Rewilding the Islands:

Nature, History, and Wilderness at

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

by

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For Chris

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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One of the chief advantages of studying environmental history is that you can go hiking, camping, and exploring in beautiful places and call it research. By choosing the history of the Apostle Islands for a dissertation topic, I even added kayaking and sailing to my list of research activities. There were many more hours spent in libraries, but those weren't quite as memorable. All graduate students should have topics like this one.

As I cast about for a dissertation topic, I knew that I wanted a place-based subject that met two requirements: It needed to be about a place to which I had a personal connection, and it needed to apply to a current, ongoing policy question or environmental issue. I found both in the Apostles. I first went camping on Stockton Island in the early 1980s, when I attended summer camp not far away at Camp Nebagamon for boys; I've returned to northern Wisconsin almost every year since. After I spent the summer of 1999 working for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, learning more about the islands' past and also about the upcoming Wilderness Suitability Study, I knew that I had found my topic.

Of course, turning a dissertation topic into an actual dissertation has been another story entirely, one that required an awful lot of assistance from an awful lot of people along the way. I now understand why people often substitute laundry lists for acknowledgements sections. As I think back on the years that it took to complete this dissertation, the list of people to whom I am indebted keeps growing. Friends and family from near and far have provided the support that made this project possible.

In Bayfield, the staff at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore has been open, friendly, and helpful from the start. Bob Mackreth, the park historian, has been a vital resource. He has opened his archives, his knowledge of the islands' past, and even his house to me. He has responded to countless emailed questions not just with prompt answers, but also with enthusiasm and support. Superintendent Bob Krumenaker and Jim Nepstad, chief of planning and resource management, have been welcoming from the first, letting me sit in on the Wilderness Study meetings whenever I was able. Julie Van Stappen has likewise provided answers to my questions about the park's ecosystems and resource management programs. Nancy Mannikko, Luke Johnson, Katy Holmer, Tam Hoffman, and Neil Howk have also helped along the way. The welcome reception that I received at the park made me look forward to all of my many research trips to Bayfield.

Other people helped in tangible ways by sharing their knowledge, expertise, and memories. Julian Nelson and Cliff and Harvey Hadland agreed to be interviewed so that I could hear first-hand their stories of working in the commercial fisheries and their memories of lifetimes spent in the islands. Mary Rice hosted me for a night on Sand Island, answered my questions and shared with me her love of a place that has been in her family for three generations. Senator Gaylord Nelson recounted for me his role in shepherding the national lakeshore proposal through Congress. Todd Anderson and his family invited me to see the islands from their catamaran—sailing might be the best of all ways to explore the Apostles. Joel Heiman made maps that appear in Chapters One, Two, and Five.

The list from Madison is far longer. My co-advisors, Nancy Langston and Bill Cronon, have been encouraging, challenging, and helpful with every single draft, funding proposal, and recommendation letter request that I have put to them. Nancy has provided support in ways that I

am sure she does not realize, perhaps most importantly in reminding me how things work outside of the department of history. Bill has been as kind, generous, and helpful a mentor as any student could ask for. Bill and Nan Fey let me stay in their Bayfield home whenever I needed it, making my many fruitful trips to Bayfield possible. This goes far beyond the boundaries of what an advisor does for a student and well into the realm of what one friend does for another. Thanks, too, to the other three members of my committee, John Milton Cooper III, Arne Alanen, and Tony Michels, for working within the strict time deadlines for setting up a defense. Arne also saved me hours of squinting at microfilm by providing his mountains of newspaper clippings on the islands, and Tony provided advice from the other side of the dissertation divide. Jim Schlender helped me to navigate the bureaucratic intricacies of the University of Wisconsin; many a graduate student would get lost in the system without his help, myself included. The powers-that-be in the history department provided crucial financial support in the form of fellowships, travel grants, and a project assistantship.

One of the best things about the history department at the University of Wisconsin is its graduate community. Around every twisted corner of the Humanities Building lies a colleague and potential friend. Being a part of this community has been one of the best things about graduate school. Will Barnett has been a lecturing partner, a sounding board for dissertation ideas, and a trustworthy friend. The other members of my dissertation group, Mike Rawson, Tom Robertson, and Kendra Smith, provided helpful feedback and much-appreciated camaraderie. Chris Wells has been a sometimes-member of that group, and equally helpful. I've found support from Madison friends in many places: on the soccer field, at the poker table, in the TA offices, on the Terrace. Some of those who have been particularly inspiring, helpful, and fun: Mike

Abelson, Shelby Balik, Karen Benjamin, John Bent and family, Katie Benton, David Bernstein, Greg Bond, Scott Breuninger, David Chang, Allison Craig Shashko, Ted Franz, Dave Fulton, Mike Grinney, Zoltan Grossman, Lynne Heasely, Sarah Marcus, Scott Moranda, Bill Philpott, Eric Olmanson, Jeanine Rhemtulla, Alexander Shashko, Dave Sheffler, Michelle Steen-Adams, Kristen Walton, Marsha Weisiger, Jesse Wolfe, and Keith Woodhouse. Becca Swartz, Joey Hoey, Todd Gray, and Amy Spratling have become fast friends and have provided an essential place where laughter is far more common than talk of the islands and their history, or history in general. Friends from farther away—college roommates, Logan survivors, camp family, the Glencoe gang—helped with this, too.

The thanks that I owe to the people I met while pursing my Master's degree in history at Utah State University continue to mount. The folks in Logan set me on this path in the first place. More than anyone else, Ona Siporin and Anne Butler taught me how to write, and how to take writing seriously. David Lewis has provided a full-circle feel to my graduate career by encouraging me as much in the final stages—as he helped me to publish an article in the *Western Historical Quarterly*—as he did in the initial ones.

None of this—not just the dissertation, but also the past experiences that have made me who I am as well as the future that I'm so excited about—would have been possible without my family. My parents and brother, Susan, Scott, and Mark Feldman, have supported every decision I've made, validated every choice. It simply is not possible to put an appropriate thank you into words. My new family, Pat, Jack and Gail Taylor, have welcomed me with open arms. They came into my life in the early stages of this project, and I'm glad that they are here to see the end

of it. Corny as it might be, I also need to acknowledge Murphy the dog; the solutions to some of my worst episodes of writers block came, with leash in hand, at the dog park or the field.

And then there is Chris. She has been there since the beginning; we met during my first semester of graduate school, and I feel quite confident in saying that I would not have reached the end of this long road without her at my side. She is my best supporter, my best critic, and my best friend. She has become my partner in all things, and this dissertation is dedicated to her.

INTRODUCTION
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Wilderness and History

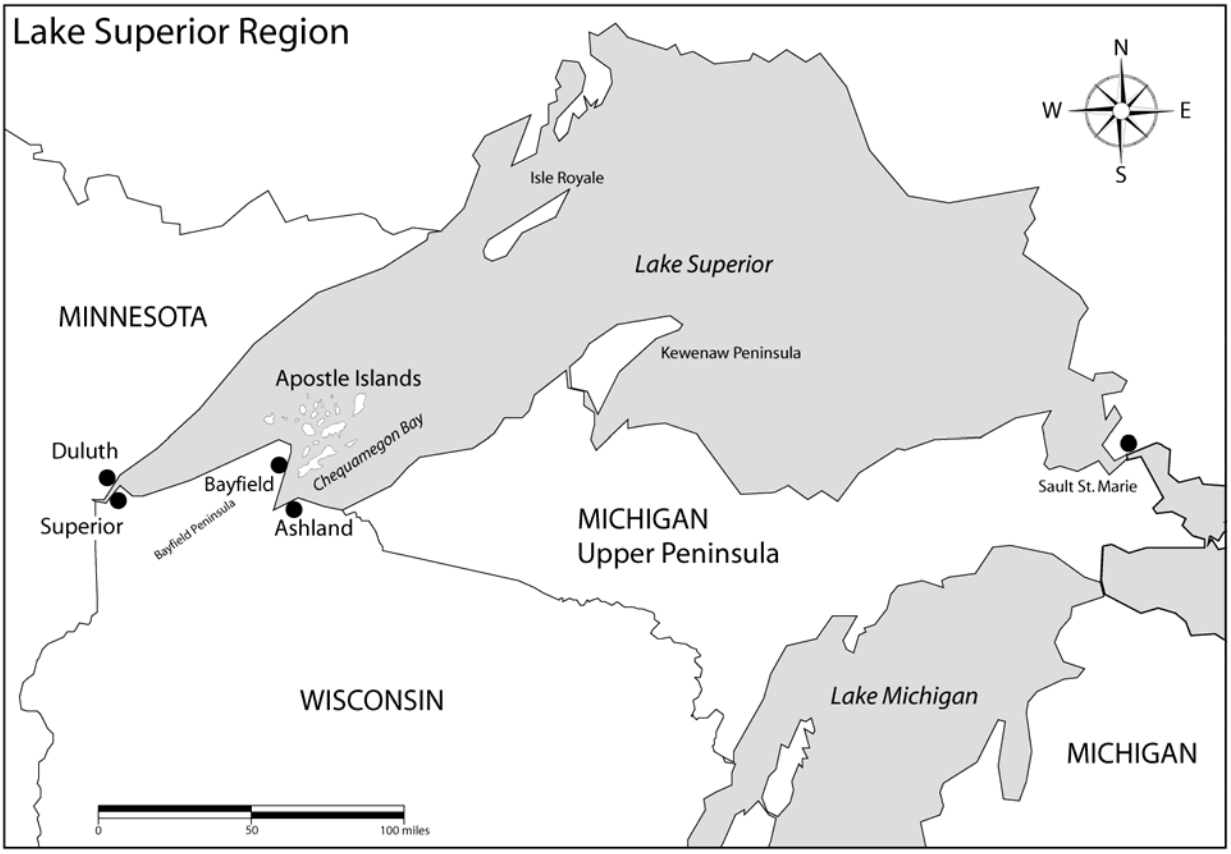
In the summer of 2000, two park rangers sat in their shared basement office in the headquarters of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore discussing the recent nesting of the piping plover, a federally endangered shore bird, on Long Island. One of the employees, the park biologist, lamented the challenges of managing for endangered species on the island's disturbed landscape. Long Island suffered from invasions of exotic species and the traffic of tourists searching for the remains of a lighthouse that had once guided ships into the Chequamegon Bay. "That's not a disturbed landscape," commented the other ranger, who happened to be the park historian. "That part of Long Island is a cultural landscape!" The two rangers captured the central dilemma of wilderness management in the Apostle Islands and many similar places: how to manage a landscape that is at once natural and historical, valuable for both its nature and its history but also for the ways its nature and history overlap.[1]

Northern Wisconsin's Apostle Islands—twenty-two islands nestled into the southwest corner of Lake Superior—provide a place to explore changing ideas about wilderness and history—and the relationship between the two. (See Map 1.) The islands certainly seem like wilderness. They boast old growth forests, empty beaches, delicate wetlands, violent Lake Superior storms and magical Lake Superior sunsets. Natural and untouched as they sometimes

[1] As relayed to he author by Robert Mackreth, historian at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore [AINL].

seem, however, the island environments are the product of intricately connected processes of human and natural history.

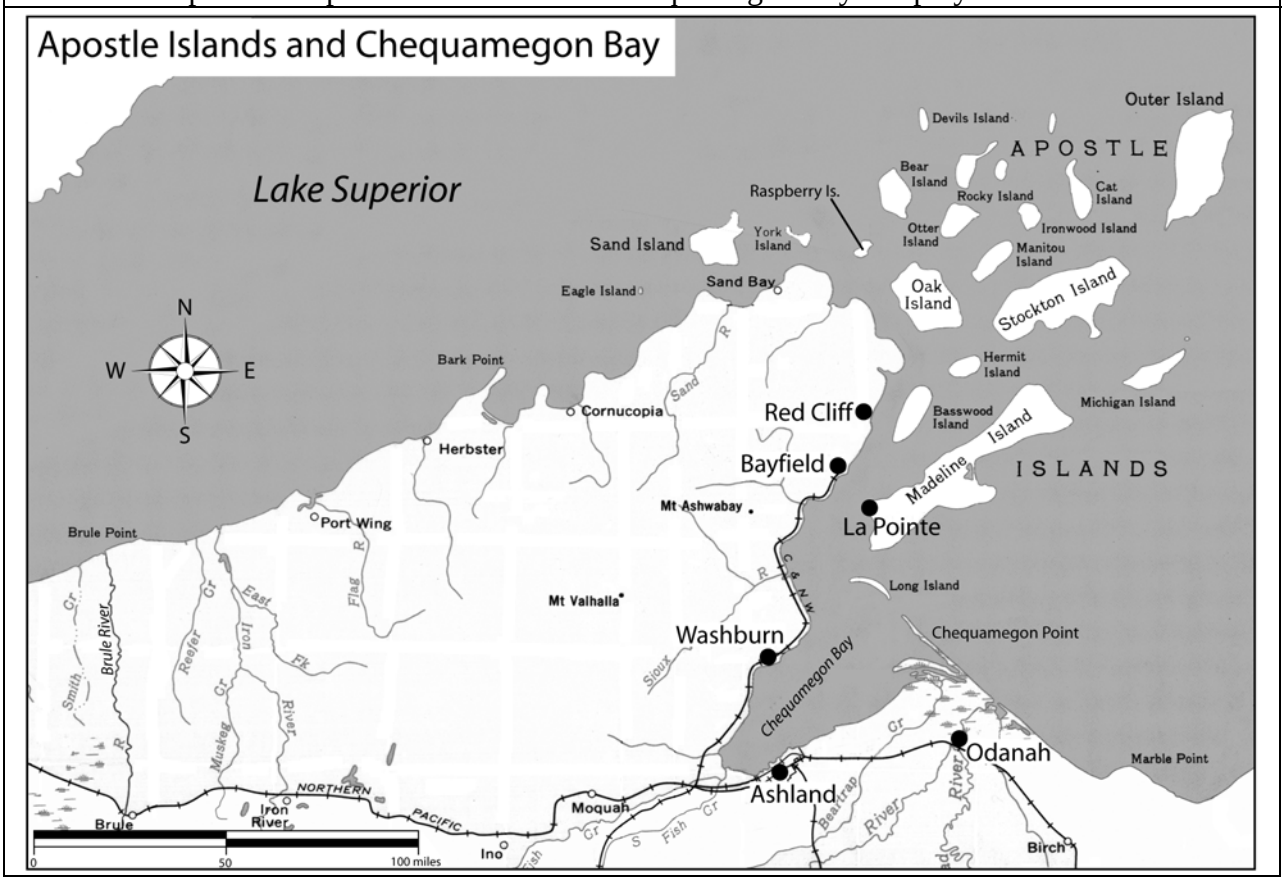
Map 1: The Lake Superior Region. Map by Joel Heiman



The Chequamegon Bay—as the region is also known—has a long human history. (See Map 2.) Euro-Americans have lived among the Apostle Islands since the mid-1800s, French fur traders and missionaries since the late 1600s, and Native Americans for many years before that. Island dwellers repeatedly turned to the area's natural resources to make a living. They logged island forests, fished the local waters, and even quarried the bedrock of the islands. Tourists, too, traveled to the area as early as the 1850s to visit the island lighthouses, to fish and hunt, or simply to escape the increasingly dirty and crowded cities. Tourism functioned as a key component of a diverse and interconnected economy that flourished in the western Lake Superior

region from the mid-nineteenth century well into the twentieth. This diverse economy indelibly marked the island environments. Quarrymen left holes in the island shoreline, loggers clearcut the forests, and fishermen altered underwater environments and fish populations. Tourists, too, shaped the islands, with their summer homes and demands for exotic sport fish.

Map 2: The Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay. Map by Joel Heiman



This human history of tourism, logging, and farming is just as important as ecological processes such as fire and succession in the creation of modern landscapes. One after another, the extractive economies of the Chequamegon Bay came to a predictable end. Lumberjacks ran out of trees and fishermen ran out of fish; only tourism remains as a viable economic activity. Old logging roads now carry hikers through island forests, farmsteads remain as woodland clearings filled with wildflowers, and fishing docks provide anchorage for vacationing boaters.

The impact of earlier activity, however, has persisted. Although the forests have regenerated, their composition reflects past human choices about where and when to log, and where and when not to. As the forest reclaims hayfields and orchards that once dotted the islands, it does so in ways informed by the choices that individual farmers made a century ago. Fish populations have changed in response to the pressures of commercial fishing, as well as to the attempts of state and federal fisheries managers to repair the damage of overfishing and to improve the utility of Lake Superior's fish species.

Even the wilderness character of the islands is the product of human choice, not just the ability of wild nature to return to an area once heavily marked by industry. A central argument of this dissertation is that as the state—first the state of Wisconsin and then the federal government—consolidated its authority in the region, it managed the islands to create a landscape valued for recreational and ecological qualities, a landscape we today call wilderness. State and federal natural resource managers promoted some activities and prohibited others, with consequences both for the environments of the islands and for the people who lived, worked, and played among them. These restrictions favored the use of the islands by non-local tourists at the expense of local residents who had earned a living based on tourism—as well as other, more extractive activities—for decades.

State authority to manage the island environments grew steadily after the late nineteenth century, culminating in the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970. Congress created the lakeshore, with the twin motivations of nature protection and recreational development. National Park Service (NPS) officials and other park supporters hoped that the park would stimulate the moribund economy of the Chequamegon Bay region, provide

recreational opportunities for the midwestern urbanites, and protect the islands—increasingly wild but still recovering from the effects of logging and other human activity—from encroaching development. Since 1977, the NPS has managed the Apostle Islands as a wilderness, and in 2004 it completed a Wilderness Suitability Study that recommended 80 percent of the lakeshore for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Wilderness management in the Apostle Islands, however, has been quite complicated. Although the islands have become a wilderness, they are also a place rich in history. The Park Service struggles to manage places like the Apostle Islands, places where wild nature and human history mingle and overlap. Both popular understanding of wilderness as well as NPS management policy segregate nature and history by defining and valuing wilderness as a place without human intrusion. In practical terms, this means that NPS policy often requires the removal of cultural resources to enhance the park's wilderness character, thereby obscuring the evident remains of he human past that combined with ecological processes to shape the modern wilderness.

These issues are not isolated to the Apostle Islands. They occur wherever we seek to mingle past and present uses of a landscape, wherever natural and cultural resources are apparently in conflict. Landscapes as far flung as the Maine Woods, Shenandoah National Park, New York's Adirondack Forest Preserve, and Point Reyes National Seashore in northern California face similar management dilemmas. The assumption that any human use degrades a landscape and cheapens its value for nature preservation dictates the places we seek to protect. Questioning this assumption and exploring the intersections of nature and culture provides a more complex understanding of both wilderness and history in the Apostle Islands.

Wilderness Debates and Historiography

American environmental history has a standard narrative: America's past can be explained as a tale of how misguided personal ambition and unchecked industrial capitalism have resulted in a degraded modern environment. Americans came to value wilderness, this story runs, only after the nineteenth-century processes of urbanization and industrialization had relegated wilderness to only the highest mountains and deepest canyons. This narrative has helped to make wilderness a precious commodity in the early twenty-first century. The bias of this standard narrative against capitalism, industrialization, and resource extraction is no coincidence; the modern environmental movement provided intellectual energy and moral force to the field of environmental history.[2]

In the past fifteen or so years, however, historians and scholars from a wide variety of fields have started to modify the standard narrative of environmental decline and to critique the very idea of wilderness. The critique of wilderness has come from several directions. One set of concerns about wilderness comes from scholars who challenge the accuracy of the myth of the pristine past, and worry about the social justice ramifications of wilderness. A second critique probes the *idea* of wilderness, and the assumptions about the relationship between humans and their environment upon which that idea is based. A third set of concerns has come from conservation biologists who have questioned the value of wilderness as a model for protecting a natural world that we increasingly understand as a dynamic and chaotic place. Other scholars and activists have come to the defense of wilderness as both an idea and as a conservation strategy.

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[2] Although repeated many places, the classic representative of this standard narrative is Roderick F. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

This ongoing discussion of the value and the meaning of wilderness is often referred to as the Great New Wilderness Debate.[3]

A key component of the celebration of wilderness is the perception that the New World of the western hemisphere existed in a wild, undisturbed, and pristine state prior to the arrival of Europeans. William Denevan, Richard White, Mark Spence, and a host of other scholars, however, have demonstrated that Native Americans everywhere directly and consciously shaped their environments with their agricultural practices, their use of fire, and their residential patterns. These scholars have argued that few parts of North America would have qualified as pristine, untouched wilderness, even before the arrival of Europeans. Indeed, the creation of national parks and later wilderness areas in places like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Glacier National Parks often required the forced removal of Native Americans who had called those places home for generations. From this perspective, wilderness seems not just to be misleading in its focus on the absence of humans, but also ethnocentric and unjust.[4]

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[3] A compilation of the multiple perspectives on the wilderness debate, including many of the essays listed in the next several footnotes, are included in J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds. *The Great New Wilderness Debate: An Expansive Collection of Writings Defining Wilderness from John Muir to Gary Snyder* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

[4] See, for example: Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983); Theodore Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82 (September 1992): 369-85; Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999). A smaller set of recent studies has demonstrated that non-Indian peoples have also had their ties to the natural world severed or restricted in the name of wilderness preservation. See, for example, Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) and Louis Warren, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Ramachandra Guha extends these critiques to the third world in "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (Spring 1989): 71-83.

A second group of scholars have critiqued wilderness as a cultural construct—as an idea, and a bad one at that. William Cronon, J. Baird Callicott, and others have explored the assumptions and underlie the American fascination with wilderness. Wilderness, they argue, is an idea created in opposition to modern, urban, industrial society, not a real, physical place that somehow avoided the influence of human activity. As cities grew dirtier and more congested in the late nineteenth century, and particularly as the frontier era drew to a close, Americans began to celebrate wilderness as the opposition and the needed antidote to civilization. The problem with this construction of wilderness, these scholars argue, is that it encourages people to value most the places where people are not; it accentuates the perceived separation between humans and nature. Celebrating distant, dehumanized wilderness, Cronon and Callicott worry, causes people to overlook the humanized landscapes closer to home, landscapes that might point the way toward healthier and more sustainable ways of living in nature.[5]

A third set of concerns about wilderness originates in the sciences rather than the humanities. In the second half of the twentieth century, ecological theory has undergone a radical makeover. As the science of ecology matured in the early twentieth century, biologists crafted a model to explain the natural world known as climax theory. Ecosystems, this model held, moved in ordered progression toward a stable climax, and there rested in equilibrium. These ideas provided important support for the nascent American environmental movement; undisturbed wilderness could be used as a benchmark to measure the degradation caused by human activity. In the 1970s, however, ecologists replaced climax theory with a model that stressed dynamism

[5] William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 69-90; J. Baird Callicott, "The Wilderness Idea Revisited: The Sustainable Development Alternative," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. Callicott and Nelson, 353-54.

and constant change. Variations ranging from the fall of a single forest tree to epochal shifts in temperature ensured that nature would never reach a state of stable equilibrium, but rather remain in constant flux. "Wherever we seek to find constancy we discover change," explained biologist Daniel Botkin of this New Ecology, "[We] find that nature undisturbed is not constant in form, structure, or proportion, but changes at every scale of time and space. The old idea of a static landscape … must be abandoned…" The insights of this new perspective complicate wilderness management, which critics charge aims to preserve the environment as it was prior to human, particularly Euro-American, disturbance. How can something in constant motion be *preserved*?[6]

These critiques of wilderness share a common thread: they complain that wilderness is essentially ahistorical. The wilderness idea is historically inaccurate, argue scholars of Native American history. Historian William Cronon explains of the assumptions that bolster the wilderness idea: "one of the most striking proofs of the cultural invention of wilderness is its thoroughgoing erasure of the history from which it sprang. In virtually all of its manifestations, wilderness represents a flight from history." Even the emerging scientific critique shares this complaint about the ahistorical nature of wilderness. By failing to recognize the dynamism of nature, wilderness "defies the fourth dimension of nature, time," points out philosopher J. Baird

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[6] Daniel B. Botkin, *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 62; Donald Worster, "The Ecology of Order and Chaos," in *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 156-70, and "Nature and the Disorder of History," in *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction*, ed. Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1995); Stephen Budiansky *Nature's Keepers: The New Science of Nature Management* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Callicott, "The Wilderness Idea Revisited," 353-54; Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 11, 265 n.16.

Callicott. Stephen Budiansky, in a book on the management lessons of recent ecological theories, claims: "The entire modern conception of nature depends upon denying her checkered past."[7]

The varied critiques of wilderness and its assumptions have prompted an equally cogent and passionate response. Wilderness advocates worry that the academy's postmodern deconstruction of nature and wilderness will have devastating real-world consequences; wilderness is a place to be cherished, they argue, not an idea to be attacked. The critics of wilderness discussed above universally avow their support for the preservation of wild places, and state clearly that they seek ways of protecting more wild nature, not less of it. But Dave Foreman, a leading wilderness advocate, worries about the impact of these academic ideas. The critiques undermine wilderness areas "by attacking the idea behind them, and others will reap the whirlwind [the critics are] sowing to try to open existing Wilderness Areas to clear-cutting, roads, motorized vehicles, and 'ecosystem management,' and, more dangerously, to argue against the designation of new Wilderness Areas." Other scholars, such as Donald Worster, worry that the historian's tendency to relativize, to deconstruct, and to describe a world of constant change—a tendency in some ways mirrored by the new ecological paradigm—strips us of the ability to make morally sound decisions about environmental management. In the mid-1990s, the wilderness debates spilled outside the academy into discussions in popular periodicals, conference halls, and classrooms. This only magnified worries about the impact of criticism of the wilderness idea.[8]

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[7] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 79; Callicott, "The Wilderness Idea Revisited," 354; Budiansky, *Nature's Keepers*, 5.

[8] Dave Foreman, "Wilderness Areas for Real," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. Callicott and Nelson, 395-407; Michael E. Soulé, "The Social Siege of Nature," in *Reinventing Nature?*, ed. Soulé and lease, 137-70; Michael Pollan, ed., "Only Man's Presence Can Save Nature: Beyond the Wilderness," *Harper's Magazine* (April 1990): 37-48; Susan Zakin, "Shake Up: Greens Inside the Beltway," *High Country News*, November 11, 1996. An abridged

One of the reasons that the wilderness debate has been so contentious is that it seems to force people to make an either/or choice—a choice between wilderness and history. One can either celebrate wilderness and advocate wilderness preservation or recognize that wilderness is nothing more than a social category, and attack it as such. Wilderness history thereby seems to undermine wilderness management as a conservation strategy. The way that environmental historians typically treat three important topics—Native American history, tourism, and the role of the state—are symptoms of this dichotomous thinking.

Although the impact of Native Americans on the pre-Columbian environment is now well-documented, environmental historians have never been quite sure what to make of Indians after the colonial encounter. Indians once shaped the environment with their agricultural practices and use of fire, but they were wiped out by guns and germs, removed, or confined to reservations. Even those histories that discuss the continued Indian presence in places like Glacier National Park tell a story of Indians departing from a landscape, and the violence done to Indian inhabitance in pursuit of wilderness preservation. In the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay, Indians faced the threats of removal and disease, as well as confinement to reservations and the restriction of their access to fish and game. But they also remained integral parts of the fishing, logging, and tourist economies. In the following chapters, I highlight the continued presence of Ojibwe in the Apostles—their participation in the island logging, fishing,

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version of Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness" essay appeared in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, August 13, 1995, 42-43. A major response to the critiques of wilderness has been to reformulate the logic behind wilderness preservation in the more ethnocentric and ecologically current ideas of biodiversity protection. See, for example, Don Waller, "Getting Back to the Right Nature: A Reply to Cronon's 'The Trouble with Wilderness,'" in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. Callicott and Nelson, 540-67, and the other essays in Parts III and IV of that book.

and tourist economies, as well as their essential role in the politics of park formation in the 1960s—as a counter to the standard narrative of the disappearing Indian.[9]

Tourism is the one economic activity whose appropriateness in the wilderness goes unquestioned. Why is this? Because we let ourselves off the hook by believing that tourism is fundamentally different from other economic activities like logging, fishing, or farming. Traveling to the wilderness to hike or to photograph, it seems, has only a minimal environmental impact, an impact with no parallel in more industrial, extractive economies. Historians fall into this trap, too, typically considering tourism in cultural rather than in material terms—for its meaning (as an emblem of consumption, for national and regional identity, for class status and leisure activities) not for its impact. By considering tourism as a part of a multi-faceted economic strategy, as an activity fundamentally similar to logging or fishing (as I do in Chapter Four of this dissertation) I hope to show the ways that tourism has shaped, and continues to shape, the environments of the Apostle Islands. Indeed, I argue that the wilderness character of the islands was in many ways created expressly for the purposes of the tourist trade.[10]

Environmental historians are paying increasing attention to the role of the state in shaping the landscape, particularly in the regulation of access to natural resources. The modern critique of wilderness has emerged in part from the recognition of the federal government's direct role in

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[9] Mark Spence, in *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, avoids this trap by showing how Native American interactions with the environment evolved during and after removal at Glacier, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks. Many others, however, discuss Native Americans merely as a part of the pre-contact landscape. See, for example, Norris Hundley, Jr., *Great Thirst: Californians and Water, 1770s-1990s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Timothy Silver, *A New Face in the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980); John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[10] The historiography of tourism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

removing the original residents of the western lands we today celebrate for their uninhabited state. Historians have evaluated this story as a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century process, a part of the cultural anxiety associated with nation building and the closing of the frontier. Critics charge that the modern idea of wilderness is trapped in century-old (or older) ideas about civilization, savagery, and the frontier; this argument provides the bulwark for the critique that wilderness is ahistorical.[11]

Historians have devoted far less attention to the more recent state role in the creating the wilderness. In acquiring the Apostle Islands and managing them as wilderness, the state determined which types of economic activity would cease, and which would persist. The state privileged certain activities, like recreational tourism, over others, like logging and commercial fishing; these choices had important social consequences. These management decisions also played an essential role in the transformation of the islands from a site of industrial, extractive activities like fishing and logging to a wilderness area most valued for its scientific and recreational characteristics. The state role in the creation of the wilderness did not cease with the reservation of Native Americans and the creation of the large, western national parks in the nineteenth century; rather, it continued into the late twentieth century. But as I explain in the final chapter, NPS wilderness management obscures this history, and the implicit human role in the return of the wild to the islands, making the roots of this transformation difficult to trace.

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[11] On the role of the state in restricting access to natural resources, see: Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*; Warren, *The Hunter's Game*; Arthur F. McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Joseph E. Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999). See also Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, and Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.

Wilderness and history, it seems, cannot share the same landscape; we must choose between the two.

But perhaps this is a false dichotomy, this choice between wilderness and history. It is time to move beyond the Great New Wilderness Debate, and to rephrase the questions that we ask about wilderness and history so that we are not faced with either/or answers. If we ask questions about the role of history in nature and the role of nature in history—and realize that these are not dichotomous categories—we will do a far better job of protecting wild nature, simply because we will understand it better. The same is true for the way we understand history.

Scholars in other disciplines have begun to ask these types of questions, with provocative results. Just as environmental historians are coming to recognize the role of ecological processes in the way that we understand human history, ecologists are increasingly recognizing that they are dealing with historical questions as well as biological ones. The ecologist David Foster, for example, explores the ways that the modern forests of New England have developed as a result of historic land use patterns—the intensive farming and logging of New England from the colonial era through the mid-nineteenth century. Much of the most valuable and biologically diverse forest in modern New England has regrown on abandoned fields, but the edge environments and early successional forest types that made these areas so rich are no longer maintained, and the agricultural and logging practices that created them have long since ceased. Foster is learning that even a single turn of the soil by a long-ago farmer can have profound implications on the forest composition almost two centuries later. Foster and his colleagues at the

Harvard Forest are exploring ways of incorporating the insights of historical research on nineteenth-century land use patterns into modern, region-wide conservation plans.[12]

There is an important recognition that is coming out of this fusion of history and ecology: that we are going to be able to do a better job protecting nature—in all of its varied states of wildness—if we stop mythologizing it as a an entity that is somehow without people. If we fail to recognize the essential role of history, even in seemingly pristine wilderness, we will not be able to fully understand the ecological complexity of the places we hope to protect. Recognizing the role of cultural processes in shaping wilderness is a path to a more complete understanding of both our environment and our history.

Places like the Apostles Islands provide the opportunity to pursue just this type of inquiry. The Apostles turn the standard narrative of American environmental history on its head. In the islands, the past is denuded, scarred by logging and other human activity, the present a wilderness, albeit one shaped in essential ways by that history of use. The modern landscapes of the Apostles provide a place to discuss nature and history in terms less polarized than those typically employed in the wilderness debates. The islands remind us that wildness can grow as well as shrink, and let us consider humans as a factor in the return of the wild rather than solely as the culprit of its disappearance.[13]

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[12] David R. Foster and John D. Aber, eds., *Forests in Time: The Environmental Consequences of 1000 Years of Change in New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); D. R. Foster, "Insights From Historical Geography to Ecology and Conservation: Lessons From the New England Landscape," *Journal of Biogeography* 29 (October 2002): 1269-75, as well as the other articles in this issue, all devoted to historical ecological research at the Harvard Forest; David Foster *et al.*, "The Importance of Land-Use Legacies to Ecology and Conservation," *Bioscience* 53 (January 2003): 77-88; Emily W. B. Russell, *People and the Land Through Time: Linking Ecology and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[13] Writer John Elder, who has thought deeply about the regenerating wilderness around his Vermont home, has said of similar places: "This wilderness will never be pristine again … But a dialogue between wilderness and culture is what we need now anyway, not a resolution. It may keep us from drawing our boundaries too straight, and remind us

The Terminology Problem

One of the difficulties of discussing the interactions between natural and cultural systems is that we do not have a very effective terminology for doing so. Most of the terms that we use to describe the return of wilderness are pejorative. For example, the forest regenerates, and the environment heals, after human use. These words describe human activity as a wound in need of recovery. These terms are an awkward fit for the Apostles. Although the island environments changed as the result of human activity, this human activity does not necessarily need to be, or deserve to be, described in such negative terms. Human action certainly can be quite destructive—lumberjacks did, after all, clearcut most of the islands. But people also built homes there, planted apple orchards, lilac bushes, and garden plots. Both the decision to clear cut and the one to plant an orchard shaped the subsequent return of wild characteristics to the islands, but it does not seem right to characterize all of these decisions in a negative way. How, then, to describe what has happened in the Apostles over the course of the twentieth century, when the islands transformed from the cutover landscape left behind by lumberjacks into a potential wilderness area? In this dissertation, I use the term "rewilding." Rewilding landscapes should be interpreted as evidence neither of past human abuse nor of triumphant wild nature, but rather as evidence of the tightly intertwined processes of natural and cultural history.

I am hardly the first to struggle with this terminology problem; all scholars who consider the relationship between history and wilderness face a similar dilemma. William Cronon, a

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that sometimes we must go down before we find our second chance. The western-based environmental movement has often asserted the value of 'virgin wilderness.' But Vermont's return to wildness … offers, instead, the image of a marriage. Not a dichotomy, but a dynamic, procreative union." John Elder, *Reading the Mountains of Home* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 83.

central figure in the wilderness debates, tries to resolve this dilemma in his book *Nature's Metropolis* by employing the terms "first nature" and "second nature" in his discussion of the transformation of Chicago and its hinterland in the nineteenth century. Cronon uses "first nature" to refer prehuman nature and "second nature" to describe the humanized landscapes that people erect upon first nature. "This distinction has its uses," Cronon qualifies, "but it too slips into ambiguity when we recognize that the nature we inhabit is never just first or second nature, but rather a complex mingling of the two." Landscape architect Robert Melnick tries to merge the terms of ecology and linguistics in his discussion of the mixed natural and historical elements in cultural landscapes. He ends up with the awkward term, "semantic ecotone." Nor am I the first person to use the term rewilding. Biological conservationists Reed Noss and Michael Soulé have used the term to refer to the scientific argument for restoring large areas of wilderness as habitat for keystone species, particularly the large predators that provide an index of ecological health. In this dissertation, I do not use the term rewilding in a quantitative, scientific manner, but rather as a way of discussing the implicit human role in the return of wilderness characteristics to a place still deeply marked by human activity.[14]

Part of the terminology problem is that "wilderness" is not just a material place; it is also a state of mind. From the earliest of colonial encounters, Euro-Americans explained their lives as battling for "civilization" and against "wilderness." Nineteenth-century boosters used the term "progress" to describe the same struggle. Bringing civilization to the wilderness or progress to

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[14] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), xix; Robert Z. Melnick, "Considering Nature and Culture in Historic Landscape Preservation in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22-43; Reed Noss and Michael Soulé, "Rewilding and Biodiversity: Complimentary Goals for Continental Conservation," *Wild Earth* 3 (Fall 1998): 2-11. See also Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 1980), 67-85.

the frontier was far more than simply the act of building houses, churches, or railroads. These terms are loaded with moral meaning, as well. Indeed, it this tension between wilderness as place and wilderness as idea that has provoked to today's wilderness debates. We no longer consider the expansion of the American nation in the nineteenth century as unqualified progress; the social and environmental consequences of this process are too well known to permit such a belief. But nor have we developed an alternate vocabulary that describes this process in morally neutral terms.

Before the process of rewilding could transform the islands into a modern wilderness, this other process—the "Progress" demanded and predicted by nineteenth-century boosters and businessmen—had to first run its course in the islands. The organization of this dissertation follows this path from nineteenth-century economic development to twentieth-century rewilding. Chapters One through Four discuss the political and economic activities that so profoundly shaped island environments, and Chapters Five through Seven assess the continuing legacy of these activities as wild characteristics returned to the islands. Chapter One places the islands with a context of regional and national economic development. Chapters Two, Three, and Four assess the impact of the logging, fishing, and tourism on island environments. Chapter Five considers the ways that these seemingly distinct activities intersected at one specific place—at Sand Island, where a community of Norwegian immigrants and other settlers made their home between 1880 and 1940. Human choices continued to shape the Sand Island environment long after this diverse and interconnected economy ceased to function. Chapter Six explores the rewilding of the islands: the way that wilderness returned to the Apostles in ways profoundly shaped by the fishing, farming, logging, and tourism of the previous century, as well as the conflicting value

placed on this emerging wilderness character by local residents and those from outside the region. Rewilding led to the designation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970, and the final chapter analyzes the dilemma faced by the National Park Service as it tries to manage landscapes that are at once natural and historical, and valuable for both reasons.

CHAPTER ONE
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Dalrymple's Dream:
The Process of Progress in the Chequamegon Bay

William F. Dalrymple had a grand dream for the future of Bayfield, Wisconsin. He believed that Bayfield would become the center of a vast commercial empire, the heart of a web of trade stretching across the continent. He envisioned commodities flowing like rivers across the northern Great Lakes, wheat, lumber, and iron traveling east, finished products like house wares and dry goods moving from eastern factories to the newly settled regions of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other western territories. Bayfield would be the center of the entire system, the point where the railroad networks of the plains met the shipping trade of the lakes. "This vast, and ever increasing tonnage of incalculable quantity, moving along the natural route of traffic, no where else finds so many natural advantages for profitable break of bulk," Dalrymple explained in 1883. Bayfield would command the commerce of the entire continent. The construction of railroads, Dalrymple believed, would make Bayfield "what nature designed … the great depot for distribution of articles of commerce for the great North West." Dalrymple had a reputation as a savvy businessman—he was known as the "Great Wheat King" for his profitable investments in North Dakota's Bonanza wheat farms—and reason to believe that his vision would become reality. One historian has labeled this vision "Dalrymple's Dream."[1]

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[1] William F. Dalrymple to E. P. Wilbur, November 19, 1883, Box 7, Folder 5, William F. Dalrymple Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin [hereafter, WHS]; *Bayfield County Press* [hereafter, BCP], June 30, 1883; Hamilton Nelson Ross, *La Pointe: Village Outpost on Madeline Island* (1960; repr., Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2000) 155.

William Dalrymple looked at Bayfield from the perspective of an outsider. He saw the town in a national, even international context, and believed that the key to the development of the region lay in establishing connections to regional and national economies. This meant both developing the region's abundant natural resources as well as taking advantage of its location on a potentially major route of transportation. To accomplish this integration, Dalrymple needed to secure capital investment, attract a supply of productive laborers, and—most importantly of all—establish a connection to the national railroad network that would link the western forests and wheat fields with eastern factories and markets. Dalrymple envisioned Bayfield's prosperous future, but Dalrymple's Dream articulated the vision held by countless other investors for countless other towns around the West and Midwest.

Dalrymple and other investors had important local allies in their attempts to integrate hopeful towns like Bayfield into the national economy. The residents of these towns shared in Dalrymple's Dream, although they held a far more local perspective. They wanted their towns to prosper, but they lacked the national vision of men like Dalrymple. They, too, recognized the importance of extra-local factors like investment capital, labor supply, and transportation networks in securing economic growth. Local boosters and more distant investors shared a vision of the future, and used a common term to describe the process for realizing that vision: Progress. All of them spent time, energy, and capital to make Dalrymple's Dream a reality, to bring progress to their towns. Boosters and investors everywhere faced a similar situation. The economic development of peripheral points of production like Bayfield depended on the integration of local resources into a larger economic structure. Although Dalrymple's dream for Bayfield never materialized, the attempt to forge these connections shaped the economic

development of the Chequamegon Bay region. Across the nation, investors, boosters, and townbuilders sought a similar path to progress.

Modern historians have followed the lead of William Dalrymple and other nineteenth-century boosters in their interpretations of the economic development of places like Bayfield. Historians are more likely to call the process economic development or American expansion than progress, but they analyze the same story of progression. Like the boosters, historians consistently point to the importance of markets, capital, and transportation networks as the essential determinants in economic growth.

Recent scholarship on the economic development of the American West provides an important interpretive framework for understanding the early history of Bayfield and the Apostle Islands. Western historians have long employed variations of the "Plundered Province" thesis to explain broad patterns of settlement and economic growth in the nineteenth-century American West. In its most basic terms, this thesis holds that the East, not the West, reaped the benefit of the West's bountiful natural resources. "[T]he few alpine forests of the West were leveled, its minerals were mined and smelted, all its resources were drained off through the perfectly engineered gutters of a system designed to flow eastward, " commented Bernard DeVoto, who coined the phrase "plundered province" in 1934. From this perspective, western economic development remained dependent on a host of *extra-local* factors: the availability of capital, the accessibility to markets, fluctuations in prices, or railroad schedules and rates. Similar factors shaped the patterns of economic development in Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay.[2]

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[2] Bernard DeVoto, "The West: A Plundered Province," *Harper's*, August 1934: 360. Scholars often point to the mining industry as the economic endeavor that most clearly reveals the West as a plundered province. The story goes like this: grizzled prospectors of the Sierra Nevada quickly gave way to a highly industrial, corporate industry. Massive hydraulic works and extensive underground operations required capital in amounts found only in New York

In the 1970s, the "Plundered Province" thesis received a jolt of international and theoretical rigor from the work of a variety of scholars, although most directly from Immanuel Wallerstein. Discontented with the standard practice of using the state as the basic unit of historical inquiry, Wallerstein offered a new paradigm. He suggested that world history should be explained as the development of a unified capitalist world-system that emerged in Western Europe during the sixteenth century. Wallerstein divided the world into two basic units: the core and the periphery. Core regions possessed advanced, mature economies, capital wealth, a strong industrial base, and high population density. Peripheral regions, on the other hand, lacked capital but possessed natural resources to supply the economies of the core regions.[3] Historians of the American West quickly adapted Wallerstein's theoretical framework to explain the economic history of their own region. They increasingly viewed the West as a piece of a far larger economic puzzle. The capitalist core—in Europe and later in the eastern United States—had

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or London. Absentee mine owners imported workers from far away and paid them paltry wages; the profits from mining went to build more mansions on Park Avenue than western towns. The corporate nature of the industry remained constant in California gold mines, Nevada silver mines, and Arizona copper mines. This pattern replicated itself in other industries, as well. More recently, historians have demonstrated that westerners themselves—bankers living in San Francisco or Denver as well as New York or Boston—often provided the capital necessary to finance resource extraction, and also reaped the rewards. But the resulting patterns of economic underdevelopment in the West's rural hinterlands remained the same. The view of the West as an exploited colony has emerged as a central tenet of western identity. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 99; William G. Robbins, "'The Plundered Province' Thesis and the Recent Historiography of the American West," *Pacific Historical Review* 55 (November 1986): 577-97; Keith L. Bryant, Jr., "Entering the Global Economy," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 195-235; Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 265. As centers of capital and industrial development moved westward after World War II, the "Plundered Province" lost many of its adherents. William G. Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 12-13.

[3] Wallerstein placed labor relations at the center of his definitions of core and periphery. Core regions had free labor while peripheral ones relied on versions of forced labor—slavery, for example. Wallerstein identified a third region, as well—the semiperiphery, which he defined as a midway point between the two. Fittingly, the semiperiphery held a mixture of free and forced labor systems. The semiperiphery acted as a the "middle man," the point of collection of resources and often the place from which core regions directly exercised control over the periphery.

incorporated the U. S. West into its economic system. Core and periphery emerged as essential explanatory terms in western history. Cowboys became the distant outposts of a national meatpacking industry rather than lonely range riders, and historians gave similar makeovers to the images of prospectors, lumberjacks, and other western archetypes.[4]

In his 1994 book *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West*, William Robbins provides one of most extensive applications of world-systems theory to the western past. Robbins believes that the history of the American West is best understood in the international context offered by Wallerstein: as a resource-producing hinterland for an expanding capitalist world-system. This system explains not just economics but the social and political history of the West as well. "Capitalism," he argues, "is the common factor essential to understanding power, influence, and change in the American West from the onset of the fur trade to the present." Viewing the history of the West outside of the context of international capitalism risks misrepresenting the past. The West *must* be analyzed within a web of economically determined relationships. "To attempt to describe change in the West as an isolated, internally homogenous process falsifies the material world; it ignores important and integral relationships involving the modern capitalist world system." And most important among these relationships, according to Robbins, is the profoundly unequal one between core and periphery. In each industry, in each economic cycle important to the western past, urban centers (first in Europe, then in the eastern U.S., and finally in the metropolitan West) exerted their influence and control

[4] Wallerstein presented his world-system theory in three volumes: *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980) and *The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy, 1730-1840s* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1989). For a concise summary of the world-system, see Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, *World Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982).

over the rural periphery. This process began in the nineteenth century and has accelerated in the twentieth. Robbins seeks to understand the impact of this inequitable relationship on the history of the American West.[5]

William Cronon focuses not on the impact of core on periphery but rather on the relationship between the two. In *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, Cronon replaces the terms "core" and "periphery" with "city" and "hinterland." Geographers use these terms in central place theory and city system theory to explain the spatial placement and hierarchical relationships between cities that compete for control of the same hinterland regions. Cronon employs this theoretical framework to explore the phenomenal growth of Chicago and its resource hinterland in the nineteenth century.[6] Investment capital and finished goods traveled from Chicago into the hinterland; natural resources like grain, timber, and livestock returned to the city and fueled Chicago's explosive growth. The city's location at the western edge of the Great Lakes shipping lanes and eastern edge of the prairies—the center of a continent-wide network of commerce—helped it achieve such prominence. Balance sheets tabulating the economic relationship between Chicago and its hinterland were hardly equal—profits from logging and wheat production ended up in Chicago and other urban investment centers, not northern Wisconsin or South Dakota. But Cronon illustrates that the country exerted as much influence on shaping the city as did the city on the country—metropolis and hinterland developed not only simultaneously, but inextricably. "The central story of the nineteenth-century

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[5] Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 7, 63.

[6] Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*. Although Cronon employs the theoretical framework offered by central place theorists in his analysis, he provides sharp criticism of this model as static and ahistorical, especially on pages 279-84. For an extensive historiographical discussion of central place theory and city systems theory see the footnotes on pages 447-50.

West is that of an expanding metropolitan economy creating ever more elaborate and intimate linkages between city and country," explains Cronon. Like Robbins, Cronon argues that the West cannot be understood in isolation; a resource hinterland cannot be explained without examining its links to an industrial metropolis.[7]

Cronon, Robbins, and other historians of the American West provide a framework for understanding the economic development of Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay. Northern Wisconsin does not at first glance seem like a western place. It lies east of the Mississippi River. It has no cowboys, few miners, and still fewer gunslingers. It does not have the aridity that defines so many western places—Bayfield gets an average of 32 inches of precipitation a year, and hundreds of miles separate the town from the nearest tumbleweed. But the economic processes that have marked Bayfield's development in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were clearly western. Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay developed as the resource hinterland for a much larger capitalist economy. The region falls squarely into the resource hinterland described by Cronon in *Nature's Metropolis*. Instead of gold, wheat, or beef cattle, the region supplied fish, timber, and cut stone to the regional markets. Many of these raw materials traveled to, and through, Chicago. As in other parts of the rural West, the extraction of these natural resources dictated economic development. And throughout its early history, Bayfield remained dependent on a host of extra-local factors. As a resource-producing hinterland, then,

[7] *Ibid*., xv, 6-7. See also William Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18 (April 1987): 157-76.

the Chequamegon Bay region must be placed within a larger context, viewed in connection to regional, national, and international economies.[8]

When Bayfield's boosters—and later the town's historians—identified markets, labor, capital, and transportation networks as the essential elements of economic growth, they identified the signposts of a process. The history of Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay is not unique. Towns around the West and Midwest tried to realize the goal of progress by integrating their town into regional, national, and international economies. Local factors, too, played a part in the economic development of Chequamegon Bay and other peripheral points. Indeed, the mixture of local geographies and environments with larger forces such as the expanding market shape the history of any single place. These local factors, and their relationship with larger ones, will be examined in the following chapters. The regional perspective suggested by Cronon, Robbins, and others, however, establishes a framework for understanding the history of Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay.

Whether labeled as "Progress," "economic development," or some other term, this process shad important consequences for both the environments and social patterns in the Apostle Islands. Railroads, for example, provided the opportunity to deliver fresh whitefish to distant urban centers. But they also changed the way that fishermen prosecuted their trade, and had real consequences for the way that they interacted with the fish populations on which they depended. Progress meant not just the shipment of white pine from Bayfield mills to the Chicago lumber market, but also the intertwining of local ecologies and national economies. When

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[8] In *An American Colony: Regionalism and the Roots of Midwestern Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002) Edward Watts makes the argument that the whole region once called the Old Northwest fits the model of an eastern colony.

Bayfield's boosters and merchants forged ties with distant markets, they also laid the groundwork for fundamental changes in the landscapes and environments of the Chequamegon Bay region. The process of progress provides a framework for understanding the early history of Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay.

Fur Traders, Land Cessions, and Integration into the Global Economy

In the Chequamegon Bay, process of integration into the global economy began long before William Dalrymple dreamed of a Bayfield as the "great depot of commerce." French voyageurs brought northern Wisconsin into the global economy in the seventeenth century, and they provide an early example of the integration of local resources into the extra-local economy shaped the development of the Chequamegon Bay. Like William Dalrymple, the French fur traders and the American treaty commissioners who followed them into the Chequamegon Bay had explicitly extra-local perspectives: that is, they looked at the fur, timber, and mineral resources of western Lake Superior and saw not just opportunities for local development but also connections to national and international markets. French fur traders and American treaty commissioners also demonstrate the essential role of the state in the incorporation of the resource hinterland into the expanding international economy. From these beginnings, the role of the state in the economic and environmental transformation of the Apostles steadily expanded.

French explorers and voyageurs first arrived in the Chequamegon Bay in the mid-seventeenth century. By 1690, the French had established a fort on Madeline Island, the largest of the Apostles and the site of an important Ojibwe winter village. Furs from far to the west and south funneled through this early fort on the way to Montreal and then France. Even at so early a

stage, the Chequamegon Bay economy revealed its vulnerability to extra-local forces: prices for North American furs in a glutted European market fell to such low levels that in 1696 the king of France cancelled all North American trading licenses. By the end of the century, the French had abandoned their Madeline Island outpost. The fort reopened in 1718 with the name that the town at that site holds today, La Pointe. French traders used La Pointe as a western base of operations in the fur trade until the British took control of the region in the 1760s. The British, and then the Americans after 1783, continued to use the Chequamegon Bay as a staging area for the western Great Lakes fur trade.[9]

True to the model of economic development in a resource hinterland, the Chequamegon Bay fur trade depended on markets, labor, capital, and transportation networks. The trade prospered for so long because of persistent European demand for beaver—the animal's soft underfur provided lining material for fashionable top hats. Indians provided the labor needed to trap beaver and other furbearers and to transport the pelts to La Pointe. First the French government and later British and American corporations like the Northwest Company and the American Fur Company provided the capital necessary to purchase pelts from the Indians and to transport them to eastern markets. The Great Lakes provided a water route to get bales of fur to European markets; although the voyageurs who carried pelts to Montreal faced a long and arduous trip, the fur trade would not have succeeded had it depended on overland transportation.

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[9] John O. Holzhueter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 1-27; Ross, *La Pointe*, 34-72. Wallerstein explains the fierce rivalry between England and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—including their battles in North America over control of the interior of the continent—as a part of the struggle over the supplies produced in peripheral regions, like furs from the Great Lakes, slaves from Africa and sugar from the Caribbean; Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II*, 246. Long before Wallerstein, Canadian geographer and economic historian Harold A. Innis explored the ways that the fur trade pulled Native peoples in the interior of North America into the European economic orbit in his classic work, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (1930; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

The value of a natural resource—beaver fur—propelled the Chequamegon Bay into the world economy. Beaver populations and the Great Lakes fur trade had both collapsed by the early nineteenth century, but subsequent economic development in the region followed the same pattern.[10]

The demand for natural resources—this time, copper and timber—guided American expansion into the region. The United States government played an essential role in this process; state power accelerated the transformation of the Chequamegon Bay region into a resource hinterland. In the mid-nineteenth century, the government signed a series of treaties with the Ojibwe residents of western Lake Superior. These treaties secured American access to land and natural resources, and also established the political geography that shaped the subsequent economic development of the region.[11]

When U.S. Indian commissioners approached Wisconsin Ojibwe for a treaty in 1837, they sought not land but timber. In fact, historian Ronald Satz has labeled the 1837 treaty signed

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[10] There is, of course, voluminous literature on the fur trade, much of it dedicated to discerning how and why Native Americans engaged in the trade in the first place. The most comprehensive treatment of the Great Lakes region and the relations between Native Americans there and the European and American powers that sought to profit form the fur trade is Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). White places the fur trade within a still larger context of the culturally and economically mediated world created by the various peoples of the Great Lakes region between 1650 and 1815. White demonstrates that although Indian residents of the region might have been integrated into an international economic and political framework, they understood their world in much more locally informed ways. In *The Roots of Dependency*, White deals more directly with the economic integration of native societies into European market structures, and the consequences of this integration for native economies and cultures. Not all scholars, of course, agree with White's explanations of Indian involvement in the international economy. In *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984, R1997), for example, Gary Clayton Anderson argues for a much more culturally—rather than materially—driven explanation of early European/Native American interactions.

[11] For a survey of the history of Native Americans in Wisconsin, see: Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*, (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 58; Ronald N. Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights: The Reserved Rights of Wisconsin's Chippewa Indians in Historical Perspective," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 79 (no.1, 1991), 1-12; Alice E. Smith, *The History of Wisconsin: From Exploration To Statehood*, vol. 1, *The History of Wisconsin Series*, ed. William Fletcher Thompson (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 123.

at St. Peters, Minnesota, as the "Pine Tree Treaty." Henry Dodge, territorial governor of Wisconsin, served as the government's chief negotiator. He estimated that the area in question contained "from nine to ten millions of acres of land, and abounding in Pine Timber." The region was "of the first importance to the people of the States of Illinois, Missouri, and the Territory of Wisconsin for its Pine Timber." As settlers reached the Mississippi River frontier, the demand for finished lumber exploded. Until the acquisition of northern Wisconsin timberland, settlers imported wood from as far away as Pennsylvania, at considerable cost. Access to the Wisconsin pinery would solve this problem. In the 1837 treaty, the Ojibwe ceded a vast territory of north-central Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota, north of the Wisconsin River, excluding a strip of land bordering Lake Superior.[12]

Federal Indian agents again requested a treaty in 1842, this time seeking copper, not pine. With billions of board feet of lumber now available in the ceded territory, lumbermen filed into the region; reports of copper deposits along the south shore of Lake Superior filtered out. Prospectors demanded that the government open the rumored deposits to private entry—but the best copper lands had not been ceded in 1837. Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert Stuart called Wisconsin Ojibwe to negotiate new land cessions in the autumn of 1842. In signing the treaty, Ojibwe ceded title to the land north of the 1837 cession, including later-day

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[12] Although the disparate Ojibwe bands had no formal, centralized government, the United States consistently attempted to negotiate with them as if they were a single nation. The 1837 treaty did not differentiate among the bands at all, but the 1842 treaty divided Ojibwe into the "Mississippi River Chippewa" and the "Lake Superior Chippewa"—primarily to facilitate the acquisition of mineral rights. Melissa L. Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 13-14; Charles E. Cleland, "Preliminary Report of the Ethnohistorical Basis of the Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering Rights of the Mille Lacs Chippewa," in James M. McClurken, comp., *Fish in the Lakes, Wild Rice, and Game in Abundance: Testimony on Behalf of Mille Lacs Ojibwe Hunting and Fishing Rights* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 27-35, Robert F. Fries, *Empire in Pine: The Story of Lumbering in Wisconsin, 1830-1900* (Sister Bay, WI: Wm Caxton Ltd., 1989), 8.

Wisconsin's Lake Superior shore and the Chequamegon Bay, as well as the Keweenaw Peninsula on Michigan's Upper Peninsula—one of the richest deposits of copper ore in the world. For this nearly seven million acre cession, including timber and mineral rights, Stuart agreed to pay $31,200 in annuities for twenty-five years, to pay accumulated debts owed by the Ojibwe to Indian traders, to provide agricultural services, and to offer additional payment to Ojibwe mixed-blood relatives.[13]

Despite the seeming lopsidedness of these treaties, Ojibwe did retain a set of rights in the ceded territory. During the negotiations for the Pine Tree Treaty in 1837, the Ojibwe representatives insisted on retaining the usufructuary rights to the territory—that is, the right to hunt, fish, and gather wild rice. Flat Mouth, one of the Ojibwe leaders with a prominent role in the negotiations, explained the Ojibwe terms: "Your children are willing to let you have their lands, but they wish to reserve the privilege of making sugar from the trees, and getting their living from the Lakes and Rivers, as they have done heretofore, and of remaining in this Country." In fact, many modern historians believe that Ojibwe negotiators in 1837 understood the treaty to mean that they had sold timber rights—not the ownership of the land itself.[14] In negotiations over the 1842 treaty, the Ojibwe again insisted on the reservation of usufructuary rights, a demand once more accommodated by federal negotiators. But unlike the 1837 treaty, the 1842 treaty included a proviso that at the request of the president of the United States, the Ojibwe could be removed from their Wisconsin lands to territory west of the Mississippi River.

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[13] Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 33; Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 36-39, Smith, *History of Wisconsin*, 148-49.

[14] Quote from Verplanck Van Antwerp, "Negotiations for the "Chippewa Treaty of July 29, 1837," App. 1, *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 79 (no.1, 1991), 145; Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 19-23; Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 27-35.

Both the retention of usufructuary rights and the removal proviso had significant consequences for Wisconsin Ojibwe.[15]

Despite promises that the Ojibwe would not be asked to leave their villages for generations, the removal order came in less than a decade. In 1850, President Zachary Taylor demanded that the Lake Superior Ojibwe evacuate their homes and move to lands west of the Mississippi. To enforce the removal order, the office of Indian Affairs announced that it would not disburse the 1850 annuity payments at La Pointe (as stipulated by the 1842 treaty) but rather at Sandy Lake, Minnesota. The removal ended in disaster. The Ojibwe who traveled to Sandy Lake found neither their annuity payments nor enough supplies to sustain them through the winter. Uncertainty about the prospect of removal and the absence of the expected annuity payment had disrupted the traditional Ojibwe food gathering activities, and many of three thousand people who traveled to Minnesota did not carry adequate provisions. Flooding in the government storehouses at Sandy Lake spoiled what few rations did exist. Desperate for food, the Ojibwe ate what they could, but the rancid meat and other soured provisions precipitated horrible cases of dysentery. An outbreak of measles followed. Anthropologist James Clifton estimates that 400 of the three thousand Ojibwe who made the trip perished at Sandy Lake or as they traveled back to their villages. The episode has come to be known as the "Wisconsin Death March."[16]

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[15] The terms of the removal proviso were hotly contested both in 1842 and in late twentieth-century discussions of Indian treaty rights. See James A. Clifton, "Wisconsin Death March: Explaining the Extremes of Old Northwest Indian Removal," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 75 (1987): 1-39, Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 40; Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 36-39, Smith, *History of Wisconsin*, 148-49 and Benjamin G. Armstrong, "Reminiscences of Life Among the Chippewa (Part II)," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 55 (Summer 1972): 288.

[16] Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 46-51, 55-56; Clifton, "Wisconsin Death March," 17; Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 63-72. The best account of the tragic events at Sandy Lake is Clifton, "Wisconsin Death March."

As a result of the disaster at Sandy Lake, the Lake Superior Ojibwe and the United States negotiated a third treaty, in 1854. Once again, federal representatives sought access to natural resources rather than land for immediate white settlement. This time, the iron ore of the Mesabi Range on the north shore of Lake Superior provided the object of acquisition. Federal negotiators found the Lake Superior Ojibwe insistent on retaining hunting and fishing rights in any ceded land and steadfastly opposed to any language that would require them to leave their homeland. They refused to cede the sought-after mineral lands of the north shore without a guarantee that they would be allowed to remain in their homes. By 1854, however, a major shift had taken place in federal Indian policy, and the treaty commissioners agreed to establish permanent reservations in exchange for the ceded territory.[17]

The 1854 Treaty of La Pointe established the political landscape of northern Wisconsin. The treaty formally repudiated the policy of removal and delineated four reservations in Wisconsin, all within the territory previously ceded in the treaties of 1837 and 1842: Bad River, on the southern and eastern shores of the Chequamegon Bay, including the rich ricing areas of the Kakagon Sloughs and two hundred acres on Madeline Island with access to important fishing grounds; Red Cliff, on the northern tip of the Bayfield Peninsula facing the islands; Lac Courte Oreilles in Sawyer County in north-central Wisconsin, and Lac du Flambeau, in Vilas County. The treaty left the Ojibwe bands that lived near Mole Lake (in northeastern Wisconsin) and

[17] The government began to experiment with reservations in California in the early 1850s, with mixed results. The appointment of George Manypenny to the position of commissioner of Indian affairs in 1853 signaled a shift in Indian policy, one that sought reservations rather than removal. Manypenny believed that the best hope for Native Americans lay in assimilating them into mainstream American society as quickly as possible, a goal most easily achieved through education. Manypenny sought to concentrate the Indian land base—essentially creating reservations—so that education and other services could be efficiently provided. He also advocated the idea of allotment, a policy not fully followed until the 1870s. Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 19-81, 83-85; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian*, abr. ed. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 112-13, 129-31.

along the St. Croix River (in northwest Wisconsin) landless, a situation not rectified until the 1930s. The 1854 Treaty of La Pointe also stipulated that the government provide a variety of annuity payments, agricultural tools, and other services.[18]

The three treaties between the United States and the Lake Superior Ojibwe had dramatic economic implications. Securing the western Great Lakes as a resource hinterland for the expanding national economy provided the primary motivation for federal treaty making. While other treaties sought access to land, the treaties signed with Wisconsin Ojibwe sought access to natural resources. "Acquiring the land was almost incidental—a necessity to control access to pine timber and minerals," explains the historian Charles E. Cleland. The prioritization of resources over land marks these treaties as distinct in the history of federal treaty making.[19]

The treaties accomplished their desired effect. Historian David Wrone has tried to quantify the value of the land and resources received by the U.S. in the three treaties. He concludes that the government acquired 170 billion board feet of lumber (perhaps 100 billion board feet in Wisconsin alone), 150 billion tons of iron ore, and 13.5 million tons of copper. The cessions also provided the U.S. with nineteen million acres of land, as well as lakes, ports, transportation routes, and power sites. "How can a dollar amount be placed on such wealth?" Wrone wonders. The resources acquired in the Ojibwe treaties provided material essential to the industrial development of the nation. Timber from the region bolstered the construction of cities and towns across the Midwest, the north shore of Lake Superior served as one of the most important sources of iron ore for the Pittsburgh steel mills and the copper carried out of the

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[18] Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 69.

[19] Cleland, "Preliminary Report," 41.

Keweenaw Peninsula became the telephone wires that connected the country. And while land might not have been the primary reason that Indian commissioners negotiated with the Ojibwe, the treaties signed to acquire pine trees, copper, and iron ore also extinguished Ojibwe title to a vast region that would soon be opened to white settlement. [20]

Like the French fur traders before them, the American treaty commissioners acted as the advance representatives of the expanding capitalist economy. They secured the integration of the Chequamegon Bay into national and international geographies and economies. Their actions also established the framework for the subsequent economic development of the area.

The federal treaty negotiators also demonstrate that economics alone did not dictate the integration of the Chequamegon Bay region into the expanding American economy. Although treaty commissioners often made their trip at the behest of speculators and potential investors, state power played an essential role in the acquisition and integration of the resource hinterland. Nor did the role of the state cease with the acquisition of land titles; the government continued to influence the transformation of the Chequamegon Bay as Euro-Americans moved into the region in increasing numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Speculation and Settlement

State power and the potential for natural resource development together created the conditions for Euro-American settlement of western Lake Superior. Although copper, timber, and other natural resources lured investors and settlers to the region, these resources had little value until the government funded the internal improvements necessary to connect the region

[20] David R. Wrone, "The Economic Impact of the 1837 and 1842 Chippewa Treaties," *American Indian Quarterly* 17 (Summer 1993): 329-41.

with national markets. The settlement of towns like Bayfield depended as well on the speculative guesses of investors seeking to predict the transportation routes generated by these internal improvements.

Although the government had acquired title to the land and resources of western Lake Superior, geography sealed the region off from the markets of the eastern United States. Travel eastward required a difficult portage around St. Mary's River at Sault Ste. Marie, at the eastern end of Lake Superior, feasible perhaps with bales of beaver fur but far more difficult with loads of copper ore. (See Map 1). In 1852, Congress authorized the construction of a canal and lock system to bypass the falls; ships would be able to pass through the locks without unloading their cargoes.[21]

The locks at Sault St. Marie extended the Great Lakes shipping lanes 350 miles further west and prompted a speculative boom at the harbors and port sites at the western end of Lake Superior. A group of investors led by Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois founded Superior City at the lake's westernmost point in 1853. Minnesota territorial representative Henry Mower Rice spearheaded a second speculative venture just a few miles away the following year. The completion of the locks at Sault St. Marie in 1855 connected these towns with eastern ports.[22]

Bayfield, eighty miles to the east of Superior City on the Chequamegon Bay, had similar beginnings as a speculative venture. In 1855, Henry Rice acquired a patent for 349 acres on the mainland directly across the channel from La Pointe. Rice had scouted the area when he traveled to La Pointe in 1847 as a federal Indian commissioner to try to convince the Ojibwe to move

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[21] Lars Larson, *Chequamegon Bay and Its Communities* (Whitewater, WI, 2001), 92-93.

[22] Larson, *Chequamegon Bay and Its Communities*, 92-93; Arthur Roberts, "Land Speculation in Superior," address to the Douglas County Museum Annual Meeting, 1969, copy in the WHS pamphlet collection.

west of the Mississippi. Rice's initial interest in Bayfield might have been as a hedge on his investment in Superior City. But by 1856, Rice had convinced eastern investors to join him in the formation of the Bayfield Land Company, which quickly sent a team to plat the town of Bayfield.[23] Rice and his colleagues chose Bayfield for its potential importance as a transportation hub. Chequamegon Bay had served as the main transportation corridor for the East/West commerce of the fur trade, and investors expected traffic to increase as the country around Lake Superior developed. Rice and his partners judged the well-protected harbor at Bayfield the best on the lake. "Bayfield is by all odds the harbor for South West Lake Superior—deep, easy of approach and departure in all winds and in all seasons of open lake," commented Rice's more famous business partner, William Tecumseh Sherman.[24]

The rush to profit from potential port sites in western Lake Superior reveals how regional and national economies shaped Chequamegon Bay. Despite its wealth in natural resources, the region had remained inaccessible to commercial shipping because of the falls at Sault St. Marie—and therefore virtually worthless for settlement. Potential connection to eastern markets quickly changed this. Towns across the West and Midwest got their start from speculators trying to predict the most likely routes of water and rail transportation. "Fundamental to the social relations of capitalism—and this was especially true of the American West—was a fiercely competitive global struggle for superior positioning in transportation, trade, and in the processing of raw materials," explains historian William Robbins. The ability of extra-local investors to

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[23] Rice named the town after the English lieutenant Henry W. Bayfield, who had conducted one of the first systematic surveys of the area in the 1820s.

[24] William T. Sherman to Henry M. Rice, June 26 1866, Henry Rice Papers, Minnesota Historical Society [hereafter, MHS], Box 1; Larson, Chequamegon Bay and its Communities, 133.

quickly assert their control over the port sites of distant Lake Superior was essential in securing the region as a resource hinterland and to integrating it into the national economy.[25]

Bayfield grew quickly from this speculative beginning. Laborers working for the Bayfield Land Company erected a log shanty on March 24, 1856, the first building in the town. Later that month, the workers constructed a dock. The first boat landed at the Bayfield dock in May, carrying J. Hanly and family—Bayfield's first permanent residents. Within just a few months, Bayfield grew into a bustling town. July brought the erection of the town's first frame house, and the Bayfield Land Company arranged for the construction of the town's first sawmill. Merchant James Chapman recorded an informal census in his diary in October, 1856. He tallied 112 residents of the town, including seventeen women and twenty-two children. Two years later, Chapman counted 152 people in Bayfield. The Bayfield Land Company contracted with newspaper publishers Hamilton & Hatch to start a paper in the new town, and the *Mercury* published its first issue on April 18, 1857. In one of its early issues, the *Mercury* printed a business directory, listing three dry goods merchants, a hardware store, six carpenters, two contractors, a painter, a blacksmith, an insurance agent, an attorney, and an engineer.[26]

Rivalries with neighboring towns provided an essential benchmark in measuring urban growth in rapidly developing regions like the Old Northwest. Superior City, Duluth, and Ashland (founded at the head of Chequamegon Bay in 1854) vied with Bayfield to attract settlers,

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[25] Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 173.

[26]James Chapman, Account Book, 1857-1871, entries for October 5, 1856 and March 4, 1858, WHS; A. T. Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 82; *Bayfield Press* [hereafter, BP], September 3, 1881; *Bayfield Mercury* [hereafter, BM], April 18 and July 11 1857.

merchants, and professionals.[27] Bayfield scored an important victory over its rivals in 1860 when two prominent government agencies opened their doors in the center of town. The Government Land Office had established an office in Superior City in 1853, but in 1860 it moved to Bayfield. T he La Pointe Indian Agency made a similar move that year, crossing the channel from the old fur-trading outpost on Madeline Island. The competition for government institutions such as the land office played an important role in the development of small towns throughout the West and Midwest. Government institutions served as a sign of the town's prosperity and promise of future growth; they also brought job opportunities and capital into small towns struggling to attract settlers. Securing two government agencies in the same year—and luring one of them from rival Superior City—was quite an achievement for the Bayfield's promoters. "The prospects for Bayfield have never been more flattering," reported town resident William Craeken to a potential investor. In moving government offices to Bayfield, the state implicitly shaped the frontier process.[28]

State power and capitalist logic combined to shape the development of the Chequamegon Bay. Although natural resources had attracted the initial interest in the region, those resources meant little until the United States government secured land cessions from the area's original inhabitants. The towns of western Lake Superior started as speculative investments, but not until state dollars constructed the locks at Sault Ste. Marie. And while the a private company

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[27] Asaph Whittlesley and his family settled at the site of Ashland in 1854, and the following year a man named Frederick Prentice platted a town called Bay City just a few miles away. The settlement did not immediately grow, and by the Civil War all but one family had drifted away. People began to return to the site in 1870, and in 1872 the plats of the two sites were merged to form the town of Ashland. Guy M. Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country in History and in Story* (Ashland, WI: Ashland Daily Press, 1930), 248-51, 295.

[28] M. Wm. Craeken to William D. Hale, May 22, 1860, William Dinsmore Hale Papers, MHS, Box 3; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 83; Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Democracy: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

spearheaded the settlement of Bayfield, state institutions like the land office and Indian agency legitimized and accelerated that settlement.

Boosting Bayfield

Treaty commissioners and land speculators looked at the Chequamegon Bay from a distance, and saw the area's potential integration into the national economy. A far more local set of interests emerged as the town of Bayfield grew. Every nineteenth-century American town, small and large, had its set of boosters—business leaders, newspaper editors, and other prominent residents who tirelessly promoted their towns in an effort to attract investors and immigrants, to realize the goal of "progress." Boosters and local businessmen played an integral role in bringing progress to towns like Bayfield. They occupied the essential intersection between local and national economies.

Boosters from dramatically different places—from wet and forested Wisconsin to mountainous Colorado to bone-dry Texas—used strikingly similar language and rhetoric. Most of them adhered to a belief in geographic determinism that historian Charles Glaab has dubbed "the doctrine of natural advantages." The future of any town, this doctrine held, could be ascertained by measuring the quality of its harbor, the extent of its natural resources, or its location on a likely transportation route. Throughout the nineteenth century, boosters from towns around the Midwest engaged in this type of speculation in an attempt to predict the location of America's next great urban center. Bayfield's boosters actively participated in the sport. Their words reflect the influence of nationally renowned writers like William Gilpin and Jesup W. Scott. Gilpin was the nation's foremost proponent of the doctrine of natural advantages. Scott

followed a similar line of reasoning, although he focused on predicting demographic trends. Scott believed that the next great American city would arise on the shores of the western Great Lakes. The writings of these men appealed to Bayfield's boosters, who saw their town's location, harbor, and resources as guarantors of progress.[29]

The boosters are easy to discount. Their boilerplate statements about natural advantages sound the same no matter the conditions. And the boosters themselves had clear financial interests in attracting settlers and investment, as they already controlled many of the local resources, mills, and port sites. The boosters' ability to assess the quality of a harbor or the extent of a mineral deposit sometimes suffered from their eagerness to attract others. And some boosters, of course, simply tried to deceive potential investors. Several scholars have suggested that a prime function of the booster press in portraying a prosperous future was to help the residents of small nineteenth-century towns overlook the dirtier, darker elements of their lives; the louder the boosting, this theory runs, the worse the conditions in the town.[30]

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[29] Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1962); Charles N. Glaab, "Visions of the Metropolis: William Gilpin and Theories of City Growth in the American West," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45 (Autumn 1961): 21-31; Charles N. Glaab, "Jesup W. Scott and a West of Cities," *Ohio History* 73 (Winter 1964): 3-12; Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, *A History of Urban America* (1967; repr., New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 59-65.

[30] In addition to Charles Glaab, a number of scholars have explored the implications of booster literature. David Hamer explores the influence of boosters on nineteenth-century perceptions of towns ad cities in *New Towns in the New World: Images and Perceptions of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Carl Abbott concludes that boosters portrayed the economic conditions in their towns more realistically than one might think in *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981); G. Malcolm Lewis categorizes booster literature and analyzes the types of rhetoric employed by boosters in "Rhetoric of the Western Interior: Modes of Environmental Description in American Promotional Literature of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 179-93; Sally Foreman Griffith explores the role of the booster press in *Home Town News: William Allen White and the Emporia Gazette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). See also Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965); Stephen V. Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities, 1850-2000* (New York, Routledge, 1998); and Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (1954; repr., Bloomington,

Nevertheless, boosters need to be taken seriously. The boosters in places like Bayfield played an essential role in the economic growth of their towns and regions. They stood at the critical point of intersection between local and national systems. Small town boosters and big-city investors spoke a similar language: financiers, too, wanted to locate towns with prosperous futures. They, too, subscribed to the doctrine of natural advantages, and the ability of the boosters to attract attention to *their* town's advantages helped determine the extent of investment. The boosters recognized—as have modern historians—that the future depended not just on the existence of natural advantages, but also in capitalizing on these advantages, in connecting local geographies to the national patterns of investment and transportation. Modern historians might use terms more analytical and precise than "progress," but they search for the same clues in their attempts to discern patterns of nineteenth-century economic growth. The boosters' constant discussion about the arrival of the railroad, the depth of their harbor, and the quality of their timber provides signposts for modern historians tracing the economic growth of a resource producing hinterland.

Boosters did more than boost; they actively participated in their town's economic life. More often than not, the boosters were also their town's most profitable businessmen. This certainly held true in Bayfield. All of Bayfield's boosters had a variety of business interests in and around the Chequamegon Bay. Samuel Fifield, for example, not only ran the *Bayfield Press* after 1870, but he also had interests in quarrying, real estate, and tourism. Bayfield's other

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Indiana University Press, 1984). On Wisconsin specifically, see Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, vol. 2, *The Civil War Era, 1848-1873*, ed. William Thompson Fletcher (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 1-2, 110; Eric D. Olmanson, "Romantics, Scientists, Boosters, and the Making of the Chequamegon Bay Region on the South Shore of Lake Superior, 1820-1900s" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin Madison, 2000), esp. 245-54; and Arlan Helgeson, *Farms in the Cutover: Agricultural Settlement in Northern Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1962).

boosters and business leaders had similarly diverse portfolios. Robinson Pike was one of Bayfield's oldest residents, and a founder of the Bayfield Businessmen's Association. His family ran the first saw mill in the area, and Pike eventually owned extensive timberlands on the Bayfield Peninsula as well as Bayfield's largest mill. He also invested in real estate, including several sandstone quarries. Pike also owned and managed one of Bayfield's two commercial docks—from which all of the region's products made their way to market. William Knight invested in orchards, lumber, sandstone, and banking. His brother John H. Knight had interests in lumber, sandstone, and tourism; the Boutin family listed dry goods, lumber, and fish dealing among their many business endeavors. The overlapping nature of seemingly distinct industries will be explored in Chapter Five. None of these small-town capitalists confined their investments to a single industry. These men were more than just boosters. Albeit on a small scale, they were also Bayfield's "Captains of Industry."[31]

Bayfield's boosters and captains believed that they had found a pot of gold. The town had the "natural advantages" needed to become more than just a successful frontier town; Bayfield would rival Chicago as the commercial center of the mid-continent. In their second issue, the editors of the Bayfield *Mercury* spelled out their vision for Bayfield's future and issued fair warning to an oblivious Chicago:

> Show us any natural advantages Chicago possesses that Bayfield does not! Chicago has good farming country, so has Bayfield. Chicago has a good harbor, so has Bayfield. Chicago has a large lumbering interest, but yet it must be admitted by her most sanguine friends that in this she is far below Bayfield. Chicago occupies a commanding commercial position, so does Bayfield. Chicago

[31] Kathryn Bishop Eckert, *The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 184-85, 205; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay and Its Communities*, 182-83; BCP, March 3, 1883 and October 27, 1870; Charles E. Twining, "Logging on the Apostle Islands: A 19th Century Overview," (Ashland, WI: Northland College Report, 1981), 11.

> may boast of her capital and influence, but let it be born in mind that Bayfield wields a greater capital and a greater influence to day, than Chicago did, when she could boast of ten times Bayfield's present population.[32]

Bayfield's leaders based this vision for the future on three natural advantages, in particular: abundant resources, a prime geographic location, and a deep harbor. The boosters believed that these characteristics virtually guaranteed a successful future.

> If one were to point out on the map of North America, a site for a great commercial city, it would be in the immediate vicinity of the "Apostles Isles," a city so located would have the command of the *mineral* trade, the *fisheries*, and the *timber* of the entire North. It would become the metropolis of a great commercial empire.... The geographical position for commercial advantages … is equaled by few and excelled by none of the most favored localities in the north-west.

These characteristics had provided the initial motivation for the government to negotiate land cessions from the Ojibwe in the 1830s, and now Bayfield's entrepreneurs hoped to capitalize on the same economic promise.[33]

Foremost among the region's "natural advantages" were its resources, and chief among these were Lake Superior's whitefish and lake trout. The American Fur Company first explored commercial fishing in the Chequamegon Bay from its La Pointe outpost in the 1830s, and fishermen had continued to serve the local market when the American Fur Company operations ceased. Bayfield's promoters hoped that whitefish and lake trout would be among the first of the town's resources to attract the attention of outsiders and link Bayfield with the regional

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[32] BM, May 30 1857.

[33] "Bayfield, Lake Superior: Early history, situation, harbor, &c…," (Philadelphia, 1858), Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Library [hereafter, AINL Library], 1-2

economy. The waters around Bayfield and the Apostle Islands teemed "with the most delicious fresh water fish known," crowed an 1858 booster pamphlet.[34]

Bayfield's promoters got their wish. From 1856, when the Bayfield Land Company founded the town, fishing served as a key industry and the largest source of employment. The fisheries' central role in Bayfield solidified in 1870, when Nelson and Frank Boutin moved their entire fishing operation to Bayfield—over 100 fishermen and their families—from Two Harbors, on Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shore. The fish dealing and packing firm of N. & F. Boutin brought with them 550 gill nets and twelve pound nets, dramatically increasing the size of the fishing fleet. The Boutin fishermen salted their catch and packed it into barrels for shipment overland to Minneapolis or by water to other Great Lakes ports. Commercial fishing became among the first of Bayfield's industries to secure markets outside the immediate vicinity.[35]

The seemingly inexhaustible lumber of the Bayfield Peninsula and the Apostle Islands provided a second key resource. Access to the tall, straight pine trees of northern Wisconsin had served as the motivating force behind the 1837 land cession treaty, and the Chequamegon Bay's earliest white residents intended to take full advantage of the resource. The Bayfield Land Company erected a mill in 1856, geared primarily for the production of lumber for local use. As early as 1857, the *Mercury* reported (doubtless with some typical booster exaggeration) that Bayfield's timber had already found its way to the national market: Local timber was "now being sent from our forest to those prairie countries at the rate of hundreds of thousands of dollars

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[34] Grace Lee Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing Enterprises on Lake Superior," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 12 (March 1926): 483-503; Lucius Lyon to T. Hartley Crawford, December 16, 1839, in *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, vol. 28, ed. John Porter Bloom (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1975), 98; "Bayfield, Lake Superior: Early history, situation, harbor, &c," 5.

[35] BP, October 13, 1870.

annually, and as those countries are settled up and improved, the amount shipped will continue to increase…" From these modest beginnings, Bayfield's early residents expected timber to become an economic mainstay of their town. By the 1870s, the building needs of the rapidly expanding nation promised a ready market for the region's timber products. "In the manufacture and shipment of *Lumber* [Bayfield] has all the elements of requisite to build up a heavy business," reported the local paper in 1872. Bayfield needed only to attract investment to realize the potential benefits of these resources. "With thousands of acres of pine lands in the vicinity, plenty of fuel for steam and a superior harbor for the largest of water craft, capital and energy only are required…"[36]

The rhetoric of Bayfield's boosters and local captains of industry reveals how these men viewed the path to progress. They already possessed the necessary natural resources such as timber and cut stone—now they needed only to attract capital and labor. The boosters themselves stood at the point of intersection between local and national economies; the responsibility for attracting these extra-local factors fell on their shoulders.

Cut Stone and the Economics of the Peripheral Economy

Cut stone served as another of the "natural advantages" that made Bayfield's future look so bright. Fishing and logging will be examined in greater detail in the following chapters, but a closer analysis of quarrying provides the opportunity to consider how these peripheral extractive industries functioned. Outcroppings of distinctive red sandstone jutted from the earth at several points around Chequamegon Bay, including on several of the Apostle Islands. Turning the raw

[36] Ross, *La Pointe*, 119; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 82; BM, April 18, 1857; BP, March 9, 1872, "The Future of Bayfield."

stone into a merchantable commodity, however, demanded capital to purchase equipment and pay wages, a labor supply to work the quarries, and buyers to purchase cut stone. Each of these conditions required connections to economies outside the region. Without these connections, the natural advantages provided by the red stone meant nothing. Dependence on extra-local markets and capital investment, however, left the quarry industry vulnerable and unstable.

