

Archibald Jones
&
The Benzie Co. River Improvement Co.

DEDICATION OF HISTORICAL SITE MARKER
CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET, BENZIE COUNTY, MI

SATURDAY, 22 AUGUST 2015, 10 A.M.



ARCHIBALD JONES (14 SEP 1811 - 15 MAY 1890)

President of the Benzie County River Improvement Company,
and responsible for the enterprise that resulted in
the lowering of Crystal Lake in August, 1873. (*)

The man who (allegedly) pulled the plug at Crystal Lake.

“He builded better than he knew.”

[() Original ink drawing by Glen Wolff, 2014,
based on a photograph, Benzie Banner 36(46), 6 (16 Jul 1931).]*

EXCERPT FROM THE LUSIAD

“... Long thus, and various, ev’ry riv’let strays,
Till closing, now, their long meand’ring maze,
Where in a smiling vale the mountains end,
Form’d in a crystal lake the waters blend:
Fring’d was the border with a woodland shade,
In ev’ry leaf of various green array’d,
Each yellow-ting’d, each mingling tint between
The dark ash-verdure and the silv’ry green.
The trees, now bending forward, slowly shake
Their lofty honours o’er the crystal lake; ...”

-- The Lusiad of Luís Vaz de Camões, Book IX

KNOW SOMETHING

“Why aim such blows at the mercurial Celt ?
Is he not useful in the shops of trade ?
Does he not pave the roads with iron bars,
And link the lakes and rivers with the sea, ...”

“Here sunbrowned toil with shining spade,
Links lake to lake with silver ties,
Here builds huge palaces of trade
And heaps the granite to the skies.”

-- Samuel R. Phillips (1824-1880), Know Nothing, 1854.

“From lake to lake these wondrous waters flow,
As human love from heart to heart should run,
Uniting them with ties as bright and true
As those which bind in peace the pure in heart.”

-- Samuel R. Phillips (1824-1880), Nebraska, 1854.

PROGRAM

WELCOMING REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF CONTRIBUTORS

THE “TRAGEDY” AND THE “COMEDY”

DEDICATION

THE PULLING OF THE PLUG

THE WEDDING OF THE WATERS

WELCOMING REMARKS

Good morning and welcome to all as we celebrate this historic occasion. One hundred forty-two years ago at this very location (*) our forefathers experienced an event unique among all inland lakes of northern Michigan. The dramatic and precipitous lowering of Crystal Lake was seemingly ill-fated in its beginning, but fortuitously evolved into a serendipitous conclusion of becoming a fortunate happenstance with a pleasant surprise. - known colloquially as the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake.

Leonard Case, a passionate promoter of local history, took an especial interest in attempting to determine the original level of Crystal Lake:

“The event was so epochal in its nature and has such a permanent bearing on the subsequent development of Benzie County that it is rightly considered as one of the major incidents of the county’s early history.”

-- Leonard L. Case, A Bicentennial Reader, 1976.

We are gathered here today to dedicate an historical site marker to acknowledge Archibald Jones, President of the Benzie County River Improvement Company, and to commemorate his accomplishments that initiated this event that has so transformed our local environment.

[() The Crystal Lake Outlet Dam controls the level of Crystal Lake to enhance recreational interests in the summer, to minimize shoreline damage in the winter, and to regulate downstream flow to minimize streambank erosion and sediment redeposition in the Betsie River and Betsie Bay.]*

INTRODUCTION OF CONTRIBUTORS

Through the intervening years many persons within and beyond the confines of Benzie County have contributed to the success of this event.

Honorary “Stockholders” (*Past & Present, 2010 – 2015*)

The Jones, Case, Hubbell, Bailey, and Torrans Families
Florence E. Bixby
Harold & Linda Saffron
Joe Evancho
William Milliron
Harold R. Bruning
Alfred M. Beeton
“Doc” Stuart Shapiro
Jim Laarman
Meredith and Robert “Bob” McNabe
Edith Overlease

Governmental Officials

Village of Beulah
Village of Benzonia
Crystal Lake, Lake, and Benzonia Townships
Benzie County Drain Commissioner
Benzie County Road Commission
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Members of the Greater Crystal Lake Community

Benzie Area Historical Society
Beulah Boosters
Benzie Conservation District
Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
Friends of Betsie Bay
Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail
Friends of Point Betsie
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
Benzonia Public Library; Darcy Library of Beulah;
Benzie Shores District Library
Village of Beulah; Village of Benzonia;
City of Frankfort
The Littorians of Crystal Lake
The Citizens and Visitors of Benzie County

Dedication Committee (*Archibald Jones Day Committee*)

Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels (Master of Ceremonies);
Al Bryant; Vicki Carpenter; Dr. Louis Yock
Land & Lake (Erection of the Marker);
Jon Mead (Photography); Olivia Buzzell (Recording)

THE “TRAGEDY” AND THE “COMEDY”

Why do we celebrate a singular esoteric event like the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake? All northern Michigan lakes share commonalities of geological histories, physiological features, hydrological behaviors; climatic influences, visual beauties, and recreational pursuits. Our visions are of clear waters and bright sunshine glittering from gentle waves lapping against pristine beaches ringed by wooded hillsides scented of pine and, exuding a spirit of place. We escape the congestion and “hustle-bustle” pace of our cities by vacationing at our special lake to experience carefree living, roughing it, returning to the simple life, and communing with nature.

