

# “SESQUI-CENTENNIAL”

THE LOWERING OF CRYSTAL LAKE  
BENZIE COUNTY RIVER IMPROVEMENT CO.

## ARCHIBALD JONES



**1873-2023**

[www.crystalana.com/sesqui.htm](http://www.crystalana.com/sesqui.htm)

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

**“SESQUI-CENTENNIAL” – THE LOWERING OF CRYSTAL LAKE (1873 – 2023)**  
**COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET / 24 pp. © 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> Ed, 053023)**

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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.

-- Stacy L. Daniels, *August 29, 1937 - ( ).*

## **INVITATION TO THE “SESQUI-CENTENNIAL” CELEBRATION !**

To my fellow Citizens, Visitors, and Friends, Greetings !

I invite you to participate in the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an epochal event. A series of coordinated activities is planned for the summer of 2023 to commemorate the lowering of Crystal Lake in 1873 which continues to have positive effect upon the history and development of Benzie Co., MI.

On 23 Aug 1873, an attempt was made to build a navigable canal from Crystal Lake to the Betsy River to Lake Michigan at Frankfort (NW Lower MI). A storm with white-capped waves washed away a temporary dam before permanent locks could be installed. The level of Crystal Lake was lowered by 17 feet as a torrent of 56,000,000,000 gallons of water rushed downstream over a period of 3 weeks leaving the canal “high-and-dry” and exposing 2,000 Acres of new beach “low-and-wet”.

The premature ending of the canal project and the conversion of some Lake surface into barren beach seemed a questionable enterprise and a catastrophic failure. It took time for its lasting success to be realized as a “*Tragedy*” (sad beginning) transformed to a “*Comedy*” (happy ending)!

As a long-time “townie” and “lakeie”, I encourage individuals, local groups, businesses, schools, and governments to “rediscover” our shared history by participating in a number of theme-related activities and events. The “*Tragedy*” was celebrated at the Benzonia-Beulah Centennial in 1958, and commemorated as part of the Benzie County Bicentennial of 1976. The “*Comedy*” has been re-enacted in a series of annual Archibald Jones Day celebrations since 2010.

Who was Archibald Jones – a scapegoat to be blamed for an ill-conceived project, or a “bootstrap engineer” to be celebrated as a hero? We now honor this man, who (allegedly) “pulled the plug” at Crystal Lake! In attempting to build a canal in 1873, he created a magnificent beach. It was “the largest inundation from an inland lake due to an anthropogenic (human) cause, a dam breaching, in U.S. history.” (!) It held the record for 147 years (almost a “*sesqui*” = 150 years ago) until surpassed by an even larger inundation on the Tittabawassee River (Four Lakes) above Midland, MI, in 2020.

The combined “*Tragedy*”/“*Comedy*” led to the founding of the Village of Beulah, and the developments of the Village of Benzonia and the City of Frankfort, notably by the coming of the railroad and carferries; installation of telegraph/telephone lines; lakeside resorts, and cottages; all connected by an infrastructure of perimeter roads and trails. The beach now supports more than 1,100 cottages, numerous resorts, several church camps, a yacht club, and a State boating access site. The former railroad is now a walking/biking trail to/from the nearby port city of Frankfort. (The “Crystal Lake Canal,” however, remains an unfulfilled dream !)

The true story of Crystal Lake is indelibly inscribed in our collective memories to various degrees. It has been told fully in large books, and abstracted in short articles, in various forms: letters, essays, quotations, poems, songs, puzzles, artwork, maps, photographs, etc. Several vignettes have been excerpted from earlier sources; others are especially prepared for this Commemorative Booklet. Enjoy!

Sincerely, Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, “President, pro tem, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co. (1873).

For more on “SESQUI” events & Commemorative Booklet, go to [www.crystalana.com/sesqui.htm](http://www.crystalana.com/sesqui.htm)

## **DEDICATION**

To Archibald Jones: “the man who (allegedly) pulled the plug at Crystal Lake”, and to his family, and to his contemporaries, the pioneer settlers of Benzie Co., without whom there would be no story; to the Case's: William L., Walter F., Alden B., Leonard L.; and to the Hubbell's and the Bailey's, and to the Rev. Dr. James Barr Walker, and others, for keeping the story “alive”;

To many Individuals: who provided “new” story facts and suggestions to the whole of the story; To the Citizens of Benzie County: who made suggestions and continue to support the story; To the Visitors to Crystal Lake: who appreciate the consequences of the story; and To my Friends at Crystal Lake: who have tolerated the idiosyncrasies of a lakeside curmudgeon.

This is a story of an epochal event that occurred at a lake of crystal waters:  
where its waters commenced;  
when its waters were  
transported; how its waters  
rose and fell; whether its  
waters are tending; and  
what its waters have effected in myriad quintessential  
ways, by affecting myriad individuals, perchance  
a few times, with dashing whitecaps;  
sometimes, with lapping waves, but  
oftentimes, with subtle ripples.

– Stacy Leroy Daniels, Crystal Lake, 28 January 2014; re-acclaimed, 10 March 2023.

## **PROCLAMATION**

Whereas, Crystal Lake is a very large glacial impoundment lake located NW Lower Michigan;  
Whereas, said Lake was subject to an anthropogenic event unique among all inland lakes;  
Whereas, said event was due to an attempt to build a canal to nearby Lake Michigan;  
Whereas, said event resulted in a breaching of its outlet dam;  
Whereas, said breaching resulted in the discharge of a voluminous portion of lake waters;  
Whereas, said discharge was the largest of its kind in U.S. history for 147 years;  
Whereas, the level of the Lake was lowered by twelve feet;  
Whereas, the receding waters left behind a significant new beach;  
Whereas, some 2,000 Acres of lake surface were transformed into a 21-mile sandy beach;  
Whereas, said event led to the founding of the Village of Beulah; the further development of Frankfort, Benzonia; and Benzie Co.; the coming of the railroad and carferries; installation of telegraph and telephone lines; development of lakeside resorts; and construction of cottages, connected by an infrastructure of perimeter roads and trails.

Therefore, now know ye that, we do by these presents proclaim 23 August 2023 be known as:

**“SESQUI-CENTENNIAL – the Lowering of Crystal Lake (1873 – 2023)”**

Village of Beulah; Village of Benzonia; Village of Elberta; City of Frankfort; County of Benzie; and Townships of Benzonia, Crystal Lake, and Lake; and The State of Michigan.

(To be read at the "8th Annual Cold Creek Bridge Walk - Celebrating 150 Years of the Lowering of Crystal Lake", Monday, 04 September 2023)

**“A MAN. A PLAN. A CANAL. A BEACH. A PANORAMA !**  
**– A SAUNTERER’S VIEW OF CRYSTAL LAKE (BENZIE CO), MI” (\*)**

*“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).*

Why tell the story about a singular esoteric ubiquitous event: the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake? Consider two twin antonyms: “uBiquity” and “uNiquity”, pronounced phonetically as: *you-bik-kwah-tee* and *you-nee-kwah-tee*. A cloud of mosquitos in the woods is *ubiquitous* (commonly everywhere at once); the one-of-a-kind that doesn’t seem to bite you at first is *uniquitous* (uncommonly rare)! All northern Michigan lakes share commonalities: 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. “The lake vacation bug bites all!”

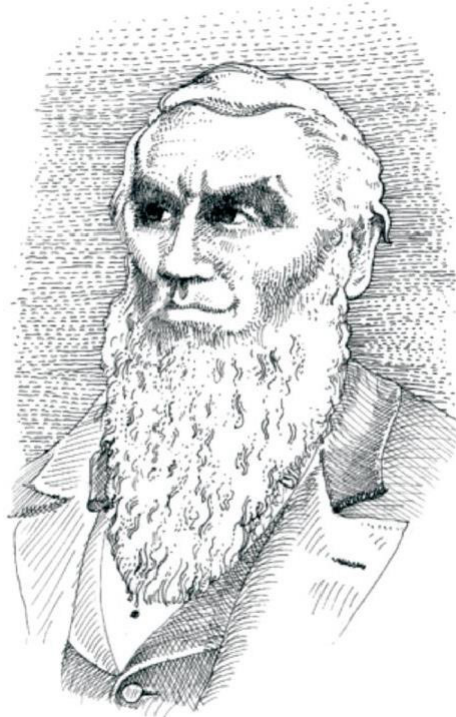
Peculiar to Michigan were needs to improve the land-locked entrances of drowned river mouths along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan (i.e., the West Coast of MI) by creating “harbors of refuge” for shipping, and inland waterways to access the interior of the State. Other “improvement projects” included: canals, dams, locks, docks, and 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*.

