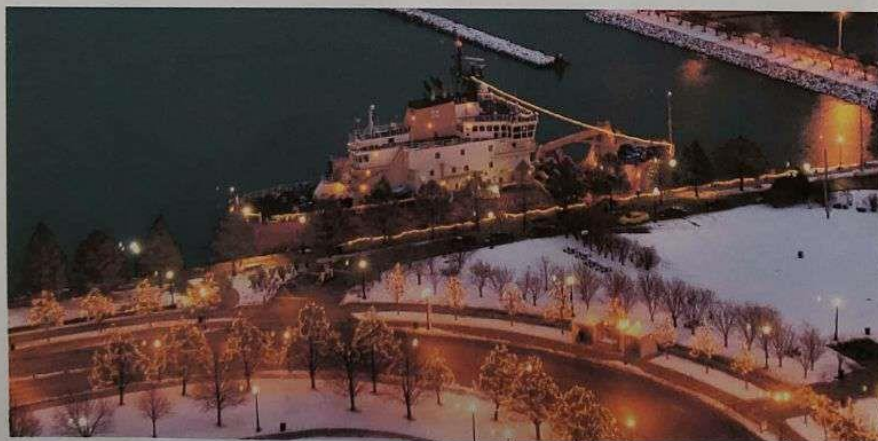


*Christmas Trees  
from Thompson  
to Chicago  
December 5 & 6, 2008  
Navy Pier  
Book 1*



*U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mackinaw docked at Navy Pier, Chicago  
December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
(Photo by Chicago's Christmas Ship Committee)*

### Chicago's Christmas Ship

Chicago's Christmas Ship was founded in 2000 by a group of mariners coming from commercial, recreational and military fields who wanted to do something special—give Christmas trees to disadvantaged families who would not otherwise be able to have a Christmas tree. A committee was formed to do just that, acting as an activity of the Navy League.

Participating Organizations are: \*Chicago Council, Navy League of the United States, \*Chicago Marine Heritage Society, \*Chicago Yachting Association, \*Friends of the Marine Community, \*International Shipmasters Association, \*United States Coast Guard, \*United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, \*Navy Pier, \*Army Corps of Engineers, \*Helicopter & Marine Unit, Chicago Police Dept, \*Chicago Fire Dept, \*Ada S. McKinley Community Services, & \*Sea Scouts of America.

100% of the donated funds are used to provide Christmas trees to deserving, less fortunate and disadvantaged families through the Ada S. McKinley Community Services and other third party independently selected charities. No other use of the funds is allowed and no one receives any compensation. Since its beginning, the Committee has raised funds that allowed it to give away over 10,000 trees.

These were our initial contacts with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Chicago Christmas Ship Committee.

Captain George Lisner would remain as our main point of contact and was on board the *Mackinaw* for the voyage from Cheboygan to Chicago. During the trip, he removed boughs from the branches of the trees on deck and fashioned two wreaths from the greens. As the *Mackinaw* passed over the wreckage site of the *Rouse Simmons*, the crew laid one of the wreaths at sea and performed a ceremony. The other wreath was proudly displayed on the *Mackinaw*.

Commander John Little finished his duty on board the *Mackinaw* early in 2008, however, he did keep in touch with us and shared our information with the new Commander, Captain Scott J. Smith.

Ms. Jasmin,

First off allow me to apologize for my tardy response.

By all means Chicago's Christmas Ship Committee is interested in your participation in our annual event. Any trees that would come from Thompson would be given special acknowledgement as such and would be earmark for special use. We have a formal ceremony where three families who are chosen to represent all recipient families are presented with trees. This could be an ideal way to spotlight trees from Thompson. There are also trees that are decorated flanking the barding area of the ship and at places of honor on the ship.

Further, I would appreciate incorporating historical information from your perspective into our educational outreach curriculum. Recommendations on accessing any local resources would also be helpful. I would also be interested in any other ideas you may have.

We look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me at any time at home 847-297-0755 or my cell 312-405-0755.

Sincerely,

CAPT George Lisner  
Chairman, Executive Committee  
Chicago's Christmas Ship  
1284 Prairie Avenue



Laurie,

If you get a chance for a photo of the Marker site today please send me a copy?

I'm so moved by all you have going regarding this occasion that I can't find much to say. What a tribute, and learning experience for children. Just when you think this is ancient history we have pirates in the real world. This ought to be a lesson for the sailors on the Cutter too. Since the Commandant of the Coast Guard is from Tucson I'm going to write him a note today and fill him in on the true meaning of all this and their part to make it a success.

My health continues to stay good however my wife has had some problems which, fortunately, have seemingly passed. We have many more good days than the alternative.

More to come ...

Tom

**THOMAS L. NOLAN, JR., EDD.**

12222 N. WHITLOCK CANYON DR.  
TUCSON, AZ 85733  
520.797.2034  
DRTomNolan@Comcast.net

Admiral Thad W. Allen  
Commandant US Coast Guard  
Coast Guard Headquarters  
2100 Second Street, SW,  
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Allen,

Tuesday, November 25, 2008 will likely be 'just another day' for the U. S. Coast Guard but one thing they are doing that day will make memories for many citizens of Thompson, MI. In commemoration of the last annual voyage of the Christmas Tree Ship 96 years ago, the Cutter Mackinaw will load 24 trees on at Cheboygan, MI and deliver them to Navy pier in Chicago. To quote from the Chair of the Thompson Historical Marker Committee,

*Each tree was sponsored by a local family in the Thompson area and we have designed special cards that will be placed on each tree telling about the family who sent it. These trees will be given to needful families in the Chicago area. Our committee will be traveling to Navy Pier and spending three days in Chicago to celebrate.*

Saturday, November 22, 2008 was another special day for this occasion and the Chair sent the following message:

*I just wanted to remind you all that ninety-six years ago today, Captain Herman Schuenemann and his crew left the harbor at Thompson for his final voyage of Christmas trees to Chicago. Christmas wreaths have been placed at the site by Dad, so for those of you who are local, take a drive down to the site. As you look out at the lake, try to imagine what the view was like so many years ago.*

I have had involvement with the story of the Christmas Tree Ship since the 1970's and know first hand the meaning of these current events to the people of the greater Thompson area. My personal thanks to you and to the men and women of the U. S. Coast Guard for making history real and helping mark this occasion.

Sincerely,



And the Fun Begins.....

Our first stop on November 16th was at the Klaus home. Karen, a Christmas tree ship enthusiast since the beginning, had generously donated trees from the field behind her home. Although most were too tall to use, we managed to find 5 that were just right. Volunteers on hand were Char & Dan Crosby, Pam & Don Zorn, Dan LaFoille, Rick Toncray, Laurie & Dale Jasmin, & Deanna Fish. As you can see from the photos, rifle season had begun so plenty of orange clothing was necessary!

We had the typical U.P. weather but it was perfect for what we were doing.

Top Left: Dale & Karen  
Middle: Don & Rick do the heavy work



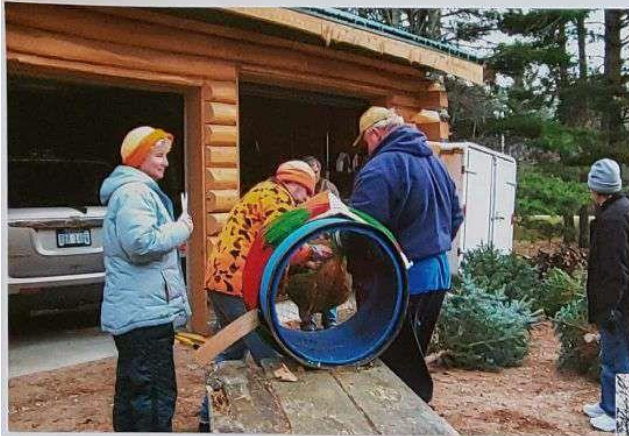
Next stop was just down the road at the Phil Hartman property. The trees were magnificent! We had tagged the trees several weeks before so with two chainsaws cutting and the rest of the crew hauling, we were done in no time. Dan & Char pruned many of the trees before they were loaded onto the trailer.





What a great crew we had! Luckily, everyone came prepared and drove their truck! By the time we cut the last tree, we had a full trailer and three full trucks. In less than one hour, we had cut and pruned 21 trees, loaded them and we were on our way to Pam & Don's to get them ready for shipping.





Pam was able to get the netting needed to wrap the trees and Dan LaFolle came up with a unique way to bind the trees. With a half barrel anchored to an old picnic table, the netting fit over the outside and as the trees were sent through trunk first, the netting bound the tree neatly. It was a close call with a couple of the larger trees but we managed to pull them all through. A little twine at the top and the job was done.





On November 23rd, only two days before the trip to Cheboygan to deliver the trees, we finished up the last details. Each tree was being delivered with a metal bell ornament that read, "A Thompson Tree—2008" along with a laminated sponsorship card from an area family. Pam & Laurie tied the bells and cards to each tree and then Don loaded them on the trailer. Next stop.....USCGC Mackinaw!





