



Bringing It All Together

THE NMU AND CENTRAL UPPER PENINSULA ARCHIVES PRESERVE THE REGION'S INDUSTRIAL AND POLITICAL PAST AND THE UNIVERSITY'S RECORDS

By Rebecca Tavernini

Marcus Robyns, NMU archivist, got a call one day from a fellow in Marquette who thought he might have a couple of books Marcus would be interested in. He was heading to work, but if Marcus would like to stop by, his wife would be there. What she handed to him were two huge, old volumes—inside were correspondence and detailed plans between Cleveland Cliffs Iron Mining Inc. (CCI) President William G. Mather and influential American city planner and landscape designer Warren H. Manning about establishing and developing the town of Gwinn. It was a historic treasure chest. Marcus asked how the couple came to have these books. “My husband works at the landfill,” she told him.

Robyns says that’s one of many similar situations he’s encountered in the ten years he’s been heading up and growing the Northern Michigan University and Central Upper Peninsula Archives. Creating a home for not only the university’s but the region’s historical records, before they disappear or disintegrate, is what he’s all about.

“People think I’m a pack rat, but actually I’m anything but,” he says. “I spend the majority of my time deciding what to destroy, and what’s worth keeping.” He looks for legal, historical and functional value while also heeding state statutes and federal requirements for retention. “Only about two percent of the records we receive are retained permanently; others for a shorter time.” But that two percent comprises invaluable materials: 150 years of CCI documents, regional historical collections, oral history tapes and transcripts, the John D. Voelker papers, labor archives of the central U.P., local government records, regional genealogy resources, local past and present politicians’ files, selected church records, civic organization files and an extensive rare book collection (see sidebar). Plus, the archives contain a host

of other research materials such as U.P. newspapers on microfilm, including copies of what is now *The Mining Journal* from 1846, school yearbooks, periodicals, maps, photographs, films and videos.

As a matter of fact, Robyns recently cobbled together, with the help of NMU’s Audio-Visual Department, a system for converting old WNMU-TV beta and VHS tapes into digital format as the original magnetic tapes will soon be so degraded they will be unviewable. He fights the same battle against time and the elements with the archives’ oral history collection on cassette tapes. Not only will the digital conversion preserve the material, it will also make it possible to increase access to it via the Internet. But there, too, is the challenge of time and resources. Robyns is the only staff member at



Archivist Marcus Robyns strikes a pose with some political paraphernalia.

the archives (he also teaches classes in public history, historical research and archival management) and he relies heavily on four student assistants to process collections and assist researchers. Many of his former students have gone on to careers or advanced education in the field. He’s grateful to his own

predecessors, Cliff Maier, the NMU history professor who became the first archivist in 1985 (his student assistant was **Dan Truckey '90 BS**; see the article on the Heritage Center in this issue), and Gayle Martinson, who established the records management program and expanded the archives to include regional historical manuscript collections. In its early days, the archives consisted of a few cubicles on the first floor of the Harden Learning Resources Center. Today, the archives is still on the first floor, but in larger (though still packed) quarters. An off-site University Records Center houses files for university offices, offering 24-hour retrieval.

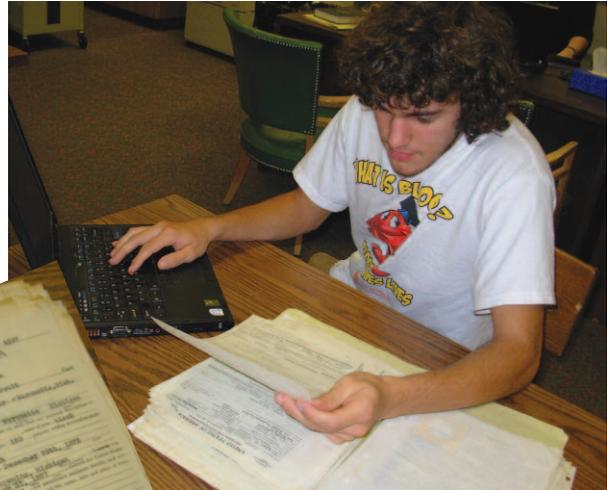
Robyns' goal at the archives has been twofold: to create the University Records Center with its easy access—which is unique among Michigan universities; and to establish the archives as the regional historical depository for the central U.P. (an official designation), while dramatically expanding the scope of its manuscript collection. One of his first tasks, and largest coups, came about accidentally.

He was touring the State Archives of Michigan in Lansing. "I happened upon 1,200 cubic feet of boxes labeled 'CCI,'" he recalls. "I asked about them and the assistant archivist explained they were records from the mining company from the 1850s through 1960s. She said if I had a truck she would have given them to me

The collections at the archives are widely used by researchers, by students as part of their class curriculum, and by people tracing their family tree.

right then and there. The state archivist was more reluctant, though."

It turned out that the records were found in the buildings of the U.P. ghost town of Fayette, Mich. In 1959, when the state acquired this property (a former iron-smelting operation) from CCI and restored it as a State Historical Park, wooden storage boxes full of records were discovered and removed. After a storage stint at the Marquette County Historical Society the records were delivered to the State Archives in 1965. It took him a few years, but Robyns eventually got the



Freshman Andrew Mallo researching naturalization records. This record is of Charles Bargion, born in 1875, who emigrated to Ishpeming from Canada.

records moved to the archives at NMU (they are still labeled "Park Records" since they were acquired at Fayette).

"We've had scholars from all over the country access these records," says Robyns. They not only contain information about mining, but agriculture, lumber, shipping and the local culture. "The Department of Environmental Quality often uses them to review old CCI purchase records to see what kinds of chemicals they were purchasing and using in the early century." One interesting letter a researcher came across was from an interracial couple in Ishpeming (1859) asking CCI for a land lease so they could open a hotel. "What stood out in the correspondence within CCI was that there was no reference or objection to race, the company was just concerned that the land was an area where illegal gambling and activities were popping up."

The collections at the archives are also widely used by students as part of their curriculum in classes such as geography, biology, environmental science, and naturally, history. People tracing their family tree also draw on the archives' genealogical immigration, naturalization and tax records. Anyone can access the records; they just need to sign a form of conditions for using the materials, and explain their research project. A research strategy will then be developed and appropriate materials pulled from the files for the researcher to review onsite.

While many records may be "invaluable," they could fetch a nice price on the black market, or from an

unsuspecting collector—hence the onsite policy. Robyns recalls being at the University of Oregon archives (where he earned his bachelor's and



Cataloger and professor Steve Peters organizing contents of one of 60 boxes of manuscripts and artifacts from **John D. Voelker '24**.

master's degrees) when an “electrician” came in to fix some wiring in the records rooms. The next day, the archives’ irreplaceable Oregon Trail pioneers’ diaries were gone. For that reason, Robyns marks his collection containers with a cryptic file number that only the staff can reference.

While protecting and preserving records can be tricky, acquiring them also takes finesse. While collections sometimes do fall into his lap, Robyns explains he also has to be an “ambulance chaser,” though he uses more proactive methods as well.

“I make connections with community members, work with our politicians to get their papers, speak to organizations and work with other archivists and historians, and yes,



The reading room at the archives.

I read the obituaries.” Despite the stacks of boxes waiting to be explored and cataloged, the dried-up Scotch tape and yellowing newspaper clippings glued into scrap-books, the decaying audio tapes and knowledge that not everything good is spared from the landfill, Robyns says he loves the job and its challenges. “The only thing I don’t like is that I get attached to the students who work here, and when they graduate, they leave. I miss them. I hate it.”

That sounds like someone who really holds on to the past. ■

What’s at the archives

Historical Regional Collections

- Citizens to Save the Superior Shoreline Records
- Sam Cohodas Papers
- Martha and Perry Hatch Papers
- Stewart Kingsbury Papers
- K.I. Sawyer Support Group/Reconversion Authority Records
- Mather Inn Preservation Society Records
- Saint Luke's/Marquette General Hospital Records
- Saint Paul's Episcopal Church Records
- John D. Voelker Papers

The Archives of the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Mining Company

Company records, plus records of mines owned by CCI and companies with which it conducted business.