Early in Bayfield's history, quarrying seemed destined to become one of the town's most important industries. Douglas Houghton, a geologist surveying the Chequamegon Bay in 1841, noted the rich, red sandstone outcroppings in the region and commented on their potential value. Bayfield's early boosters pointed to the stone as an important resource sure to garner national attention. "This beautiful sandstone, now coming into such popular use throughout the northwest and extending well to the south and east, can nowhere be quarried and shipped at so little cost as from the islands and main shore in this vicinity." Ships could be loaded with stone cut from quarries conveniently located directly off the emerging Great Lakes shipping lanes, without the typical intermediate step of moving the heavy stone from quarry to port.[37]

Developing the quarries required investors from outside of the Chequamegon Bay. After reconnoitering potential sites in 1868, the Milwaukee and Chicago investors organized the firm of Strong, French & Company, which began quarrying operations on Basswood Island in 1870. The firm had already found a market, in the form of a contract to provide Basswood Island stone for a new courthouse building in Milwaukee. In its first year of operation, the island quarry employed forty men; working by hand, without power equipment, and despite the need to clear trees and to build docks, the laborers shipped two thousand tons of stone in that first year. "It

[37] BP, March 9, 1872; Eckert, *The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region*, 35.

certainly looks as though Basswood is going to be a lively place ere long. The company owning the quarry has several large contracts and expect to do an immense business," reported the *Bayfield Press*. "We are more convinced than ever that this Island Quarry is capable of supplying a vast amount of stone for an unlimited number of years." This optimism seemed well founded after the great fire in Chicago in 1871 opened an apparently limitless new market. Cut stone from Basswood Island and other Lake Superior quarries became a favored building material as a new Chicago rose from the ashes. The Chicago Tribune Company, for example, purchased Basswood Island sandstone quarried by Strong & French for the reconstruction of its headquarters building in the immediate aftermath of the fire.[38]

After the Chicago fire, Strong & French no longer needed to worry about securing buyers for their stone, but finding laborers to work in the quarry proved much more difficult. Demand from the Chicago market allowed the firm to keep their Basswood Island quarry running through the winter of 1872-1873. Strong & French simply could not find enough men to work in the quarry. The *Bayfield Press* provided a running commentary, reporting nearly every week on both the bright future of the firm and also on the persistent labor shortage. "A large quantity of this brown stone has already been shipped to Chicago and the quarry will be kept open all winter in order to supply contracts made in that city. Next season a much larger force will be employed in the quarry than heretofore, and several vessels will be required constantly for transportation," reported the local paper less than one month after the fire. The company expanded its operations, adding horse-powered derricks and steam drills to increase production. The quarry employed between fifty and one hundred men during the navigation season—when boats could regularly

[38] The Tribune Building was destroyed in 1902. BP, February 25, March 11, and June 24, 1871; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 18, 20.

pick up the cut stone and carry it to market—and a smaller crew during the winter. The local paper tried to help supply labor by regularly pronouncing job opportunities at the quarry: "The firm of Strong, French & Co. desire to obtain fifty men immediately to work in their quarry on Basswood Island. Steady employment will be given the entire year at good wages—$2.25 being offered. The quarry is free from mud and men will not be obliged to lose any time from bad weather." Even with the promise of year round work and good working conditions, Strong & French struggled to find enough laborers.[39]

Despite the bright outlook in 1872 and early 1873, cut stone proved to be one of the Chequamegon Bay's least enduring industries, for reasons important to understanding the peripheral economy. The dependence on extra-local market forces made hinterland extractive industries extremely vulnerable to market fluctuations. Even with such a rich supply of stone, the Chequamegon Bay quarrying industry could not overcome this vulnerability. The nationwide financial crash of 1873 ruined Strong & French, forcing the closure of the Basswood Island quarry. The quarry opened again in 1883, under the ownership of Cook & Hyde, another Milwaukee-based firm. Quarrying again boomed on Chequamegon Bay in the 1880s, prompting another bout of optimism about the importance of stonecutting for the regional economy. Quarries opened on Hermit Island, Stockton Island, and at several points on the mainland. Although securing a consistent supply of labor again proved a problem, the quarries provided stone for cities throughout the Midwest, including St. Paul, Omaha, Cincinnati, and others. But in the 1890s the industry entered another period of decline. The economic crash of 1893 shut down several of the quarries, and because a large supply of cut stone had already been shipped to

[39] BP, March 11, 1871, November 11, 1871, May 25, 1872, and June 1, 1872.

midwestern cities, there was little immediate demand for more. Shifting architectural styles—especially an increased preference for white stone, inaugurated by grand, white buildings of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago—guaranteed that the red stone quarries of Chequamegon Bay would not reopen. Throughout its brief history, the quarrying industry of the Chequamegon Bay remained dependent on extra-local economic forces and thereby vulnerable to quick and disastrous shifts in market demand.[40]

Because the quarries only produced for just over twenty-fives years, Chequamegon Bay's stone industry provides a clear example of the obstacles to peripheral economic development. The easily accessed, plentiful supplies of a valuable natural resource did not guarantee success. To make the cut stone industry profitable, quarry owners needed a consistent labor source, capital investment, a stable demand for their product, and access to national markets; none of these were easy to secure. All of Bayfield's early extractive industries faced similar hurdles.

The Search for Labor, Capital, and Connection

For all of the Chequamegon Bay's extractive industries, success—or progress—depended on the ability of Bayfield's boosters and captains to attract three different elements to the region: First, investors to finance the costs of resource extraction; second, a reliable labor source; and third—and most important—a way to get fish, stone, lumber, and other raw materials to the national markets. This hinged on their ability to bring the railroad to Bayfield. The search for these three elements dominated Bayfield's early history. Towns around the region—all of them dreaming of progress—faced a similar challenge.

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[40] *Ashland Press* [hereafter, AP], October 18 and October 25, 1873; BCP, December 12, 1885; Eckert, *Sandstone Architecture*, 86-87.

Bayfield's boosters utilized a variety of tactics to attract outside investors. They published promotional brochures designed to highlight the region's natural advantages, and distributed them in financial centers like St. Paul and Chicago. They invited potential investors to town to explore Bayfield's potential. In 1883, the *Bayfield County Press* reported that "a delegation of capitalists drawn hither to inspect the natural advantages of the place and its surroundings for purpose of trade and business." The group included potential investors from St. Paul, Pennsylvania, and New York City. A delegation of local citizens, including Robinson Pike, met the investors upon their arrival and provided lodging in Bayfield's finest hotel. Pike offered his yacht, the *Favorite*, to carry the financiers on a tour of the Apostle Islands.[41]

Few Bayfield residents had the money to finance resource extraction on their own. Pike, who built a small fortune over the course of many years by investing in lumber, stone, and real estate, stands as an exception. More frequently, Bayfield's boosters and local captains of industry served as representatives for investors from outside the immediate region. John H. Knight, for example, attended law school in the 1850s with William Freeman Vilas, one of Wisconsin's most powerful politicians during the last third of the nineteenth century. Vilas visited Knight in Bayfield while on a tour of Lake Superior in 1873. The two then went into business together, incorporating the Superior Lumber Company. Vilas provided the capital and reputation for a firm that became an extensive landowner in northern Wisconsin. Knight served as general manager and local representative of the company, using his position in the Bayfield Land Office to

[41] For examples of booster pamphlets, see "Bayfield, Lake Superior" and *The Industries of Bayfield: Giving Sketches of Town, Railroads, Manufacturing, Mercantile, Real Estate, Pine Lands, Mining, Professional* (Pacific Publishing: St. Paul, 1883), MHS; BCP, December 8, 1883.

acquire some of the region's most promising timberlands. Bayfield's boosters succeeded most notably in attracting investors for the logging, fishing, and quarrying industries.[42]

As much as they needed to spark the interest of outside financiers with large bank accounts, Bayfield's business leaders and their allies in the local press also needed to lure men and women of lesser means. As the quarry industry revealed, economic development depended on a steady supply of labor as well as markets and capital. To this end, Bayfield's boosters publicized the opportunities for laborers presented by the natural resources of the region. "We have it all," boasted the editors of the *Mercury* 1857. "We have a healthy country, a rich country, and a lovely country. Here is the home for the agriculturalist, the miner, the builder, and the sailor. We ask you all to come, see and be satisfied."[43]

Prospective immigrants were less interested in Bayfield's fish and stone than they were in another of the region's plentiful resources: land. New farmers could earn money to support themselves in their first year by selling timber as they cleared land in preparation for farming. And as soon as they put in crops, farmers would have a ready home market: men working at construction in Bayfield or in the area's lumber camps needed provisions and paid premium prices. "All a man has to do is come out with his axe and hoe, and he can commence at once to farm on these terms…. Now is the time to move here! Such an opportunity will never occur again!" Bayfield boosters kept up this sort of rhetoric through the 1880s. They preached a familiar mantra about the need for capital and labor, geared to attract immigrants rather than

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[42] William F. Vilas, diary of Lake Superior Trip, 1873, vol. 42, William Freeman Vilas Papers, WHS; Horace Samuel Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas: Doctrinaire Democrat* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1991), 27-29.

[43] BM, April 18, 1857.

investors. Economic potential had attracted the area's very first settlers such as Henry Rice and Robinson Pike; it would attract much-needed laborers as well.[44]

After a quick start, Bayfield's population growth soon leveled off. When James Chapman recorded 152 people living in Bayfield in 1858, the town was less than three years old. Two years later, when the first United States census takers visited the young town, they found 347 residents—a significant increase in such a short period, no doubt due to the extensive boosting and publicity carried out by the Bayfield Land Company. Ten years later, however, the population remained virtually the same; the 1870 census listed 344 people in the town. That year, the boosters' predictions that natural resources would lure droves of settlers proved momentarily true when the Boutin family moved their cadre of fishermen to town. But the expected waves of settlers failed to materialize, and by 1880 the population had climbed only to 564. Some of these statistics are suspect, however, because the census takers frequently ignored the local Indian population. In 1870, for example, the census enumerates only two Indians living in all of Bayfield County. This would have come as a surprise to the several hundred Ojibwe living on the Red Cliff Reservation, just a few miles north of Bayfield.[45]

Four cities jostled for position at the western end of Lake Superior: Duluth, Superior, Bayfield, and Ashland. In 1860, these four cities were fairly close in population. Bayfield kept ahead of Ashland in the race to become the dominant city on Chequamegon Bay, recording a higher population tally than Ashland in all but one five-year interval until 1880. The real population growth occurred eighty miles to the west. In 1860, only eighty people made their

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[44] "Bayfield, Lake Superior," 1; BP, December 31, 1881.

[45] *Eighth Census, 1860*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin; *Ninth Census, 1870*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin; *Tenth Census, 1880*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

home in Duluth; three hundred lived in Ashland and over five hundred each in Bayfield and Superior. By 1870, however, Duluth had surged to the front—its three thousand residents more than doubled the combined total of the other three cities. That year, western Lake Superior's first railroad arrived in Duluth, ensuring a permanent place as the region's largest city.[46]

The census takers were not the only ones to overlook the Indian population of the Chequamegon Bay. In their effort to attract a labor force, Bayfield's leaders ignored a labor source close at hand—on the Indian reservations at Red Cliff and at Bad River, outside of Ashland on the south shore of Chequamegon Bay. The local papers only infrequently mentioned the region's Indian residents, and almost never did so in connection with Bayfield's future promise. The presence of Indian communities so close at hand did not—in the eyes of Bayfield's boosters—help in the project of attracting a workforce. Bayfield's promoters believed that advertising the nearby Indian population diminished their claims of Bayfield's progress, instead emphasizing its still raw "frontier" characteristics.

In fact, the Ojibwe had played a key role in the Euro-American economy of the Chequamegon Bay for decades. Indian labor had been essential in the fur trade carried out in the region from the 1680s through the 1830s. As the beaver, mink, and other animals upon which the fur trade depended became harder to find in the 1830s, the American Fur Company diversified its interests in the Lake Superior region by experimenting with commercial fishing. The AFC established a fishing station at La Pointe, equipping local residents with seine nets, wooden barrels, and a supply of salt. By 1837, La Pointe Indians provided the company with two

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[46] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States,1860*; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Wisconsin; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*.

thousand barrels of salted fish per year. Ojibwe women found paid work in the fishery, too, cleaning and packing the fish caught by the men. As the pace of settlement in western Lake Superior increased, Ojibwe found work in the mines, lumber camps, and other extractive industries. Throughout this period, they balanced the opportunities for wage work with more traditional economic activities like ricing, hunting, fishing, and maple sugar production.[47]

The Ojibwe continued to play an important role in the Chequamegon Bay economy throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. Among the first farms in the region were those established on the reservations to serve as model farms. The Ojibwe found a ready market for any surplus they produced in the markets of Bayfield and Ashland. Ojibwe were also able to integrate products of their traditional subsistence economy into the emerging economic framework of the Chequamegon Bay. They sold blueberries, cranberries, and wild rice in Bayfield, all items essential to traditional subsistence patterns. In 1871, cranberries promised "a splendid yield in this section and already large amounts have been picked by the Indians. They bring a fair price and find a ready market." In May of that year, Leihy's Bayfield grocery boasted "a ton or two of maple sugar for sale cheap for cash." Ojibwe from the Bad River reservation sold over three thousand pounds of maple sugar to Bayfield merchants in 1871. Maple sugar provided one of the only sources of sweetener to the cooks of the region.[48]

Ojibwe men and women continued to work as wage laborers in the Chequamegon Bay's extractive industries, as well. Lumbermen around the bay, for example, frequently employed Indians in their winter camps. "Over half the Indians [are] engaged outside of the reserve in

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[47] Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing Enterprises on Lake Superior"; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 72; Satz, "Chippewa Treaty Rights," 45; Larry Lankton, *Beyond the Boundaries: Life and Landscape at the Lake Superior Copper Mines, 1840-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71;

[48] BCP, May 27 and September 15, 1871.

logging camps, cutting wood," commented Indian Agent I. L. Mahan in 1875. Fishing, too, provided important work: Ojibwe men worked on wage for local fishermen or sold their own catch to Bayfield dealers. In 1885, Frank Boutin—one of Bayfield's leading fish dealers—estimated that a quarter of fishermen working in the Chequamegon Bay were "Indians or part Indian."[49]

The expansion of the national economy into the Chequamegon Bay had dramatic implications for the Ojibwe residents of the region. Euro-American settlement of the region brought epidemic disease, confinement to reservations, and the disruption of subsistence activities to Wisconsin Ojibwe. The wage work available in Bayfield and Ashland, however, helped some Ojibwe navigate through a period of prolonged economic distress. Those who lived close to the Chequamegon Bay towns had an easier time making economic ends meet than did Ojibwe who lived in the central Wisconsin reservations at Lac Court Oreilles or Lac du Flambeau. This was especially true when poor weather or other factors disrupted the subsistence cycle. Indian Agent John H. Knight noticed this phenomenon in 1870. In his annual report, he explained that unseasonably cold weather had destroyed the wild rice supply in much of the state, and that hunger had aggravated already poor health conditions on many Wisconsin reservations. "Those bands living on the Red Cliff and Bad River reservations are the only Indians connected with this agency who have any prospect of security from want this winter…

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[49] Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 295; Shifferd, "A Study in Economic Change," 32; I. L. Mahan, "Office of the Lake Superior Indian Agency," in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1875) [hereafter, BIA year Annual Report], 372; Hugh M. Smith and Merwin-Marie Snell, comp., "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885,"in United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report of the Commissioner for 1887* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891) [hereafter, the annual reports of the U. S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries and its bureaucratic successor, the United States Bureau of Fisheries, will be cited as the U. S. Fish Commission Report, year], 49; BIA 1850 Annual Report, 53.

The Red Cliff and Bad River bands can obtain employment in and about Bayfield, and can catch fish in abundance." Wage work remained important for both for the Ojibwe as well as for the extractive industries of the region throughout the nineteenth century.[50]

Ojibwe wageworkers filled specific niches within the region's extractive industries. Coopering provides a good example. The fishing industry demanded a constant supply of wooden barrels. Especially prior to the arrival of the railroad in 1883, Bayfield's fishermen transported their catch to market in wooden barrels packed with salt, or in the form of fish oil, also packed in barrels. The *Bayfield Press* continually called for the establishment of cooperages or barrel making factories, noting the lack of local production as a missed economic opportunity. In 1883, Bayfield's three largest fish dealers exported 16,495 barrels of fish; local craftsmen had produced only 5,550 of those barrels. The *Press* kept tabs on rumors that Robinson Pike, Samuel Vaughn, or one of the town's other leading businessmen would solve this problem by purchasing barrel making equipment and bringing a new industry to Bayfield.[51]

But barrel making did occur in town. In 1873 Indian Agent Mahan had arranged for training in the cooper trade for young men of the Red Cliff Reservation. In 1874 he reported the production of one thousand barrels. "These find a ready market at fair rates, and the introduction of this industry promises to be an important source of revenue to these Indians," he explained. The 1880 census listed nine coopers in Bayfield. The census taker recorded that five of the nine were Indian. Marriage to an Indian woman connected a sixth to the Ojibwe community. Two-thirds of the Bayfield's coopers, therefore, were members of the Indian community. But as with

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[50] John H. Knight, "Office of the Lake Superior Indian Agency," in BIA 1870 Annual Report, 309.

[51] BCP, March 3, 1883 and January 19, 1884; BP, June 8, 1872.

population statistics, local business leaders took no notice of the barrel production by the town's Ojibwe residents. The existence of local, Indian-controlled cooperages and the continued demands for a stronger barrel industry in the local press reveal the extent to which business leaders overlooked the value of the local Indian population in their search for a labor source to drive the region's extractive industries.[52]

The economic niche of the Ojibwe barrel makers also demonstrates the ethnic and racial complexity of the Bayfield population. Although not the focus of this study, racial and ethnic patterns did shape the development of the town. When census takers visited Bayfield in 1860, they recorded evidence of trends prevalent elsewhere in Wisconsin, as well as indications of Bayfield's particular past. The largest segment of the town's 353 residents consisted of men, women, and children born outside the state of Wisconsin—136 people fell into this category. Yankees and northern midwesterners dominated this group—people born in New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, or other northern states. Young towns around Wisconsin had similar Yankee roots. One hundred and one of Bayfield's residents were children under the age of eighteen who had been born in Wisconsin. The next largest population group—the 44 adults born in Wisconsin—stands out: 29 of the 44 had surnames like Soulier, Brissette, Cadotte, or Gaudin—identifiable French Canadians whose families had lived in the Chequamegon Bay for generations.[53] Although recorded by the census-takers as white, many of these families had intermarried with members of the Ojibwe bands. Bayfield's French-Canadians had their own

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[52] I. L. Mahan, "Office of the Lake Superior Indian Agency," in BIA 1874 Annual Report, 26-27; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census, 1880*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield and Ashland Counties.

[53] The 1860 census marked place of birth, but not parent's place of birth; to acquire these statistics I simply tabulated the identifiably French names; some of these might not have been French-Canadian, and some of the other Wisconsin-born adults might have been.

economic niches—many of them listing their occupation as "fisherman," others simply as "laborer." The majority of immigrants living in Bayfield in 1860 had been born in English-speaking countries or in the provinces that make up modern-day Germany.[54]

This population pattern persisted through the 1870 and 1880 censuses, although the number of Wisconsin-born adults increased noticeably, and the percentage of French-Canadians relative to the rest of the population declined. An important change in the ethnic makeup of Bayfield occurred after 1880, when the town and the surrounding islands became a destination for Scandinavian immigrants, particularly Norwegians. Although only a handful of Bayfield residents in 1880 had emigrated from Scandinavian countries, by 1885 fully 20 percent of Bayfield County fell into this category, settling not just in Bayfield and on the islands but establishing entire towns in the western portion of the county. Scandinavians increasingly displaced the French Canadians as the primary fishermen of the region. Race and ethnicity complicated the labor patterns in the Chequamegon Bay's extractive industries.[55]

Capital and labor meant little for Bayfield's economic development, however, without a link to national transportation networks. Bayfield did have a prime location on the Great Lakes shipping lanes. The accessibility to boat traffic meant that the immediate shores of Lake Superior attracted Anglo American settlers far earlier than inland portions of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Once the laborers of the Bayfield Land Company constructed a dock during the first month of work on the new town, residents of Bayfield had the infrastructure necessary to import finished

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[54] *Eighth Census, 1860*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin; Current, *Civil War Era*, 45-46.

[55] *Ninth Census, 1870*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin; *Tenth Census, 1880*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield County, Wisconsin; Ernst G. Timmes, comp., *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin, 1887* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Litho. & Engr. Co., 1887), 318; Margaret Beattie Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783-1933* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 80-85.

goods and to export raw materials like lumber, fish, and cut stone. Bayfield boasted a deep harbor, free of sand bars and other impediments, and the nearby Apostle Islands provided protection from the most ferocious of Lake Superior's storms. Indeed, Bayfield's boosters rarely ceased boasting about "the largest, safest, and best harbor on the Lake."[56]

The facilities for lake transportation allowed the town to enjoy its modest growth in the 1860s and 1870s. In 1873, S. L. Vaughn recorded a list of freight received at Bayfield's dock that reveals the trade carried on by the town's merchants. Merchants Peter Ley, James Chapman, and George McCloud received stoves, pots, bedsteads, coffee, tobacco, cloth, and other dry goods for sale in their stores. Robinson Pike and the firm of Strong & French picked up supplies like soap, tea, groceries, pickles, crackers, flour, and cured hams, for use at in the quarries and lumber camps. Ships entered the harbor from Duluth, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Chicago, Buffalo, and other Great Lakes ports. Vaughn's log records only incoming traffic, but boats did not leave Bayfield with empty holds; they carried lumber from Pike's mill, fish from the N. & F. Boutin packing company, or cut stone from the Basswood Island quarry. An 1878 record of outgoing traffic from two Bayfield docks (but not the quarries) indicates the shipment of over $26,500 of salt fish, fresh fish, and fish oil and $14,000 of wood and lumber products.[57]

Shipping on the lakes, however, had definite limits. Every December or January, ice encased the harbors of the northern Great Lakes, and towns like Bayfield descended into a four-month period of isolation. Travel over the ice—often by dog team—could carry the mail pouch and even the occasional shipment of frozen fish, but little else. While it depended on the shipping

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[56] BM, April 18, 1857.

[57] S. L. Vaughn, Record Book, Freight Received, 1873, WHS; BP, January 29, 1879.

trade, Bayfield's potential for growth remained limited. Only a railroad would overcome these limitations, a fact well recognized by the boosters.[58]

The railroad, not the shipping lanes, determined Bayfield's economic development. Bayfield serves as a classic example of the power of the railroad to determine the fortunes of small towns in the West and Midwest. Even Bayfield's founding was tied closely to the promise of the railroad. When Henry Rice first acquired land at the eventual site of Bayfield, he did so because he believed that Chequamegon Bay would become the terminus of a railroad route from St. Paul. He had reason for this belief. In 1854, Congress began to consider a railroad land grant bill for the state of Wisconsin, one that would connect the potential Lake Superior port sites with the nation's rapidly expanding railroad system. The bill passed in 1856, providing large land grants—every alternate section for six sections of width on each side of the railroad—to the companies that received the construction contracts. The law specified two routes: From Fond du Lac straight north to the Michigan/Wisconsin state line, and from Madison to Portage City, up the St. Croix River valley to the west end of Lake Superior, and from there to Bayfield. The bill had the full support of the senators who had invested in speculative town sites at Superior City and at a Bayfield, including Henry M. Rice, who served in Congress at the time as the territorial representative from Minnesota. The St. Croix and Lake Superior Railroad, a subsidiary of the La Crosse and Milwaukee, won the contract for the road to Bayfield and Superior.[59]

Bayfield's earliest settlers paid close attention to these developments. In its first issue in 1857, the *Mercury* predicted that the railroad connecting the town to both Chicago and St. Paul

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[58] Grace Lee Nute, *Lake Superior* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944), 102.

[59] John M. Bernd, "The La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Land Grant," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 30 (December 1946): 141-53; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 86.

would be complete within two years. A booster pamphlet published the following year reported that construction would start in June, 1858. “This is great and glorious news for emigrants to the Lake Superior. Now or never is the time to settle at Bayfield and Superior.” Bayfield’s residents tracked the progress of the railroad in their private correspondence, as well. “The Rail Road will be surveyed to Bayfield early in the season and put under contract,” Henry Rice informed William McAboy in 1856, an employee of the Bayfield Land Company.[60]

Scandal and financial panic delayed the progress of the railroad toward Bayfield, and Bayfield’s progress toward its prosperous future. The panic of 1857 hit Wisconsin hard; unfortunately for Bayfield residents, town site promoters and railroads fared particularly poorly in the late 1850s. The *Mercury* went out of print, a casualty of the financial distress, making Bayfield’s development over the next decade difficult to trace. But residents of the town surely followed news about the La Crosse & Milwaukee Railroad Company, parent company of the St. Croix & Lake Superior.[61] Railroads suffered more than any other industry in Wisconsin during the Panic of 1857, forcing many of the state’s railroads into bankruptcy—including the La Crosse and Milwaukee. In 1858, the Wisconsin state legislature investigated rumors of foul play in the awarding of the railroad contract. The investigators found that Byron Kilbourn, president of the company, had secured the contract by paying more than $800,000 in bribes (mostly in the form of bonds in the company) to state politicians. Financial distress and scandal put a hold on the construction of the rail connection to Lake Superior.[62]

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[60] BM, April 18, 1857; “Bayfield, Lake Superior,” 1; H. M. Rice to Major Wm. McAboy, January 8, 1856, Rice Papers, Box 1, MHS.

[61] The St. Croix and Lake Superior Railroad actually held the contract, but the La Crosse and Milwaukee had purchased the St. Croix and Lake Superior to ensure that it would control the lands disbursed for the grant.

[62] Bernd, “The La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Land Grant”; Current, *The Civil War Era*, 241-48.

Bayfield residents closely followed the progress of the railroad. With the railroad in limbo, Bayfield's prospects looked less certain, and those who had invested in the town wanted reassurance that their investments would pay off. "I can learn nothing definite in regard to the Rail Road," Bayfield resident William Craeken wrote to investor William Hale in 1860, "but am informed by Mr. Rice that everything is working well." Good news was reported instantly. "There is a strong possibility that a large eastern colony will settle near us in the spring," Craeken also wrote to Hale, "our proprietors are making every effort to bring it about there is also a strong probability that the work will be commenced on this end of the Hudson and Superior Rail Road in the spring…"[63]

Bayfield's boosters had more to worry about than just when the railroad would reach Lake Superior—they also had to ensure that their town would benefit from the route. Superior emerged as Bayfield's biggest rival. The 1856 land grant law specified the construction of a line "to the western end of Lake Superior and to Bayfield." This clause needed interpretation. Did it mean that a railroad would go to Bayfield, via Superior, or did it mean that Bayfield would merely be reached by a branch from the main line? Bayfield's future depended on the outcome—it needed a direct connection to Minnesota and the emerging western railroad networks. Bayfield and Superior waged a public battle through their newspapers, each seeking to secure the terminus. Bayfield citizens believed their better harbor meant that they should become the terminus; Superior residents pointed to their geographic position at the true head of the lake. In May 1860, the *Bayfield Press* reported that the directors of the railroad company had recognized "the superior advantages of Bayfield as a terminus" and that they would "without further ado

[63] M. Wm Craeken to William D. Hale, May 22, 1860 and January 15, 1860, Box 3, Hale Papers.

make Bayfield the *only* terminus on Lake Superior." The editors of the Superior *Chronicle* responded with their own publicity and similar reports of the intentions of the railroad's directors. The booster rhetoric of small-town newspapers, of course, did nothing to hasten the actual construction of the railroad. The Saint Croix & Lake Superior forfeited the lands set aside to compensate for construction costs without completing a single mile of track.[64]

Delays, scandals, and political maneuvering continued to slow the construction of railroads in northern Wisconsin. In 1864, Congress renewed the hopes of western Lake Superior's residents with another railroad land grant bill. The St. Croix and Lake Superior Railroad Company again won the contract to build a road from the St. Croix River valley to the lake, but forfeited the lands once more when it had not started construction by 1869. Competition between investors in Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota railroads delayed subsequent assignment of the land grant. The 1864 bill provided for a second route to Lake Superior, this one through the center of the state. But delays stalled construction along this route, as well. In 1871, several smaller railroad companies formed to take advantage of the generous grant provisions merged to create the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company. A year later, the Wisconsin Central announced that its Lake Superior terminus would be Ashland, at the southern end of Chequamegon Bay. Financial trouble again delayed construction, though, and due to the Panic of 1873 the first trains of the Wisconsin Central did not run until 1877.[65]

Town builders like Henry Rice tried to use their personal connections to lure a railroad to Bayfield. Rice kept a running correspondence with Boston financier Gardner Colby, the

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[64] Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 135-37; Current, *Civil War Era*, 430; *Superior Chronicle*, February 24, 1857 and May 26, 1860.

[65] William R. Durrwachter, *The Wisconsin Central: A Centennial View* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Company, 1971); Current, *Civil War Era*, 430-33.

president of the Wisconsin Central. Rice tried desperately to convince Colby to invest with him in Bayfield—and to bring his railroad to the town. Rice wanted Colby to purchase Bayfield land, confident that a railroad would make the investments pay handsomely. Their correspondence underscores the interconnections inherent in linking a peripheral point of production like Bayfield and the larger economic structure. For Henry Rice and a developing Bayfield, Gardner Colby represented both the much-needed financial investment as well as the essential railroad connection that would provide access to urban markets.[66]

Bayfield residents recognized that the town's natural advantages meant little if they failed to secure a railroad. F. W. Bartlett, a clerk at the Bayfield Land Office, explained the situation to St. Paul investor William Hale:

> All of the land is good, well wooded with lots of sugar maple and other species of hard wood. Soil is good and when cleared will produce good crops... From all I can learn of the property, I can say that if we ever get a Railroad to this section of the country, (which I think will certainly be within a very few years) your investment will pay you well. If by any chance the R.R. should be built to the head of the lake (Superior City) why of course the property would not command a large price—there is but little sale for wild lands at this time.

The railroad was the key to progress: it would connect Bayfield to the national market, attract investment, and multiply the worth of the town's natural advantages.[67]

News that the rival towns of Duluth and Ashland would receive rail connections first hit the residents of Bayfield hard. In 1870, the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad arrived in Duluth, and in 1872 the Wisconsin Central announced that it would stop in Ashland. The editors of the *Press* recognized the "doubtless high hopes that were at one time entertained of its

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[66] H.M. Rice to Gardner Colby, June 23, June 30, July 3, and July 8, 1869, Rice Papers, Box 1, MHS.

[67] F.W. Bartlett to W.D. Hale, August 21, 1866, Hale Papers, Box 3, MHS.

becoming a great railroad center have undergone some modification of late." Still, the editors believed that the town might still enjoy a prosperous future as a commercial point, a summer resort, and perhaps as a campus in the state educational system. And Bayfield did still have its natural resources—timber, stone, and fish. The bad news on the railroad front did slow things down in Bayfield. A letter from Bayfield published in Milwaukee reported that the "fixing of the lake terminus of the Wisconsin Central at Ashland has however, had a chilling influence on this place. It has grown but little, if any, the past year, while the tide of emigration, business and excitement, sets in towards the new and rising city of Ashland." As a symbol of Bayfield's dwindling promise, Samuel and Hank Fifield—editors of the *Bayfield Press* and among the town's most boisterous boosters—packed up their printing equipment and moved to the now-booming town of Ashland. (Sam Fifield did return and restart the *Bayfield Press* in 1877.)[68]

The Panic of 1873 dimmed Bayfield's prospects still further. Because it had not secured much in the way of outside investment, Bayfield remained relatively insulated from the financial troubles that rocked the nation when railroad magnate Jay Cooke's empire collapsed, dragging the national banking system and the stock market down with it. But residents of the Chequamegon Bay did watch the national scene with concern. "The bank failures east make some of our people feel blue, and the fear of a general break-up is anticipated. If such an event does happen it will be several years before this section recovers from the shock." When the Basswood Island quarry—one of the region's largest employers—shut down, everyone felt the shock. "The prevailing disease in this section is h-a-r-d-t-i-m-e-s," lamented the newspaper. The hard times in Bayfield indicate the challenges of life in an economy dependent on extra-local

[68] BP, March 9, 1872; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 16. 1872; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 155.

factors. Peripheral economies were—and still are—extremely vulnerable to market fluctuations and extra-local economic events like the Panic of 1873.[69]

Spurned by the Wisconsin Central, Bayfield's boosters and captains turned their attention to the development of an industry less immediately dependent on the railroad: tourism. Boosters had extolled the virtues of Bayfield as a health resort and recreational retreat since the founding of the town, using much the same language as they did in discussing their town's other "natural advantages." An 1858 pamphlet reported that Bayfield had become "the talk of fashionable tourists" for its scenery, climate, fishing, and sailing opportunities. And not only could Bayfield claim the pure air needed for a health resort, it also had an advantage no other place could claim: the nearby Apostle Islands. "Bayfield, however, will ever owe its celebrity it a great degree to its near vicinity to the Apostle islands… This splendid group, the grand Archipelago of the Lakes, possess a marvelous attraction of scenery in its varied combinations of land and water excelled by no other nearer than the islands of the Carribean [*sic*.] Sea," proclaimed the newly-started *Bayfield Press* in 1872.[70]

As with many other industries, the local paper continually pointed out ways that enterprising businessmen might make money in the tourist trade. They encouraged steamboats to set special rates for tourists and to join in the construction of a hotel on the islands. In 1878, the *Bayfield Press* suggested that town residents should build a hotel to compensate for their inability to lure a railroad. "It seems that there is no hope of an early completion of the North Wisconsin Railroad through to this place," commented the editors. Instead, the editors suggested

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[69] AP, October 4, October 18, and October 25, 1873; White, *It's Your Misfortune*, 249-50.

[70] "Bayfield, Lake Superior," 12-14; BP, March 16, 1872.

that town residents donate labor and materials and purchase bonds to construct a grand hotel large enough to house two hundred people. The editors estimated that health seekers would spend an average of one thousand dollars a day; everyone in the town would benefit. For its part, the *Press* published weekly notices of the advantages that Bayfield offered "to seekers of health and pleasure": "The climate is pure, cool and bracing. It invigorates the whole system, creates appetite and induces sleep. To persons with nervous afflictions the climate is as soothing as anodyne, and works radical cures. Weak lungs are made robust, strong, and healthy." If the town could build a reputation as a resort, the lack of a railroad would not hurt as much; tourists could arrive in Bayfield via steam ship.[71]

Finally, almost thirty years after the founding of the town, the railroad arrived in Bayfield in 1883. "Linked at Last!" proclaimed the banner headlines in the *Bayfield County Press* when the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railway (known simply as the Omaha) arrived from the West in October 1883. Bayfield finally had its rail connection to national markets. The *Press* explained the significance of the rail connection in the most glowing of terms:

> The importance of this event to Northern Wisconsin and the Great West, as well as this immediate locality, is incalculable. It forms a grand highway from the rich plains of the far west to the inland sea port over which their products may find rapid and cheap transit to markets of the East. It opens up and renders available to settlement a grand territory of valuable timber land sand gives outlet to the great pineries of the northwestern part of the state, thus pioneering the way for the capitalist and the laborer to rich fields for their enterprise and skill. It renders available for maritime business one of the grandest harbors in the world and its coming is hailed with rejoicing by the storm tossed mariner as well as by those who heralded its coming by settling upon its shores long years ago.

Henry Rice, who had waited as long as anyone for the arrival of the railroad, joined in the celebration, as well as in the anticipation of Bayfield's future as a bustling port. "Some place

[71] BP, December 18, 1878; AP, August 10, 1872; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 156.

along this shore must be the objective point and why not Bayfield?" Rice had much to gain from this future; he still owned significant Bayfield real estate. The arrival of the railroad renewed hopes for a future as a thriving port city rather than a sleepy fishing village.[72]

Even this moment of triumph, however, was tempered by decisions made far from Bayfield. As the Omaha road approached the Chequamegon Bay, Bayfield residents assumed that the railroad company would construct its primary terminal in their town. After all, the Omaha had inherited the 1856 Congressional land grant that specified that the route be built to Bayfield, and the town's promoters and investors had been operating under this assumption ever since. The directors of the Omaha, however, chose to build their terminal and transshipment facilities at newly-founded town of Washburn, thirteen miles to the south. Steep grades between the two sites convinced the directors of the Omaha to construct major facilities at the southern point, and build a spur north to Bayfield. The Omaha actually stopped just over a mile short of the dock and harbor at Bayfield, an essential link if Bayfield hoped to serve as a point of transshipment from rails to water. "All that remains for us to do," the editors of the *Bayfield County Press* related to their readers, "as a community, is to accept this fact in a philosophical manner and redouble our individual efforts to further the interests of that particular locality in which our interests lie." And even if they did not have the ore docks, grain elevators, and other advantages promised by terminal facilities, Bayfield had at last won its railroad connection.[73]

Despite the loss of the terminal, the arrival of the railroad did have a transformative impact on Bayfield's extractive industries. It provided Bayfield business leaders with the direct

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[72] BCP, July 28 and October 13, 1883.

[73] BCP, May 12, 1883; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 159-60, 167.

connection to national markets for which they had been searching for nearly three decades. This connection made the natural resources of the Chequamegon Bay more valuable and made Bayfield a more attractive spot for outside investment. The railroad gave Bayfield's industries an instant boost. The town's fishermen could now get fresh fish to market, rather than having to pack their catch in salt. In 1884, just one year after the arrival of the railroad, the A. Booth Packing Company—the largest fish dealers in the Great Lakes—opened a packinghouse in Bayfield, quickly becoming one of the town's biggest employers. Tourism, logging, quarrying, and shipping received a similar jolt. Census statistics reflected the new prosperity. The 1885 state census reported that 1,409 people lived in Bayfield—almost three times more than the 495 people who had made a home there in 1880.[74]

Dalrymple's Dream, Dalrymple's Fantasy

The arrival of the railroad also resuscitated the hopes of Bayfield's boosters that their town would finally realize its potential, finally emerge as an important center of commerce. William F. Dalrymple had the most coherent vision for Bayfield's future. Originally from western Pennsylvania, Dalrymple by the 1860s and 1870s had extensive investments in real estate in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota, as well as several other ventures. Far more than Bayfield's boosters and captains of industry, Dalrymple saw Bayfield from the perspective of an outsider. He viewed the town in a regional context, in connection with wheat produced to the west, iron mined in the north, and goods manufactured in the east. Dalrymple hoped to

[74] Kathleen Lidfors, "Bayfield, Wisconsin: God and Capital,"(1980), AINL Library, 14; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 157-59; BP, January 27, 1883 and March 1, 1884; *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*; Timmes, comp., *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin, 1887*, 318.

establish Bayfield as an important point for the break of bulk—for the transshipment of goods and raw materials from the eastern shipping lanes of the Great Lakes and the western railroad networks. In the process, of course, he hoped to make a tremendous amount of money. Dalrymple's Dream—and his inability to realize it—reveals both the possibilities and perils of the peripheral economy.

Dalrymple identified Bayfield's potential as a transportation hub and speculative investment early in the town's history. He purchased real estate around Bayfield and cultivated local representatives to look after his interests. Beginning in 1868, he corresponded with prominent Bayfield businessmen Andrew Tate (a county clerk, lawyer, merchant, and one of the town's first residents) and Robinson D. Pike. Pike and Tate looked after Dalrymple's investments and kept him informed on changing conditions and opportunities in Bayfield. Tate, Pike, and Dalrymple's other local correspondents actively persuaded Dalrymple to invest in Bayfield. "First we have the harbor. Second we have timber for lumber and shingles. Third the Fishing grounds," Tate boasted to Dalrymple in 1869. "This is one of the best speculations that I know of in this country," explained Pike about the opportunity to purchase cheap land in the vicinity in 1871. Spurred by such advice, Dalrymple began to purchase lots in town and timberlands outside of it.[75]

Dalrymple's interest in Bayfield intensified when his investments elsewhere began to pay large dividends. William Dalrymple had invested heavily with his brother Oliver in the bonanza wheat farms of North Dakota's Red River valley. Following the Panic of 1873, the

[75] Andrew Tate to William F. Dalrymple, September 9, 1869, Box 3, Folder 3, and R. D. Pike to William F. Dalrymple, December 14, 1871, Box 3, Folder 4, January 26, 1872, Box 3, Folder 5, and January 28, 1879, Box 4, Folder 5, Dalrymple Papers.

Northern Pacific Railroad initiated a policy of exchanging lands that it had received from a federal land grant for its own depreciated securities. Large blocks of land in the flat, treeless, and fertile Red River valley came into private ownership. Two of the valley's largest landowners hired Oliver Dalrymple to manage an experimental wheat farm. Oliver Dalrymple treated agriculture as an industrial pursuit, relying on corporate organization, heavy capital investment, and specialized production. He experimented with new forms of agricultural technology, especially mechanized field operations like reaping and sowing. The results were staggeringly productive—at least for a time—and became known as the Bonanza wheat farms. In his first year, Dalrymple brought 1,280 acres into production; the next year, he produced 75,000 bushels of wheat. Oliver Dalrymple continued to manage the farms of others while he invested in and expanded additional operations of his own. Dalrymple himself had very little money to his name, but he enticed his brother William to join the venture. By the early 1880s, Oliver Dalrymple oversaw 32,000 acres of land sowed with hard spring wheat.[76]

The success of their Dakota wheat ventures spurred the Dalrymple brothers to expand their investments in Bayfield. They sought to diversify their options for getting Dakota grain to eastern and international markets. William Dalrymple wanted to transport his grain to Bayfield via the railroad, store it there in massive grain elevators, and then ship it through the Great Lakes to points east. Such a route would break the grip of the Northern Pacific on transportation

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[76] Historians frequently hold up the Bonanza wheat farms as examples of how capitalism transformed the landscape of the American West, and of the role of extra-local factors in western economic development. Gilbert C. Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 75-93; Stanley Norman Murray, *The Valley Comes of Age: A History of Agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1967), 104-49; John Stewart Dalrymple, *No. 1 Hard: Oliver Dalrymple, The Story of a Bonanza Farmer* (Minneapolis: Privately Printed, 1960); White, *It's Your Misfortune*, 271; Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 73-74; Michael P. Malone, *James J. Hill: Empire Builder of the Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 78; Deborah Kay Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

options for Dakota wheat and help Dalrymple cut out a profit-taking middleman. Dalrymple's interest, of course, thrilled Bayfield's business leaders. The interest of a rich, well-connected man like William Dalrymple—the Bayfield newspaper called him "The Dakota Wheat King"—portended good things for a small town still dreaming of progress and prosperity.[77]

William Dalrymple had an expansive and well-articulated vision for Bayfield's future, but one that differed in important ways from that of the town's local boosters and businessmen. Dalrymple had the perspective of an outsider, and he saw Bayfield in a larger context—as the center of a continental web of commerce. Situated at the western end of the Great Lakes shipping routes, Bayfield provided a logical point for the break of bulk, the point where large shipments of finished goods from eastern manufacturing centers could be most profitably broken into smaller sets for distribution to growing western towns. This meant not only control of regional goods like Wisconsin lumber and Dakota wheat, but the shipping traffic of a much larger area: "the coal fields of Penn. and Ohio alike, with the products of the numerous works and factories that seek a western outlet … may be profitably shipped through this port and made tributary to its improvements… As, likewise, will be the tonnage of the grain fields, the stock farms, and the mineral resources of the vast country to the northward and the lakes, seeking an eastward outlet." Chicago's location between eastern and western railroad networks had led to that city's astounding growth; Bayfield would follow a similar path, and soon control the commerce of the entire continent. Like the town's local boosters, Dalrymple believed that a combination of

[77] Lidfors, "Bayfield, Wisconsin," 20; Register, Dalrymple Papers; Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier*, 75-93*;* Dalrymple, *No. 1 Hard*; BCP, January 27, 1883.

Bayfield's natural advantages and its soon-to-be constructed capital improvements virtually guaranteed this future.[78]

William Dalrymple spent the last third of the nineteenth century trying to make his dream into a reality. As the Omaha approached Bayfield, Dalrymple acquired a railroad charter of his own. In August, 1883, Dalrymple filed articles of incorporation for the Bayfield Transfer Railroad Company [BTRR], reporting a capital stock of a modest $100,000. The decision by the Omaha's board of directors to construct their terminal at Washburn instead of Bayfield did not derail Dalrymple's Dream; the Bayfield Transfer would complete the connection, and allow the transfer of freight from rail cars to waiting ships. Dalrymple followed the creation of the BTRR with the incorporation of a more ambitious company, the Bayfield Harbor & Great Western Railroad. The BH & GW would run a short line connecting Bayfield—and the Bayfield Transfer Railway—with the transcontinental railway network. Dalrymple determined that seventy-five miles of track would connect Bayfield with the Northern Pacific, the Canadian Pacific, and the Great Northern Railway—another 20,000 miles of established railway lines. With a further hundred miles, the BH & GW would reach Minneapolis-St. Paul and its additional 25,000 miles of track. Freight from across the continent would travel the BH & GW to Bayfield. Connection to these railroad networks would put Bayfield in position to command the commerce of a hinterland stretching over two million square miles to the south and west—over three times greater than the combined hinterlands of Chicago and New Orleans. The inevitable result: "And men may as profitably engage in obstructing the currents [of commerce] … as they move onward in majestic grandeur and power to swell the depths of the waters of the ocean, as to labor to

[78] Dalrymple to W. P. Wilbur, November 19, 1883.

obstruct and divert the economies Nature has here provided for commercial life." Dalrymple published a promotional pamphlet under the name of the BH & GW to publicize his idea.[79]

Dalrymple's Dream also included docks, piers, and the other infrastructure necessary to support these rivers of commodities. As railroad freight approached Bayfield, the BTRR would serve as the vital connection between rail and lake transportation. Dalrymple began acquiring property in Bayfield in the 1860s. By the 1880s, he owned most of the territory between Bayfield and Red Cliff to the north, including the land along the waterfront. This would be the site of the piers and docks that would send the freight of the West toward the ports of the East, and receive finished goods in return. The BH & GW's prospective map depicts this area as the town of Dalrymple, complete with street grids and avenues. Dock after dock would line the shore north of Bayfield; one map projected no fewer than 57 piers extending into the lake. Dalrymple owned land on Basswood Island, too, just across a narrow but deep channel. His correspondence with potential investors is filled with discussions about how to best make use of all this land, how to attract merchants, contractors, shipping firms, and railroad agents.[80]

The incorporation of the two railroads gave new impetus to the hopes of Bayfield's residents. "The principal barrier to the successful rearing of its commercial monuments has been the said disappointment of railway facilities," explained a booster pamphlet published just after the arrival of the Omaha in 1883. But now things had changed. The pamphlet called the BTRR Bayfield's

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[79] Articles of Incorporation, Bayfield Transfer Railway Company, July 26, 1883, Box 6, Folder 2, Dalrymple Papers; Bayfield Harbor & Great Western promotional brochure, n.d., Box 28, Folder 2, Dalrymple Papers; Don Anderson, comp., *19th Century Railroading in Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, 2001), WHS pamphlet collection, 6.

[80] Dalrymple Papers, *passim*.; Bayfield Harbor & Great Western promotional brochure; Lidfors, "Bayfield, Wisconsin," 11.

> salvation dispensed in a time of need, and if the citizens' wishes were not satisfied in years gone by they are now gratified to realize that they have lived to see their hopes fulfilled and an opportunity for the successful development of the resources of that immensely wealthy district of which Bayfield is the center, the port of entry for the millions of merchandise that will soon be required to meet the demands of settlers who are already beginning to pour in and center their interests with that of the 'Harbor City,' the point from which will be shipped all the products of her illimitable forests, her manufactories and quarries…

The *Bayfield County Press* followed these developments closely, of course. The *Press* notified its readers whenever William Dalrymple or his representatives visited Bayfield or entertained prospective investors. Bayfield's captains of industry—R. D. Pike, Nelson Boutin, or others—participated in these visits, too, taking the visiting notables on tours of the islands aboard their yachts and throwing dinner parties.[81]

Investors were, in fact, the key to Dalrymple's Dream. Rich though he was from his investments in Dakota wheat, William Dalrymple could not build the BH & GW by himself. He desperately needed investors to help construct the railroads, piers, and grain elevators required to connect Bayfield to its nature-ordained future. His papers are filled with correspondence in which he tries to attract business partners, especially railroad companies. He wrote to representatives of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Cleveland, Lorain and Wheeling Railroad Company, the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, the Erie & Western Transportation Company, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul Railway Company, among others. He corresponded with the banker for a syndicate of "London Capitalists" who wanted to invest in American railroads. "Your road will be extended West and can not afford to lose the freightage it must by not building to Bayfield," Dalrymple explained to the directors of the Northern Pacific. To all of these potential investors, Dalrymple delineated his plans for

[81] *The Industries of Bayfield*; BCP, December 8, 1883 and August 29, 1891.

Bayfield, the town's natural advantages—its deep and protected harbor, its geographic location, its resources. "I wish to call your attention to a property in Bayfield harbor at Bayfield, Wis…the best natural dockage…large quantities of lake freight will be loaded there…Bayfield Harbor will become the strong, if not the successful competitor, for … the west end of Lake Superior, and here a city will be built…" Dalrymple echoed decades of local booster rhetoric in a concerted effort to make his dream a reality.[82]

Dalrymple could not convince even a single one of these men to invest in the BH & GW. They offered him a variety of reasons: one claimed to be too old to invest in such a long-term project; another proffered that Bayfield was too far away from his company's base of operations; the London capitalists deferred because of instability in the British markets. Even Dalrymple's own brother, Oliver, had doubts about the viability of the scheme. "My interests at Bayfield are not now large enough so I can afford to take my grain trade there and spend the remainder of my life building Rail Roads," he explained. The town of Bayfield did purchase $25,000 in bonds from the BH & GW, a gesture of the potential importance of the scheme to Bayfield but nowhere near the amount required to complete the project. In his promotional material, Dalrymple estimated that he needed $1.2 million dollars to build the eighty miles of track necessary to connect with the transcontinental railroad systems. Dalrymple's Dream never materialized.[83]

Without capital investment, Dalrymple could barely build a railroad track, let alone dominate the commerce of two million square miles. Although he had incorporated the Bayfield

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[82] See, for example, Selah Chamberlain to William F. Dalrymple, July 14, 1883, Box 6, Folder 2; William H. Layre to Dalrymple, February 23, 1883, Box 6, Folder 4; William F. Dalrymple to Mr. Lindley, February 6, 1886, Box 8, Folder 6; quotes from Draft, William F. Dalrymple to Northern Pacific Railroad, May 1882, Box 6, Folder 1, all in Dalrymple Papers, WHS.

[83] Oliver Dalrymple to William F. Dalrymple, January 26, 1885, Box 8, Folder 4, Dalrymple Papers; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 168; "Titus S. Emery," promotional brochure, 1892, Box 28, Folder 3, Dalrymple Papers, WHS.

Transfer Railway in 1883, survey work on the road did not begin until 1891 and the first trains did not run until 1898. Eventually the BTRR had sixteen miles of track, and carried passengers and lumber between Bayfield and the northern part of the Bayfield Peninsula. The Wachsmuth Lumber Company purchased the rail in 1914, and used it to carry logs for another decade. By 1924, the tracks had been removed. The BH & GW acquired right-of-ways through a portion of its projected route and started the initial surveying work. But instead of an eighty-mile track that would connect it with 60,000 miles of railroad networks, the BH & GW only laid six miles of road, from Bayfield to a dead end in the middle of the Bayfield Peninsula. "Often referred to as 'Dalrymple's Dream,' the two railroads and the village should more accurately be called 'Dalrymple's Fantasy,'" commented a historian of the Chequamegon Bay.[84]

The demise of Dalrymple's endeavors permanently ended Bayfield's hopes of becoming a major port city. The town's boosters stopped dreaming of dominating continental commerce. Duluth and Superior remained the key shipment point for Dakota wheat. Ashland emerged as the largest port on Chequamegon Bay, and Washburn soon passed Bayfield as a lumber and railroad town. When the Omaha railroad declared that it would build its terminal facilities at Washburn, Bayfield's only bank moved there, too—a symbolic statement of Bayfield's inability to attract capital investment. The town of Dalrymple never existed, the string of docks intended to welcome ship after ship never escaped the confines of William Dalrymple's promotional maps. Bayfield continued to grow modestly, on the strength of its fishing, timber, and tourist trades. The railroad provided a significant jump in population, from 495 in 1880 to 1,409 in 1885, but

[84] Ross, *La Pointe*, 155-56; Lidfors, "Bayfield, Wisconsin." 11; BCP, December 25, 1897; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 168 n.37.

the rate of increase soon leveled off. Census takers counted 1,373 residents in town in 1890 and 1,368 in 1895. By 1900, the population had climbed to 1,689.[85]

Why did Dalrymple's Dream—and the other booster dreams for Bayfield—fail to materialize? As the booster rhetoric indicated, geography determined Bayfield's fate, at least in part. Railroads coming from St. Paul arrived in Duluth, eighty miles to Bayfield's West, in 1870. Ashland's location at the southern end of Chequamegon Bay meant that it became the first railroad town on the Bay, capturing the north-south traffic of the Wisconsin Central. Ashland's proximity to the rich iron deposits of the Penokee Range promised a far more extensive shipping trade than Bayfield could have produced. In 1870, Ashland had been virtually deserted; by 1890, its population neared ten thousand. Washburn, which had received the Omaha's terminal facilities over Bayfield because of more favorable railroad grades, soon surpassed its northern neighbor as well. The railroad connections gave Duluth, Ashland, and Washburn an advantage securing financial investments and a strong shipping trade. Oliver Dalrymple, in expressing his hesitation to invest in his brother's plans in 1885, stated the situation concisely: "The place is dead and others flourishing. We grant, as all do that Bayfield harbor is perfect. Still, Rail Roads and business have built up other cities which are accommodated and satisfied and do all…" Perhaps personal failure prevented Bayfield from achieving the status that the boosters and

[85] BCP, September 1, 1883; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 160; Hans B. Warner, comp., *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin, 1882* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Litho. & Engr. Co., 1882), 344-45; Timmes, comp., *Blue Book of the State of Wisconsin, 1887*, 318; William H. Froehlich, comp., *Blue Book for the State of Wisconsin, 1901* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Lithograph Co., 1901), 456-57.

others had predicted; had Dalrymple been more successful at securing investment, Bayfield's future might have been different.[86]

At the most basic level, Bayfield did not flourish because the town remained too loosely connected to the national economy. It did not secure the access to markets, the labor supply, and the railroad connection necessary for economic development in the resource hinterland. Bayfield remained an outpost, a point of production of natural resources rather than a manufacturing center. The stone, fish, and lumber produced from the region's natural resources had to be shipped elsewhere for marketing and finishing.

Towns like Bayfield are easily found across the western and midwestern landscape. Indeed, there are far more towns that failed to live up to their boosters' expectations than there are towns that fulfilled them. Bayfield did not become the commercial center for the continent, but it did become an important—albeit peripheral—point of production. By the 1880s, the fishing grounds had emerged as the most productive on Lake Superior, and Bayfield boasted a large lumber mill and a thriving tourist trade. Each year, the town's workers sent millions of pounds of fish and board feet of lumber to market, and entertained thousands of tourists. Market fluctuations, capital investment, and transportation networks set limits on the extent of these activities, but fishing, logging, and tourism continued. This was life in the resource hinterland: impersonal, extra-local economic factors drew the outlines of economic development in the Chequamegon Bay and elsewhere on the periphery. Far more local factors, however, colored in this outline and shaped the inner-workings of the region's extractive economies.

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[86] Oliver Dalrymple to William F. Dalrymple, January 26, 1885; Hans B. Warner, comp., *Legislative Manual of the State of Wisconsin, 1878* (Madison: David Atwood, 1878), 244-45: Froehlich, comp., *Blue Book for the State of Wisconsin, 1901*, 156-57.

The history of Bayfield an the Chequamegon Bay in the nineteenth century reveals a process essential to understanding economic development in the periphery. Over the course of several decades, peripheral places like Bayfield integrated with the national economy. Towns grew when their boosters attracted capital investment, when enough laborers lived in the area to produce natural resources, when railroads provided connections to national markets. These towns suffered when investment dried up, markets fluctuated, or the railroad failed to appear. As we shall see in the next several chapters, this process of integration had important consequences for the environments of the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay.

And yet, the process of economic development did not depend solely on the extra-local, on integration into the national economy. Local concerns, too, shaped economic growth. The process of economic development predicted by the boosters and analyzed by modern historians occurred differently in each peripheral place. Geography and topography shaped the logging industry, dictating when, where, and what types of forest the lumberjacks felled first. The way that fishermen understood and reacted to changing fish populations determined the economic viability of the fishing industry. And local amenities, local landscapes, and local histories shaped the tourist trade. To understand how the process of “progress” was articulated in any specific place, we need to consider these very local concerns. The next three chapters explore these local factors, and the way that they shaped economic development in Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay as much as the demand for capital investment and a railroad connection.

CHAPTER TWO
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Where Hemlock came before Pine: The Local Geography of the Chequamegon Bay Logging Industry

The forest of Michigan Island has a strange history. Lumberjacks did not arrive on the 1,600-acre island until the 1890s—thirty years later than the neighboring islands. When logging did begin, it happened at the wrong time of year. Almost everywhere else in the Northwoods, logging took place in winter. Lake Superior's winter winds and strong currents keep Michigan Island free of ice—and impossible to access during winter, when ice closed mainland ports like Bayfield. Lumberjacks could only work on Michigan Island in the summer. The most extensive logging on the island did not get underway until 1919, when the John Schroeder Lumber Company built a railroad that ran the three-and-one-half mile length of the island. Although railroads had been essential to the lumber industry for nearly a half-century, the Schroeder Company's railroad was the first used in the Apostle Islands. In just four years, Schroeder stripped the island of all its merchantable timber. But when the company pulled out the railroad in 1923, it left seventy-seven acre section of forest virtually untouched. The federal government had established a lighthouse on the island in 1869 and created a reserve for use as a woodlot by the keeper's family; Schroeder's lumberjacks had to leave these trees uncut. The reserve survived as one of the few patches of old growth forest on the shores of Lake Superior. Climate, topography, and local political boundaries marked Michigan Island logging as different. But

even in its distinction, Michigan Island compares to the other islands: each island has its own history, each island forest its own pattern.[1]

More distant influences shaped the logging of Michigan Island, as well. The Schroeder Company built a railroad on the island, for example, in response to the spiked demand for wood created by World War I. The summer logging carried out on the island would not have been possible without the technological advantages provided by the railroad. The desire to promote and protect Great Lakes shipping lanes led to the creation of the lighthouse reserve. A complex interplay of factors both local and national, human and ecological combined to create the forests of today's Apostle Islands. Understanding the modern forest requires attention to this interplay.

Most analyses of the history of the logging industry adopt the macro-scaled views discussed in the previous chapter. From this perspective, railroad connections, markets, and technological innovation emerge as the driving and defining forces in the history of the logging industry. Industrial logging originated in New England and migrated to the Great Lakes, the Southeast, and finally the Pacific Northwest, exhausting the resources of each region in turn. The labor relations, technologies, and economic organization of the industry evolved at each stop. Tracking this evolution provides insights essential to understanding the economic and environmental history of not only the logging industry, but of the regions where logging took place. These studies isolate and abstract the logging industry and provide a platform for observing the industry's inner-workings.[2]

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[1] BCP, October 8, 1898, March 20, 1903, and June 6, 1919; Mary T. Bell, *Cutting Across Time: Logging, Rafting, and Milling the Forests of Lake Superior* (Schroeder, MN: The Schroeder Area Historical Society, 1999), 59; *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Facts Book*, AINL Library.

[2] The most comprehensive of the many national surveys of the logging industry is Michael Williams, *Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); see also Thomas R. Cox, *et al.*, *This Well-wooded Land: Americans and their Forests from Colonial Times to the Present* (Lincoln: University

But there is something to be said for adopting a more local approach. Much can be learned from an abstract or bird's eye perspective on the logging industry, but much can be lost, as well. In the search for broad patterns, for explanations of the logging industry across the region or the nation, the big-picture approach makes sense. But this macro-scale view draws attention away from the peripheral points of production, away from the forests where trees became lumber. Broad patterns obscure the smaller details, the locally determined conditions equally important in the production process. Many of the critiques leveled at the world-systems model discussed in the previous chapter emerge from just this point. To understand the inner-workings of an extractive industry like logging in a remote place like the Apostle Islands, a more peripheral perspective is required. In the words of one of Immanuel Wallerstein's critics: "We must, in short, put on new spectacles and look at world history with peripheral vision."[3]

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of Nebraska Press, 1985); Douglas W. MacCleery, *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery* (Durham, NC: United States Forest Service, 1993); William G. Robbins, *American Forestry: A History of National, State, and Private Cooperation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); Char Miller, ed., *American Forests: Nature, Culture, and Politics* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1997). There is a vast literature on logging the Great Lakes cutover, for example: Robert Gough, *Farming the Cutover: A Social History of Northern Wisconsin, 1900-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Fries, *Empire in Pine*; Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Vernon Carstenson, *Farms or Forests: Evolution of a State Land Policy for Northern Wisconsin, 1850-1932* (Madison, University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture, 1958). Another common technique for exploring the lumber industry isolates specific lumber companies or lumber barons; see: Charles E. Twining, *Downriver: Orrin H. Ingram and The Empire Lumber Company* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975) and *F. K. Weyerhaeuser: A Biography* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997); John N. Vogel, *Great Lakes Lumber on the Great Plains: The Laird, Norton Lumber Company in South Dakota* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992); A. R. Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company: A Case Study of the Wisconsin Lumbering Frontier* (New York: New York University Press, 1957). Another group of studies explores timber policy and conservation, such as William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the U. S. Lumber Industry, 1890-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982); William D. Rowley, *U.S. Forest Service Grazing and Rangelands: A History* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1985); Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976); Paul W. Hirt: *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests Since World War II* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). Nancy Langston, in *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995) crosses the boundary between policy studies and the local, on-the-ground changes taking place in the forest.

[3] Steve J. Stern, "Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World-System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean," *American Historical Review* 93 (October, 1988), 832.

What does the logging industry of a place like the Apostles look like when seen with peripheral vision? Local geographies, economic conditions, and political boundaries merge with railroad networks and industrial organization in determining economic development. This integration, of course, occurred everywhere that lumberjacks entered the woods. This chapter explores the history of logging in the Chequamegon Bay by analyzing the intersections among geography, forest composition, technology, economic organization, and political boundaries in four aspects of the Chequamegon Bay timber industry. First, the access to island forests combined with local forest composition and the demands of the national lumber industry to create an unusually diverse timber trade in the Apostles. As the logging industry of the Chequamegon Bay matured, it lost its distinct character. But the growth of the R. D. Pike Lumber Company in Bayfield reveals the uneven application of the technological and economic changes that marked this maturation and provides a second opportunity to consider the distinct nature of the Chequamegon Bay logging industry. Third, the forest history of Stockton Island demonstrates how the tax policies and market fluctuations influenced the decisions of individual landowners, with long term consequences for forest composition. Finally, the political boundaries represented by Ojibwe reservations and lighthouse reserves shaped logging patterns in still other ways, dictating where and when logging could occur.

Local Forests, the National Lumber Industry, and the Forests of the Apostle Islands

How did lumbermen decide which parts of the forest to cut first? They did not, of course, start at one end of the forest and methodically work their way across it. The composition of the forest shaped the decision, because some tree species were more desirable than others, and

lumberjacks sought the most valuable tree. Access to the forest—determined by island shorelines, rivers, and topography—also played a role. Transporting cut logs to the mill was the single most arduous and expensive part of the logging process, and even the tallest, straightest, thickest trees remained uncut if access to the forest proved too difficult. But extra-local factors determined where lumberjacks worked, too. The value of each species depended on fluctuating markets, and the degree of access to the forest changed with technological innovation. Local geographies and national economies combined to determine the course of island logging.

The Bayfield Peninsula marks the northernmost boundary of a region often called the Wisconsin pinery. In the late nineteenth century, white pine stood as Wisconsin's single most important natural resource. Tall, straight, free of knots, lightweight, and easily worked, white pine was the most sought after building material in the country. The demand for white pine intensified as Euro-American settlers rolled onto the treeless prairies of the mid-continent. The Wisconsin pinery offered one of the nation's most abundant supplies of this essential resource. The term "pinery," however, can be misleading. Pine did not necessarily dominate Wisconsin's forests. In fact, only a few parts of the state could claim white pine as a dominant forest species. Any tract of several hundred acres with an average of only one or two large pine trees per acre received the designation of "pineland." The quality and the amount of white pine varied greatly from one part of the state to another.[4]

The early nineteenth-century forests of the Apostle Islands were classified as pinelands: the occasional white pine surrounded by a forest dominated by other species. The men who surveyed the islands for the Government Land Office between 1852 and 1857 recorded primarily

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[4] Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 6; John T. Curtis, *The Vegetation of Wisconsin: An Ordination of Plant Communities*, (1959; repr., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 200.

hemlock, white and yellow birch, and maple, with the occasional pine.[5] Recent reconstructions of early nineteenth-century island forests have concluded that a mixed coniferous/hardwood forest dominated by hemlock, white pine, sugar maple, and yellow and white birch covered 90 per cent of the islands. Scattered stands of red oak grew in well-drained areas. Balsam fir and white cedar were more prominent in poorly drained areas, and on the portions of the islands most exposed to the windthrow resulting from Lake Superior's often violent storms. Forest conditions such as these were consistent throughout the mesic (relatively wet) forests of northern Wisconsin, although the specific composition of the forests varied from place to place with factors such as elevation, drainage, and frequency of windthrow.[6]

Lake Superior directly shaped the composition of island forests. The soils on the Apostles and on the immediate shore of the islands are mainly thick, red clay, the silt depositions left by a retreating Lake Superior in the immediate post-glacial period. The big lake shapes the region's climate, too. The area immediately around the lake has more moderate temperatures in both the

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[5] The Government Land Office (GLO) survey notes provide an essential source for determining historic vegetation patterns in Wisconsin, but like all historical documents they must be used carefully. The surveyors compiled legal land descriptions, not a scientific data set. Recent research by David Mladenoff, Lisa Schulte, Kristen Manies, and others has shown that individual surveyors frequently displayed a bias when choosing which tree species to record as "witness trees"—that is, the trees used to mark section boundaries. Surveyors consistently chose a certain type of tree, or a certain size of tree, and these biases varied with each individual surveyor. This bias needs be taken into account when using the GLO survey notes to recreate the specific forest composition of a small area; interpolations based on survey notes must also include modern observations on soil types and ecological systems. See, for example, Lisa A. Schulte and David Mladenoff, "The Original US Public Land Survey Records: Their Use and Limitations in Reconstructing Presettlement Vegetation," *Journal of Forestry* 99 (October 2001): 5-10; Kristen L. Manies and David J. Mladenoff, "Testing Methods To Produce Landscape-scale Presettlement Vegetation Maps from the U. S. Public Land Survey Records," *Landscape Ecology* 15 (2000): 742-54.

[6] Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, Surveyors Field Notes, 1832-1865, WHS; Douglas J. Frederick and Lawrence Rakestraw, "A Forest Type Map of Pictured Rocks and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore from the Original General Land Office Survey Records," prepared for the National Park Service, AINL Library; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island, Ashland and Bayfield Counties, Wisconsin." *The Michigan Botanist* 32 (March, 1883), 53; Curtis, *Vegetation of Wisconsin*, 177.

summer and the winter as a result of the lake's tempering effects. Wind has shaped Lake Superior shoreline forests, as well, altering the composition of shoreline forests.[7]

Early narrative descriptions of the island forests corroborate these conclusions. The *Bayfield Mercury* described the region as "heavily timbered with the White and Norway pine, White Birch, Balsam, Sugar Maple, Soft Maple, Basswood and Oak." The booster press's placement of white pine at the front of the list of species indicates the commercial importance of the tree. William Craeken described the region in 1860 as "heavily timbered with maple, birch, oak and pine." In 1866, the register at the U. S. Land Office in Bayfield described the forests of the Bayfield Peninsula to a potential investor: "All of the land is good, well wooded with lots of sugar maple and other species of hard wood." Descriptions such as these, though, need to be considered lightly. None of these correspondents had formal training in forestry, and all three were actively trying to solicit investors for Bayfield's extractive industries.[8]

No trained foresters surveyed the forests of northern Wisconsin until 1898. That year, the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History survey dispatched Filibert Roth to assess the state's remaining forestlands. Roth reported that the narrow belt of red clay soils that bordered the southern shore of Lake Superior had a marked effect on the region's forests. He found the forests "stocked with a unique mixture of conifers and hardwoods, remarkable in the species which are associated and resembling more the regular pinery of the sandy lands than the mixed woods of the loamy soils." By the time Roth visited the islands, most of the highly marketable white pine

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[7] Filibert Roth, *On the Forestry Conditions of Northern Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, 1898), 3; Eric A. Bourdo Jr., "The Forest the Settlers Saw," in *The Great Lakes Forest: An Environmental and Social History*, ed. Susan A. Flader (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

[8] BM, August 22 1857; M. Wm. Craeken to William D. Hale, January 15, 1860, and F. W. Bartlett to W. D. Hale, August 21, 1866, Hale Papers.

had been culled, but he found that the island and shoreline forests provided an excellent resource for continued logging operations.[9]

Determining the early nineteenth-century forest composition of the Apostles is essential to understanding how and why logging in the islands developed as it did. Environmental historians typically use the notes of the General Land Office surveyors and later scientific surveys to establish a baseline against which to judge the changes wrought by logging and white settlement. Tracing these changes remains an important goal of this study. But the pre-settlement forest composition can serve as more than a baseline. It can also help explain the history of logging in the islands. The specific composition of any forest stand—the prevalence of pine, oak, hemlock, or cedar—combined with geographical factors like proximity to water and topography to determine the course of logging in the Apostle Islands.

As in any frontier lumber town, the products of the earliest logging in the Bayfield region supplied the local rather than the national market. Just after founding the town in 1856, the Bayfield Land Company erected a small, steam-powered sawmill. The *Bayfield Mercury* dubbed the mill the ”most useful” building in town—because it provided a finished supply of wood to meet the needs of local construction. Entrepreneurs opened several other small mills around Chequamegon Bay in the 1860s. Delia Whittlesey Chapman, one of the first Anglo-American women in Bayfield, described the small scale of the early logging industry: “The only industry the small town boasted was one sawmill, shingles were made by hand by one or two men who understood the trade. Sitting in their covered sheds, astride a bench, with a draw shave, they fashioned from cedar, which had been sawed and split into bolts. They were slowly but well

[9] Roth, *On the Forestry Conditions of Northern Wisconsin*, 3.

made…" Small-scale milling and shingle-making activities like this developed in most frontier towns, and proved essential to the rapid growth of a place such as Bayfield.[10]

Although Chequamegon Bay lumbermen continued to meet local demands for shingles and finished lumber, they quickly turned their attention to the national market. With this shift, the logging industry took on a distinct character. Local geography and national market demand combined to present unusual opportunities for Chequamegon Bay lumbermen. By 1880, lumbermen in the Apostles boasted a far more diverse trade than did their colleagues in other parts of the Northwoods.

The logging industry of the Chequamegon Bay started late relative to other parts of Wisconsin. The eastern shore of Lake Michigan provided a home for the first large-scale logging in Wisconsin, propelled by the massive demand for building materials and wood products in Chicago; by mid-century, lumbermen had erected mills all along the shore as well as along the Fox and Wolf Rivers. The logging industry along the Mississippi and the large rivers at the center of the state was already well established when the Civil War stimulated a massive increase in production. By the time commercial operations commenced along Lake Superior in the early 1870s, the mills of the Wisconsin River pinery already produced two hundred million board feet of lumber each year, and the mills at La Crosse churned out three hundred million.[11]

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[10] BM, April 18, 1857; George W. Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest* (Chicago: George W. Hotchkiss & Co., 1898), 469; quote from Burnham, *Lake Superior Country in History and in Story*, 203; Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 82, 85; Charles E. Twining, "Logging on the Apostle Islands: A 19th Century Overview," Northland College Report, in AINL Library, and "A Brief Look at a Brief Experience: Early Logging on the Apostle Islands," in *Third Annual Research Conference, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*, ed. Jim Wood, (Bayfield, WI: USDI/NPS Midwest Regional Office, 1981), 18-20.

[11] Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 18-20, 29.

The vast majority of this tremendous amount came from a single species—white pine. Because white pine provided such malleable, easily worked wood, it brought the best price—few other species proved worth the trouble of logging on a large scale. But buoyancy proved to be the pine's most important characteristic. Until railroad logging emerged in the late 1870s, rivers provided the only feasible method of getting logs out of the woods and into the mills. And only softwoods like white and red pine floated well enough to travel in this manner. In the woods, then, lumberjacks cut pine—and little else. Loggers cut the pines closest to the river first, and then moved back into the forest, selectively cutting pine and moving the logs to the riverbank. From there, the logs were floated en-masse to the downstream mills. In most parts of the western Great Lakes, lumberjacks ignored hardwoods like maple, birch and oak, and even conifers like hemlock and cedar—which did not float nearly as well as pine—until the 1880s and 1890s.[12]

In the Apostle Islands, though, different conditions applied. Rafts of island pine still floated into the mills, and as in the rest of the region, pine became the single most important commercial species. But unlike the mainland interior, the cedar, hemlock, and hardwoods that grew along the shore could be easily brought to the mills and sold at a profit. Lumberjacks simply loaded logs onto barges or scows and towed them to mills in the Chequamegon Bay cities. Andrew Tate, one of Bayfield's earliest settlers, matter-of-factly explained the situation to a potential land investor: "The most of the wood cut the last winter has been cut on the islands Oak and Basswood… It is cheaper because it is a short distance to the water." Cheap, easy access to island forests marked the lakeshore and island logging operations as different.[13]

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[12] Twining, "Logging on the Apostle Islands," 16; William F. Raney, "Pine Lumbering in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 19 (September, 1935):71-90; Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 148-207.

[13] Andrew Tate to William F. Dalrymple, April 12, 1870, Box 3, Folder 4, Dalrymple Papers.

The logging industry of the Chequamegon Bay, then, developed a far more diverse trade than pine-focused central Wisconsin. Cedar logs fed the shingle mills and also provided railroad ties and mining supports, a key early component of the Chequamegon Bay logging trade. Entrepreneurs established wood yards on two of the islands to sell hardwood to passing steamships. Around the islands, small operators spent portions of the spring and summer harvesting the bark of the hemlock tree to supply tanneries up and down the Great Lakes. Hardwood species like maple and oak emerged as staples of early island logging efforts, too.

Cedar—not pine—served as the first object of Chequamegon Bay lumberjacks. The firm of Taff & Dunn established a commercial shingle mill on Pike's Creek in 1860, the first truly commercial operation on the bay. In 1870, Bayfield boasted two shingle mills; S. S. Vaughn's mill alone produced forty thousand shingles per day. One year later, Vaughn had increased capacity to fifty thousand per day. Many of the shingles went to protect the roofs of local buildings, but both Vaughn and R. D. Pike shipped shingles by boat to Duluth and to eastern ports. The *Bayfield Press* reported in 1870 that Pike had sent three million shingles to market that year—certainly an exaggeration but still an indication of market production. Cedar was the wood of choice for shingle manufacturing. The shingle mills transformed cedar logs into regularly shaped sixteen-inch shingles. The tough, durable wood proved to be highly water resistant and made ideal shingle material. And cedar abounded in the lowland forests of the islands and shoreline.[14]

These same characteristics made cedar desirable for more industrial uses, too. Cedar grows in swampy, lowland environments, and its wood resists damp conditions. It also lasts well

[14] BP, October 13, 1870; *Ashland Daily Press* [hereafter, ADP], May 6 and 13, 1871; Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry*, 752.

underground—making it perfect for railroad ties, telegraph poles, and mining supports. West from Ashland, along the Lake Superior shore, prospectors found bountiful supplies of copper and iron, and mining emerged as a key industry in the region. As the mining shafts delved deeper into the ground, they required more and more wood supports. "The imagery of entire forests being converted to be inverted is too obvious to ignore," commented the historian Charles Twining of logging in the Apostles.[15]

Railroads, too, required a tremendous amount of wood. An average mile of railroad track required 2,700 cross ties, 125,000 board feet of lumber per mile. This meant economic opportunity for Chequamegon Bay lumbermen. In 1871, the Wisconsin Central surveyed the route south from Ashland and started construction on the road in April 1872. S. S. Vaughn (who had moved his milling equipment from Bayfield to Ashland in the early 1870s) secured the contract to supply the railroad with lumber. "The tug *Wadsworth* is just as busy as can be now-a-days, towing flats loaded with railroad ties from the Islands to the Central's dock," reported the *Ashland Daily Press*. The extensive demand for wood usually dictated a cheap, local supply for cross ties. But because island forests could be easily reached and logs could be cheaply sent down the lakes, ties from the Chequamegon Bay began to appear in Chicago in the 1870s. From Chicago, they traveled west via rail to help extend the railroad networks onto the prairies.[16]

Accessibility, topography, and forest tree species dictated other early logging operations in the Apostles, as well. As the steamship trade picked up along the south shore of Lake Superior, James Chapman and William Knight recognized the need for stations along the most

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[15] Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry*, 752; Charles Twining, "The Apostle Islands and the Lumbering Frontier," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 66 (Spring, 1983): 215.

[16]Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 255; ADP, July 20 and September 21, 1872.

traveled routes to supply wood-burning steamers with fuel. The islands provided several logical spots along the increasingly important Duluth-Bayfield-Ashland run, as the ships traveled through the islands to shelter from the lake's notorious weather. In 1857, Chapman and Knight established a fuel wood station at Oak Island. By 1870, they had built a four hundred foot dock to accommodate all sizes of boats and ran a semi-permanent lumber camp on the island. Lumberjacks worked throughout the winter to accumulate a supply of fuel large enough to meet the demands of the shipping season. Knight advertised in the local papers to ensure that steamboat captains knew of his operation. "Oak Island wood yard! My Wood Yard has a large dock where boats of any draught can lay in perfect safety in all kinds of weather and load." Knight and Chapman did not sell white pine as fuel wood—they could sell that at much higher prices for conversion to finished lumber. Instead, they supplied the steamers with hardwood and hemlock. Oak Island provided the logical place for such activity. Oak Island has the highest elevation of the islands, and its steeper topography meant a well-drained forest—and a higher percentage of longer-burning hardwoods. The ravines that scored the island aided the movement of logs to the dock, where they could be chopped into smaller pieces and stacked for sale to passing ships.[17]

The combination of island geography and nationwide trends in the tanning industry provided more unusual opportunities for island loggers. In the mid-nineteenth century, hemlock emerged as the preferred source of tannin, an essential chemical in the process of turning animal

[17] James Peet Diary, July 6, 1857, WHS; BP, October 27, 1870; ADP, July 27, 1872. Fuel wood stations, of course, dotted the shores of all major transportation routes, and were among the first logging activities around the lake states and constituted important backwoods industries. Entrepreneurs like Chapman and Knight earned the label "woodhawks" for their actions. They were also often a cause of localized timber exhaustions. See Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 153-55.

hides into leather. Tanning required three elements: water, hides, and a tanning agent like tannin. Because hemlock bark spoiled easily and broke into pieces from extensive handling, it could only be shipped via water. Like the rest of the logging industry, tanneries moved west during the course of the nineteenth century. They moved across New England and into New York, then into northwestern Pennsylvania, across Lake Erie to Michigan and then to Wisconsin. Wisconsin emerged as an important center of the tanning industry because its extensive hemlock forests could be easily accessed along the shores of the Great Lakes. The 1860s witnessed tremendous growth in Wisconsin tanneries, especially in the southeastern corner of the state. By the end of the decade, Wisconsin tanneries produced over two million dollars worth of tanned leather. By the 1880s, Wisconsin ranked fourth in the nation in the production of leather products, and its ranking continued to climb over the next several decades.[18]

By the 1870s, the Apostle Islands had emerged as an ideal source for tanbark. Hemlock dominated the island forests, and the miles of shoreline ensured access to trees whose bark could be secured with a minimum of handling. Because the preparation of hemlock bark did not require milling, these operations were often of small scale. In 1871, John Buffalo—a member of one of the most prominent Ojibwe families in the area—secured a contract with Tarbox & Company, a St. Paul tannery. Buffalo received $3.75 per cord for one hundred cords of tanbark, which he shipped to Duluth via steamer and then to St. Paul on the railroad. Charles Rudd owned a farm on Basswood Island, just across the channel from Bayfield. Throughout the 1880s, he had a team of men harvesting several hundred cords of tanbark per year for shipment to a Duluth tannery.[19]

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[18] Charles E. Schefft, "The Tanning Industry in Wisconsin: A History of Its Frontier Origins and its Development," (MA, University of Wisconsin, 1938), 7-22, 33, 51.

[19] BP, July 22, 1871 and March 2, 1872; BCP, July 3, 1880 and September 26, 1885.

Seasonal demands of tanbark preparation also helped to make the Apostles a convenient spot for the activity. Bark season ran from May through July, when the light flow of tree sap made the process easier. Loggers first felled the hemlock, often cushioning the fall by laying a bough of small trees to protect the bark. Peelers then removed the bark in four and one-half foot strips. They laid the bark out to dry, flesh side out in dry weather and bark side out in wet weather; once dry, the bark was stacked and sold by the cord. One old lumberjack remembered it as the toughest of all of the jobs in the woods. Bark peelers "were the hardest, toughest workingmen connected with woods work. Not only the work, but a heavy axe or a heavy bark spud in one hand, with the other hand holding a sheet of bark to work the spud under so the sheet would not break. On top of that, about two-thirds of them were covered with mosquitoes, black flies, and no-see-ums... It was a long way from a picnic in the woods." The spring season and fragility of the bark dictated that only forest stands accessible by water could supply tanbark.[20]

Bayfield's boosters and businessmen recognized an economic opportunity and worked hard to attract a tannery to the region. "The hemlock extract business is proving to be a very lucrative one in Michigan," pointed out a local editor in 1872. "Why don't [sic] some one establish a factory on one of the Apostle Islands? Hemlock abound in this vicinity." Although the bark peelers of the Chequamegon Bay continued to find buyers for their product, the towns around the bay never succeeded in luring a tannery. Tanneries were not much of a prize, in any

[20] George Corrigan, "Tanneries and the Hemlock Bark Industry in Wisconsin," in *Some Historic Events in Wisconsin's Logging History: Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin*, ed. Ramon R. Hernandez (Wausau, WI: Forest History Association , 1978), 25-27.

case. They produced copious amounts of particularly foul pollutants, dumping large quantities of lime, animal flesh and hair into the rivers and lakes and emitting a putrid odor.[21]

The unusual accessibility of the island forests also meant that Chequamegon Bay lumbermen had a market for hardwood species like maple and oak. Hardwoods do not float, so until the development of railroad operations lumberjacks had no way of getting them to the mills. But in the islands, oak, birch, and maple logs could be loaded onto scows or barges and towed to the mills at Bayfield and Ashland. A demand for these types of wood did exist. Cabinetmakers sought out birch and bird's eye maple for furniture; the islands boasted the latter "as perfect as a picture," according to one booster pamphlet. And oak provided the material for an important item of local need: by 1870, R. D. Pike produced oak barrel staves to meet the needs of local fishermen, who salted and packed their catch into wooden barrels for shipment and storage.[22]

Until railroad networks made the inland hardwood forests accessible, the islands and other lakeshore regions provided the only economical supply of these types of wood. Bayfield's boosters recognized the advantages for hardwood logging offered by the islands, and as with the tanneries they advertised this attraction to would-be investors. This time, though, they had more success. In 1886, the Bayfield Woodenware Company opened its doors. The company manufactured boxes, staves, and decorative woodwork, using oak, birch, maple, basswood, and cedar, as well as pine. Area loggers reported that the company paid the highest prices on record for high quality oak.[23]

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[21] AP, July 6, 1872; BP, February 11 and April 29 1871, March 30, 1872; Schefft, "The Tanning Industry in Wisconsin," 54-58.

[22] Twining, "A Brief Look at A Brief Experience," 19.

[23] *The Industries of Bayfield*, 9-10; BP, December 10, 1870.

The diverse logging operations in the Apostle Islands, therefore, differed from those in many other parts of the state, where nearly all nineteenth-century logging focused on the removal of a single species. Studies of the impact of logging in the western Great Lakes, New England, and the Pacific Northwest have given us some idea bout how the selective logging of pine reduced forest diversity, in part by altering the seed sources available for forest regeneration. It is difficult to speculate what the diverse timber trade of the islands meant for individual forest stands, much less for the region as a whole. On any island or forest stand, in any season, loggers probably did remove single species—for the tanbark trade, for example, or in search of oak for barrel staves. But from stand to stand, from island to island, there was a great deal more diversity in timber removals, which suggests different conditions for forest regeneration. What this means for the composition of the modern island forests remains unclear, but this does mean that our models for forest growth after logging need to be revised.[24]

Although the island forests supported a far more diverse logging industry than in other regions of the state, white pine still stood out as the single most important forest tree species in the Chequamegon Bay timber trade. But pine logging in the Apostles also contained subtle differences from mainland operations. In the era before railroads, lumbermen floated each season's cut of pine to the mills along the Mississippi, Black, La Crosse, Wisconsin, and other rivers. The great log drives along the rivers remain one of the most vividly remembered and romantic aspects of the nineteenth-century logging frontier. Lumberjacks stamped their logs with

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[24] See, for example, Clifford E. Ahlgren and Isabel F. Ahlgren, "The Human Impact on Northern Forest Ecosystems," in *The Great Lakes Forest*, ed. Flader, 33-51; Forest Stearns and Gene E. Likens, "One Hundred Years of Recovery of a Pine Forest in Northern Wisconsin," *American Midland Naturalist* 148 (July 1992): 2-19; D. A. Orwig and M. D. Abrams, "Impacts of Early Selective Logging on the Dendroecology of an Old-Growth, Bottomland Hemlock-White Pine-Northern Hardwood Forest on the Allegheny Plateau," *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society* 126 (July-September 1999): 234-44.

their company's log mark, or brand, and dumped their season's cut into the river along with that of every other outfit at work in the same watershed. When the millions of board feet of sawlogs arrived in the mill towns, logs were sorted according to their marks to ensure that each mill received its share.[25]

In the Chequamegon Bay, however, this type of booming operation was almost completely absent. Loggers piled their cut on the island banks or on the near-shore ice in the late winter, and tied them into rafts when the ice melted. Steam tugs then towed the rafts directly into the mill, without the need for any type of sorting operation. Nor were booming and sorting operations frequently required in mainland operations. The short and shallow rivers that drained the Bayfield Peninsula and Chequamegon Bay never carried the tremendous number of logs transported by the rivers at the center of the state. Often a single logging operation had the whole river to itself. Furthermore, Bayfield had only one major mill—obviating the need for any extensive sorting operation. Ashland, often a destination for island timber, had more mills and did have the booming facilities required for log sorting if necessary.

