

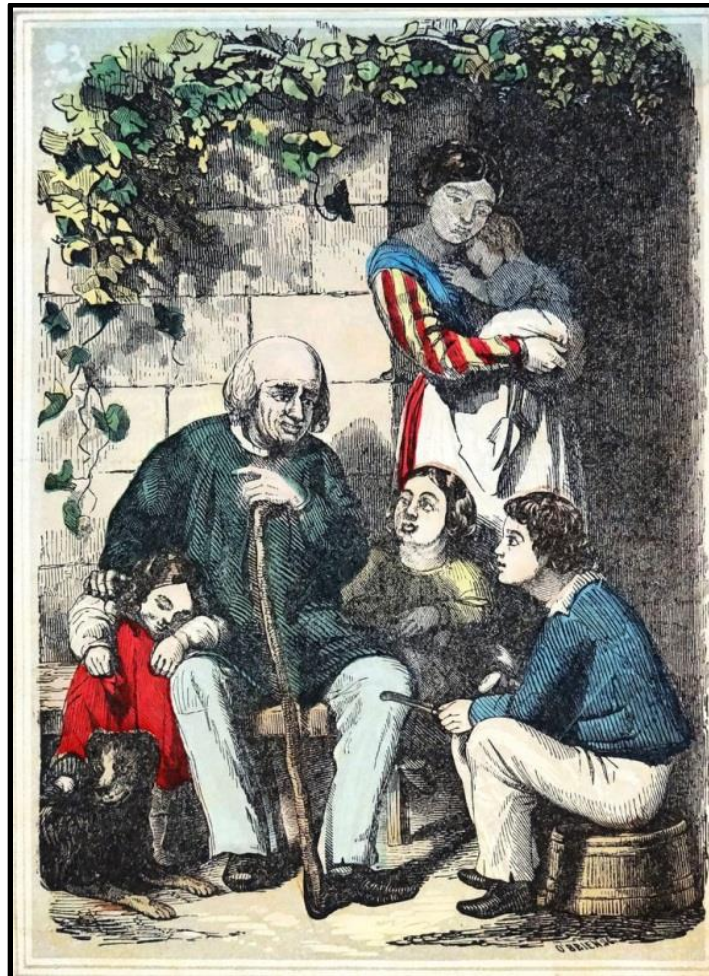
# CRYSTALANA

## 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. 2, 2018.



#### The Aged Pioneer Relating His Early Adventures

"Some fine summer's evening, he may be seen seated in the porch of his dwelling, his frank, open countenance beaming with delight as he related the tale of his early adventure to his little grandchildren, who, clustered about his knees, drink in every word with intense interest."

-- Henry Howe, Historical Collections of the Great West, 1854. (Frontispiece)

Issue Theme: "The Benzie Book"

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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.

"... Long thus, and various, ev'ry riv'let strays,  
Till closing, now, their long meand'ring maze,  
Where in a smiling vale the mountains end,  
Form'd in a crystal lake the waters blend..."

-- The Lusiad of Luís Vaz de Camões, Book IX, Lines 573-576.

"As white cap'd waves wash'd a temporary dam askew,  
Ere locks be placed, the riv'let burst forth again.  
A torrent stray'd to Betsey River, to Frankfort, ran through  
Form'd from the Crystal lake to blend in vast Lake Michigan."

-- "A.J."

### **Historical Reflection: "The Benzie Book"**

[***"The Benzie Book"***, Rev, H.S. Mills, Neighbor's Column BB 28(12), 1 (16 Nov 1922).]

"I suppose that every community has an interesting history, if only it were fully known and truly told—a history that would be well worth recording because the community is composed of human beings, and every human life is fraught with intense interest. But it would seem that for some reason this Crystal Lake region has more than its share of charming scenes and attractive localities, and that in its early settlement and its succeeding history there has been an unusual number of stirring events. Perhaps it seems so only because we know about them, but be that as it may, they are well worth describing and recording."

