



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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By Paul von Goertz - KRHCC Board Member

CRUSADER II GETS AN ENGINE - AND IT'S NO STRANGER TO KR

Ever since we began the restoration of CRUSADER II we have been looking for an appropriate engine. According to Mike Ojard, the original was a four-cylinder Lathrop made by Lathrop Engine Company out of Mystic, Connecticut. They produced very reliable marine engines from 1897 until at least the late 1950s. An internet search found only one and that was at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia, and, not surprisingly, they would not part with it.

Many engines in fish tugs up to the 1950s had marinized automobile engines, but we wanted a real period marine engine for CRUSADER II like the one it had, and thanks to Randy Ellestad's alert eye, we found one – on display at the Lake Superior Marine Museum in Duluth's Canal Park.



Photo: Engine from the front showing a large flywheel
Credit: Paul von Goertz

The engine is a two-cylinder, 12-horsepower gasoline common among marine engines used by commercial fishermen along the North Shore. Ironically, it was used in the 28' fish tug VEGA owned by Nils Lind of Knife River (KR). The engine features two sparkplugs per cylinder for dependability, and brass priming cups on each cylinder head for ease of starting. It was manufactured by Palmer Brothers Engines, Inc., out of Cos Cob, Connecticut. The company dates to the early 1900s so apparently was a pioneer in marine gas engines. The engine was restored and donated to the Lake Superior Marine Museum by Clarence M. Swenson of French River. Clarence was a cousin to the Nils Lind.

While the engine's horsepower is a bit modest for a displacement fish tug like CRUSADER II, its special features, great condition, eye appeal and ties to KR's

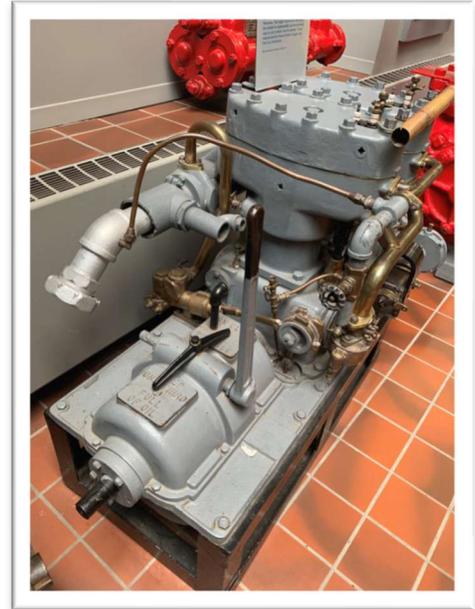
NEWSLETTER

commercial fishing history made it a good choice. The Palmer will be on loan from the Lake Superior Marine Museum by a unanimous vote of the LSMMA board of directors to the KRHCC'S request.

The Palmer will be installed this summer as a nonfunctioning display engine. Many thanks to Randy Ellestad for finding the engine, stick-handling the loan and for picking it up. And, many thanks to Sara Summers, marine museum executive director, and the board of the LSMMA for the loan of the engine until at least 2044.

Photo: Engine from the back showing the transmission.

Credit: Paul von Goertz



Editor's note: The Museum (LSMMA) opened in 1974. To create awareness for the opening, I was one of four divers to retrieve an anchor off the whaleback THOMAS WILSON sunk off Leif Erikson Park in June of 1902. We donated it to the museum, the retrieval of which received widespread publicity. The WILSON was downbound loaded with iron ore when it was T-boned by the upbound wooden steamer GEORGE HADLEY because of a mix-up in passing signals. It sank within minutes in 70 feet of water with the loss of nine lives. The anchor is on display near the far south end of the Lakewalk. We never asked or expected anything from the museum for this donation, but the loan of the Palmer for me sure brings that donation full circle!

CALLING ALL THIRD GENERATIONS OF FOUNDING FISHING FAMILIES! WE NEED YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORIC PHOTOS

The third generation of KR's founding fishing families are probably all in their 70s now and starting to wonder what to do with all those family photos. The KRHCC is interested in those that show scenes in whole or in part any aspect of commercial fishing, boating, railroading, commercial buildings, community events and anything that depicts KR life up through the 1960s. We're not too interested in those that depict your family's special events like Uncle Ray's 90th birthday.