Labor Archives of the Upper Peninsula

Records of unions, labor leaders and publications

Local Government Archival Records

Records created by counties, municipalities, and townships, including Marquette, Alger, Delta, Dickinson and Schoolcraft counties.

Political Archives of the Central Upper Peninsula

- Connie Binsfeld
- Patrick M. Gagliardi
- James Goulette
- Dominic J. Jacobetti
- Howard Swaine
- Charles Varnum



The Moses Coit Tyler Collection of Rare Books

The core of the Lydia Olson Library’s first collection, consisting of 2,000 titles comprising 3,000 volumes of nineteenth century works on American history, theology, and literature.

Oral History Collections of the Upper Peninsula

• The NMU and Regional Oral History Collection

Faculty, staff, alumni, and student life interviews; lectures from the McGoff Lecture series including Gerald Ford, Alexander Ginzburg, Abbie Hoffman, General Alexander Haig, Vincent Price and Robert Bly, among others; debates; press conferences; NMU presidential addresses and special events such as dedications, musical performances and commencements; student oral history projects pertaining to World War II and the September 11 terrorist attacks; oral histories of the Ski Hall of Fame, iron mining, local celebrations, events and U.P. ethnicities.

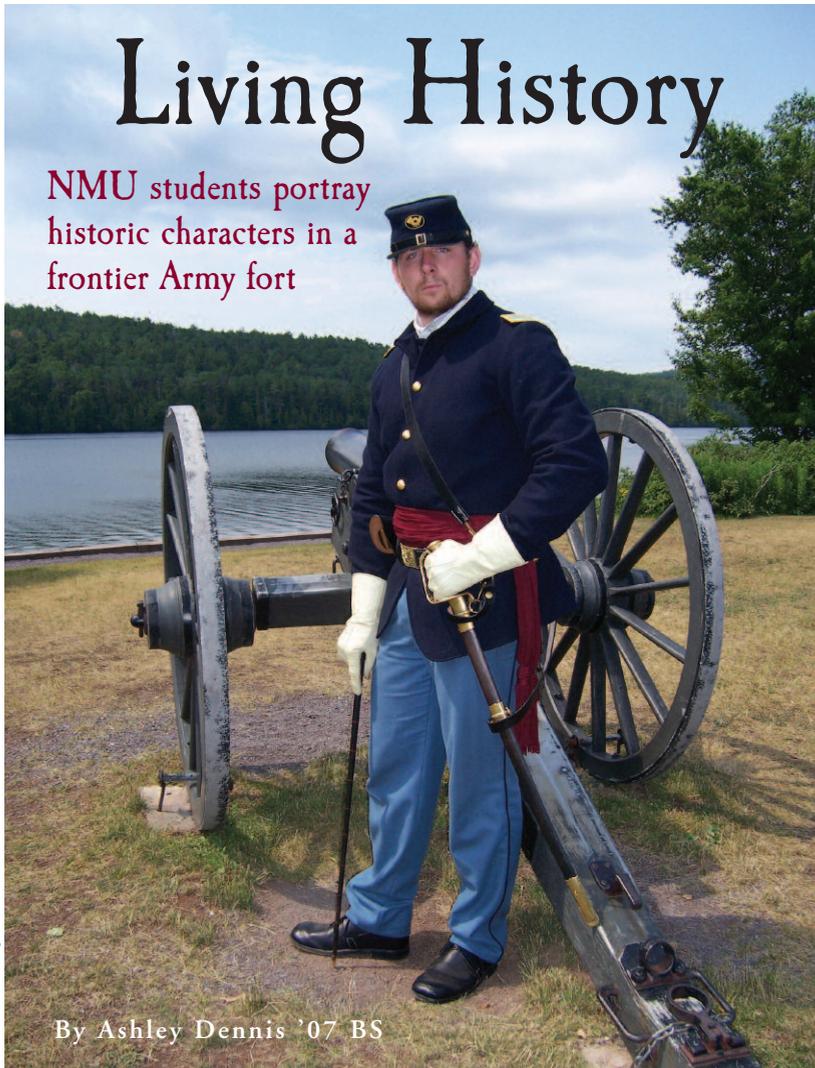
• The Red Dust Project Oral History Collection

800 oral history interviews and 17 books, documenting the history of the Central Upper Peninsula conducted by students of the former National Mine School and Aspen Ridge Middle School.

Visit www.nmu.edu/archives

Living History

NMU students portray historic characters in a frontier Army fort



Photos courtesy of Howard Nicholson

By Ashley Dennis '07 BS

NMU student David Paddock in character at Fort Wilkins on the shore of Lake Fanny Hooe

At the northern tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula, in the summer sun of 1870, Katie Holms pulls out her washboard and tub—and sighs. Her knuckles are sore, back aching, and she hasn't been paid in weeks, but such is life for the laundress of Fort Wilkins. Just as she begins to scrub the dirty clothing, someone approaches, "Hey, is there any cell phone service up here?" Katie sighs again.

No, NMU's Physics Department hasn't invented a time machine with the ability to blast students back to the past (yet); this is the doing of dedicated history buffs, professors and students.

Started in 1976 by Tom Friggens, Fort Wilkins "Living History" program has touched the lives of more than three million people. Friggens, now a regional manager for the Michigan Historical Center and director of the Michigan Iron Industry Museum, says the intent of the program is to "present history in an interpretive manner that encourages interest in the past."

Each summer, four to five students from Northern travel to Copper Harbor to portray fictitious characters based on actual individuals who once

lived at the Fort. After grueling training sessions, the students learn how to present the daily activities, attitudes and opinions of their characters.

"Most students have a hard time with the theatrical aspect of the program," says Russell Magnaghi, head of NMU's history department, "Learning the facts is the easy part." Friggens adds that "first-person role-playing is the most difficult because students are depicting the social and economic situations of 1870 and acting skills are needed in order to do so correctly."

Catherine Kimar, a senior majoring in outdoor recreation leadership and management, plays the part of the laundress Katie Holms.

"I was interested in the program after I heard about it by taking a class with Dr. Nicholson [assistant professor of history]. Historical role playing and interpretation is an important part of our curriculum in the outdoor recreation program, and I wanted to take this opportunity to receive firsthand experience with this type of a job," says Kimar. "I related more to the laundress than the officer's wife, and the character is a more interactive part to the role-playing program."

Kimar's character, as well as her "husband," Private Jonathan Holms, Second Lieutenant Richard Mueller, his wife Juliette, and Quartermaster Sergeant Patrick O'Neill, are based on real-life members of the 1870 garrison. By that time, the fort already had a colorful history.

The fort was constructed in 1844 as a frontier U.S. Army post. Some believe it was created at the urging of local residents following an uprising of a band of Chippewa Indians on Isle Royale who refused to surrender their lands. Two years

later, it was abandoned. In the mid-1850s, the fort was leased by the War Department to a private owner who turned it into a popular resort, but it eventually fell into disrepair. In 1867, with large numbers of troops following the Civil War, the 43rd Infantry, numbering approximately 66 men, reoccupied Fort Wilkins. As before, the geographic isolation of the post (it's about as far north as you can go in Michigan, excluding Isle Royale) contributed to problems of morale and desertion. In 1870, the fort was officially closed as a military post. Many years later the old fort was restored by local civic groups. It's comprised of 19 buildings, 12 of which are original structures. Fort Wilkins became a state park in 1923. The park also includes the Copper Harbor lighthouse, one of the first on Lake Superior.

Today, many consider employment with the Living History program to be a stepping stone to museum work.