The logging industry developed differently in the Chequamegon Bay than it did elsewhere in the Northwoods. The mills on the bay never reached the same size as did those in

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[25] There is a voluminous literature on the logistics and lore of the pine era in the northern Great Lakes. See, for example, Malcolm Rosholt, *The Wisconsin Logging Book, 1839-1939* (Rosholt, WI: Rosholt House, 1980) and *Lumbermen on the Chippewa* (Rosholt, WI: Rosholt House, 1982); Raney, "Pine Lumbering in Wisconsin"; Ruth Stoveken, "The Pine Lumberjacks in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 30 (March 1947): 322-34; Raleigh Barlowe, "Forest Policy in Wisconsin: Prelude to a Conservation Policy," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 26 (March 1943): 261-79; Robert F. Fries, "The Founding of the Lumber Industry in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 26 (September 1942): 23-35, and "Mississippi River Logging Company and the Struggle for the Free Navigation of Logs, 1865-1900," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 35 (1948): 429-48; George Corrigan, *Calked Boots & Cant Hooks: One Man's Story of Logging the North* (Ashland, WI: Northword, Inc., 1976); Paul W. Gates, *Wisconsin Pine Lands of Cornell University: A Study in Land Policy and Absentee Ownership* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1943); John E. Nelligan, *White Pine Empire: The Story of a Lumberman* (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 1969); George W. Sieber, "Wisconsin Pine Land Logging and Logging Management," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 56 (1967-68): 65-72; Robert W. Wells, *"Daylight in the Swamp!": Lumberjacking in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978).

Eau Claire, Oshkosh, and the other major milling towns, in part because the watersheds draining into Lake Superior covered a much smaller area—and had many fewer trees—than did those in the center of the state. But the geography and accessibility of the island and lakeshore forests guaranteed the mills of the Chequamegon Bay a far more diverse timber trade than elsewhere in the state.

But then, every place developed a little differently. The advantages of access offered by the islands could be found on other Lake Superior and Lake Michigan shorelines. Hemlock, fuel wood, and hardwood found their way to market in other places, too. Some rivers hosted large log drives, others did not. Some towns developed large and thriving milling industries, while others did not. In each place, in each time, local ecological and geographic conditions integrated differently with the expanding market. Only by paying attention to these local intersections can we fully understand why logging occurred as it did, where it did, when it did—not just in the Apostles, but anywhere.

Uncovering the local details of island logging operations has a larger significance, as well. When James Chapman established a fuel wood station on Oak Island, he did more than simply fill a niche in the Chequamegon Bay's frontier logging industry. He also represented the beginning of a process with a long legacy for the environments of the Apostles—the integration of human and natural processes. Both human and natural conditions made Chapman's activities possible. The station flourished because of its location on a steamship route, the commercial trade of the growing cities on Lake Superior's south shore, and Chapman's ability to advertise in the local newspapers. But Chapman needed the hardwoods—the preferred source of fuel—that grew on Oak Island's hilly, well-drained, terrain. And he needed the ravines on the island to help

move logs to the shore, where they cut and stacked in preparation for sale to passing steamships. Neighboring York Island, also located on the steamship route, never hosted a fuel wood station—its low and swampy conditions and different forest composition made it a far less suitable location. Natural and cultural processes came together to make Chapman's Oak Island station feasible. Once joined, these processes would never separate. Chapman's logging activities permanently altered the character of the Oak Island forests. In each of the logging operations around the islands—and everywhere else—the human processes of technological innovation and market expansion intertwined with natural processes represented by geography or forest composition.

The R.D. Pike Company and the Maturation of Bayfield's Logging Industry

As the logging industry of the Chequamegon Bay matured, it lost its distinct character. The topography of the islands did not change, of course. But the organizational and technological innovations that transformed every aspect of the logging industry in the nineteenth century provided lumberjacks the ability to overcome the obstacles of local geography. These innovations make the local conditions that also shaped logging more difficult to trace, but they did not diminish their importance.

The expanding operations of Bayfield lumberman Robinson D. Pike mark the transition from a frontier, locally-driven industry to one tied to regional and national markets. Pike's developing business followed a path similar to logging companies elsewhere in the Great Lakes. His mill exemplifies the technological and organizational revolutions that accelerated the pace of logging in the Great Lakes states over the last half of the nineteenth century. And yet, the

organization of the R. D. Pike Company, and the way that the lumberjacks in its employ logged the forests of the Chequamegon Bay, differed subtly from similar operations elsewhere.

No single place more powerfully represents the meeting place of extra-local economic factors with the local environments of the Apostle Islands than Pike's Bayfield mill. Pike received his logs from every corner of the Bay—from both the islands and the mainland. Trees of every species arrived at his mill in the form of sawlogs, but left in the form of shingles, railroad ties, and all other manner of finished lumber. These commodities were at once natural and cultural, and became so in Pike's mill, and in the camps that supplied it.

Robinson D. Pike, the son of one of Bayfield's earliest residents, shepherded the transition of Bayfield's logging industry from a purely local concern to one of a national scale. In 1866, Pike purchased a small, water-powered shingle mill that had been erected in 1860 on a creek several miles south of Bayfield. By 1869, he had moved his equipment to Bayfield. He immediately began to expand the capacity of his mill and the extent of his logging operations. Pike erected a planing mill in 1871, and purchased a steamer to help secure a steady supply of logs. This small beginning provided the nucleus of Bayfield's logging industry, and Pike became Bayfield's single most important businessman.[26]

A visitor walking down Bayfield's main street in the late nineteenth century would have seen the products of Pike's mill at every turn. Indeed, Pike kept a running advertisement in the *Bayfield County Press* that announced: "R. D. Pike, Manufacturer of and Dealer in Lumber, Shingles, Pickets, Lath, Beveled Siding, And Every Kind of Dressed Lumber; I keep constantly on hand a Large Stock of Seasoned Lumber, Dressed & Undressed." If nineteenth-century

[26] Andreas, *History of Northern Wisconsin*, 82, 85; quote from Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 207; Twining, "Logging on the Apostle Islands," 13-14.

Americans lived in a world made of wood, R. D. Pike sold just about every type of wood product. Bayfield continued to grow through the end of the century, and growing towns required wood—guaranteeing a steady local market.[27]

But from the very beginning, Pike also supplied the national market. Before the arrival of the railroad in 1883, Bayfield's position the Lake Superior shipping lane guaranteed access to markets all over the Great Lakes. Pike shipped to lumberyards in Buffalo and Tonawanda, New York, as well as other eastern destinations. Chicago, too, provided an important market. Few cities matched Chicago for its constant, insatiable demand for wood. After receiving lumber by boat, Chicago retailers sent it westward via rail to the wood-starved prairies.[28]

Pike also shipped his products directly west, without going through Chicago. After 1870, he connected with western railroads at Duluth. The arrival of the Omaha Road in Bayfield in 1883 eliminated this intermediate step. In August 1885, for example, Pike shipped 75 carloads of lumber directly to Missouri. Many large Wisconsin and Minnesota mills developed their own western retail trade, opening lumberyards along the constantly spreading railroad network. Pike never took this step, but did ship finished lumber west when such a move made financial sense.[29]

The trunks of every forest tree species traveled through Pike's mill. Cedar shingles served as one of Pike's most important early products, for both the local and national markets. Pike produced oak staves used by the town's coopers to make fish barrels. He sold maple, oak, and other hardwoods both locally and nationally. He purchased the hemlock logs felled in the pursuit

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[27] For an example of the advertisement, see BCP, May 23, 1885.

[28] BCP, October 29, 1887, and June 23, 1894; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 60-84; Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 93-105.

[29] BCP, August 8, 1885; Vogel, *Great Lakes Lumber on the Great Plains*.

of the bark trade, most likely converting them into railroad ties. Pike took full advantage of the unusually diverse timber trade of the Chequamegon Bay. Nevertheless, white pine still stood as the most important species in Pike's timber trade.[30]

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the logging industry of the Chequamegon Bay lost much of its distinct character. Rapid industrial expansion and technological innovation combined to even out local discrepancies in the logging trade. These trends provide two of the most common themes in the voluminous literature on the nineteenth-century lumber industry.[31] In their analysis of technology and economic organization, however, most scholars overlook the local factors that continued to shape patterns of logging not just in the Chequamegon Bay, but everywhere.

Annual Production at R. D. Pike's Sawmill[32]	
Year	Mill Capacity
1870	300,000 ft.
1878	2,280,000 ft.
1883	7,000,000 ft.
1885	10,000,000 ft.
1887	12,553,880 ft.*
1888	11,090,656 ft.
1892	18,000,000 ft.
1895	11,000,000 ft.
1896	15,000,000 ft.
1897	20,000,000 ft.
1898	28,763,000 ft.
1899	35,843,293 ft.

[30] BP, October 13 and December 10, 1870 and January 5, 1872; BCP, October 15, 1881.

[31] These themes are constant throughout the historiography on logging. See, for example: Williams, *Americans and their Forests;* Fries, *Empire in Pine;* Cox, *This Well-Wooded Land*; Twining, *Downriver*.

[32] *Industries of Bayfield*, 16; Twining, "Logging the Apostle Islands," 14, 25, 29; BCP, December 3, 1887, December 8, 1888, January 24, 1893, November 14, 1896, December 10, 1898, December 30, 1899, and September 9, 1954. *This is the number of feet the mill had produced as of December 3, but it had not yet closed for the season.

Pike's mill serves as an example of the economic and technological transformation of the nineteenth-century lumber industry. None of Pike's records survived, so statistics on the production of his mill are spotty, primarily culled from newspaper reports and the occasional comments of outside observers. Pike's first mill in Bayfield had a capacity of ten thousand board feet of lumber per day, and only produced 300,000 board feet during the year.[33] Additions and expansions had an immediate impact on production, and by 1878 the mill produced 2,280,000 board feet. The mill sawed 7,000,000 feet in 1883, topped 11,000,000 in 1888, and peaked at 18,000,000 feet in 1892. The nationwide financial panic of 1893 sent midwestern lumber markets plummeting, and R. D. Pike did not escape the depression. In 1895, production dropped to 11,000,000 feet. But Pike recovered rapidly. In each of the last three years of the century, Pike's mill set production records, churning out over 35,000,000 feet of lumber in 1899.

Although never one of the largest mills in the state, the R. D. Pike Company's production measured up well against other Wisconsin lumbermen. The company's 1887 production placed it in a category with twenty other mills around the state producing between ten and twenty million feet of lumber. Eighteen other Wisconsin mills produced more, and ninety-three less. Over the next decade, Pike's output declined relative to his Wisconsin colleagues. In 1897, when Pike's

[33] The actual size of a mill like Pike's is easily obscured by statistics such as board feet, especially when those statistics climb to figures as high as thirty-five million. The "board foot" corresponds to a piece of wood that is one foot long, one foot wide, and one inch thick. Single trees often produced an impressive amount of wood. One forest giant felled on the shore of the Bayfield Peninsula in 1891 measured 4,599 board feet. Lumberjacks cut the trunk of this particular tree into four sections, and two limbs produced two logs each. At Pike's mill, these six logs were then sawed into one-inch thick boards. An average sixteen-foot sawlog produced 500-1,000 board feet of lumber. So when the newspaper reported a daily cut of 10,000 feet, this meant perhaps twelve sawlogs, taken from only three or four trees. But tree size did not remain constant; it decreased as the industry matured. In the more established logging regions of central Wisconsin, pine trees brought to the mill in the 1870s averaged only three hundred board feet. Cut lumber is also occasionally measured in cords: 128 cubic feet, or a stack of wood measuring 4x4x8 feet; one cord is the rough equivalent of 500 board feet. BCP, February 21 and 28, 1891; Twining, "Logging the Apostle Islands," 12; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 70. The 4,599 foot log brought to Pike's mill in 1891 scaled as follows: first log, 1,068 ft.; second log, 923 ft.; third log, 800 ft.; fourth log, 710 ft.; limbs, 404 ft., 210 ft., 107 ft., and 107 ft.

mill sawed twenty million board feet, thirty-three mills produced more. The following two years, however, Pike increased the output at his mill significantly.[34]

Advances in both technology and industrial organization propelled the dynamic expansion of the lumber industry through the late nineteenth century. Increasing scale and efficiency, in both the forests and the mills, transformed virtually every aspect of the industry. Even axe handles received a makeover, as straight handles gave way to more efficient, curved ones. Steam haulers and mechanized ice road sprinklers made log transport more efficient. Technology in the mills advanced apace. Frame, or muley, saws gave way to circular saws and then band saws, each change increasing the speed and efficiency of the mill and decreasing the amount of waste material. Power sources transformed, too. Water driven mills gave way to steam engines of increasing power. Engineers perfected systems of moving logs around the mill complex and feeding them directly to the saws with a minimum of labor. Many of these technological revolutions originated in the forests of New York, New England, or Michigan, and migrated along with the rest of the industry to the Wisconsin pinery.[35]

R. D. Pike applied these technological innovations in his Bayfield mill. Continual expansion and renovation marked his four-decade tenure on the Bayfield waterfront. Although his first mill ran on waterpower, he quickly upgraded to steam. His initial expansion in 1870 and 1871 added a planing mill and muley saw, and he soon upgraded to a circular saw. By 1888, his

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[34] Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 154. Pike could not even claim to be the largest milling operation on Chequamegon Bay. The large Chicago firm of Bigelow Brothers operated a mill at Washburn that cut twenty-seven million feet in 1892 and nearly forty-seven million feet in 1895. Several of the Ashland mills topped Pike's output, too, including the Shores Lumber Company and the Keystone Lumber Company. Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry*, 468-69; BCP, November 9, 1889.

[35] There is a vast literature on these subjects. See, for example, Williams, *Americans and Their Forests* and Fries, *Empire in Pine*.

mill still ran a single circular saw, but he had increased its efficiency considerably. Pike undertook a major renovation in 1893. That year, he organized his mill as a stock company and used the resulting capital to add a band saw, overhaul his other equipment, and double the capacity of the mill.[36]

The railroad altered the logging industry more than any other technological change. Although lumbermen had experimented with iron tramways in the woods as early as 1852, railroads did not come into widespread use until the late 1870s. The first logging railroads appeared in Wisconsin in the 1860s. Railroads changed everything from the location of the mills to the site and season of the logging to the type of tree cut. The railroad hauled small portable mills deep into the forest; logs could be roughly cut and then transported by rail for finishing elsewhere. Rail transportation opened swaths of forests previously inaccessible for their distance from navigable watercourses. Even the season of logging operations changed. Bogs, hills, and windthrow made summer movement of logs virtually impossible, so until the late nineteenth century almost all logging took place in the depths of winter, when ice and snow eased the skidding of logs. Once loggers brought railroads into the heart of the forest, the need for winter logging declined. By the 1890s, lumberjacks routinely worked the summer season. Railroads also solved the transportation dilemma presented by hardwood species that did not float, profitably bringing oak, maple, and birch to market. Entire forests already stripped of pine regained their value, and new markets for previously useless trees developed around the country.

[36] BP, April 15 1871; BCP, July 7, 1888 and January 24, 1893.

Logging in other parts of the western Great Lakes began to more closely resemble the diverse trade of the Chequamegon Bay.[37]

And yet, the railroad meant much less in the Apostle Islands than it did elsewhere. Loggers already cut hardwoods and hemlock without the aid of railroads, due to the access to island forests offered by Lake Superior. Even after 1900, Pike used horsepower alone on Oak Island, a source of timber large enough to employ five camps over the course of nearly a decade. It made little financial sense to transport rails and engines to the smaller islands whose forests would only withstand a season or two of intensive logging. Railroads played a role in logging only on Michigan Island and Outer Island, and even there not until the 1920s, when timber exhaustion around the state increased the value of remnant stands. Local geography and industry-wide technology merged to shape the specific patterns of logging in any one place.

Different conditions applied in the mainland forests of the Bayfield Peninsula. As soon as they were able, Robinson Pike and the other local lumbermen began using railroads to access interior forests. The Bayfield Transfer Rail Road—all that remained of wheat king William Dalrymple's grand visions for Bayfield as a central railroad depot—emerged as an important logging railroad, carrying carloads of timber from the peninsula forest to the Bayfield mills. Railroads eventually reached virtually every corner of Ashland and Bayfield Counties; Ashland County alone boasted 717 miles of track by the time the forests there were exhausted in the 1940s. Geography continued to modify the application of technology.[38]

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[37] Williams, *Americans and their Forests*, 211-16; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 34, 88; Rosholt, *Wisconsin Logging Book*, 67; James P. Kaysen, "Railroad Logging in Wisconsin," in *Some Historic Events in Wisconsin's Logging History*, ed. Hernandez, 39-44.

[38] Kaysen, "Railroad Logging in Wisconsin," 40; Rosholt, *Wisconsin Logging Book*, 78-79.

Technological innovation propelled equally radical transformations in the economic organization of the lumber industry. Railroads, band saws, steam haulers required, above all, financial capital. As the logging industry grew in scale and efficiency, it also became more corporate. Changing patterns of land ownership throughout the Great Lakes region reveal this revolution in industrial organization. After investing so heavily in milling technology, mill owners needed to ensure a continual supply of logs for their mills—otherwise, they paid interest on loans secured to build idle mills. Mill owners purchased increasing amounts of timberland and stumpage rights. As in other industries, these forces drove the lumber industry toward monopoly. Throughout the Great Lakes region, small-scale mills disappeared; larger, corporate operations flourished. A small number of lumbermen—often called the "Lumber Barons"—dominated the industry on the strength of organizations integrated both vertically (controlling all aspects of production, from woods work to the sale of finished lumber) and horizontally (centralized control of a specific type of operation, such as log booming and sorting).[39]

Mill owners had a variety of methods of ensuring a steady supply of sawlogs. They often owned extensive timberlands, and ran the lumber camps that supplied logs to their mills. Sometimes, however, mill owners did not own the land itself, but only the right to harvest timber—the stumpage rights. And the mill owners did not necessarily run their own camps; they often hired contractors, called "jobbers" to fell timber and deliver logs. Such arrangements usually worked in the favor of the landowner or mill owner, because the jobbers assumed all financial risks, furnished their own equipment, and provisioned their own camps. Finally, mill owners purchased significant amounts of timber from small, independent loggers with whom

[39] Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 216, 219-221.

they had no other direct connections. Farmers or other small landowners who needed to clear their land anyway often sold the cut to the local mill. The specific method in which a mill owner acquired his annual supply varied from year to year.[40]

R. D. Pike relied on all of these methods to supply logs to his Bayfield mill. He owned extensive timberlands, including almost all of Oak Island, where he ran a series of lumber camps throughout the 1890s. Pike also owned the majority of Outer Island. He purchased extensive stumpage rights on the Bayfield Peninsula. Pike ran several mainland camps but also hired jobbers to cut his timber holdings on the Bayfield Peninsula. And he regularly purchased the sawlogs cut by small landowners and other independent loggers.[41]

One of Pike's timber acquisitions in 1886 reveals a significant increase in the scale of logging on the Chequamegon Bay. That year, Pike teamed with St. Paul financier E. F. Drake to pay $690,000 for the stumpage rights to 300,000,000 board feet of standing timber in the central Bayfield Peninsula from the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Omaha Rail Road. The *Press* reported it as the largest timber sale in the region's history, and commented that "the enterprise is an important one for Bayfield Co., and will add greatly to the industry of the city." Pike hired jobbers to log the newly-acquired timber. The deal also illustrates the continuing importance of extra-local sources of investment capital to the extractive industries of the Chequamegon Bay.[42]

It was in the smaller purchases, however, that Pike's mill looks most different from mills elsewhere. Land ownership patterns in the Chequamegon Bay differed from those in other parts

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[40] Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 35-37; Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 64-65.

[41] Andrew Tate to William Dalrymple, January 3, 1873, Box 3, Folder 4, Dalrymple Papers; BCP, October 15, 1881, February 6, March 6, October 30, and November 20, 1886, December 17, 1892; Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 56.

[42] Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 56; BCP, March 6 and February 6, 1886, and January 19, 1889.

of the region. Small, independent landowners and contract jobbers found the forests of the Apostle Islands particularly attractive. Island geography minimized the cost of transporting cut logs; none of the trees were far from water. Loggers did not have to build roads or tramways, construct large dam works to assist river drives, or remove river obstacles like rapids and waterfalls—expensive and time-consuming activities all. Low transportation costs made island logging especially attractive.

The size of many of the islands also worked in the small loggers' favor. On the larger islands like Oak, Outer, and Stockton Islands, a single company owned either most of the island outright or had purchased stumpage rights and conducted logging operations there for several years at time. Pike ran his camps on Oak Island for ten years, for example, allowing him to minimize the costs of constructing camps and moving his equipment on and off the islands. On smaller islands, though, where a season or two of concerted logging removed most of the merchantable timber, it made more sense to hire contractors. Smaller islands also made logical investments for independent logging firms. Jobbers cut the timber from Bear, Ironwood, Basswood, Sand, Manitou, Wilson's (now called Hermit), and Cat Islands. The forests of most of these smaller islands ended up in Pike's mill.[43]

The Stockton Island Dilemma

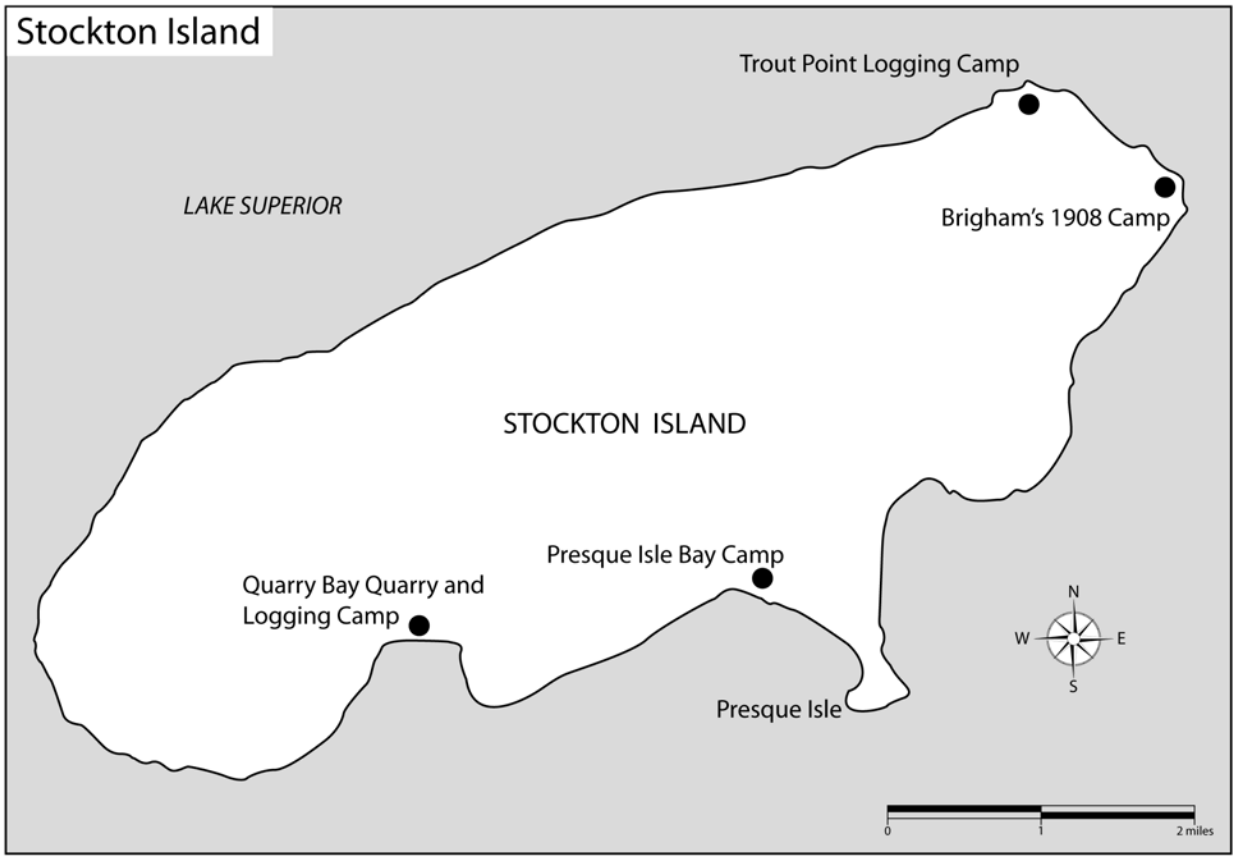
John H. Knight and William F. Vilas had a dilemma. They had purchased lands on Stockton Island, fifteen miles northeast of Bayfield, as a speculative investment in the 1880s, and

[43] The small logging operations of contract jobbers are hard to trace with any certainty. The local press, though, usually commented on the existence of these efforts, if nothing else. See, for example: BCP, April 7, 1883, December 20, 1884, October 23 and 30, 1886, November 18, 1889, December 17, 1892, May 25, 1901, May 20, 1903, May 11, 1906, and March 29, 1907.

they had to find a way to make the investment pay. Should they sell only the stumpage rights, and retain ownership of the land for possible future development? Should they sell the island's prime pine timber alone, or find a way to package the pine with the less marketable hemlocks and hardwoods that dominated the island forest? While Knight and Vilas sought to answer these questions, both tax bills and the threat of forest fire mounted.

Timberland owners everywhere faced a similar dilemma. The logging history of Stockton Island—called Presque Isle or Presquisle Island in the nineteenth century—provides the opportunity to consider how the decisions of individual landowners shaped the economic development and environmental transformation of a specific place. It took lumberjacks forty years to clear the forests of Stockton Island, working intermittently from the early 1880s until 1920. Their actions reveal how the intersection between cultural factors such as the market price for lumber and state tax policy as well as natural factors like forest composition, geography, and fire risk determined when and why logging occurred as it did. These factors merged on the ground at Stockton Island, as they did in subtly different ways everywhere.

Map 3: Stockton Island. Map by Joel Heiman



The pre-logging forests of Stockton Island, of course, followed the general patterns of forest composition found elsewhere in the region. At slightly over 10,000 acres, Stockton is the largest of the islands today included in the national lakeshore. (See Map 3.) The island consists of a patchwork of different ecosystems. Low clay bluffs dominate the island. Sandstone outcroppings emerge on the southwestern corner of the island, at Presque Isle Point on the southernmost tip, and as steep and rugged bluffs along the northeast shore. The island's most distinctive feature is a tombolo—a low sand deposit that connects once-separate Presque Isle Point to the rest of the island. The tombolo deposits enclose an extensive lagoon. When GLO surveyors visited Stockton Island in 1857, they recorded a forest particularly rich in hemlock

covering 80 per cent of the island. Yellow birch was also prevalent. The remaining 20 per cent of the forest consisted of sugar and red maple in well-drained uplands, marshes, lowland cedar-fir forests, and a few areas dominated by the coveted pine species. White and Norway/Red pine grew in the areas with the driest, sandiest soils, such as those along the east side of the tombolo lagoon and the north side of Quarry Bay.[44]

The surveyors who visited Presque Isle in 1857 noted two important natural resources on the island: white pine and fishing grounds. They were less impressed with the land itself. "General Remarks: There is but little good land in this Township. The greater part being a very inferior quality. There is some good White Pine on Presque and Hemlock Islands," recorded deputy surveyor P. Allen Barber in his field notes. "Its principal importance, is derived from the facilities it affords the carrying on the fishing business, the bays on Presque Isle are a favorite grounds for fishermen…" As they conducted the survey, Barber and his team recorded general observations of the landscape. "Surface rolling….Timber Hemlock, Pine, Birch & Maple. Undergrowth Balsam & Cedar," reads their description of the interior forest north of Quarry Bay, a typical entry for the island's forest cover. Although the observations of the field surveyors cannot provide an accurate reading for the composition of a specific patch of forest, they can convey a narrative picture of what the surveyors encountered in 1857.[45]

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[44]Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, Surveyors Field Notes, 1832-1865, notes for T52N, R2W and T51N, R2W, Series 701, Reel 2, vol., 19; Frederick and Rakestraw, "A Forest Type Map of Pictured Rocks and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," 24; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island," 112; R. K. Anderson and C. J. Milfred, *Inventory of Select Stockton Island Resources for Recreational Planning* (Stevens Point, WI: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 1980), AINL Library, 66-69; Albert M. Swain and Marjorie Winkler, "Forest and Disturbance History at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Park," *Park Science* 3 (Summer 1983): 3-5.

[45] Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, Public Land Survey Field Notes, Notes for T52N, R2W and T51N, R2W.

Despite the surveyor's valuation of timber and fishing grounds, the sandstone outcroppings at Quarry Bay, on the island's south shore, provided the first major extractive use of the island's resources. As the cut stone industry of the Chequamegon Bay boomed in the early 1870s, entrepreneurs began searching for likely quarry sites. They found one on Stockton. The Duluth, Minnesota firm of Willard, Mercer & Company contracted to supply three hundred cords of sandstone to repair the breakwater at Ontonagon, Michigan. The company began work at Quarry Bay in the spring of 1871. Even a small-scale quarry such as this one required land clearing and lumber for the construction of buildings, docks, hoists, and other equipment. Although there is no way to determine the extent of logging in the 1870 and 1871, the quarry was the first extractive use of the island's resources.[46]

Stockton Island's distance from the mainland protected it from the earliest logging efforts. Lumberjacks entered the forests on near shore islands in the 1870s, culling the tallest, straightest pines growing close to the shore. As these easily reached trees became harder to find, loggers moved to the outer islands. Although harder to reach by boat and more exposed to the lake's violent weather, the Stockton Island shoreline was still easier to log than the interior of an in-shore island. By the 1880s, pine-seekers had reached Presque Isle.

William King, a local logging contractor, set up a camp on the island in 1884. For the next several years, King high-graded the white pine from the most accessible points on the island. Although no evidence remains to indicate the location of King's camp, two of the island's most extensive areas of pine forest—behind Quarry Bay on the south shore and near the tombolo lagoon on the southeast corner—were easily accessible from the water and are the most likely

[46] BP, December 10, 1870 and June 10, 1871.

sites. The *Press* reported that King had found pine logs of unusual size and quality: "He is getting some very nice logs, having one lot of 190 that scaled at 103,675 feet." At these measurements, King's Stockton Island pine logs scaled nearly twice the size of the average log sawed in other Wisconsin mills. Each winter in the mid-1880s, King banked about 300,000 board feet of lumber. In the spring, he towed the rafts of pine to Pike's Bayfield mill.[47]

It is difficult to trace the ownership of the land and stumpage rights on Stockton Island because many of Ashland County's early tax rolls are incomplete or have been destroyed. King might have been logging land that he owned outright. More likely, however, he had purchased the stumpage rights to the island's pine, or he worked on a contract for the landowner. In the mid-1880s, John H. Knight and William Vilas began to acquire land on the island as a speculative venture. Knight and Vilas—or their heirs—owned most of Stockton Island for the next seventy years.

John H. Knight and William Freeman Vilas were partners in land investments all over northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. The two had attended law school together in New York in 1858, and they maintained a correspondence. In 1873, Vilas—a rising star in the Wisconsin and national Democratic Party—took a vacation tour of Lake Superior. His trip included a visit with Knight in Bayfield and a sail around the Apostles. Shortly thereafter, Knight and Vilas began to invest in northern Wisconsin timberlands. Knight had arrived in Bayfield in 1869 to serve as the federal Indian agent. He soon engaged in a variety of business activities, including real estate

[47] BCP, June 7, 1884, November 7, 1885, and February 20 and March 20, 1886.

management and speculation, hotel management, and quarrying. He also served as the registrar for the Bayfield Land Office from 1871 until 1885.[48]

Vilas and Knight made a potent team. Vilas, with his political and business connections, had access to far more capital than Knight. Knight's multiple business interests and his position in the land office provided information that the partners used to invest in timberlands around the region. Knight culled tips and information on the location of choice timber tracts from the registrants who came through his office, and used the knowledge to acquire good land for Vilas. The pair became among the largest landowners in northern Wisconsin.[49]

Knight and Vilas's investments became the subject of intense investigation by Wisconsin newspapers, led by the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Registrars could legally purchase public lands until 1892, but Knight almost always purchased lands in Vilas's name. Knight himself paid the taxes on these investments, using money provided by Vilas. Vilas's political enemies tried to use these suspicious investments to political advantage, and scandal dogged the partners throughout the rest of the century.[50]

While these investigations found nothing illegal, they did reveal that Knight and Vilas had made some incredibly lucrative investments. Between 1881 and 1885, Knight made nearly fifty purchases in Vilas's name at the Bayfield land office, paying $17,634 in cash for 8,854 acres of timberland—an average price of $1.99 per acre. In 1881 and 1883, Knight and Vilas

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[48] Vilas served as a Wisconsin state senator in 1885, and became the national chairman of the Democratic Party in 1886. President Grover Cleveland appointed him Postmaster General in 1885 and Secretary of the Interior in 1888. Vilas served as a Wisconsin senator from 1890 until 1897. Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas*, 11, 27-29; Larson, *Chequamegon Bay*, 216.

[49] Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas*, 11, 27-29.

[50] Horace Samuel Merrill, Vilas's biographer, attributes the scandal-mongering by the *Milwaukee Sentinel* to Vilas's political enemies, and points out that the investigations produced no evidence of wrongdoing by either Knight or Vilas. Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas*, 27-29.

sold 480 acres of this land to timber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser for $15.62 per acre. In 1887, the partners sold another 1,062 acres for a similarly high price. Knight and Vilas extended their investments beyond mere speculation, incorporating the Superior Lumber Company in Ashland in 1881. They built a mill in Ashland in 1882, and at times logged over ten million feet of lumber per year before selling the mill in 1889 and disbanding the company.[51]

Knight and Vilas acquired a large portion of their timberlands—including those on Presque Isle—at tax auction. If a private landowner failed to pay their taxes for a period of several years, county governments reclaimed the lands and offered them at auction. The high bidder paid delinquent taxes and acquired title to the land. Knight's position in the land office helped here, too, providing information on which sections of land would be soon up for sale. The scattered and incomplete Ashland County tax rolls do not reveal the previous owners of Stockton Island, but the correspondence between Knight and Vilas indicates purchase of the island at tax auction. By 1890, the two men owned 6,015.46 Stockton Island acres, and they continued to expand their island holdings over the next decade.[52]

More than just timber, however, lured Knight and Vilas to Stockton Island; the quarry site attracted their attention, too. In the mid-1880s, with Chequamegon Bay quarries booming once more, Knight established the Ashland Brown Stone Company. John Knight used his connections with the Wisconsin Central railroad—where he served as the local attorney in

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[51] Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas*, 27-29; Roy N. Lokken, "William F. Vilas as a Businessman," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45 (Autumn 1961): 32-40; BCP, January 16, 1886; Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 226.

[52] Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 161-78; Paul W. Gates, "Frontier Land Business in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 52 (Summer 1969): 306-27; Ashland County Tax Rolls, 1880, 1890, 1900, Ashland County Series 4, WHS; John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, June 6, 1889, Box 9, Vilas Papers. Tax rolls from 1859-1870 have no information on Stockton Island land ownership; presumably no individual owned or paid taxes on the land. From 1870 on, records only exist for every tenth year. The 1880 tax rolls—the earliest indication of ownership of Stockton Island—show some taxes levied but not paid on Stockton Island lands, but do not list the names of landowners.

Ashland—to secure the contract to supply stone for the construction of a new train station in Ashland. The quarry opened in 1886 and produced 25,000 cubic feet of cut stone, with plans for expansion. "This stone business is growing into a most important and valuable industry," Knight wrote to Vilas. Even as production continued at the quarry, Knight made clear to Vilas that his interests in the quarry were purely speculative. "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." Knight sold the company to a firm based in Chicago. The new owners dramatically increased production at the site, shipping 285,000 cubic feet in 1895, before suspending operations in 1897. Like the quarries elsewhere in the region, changing architectural styles and construction techniques eventually made Presque Isle stone unmarketable.[53]

New activity at the quarry spurred a second round of logging on Presque Isle. The quarry site lay just to the west of one of the island's best stands of white pine. The quarry served as a base for logging operations all over the southern part of the island in the 1890s. Lumberjacks culled the white pine from forests otherwise dominated by hemlock and yellow birch. Some of this timber went to supply the needs of the quarry for the construction of docks and scaffolds. Most of it, however, went to the Bayfield mills. The connection between quarrying and logging on Stockton Island reveals the importance of local concerns in dictating when and where logging occurred. Without a potentially lucrative quarry, patterns of land ownership and logging would have developed differently.[54]

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[53] Eckert, *The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region*, 204, 223; John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, July 25, 1891, Box 11, Vilas Papers; BCP, January 7, 1888.

[54] Jeffrey J. Richner, "An Archeological Evaluation of the Trout Point Logging Camp," (Lincoln, NE: National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center, 1986), 8; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island," 53.

As quarrying operations picked up, Knight and Vilas tried to determine how best to dispose of the rest of their Stockton Island holdings. They had the choice of either selling the land outright or simply selling the stumpage rights. In June 1891, Knight hired timber scaler John O. Day to travel to Presque Isle and estimate the amount and quality of the timber there. Day estimated that the island contained less than three million feet of pine. Knight had hoped for more, but the high-grading operations of William King in the 1880s had taken out some of the best timber. What the island lacked in pine, however, it made up for with hemlock. But unfortunately for Knight and Vilas, hemlock was worth considerably less than pine. Knight figured that they could receive at least $4.50 per thousand feet of pine, but doubted that hemlock would yield more than $1.50 per thousand feet. Still, he had high hopes for a sale that would bring a significant profit. "I think if we can [get] 50 or 60 thousand dollars for the Presque Isle Lands … we ought not hesitate to sell," he advised Vilas in 1891.[55]

Knight and Vilas knew that holding timberlands presented a serious financial risk. The longer they held onto the lands without cutting them, the more taxes they paid. Wisconsin's tax system did not make it easy to hold on to timberland. The combination of institutionalized tax policy and prevailing opinions about land use created a set of incentives for quick, rash, and wasteful logging of the Wisconsin forests. Throughout the nineteenth century, Wisconsin taxed landowners on the value of the standing timber on their property. This meant that the longer they held the land, the more times they had to pay taxes on the timber before they realized any profit

[55] Given the estimated amount of timber and Knight's predictions of price, the timber on Stockton was not worth the asking price of $50,000. Three million feet of pine, at $4.50/1000 feet meant $13,500; ten million feet of hemlock at $1.50 meant $15,000, for a total value of $28,500. Knight was discussing the sale of the land outright, however, not just the sale of the stumpage rights. John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, July 25, 1891 and August 5, 1891, Box 11, Vilas Papers.

from logging. "[T]hus the tax encouraged landowners to realize what they could sooner rather than later, adding to other pressures to present over future preference in getting yield from the forest," explains the preeminent legal historian, James Willard Hurst. These tax policies rested on two widely shared but contradictory ideas. On the one hand, Wisconsinites believed for most of the century that the state's pineries held a virtually inexhaustible supply of wood. At the same time, most people thought that the best use of forested land lay in clearing it to make way for grain-producing farms, a process well underway in fertile southern Wisconsin. These beliefs, as well as the financial imperative caused by high taxes, forced timberland owners like Knight and Vilas to pay more attention to short term advantages of logging than the long term consequences of wasteful and inefficient logging practices.[56]

Knight found the tax obligations on Stockton Island particularly onerous. "In regard to the Ashland Co. taxes which are so outrageous… payment of such taxes for a few years takes all there is of the lands." Over the ten-year period from 1890 to 1900, only limited logging took place on Stockton Island, so Knight and Vilas recognized very little financial return in their investment. Their tax obligations, however, mounted each year, averaging $405.77 on Stockton Island alone. They paid an estimated $4,057.70 in taxes on lands with an assessed value of $7,186.96. The mounting tax burden pressured Knight and Vilas to find a buyer for their land or to hire someone to log the island for them.[57]

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[56] James Willard Hurst, *Law and Economic Growth: The Legal History of the Lumber Industry in Wisconsin, 1836-1915* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1964); for a condensed version of Hurst's arguments, see Hurst, "The Institutional Environment of the Logging Era in Wisconsin," in *The Great Lakes Forest*, ed. Flader, 137-55, quote on 148.

[57] John H. Knight to William K. Vilas, January 28, 1895, Box 23, Vilas Papers; Ashland County Tax Rolls, 1890 and 1900. The tax figures were arrived at as follows: In 1890 the Knight and Vilas owned 6,015.46 acres, valued at $6,610, on which they paid $308.60 in taxes (average value of $1.10/acre, average tax of $.051/acre). In 1900, they owned 7,739.48 acres, valued at $7,650.60, on which they paid $520.61 in taxes (average value of $.99/acre,

Forest fires also threatened the investments of timberland owners like Knight and Vilas, and encouraged the sale of stumpage rights as quickly as possible. Fires decimated the Great Lakes forests throughout the lumbering era. Loggers behind left piles of slash—branches, small trees, and other refuse—when they finished their work. As slash piles turned to bone-dry kindling, even the slightest spark could ignite a potentially catastrophic blaze. And there was no shortage of sparks—lightning, passing locomotives, steam powered sawmills, campfires, and land-clearing operations by local farmers all generated a constant risk of fire. George Hotchkiss, one of the first chroniclers of the Wisconsin logging industry, estimated in 1898 that as much Wisconsin timber had been destroyed by fire as had reached a commercial market. He suggested a staggering total of 110 billion board feet of lumber lost to the flames.[58]

Changing fire regimes were among the most important of the logging-induced ecological transformations in the Apostle Islands. Prior to logging, fire in the islands was a rare occurrence. Mature northern hardwood-hemlock forests—like those that clothed Stockton—were damp and relatively fire resistant. They also had a relatively limited base of downed wood to serve as fuel. The rare fires induced by lightning or other causes were small in size and low in intensity. The lake offered further protection from fire. Government Land Office surveyors made no mention of fire scars in their work in the islands in the 1850s. Logging changed these conditions. Removal of the forest canopy opened the understory to the drying influence of the sun, and the piles of slash left behind by loggers provided fuel. The quarries, fish camps, and ongoing logging

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average tax of $.067/acre). Since tax records for intervening years have been destroyed, I averaged annual value and tax rates (average value of $1.045/acre, average tax of $.059/acre) and applied these to the average number of acres owned, 6,877.47.

[58] Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest*, 641; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 105, 247.

activities provided no shortage of sparks and made fire a constant danger. While fire had been a rare occurrence in the Apostles, fires burned almost all of the islands after logging.[59]

Cognizant of the increased threat, Knight and Vilas hesitated to sell the pine separately from the other timber on the island. Selective cutting for pine increased the risk of fire to the remaining timber. This forced the landowners to weigh the relative costs of the tax burden and the likelihood of a fire. "Cutting the timber will reduce taxes but of course makes it hazardous for the other timber. These chances have to be always taken by the owners of timber & we are no exception. The question is should we sell, and reduce taxation & interest account on investment." The best solution: finding someone to buy all of their Stockton Island land.[60]

Lands rich in hemlock—like those on Stockton Island—presented a particular dilemma for timberland speculators. "…I am at a loss when it comes to dealing in hemlock," complained Knight to his business partner. In 1891, Knight and Vilas had decided to hold off on the sale of their Stockton Island land, waiting for a better price. When the nationwide financial panic of 1893 gutted the midwestern lumber industry, they had little choice but to wait for prices to improve. Even as the lumber industry began to revive in the middle of the 1890s, hemlock timber still had little value. Chicago lumber merchants paid $6.50 per thousand feet, but at that price it did not pay to provision a camp, pay wages, transport logs to the mill and then deliver them to Chicago. Still, Knight and Vilas hoped that their Stockton Island investment would pay off. The key lay in attracting a tannery to Bayfield, and with it a steady demand for hemlock bark. "[T]he

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[59] Anderson and Milfred, *Inventory of Select Stockton Island Resources for Recreational Planning*, 93; Robert B. Brander, "Environmental Assessment: Natural Resources Inventory and Management, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin," (Bayfield: National Park Service/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1981), 50; Swain and Winkler, "Forest and Disturbance History at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Park," 4.

[60] John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, September 21, 1891, Box 12, Vilas Papers.

man who can use the bark, can, the way I figure it, get $.50 to $1.00 per 1000 on the lumber," commented Knight. "Without deducting the cost of felling the trees and making roads for bark, hemlock for lumber has no value."[61]

Rumors of the imminent establishment of a tannery in Bayfield—rumors that had been circulating almost since the founding of the town—convinced Knight and Vilas to hold off on any potential sale. The best thing, Knight explained in 1895, "is to wait the development of the tannery business up here which is sure to accrue sooner or later." Knight's hopes lifted again in 1896, when he learned that the U. S. Leather Trust had decided to build a large tannery in Bayfield. "I do not believe I exaggerate or come up to the figure when I predict that in a very short time we will get over $100,000 for our Presque Isle and 51-4 lands." (Township 51 north, range 4 west, is at the northern tip of the Bayfield Peninsula.) The rumors proved untrue; Bayfield never did secure a tannery.[62]

By the winter of 1896-1897, Knight and Vilas decided that they could no longer wait on the price of hemlock. They needed to earn revenue on their Stockton Island lands; otherwise, taxes drained all value from the investment. Although hemlock prices remained low, pine prices rose consistently as supply dwindled. Despite the increased risk of fire, Knight and Vilas sold a portion of the island's white pine to a Detroit lumberman. This was not a big transaction—Knight and Vilas earned only $3,500—but it allowed the partners to continue to pay taxes while they waited for a more lucrative deal.[63]

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[61] John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, May 13, 1895, Box 24, Vilas Papers.

[62] John H. Knight to William F. Vilas, May 22, 1895, Box 24, and July 31, 1896, Box 29, Vilas Papers.

[63] J. F. Van Dooser to William Freeman Vilas, December 9, 1896, Box 31, and September 16, 1897, Box 33, Vilas Papers.

Finally, in 1905, Vilas found a buyer for the rest of the Stockton Island timber when he leased stumpage rights to the Milwaukee-based John Schroeder Lumber Company. Schroeder had purchased a large Ashland mill in 1901, and like mills everywhere, the company needed to secure a steady supply of sawlogs. Schroeder purchased land along both shores of Lake Superior, as well and land and stumpage rights to timberland around Chequamegon Bay. The company logged on the Bayfield Peninsula near Bayfield, north of the town at Red Cliff and Sand Bay, and on Oak Island. Much of this land Schroeder acquired from R. D. Pike, who had begun selling the lands from which he had stripped the pine. Schroeder also acquired stumpage rights on Michigan Island and Outer Island. And in 1905 the company secured a lease for "all trees and timber of every kind and nature" on Stockton from William Vilas (John Knight had passed away in 1903). Vilas had finally found someone to buy the Stockton Island timber.[64]

The John Schroeder Lumber Company, however, did not immediately begin logging its newly acquired Stockton Island timber, focusing on its other timberlands first. But with taxes mounting (Schroeder acquired the tax burden along with stumpage rights), the company hired jobbers to begin removing the island's hemlock and hardwood. The Boutin-Johnson Lumber Company secured the first of these contracts in the winter of 1906-1907, employing a crew of forty lumberjacks to cut several million board feet of lumber. Elisha K. Brigham secured the contract the following year.[65]

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[64] Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 1-10, 54, 65-78; Angus L. White, *A History of John Schroeder and the John Schroeder Lumber Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin* (Lanesboro, MN: Forest Resource Center, 1990), 1-8, 13, 16-17; W. G. Nohl and H. Rettinghouse, comp., *Map of Ashland County, Wisconsin, 1905* (New York: W. G. Nohl, 1905).

[65] BCP, October 26, 1906; Wisconsin Lumber Inspectors, District 11 Miscellaneous Record, Log Marks, 1875-1925; Other Records, 1893-1927, Records of the Wisconsin Lumber Inspectors, vol. 1, Box 8, WHS, 160, 166, 168; Nohl and Rettinghouse, comp., *Map of Ashland County, Wisconsin, 1905*, 33.

Elisha Brigham's financial woes provide an opportunity to investigate the scale of logging on Stockton Island between 1907 and 1909. Plagued by debt, Brigham was forced to sell his entire Stockton Island logging outfit to the J. B. Mathews & Company. This included:

Elisha Brigham's Stockton Island Logging Outfit, 1909	
1 pair bay geldings (Tom, 12 years, and Sam, 9 years, weight 3,400)	2 set big wheels (10 ½ feet)
1 pair black and tan geldings (Nig, 10 years, Barney, 11 years, weight 3,200)	Rafting outfit including 3 200# anchors, tie chains and boom chains
9 logging harnesses	1 camp cooking range
120 pair camp blankets	1 large camp heater
4 sets logging sleighs complete	Cooking outfit for 60 men
6 pair big drays	1 dozen crosscut saws
1 water tank, and sleighs with heater	1 outfit carpenter's tools
1 big road cutter	1 blacksmith outfit complete, forge and tools
2 lumber wagons	general camp outfit for 8 teams and 60 men
	1 tow chain for all purposes.

Brigham's outfit provides several clues about the nature of his Stockton Island logging. At sixty men, Brigham managed a camp that was large by island standards but smaller than many mainland camps and far smaller than the camps that the Schroeder Company would soon establish on the island. The use of sleighs, water heaters, and a water tank indicate a predominantly winter operation. (Loggers used the sleigh-mounted, heated tanks to sprinkle the roads with water, which then froze and made for easier overland transport of cut logs.) The rafting outfit, anchors, and towing chain reveal that Brigham cut at least some pine. Although hemlock logs do float and were occasionally transported as rafts, both hemlock and hardwood were usually loaded onto barges or scows for transport. Finally, Brigham's outfit remained fairly simple, technologically speaking. By 1908, lumberjacks commonly used railroads, steam haulers, tractors, and other heavy equipment. The difficulties of getting such equipment to the

islands, however, meant it remained more efficient to rely on horse teams. Island logging remained different from similar-sized operations carried on elsewhere at the time.[66]

The Schroeder Company established its own camps on Stockton Island in 1911. The company's management contemplated constructing a railroad on the island, to facilitate access to the interior of the island. Although it did not build a railroad, the company did significantly increase the scope of logging activity on Presque Isle. In 1911, Schroeder established four camps on the Island, at Quarry Bay, Presque Isle Bay, Bluff Top Clearing, and Trout Point. (See Map 3.) Each of these camps employed as many as one hundred men, and Schroeder often had more than three hundred men on the island. This represented a far larger operation than anything else in the islands up to that point. In 1915 alone, Schroeder removed ten million board feet of hemlock and hardwood from the island.[67]

Why had Stockton Island's hardwood and hemlock stands finally become worth the trouble of logging, forty years after the inception of the lumber industry in the Chequamegon Bay? By 1900, lumberjacks had stripped the pine from virtually all of the forests in the region—only hemlock and hardwoods remained. The ever-spreading network of railroads provided a way to get hardwood to mills in quantities not possible when river drives and log rafts had been the only means of transportation. This, in turn, helped generate a market for previously unmerchantable species. Hardwoods like maple, beech, and oak replaced softwood as the preferred wood for flooring. Hardwood flooring lasted longer, and was easily constructed from the trimmings left over from the production of furniture, interior paneling, or musical

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[66] Wisconsin Lumber Inspectors, District 11 Miscellaneous Record, 168-69.

[67] BCP, October 6, 1911 and March 12, 1915; AP, February 17, 1914; Richner, "An Archeological Evaluation of the Trout Point Logging Camp," 8, 10.

instruments. The advertising and sales techniques of Northwoods lumbermen helped create a market for hemlock, too; they tried to convince lumber buyers that northern hemlocks provided the best substitute building material for the vanishing white pine. Other uses were more industrial in nature. Hardwoods became an important source of the charcoal that fired the iron smelters along both shores of Lake Superior. Pulpwood provided the most important new use for hemlock stands. Pulp mills in central Wisconsin turned hemlock, paper birch, aspen, and jack pine into paper. With the development of these new markets, the hemlock and hardwoods that remained on Stockton in 1912 increased in value.[68]

The shift from pine to hemlock and hardwood, of course, occurred throughout the Great Lakes. White pine production peaked in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota in the early 1890s, and then began a steady and unremitting decline. Even as the total production of white pine dropped, pine still dominated the total cut. In 1897, hemlock accounted for only 10 percent of the softwood cut in the lake states. But by the mid-1890s, hemlock and hardwoods increasingly displaced white pine. By 1920, hemlock and hardwoods combined to form 88 percent of Wisconsin's total cut. All over the region, mills that had cut only pine turned to hemlock and hardwood, instead.[69]

The transition from pine to hemlock and hardwoods occurred at Robinson D. Pike's Bayfield mill, although Pike did not live to see the shift—he died in 1906. Henry J. Wachsmuth replaced Pike as Bayfield's leading lumberman when he bought Pike's mill and much of his

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[68] Lynn Sandberg, "The Response of Forest Industries to a Changing Environment," in *The Great Lakes Forest*, ed. Flader, 195-219; Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 114-15.

[69] Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*, 222-28; Randall Eugene Rowe, "Lumbering/s Impact on the Landscape of the Wolf River Area of Northeastern Wisconsin," (MA Thesis, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1971), 4; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 240-41.

timberland. Wachsmuth ran the business in the same way as his predecessor, refitting and expanding the mill every few years, cutting as much as forty million feet of lumber in 1911. But with white pine virtually gone from the Chequamegon Bay, Wachsmuth focused on other tree species, particularly hemlock. Like Schroeder, Wachsmuth benefited from the emerging markets for these different types of wood.[70]

The shift away from pine was but one of many changes transforming the lumber industry at the end of the nineteenth century. The size and scale of lumber camps increased apace with the mills. Mid-nineteenth-century lumber camps—often called "State of Maine" style camps—were small and primitive, housing less then twenty-five lumberjacks, and often only ten to fifteen. As logging transformed into a larger, more industrialized operation, the size of camps expanded. By the 1880s, a typical "State of Michigan" style camp housed sixty to one hundred men, or even more. A bunkhouse, cookhouse, blacksmith's shop, barn, and wanigan (camp store) were erected at each camp, with more common finished goods like wood stoves and cooking stoves. While hardly the lap of luxury, these camps were far more comfortable than those of the previous decades.[71]

The Schroeder camps on Stockton Island reflected this transformation. Schroeder conducted eight years of extensive logging on the island, using typical "State of Michigan" style camps. The company established its largest camp at Trout Point, on the northernmost point of the island. Archaeological evaluations in the 1980s reveal the Trout Point camp as among the largest

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[70] Henry J. Wachsmuth, interview by Frank Kelley, Bayfield, WI, September 14, 1955, tape in WHS; Rosholt, *Wisconsin Logging Book*, 262-65; BCP, March 20, 1903, November 15, 1907, March 24, 1911, and August 27, 1924.

[71] Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 27; White, *A History of John Schroeder and the John Schroeder Lumber Company*, 12; Rosholt, *Wisconsin Logging Book*, 82-83; Corrigan, *Calked Boots & Cant Hooks*, 28-50; Stoveken, "The Pine Lumberjacks in Wisconsin."

on record in the islands. The Schroeder Company erected eight buildings on the site, including a kitchen with attached root cellar, a dining hall, two bunkhouses with space for 56 lumberjacks each, a tool shed, and a camp office/store. Schroeder began transporting men and provisions to the camp in December and took them off the island in April. Lumberjacks worked six days a week, from five in the morning until dark, with little free time.[72]

Although typical in these ways, the Trout Point camp stands out as one of the last of its kind. When logging on Stockton ceased, Schroeder abandoned the large winter sleigh-based operations for more mechanized logging driven by the technology of the railroad. Mainland logging camps made this transition many years earlier. The water access that distinguished other island logging retarded the process of technological transformation in the Apostles. Nationwide industry trends were applied differently in each place, depending on local conditions.

The Schroeder Company modified other standard camp practices to make logging practicable on Stockton. As camp sizes grew, it became more and more difficult to supply them with provisions to last through the winter. Lumbermen elsewhere, of course, faced this problem. Many, including R. D. Pike, ran dry goods retail businesses to complement their logging operations. Others simply incorporated the production of food into their vertically integrated logging operations, running extensive farms to help provision their camps. Schroeder used steam tugs to carry men and supplies from Ashland to its Stockton Island camps until ice closed navigation, and then sent horse teams over the ice from Bayfield. Still, providing fresh food for the lumberjacks was a constant problem.[73]

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[72] Richner, "An Archeological Evaluation of the Trout Point Logging Camp," 81-96; Kate Lidfors, "Historic Logging Sites in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: A Resource Management Plan," (1984), AINL Library.

[73] Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 47-49.

In 1915, Schroeder partially solved the provisioning problem by purchasing two hundred head of cattle in St. Paul, shipping them by rail to Ashland and from there ferrying them out to Stockton and Oak Islands before turning them loose to fend for themselves. "They will be fattened this summer and butchered when necessary for the camps, probably next winter. It will cost nothing to herd them… The Schroeder people have had several hundred hogs running wild on Stockton Island and the animals requiring very little feed, and furnishing fresh pork the year round for the camps." Two years later, Schroeder turned 569 cattle loose on Stockton Island. The company acquired other supplies from local farmers. In few other places could whole herds of cattle be left to fend for themselves until needed to supply the lumber camps.[74]

Releasing unrestrained livestock into the woods was a typical practice during the colonial era, but far less common in the nineteenth-century Midwest. The practice had complex environmental consequences, and it is possible to speculate about the impact of the cattle and hogs on the Stockton Island forests. By grazing on understory shrubs and the seedlings regenerating in cutover areas, cattle often helped spread weed species—such as ragweed, which modern pollen and charcoal studies have demonstrated increased on Stockton just after logging. Grazing also encouraged the growth of the woody, thorn-bearing vegetation inedible to cattle. Cattle might also have benefited the regeneration of conifers, which grow from seed, over such trees as oak and birch, which sprout from roots and old stumps and were preferred by cows. Grazing has also been associated with soil compaction, increased water runoff, and other

[74] BCP, April 30, 1915 and November 18 and May 11, 1917.

ecological changes. The fires that swept the island in the 1920s further complicated the impact of grazing on the subsequent regeneration of the Stockton Island forests.[75]

Although ease of access had long marked island logging, Stockton suffered from inaccessibility for several weeks at the beginning and end of winter, when ice closed navigation but remained too thin to guarantee safe travel to the island. This made provisioning the camps a challenge, and also made island work significantly less attractive to lumberjacks. Work in an early twentieth-century logging camp was difficult and dangerous in the best of circumstances. On the islands, the consequences of even a minor injury were exaggerated by the long trip to medical attention. In January 1913, for example, a pile of logs fell on two lumberjacks in one of the Schroeder camps on Stockton. One man suffered a broken arm, the other a broken leg. The camp foreman sent a messenger to Bayfield to summon a doctor, but the trip took four days due to poor ice conditions. The delay caused a short-term strike in the Schroeder camps when many of the lumberjacks quit and left for town, "not caring to work in a place, where if injured, it would be difficult to secure medical attention." The loggers returned to work when the ice solidified, but a fatality in the camp a few months later exacerbated he situation. The following season, Schroeder hired a doctor to serve on the island at the beginning and end of the season.[76]

After eight years of extensive activity, in 1920 the Schroeder Company shut down its logging camps on Stockton, the timber resources of the island exhausted. The company moved

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[75] Swain and Winkler, "Forest and Disturbance History at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Park," 4. For a discussion on the impact of free-roaming cattle on the forests of colonial New England, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 143-47; David R. Foster and Glenn Motzkin, "Interpreting and Conserving the Openland Habitats of Coastal New England: Insights from Landscape History," *Forest Ecology and Management* 185 (November 3, 2003): 127-50; A. J. Belsky and D. M. Blumenthal, "Effects of Livestock Grazing on Stand Dynamics and Soils in Upland Forests of the Interior West," *Conservation Biology* 11 (April 1997): 315-27.

[76] BCP, January 10 and 24, 1913 and February 6, 1914.

its men and teams to nearby Michigan Island, but there faced entirely different conditions. Michigan Island's exposed location on the southeastern edge of the archipelago meant that it could not be logged in the winter—solid ice never formed between the island and mainland, making transportation of men, equipment, and supplies dangerous, if not impossible. So Schroeder built a railroad that ran the length of the island to cut the previously inaccessible timber—the first use of the railroad in the Apostles, over a half century later than on the mainland. When Schroeder finished logging on Michigan in 1923, the company tore out the tracks and moved them to Outer Island, which was similarly inaccessible to winter logging.[77]

The Schroeder Company had purchased only the stumpage rights to Stockton Island, so it simply abandoned the island once the trees were gone. The dilemma of what to do with Stockton—and its tax burden—returned to the landowners. With the timber gone, the most preferable scenario was to put the land into agriculture or orchards. "It is a question as to what will become of this island," commented the *Bayfield County Press*. "Will it lie unproductive or will some further use of its natural resources be made? ... If the 11,000 acres on the island were divided up into eighty acre plats it could support 180 farms." No one questioned the island's capacity to support productive agriculture. The pattern of logging succeeded by farms had been followed throughout New England, across the lake states and into southern Wisconsin, and remained the great hope for the cutover lands across northern Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. "Grass and clover grows luxuriantly there and the soil is productive enough to support all of Ashland County with produce. Not one foot of the ground is under cultivation at

[77] Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 59-61; White, *A History of John Schroeder and the John Schroeder Lumber Company*, 12-15; BCP, June 6, 1919.

the present time." The *Press* further reported that 3,000 acres on the island would be immediately put up for sale.[78]

John Knight and William Freeman Vilas, however, did not have to wrestle with the question of what to do with Stockton Island. Knight had died in 1903 and Vilas in 1908. Their descendants inherited the Stockton Island dilemma. The two businessmen would not have been happy with subsequent developments on the island, however. Farms, orchards, and ranches did not replace the logging camps as sites of commercial production; in fact, no one again used the island as a base for resource extraction. Fires soon swept the island, fueled by piles of slash left behind by the Schroeder lumberjacks. Stockton Island became a wasteland, nothing more than a drain on taxes. Or so it seemed at the time. As forests on the island regenerated in the ensuing decades, they grew as well a new kind of value—as a place for recreation and ecological study, as a wilderness. This transformation will be the focus of Chapter Six.

John Knight and William Vilas's Stockton Island dilemma demonstrates the integration of national, local, and even personal actors in the economic and environmental transformations of specific landscapes. Industry-wide technological innovation and economic organization continued to set the parameters for the decisions of individual landowners like Knight and Vilas. But when it came to the decision of when to start logging the island, Knight and Vilas had to weigh such elements as tax policy, market price, forest composition, and fire risk. These factors came together in ways subtly different from other places. The choices made by Knight and Vilas—to purchase the land in the first place, to hold off on initial logging, to lease the stumpage

[78] BCP, February 27 and July 2, 1920.

rights rather than to sell land outright—further tied together the human and natural processes simultaneously at work on Stockton Island.

The Political Geography of the Chequamegon Bay Logging Industry

Politics shaped these intertwined natural and cultural processes, too. If species composition and water access determined which parts of the forest lumberjacks entered first, political boundaries determined which areas they avoided. The creation of lighthouses to aid in the Great Lakes shipping trade established a series of reserves among the islands and prevented logging of some of even the most accessible islands. The Ojibwe reservations at Bad River and Red Cliff—and the different histories of the two reservations—further shaped logging in the region. The political geography of nineteenth-century logging in the Apostles has had a long shadow. The areas logged—and the areas unlogged—played an essential role in determining which lands would be included in the national park established a century later.

The federal government established its presence in the Apostle Islands prior to the settlement of Bayfield in 1856. In 1853, anticipating an increase in shipping traffic in the western Great Lakes with the construction of the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, the government began planning for lighthouses in western Lake Superior. In 1854, the U. S. Light House Board decided to erect a lighthouse on the tip of Long Island to help guide ships into the protected waters of Chequamegon Bay, and constructed its first lighthouse in 1858. The shipping trade increased as expected, and the government soon established lighthouses on several of the other islands: Raspberry Island, 1863; Michigan Island, 1869; Outer Island, 1874; Sand Island, 1881; Devils Island, 1891; and Long Island/Chequamegon Point, 1893. The lighthouses emerged as one of the

most distinctive features of the Chequamegon Bay. They served not only as aids to navigation, but also as centerpieces of the nineteenth-century tourist trade. Surprisingly, they also played an important role in the forestry history of the Apostles.[79]

With the construction of each lighthouse, the U. S. Light House Board reserved a plot of land at each station. Lighthouse keepers and their families had access to this reserve for fuel wood, but commercial logging was not permitted. These reserves were often quite small: 77 acres on Michigan Island, 111 acres on Sand Island, and 240 acres on Outer Island. But on some of the smaller lighthouse islands, like Raspberry (295 acres) and Devils (320 acres) the government reserved the entire island. Keepers and their families lived on the islands during Lake Superior's shipping season—roughly, from March or April through December. Keepers certainly cut trees in the lighthouse reserves—it takes no small amount of wood to keep a house warm through December in northern Wisconsin. But these activities were confined to the areas immediately adjacent to the light stations. The rest of the reserve remained uncut.[80]

The lighthouses of the Apostle Islands have had a lasting legacy. The lighthouses remain the stalwarts of the Chequamegon Bay tourist trade. The reserves created for the use of the keepers and their families today provide some of the best examples of unlogged hemlock-hardwood forest in the Great Lakes region. The lighthouses and their reserves stand as the preeminent cultural and natural resources of today's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

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[79] The first lighthouse in the islands was actually erected on Michigan Island in 1858, where contractors built a lighthouse originally intended for Long Island. The contractors were forced to build another lighthouse, at their own expense, at the correct location on Long Island. The Michigan Island light was shut down, but relit in 1869. *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Facts Book*, AINL.

[80] *Ibid*.

Federal policy also prohibited lumberjacks from working in the Chequamegon Bay's two Ojibwe reservations. The treaty of 1854 created reservations on both shores of the Chequamegon Bay. The Bad River reservation stretches for over 124,000 acres to the south and west of Ashland, including the region drained by the Bad, Marengo, White, and Potato Rivers, as well as a rich ricing area known as the Kakagon Slough. The Bad River reservation also includes a two-hundred acre parcel of land on Madeline Island, reserved during treaty negotiations for use as a fishing ground. The Red Cliff reservation runs north from Bayfield along the shore of the Bayfield Peninsula. The original reservation created in 1854 consisted of only four sections of land, slightly more than 2,500 acres. But the federal government enlarged the Red Cliff reservation significantly in 1863, to roughly 14,000 acres. Both reservations were heavily wooded, and as logging operations around Chequamegon Bay intensified over the second half of the nineteenth century, the timber resources at Bad River and Red Cliff drew increasing attention from the area's lumbermen.[81]

The office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) strictly managed the timber resources on the reservations under its control.[82] The BIA tied its timber policy to its larger goal of assimilating Native Americans into mainstream American society by training them to become farmers. Indians were not allowed to sell reservation timber, and were only allowed to clear land for agricultural purposes. In the 1870s, the BIA began to allot the Ojibwe reservations; that is, the division of tribal lands into individual ownership, again with the goal of assimilation through

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[81] U. S. Congress, House, *Message of President on Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Lake Superior Chippewa Indians*, 48th Cong., 1st sess., 1883, H Exec. Doc. 12, serial 2193.

[82] Originally called the Office of Indian Affairs or the Indian Office, the agency will be referred to by its modern name, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or the BIA.

training in agriculture. Even as the ownership of reservation land shifted into private hands, the BIA retained tight control over the ability of individual Indians to sell the timber on their land.[83]

As the logging industry in the Chequamegon Bay region expanded in the 1870s, the Indian agents stationed in the region strayed from the strict interpretation of this policy and initiated a small-scale logging operation on the Red Cliff reservation. Under the direction of Agent S. N. Clark, residents of the Red Cliff reservation cut several thousand cords of wood, ten thousand rails and fence posts, and three hundred thousand board feet of lumber. Clark hoped to clear land and provide fencing for agricultural purposes, but also to earn money for the Indians by selling the timber at a profit.[84]

I. L. Mahan succeeded Clark as agent for the La Pointe Agency, and he expanded the logging operations at Red Cliff. The BIA erected a small mill on the reservation, and in 1874 Mahan expanded the dock and constructed booming facilities to aid in shipping cut lumber, and also built a cooperage, a carpenter's shop and a boarding house for the men employed at the mill. Mahan pressed the boundaries of the federal policy that limited the sale of Indian timber to that which fostered agriculture, but he rationalized that the Red Cliff residents needed the money to supplement their meager incomes. The Red Cliff mill cut approximately eight thousand board feet per day, with a seasonal cut of over 250,000. At this capacity, the reservation mill produced only slightly less finished lumber than did R. D. Pike's Bayfield mill during the same period.[85]

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[83] Anthony Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations Under the Great Lakes Agency* (Minneapolis: U. S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1996), 24-25.

[84] BIA 1871 Annual Report, 600-601.

[85] BIA 1874 Annual Report, 26-27, 188; BP, August 12 and October 21, 1871.

Despite its similar capacity, the Red Cliff mill functioned quite differently than did Pike's mill. In the heart of its first season, for example, the reservation mill shut down for several days while its workers traveled to Bayfield to receive the annuity payments owed to them as a result of the 1842 and 1854 treaties. And when it came time to receive compensation for their labor, Indian lumberjacks and mill workers did not receive cash—as did white workers—but rather received their wages in the form of goods and provisions.[86]

A second difference lay in the priorities of the mill owners. Pike ran his mill with the simple goal of making money. Indian Agents Clark and Mahan, on the other hand, hoped to use the experience of working in the mill as a way of teaching industrial skills to residents of the Red Cliff reservation. "All this work they did themselves without oversight or supervision of any kind, and it was all well done," proudly reported Clark in 1871, after the first year of logging. Learning these skills and entering the wage economy would gain importance after 1875, the agents believed, when the Ojibwe received the last of the annuity payments owed to them. Clark and Mahan were just the first of the Indian agents and timber industry representatives to use this type of paternalistic logic as a justification for selling Indian timber; versions of the same argument would be repeated many times over the next half-century.[87]

Although the Chequamegon Bay timber trade continued to grow, an important shift in federal Indian policy halted logging on the Red Cliff reservation. The treaty of 1854 had provided the president with the authority to assign reservation lands to family heads at his discretion, and in 1876 the Red Cliff band became the first of the Wisconsin Ojibwe to have their

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[86] BP, September 23, 1871.

[87] BIA 1874 Annual Report, 188; BIA 1871 Annual Report, 601; Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 27.

lands allotted. As they prepared to shift tribal lands into individual ownership, BIA officials stopped all logging on unallotted land. Logging operations on the Red Cliff Reservation through 1875 had taken place on land held communally by the tribe; these activities ceased with allotment. And although thirty-one eighty-acre parcels were allotted in 1876, a delay in processing the patents held up the transfer of these lands, forcing the suspension of all logging activity on the reservation. By 1881, Agent William R. Durfee reported: "The saw-mill built by the government upon this reservation is now in a state of dilapidation and unrepair, and cannot be profitably put into condition for further usefulness."[88]

As the BIA processed allotments, the logging of Indian timber resumed once more. By 1884, over five hundred Wisconsin Ojibwe had received individual patents for eighty-acre plots at the Bad River, Red Cliff, and the Lac du Flambeau reservations. Agent Durfee devised a plan for logging the reservations. Durfee did not want the Ojibwe to simply sell the stumpage rights. While doing so would provide money, Durfee believed that the Ojibwe should receive other benefits from their timber, as well. He established a system that allowed Indians to log three quarters of the timber from their allotted lands, reserving the final quarter as a woodlot for home use. Crews of white laborers would not be allowed on the reservations; the Ojibwe themselves were required to complete the woods work and bank the sawlogs on the riverside or lakeshore for transport to the mill. The purchaser of the logs would be required to pay not just for the cost of the logs, but for the labor spent in cutting them. Durfee explained the advantages of his system:

> it was not to the advantage of the Indian to have all his pine cut off, to sell his stumpage, and get a large amount of money without labor, because he would not know the value of money coming to him in that way and it would soon be

[88] BIA 1881 Annual Report, 180; BIA 1876 Annual Report, 140; Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 28.

> squandered; that all he would have left would be the land covered with stumps and would be in a poorer condition than when he began … [Under this plan the] work would last for a great many years … the younger ones growing up in the community might improve and become self-supporting men…

Although the men who bought the timber might not make as much money from this system, Durfee believed it provided the best use of reservation timber. He viewed Ojibwe timber as a tool for education and assimilation, not just as a financial resource. Durfee received authority for his plan in 1882. By 1883, Ojibwe on the three reservations had signed forty-two contracts for the logging and sale of timber; the size of the contracts ran from 30,000 board feet up to 900,000. By 1884, the number of contracts had increased to eighty-eight, and Ojibwe had promised to bank forty-eight million board feet of lumber.[89]

Although Durfee might have tried to set up the contracts to benefit the Ojibwe landowners, the system was quickly turned to the advantage of the white lumbermen who lived near the reservations. James T. Gregory, who succeeded Durfee as the head of the La Pointe Agency in 1885, disregarded many of the policies established to regulate reservation logging. He allowed the Ojibwe to sell their stumpage rights to white contractors, and freed contractors from the requirement of hiring Indian labor. He permitted the loggers working on the reservations to selectively cut the best timber from individual allotments, leaving the remainder devalued and at significant fire risk. Finally, Gregory allowed the closure of these contracts without the approval of the Washington office of the BIA.[90]

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[89] BIA 1884 Annual Report, p liii-liv; Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Indian Traders, *Chippewa Allotments of Lands and Timber Contracts*, 50th Cong., 2nd sess., 1889, S. Rept. 2710, serial 2624, 1007-1011.

[90] BIA 1887 Annual Report, 229; BIA 1888 Annual Report, xli-xlii, Select Committee on Indian Traders, *Chippewa Allotments of Lands and Timber Contracts*, iii; Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 34.

Gregory's interpretation of BIA timber policies led to a dramatic increase in logging on Wisconsin reservations. In 1887, he reported, "Logging was carried on more extensively during the season of 1886-'87 than ever before. In fact it is very hard to restrain it within proper bounds when once authority is given to commence." From 1882-1885, under Agent Durfee, Wisconsin Ojibwe made 206 contracts for close to 77 million board feet of lumber. With Agent Gregory in charge from 1885 to 1888, these numbers increased to 1,203 contracts for close to 383 million board feet of lumber. The cut on the Bad River reservation alone in 1886-1887 measured over 23.2 million board feet, more than double the amount logged in any previous season.[91]

That Gregory had administered so dramatic an increase in logging was hardly surprising; he had received his appointment at the behest of prominent Wisconsin lumbermen John H. Knight and William F. Vilas. Gregory started work for the Vilas-owned and Knight-managed Superior Lumber Company in 1881, first as a timber scaler and then as the company's bookkeeper. In 1885, Knight asked Vilas—who served at the time as postmaster general while climbing the ranks in the national Democratic Party—to use his influence to appoint Gregory to the position of Indian agent at the La Pointe Agency. Knight and Vilas continued to follow the logging operations on Indian lands. In 1887, Knight wrote to Vilas concerned that the delays in allotting lands on Wisconsin reservations were threatening the investments of their industry colleagues. Knight wanted Vilas to use his influence to grease the wheels of the BIA bureaucracy. "[Local lumbermen] have undoubtedly invested a large amount of money in the project and they are very anxious—indeed much alarmed … if delayed much longer will be very

[91] These statistics cover all of the reservations under the La Pointe Agency, including Red Cliff, Bad River, Lac Court Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, and Fond du Lac (in Minnesota). BIA 1888 Annual Report, xli-xlii; Select Committee on Indian Traders, *Chippewa Allotments of Lands and Timber Contracts*, iii.

hurtful not only to the contractors but to the Indians…. These men are our friends and have been honest and upfront in their dealings with these Indians and if you feel you can help them out by asking the Secy. of the Interior to take the subject up … I am sure that the approval will not be a mistake." The Superior Lumber Company did not hold any contracts for reservation timber. But D. A. Kennedy, an employee of the company, had extensive contracts for Bad River timber, many of them printed on Superior Lumber Company letterhead.[92]

The logging activities on the Ojibwe reservations quickly became the subject of a Congressional inquiry. Several lumbermen from central Wisconsin accused Gregory of favoritism in doling out timber contracts to men like D. A. Kennedy, his former colleague at the Superior Lumber Company, and in March 1888 the Republican-dominated Congress appointed a select committee to investigate allotment and timber sales on Wisconsin Ojibwe reservations. For the second time, Knight and Vilas found themselves embroiled in a scandal over their investments in northern Wisconsin timberlands.

After collecting over 1,300 pages of testimony and documentary evidence, the Congressional committee issued a damning report. It declared findings of "inexcusable neglect of duty" by the commissioner of Indian Affairs and "willful and deliberate disobedience of laws and orders, and gross abuse of official power" by Gregory. The committee further concluded:

> That a plan originally designed to benefit the Indians, by giving them for many years useful employment and reasonable sums of money, while removing from the reservations only trees which could be judiciously spared and leaving the rest suitably preserved and located, has been perverted into a system under which greedy contractors have rushed upon the reservations … [with] contracts practically unlimited as to the number of trees to be cut; … [and has] brought in

[92] Select Committee on Indian Traders, *Chippewa Allotments of Lands and Timber Contracts*, v-vi; Merrill, *William Freeman Vilas*, 141-44; Knight to Vilas, September 26, 1887, Box 9, Vilas Papers.

> swarms of white lumbermen to do the work; [and has] already absolutely denuded the finest timber tracts…

The committee ordered an immediate cessation of all reservation logging until a new regulatory system could be devised.[93]

Modern historians have concluded that the investigations over allotments and logging of Ojibwe lands had more to do with partisan politicking than with Indian welfare. The committee did not find any specific wrongdoing on the part of John H. Knight, and held Vilas responsible in his role as Secretary of the Interior (a post to which he was appointed in January 1888), but not for his connections to the Superior Lumber Company.[94]

Regardless of Knight and Vilas's complicity in these events, the timber scandals on the Chequamegon Bay reservations had a long legacy. The scandals, and the resulting policies, set in motion a process of rapid logging and land alienation on the reservations. The resulting patterns of land ownership—and the climate of distrust created by the scandals—subsequently shaped the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

A strange thing had happened at Red Cliff during the years that Gregory encouraged such widespread logging on the Ojibwe reservations: almost no logging took place whatsoever. The Senate committee investigated all of the reservations under the La Pointe agency with the exception of Red Cliff. Why had Red Cliff been spared the rush of white lumbermen? The government lacked the authority to allot most of the lands in the Red Cliff reservation, and the Ojibwe were only allowed to sell the stumpage rights on lands that they owned individually. The

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[93] Select Committee on Indian Traders, *Chippewa Allotments of Lands and Timber Contracts*, i, vi-vii, 256.

[94] Merrill, William Freeman Vilas, 144-45; J. P. Kinney, *Indian Forest and Range: A History of the Administration and Conservation of the Redman's Heritage* (Washington, DC: Forestry Enterprises, 1950), 23-24.

treaty of 1854 had provided authority to allot the lands in the original four sections of the Red Cliff reservation, as well as on the other reservations created by the treaty. These original four sections were parceled out in 1876. The government lacked the authority, however, to allot the lands on the eleven thousand acres added to the Red Cliff reservation in 1863. Throughout the 1880s, only the thirty-five people who held land titles were allowed to sell their timber. The majority of reservation lands remained untouched.[95]

The delay in allotment at the Red Cliff reservation altered the economics of the logging industry in the Chequamegon Bay. The timber resources at Red Cliff had long attracted the attention of lumberman. The unallotted portion of the reservation stretched north from Bayfield around the edge of the Bayfield Peninsula. Lake Superior provided the same advantages of accessibility and transportation as it did on the islands—felled trees had to be hauled only a short distance to the lakeshore for easy shipment to the mills. In 1874, one estimator noted, "The pine on the reservation averages a good quality... It would require about one mile and a quarter hauling, more or less, down a moderate grade to the water.… No 'driving' is required. The booming facilities are excellent and shipping the same. Altogether I would consider it one of the most favorable points for manufacturing and shipping lumber on Lake Superior." The value of the reservation timber increased with time, as the pine trees throughout the region disappeared. By 1898, when Wisconsin state forester Filibert Roth visited the area, the Red Cliff reservation contained the last large block of uncut pine timber on the Bayfield peninsula.[96]

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[95] BIA 1884 Annual Report, lv; BCP, April 17, 1886.

[96] J.A. Davis to William F. Dalrymple, September 17, 1874, Box 3, Folder 5, Dalrymple Papers; Roth, *On the Forestry Conditions of Northern Wisconsin*, 57.

As the value of the Red Cliff timberlands increased, pressure mounted from all sides to authorize logging. Lumbermen wanted access to the rich pinelands. Red Cliff residents, cognizant of the money being made by Ojibwe on other reservations, demanded the right to receive their allotments and to sell their timber. In 1888, they petitioned to have their lands allotted, under the authority granted to the government by the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887. But due to the ongoing Senate investigation of allotment practices on other La Pointe Agency reservations, the BIA took no action. The agents who succeeded James Gregory at the La Pointe agency repeatedly asked the BIA to hasten the allotment process.[97]

All parties recognized the cost of delay: fire could destroy the valuable pine forests before anyone had earned a penny. "The pine timber should be disposed of without delay, as it is rapidly going to destruction by wind and fire," explained Agent M. A. Leahy in 1889. "Scattered through these reserves are old choppings which are exceedingly inflammable. Fires get into these choppings, great conflagrations ensue and destroy many millions of valuable timber every season." Leahy and his successors issued similar warnings each year in their annual reports.[98]

These predictions came true in 1896. In mid-October, a fire raged through the heart of the Red Cliff reservation, severely burning over seven million board feet of prime pine. The timber in the burned area retained a portion of its value, but only if it was logged immediately. If left to stand for the entire winter and following summer, insects and rot would destroy what good logs

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[97] BIA 1889 Annual Report, 303; BIA 1890 Annual Report, xlix, 239; Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 61; Kinney, *Indian Forest and Range*, 76.

[98] BIA 1889 Annual Report, 303.

remained. But the BIA had still not approved the allotment of tribal lands on the reservation; no logging whatsoever could occur without allotment.[99]

The fire forced the BIA to allot the remaining Red Cliff tribal lands. One month after the fire, the BIA approved the allotment list and directed La Pointe agent W. A. Mercer to devise a plan for the immediate salvage logging of the burned region, as well as for cutting the green (unburned) timber still standing. The entire Red Cliff Reservation—over fourteen thousand acres—now lay in the hands of individual Indians, parceled out to 204 household heads. Agent Mercer and John Buffalo, one of the leaders of the Red Cliff reservation, arranged for salvage logging to begin immediately, using both white and Indian labor. By the end of the winter of 1896-1897, the Red Cliff lumberjacks had banked 7.5 million feet of white pine.[100]

The subsequent logging on the Red Cliff Reservation differed from the operations elsewhere on the Bayfield Peninsula. Agent Mercer devised a plan that mirrored the ongoing logging at other Ojibwe reservations in the La Pointe agency. In the 1890s, in the aftermath of the Congressional hearings on allotment and timber sales, the BIA had developed a system for reservation logging called the "La Pointe Plan." A single contractor purchased the stumpage rights to all timber on the reservation. The contractor faced stiff rules and regulations designed to protect Indian interests. Each individual allottee signed a contract, but with a uniform price for each type of timber. The standardized contracts were much easier to police than the multitude of different contracts used during the 1880s. The plan also required the contractor to erect a mill on

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[99] W. A. Mercer to Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 7, 1896, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Special Cases 1821-1907 [hereafter BIA Archives], Special Case 32, RG 75, Box 33; BIA 1897 Annual Report, 45-46.

[100] Mercer to Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 7, 1896; BIA 1897 Annual Report, 45-46, 313; BCP, January 13 and February 6, 1897.

the reservation, to cut all timber logged on the reservation at that mill, and to give Indians preference in hiring in the mills and camps. The BIA had employed this system at the other Wisconsin Ojibwe reservations since the early 1890s. The BIA began soliciting bids for the 7.5 million board feet of salvaged pine and one hundred million board feet of standing green timber on the Red Cliff Reservation in August 1897.[101]

Duluth lumberman Frederick L. Gilbert won the contract, and his newly formed Red Cliff Lumber Company (RCLC) began logging operations in the early winter of 1897-98. The company cut over eight million board feet of white pine in its first year. By June 1898, the company had constructed a mill on the reservation, as well as a store, a boarding house, additional employee housing, an electrical plant, docks, and wharves. The RCLC cut and milled an average of more than seven million feet of pine over the next five years.[102]

The Red Cliff Lumber Company cut the pine timber on the Red Cliff reservation with unusual speed. The company's lumberjacks were aided not only by the accessibility offered by Lake Superior, but also by railroads. The Bayfield Transfer Railroad and the Bayfield Harbor & Great Western—the remnants of William Dalrymple's plan to control continental commerce—

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[101] Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 61-62; BIA 1897 Annual Report, 46-47. The La Pointe Plan did not end the corrupt practices of white contractors on Ojibwe Reservations. In 1909-1910, the Senate again held hearings to investigate charges of corruption and the misuse of power by Samuel Campbell, agent at the La Pointe agency, and by the Stearns Lumber Company. Stearns was the contractor for the timber contracts on the Bad River reservation. The company paid its white workers in cash, but paid Indian laborers in credit coupons redeemable only at the company store, where food and dry goods were sold at a considerable markup. Campbell retained strict control of the profits that Ojibwe received from the sale of their timber, allowing them each a meager allowance while keeping the bulk of the money—several hundred thousand dollars—in the bank. Campbell funneled thirty thousand dollars of Indian timber money into his own personal account, which he then loaned to the Stearns Lumber Company at little or no interest. Stearns could then use Indian money to purchase more Indian timber. The Red Cliff Lumber Company, like Stearns, controlled the reservation general store, although there is no evidence to indicate whether Frederick Gilbert paid the Ojibwe who worked for him in cash or in credit. See Patty Loew, "Newspapers and the Lake Superior Chippewa in the 'Unprogressive' Era," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin Madison, 1998), 29-37.

