

Sod House Theater Company:
Split Rock Lighthouse Historical Research Project

Annotated Bibliography

Albers, Patricia C. and William R. James. "Images and Reality: Postcards of Minnesota's Ojibway People 1900-80. *Minnesota History Magazine*, Minnesota Historical Society, Summer, 1985.

Writers Albers and James have produced here an extremely well documented and fascinating examination of how imagery was altered to communicate and foster untruths of the Ojibway People. I was not able to use this article except as a passing reference in the 1920's tourist themed decade but include it here as it had an impact on my early research and process of communicating our ideas and focusing on themes for each decade. I think the impact of this article on my research also speaks to the times we live in and discussions of "truth" and how "facts" are reported in contemporary writing and journalism.

Beardslee, Lois. "You Can't Have my Firewood." *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. Edited by Doris Seale and Beverly Slapin. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA, 2005.

Also "Open Letter to a Non-Indian Teacher" written by – "An Indian Mother"

Author Lois Beardslee lays out an extremely persuasive argument for how a non-Native American person, such as me, can respectfully write about and interact with the native experience in books and literature. This article along with the below listed book were crucial to my understanding of how our performance piece could respectfully acknowledge the importance of Ojibwe contributions in our project: The limitations I perceive here are mine as I process these resources to learn how we might include the stories and literature of the Ojibwe people in our performance piece.

Benton-Banai, Edward. *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*. Indian Country Press Incorporated, Saint Paul, MN, 1979.

Bishop, Hugh E. *Haunted Lake Superior: Ghostly Tales and Legends from the Mystical Inland Sea*. Lake Superior Port Cities, Inc. Duluth, MN, 2003.

Hugh E. Bishop, author writes a series of “Haunted books” packed with ghost stories, and tales of encounters with spirits or beings from other dimensions. In addition to historical sources, Bishop has unearthed a rich trove of recent occurrences in which “something different” has happened in the North Shore or Lake Superior region. For me, this book provided a cautionary tale in using the stories of the Ojibwe people as for the storytellers who tell these tales they are deeply personal offerings and not something I should be using in a superficial manner. Of special interest to me was the section on Lighthouse hauntings. I used this book and two others as inspiration for the 1990’s Ghost stories theme.

Fochs, Rhonda. *Minnesota's Lost Towns Northern Edition*. North Star Press, Minneapolis, 2014.

Author Rhonda Fochs is sometimes billed as “a ghosthunter who illuminates historical tales.” I found this book to be an excellent read. Interesting to see all the tales, folk lore associated with lighthouses, Lake Superior, and the North shore region. Of course, one of the limitations with any book like this is it fiction or non-fiction? For me this became the basis of creating my own ghost story. I used this book and two others as inspiration for the 1990’s Ghost stories theme.

Fox, Mary, Artistic Director, Renegade Theater Company, Duluth, MN. February 2022. Telephone interview. Darcey Engen in attendance.

Ms. Fox was interviewed by Darcey Engen to query a partnership between Sod House Theater and Renegade Theater Company. This collaboration would use the Split Rock Lighthouse Research Project to create original material for a performance piece. Ms. Engen and Ms. Fox discussed how they might use local to Duluth actors and collaborators to gather for a weekend workshop on May 14, and May 15, 2022, in Duluth, MN. Continued discussions culminated in the commitment of ten area actors and Ms. Fox herself for the “Lighthouse Research to Performance” workshop led by Sod House Theater artistic directors Darcey Engen and Luverne Seifert. Experienced at creating site specific work from original materials Engen and Seifert will bring various props, costume pieces, and make the research available to all actors/collaborators. Plans are also being made to film the weekend’s process so the work can continue toward the beginnings of a scripted piece for performance in August or September of 2023.

Gilman, Rhoda R. *Stand Up: The Story of Minnesota’s Protest Tradition*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN. 2012.

Author Gilman writes an overview of various political protests in Minnesota. Gilman tells the story of Minnesotans who repeatedly challenged the status quo.

She unstintingly reports on both their success and failures in this regard. The narrative is particularly absorbing when she follows a specific person's story of how they challenged powerful corporations and/or political juggernauts. These stories illuminate the persons spirit of tenacity and how their activism becomes their way of life and looking at the world. For me this became a direct inspiration for the 1960's decade on Political activism in the Twin Harbors, MN and North Shore areas. What became clear to me in reading this book was how interesting the Minnesota spirit of "can do" was and how rich with performance potential these stories might be. I became interested in how people may have taken on the challenge to provoke change, to create a better community, better world. Therefore, I turned the decade's theme into finding out those stories from our group of actors/collaborators. What are the family stories on political change, activism, we might unearth in our group of creators? Obviously, this section of the research is unfolding as we gather our group and begin discussions of family stories or ideas.

