Bayfield County, compared to ten farms with 1,985 acres in 1860. In 1880, however, there were more improved acres—496 compared to 293 in 1860. Potatoes were still the leading crop; the seven farms produced 1,740 bushels. Only one of the farms grew wheat, a total of 65 bushels. The number of milk cows had increased since 1860 and most of the farms sold butter, reflecting the growth of dairy farming in southern Wisconsin. During the late nineteenth century the population of the Lake Superior region, including the Chequamegon region, experienced significant growth, and farming increased accordingly. Some of the farmers were homesteaders, while others purchased land. Some identified themselves as farmers, while others farmed as a secondary occupation. When they produced more than was needed to feed their families, there was a ready market in local towns, logging camps, and quarry camps. After the railroad reached Bayfield in 1883, farmers grew strawberries for long-distance shipping. Logging operators grew vegetables to feed their crews—potatoes were the bread of the logger as

⁸ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 65, 124, 133, 144; *Report of Commissioner 1855*, 31; *Report of Commissioner 1859*, 77–78; *Report of Commissioner 1860*, 52–53; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 56; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 141–42.

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earlier they had been the bread of the trader. Farming on the reservations showed modest gains, though nowhere near what the missionaries and government agents desired, and some of the farming was done by government farmers hired to instruct the Ojibwe. In 1874 the Bad River Ojibwe had 255 acres under cultivation, while the Red Cliff Ojibwe had small, “well-tended” gardens. By 1890 the Bad River Ojibwe were cultivating about 600 acres of land.⁹

Under the Homestead Act, more than three dozen claims were filed for homesteads in the Apostle Islands. Though not all of these were proved up, the Homestead Act was the single greatest factor in the growth of farming in the islands. On December 12, 1865, Richard “West” McCloud filed a claim for 171 acres on the northern portion of Basswood Island, the first in the Apostle Islands and one of the earliest claims in northern Wisconsin. West McCloud came from St. Paul to the new settlement of Bayfield in 1856, and with John and Joseph McCloud he opened the town’s first hardware store. When West McCloud proved up his homestead in 1871 he had a one and one-half story log house with a frame addition, wood floors, shingle roof, glass windows, and a cook stove for heat. He had five fenced acres under cultivation, working them by hand. McCloud described himself as a market gardener, and one of the markets he supplied was the Strong, French and Company quarry camp on the island. The *Bayfield Press* delighted in extolling the mammoth vegetables that “champion farmer” McCloud brought to town for display, such as an eighty-one pound pumpkin, a three pound tomato, and potatoes eight inches in diameter. McCloud’s crops included six varieties of onion, ten varieties of corn, cucumbers, peas, beans, radishes, beets, cabbages, melons, grapes, and winter wheat. Judge Joseph McCloud assisted his brother West at his farm. Well known in Bayfield, Joseph McCloud had been the town’s first postmaster and an assistant editor of the *Bayfield Press* when it began publication in 1859. Despite his success, in 1878 West McCloud sold his farm to Robert Pew, teacher at the Red Cliff Reservation, and returned to St. Paul. Pew purchased additional land on Basswood Island in 1881, and newspaper reports from the 1880s indicate that he grew turnips and oats and cut hemlock and cordwood on the island. Meanwhile, Joseph McCloud had apparently acquired his own land on Basswood Island, for he remained there after his brother left. In 1881 he resigned his position as judge and lived a solitary existence on the island, tending a garden and acting as caretaker for the sandstone quarry.¹⁰

On December 13, 1865, one day after West McCloud filed his homestead claim, John B. Bono filed a claim for 151 acres of land on Basswood Island adjoining

⁹ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 10–11, 15–18; William Vilas, “Diary of Lake Superior Trip, 1873, August 22, William F. Vilas Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; “Historic Sites of Bayfield County,” 5; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 144, 152–53, 175, 179; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 165–71; Alanen, “Historical Information,” 7–8, 24–25; *Bayfield County Press*, February 23, 1889; *Report of Commissioner 1874*, 26–27; Shifferd, “Study in Economic Change,” 33.

¹⁰ Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 7–8; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 10–12; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 80, 82; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 18–21; *Bayfield Press*, November 5, 1870, November 12, 1870, May 13, 1871, September 30, 1871, November 25, 1871, October 3, 1877, October 10, 1877, October 31, 1877, November 28, 1877, September 18, 1878, October 9, 1878, October 23, 1878, October 1, 1881, December 3, 1881; *Report of Commissioner 1879*, 164; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 80–81.

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McCloud's land on the north. Bono came to La Pointe in 1855 and opened a boardinghouse; the following year he opened Bayfield's first hotel—the Bayfield Exchange. Bono sold that hotel but later opened the Fountain House hotel. He also worked as a shoemaker and fish dealer and ran a meat market and grocery store. Several of these occupations he pursued concurrently. Farmer, however, was not to be one of Bono's titles, as he did not prove up his Basswood Island claim. In February 1871, Peter B. Richards filed a claim for the parcel that Bono had forfeited. At about the same time Nazaire LaBonte filed a claim for 147 acres of land adjoining McCloud's land on the south. LaBonte grew up on a farm in Quebec. He left there in 1856 and came to Bayfield just a few months after the initial settlement. LaBonte worked a variety of jobs related to town building, and in 1861 married a stepdaughter of John Bono. After 1861 he operated the government sawmill on the Red Cliff Reservation and later ran a boardinghouse in Bayfield. On September 4, 1871, LaBonte, Richards, and McCloud all submitted their final claims, serving as witnesses for each other. Unlike McCloud who had farmed his land for five years, LaBonte and Richards exercised the six month option, paying \$1.25 an acre for their land. Both men had about one acre under cultivation and had built one story houses; Richards' house was log and LaBonte's house was frame.¹¹

Michigan Island experienced the most homesteading activity of any of the Apostle Islands. In 1877 Joseph Sexton filed the first homestead claim for Michigan Island, for 140 acres on the western tip of the island. Born in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, by the age of twenty-two Sexton was living in Bayfield and working as a bartender. When Sexton proved up his homestead in 1883 he had six acres cleared and partially planted and had built a frame house. He had also constructed a fish house, cooper shop, and smokehouse, indicating the importance of fishing to his livelihood. Sexton and his wife Mary had three children by 1883, and the family moved to La Pointe for four months during the winter so that their two oldest children could go to school. In 1886 the Sextons left Michigan Island when Joseph began his thirty-five year career as an Apostle Islands lighthouse keeper. The departure of the Sextons did not leave Michigan Island devoid of homesteads. In 1881 Benoni Boutin Jr. filed a claim for 166 acres near the middle of the island, on the southern shore. Benoni was one of the eight Boutin brothers who moved their fishing business to Bayfield in 1870. In 1881 Benoni was a sixty-year-old widower with grown children. He continued working as a fisherman but made enough improvements—a small house, a boat shanty, and ¼ acre of cleared land planted with potatoes—to purchase the claim for cash six months later. Scottish immigrant John Baxter was the third Michigan Island homesteader, filing a claim in 1883 for 160 acres between the lighthouse reservation and Sexton's claim. Baxter worked as a cook in area logging camps both before and after he filed his claim, but his document of proof, submitted in 1888, demonstrates the effort he made to improve his homestead. Baxter had planted a one acre orchard and cleared an additional six acres, two of which were planted with crops. In an average year he raised about sixty bushels of potatoes and twenty bushels of turnips—perhaps supplying his logging camp kitchen—and two tons of hay. Farm buildings consisted of a barn, root house, and woodshed. Baxter's frame house had a cellar and was sparsely furnished with a cook stove, cooking utensils and

¹¹ Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 11–13; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 83; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 147–48.

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dishes, a bed, a table, and six chairs; a well supplied water. In 2005 archaeologists identified sites on the western end of Michigan Island that may represent Baxter's or Sexton's homestead or both. One of the sites (47AS351) contains a well-preserved root cellar.¹²

In May 1883 five Swedish immigrants filed claims on Michigan Island, apparently with the intent to purchase the claims after six months. The five may have been two sets of brothers, as three were named Whalquist and two were named Larson. A boatload of lumber was delivered to the men, but it does not appear that they did much with it. After three months and eighteen days they submitted their final proofs, and their claims were cancelled due to insufficient residence. John Pasque's presence on Michigan Island was much less fleeting, although his homestead was somewhat of a footnote to his eventful career on the lakes and seas. Born in France, Pasque began sailing on merchant vessels at age thirteen, traveling around the world until in 1862, at the age of nineteen, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. During the Civil War he was captured at Fort Sumter, imprisoned in the Confederate prison at Andersonville, and after his release assigned to duty on President Lincoln's yacht *Hornet*. After the war Pasque worked for eighteen years as a lighthouse keeper on the Great Lakes, the last ten of those years—from 1883 to 1893—on Michigan Island. Thus Pasque was employed as lighthouse keeper in 1886 when he filed a claim for 160 acres north of the lighthouse reservation and to the east of Baxter's claim. Three years later the *Bayfield County Press* reported that the vegetables that Pasque brought to Bayfield for sale were so large that he might need a steamer to bring them over. By the time he proved up his homestead in 1891, Pasque had cleared four acres that he had planted with crops and an orchard. He had constructed a house, barn, and two sheds, and dug a well. Pasque, his wife Josephine, and their daughter Eva departed the island for the mainland from December to April. As Pasque explained in his proof, the severe winter weather and unstable ice conditions made it too dangerous to live there during these months. Michigan Island was more hazardous in this regard than most of the other islands, as the strong currents of the open lake kept solid ice from forming. After Pasque left the lighthouse service in 1893 he began an active career as owner and captain of several ferry and tugboats that served Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. In 1898 he still owned the Michigan Island homestead, but by 1906 the land had been sold to John Schroeder and Pasque and his family were comfortably situated in a home in Bayfield.¹³

Three men filed claims for Michigan Island homesteads in March 1888; the first (by two days) was Chauncy T. Andreas. Born in Sparta, Wisconsin, Andreas learned the jewelry trade in his home town, and in 1881 he came to Bayfield and opened a jewelry store. Andreas filed for 162 acres of land east of Sexton's claim, on the north shore of the island, which he purchased with cash the following March. During that year Andreas cleared about two acres of land, planting half with potatoes, cabbage, and tobacco. He

¹² Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 16; Williams, "Long Island," 72–74; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 20–23; Richner and Roberts, "Trip Report: Apostle Islands."

¹³ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 17; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 23–25; "Captain John Pasque," *Bayfield County Press*, March 3, 1906; "Civil War Veteran Buried Saturday," *Bayfield County Press*, June 10, 1927.

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dug a well and built a house and cellar, barn, and hen house. The latter housed thirty-five chickens when Andreas came to live on the island in August, but he ate more than twenty of them during the winter. His wife and two small children stayed with him until December, when they left for the winter. Andreas sold his Michigan Island homestead before 1898. In the early 1900s Andreas worked as an engineer on a fish tug, and by the 1910s he was one of the Bayfield Peninsula's leading fruit farmers. Brothers Joseph P. and John A. Lambert were Irish-Canadian immigrants who worked as laborers in Bayfield before they filed homestead claims. Joseph was a bachelor; John was married with children. Both paid cash for their claims after a period of seven months (Joseph) to a year (John), and both had cleared two acres by the time they submitted their final claims. Joseph planted part of his clearing with potatoes and other vegetables. John had an acre ready for planting in 1889, but it appears that he focused his initial efforts on livestock as he had twenty-two chickens and twenty rabbits. Both of the Lamberts dug wells and built houses and farm buildings. But they did not live long on their homesteads; by 1898 the parcels were owned by Fred Fischer.¹⁴

Between 1889 and 1899 four men tried unsuccessfully to claim a 111 acre homestead on the southern shore of Michigan Island. In consecutive order, the four claimants were Lyman B. Price, Solomon Boutin, Adolph O. Brensike, and Philip Boutin. Brensike was a German immigrant; the remainder were born in the U.S. Although they were unsuccessful as homesteaders, the two Boutins made their careers in the family fish business. By 1906 the parcel was owned by W. Wachsmuth. Michigan Island homesteaders helped each other to establish and maintain their homesteads, but it appears that the island was too inhospitable for farming even with such assistance. By 1906, when Jacob Jacobson filed the final homestead claim for Michigan Island, all of the previous homesteaders had departed. Jacobson, a Danish immigrant, filed a claim in June 1906 for eighty acres at the eastern tip of the island but left the island six months later. Sometime before 1910 Jacobson returned to his claim with his wife, Emma, and three children. In 1915 when he proved up the claim, Jacobson had sixteen acres under cultivation, more than any other Apostle Islands homestead. That year he raised thirty bushels of potatoes, thirty-five bushels of rutabagas, and two tons of hay. Buildings included a one story house measuring twelve by twenty-four feet and a barn measuring twelve by twelve feet. By 1915 the family had increased to four children, and the Jacobsons left the island from December to April so the children could go to school. By 1920 the Jacobsons had departed their homestead for a farm on Basswood Island and a home in Bayfield.¹⁵

Madeline Island offered a more hospitable environment for farming than that on Michigan Island. When the homestead era began, Euro-Americans had been farming on Madeline Island for well over one hundred years, and the village of La Pointe, though declining, offered amenities that were lacking on the other islands. Between 1874 and

¹⁴ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 17–18; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 25–28; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 83; *Bayfield County Press*, January 26, 1889, May 6, 1904, November 10, 1905; Nohl, *Ashland County Plat Book*.

¹⁵ Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 28–30, 37; Hadland and Mackreth, "Commercial Fishermen"; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 20; *Map of Ashland County*, 1917.

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1900 fourteen claims were filed for homesteads on Madeline Island. Six of these claims were proved up. The first five homesteaders were all born in the U.S. or Canada; none of their claims were successful. After 1893 most of the homesteaders were Scandinavian, consistent with the influx of Scandinavians to the region during the 1890s. The first successful homestead application was filed by Norwegian immigrant Andrew Siem in 1894. By the time he proved up his homestead in 1899 Siem had about 7 of his 128 acres under cultivation and had built a log house with a cellar, a barn, a store house, a fish house, and a dock. As the fish house suggests, Siem's vocation was fishing, but he raised crops each season as required. The other successful homesteaders were Jonas V. Hultquist, John Falt, Matis Haikinen, Olaf Dahlin, and John P. O'Neill. Together their homesteads totaled 636 acres, ranging in size from Haikinen's 40 acres to Hultquist's 157 acres. The amount of cultivated land on each homestead ranged from 6 to 10 acres. Three of the six men were single at the time that they proved their homesteads, and two of the married men had children. Dahlin had four children at home and Haikinen had five—a family of seven living in a log house sixteen by eighteen feet. All of the men spent some time away from their homesteads in order to earn additional income. Olaf Dahlin was a carpenter who built buildings and furniture for his family and others on Madeline Island.¹⁶

During the early 1890s two claims were filed for homesteads at the northern tip of Bear Island. Swedish immigrant Gust Brandon filed a claim for twenty-eight acres in 1890, and two years later English immigrant James H. Beattie filed a claim for forty-seven acres adjoining Brandon's claim. Both men relinquished their claims before 1901. The sole attempt to establish a homestead on Stockton Island was similarly brief and unsuccessful. Canadian immigrant Albert Lamb filed a claim for eighty-one acres on the southern shore of Stockton Island in 1896 and relinquished the claim by 1899. Sand Island was the only other of the Apostle Islands where homestead claims were filed, and there farming took a different direction. Louis Moe filed a claim for a forty acre inland parcel on Sand Island in 1893. Moe abandoned that claim when he purchased a lakeshore farm that Jack Hadland, another Norwegian immigrant, had developed at East Bay. Moe's farming, fishing, and logging operation became a fixture of the East Bay community of fishermen-farmers. That community was thriving in 1909 when Nils F. Biorn filed a claim for forty acres of land adjoining Moe's farm. Biorn was a Norwegian immigrant living in Minneapolis with his wife Erika and ten children. He and his family took up residence on their claim in the summer of 1910. It appears that the other Sand Island farmers had purchased the better farmland, as Biorn's land was nearly all swamp. In addition the timber had been cut, leaving only brush. Despite such unfavorable conditions, Biorn managed to build a house and barn, clear four to five acres, and plant two acres with potatoes and garden vegetables. In December 1911 the Biorns moved back to Minneapolis because of illness in the family. A year later Nils Biorn was kicked by a horse and killed. In 1913 Erika Biorn proved up the claim and received title, although it is not clear whether or not she returned to Sand Island.¹⁷ In 1910 Magnus Palm filed a homestead claim for forty-one acres on Sand Island, the last homestead

¹⁶ Homestead applications and related documents compiled by Arnold Alanen; Goc, *On the Rock*, 73; Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 19–20.

¹⁷ In 1912 the residency requirement under the Homestead Act was reduced from five to three years.

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claim in the Apostle Islands. Palm's farm was south of the other East Bay farms and located inland away from the shore. Although he did relatively little farming, Palm proved up his claim in 1917. Anna and Magnus Palm were the sister and brother-in-law of promoter Edwin Bonde. The stories of the Palms and the Moes belong with the story of the Sand Island community.¹⁸

Among the homesteads established on the Bayfield Peninsula was that of Charles Myers on the north shore west of Sand Point. Born in Ohio, in 1895 Myers filed a claim for 104 acres that he proved up in 1900. By then Myers had improved the property with a log house, kitchen, chicken coop, hay shed, and well and had cleared six acres of land. Myers still owned the homestead in 1924, but in 1929 the farmstead with about 50 acres was sold. By 1954 the entire property was owned by Bayfield County. In the early 1980s the remains of a farm building were still evident on the property.¹⁹

Local newspapers were tireless promoters of farming in the Chequamegon region. Early newspapers perhaps used more ink promoting than informing; this seems to be the case with the *Bayfield Mercury*, Bayfield's first newspaper, published in 1857. The *Mercury* listed the advantages and opportunities of the new communities at Ashland and Bayfield and environs: location, harbor, timber, mineral resources, fish, and rich farmland. The last was pitched to the average man who did not have money to invest in a logging outfit or fishing rig let alone develop a mine. The *Mercury* noted the region's mild winters, a feature that would join affordability as a major selling point for farming when population growth resumed following the Civil War. In 1870 the *Bayfield Press* wrote: "Much of this land can be obtained by homestead or pre-emption entry, and no section of our county offers better inducement to the poor man to make a home for himself and family."²⁰ The following year the *Bayfield Press* wrote of the Apostle Islands: "Upon the outer islands frosts are not known before November—the ground never freezes—and during the winter just past the lowest the thermometer sank on Michigan Island was ten degrees below zero. On some outer islands it probably did not reach zero—so it will be seen that in length of summer season, warmth of climate and of water, we are more highly favored than the famous fruit region of Western Michigan. Our soil is rich, the islands easily accessible, and a never failing market near at hand."²¹ The *Press* published Major Whittlesey's government survey map of the Chequamegon region with the heading "The Great Fruit Growing Section of Northern Wisconsin, Lake Superior."²²

¹⁸ Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 13–14, 34–35; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 18, 26, 30–31; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 33–39.

¹⁹ Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 35–36. The former Myers homestead is within the lakeshore unit of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

²⁰ *Bayfield Press*, October 20, 1870. The newspaper was published as the *Bayfield Press* from 1870 to 1872 and 1877 to December 9, 1882, when the name was changed to *Bayfield County Press*. Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 3.

²¹ April 8, 1871, quoted in Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 15–16.

²² Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 44–45, 53–54; *Bayfield Mercury*, August 22, 1857; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 7–8, 15–16; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 15–17; *Bayfield Press*, June 3, 1871.

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Agricultural societies were formed and held exhibitions and fairs to promote farming. The Lake Superior Agricultural Society was organized in Superior in 1859. An agricultural show was held in Ashland in 1877. The Bayfield County Agricultural Society was formed in 1894 and established the Bayfield County Fair at Iron River; the first Ashland County Fair took place the following year. Some investors in Apostle Islands real estate used their own resources to try to demonstrate the viability of farming in the islands. In 1868 Henry M. Rice, Minnesota's first U.S. senator and founder of Superior and Bayfield, purchased Rocky Island, thereafter known as Rice's Island, and part of South Twin Island. Three years later Rice hired a man to clear land on Rice's island for farming and fruit growing. Although he abandoned this effort, Rice remained a vocal proponent for fruit growing in the Chequamegon region. Rice's friend, St. Paul physician Samuel Willey, and his wife Mary purchased the remainder of South Twin Island—thereafter Willey's Island—in 1868. The Willeys hired fisherman John Smith to create a small farm and orchard on the island. These were abandoned when Samuel Willey died in 1872, and five years later a windstorm flattened the buildings. An 1884 map, however, shows "Willey's Orchard" at the north end of the island. In 1871 a third Minnesotan, former U.S. senator Ozara P. Stearns, purchased 640 acres on an unidentified island on behalf of a group of eastern capitalists, intending to develop fruit orchards. Stearns, considered an expert on fruit growing, opined that peaches and apples could be grown profitably in the islands. It does not appear, however, that these orchards were ever developed.²³

Other farmers succeeded where these wealthy investors failed, and the *Bayfield County Press* celebrated these successes with reports of abundant, delicious, and "mammoth" produce.²⁴ West McCloud was one of their favorites; another was Michigan Island lighthouse keeper and nurseryman Roswell H. Pendergast. Born in New Hampshire, Pendergast and his wife Helen migrated to Minnesota and then to La Pointe. When the Michigan Island light was reestablished in 1869, Pendergast was appointed keeper, arriving in September. However, the following May the superintendent of lights recommended that Pendergast be removed due to charges of inefficiency and taking absence without leave. Pendergast's keeper status for the next year or so is unclear, but ultimately the charges were declared false, and by the summer of 1871 he had been officially reinstated. In October the lighthouse inspector praised Pendergast's work in improving and beautifying the light station grounds. Pendergast's work was indeed praiseworthy—in two years he had planted a nursery of several thousand fruit trees on the island and was selling shrubs and fruit trees to residents on the mainland. The majority of the trees were apple, but he also planted pear, plum, cherry, and peach trees, although the last apparently did not thrive. Pendergast grew oats, corn, beans, and potatoes and raised chickens. He probably constructed the barn that stood at the light station for a number of years. In September 1871 the *Bayfield Press* reported: "Pendergast of

²³ Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 6, 33–34; *Bayfield Press*, May 6, 1871, May 13, 1871, June 3, 1871, October 31, 1877; *Bayfield County Press*, July 28, 1883, September 28, 1895; "Historic Sites of Bayfield County," 10; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 8–9; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 26–29.

²⁴ In fairness to the *Bayfield County Press* and its booster approach, the newspaper also reported crop failures due to such problems as drought and cut worm.

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Michigan Island, presented us a fine specimen of the ‘Early Rose’ potatoe as we ever saw. They were planted on the 15th of June and the largest one weighed nearly three pounds. His corn and beans look splendid. He showed us a bouquet of pansies—that was large, beautiful and fragrant.”²⁵

Pendergast’s nursery business was quite successful—during the 1872 season he sold more than three thousand dollars worth of fruit trees. His customers ranged along the south shore of Lake Superior as far east as Ontonagon, Michigan. Even with his dual jobs as lighthouse keeper and nurseryman, Pendergast found time to sell lightning rods and act as a canvasser for the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, the famous Congregational preacher. In June 1874 Pendergast suddenly resigned his position as lighthouse keeper, citing health reasons. Perhaps the Pendergasts lost their taste for island living after their two month old son died on the island the previous summer. The family moved to Minnesota, where Roswell Pendergast had a long and distinguished career as a nurseryman. Pendergast’s legacy to the Chequamegon region was not only the trees that he planted, and the nursery stock that he sold, but the example he set—for the Bayfield Peninsula would indeed become a famous fruit growing region, and Pendergast played an important role in making that happen.²⁶

Although other lighthouse keepers were not professional horticulturists like Pendergast, many were accomplished gardeners. Even on remote Outer Island the keepers raised potatoes and kept chickens. In the Sand Island lighthouse log Emmanuel and Ella Luick recorded their seasonal round of planting, hoeing, harvesting, and storing produce for the winter. Their crops included tomatoes, corn, lettuce, peas, and of course potatoes. In October 1899 Emmanuel Luick dug 5 ½ bushels of potatoes; these were packed in hay for winter storage. The Luicks lost some of their chickens to a hawk, but it appears that the number of baby chicks outnumbered those lost. In the fall they butchered some of the chickens and took the rest to Louis Moe to keep for the winter. One November Emmanuel Luick borrowed skies from Moe and used them to travel to East Bay with his chickens; Ella Luick described the episode: “He made a poor Norwegian though, but after practicing awhile he decided that he could manage them. So he put our four chickens in a bushel basket, and the basket in a bag, and the ‘skees’ on his feet, and with the bag on his back he started for East Bay. He got home three hours later and says ‘skees’ are better than walking in 18” of snow, but not as easy as snow shoes.”²⁷ Naturally the Bayfield newspaper publicized the keepers’ gardening accomplishments and noted the excellent soil that made them possible. Raspberry Island lighthouse keeper Louis Larson presented the editor with a “splendid mess of potatoes.” Among the specimens left at the newspaper office by Larson’s successor Seth Snow were a chicken as big as a turkey, “the largest and handsomest onions we ever gazed upon,” and the best

²⁵ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 13; Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 16–18; Snyder, “Compendium,” 84, 92, 102, 104, 124; Rathbun, “Light Stations,” 51–52; *Bayfield Press*, October 13, 1870, October 27, 1870, November 5, 1870, February 4, 1871, March 4, 18871, May 20, 1872, September 2, 1871, September 16, 1871, September 23, 1871.

²⁶ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 13–14; Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 17–19; *Ashland Press*, October 12, 1872, August 16, 1873.

²⁷ Luick, “Sand Island Log,” November 23, 1898.

