

NORTH: A HISTORY OF NATURAL AND IMAGINED LANDSCAPES IN THE GREAT
LAKES REGION

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents
whom took me North when I was a boy.

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ABSTRACT

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by Camden Burd

The goal of this thesis is to examine the language and literature surrounding the literature describing the Northern portions of the Great Lakes region with an emphasis on Michigan. Historians are particularly interested in regionalism and regional studies as exemplified by numerous Western and Environmental History programs. Through an examination of earliest American accounts of the region called “North” we can understand how cultural ideas shaped an environment that was removed from the larger American environmental history. Through a study of early naturalist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and early tourism advertisements the thesis demonstrate the uniqueness of the northern portion of the Great Lakes region. North, because it lacked the agricultural development in the nineteenth century, became an imagined space upon which larger urban populations living outside of the region projected ideas and values of wilderness.

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INTRODUCTION

What is North?

In attempting to identify, articulate, and argue the need to study the concept of “North” in American regionalism many issues arise. What is North? Who defines North? Is North a definite space? Throughout this thesis I argue that North is not only an environmental region that needs to be studied, but that through its study one can further understand the larger ideas surrounding American regionalism and the ways in which others have attempted to define certain environments.

Perhaps, there is a way in which historians and geographers can find a geographical boundary to North by examining examples of distinctly defined regions of within America. For if there is an identifiable North, there must be an identifiable South, East, and West. By working around its boundaries, a certain environmental identification of North may be better understood.

Historians of the American West have been able to carve out distinct field of study. While there are still debates whether western history is a process or a place, such conversations only demonstrate the balance between imagined space and real space. Western historians are of the opinion that as one crosses the Mississippi River, one has reached a large swath of Western United States. Historians, such as Dan Flores, claim the western history is a history associated with federal land, aridity, native populations, and tourism. Although such descriptions are too vague to be considered concrete attributes, many academics accept the existence of American West and a distinct western space. Troublesome as it may be to link the Great Basin with forests of the Pacific Northwest, western historians continue to argue that there is history of an American West. This space, although defined in large regional and environmental terms, is likely

a product of the people who live in the perceived western United States. The idea that people make place helps to contextualize the formation of regional studies.¹

The study of region is as much about place as it is about the culture of those who live in that place. The American South is well situated to examine how environments and culture are so easily blended with one another. Even in the early stages of colonial development, Timothy Silver argues that the South requires separate examination. His text, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800*, serves as a counterpart to William Cronon's *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*.² Silver acknowledges that the nineteenth and twentieth century South was marked by strong regional identity and a cohesive environmental element that could resemble an American South. Using the region's modern cultural framework, he attempts to fit colonial change into boundaries and similarities that simply did not exist in his study. His work acts as far greater evidence for a modern idea of an American South than a colonial one, which exemplifies how a region is defined by more than environmental factors; it also is imagined or invented in the minds in those who reside there. Those ideas, like the environment, constantly evolve rather than remain static.

Albert Cowdrey, in his *This Land, This South: An Environmental History*, again exemplifies the difficulty of carving out a specific American South. He claims, "besides being a

¹ Dan Flores, "Place: Thinking about Bio-regional History," in *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 89-106.

² Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang Publishers, 1983).

subculture, a web of traditions, or a sequence of events, the historical South is a place.”³ Despite his claim that South is a place, he also notes the trouble with pinning down strict boundary lines. His study acknowledges the difficulty in drawing boundaries around one specific South. For example the author argues that Maryland in many places more closely resembles the agricultural practices of Pennsylvania rather than the historic agricultural systems of the South. Although Maryland was, at one point, seen as the South, many today do not consider the state distinctly Southern. Maryland, then, serves as an example of how American regionalism deserves further study both from environmental and cultural perspectives. Portions of Texas also fit into that same methodological process. Despite Cowdrey arguing that “both culture and nature usually lack hard edges,” he still recognizes the need to study this region as a whole.⁴ Like Silver, Cowdrey knows an American South exists. However, collecting the evidence of environmental and cultural connection makes real boundaries very difficult to find.

Other regions where cultural and environmental perceptions blend to define a distinct region can be found in the Eastern United States, more specifically New England. Historians have long noted the distinctive regions of New England for its puritan beginnings. With the rise of environmental histories, New England was not only studied for its cultural past, but also its environmental uniqueness. The New England environment marked for its “indented coastlines, thick forests, thin soils, rugged mountains, and powerful rivers” are argued to be something unique to other regions of the United States.⁵ Despite the environmental factors, these

³ Albert Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An Environmental History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 5- 6.

⁴ *Ibid*, 6-7.

⁵ Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd, introduction to *A Landscape History of New England*, ed. Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology

distinctions seem rather vague to establish a distinct New England. The shared environments must be coupled with an identity of its inhabitants, or outsiders, to ensure this region as unique.

Despite attempts to define environmental and cultural regions within the United States, North still remains a rather unexplored region. While the region's historiography is unexplored in an American setting, the global scholarly community has examined the North as a specific environmental region. Many environmental historians have examined histories of the polar North and Nordic regions. European and Canadian scholars have mostly dominated the Nordic focus within environmental history. This field, focuses on similar environments in like latitudes, and tends to examine history from a distinct ecological perspective. The Nordic North, for historians, is a region of study situated with distinct boundary lines. Nordic, implies a specific landscape for historical change. Such environments do not lie within the United States of America with exception of Alaska and possibly certain regions at the border with Canada that resemble boreal forests. North, within the Great Lakes region, is a cultural space in addition to an environmental one. However, because American regions are often difficult to pin down cultural and environmental boundaries combined give a fuller picture of the basic idea of a place. For the case of North, in the Great Lakes region, we must understand its connection to populations further south. While environmental perception is critical to its formation, the concept of North is largely based on cultural ideas that help identify this region as distinctly northern. The North is a construct of those residing further south as well as those who see themselves as residents of the North.

Press, 2011), 1-11; Richard Judd, *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1-12.

The Great Lakes region was organized into the Northwest Territory in 1787 as a political region seen as a western space. The region's title implies the geographic relativity that politicians viewed this body of land. The Northwest Territory is unique as a region of study for a multitude of reasons. The founding of the Northwest Territory demonstrated a monumental exhibition of democratic legislation. At the time of its founding, politicians were concerned about opening western lands for settlement. Many worried that western expansion would depopulate the eastern states and weaken the strength of the Union. The Northwest Territory was an experiment that required elements to ensure connection to a larger American political sphere.⁶

The space, known as the Northwest Territory, lost its title after western expansion pushed past the territory into more westward land. Settlements, such as the Oregon Territory, required a new spatial arrangement of geography.⁷ The Northwest Territory became the Old Northwest and it soon became the Midwest once settlement grew west of the Mississippi River. What once was West, was now only partially West, or simply Middle West.⁸ Such shifts in regional identification shed light on the troubles of drawing harsh boundary lines in environmental and demographic boundaries. Drawing boundaries between North, South, East, and West may have strong environmental characteristics, but require a certain belief by the people who are choosing to define that region. Ideas about space are a far more enduring and powerful in creating distinct regions through history than the environmental factors. That is not to say ecological realities do not affect regionalism. In fact they are critical. However, the way environments are interpreted,

⁶ Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 1-20.

⁷ Andrew Menard, *Sight Unseen: How Fremont's First Expedition Changed the American Landscape* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 110-111.

⁸ Terry A. Barnhart, " 'A Common Feeling': Regional Identity and Historical Conscious in the Old Northwest, 1820-1860." *Michigan Historical Review* 29:1 (Spring 2003), 70.

used, imagined, and represented is evidence of those individuals or groups of people that are seeking to define a certain region. In order to find an American North, one must follow the ideas, alongside the environments, of those who attempted to create the definition of North.

Sherrill E. Grace in *Canada and the Idea of North* provides a framework to look at the cultural and environmental constructions of north. Grace argues there is distinct idea of North within Canadian culture that is an idea that drives environmental discussion, policy, art, literature, and identity. North, usually, is a rural space that appears to be more natural than urban environments found in southern portions of Canada. This means that North requires a more Southern population to create such a space. However such definitions can lead intense disputes between those that reside in the North and those who have a imaginative idea of what North should be. Like the American West, American South, and New England, the study of North requires a group of visitors or non-residents, as equally as it requires those who live in that specific region. Demographic tensions can strengthen regionalism and further cement cultural, in addition to environmental, ideas of American regions. The cultural practices and environmental policies associated with the idea of North within Canada are accompanied with an array of cultural baggage. North, then, is an environment imagined.⁹

I will attempt to track the idea of North within the Great Lakes region, emphasizing Michigan and those who believed the northern portions of Michigan had distinct environmental differences to landscapes further south in the same territory. From those environmental differences, stemmed a cultural and economic distinction that made certain environments North. Using the model in Grace's work, I will demonstrate that North in this region is, too, largely

⁹ Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal &Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 20-30.

imagined. This is a story of those who entered a region that was labeled North and how their experiences, perceptions, and words continued to create a culture directed to celebrate the North in the Great Lakes basin. This text will argue the need to explore this unique geographic region. In addition, the thesis will emphasize a component sometimes overlooked by histories of American regionalism; people and place are connected through some element of imagination and environment.

The thesis is broken into two chapters that explore both the environmental and imagined characteristics of the North. Chapter one focuses primarily on the 1820 expedition led by Lewis Cass into the northern portion of the Great Lakes region. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, lead geologist, was the voice of the expedition because his journal provided the most complete documentation of travels. Boundary lines between the United States and British Canada were finalized after the War of 1812 and the expedition was sent to gather information regarding this newly acquired frontier. Through further examination of Schoolcraft's words one can see how the environments of this northern region affected his own writings and perceptions throughout the trip. Schoolcraft used the term "North" to define very specific environments based on his own cultural views of proper land use. As Schoolcraft worked further into American frontier, he continued to label certain landscapes as North. This chapter demonstrates the early beginnings of the idea of North within the Great Lakes region and the environmental characteristics that defined a northern environment.

Chapter two examines the cultural construction of North within the Great Lakes region. After Schoolcraft returned from the 1820 expedition, he was soon appointed Indian agent at Fort Brady in Sault Ste Marie. At Fort Brady, where Lake Superior and the St. Mary's River connected, was the place where Henry Schoolcraft transitioned from a geologist into an

ethnologist. From the outpost at the edge of the American boundaries, Schoolcraft collected Chippewa histories and folklore. In addition to his work as an Indian agent, he also considered himself a man of literature. He established his own publication and wrote literature as well as poetry. Through his efforts he, in many ways unintentionally, defined a region of the Great Lakes as distinctly North. This chapter will examine how his efforts influenced a larger culture of tourism and how the idea of North grew well beyond his original imagined northern boundaries. Tourism advertisers took the environments Schoolcraft defined, and turned north into a marketable and imagined space for urbanites. This chapter explores how previous ideas of North were expanded upon and adopted by broader American audiences.

Although this text is focused heavily in environmental perceptions, this work is more than a history of Americans and their views of the environment. This is a history of ideas. The research presented tracks the concept of North through the nineteenth century; an idea that transitions from an unfamiliar and unwelcoming space into a desired location sought out by many. North, within the Great Lakes region, blends environmental realities with cultural assumptions to create an imagined space. As seen with previous studies of distinctive American regions, there is a blend of environmental realities and cultural expectations.¹⁰ Although this text is a study of the idea of North, it can provide insights into the questions that still drive historians to understand the connection of people and place.

¹⁰ Robert Sack, "Wisconsin is Almost Anywhere: Generic Places and the Routinization of Everyday Life," in *Wisconsin Land and Life*, ed. Robert C. Ostergren and Thomas R. Vale (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 527. North as a region in the Great Lakes region has eventually been marketed as an idea to a large space celebrating certain cultural ideals of recreation and relaxation. The rather ubiquitous region could be equated to ordinary landscapes described as generic places Sack's work.

CHAPTER I

THE ENVIRONMENTAL NORTH

In 1820, Henry Schoolcraft recorded in his journal of travels on an expedition led by Territorial Governor of Michigan Lewis Cass to explore Lake Superior and the sources of the Mississippi River:

The feelings of the party may be imagined upon this occasion, seated, as we were, in the midst of one of the most awful solitudes, and in a region which had impressed every individual with indescribable feeling, that was manifested in a general anxiety to depart from it.¹¹

The language of Schoolcraft is dark and demands the reader imagine a geography so removed and foreign that it could put an expedition of the most rugged frontiersmen into a state of anxiety. Early documents of exploration were filled with accounts of naturalists blending emotion and science to define environmental landscapes. Schoolcraft's words about the Lake Superior region would go on to label it as a distinct space in the American mind. Through a closer examination of Schoolcraft's words one can see how Lake Superior environments were defined and the lasting impressions such observations can have on those environments. The 1820 expedition began, by Henry Schoolcraft and those who were influenced by him, a set of cultural and environmental standards associated with the northern reaches of the Great Lakes Region.