Initially we had thought to center the 1960s decade around Judge Miles Lord as I read this source: Walburn, Roberta. *Miles Lord: The Maverick Judge Who Brought Corporate America to Justice*. University of MN Press, Minneapolis, MN. 2017. This book, while extremely interesting and professionally written did not lend itself, in my opinion, to the personalization I was pushing for in this decade.

Kaufman, Moises and Barbara Pitts McAdams. *Moment Work: Tectonic Theater Project's Process of Devising Theater*. Penguin Random House Canada Limited, Toronto, Canada. 2018.

Creators of theater from real world or collaborative processes, Kaufman and McAdams elucidate their system of creating theater. This book became extremely useful as a resource for the decades I wrote up with a clearer focus such as the 1910's Decade and the 1950's decade. A major overall goal of this research project is creating a launch pad for the next step in development, creating an on-site performance piece customized to Split Rock Lighthouse and performed by actors/creators/visioners in the North Shore area. I felt like this book and the ways the authors created "something from an idea or visual image" helped me write and research evocative moments/stories for our upcoming creative process.

Lanier, Lyda. Featured columnist, Interviewer. Interview in person Ridgeville, Wisconsin, June 12, 2021, Dora Lanier with James Lanier also in attendance.

Lyda Lanier was a featured columnist and journalist who interviewed a variety of people for her articles over a 50-year writing career. Mrs. Lanier spoke about interviewing best practices and how to document each interview. Knowledge gained during this in person interview helped us in interviewing key sources for materials, document the interview, and look for inspiration. I used this interview as inspiration for the 1960s Political movements decade in asking the actors of our production to bring their own family histories into the production by interviewing people living in the North Shore area in the 1960s. These interviewing best practices will help actors get real life history of political activities, and social/political concerns of the day. These interviews/themes of political uprising or protest could be included in our production.

Mayo, Kathryn and William Mayo. *61 Gems on Highway 61: Your Guide to Minnesota's North Shore, from Well-known Attractions to Best-Kept Secrets*. Adventure Publications, Cambridge, MN. 2018.

Excellent overview of the sights, sounds, smells to find along this famous highway. Highly informative and used as an overall introduction for me as I had never been to the North Shore.

Pszwaro, Ruth, Artistic Director Grand Marais Art Colony and Lyla Brown, Executive Director Grand Marais Art Colony. In person interview June 16, 2021. Dora Lanier and Darcey Engen in attendance.

Ms. Pszwaro and Ms. Brown helped us understand the history of the Grand Marais Art Colony, its current offerings, and goals for the future. Through them we were inspired to explore how founder Birney Quick started the colony and more specifically to focus on how art is shared and how to make art accessible. Ms. Brown shared the following resource with us: Quick, Birney, *Adrift in Aesthetic Latitudes for Those at Sea About Art*, 1980 Voyager Press, MN. The combination of this book and this interview inspired the use of the clothesline as a central image for our production. I felt it was important to concentrate specifically on one of the founder's and current director's themes-making art accessible and the constant striving to bring art into everyday existence. I was informed of Amanda Lovelee, contemporary artist who at the time of our interview was creating a road sign piece. Following up with Ms. Lovelee in later research I believed her work and Sod House's work could be a good match. Therefore, based on this interview I decided to focus on the clothespin art theme for the Grand Marais art Colony, 1940's decade.

[Grand Marais Art Colony | MNopedia](#)

[Making a place for art : 50 years at the Grand Marais Art Colony / Colleen J. Sheehy. \(mnhs.org\)](http://mnhs.org)

General 4 — Plein Air Grand Marais

Preus, Margi, Illustrated by David Geister. *Storm's Coming* Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN. 2016.

Children's book author Margi Preus created this lively children's story about a young girl who lives at Split Rock while her father is one of the resident lighthouse keepers. What struck me most in the story was the idea of portends, ways of forecasting or predicting the weather by the actions or interactions of animals in nature. When I decided to focus the research for the 1970's decade on the November Gales these portends became the basis for a suspenseful build up to the storm. I connected very strongly with this book's theme of "Warning." A lighthouse, the light, the foghorn, its very existence is based on warning of fog, warning of cliffs ahead, warning of wind, warning of danger. This book and the one listed below filled out an enormously interesting conflict for the November Gales and further, as a compassionate human being, helped me avoid delving into the loss of life from these Gales. A subject I am not qualified to research, nor do I wish to retraumatize families who are, to this day, living with the loss of a father, mother, brother who died because of these powerful weather patterns.

Mackay, Elly, *Red Sky at Night*, Penguin Random House Canada, Tundra, 2018.