# Pioneer Tribune

The voice of the Central U.P. since 1876

ctions, 12 pages

Manistique, Michigan

Thursday, December 4, 2008

## History comes alive

### Schoolcraft County Christmas trees once again sailing south to Chicago

by Paul Olson

For the first time in 96 years, a load of Christmas trees from Schoolcraft County is on the way to families in Chicago. The project, more than three years in the making, is a collaboration between the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee and local residents, a charitable effort called Chicago's Christmas Ship and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The trees - two dozen of them in all, from Cooks and Thompson - were taken to Cheboygan last week, where they were loaded with about 1,200 other trees aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Mackinaw. The vessel sailed this week for Chicago, where its special seasonal cargo will eventually be distributed to families in need.

The project recalls the story of the Rouse Simmons, the famed "Christmas Tree Ship" that sailed from Thompson Harbor in 1912 with a load of holiday trees for Chicago, only to go down with all hands during a violent Lake Michigan storm.

The resemblance is intentional, of course - the latest effort by the historical committee to highlight the link between the ill-fated schooner and the Thompson area.

Established in 2005 to preserve the history of the town-



Two dozen Schoolcraft County Christmas trees are loaded aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Mackinaw at Cheboygan last week. On Monday, the trees left for a journey through the Straits of Mackinac and down Lake Michigan to Chicago - the first trees from the Thompson area to be transported to the Windy City in 96 years. (Submitted photo)

ship, the committee's first project was securing a state historic marker for the local Lake Michigan access site. The marker, installed and dedicated two years ago, details township history on one side and the story of the Rouse Simmons on the other.

Committee projects for 2007 included the installation of additional historic displays at the site. The group then wrapped up the year by hosting drama students from the Gwinn schools, who staged a presentation of "The Christmas Schooner," a musical based on

the Rouse Simmons tale.

While all of that work was going on, members were also pursuing another idea, hoping

## Trees

Continued A6

## Trees

Continued from A1

to reestablish the annual shipment of trees to Chicago that was begun by Simmons' Captain Herman Schuenemann and his brother, August - and continued by Herman's wife and daughters for a number of years after his death.

Committee member Laurie Jasmin began investigating the possibility after learning about Chicago's Christmas Ship, a nonprofit volunteer project launched in 2000 by members of the Illinois maritime community. Each year that committee raises money to buy trees from the northern Lower Peninsula, which are brought to Chicago aboard the Mackinaw and distributed to families that could not otherwise afford them.

As part of their work, the group also honors the history of the Schuenemann family and the old-time Christmas tree trade on Lake Michigan, making it a natural fit for the historical committee's own goals, Jasmin thought.

She spent several years sending e-mail messages to Coast Guard officials but didn't have much luck until last December, when she finally made contact with the right person - the captain of the Mackinaw. She also got in touch with Capt. George Lisner of Chicago's Christmas Ship. Both received packets of information about the Thompson committee and what they had in mind.

"That planted the seed," Jasmin says. "They were both

really excited by the idea."

The parties spent much of the past year planning via e-mail, while Historical Committee members began searching for trees, putting out inquiries and posting a notice on their Web site.

The search yielded an offer of tree donations from Karen Klaus of Cooks, an enthusiastic support of the committee ever since the historic marker dedication.

Unfortunately, Jasmin says, many of the trees Klaus had available were too large, but she referred them to Phillip Hartman of Cooks, who donated a number of trees, as did George and Deanna Fish of Thompson.

The 24 trees were cut several weeks ago by a group of volunteers that included Jasmin and her husband, Dale, Char and Dan Crosby, Pam and Don Zorn, Deanna Fish, Dan LaFolle and Rick Toncray.

The trees were bundled using a barrel that was creatively turned into an improvised netting device, stored for a short time, then taken to Cheboygan Nov. 23, where they were hand-carried onto the deck of the waiting Coast Guard cutter.

At every step along the way, the Schoolcraft County trees will be distinguished from the 1,200 or so others that are part of this year's Christmas Ship campaign.

According to Jasmin, the Chicago committee is designating each of their trees as an "official" tree, and the Thompson group will be given special recognition for their donation.

The Historical Committee is

also taking steps to make sure their trees stand out. Each was decked out with a special bell ornament and a card recognizing a local family, business or organization that agreed to sponsor that particular tree.

Jasmin says they asked sponsors for a \$10 donation to cover the committee's gas and mileage costs, but some contributed more.

The sponsors were selected based on their ties to the community.

"Most are connected to Thompson or the historical committee," Jasmin explains.

The cards that go with each tree include a picture, a brief family or business history, and contact information.

"We're encouraging the people who receive the trees to get in touch with the sponsor, so the sponsors can let us know where each tree ended up," Jasmin says. "We don't really know how many of the people will do it, but we're hoping to hear from as many as possible."

Historical Committee members felt like honored guests at last week's tree delivery, as they were treated to a tour of the Mackinaw and lunch aboard the cutter with Cmdr. Scott J. Smith.

But that was only the beginning. The group will also be recognized at ceremonies in Chicago this week.

An eight-member contingent left Schoolcraft County today (Thursday), heading for the Windy City. The group was slated to include committee members Jasmin, Wnuk, Zorn and Fish, along with Klaus, Gloria Handl, Beth Malloch and Shirley Leitgeb.

They are expected to arrive in Chicago tonight, after stops at Algoma, Wis., the birthplace of Herman Schuenemann, the fishing museum at Two Rivers, Wis., where they will see the recovered wheel of the Rouse Simmons, and Milwaukee, to see the schooner's anchor.

On Friday morning, they will be on hand at Navy Pier when the Mackinaw arrives, escorted by fire and police boats and welcomed by the Chicago Military Academy Band.

There will be a VIP reception later in the day, but first, committee members will be

taking part in presentations for Chicago school children on board the Mackinaw. The group will provide information about the Rouse Simmons and present a gift bag to each child, including an Upper Peninsula pine cone ornament and a Christmas Ship pencil.

Saturday will bring the official ceremonies for the 2008 Christmas Ship project. Highlights will include a memorial wreath presentation and a Coast Guard flyover, plus various speeches and tributes.

Finally, the trees will be unloaded from the cutter. Most will go to families through an organized distribution network, but some will be presented to selected "poster families" during the ceremony.

At that point, Jasmin says, the U.P. trees will once again be in the spotlight, as they are showcased during the presentation.

The local group will head back north on Sunday, but first they hope to visit the Great Lakes office of the National Archives, to view Christmas Ship information housed in the collection there.

Jasmin says they also want to spend time with several other people who will be in Chicago for the festivities, long-time supporters of the Thompson Committee and its work, including author Rochelle Pennington and the Ehling family - William Ehling, who is Herman Schuenemann's grandson, and Barbara Ehling, the captain's great-granddaughter.

Once back in the U.P., committee members will turn their attention to next year.

Jasmin says they want to make the tree distribution an annual event.

"This is a really great project, and we want to keep it going," she says. "It's a great way to highlight our history and all of Schoolcraft County. We're excited about it."

Looking farther ahead, Jasmin says the committee is already making plans to mark a historic anniversary.

"This is the first time in 96 years that trees from our area are being distributed in Chicago," she says. "In four years, it will be the 100th anniversary, and we thought it would be great to get 100 trees on the boat."

Paul Olson, Editor of the Pioneer Tribune has been a great supporter of our projects since the beginning and this article and editorial really did make our committee proud. We can't thank him enough for all that he has done for us over the past 4 years.

## EDITORIAL

### *Impressive work, important lessons*

At first glance it appears to be just another human interest story, one of those articles that makes you smile and say, "Hey, that's kind of neat." But this week's story about the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee is also a reminder of what one small group of volunteers has accomplished in a relatively short amount of time, how much they are doing to promote not just their area but Schoolcraft County and Upper Michigan as a whole.

Community promotion may not have been the committee's original goal, but it's surely been one of the most immediate benefits of the group's historic-preservation efforts. In fact, the organization has proven remarkably adept at finding projects that do both things at once, that showcase the heritage of a single tiny, rural township while simultaneously letting the wider world know a bit more about this particular corner of the U.P.

The committee's work so far is just the beginning. They are clearly determined never to rest on their laurels, to always be looking ahead to the next year, the next project. But for just a moment let's pause, take a breath, and look back at what they have already done.

In just a few short years, the committee has reclaimed this area's link to the famous Christmas Ship, a connection that was often ignored and all but forgotten by folks outside the county. They've recorded the histories of local families and businesses. They've established contacts with state and national historical officials. They've developed impressive marketing materials. They've built a remarkable community asset at the Lake

Michigan access site, with plans for still more improvements to come. They've enhanced the arts in the community by bringing in a large-scale musical production. And now they're spreading their particular gospel even farther afield, taking part in a project that not only does worthwhile charitable work but will have the name "Thompson" on the lips of many Chicago residents - people to whom the Upper Peninsula previously seemed remote, as far away as the dark side of the moon.