"Well over 200 interpreters have spent time working in



NMU senior Catherine Kimar in her role as laundress Katie Holms. Below left, and right, the restored buildings at Fort Wilkins contain displays of how they would have been used in the 1800s and many actual artifacts found on the property or authentically re-created.

museums, with 15 or so going on to professional museum careers," says Tom Friggens.

Barry James '92 BS, curator of education for the Michigan Iron Industry Museum, participated in the program for two seasons (1990-1991). **Dan Truckey '90 BS**, who also role played for the fort, was

recently appointed as curator for the Beaumier Heritage Center at NMU (see article in this issue of *Horizons*).

The actors must stay in character the entire time they are in costume.

"Interpreting provides a university education experience that evolves into museum experience," says Friggens.

One of the main goals at Fort Wilkins is to encourage visitors of all ages to participate in the historical activities, whether it be interacting with a role player or taking part in a game of stick ball.

"Visitors gain an unusual museum experience by being able to interact emotionally with characters from the past," explains Friggens.

While a few people might be spooked by the actors, Kimar notes that most people are ready and willing to mingle with the characters and ask questions.



"I don't think too many people get uncomfortable. After all, we leave them pauses and openings where they can leave if they aren't interested in what our characters have to say or don't want to interact with us," she says. "Almost all visitors will at least greet us in return and respond to what we say."

Children are also encouraged to converse with the role players. "We want children to leave excited about what they've learned during the visit, to go back to the car and say, 'Hey mom did you know...!'" says Magnaghi.

Kimar points out that "some children are startled or surprised [by the characters] and run away, and others will greet us and talk with us. If you have an interactive task for them to do, such as grinding coffee, washing laundry, using a slate board, they tend to be more willing to listen to what you have to say. I've had a lot of them say that they appreciate their modern conveniences after participating in the program."

On occasion, visitors will not realize that the actors must stay in character the entire time they are in costume and will ask modern-day questions. This can lead to an



One of the main goals at Fort Wilkins is to encourage visitors of all ages to participate in the historical activities, whether it be interacting with a role player, like student James Simmons above, or taking part in a game of stick ball.

awkward, if not amusing conversation. For example if a guest asks Katie Holms where the bathroom is, she responds with a historically accurate answer, such as, "Well, we do have a privy out back of the officer's quarters if you need to use it. The main sinks are down that way" (the sinks being in reference to the modern amenities near the park gift shop). Or if someone inquires about a restaurant her reply would be, "I reckon that the nearby village of Copper Harbor might have a few places if you're looking for some good eats."

Perhaps the most significant and unique aspect of Fort Wilkins is its focus on common characters.

"It's a colorful and lively interpretation of ordinary people like you and me," says Friggens. "Instead of emphasis on people of importance like the Lincolns, visitors relate better to average citizens."

Everything the character does, from the way he or she acts to the slightest bit of gossip they share, is based on extensive historical research.

"The program becomes a touchstone in the sense that guests realize that human nature hasn't changed. We may have more niceties now, but human nature hasn't changed." ■

The park's Web site is www.michigan.gov/ftwilkins

What They Did with a Major in History

By Cindy Paavola '84 BS

As Northern Michigan University students, **Steven Brisson '89 BS** and **Dennis Delor '98 BS** weren't sure how to answer the question: "What are you going to do with a history degree?"

"At the time, I had very undefined goals and no idea what to do with my interest and major in history," says Brisson. "I just knew that I did not want to teach."

Today, Brisson is the chief curator for the Mackinac State Historic Parks. Delor, too, had no real interest in traditional classroom teaching, but had a passion for things from the past. He is also a chief curator—for the St. Clair County (Mich.) Parks and Recreation Department. Brisson and Delor are examples of two of many NMU alumni who have found viable, fulfilling careers as professionals in the business of preserving history.

A classroom without walls

Dennis Delor chuckles when he recalls that he was "constantly" questioned about his academic major and minor choice.

"Family and friends would say, 'How are you going to make a living at that?' At the time, I didn't have a clue, but it really turned out well for me."

Following his graduation, Delor worked at museums in Troy, Mich., and Skokie, Ill., before his longtime interest in Civil War history led him to Pamplin Historical Park, one of the top Civil War historical sites in the nation. There he worked as the chief of programming and services until a family situation called him back to Michigan in 2005.

During his career, Delor has been involved in museum programming, collection management, interpretive education and presentations, and consulting for historical societies and organizations. He adds that working with historical organizations also involves doing publicity, presentations, marketing and writing for many projects—all skills his liberal arts education prepared him well for, although he didn't always realize it at the time.

Delor has also been involved with or in charge of many historical restorations, including a bank, hospital, schoolhouse, log cabins and a farmhouse. One of his most unique and exciting professional challenges was to recreate a winter military encampment at the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier, in Petersburg, Va.

"We recreated about a quarter of

often history is taught in a way that is unimaginative. It would be so much more meaningful if teachers had the resources and opportunities to take the history lessons out of the classroom. Using the five senses, making it an interpretive learning experience, is the way to teach history."

Delor says some of his early passion for the subject was encouraged by his Marysville, Mich., junior high school history teacher, **Tim Evans '77 BS**, who is involved in French-Indian War reenactments.

Delor says NMU professors Russ Magnaghi, Jon Saari, Judy DeMark and Jean Kinnear made history and interpretation relevant, too. "I still have materials from Jean Kinnear's classes in my file drawer at work and I use them all the time."

Enjoying history is for everyone, but being in charge of preserving or recreating history takes specific insight.



what the winter encampment of the Petersburg battlefield would have been like around 1864 and 1865. It was accurate in every detail—how the streets were laid out, the log huts, how the buildings were built. There was so much history that took place there and for that exhibit we were able to recreate it almost exactly as it was, so for visitors it was like going back in time."

Hands-on interpretation of history is something Delor wishes school systems had more opportunity to do.

"I know how vital the basics are, but history is important, too. So

"Historians get excited about strange things," he says. He recalls finding a hand-forged nail while working on the hospital restoration.

"I came crawling out of the dirt with this chunk of old wood, exclaiming in amazement about the nail, but most of the people around only saw a piece of iron sticking out of old wood. They did not understand my excitement, but I immediately felt connected to the building's past. That's what it's always been like for me. I'm in this field because I love linking the past with the present."

Michigan of Old

The Mackinac State Historic Parks, administered by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, includes Mackinac Island State Park, Fort Mackinac, Colonial Michilimackinac, Historic Mill Creek, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and Historic Downtown Mackinac, Mich.

“A lot of NMU alumni are people who live in Michigan or have relatives they visit in the state and I would encourage them to visit these historic sites, which are a wonderful state resource and something the region should take great pride in. The Upper Peninsula has some outstanding historical resources,” says Brisson.

He finds his job exciting in that every day is different, especially considering the scope of overseeing museum operations of seven historic sites.

“One day I’m involved with an event on the island, the next I’m



Steve Brisson, chief curator for Mackinac State Historic Parks

that keep me learning every day,” Brisson states.

“I’m lucky, too, that I work with a great staff,” he says. That staff also includes **David Kronberg ’90 BFA, ’95 MA**, an art and design major who serves as exhibit designer creating a variety of products including gallery exhibits, hands-on elements and outdoor trail signs.

A student position at the then newly opened Michigan Iron Industry Museum is what set Brisson on his public history career path.

“That was my first exposure to public history and it was revealing to me,” he says. “While I had always been passionate about history, I wasn’t really aware of the public history side until then. Right away, public history was very interesting to me.”

Brisson worked at the iron museum for two summers and then worked at Fayette State Park (in the U.P.) for another two summers. He also worked in the winters at the Marquette County Historical Society under a Kellogg Grant project. Then NMU professor Russell Magnaghi encouraged him to apply to the Cooperstown Graduate Program,

which trains history museum professionals. He did, receiving his MA in 1992, and then went on to work as a curator with the Wisconsin State Historical Society before joining Mackinac State Historic Parks in 1996 as curator of collections. He became chief curator in 2003.