Henry Schoolcraft, born outside Albany, New York, in 1793, grew to be fascinated with the American frontier after watching the West open up during his childhood. He spent of his childhood in rural New York State and, despite his work at Hamilton Glass Works, remained steadfast with his desire to obtain an education. In 1819, Schoolcraft committed to moving west

¹¹ Henry Schoolcraft, "Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern Regions of the United States extending from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River in the Year 1820," *Schoolcraft's Narrative Journal of Travels*, ed. Mentor L. Williams (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 126.

to explore the geology of the American frontier after a few years of strenuous economic hardships associated with a transitional work life. Schoolcraft's only experience as a professional geologist prior to his Great Lakes expedition was an opportunity at the age of twenty-six to participate in his first geologic survey into Missouri and Arkansas to explore lead mines of the region.¹²

After his work in portions of the western frontier, Schoolcraft was made a member of a party led by Lewis Cass into the Lake Superior region. After the War of 1812, the Treaty of Ghent solidified boundary lines through Lake Superior. Yet the environments and conditions of the southern shore of Lake Superior remained relatively unknown.¹³ The relationships stemming from the British fur trade in the region worried Secretary of War John C. Calhoun as to the disposition of many native groups towards a future United States presence. The American presence would deter the British from posing as a threat in the Great Lakes region.

Sent by the War Department, Lewis Cass was commissioned to gather information from native groups in the region and procure land on the St. Mary's River for an American fort. This region was still remote and its geography unknown to a growing United States. Lewis Cass proposed to learn of the lands and report on the numerous rumors of natural copper in the region.¹⁴ More importantly, the expedition aimed to find the source of the Mississippi and head south to the Fox River and exit back into the Great Lakes system at Green Bay. Although Schoolcraft's writings came to represent the main observations of the group while exploring the Lake Superior Region, it is important to recognize the primary objective of the party.

¹² Duane Paul Mosser, "Henry Rowe Schoolcraft: Eyewitness to a Changing Frontier" (PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 1991), 1-50.

¹³ Lewis Cass to John C. Calhoun, November 18, 1819, in *Schoolcraft's Narrative Journal of Travels*, ed. Mentor L. Williams (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 302.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The goal to promote an American presence on the St. Mary's River and Lake Superior demonstrates to historians the perceived purpose of landscape of the northwest section of the young nation. While this region was perceived as wilderness mostly inhabited by a native population and home to the fur trade, it was removed from larger cultural goals. Further south, eastern farmers actively worked to improve cheap land from wilderness to meaningful farmland were settling the Ohio Valley and the larger Northwest Territory. Pioneers aimed to battle the wilderness and make the landscape useful to American ideals. Lewis Cass wrote to Calhoun, only after the military and diplomatic base for the expedition had been determined, "Should it be deemed important, I request that some person acquainted with zoology, botany, and mineralogy may be sent to join me."¹⁵ The Northern environments of the western United States in 1820 were distant concerns of the larger geopolitical relations of the region. Henry Schoolcraft's role as a geologist was a minor aspect to the larger goal of the expedition to assess and secure a northern border of a young and growing territory and to learn the potential of the region for settlement.

Schoolcraft was assigned to collect information regarding the natural environments of the region. Although his role was not primary in the expedition, his observations would embody the expedition and the landscape of the regions traveled. Schoolcraft was a mineralogist who was relatively new to his career. He had finished a report on the landscapes of Missouri and Arkansas, paying close attention to the lead deposits of the region. The exploration in 1818 and 1819 finished before he was tapped to join Lewis Cass to inspect the rumored copper deposits of the Lake Superior region. His position as a mineralogist however does not detract from the observations made about all aspects of the natural environments of the landscape. Rather

¹⁵ Ibid, 305.

Schoolcraft's words would create a lasting impression on a landscape that he defined as a distinct, Northern space.

Henry Schoolcraft was a mineralogist at a time when the field was in its infancy. Natural history was still coming into its own as a profession and those who made observations in the formative years combined emotional and scientific observations when attempting to understand environments. Historian Richard Judd has demonstrated that natural history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries used fear, wonder, and observation to define landscapes. Likewise, naturalists judged environments based on their potential as agricultural spaces.¹⁶ Schoolcraft is no exception to this idea. His words, which would help define the region, imbued an emotional label upon the landscape of southern shore of Lake Superior as desolate, remote, and wild. However, in order to demonstrate Schoolcraft's observations of the northern environments of Lake Superior, one must track the observations made during the party's expedition north and return south on the Mississippi. Through Schoolcraft's observations and experiences, historians can understand how meaningful space is defined and the relationship between observation, emotion, and environment. Only by tracking changing perceptions of different environments can understand how Schoolcraft viewed the environments of the northern reaches of the Great Lakes region.

On May 24, 1820 Lewis Cass' party set out from Detroit. The party left the last major settlement as they ascended Lake Huron towards Michilimackinac region. Schoolcraft's entry describes Detroit in pleasant light and provides context towards understanding a celebrated landscape in early nineteenth century. In order to understand his definitions of the Lake Superior

¹⁶ Richard Judd, *Untilled Garden: Natural History and the Spirit of Conservation, 1740-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

region, one must understand his assumptions about land use within agricultural areas to better comprehend any assumptions made about unsettled areas.

The banks of the river present a compact settlement along the American shore, in which the succession of farm houses, orchards, and cultivated fields, is in no place interrupted by forests, or even, by detached copses of woods. Every thing bears the appearance of having been long settled and well improved. The soil is a deep, black alluvion, of the richest quality... The appearance of extensive orchards, the wind mills which occupy every prominent point along the river, the clearness of water, the woody islands in the river, already covered with green foliage, and the distant view of Detroit, every moment receding in the landscape, all served to imprint a character of mildness and beauty upon the scene¹⁷

Schoolcraft's observations of the environments surrounding Detroit celebrated both civilization and the balanced use of the perceived agrarian benefits of the St. Clair River region. Schoolcraft defined the St. Clair landscape not only based on its natural qualities for agriculture, but the emotional assumptions that are associated with cultivated lands. Included in the same thoughts of environmental qualities is the concept of civilization. Schoolcraft linked both civilization and natural qualities to understand and celebrate certain environments based on their overall potential for development.

Environments that had been successfully transformed into useful demonstrations of civilization delighted Schoolcraft equally as much as environments that carried the potential of civilization. As the exploration group traveled north along the American side of Lake Huron they reached Saginaw Bay. On June 1, Schoolcraft made this observation regarding the potential of Saginaw Bay:

Saganaw Bay is by far the largest of the numerous inlets which serve to indent the very irregular shores of Lake Huron... The navigation is safe for vessels of any burden, and its numerous coves and islands, present some of the best harbours in the lake.¹⁸

¹⁷ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels*, 59.

¹⁸ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 72-73.

Historians and geographers alike will note this type of observation indicates Schoolcraft's ability to imagine the progress of civilization on unsettled lands. Imaginative geographies demonstrate certain optimism, or positive assumptions, based familiar environmental qualities known to define civilized environments as defined by American ideals.¹⁹ Early nineteenth century explorers, like Schoolcraft, often imbued meaning into otherwise regular landscapes. Naturalists often observed certain natural features of a space, optimistically filled spaces with grandiose ideas of land use, only to later discover the environmental realities. Such language is present when Schoolcraft outlined the Saginaw Bay's valuable qualities:

At its southern extremity it receives Saganaw river, a large and deep stream with bold shores, and made up of a great number of tributaries, which irrigate an extensive country, reputed to be one of the most fertile and delightful in the Territory of Michigan... These lands have recently been disposed of to the United States government, and will shortly be thrown into market. From the terms of high admiration of which all continue to speak of the riches of the soil, the natural beauty of the country, and its central and advantageous position for business, we are led to suppose that it presents uncommon incitements to enterprising and industrious farmers and mechanics.²⁰

The environments around Saginaw Bay, to Schoolcraft, most resembled the valued attributes necessary to create and maintain a meaningful resemblance of civilization. For nineteenth century naturalists like Schoolcraft, that meant rich soil, prospect for agricultural production, and its location in relation to commerce. Early nineteenth century naturalists imbued emotional characteristics in connection to the natural world they were observing. Part of this was that the formation of geology study was in its infancy, as scientific inquiry had yet to become a formal study in America. However, in this brief era of early nineteenth century natural observation, naturalists and scientists connect emotional feeling to place. This blending of science and

¹⁹ Eric D. Olmanson, *The Future City on the Inland Sea: A History of Imagined Geographies of Lake Superior* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 9- 16.

²⁰ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 73.

sensation created a powerful definition upon specific places and instilled lasting impressions as to what regions represented to a larger American public.²¹

As the expedition continued to head North from Mackinac Island, Schoolcraft began to describe an entirely different environment and his writings reflect his own knowledge about the once bustling colonial history of the region. Site to the expansive Great Lakes fur trade, Michilimackinac and Sault Saint Marie experienced a flow of people and products that defined the region for two centuries. The unique and violent history, however, left the region in apparent disorder at the time Schoolcraft made his way up the St. Mary's River on June 15, 1820. Although his observations celebrate the "several wooded islands upon the inclined plane of the falls," combined with "deep green foliage" of the surrounding forests against the "snowy whiteness of the rapids" that "produce a diversity which has a pleasing effect" the young naturalist transitions into a new descriptive category. Schoolcraft crossed a threshold into what he claimed was "northern scenery."²²

The transition from Mackinac Island to Sault St. Marie marked a point or passage into a new, northern region. Schoolcraft gives little indication as to what marks a significantly "northern scenery," but through further examination into the environmental qualities he described a clearer definition of Schoolcraft's "north" may be understood.²³ The landscape was rocky and appeared more sterile than the environments found just south at Mackinac Island, where agriculture was more prevalent. The rapids of the St. Mary's likely marked a transitional point for Schoolcraft after traveling across the Lake Huron shoreline that offered very little, as he

²¹ Menard, 147-157.

²² Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 95.

²³ Ibid.

described, in “features of boldness or sublimity.”²⁴ The St. Mary’s River connected the higher elevated Lake Superior to the lower Lake Huron, which in turn created intense rapids that historically made one of the most significant portage sites in Great Lakes fur trade. This distinct environmental shift marked a departure from celebrated landscapes into new uncivilized environments.

Schoolcraft referenced the idea of wild or wilderness as a landscape uncivilized. However, the term “wilderness” can be used to represent a myriad of emotions and ideas about the natural world. Historian Roderick Frazier Nash understood early nineteenth century American ideas of wilderness as a space contrasting idealized civilization. Wilderness was feared for its environmental unknowns as well as its synonymous association with Indian country. His argument places Schoolcraft’s definitions of wilderness as an enemy of civilization. That is to say wilderness was unsettled, and misused in the eyes of Schoolcraft. Only through settlement and cultivation could wilderness be overcome. For nineteenth century Americans, wilderness needed to be combated and conquered then shaped to fit the ideals of an agrarian based economy. Nash’s definition of wilderness certainly applies when looking at Schoolcraft’s own words regarding the landscape of the north peninsula however it overlooked unique environmental qualities that define this region.²⁵

Other academics such as William Cronon and John Brinckerhoff Jackson examine the pitfalls of researching and defining the concept of wilderness.²⁶ Where is wilderness? Does it

²⁴ Ibid, 79.

²⁵ Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 24-30.

²⁶ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” ed. William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 69.

have to be a specific size or a specific set of natural factors? Who can inhabit wilderness? These questions do not diminish the concept of wilderness but require a deeper examination of the environments that are termed wilderness. Like snapshots in time, wilderness is a term embodying an ideal or experience by the observer. Wilderness should be accepted as a term embodying an emotion, often transient in time, which is placed on environmental factors new or contrasting to the rural and agricultural world. Therefore, to understand Schoolcraft's ideas of wilderness, a closer examination of his past experiences blended with environments he encountered on the south shore of Lake Superior is necessary and valuable in distinguishing his idea of north.²⁷

Schoolcraft could not ignore the abundant native population that existed near the Sault St. Marie region that also marked this northern Wilderness. The population existed in large part due to the fur trade, but also the rich fishing lands that had brought the original concentration of populations to the region since before colonial settlement.²⁸ The recent shift in due to political struggles, however, had caused the settlement to fall into disrepair. Schoolcraft saw the village of Sault St. Marie in grim terms where many buildings were “in a state of dilapidation, and altogether it has the marks of an ancient settlement fallen to decay.”²⁹ However, when combined with the new environment of Sault St. Marie, it is more apparent that Schoolcraft defined north as a culmination of environmental and society values. The landscape is distinct and those who live there, natives and traders, mark a certain inhabitant fit for life in such a northern environment.³⁰ Schoolcraft did see much worth in the settlement nor did he see an interest in

²⁷ J.B. Brinkerhoff, “Beyond Wilderness”, *Sense of Place, Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 72.

²⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11.

²⁹ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 95.

³⁰ Ibid.

improving the situation of those who lived there. Unlike Saginaw Bay where he saw potential in its development, Schoolcraft saw Sault St. Marie as foreign and remote.

As the expedition traveled westward from Sault St. Marie, Schoolcraft continued to describe the distinct features of the northern environments of the Lake Superior region. Schoolcraft stated as he traveled across the southern shore, “The lake spread like a sea before us... on the south the mountain chain extending head of the river St. Mary, westward, towered majestically into the air.”³¹ Schoolcraft pointed to the geography of the region as unique, and ultimately “a scene of beauty of and magnificence... amid the rugged scenery of the north.”³² Schoolcraft defined harsh differences in geography that made the environment unique compared to the shorelines of southern lakes he had experienced just days before.

The environments of Lake Superior were unique to what he had experienced during the previous portions of the expedition. To the left of the entire expedition party, a peninsula of land that separated Lake Superior from both Lake Michigan and Lake Huron ran westward, increasing in hills and valleys the deeper the one traveled into the Southern portions of the Canadian Shield. To the right of Schoolcraft, the rising hills of the Laurentian Plateau, were some of the oldest exposed rock on Earth. The hills of the north country were remnants of large mountains worn down by time, and the powerful force of glaciers that moved rocks and sediments across the northern stretches of North America.³³ Nearly 10,000 years after the glaciers retreated Schoolcraft found evidence in creating this imagined northern space.³⁴

³¹ Ibid, 102-103.