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barley and oats in the state. The “monster” eggs laid by Michigan Island Keeper Rumrill’s hens reportedly were three inches long and twice as heavy as common eggs.²⁸

The *Bayfield Press* bemoaned the failure of lumbermen to plant crops on the land that they logged. Occasionally, however, a logger did just that. In 1883 the firm of Boutin & Mahan, then the largest fish dealer in Bayfield, was engaged in logging on Basswood Island. The *Bayfield County Press* gleefully described the “mammoth” strawberries that Samuel Mahan raised on his Basswood Island land. “One of these berries (and by no means the only one) measured five and three-fourths inches in circumference and tipped the scale at one ounce.”²⁹ Charles Rudd’s logging and farming operation on Basswood Island began the same year. A Kentucky native, Colonel Rudd (as he was known) purchased an interest in the original Bayfield town site from Henry Rice in the 1850s. Rudd continued to invest in the Bayfield area, and in 1883 he acquired several hundred acres on Basswood Island. Like Rice and Samuel Willey, Rudd wanted to demonstrate the viability of farming on his Apostle Islands land, and he did so with greater success than his predecessors. As his men cut cordwood, they also cleared the land of underbrush in preparation for planting hay. In July 1884 Rudd came to live on Basswood Island and built a house, barn, and outbuildings. Rudd’s harvest in September 1885 demonstrated the fruits of his farming and logging labors—he shipped more than one hundred cords of tan bark and fifty cords of wood, and harvested four acres of oats, one acre of buckwheat, two acres of millet, and two and one-half acres of potatoes. In addition he built a two story house for a tenant farmer and cut enough hay to feed his mule team and several head of cattle for the winter. Although the bachelor attorney, landowner, lumberman, and farmer returned at times to Kentucky, Rudd had become a part of the Bayfield community by the time he died in 1897. Today a large clearing with a small apple orchard and possible building remains marks the site of Rudd’s farm (47AS69).³⁰

During the logging heyday, most of the men who lived on Madeline Island worked part time in logging camps, but those who stayed for the long term were also farmers. Fishermen who made their homes on Madeline Island at least grew vegetables for their families. On other islands fishermen planted gardens at their fish camps. William Herbert Sr.’s farm on Ironwood Island may have developed from a fish camp garden, as Herbert was a local fish dealer (and sometime lighthouse keeper). The *Bayfield Press* reported in 1877 that Herbert brought in a fine lot of vegetables, including a two pound tomato, from his Ironwood Island farm. Unfortunately the identity of Ironwood Island at that time is unclear. Whittlesey’s 1871 map of the Apostle Islands does not show an Ironwood Island; the island today known as Ironwood is labeled

²⁸ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 14–15; “Outer Island Log”; Luick, “Sand Island Log,” 1898–1899; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 32; Alanen, “Early Agriculture,” 32–33; *Bayfield Press*, October 21, 1871, February 27, 1878, August 27, 1881, January 28, 1882, December 2, 1882; *Bayfield County Press*, March 24, 1883, October 10, 1885.

²⁹ *Bayfield County Press*, July 21, 1883.

³⁰ *Bayfield Press*, October 27, 1870; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 18; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 23–25; *Bayfield County Press*, November 24, 1883, July 19, 1884, July 26, 1884, September 26, 1885, October 17, 1885, October 31, 1885; “Death of C. P. Rudd,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 10, 1897; Lidfors, “Historic Logging Sites,” 84.

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Higgin's Island. Other nineteenth-century maps of the Apostle Islands give the name Ironwood Island to the islands known today as Ironwood, Otter, Rocky, and North Twin. James Smith, who fished from Rocky Island in the 1890s, probably had a small farm there.³¹

By the 1890s there were about two dozen fishermen on Sand Island. Most of them occupied seasonal fish camps, but a few had built more substantial homes with farms. The first fisherman to make a long term commitment to Sand Island was Frank Shaw, who bought land along the southeastern shore of the island in 1870 and soon after built the two small log houses that became the core of his fish camp and farm.³² During the 1880s the Shaw family began spending summers on the island. By then, possibly earlier, Frank Shaw was growing potatoes and selling them in Bayfield. In October 1886 the *Bayfield County Press* reported: "Frank Shaw, Emperor of Sand Island, spent a few days in town this week. His potato crop this year is only a trifle over three hundred bushels when it ought to be seven hundred in order to supply the demand, as Sand Island tubers always find ready market."³³ Even though Shaw was known for his ability as a fisherman, he apparently had a talent for farming as well. During the 1890s he regularly sold his farm produce in Bayfield. One summer his strawberry crop was estimated at two hundred crates. Shaw's hired hands helped with farming as well as with fishing. In his 1895 description of the Apostle Islands Sam Fifield noted Shaw's "good snug farm." In 1897 Frank and Josephine Shaw made their Sand Island farm their year round home.³⁴

When the Shaws began wintering on Sand Island at least three Norwegian fishermen had farms at East Bay. Louis Moe's farm was the most substantial, with a one and one-half story, L-plan frame house, barn, woodshed, ice house, dock with fish house, blacksmith shop, and a camp building for Moe's logging crew with a root cellar underneath. Moe lived on the farm as a bachelor until 1899 when he traveled to Norway to get married, returning to Sand Island with his wife. The farms of Peter Johnson and Peter Hansen are not as well documented, but their houses were more modest. Johnson's house, later acquired by his brother Herman, was a one story, one room log house with an attic. The 1895 census shows five people in the Johnson household. The Hansens' one story house was probably built of logs and later covered with horizontal siding. In 1895 Sam Fifield wrote of East Bay: "There is a settlement of Swede and Norwegian fishermen-farmers on East bay, which bids fair to increase in numbers and prosperity, for Sand Island contains much rich soil for farming which only needs clearing and improvement."³⁵ The census shows that about one third of the Sand Island fishermen in

³¹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 145, 151; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 14-15, 33-34; Rathbun, "Commercial Fishing," 48; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 105-106; *Bayfield Press*, October 17, 1877; Cowan to Lidfors, 5 September 1980 and letter to Oerichbauer, 20 October 1981, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore historical subject files; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 25-26, 36, 38.

³² See chapter five for additional discussion of Frank Shaw and other fishermen-farmers of Sand Island.

³³ October 16, 1886, quoted in Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 30.

³⁴ Manuscript schedule for the 1895 Wisconsin census of population, Bayfield Township, Bayfield County, Wisconsin State Archives; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 9-10, 29-31; Parnes, "Shaw Farm"; *Bayfield County Press*, November 24, 1894, May 9, 1896, October 17, 1896, July 17, 1897, July 31, 1897, July 23, 1898; Fifield, "Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon."

³⁵ Fifield, "Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon."

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1895 were Scandinavian immigrants, but they did indeed form a community that would grow as Fifield predicted.³⁶

The Cutover Era

Forests were both a physical and economic barrier to farming. Trees had to be removed before crops could be planted, but in addition many people were unwilling to commit money and labor to farming when faster and easier money could be earned working in the logging camps. This changed when the pinery was replaced by the cutover. Between 1900 and 1940 the number of farms and the amount of improved farmland in the Lake Superior region tripled. Growth slowed during the agricultural depression of the 1920s but picked up again during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the movement of the unemployed “back to the land” exceeded the loss of farms to foreclosure. By the early 1900s the Homestead Act was no longer a significant factor in encouraging farming, as most of the land was privately owned. Instead there was the campaign to farm the cutover. Lumber companies promoted farming so that they could sell land that they no longer needed. Land companies looked for profits on their speculative investments. Community boosters continued to promote farming as they always had, perhaps with greater urgency now that income from lumber was disappearing. Officials, politicians, and scientists promoted farming as the necessary and proper way to redeem the ravaged cutover lands. Promoters targeted immigrants especially, and they came along with other hopeful farmers attracted by the relatively low cost of land. Potatoes were an easy and popular cash crop for cutover farmers. Raising poultry and selling eggs was another common and reliable source of cash. More established farmers typically focused on dairy farming.³⁷

As logging declined in the Chequamegon region, farming joined fishing as the foundation of the local economy. Logging did not end all at once, of course. Hardwood and hemlock logging continued after pine was depleted, especially in the Apostle Islands where these trees were abundant. Logging camps remained an important outlet for farm produce through the 1920s. Frank Clark, the Schroeder Lumber Company’s Ashland manager, told the *Bayfield County Press* that “there is no place on earth where such good potatoes grow as on the islands of the Apostle group and the shores of Chequamegon bay.”³⁸ Clark stated that the company used “great quantities” of potatoes in its camps and purchased them from farms on the islands or on the mainland near the water as much as possible. Meanwhile, the campaign to farm the cutover was waged enthusiastically in Bayfield and Ashland counties. When the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey conducted a statewide survey of soils and agricultural conditions, its report on the Bayfield area described the success of fruit farms near Bayfield and dairy farms near Ashland, the latter with “magnificent crops of clover, timothy, alfalfa, and pasture

³⁶ Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 34–35, 44–45; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 26–27; manuscript schedule for the 1895 Wisconsin census of population, Bayfield Township, Bayfield County; “Herman Johnson.”

³⁷ Alanen, “Historical Information,” 6, 25–26; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*; Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier*, 156–60.

³⁸ “Islands Producers of Great Potatoes,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 16, 1917.

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grasses.”³⁹ In 1905 the *Bayfield County Press* wrote with typical cutover rhetoric: “The cut-over pine lands of Bayfield are just coming into the market for agriculture, dairying, and stock raising, although such a statement if made a few years ago would have been laughed at. The soil is a rich, red, sandy loam, the climate the best, the rainfall just right for profitable farming. . . . The experienced Bayfield county farmer will tell you that he would rather have an eight acre timber farm than a 100 acre prairie farm.”⁴⁰ Such claims may have been exaggerated but they were not baseless. The Bayfield Peninsula was one of the great agriculture success stories of the cutover, and for fruit growing it had no equal within the cutover. Lake Superior creates a moderate climate on the Bayfield Peninsula that is more conducive to fruit growing than farther inland. Because of the lake, the growing season is longer, winters are milder, and summers are cooler. Relatively even temperatures prevent late spring and early autumn frosts, while the late arrival of spring inhibits fruit from blossoming until the danger of frost has passed. Promoters were quick to advertise the advantages of the “Frost Proof Fruit District” encompassing the Bayfield Peninsula and Apostle Islands. The climate offered marketing advantages as well, because fruit from the Bayfield district matured two to three weeks later than fruit grown elsewhere, thus arriving in a “bare” market and commanding a higher price. Soils on the Bayfield Peninsula were also well suited for fruit growing.⁴¹

Bayfield’s twentieth-century fruit growers traced their beginnings to Roswell Pendergast and his nursery on Michigan Island in the early 1870s. Apples were grown commercially on the Bayfield Peninsula during the 1870s, but strawberries were the first fruit crop to be grown on a large scale for the commercial market, beginning in 1883 when the railroad reached Bayfield. The newspaper apparently did not exaggerate when it reported that Samuel Mahan’s Basswood Island strawberries measured five and three-fourths inches in circumference—by the early 1900s Bayfield was famous for its large berries. Harvey Nourse, one of Bayfield’s leading fruit farmers, told attendees at the Wisconsin Horticultural Society winter meeting in 1910 that he had grown strawberries measuring seven inches in circumference. That year 100 acres of strawberries were planted on the Bayfield Peninsula. By then cherries and apples had joined strawberries as Bayfield’s leading fruit crops, and for that credit was due to lumberman William Knight. As the forests were depleted, Knight, like other area lumbermen, found himself owner of hundreds of acres of cutover land. But where other lumbermen tried to sell their lands,

³⁹ Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 30–31.

⁴⁰ *Bayfield County Press*, November 10, 1905.

⁴¹ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 3–4; Cortney A. Cain, “The Development of Apple Horticulture in Wisconsin, 1850s-1950s: Case Studies of Bayfield, Crawford, and Door Counties,” (master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2006), 169–174; “Life of William Knight”; *Squaw Bay, Bayfield Peninsula, Wisconsin* (Eau Claire, WI: Squaw Bay Realty Company, [ca. 1913]), 12–21; J. M. Black, “Commercial Fruit Growing in Bayfield—Past, Present and Future,” in *Annual Report of the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society for the Year 1915*, ed. F. Cranfield (Madison: Cantwell Printing Company, 1915), 80–81, online at *University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, The State of Wisconsin Collection*, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=article&did=WI.WSHS1915.BLACKFUTURE&isize=M>.

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Knight planted his, first with potatoes, then with fruit trees.⁴² Knight told the audience at a Wisconsin Horticultural Society meeting: “All I claimed to be skilled in was in cutting down trees, now I am going to get skilled in growing some.”⁴³ In 1906 Knight’s apple orchard consisted of two thousand trees. Every year he planted more trees; in 1908 he had 30 acres of apple trees and he planned to plant 10 more acres in the spring. By 1910 Knight’s apple orchard was the largest in the state of Wisconsin, and it produced abundantly. By 1912 Knight had planted more than six thousand apiece of apple and cherry trees—altogether at least 120 acres of these and other fruits. Knight not only set an example that was followed by other farmers, he worked tirelessly to promote and assist fruit growing on the Bayfield Peninsula. In 1909 Knight was the first president of the Bayfield Peninsula Horticultural Society, established to undertake experimental plantings and educational work. With 150 members in 1912, the society was the largest of its kind in the state. In 1910 Knight and others organized the Bayfield Peninsula Fruit Association to market fruit and other farm products cooperatively. As the association demonstrated its effectiveness at shipping and marketing, membership grew from sixty growers in 1910 to two hundred growers in 1921. Knight was involved in the creation of the Bayfield Fruit Land Company, incorporated in 1911 to sell cutover lands and improve them for fruit growing. Other land companies active in the area included the Frenzel Land Company and Carver, Quayle & Nourse.⁴⁴

The University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture aided agriculture and horticulture in the Chequamegon region by conducting research and educational activities. In 1905 the college’s agricultural experiment station planted two trial orchards, one near the Salmo Fish Hatchery and the other on Madeline Island. Two years later the college began a series of educational meetings with farmers in Bayfield and Ashland counties. By 1911 the college had established a permanent agricultural experiment station at Ashland Junction, at the base of the Bayfield Peninsula near the Ashland County border. The College of Agriculture, William Knight, and the various private agencies proved to be effective in promoting farming on the Bayfield Peninsula. In 1910 Knight reported that cleared land could not be bought at any price. Experts recommended dynamite to remove the stumps that slowed the process of land clearing. In 1911 the Bayfield Peninsula Fruit Association shipped forty thousand dollars worth of

⁴² While the big lumber companies put large areas of cutover land up for sale, a number of the smaller, local logging operators followed Knight’s example by taking up farming and becoming involved in local farm organizations.

⁴³ Quoted in “Life of William Knight.”

⁴⁴ “Life of William Knight”; Black, “Commercial Fruit Growing,” 79, 81; Cain, “Apple Horticulture,” 167–69, 172, 176–77, 182, 189–90, 193, 197–200; “Historic Sites of Bayfield County,” 5–6; Harvey Nourse, “Big Bayfield Berries,” in *Annual Report of the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society for the Year 1910*, ed. F. Cranefield (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1910), 59–62, online at *University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, The State of Wisconsin Collection*, <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=article&did=W1.WSHS1910.NOURSEBIG&isize=M>; William Knight, “Report from Bayfield,” in *Annual Report of the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society for the Year 1910*, 226–27, online at <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=article&did=W1.WSHS1910.KNIGHTREPORT&isize=M>; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 182; *Squaw Bay*, 12–21; Henry P. Peterson, “Bayfield Prosperity Outrivals That of Other Towns,” *Superior Telegram*, August 13–14, 1921; “Carver, Quayle & Nourse,” *Bayfield County Press*, February 2, 1906.

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fruit. Ten years later the association typically shipped one hundred thousand dollars worth of fruit a year. Fruit farmers raised dairy cows also, and for many more farmers dairy farming was primary. Throughout Wisconsin cooperative dairies collected cream from farmers and manufactured and sold butter; there were several such dairies in Bayfield and Ashland counties. The Bayfield Peninsula Fruit Association helped to organize the Bayfield Creamery Association, which built a creamery near the Fruit Association warehouse in Bayfield in 1916. In June the editor of the *Bayfield County Press* bought the creamery's first pound of butter.⁴⁵

In 1921 Bayfield's farm economy took another step forward with the opening of the Bayfield Canning Company. In the beginning the cannery processed a variety of vegetables and fruits, especially surplus and lesser quality apples; later in its history production was limited to green and wax beans. This auspicious start to the decade was not borne out, however, as the nationwide agricultural depression reduced prices for farm products and exposed the marginal nature of cutover farming. Public policy makers lost faith in the vision of the cutover as an agricultural land of plenty and began emphasizing reforestation. Problems continued during the Great Depression, as evidenced by the closure of the Bayfield Creamery for a year in 1934–1935. In an effort to boost the fruit market, Bayfield held an apple festival in 1926 and instituted an annual strawberry festival in 1931. While the purpose of these festivals was to promote and sell fruit, they also show a growing orientation towards tourism. The 1939 annual report of Bayfield County's agricultural agent reveals a farm economy that was well established but not robust. Dairy farmers were beginning to recover from a period of drought and low prices, and strawberry prices were approaching normal. The average Bayfield County farm had twenty-two acres under cultivation—too little for economic security—and the agent used two new land clearing tractors to help clear land on farms that were “well located.” The state had classified 40 percent of Bayfield County's lands as forestry lands and 27 percent as agricultural lands. The agency's farm programs were designed to assist existing farmers, not to attract new ones, and the agent's responsibilities included administering designated county forests. The agent wrote in his report that forestry and agriculture needed to be developed simultaneously, and noted that recreational land use was increasing.⁴⁶

The campaign to farm the cutover extended to the Apostle Islands. When Schroeder finished logging Stockton Island in 1920 the *Bayfield County Press* wrote: “If the 11,000 acres on the island were divided up into eighty acre plats it could support 180 farms. Grass and clover grows luxuriantly there and the soil is productive enough to

⁴⁵ Cain, “Apple Horticulture,” 180–81, 184–89, 197; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 31–33; “Historic Sites of Bayfield County,” 10; *Bayfield County Historical Happenings* 24 (April 2003); Knight, “Report from Bayfield,” 226–27; Peterson, “Bayfield Prosperity”; *Squaw Bay*, 19; Sheree L. Peterson, “Bovines & Butterfat: The Story of the Bayfield Creamery,” *Bayfield Courier* 44 (February 2001), 2–4; Peterson, “Bayfield Prosperity.”

⁴⁶ Peterson, “Bayfield Prosperity”; Cain, “Apple Horticulture,” 200–203; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 115–79; Peterson, “Bovines & Butterfat,” 4–5; “Annual Report of the Bayfield County Agricultural Agent, Washburn, Wisconsin, 1939,” online at *University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, The State of Wisconsin Collection*, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=header&id=WI.BayfiCoAA39&isize=M>.

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support all of Ashland county with produce.”⁴⁷ Despite reports that three thousand acres on Stockton Island were put up for sale, the only cultivated land on the island was in the gardens of the fish camps. Schemes to develop farms on cutover lands met with little success in the islands. In August 1905 the *Bayfield County Press* reported a rumor that Outer Island had been sold to a Kansas City man who planned to transform the island into a fruit farm. About the same time Carver, Quayle & Nourse Real Estate Company of Bayfield sold Otter Island—popularly known as Hardwood Island—to a group of investors that included N. E. Carver, Harvey Nourse, and many of the same men who had purchased Bayfield Peninsula farms from the company. The investors formed the Apostle Island Park Association to develop Otter Island (which they renamed Park Island) into a park, sheep ranch, dairy farm, orchard, and summer resort. The association still owned most of the island in 1917, but there is no evidence of any of these developments. In 1909 Carver, Quayle & Nourse purchased Rocky Island from the heirs of Henry Rice and sold it a few weeks later to the Frenzel Land Company of St. Paul. In 1910 the Frenzel Land Company purchased land on Manitou Island and by 1917 it owned several large parcels on Basswood Island in addition to all of Rocky and Manitou islands. However it was fishermen, not farmers, who purchased land from the Frenzel Land Company.⁴⁸

One scheme that produced some results, albeit short term, began in 1909 when the Minneapolis-based Lake Superior Land & Development Company purchased Hermit Island. The company converted Cedar Bark Cottage into a resort hotel and divided most of the island into ten-acre tracts that it advertised in Minneapolis and St. Paul as suitable for summer homes and small fruit farms. The *Bayfield County Press* occasionally reported the sale of Hermit Island tracts, but the only family known to have lived on the island is the Bruder family from Minneapolis. The Bruders purchased a ten-acre tract on the eastern end of the island, not far from Cedar Bark Cottage. Grace Bruder arrived in 1914 with her two sons, sixteen-year-old Garland and eleven-year-old Hector. The three built a house and outbuildings and planted an apple orchard. Husband and father Theodore Bruder continued to work in Minneapolis, paying occasional visits to the island. Because the farm was located on top of a sandstone bluff, the Bruders used a ladder to climb to the farm from the boat landing. They built a sweep well—a long pole with a bucket on the end—to obtain water from the lake. The Bruders were still working their Hermit Island farm in 1920 but by 1930 the farm was abandoned. Field survey in 1981 identified an orchard with sixteen apple trees, remains of five buildings, drainage ditches, and plow lines at the Bruder farm site.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “This Winter Ends the Presque Isle Operations,” *Bayfield County Press*, February 27, 1920.

⁴⁸ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 134–35; “Outer Island Sold,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 18, 1905; “Carver, Quayle & Nourse”; “Apostle Island Company Formed,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 8, 1905; “Hold Meeting Here,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 22, 1905; *Map of Ashland County*, 1917; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 26, 28, 63–64; Johnson, “Manitou Island Fishing Camp,” 5–6, 9.

⁴⁹ “Wilson Island Sold,” *Bayfield County Press*, July 2, 1909; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 21–22; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 28–31; manuscript schedule for the 1920 federal census of population, La Pointe Township.

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Among the Apostle Islands, farming was practiced most extensively and successfully on Madeline Island, where any farmers attracted by cutover farming promotion joined an established community with an economy already based in part on farming. When the *Bayfield County Press* pondered the future of cutover Stockton Island it suggested Madeline Island as a model: “After the lumber was exhausted farms grew up and all along the western shore especially, a very prosperous farming group has grown up, and Stockton may eventually do the same.”⁵⁰ Some of Madeline Island’s well known lumbermen such as R. J. Russell and Olaf G. Anderson became Madeline Island’s well known farmers. By 1905 Russell had cleared two hundred of his two thousand acres and was growing wheat, oats, vegetables, and fruit and breeding Guernsey cattle and Poland China pigs. Olaf Dahlin, who proved up his Madeline Island homestead in 1901, worked in Russell’s logging camp when he first came to the island. Because most of the island was already in private hands by the 1890s, Dahlin claimed 119 acres of forested land on the north end near the Ojibwe fishing reserve. Dahlin’s farm and the farms of his married children became the nucleus of a community of fishermen-farmers on the north end, distinct from the village of La Pointe as evidenced by its separate schoolhouse. In the early 1900s the men found winter work in the logging camps that were still active in that area. Although their farms were primarily for subsistence, at times they produced a surplus that they sold along with their fish.⁵¹

Fur traders and missionaries brought the Chequamegon region’s first dairy cows and fruit trees to Madeline Island. Subsistence farmers continued small scale fruit and dairy farming, but by the early 1900s there were also fruit and dairy farmers producing on a larger scale for the commercial market. The University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture’s trial orchard on Madeline Island demonstrated the productivity of fruit trees on the island. The trial orchard contained four and one-half acres of apple, plum, and cherry trees, and was located on land owned by Edward P. Salmon, owner of the Old Mission Inn on the grounds of the former Protestant mission. It was perhaps no coincidence that the cherry orchard planted by Protestant missionaries was still extant and providing cherries for pies that delighted Old Mission guests. John Bissell, one of the island’s leading fruit and dairy farmers, came in 1896 to run a logging camp and purchased a farm that spring; by 1905 he had cleared one hundred acres of land. Ten years later Bissell built a new, three thousand dollar “sanitary” barn with cement floors and up-to-date ventilation for his herd of sixteen dairy cows. Bissell was one of several Madeline Island dairy farmers who joined the Bayfield Creamery Association. As tourism grew on Madeline Island it created an increasingly important market for farmers, who sold produce and dairy products to summer residents and to the Old Mission Inn. In 1929 summer resident Hunter Gary purchased the 160-acre farm that had been homesteaded by Jonas Victor Hultquist. Gary hired the Tom Anderson family as tenant farmers. During the summers the Andersons operated a delivery service that supplied milk, cream, cream cheese, eggs, poultry, and meat, mostly to summer residents. In the winter the Andersons shipped cream to a creamery in Ashland. By 1930 Gary’s farm was

⁵⁰ “Winter Ends Presque Isle Operations.”

⁵¹ Bernstein and Canaday, “Madeline Island Survey,” 19–20; Goc, *On the Rock*, 41, 163–68, 342; “Bayfield Fruit and Farm Lands,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 10, 1905; *Map of Ashland County*, 1917; Olaf Dahlin homestead application and related documents.

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one of three on the island that were owned by summer residents and operated by tenants. At that time about half of Madeline Island's population—122 of 235 people—lived on farms. The typical farm had half a dozen cows, a team of horses, some pigs and chickens, a vegetable garden, fruit trees, and fields in hay, oats, and sometimes potatoes. Some of the farmers sold milk to summer residents and residents of La Pointe and shipped cream to creameries in Bayfield, Ashland, Washburn, Duluth, and Superior. Two farms on the north end marketed strawberries and raspberries.⁵²

Sand Island was the only other of the Apostle Islands with a year-round community, and as on Madeline Island farming and fishing were the primary supports of the island economy. In the early 1900s, Frank Shaw, Louis Moe, Peter Hansen, Fred Hansen, Herman Johnson, and Harold Dahl were all fishermen who farmed to help support and feed their families.⁵³ Swen Bergstrom, the island's only Swede, was a carpenter who helped construct many of the buildings on the island. In 1909 Nils Biorn came to Sand Island and filed a homestead claim, but the Biorn family left the island in 1911. After Biorn died in an accident the claim was proved up by his widow, although it is not clear whether she returned to the island. Later one of the Biorn sons, Henry, returned to the island to work as a fisherman. Burt Hill purchased Frank Shaw's farm in 1910, and the Hills moved to the island full time. Edwin Bonde, who arrived on the island about 1909, helped to boost the island's population with his development scheme. A Norwegian immigrant from St. Paul, Bonde purchased land at East Bay, divided the lakeshore properties into small lots for summer homes, and assembled larger inland parcels for farming. Bonde planted apple trees and ginseng to make the properties more appealing and advertised them for sale to the Norwegian communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Magnus and Anna Palm, Bonde's sister and brother-in-law, came to the island in 1910, but rather than buy land from Bonde, the Palms homesteaded forty-one acres. Magnus Palm proved up his homestead, but he did relatively little farming or fishing, instead supporting his family mostly by working for other Sand Island residents. The Palm family left the island in 1924 after Anna developed tuberculosis.⁵⁴ Thorvald Dahl, no relation to Harold Dahl, later bought the Palm farm. Dahl, who came to the island from North Dakota and was called "T. Dahl" by his neighbors, made a living repairing things and growing berries. After about five years the Dahls moved to Madeline Island.⁵⁵

Magnus Palm's brothers—Will, Carl, and Ludwig—purchased lots from Bonde, mostly for summer homes though at times some of them wintered on the island. Two additional Norwegian families—the Loftfields and the Norings—purchased farms from

⁵² Cain, "Apple Horticulture," 184–86; Ross, *La Pointe*, 160, 166; "Bayfield Fruit and Farm Lands"; J. B. Chapple, "John Bissell, Island's Oldest Man, 50 Years Wed, Has Had Vivid, Interesting Life," *Ashland Daily Press*, July 16, 1945; Peterson, "Bovines & Butterfat," 4–5; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 245–46; Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 20–21; Goc, *On the Rock*, 40.