The way the committee is handling the Christmas tree project is representative of the way they've carried out almost all of their work so far. Find a project and focus on it. Plan it well, do it right, don't be afraid to add a touch of class to what you do, go the extra mile and offer something a little bigger and better than people expect, and never miss the opportunity to promote and teach, to let others know about Schoolcraft County, its role in history and its current status as a great place to visit.

Yes, the story of local Christmas trees sailing down Lake Michigan for the first time in almost a century is definitely a great human interest story. But it's also proof of what can be done if you have a well-defined mission, the ability to set goals and stick to them, a little energy, a lot of creativity, a knack for rallying community support, and the fearlessness to press on past challenges and obstacles.

Everyone who lives and works in Schoolcraft County owes a nod of gratitude to the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee. More than that, we can all learn some valuable lessons from them.

SPONSOR FAMILIES—2008

Wayne & Shirley Stanley, In Memory of Osborne Stanley family (\$10.00)  
Eris Webb & Winnie Blake, In Memory of Squires family (\$50.00)  
Charlene Turek & Family, In Memory of Cecil Johnson family (\$100.00)  
Rose LaPlante, In Memory of the LaPlante & Fitzgerald family (\$15.00)  
Ernie Hoholik, In Memory of the Hoholik family (\$10.00)  
Joseph VanDyck, In Memory of the VanDyck family (\$20.00)  
Robert "Butch" Hedberg, In Memory of the Sellman family (\$20.00)  
George & Deanna Fish, In Memory of the Gierke family (Trees)  
Tom & Bob Carlson, In Memory of the Strom family (\$10.00)  
Sara Bradley & Family, In Memory of Hassel & Georgia Osterhout (\$20.00)  
Barb Lofquist & Family, In Memory of the Hursh & Schneider family (\$10.00)  
Fred & Kathy Jasmin, In Memory of the Chesbrough family (\$10.00)  
Fred & Barb Hinkson, In Memory of the Hinkson family (\$25.00)  
Ron & Pauline Frans, In Memory of the Frans family (\$50.00)  
Dan & Donna LaFoille (\$85.50)  
Jody & Meg Wnuk (\$50.00)  
Don & Pam Zorn (\$40.00)  
Dan & Char Crosby (\$40.00)  
Terry & Valerie Baker, The Thompson Outpost (\$10.00)  
Randy & Theresa Lund (\$50.00)  
Mike & Lisa Boudreau (\$25.00)  
Karen Klaus (Trees)  
Gloria Haindl (\$10.00)  
Gulliver Historical Society, Seul Choix Lighthouse (\$10.00)  
Philip Hartman & Family—21 Magnificent Trees!  
Donations also received from the following: Doyle Township (\$10.00)  
Rick Stram (\$20.00); Anita Fagan (\$25.00)

In the following pages, I have included a reduced copy of each one of the sponsor cards for the 24 trees. The opposite page has the front and back cover that was generic to each card.

We tried to include historical photos whenever possible and except for a very few, the families all had direct ties to the Thompson area, the Historical Committee or the Thompson Township Board.

The cards were laminated and tied to each tree prior to being loaded onto the *USCGC Mackinaw*.

## *Christmas Tree Memories*

Among the Yuletide cargo aboard the United States Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw* this holiday season are authentic woodland Christmas trees harvested from the area around Thompson, Michigan. Thompson is the very place in the Upper Peninsula where Captain Herman Schuenemann last loaded evergreens and boughs aboard his schooner, the *Rouse Simmons*, for his final run of the season nearly 100 years ago. This last trip of the year was a favorite of the Captain's because of the joy it brought to the citizenry of Chicago.

Once again, such trees will grace the spirit of a Chicago Christmas. Cut and delivered to the ship by descendants of Captain Schuenemann's Thompson friends, these beautiful spruce trees have grown naturally in the wild. They are reminiscent of the traditional Christmas trees of olden times. Just as the deck of the *Rouse Simmons* was laden with thousands of Christmas trees, the deck of the *Mackinaw* carries a few rare and authentic Christmas trees in honor and memory of "Captain Santa" and the "Christmas Tree Ship."

*Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
Thompson, Michigan*

*The Front Cover of the Sponsor Card  
was Designed and Written*

*by  
Char Crosby*

Thompson Historical  
Advisory Committee

Wayne Stanley

Laurie Jasmin

Meg Wnuk

Pam Zorn

Charlene Crosby

Deanna Fish

Robyn McLeod

December 5th & 6th, 2008

Navy Pier

Chicago, IL

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
Terry & Valerie Baker Owners  
The Thompson Outpost*

Thompson was once a bustling town complete with a lumber mill, boarding house, post office, general store, churches, saloons, and wooden sidewalks. Today it is a quiet village with very little remaining to remind you of the old town and if your not paying close attention as you drive down the highway, you may just miss this beautiful spot on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Our country store was built soon after the highway was dedicated in 1936. We now call it the Thompson Outpost, and it is the longest continuing commercial business in Thompson. Although it has changed ownership and its name many times over the past seventy years, it has managed to keep its original charm, complete with the cobblestone exterior. Many of the local residents who grew up in Thompson remember coming into the store as children and seeing penny candy lined up on the counter in big glass jars or buying a glass bottle of ice cold pop for a dime. For several years, it served as the local post office.

We still offer everything from real ice cream cones to hunting and fishing licenses, groceries, gas and a friendly smile as you walk through the door.

If you ever find yourself traveling through the Upper Peninsula or would like to visit the Last Port of Call for the Christmas Tree Ship, be sure to stop at our store and say hello,

*We wish your family a  
Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year!*



Grant's Modern Tourist Court"

This photo was taken in 1953 and was made into a postcard. All of the cabins are gone except for three. The cabins were a popular place to stay for the salmon fishermen and deer hunters.

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Mr. & Mrs. Terry Baker, 8895W Hwy US2, Manistique, MI 49854.

**B  
A  
K  
E  
R**

**B  
O  
U  
D  
R  
E  
A  
U**

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Boudreau Family*

Thompson is a small, rural community and little remains of the old lumbering town of a century ago. Today it is a beautiful place to live and a great area to vacation. My husband and I purchased our first and only home in Thompson Township.

I became a member of the Thompson Township Board in 1999 and have found it to be an interesting and rewarding experience. The Thompson Historical Advisory Committee has worked very hard to rekindle the story of the Christmas Tree Ship and Thompson as the schooner's last port of call before tragically sinking in a winter storm laden with thousands of Christmas trees bound for Chicago. We applaud their many accomplishments.

We hope you enjoy the evergreen tree that was freshly cut for Christmas from the forests around Thompson in an effort to carry on the tradition begun by Captain Herman Schuenemann in the 1880's.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year  
From Our Family to Yours!*

*Mike, Lisa, Jabeh, Hannah & Lily Boudreau*



The photo above is the Grass Lake School, one of eight rustic one-room schoolhouses in Thompson Township during its heyday many years ago. The teacher in the picture was Mary Larson, and Grass Lake School was her first teaching job. Although no longer standing, this schoolhouse was located just down the road from where our home is today.

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Boudreau, 10293W Flodin Road, Manis-

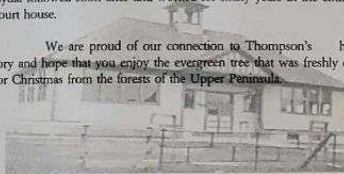
*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Carlson Family*

In 1870, Mathias & Brita Lovisa Strom immigrated from Norway to Thompson, Michigan. After settling in the area, they had two children, Mathias Jr. and Lydia. Both children were attending Thompson School in 1897, as shown on the school roster (opposite page)

In researching historical records, it appears that the family was civic minded and involved in local politics. Matt Jr. was identified as the Thompson Township Clerk from 1909 to 1911 and then as Treasurer in 1915 & 1916. His sister, Lydia, was recorded as being the Treasurer in 1921 & 1924.

Matt Jr. married Signe Carlson in 1932, moved to the neighboring town of Manistique where they raised their family. Lydia followed soon after and worked for many years in the county court house.

We are proud of our connection to Thompson's history and hope that you enjoy the evergreen tree that was freshly cut for Christmas from the forests of the Upper Peninsula.



Above: School Roster from 1897  
Photo at left is of the Thompson School in 1897. This school still stands today but has been turned into a residential home.

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Mr. Tom Carlson, 112 East Elk, Manistique, MI 49854

**C  
A  
R  
L  
S  
O  
N**

**C  
R  
O  
S  
B  
Y**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Daniel & Char Crosby*

Christmas Greetings from Thompson, Michigan - the last port of call for Captain Schuenemann's "Christmas Tree Ship." The *Rouse Simmons*, better known as the "Christmas Tree Ship" by Chicagoans in the late 1800's, was a wooden three-masted sailing schooner. Every November thousands of Christmas trees from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan were loaded aboard the ship so the citizens of Chicago could enjoy a festive holiday.

