

ROCKY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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<http://rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org/>

A Centennial City

1903-2003

January 2016 News Edition



ROCKY RIVER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2016
7:00 PM

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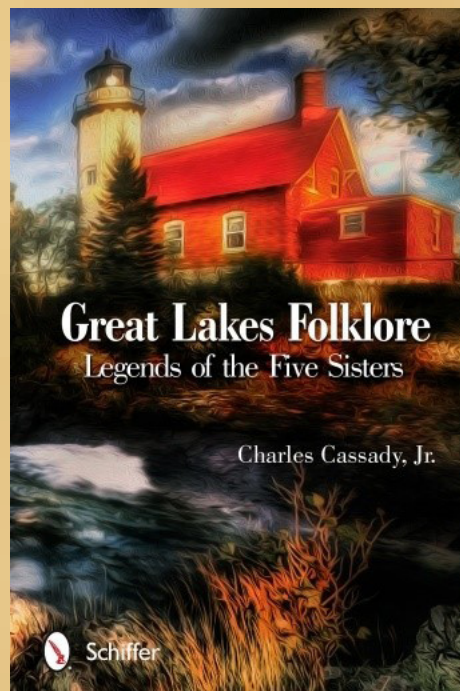
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GREAT LAKES FOLKLORE: LEGENDS OF THE FIVE SISTERS

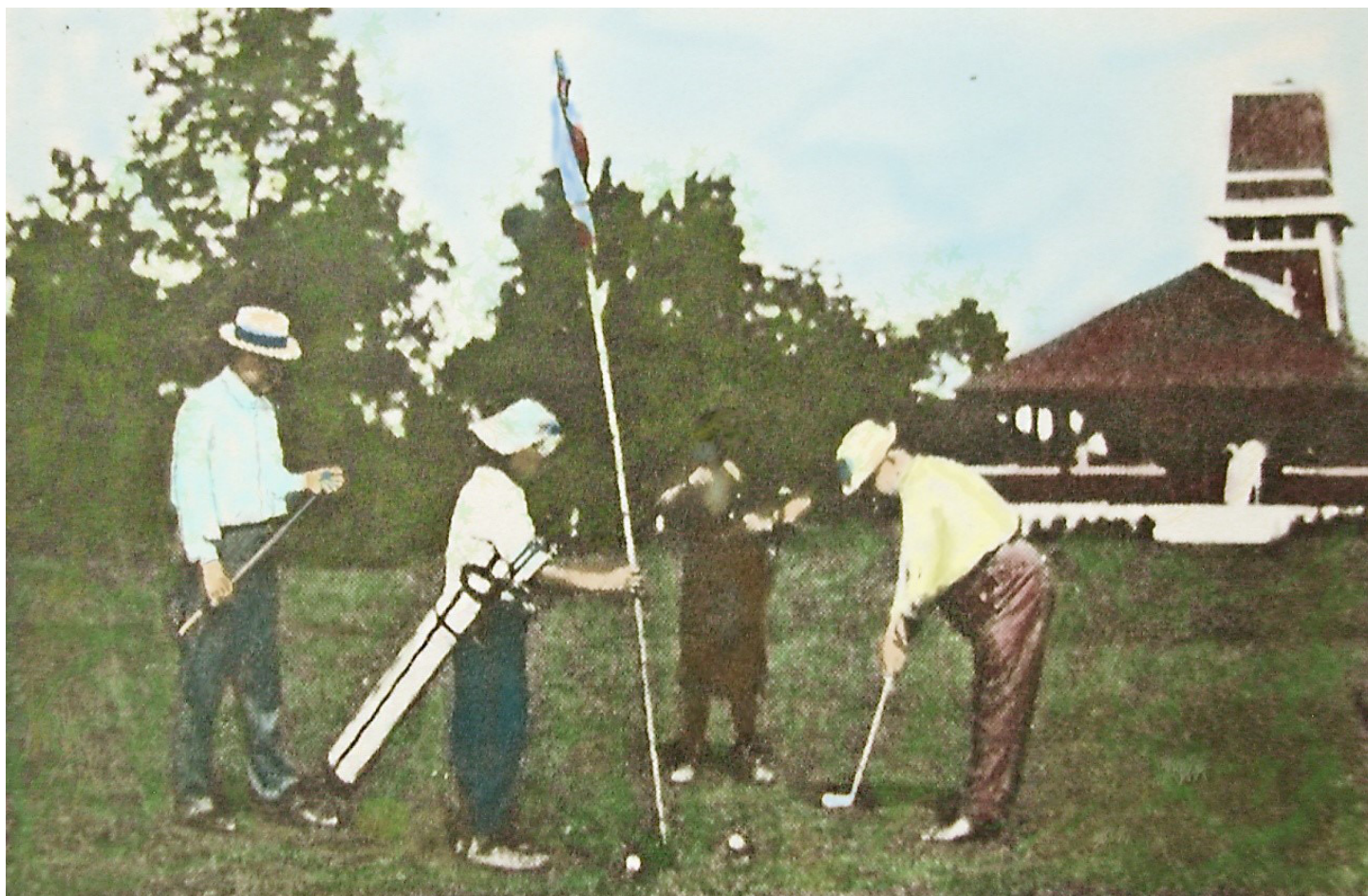
Presented by Charles Cassady, Jr.