Peculiar to Michigan in the 19th Century were needs to improve the land-locked entrances of drowned river mouths along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan (the West Coast of MI) by creating “harbors of refuge” for shipping, and inland waterways to access the interior of the State. Other “improvement projects” included canals, dams, locks, docks, and/or other appurtenances for transporting timber, powering saw- and grist-mills, and irrigating newly cleared fields. Many natural river outlets were straightened and new channels dredged to navigable depths to connect nearby inland lakes by “slack-water” canals to Lake Michigan. These included: Saugatuck, Holland, Grand Haven, Muskegon, White Lake, Pentwater, Ludington, Manistee, Portage, Frankfort, Charlevoix, and Petoskey. The attempt to connect a canal from Frankfort Harbor to Crystal Lake proved to be the most ambitious of all.

The “Tragedy” / “Comedy” is a well-known story of the lowering of Crystal Lake, in Benzie Co., MI. Archibald Jones founded the Benzie County River Improvement Co. in 1873, to improve water-lots on Crystal Lake, remove obstructions and construct slack-water canals between Crystal Lake and Lake Michigan, and build a steamboat to facilitate shipping of settlers and goods to and from the interior of the County to the nearby port of Frankfort. Ensuing events were unique among large inland lakes of NW Lower Michigan. The dramatic lowering of a very large inland lake and the ensuing creation of a perimeter of sandy beach insured the future of Crystal Lake as a prime recreational area.

William L. Case, a boy of 18, witnessed and later chronicled the event in a classic pamphlet, “The Tragedy of Crystal lake” in 1922.

He began his story by describing the appearance of Crystal Lake during early settlement days when the level of the water was much higher. “Almost its entire circumference it reached to the woods and the foot of the hills that surround it, so that for the greater part of the distance, one could not walk dry shod between the water and the overhanging trees.” (Case, p5)

He then described the arrival of Archibald Jones, “a man of patriarchal appearance with a long white beard and endowed with boundless energy and enthusiasm”. During a chance encounter with the Rev. James Barr Walker, a founder of the Benzonia Colony, he was convinced to move north, where he conceived an ambitious plan for an inland waterway from Frankfort Harbor through the Betsie River, to Crystal Lake, and beyond through Long and Rush Lakes to the Platte Lakes. He organized the

Benzie Co. River Improvement Company. Stock was subscribed with enthusiastic support of local citizens, Dredging of the Betsie River commenced and continued up to the Outlet of Crystal Lake.

On the very morning when he intended to square hue timber and drive spiles to construct permanent locks at the Outlet, the worst storm of 1873 blew over the Lake and a temporary dam was washed away. “The waters of the lake had at last gotten the upper hand of any and all of its would-be human masters and the tragedy was truly appalling.” For several weeks, the flood poured downstream into the swamps and washing clean the harbor at Frankfort, The shore line continued to widen as the level of the Lake lowered until finally the fury of the torrent was spent.

Case concluded, “By this time the water was many feet lower than at the present time and its whole appearance was strangely changed.” “All around the lake where the water is now shallow, there was a wide waste of bleaching sand and rock.” “And so it was – that this one time beautiful Crystal Lake was quickly shorn of her glory and became for a time at least, just a desolate looking common inland lake or mill pond.” “With a sense of total failure in what seemed to them a worth-while enterprise, most of these pioneer boosters went to their final account, little thinking that in an entirely different way they were giving a great public service to the next generation.”

The Rev. Harlow Spencer Mills, an astute observer of the Benzie community, wrote a thoughtful introduction to the “Tragedy”. He doubted the appropriateness of calling it a “tragedy” i.e. “a melancholy event in which human lives, or human interests are sacrificed”. The lowering of the lake resulted in no sacrifice of human life, and it is doubtful to those of us now living that any “human interest” really suffered.

Rev. Mills also suggested a repository of “Crystalana” to preserve the history, literature, and traditions of Crystal Lake. “I suppose that every community has an interesting history, if only it were fully known and truly told—a history that would be well worth recording because the community is composed of human beings, and every human life is fraught with intense interest. But it would seem that for some reason this Crystal Lake region has more than its share of charming scenes and attractive localities, and that in its early settlement and its succeeding history there has been an unusual number of stirring events. Perhaps it seems so only because we know about them, but be that as it may, they are well worth describing and recording.” [“The Benzie Book”. Benzie Banner 28(12), 1 (16 Nov 1922); Ibid, “Crystalana”, BB 29(36), 1-2 (04 Aug 1927).

“It is true that the lake must have presented a scene of sylvan beauty as the high bluffs dipped their feet in its clear waters, and the overhanging trees were mirrored in its crystal depths. But the sandy beach with which it is now bordered, affording a road bed for the rail road, and space for the fine stone boulevard which is such a favorite with the automobile riders, is practically much more useful, if not more beautiful. I am sure we should all prefer Crystal Lake in its present condition rather than as it was in the early days, before it was lowered, though in some places the beach is wider than either beauty or utility require.”