My husband and I are so pleased to be a part of this tradition once again. We live on the beautiful north shore of Lake Michigan in the very area where the captain's friends cut evergreens for the yuletide voyage. We retired and settled here after enjoying many summers in the land up above. "Up above" is a term local people use to describe where they live - up above the Mackinaw Bridge, as opposed to "down below" in the lower peninsula of Michigan.

Thompson, once a busy lumber town and harbor, is now a small village with a very big heart. The natural beauty of forests, lakes, rivers, creeks and beaches abounds with a great variety of wildlife - deer, bears, coyotes, wolves, bald eagles, fish and other small game.

We hope your Christmas tree is as special to you as it is to us. It grew naturally in the woods near Thompson. We chose and cut it ourselves as part of the Thompson Historical Advisory Board. It made the same trip down Lake Michigan to Chicago as Christmas trees did a hundred years ago. May it help make your Christmas merry and bright!

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Crosby, 3256S Whitecaps Trail, Manistique, MI



As you can see from the photo, wildlife was not always completely wild. Thompson residents lived close to nature and sometimes made friends with bears and deer.

Photo of Miles O. Stanley. Miles was a locksmith by trade and his father Osborne supplied meat to the crew aboard the *Rouse Simmons*. His son, Wayne Stanley is an active member of the Thompson Historical Committee.

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Fitzgerald & LaPlante Families*

My late husband, Robert (Bob) LaPlante was a Diplomatic Courier for the United States and would have been proud to be sponsoring this authentic Christmas tree from the forests of the Upper Peninsula.

Bob's grandfather, Edward Fitzgerald, moved to Thompson with his wife Nan around 1894 and they had three children (Myrtle, Zada & James). Myrtle married Mr. George LaPlante and they in turn had five children (Nan, Margaret, Robert (Bob), Edward & James).

After a very distinguished career and during the writing of his memoirs, Bob built a log cabin on Thompson Harbor and resided there until his death with his wife Rose Marie. This land was part of the original homesteaded property and was known as "Swede Town" in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The docks where the schooners would pull up to were just a short walk away and the ships would have sailed right by the cabin.

Thompson is a small, rural community and little remains of the old lumbering town but it is a beautiful place to live and a great area to vacation in.

If you ever find yourself in our neck of the woods, please stop to visit "The Last Port of Call for The Historic Christmas Tree Ship".

*Merry Christmas!  
In Memory of Robert "Bob" LaPlante  
By Rose Marie LaPlante*



This photo was taken from the end of our boardwalk at our home. In the late 1800's to early 1900's, you would have been looking directly at the mill and docks and it would have been a very busy place.

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:

Rose LaPlante, P.O. Box 34, Manistique, MI 49854

L  
A  
P  
L  
A  
N  
T  
E

F  
R  
A  
N  
S

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
Ron & Pauline Frans*

In 1975, we moved our family to Manistique, Michigan where we could be close to family & friends in the Upper Peninsula. We owned and operated our own business, Rainbow's End which was also located in Manistique. Selling everything from soup to nuts, it quickly became a favorite place to shop!

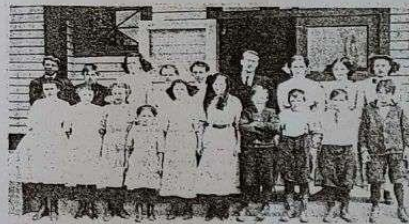
In 1984, we purchased a home in Thompson Township and because we loved the area so much, we decided to acquire additional property. In 2001, our business in Manistique was destroyed by fire and out of the ashes came a new beginning. In 2002, we brought our business "home" to Thompson and Pauline's Rainbow's End has been thriving ever since.

We are proud to be part of Thompson and to support the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee in its endeavor to bring the Christmas trees to Chicago as the Rouse Simmons did ninety-six years ago.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!  
Ron & Pauline Frans  
Pauline's Rainbow's End*

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:

Mr. & Mrs. Ron Frans, 1590S Ivan Carlson Road, Manistique, MI



Although hard to see, this old photograph was a school picture taken in the early 1900's. In the back row is Charles Frans Jr. (first on left) and Hilda Frans (second from right).



The photo at left is the Swedish Lutheran Church which was located in Swedetown, so named because the Swedish people all settled in the same area. Our family arrived in Thompson and settled in this area which was just a stone throw from the docks.

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
George & Dianne Fish Family*

My husband and I live in Thompson just about one mile from the original village which was bustling with activity in the late 1800's to early 1900's. I have been a member of the Thompson Historical Advisory Committee since it was formed in 2005 and have deep ties to Thompson Township.

My grandfather, Frank Gierke, owned the local barbershop in the Village. When he purchased the shop, the barber chair was obsolete and he decided to purchase a new one but the chair would cost about \$90.00. Eager to impress his customers but wondering how to finance the chair, young Frank went across the street to the meat market and discussed this major purchase with Mr. Hruska.

At a regular township board meeting on November 30th, 1915, Frank was permitted to operate a pool table in Thompson for a period of one year. This was the first pool table in the area.

Thompson is a small, rural community and little remains of the old lumbering town but it is a beautiful place to live and a great area to vacation in.

If you ever find yourself in our neck of the woods, please stop to visit "The Last Port of Call for The Historic Christmas Tree Ship".

*Merry Christmas!  
In Memory of  
Frank Gierke*



If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Mr. & Mrs. George Fish, 18205 Little Harbor Road, Manistique, MI

**F  
I  
S  
H**

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
The Haindl Family*

My family is pleased to sponsor a Christmas tree in memory of our ancestors who left Europe to make a new life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

As an elementary school teacher, I have been teaching the story of the *Christmas Tree Ship* since 1985. For many years before that, I would watch our local paper each November for articles to add to my collection of stories about Captain Schuenemann and his famous schooner. When I had enough information, I added this wonderful story to my social studies curriculum.

This tree is dedicated to our family's ancestors; the Ekstrom's, Haindl's, Pawley's and Popour's. They immigrated from Sweden, Germany, England, and France. In Michigan's Upper Peninsula, they become ship and bicycle builders, loggers, store owners, and farmers. They left loved ones behind in Europe in order to make a better life for themselves and future generations to come. We are forever grateful.

*Happy Holidays  
to You All  
From  
The Haindl Family*



The photo above of Indian River is just a glimpse of the beautiful scenery in the Upper Peninsula. The river flows to Indian Lake, which is the fourth largest in the State of Michigan.

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Gloria Haindl, 147N Popour Road, Cooks, Michigan 49817

**H  
A  
I  
N  
D  
L**



*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Hinkson Family*

Our grandfather, Chancey M.B. Hinkson, was a resident of Thompson and a saw filer for the local lumber Mill. He and his wife, Selina, married in 1891. Chancey & Selina had four children, one of whom is our father, Fred Chancey Hinkson, born in 1892.

Known by the nickname "Hinky", he was interviewed for the documentary, "The Christmas Tree Ship", which was produced after the anchor of the *Rouse Simmons* was found in the early 1970's. He remembered the way the Captain would pile the deck high with the freshly cut evergreens. He was down by the docks when the trees were loaded for the last time and was astounded by how high the trees were stacked on deck. When asked if he thought the ship was overloaded in the film, he replied "Yah, I believe it."

Today, ninety-six years after Captain Herman Schuenemann left Thompson Harbor, this story will come full circle as trees from the forests of the Upper Peninsula finally arrive in Chicago once again.

Our family is happy to be a part of this wonderful tradition and hope that your family will enjoy a blessed and peaceful Christmas Season.

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Mr. Fred Hinkson, 103 Arbutus Avenue, Manistique, MI 49854

*Merry Christmas!  
In Memory of our Parents  
Fred & Irene Hinkson*



(Top) Irene & Fred Hinkson (second & third from left) with Friends in Thompson, MI  
(Bottom) Fred & Irene in later years



**H  
I  
N  
K  
S  
O  
N**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
The Hoholik Family*

The Hoholik family has lived in Thompson Township for almost a century. They settled about two miles north of the harbor and operated several farms providing produce, meat and eventually dairy products to the local population.

Ernest, better known as Ernie, is the son of Joseph M. Hoholik and was born in Thompson in 1924. Ernie's childhood was spent working on the family dairy farm. One of his chores was to walk the herd of cows to and from the Thompson plains where they grazed. Later, as the dairy operation expanded, he drove a milk truck delivering bottled milk throughout the county.

Ernie's strong belief in his community led him to become Thompson Township Supervisor and later a Schoolcraft County Commissioner. After serving the community for 32 years he retired from elective office, although he still sits on several advisory boards.

