

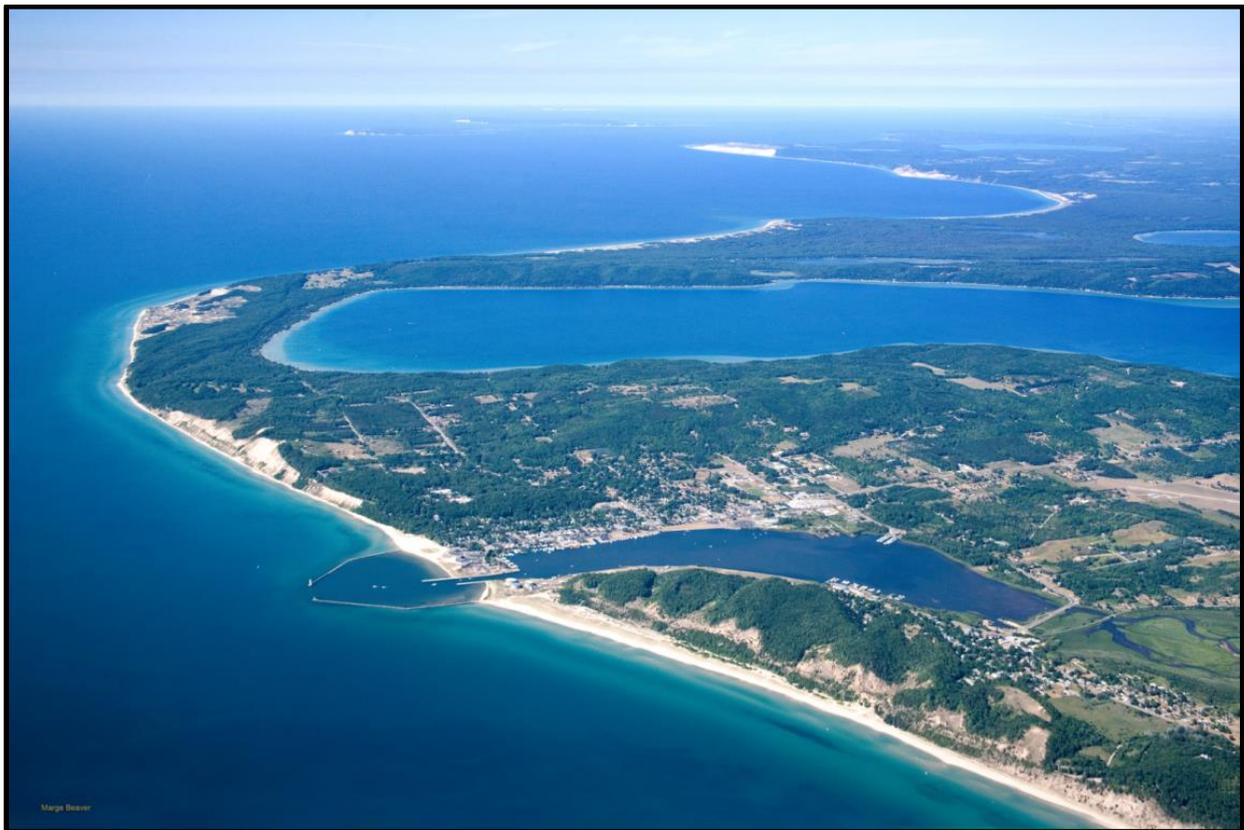
# CRYSTALANA

## A JOURNAL OF

### Historical Reflections and Current Perspectives of Crystal Lake, Its Watershed, & Benzie County, MI.

As compiled by Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, a humble saunterer, and  
"President *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., Est. 1873."

Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018.



#### "Crystalana" : Statement of Purpose

"Crystalana" [www.Crystalana.com](http://www.Crystalana.com) is a new website to complement [www.CrystalLakeComedy.com](http://www.CrystalLakeComedy.com) and to supplement two published texts: "**The Comedy of Crystal Lake**" (2015), a 496-page book; and its classic prequel, "**The Tragedy of Crystal Lake**" (1922), a 17-page pamphlet. Subjects will be presented in journal format. Each issue will contain two feature articles: a Historical Reflection, and a Current Perspective, supported by brief commentaries on People, Places, Phenomena, and Potpourri encountered across the greater Crystal Lake Watershed in Northwest Lower Michigan.