If you have any questions about the value of a photo(s) to the KRHCC, email me at: vongoertzpaul@yahoo.com You can keep the original, we will copy it. Any photo you donate will be credited to you.

DEPOT APRON WAS NO SMALL PROJECT IN EARLY 1900s



Credit KRHCC historians Randy Ellestad and Todd Lindahl for this historic photo; Randy for finding the photo and Todd for telling us what we're looking at.

The photo was not dated but a good guess is that it is 1900 or 1901. The depot arrived on two flatcars from Lester Park in December of 1899. Streetcar service from downtown Duluth had reduced rail service to Lester Park to where the depot was unnecessary. Knife River was booming and needed a depot. Once here, a concrete slab was needed for a siding and a loading platform.

The photo appears to be professionally taken as it is of reasonably good quality, and all the men are posing. The depot is about twice the size of our depot today. Two waiting rooms, one for men and one for women, were originally built as at the time men – mostly loggers – chewed, drank, used profanity, had lice and smelled bad. Sometime in the 1920s as logging activity diminished, it was decided the men's waiting room and a storage room were no longer needed and so were removed.

Thanks to Todd's discerning eye, we know what's going on this photo.

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Key to significant elements in the photos:

Station #1 - Concrete forms

Station #2 - Water tank for steam locomotives (partially hidden by depot)

Station #3 - Top of order board pole. The pole on site now is in near exact location

Station #4 - Telegraph pole

Station #5 - Cement mixer

Station #6 - Upright steam boiler to power the engine that rotates the mixer

Station #7 - Wheelbarrow ramp for dumping gravel.



Gravel for the concrete came by rail and dumped on site. Beach rock might have been used as it is washed clean. When the apron was broken up and replaced in 2021, it could be seen that rocks in the concrete were rounded, indicating they were once beach stones.



Photo on left, Mike Ostman Trucking and Excavating did a very professional job removing the cracked and heaved original concrete apron, without damaging existing usable sections along the railroad right-of-way. *Photo on right*, volunteers screed freshly-poured concrete.

Credits: Paul von Goertz

Many thanks to KRHCC historians Todd Lindahl and Randy Ellestad for giving us this interesting slice of KR history.

“MEMORIAL TREES” CAN HONOR A LOVED ONE AND BEAUTIFY KRHCC SITE

The KRHCC will complete its grading and drainage plan this summer in preparation for the pouring of the slab for LEIF ERIKSON’s shelter. Its completion means we can now consider planting “memorial trees” adjacent to the swale along the north boundary of the site, and along Marina Road on our west border. The swale has been contracted to Shoreview Natives. The trees along the north border will form a visual border between the KRHCC and the Knife River Campground and eventually provide shade for seasonal campers.

Memorial trees are specifically planted in memory of a deceased loved one and can serve as a living tribute to honor their life. Memorial trees grow and thrive over time, creating a long-lasting testament to the life of a loved one. The act of planting a tree can be a therapeutic experience for those who have lost a loved one, offering a sense of connection and closure. They offer a distinctive alternative to traditional memorials, such as gravestones or a plaque.

From an environmental perspective, trees play a critical role in our ecosystem by providing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, and supporting wildlife habitats.

The KRHCC has worked with Anderson’s Greenhouse in Two Harbors to put a memorial tree program in place. They will provide trees native to our area and climate, plant them, fertilize, wrap and stake them, and provide care including watering for the first three months following planting. Cost is \$600 per tree in the ground.

Trees offered with descriptions are as follows:

St. Croix Elm Tree

An American elm tree with a vase shape and an open, spreading canopy. Its summer foliage is a beautiful dark green with a fall foliage turning a wonderful yellow. Expected mature height 60'-70' and a mature spread 70'-90'.

Fall Fiesta Sugar Maple Tree

Branching is full and symmetrical upright and rounded. Beautiful leathery, glossy, deep green leaves. Outstanding fall color shows far more oranges and reds than other sugar maples. Expected mature height 50'-70' and mature spread 50.'

Bur Oak Tree

This oak has attractive corky bark especially in the winter. A rounded and open-shaped tree. The foliage is dark green above and grayish beneath in the summer turning yellowish-brown to purple in the fall. Expected mature height 60'-70' and mature spread 60'-70'.