While Ernie is very proud of his service to the community, he is most proud of the fact that he is the oldest Thompson born resident

*The Hoholik Family  
with you a  
Blessed Holiday Season!*



The photo above was the St. Frederick Catholic Church and was built in the early 1900's. The local lumber company provided clear white maple for the entire floor of the church. The priests, Father Cebul and Father LaForest, traveled by horse from Manistique on Saturday afternoons and would stay with local parishioners overnight in their homes. After serving the village for many years, the building was obtained by Joseph Hoholik who moved it to his family farm. The sacristy is still standing today and has been donated back to the historical committee.

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:  
Mr. Ernie Hoholik, 709S State Hwy. M149, Manistique, MI

**H  
O  
H  
O  
L  
I  
K**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
Barbara Lofquist & Family  
In Memory of their Grandparents  
Joseph & Blanche Hursh  
& their Parents  
Paul & Zita Schneider*

Our grandparents, Joe Hursh and Blanche (Paquin) Hursh were both descendants of early Thompson families. They married in the early 1900's (photo at right was taken for their wedding day) and had four children, Edward, Noel, Earl & Zita. They homesteaded and raised their children not far from the Hursh family farm and later moved a short distance away to the Flodin Road where they lived for the remainder of their lives.

Our mother, Zita, married Paul Schneider in 1947 and raised five daughters and one son. They, too, made their home on the Flodin Road just around the corner from where Zita's parents lived. Paul & Zita lived there until their deaths in 2004 and 2005. Their daughter Jane built a home near them and still lives there today.

The Hursh and Paquin family were very active in township government, and many of their descendants still live in Thompson today. Joe worked in the woods and local lumber mill, so we would assume that he, too, was involved in some small way with the trees that were loaded on the ill fated *Rouse Simmons*.

We hope that your family has a peaceful and happy holiday season. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Barbara Lofquist, 1703N Kendall Road, Manistique, MI 49854

**H  
U  
R  
S  
H**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
Fred & Kathy Jasmin  
In Memory of  
The A.M. Chesbrough Family*

Abram Chesbrough was a prominent businessman and owner of the lumber mill in Thompson during the early 1900's. He owned most of the land in the village until around 1925 when he sold the mill and retired. The site where the *Rouse Simmons* once docked in front of the lumber mill was later sold by the Chesbrough family to the State of Michigan. Although now it is only vacant land, at the height of the lumbering boom in Thompson, this was the main street in the village. The lumber company office was combined in the same building as the post office and general store.

A coupon book is pictured at the right. Working men were paid in cash and coupons which could be used to purchase supplies from the general store. Local newspaper articles of the time noted that the coupons were a deterrent to excessive drinking by the lumbermen because they were *not* redeemable at the local saloons.

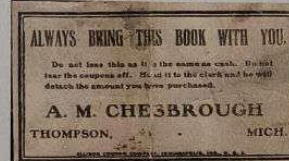
The house that we purchased in the early 1980's in the village was once owned by the Long's, another prominent family in Thompson. Adeline Long was the secretary of Mr. Chesbrough and she resided here with her brother Ed and sister, Mathilda. This original Thompson dwelling that is now our home, is one of the few remaining original buildings in the village.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas this holiday season and hope that you enjoy your tree every bit as much as we have enjoyed being a part of this project.

Fred & Kathy Jasmin



FRONT COVER OF COUPON BOOK



REAR COVER OF COUPON BOOK

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Jasmin  
8896W Main Street, Manistique, MI 49854

**J  
A  
S  
M  
I  
N**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
Karen Klaus*

For the past three years, I have been participating in the local revival of the story of the *Christmas Tree Ship* and have worked along side the Thompson Historical Committee with each of their projects. It has truly been a great adventure.

History is many times forgotten, and my way of passing this on to my children and grandchildren will be through the donation of several of these authentic trees harvested from the land surrounding my home near Thompson. Over the years, I have trimmed the trees the best that I could, and I am so pleased that this labor of love is now a part of your holiday season.

As you celebrate Christmas, I send my very best and hope that you enjoy this personally selected tree from the beautiful Upper Peninsula. Captain Schuenemann was a friend to many families in our community, and we are sure that he would be proud to have these trees once again traveling to the great city of Chicago!

*Merry Christmas  
From My House  
To Yours -  
Karen Klaus & Family*



Historical photo of  
Barbara  
Schuenemann

Barbara and her three daughters proudly carried on this family tradition for many years after the *Rouse Simmons* went missing.

Like her husband, she was always a welcome guest in homes at Thompson and Manistique.

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Karen Klaus 1097N Co. Rd. 437, Cooks, Michigan 49817

**K  
L  
A  
U  
S**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Dan & Donna LaFolle Family*

To Our Chicago Friends,

We hope that your Christmas is filled with love and good cheer and that you enjoy this tree while celebrating the season with your family and friends.

My wife, Donna and I have been involved with the Thompson Historical Society for the past 4 years and are pleased to have an opportunity to sponsor one of the trees that will continue on the great tradition that the Schuenemann family was once so proud of.

Ninety-six years ago there were people standing on the Clark Street Bridge waiting for the *Rouse Simmons* to sail into the harbor with a load of trees from the great Northwoods of the Upper Peninsula. Although many of those trees still lie on the bottom of Lake Michigan within the wreck of the *Rouse Simmons*, we believe this tree represents them all and hope that its meaning is as special to you as it is to us.

Thompson is a small, rural community and little remains of the old lumbering town but it is a beautiful place to live and a great area to vacation in.

If you ever find yourself in our neck of the woods, please stop to visit "The Last Port of Call for The Historic Christmas Tree Ship".

*Merry Christmas!  
From Our House to Yours,  
The LaFolle Family*



A view of the Village of Thompson - early 1900's  
If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, you may write to:  
Dan & Donna LaFolle, 15N County Road 441, Manistique, MI 49854

**L  
A  
F  
O  
I  
L  
L  
E**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Randy & Theresa Lund*

As your family gathers around this special tree during the holiday season, our family will be thinking of you and hoping that you find as much pleasure in receiving this tree as we have had in sending it to you.

The *Rouse Simmons* is a very important part of Thompson's rich history and we are very proud to honor the Schunemann family in carrying on this tradition that they were a part of over 100 years ago.

My husband Randy and I own our own business and we have two grown daughters and two grandchildren. I am a member of the Thompson Township Board and we have been very supportive of our local historical committee as they bring this story back to life in our community.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*

*From Our House*

*To Yours!*



Village of Thompson—Taken in the early 1900's



This photo is of the Thompson docks. The schooner on the left has been tentatively identified as the *Rouse Simmons*

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:  
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Lund, 839 Ash Road, Manistique, MI

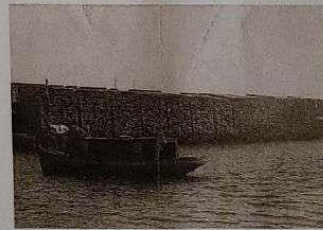
L  
U  
N  
D

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
The Hedberg Family  
In Memory of  
William & Hilma Sellman  
& Robert (Billman) Hedberg*

William Gust Sellman and his wife Hilma, started one of the first commercial fishing operations in 1912, the same year the *Rouse Simmons* sailed for the last time from Thompson Harbor. One of William's first boats was the "Dorothy S" and was built by a local man. William and Hilma's children, including our mother Evelyn, were born in Thompson on the family farm. In 1924, he moved his family and business to neighboring Manistique, and the business was passed down from generation to generation for many years afterwards.

Our family has been proud to be an important part of Thompson history and recently donated several albums of photos, articles and family information to the Thompson Historical Committee.

*We hope that your family enjoys this very special  
Christmas Tree that was hand picked from our forests and represents those trees  
forever lost on  
November 23, 1912  
Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year  
From Our House to Yours!*



The photo taken above was of William Sellman aboard the *Dorothy S* in the Thompson Harbor. As you can tell by the photo, having your picture taken was serious business back in the early 1900's and warranted a white dress shirt and tie!

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:

Mr. Robert Hedberg, 901 Manistique Avenue, Manistique, MI 49854

S  
E  
L  
L  
M  
A  
N

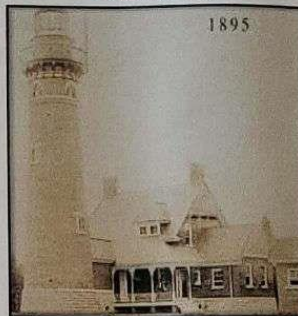
*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by  
The Gulliver Historical Society  
Seul Choix Point Lighthouse*

Hundreds of years ago, Native Americans and French fur traders traveled in canoes across the rough waters of Lake Michigan. On one occasion, a group of French sailors were caught in a terrifying storm which forced them to seek shelter. They landed on the rocky shore of a harbor and found refuge in the bay while waiting out the storm. Before leaving, they named the harbor Seul Choix (*pronounced Sis-Shwa*) which translates to "Only Choice."

The Seul Choix Point Lighthouse has represented peacefulness and a place of refuge during the changing times. The Native Americans and fur traders sought safety in the harbor while fishermen and loggers depended on its resources for their livelihood. Sailors relied on the peace of mind brought by the light and fog signal. Today, the fishing and shipping industries need the light as a navigational aid.