[Photo: Marge Beaver, "Above the North", #127, 7/2/2005. [photography-plus.com](http://photography-plus.com) ]

Issue Theme: “Crystalana”

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Prologue

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

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

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

-- Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, 29 Aug 1937 - ( ), *“The Comedy of Crystal Lake”*, 2015.

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

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

“Crystal Lake was special for me too. I came; saw; conquered; but never idled.”

-- “A.J.” (Archibald Jones, Jr.) (1811-1895)

## **Historical Reflection: “Crystalana”**

[“**Crystalana**”, Rev. H.S. Mills, Wanderer’s Column, Benzie Banner 29(36), 1, 6 (04 Aug 1927).]

“The above caption ( “**Crystalana**” ) needs an explanation.” “It is not the name of a nice young lady, though ‘Crystal Anna’ wouldn’t be a bad name for a handsome young girl. Nor is it like ‘Crystallia’ (sic), the name of a new resort that has been opened on the shore of the lovely (Crystal) lake. It is rather the caption of an idea, which, if it may be carried out in a practical way will be a valuable thing for the community, and increasingly valuable as the years go by.”

“I have been thinking it might be well to start something of the kind for the Crystal Lake Region. It would hardly do to issue an “Encyclopedia Crystalana”. We are not quite big enough or famous enough to compete in that way with The British Empire, or with the Great American Republic; but I think we are big enough and famous enough to plan for the preservation of the history, literature, and traditions of this beautiful Crystal Lake Region.”

“History is never appreciated in the making, and traditions are never born until they are old. It is curious about that. The making of history is its most important stage. After it is once made, there is nothing to do but to record it, preserve it, and learn from it; and yet, when history is in the process of construction, nobody thinks much about it. In fact, it is made almost unconsciously. It is but the onflowing of the stream of common life. But after a century has passed by, the record of those common, uneventful years is eagerly read and closely scrutinized by those of succeeding generations.”

“Every man should have a ‘Vocation’ and an ‘Avocation’. His Vocation is his life work, and he ought to put into it his best energies. His avocation is some side issue – some extra work he is interested in, and to which he devotes a portion of his spare time. His avocation will rest him, and fit him the better to pursue his vocation. The Wanderer did not play golf or tennis or base-ball – it might have been better for him if he had. But his avocation was Making Scrap-Books. For twenty years it was his habit to clip from the papers items of local and general interest, and paste them in books.”

“Could there not be an alcove, a book-case, or a shelf in the Community House Library, where such records could be preserved and open to the public, and to future generations? There are some books and pamphlets that have been written by people who have lived here that might profitably be assembled and kept. There are other propositions written by people now living that might properly find a place in such a collection.”

“Many more productions worthy of preservation might be added to this list, and as the years go by it would receive accessions from time to time, and thus there would be made a notable literary collection that would not only have present value, but would be increasingly valuable as the years go by. Will not the Community House Committee move in this matter and appoint a special committee who shall make this suggestion a reality?” (HSM) July 25, 1927.

[(\*) The Benzie Area Historical Museum contains a trove of historical records of individual people and places associated with diverse topics for consideration in the modern resurrection of “Crystalana”. The Benzie Area Historical Society seeks to educate the public about the Benzie area, its people, and its history through exhibits at the museum and programs throughout the area. The Benzie Area Historical Museum, owned and operated by the Society, collects and preserves artifacts, photos, and stories about our past (inc. many of the columns of Rev. H.S. Mills. The Museum is housed in an 1887 Congregational Church building and is on the Michigan State Register of Historic Sites.”]

The Benzie Area Historical Museum (Michigan State Historic Site, 1981), PO Box 101, 6941 Traverse Ave., Benzonia, MI 49616, 231-882-5539. [www.benziemuseum.org/index.html](http://www.benziemuseum.org/index.html)

## **Current Perspective: A Prospectus for “Crystalana”**

[“**Crystalana**”, a repository to preserve the history, literature, and traditions of the Crystal Lake area.]