³² Ibid.

³³ Jack L. Hough, *Geology of the Great Lakes*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 13-15.

³⁴ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 79.

Schoolcraft's scenes of grandeur were accompanied with observations regarding the soil and composition of the landscape of the southern shore of Lake Superior. He first noticed the sterility of the soil and the emotions that are associated with the lofty and sandy bluffs of Grand Sable Dunes. He noted that the region "presents a novel and interesting appearance from the lake" and, he continues, "although generally commanding, present a great uniformity, and leave upon the mind a strong impression of bleakness and desolation."³⁵ The term desolation, combined with physical and emotional observations, was juxtaposed against the soils found in sites where agriculture would flourish, such as the Saginaw Bay and St. Clair. Even though Saginaw Bay was perceived as wild space, it still offered the optimism of civilized cultivation and growth, whereas Schoolcraft lacked optimism for the early environments of Lake Superior and Northern space.

Similar descriptions of coastline as desolate and sterile continued to appear in Schoolcraft's accounts of the Lake Superior region. This landscape was foreign and unprecedented. Although views at Pictured Rocks may have been described as possibly the most "grand, picturesque, and pleasing" arrangement in American scenery, Schoolcraft was still hesitant to celebrate its potential for human habitation. Rather the scenery appeared to be quite the opposite. Schoolcraft compared the channels of rock carved out by crashing waves as "dilapidated battlements," "desolate towers," and "antiquated buildings." If certain environments represented the potential of civilization, then the southern shore of Lake Superior presented the opposite of civilization, or worse, the collapse of civilization.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid, 104.

³⁶ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 107-108.

Traveling conditions along the southern shore of Lake Superior also imposed a lasting impression on Schoolcraft and the expedition. On several occasions the group was forced to pull ashore and take refuge from the danger of the waves. This practice was common for canoe travel in the Great Lakes region due to the position of the group and the prevailing winds of the region. The danger of waves may have appeared more prevalent to Schoolcraft than he experienced while traveling Lake Huron. Schoolcraft noted the southern shore was exposed to a “fury of continuous storm.”³⁷ His observations resonated to the possible dangers of travel on the southern shore, demonstrating the realities of climatology of Lake Superior. Due to the predominant western and northwestern winds over the Great Lakes region, waves travel long distances across Lake Superior leading to an increased wave size. The geographic situation, of Lake Superior combined with wind patterns, would leave the southern shore subject to much larger waves than northern shore of the same body of water. To a traveler moving west across the southern shore the dangers presented were apparent. Schoolcraft’s observations therefore used personal experience combined with scientific observation to label the nature of travel of south shore as a continual struggle and increasingly dangerous.³⁸

No other entry in describing the northern reaches of the expedition best embody Schoolcraft’s blending of nature and emotion to label environments as wilderness than when the expedition group ventured up the Ontonagon River in search for the large copper boulder. Schoolcraft was driven by rumors of a pure copper boulder situated in the middle of the Ontonagon. Such a discovery would have been of great interest to the young geologist. As the group headed up the river, the natural qualities and Schoolcraft’s observations closely resemble

³⁷ Ibid, 117.

³⁸ David W. Phillips, “Environmental Climatology of Lake Superior,” *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 4, No 3-4. (1978): 296.

the emotion, fatigue, and fear he felt within the Ontonagon River valley. The first portion was described as “delightful.” The landscape was forested banks surrounding a wide river and a steady but manageable current for the canoes.³⁹ However, on the second day, the tone of Schoolcraft’s writings changed. The ease of travel worsened when the group came to rapids in the river. The Chippewa guides advised that the group go by land, through the thick forests, rather than battle the rapids. The expedition split. Schoolcraft, motivated to find the copper boulder as soon as possible, went by land while Cass chose to travel by canoe and reconvene at the site of the boulder.⁴⁰

Schoolcraft’s party arrived first at the boulder admitting that the reality of the site was slightly disappointing. The actual size was much smaller than rumors let on. Rather than being a massive boulder situated in the river, Schoolcraft noted that “its greatest length is three feet eight inches-its greatest breadth three feet four inches.”⁴¹ The boulder itself was slightly smaller than two tons leaving Schoolcraft with a rather lackluster emotion upon arrival. After Schoolcraft commented on the copper boulder, he described the surrounding environment. Although optimistic about the possibility of mining in the region, Schoolcraft made harsh judgments of the landscape and its character that mark the region as desolate and unable to support human habitation. Schoolcraft described the view surrounding the boulder:

The masses of fallen earth, --- the blasted trees, which either lie prostrate at the foot of the bluffs, or hang in a threatening posture above, -- the elevation of the banks, --- the rapidity an noise of the stream, present such a mixed character of wildness, ruin, sterility, as to render it one of the most rugged views of nature.⁴²

³⁹ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 120.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 120-121.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 122.

⁴² *Ibid*, 123.

Despite finding the copper boulder and the potential of the mineral wealth in the region, the naturalist remained firm that this area was absolute wilderness and at “the ends of earth, and beyond the boundaries appointed for the residence of man.”⁴³

The geologist’s observations in Missouri and Arkansas two years earlier give insights into what made the northern region different. While touring through this western frontier, Schoolcraft made note of the sterility, native presence, and wild nature of the countryside of Missouri and Arkansas. He often noted the presence of agriculture where native groups were situated. Despite his definition of wilderness, he could not escape the United States presence in the western space. He stated:

We have traveled over many traceless desert, and uninhabited plain. We have crossed that boundary in our land...we are beyond the pale of civilized society... but we are not beyond the influence of money which is not confined to geographical boundaries.⁴⁴

In his mind, Schoolcraft had entered wilderness. He crossed an imaginary threshold of civilized society and into a wild society. Although he recognizes the presence of economic similarities, this space was wilderness. When compared to the 1820 observations he made in the North, Schoolcraft could not find similarities. Missouri and Arkansas were wild, but had the natural advantages suitable for growth and settlement. His imagined north lacked this critical component.

The northern forests were subject of considerable attention in Schoolcraft’s notes. He wrote about the forests in the region of the Ontonagon River, “we shudder in casting our eyes over the frightful wreck of trees,” and continues, “Yet we only ascend the bluffs to behold hills

⁴³ Ibid, 123.

⁴⁴ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Journal of a tour into the interior of Missouri and Arkansas : from Potosi, or Mine á Burton, in Missouri Territory, in a south-west direction, toward the Rocky Mountains: performed in the years 1818 and 1819* (London: Printed for Sir Richard Phillips, 1821), 44.

more rugged and elevated; and dark hemlock forests, and yawning gulfs more dreary, and more forbidding to the eye.”⁴⁵ In comparison to the neatly arranged orchards and hardwood trees observed in the St. Clair River near Detroit, the forests near the copper boulder in the Ontonagon River were remarkably different. The forests were predominately composed of trees associated with poor land quality. Highlands mostly contained white pine, jack pine, balsam fir, hemlock, and red pine. The hills, because of their ability to drain water more easily, also had higher amounts of hemlock, beech, and sugar maple trees than lower lying, poorly drained areas also common in the northern landscape. Dense forests of tamarack, cedar, and spruce trees were species commonly found in low-lying areas or swamps. Pre-settlement forests of the Lake Superior region were very dense and most likely made travel through the region very difficult and tedious.⁴⁶ The dense and sporadically arranged northern forests played into Schoolcraft’s definition of his northern wilderness.

The naturalist also noted the apparent sterility of the landscape near the Ontonagon River. Much of this thought process is likely based on the idea that certain trees such as pine and cedar defined the natural quality of nutrients in the soil. Forests were product of the soils from which they grew. The composition of the peninsula is made up mostly of sand, loam, silt, clay and some peat. While some soils can sustain traditional deciduous hardwoods associated with well performing soils, the sand found near the Lake Superior shoreline mostly supported pines and hemlock.⁴⁷ The sandy soils that supported the dense pine forests of the Lake Superior region

⁴⁵ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 124.

⁴⁶ Quanfa Zhang and Kurt S. Pregitzer and David Reed, “Historical Changes in the Forests of the Luce District of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan,” *American Midland Naturalist* 143, no 1. (2000).

⁴⁷ R.H. Westveld, *The Relationship of Certain Soil Characteristics to Forest Growth and Composition in the Northern Hardwood Forest of Northern Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan

seemed unfavorable for development. The rich alluvions described near Detroit and Saginaw Bay were replaced by barren sands and the dense pine forests they supported. As Judd noted regarding early naturalists perceptions when encountering immense forests, “the deep woods, with its high canopy and limited understory, seemed almost as sterile as the mountaintops.”⁴⁸ Seemingly untouched forests appeared daunting to many naturalists because of the forseen labor that would be involved in improving the landscape. Schoolcraft often noted the sterility of the soil and the region’s inability to maintain human, animal, or vegetable life. For example he stated, “Every object tells us that it is a region alike unfavorable to the productions of the animal and vegetable kingdom.”⁴⁹ Again inland near the Ontonagon River describing the mineral potential of the region he noted:

It is here that the stunted growth of vegetation, and the rocky elevated nature of the country, leads us to look for those treasures in the mineral kingdom which nature has denied in soil and climate.⁵⁰

Although the geologist demonstrated the potential of copper mining in the region, he measured it against the ability to produce agricultural products. Schoolcraft placed worth on landscape based on its ability to sustain life as measured by nineteenth century agrarian standards. For the young naturalist touring the Lake Superior region, this landscape was devoid of human potential and meaningful habitation.

As the party left Ontonagon and continued west along the coast towards Fond du Lac Schoolcraft prepared his final observations of the Lake Superior region. On the surface he made notes of the general geography, and types of trees, and fauna found along the southern coast of

State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, Agricultural Experiment Station, Section of Forestry, 1933), 7.

⁴⁸ Judd, 174.

⁴⁹ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 123-124.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 125.

the lake. However, underneath those observations are indicators that tell of the inherent danger of the landscape. Schoolcraft uses words such as “generally sterile,” “dangerous,” “frightful winter,” and “disastrous” which to those reading the accounts would view the Northern environment as distinctly remote and worthless to agrarian values.⁵¹

Schoolcraft’s ideas of North continue beyond the reaches of Lake Superior. The expedition continued inland to Sandy Lake searching for sources of the Mississippi. Landscapes were described as sterile, often measured against the forests that contribute to idea of wilderness. Schoolcraft noted the environments of the Northwest to be an “inhospitable region... that is subject to the influence of a winter atmosphere for nine months of the year, and that it can never be rendered subservient to the purposes of agriculture.”⁵² Again, Schoolcraft harshly defines the region against the agrarian standard used to value potential landscapes.

The climate was a major factor that defined a distinct northern environment. The southern shore of Lake Superior is situated along the 46th parallel. Because its location the shoreline is subject to large storms and extreme colds. Schoolcraft was accurate to distinguish the frigidity of the region as distinct. Although the entire Great Lakes region is affected by western winds that can bring warmth and northern Canadian winds that brought extreme lows, the northern peninsula would undergo what seemed to be a longer winter season.⁵³ Measured against the ability to plant crops, the cold climates prohibited the cultivation of staple crops such as corn and

⁵¹ Ibid, 137.

⁵² Ibid, 146.

⁵³ Paul Gross, *Extreme Michigan Weather: The Wild Word of the Great Lakes State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010, 39-42.

some fruits. The agricultural landscape found in Detroit would be difficult to replicate due to the cooler climates and earlier frosts of the region.⁵⁴

If the St. Mary's River marked a transitional moment of entrance into a Northern environment for Schoolcraft and the expedition then there must be a distinct space where the environment reverts back to southern or non-northern landscape. The descriptions of the landscape shed light onto a transition from northern space to a landscape more fit for human habitation. Schoolcraft notes while traveling down the Mississippi, "The quality of the soil of the prairies improves as we descend, and during the last twenty miles may be considered of the richest kind."⁵⁵ As the group approached the American fort at St. Anthony Falls, the site of present day Minneapolis, the topography and vegetation had new associations for Schoolcraft. The northern environments that represented a desolate and barren landscape were quite different than those landscapes found near the St. Anthony Falls. Schoolcraft described the scene:

The garrison have cleared and put under cultivation about ninety acres of the choicest bottom and prairie lands, which is chiefly planted with Indian corn and potatoes... and private gardens, which supply vegetables with great abundance for all the men... We found the wheat entirely ripe, and the melons nearly so. These are the best commentaries that can be offered upon the soil of the climate. To ascertain, however, that the former is of the richest quality, a cursory examination is only required. It presents all the peculiar appearances which characterize the fertile alluvions of the valley of Ohio.⁵⁶

The descriptions outline that Schoolcraft had descended from a northern environment void of agricultural life and sustainability and into a land with great potential for production.

In calling attention to the transition out of a distinctive environment, defined as north, a clearer picture of land perception and value comes to fruition. The emotional and theoretical

⁵⁴ Terry S. Reynolds, " 'Quite an Experiment', A Mining Company's Attempt to Promote Agriculture on Michigan's Upper Peninsula," *Agricultural History* 80, no 1 (2006), 69.