[102] G.L. Scott to W.A. Jones, September 7, 1897, BIA Archives, Special Case 32, Box 34, File number 1897: 37057; E. T Buxton to W. A. Jones, June 14, 1898, BIA Archives, special case 32, Box 34; BIA 1896-1902 Annual Reports.

both cut through the Red Cliff reservation. The RCLC built spur lines off these tracks to reach into almost every corner of the reservation, allowing the lumberjacks to cut not just pine but hardwoods, as well. After reaching a peak of 12.3 million board feet (including over ten million board feet of pine) in 1902-1903, the total cut on the Red Cliff reservation plummeted, falling to 5.7 million board feet in 1903-1904.[103]

Despite containing the last large stand of timber on the Bayfield Peninsula in 1896, the timber reserves of the Red Cliff reservation did not last long. After just one decade of intensive logging, very little merchantable timber remained. When the Wisconsin state forester surveyed the reservation in 1905, he reported finding "only a small amount of hardwood and cedar." A 1910 estimate placed the total standing timber at eleven million board feet. What good timber remained on the reservation was found in widely scattered, isolated areas, making it hard to log and decreasing its value. When a fire destroyed the Red Cliff Lumber Company mill in 1906, Gilbert decided not to rebuild; he defaulted on his contract to finish logging all merchantable timber on the reservation. Thereafter, individual Red Cliff residents arranged for the logging of timber on their own allotments, selling each year's cut to mills in Bayfield and Washburn. Loggers continued to remove small amounts of timber, mostly hemlock, from the reservation into the 1920s, with a maximum of 1.5 million board feet in 1920. By 1923, the BIA ceased keeping records of logging operations at Red Cliff.[104]

State power played an important role in the logging of the Chequamegon Bay. It set boundaries that determined where loggers could enter the woods, and where they could not. The

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[103] Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 63-4, BIA 1904-1905 Annual Reports.

[104] E. M. Griffith, *First Annual Report of the State Forester of Wisconsin* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1906), 24; Godfrey, *A Forestry History of Ten Wisconsin Indian Reservations*, 64, 103-107; Wachsmuth interview.

state shaped the logging industry in more subtle ways through its tax policies and land grant subsidies for railroads. Only after most of the trees of the western Great Lakes had been run through the mills did state governments begin to take a more involved role in regulating the logging industry by creating state forests and reserved areas. As we shall see in the following chapters, the state took a far more active regulatory position in the fishing industry, and played a rapidly expanding role in the transformation of the landscapes of the Apostle Islands.

The political boundaries that directed logging around the Chequamegon Bay had a lasting legacy. Following the allotment and rapid removal of the timber from the Red Cliff Reservation, Ojibwe residents were quickly alienated from their land. Once they had sold their timber, the Indian landowners often struggled to pay their taxes, and were forced to sell their lands or watch them be condemned by the county. The resulting patterns of Indian and non-Indian landownership on the reservation played an important role in the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in the 1960s. The lighthouses left their legacy, as well, in the form of the old growth stands inadvertently protected from commercial logging. Local political boundaries had combined with market prices, economic organization, geography, and forest composition to determine when and where lumberjacks entered the woods. The result was a patchwork forest of different ages and types, a forest as much the result of human processes as ecological ones.

The Last Whistle

The forests outside of the Red Cliff Reservation did not last much longer. Elsewhere around the Chequamegon Bay, and elsewhere around the state, mills shut down for lack of wood.

The lumber companies either went out of business or moved their operations to newer, more productive lumbering regions like the Pacific Northwest.

By the turn of the century, lumbermen had already recognized that Wisconsin's timber resources would soon run out. The best white pine had already been culled from most parts of the state. When Filibert Roth conducted his survey of state timber resources in 1898, he noted the imminent decline of the industry. "It is impossible to foretell how long the pine is likely to last. As stumpage increased in price and the opportunity to buy it decreases, one mill after another drops out. Half the mills of twenty years ago are no longer in existence, not because they failed to pay, but because their pine supplies gave out, and this same condition will continue. The output, already on the decline, will grow smaller…" A second survey by the State forester in 1909 reported that 45 to 95 percent of Wisconsin's ten northernmost counties consisted of cutover land, with much of the remainder already culled for pine.[105]

The mills around Chequamegon Bay reflect the trend. The Hines Lumber Company ran one of the largest mills on the bay, in Washburn. When the mill burned down just after the turn of the century, the company chose not to rebuild it, but replaced it instead with a portable mill carried by rail directly to the logging site. By 1905, even that mill ceased to run. "The last stick of timber, owned on Chequamegon Bay by this company, has been cut and they have practically completed all their business in Washburn," explained the local paper. The company moved its base of operations across the country to Oregon. Hines was one of the first to shut its Chequamegon Bay mills, but others soon followed suit.[106]

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[105] Roth, *On the Forestry Conditions of Northern Wisconsin*, 42; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 251.

[106] BCP, November 30, 1905.

The Wachsmuth Lumber Company lasted a little longer. It continued to log the Bayfield Peninsula and some of the smaller islands until the mid-1920s. When the end approached in 1924, the *Bayfield County Press* offered what amounted to an obituary:

> Practically all the large timber on the Peninsula, owned or purchased recently by the company, has been cut and but a few remaining logs in the slip are yet to be sawed up, and the big whistle at the mill will announce the completion of its work … Millions of feet of the best North Wisconsin pine, hemlock and hardwood timber have passed over the great chain to the log deck of the mill during the years of operation here, and Bayfield Peninsula lumber had gone into construction throughout the entire western hemisphere…. we will miss the familiar sound of the big whistle at morning, noon, and night, and the familiar hum of the whirring saws as they cut their way through the logs.

On September 9, 1924, at exactly 7:30 PM, fifty people gathered to watch the last hemlock log go through the Henry J. Wachsmuth Company's Bayfield mill. The plant engineer blew the mill's whistle for nine minutes. That final log provided 410 feet of lumber.[107]

The John Schroeder Lumber Company followed a similar path. When it had stripped Stockton Island of its hemlock and hardwoods, the company moved its employees and equipment first to Michigan Island and then to Outer Island. The company also logged Oak Island from 1917 to 1929. It had 225 men stationed at its Outer Island railroad camp heading into the winter of 1930, with plenty of standing timber still waiting to be cut. But as the Great Depression deepened, Schroeder could not maintain its operations. It closed the Outer Island camp, and the Ashland mill shut its doors soon thereafter. Ashland County eventually confiscated the tax deed on the real estate and personal property at the Ashland mill. Other

[107] BCP, August 27 and September 10, 1924.

logging and milling companies around Chequamegon Bay shut down at the same time, doomed by the combination of dwindling resources and a stagnant economy.[108]

By the 1920s, the landscapes of the Apostle Islands looked much the same as those in almost every other part of the northern Great Lakes forest. The region had come to be known as the Cutover. Stumplands and fire scars had replaced the dense forests that covered the region just eighty years earlier. The seeming uniformity of Cutover landscapes masked important local variations in forest history. In each place, in each part of the northern Great Lakes forest, geography, economics, and politics had come together in different ways to shape local patterns of logging. Human and natural, local and national factors had become tightly intertwined.

Once joined, these factors would not be easily separated. Although the logging industry slowed to virtual halt after the 1930s, the decisions made by lumbermen like Pike, Knight, Vilas, and countless others continued to shape the landscapes of the Apostles. So, too, did the political boundaries established by the federal government and the ecological processes of fire and forest regeneration. The local factors that combined to shape the logging of the Apostles continued to interact with each other even though the logging itself had ceased. Neither the ecological nor the human processes that combined to unwild the islands, however, remained constant. National markets, technology, and local ecological processes remained in constant fluctuation.

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[108] Bell, *Cutting Across Time*, 78; White, *A History of John Schroeder and the John Schroeder Lumber Company*, 36.

CHAPTER THREE
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Stability and Change in the Island Fishing Industry

> The storm signal is flying as the tug goes out—but that is set to warn the captains of the big steamers, not the fishing crew of a little tug. The wind is from the northwest and quite a sea is rolling on the bay. It snows and the temperature is falling. The crew knows they are playing with fate, but they have been taught to laugh at danger…. The wind suddenly shifts to the northeast and in an hour heavy seas are furiously tossing the little boat, but the crew are anxious to save their nets and get a few more fish…. The bow is sheathed with a huge coating of ice and the waves break over the rail, the water rushing on board freezing as it falls. The crew struggle on in this terrible way till the end of the "string" is reached, when the tug makes a rough voyage home, but lands her crew and cargo safely.
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> —"The Herring Fishers: A Night on the Dark Waters of Lake Superior," *Bayfield County Press*, December 10, 1898.

The people of Bayfield did not need the *Press's* dramatized account to remind them of the importance of the herring fishery. The town's commercial fishermen depended on the silvery little fish for their livelihood, and in the late 1890s, the annual herring season marked one of the most important social and economic events on the calendar. In 1896, Bayfield fishermen netted more than 2,500,000 pounds of herring—in just over two weeks. Herring accounted for 44 percent of the local catch in 1899, and Bayfield provided 62 percent of the total Lake Superior commercial harvest that year. When the herring began to run in mid- to late November, the entire town focused on the event. The packinghouses hired additional hands to cope with the tremendous amount of fish. Children left school to earn a few dollars picking nets or to help their parents on the fish tugs. "The money was full of herring scales," remembered one fisherman, because everyone had their hands on herring. Despite its economic and social significance,

however, Bayfield's herring fishery was less than a decade old. In 1890, herring accounted for a mere 6 percent of the local catch, and few children escaped school for such inconsequential work. Fishermen had only turned to herring in response to the seemingly overnight collapse of the whitefish fishery. This type of fluctuation, although not always so quick or dramatic, marks the history of commercial fishing in the Apostle Islands.[1]

Environmental historians like to tell stories of linear change, of a steadily declining resource base or steadily increasing industrialization. This has been particularly true in the limited historical inquiry into commercial fishing. Interpretations of commercial fishing on the Great Lakes and elsewhere fit this linear pattern: the development of ever more efficient fishing technology; the increasingly corporate economic organization of the fishing industry; the collapse of commercial fish populations under the pressure generated by technology and commercialization; the growing control of commercial fishing by an expanding regulatory state.[2] But environmental change—and human reaction to these changes—does not always occur in

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[1] "The Herring Fishers: A Night on the Dark Waters of Lake Superior," BCP, December 10, 1898; Cliff and Harvey Hadland, interview by the author, November 8, 2001, Bayfield, WI, copy in the author's files; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1892; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1902.

[2] Very few historians have looked in-depth at commercial fishing. Those that have tell essentially linear tales: In *Fishing the Great Lakes*, the most in-depth analysis of Great Lakes fishing, Margaret Beattie Bogue explores the gradual collapse of a resource base; in *Farmers & Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), Daniel Vickers traces the transition of New England fisheries into an increasingly capitalist endeavor; Arthur McEvoy, in *The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1950* discusses the restriction of the California fisheries and the extension of state control over commercial fishing. Joseph E. Taylor III, in *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* steps outside of this pattern in his discussion of the contested meanings and uses of salmon in the Pacific Northwest. For the limited work on the Great Lakes fisheries in the nineteenth century, see William Ashworth, *The Late, Great Lakes: An Environmental History* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Tom Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror: The Use and Abuse of the Great Lakes* (Sturgeon Bay, WI: Golden Glow Publishing, 1978); Charles Cleland, "Inland Shore Fishery of the Northern Great Lakes: Its Development and Importance in Pre History," *American Antiquity* 47 (October, 1982): 761-84; John L. Goodier, "Fishermen on Canadian Lake Superior: One Hundred Years," *Inland Seas* 45 (Fall 1989): 284-306; Matti Kaups, "Norwegian Immigrants and the Development of Commercial Fisheries Along the North Shore of Lake Superior, 1870-1895," in *Norwegian Influence on the Upper Midwest*, ed. Harald S. Naess (Duluth: University of Minnesota, Duluth, 1975), 21-34.

such easily charted linear patterns. Technologies, markets, fishing practices, state authority, and underwater environments all existed in a state of flux, and all constantly shifted in reaction to each other. Environmental change needs to be understood not as a narrative of linear incline or decline, but as one of constant action and reaction. Such was the case in the commercial fisheries of the Chequamegon Bay.

As with the lumberjacks' reaction to the local geographies of the Apostles, the response to the fluctuating opportunities of the island fisheries contributed to the environmental transformation of the islands. That this transformation took place underwater and away from easy observation does not make its occurrence any less important for understanding the changing character of the Apostles. The commercial fisheries provide an opportunity to examine the growing connections between human and natural systems, even while both of these systems continued to change in reaction to each other. Fishermen worked within a set of rules determined by both human and environmental conditions. As these conditions changed, the government bureaucrats, scientists, and fishermen involved in the fishery were forced to adapt. Bureaucrats sought to simplify and regulate commercial fishing, scientists sought to repair and reshape the environmental conditions of the fishery, and fishermen explored new fishing techniques and new species of fish. The growing role of the state in regulating the activities of fishermen created an important framework for restricting economic activity that foreshadowed the arrival of the National Park Service and the management of the islands as a wilderness free from the scars of industrial activity.

The Rules of Fishing, 1850-1883

Fishing emerged as one of Bayfield's most important economic activities in the years immediately following the founding of the town. Both natural and human relationships shaped the expanding fishery. Market prices determined which fish the fishermen sought, but fishing techniques and seasons depended on the habits of the fish. Underwater environments and available technology also determined patterns of commercial fishing. All of these factors combined to create a set of rules that governed the actions of the men and women who sought to make a living off the fisheries of the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay.

Despite its early prominence, only scattered evidence of the early island fishery remains. When Methodist missionary James Peet, sent to Lake Superior by the American Home Missionary Society, visited Bayfield in December 1857, he counted twenty-nine fishing boats in the harbor. "They are getting very good hauls I understand," Peet commented in his diary. No records exist to suggest who ate, bought, or sold the fish caught by Bayfield's first fishermen. Much of their catch was certainly consumed locally. Peet, for example, talks of buying barrels of fish directly from the fishermen to provision the school that he ran in town. The balance most likely went east to the copper mines along the western end of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The *Bayfield Mercury* reported in 1857 that several shipments of fish had been sent to cities on the southern Great Lakes, but offered little other detail.[3]

The historical record provides a better picture of the commercial fishery after 1870, when the fishing company N. & F. Boutin transferred its operations from Two Harbors, Wisconsin. Eight Boutin brothers were at the heart of the operation; Nelson and Frank—the N. and the F. of N. & F. Boutin—ran the family firm. The Boutins had migrated from Canada to Detroit in 1837,

[3] BM, August 22 1857; Peet Diary, December 5, 12, and 14, 1857.

and then to Mackinaw Island in northern Lake Michigan. They then moved several times around Lake Michigan, searching for the best fishing grounds. But as the Lake Michigan fisheries declined due to overfishing, the Boutins switched lakes altogether, moving first to Ashland in 1869 before finally settling in Bayfield. The family brought their entire fishing operation: 550 gill nets, 12 pound nets, a variety of small fishing boats, a large schooner named the *Alice Craig*, and over 100 fishermen and their families. They also opened a dry goods store from which they sold supplies to the fishermen in their employ. The move quickly established the Boutins as the Bayfield's single largest employer. (The Boutins also entered the timber trade; fishing was connected to logging and other economic activities in the region in important ways, a subject of Chapter Five.) The firm processed, packed, and sold salted fish. By 1871, they had already shipped 100,000 pounds of fish from their new Bayfield base, and announced plans to expand in the 1872 season. In addition to the Boutins, several smaller dealers worked out of Bayfield.[4]

The Boutins chose Bayfield for a reason—with its bountiful fish stocks, easily accessed fishing grounds, and the protective ring of the Apostle Islands, Bayfield had already earned a reputation as one of Lake Superior's most productive fisheries. The islands provided a particularly good location for catching whitefish (*Coregonus clupeformis*), the most prized of all of Lake Superior's fishes. Broiled whitefish remains today a specialty of the Lake Superior region, and its qualities as a food fish meant that it brought a far higher market price than any other Great Lakes fish. But unlike some of the other freshwater market fish such as lake trout, whitefish are restricted to inshore, shallow water habitats. The Apostles project into the largest

[4] BP, October 13, 1870 April 4 and May 5, 1871; U. S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Family-managed Commercial Fishing in the Apostle Islands during the 20th Century, with Background Information on Commercial Fishing in Lake Superior* (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1985), 13-15.

area of shallow water on Lake Superior, making the islands the premier whitefish grounds on the lake. The deeper waters around Isle Royale and off the north shore of the lake, by contrast, offered good spots for lake trout but not for whitefish. When the Boutins moved to Bayfield in 1870, the whitefish were particularly easy to catch. Whitefish are gregarious, moving in schools as they comb the lake bottom for small fish and crustaceans. Among the Apostles, fishermen usually found whitefish in water between 18 and 64 meters deep, easily within the reach of the nets used in the 1870s. Of course, the Boutins were not alone in taking advantage of the island fishing grounds. In 1880—the first year for which this type of statistic is available—414 fishermen plied Lake Superior; at least 130 of them lived in Bayfield and another 30 in Ashland.[5]

Fishermen sought lake trout as well as whitefish, even though the latter brought a higher price. And the islands provided good trout grounds, too. Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) could be caught off the deepwater ledge that surrounded the Apostle Islands archipelago, a preferred lake trout feeding area. Unlike whitefish, trout did not move in schools, so fishermen spent the summer looking for the spots where they had the best chance of catching individual fish. Fish dealers like the Boutins sent their boats from Bayfield as far away as Isle Royale (over 120 miles) in search of lake trout. In October, however, the trout headed for shallower waters to spawn, and the Apostles were prime spawning grounds. Fishermen depended on these mid-autumn runs to catch trout in large quantities. A subspecies of lake trout, known as the siscowet (*S. n. siscowet*), swims in the deeper waters of the lake. Siscowet are fattier and oilier than other

[5] A. H. Lawrie and Jerold F. Rahrer, *Lake Superior: A Case History of the Lake and its Fisheries* (Ann Arbor, MI: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1973), 44; George C. Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 323-29, 335-40; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 151; "Whitefish—Distribution—Abundance in Places, Lake Superior," Notes and Files of the Joint Commission Relative to the Preservation of the Fisheries in Waters Contiguous to Canada and the United States [hereafter, IJC Notes], Notes by Subject, Lake Superior, 1894, Box 10, vol. C, RG 22, NA, 45.

lake trout—an adaptation to their deeper, colder environment. Although not valued as a food fish, siscowet provided an excellent source of fish oil. Bayfield fishermen could easily catch siscowet, too, by setting their nets beyond the deepwater ledge.[6]

Lake Superior fishermen of the mid-nineteenth century had two primary types of nets: pound nets and gill nets.[7] Pound nets provided a more reliable catch, but required a far greater investment in equipment and significantly more labor. Fishermen set pound nets (also called pond nets) at fixed locations in shallow water, usually between thirty and fifty feet. A straight, long leader guided fish through a tunnel and into an enclosed area called a pot; fish found it hard to escape once so enclosed. Every few days, fishermen entered the pot in a small boat and scooped out the entrapped fish. The key event in the pound net season was the setting of the nets; in the Apostles, this usually occurred in the second half of May. The location of the nets mattered greatly, because once set they could not be easily moved—the nets stayed in place through the summer and sometimes into the autumn spawning season. Pound nets required more capital than other netting technologies, especially in labor costs. A single man could not set posts by himself, but a team of three could set and tend between three and five nets. Additional men could place and tend more nets. Only well-capitalized operations, therefore, could afford to fish in this manner. A federal investigator assessed Great Lakes pound net fisheries in the mid-1880s: "The nature of the apparatus used in pound-fishing and the outlay which it involves make it impossible for men of limited means to engage in it. The industry is therefore largely carried on

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[6] Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 34; "Whitefish—Distribution—Abundance in Places, Lake Superior"; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 13.

[7] Seine nets were popular, too, but only in the early years of the fishery, and fyke nets and dip nets were only used sparingly. Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 38; Smith and Snell, comp., "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," in U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1889, 54; A. B. Alexander, Notes, U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, "Records Concerning Relations with Canada," 1908, Box 3, NA, RG 22.

by men who possess considerable capital and capacity for prosecuting a business of some magnitude." Not until the well-capitalized Boutin brothers moved to Bayfield did pound net fishing become popular among the islands.[8]

But pound nets could not be used everywhere. They could only be employed in relatively shallow water, because fishermen had to drive the posts into the lake bottom. The same process dictated that pound nets could only be used in places with gently rolling, sand- or clay-bottomed portions of the lake. Too rocky a lake bottom meant not enough stability for the nets to survive the repetitive beating of wind and waves. The shallow channels of the Apostle Islands archipelago and the Chequamegon Bay made pound nets a far more popular technology in the Bayfield fishery than elsewhere on Lake Superior. In 1885—the first year for which such statistics were taken—Bayfield fishermen used 124 sets of pound nets, while Ashland fishermen used twenty. Only 86 other pound nets could be found on the entire lake, and only at Duluth and along Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula did fishermen use more than ten.[9]

Gill nets, in contrast, required far less capital investment and could be used almost anywhere on the lake. The fishermen dropped gill nets into the lake, weighing down one end with stone or lead and boosting the other end with floats made of cork or a light wood. They returned to the nets after several days, hauled them in and picked out the fish caught in the mesh by their gills. New nets were then set—in the same location, or they could be easily moved if the fisherman thought he would have better luck elsewhere. Fishermen brought the wet nets to shore,

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[8] Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 52-53; George Brown Goode, "History and Methods of the Fisheries," Part 5 of T*he Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1887), 757; Frank Prothero, *The Good Years: A History of the Commercial Fishing Industry on Lake Erie* (Belleville, Ontario, CAN: Mika Publishing, 1973), 40-48.

[9] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1887; Prothero, *The Good Years*, 40-48.

dried them on reels, and readied them for the next round. A typical fisherman had four gangs of fifteen to twenty nets, keeping three gangs in the water at any one time. Crews consisted of two or three fishermen, who manned a sailboat often known as a Mackinaw boat. These lighter, more mobile rigs cost lest to purchase and maintain than pound nets. In the 1870s, a gill net rig and Mackinaw boat cost about $325; a pound net and flat–bottomed tending boat cost $550. Gill nets also had a longer season than pound nets, as the nets could be set from the break up of the ice until the end of the autumn fishing season, from April to November. Fishermen also set gill nets through the ice in winter.[10]

The relationships between the fishermen and fish dealers often dictated the fishing technology and extent of fishing operations. These relationships were loose and fluctuating, but fell into three categories. Some fishermen simply worked on a fixed wage, using the dealer's boats, nets, and other equipment. Other fishermen were independent, owning their own equipment and selling their catch to whichever dealer offered the best price. Still others fished on shares—they bought nets, supplies and equipment from the dealer, and promised to pay with two-fifths to one-half of their catch, sold to the dealer who had advanced them the equipment.

Fishermen and fish dealers in Bayfield used all three of these arrangements. A big firm like N. & F. Boutin employed people directly or on shares, stationing them on the islands and sending their schooner, the *Alice Craig*, around the islands to pick up the catch. As the *Alice Craig* picked up fish, it also dropped off barrels and salt so that fishermen could preserve the fish until the next run. With such a large territory to cover and a heavy dependence on the weather for transportation, collection of fish from some island fish camps could be as far apart as a month.

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[10] *Ibid*., 50-52; James W. Milner, "Report on the Fisheries of the Great Lakes: The Result of Inquiries Prosecuted in 1871 and 1872," in U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1872-1873, 34; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 39-40.

The Boutins also ran a dry goods store in Bayfield, from which they sold provisions to fishermen on credit. In 1879, for example, N. & F. Boutin put in over 1,200 gill nets (close to 90 linear miles of net), 28 pound nets, and 7 seine nets, and that year marketed at least 11,000 half-barrels of fish. The firm employed about 70 men, making them one of the largest fishing outfits on the lake, and also bought fish from independent fishermen.[11]

Bayfield's other dealers worked differently. The smaller firm of Shaw and O'Malley, with only a couple of sets of pound nets, employed far fewer people, and did not sell equipment on shares. They hired wage laborers directly or bought fish from independent fishermen. Fishermen working on wages for the large companies and independent fishermen who owned their own rigs used both pound and gill nets. Pound nets were an option only for the most stable and secure fishermen. "It is only men who have been fishing for a number of years, and have accumulated some money, who will put pound nets now and experiment with them," explained Duluth fisherman John Coventry. Throughout the 1870s, Bayfield had two or three smaller firms, in addition to N. & F. Boutin, and the Boutins split into two smaller firms in the early 1880s.[12]

Between them, the wageworkers, independent fishermen, and large dealers populated the islands with small, itinerant fish camps. Little evidence remains of these camps, scarcely more than scattered references in the local newspapers and the occasional comments by the federal investigators who periodically visited the islands to assess the state of the Lake Superior fishery. Pound netters focused on areas with relatively shallow, flat, sandy bottoms. For gill nets,

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[11] BP, February 25, 1871; BCP, April 23 and November 15, 1879; Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 52; Martha Neuman, *Special History Study: Rocky and South Twin Islands: A History of Commercial Fishing Camps and Resorts* (Bayfield, WI: National Park Service/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1992), in AINL Place File, Rocky Island.

[12] IJC Notes, Box 10, vol. A, 268; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 15.

fishermen needed proximity to the deepwater ledge around the outside of the archipelago. And the fish camps also needed to be accessible by the large collecting boats. Preferred locations for pound nets included the east bay of Sand Island, the narrow, protected channel between Rocky and South Twin Islands, the shallow regions of the interior of Chequamegon Bay, and various spots along Madeline Island. Gill-netters often camped at Presque Isle Bay on Stockton Island, the Rocky and South Twin channel, and Madeline Island. Oak Island, Bear Island, and Outer Island all served as temporary fish camps, too. Fishermen tended to set pound nets in the same location year after year, although the size of the catch differed annually. For the more mobile gill nets, however, the location might change from year to year or month to month; the fishermen relied on observation and experience to determine the best fishing spots. Island camps consisted of little more than small shanties to house the fishermen and perhaps some drying reels to care for the gill nets. Fishermen abandoned the camps before the onset of winter.[13]

Once the dealers had collected the fish from the island camps, they then faced the challenge of locating markets and transporting the catch. Prior to the arrival of the railroad to Bayfield in 1883, market options were limited. Until 1877, packing fish in barrels of salt for shipment by boat provided the only means of transporting perishable fish to markets in other Great Lakes ports. When the Wisconsin Central Railroad completed the line to Ashland in 1877, the Bayfield dealers began to sell limited quantities of fresh fish, but still worked primarily with salted fish. The statistics for 1882, the year before the railroad arrived in Bayfield, reveal the method of shipment and the final destinations of fish caught in the Apostle islands. That year,

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[13] A. J. Woolman, "Notes to Accompany Chart No.3, Lake Superior (South Shore)," 1894, IJC Notes, Box 9, vol. I; BP, November 12 , 1870 and February 11, 1871; Julian Nelson, interview by the author, November 12, 2001, Bayfield, WI, copy in the author's files; Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 45; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 62.

Frank Boutin shipped more fish than the other dealers, sending 900,000 pounds of salt and 40,000 pounds of fresh fish to market. Almost all of this went to Great Lakes ports: 206,000 pounds to Buffalo, 245,000 to Chicago, and 448,200 pounds to other points. The 40,000 pounds of fresh fish went to Chicago or Milwaukee on the Wisconsin Central. The firm of Boutin & Mahan (Nelson Boutin's firm) dealt with a larger quantity of fresh fish, shipping 442,500 pounds of salted fish and 324,456 pounds of fresh, all but 10,000 pounds of the latter over the Wisconsin Central. Fred Fischer, the third largest fish dealer in Bayfield, sold all of his 206,800 pounds of fish salted to markets in Cleveland, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Stillwater, Minnesota. The Bayfield dealers combined to send 1,973,756 pounds of fish to market in 1882.[14]

The actions of the fishermen are far harder to trace than those of the fish dealers. Only the most general picture of the lives of early fishermen can be drawn. A single ethnic group—French Canadians—dominated the Chequamegon Bay commercial fishery. The Boutin family, for example, had emigrated from Canada earlier in the century. Twenty-five of the forty-five men (and one woman) who listed their occupation as full-time fishermen in the 1880 census traced their ancestry to Canada. Unlike the Boutins, many of these families had lived in the Chequamegon Bay region for several generations, arriving to work in the fur trade but staying after this trade declined. Many of the other men and women who worked in the fishing industry did so only on a part-time or wage labor basis, working part of the year on the fishing boats but also in the lumber camps, farms, and mines elsewhere in the region. The women who helped

[14] Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 49; BP, February 5, 1879; BCP, February 3, 1883.

fishermen on the boats, or by picking, cleaning, and drying nets on shore were counted only rarely in such statistics, if at all.[15]

Ojibwe, too, played a key role in the Apostle Islands commercial fishery throughout the nineteenth century. Indian men and women had worked as wage laborers in the first commercial fishing venture in the islands, carried out by the American Fur Company in the 1830s, and they continued in this role as the fishery expanded after the settlement of Bayfield. One federal investigator, sent to study the Lake Superior fisheries in the 1880s, explained: "With the Indians fishing is, of course, a hereditary profession, handed down from father to son." An 1887 estimate counted a quarter of the Chequamegon Bay fishermen as either "Indians or part Indian." Indian agents stationed at the La Pointe Agency reported through the end of the century that Ojibwe found regular work in the commercial fishery.[16]

The Ojibwe treated fishing as both a subsistence and a commercial activity. As they integrated into the expanding American economy, Ojibwe blended subsistence pursuits with the new opportunities presented by wage work and market production. Fishing stands as an example of this balancing act. The solid ice that formed over the shallow channels between the near-shore islands provided ideal conditions for winter spear fishing. This allowed the Ojibwe of the Red Cliff and Bad River reservations to apply this traditional fishing method in pursuit of a commercial catch—making Bayfield the only site of commercial spear-fishing on Lake Superior.

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[15] Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 35, 49; George Brown Goode, "The Fishermen of the United States," Part 4 of *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States*, 45; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census, 1880*, Manuscript Census, Bayfield and Ashland Counties, Wisconsin.

[16] Nute, "American Fur Company's Fishing Enterprises on Lake Superior," 483-503; Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 35, 49; Goode, "The Fishermen of the United States," 45, 49; BIA Annual Report 1875, 371; BIA Annual Report 1882, 173; BIA Annual Report 1891, 468.

"Often large catches are taken, but at times few are secured," reported one observer. The Ojibwe used other techniques, including hook-and-line (or bobbing) and gill nets. In the 1890s, one white fisherman estimated "The winter fishing … is done by Indians and other fishermen. Considerable many half-breeds—Indian blood. There would be probably upwards of 150 people engaged in this fishing in the winter. There will be 1/3 of that number who do not sell any fish—just fish for their own use." Indian fishermen sometimes fished solely for their own table; other times they sold their catch to Bayfield dealers, or worked on a wage basis. The mixture of subsistence and market activity provided an essential component of Ojibwe economic life.[17]

A set of rules derived from both human institutions and natural systems governed the early fishery of the Apostle Islands. These rules dictated the behavior of the largest packing firms and the most independent of fishermen. Market price, available technology, and the feeding and spawning habits of whitefish and lake trout determined the organization and the prosecution of the commercial fishing industry. None of these rules, however, remained constant. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the rules —both those derived from human economic structures and natural ecosystems—began to change.

The Railroad, Technological Innovation, and the Expansion of the Island Fishery

Until the 1880s, fishermen remained dependent on the wind for transportation and their arms for the hauling and picking of heavy fishing nets. Bayfield's fish dealers, meanwhile, could sell only salted, not fresh fish, a product for which they found only a limited market. The arrival

[17] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1892; M. B. Johnson, interview by Richard Rathbun, Bayfield, WI, July 10, 1894, and Irving Chafe, interview by Richard Rathbun, Bayfield, WI, July 10, 1894, both in IJC Notes, Box 8, vol. III; BIA 1850 Annual Report, 53; BIA 1881 Annual Report, 180; Shifferd, "A Study in Economic Change."

of the railroad at Bayfield and the development of new fishing technologies, however, loosened these restrictions and fueled a dramatic expansion of the island fishing industry.

The arrival in Bayfield of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Omaha Rail Road in 1883 instantly changed the marketing opportunities available to the town's fish dealers, ushering in a new era of commercial fishing in the Apostles. The railroad provided a way to get fresh fish to market. "Boutin & Mahan are shipping large quantities of fresh fish by almost every train" reported the *Bayfield County Press* in November 1883, only a month after the opening of the railroad depot. Even with the rail connection, Bayfield's dealers continued to ship a far higher quantity of salted fish than fresh fish. City markets still could not provide enough demand for fresh fish, while salted fish could be served to miners and lumberjacks in the other extractive industries active in the region. Over the rest of the decade, however, as freezing and refrigeration technologies continued to improve, the proportion of fresh fish steadily increased.[18]

Transportation technology improved on the water as well as on land. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, steamboats began to replace sailboats, with dramatic implications for commercial fishing. The first steamer began toiling in the Lake Superior fishery in 1871. In 1879, the Boutins bought a steam tug, the *N. Boutin*, and used it along with their schooner to pick up fish and drop of salt and barrels to the island-based fishermen. Steamers allowed fishermen to reach fishing grounds farther away from Bayfield, and also freed them from dependence on the winds to keep a regular collection schedule. Larger firms could more easily station their employees or fishermen beholden to them on the outlying islands. Steamers also made possible

[18] BCP, November 24, 1883 and January 17, 1885.

the limited shipment of fresh fish. A fresh catch could be immediately put on ice, picked up by a steamer, and shipped to the railroad depot in Ashland or Bayfield.[19]

The combined advantages of the railroad and steamship provoked an expansion of island fishing operations. By 1885, Boutin & Mahan had over $50,000 invested in their store, warehouses, packinghouses, and docks. They added a second steamer in 1884. The firm of Rich & Atwood, which opened in Bayfield in 1883, invested in a new steam tug and a schooner. Alphonse Le Bel, owner of the Ashland Fish Co., moved his entire business to Bayfield in the middle of 1884. By 1885, four steamers docked in Bayfield.[20]

The railroad helped Bayfield catch the biggest fish of all: A. Booth & Sons, the largest fish dealing and packing firm on the lakes, opened an outpost in Bayfield less than a year after the arrival of the railroad. Alfred Booth had emigrated to the United States from England in 1848, and he opened a small fish and vegetable shop in Chicago in 1850. Booth had good timing—he opened his store just as Chicago began an unprecedented commercial expansion, and Booth's business grew with the city. Booth built a vertically integrated operation based on the model of other nineteenth-century industries, catching, collecting, processing, and marketing fish. He shepherded the company from a value of under $10,000 in 1862 to over $300,000 by 1880. As Chicago's railroad network stretched across the continent, Booth began supplying markets farther afield. At first, Booth could meet the demand for whitefish simply by fishing the waters of southern Lake Michigan. But as whitefish became scarcer, Booth had to look farther north. By 1885, the company stationed fleets in several northern Lake Michigan ports,

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[19] Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 31; Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 49; BCP, April 16, 1879; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 49; Prothero, *The Good Years*, 95.

[20] BCP, January 17, 1885 and January 9, 1886

transporting fish down the lake to Chicago via steamer. As Lake Michigan's whitefish stocks declined, Booth began moving his fleet to Lake Superior.[21]

With its new railroad connection and well-known fishery, Bayfield emerged as the best spot for a highly capitalized commercial fishing operation like Booth's. "…Bayfield is *the* point on this lake for successfully conducting this business," proclaimed Alfred Booth. The Bayfield Businessmen's Association offered to donate a prime site at the foot of First St., in the center of town, for the construction of a dock. Booth (called the A. Booth Packing Company after 1885) installed packinghouses, net sheds, icehouses and a freezing plant. Attracting the nationally renowned company was a major victory, promising good things for Bayfield's economy. Bayfield's businessmen could not have been happier with the decision. "The outlook for the shipment of fresh fish firm Bayfield to neighboring points was never better than this spring, and the shipments by express are already large, and constantly increasing," reported the *Bayfield County Press*.[22]

The railroad and freezing technology changed the basic operations of the fishing industry. Fresh, not salted, fish became the most important product. Booth and the other Bayfield dealers harvested blocks of ice from the bay during winter, packed them in sawdust and stored them in low, dark icehouses that preserved the ice through the summer. The three to four hundred pound blocks of ice were cut and transported first with horses, later with mechanized equipment. As developments in technology and transportation allowed the dealers focus on fresh fish, ice became increasingly important. Where collection boats once dropped off salt and barrels for the

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[21] Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 59-73.

[22] BCP, March 1, 1884, December 12, 1885, May 22, 1886, and June 21, 1889.

preservation of fish, now they dropped off flaked ice to keep the fish fresh. Fish were frozen in airtight pans, each with a capacity of forty pounds, and then packed into a freezer. Booth could freeze up to 10,000 pounds a day and its four freezers at the Bayfield plant could hold close to one million pounds of fish. This gave Booth a significant advantage on the market, because it could hold a large quantity of fish while it waited for a good price.[23]

The scale of island fishing operations expanded to supply the new packinghouse. In 1888, Booth stationed a steam tug, the *T. H. Camp*, on Rocky Island (also known as Rice's Island). Booth hired fishermen to work the boat, including an engineer, a fireman, four fishermen, and a cook. They had another employee on the island who worked as a shoreman. The *Ashland Daily Press* described the scene: "The harbor is 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 [sic.] a number of rustic huts, the homes of the fishermen." The *Camp* had four full gangs of gill nets. When a gang came out of the water, the tug brought it back the island headquarters where the shoreman—for many years a Norwegian immigrant named Charlie Benson— repaired any holes or tears in the linen nets. With the steam tug, Booth company fishermen had a much greater range than earlier fishermen. They could fish up to a distance of over twenty miles from the island, almost all the way to the lake's north shore. In 1893, Booth stationed another steamer at Rocky Island, although usually only the *Camp* docked there. Booth had a second steamer, the *Barker*, which it used as a collection boat. The *Barker* made regular runs to Rocky Island,

[23] Justin Walsted, interview by Roy Tull, Bayfield, WI, 1979, Transcript in AINL Library; BCP, June 21, 1889; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 60.

dropping off ice and supplies and picking up fish. Along the way, the *Barker* stopped at the other island fish camps to pick up their catch, as well.[24]

The general organization of the fisheries remained the same as it had before the arrival of the railroad. Some fishermen worked directly for Booth or the other dealers on a wage basis, some as independents, and some fished on shares or credit. Booth's Rocky Island operation was the largest wage-labor fishing operation in the Apostles. As Booth's dominance in Bayfield grew, it became the most important supplier for those fishermen who fished on shares. Fishermen called this being "tied up to Booth." One fisherman remembered: "You could go to Booth in the wintertime if you were short of cash, and … they'd give you a certain amount of credit…. [If you were] not in debt to Booth so could sell your fish to anyone. If you owed Booth money, you had to sell them your fish." The increasing use of mechanized equipment—gill net steamers and freezing plants—continued to widen the gap between large dealers like Booth and the smaller, independent fishermen.[25]

Although the organization of the fishing industry remained similar, technological innovations combined with the railroad and steamboat to dramatically increase the intensity of the fishing. Technology transformed every aspect of the fishing process between 1870 and 1900 and ensured that fishermen caught more fish with less effort. For example, fishermen began switching from cotton to linen nets in the late nineteenth century. Linen nets packed tighter and weighed less, so the same number of fishermen could more easily handle a greater quantity of

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[24] Fred Benson, interviewer unidentified, Rocky Island, August 30, 1979, tape in the AINL Library; Martha Neuman, "What are those Cabins Doing There?" (MA, University of Wisconsin, 1991), 34; "Beautiful Isles of Chequamegon," ADP, December 21, 1895; M. B. Johnson interview; Captain Swannes, interview by A. J. Woolman, Rice or Rocky Island, July 11, 1894, both in IJC Notes, Box 8, vol. III.

[25] Fred Benson interview; Cliff and Harvey Hadland, interview by Martha Neuman, Rocky Island, July 25, 1992, tape in AINL Library; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 58.

nets in a single lift. The size of the mesh on both pound and gill nets decreased, meaning that the fishermen snared smaller and smaller fish. The addition of steam-powered gill net lifters in the 1890s enhanced fishing intensity still more. The switch from sail- to steam-powered boats significantly increased the capacity of each boat. While a sailboat used for gill nets handled an average of six linear miles of netting, a steam tug rig averaged twenty-nine miles. The number of fishermen employed in the islands and on the rest of Lake Superior increased, too. The number of fishermen on the lake jumped from just over four hundred in 1880 to over nine hundred in 1903. With so many variables, there is no way to quantify the increase in fishing intensity, especially since the statistics collected by nineteenth-century fisheries investigators are often quite suspect. But Ludwig Kumlein, a federal investigator studying the Great Lakes fisheries, estimated a 500 percent increase in the efficiency of fishing apparatus between 1870 and 1880. Fishermen had their own estimates, often couched in terms of pounds of fish caught, miles of net used, or number of boats. One thing is certain: the scale and efficiency of the fishing fleet increased dramatically in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[26]

The amplified intensity of the fishing translated into much higher production figures. With better nets, more powerful boats, and more fishermen, the commercial catch throughout the Great Lakes exploded. In 1889, Great Lakes fishermen caught a whopping 146,284,000 pounds

[26] Statistics on every aspect of the fisheries often varied widely from year to year. Different investigators counted different numbers of boats, types of boats, numbers of fishermen, and types of apparatus. There were no standard lengths of gill nets or standard mesh sizes, and no fixed system of reporting the quantity of fish caught. Federal or state investigators or wardens collected much of the information; fishermen did not always give these men truthful answers. Not until the 1930s did fisheries experts devise any standardized method for measuring the quantity of the catch and the intensity of the fishing effort. See Ralph Hile, *Collection and Analysis of Commercial Fishery Statistics in the Great Lakes* (Ann Arbor, MI: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1962). Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 97; Chas. W. Smiley, "Changes in the Fisheries of the Great Lakes during the Decade, 1870-1880," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* 1 (1882): 252-58; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1904, 649-61; Notes of Richard Rathbun, IJC Notes, Box 10, vol. B, 43.

of fish—a record exceeded only twice since. The greatest expansion came between 1880 and 1885. The total catch for Lake Superior between those years expanded from 3.8 million pounds to nearly 9 million. Production levels did not remain at this high level, but in 1893 the Lake Superior catch again topped 8 million pounds, and in 1903 it tallied over 13 million pounds.[27]

With the arrival of the railroad and the expansion of its fishing fleet, Bayfield secured its position as the most important fishing town on Lake Superior. In 1885, United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries collected the most extensive set of statistics on the fisheries of Lake Superior gathered to that point. Bayfield and the Apostles ranked at the top of almost every statistical category. One hundred and eighty-eight of the lake's 622 fishermen sailed from Bayfield or Ashland (with Bayfield's 167 counting over 40 more than any of the other fourteen American ports). Bayfield fishermen caught 2,832,500 pounds of fish in 1885, close to one third of the total for the whole lake. Duluth, with just over two million pounds, came in a distant second, and Sault Ste. Marie third with 1.14 million pounds. Bayfield had 209 of the lake's 510 fishing vessels (steamers, sailboats, and row boats), although some of the other ports had more steam tugs. Bayfield's gill-netters had 2,000 gangs of nets, putting them in second place on the lake behind the fishermen of the Keweenaw Peninsula in Upper Michigan. In pound nets, though, Bayfield's 124 totaled more than those in all other ports combined. In all, Bayfield fishermen had $129,500 invested in their fishery. Of all the other cities or towns on the lake, only Duluth topped $100,000. Bayfield's whitefish grounds were particularly rich. In 1885, Chequamegon Bay fishermen accounted for 49 percent of the lake's total whitefish harvest.[28]

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[27] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1904, 649-61, and 1885, 37-40; BCP, January 9, 1886.

[28] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1887, 37-40.

By 1890, technological innovation had improved efficiency in every aspect of the commercial fishery: from catching fish with lighter, tighter nets to freezing them in larger and larger quantities. These advances removed the limitations on the transportation and preservation of fresh fish; the result was a dramatic increase in the intensity of the fishing effort. The rules of commercial fishing in the Apostles had changed. The fish of Lake Superior could not long withstand the pressure.

The Collapse of the Lake Superior Whitefish Fishery

The bloated production figures that followed the arrival of the railroad and the conversion to steam power masked disturbing changes under the water. The increased intensity of fishing in the Chequamegon Bay had an almost immediate impact: whitefish populations crashed in the 1890s. But changes in fish populations are hard to trace, even for modern scientists—the fishermen and federal investigators who examined the Lake Superior fisheries in the 1890s did not agree that a problem existed, much less on the origins of the problem. Even as the value of the whitefish fishery dwindled, many observers continued to believe that the fish would return.

Although there is no method to quantify the statistical relationship between fishing effort, commercial catch, and the health of the fish populations in the nineteenth century, contemporary observers agreed that that harvest levels were not keeping up with the increased fishing intensity. Despite continued technological innovation and intensifying effort, harvest levels remained relatively stable. The fish, in other words, were becoming harder and harder to find. Whitefish—the most desirable commercial species—showed the first signs of stress. In 1880, whitefish made up 59.1 percent of Lake Superior's commercial catch, measured in pounds. In 1885—despite

record highs in total pounds of fish caught—this proportion had dropped to 51.8 percent. Although the percentage of whitefish actually increased slightly to 52.5 percent by the end of the decade, these percentages dropped significantly in the 1890s. In 1893, whitefish represented only one-third of the total catch, and by 1903, a mere 6 percent. Similar changes occurred on the other Great Lakes, although they occurred later on Lake Superior, the least developed of the chain.[29]

White Fish, Lake Trout and Herring as Percentage Of Lake Superior Commercial Catch, 1880-1903[30]							
Year	Total Catch, in Pounds	Pounds Whitefish	% Whitefish	Pounds Lake Trout	% Lake Trout	Pounds Herring	% Herring
1880	3,816,625	2,257,000	59.1%	1,464,750	38.4%	34,000	.01%
1885	8,825,980	4,571,947	51.8%	3,488,177	39.5%	324,680	4.7%
1890	6,115,992	3,213,176	52.5%	2,613,378	42.7%	199,121	3.3%
1893	8,096,927	2,732,270	33.7%	4,342,122	53.6%	660,272	8.2%
1899	5,129,654	693,191	13.5%	3,118,169	60.8%	1,125,478	22.0%
1903	13,265,613	794,022	6.0%	4,954,830	37.4%	4,742,805	35.8%

The rapid decline of the whitefish catch was not unexpected. James Milner, who conducted the first federal survey of the Great Lakes fisheries in 1871, reported on the declining whitefish populations of the lower lakes at a time when the Lake Superior fisheries had barely been tapped. A decade later, Chas W. Smiley compared Milner's 1871 findings with a second federal investigation conducted in 1880. He concluded that the tremendous increase in intensity of commercial fishing, declines in the average size of fish arriving at market, and continued fishing pressure portended the imminent collapse of the Great Lakes fishery. Smiley predicted: "in the natural order of events, remarkable diminution if not complete collapse is to be

[29] The pattern followed by the Lake Superior fisheries is one found in commercial fisheries around the world. As fishing intensity increased—spurred first by increased number of fishermen and then by increasingly efficient apparatus—the fish population begins to lose its ability to replenish itself. Even as the fishing industry increases in its ability to find and catch fish, it continues to inhibit fish reproduction. The best discussion of this can be found in McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*.

[30] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1904, 650.

anticipated in the coming decade." In 1887, W. D. Tomlin reported to the American Fisheries Society: "Year by year men engaged in fishing have seen their feeding grounds almost deserted and the numbers still deminishing [sic], until at last to find a large whitefish in their nets is indeed a curiosity." By the 1880s, both federal and state fisheries investigators regularly expressed their concerns about the Lake Superior whitefish fishery.[31]

It is hard to accurately trace the health of the fish populations of so localized a region as the Chequamegon Bay. Catch statistics for specific places could fluctuate wildly from year to year, for reasons unrelated to the health of the fish populations or fishing intensity. For example, heavy storms during the fall spawning season might keep the fleet at port, with significant consequences for catch statistics. Or an unusually early spring thaw and a late freeze might let the fishermen work for longer than usual, with an attendant increase in the commercial harvest. Climate-induced changes in the water temperature helped determine where certain species of fish could be found, and this could vary from year to year. And with such a confined area, the addition of a single steamer—such as when A. Booth & Sons decided to station a second gill net steamer at Rocky Island in 1888—could dramatically alter the size of the catch.

Still, little doubt exists about the fate of the Bayfield whitefish industry. The whitefish fishery of the Apostles and the Chequamegon Bay showed signs of stress as early as 1880. That year, a federal investigator noted the apparent decline in whitefish numbers, but expressed little concern: "Fish are somewhat less abundant in this region than formerly, especially in

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[31] Milner, "Report on the Fisheries of the Great Lakes," 14, 17; Smiley, "Changes in the Fisheries of the Great Lakes," 252; W. D. Tomlin, "Migration of Lake Superior Fish," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 16 (1887): 60; Fish Commissioners of the State of Wisconsin, *First Biennial Report of the Fish Commissioners of the State of Wisconsin for the Two Years Ending December 31, 1884* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1884) [hereafter, Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, year], 8.

Chequamegon Bay, but the decrease is not considered at all alarming. It is the experience of the fishermen that if fishing is desisted from on a ground which has been depleted, fish will return to it in the course of a couple of years, and the catch will again be as large as previously." James Chapman, a Bayfield merchant who also served as a fish warden for the state of Wisconsin, reported unusually poor harvest years in 1886 and 1887, when the whitefish catch dropped from over two million pounds to under five hundred thousand pounds. 1888 started off poorly as well, when a series of spring storms kept the fishing fleet in Bayfield. By the end of the year, however, the fishermen reported one of their best harvests in years. Of course, James Chapman and other observers of the Chequamegon Bay fishery commented not on the health of the fish population but on the economic status of the commercial fishery, related but certainly distinct concerns.[32]

White Fish, Lake Trout, and Herring as Percentage Of the Commercial Catch in Bayfield and Ashland, 1885-1903[33]							
Year	Total Catch, in Pounds	Pounds Whitefish	% Whitefish	Pounds Lake Trout	% Lake Trout	Pounds Herring	% Herring
1885	3,159,500	2,251,800	73.3%	632,700	20.0%	70,000	.02%
1890	1,555,079	1,082,394	69.6%	352,009	22.6%	94,102	6.1%
1899	1,584,052	61,322	3.9%	707,622	44.7%	696,959	44.0%
1903	4,783,566	128,877	2.7%	1,043,226	21.8%	3,046,025	63.7%

The observations of the 1880s foreshadowed the exhaustion of the Chequamegon Bay whitefish fishery. Statistics that separate the island fisheries from the rest of the lake are scarce, but those that exist reveal a sharp decline in whitefish. In 1885—the largest catch of the nineteenth century—whitefish made up over 73 percent (by weight) of the Bayfield commercial

[32] George Brown Goode, "A Geographical Review of the Fisheries Industries and Fishing Communities for the Year 1880," Part 2 of *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States*, 636; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, year, 1887-1888; BCP, January 15, 1887.

[33] Compiled from U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1887, 1892, 1902, and 1904.

harvest. Five years later, although the total number of pounds had dropped by more than half, whitefish still represented 70% of the catch. In the 1890s, however, the bottom dropped out of the whitefish fishery. By 1903, whitefish made up a scant 3 percent of Bayfield's fish harvest.

The whitefish fishery of the Chequamegon Bay collapsed faster and more thoroughly than at any other point on Lake Superior. Fishing villages dotted the south shore of the lake, all of them taking advantage of the shallow water that provided habitat for whitefish. None of these towns, however, boasted as large a whitefish fishery as Bayfield. In 1885 and 1890, no other spot on the lake topped the islands in terms of total pounds of whitefish caught or in the amount of whitefish as a percentage of the total catch. By 1899, however, the Chequamegon Bay had dropped into fourth place in terms of total production, and caught a lower percentage of whitefish than anywhere else. Sault St. Marie and Whitefish Bay surpassed Bayfield and the islands as the premier whitefish grounds on Lake Superior, hauling in 224,718 pounds (36.7% of the total catch) in 1899 and 313,210 pounds (34.6%) in 1903. Other south shore whitefish harvests declined in the 1890s, too, although not in the dramatic fashion as had Bayfield's.[34]

The declining productivity of the Great Lakes fisheries and continued worries about the ocean fisheries of the Atlantic and the Pacific prompted the United States and Canada to explore the possibility of joint regulation. Early attempts at regulation of the Great Lakes and ocean fisheries routinely stumbled over the problem of multiple jurisdictions: Each state and province had its own set of rules and regulations. Lake Superior, for example, had different regulations imposed by the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, as well as the province of Ontario. The United States government lacked the constitutional authority to regulate the

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[34] *Ibid.*

American fisheries, inhibiting prospects for uniform regulation across state and international boundaries. But as the problems in the commercial fisheries became more apparent, the two governments investigated the possibility of signing a treaty to jointly manage the fisheries where the problems of multiple jurisdictions arose.[35]

In pursuit of this goal, the U. S. and Canada in 1892 created the Joint Commission Relative to the Preservation of the Fisheries in Waters Contiguous to Canada and the United States (the IJC, for short). The commission was charged with examining the fisheries and issuing recommendations of both regulatory and restorative measures. The report of the IJC became an investigative effort truly remarkable in scope. Representatives of the IJC interviewed fishermen, fish dealers, and local officials on both sides of the international border, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They asked a routine set of questions and took careful notes. The collection of data took close to three years. IJC investigators reached Lake Superior in 1894, and there interviewed fifty men intimately familiar with the fishery; eight of their subjects worked in the Apostles and Chequamegon Bay. These men explained what they thought had caused the whitefish collapse, how they had adapted to the changing opportunities of the fishery, and what they thought needed to be done to repair the damage. The notes collected by the investigators provide an unparalleled commentary on a Great Lakes fishery in the midst of an important transition.[36]

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[35] Federal and state governments had begun regulating American fisheries after the Civil War, as fisheries along the East Coast suffered from the effects of overuse and pollution. McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*, 100-101; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 238-43.

[36] *Report of the Joint Commission Relative to the Preservation of the Fisheries in Waters Contiguous to Canada and the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1897) 54th Cong., 2d sess., House Misc. Doc. 315, serial set 3534, 12, 16; "List of Persons Interviewed on Lake Superior During Summer of 1894," IJC Notes, Box 10, vol. A, 3-13.

The fishermen and fish dealers interviewed in Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay universally agreed that the whitefish in their region had declined significantly. Irving Chafe, the manager of the Booth packinghouse in Bayfield, estimated that taking "the average of the last 5 years, the catch now of whitefish would not be more than 1/3 what it was during the previous 12 years. The last 3 years have been exceptionally poor years. It had been falling off before, but had a big drop about 3 years ago. The average size of the whitefish is smaller than it used to be." John Smith, an old independent fisherman with twenty years of experience fishing in the Apostles, had similar observations. "The fishes are not as abundant as they were ten years ago … there is not one whitefish now to where there was 100 then … there has been a corresponding decrease in size, as well as numbers, and that not only are large fish much fewer, but that the general average is at least one pound lighter." Almost every single person interviewed from the Chequamegon Bay area made similar comments.[37]

Many of the fishermen interviewed by the investigators believed that the decline in whitefish could simply be attributed to over fishing. "[T]he fishermen have cleaned them all out," one explained. "[T]here has been too much fishing here, which has killed off the fish. The decrease began when the tugs came here." Another pointed out: "There is no use of talking but that years ago when fish were plentiful there were a great many small ones uselessly caught and thrown away. We have done that ourselves." The fishermen recognized that although the size of the commercial harvest had increased over the years, this came only in combination with more extensive and more efficient fishing apparatus. Other fishermen blamed the collapse of the whitefish on a decrease in the mesh size of gill nets and pound nets, which caught fish too small

[37] Irving Chafe interview; M. B. Johnson interview; John Smith, interview by A. J. Woolman, July 12, 1894, Rice or Rocky Island, all in IJC Notes, Box 8 vol. III.

to sell on the market while wiping out whole schools of young fish before they matured. Still others believed that the fishing of the spawning grounds prevented the fish from reproducing. C. W. Turner, the Booth Company's manager at the St. Paul distribution center, cited a widely held belief when he claimed "that the offal being thrown in the lake drives the whitefish away." Many of the fishermen dropped offal—fish too small for market, or fish guts, or fish dead too long before packing in ice or salt—directly into the lake. Whitefish in particular, many believed, avoided areas so sullied. The fishermen "were killing the goose that laid the golden egg," lamented Duluth fish dealer M. F. Kalmbach, a forty-year veteran of the Great Lakes fisheries.[38]

But why had the Bayfield fishery suffered a more severe collapse than at other points on the lake? Part of the answer lay in the type of nets preferred by the Chequamegon Bay fishermen. The sandy, gently sloped, shallow lake bottom in the bay and among the islands had long provided Bayfield area fishermen with the perfect underwater environment for setting pound nets. These environmental conditions had provided island fishermen with a competitive advantage in the whitefish fishery. But pound nets, the fishermen agreed, did far more damage to the fishery than gill nets. "[Pound nets are] much more detrimental to the fishes than gill nets, since they take a great many more young fish," commented one fishermen, "especially is this true for whitefish. [sic.]" The pound nets regularly trapped fish too small to sell, whereas gill nets let smaller fish pass through their twine unmolested. Whitefish swim the waters of Lake Superior in discrete populations. The repeated harvest of the young fish in the Chequamegon

[38] IJC Notes, Box 11, vol. E, 74, 84, 105; M.F. Kalmbach, interview by Richard Rathbun, July 5, 1894, Duluth, MN, IJC Notes, Box 7, vol. II.

Bay and among the islands inhibited whitefish reproduction and contributed to the collapse of the Bayfield whitefish fishery.[39]

It was not just the fishermen, however, that disrupted whitefish reproduction. The logging industry, too, disturbed whitefish feeding and spawning grounds. Bark that sloughed off log rafts during transport to the mills and sawdust dumped by mills directly into the lake coated the bottom and stopped whitefish from spawning or made it more difficult for them to find food. The fish were "driven off from the nice grounds and are in deeper water where their own reproduction is lost entirely," explained one fisherman. "The heavier the logging, the lighter the catch of fish," complained another. Some fishermen also believed that sewage and refuse dumped into the lake by cities like Ashland and Duluth, as well as the increased boat traffic associated with the increasing trade of iron and grain from those cities, contributed to the decline of the whitefish. The combination of the pressure applied by a constantly intensifying commercial fishing effort, destructive gear, and the habitat destruction caused by logging doomed the whitefish fishery of the Apostle Islands.[40]

By the middle of the 1890s, little doubt existed about the state of the Chequamegon Bay whitefish fishery. Whitefish had been the most valuable component of the area's most important

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[39] The fishermen also blamed seine nets for taking inordinate amounts of young fish, but seine nets had only been used extensively in the early years of the Bayfield fishery. John Smith interview; Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin*, 335. Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 44-48. Disputes over access to fisheries can often be reduced to a competition between pound netters and gill netters, with each apparatus representing a different racial, ethnic, or economic group. This does not appear to be the case in the Chequamegon Bay. The use of steam tugs and mechanical net lifters had increased the capital investment required in gill net fishing, and decreased the cost differences between pound and gill nets. And in the IJC interviews, even the pound net fishermen generally agreed that their apparatus was more damaging to young fish than gill nets. For discussions of pound netters versus gill netters, see Taylor, *Making Salmon*, 141-47 and Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 101.

[40] Kalmbach interview; F. W. Shaw, interview by A. J. Woolman, Sand Island, Lake Superior, July 9, 1894, IJC Notes, Box 7, vol. II; Woolman, "Notes to Accompany Chart No. 3"; IJC Notes, Box 11, vol. E, 67, 71; R. E. Rohe, "The Upper Great Lakes Lumber Era," *Inland Seas* 40 (Spring 1984): 22; Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 48; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 120-28.

industry, but the fish had disappeared almost entirely. Whitefish stocks in other parts of Lake Superior were showing similar signs of trouble. Something needed to be done protect whitefish and other commercial species from further decline.

Regulating and Restricting the Fishery, 1890-1910

The state of Wisconsin responded to the collapse of the commercial whitefish fisheries on Lakes Superior and Michigan by consolidating its control over natural resources. For the commercial fisheries, this meant a process of simplification, restricting and limiting the activities of the fishermen. The state used the opportunity provided by the declining Great Lakes whitefish harvests to increase its presence in the regulation of the fisheries. By 1910, the Wisconsin Fish Commission held the power to determine who could fish for commercial species, and when and where this activity would take place. The consolidation of state authority over the fisheries had real consequences for the fishermen of the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay. State policies privileged some fishermen over others. The A. Booth Packing Company and other large fishing and packing operations benefited the most from state control. Among the biggest losers in the struggle for access to the declining resources of Lake Superior were the Ojibwe fishermen who had participated in both commercial and subsistence fishing for generations.

The expansion of the regulatory state was, of course, a defining feature of the Progressive Era, and Wisconsin was among the most progressive of states. Almost every aspect of governance was transformed during the period between 1880 and 1920, from elections to public health to economic regulation, as well as conservation. Historians have explained many of these reforms as an attempt to bring order and efficiency to society through increased reliance on

scientific expertise and government regulatory authority. These trends were particularly true in the Progressive conservation movement. In Wisconsin, the state initiated programs to manage and control its fish, wildlife, forests, and other natural resources.[41]

State regulation of the commercial fishery grew slowly during the last third of the nineteenth century. Wisconsin took the first step toward regulating its commercial fisheries in 1866, when the legislature created the position of Great Lakes fish inspector. Lake Superior fisheries had barely been tapped at this point, but Lake Michigan fisheries had been exploited for decades and were already threatened by overfishing. The first fish inspectors did little more than estimate each year's commercial harvest. The legislature created the Wisconsin Fish Commission in 1874, with the charge "to prevent or delay the exhaustion of fish." In 1879, at the behest of the commission, the legislature passed the first laws regulating the fishery, setting the minimum weight for the commercial sale of fish at three-quarters of a pound and banning nets with a mesh size smaller than three inches.[42]

In 1887, the Wisconsin legislature took a bold step toward conservation of the Lake Superior fishery: it prohibited the setting of all types of nets in the Chequamegon Bay, an area considered essential spawning grounds for whitefish. The move was surprising, because the Lake Superior whitefish fishery, particularly in the bay, was thriving. In 1885, Lake Superior fishermen had hauled in record numbers of whitefish: over 4.5 million pounds, with half of this

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[41] The literature on the Progressive Era, conservation, and Wisconsin progressivism is voluminous. See John D. Buenker, *The Progressive Era: 1893-1914*, vol. 4, *The History of Wisconsin Series*, William Fletcher Thompson, ed. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967); Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency, the Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

[42] Walter E. Scott and Thomas Reitz, *The Wisconsin Warden: Wisconsin Conservation Law Enforcement, A Centennial Chronology (1879-1979)*, (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1979), i, 1-5; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1874.

amount coming from Bayfield-based fishermen. Why would the legislature limit such a productive fishery? The answer lay in the waters of Lake Michigan, not Lake Superior. Lake Michigan's commercial whitefish harvest plummeted during the 1880s, dropping from over 12 million pounds in 1879 to 8.6 million pounds in 1885 to 5.2 million pounds in 1889. The Wisconsin commissioners explained the problem: "[The] law of 1885 is evaded by the takers of whitefish in the waters of Lake Michigan…. it is useless for the state to spend money in planting whitefish fry so long as the laws for the protection and preservation of the young fish are violated with perpetual impunity." Bayfield warden James Chapman reported similar problems with the catching of undersized fish in the Chequamegon Bay, even though harvests remained robust. The quickly dropping catch statistics from Lake Michigan prompted the Wisconsin Fish Commission to tighten regulations on fishing on both of the Great Lakes under its jurisdiction. The Chequamegon Bay closure was short-lived, however, and the legislature reopened the bay to commercial fishing in 1891. Legislative records do not indicate a reason for the change in policy. But the fishermen of the Chequamegon Bay region blamed the restrictions for a noticeable decline in the commercial harvest for their region after the banner year of 1885; perhaps they lobbied to reopen the bay fishery.[43]

These early regulations did not necessarily change fishing practices. The Wisconsin Fish Commission had little power to enforce its regulations—wardens were not appointed until 1879. Even with wardens supposedly policing the commercial fleet, enforcement remained lax. Lake

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[43] *Laws of Wisconsin, 1887* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1887), ch. 520, s. 2; T. J. Cunningham, comp., *Fish and Game Laws of the State of Wisconsin, 1891* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, State Printers, 1891); Norman S. Baldwin and Robert W. Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production in the Great Lakes, 1867-1960* (Ann Arbor, MI: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1962); Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1885-1886, 5, 1887-1888, 46, and 1891-1892, 4.

Superior is an awfully large lake to patrol, and wardens faced pressure from the fishermen—often their neighbors or even relatives—to ignore what violations they might have seen. Rolla Baker, the first warden for the Ashland and Bayfield area, explained that "[t]he enforcement of laws for the preservation and protection of fish and game meets with much opposition, and the laws are continually violated, while the offenders are seldom brought to justice." In 1889 and 1890, the fish wardens for Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters reported only twelve violations, and none of these resulted in a conviction. The fisheries were regulated in the law books more strictly than on the water.[44]

Wisconsin and the other Great Lakes states gradually tightened their fishing regulations. This included establishing minimum net sizes, minimum weights for marketable fish, and closed seasons for the fishing of commercially important species like whitefish and lake trout. In 1887—with the same law that outlawed nets in the Chequamegon Bay—the Wisconsin legislature passed a law prohibiting possession or sale of whitefish weighing less than 1.5 pounds, punishable by a fine. By 1891, fishermen could not fish for lake trout from October 1 to January 15 or for whitefish from November 10 to December 15. Enforcement of these regulations, however, remained problematic well into the twentieth century.[45]

The International Joint Commission issued its final report on American and Canadian fisheries in 1897, but this had little direct impact. The commission recommended joint regulation of the Great Lakes fishery, but neither government received the report favorably. Pro-business American president William McKinley did little to support the recommendations for restrictions

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[44] Scott and Reitz, *The Wisconsin Warden*, 1; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1889-1890, 56, 60.

[45] *Fish and Game Laws of the State of Wisconsin, 1891, 1895* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1891).

on the commercial fishing industry. Although the Canadian government continued to urge the adoption of uniform regulations, without the cooperation of the United States little could be achieved. Individual states retained the responsibility for managing the fisheries, with mesh restrictions, fishing seasons, and other regulations varying from state to state.[46]

The activities of IJC did, however, call attention to the continuing problems facing the Great Lakes fishery and provoke a renewed dedication to state-based regulation. Despite the reopening of the Chequamegon Bay to fishing in 1891, catch statistics for Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters remained distressingly low. In 1895, the Wisconsin legislature again closed the Chequamegon Bay to all nets, a direct response to the collapse of Bayfield's whitefish fishery. The repeal of the 1887 closure law had prompted fishermen to flood into the Chequamegon Bay in search of whitefish. "[S]mall white fish have been taken by the tons in Chequamegon Bay," reported Wisconsin Fish Commissioner James Nevin. Netters "drew load after load of white fish to the shore, of a size so small that it would take three or four of them to make a pound." The Wisconsin commissioners hoped that the ban on setting nets in the spawning grounds would allow whitefish stocks to rebound. 1897 regulations further increased the minimum size of lake trout and whitefish to two pounds and extended the close season for both species.[47]

Many fishermen supported the regulation of their industry. When one member of the Wisconsin Fish Commission visited Bayfield, Ashland, and Madeline Island in 1878, he reported "that there is a almost universal demand for legislation which shall protect the young fish from

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[46] Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 248.

[47] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1893-1894, 24; Scott and Reitz, *The Wisconsin Warden*, 6-8; *Fish and Game Laws of the State of Wisconsin, 1897* (Madison: Democrat Printing Co., 1897); BCP, January 15, 1887 and January 21, 1899; United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, "Statistics of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes," in U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1901, 585; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 25.

being caught in these destructive nets and left to rot upon the beach or hauled off by wagonloads for manure." In 1886, the leading fishermen of Lake Superior organized into an association to promote regulation and artificial propagation of commercial fish species. IJC investigators found a surprising number of fishermen in favor of stricter regulation. Fishermen supported the regulation of the fishery—despite the potential damage to their own economic fortunes—because they recognized their own role in the destruction of the whitefish.[48]

But some fishermen had less altruistic reasons to support regulation: they saw it as a way of asserting their control over a declining resource. C. W. Turner, the western manager for the A. Booth Packing Company, wrote the Wisconsin Fish Commission in 1893, demanding "some means be determined to prevent the wholesale catching of smaller fish." Turner was particularly concerned with the fisheries of the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay, where his company carried on extensive fishing operations. Booth had invested heavily in its Wisconsin outpost, and Turner wanted to use state regulatory authority to protect that investment.

> I would kindly ask what has been done, or what is going to be done, in reference to the breeding grounds of the whitefish at Chequamegon Bay. Certainly something must be done, as the present and past modes of fishing is very fast depopulating the waters, owing to the unprincipled people employed in fishing. … Now this is getting to be a serious question with us. We have invested over $200,000 in the state of Wisconsin at Bayfield and Ashland and would therefore ask protection from the fish commissioners, as something certainly must be done to protect our industry, as we are not there for today, but we are there for the future…. Now, certainly some stringent measure must (or should) be taken immediately to offer us some protection, also to protect the fishing grounds, otherwise there will not be any white fish on the south shore of Lake Superior.

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[48] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1878, 8; Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 36; Laflin & Co. Wholesale Dealers in Oysters and Fish, "Need of a National Law to Regulate the Size of both Pound and Gill Nets on the Great Lakes," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* 4 (1884): 232-4; F. W. Roach, IJC Notes, Box 11, vol. D, 147.

In Turner's eyes, Booth's investment in Wisconsin industry gave the company the right to expect preferential treatment from the state, at the expense of smaller, poorer fishermen.[49]

State regulation benefited some fishermen more than others. Large operations like Booth, wageworkers, and full-time fishermen benefited the most from regulation, while the part-time fishermen and independents suffered. Restrictions on mesh size posed a real hardship on many fishermen. Independent fishermen who had recently invested in new nets—only to have those nets declared illegal—did not have the money to refit their rigs. Closed seasons worked to the advantage of large fish dealers like Booth, because it gave them time to dispose of their supply of frozen fish while no new fish reached the market. Even James Nevin, superintendent of the Wisconsin Fish Commission, recognized the unequal benefits of state regulation. "I consider the close season for fishing on the Great Lakes as being in the interest of the syndicate of fish dealers … to the disadvantage of the small fishermen on the lakes." Most independent fishermen accepted minimum mesh sizes for nets, but resisted the gradual tightening of other regulations.[50]

Despite the increasing restrictions, enforcement remained a problem. Those who opposed regulation easily circumvented what regulations did exist. Fishermen set their nets during the closed seasons or in areas declared off-limits. The Wisconsin Fish Commission received constant reports of violations of the fishing laws, but could do little in response. "We have neither the means nor the power to proceed against a single offender not possessed by every other citizen of the state," complained the commissioners in 1887. Wisconsin wardens encountered district attorneys who refused to prosecute fish and game violations, justices of the peace who ruled such

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[49] BCP, October 20, 1983 (a reprint of C. W. Turner's 1893 letter).

[50] IJC Notes, especially Box 11, vol. D., 145-47 and 174-97; James Nevin, "Artificial Propagation versus a Close Season For the Great Lakes," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 27 (1898): 25.

laws unconstitutional, and judges who returned guilty judgments without punishment. The Wisconsin Fish Commission repeatedly asked the legislature to appropriate more money for wardens and to give those wardens more power.[51]

By the turn of the century, however, the state of Wisconsin had made significant headway in enforcing fishing regulations. The legislature appointed five wardens to focus solely on the enforcement of fish and game laws in 1897, and these appointments made an immediate impact. In 1898, the state fish and game warden reported 614 arrests, 511 convictions, $6,415 in fines and the confiscation of over $15,000 nets, boats, and other fishing gear; he attributed this enforcement record to the presence of the new appointments. In 1899, the state legislature approved the appointment of thirty deputy wardens around the state.[52]

As the state extended its regulatory authority over commercial fishing, it simultaneously sought to control the fishing of Ojibwe Indians both on and off the reservations. Ojibwe had participated in the Chequamegon Bay commercial fishery since its inception in the 1830s. Ojibwe fishing, however, differed in that fishermen often blended commercial and subsistence opportunities. When Ojibwe continued to follow this pattern in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, they increasingly came into conflict with state-imposed closed seasons, sanctuary laws, and minimum weight requirements. Ojibwe fished nonetheless, confident that the treaties they had made with the federal government protected their rights to do so. Wisconsin's state authorities believed differently, and sought to control Ojibwe fishing much as they had the activities of other commercial fishermen.

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[51] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1885-1886, 5, and 1893-1894, 29-30.

[52] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1895-1896, 35, and 1897-1898, 86; Scott and Reitz, *The Wisconsin Warden*, 6, 8.

Since the creation of reservations under the treaty of 1854, the goal of federal Indian policy in Wisconsin had been to confine the Ojibwe to those reservations. By the close of the nineteenth century, this policy had largely succeeded. In the Chequamegon Bay, however, where the Bad River and Red Cliff Reservations lay only a few miles away from the port towns of Ashland, Bayfield, and Washburn, many Ojibwe pursued a mixture of subsistence and commercial activities, much as they had since the fur trade era. They took wage-paying jobs in the area's fishing, logging, and mining industries, but left these jobs when other opportunities presented themselves—much to the chagrin of the federal Indian agents who had set as their goal the training of Ojibwe men for "civilized" occupations. This pattern held particularly true in fishing, where Ojibwe men continued to mix independent fishing, wage work for white fishermen, and subsistence, with little regard to reservation boundaries.[53]

In the late 1880s, as they restricted commercial fishing, state authorities tried to ensure that Ojibwe fishermen obeyed the new laws. In 1889, several Red Cliff Indians were arrested for placing nets just off the shore of their reservation, in violation of a newly passed regulation prohibiting fishing on or near the shore of Lake Superior. As state fishing regulations tightened, conflicts with Ojibwe fishermen increased. In 1896, Wisconsin wardens confiscated the nets of two prominent Red Cliff residents, Antoine Buffalo and Michael DePerry. Buffalo and DePerry approached W. A. Mercer, the federal Indian agent stationed at Ashland, complaining "that their nets have been removed from the water and their fishing suspended at the height of the fishing

[53] Shifferd, "A Study in Economic Change"; Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 79.

season, and that they are being put to great inconvenience thereby, as it is at this period that they cure the fish, for their own use in the winter time…" Buffalo and DePerry were also arrested.[54]

From the start of their conflict with the state over hunting and fishing, Wisconsin Ojibwe consistently maintained that the 1854 treaty of La Pointe guaranteed their right to pursue these activities both on and off the reservations. The Ojibwe arrested in 1889 claimed "that it has been customary from time immemorial for many of the Chippewas to obtain the major part of their subsistence from that source…" The 1854 treaty protected Ojibwe right to hunt and fish in the ceded territory until otherwise ordered by the president. This clause, the Ojibwe argued, had never been revoked. Agent Mercer reported the Indian reaction when state wardens prevented several Red Cliff band members from using their nets under the laws regulating mesh size in 1894: "The Indians all feel that they are entitled to hunt and fish as they may choose and that the stipulation of the treaty with the Government granting this privilege has never been changed." Until they heard otherwise from the president, the Ojibwe planned to continue to hunt and fish.[55]

Authorities in the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the Wisconsin Fish Commission had a different interpretation of Ojibwe rights. Both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Wisconsin fish and game warden wanted a definite opinion on the subject, and asked the Wisconsin attorney general for direction in the 1896 arrests of Antoine Buffalo and Michael DePerry. Attorney General W. H. Mylrea offered his opinion in unequivocal terms: "It is my opinion that the Indians in the state are amenable to the state laws. The power of the state to regulate and control the taking of fish and game is unquestioned." Mylrea argued that because

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[54] W. A. Mercer to H. E. Briggs, June 6, 1896, and D. M Browning, Commissioner, to Lieut. W. A. Mercer, June 25, 1894, Wisconsin Department of Justice, Closed Case Files, Series 644, Box 2, Folder 5 (36), WHS.

[55] Browning to Mercer, June 25, 1894; Lieut. W. A. Mercer to Commissioner of IA, June 12, 1894, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, NA, RG 75, Box 1096, LR 1894: 22633.

the federal government had not reserved the right to manage wildlife when Wisconsin became a state in 1849, this right remained with the state. "The state is entitled," Mylrea continued, "to punish Indians as well as others for the violations of the fish and game laws." Mylrea provided the first legal opinion on treaty-guaranteed fishing rights in Wisconsin, and his comments provided the impetus for a concerted campaign to curtail these rights.[56]

The state's authority to restrict Indian hunting and fishing received an important test in federal court in 1901. Wisconsin warden Bert McClaughlin arrested John Blackbird, a member of the Bad River Band, for illegally setting a net in Bear Trap Creek, deep in the heart of the Bad River reservation. Blackbird was taken to Ashland, tried and convicted in municipal court, and fined a total of $36.75. When he refused to pay, Blackbird was thrown in the county jail and put to hard labor for thirty days. Throughout these proceedings, Blackbird maintained that the treaty of 1854 protected his right to fish on the reservation, regardless of state law; he appealed to the U. S. district court for a writ of habeas corpus. The Wisconsin attorney general, E. R. Hicks, advanced the argument proposed by W. H. Mylrea in 1896: that Wisconsin had the unquestioned right to manage the game and fish within its borders. Federal judge Romanzo Bunn disagreed. He ruled that the federal government maintained jurisdiction for crimes committed on Indian reservations, and that on-reservation fishing remained outside of state law. He also chided Wisconsin state authorities for their actions: "After taking from them the great body of their lands in Minnesota and Wisconsin … and stipulating that they should always have the right to fish and hunt upon all the lands so ceded, it would be adding insult as well as injustice now to deprive them of the poor privilege of fishing with a seine for suckers in a little red marsh-water

[56] W. H. Mylrea to G. H. McCloud, June 26, 1896, Wisconsin Department of Justice, Closed Case Files, Box 2, Folder 5 (36), WHS.

stream upon their own reservation…. [T]he prisoner's arrest was the result of overzeal on the part of a fish and game warden, which may be excusable, but is not justifiable in law." On Judge Bunn's ruling, Blackbird was released.[57]

Despite the ruling, Wisconsin authorities continued to press for absolute control over the fish and game resources of their state. In June 1907, wardens arrested Red Cliff member Michael Morrin for fishing with gill and pound nets in Red Cliff Bay, just off the reservation but in violation of state laws preventing the use of nets within one mile of the shoreline. Morrin appealed his conviction, and the case traveled to the state supreme court. The case differed from the circumstances of the Blackbird case. In Blackbird, the courts wrestled with the question of subsistence fishing within reservation boundaries. But Morrin had set his nets in Lake Superior, technically off the reservation, and sold his catch to the Bayfield-based Dormer Boutin Fish Company. In addition to claiming the state's right to manage all wildlife within its borders, the Wisconsin attorney general argued that because Morrin had received his U. S. citizenship under the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, he was subject to the same laws as other citizens. Morrin claimed that the treaty of 1854 protected his right to fish, and that the federal government alone held jurisdiction over crimes committed on reservations. The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled in the state's favor. Without mentioning the Blackbird case, the court held that

> to except such Indians from state laws regulating hunting and fishing within the borders of a state after its admission into the Union would deprive the state of its sovereign power to regulate the rights of hunting and fishing ... the stipulations in the treaty with the Chippewa Indians respecting their right to hunt an fish within the borders of this state were abrogated by the act of Congress admitting the state

[57] U. S. District Court, Western District, Wisconsin, "In re. Blackbird, No. 602" *Federal Reporter* 109: 139-45. See also Charles F. Wilkinson, *To Feel the Summer for the Spring: The Treaty Fishing Rights of the Wisconsin Chippewa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Law School, 1990), 20; Steven Eric Silvern, "Nature, Territory, and Identity in the Wisconsin Ojibwe Treaty Rights Conflict," (Ph.D diss., University of Wisconsin, 1993), 139.

> into the Union and making no reservation as to such rights…. In view of this fact, we cannot perceive how he can claim immunity from the criminal law of this state. His status is like that of every other citizen, and subjects him to penalties of the violation of any state law...

The court issued a powerful ruling, extending the state's regulatory authority over Indian fishing and hunting both on and off the reservations. The Morrin ruling restricted Ojibwe treaty rights to hunt and fish for the following seventy-five years.[58]

As with the regulatory laws, court decisions did necessarily translate into changed behavior. Much as they had before the state attack on their treaty rights, Ojibwe continued to rely on the fish of Lake Superior for both wage work and subsistence. They sold their catch commercially or worked for other fishermen, but they either complied with state fishing laws or risked further run-ins with state wardens. The intermittent cases concerning Indian violations of fish and game laws that appeared in Wisconsin courts throughout the twentieth century testify to Ojibwe resistance to state authority. Concern over hunting and fishing rights also played a central role in negotiations between the federal government and members of both Chequamegon Bay reservations on the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in the 1960s.[59]

The state's growing control over both commercial fishing and Ojibwe usufructuary rights was part of a larger process. Over the first several decades of the twentieth century, the state of Wisconsin gradually increased its involvement in the regulation and maintenance of the commercial fisheries on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Although fishermen easily

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[58] Supreme Court of Wisconsin, "The State vs. Morrin," *Wisconsin Reports* 136 (1908): 552-57; F. L. Gilbert and A. C. Titus, Attorneys for Plaintiff, and W. M. Tomkins and M. E. Dillon, Attorneys for Defendant, "State of Wisconsin vs. Michael Morrin, Wisconsin Supreme Court," *Wisconsin Reports Cases and Briefs* 136 (Book 12): 552; Victor T. Pierrelee to F. L. Gilbert, July 13, 1907, Wisconsin Department of Justice, Closed Case Files, Box 8, Folder 36; Wilkinson, "To Feel the Summer for the Spring," 21; Silvern, "Nature, Territory, and Identity," 140-41.

[59] Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 87-90; Silvern, "Nature, Territory, and Identity," 141-44.

circumvented the earliest regulations, the growing state role in fishery management marked an important turning point in the history of the Apostles and the Chequamegon Bay region. These were the first steps toward bringing what James C. Scott calls "legibility" to the management of natural resources: that is, simplification for easier state management. Regulations like closed seasons, mesh size, and weight restrictions systematized fishing, making it easier for the state to control. The state had a similar motive in curtailing Indian fishing. Ojibwe had argued that treaties gave them special privileges, but legibility required that state fishery managers force Ojibwe fishermen to comply with the same simplified rules as everyone else. Exceptions for subsistence fishermen made the extension of the state's regulatory authority far more difficult. The implementation of a license system for commercial fishermen in 1909 serves as a classic example of state action designed to increase the legibility of natural resource management. With licensed fishermen, the state could more easily track and control commercial fishing.[60]

Over the rest of the twentieth century, the role of the regulatory state continued to grow. Regulation expanded from the fisheries to land use and economic development. With each new regulation, the state—first in the form of the state of Wisconsin, and then the federal government—further simplified the natural resources under its control, and further prescribed the actions of the residents of the region. Each of these regulations, too, shaped the changing physical environment of the Chequamegon Bay. The regulatory authority of the state—although virtually absent for most of the nineteenth century—emerged in the twentieth century as one of

[60] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2-3; *Laws of Wisconsin, 1909* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1909), ch. 357, s.1.

the most potent forces shaping the economic and environmental history of the Apostle Islands.

Reshaping the Fishery

The extension of state authority did not stop with restriction and regulation. At the same time as it tried to simplify and control the commercial fishery, the state also took active steps to repair it. Most directly through artificial propagation programs but also through the imposition of closed seasons and the creation of spawning sanctuaries, the Wisconsin Fish Commission sought to reshape nature to its own ends.

Like regulation, artificial fish propagation developed before the crash of the Lake Superior whitefish in the 1890s. In 1872, federal fisheries expert James Milner urged the states to establish stocking programs, especially for whitefish. The states took his advice. When Wisconsin created its fish commission in 1874, the commissioners immediately announced plans to plant five million fry (the term for recently hatched fish) in Lake Michigan. Although the commission at first focused on the more heavily fished Lake Michigan, the commissioners cautioned in their first annual report that Lake Superior must not be ignored. “The propagation of the white fish must always constitute the leading object of the Commission, and the stocking of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and Green Bay, must be kept steadily in view,” declared the 1876 annual report. The following year, the commission distributed its first whitefish and lake trout fry in Lake Michigan. Artificial propagation did not begin in Lake Superior until 1885, when the commission released 2.25 million whitefish fry into Chequamegon Bay at Ashland. The commission subsequently planted fry at various points along the Lake Superior shore, although the amounts fluctuated widely. In 1891, for example, the commission planted ten

million fry, the following year only two million. The U. S. Fish Commission provided technical support, and in some places participated directly in the fish stocking programs.[61]

The report of the International Joint Commission coincided with a renewed dedication to propagation programs. In 1895, the Wisconsin legislature appropriated $20,000 for the establishment of a new fish hatchery in northern Wisconsin. Three of Bayfield's most prominent businessmen—led by lumberman R. D. Pike—donated six hundred acres of land for the project. "[H]ereafter we shall be able to increase the output and prevent the practical extermination of this choicest product of our waters," pronounced James Nevin. With the help of the new Bayfield Fish Hatchery, the Wisconsin Fish Commission continued to release staggering amounts of fry in the Apostle Islands: 11.5 million lake trout fry in 1899; 22 million lake trout fry in 1900; 13.8 million lake trout fry and 8 million whitefish fry in 1901; 13.5 million lake trout and 18.8 million whitefish in 1902.[62]

The fishermen supported artificial propagation far more enthusiastically than regulation. In 1886, 156 Lake Superior fishermen petitioned the U. S. Fish Commission for an enhanced federal role in artificial propagation. The fishermen themselves performed an important part of the project. During spawning season, they regularly stripped their catch of milt and eggs for the hatchery, and volunteered their time to distribute fry and fingerlings (young fish reared in the hatchery). Many fishermen practiced a form of artificial propagation even when they were not working directly for the hatcheries. As they caught fish during spawning season, they mixed eggs

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[61] Milner, "Report on the Fisheries of the Great Lakes," 16; Ron Poff, *From Milk Can to Ecosystem Management: A Historical Perspective on Wisconsin's Fisheries Management Program, 1830s-1990s* (Madison: Bureau of Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1996), 3; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1874, 1876, p. 5, 1885-1886. p. 19, 1891-1892, p. 69; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1885, ix; McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*, 105.

