



Frances E. Andrews – A Lasting Legacy

Editor's Note: The previous two issues of this newsletter have featured pieces on Frances Elizabeth Andrews. We learned about her family and her early life, including their connections to Barnum Island near Isle Royale. Born in 1884, Frances graduated from Oberlin College in 1906. We learned about her mother, Mary Hunt Andrews, and how her early death affected Frances. Frances Andrews met Ernest Oberholtzer about 1928, and their friendship and correspondence was a lifelong practice for both of them. In the last issue, we learned more about how Frances loved the Front House on Mallard Island and how she continued her support of Ober and his advocacy work.

Frances and Ober remained friends until her death in the summer of 1961. Five years earlier, Frances had purchased the piece of land that she called "Wildcroft," on Bancroft Bay (now Frank's Bay). She renovated a home there, with a second story that was labeled "Ober's" on the blueprints. As usual, Ober had other ideas. He instead purchased another old houseboat at auction and, with the help of several of his Ojibwe friends, moved it to the shoreline of Wildcroft. Once it was up on land, he had Charlie Friday build a second story and a stone fireplace. He then dubbed his new home the "Frigate Friday" in honor of Charlie, and set about building a small duck pond and garden. Among the things that Ober and Frances had in common were their unwavering efforts to grow their own food and to make a little money at it if possible.

Frances had been experimenting with all sorts of agricultural enterprises at her property near Sarona, Wisconsin. Inherited from her father, the land had been both a working farm and a lovely stretch of timber and wetland. She experimented with various crops, sheep, ducks and even looked at uses of acorns as income for the land. In 1954, she deeded the 300 acre "Hunt Hill" to the National Audubon Society as a teacher's camp and bird refuge. During this same time, her family's long-time summer retreat on Barnum Island was becoming part the Isle Royale National Park. She and her father had supported development of the park, but they had believed that the families that had commercial fishing interests on the islands should be able to remain and continue to fish. Frances spent many hours writing letters and personally visiting park personnel, but in the end, they were not allowed to stay.

She was also interested in the Ojibwe families living in Grand Portage. Again, Frances schemed to find economic opportunities to keep them on their land and preserve their way of life. She donated the funds to rebuild the dock at Grand Portage, believing that it was critical to the lives of the people in that community. She and Ober were both very opposed to the road going through Grand Portage, especially if it impacted Mount Josephine in any way.

A strong, deep attachment to the land and wilderness motivated Frances Andrews, and she was willing to spend her resources, both time and money, to preserve the places she loved. She also understood business and politics, and kept her mind sharp and organized. Ober very much admired her organizational skills, and he often commented that she could get more done than any person he knew. *(continued on page six)*

In the words of Ernest Oberholtzer...

[The Quetico Superior policies] contemplate setting aside the border lakes and streams from Rainy Lake east to Lake Superior together with their tributaries in both countries and maintaining them inviolate for all time for the health and delight of the people of both countries.

We are in a period of profound transition. New values are emerging. New human satisfactions must be provided. Health and happiness depend only in part on man-made goods.

It is no time to apologize, to speak in whispers. The hour has come to call out in ringing tones. Our young people will be the final answer. The same spirit... will command its universities of the wilderness.

[written ca. 1932-35]