⁵⁵ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 190.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 194.

ideas that define early nineteenth century environments were far more varied than a simple dichotomy of civilization and wilderness. The potential of landscapes was measured against several factors, mainly the environment's ability to sustain permanent settlement and meaningful cultivation. Schoolcraft exhibited great optimism towards wild environments including a description of the Fox River that best exhibits how land was valued:

Taking into consideration the great fertility and extent of its tillable soil—the rural beauty of the country—its advantageous position for commerce, either with north or south, and its salubrious and delightful climate, it will probably hereafter, when the Indian tribes yield before an industrious emigration, support one of the most compact, extensive, and valuable agricultural settlements in the Michigan territory.⁵⁷

Despite the fact that Schoolcraft knows this area “supports so great a savage population,” the landscape offers promise and the eventual cultivation by future American settlers.⁵⁸ Schoolcraft's imaginative geography of proper cultivation placed a western frontier as a potential and impending site of American settlement.

This example of manifest destiny did not apply to Schoolcraft's north in 1820. As demonstrated, the Lake Superior region lacked an environment deemed beneficial to human habitation. Regardless of the potential mineral deposits, Schoolcraft defined the northern space as remote, barren, and absent of qualities that would make it suitable for American progress as defined by early nineteenth century standards.⁵⁹

Schoolcraft's idea of north was heavily based in the specific environmental characteristics he had outlined through his travels through the Lake Superior region. However, to declare that this region was simply a culmination of environmental factors considered ill suited for sustainable habitation overlooks a major contributing factor in identifying this region as

⁵⁷ Ibid, 244.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Menard, 5.

distinct. This was Indian country. Although Schoolcraft was positioned in the 1820 expedition as a geologist, his writings represent the conception placed towards the majority of inhabitants in the region. The native residents were the largest population of the region. Likewise, the native population practiced different agricultural techniques and practiced seasonal migrations that were reflected in the appearance of the landscape.⁶⁰ Not ignorant of this fact, Schoolcraft most likely wrote about the North as Indian country, therefore, if the North had specific environmental factors, Schoolcraft also labeled this region specifically *wilder* by associating this region a Native American population.⁶¹

As noted before, Schoolcraft began using the word “north” when he reached Sault Ste Marie. This marked a passage into a new body of water, distinct environments, but also to a region dominated by native populations. If the St. Mary’s River marked environmental passage to the North, then the party’s experience with native groups at Sault Ste Marie also marked a dramatic shift into the North.

The Treaty of Ghent settled the boundary lines between the United States of America and Great Britain. The next and harder task was strengthening new alliances with the Chippewa Indians at the St. Mary’s River who had previously been trading partners with the British. When Lewis Cass addressed Chippewa elders at Sault Ste Marie, there was a faction of residents adamantly against creating new alliances with the United States. Such new alliances threatened traditional trade relationships and brought about new policies towards their Chippewa land practices. The American presence represented a passage of time Cass’ request to the Chippewa

⁶⁰ Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999)

⁶¹ Helen Hornbeck Tanner (ed.), *Atlas of the Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 20-22.

leaders to cede land for the construction of a new fort. During the negotiations, a group of Chippewa natives had raised the British flag to indicate the group's opposition towards ceding land for an American presence. Cass quickly called the party to arms and the following hours were marked with, "a state of alarm" that pitted Americans against a comparable number of Chippewa warriors.⁶² Although the treaty was quickly signed after a few hours of talks, this moment must have served as a transition point. Schoolcraft knew they were entering a region whose inhabitants had previously been aligned with the British, however, until this moment the voyage lacked much danger or distress. For Schoolcraft, Sault Ste Marie marked an environmental passage but also an emotional passage into a new and dangerous wild. His descriptions after Sault Ste Marie demonstrate such a shift.

Schoolcraft's experience at Sault Ste Marie is critical to understanding his view of North. North was not simply an environment apart, it was a culmination of nature and geopolitical realities that blended Indian population with ecological realities. This type of thinking runs throughout Schoolcraft's notes where he seemingly blends environmental facts with ethnographic observation. While noting the transient nature of many Chippewa bands Schoolcraft noted, "their erratic deposition appears to be attributable, in great measure, to the poverty of the regions they inhabit, and their inclemency of their climate."⁶³ Although he points to the harsh climates of the north as the major contributing factor to their mobility he also claims many benefits to such a northern climate. "The same climate, however, which renders them a scanty subsistence, exempts them from other evils, with which their southern neighbors are

⁶² Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 98-99.

⁶³ Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Trough Northwestern*, 154.

afflicted.”⁶⁴ Northern climates, although poor for agricultural pursuits, represented a healthy space that is marked by open air, free exercise, and simple diets. Ultimately, Schoolcraft saw North as a space exempt “from a train of diseases incident to refined society.”⁶⁵ Schoolcraft demonstrated strong correlations between the environments of his described northern regions and those who inhabited them. Certain assumptions then existed in his definition of North and he continued to label the region as such after 1820.⁶⁶

The 1820 expedition provides a critically important element of the idea of North in the Great Lakes region. As the young naturalist crossed into Lake Superior his language, tone, and experiences helped shape a distinct environment. Although initially vague, North was a region of the Great Lakes associated with poor soils, vast pine forests, large native populations, and an environment more harsh and rugged where the likelihood of success for agricultural pursuits and disease were equally bleak.

Schoolcraft’s position as a geologist perhaps made it easier to blend natural world with the native occupancy. His focus was to examine the natural world, however, it is apparent he was constantly combining a native narrative into that context. Ultimately, in order to understand what a Northern environment meant, one must examine his work with native groups. After his work as a geologist for the expedition, he accepted a position as the Indian agent at Sault Ste Marie in 1822. His reputation as a scientist would be outweighed by his work collecting ethnographic material of the Chippewa tribes. However, through a closer examination it becomes more apparent that environmental observation was present in his writings too.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

One can only imagine it was a cold December in 1826 at Sault Ste Marie when Henry Schoolcraft released the first issue of his publication, the *Muzzeniegun or The Literary Voyager*. The publication was a collection of Indian folklore, translations, and history. The title of the text indicates his own perception of his presence at Fort Brady. He saw himself as a well-educated man, a scholar, whose passion for classical literature was not quite satisfied upon entering the frontier post. In an effort to document his surroundings and satisfy his own desire for literature he edited and produced the *Literary Voyager*. Towards the end of the first issue Schoolcraft displayed his own work as a poet, placing himself in the North he had previously carved out during the 1820 expedition.⁶⁷

Remote from all the world – away – away.
Where lone St. Mary's waters foam and play
And broad Superior's mountains, rising high
In pictured forms, imprint the northern sky
Far, far from every haunt my heart holds dear,
What can engage the contemplative, *here*.
Long mazes past, where lakes and streams resound
I seem to stand at earth's remotest bound.⁶⁸

Such literature further demonstrates the observations Schoolcraft made six years earlier while touring the Lake Superior region. He still views this the North as remote, but beautiful. Whereas he was a visitor during his first tour, now he observed as a permanent resident at “earth's remotest bound.”⁶⁹

Schoolcraft begrudgingly accepted the position at Sault Ste Marie in 1822. His passions as a geologist and naturalist had him leaning towards a career in the sciences however he was

⁶⁷ Phillip P. Mason, Introduction, in *The Literary Voyager or Muzzeniegun* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1962), xviii- xxvi.

⁶⁸ Ekiega, “Lines, on Coming to Reside at Sault Ste Marie,” *The Literary Voyager or Muzzeniegun*, December 1826.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

appointed as an Indian agent at the newly constructed Fort Brady on the river he had just visited two years prior. Upon residing at Sault Ste Marie, he immediately created a friendship with John Johnston, prominent fur trader and local leader. Schoolcraft married Johnston's eldest daughter who was part Chippewa.⁷⁰

Although he had become a prominent member of the community of the St. Mary's River, such poetry as seen in the *Literary Voyager* continued to exhibit a feeling of bleakness he must have attributed towards the northern environment. The readership of such a publication may be difficult to imagine in Sault Ste Marie; a population consisting of mostly traders, soldiers, and local Ojibwa population. However it is likely Lewis Cass, by now a close friend to Schoolcraft, was a subscriber to the *Literary Voyager*. Politicians aware of the text would have closely tied it to Schoolcraft's work with the 1820 expedition. The combination of the dismal descriptions presented during his first expedition as well his personal views as seen in the *Literary Voyager* leaves no doubt that many politicians did not hold the environments of the Lake Superior region in high regard throughout the 1820s and 1830s.

Evidence of the impact of Schoolcraft's perceptions can best be understood through a dispute between Michigan and Ohio boundary lines. In 1835 the territory of Michigan and the state of Ohio were in a diplomatic battle over a piece of land known as the Toledo Strip. This small piece of land, roughly four hundred sixty square miles, was a stretch of land from where the Maumee River entered Lake Erie extending inland along the border of Michigan and Ohio. Both political bodies claimed the strip of land due to the vagueness of the original boundary lines that had been drawn from a misunderstanding about the geographic situation of the Great Lakes.

⁷⁰ Mosser, "Henry Rowe Schoolcraft: Eyewitness to a Changing Frontier" (PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 1991), 207.

However, when Michigan began to apply for statehood the boundary, which had been claimed by Ohio, admission was delayed. The dispute over the Toledo Strip increased tensions between both governments in the State of Ohio and Michigan Territory.

President Andrew Jackson presented an ultimatum for Michigan's acceptance into the Union. Ohio, already an admitted state, would continue to hold the strip of disputed land in exchange for expanding the boundaries of Michigan to include 16,000 square miles of land north of Lake Michigan. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan was formally, and begrudgingly, accepted in 1837. Many politicians saw this exchange as a loss despite the drastic differences in sizes of lands acquired against the land that had been disputed near the Maumee River. Driven by the reports of the acquired region, it becomes clearer how land in the early nineteenth century was interpreted and valued in the American mind. For Michigan politicians, Schoolcraft's words in regards to the Lake Superior region informed those downstate of a region far removed from the larger political conscious. The observations of the 1820 expedition from the early American beginning marked this region as Northern space worthless to the ideals of the agriculturally and industriously minded American.⁷¹

While residing in Sault Ste Marie, Schoolcraft shifted his studies from a focus on the natural world and a new interest towards those who inhabited the shores of Lake Superior. This change in study was as much a reflection as his change in position as the larger culture trends occurring in America. James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, published in 1826, demonstrated a new, widely held, cultural appreciation of American Indians in history.⁷² American Indians were romanticized in an era of Indian removal and despite nineteenth century

⁷¹ Don Faber, *The Toledo War: The First Michigan – Ohio Rivalry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

⁷² James Fennimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1826).

ideas of Indian ignorance, their history was a celebrated era. Likewise, Schoolcraft's own writings reflect his own views to the impending removal of American Indians. In an 1827 publication of the *Literary Voyager* Schoolcraft captured this sentiment when he stated:

Doomed to the extinguishment by some inscrutable fiat, we see the race of aborigines, like the primitive inhabitants of Canaan, falling before the invaders like the grain beneath the scythe, and leaving their rich inheritance to mend of other minds.⁷³

Another poem romanticized this passing of time,

St. Mary's falls run swift & strong, ever as on they go,
The waves from shore to shore prolong, a hollow sound of woe.
That sound upon mine ear doth write, the note of my tribe's decay;
That, like a murmuring stream by night, is rapidly passing away.⁷⁴

Schoolcraft lived in close proximity of Chippewa and Algonquin groups whom he communicated on a regular basis. He celebrated their past and their culture, but accepted what he saw as their apparent fate. Despite his affection for the study of American Indian culture, his signature could still be found on the 1836 treaty that shifted roughly 13.8 million acres in land from Indians in Northern Michigan into the hands of the United States of America.⁷⁵

As Indian agent, and later politician and diplomat, his largest contribution was his role as an ethnologist. Schoolcraft was able to collect several translations and Chippewa and Native American narratives regarding creation stories and local folklore. Through his work, Chippewa and Algonquin culture was presented to a larger American audience. Schoolcraft released his collection of folklore in his *Algic Researches, Comprising Inquiries Respecting the Mental*

⁷³ Henry Schoolcraft, "The Unchangeable Character of the Indian Mind," *Literary Voyager*, February 16, 1827.

⁷⁴ Henry Schoolcraft, "Lament for the Race," *Literary Voyager*, March 10, 1827.

⁷⁵ "Treaty of Washington," March 28, 1836, *List of Documents Concerning the Negotiation of Ratified Indian Treaties 1801-1896*, No. 6.

Characteristics of the North American Indians in 1839.⁷⁶ Schoolcraft composed this collection while acting as a politician in the state of Michigan. This collection of folklore explored origin narratives and mythology. Schoolcraft considered this text a much-needed study into the identity and stories of Algonquin tribes that were being diminished in the midst of American expansion.

Schoolcraft's *Algic Researches* influenced poet and writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to write his epic poem entitled *Song of Hiawatha*.⁷⁷ An adaptation of Schoolcraft's work in collecting folklore, Longfellow fit many of Schoolcraft's collected stories into a linear epic poem set in Lake Superior's Pictured Rocks.⁷⁸ The character Schoolcraft called Manabozho, whom Longfellow chose to call Hiawatha, was the primary character throughout the epic poem. Longfellow had chosen to rework selected stories that had already been edited by Schoolcraft. Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* was not a reiteration of Ojibwa folklore. The poem was packaged, almost in identical fashion the Finnish classic *Kalevala*, to attract an American audience that had demonstrated its fascination with the American Indian experience.⁷⁹ Accuracy, prose, and authenticity mattered very little to those who wrote and consumed such literature. To an expanding nation, American Indian literature provided a glimpse to the environments and worlds that once were. Longfellow's work, despite being written in Boston, would have a much larger impact towards shaping the identity of many Northern places in the Great Lakes region.