But what of the man who inspired the event? Was he to be cast as a scapegoat for the “complete failure” of an “ill-advised project”?

The role of Archibald Jones, “the man who (allegedly) pulled the plug at Crystal Lake”, involved travels of a typical American family in the 1800’s, searching for opportunities, experiencing adventures, and facing vicissitudes posed by the opening of the American Midwest. A “Tragedy” depicts a protagonist overcome by superior force or circumstance; a “Comedy” depicts a laughable person involved in a blunder without pain or disaster. The lowering of Crystal Lake has elements of both - a serious beginning with a happy ending with perceived foibles of human nature and realized unintended consequences of bold venture.

In summary: the story of the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake seemed destined to become a singular esoteric event, but instead its uniqueness has become an object lesson to be extrapolated to other lakes. Uniqueness of opportunity brought Archibald Jones to Crystal Lake. The Benzie County River Improvement Co. improved upon Nature,

and increased both uniqueness and commonality for Crystal Lake. In 1873, the level of Crystal Lake was dramatically lowered in an attempt to construct a slack-water canal between it and Lake Michigan. Most other canals had differences in level of only a few feet, while the original level of Crystal Lake was 38 feet above Lake Michigan which made it especially attractive for a canal. Unfortunately, the whitecap waves of Crystal Lake washed out a temporary dam before a permanent canal could be completed. The level of the Lake dropped precipitously by 20 feet and 76 billion gallons of water poured irretrievably from the Lake down its Outlet (and unnoticeably raising the level of Lake Michigan by 0.2 of an inch!). The canal system was never realized, but the lowering of the Lake exposed a 21-mile perimeter of sandy beach where none had previously existed. This made possible: the founding of the Village of Beulah, the coming of the railroad, installation of telegraph and telephone lines, development of lakeside resorts, construction of 1,100 cottages, all connected by an infrastructure of perimeter roads and trails - the multitudinous benefits that we all share today.

“Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot.” -- Charlie Chaplin

“The long and the short of my life has had its tragedies and its comedies.” – “A.J.” (Archibald Jones)

When should littorians be put in an old-folks home ?
Fill up their lake. Offer a teaspoon, teacup, and bucket.
Ask them to empty their lake.



A normal littorian would use the bucket.
It’s bigger than the spoon or the teacup. Right ?
No. A normal littorian would just pull the plug !
Do you want a bed near a window overlooking the lake ?



DEDICATION

It is fitting that we hereby dedicate this historical site marker:

To Archibald Jones: “the man who (allegedly) pulled the plug at Crystal Lake”, and to his family, and to his contemporaries, the pioneer settlers of Benzie County, without whom there would be no story;

To the Case’s: William L., Walter F., Alden B., Leonard L, & their descendants; and to the Hubbell’s and the Bailey’s, and to the Rev. Dr. James Barr Walker, and others, for keeping the story “alive”;

To many Individuals: who provided “new” story facts and suggestions to the whole of the story;

To the Citizens of Benzie County: who made suggestions and continue to support the story;

To the Visitors to Crystal Lake: who appreciate the consequences of the story; and

To you the Friends of Crystal Lake: who have participated in living the story.

THE PULLING OF THE PLUG

“I have often said, and oftener think, that this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel – a solution of why Democritus laughed and Heraclitus wept.” -- Horace Walpole, letter to Horace Mann (1769) .

Let us now symbolically “pull the plug the historical site marker:

(Unveiling of the Historical Site Marker.)

THE WEDDING OF THE WATERS

Archibald Jones, having been a toiler on the Clinton ditch (Erie Canal) in his boyhood, saw a fine opportunity to make a slack-water canal between Crystal Lake and Lake Michigan via the Betsie River. Perhaps he sought to emulate the earlier creation of the Erie Canal as a water link between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean via the Hudson River. On November 4, 1825, Governor DeWitt Clinton poured water from Lake Erie into the ocean at New York in a ceremony celebrating the “Wedding of the Waters”. It is most fitting, therefore, that we echo this same spirit in wedding the waters of Crystal Lake with the waters of Lake Michigan.

This is a story of an epochal event that occurred at a lake of crystal waters:

Where	its waters commenced;
When	its waters were transported;
How	its waters rose and fell;
Whether	its waters are tending; and
What	its waters have effected in myriad quintessential ways,

by affecting myriad individuals, perchance
a few times, with dashing whitecaps;
sometimes, with lapping waves, but
oftentimes, with subtle ripples.

“The smallest bark on life’s tumultuous ocean
Will leave a track behind for evermore;
The lightest waves of influence set in motion,
Extend and widen to the eternal shore:
We should be wary, then, who go before
A myriad yet to be; and we should take
Our bearing carefully, where breakers roar
And fearful tempests gather; one mistake
May wreck unnumbered barks that follow in our wake.”

-- Burton Rensselaer Jones, “Incidents in the Life and Labors of Burton Rensselaer Jones, 1909, Preface Chap. 1, page 13.

Thank you for your attendance and kind attention.

(Conclusion of the Dedication)

APPENDICES

William L. Case (1856-1933), a local businessman and former state representative, masterfully told what was believed to be the authentic story based upon his recollections made almost 50 years after witnessing the event as a 17-year old boy (*).