"I understand that a man eminent, for his literary ability (Frank T. Lee), has undertaken the work of preparing a small book describing the beauties of this Crystal Lake region, and setting forth in an attractive way the interesting features of this locality. It will be profusely illustrated, and made in every way attractive, and no doubt will be in great demand, not only by those whose homes are here, but also by large numbers of the resorters who come this way in the summer time. I don't know what the title of such a publication would be, but I suggest that it be called '***The Benzie Book***'."

"Of course the contents of such a book would be varied. There would be a description of the scenery of the region, and if it were in any degree adequate it would be fascinating, for it is difficult to match the natural features of the landscape in any county of Michigan. The dozen lakes each one of which is a gem of beauty the high sand dunes along the Lake Michigan shore, and the deep wooded hills of the back country; the Betsey and the Platte Rivers as they make their winding way toward the Big Lake; the clear troutt (sic) stream, the home of the wary fish that have such a fascination for the gamesters; the good stone roads that run in every direction—all these would furnish ample material for the descriptive faculty."

"And then the towns and villages will receive some attention. Frankfort, with its picturesque location, its fine shipping facilities, and its teeming summer population; Benzonia-Beulah, the twin villages at the east end of Crystal Lake where the County seat is located; Thompsonville down in the south east corner, Honor, nestling in its narrow valley, and Lake Ann in the north east corner—they are all attractive villages, and should be well described. The two summer assemblies which in their season are populous towns, would receive adequate attention."

"The large resort settlements around the Platte Lakes and Crystal Lake would require some attention, and the people would want to hear about Crystallia, Robinson's, Pautz Resort, Glen Eyrie, Glen Rhoda, VanDeman's Land and other points of interest would come in for description, and their special attractions would need to be noted."

"The writer of such a book would need to give some attention to the fruit interests of this region, which are more extensive than many of us think. The large orchards on the north shore, the "Crystal Lake Orchards", the "K. and W. Orchards", and the Rogers and Kraker orchards, numbering practically, in one body, more than 30,000 trees; the Hill Orchards, formerly known as the Paul Rose Farm and many smaller orchards, all told make an aggregate that would astonish many who think of this north country as a wilderness."

"The churches and schools would of course come in for their share of attention, and there would be some account of the first settlement of this region, and of the ideals and aims of those "sturdy pioneers that have had so much to do with the character of its later development. It may be that mention would be made of some of the people who have been prominent in the history of the county, and perhaps their faces might appear on the pages of the book. The pictures would be a prominent

feature. The illustrations would be numerous, and in the highest style of art, and would add very much to the attractiveness of the publication.”

“Surely with such abundant and valuable material, and with skillful literary treatment such a book would be heartily welcomed by all the people who live in this region, as well as by our large summer population. It would be a valuable means of publicity and advertisement that all would appreciate”.

“Let us look for “*The Benzie Book*” and be ready to give it a hearty welcome when it appears.”

### Current Perspective: Crystal Lake – Commonality and Uniquity

[“*The Comedy*”, 2015, Readers’ Perspective, p xxx.]

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

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

One lake’s uniqueness is an object lesson to be extrapolated to other lakes. Uniqueness of opportunity brought Archibald Jones to Crystal Lake. The Benzie County River Improvement Co. improved upon Nature, and increased both uniqueness and commonality for Crystal Lake. This two-part tale is directed toward young adults and mature audiences, who have surmised that a special and unique “spirit of place” exists for Crystal Lake and its Watershed.

In 1873, the level of Crystal Lake was dramatically lowered in an attempt to construct a slack-water canal between it and Lake Michigan. Most other canals had differences in level of only a few feet, the original level of Crystal Lake was 35 feet above Lake Michigan which made it especially attractive for a canal. Unfortunately, the whitecap waves of Crystal Lake washed out a temporary dam before a permanent canal could be completed. The level of the Lake dropped precipitously by 17 feet and 56 billion gallons of water poured down its outlet.