The space along north and west borders can accommodate an estimated at 12 -15 trees. Planting time-line depends upon the completion of planting the swale with native shrubs and plants, pouring of the slab for the Viking ship, and the optimum time window for planting. Trees can be planted up to first week in September. It is possible the tree planting may extend into spring 2025. For now, if a memorial tree at the site of the KR’s heritage center appeals to your family, please email: info@krhcc.org

CARP IN THE KNIFE RIVER

One might wonder what large carp, an ugly and oily freshwater fish, would be doing in a designated steelhead river like the Knife. Yet they were there in the river basin in the mid-'80s in great numbers from under the railroad bridge to the mouth. Many KR residents saw the gross bottom feeders, which Mike Ojard recalls seeing as far back as 1972. Image: The American carp, Photo: Public Domain



My own experience seeing carp in the river was at a Fourth of July community celebration at the rec field about 1987. Young boys, including our oldest son about age 12, departed the celebration and came back holding carp 10 -15 lbs. by the gills. They had snagged them with treble hooks off the railroad bridge, then walked them to shore. (violations of both trespassing and snagging fish).

The fish could easily be seen from the bridge as there were many of them judging by their dorsal and tail fins breaking the surface. As more and more carp were brought to the ballfield, a contest began as to who would catch the biggest fish.

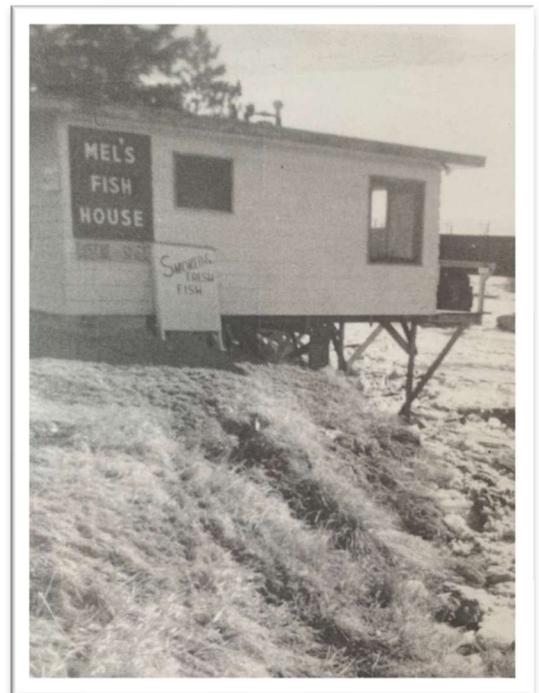
Mike Ojard recalls it was Mel Bugge who initiated the competition.

At the time, *Mel's Fish House* was partially cantilevered over the east side of the river off Scenic 61 and so a good vantage point to see the carp swirling below.

Image right is of Mel and Sophie Bugge's fish stand, photo credit to Kay Struve.

The run of carp was short-lived, maybe a week. Some thought they came out of the Duluth harbor. I contacted Cory Goldsworthy from the DNR's Lake Superior area fisheries to ask if there were ever any reports of carp in North Shore rivers and he said they had none.

I usually try to document my newsletter stories to a credible source, but this one must rely on memories of several people.



CRUSADER SHELTER WILL RELY ON “VALUE ENGINEERED MODIFICATIONS” TO KEEP PRICE WITHIN WHAT WE’VE RAISED.

We were introduced to a new building term after meeting with shelter builder Tim Anderson of Tim Anderson Construction of KR. The term is “value engineered.” According to Investopedia, it is a systematic, organized approach to providing necessary functions in a project at the lowest cost.” In other words, *we gotta find ways to get the biggest bang for the bucks we have.*

How nice it would be if we just had a few more bucks to add some Scandinavian flare to our design to separate its appearance from a hay barn. Can you help? All donations are fully IRS tax-deductible. Send to KRHCC, PO Box 240, Knife River, MN 55609. Thank you!

CORRECTION

In the March issue we had a story about CRUSADER having a tiller and credited Mike Fitzgerald for documenting that fact. We misspelled Mike’s last name. Should be Fitzpatrick. Your writer regrets the error.

The KRHCC is a 501 (c3) non-profit so all donations whether in the form of a memorial, honorarium, or sponsorship are fully tax deductible. Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org

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