“As far as the writer knows there is no written or printed record of the tragedy of the lowering of Crystal Lake in 1873 and of the enterprise and activity of the Betsie River Improvement Company in connection with it. It is now almost half a century since those events occurred and this chronicle is prepared from information furnished by a few old timers that were living here then, and by careful digging into the personal recollections of the narrator.” – William L. Case, 1922

[(*) Case, William L., *“The Tragedy of Crystal Lake, with Some Sidelights, By a Survivor”*, 1st Ed., J.W. Saunders, Beulah, MI, 1922, 17pp; 2nd Ed., 1947, 23pp; 3rd Ed., 1962; reprinted, 1976, 22pp.; reprinted, 2007, 24pp. Special editions), 1941, 22pp; 1978, 28pp.]

Stacy Leroy Daniels (1937 -), a Frankfort native and long-time littorian on Crystal Lake, read the “Tragedy” as a young boy. After becoming a professional environmental engineer, he came to wonder more about the uniqueness of Crystal Lake: What caused the lowering of the Lake? Who was Archibald Jones – a scapegoat to be blamed for an ill-conceived project, or a “bootstrap engineer” to be celebrated as a hero? (**)

“The “Comedy” of Crystal Lake, is a continuation of the “Tragedy” of Crystal Lake.

Part I. The Lowering of Crystal Lake is a critical review of recorded legends, contemporary accounts, and historical records that include: the original Stock Certificate, the Articles of Association, the Map of Proposed Improvements, and the Court Proceedings for the Benzie County River Improvement Company from the 1870’s.

Part II. The Biography of Archibald Jones is an accounting of the accomplishments of an entrepreneur and “bootstrap engineer” enjoined in the settlement of a new territory filled with challenges and opportunities.” – Dr. Stacy L. Daniels, 2014

[(**) Daniels, Stacy Leroy, *The “Comedy” of Crystal Lake, I. The Lowering of Crystal Lake; II. The Biography of Archibald Jones, Being a Summary Chronicle with Many More sidelights, written in Two Parts, of a seemingly Ill-Fated Historical Event, so epochal in its nature as to have had a permanent bearing upon the development and future of Benzie Co., Northwest Lower Michigan, together with myriad viewpoints of its diverse characters and sundry locales, &c., &c., Flushed With Pride Press, 2015, 496pp. ISBN 978-0-692-21715-3.*]

Bruce Catton (1899 - 1978), the renowned historian, raised in Benzonia, also wrote eloquently of Crystal Lake, and of development:

“Crystal Lake will always be something special for me, because it symbolizes an emotion that goes beyond time and space.” ... “It (Michigan) is wood and water, golden sand and blue lakes, emptiness and memories and the sort of isolation which it is hard for a city man to come by, these days.” ... “This is good country to come from and it is even better to go back to. It is a land of memories and also a land of escape; a place where you can be utterly idle in more pleasant ways than any other place I know.”

– Bruce Catton, *The Real Michigan*, *Holiday Magazine* 22(2), 26-39 (Aug. 1957).