⁷⁶ Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches, Comprising Inquiries Respecting the Mental Characteristics of the North American Indians*, 2 volumes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1839).

⁷⁷ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Song of Hiawatha* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855).

⁷⁸ Chase S. Osborn and Stellanova Osborn, *Schoolcraft, Longfellow, Hiawatha* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: The Jaques Cattell Press, 1942), 41-58.

⁷⁹ Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 298.

Schoolcraft's efforts in *Algic Researches* were part of a much larger effort to record and present the history of the region. This was constant concern for Schoolcraft, recognizing the need for regional identity to create a cohesive bond by those moving into the American frontier. This is largely the reason why Henry Schoolcraft and Lewis Cass acted as the founding members of the Michigan Historical Society in 1828, before Michigan had transitioned from a territory into a state. Both Cass and Schoolcraft focused their work on Indian groups of the region recognizing the need to document this passing era.⁸⁰ Poetry, novels, magazines were the products of prominent members of society documenting the history of a young American territory. Historian Terry Barnhart has argued that political bodies in the Northwest Territory supported historical organizations to "foster what they regarded the best of eastern culture and institutions" and in doing so "creating new regional identities in the process."⁸¹ Barnhart proposes that those who documented, composed, and presented this new form of frontier literature did so to create an identity to those settling the American frontier while constructing a distinct identity to place.

Regional identity can be developed by the collection of histories, poetry, and stories. The words and works of Henry Schoolcraft helped understand the history of many native groups in the Great Lakes region with a focus towards Chippewa bands of the Lake Superior region. In an effort to collect the histories and allegories of this group, Schoolcraft created the momentum to label the Northern regions of the Great Lakes as a distinct space. Through his expeditions in 1820, as well as his work as an Indian agent and politician, Schoolcraft constructed a larger idea of North that would be shaped as the nineteenth century progressed. Tapping into a new romanticized view of American Indian culture, those who created popular literature through

⁸⁰ Barnhart, 55-60.

⁸¹ Ibid, 70.

books and travel brochures shaped Schoolcraft's perception of North into a new and imagined landscape.

CHAPTER II

THE IMAGINED NORTH

It is now and has been for years past the universal custom of the American People to ‘go somewhere’ during the midsummer season, each year, for a short period of rest and recuperation from business cares; for the many pleasures to be enjoyed at some delightful summer resort, where one can appreciate the quiet beauties of nature, the invigorating climate, the pure air, the sparkling waters, the pleasures of the chase, capturing the finny tribe.⁸²

The above excerpt is taken from a vacation brochure from the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company in 1885 entitled *Summer Resorts in Northern Michigan*. From afar the message seems like a simple advertisement preaching the beauties of the environmental landscape and the benefits that vacationing can have on the traveler. But after a closer examination insights can be found into why Americans vacationed, and the larger cultural discourses that appealed to potential travelers looking for leisure in Northern Michigan. North, in this ad, is a celebrated and sought out location.

Throughout the middle of the nineteenth century new technologies and a growing country helped transform the way Americans viewed, interpreted, and valued landscapes. How is it that Schoolcraft’s first definition of North, a landscape lacking an opportunity for economic growth, grew to be a celebrated space as advertised above? How is it that North became an idealized space rather than a desolate space that Schoolcraft had described just decades prior. Likewise, how did Schoolcraft’s definition of North, a space defined in terms of its environmental attributes and indigenous demographics, expand to include destinations on the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad? Throughout this chapter, I argue that because of the growth of modernity in the Gilded Age the environments defined as “North” fundamentally changed in their meaning.

⁸² *Summer resorts and waters of northern Michigan: reached via Grand Rapids & Indiana R.R., the Fishing Line* (Chicago: Poole Bros, 1885), 1.

Where Schoolcraft argued that North was specific to environments north of Sault Ste Marie, advertisers and urbanites expanded on this idea of North. Although both definitions are different, they are linked in both environmental perceptions as well the cultural practices attributed to their development. Schoolcraft, like the advertisers who attempted to draw vacationers to the North, and similar to the urbanites who traveled to the North for certain wilderness experiences, the idea of North was used to define certain cultural practices that helped drive a shift in environmental perception and ecological change.

Schoolcraft's North did not always remain a remote northern region in the eyes of industrialists. As the nineteenth century progressed, growth in technology and the expansion of transportation transformed once remote wilderness into desired land. The landscapes Schoolcraft described as devoid of agricultural production, in large part, remained worthless to the prospective farmer, but opened possibilities to investors looking to find wealth in the forests and mineral deposits of the landscape.⁸³ Douglas Houghton's 1837 expedition marked a new era in the development of the North. Whereas Henry Schoolcraft made broad definitions about landscape and sent by the Secretary of War to solidify boundary lines, Houghton toured the North for different reasons. Houghton was sent by the State of Michigan, shortly after acquiring the land through the border dispute with Ohio, to prepare geological surveys and measure the potential towards developing copper mining in the region. The newfound interest in the mineral deposits led to early growth in mining regions on Lake Superior's south shore.⁸⁴ The new State

⁸³ Reynolds, 64-98.

⁸⁴ Olmanson, 75-77.

of Michigan was determined to access the potential wealth despite Schoolcraft's bleak descriptions of the land.

Houghton's 1841 report noted that the copper deposits in the Keweenaw Peninsula may add some wealth to the state of Michigan:

While I am fully satisfied that the mineral district of our state will prove a source of eventual and steadily increasing wealth to our people, I cannot fail to have before me the fear that it may prove the ruin of hundreds of adventurers, who will visit it with expectations never to be realized... I would simply caution those persons who would engage in the business in the hope of accumulating wealth suddenly... to look closely before the step is taken, which will most certainly end in disappointment and ruin.⁸⁵

Houghton's words demonstrate a slight shift in attitude towards future development of the southern shore of Lake Superior. Houghton was more optimistic about settlement of the region. Like Schoolcraft, he acknowledged that the environment would test settlers because of its harsh realities. Despite his call for caution, Houghton was more optimistic than Schoolcraft's observations. Whereas Schoolcraft did not encourage settlement of the region, Houghton saw the growth of a mining community. Like Schoolcraft, Houghton experienced the dangerous environments of the region. It was in the midst of one trip to Lake Superior where he drowned due to the tremendous ferocity of the Lake Superior water currents.

Copper mining and iron mining quickly brought investors to environments Schoolcraft had once described as desolate and barren. Those who sought riches in Schoolcraft's North struggled through many parts of the early mining process.⁸⁶ Although technological advances allowed easier access to the northern reaches of the Great Lakes, the environmental realities of a mining settlement in the Lake Superior region led to slower growth of it and many northern areas

⁸⁵ Larry Lankton, *Hollowed Ground: Copper Mining and Community Building on Lake Superior, 1840s-1990s* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

of the Great Lakes. The greatest obstacle was finding a method of transporting bulk ore from Lake Superior to markets. Water transportation was well-established on the Great Lakes but the portage around the rapids of the St. Mary's River increased costs to the point where profit was essentially eliminated.⁸⁷

Despite the efforts throughout the 1840s and 1850s it took some time to convince the federal government to invest in a proper canal system at Sault Ste Marie. The same rapids that had made fishing fruitful at the St. Mary's River were now seen as an obstacle to the growth of the copper and iron industries. Although copper and iron companies argued for the need for proper canals to navigate the rapids at the St. Mary's, many politicians still viewed the region as remote and worthless. Statesman Henry Clay (W-Kentucky) adamantly opposed federal support for the building project. His language closely resembled that of Henry Schoolcraft when he stated that the canal construction would be "a work beyond the remotest settlement in the United States, if not the moon."⁸⁸ Despite the economic opportunities of the mining region, many politicians still viewed this region as Schoolcraft did when he toured the region in 1820.

Canals and railroads were a major development of the Great Lakes region throughout the nineteenth century. Such construction projects were seen as synonymous with economic growth. This alteration to the natural environment situated certain landscapes as more valuable than others. Despite its prominence to local Chippewa residents and traders who saw the value in the fishing grounds this region was deemed too remote to be valuable. Many saw the attempt to improve the St. Mary's River as a worthless attempt to improve a barren landscape, others saw

⁸⁷ W. Bruce Bowlus, *Iron Ore Transport on the Great Lakes: The Development of a Delivery System to Feed American Industry* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc, Publishers, 2010), 53-89.

⁸⁸ Walter Havighurst, *Long Ships Passing: The Story of the Great Lakes* (New York City: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 197-201.

the need to make the Lake Superior region accessible to shipping industries. The push to provide access to raw materials was influenced by mining interests, but also by the desire to access the rich virgin forests of the Great Lakes region.⁸⁹

Due to the rapid growth of the American east coast during the mid-nineteenth century, those who led the lumber industry turned west to the woods of the Great Lakes region. The northern woods, in particular, were the most desired forests for the growing lumber industry. The same forests Schoolcraft first saw as a barrier to settlement were now were a valuable commodity to a growing market for wood to be used as fuel, railroads, timber, and fencing. As the country settled further into the western prairie, the forests of the Great Lakes region were the resources for which those settlers relied. Trees, in particular the white pine, served as an economic symbol of the north woods. The North slowly transitioned from a place with little chance of settlement, to larger space based around extractive economies.⁹⁰ Yet, in the mid-nineteenth century, North only varied slightly from Schoolcraft's early definitions. While settlement was still scarce in the region associated as Northern forests, the economic value was substantially based on the new technology that made timber resources available to a larger American economy.

Much of the country, in particular the Midwest, underwent a tremendous growth in the infrastructure for transportation in the mid-nineteenth century. Although a major eastern population began moving west, Midwestern cities like Chicago became hubs of economic and industrial activity. Likewise, natural resources held new meanings because of their increased role in the daily lives of urbanites. William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis* demonstrates how the

⁸⁹ Bowlus, 15-32.

⁹⁰ Michael Williams, *Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 193-237.

Midwest, and Chicago, was centered at the heart of an expansive trade network of natural materials. Midwestern Port cities and railroads were built to distribute newly accessible natural resources that previously were far too remote for exploitation and profit. For example, the white pine of northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were targets of an immense lumber trade. Cronon's text focuses on the economic power nature's resources played in developing the Midwest, however, more importantly, outlines the changing value natural resources and environments held in the hearts of American consumers, industrialists, and politicians. Natural resources had become valuable assets as a part of the emerging free market economy. Northern Michigan forests were seen less as wild spaces and more as commodities.⁹¹

Mid-nineteenth century Great Lakes cities became hubs of resource trade. Lumber, minerals, and agricultural goods brought hinterland environments within reach to urban consumers. This fundamental shift altered the way in which distant wilderness was viewed. Wilderness was not far away, but rather, quite obtainable to any traveler seeking to visit these locations. Thanks to railroads, traveling to northern stretches of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to enjoy natural spaces not only became safe but also convenient. These landscapes were no longer perceived as remote wilderness, but rather lucrative landscapes of economic growth for both resource extraction and tourism.

Early advertisements preached the natural abundance of the region. Pamphlets of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company were addressed to the outdoorsmen seeking frontier pleasures such as fishing, hunting, and other recreational activities. Although the Grand

⁹¹ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991). The Great Lakes Forests were sought for their abundance of white pine in the late nineteenth century. The Great Lakes Region produced the most lumber in this era that led to the rapid growth of Midwest population and cities. The cities were intrinsically tied to the environments they sought to exploit.

Rapids and Indiana Railroad sought to advertise outdoor enthusiasts to ride their train north to the newly accessible Northern Michigan landscape, the primary goal was to access the rich forests and resources this geographic area promoted. Initially, the company was mostly interested in advertising the land that had been granted to them from the United States Congress. The company intended to sell lands to new farmers, and loggers, prepared to exploit the untapped natural resources critical to an ever-growing industrial nation. In 1866 Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, President Samuel Hanna made no mention of Petoskey, a community that would soon to be a future hub of Northern Michigan travel. Rather, he focused on the fertile lands for farming and the abundance of pine to be harvested.⁹² Railroad companies were originally far more interested in the extraction of natural resources to gain profit, rather than the movement of people to vacation on their rail lines.

As transportation increased, so too did tourism. Steamships offered access to the Great Lakes for many years, but vacation was still limited to a class of people who could afford extended periods of time away from home or work for vacation and travel, and the expenses associated with both. However, the advent of the railroad through Michigan, and much of the Midwest, opened a new route for travel and the advent of a more affordable means of vacation during the post Civil War period. For example, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad offered an accessible route for Midwestern urbanites to reach once remote and otherwise wild areas as perceived by Americans in the mid-nineteenth century like one fishermen who used rail roads and steamers to travel to the St. Mary's River in 1846 to fish trout.^{93 94}

⁹² *An exhibit of affairs of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad* (Fort Wayne: Daily Gazette Job Office, 1866).

⁹³ Anonymous Author, "Fishing at Mackinac and the Falls of St. Mary," *The Spirit of the Times* (Chicago, IL), Nov. 27, 1846.

Resorts were usually found nearby rail lines making frontier activities less rugged and more inclusive to entire families. In 1876, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company donated three hundred acres of land near Petoskey in the Little Traverse Bay to a Methodist group for religious and social purposes.⁹⁵ This group, the Bay View Association, represented the beginning of broad based resort life in Northern Michigan. The donation would spur movement of peoples north not for agriculture or lumbering, but rather an area of leisure and natural beauty. This represented a new shift in the direction of the company from resource extraction towards the movement of vacationers. Northern Michigan offered itself as a vacationland or area of leisure.