[62] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1895-1896, pp. 1-10, 20, 1899-1900, p. 99, and 1901-1902, pp. 94-95.

and milt directly on their boats and dumped the fertilized mixture back into the water on the spot. The Booth tug *T. H. Camp*, based on Rocky Island, followed this practice, as did many of the other fishermen working in the islands. When the legislature established closed seasons for lake trout and whitefish, the fish commission issued permits that allowed limited fishing during the closed season in return for the collection of eggs and milt for the hatcheries. The fishermen recognized that their industry stood to gain from the state-sponsored propagation program.[63]

Despite this enthusiastic support, the actual impact of fish stocking on the commercial harvest remains unclear. Early proponents of artificial propagation approached their project with a passion reminiscent of nineteenth-century town boosters. W. D. Tomlin told the American Fisheries Society in 1897, for example, that artificial propagation produced fish more efficiently than nature itself. James Nevin, the longtime superintendent of the Wisconsin Fish Commission, believed that planting fry, not closed seasons or other forms of regulation, would best resuscitate the fishery. “I don't believe in a close season. We can accomplish more without, by having the men strip the eggs and plant them back in the spawning grounds,” he declared. Artificial propagation remained so popular in large part because these programs were much more easily carried out than the enforcement of legislated regulations. Fishermen, too, testified to the impact of stocking programs. Fishermen along Lake Superior’s Minnesota shore, for example, believed that “much good has been done and the catch, especially of whitefish, considerably increased.” Historian Joseph Taylor explains late nineteenth-century faith in fish culture as the result of the view of nature as a controllable, closed system that could be easily modified to fit human ends.

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[63] Smith and Snell, “Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885,” 36; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1892, 372; M. B. Johnson interview, 17; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1913/1914, 17; IJC Notes, Box 11, vol. D, 220, 226-27, 234.

Indeed, most fish culturists agreed with Nevin, believing that humans could produce fish far more efficiently than unassisted nature. This assumption led fisheries managers and pisciculture experts to consistently misconstrue evidence that the artificial propagation of commercial fish was not working as well as they continued to believe.[64]

Belief in the effectiveness of artificial propagation continued well into the twentieth century, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Stocking did little to arrest the calamitous collapse of the whitefish population in the 1890s. Not until the 1920s did a few scientists begin to question the efficiency and cost of the programs, and even then, the clear majority continued to support stocking programs. As a more modern, scientific understanding of the fisheries emerged over the twentieth century, doubts about the impact of pisciculture continued to grow. One 1956 study found no positive evidence that artificial propagation had ever significantly increased the yield of the commercial fisheries. A 1970 survey concluded: "It is not really clear that these activities, formal or informal, have materially affected the populations of any species other than … brown and rainbow trout."[65]

For the fisherman and government experts of the nineteenth century, however, artificial propagation represented an attempt to make nature work for them. If technology and economic structures could change, so, too, could the underwater ecosystems of the Lake Superior. Fisheries experts designed closed seasons, instituted during the spawning season, to give the fish populations a chance to regenerate. The creation of sanctuaries—around spawning grounds or

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[64] W. D. Tomlin, "Advancement in Fish Production," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 26 (1897): 93-112; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1892, 372; Taylor, *Making Salmon*, 100, 109.

[65] As techniques for artificial propagation matured in the twentieth century, however, these programs became much more successful, such as with the rehabilitation of the lake trout population in Lake Superior since the 1960s. Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 3; J. R. Fymond, "Artificial Propagation in the Management of Great Lakes Fisheries," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 86 (1956): 384-92; McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*, 105-8.

preferred feeding areas such as the Chequamegon Bay—were also based on contemporary understanding of the needs of specific species, and an attempt to nurture those species. Restrictions on the deposition of fish offal and sawdust developed from the belief that these substances harmed fish populations. And propagation programs, of course, aimed to bolster the populations of species adversely affected by heavy fishing. In all of these cases, scientists tried to shape the Great Lakes environment to the benefit of certain commercially valuable species of fish. Nature was not something they merely reacted to, but something that could be controlled.

Why did state officials expend so much effort and energy on the protection and propagation of commercially valuable fish species, but so little on commercially valuable forest trees? There are several potential explanations. First, many people believed that forests were supposed to give way to cleared fields—this was a part of the progress of civilization, and little should be done to stop it. No similar sense of progression existed for the fisheries. Second, people believed artificial propagation could arrest the decline of the fisheries, and even improve their efficiency, with immediate results; forests took far longer to repair. Finally, fish species held recreational as well as economic potential, a value that did not at that time exist for forests The demands of sportsmen, as we shall see in the next chapter, added an additional motivation for the control of wasteful fishing practices and the protection of fish and wildlife.

New Techniques, New Fish, & the Emergence of the Twentieth-Century Fishery

Regulation and propagation were not the only responses to the changing situation of the commercial fishing industry. Fisherman of the Apostles and the Chequamegon Bay began to change the way that they fished, and the species of fish that they sought. Whitefish had long

dominated the commercial harvest, especially in Bayfield. But as whitefish declined, fishermen simply switched to lake trout. In the mid 1890s, herring, too, became an important component of the commercial harvest. These changes, in turn, sparked a reorganization of the economic structure of the fishing industry.

Over the last two decades of the nineteenth century, lake trout replaced whitefish in the fishermen's nets. On Lake Superior, the percentage of lake trout in the overall catch grew from 38 percent in 1880 to 43 percent in 1890 to 61 percent in 1899. In Bayfield, trout made up 20 percent of the catch in 1885, when whitefish still accounted for 73 percent of the total. By 1899, lake trout constituted 45 percent of the catch. Anecdotal observations of the local fishermen corroborated the shift. M. B. Johnson told the Joint Commission investigators in 1894 that he did "not expect the tug 'Camp'… has caught 10 lbs. of whitefish all the season so far. It is all trout." Fishermen understood the shift as a simple matter of supply and demand. When delicate, tasty whitefish were easy to catch and cheap to buy, there was little market for trout. But as whitefish became harder to find, prices jumped, the demand for cheaper trout rose accordingly.[66]

The increasing prevalence of lake trout brought shifts in the organization and apparatus of the industry. Pound nets had long provided the best chance for catching whitefish. The underwater environments of the islands and Chequamegon Bay provided the perfect situation for pound nets, explaining Bayfield's early dominance and rapid decline of the Bayfield whitefish fishery. When whitefish stocks collapsed, pound nets lost their competitive edge. Bayfield pound netters hauled in an average of 11,420 pounds of lake trout and whitefish per net in 1890. By 1899, yield per pound net had dropped to just 1,260 pounds. "There are not as many pounds now

[66] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1887, 1892, 1902, and 1904; M. B. Johnson interview; *Report of the Joint Commission*, 147.

as there used to be simply because they cannot get enough fish to pay them to use them," explained south shore fisherman Edward S. Smith. Meanwhile, with advent of steam tugs, mechanical gill net lifters, and linen nets, the effectiveness of gill nets had increased significantly. Where pound nets had once been the gear of choice for the larger, more financially secure fishermen of the Apostles, this was not longer the case by the mid-1890s. The A. Booth Packing Company, for example, invested in gill net steamers rather than pound nets. The more versatile gill nets also offered a better chance at catching lake trout, which swam in deeper waters and with a greater range than whitefish. In 1890, the fishermen of Ashland and Bayfield owned 1,723 gill nets, valued at $16,745. By 1903, these numbers had climbed to 2,598 nets valued at $29,588. Gill nets had become the preferred apparatus for island fishermen.[67]

Herring, too, became increasingly important at the end of the nineteenth century. Much as with the whitefish fishery, geography and environmental conditions made the Apostle Islands the premier herring grounds on Lake Superior. Lake herring (*Coregonus artedii* Lesueur) are a much smaller fish than any of the other Great Lakes commercial species. Herring feed primarily on plankton, which they find in the deep waters of Lake Superior during the summer. But as winter approaches, herring move inland toward shallower waters, congregating in schools numbering in the millions. Spawning season occurs at the end of autumn—in the Apostles, typically in November. "At that time they appear in millions … over the great muddy bottoms in the shallower Wisconsin waters at the extreme western end of the south shore of the lake," recorded one observer. The massive numbers and shallow waters made herring particularly vulnerable to

[67] U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1894, 1902, 1904; Edward S. Smith, interview by Richard Rathbun, July 5, 1894, Duluth, Minnesota, IJC Notes, Box 7, vol. II.

commercial nets during the two- to three-week spawning season. In fact, almost 90 percent of the annual catch of herring occurred during this time.[68]

Lake Superior fishermen did not start catching herring until the 1890s. Herring spoil easily, especially from over-handling; until the perfection of curing and freezing techniques, the fish could not be sold commercially. When James Milner surveyed the industry in 1871, he noted the tremendous abundance of the fish but commented on the lack of markets. Technological improvements increased the marketability of herring after the 1880s. As with the other commercial species, the herring fishery on Lake Superior developed far later than it had on the other Great Lakes. In 1890, when Lake Superior fishermen caught just less than 200,000 pounds of herring, Lake Erie fishermen hauled in over 44 *million* pounds. (Shallow Lake Erie provided an ideal environment for herring.) One 1892 federal report noted that the "lake herring is abundant throughout [Lake Superior], but, being regarded as a cheap fish, it has little market value at the present time." But as whitefish disappeared, fishermen increasingly turned to herring as a replacement. Freezing and transportation technology ensured the ability to get herring to market. And as the Lake Superior region became more populated, a new use for the fish emerged: farmers purchased large amounts of the cheap fish to use as fertilizer on their fields.[69]

Especially for the fishermen of Bayfield—who had long relied on whitefish—herring became an increasingly important component of the commercial harvest. In 1890, herring made up a mere 6.1 percent of the catch, measured in pounds. By 1899 this number had climbed to

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[68] A. C. Dunn, "The Lake Superior Herring," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 47 (1917-1918): 92-95; Rahrer and Lawrie, *Lake Superior*, 52; Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin*, 341-45; Woolman, Notes to Accompany Chart No. 3," IJC Notes.

[69] Milner, "Report on the Fisheries of the Great Lakes," 65; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 155-56; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1892, 370, and 1904, 652.

44% and then to 63.7% by 1903. Just as they had dominated Lake Superior's whitefish trade, Bayfield fishermen quickly emerged as the lake's largest suppliers of herring. By 1903 Bayfield fishermen produced over 64 percent of the lake's commercial catch of herring.

Commercial Catch of Herring, Lake Superior and Bayfield Vicinity[70]			
Year	Pounds Herring, Lake Superior	Pounds Herring, Bayfield and Vicinity	Bayfield catch as % of Lake Superior total
1885	324,670	70,000	21.6%
1890	199,121	94,102	47.3%
1899	1,125,478	696,959[71]	61.9%
1903	4,742,805	3,046,025	64.2%

Although tremendous amounts of herring passed through Bayfield's packinghouses, the fish did not command that high a price. The first several hauls in November paid well, but the markets were soon glutted with herring. In 1903, for example, 3,046,025 pounds of fresh and salted herring brought in only $18,870 (just $.60 for one hundred pounds of herring). In contrast, fresh and salted whitefish combined to value $4.12/100 lbs. and trout sold for 3.78/100 lbs.).[72]

Herring season quickly became one of the central economic and social events in Bayfield. Prime herring season did not occur until the whitefish and lake trout season had ended; the fishermen focused entirely on the herring while they spawned. By 1903, herring constituted 25 percent of the value of Bayfield's entire commercial catch. An observer recorded the scene on the Bayfield docks in 1898: "During most of the season the men are engaged in taking whitefish and trout, but as the cold weather comes on and the close season for the big fish begins, they turn their attention to the herring, and every available spot on the docks is covered with a temporary

[70] Compiled from U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1887, 1892, 1902, and 1904.

[71] 1899 was a particularly bad year for herring; through the mid-1890s Bayfield's fishermen regularly caught over one million pounds of herring, and they topped two million in 1895 and 1896.

[72] Woolman, "Notes to Accompany Chart No. 3," IJC Notes.

house for dressing and packing these small but delicious fish." Unlike trout and whitefish fishing, fishermen did not pick the nets while on the water; they simply hauled in the packed nets and headed back to town. A single haul during the height of spawning season often weighed well over ten tons. Each night, steamers and sailboats returned to Bayfield, their forward decks "filled with a mass of squirming fish." Dockworkers picked the nets of herring, cleaned them, and readied them for the next day's run. The packinghouses did not have enough staff to handle so much fish, so they hired extra workers during the herring season. Once pickers removed herring from the nets, they carried the fish into the packinghouse, where workers used assembly line methods to behead, gut, and pack the herring. Dealers usually salted most of the catch, although they froze some, as well. In 1904, Booth built a canning operation with a capacity of 2,500 cans of herring per day. As the size of the herring harvest expanded in the twentieth century, the dealers hired as many as one hundred people just for the herring season.[73]

The increasing importance of herring in the overall percentage of the commercial catch further marginalized pound nets as an effective technology. By the time the herring spawning season began in November, pound net fishermen had taken in most of the their nets. To catch herring, fishermen used special herring nets—essentially, a gill net with a small enough mesh to catch the small fish. Steam tugs and power lifters greatly assisted fishermen in their ability to bring in such large quantities of fish on a single night's run.[74]

The whitefish collapse in the 1890s also reshaped the organization of the fishing industry in the Apostles. Throughout the 1890s, A. Booth Packing Company had continued to extend its

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[73] BCP, December 10, 1898; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 35, 61; Joseph La Belle, interview by Richard Rathbun, Bayfield, WI, July 10, 1894, IJC Notes, IJC Notes, Box 8, vol. III; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1904.

[74] Prothero, *The Good Years*, 40-48.

dominance of on Lake Superior and elsewhere on the Great Lakes. The financial distress caused by the whitefish collapse, combined with the financial panic that swept the country in 1893, aided Booth in this endeavor. Around the lakes, Booth purchased the fishing outfits and dealerships that had failed during the 1890s. The firm reorganized in 1898, incorporating as A. Booth Packing Company with a capital stock of $5.5 million—by far the largest and most widespread fishing company on the Great Lakes. In this consolidation, the commercial fishery mirrored the trends of other American industries of the time; Booth even earned the derogatory label of the "fish trust." Company officials argued, however, that their dominance of the industry meant more efficient marketing and less wasteful fishing practices. In many places on the Great Lakes, fishermen had little choice but to sell their fish to Booth—at Booth's prices—because no other dealers remained in business. Bayfield, though, with its proximity to the rich island fishing grounds, continued to provide a home for two or three other small fish dealers.[75]

A. Booth and Company did not fare well in its new form. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the company regularly sparred with federal, state, and Canadian provincial regulatory agencies. It suffered, too, from poor commercial catches of 1905 and 1906. The Wisconsin Fish Commission described 1906 as one of the worst years on record; the Lake Superior fishing tugs stopped running early in the season because the nets continually came up empty. In 1908, A. Booth and Company declared bankruptcy and shut down entirely, before reopening in 1909 as the Booth Fisheries Company. No corporate records remain to explain the

[75] Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 264.

specifics of the company's financial troubles. One Bayfield fisherman, however, remembered that the poor fishing years directly contributed to the problems.[76]

Booth's 1908 bankruptcy marked a major transition in the Bayfield fishery. The company overhauled its entire operation. It sold its nets to individual fishermen, ceased employing fishermen directly, and focused entirely on collecting, processing, marketing the catch. The fishermen stationed at Rocky and South Twin Islands as Booth employees became independents, selling their catch to Booth or other Bayfield fish dealers. After 1908, all of the fishermen in the Apostles worked for themselves, although some did borrow money from the Booth Fisheries Company. Booth's collection boats visited the island fishing stations on a regular schedule, dropping off fresh ice and picking up the daily catch. Bayfield's other dealers worked the same way, or simply waited for the fishermen to bring the catch to them at the end of each day. Bayfield's fishermen and fish dealers followed this model for the next half-century.[77]

Technological developments in the early twentieth century made the new economic organization possible. In 1899, a fishing firm in Marquette, Michigan attached primitive gasoline engines to sailboats as a form of auxiliary power. The idea quickly caught on. As gasoline engines became more common, fishermen adapted them for use on their boats. By 1903, thirty-five gasoline launches plied Lake Superior, including five in the Apostle Islands. By 1910, gasoline boasts dominated the inshore fishing industry. Even the most primitive gasoline engines made the work of independent fishermen far more feasible. With the assistance of powerboats, a crew of one or two could more easily take advantage of other technological innovations like

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[76] *Ibid.*, 264-72; Goodier, "Fishermen on Canadian Lake Superior," 289; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1905/1906, 22; Fred Benson interview.

[77] Neuman, *Special History Study: Rocky and South Twin Islands*; Fred Benson interview.

mechanical lifters. Gasoline engines also increased the fishermen's range, the number of nets they could handle, and their ability to combat inclement weather. Steam tugs had required a much larger crew—and larger amounts of capital to pay for hired help and the maintenance of the engines and their larger boats. Gasoline engines provided the advantages of steam tugs to fishermen of more limited means. In most other American industries of the time, technological innovation paved the way for increasing scale and corporate organization; the reverse was true in the Great Lakes commercial fishery. The environmental changes that favored gill nets over pound nets and the evolution of gas-powered boats meant that smaller, independent fishermen took the place of corporations like Booth on the waters of the Lake Superior.[78]

The fishing industry of the Chequamegon Bay looked far different in 1910 than it had in 1880. Fishermen used different equipment to catch different species of fish, preserved their catch in new ways and prosecuted their industry under the guard of a powerful regulatory state. One thing remained constant, however: the natural and human systems of the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay continued to change in reaction to each other. As human systems for catching fish shifted, fish populations responded. Whitefish had all but disappeared from the island waters by 1900, forced out by entrapping pound nets, constant fishing pressure, and the slag and sawdust produced by the logging industry. By the 1930s, however, all of these conditions had changed. Lumbering and milling had ceased, fishermen used fewer pound nets, and the state protected spawning sanctuaries and enforced close seasons; whitefish returned to the islands. In

[78] U.S. Lighthouse Service, Sand Island Keeper's Log, entry for August 25, 1904, AINL Library [hereafter, SI Keeper's Log]; U. S. Fish Commission Report 1901, p. 589, 1904, p. 647, 655 and 1925, pp. 555-56; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 258; Ross, *La Pointe*, 192; Neuman, "What are those Cabins Doing There?" 34, 36.

1936, the Chequamegon Bay whitefish catch topped 100,000 pounds for just the second time since 1908. Harvests continued to climb steadily, and topped 700,000 in 1948.[79]

The natural and human systems of the Apostle Islands fishery continued to react to each other throughout the twentieth century. With each action, with each reaction, these systems grew more inextricably connected. But commercial fishermen were not the only ones whose actions altered the underwater environments of the Apostle Islands. A new breed of fishermen—those fishing for sport rather than money—brought a different set of assumptions and priorities to fisheries management. The actions of sport fishermen and tourists shaped the island environments in still other ways.

[79] Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 48; Baldwin and Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production*, 150.

CHAPTER FOUR
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Consuming the Islands:
Tourism and the Economy of the Chequamegon Bay, 1855-1934

In 1865, avid outdoorsman Robert Barnwell Roosevelt traveled to Lake Superior for a month of sightseeing, fishing, and camping. His companion was Don Pedro, a man so green to the ways of the woods that roughing it meant "finding his claret sour or being compelled twice in one day to eat the same kind of game…" Roosevelt wrote about his adventures in *Superior Fishing: The Striped Bass, Trout, and Black Bass of the Northern States*, anticipating many of the ideas associated with his far more famous nephew, Theodore. The elder Roosevelt wrote passionately about the sportsman's ethic, the need for conservation, and the advantages of outdoor life. Although the "true mode of enjoying the sport is by camping out," Roosevelt conceded that Bayfield and the Apostle Islands provided "the best of fishing, united with good hotel life." As Roosevelt and his party turned back toward the east, he lamented the end of his adventure: "This was to be our last day on the lake, our last day in the open woods, the last time we were to stand face to face with nature's solitude—and our spirits felt depressed at the prospect … We were approaching civilization, where stiff and stately houses were to limit our views, and man's works shut out those of God." Roosevelt's ideas represent early evidence of the sea-change in American ideas about nature, the growing celebration of wilderness and increasing wariness of an urban, structured, and industrial society. It would not have occurred to Roosevelt that his actions, and those of the tourists and sportsmen who followed him to places

like the Apostle Islands, shaped wilderness environments in ways similar to the logging, quarrying, or other demands of a rapidly industrializing nation.[1]

At first glance, tourism seems very different than the other economic activities that took place on the Chequamegon Bay at the turn of the century. While lumberjacks cut huge swaths of island forest, quarrymen gauged deep pits in the shoreline bluffs, and fishermen snared millions of pounds of fish, wealthy tourists traveled the islands in search of picturesque scenery, clean air, and the sporting life. One might even think that tourism and these extractive activities came into direct conflict. A closer look, however, reveals that tourism had much in common with extractive industries. Tourism on an economic periphery like the Chequamegon Bay followed the same pattern of development as logging and fishing. Island tourism developed as it did because of a delicate interplay between local history and geography and nationwide cultural trends. And the demands of the tourist trade bound human and ecological processes tightly together. Although it might not have had the visible impact of logging, tourism also contributed to the economic and environmental transformation of the islands during the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. In fact, tourism's impact on island environments proved far more enduring than the other extractive industries so important to the Chequamegon Bay economy.

Historians typically treat tourism as an activity fundamentally different from other industries. Indeed, they regard tourism as the product of a maturing, consumer-oriented economy growing beyond dependence on resource extraction. As the nation's population moved to the cities and with the developing middle class earning disposable income and leisure time, tourism emerged as a central aspect of a consumer society—a society that placed more value on the

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[1] Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, *Superior Fishing: The Striped Bass, Trout, and Black Bass of the Northern States* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985; repr., G. W. Carleton: New York, 1865), 23, 118, 120, 122.

meaning of goods (and vacations) than on their practical use. Tourism was a cultural, not a commercial, activity. The reason to study tourism, then, is for its meaning not for its impact. Tourism has been used as vehicle to study emerging regional and national identity, class structure, or changing ideas about nature, work, and leisure. In this search for meaning, historians treat tourism as a different class of activity than the productive industries like farming or logging. The search for meaning, however, makes the environmental consequences of tourism harder to trace. Far fewer historians have investigated tourism in material, commercial terms, or explored the practices and environmental transformations necessary to build the tourist trade's many layers of meaning.[2]

Environmental historians have a special interest in tourism. Particularly during the nineteenth century, the activities of tourists played a central role in changing American ideas about nature and wilderness. Through tourism, many scholars have argued, Americans came to

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[2] The literature on tourism has exploded in the last fifteen years. For tourism and the emergence of national and regional (usually western) identity, see Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957); Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Scott Norris, ed., *Discovered Country: Tourism and Survival in the American West* (Albuquerque, NM: Stone Ladder Press, 1994). For tourism as a form of consumption, see Shaffer, *See America First*; Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). For tourism and class identity, see Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979). For tourism and changing ideas of nature and wilderness, see Sears, *Sacred Places*; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto, CAN: University of Toronto Press, 1995); and especially Sutter, *Driven Wild*. Of these, only Rothman, in *Devil's Bargains*, directly considers the material transformations wrought by tourism. For some examples of work in conservation biology on the environmental impact on tourism, see Reed F. Noss, *et al*., "Conservation Biology and Carnivore Conservation in the Rocky Mountains," *Conservation Biology* 10 (August 1996): 949-63; L. M. Bautista, *et al*., "Effect of Weekend Road Traffic on the Use of Space by Raptors," *Conservation Biology* 18 (June 2004): 729-32; J. Priskin, "Tourist Perceptions of Degradation Caused by Coastal Nature-Based Recreation," *Environmental Management* 32 (September 2003): 189-204.

know and celebrate their nation. Robert Barnwell Roosevelt's 1865 fishing expedition to Lake Superior fits into this trend. The United States might not have had the castles and pageantry of European nations, but it had a vast, magnificent wilderness. Both the persistence of and the battle against this wilderness played crucial roles in the formation of the image of the United States as "nature's nation." Out of this identity emerged a national passion for wilderness. For many years, environmental historians followed the lead of Roderick Nash and traced the roots of twentieth-century wilderness protection to this nineteenth-century fascination; Americans appreciated their wilderness so much that they eventually decided it needed protection from the logging, mining, and other industries that threatened it. Recent scholarship, particularly that of Paul S. Sutter in *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*, has revealed a more subtle tension between tourism and wilderness preservation. Aldo Leopold, Robert Sterling Yard, and other founders of the Wilderness Society sought wilderness protection not because of the threats posed by resource extraction, but because of their fear about how quickly tourists—and the roads that carried them—were eating up what little remained of the American wilderness. Both the old and the new interpretations of the relationship between tourism and wilderness treat tourism as fundamentally different from other economic activities.[3]

But perhaps tourism was not so dissimilar. It served as an early and essential component of the Bayfield economy, little different from logging and fishing in the eyes of the town's residents. The earliest tourism in Bayfield—before the arrival of the railroad—demonstrates the similarities between the tourist trade and the extractive economies from which it is usually segregated. As in these other industries, the arrival of the railroad dramatically altered tourism in

[3] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Sutter, *Driven Wild*.

the islands, and the promotional efforts of the railroad corporations provide an opportunity to explore how tourism functioned at the intersection of local conditions in the Chequamegon Bay and national cultural trends. The rise of sport fishing and the development of a wealthy summer community on Madeline Island reveal that tourism demanded the same intermingling of human and natural processes as did other industries. Finally, state power played an implicit role in the tourist economy. Indeed, the increasing role of the state in island land management prompted the segregation of tourism from other types of economic activity.

Tourism and the Chequamegon Bay Economy Before the Railroad

As soon as workmen completed the locks at Sault Ste. Marie in 1855, the Apostle Islands and the rest of Lake Superior became accessible to tourists. Bayfield's boosters wasted little time in promoting the advantages of their town to potential travelers. The boosters recognized that Bayfield's tourist economy depended upon the same factors that determined the health of their logging, fishing, and quarrying interests: capital investment, national transportation networks, and a labor supply. Bayfield's boosters and businessmen did not separate tourism from other industries, but instead looked at it as an integrated part of their town's economy.

Tourism emerged as one of the first important economic activities in Bayfield. Henry Rice commanded William McAboy, the local representative of the Bayfield Land Company, to erect a hotel in 1856—one of the first buildings in town. Rice instructed McAboy to build a plain, simple structure, not a fancy hotel. A more elaborate hotel would be built in the future. "[W]hen we can to advantage we intend to build a <u>fine</u> hotel," Rice explained to McAboy. Delia Whittlesey Chapman, one of the town's first residents, remembered that tourism provided one of

the most important early industries for the growing community. She recalled that "tourists came by boat from all parts of the country east of the Mississippi River, known as 'down below.' They lingered to eat our white fish and went a way to praise it." Out-of-town visitors injected an important supply of cash into the fledgling town's economy.[4]

As in Bayfield's other industries, boosters actively promoted tourism. They used the same grandiose rhetoric in their predictions of a successful tourist trade as they did in promising Bayfield's future as a depot of continental commerce. Boosters suggested a long list of reasons that vacationers should visit Bayfield. Lake Superior, boasted one 1858 brochure, had emerged as "the talk of fashionable tourists" for its magnificent scenery and bracing climate. The pamphlet recommended that tourists "spend a few days and enjoy the fine fishing and sailing this beautiful bay." In 1870, the editors of the *Bayfield Press* expected that the town would soon emerge as a major western resort. "The time will come when the people of Chicago, Milwaukee and the western cities, seeking rest and recreation during the summer months, will flee to this harbor for repose. Nowhere on the lake is the scenery more enchanting." Visitors enjoyed sightseeing, sport fishing, camping, and the healthful weather and pure air of Lake Superior.[5]

Bayfield's business leaders recognized that the growth of their tourist economy depended on raising the capital necessary to construct hotels, boarding houses, and other infrastructure. The fate of Rice's hotel is not clear, but by the early 1870s Bayfield boasted three hotels: Smith's Hotel, the Fountain House, and the La Bonte House. These establishments easily filled their rooms during the summer season. Indeed, Bayfield residents lamented, the town regularly turned

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[4] Henry M. Rice to Major Wm. McAboy, November 25, 1856, Rice Papers, Box 1, Volume 3; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 204, 293.

[5] *Bayfield, Lake Superior*, 12, 13-14; BP, November 12, 1870.

away visitors for lack of rooms. One complained that tourist facilities were "wholly inadequate to meet the demands for accommodation." The editors of one Chequamegon Bay newspaper urged the steamboat companies "whose boats ply this lake, to jointly build a large, first-class hotel upon some one of the islands" or in one of the bayside cities. The editors of the *Bayfield Press* had a grander vision. "It is apparent that a large, well arranged hotel will bring hundreds of people to this place..." Such a hotel would help all aspects of Bayfield's economy. The tourists would "aid in consuming our produce, in giving employment to laboring men and in helping business generally." The editors believed that Bayfield could easily attract at least enough visitors to fill a two hundred-person hotel. They estimated that these visitors would spend an average of one thousand dollars a day on room, board, and other services. The problem, all realized, lay in raising the money to fund such a hotel. "Is there some plan by which we can build a twenty-five thousand dollar hotel?" wondered the editors of the *Press*. Just as in logging or fishing, the ability to secure outside capital determined the fate of Bayfield's tourist trade.[6]

In addition to capital investment, tourism depended on a connection with national transportation networks. Until the arrival of the railroad, this meant steamship travel from the lower lakes. Early tourist promoters directed their efforts at attracting steamship travelers. In 1857, just two years after the completion of the locks at Sault Ste. Marie, John Disturnell published guidebooks titled *A Trip through the Lakes of North America* and *Upper Lakes of North America*, both promising "a complete guide for the pleasure traveler and emigrant." These guidebooks described the scenery and accommodation options for a steamship trip through Lakes Michigan and Superior. In 1856, the Lake Superior Line began offering regular steamship travel

[6] *Industries of Bayfield*, 45; BP, August 21 1878 and May 31, 1879; AP, August 10, 1872.

to the western end of Lake Superior from Cleveland and Detroit, and other companies offered travel from Buffalo and Chicago. A Cleveland company boasted travel on "new, staunch, upper-cabin and low-pressure steamer PLANET," with passage through Sault Ste. Marie, along the south shore of Lake Superior, including "La Pointe, (the fairy region)." Fledgling tourist economies developed all along the shore of Lake Superior as steam travel became more regular. It was by steamer, for example, that Robert Barnwell Roosevelt traveled in 1865.[7]

The railroad represented both the capital investment and the transportation connection that the Chequamegon Bay tourist trade needed to thrive. As soon as they completed construction of tracks into Bayfield and Ashland, the railroad companies erected grand, luxurious hotels in an attempt to lure tourists into the region. In the 1870s, railroad companies began to invest heavily in the construction of these hotels. Tourist dollars provided an important supplement to the lumber, agricultural produce, fish, and other commodities that the railroads hauled to market, and tourists paid for a round trip fare. Early railroad hotels often imitated European architecture and resort style. The Wisconsin Central, for example, erected the Hotel Chequamegon in Ashland in 1877. A promotional brochure boasted: "Broad piazzas on three sides give an unequaled promenade over 1,000 feet in length. The *cuisine* is perfect, not excelled by any hotel in the world…" The hotel had room for five hundred guests and provided "all the modern conveniences," including running water, electricity, fountains, bowling alleys, a billiard parlor, croquet, lawn tennis, and an archery range. When the Omaha reached Bayfield in 1883, it

[7] J. Disturnell, *Upper Lakes of North America* (New York: J. Disturnell, 1857), 57, 93 and *A Trip Through the Lakes of North America* (New York: J. Disturnell, 1857); BM, April 18, 1857, Roosevelt, *Superior Fishing*.

constructed the Island View Hotel in similar style and luxury. Railroads dominated American tourism industry well into the 1920s.[8]

A successful tourist industry required a local labor supply, too, and the people who worked in Bayfield's tourist industry reveal the integration of tourism with the region's other economic activities. Samuel S. Fifield, editor at times of the *Bayfield Press* and the *Ashland Press*, served as the first proprietor for the Hotel Chequamegon. Prominent lumberman John H. Knight ran one of Ashland's other large hotels. The wives and daughters of fishermen and lumberjacks worked in the hotels. Bayfield lumberman Henry Wachsmuth's dry goods store sold not just supplies for loggers but also "boots, shoes, and gent's furnishings" and "fine goods for the resort trade." Excursions to the islands—whether for sightseeing, berry picking, lighthouse picnics, or fishing—usually took place on the larger boats in Bayfield's fishing fleet. N. & F. Boutin's schooner the *Alice Craig*, and later the steamer *N. Boutin*, regularly plied the tourist trade as well as the fishing grounds. The overlapping nature of the Chequamegon Bay's diverse economy will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.[9]

As in fishing and logging, the Native American communities that flanked the Chequamegon Bay played a vital role in the region's tourist economy. Sport fishing and camping were among the most popular tourist activities. Tourists regularly hired local Indians to sail or

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[8] Wisconsin Central Railroad, *Famous Resorts of the Northwest, Summer of 1887* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1887), WHS pamphlet collection, 7; Wisconsin Central Railroad Company, *Summer Resorts of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, Lake Superior Line* (Milwaukee: Cramer, Aikens, and Cramer, 1879), WHS pamphlet collection, 19; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield Wisconsin: The Most Famous Health and Pleasure Resort in Northern Wisconsin* (Bayfield: Bayfield County Press, 1890), WHS pamphlet collection; Aron, *Working At Play*, 49-52; Hyde, *An American Vision*, 148-177; Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 50-113; Shaffer, *See America First*, 40-92.

[9] Wisconsin Central Railroad Company, *Summer Resorts of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, Lake Superior Line*, 19; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 225; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield Wisconsin*, 11-12; BP, August 19, 1871, July 31, 1878, July 29, 1882, and August 18, 1883.

row them to and from the fishing grounds, or to work around the camp on longer expeditions. "Men were employed to take the tourists fishing in row boats and often they would go as far as Sand River and return in one day. Others would take tents and camp for several days," remembered early Bayfield resident Harvey Nourse. "Hank LaPointe, a half-breed Indian, had a mackinaw boat 16 feet in length and he was employed constantly during the summer in taking out fishing parties." Robert Barnwell Roosevelt hired Indian guides when he toured Lake Superior in 1865, as did William Freeman Vilas on his 1873 trip. The money provided by these wealthy out-of-towners served as an important source of income for many Ojibwe. On other parts of the lake, Native Americans earned one dollar a day as laborers but up to sixty dollars a month as guides. The opportunities for Indian guides expanded as the railroads brought more and more tourists to the region.[10]

Although historians often segregate tourism as a separate industry, an act of consumption that functioned in far different ways than production-oriented industries, this was not the case. Early tourism in Bayfield and other points on Lake Superior developed in much the same way as other extractive industries. Both local boosters and national railroad corporations viewed tourism as a part of a varied economic strategy rather than as an activity apart.

Railroad Tourism in the Chequamegon Bay

Much like logging and fishing, the railroad increased the scale of the Chequamegon Bay tourist trade. It made the Apostle Islands easily accessible from Chicago, Milwaukee,

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[10] Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 293, Roosevelt, *Superior Fishing*, 40; Vilas, diary of Lake Superior Trip, 1873; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 97, 135-36. Indians played another important role in early tourism, as the tourists' object of interest; this will be discussed below.

Minneapolis, and other midwestern urban centers. Through the 1920s, the railroad companies aggressively promoted tourism in the northern Great Lakes, and the Apostle Islands emerged as the keystone of these promotional efforts. Tourism did not have a "market" in the same sense as logging or fishing; for the tourist trade, securing markets meant attracting visitors. Promotion of the Apostle Islands and vicinity by the Wisconsin Central and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad companies in the late nineteenth century provides the opportunity to consider why people traveled to the islands, and what they did while there. Tourists did not go just anywhere; they chose specific places for concrete reasons. Like other extractive industries on the economic periphery, tourism developed at the intersection of the local and national: local geographies, histories, and environmental conditions merged with nationwide cultural trends to make the Apostles the premier resort destination of the northern Great Lakes. Tourists traveled the railroads in search of health, scenery, the sporting life, history, and the frontier experience. Many scholars have explored these motivations for travel. My purpose here is to consider why tourists chose the Apostle Islands as their destination.

The anti-urban, anti-industrial, anti-corporate tenor of promotional campaigns conducted by the corporate, industrial railroad companies stands as one of the great ironies of nineteenth-century tourism. As living conditions in American cities deteriorated, especially after the Civil War, the search for health motivated American travelers. Cities grew larger, dirtier, and more congested, and urban residents looked for ways to escape. They wanted vacation destinations to have clean air, spas, refreshing climates, mineral springs, and other restorative attributes. In the 1870s, Dr. George Miller Beard began diagnosing a condition he called neurasthenia, or nervous exhaustion. Miller believed that neurasthenia derived from the pressures of modern, civilized,

urban living. Doctors around the country recommended long stays at healthy spots and resorts as the standard cure for nervous exhaustion, as well as for other diseases like consumption and tuberculosis. Despite their complicity in sullying city environments, railroad companies eagerly promoted their resort hotels as the cure for the nervous, the sick, and the stressed.[11]

In Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay, the railroad companies found a spot they could promote as a health resort to the residents of the congested midwestern urban centers. The railroads pronounced Bayfield "the most healthful spot in the state. It is supplied with pure spring water conveyed in pipes to all parts of the town. This water possesses many of the properties of our most noted mineral waters without their unpleasant taste… BAYFIELD AS A HEALTH RESORT has superior claims. It is a Mecca for all who are troubled with catarrh, asthma, bronchitis and throat diseases of all kinds. Consumption before it has progressed too far easily yields to the influences of our pure dry air and pine forests." Bayfield's boosters took to calling their town the "Fountain City" to emphasize their clean water and the many fountains displayed along the city streets. The railroads sought out national experts like Arthur Holbrook, vice president of the Hay Fever Association of the United States, who declared the Lake Superior region the best refuge in the west for sufferers of hay fever. The Omaha Road quoted Dr. Joseph Hobbins as saying that Bayfield's cool summers and sparsely settled surroundings kept away the pollen and ragweed of more settled regions. The railroad companies tied the national concern with neurasthenia, hay fever, and other illnesses with the specific—and supposedly restorative—attributes of Bayfield and the Chequamegon Bay.[12]

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[11] Hyde, *An American Vision*, 150; Aron, *Working at Play*, 15-44.

[12] Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield Wisconsin*, 1, 4, 9; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 281-82; BP, December 18, 1878; Wisconsin Central Railroad Company, *Summer Resorts of the Wisconsin Central Railroad*, 31.

Those not suffering from neurasthenia, hay fever, or some other health problem sought to escape the cities, as well, to explore the nation's natural landscapes and wild areas. Over the course of the nineteenth century, American attitudes toward the natural world changed dramatically. Following the lead of intellectuals and artists like Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Cole, and Albert Bierstadt, Americans came to appreciate the wild, natural qualities of North America. Tourists sought out sublime, picturesque, and pastoral landscapes—landscapes similar to those depicted with paint and pen. This transformation took root early in the century in appreciation of the Maine woods and the mountains of New England and upstate New York. The expanding railroad network made western landscapes ever more accessible, and traveling to destinations remarkable for their scenery and wilderness became a central feature of upper-middle class tourism. As they traveled, Americans built for themselves a national identity as a country blessed by nature's bounty—an identity as "nature's nation."[13]

The promotional campaign for the Apostles hinged on connecting island scenery to this emerging fascination with the American landscape. Railroad brochures, therefore, described the scenes their passengers could expect to find in terms borrowed directly from the romantic thinkers and landscape painters:

> Lake Superior has at times not only the varied interest, but the sublimity of a true ocean. Its blue, cool, transparent water … undisturbed by tides, lies during a calm, motionless and glassy as those of some secluded lake, reflecting, with perfect truth of form and color, the inverted landscape that slopes to its sandy beach. But when the inland sea is stirred by the rising tempest, the long sweep of its waves

[13] The classic work on changing American ideas about wilderness remains Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. See also Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980; Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Lawrence Buell, *Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995). On the relationship between tourism and changing ideas of nature, see in particular Hyde, *An American Vision*; Sears, *Sacred Places*; and Shaffer, *See America First*.

> and the curling white-caps that crest its surface give warning not only to the fragile boat, but also to sloop and schooner and lake steamer to seek some sheltering haven.

The islands, with their sea caves, sandstone cliffs, secluded bays, and calm beaches were especially rich in the water-meets-the-land picturesque scenery sought by travelers. "The rocks are, in countless places, worn into grottoes, detached pillars and blocks, deep caverns, lofty arches and graceful niches, through and around which the waves resound on the slightest agitation of the water." Exploring the islands offered days of entertainment, "and one can never exhaust the delightful and changing panoramic features, which in infinite variety continually pass before the eye in ever new and wiching [sic.] forms of beauty."[14]

Bayfield tourism promoters tied the island lighthouses into this romantic sensibility. Excursions to see the lighthouses, or to picnic on their grounds, had been a centerpiece of island tourism since the 1860s. The *Ashland Daily Press* called Sand Island "one of the Beauty spots on our coasts." The *Press* used the language of color and light typical of the picturesque to describe the scene: "From the tower the view is indeed grand, the great sea stretching away to the north and west where the blue outline of the north shore can be seen from thirty to seventy miles distant. East and southeast lay the islands spread out in a beautiful panorama, their green shores casting shadows upon the clear channels which surround them, forming a most interesting and charming picture." Albert Bierstadt himself had reportedly once visited the island—a sure indicator of Sand Island's romantic bonafides.[15]

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[14] Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, & Omaha Railway, *Health and Pleasure Midst the Pines, Northwest Wisconsin and the Shores of Lake Superior* (Pioneer Press, St Paul, 1885), WHS pamphlet collection, 37; *The Apostle Islands and Lake Superior* (Milwaukee: Cramer, Aikens, and Cramer, 1884), WHS pamphlet collection, 35.

[15] ADP, December 21, 1895.

Many tourists wanted to do more than simply sightsee. They also wanted to escape into nature, to live the sporting life, to go camping and fishing. Camping vacations offered all of the advantages of nature tourism in a single vacation: tourists enjoyed the restorative qualities of the outdoors while taking in the romantic scenery. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Theodore Roosevelt emerged as a loud proponent of the virtues of the outdoor life. Roosevelt's rhetoric added a layer of racialized and gendered meaning to the pleasures of camping and sport fishing. Roosevelt and many of his contemporaries believed that the white race—particularly white men—ran the risk of becoming soft and privileged if they remained too long within the structured confines of civilized society. Camping, hunting, and the outdoor life provided the necessary remedy to these ills, just as nature cured those afflicted with neurasthenia.[16]

The railroads suggested to their potential passengers that the lakes and rivers of northern Wisconsin, especially the Chequamegon Bay region, contained a paradise for hunters and fishermen. Promotional literature promised that fishermen would find the creeks and rivers flowing into the Chequamegon Bay—the Sand, Sioux, Onion, and Raspberry Rivers, among other popular spots—"literally swarming with the finest brook trout … Five hundred of the epicurean dainties in one day is by no means an extraordinary catch for a party to exhibit on their return to the hotel." Hunters would find deer, bear, wolves, and "every imaginable species of wild fowl and small game …There is no occasion for a sportsman to crawl back into camp empty-handed from these hunting grounds; his only dilemma will be to procure a game-bag

[16] Colleen J. Sheehy, "American Angling: The Rise of Urbanism and the Romance of the Rod and Reel," and Russell S. Gilmore, "'Another Branch of Manly Sport': American Rifle Games, 1840-1900," in *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 77-92 and 93-112; Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 170-216; Aron, *Working at Play*, 156-77.

sufficiently capacious to contain his booty." And the channels between the Apostle Islands offered a form of fishing found nowhere else between the ocean coasts: trolling, or fishing for lake trout with a hook and line. "Parties who have tried it say there is no finer sport to be had than that of trolling for lake trout among the islands during the months of June and July," commented the *Bayfield County Press*. Trolling became an increasingly popular activity for sportsmen after the turn of the century. The railroad companies often included the fish and game regulations of Wisconsin or other Great Lakes states in their published timetables to make a sport fishing vacation that much easier for their passengers.[17]

The railroad companies placed the Apostle Islands at the center of their efforts to promote tourism across the North Woods and in direct competition with tourist destinations in other regions. What made the Chequamegon Bay better than these other places, which also tried to attract tourists in search of health, nature appreciation, and sport? Saratoga Springs, the White Mountains, and other eastern resorts, Wisconsin Central promotional literature claimed, had long ago lost their wildlife resources and restorative attributes. The destinations of the Far West, on the other hand, "appear to have been so completely overdone by guidebooks and circulars as to have reached a hackneyed stage of 'innocuous desuetude' long before its attractions are exhibited to view…" In addition, a large chunk of the vacation would be spent simply traveling to such far away places. Northern Wisconsin, however, offered "a new Eden of enchantment … the summer paradise of the fashionable world, the angler's Mecca of inexhaustible resources, the

[17] Wisconsin Central Railroad, *Famous Resorts of the Northwest*, 9; *The Apostle Islands and Lake Superior*, 31; BCP, May 26, 1900.

huntsman's bonanza, in short, the complete Utopia of the tourist and pleasure-seeker…" No other part of the country offered so many opportunities for rest and recreation.[18]

Although different resort areas around the country tapped into national trends in health seeking, sporting, or nature appreciation, each place varied its promotional efforts slightly, to match these trends with local conditions. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the way that tourist promoters of the Apostle Islands used local history. La Pointe, with its long tradition of missionaries and fur traders, emerged as the centerpiece of this type of promotion. The romantic fascination with ruins and local history merged to create a tourist destination: "…Madeline Island, contains the ruins of the historic city of La Pointe, one of the places settled by Father Marquette and the base of the operations of the American Fur Company in early days. The ruins of the old church built by Father Marquette may yet be seen…" Visitors to the island could share in the romance and adventure of the voyageur, the trader, and the missionary. "At one time the whole south shore of Lake Superior was vocal with [the voyageurs'] sweet melodies; and the traveler to-day occasionally hears a strain of these original compositions, which still retains its fascinating charm. The old life of the missions and the legends of the fur trade have thrown a mellow flavor of adventure about the shores of the northern lakes to be found nowhere else.... To the curious traveler familiar with their *patois*, the few antiquated voyageurs now living in [La Pointe] relate many a stirring tale." On Madeline Island, tourists could not only see historic sites but also even speak with living relics of the romantic past.[19]

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[18] Wisconsin Central Railroad, *Famous Resorts of the Northwest*, 4.

[19] Tourist brochures frequently exaggerated the role of Father Jacques Marquette in the La Pointe mission—he did visit the island in 1669 but remained for only a short time, and although John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company established a post on Madeline Island, there is no evidence to indicate that Astor himself ever visited. Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield Wisconsin*, 1; *The Apostle Islands and Lake Superior*, 11; Ross, *La Pointe*, 32.

The emphasis on American history in tourism promotion also reflected a nationwide trend. Many scholars have pointed to the fascination with the American landscape as an essential element in the development of nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. History-based tourism, too, played a role. National guidebooks in this era encouraged tourists to visit sites important in American history, particularly those that celebrated the story of American conquest over a wild continent and its wild inhabitants. In this way, the Spanish conquistadors of the Southwest and the French missionaries of the Old Northwest took their places beside American Indian fighters and western explorers as heroes of the national story. The French history of La Pointe fit perfectly into this tradition.[20]

Native Americans played an especially important role in the tourists' search for both wilderness scenery and American history. Tourists of the late nineteenth century were fascinated with the primitive—not only the primitive wilderness, but also the primitive Indians who lived in that wilderness. Tourists traveled to Indian villages, filling their diaries with commentary on the barbarous and uncivilized conditions of the reservations. Or, railroads and resort companies arranged for vacationers to attend dances, ceremonies, and cultural performances. Observing Indians gave tourists the chance to engage in an explicit commentary on the status of their own civilization. Tourists in other regions of the country similarly positioned themselves in relation to the "exotic other"—Chinese immigrants, Chicanos, even Mormons—as a way of reaffirming their own class and racial identity. For the Lake Superior country, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha* defined the exotic other. Tourists traveled to Lake Superior hoping to find among the Ojibwe the real-life analog to the poem. Interacting with

[20] Shaffer, *See America First*, 193-98.

Native Americans also provided tourists with a dose of the "frontier," an experience that tourists increasingly sought in response to the national concern over the closing of the frontier.[21]

With Ojibwe reservations flanking the Chequamegon Bay at Red Cliff and Bad River, tourists found ample opportunity to explore their fascination with the native and the primitive. "For those who have never seen a similar town," commented one promotional brochure, the town of Odanah on the Bad River Reservation "can hardly fail to be of interest… The natives number about five hundred and are a quiet, industrious people. Belonging to the once large and powerful Chippewa tribe, they continue to indulge in many of their primitive customs, although they have adopted many of the principles of civilization. They build their own canoes, which are made of bark, are partial to bright colors and in general possess in personal appearance the characteristics of their race." La Pointe, still the home of a community of mixed French and Indian descent, provided a similar opportunity. For those who did not make the trip to Odanah or Madeline Island, the Hotel Chequamegon arranged to have Bad River band members perform dances at the hotel. Camping, too, served as an escape into the primitive conditions of the past. Tourists magnified the primitive, frontier experience by hiring Indian guides for multi-day camping and fishing excursions amongst the islands, or by paddling birch-bark canoes along the shores of Lake Superior.[22]

It is important to recognize that the desires of nineteenth-century tourists to experience the primitive wilderness cannot be taken too literally. The primitive became far more powerful

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[21] Jasen, *Wild Things*, 80-88; Shaffer, *See America First*, 280-82; Olmanson, "Romantics, Scientists, Boosters, and the Making of the Chequamegon Bay Region," 348.

[22] Edwards Roberts, *Gogebic, Eagle River, Ashland, and the Resorts in Northern Michigan and Wisconsin Reached by the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railway* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1886), 48; *The Apostle Islands and Lake Superior*, 9, 31; Arthur Tenney Holbrook, *From the Log of a Trout Fisherman* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1949), 25; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 133.

when placed in stark contrast to the luxury tourists could expect in the resorts and hotels built by the railroads. Even when camping amongst the islands, tourists did not risk real threats and privations like disease or hunger. The tourist wanted, in the words of one railroad brochure, an

> easily-get-at-able, strictly-first-class wilderness, with all modern improvements … the anti-malarial, non-venomous, highly-medicated, thoroughly-oxygenized, ozone-impregnated, piney-perfumed, damp-devoid, health-reviving, rest-inviting, appetite-constructing, intellect-elevating, devotion-developing, vice-destroying, virtue-strengthening, brain-expanding, sense-sharpening, idea-evolving, fashion-forgetting, lake-embellished, stream-meandered, fish-abiding, game-inhabited, sun-kissed, delightfully-diversified, fragrant, cool and inviting wilderness, where his ear will not be pained, and his soul will ne'er be sick.

The tourist wanted what the railroads called a "tame" wilderness, and they could find it in the Apostle Islands.[23]

Like other industries on the economic periphery, tourism functioned at the intersection of the local and the national. In the tourist trade, "resources" meant scenery, opportunities for camping, and a primitive experience, not board feet of lumber or cords of cut stone. Tourists traveled to the islands for an experience grounded in local landscapes and history, but they did so in response to nationwide cultural trends. But the local environments and resources that the tourists sought did not remain constant; environments of the Apostle Islands changed in response to the demands of the tourist trade.

Sport Fishing, Summer Homes, and the Transformation of Island Environments

One of the reasons that historians have segregated tourism from other forms of economic activity is that it has a less visible effect on the environment. The impact the lumberjacks on island forests or the quarrymen on the region's stone outcroppings are hard to miss. The

[23] Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway, *Health and Pleasure Midst the Pines*, 3.

influences of the tourist trade were no less obvious—we are just less accustomed to looking for them. As sport fishing grew ever more popular in the nineteenth century, local, state, and national fisheries experts sought to shape nature to meet the demands of anglers. They used many of the same techniques applied to the regulation and restoration of the commercial fisheries, such as closed seasons and artificial propagation. Much like the more obviously production-oriented actions of fishermen or lumberjacks, these actions tied together natural and human processes. Island landscapes, too, changed in response to the tourist trade. Beginning in the 1890s, growing popularity as a summer destination transformed the social, economic, and physical landscapes of Madeline Island. Tourism, too, shapes the environment.

When the state legislature established the Wisconsin Fish Commission in 1874, its primary concern lay with the declining commercial fisheries of Lake Michigan and the vulnerable fisheries of Lake Superior. The commissioners focused their propagation and stocking efforts on commercial species: whitefish and lake trout. Within just a few years, however, the commissioners turned their attention to the inland sport fisheries. In 1879, they announced plans to supplement natural reproduction of game fish like the brook trout, wall-eye pike, and black bass, and to begin introducing sport fish popular elsewhere. The motivation for this transition was explicitly economic. “Hundreds of sportsmen from beyond our borders annually visit [northern Wisconsin], and leave thousands of dollars within our confines,” the commissioners explained in 1879. As railroad lines reached all corners of the state, and as railroad companies promoted sporting and hunting opportunities throughout northern Wisconsin, the value of the tourist economy expanded rapidly. The fish commissioners believed their work vital to this development. “These summer dwellers and throngs of transient sporting tourists who bring so

large a revenue to our state, seek not only fine scenery, boating and fresh air. Our lakes and rivers are also attractive to them because of their fish supply. This supply needs continual protection as well as reinforcement." The Wisconsin Fish Commission applied the same techniques of propagation and stocking to game species as they did to commercial species.[24]

As with commercial fishing, the Wisconsin fish commissioners complemented their stocking programs with a continual call for the regulation and restriction of sport fishing. Beginning in the 1870s, the state legislature began to set closed seasons on sport fish like brook trout and black bass, to prohibit the use of nets on inland waters, and to outlaw the sale of game species. Like the regulation of commercial fishing, too, the restrictions on the catch of game species had the result of privileging some activities—and some groups of people—over others. Far more than in commercial fishing, however, this prioritization of use was fully intended. "While these inland waters have a local importance as yielding food, their value as a means of sport and recreation is much greater, both to the state and to the community in which the lake is situated," the commissioners explained in 1908. "For this reason, the aim of legislation for many years has been to preserve the fishing rather than to cause the lakes to yield a maximum amount of food." The commissioners believed—and the state legislators agreed with them—that sporting provided a better use of game fish than did subsistence or market sale. As with commercial fishing regulations, the state had little power to enforce the earliest of these regulations, but the state consolidated its authority over fish and game resources by designating more wardens and arming them with stronger powers. Rural residents of northern Wisconsin—who often depended on fish and game to supplement their meager incomes—saw their access to natural resources

[24] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1879, p. 11, 1884, p. 6, and 1889-1890, p. 4.

restricted. The protection of sport fishing provided an essential and complementary motive, as well, to the state campaign to restrict Ojibwe right to hunt and fish in the territory they had ceded during the nineteenth century.[25]

The actions of the state in enhancing and controlling inland sport fisheries did not simply change the way that both residents and tourists interacted with the environments of northern Wisconsin; they changed the environment itself. The Wisconsin Fish Commission supplemented native brook trout, black bass, and wall-eye pike with other game fish, particularly rainbow trout and German brown trout. Private fish culturists imported rainbow trout from California to Wisconsin in the 1870s. Once the state established its own fish hatcheries in the 1880s, it widely distributed rainbow fry and fingerlings. Anglers particularly favored rainbow trout because it prefers fast-moving water and puts up a spectacular fight when hooked. Fish culturists introduced German and Scotch brown trout, too, both imported from Europe in the 1880s. Brown trout are considered particularly intelligent and difficult to catch—and so grow to larger sizes than rainbow trout. The Wisconsin Fish Commission began stocking northern streams and rivers with both of these species in the 1890s. The Bayfield Fish Hatchery, constructed in 1896, became the central point for dispersal of sport fish in northern Wisconsin. Periodically in the 1890s and yearly after 1900, state workers planted rainbow, brook, and brown trout fingerlings and fry into Fish Creek, the Onion, Sand, Sioux, and Little Sioux Rivers, and other waterways that emptied into the Chequamegon Bay. Both rainbow and brown trout established self-perpetuating populations in the rivers that emptied into the bay by the early twentieth century.

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[25] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1880, p. 8 and 1907-1908, p. 13; Poff, *From Milk Can to Ecosystem Management*, 3-5. For recent scholarship on the social consequences of fish and game laws, see Warren, *The Hunter's Game*; Taylor, *Making Salmon*; Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*.

The fish commission introduced other species, as well—several varieties of salmon, grayling, and perch—but none of them adapted to Wisconsin rivers like the rainbow and brown trout. The constant introduction of new species combined with changing land use patterns to reshape the fish populations of the state's streams, lakes, and rivers.[26]

Trout fishing on the Brule River, which empties into Lake Superior just east of the Bayfield Peninsula, serves as an example of the complicated interconnections of social class, species composition, and sport fishing. (See Map 2.) The Brule is, perhaps, the most famous trout stream east of the Mississippi River, known equally for the abundance of its trout and for the high social standing of its fishermen. With the Apostle Islands, the Brule stood as the most famous tourist attraction in northern Wisconsin. The river even served as the seat of the United States government in 1928, when President Calvin Coolidge spent his summer fishing the river. Presidents Grover Cleveland and Ulysses S. Grant reportedly tested their skill with a rod there, too. When Robert Barnwell Roosevelt toured Lake Superior in 1865, he singled out the Brule as a particularly fine trout stream. E. T. Sweet, who published a book on the geology of the region in 1880, reported of the lakes in the upper Brule: "I have seen [brook trout], upon a clear day, in these lakes, as thick as minnows in a common pond ... It has been aptly said that this is the angler's paradise. One may capture in a short time all that he can carry." By the turn of the century, the Brule was widely regarded as "the king of the Lake Superior trout streams." It was known, too, as a Mecca for some of the Midwest's richest and most successful businessmen. Chequamegon Bay lumbermen John H. Knight and William Freeman Vilas constructed the first of these exclusive lodges in the 1870s, and men from Chicago, St. Paul, and other urban centers

[26] Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin*, 291-92, 295, 299, 302; Poff, *From Milk Can to Ecosystem Management*, 4; Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1895-1896, 9-12.

soon joined them. These men purchased land along the banks of the river, established private fish and game reserves, and built lavish clubhouses and stately summer homes.[27]

Class dynamics and fish culture came together at Cedar Island, the private estate of St. Louis oil and railroad tycoon Henry Clay Pierce. Pierce began acquiring land along the Brule in the 1880s, and by the 1890s he owned close to four thousand acres of riverside property. He erected a luxurious lodge on Cedar Island, and reportedly employed a retinue of forty servants and assistants during the summer. President Coolidge spent the summer of 1928 as Pierce's guest on Cedar Island. Pierce also built on the property one of the largest private fish hatcheries in Wisconsin. He raised native brook trout, as well as rainbow trout, Scotch brown trout (also called Lochlevens), and German brown trout, among other species. Once they had reached sufficient size—reportedly on a diet heavy on beef liver—these fish were released into the river for the sportsmen's pleasure. Pierce employed Fred Mather, one of the nation's leading fish culture experts, to oversee the operation. By the first decade of the twentieth century, both rainbow and brown trout had established self-perpetuating populations on the Brule. But Pierce was also a notorious recluse. He vigorously guarded his property, posting signs warning off trespassers, both anglers of his own social class and rural residents of the region who strayed onto his property in search of fish or game for their table. When the state of Wisconsin stocked the rivers of the state with game fish, they had the interests of men like Pierce in mind; when they passed

[27] Roosevelt, *Superior Fishing*, 122; D. John O'Donnell, "A History of Fishing in the Brule River," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Letters* 36 (1944), 24, 28; Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 318; Holbrook, *From the Log of a Trout Fisherman*, 73-74.

laws limiting the use of those species for subsistence or market purposes, they hoped to restrict the activities of the men and women who trespassed on Pierce's property.[28]

Stocking by both Pierce and the state of Wisconsin combined with shifting land use in the Brule River basin to change the river ecosystem. Both rainbow and brown trout became well established on the Brule. By the early twentieth century, these species had largely displaced the native brook trout. A 1944 survey revealed that these exotic species made up 75.2 percent of all trout caught on the river. The closer to the river's Lake Superior mouth one fished, the less likely one landed native brook trout. Changing land use patterns contributed to this transformation. Chequamegon Bay lumbermen Knight and Vilas owned timberland on the upper Brule, and in the mid-1890s they began logging these lands. Lumber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser also logged large tracts of land within the Brule river watershed. As logging proceeded, the temperature and silt load of the Brule increased—the consequence of removed forest cover and soil erosion. These changes benefited introduced species like the brown trout, at the expense of the native brook trout. The wealthy sportsmen contributed to the problem, too, by removing downed logs and snags to create the manicured clubhouse lawns from which they liked to enjoy their wilderness retreats, further exposing the river to the warming sun. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Brule River's sportsmen-landowners began complaining about the decline of angling opportunities, and demanded that the state step up its propagation program, crack

[28] Burnham, *Lake Superior Country*, 316-19; Albert M. Marshall, *Brule Country* (St. Paul, MN: The North Central Publishing Company, 1954), 167-79; Joseph F. Cullon, "Landscapes of Labor and Leisure: Common Rights, Private Property and Class Relations along the Bois Brule River, 1870-1940," (MA, University of Wisconsin Madison, 1995).

down on illegal fishing, and limit logging and other development on the river. State authorities complied with all of these requests.[29]

During the early twentieth century, the Brule River retained its reputation for both trout and wealthy anglers. The environments of the river and riverbank, however, had been transformed. Dignified mansions and rustic clubhouses lined the shore of a river that housed species of fish imported from California, Scotland, and Germany. Because of its fame, the Brule has attracted more attention from historians, ecologists, and other scholars than have other streams and rivers of northern Wisconsin. But similar ecological changes occurred on the Onion, the Sioux, the Sand, the Raspberry, and other waterways that drained the mainland across from the Apostle Islands. Although wealthy sportsmen did not build clubhouses on these rivers, they did cast their lines in search of exotic game fish. And some of them traveled to these rivers from the summer homes that they erected on Madeline Island.

Madeline Island is at once similar to the other islands and also markedly different. It has similar soils, forests, and topography to the other Apostle Islands, although at close to twelve thousand acres Madeline is the largest of the group. Lumberjacks, fishermen, farmers, and tourists came to Madeline Island in search of lumber, fish, and scenic views. And yet, Madeline is also different. The fishermen, farmers, lumberjacks and tourists stayed on Madeline Island, or at least tried too—only the tourists truly persisted. After the turn of the nineteenth century, Madeline Island emerged as one of the most exclusive summer destinations in the Midwest, its shores lined with stately summer homes and formal gardens. When the Congress created Apostle

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[29] D. John O'Donnell, "A Four-Year Creel Census on the Brule River, Douglas County, Wisconsin," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Letters* 37 (1944), 279, and "A History of Fishing on the Brule River," 27; Marshall, *Brule Country*, 204; Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin*, 291-92, 321-22; Cullon, "Landscapes of Labor and Leisure"; Holbrook, *From the Log of a Trout Fisherman*, 124-37.

Islands National Lakeshore in 1970, it excluded only Madeline Island from the park. Madeline Island serves as an example how tourism can reshape the landscape.

Madeline Island is, of course, set off from the other islands simply by its history. Many scholars have examined Madeline Island as an early center of Ojibwe culture, as a French trading and missionary post, and as a base of operations for the American Fur Company and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Very little has been written, however, about the island after the AFC shut down and the mission moved across Chequamegon Bay to Odanah in 1845. Most observers share the opinion of the editors of the *Bayfield County Press*, who narrated the history of the town of La Pointe in 1893: "La Pointe lost its grip and gradually went to seed…" Most nineteenth-century commentaries on the island emphasize its decline and near-abandonment.[30]

And yet, the La Pointe community persisted. Census takers counted 319 people in La Pointe township in 1860. Commercial fishing remained the primary occupation on the island, along with ancillary occupations like coopering and boat building. But islanders engaged in logging and farming, too. In all of these activities, Madeline Island looked much like its neighbors in the archipelago and other parts of northern Wisconsin. Fishermen packed whitefish in barrels of salt for sale in midwestern urban centers. Even while lumberjacks stripped the island of its white pine, the unusual accessibility of the island provided an opportunity for summer woods work to harvest cedar railroad ties, hemlock bark, and hardwoods. Farmers, often clearing fields in the cutover areas left behind by logging operations, mixed subsistence farming with limited market production, selling their surplus in the lumber camps or in the emerging

[30] See Ross, *La Pointe*; Holzheuter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region*; BCP, March 25, 1893.

markets of Bayfield and Ashland. Often, islanders mixed and matched among all these activities, finding seasonal work in many different industries over the course of the year.[31]

The intermittent opportunities provided by the tourist trade played an important role in the island economy, as well. As the Chequamegon Bay emerged as a tourist destination in the 1870s and 1880s, La Pointe became an important attraction. Tourists made the short trip across the channel from Bayfield to poke around the village, exploring the old AFC buildings, several Indian cemeteries, and the buildings left behind by the Protestant and Catholic missionaries. Exploring the romantic past was one of the Lake Superior region's foremost attractions, and nowhere did tourists engage the past more easily than at La Pointe. The island even had a large hotel, the Madeline House, built originally by the American Fur Company, but this burned down in 1866. A second hotel catered to tourists into the 1890s.[32]

In 1887, George Francis Thomas—one of the largest landowners on the island—tried to make Madeline a tourist destination in its own right. Under the auspices of the Madaline [sic.] Island Resort Company, Thomas published a fifteen-page brochure touting the island's advantages as a summer resort and advertising the sale of both lots and shares in the company. Thomas mimicked the railroad promotional efforts in his rhetoric, explaining the opportunities

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[31] U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census, 1860*, manuscript census and agricultural schedule, Ashland County, Wisconsin; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census, 1870*, manuscript census and agricultural schedule, Ashland County, Wisconsin. On Madeline Island fishing, see Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 48; *Superior (Wisconsin) Chronicle*, August 17, 1856; BP, May 4, 1872. On island logging operations, see BP, December 10 and 24, 1870; BCP, July 23 and October 22, 1881, April 7, 1883, and January 29, 1887. On island farming, see J. Disturnell, *Great Lakes; or, Inland Seas of America: A Complete Guide for Tourists and Emigrants* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1865), 125; Eliza Morrison, *A Little History of My Forest Life* (La Crosse, WI: Sumac Press, 1978), 14-19.

[32] Ross, *La Pointe*, 120; Rebecca Sample Bernstein and Tricia L. Canaday, "Madeline Island Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey," Report Prepared for Town of La Pointe, 1993, WHS pamphlet collection, 26; Island View Hotel Company, *Bayfield Wisconsin*, 1; *The Apostle Islands and Lake Superior*, 11; BCP, August 26, 1893; George F. Thomas, *"Tourist Supplement": Specimen Pages from Lake Superior Souvenir* (Ashland, 1891), WHS pamphlet collection.

for health- and pleasure-seekers, sportsmen, and the chance to explore the romantic ruins left behind by fur traders, voyageurs, and missionaries. "It is just far enough removed from the main land to give rest and repose," promised Thomas. "And then there is the quaint old village of La Pointe, with its ancient relics and legendary tales, slumbering upon the southern shore of Madaline Island, famed above all others in the traditions of the past." The brochure included a map showing a proposed five thousand acre state park on the northeastern end of the island, the first evidence of any type of park proposal for the islands. Although Thomas continued to advertise into the 1890s, there is no indication that he sold so much as a single lot or share through the Madaline Island Resort Company. But his was the first attempt to develop Madeline Island as a tourist destination. More significantly, he tied his plans for development to the establishment of a large state park, an important statement that Madeline Island's best use was for tourism rather than for farming or logging.[33]

Madeline Island's emergence as a summer resort came not from a development scheme like Thomas's, but from a far less likely source: the vacation needs of Congregational ministers. In 1897, Reverend Edward P. Salmon purchased the property of the Methodist mission that had been established on the island in the 1830s but had long since fallen into disrepair. He renovated the buildings and in 1898 opened the Old Mission, a resort initially intended to cater to the needs of Protestant ministers and their families. Although the resort retained a set of strict rules about appropriate behavior and decorum, the clientele did expand beyond families of the cloth. In fact, the Old Mission became the focal point of the Madeline Island summer community for the next

[33] Madaline [sic.] Island Resort Co., "A History of Madaline Island, in Chequamegon Bay, Lake Superior, and of the Old La Pointe Mission. With A Description of The Island and Its Advantages as a Summer Home," 1887, WHS pamphlet collection, 4, 12; Thomas, *"Tourist Supplement."*

forty years. Many families returned year after year, eventually convincing Salmon to construct cabins that they could rent for the length of the summer, taking their meals at the Old Mission dining hall. Other frequent guests simply purchased land and erected their own summer homes.[34]

Once summer residents had secured a beachhead on the island, they began a process perhaps best described as colonization. After just one year at the Old Mission, wealthy Omaha businessman and hay fever victim Frederick M. Woods grew dissatisfied with the restrictive rules imposed on guests by Edward P. Salmon. Woods purchased land of his own and erected a stately summer home. He then convinced many of his relatives and business associates from Nebraska to join him in spending summers on Madeline Island. The row of summer residences that grew up on Pointe du Froid, just to the north of the town of La Pointe, came to be known as Nebraska Row. A second group of summer homes coalesced around the residence of John D. O'Brien, populated primarily by urbanites from St. Paul and known as O'Brien Row. O'Brien's home predated the Old Mission, as he had constructed it in 1894. O'Brien had spent his childhood on the island, while his father served as a teacher in the Catholic school in the 1850s. He had returned to the area in the 1880s as a sporting enthusiast and become a founding member of the Winneboujou Club—one of the Brule River's most exclusive hunting and fishing clubs. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the summer community of Madeline Island continued to expand. The prosperous years of the late 1920s brought a concentrated flurry of construction.

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[34] Stanley Edwards Lathrop, "A Historical Sketch of the 'Old Mission,' Lake Superior, Wisconsin," (Ashland, 1905), WHS pamphlet collection; Wilfrid A. Rowell, "The Story of the Old Mission," (1932), WHS pamphlet collection; Vickie Lock, "A Summer Place: Elizabeth Hull's Madeline Island Photo Album," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 85 (Summer 2002): 32-39; Ross, *La Pointe*, 158-160; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, Inc., *On The Rock: The History of Madeline Island Told Through Its Families* (Friendship, WI: New Past Press, 1997), 340.

Summer residents arrived from cities all over the Midwest, but joined to form a cohesive summer community on Madeline Island.[35]

Summer residents took part in the same activities that tourists had enjoyed in the Chequamegon Bay for a half-century. They began to arrive at the island in the end of June or in early July, and often stayed through the first week of October. Longtime summer resident and island historian Hamilton Nelson Ross remembered:

> 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 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… 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 … Some of the more venturesome experimented with Indian birch bark canoes, a few of which were still in existence.

The Old Mission continued to serve as a center of social life for summer residents. Many families ate their meals in the Old Mission dining room, or joined with resort guests in their explorations of the islands.[36]

The summer tourist season became a vital part of the Chequamegon Bay economy. Every summer, tourists flocked to the resorts on Madeline and on the mainland. By one estimate, the population of Bayfield and its environs more than doubled each summer. Everyone benefited from the increased business. "The advent of the summer tourist season is generally a welcome occurrence to Bayfield merchants, and in fact to all Bayfield people," reported the *Bayfield*

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[35] BCP, July 12 and September 13, 1912; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, Inc., *On The Rock*, 18-19, 20, 25, 30-31; Anton H. Turrittin, "Social Change in an Isolated Community: A Study of the Transformation of Madeline Island, Wisconsin," (MA, University of Minnesota, 1960), 104; Holzheuter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region*, 57.

[36] Ross, *La Pointe*, 166-67; for an account of the 1904 excursion of a group of Old Mission guests, see BCP, September 2, 1904.

County Press in 1911. "The number which spend the season in or near this city has reached up into the hundreds and the marketing they do does much to enliven the merchants' business during the summer." Farmers found a ready market for their produce, as well. Even fishermen took advantage of the summer season, a traditionally less productive part of their year. They offered their services to take tourists on fishing expeditions or other tours of the islands. The economic impact of the tourist trade is difficult to quantify, because many of its benefits were informal or indirect, such as the extra income collected by fishermen.[37]

Madeline Island's emergence as a tourist destination prompted Chequamegon Bay entrepreneurs to establish resorts on other islands, as well. The *Bayfield County Press* reported rumors of summer home or resort development on Oak, Michigan, and Ironwood Islands. In 1914, one Sand Island landowner subdivided his property into 1.5 acre lots for sale to prospective summer residents. The Lake Superior Land and Development Company put together the most comprehensive resort scheme. In 1910, the Minneapolis-based company announced plans to convert Hermit Island into a combination fruit orchard and summer home site. A promotional brochure contained a map carving Hermit Island into ten-acre shoreline parcels for the construction of private homes, with the interior of the island designated for fruit orchards and a "natural reserve forest." The company platted the island into seventy-eight parcels. Central to these plans was the odd, three-story mansion on the island, the Cedar Bark Lodge—once the

[37] BCP, June 20, 1911, July 2 and December 31, 1915, May 23, 1919; Donald G. Albrecht, ed., *The Chequamegon Bay Apostle Islands Fishery*, (Ashland, WI: Northland College, 1975), 25.

summer residence of a prominent Ashland businessman. Although Cedar Bark Lodge ran as a resort for several years, the plans for private homes and orchards never came to fruition.[38]

Madeline Island remained the hub of summer activity in the Chequamegon Bay, with increasing consequences for island economic and social life. More and more islanders gave up traditional occupations like fishing and logging for work in the tourist trade. In 1930, nineteen islanders listed their full-time occupations as service oriented positions like gardener, caretaker, or housekeeper. In fact, these occupations made up the second largest category of employment on the island, second only to common labor. In contrast, not a single person listed this type of occupation in 1900. Madeline Island farmers benefited, too, selling produce, butchered meats, and dairy products. In some cases, the relationship between farmer and summer resident was more formal: In 1929, Nebraska Row resident Hunter S. Gary purchased a farm on the interior of the island and hired the Anderson family as year-round tenants. The Andersons ran a produce-delivery service, providing summer residents with standard orders of eggs, milk, cream, meat, and other fresh food. By 1930, summer residents owned three interior farms and employed year-round residents in similar arrangements. The ongoing productive work of fishing and farming was not at all a disincentive for summer residents, but rather an advantage. Madeline Island thus provides an example of how the spaces of production and consumption overlap more than we typically imagine. This overlap began to change the nature of island life, as islanders depended more and more on the seasonal opportunities of the tourist trade. The perils of seasonal labor and

[38] "Hermit Island: Near Bayfield Peninsula, Lake Superior," n.d., AINL Library, Hermit Island hanging file; *Map of Ashland County, Wisconsin* (J. W. Day & J. O. Forss, publishers, 1917), 33; BCP, September 22, 1905, July 2, 1909, March 3, 1911, October 6, 1926, and April 26, 1928; Holzheuter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Bay Region*, 52.

dependence on wealthy tourists, of course, occurred everywhere that tourism made up a significant part of the economy.[39]

Madeline Island's landscape reflected the growing economic importance of tourism. Nebraska Row stands as an example. When Frederick Woods constructed the first summer home there in 1899, he built in an open pasture. The large open space had once been the site of cabins and merchant's shops, built in the wings of the American Fur Company post, and had been completely cleared of its forest cover. A severe fire in 1869 (started by an explosion in R. D. Pike's steam-powered sawmill, which then ran in La Pointe) burned down the homes, shops, and the AFC warehouses, many of which had remained vacant since the demise of the fur trade. Little new economic activity took place on the island until the growth of the tourist trade in the 1890s. As Colonel Woods and his colleagues erected summer homes on the site of the old commercial buildings, they also began to plant trees. Early photos of the area show the handsome mansions with virtually no surrounding vegetation; by the 1940s, Norway pine and other ornamental trees surrounded the same houses. The grounds of Coole Park Manor, a summer residence built by former Old Mission guests Albert and Cora Hull to the south of the village of La Pointe in 1913, underwent the most complete transformation. Beginning in 1920, the Hulls transformed their lot into a formal, tiered English garden, with 450 rose bushes, a teahouse, pergolas, stone paths, and a small pool and fountain. The formal gardens of Coole Park

[39] U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, manuscript census, Ashland County, WI; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, manuscript census, Ashland County, WI; Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey," 21; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, *On the Rock*, 40; 122; Turrittin, "Social Change in an Isolated Community," 23. On dependence on the tourist economy, see Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, 227-51.

Manor and the manicured lawns of Nebraska Row that replaced the pasture symbolize the ways that tourism transformed the physical environment of Madeline Island.[40]

The transformation of the Madeline Island's cultural landscapes to satisfy the needs of summer tourists radiated outward from the town of La Pointe. In town, summer residences replaced the more modest homes that had provided homes for islanders. Outside of town the landscape changed in more subtle ways. The managers of the Old Mission, for example, replaced the apple and cherry orchard to the east of La Pointe with a golf course and a tennis court in the 1920s. Another entrepreneur dredged the lagoon on the southwest tip of the island in the 1930s to build a marina capable of housing the powerboats and yachts of the wealthy summer visitors. Islanders and local businessmen continued to discuss the idea of establishing a state park on the eastern side of the island, creating a reserve for the benefit of the tourist trade.[41]

These changes accelerated over the course of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1940, the average number of farms on Madeline Island fluctuated, but hovered around thirty. In 1935, for example, 32 farms dotted the island. After World War II, however, the number of farms declined precipitously: 18 farms in 1945; 12 in 1950; 8 in 1954. By 1960, only one working farm remained on the island. The capital demands of mechanized, post-World War II agriculture and the rising taxes that followed summer development forced farmers to sell their

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[40] Hamilton Nelson Ross, "The Great La Pointe fire of 1869," n.d., Folder 7, Box 5, Hamilton Nelson Ross Papers, WHS; Lock, "A Summer Place: Elizabeth Hull's Madeline Island Photo Album," 33; Bernstein and Canaday, "Madeline Island Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey," 25; Ross, *La Pointe*, 123, 159.

[41] Dredging the lagoon and expanding the marina proved quite controversial, for in doing so developers began to intrude on a historic Ojibwe burial ground. The controversy was resolved by purchasing the land in question—with the help of summer and winter residents of the island—and donating it to the town as Ojibwa Memorial Park. Edward Salmon, "'Old Mission': Madeline Island, Wisconsin," 192?, WHS pamphlet collection; Holzheuter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region*, 59;W. F. Pett, "A Forgotten Village," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 12 (September, 1928): 18; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, *On the Rock*, 81, 97, 98; BCP, May 29, 1908.

property. The fields lay fallow, but the farmhouses became summer homes. One observer counted 125 summer homes on the island in 1960. As plans for a national lakeshore in the islands progressed in the 1960s, the pace of tourist development on Madeline Island quickened.[42]

Historians frequently overlook the environmental changes that accompanied tourism. The environmental impacts of resource production economies like fishing, logging, or other contemporary economic activities are easy enough to find, but historians typically segregate tourism from these activities. Treating tourism as an act of consumption rather than as an integral part of a diversified economy, however, makes the environmental transformations wrought by tourism harder to trace. But on the Brule River and other Lake Superior trout streams, wealthy anglers and state fisheries experts introduced exotic game fish and altered river ecosystems. Summer residents and island entrepreneurs brought similar changes to the landscapes of Madeline and several of the other islands. These transformations were no less radical than those that accompanied logging or farming, simply less obvious.

Tourism, the State, and the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant

The explicit role of the state in nurturing the tourist trade provides a final parallel between tourism and the resource-extractive industries of a peripheral point of production like the Chequamegon Bay. The state indirectly fostered tourism in many ways, most notably through federal subsidies for internal improvements that allowed first steamships and then railroads to carry tourists to the islands, and also in the state of Wisconsin's restriction of Ojibwe fishing rights to clear the way for regulated sport and commercial fishing. During the twentieth century,

[42] Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, Inc, *On the Rock*, 40, 43, 58, 63, 65; Turrittin, "Social Change in an Isolated Community," 86, 94.

however, the role of the government in the tourist economy became far more explicit. In the 1910s and 1920s, the state of Wisconsin initiated a coordinated program of road building, with the attraction of tourist dollars a primary motivation. In the Apostle Islands, tourist promoters capitalized on the construction of these roads to develop a new tourist venture, the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant. As resource-dependent industries collapsed, Bayfield businessmen looked increasingly to tourism as an economic savior, and to the state and federal governments for aid in bolstering the tourist economy. The inclusion of the state government in planning for tourism led to a fundamental shift in perceptions of the islands and the transformation of the island landscapes.

In 1923, business leaders throughout northern Wisconsin and Michigan began planning for the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, performed for the first time in August 1924. Staged in an outdoor amphitheatre just a few miles north of Bayfield, the pageant depicted the history of the Chequamegon Bay from prehistory through the arrival of American treaty commissioners in 1854. Over four hundred actors dramatized this story through the presentation of thirty-five scenes viewed over three consecutive days. These scenes depicted events in the region's history, such as "The Arrival of Jean Nicolet, at the Chequamegon, 1634," and "The Arrival of the American Fur Traders." Some scenes were set elsewhere but played a role in the Chequamegon Bay's past ("The Founding of the Hudson's Bay Co., London, 1670"); others departed entirely from any accurate portrayal of the past. Although purportedly about Native Americans, and narrated through the dream vision of an Ojibwe brave named Mokadjiwens, the Chequamegon

Bay's journey from barbarism to civilization emerged as the central theme of the pageant. Organizers planned to run the pageant for two or three weeks every year, in August.[43]

The Apostle Islands Indian Pageant exemplifies the continued ambiguities in the relationship between white and Ojibwe residents of the Chequamegon Bay region. As in the past, Native Americans were at once the object of tourism as well as active participants in the tourist economy. Visitors traveled to Chequamegon Bay to see a pageant that at once portrayed Indians as noble participants in the drama of history and bloodthirsty savages resisting the march toward civilization. But the Ojibwe were more than simply an object of white tourism. Up to four hundred Ojibwe men and women found work in the pageant, with additional income available through concessions and other sideline activities. No records survive that indicate an Ojibwe perspective on the pageant. White residents of the area, however, had quite complicated reactions. Some saw the pageant in purely economic terms, pleased to find a potential source of income. The superintendent of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation believed the pageant would help preserve Ojibwe culture and tradition, a growing need as the last generation to remember pre-reservation life passed away. Still other white residents of the region worried that drawing attention to the prominent Indian communities would only bolster northern Wisconsin's reputation as a backwards, uncivilized place.[44]

The complex motivations behind the staging of the pageant further attest to these ambiguities. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, towns all over the country used

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[43] Olmanson, "Romantics, Scientists, Boosters, and the Making of the Chequamegon Bay Region," 340-53; Kenneth M. Ellis, "Ke-wa-de-no-kwa: First Annual Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, 1924," WHS pamphlet collection; BCP, July 20, 1923.

[44] Ellis, "Ke-wa-de-no-kwa"; BCP, July 20, 1923; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 155-59; Olmanson, "Romantics, Scientists, Boosters, and the Making of the Chequamegon Bay Region," 340-53. On northern Wisconsin's rough and tumble reputation, see Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 150-56.

historical pageants as statements of civic identity, patriotism, and progress. The Apostle Islands Indian Pageant revealed all of these motives. Pageants also brought regional—and sometimes even national—attention to towns often still struggling for economic security. Economics provided primary motivation for the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant. Editors of the *Bayfield County Press* predicted that the pageant would establish Bayfield as "a gateway through which in the single summer more tourist visitors may pour than during all of the history of tourist travel in Northern Wisconsin." They estimated a ten-fold increase in tourist visitors, all of them traveling with the incentive of "going back to the wilderness of James Fennimore Cooper." Organizers publicized the opportunity to explore America's romantic past, to see primitive Indians first-hand, to experience the beautiful outdoors of northern Wisconsin. Pageant organizers hoped that close to one hundred thousand people would take in the spectacle over the three-week period, and that revenue for the event would top that level in dollars. As they had for decades, Bayfield businessmen hoped to earn a profit on the shoulders of the region's Native Americans.[45]

The Apostle Islands Indian Pageant differed from earlier attempts at tourist promotion, however, in its focus on automobile tourism. "Come by automobile," encouraged one pamphlet, "over long graveled and concrete highways. Drive through virgin lands of forests, lakes, and rivers. Enjoy wild life in its primitive haunts, for you will startle deer, and grouse, and partridge, all along the way." Once they arrived in the Chequamegon Bay region, visitors would find an array of services catering to the needs of auto campers. "Visitors to the Indian Pageant will find plenty of accommodations to suit their particular likes and needs. Near the Pageant Grounds is a

[45] BCP, July 20 and August 10, 1923, and June 25, 1924. On historical pageants in general, see David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

large tourist camp with cooking grates, running water, fire wood and comfort stations." Ashland, Washburn, Bayfield, Duluth, and Superior offered similar facilities, as well as garages, filling stations, and restaurants. Those who attended the pageant would touch the primitive and the wild while also enjoying the comfort and convenience of modern automobile travel.[46]

In aiming their promotional campaign at auto campers, pageant organizers hoped to tie into a wildly popular national trend. As cars became more affordable and middle-class incomes rose during the 1920s, urbanites from around the nation took to the roads, in the process inventing an entirely new type of tourism. Only the wealthiest Americans could afford the time and expense of long railroad journeys to remote destinations, but auto-touring made vacations available to a far larger number of people. A new pattern of vacationing emerged, often called "gypsying"—touring the countryside with no particular itinerary, freed from the confines of a railroad timetable and the set, limited number of stops. New destinations and wayside attractions sprang up as auto campers explored the countryside. Traveling the roads by car emerged as the quintessentially American vacation. By the early 1920s, rural towns and larger cities around the nation established municipal auto camps. These camps attracted potential customers to town centers—where their freely spent dollars could be more easily captured—and also kept them out of the fields and yards of farmers and other rural residents. By the early 1920s, auto touring had blossomed into an important industry. One survey determined that on August 2, 1923, 29,409 out-of-state cars toured Wisconsin roads, from states as far-flung as New York and California.

[46] "Apostle Islands Indian Pageant: America's Super Indian Classic," ca. 1925, WHS pamphlet collection.