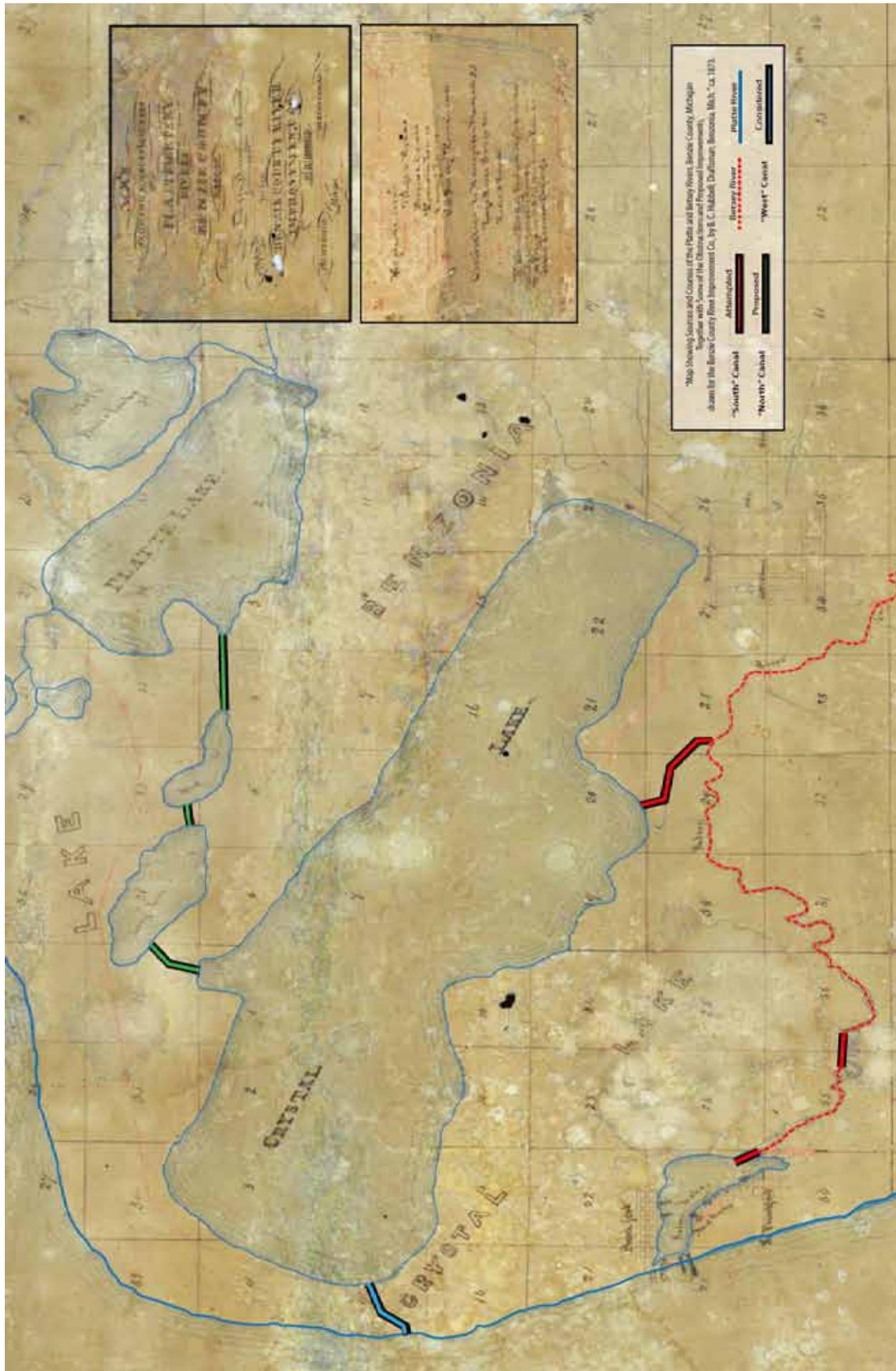
“Crystal Lake is a noble body of water, eight miles long by two or three miles wide, ... so crystal-clear that you can count pebbles on the bottom where it is twenty feet deep. It is surrounded by low green hills, and when the sun is out its color is a breathtaking, incredible, picture-postcard blue; spring-fed, it is deep and cold, and only the hardiest would care to swim in it at any time except midsummer, but when the weather is warm to go into this water is like dipping into the fountain of youth. A nice beach runs all the way around it, stony here and there but mostly white sand, and that beach exists because the good people of Benzonia made a profound miscalculation (sic) back in 1873.”

– Bruce Catton, *Waiting for the Morning Train, An American Boyhood*, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1972, 260pp, Chap. Three, pages, pp 49-50.

“Development becomes compulsive. It is never possible to call a halt. Once you take the first step, even if the last step goes straight off the edge of a precipice. It is fairly easy for man to assert his mastery over his earthly environment, but once he has asserted that mastery he has to go on exercising it no matter where the exercise takes him. The age of applied technology has one terrible aspect – each new technique has to be exploited to its absolute limit, until man become the victim of his own skills. The conquest of nature cannot end in a negotiated peace.”

– Bruce Catton, *Waiting for the Morning Train, An American Boyhood*, Doubleday, Garden City, NY, 1972, 260pp. Chap. One, page 5.

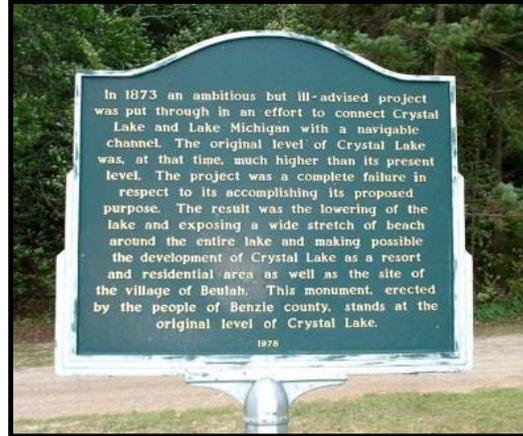
“Map Showing Sources and Courses of the Platte and Betsie Rivers, Benzie County, Together with Some of the Obstructions and Proposed Improvements for the Benzie County River Improvement Company, Benzonia, MI, drawn for the Benzie County River Improvement Co., by B. C. Hubbell, Draftsman, Benzonia, Mich.” , ca. 1873.



HISTORICAL SITE MARKERS

In 1976, Leonard L. Case, proposed a project “to definitely determine the original level of the lake as nearly as possible, to identify it with suitable and permanent markers upon which suitable inscriptions could be engraved, and to set them up at several locations on the lake’s shore”. Three identical historical site markers were located by the County Surveyor, Soil

Conservation Department staff, and members of the Benzie Area Historical Society, were unveiled in ceremonies on August 27, 1978. They are located at (1) downtown Beulah on the SE shore of Crystal Lake, (2) the corner of Crystal Drive and Warren Road, on the NE shore of Crystal Lake, and (3) in Bellows Park on the SW shore of Crystal Lake.