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 away a temporary dam before the canal could be completed. The level of the Lake dropped precipitously by 17 feet as 56 billion gallons of water poured down its outlet. Although a canal system was never realized, some 2,000 Acres of former lake surface was transformed into a 21-mile perimeter of sandy beach. This made possible: the founding of the Village of Beulah; the development of Frankfort and Benzie Co.; the coming of the railroad and carferries; installation of telegraph and telephone lines; development of lakeside resorts; and construction of 1,100 cottages, all connected by an infrastructure of perimeter roads and trails.

This epochal event was the largest inundation from an inland lake due to an anthropogenic cause (a dam breaching) in U.S. history for 147 years until surpassed by a larger event in 2020! One lake’s uniqueness is an object lesson to extrapolate to other lakes. Uniquity of opportunity brought Archibald Jones, a “bootstrap engineer” to Crystal Lake. The Benzie County River Improvement Co. improved upon Nature, and increased the uniqueness for Crystal Lake. A unique place exists for Crystal Lake and its Watershed! It is a fascinating true story of a man, a plan, a canal, a beach, and a panorama!

(\*) Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels. Benzonia Academy Lecture, Mills Community House, 7 PM, 13 July 2023.

## ARCHIBALD JONES (“Bootstrap” Engineer)



**ARCHIBALD JONES (14 Sep 1811-15 May 1890), President of the Benzie Co. River Improvement Co. responsible for the enterprise that resulted in the lowering of Crystal Lake, August, 1873. Drawing by Glen Wolff, Glenn Wolff Studio. 2014, from a photograph Benzie Banner 36(46), 6 (16 Jul 1931); caricature of Archibald Jones by Patrick G. Reed, Patrick Reed Design, 1992.]**

**Archibald Jones acquired this Victorian home at 6850 Traverse Ave from the Rev. James Barr Walker, the forgotten founder of Benzonia in 1872. It served as stage stop and remained in the Jones family for 130 years over four generations.**



The Archibald Jones Home and Park Place Hotel, ca. 1885.

Daniels, Stacy Leroy, The Park Place Hotel (The Walker-Jones House), Benzie Heritage 40(4), 1-3 (Fall 2021). [https://benziemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BAHS\\_FALL-2021-NEWSLETTER\\_WEB-ith-Highlights.pdf](https://benziemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BAHS_FALL-2021-NEWSLETTER_WEB-ith-Highlights.pdf)

## “THE SAGA OF ARCHIBALD JONES” (His Life in Verse)

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

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

The Jones: 5 boys, 3 girls, comprised their flock.  
As they traversed across the middle west,  
Challenges were met, opportunities sought,  
As they pursued their destiny and quest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE BENZIE COUNTY RIVER IMPROVEMENT COMPANY

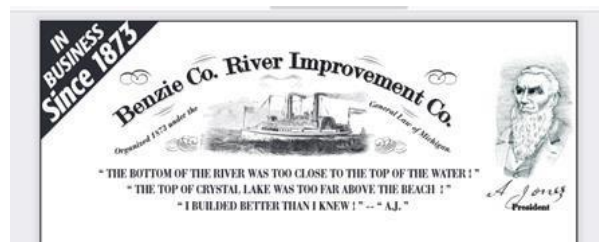
The Benzie County River Improvement Company (BCRIC) was organized in 1873 to improve navigation of the Betsie River from Frankfort on Lake Michigan upstream to Crystal Lake. The level of the Crystal Lake Outlet was to be lowered about four feet to the level of its confluence with the Betsey River less than a mile downstream. This would allow small steamers to run from Frankfort directly into Crystal Lake, which had a larger surface and a longer shoreline, but much less usable beach. Capital stock of \$25,000 consisted of 1,000 shares at \$25 par value.



As its various ventures faltered, the BCRIC finally declared bankruptcy in 1875. No lasting canal materialized, nor did any flat-bottomed paddleboat ply the shallow Betsey River. The failure of the BCRIC was certainly not due to a lack of trying. Folks had been firmly “sold” on the ideas put forth and were enthusiastic that the project would benefit their personal livelihoods.

The early pioneers in Benzie County were very entrepreneurial in the harvesting of timber resources and in the development of water resources for transport of products and settlers. As the area around Crystal Lake transformed into a recreational paradise, civic interests turned to resource management, the pursuit of lake level management, and the protection of the high water quality of Crystal Lake and its Watershed.

The BCRIC was one of the first companies in Michigan to apply for a permit to construct a canal (1871); Benzie Co. was one of the first MI counties to set a level for an inland lake and build a control dam (1911); and the Benzie/Leelanau District Health Department implemented one of the first ordinances in the entire U.S. to requiring inspection and upgrading of septic systems prior to property transfer emphasizing replacement of failed systems around Crystal Lake (1980).



**The Benzie Co. River Improvement Co lives on - in spirit!**

**History allows us to remember the past, experience the present, and imagine the future!**



## THE NAMING OF CRYSTAL LAKE (\*)

Crystal Lake was originally named “ ‘Cap Lake’ ” because of its propensity for generating "white caps", i.e. large rolling waves with broken and foaming crests, which are ever present on its surface during periods of strong winds. The name Cap Lake originally appeared on the first surveys by Alvin and Austin Burt dated 1838-9. Prior to ~1860, Crystal Lake was sometimes shown on maps with no name, or incorrectly identified as the nearby Lake aux Becs Scies or Betsie Lake (Betsie Bay) at the mouth of the Betsie River at Frankfort.

According to legend, an Ojibwe chief drowned in Crystal Lake, and mysteriously reappeared in Lake Michigan. Kenny Neganigwane Pheasant [www.anishinaabemdaa.com/](http://www.anishinaabemdaa.com/) states that the Anishinaabe name for Crystal Lake was *Digmegonbiz* (White Fish Lake). Dr. Margaret Noori, Lecturer in Ojibwe Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, has suggested the name of *Nishiime* (Younger Sibling) of the Gichigami (Great Lakes). This heart-felt name is simple and direct, and does not overly personify nature, as fast-talking old men might have done standing on the shore calling Crystal Lake:

*“Giiwitaayaazha-mangi-zhaaboonde-naazibiiyaamadinaa-waasaa-ishpadin-anzigwagbiiijimaagazehns-ziibiikaajige-ziikoobiiginan-waashegaminaaboo-zaaga`igan”*

With many more morphemes as is sometime common to the language. It roughly translates as:

”He walks around-big-open from one end to the other-with hills coming down-waves frothing white ice freezes thick-(with) saw-bill ducks-(and) shining little fishes-to dig a canal-(and) drain the water out of-Crystal (clear)-Lake.”

## THE AUX BEC SCIES (\*)

By most accounts, the word "Benzie" derives from the French, *La Rivere aux Bec Scies*, for the Betsie (var. Betsey, Betsy) River, meaning, river of the saw-bills (ducks). The Native American name, *ans-zig-o-ze-bee*, has the same meaning. *Mergus merganser* (L. *mergere* dive + *anser* goose), the common merganser found on lakes and rivers in Europe, northern Asia, and North America, is a large, handsome, fish-eating duck, whose bills have serrated edges (saw-bills) to help them grip and swallow prey. They nest in tree cavities, from which the young emerge shortly after hatching.

Common mergansers have shaggy crests, large broods, raucous cries, oily inedible flesh, hunting restrictions, and can carry the vector for swimmers' itch. The male merganser has a dark green crest; the female has a reddish-brown crest.