Although a canal system was never realized, the lowering of the Lake exposed a 21-mile perimeter of sandy beach where none had previously existed. This made possible: the founding of the Village of Beulah, the coming of the railroad, installation of telegraph and telephone lines, development of lakeside resorts, construction of 1,100 cottages, all connected by an infrastructure of perimeter roads and trails.

This epochal event is unsurpassed compared to all other large inland lakes in Michigan history. Its unintended consequences make this story worthy of telling to a wider audience.

## **People: Rev. Frank T. Lee**

The Rev. Frank Theodosius Lee (23 Mar 1847, Kenosha, WI – 1934 Claremont, CA) graduated Oberlin College, Class of 1874 and successful pastor in Maywood, IL, became Dean of the School of Bible and Christian Training which has just been established at Washburn College, Topeka, KS, where the Rev. Charles Monroe Sheldon, a well-known theologian and social reformer was the minister of the Central Congregational Church. He later moved to Claremont, CA, where the Rev. H.S. Mills had retired. All three Revs. were associated with the Congregational Summer Assembly.

Dr. Lee and his family spent many summers in the early 1900s at Frankfort, at the CSA, at Crystal Lake, where they had a cottage. He was well-qualified to write a ten-part series of historical and descriptive sketches entitled: "The Attractions of Crystal Lake and Vicinity", that was serialized in the Benzie Banner from February through April of 1923. The entire series was then later published as a 32-pp pamphlet included: I. The Traverse Region; II. Benzie County—Fruit Culture; III. Crystal Lake and How It Was Lowered; IV. Frankfort in Its Beginnings; V. Present Day Frankfort and Elberta; VI. Benzonia—Beulah; VII. The Congregational Summer Assembly; VIII. South Shore Resorts—The Christian Assembly; IX. West and North Shore Resorts—Crystalia (sic); and X. Honor—Platte Lake.

[(\*) Lee, Frank T., Attractions of Crystal Lake and Vicinity, Benzie County, Michigan, Historical and Descriptive, Record Publishing Company, Beulah, Mich., 1923, 32 pp.]

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071294121;view=1up;seq=33> ]

## **Places: "The Attractions of Crystal Lake and Vicinity"**

[Conclusion. Frank T. Lee, Benzie Banner 28(31), 9 (05 Apr 1923).]

"The Attractions of Crystal Lake and Vicinity" have now been sufficiently set forth to make it evident how desirable a region this is for summer outings. For a life out of doors, in an unconventional way and among unconventional people, the Crystal Lake region is unrivaled. There are no "fashionable" resorts here, and it is hoped that there never may be. To get away from fashion's exacting demands and the strenuous pressure of one's routine life, and actually to rest and recreate for a season is the underlying motive of coming here. Especially is the region favorable for family outings. No better place for turning children loose and for healthful recreations for young people can be found. This is more and more being realized by the thousands of people, all told, who find their way here every summer. The number is all the time increasing."

"It is difficult to realize that this region, for miles around, was, hardly a half century ago an unbroken forest, but the work of cutting timber for lumber purposes was carried forward vigorously for a number of years, until the heaviest of it was removed. Since then the ground has gradually been cleared for farming purposes. Were it possible for the Indians who used to roam through these parts, following various trails through the forest, to revisit the country, they would hardily recognize it."

## **Phenomena: Digging Up the Early History of the Region**

"The writer (Frank T. Lee) has spent his summer vacations at Crystal Lake from the time of the establishment of the Congregational Summer Assembly here (1904), not having missed a season (~20 years). Nor has he ever wearied in coming. It has been interesting, although not always easy, to dig up the early history of the region, but it has seemed to be a worth while task which no one appears to have attempted hitherto. Effort has been made to be accurate and to verify statements made, although slight errors may have inadvertently crept in. The constant embarrassment has been, to select from the abundant material which has become available. Many interesting facts and incidents have had to be omitted from lack of space." (Lee, Ibid.)

