The subsequent speech by Judge Joseph McCloud reflects the early settlement of the Western Lake Superior region, including Bayfield, Chequamegon Bay, and La Pointe in the “New Wisconsin.” He also references points of interest on the Minnesota shores of the Great Lake.

Twould be risky business for the transcriber to assign the Judge the notoriety of being Bayfield’s first historian, but that as an intellectual and academic type of scholar he certainly holds his ground. Hereafter the reader meets the Judge in the prime time of his life.
In reading the history of the world we cannot avoid noticing that certain periods are pretty eminently distinguished by the great actions of men, periods when the whole civilized world appeared moved by one impulse perhaps of conquest, perhaps of discovery and perhaps of religion. Eras of enterprise or man's blood seem to know no feeling but activity, their soul’s desire but the accomplishment of memorable dates. We have seen these days of action which were most generally bloody and tumultuous, succeeded by years of calm, peaceful and of striking events that we could almost believe the fire in man's blood has gone entirely out.

The Age of Louis XIV of France was one of striking interest in the world's history; a spirit of adventure possessed all the civilized governments of Europe; discovery after discovery was made of new regions, and the glowing and romantic accounts published of their riches, beauty and strange inhabitants, was the all absorbing topic from the princes to the peasant. It has not been strange that the monarchs of Europe should desire to possess the lands whose wealth was represented to be incalculable, and from such sources re-establish their depleted treasuries; still less remarkable is that of the society of the Jesuits, whose missions at that time covered the known world, and who began to hope for a blessing that was to be expected on the full firm and of the command of the Savior to preach the gospel.
I remark it is still strange, that this society should take the liveliest interest in these discoveries, either most active in making them, and the first to project new ones. And although it is difficult to tell who displayed most zeal, the trader or the missionary, it is not a hard matter to say whose motives command our admiration, whose memory our respect, who sufferings in devotions our sympathy is held in esteem. So we find the members of this society hand-in-hand with the government in these discoveries; accompanying every expedition, as objective in accomplishing many of their own, establishing missions at every point; doing all in their power for the benefit of the savages, and opposing from that day to this with all their might, the introduction of ardent spirits among them. It is impossible to look at the labors of these men, without admiration, who bore the cross to the banks of the St. Mary, and the confines of Lake Superior and looked wistfully towards the home of the Sioux Indian in the Valley of the Mississippi, five years before Apostle Eliot had addressed the peoples that dwelt within six miles of Boston Harbor. And Dr. Neal says, “Some years before the Puritan Robinson landed on the icy coast of Plymouth, the disciples of St. Francis had penetrated the forest, even to the waters that empty into Lake Huron. Before the Mayflower, with their precious freight, weighed anchor from Southampton, there was a French settlement at Québec. Before Harvard University was in operation, the disciples of Ignatius Loyola were establishing educational institutions on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, and the renowned Richelieu assisted to endow a public hospital under the care of the Ursulines.”

As early as 1634 two priests, Brefoef and Daniel erected a mission on the shores of Lake Huron; and in 1641 priests of the same order passed through the river Ottawa, coasted along the shores of Lake Huron to visit by invitation the old Jew boys at the outlet of Lake Superior.

A voyage of 17 days, they arrived at the Falls of St. Marie (Sault Ste Marie, Michigan) where they found assembled two thousand of that tribe. Here they learned much and calculated to influence the seal of their society, but it was not until 1654, 13 years after the two adventurous young men, engaged in deferred trade followed the Indians on their hunting excursions for two years and are probably the first white men who gazed on Lake Superior.

They returned to Québec, giving such glowing accounts of this great inland sea that even the Bishop of Québec volunteered to be the first to plant the symbol of his faith among the newly discovered tribes. It was at length determined that the aged Menard, with much experience among the Indians of Western New York, should be the
first missionary to go to the shores of Lake Superior. I cannot do better than give the words of Dr. Neal in speaking
of Menard, he says: “his hair whitened with age, his mind ripened by long periods, and acquainted with the
peculiarities of Indian character, he had been the man for the mission.” The night before he started the eyes of the
venerable priest were not closed. He thought much of his friends, and knowing that he was about to go into a land
of barbarians, two hours after midnight he penned the following letter to a brother missionary.

“Reverend Father-- The peace of Christ be with you. I write to you probably the last word, which, I hope will be the
seal of our friendship until eternity. Love whom the Lord Jesus did not disdain to love; to the greatest of sin
ners; for he loves whom he loathes with the cross. Let your friendship, good father, be useful to me by the desirable fruits
of your daily sacrifice.