One advertisement outlined the reason why Midwest urbanites traveled north, “Vacation is the cessation of work and the diversion of the mind into new and pleasant channels; it is repairing and oiling of the machinery necessary to the better accomplishment of work.”⁹⁶ Vacation, at its base, means to vacate. Those traveling to Northern Michigan wanted to relieve themselves from the trials of everyday life. In doing so, the vacation better prepared them for work once returning to the urban world.

In a modern world, cities grew at a new rate. Midwestern cities saw tremendous growth due to transportation and the movement of goods both east and west. By taking a closer look at

⁹⁴ *Map of the land grant of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company*, Map (New York: G.W. & C.B. Colton & Co., 1870). Marie Johnson, “The Building of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad”, *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol 41, No 2 (1945). Outlines a specific historical record on the business transactions that created the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad. The construction of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad was made possible through a grant from the US congress in 1856 that was aimed at the production of a railroad from Grand Rapids to a point near the Traverse Bay region. Eventually, the line would reach as far south as Fort Wayne, Indiana and connect more Midwesterners with Northern Michigan.

⁹⁵ *Annual Report: 1875-1876* (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, 1877).

⁹⁶ *Midsummer D& C Voyages* (Detroit: Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, 1893).

the issues of the city and modernity, a more complete definition of vacation can be understood. After all, vacation was constructed to represent something different than the daily routines of those traveling on the steamers and passenger lines headed to the newly defined North.

Vacation, a construction of those seeking to find an experience different than that found in Midwestern cities can help explain how the natural environments of Northern Michigan were defined. However, the need to escape urban space can be incredibly hypocritical. Modern amenities were never completely abandoned and vacationers would have been surrounded by evidence of the modern world. When renowned fisherman, Charles Hallock, toured Northern Michigan, for instance, he noted the dredging of the inland canal, a chain of lakes and rivers from Crooked Lake near Petoskey across the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan near Lake Huron, developed to ease travel through the northern portion of the state:

Just above our place at the landing the channel has been dredged and deepend, and the sand thrown out on either side is kept from drifting into the stream again by long rows of piles and planking. The bottom is irregular, and from the deepest holes one can take bass with a fly while standing on the bank.⁹⁷

Even while fishing, Charles Hallock saw dredging as coexisting with natural abundance. The same dredging that destroyed natural habitats for the fish he enjoyed catching, were the sites of his own recreational activity. Likewise, the same rail lines that were built to exploit and transport lumber and agricultural products to the industrial centers were the rail lines that delivered urbanites from those industrial centers back to the point of extraction. Despite this antagonistic relationship, both ideals existed and relied upon each other.

In order to draw urbanites to the North, railroad companies focused on the elements of beauty rather than extraction. Publications, such as the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad

⁹⁷ Charles Hallock, *Vacation Rambles in Northern Michigan* (Grand Rapids: Passenger Department of Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, 1878), 29.

Company's brochure, were meant to capture the attention of urbanites seeking the qualities of a landscape sought out and idealized by potential travelers. Ideas such as frontier and wilderness, and the health benefits of both are themes that commonly appeared in tourist pamphlets. Interestingly enough, these advertisements allow insights into the minds of both the consumer and those who sought to construct northern Michigan as a vacationland. The landscape of Northern Michigan was advertised and modified to answer the cultural concerns of a modern world. The traveling experience, descriptions of environment, and the activities planned for tourists were shaped by urbanites and advertisers. In understanding the language and descriptions of Northern Michigan a larger truth becomes apparent. The Gilded Age saw a fundamental shift in the identification of landscapes and meaning of natural environments. The North, an environment Henry Schoolcraft referred to as the Lake Superior region, grew to embody a larger area. Throughout the Gilded Age, natural environments were not solely valued for habitation; rather natural environments could be valued for their wealth in extractive resources and their potential as tourist destinations. Locations like Little Traverse Bay and Mackinac Island, to the Midwest urbanite, transcended their biological characteristics and represented answers to larger cultural questions about their own urban society and simultaneously adopted the indicator used in pamphlets and advertisers: North.

Vacation was an escape from the anxieties and stresses of the modern world. For many urbanites, the stress of work and societal shifts acted as triggers for city dwellers to vacate the cities and head to remote locations along the Great Lakes. Northern Michigan, like Northern Wisconsin and Minnesota, served as a "vacationland" for Midwest urbanites. Easily accessible by rail or steam ship, Northern Michigan was known for its cooler climates and vistas that appealed to the ideals of the anxious, stressed inhabitants of large metropolitan areas. Advertisers

attempted to speak to the concerns of those residents, who faced an increasingly modern and industrial pollution urban environment. Advertiser pamphlets responded to the increasing concerns. Here, historians can understand both the ideals of urbanites and their justifications to vacate their homes and find leisure in a Northern Michigan landscape.

Following the work of Roderick Frazier Nash, this new appreciation in the perception of wild environments shifted in the mid-nineteenth century. Nash demonstrates industrialization brought about a new appreciation by the likes of Henry Thoreau and politicians such as George Perkins Marsh. Nash, as much as he examines the shifting meanings of natural landscapes through time, is looking at the changing definition of wilderness. The word itself takes on new meaning throughout time and represents for those people, at significant points in time, a unique definition of place and identity. Natural environments do change in definition. This change does not always occur through biological or environmental processes, but rather through cultural, social, and religious definitions. Individuals or societies will create meaning to place based on the visions they need a natural world to become.⁹⁸

Vacation and tourism offer insights into the ideas of Americans throughout history about cultural concerns and economic conditions. As a construction of travelers, tourism and vacationlands are built to represent the ideals of those seeking certain environments and experiences. Vacationlands work as mirrors for societal values and cultural expectations in which natural environments are to represent. By exploring Northern Michigan such as the Little Traverse Bay and Mackinac Island vacationlands, historians can more accurately track environmental perceptions of the urban areas tourists meant to escape, the natural qualities of

⁹⁸ Nash, 84-107.

landscape visitors imagined, the leisure activities that held deep cultural meaning and environmental perceptions, and information about those who traveled to the North.

As historian Roland Marchand has pointed out with his studies of messages of advertisers, dealing with advertisements offers insights into larger cultural discourses.⁹⁹ Companies like the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company as well as the Michigan and Indiana Railroad Company had to balance the celebration of technological advantages of travel while still appealing to the anxieties associated with modernity. Steamers and trains worked as both symbols of modernity as well as access to relief from the problems associated with the modern era. At times conflicting, the message of company advertisements had to balance the benefits of industrialization with a larger discourse of fear of their era. Studying advertisements that attempt to draw urbanites to Northern Michigan can further develop the identity of those who defined of vacation, vacationlands, and participated in the activities that drew people to the region. While it is important to note that companies such as the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, as well as Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, advertised to urbanites seeking to leave the city, the concept of vacation is a construction of those seeking to find or fulfill a certain experience.¹⁰⁰

Vacationing has been understood in many ways at different eras throughout American History. In *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* historian

⁹⁹ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). This text argues the role of advertising to understanding larger cultural concerns. While this text focuses on a later period than the one being examined here, it provides a theoretical framework to understand the cultural concerns and their representations in advertisements. Advertisers must reflect societal concerns in order to appeal to potential clients, however also distort the reality to market a new experience or product.

¹⁰⁰ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964)

John Sears explores how Americans viewed tourism throughout the nineteenth century. Areas such as the White Mountains of New Hampshire and Niagara Falls were far less a destination by middle class urbanites than by wealthier citizens. Travel was more expensive in the early railroad period which, in turn, meant only a certain population experienced leisure and vacation through long distance travel and prolonged stays. Likewise, the description and draw of certain environments had entirely different meanings for tourists during the middle nineteenth century than it did at the turn of the century. Sears argues that tourists attached natural scenes of grandeur to romantic and religious meanings. Landscapes were sacred and the experiences were personal, intimate, and spiritually revitalizing.¹⁰¹ Advertisers not only had to figure out how to transform northern Michigan into a vacationland, but they had to make sure that their promotional material would appeal to the consumer on a deeper, more personal level. Promoters spoke to larger cultural concerns of a changing economic and modernizing world.

In order to understand the appreciation for the North, one must understand the shift in urban areas. As cities grew, industrialization changed the face of the cities from smaller organic cities into expansive industrial complexes filled with factories and rail yards.¹⁰² Natural space became difficult to find in urban areas.

Although railroads and shipping increased in the Great Lakes region, tourists and vacationers had to find value in the excursion. A closer examination of advertisements demonstrates more about the environments they vacated from as well as the imagined space they

¹⁰¹ John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989). This text outlines a narrative of travel that is only experienced by the wealthy class. Not until travel was made easier for middle and lower classes did the meaning of travel begin to transform.

¹⁰² Ted Steinberg, "Death of the Organic City," in *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 157-172.

created in the North. Gail Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization* outlines a cultural crisis occurring as a result of a rapidly shifting modern world. Ideas of gender and race are questioned as the Victorian era was replaced by a modern world that challenged ideas of economic, social, and racial norms. While Bederman focuses on the connectivity of race and gender definitions at the turn of the century, a larger theme of anxiety is developed in this era. Cities grew larger, standards of employment shifted, and traditional gender roles were challenged. The new urban era was associated with an uncertainty and stress brought out by these changes. Bederman describes the disease *neurasthenia* as a mechanism to diagnose the anxieties of the modern world and justification for the gender and cultural unknowns large urban areas represented.¹⁰³

In 1884, Dr. George Miller Beard offered his research in the proper treatment of the disease of Neurasthenia. The disease defined by Beard is:

The prime cause of modern nervousness is modern civilization with its accompaniments; all other accredited influences, however important, and interesting, as indulgence of appetites and passions, and even climatic conditions and the nervous diathesis, being only second or tertiary.¹⁰⁴

Beard's assessment of neurasthenia links mental and physical health to the growth of cities and the advent of new technologies. Cities, the hub of economic trade, could create stresses that threatened the mental and physical state of those who lived and participated in this modern world. Vacation offered a break from that life. Beard offered treatment options for the many sufferers of neurasthenia,

¹⁰³Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Bederman address the turn of the century as an era of tremendous discourse over the definition of civilization and the benefits and/or anxieties associated with a modern world. This text attempts focuses on linking race to questions of civilization. In a similar manner, I aim to link environmental perceptions to the discourse of civilization during this same period.

¹⁰⁴ George Miller Beard, *A Practical Treatise on the Treatment of Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)* (New York: W. Wood & Co., 1880), vii.

In the cases that are supposed to be nervous prostration, the very best results are oftentimes accomplished, in both cerebraesthesia and myelasthenia, when the patient remains at home, or near at home, or at least in his own country, by short vacations. Trips that last for perhaps but two or three days, or even a single day, especially a change from city to country air, sometimes brings relief.¹⁰⁵

Vacation, then, could be a healing agent. If urban life was associated with the symptoms of neurasthenia, then vacation could offer relief from the nervous disease.

Travel companies such as steamship lines and railroads recognized the stresses of city living when advertising to those living in urban eras. For example, the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company advertised Mackinac as a health resort for “sickly” city dwellers. Many pamphlets quoted physicians claiming the excellence of vacation spots like Mackinac Island:

Dr. Hammond, the famous physician, says ‘I have no hesitation in saying it is the best summer resort of which I have any knowledge for persons whose nervous systems are run down, or who desire to be built up and strengthened.’¹⁰⁶

Advertisements wrote about venues that acted as prescriptive cures to those suffering from symptoms of neurasthenia.

Among many symptoms of neurasthenia, Beard located hay fever as symptom of the anxieties of modernity. Hay fever defined by Beard was “simply a nervous idiosyncrasy, usually against some one or many external irritants, of which pollen, sunlight, dust, heat, foul air, smoke, and various fruits and flowers are the most familiar.”¹⁰⁷ In an industrial urban center foul air, smoke, and fumes represented more than modern-day definitions of pollution. All the new pollutants or were a threat that added to the negative experiences associated with city-life.

¹⁰⁵ Beard, 186.

¹⁰⁶ *D & C day and night trips Detroit and Cleveland* (Detroit: Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, 1905).

¹⁰⁷ Beard, 128.

The concept of pollution played an important role for many vacationers to travel to the northern portions of Michigan. Historian Adam Rome examined the middle-class understanding of pollution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rome tracked the changing vocabulary used by those attempting to describe the environmental effects of an increasingly industrial world. Rome argues that for late nineteenth century middle class Americans the term “pollution” held much more moral and religious meaning. “Pollutants” were not only a threat to the natural surroundings but also, and more importantly, a threat to the moral fiber of society. The term held double meaning as a moral degradation to the surrounding natural world the pollutants affected; meanwhile, scientists began using the term more commonly to describe industrial effects on the land, air, and water. Pollution represented a growing modern world as well as the moral effects such advancements placed on those who inhabited cities.¹⁰⁸

Pollutants became an increasingly more visible aspect in the lives of this in Midwestern urban areas. Likewise urbanites placed moral assumptions on interpretations of environmental changes. Industrialization essentially created a new understanding of pollutants on urbanites’ lives that experienced the changes. A new conscious citizen was born in reaction to the stresses brought on by the growing modern world: the sufferer. Sufferers of the modern world represented an upper-middle class of citizens who experienced such pollutants environmentally and morally.