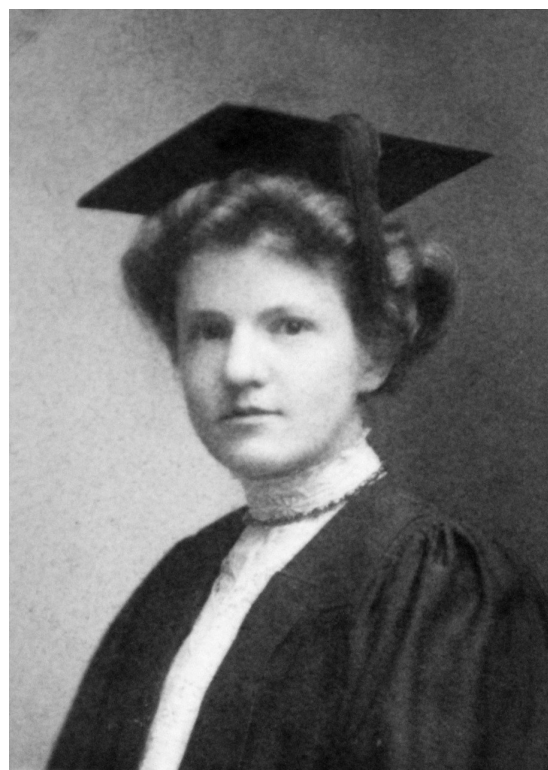


Photo Courtesy of the MN Historical Society

Dear Readers,

Wintertime is busy in Excelsior, at the “world headquarters” of the E. C. Oberholtzer Foundation. The Foundation has several very active board members and they and I chip away at the organizational stuff that is so necessary behind the scenes. Budgets and taxes, just like at home! (Other more “fun” stuff, too!)

Mallard Island offers us three seasons each year. There is the season of design and desire—a hopeful season based on ideas, commitments, names and promises. Then there is the experiential season of wind and water—usually a very interesting playing out of hopes on the rocky paths of an 1,100 foot island. At the end of each year, there is the season of remembering—colorful memories peel off in the form of songs and photographs, stories, laughter, new friendships, the common aha-realization of what it means to be near to the wilderness or a new lover of the wild.

I'd like to say that in 2014 we had only one of those three seasons, but in truth we did get all three, it is just that they didn't roll out “as expected.” We had that big normal season of design, and then a sorrowful truncated season of experience. However, more carpenters experienced Mallard Island than ever before! And our season of remembering is adorned with a powerful 8-minute video that has brought tears and laughter. It was quite a year, to be sure.

If you read my “Lessons” piece (page -3-), you'll know that I crave the deeper conversations about how the flood of 2014 affects us, changes our culture, and causes new commitments. All of that learning will carry on person by person, inevitably. Yet here we go round again-- a hundred-plus island-goers are eager to greet the island again this summer, and I know they will find the place in good shape. My gratitude to each and every: board, new staff, caretakers, volunteers and donors, for helping this summer come true.

- Beth Waterhouse

New Island Leadership in 2015

By Beth Waterhouse

I am happy to announce that this summer we welcome the time and talents of two new *summer program directors*.

Mairi Doerr and **Prudence Johnson** will be sharing a newly created position to add strength to the caretaking on Mallard and to ensure that two caretakers are present on the island each week.

For several years, there have been many details for one person's mind and ten weeks for one part-time position, and it has become clear to me and to the board of directors that we're smart to broaden the staffing picture. I will be on the island for a few weeks while I retain my role as Executive Director, and I'll be more available so that communications in the summer months will be easier for everyone.

... New Leadership ...

Mairi Doerr first visited Mallard ten years ago and she has added her energy to several program weeks and maintenance projects ever since. Though her own summer of 2015 is a busy one, her enthusiasm for the island prompted her to apply for this part-time position. Mairi says, “I am delighted to serve the Foundation in this new capacity. My head, heart, and hands will offer you my best!” Mairi's “best” includes a clear grasp of the maintenance and repairs needed on the islands.

Prudence Johnson is a newly trained Mallard caretaker and a highly competent person, thankfully also attracted to this position. She writes, “History has always had a strong pull on me; it has been the focus of my academic studies and a great deal of my extracurricular reading, and for several years I've put most of my artistic energies into creating works that present historical subjects as entertainment.” Though Prudence does not take this on as a musician, one might likely hear the chords of her ukulele and her voice around a campfire or two.

Each of these individuals will absolutely grace the week/s they focus on in the summer of 2015. Our thanks to them both!



MALLARD ISLAND

THE OBERHOLTZER FOUNDATION

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF
OBER'S NORTH WOODS LEGACY AS A SOURCE
OF INSPIRATION, RENEWAL, AND CONNECTION
TO THE NATURAL WORLD

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www.eober.org

Please think about adding the Oberholtzer Foundation to your estate planning. This is one way to make a lasting difference. We can also and will gladly accept stock donations. To learn more about Ernest Oberholtzer, his stories or his islands, visit the Internet at www.eober.org

Lessons from a Flood (so far...)