Some folks use scare tactics: “The most amazing thing that I saw was a cottage owner who ran down her dock banging pots and pans to scare away a mother merganser with chicks which was swimming by her beach. The mergansers were here a long time before the cottages as the Betsie River and Betsie Bay were named after the mergansers seen in the area by French explorers. Apparently, mergansers, like non-lake front owners, have no right to use the lake.” [www.michigan-sportsman.com/forum/showthread.php?p=1024514](http://www.michigan-sportsman.com/forum/showthread.php?p=1024514) (Anon., Jan 5, 2006)

[(\*) Excerpts from “*The Comedy of Crystal Lake*” (2015, 496pp).]

## THE WATERS & THE LANDS: QUANTITIES AND QUALITIES

Crystal Lake is an amalgam of waters and lands. We marvel at the diverse *Quantities* and *Qualities*: the “how-large” and the “how-good” aspects of Crystal Lake and its surrounding vistas, as manifested by spectacular sunrises/sunsets and alternating moods cast by calmly lapping ripples or tempestuous whitecapped waves and how they affect our lives. We brag audaciously of the physical immensities of its “outward” *Quantities*, but underappreciate the subtle effects of its unseen “inner” *Qualities* ! Because of its unique morphology, and relatively rural undeveloped location, Crystal Lake is classified as “hyperoligotrophic”, i.e. very low biological productivity leading to exceptionally “crystal-clear” waters of very high water quality. Crystal Lake is a groundwater seepage lake, without multiple upstream sources of contaminants. Most water enters the Lake by precipitation and leaves by evaporation. More water flows out of the Lake underground through the Point Betsie isthmus to Lake Michigan than down the Outlet. Crystal Lake is still 23 ft above Lake Michigan even after its lowering by 12 ft (net) !

Ironically, it was the poor timber quality and sandy infertile soil around Benzie County’s lakes that made the lakeshore a poor bargain for settlers but a boon for future cottagers ! Concerns over perceived degradation of water quality due to development led to a major study of water quality (1970), and the passing of a landmark septic system inspection ordinance (1980). Concerns over wildly fluctuating lake levels led to the setting of a two-stage lake Level (1980), and establishment of the Crystal Lake Watershed Overlay District (1994). Archibald Jones’ attempt to build a canal focused our attention !

The Crystal Lake & Watershed Association (CLWA), and its predecessors, in cooperation with other local and regional organizations and governments, have investigated water quality, soil erosion, and sediment transport within the since the 1960s. These include: participation in the MDEQ Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program, synoptic surveys of lake water quality, lake level control, surveys of benthic invertebrates and aquatic macrophytes, GIS mapping, and watershed history. The prototypical Lake Owners’ Manual, “Crystal Lake - Life or Death” addressed water quality problems (1987). The Crystal Lake **“Walkabout** has been an educational program of science education involving “hands-on” observational monitoring and environmental exploring (1993+). A comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was completed for the greater Crystal Lake/Betsie River Watershed (2016).

We are blessed to have a very large lake set amidst a very small watershed with a very long residence time. The detriment is that anything and everything entering the Lake from beyond its watershed stays there unless physically removed, chemically transformed, or biologically incorporated. Within the Crystal Lake Watershed, we’re all “*Shedies*” ( “*Lakie*” + “*Townie*” + “*Fudgie*” = “*Shedie*” ). Regardless of who we are, and where we’re from, we share its benefits to preserve for future generations !

1. Crystal Lake is about “*halfway*” between “*here*” and “*there*” : “*halfway*” between the Equator and the North Pole, and “*halfway*” between the NW corner of the UP of MI and the SE corner of the LP of MI !
2. Benzie Co. encompasses 860 sq mi = 320 sq mi (37%) “Land”+ 540 sq mi (63%) “Lake Michigan” !
3. Crystal Lake Watershed = 43.98 sq mi = 28.52 sq mi (65%) “Land”+15.46 sq mi (35%) “Crystal Lake” !
4. Crystal Lake ranks 3rd (depth); 4th (volume); and 9th (area) of 26,266 inland lakes ( $\geq 1.0$  A) in MI !
5. Lowering Crystal Lake to the level of Lake Michigan in 1873 would have raised the latter ~ 0.3 in !
6. Crystal Lake contains 221,000,000,000 gallons = 678,000 Acre-ft = 0.201 cu mi) (at 600 ft elev.) !
7. All the “Water” in Crystal Lake would cover all the “Land” of Benzie Co. to a depth of 3’-8” !
8. A faucet flowing at 10 gallons per minute for 51 years would lower the top of Crystal Lake one inch !
9. The glacial moraines around Crystal Lake are about twice as high as the Lake is deep ~2x165 ft !
10. Crystal Lake lost about 7% depth, 8% area, & 15% volume in exchange for a magnificent beach !

## INTRODUCTION TO CENTERFOLD MAP / REFERENCES

This is a brief introduction to the following centerfold map published separately (2018, 2023), which was based on new research done after prior publications of the “Tragedy” (1922) and Comedy (2015) (1,2). A rediscovered historic project map showing proposed improvements was combined with new data to create a high-resolution topographic / bathymetric map showing both historic canals and modern features of interest. Quantitative comparisons before and after lowering of the Lake allowed “re-creation” of the sheer magnitude of this epochal event! Book and Map with details available separately!

A historically significant map (3), drawn for the BCRIC by Buel C. Hubbell in 1873, was “rediscovered” in 2011 in the Benzie Area Historical Museum (BAHM), where it had resided uncatalogued and forgotten for 30 years. It had first been found hidden in a wall during the 1980 renovation of an 1870s farmhouse built by John Bailey, a Benzonia pioneer and Vice President of the BCRIC, who also surveyed the “Beulah View and Crystal City Resort”. The map shows outlines of lakes; sources and courses of rivers; proposed canals; wagon roads; township, county, and section lines; town corners; obstructions to navigation. A handsome two-sided bronze historical site marker was later dedicated at the Crystal Lake Outlet to commemorate the historic event on 22 Aug 2015 (4). This historic map (patterned after the 1838-9 survey is a very accurate portrayal of Crystal Lake before it was lowered.

A high-resolution topographic / bathymetric map (5), created in 2018, and revised in 2023, showing HIGH (1873), LOW (1904), and NOW (2015) lake levels; land elevations; beach contours, and the Watershed boundary; with three historic canal routes superimposed. A new QL2 LiDAR dataset (MiSAIL 2015) was used to: (i) assess present (NOW) size of the lake; (ii) develop dynamic 3-D models of the Watershed; (iii) reconstruct the original lowering, and (iv) determine Water lost = Beach gained. This modern map is considered a very accurate portrayal of Crystal Lake after it was lowered.

Three canal routes were considered, proposed, and/or attempted from Crystal Lake to Lake Michigan (1) **“SOUTH” Canal** (proposed, surveyed, and attempted in 1873 by the **BCRIC**) from the Outlet of Crystal Lake into the Betsey River, on to Betsey Lake. and into Lake Michigan at Frankfort; (2) **“NORTH” Canal** (proposed and surveyed in 1873, but never attempted by the **BCRIC**) from Platte Lake through Rush Lake, Long Lake, and Round Lake, and into Crystal Lake; and (3) **“WEST” Canal** (considered sometime prior to 1873, but independent of the **BCRIC**) to run directly from Crystal Lake across the isthmus of Point Betsey into Lake Michigan.

**REFERENCES** (Refs. (1)-(5) cited in above text; refs. (6)-(9) are supplemental.)

(1) William L. Case, *“The Tragedy of Crystal Lake”*, With Some Sidelights, By a Survivor, J.W. Saunders, Beulah, MI, 1922, 17pp. et seq.

(2) Stacy Leroy Daniels, *“The Comedy of Crystal Lake”*, I. The Lowering of Crystal Lake; II. The Biography of Archibald Jones, by a Humble Saunterer, Flushed With Pride Press, © 2015, 496pp. ISBN 978-0-692-21715-3.

[www.CrystalLakeComedy.com](http://www.CrystalLakeComedy.com)

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

(4) **Dedication of Historical Site Marker**, 22 Aug 2015, 16pp. [www.crystallakecomedy.com/PDF/HistoricalMarkerProgram.pdf](http://www.crystallakecomedy.com/PDF/HistoricalMarkerProgram.pdf)

(5) **“Crystal Lake Watershed and Bathymetry of Crystal Lake, Benzie County, Michigan, with Historic Canals and Modern Features of Interest”**, Produced by Stacy Leroy Daniels, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co. Map compiled by Trevor Hobbs © 2018 & Greg Anderson © 2023.