In three or four months you may remember me at the moment for the dead on account of my old age, my weak
constitution and the hardships that weigh amongst these tribes. Nevertheless I am in peace, for I have not been led
to this mission by any temporal mode, but I think it was by the voice of God. Eternal remorse would have
tormented me, had I not come when I had the opportunity. We have been little surprised, not being able to provide
ourselves with vestments, and other things; but we will face such as little birds enclose the lilies of the fields, will
take care of the servants, and then that it should happen that we should die with one, we would esteem ourselves
happy.

I am loaded with affairs. All I can do is to recommend our journey to your daily sacrifices, and to embrace you
with the sentiments of heart as I hope to do in eternity. My Reverend Father- your most humble and affectionate
servant in Jesus Christ.” R. Menard

From the Three Rivers, this 27th of August, two o'clock after midnight 1660, Dr. Neal continues, “this letter is
touching in its simplicity and could hardly have been written by one who had not been filled with the spirit of Jesus,
and as soon as a Christian people begin to dwell upon the shores of Lake Superior it will be involved in their
literature, and read and admired by those whose tastes are refined.”

Menard's anticipations were realized; in a few months he was added to “the memento to of death.” Immediately
after he penned this letter he started with a band of Ottawa for Lake Superior; and underwent great hardships on the
journey reaching on 15, October the bay which he named St. Theresa, and is supposed to have been the Bay of
Keweenaw. After a residence of faith for eight months, amid piles of ice and snow, and with his life in hand he
accepted the invitation of some Huron, according to Charlieoux, to go to their island home at LaPointe, then called
by them Chewamigan and, by Menard, the Isle of Saint Michael. He commenced his journey accompanied by a
faithful man named John Greerer with the service of the missionary many years. On 20, August 1661, being obliged
to walk some distance in order to avoid rapids, and while his old servant was making the portage with this canoe, he
entered the woods and was lost. To this day it is unknown whether the aged man perished from starvation, or by
violence from the savages. But there appears to be well grounded hope that the provenance which feeds a little bird
in the desert and encloses the wild flowers of the forest he became a shepherd and that when he came to die he was
enabled to dwell with profit on the following sentences of his well found breviary: “the Lord is my shepherd.”

On the news of the death of this little man reaching Quebec, Claude Allouez, also a Jesuit, volunteered to continue
the labors ended in a so melancholy manner, and reached the shores of Lake Superior in 1665; pushing beyond
Ontonogon, he did not stop until he reached the island of LaPointe, the ancient residence of the of the Chippewa.
During his residence here he was the first white man to hear of the existence of the great river which he calls
Mississippi. His laborers were so successful, that he returned to Quebec for assistance, and caring there on but two
days he was on return accompanied by a fellow laborer named Nicholas. In 1668 they were joined by Dablond and
Marquette; the latter afterword renowned for his discovery of the Mississippi River. Speaking of the mission says
Bancroft, “on the shores of the bay to which the abundant fisheries attracted crowds, the channel so rose and the
mission of the Holy Spirit was founded. The admiring throngs, who had never seen a European, came to gaze on the
white man, and on the pictures which he displayed of the realms of hell in of the last judgment. There a choir of
chapel was taught to chant the patter and the eye.”

Allouez became weary of the obstinate unbelief of the savages and left the mission in 1669, Marquette taking his
place, who speaks of the attack of the Sioux and the Huron’s and all of LaPointe in 1670; and in 1671 the mission
was abandoned on account of the war raging between these tribes; and the lake was left without a white resident; the
Sault Ste. Marie was the nearest French settlement. Here the mission house was burned in 1674 in a conflict between the Sioux.

Although the missionaries appear to have abandoned Lake Superior at this time, it is not so for the trader; for we find Sueur Daniel Duluth an intelligent and enterprising man from Lyon's, in the year 1678 establish a first trading post on Lake Superior, at the mouth of Pigeon River; and towards the end of July 1680 accompanied by five men he crossed from the lake to the Mississippi meeting Hennepin at his camp on the St. Francis, now Elk River. Duluth undoubtedly deserves the credit of being the first white man making this tour. He also appears to have discovered Mille Lacs and caused the Kings arms to go where no Frenchman had ever been and at two other villages of the Sioux 120 leagues further – almost reaching the Red River of the North. Duluth is considered the discoverer of Minnesota; he was a brave soldier, and took an active part in the war between the English and the French in 1687, being a commander at Fort Frontenac, where he died in 1710.