## **Potpourri: Written History**

[Preface on written history from Henry Howe's "Historical Collections of the Great West" (\*).]

"Written history is generally too scholastic to interest the mass. Dignified and formal, it deals mainly in great events, and of those imperfectly, because not pausing to present clear impressions by the associations of individual life. It is these that lend to written fiction its greatest charm, and attract the multitude by appearing more like truth. Although untrue in the particular combinations, scenes and plots delineated, yet well written Fiction is drawn from Nature, from experience, and these facts in life, as with chessmen, are only arranged in new, but natural positions."

"History includes everything in Nature, Character, Customs and Incidents, both general and individual, that contributes to originate what is peculiar in a People, or what causes either their advancement or decline. So broad its scope, that nothing is too mighty for its grasp—so searching, scarce any thing too minute. Were written history a clear transcript of the valuable in history, it would be more enticing than the most fascinating fiction. But as History is written more like Fiction, and Fiction more like History, the latter has an hundred fold its readers."

"Herein are narrated not only the great events in the History of the West, but the smaller matters of individual experience, as important to its illustration. Interspersed are descriptions, of some of those more striking objects of Nature, that elicit wonder, or gratify the love of the grand or the beautiful. Additional, are prominent facts in relation to a distant Land which is lashed by the surf of a far western Ocean—a young Empire, rising in golden splendor under the rays of a far western Sun."

"For this work no originality can be claimed. Like all compilations, it is the production, not of one mind, but of a multitude—the offspring, not of one lather, but of many. Hence, a superiority over an original work. The production of a single mind, however masterly, is pervaded by one style, and occasionally sinks into common place. But a skillful compilation gives a variety, and selecting only the best things, places them where they will best appear in comparison or combination. The fashion has been to prefer original works, and so it will continue until the public forget to regard the fields of literature as one grand Coliseum, and the actors thereon as merely mental Gladiators."

"Compilers are but an humble class—mere Camp followers of the great army of Authors who combat alone for Fame. When they are credited with selecting judiciously, abridging carefully, and combining adroitly, their Lilliputian cups are to the brim. Above this plane of a lower level they have no wings to soar. But on this is a broad field for utility. Such has been our object; and if we beguile the hours and brighten the memory of other days in the mind of the aged Pioneer—if we amuse and instruct the young Farmer, at his evening's fireside, after a hard day's toil—then our measure is filled."

[(\*) Henry Howe (11 Oct 1816 – 14 Oct 1893), the son of a publisher and printer, whose bookstore was one of the most famous in the country. He learned the printing trade, and wrote for local newspapers. He wrote histories of several states in the United States including:

Howe, Henry, Historical Collections of the Great West: Containing Narratives of the Most Important and Interesting Events in Western History -- Remarkable Individual Adventures --Sketches of Frontier Life -- Descriptions of Natural Curiosities: to which is Appended Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, Utah, California, Washington, Nebraska, Kansas, Etc., Etc., Published by G.F. Tuttle, Cincinnati, 1854, 527pp pages 6-7 Preface.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=wbY-AAAAYAAJ> ]

"To contemplate these mighty events—more wondrous than Romance—is instructive to Virtue !—to act well in the Present, its aim!" —to anticipate more glorious changes in the Future, its brightest Hope! – Henry Howe, Ibid. p7.

The sketches of Frank T. Lee were fittingly closed by a poem, "God of The Out of Doors".

God of the out of doors,  
My soul bows down to Thee!  
Creator of the woods and hills,  
The rivers and the sea.

God of the out of doors,  
The rest man cannot give.  
This bit of thy creation grants  
While I beside it live.

Was it the pressure of thy hand  
That formed this Crystal Lake?  
Bending above it bluest sky  
A mirror thus to make?

I thank Thee in my heart,  
God of the out of doors  
For all the restful joy I feel,  
For all thy bounty pours.

