

November 7, 2023

To: The Supporters of the Benzie Area Historical Society & the Greater Benzie County Community  
From: Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels (BAHS Board); President *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co.  
Re: Kudos for the SESQUI ! ; “How Archibald Jones Came to Crystal Lake”

Greetings:

As we conclude the “**SESQUI-CENTENNIAL - The Lowering of Crystal Lake (1873-2023)**“, I wanted to thank all the many individuals and groups who made the celebration a success !

I’m certain, my alter ego, Archibald Jones, Jr., would have appreciated all of what we did in his honor ! His attempt to build a canal created the beach that led to the future development of Benzie County ! Let us leave this marvelous legacy of Crystal Lake and its Watershed to our future generations !

Most sincerely yours,

Dr. Stacy Leroy Daniels, President *pro tem*, Benzie Co. River Improvement Co.

Selected parallelisms to contemplate and imagined replies by “A.J.” (Archibald Jones):

“Lo! The level lake and the long glories of the winter moon.”  
– Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Le Mort d’Arthur*, 1835.

“So? To and fro. High and low, the levels go, and glory wanes.”  
– “A.J.” (Archibald Jones)

“You must not pump spring-water unaware, upon a gracious public full of nerves.  
Good things, not subtle, new yet orthodox, as easy reading as the dog-eared page.”  
– Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, 1864.

“I sprung lake water on the public unaware. I had my nerve.”  
– “A.J.” (Archibald Jones)

P.S. See online description of the 2023 “SESQUI” events; the “Commemorative Booklet (20pp), and the final program with photos and videos from Archibald Jones Day held on Labor Day, Sep 4. 2023!  
<http://www.crystalana.com/sesqui.htm> (follow the links to many other historical features of Crystal Lake!

The following essay describes the eventful coming of Archibald Jones to Crystal Lake:

**“How Archibald Jones Came to Crystal Lake” (SLD, October 4, 2023).**

Reference: Stacy Leroy Daniels, How Archibald Jones Came to Crystal Lake, Chap. II-6, pp 305-311, in “*The Comedy of Crystal Lake*”, (2015, 496pp). <http://crystallakecomedy.com/> ;  
Daniels, Stacy Leroy, The Park Place Hotel, The Walker-Jones House, Benzie Heritage 40(4), 1-3 (2021). [https://benziemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BAHS\\_FALL-2021-NEWSLETTER\\_WEB-with-Highlights.pdf](https://benziemuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BAHS_FALL-2021-NEWSLETTER_WEB-with-Highlights.pdf)

(Copies of “*The Comedy*” are available for reference/purchase at the Benzie Area Historical Museum.)

**“How Archibald Jones Came to Crystal Lake” [Letter, Benzie Banner 29(08), 1 (04 Oct 1923)].**

Recalls Introduction of Local Cashier  
Delaware, Ohio, Sept. 22, 1923

Dear Mr. (William) Case:

“I have received the *“Tragedy of Crystal Lake”* which maybe was sent by you or possibly by I. P. Jones. To me it recalls a peculiar incident vis: When Dr. Walker left Benzonia enroute to Wheaton, (I believe it was) he stopped at Irving Park (now a part of' Chicago) and was the guest of my home and parents.

Vividly I recall the occasion and of his explaining his change. He expressed a desire to make an exchange of his Benzie county properties for our home. Father could not then consider such an offer reasonably but introduced the Doctor to Archibald Jones who made a trade with the Doctor. Some years afterward my parents moved into the Walker-Jones house here (Benzonia) as renters and there they both passed away, 43 years ago . **Possibly had father not thought of Mr. Jones as one who might help the Doctor, Mr. Jones might not have ever heard of Crystal Lake (!).** Irving Park Jones was the first child born in our village of Irving Park and the writer well recalls his such introduction.”

Sincerely, Moulton Houk (emphasis added)

[Interpretation (SLD, October 4, 2023)]

Moulton Houk (1859-1924), general passenger agent of the Toledo & Ohio Central lines (1886 to 1917), wrote a revealing “Letter to the Editor” on how Archibald Jones (1811-1890) came to Crystal Lake in 1872 to found the Benzie Co. River Improvement Co., and attempt to build a canal to Lake Michigan. The letter was written Sep. 22, 1923, sent to the editor of the Benzie Banner, and published Oct. 4, 1923, a year after William L. Case (1856-1933) published his 17pp pamphlet, *“The Tragedy of Crystal Lake”* (1922). (The sequel, *“The Comedy of Crystal Lake”* (2015, 496pp), was published 92 years thereafter.)

This letter describes a chance meeting held in 1872 at the home Moulton Houk’s parents (both former Benzonians) living in Irving Park, IL (Chicago). The Rev. James Barr Walker (the then disgruntled, and now forgotten, founder of the Benzonia Colony) was passing through town on his way to assuming a teaching position at Wheaton College. He offered to exchange houses with the elder Houks, who were not interested. Upon learning that Walker’s new house in Benzonia was for sale, the Houks introduced him to Archibald Jones, Jr., a “bootstrap engineer and entrepreneur, visiting his son and new grandson nearby. Mr. Jones was looking for new endeavors and was enticed to make a “trade” (of unknown nature) with Dr. Walker. He and family members subsequently moved to Benzonia to fulfill his destiny!

Without this fateful meeting there would have been: no Archibald Jones coming to Crystal Lake; no lowering of Crystal Lake; no failure of a canal; no inundation of the surrounding lands; no successful creation of a magnificent beach; and, hence, no story of the early history to be told ! Archibald Jones left Crystal Lake after his Company went bankrupt in 1874, returning briefly in the 1880s. Moulton Houk’s parents moved back to Benzonia, and for a time actually rented the former Walker, now Jones, house. Moulton and his family of six children summered at Crystal Lake into the 1920s. William Case did not publish his remembrances of digging the canal in 1873 until 1923, and so was unaware, if ever, of the details of the fateful meeting, until 50 years latter during its semicentennial. By then the future of Benzie Co. was assured ! The Sesquicentennial of the epochal attempt was celebrated in 2023 !