⁵³ See chapter five for additional discussion of the Sand Island community.

⁵⁴ Fred Hansen noted the Palms' departure in his diary, October 2, 1924. The previous day he helped move their piano.

⁵⁵ *Bayfield County Press*, July 9, 1909; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 27–31; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 37–40; Dahl, *Diary*; Melvin Dahl interview; manuscript schedule for the 1930 federal census of population, Bayfield Township, Bayfield County, Wisconsin State Archives.

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Bonde. Sigurd Loftfield, with his wife Katherine-Maria (German born) and his parents Olaf and Jonette purchased ten acres inland and three lakeshore lots that they named Solheim, Norse for “Sun Home.” The Loftfields arrived in 1909 or 1910 and developed a fruit and dairy farm. Sigurd Loftfield worked off the island quite a bit—at logging camps, on ore carriers, and at other jobs in locations as far away as Panama. Olaf and Jonette stayed on Sand Island when Sigurd and Katherine-Maria moved with their children to Detroit in 1923. Even after Olaf died, Jonette remained, operating a convenience store through the 1930s. Bertrand and Birgit Noring purchased twenty inland acres from Bonde and moved to Sand Island from Minneapolis in 1912. Whereas most of the Norwegian families on Sand Island had come from Norwegian fishing villages, the Norings came from a farming region of Norway. As this background suggests, Bert Noring was a farmer first, and his farm became one of the largest and most successful on the island. At times Noring went out fishing with Fred Hansen or the others, and his son Bill became a full time commercial fisherman, eventually building his own house on the lakeshore.⁵⁶

Sand Island’s fishermen-farmers each had farms of about ten to fifteen acres where they planted potatoes and other vegetables, fruit trees, berries, and hay and oats for their animals. Each family kept at least one milk cow, one or two steers, some pigs and chickens, and sometimes sheep. The farms were primarily for subsistence, and they provided ample food for Sand Island families. In the fall they’d slaughter pigs and cattle for winter meat, and all of the farms had root cellars. Louis Moe’s farm was larger, with about five acres of fruit trees, potatoes, vegetables, strawberries, and raspberries, and another twenty acres in hay. Moe needed the additional pasture to feed the six to eight cows that he kept to supply milk for his logging crew as well as his family. At twenty-three acres, the Loftfield farm was comparable in size to the Moe farm.⁵⁷ The Norings and the Hills had the largest farms with the most extensive farming operations. The Norings added twenty acres of pasture land to the twenty acres that they originally purchased from Bonde. The Shaw-Hill farm was about thirty-two acres, and Burt Hill also made hay on adjacent properties owned by summer residents. The Loftfields, Norings, and Hills sent cream, vegetables, and fruit to market in Bayfield, and the other farmers did the same when they had a surplus. Booth’s and other fish collecting boats took farm products to Bayfield along with fish, thus playing an essential role in making market farming viable on the island. Sand Island strawberries maintained the excellent reputation they acquired under Frank Shaw. The Loftfields, Norings, Hills, and T-Dahl all raised strawberries for the market. Bill Noring recalled: “They raised berries out there [Sand Island] that Bayfield couldn’t compete with at that time. They were that nice. . . . You put them on the *Turner*, they had an engine box over the engine and it stood up about that high. It was the only place you could put them because the other places were for fish, and that vibrated so, you can imagine what the berries looked like when they got

⁵⁶ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 28–31; Dahl, *Diary*; Melvin Dahl interview; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 282, 288–89, 300; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” map insert showing Solheim.

⁵⁷ According to the 1925 Bayfield County tax rolls, the Loftfields owned several parcels totaling twenty-three acres and were paying taxes on an additional forty acres. Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 277.

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to Bayfield.”⁵⁸ Noring’s description illustrates one of the problems with marketing strawberries—they were easily crushed. Strawberries and raspberries were also prone to disease. Eventually the farmers stopped raising berries for sale in Bayfield. But on Sand Island, as on Madeline Island, a more local market developed as the number of summer residents increased. This was a particularly important outlet for the Hills, who lived on the southern end of the island where there were more summer residents than at East Bay.⁵⁹

The Shaw-Hill farm was part of the environment and economy that shaped all of the Sand Island farms, yet it was distinguished from the farms at East Bay by its location, longevity, and the ethnicity of its owners. When the century began, fisherman Frank Shaw had already established a thriving farm at Shaw Point, regularly selling produce in Bayfield. In 1902 Shaw added sheep to his farming enterprise, purchasing them from R. J. Russell on Madeline Island. Shaw purchased more sheep from Russell in 1904, but the following year the Shaws moved to Bayfield for the winter, ending their sheep raising endeavor. For the next few years Frank Shaw made hay during his summers on the island and was so successful that he purchased a new hay press in 1909. The following year, however, Shaw sold the farm to Burt Hill and in 1914 Shaw died. For several years Hill followed Shaw’s precedent, both fishing and farming until 1919 when he stopped fishing to pursue farming full time. Hill expanded the farm, building an ice house that served all the residents near Shaw Point and probably the granary or store house adjoining the root cellar built by Shaw. These buildings are south of the farmhouse, near the dock. To the north of the house, Hill built a large barn with a hay mow and accommodations for six to eight cows, a bull, several young cattle, two horses, and chickens. The pig pen was to the west of the barn near the apple and cherry orchard, and the vegetable and flower gardens were in the center of the complex formed by house, barn, and orchard. North of the farmstead was a large hay field, bordered on the west by a row of apple trees extending along the road, and more apple trees on the east. The Hills obtained a significant portion of their income from sales of milk, cream, eggs, butter, meat, poultry, and produce to summer residents. Brothers Clyde and Herman Jensch, who spent summers at the Campbell cottage, recalled the richness of the Hills’ cream; Clyde described it as so thick you could stand on it. Boarders were also an important source of income for the Hills, who preserved large quantities of food to feed them. Burt Hill butchered and smoked meat, and Anna Mae Hill canned anything that was growing, according to Herman Jensch—berries, apples, sauerkraut, chickens, and more. Jensch described Anna Mae Hill in her kitchen at canning time: “I can see her, rushing around—hotter than hell and that range going just like a steam engine. And she trotted all the time—quicker than a cat.” As for the root cellar, Jensch described it as a food addict’s dream come true, and others confirmed this picture of abundance.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Bill Noring interview.

⁵⁹ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 26, 29–30, 34–35; Melvin Dahl interview; Bill Noring interview; Dahl, *Diary*; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 275–84, 296; Doenitz and Rettinghouse, *Map of Bayfield County; Plat Book of Bayfield County* (Rockford, IL: W. W. Hixson, [1925]); Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 29–35.

⁶⁰ Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 25–26, 32, 34–36; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 15, 18–20, 29–35; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 276–77, 296–97, 301–302; Herman Jensch interview; Clyde and Dorothy Jensch, interview by Arnold Alanen, July 12, 1988, tape recording with written

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Bert and Birgit Noring developed a farm that was comparable in size and scope to the Hills' farm. When the Norings came to Sand Island in 1912 they lived with Edwin Bonde while they built a house and began clearing their land, which was thickly wooded with hemlock and cedar. Bill Noring said that you couldn't see each other twenty feet away for the hemlock. They used the logs that they cut to build their house and other farm buildings. The Norings hired Swen Bergstrom to help them build their house of vertical logs, like many other buildings on the island. Lighthouse keeper Emmanuel Luick laid the brick chimney. Over the next several years the Norings built a barn, wood shed, root cellar with attached ice house, and smokehouse, all of logs set either vertically or horizontally (figure 23). In 1932 or 1933 the Norings hired Clyde Nyland to build a new, larger barn and they moved the old barn to near the root cellar to serve as a chicken coop.⁶¹ Near their house they transplanted spruce trees to form a windbreak, and planted ornamental white birch and cedar trees and lilac and rose bushes. When they began farming the Norings borrowed a plow and team of oxen from Fred Hansen and Herman Johnson. Later they had their own horse in addition to sheep, chickens, pigs, some young cattle, and five or six Holstein cows. For the animals they grew hay, oats, and forage crops such as timothy and clover. Their vegetable garden included potatoes, rutabagas, carrots, onions, cabbage, and sweet corn. They grew apple and cherry trees and strawberries. The Norings sold produce and dairy products in Bayfield and to men on the fish collecting boats. They also butchered their own meat and canned large quantities of fruit and vegetables for home consumption—Bill Noring remembered having four to five hundred quarts of canned goods in the house.⁶²

Farming required cooperation between and within families in order to succeed. The fishermen were out in their boats most days during the growing season, often leaving farm work for evenings and bad weather. In his diary Fred Hansen describes plowing; discing; hauling manure; planting; hoeing; digging potatoes; and pulling carrots, cabbage, and rutabagas. He built and maintained farm buildings and fences and tore old ones down. When his sons were old enough they helped with the harvest. Except for hoeing potatoes, Hansen does not mention weeding the garden or milking the cows—this was traditionally women's work on midwestern farms, and other accounts indicate that women and children performed these tasks on Sand Island. Burt Hill, however, tended and milked his dairy cows himself. Neighbors helped each other with all aspects of farm work, and those who owned horses and oxen loaned them to those who had none (figure 24). East Bay farmers maintained a communal pasture for their cattle at Swallow Point. Bert Noring served as veterinarian and butcher for the community, although Fred Hansen butchered his own animals—one hog that he slaughtered in December 1915 weighed 383 pounds! Haying was a labor intensive activity that often required extra hands in order to get the hay in while the weather was dry (figure 25). The Jensch boys helped with haying

transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Elizabeth (Andersen) Hulings, interview by Arnold Alanen, October 27, 1988, tape recording with written transcript, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files

⁶¹ Nyland was the Swedish carpenter from Ashland who built Fred Hansen's new house a few years later.

⁶² Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 29–30; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 39–44; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 277–78; Bill Noring interview.

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Figure 23. Bert and Birgit Noring building their root cellar, ca. 1913. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Noring Family Collection.

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Figure 24. Fred Hansen's ox "Bill," ca. 1920. Dahl house in background. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Alma Hansen Dahl Collection.

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Figure 25. Haying on Sand Island. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Elvis Moe Collection.

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on the Hill farm, and Herman Jensch remembered Fred Hansen coming over in the evenings, after fishing and eating supper: “He’d walk all the way from East Bay, come in his rubber boots. . . . We’d probably bring in about three wagon loads of hay, put it up in the barn, and between the wagon loads we’d get out a bottle of good old home brew.”⁶³ Much of the time neighbors helped each other informally, but sometimes the exchange of goods and services was more formal. Burt Hill recorded in his account book that Elvis Moe paid for twenty dozen eggs with five hours of cutting hay, five pounds of beef, five gallons of gasoline, and six and one-half pounds of fish. Cooperation and sharing were evident not only in work but in all aspects of community life, whether it was a boat ride to the mainland, a card game, a gift of fish, or organizing a telephone company. People had to work together and help each other in order to sustain their way of life.⁶⁴

The Sand Island community began to diminish in the 1920s as residents moved away or died. As the population declined, homes were occupied seasonally by fishermen or summer residents, or simply abandoned. Today most of these homes are gone; buildings remain only at the Shaw-Hill and Fred Hansen farms. Still standing at the Shaw-Hill farm, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, are the two dwellings, workshop, root cellar (the roof has caved in), ice house, granary, and smokehouse. The barn was struck by lightning and burned down in 1944. At the Fred Hansen farm there are several domestic and fishing-related buildings, but the sturdy log root cellar speaks directly to the Hansens’ farming activity.⁶⁵ Although no buildings are standing at the Noring farm, a field survey in 1981 located ruins of several of them along with fences and artifacts such as a logging chain and harness. Near the house ruins were spruce trees, lilacs, roses, and a birch tree; two rows of apple trees were slightly farther away. In 2004 the farm site was more overgrown and building ruins had deteriorated further, but many features were still identifiable. At some other farms there are clearings, and trees, shrubs, and flowers planted by the vanished inhabitants are visible. But where clearings have not been maintained the sites are difficult or impossible to identify. Field boundaries and drainage ditches remain evident at the Shaw-Hill farm, and there are still rows of apple trees in the three orchards planted by Burt Hill.⁶⁶

At the north end of Sand Island, Emmanuel Luick and his wife continued to tend their vegetable garden until the lighthouse was automated and the Luicks left the island in 1921. Luick also made hay, often assisted by Louis Moe and other islanders, whom he assisted in return. One fall, however, this arrangement went awry when Louis Moe’s cattle came over and ruined Luick’s haystack. Apart from Sand and Madeline islands, the most sustained farming activity in the islands took place at the light stations. None of the lighthouses had mechanical refrigeration so vegetable gardens were essential. The lighthouse families ordered seeds from the Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward

⁶³ Herman Jensch interview.

⁶⁴ Dahl, *Diary*; Bill Noring interview; Herman Jensch interview; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 279–81, 289–92; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 29; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 34.

⁶⁵ In 1978 Hansen’s barn and henhouse were still standing in a clearing north of the house; if these are not extant today the ruins should still be visible. See chapter five for more on the Hansen property.

⁶⁶ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 300–304; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 29–30, 32–35; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 36; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, “Early Agricultural Development,” 41–44.

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catalogs. Walter Parker, who lived on Devils Island when his father was assistant keeper during the 1910s, remembered a garden by the boathouse with lettuce, peas, onions, and other vegetables, but no potatoes because the soil was too thin. Even on Long Island with its sandy ground, Joseph Sexton planted a garden with potatoes and kept a cow and chickens—thirty-seven in 1912. When the receding shoreline threatened his garden he built cribs to protect it. At the Michigan Island light station, Elizabeth Lane was renowned for her flower garden, but the Lanes also raised vegetables and berries and added cherry trees to the remnant of Roswell Pendergast's orchard.⁶⁷

Except for the Luicks on Sand Island, the Lanes were the only lighthouse keepers with neighbors who farmed—the Jacob and Emma Jacobson family who had a homestead on Michigan Island in the 1910s. Although they proved their homestead in 1915, the Jacobsons left Michigan Island for a farm on Basswood Island. In 1917 Emma Jacobson owned a parcel on the east shore of Basswood Island. Several informants recalled the Jacobson farm at that location. In 1915 the Jacobsons were already acquainted with Basswood Island residents Elisha and Lloyd Brigham—who witnessed their homestead claim—and probably already owned the Basswood Island property. The Jacobsons wintered in Bayfield, undoubtedly so that their children could go to school. In 1946 E. B. Jacobson owned the east shore farm as well as a parcel on the west shore containing the Dock site (47AS68), where according to oral history there was a farm at some point before 1920.⁶⁸

Elisha K. Brigham operated the most substantial farm on Basswood Island, on what had once been the West McCloud farm. By 1898 Robert Pew had sold the farm that he purchased from McCloud; William Dalrymple owned the western part and the Rudd estate (Charles Rudd died in 1897) owned the eastern part. Meanwhile, Brigham was logging on Basswood Island as early as 1893. In April 1902, as Brigham was completing the logging season, a fire burned the Basswood Island buildings in which his logging outfit was stored, destroying the outfit completely. Brigham's sons, Earnest and Earl, both lost clothes, books, and guns that were in the buildings, suggesting that this was a more permanent residence than the usual logging camp. The *Bayfield County Press* reported that the fire had been set and spread unintentionally to the buildings, suggesting that the land was being cleared for farming. In addition, the *Press* identified the buildings as being located on the Rudd property. But since the Rudd estate owned several parcels on Basswood including the Rudd farm site on the west side of the island and the McCloud farm site in the northeast quadrant, the location of this incident may remain a mystery. By 1917 Minnie Brigham, Elisha's wife, and Lloyd Brigham, one of

⁶⁷ Luick, "Sand Island Log"; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 280; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 14; Parker, interview by Lidfors; "La Pointe Log"; Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 19–20; "Michigan Island Log."

⁶⁸ In 1917 the Dock site property was owned by logging contractor J. H. Deniston. E. B. Jacobson may have been Emma Jacobson; in 1946 she would have been in her seventies. Alanen, "Early Agriculture," 29–30; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 18, 25; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 20; manuscript schedule for the 1910 federal census of population, La Pointe Township, Ashland County, Wisconsin State Archives; *Map of Ashland County, 1917*; *Plat Book, Ashland County, Wisconsin* (Rockford, IL: Rockford Map Publishers, 1946); Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 79–82.

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his sons, owned the eastern part of the McCloud farm.⁶⁹ It seems likely that the Brighams purchased the property in the early 1900s, as Elisha Brigham sold his logging outfit and timber rights in 1908, and there is no mention of him logging after the 1908–1909 season. When Brigham died, the *Bayfield County Press* wrote that after he gave up logging he devoted practically all of his attention to his farm. The Brighams cleared about twenty-five acres and planted an orchard of several hundred apple and cherry trees. Their livestock included horses, dairy cows, pigs, and chickens. The Brigham children did not continue to farm after their father died in 1923, but they retained ownership of the farm until 1967. Archaeological surveys of the McCloud-Brigham farm (47AS67) conducted in the early 1980s revealed an undisturbed site with seven structures, a well, a drainage system, and stone walls. Much of the orchard was extant, and domestic plants included rhubarb, asparagus, currants, raspberries, and daffodils. Numerous artifacts at the site ranged from condensed milk cans to a McCormick hay mower. Overall the site has the potential to reveal considerable information about farming in the Apostle Islands.⁷⁰

Farming nationwide began a prolonged decline in the 1940s. The decline was more precipitous within the cutover, where farms were often marginal and government policy favored reforestation. Bayfield's farms and orchards produced a bumper crop in 1945. German prisoners of war were brought in from Fort Sheridan, Illinois, to help harvest four hundred tons of beans for the Bayfield Canning Company and one hundred thousand bushels of apples for the Bayfield Fruit Growers Co-operative.⁷¹ One of the farms where the POWs worked was owned by Rocky Island fisherman Martin Erickson. During the 1950s, however, the decline of farming was evident in the closure of both the Bayfield Canning Company and the Bayfield Creamery. Fruit growing has been sustained in part by catering to tourists, seen most famously in the Bayfield Apple Festival. Today, farming occupies a more important place in the Chequamegon region than in many parts of the cutover. In 2002 Ashland County had about 9 percent of its land in farms, and Bayfield County had about 12 percent in farms. In the Lake Superior region overall, less than 2 percent of the land was in farms.⁷²

⁶⁹ In 1917 Brigham family members owned additional land further south on Basswood Island, but the evidence is clear that the Brigham farm was on the former McCloud farm.

⁷⁰ Archaeologist Patrick Martin, who surveyed the McCloud-Brigham farm site in 1981, evaluated it as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 18, 21–23; *Map of Ashland County*, 1917; *Plat Book, Ashland County, Wisconsin* (Rockford, IL: Rockford Map Publishers, 1946); *Bayfield County Press*, April 12, 1902; Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites," 13–14; "Pioneer Resident Died Thursday," *Bayfield County Press*, February 16, 1923; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 19–20; Martin, "Two Sites in Apostle Islands," 7–10, 39–40.

⁷¹ The Bayfield Peninsula Fruit Association was reorganized as a co-operative in 1945. Cain, "Apple Horticulture," 201.

⁷² Alanen, "Historical Information," 24–28; "Prisoners of War Save Bayfield Crop," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 29, 1945; Cain, "Apple Horticulture," 201–202; Peterson, "Bovines & Butterfat," 5; USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture, Wisconsin State and County Profiles," <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/profiles/wi>; Center for Water and the Environment, Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota-Duluth, "Lake Superior Landuse and Bathymetry," 1999, *The Lake Superior Decision Support Project*, <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/lsgis/landuse.htm>.

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In the Apostle Islands farming has disappeared completely. Island farmers faced obstacles in addition to those faced by farmers elsewhere in the cutover. The costs of transporting materials and supplies to the islands and transporting farm products from the islands to market put island farmers at a disadvantage compared to farmers on the mainland. Sand Island farmers paid freight charges to the fish collecting boats that transported their products. Burt Hill later regretted his decision to give up fishing for full time farming, citing the high cost of getting produce to market. Accessibility was a problem for anyone who tried to live on the islands. It was a greater problem for the outer islands and those lacking good harbors, but none of the islands were accessible during the periods of winter freeze up and spring break up. Some of the islands were too small to support more than one or two farms, and the chances of success diminished without neighbors for assistance and support. But even on Sand Island, where individuals had the support of a community and fishing provided income for most families, the limitations and difficulties of island life eventually brought the community to an end. The last year-round residents left Sand Island in 1944. On Madeline Island, farming declined dramatically during the 1940s. The number of farms on the island decreased from thirty-two in 1935 to eighteen in 1945 to twelve in 1950. An increase in average farm size did not compensate for the decrease in numbers. By 1960 only one working farm remained on the island. Long-time resident Hamilton Nelson Ross observed that the increase in the deer population devastated the island's vegetable gardens, and undoubtedly that was a factor. But more important than deer was a fundamental change in the way of life on the island. As Madeline Island's farms decreased so did its year round population, while the summer population grew into the thousands, and tourism replaced farming and fishing as the basis of the island's economy.⁷³

⁷³ Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 36–40; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 277; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 15; Goc, *On the Rock*, 43, 58, 63, 74, 85; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 248; Ross, *La Pointe*, 166.

CHAPTER NINE TOURISM AND RECREATION

When logging, quarrying, and fishing were in their heyday, tourism played a secondary role in the economy and life of the Apostle Islands. But tourism and recreation grew as the extractive industries declined and ultimately came to define how people use the islands. Tourists began touring Lake Superior and visiting the Apostle Islands in the mid-nineteenth century, especially after the opening of the Sault locks in 1855 made the lake more accessible. When railroad lines were completed to Ashland in 1877 and Bayfield in 1883 it became even easier to travel to the Chequamegon region. The Hotel Chequamegon in Ashland and Island View Hotel in Bayfield provided comfortable accommodations for tourists, who enjoyed boat excursions, fishing trips, and other recreational activities. On Sand Island, Samuel Fifield opened Camp Stella in 1886, making a new type of island experience available to visitors. Edward P. Salmon opened the popular Old Mission Inn on Madeline Island in 1898, but the rows of private cottages begun on Madeline in that decade proved to be the wave of the future. By the 1920s automobiles were rapidly becoming the dominant mode of travel to the Chequamegon region, and ferry boats took autos to Madeline Island. More people built summer homes on the islands, mostly on Madeline and Sand islands. Trolling and deer hunting attracted outdoor enthusiasts who filled the rental cabins at the Trollers Home on South Twin Island and the Rocky Island Air Haven. A movement to create a national park in the Apostle Islands failed in the 1930s, but recreational use of the islands continued to increase, the forests regenerated, and more land came into county and state government ownership. The effort to create a national park was revived in the 1960s, and in 1970 Congress created Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

The First Tourists

Beginning with the expedition led by Governor Lewis Cass in 1820, American scientists and Indian agents traveled through the Lake Superior region to explore and report on its geology, flora, fauna, and inhabitants. They traveled by canoe and barge and invariably stopped at Madeline Island where they camped out (on the island or mainland) or lodged with fur traders or—after 1831—with missionaries. Although they were traveling on government business, the explorers displayed the romantic sensibility of the time in their response to the natural beauty and scenery of the Lake Superior region. When Thomas McKenney, head of the Indian Office, sailed through the Apostle Islands in 1826 he wrote: “The horizon is marked with a beautiful green circle, made by the hills all around us, that rise gradually from the lake, some a hundred, and some two hundred feet, whilst their sides are richly enameled with every variety of the green, from its palest to its deepest hue.”¹ While he was on Madeline Island McKenney expressed an interest in visiting the site of the Jesuit mission on the island, but he was told that there was nothing left to see. This was an early instance of a historic site as a sightseeing attraction, and also a record of a historical fallacy that lingered until recently—the belief that the

¹ McKenney, *Tour to the Lakes*, 34.

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seventeenth century Jesuit mission was on Madeline Island. It appears that the site of the French fort at Grant's Point was believed to be the Jesuit mission site.²

Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft led expeditions along the south shore of Lake Superior in 1831 and 1832. Geologist Douglass Houghton, who traveled with Schoolcraft in 1832, led his own expedition in 1840. Bela Hubbard, a member of Houghton's expedition party, described Ojibwe dances that he and his colleagues witnessed on Madeline Island. Others came to La Pointe to witness the annual treaty payments, when thousands of Ojibwe gathered and performed ceremonies. Such descriptions show that by the 1840s the Ojibwe were already an attraction for sightseers. In 1847 geologist David D. Owen began a survey of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota for the federal government. Owen wrote of La Pointe: "It is not only one of the most commanding and accessible situations on Lake Superior, but it presents one of the most agreeable and picturesque lake scenes the tourist can well imagine. . . . As a site for a town, and especially as a place of resort for health and pleasure, La Pointe offers advantages beyond any portion of the mainland in Wisconsin. . . . Its gently sloping sandy beach insures a secure footing to the bather."³ By the time Owen's work was completed and published in 1852, the U.S. General Land Office had begun platting and selling land in the Chequamegon region, and tourists had begun to visit La Pointe.⁴

The first tourists were wealthy people with money and leisure time to travel exclusively for pleasure. The first American resorts were health resorts—mineral water spas and seashore resorts where these wealthy tourists went to drink and bathe in mineral waters, breathe healthy ocean breezes, and socialize. In the early nineteenth century, Americans developed a new, romantic appreciation for nature and wilderness, and tourists began traveling in search of scenic beauty. The American Grand Tour encompassed places such as the Catskill Mountains, Lake George, and—preeminent among them all—Niagara Falls. As the population migrated westward away from the East Coast, the healthy breezes of the lakeshore were substituted for those of the seashore, and tourists traveled to see the natural wonders of the Great Lakes. In the 1830s tourists began to visit Mackinac Island where they marveled at the island's wild beauty, visited its historic sites, and were fascinated by the métis and the Ojibwe. Madeline Island also had wild beauty, historic sites, métis, and Ojibwe, though on a more modest scale than Mackinac Island. In addition, Mackinac Island had the great advantage of accessibility—travelers from the south and east did not have to traverse the Sault rapids to reach it. When Charles Lanman visited Mackinac Island in 1846 he wrote:

² Troy Henderson, *Lake Superior Country: 19th Century Travel and Tourism* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2002); Peterson, "Village in the Shade"; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 35–40; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 73–82; McKenney, *Tour to the Lakes*, 261–66; Allen, Journal; Sproat to Thompson, 20 September 1838.

³ Quoted in Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 50.

⁴ Peterson, "Village in the Shade"; Wisconsin Historical Society, "Dictionary of Wisconsin History," Owen, David Dale, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=1469&term_type_id=1&term_type_text=People&letter=O.

