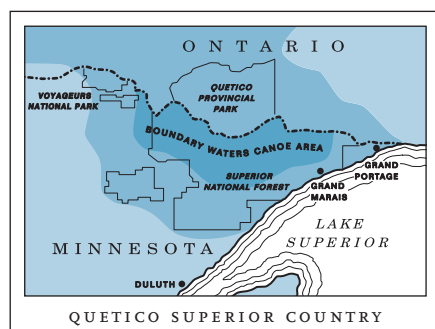


# Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION SUMMER 2004



The Quetico Superior Foundation, established in 1946, encourages and supports the protection of the ecological, cultural and historical resources of the Quetico Superior region.

*“Nature is the ultimate humbler, both of persons and of civilizations. It can be destroyed by greed, but it never flatters the greedy; it can, for a time, be made the domain of the elites, but it outlives them; it can be temporarily overpowered, but never, except at the peril of all, overwhelmed. On the other hand, nature showers its bountiful blessings upon the mighty and the meek in equal proportion. The howl of the wolf, the cry of the loon, the lap of clean water against an untrammelled shore constitute the only common currency; to defend them is to labor in the most elementary way for the general good.”*

– Paul Gruchow *Boundary Waters, The Grace of the Wild*



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### The Quetico Foundation 50th Anniversary Celebration

Founded in 1954, The Quetico Foundation will be celebrating fifty years of wilderness protection and stewardship with its U.S. neighbors, on October 1st at the University Club of St Paul. Speakers will include Cliff Jacobson and Becky Mason. Tickets are \$100/person. Contact William B. Sargent (416-941-9388) or email reservation requests to [office@queticofoundation.org](mailto:office@queticofoundation.org).

A Ticket Reservation Form is available on the Foundation's Website:

[www.queticofoundation.org](http://www.queticofoundation.org)



The Japanese House on Mallard Island, as seen from Crow Island. Photo by Charles Dahl.

## MALLARD ISLAND Ernest Oberholtzer's Dream



*The battle to spare the living wilderness is now living history and the men who fought that battle are among our quiet legends.*

*Ober's little island awaited it's new mission and Ober himself spoke of his dreams for it's future. He saw it as a place for musicians, artists, writers and teachers to come for a refreshment of tired souls. He saw it as a continuation of its role as a special place to his Ojibwa Indian friends, the home of friendly spirit families. He saw it as a living island much as he saw his beloved boundary waters country as a living wilderness. These are the dreams he told to friends...*

*...today, Ober's dream is reality*

*thanks to the Foundation that bears his name.*

– Ted Hall, from the 1980-81 Winter issue of Wilderness News

*continued on page 2*

# The Dream Goes On: The Later History of Mallard Island

by Edith Rylander

During Ernest Oberholtzer's active years, the island he accepted in lieu of back wages in 1922 was, indeed, a university of the wilderness. Friends of the Quetico-Superior and founders of the Wilderness Society joined writers, painters, musicians, native berry-pickers and Rainy Lake neighbors at his table. They slept in Bird House, Japanese House, Front House, Cook's House, Cedarbark House. They dipped into the ever-growing personal library of this most eclectic learner. They listened to him play the violin.

But when Ober died, in 1977, he had not lived on Mallard Island since the summer of 1957. The island had been visited, supervised, and briefly inhabited, Ober having given the keys to the Mallard to Bob Hilke in 1968, with instructions to watch over it. At the time of his death the buildings still contained Ober's things, everything from his well-worn canoe to sheet music and letters from friends. But none of this treasure trove of history was in any kind of order. And what were his heirs, legal and spiritual, to do with it all?

There was a complex sorting-out process which was not without tension. At the core of it was the decision to maintain lands, buildings, and collections intact, as much as that was possible. The willingness of Ober's heirs to share part of their inheritance assured that Ober's legacy would live on.

Today, the Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation "maintains Ober's island home as a place of inspiration, renewal and connection to the natural world."