Tourists spent an estimated one hundred million dollars in the state of Wisconsin in 1923. The organizers of the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant hoped to profit from this trend.[47]

The state government played a direct and essential role in luring auto campers to Wisconsin, primarily through a consistent commitment to road building after 1911. That year, after two decades of discussion, the legislature passed the State Aid Road Law. The law provided for road development, cooperatively funded by county and state governments, and also created the State Highway Commission to supervise highway construction. The Wisconsin highway network grew dramatically over the next decade. In 1918, the state established a state trunk highway system, which included five thousand miles of improved roads. This number jumped to 7,500 miles in 1919 and ten thousand miles by 1926. The federal government contributed to the improvement of Wisconsin roads, as well, with matching funds grants under the Federal Highway Act of 1921. During the 1920s, highway engineers discovered methods of finishing and improving roads to help them withstand Wisconsin's notoriously brutal winters. By 1926, Wisconsin boasted one of the best road systems in the nation.[48]

Recreation provided a key motivation for the burst in highway construction. In the 1890s, urban bicyclists lobbied for road improvement so that they could better enjoy their sport. Rural

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[47] Paul W. Glad, *War, A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, vol. 5, *The History of Wisconsin Series*, William Fletcher Thompson, ed. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 215; Shaffer, *See America First*, 132; Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 24-44; Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 71-79.

[48] Wisconsin's constitution banned state appropriations for internal improvements, but this clause was amended in 1907. Wisconsin therefore got a late start in road building, and did not pass its first important road construction law until 1911. Ballard Campbell, "The Good Roads Movement in Wisconsin, 1890-1911," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 40 (Summer, 1966): 273-94; Glad, *War, A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, 155-62; State Highway Commission of Wisconsin and the United States Public Roads Administration, *A History of Wisconsin Highway Development, 1935-1945* (Madison: The State-Wide Highway Planning Survey, 1947), 35-43, 77-78; John T. Donaghey, "The Story of Wisconsin Highways," in *Wisconsin the Beautiful* (Madison: Wisconsin Conservation Commission, n.d.). On federal contributions to road building in the 1920s, see Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

residents of the state, however, often opposed state-sponsored road improvements, fearing an increased tax burden and a loss of control over local decision-making. Road-building advocates, such as the Wisconsin division of the League of American Wheelmen, the Wisconsin Good Roads Association, and the Wisconsin State Automobile Association, directed much of their promotional efforts at the state's rural residents. They argued that road improvement would help farmers and loggers get their products to market, but recreation provided an underlying motivation for this rhetoric. When the bicycling fad died away in the 1890s, motorists picked up the mantle of the good roads movement. And by the 1910s and 1920s, road advocates had succeeded in convincing most Wisconsinites of the need for state aid for road construction. Residents of rural Wisconsin hoped that good roads would help them to lure tourists from urban centers around the Midwest. Municipal governments contributed, too, by establishing free motor camps complete with services such as fire grates, showers, bathrooms, and pavilions.[49]

The organizers of the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant depended upon the support of the state and county road building to make their venture profitable. Just one week after the creation of the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant Corporation, Bayfield businessmen attended a hearing before the State Highway Legislative Committee to urge that forty-four miles of highway thirteen be improved and designated a part of the state highway system. The Chequamegon Bay's major roads had been included in the original state highway system in 1917: highway ten, between Ashland and Superior, and highway thirteen, between Ashland and Bayfield. Highway thirteen traced the south shore of Lake Superior between Bayfield and Superior. An improved state highway along this route, promised L. E. McKenzie, the general manager of the pageant

[49] Campbell, "The Good Roads Movement in Wisconsin, 1890-1911"; Glad, *War, A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, 155-62; Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 72, 76; Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 25.

corporation, would provide a scenic drive equal to any in California. Indeed, he argued that successful development of the region as a tourist destination depended on the state government's willingness to improve this road. "Immediate completion of state highway between Superior and Bayfield is the prime essential for development of the Lake Superior region." McKenzie recognized that the success of the pageant depended on good roads. Without improved roads, even ten minutes of rain might prevent thousands of visitors from making the trip to Bayfield. With the urging of McKenzie and other Chequamegon Bay business leaders, highway thirteen was included in the state trunk system and improvement was well underway by 1925.[50]

During the 1920s, tourist ventures throughout Wisconsin and the western Great Lakes hoped to take advantage of new, improved roads. With timber resources gone or disappearing and the prospects for cutover farming increasingly grim, businessmen hoped that tourism would take the place of logging in the region's economy. Northern Wisconsin residents formed a series of organizations throughout the 1920s to help promote the tourist trade. In 1922, they formed the Northern Wisconsin Resort Association, with the goal of both luring tourist dollars to the state and also improving services. The organization claimed 2,000 members in its first year, and in 1923 changed its name to the Wisconsin Land O' Lakes Association. The group began publication of *Wisconsin Land of Lakes Magazine* in 1925, to further promote the region. The magazine featured frequent articles on the appeal of northern Wisconsin to auto campers. Local newspapers around the state renewed their efforts at tourism boosting, too. Organizers of the

[50] BCP, August 10, 1923 and June 25, 1924; *Wisconsin up-to-date Road Map and Tourists' Guide*, (Portage, WI: Columbia Novelty Company, 1922), WHS pamphlet collection; State Printing Board, comp., "Official Highway Map of Wisconsin," in *1925 Wisconsin Blue Book* (Madison: State Printing Board, 1925); Asa K. Owen, "Upper Thirteen, Wisconsin," (1926), WHS pamphlet collection; "Vacation Days in the Chequamegon Bay District of 'Upper Thirteen': Wisconsin's Big Highway," (Park Falls, WI, n.d.), WHS pamphlet collection.

Indian pageant built on this publicity, encouraging tourists to "travel though the scenic wooded sections of Minnesota and Wisconsin, through the beautiful Land O' Lakes region, and on up to the Pageant grounds … Where you may tour concrete highways through a virgin wilderness, or camp at modern summer resorts and tourist playgrounds." Attracting motorists remained a central part of this promotional strategy, and the Land O' Lakes Association, like other similar groups, lobbied repeatedly for state aid in improving Wisconsin's highways.[51]

Despite the high hopes of its organizers and promoters—and state aid in the form of road construction—the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant did not provide the expected financial windfall. In its first run, from August 1-20, 1924, poor weather kept the potential audience off the road and away from the pageant grounds. The second season had a higher turnout, but still only twelve thousand people attended the show. By the end of the 1925 season, the pageant had failed to cover expenses for two years running and announced a debt of $60,000. The production survived only one more year. The significance of the pageant, however, lies not in its brevity but in the way that its organizers looked to the state to create the essential link that would bring tourists to the islands. After the 1920s, Wisconsinites and other Americans increasingly turned to the state to organize and supplement the tourist economy.[52]

In the 1920s and especially in the 1930s, the state of Wisconsin assumed an increasing role in planning for tourism in northern Wisconsin. In the 1920s, University of Wisconsin economist Richard T. Ely helped found the discipline of land economics. Wisconsin's cutover district served as one Ely's first laboratories as he explored this new field. Ely and his colleagues

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[51] Glad, *War, A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, 214; "Apostle Islands Indian Pageant"; "Wisconsin State Tourist Bureau" (1928), WHS pamphlet collection; *Wisconsin Land of Lakes Magazine* 1-5 (1925-1929).

[52] BCP, August 13 and 20, 1924, August 20 and 27, 1925, and July 15, 1926.

believed that they could use statistics and modern scientific methods to determine the best possible use for land and natural resources. For decades, settlers had attempted to make northern Wisconsin follow the developmental path of New England, the Ohio River Valley, and southern Wisconsin—that is, they tried to carve farms out of the cutover. Ely and his colleagues believed that the region was unfit for agriculture and best suited to reforestation and use for forestry and recreation. A crisis of tax delinquency in the mid-1920s provided the turning point in this transition. Settlers who had moved to the cutover during the farm expansion of the early twentieth century could not pay their taxes when the bottom dropped out of the farm economy in the 1920s. Nearly one quarter of all land in seventeen northern Wisconsin counties entered into tax delinquency in 1927 alone. Removing this amount of land from the tax base severely strained county governments and made the provision of public services to remaining settlers untenable.[53]

The ideas of land economics and the crisis of tax delinquency resulted in the 1930s in the adoption of rural zoning. In 1929, the state legislature conveyed to county governments the right to adopt rural zoning ordinances. Counties could then designate land for exclusive forest, agricultural, or recreational use. They could prevent agricultural settlement on lands deemed too poor for farming, which relieved county governments of the obligation to provide costly roads, schools, and services to scattered and isolated farm families. Wisconsin's rural zoning law was the first in the nation, and it became a model for New Deal management of sub-marginal agricultural lands. Oneida County adopted the first ordinances in 1933, and all of the Wisconsin cutover counties followed by 1940. In all, county governments closed nearly five million acres to farming and settlement. Although at first resistant to zoning ordinances and centralized state

[53]James Kates, *Planning a Wilderness: Regenerating the Great Lakes Cutover Region* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 15-51; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 162-67; Carstensen, *Farms or Forests*.

planning, town boosters and businessmen in rural Wisconsin by the 1930s saw a greater state role in collective planning as the path out of the crisis of tax delinquency and depression. Farmers—the men and women being told that their lands were unfit for agriculture and often asked to leave their farms—were predictably less enthusiastic about rural zoning.[54]

Zoning for recreation and tourism emerged as a central tenet of economic recovery for the cutover. County planning boards, with the assistance of state extension agents, classified lands for agriculture, forestry, or recreation. A typical recreational area might prohibit such industrial activity as quarries, sawmills, or mines, but would allow development for summer homes. An early state publication explained the benefits of recreational zoning: "Recreational land means taxable wealth. A zoned area dedicated to recreation insuring a quiet, beautiful, undisturbed area in which to build a summer home will help to attract the recreation seeker to the zoned counties of Wisconsin." Some areas were zoned to allow for forest products industries as well as for tourism and recreational use. But more significantly, the county used this authority to segregate recreational land use from other types of economic activity.[55]

Rural zoning needs to be understood as a part of the same process of simplification that took place in the commercial fisheries in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Faced with the disorder and inefficiency of settlement on submarginal lands and widespread tax delinquency, state officials responded by using the zoning ordinances to order the landscape for

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[54] W. A. Rowlands and F. B. Trenk, *Rural Zoning Ordinances in Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, circular no. 281, 1936); Walter Rowlands, Fred Trenk, and Raymond Penn, *Rural Zoning in Wisconsin* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, bulletin 479, 1948); F. G. Wilson, "Zoning for Forestry and Recreation: Wisconsin's Pioneer Role" *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 41 (Winter, 1957-1958): 102-106; Kates, *Planning a Wilderness*, 146-60; Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 167-69.

[55] Rowlands and Trenk, *Rural Zoning Ordinances in Wisconsin*, 13; Rowlands, Trenk, and Penn, *Rural Zoning in Wisconsin*, 8.

easier management. State and county governments thereby assumed a far more powerful role in determining economic activity, an authority that increased steadily over the twentieth century.

Ashland County adopted rural zoning ordinances in 1934. La Pointe Township—which included all of the Apostle Islands but three—faced a different situation than the rest of the county. In 1930, only 1.25 percent of La Pointe Township's 48,071 acres were involved in tax delinquency proceedings. The county's other townships ranged from 12.3 percent to over 36 percent, and averaged 26.3 percent. In fact, by 1930, the state held title to only one eighty-acre parcel on Basswood Island; the rest of the Apostles remained in private ownership. Island landowners continued to see value in their property, and continued to pay their taxes, despite the fact that by 1930 most of islands had been stripped of their timber. Recreational potential provided this value. Taxes on recreational property provided over one-third of La Pointe Township's property tax collections in 1930. When it created land use areas in 1934, the Ashland County Land Use Planning Committee divided the Apostle Islands into two categories. It designated Madeline Island as "agricultural and recreational" and the other sixteen islands under its jurisdiction as "forestry and recreational." The county closed these islands to potential agricultural settlement, to all uses other than forestry and tourism. Even Madeline Island's agricultural land use depended on recreation—on the local markets created by the extensive summer home development. By 1934, then, the county government began the process of segregating the Apostle Islands for their recreational value, and had set Madeline Island into its own land use category.[56]

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[56] *Making the Most of Ashland County Land* (Extension Service of the College of Agriculture, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, special circular, October, 1930), WHS pamphlet collection, 7, 27; Ashland County Land Use Planning Committee, *Ashland County Intensive Land Use Planning Report* (Ashland County Land Use Planning Committee, Ashland, WI, May 1, 1941), 21, 25.

This segregation of tourism from other economic activity marked a turning point in the environmental history of the Apostle Islands. Ashland County planners—prodded by state and university extension agents—began to conceive of the Apostle Islands as a place valued only for recreation. Over the rest of the twentieth century, the state further prescribed the types of activity permissible in the islands. These ideas culminated in the view of the islands as a wilderness, as a place valued for only a specific type of recreation. This represented a strikingly new perspective. Tourism in the Chequamegon Bay had never been segregated from other economic activities. It had developed in much the same way as the extractive industries like fishing and logging, depending on markets, labor, capital, and transportation networks. It had resulted in the same intermingling of natural and human processes. Indeed, tourism had served as but one aspect of the region's economy. The integrated, overlapping nature of the Chequamegon Bay economy can be seen most clearly on Sand Island, where fishermen, loggers, farmers, and summer residents built a community between 1880 and 1945.

CHAPTER FIVE
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Creating the Sand Island Wilderness, 1880-1945

"As I scurried on deck
Into bitter black cold
There were waves like jaws
Of some wild animal
Devouring our ship
Leaving nothing but bare bones"
--"Sevona," from *Frozen in Time*, by Hope McLeod

"These were hurricane seas
I prayed
I put on my uniform
I didn't know what else to do
I heard the whistle, I saw the flares
I prayed.
Seven men, seven men…"
--"Sand Island Light, Seven Men," from *Keeper of the Light*, by Warren Nelson, Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua

Perhaps the most renowned event in the history of Sand Island was the dramatic wreck of the ship *Sevona* on September 2, 1905. The ship, bound east from Duluth loaded with iron ore and caught in a tremendous nor'easter, ran for shelter in the Apostle Islands. But the captain misjudged his position, and the boat slammed onto Sand Island Shoal—and split in half. Seventeen of the crew and passengers clambered into lifeboats, but seven others, including the captain, were stranded in the other half of the ship. Immanuel Luick, manning nearby Sand Island Lighthouse, heard the ship's call of distress but could only stand and watch as the seven stranded men fashioned a raft out of the boat's wooden hatch covers. "Seventeen made the shore

that night, seven swallowed by the lake," runs one of the several folk songs written about the wreck. The iron foundation of the *Sevona* still lies on Superior's bottom, an attraction for divers and underwater archeologists. The songs keep alive the heroism of the passengers and crew struggling for shore and the anguish of Keeper Luick, forced to watch the tragedy from his tower, alone and unable to help. The story of the *Sevona* helps create a picture of lonely, isolated wilderness at Sand Island.

But the songs do not tell the full story of the *Sevona*, and the details they omit complicate the image of Sand Island wilderness. One of the lifeboats that escaped the foundering ship washed ashore on Sand Island's East Bay, home to a growing community of Norwegian fishermen and farmers. The survivors did not huddle wet and cold on the beach to wait out the storm, but rather found shelter in the home of Frederick Hansen, one of the island fishermen. Once the weather calmed, Keeper Immanuel Luick and his assistant combed the island's shoreline for bodies of the drowned sailors; meanwhile, tourists staying at Camp Stella—the oldest resort in the Apostle Islands, located on the southeast corner of Sand Island—sailed pleasure boats around the wreck looking for souvenirs. Much like the dramatic story of the shipwrecked *Sevona*, Sand Island's history is more complicated than it first appears.[1]

Today, Sand Island seems like a wilderness. When National Park Service managers began the park's Wilderness Suitability Study in 2001, much of the discussion focused on whether to recommend the inclusion of Sand Island in the wilderness proposal. But Sand Island's wilderness characteristics are a recent development. From 1880 through 1945, a community of fishermen and farmers lived, worked, and recreated on Sand Island. These men and women

[1] SI Keeper's Log, September 2-11, 1905.

indelibly marked the island environment through their economic activities and their land use decisions; these decisions continue to shape the landscape, long after the people themselves left the island. Today, Sand Island is quickly regaining its wild character. Even as wilderness returns to the island, it does so in ways influenced by the logging, fishing, farming, tourism and other activities of the men and women who settled there over a century ago.

Modern perceptions of wilderness obscure Sand Island's past and make it difficult to recover and understand the lives of people who carved a home for themselves there. Today, the island seems like a lonely and isolated place. Indeed, its most prominent structure is Immanuel Luick's former home—the sandstone lighthouse on the island's northern tip, a powerful symbol of loneliness and isolation. Today's park visitors travel to the lighthouse to imagine for themselves Keeper Luick's anguish and isolation as he watched the *Sevona* disaster. Islanders did struggle with isolation, and the distance from Bayfield provided a defining feature of island life. But Sand Island's past is best understood not for its isolation, but as the central point in a web of relation. In building a life for themselves, islanders established a series of connections—connections between themselves and their environment, and also among themselves and among their various economic activities. It is these connections that the modern wilderness most completely obscures.

Historians struggle to untangle and understand the myriad connections that were essential components of life at places like Sand Island. This is particularly true in the economic realm. Historians and other scholars typically isolate and abstract specific industries for analysis. Study of a single industry provides distinct analytical advantages: the internal economic, environmental, and social dynamics of the specific industry become clear. Most studies of

western and midwestern economic history follow this model, isolating the fishing, mining, or tourism industries for detailed study. Such techniques have rendered persuasive interpretations. But this abstraction hides local details and conditions and draws attention away from the places of production, away from the places where lumberjacks felled trees and fishermen snared trout.[2]

At peripheral points of production, at places like Sand Island, seemingly distinct industries overlapped and reinforced each other. Residents of Sand Island participated in virtually all of the economic activities of the Chequamegon Bay—logging, fishing, farming, and tourism. But islanders did not experience these activities in isolation from each other. Fishermen doubled as farmers, farmers fed tourists, and the steamships of Bayfield's big fish dealers carried potatoes and people to and from the island, along with loads of herring and lake trout. These industries functioned as part of an integrated economic strategy pursued by many residents of the Chequamegon Bay, and on rural peripheries everywhere. Intersection, not isolation, provides the paradigm for understanding the economy Sand Island and other peripheral points of production.

Connections determined non-economic aspects of life on Sand Island, as well. As the residents of Sand Island built their settlement, they built as well a series of connections, both among themselves and with the island's physical environment. With formal institutions like a school and a cooperative store, and with informal relationships such as a gendered division of labor and Sunday card games, islanders built connections with each other as a way of navigating the exigencies of life on a resource-producing periphery. They also established connections between themselves and the natural world. By clearing the forest to create space for fishermen's

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[2] See, for example, McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*; Taylor, *Making Salmon*; Williams, *Americans and Their Forests*; William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon, 1850-1986* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1988); Fries, *Empire in Pine*; Rothman, *Devil's Bargains;* Aron, *Working At Play*.

shacks, farm fields, and summer homes, islanders connected human and natural processes at the most basic of levels. They replaced the pre-settlement lowland forest ecosystem with one modified forever by their actions. Long after the farming and fishing ceased, the connections forged by islanders continue to mark Sand Island environments. The fact that modern tourists travel to Sand Island to explore the returned wilderness does not erase these connections. Today's Sand Island landscapes testify that wild places, too, have human pasts.

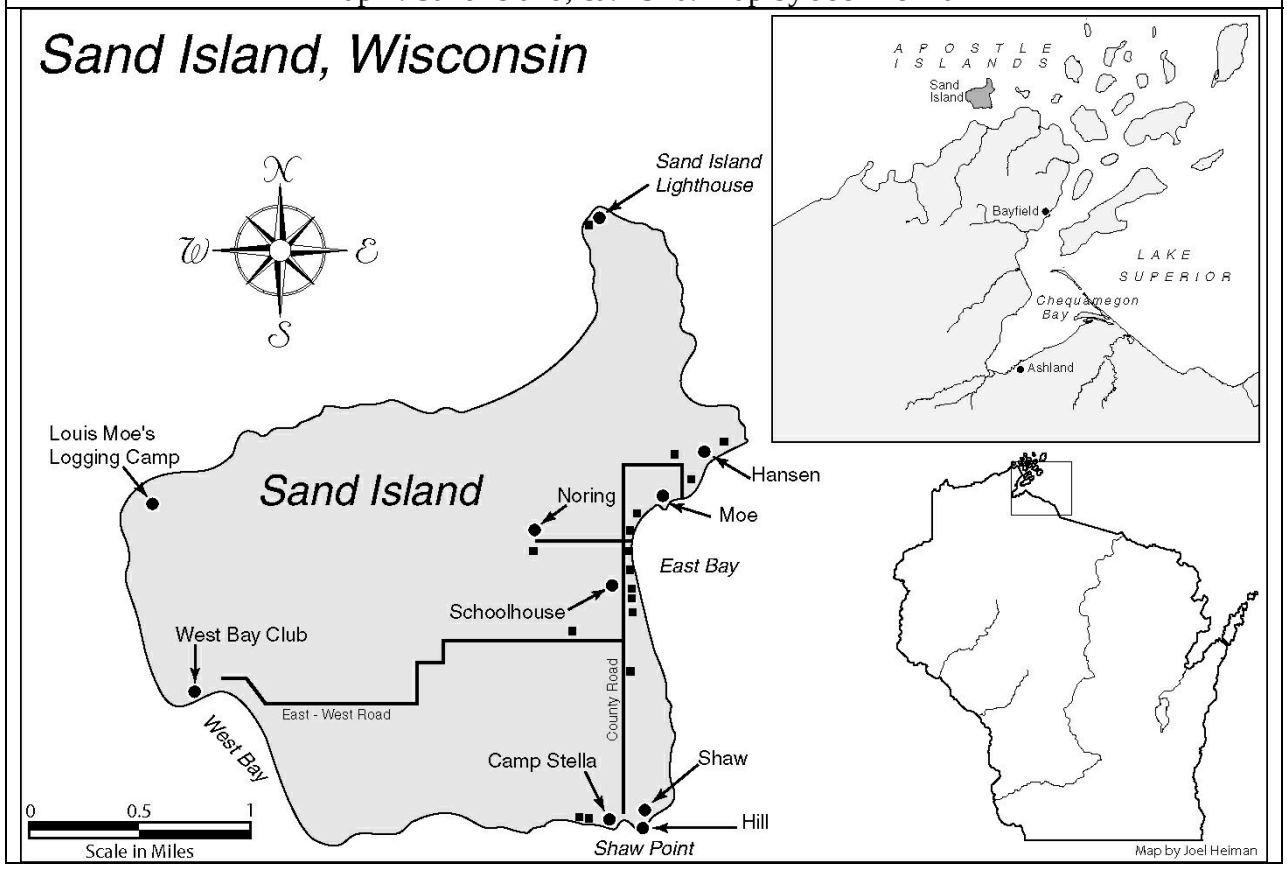
A close reading of this intertwined history offers four important conclusions, two about peripheral economic systems and two about modern ideas of wilderness. First, it reveals that well into the twentieth century, men and women on the economic periphery performed an intricate balancing act between the demands of subsistence and market engagement. Second, it demonstrates the importance of local environmental and geographic conditions in shaping economic development. Third, the story of Sand Island illustrates the connections between human and natural processes that develop wherever people seek to make a home for themselves in the world. And finally, Sand Island stands as an example of the enduring legacy of these connections, even in places that today seem removed from the impact of human activity.

The Roots of Connection

Like most parts of the rural periphery, Sand Island was slowly integrated in the country's expanding economic framework. Through the mid-1880s, Sand Island served as a seasonal outpost for the extraction of natural resources. Although Sand Island provided a base for fishing, logging, and tourism, all of these activities remained seasonal and limited in scope. Lack of

connections with the national transportation system restricted Sand Island's utility. Even at this early stage, however, the roots of Sand Island's many layers of connection were spreading.

Map 4: Sand Island, ca. 1920. Map by Joel Heiman



Sand Island received very few visitors until the 1870s. Although just over a mile off the mainland, distance from the early nineteenth-century Ojibwe community on Madeline Island and the European settlements of Bayfield and Ashland protected the island's isolation. Unlike many of the other islands, little evidence of Ojibwe use of Sand Island exists. Archeological surveys have revealed only the slightest traces of early Indian use of the island—a few quartz flakes and fire-cracked rocks, nothing more. Archeologists have surmised that these few signs might mark

the island's use as an itinerant fishing or hunting camp. When Government Land Office surveyors arrived 1857, they found no evidence of human activity.[3]

In 1870, fishermen Frank Shaw became the first individual to stake a take a more permanent interest in Sand Island. Shaw acquired land on the island's southeast corner with his Civil War veteran's bonus. (See Map 4.) Shaw and his wife, Josephine, had moved to the Chequamegon Bay region from Sandusky, Ohio, in 1867. At first, they did little with their new property. The Shaws lived in La Pointe during the 1870s, and in Bayfield in the 1880s. Frank Shaw fished among the Apostles, while Josephine ran a Bayfield boarding house called the Lake Superior House and their small children attended school. By the early 1880s, Frank Shaw used Sand Island as a base for his summer fishing. From April until early September Shaw fished the waters around Sand Island with pound nets. He hired as many as four men during the summer to help with the labor of driving pound net posts and tending the nets. Shaw's use of pound nets and hired labor indicates his financial success during the boom period of Chequamegon Bay fishing: pound nets require more capital investment than gill nets or seine nets, the other types of fishing equipment common at the time. Shaw and his men salted their catch and either transported it to town themselves or—more likely—waited for one of the collection steamers sent to the islands by Bayfield's large fish dealing companies. Shaw fished in this manner throughout the 1880s, although Sand Island remained for him only a summer residence. The *Bayfield County Press* regularly reported on the Shaw's arrival in town for the winter.[4]

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[3] Robert J. Salzer and David F. Overstreet, *Summary Report: Apostle Island Project; Inventory and Evaluation of Cultural Resources within the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore—Wisconsin* (Bayfield, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1976), 65, 68; Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands, Surveyors Field Notes, 1832-1865, notes for T52N, R5W, series 701, vol. 50, reel 8.

[4] Arnold R. Alanen, "The Shaw-Hill Farm Site on Sand Island (Apostle Islands National Lakeshore): Biographical and Site-Related Information," (1990), AINL Library, 4-8; F. W. Shaw interview, IJC Notes; U. S. Department of

Frank Shaw, however, was more than just a fisherman. Even as he tended his nets during the summer fishing season, Shaw and his hired men also grew crops on Sand Island. Most of what they grew went to feed the family and the hired men, but they also shipped produce to market in Bayfield. In 1888, for example, Shaw arrived in town laden with three hundred bushels of potatoes. In the mid-1890s, with the children no longer in school, the Shaws made Sand Island their year-round home. Shaw expanded both his fishing and farming activities over the rest of the decade. The Shaw farm earned a particular reputation for its strawberries: "The finest strawberries that have been brought into market this season are arriving daily from Frank Shaw's farm at Sand Island," reported the local newspaper. The farm began to look like other farmsteads in rural Wisconsin, complete with cows, chickens, and sheep, hayfields and apple orchards. Shaw's fishing operation grew, too, and by 1899 his fleet included four vessels and he kept three to four hired men on hand at all times. By 1895, the *Ashland Daily Press* reported, "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."[5]

Other fishermen used Sand Island as a summer fishing camp, too, some of them perhaps even predating Frank Shaw's farm. The underwater ledge around the outside of the archipelago served as one of the region's most important fishing grounds, and Sand Island provided easy access to these preferred areas. Fishermen chose Sand Island as a summer base of operations because they could quickly get to the ledge off the northern and western points of the island. The

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Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census, 1880*, manuscript census, La Pointe Township, Ashland County, Wisconsin; Wisconsin Department of State, *1885 Wisconsin State Census*, Town of Bayfield, Bayfield County; BCP, October 16, 1885, October 1, 1887, and April 13, 1889.

[5] BCP, July 31, 1897; William H. Tishler, Arnold R. Alanen, and George Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development on the Apostle Islands," (Madison, WI: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore/Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Wisconsin, 1984), AINL Library, 31-32; ADP, December 21, 1895.

island's sandy east bay also provided shelter and an easy approach. Like Shaw, these fishermen only spent their summers on the island, selling their catch to local fish dealers whose boats made periodic stops on the island. Unlike Shaw, however, these itinerant fishermen owned no land on the island and built nothing more than shacks for shelter. Little remains to record the character of these fishermen's lives. Their names occasionally appear in the local newspapers, enough to prove their existence but little else.[6]

Through the 1880s, Sand Island remained a seasonal fishing station, and as autumn turned to winter lumberjacks replaced the fishermen on the island. In December 1884—well after the close of the fishing season, but before the winter freeze—the Boutin company's steamer arrived at the island towing a barge loaded with men, teams and supplies for a logging camp run by the local firm of Boutin & Holston. The company estimated that its winter logging would total over 2,500,000 board feet of lumber, mostly high-grade white pine. The following June, another Boutin tug arrived at Sand Island to pick up equipment and to tow a raft of the winter's work to the Ashland mills. Boutin & Holston reestablished the camp in November 1885, "to clean up what was left at that point last year," and to cut the remaining easily accessible white pine. That one of Chequamegon Bay's biggest fish dealers doubled as a logging contractor represents an early indication of the ways that seemingly different industries intersected at a peripheral point of production like Sand Island. Many fishermen found winter work in lumber

[6] Smith and Snell, "Review of the Fisheries of the Great Lakes in 1885," 45; BCP, November 12, 1870, and December 6, 1884.

camps, and some of Sand Island's early seasonal fishermen could easily have moved into the middle of the island in the winter.[7]

The federal government provided another form of seasonal employment on Sand Island. In 1881, the U.S. Lighthouse Service constructed a lighthouse to guide the ships of the region's rapidly expanding commercial trade through the shoals off of York and Sand Islands, into the West Channel, and to the Chequamegon Bay ports of Bayfield, Washburn, and Ashland. Contractors built the new lighthouse out of locally quarried red sandstone, and the statuesque building boasted a fifty-foot tower. The *Bayfield County Press* quickly pointed out that the new lighthouse added yet another feature to the growing tourist trade: "Among the many attractions in and around Bayfield and the Apostle Islands should be numbered the new Light House, in course of construction on Sand Island. Superintendent Louis Lederle, and family, have located o the island and will be pleased to point out the various points of interest." The lighthouse went into operation in September 1881.[8]

Even as the government built the red stone lighthouse, Sand Island emerged as a tourist destination. Several of the region's most wealthy and prominent citizens sought out the island as spot for summer fishing and camping. Samuel Fifield—one-time editor of the Bayfield and Ashland papers, former state senator and lieutenant governor, and the Chequamegon Bay's most important booster—spent part of the summer of 1881 camping on the island. In following summers, prominent local businessmen John H. Knight, James Chapman, and Currie G. Bell visited the island to fish for trout and for "sport and sight seeing among the islands." Fifield liked

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[7] BCP, December 12 and 20, 1884, February 14, June 27, and December 28, 1885; R. K. Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island, at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* (Stevens Point: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 1982), 41-51.

[8] BCP, July 2, and September 17, 1881.

the island so much that he returned on a permanent basis. In 1886 he established the Apostle Islands' first summer resort, Camp Stella, on the south shore of the island, just to the west of Frank and Josephine Shaw's farm. Fifield had very different plans for Sand Island than did his neighbors. Next to the Shaw's hay fields and market garden, Fifield constructed a landscape of leisure. Fifield set up a "street" lined with white canvas camping tents, a substantial dock, several permanent cottages, a large dining space, a water pump, and even gas-powered street lamps. Sand Island became for Fifield both an escape into nature and a hay fever retreat for his suffering wife, Stella. "Beneath the evergreen boughs the white tents glisten through the open spaces of a beautiful grove," Fifield described. "The sun finds its way among the tree tops that cast a welcome shade where the hammocks are hung, while a gentle breeze, cooled by the waves of the sparkling bay, plays summer airs, that lull and soothe the happy campers to delightful dreams." At first, Camp Stella's visitors consisted mainly of the Fifield's local friends and relatives. But as the camp developed—and as Fifield's promotional efforts took hold—Camp Stella attracted more out of state visitors. Many of Fifield's guests returned year after year.[9]

By 1890, then, Sand Island served as the seasonal home for a loose collection of people: summer fishermen, late-summer campers and tourists, the lighthouse keeper, and the occasional winter lumberjacks. Natural resources like fish and timber harvested on Sand Island contributed to the Chequamegon Bay's expanding economy. The lighthouse guided ships into the flourishing town of Bayfield, and tourists and campers relaxed in Camp Stella's white tents. One would be hard pressed, however, to call the collection of people on Sand Island a community—they were

[9] BCP, June 23 and July 7, 1883; Sheree L. Peterson, "Camp Stella: Meeting Place of Kindred Souls," (Bayfield, WI: Eastern National Park and Monument Association/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1997), AINL Library, 22-37, 53; Samuel S. Fifield, "The Story of the Apostles," *Picturesque Wisconsin* 1 (July 1899): 67-88.

only loosely connected to each other, bound by little more than their geographic proximity. Even at this early stage, however, the seasonal residents had begun to modify the Sand Island landscape. The Shaws had established a growing farm, lumberjacks had stripped pine from the island forest, and Samuel Fifield had transformed Camp Stella into a landscape of recreation and leisure. As the Sand Island community developed in the 1890s, the pace of these changes accelerated and the economic activities that occurred on the island grew more tightly connected.

An Economy of Connection

The Sand Island community grew with the town of Bayfield. When the railroad tied the Chequamegon Bay more tightly to the national economic framework, the types of activities possible on Sand Island broadened. The scale of the logging, fishing, farming, and tourism on Sand Island expanded, and the connections between these various industries solidified. In the 1890s, Norwegian immigrants joined the Shaws and transformed Sand Island from a seasonal outpost into a year-round community. These immigrants established a set of economic and social relationships that tied Sand Island's different parts—seasonal and permanent, tourist and resident, fishing and logging, human and natural—closely together.

Norwegian immigrants first settled on Sand Island in 1893. In 1890, Louis Moe followed many of his countrymen by leaving his home in Norway's Lofoten Islands and emigrating to the U.S. In 1893, Moe filed a homestead claim on Sand Island. Soon after, other men and women from the same region of Norway followed him, many of whom had fished with Moe in the Old World. Peter and Dorthea Hansen, and their nine-year-old son Frederick, emigrated in 1893, moving to Sand Island straight from Norway. When the Wisconsin state census taker arrived on

the island in June 1895, he found the roots of a growing community. He counted forty-six residents of the island. Nineteen of these were single men, indicating the island's continuing importance as a seasonal fish camp. But seven families also called the island home. The local papers took notice of the growing outpost, too. "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." Such publicity no doubt helped attract more settlers, and the island population continued to grow.[10]

Norwegian immigrants to Sand Island followed a pattern of chain migration common in the upper Midwest. As in many immigrant groups, advice passed through kinship networks often motivated decisions to emigrate. The presence of familiar faces and a known destination made the first steps of immigration easier. The Hansens, for example, came straight from Norway to Sand Island. There, they fished with Louis Moe until they made enough money to buy their own boat and establish a homestead on the island. In addition to the help offered by acquaintances, the Apostle Islands provided a familiar environment. Although noticeably short on fjords, the Apostles offered the chance to replicate the mixed fishing and farming economy that many of the immigrants had practiced in Norway. The combination of the chance to pursue a familiar lifestyle and the established Norwegian community made Sand Island a frequent stopping point for immigrants to the Chequamegon Bay region. "Their interest in fishing drove them there," recalled Bill Noring, an immigrant's son. "Every one of the fishermen who started fishing here started at Sand Island… They all started out there for a season or two." New arrivals served as

[10] Moe changed his name from Lars Peter Eliason upon arriving in the U.S. Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development on the Apostle Islands," 34; Alma Dahl, Carl Dahl, and Bill Noring, interview by Norma Lien and Jan Moran, February 2, 1981, transcript in AINL Name File; Wisconsin Department of State, *Wisconsin State Census, 1895*, Township of Bayfield, Bayfield County; ADP, December 21, 1895.

hired hands until they could get their own boat and set up their own operation on Sand or one of the other islands. During this era, Scandinavians replaced French Canadians and American Indians as the dominant ethnic group in the Lake Superior commercial fishery.[11]

The expanding Sand Island fishing industry reflected regional trends in other ways, too. The railroad had arrived at Bayfield in 1884 and A. Booth & Sons the following year. The ability to transport fresh fish to market increased the number of fishermen—and the intensity of the fishing—throughout the region. Booth and Boutin company boats arrived at Sand Island on a regular schedule to pick up fish and drop off ice. The Sand Island community developed just as the whitefish population crashed, so Louis Moe, Peter Hansen, and the other immigrants fished primarily for herring and lake trout. Although the whitefish crash cannot be traced to the specific activities of the island's new residents, the islanders participated in the expansion of scale and fishing intensity that led to the collapse.

Some of the island's permanent residents were primarily farmers rather than fishermen, and their impact on island environments is easier to trace. The Noring and Loftfield families moved to Sand Island in the 1910s, and devoted their energies to farming. Sand Island farmers grew a variety of crops, but they were most well known for their berries. "The strawberries that [the Loftfield's] raised were large berries and delicious. They were about the size of eggs—you could put them in an egg carton and sell them by the dozen, they were that large," remembered one islander. Because of the cooling effect of Lake Superior, the berry season on Sand Island

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[11] Alma Dahl, Carl Dahl, and Bill Noring, interview by Norma Lien and Jan Moran, February 2, 1981, transcript in AINL Library; Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Kaups, "Norwegian Immigrants and the Development of Commercial Fisheries Along the North Shore of Lake Superior, 1870-1895," 21-34; Ragnar Standal, "Emigration from a Fjord District on Norway's West Coast, 1852-1915," trans. C. A. Clausen, *Norwegian-American Studies* 29 (1983): 185-209; Jane Marie Pederson, *Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin, 1870-1970* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 109.

started later and lasted longer than on the mainland, providing a competitive market advantage to island farmers. The Loftfields and Norings grew a variety of vegetables, too—potatoes, rutabagas, carrots and cabbage. The Norings also kept cattle—a half-dozen or so Holsteins—and sold cream and butter to the Bayfield Creamery. They also marketed beef and sausage from animals butchered in early winter. The Norings and Loftfields sent much of their produce to market in Bayfield, using the daily runs of the fish collecting boats for transportation. The labor necessary to make the farm economy work was divided along gender lines, and will be discussed later in the chapter.[12]

After 1910, Burt Hill and Anna Mae ran the most extensive farm on the island. Hill worked as an editor for the *Bayfield County Press* and was one of the Bayfield community's most visible citizens, a member of the fire department, the Bayfield Booster Club and the Commercial Club. In 1894, he married Frank Shaw's daughter, Anna Mae. In 1910, Hill resigned from the *Press*, purchased his father-in-law's farm, and moved Sand Island. Hill used Frank Shaw's pound-net equipment for several years, but in 1919 he sold the fishing gear and focused on farming. For the next two decades Hill expanded his farming and dairying operations. Hill kept meticulous records, and his account books from several years during the 1910s and 1930s have survived. Like the other Sand Island farmers, Burt and Anna Mae grew a variety of crops and kept livestock to cobble together a yearly income. They had three small apple orchards scattered around the property, and sold apples and cider. The Hills also raised and sold chickens

[12] Bill Noring, interview by William Tishler, September 14, 1981, tape in the AINL place file, Sand Island; Bill Noring, interview by Norma Lien and Jan Moran, December 16, 1980, transcript in the AINL name file; BCP, July 5, 1912; Howard Palm, interview by Carol Ahlgren, White Bear Lake, MN, October 17, 1987, transcript in AINL name file; Melvin Dahl, interview by Carol Ahlgren, Minneapolis, MN, November 12, 1987, transcript in the AINL name file; 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), 185-95.

and their eggs. They owned eight dairy cows and a cream separator, and well over half of their farm income derived from the sale of milk, butter, and cream. Like the other farmers, the Hills sent their produce to town on the fish boats, paying the Booth Fisheries Company small fees (ranging from $.10 to $1.40) for freight once or twice a week. They sold dairy products to the Bayfield Creamery and agricultural produce to Bayfield grocer Christian Melde. The Hills also sold farm products, like chickens, eggs, ice, and other produce, to their island neighbors.[13]

Farming operations involved more obvious physical change to the island landscape than did the activities of the fishermen, and the Noring farm serves as an example of the on-the-ground transformations wrought by the settlement process. The 1925 Bayfield County tax rolls record the Norings working a 40-acre farm. (The Loftfields owned several parcels totaling 23 acres, and were also paying taxes on an additional 40-acre parcel.) All of this land had to be cleared for agricultural production. Like other settlers of rural Wisconsin, the Norings used the trees felled in the process of land clearing to construct their first house and other farm buildings. They then used fire to clear the understory and stumps. "When we first got out there you could stand [20 feet away] and couldn't see each other, for the hemlock… They never had a horse to take the logs out… Oh yes, they cleared it," remembered Bill Noring. The Norings replaced the original forest vegetation with a suite of crop plants—potatoes, rutabagas, cabbages, strawberries—on portions of their land and forage plants such as timothy and clover elsewhere.[14]

The Norings planted a different suite of plants in the area immediately around the farmstead. The Noring farm is the farthest of the Sand Island homes from the shoreline, about a

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[13] Alanen, "The Shaw-Hill Farm Site on Sand Island," 12-15; Burt Hill Memoir, ca. 1941, AINL name file; Hill Account Books, 1914-1944, AINL Library.

[14] Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1925, Bayfield County Courthouse, Washburn, WI; Noring, interview by Lien and Moran.

quarter-mile inland from the island's east bay. Building the farmhouse and clearing land meant removing some trees and planting others. The Norings transplanted several spruce trees, dug up from one of their fields, to the northeast side of the house to form a windbreak. They planted lilac bushes along the west side of the house and rose bushes elsewhere nearby. This level of detail about the island landscape demonstrates not only how the settlers reshaped their surroundings but also reveals the legacy of their actions: the physical changes to the land persist more than a half-century after the Norings left their farm. The ongoing impact of these decisions will be discussed below.[15]

Farmers and fishermen each changed the physical properties of the Sand Island landscape to meet their needs. The lasting impact of the transformations wrought by the islanders will be discussed at the end of this chapter. But to consider the farmers and fishermen as distinct from each other misses an essential aspect of Sand Island life. No one on Sand Island was only a fisherman or only a farmer. All worked together, with daily tasks, seasonal changes, and personal lives overlapping in intricate ways.

Burt Hill, despite selling his fishing gear in 1919, remained tied to the island's fishing industry in important ways. Hill rented space at his dock to fishermen during the herring season, and Anna Mae Hill provided room and board to entire herring crews as a way of earning extra cash. In 1915, for example, the Hills boarded a crew of herring fishermen for the S.L. Boutin Fish Company. The Hills continued to rent dock space and boarding space intermittently throughout the 1930s. In 1933 and 1936 the Hills boarded the crew hired by fellow Island resident Carl Dahl. In 1936, this meant housing up to 30 men for most of the month of

[15] Noring, interview by Tishler; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development on the Apostle Islands, " 40, 42.

November, charging five to seven dollars a day and earning a total of $502.20 for the month. Hill also took part in the fishing industry in his capacity as the island's handyman—fixing boats and motors for the fishermen.[16]

Almost all of the Sand Island fishing families engaged in limited farming and agricultural activities, sometimes simply to put fresh meat and vegetables on the table but at other times to supplement their cash supply. Fred Hansen's diary details the completion of constant agricultural tasks. The Hansens planted an extensive garden, as well as fields of hay, oats, and millet. Although no records exist to detail who performed which tasks on the farm, the Hansen women and children most likely tended the vegetable garden. Much of their produce went directly to their own table, but some of it went to the Bayfield market. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s Hansen records selling surplus strawberries, raspberries, potatoes, and rutabagas. Entries that indicate trips to town or the shipment of marketable quantities of produce occur regularly in the diary, but with no consistency; fishing clearly required the most time and produced the most reliable income.[17]

Most of the island fishermen had a menagerie of livestock, too. The Hansens, for example, always had at least one cow (and sometimes two or three), and at other times had hogs, chickens, and sheep. Most of the island families had a cow or two, sometimes to provide milk but more importantly for meat. The women and children of the island generally tended to the livestock. The Norings and the Hansens served as the island's butchers, and late in every autumn—once the weather had turned cold enough to guarantee that the meat would keep—Fred

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[16] Hill Account Books, 1915, 1933, 1936; Frederick H. Dahl, ed., *Diary of a Norwegian Fisherman: The Collected Diaries of Frederick A. Hansen* (Jacksonville, FL: Paramount Press, 1989) [hereafter, Hansen Diary], August 21, 1924.

[17] Hansen Diary, July 2 and 8, 1923, May 26, 1934, October 26, 1933, and October 27 1934

Hansen and Bert Noring butchered a cow or a hog. Some years Fred Hansen only butchered a single animal. Other years, though, his butchering was more substantial: in December 1916, he butchered 693 pounds of pork; 936 pounds in 1920, and in 1932 and 1933 he records butchering cows, sheep, and pigs. Cattle were often turned loose on the island to fend for themselves. The area around Justice Bay, near the lighthouse, served as a common pasture, much to the chagrin of Keeper Luick, who recorded in the official lighthouse logbook in 1917 that "L. Moe cattle came over and ruined my haystack."[18]

The Hansens and the other Sand Island families merged farm labor into a daily and seasonal schedule dictated by their primary work of fishing. Most of the year, the seasonal nature of the two activities complemented each other: for example, the fall harvest of root vegetables like carrots, potatoes, and rutabagas occurred in October, before the start of the time- and labor-intensive November herring season. Winter provided ample time to fix nets or work in the barn. The biggest labor crunch developed in the spring, when the fishermen struggled to work the early trout season as well as plow and plant their gardens and fields. Fred Hansen's diary entries from May, 1913 reveal both the competing demands of fishing and farming as well as the multiplicity of tasks completed by Sand Island fishermen/farmers.

> May 1913
> 6 About 300 lbs. [fish] today. Planted in hot bed.
> 7 About 500 lbs. today. Nice weather but cold.
> 8 Nothing doing—no fish.
> 9 Stretched some fence.
> 10 Lifted [nets] as usual.
> 11 About 350 lbs. fish today.
> 12 Foggy, so we could not lift—finished our fence.
> 13 Lifted.

[18] Hansen Diary, December 27, 1916, November 7, 1929, December 1932 and December 1933; Noring interview with Tishler; SI Keeper's Log, September 5, 1917.

14 Nothing doing—stormy. Moved boat to Shaw's.
15 Brought boat back. Raised the barn roof.
16 Lifted—no fish.
17 Went to town and came back today.
Sun. 18 Played cribbage and whist all day.
19 Lifted.
20 Plowed some—had to stop for rain.
21 Finished plowing—foggy.
22 Best lift of the season so far—about 1100 lbs.

The weather helped determine where Hansen spent his time. Foggy, windy days that made for difficult fishing offered the chance to work around the farm. Although Hansen rarely mentions it in his diary, his children remember Nettie Hansen doing much of the gardening work.[19]

The most important intersection between fishing and farming came on the boats that transported fish and produce to Bayfield. When the fish boats stopped at the island to pick up the daily catch, they also took on board bushels of potatoes, jugs of cream, and crates of berries, all bound for the Bayfield market. The time and expense of transporting produce to Bayfield certainly hindered market agriculture on the islands; without the scheduled daily stops by the collection boats, this kind of activity would not have been viable. But by dovetailing fishing and farming, island residents protected themselves against the vagaries of the national market. At times, prices for fresh fish dropped so low that it made no sense to fish; islanders could then work on their farms, instead. The collection boats traveled the intersection between fishing and farming that allowed the mix-and-match economy of the island to function.[20]

Louis Moe serves as an excellent example of the multivalent nature of Sand Island economic life. Like many of the other island residents, Moe worked primarily as a fisherman.

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[19] Hansen Diary; Dahl, Dahl, and Noring interview.

[20] Noring interview with Lien and Moran; Hill Memoir, 8; Hansen Diary, August 1919.

But he had twenty-five acres of cleared land on his farm, with about twenty acres in hay. He also had an orchard and grew potatoes, strawberries, and raspberries to sell in Bayfield, and kept cows, hogs, and chickens. Moe stands out from other island residents because he ran a logging camp on the west side of the island for over two decades, complementing still further his fishing and farming. (See Map 4.) Moe began logging on the island in 1897. He started by logging his own land, but then secured stumpage rights on the west end of the island by working out arrangements with the absentee owners of unsettled portions of the island. Moe paid half the taxes due to Bayfield County in return for the right to log. For example, in 1907 he bought from Charles Gooding "as much hemlock, cedar and tamarack as he can cut by March 26, 1910..." Logging in the 1880s cleared most of the white pine from the island; Moe logged the remaining softwoods and then turned to hardwoods like birch and maple. Each spring, he hired a scow to carry the lumber to the mills. Moe logged intermittently through the mid-1920s.[21]

A winter logging camp required considerable logistical support, and Moe's operations affected other island families, too. Small-scale logging outfits like Moe's worked on the same seasonal schedule as larger, more industrial operations. Moe hired between eight and ten loggers to come out to the island each winter, usually men from Bayfield. But the sons of island fishermen worked in the camp, too. Carl Dahl and Bill Noring both worked as sawyers, and Bill Palm worked as a swamper—identifying trees to be cut and finding routes for the skidways that led cut lumber to the shoreline for shipment. Bergitt Noring (Bert Noring's wife and Bill's mother) worked as the camp cook one year. Moe relied small herd of cattle to provide beef for

[21] Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 35; BCP, March 13, 1897, May 28, 1898, and April 12, 1924; Register of Deeds Office, Bayfield County Courthouse, Volume 63 Deeds, 18.

the loggers. He also had a blacksmith shop on his farmstead on the east side of the island, where he could repair logging equipment, shoe horses, and take care of other small scale metalwork.[22]

Fishermen and farmers all over the Great Lakes replicated the seasonal labor patterns evident at Sand Island, hanging up their nets or plows and looking for work in the area's many logging camps during the winter. This proved particularly true for hired hands, as opposed to fishermen who owned their own gear and boats. Frank Shaw employed "on an average three men, sometimes more, and when fishing is light but two. The rest of the time the men are engaged in the woods lumbering…" Farmers, too, found employment in the lumber camps. Just as often, they rented out their oxen and horses to haul logs, and received wages themselves for tending the livestock. And farmers frequently sold timber that they cut in the process of clearing their land to nearby sawmills. Although Frank Shaw did not run an extensive outfit like Louis Moe, he occasionally sold sawlogs to Bayfield lumbermen on a contract basis.[23]

When describing the nature of island life, former residents of the island stress this multivalent, self-sufficient lifestyle. "My dad was a fisherman but he also had a great big garden, fruit trees and we had berries," remembered Fred Hansen's daughter, Alma Dahl. Melvin Dahl said of his father: "Then, of course, he commercial fished and we had two to three milk cows and a barn and everything. And then we grew our own vegetables and potatoes and practically grew our own meat, too." Another islander had a similar impression: "All of the people in East Bay …

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[22] Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development," 35; Dahl, Dahl, and Noring interview; BCP, January 21, 1916.

[23] Shaw interview, IJC notes; Fries, *Empire in Pine*, 28; Reynolds, *The Daniel E. Shaw Lumber Company*, 10, 27; BCP, September 21, 1895.

all raised everything under the sun that you could possibly raise." Living on an island, of course, made self-sufficiency imperative.[24]

Viewed from Sand Island, a peripheral point of production, the intersections between various industries take on added importance. Rather than functioning as independent industries, fishing, farming, and logging reinforced each other. Overlapping transportation methods made each individual activity economically feasible. The seasonal nature of the different industries complemented each other, too. Winter logging, spring and fall fishing, and summer fieldwork allowed the residents of Sand Island to patch together their livelihoods. Sand Island's isolation—and the very fact that it is an island—exaggerates some of these interconnections, and this makes them easier to identify and to trace. But every small place had purely local conditions and economic intersections like these, and in each place they came together differently. One study of northern Wisconsin, for example, found that in 1930 over half of all farmers took on additional off-farm work in mining, logging, tourism, or some form of wage work. Throughout the hinterland regions of the West and Midwest, local interconnections and overlap between seemingly distinct industries determined how and when people engaged in economic activity.[25]

Connections between industries were not limited to places so peripheral as Sand Island. Seemingly distinct industries based in Bayfield also intersected in important ways. Chapter 1 discussed the overlapping interests of Bayfield's leading businessmen. The multi-faceted investments of these men directly shaped the development of Sand Island. The Boutin family, for example, not only ran one of the large packing firms that picked up Sand Island fish, they also

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[24] Dahl, Dahl, and Noring interview; Melvin Dahl interview; Elizabeth (Anderson) Hulings, interview by Arnold Alanen, October 27, 1988, Bayport, MN, tape in AINL archives.

[25] Kerlin M. Seitz, "Types of Part-Time Farming in Northern Wisconsin," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 49 (1958): 161-71.

conducted the first major logging operation on the island in the 1880s. And Sand Islanders might have purchased dry goods at the Boutins' Bayfield store. When Frank Shaw sought to expand his farm in 1890, he bought additional land from real estate speculator William Knight. Ten years later, when Knight promoted the region's fruit through his presidency of the Bayfield Peninsula Horticultural Society, he helped to market the apples and berries that Shaw and his neighbors grew on Sand Island. The connections between the apparently distinct investments of Bayfield's leading businessmen thus become apparent when examined at the point of production.[26]

It might be tempting to view Sand Island as exceptional or irrelevant because of its isolation and the small scale of the market production that occurred there. But such a view would be mistaken. All aspects of Sand Island's balanced, diverse economy functioned as parts of a larger, regional whole. The commercial fishery of the Apostle Islands and Bayfield vicinity emerged in the 1870s as one of the most productive on Lake Superior, and it maintained this position for close to a century. In 1927, Frederick Hansen caught 23,478 pounds of lake trout and whitefish; the Bayfield area's 142 other fishermen totaled 608,276 pounds (meaning Hansen caught far more than most). Specific measurements of the saw logs taken from Sand Island are not available, other than the 2.5 million board feet harvested in the mid-1880s. But sawmills all over the region bought logs from independent farmer-loggers and from contract loggers like Louis Moe. Indeed, some mills secured half of their supply of saw logs in this manner. Lumberman John H. Knight and William F. Vilas also owned Sand Island timber, and sold stumpage rights to Louis Moe. When islanders sold crates of berries or bushels of apples in town,

[26] BCP, January 21, 1916; "Lots 1&2, Section 18, T52N, R4W," n.d., File 06-102 Westhagen, Milton H., Land Acquisition Files, AINL; Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1885-1900; William Knight, "Fruit in the Bayfield District: Apples, Cherries, and Other Fruits Discussed," speech before the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, Madison, 1908, Dalrymple Papers, Box 28, Folder 1.

their actions need to be understood as a part of the effort by local business leaders to establish the Bayfield Peninsula as a fruit-growing district of national importance. In all of these cases, economic activity on Sand Island contributed to the regional economy.[27]

Islanders did not practice a subsistence lifestyle or a purely market-based one, but rather a blend of the two. Rural, economic, and agricultural historians have engaged in a vigorous debate over when and how fully American farm families embraced market capitalism. Did farm economies embrace the imperatives of the market—a focus on the accumulation of wealth by reliance on a single cash crop—in the early 1800s or not until the middle of the 1900s? On Sand Island, at least, decidedly non-market factors helped to shape daily life well into the twentieth century. Economic life remained seasonal, diversified, and flexible. When the price for fresh fish fell below a certain point—or the weather prevented successful fishing—they could simply switch to farming. They consumed much of their agricultural produce at home, but also planted crops with an eye on the market. Wage work provided supplemental income as needed. Islanders worked for and with each other, paying their debts with labor or bartered goods, not in cash. And yet, the Sand Island economy clearly connected to—and depended on—national markets. To view these economies in purely industrial terms is to overlook how they functioned on the ground, in the places where fishermen caught fish and lumberjacks cut trees.[28]

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[27] Hansen Diary, 181; U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1928, 607, 610; Reynolds, *The Daniel Shaw Lumber Company*, 158-61; Knight, "Fruit in the Bayfield District"; Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1880-1915 (Moe paid half the taxes on a plot of land owned by Knight in 1915, suggesting a stumpage rights agreement).

[28] On the debates over the origins of market-focused agriculture, see Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Winifred B. Rothenberg, "The Bound Prometheus," *Reviews in American History* 15 (December 1987): 628-37; David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 134, 160-61; James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (January 1978): 2-32. In *The Farm on North Talbot Road* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska

When seen from the periphery, the process of economic development looks quite different than when seen from the core. Railroad connections and investment capital retain their significance in determining patterns of growth, but seasonal labor patterns and the intersections between seemingly distinct industries take on added importance. Bayfield's boosters might not have paid much attention to these factors, but locating these intersections and economic opportunities was an important part of the process of progress.

Sharing Labor, Sharing Community

The process of progress involved more than just economics. After 1900, Sand Island transformed from a seasonal way station for independent and unrelated fishermen, loggers, and tourists into a tightly interconnected settlement. As the year-round population grew, islanders built for themselves a community. This community developed on the strength of informal relationships between neighbors as well as more formally organized institutions. Much like the island economy, island social life is best understood as a web of connection.

Immigration to Sand Island continued through the 1910s. Population statistics are difficult to tabulate for Sand Island, because census takers did not always differentiate between island and mainland residents. In 1900, the census takers skipped the island entirely. Limited census information and anecdotal evidence indicate that the island population hovered between thirty-five and fifty-five after the turn of the century, although sometimes rose above this. In his diary, Frederick Hansen names over seventy-five year-round residents, although not all of them lived on the island at the same time. In January 1911, Louis Moe traveled to Bayfield with news

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Press, 2001), Allan G. Bogue provides a parallel account of a mid-twentieth-century diversified farm economy in rural Canada.

of a growing Sand Island community. "He reports everybody on the island feeling fine and enjoying life. He says an especially pleasant Christmas was enjoyed by the residents on the island, and that a large Christmas tree in the school house was a pleasant event … A fine chicken supper was served by the Ladies Aid Society." Fifty-six people made Sand Island their home in 1911, and Moe expected continued expansion of the settlement. The 1920 census provides the clearest formal tabulation of island residents, and lists forty-five people living on the island. In contrast to the 1885 state census, when most islanders were single male fishermen, by 1920 only two single men lived on the island—everyone else lived in a family group.[29]

The growing island population built a series of community institutions. The schoolhouse was the most prominent of these. During the early years of Sand Island settlement, families who wished to send their children to school moved to Bayfield during the winter. A one-room school housing grades one through eight resolved this problem when it opened in 1910. Several of the older daughters of the island families served as teachers, while other teachers came from the mainland and boarded with one of the island families during the school year. Sixteen students attended the school in 1911, and that number grew to 25 by 1914. Older islanders used the school, too, for social gatherings and community meetings. A post office of sorts soon opened on the island; Bayfield County appointed Burt Hill as postmaster for the community of "Shaw" in 1912. Hill arranged to meet the postal carrier at Little Sand Bay (just across the channel on the mainland) to pick up the mail. By 1916, though, the islanders reverted to their old system of receiving mail via the fishing boats. In 1914, Bayfield County responded to the request of the

[29] BCP, January 13, 1911; Hansen Diary, v; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, and *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*, manuscript census, Bayfield township, Bayfield County,

islanders and established a county road, from the Shaw/Hill farm to the north end of East Bay. The county paid Burt Hill to clear brush and to keep the road in good condition. The islanders even managed to raise money for a venture called the "Sand Island Telephone Company," connecting an underwater cable to the mainland just in time to receive an important first message: news of the end of the first World War in November 1918. Regular service soon followed, but only for a short while—the cable proved too difficult to maintain. All of these developments were signs of a growing community.[30]

Islanders crafted a longer-lived institution when they gathered at the schoolhouse in June 1918 to organize a cooperative store. The store opened one month later in a lean-to attached to one of the buildings on Burt Hill's farm; Hill served as manager and secretary. Hill stocked dry goods that could not be produced on the island, such as coffee, flour, sugar, and toothpaste. The store saved islanders the hassle of the long trip into Bayfield for essential items, and cut costs by serving as a cooperative buying club. Scandinavian settlements all over the upper Midwest employed cooperatives of this nature to help keep costs down and to mitigate the isolation of rural life. The Jonette Loftfield also ran a small store out of their farm, selling basic dry goods. Many of the people who grew up on the island fondly remember buying penny-candy at the Loftfield farm.[31]

Other aspects of Sand Island community life were far more informal. Sharing labor helped islanders cope with the dual demands of fishing and farming. In his diary, for example, Frederick Hansen recorded that Bert and Bill Noring, Sven Bergstrom, and Burt Hill all

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[30] Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 195-96; Hill Diary, 3, 5, 7; BCP, June 14, 1912, February 8, 1916, and December 27, 1918; Dahl, Dahl and Noring interview.

[31] Hill Memoir, 7; Hill Account Books; Alanen, "The Shaw-Hill Farmsite," 24; Melvin Dahl interview.

accompanied him in his boat at one time or another. Even lighthouse keeper Immanuel Luick worked the occasional day on the fishing boats: "Keeper went out to help set nets [with Louis Moe]. Had to row every stroke of the way," noted Luick in his logbook in 1899. Hansen's diary also records examples of his work with the Moes, Norings, and other island families, cutting wood, putting up fences, clearing bush, and haying. Sometimes this work took place within the framework of neighborly cooperation; other times there was a more structured exchange. In 1938, Burt Hill records that Elvis Moe bought 20 dozen eggs. He did not pay by cash, but rather with 5 hours of cutting hay, 5 pounds of beef, 5 gallons of gasoline, and 6.5 pounds of fish. Island fishermen frequently borrowed Hill's horse team to plow their fields or haul loads of firewood, occasionally paying in cash, but more often by exchange. In June 1914, Hansen "Went over to Hills to get farm tools in eve"; the next day, he wrote "Had team—plowed and disced—brought tools back." Hill's account books reveal that this type of in-kind exchange took place frequently. Similar patterns of shared labor and neighborliness formed the bulwark of community life elsewhere in rural America.[32]

Islanders shared their recreational time, as well. Sundays were a day of rest and visiting; Fred Hansen described such time as "calling." Islanders spent weekend nights dancing and playing cards. Whist and cribbage served as the most popular games. "Much of the time it was card playing," remembered Bill Noring. "Of course there was a lot of dancing going on. You'd sit there in your stocking feet and pretty soon you'd get a rap at the door and surprise, the men would throw the old heater out and [they] had an old Swede there that could play the accordion and they'd dance till four o'clock in the morning" Islanders also went on camping and hunting

[32] Hansen Diary, June 2, 1914 and July 5, 1915; Hill Account Books, no. 3, 59; SI Keeper's Log, November 7, 1899; Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 91.

trips along the mainland or to the other islands. They took advantage of the picturesque lighthouse and its manicured gardens and grounds for picnics and parties. In their recreational activities, islanders replicated patterns of rural life experienced elsewhere. The confines of the island, and the short distance between homes, in some ways allowed for a more active social life than experienced by residents of many other parts of rural America in the early twentieth century.[33]

There were, of course, distinctions and divisions among island residents. Almost all of the families living on the island had immigrated from Norway or other Scandinavian countries—only the Shaws, Hills, and Luicks were native-born. (The Luicks lived in Bayfield from late December to April, when the lighthouse was closed, but they took part in many of the activities of the year-round community.) In the Sand Island lighthouse logbook, Immanuel and Ella Luick indicate their distinction from the immigrant community in their observations of the "Norwegian funeral" held for a child who drowned in 1914, and in other comments of ethnic difference. Burt and Anna Mae Hill were positioned at once on the center and on the outskirts of Sand Island life. Because of his nativity and experience with bookkeeping, Burt Hill served as the island's postmaster and ran the cooperative store. Some of the islanders, however, resented Hill's involvement in these ventures. The cooperative store fell apart in the late 1920s when other islanders believed that Hill derived too much profit from his five percent commission on sales.[34]

Gender, as well as nativity, divided the island community. Women played an essential role in the multi-faceted Sand Island economy, although their labor is hard to trace. The primary

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[33] Hansen Diary; SI Keeper's Log; Noring interview.

[34] SI Keepers Log, November 23, 1898, and June 29, 1914; Hill Memoir, 7-8.

sources on Sand Island are silent on women's economic roles. It is not clear who worked in the gardens and tended the dairy cows—two areas traditionally considered women's work on midwestern farms but undergoing changes as farms became more specialized. Burt Hill cared for his small dairy herd. In traditional Norwegian families, on the other hand, tending to dairy cows was considered women's work. In his diary, Fred Hansen mentions butchering hogs and cattle but never milking or feeding them, and frequently records his farm work. Hansen's children remember their mother tending the large garden. But records or no, it is certain that the women of Sand Island contributed a great deal of the labor of berry picking and garden tending. There is no evidence of Sand Island wives or daughters working on the fish boats, although they might have, as women did in fishing families elsewhere on the Great Lakes. And women often helped with shore work such as cleaning and drying nets. Women's reproductive and domestic work also played an essential role in the Sand Island economy; children worked in the fields and on the boats, at far cheaper rates than hired hands.[35]

Today's Sand Island landscape is not conducive to recalling the bonds of community that islanders forged between 1890 and 1940. Today's island is a forlorn place, a place where the most active agent is wild nature returning to reclaim former farms and fields. Only the foundation remains of the schoolhouse, once the site of dances, store meetings, birthday parties, and socials. Aspen trees have grown up through the foundation, replacing the students and

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[35] Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers*; Mary Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community and the Foundations of Agribusiness* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 30; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 75-76. On women's work on the family farm, see Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Katherine Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). On women in the commercial fishing industry, see Charlene J. Allison, Sue-Ellen Jacobs, and Mary A. Porter, *Winds of Change: Women in Northwest Commercial Fishing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989).

dancers. Sand Island seems like a lonely wilderness today, but it was once home to a community of residents tightly connected to each other.

Understanding Sand Island Tourism

Vacationers and tourists joined the year round residents on Sand Island in the summertime. Camp Stella continued to grow, combining with the lighthouse to make Sand Island a popular tourist destination. In the 1910s and 1920s, wealthy residents from the Midwest's urban centers built summer homes on Sand Island, much as they did on Madeline Island. The tourists and summer residents integrated into the island's social and economic network. Tourism, like fishing, farming, and logging, functioned on a seasonal, contingent basis, flourishing at the intersection of seemingly distinct industries.

Camp Stella prospered and expanded after its founding in the 1880s. Sam Fifield added several permanent structures to the row of tent pads originally used for guest lodging. The *Bayfield County Press* explained the advantages of the resort in 1911: "It is situated in a position affording special opportunities to lovers of boating, swimming, etc. Like other nearby resorts, 'Camp Stella' is forging to the front and is instrumental in bringing many people to this region during the warm months." Fifield used his skills as a writer and connections as editor of the Ashland newspaper to promote the resort, and the comings and goings of prominent guests received constant coverage in local papers throughout the late summer. Fifield even arranged to have a movie about the resort filmed in 1912, to show in theatres around the country. Camp Stella entertained more than sixty people at once during the height of the summer season.[36]

[36] BCP, August 11, 1911 and August 22, 1913; Peterson, "Camp Stella," 57.

Fifield's promotion of the resort mirrored the rhetoric of the railroad companies. Visitors found a chance to recuperate from the pressures of hectic urban living. They could hunt, fish, and camp, and take in the picturesque beauty of the islands.

> The mellow August days and the glorious moon-lit nights, are enjoyed in full measure by the camp's people. They hunt the pheasant in the forest 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.

Indeed, Fifield had a direct tie to railroad tourism—he had served as the first manager of the Hotel Chequamegon, the Wisconsin Central's luxurious Ashland establishment.[37]

Camp Stella's guests pursued a different type of fishing than Sand Island's permanent residents. Whereas the commercial fishermen set their nets in the big lake for lake trout, whitefish, and herring, summer tourists traveled to the nearby mainland streams in search of anadromous trout. Like the tourist camps elsewhere in the region, Fifield did what he could to ensure his guests' success with the rod and reel. In 1904, he secured 22,500 rainbow trout fry from the state fish hatchery in Bayfield and released them into the mouth of the Sand River, just across the channel from Camp Stella on the mainland. Fifield's actions mirrored those of other wealthy sportsmen in their quest to modify fish populations in the name of sport fishing.[38]

As a summer resort, Camp Stella did not survive the death of its founder, Sam Fifield, in 1915. Independent entrepreneurs ran the resort in the ensuing years, but none lasted more than a few seasons. Camp Stella then lay vacant until 1934, when the Jensch family—who had

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[37] Fifield, "The Story of the Apostles," 67-88; Wisconsin Central Railroad Company, *Summer Resorts of the Wisconsin Central Railroad*, 19.

[38] Wisconsin Fish Commission Report, 1903-1904, 59.

themselves originally come to Sand Island as guests at Fifield's resort—bought it for use as a summer home. The Jensch's then sold part of the camp to two other families, also for summer use. The change from resort to summer home tied tourism more concretely into the lives of the permanent Sand Island residents. The same people came to the island each year, integrating them more directly into the island's social and economic framework.[39]

Even as Camp Stella closed, Sand Island emerged as a popular site for summer home construction. The West Bay Club, built on the southwestern corner of the island, followed the model of the private clubhouses established on the Brule River. (See Map 4.) O. H. Neegard visited Camp Stella in 1910, and liked the island so much that he determined to build a home of his own. He and several friends bought over one hundred acres on the island in 1912 and 1913, and began construction of an Adirondack style lodge—the most substantial building on the island. It had a large living area, a kitchen and pantry, six bedrooms (each with its own sink and running water), gas and electric lights, and men's and women's bathrooms, complete with flush toilets. The West Bay Club only lasted until 1922, however, when club member Frank Eha bought out his partners. Eha used the club as a family summer home for over forty years. Eha continued to purchase land, eventually becoming the largest landowner on the island.[40]

Individual families built less substantial summer homes. The *Bayfield County Press* reported in 1909: "East Bay on Sand Island has been invaded by those in search of summer homes here." Year-round resident Edwin Bonde promoted the area for just this purpose. He divided his land into farming plots on the interior and a series of small, one and half acre plots

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[39] BCP, August 13, 1915; Hill Memoir, 6; Hulings interview; Peterson, "Camp Stella," 104, 109.

[40] Thomas Gerstenberger, "Island Hideaway: The West Bay Club," *Lake Superior Magazine* 14 (December/January 1992): 50-53; Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1915-1940.

along the East Bay road, for sale as summer homes. In 1914, Bayfield County tax rolls reveal that nine people owned the fifteen lots of section 24—the land along East Bay. The following year, after Bonde's subdivision, the same acreage had been divided into 38 plots, with 32 separate owners. Some of these new owners chose not to build on their new land, and many of these lots remained vacant. Permanent residents of the island bought some of these lots, too. But most of the people who bought land from Bonde intended to build summer homes.[41]

Like fishing, farming, and logging, Sand Island tourism might have looked slightly different because of its island setting, but it also functioned as a part of a larger regional economy. Sam Fifield promoted Camp Stella in the same manner as the large railroad companies, luring guests to his resort by advertising its natural and healthful qualities. The burst of summer home development on the island in the 1910s and 1920s had analogs not just on Madeline Island, but on lakes and rivers throughout the northern Great Lakes cutover region. This tourism, too, was the result of conscious promotion, often with the aid of state and county road building and zoning ordinances.

Summer residents merged into the social and economic networks of the permanent Sand Island residents. Summer residents depended on year-round islanders for food, transportation, and the upkeep of their homes. First Camp Stella, and then the individual summer residents, provided an important home market for Sand Island fishermen-farmers. Summer families like the Andersons, the Disens, and the Jenschs show up regularly in Burt Hill's account books. They bought dairy products, meat, chickens, eggs, fruit, and other agricultural products. Summer visitors either arranged for travel to the island on one of the Booth or Boutin boats, or with one

[41] BCP, July 2, 1909; Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1914-1915; Howard Palm interview.

of the island fishermen. For example, on August 13, 1933, for example, Fred Hansen altered his usual diary entries on fishing and farming to note: "Hauled tourists. $4.00." Summer resident Howard Palm remembered: "We were dependent on them for transportation. When we came out to the island, the only way we could get across would be to have someone from the island come to get us—to the mainland." Summer residents paid islanders to serve as caretakers for their property, as well. Burt Hill earned $25 per year as caretaker for several island properties, plus additional money for work like cutting wood, roofing, and opening the summer homes for a new season. Herman Johnson worked as the caretaker for the Aabel family, opening their home just before they arrived from the Twin Cities. Summer residents therefore added a significant amount of money into the Sand Island economy. And unlike permanent residents, who often paid their debts with labor, fish, or butchered meat, summer visitors paid with cash.[42]

Anna Mae Hill—not her husband—performed the most lucrative work for the summer residents by providing room and board. Some of the summer residents that lived close the Hill farm chose not to cook their own meals, instead paying Anna Mae Hill to cook for them. The Andersons, for example, paid $78.00 for meals in August 1938. Especially in late 1930s, when the Hills had curtailed their farm work due to advancing age, meals and boarding receipts made up the largest portion of their income. In 1938 Anna Mae Hill's boarding work accounted for nearly six hundred dollars, more than the combined income derived from the sale of chicken and dairy products, apples, and money earned by Burt Hill through labor and renting his horse team

[42] Hill Account Books; Hansen Diary, August 13, 1933; Helen Hillstrom, interview by Susan Monk, July 1985, Sand Island, Wisconsin, transcript in AINL Name File.

and plow. The Loftfields, too, provided room and board to summer visitors, although on a smaller scale than the Hills.[43]

The summer residents took part in island social life, too. Summer residents engaged in the card playing, dancing, and visiting shared by year round residents. The West Bay Club hosted dances—everyone on the island was welcome—almost every Saturday night during the summer. If the income differential between summer and year-round residents led to resentment or envy, the extensive primary sources on island life make no mention of it.[44]

But here, too, there was an obvious distinction between summer folk and permanent residents. The fishermen themselves served as a tourist attraction for visitors to the island. The city-folk who frequented Camp Stella relished the opportunity to watch Frank Shaw, Louis Moe, and the other island fishermen return in the middle of the day with a load of fresh fish. And when tourists took passage on the Booth and Boutin fish boats for an island cruise, they had no choice but to wait on the island while their boat took on the daily catch for transport to Bayfield. One observer described her trip on the Booth Company boat the *Apostle Islands*: "While waiting for the fishing boats, the passengers explore the little fishing community, peering into unpainted sheds, where dry nets are hanging in big rolls from the rafters, and where trays of floats and sinkers are kept; examining the great wooden reels outside, on which the wet nets are spread to dry; and picking the raspberries that are so thick in the islands in the latter part of summer." [45]

Segregating tourism from the more obviously productive activities on the island obscures an essential component of the tourist trade. Extractive activities like fishing and farming did not

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[43] Hill Account Books; Helen Hillstrom, "My Recollections of Sand Island, 1926-1984," n.d., AINL Name File.

[44] Howard Palm interview; Hillstrom, "My Recollections of Sand Island."

[45] BCP, July 31, 1897; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 265.

preclude tourism on Sand Island. On the contrary, it was these other activities that made tourist endeavors on the island possible in the first place, and allowed them to continue. Tourists and summer residents depended on the islanders for food and transportation. Permanent residents benefited from these arrangements, too, earning much needed income by providing food and services. Although tourism relies on different resources and relationships than do productive industries like fishing and farming, on Sand Island all of these activities remained tightly connected, even mutually dependent. Landscapes of leisure and labor overlapped within the same geographical space.

The Rewilding of Sand Island

And yet, tourism persisted long after other activities at East Bay ceased. One by one, families began to leave Sand Island. Year-round houses were converted into summer homes or fell into disrepair. Fishing sheds filled with cobwebs. Fields lay fallow, and the forest encroached on their margins. The wilderness slowly returned to Sand Island. Although the fishing, farming, logging, and tourism that had dictated economic life on the island ceased, the impact of these activities on Sand Island landscapes persisted. Today, the fields seem like peaceful, even pristine, forest meadows filled with wildflowers; only a trained ecologist or someone already familiar with Sand Island's history would know differently. But to view this transition, this returning of the wilderness to Sand Island, as only a result of ecological succession, as purely a natural and not a human phenomena, misses an essential part of the process.

Rural communities around the country declined in the first half of the twentieth century, and Sand Island was no exception. The increasing mechanization and corporatization of

agriculture made family farming more difficult. Fewer farms and a decreased demand for labor combined with the allure and opportunity of the cities to plague rural areas with chronic outmigration. Across the country, 6.25 million people—predominantly the young and unattached—left rural areas for the cities in the 1920s alone. The farm crisis of the 1920s depressed the market price for basic agricultural commodities and made life on the rural periphery still more difficult.[46]

The East Bay community faced same dilemma—few of the children chose to stay in the area as adults. The isolation of island life exaggerated these problems. The closing of the school in 1928 for lack of students marked the imminent decline of the community. Island families began to leave. With their children grown, farming and fishing proved more and more taxing for the settler generation. And as they aged, islanders needed to be closer to the facilities and services of Bayfield or other towns. When Anna Palm developed tuberculosis in the 1920s, she needed to move to a sanitarium and her family could no longer live on the island year-round. Olaf Loftfield died in July 1930, and his widow Jonette joined their children in the Twin Cities shortly thereafter. Frederick Hansen died of cancer in 1939. Burt Hill suffered from diabetes, and as he and Anna Mae grew older, life on the island simply became too difficult. Hill's memoir records his increasing health problems and struggles with the isolation of island life. In 1942, the Hills sold their farm to one of the island summer families and moved to Bayfield. Even the lighthouse eventually stood vacant—the U.S. Lighthouse Service automated the station in 1921. The Norings were the last family to leave the island, and their decision to leave followed the same pattern. One islander remembered: "When the Noring's family was raised—all the kids

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[46] On the general decline of rural American communities, see Danbom, *Born in the Country*, 196-97; Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 251; White, *It's Your Misfortune*, 431-32, 464-65.

were on their own—the Norings abandoned the farm and built another house down by the lake near the shore. They lived there for a few years until they started getting older and weren't able to live on the island anymore. They wanted to live in town—be closer to medical help if they needed. Which is what all of them do eventually."[47]

Sand Island was empty in the winter of 1944. An *Ashland Daily Press* headline proclaimed: "Sand Island Utterly Deserted." The story lamented the end of an important part of the region's history: "For the first time in more than half a century, Sand Island … will be utterly deserted this winter. The seagulls will keep a lonely vigil at Swallow point. The new-fangled gas light in the steel tower in front of the lighthouse which was home to the veteran Emmanuel Luick for so many years will blink on in solitude till the close of navigation. The waves will lash against the fishermen's docks, but there will be no one to care." Sand Island would never again serve as a year-round home. The *Ashland Daily Press* article clearly reveals that Sand Island's reconfiguration as a lonely wilderness had begun.[48]

Although the Hills, Norings, Hansens, and other families had left the island, the decisions that they made in the process of making the Sand Island their home continued to shape the landscape. The Shaw-Hill farm serves as an example of the ties between human choices, ecological processes, and the modern landscape. First the Shaws, then the Hills, lived on the southeast tip of Sand Island from the 1870s through the 1940s, by far the longest inhabitance of any spot on the island. The landscape still reveals the physical evidence of this long tenure. Apple orchards and field boundaries demonstrate the ongoing impact of earlier choices. Hill

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[47] Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 194, 199; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development on the Apostle Islands," 38-39; Hansen Diary, July 16, 1930; Hill Memoir; Bill Noring interview; Howard Palm interview.

[48] "Sand Island Utterly Deserted, 1st Time in Half a Century," ADP, October 17, 1944.

planted three apple orchards on the property, each still clearly identifiable by their row planting and the drainage ditches that flank each row. Today, occasional apple trees have sprung up elsewhere on the farm, the result of seed-carrying birds or small animals. The oldest of the orchards, with trees dating to 1920, stands on the southwest end of the property, closest to the farmstead. The age of the trees suggests that Burt Hill planted them just after he sold his father-in-law's fishing outfit and dedicated himself to farming. Indeed, these are some of the oldest trees on the property. The other two orchards date to 1940, the very end of Hill's tenure on the island. Both are located on spots originally too wet for apple trees—they required drainage ditches to remove the excess water. One orchard lines the county road, perhaps planted for its beautiful blossoms as much as for productive reasons. The trees remain, but have been joined by other plants that moved in after productive work ceased. An alder thicket has grown up around the apple trees along the road, and the eastern orchard trees have been joined by American plum, mountain ash, and serviceberry, along with dense thickets of red-osier dogwood.[49]

Changing field boundaries at the Shaw-Hill farm further illustrate how land-use decisions of the past remain marked on the modern landscape. Aerial photos taken intermittently since 1938 and vegetation surveys conducted since the creation of the national lakeshore in 1970 reveal three distinct, human-induced boundaries on the farm. The oldest part of the clearing lies at southernmost tip of the property, the area around the original home. The dry soils around the house required the least maintenance and labor for the limited crops grown by Frank Shaw in the 1880s and 1890s to complement to his fishing business. A second zone, cleared between 1900-

[49] Hill Memoir, 26; John Harrington, "Shaw Farm Vegetation Survey" (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1982), AINL Library, 7; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Madeline Island," 110.

1920, surrounds this original area. The most recently cleared land, dating to Hill's expansion during the 1930s, extends north and west to the historic edge of the fields. By 1982, native woody vegetation—alder, dogwood, and young aspen trees—had encroached into the clearings. These shrubs had moved in from the north, invading the wettest parts of the old fields first, with alder in the wettest areas. In some areas of the clearing, willow, hawthorn, mountain ash, and serviceberry have moved into the sedge meadow in straight, regular lines, following the drainage ditches dug by Burt Hill when he expanded his farming operations in the 1930s. Aspen and birch trees have encroached on the old fields more slowly, moving in from the existing boundaries.[50]

Some of the boundaries on the Shaw-Hill farm are quite stark. A barbed wire fence marked the northern edge of the farm. Vegetation surveys conducted in 1982 discovered a sharp differentiation in forest composition and age on the two sides of this fence. South of the fence, in the area once completely cleared, investigators found a stand of twenty-year old aspen trees. Aspen are among the first trees to grow into an open, disturbed area, and they began their invasion when active clearing of the fields ceased in the 1950s. To the north, NPS investigators found a mixed birch and balsam fir forest, with trees approximately sixty years old. Although never fully cleared for agriculture, this area had been subject to selective logging and fire.[51]

The impact of human choices made sixty or one hundred years ago can be found all around the east bay. The Norings were the last family to live on the island year round. All that remains of their homestead is a pile of moldering boards. But the spruce trees they transplanted

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[50] Harrington, "Shaw Farm Vegetation Survey," 4, 8-10; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Madeline Island," 110; Aerial Photographs, 1938, 1963, 1973, 1978, 1988, AINL Aerial Photograph Collection.

[51] Harrington, "Shaw Farm Vegetation Survey," 4; Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 57-58, 64.

to the northeastern side of their home to form a windbreak still mark the site, as do lilac bushes that Bergitt Noring planted by the side of the house. The drainage ditches dug by the county to keep the East Bay Road dry today guard the most developed trail on the island. In the southern, wetter part of the road, those ditches now host dense alder thickets. These ditches also provide a home for wetland plants like fringed loosestrife and late goldenrod. Farther north, in dryer areas, a colony of a rare sedge plant, *Carex pallescens*, also thrives along the roadside. Ecological processes alone cannot explain these small Sand Island environments. History—the choices of individual men and women—helped create this landscape, too.[52]

Not all island environments have been so completely transformed. Modern reconstructions of the precontact forest delineated three major vegetation types on Sand Island: 92 per cent of the island was covered by a mixed-deciduous forest dominated by yellow birch, white pine, and hemlock in the dry areas and white cedar in the wetter areas. White pine dominated the forest on the northernmost tip of the island. Black spruce and tamarack bogs made up the third vegetation type. Despite the extensive human use of the island, the latter two cover types have been only slightly modified. The establishment of the lighthouse—and a woodlot reserved for the use of the keepers—protected the white pine forest on the northern tip of the island from commercial logging; this area is today a part of Apostle Islands Maritime Forests State Natural Area. The black spruce bogs also retain their original character, these areas protected by their lack of utility.[53]

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[52] Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Madeline Island," 110; Tishler, Alanen, and Thompson, "Early Agricultural Development on the Apostle Islands," 42.

[53] Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 41-51; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Madeline Island," 110; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, State Natural Areas Program, http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/sna/sna266.htm.