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“What can I say about this island that will be new, since ‘every body’ now pays it a brief visit while journeying in the West?”⁵

Charles Lanman’s itinerary set him apart, however. He began his journey in St. Louis, traveled up the Mississippi River by steamboat and canoe, and then circled Lake Superior by canoe before running the Sault rapids to travel to Mackinac Island. Lanman was a landscape painter and writer, which put him in the company of many artists and writers who traveled to the wilderness to experience and portray the sublimity of nature, but Lanman was one of the first American artists to tour Lake Superior. Lanman traversed Lake Superior with a company of about fifty voyageurs and Ojibwe bound for La Pointe for the annuity payment. Commanded by fur trader Allen Morrison, the company traveled in ten birch bark canoes, camping out when they stopped for the night, eating mostly boiled pork and dough. Lanman enjoyed this mode of experiencing the wilderness, citing protracted rainstorms and mosquitoes as the only miseries he encountered. He was inspired by the beauty of the Apostle Islands, although inexplicably he described them as three in number. Lanman wrote that the islands “stud the water most charmingly. There is a dreamy summer beauty about them, which made me almost sigh to dwell along their peaceful and solitary shores for ever.” Lanman’s visit to Madeline Island was tainted, however, by what he observed at the annuity payment—starving Indians, many of whom had traveled long distances to receive a meager sum of money and trade goods, and who immediately paid their money to the American Fur Company for pork and flour sold at extortionate prices. Lanman wrote that his reflections on the fate of the Indian tribes prevented him from enjoying his visit to the island.⁶

By the time Lanman made his canoe voyage on Lake Superior there were two steamers on the lake—the propeller *Independence* and the side-wheeler *Julia Palmer*, both portaged around the Sault rapids. Several more steamers were brought over before the Sault canal opened in 1855. Sometimes the steamers offered tours of Lake Superior, with visits to such points of interest as Pictured Rocks, Isle Royale, and La Pointe. In 1851 F. R. Stebbins took a steamboat tour of Lake Superior with his wife and two daughters. This was not an ordinary tourist jaunt—the touring party included Michigan Governor John S. Barry and other political dignitaries. As the steamboat approached La Pointe, many of the inhabitants came to the landing; the arrival of a steamboat at Madeline Island was still an uncommon event. Stebbins was more interested in the Ojibwe than in any of the other sights on Madeline Island; when they disembarked he headed directly for their “wigwams.” He described the reaction of the touring party as the Ojibwe prepared to perform a dance: “The excitement of the white tourists now became intense. We all knew we were to look upon a genuine war dance—all but the

⁵ Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15–30, 128–30; John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3–11; Henderson, *Lake Superior Country*, 7, 31, 49; Charles Lanman, *A Summer in the Wilderness; Embracing a Canoe Voyage up the Mississippi and around Lake Superior* (New York: D. Appleton & Company; Philadelphia: G. S. Appleton, 1847), 162, online at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lhbum21589\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(DOCID+@lit(lhbum21589))).

⁶ Lanman, *Summer in the Wilderness*, 126, 128, 134–35, 141–44.

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war—not by some mountebank company, but principally by the woods Indians, who so far had refused to be civilized and ‘Christianized’ into doubtful saints, at the Jesuit Mission stations.”⁷ Stebbins went on to describe the dance, performed in front of the Protestant mission, by warriors who wore little other than paint and breech cloths. The ladies of the party fled into the mission house when they first saw the dancers, but they gathered their courage and returned to their front row vantage point. Chief Buffalo watched the dance and afterwards conferred with Governor Barry about the 1842 treaty, not with any satisfaction.⁸

Steamers also made special trips to La Pointe for the annuity payment. This served both those who attended the payment on business (often unscrupulous business) and those who went to view the spectacle. For those who traveled to Lake Superior to experience nature and wilderness, encounters with the Ojibwe furthered their purpose, as Indians were viewed as savages who were a part of nature much like bears and wolves. Just as wilderness became a tourist attraction when it receded in the face of settlement, Indians became a tourist attraction when they were defeated and no longer threatening. Though Charles Lanman was dismayed by the plight of the Ojibwe he encountered on Madeline Island, the excitement that F. R. Stebbins described was the more common reaction. Overall, Madeline Island tourism was still in its infancy in the early 1850s. Far from being a destination, La Pointe was a stop on the Lake Superior tour, and the tours were infrequent. Visitors such as the Stebbins family stopped briefly at La Pointe and then continued on their journey.⁹

Steamboat Tourism

The 1855 opening of the canal and locks at Sault Ste. Marie was a turning point for Lake Superior tourism. As ships passed with relative ease through the locks, all kinds of lake traffic grew significantly, including steamers carrying tourists. Compared to travel on a sailing vessel or by canoe with a private guide, steamboat travel was speedy, convenient, comfortable, and inexpensive. Together with railroads, steamboats revolutionized travel and made vacations more affordable for the growing middle class who, in turn, had more leisure time and money to take vacations. But the railroads did not reach Lake Superior until the 1870s, making lake transportation a key element in the early Lake Superior tourism industry, just as it was in the fishing, lumbering, quarrying, and mining industries. Steamboat tours of Lake Superior grew in popularity, and guidebooks were published to serve both tourists and immigrants. Prolific guidebook author John Disturnell published his first guides to travel on the Great Lakes in 1857. The following year James Ritchie published a guide to Wisconsin and Lake Superior. In 1872 Disturnell published a guidebook for Lake Superior exclusively: *Lake Superior guide, giving a description of all the objects of interest and places of resort on this great*

⁷ Quoted in Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

⁸ Nute, *Lake Superior*, 121; Peter A. Rathbun and Mary Yeater Rathbun, “Special History Study: Historic Tourism and Recreation in the Apostle Islands Archipelago—Draft,” (Springfield, IL and Hollandale, WI: Rathbun Associates for the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, 1987), 66–67; Peterson, “Village in the Shade.”

⁹ Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 66–68; Ross, *La Pointe*, 80, 82, 120.

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inland sea. . . Guidebooks included historical and geographical information about Lake Superior with descriptions of towns and sights of interest such as the Sault canal, copper and iron mines, and—the perennial favorite—Pictured Rocks. Most of the tourists came from the Midwest, particularly from the upper Great Lakes. To accommodate them, hotels opened on Madeline Island and in the new towns on the mainland.¹⁰

Even before the Sault canal opened, towns were established at the western end of Lake Superior in anticipation of the people that the canal would bring and the opportunities it would create. Superior was the first, in 1853, followed by Duluth, Ashland, and lastly Bayfield in 1856. As these towns grew they offered amenities such as hotels, saloons, and entertainment well beyond what was available on Madeline Island. Steamers were increasingly likely to dock at Bayfield or Ashland rather than at La Pointe. Following the treaty of 1854, many of the La Pointe Ojibwe, a popular attraction for tourists, relocated to reservations on the mainland. Tourism played an integral, if secondary, role in Bayfield's economy from its earliest days, and the village became known for its fountains and fish. Newspapers and other boosters promoted the attractions of the Chequamegon region for tourists just as they promoted its advantages for settlers. A typical statement in the *Bayfield Press* read: "No place in the country is blessed with purer atmosphere and water, or a more salubrious and delightful climate than Bayfield. The natural beauty of its surroundings is the theme of admiration for all who visit it, and it is destined to become one of the greatest resorts for the health and pleasure seeker, on the continent."¹¹ Despite the shift of tourist infrastructure to the mainland, the Apostle Islands remained the premier attraction of the Chequamegon region, at the least viewed from the steamer if time did not permit a boat excursion or a visit to La Pointe.¹²

After 1855 most people who traveled to the Chequamegon region came by steamboat. Shortly after the Sault canal opened, steamboat companies began offering regular service between Duluth-Superior and Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo. The boats made at least one stop in the Chequamegon region, initially at La Pointe, but by the 1860s Bayfield had become the primary port in the region. The trip from Chicago or Cleveland to Superior, with stops, took about four days in the 1850s. The steamers carried passengers in upper cabins and freight in cargo holds below the decks. Facilities for passengers included salons, dining rooms, and staterooms for those who could afford private sleeping quarters. When the Sault canal opened in 1855, the richly appointed palace steamers were at their apex in both size and luxury, but only the smallest of these side-wheelers could fit through the Sault locks. Passenger travel declined abruptly following the Panic of 1857, and the palace steamers were withdrawn

¹⁰ Henderson, *Lake Superior Country*, 7–8, 57; Donna R. Braden and Judith E. Endelman, *Americans on Vacation* (Dearborn, MI: Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, 1990), 8–9, 31, 34–36; Aron, *Working at Play*, 3–4, 32–35, 137; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 219; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 66–69, 77; James S. Ritchie, *Wisconsin and its resources* (Philadelphia: Desilver; Chicago, W. B. Keen, 1858), online at <http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;idno=AJA3298>; John Disturnell, *Lake Superior Guide* (Philadelphia: J. Disturnell, 1872), online at [http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;cc=moa;idno=aja3067.0001.001;frm=frameset;view=](http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;cc=moa;idno=aja3067.0001.001;frm=frameset;view=toc)
[toc](#).

¹¹ *Bayfield Press*, June 3, 1871.

¹² Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 217–19; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 69–78.

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from service. When the passenger business recovered after the Civil War, propeller steamers predominated and were more modest in size and appointments. Soon after, railroads began to impact travel to the Chequamegon region; a rail line was completed from St. Paul to Duluth in 1870, and excursion trips took visitors from St. Paul to Duluth by rail and then on to Bayfield by steamer.¹³

Hotels and boardinghouses accommodated tourists who stayed overnight in La Pointe, Bayfield, or Ashland. On Madeline Island, the Madeline House hotel opened in a former American Fur Company warehouse soon after the Sault canal was completed. When the Madeline House opened, La Pointe was still the leading town in the Chequamegon region, and the three story hotel, with room for seventy-five guests, hosted the notables who came to visit the area. John B. Bono came to La Pointe in 1855 and opened a boardinghouse, then moved to Bayfield the following year. Julius Austrian ran a boardinghouse, and Captain John Daniel Angus ran a small hotel or boardinghouse called The Exchange. Another Madeline Island hotel received unfavorable notice from young Eugenia Prince, an early resident of Ashland. Prince met Mrs. Abraham Lincoln in 1868, when the latter was touring Lake Superior, and upon learning that Mrs. Lincoln was en route to visit La Pointe, Prince warned her: “Don’t stay at the Cramer hotel what ever you do; it’s full of knot holes and the men snore something awful.”¹⁴ The warning proved unnecessary, as Mrs. Lincoln was only going for a day trip. In 1869 the Madeline House, along with much of the village of La Pointe, burned in the fire that followed the boiler explosion in R. D. Pike’s shingle mill.¹⁵

In 1857 Edwin Ellis, one of the proprietors of Bay City (later part of Ashland), built a hotel there, but the hotel closed when the town was depopulated during the depression that followed the Panic of 1857. When Ashland was revived in the early 1870s, several boardinghouses and small hotels opened. The Colby House, built by J. M. Davis in 1871, seems to have been the leading hotel; a visitor in 1872 wrote: “Mr. Davis keeps the Colby House, two or three doors east of the *Press* office, and furnishes forth a table that the traveler will appreciate.”¹⁶ But for the most part Ashland was preoccupied with building its railroad and was not oriented toward tourism. In contrast, a little more than a year after the first log cabin was built in Bayfield there were two hotels in the village. The first hotel was the Bayfield Exchange, built by John Bono in 1856. Per the instructions of Henry M. Rice, the Bayfield Land Company began building a hotel in December of that year; the Bayfield House was completed in June 1857. During the 1860s Bono sold the Bayfield Exchange to Captain P. W. Smith, who developed Smith’s Hotel into one of the leading hotels on Lake Superior. After a few years Bono returned to

¹³ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 219–20; Ritchie, *Wisconsin and its resources*, 218; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 70–72; Minnesota Historical Society, “Great Lakes Water Craft”; Katherine C. Grier, *Culture & Comfort People, Parlors, and Upholstery, 1850–1930* (Rochester, NY: Strong Museum, 1988), 38–42; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 141; *Bayfield Press*, June 3, 1871.

¹⁴ Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 223.

¹⁵ Ross, *La Pointe*, 80, 82, 120, 126–27; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 51, 147–48; *Bayfield Mercury*, August 22, 1857; Sheree Peterson, e-mail to author, 6 December 2006; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 221–23.

¹⁶ Quoted in Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 190.

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the hotel business and opened the Fountain House hotel, one of several hotels and boardinghouses in Bayfield in the 1870s.¹⁷

In June 1871 the *Bayfield Press* reported on a visit by a group of gentlemen from St. Paul and Duluth who arrived on the propeller *Arctic* and stayed several days. Despite his boasting, the reporter provides a useful summary of the attractions of the Chequamegon region for tourists. “They come for pleasure and from all reports enjoyed themselves muchly, trout-fishing, boat-riding and ruralizing among the Islands, which at this season affords many attractions. The beautiful scenery and healthy climate of this section surpasses any on Lake Superior, and as a place of resort, Bayfield will soon rank among the most noted watering places of the country.”¹⁸ Lake Superior maintained an excellent reputation for its healthful climate. Several of Bayfield’s early settlers and prominent businessmen came to La Pointe or Bayfield for their health and decided to stay. Elisha Pike came to La Pointe in the summer of 1855 to recover from malaria, purchased a sawmill and land on the mainland, and brought his family to live there that autumn. Boat excursions around the islands were favorite activities for both tourists and residents. Passengers on the lake steamers enjoyed views of the Apostle Islands while their boats were en route, and local boats such as the steam tugs *Minnie V.* and *Eva Wadsworth* made special pleasure excursions. In addition to hauling lumber, sandstone, and a variety of other cargo, in 1870 the *Minnie V.* logged five pleasure trips to Excursion Cave and an estimated fifty “pleasure trips to Ashland Bay and numerous other places of which no account has been kept.”¹⁹ Visitors could also rent rowboats and small sailboats to tour the islands on their own. In addition to the natural beauty of the islands, sights of interest included La Pointe, the lighthouses, and—after 1870—the Basswood Island sandstone quarry.²⁰

As La Pointe diminished in size and importance relative to newer settlements on Lake Superior, its reputation grew as a place of romantic interest—a place of relics and ruins. Mrs. Lincoln’s boat stopped long enough at La Pointe for visits to the Catholic church and Protestant mission. The cemeteries were also favorite stops for tourists. Guidebooks and travel accounts often repeated the (inaccurate) story of the seventeenth-century Jesuit mission on Madeline Island. Mainland attractions included the Red Cliff and Bad River reservations and the village of Bayfield. Although the newspapers were unlikely to reprint unfavorable descriptions of Bayfield, they were not the only ones who found the village charming. Bayfield offered excellent views of the Apostle Islands. A reservoir and water system constructed in 1870 fed the decorative fountains that gave the

¹⁷ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 114–16, 134, 147–48, 152–53, 156, 188–93; *Bayfield Mercury*, August 22, 1857; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 69, 80–81, 83–84; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 217–19; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 204, 293; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 73; Disturnell, *Lake Superior Guide*, 25, 52.

¹⁸ *Bayfield Press*, June 3, 1871.

¹⁹ The report does not give the location of Excursion Cave, but it was a fifty mile round trip from Bayfield. *Bayfield Press*, December 17, 1870.

²⁰ Ritchie, *Wisconsin*, 181, 183; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 83–85; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 133, 149; Sam S. Fifield, “Twenty Years Progress,” *Ashland Daily Press*, December 22, 1890; *Bayfield Press*, August 26, 1871, September 2, 1871; Disturnell, *Lake Superior Guide*, 24–27; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 74–76.

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village the nickname “Fountain City.” A visitor in 1871 wrote that the citizens of Bayfield “take pride in keeping their little city neat and clean. Their gardens are well kept, fountains playing night and day, while many have beautiful brook trout at their base that are tame and feed from the hands of their keepers.” The brook trout in the fountains may have been pets, but those in the rivers and streams that entered Chequamegon Bay were fair game. Sport fishing was another favorite activity for tourists—in the rivers and streams, along the rocky shorelines, and trolling among the islands. Visitors who were not interested in catching fish were still likely to eat them, as whitefish and lake trout were famous delicacies. Delia Whittlesey Chapman who was a young girl in Bayfield in the 1860s and 1870s recalled: “They lingered to eat our white fish and went away to praise it.”²¹

When attorney and politician William F. Vilas toured Lake Superior in 1873 he kept a diary of his trip, offering a glimpse of the travel experience of a wealthy tourist. In Bayfield, Vilas had the advantage of a local connection—his friend John H. Knight met him at the dock when he arrived by steamer on the evening of August 21 and arranged for Vilas to get a good room at Smith’s Hotel. The following day Knight arranged a fishing party. The group started off rock fishing at Houghton Point, but high wind made rock fishing impossible so they sailed to the Sioux River where they found success. They fried and ate the trout that they caught for their midday meal. That night Vilas dined at the Knight residence. Vilas left Bayfield early on the morning of August 23 on the steamer *Cuyahoga*, enjoying the views of the Apostle Islands as the boat headed for Duluth. On board the *Cuyahoga* was Ojibwe Chief Nagonab, with interpreter Benjamin Armstrong, who invited the passengers to a talk in the cabin. The captain undoubtedly arranged for the talk as entertainment for the passengers, but Nagonab took the opportunity to speak not only about his experiences with the white people but also his grievances. The talk was lengthy and Vilas took detailed notes.²²

Railroad Tourism

Apostle Islands tourism entered a new era when the Wisconsin Central Railroad was completed to Ashland in 1877. With a rail connection to Milwaukee and Chicago and the new Hotel Chequamegon, Ashland quickly entered the ranks of Wisconsin’s leading resorts. Ashland’s rail connection put Bayfield at a disadvantage until the Island View Hotel opened and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad was completed to Bayfield in 1883. Railroads made travel to Lake Superior cheaper and faster, not only from inland locations but also from locations such as Milwaukee and Chicago that were already served by lake steamers. Chequamegon Bay and the Apostle Islands became a popular vacation destination for people from Minneapolis and St. Paul. The railroad lines promoted Lake Superior tourism aggressively, and the Chequamegon region was a focal point of these advertising campaigns. Railroads also helped to make

²¹ *Bayfield Press*, August 26, 1871, September 2, 1871; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 223, 281, 293; Ritchie, *Wisconsin*, 260–61; Disturnell, *Lake Superior Guide*, 25; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 213, 218, 220, 222, 229; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 74–77; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 153. Chapman quoted in Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 204.

²² Vilas, “Diary,” August 21–August 23, 1873.

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accessible the inland lakes and forests of the Lake Superior region that could not be reached by lake transportation. At the same time, Americans were becoming more interested in active vacations during which they could camp out, hunt, fish, and experience nature more intimately. Thus began the popularity of the Northwoods vacation, which gained momentum as logging declined. Nevertheless, the appeal of the lakeshore and islands remained strong. By the 1890s Mackinac Island was the premier resort of the Midwest. On Lake Superior, Isle Royale rivaled the Apostle Islands as a tourist destination.²³

The period of railroad dominance in Lake Superior tourism continued through the 1910s, augmented by steamboat travel but not seriously challenged by automobile travel until after World War I. During this time tourism in the Chequamegon region grew and evolved. More visitors came and they stayed longer. As tourism assumed a larger role in the local economy, more businesses offered goods and services for tourists. In a brochure published by the Island View Hotel Company, Edward Valley and D. J. Etsell advertised outfits for hunting and fishing parties; Robert McCamis advertised wines, liquors, and cigars for camping parties; Fred Fischer proclaimed his store headquarters for tourists' supplies; Henry Wachsmuth advertised goods for the resort trade; and others offered resort properties for sale. The big hotels in Bayfield and Ashland played an important role in attracting tourists in the late nineteenth century, but in the twentieth century they became outmoded as people preferred to build private island homes. Island resorts, cottages, and attractions became more prominent in the region's tourism, attracting a middle- to upper-class clientele.²⁴

Following the completion of the Wisconsin Central Railroad to Ashland in 1877 and the Omaha line to Bayfield in 1883, two additional railroad lines were built to Ashland. An extension of the Northern Pacific Railroad from Superior to Ashland was completed in December 1884, giving Ashland an important connection to the twin ports at the head of the lake. Six months later Ashland became the western terminus of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railroad. Railroad fares were reduced as competition between lines increased and the railroads operated more efficiently. Railroads offered the fastest and most reliable mode of transportation, but train travel was not always particularly comfortable. Trains were often crowded, dirty, hot, and lacking in amenities. For those who could afford a more leisurely trip, travel by lake steamer offered greater comfort and—for a price—even luxury. The steamers did not compete with the railroads. On the contrary, railroad companies owned the steamboat lines until 1915, when anti-trust laws forced the railroads to divest. Timetables were coordinated so that tourists could travel by rail to port cities and transfer conveniently for their Lake

²³ Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 67, 81; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 159–60, 194–96; Henderson, *Lake Superior Country*, 8, 89; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 220, 222–229; Aron, *Working at Play*, 49–54; Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 34–36; McMahon and Karamanski, "Time and the River," 225–26; Timothy Bawden, "Escape to Wisconsin: The Early Resort Landscape of Northern Wisconsin, 1890–1920," *Wisconsin Preservation News* 22 (July/August 1998): 1.

²⁴ Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 34–36; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 292; "Tourist Season Now Open," *Bayfield County Press*, July 8, 1910; "Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield, Wisconsin, the Most Famous Health and Pleasure Resort in Northern Wisconsin* (Bayfield: Bayfield County Press, 1890), 11–12.

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Superior cruise. Harvey Nourse recalled during the late 1800s when as many as ten passenger boats docked at Bayfield in a day, and someone from the Island View Hotel met every boat.²⁵

During the 1870s and 1880s the leading steamboat line on the Buffalo to Duluth route was the Erie and Western Transportation Company, owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad and popularly known as the Anchor Line. In 1871 the Anchor Line put into service the “triplets” *China*, *Japan*, and *India*, each about 220 feet long and offering a level of comfort not available on the Great Lakes since the palace steamers of the 1850s. On each ship was a carpeted main cabin for first class passengers with a men’s smoking room at one end and ladies’ cabin with grand piano at the opposite. The triplets also carried immigrants in steerage and package freight. The construction of larger locks on the Sault canal in 1881 and 1896 made possible the passage of larger ships into Lake Superior, and the market for passenger travel on the lakes made feasible steamers that were larger, faster, and truly luxurious. Railroad magnate James J. Hill had formed the Northern Steamship Company to carry freight on the Great Lakes. In 1892 he commissioned two steamships exclusively for passenger travel—the *North West* was launched in January 1894 and the *North Land* was launched a year later. The twin steamers were each 385 feet long, carried a crew of 147, and had the capacity for more than 400 passengers. The staircases between the passenger decks were built of white mahogany, the lounges were furnished in leather and brass, and electric lights were used throughout. For the next twenty years the *North West* and the *North Land* set the standard for luxury travel on the Great Lakes.²⁶

New hotels were also larger and more luxurious than their predecessors. In Ashland, the Wisconsin Central Railroad built the Hotel Chequamegon, which opened in August 1877. The three story, L-shaped hotel was built overlooking Lake Superior and was encircled by a veranda to maximize the views and lake breezes. Immediately filled to overflowing, Hotel Chequamegon was soon enlarged; by 1891 the veranda had grown from four hundred to one thousand feet and the hotel could accommodate four hundred guests. Hotel Chequamegon had electricity and running water and its facilities included a grand parlor, reading rooms, billiard parlor, bowling alley, croquet, and lawn tennis. With the opening of the Hotel Chequamegon, Bayfield businessmen began to agitate for something equivalent. Samuel Vaughn began building a hotel in 1879, but work was suspended, and the Island View Hotel did not open until July 1883. The three-story hotel with verandas was built on a hillside in Bayfield and offered appointments and services

²⁵ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 199–200; Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 34–36; Aron, *Working at Play*, 51–54; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 79–80; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 144; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 292–93.

²⁶ Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 141–45; Minnesota Historical Society, “History of Minnesota’s Lake Superior,” adapted from the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Minnesota’s Lake Superior Shipwrecks, A.D. 1650–1945,” by Patrick Labadie, Brina J. Agranat and Scott Anfinson, <http://www.mnhs.org/places/nationalregister/shipwrecks/mpdf/mpdf1.html>; Walter Lewis, “Ship of the Month No. 54 City of Ottawa,” *The Scanner* 8 (February 1976), newsletter of the Toronto Marine Historical Society, online at <http://www.hhpl.on.ca/GreatLakes/Documents/Scanner/08/05/default.asp?ID=c006>; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 136.

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similar to those at Hotel Chequamegon on a smaller scale. But the view of Lake Superior and the Apostle Islands from the Island View Hotel was unequalled. After it burned in 1887, the Island View Hotel was rebuilt with accommodations for more than two hundred guests. There were a number of other hotels and boardinghouses in Bayfield, Ashland, and Washburn, but the only other hotel that compared to the Island View or Hotel Chequamegon was the Knight Hotel, opened in Ashland in January 1892. The hotel occupied the third and fourth floors of the sandstone Knight Block, with additional sleeping rooms in the tower. Whereas the rambling, wooden Hotel Chequamegon on the lakefront was a resort hotel, the Knight Hotel was a city hotel, with elevators, a music hall, wine room, and billiard room. Modern conveniences, fireproof construction, and excellent cuisine were selling points for the hotel. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* credited Knight Hotel manager John C. Mann as the creator of planked whitefish. Others placed the origin of this famous Lake Superior specialty in the kitchen of the Hotel Chequamegon.²⁷

As the twentieth century opened, there was already a trend in tourist accommodations away from village and city hotels toward resorts and cottages in more rustic surroundings. The Hotel Chequamegon declined and finally closed in 1913, at which point part of the building was relocated and the remainder demolished. The Island View Hotel operated intermittently after 1896, until 1918 when it too was partly relocated and partly demolished. A local newspaper editor wrote of the hotel's passing: "There was a time when this hotel was popular with the hay fever sufferers and others who sought the cool breezes of Lake Superior during the summer months, but in late years the cottage in the shady nook by the beach comes nearer to the outer's ideal as a place of rest and hundreds of them can now be found on Madeline and numerous other islands as well as on the mainland shores."²⁸ Cottages by inland lakes were popular as well as cottages by the beach. But the Apostle Islands had always been the premier tourist attraction in the region, and increasingly people were staying on the islands for days or weeks, at resorts or in private summer homes. This development was predicated on reasonably reliable transportation from the mainland to the islands. Boat service became more regular when steam tugs began providing local transportation on Chequamegon Bay in the 1870s. By the 1880s the steam tugs that fish dealers used to collect fish from island fish camps provided regular service to many of the islands, carrying passengers and a variety of cargo in addition to fish. Some of the ferry boats between Ashland and Bayfield stopped at La Pointe; by the mid-1890s the steamer *Plowboy* was making two trips daily between Bayfield and Ashland with stops at La Pointe on each leg. In 1901 Captain John Pasque—former Michigan Island lighthouse keeper and homesteader—began offering ferry service between Bayfield and La Pointe on the gasoline-powered

²⁷ Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 160, 169, 195–96; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 69, 83–84; Ross, *La Pointe*, 131, 143; "Ashland and Its Famous Hotel," *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1891–92*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 219–21; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 81–83, 92; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 292–93; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield*, 3; "Bayfield's Island View Hotel," *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1893*, reprinted in Benton, *Golden Days*; "Washburn Through the Years"; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 205–207; "Hotels of Wisconsin," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 26, 1898, online facsimile at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=724>.