Mirror in which my heart may see  
The smile God's face did take  
When in the joy of conscious power,  
He fashioned Crystal Lake-

And I am grateful for this place  
On earth which Thou didst make  
When the kind pressure of thy hand  
Created Crystal Lake.

-- Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, D.D. (\*)

[(\*) "For those who knew Charles M. Sheldon of Topeka, KS, and as he put it, who found in Frankfort and the Congregational Summer Assembly, refreshment for a tired body and a weary mind; and especially to those who, during their tarrying by the big and little lakes, have had eyes to see the beautiful, ears to hear the good, and heart to receive the best, will appreciate the following poem ..."  
-- Thora Layman, Reverent Adoration, Benzie County Patriot 80(35), 6 (16 Mar 1977).]

**In Reality:** Benzie Co., ranks 83/83 in land area (321.34 sq mi); 25/83 in water area (538.38 sq mi) and 37/83 in total (land + water) area (859.72 sq mi).

[(\*) [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/1990\\_Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Area\\_by\\_County\\_32916\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/1990_Land_and_Water_Area_by_County_32916_7.pdf) ]

**In Reality:** The U.S. has 264,837 sq mi of water (7.0% of total area). Alaska (1/50) has 94,743 sq mi of water; Michigan (2/50) has 40,175 sq mi. Michigan ranks (1/50) with 41.5% of total area being water; Hawaii (2/50) with 41.2%; and Alaska (11/50) with only 14.2%.

<https://www.geolounge.com/which-states-have-the-highest-percentage-of-water-area/>

## 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."**

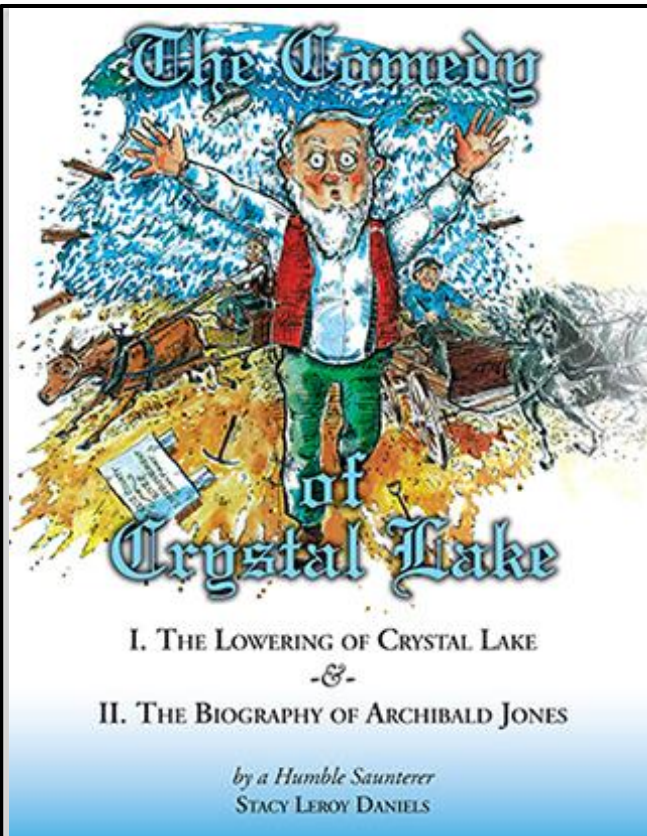
**And so, O lovely lake, you gave to me  
A message straight from God. And I still take  
That message with me as I wander far.  
And hope once more to see you, Crystal Lake.**

-- 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”**.)



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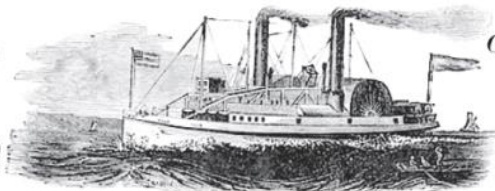
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496 Pages | 200 Illustrations  
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PO BOX 281, Frankfort, MI 49635  
[FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com](mailto:FlushedWithPridePress@gmail.com)  
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