Western and central Sand Island look very different than East Bay. With its more intensive human use, and more varied land use history, the eastern portion of the island today contains a patchwork of different vegetation types. The rest of the island, however, has larger areas covered by similar forest types. Escaped garden plants or foundation ruins do not provide clues to past human choices, but the forested landscape of the western portion of the island also illustrates the continued intermingling of natural and cultural processes. A 1982 survey conducted for the National Park Service produced a crude cover-type map of the island. The largest cover type, 860 acres, had a codominance of large yellow birch and white cedar. The third largest forest type, 330 acres, held a higher number of trees per acre (255 to 151 stems/acre) but had a similar composition, although with slightly more balsam fir. The second largest cover type, 699 acres, consisted of a similar composition but a lighter density—only 117 stems/acre.[54]

Land ownership changes may help explain this pattern. Louis Moe owned the land on the western coast of the island, land he acquired and logged in the 1920s. When Moe died in 1929, his family ceased paying taxes on this property. By 1935, Bayfield County had begun to acquire this property (as well several other parcels on the island). Once the county assumed control of this land, logging ceased. No logging occurred on the southern shore of the island, either, owned after the 1920s by the families of summer residents Samuel W. Campbell and Daisy Jensch. These areas show up in the 1982 vegetation survey as the more densely forested portions of the island. The center of the island once belonged to a summer resident, as well—to Frank Eha, a charter member of the West Bay Club who bought out his colleagues in 1922. Eha continued to purchase land on the island into the 1940s, but in the 1950s the property came under control of

[54] Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 41-51.

small regional logging companies—first Penokee Veneer Lumber Company, and then Budvic Timber, Inc. Both of these companies selectively logged their land for white cedar and yellow birch. In some parts of the island, logging persisted into the 1970s—even after the creation of the national park. (The park service's struggle to gain control of Sand Island from resistant landowners will be discussed in the final chapter.) The most recent vegetation map of the island, compiled in the 1990s, echoes these land ownership patterns, with vegetation types roughly conforming to old property lines. Certainly, the processes of forest regeneration and succession shaped these landscape patterns. But so, too, did the needs and decisions of Louis Moe, Bayfield County supervisors, Daisy Jensch, and Frank Eha. The evidence of those decisions is not found in old fields and fences, but in the composition of the modern forest.[55]

Environmental historians do not have an accurate term to explain what has happened at Sand Island over the past century. Terms like "exploitation," "degradation" and "destruction" are usually used to describe the impact of American industrial activity on the landscape; terms like "healing" and "recovery" are employed to portray the return of wilderness characteristics to a once-degraded place. These terms might apply to places where large lumber companies logged virgin forest, leaving behind ugly piles of slash, refuse, and fuel for forest fires. But what about at Sand Island? Is it right to characterize the choices of Frank Shaw, Burt Hill, or Bergitt Noring in this way? Were their decisions to plant apple orchards or lilac bushes acts of destruction and degradation? If not, then perhaps recovery is not the correct word to explain what has happened

[55] Moe's land included portions of sections 15 and 22; the Campbell/Jensch property is on sections 25 and 26; the Eha/Budvic timber lands primarily in section 14 and 23, all in Township 52 North, Range 5 West. Bayfield County Tax Rolls, 1920-1945; BCP, May 18, 1929; Anderson, *et al.*; *Basic Recreational and Ecological Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 57-58, 90, 95, 99, 106, 111; *Plat Book of* Wisconsin (Rockford, IL: W. W. Hixson & Co., 1923); *Plat Book of Bayfield County, Wisconsin* (Rockford, IL: W. W. Hixson & Co., 1931); *Plat Book with Index to Owners* (Rockford Map Publishers: Rockford, IL, 1954); *Plat Book with Index to Owners, Bayfield County* (Rockford, IL: Rockford Map Publishers, 1967); Gerstenberger, "Island Hideaway," 50.

to the Sand Island landscapes that their lives helped to shape. The term “rewilding” is a better fit. Rewilding landscapes should be interpreted as evidence neither of past human abuse nor of triumphant wild nature, but rather as evidence of the tightly intertwined processes of natural and cultural history.

Rewilding points toward a narrative that explains the history of places like Sand Island without characterizing all human activity as a wound in need of recovery. Human activity certainly can be destructive and degrading, but it is not necessarily so. The Apostles are becoming wild again primarily because of human choices—the choices made by the Hills, Norings, and other families to leave Sand Island, but also the choice to designate the islands as a national park, to manage them as wilderness, to allow some kinds of activity but not others. These choices have provided a space for wild characteristics to return to the island. The narrative of rewilding helps explain human action that is not always destructive and exploitative, as well as the implicit human involvement in the return of the wild to the Apostle Islands.

Providing this analytical space is important, because human activity on Sand Island did not cease when the year-round community went into decline. Contrary to the *Ashland Daily Press*’s 1944 headline, Sand Island was not deserted. Second generation islanders Bill Noring, Elvis Moe, Jacob Hansen, and Carl Dahl, used the island as a summer base for commercial fishing into the 1950s. Other island children converted their parent’s houses into summer homes. Richard and Howard Palm, sons of settlers Anna and Magnus Palm, returned to the island. Their original family home had become dilapidated beyond repair, so they acquired Herman Johnson’s house and moved it down the bay. And the island still had its community of wealthy summer residents. Charles Jensch leased the old Sand Island lighthouse from the U.S. Lighthouse Service

for summer use. Long-time summer resident Frederick Anderson bought the Shaw-Hill farm. Although agricultural work did not resume, the Anderson's occasionally mowed the old fields into the 1950s. Limited logging continued on the western half of the island. These people continued to use and shape the Sand Island environment. When the NPS acquired the Sand Island, the islanders fought bitterly to retain control over a place that they viewed as their own, by right of history as well as ownership. This struggle will be discussed in the following two chapters.[56]

For today's visitors to Sand Island, however, the legacy of this proprietary relationship is hard to see. Visitors disembark at the East Bay dock and walk into a grassy opening and camping area—once the site of Herman Johnson's home. If they choose, as most visitors do, to walk to the lighthouse on the northeastern corner of the island, they walk through a field filled with swaying purple stalks of fireweed. Few realize that they pass through the Moes' old farm fields. Other trails that lead from the East Bay dock bring visitors to sites where the process of rewilding is more clearly evident. For example, those who walk inland from the dock on the faint track to the Noring farm find rusted farm equipment, ruined buildings, and Bergitt Noring's lilac bushes. The most developed trail on the island follows the old county road south past the Loftfield farm and the foundation of the schoolhouse. The remains of two abandoned cars lie off the side of the road, their upholstery long since rotted away and their wheels three-quarters buried in the mud. Wilderness is returning to all of these places, but in ways powerfully informed

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[56] "Sand Island Utterly Deserted, 1st Time in Half a Century," ADP, October 17, 1944; Alanen and Tishler, "Farming the Lake Superior Shore," 199; Howard Palm interview; Harrington, "Shaw Farm Vegetation Survey," 4; James Feldman and Robert W. Mackreth, "Wasteland, Wilderness, or Workplace: Perceiving and Preserving the Apostle Islands," in *Protecting our Diverse Heritage: The Role of Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites* ed. David S. Harmon, Bruce M. Kilgore, and Gay E. Vietzke (Hancock, MI: George Wright Society, 2004), 274.

by the choices made by islanders fifty, eighty, or one hundred years ago. As it returns, the wilderness obscures the evidence of these choices; human history is lost in the returned wilderness.

Visitors to the islands once had the opposite problem. In the late 1920s, representatives from the National Park Service toured the islands to evaluate the region as a prospective park. They did not see a wilderness, but a fire-scarred landscape permanently ruined, to their eyes, by five decades of destructive logging practices and other human use. In 1929, it seemed that the wilderness had been lost to the demands of progress. Had these park representatives recognized the way that wilderness characteristics would return to the islands, they might have come to very different conclusions about the value of Apostles, and set the region on a very different course.

CHAPTER SIX
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A Tale of Two Parks: Rewilding the Islands, 1929-1970

In August, 1930, the National Park Service sent landscape architect Harlan Kelsey to Bayfield to evaluate a proposal to designate the Apostle Islands as a national park. Kelsey was not impressed with what he found. "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 explained that destructive logging practices of the previous half century had robbed the area of its value to the Park Service. He continued: "The hand of man has mercilessly and in a measure irrevocably destroyed [the islands'] virgin beauty, and, therefore, a largely controlling element as outstanding national park material…" Kelsey's comments effectively destroyed any chance that the Apostles would then become a national park. But Harlan Kelsey was wrong, at least in his assessment of the islands' future. Congress created Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970. Kelsey would no doubt have been shocked to learn that the islands' "primitive conditions" and "wilderness character" provided the major motivation for the creation of the park.[1]

[1] Harlan P. Kelsey, "Report on Apostle Islands National Park Project," January 20, 1931, NA, RG 79, box 634, National Park Service, General Classified Files, 1907-1932, Proposed National Parks, 0-32 [hereafter, First Park Proposal Files].

What had happened in the Apostle Islands in the forty years between the two park proposals? The simple answer is that the forests had regenerated after the many years of logging and intensive resource extraction. But far more had happened in the Apostles than just forest growth. The islands had become a wilderness, a place valued for new and strikingly different reasons. Until the 1950s, the primary value of the Apostle Islands derived from the natural resources they contained—their timber, fish, and stone, as well as the scenery and sporting opportunities necessary for the tourist trade. As a wilderness, though, the islands were valued as a recreational and ecological landscape more than an extractive one. The "natural condition" of the islands—the seeming absence of human interference in forest regeneration and other ecological processes—provided the basis for these recreational and ecological values. When state natural resource managers and then NPS officials again looked at the islands in the 1950s and 1960s, they found a landscape worth protecting for these new reasons. To be sure, the islands still had economic importance as a site for primitive recreation and tourism, but the new wilderness value severely restricted other types of economic activity.

The islands' value as a primitive, wild and natural landscape is surprising, because human activity continued to shape island environments. As forests regenerated, they did so in ways profoundly influenced by the logging and farming activities of previous generations. The forests that grew on the islands in the mid-twentieth century had a different mosaic of trees and understory plants and sheltered different wildlife populations than those that had existed prior to logging. Underwater environments continued to change, as well, due to the pressures of commercial fishing, the spread of exotic species, and the introduction of sport fish. Decisions about forest and fisheries management contributed directly to the rewilding of the Apostle

Islands. So did the actions of residents of the Chequamegon Bay region, who continued to pursue the diversified economic strategy that had sustained them for close to a century, adapting this strategy to the changing environment.

This older, multivalent economic system, however, became a point of conflict between the residents of the Chequamegon Bay region and the planners, ecologists, and environmental advocates who valued the islands for their wildness. This conflict centered on the proper relationship among tourism, nature, and the role of the state. Residents of the region looked to the state—both to Wisconsin and to the federal government—to bolster their sagging economy, not in the least by helping to lure tourists to the Chequamegon Bay. State experts believed that the best use of the Apostles was as a location for the primitive outdoor recreation favored by an ever more environmentally aware public. The demands of primitive outdoor recreation, however, conflicted with deeply ingrained traditions of resource use. Resolution of this conflict occurred only when state power grew strong enough to separate nature tourism and primitive recreation from the suite of other economic activities pursued on the Chequamegon Bay.

The two national park movements in the Apostles served as bookends for the conflict over nature, tourism, and the role of the state. In the 1920s, residents of the Chequamegon Bay region tried to interest the federal government in creating a national park in the islands. When this effort failed, regional residents resumed their multivalent economic strategy. But the unstable island environments—especially the collapse of the Lake Superior lake trout population in the 1950s—made this economy untenable. State land managers and planners saw an opportunity in northern Wisconsin's regenerating forests and economic distress; they hoped to rebuild the region's economy through tourist development, at the same time responding to

increasing demands for outdoor recreation and nature protection. In pursuit of this goal, state officials created Apostle Islands State Forest, and decided to manage this forest as a wilderness area. In the 1960s, a renewed effort to create a national park in the Apostles derived from a similar set of motivations. The transformation of the islands into national park material was not complete, however, without resolution of the conflict between locals and outsiders over nature, tourism, and state authority.

A Park in the Cutover: The First Apostle Islands Park Movement, 1929-1936

As the 1920s drew to a close, businessmen and civic leaders in the Chequamegon Bay region recognized that they faced an economic crisis. The logging industry, a key component of the regional economy, had collapsed. Despite the limited success of the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant, many people still believed that tourism could solve the region's economic ills. For tourism to flourish, however, the Chequamegon Bay needed a permanent tourist infrastructure; it needed a national park. But despite the best efforts of local businessmen, the first Apostle Islands park movement proved even less successful than the Indian pageant. Local history and environmental practices combined with national park policy to doom the park proposal.

The leaders of the first park movement in the Apostles had a simple motivation: economics. Although commercial fishing continued to thrive, the regional economy had not recovered from the slow decline of the logging industry. A few mills continued to run in Ashland, but one bay-area mill after another shut down in the late 1920s. "At that time, we were in an economically very poor shape," remembered Charles Sheridan, president of the Apostle Islands National Park Committee. "[The park] was looked on as an economic boon. It would

bring in thousands of people and it would increase property values and it would give us business." Just as residents of the region began to explore the possibility of a national park, the Pike-Wachsmuth mill—long the center of the Bayfield economy—burned to the ground, a powerful symbol of the need for economic revitalization.[2]

Park boosters hoped to capitalize on the nationwide attention brought to the islands by the Apostle Islands Indian Pageant. During its three-year run, the pageant had drawn visitors from across the nation, and park promoters hoped lingering fond memories of the region would lure tourists back to the Apostles. The Chequamegon Bay earned free publicity, too, from a visit by President Calvin Coolidge. Coolidge, an avid sportsman, spent the summer of 1928 fishing at the exclusive Brule River retreat of his friend Henry Clay Pierce. On August 22, the president and his wife traveled from the Brule to the Chequamegon Bay, where they toured the Apostle Islands aboard the yacht of Madeline Island summer resident Frank Woods and attended a reception at the Madeline Island summer home of Hunter S. Gary. Coolidge reported favorably on the region's prospects as a tourist destination. "I think this is going to be a coming region for those who are seeking recreation," the president stated. "The fishing around here, I can testify, is fine. The climate is wonderful. It has been a great benefit to Mrs. Coolidge and myself, and we are returning to Washington refreshed and invigorated." Park promoters hoped to use the publicity generated by Coolidge's visit to interest the National Park Service in the Apostles.[3]

Enlisting government aid in tourism promotion was nothing new. Railroads had received generous federal subsidies in the form of land grants and had served as the backbone of the

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[2] Charles M. Sheridan, interview by Lawrence Rakestraw, 1975, in Lawrence Rakestraw, "Forest and Cultural History in Apostle Islands and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshores, Lake Superior," (Houghton, MI: Michigan Technological University, 1975), AINL Library, 71; BCP, March 20, 1930.

[3] Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 316; Ross, *La Pointe*, 173.

tourist industry throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As railroads gave way to automobiles as the most popular form of tourist transportation, tourism promoters turned to the state of Wisconsin to improve the roads that carried tourists from urban centers to the Chequamegon Bay. And in 1929, the Wisconsin legislature gave county governments the authority for rural zoning ordinance, which brought the state still further into the tourist trade.

The desire to keep some of the islands in public ownership provided secondary motivation for the first park movement. As summer home construction expanded on Madeline and Sand Islands, and development schemes other islands became more common, some bay area residents worried that the Apostles might become the reserve of wealthy summer dwellers from outside the region. John B. Chapple, park promoter and editor of the *Ashland Daily Press*, sounded the alarm in 1930: "Do we want the Apostle Islands grabbed from under our nose and plastered with "Private—Keep Out" signs? These islands which we have loved so long belong primarily to us of the Chequamegon Bay region. But it doesn't take long for a deed to transfer ownership when men of unlimited means find the islands are havens for secluded estates more entrancing than anything they had believed to exist." A national park would preserve local access to the islands. Chapple's comments highlight the local origins of the proposal; these local origins distinguish the park movement of the 1920s from that of the 1960s.[4]

Lobbying for a park in the Apostles began as a local endeavor but quickly moved into the national arena. Representatives from Ashland, Bayfield, and Washburn jointly formed the Apostle Islands National Park Committee to shepherd the idea to fruition. The committee included journalists Charles M. Sheridan of Washburn and John B. Chapple of Ashland, Bayfield

[4] Burnham, *The Lake Superior Country*, 347-48.

banker Joseph P. O'Malley and Bayfield hotel owner Bert J. Bracken, among others. On the national level, Wisconsin congressman Hubert H. Peavey corresponded with the National Park Service and in January 1930 submitted a bill to Congress to fund an investigation of the island proposal. Peavey's bill sailed through Congress, and the NPS agreed to send a representative to the islands. Residents of the Chequamegon Bay region were thrilled. "NATIONAL PARK LOOKS CERTAIN ON ISLANDS" proclaimed a *Bayfield County Press* headline.[5]

In lobbying for a national park, Peavey, Sheridan, and other park promoters placed Madeline Island at the center of their proposal. Madeline represented all of the advantages offered by the islands: it had the history, scenery, and recreational opportunities, park promoters believed, to interest the NPS. Madeline Island was also easily accessible from the mainland, and already possessed the framework for a good park road system and the area for future development. Congressman Peavey believed that forty to fifty percent of Madeline Island might be combined with several other islands to create a fine national park. The island's wealthy summer residents evidently agreed, for they supported the proposal and provided important logistical support to the project.[6]

That Madeline Island served as the centerpiece of the plan reveals the type of park that Peavey and other promoters hoped to establish. They did not want a wilderness park—far from it. Rather, they wanted a park that followed the well-established patterns of the tourist trade in the region. They wanted a park that showcased the area's history and natural advantages, and

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[5] BCP, February 7 and December 12, 1929, January 7, April 24, and May 15, 1930; Arno B. Cammerer to Hubert H. Peavey, January 19, 1929, First Park Proposal Files.

[6] W. B. Lewis to Mr. Albright, November 26, 1929, First Park Proposal Files; BCP, January 31 and February 14, 1929.

most importantly one that would help revive the slowing economy. They expected that filling stations, hotels, restaurants, and other services would quickly follow the creation of the park.

The National Park Service hired Boston-based landscape architect Harlan Kelsey to investigate the Apostle Islands park proposal. While on his visit to the western Great Lakes, Kelsey also planned to visit and evaluate the Quetico-Superior country in northern Minnesota, the Menominee forest in Wisconsin, and Michigan's Isle Royale, all under consideration as national parks. From August 6-12, Kelsey enjoyed a whirlwind tour of the Apostle Islands. His hosts on the Apostle Islands National Park Committee treated him to a tour of the region's most scenic spots. Madeline Island summer resident Hunter Gary offered the use of his yacht, the *Lamora*, for a trip around the Apostles. The John Schroeder Lumber Company supplied transportation to Outer Island, where Kelsey toured both their lumber camp as well as the uncut forest that remained on the island. Kelsey also enjoyed an aerial tour of the islands and a banquet in his honor at the Bracken Hotel in Bayfield.[7]

The hospitality made little difference: Kelsey was profoundly disappointed by the Apostles. He conceded that although spectacular forests might have once sheathed the islands, logging and forest fire had left behind a ruined landscape. "The second growth on the Islands which I visited," Kelsey explained in the report that he filed on the conclusion of his trip, "is now in the jungle stage, making it difficult to walk over them even following the abandoned logging roads which criss-cross them in every direction." Stockton Island, Kelsey reported, had "a good safe harbor with deep water, but for several miles the adjacent shore has been recently fire-swept and fairly ruined." Kelsey came to a damning conclusion: "this project does not meet National

[7] Kelsey, "Report on Apostle Islands Park Project."

Park standards…" He pointed out in his report that no one on the local committee had ever visited a national park or understood what these park standards might be—subtly explaining the promotional efforts for a proposal that had little chance of success.[8]

Kelsey found his visit to Outer Island, where active logging continued, particularly disturbing. There, Kelsey viewed the last remaining large tract of uncut forest in the islands. "This forest beyond logging operations was magnificent—as beautiful perhaps as any I have ever seen, yet if present plans are carried out in 5 or 6 years nothing will be left but a smoldering desolate waste." Even during his visit to Outer Island, fires burned across the southern, logged over portion of the island. Kelsey lamented the lack of attention paid to methods of scientific forestry and feared that fire would quickly claim any seed trees that remained—much as it had on the other islands. Kelsey commented that were the islands to have any value, even as a state park, logging needed to cease immediately.[9]

Fire scars and logging slash were not the only reasons that the Apostle Islands failed to qualify as a national park; NPS policies played a role, as well. The Park Service had reached a delicate stage in the late 1920s. In the years since the creation of the NPS in 1916, directors Stephen Mather and Horace Albright had worked religiously to expand the power of their agency. They used two primary arguments to promote this expansion. First, they argued that the Park Service should collect examples of characteristic American landscapes as a way of preserving samples of primitive America. This ensured park management of some of the West's most sublime places, such as the Grand Canyon and the Grand Tetons. Second, Mather and

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[8] *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 8.

[9] *Ibid.*, 7, 9.

Albright desperately wanted geographic diversity within the park system. They recognized that most potential park visitors—as well as important political support—lived east of the Mississippi River. This logic propelled creation of parks in such places as the Maine coast (Acadia National Park) and the Shenandoah Valley. At the same time, Mather, Albright and their allies worked to guard the service's reputation as protector of the nation's most important and spectacular places. They worried that allowing "inferior" parks into the system would tarnish the agency's reputation and limit its power.[10]

When Harlan Kelsey commented in his report that the Apostle Islands "did not meet National Park Service standards," he touched on this ongoing debate. In addition to the cutover condition of the islands, Kelsey noted several other problems with the proposal. On the same trip that took him to Bayfield, Kelsey traveled to Isle Royale, a large island in the middle of Lake Superior to the north and east of the Apostles. Discussions on establishing a park on Isle Royale began in the mid-1920s, and Kelsey confirmed that Isle Royale fit NPS standards far better than did the Apostles. Kelsey—and the several NPS investigators who followed him to the Chequamegon Bay over the next six years—also pointed to the lack of public land in the Apostles as a serious obstacle to park formation. At that time, only lands already in predominantly public ownership were designated as parks.[11]

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[10] Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); 67-68; Ronald A. Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1984), 33-36; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 109-111.

[11] Kelsey, "Report on Apostle Islands National Park Project," 8; Horace M. Albright to Hubert H. Peavey, n.d. (1931), First Park Proposal Files; Arno Cammerer, "Memorandum for Director Albright covering report on inspection of the Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) project," September 4, 1931, First Park Proposal Files.

Both Kelsey and Arno Cammerer (a future director of the NPS who investigated the Apostles in 1931) believed that the islands should be preserved, but as a state park rather than a national one. The reason for this, they argued, lay in the islands' recreational potential. Cammerer explained that "The whole bay region is a wonderfully scenic region and has untold possibilities for recreation." In 1930, however, the NPS was not interested in recreational parks. The NPS certainly catered to tourists, but Mather, Albright, Cammerer, and other agency leaders believed that maintaining NPS standards mattered more than expanding the system to include inferior, recreational parks better suited to state park management. As much as the regeneration of the forests, it was a change in this attitude over the course of the twentieth century that paved the way for the creation of a national park in the Apostles.[12]

Persistence and Change in Chequamegon Bay Environments and Economies, 1930-1960

When the National Park Service rejected the proposal to establish a park in the Apostle Islands, residents of the region had little choice but to accept this decision. They continued to pursue the varied economic strategy that had sustained them for the past eighty years. Fishing remained the most important economic activity in islands, but it was still supplemented by logging, tourism, farming, and other economic activities. As they had before, people carved out a niche for themselves at the intersections of seemingly distinct industries. But many years of intensive resource extraction had significant consequences for the environments of the Apostles. Both under the water and on the land, island environments continued to change. Forest

[12] Kelsey, "Report on Apostle Islands National Park Project," 9; Cammerer, "Memorandum for Director Albright covering report on inspection of the Apostle Islands (Wisconsin) project," 5.

composition and fish and deer populations shifted dramatically during the mid-twentieth century, each change providing new economic opportunities and challenges for residents of the region.

Commercial fishing remained at the core of the Bayfield community, both in terms of the town's identity as well as its economy. The general organization of the Bayfield fishery looked much as it had since the early twentieth century. The Booth Fisheries Company dominated the fishery, although two or three smaller packing firms also worked from Bayfield. Booth and the other companies sent their collection boats to the island fishing camps on a regular schedule, picking up fresh fish and dropping off ice. Other fishermen sailed from Bayfield, dropping their catch off at the packinghouses each night. Fishermen spent their summers catching the lucrative lake trout and whitefish, switching to herring for the brief late autumn season.[13]

Both on Lake Superior as a whole and in the waters around Bayfield, lake trout harvests remained remarkably constant from 1925 to 1950. In 1951, federal fisheries investigators Ralph Hile, Paul H. Eschmeyer, and George F. Lunger completed a statistical analysis of Lake Superior's lake trout fishery. They noted that Michigan fishermen dominated the fishery, accounting for 71.5 percent of the harvest. Wisconsin fishermen contributed 17.5 percent, down from 23.2 percent in the period from 1908 to 1925.[14] Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger established that from 1926 to 1949, trout production on Lake Superior had averaged just over three million pounds, with 533,000 pounds of this from Wisconsin. In fifteen of the twenty-four years, the catch deviated from this mean by less than 250,000 pounds for the lake as a whole, and by less

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[13] *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 54-59.

[14] Fisheries statistics for Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters were not broken down into smaller geographic areas. As before, however, most of the fishermen working the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior listed Bayfield or Ashland as their main ports; several also fished out of Cornucopia, just to the west of the Bayfield Peninsula.

than 60,000 pounds in Wisconsin. The study revealed a cyclical trend in lake trout production, with peaks in the mid-1920s, late 1930s, and mid-1940s, particularly in Michigan waters.[15]

Commercial Fish Harvest, pounds, Wisconsin Waters of Lake Superior[16]			
Year	Whitefish (% of Lake Superior whitefish catch)	Lake Trout (% of Lake Superior lake trout catch)	Herring/Chub (% of Lake Superior herring catch)
1930	85,000 (33.7 %)	475,000 (19 %)	1,112,000 (9.3 %)
1931	52,000 (11 %)	495,000 (16.5 %)	1,262,000 (16.7 %)
1932	57,000 (11.8 %)	564,000 (18.4 %)	650,000 (10.1 %)
1933	72,000 (13.8 %)	560,000 (22.5 %)	950,000 (12.9 %)
1934	91,000 (18.6 %)	611,000 (18.1 %)	3,205,000 (23.7 %)
1935	73,000 (14.3 %)	502,000 (14.4 %)	2,636,000 (19.4 %)
1936	137,000 (36.6 %)	521,000 (16.1 %)	3,024,000 (25 %)
1937	99,000 (27.2 %)	440,000 (14.3 %)	3,148,000 (26.1 %)
1938	123,000 (27 %)	520,000 (16.4 %)	2,630,000 (24.2 %)
1939	106,000 (21.3 %)	462,000 (16.8 %)	3,283,000 (24.7 %)
1940	152,000 (22 %)	531,000 (19.8 %)	5,373,000 (31.4 %)
1941	273,000 (37.5 %)	630,000 (22.1 %)	6,199,000 (33.8 %)
1942	253,000 (33.7 %)	659,000 (22.3 %)	5,358,000 (34.9 %)
1943	266,000 (36.3 %)	618,000 (20.2 %)	4,625,000 (32.3 %)
1944	263,000 (39.7 %)	707,000 (18.9 %)	4,873,000 (33.4 %)
1945	338,000 (47.1 %)	572,000 (17 %)	6,649,000 (46.5 %)
1946	481,000 (52.5 %)	534,000 (15.5 %)	6,680,000 (49.5 %)
1947	619,000 (65.1 %)	518,000 (17.5 %)	4,758,000 (43.4 %)
1948	713,000 (59.4 %)	553,000 (18.7 %)	6,455,000 (43.1 %)
1949	767,000 (59.7 %)	514,000 (17.3 %)	5,120,000 (38.3 %)
1950	523,000 (50.1 %)	591,000 (18.5 %)	3,960,000 (48.4 %)

Commercial production of whitefish and lake herring, both in Bayfield and on the rest of Lake Superior, showed a distinctly different pattern during this period. Herring production fluctuated wildly between 1920 and 1950. One group of scientists attributed these fluctuations

[15] Ralph Hile, Paul H. Eschmeyer, and George F. Lunger, "Status of the Lake Trout Fishery in Lake Superior," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 80 (1951): 278-312. See also 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, 1950-1970* (Ann Arbor, MI: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1975), 11; Baldwin and Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production*; Walter Koelz, "Fishing Industry of the Great Lakes," in U. S. Fish Commission Report, 1925, 554-617.

[16] Baldwin and Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production*. These statistics represent only the American, not Canadian, production on Lake Superior.

not to abundance of herring, but rather to the unstable markets for the fish. Wisconsin's percentage of the annual herring harvest rose steadily, topping 40 percent in the late-1940s. Whitefish production slowly rebounded from the collapse of the late nineteenth century, both on the lake as a whole and particularly in Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters. Only twice between 1909 and 1937 did the Wisconsin harvest exceed 100,000 pounds, but these levels rose significantly after 1938. Fisheries experts have no convincing explanation for this rebound, but suggest that the cessation of logging in the region might have cleared spawning beds and improved water chemistry, permitting a recovery of the whitefish population.[17]

From the mid-1920s through the 1950s, Lake Superior fishermen enjoyed extremely favorable market conditions. In 1925, the Lake Erie herring fishery crashed, ruining what had been the largest herring fishery on the Great Lakes. Demand for Lake Superior herring consequently increased, as did the size of the harvest. Collapses of the lake trout fisheries on Lake Huron in the 1930s and Lake Michigan in the 1940s produced a similar result: a near monopoly on trout for Lake Superior fishermen. The progressive decline of lake trout made the recovered whitefish relatively more valuable, as well. With strong demand and steady harvests, then, the fisheries of Lake Superior seemed to be thriving during the first half of the century.[18]

The good years came with a cost. Although production of lake trout, whitefish, and herring either remained stable or increased after 1930, the intensity of the fishing effort rose significantly over the same period. The high prices and consistent demand for Lake Superior fish

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[17] Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 48, 53; Baldwin and Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production*; William R. Dryer and Joseph Beil, "Life History of Lake Herring in Lake Superior," *Fishery Bulletin* 63 (1964, no. 3): 493-530; William R. Dryer, "Age and Growth of Whitefish in Lake Superior," *Fishery Bulletin* 63 (1963, no.1): 77-95.

[18] Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 49; Bogue, *Fishing the Great Lakes*, 156; Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger, "Status of the Lake Trout Fishery in Lake Superior," 308-309; Dryer, "Age and Growth of Whitefish in Lake Superior," 78.

drew more and more fishermen onto the lake. Technological innovations made these fishermen more effective than those of previous generations. After 1945, for example, fishermen began to use nylon nets. This cheaper, lighter, rot-free alternative to cotton or linen permitted more fishermen to enter the industry, and allowed smaller numbers of fishermen to employ greater amounts of netting. Experts estimated that nylon nets were 2.25 times more efficient than cotton ones. More sophisticated floats and weights allowed fishermen to set their nets in deeper water, and depth finders allowed for far more precise setting of nets in specific locations.[19]

Contemporary observers recognized the dire implications of steady production levels from intensifying effort. In their 1951 study, Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger, calculated not just production (a simple measure of pounds of fish caught) and intensity (the amount of apparatus used), but also abundance (catch per unit of effort). They determined that the production levels remained high only at a consequence of increasing effort; while effort continued to rise, relative abundance of lake trout declined. Comforting though recent good years might be, they warned,

> the general situation must be recognized as dangerous. The trends … cannot continue much longer. Still further decreases in the abundance of lake trout inevitably must reduce the catch per unit of effort to the level at which operations are no longer profitable. When that point is reached, fishing intensity and production must be expected to drop abruptly. Only a reversal of the present trend in the abundance of lake trout can save the fishery from disaster.

[19] These technological innovations were unevenly applied. For example, because fishermen only used their herring nets once a year for a brief season, herring nets tended to last much longer than regular commercial nets; consequently, the switch to nylon came much later in the herring fishery. Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger, "Status of the Lake Trout Fishery in Lake Superior," 310-11; Pycha and King, *Changes in the Lake Trout Population of Southern Lake Superior*, 7, 11, Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror*, 204; Dryer and Beil, "Life History of Lake Herring in Lake Superior," 500.

Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger suggested that the decline in lake trout abundance might be due to overfishing, but it might also be due to a natural cycle in lake trout populations. The former meant the imminent decline of the fishery; the latter theory at least provided some hope.[20]

Fishing was not the only economic activity in the Apostles. The multivalent economy of the islands persisted well into the 1950s. The fish collection boats continued to carry tourists on excursions through the islands. The fishermen-farmers of Sand and Madeline Island carried on their mixed economies. Island fishermen supplemented their income with occasional wage work, if not in lumber camps then in the Ashland iron mills or the Great Lakes shipping trade. Small-scale logging continued on several of the islands, in some cases based on second growth timber and in others on the remaining old growth stands. In the late 1930s, for example, the Lullabye Lumber Company purchased the unlogged portions of Outer Island and selectively logged for large birch and maple. Logging continued on Madeline and Sand Islands, as well.[21]

The Rocky Island Air Haven exemplifies the persisting connections between industries and the diverse island economy. Rocky Island had served as a summer camp for fishermen and their families since the late nineteenth century. In the mid-twentieth century, the Booth tug waited at the Rocky Island dock of Grace and Laurie Nourse while Nourse and other fishermen loaded their catch. In early 1940s, the Nourses began to serve coffee and pie to the tourists traveling on the tug. In 1946, the Nourses converted their net house into a dining room large enough for one hundred customers and named their restaurant the Rocky Island Air Haven.

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[20] Hile, Eschmeyer, and Lunger, "Status of the Lake Trout Fishery in Lake Superior," 310-11.

[21] BCP, October 1, 1936, July 27, 1939, and April 30, 1942; Nute, *Lake Superior*, 265; Ronald W. Johnson, "The Manitou Island Fish Camp: A Special Study," (Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1983), AINL Library, 21; Cliff and Harvey Hadland interview, November 8, 2001; "Alex Kirschling, President of Lullabye Furniture Co.," n.d., AINL Name File; Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 56.

Laurie Nourse gave up fishing to captain an excursion boat; tourists boarded the boat and placed their lunch orders in Bayfield, and Laurie radioed the order to Grace, who had meals ready when the boat arrived. The Nourses bought fresh fish from other island fishermen. The Nourses provided cabins and meals to sportsmen who wanted to spend several days in the islands. Another fisherman ran a similar, albeit less successful, resort on South Twin Island.[22]

The Nourses did not limit their tourist business to fishermen and day-trippers. In the late 1940s, a different brand of sportsmen arrived in the Apostles: deer hunters. Every autumn Rocky Island, in particular, became the center of a distinctive island deer hunt, and the Nourses provided hunters with room and board. Some years they housed forty hunters at once. Other island landowners followed a similar course. Robert Harrison built a twenty-five person deer camp on Basswood Island, and Irving Hadland established one on Bear Island. Madeline Island also emerged as a favored hunting ground, where several islanders built hunting camps on their property, and at least ten mainland hunting clubs erected cabins. One mid-1940s count estimated nearly three hundred hunters on Madeline in a single day.[23]

If deer camps provided a new source of income to island landowners, this was because deer had only recently arrived on the islands. As in other parts of the North Woods, logging prompted a dramatic shift in deer populations. Prior to logging, deer populations in the dense hardwood-hemlock forests of northern Wisconsin probably remained below ten deer per square mile. The edge environments and early successional stands of aspen in areas regenerating after

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[22] Grace Nourse, interview by Greta Swenson, Bayfield, WI, 1981, transcript in the AINL Name File; Neuman, "What are those Cabins Doing There?" 96-99, 101-107.

[23] Grace Nourse interview; Ben F. Waskow and George A. Curran, "Deer Hunting on the Apostle Islands," *Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin* 19 (October 1954): 3-7; BCP, October 11, 1945; Loel Tiffany and Hanford Tiffany, "One of the Apostles," *The Chicago Naturalist* 7 (1944, no. 4), 80; Turrittin, "Social Change in an Isolated Community," 109.

logging, and particularly after fire, proved a much more favorable deer habitat. The elimination of wolves and other predators enhanced conditions for the rapid growth of deer populations. The rise of conservation led to the implementation of bag limits, license requirements, and closed seasons—deliberate attempts to protect and increase the deer herd. By In the mid-1930s, a handful of scientists recognized that they had a problem: deer herds had grown too large, well beyond the carrying capacity of their range. Overpopulation meant damage to crops and dramatic die-offs during harsh winters, or necessitated winter feeding programs.[24]

The Apostle Islands followed this trajectory. A biologist who visited the islands in 1919 reported very light deer populations, including on Madeline Island. By the 1930s, however, Madeline had a reputation as a spot for good deer hunting, and by the late 1940s, island deer herds had reached problem proportions. Rocky Island, home to the Nourses' restaurant, had a remarkably fast transition. Deer were only occasionally sighted on the island in the 1930s, and as late as 1946 the island deer population remained quite small. The island had a dense cover of Canada yew, a preferred food, as well as ample winter shelter and forage. Quite suddenly, the deer population exploded. One state deer ecologist called the Rocky Island irruption "the fastest buildup of a deer population and the fastest degeneration of a habitat I've seen." Hunters killed 124 deer on Rocky Island in 1954, a remarkable total for an island of only 1,100 acres.[25]

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[24] Burton L. Dahlberg and Ralph C. Guettinger, *The White-Tailed Deer in Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin Conservation Department, 1956), 14-16, 39-42; Susan L. Flader, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974); Keith R. McCaffery, "History of Deer Populations in Northern Wisconsin," in *Hemlock Ecology and Management: Proceedings of a Regional Conference on Ecology and Management of Eastern Hemlock*, ed. Glenn Mroz and Jeff Martin (Madison: Department of Forestry, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995), 109-112; Otis S. Bersing, *A Century of Wisconsin Deer*, 2nd ed. (Madison: Wisconsin Conservation Department, 1966).

[25] Brander, "Environmental Assessment," 99-103; Fred Benson interview; G. N. Lamb, "Report of Investigation of Proposed National Parks," Apostle Islands National Park, 1936, First Park Proposal Files, 2.

Both deliberate and accidental human action contributed to the quality of the deer habitat on the islands. Deer fared particularly well in recently burned over areas. Fires in the islands had a variety of causes, both human and natural. Logging thinned or removed the forest canopy, exposing the soil to the drying influences of the sun and wind, and lumberjacks left behind piles of slash and refuse; both conditions made cutover landscapes particularly susceptible to fire. Fires burned on Stockton Island at least five different years between the cessation of logging in 1920 and 1954; a 1934 blaze was particularly intense. Oak, Outer, Rocky, and several other islands burned during the same period. Lightning set some of these fires; escaped campfires from fishing and hunting camps caused others. But some were set deliberately. Berry pickers started the Stockton Island fires in 1934 and 1936. The island had been a favored site for blueberry picking for well over a century, frequented by both white and Indian residents of the region, as well as tourists seeking a pleasant spot for a picnic. Madeline Island, too, was a berry-picking destination. Regular burning helped keep the island berry patch productive; without fire, young trees would quickly shade out the berry bushes. Fires might have had the unintended consequence of improving deer forage, but the fires themselves were often intentional.[26]

The deer irruption on the Apostle Islands presented a familiar problem to state game managers. As biologists recognized the impact of deer irruptions in the 1930s, they lobbied for state conservation wardens to take action to reduce the herd, such as extended seasons and antlerless hunts (hunts for does instead of bucks, which more effectively control population by limiting reproduction). But not everyone saw deer populations as a problem, and many people

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[26] BCP, August 16, 1934 and October 14, 1943; Anderson and Milfred, *Inventory of Select Stockton Island Resources for Recreational Planning*, 70-72; Tiffany and Tiffany, "One of the Apostles," 80; Burton L. Dahlberg to L. P. Voigt, May 17, 1955, Box 453, Folder 39, Wisconsin Conservation Department, Subject Files, 1917-1968, WHS [hereafter, WCD Files].

opposed these measures; Wisconsin did not have an antlerless season until 1951. The Conservation Commission (the state's conservation policy-making body) authorized a special "any deer" season for the Apostle Islands in 1954, and carried out a publicity campaign designed to lure hunters to the islands. "For the adventurous and skilled deer hunter, young in body or spirit, the Apostle Islands offer thrills, rugged conditions, and good hunting success!" exclaimed one state publication. Hunters responded by taking 411 deer from the islands in 1954 (excluding Madeline, which did not have the special season), 254 in 1955, and 209 in 1956. The Conservation Commission hoped hunting would alleviate pressure on the deer range, and kept the special hunting regulations for the Apostles in effect for close to two decades. The opportunities of the deer hunt solidified the islands' reputation as a destination for outdoor recreation in a rugged and primitive setting. This reputation became an essential factor in the transition of the Apostles into a wilderness.[27]

While the deer irruption meant an additional source of income to the Nourses and other island landowners, it meant something different to ecologists. The Apostles provided a tremendous opportunity to study the relationship between deer and forest regeneration in a cutover landscape. The islands have a generally uniform topography and soil, but greatly varying deer histories. Some islands, like Rocky and Madeline, had high deer populations. Others, like Cat and Michigan, had only small numbers of deer, while still others—such as Raspberry and Outer—had none. Research has focused on the relationship between deer and a prevalent understory shrub, Canada yew. Thickets of yew so dense that walking is difficult are still a

[27] The special deer season did not include Madeline Island, where regulations remained the same as on the mainland; the statistics in this paragraph likewise exclude Madeline. Waskow and Curran, "Deer Hunting on the Apostle Islands," 3; Brander, "Environmental Assessment,"102-103.

defining characteristic of islands that have never had large deer populations, whereas yew is virtually absent from Rocky, Stockton, and the other islands that had irruptions. Deer also influenced hemlock regeneration by feeding on saplings and significantly reducing the number of young hemlock. The value of the Apostles for scientific research—first lauded by deer ecologists in the 1940s and 1950s—emerged as a major motivation for state acquisition of the islands.[28]

The economic opportunities provided by the deer irruption on Rocky and the other islands proved fleeting, forcing the Nourses and the other island landowners to adapt yet again. State game managers had hoped that hunters would help keep the deer population from exceeding the carrying capacity of the islands, and thereby prevent the die-offs that had plagued portions of the mainland. Even the special hunting seasons failed to keep the deer herd in check. Browse conditions deteriorated rapidly on the islands with large herds, and by the early 1960s observers noted signs of starvation. Harsh winters exacerbated the problem. Hunting slowed as the deer herd declined in health and numbers; the total number of deer killed on the islands topped one hundred only twice after 1958, falling to nine in 1972, the last year records were kept for the islands. The rapid rise and fall of the deer population—and the economic opportunity it provided—stands as another example of the uncertainty of life on the economic periphery; an unstable natural world, as well as unstable markets, contributed to this uncertainty.[29]

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[28] E. W. Beals, G. Cottam, and R. J. Vogl, "Influence of Deer on Vegetation of the Apostle Islands, Wisconsin," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 24 (January 1960): 68-80; Wisconsin Legislative Council, Conservation Committee, Minutes, January 9, 1956, in Folder 39, Box 453, WCD Files; R. K. Anderson and L. R. Stowell, *Wildlife Management Plan for Select Habitats and Species of The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* (Stevens Point: University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, 1985), 91-95; Margaret B. Davis, *et al*., "3,000 Years of Abundant Hemlock in Upper Michigan," in *Hemlock Ecology and Management*, ed. Mroz and Martin, 22.

[29] Brander, "Environmental Assessment," 102-103; Lelyn Standyk, Richard L. Verch, Bruce A. Goetz, "Stockton Island Survey: An Ecological Survey and Environmental Impact Study of Stockton Island, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," (Ashland, WI: Northland College, 1974), 22.

Commercial Fish Harvest, in pounds, Wisconsin Waters of Lake Superior, 1950-1960[30]				
Year	Whitefish	Lake Trout	Herring/Chub	Smelt
1951	183,000	504,000	5,353,000	1,000
1952	140,000	521,000	5,908,000	45,000
1953	171,000	450,000	5,393,000	21,000
1954	332,000	436,000	5,648,000	22,000
1955	505,000	553,000	4,453,000	72,000
1956	541,000	489,000	4,273,000	114,000
1957	289,000	287,000	3,332,000	138,000
1958	88,000	259,000	3,041,000	41,000
1959	121,000	186,000	3,645,000	294,000
1960	128,000	109,000	2,945,000	334,000
1961	93,000	103,000	3,244,000	568,000
1962	85,000	120,000	2,882,000	370,000

In the 1950s, fish populations fluctuated as much the island deer herds, but with far greater economic consequences. Exotic species and overfishing threatened the most important commercial fish species. Rainbow smelt (*Osmerus Mordax* Mitchill) were the first of several exotic species to pose problems for the fishermen. Smelt were introduced to inland lakes in Michigan in the early 1900s as food for stocked salmon, but they quickly escaped into Lake Michigan; by 1930 smelt appeared in eastern Lake Superior, and they reached the Apostles by the 1950s. The silvery, seven-inch long fish had an immediate impact on the commercial herring catch. Herring and smelt competed directly with each other for food. As smelt populations grew, they often concentrated on herring spawning grounds in late autumn, impairing herring reproduction. In response to this competition, herring numbers and harvest levels dropped. Fisheries biologists have speculated that competition with smelt, rather than overfishing prompted this decline, although fishing took its toll, as well. Fortunately for the fishermen, smelt also had commercial value, sometimes bringing a higher price than the herring that they

[30] Baldwin and Saalfield, *Commercial Fish Production*.

displaced. Systematic commercial fishing for smelt began in the early 1950s, and rose steadily. Like the herring, however, smelt season was brief and could not support a year-round fishery.[31]

The collapse of the lake trout fishery was more rapid, more complete, and more disastrous for the fishermen. The parasitic sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus* Linnaeus) took much of the blame for the destruction of the lake trout fishery on the Great Lakes.[32] Over the course of the twentieth century, the sea lamprey slowly moved up the Great Lakes, decimating commercial fisheries along the way. Improvement of the Welland Canal during World War I provided a route from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie, and the lamprey moved steadily west and north. They reached Lake Michigan in the 1930s and crossed through the locks at Sault Ste. Marie into Lake Superior in 1946. The impact of the lamprey was hard to miss. The parasitic sucker attached itself to the sides of adult and juvenile lake trout, sucking out their insides. Lamprey preyed upon trout before they reached maturity, drastically limiting trout reproduction. Fishermen in the Apostles first noticed lamprey-scarred trout in their nets in the early 1950s.[33]

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[31] Emory D. Anderson and Lloyd L. Smith, Jr., "Factors affecting Abundance of Lake Herring (*Coregonus artedii* Lesueur) in Western Lake Superior," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 100 (1971): 691-707; John Van Oosten, "The Dispersal of Smelt, *Osmerus Mordax* (Mitchill), in the Great Lakes Region," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 66 (1936): 160-71; David Nourse, interview by Greta Swenson, Bayfield, WI, 1981, AINL Name File; Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 55.

[32] Recent research has questioned the role of the lamprey in the destruction of the Great Lakes lake trout fishery. Contemporary observers of the collapsing fisheries universally blamed the sea lamprey, often in combination with overfishing. More recent studies have suggested that dioxins—chemical byproducts of papermaking and other industrial processes—polluted the Great Lakes and offer a more likely explanation. This analysis applies more to the lower Great Lakes than to Lake Superior, where dioxin levels remained low. For Superior, biologists still blame the combination of overfishing and lamprey infestation, noting the increase in fishing intensity required to maintain harvest levels in the years before the arrival of the lamprey. Daniel W. Coble, *et al*., "Lake Trout, Sea Lampreys, and Overfishing in the Upper Great Lakes: A Review and Reanalysis," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 119 (1990): 985-95; P. M. Cook, *et al*., "Effects of Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptor-mediated Early Life Stage Toxicity on Lake Trout Populations in Lake Ontario During the 20th Century," *Environmental Science & Technology* 37 (September 1, 2003): 3864-77; *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, November 17, 2003.

[33] Pycha and King, *Changes in the Lake Trout Population of Southern Lake Superior*, 2; Bernard R. Smith, J. James Tibbles, and B. G. H. Johnson, *Control of the Sea Lamprey (Petromyzon Marinus) in Lake Superior, 1953-1970*, (Ann Arbor. MI: Great Lakes Fishery Commission, 1974), 2; Carl L. Hubbs and T. E. B. Pope, "The Spread of the

The arrival of the lamprey devastated the Lake Superior trout fishery. After first finding scarred trout in the early 1950s, fishermen in the Apostles soon found that lamprey had ruined the entire haul. Thirty-six percent of trout caught in Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters in 1955 had lamprey scars; this percentage increased to 56 in 1956 and 79 in 1957. In addition, fishermen caught fewer and fewer large fish. On the lake as a whole, commercial production plummeted by 27 percent per year after 1953, with harvests falling progressively from the eastern to the western edge of the lake. The lamprey infestation threatened to ruin stocking and research programs, simply because healthy trout could not be found. "Imagine, only two females were caught in the course of netting the important spawning reefs [in the Apostles] which have always been a dependable source of eggs," lamented Wisconsin state fisheries biologists.[34]

The lamprey infestation essentially put an end to commercial fishing in the Apostles. The Booth Fisheries Company stopped sending collection boats to the islands in 1958 and closed its Bayfield packinghouse soon after. Faced with declining marketing options and harvests, many fishermen had little choice but to retire or look for other work. The state of Wisconsin took the extraordinary step of closing the lake trout fishery altogether in 1962, with the hope that lamprey control and reduced fishing pressure might save the lake trout from extirpation. "We fished as long as we could, and then in '62, the state closed the lake for trout," remembered Julian Nelson, a long-time island fisherman. "And of course by that time, everybody realized that they had to do

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Sea Lamprey Through the Great Lakes," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 66 (1936): 172-76; Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror*, 85; John Boehme, interview by Phil Peterson, Bayfield, WI, 1983, AINL Name File.

[34] Pycha and King, *Changes in the Lake Trout Population in Southern Lake Superior*, 2; Lawrie and Rahrer, *Lake Superior*, 40; "Summary of Accomplishments in the Fish Management Division During 1956," Folder 6, Box 780, WCD Files; "Summary of Accomplishments in the Fish Management Division During 1957," Folder 5, Box 780, WCD Files.

something different to make a living. And so we, a lot of us just walked away from it." A few fishermen persisted in the industry, focusing on herring, smelt, and chubs (deepwater herring). But with lake trout and whitefish—the two highest-priced fish—devastated by the lamprey, fishing became even more tenuous an occupation than it had been in the past.[35]

Other economic blows battered northern Wisconsin region in the 1950s. Iron mining along the south shore of Lake Superior, and smelting and shipping in Ashland, declined sharply. The area's farm economy had collapsed, too, the victim of poor soils and a short growing season. Chequamegon Bay communities of Bayfield, Washburn, and Ashland (as well as other northern Wisconsin towns) suffered from chronic unemployment, out-migration of labor and capital, and economic depression. In 1965, the U.S. Department of Commerce declared northern Wisconsin one of the most economically distressed regions in the country.[36]

The collapse of the commercial fishery was the final blow for the multivalent economy that had persisted on the Apostle Islands for over a century. The fishermen who used Sand Island as a base retired, and the last productive economic activity there ceased. The Manitou Island fish camp, long a base for itinerant fishing in summer and winter, fell into disuse. A few fishermen continued to work out of Rocky and Madeline Islands, but in smaller numbers and with poorer

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[35] Julian Nelson interview; Roy and Irene Hokenson, interview by S. L. Fisher, December 9, 1981, AINL Name File; David Nourse interview; Cliff and Harvey Hadland interview, 1992. Michael J. Hansen, *et al*., "Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) Populations in Lake Superior and Their Restoration in 1959-1993," *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 21 (1995, supplement 1), 162.

[36] James Napoli, *The Coasts of Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin Sea Grant College Program, 1975), 10; *Recreational Potential of the Lake Superior South Shore Area* (Madison: Department of Resource Development, 1964), 5; Department of Resource Development, *Economy of Northwest Wisconsin: State Planning Area VI; Population Analysis, Economic Analysis, Program for Economic Development* (Madison: State of Wisconsin/Department of Resource Development, 1967).

prospects than before the lamprey. Only a single farm remained on Madeline Island. By 1960, productive work in the islands had ground to a standstill.[37]

Outdoor Recreation, State Power, and the Island Wilderness

Even as the multivalent economy of the Apostles dwindled, a new, far more exclusive use of the islands grew in its place. In the 1950s, the islands emerged as a premier spot for primitive outdoor recreation. In the prosperous years that followed World War II, the nation as a whole and Wisconsin in particular experienced a boom in outdoor recreation. Wisconsin Conservation Department (WCD) officials responded to the resulting pressure on park and forest facilities by acquiring new lands, improving parks, and building campgrounds. For the Apostles, however, WCD officials had a different vision: they saw the islands as a wilderness, an undeveloped and wild area valuable for its recreational and ecological characteristics. Residents of the Chequamegon Bay region maintained a markedly different view of the Apostles, one far more in step with traditional economic activities on the islands. As state management authority in the islands grew, these two perspectives came into increasing conflict.

In the 1950s, the United States emerged from two decades of depression and war into a period of unprecedented economic growth. Middle-class Americans enjoyed disposable income and leisure time and possessed a pent-up consumer demand that had accumulated over the previous two decades. Americans responded to this situation by heading indoors to suburban shopping malls and outdoors to beaches, hiking trails, and campgrounds. By every measure,

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[37] David Snyder, "Sand Island," n.d., AINL Place File, Sand Island; Johnson, "Manitou Island Fish Camp," 8; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, Inc., *On the Rock*, 137; Turrittin, "Social Change in an Isolated Community," 94.

demand for outdoor recreation surged between 1950 and 1960: visits to national parks jumped 86 percent; outboard motors in use, 94 percent; fishing licenses, 25 percent; and visits to recreation areas, 143 percent. The nation simply did not have enough recreational facilities to meet the rising demand. In 1956, the National Park Service responded to the influx of visitors with a massive expansion and modernization plan, known as Mission 66. Two years later, Congress reacted to the perceived "crisis in outdoor recreation" by creating the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission to assess the nation's recreational resources and to recommend a plan to maximize those resources.[38]

Wisconsin's crisis in outdoor recreation was particularly acute. Since the days of railroad tourism, the state had enjoyed a reputation as the playground of the Midwest, famous for its lakes, resorts, and sporting opportunities. Even before the boom of the 1950s, some people believed that Wisconsin did not have enough publicly owned recreational lands and facilities, and accused the legislature of underfunding the state park system. Pressure on state parks and forests increased significantly in the 1950s. This was particularly noticeable in the demand for campgrounds—camper visits to state lands exploded by 243 percent during the decade. Total visits to state parks jumped from three million in 1951 to over five million in 1956. Funding for the parks, meanwhile, remained constant. In 1954, Wisconsin spent only nine cents per park visitor. In comparison, Michigan spent thirteen cents and Minnesota spent twenty-seven. The WCD parks division did not have money to build and maintain facilities in the existing parks, let alone to acquire new land. "If we continue at our present rate of acquisition and development we

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[38] Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 62-64; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 173-91; Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, *Outdoor Recreation for America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 35.

cannot possibly hope to supply the demand," explained one state official in 1959. "In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that several state parks may have reached a saturation point as far as day-use-picknicking [sic.], swimming and sight-seeing is concerned." Demands on recreational resources had reached crisis conditions, and experts expected the problem to intensify. "[No] matter how clever our planning and development, the point may soon be reached when every camping unit is occupied every day of the camping season. What will we do the following year?"[39]

State officials recognized in the rising demand for outdoor recreation an opportunity to ameliorate the chronic economic depression that stifled the northern part of the state. With its forests, lakes, and rivers, the area contained a virtually limitless supply of recreational resources. If planners could connect recreationally starved urbanites of Chicago, Milwaukee, and other cities with these resources, they could solve two problems at once. Indeed, Wisconsin planners believed that *only* by developing a recreation industry could the south shore of Lake Superior rise from its economic stagnation. Beginning in the mid-1950s, Wisconsin planners began to recommend the creation, expansion, and improvement of parks, roads, and forests throughout northern Wisconsin.[40]

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[39] E. J. Vanderwall, "Historical Background of the Wisconsin State Park System" (Madison: Wisconsin Conservation Department, 1953); Roman H. Koenings, "The Status of the State Parks in Wisconsin," delivered at the National Conference on State Parks, September 1960, Box 815, Folder 6, WCD Files; Leonard J. Seyberth, "Wisconsin State Parks Going Down Hill; Why?" 1962, Box 871, Folder A, WCD Files; "Annual report to the Conservation Commission, Forests and Parks Division," 1959, Box 781, Folder 1, WCD Files, 3, 4.

[40] I. V. Fine, Ralph B. Hovind, and Philip H. Lewis, Jr., *The Lake Superior Region Recreational Potential: Preliminary Report* (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Resource Development, 1962); I. V. Fine, *Apostle Islands: Some of the Economic Implications of the Proposed Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, School of Commerce, Bureau of Business Research & Service, and Center for Research on Tourism, 1965), 3.

Larger environmental, economic, and political developments in Wisconsin framed the plans to develop the recreational resources of Lake Superior. Gaylord Nelson built his political career in Wisconsin in part on the recognition that recreational tourism could help solve northern Wisconsin's economic ills. As a state senator in the early 1950s, Nelson worked to inject New Deal values of planning and centralized research authority into the state's resource management programs. When he became governor in 1958, Nelson accomplished this with two ambitious initiatives. In 1959, he established the Department of Resource Development to centralize research and planning for economic development. Two years later, during his second term, Nelson launched the Outdoor Recreation Action Program (called ORAP), to fund and develop the state's underutilized recreational resources. With these moves, Nelson built a reputation—for himself as well as for his state—as a leader in the emerging environmental movement. In both its use of modern planning techniques and its focus on outdoor recreation, Wisconsin became a national model. This context is essential for understanding the decision to acquire the Apostle Islands, and more importantly the decision to manage the islands as a wilderness.[41]

The movement for state acquisition of the Apostles began in 1950. That year, the Milwaukee County Conservation Alliance—an affiliation of sportsmen's clubs—submitted a resolution to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission requesting a study of the feasibility of state acquisition of the Apostle Islands "for recreational purposes." Although the Wisconsin Conservation Department did compile island ownership records, it took no further action. WCD officials recognized that several studies in the previous twenty years had highlighted the

[41] An important secondary motive of the Department of Resource Development was to circumvent the conservative Wisconsin Conservation Department, which was dominated by Nelson's Republican opponents. Thomas R. Huffman, *Protectors of the Land and Water: Environmentalism in Wisconsin, 1961-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 9-35.

impracticality of public acquisition of the Apostles (a conclusion reached by both the Park Service as well as the WCD, which had rejected the idea of state park in the Apostles in 1936). But the Milwaukee sportsmen were not easily dissuaded. Both deer herds and the Apostles' reputation as a spot for primitive recreation were peaking in the early 1950s, and the sportsmen again recommended public acquisition to the Conservation Commission in 1952. These proposals differed significantly from earlier ones, however, in that they originated outside the Chequamegon Bay. They served the needs of Milwaukee hunters, not the people who lived near the islands.[42]

In response to this pressure, WCD officials once again considered state acquisition of the islands. In 1952, during a commission meeting in Ashland, WCD administrators, conservation commissioners, and a representative of the Milwaukee County Conservation Alliance toured the islands. They liked what they found: a forest recovering after the destructive logging of previous generations; a landscape seemingly tailor-made for scientific experiments in ecology and game management; and a wonderland for the types of outdoor recreation that were surging in popularity. During the mid-1960s, the movement for state acquisition of the islands coalesced around these attributes.[43]

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[42] Wisconsin Conservation Commission, Minutes, May 12 and November 10, 1950, in Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, WHS [hereafter CC Minutes, date]; John Borkenhagen to C.L. Harrington, June 5, 1935, and Paul J. Houfek, "A Report on The Apostle Islands of Lake Superior," May 1935, both in Box 453, Folder 38, WCD Files; Harold C. Jordahl, Jr., *A Unique Collection of Islands: The Influence of History, Politics, Policy and Planning on the Establishment of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* (Madison: Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1994), 101-103. Jordahl's 1994 report is an essential document of the history of state and federal acquisition of the islands. Jordahl worked in the Wisconsin Department of Resource Development and then assumed a position with the United States Department of the Interior. He played a key role in designation of the islands first as a state forest and then as a national lakeshore. His 860-page report is at once a primary source, a memoir, and a highly detailed, blow-by-blow administrative history of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

[43] CC Minutes, July 11, 1952.

How could state officials find so much to value in the Apostles, just two decades after NPS investigators described the islands as a logging- and fire-devastated wasteland? Certainly, the trained scientists of the WCD recognized the signs of logging. "The island was once covered with the finest trees the north woods could support," explained one pair of naturalists of Madeline Island. "Perhaps not a single giant among the white pines remains, but an occasional badly rotted stump furnishes the evidence of a former luxuriant growth." Even today, large stumps and fire scars are still evident on some of the islands, as well as the ruins of logging camps and industrial machinery. Nevertheless, observers valued the islands for their "natural condition." Wisconsin's chief forester, John Beale, described Stockton Island in 1956 as "an island almost in its natural condition; no fires have destroyed the forests. It has not been logged since 1915…" By this, Beale meant not the absence of human activity, but that people had not directly shaped forest regeneration. Stockton Island had no roads, no buildings save a few ruins, and no active forest management. As plans for public acquisition of the islands developed, the naturalness, or wildness, of the islands became a frequent topic of discussion. The prevailing ecological belief that forests inevitably and predictably matured from disturbance to a climax ecosystem increased apparent scientific value of the islands' "natural condition."[44]

Island forests might have regenerated without direct human interference, but human influence was far from absent. Past human activity shaped the rewilding of the islands in numerous ways. Colonizing plants like white birch and aspen thrived in the cutover and fire-

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[44] Tiffany and Tiffany, "One of the Apostles," 76; Swain and Winkler, "Forest and Disturbance History At Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," 3; Anderson, *et al*., *Basic Ecological and Recreational Resources Inventory of Sand Island*, 70; Wisconsin Legislative Council, Conservation Committee, Minutes, January 9, 1956, Box 453, Folder 39, WCD Files. On climax theory, see Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 235-52.

scarred islands. Maturing second-growth forests had a different composition than prior to logging. Hemlock and white pine served as two of the most important species in the nineteenth-century lumber trade in the islands. But these trees made up a much smaller part of the regenerating forests. Heavy deer browse and increased light levels after clear cutting and fire retarded hemlock regeneration. White pine seed sources often perished in the fires that followed logging. White pines in the Apostles were limited to a few isolated sandscapes and the areas protected from logging by lighthouse reserves. Red and sugar maple, in particular, benefited from the low regeneration rates of white pine and hemlock, and dominated the rewilding island forests. One of the important impacts of these changes was a lessening of landscape diversity—dense stands of hardwood replaced the former mosaic of hemlock, hardwoods, and pine. In some places, such as on Sand Island, changing forest types can be traced to specific human choices to clear fields or plant orchards. But on all the islands, the natural condition masked the ongoing role of past human action in the process of rewilding.[45]

The natural condition of the islands provided an important additional value: an unparalleled opportunity for scientific research. One ecologist, who conducted research on the island forests in the late 1950s, called the Apostles a "ready made experiment for the ecologist" because of their location, their isolation from each other and the mainland, and their different histories of fire, logging, deer browsing, and agriculture. In 1955, several members of the University of Wisconsin faculty surveyed Stockton Island, and noted its potential as a center for

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[45] Ahlgren and Ahlgren, "The Human Impact on Northern Forest Ecosystems," 39; E. W. Beals and Grant Cottam, "The Forest Vegetation of the Apostle Islands, Wisconsin," *Ecology* 41 (October 1960): 743-51; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island," 53; Albert M. Swain, "The Role of White Pine and Hemlock in the Forests of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Past, Present, and Future," in *Fifth Annual Research Conference, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*, ed. Merryll M. Bailey (Omaha: USDI/NPS Midwest Regional Office, 1983); Davis, *et al*., "3,000 Years of Abundant Hemlock in Upper Michigan," 22.

forest, entomological, and wildlife research, and suggested the establishment of a marine biology station to study Lake Superior. WCD officials also underscored the islands' scientific value. In 1953, the WCD had used Stockton Island as its base for the experimental release of the pine marten and black grouse, and planned other wildlife research, as well.[46]

WCD officials evaluating the islands, however, believed that the Apostles' greatest value lay in the opportunity for wilderness recreation. Visitors to the islands had long noted their scenic beauty, their red sandstone cliffs and beaches, and the opportunities for sport fishing and trolling. But as the outdoor recreation craze intensified in the 1950s, the Apostles took on a new value. They could provide a type of recreation not possible in most places. State deer ecologist Burton Dahlberg explained in 1955:

> The value of an undeveloped area where it is possible to get away from the hustle and bustle of modern living cannot be overestimated. There are very few places left in the Middle West that offer an opportunity to establish a natural area, where future generations may know the value of natural things. As human pressures increase the value of places like Stockton Island will increase proportionately. One of Stockton Island's greatest assets is its inaccessibility. The fact that a vacation on the island requires some planning and the possibility that one may be stranded for a few extra days makes it all the more desirable.

Dahlberg's statement—sent to the director of the WCD—is an important one. Although he did not use the term "wilderness," he was one of the first to directly employ wilderness rhetoric in calling for public acquisition of the islands. Dahlberg and others worried that logging and development might soon rob the islands of their wilderness value.[47]

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[46] Beals and Cottam, "The Forest Vegetation of the Apostle Islands," 743; "Report of the Committee Investigating Stockton Island, Ashland County, Wisconsin," 1955, Box 453, Folder 39, WCD Files; John A. Beale to Allen T. Edmunds, September 6, 1956, Box 426, Folder 7, WCD Files.

[47] Dahlberg to Voigt, May 17, 1955; see also, "Report of the Committee Investigating Stockton Island Ashland County Wisconsin," 3.

As WCD officials toured the rewilding islands, the national wilderness movement gathered steam. In the 1950s, wilderness advocates rallied around the defense of Echo Park in Colorado's Dinosaur National Monument, a wild and beautiful canyon at the confluence of the Green and Yampa Rivers, threatened by a federal dam proposal. Arguments based on the scientific and recreational value of wilderness emerged as key points in this battle. Wilderness advocates strategically appealed to the growing demand for outdoor recreation to build a national coalition against the dam project. The momentum generated by stopping the dam at Echo Park led to the submission of the first wilderness bill to Congress in 1956, and the eventual passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964. WCD managers who toured the islands in the mid-1950s did not specifically reference the Echo Park conflict or the national wilderness movement, but they employed the rhetoric used in these debates.[48]

For all these reasons—regenerating forests, scientific value, and most importantly wilderness recreation and the potential economic benefits of tourism—state officials began to plan for acquisition of the islands. In August, 1955, the Conservation Commission met in Bayfield, with the islands again on the agenda. The commissioners briefly discussed and then unanimously accepted a statement prepared by the WCD significantly titled "Policy on Acquisition of an 'Apostle Islands Wilderness Area.'" The policy statement called for the preservation of the islands' scenic, historical, plant, wildlife, and scientific resources. It encouraged further study of these resources and their potential, "especially for their specialized wilderness-type recreational values." WCD officials singled out Stockton, Oak, and Basswood

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[48] Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 220-26; Douglas W. Scott, *A Wilderness-Forever Future: A Short History of the Wilderness Preservation System* (Washington, DC: Pew Wilderness Center, 2001).

Islands for state acquisition. The estate of William F. Vilas still owned almost all of Stockton, while Ashland County had acquired title to most of Oak and Basswood in tax delinquency motions; both indicated their willingness to sell.[49]

The 1955 wilderness acquisition statement also highlighted the lack of funds available for purchase of the islands. "[A]lthough this acquisition program is most desirable, it is not immediately attainable and may be realized slowly because of already established commitments and priorities in the use of available funds." In 1955, Gaylord Nelson's ORAP program still lay six years in the future, and a chronic budget shortfall handcuffed the state's environmental programs—particularly land acquisition and state parks. This lack of funds clouded discussions of state purchase of the islands from the start. WCD officials recognized that money to purchase the islands likely required legislative action, and considered such action unlikely. WCD officials advocated wilderness management for Stockton Island in part because this required no additional funding for development.[50]

Despite the financial crunch, WCD administrators discovered a cost-effective method for the state to secure management authority on Stockton Island. Upon hearing of state interest in the islands, the trustees of the William F. Vilas estate contacted the WCD about a sale or leasing arrangement. After brief negotiations, the WCD agreed to a five-year lease for one thousand dollars per year—just over the annual tax bill—and also secured a purchase option should funds become available. The WCD had no plans for any kind of development on Stockton, instead

[49] CC Minutes, February 9 and August 12, 1955; Jordahl, 116-119.

[50] CC Minutes, April 1 (Committee on Land), February 9, June 10, and August 12, 1955.

retaining the island "as a wilderness area … open for limited recreational use," as well as for research and game management.[51]

Other islands proved more difficult to acquire. When discussions on state acquisition began in the early 1950s, residents of the Chequamegon Bay region expressed their support for the project. The Ashland and Bayfield County Boards and local chambers of commerce all promised to work with the state. The WCD vowed, as well, that it would develop its plans in conjunction with county governments. But as prospects for acquiring and managing the islands solidified, residents of the Chequamegon Bay began to express their displeasure with state action. After adopting the wilderness acquisition policy, WCD officials approached the Ashland County Board for purchase options on Oak, Basswood, and parts of Stockton Islands—this would allow the state to acquire the islands when funds became available. The Ashland County Board not only declined to offer the state a purchase option, it retained a real estate agent to help sell its island property to private developers.[52]

At issue was the classification of state lands, and the WCD's plans for development of the Apostle Islands—or, more accurately, a lack of any plan whatsoever. WCD officials considered three classifications for the islands: state forest, state park, or state forest designated as wilderness. Although the WCD administered state forests under the principle of multiple-use,

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[51] CC Minutes, February 9, 1955 and March 9, 1956 (Committee on Land); Ray M. Stroud to State Conservation Department, May 5, 1955, and L. P. Voigt to Conservation Commission, May 23, 1955, both in Box 453, Folder 39, WCD Files.

[52] G. E. Sprecher to L. P. Voigt, July 6, 1954, Merv Clough to Victor Wallin, October 13, 1954, and Ludwig Trammal to Vic C. Wallin, January 6, 1955, all in Folder 39, Box 453, WCD Files; CC Minutes, April 1, 1955 (Committee on Land) and December 14, 1956; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 121-22, 131; Minutes of February 12, 1956 Meeting of the County Board, Box 9, and Minutes of November 13, 14, 1956 Meeting of the County Board, Box 10, Ashland County Board of Supervisors, County Board Proceedings, 1914-1964, WHS [hereafter ACB Proceedings].

timber production served as the primary function of state forests. State parks, on the other hand, were primarily developed recreational sites with roads, picnic tables, flush toilets, concession stands, and other amenities. Areas qualified for parks on the basis of their scenery, plants and wildlife, or historical, geological, or archaeological value. Wilderness, in Wisconsin state terms, meant areas with little formal management and a primarily "natural" character. Wilderness designation within the state land system was therefore usually reserved for state forests, as state parks typically had too much development to qualify. In 1955, Wisconsin did not have a formally articulated wilderness policy, and recognized only two wilderness areas—portions of the Northern Highland and Flambeau River State Forests. Despite their history of logging, the Apostles remained in their "natural condition" and therefore qualified as wilderness. Debates over state acquisition of the Apostles revolved around the question of classification—some people wanted the islands declared a state park and developed as a tourist destination; others wanted the islands declared a forest and "unmanaged' as a wilderness area.[53]

Residents of the Chequamegon Bay region disapproved of the WCD's plans to administer the Apostles as a wilderness. Instead, they demanded that the WCD create a state park in the islands. A state park, argued newspaperman John B. Chapple of the *Ashland Daily Press* and Frank Dexter of the *Bayfield County Press*, would bring in more tourists, and generate more dollars, for the local economy. Kenneth Todd, chairman of the Ashland County Board, believed "it would not help the state, the county, or the islands if they are established as a pure wilderness area … there is already enough wilderness area in the north and that the need is for well-

[53] The purpose of state parks was to "preserve the outstanding scenic or historic places of state-wide significance for public recreation and educational uses." Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 91-101; E. J. Vanderwall to Ernest S. Griffith, November 30, 1948, Box 439, Folder 3, WCD Files; Wisconsin Legislative Reference Library, comp., *The Wisconsin Blue Book, 1958* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1958), 354-55.

developed state parks." Todd and other members of the county board also worried about the loss of potential tax revenue if the state acquired the islands; they wanted Ashland County land returned to tax-paying private ownership if it was not going to be developed as a park.[54]

What the residents of the Chequamegon Bay region wanted was a form of tourist development more in line with past uses of the islands. Ashland County official Clarence Day pinned his hopes on renewed interest in summer home development in the islands. John B. Chapple had long supported the creation of a park in the Apostles—he had played a prominent role in the national park proposal of 1929-1930. His ideas about the type of park he wanted had not changed. As before, he advocated a park based on Madeline Island, one that would recognize the historical importance and scenic beauty of the islands. Chapple's idea for a park included a historical museum and highlighted the beautiful beach on the northeastern side of Madeline Island. This type of park, Chapple and his colleagues believed, would lure tourists, as well as hotels, restaurants, and service stations to supply them. "[The] people in the Ashland area want something made of the islands so that they will be an attraction for tourists and the local people as well," explained Kenneth Todd. Residents of the Chequamegon Bay region did not believe that wilderness would provide any of these benefits.[55]

Despite the stiffening opposition, the state forged ahead with its plan for the Apostles. In March 1959, the Conservation Commission created Apostle Islands State Forest—formalizing the wilderness acquisition policy adopted in 1955. The forest included Stockton, Oak, and Basswood Islands. This action did not necessarily mean that the WCD would immediately

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[54] Wisconsin Legislative Council, Conservation Committee, Minutes, August 24, 1956, in Folder 39, Box 453, WCD Files; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 108, 119.

[55] Wisconsin Legislative Council, Conservation Committee, Minutes, August 24, 1956.

purchase land within the forest boundary. WCD officials exercised their option on Stockton Island. But Ashland County Board members were not pleased with the creation of the state forest, and they resolved not to sell County lands on Oak and Basswood Islands until the state demonstrated an acceptable development program for Stockton.[56]

The Ashland County Board's demands for development did not dissuade the WCD from managing Stockton Island as a wilderness. But what, exactly, did wilderness management mean? The state had no clear plan or policy, no infrastructure to manage the forest, count visitors, or assess visitors' needs. In the first several years after the creation of the state forest, the WCD's annual reports did not even mention the Apostles. But the publicity generated by the creation of the state forest lured visitors to Stockton Island, forcing the WCD into action. "There was an incident that appalled me," complained Molly Sulewsky, who visited Stockton Island in 1965. "The unsightly and unsanitary condition of a garbage dump about eight feet in circumference that was piled high with all kinds of refuse and tin cans and left uncovered…. One could tell that this rubbish dump had been there for a long time and not taken care of." The WCD cleaned up the eyesore, and over the next several years it built a dock and several pit toilets on the island. In 1966, the WCD periodically sent a representative to examine the island; he estimated that 4,200 visitors that year. Although Stockton Island had been titled a wilderness area, the practical meaning of this designation remained unclear.[57]

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[56] CC Minutes, January 9 and March 12, 1959; *Proceedings of the Ashland County Board of Supervisors, 1959-1960*, April 19, 1960, 50-51, ACB Proceedings.

[57] Molly Sulewsky to L. P. Voigt, September 13, 1965, D. J. Mackey to Mrs. Max W. Sulewsky, October 14, 1965, both in Folder 8, Box 633, WCD Files; D. J. Mackie to Elizabeth Hawkes, April 18, 1966, Folder 5, Box 451, WCD Files; Robert L. Steiro to Edward D. MacDonald, March 27, 1967, Folder 8, Box 815, WCD Files.

The purpose, if not the management, of wilderness in the Apostles crystallized in the 1960s. Planners for the state of Wisconsin envisioned the entire south shore of Lake Superior as a recreational landscape, with developed park facilities, scenic roads, beaches, public fishing grounds, and primitive areas all complementing each other to provide diverse recreational opportunities. State planners hoped to use this development to solve the state's recreational crisis and the northland's chronic economic woes. The WCD tried to respond to the Chequamegon Bay residents' demands by creating a state park at Big Bay, on the northeastern side of Madeline Island.[58] The department improved facilities at Amnicon Falls and Copper Falls State Parks, as well as at Brule River State Forest—all within sixty miles of Ashland. The state acquired land at Raspberry Bay, on the northern tip of the Bayfield Peninsula, for a boat landing to increase access to the Apostles. The WCD also tried to purchase some of the privately owned islands. State planners pictured wilderness recreation in the Apostles as a part of this regional plan. The WCD made repeated efforts to purchase Oak and Basswood Islands, but the Ashland County Board continued to reject these overtures.[59]

The recreational development plan of the 1960s represents the culmination of a trend toward increased state role in resource management. Rising environmental awareness, a greater faith in the power of centralized planning, and the crisis in outdoor recreation convinced state

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[58] Big Bay State Park has its own story. At the request of the supervisors of La Pointe Township (which included Madeline and all of the islands in Ashland County), the WCD established Big Bay State Park in 1963, with plans for a developed, 2,700 acre park featuring the popular beach. As the national lakeshore moved closer to designation, however, and the exclusion of Madeline from the proposal became clear, the prospects for private development of the island rose dramatically. This led Madeline Island residents to demand that the WCD scale back on its plans for the state park. Wealthy summer resident Theodore Gary led this opposition movement, and he made a series of extremely profitable real estate deals on the island in the 1960s, capitalizing on the rising land values. L.P. Voigt to Bernard Gehrmann, November 1, 1966, Box 633, Folder 9, WCD Files; Holzheuter, *Madeline Island and the Chequamegon Region*, 59; Madeline Island Historical Preservation Association, Inc., *On the Rock*, 79-80.

[59] Roman H. Koenings to James Crum, March 7, 1962, Folder 4, Box 441, WCD Files; CC Minutes, February 24, 1962, September 13, 1963, November 6, 1964.

officials that recreation provided the best use of Lake Superior's resources. They determined that they could achieve the goals of environmental protection as well as the economic benefits of tourism by devoting increasing acreage to recreation rather than other uses, such as logging or even private development. "There is every reason to believe," explained one WCD official of his agency's plans for the Apostles, "that the long-time gain … would be greater if the state of Wisconsin were to develop public recreation facilities than if the county-owned lands were to be sold to private individuals to get them on the tax roll." State planners pushed this logic one step further, delineating which parts of the landscape were appropriate for which types of recreational activity. As they had with rural zoning in the 1920s, state managers ordered and simplified the landscape to make management goals easier to achieve. And as was the case in the early twentieth century, nowhere was the state's campaign for simplification of resource use more clearly evident than in fisheries management.[60]

The collapse of the lake trout fishery prompted the state to take a more active role in managing the Lake Superior commercial fisheries. Here, however, state managers faced a more difficult task in balancing recreational consumption and commercial production. In the 1950s, as lake trout became harder and harder to catch, competition between sportsmen and commercial fishermen intensified. Sportsmen blamed commercial fishermen for destroying the lake trout fishery, and argued that recreation brought more money to the local economy. Commercial fishermen, on the other hand, blamed the lamprey invasion for the decline in lake trout, and believed that their economic needs should take precedence over the leisure-time activities of sportsmen. The Bayfield Trollers Association—formed in 1936 to promote the interests of

[60] Koenings to Crum, March 7, 1962.

charter boat owners and sportsmen—asked the Conservation Commission in 1950 to reserve an area in the Apostles for the exclusive use of sportsmen by prohibiting commercial nets. In lieu of state action, commercial and charter boat captains agreed to create such an area around North Twin Island. In 1959, with the lake trout all but gone, the Ashland Rod and Gun Club asked the commission to close all commercial fisheries except herring for at least five years. The following year, the Ashland County Board urged the WCD to prohibit commercial fishing within one mile of the Apostle Islands because it believed that sport fishing was more important and commercial fishing "has been detrimental to the interests of the amateur fishermen and is therefore harmful to the area." In 1962, the state closed the commercial trout fishery, but allowed continued sport fishing for the species.[61]

Closing the fishery paid quick dividends—restoration of the Lake Superior lake trout stands as one of the great success stories of modern fisheries management. As the lamprey infestation worsened on the eastern Great Lakes in the 1940s and 1950s, lake states teamed with the federal government and Canada on an aggressive research and control program. This program focused on Lake Superior, which held the last viable population of lake trout. Still, the lamprey invasion continued; a weir constructed for research purposes on the Brule River caught 22,478 lamprey on their way upriver to spawn in 1961, the year the parasite numbers reached their zenith and lake trout their nadir. Researchers experimented with variety of control techniques, eventually settling on a combination of lampricide (poison that selectively killed

[61] Sport fishermen were required to get a permit to fish for lake trout—a first for the outlying waters of Lake Superior, and after 1962 they were required to report their trout catch. Brian Belonger, "Lake Trout Sport Fishing in the Wisconsin Waters of Lake Superior" (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish, Game and Enforcement, Management Report no. 20, 1969); Albrecht, ed., *The Chequamegon Bay Apostle Islands Fishery*, 25; CC Minutes, June 9-10, 1950, September 12, 1952, and May 14, 1959; Minutes of the November 15 and 16, 1960 Meeting of the County Board, Box 10, ACB Proceedings.

lamprey larvae) and electronic barriers to restrict access to spawning streams. State fisheries experts combined lamprey control with massive stocking of lake trout yearlings. These treatments brought dramatic results, and the number of lampreys caught on rivers like the Brule plummeted while lake trout numbers rose steadily. Fisheries experts saw signs of recovery by 1965, and by 1970, Lake Superior lake trout stocks had returned to their pre-lamprey levels.[62]

Rebounding lake trout stocks forced state managers to balance sport and commercial fishing. When the state reopened the trout fishery 1968, it did so with a new set of priorities. Planners expected a resurgent sport fishery—especially trolling for lake trout—to play an essential role the recreational economy. State authorities implemented a management technique known as "limited entry," strictly regulating the number of commercial fishermen allowed on Lake Superior and the amount of trout each fisherman could catch. Fifty to sixty fishermen had permits to fish the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior in the 1950s and 1960s, but by 1971 this number had dropped to twenty-one. The state achieved this reduction by issuing licenses only to those who qualified as full-time fishermen (based on number of days spent fishing and the value of equipment). Although bound by bag limits and other regulations, sport fishermen clearly enjoyed first priority. The WCD explained its position as an attempt to find "the greatest good recreationally, aesthetically, and economically." This meant "precedence in management is given to sport fishing, since it provides a greater benefit." As they had in allocating other types of resources, planners determined that recreational consumption rather than commercial production

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[62] Hansen, *et al*., "Lake Trout Populations in Lake Superior," 153, 159-64; Ronald J. Poff, "Lake Superior Fisheries," (Madison: State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1972); Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror*, 60-63, 78; *Family-managed Commercial Fishing*, 85; Smith, Tibbles, and Johnson, *Control of the Sea Lamprey in Lake Superior*, 54; Pycha and King, *Changes in the Lake Trout Population of Southern Lake Superior*, 3.

provided the best chance for both protecting trout and stabilizing the economy. This was a very different perspective on production and consumption than had prevailed in the Apostle Islands for the previous century. The days of the multivalent economy, where tourism stood as but one part of a complex and interconnected economic strategy, had disappeared.[63]

The introduction of a sport salmon fishery to Lake Superior demonstrates the new priority of sport fishing and recreation. Fisheries biologists recognized that the lamprey, smelt, and other exotic species had already disrupted predator-prey sequences; the exotic alewife, in particular, lacked natural predators and threatened to explode in population. With the new priority on sport fishing, this situation presented an opportunity as much as a crisis: state fisheries experts in Michigan and Wisconsin introduced yet another exotic species, one that they expected to bolster the trolling industry. Wisconsin's fisheries managers had tried to introduce several species of salmon in the late nineteenth century, but without success. They renewed their attempts in the late 1960s, introducing chinook and coho salmon to both Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. Both species established self-perpetuating populations in lake Superior and became important prize fish for the resurgent sport fishing industry in Bayfield. The decision to introduce yet another exotic species—after the ecological risks of such actions were well

[63] State management of the lake trout fisheries grew more complicated after 1972, when the Wisconsin Supreme Court held in *State v. Gurnoe* that Ojibwe Indians had a treaty-guaranteed right to fish in the waters adjacent to their reservation free of state regulation. This meant that lake trout and other fish had to be divided still further, among sport, commercial, and Indian fishermen. *Recreational Potential of the Lake Superior South Shore Area* (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Resource Development, 1964), 82; Hansen, "Lake Trout Populations in Lakes Superior," 162; CC Minutes, January 12, 1968; Albrecht, ed., *The Chequamegon Bay Apostle Islands Fishery*, 23-24; John G. Brasch, "Lake Superior Fisheries Management," n.d., (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources), 2, 11-13; *Department of Natural Resources, State of Wisconsin, 1967-69 Biennial Report* (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1969), 17; Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror*, 76-77, 104-109.

known—testifies to the commitment to recreational development. Northern Wisconsin—and the Apostle Islands in particular—had become almost exclusively a recreational landscape.[64]

When federal officials again considered creating a national park in the Apostle Islands in the 1960s, they found a very different situation than they had earlier in the century. In the 1920s, the islands had supported a diverse economy, of which tourism represented but a single strand. By 1960, the islands were used almost exclusively for recreation. This transformation derived from changing island environments, growing state authority, and shifting attitudes about outdoor recreation. Changing fish and deer populations at once created the coveted outdoor recreation activities and made the diversified island economy untenable. But policy decisions made by an increasingly powerful state also helped to transform the islands into a recreational landscape. The NPS representatives who visited the islands in the 1960s found this new landscape to their liking.

Local Demands, National Needs, and the Creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

During the 1960s, the movement to create a national park or national lakeshore in the Apostles slowly gained momentum. By this time, no one doubted that the islands deserved recognition for their wild and primitive character. But as the park moved closer to designation, conflict over the proper balance among nature, tourism, and state authority polarized. Local opposition to the park narrowed, while at the same time national interest in the proposal broadened. The promised economic benefits of a national park won the support of many of those

[64] The alewife remains a potential problem on Lake Michigan, where it makes up an unnaturally large percentage of the lake's forage fish. The cold waters of Lake Superior have helped to deter the establishment of a large population. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, "Fishing Wisconsin's Great Lakes for Trout and Salmon," (Madison: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1974); Becker, *Fishes of Wisconsin*, 265, 304-307, 312; Kuchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror*, 77; CC Minutes, January 9, 1969.

who had opposed wilderness management and Apostle Islands State Forest. Only the people most directly affected by the park proposal—island property owners and residents of the Red Cliff and Bad River Reservations—maintained their opposition. On the other hand, nationwide interest and support widened as national leaders and federal officials responded to demands for outdoor recreation and nature protection.