²⁸ *Bayfield County Press*, October 27, 1916.

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launch *Eva*. Pasque made four runs daily, timed to connect with the trains from Bayfield. Given the growing volume of business from summer residents and tourists on Madeline Island, Pasque soon had competition. Jack Hadlund began operating a Bayfield to La Pointe motorboat ferry in 1902, followed by Charles Russell in 1903. In addition, Colonel Frederick M. Woods offered free boat trips to Bayfield on his motorboat *Nebraska* to anyone waiting at the La Pointe dock at 9:00 a.m. (daily except Sunday.)²⁹

The first resort in the Apostle Islands was Camp Stella on Sand Island, opened by Samuel S. Fifield in 1886. Sam Fifield looms large in the history of the Chequamegon region. Born in Maine in 1839, Fifield came to the St. Croix River Valley in 1854 when the lumber industry was growing rapidly there. In 1860, at the age of twenty-one, he entered the newspaper business as an apprentice and by 1862 was publishing his own paper, the *Polk County Press*. Fifield became enamored of the Chequamegon region when he visited there in 1870, and in partnership with his brother Hank he purchased the defunct *Bayfield Press*. At first Hank edited the *Bayfield Press* while Sam remained with the *Polk County Press*, but in 1872 both the *Bayfield Press* and Sam Fifield moved to Ashland, where the newspaper became the *Ashland Press*. In 1873 Sam bought out Hank, and in 1877 he resumed publication of the *Bayfield Press*, publishing both newspapers until he sold the *Bayfield Press* in 1880.³⁰ In 1888 he sold the *Ashland Press* and was soon after appointed postmaster in Ashland, a position he held until he retired in 1914. Fifield invested in Ashland real estate and businesses and had an active career in local and state politics, serving in the state assembly and state senate prior to his election as lieutenant governor in 1881. At times he served as acting governor, and from this he retained the title governor for the remainder of his life. Fifield had many friends, and through his newspaper and political connections he was a tireless booster for the Chequamegon region.³¹

Sam Fifield and his wife Stella began to camp on Sand Island in 1881. The camping trips became an annual event, and the Fifields were joined by family and friends. In 1886 they camped on the property that became Camp Stella, and soon after they purchased the property and began developing a permanent camp. While the Fifields sought relief on Sand Island from Stella's hay fever, their camping vacations were part of a popular trend. Camping vacations offered a more intimate and active experience of nature, an experience that many people found more relaxing, enjoyable, and restorative than a sightseeing or resort vacation. Organized, communal camps such as Camp Stella offered a more civilized camping experience, with hired help to do the work and other guests to share in recreational activities. In the early years, guests at Camp Stella were relatives of the Fifields and friends from Ashland. By the 1890s out-of-state guests were common, many of them members of Sam Fifield's broad circle of friends and acquaintances, including newspapermen and politicians. It was an affluent, often

²⁹ Ross, *La Pointe*, 159, 162–63; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 205; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 91, 104; "Wrecking the Famous Old Hostelry Here," *Bayfield County Press*, May 3, 1918; Bawden, "Escape to Wisconsin," 1–2; Peterson, "Camp Stella," 35–36, 40–42; "Historic Sites of Bayfield County," 13–14; "Ferry Boat History," *Madeline Island Ferry Line*, website, <http://www.madferry.com/ferryhistory.html>; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 82.

³⁰ In December 1882 the name was changed to *Bayfield County Press*.

³¹ Peterson, "Camp Stella," 4–33, 56.

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prominent, clientele. In 1908 the *Bayfield County Press* (formerly the *Bayfield Press*) reported that Camp Stella was filled to capacity with at least forty guests at every meal.³² Any guests who were not friends of the congenial Fifielands when they arrived were friends when they left.³³

The landscape at Camp Stella was rustic but manicured, with gardens and lawns and a main street lined with tents and gas street lamps (figure 26). In addition to the tents there were several log cottages, a dining room, kitchen, a dance hall, and a pavilion cantilevered over a ravine. In 1906 Sam Fifiel built the Sevona Memorial Cottage out of hatch covers from the *Sevona* shipwreck. Burt Hill recalled that Fifiel paid island residents one dollar for each hatch cover that they found. There was a substantial dock at the camp, and in 1911 the Fifielands installed a pumping system to supply water for camp use and fire protection. Staff at Camp Stella included a cook and cook staff, groundskeeper, laundress, and boat pilot and crew. A French Canadian logger named Oliver LaTour came to work at Camp Stella about 1903. Known as Uncle Oliver, LaTour worked as year-round caretaker for the camp as long as it was open and then some. Sam Fifiel's yacht *Stella* was used for transportation from the mainland and for pleasure cruises around the islands.³⁴ Fifiel viewed Camp Stella as a "miniature paradise" and "meeting place of kindred souls." Life at Camp Stella is best described in Fifiel's own words:

The mellow August days and the glorious moonlit nights, are enjoyed in full measure by the camp's people. They hunt the pheasant in the forests of the mainland, and try their skill with rod and reel in the neighboring streams, the home of the speckled trout. They sail and row in the charming bays and bathe in the limpid waters; while with camp games, good books, and restful hammocks, they pleasantly pass the time, at rest from the treadmill and trials of life. At night, the blazing camp fire adds to the comfort and novelty, around which, with song and story, many a happy hour is whiled away.³⁵

The death of Stella Fifiel in July 1913 marked the beginning of the end of Camp Stella. Though staff and guests missed Stella, Sam Fifiel opened for one more season in 1914, prior to his own death in February 1915. Subsequently Camp Stella was operated briefly as a camping resort. The property passed through a number of owners until it was purchased by the Andersen family in 1935. Today Camp Stella retains much of its historic character and is an important representative of early tourism in the Apostle Islands. Several of the gas street lamps and original Camp Stella buildings are extant, including the dining room and Sevona Memorial Cottage, which is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.³⁶

³² Some came out on cruise boats for dinner only.

³³ Peterson, "Camp Stella," 34–39, 52–58; Aron, *Working at Play*, 156–58, 164–68; Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 60–63.

³⁴ Peterson, "Camp Stella," 37–73, 113–14; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 272; Herman Jensch interview; Hill, "Diary."

³⁵ Sam S. Fifiel, "The Story of 'The Apostles' or a Cruise with the Stella," *Picturesque Wisconsin* 1 (July 1899).

³⁶ Peterson, "Camp Stella," 96–98, 104, 110, 118–20.

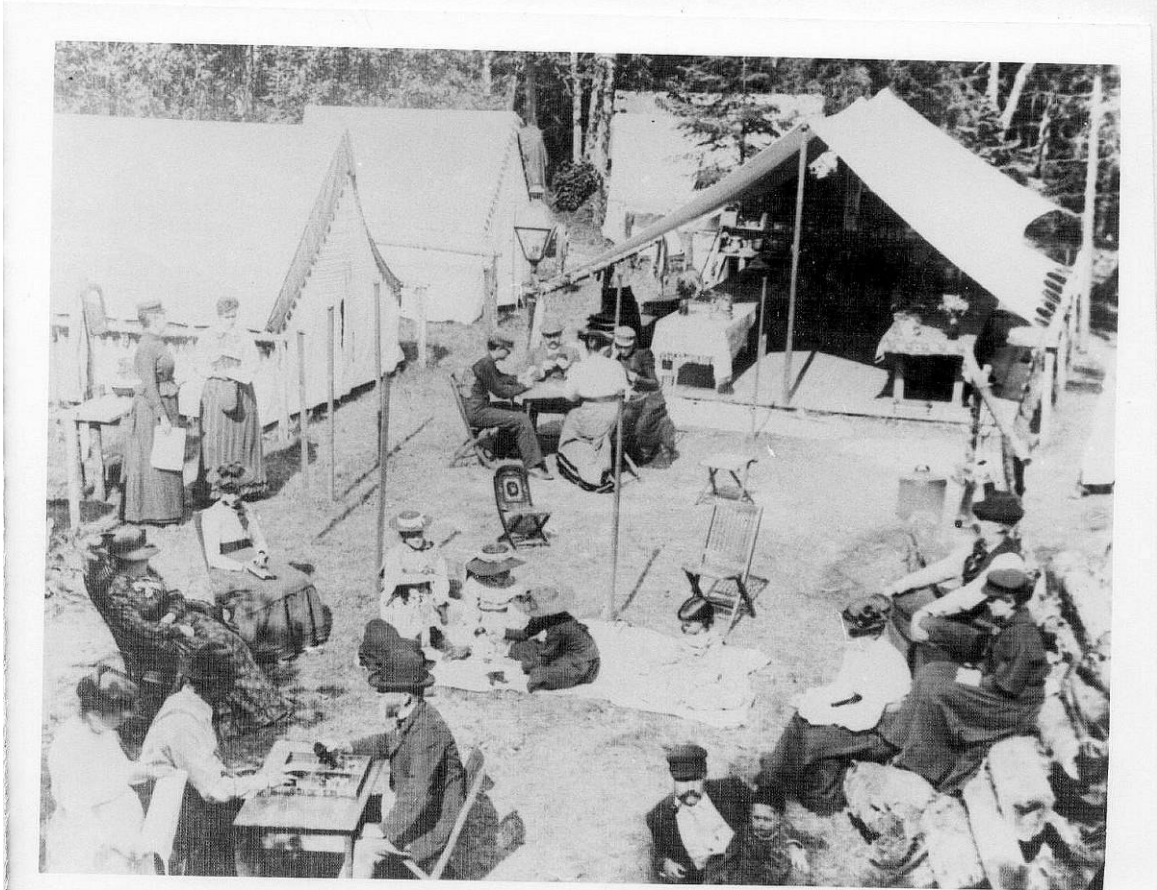


Figure 26. Camp Stella, Sand Island. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Bayfield Heritage Association.

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Camp Stella was a catalyst for summer homes on Sand Island. Samuel and Phebe Campbell built one of the first in 1909. Born in Pennsylvania, Sam Campbell moved to the St. Croix River Valley after the Civil War, where like many others he became friends with Sam Fifield. Campbell and his family settled in Hudson, Wisconsin, and Campbell worked several private and government jobs before he was appointed head of the La Pointe Indian agency in 1898. At that time the agency was headquartered in the Federal Building in Ashland, the same building that housed the U.S. Post Office where Sam Fifield was postmaster. The two men renewed their friendship, and Sam and Phebe Campbell were frequent guests at Camp Stella until 1909, when the Campbells purchased property adjoining Camp Stella to the west and built a cottage there. The large, square, one and one-half story cottage had a porch on each side. Water was dipped from the lake using a windlass. The Campbells, their children, and their grandchildren spent much of their summers at their Sand Island cottage, particularly their daughter and son-in-law, Daisy and Charles Jensch, and their six children. The cottage became a place of refuge for Sam Campbell as he struggled with debt and became embroiled in controversy regarding his management of Ojibwe money. Today, the cottage retains its historic character.³⁷

The West Bay Club on Sand Island also had its genesis at Camp Stella. St. Paul architect Charles W. Buechner visited Camp Stella and returned home with the desire to build a retreat on Sand Island. Buechner convinced five of his friends—Henry W. Orth, Robert Wellisch, Fred Romer, G. A. Yocom, and Frank Eha—to join him in this venture. The men formed the West Bay Club, purchased 104 acres on the west side of the island, and began building their retreat in 1912. Completed in 1913, the West Bay Club lodge was an unusual building for its time and place, reflecting the talents of the men who built it. Buechner, Orth, and Yocom were architects; they designed the building. The prominent and prolific architectural firm of Buechner and Orth (1902–1924) designed many public buildings in the upper Midwest, including twenty-two courthouses that have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Romer was a general contractor, Eha was a heating and plumbing contractor, and Wellisch was a boiler manufacturer. Their West Bay Club was a one and one-half story rustic frame lodge with peeled log siding, cedar trim, and a screened porch on three sides. Most of the first floor was taken up by the large communal living and dining area, with kitchen and pantry in the rear. Upstairs were six bedrooms for the adults; the children slept in the living area or on the porch. At each end of the porch was a bathroom, one for men and one for women, with hot and cold running water, bathtubs, and flush toilets. Each bedroom had a sink with hot and cold running water, and the kitchen was equipped with the same plus a gas stove and refrigerator that ran on bottled gas. The lodge had both gas and electric lights, the latter powered by a gas generator. Despite these modern conveniences, the most reliable lighting in the lodge was by candle or kerosene lamp, and a privy in back supplemented the flush toilets.³⁸

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 74–94, 105–108, 112, 118–19, 121–22.

³⁸ Gerstenberger, “Island Hideaway,” 50–53; Cortney Cain, “West Bay Club-Sand Island-Bayfield County,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination—Draft (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, n.d.).

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The West Bay Club served as a vacation retreat for the six families for ten years. Saturday night dances at the club were a social highlight for all of the Sand Island residents. In 1922 Frank Eha bought out the other families, and the club became a summer home for the Eha family exclusively. As it stands today, the exterior of the West Bay Club lodge has changed little since 1913. In addition to the lodge, the property includes an ice house, utility shed, privy, bridge, and the ruins of a water tower, all dating to the early years of the club. An unusual example of an early twentieth-century vacation retreat, the West Bay Club is also significant for its association with the prominent architectural firm of Buechner and Orth.³⁹

Sam Fifield and Camp Stella brought attention to Sand Island as a summer resort, leading others to build summer homes on the island. In July 1909 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that East Bay on Sand Island was being “invaded” by people in search of summer homes, and that Dr. C. F. Disen and Mr. Oble of Minneapolis were building cottages there. Mr. Oble was actually Christian Aabel, and both he and Disen—a professor—and their families summered on Sand Island for many years. It was also about 1909 when Edwin Bonde came to the island and began buying and selling real estate. Bonde divided land that he owned along East Bay into small lots for summer homes. Although few of these lots were actually developed, the Palm brothers—Will; Carl; and Ludwig, an insurance salesman—purchased lots from Bonde for homes that they used primarily in summer.⁴⁰

For the transient tourists who stayed at Camp Stella, the island’s working residents were part of the entertainment. Sightseeing included visits to the lighthouse and watching the fishermen pull up their nets. Those who had summer homes, however, developed at least a business relationship with Sand Island’s fishermen-farmers. Burt Hill and others provided transportation to and from the island and maintained the summer residents’ homes—mowing grass, cutting wood, hauling ice. Much of the fresh food consumed at the summer cottages came from island farms. In return for these goods and services the summer residents provided an important flow of cash into the Sand Island economy. The social round of parties and dances included both summer and year-round residents. Burt Hill described a social get together one August day in 1919: “There was a picnic on the lawn at Jensch’s and that evening a dance in the pavilion at Camp Stella which was attended by the island people and a party of friends of Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Boutin who were camping out at Camp Stella. Mrs. Jensch and Mr. Noring carried off all honors as they tripped the light fantastic.”⁴¹ The Hills had the greatest involvement with the summer residents, and there were lasting friendships between them.⁴²

³⁹ In 2002 the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office determined the West Bay Club to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Gerstenberger, “Island Hideaway,” 51–53; Cain, “West Bay Club,” 1–3, 6–8.

⁴⁰ Peterson, “Camp Stella,” 78–79; *Bayfield County Press*, July 2, 1909; Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 27, 31; Melvin Dahl interview; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 295–96.

⁴¹ Hill, “Diary,” August 21, 1919.

⁴² Peterson, “Camp Stella,” 51–52; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 296–99; Alanen, “Shaw-Hill Farm,” 15–20; Hill, “Diary.”

Tourism and Recreation

During the early years of railroad tourism in the Chequamegon region, La Pointe could not match the comfort and convenience of the hotels in Ashland and Bayfield, and there was nothing on Madeline Island comparable to Camp Stella. In 1888 Burt Hill's mother, Mary C. Hill, opened "refreshment rooms" in La Pointe and soon after expanded into the hotel business. Hill's advertisement stated that "the many attractions of this historic island cannot be seen during the short waiting of the excursion steamers. Tourists wishing to make a longer stay can secure good board with rooms at reasonable rates."⁴³ Apparently many tourists did wish to make a longer stay, as Mary Hill's Island Park Hotel quickly became a success. Others devised grander schemes to develop a resort on Madeline Island. In 1885 George Francis Thomas formed the Apostle Islands Improvement Company, followed in 1887 by the Madaline [*sic*] Island Resort Company to sell lots for summer homes. Thomas had married Sarah Bell, daughter of the influential Judge John W. Bell and Margaret Brabant Bell, reputedly the daughter of an Ojibwe chief. When Sarah died in childbirth in 1884, Thomas inherited a large tract of land extending north from the village of La Pointe. Thomas's resort development plans included a five thousand acre state park. Although his resort did not develop in the manner he envisioned, Thomas did sell a number of lots for summer homes, and for several years in the early 1900s he operated a summer hotel in Treaty Hall.⁴⁴ In 1893 the *Ashland Daily Press* reported several schemes to develop camps or resorts on Madeline Island. The Chicago-based American Health Resort Association and the Milwaukee Resort and Improvement Company both purchased large tracts of land to subdivide for summer homes. Another group purchased the Grant farm and platted a new summer resort town called Madeline. The First District Lodge of Good Templars purchased five acres on Big Bay Road for a summer camp.⁴⁵

Although none of these schemes amounted to much, Madeline Island developed along other pathways to become one of Lake Superior's leading summer resorts. In 1897 the Reverend Edward P. Salmon of Beloit, Wisconsin came to visit his friend the Reverend Edward P. Wheeler of Ashland, who was vacationing on Madeline Island. Wheeler was the son of missionary Leonard Wheeler and pastor of the Congregational Church in Ashland. The visit led Salmon to purchase a large tract of land on Madeline Island that included the old Protestant mission, abandoned in the 1850s. Salmon immediately began to renovate the mission building, and in 1898 he arrived with his family for vacation. Salmon's concept for the mission building soon expanded from family retreat to summer resort for other ministers and their families. He added a dining room and kitchen to the old mission and built two dormitories on the grounds. He purchased the Protestant church in the village of La Pointe and moved it to the old mission grounds, where it was used for summer Sunday services. Despite strict rules for

⁴³ *Ashland Daily Press*, August 14, 1888.

⁴⁴ In 1917 Thomas donated Treaty Hall to the DAR. for use as a museum. It was destroyed by fire in 1923. John B. Chapple, "'Treaty Hall' is Deeded to Minnesota D.A.R.," *Duluth News-Tribune*, August 6, 1917; Ross, *La Pointe*, 172.

⁴⁵ Hill, "Diary"; Alanen, "Shaw-Hill Farm," 12-13; *Bayfield County Press*, May 23, 1885, November 14, 1885, November 28, 1885, October 29, 1892, April 8, 1893, June 10, 1893, August 5, 1893, July 16, 1898; Ross, *La Pointe*, 122-23, 144-45, 166; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 87; "Wisconsin's Plymouth Rock," "The Coming Summer Resort," "Chautauqua's Rival Madeline," *Ashland Daily Press Annual*, 1893.

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behavior (i.e., all lights out at 10:00 p.m.), the Old Mission Inn quickly gained a broad clientele.⁴⁶

Like Camp Stella on Sand Island, the Old Mission Inn was a catalyst for summer homes on Madeline Island. The first summer cottages on the island preceded the Old Mission Inn by a few years. In 1894 the Reverend Thomas Gordon Grassie, a Congregational missionary in Ashland, summered with his family at La Pointe. Grassie purchased a lot from George Francis Thomas and constructed a cottage the following summer. At the same time John O'Brien of St. Paul constructed a summer cottage at La Pointe for his family. O'Brien's father, Dillon O'Brien, taught in the Catholic school at La Pointe in the late 1850s. In 1896 three families from Ashland built cottages nearby, creating what became known as O'Brien's Row. The next enclave of cottages was a direct offshoot of the Old Mission Inn. Colonel Frederick M. Woods, a wealthy businessman from Lincoln, Nebraska, came to Bayfield seeking respite from hay fever. In 1897 Colonel Woods asked Reverend Salmon to build a cottage for him on the grounds of the latter's newly acquired mission. But when Woods took up residence on Madeline Island the following summer he found the cottage too rustic and Salmon's rules too restrictive. In 1899 Woods built a summer home north of the village of La Pointe, on a former pasture located on a bluff overlooking the channel. He planted trees and convinced his family and friends to build cottages nearby. The grand cottages that wealthy Chicagoans built on Mackinac Island provided a model for Nebraska Row, which soon became the showplace of Madeline Island.⁴⁷

Cottages continued to grow in popularity in the twentieth century. About 1906 a group of families from St. Paul asked Salmon to build cottages on the Old Mission Inn grounds where they could stay for the summer, taking their meals in the Old Mission dining room. Salmon built about a dozen such cottages, and families returned to stay in them year after year. Others who initially stayed at the Old Mission Inn purchased land and built their own summer homes on the island. In 1915 the *Duluth News Tribune* reported that hundreds of cottages lined the shores of Madeline Island and more were under construction. Although an actual count would have found dozens of cottages rather than hundreds, it still outnumbered the handful of summer homes on Sand Island. At that time the village of La Pointe was being improved with cement sidewalks, shade trees, and gardens to increase its appeal as a summer resort. The improvement effort was headed by village president Olaf Anderson, farmer and former lumberman, and shows the important role that tourism had assumed in the island economy. Farmers sold produce, meat, and dairy products to summer residents. Some of the island's year-round residents worked as caretakers, gardeners, or housekeepers for those with summer homes.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 26–27; Ross, *La Pointe*, 149, 158, 160, 165–66, 168–69; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 242–43.

⁴⁷ Ross, *La Pointe*, 149, 153–54, 157–59; Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 26, 28; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 242–43; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 57.

⁴⁸ Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 27–28; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 243–46; "Will Erect New Cottages," *Bayfield County Press* September 12, 1912; "Madeline Island to Be Made Summer Resort," *Duluth News-Tribune*, August 22, 1915; Ross, *La Pointe*, 166.

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Apart from Madeline and Sand islands, there was minimal summer home or resort development in the islands. In 1884 a Professor Denison of Chicago purchased sixteen acres on the north end of Basswood Island and built a summer cottage there. At the beginning of July the professor and six of his students took up residence in the cottage with a cook and boatman (one man) providing support; they stayed through most of the month. Denison reportedly planned to build additional cottages for rent, and in 1885 he constructed a boat landing and “other improvements,” but it does not appear that other visitors came to stay there. By 1898 the property was under different ownership. Some of the land and development companies planned to sell land for both farms and summer homes. When the Apostle Island Park Association purchased Otter Island in 1905, their development plans included a park and summer resort in addition to a sheep ranch and dairy farm, none of which materialized. On Long Island, where the sandy soil was unsuitable for agriculture, a group of investors headed by E. H. Bauch of Chicago sought to develop a resort community on the east end of the island.⁴⁹ Bauch had the land surveyed and platted into small lots, twenty-five feet wide, on either side of a boulevard running lengthwise through the center of the island. Long Island had an excellent beach and was a popular place for camping, picnics, and berry picking. But the island’s shifting sands made the sale of real estate and construction of homes problematic; only a few small cabins were built.⁵⁰

The only development scheme to achieve even minor success on an island other than Madeline or Sand was that of the Lake Superior Land & Development Company, which purchased Hermit Island in 1909. In addition to dividing the island into ten acre lots for sale for small farms or summer homes, the company renovated and expanded Frederick Prentice’s Cedar Bark Cottage and opened it in 1910 as a resort hotel with accommodations for twenty-five guests. Despite frequent reports that lots had been sold and that cottages would be built next season, no summer homes were built on Hermit Island. However Cedar Bark Lodge—also called the Hermitage—operated for several years, apparently with some success. In July 1913 the *Bayfield County Press* reported: “Bark Cottage on Wilson island is now open and receiving guests on nearly every incoming train and boat.”⁵¹ In 1915 the *Skater* made trips to Hermit Island on Tuesdays and Thursdays, staying long enough for passengers to have dinner at the Hermitage. In 1916 Grace Bruder, who owned the only farm on Hermit Island, leased the Hermitage. In October the Bruders reported a profitable season and said that they would open the resort the next summer. But there is no indication that the Hermitage was open for business after 1916.⁵²

⁴⁹ In 1915, following the death of Sam Fifield, Bauch purchased Camp Stella. “Purchases Camp Stella,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 13, 1915.

⁵⁰ *Bayfield County Press*, June 28, 1884, July 5, 1884, July 26, 1884, May 30, 1885, June 27, 1885, July 19, 1912; Nohl, *Ashland County Plat Book*; “Apostle Island Company Formed”; “Hold Meeting Here”; Williams, “Long Island,” 99–100; “Plat Property on Long Island,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 9, 1912; “La Pointe Log.”

⁵¹ “A Big Season Is Anticipated,” *Bayfield County Press*, July 11, 1913.

⁵² Alanen and Tishler, “Farming the Lake Superior Shore,” 21–22; “A Large Summer Resort to Be Built,” *Bayfield County Press*, May 13, 1910; “New Resort Will Open,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 19, 1910; “Summer Resort to Open,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 30, 1911; “Additions for Summer Resort,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 29, 1911; “Will Erect New Cottages,” *Bayfield County Press*, September

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The tourist season was primarily in July and August, although some people came earlier and others stayed into September, especially hay fever sufferers. Bayfield and the Apostle Islands maintained their reputation as a health resort, with hay fever relief the main selling point. The region's effectiveness as an escape from hay fever depended on the absence of ragweed and goldenrod, and in the early 1900s the increase of these "pests" in Bayfield and vicinity endangered this aspect of the tourist business. Local ordinance required residents to remove these plants from their land, and the *Bayfield County Press* urged people to get busy with their spades. Apparently they were able to keep the menace under control, as a 1916 article in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* stated: "Hay fever sufferers find almost instant relief when they reach the Chequamegon Bay district and the islands are recommended as an absolute specific for this prevalent and annoying malady."⁵³ The islands had an advantage in hay fever relief, as the invasive plants were slower to migrate across the water.⁵⁴

The region's success as a resort was based on recreational opportunities as well as on hay fever relief. Boat excursions around the islands continued to be a favorite pastime for tourists and locals. Sam Fifield took Camp Stella guests on island excursions aboard the *Stella*. Ferry boats such as the *Plowboy*, *Fashion*, and *Tourist* offered pleasure excursions in addition to their daily ferry runs. Island excursions were offered at regularly scheduled times during tourist season, or boats could be chartered for private parties. School groups, church groups, business organizations, and social clubs often took advantage of this opportunity. An excursion might consist of a tour around the islands or an outing to one island in particular. Picnics, corn roasts, marshmallow roasts, and bonfires were all popular activities for island outings. Beginning in 1904 the leading ferry and excursion boat was the *Skater*, owned by the Chequamegon Bay Transportation Company. The newspaper stated that the *Skater's* Captain Murphy "spares no pains in explaining to the stranger all that he may wish to know concerning the history of, and Indian legends pertaining to the beautiful group of Apostle Islands."⁵⁵ In July and August the *Skater* offered excursions among the Apostle Islands on Tuesdays and Thursdays, leaving Bayfield at 11:00 a.m. and returning at 4:00 p.m., with lunch on board. At the beginning of the 1910 season the Chequamegon Bay Transportation Company announced plans to build a large dock for the *Skater* on Stockton Island to make that island more accessible for day long outings. Devils Island was not part of the regular excursion itineraries because of its distance, and when Devils Island excursions were offered they were quite popular.⁵⁶

12, 1912; "Big Tourist Year Is Now Expected," *Bayfield County Press*, March 26, 1915; *Bayfield County Press*, July 16, 1915, February 18, 1916, April 7, 1916, October 27, 1916; "Big Tourist Season Is Expected," *Bayfield County Press*, March 31, 1916; "Island Resorts Close Next Week," *Bayfield County Press*, September 15, 1916.