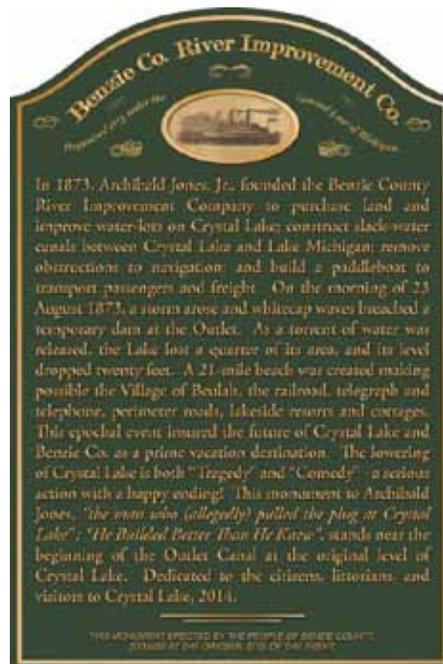
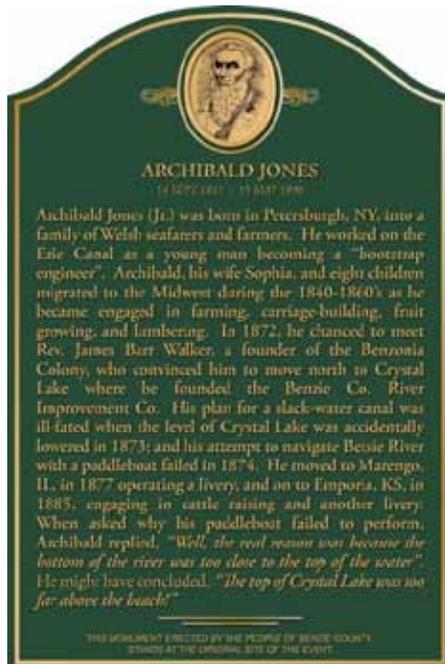


This original text was factual, but did not refer to as the “Tragedy, did not name Archibald Jones or the Benzie County River Improvement Company, and did not contain the specific date or original lake level (*). Implication that the project was “ill-advised” and “complete failure” “in respect to its accomplishing its original purpose” did not tell the whole story.

Crystal Lake has been an enduring controversy for more than a century! The “Comedy” continues!]

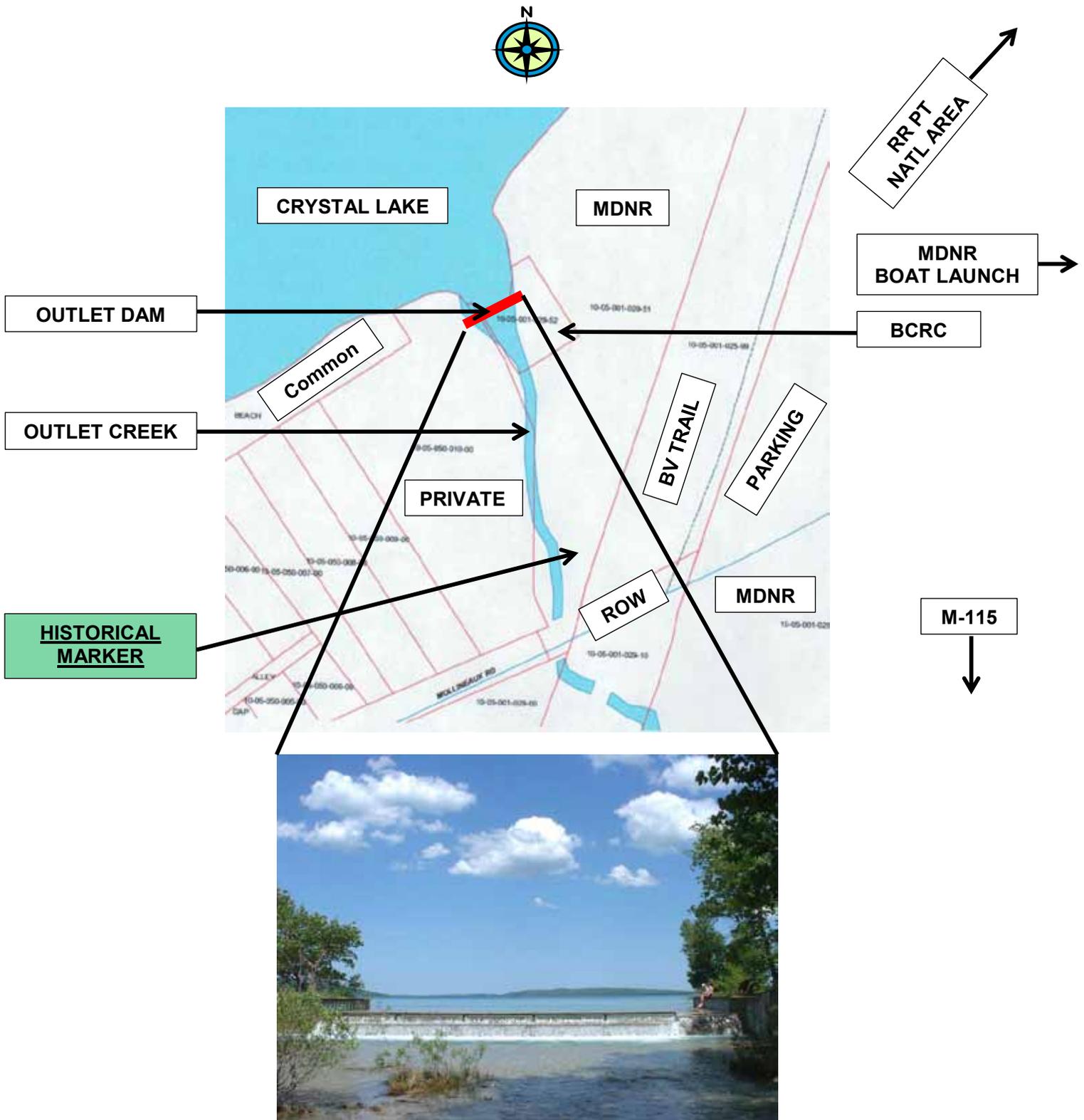
[() Harold Bruning, a knowledgeable local surveyor concluded that the level of the Lake was at the foot of the monument(s) or ~ 610 feet based upon his travels and observations around the Lake. Based upon additional research for the “Comedy”, the original level of the Lake could have reached to the top of the monument(s) or ~ 615 feet. Either way, there is still enough beach and enough water to be shared by all! Establishment of acceptable level(s) for*