The crisis in outdoor recreation that had spurred state acquisition of the Apostle Islands motivated the federal government's interest in the area, as well. In 1958, Congress created the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC); the commission published its report, *Outdoor Recreation for America*, in 1963. Although the report did not specifically mention the Apostles or the Chequamegon Bay region, it highlighted the importance of this type of place in meeting the nation's surging recreational needs. The report emphasized the value of water for recreational activity. "Most people seeking outdoor recreation want water—to sit by, to swim and to fish in, to ski across, to dive under, and to run their boats over…. Camping, picnicking, and hiking … are more attractive near water sites." Access to beaches, lakes, and other sites of water-based recreation remained far below demand; the problem was particularly acute for ocean and Great Lakes shorelines. These areas had been neglected as a public resource, and left open to private acquisition. Consequently, only a small percent of shoreline remained in public ownership. "Immediate action should be taken by Federal, State, and local governments to acquire additional beach and shoreline areas," the report recommended.[65]

The National Park Service developed a particular interest in the Great Lakes shorelines during the 1960s. Responding to the same anxiety as the ORRRC, the Park Service conducted a

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[65] Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, *Outdoor Recreation for America*, 4, 70, 173-79.

series of studies on the national coastlines in the late 1950s. In 1959, the NPS published *Our Fourth Shore: Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey*. Like the ORRRC report, *Our Fourth Shore* underscored the need for public acquisition of Great Lakes shoreline to satisfy the underserved recreational needs of midwestern cities. The report identified the Bayfield Peninsula, Stockton Island, the Brule River, and the Bad River/Kakagon Sloughs (marshes on the southern edge of the Chequamegon Bay) as areas of potential significance. At the same time, the NPS found itself under attack in its role as the guardian of the nation's recreational resources. The ORRRC was staffed primarily with officials from the rival U.S. Forest Service, and resulted in the creation of another agency that further undermined NPS authority in recreation management, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. A flurry of parks emerged from this bureaucratic competition. The shoreline surveys alone led to the designation of twelve new parks between 1963 and 1972, including Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961 and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (on Lake Superior) and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (on Lake Michigan) in 1966. These areas, established for the recreational opportunities they provided as well as for nature protection, became important models for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.[66]

When Wisconsin governor Gaylord Nelson approached Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall in 1962 with the idea of creating a national recreation area in the Chequamegon Bay, then, he found a warm reception. Nelson's plans for recreational development in northern Wisconsin were proceeding, but he recognized the opportunity to significantly increase the scale of the project by drawing in the federal government. The possibility of including the Bad River and

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[66] United States Department of the Interior, *Our Fourth Shore: Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1959); Runte, *National Parks*, 225-28; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 205-206; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 62-64.

Kakagon Sloughs—on the Bad River Reservation—also attracted the interest of the Interior Department. On May 10, 1962, the Bad River Tribal Council passed a resolution asking the secretary of the interior to establish a national shoreline recreational area on a part of their reservation. Tribal leaders hoped that such a designation would both provide economic opportunity for the chronically depressed reservation as well as help protect "the natural resources, the ancient customs and culture of our reservation." Including reservation lands in any park proposal required the involvement of the federal government.[67]

The proposal for a national recreation area in the Chequamegon Bay area also provided an opportunity to put the conservation philosophy of Secretary Udall and President John F. Kennedy into practice. Kennedy Democrats viewed the management of human and natural resources as closely related concerns, and believed that the federal government should play a central role in maximizing both sets of resources. A national recreation area in the Apostles could provide both economic revitalization and nature protection, and fit with this philosophy—later called "New Conservation." In 1963, Kennedy traveled to Ashland as a part of a national conservation tour, and he visited the Apostles and discussed the project in exactly these terms. "This section of Wisconsin, like other sections of the United States, which in the past depended upon a few natural resources, has known what economic distress can do when those resources are exhausted or when indifference lays them waste…. If promptly developed, recreational activities and new national park, forest, and recreation areas can bolster your economy and provide pleasure for millions of people in the days to come." Kennedy highlighted the economic

[67] Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 234-35; Bad River Tribal Council, Resolution no. 1326, May 10, 1962, Appendix A in North Central Field Committee, *Proposed Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield and Ashland Counties, Wisconsin* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, 1965), [hereafter, 1965 AINL Working Proposal].

implications of nature protection in the Apostles. "Our goal," the president explained in an address in Duluth, Minnesota on the same trip, "is the full employment of both the natural and human resources which this area still possess in abundance." The logic for nature protection grew more persuasive, too, as the environmental movement gained steam in the 1960s.[68]

With wide backing, the Interior Department planners assembled a formal proposal for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. In 1964, Secretary Udall deputized a task force to work on the project, which included representatives from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Recreation, the state of Wisconsin, the tribal councils of the Bad River and Red Cliff Reservations, and several other agencies. The resulting proposal stated three primary goals: preserving a "splendid remnant" of the Superior shore; improving conditions on the Bad River and Red Cliff Reservations; and bolstering the local economy through tourism. The proposal envisioned a lakeshore comprised of three separate units. The Apostle Islands Unit, "the core about which the entire proposal revolves," would be acquired and "preserved as wild natural areas" with only limited facilities. Madeline Island would be excluded entirely. (Specific aspects of the proposal will be discussed in detail in the final chapter.) The Red Cliff Unit would stretch around the perimeter of the Bayfield Peninsula; all but the westernmost portion of this unit lay within the Red Cliff Reservation. This unit would receive the most development, with a scenic road, park headquarters, and extensive picnicking and docking facilities. The Kakagon-Bad River Sloughs Unit included the marshlands and coastline of the Bad River Reservation, which

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[68] John F. Kennedy, "Remarks of President John F. Kennedy, Ashland Wisconsin, September 24, 1963," Appendix B in 1965 AINL Working Proposal, and "Special Address by the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, at the University of Minnesota, Duluth," in *Land and People Conference: Northern Great Lakes Region, Official Proceedings, Duluth, Minnesota, September 24-25, 1963* (Milwaukee, WI: United States Department of Agriculture, 1963), 1-7; Huffman, *Protectors of the Land and Water*, 33; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 255.

would receive a ranger station, docking facilities, and other facilities, with strict controls on boat access to preserve the wild character of the marsh. In addition, the proposal called for preferential hiring of the region's Native American residents. In 1965, Gaylord Nelson—elected to the Senate in 1962—introduced the proposal to Congress. Although slowed for several years by bureaucratic scuffling within the Interior Department, in 1967 President Lyndon Johnson asked Congress to create the national lakeshore.[69]

The decision to propose a national lakeshore rather than a national park was an important one. From the time that Nelson brought the Apostles proposal to the federal government, he had advocated the creation of a recreation area rather than a park. Lakeshore, as opposed to park, status had two advantages. First, it fit well with the increased national demands for recreational areas and the Park Service's attempts to meet this need. Second, the traditional patterns of hunting, fishing, and trapping carried on by the white and Indian residents of the region could continue in a lakeshore, but not in a park. Protection of hunting and fishing rights was an essential component of the proposal for the Ojibwe.[70]

Decisions about where to draw the lakeshore boundaries proved far more contentious. Planners decided to include within the lakeshore boundary the summer colonies on Sand Island and Little Sand Bay, but to exclude Madeline Island. Madeline was left out of the park because of its extensive road system, wealthy and developed summer homes, high property values, permanent population, and the presence of Big Bay State Park. Lakeshore planners considered

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[69] Jordahl attributes the delays in developing the proposal to a number of factors, including competition between the NPS and the Bureau or Recreation, the intricacies of planning for a national park within reservation boundaries, and the assassination of President Kennedy. North Central Field Committee, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: A Proposal* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, 1965), 5; 1965 AINL Working Proposal, 65-77; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 258-59, 405-08.

[70] Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 235, 293-97.

excluding Sand Island and Little Sand Bay entirely or including them but using conservation easements or zoning ordinances to limit development. They decided, instead, to acquire these two areas while offering landowners the option of leasing their land back from the government. This type of leasing arrangement was the traditional way that the NPS treated the purchase or condemnation of privately owned lands. Madeline Island had served as the centerpiece of the first park proposal in 1929; its exclusion signifies how differently planners envisioned the lakeshore in the 1960s.[71]

Between 1967 and 1970, the House and the Senate each held two sets of hearings on the Apostle Islands proposal, producing almost one thousand pages of testimony. In these hearings, concerns about the proposal crystallized. Almost no one doubted the wildness of the islands, or their value as a wilderness landscape. Even the people who opposed the project based their arguments on the islands' wildness. Concerns over the proposal fractured along geographic lines, and the debates assumed the local/extra-local polarization typical of federal nature protection efforts.[72] A narrowly defined group of locals—mostly those who owned land within the proposed lakeshore—maintained a stiff opposition in the face of growing national support for the project. At issue, once again, was the proper relationship among nature, tourism, and state authority. The growing opposition of the Red Cliff and Bad River Ojibwe bands further complicated debates over the proposal. As the hearings progressed, Indian support for the lakeshore evaporated. More than any of the other concerns, Indian opposition threatened to derail the entire project.

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[71] 1965 AINL Working Proposal, 98-99.

[72] See, for example, Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*; Warren, *The Hunters' Game*; Robert W. Righter, *Crucible for Conservation: The Creation of Grand Teton National Park* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982).

Significantly, even the opponents of the lakeshore agreed that wildness served as the islands' greatest attribute. Indeed, they invoked this wildness in their arguments against the park. They believed that the rewilding of the islands had occurred because of deliberate human choices—their own choices. "Who has been conserving this land?" demanded a Sand Island landowner. "We have." Lakeshore designation would attract more visitors, increase pressure for development, and ruin the islands' wild character and beauty. "I see but one eventual outcome for all of these grandiose plans for this area," explained one opponent. "Tourist facilities and marinas will mar the untouched islands, and make them more accessible for the great influx of the random vacationing populace, many of whom will have no regard for this country." That the islands deserved recognition for their beauty and wildness was never in doubt.[73]

Indeed, some people argued that the islands and the lake that surrounded them were *too* wild for consideration as a lakeshore. Many of the people who testified, especially commercial fishermen and their children, believed that bringing large numbers of tourists to the islands was asking for trouble. "The main thing that concerns me about this national park is the safety involved," stated one lakeshore opponent. "Lake Superior, its waves are over 25 feet high and I have seen many people, a lot of casualties … you get novice and laymen people out in the lake in 16- ad 20-foot boats and they are nothing but trouble." Fishermen Bob Hokenson shared this view. "I've been caught in plenty of [storms] and even did a little praying at times with bigger boats in the 40 ft. class." Sand Island landowner Carl Dahl's father had drowned in a Superior

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[73] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., March 17, 1969 [hereafter, 1969 Senate Hearings], 84; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation*, 90th Cong., 1st sess., May 9, June 1-2, 1967 [hereafter, 1967 Senate Hearings], 168.

storm, a fact that he made clear in a letter to the House subcommittee. If Harold Dahl, an experienced fishermen, had succumbed to the violent and wild lake, how well could untrained and unsuspecting tourists possibly fare?[74]

What really bothered landowners within the lakeshore boundary, however, was simply their belief that the federal government was unfairly taking their land. Almost all of the opponents of proposal owned land within the lakeshore. Over one hundred landowners banded together to form the South Shore Property Owners Association, a group determined to fight against the project. Others joined the Apostle Islands Residents' Committee. All of them regarded the proposal as a contest between locals and outsiders for control of lakeshore. "It seems to me that the southern half of the State should take care of its own responsibilities and let the northerners do likewise," complained one property owner. Opponents of the park continued to lament the potential loss to the local tax base and presence of federal agencies that they saw as expanding far beyond appropriate boundaries. Arthur Meirotto asserted: "As chairman of the town of Russell [Bayfield County], I oppose the proposed national lakeshore park. The federal government already owns some 250,000 acres of national forest in Bayfield County…. When and where will this land acquisition stop?" The only national organization to oppose the lakeshore was the American Landowners Association, which protested the attack on private property rights. This group—as well as those who faced losing their land—believed that the government condemnation of private property violated fundamental American principles. The proposed options to provide twenty-five year or lifetime leases to property owners mollified

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[74] 1967 Senate Hearings, 35; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Hearings before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., August 19, 1969 [hereafter, 1969 House Hearings], 156, 159.

almost no one. The NPS faced a bitter struggle to acquire land from resistant owners for well over a decade after the designation of the lakeshore in 1970.[75]

Sand Island landowners expressed particularly strong opposition to the proposal. At the heart of their complaints was the fact that Madeline Island had been excluded from the park, while Sand Islanders faced the prospect of losing land that had been in their families for decades. "Now Madeline Island has a lot of estates, and fine roads… but to us, Sand Island is just as important," explained island land owner Samuel Jensch. "We would like Sand Island to be excluded." It seemed to the Sand Islanders that the reason for this unfair treatment was class: Madeline Island's wealthy summer residents were receiving special treatment. "The people with the money can buy anything they want regardless of the little guys [sic.] feelings," complained David Dahl. "This is so with Senator Nelson and Mr. Gary on Madeline Island. They are going to get what they want no matter how they do it."[76]

Many of the islanders believed that history should exclude Sand Island from the lakeshore. One after another, the descendents of the men and women who settled on Sand Island related their family histories to the congressional committees. "For three generations my ancestors lived and made their living on the island as commercial fishermen and farmers," explained Fred Hansen's daughter. Howard Palm believed that although the lumberjacks, fishermen, and farmers had left the island, their descendants should be allowed to remain.

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[75] Some of the property owners within the boundaries did support the park proposal, but they were very much in the minority. 1967 Senate Hearings, 45-59, 83-87, 158, 171; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Hearings before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation*, 91st Cong., 2nd sess., March 23, 24 and June 3, 1970 [hereafter, 1970 House Hearings], 322.

[76] 1967 Senate Hearings, 39, 65-69, 273; 1969 Senate Hearings, 131; 1969 House Hearings, 181; 1970 House Hearings, 293.

> At one time there was a thriving community on Sand Island comprised of lumbermen, farmers and fishermen who resided there the year round…. A few years ago the fishing industry had serious setbacks due to the invasion of Lake Superior by the lamprey. As a result the remaining fishermen and farmers on the island were forced to leave for other employment. However, their homes and cleared land for farming still remain, and the people who were forced to leave continue to maintain their homes for summer use for themselves, their children and grandchildren.

Palm hoped to convince the Senate subcommittee that Sand Island had too much history to be included in the national lakeshore. He was right to raise this concern. As we shall see in the next chapter, NPS management policies for the islands often had the impact of erasing human history from places like Sand Island.[77]

Most other residents of the Chequamegon Bay region—those who did not own land within the lakeshore boundary—enthusiastically supported the lakeshore. Even the previously recalcitrant members of the Ashland County Board passed a resolution in favor of the project. Kenneth Todd, a vigorous opponent of the state's acquisition of Ashland County property on Oak Island, had a very different reaction to the national lakeshore. Ashland County could bear the loss of taxable lands, Todd argued, because "the benefits that would be created by the establishment of the park would more than offset the loss in revenue there." The park would bring economic development in the form of gas stations, motels, and marinas. Indeed, the proposal called for the exact type of recreational development that Todd and others had demanded in their conflict with state authorities over land classification in the 1950s. The proposal included a scenic road along the mainland peninsula, a lodge on Sand Island, and other developments. Harry Jardine, president of the South Shore Scenic Drive Association, believed that the lakeshore was "one of the best things that could ever happen to the south shore and the

[77] 1969 Senate Hearings, 129, 133.

whole area" because of the traffic it would bring to local businesses. The Bayfield County Board also supported the park, although it urged that privately held lands be deleted from the proposal. John B. Chapple, who had advocated the creation of a state park rather than a state forest, strongly supported the national lakeshore. Chapple estimated that three-quarters of the residents of the Chequamegon Bay agreed with him. Opposition to the national lakeshore, therefore, was far more narrow than had been opposition to Wisconsin's proposals for wilderness management in the islands.[78]

National conservation groups lined up in favor of the proposal. The National Parks Association, the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the Izaak Walton League, the National Wildlife Foundation, and several other national organizations sent representatives to testify at the hearings. Sigurd Olsen, president of the Wilderness Society in the 1960s, grew up in Ashland and knew the islands well. "Here is a great opportunity to preserve this magnificent region for the enjoyment of untold millions of this generation and generations to come. The alternative is to see commercialism take over and destroy what is still intact, barring the public from its enjoyment." For Olson—not surprisingly—the islands' wild and primitive character provided a more powerful incentive for designation than did the economic stimulation that the lakeshore would provide. In fact, he recommended amending the proposal to designate the islands as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other environmental organizations also made this suggestion, and opposed the mainland scenic road and island lodges. The emergence of wilderness management in the islands will be discussed in the next chapter.[79]

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[78] 1967 Senate Hearings, 93, 133-34; 1969 House Hearings, 26, 142.

[79] 1969 House Hearings, 171-72.

A broad array of other local, regional, and national organizations endorsed the lakeshore proposal. Gaylord Nelson placed in the record of each congressional hearing a list of the national and local groups that supported the project. The list included 37 business organizations, 17 civic organizations, 12 national organizations (including environmental groups), 16 farm organizations, 2 labor organizations, six regional organizations, 28 newspapers, 12 governmental organizations, and 50 conservation clubs. The proposal to create Apostle Islands National Lakeshore enjoyed broad support; nature protection combined with economic stimulation is a difficult combination to oppose.[80]

One group of people stood outside the frame of the debate on economics and wilderness: the members of the Red Cliff and Bad River bands. Initially, both bands supported the lakeshore. Indeed, Gaylord Nelson's decision to approach Stewart Udall with the proposal for a national recreation area stemmed in part from the 1962 resolution passed by the Bad River Tribal Council in support of the idea. Both the reservations lagged far behind other parts of the area in a variety of economic and social indicators, such as employment, income, education, housing quality, and health standards. Improving these conditions remained an essential goal of the lakeshore project. State and federal planners hoped that the lakeshore would prompt coordinated resource management, celebrate Ojibwe cultural practices, and revitalize the reservation economies. Federal planners had spent a good deal of time negotiating complicated leasing arrangements that met the needs of both the NPS and the Ojibwe bands. The proposal called for preferential hiring for Indian residents of the region, and included a series of measures aimed at protecting

[80] *Ibid*., 16-19.

Ojibwe treaty rights and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, both bands expressed mounting opposition to the lakeshore proposal as the hearings over the lakeshore progressed.[81]

Concerns about the protection of hunting and fishing rights stimulated Ojibwe opposition to the lakeshore. In the 1950s, the boom in outdoor recreation sent record numbers of non-Indian hunters and fishermen into the North Woods; WCD wardens intensified the regulation of hunting and fishing in the area. Conflict between Ojibwe and state officials over hunting and fishing rights heightened, with the Bad River Reservation at the center of the dispute. In 1959, the Bad River Tribal Council issued a "declaration of war" against the WCD over the state's refusal to recognize their treaty rights, forbidding state wardens from entering tribal land. In 1965, the tribal council passed a resolution opposing the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The resolution accused the federal government of failing to protect the band's treaty rights, and labeled the lakeshore proposal "another step by the Government to acquire Indian lands and destroy Indian hunting, fishing, and gathering" rights. Tensions lessened slightly in early 1967, when Wisconsin Attorney General Bronson LaFollette ruled that state hunting and fishing laws did not apply on reservation lands. The conservative WCD, however, ignored this decision, and continued to arrest Bad River band members for on-reservation game violations. The Bad River council maintained its opposition to the lakeshore.[82]

Concerns about treaty rights prompted a more general distrust of federal motives, and Indian support for the lakeshore eroded further. Ojibwe doubted that they would ever see the

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[81] 1967 Senate Hearings, 2-5; Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 149, 168; Aguar, Jyring, & Whiteman—Planning Associates, *Tourist and Recreational Resources: Red Cliff Indian Reservation, Wisconsin* (Duluth, MN: U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1965); Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 509-17.

[82] 1967 Senate Hearings, 75-77, 102-103; Satz, *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, 89; Larry Nesper, *The Walleye War: The Struggle for Ojibwe Spearfishing and Treaty Rights* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 52-53.

economic benefits offered by the federal planners. "[The] promises that they are making us now that are supposed to be for us in this national park, and they are promises, will they ever be fulfilled?" wondered Red Cliff member Idile Duffy. "We have waited over 100 years and not one of the other promises have ever been fulfilled. How can you people ask us to accept your promises again?" Of the preferential hiring clauses, for example, the Indians worried that few of their young men and women would be deemed qualified for Park Service jobs. Although not all of the Ojibwe who testified at the hearings opposed the bill, most tribal leaders spoke against it. Red Cliff tribal chairman Philip Gordon called the proposal "more of the paternalistic garbage that the Federal Government has fed to the Indians for far too many years."[83]

Distrust of federal motives and the renewed hunting and fishing controversy took place within the context of rising national awareness of Indian rights. Treaty issues linked Indian claims and the civil rights movement. Disputes about treaty rights occurred not just in Wisconsin, but across the nation. Vine DeLoria, Jr., published his manifesto, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, in 1969. And while the House of Representatives held hearings that focused on Indian opposition to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970, Indian activists occupied Alcatraz Island to protest the history of federal mistreatment of Native Americans. Federal plans for acquisition of the Bad River and Red Cliff Reservations, therefore, struck a tender nerve. Reservation councils around the country and several national Indian organizations opposed the lakeshore proposal.[84]

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[83] 1967 Senate Hearings, 226, 245; 1969 House Hearings, 49.

[84] 1970 House Hearings, 305-306; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 556-67; 596-97; Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: MacMillan, 1969).

In 1970, the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation spent three days in contentious debate over inclusion of Indian lands in the lakeshore. Mounting Indian opposition imperiled the entire project. Senator Nelson worked hard to salvage the bill, negotiating with the tribal councils and with the National Congress of the American Indian on amendments that might win Indian support. Despite amendments to strengthen the proposal's protection of treaty rights, to affirm preferential hiring status, and to bolster tribal control of reservation lands acquired by the federal government, both the Bad River and Red Cliff Bands maintained their opposition. Members of the subcommittee began to consider the possibility of deleting all Indian lands from the proposal. NPS officials, however, strongly opposed this option; they wanted both the Kakagon/Bad River Sloughs and the Red Cliff Unit included in the park.[85]

In the end, Indian opposition did not prevent the creation of the lakeshore, but it did change the boundaries of the project significantly. Wayne Aspinall, chair of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, recognized that the lakeshore stood little chance of approval if the Ojibwe maintained their opposition. "If you get this bill to the floor with the Indians of the United States against it, you are not going to pass it. Let us just be realistic." Instead, Aspinall favored deleting Indian lands from the proposal. The resulting compromise did just that. All Indian lands—whether held tribally or individually—were excluded from the lakeshore, except for two small plots on the Bayfield Peninsula. The Bad River Unit was deleted entirely, and the Red Cliff Unit reduced in size to cover just fifteen miles of shoreline on the western edge of the peninsula. This mainland portion of the lakeshore did include lands within the reservation boundary that had long been alienated from Indian ownership—the legacy of the

[85] 1970 House Hearings, 343-44; 396, 413. See also, Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 569-598.

quick sale of reservation timber to the Red Cliff Logging Company at the turn of the century. Long Island was deleted from the proposal, too, because of its proximity to the Bad River Reservation and its distance from the other islands. In its new form, the proposal moved ahead quickly. The House approved the lakeshore on September 11, 1970, and just two weeks later, on September 26, President Richard Nixon signed the bill creating Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.[86]

The most remarkable element of the park formation process was how little question remained about the wildness of the islands. Although federal planners were well aware of the failed park proposal of the 1930s, this history did not deter the plans of the 1960s. Logging camps, fire scars, farm fields, and fishing shacks still dotted the Apostles, unmistakable evidence of islands' history of resource extraction. But the process of rewilding had returned to the islands their primitive character and elevated their recreational value. Only a small minority of landowners opposed the park, and even they did not dispute the islands' value as wilderness. The combined logic of nature protection and economic stimulation garnered overwhelming support for the park, both from around the Chequamegon Bay and across the country. Although the history of the islands did not inhibit lakeshore designation, managing a rewilding landscape—with its intertwined natural and cultural elements—proved far more difficult.

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[86] 1970 House Hearings, 431; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 588-97; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Establishment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in the State of Wisconsin and for Other Purposes*, 91st Cong., 2d sess., 1970, H. Rep. 91-1230.

CHAPTER SEVEN
***
Conclusion:
The Rewilding Dilemma

With the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970, the National Park Service inherited a rich and provocative landscape. The islands boasted lonely beaches, mysterious sea caves, majestic cliffs, and bays that could protect ships small and large from the powerful moods of Lake Superior. Island forests contained some of the best remnant stands of old growth forest in the western Great Lakes. Lighthouses guarded six of the islands; although automated beacons had replaced the keepers and their families, the romantic buildings and manicured lawns still served as among the biggest tourist attractions in the region.

Creating the lakeshore, however, proved far easier than managing it. For fifteen years after designation, the NPS engaged in acrimonious disputes with private property owners for control of the land within the lakeshore, and problems did not cease when the Park Service secured control of the islands. The NPS has struggled to administer the rewilding landscapes of the Apostles. Since 1977, the Park Service has managed the islands as wilderness, and used wilderness management to reorder both natural and cultural the landscapes of the Apostle Islands. The National Park Service has promoted some activities at the expense of others, with the goal of creating a landscape valued for its recreational and ecological qualities.

At the root of the Park Service's struggle to manage rewilding environments like those of the Apostles is a tension between nature and history. Both NPS tradition and modern policy

segregate the management of natural and cultural resources—even though in the Apostles and other similar places, the two resources mingle and overlap. The American wilderness ideal prompts this segregation by defining and valuing wilderness as a place without human intrusion, and therefore a place without history. The divide between nature and history is further reinforced by the demands of the modern bureaucratic state for simple, ordered, easily managed landscapes. Places like the Apostles, the product of interconnected natural and cultural processes, complicate both the wilderness ideal and the Park Service's attempt to manage for that ideal.

State power and ecological succession make a potent team. Together, they have remade the Apostle Islands. Island forests have regenerated; the signs of the cutover wasteland that so disturbed NPS representatives in the early 1930s are very difficult to find. The islands have regained their wild and primitive character. Once the site of logging, fishing, and other extractive activity, tourism alone remains as a viable economy in the islands. Kayaks and sailboats have replaced fishing tugs on the water and hikers have replaced lumberjacks in the woods. This transformation, however, has had important consequences. The rewilding of the Apostles—and subsequent wilderness management—has drawn a stark boundary between the seemingly pristine present and the human occupied past.

The Battle for Sand Island

Before NPS officials could take formal steps toward managing Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (AINL), they had to acquire the property of landowners often bitterly opposed to the park's agenda. Private citizens owned approximately 60% of the 42,000 acres of land included within the lakeshore in 1970. These lands contained 145 improvements, including 11 year-round

residences, 97 seasonal cottages, 8 rental cottages, and 25 docks. Some owners willingly sold their lands. Others fought what they perceived as an unfair land taking in the courts. The state of Wisconsin also owned nearly seventeen thousand acres within the lakeshore. The complicated process of land acquisition can be divided into three episodes: the battle for Sand Island, the transfer of state lands, and the addition of Long Island to the park. With each new acquisition, the NPS consolidated its control over the islands. But each of these acquisitions carried an internal logic that pushed NPS managers to elevate nature protection over other possible activities in the islands.[1]

In the first planning document created for the new park in 1971, AINL officials announced their intention to move ahead with land purchases as quickly as possible. This would open the islands to immediate public use, and conformed to emerging Park Service policy on land acquisition. Until the 1960s, Congress had carved most national parks out of lands already in public ownership. The creation of Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961, however, signaled a change in this practice; new parks often required the federal government to exercise its power of eminent domain to purchase or condemn privately owned lands. The boisterous economy of the early 1960s allowed federal officials to form ambitious, expansive plans for the acquisition of recreational lands; Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964 for just this purpose. NPS officials strongly preferred the acquisition of lands in fee simple, rather than the purchase of easements or the use of zoning ordinances that would allow private citizens to own property within the boundaries of parks and lakeshores. NPS managers believed that such privately owned parcels, known as inholdings, kept alive threats of logging, commercial

[1] United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Master Plan: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, 1971) [hereafter, 1971 Master Plan], 17.

development, and other inappropriate use, and significantly impaired their ability to manage the parks. Inholdings posed a particular problem in areas valued for their natural character.[2]

NPS officials began acquiring private land in the Apostles in 1972. Some island landowners sold their lands willingly, or at least without a fight. Others refused to agree so easily. The NPS initiated condemnation procedures with recalcitrant landowners in 1973. By the mid-1970s, NPS officials found themselves embroiled in fifty different condemnation cases involving seventy-two tracts of land.[3]

Although these cases spanned the park, Sand Island emerged as the central battleground in the struggle for land acquisition. Lying just two miles off the mainland and possessing the protected docking space of East Bay, Sand Island figured heavily in early plans for the lakeshore. The 1971 park *Master Plan* called for a large campsite, hiking trails, a marina, and concession facilities on the island. The same advantages and access, of course, had drawn Norwegian immigrants in the 1890s and summer residents for decades thereafter. Sand Islanders had steadfastly fought against the creation of the lakeshore, lobbying at the very least for the exclusion of Sand Island from the park and often opposing the entire proposal. Several island families refused to sell their land to the NPS, and questioned the government's authority to take their lands in the first place. These families took their cases to the federal courts.[4]

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[2] 1971 Master plan, 28; Runte, *National Parks*, 225; Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 237; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 65-66.

[3] Frank M. Tuerkheimer to Peter R. Steenland, May 4, 1981, Folder "06-143 Rice, Mary Elizabeth," Land Acquisition Files, AINL.

[4] 1971 Master Plan, 22-23; Pat H. Miller to Richard E. Cohen, April 28, 1981, in Folder "06-143 Rice, Mary Elizabeth."

The conflict between the NPS and the Westhagen family became particularly acrimonious. The Westhagens purchased the house and property that had once belonged to Norwegian farmer-fishermen Fred Hansen in 1956, and they lived on the island in the summer. The family strongly opposed the creation of the lakeshore; Eric Westhagen testified in opposition at every congressional hearing held on the proposal. The Westhagens had plans to use their property as more than a summer home, and they refused to abide by the terms stipulated by the use-and-occupancy agreements offered by the Park Service. The Westhagens wanted the right to maintain a dock, to construct a helicopter pad, to conduct their stockbrokerage business, to cut and collect firewood, to run a market garden, and to keep horses. They also wanted to use their property and advantageous location to cater to tourists by renting cottages and boats and by selling gasoline from their dock. In short, the Westhagens wanted to conduct the very types of commercial activities that made NPS officials so opposed to inholdings in the first place.[5]

For more than a decade, first through negotiation and then in the courts, the Westhagens and the NPS battled for control of 112 acres on the easternmost tip of Sand Island. Park officials initially offered the Westhagens $106,375 for their property; the Westhagens demanded $397,500, as well as the right to use their land as they saw fit. Negotiations quickly turned sour. "I spent the better part of five hours with Mr. Westhagen and his mother trying to find some neutral ground—to no avail," commented one federal negotiator. The dispute moved to the courts, culminating in a jury trial in November 1980. By this time, the NPS had increased its offer to $250,000, but the Westhagens now asked for $500,000. After the jury set the fair market value of the property at $241,500, the two parties still needed to negotiate the terms of the use

[5] Eric Westhagen to Mr. Russell Dickenson, March 23, 1981, and John M. Vaudreuil and Frank M. Tuerkheimer to David Watts, June 17, 1981, both in Folder "06-102, Westhagen, Milton H.," Land Acquisition Files, AINL.

and occupancy; the disputes were not resolved until 1983. The NPS eventually agreed to many of the Westhagens' demands, such as the right to run their brokerage business from the island, to have a market garden, to keep horses for personal use, to cut dead or fallen trees, and to repair and maintain the dock. Park officials refused to allow the construction of a helicopter pad or the renting of boats and cottages. The NPS also retained control of a portion of the property on which it planned to establish a hiking trail. Although NPS managers eventually conceded a number of exceptions to the ordinary conditions of use-and-occupancy agreements, they prohibited the activities most at odds with emerging plans for the management of Sand Island.[6]

Howard "Bud" Peters, a landowner on the other side of the island, posed a different set of problems for NPS managers. Unlike the Westhagens, Peters had supported the park from the start. In fact, he had served on the Citizens Committee for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, the group that provided logistical support and local connections to park planners throughout the 1960s. Peters believed that the lakeshore provided "the best long-range use of this land." But he did not believe the recreational use of the islands to be in conflict with his own plans to cut timber on Sand Island. In fact, Peters suggested that the NPS should consider logging many of the islands in the future, if the value of the timber rose. Economic stimulation had, after all, been a primary motivation of the park. As if to prove his point, Peters continued logging on Sand Island into the 1970s, a last vestige of the multivalent island economy characteristic of an earlier

[6] Vaudreuil and Tuerkheimer to Watts, June 17, 1981, Pat Miller to Eric P. Westhagen and Helen F. Westhagen, May 8, 1981, *United States of America v. Eric Westhagen, et al.*, Civil Action No. 76-C-178, Final Judgment, U.S. District Court for western district of Wisconsin, November 4, 1983, both in Folder "06-102, Westhagen, Milton H."

era. NPS officials worried that Peters' continued logging posed a grave threat to the island environments they had been asked to protect.[7]

Peters owned Budvic Timbers, Inc., a small logging company based in nearby Mellen, Wisconsin. He had acquired just over 1,044 acres on Sand Island in 1962 from another small logging firm. The property had originally been owned by Frank Eha, a charter member of the West Bay Club; Peters purchased the historic Adirondack-style lodge as well as the timberland. He logged on Sand Island for two seasons in the 1960s, but then ceased to wait for more favorable market conditions. When NPS representatives appraised his Sand Island holdings in 1973, they concluded that the timber had no commercial value because of the cost of transportation to and from the island, they crafted their offer to Peters accordingly. Peters disagreed with this conclusion, and decided to log his property before ceding control to the Park Service. During the summer of 1973, he housed an eleven-person crew in the West Bay Club lodge, using heavy equipment such as cranes and tractors to remove high-quality yellow birch and saw logs. Peters estimated that he would be able to take as much as three million board feet of timber from the island, despite the NPS valuation.[8]

Predictably, NPS officials were not at all happy with the prospect of logging within the boundaries of the newly created national lakeshore. For NPS managers, the park's promised economic stimulation would come not from the value of the island timber but from the value of wild nature. Tourists would pay to see this wildness, not the eroded banks, refuse, and roads left

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[7] 1967 Senate Hearings, 87-91.

[8] When assessing the value of the Sand Island timber, NPS officials refused to consider the fact that Peters himself owned a logging company and all the necessary equipment, and that he could therefore log the island at a more reasonable cost than most. ADP, August 25, September 26, and November 9, 1973; Memo, to William Bromberg, July 12, 1973, and Regional Director, Northeast Region to Associate Director, Operations, August 15, 1973, both in Folder "06-109 x112," in Land Acquisition Files, AINL [hereafter, Budvic Timber File].

behind by logging. The *Ashland Daily Press* reported that NPS officials were "disturbed by the destruction of the natural character of the area and efforts are being made to persuade the land owner to halt the operation." When AINL rangers visited the island in the fall of 1973, they found "The road is extremely deteriorated with ruts in places 5 feet deep…. The mud is the consistency of wet cement, and is running into the lake in many places along the road." Other visits revealed that Peters had extended the logging roads, dredged a small stream, and dumped fuel and oil drums directly into the ground. Peters' logging, in the eyes of the NPS rangers, presented a direct conflict to the goals of the lakeshore.[9]

NPS officials reacted quickly to the threat. When Peters rejected the Park Service's initial offer and commenced cutting timber on Sand Island, AINL representatives tried to talk him out of this action—to no avail. In September 1973, NPS officials filed a declaration of taking in the federal district court, a formal procedure that expedited the normal condemnation process and provided the federal government with immediate control over the land in question. NPS managers claimed in federal court that the Budvic tracts were essential for "the proper preservation, development, and administration of that area for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people." The NPS assumed legal title of the contested property in November 1973, but not until after Peters had removed an estimated five hundred thousand board feet of timber from the island. Like many of the other Sand Islanders, Peters appealed the appraised value of his property, and did not reach a final agreement with the NPS until 1982. NPS managers took the extreme step of filing a declaration of taking because of the danger logging posed to the natural

[9] ADP, August 25, 1973; Memo, Supervisory Park Ranger, Apostle Islands NL to Superintendent, November 15, 1973, and photographs of August 15, 1973 visit to Sand Island, both in Budvic Timber File.

character of the newly created lakeshore. AINL officials took similar action in the courts in 1979 to stop logging in the mainland unit.[10]

Disputes over land acquisition were not limited to Sand Island. Although not all of the negotiations were as contentious as those with the Westhagens and Howard Peters, landowners around the archipelago contested the federal condemnation of their lands. Of the fifty condemnation cases conducted to consolidate federal authority over the islands, a 1976 commission on just compensation resolved six, three were heard and decided by jury trial, and the rest were settled by negotiation. But just when it seemed that the NPS had finally secured control of the islands, changing politics in Washington, DC, threatened to strip this authority.[11]

The election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 brought revolutionary changes to federal land management policy. Reagan appointed the controversial James G. Watt as secretary of the interior. Among Watt's most divisive ideas was the privatization of federal land management—he wanted to reopen the sale of public lands to private citizens. This policy change had potentially dramatic implications for the Apostle Islands. In 1982 and 1983, Park Service land acquisitions slowed to a virtual standstill, as Watt directed the agency to use money allocated by Congress for land purchases for construction and maintenance in existing parks. In the Apostles, the NPS had completed its land acquisition program. But Watt and his deputies still

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[10] ADP, November 9, 1973; United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, *Declaration of Taking*, September 28, 1973, AINL Press Release, November 8, 1973, *United States of America v. Budvic Timber Inc.*, Final Judgment, U.S. District Court for western district of Wisconsin, June 30, 1980, and Basil G. Kennedy to Pat H. Miller, March 27, 1982, all in Budvic Timber File; Memo, Superintendent to Regional Director, October 3, 1979, AINL Reading Files.

[11] Tuerkheimer to Steenland, May 4, 1981.

applied the new logic of privatization: they considered selling previously acquired lands within lakeshore boundaries back to the original owners.[12]

In 1982, the Anderson/Rice family—summer residents of Sand Island since the 1935 (when they had purchased a part of Camp Stella) and owners of the Shaw-Hill farm since 1942—approached officials in the Interior Department about reacquiring title to their Sand Island property. The Anderson/Rices had contested the right of the government to condemn their land in the first place, and only a judicial ruling prompted them to sell their Sand Island property in 1981. The next year, however, the family sought to turn the environmental politics of the Reagan administration to their advantage. They found a willing ear in Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Ric Davidge. Davidge had previously served as the managing director of the National Inholders Association, a group that fought against what it regarded as unnecessary state regulation of private property. Davidge agreed to consider the Anderson/Rice proposal, and entered into negotiations to resell or exchange portions of Sand Island.[13]

Word that the Anderson/Rices might reacquire portions of Sand Island sparked a public outcry. Gaylord Nelson called the proposal "an outrageous violation of the whole principle of

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[12] Fred C. Anderson originally purchased property on the island in 1935, and the Rice family are his descendants. House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks, *Land Acquisition Policy and Program of the National Park Service*, report prepared by the staff, 98th Cong., 2d sess., 1984, Committee Print 7, 12. On James Watt's and Ronald Reagan's environmental policies, see Ron Arnold, A*t the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and the Environmentalists* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1982); William L. Graf, *Wilderness Preservation and the Sagebrush Rebellions* (Savage, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 1990); Jonathan Lash, Katherine Gillman, and David Sheridan, *A Season of Spoils: The Reagan Administration's Attack on the Environment* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); C. Brant Short, *Ronald Reagan and the Public Lands: America's Conservation Debate, 1979-1984* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989).

[13] Alanen, "The Shaw-Hill Farm Site on Sand Island," 27; Judgment, *United States v. Mary Elizabeth Rice, et al*., Civil Action 76-C-199, U.S. District Court for western district of Wisconsin, March 16, 1981, and Bradley G. Clary to Ric Davidge, November 11, 1982, both in Folder "06-143, Rice, Mary Elizabeth (Sand Island Exchange)," in AINL Land Acquisition Files [hereafter Sand Island Exchange Files]; House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks, *Public Land Management Policy, Part V: Impact of Acquisition Delays on the Lands and Resources of the National Park System*, 98th Cong., 1st sess., 1983, 180.

management of public lakeshore." The Sierra Club threatened to sue to stop any resale. The Apostle Islands resale proposal, as well as other questions about the sale of public lands, seemed to confirm environmentalists' worst fears about the land management plans of Reagan and Watt. "We do not know if the Apostle Islands case will be the first of a wave of disposal actions, but if this sale is completed, every disgruntled person who has sold land to the National Park Service will be trooping into Washington with both hands out," explained Michael McCloskey, executive director of the Sierra Club. Opponents of the resale plan worried about the precedent such an action would set for future park management. They also opposed the proposal for the way that it seemed to convey favors to special interests and provide preferential treatment to the Anderson/Rice family, reportedly generous donors to the Republican Party.[14]

Faced with such public opposition, Interior Department officials backed off from the prospect of selling the Shaw-Hill farm back to the Anderson/Rice family. Instead, they pursued the prospect of trading usage rights. The NPS would grant the family the right of occupancy in perpetuity on a small portion of the property—the buildings and grounds around the homestead—in return for terminating occupancy rights on the rest of the land. In addition, the family would provide access and tours of the historic buildings on the farmstead and allow the public to use one of their docks. Davidge and other supporters of the idea argued that such an exchange was in the public interest, as it secured access to the sheltered dock and the historically

[14] *Milwaukee Journal*, January 22, 1983; *Polk County Ledger*, January 27, 1983; ADP, January 18, 1983; *Duluth News-Tribune*, January 22, 1983; Shari Eggleson to Sierra Club Members, John Muir Chapter, n.d., in Sand Island Exchange Files. See also the correspondence of private citizens included in Folder "Correspondence—Sand Island," Land Acquisition Files, AINL.

significant farmstead. The Anderson/Rice family, however, backed out of the deal, choosing instead to retain the original lifetime use-and-occupancy agreement.[15]

Significantly, AINL staff members were not involved in the negotiations on the Sand Island land exchange. Watt's policies on NPS land acquisition prompted an immediate response from Democratic congressmen steadfastly opposed to his policies. This response included congressional oversight hearings in 1983 on acquisition policies and a stern reprimand of Watt by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. When pressed in aggressive questioning at the oversight hearings to discuss the Sand Island land exchange, Apostle Islands Superintendent Pat Miller explained that members of his staff had not participated in the resale discussions. "I think the direct—the knowledge that I have—you have to understand that most of the negotiations that occurred at levels above my office…" The potential resale or exchange of Sand Island derived from Reagan's and Watt's ideas about the proper management role of the federal government, not the needs of NPS officials on the ground. The acquisition of private property had been the central concern of AINL staff for over a decade, with the goal of unifying park management, not fracturing it further. AINL rangers worked to simplify the ownership and management of the Apostles, not make it more complicated by extending and renegotiating use-and-occupancy agreements.[16]

The goal of unified management had motivated federal acquisition of nearly 40 percent of the lakeshore. Not all of the islands were in private ownership when Congress created the national lakeshore in 1970. In 1976, the NPS acquired title to the nearly 17,000 acres owned by

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[15] House Committee, *Public Land Management Policy*, 169-73; Memo, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife to Director, National Park Service, March 26, 1983, Sand Island Exchange Files.

[16] House Committee, *Public Land Management Policy*, 170; House Committee, *Land Acquisition Policy and Program of the National Park Service*.

the state of Wisconsin. This transfer had its own set of complications. The Park Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (the DNR replaced the Wisconsin Conservation Department in 1967) initially planned on joint management in the islands. But in the 1971 *Master Plan* for AINL, NPS officials recommended that all of the land within the lakeshore be brought within a single jurisdiction. "[The] entire archipelago … under one jurisdiction and administration is deemed advisable for good management of the lakeshore." With the acquisition of private lands bogged down by contentious condemnation cases, AINL officials issued a renewed call for the transfer of state lands to the federal government in 1973. State managers and policy makers, however, demanded financial compensation for state-owned land, free access to the lakeshore for Wisconsin residents, continued state control of hunting and fishing, guarantees about the nature of NPS management, and other considerations.[17]

The compromise that resolved these concerns pushed AINL closer to wilderness management. Before state officials would transfer the islands under its control, they wanted assurances that the NPS would manage the islands to preserve their "wilderness character." The NPS at first objected to this language, worried that since the 1970 lakeshore legislation had not used the term "wilderness," its use by the state in a formal transfer document might pose legal or management problems. Wisconsin officials, however, insisted on the right to declare the proposed uses of the land in question; they had spent close to $400,000 to create a wilderness opportunity for their citizens, and they wanted assurances that this wilderness would endure. The director of the Wisconsin Conservation Department made this clear as early as 1967, when he recommended at the congressional hearings on lakeshore designation that the islands receive

[17] 1971 Master Plan, 26; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 599-615; Natural Resources Board Minutes, October 6, 1970 and July 15, 1971, Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, WHS.

formal wilderness designation. When the Wisconsin legislature transferred state lands to the NPS in 1976, it declared: "It is the policy of the legislature that the Apostle Islands be managed in a manner that will preserve their unique primitive and wilderness character." Legislators wanted the citizens of their state to "be assured the opportunity for wilderness, inspirational primitive and scenic experiences in the Apostle Islands into perpetuity." This was a far more aggressive stance on wilderness protection than contained in the lakeshore legislation. When the Interior Department considered reselling Sand Island to the Anderson/Rice family in the 1980s, the Wisconsin attorney general threatened a lawsuit to stop the action. The state of Wisconsin had emerged as a powerful force for nature protection and as an advocate for wilderness.[18]

Harold Jordahl, Jr., played an essential role in transfer of state lands, and also in the affirmation of the importance of wilderness. Jordahl had been at the center of lakeshore planning since the early 1960s, working first for Gaylord Nelson in the Wisconsin Department of Resource Development and then for the Interior Department, where he chaired the committee that crafted the original lakeshore proposal. By 1975, Jordahl chaired Wisconsin's Natural Resource Board, which set he state's conservation policy. He advocated transferring state lands to the Park Service as early as 1970. Jordahl also played a prominent role in other early management decisions that directed Park Service policy in the Apostles ever more in the direction of wilderness preservation.[19]

Jordahl also served as a central figure in the final addition to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, when Congress added Long Island to the park in 1986. Like other battles over land

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[18] Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 606; 1967 Senate Hearings, 126; *Wisconsin Statutes*, s. 1.026, (Prestegard and Thimke, 1975); *Madison (WI) Capital Times*, February 8, 1983.

[19] Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 609.

acquisition, the addition of Long Island pushed the NPS toward a policy that elevated nature protection over other uses of the islands. Long Island had been a part of the original 1965 proposal, but was removed with the Bad River/Kakagon Sloughs Unit to meet Ojibwe concerns about federal management. In the early 1980s, two arguments emerged for its addition to the lakeshore. The island's proximity to the mainland meant that it had the potential for high recreation use; adding the island to the lakeshore would increase visitation to the park and make it easier for park administrators to acquire needed management funds. Developing the island for tourism would, in turn, benefit the local economy. Resource protection provided a second motivation for protecting the island. Long Island's variegated dune, wetland, and forest habitats contained by far the most diverse collection of plants on the archipelago. Long Island provided a home for the piping plover, a federally endangered shorebird, as well as the common bittern, a bird on Wisconsin's threatened species list. The island also had cultural value for its religious significance to Ojibwe, its lighthouse, and its historic importance in the French fur trade. The economic benefits of tourism and the protection of natural and cultural resources had motivated the designation of the national lakeshore in the first place; the addition of Long Island would affirm and extend these goals.[20]

When Congress debated the addition of Long Island to AINL, however, the goals of recreational tourism and nature protection came into increasing conflict. How could the NPS

[20] Long Island stands apart from the rest of the islands—the result of wave and dune action from Lake Superior rather than the erosion and rebounding land surface that followed the retreat of the glaciers. In fact, Long Island is not even always an island. The wave action that created the island could also change it overnight. Although separated from the mainland for most of the twentieth century, a violent storm in 1975 (the same storm that wrecked the ship the *Edmund Fitzgerald*) created a land bridge to the mainland; today, Long Island is once more disconnected from the mainland. With its swimming beaches and historic lighthouses, however, Long Island is culturally connected to the rest of the archipelago. Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 619-21; Judziewicz and Koch, "Flora and Vegetation of the Apostle Islands and Madeline Island," 84-85; ADP, June 4, 1985.

manage for both increased tourist use of the island and protect the island environment—and the endangered piping plover—at the same time? "This growing and presently uncontrolled access and use of Long Island by day visitors and overnight campers threatens to destroy sensitive areas of the island," worried the director of the Ashland-based Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute. "Dogs run unleashed chasing birds off their nests, trash is left behind from picnics and all-terrain vehicle tracks and campers leave their impact on the vegetation." Advocates of nature protection wanted NPS management to focus on plover habitat; those arguing for the addition of Long Island on the basis of its recreational value wanted to ensure heightened access to the berry patches and swimming spots along the island. The use and the protection of Long Island seemed to be in conflict.[21]

Mounting opposition from the Bad River Reservation complicated the conflict between nature preservation and tourism. Although Long Island was not on the Bad River Reservation, the island had vital religious significance to the Ojibwe. Long Island provided a stopping point on the Ojibwe migration to western Lake Superior; several legends explain the importance of the island. A spokesman for the band informed Congress and the NPS that Long Island holds a "sacred and holy place in the history of Ojibwa people." The Bad River Tribal Council passed a resolution opposing NPS acquisition of the island in 1985. The Ojibwe worried that NPS management would increase non-Indian visitation to the island and lead to the commercialization of a place that they considered sacred.[22]

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[21] Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Reserved Water and Resource Conservation, *Additions to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, Boundary Adjustments to Units of the National Park System, and Revision of a Ski Area Permit System on National Forest Lands*, 99th Cong., 2d. Sess., 1986 [hereafter 1986 Senate Hearings], 330; Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 632-33; ADP, June 4, 1985.

[22] Jordahl, *A Unique Collection of Islands*, 644-45.

The two families that owned land on Long Island sounded a familiar refrain about the prospect of federal condemnation of land. Both families had owned their land for generations, and believed that this history should protect them from federal takeover. Archie Wilson explained: "We are not newcomers bent on profit or distruction [sic.]. The land is part of our heritage and family tradition. We want nothing more than to be allowed to pass these properties on to our children and grandchildren." The private landowners suggested that they could sell conservation easements to assist in plover protection, and pointed out that increasing tourist access to the island by including it in the lakeshore would only further threaten the plover.[23]

Negotiation and networking by those advocating NPS acquisition of the island, including AINL Superintendent Miller, Jordahl, tribal representatives, and others, resolved the conflict by clearly stating the reasons for acquisition of the island. Resource protection, not tourism, would get priority in NPS management of Long Island. Wisconsin Senator Robert W. Kasten, Jr., explained the compromise and the clarified the intent of the bill: "All interested parties agree that the primary goal must be to protect the natural and cultural resources on Long Island. The secondary goal should be the development of human use and visitation patterns which are compatible with such protection." Clearly stating these priorities earned the support of the environmental groups, and also met Ojibwe concerns. Only the landowners continued to oppose NPS acquisition of Long Island. With this agreement in place, the Senate passed the boundary adjustment legislation and President Reagan signed the bill into law in October 1986. The Long

[23] 1986 Senate Hearings, 461

Island compromise served as an important statement that the NPS had elevated the *protection* of resources—both natural and cultural—over their *use*.[24]

The NPS representatives spent a great deal of time, money, and effort securing unified control of the islands. The logic of land acquisition had a lasting impact on NPS management in the islands. In acquiring lands from private landowners, such as those on Sand Island, NPS managers sought to prevent what they deemed inappropriate private activity—such as logging or commercial tourist development. Wisconsin legislators wanted assurances that their investment in the island wilderness would endure, and when they donated lands under state control to the NPS they made this demand a formal part of the transfer. The addition of Long Island to AINL in 1986 completed NPS acquisition, and provided the clearest statement of the emerging prioritization of resource protection over other human activities in the Apostle Islands. NPS policy soon established an additional set of priorities, one that elevated natural over cultural resources. Indeed, NPS land acquisition was just one part of a larger process of reordering the environments of the Apostles to meet the goals of wilderness preservation.

The Dilemma of Rewilding Landscapes

This trend toward wilderness management in the islands began even before Congress created the park in 1970. Initial proposals for the lakeshore derived from dual motivations: recreational tourism and nature protection. The NPS proposed to manage the lakeshore for both of these goals, with a series of recreational developments on the mainland and islands, and other areas preserved in their primitive state. In the early years after the creation of the park, however,

[24] *Ibid*., 30.

the NPS consistently veered away from recreational development and toward wilderness management. Tourism and recreation still played an important role in park management plans, but the primitive recreation encouraged by AINL management decisions differed greatly from the type of recreational development residents of the region expected when they supported the creation of the park. The trend toward wilderness management has brought many advantages to the islands and to the communities of the Chequamegon Bay. But this trend also had significant implications for cultural resource management and for the way that we understand wilderness and history. NPS officials have disguised or removed evidence of the islands' human past to foster the appearance of wilderness in the Apostles. Although both natural and cultural processes had created the rewilding landscapes of the islands, the American wilderness ideal—and especially the articulation of this ideal in NPS policy—place nature and culture in opposition.

The 1965 lakeshore proposal included a series of recreational developments that represented a primary purpose of the lakeshore: to meet the growing recreational needs of midwestern urbanites. These developments included a thirty-mile scenic drive along the Bayfield Peninsula flanked by hiking trails, picnic sites, and marinas. Sand Island would provide the best chance for people to spend a night on one of the Apostles, and the proposal called for a concessionaire-operated lodge, a multi-site campground, and a ranger station on the island. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, these proposals secured the support of the residents of the region for the lakeshore—including many of those who had opposed state plans for a wilderness park in the islands in the 1950s.[25]

[25] 1965 AINL Working Proposal, xviii; 1967 Senate Hearings, 93; 1969 House Hearings, 26.

When the NPS secured control of the lakeshore, it did not complete these recreational developments. Why not? The NPS abandoned these plans for material, political, and philosophical reasons. The environmental conditions of the Bayfield Peninsula and the slow process of land acquisition raised questions about the construction of the scenic road. So did the pressure applied by environmental groups and the personal preferences of important park supporters. An essential contradiction in the logic of wilderness management, however, provides the most significant reason for the shift of NPS priorities from recreational tourism to wilderness.

Practical concerns prevented some of the NPS development plans. Engineers worried, for example, that the red clay soils of the Bayfield Peninsula along the Superior shore would not support a high-volume road. The soils were highly erodable and unstable, and a road would require costly long-term maintenance. The gulleys and ravines along the route posed an additional problem: "substantial amounts of fill would be required [to bridge the ravines]. Such filling would in itself destroy much of the scenic beauty that the proposed highway is to make available to the visitor." Last-minute changes to the lakeshore boundaries also decreased the likelihood of a scenic road in the mainland unit. Because the NPS only acquired a narrow strip of land along the shore, and none of the shoreline in the Red Cliff Reservation, a scenic road began to seem untenable.[26]

From the first congressional hearings on the lakeshore proposal in 1967, national environmental groups pressured the Park Service to abandon recreational developments like the scenic road and the Sand Island lodge. Wilderness Society spokesman M. Rupert Cutler urged that Congress amend the authorizing legislation to immediately designate the islands as a part of

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[26] *Recreational Potential of the Lake Superior South Shore Area*, 24, 25; Natural Resources Board Minutes, October 6, 1970.

the National Wilderness Preservation System. “Such action would be in line with the bill’s objective, namely, to preserve this archipelago as an unspoiled area of great natural beauty,” Cutler stated at the 1967 Senate hearing. The proposed lodge on Sand Island, on the other hand, “would conflict with the bill’s objectives, and we urge that this proposed development be reconsidered.” Sigurd Olson also recommended immediate designation as wilderness when he testified at House subcommittee hearings in 1969. Other environmental organizations opposed the construction of the mainland scenic road. William Fortney, representing Wisconsin’s John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club, argued that the road would “do very serious damage to the very qualities the lakeshore is intended to preserve.” The president of the National Parks Association cautioned “the proposed scenic shoreline drive could become the familiar monstrosity.” The environmental organizations recognized the potential conflict between wilderness and recreational development and pressured the NPS to prioritize the former over the latter.[27]

This political pressure worked, in part because the environmental groups had important allies in the Senate and in the Interior Department. Harold Jordahl and Gaylord Nelson, the two most instrumental individuals in crafting the park proposal and guiding it through Congress, both sympathized with the perspective of the environmental organizations. Jordahl explained his concerns about the road shortly after the creation of the park: “Senator Nelson and I both had reservations regarding the scenic road proposal and its impact on the environment. So did [NPS] Director George Hartzog. I met with Director Hartzog and his staff on a number of occasions regarding the scenic road proposal, and he subsequently substantially modified this road to minimize its environmental impact.” Plans for the road were eventually abandoned altogether.

[27] 1967 Senate Hearings, 59-61, 63, 64-65, 173-74; 1969 House Hearings, 96, 171; 1970 House Hearings, 383.

Jordahl later played a central role in the transfer of Stockton, Oak, and Basswood Islands from state to the federal ownership, and in the drafting of the wilderness language in the Wisconsin legislation authorizing that transfer.[28]

More important than any of these concerns in the shift in priorities from recreation to wilderness, however, were internal decisions made by NPS staff. From the publication of the first park management document in 1971, NPS officials made a series of decisions that pushed park policy closer and closer to wilderness management. This trend, in turn, created a new set of dilemmas for AINL rangers, problems rooted in the islands' history as well as in their wildness.

When NPS staff produced the park's first management plan in 1971, they made decisions with significant implications for future management in the islands. The *Master Plan* laid out a philosophy of resource management that would guide subsequent policies. "The purpose of park management is to provide for extensive public recreation use without deterioration of the natural systems on which this use is based." Consistent with this general philosophy and in accordance with NPS policies, the *Master Plan* divided the islands into management zones. All of the islands but three received the designation of "Primitive," meaning that they would receive no development whatsoever. Sand, Rocky, and South Twin Islands were excluded from this category, ostensibly because they had the most clearly visible development in the form of fishermen's cabins, summer homes, and inholdings. These islands, as well as Presque Isle Point on Stockton Island and the entire mainland unit, were designated as "Natural Environment." This category permitted "trails, interpretive devices, an occasional picnic table, and other such low-

[28] Harold C. Jordahl, Jr., to Mrs. George L. McCormick, September 24, 1971, in Folder "06-117, Jensch, Herman," Land Acquisition Files, AINL; Gaylord Nelson, interview by the author, May 20, 2002, Washington, DC, copy in the author's files.

key developments." The only exceptions to these two classifications were the quarry sites on Stockton and Basswood Islands and the five lighthouses, all designated in the "Historical and Cultural" category, and small enclaves set aside for "essential public use and development" on several of the islands. These would provide space for ranger stations, campgrounds, and other facilities. The *Master Plan* did not break these land classifications down by acreage, but the vast majority of the lakeshore—well over 90 percent—fell into the primitive or natural environment categories. Nor did the *Master Plan* mention wilderness. The 1964 Wilderness Act required that the Interior Department evaluate roadless areas under its jurisdiction for wilderness suitability; it remained unclear, however, whether this stipulation applied to lands acquired after 1964.[29]

NPS officials quickly resolved this question. The lakeshore's second management document, published in 1977, placed the vast majority of the park within a "Wilderness Study Subzone." The 1977 document succinctly stated the park's wilderness management goal: "To study Apostle Islands lands for potential inclusion as Congressional designated wilderness." As in 1971, small parcels of land were placed in a Development Zone (a mainland administrative area and campgrounds on Rocky and Stockton Islands) or a Historic Zone (the quarries and lighthouses). Lands still the subject of condemnation proceedings and not yet under NPS control were labeled "Special Use Zones." NPS policy stipulated that areas under consideration for wilderness must be managed "so as not to impair their wilderness qualities, pending congressional consideration of wilderness designation." By the time the park published its *General Management Plan* in 1989—the first publicly vetted planning document—de facto wilderness management had been in place for nearly two decades. "In general" the GMP

[29] 1971 Master Plan, 25, 27; *Wilderness Act of 1964*, September 3, 1964, P.L. 88-577, 78 *Stat*. 890, 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136; 1967 Senate Hearings, 60.

explained, "the long-term natural resource objective of the National Park Service is to restore and maintain the biologic diversity of the dynamic ecosystem that would exist today had not human activities such as logging intervened." The 1989 GMP estimated that 97 percent of the park might be suitable for wilderness designation, and declared that these lands would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics.[30]

The move toward wilderness management in the Apostles, however, presented NPS managers with a dilemma. As they managed 97 percent of the park as a potential wilderness area, how were they to treat the park's cultural resources? For wild though they might have become, the island environments derived from both natural and cultural processes. In some places, the human origins were easy to see—at the quarries, for example, or where summer homes and fishermen's cabins still stood. Human influence was elsewhere more subtle but no less profound. Decisions made by lumberjacks, fishermen, farmers, lighthouse keepers and state conservation managers of the past century shaped the island environments. The legacy of these decisions remained in the clearings that once housed logging camps or hayfields, and in the composition of island forests. What did wilderness management mean for this place that was at once human and natural?

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as a place where "the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The act specifically explains that wilderness should be land "retaining its primeval

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[30] National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Statement for Management* (National Park Service/U. S. Department of the Interior, 1977), 5-8, 24; National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Statement for Management* (National Park Service/U. S. Department of the Interior, 1983), 18; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin, *General Management Plan* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1989), 20, 21, 28.

natural character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation." The rewilding environments of the islands, with their fishing shacks, logging camps, and second growth forests, might seem poor candidates for wilderness suitability. Early debates over wilderness classification focused on the question of what it meant for a place to be "untrammeled." A number of industry groups, as well as the U. S. Forest Service, argued for the strictest possible interpretation of this term as a way to limit the number of acres that might qualify for designation.[31]

Wilderness advocates, on the other hand, argued for a looser interpretation of the terms of the act. The 1964 legislation clarifies the definition of wilderness to include land "which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable." The Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 affirmed this less restrictive interpretation and underscored the need to identify and protect places where wilderness characteristics have returned after disruptive human use. The rewilding islands fit much more easily into the broadened definition of wilderness. The ascendance of this less restrictive definition of wilderness had an important consequence: it elevated the appearance and visual characteristics of wilderness over ecological considerations or the history of use in determinations of wilderness designation. It also allows the assignation of wilderness value to places that will become more wild in the future, even if they might be less wild in the present.[32]

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[31] *Wilderness Act of 1964*

[32] *Wilderness Act of 1964*; *Eastern Wilderness Areas Act*, January 3, 1975, P.L. 93-622, 88 *Stat*. 2096, 16 U.S.C. 1132. See also Laura A. Watt, "The Trouble with Preservation, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Term for Wilderness Protection: A Case Study at Point Reyes National Seashore," *The Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* 64 (2002): 55-72 and Mark Woods, "Federal Wilderness Preservation in the United States: The Preservation of Wilderness?" in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. Callicott and Nelson, 131-53.

The decision to manage the Apostles as a potential wilderness has had on-the-ground consequences for NPS administration of the islands. Identifying the islands as a potential wilderness obligated NPS officials to manage the islands in such a way as to preserve their wilderness character. "The National Park Service shall take no action that would diminish the wilderness suitability of an area possessing wilderness characteristics until the legislative process of wilderness designation has been completed," reads the NPS policy on wilderness management. In addition, NPS policy stipulates that the agency will "seek to remove from potential wilderness areas the temporary, non-conforming conditions that preclude wilderness designation." That is, NPS wilderness management policy requires removing evidence of past human use to encourage the appearance of untrammeled, pristine wilderness.[33]

NPS managers have done just this in the Apostles. On Sand, Rocky, and South Twin Islands, the islands with the most extensive human histories, the NPS has removed buildings and other signs of human use—that is, the non-conforming conditions. In 1977, the NPS burned and removed many of the buildings that had once made up Troller's Home Resort on South Twin Island. The former restaurant and one other cabin were left as a ranger station and as a visitor center. Rangers removed buildings on Sand Island and Rocky Island, as well, replacing the cabins with rustic campsites. NPS wilderness management policy requires that rangers create the

[33] National Park Service, *National Park Service Management Policies* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1988), section 6.3.1. The NPS policies that try to reconcile this apparent conflict between natural and cultural resource management create an additional dilemma. Historic sites that meet the criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places typically qualify for continued preservation within a wilderness area; those that do not are classified as "non-conforming conditions." This has the effect of freezing the decision about which historic resources deserve preservation to the category of resources recognized as nationally significant at the time of wilderness designation. It also privileges some stories over others. NHRP status is reserved for those resources of national, not local significance. Examples of vernacular architecture or sites of local value often do not qualify, and thus would not be preserved within a wilderness area. Feldman and Mackreth, "Wasteland, Wonderland, or Workplace."

appearance of wilderness, even if this appearance is in some ways a deception. Campers could stay on the islands, camp in clearings created by farmers and fishermen, but believe that they were experiencing wilderness. Nature itself seems to be cooperating with the NPS, for each year the forest creeps further into the old fields, the undergrowth buries the ruined houses still deeper, and Lake Superior carries away the remnants of another dock. The islands' human past is being obscured by the forces of nature as well as by modern conceptions of wilderness.[34]

The Rocky Island Air Haven, discussed in the previous chapter as a symbol of the diverse economy that persisted in the islands for nearly a century, stands also as an example of the implications of the trend toward wilderness management. By the time Congress created AINL in 1970, the Nourses had run their restaurant for over twenty-five years. The 1971 *Master Plan* incorporated the Air Haven into its scheme for visitor access to the islands. "The small restaurant at Rocky Island would continue to serve its famous Lake Superior fish dinners," it stated. The plan also suggested the development of a nature trail to provide a hiking experience on Rocky Island. But as the park moved toward wilderness management, NPS officials determined that the commercial activities of the Air Haven no longer had a place in the park and shut down the restaurant. First, park personnel required that the Nourses apply for a permit to operate the restaurant. Then, in 1974, they did not issue a permit at all. Grace Nourse does not remember this closing fondly. "What hurt so much [was that] they came and got the keys from us and said we want to look at the place. They never returned the keys … They just brought in a wrecking crew

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[34] Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, *Annual Report, 1977* and *Annual Report, 1978* (Bayfield, WI: National Park Service/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1977, 1978); Neuman, "What are those Cabins Doing There?"128. Katy E. Holmer, "A Superior Summer: A Landscape History of Rocky Island, An Apostle Islands Fishing Community"(MA, University of Wisconsin Madison, 2003), 104. See also William Cronon, "The Riddle of the Apostle Islands," *Orion* 22 (May/June 2003): 36-42.

and tore down all the buildings." The NPS razed the resort in 1982. The Air Haven was a "non-conforming condition," and its removal helped to create the appearance of wilderness in the Apostles.[35]

The park does protect and interpret history, and it does this well. The lighthouses remain a centerpiece of the region's tourist trade, and the park's most well known attraction. Modern visitors climb the lighthouse towers, play croquet on the light station lawns, and imagine for themselves what the lonely lives of the keepers must have been like. Commercial fishing also plays a prominent role in the park's cultural resources program. The NPS has restored the Hokenson fishery, on the mainland at Little Sand Bay. The fishery represents the small, family-managed fishing operation that persisted in the islands for much of the twentieth century. At Manitou Island, the NPS interprets the lives of the poorer, itinerant fishermen who worked in the islands from the mid-nineteenth century until the collapse of the lake trout fishery in the 1950s. At both sites, visitors have the opportunity to learn about an era when resource extraction, not wilderness tourism, provided the economic base for the island economy. The Park Service also provides information for visitors curious about the quarries, farms, and logging camps on the islands.[36]

The park's management of historic resources, however, reinforces the segregation of nature and culture. History is confined to small, isolated enclaves—the light stations and the fish camps—designated specifically for the interpretation and management of cultural resources. This segregation occurred immediately after the creation of the park. The 1971 *Master Plan* classified

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[35] 1971 Master Plan, 3, 23; Grace Nourse interview; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, *Annual Report, 1982* (Bayfield, WI: National Park Service/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1982).

[36] For an overview of the lakeshore's historic resources programs, see "Islands of History," on the park website at http://www.nps.gov/apis/history.htm.

the lighthouses and quarry sites as "Historic and Cultural Zones," and this division has persisted since. A second symptom of this segregation is that camping and visitor facilities are frequently placed at historic sites. Modern campgrounds inhabit an old R. D. Pike logging camp on Oak Island, the Stockton Island quarry, and the site of Sand Island fisherman-farmer Herman Johnson's home. The quarry is hard to miss, but most visitors never know about the history that surrounds their tents when they bed down for the night elsewhere in the park. The logic behind these campground locations comes from the desire to keep nature and culture separate: to confine visitor impacts to those areas already significantly altered by human use.

But removing or hiding the evidence does not change the islands' past, or diminish the role of the human action in creating the modern island environments. Human history everywhere marks the islands. Island forests have regenerated after logging followed by fire, and the dates and methods of logging have shaped the composition of the modern forest. "Many of the existing forest associations are sere stages of secondary succession, created by temporal differences of logging disturbance, and further influenced by soil variations," succinctly concludes one study. The lighthouses still guard some of the most valuable old growth forests in the western Great Lakes, complicating and enriching the forest mosaic. The lake trout that sport fishermen chase among the islands trace their ancestry to stocked fish released into the lake after fisheries managers brought the sea lamprey under control; the pacific salmon these fishermen also catch might make good eating, but their presence in the Apostles is far from natural.[37]

Even the islands' wildness derives from deliberate human choice. The Norings, Hills, and other Sand Island families made choices to leave their homes, to let the forests reclaim their

[37] Anderson and Stowell, *Wildlife Management Plan for Select Habitats and Species of The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*, 47.

farms and fields. When the state of Wisconsin first adopted its acquisition policy for Stockton Island, state officials considered harvesting the timber on the island to help pay the purchase cost; they chose, instead, to manage the islands as a wilderness. When NPS planners put together their initial proposal in 1965, they included section titled "Alternatives." In it, they explained what they expected would transpire in the islands without federal action: "in the absence of a National Lakeshore, many of the amenities in this region will eventually become private developments. Although they may be orderly and well-planned, the history for comparable parts of the Great Lakes region provides ample evidence to the contrary." The rewilding of the islands is as much a historical process as a natural one. NPS wilderness management, however, places the natural over the cultural. Federal wilderness, by its very definition, is a place where people visit but do not remain.[38]

The returned wilderness of the Apostle Islands deserves to be both celebrated and protected, as the Park Service is doing. We will do a better job on both counts, however, if we recognize the complex interplay between nature and history that has created the modern wilderness. The people who inhabited and managed the islands in the past could have made different choices, choices that would have left us with a vastly different place today. The choice to let the wild return to the islands is worth celebrating in its own right. So, too, is the wilderness that resulted from these decisions. Such a celebration requires that we recognize the human role in the creation of the wilderness, and that we stop mythologizing wilderness as a place without people, a place without history.

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[38] A. W. Schorger to Lester P. Voigt, May 31 1955, Folder 39, Box 453, WCD Files; CC Minutes, June 10, 1955 (Committee on Land); 1965 AINL Working Proposal, 116.

Why does the National Park Service employ such a rigid wilderness management policy, and one that so implicitly favors nature over culture? First, deeply seated traditions within the NPS elevate natural over cultural resource management. Second, a paradox within the American wilderness ideal determines NPS wilderness management policy. And third, the demand of a modern, bureaucratic state for legible, easily managed environments pushes the NPS to simplify the complex task of wilderness management by focusing on nature rather than culture.

Historic resources have long been a secondary priority within the National Park Service. American national parks are known first and foremost as places of sublime natural beauty—places like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon are considered the "crown jewels" of the system. The NPS, of course, also administers historic sites such as battlefields, urban parks, and commemorative sites. But the origins of the agency lie in the management of the large scenic parks; historic parks were later additions. The career ladder within the agency typically depends on service in scenic parks, not historical ones, and people with backgrounds in forestry and natural resource management dominate agency leadership. Historic parks and cultural resource management projects often suffer in the competition for funds with more popular and visible natural resource projects. Outside interest groups concerned with natural resources typically wield far more power than those associated with cultural resources. In short, the Park Service's vision for, and commitment to, historic preservation and cultural resource management has always been less certain than it has for natural resources.[39]

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[39] Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 131-32, 154-55; Stephanie S. Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management in Natural Areas of the National Park System," *Public Historian* 9 (Spring 1987): 65-76; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 136-37.

Complicating this prioritization is the fact that cultural resources are often viewed as an intrusion on the ecological integrity and the significance of places valued for their natural characteristics. This is particularly true in wilderness areas. The NPS has a long history of removing cultural resources from natural areas in the name of nature protection. Parks as widely dispersed as Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, Point Reyes National Seashore in California, and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan have all faced this dilemma. In many cases, NPS officials have used wilderness status as a mandate to remove shelters, cabins, or other artifacts without regard for their significance as historic or recreational resources. Or, they have simply allowed historic resources to fall into such disrepair that they are removed as safety hazards. A similar process has taken place at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.[40]

The tension between history and wilderness stems from internal contradictions within American ideas of wilderness, and even within the definition of wilderness included in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The American wilderness ideal locates wilderness wholly outside the realm of human activity. This is a core element of the 1964 act; wilderness places are untrammeled, places where people are not. Evident human use—especially modern, Anglo-American use, necessarily degrades wilderness. This paradox lies at the center of the recent wilderness debates; this is the trouble that William Cronon refers to in his essay, "The Trouble with Wilderness." Cronon and others worry that by idealizing nature without the presence of people, modern environmentalism foregoes the possibility of finding a way for humans and

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[40] Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management in Natural Areas," 69; Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, "Introduction: Why Cultural Landscape Preservation?" 20, and Alanen, "Considering the Ordinary: Vernacular Landscapes in Small Towns and Rural Areas," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, ed. Alanen and Melnick, 20; Watt, "The Trouble with Preservation"; Melody Webb, "Cultural Landscapes in the National Park Service," *Public Historian* 9 (Spring 1987): 77-89; Rebecca Conard, "Applied Environmentalism, or Reconciliation Among 'the Bios' and 'the Culturals,' *Public Historian* 23 (Spring 2001): 9-18; "Shenandoah: Managing Cultural Resources in a Natural Park," *Cultural Resource Management* 21 (1998, no.1).

nature to coexist. We "leave ourselves little hope of discovering what an ethical, sustainable, *honorable*, human place in nature might actually look like," Cronon writes. The trouble with wilderness comes into stark contrast in the Apostle Islands, where the wilderness itself is of such clear human creation, but Park Service management policies force the segregation of nature and culture.[41]

Environmental historians and scholars from a wide variety of fields have started to question the modern wilderness ideal. Native Americans consciously and extensively manipulated their environments with their agriculture, their use of fire, their control of water, and their settlement patterns. The lands that Euro-Americans first encountered in the New World, in other words, were neither pristine nor untrammeled. Creating a seemingly pristine wilderness, often in the national parks, required the violent removal of Indian societies. Scholars have also analyzed the cultural construction of wilderness—the recognition that the wilderness ideal is the product of modern, industrialized society. Although the traditional narrative of American environmental history has begun to change, the management policies established to tell this story have been slow to catch up.[42]

A final reason that the NPS employs a rigid definition of wilderness is its need for what might be called a legible landscape. Anthropologist and political scientist James C. Scott, in his book *Seeing Like a State*, uses the concept of legibility to explain practices as diverse as the creation of permanent last names, the standardization of weights and measures, and the codification of property division. Scott explains each of these as a part "of the state's attempt to

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[41] Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness."

[42] See the introduction for a more complete discussion of changing scholarly interpretations of wilderness.

make a society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified … classic state functions…" The same logic can be applied to wilderness management. The federal government has rigidly specified the way that a wilderness should look and feel so that wilderness management can be consistent across federal lands, no matter the local conditions in any specific place. Such a management policy is easily applied—and the environment thereby more easily controlled. A legible landscape like wilderness is easier to manage than the messy, illegible reality, where every individual landscape is the product of an intricate blend of natural and cultural history that necessarily varies by site. Indeed, NPS policy specifically states that the agency "will seek to achieve consistency in wilderness management objectives, techniques, and practices on both an agency and an interagency basis." The demand for simplified management motivated initial NPS land acquisition policy in the Apostles, as well as the subsequent decisions about how to administer island environments.[43]

A powerful, modern state making decisions about resource management based on legibility did not, of course, come out of nowhere with the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 or the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in 1970. Indeed, the growing power of the state needs to be understood as a part of the fusion of the natural and cultural processes that have made the islands look the way that they do. As Wisconsin gradually increased its ability to control and manage commercial fishing, it used techniques like closed seasons and license requirements to simplify and order the natural world. Both the state and federal governments allocated increasingly scarce resources, determining how those resources could be used to maximize desirable goals like nature protection, economic stability, and opportunities for

[43] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2; National Park Service, *National Park Service Management Policies*, section 6.3.3.

outdoor recreation. The rural zoning ordinances of the 1930s marked a first step in a long process of simplification and resource allocation, a process that culminated in the creation of the lakeshore and the decision for wilderness management.

Wilderness has brought many benefits to the Apostle Islands and the Chequamegon Bay region. The island environments are diverse, healthy, and thriving. Park biologists conduct effective programs to protect the archipelago's threatened species of plants and animals and its vulnerable bogs and sandscapes. Visitors enjoy the combination of Bayfield's rustic charm and the islands' rugged beauty. Hikers, canoeists and kayakers find in the islands the peace and spirituality they often seek in wilderness areas—the sense of escape that critics of the wilderness ideal find so troubling. The national lakeshore and its wilderness landscapes have had significant implications for the local economy; wilderness tourism is big business. Tourism has provided a far more stable economic base for the region than did the boom-and-bust extractive industries like logging, quarrying, and fishing.

The growing power of state authority, and the wilderness management it has imposed on the islands, has also had social consequences. In the late nineteenth century, Ojibwe had their treaty-guaranteed rights to hunt and fish restricted as the state increased its natural resource management authority. The creation of the national lakeshore severed the rich and deep connections between islanders and homes that had been in their families for generations, particularly on Sand and Rocky Islands. The opportunities for solitary, primitive recreation in a wilderness setting have come at the expense of other activities that depended on such amenities as lodges, restaurants, and scenic roads. Wilderness management depends on island resources, but in a far more restrictive way than did the economic activities of an earlier era.

Environmental historians are paying increasing attention to the social consequences of nature protection. As they continue to examine the relationships between humans and nature, they are recognizing the links between this relationship and the distribution of power within human society. Some groups are able to control and restrict the use of the environment, others see their uses restricted or criminalized. Predictably, these consequences are most often borne by members of racial or ethnic minorities on the short end of deeply-entrenched power imbalances. The goal of this larger inquiry is not to weaken wilderness and other forms of nature preservation, but rather to explore and analyze the connections between humans and their environments. Creating parks and wilderness areas or imposing fishing regulations force changes in this relationship, changes to which we need to pay attention

The Future of Wilderness in the Apostle Islands

Abstract as they might seem, changing ideas about wilderness have on-the-ground consequences in places like the Apostles Islands. In Spring 2004, the National Park Service finished a three-year Wilderness Suitability Study—the result of its obligation to study all potential wilderness lands within the system for congressional wilderness designation. This study provided an important commentary on both the islands' past and on their future.

In 2001, NPS planners initiated the Wilderness Suitability Study for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. After a series of such studies across the system in the decade following the Wilderness Act, the NPS did not conduct any for the remainder of the twentieth century. The lakeshore's 1989 *General Management Plan* directed the completion of a wilderness study, and

in 2001 Congress provided the necessary funding. The AINL study was the first conducted by the NPS in over two decades.[44]

In the initial stages of the study, NPS planners made several important decisions about the boundaries of the potential wilderness. They decided, for example, to exclude the mainland unit entirely from wilderness consideration, as well as the waters surrounding the islands. The NPS controls only a narrow strip of land along the mainland shore of the Bayfield Peninsula, and roads and several nonfederal tracts of land cut across this strip, making wilderness management impractical. The water between the islands lies outside of the boundaries of AINL; the state of Wisconsin still holds this jurisdiction, while the NPS administers the islands themselves. Although the NPS does own the surface water one-quarter mile from the island shorelines, planners decided that managing this narrow stretch of water as wilderness was not practical. Public docks were not considered, either, because they provide public access to the islands and were designed for motorized watercraft; NPS planners likened the docks to mainland parking lots and excluded them from consideration. The lighthouses and their adjoining cultural landscapes, the administrative areas on several islands, and the interpretive fish camp on Manitou Island were also left out of the potential wilderness. So, too, were two important Sand Island sites: the Shaw/Hill farmstead and the West Bay Club. The Shaw-Hill site contained many historic structures, and the Anderson/Rice family maintained a lifetime lease on the property that

[44] National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin: Draft Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, DC: National Park Service/U.S. Department of the Interior, 2003), 1, 9; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin, *General Management Plan*, 52.

would keep the site out of NPS control for several decades, at least. As for the West Bay Club, the NPS declared it "clearly a sign of past human activity."[45]

The study took three years. NPS planners identified four alternatives for wilderness designation. Alternative A recommended no wilderness whatsoever. Alternative B maximized wilderness by declaring 94 percent of the park's land base as wilderness; only those lands determined unsuitable were excluded. Alternative C recommended that 80 percent of the land base be declared wilderness, leaving out Sand, Basswood, Long, and a portion of Stockton Island. Alternative D limited wilderness to the most remote, least visited parts of the park, recommending 55 percent of the land base for wilderness. After wide public comment, the NPS study team identified alternative C as the preferred alternative, and made this recommendation formal when it completed the study in early 2004.[46]

NPS planners believed that Alternative C offered several distinct advantages. First, it declared 80 percent of the park as wilderness. Second, the islands that it excluded provided opportunities to manage and interpret the environmental history of the Apostles. The NPS recognized the process of rewilding as an essential component of this history. "This alternative … is intended to ensure that there will be outstanding opportunities for people to learn both the stories of the people who settled and altered these islands and the story of the 'rewilding' of the park … the prices whereby the park's historical 'wilderness' qualities are gradually returning." The inclusion of Sand and Basswood Islands in the wilderness area would require the NPS to

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[45] National Park Service/Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin, *Apostle Islands: Wilderness Study Workbook* (Washington: DC: National Park Service, 2002), 6-7.

[46] National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin: Draft Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement*; United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Record of Decision: Wilderness Study Final Environmental Impact Statement*, http://www.nps.gov/apis/finalrod.pdf.

remove the "non-conforming conditions"—that is, the visible evidence of the human past. Exclusion from the wilderness meant that these resources could remain and serve as the center of interpretative efforts. Long Island was left out of the proposal because of its high level of day use and limited opportunities for solitude, and also because if the island's religious significance to Ojibwe and the Bad River Band's opposition to designation there.[47]

Park Service officials were quick to point out that little would change on the islands under any of the alternatives. The NPS has pursued a wilderness management policy on the islands almost since the creation of the lakeshore in 1970. "Our mantra is if you like us now," explained AINL superintendent Bob Krumenaker, "you'll like us later." Wilderness designation would add congressional authority to NPS policy. It would also provide long-term stability to NPS management in the islands. "In the long run, wilderness designation *prevents* major changes from occurring in the park—something visitors tell us is very important to them. Wilderness is the best way to keep things the way they are today. For you. For your children. And for generations yet to come, regardless of changes in park management or political climate," stated AINL officials on the website created to publicize the suitability study. Wilderness designation would also satisfy the conditions stipulated by the Wisconsin legislature when it transferred title of the islands to the federal government.[48]

The NPS study team received over 4,500 written comments in the first stage of the wilderness suitability study, and an additional 3,500 responses after the publication of the study's

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[47] National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin: Final Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2004), 33; United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Record of Decision*, 2-3.

[48] *Milwaukee Journal*, July 9, 2002; Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, *Wilderness Suitability Study: Frequently Asked Questions*, http://www.nps.gov/apis/wild_faq.htm.

first draft. The "overwhelming majority" of these comments supported designation, with most of the comments supporting either the preferred alternative or alternative B, which called for maximizing wilderness. Some correspondents supported the preferred alternative but requested that the NPS alter it to include Basswood Island in the wilderness area. The handful of people opposed to designation worried primarily that the NPS would use wilderness management to restrict motorized access to the islands. Much of this opposition stemmed from a controversy over wilderness management at nearby Isle Royale National Park, where changes in NPS management did indeed result in the exclusion of motorboats from certain areas. In the Apostles, though, all docks were deliberately excluded from consideration as wilderness to maximize public access to the islands.[49]

Completion of the wilderness suitability study does not guarantee designation as wilderness. Although the regional director of the Park Service's Midwest region has approved the study and its recommendations, designation still requires the approval of the director of the NPS, the interior secretary, the president, and Congress. Wilderness proposals are always controversial; designation for the Apostle Islands is far from certain.

The islands, though, grow wilder with each passing year. The actions of the fishermen, farmers, and lumberjacks who once lived and worked in the islands will recede further into the past. The impacts of their actions on island environments—their decisions about where to fish, when to farm, or how to log—will become harder and harder to see. Their legacy will remain, though, in the location of campgrounds and the composition of the islands forests. Choices about

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[49] "Summary of Written Scoping Comments," March 11, 2002, AINL, copy in author's files; National Park Service, *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin: Final Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement*, 112, 124, 148; John D. Neal, "Wilderness Suitability Study for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore," AINL memo, November 2001.

resource management made by state and federal officials are, in some ways, easier to trace than those made for resource extraction a century ago. The very wildness of the islands provides the evidence of decisions to allow some types of activity and not others, to manage the islands in a way that allowed the wilderness to return.

It is the way that this wilderness returns to the islands—the process of rewilding—that gives the islands their greatest value. Neither human nor ecological processes alone created the island wilderness, but a mixture of the two. Understanding the role of history, even in seemingly pristine wilderness, helps us to fully understand the ecological complexity of places like the Apostle Islands. For no matter how wild the Apostles become in the future, the island wilderness will always have a history.

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