While he was in Wisconsin, technology became a more frequently used tool for museums and historical organizations. “Computers and multimedia provided us some new opportunities,” he says. “These new media exist and should be used—people expect that. Over the decades different tools for teaching about the past have been developed, for instance the development of professional and authentic living history programs in the 1960s and ’70s. The technology that exists today gives us another way to present material successfully.”

Regardless of how the history is presented, Brisson finds preserving it and displaying it to the public rewarding.



Fort Mackinac

“I think the goal of places such as the Mackinac State Historic Parks is in sharing our collective past with the broader public. We take what academic historians and scholars do and bring it to the public in a way that it can be easily understood by all ages and by people from many different backgrounds. I think in doing so we can find common ground as a society.” ■



Gardening at Colonial Michilimackinac

working on a book about the lighthouse. For instance, right now we’re very busy doing work on the Historic Mill Creek Park, which is an early 19th-century water-powered sawmill site. We’re redoing it as a discovery park with interactive activities and new programming. There’s a lot involved in keeping a 19th century waterwheel turning, so things like



By Kristi Evans

Following History's Beacon

An interview with **Dave Snyder** '82 BS is not your typical Q&A session. It begins with an "I can just go, if you want," and unfolds like an audio travelogue. With little prompting, he weaves insightful facts and engaging stories into a finely crafted tale about his career-related adventures. This presentation-style format is understandable, given his professional background. Snyder's livelihood has revolved around researching history and formally sharing the details with receptive audiences.

For two summers in the 1970s, he led shoreline walks past shipwrecks to the Au Sable Lighthouse at Pictured Rocks. He portrayed an infantry soldier on the Santa Fe Trail at Fort Larned, Kansas. He spent a summer at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, Alaska. He told Revolutionary War stories along the Freedom Trail in Boston. He served as a National Park Service (NPS) historian at Isle Royale and the Apostle Islands. And he has guided more than 40 tours to legendary lighthouses in the United States and abroad through the U.S. Lighthouse Society.

"My history degree from

Northern really helped. I've also been lucky," Snyder says. "NPS historians these days typically need a master's degree or higher. I was fortunate to get a job with a bachelor's. I grew up a third-generation Yooper near Munising and spent a lot of time on Lake Superior and in

the woods with my dad, who was a logger. At Northern, many of my classes focused on the history of Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. The combination fit what they were looking for at the time."

Snyder says most job seekers don't just jump into a position in the highly competitive NPS, so he adopted a gradual approach to gaining entry into the coveted agency. After his one-year stint in Boston, he landed his first permanent government position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at a man-made lake near Hot Springs, Ark. For an oral history project, Snyder interviewed folks who lived in the Ouachita River Valley before the flowing water was dammed to form a lake in the 1940s.

It was there that he heard about a newly created historian position at Isle Royale. Married at the time to a U.P. native and eager to move back to the region with their young child, Snyder applied and was hired. He spent about seven months of each year on the mainland in a Houghton office and the remainder on the island.

"I worked with regional NPS archeologists on a four-year survey

of the island. The best time to do it was in the spring before the vegetation was up. I also did an architectural survey of the buildings, including the four lighthouses. Rock Harbor is the oldest—1855. The newest is Rock of Ages, which was built in 1907."

Snyder said the first beacon was built to help guide boats to the island, primarily those transporting workers for the copper mining industry. The other lighthouses were erected to keep boats away from the hazardous rocks and reefs.

"Isle Royale is in the middle of the navigation lane for ships traveling from Duluth or heading to the Soo from Thunder Bay. Even with the lighthouses, a lot of ships hit the island and smaller ones around it. There are ten major shipwrecks in the area—huge ore carriers like the 532-foot-long *Chester A. Congdon*. As the historian, I was also on the NPS dive team. We established mooring buoys over three summers



Photos courtesy Dave Snyder

A Dave Snyder-led tour to his early stomping grounds at the AuSable Lighthouse. Above left, Snyder near the Portland Head Lighthouse in Maine.

so divers could secure their boats without anchoring into the wreckage and pulling historic fabric with them when they left. It's amazing how intact the wrecks are, with the cold water and not many creatures feeding on them."

When Isle Royale became a national park in 1931, negotiations ensued between the government and

families who owned summer homes or had commercial fishing interests on the island.

“A lot of people with money built summer resort homes and had been going there for many years. Some went to escape hay fever. There were also commercial fishing families who had lived on the island for several generations. They were poorer—and many had long-standing relationships with the resort families, such as readying the cabins in the spring, winterizing them in the fall and bringing them fresh fish or fresh-baked pies.”

Most families were given a life lease to their property, which sometimes transferred to their children. When he was there, about 10 resort families still used their cottages and three families had fishing rights to the island, shipping their catch to Duluth. He interviewed some of them; the youngest was born in 1937.

Even in modern times it is a relatively isolated existence on Isle Royale. Snyder spent stretches apart from his wife, who was a teacher in Hancock. When the family was together on the island, there were few potential playmates for his young daughter. His food orders were submitted to a Houghton grocery store and delivered by boat once a week.

In search of a “normal, year-round schedule,” Snyder became the park historian for the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. He maintained a Lake Superior workplace, but could commute to the 21 islands from the mainland in Bayfield, Wis. He spent nine years researching lighthouses.

“It was interesting to discover that the Lighthouse Service used some of the same plans in different locations. For example, the

Michigan Island Lighthouse in the Apostles, built in 1857, is identical to Rock Harbor, built two years earlier on Isle Royale.

“As I interviewed descendants of keepers, I found that these people would move around as they went through the ranks from second assistant to keeper. They served at various places, but it was a regional thing. Most of them stayed on Lake



A veteran U.S. Lighthouse Society tour participant, with his souvenir patches.

Superior. Between the two parks, I collected maybe 1,000 photos and about 60 oral history interviews.”

As the Apostles’ primary contact for visitors with an interest in history, Snyder accompanied the head of the U.S. Lighthouse Society—a nonprofit historical and educational organization in San Francisco—and a group of 40 on a day-long excursion. They visited three lighthouses, including two with working trams.

“These railroad cars were historically run by coal-fired steam engines, but now they’re powered by electricity supplied by a diesel generator,” Snyder said. “They were used to bring coal, fuel and other supplies up the steep bluffs to the lighthouse. I put the group’s lunches in the tram and delivered them up the bluff. They were orgasmic over the fact they were still operating. I also gave a talk that night. The head of the society kept in touch after that, saying I should go work with him.”

Snyder eventually obliged. After two years leading tours for the society during his vacations from the NPS, he accepted a full-time position. He helped write and edit a quarterly historical journal called *The Keeper’s Log*. He also averaged about five tours a year. Snyder accompanied groups along the East and West coasts, to seven foreign locales including New Zealand, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, and back in his native Upper Peninsula.

While working for the society, Snyder was fascinated to learn that NMU alumnus **Scott Holman ’65 BS** had bid on and won Granite Island (off of Presque Isle) and became the first new owner of its light station since the Civil War.

“Lighthouses don’t change hands very often and they aren’t usually sold to private individuals. It happened a lot in the ’20s and ’30s, but not now with all of the historic preservation laws. The Holmans have done stunning things with it.”

Snyder moved to another maritime locale, Maine, about a year ago to take time off and explore future career options. He does some work for the Lighthouse Depot, a retail catalog operation, and he may lead future tours for the U.S. Lighthouse Society.

In reflecting on his past, Snyder recalls two NMU faculty members were particularly inspirational: Russ Magnaghi, who in addition to being active in local history also rented a room in his house to Snyder; and Ruth Roebke-Berens, who told him he was one of her best writers.

