

Wilderness News



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SPRING 1985

A MAGIC AFTERNOON ON A MAGIC ISLAND

By Ted Hall

One by one they depart this planet, those warriors for the wilderness who also were statesman, poets, philosophers and teachers. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness was their most tangible victory hereabouts, but their even larger gift to this planet and its passengers was the breaking of a mind-set that sought conquest of nature in defiance of our dependence on its fragile balance.

They taught as they fought, so that a new generation is alert to the lessons of plundering a hospitable planet and of the by-laws for continuing our lively ride. They taught us humility and the good sense of being friends with our landlord, who, after all, holds the key to our survival as a component of life on Earth.

They were a remarkable group of men and women who risked the wrath of the Establishment of that day to pull the brake on a bandwagon headed for its own destruction. They included people with ties to the conquest that now discredited itself by its lack of vision. They included businessmen and professionals with much to lose materially by opposing the powerful forces that saw forests only as board feet of lumber and sparkling lakes only as metered kilowatts of electricity.

They included scholars, artists, musicians, volunteer civic workers, scientists, explorers, sportsmen and clergy. They included grain men and railroad men and ore men and lumber men.

And they included two remarkable oddballs: Ernest Oberholtzer and William H. Magie, two men so different in their tastes and manner that only a burning common interest would have merged their trails. That burning common interest was their love for the wilderness and their determination that should not vanish by default. Thus they marched together in the front rank of that formidable troop of conservationists, warriors and teachers all.

Ernest Oberholtzer died in 1977 and a bronze plaque set in the granite spine of the



Lucille Magie beside the plaque honoring her husband, Bill Magie.

tiny Rainy Lake island that was his home pays tribute to him as a man and as one of the warriors in the battle to save the wilderness. William Magie died in 1982 and a plaque honoring his love for the wilderness and his fight to save it was mounted on the edge of Farm Lake in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. But vandals pried loose Bill Magie's plaque as a reminder of the depth of bitterness the battle has left. Friends sought a safer, yet equally appropriate place to mount the plaque, and when Herbert C. Johnson, Chairman of Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness (of which Bill Magie was a founder) suggested to trustees of the Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation that Ober's island might be an appropriate place, a fine event was in the making.

And on a sunny Saturday last August, Ober's hospitable magic island played host again for Ober's friends and Bill Magie's friends—old friends and new friends—as Bill Magie's plaque was unveiled by his wife, Lucille, in the company of their daughter,

Susan Berggren, and representatives of those groups that seek to carry on his stewardship of the wilderness.

The Oberholtzer Foundation, as host, was represented by its chairman, Charles A. Kelly, Thomas Tarbox, James Davis, and Ted Hall. The Quetico-Superior Foundation was represented by its president, Fred Winston, Worth and Lucy Bruntjen, Kelly and Hall; Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness by Herbert C. Johnson, who, with Greg Lais and Sheila Hart and two contingents of canoeists just in from the Boundary Waters and the Yukon, also represented Wilderness Inquiry II.

Also present were Nelson French of Project Environment, Chuck Anderson of the U.S. Forest Service, Chuck Stoddard of The Wilderness Society and Kevin Proescholdt and Janet Green of the Audubon Society.

When the guests were assembled in the garden near the plaque—the garden Ober called "Little Iowa" and depended upon for sweet corn—Ted Hall extended the welcome

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE NORTH WOODS

By Guy Gibbon



How many of us have stopped for more than a moment or two while paddling in the middle of a North Woods lake to think of the many people who must have lived here before the first French fur-traders arrived? How many know when the first people came? When wild rice was first harvested in abundance? Or how archaeologists answer questions like these?

Just as we leave small clues at our campsites, a lost fishhook, for example, the prehistoric Indians of the North Woods did too. Archaeologists have been able to piece together a sketchy story of these distant people from the broken pottery vessels, projectile points, food debris, and many other items that they left behind. Apparently, the first settlers of what is now the North Woods arrived between 13,000 and 12,000 years ago, or between 11,000 and 10,000 B.C. when retreating glaciers and spruce parkland covered much of the region. Since there were very few of them, their remains are difficult to find. However, a few stone blades with a prismatic shape found along the Rainy River and a small number of widely scattered long lanceolate projectile points show that they were here and that they were probably hunters. Other hunters, archaeologists call the Archaic people, left their large stemmed and notched projectile points along the shores of the lakes and rivers of our region between 7000 and 200 B.C. They are best known, perhaps, for the distinctive copper tools they made after 5000 B.C. Copper knives, spear points, spuds, adzes, and other tools have been found along the shoreline of most large lakes and rivers in the area, including Rainy River, Rainy Lake, Namakan, and Lake Kabetogama.