Over the years, the Great Lakes: Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario have carried Native Americans, explorers, immigrants, bandits, miners, warriors and entrepreneurs and have inspired great tales of life on and around the water. What secrets do the Five Sisters hold deep? This voyage into the haunting stories, strange men, ghostly ships and tales of the Great Lakes is worth hearing. Come and hear this entertaining program.

KESWICK GOLF COURSE

By David Hollis



“So, We’re Going to Build A Golf Course, Where?”

IN A FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN THE Cleveland Plain Dealer on May 23, 1909, Mathews and Gilbert Realty asks, “Why Go to the Seashore?” They claimed Oakwood on the Lake could be a daily vacation just seven miles west of downtown Cleveland. All the amenities of an expensive coastal junket could be just minutes away from the workday world. When the Frasier Realty Co. along with Rex Realty of New York aligned with the local company, Mathews and Gilbert, to buy the Daniel P. Eells Estate in August of 1907, plans were submitted for upscale housing on the 137 acres of verdant parkland. By

1910, parcels along the lakeshore, on the Rocky River cliffs along Frazier Drive, on Buckingham and Argyle, were selling briskly. Cheaper plots were available at \$600, while the prime locations sold for \$5000. But that full page ad contained an odd sales pitch, “Mathews and Gilbert are in the real estate business to sell. Although they realize the value of their holdings, their aim is quick sales and many of them. They are contented with small profits for they know the value of the allotment, and wish not only to clear something for themselves, but also give the buyer a chance to make his share.”

Why the fire sale come on? Why the veiled desperation and concern? Economic and political, of course.

While automobile registrations nationwide rose from 8000 in 1900 to 902,000 in 1912, the price of fuel was skyrocketing 50% every few years. Clevelander William Burton wouldn’t patent his thermal cracking process for Rockefeller’s Standard Oil until 1913. His idea doubled the output of usable petrol from a barrel of crude. At \$600, cars were expensive, as was the gasoline to run them. The mass transit Nickel Plate Railroad station would not be com-

pleted till 1917, making the suburb an expensive proposition. As the world slid toward war in Europe, the local economy faltered, and businesses cut back on construction of homes, steel mills, and downtown offices.

On the political horizon, William A. Stinchcomb began campaigning for a Cuyahoga County Parks system back in 1905. On June 5, 1911, the State Legislature authorized parks, boulevards, and public roads outside city limits for public recreation. In 1912 the County Board of Parks was created, a commission appointed, but without any funding to facilitate acquisitions. Stinchcomb became the County Surveyor in September 1912, and claimed the “power to prohibit private owners from building within the lines of a street or roadway as projected.”

