



MANITOWISH WATERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Water Transport to MW from 1890-1920



A Rest Lake landing located immediately north of the Rest Lake dam. Note: nearly all forms of early water transport are present in the image: birchbark canoe, cedar/canvas canoe, resort launch and logging paddle wheel.

We all look forward to getting back to Manitowish Waters, whether to visit or return home. Automobile is easily the most common way guests and residents arrive here today, but many use several local airports to get to the area as well.

Historically, the earliest travel to Manitowish Waters required water transport. Native communities like the Ojibwa used birchbark canoes and sometimes dugout canoes to access the rich resources of the Northwoods. The Manitowish River served as a preferred route to reach the Flambeau Trail to Lake Superior or to travel as far south as the Mississippi River. Fur traders, missionaries, government agents and timber cruisers all adopted Ojibwa travel methods and often required native guides to navigate the region.

The earliest settlers and tourists used canoes to navigate the lakes and rivers. Sometimes they were required to portage boats and packs to arrive on the Manitowish chain. Even in 1889, when railroads sliced through the Northwoods making access to our chain much faster, water travel was typically part of getting to MW. For decades, canoes remained a key means of travel, but quickly rowing boats for guiding and transport were added to local boat liveryes. Late 19th century magazine articles marveled at the rowing

prowess and stamina of early guides like **Pete Vance, Joe Lavigne and Dan Devine.**

Motorized boats started first with large launches that area resorts favored for the transport of guests and supplies. Large boat launches became iconic of the early resort era, greeting guests at rail, wagon or stage coach stops. Resorts had extensive landing docks to accommodate the launches, including guests, gear, luggage and supplies. Small outboard motors arrived in the early 20th century and slowly changed how residents and visitors enjoyed the waters of the chain.



Continued on page 3

MWHS Fun Night! June 27—Join Us!!!



Jim Bokern

Bring on Summer

The Manitowish Waters Historical Society is excited about the numerous events we are offering throughout our community this summer. In particular, the MWHS and the North Lakeland Discovery Center are collaborating on a series of pontoon tours that will offer new and in-depth insights into our history. 2019 historic pontoon tours include trips on Dillinger's time on the chain, life on Alder and Wild Rice Lakes, exploring Rest Lake, and a glimpse at life on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. Please check out the calendar below and our website for details and registration information, and we hope to see you on the water!

MW Historical Society 2019 Calendar

Go to the website <https://www.mwhistory.org/events/>

<p>JUNE</p> <p>Dillinger Pontoon Tours 6/15, Various Times Discovery Center</p> <p>MW Historic Mysteries 6/22, 9:30 to 11 am Koller Library</p> <p>Fun Night 6/27, 4 to 7:30 pm White Oak of Chippewa Retreat</p> <p>Historic Traditions Alder & Wild Rice Lakes by Water 6/28, Various Times Discovery Center</p>	<p>JULY</p> <p>Dillinger Pontoon Tours 7/6, Various Times Discovery Center</p> <p>Logging Impacts 7/6, 9:30 to 11 am Koller Library</p> <p>Exploring Rest Lake by Pontoon 7/12, Various Times Discovery Center</p> <p>Railroads and Commerce 7/13, 9:30 to 11 am Koller Library</p> <p>Civilian Conservation Corps 7/27, 9:30 to 11 am Koller Library</p>	<p>AUGUST</p> <p>Chamber After 5 Exploring MW Mysteries 8/1, White Oak Grill</p> <p>Turtle Flambeau Pontoon Tour 8/3, 9 am to 4 pm Discovery Center</p> <p>Dillinger Pontoon Tours 8/10, Various Times Discovery Center</p> <p>Big Lake Canoe Trip 8/24, 9 am to 2:30 pm Discovery Center</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>Nibbles n' Knowledge 9/12, 5 to 7 pm Discovery Center</p> <p>OCTOBER</p> <p>No MWHS Meeting</p> <p>NOVEMBER</p> <p>MW's Unique Environmental Legacy 11/14, 5:30 to 7 pm Discovery Center</p>
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Board of Directors

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Row Boat Motor Agents Wanted

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Makers of Marine Motors for 14 years.

Model M. 2 H.P.
Weight 56 lbs.

Early outboard motors began a revolution in MW water travel. Circa 1915

Transport continued from page 1



While we still see canoes on the water today, they were a major source of transportation in 1918.



Part of the canal system from Alder Lake to Little Trout Lake

Remarkably, around 1900, Richard Southgate built one of the most novel water transport systems to access the Manitowish Waters chain. Using the railroad stop on White Sand Lake in Lac du Flambeau, Southgate had six canals constructed to allow motorized boat access all the way to Alder Lake! Not only could Southgate's guests access his estate on

Little Trout Lake and our chain of lakes, but MW residents and visitors used the canals to access many Lac du Flambeau lakes.