We have an account of Le Sueur being commissioned by Frontenac to establish a post at La Pointe in 1693. But I can find no account of his ever going there and it is hardly probable he went as we find in the month of September 1718, Captain St. Perrie, with Ensign Linctot, who had succeeded St. Pierre, was ordered by presence, in the promise of the missionary, to endeavor to detach the Dakotas from their alliance with the Fox tribes.

At this time Linctot made arrangements for peace between the Ojibway and the Sioux and sent to them Frenchman to dwell in the villages of the latter, with the promise that if they ceased to fight the Ojibway they should have regular trade and a priest to reside with them. At this early date a French officer was commissioned to open a northern route to the Pacific and going westward from the Grand Portage at Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg. Ascending the Assiniboine, he struck out on the plains and for several days journeyed towards the Rocky Mountains. Here he established some six commercial ports on the road, but difficulties with the Indians forced him to return.
About 1745 the English influence which had been constantly increasing began to assume an appearance of actual hostility; and not only were the French voyageurs robbed and maltreated on Lake Superior, but even then the commandant at Mackinac was exposed to insolence, and there was no security anywhere.

It was not long before Canada was fairly enveloped in a war within New York and New England colonies. I cannot in this lecture give a history of this war as neither my time nor your patience would permit, but we will notice that in 1748 La Rhonde started for LaPointe, and Veranderri for Fond du Lac, to prevent by their presence the dissatisfaction of the Indians, in the incursions of the English.

At the end of the war and after the disturbance of commerce incidents, trade with the Indians again became an object and in 1776 traders left Mackinac, and proceeded as far as the Pigeon River. Thomas Curry ventured as far as the Valley of Saskatchewan and James Finley established a post in the same valley as high as the 48.5° of latitude. This excited the curiosity of the Hudson Bay Company, who tried to counteract the enterprise with private traders; in 1780 the Indians destroyed a post on the Assiniboine, and later plotted to extirpate the traders; but the smallpox breaking out among them prevented the massacre. The Northwest Fur Company was founded in 1783 with 16 shares, entrusted to the management of the brothers Frobisher and McTavish at Montréal. There being dissatisfaction among some, an opposition company was formed after a keen rivalry was merged in the Northwest in 1786. From that time the fur trade of the Northwest became systemized, two agents at Montréal received the goods from England, and two went every year to Grand Portage to receive packs shipped for Europe.

In 1798 the company reorganized at the close of the last century and had in their employee, 50 clerks, 75 interpreters and 1120 canoes. In July the voyageurs began to assemble at Grand Portage to settle accounts and receipts at the new office, and at times more than 1000 were assembled together. The proprietors, clerks, guides and interpreters all met in one large hall, at different tables, and the labors of the day being over, the fiddlers were brought in and were looked forward to with pleasure by the trader at the lonely outpost.

In 1784 we find Alexander Henry with his clerk Perrault arriving at La Pointe from Montréal, and soon after reaching Fond du Lac, where at this time Default was clerk of the Northwest Company, appears to of had a partner named Harris whom he met at this place, where they traded during the winter; and in a drunken quarrel was stabbed in the neck by an Indian, and starting for Montréal for medical assistance, died after passing Mackinac.

The Treaty of 1783 between Great Britain and the United States provided that the British traders and settlers should be allowed to enjoy all their former privileges without becoming citizens the United States; and the Northwest Company taking advantage of this clause, not only established posts all over Minnesota but even created civil chiefs among the Indians to whom they presented the colors and metals of his Britannic Majesty. Not until the year 1805 were these difficulties put at rest by Congress by passing a law that no foreigner should engage in union trade without becoming a citizen.

In 1809 John Jacob Astor organized the American Fur Company, making their principal post on Lake Superior at LaPointe, while the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies were engaged in one of the most barbaric quarrels which ever disgraced humanity, a quarrel whose deeds of atrocity would shame the very savages they sneered at. The American Fur Company reports their business reaping a rich harvest; and before the belligerent parties had made peace, secured all that was worth having of the trade. We now see a difference in the manner of doing business on the lake. The fleets of canoes no longer start on their voyage, delayed by every wind, encumbered with their hundreds of voyageurs, coasting along the points and bays, and being months making a trip.