Whatever beacon Snyder follows next, his tour-guide personality will no doubt play a role. Just listening to his rapid-fire illustrative account of his career and adventures from my office chair was the next best thing to being there. ■

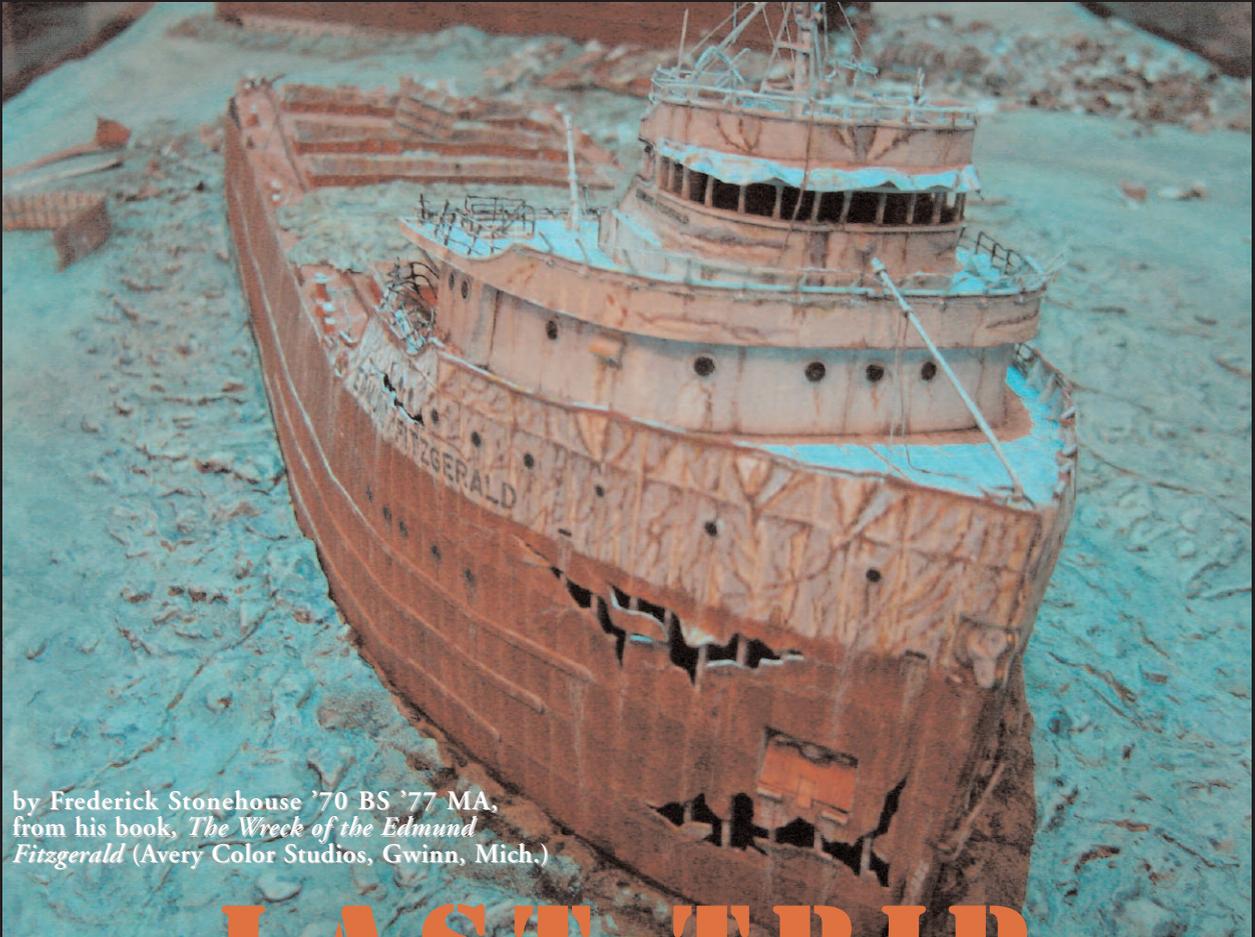


Image of a model of the underwater wreck site created by Richard W. Sullivan. Reproduced on a poster by Avery Color Studios, Gwinn, Mich.

by Frederick Stonehouse '70 BS '77 MA,
from his book, *The Wreck of the Edmund
Fitzgerald* (Avery Color Studios, Gwinn, Mich.)

LAST TRIP

In the early morning of November 9, 1975, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was docked peacefully at Burlington Northern Railroad Dock No. 1 at Superior, Wis., awaiting a routine trip to Detroit. By 2:15 p.m. she had been loaded with 26,116 long tons of taconite pellets and was fueled for the voyage. "...crewmembers were observed replacing the hatch covers. There were no unusual incidents or occurrences and this appeared to be a routine loading and departure." This was far short of record cargo. During unusually high water in 1967 she carried four loads in excess of 30,000 tons.

About two hours later, in the vicinity of Two Harbors, Minn., she caught sight of the *Arthur M. Anderson*. The 767-foot *Anderson*, also carrying a cargo of taconite pellets, was downbound from Two Harbors for Gary, Ind. The *Anderson* was separated from the *Fitzgerald* by 10 to 20 miles as the two steamers proceeded eastward along similar routes.

Meanwhile a storm, generated over the Oklahoma Panhandle on November 8, was proceeding northward on

a historic journey of its own. Described as a "typical November storm," it gathered forces rapidly as it roared over east central Iowa, headed for Wisconsin. By 7 p.m. on November 9, the National Weather Service had issued gale warnings for all of Lake Superior.

Gale warnings were escalated to storm warnings in the early hours of November 10.

Shortly after 7 a.m., the *Fitzgerald* contacted the company office and indicated a delayed arrival at the Soo Locks because of the worsening weather conditions. At this time the storm's center had passed over Marquette and was headed over Lake Superior.

Due to the intensity of the storm, the *Fitzgerald* abandoned the normal shipping lane along the southern shore and proceeded toward the northeast, about halfway between Isle Royale and the Keweenaw Peninsula.

The *Fitzgerald* swung eastward, following the north shore and continuing southeastward along the eastern shore. By 1 p.m., November 10, she was 11 miles northwest of Michipicoten Island.

The *Fitzgerald's* course change to the Lake's northern waters followed an old tradition born in the early days of steam navigation. This was the popular "fall north route,"

which offered more protection from prevailing northerly gales. The south route was much shorter, but was much more exposed and dangerous in a gale.

The *Fitzgerald* passed west of Michipicoten's West End Light and altered course to pass north and east of Caribou Island. Sometime after 7:15 p.m. something happened. In what seemed but a matter of seconds, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* disappeared.

What little knowledge we have of the *Fitzgerald's* last moments on the Lakes has been pieced together from the testimony of the officers of the *Arthur M. Anderson*.

Shortly after joining the *Fitzgerald* off Two Harbors, the *Anderson* received notice of the gale warnings. Sometime after 2 a.m. on November 10, Captain Jesse B. Cooper of the *Anderson* radioed Captain Ernest McSorley of the *Fitzgerald* to discuss the threatening weather. It was during this conversation that the two captains agreed to take the longer, safer northern route.

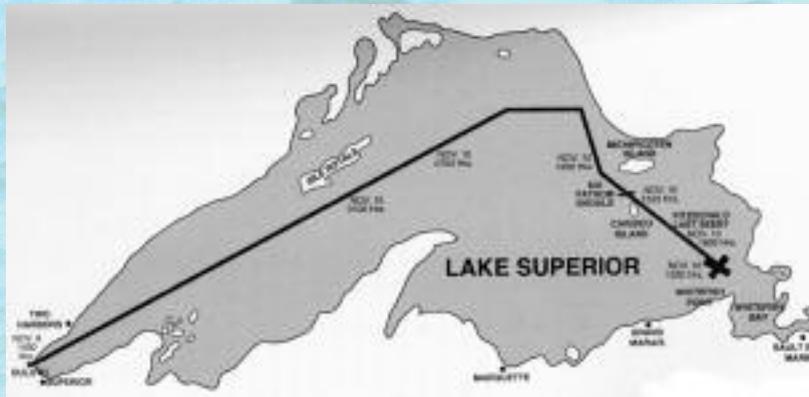
McSorley was an experienced Great Lakes captain. His 44 years as a mariner began when he was an 18-year old deckhand working aboard ocean-going freighters. In 1950 he became the youngest Master of the Lakes.