In April 2013, Stacy Leroy Daniels proposed a new historical site marker” to be funded at the local level and erected at the Crystal Lake Outlet, where the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” all began on August 23, 1873. The new historical site marker is a handsome two-sided bronze monument containing images of Archibald Jones, Jr., and the Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., resp.,. The text describes the project as a well-conceived plan by a visionary “boot-strap engineer that resulted in a most qualified success well worthy of acclaim.



HISTORICAL MARKER SITE

(Location: Crystal Lake Outlet at Mollineux Road,
 Benzie Co., Crystal Lake Twp, T26 N R15 W, Sec 29. 44.636222,-86.147203) <http://goo.gl/maps/h1YYh>



The Outlet Dam (scene of The “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake[Acknowledgement to David Penny,
<http://www.coheadquarters.com/PennLibr/BenzieCounty/IndexBenzie.htm>

THE OUTLET DAM

HIGH AND WET (20 APR 2013)



JUST RIGHT (20 JUN 2013)



LOW AND DRY (14 OCT 2013)



[(*) Analogous to Goldilocks' porridge, the Lake level is high and wet, just about right, or low and dry.]

THE CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET (NEAR MI 6 BVT @ MOLLINEAUX RD)

Township 26 N ; Range 15 W ; Sec 29 ; Lat 44.636222, Long -86.147203, Alt. 183 m, 600 ft,



HISTORICAL SITE MARKER

CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET DAM (ca. 1912-1913)



[(*) The group may well be Archibald Jones' three grandchildren (!) George C. Jones, Irving Park Jones, and Rosa May Jones, were 45, 41, and 36, resp. in 1912, and/or Irving Park Jones' wife, Susan Mae (Remington) Jones was 36. Archives of the Traverse City History Center, Image 52, entitled, "Crystal Lake outlet dam with three people standing in (sic) the lake". Image 52., History Center of Traverse City (with permission).

MISTAKE AT THE LAKE

(The Ballad of Archibald Jones) Song & Lyrics © 2010 By Doc Stuart

Shall I tell you the story of Archibald Jones?
One of history's great unknowns.
It's a story of the catastrophe,
At Crystal Lake in 1873.

Some thought he was a genius;
Some thought he was mad;
Some thought he was only foolin'.
He worked for years on the Erie Canal.
That's where he got his schoolin'.

Said Jones to the folks to the folks of Benzie County,
"There's wealth by the lake – magnificent bounty;
Hardwood a plenty ready for sale;
To get it to market gotta' build a canal."

Said Jones to the folks by Crystal Lake,
"To Lake Michigan we'll deliver."
So they dammed the project from the very start,
To connect the Lake to the River.

Well, no engineer was Archibald Jones,
No engineers were consulted,
Just a long white-bearded dreamer's' idea,
And you all know what resulted.

A quarter of the water came rushing out.
You could hear the roar for miles.
Trees uprooted, swamps disappeared,
The Betsie River ran wild.

Well the beautiful Lake was now twenty feet down;
The Improvement Company bankrupted.
It's a miracle that nobody drowned,
When the lakeshore was disrupted

When the Mud Hen steamer got stuck in the muck,
He said the people bought her,
"The boat won't float if the bottom of the River's
Too close to the top of the water."

Though many investors lost their shirts,
'Cause Jones was overzealous,
Out of bad sometimes comes good
Only passing time could tell us

In Benzie County they celebrate,
The day that Jones made the breach.
One man's mistake by the Lake,
Is another man's day at the beach.

At Crystal Lake once was a mistake,
But Beulah, tell your sons and daughters,
Had it not been for Archibald Jones
Your resort would be under water.

Yeah! Had it not been for Archibald Jones,
Your land would be under water.