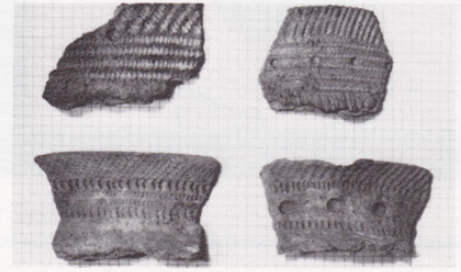
Life seems to have quickened and to have become more complex in the North Woods between 200 B.C. and 800 A.D. Ceramic containers and earthen burial mounds appear for the first time, and there is evi-

dence of extensive trade with areas to the south. Archaeologists identify these people most easily by the types of pottery they made, such as the Laurel style. After A.D. 800 wild rice became a food staple for the first time and new ceramic styles, with names like Blackduck and Sandy Lake, appeared. It is generally thought that Sandy Lake is associated with the prehistoric roots of a number of branches of the Dakota Indians, especially the Yanktonai Dakota and the Assiniboin. Projectile points are now primarily small side-notched forms and small triangular points. A description of these and other North Woods ceramic cultures can be found in Scott Anfinson's *A Handbook of Minnesota Ceramics* (1979).

A number of trends occurred during this long prehistoric period that affected what we can expect to find today. For example, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of people who lived in the North Woods through time. We should anticipate finding, then, more Blackduck and Sandy Lake archaeological sites than Laurel sites, and more Laurel sites than Archaic. Another trend was an increase in the number and variety of physical structures that were built. For example, earthen mounds appear with the first ceramics, but after A.D. 800 mounds appear with a variety of wild rice processing structures, such as jigs and roasting pits.

A number of historic events also profoundly affected the kinds of archaeological remains that we can expect to find today in the North Woods. Logging, mining, and more recently, the spread of summer cabins have destroyed or disturbed great numbers of archaeological sites. Most devastating, in many areas, was the construction of dams that dramatically raised the water level and eroded many sites away.

An archaeological survey I conducted in Voyageurs National Park in 1976 forcefully



Archaeological records from the North Woods.

Who were the people that lived in the North Woods before the first French fur-traders arrived?

illustrated the effect on the archaeological record of this latter historic event. Our search throughout the area showed that prehistoric archaeological sites had been located on the shores of the major lakes and that nearly all of them had eroded away at least in part with the rise in water level. Many of these sites are now only visible as scatters of stone flakes and ceramic sherds on the sandy beaches in the park.

Recent archaeological explorations on the Canadian side of Lake Namakan have again demonstrated the impact of this historic event on the archaeological record. An extensive, largely Blackduck, site on the property of Betty Lassard has been largely destroyed by erosion, although quantities of pottery and other prehistoric tools can still be found along the beach. The information that has undoubtedly been lost was demonstrated by test-excavations on another Blackduck site on high ground at the Sand Point Resort, where a wide variety of interesting items, including projectile points, ceramic sherds, ricing jigs, and animal bones, was recovered. An intact burial mound still stands next to the lodge. Another site on higher ground that has survived is an apparent "thunder bird" nest, a vision quest structure, on a very small island in the lake. Brief reports on these interesting explorations, which have been funded by the Quetico-Superior Foundation, will appear in future editions of the Newsletter.

The archaeological record of the North Woods is fragile, as I have tried to demonstrate here. Each of us should be as concerned with its preservation as we are with the preservation of the forests and wildlife around us. Archaeological discoveries, whether a projectile point or a handful of sherds, should be reported to responsible authorities.

In turn, the authorities should be urged to construct even on a small scale interpretive centers that will help us better understand those people who lived in the North Woods for thousands of years before the first French fur-traders.

A MAGIC AFTERNOON ON A MAGIC ISLAND *(Continued from page 1)*

of the island and recounted Ober's role in the conservation movement, noting the strong and loyal support that had enabled him to bring exploitation of the boundary lakes area under public control, and the universal focus of Ober's conservation philosophy. "This island was his little university that for half a century has influenced people's attitude toward wilderness, and today it continues that mission, steering the course he and those staunch allies, including Bill Magie, have set."

The tanned and cheerful members of the Wilderness Inquiry canoe expeditions, some in wheelchairs for this occasion, others with crutches or canes but all determinedly self-sufficient, were without words offering an eloquent testimonial to the spell of Ober's island and to the wilderness. They also were rebutting the charge that by banning aircraft and motorboats from the wilderness areas, conservationists were also banning the handicapped from the wilderness.



Herb Johnson admires his Lake Superior Oodelight with inscription.

Then Herbert Johnson and Lucille Magie uncovered the plaque on the granite wall beside the garden, and to that afternoon's warm sunlight and the silent friends it said:

"Think on this land of lakes and forests
It cannot survive man's greed
Without man's selfless dedication.

William H. Magie
Friend of the Wilderness
Devoted most of his life to this cause
Now it is yours"

Then, to Herb Johnson for his thoughtfulness and effort to bring Bill Magie's plaque to so appropriate a setting in so appropriate a gathering, Janet Green presented him a Lake Superior Oodelight inscribed as Bill Magie often closed his peppery letters:

"May your headwinds always be light
and your portages short
throughout the years ahead."