Throughout the exhaustive investigations into the sinking of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, there was never any evidence that McSorley had been negligent, or responsible in any way for his vessel's loss.

McSorley and Cooper concluded their first communication by agreeing that a northeasterly course would be best. The gale warnings had just changed to storm warnings with projected northeast winds of 50 knots and the two masters wanted to be in the lee of the Canadian shore.

Both vessels made minor course alterations at 3 a.m. and the *Fitzgerald*, the faster of the two steamers, began to pull slightly ahead. The winds were now from the northeast at 42 knots.

For nearly six hours the two ships proceeded smoothly along similar courses. At 9:53 a.m. the *Anderson* headed due east, and an hour and 37 minutes later changed her heading to 125° T, proceeding south-eastward, along the north shore. In effect, the *Anderson*



was "cutting corners" and by doing so was able to keep up with the faster *Fitzgerald*. The *Fitzgerald* had traveled closer to the shore before

heading south, according to officers in the pilothouse of the *Anderson*.

Both vessels ran into worsening weather conditions. Winds and seas continued to rise through the trip.

Shortly before noon, the *Anderson* changed course again, to 149° T. The weather had momentarily improved, with winds dropping to 30 knots. The waves were still running high—10-12 feet.

At 12:52 p.m. the *Anderson* was 10.8 miles off Otterhead and altered course to 154° T. to clear Michipicoten Island's West End Light by two to two-and-a-half miles. The *Fitzgerald*, meanwhile, was about seven or eight miles ahead and somewhat to the east.

At 1:40 p.m. Captain Cooper radioed McSorley to discuss an anticipated windshift. Cooper advised that he would be changing his course to the west before passing Michipicoten Island to be taking the rising seas from astern. McSorley said that he would continue on, since he had just cleared the island. He added, though, that his vessel was "rolling some."

At 2:45 p.m. the *Anderson* changed course to 130° T. to clear the Six Fathom Shoal area north of Caribou Island. The *Fitzgerald* was observed to be about 16 miles ahead. The northwest winds had swelled up to a blistering 42 knots. Only an hour earlier they had been at 5 knots. A heavy snow began to fall and the pilothouse watch on *Anderson* lost sight of the *Fitzgerald*. The *Edmund Fitzgerald* was never seen again.

The northwest seas began to build with alarming speed. The Captain of the *Anderson* was deeply concerned about the Six Fathom Shoal area. He thought his ship would be cutting it close and made a course change to avoid the area. Although the *Fitzgerald* had disappeared from view, the *Anderson* had her on the radar screen as being 16 miles ahead and a "shade" to the right. Although no plot of the *Fitzgerald's* position was kept, watch officers on the *Anderson* observed her moving again to the right.

To those "watching" the *Fitzgerald* through the eyes of radar, she appeared to pass north and east of Caribou

Island and, as Cooper later testified, closer to the Six Fathom Shoal than he wanted the *Anderson* to be.

Meanwhile, the seas had been building and the winds stepping up their force. At 3:20 p.m., the *Anderson* recorded the winds to be howling at a steady 43 knots and the waves running up to 12 and 16 feet. Her deck was awash with heavy amounts of water.

Ten minutes later the *Anderson* received a call from the *Fitzgerald*, still invisible, somewhere in the storm. Captain McSorley reported that his ship had a “fence and rail down, two vents lost or damaged and a list.” Just how serious this damage was would become a source of future debate. It is important to note, though, that the *Fitzgerald* said she was slowing down so that the *Anderson* could catch up and keep track of her.

Captain Cooper then asked the *Fitzgerald* if she had her pumps going and was told, “Yes, both of them.” Radar on the *Anderson* now showed the *Fitzgerald* to be 17 miles ahead and a little to the right.



Families touring the *Fitzgerald* shortly after construction in 1958.

Courtesy Stonehouse Collection

The *Anderson* made note of the damage aboard the *Fitzgerald* and agreed to keep an eye on her. However, no one in the *Anderson* pilothouse at the time of the last communication believed there was any reason to be concerned for the welfare of the *Fitzgerald*.

Only minutes later, the *Anderson* received an emergency broadcast from the Coast Guard: All ships on Lake Superior were directed to find safe anchorage. The locks at Sault St. Marie had been closed. The fierce November storm had finally received full notoriety.

Later, the Lock Master at the Soo was to state that his anemometer showed gusts over 90 mph and that water was sweeping regularly over the lock gates. At one point vessels below the locks were reporting winds gusting to 96 mph! Even the Mackinac Bridge was forced to

close down. Winds there had reached 85 mph.

Sometime between 4:00 and 4:30 p.m., the *Fitzgerald* had contacted the 490-foot Swedish saltwater vessel *Avafors* and asked if the Whitefish Point radio beacon and light were operating. The *Avafors*' pilot replied that she wasn't receiving the radio beacon and couldn't see the light. A little later the *Fitzgerald* learned from the Grand Marais Coast Guard that there had been a power failure and that neither the beacon nor the light was operational.

About an hour after that call, the *Avafors*' pilot put in a call to the *Fitzgerald*. He spoke directly with Captain McSorley and told him that he had Whitefish Point's light in sight, but still wasn't receiving the beacon. At one point in this conversation, the *Avafors*' pilot heard McSorley shout to someone off-mike, “Don't allow nobody on deck!” He also thought he heard a vent being mentioned. When McSorley returned to his conversation with the *Avafors* he volunteered the information that the *Fitzgerald* “had a bad list, had lost both radars, and was taking heavy seas over the deck in one of the worst seas he had ever been in.”

At approximately 4:10 p.m. the *Fitzgerald* radioed the *Anderson*. Cooper was temporarily away from the wheelhouse. The first mate took the call. The *Fitzgerald* reported that both her radars were now out. She was in need of navigational help, and the *Anderson*'s first mate readily agreed to provide it.

At 4:52 p.m., the *Anderson* was abeam of and six miles off the tip of Caribou Island. On the radar the *Fitzgerald* was plotted 14 to 15 miles ahead and a mile to the right. The wind was raging now. The *Anderson* logged it at 58 knots from the northwest, the highest winds thus far recorded during the voyage. Waves had swelled to 12-18 feet and a light snow continued to fall.

The *Fitzgerald* radioed again. It was just after 5 p.m. and the *Fitzgerald* wanted a position. The *Anderson* replied that she was 10.5 miles, 088° T. from Caribou Island light, reading the *Fitzgerald* to be 15 miles ahead.

The *Anderson*'s first mate then informed the *Fitzgerald* that Whitefish Point was 35 miles away.

At 6 p.m. the *Anderson* was 15 miles southeast of Caribou Island and was pulling out of its lee when waves as high as 25 feet came smashing across her deck. At 6:10 Captain Cooper went below and left the first mate in charge of the wheelhouse. From what he could see on the radar screen, the first mate thought the *Fitzgerald* was working her way to the left of the *Anderson*. He called the *Fitzgerald* to inquire about the apparent drift and the *Fitzgerald* reported maintaining a course of 141° T.

At 7 p.m. the *Anderson* again made radio contact and reported the *Fitzgerald*'s position as 10 miles ahead and 15 miles off Crisp Point.

Ten minutes later the *Anderson* called again to issue a routine warning. There was another vessel approaching, nine miles ahead of the *Fitzgerald*.