The lighthouse is located east of Thompson where Captain Schunemann once docked to load trees for his hometown of Chicago. As the Captain and his crew sailed the great waters of Lake Michigan, this historic lighthouse was likely a beacon for them as well.

*We wish your family a  
Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year!*



Earliest known existing photograph of the Seul Choix Point Lighthouse

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, please write to:  
Gulliver Historical Society  
672N West Gulliver Lake Road, Gulliver, MI 49840

**HISTORICAL  
GULLIVER**

**SQUIRES**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Hiram & Kate Squires Family  
(Granddaughters Eris Webb & Winnie Blake)*

The following narrative was written by Eris Webb in fond memory of her Grandma Kate who was a very important figure in Thompson History.

Thompson in the early days after the lumber business boom became mainly a farming community. Most were run by large families with lots of children. My maternal grandmother, Kate Squires, was a valiant woman, and a proud Native American. She served as Thompson Township Treasurer for many years. She was a nurse/midwife who brought more than 300 babies into the world. She often accompanied Dr. Tucker on many of his calls in the area. She walked long distances in all kinds of weather to help those in need of medical care. Many residents couldn't afford to call the doctor but knew they could depend on Kate. She was a strong woman who knew much about Native American herbs and remedies. One winter evening while out on an errand of mercy, Grandma came upon an old woman known as Squaw Mary, apparently sleeping in a snow bank. Since Squaw Mary was known to be fond of "firewater", it was assumed she was not frozen there, but merely sleeping, however, she was very cold. Grandma took her in and gave her hot soup and tea and Mary thawed out nicely. Since she was certain that Kate had saved her life and in gratitude, gave her the secret recipe for the famous "cedar poultice" for which Kate became noted. The poultices affected many known healings, many overnight."

Kate died too soon in 1942 at the age of 67. She is an unforgettable person and a role model for me. There were always lots of friends around her table and she was the most hospitable person I have ever known. In those days, on many weekends, there were square dances at the Town Hall and Kate played the piano and my Grandfather Hiram, played the violin and sometimes Uncle John called the squares. All of us children loved the square dances because we were sometimes allowed to join in the dancing. The adult dancers would pick us up and spin us around until we were perpendicular to the floor! It was good fun and we felt all grown up!"

**Squires Family**



Hiram & Kate Squires with daughter Kötibel (standing in front of Hiram), & Pearl (middle front) and niece Viola (rear). Kate & Hiram raised Viola after Kate's sister, Esther, died.

*May God Bless Your Family this Holiday Season!  
Eris Webb & Winnie Blake*

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Once sponsored by the  
Osborne Stanley Family*

To Our Chicago Friends! We hope that this holiday season is one that is blessed with good health and happiness for your family.

Our grandfather and great-grandfather, Osborne Stanley was down on the docks at Thompson Harbor the night before the *Rouse Simmons* sailed. Osborne was an avid hunter and venison was plentiful in the woods around his farm so he was happy to supply some meat for the crews return voyage to Chicago. His grandson, Wayne Stanley, who is a member of our Historical Committee, remembers "Gramps" talking very fondly about the Schuenemann's, especially Barbara who had lunch in their home with his wife Florabel.

Our family has lived in Thompson for six generations and we are proud to be a part of this history and excited to be in Chicago ninety-six years after the *Rouse Simmons* sailed from our harbor.

Thompson is a small, rural community and little remains of the old lumbering town but it is a beautiful place to live and a great area to vacation in.

If you ever find yourself in our neck of the woods, please stop to visit "The Last Port of Call for The Historic Christmas Tree Ship".

*Merry Christmas!  
From Our House to Yours,  
The Stanley Family*



Old Mill Crew Photo  
Grandpa Osborne Stanley is indicated by the red arrow.  
If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write  
to:  
Laurie Jastrin, 12515 N. Stanley Road, Manistique, MI 49854

**STANLEY**

**BRADLEY**

*The Authentic Christmas Tree  
Once sponsored by the  
Bradley Family*

One of the first historians of Thompson was our mother & grandmother, Georgia (Taylor) Osterhout. She began gathering the information in order to provide a record for her son and daughter.

Georgia was born in Thompson on January 10, 1906. At that time the lumber mill was a very important part of the village. She wrote that she remembered sneaking out early in the morning to go and sit on the lumber piles to watch the ships as they sailed in and out of the harbor. She said they would maneuver out so far and then, all at once, hoist the sails. It was always a beautiful sight. Georgia would keep one eye on the boats, and one eye out for her mother, who was never too far behind her daughter's escapades.

Horses were the backbone of early logging operations and the teams were cared for by their drivers. One of Georgia's highlights of her early childhood was to hold the reins of a team named Picadore and Topsy, when on their way back to the barn, they would stop at Thompson creek to drink. Driver of the team, Mr. Fred Hinkson, would wait by the creek and let the children of the area drive the horses back to the barn.

Hassel & Georgia lived for many years on the shoreline just a stone throw away from where the *Rouse Simmons* last docked.

*Merry Christmas!  
From Our House to Yours!  
In Memory of  
Hassel & Georgia Osterhout*



If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas Tree you may write to:  
Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Peterson, 260N M-149, Cooke, MI 49817

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Cecil Johnson Family  
Daughters: Charlene Turek, Jerry Turek & Mary Simmons*

To Our Chicago Friends! We hope that this holiday season is one that is blessed with good health and happiness for your family.

Our dad, Cecil Johnson, was born in Thompson in 1908. He and our mother, Evelyn, raised not only three daughters but five of our cousins who were left orphans at an early age. Cecil died at the age of 39 from a heart attack while chasing a pig out in the front of the family home where I still live today. Our family has many fond memories of Thompson.

I married my husband, Gerald Turek, and we raised eight children here. In 1980, Gerald opened a used car parts/junk yard and ran it until 2006 when he passed away from cancer. Our youngest son, Paul took over the business. We also have a cabin on Lake Michigan close by where we have had many get-togethers with family and friends over the years. Each spring for the past 33 years we have a smelt fry on the beach by the cabin and people come from all over to attend.

Our lake frontage is only about 1/2 mile from where the Thompson Docks once were located and the *Rouse Simmons* would have passed right by on her way to the docks.

My family and I hope you enjoy this authentic Christmas Tree and wish you the very best in the coming year.

*Merry Christmas!  
From Our House to Yours,  
In Memory of Cecil & Evelyn Johnson*



The picture about was of the Lumber Company office, general store and post office, all in one building and was located on the main street in downtown Thompson, MI.

If you wish to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree, you may write to:  
Charlene Turek, 1692S Little Harbor Road, Manistique, MI 49854

**J  
O  
H  
N  
S  
O  
N**

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Joseph & Virginia VanDyck*

Our grandparents, Joseph H. & Elizabeth VanDyck, were true entrepreneurs. They started their grocery store business in Thompson but later moved to neighboring Manistique. According to papers kept in my grandfather's safe, he was called as a witness to attend the inquest of the incidents that lead up to the sailing of the *Rouse Simmons* from Thompson Harbor on November 22, 1912.

At the inquest, my grandfather related that Mr. Schuenemann and two mates made the purchase of supplies for the trip from his store. They were not only frequent customers but also friends of the family. While in Manistique, they often stayed with either the VanDyck family or others in the neighborhood.

The store was operated for many years afterward and although the store is no longer there, many locals still remember shopping at VanDyck's. Eventually the building was torn down and my wife & I built our home on the site.

Our family hopes that you will enjoy this tree that has been harvested from the forests near Thompson. We wish you a Safe and Happy Holiday Season!

*Merry Christmas!  
In Memory of our Grandfather,  
Joseph H. VanDyck*



VanDyck Family

Seated (L to R): Joseph J., Elizabeth & Joseph H. VanDyck  
Back Row (L to R): Shirley, Edna, Margaret, Lillian & Gladys  
If you would like to contact the sponsors of this tree, you can mail to:  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph VanDyck, P.O. Box 22, Manistique, MI 49854

**V  
A  
N  
D  
Y  
C  
K**

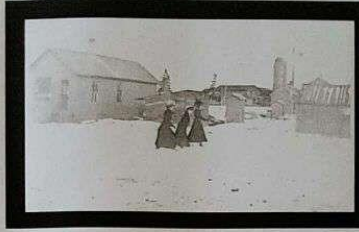
*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
The Wnuk Family*

In recent years Thompson has become a popular place to live. Retirees from all over the country and residents from Manistique and surrounding areas have moved to beautiful Thompson. One such family is the Wnuks, who lived in Manistique for 20 years and dreamed of building a home in Thompson on the property they purchased in 1988.

Not long after becoming Thompson residents the magical spell of the Christmas Tree Ship and the history of the village became a part of the Wnuk's life. Invited to be on the new historical advisory committee, the interest became a passion. While working with the committee on the historical marker project the history of this wonderful place came alive.