And what was “projected” had to concern Mathews and Gilbert. H.R. Cooley, the County Charities Director, released the first plans for the Metropolitan Park System, an “outlying park and boulevard chain following the hills and valleys along the Rocky River.” General Assembly funding wouldn’t begin until 1915, which allowed the MetroParks board to begin serious planning. But in 1912, Herb Mathews and Edward Gilbert, along with their New York principals Charles Frasier and James Campbell had to consider if Oakwood might be incorporated into the park system; how long the westward suburbanization would take to reach the Rocky River; and how would these new residents commute to downtown.

Considering there were only five golf courses in the county, all south and east of the big city; and each required a daylong excursion for duffers on bad roads and faulty bridges to play a round on the “royal and ancient”, the solution was obvious.

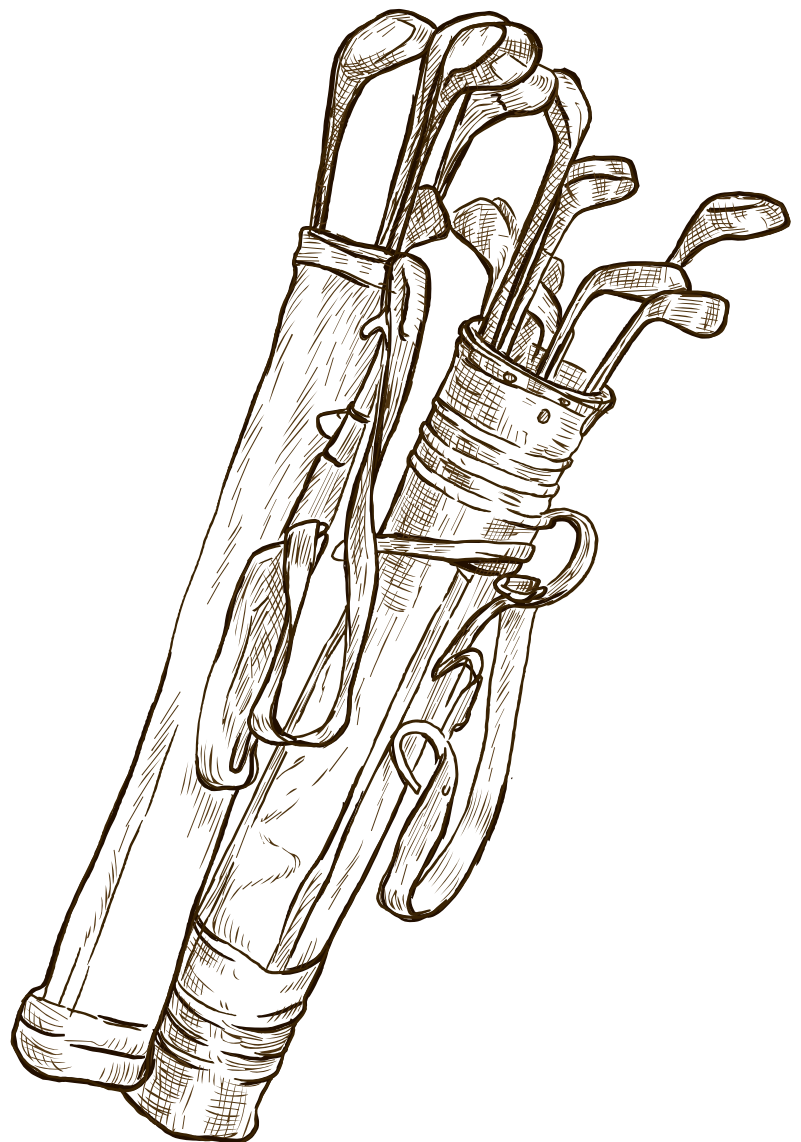
In early 1913, Mathews and Gilbert halted improvements and construction