“**Crystalana**” will consider Historical Reflections and Current Perspectives of an unique environment: the Crystal Lake Watershed, within Benzie County, in Northwest Lower Michigan. It invokes physical and mental “sauntering” - travelling at a measured, but thoughtful, pace toward an uncertain goal, while encountering myriad subjects of local interest. Past, present, and future interactions and events will be contemplated, interpreted, and reassembled in journal format to comprise a “**Benzie Book**”.

“Saunterers” of Benzie County in the present context are of three types: (1) “Townies” - descendants of pioneering ancestors, or long-time residents; (2) “Lakies” - more recent immigrants, like cottagers with expectations of adventure, or retirees, with their changing lifestyles; and (3) “Fudgies” - transient visitors, who come and go for shorter durations. All saunter down separate life paths from place to place over differing periods of time and become creators and caretakers of “**Crystalana**”. These diverse saunterers meet, interact, assimilate, and share common experiences within their mutual watershed environment. They become: (4) “Shedies” – receivers of historical reflections and current perspectives to contemplate, and transmit onward to future generations.

“Serendipity” is the fortuitous occurrence and subsequent encounter with “chance” events in which unintended consequences arise from intended actions. It is often associated with sauntering through a familiar environment - akin to not looking for anything in particular, and discovering something very surprising and significant right under one’s nose or at one’s feet. Unique and unusual events can be described in “vignettes” – short evocative literary sketches and/or verbal portraits.

“**Crystalana**” expands original “saunterings” by broadening understanding and elaborating facts that were largely unknown or less fully documented in previous accounts. It is this author’s intent neither to disparage the “**Tragedy**”, nor to exalt the “**Comedy**”. The “**Tragedy**” occurred during 1873, and its “tragic” aspects were felt well into the early 1900s. The transition into the “**Comedy**”, with its “comedic” aspects, is of more recent interpretation and still continues. The former remains forever indelibly inscribed in our collective memories; the latter only embellishes upon its virtues.

Each issue of “**Crystalana**” will have a central theme and will emphasize diverse characters and sundry locales, esp. featuring its chief protagonist, Archibald Jones Jr. (“A.J.”) (1811-1890), President of the Benzie County River Improvement Company, searching for opportunities, experiencing adventures, and facing vicissitudes of the opening of the American Midwest.

To accomplish this ambition, “**Crystalana**” will be a verbal collage of intertwining stories within stories of People, Places, Phenomena, and Potpourri encountered within the Crystal Lake Watershed and across Benzie County. “**Crystalana**” will feature myriad saunterings supported by texts, maps, poems, quotations, aphorisms, philosophies, (with emphases added) all in imagination, and in reality, associated with the sense of being of, and belonging to, the greater community of Crystal Lake.

“**Crystalana**” is designed initially to follow the chronology of events described within the chapters comprising the two interrelated Parts of “**The Comedy of Crystal Lake**”: I. The Lowering of the Lake, and II. The Biography of Archibald Jones. Publication may be irregular and format subject to change. “**Crystalana**” is intended to be informative, educational, and entertaining for its readers.

Contents from published sources are in the public domain; those from copyrighted sources (©) are intended for educational noncommercial purposes. Hopefully, “Crystalana” will provide enlightenment from the past, enjoyment of the present, and encouragement for the future. Comments are welcome.

-- Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, A Humble Saunterer, January, 2018.

## **People: The Originator of “Crystalana” (The Rev. Harlow Spencer Mills)**

The idea for emulating a repository of “**Crystalana**” is taken unabashedly from newspaper columns penned by the Rev. Harlow Spencer Mills (08 Oct 1846 - 01 Feb 1931). As the long-term pastor of the Benzonia Congregational Church, from 1896 to 1916, and frequent newspaper contributor, he needs little introduction to Benzie readers.

He began writing weekly columns for the Benzie Banner in 1910-1911, continuing until early 1931. Numbering more than 1,000, they cover subjects taken from his keen observations of humankind over three periods of his life: the Pastor’s Column, the Neighbor’s Column, and the Wanderer’s Column. After losing his personal library his parsonage burned in December 1915, he received many replacement books as gifts, including a twenty-volume set of “The Encyclopedia Americana”. He also avidly pursued his avocation of filling “scrap-books” with items of local and general interest.