The world of the 1990s still witnessed storm as act of god or anomaly, as something beyond human power, as something rare. We are maturing, coming to realize a few things, yet still without a clue about how to change the dominant culture—how to turn the CO2 ship. We, as a people, are caught between knowing and acting. Meanwhile, post-flood of 2014, our relationship with Mallard Island must now also mature, I believe, and be a little more honest. Dreams of the island can live boldly but might now be seated in reality, each group with the right boots on, able to coalesce as a group and act together if necessary. I come to know the rocky island as something vulnerable rather than magically protected, and we now all may take an even larger part in its protection and care. After a winter of thinking back on the flood experience as well as five beautiful flood restoration weeks, here are some thoughts.

- Beth E. Waterhouse

Lessons from the Rainy Lake flood of 2014:

The flood was in no way “rational.” We were out of control. This could teach us about our vulnerability both on a narrow spit of rock and on a mid-sized blue green planet. It brings us to our knees in a new kind of humility. Our voices go quiet; we hear ourselves whisper—in unison—“teach us.” We gain receptivity, if only for a short while. Make the most of it.

Rock is archaic, immortal, and vulnerable. My favorite huge and split glacial erratic stood on the east shore of Fawn Island. This year it split completely, and the north half fell into the lake. We are now witnessing things in geologic time.

Mallard as a human construct, as Oberholtzer’s legacy in pianos and books, in photographs or gardens and cedar buildings, is in human-time; it is ephemeral.

The island has a “bodhichitta,” a soft spot at the heart of itself. This is the low center of the island. And this low, direct access to the water is one of its greatest beauties. Perhaps that vulnerability (suggests Pema Chodron) is what offers us connection—a doorway to others. Are we all learning new ideas about resilience?

One strength on Mallard Island in Ober’s day was community. Recall how he fed any who showed up at the dock, how he would loan a cabin to a family for months at a time, how he welcomed friends and fed them even before he’d ask again, please, for their names! This sense of community still exists; it is perhaps the strongest part of his legacy that lives on, and we should boldly foster it.

Community is where knowledge is pooled, where the group knows more than the individual, where all skills are welcome and a diversity of skills is best, and where life-skills such as working with wood or stone, leather, tools, food, and even soul-basics such as music are of great value. Mallard can teach us more about all this.

One of the least in the factors of our wealth on Mallard Island is our money.

Those who come to Mallard Island need to come just a tad more prepared, not just wearing pretty sandals and a sun dress or carrying that valuable guitar, but with good solid shoes that could climb over a downed jack pine in the path if necessary. “Did we mention rain gear?” We might now assume a little more reality and take nothing for granted.

The flood-affected region around Rainy River and Rainy Lake called this an “episode;” urbanites or environmentalists call it the beginning of a trend. Time will tell, but we might well prepare for both. What does *climate change* mean for us?

Poor water quality is equally as big an issue as flooding, in Rainy Lake’s future.

We might all ask “what if?” What if this flood could be an opening to a new part of our mission as a community or as an organization toward a new understanding of the lessons of Mallard Island? Where does indigenous wisdom fit into Ober’s legacy and the history of his island home?

Mallard Island reaches back in time and thus forward in time. It gives young and old alike a sense of security or faith in that a flood also could heal us, heal our fears even of ourselves. New conversations around the wannigan table will be welcome.



Mallard Island Summer of 2015

Barring unusual weather or water levels, this is the listing of plans and dreams that will come true this year. An extra July work week was added this year, due to the flood and many repair needs last year. Quotes here are from the program hosts.

May 24-30 First Work Week – The focus is on general repairs, overall spring cleaning, and completing the flood restoration work on Cedarbark House.

May 31 – June 6 Gardening Work Week – focus is a continuation of carpentry efforts and island perennial gardens. May be some bird banding going on.

June 7-13 Oberholtzer Opera Workshop II – Bill Beckstrand, host and composer. An opera about Ober's life? Yes, the libretto is now being written by David Walsh, and compositions are coming together. It'll be grand.