Even after the arrival of automobiles and Highway 10 just before World War I, water transportation remained an essential means of getting to and around Manitowish Waters.

Second Leaders of Historic Preservation Recognized



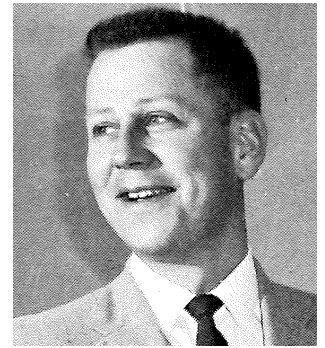
Carl Christensen



Audrey Dickerson



Palmer Hanson



Forrest Johnson

At a special meeting on May 22nd, the MWHs recognized the second class of Leaders of Historic Preservation. The inaugural class was selected in 2018.

The Leaders of Historic Preservation recognizes the men and women who have preserved the history of Manitowish Waters.

We are pleased to recognize **Carl Christensen, Audrey Dickerson, Palmer Hanson** (all three honored posthumously) and **Forrest Johnson**. You can read more about them and their contributions at:

<https://www.mwhistory.org/about-us/presentations/>

“Hey, is that Grandpa?”



Well, it might be grandpa in this photo, but below are the answers for the mystery image shared in the March MWHs newsletter.

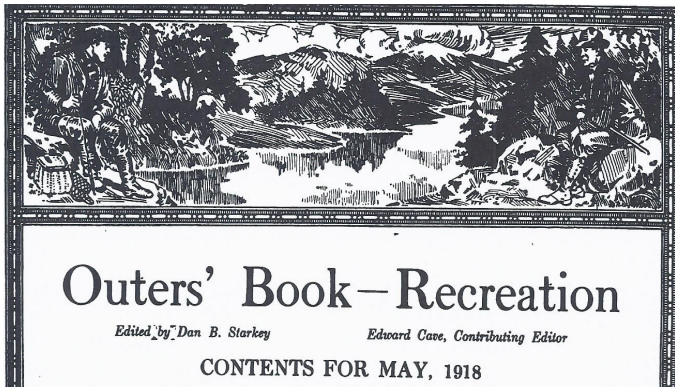
Who: Civilian Conservation Corps workers at Camp Mercer or 660th Company S-79

What: Swimming or bathing because no showers were available during the first months of operation

Where: The Manitowish River about one half mile downstream of the outlet of Circle Lily Creek, at the historic site of Camp Mercer

When: Summer of 1933

A Look Back: Below The Chain in 1918



In the summer of 1918, **E.C. Potter** produced four well-written articles for Outers' Book-Recreation based on his travels to Manitowish Waters and the area. Each article contains insightful text, detailed maps and fascinating pictures which collectively provides new understanding of the early days of Manitowish Waters' tourism. The MWHs is featuring an excerpt of Potter's article, "In Dam, Sturgeon and Benson Lakes." For those who wish to read the entire article, you can access a PDF version at <https://mwhistory.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/1918-Outers-Benson-Dam-Sturgeon-article.pdf>.

Excerpt from "In Dam, Sturgeon and Benson Lakes"

"Numerous streamlets from the southern central portion of lake-starred Vilas county wend their rippling way south to the Wisconsin, and on the western slope the Turtle and Manitowish waters join the Chippewa and continue to the Upper Mississippi.

The Manitowish River loses its identity about fifteen miles below the town of Manitowish, where it combines with Bear Creek, the outlet of the Flambeau waters, forming the Flambeau River. The dam at Rest Lake is a bar to the passage of the fish up stream, but for many miles below, in fact clear to the Park Falls dam in the Chippewa River, there is nothing to prevent the fish from following their instinctive habit of traveling up stream and making the submerged stumps and weed beds of the **Benson, Sturgeon and Dam Lakes** their summer home."



Editor's Note: As you will see if you read the original article, the author refers to our nine-lake chain. At the time, Little Star Lake was considered part of Manitowish Lake. Also, in 1918, what is today Vance Lake immediately below the dam was known as Dam Lake.



Who, What, Where and When?

The Manitowish Waters Historical Society is featuring nearly 100 early images from the Wisconsin Historical Society collections at <https://mwhistory.pastperfectonline.com>.

This special collection reveals life during the early days of the CCC.

Who can determine the location (at left) of this famous site in our community? What do you think they were doing and when?

Please submit your thoughts to: jmcbett@gmail.com.

We will follow up in our next newsletter with feedback from MWHS newsletter readers.

Please Join us for the First-Ever MWHS FUN NIGHT

***So, you think you know your
Manitowish Waters history?***

Then you'll want to join us on Thursday, June 27th at White Oak Grill at Chippewa Retreat for the first-ever MWHS Fun Night.

A cash bar and complimentary appetizers will be available beginning at 4 p.m., with a brief presentation at 5:30 p.m. followed by the highlight of the evening, **MWHS Jeopardy!**

The MWHS would like to thank **Michele and Tom Baer** for sponsoring this event and **John McGraw** for the use of White Oak Grill.