⁵³ "Attention Called to the Islands," *Bayfield County Press*, May 12, 1916.

⁵⁴ "Tourist Season Now Open"; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 224; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield*, 4, 8-9; "Wisconsin's Plymouth Rock"; Peterson, "Camp Stella," 42.

⁵⁵ "Steamer Skater Begins Season," *Bayfield County Press*, May 30, 1913.

⁵⁶ "First Excursion Trip," *Bayfield County Press*, June 7, 1912; "Expect a Big Summer's Business," *Bayfield County Press*, June 28, 1912; "Ashland's Pleasure Fleet," *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1893*, reprinted in J. B. Chapple, *Chequamegon Area Bicentennial Edition*, July 1976; "Madeline Island Ferry";

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Fish-collecting boats took passengers when they made their regular rounds and also offered separate pleasure excursions during tourist season. A trip on a collecting route offered the added attraction of the opportunity to watch fishermen at work. In 1901 the Booth Packing Company purchased the steam tug *S. B. Barker* from an Ashland lumber company. Although Booth used the *Barker* primarily as a collecting boat, the company added a second deck with enclosed sides to accommodate passengers. Lifelong Madeline Island summer resident Hamilton Nelson Ross wrote that a trip on the *Barker* was an outing of “considerable interest” to summer visitors, its attractions including blueberry pie, the cook’s famous fried fish, and the accommodating Captain Okay J. Vorous, known as “Okay jay.” An unusual excursion took place in June 1898 aboard the lake steamer *Christopher Columbus*, the only whaleback steamer built to carry passengers. At other times the *Christopher Columbus* stopped at Chequamegon Bay ports as she carried tourists between Chicago and Duluth, but this may have been the only time that she offered a cruise around the islands. A special train brought excursionists from Minneapolis to Washburn, and the *Christopher Columbus* picked up passengers there and at Ashland and Bayfield. About two thousand people enjoyed the cruise, with live music and the lake “at her best.”⁵⁷

There were many sights for tourists to see around Chequamegon Bay and among the Apostle Islands. The islands were known for their picturesque beauty, a reputation aided by publicists such as newspapers, railroad companies, George Francis Thomas, and Samuel Fifield. In typical prose the latter wrote of the islands: “Of all the charming spots [on Lake Superior] that gladdens the eye and heart, there are none that equal the magical islands of the Apostle group. How lovely they are, reflecting their brilliant foliage in the glistening waters that kiss their brownstone shores!”⁵⁸ Of special interest were caves and rock formations, with names such as Sphinx (Stockton Island), Anvil (Stockton), and Temple Gate (Sand Island). The most extensive caves and formations were on Stockton, Devils, and Sand islands and on the north shore of the Bayfield Peninsula on the mainland. Fifield wrote that on Devils Island one could take a rowboat hundreds of feet under the island “passing through vaulted chambers, supported by numerous pillars and arches, fine specimens of Nature’s masonry, lighted by circular and gothic windows, cut through walls of variegated stone.”⁵⁹ Lighthouses, though manmade, were appreciated as places of picturesque beauty and romantic interest. The lighthouses were popular tourist attractions, both for the structures themselves and the views that could be enjoyed from

Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 92–94; “Ferry Boat to Start,” *Bayfield County Press*, May 13, 1910; “On Popular Excursions,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 20, 1912; “Attracts Many People,” “Second Cruise of the Lizzie W.” *Bayfield County Press*, September 2, 1904; *Bayfield County Press*, July 22, 1904; *Bayfield County Press*, June 24, 1904, July 19, 1912, July 26, 1912, August 2, 1912, August 9, 1912, August 1, 1913, August 4, 1916. These are just a sampling of the numerous reports of island outings and excursions.

⁵⁷ “Attracts Many People,” *Bayfield County Press*, July 22, 1904; *Bayfield County Press*, June 26, 1903; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 95; Ross, *La Pointe*, 168; Benton, *Golden Days*; “A Great Trip,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 4, 1898; “The Excursion,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 18, 1898; “Two Excursions Coming,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 10, 1898; *Bayfield County Press*, September 17, 1898.

⁵⁸ Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

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their towers. There were so many visitors to the lighthouses that at times they interfered with the keepers' work. This was especially true on Long Island, close to Ashland and Bayfield, where Keeper Joseph Sexton complained of so many tourists that they were wearing the paint off the stairs. Historic places, stories, and legends also fed the interest in things romantic. Madeline Island was the main historic attraction; the *Ashland Daily Press* called it Wisconsin's Plymouth Rock. The legend of Wilson the Hermit added to the allure of Hermit Island. The Ojibwe personified both nature and history, and tourists traveled to the Red Cliff and Bad River reservations to see them. Even more conveniently, members of the Bad River band performed dances at the Hotel Chequamegon. Ironically, while tourists sought to experience traditional Ojibwe customs, government agents and missionaries were working hard to destroy these customs. Visits to historic sites, part of a general trend in tourism, helped to make vacations seem educational and less frivolous. A related trend was to visit workplaces, evidenced in the Apostle Islands by touring sandstone quarries or watching fishermen lift their nets.⁶⁰

Other popular recreational activities included swimming, boating, hiking, and berry picking. The granddaughter of Sand Island summer resident Christian Aabel remembered swimming every day when she visited the island even though she could only stay in the cold water for ten or fifteen minutes. Tourists could rent sailboats or rowboats. Summer residents owned their own boats, and yachting grew in popularity among the affluent. The proliferation of private motorboats after 1900 had a great effect on island recreation. Boat owners—both year round and summer residents—could more easily, comfortably, and frequently take parties of their friends on island outings. The *Bayfield County Press* was full of such events during the summer. For example, during one week in August 1916, Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Boutin took thirty friends on the tugboat *Herring King* to a picnic outing on Presque Isle, while Mrs. A. H. Wilkinson and Mr. F. Boutin took a large number of friends on an all day picnic trip among the islands on their yacht *Illini*. Those desiring more action could go fishing, camping, or hunting; hotels and retailers would provide outfits for these activities. Hunting was primarily a mainland activity, but there were many places to camp in the islands. Although many sport fishermen preferred trout fishing in mainland rivers and streams, trolling for lake trout grew in popularity, aided by the convenience of the motorboat.⁶¹ Hamilton Ross described summer life on Madeline Island as “fairly simple.”

There were walks in the woods, with the latter's profusion of ground pines and other characteristic flora of the latitude. There were berrying trips to local

⁶⁰ “Tourist Season Now Open”; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 225–26, 229–31; “The Beautiful Apostle Islands,” *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1893*; Fifield, “Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon”; Fifield, “Story of ‘The Apostles’”; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield*, 10; “La Pointe Log,” August 23, 1900 and numerous other entries; “Wisconsin's Plymouth Rock”; Peterson, “Camp Stella,” 52; Aron, *Working at Play*, 143–47.

⁶¹ Helen Hillstrom, interview by Susan Monk, July 1985, tape recording with written transcript and recollections, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore personal narrative files; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 94–95; “Summer Outings on Lake Superior,” *Ashland Daily Press Annual, 1893*; Ross, *La Pointe*, 160; “Summer Resort to Open”; *Bayfield County Press*, June 18, 1915, August 4, 1916; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 227–29; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield*, 3–4, 11–12.

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districts and other islands for gathering wild strawberries, blueberries and raspberries. The fishing enthusiasts traveled to the mainland to whip the small rivers for brook trout. There were sails and expeditions with Captains Charles Russell and Daniel Angus. Some of these cruises consumed several days in the waters of the adjacent archipelago, convincing the visiting city dwellers that they were truly experiencing pioneer life. The novelty of sleeping on sandy beaches, which, before morning, converted themselves into beds of unyielding concrete, vividly confirmed this belief.⁶²

Automobile Tourism

The automobile transformed tourism just as it transformed every aspect of American life. In the early 1900s automobiles were expensive and relatively primitive, roads were poor, and automobile touring was a pastime for the wealthy who could afford to take long and costly trips. But by the 1920s autos cost less and performed better, and auto ownership increased dramatically. The number of private automobiles registered in the U.S. grew from eight thousand in 1900 to eight million in 1920 to twenty-three million in 1930. State and federal governments put billions of dollars into road improvements and highway construction, and gasoline stations, roadside restaurants, and tourist courts proliferated. Automobiles gave tourists more freedom and flexibility than they had when traveling by railroad. Travelers were not limited to fixed timetables and could go virtually anywhere there was a road. Automobile tourists tended to be more transient—visiting more places and spending less time at each one. Automobile travel was not necessarily cheaper than railroad travel, but it was preferred. Automobile tourism superseded railroad tourism after World War I, and by 1935, 85 percent of vacation travel was by automobile. Meanwhile, tourism in general increased through the 1920s, as people had greater personal income and more leisure time, including paid vacations. More people from a greater variety of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds could afford to take vacations. A growing number of affluent vacationers bought second homes, providing a counterpoint to the transient auto tourist. Tourism diminished during the Depression and World War II, but after the war it came back stronger than ever. Paid vacations became standard even for the working class.⁶³

In the Lake Superior region, automobiles and improved roads made inland lakes and forests much more accessible than before. Railroads came closer than steamboats did, but railroad travelers still had a bumpy wagon ride from the station to their final destination. Reforestation played a key role in the growth of tourism in the region. During the 1920s government agencies began to encourage reforestation rather than farming in the cutover, with both forestry and recreation as intended uses. In the 1930s Wisconsin's cutover counties adopted rural zoning ordinances, designating areas of land for forestry, recreation, or agriculture. When Ashland County passed a rural zoning

⁶² Ross, *La Pointe*, 166.

⁶³ John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 101–104, 120–21, 146, 169–70; Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 9, 41–44; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 253–55; McMahon and Karamanski, “Time and the River,” 244–49; Bawden, “Escape to Wisconsin,” 3; Aron, *Working at Play*, 10, 184, 205–209, 229, 238–49.

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ordinance in 1934, it designated Madeline Island for agricultural and recreational use and the remaining islands under its jurisdiction for forestry and recreational use. Bayfield County adopted similar zoning.⁶⁴ The Northwoods figured prominently in Wisconsin's burgeoning vacation industry. In 1923 tourists spent an estimated one hundred million dollars in Wisconsin; by 1960 this figure was approaching six hundred million dollars. Wisconsin billed itself as the playground of the Midwest—in 1960 more than 70 percent of vacationers came from outside of the state, the majority from Illinois. In turn, northern Wisconsin claimed with some justification to be the playground of Wisconsin. Nearly 80 percent of the 1960 vacationers went to the northern part of the state. Another measure of the popularity of the Northwoods vacation was the increase in the number of second homes in the region. Between 1940 and 1960 the number of vacation homes in northern Wisconsin nearly tripled, from 12,525 to 33,905. The latter figure represented more than 40 percent of the vacation homes in the state.⁶⁵

As logging declined and farming for the most part failed, tourism became increasingly important to the economy of the Lake Superior region. Local governments and businesses joined together to promote, develop facilities, and advocate for recreation and tourism. In 1922 businessmen in northern Wisconsin organized the Northern Wisconsin Resort Association, soon renamed the Wisconsin Land O' Lakes Association. The association published and distributed brochures, road maps, and *Wisconsin Land O' Lakes Magazine*. In 1936 local tourist boards in northwestern Wisconsin formed an organization called Indian Head Country to promote tourism in that part of the state. The name and image of the organization came from an imaginative rendering of the northwestern border of the state, creating a profile similar to that on an Indian head nickel. Indian Head Country, Inc. operated for more than fifty years, advocating for recreational development in fifteen northwestern counties and producing an abundance of promotional materials that included an annual guide to vacation opportunities in that area. Business organizations in Bayfield, including the men's club, commercial club, and later the chamber of commerce, tied into these regional promotional campaigns. Tourists could not, of course, drive their automobiles to a motel or cottage in the Apostle Islands, but the islands participated in the growth of Northwoods tourism. The Apostle Islands combined many of the qualities that made the Northwoods appealing with their own distinctive history and scenic beauty. Bayfield and the Apostle Islands were a center for lake trout trolling on Lake Superior, and reforestation brought deer and hunters to the islands. An affluent elite built summer homes in the islands, especially on Madeline Island, but people with more modest incomes could stay at mainland tourist cabins and tour the islands on fish collecting boats. Tourism joined commercial fishing as the foundation of the Apostle Islands economy until the 1950s, when the sea lamprey destroyed the fisheries and plunged the area into crisis.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Sand, Raspberry, York, and Eagle islands are in Bayfield County.

⁶⁵ McMahan and Karamanski, "Time and the River," 244–47; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 379; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 254, 257–60, 336; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 58–59; I. V. Fine and E. E. Werner, "The Tourist-Vacation Industry in Wisconsin" (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Resource Development, 1961), 3, 9, 21; Fred L. Holmes, *Alluring Wisconsin* (Milwaukee: E. M. Hale & Co., 1937), 13; Alanen, "Historical Information," 29.

⁶⁶ McMahan and Karamanski, "Time and the River," 245–46, 260; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 256–57, 334–35, 354; *Bayfield County at the Top O' Wisconsin* (Bayfield County Press, n.d.), brochure in the

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The first automobile appeared in Ashland on July 20, 1903, driven by a local druggist. By 1912 a few ambitious tourists were traveling to the area by auto, including George Woods, son of Nebraska Row founder Colonel Woods, who drove from Lincoln, Nebraska, at an average speed of twenty-five miles an hour. In August 1919 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that very few tourists were traveling by train that summer and motoring parties were filling the hotels. “Very few” was probably an exaggeration, but the article shows that auto tourists were becoming common. Describing Bayfield two years later, a *Superior Telegram* reporter wrote that the two garages in town were packed to capacity by the hundreds of auto tourists who passed through almost daily. Other facilities for auto tourists included filling stations, restaurants, and campgrounds equipped for auto camping. Good roads were essential for auto tourism to thrive, and county, state, and federal governments worked together to build them. In 1911 the Wisconsin legislature passed the State Aid Road Law, establishing a program of road building and improvement in cooperation with county governments. In 1917 the state introduced a system of numbered trunk highways. The federal government provided funds to states for road building under the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and later under the Federal Highway Act. The main roads in the Chequamegon region were included in the original state trunk highway system: Highway 10 (later U.S. 2) from Ashland to Superior and Highway 13 from Ashland to Bayfield. The portion of Highway 13 between Bayfield and Superior was not designated a state highway and improved until the 1920s, following advocacy by local businessmen who understood the importance of the scenic drive along the Lake Superior shore for attracting tourists. Highway 13 crossed the state of Wisconsin from Beloit on the Illinois border to Superior and became a popular tourist route, in part because it carried vacationers from Illinois to Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. Chequamegon region businesses joined in a long running statewide advertising campaign to promote travel along “Lucky 13.” In the early 1960s the portion of Highway 13 along the shore of the Bayfield Peninsula was promoted as the South Shore Scenic Drive. Roads were also built on Madeline and Sand islands. There was a county road on Madeline Island by 1899.⁶⁷ In 1914 Bayfield County built a road on Sand Island extending from the Hills’ farm to the north end of East Bay. Island residents requested the road, although there were few motor vehicles on the island. In the early 1920s the *Chinook* became the first Madeline Island ferry boat built to carry an automobile (one per trip).⁶⁸

collections of the Bayfield Heritage Association; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 98, 118; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 263.

⁶⁷ George Francis Thomas, “The Chequamegon Region,” *Picturesque Wisconsin* 1 (July 1899): 97. A 1928 map in the collections of the Madeline Island Historical Museum shows the county road in its current configuration. Sheree Peterson, e-mail to author, 3 January 2007.

⁶⁸ Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 381–82; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 96–97, 101–102; “Tourism Rooms on Madeline Island are Full,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 22, 1919; Peterson, “Bayfield Prosperity”; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 252–56, 288–89; Jakle, *The Tourist*, 125–26; Wisconsin Historical Society, “Automobile Culture,” *Turning Points in Wisconsin History*, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-042/?action=more_essay; Wisconsin Historical Society, “National Roads and Road Markings,” *Wisconsin History Explorer*, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/archstories/late_roads/natl_roads_markings.asp; Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 173–74; *South Shore Scenic Drive* (South Shore Scenic Drive Association, n.d.),

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Although railroad travel declined after World War I—22 percent between 1921 and 1941—it was still a common mode of long distance travel. In the 1920s the railroads offered special excursion fares to the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, but the pageant was really designed and promoted for auto tourism. Steamboat travel was already in decline on the Great Lakes by the 1920s. When anti-trust laws required railroad companies to sell their steamboat lines, steamboats had to compete with their former partners, and the railroads were the winners. Losses due to fires and the costs of complying with stricter fire regulations also contributed to the decline of passenger steamers. Air travel played a minor role in Apostle Islands tourism beginning in the 1940s. A small airport for private planes was built on Madeline Island in 1949. Tragically, a plane crash at the airport on the day before it was dedicated killed James Russell, who operated one of the Madeline Island ferries, and summer resident Vincent O'Brien, Jr. Some of the people who lived or worked on other islands used planes at times for transportation. Laurie and Grace Nourse, who owned the Rocky Island Air Haven, sometimes flew to the island.⁶⁹ In 1945 the Nurses cleared land on the north end of Rocky Island for an airstrip that they intended to serve visitors, but only one plane ever landed there. In 1959 John Atwood bought South Twin Island for a vacation retreat, and the following year he built an airstrip on the island. Atwood and his friends used the airstrip frequently.⁷⁰

New types of accommodations appeared to house auto tourists. The first were municipal auto camps. Bayfield, Ashland, and Washburn joined municipalities nationwide in building camps to keep auto tourists out of farmers' fields and entice them into town to spend money. By 1930 auto camps were rapidly disappearing as travelers found more comfortable lodgings in privately owned tourist cabins. In the Chequamegon region, as throughout the Northwoods, housekeeping cabins with kitchenettes became the norm, catering to vacationers of more modest means than those who stayed at resorts such as the Old Mission Inn, where meals and other services were provided. At Little Sand Bay, Hermie Johnson built several housekeeping cabins and added a rental apartment on the second floor of his general store and tavern. Nearby, John Nelson's nephew and family vacationed in the log cabin that Nelson built in the 1930s until they built a new cabin on the property in the 1960s. There was a campground at the South Shore Club park. With a beach, charter fishing trips, boats for rent, and dances at the tavern, Little Sand Bay was a popular summer resort.⁷¹ South of Bayfield, at Salmo, the Harvey Nourse family opened Pinehurst resort, which offered both tourist cottages and lodge accommodations with three meals a day. Unlike most Northwoods resorts, the

brochure in the collections of the Bayfield Heritage Association; "South Shore Scenic Road Project Wins Nelson Favor," *Duluth News-Tribune*, August 17, 1960; "Madeline Island Ferry."

⁶⁹ Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 107.

⁷⁰ Jakle, *The Tourist*, 169; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 99–102; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 252–53; "Railroads Give Pageant Special Low Rate," *Bayfield County Press*, July 19, 1925; Beck and Labadie, *Inland Seas*, 144–45; Goc, *On the Rock*, 62; "2 Die in Madeline Isle Plane Crash," *Duluth News-Tribune*, August 14, 1949; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 107, 112–13, 158; Holmer, "Superior Summer," 85.

⁷¹ After the National Park Service purchased the Johnson property in 1973, they remodeled the store and tavern to serve as the Little Sand Bay Visitor Center and removed all of the other buildings from Johnson's resort and fishery.

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lodge at Pinehurst was not a rustic log structure, but rather the former home of R. D. Pike, purchased by Harvey Nourse following Pike's death in 1906. The Nourses used produce and dairy products from their farm to prepare meals for their guests. Hotels and boardinghouses—the latter now called tourist homes—continued to accommodate travelers, but their business declined steadily in competition with tourist cabins and later motels. The Knight Hotel was the largest of several hotels in Ashland, and from the 1930s the Hotel Bayfield (previously the Hotel Bracken) was the leader in Bayfield. The listings for these hotels in the 1945 AAA guide show in part why hotels were losing favor. At the Knight Hotel, thirty out of one hundred rooms had bathrooms, and at the Hotel Bayfield only seven out of thirty rooms were so equipped.⁷²

On Madeline Island, the Old Mission Inn maintained its popularity and expanded its facilities under the ownership of Edward Salmon, nephew of the Reverend Edward P. Salmon. During the 1920s Salmon replaced the apple and cherry orchard on the grounds with a tennis court and golf course. In 1941 Salmon gave the Old Mission property to Beloit College, which tried to operate the resort with little success. In 1948 the college acquired Coole Park Manor, summer home of the Hull family, and opened it as an auxiliary guest facility called Haven House. Located south of the village of La Pointe, the formal garden at Coole Park Manor was a showplace with a tea house, pool, fountain, and 450 rose bushes among the floral plantings. In 1953 the college sold the Old Mission to a group of families, who occupied the cottages and used the Old Mission building for an art center. New owners operated the former Coole Park Manor as a guest house called Chateau Madeline. In the mid-1960s the Old Mission building was demolished.⁷³

The scarcity of public accommodations on Madeline Island was indicative of the predominance of summer residents who owned their own homes. New arrivals tore down the modest homes of year-round residents to build imposing summer “cottages.” Four of the children of Colonel Frederick Woods, known as the father of Nebraska Row, built houses there, including Frank H. Woods, president of the Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company, whose “palatial” summer home was completed in 1925 at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars. In the same year, telephone executive Hunter L. Gary of Kansas City, Missouri, built a seventy-five thousand dollar home on Nebraska Row. Three hundred people from Madeline Island, Ashland, and Bayfield attended Colonel Woods's eighty-second birthday party in August 1926, and the people of Madeline Island

⁷² Jakle, *The Tourist*, 152–66; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 252–53; Bawden, “Escape to Wisconsin,” 3; National Park Service, “Little Sand Bay,” 43; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore photograph collection, negative numbers #210, 1466 #16A(17), 1466 #18A(19), 1466 #19A(20), 1466 #28A(29), 1466 #30A(31), 1466 #32A(33), #1467 #1; Virginia Kosmo, “Tiny Fishing Village Uses Sunset as Lure,” *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, June 12, 1960; Ben Kern, “Apostle Islands Park Brings Sadness to a Few,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 2, 1973; [unnamed], “Life As I Remember”; tract file 01-104, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 92, 102, 104, 107, 111, 123, illustration no. 44; “Tourist Season is About Finished Now,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 19, 1929; American Automobile Association, *Directory of Accommodations, North American Continent* (Washington, D.C., 1945), 157.

⁷³ Bernstein and Canaday, “Madeline Island Survey,” 25, 27; “Tourist Season Finished”; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 247–48; Goc, *On the Rock*, 61, 64, 78; “Old Mission Inn Becomes Art School,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 17, 1954; “Old Mission Has New Management,” *Ashland Daily Press*, June 8, 1948.

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published a tribute to Colonel and Mrs. Woods in appreciation of their role as pioneers of the island's summer colony. Even more newsworthy, Hunter Gary and Frank Woods hosted President Calvin Coolidge on a visit to the Apostle Islands in August 1928. The Coolidge family was spending the summer on an island in the upper Bois Brule River, just west of the Bayfield Peninsula, enjoying the climate and trout fishing. President and Mrs. Coolidge and their son John traveled by auto to Bayfield, where they embarked on the motor yacht *Nellwood*, owned by Frank Woods. The steamer *Madeline* followed with newspaper men, camera men, and guests. The boats traveled to Devils Island, where the party viewed the sea caves and watched Charlie Benson lift his fish nets before they landed on the island for a picnic lunch on the rocky shore (figure 27). Afterwards, the group traveled to Madeline Island for tea and a reception at the Gary home and a tour of the island's historic sights, including the Protestant church and the Ojibwe burial ground. President Coolidge reportedly described the islands as one of the most delightful spots he had ever visited, and Mrs. Coolidge described their day there as angelic, promising to come back. The Madeline Island summer community continued to grow after World War II. In 1960 there were 125 summer homes on the island, of which 40 were built after the war. Ten years later, when the year round population of Madeline Island was about 150, the number of summer residents was estimated at 2,000 to 3,000.⁷⁴

The summer community on Sand Island did not grow the way that it did on Madeline Island, but the families who summered there in the early 1900s continued to come, and a few new families were added. Charles and Daisy Jensch inherited the Campbell cottage and passed it on in turn to their son Herman. The Hans Jacob Andersen family lived across the street from the Jensch family in Hudson, Wisconsin, and the Andersens came to visit the Jensch family on Sand Island. Andersen, with his sons Herbert and Fred C., founded the window manufacturing company that became Andersen Window Corporation. In 1934 Daisy Jensch purchased Camp Stella and sold it to the Fred Andersens, who then sold half of the camp to their friends Stephen C. and Helen Phipps, also from Hudson. When the Andersen family began to summer at Camp Stella they took their meals at the Hills's home. The money that Anna Mae Hill earned by providing meals to summer residents and fishermen was an important source of income for the Hills, accounting for half of their annual income by the late 1930s. In 1942 Burt and Anna Mae Hill moved to Bayfield, and in 1944 they sold their Sand Island farm to Fred Andersen. After they fixed up the buildings, which had deteriorated when Burt Hill became ill, Elizabeth Andersen Hulings with her husband A. D. (Bill) Hulings and two daughters spent summers at the former Hill farm.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 248; "Building Palatial Summer Home," *Bayfield County Press*, May 14, 1924; "'Nebraska Row' Contingent Here," *Bayfield County Press*, July 1, 1926; "Colonel Woods Celebrates Birthday," *Bayfield County Press*, August 19, 1926; "Coolidge Decides to Visit Apostle Islands," *Duluth News-Tribune*, August 15, 1928; "Coolidge Enjoys Yacht Outing Among Islands," *Bayfield County Press*, August 23, 1928; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 313–24; "Tourist Season Finished"; Goc, *On the Rock*, 74, 85; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 57–58.