New ailments became associated with those living in the cities and perhaps the most common of such ailments was hay fever. Historian Gregg Mitman’s research connects pollutants with the significance of hay fever in Gilded Age America and the growth of tourism as a result of

¹⁰⁸ Adam Rome, “Coming to Terms with Pollution: The Language of Environmental Reform, 1865- 1915,” *Environmental History* Vol 1, No 3 (1996).

the ailment. Hay fever originated in the cities of the eastern United States as a disease mostly affecting wealthy industrialists living in growing cities of the 1830s.¹⁰⁹ Defined by the irritation caused from dusts and seasonal pollens, those suffering from hay fever began looking to escape the cities to find areas of rest and relaxation. Nineteenth century scientists, in combination with a myriad of prescriptive drugs, believed that escaping the urban areas so abundant with pollens and traveling to perceived areas of improved air quality could relieve hay suffering.¹¹⁰

While Mitman credits the White Mountains of New Hampshire as the most popular destination for sufferers of hay fever in the east, for those living in the Midwest the Great Lakes and the “North” offered the greatest chance of escape from the ailments. The North was accessible due to the new modern world and offered the rural and pastoral setting to escape the city. Tourism advertisements preached of the healing powers the Great Lakes for those looking to escape the city and the ailments of hay fever.

In addition to the treatment of hay fever, Beard noted that vacation could aid with the treatment of mental exhaustion often associated with neurasthenia. Beard also recognized the urban areas most afflicted by hay fever symptoms were areas where dense pollens carried by wind from rural areas into the city. Cities were affected by winds carrying irritants from farms into the cities. To combat the affliction, areas such as Northern Michigan with fresh air off the water offered a haven from hay fever.¹¹¹

Social organizations were established to give a voice to the sufferers of the hay fever. The United States Hay Fever Association, founded in 1873, met annually to discuss practical

¹⁰⁹ Gregg Mitman, “Hay Fever Holiday: Health, Leisure, and Place in Gilded Age America,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol 77, No 3 (2003).

¹¹⁰ Charles Harrison Blackley, *Hay Fever: Its Causes, Treatment, and Effective Prevention, Experimental Researches* (London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1880).

¹¹¹ Beard, 191.

solutions to the troubles associated with hay fever. As the group attempted to collect data on where sufferers found relief from the symptoms, the association produced publications that provided medicinal remedies for subscribing sufferers. They acted as travel guides for any potential traveler looking to find relief from hay fever. The New York based association preached the healing powers of the White Mountain Region of New Hampshire, but Northern Michigan was also often noted as a haven of relief. One account noted, "Man, Chicago, victim 10 years. Used Pollantin part of time with partial relief. Relief at Harbor Spring, Mich."¹¹² Harbor Springs was noted as a synonymous approach, if not an even more effective approach, to treating the ailment as a medicinal drug. By the late nineteenth century Northern Michigan towns were known nationwide as hay fever destinations and vacationing spots. This altered the activities and realities of these locations in the minds of the travelers on rails and steamers seeking to find a certain experience not found in urban areas.

As transportation and lodging options increased, so too did the amount of travelers that visited Northern Michigan. Little Traverse Bay soon became an area built around the ideals of the urban visitors seeking to escape the stresses of city living. Rail lines were constructed from Petoskey to Harbor Springs, Bay View, and Wequetonsing all surrounding the bay area.¹¹³ Summer Resorts grew to represent the ideals of the summer visitors with recreational activities and natural beauty. Whether an escape from hay fever, anxieties of modern living, or the economic woes urban life urbanites sought an experience. Organizing activates advertisers attempted to define a Northern Michigan vacation as a compliment and contrast to city life, but

¹¹² *Report: Unites States Hay Fever Association* (New York: United States Hay Fever Association, 1913), 8.

¹¹³ *Annual Report: 1880-1881* (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company, 1882).

did not abandon the comforts of a modern world. Northern Michigan developers had to balance modern norms with the cultural icons of relaxation and rejuvenation.

The Bay View Association, the original resort of Little Traverse Bay, was founded as a Methodist association for religious meetings and rest in the Northern Michigan. In 1884, one publication of the *Bay View Herald* declared “Bay View is specific for Hay Fever,” and that “hundreds with testify to their entire freedom from this annual fever so long as they remain in their Northern Home.”¹¹⁴ Bay View, outside of Petoskey, was situated in a perceived clean and comforting environment meant to find spiritual renewal. Yet its idyllic recreational environment illustrated that vacationing up north provided a physical, in addition to spiritual, purification. Those who visited could fish, hunt, and attend a Chautauqua lecture series in the North.

Visitors grew to expect certain experiences as part of the community. The association was developed to fit the needs of those traveling to the North. One Bay View president noted in an annual report,

... through its educational and religious advantages, to uplift and upbuild humanity, giving to life a broader view, so that in coming here the entire man is strengthened in his vacation, and return to his, physically, morally, intellectually and spiritually better fitted to cope with the problems of every day life.¹¹⁵

The shores of Lake Michigan represented a location of complete restoration. Members of the association believed Hay Fever and anxieties were cured by the Northern Michigan climates as well a location of moral restoration for religiously inclined organization.

For a passenger of a steamer of the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, traveling north was not only about the destination but the act of traveling to the North. Reading materials

¹¹⁴ Michigan Camp Ground Association, *Bay View Herald: Eight Michigan State Camp Meeting* (Grand Rapids: L.S. Dexter, 1864), 15. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹¹⁵ Bay View Camp Ground Association, *Annual Reports* (Bay View, Michigan: Bay View Association, 1919), 1. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

in cities and aboard the vessels helped prepare the traveler for the experiences they were sure to find aboard their steamships and eventually ashore. A 1900 novel was published by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company titled *A Hero of Manila* described what potential vacationers could expect to find in a northern Michigan vacation. Captain, the protagonist of the story, is a tall, slender, dark haired, heroic character who is honorable on and off the field of battle. Highly decorated, the captain is seemingly invincible to the wrath of war however falls victim to the inhospitable climate of the jungle and contracts a tropical fever. He is sent back to America to heal from this life threatening sickness.¹¹⁶ But the hero continues to battle the disease as his doctor cannot defeat it. The doctor concludes that the ambiguous fever is killing the one-time war hero and he would mostly likely die from the sickness within six months. Shocked by the doctor's diagnosis, the Captain is resilient to beat the disease because of a distant but not forgotten love. Just two years before, a fair girl from Pennsylvania had promised her heart to him. Saddened to lose his opportunity to find true love he reaches out to his family. A distant aunt from northern Michigan visits the hero refusing to accept his death. She claims the captain simply needs to visit the fresh airs of northern Michigan. She convinces the Captain to head north, on a Detroit and Cleveland steamer to the healing winds of the north and he obliges.¹¹⁷

The reader can follow the Captain's progress through all the ports of the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company's major vacation hubs; Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Alpena, Cheboygan, and Mackinac Island where this novel capstones. Along the way the war hero miraculously heals thanks to the clean air of the northern Great Lakes and the comforts found on a Detroit and Cleveland vessel. In a comeback recovery, the Captain returns to full health, learns

¹¹⁶ *A Hero of Manila* (Detroit: Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, 1900).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

of the rich history and mystery of the Northern wild, and ultimately marries the girl who had promised her heart just two years before on scenic Mackinac Island.¹¹⁸

Publications like Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company's *Soldier of Manila* serve both as advertisements, but also informed readers of expectations that vacationing on the Great Lakes could expect. The novel's pages were lined with advertisements of hay fever medicines, hotels, and local shops found in various towns along Lake Michigan and Lake Huron coastline. The experience of travel, itself, aided vacationers attempting to heal from the pressures of the city. Sleeping overnight on a steamer headed to Mackinac is "undisturbed by racking dreams and hideous nightmares, brought by the thoughts of the city and its cares."¹¹⁹ Traveling North was as effective, if not more effective, at healing than actually being in the North.

Traveling North not only brought you to a venue of rest and relaxation but also delivered an affordable cultural experience not found in the cities. On May 25, 1886, one passenger wrote to his friend, E.J. Meyers, and described his experience on board the steamer, *City of Mackinac*. He outlined extravagant bands, delicious food, and stunning vistas. For Meyers, the experience of travel was the vacation as much as the final destination of Mackinac Island.¹²⁰

In addition to the healing qualities that the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company and the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company utilized to draw urbanites to Northern Michigan, these advertisers created an expectation for travelers of what these locations embodied. Recreational activities and scenic lookouts were much more than simply tourist attractions, they were measures to restore worn down souls and connect to a simpler era removed

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *D & C day and night trips Detroit and Cleveland* (Detroit: Detroit an Cleveland Navigation Company, 1905).

¹²⁰ Claude to E.J. Meyers, May, 25, 1886.

from modern times. Scenic lookouts were one of many advertiser techniques to appeal to urbanites.

One of the earlier advertising campaigns was to name the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad line as the “Fishing Line.” Attempting to lure fisherman to the region, the activity advertised itself as an activity of rejuvenation. The fishing in Northern Michigan was characterized as far superior to urban areas where canal dredging and industrial activity wore down fish populations. Many rivers and lakes of the Northern vacationland were seemingly untouched by modern world ideals that in turn, meant very large fish populations. Trout, grayling, black bass, perch, pickerel, pike were all celebrated fish aimed to be caught by avid and casual fishermen alike. Advertisements, however, constructed the meaning of rejuvenation and relaxation. Rejuvenation was advertised as not separate from work, but rather, work put towards restorative means. Fishing, as discussed in advertisements, required a certain level of work. One advertisement notes, “The brook trout, the most endeared member of the finny tribe to the heart of the angler, is found here in abundance and strings of speckled beauties reward fishermen for a day’s labor in this vicinity.”¹²¹ The participants did not completely remove themselves from modern world, but rather partook in a primitive form of labor that required skill and mastering in order to catch the celebrated fish. Hunting also was advertised much like fishing, and connected urbanites to a primitive practice of labor. Not shunning the modern worlds amenities, urbanites could connect to the ancient practice of hunting by collecting an abundance of deer, bear, small game, and pigeons.¹²²

¹²¹ *Petoskey: Queen City of the North* (Petoskey: Petoskey Record, 1908).

¹²² *Summer resorts and waters of northern Michigan: reached via Grand Rapids & Indiana R.R., the Fishing Line* (Chicago: Poole Bros, 1885).

A celebration of primitivism, or nostalgia for a vanishing frontier, was the main theme seen through the activities in which urbanites could experience while vacationing in northern Michigan. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company regularly presented Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* with employed Ojibway Indians. This emphasis was to connect urbanites with a romanticized and primitive environment. One Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad pamphlet read:

Here at Yawaygamug, the native Ojibway Indian actors will give their play of 'Hiawatha' in the very place where Ojibway of the old days camped when it blew hard on the Great Lakes; here he could always get a deer, a bass, or a doré, a favorite food of his; here he had suitable soil and climate for his corn, beans, and potatoes; here grew the bark for his canoe covering, the cedar, and all the roots necessary for its construction; here his innate love for the beautiful was satisfied... His self respect is immeasurably increased – increased commensurately with the respect shown by the white man for the Indian whom he sees transformed into a beautifully attired being... telling us of hygienic practices and exercises to which we must return if we would not become physically degenerate.¹²³

The play *Hiawatha* offered more to viewers than entertainment. Despite the fact the play was set at Lake Superior's Pictured Rocks, tourists did not see a disconnect with the performance in Little Traverse Bay. For tourists, this was a similar North to what Schoolcraft had described decades before. Advertisers preached of the moral lessons urbanites could learn from natives portrayed in the play and found in the North.

The landscape of Northern Michigan was actively advertised as mythical environment often linked with Indian narratives. Performance of Native American stories was not unique to the late nineteenth century. Historian Richard White has demonstrated the greater cultural fascination with the frontier mythology, especially in the Midwest. At the same time Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 frontier thesis was presented in Chicago, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and*

¹²³ *The Indian Play of Hiawatha at Ya-way-ga-mug near Petoskey, Michigan* (Grand Rapids: The Dean-Hicks Printing Co., 1905).

Congress of Rough Riders of the World could be found nearby. Americans were enamored with the frontier and it was seen as a critical narrative in the American experience. Although farmers conquered Turner's frontier and cowboys conquered Buffalo Bill's frontier, both saw the frontier as an important narrative in American identity. In addition, both saw themselves as historians telling important narratives. Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* was unique to the frontier experience in that it did not focus on white pioneers pushing the Great Lakes natives from their homelands. There was little violent contest like what could be seen in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* showing Americans as victors, but a spectator would experience the same passage of time demonstrated in the frontier narrative. The *Song of Hiawatha* ends when the black robes arrive to Hiawatha's village marking the end of an era. As the spectators of the *Song of Hiawatha* play watched Hiawatha sail west telling his village to heed the message of the black robes, viewers would have been familiar and receptive to conquered frontier theme.¹²⁴

Urbanites did not abandon their convictions about the conveniences of a modern world. However the traditions and practices were synonymous to the perceived beauty of the landscape. Following the conclusion of the performance spectators could partake in activities that included fishing, canoeing, and swimming taught by local native groups residing near Crooked Lake.¹²⁵ The *Song of Hiawatha* and the desire to partake in restorative activities helped build the imagined place of the North.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Richard White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," in *The Frontier in American Culture: An Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994-January 7, 1995* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 7-65.

¹²⁵ *The Indian Play of Hiawatha at Ya-way-ga-mug near Petoskey, Michigan* (Grand Rapids: The Dean-Hicks Printing Co., 1905).