Thompson is a very special place to many people, those that have deep roots in the community and those that have only begun to call it home

*The Wnuk family  
hopes that your holiday season  
is filled with love and peace.*



The photo taken above has always been one of my favorites. I often wondered where these three ladies were heading as they walked along in the direction of the lakeshore. (The large silo shaped structure in the background was the burner of the old lumber mill).

If you would like to contact the sponsors of this Christmas tree,  
please write to:

Mr. & Mrs. Jody Wnuk, 9477W Carlson Road, Manistique, MI 49854

W  
N  
U  
K

Z  
O  
R  
N

*This Authentic Christmas Tree  
Was sponsored by the  
Don & Pam Zorn*

As newcomers to this area, we are proud to relive the history of the Thompson area and sponsor a Christmas tree hand cut from the local forest.

Our family has always been drawn to this area for our vacations. The beautiful shorelines, wonderful fishing and well kept campgrounds were the perfect place to escape the frantic pace of Michigan's major cities. We were fortunate to be able to move here for our retirement years.

As we have settled into the area, the unique history of this lumbering town has intrigued us and inspired the desire to share the story with all who visit Thompson. We have participated in the establishment of a historical marker and interpretive panels on the shoreline of Lake Michigan at the site where the docks and mill once were.

We hope you will enjoy this small token of the bond shared by Chicago and Thompson. May this season bring you peace & joy!

Merry Christmas  
From  
The Zorns



The current raft pictured at left is open year around.

One of the major attractions in Thompson Township is the "Big Springs" or "Kitch-it-kipt". This natural fresh water spring gushes over 10,000 gallons a minute from the many fissures in the underlying limestone bottom and the water is crystal clear. Also referred to as "Mirror of Heaven", the ride across the spring on the self-propelled raft is one that you would not soon forget.

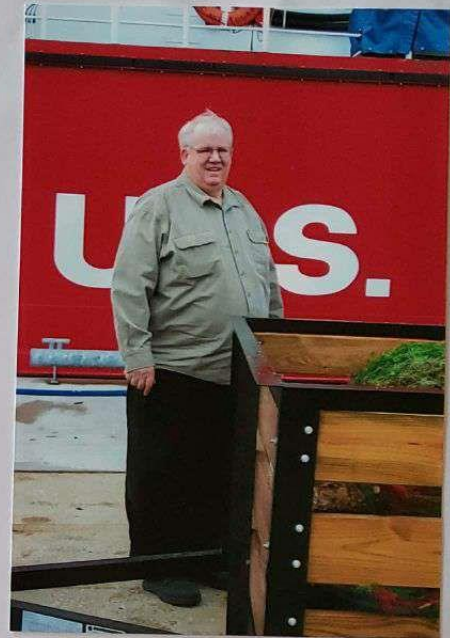
As you can see from the photo below, this has been a site worth visiting for many years and although the ride may have changed, the reaction of the sightseers is always the same!

If you would like to  
contact the sponsors of this  
Christmas tree,  
Write to:  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Zorn,  
21N County Road 441,  
Manistique, MI 49854









Tuesday, November 25th, 2008

Dan LaFoille, our close friend and one of our biggest supporters, along with Rick Toncray, had offered to drive us and the trees down to Cheboygan where the *Mackinaw* was in port.

It was hard to believe that approximately 2 1/2 hours after leaving home, we would be watching as our trees were loaded onto the USCGC *Mackinaw* for the voyage down to Chicago. For over three years, we had been dreaming of and planning for this day.

As we drove into the parking lot, a quick phone call was made to Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Matthew Perkins, who promptly appeared and greeted us warmly. Almost immediately, he returned to the ship and the next thing we heard was an announcement over the loud speaker, "All hands on deck to unload Christmas trees". I don't think we could have put into words what we were feeling at that moment.  
It was incredible!

We were reviving a tradition that had ended in our community on November 22, 1912.





Top Left: On hand that day were members of the ROTC. They quickly appeared on deck and came down the walk to start loading our trees by hand. Earlier in the day, over 1000 trees cut locally from tree farms and loaded by crane onto the deck of the Mackinaw.



As we watched from below, our trees were handled with care and affectionately called the "Official Trees". As each made it's way from trailer to ship deck, we could hear the bells that had been attached softly ring.





Right: Crew from the *Mackinaw* appeared on deck to direct the process and made sure the trees were placed in the proper location. We were welcomed aboard by ENS David Lieberman who offered to give us a guided tour of the ship. Of course, we were excited and honored to be given the opportunity.



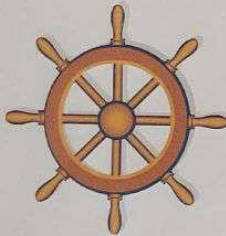


Left & Below: The Cheboygan trees had already been secured by the time we arrived. Our trees were randomly placed on deck (bottom left) and were kept separate. The Thompson trees were bound differently than the others, had an ornament and sponsor card and each trunk was marked with a painted red "T". Although we didn't see where the trees ended up on deck, when they arrived in Chicago, all 24 trees were still together and given special attention.





As part of our tour, we were able to see many of the rooms where the day-to-day operations of the *Mackinaw* take place. One of the highlights, was being on the bridge, looking out over Cheboygan and sitting in one of the Captain chairs!



Long gone are the days when the Captain would stand outside on a cold, stormy night holding on tightly to the wooden wheel of the ship as the seas tossed the ship from side to side. Today, our most sophisticated ships are run expertly by joysticks and computers. We were amazed at the technology on board the *Mackinaw*.





We ended up in the galley and were invited to have lunch with the crew. On the menu, hot dogs and hamburgers, curly fries and salad. To our great surprise, ENS Lieberman showed us into the Ward room where we ate our lunch with Commander Scott J. Smith. Wow! How can you top an experience like that? After lunch, but before leaving the ship, we were able to buy "official" Mackinaw sweatshirts.



The ride home was *almost* as fun as the ride down to Cheboygan. Pam & I had affectionately named the Mackinaw the "Buoy Boat" and were tickled that our trees were finally on board. We could hardly believe that in 9 days we would be on our way to Chicago and Navy Pier. Many times on the way home, one of us would look back, see the empty trailer being towed and ask the other, "Where's our trees?" and the answer would always be "They're on the Buoy Boat!"

While we were  
off on our  
Chicago  
adventure,  
historical  
committee  
member  
Char Crosby  
wrote this  
heartwarming  
and beautiful  
poem.

Watching out  
over the lake  
from her living  
room window,  
Char was able  
to spot the  
*Mackinaw* as  
they tended  
the buoy off  
Wiggins Point.

### *A Christmastide*

*A long time ago in a land far up north  
Pine trees were cut and by boat were sent forth.  
A three-masted schooner bound for Chicago  
Was laden with holiday greenery as cargo.  
T was the captain's favorite run for very good reason -  
His ship heralded the joy of the Christmas season.  
Big water was restless; it was time to go  
Before being stalled by ice, wind and snow.  
As sails were hoisted high in the sky  
An ominous warning on the wind seemed to cry,  
The waves fitfully tossed; the lake roared with fury.  
Each weather amen bid the captain to hurry.  
A fierce winter gale tragically ended tradition  
As a powerful storm plunged the ship to perdition.  
Life was extinguished and hope was dashed  
In the blink of an eye by that harsh wintry blast.  
No trees in Chicago that Christmas arrived -  
Neither ship, nor captain, nor sailor survived.  
A hundred years later with heads full of lore  
A small band of people would history restore.  
They sought trees to revive the legend of old  
To rekindle a gift in this season of cold.  
Spruce, fir and balsam of magnificence great  
Would be cut, baled and shipped, not a moment too late.  
Families were waiting at the south end of the lake.  
They needed some trees, for yuletide's sake!  
Shouts of "Merry Christmas" rang with good cheer  
As a ship of glad tidings docked alongside the pier.  
To welcome the *Mackinaw* an eager crowd gathered.  
This Christmas vessel was a ship for all weather.  
Hearts swelled with joy and eyes filled with wonder  
To see humble pine trees again proud in splendor.  
A long century passed, but now complete is the trip -  
From Thompson to Chicago sails the Christmas Tree Ship!*

*Char Crosby  
Thompson Historical Advisory Board  
2008*



# ALGOMA, WISCONSIN

## Birthplace to Captain Herman Schuenemann

Thursday, December 4th, 2008

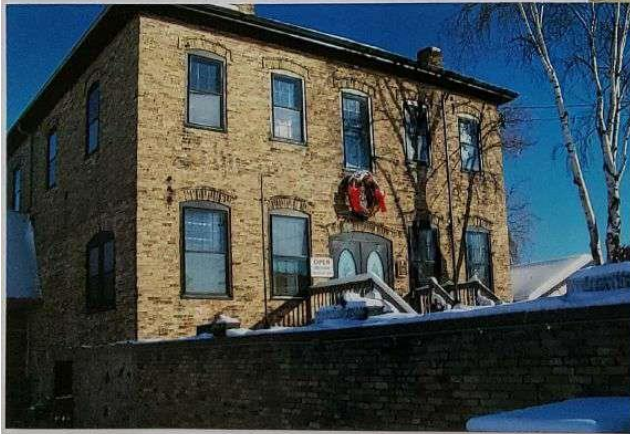
Our goal was to see and experience as many points of interest that we could on our trip to Chicago. The trees were tucked away on board the *Mackinaw* and we were finally on our way.