Ernest Oberholtzer. *Photographer unknown, circa 1940's.*

Well before legal niceties were completed, the massive task of sorting, repairing, reconstructing and classifying had begun. Much of the early work was done by Ted and Rody Hall and Gene Ritchie Monahan. Gene Monahan in particular organized numerous unbound, scattered papers to go to the Minnesota Historical Society. Jean and Randy Replinger and a crew of volunteers sorted, organized, catalogued, and shelved the expansive library. Ray Anderson sorted and cataloged Ober's amazing photographs. In 1985, the foundation selected its first program director, Jean Sanford Replinger.

These volunteers were merely the first of an enormous number of helpers who made buildings safe and habitable, restored crumbling masonry, cleared and re-planted Ober's gardens, and replaced old-style outhouses with composting outhouses. Ober's Island is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Even as the Mallard was restored and maintained, the program director has implemented summer programs designed to ensure wise use of this unique island's resources, including Ober's personal legacy. These programs include "work weeks", devoted to the well-being of the island's buildings and collections, and theme-oriented programs. Painters, photographers, musicians, bird-banders, bibliophiles, writers, Ojibwe language learners and educators have met, mingled, learned, and shared, much as Ober might have wanted. □



Ober's Big House. *Photo by Charles Dahl.*



Cook's House. *Photo by Roger Reede.*



The Bird House. *Photo by Charles Dahl.*

# Toward Magnetic North

## The Oberholtzer-Magee 1912 Canoe Journey to Hudson Bay

Published by the Oberholtzer Foundation

Marshall, Minnesota

(2000, 128 pages, \$50.00-Hardcover)

1-800-647-7827

*Reviewed by David Pelly, author of six books about Canada's Arctic, including Thelon: A River Sanctuary. Note: This review by David Pelly was originally published in Nastawgan, Spring 2001.*

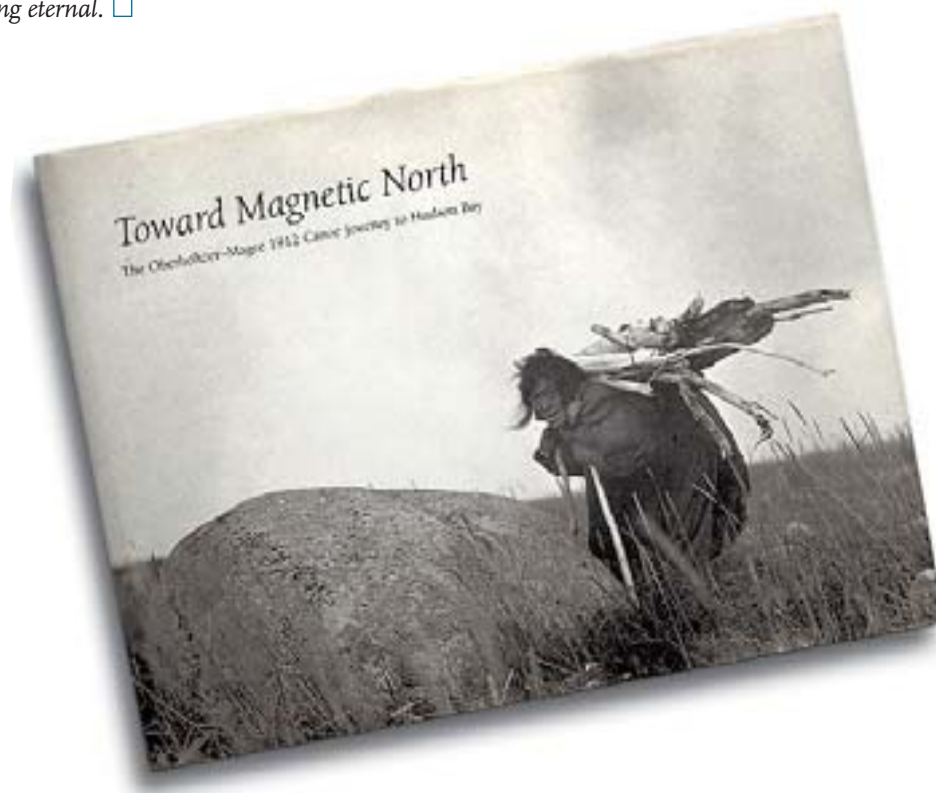
When a group of dedicated volunteers undertakes a project, and succeeds, the result typically rises above anything that simple commercial enterprise is capable of achieving. Such is the case with the book Toward Magnetic North, published by the Oberholtzer Foundation in Minnesota. This volume fairly sparkles.