Rice, Kathy, *Secrets of the Pie Place Café: Recipes and Stories Through the Seasons*. Lake Superior Port Cities, Inc. Duluth, MN, 2016.

Kathy Rice owner of the now closed The Pie Place Café in Grand Marais, MN divides her cookbook into the seasons of the year. Each recipe has a story from either her life, or from one of her customers. Notable for my research was the story in the Chapter "Summer Tastings" entitled "The Lure of the Lake." Here Ms. Rice tells the story of a family who traveled to the North Shore area starting in 1928 driving on a dirt road. This story was a crucial jumping off point for me in examining the 1920's decade and building of the Lake Superior Highway/Highway 61 and how that changed life at Split Rock Lighthouse. Though I did not try any of the recipes I admit to reading them with delight along with the stories. I enjoyed how Ms. Rice combines both clear culinary directions, a sort of whimsical this is how I'm connected to this story charm, and the stories themselves. I also value her overall theme as she writes in the introduction, "...Each person brings all that they are to the creative process of our culinary life as a restaurant family. Like a homemade pie, each slice is critical to the whole."

This resonates with me as a theater artist, writer, and actor bringing a story to life as a play and the collaborative process we go through as theater makers.

Radzak, Lee with Curt Stone. *The View from Split Rock: A Lighthouse Keeper's Life*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 2021.

Lee Radzak, Light House Keeper/Site Manager for Split Rock Lighthouse. Mr. Radzak's memoir of his 36-year career is filled with stories, history of the lighthouse, challenges, weather patterns, and wonderful photography of the site. Along with collaborator Curt Stone he writes insider stories of being, living, and working at this historical site for the main part of his career and life's work. He also includes his and his families' interactions with the Minnesota Historical Society, and the nearby community of Two Harbors, MN, and welcome and unwelcome tourists who visited the site. A naturalist at heart, a historian by passion his writing is alive with curiosity, honesty, and inside information one can only learn from someone who has lived it. This resource went above my expectations, I found myself coming back to it for inspiration during several of the decades research work. I feel fortunate that this book was released just as we began our research into the lighthouse.

Salas, Jo. *Improvising Real Life: Personal Story in Playback Theater*. Tusitala Publishing, New Paltz, NY, 2007.

Jo Salas, founder of playback theater an improvisational method that takes real life stories and puts them on stage, writes about the process of creating Playback theater. This book became extremely useful as a resource for the decades I wrote up with a closer bridge to performance such as the 1960's Decade and the 1990's decade. A major overall goal of this research project is creating a launch pad for the next step in development, creating an on-site performance piece customized to Split Rock Lighthouse and performed by actors/creators/visioners in the North Shore area. This book and my decades long experiences performing Playback Theater helped me write and research evocative moments/stories for our upcoming creative process.

Scriven, Hayes, Site Manager, Split Rock Lighthouse, Two Harbors, MN. In person interview, June 14, 2021. Dora Lanier, Darcey Engen in attendance.

We prepared for our interview with Hayes Scriven and our onsite visit to the Lighthouse by watching the below listed videos. The first one listed is a video "Documentary and Question and Answer Session" with Hayes Scriven and was particularly applicable to our time spent with Mr. Scriven. As we were meeting Mr. Scriven at the height of his busy season both Darcey and I felt it crucial to have

plentiful and public background information going into the interview. We hoped during our time together to focus on how Sod House Theater and the Lighthouse might partner to create a new performance piece. In that regard I confess to following the Lighthouse/Hayes Scriven on their Facebook page and watching countless beautiful videos of sunrises, sunsets, weather, the inside of the Keeper's house, and several "the tours are back" Lighthouse notifications. It was a fascinating period to track as the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were just being lifted and the lighthouse was not only coming out of its winter slow time but also a year of radical change in how they delivered content during the pandemic. On a personal note, I enjoyed seeing so much of Mr. Scriven's photography and was able to pass on my compliments to him at all the beauty he brought into my life during the winter of 2021 as I was learning more about the site.

[Hayes Scriven. Split Rock Lighthouse Modern Keeper of the Light on Vimeo](#)

[MN90: The Lighthouse Keeper's Mistake : Collections Online : mnhs.org](#)

[MN90: The Lure of the Lighthouse : Collections Online : mnhs.org](#)

[July 31, 1910: Split Rock Light burns for the first time – Zenith City Online](#)

[Documentary - Split Rock, The Superior Light - Bing video](#)

[The Family Lives of Split Rock's Keepers - Lake Superior Magazine](#)

Shapiro, Aaron. *The Lure of the North Woods: Cultivating Tourism in the Upper Midwest*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2013.