in Oakwood On the Lake. To protect their investment and wait for park plans to materialize, they decided to delay the build out for ten years, and settled on the name Keswick for their proposed nine hole golf course. Since the former Eells Estate was park ready; moving a few early homes, grading the fairways, and putting up a club house would be relatively easy. The Keswick Club could generate some income, the housing plan could lie fallow, the park plan could gel, and the economy could right itself from bust to boom. In March 1913, they hired experienced golf pro David Smith to finish the course design, and scheduled a June 1st opening. With over 100 members, the Keswick survived three years, shut-

ting down after the 1916 season, and dispersing members to Westwood and Dover Country Clubs.

Only then did the Beachcliff and Oakwood On the Lake housing boom reignite.

For more information on “Keswick Golf – the Forgotten Links”, a photo history book is available (\$20) at Rocky River Historical Society events; or by contacting the author, David A. Hollis at dahollis@multiverse.com. A portion of each sale benefits the Rocky River Historical Society.



SS EDMUND FITZGERALD

SINKING IN LAKE ERIE, 10 NOVEMBER 1975

By Gay A. Christensen-Dean

“ON THE EVENING OF 10 NOVEMBER 1975, the SS EDMUND FITZGERALD, while in a severe storm, with a full cargo of taconite [a form of iron ore] pellets, sank in eastern Lake Superior at 46°59.9'N, 85°06.6'W, approximately 17 miles from the entrance to Whitefish Bay, Michigan. All of the 29 crewmen on board at the time of the casualty are missing and presumed dead.”

The SS EDMUND FITZGERALD was a conventional “straight decker” Great Lakes ore carrier. It was designed with cargo holds in the center of the ship, and ballast tanks outside of and below the holds. The forward deckhouse had accommodations and the pilot house and the aft deckhouse above

the engine room had accommodations and mess facilities. The deck between the forward and aft deckhouse is called the spar deck. There were 21 cargo hatch openings along the spar deck. Each cargo hatch was closed by a single steel hatch cover, with a gasket around the underside of its perimeter. Each hatch cover was secured by 68 double pivot, adjustable tension clamps, which were positioned by an electrically powered hatch crane. There was also access to the cargo holds through two access hatches located between the cargo hatches.

A typical storm developed in the Oklahoma panhandle on 8 November, and moved northeast across Kansas. The SS EDMUND FITZGERALD with

its load of taconite pellets, left Superior, Wisconsin on the afternoon of 9 November enroute to Detroit, Michigan, and was in communication with other vessels periodically along the trip, including the Steamer ARTHUR M. ANDERSON, which was following the FITZGERALD, sometimes within sight and sometimes not. The storm intensified on 9 November as it passed over Iowa with an average speed of 37 knots, and the National Weather Service issued gale warnings for all of Lake Superior. At 0100 on November 10, the FITZGERALD reported winds at 52 knots, continuous heavy rain, waves 10 feet. At 0700, the FITZGERALD reported winds at 35 knots, continuous moderate rain, waves



10 feet - their last weather report. Both the FITZGERALD and the ANDERSON kept changing courses due to the weather. At 1445, the FITZGERALD was 16 miles ahead of the ANDERSON; it started snowing, and the ANDERSON never saw the FITZGERALD again. At approximately 1530 on 10 November, the FITZGERALD reported some topside damage (a fence rail down and two vents lost or damaged, which in itself would not be enough to cause the loss of the vessel), and a list, which again would not be serious enough to cause the loss of the vessel according to the Marine Report, but it did not say what caused the damage or that it was concerned, and that they had their two (out of six) pumps going. Between 1610 and 1615, the FITZGERALD reported to the ANDERSON that their radars were not working so the ANDERSON provided navigational assistance. They were taking heavy seas over the deck, also. At 1652, the ANDERSON reported winds of 58 knots, still snowing, waves 12 to 18 feet. At 1910, the FITZGERALD reported to the ANDERSON when asked how they were making out with their problems, "We are holding our own". That was the last transmission from the Fitzgerald, and the last time they were

seen on the ANDERSON's radar screen. No distress message was received from the FITZGERALD.