In 1912, Ernest Oberholtzer and Billy Magee canoed from Lake Winnipeg north into the southern part of the Keewatin (now Kivalliq, Nunavut), east to Hudson Bay, and then south again (upriver) to Lake Winnipeg. The original plan was to follow J. B. Tyrrell's route down the Kazan and out to Chesterfield Inlet on the Bay, but wisely the men decided to turn east when, in early August, they were only just crossing the 60th parallel. The journey of 3200 kilometers—some of it through country hitherto unmapped by white men—took them 133 days, and ended amid early November snow squalls. Oberholtzer was a 28-year-old Harvard graduate with a newly acquired penchant for wilderness travel by canoe. Magee, whose proper name was Titapeshwewitan, was a 50-year-old Ojibwa befriended by Oberholtzer three years earlier in the Rainy Lake district. For the people behind this book project, Oberholtzer is clearly a hero, his journey an epic. But it is implicitly evident that they are celebrating something more: his love for the land and dedication to wilderness preservation. According to the book, Oberholtzer was a founder of the Wilderness Society, and “the central figure in the seemingly endless struggle to preserve the wilderness areas on the Minnesota-Ontario border.” One gets the feeling that this life-long campaign had its roots in the 1912 journey.

The book offers several short and interesting essays, each from a different perspective, about the man himself, who died in 1977 at age 93. Brief excerpts from his trip journal are used to lay the foundation for the book's main purpose, to present a selection of 70 of Oberholtzer's black-and-white photographs, taken in 1912 with a large-format 3A Graflex camera weighing almost three kilograms. Some are better than others, of course, but taken together they provide a memorable sense of the man and the journey through unknown country. The most striking of all the images were captured in an Inuit camp at the mouth of the Thlewiaza River on Hudson Bay.

The forward to this book puts Oberholtzer in a league with Eric Morse and Sigurd Olson. Judging the man revealed in these pages, it seems apt, insofar as his love for the wilderness was obviously profound. One difference is that his legacy, as witnessed here, is photographic. As the book says: “Only a few years after Ober and Billy paddled to Hudson Bay, the north country became the domain of airplanes and gasoline engines. York boats became antique curiosities. Paddles were replaced by outboard motors, and dog teams gave way to snowmobiles. Ober's photographs remind us that things change, but the wilderness he captured in them remains eternal.”

*It is books such as this, which celebrate the wilderness, that give it even a fighting chance of being eternal. □*



## The Roadless Area Conservation Rule

**The Roadless Area Conservation Rule is the most significant public lands conservation measure of recent years. Protecting nearly 60 million acres of national forest land from logging and road-building, including 147,000 acres of the Quetico Superior region.**

The Roadless Rule was significant and involved nearly three years of research and analysis, more than 600 public meetings, and 1.6 million public comments of which 95% were in favor of complete roadless area protection. From the Quetico Superior region (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) 96% of the 75,967 comments supported the Roadless Rule. When completed in January 2001, people across the country celebrated and praised the efforts of the Forest Service to preserve American's forest legacy for future generations.

The Bush administration delayed implementation of the rule. Then, in July 2004 the administration announced plans to put the fate of these federal lands in the hands of the state governors to petition the federal government for protection of their state's wild national forest lands.