[(\*) Grand Traverse College, was chartered in 1863, but reorganized in 1891 as Benzonia College, providing college-level education until 1900, when it became the Benzonia Academy. In 1906, George Catton became headmaster and his family lived on the main floor of the women’s dormitory. His son, Bruce Catton wrote the Pulitzer-Prize winning book “Waiting for the Morning Train”, a memoir of his life in Benzonia. Destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1909, it was renamed “Mills Cottage” in honor of Rev. Mills. The Academy closed in 1918, but the distinctive red brick building known after several renovations as the Mills Community House, is an integral part of the community.]

The Mills Community House (National Register of Historic Places, 1972) PO Box 421, 891 Michigan Ave., Suite A, Benzonia, MI 49616 <https://www.millscommhouse.org/history.html>

## **Places: The Location of “Crystalana”**

“**Crystalana**” is defined by the Crystal Lake Watershed located in Benzie Co., in NW Lower MI. It is a small, self-contained subwatershed (45 sq mi) of the larger Betsie River Watershed to the south. It is contiguous to the Platte River Watershed, and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to the north. The Betsie River Watershed encompasses seventeen townships across Benzie, Manistee, and Grand Traverse Cos. Crystal Lake is ringed by smaller lakes: to the south by Betsie Lake on the Betsie River, and the Herring Lakes flowing into Lake Michigan; and to the north by Round Lake, Long Lake, and Rush Lake, and by Little and Big Platte Lakes, with the Platte River flowing through the latter into Lake Michigan. Crystal Lake, a former glacial embayment, is contained by high sand ridges, and lies high above an isthmus separating it from Lake Michigan and Point Betsie to the west.

## **Phenomena: The Genesis of “Crystalana”**

The series of vignettes being considered for “**Crystalana**” are extensions of subjects found within two published texts: “**The Comedy of Crystal Lake**” (2015), and its classic prequel, “**The Tragedy of Crystal Lake**” (1922). These two books in juxtaposition describe the geo-socio-economic effects caused by an epochal event, precipitated by the converging effects of both natural and anthropogenic forces, the lowering of Crystal Lake in 1873, but from two very differing perspectives! The common plot of this well-known true story involves the precipitous lowering of Crystal Lake that evolved from a sad (tragic) beginning (a failed canal) into a happy (comedic) happy ending (a sandy beach). The unintended consequences of this endeavor, with its serendipitous elements, have since evolved from a perceived “failure” of an “ill-advised project” by an apparent scapegoat, to an unqualified “success” by a visionary celebrated as a local hero (\*). Subsequent serendipitous sauntering through a trove of historical records has led to many fortuitous “rediscoveries” of forgotten and under-appreciated items.

[(\*) The life and times of Archibald Jones, Jr., will be elucidated in the unfolding of “**Crystalana**”. ]

## **Potpourri: About the Humble Saunterer**

Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels (PhD, ChE, UM 1967), has been a professional environmental engineer in industry (Dow Chemical); academia (University of Michigan); small business (Ingenuity IEQ); government (MDEQ, U.S. EPA); and nonprofits (Michigan Lake & Stream Associations, ML&SA; Crystal Lake & Watershed Association, CLWA; Benzie Area Historical Society (BAHS); and Benzie Area Genealogical Society (BAGS). He has observed, participated, and directed many environmental studies of the Crystal Lake Watershed.

His activities with the CLWA, and its predecessors, have included: Board memberships since the 1960s; chairs of Water Quality and of Education & Communications Committees, and editor of newsletters and webpages. In 1993, he created the Crystal Lake "***Walkabout***", an educational program for students in Benzie Co., and coordinated it until 2015. He has been a member/chair of national science advisory committees, and has authored/coauthored 360 papers/presentations on diverse environmental topics, including more than 120 on the Great Lakes and Crystal Lake. His father was the Superintendent of Frankfort Public Schools; his mother, an English teacher; his wife, a science teacher; and his daughter, an elementary teacher and lawyer. He also has written many environmentally-themed poems, and has been an avid runner in the Crystal Lake Team Marathon.