Only a 16-foot, badly mangled section of the No. 1 lifeboat was ever found. A remarkably small amount of material was recovered from the disaster, which claimed the lives of 29 men.

The Coast Guard Report describes the exchange this way: "At 1910 (7:10 p.m.), the mate called the *Fitzgerald* again and told them, 'There is a target 19 miles ahead of us, so the target is nine miles on ahead.' *Fitzgerald* asked, 'Well, am I going to clear? And the mate said, 'Yes, he is going to pass to the west of you.' *Fitzgerald* replied, 'Well, fine.' As the mate started to sign off, he asked, 'Oh, by the way, how are you making out with your problem?' and the *Fitzgerald* replied, 'We are holding our own.'"

Those were the last words that anyone ever heard from the *Edmund Fitzgerald*.

Captain Cooper returned to the pilothouse as this final conversation was being completed. At that time, the *Anderson* was 25 miles north-northwest of Whitefish Point. The officers observed the *Fitzgerald* on the radar to be 9 miles ahead and a little over a mile to the east. This casual observation was to be the last time anyone on the *Anderson* was certain the *Fitzgerald* was on the radar screen.

By now the snow had stopped altogether and visibility in the storm-darkened evening improved. The wheelsman aboard the *Anderson* peered ahead and saw—or thought he saw—two lights off the port bow. The lights were white and red, and the white one appeared to be forward of the red one. After studying them carefully, he decided the red light must be on the shore, and although he tried to point out the white light to the rest of the watch, no one else could see it.

While looking for the wheelsman's lights, the mate saw some others. They were the lights of the *Nanfri*, *Benfri* and *Avafors*, three upbound saltwater vessels, about 17 miles ahead. The *Fitzgerald* was supposed to have been closer than those three ships, but her lights were nowhere to be seen. Cooper thought the *Fitzgerald* might have suffered a power blackout and urged those on watch to study the horizon for a silhouette. Although the weather was clearing, they saw nothing.

Cooper felt a deepening sense of alarm. The *Anderson* rapidly adjusted her radar and found three distinct targets. But they were the *Nanfri*, *Benfri* and *Avafors*, not the *Fitzgerald*.

Both the captain and the mate attempted to contact the *Fitzgerald* by radio. They reached no one. Thinking—and by now, hoping—that the radio might be out of order, the *Anderson* tried to contact the *William Clay Ford*. The *Ford*, anchored behind the shelter of Whitefish Point, received the *Anderson* loud and clear.

Cooper then called the Coast Guard at Sault Ste. Marie. He reached them on channel 16 and was instructed to switch to channel 12, normal procedure. When he did so, there was no follow-up. Cooper called the *Nanfri* to see if she had anything on her radar that might be the *Fitzgerald*. She didn't.

It was about 8:25 when the *Anderson* finally made successful contact with the Coast Guard in Sault Ste. Marie. Cooper told them he'd lost track of the *Fitzgerald* on radar and that he was worried. According to Cooper, the Coast Guard was unimpressed, and told the *Anderson* to keep her eye out for a missing 16-foot boat in that area. Whether a 16-footer was missing was not Cooper's immediate concern. He believed that there was a 729-foot boat missing, and 10 minutes after his previous call he radioed the Coast Guard again to make a stronger appeal: "I am very concerned with the welfare of the steamer *Edmund Fitzgerald*. He was right in front of us experiencing a little difficulty. He was taking on a small amount of water and most of the upbound ships have passed him. I can see no lights as before, and I don't have him on radar. I just hope he didn't take a nose dive!" ■

Frederick Stonehouse '70 BS '77 MA has authored 30 books on maritime history, including *Great Lakes Lighthouse Tales*, *Great Lakes Crime: Murder, Mayhem, Booze & Broads*, and his latest, *Haunted Lake Huron*. He has served as an on-air expert for "National Geographic Explorer" and the History Channel and teaches maritime history at NMU. Learn more at www.frederickstonehouse.com.



Take the NMU Quiz

How much do you know about your alma mater?

Compiled by Melissa Conner '07 BS

1. What courtroom drama, written by an NMU alum, was filmed in Marquette in 1958?

- a. *12 Angry Men*
- b. *Inherit the Wind*
- c. *Anatomy of a Murder*
- d. *Witness for the Prosecution*

2. In 1954, freshmen were required to wear what during homecoming week initiation?

- a. A button
- b. A beanie
- c. A suit and tie
- d. A yellow or green shirt

3. Dr. Emerson Garver of which academic department conducted experiments in a “makeshift hut” behind Kaye Hall in 1961?

- a. Chemistry
- b. Criminal Justice
- c. Biology
- d. Education



4. The Hedgcock Fieldhouse was often nicknamed “The Bullpen.” How did this name come about?

- a. It's where the NMU baseball team practiced
- b. It hosted an annual indoor rodeo in the 1950s
- c. It was often the scene of chaos and frustration as students waited in long lines and competed for “class cards” during registration
- d. The original campus mascot, “Bully” was kept in a cage there

5. Which United States president received an honorary doctor of laws degree from NMU?

- a. Ronald Regan
- b. Herbert Hoover
- c. Harry Truman
- d. George Bush

6. In September 1983, Sgt. Maj. Jimmy A. Powell of the Military Science Department did something so outrageous that it made national news coverage and has been used by the U.S. Army as an example of what to avoid in class. Was it:

- a. Fired a loaded weapon in class
- b. Brought a live chicken to class and bit off its head to show the students how they could live off the land
- c. Made students eat a nail
- d. Threw a live hand grenade out the window

7. There was talk of closing NMU down due to low attendance in which year?

- a. 1925
- b. 1947
- c. 1950
- d. 1989

8. What professional football team used Northern Michigan University's campus for summer training in 1962?

- a. Dallas Cowboys
- b. Chicago Bears
- c. Detroit Lions
- d. Green Bay Packers

9. One year, around 1930, students were kept on campus during Thanksgiving break due to:

- a. Typhus outbreak downstate
- b. Meningitis
- c. Blizzard
- d. The Mackinac Bridge closed

10. How many students made up the first class of 1899?

- a. 50
- b. 30
- c. 40
- d. 20

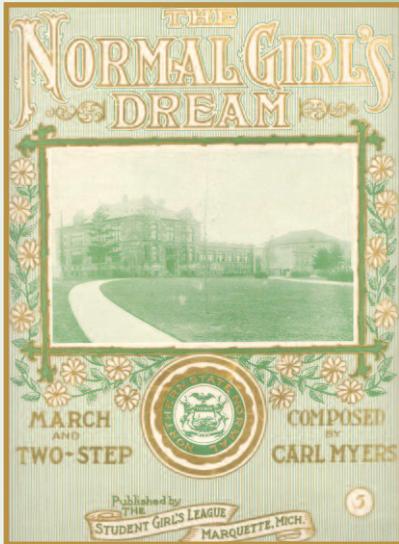
11. From 1965 into the early 1970s, *Northern News* featured a section titled “Friday's Fairest.” Was this section about:

- a. Well-liked professors
- b. Popular dishes at dinner
- c. Attractive co-eds
- d. Weekend weather

12. The statue of Abraham Lincoln in the University Center was given to the university by:

- a. Anonymous faculty member
- b. Professor Luther West
- c. The Class of 1916
- d. The State of Michigan

- 13.** On October 6, 1977, Northern Michigan University students made an attempt to get into the Guinness Book of World Records. What was the event?
- Holding a gigantic musical chairs game
 - Seeing who could stand in Lake Superior the longest
 - Baking the world's largest pastry
 - Making the biggest human pyramid



- 14.** NMU students were not always known as the “Wildcats.” What was Northern first known as?
- The Cubs
 - The Teachers
 - The Bobcats
 - The Snow Trotters

- 15.** Up until 1915 what class was required for all students, regardless of major?
- Chorus
 - Geometry
 - Economics
 - Ballroom dancing