First stop after leaving Thompson was Algoma, Wisconsin. Although there are no significant historical points to visit here, we couldn't drive by without stopping.

Top Right: Christmas Tree Ship Point. A small wooden marker has been placed near the water. The sign reads, "A schooner transporting Christmas trees to Milwaukee & Chicago passed this point in the 1800's. Captain Herman Schuenemann of the Christmas Tree Ship 'Rouse Simmons' was born in Algoma."

Bottom Left: von Stiehl Winery. For three years the winery sold a commemorative wine bottle with a special "Christmas Tree Ship" label. Although no longer using that label, we purchased a case of their Christmas wine to share with our friends along the way.

Bottom Right: On the front steps of the historic building  
Back row (L to R) Deanna Fish, Laurie Jasmin, Shirley Leitgeb, & Beth Malloch  
Front row (L to R) Pam Zorn, Karen Klaus & Meg Wnuk

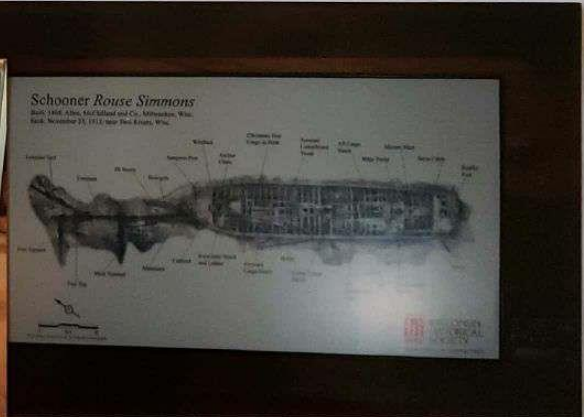


# TWO RIVERS, WISCONSIN



Wheel of the Rouse Simmons as restored by Mr. Jim Brotz. Mr. Brotz attended our dedication for the historical marker in 2006.

Thursday, December 4th, 2008  
Rogers Street Fishing Museum & Coast Guard Museum.  
Just about an hours drive from Algoma, we arrived at Two Rivers and were greeted by Sandy Zipperer, Director of the museum. Although closed for the winter months, Sandy had graciously offered a private tour for our group. The museum is home to the restored wheel and other recovered artifacts from the *Rouse Simmons*. Sandy, a shipwreck enthusiast, entertained us with her knowledge of the schooner along with a great tale of the shipwreck *Vernon*. A wonderful hour that was well spent and greatly appreciated by us all. What a great experience to stand behind the wheel as Captain Herman Schuenemann had done over 96 years before us.





Aleg



Pam



Deanna



Laurie



Laurie & Sandy standing in front of the recovered wheel of the shipwreck Vernon.



L to R: Karen Klaus, Shirley Leitgeb, Beth Malloch, Pam Zom, Laurie Jasmin, Deanna Fish & Meg Wnuk.



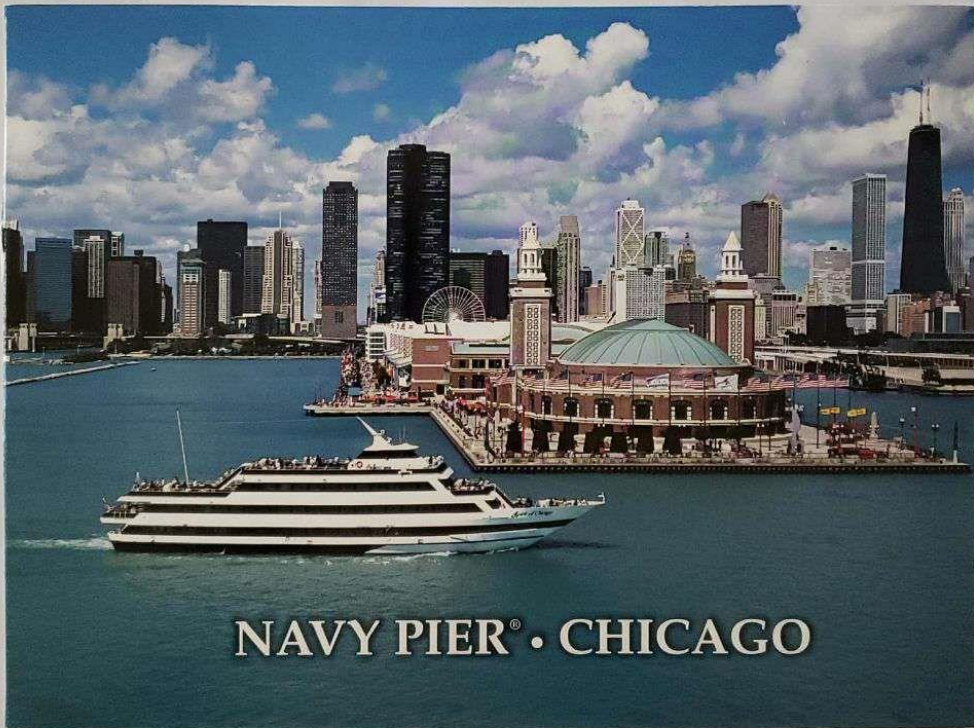
HISTORIC  
**ROGERS STREET**  
 FISHING VILLAGE  
 &  
 GREAT LAKES  
 COAST GUARD MUSEUM



1886 Two Rivers Lighthouse

2010 Rogers Street  
 Two Rivers, Wisconsin 54241  
 (920) 793-5905  
 www.rogersstreet.com

# CHICAGO

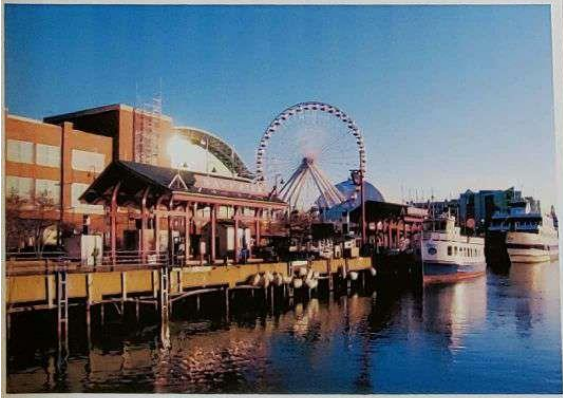


NAVY PIER® • CHICAGO

After leaving Two Rivers, our next planned destination was the Milwaukee Yacht Club where the *Rouse Simmons* anchor is on display. With heavy traffic and less than perfect directions from Map Quest, we missed the desired exit so we by-passed the city of Milwaukee completely. Perhaps we would try again on our return trip.

The entire ride was smooth sailing all the way with Pam at the wheel and Meg as our navigator. All were relieved when we reached the hotel and were able to unload, have a cup of coffee, and begin planning for the next day.

After a brief rest, we bundled up against the cold and took a brisk walk down to Navy Pier, which was only four blocks from our hotel. Satisfied that we were prepared for the early morning arrival of the *Mackinaw*, we headed back to the room and shared a bottle of wine from the von Stiehl winery.



*Thompson Historical Advisory Committee*

1251S N. Stanley Road  
Manistique, MI 49854  
Phone (906) 341-6338  
[lauriejasmn@centurytel.net](mailto:lauriejasmn@centurytel.net)

---

(Letter mailed to all tree sponsors)

Mr. & Mrs. Dan Crosby  
3256S Whitecaps Trail  
Manistique, MI 49854

Dear Dan & Char,

Our committee would like to thank you for supporting our "Christmas trees to Chicago" project. We are enclosing a copy of your sponsor card that will be attached to one of the twenty-four trees that will be given to a disadvantaged family in the Chicago area.

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, the trees will be cut and wrapped and then delivered on November 25<sup>th</sup> to the US Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw*. The trees will arrive in Chicago on December 5<sup>th</sup> aboard the *Mackinaw* at Navy Pier. Several members of our committee will be present to participate in the many festivities.

This year the tradition of bringing trees from the Upper Peninsula to Chicago will be revived. Ninety-six years ago, on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1912, the *Rouse Simmons* sank with a load of trees from our forests. On December 5 & 6, these trees will come full circle as they finally arrive in Chicago.

With warm regards and gratitude,

Thompson Historical Advisory Committee  
Wayne Stanley, Charlene Crosby, Meg Wnuk, Pam Zorn,  
Deanna Fish & Laurie Jasmin