(6) Stacy Leroy Daniels, **“A Comparison of Flood Inundations in Michigan: Crystal Lake Watershed and Tittabawassee River Watershed”**, 2020, et seq.

(7) **“A Journal of Historical Reflections and Current Perspectives of Crystal Lake, Its Watershed, & Benzie County, MI”**. [www.CRYSTALANA.com](http://www.CRYSTALANA.com)

(8) Daniels, Stacy Leroy, **“Wreck”-reation or Rē-Creation? - A Comparative Tale of Two Michigan Inland Lake Communities**, World Canals Conference, Hagerstown, MD, 30 Aug 2021.

(9) Daniels, Stacy Leroy, **“SESQUI-CENTENNIAL – The Lowering of Crystal Lake (1873-2023)”**, 24 pp, © 2023.

86°20'W

86°15'W

86°10'W

# CRYSTAL LAKE WATERSHED

AND

# BATHYMETRY OF CRYSTAL LAKE

## BENZIE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

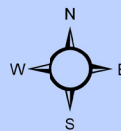
WITH

### HISTORIC CANALS & MODERN FEATURES OF INTEREST

Produced by Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels,

"President *pro tem*, Benzie County River Improvement Company, Ext. 1878".

Map Compiled by Trevor Hobbs & Greg Anderson



44°45'N

44°40'N

## Lake Michigan

### CANAL ROUTES

- SOUTH (ATTEMPTED)
- SOUTH (DREDGED)
- NORTH (PROPOSED)
- WEST (CONSIDERED)

### CRYSTAL LAKE LEVELS

- High 1873 (612 FT)
- Low 1904 (595 FT)
- Now 2015 (600 FT)

### CRYSTAL LAKE DEPTH (FT)



### LAND ELEVATION (FT)



### OTHER FEATURES

- CITY
- TOWNSHIP
- VILLAGE
- SBDNL
- PLSS



44°35'N

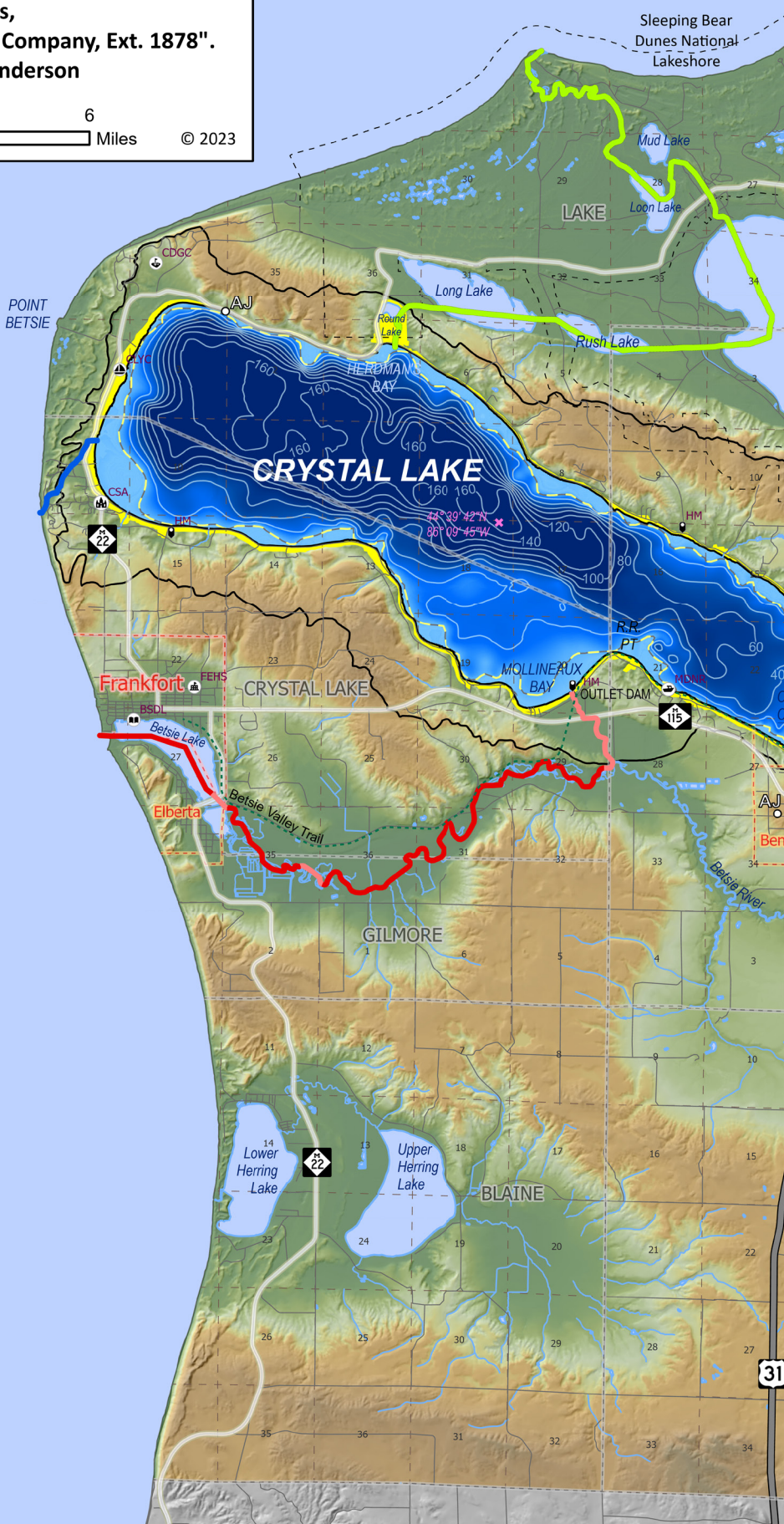
86°20'W

86°15'W

MANISTEE 24.5 MI.

86°10'W

MANISTEE 24.1 MI.