Participants will be placed on eight-person teams and compete as a team to answer MWHS historical items (answer in the form of a question, please!), with prizes awarded to the top teams over two rounds. Our evening will wrap up around 7:30 p.m.

**You can register at the Koller Library or by
visiting the MWHS website at:**

<https://www.mwhistory.org/event-signup/>.

Registration will be limited to the first 96 contestants so sign up soon!

MWHS JEOPARDY!

June 27, 2019

4 to 7:30 pm

**White Oak at
Chippewa Retreat**

Our Waters, Our Cranberries

Frank Koller inspecting his lift pump impeller below his residence along the "big ditch" from Little Trout Lake, circa 1945.



Most everyone knows that one of Manitowish Waters' greatest claims to fame are our cranberry marshes. But you may not know the significant role that our local waters play in providing protection to those tasty berries. Without our beautiful chain, we wouldn't have our cranberries!

Betty and Frank Koller were pioneer cranberry growers. In September, 2015, MWHS board member Janelle Kohl sat down with Betty to get her perspectives on our history and the early days of cranberry farming in the area. Here is a brief excerpt from the interview. You can watch the video of the entire interview at <https://www.mwhistory.org/oral-history/>. The pump house/living quarters that Betty mentions was a utilitarian structure during the early and lean years of the cranberry business.



Excerpt from an Interview with Betty Koller

"We put up a house out on the marsh over our pumps. We had two diesel pumps. They were lift pumps and we put this building up over these pumps and then we put our house above that. It was an army barracks. There was very little insulation. That is what we lived in for some years. We bought a cottage. We had to move, but it was too far from the marsh so we built a house over the pumps and we lived out there in the winter and Frankie went to school. He never missed a day. The bus didn't come in (so) we had to take him down to the main road.

People would say, 'Isn't that noisy?' I would say 'You get used to it.' (laughter)

And if a stick went through or something and changed the rhythm of the pump, you'd wake up. But, it was right on the beds. Which you wanted to be near there."



Water being released or pumped out from the Koller cranberry marsh.

2019 Pontoon History Tours on our Waterways

Dillinger Pontoon Tours

Meet at Little Bohemia

Lunch from noon to 1 pm

June 15th—9:30 to 11:30 am, 1:15 to 3:45 pm

July 6th—9:30 to 11:30 am, 1:15 to 3:45 pm

August 10th—9:30 to 11:30 am, 1:15 to 3:45 pm

Alder and Wild Rice Lakes by Water

Meet at the Jim Bokern's house

June 28—9 to 11 am

11:30 am to 1:30 pm, 2 to 4 pm

Exploring Rest Lake by Pontoon

Meet at the Discovery Center

July 12—9 to 11 am,

11:30 am to 1:30 pm, 2 to 4 pm

Turtle Flambeau Pontoon Tour

Meet at the Discovery Center

(bus transportation provided)

August 3—9 am to 4 pm

Register at: <https://www.mwhistory.org/events/>



Tourists boarding launches to area resorts from Little Star Lake railroad and wagon stop

Then and Now



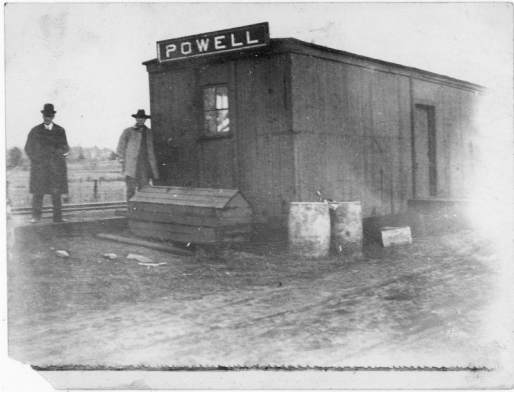
From the shores of Koerner's Spider Lake Resort around 1918 looking across from what is today Greer's Pier



Richard Southgate's unique canal and locks system that allowed his remote estate on Little Trout Lake to connect with the MW chain and Lac du Flambeau in the early 1900s and today.



Membership & Donations



Powell Depot

Those interested in joining the MWHS should complete the form below and send in your form with \$20 to:

Manitowish Waters Historical Society
P.O. Box 100
Manitowish Waters WI 54545

Those considering joining the Manitowish Waters Historical Society are encouraged to explore our web page, attend MWHS events and reach out to board members.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Email: _____

Thank you for supporting the Manitowish Waters Historical Society.
Memberships renew each January.

Donations

Donations can be sent to:
Manitowish Waters Historical Society
P.O. Box 100
Manitowish Waters WI 54545

MW Historical Society is an approved 501c3 charitable organization, and contributions may be tax deductible. Please contact us for additional information.



MANITOWISH WATERS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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