The Commandant concurred with the Marine Board that the most probable cause of the sinking was the loss of buoyancy and stability resulting from massive flooding of the cargo hold. The flooding most likely took place due to ineffective hatch closures. It was known that Company requirements did not require routine maintenance on damaged hatch covers. It is not known if all the cargo hatch clamps were properly fastened. In the bad storm, as the high seas rolled over the spar deck, the flooding probably increased in volume as the ship lost freeboard. The cargo hold was not fitted with watertight bulkheads. Thus, water entering could move throughout the hold. Then, the ship dove into a wall of water and never recovered, with the ship breaking up as it plunged or as it struck bottom. The sinking was so rapid and unexpected that no one was able to successfully abandon ship.

No survivors or bodies were found. One damaged lifeboat and one-half of another lifeboat with the words "EDMUND FITZGERALD" painted on the bows, two inflatable life rafts, 21 life jackets and some miscellaneous pieces

were found at the surface. The 29 missing crew were mostly from towns around the Great Lakes, including John H. McCarthy of Bay Village, James A. Pratt of Lakewood, Ohio, and Bruce L. Hudson of North Olmsted, Ohio.

In the spring of 1976, highly sophisticated photographic equipment positively identified the wreck as the SS EDMUND FITZGERALD. It lies in 530 feet of water in eastern Lake Superior, approximately 17 miles northwest of Whitefish Point, Michigan, just north of the International Boundary, in Canadian waters. The bow is sitting upright and the stern is inverted, with debris in between. Some hatch covers were found, and only a few of the hatch clamps were damaged, meaning probably that those were the only ones that had been properly fastened down.

Source: Department of Transportation Coast Guard Marine Casualty Report, SS Edmund Fitzgerald; Sinking in Lake Superior on 10 November 1975 with Loss of Life, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation Report and Commandant's Action, Report No. USCG 16732/64216, unclassified, dated 26 July 1977



Captain Newman Larsen

(1903–1988)

Newman Larsen of Rocky River, Ohio, became a lake captain in 1941. At age 37, he was the youngest lake boat captain up until that time. In the spring of 1959, until he retired in 1966, he was Captain of the SS Edmund Fitzgerald.

Excerpt from “A TOUR OF ROCKY RIVER” July 30, 2015

*With Jack Nickels, Gay Christensen-Dean,
Vic Erml*

JACK: So what we have right now, we're in Rocky River Park and there's a ravine to our west and in the bottom of that ravine is a concrete culvert. You can walk in it. It's 6 foot high and 8 foot wide, and it goes all the way up to just behind the Lake Road Market on Lake Road and

then it splits off, goes behind Morewood Parkway and goes up by and it goes cross Detroit Road at Herb's Tavern. Hunkin-Conkey put that in for \$245,000. They bought the first in Ohio, Bucyrus Erie Crane, and it dug the trench right down through here and recarved Falmouth, moved Falmouth Drive over the culvert, and now the east bank of north Morewood

Parkway is a cliff that goes down into the old ravine. The next thing is the street. There's no homes on the west side of Falmouth because of you can't build over the sewer. That was the biggest sewer project in northern Ohio at that period of time. Cleveland didn't even have anything that massive.



U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS DO YOU REMEMBER?