[() "Doc Stuart" composed the original ballad, "Mistake at the Lake", for the First Archibald Jones Day celebrated on 28 Aug 2010. Rights were conveyed for exclusive local use. He is an attorney with Cohen & Lombardo P.C. of Buffalo, and also a musician, who won the grand-prize winner of the first Erie Canal songwriting contest. He composed, recorded and performed "The Lockport Locks (On The Erie Canal)," which celebrates the genius of canal construction.]*

THE SAGA OF ARCHIBALD JONES

The Saga of Archibald Jones: in which
Was said, from Petersburg, New York, he came,
A young Welshman toiling on old "Clinton's Ditch" -
The Erie Canal of travelers' fame.

He married Sophie Needham from Vermont.
Their union lasted more than fifty years.
His deeds as entrepreneur were clairvoyant,
Esteemed forbearer, hearty pioneer.

The Jones: five boys, three girls, comprised their flock.
As they traversed across the middle west,
Challenges were met, opportunities sought,
As they pursued their destiny and quest.

They travelled far and wide on westward track:
From New York to Sandusky; Put-in-Bay;
Lexington, in the woods at Sanilac;
To Marengo; Emporia; they strayed.

First Archibald just simply farmed the land;
Built stagecoaches, raised horses, and grew fruit;
And managed large estates and timber stands;
With livery stable, cattle ranch, pursuits.

He met, the Rev. Walker quite by chance.
(Who'd founded Benzonia on the hill.)
He told Jones that his future was perchance:
Join lakes and rivers with canals and mills.

Jones sallied forth. To Benzie County, came.
In eighteen-hundred-seventy-and-three.
He formed, with vision, thoughts of future fame,
The Benzie County River Improvement Company

To dredge canals from near Lake Michigan true.
From Frankfort-on-the-Lake, he would be bound
Upstream toward Crystal Lake, so green and blue,
Up little rivers, and beyond the towns.

The Betsey River was a shallow stream,
Filled full with fallen trees and giant rocks.
But Archibald was undeterred, it seemed.
He promoted his Company, sold stock.

He then surveyed the lay of Lake and land.
Drew a fine map to chart the downward course.
The Company dredged slimy muck, and sand,
With sweat of "bootstrap engineer", and horse.

As his stout crew approached the Crystal Lake,
The system of canals seemed well in hand.
Just one slack-water channel left to make,
Then briefly close it with a temporary dam.

It was ("alleged") that it was his intent
To "pull the plug" just partially askew.
Pass just a small bit of the lake's content.
Alas! 'He builded better than he knew'.

True course of nature, the advantage took.
A storm arose unleashing whitecap waves.
The dam was breached! A torrent down the brook!
Epochal event - a legacy engraved.

The level of the Lake dropped twenty feet!
Shorn of beauty, the land was desolate.
Twenty-one miles of barren sand replete.
Behold! The "Tragedy" of Crystal Lake!

Undaunted, a small paddleboat was run
Down river. Its wheel did slowly churn,
Stern-first, but only once. The trip was done.
Sandbars were hit round almost every turn.

'Tis true his plan set forth to navigate
Did not bear fruits of labors as surveyed.
Hear this for what we now should advocate:
Archibald be not scapegoat as portrayed.

Speak well. Ambitious project, well-advised.
The lowering of the Lake? Delayed success!
Forsooth! For lo, we should not be surprised,
As we, our hero, celebrate, and bless.

The "Comedy" of Crystal Lake ensues!
Railroad, telegraph, and telephone appear,
And Crystal City with its "Beulah Views",
Where cottages, resorts grow year-by-year.

A solid concrete dam now stems the flow
From placid Outlet onward to the sea.
Too high for some, for others yet too low,
The level of the Lake appears to be.

And left behind, a wide and mighty beach,
Which we enjoy with all our kith and kin,
Life's lessons for us now to learn and teach,
Just where we are, as we remember when.

The deeds of men leave ripples in their wake,
Like crystal waters viewed directly through.
As God, and Nature, and our Crystal Lake,
Our human surfaces, and thoughts, renew.

– Stacy L. Daniels,
Archibald Jones Day,
23 Aug 2014

PROLOGUE

The sun awaits its birth o'er quiet Lake
A glow behind the night, yet to dispense the dark.
The lightening hills, still ghostly, anticipate the dawn
But peace still reigns; no discontent lies within my heart.

And as I stroll along the rippled sands
Peace walks with me – I wait and sigh
For that beckoning voice beneath the ripple of the waves
To tell me, “Be ye still, for God is neigh”.

And so, yet lovely Lake, I pour out forth to you
This message from my soul. No longer ache
Forever after me as I depart this life.
Remember calm and stormy inspiration, Crystal Lake.

-- Stacy Leroy Daniels, 29 August 1937 - ().

EPILOGUE

The sun has set, and o'er the quiet lake
His light still lingers, reluctant to depart.
The darkening hills draw close, and over all
Peace reigns, but discontent still fills my heart.

But as I stand alone upon the shore
Peace also comes to me - I seem to hear
A voice amongst the murmur of the waves
Saying. “Be still and know that God is near.”

And so, O lovely lake, you gave to me
A message straight from God. And I still take
That message with me as I wander far.
And hope once more to see you, Crystal Lake.

-- Walter F. Case, 4 February 1895 – 06 March 1923.