June 14-20 Readers' Book Work Week – Book care volunteers will at last begin again on inventory, small repairs, and annual cleaning of 1/3 of Ober's book collection on Mallard Island. They find time to read and share their favorites.

June 21-27 Eco-Artists Week – hosted by Kate Casanova. This group of visual artists, musicians and writers share an interest in nature, place and collaboration. Their time on the island will result in both individual and collaborative works that are interdisciplinary and process oriented.

June 28 to July 4 Ojibwe Language Week – hosted by Pebaamibines (Dennis) Jones, an Ojibwe teacher, and great-grandson of Tay-da-pa-swe-wi-tang (Billy Magee). The group is working on Ojibwe language projects and also takes time to feast the spirit-keepers of the island. Time for work, ceremony and reflection.

July 5-11 REST WEEK ONE – to include tree trimming on Mallard Island

July 12-18 Third Work Week – One major focus may at last be on the re-siding of Ober's Big House, for which cedar was procured last spring.



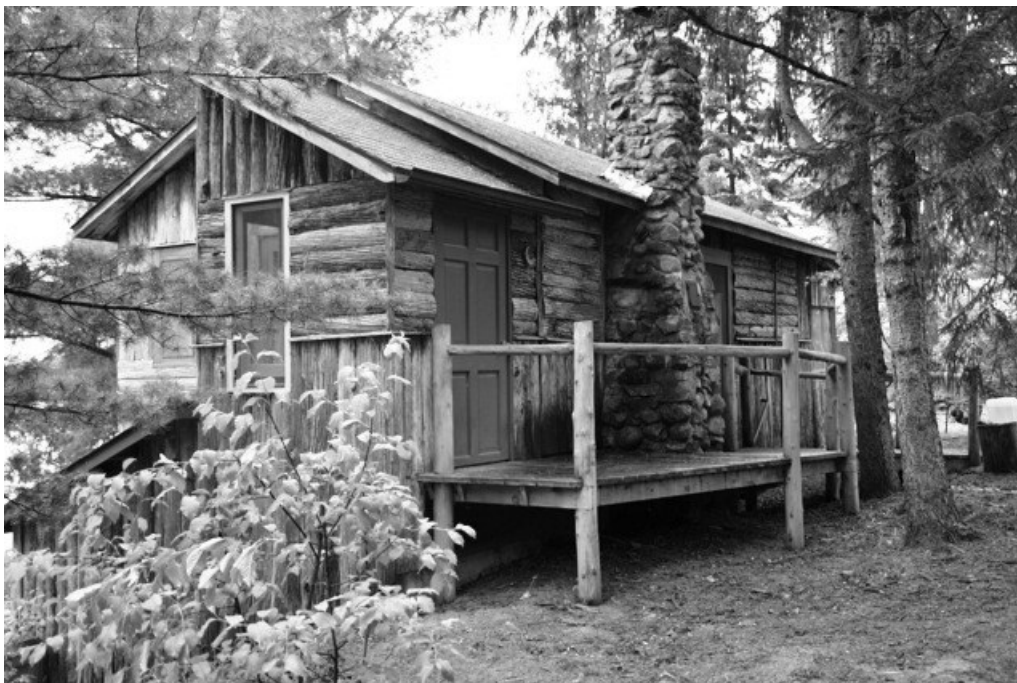
New cedar stairs installed on Cook's House by David Donisch and Michael Reid, late May 2014.

Photo by Peggy Anne Smith



Bill Forsyth and Tom Balcom replace the channel side screen on the Library, June 2014.

Winter House.
Photo by Peggy
Anne Smith,
early June 2014.



July 19-25 Creative Collaborators – hosted by Yata Peinovich and Jean Accola. Folks bring a wide range of artistic disciplines, and they will be co-creating during the week. “Our objective is to bring people together to navigate new streams of learning and inspiration in music, art, storytelling and photography.”