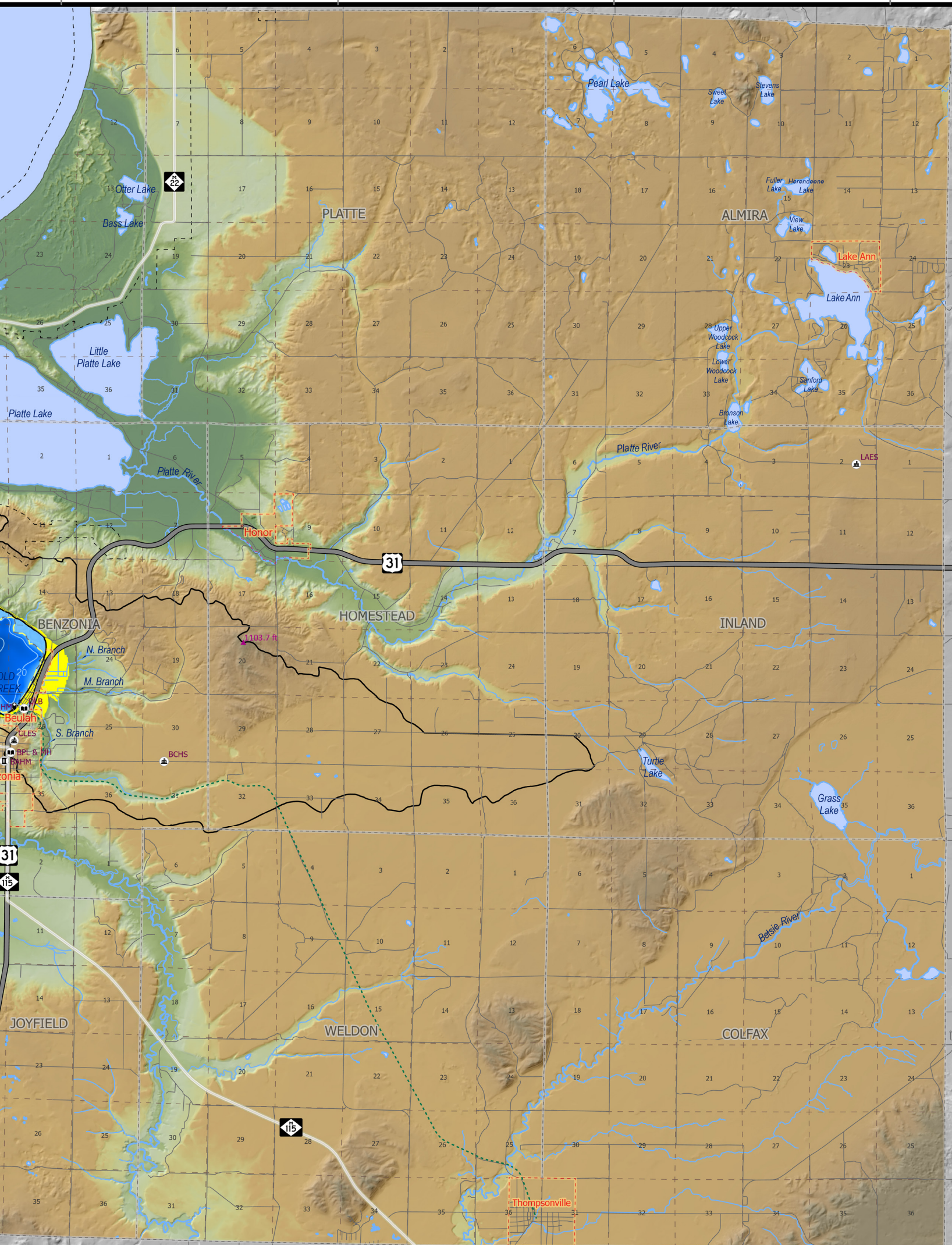
86°5'W

Leland 29.2 MI.

86°W

85°55'W

85°50'W



44°45'N

44°40'N

44°35'N

TRAVERSE CITY 15.5 MI.

86°5'W

86°W

CADILLAC 36.6 MI.

85°55'W

85°50'W

## THE STORY IN PICTURES

The story of the lowering of Crystal Lake has been illustrated by two series of woodblock prints that have been combined in an intertwined chronological sequence (\*).

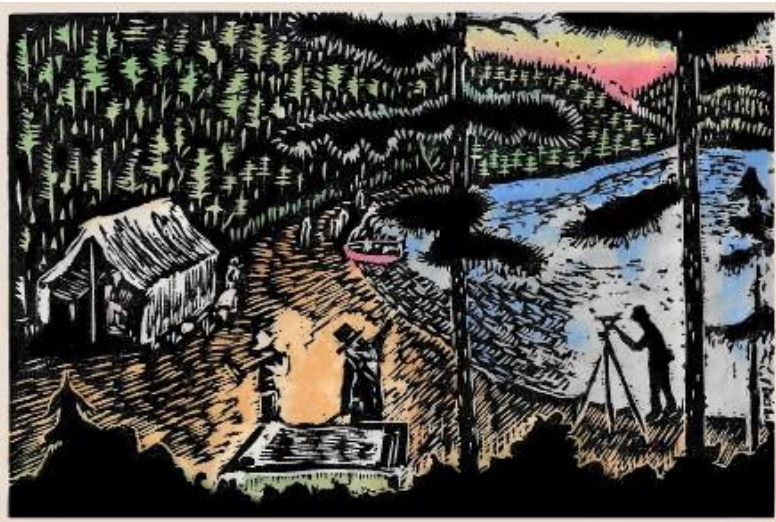
[(\*) Woodblocks WB-1, -2, -3, -7, -8, -9 were drawn for the “Comedy” by artist Glen Wolff (2014); (\*) Woodblocks WB-4, -5, -6, -10 were drawn for the “Tragedy” by unknown artist, ca. 1922) .] See The classic prequel, “The Tragedy of Crystal Lake” (1922, 17pp) by William L. Case; and the sequel, “The Comedy of Crystal Lake” (2015, 496 pp) by Stacy Leroy Daniels.



WB-1. Crystal Lake Primeval  
(The Bathtub on the Hill)



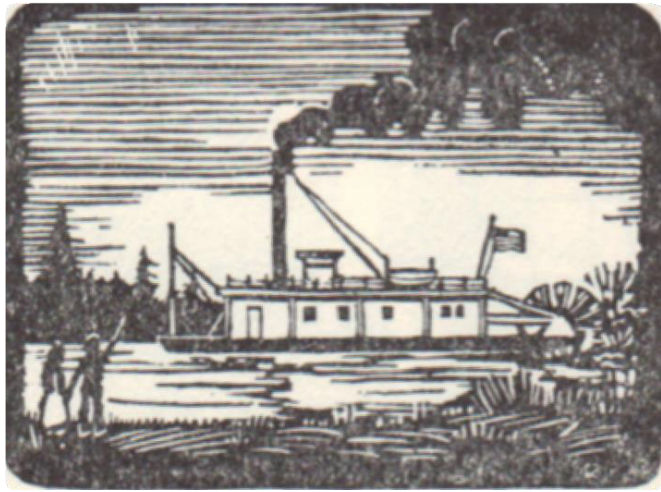
WB-2. A Shortcut Is Needed  
(Settlers Are Coming to Northwest Michigan)



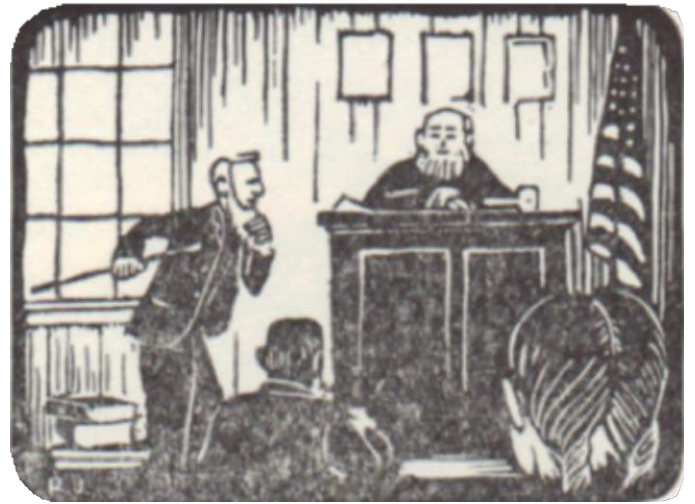
WB-3. The Canals Are Surveyed  
(The Outlet Runs Downhill)



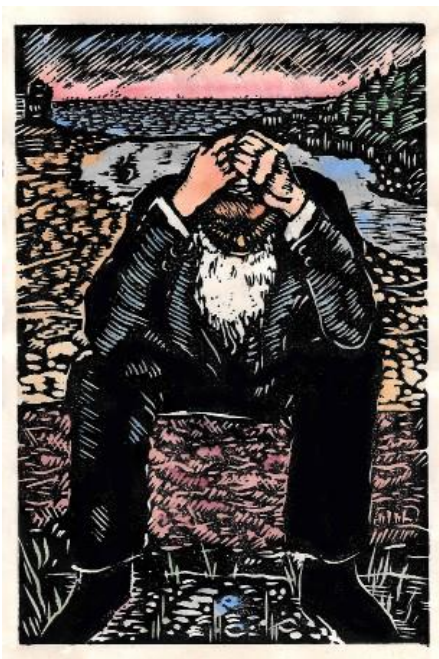
WB-4. “The Blood Is Let”  
(The “Tragedy” Begins)



WB-5. "First Trip Brings Disappointment" (The Paddleboat Backs Downriver)



WB-6. "The Bottom Was Too Close to the Top" (The Company Is Sued)