¹²⁶ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* also examines the rise of primitivism as moral lessons of balancing civilized life with manly endeavors. Natives were seen as less civilized however,

The link between literature, tourism, and the perceptions of environment demonstrate how a natural landscape's definition transforms to fit the needs and desires of a larger American audience. Advertisers created a link between cultural anxieties about modernity and a natural environment changing its definition in accordance with the preferences of those vacationing in the North. Although companies such as the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Company did not first build their line to attract urbanites north, but to extract resources from previously remote areas, the rise of tourism resulted from both the business decisions of steamship and rail companies and the demand from urbanites to escape the stresses of a new and industrialized world. Throughout the nineteenth century the environment of North transformed itself into a cultural idea associated with certain landscapes. North was more than a place, it was an idea.

Gilded Age Tourism both offers insights into growing business models but also the ways in which the natural environment was defined and used. The industrial world, even with the amenities and economic growth that benefitted a growing economy, brought new stress and uncertainty to nineteenth century Americans. Rail and steamship companies advertised to the growing concerns of urbanites. Northern Michigan landscapes, once deemed remote and wild, took on restorative attributes to heal hay fever, neurasthenia, and other anxious disorders.

One advertisement perfectly embodies the way in which the North was packaged to urbanites looking to leave the city:

Besides the agreeable climate on reaching Mackinac, there is the new sensation to one who has not before enjoyed the novelty of an insular life, of having found an island retreat. To his jaded sensibilities all around him is fresh, a feeling of security comes over him, and when, from the rocky battlements of the fort, he looks down at the surrounding

their culture and environmental practices were embraced for primitive practices that man was encouraged to balance as part of the crisis of modernity.

waters, they seem a bulwark of defense against the host of annoyances from which he has sought refuge.¹²⁷

As seen in the above advertisement, the waters of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are defined beyond their natural qualities, and come to mean something quite different. The lakes were advertised as a defense against a modern world, a definition that reflected the needs of travelers of the uncertain industrial world they left. Attempting to understand the reasons why urbanites vacationed to Northern Michigan provides insights into larger cultural understandings of environment and the perception of landscapes. Northern Michigan vacationland was built and advertised to appeal to the anxious Americans suffering from modernity. The Northern Michigan landscape, in the minds of Gilded Age Americans, offered more than an abundance of natural resources for exploitation. Rather, the environment transformed in definition to represent the cultural ideals of those choosing to vacate to the North. Through written advertisements, north resembled more than specific geographic areas. The idea of North grew to a cultural perception of environmental qualities in the last half of the nineteenth centuries that blended ecology, health, native mythology, and leisure that imprinted a definition on the largely imagined North of the Great Lakes region.

¹²⁷ Detroit and Cleveland Steam Navigation Company, *Hunting and fishing resorts of the Great Lakes via picturesque Mackinac* (Buffalo: N.Y Matthews & Northrup Co., 1887).

CONCLUSION

Continuing the Culture of North

As the twentieth century began, the tradition of visitors from Chicago, Indianapolis, and other Midwest cities traveling to the Upper Great lakes region had been solidified in the summer time months. The idea of North, for those visitors, meant a region defined by amenities of natural space, landscapes desired for their health benefits, and an imagined mythic history that celebrated and defined the space as North. North had transcended a geographical direction and turned into a cultural idea. When visitors arrived by train in Petoskey, Michigan, they were looking for a certain experience that had been crafted to appeal to all the stresses associated with their urban areas.

A boy began traveled to the Petoskey region after his father, a doctor in the Chicago area, sought refuge from an ailment similar to neurasthenia. His father had bought a piece of land on Walloon Lake just south of Petoskey. The family spent summers in Northern Michigan, like so many from the larger cities had been accustomed to do. As an adolescent, the north was a place of inspiration and imagination for the young boy. Summers were filled with fishing, hunting, reading, writing, and regular work on the small family farm. Because of the efforts of travel brochures, ideas of medicine, and the cultural practices that attempted to define this space as “North,” Ernest Hemingway, as a boy, was inundated with a unique landscape in an increasingly modern world.¹²⁸ His first publication as an author featured a collection of stories entitled “Up in Michigan.”¹²⁹ This work exposed larger themes relating to gender, American Indians, and the

¹²⁸ Ron Berman, “Hemingway’s Michigan Landscapes,” *The Hemingway Review* 27, no. 1 (Fall 2007), 39-40.

¹²⁹ Michael R. Federspiel, *Picturing Hemingway’s Michigan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 121-179.

celebrated environments of Northern Michigan. The themes found within Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad tourist pamphlets were not only successful in drawing urbanites to the region, but had directed the larger cultural identification of this region. North, in the Great Lakes region, was not a direction but a cultural expectation that blended these larger themes together to create one imagined landscape of pristine nature.

Like layers of time, North began as an area remote and removed from the goals of an expanding America. Schoolcraft defined the North as a barren landscape unsuitable for large-scale habitation. Despite the opportunities in timber and mineral wealth, Schoolcraft still viewed North as wilderness. However as railroads and canals made the North more accessible, the same landscapes that had once been scorned for their remote nature and low possibility for settlement were seen less as obstacles and were increasingly more valued for their remote setting.

In this sense, North can be argued as a space very similar to the narrative of the wilderness mentality in American history. As mentioned before, Roderick Frasier Nash's classic text *Wilderness and the American Mind* demonstrates how wilderness grows from feared landscape to celebrated environment through the duration of American history. Wilderness, for Nash, was battled, conquered, and nearly eliminated.¹³⁰ As technology closed the frontier, a new appreciation or nostalgia was identified in the wilderness. Wilderness grew to be protected, visited, and sought out. Such sentiments certainly rang true in the Great Lakes region throughout American history. One pioneer recalled settling in Michigan as a frightful experience, "the whole country was in the possession of a strange and savage people, who would naturally regard the new-comers as not entitled to a friendly welcome; with abundant leisure, always armed, and with

¹³⁰ Nash, 346.

sagacity enough sagacity to know that the incomers were at their mercy.”¹³¹ Wilderness existed as a feared space for much of the Great Lakes region during early nineteenth-century settlement. Wilderness was feared and battled to bring productive agricultural lands into use. As the meaning of North shifted, nineteenth century environments were valued for more than their agricultural value.

As Schoolcraft pointed out, however, North was not included as a landscape sought out by nineteenth century farmers. Not until mining and lumbering became advantageous ventures did the North take on worth. Small farmers did not benefit from the new value; rather, the resources were it was diligently extracted for the profits of large industry. Unlike wilderness, a concept that is solely valued by rural natures and a lack of development, North cannot escape the presence and history of human interaction. Wilderness, as an idea, requires natural landscapes that have been seemingly untouched by the American experience. North, as an idea, is more nuanced than a simple idea of natural ecologies. It is contingent on the history, rural towns, and industrial remnants that allow tourists to visit and stay comfortably in an environment that is more of a reflection of human value than ecological reality. The culture of North was well established before the larger American effort to preserve lands and forests from human interaction.

Historians have tracked the role of conservation at the beginning of the twentieth century in regards to the cutover forests of the Great Lakes region. As conservation grew at the dawn of the twentieth century, there was an increased focus on protecting the landscapes that had previously been exposed to the larger economic goals of a developing nation. Through the efforts

¹³¹ Hon. Alonzo Sessions, in *Memorials of the Grand River Valley*, ed. Franklin Everett and Earl W. De La Vergene (Chicago: The Chicago Legal News Company, 1878), 61.

of major characters such as Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt, politicians, scientists, and scholars alike sought to protect and conserve American forests. For the Great Lakes region, the northern forests were, by far, the most sought after regions to introduce this new environmental policy.¹³²

The tourist culture perhaps encouraged the specific focus to restructure the natural world of the North. Historian Aaron Shapiro has argued the direct link between conservation and tourism in the early twentieth century. Proponents of forestry in the Great Lakes region believed the development of new forests in the North would encourage tourists to continue to reach regions previously unassociated with tourism. As Michigan's logging and copper industry diminished in the early twentieth century, a new market took the place of larger extractive communities. The Upper Peninsula Development Bureau was formed to redefine the stretch of land that Schoolcraft had once seen as barren. After logging and mining had dwindled, the need to redefine this space had caused developers to repurpose lands similar to tourist towns such as Petoskey. Drawing on the cultural definitions that had been placed on the North in the previous decades, promoters of the newly forested Upper Peninsula had created a new advertising campaign that effectively named the landscape "The Land of Hiawatha."¹³³

After copper and virgin pine had been cleared developers were faced to recreate Michigan's western Upper Peninsula. The advertisement campaign known as *Clover-Land* attempted repurpose the cutover land as well suited agricultural land. One advertisement noted:

¹³² Aaron Shapiro, *The Lure of the North Woods: Cultivating Tourism in the Upper Midwest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 43-72; Timothy Bawden, "Reinventing the Frontier: Tourism, Nature, and Environmental Change in Northern Wisconsin, 1880-1930," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2001).

¹³³ Allen Dyer Shaffmaster, *Hunting in the Land of Hiawatha* (Chicago: M. A. Donohue and Company, 1904).

The natural resources of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are so abundant, particularly in her supply of copper, iron ore and lumber, that the business of farming has been neglected, and the farmer in the Upper Peninsula has not received the justice due him in the industrial classification. Nevertheless the natural advantages that present themselves to the farmer everywhere are many.¹³⁴

Despite the attempts of the Upper Peninsula Development Bureau to paint the region in new light, retain the population, and restore an economic cornerstone, the realities of landscape made this campaign overwhelmingly unsuccessful. Towards the end of the *Clover-Land* campaign, advertisements resembled tourist pamphlets than typical development booster propaganda. One pamphlet advertised Marquette County as, “an abiding place of contentment; health, pleasure, and opportunity beckon from every hill-top.”¹³⁵ Developers used the ecological assumptions tourist advertisers had utilized to define the climates of North in the previous decades to encourage settlement in the cutover region.

Cutover regions were also the site of the massive conservation and reforestation efforts. The northern portions of the Great Lakes were the primary sites of reforestation. The new forests of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula were planned to fit the needs of those at the time. Therefore their growth represented a shift in environmental policy, but also the cultural beliefs that forests and wilderness were essential to the American landscape. The northern stretches of the Great Lakes region were ideally suited for this environmental project both for their rural setting and ease of acquisition; however, the idea of North most likely played a critical factor in creating a new wilderness. Scholar Jim Kates articulates that the efforts to create a new wilderness in the North

¹³⁴ The Upper Peninsula Development Bureau, “The JM Longyear Plan for Bringing Highest Type of Farmers to Clover-Land,” *Clover-Land* (Menominee, MI), January 1916.

¹³⁵ Kathleen Carney, “Why is Marquette County a Good Place in Which to Live?,” *Cloverland Magazine* (Menominee, MI), October 1921.

were not local endeavors championed and driven by local populations. Rather it was a formulated plan from those who imagined North as an idea:

Because the money, political clout, and knowledge involved in remaking the forest lay in the cities and the universities, the new woodlands landscape would come to reflect the desires and dreams of the more cosmopolitan population.¹³⁶

The idea of North drove scholars and politicians to make a new planned wilderness.

Elements of Schoolcraft's earliest observations about the North remain in the of the Great Lakes region today. His imagination, directed by the environments and experiences he first encountered in 1820 and developed as an Indian agent, have been repackaged and interpreted based on larger cultural beliefs. Schoolcraft's choice to record certain aspects of the North inspired a slightly different definition in Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*. Across the American landscape Schoolcraft and Longfellow's imaginations have led to the naming of several forests, towns, parks, and iconic geographies. As historian Jared Farmer indicated about place names, Indianist names such as Hiawatha (that can be found over 100 different locations in twenty-nine states) and Minnehana (with over 60 locations in twenty six states) all represented the impact and desire to connect with an Indian mythology in a space.¹³⁷ The names Hiawatha and Minnehana along with other characters names from Longfellow's poem such as Osseo, Nokomis, Wabasso, and Wenonah dot the American landscape, most of which exist in the Great Lakes region.¹³⁸ The place names indicate an attempt to connect to the history of the landscape, but more realistically, the effort represents an attempt to connect with a certain imagined, cultural landscape.

¹³⁶ Jim Kates, *Planning a Wilderness: Regenerating the Great Lakes Cutover Region* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 162.

¹³⁷ Farmer, 253.

¹³⁸ Virgil J. Vogel, "Placenames from Longfellow's 'Song of Hiawatha,'" *Names* 39 (September 1991).

The idea of North began with Henry Schoolcraft who came to terms with a wilderness he had not encountered before. As he wrote about the qualities of the landscape and those native groups that inhabited them he created the early foundations of what North would represent at the dawn of twentieth century. As technology increased, distant environments fundamentally changed in definition. The North Schoolcraft called remote, was now a larger space that was celebrated for its natural wealth and restorative attributes. Even today, advertisements call urban populations to vacation North. Cities such as Traverse City, Petoskey, Mackinac City, Sault Ste Marie, Marquette, and Houghton, all attempt to attract those who believe in the idea of North to travel and spend money and visit. As the mining and lumber industries are shadows of what they once were, tapping into the culture of North brings money and jobs even if for a season.¹³⁹ North was, and is, an idea more so than any specific place. Although based in certain environmental ideas, North blends environmental and cultural expectation to create a completely imagined space.

¹³⁹ Sherrill E. Grace in *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007) demonstrates that there is a significance difference between those who define North and those inhabit the North. This dichotomy of perception can lead to disputes over land ownership, land use, and political disagreements.

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