It had been a day of fine memories, including memories of all those other great conservation warriors now departed from this planet they left better than it would have been without their warning and their courageous work in its behalf.



Wilderness Inquiry II canoers, rebutting the charge.



Chuck Anderson of the U.S. Forest Service and Nelson French of Project Environment.



Ted Hall and Lucy Buntjen.

BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS, CASINOS AND ROULETTE

Reactions were mixed in early February when Governor Rudy Perpich and area legislators reported that they were considering big-time gambling for Ely, Minnesota.

Perpich's top aide, Terry Montgomery, said that Perpich envisions Ely as a gambling mecca rivaling Las Vegas and Atlantic City. "This is not North Dakota two-bit," said Senator Doug Johnson, DFL-Cook, who along with Representative Dave Battaglia DFL-Two Harbors, is supporting the proposal. "People would decide on Las Vegas, Atlantic City or Ely," he said. A more seasoned assessment of the gambling prospects in Ely was compiled by Casinos Austria, Vienna, Austria. Casinos Austria owns casinos in Austria and operates them in other European Countries.

In an 89 page report, Casinos Austria predicted that backpackers and canoe enthusiasts would probably avoid the Ely area if it became a gambling mecca. The report cautioned that a casino could scare off the visitor who is looking for a wilderness experience. That might be regrettable, but the people who come to gamble would spend much more money.

The Reverend John Sustarsic, Pastor of St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Ely, said, "I have serious doubts that any gambling will help Ely. It may help economically, but we will have other problems here with gambling." Sustarsic was concerned that a portion of the area's poor would squander their milk money and that the gambling would inevitably bring in prostitution and organ-

ized crime.

Mayors of other northern Minnesota cities including International Falls and Duluth expressed keen interest in casinos for their cities as well.

Casino gambling was proposed as an economic development program to help depressed Ely and the Iron Range towns around it. The Casinos Austria report estimated that a casino in Ely would turn an annual profit of \$5.3 million, attract 100,000 visitors a year and create 930 jobs. A 250 room hotel-casino complex would become the largest employer in town. Economic conditions have been tough in Ely for decades, and it is easy to understand why so many Ely residents strongly support casino gambling.

THE QUETICO FOUNDATION LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

	Price	Postage & Handling
1. "Water-resistant Map of Quetico Park" (Tyvek paper)	\$6.00	\$0.75
Published in co-operation with the Ministry of Natural Resources, this beautifully colored map (36" x 30") with scenic illustrations, shows the access points, Portages, Park Stations, Facilities and Boundaries, First Aid Posts and other useful information.		
2. "Canoe Trails Through Quetico" by Keith Denis	\$7.50	\$1.50
"A combination of early Canadian history and a practical guide to canoeists who might wish to explore this region" Canadian Geographical Journal. Includes map of 15 routes.		
3. "Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes"Paper	\$12.95	\$2.00
by Selwyn Dewdney and Kenneth E. Kidd. Describes the results of an exciting quest to discover and record Indian rock paintings of Northern Ontario and Minnesota. Eight quadri-colour plates, 80 line drawings in colour and 6 maps.		
4. "Quetico Fishes" by E.J. Crossman	\$3.00	\$0.75
A book for the layman and the ichthyologist with detailed descriptions of the fishes, habitats and locations in the park.		
5. "Plants of Quetico and the Ontario Shield"Paper	\$12.95	\$2.00
by Shan WalsheCloth	\$25.00	
A handy guide, 160 pp., 223 colour illustrations and 3 maps, to the plants, shrubs and trees of Quetico Park which will be of use far beyond the Park boundaries. A check list of all 658 plants known to occur in the Park is included.		
6. "Quetico-Superior Country" by Bruce M. Litteljohn	\$1.50	\$0.75
An illustrated, 31-page magazine-style publication.		
7. "Wilderness Canada" edited by Borden Spears	\$27.95	\$3.00
A beautifully illustrated coffee table type book.		
8. "Canadian Voyageur Crests"	\$2.75	\$0.50
9. "Quetico" 16 mm colour sound award-winning film on rental basis.		

Available from the Quetico Foundation, 170 University Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3B5.

DISCOVERING THE UNITED STATES— CANADIAN BORDER

We recommend to our readers the National Geographic Series book just published, "Lakes, Peaks and Prairies, Discovering the United States—Canadian Border." Pages 90-98 have copy and photographs of the BWCA and a photograph of Dorothy Molter. The excellent photographs are by Michael Yamashita.

WILDERNESS NEWS MAILINGS

Wilderness News is mailed free of charge to anyone who requests to be placed on our mailing list. In 1985 the company which formerly printed Wilderness News destroyed our mailing list. Consequently many readers who received Wilderness News in the past may have been inadvertently dropped. We hope anyone we have missed will contact us so that his or her name can be re-entered on our list to receive Wilderness News.

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