⁷⁵ Peterson, "Camp Stella," 105–15, 118; Hulings interview; Hill, "Diary," 1934; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 36. Elizabeth Andersen Hulings was the daughter of Herbert Andersen. She and her brother were raised by their uncle Fred Andersen after her father died.

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Figure 27. President Calvin Coolidge picnic on Devils Island, 1928. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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On the west side of Sand Island, Frank Eha purchased the shares of the other West Bay Club members in 1922. For the next thirty years Eha and his family summered at the West Bay Club, finally selling it to a lumber company in 1952. Prior to 1922, Gertrude Wellisch, daughter of West Bay Club member Robert Wellisch, vacationed at the West Bay Club. In 1925 Gert Wellisch, who taught school in St. Paul, found another summer home on Sand Island—the vacant Sand Island lighthouse, which had been automated in 1921. Wellisch wrote to Congress to secure permission to lease the lighthouse; it took months before the Department of Commerce approved the lease. For the next eighteen years Wellisch spent summers in the Sand Island lighthouse. East Bay residents liked Wellisch, whom they recalled as a self-sufficient individual who carried her suitcases on the two mile walk from East Bay to the lighthouse. Later, when she brought an auto to the island, she left it at the East Bay dock for others to use. In 1942, with the status of the lighthouse and her lease uncertain, Wellisch purchased a shoreline parcel between Shaw Point and East Bay and hired Ashland carpenter Clyde Nyland to build her a summer home that she named Plenty Charm. Nyland, who built Fred Hansen’s house and a barn for the Norings, was well known locally for his skill, which is evident in Plenty Charm. The focal point of the modest two bedroom home is the cathedral ceiling living room with pine paneling, fieldstone fireplace, and an oversized picture window facing Lake Superior. Wellisch summered at Plenty Charm until she died in 1966. The house stands today with few alterations since it was built, an excellent representative of the work of a master carpenter and of summer life on Sand Island.⁷⁶

At East Bay, the mainstays of the summer community were the Disen, Aabel, Bonde, and Palm families. Jonette Loftfield offered room and board for summer tourists. The Loftfields also hosted Saturday night ice cream socials. Young Herman Jensch did not enjoy these because he had to dress up and the ice cream was salty. After Jonette Loftfield died, younger members of the Loftfield family spent summers at the family home on Sand Island. Harold Dahl’s son Melvin was not a fisherman like his brother Carl; he worked for Northwestern Bell in Minneapolis. About 1942 Mel Dahl bought the Disen summer home, and his family spent every summer there until they sold it to the federal government. In the late 1950s Howard and Richard Palm, sons of Ludwig Palm, purchased the Herman Johnson home (Johnson died in 1955) and moved it down the shore to serve as their summer home. Christian Aabel’s grandchildren were still coming in the 1960s. After Gert Wellisch vacated the lighthouse it housed new summer tenants including John B. Chapple, editor of the *Ashland Daily Press*, and A. D. Hulings.⁷⁷

On Rocky Island, the fish camps became family vacation retreats when the fishermen retired, or took other work as the fish populations declined. It was a logical transition—summers at the fish camps had always been a combination of work and

⁷⁶ Cain, “West Bay Club,” 5–6; Robert W. Mackreth, “Plenty Charm,” fact sheet (Bayfield: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 2004); “Teacher Gets Summer-Long Thrill Living in Lighthouse on Lake Superior Island,” *Minneapolis Journal*, September 27, 1926.

⁷⁷ Hillstrom interview; Melvin Dahl interview; Herman Jensch interview; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 298, 307; “Herman Johnson”; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, 3 January 2007; “Sand Island Deserted”; Peterson, “Camp Stella,” 515; “Sand Island Also Has Rugged Scenery,” *Ashland Daily Press*, October 27, 1973.

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pleasure for the fishermen's families. At the Erickson fish camp, Martin and Mel Erickson built a recreational cabin for Martin after he retired in 1948. Unlike the other cabins, it was set 250 feet back from the shore on a small hill, giving its occupants a sweeping view of Lake Superior. Mel Erickson's son Jack and grandson Marty were both commercial fishermen (Marty still fishes), but since the mid-1960s they have used the family's Rocky Island camp primarily for recreation. None of Charlie Benson's sons became fishermen, and they all left the Bayfield area but returned with their families in the summers to vacation at the Benson camp. In the 1940s Fred Benson added a summer cottage to the three cabins already at the camp. In 1966 Julian Nelson divided his fish camp into three parcels, deeding one parcel to his children; another to his sister and brother-in-law, Olive and Robert Jones; and the third to family friend John Chapin. Grandchildren of Olaf Edwards, from whom Julian Nelson purchased his fish camp in 1947, also vacationed at the Nelson fish camp. In addition to the Nourses, who operated the Rocky Island Air Haven, one more family built a vacation home on Rocky Island. In 1943 Grace Nourse's father, Vern Butler, purchased sixty-six acres at the southern end of Rocky Island where he built a three room log cabin and outbuildings. A retired logger and bartender, at first Butler and his wife summered at their cabin, with frequent visits from their children. In 1947 Butler started spending winters on the island. He prepared with plenty of food and firewood, but did not bother to bring a two way radio. He told a newspaper reporter "If something happens, well, let it happen. And if I die—well, they'll find me in the spring."⁷⁸ Illness forced Butler to leave Rocky Island in the early 1950s, and in 1957 he sold the property to the Lindgren family of Minneapolis.⁷⁹

There was a scattering of vacation homes on other islands, including Otter, Hermit, Basswood, Cat, and North Twin. On Bear Island, logger James Peterson built a log cabin for Madeline Island summer resident Leo Capser about 1940, in return for the right to log land that Capser owned on the island. Capser did not use the cabin very much and sold it in 1952. The cabin is extant today. On Long Island, Sigvart B. Sivertson purchased land toward the east end of the island in 1947 for a recreational fishing camp that was later used by his descendents. Sivertson and his family built a cabin and also used the fishermen's shanties that were built in the early 1900s. In 1958 the Raspberry Island light station was leased to Ellerbe Architects of Minneapolis, which used the light station as a vacation retreat for its employees for seventeen years. Ellerbee hired retired fisherman Mel Erickson and his wife Joyce as caretakers for the light station. Raspberry Island vacations proved a popular benefit—during one deer season there were thirty-five people at the station. Also in 1958, the federal government sold the Michigan Island light station, and in 1962 it was purchased by the Don Bliss family of Grosse Pointe, Michigan for a summer retreat.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Charles M. Sheridan, "Happy Hermit," *Duluth News-Tribune*, October 1, 1950.

⁷⁹ Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 112, 114–17; Holmer, "Superior Summer," 86–87, 103, 143–64; Sheridan, "Happy Hermit."

⁸⁰ Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, 23 August 2006; Williams, "Long Island," 100; Rathbun, "Light Stations," 79–80; Quinn Evans, "Raspberry Island Lighthouse," 12, 42; Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 178; Don Bliss, "Letter to the Editor," *Bayfield County Press*, October 11, 1962.

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The hunting and fishing resorts that became so popular in the Northwoods had their counterparts in the Apostle Islands. On South Twin Island, Lenus and Inga Jacobson opened the Trollers Home in the 1930s. When the South Twin fishermen left that island and moved to Rocky Island, Jacobson began renting their cabins to trollers. Guests typically stayed two to three nights and could rent beds, sheets, and firewood for fifty cents per night. The Jacobsons did not offer meals. Inga Jacobson did the cleaning and laundry; the Jacobson cabin was equipped with gas-powered electricity, running water, and an electric washing machine. Lenus also continued to fish commercially, which combined with the Trollers Home to provide a good living for the couple. When Lenus Jacobson retired he sold South Twin Island with Trollers Home to Carl Moe and George Englund of Bayfield. Moe and Englund expanded Trollers Home by adding a restaurant and opened it as Trollers Home Resort in May 1946 (figure 28). On opening day the Bayfield Commercial Club gave the new resort a boost by chartering the *Apostle Islands* for a trip to South Twin. The restaurant served eighty fish dinners that day. The following year the partners built a new dock and an additional cabin. Charter fishing boats brought their clients to Trollers Home Resort for a fish dinner and overnight stay at the end of their day of fishing. Sometimes trollers' wives came along on the trips but did not go out fishing, and Mary Ellen Moe served them a luncheon. Trollers Home Resort seems to have been a good idea at the wrong time. The sea lamprey, bad weather, and competition from the Rocky Island Air Haven presented obstacles it could not overcome. Moe and Englund sold the island in 1951. After going through several owners, South Twin Island was purchased in 1959 by John Atwood of Rockford, Illinois. Atwood planned to divide the island into parcels for vacation homes. These plans never materialized, but Atwood remodeled the Trollers Home restaurant to use as his own vacation home. Except for one log cabin, all of the buildings from Trollers Home have since been removed.⁸¹

The Rocky Island Air Haven was more successful than the Trollers Home Resort. Commercial fisherman Laurie Nourse was the son of Harvey and Emma Nourse, owners of the Pinehurst resort at Salmo. Laurie began fishing from Rocky Island in 1938 and bought property for a fish camp in 1941. Within a few years, the Nourses started serving coffee and pie to tourists who were waiting for fish to be loaded onto the *Apostle Islands*, Booth's collecting boat. In 1946 Laurie Nourse converted his net house into a dining room, and the Rocky Island Air Haven opened for business. At first Laurie Nourse worked in the Superior shipyards and on an ore boat, returning to Rocky Island on the weekends. In 1956 Laurie Nourse Jr. began running the *Gar How I* as an excursion boat. Passengers ordered their meals after they boarded the boat, and Laurie radioed the order to Grace, who with the help of her hired "girls" had the food ready when the boat arrived at noon. In the 1960s Laurie Nourse Sr. worked as captain of the *Chippewa* excursion boat, which also stopped at the Rocky Island Air Haven for lunch. The Nourses built sleeping cabins that attracted trollers in the summer and hunters in the fall. With cabins and tents, there were times when they accommodated as many as forty hunters. Grace

⁸¹ John Duva built the extant log cabin as a fish camp in the 1910s; today it is used for storage. Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 96–100, 112–14; "South Twin Memories," fact sheet, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore; "Outing at South Twin was Ideal; Weather Man Most Co-Operative," *Bayfield County Press*, June 20, 1946.



Figure 28. Mary Ellen Moe at Trollers Home Resort, South Twin Island, ca. 1950. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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Nourse served the hunters three meals a day, getting up at 4:00 a.m. (an hour earlier than in the summer) to make breakfast. The Rocky Island Air Haven stayed in business until it was purchased by the National Park Service. Subsequently the Nourses moved one of the sleeping cabins north along the shore to a location near the extant fish camps. The rest of the buildings have been removed. Despite the hard work, Grace Nourse loved Rocky Island and their life there. As she reflected later on: “I could hardly wait to get out to the island in the spring. . . . It was heaven to live out there.”⁸²

In 1945 fish dealer Irving Hadland purchased eighty acres at the southern end of Bear Island from logger James Peterson. Hadland used the property as island headquarters for his fishing operation and developed ambitious plans for a resort, including building an all-weather harbor, stocking the forest with deer and bear, and serving fish dinners. Although not all of Hadland’s ideas were implemented, he did open a camp for hunters.⁸³ On Basswood Island, brothers Robert and William Harrison supplemented their early 1950s logging operation with rental cabins for hunters and fishermen. In 1954 they offered accommodations for twenty-five.⁸⁴

Numerous other schemes to develop resorts in the Apostle Islands came to naught. Islands were sold and sold again as plans were made and abandoned. In 1923 a group of investors from Milwaukee purchased York Island from William Knight for “one of the largest resort projects in northern Wisconsin.” Plans were for a golf course and recreation grounds in the center of the island and cottages along the shore. The Milwaukee group also purchased forty acres at Little Sand Bay for a garage to house the automobiles of the cottagers. In 1928 investors from Indiana purchased both Outer and Michigan Islands (excluding the lighthouse reservations) with the intention of developing summer resorts on the islands. At that time the John Schroeder Lumber Company was logging Outer Island, for which it owned the timber rights but not the land. In 1929 a Chicago man purchased North Twin (then called Brownstone) Island, intending to build a summer home and rental cabins for trollers. In that year the *Bayfield County Press* reported that most of the available islands had been purchased recently by individuals or groups with plans to develop them in the near future. There were development schemes on the mainland also, among them the South Shore subdivision at Little Sand Bay. In the 1920s a group of area residents formed the South Shore Club and platted the South Shore subdivision with 103 lots that they intended to sell for vacation homes. Although sales were few, the dock and park that the club built were popular for fishing, swimming,

⁸² Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 101–109; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 325–26; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 83–85; Goc, *On the Rock*, 66. Grace Nourse quoted in Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 108.

⁸³ The Trollers Home Resort and Rocky Island Air Haven preempted Hadland’s plans to serve fish dinners.

⁸⁴ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 326; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 112; “Irving Hadland Starts Work on Unique Bear Island Resort,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 11, 1945; “Work on Island Resorts is Making Some Progress,” *Bayfield County Press*, April 18, 1946; Robert Mackreth, e-mail to author, October 18, 2006; Ellis, “Bayfield Brothers Resort Dream”; Ben F. Waskow and George A. Curran, “Deer Hunting on the Apostle Islands,” *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin* 19 no. 10 (1954): 6.

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camping, picnics, and community events. Such speculative schemes were typical of the 1920s, and they typically failed during the Depression.⁸⁵

Madeline Island was like a siren's song to developers. During the 1920s at least two companies—the Midwest Finance Corporation and the Madeline Inn Corporation—promoted summer home and resort development on Madeline Island. In 1963 Apostle Islands, Inc., made plans for a \$2.2 million year-round resort complex with a three hundred room hotel and seventy-five cottages on seven hundred acres. This particular resort was not built, but within a few years summer resident Theodore Gary—son of Hunter Gary—built a new marina and golf course and laid plans for luxury vacation homes surrounding the golf course.⁸⁶

Vacationers came to the Chequamegon region for recreation more than for hay fever relief. Fishing, swimming, boating, and picnicking were favorite activities for Americans taking lakeshore vacations. Little Sand Bay abounded in activities for day trippers and tourists, who could rent one of Hermie Johnson's cabins for a longer stay. On the western side of the Bayfield Peninsula, Charlie Saxine created a recreation spot similar to Little Sand Bay, offering boating, swimming, fishing, picnicking, and playground equipment. Visitors could also camp on the grounds for the "nominal" fee of fifty cents per car per day. The sandy beaches on York and Long islands, relatively close to the mainland, were popular for swimming and picnicking, as was the beach at Big Bay on Madeline Island. Recreational boating, already a popular activity, became even more so, sailing especially. Yachts became commonplace among the wealthy summer residents of Madeline Island. In August 1946 the first annual Bayfield Regatta featured races and a boat parade. Golf and tennis were not specifically part of the lakeshore experience, but by the 1920s—when a golf course and tennis court were built at the Old Mission Inn—they were expected at resorts. Vacationers also looked for evening entertainment, typically in the form of music and dancing. In 1925 the Midwest Finance Corporation, which was selling vacation property on Madeline Island, built the Lakeside Pavilion in Bayfield to help boost tourism in the region. The Lakeside Pavilion reputedly had one of the finest dance floors in northern Wisconsin. The taverns that opened following Prohibition also offered dancing. Crowds of people went dancing at Hermie Johnson's tavern at Little Sand Bay.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ "York Island to Become a Big Summer Resort," *Bayfield County Press*, November 9, 1923; "Isle in Apostle Group Sold for Summer Resort," *Duluth News Tribune*, January 29, 1928; "Michigan Island Sold," *Bayfield County Press*, April 26, 1928; "Inspect Outer Island," *Bayfield County Press*, June 28, 1928; "Brownstone Island Sold to Chicago Man," *Bayfield County Press*, August 8, 1929; "Tourist Season Finished"; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 103–104; tract file 01-104, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore; National Park Service, *Little Sand Bay*, 28, 45.

⁸⁶ Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 103; Goc, *On the Rock*, 77–81; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 59; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 319–21.

⁸⁷ "Saxine Place at Squaw Bay, Attractive Amusement Place," *Bayfield County Press*, August 20, 1925; "York Island Resort"; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 103, 113–14, 116, 118, 127–28; "Plans Being Made for Big Waterfront Regatta," *Bayfield County Press*, June 20, 1946; Minnesota Historical Society, "Minnesota's Lake Superior"; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 248; Sheree Peterson, "Bayfield's Lakeside Pavilion to be Renovated," *Bayfield Courier* 33 (December 1994); "Bayfield Lakeside Pavilion Renovation Statement," brochure in collection of Bayfield Heritage Association; "Life

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An emphasis on entertainment is also evident in the festivals and pageants that Bayfield promoters began staging in the 1920s to attract more tourists and sell local products. The Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, held in 1924 and 1925, was the granddaddy of them all—an over-the-top spectacle based loosely on Apostle Islands history that became a legend in itself. At an outdoor amphitheatre by Red Cliff Bay, four hundred Ojibwe plus additional actors and dancers dramatized Apostle Islands history up to the mid-nineteenth century. The pageant opened with a parade of thirty-two mounted cavalry musicians; the scenes that followed included a dance of twenty Indian maidens, an Ojibwe-Iroquois battle, the landing of Marquette at Chequamegon Bay, and more. The pageant organizers targeted automobile tourists in their promotion, hoping that close to one hundred thousand people would attend. But it rained for eighteen out of the twenty-one days that the pageant was performed in 1924, and total attendance was only fifteen thousand. In 1925 twelve thousand people viewed the pageant, and by the end of that season the pageant corporation was sixty thousand dollars in debt. Had the pageant been more successful, perhaps it would have helped to alleviate poverty on the Red Cliff and Bad River reservations, though it was more about exploiting the Ojibwe than assisting them. In 1928 the pageant grounds were sold to a Chicago group who built a hunting, fishing, and recreational club that later included the popular Pageant Tavern.⁸⁸

Other events held in the 1920s and 1930s included a winter carnival and dog derby, the Paul Bunyan Festival, and the Father Baraga Centennial at La Pointe in 1935. The most successful event was Bayfield's strawberry festival, first held in 1931 to mark the beginning of strawberry season. Celebrated with a parade and dance and plenty of strawberry shortcake, by the early 1940s the one-day event was attracting four thousand people. In the 1950s the strawberry festival was merged with the Bayfield Regatta, resulting in the Strawberry Regatta, which included a shortcake baking contest to select the strawberry queen. In 1956 the strawberry festival was integrated into the Bayfield Centennial. The Bayfield Apple Festival took the place of the strawberry festival in the 1960s. The first apple festival was held in 1926 as a way to sell that year's bumper crop of apples. During the 1940s a harvest festival featured but was not limited to apples. The apple festival was revived in 1955, and in the early 1960s it became an annual event. The event centered on a parade, crowning of an apple queen, and apple sales, but it grew to include a variety of other activities ranging from carnival rides to apple contests. Attendance grew from four thousand people in 1962 to six thousand people in 1965 to more than twelve thousand people in 1973. Attendance reached sixty thousand people in 2005, and the Bayfield Apple Festival continues today as one of Wisconsin's most popular festivals.⁸⁹

As I Remember"; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore photograph collection, negative numbers 1466 #16A (17), 1466 #32A (33).

⁸⁸ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 250–57; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 99–101, 116; "Indian Pageant Opens at Bayfield," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 2, 1924; "Pageant Purpose Fulfilled Says Writer," *Bayfield County Press*, October 8, 1924; "Pageant Grounds Now Owned by Chicago Men," *Bayfield County Press*, March 15, 1928.

⁸⁹ Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 99, 105, 117–18, 125–26; "Cold Delays Bunyan Celebration at Bayfield," *Duluth News Tribune*, January 25, 1937; "Hundreds Honor Paul Bunyan at Bayfield Fete," *Duluth News Tribune*, March 21, 1938; "Plans Being Made for Apostle Island Week," *Bayfield County*

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Festivals helped to boost tourism, but the success of the Chequamegon region as a vacation destination was based on outdoor recreation, which was, in turn, rooted in the region's natural resources. Lake Superior; inland lakes, rivers, and streams; forests; and the fish and wildlife that they supported made the Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay area ideal for outdoor recreation. Fishing, hunting, and camping, which had been growing in popularity since the late nineteenth century, flourished in the prosperous 1920s and boomed in the years following World War II. Fishing ranked high among vacation activities—a 1960 survey of Wisconsin vacationers found fishing to be the second biggest reason why people vacationed in the state, following scenery and sightseeing. Abundant inland lakes and trout streams played an important role in attracting sport fishermen—Bayfield County promotional materials claimed 350 miles of “Wisconsin’s best” trout streams and 300 spring water lakes stocked with bass, walleye, northerns, muskies, perch, blue gills, and crappies. But Bayfield’s reputation as a premier location for lake trout trolling brought even greater benefit to local businesses. Interest in trolling increased rapidly after 1926, when a troller near Munising, Michigan, reputedly caught fifteen hundred pounds of fish in five hours. On the eve of World War II an estimated five thousand trollers came to Bayfield each year. Generally between twenty and thirty charter fishing boats operated out of Bayfield. Some commercial fishermen cleaned up their fish tugs for charter fishing trips, whereas others made substantial investments in boats specially equipped to attract affluent clients.⁹⁰

The charter boat owners formed the Bayfield Trollers Association to look after their interests, and established their headquarters at the Log Cabin Trolling Service, a reservation service for trollers started by Inez Gonias, whose husband operated a trolling boat. One of the association’s initiatives was a weekly and season prize for the biggest lake trout taken on a member’s boat. In 1938 Robert Feldmeier of Russell Township, trolling on the Hokenson fish tug *Twilite*, won the season prize with a lake trout that weighed forty-four pounds and one ounce, a record that has apparently remained unbroken. Winter ice fishing, or bobbing, also grew in popularity. During the Depression bobbing was about food and income as well as sport, but after the war

Press, August 15, 1935; “Baraga Mission Centennial August 29–30,” *Bayfield County Press*, August 22, 1935; “Island Event Gets Favorable Publicity,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 5, 1935; Peterson, “Lakeside Pavilion”; “Tribute is Paid to Bayfield Area in Program Here,” *Duluth News Tribune*, May 18, 1942; “Committee Calls for Strawberry Regatta and Shortcake Baking Queen Candidates,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 17, 1954; “9-Day Bayfield Centennial Fete Set,” *Duluth News Tribune*, June 29, 1956; Cain, “Apple Horticulture,” 202–207; *Bayfield County Press*, October 7, 1965; *Bayfield Festive Apple Cookbook and Almanac* (Ashland: Paradigm Press, 1999), 90.

⁹⁰ Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 60–68; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 335–36, 342; Fine and Werner, “Tourist-Vacation Industry,” 15–16; *Bayfield County at the Top O’ Wisconsin*; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 379–81; Lawrie and Rahrer, “Lake Superior: A Case History,” 41–42; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 263; Ross, *La Pointe*, 171–72; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 350; “War Cuts Bayfield’s Tourist Traffic,” *Ashland Daily Press*, August 9, 1943; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 108–111; “Lake Trolling is ‘Big Business’: 21 Boats are Large Investment,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 12, 1947; “Deep Sea Fishing Among Historic Apostle Islands,” *Sports and Recreation in the Upper Midwest* (July–August 1949): 14–16; Virginia Beauchamp, “Trolling Days Used to be Bigger,” *County Journal* (Cable, WI), May 24, 1989; *Trolling and Bobbing in Lake Superior*, brochure in collections of Wisconsin Historical Society library, Madison.

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bobbing gained adherents among sport fishermen. In March 1947 the *Bayfield County Press* reported that nineteen planes had landed on the Lake Superior ice the previous Sunday, bringing bobbers from Milwaukee, Ontonagon, Michigan, and elsewhere. When fish populations began their precipitous decline in the 1950s, sport fishermen, commercial fishermen, and Ojibwe fishermen came into conflict. In 1962 the state closed the commercial lake trout fishery on Lake Superior to give the lake trout population a chance to recover, but it continued to allow sport fishing, in part because commercial fishermen's nets caught more fish and thus put more pressure on the fish population, but also because sport fishing was increasingly perceived as having greater value than commercial fishing to the local economy. When the lake trout population recovered and commercial fishing was again permitted, licensing and quotas favored sport fishermen.⁹¹

Hunting became prominent in the Apostle Islands in the mid-twentieth century. In part this was because hunting for sport (as opposed to hunting for food), once the province of the wealthy, became more common among the middle class. Between 1940 and 1960 the number of hunting licenses issued in Wisconsin increased from 400,000 to 622,000. More importantly, during this same period deer proliferated in the second growth hardwood forests of the Apostle Islands. In the early 1900s, island residents and vacationers who wanted to hunt went to the mainland; it was news when J. O. Valeen killed a buck on Oak Island in 1909. In 1919 a biologist reported a very light deer population in the Apostle Islands. But by the mid-1930s deer were numerous on a number of islands, and the fall deer hunting season began to play a role in the island tourism industry. Madeline Island had particularly good deer hunting, and island residents and mainland hunting clubs built hunting camps on the island. On one day in October 1945 there were an estimated three hundred hunters on Madeline. Rocky, Bear, Basswood, Manitou, and Stockton islands, which offered high densities of deer and relatively open forest, were also popular hunting islands. But a majority of islands had deer, and hunters went to all of those. By the late 1940s the islands were overrun with deer, which had reduced their food supply to dangerously low levels. In order to thin the deer population, in 1954 the Wisconsin Conservation Commission established an "any deer" season for all of the Apostle Islands except Madeline, during which each hunter was permitted to take one deer regardless of age or sex. Hunters flocked to the islands, and that season they killed 411 deer including 124 from Rocky Island, which had the highest deer density of any of the islands (figure 29). In 1955 the Apostle Islands hunt took 254 deer, and in 1956 the total was down to 209.⁹² Starvation and hunting reduced

⁹¹ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 350–53; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 110–11; "19 Planes at Bayfield 'Airport' as Ideal Weather Lures Bobbers," *Bayfield County Press*, March 13, 1947; Ruth Moon, interview, August 4, 1988, tapes 74 and 75, videotape with written summary, Bayfield Video Archives, John Hanson, director, Bayfield Carnegie Library; "All-Time Lake Trout Trolling Catch is Made," *Ashland Daily Press*, August 8, 1938; "Deep Sea Fishing," 15; Beauchamp, "Trolling Days"; *Trolling and Bobbing*; Virginia Beauchamp, "Bobbing Used to be More Difficult Sport," *Bayfield County Press*, March 14, 1991; Visser, "Fish and the Chippewa," 8–12; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 331.

⁹² Statistics for 1954 through 1956 do not include Madeline Island.