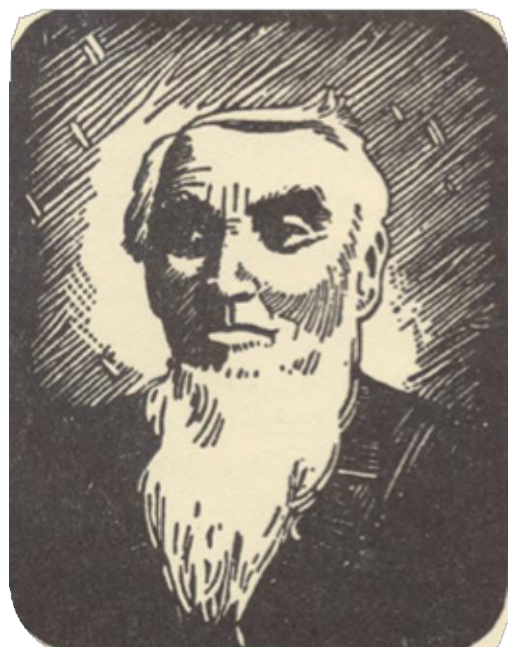
WB-7. At the Crystal Lake Outlet (Dammed If He Does; Damned If He Don't)



WB-8. The Flow Is Stemmed (The Plug Is Replaced)



WB-9. The Lake Survives (The "Comedy" Awaits)



WB-10. "He Buildded Better Than He Knew" (Archibald Jones)

**“THE TRAGEDY BEGINS / THE COMEDY AWAITS” (\*)**

*“The world turns softly, not to spill its lakes and rivers. The water is held in its arms and the sky is held in the water. What is water, that pours silver, and can hold the sky?” – Hilda Conkling, Poems by a Little Girl, 1920.*

**Prelude:** In former times, there is a large inland lake in northwest Lower Michigan surrounded by high hills falling sharply toward the water’s edge largely devoid of beach. Its crystalline clear waters, deep and cold, reflect shades of green and blue. Tall pines and scattered maple and beech forest its slopes. Its surroundings are devoid of human habitation except for a few scattered cabins and small farms. Late summer haze fills the air. Plants are in full flower, their leaves not yet turning many-hued. All is serene, perhaps a bit pensive, with fall approaching. On the southeastern shore of the lake, a small creek runs downstream to the big inland sea. This outlet sometimes overflows with spring freshets and winter runoff, but now is a time when its lazy flow has subsided to a mere meandering trickle.

But behold! Near the scene is a bustle of activity. Brawny men with axes and shovels engage in slashing brush and downing trees to clear a new pathway along the creek. With horse-drawn scrapers, some are dredging deeply into the virgin soil to construct some sort of ditch. Others are building a makeshift low-crested dam of logs and rocks to hold back the lake waters, pent up for millennia, from entering the channel. But to what purpose – a canal, to divert water and permit passage, but for whom and for what?

After the day’s activities have concluded, the teams of horses are led away to be fed. Most of the weary men trudge homeward to their suppers. They seem intent to return on the morrow to finish their endeavors. Two men remain behind to watch over the surroundings. Nothing extraordinary is expected. The watchmen build a small fire for camaraderie as the nights are beginning to cool with impending fall. The wind is calm, and the lake is peaceful, except for a few gentle waves lapping its shoreline. The fire is the only sign of civilization within sight. It is the forest primeval. The men commune with Nature. The stillness is broken only by a few bird cries and an occasional fish splashing in the shallows. As the shadows darken, the men settle in their bedrolls comforted by the wind rustling in the towering pines.

But Nature is fickle and prone to be ever-changing. The wind stirs the branches in the overhanging trees. It begins to pick up as the night progresses. Clouds form and scud invisibly across the dark sky of a new moon. The lapping waves increase and wash more strongly against the meager beach. By the early morning hours, the wind is blowing strongly across the long reach from the northwest directly at the shore before the dam. The waves become whitecaps with foam billowing at their crests. Their force is felt as they begin to crash upon the narrow shore. They advance onward toward the little dam.

Relentlessly the waves climb the beach and reach the bulwarks of the dam. They begin to beat at the logs of the retaining wall and its supports. Small rivulets wash grains of the sandy soil from between the cracks causing small leaks to appear. Around the ends of the structure other rivulets are washing away clods of the adjoining earth. Now these small rivulets become steady streams, each eroding away the foundation of the dam and carrying the suspended soil downstream in an increasing flow.

A watchman arises to conduct an inspection. He becomes alarmed at developments. He awakens his fellow and together they strive to add logs to strengthen the dam. They shovel more soil to stem the flow. Their struggles are of little avail. The onslaught of the crashing whitecaps become too much for the meager temporary dam to resist. First a log at one end gives way and then another. The waters engulf the structure and surge over the top. The flow becomes more than the structure can restrain and it collapses entirely and washes downstream. The waters of the lake, freed from their confinement, seize the opportunity to rush downstream in a rapturous torrent toward the inland sea!

The capricious whitecaps triumph! The blood is let! The *“Tragedy”* begins! The *“Comedy”* awaits ... Will the waters of the Lake ever be conserved in such a changing environment?

[(\*) Daniels, Stacy Leroy, (“President *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., Est. 1873”), The “Tragedy” Begins: the “Comedy” Awaits, 1st Place Judge’s Pick, Creative Writing Contest, 2020 Michigan Inland Lakes Convention,, 17 Sep 2020,]



## **“TO PULL THE PLUG FROM CRYSTAL LAKE. TO PUT IT BACK? THERE IS NO QUESTION!”**

There are many odd quirks in our language. Various “plugs” refer to: wine bottle corks, bathtub drain stoppers, fireplugs, sparkplugs, small clods of sprouts for transplant, wads of chewing tobacco, fishing lures, traffic jams, mental blocks, words of encouragement. and tired old horses! Most all convey a sense of controlling or stopping the “flow” of something, somewhere, sometime, usually involving water.

Additional actions include the plugging and unplugging of electrical devices to connect power and communications inputs to start up or shut down processes for making of things and outputting of sound, light, etc. Development of unseen “wireless” communications further complicates the discussion. We mentally “plug” / “unplug” ourselves from our physical environment in the most literal sense.

Some physical “plugs” are fixed in place and always in closed positions to stop unwanted discharges by filling holes or blocking leaks for extended periods. Other “plug-like” things, like faucets, valves, flood gates, dams, levies, etc., are opened or closed on demand to prevent excessive flows for shorter periods. Such devices are often found at or near collection and distribution facilities for treatment, storage, and transport of water. These are associated with natural waterbodies streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, or artificial impoundments, The infrastructure to supply drinking water, wastewater treatment and disposal, flood prevention, crop irrigation, power generation, and water transportation, is vast!

Physical “plugs” may be associated with natural geological “plug” processes, such as solidified lava in volcanos, or hydrological “plug” processes, such as damming of rivers by ice dams or landslides, which cause natural “floodings”. Anthropogenic “plugs”, i.e. “engineered structures”, like concrete dams and earthen impoundments may fail due to bad design, construction, maintenance and/or operation resulting in artificial “inundations”. Natural and artificial events can combine to exacerbate each other. The going get tougher when we contemplate mental “actions” in terms of non-physical “plugs”. We “put in a plug” (good words of encouragement) to promote a worthy project, yet we are often quick to “pull the plug” on a project that is “going down the drain” financially! A mental block/drain is an oxymoron.

There are two interpretations of the adage: “*to pull the plug*”, often expressed by metaphors, for both the action, “to pull”, and the object, “the plug”. In combination, two phrases, “to pull the plug” and “to unplug”, can be associated in diametrically opposing ways: (1) to stop an existing un-plugged process, like a leakage, and prevent its continuation and reoccurrence; or (2) to start a new plugged process, like a controlled drainage, to prevent excess accumulation and detrimental overflow.

Both actions have nuances of seemingly being uncontrolled/controlled, natural/artificial, accidental/intentional, and/or undesirable/preferable, and oftentimes with a bit or a lot of both! “Unplug”: a sense “of removing (intentionally or unintentionally) an existing barrier (real or imagined); to attempt an intended action whilst serendipitously initiating an unintended or unexpected alternative!