He has accumulated a wealth of experiences of the local area, and wishes to continue to share his contemporary philosophy on the sense of place and environmental consequence of being at Crystal Lake with the extended Benzie community.

His new book, "***The Comedy of Crystal Lake***" (2015) tells the true story of Archibald Jones, and the attempt in 1873 to build a canal from Crystal Lake to Lake Michigan. The dramatic lowering of a very large inland lake, and the creation of its sandy beach, was an epochal event that led to the future development of Crystal Lake and Benzie Co. [www.CrystalLakeComedy.com](http://www.CrystalLakeComedy.com) Dr. Daniels assumes his current role as "President *pro tem*, Benzie County River Improvement Company, Est. 1873".

Contact: Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, P.O. Box 281, Frankfort, MI 49635,  
[www.Crystalana.com](http://www.Crystalana.com) , [FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com](mailto:FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com)

**In Reality:** Crystal Lake experienced a dramatic lowering in 1873. It is still among the largest inland lakes in Michigan in depth, 165 ft (#3), surface area, 9,896 A (#11), and volume, 221 B gal (#3).

### **Epilogue**

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

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

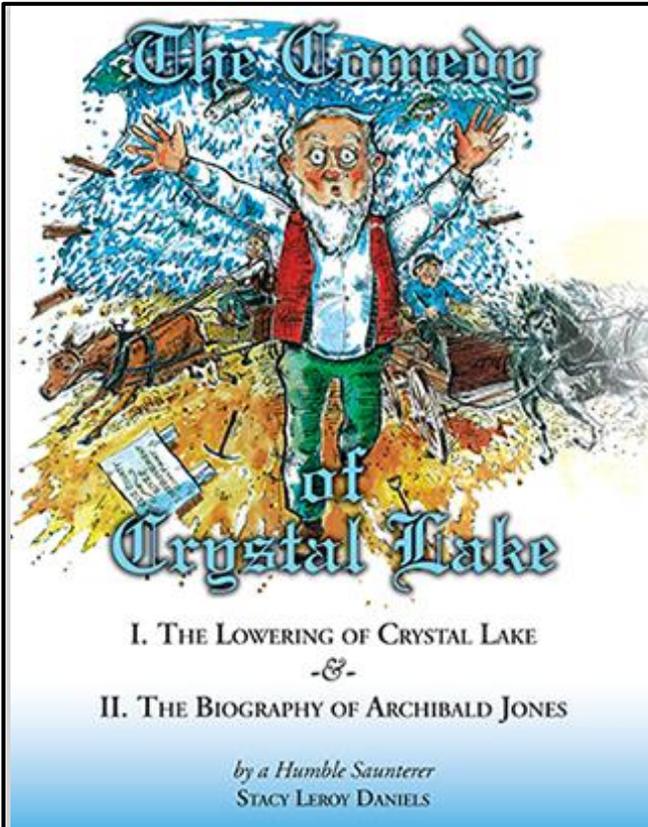
**And so, O lovely lake, you gave to me  
A message straight from God. And I still take  
That message with me as I wander far.  
And hope once more to see you, Crystal Lake.**

-- Walter F. Case, 04 Feb 1895 – 06 Mar 1923, "***The Tragedy of Crystal Lake***", 1922.

**References:**

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

Case, William L., **“The Tragedy of Crystal Lake”** , “with Some Sidelights, By a Survivor, 1st Ed., J.W. Saunders, Beulah, MI, 1922, 17pp. (A copy of the 2007 reprint is included in **“The Comedy”**.)



**“THE COMEDY OF CRYSTAL LAKE”**  
[ Sequel to the classic “Tragedy” (1922) ]

The story of Archibald Jones and the attempt to build a canal from Crystal Lake to Lake Michigan in 1873. The dramatic lowering of a very large inland lake and the creation of its sandy beach.

The epochal event that led to the development of Crystal Lake and Benzie Co.

Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, “President, *pro temp* Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., Est 1873”  
ISBN 978-0-692-21715-3 | Hardcover | 9” x 12”  
496 Pages | 200 Illustrations  
Flushed With Pride Press ©2015  
PO BOX 281, Frankfort, MI 49635  
[FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com](mailto:FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com)  
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