July 26 to Aug 1 Songwriting week will focus on songs connected to the natural world. Voluntary workshops will allow musicians to share ideas and develop lyrical images. "The mystery that is Mallard is the catalyst that allows creativity to flow freely for each artist and for the group as a whole." Host: Tony Rongstad

August 2-8 MN Screenwriters Week – hosted by Daniel Laurence. Accomplished screenwriters will again work together on current projects and collaborate to support each other’s screenplays. “Facilitated by our 2013 week on the island, and for almost two years, we have collaborated, strategized, provided editing, and supported each others’ writing and goals in this field of work.”

August 9-15 Science and Art: A Collaborative Conversation on Mallard. Hosted by Kathryn Kysar and Michael Walsh. Musicians, visual artists, and writers will be in conversation with environmentalists, biologists, and scientists to build collaborative understanding of earth-related issues.

August 16-22 REST WEEK TWO – a time to rest the island ecology.

August 23-29 Readers & Writers - This week provides an opportunity for writers to pursue their individual writing goals and projects surrounded by the beauty and magic that is Mallard Island. Inspiration and support are offered by the group during informal daytime or evening discussions. Host: Stephen Wilbers

August 30-Sept 5 Individual Artists and Special Projects Week – hosted by the Oberholtzer Foundation. Artists bring a body of work; special projects use the archives. This summer, the group includes five whose focus is photography, a videographer, a writer, a watercolor painter, and a children’s book illustrator working with oil pastels.

September: Stay tuned for possible island tour days the week of September 6-10. There will also be a planning meeting of the Oberholtzer Foundation board of directors and a proposed week of forestry work mid-month.

Email: beth@eober.org for possible openings in the July work week or to be put on a waiting list for several of the weeks listed above.

(Continued from page one)

In the end, she made one last trip to her beloved Rainy Lake. She had been ill for several years with congestive heart failure, but wrote that she would arrive at Wildcroft in a day or two— on July 21st, 1961. She did arrive but went straight to the hospital in International Falls, where she died on July 23rd.

In her will, Frances provided for the people she loved and the organizations that she believed in. Notably, she left the National Audubon Society \$100,000; Ober \$55,000; the Minneapolis Art Institute \$50,000; The American Association for the United Nations, \$10,000; Planned Parenthood Federation, \$20,000; Nature Conservancy, \$25,000; Quetico Superior Council, \$10,000 and YMCA, \$12,500, as well as other organizations. The will states that Sarah Bosworth Jones, her only surviving relative, received her personal effects and family jewelry along with \$8,000.

In addition, Frances had already generously set up scholarship programs at her alma mater, Oberlin College, and several study-abroad scholarships at other universities. The Minneapolis Foundation still gives grants that originated with the generosity of Frances E. Andrews.

A decade prior, back in 1950, Oberholtzer had worked with Frances and William Hapgood so that Frances might purchase Deer Island (Grassy) to keep it from being developed. After Frances' death, Deer Island was in Ober's care, and he soon donated it to the Camping and Education Foundation, who owns it today and maintains it as a wild island.

In summary, I am so thankful that my life story has crossed paths with that of Frances Andrews, and that I've been able to travel back in time to walk along with her for awhile. I've learned much about generosity and how to shape the future—with vision, persistence, skill and the use of one's resources. Thank you, Frances Elizabeth Andrews!

All three parts of this tribute were written by Mary Swalla Holmes.



Photo courtesy of the Oberholtzer Foundation and the MN Historical Society, taken by Roy Watts.

Frances E. Andrews

Building Endowment Fund

A second anonymous gift has more than doubled the principal now held in this fund as a way to ensure Mallard Island repair and maintenance dollars for future years. Our unbounded thanks to the donor for this generous addition to the fund, now at over \$40,000. It is so appropriate, reading of the generosity of Frances Andrews in Ober's day, for this to be created at this time and in her name.



To Contact Us:

The E. C. Oberholtzer Foundation is located in Excelsior, Minnesota (55331) at 818 3rd Ave, #305. Phone (952) 401-0591. Best email address is < beth@eober.org >. On facebook, enter "Mallard Island in Rainy Lake." Our annual budget for 2015 is projected to be close to \$130,000 and individual donations will support an important percentage of that budget.