We put this duality of conflicting “pullings out” vs. “puttings back in” of plugs to the test at Crystal Lake! We decry the (alleged) accidental “pulling” of the (hypothetical) “plug” by nature a “tragic” failure, yet applaud its unanticipated result, a “comedic” success! A sad beginning ultimately became a happy ending. Nobody advocates “putting the plug back in the Lake, or pulling it out further. One hundred and fifty years after its lowering, and after decades of debate over whether the level of Crystal Lake is “too high” or “too low”, its level, like Goldilocks’s fabled porridge, has become “just right”, as it is! “After I (allegedly) pulled the plug at Crystal Lake, I was forced to pull the plug on my canal project which got flushed down the drain as the new beach was created!” -- “A.J.”. (sic, Archibald Jones)



## “THE PANORAMA OF THE LOWERING OF CRYSTAL LAKE”

The iconic panoramic photograph (below) typifies the period between the discovery of Crystal Lake by 1822 together with its survey by 1838, and connotes the opening of its pristine wilderness of the surrounding moraines, still partially cloaked with forest, to the advances of civilization ! The newly exposed beach was entirely covered with some twelve seventeen feet of water before the level of Crystal Lake was lowered in 1873 in an attempt to build a canal to Lake Michigan “just over the hill” !

The panorama shows the cut-over terrain mixed with barren beach (no discernible swampland) existing at the time the "new" station of the Frankfort & South Eastern Railroad (F&SE RR) was moved from Benzonia to Beulah. It represents a time (1889), some 16 years after the lowering of Crystal Lake (1873), and some 22 years before the installation of a permanent dam at the Crystal Lake Outlet!



The composite series of photographs were taken from the beach at Crystal City (Beulah) at the east end of Crystal Lake looking west down the entire length of the Crystal Lake toward Point Betsy (not visible in the distance). The F&SE RR ran southwest past the station and then wrapped west along the lakeshore on toward Bay Point (Railroad Point) (visible), across the Crystal Lake Outlet (canal), and then further west away from the Lake to Frankfort on Lake Michigan. The F&SE RR also connected to the Ann Arbor RR in Beulah and ran east to Thompsonville.

The swampy areas prevalent along the lakeshore made road building difficult in the early 1900s - cutting trees, grubbing stumps, and laying a corduroy of logs. As resorters began to build cottages along the bluffs and automobiles became more common, the need for more local roads increased. It was a common occurrence for groups of resorters to be called out to pry and push some unfortunate motorist out of a sand hole in the road. Caches of blocks, poles and planks were kept handy beside the road for a number of years for emergencies. The roads were gradually surfaced with gravel taken from pockets along the beach. A far cry from the modern highways free of natural speed bumps and sinkholes !



North Shore of Crystal Lake, ca. 1920.

**THE CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET**

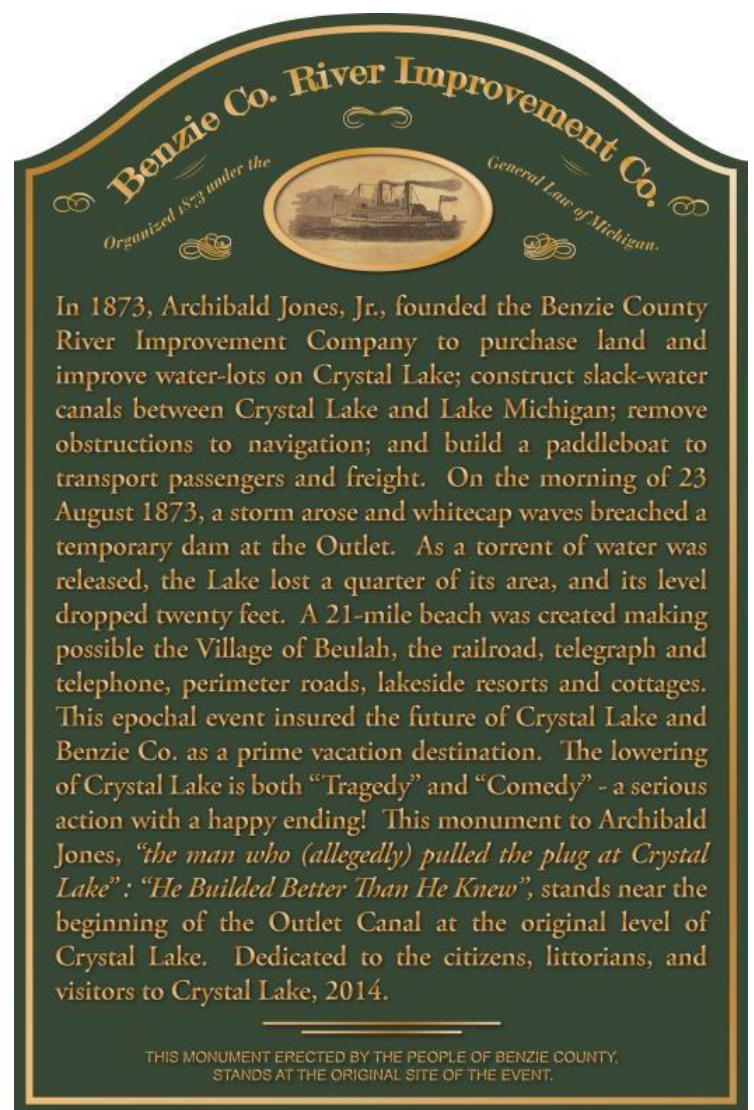
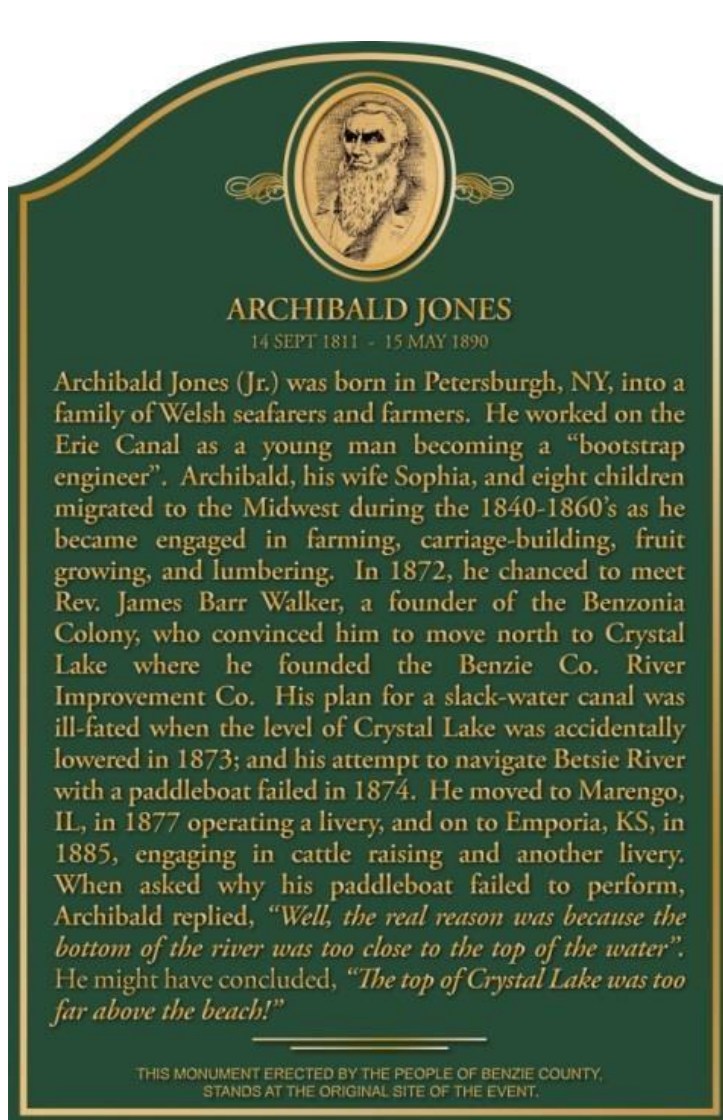


**Crystal Lake Outlet Dam (ca. 1912-1913), "The Comedy", p166,**



**CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET, watercolor, ca. 1950, John E. Easley (17 Jul 1904 - 05 May 1986)**

## HISTORICAL MARKER (CRYSTAL LAKE OUTLET)



[Location: Crystal Lake Outlet at Mollineaux Road on Betsie Valley Trail, Benzie Co., Crystal Lake Twp, T26 N R15 W, Sec 29 (44.636696 -86.146598). Three earlier markers (1978) with somewhat different inscriptions are located on the SE, NE, & SW shores of Crystal Lake.]