Figure 29. Deer hunters on Rocky Island, ca. 1954. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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the deer population, and the number of deer killed by hunters continued to decline, reaching a low of 9 deer in 1972. Bears were also hunted on the islands.⁹³

Camping ranked below hunting and fishing in popularity as a vacation activity, although it increased after World War II as part of the outdoor recreation boom. After Camp Stella closed, camping was also a more individual, lower profile activity than trolling or hunting (although some hunters camped out), which makes it difficult to get a sense of how much camping took place on the islands. References in newspapers, diaries, and other sources indicate that both locals and tourists camped in the Apostle Islands. Camping was common in the state parks and forests in the islands in the 1960s. One camping trip that was definitely not low profile took place in June 1959, when the Boy Scouts held a camporee on Stockton Island. Five hundred boy scouts and leaders from northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula attended the weekend-long camporee. The daunting task of transporting the scouts and leaders to the island was handled by the landing craft tank *Outer Island*, donated for the event by the Lullabye Furniture Company. The trip on the *Outer Island* seems to have generated as much excitement as the camporee itself. Tents, bedding, food, and supplies were moved by the *Outer Island* and by local boats. In 1960 the camporee was moved to Otter Island, and bigger plans were made for a four-day event marking the golden jubilee of the Boy Scouts. Work parties from Bayfield equipped with shovels, axes, and chain saws began work two months in advance, preparing campsites and assembly areas, clearing out logging roads, and building a boat landing. The abandoned Northern Hardwood Veneers logging camp was rehabilitated for use as camporee headquarters. This time fifteen hundred scouts, leaders, and personnel attended the camporee, and the *Outer Island* transported them three hundred at a time to Otter Island (figure 30). The program included competitive events such as signaling and totem pole carving, demonstrations by the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard, and campfire ceremonies. Despite all of its logistical challenges, the camporee was a huge success and generated widespread publicity for the Apostle Islands.⁹⁴

⁹³ Braden and Endelman, *Americans on Vacation*, 60–62; Bawden, “Escape to Wisconsin,” 2–3; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 89; *Bayfield County Press*, December 3, 1909; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 326–30; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 118; Julian Nelson, conversation with Robert B. Brander, March 7, 1980, memo in Apostle Islands National Lakeshore files; Neuman, “What Are Those Cabins Doing There,” 107, 160; Holmer, “Superior Summer,” 84; “Claims 400 Deer Starved on Island,” *Ashland Daily Press*, May 18, 1948; “Dr. Ellison’s Letter Concerning Madeline Island Deer Survey,” *Ashland Daily Press*, June 14, 1948; Waskow and Curran, “Deer Hunting,” 3, 6–7; “Outlying Apostle Islands Have Become Mecca for Down-State Bow-and-Arrow Deer Hunters,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 21, 1954; “Stories of Apostle Islands Overrun by Deer Herds Bring in Early an Army of Optimistic Hunters,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 18, 1954; “A Few Island Deer Hunting Parties Beat Records Established Earlier by Bow-and-Arrow Hunters,” *Bayfield County Press*, November 25, 1954; “Only Fair Luck So Far for Island Deer Hunters,” *Bayfield County Press*, October 8, 1959; “Apostle Islands Deer Hunt Due,” *Duluth News Tribune*, October 9, 1960; Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 334.

⁹⁴ Fine and Werner, “Tourist-Vacation Industry,” 4, 19; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 336; Benton, *Golden Days*, S-5; “Two Major Scouting Events Are Being Planned for Apostle Islands During the Summer Season,” *Bayfield County Press*, March 12, 1959; “More Than a Thousand Boy Scouts and Leaders Coming to Bayfield for Stockton Island Camporee,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 18, 1959; “Boy Scout Camporee Held on Stockton Island Was Great Success, Say All Persons Concerned,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 25, 1959; “16 Boy Scout Council Executives and Leaders on Inspection Tour of Otter



Figure 30. Boy Scouts landing on Otter Island for 1960 camporee. Courtesy of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Island Camporee Site," *Bayfield County Press*, April 28, 1960; "Stories about Otter Island Boy Scout Camporee Are Bringing Wide Publicity to Apostle Islands," and "'Outer Island' Must Move a City of 2,000, Plus Gear," *Bayfield County Press*, May 12, 1960; "Work Party," *Bayfield County Press*, May 19, 1960; "Final Evening Ceremony Will Highlight Camporee," *Bayfield County Press*, June 2, 1960; "Otter Island Camporee Is Just Six Days Away," *Bayfield County Press*, June 16, 1960; "Otter Island Camporee Is Officially Under Way As 'Outer Island' Loads Vanguard of Scouts," *Bayfield County Press*, June 23, 1960; "City of 1500 Boy Scouts and Men Is Moved Efficiently, without Mishap, Back to Mainland," *Bayfield County Press*, June 30, 1960.

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The outdoor activities that drew tourists to the Apostle Islands would not have been as appealing without the scenic beauty of the islands. By the mid-twentieth century the regenerated forests had covered most of the scars from logging, and the Apostle Islands had much to offer the large segment of the vacationing public seeking scenery and sightseeing. The best way to see island scenery was by boat, and for the majority of tourists to the region, who stayed on the mainland, a boat excursion was most expedient and affordable. In 1925 the Indian Pageant publicity department published information on “alluring boat trips” that stopped at Indian Pageant Park and toured the islands. The *Bruce* circled the islands on Wednesdays and Saturdays and on Sundays made excursions to Devils Island, with music on board by the Northwoods Orchestra. The *Antoinette* offered three hour excursions every morning and was available for charter in the afternoon. The *Turner* and the *Roy*, owned by Booth Fisheries and S. L. Boutin respectively, took passengers on their daily collecting trips to the islands. In 1926 the Apostle Islands Transportation Company acquired the *Bruce*, which previously ran from Duluth to Bayfield and Ashland, to serve as a ferry boat between Ashland, Bayfield, Washburn, and Madeline Island as well as an excursion boat. Members of the Woods family, who were stockholders in the Apostle Islands Transportation Company, remodeled the *Bruce* and renamed her the *Madeline*. Until 1932, when she was put into service between Houghton, Michigan, and Isle Royale, the *Madeline* was the premier Apostle Islands sightseeing excursion boat. After 1932 the number of excursion offerings diminished. Because people traveled by auto between Bayfield, Ashland, and Washburn, they no longer needed ferry service, and by 1940 only the Bayfield to La Pointe ferries remained. There were not enough tourists to support a full time excursion boat, and the fish collecting boats became the sightseers’ best option.⁹⁵

By the late 1930s, with the S. L. Boutin Fish Company out of business, the Booth Fisheries Company was both the oldest and the largest fish company in Bayfield. In 1938 Booth replaced the *Turner* with the *Apostle Islands*, a diesel-powered boat built for the dual purpose of fish handling and sightseeing. Booth advertised “Attention Vacationers! A day of complete relaxation on Lake Superior will do wonders for your morale.”⁹⁶ The all day boat trip left Bayfield at 10:15 a.m., visiting the western islands on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and the eastern islands on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Grace Lee Nute recommended a trip on the *Apostle Islands* in her book *Lake Superior* (1944). The *Apostle Islands* continued its fish collecting and sightseeing excursion service until 1958, leaving a gap in the local tourism industry when it stopped. Two years earlier Laurie Nourse Jr. had purchased the Madeline Island ferry boat *Gar How I* and began running it as an excursion boat, but that was not enough to meet the demand. In 1960 Bob Weber began an excursion boat service, and in 1961 he began running the *Chippewa*, with a 105-passenger capacity. By the early 1970s Weber had added the *Sea*

⁹⁵ Fine and Werner, “Tourist-Vacation Industry,” 15–16; “Alluring Boat Trips For the Visitors,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 23, 1925; *Bayfield County Press*, July 16, 1925; “Steamer Bruce Again Operates,” *Bayfield County Press*, September 16, 1926; “Steamer Madeline In First Trip June 24,” *Bayfield County Press*, June 25, 1931; “Madeline Island Ferry”; Goc, *On the Rock*, 37, 73; Rathbun and Rathbun, “Historic Tourism,” 105–107, 112–13.

⁹⁶ *Ashland Daily Press*, June 30, 1945.

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Queen II and the *Islander* for a total capacity of 375 passengers on the three boats. The *Chippewa* made an all day cruise with a lunch stop at the Rocky Island Air Haven, while the other two boats made shorter trips, offering a variety of itineraries.⁹⁷

Sightseers were interested in history as well as scenery, and the Apostle Islands tourism industry was not shy about trading on its historic past, as is evident in the Indian Pageant of the mid-1920s. At the time of the pageant, Nelson's Store in Bayfield built the Apostle Island Trading Post, which attempted to duplicate a building at the American Fur Company trading post at La Pointe. The Apostle Island Trading Post proved popular with tourists and was more convenient than a trip to Madeline Island. Nevertheless, Madeline Island was the premier historic attraction in the Chequamegon region, despite the scarcity of historic buildings on the island. Much of the village of La Pointe, including most of the American Fur Company buildings, was long gone, destroyed in the 1869 fire. But there were more recent losses. Father Baraga's Catholic church was destroyed by fire in 1901, and Treaty Hall burned down in 1923. The Protestant church, which had been moved to the Old Mission grounds, collapsed in 1943. The Old Mission building was demolished in the mid-1960s. But there was a "new" historic attraction, the Madeline Island Historical Museum, which preserved some of the tangible pieces of the island's past and interpreted island history. The museum was created by Leo Capser, a St. Paul businessman who began summering on Madeline Island in 1903, and his wife Bella. The Capsers befriended island trapper, hunter, and amateur archaeologist Al Galazen, whose personal collection of historical artifacts became the core of the museum collection. Madeline Island historian Hamilton Nelson Ross advised the Capsers on the museum's development. The museum was composed of four log buildings that were moved to a site near the end of the La Pointe dock and joined together. Additional building materials were salvaged from the ruins of the Protestant church and the first La Pointe lighthouse on Long Island. Gram Johnson, the matriarch of Madeline Island, donated the first building, one of the last remaining buildings built by the American Fur Company. The other buildings were Gust Dahlin's barn, the old town jail, and the Old Sailors' Home, built by Olaf Anderson in memory of his brother who drowned in Lake Superior.⁹⁸ The Madeline Island Historical Museum opened to the public in 1958 and by 1967 had reached a yearly visitation of ten thousand people. In 1969 ownership of the non-profit museum was transferred to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (now the Wisconsin Historical Society).⁹⁹

⁹⁷ John B. Chapple, "Ever Had a Trip on the Apostle Islands Among the Islands?" in *The Wisconsin Islands, The Famous Apostle Islands at the Top of Wisconsin* (Ashland Daily Press, 1945); Neuman, "What Are Those Cabins Doing There," 55, 103; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 263-67; Goc, *On the Rock*, 66; Rathbun and Rathbun, "Historic Tourism," 122, 127; Benton, *Golden Days*, S-5; "'Chippewa' Is Approved for Use on Islands Run; Plans Take Shape for Next Wednesday's Party," *Bayfield County Press*, October 19, 1961.

⁹⁸ Gust Dahlin, son of Olaf, came to the U.S. in 1896 and like his father was a farmer and builder. Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Survey," 19.

⁹⁹ "Many Tourists Register at Trading Post," *Bayfield County Press*, July 16, 1924; Ross, *La Pointe*, 164, 172, 174; "Hard Work, Cooperation, Dreams Build Madeline Island Museum," *Wisconsin Then and Now* 14 (April 1968): 1-3; "Madeline Island Historical Museum Opens Sunday," *Ashland Daily Press*, June 10, 1958; "Madeline Island Museum Is Officially Opened," *Ashland Daily Press*, June 17, 1958; Holzhueter, *Madeline Island*, 58.

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State and National Parks

The first organized effort to create a national park in the Apostle Islands began in the late 1920s. Local business and community leaders were trying to develop tourism as a replacement for the lumber industry, which was greatly reduced and still declining. The Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, the biggest tourist venture so far, was a financial failure, but it brought thousands of people to the region. These local leaders hoped that publicity from the Indian Pageant and from President Coolidge's 1928 visit would help to gain support for a national park that would bring thousands of people annually to the Chequamegon region. They were also concerned that wealthy summer people would buy so much island property that the Apostle Islands would become a private reserve, unavailable to the permanent population of the region. John B. Chapple wrote "Do we want the Apostle Islands grabbed from under our nose and plastered with 'Private—Keep Out' signs?"¹⁰⁰ A national park would preserve the islands for public use. Representatives from Bayfield, Ashland, and Washburn formed the Apostle Islands National Park Committee and enlisted Wisconsin Congressman Hubert H. Peavey to pursue their cause at the federal level. They envisioned a park that would include part of Madeline Island and perhaps some of the smaller islands. Peavey introduced a bill to Congress to authorize the investigation of a national park in the Apostle Islands; the bill was enacted in May 1930. In August the National Park Service sent Boston landscape architect Harlan P. Kelsey to the upper Great Lakes to investigate four candidates for national park designation including the Apostle Islands and Isle Royale. Advocates for an Apostle Islands National Park emphasized the scenic, historic, and recreational value of the islands and noted their accessibility to millions of people in the Midwest. Kelsey, however, was horrified by the effects of logging and forest fires on the islands, and in his report he stated that the islands did not meet the standards for a national park. By comparison, he found Isle Royale to be a much better candidate. Kelsey recognized that the Apostle Islands had historic, scientific, and recreational value and suggested that they be preserved as a national monument, national forest, or state park. But the cost of land acquisition was the final obstacle for a national park or any of the other options, as there was little publicly-owned land in the islands at that time. Two subsequent park service investigators confirmed Kelsey's conclusions, and in 1936 the National Park Service ended its investigation of a national park in the Apostle Islands. Isle Royale National Park was authorized by Congress in 1931 and established in 1940.¹⁰¹

During the 1920s and 1930s large areas of cutover land in the Lake Superior region reverted to county governments as the result of tax delinquency. Government agencies used some of this land to create county, state, and national forests that were managed for forestry but also used for recreation. During the 1930s Ashland and Bayfield counties established county forests on the mainland, and in 1933 the federal government established Chequamegon National Forest with holdings in both counties. After World War II the outdoor recreation boom created a nationwide shortage of public parks and forests with recreational facilities. In Wisconsin, visits to state parks grew

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 349.

¹⁰¹ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 313–20; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 173–200; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 347–49.

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from three million in 1951 to more than five million in 1956. Recreation advocates looked to northern Wisconsin, with its abundance of recreational resources, as the logical place for more state parks. Government officials also hoped that recreation-based economic development would help to alleviate economic hardship in the region. The Apostle Islands were an obvious target. In 1950 the influential Milwaukee County Conservation Alliance—an alliance of sportsmen’s clubs—submitted a resolution to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission requesting a feasibility study of state acquisition of the Apostle Islands for recreational use. When state officials visited the islands they found that the regenerated forests fit their definition of a wilderness, with scientific and recreational value.¹⁰²

In 1955 the Wisconsin Conservation Commission adopted a “Policy on Acquisition of an Apostle Islands Wilderness Area.” The policy stated the commission’s interest in acquiring land in the Apostle Islands for a wilderness area that would preserve the islands’ historical, geological, plant, and animal resources for research and wilderness-type recreation. The Wisconsin Conservation Department had no money for immediate acquisition, but it focused its planning on Stockton, Oak, and Basswood islands. Most of Stockton Island was owned by the William Vilas estate. Ashland County owned the remaining seventy-two acres on Stockton Island plus much of Basswood Island and all of Oak Island. The Vilas estate leased its Stockton Island holdings with an option to buy to the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Ashland County officials, however, did not want an unmanaged wilderness area in the islands—they wanted a state park with well-developed recreational facilities to attract tourists and serve local residents. They refused to give the state a purchase option for a wilderness area. Despite this opposition, in 1959 the Wisconsin Conservation Commission created Apostle Islands State Forest consisting of Stockton, Oak, and Basswood islands. The Wisconsin Conservation Department purchased Stockton Island (exclusive of the county’s holdings) but was not able to acquire the other two islands. In 1963 the Wisconsin Conservation Department responded to local requests for a state park by establishing Big Bay State Park on Madeline Island. Within a few years, however, Big Bay State Park became embroiled in controversy. Summer residents and developers led by Theodore Gary opposed the state park, while supporters argued that the park would serve the greater public, not just the wealthy. By that time the advancing prospects for an Apostle Islands National Lakeshore had reshaped the entire public lands scenario in the Chequamegon region.¹⁰³

The movement to create Apostle Islands National Lakeshore grew out of the same motives as the movement to create a state park—to protect natural resources, to alleviate

¹⁰² “County Forests Program History,” Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,” http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/history/history_county.htm; Seventh American Forest Conference Communities Committee, “Community Forest Conference Questionnaire for the Bayfield Wisconsin County Forest, 2/28/05,” online at <http://www.communitiescommittee.org/conference/pdf/WI%20County%20Forests.pdf>; “Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest—Area History,” U.S. Department of Agriculture/Forest Service, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/general/history/index.html>; Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 335–43; Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 55–59, 69–70, 77, 82, 101–109.

¹⁰³ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 343–50; Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 109–37, 312, 315–20; Goc, *On the Rock*, 77–80.

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the shortage of public places for outdoor recreation, and to generate economic development. These goals informed the policies of Gaylord A. Nelson, a key figure in the creation of the modern environmental movement, who was elected governor in 1958. Nelson made Wisconsin into a national model for conservation. One of his greatest achievements as governor was the 1961 Outdoor Recreation Act Program (ORAP), which authorized a cigarette tax to fund a fifty million dollar state program to acquire land for recreation and conservation.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, federal agencies were recommending the acquisition of Great Lakes shoreline for public recreation areas. A National Park Service study of the Great Lakes shoreline identified the Bayfield Peninsula, Stockton Island, and Kakagon and Bad River sloughs as areas that were potentially significant. Activity and discussion generated by the ORAP and federal studies led the Bad River Tribal Council to pass a resolution on May 10, 1962, requesting the governor of Wisconsin and U.S. secretary of the interior to study the feasibility of a national shoreline recreation area on the Bad River Reservation. The tribal council was interested in sensitive development that would provide economic opportunity on the chronically depressed reservation while preserving the reservation's natural resources and cultural traditions. Later that month, when Governor Nelson met with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall regarding the Bad River resolution, he stressed that the area should be a recreation area, not a national park, as the former would allow continued hunting, fishing, and wild rice harvesting while protecting the area's wilderness qualities.¹⁰⁵

National recreation areas have their roots in the New Deal programs of the 1930s. At that time the National Park Service began to play a central role in planning for public recreation areas at all levels of government. The 1936 Parks, Parkways, and Recreation Act established the basis for national recreation areas as part of the national park system. With this background, in 1941 Congress designated Cape Hatteras as a national seashore recreational area. Hunting and fishing—prohibited in national parks—were permitted at Cape Hatteras, and recreation was emphasized, as long as these activities did not interfere with preservation of the seashore's natural qualities.¹⁰⁶ It was another twenty years before Cape Cod National Seashore was created in 1961, followed by national seashores at Point Reyes, California, and Padre Island, Texas, in 1962. These provided important precedents as Apostle Islands National Lakeshore took shape. The requirements for national recreation areas and seashores were further defined in the next few years, and their place within the national park system was clarified.¹⁰⁷

The federal investigation prompted by the Bad River resolution was quickly broadened to include the Apostle Islands and Bayfield Peninsula in addition to the Bad River and Kakagon sloughs, the whole to constitute Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. In November 1962 Gaylord Nelson was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he was a leader in advocating for environmental protection. At Nelson's suggestion, President John F.

¹⁰⁴ ORAP funds were used to create Big Bay State Park.

¹⁰⁵ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 338, 354–57; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 201–202, 205–36, 783–84; Keith Schneider, "Gaylord A. Nelson, Founder of Earth Day, Is Dead at 89," *New York Times*, July 4, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Because no funds were appropriated for land acquisition, Cape Hatteras National Seashore was not actually established until 1953.

¹⁰⁷ Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 149–66, 239–40, 268–69.

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Kennedy embarked on a five-day, eleven-state “conservation tour” in September 1963. In Wisconsin, Kennedy toured the Apostle Islands by helicopter and spoke to a crowd of ten thousand people in Ashland. In his Ashland speech, Kennedy emphasized the benefits to northern Wisconsin of combining natural resource conservation with the development of recreational resources. “If promptly developed, recreational activities and now national park, forest and recreation areas can bolster your economy and provide pleasure for millions of people. . . . Lake Superior, the Apostle Islands, the Bad River area, are all unique. They are worth improving for the benefit of sportsmen and tourists. . . . Lake Superior has a beauty that millions can enjoy.”¹⁰⁸ President Kennedy’s visit helped to further progress toward an Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. In April 1964 Secretary Udall appointed a task force with representatives from federal agencies, the state of Wisconsin, and the Red Cliff and Bad River tribal councils to conduct a full study of the national lakeshore. The task force proposed a national lakeshore consisting of three units. The Apostle Islands Unit would contain all of the islands except for Madeline, excluded because of its permanent population, summer homes, high property values, extensive road system, and Big Bay State Park. The twenty-one islands proposed for inclusion would be preserved as wild natural areas with limited facilities. The Red Cliff Unit extending along the shoreline of the Bayfield Peninsula was mostly within the boundaries of the Red Cliff Reservation. This unit would have park headquarters, a scenic road, and extensive docking and picnicking facilities. The Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs Unit would consist of the marshlands and adjacent shoreline on the Bad River Reservation. Facilities in this unit would include a ranger station and docking facilities, with strict controls on boat access to preserve the wild character of the sloughs.¹⁰⁹

In September 1965 Senator Nelson introduced legislation to Congress to create Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. For reasons mostly bureaucratic, it was nearly two years before the Senate held its first hearings on the lakeshore in June 1967. Over the next three years the Senate and the House of Representatives held multiple hearings, altogether generating nearly one thousand pages of testimony. The political climate at the federal level was favorable. In 1966 Congress designated the first national lakeshores—Indiana Dunes on Lake Michigan and Pictured Rocks on Lake Superior. Pictured Rocks was envisioned as part of a regional network of national parks, forests, and recreation areas in the upper Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. Already in place were Isle Royale National Park in Michigan; Grand Portage National Monument (1960) in Minnesota; and six national forests, including Superior National Forest and its Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Planning was underway for St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in Wisconsin and Minnesota (1968, 1972), Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan (1970), and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota (1971). The Canadian national parks on the north shore of Lake Superior were also seen as part of the upper Great Lakes network. Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was an integral part of this scenario. Congress authorized the Upper Great Lakes Regional Commission in 1965 to coordinate regional economic

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 252.

¹⁰⁹ Feldman, “Rewilding the Islands,” 357–59; Jordahl, “Unique Collection of Islands,” 236–75, 784; Schneider, “Gaylord A. Nelson.”

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development linked to this network of national areas. National environmental groups supported the proposed designations.¹¹⁰

At the local level, responses to the proposed Apostle Islands National Lakeshore were mixed. Most business leaders, elected officials, and residents of the Chequamegon region supported the national lakeshore. Even though the lakeshore would contain extensive undeveloped wilderness areas, there would also be substantial new recreational facilities. A national lakeshore would garner a larger government investment and attract far more visitors than would a state park. All of this would benefit local businesses and stimulate economic development. Outside of the Indian reservations, opposition to the national lakeshore came primarily from people who owned property within the proposed boundaries. Private property accounted for slightly more than half of the land within the lakeshore boundaries and outside of the reservations. As of 1967 these properties contained 14 year-round residences and 115 seasonal cottages at Little Sand Bay, on Sand Island, and at scattered locations throughout the islands.¹¹¹ More than one hundred property owners formed the South Shore Property Owners Association to fight the national lakeshore. Sand Island property owners argued that if Madeline Island was excluded because of its history and summer residents, then Sand Island should be excluded for the same reasons. Descendents of the Hansens, Dahls, Palms, and Jensches gave poignant testimony relating their family histories on Sand Island and what their summer homes there meant to them. In the end, Sand Island property owners did not have the political clout to alter lakeshore boundaries, but the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe did. Even though economic development on the reservations was an integral part of lakeshore planning and the federal government pledged to uphold treaty rights, Ojibwe support for the lakeshore wavered after the proposal was introduced to Congress. To a large degree this stemmed from increasing conflicts between the Ojibwe and state officials over hunting and fishing and the failure of the federal government to act effectively to protect Ojibwe treaty rights. There was also the Indian rights movement, responding to the legacy of more than a century of distrust, of lands unfairly taken, and promises unfulfilled. By 1969 both the Red Cliff and Bad River tribal councils stood in opposition to the national lakeshore.¹¹²

The opposition of the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe proved a nearly insurmountable obstacle to the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. When it appeared unlikely that Congress would pass the lakeshore bill in the face of this opposition, Nelson and others proposed removing Ojibwe lands from the proposal. The National Park Service, however, was adamant that Ojibwe lands be included. Finally, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs engineered a compromise. The Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs Unit was deleted from the proposal, and the Red Cliff Unit was reduced to twelve miles of shoreline. The latter included land within the boundary of

¹¹⁰ Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 253–56, 267–75, 784–85; Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 356, 359–60, 365; Alanen, "Historical Information," 30; McMahon and Karamanski, "Time and the River," 271–73.

¹¹¹ Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 337.

¹¹² Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 360–69; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 337–38, 358–76, 537–43, 784–85.

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the Red Cliff Reservation, but all of it had been sold to non-Indian owners long ago. Long Island was also removed because of its proximity to the Bad River Reservation and distance from the other islands. Although the Ojibwe continued to object, the amended bill moved forward quickly and was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on September 26, 1970. In the early 1980s the inclusion of Long Island in the national lakeshore was reconsidered because of its distinctive natural and cultural resources and high recreational potential. The Bad River Tribal Council opposed the addition of Long Island, citing its sacred significance and the negative environmental impacts that could result from increasing recreational use. After the National Park Service adjusted its plans to emphasize protection over recreation, the Bad River Ojibwe withdrew their opposition. On October 17, 1986 President Ronald Reagan signed the bill adding Long Island to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.¹¹³

¹¹³ Feldman, "Rewilding the Islands," 369–70, 384–88; Jordahl, "Unique Collection of Islands," 569–98, 617–72, 785–86.

MAPS

The cultural resource base maps in this report show historic resources with known locations. The maps do not attempt to show historic sites that have not been located, nor do they show pre-contact archaeological sites. The only island roads shown on the maps are on Devils, Sand, and Madeline islands—roads that are well-documented and still evident. Reforestation has made it difficult to discern other roads that once existed on the islands for logging and other purposes, but such landscape features should be recognized as historic resources. The same holds true for footpaths, which are even more ephemeral than roads. The maps show only a few well-known footpaths on Rocky and Sand Island, but there were many others. Similarly, the Outer Island logging railroad appears on the map, whereas the Michigan Island logging railroad, whose location is only partially known, does not.

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