- 16.** Which first lady came to NMU’s campus and talked about “Changes in the United States in the Past 50 Years?”
- Betty Ford
 - Jacqueline Kennedy
 - Eleanor Roosevelt
 - Helen Taft

- 17.** President John X. Jamrich was characterized and known for wearing what?
- Stormy Kromer cap
 - Flannel shirts
 - Green suspenders
 - Bow ties

- 18.** Who wrote NMU’s alma mater?
- Biology Professor Luther West
 - Francis Scott Key
 - Speech Department Head Forest Roberts
 - Bruce Springsteen

- 19.** What are NMU’s traditional school colors?
- Emerald Green/Gold Yellow
 - Pine Green/Yellow Gold
 - ForestGreen/Old Gold
 - Forest Green/Autumn Yellow

- 20.** What is “The Heart of Northern?”
- Pin given to sorority members
 - The academic mall
 - Mound of earth in the shape of a heart
 - a veterans memorial on campus

- 21.** Back in 1900-1901, what was the combined price for room, board, books and registration?
- \$58
 - \$82
 - \$102
 - \$138

- 22.** What was the first franchise on the NMU campus?
- Starbucks
 - McDonalds
 - Domino’s Pizza
 - There never was one

- 23.** Who was Charles Meyers, who wrote “The Normal Girl’s Dream”— a melody dedicated to faculty member Eulie Rushmore?
- An inmate at Marquette Branch Prison
 - Eulie Rushmore’s husband
 - A student of Rushmore’s
 - A fellow faculty member

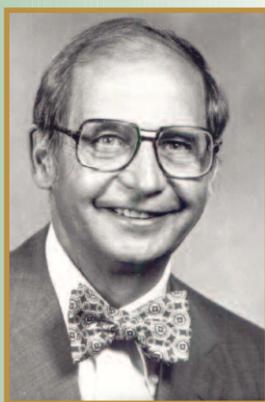
- 24.** A popular 1970’s entertainment group considered “NMU’s Entertainment Ambassadors” was known as the:
- Jazz Cats
 - Snow Angels
 - The Dreamers
 - The Fantasticos

(Answers on next page)



Quiz Answers

1. c—*Anatomy of a Murder*, based on the novel by **John Voelker '24**
2. b—a beanie
3. c—Biology. (Soon after, plans were drawn for West Science.)
4. c—registration
5. d—George Bush
6. b—the chicken
7. c—1950
8. a—Dallas Cowboys
9. a—typhus outbreak
10. d—20 (19 women, 1 man)
11. c—it contained a weekly photo of an attractive female student. It was a take-off on *Playboy's* “Playmate of the Month.”
12. c—the class of 1916
13. a—Holding a gigantic musical chairs game. In 1978, NMU students created the world's largest pasty. And in 2005 during Finn Grand Fest, the world's largest sauna (containing around 600 people) was stoked up behind the Superior Dome (although it's unofficially recorded that during Finn Fest in 1996 at NMU 658 participated).
14. b—the Teachers
15. a—chorus
16. c—Eleanor Roosevelt
17. d—bow ties
18. a—West wrote “Hail Northern” in 1949
19. c—forest green and old gold (though a more olive color was used prior to the 1960s)
20. c—“The Heart of Northern” was a raised berm shaped like a heart. It was a romantic place on campus in the 1920s. It was the site for engagements, pinnings, May festivals and band concerts. It was located in the grass area that is now on the east side of Cohodas Hall. A recreated heart is now by Jamrich Hall.
21. a—\$58
22. c—Domino's Pizza
23. a—prison inmate
24. d—The Fantastics. The group was composed of NMU students. They toured with the USO to military bases and recorded albums.



Questions are drawn from *A Sense of Time*, Russ Magnaghi, NMU Press, 1999, and *Northern Michigan University: The First 75 Years*, Miriam Hilton, NMU Press, 1975.

HELP WANTED:

For Student Life Exhibit

The Beaumier Heritage Center is in the process of creating a new exhibit on campus life that will open in April 2008. This exhibit will focus on the life of students at NMU from the early 20th century through today and how things have changed. In order to tell this story, they are looking for your help, in the form of stories or anecdotes about Northern from your time on campus and artifacts that may be used in the exhibit. Here are some sample topics (though any stories are welcome): the dining halls; work experiences; dorm life; organizations you were involved in; your freshman experience; campus controversies; technology; favorite instructors and staff; off-campus hangouts; and music.

Some examples of the types of artifacts we are looking for include (please contact us before sending or dropping off any): old computers, typewriters, slide rules, and other school equipment; stereos, TVs, lamps and other dorm room items; clothing (especially with Northern's name on it) worn on campus; signs, posters, and other printed material; photographs from your life on campus; general mementos from your time at Northern; and audio and video recordings of events and activities.

If you have memories or artifacts you would like to share, please contact Daniel Truckey at the Beaumier Heritage Center at dtruckey@nmu.edu or 906-227-1219.

BACKYARD TREASURE

A 1917 Smith-Corona typewriter was propped on a stand for visual effect as **Dan Truckey '90 BS** gave a recent presentation as the new director of the Beaumier Heritage Center at NMU. He explained how his grandfather had used the now-primitive device during his 40 years as a clerk with the Lake Superior & Ishpeming Railroad. This began a brief synopsis of his family's ties to the Upper Peninsula.

Truckey firmly believes in the value of artifacts to illustrate family stories and that there are many rich legacies waiting to be shared. He says the Heritage Center will not attempt to supersede county historical societies and other museums, but will complement them through its broader mission.

"This is the only place that seeks to tell the story of the entire Upper Peninsula," says Truckey, who was hired in July. "We have an opportunity to present historical elements that haven't been told yet or explored as far in-depth as they could be. I envision the center as a gallery, repository and public gathering space that also offers educational programs and professional development opportunities. Community outreach will be an essential component, whether in the schools or to promote lifelong learning. There are so many possibilities. I've formed an advisory board to help define the center's goals and future direction."

Truckey would like to unveil a major exhibit every spring and intersperse special programming throughout the year. He is planning an inaugural U.P. Folklife Festival March 15-16 at NMU. The event will feature artists, musicians and dancers whose creative expression reflects the U.P.'s ethnic heritage.



By Kristi Evans

Heritage Center Director Dan Truckey aims to create a museum of the Upper Peninsula

John Beaumier '53 BS and his wife, Mary Jane, contributed \$1 million to establish the center, which was dedicated in December 2006 at its temporary home in the Superior Dome. Truckey said the hope is to relocate it permanently if tentative plans to renovate Lee Hall into an alumni facility are carried out.

Visitors who passed through the center this fall were offered a glimpse of the professional and personal life of the late Sam Cohodas. His family operated "sanitary fruit stores" in Marquette, Ishpeming and Negaunee—all three opened simultaneously on the same spring morning in 1919. Cohodas Bros. became one of the nation's largest wholesale fruit and vegetable companies when it acquired orchards in Washington and canneries in lower Michigan. Sam later entered the banking business and was known as a community leader and philanthropist.

The center's exhibits cover the ethnic, cultural, religious, industrial

and educational history of the region. Photo boards document the arrival of the early immigrant workforce and the ensuing struggle for labor rights in the mining and timber industries. Display cases contain glass bottles bearing the names of former U.P. breweries, preserved Finnish cardamom bread and other traditional foods.

The Cornish pastry has been a familiar staple of the Yooper diet. In his presentation, Truckey drew an analogy between this portable delicacy and the region's history.

"Everyone knows that no matter what's inside, the crust is the most important part. The cultural heritage of the U.P. is like the crust—it holds everything together. We can learn a lot from those who came before us. Our future is in their past. To start a museum dedicated to the U.P. has been a dream of mine. With my family's long connection to this region and to Northern, it couldn't be more perfect." ■