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

One hundred forty-two years ago (as of 2015) at this very location our forefathers experienced an event unique among all inland lakes of northern Michigan. The dramatic and precipitous lowering of Crystal Lake was seemingly ill-fated in its beginning, but fortuitously evolved into a serendipitous conclusion of becoming a fortunate happenstance with a pleasant surprise known colloquially as the “Tragedy” / “Comedy” of Crystal Lake.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following community groups and businesses are acknowledged for their past and present support:

Benzie County River Improvement Co.  
 Benzie Area Historical Society  
 Benzie Conservation District  
 Benzie Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Frankfort-Elberta Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Crystal Lake Community Business Association  
 BaySide Printing, Inc.  
 Field Crafts  
 Congregational Summer Assembly  
 Crystal Lake Yacht Club  
 Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail  
 Friends of Point Betsie  
 Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians  
 Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Conservation Resource Alliance  
 Grow Benzie  
 Historical Society of Michigan  
 IMAGIN, Inc.  
 Michigan Lakes & Streams Association  
 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore  
 U.S. Coast Guard - Station Frankfort  
 ATI Consulting  
 Benzie County Record Patriot  
 Betsie Current  
 Cottage Pros  
 Crystal Lake Alpacas  
 Crystal Lake Marina  
 Crystal Mountain Resort  
 Flushed with Pride Press  
 L'Chayim Delicatessen  
 MacDonald Marine, Inc.

Saint Ambrose Cellars  
 State Of The Art Framing & Gallery  
 Wayfarer Motel  
 Networks Northwest  
 Benzie County Government  
 City of Frankfort  
 Township of Benzonia  
 Township of Lake  
 Township of Crystal Lake  
 Village of Beulah  
 Village of Benzonia  
 Village of Elberta  
 Benzie County Central Schools  
 Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools  
 Benzie Shores District Library  
 Benzonia Pubic Library  
 Darcy Library of Beulah

## 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.

## "Crystalana"

A JOURNAL OF

Historical Reflections and Current Perspectives of Crystal Lake, Its Watershed, & Benzie County, MI. A new website compiled by Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, a humble saunterer and "President *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., Est. 1873."

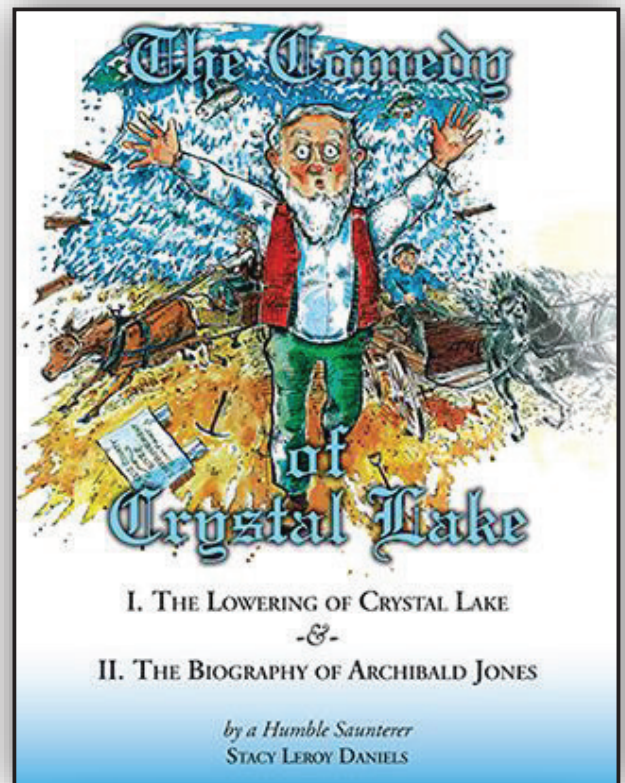
"Crystalana" [www.crystalana.com](http://www.crystalana.com) is intended to supplement "The Comedy of Crystal Lake."

[www.crystallakecomedy.com](http://www.crystallakecomedy.com)

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Flushed With Pride Press**

3901 Orchard Dr. | Midland, MI 48640

**SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE LOWERING OF CRYSTAL LAKE, THE "TRAGEDY" / "COMEDY" - (1873 - 2023)**



**BOOK \$32 | WATERSHED MAP \$10**

**THE BOOKSTORE, FRANKFORT**  
*Proceeds go to local nonprofit organizations*

**Available at the following locations:**

BaySide Printing, Frankfort  
 Benzie Conservation District  
 Benzie Area Historical Museum

Benzie Co. Chamber of Commerce, Benzonia  
 Frankfort-Elberta Chamber of Commerce, Frankfort  
 The Bookstore, Frankfort

**“THE CRYSTAL LAKE” / (AN UNCAST STONE MAKES RIPPLES NOT!)**

Once, while contemplating Nature,  
With simple mundane view,  
I chanced upon a Crystal Lake -  
Its surface, calm and smooth.

I tossed a stone upon this Lake,  
With hardly much ado.  
A tiny ripple formed, and spread.  
Beyond my sight, it moved.

I wondered how a splash so small,  
To such a ripple, grew.  
And as my ripple slowly waned,  
Could it be really true?

It caused events across that wide  
Expanse of green and blue  
For lo: we must be sensitive.  
Give Nature all her due.

These ripples come from all of us:  
From different points of view,  
We are all parts of one complex  
Environmental stew.

-- Stacy Leroy. Daniels, "The Crystal Lake", 5/22/2008;  
as especially revised from "The Pond", 6/25/1982.

Some parts of each of us connect.  
Life's puzzle we pass through.  
We seldom know the consequence  
Of rippling as we do.

Our ripples may have no effect,  
Or magnify undo.  
We think our ripples dissipate;  
Contrarily construe.

What our ancestors discovered,  
And progeny pursue,  
What God hath wrought, forever  
Mere man can knock askew.

All our deeds are seen, transparent,  
Like water, clearly through.  
Then Nature, like the quiet Lake,  
Its surface does renew.

**EPILOGUE**

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

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

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

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

## “THE BALLAD OF ARCHIBALD JONES” (\*)

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

Some thought he was a genius;  
Some thought he was mad;  
Some thought he was only foolin’.  
But he worked for years on the Erie Canal (!)  
That’s where he got his schoolin’.

Said Jones to the folks of Benzie County,  
“There’s wealth by the Lake – magnificent bounty,  
Hardwood a plenty, ready for sale,  
To get it to market, gotta’ build a canal”!

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

Well, no engineer was Archibald Jones (?)  
No engineers were consulted (?)  
Just a long white-bearded dreamer’s idea,  
And you all know what resulted!

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

Well the beautiful Lake was now 20 feet down.  
The Improvement Company bankrupted.  
It’s a miracle that nobody drowned  
When the lakeshore was disrupted!

When the Mud Hen steamer got stuck in the muck,  
He said to the people that brought her,  
“The boat won’t float if the bottom of the river’s  
too close to the top of the water”.

Though many investors lost their shirts,  
‘Cause Jones was overzealous,  
Out of bad sometimes comes good,  
And only passing time could tell us.

In Benzie County they celebrate  
The day Jones made the breach.  
One man’s “mistake by the Lake “ (?)  
Is another man’s “day at the beach” (!)

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

(\*) “Mistake (?) at the Lake”, Song by Doc Stewart, © 2010 (Lyrics Reformatted by Stacy Leroy Daniels, 2022). Song [http://crystallakecomedy.com/sound/Ballad\\_of\\_Archibald\\_Jones.mp3](http://crystallakecomedy.com/sound/Ballad_of_Archibald_Jones.mp3)

### CRYSTAL LAKE CANAL BOATS



Lest we forget, but for wills of wind and wave, we would have the Crystal Lake Canal “raging” from the bucolic to the congested in our imaginations. The latter is akin to portraying all the folks who claim passage of ancestors aboard the famous “Mayflower”, whose Captain, Christopher Jones, Jr., incidentally, was the Great(5)grandfather of Archibald Jones, Jr !!!