Excellent overview of the sights, sounds, smells to find along this famous highway. Informative and used as an overall introduction for me as I had never been to the North Shore.

Storlie, Virginia, President of the Tofte Historical Society. In person interview as we toured the North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum, Tofte, MN, June 16, 2021, Dora Lanier and Darcey Engen in attendance.

Virginia Storlie showed us through the exhibits answering our questions about the commercial fishing industry on the North Shore. Her comments, stories, and shared resources led to our work in the 1970's decade with its focus on November Gales, as well as the 1950s decade narrowing down to the story of Hemar Aakyik. Mrs. Storlie shared numerous newsletters of the museum with us which are a **Treasure Trove** for anyone researching the North Shore commercial fishing industry. Ms. Storlie was incredibly generous with her time and with the

information she gave us. I cannot say with enough emphasis how truly amazing this cache of newsletters is for people studying this topic. Also, in numerous newsletters there are calls for added information, new stories. For example, in Volume 28, Fall 2020 of the North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum Journal there is a call entitled: “We could use your stories” Where contact Robert Sve asks for stories from families who were involved in the commercial fishing industry. The editor of the journal also makes it easy for people in the industry to contact the journal to share information, stories, recipes, data, etc.

Newsletter used for 1950’s decade, “Helmar Aakvik’s Daring Rescue Attempt” from the North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum Journal – Newsletter, Volume 3, Fall 1995, Issue 4.

[North Shore Commerical Fishing Museum \(commercialfishingmuseum.org\)](http://commercialfishingmuseum.org)
[Thanksgiving ice-storm rescue highlighted in 'Bold Sea Stories' collection \(carnegiehero.org\)](http://carnegiehero.org)

[Carnegie Medal, \\$500 awarded one year after attempted rescue \(carnegiehero.org\)](http://carnegiehero.org)

[Helmer M. Aakvik – Carnegie Hero Fund Commission](#)

Schumacher, Michael. *Mighty Fitz: The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. Bloomsbury Press, New York NY. 2005.

[Listen to radio transmission on the night of the Edmund Fitzgerald's sinking | Michigan Radio](#)

Treuer, Anton. *Everything you Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask*. LQ - Levine Querido, Montclair, Amsterdam, New York, 2021.

Professor Anton Treuer is an American academic and author who has written over 14 books. He specializes in the Ojibwe language and American Indian Studies. A professor at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, MN his work in cultural studies, diversity, and education have brought him acclaim on many levels including being named a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow. This book is a revised edition of the same titled book first published in 2012. I found this book and the below sources extremely valuable in including the significant role of the Ojibwe people in this project. Professor Treuer has several YouTube videos which were also invaluable to the 2000 decade which explores the role of the Ojibwe

storyteller and how their work could be incorporated into our Lighthouse Performance piece.

Treuer, Anton. *Living our Language: Ojibwe Tales and Oral Histories*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 2001

One limitation I found in this book is I do not speak Ojibwe and the book is in part a collection to document and I would imagine celebrate the Ojibwe language.

Wallen, Ian, Tour Guide, Split Rock Lighthouse, Two Harbors, MN. In person interview following the “Keeper’s Tour.” June 14, 2021. Dora Lanier, Darcey Engen and six other tour goers for Keeper’s Tour. Dora Lanier, Darcey Engen for the interview after the tour.

Mr. Wallen, at the time of our meeting had been giving tours at the lighthouse for five years and classified as “Interpreter II.” A BFA candidate in acting at University of Minnesota-Duluth he was extremely helpful, professional, informative, and ably communicated his passion for history and especially Split Rock Light house. Our conversation was a direct inspiration for the 2020’s decade as in that decade we chose to focus on Tour Guides. I particularly enjoyed how he included two younger members of our tour, brothers aged @5 and @9. He taught both brothers how to turn the crank on the lighthouse just as the Keeper’s had done since 1910, displaying patience and a kind demeanor he helped the younger brother learn to turn the crank and encouraged us all to speculate on the weight being moved and how many rotations we would have to make. Overall, both Darcey and I considered the tour excellent and gave us even more foundational information for our interview with Site Manager, Hayes Scriven later that same day.

Wurzer, Cathy. *Tales of the Road: Highway 61*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008.

Excellent overview of the sights, sounds, smells to find along this famous highway. Very informative and used as an overall introduction for me as I had never been to the North Shore.

Internet Sources for “The Lure of the Smelt Fry” – Decade 2010

[Appetites: Smelt are a tasty small fry | MPR News](#)

[Community makes inaugural smelt fry a huge success | Columnists | hometownsource.com](#)

[Meet Beaver Bay - Lake Superior Magazine](#)