*VP nominated was James Sherman. He died on Oct. 30 and was replaced on ballot by Nicholas Butler

1900 William McKinley/Theodore Roosevelt(R) def William J. Bryan/Adlai Stevenson(D)

1904 Theodore Roosevelt/Charles W. Fairbanks(R) def Alton B. Parker/Henry G. Davis(D)

1908 William H. Taft/James S. Sherman(R) def William J. Bryan/John W. Kern(D)

1912 Woodrow Wilson/Thomas R. Marshall(D) def William H. Taft/(R)

1916 Woodrow Wilson/Thomas R. Marshall(D) def Charles E. Hughes/Charles Fairbanks(R)

1920 Warren G. Harding/Calvin Coolidge(R) def James M. Cox/Franklin Roosevelt(D)

1924 Calvin Coolidge/Charles G. Dawes(R) def John W. Davis/Charles W. Bryan(D)

1928 Herbert Hoover/Charles Curtis(R) def Alfred E. Smith/Joseph T. Robinson(D)

1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt/John N. Garner(D) def Herbert Hoover/Charles Curtis(R)
1936 Franklin D. Roosevelt/John N. Garner(D) def Alfred M. Landon/Frank Knox(R)
1940 Franklin D. Roosevelt/Henry A. Wallace(D) def Wendell L. Willkie/Charles McNary(R)
1944 Franklin D. Roosevelt/Harry S. Truman(D) def Thomas E. Dewey/John W. Bricker(R)
1948 Harry S. Truman/Alben W. Barkley(D) def Thomas E. Dewey/Earl Warren(R)
1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower/Richard M. Nixon(R) def Adlai E. Stevenson/John J. Sparkman(D)
1956 Dwight D. Eisenhower/Richard M. Nixon(R) def Adlai E. Stevenson/Estes Kefauver(D)
1960 John F. Kennedy/Lyndon B. Johnson(D) def Richard M. Nixon/Henry Cabot Lodge(R)
1964 Lyndon B. Johnson/Hubert H. Humphrey(D) def Barry M. Goldwater/William E. Miller(R)
1968 Richard M. Nixon/Spiro T. Agnew(R) def Hubert H. Humphrey/Edmund S. Muskie(D)
1972 Richard M. Nixon/Spiro T. Agnew(R) def George S. McGovern/R. Sargent Shriver, Jr. (D)
1976 Jimmy Carter/Walter F. Mondale(D) def Gerald R. Ford/Robert Dole(R)
1980 Ronald Reagan/George H.W. Bush(R) def Jimmy Carter/Walter F. Mondale(D)
1984 Ronald Reagan/George H.W. Bush(R) def Walter F. Mondale/Geraldine Ferraro(D)
1988 George H.W. Bush/Dan Quayle(R) def Michael S. Dukakis/Lloyd Bentsen(D)
1992 Bill Clinton/Al Gore(D) def George H.W. Bush/Dan Quayle(R)
1996 Bill Clinton/Al Gore(D) def Robert Dole/Jack Kemp(R)
2000 George W. Bush/Richard Cheney(R) def Al Gore/Joe Lieberman(D)
2004 George W. Bush/Richard Cheney(R) def John Kerry/John Edwards(D)
2008 Barack Obama/Joe Biden(D) def John McCain/Sarah Palin(R)
2012 Barack Obama/Joe Biden(D) def Mitt Romney/Paul Ryan(R)

In Memoriam:

JAMES STRUHAR

1935–2015

James Struhar was born July 11, 1935 in Cleveland, Ohio. A graduate of Rocky River High School, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps for two years, and then became a residential building contractor/builder in Rocky River and the surrounding area. He collaborated with his father John Struhar to develop Struhar Drive and his namesake Jameston Drive in Rocky River, and build what is now the Rocky River Post Office, formerly Murman's grocery store. He and his wife Patricia moved to Colorado for many years, before moving back home to Ohio. He died November 16, 2015, age 80 years.

Donations:

Historical Items donated by the Christensen Family

ROCKY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 16445

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440-895-0983

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2016 PROGRAM DATES

March 10, 2016, Thursday, 7:00 PM

Famous and Infamous Women of Millionaries' Row

Presented by Dan Ruminski at

Rocky River Public Library