Thank you!

The Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation Board of Directors includes: Jim Fitzpatrick, president; Mary Swalla Holmes, vice-president; Tim Heinle, treasurer; Peggy Anne Smith, secretary. Beth Waterhouse serves as executive director. Board Members At Large: Jim Davis, Bob Hilke, Pebaamibines (Dennis) Jones, Charlie Kelly, Robin Monahan, Michael Reid, Jean Sanford Replinger, John Roth, Harry Sweatt, Diane Tessari and Elaine Thrune. *Emeritus Members:* Marne Monahan d., Gene Ritchie Monahan d., Ted Hall d., Charles A. Kelly (assistant treasurer), Delores De Laittre d., Joe Paddock (Ober's biographer) and Douglas Wood. Honorary member: Ray Anderson d.

Dear Friends,

When one thinks back to the summer of 2014 on Rainy Lake, the flood is the main image that surfaces right away. Yes, we had our challenges with high water and forceful winds on the Oberholtzer Islands.

Yet, after all the unusual activity that lasted eight weeks, we were able to accomplish a lot. We had good professional help, amazing volunteer assistance, and that extra lift from all of you. Thanks so much for standing by us as we worked through some of our biggest headaches. Yes, it is so helpful to have someone hold your hand as you traverse a difficult trail.

We still have some hills to climb as we look toward next summer. We want to get back into Cedarbark House (ready it for visitors again). We have several rock walls needing mortar, and the normal maintenance and repairs are competing for the top of the list. All in all, we are confident that the Oberholtzer Islands will be in good shape when we start the summer programs.

Financially, we had a good year in 2014—so many of you stepped forward to help us. Our people, our friends, and a determined spirit lead us “over the tough portage.” So many people put their muscles to the tasks, working together. As an old friend once told me, “Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me that we may be as one.”

Thanks again for all your extra support. We could not have made this progress without your help. All your efforts are so very much appreciated.

Adopt the pace of Nature; her secret is patience.

Tim Heinle

Gifts in Honor or Memory of...

An island such as Mallard Island and a legacy such as Oberholtzer’s legacy tend to attract generosity in honor of others. The following donors wished to designate their 2014 gifts to friends or family as follows:

Michael L. Anderson in memory of Leo Sheridan Anderson
Sarah Gruner in memory of Mary Hilke
Suzanne Hanson in memory of Janet Pearson
Pamela Joern in memory of Janet Pearson
Gary L. Johnson in memory of Janet Pearson
Patrick Lutter in memory of Janet Pearson
Joe and Nancy Paddock in memory of Nancy’s sister, Janet Pearson
Sheree L. Peterson in honor of Jean Sanford Replinger
John Roth in memory of Stephanie Prem
Romaine Scharlemann in memory of Janet Pearson
Martha Schlenk in memory of Janet Pearson
Shirley Scott in memory of Janet Pearson
Trina Sleper in memory of Ruth R. Anderson
Paul Van Gorp in honor of Joe Paddock
Beth Waterhouse and Don Maronde in memory of Janet Pearson.





MALLARD ISLAND

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Leap of Faith

Our turtle rises in a new rush, up from below.
Unearthly power in the waters today,
Pouring down from the North.

Soon Turtle is lifted into coves
Unexplored in recent years.
She looks down on loon's ledge, otter's den.

Now swimming over rocks and walls,
she has but a short scramble
Up onto her favorite nest of grass,
Here, on this slim and rocky island,
in front of this small brown wooden building,
She digs, drops eggs into shallow soil.

Turtle normally tumbles six feet
Head over tail over shell
Falling to the water's surface.

Normally, this leap takes a little faith.

This summer, it's a simple thing...

On this unusual June day,

Turtle slips easily off rock into level blue water

She swims off, lighter,
unencumbered.

(BEW 2014)

Photo by John Ratzloff who has this to say -- "I plan to continue my photography on White Earth Nation and with The Steger Wilderness Center, and I plan to make portraits of enemies of indifference until I die."



Mother snapping turtle shows up on or about June 24th each year in front of the Library on Mallard Island