Only about 17 percent of the national forests in Quetico Superior region remain wild and intact. Of these areas, the majority have been protected by Congress. However, there remain 147,000 roadless acres that could only be protected by the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. We have the opportunity to contact the Forest Service before the September 14th deadline to express our support for keeping the Rule in place. E-mail: [statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us](mailto:statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us) or visit [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) for more information.

## Celebrate 40 Years of Wilderness

**The Wilderness Act was enacted on September 3, 1964 to protect some of the remaining natural areas in the United States as wilderness, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). The intent of the Wilderness Act was to establish wilderness areas for the “use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness...”**

At the national level many activities are being planned including an updated map of the national wilderness system, online interactive curriculum for teachers, Walks for Wilderness and special programs featuring wilderness are planned for National Public Radio's Earth & Sky program and on the Public Broadcast System. For updated information on nationwide 40th Anniversary events & activities please visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).



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## The Quetico Foundation Celebrates 50 Years of Wilderness Protection

The Quetico Foundation came into being in 1954 with the encouragement and support of the Quetico Superior Foundation. It is dedicated to the protection of Quetico Provincial Park and other wilderness parks in Ontario. Although the focus has primarily been on Quetico, the Foundation has played a significant role in the establishment and protection of other wilderness parks such as Polar Bear, Killarney, Woodland Caribou, Opasquia, Kesagami, Wabakimi, and Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater. In addition to liaison with conservation organizations in Canada, the Foundation maintains a close relationship with the Quetico Superior Foundation, Wilderness Research Foundation, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness and Voyageurs Region National Park Association in the U.S.A. related to enhancing the protection and stewardship of the Quetico-Superior ecosystem.

For 50 years, The Quetico Foundation has undertaken to educate the public and to work cooperatively with the Ontario government and other organizations to protect the values of wilderness parks in Ontario. Over the years, the Foundation has supported a variety of research and educational projects such as publishing our newsletter, *The QUETICO*, planting a disease resistant variety of white pine, establishing the John B. Ridley Research Library at Quetico Provincial Park and awarding the Shan Walshe Memorial Award.



In 1997, the Summer Student Research Program was initiated to hire high school, college, and university students from Atikokan and the Lac La Croix First Nation to conduct research in Quetico. Funding for the program has been provided by the Quetico Superior Foundation. The Quetico Foundation takes a leading role in ensuring that our natural heritage is protected for present and future generations.

The reasoned, rational and science-based approach of the Foundation has given it a strong voice and the ability to work cooperatively with government agencies and nonprofit organizations on both sides of the Canada-United States border to protect the wilderness character of the region.

Even with an investment of more than \$500,000.00 in Quetico in the last decade alone, The Quetico Foundation sees the need for an ever-increasing effort to sustain the Park as one of the few quiet places left in the world. As a result, the Foundation has established its first membership program. Already, a number of people from the United States have become members. Since over 85 percent of the visitors to Quetico are American, your support as members will become a vital component in the success of our projects for the benefit of present and future generations. Many visitors, enriched by their Quetico experience have wanted to give something back. Now, you can!

Your membership will help put wilderness protection first. Make an investment in the future of Quetico Provincial Park by becoming a member of The Quetico Foundation. Information about The Quetico Foundation Membership Program and Application Form is available on the Foundation's Website: [www.queticofoundation.org](http://www.queticofoundation.org).



### ALONG THE TRAIL



Dolmen stones near Lake Lujenida. Photo by Gary Meinz.

## Dolmen Stones in the Boundary Waters

Just an easy paddle from the Sawbill Landing you may find one of the Boundary Waters' hidden mysteries. Dolmen stones are usually a natural boulder supported by "peg" stones. They are found throughout Europe and are commonly found in the Eastern United States. It is believed that this dolmen is the only one in Minnesota. The Dolmen measures approximately 4 feet high by 6 feet wide and seems to be oriented to the sunrise at the Summer Solstice. It has been speculated that this Dolmen may have been used to observe planetary/star movements, or as a worship area marking changes in the seasons.

### Wilderness News

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