Sailing vessels, one after another, made their appearance. The Northwest Company at the beginning present century had four sailing vessels on the lake. The schooner Bearu which was lost at Whitefish Point in 1811; the Otter, lost on Terrible Island; the Mink lost at the Sioux Rapids, and the brig Recovery which was run over the rapids in 1813, were property of this company. The American Fur Company built the brig Astor in 1835 at the Sault Ste. Marie. The schooner Whitefish was built at the Sault in 1837, and owned by the Hudson Bay Company. The American Fur Company built the schooner Brewster at Sault Ste. Marie in 1838, and the Siskowit at LaPointe in 1839; the last named was lost in the Chocolate River in 1853. The brig Napoleon, an afterward propeller, was built at the Sault Ste. Marie in 1849. And Captain Bayfield, of her Majesty's Royal Navy, surveyed in the schooner Bullfrog from 1821 to 1825.
To the middle of the present century there appears to have been but one object of trade of Lake Superior. Fur, with a grand production of the country; and this so entirely was controlled by companies who could, and did monopolize them, that there was no encouragement for private traders to come here; the mineral wealth of the mountains would attract the eyes of the world, while then undisturbed; and not known of them but by hearsay of the most fabulous nature; it is not strange that in the year 1836 there should be about 130 white inhabitants living on Lake Superior. The settlements on the lake at that time were, commencing at the Sault Ste. Marie; first one trader at Sand Island, one trader at L’Anse, and a Methodist missionary; one trader at Iron River; the American Fur Company supposed at LaPointe, and the missionary, Mr. Hall; the American Fur Company supposed at Fond du Lac, and Bishop Baraga as missionary; the same company also having supposed at Grand Portage. Fort William, the Hudson Bay Company post; Mischicoten River, the post of the Northwest Fur Company, and at Badgawaming, 60 miles above the Sault Ste. Marie.

With the exception in Fort William, these places were but mere posts in charge of one man with the stock of such goods as the Indians were in the habit of exchanging for furs. Among the American fur traders, LaPointe was looked to with about the same feeling as an interior countrymen thinks of New York and the Emperor of Haydee Hurley demanded or received greater honors, then the company's agent at LaPointe; it was the Mecca of the voyageurs hopes, the place where he made his yearly pilgrimage, where he could get everything he needed and a good man had the privilege of getting drunk once a year; and after a short but pleasant visit, he would take up his pack with a light heart and start forward from the lonely outpost, as happy as any man in the world, with cornmeal and tallow for his food, and sometimes tea to drink, but not always. These days have passed away; it is a rare treat now to hear the voyageurs song timing to the dip of his paddle to the course of a dozen voices, echoing along the Rocky shores of Get-chi-giom-mi, and it is indeed a great location that gathers together enough Indians for dance.

About the year 1840 the mineral resources of the lake began to be develop, mining companies formed as surveys by competent geologists were made and when the immense richness of these mines was first published it produced excitement in a series of successful and unsuccessful speculation unprecedented. The rapid influx of immigration made a larger number of vessels indispensable and in the year 1837 the schooner Algonquin was hauled over the Sioux portage, and launched on Lake Superior. In 1840 the schooner Elizabeth followed; in 1843 the Swallow; in 1844 the Chippewa, the Uncle Tom and the propeller Independence, the first steam vessel on the Lake. In 1845 the schooner Florence and the steamer Julia Palmer were the first side wheel steamers on the Lake. In 1847 the propeller Monticello; in 1850 the steamer Baltimore; in 1851 the steamer Sam Ward; and in 1852 the steamer Illinois passed the canal at Sault Ste. Marie, opening a continuous communication between the largest body of fresh water in the world and the Atlantic.

That the increased development of the country could warrant such an augmentation of vessels was of course very great, new mines were starting, new companies forming and new town springing up every month, the difficulty appeared to be to say what there was not. Missions, both Protestant and Catholic, were started on all sides; the Protestant mission at LaPointe under Mr. Hall, being the first. Mr. Hall and wife arrived at La Pointe, August 30, 1831, traveling from Mackinac in an open boat, in the company with Mr. Warren, at that time in charge of the fur companies post. Mr. Ayer also accompanied them and took charge of the school which was immediately established, but the next year Mr. Ayer removed to Sandy Lake and was succeeded by Mr. Boutwell. The Roman Catholic mission was soon after established and the first chapel built at the bridge. The mission at Bad River was established many years ago by Mr. Wheeler and wife, assisted by Ms. Spooner.

The County now increases so rapidly in population and importance that we find it difficult to trace its successive steps. The first mining operations on the lake commenced in the vicinity of Fort Wilkin, in what was called the black oxide theme in the year 1840, and Copper Harbor was started at the same time. In 1841 the Eagle River diggings, now the Phoenix mine, was commenced, and so ore was found for the first time in any quantity, the excitement was great in Eagle River and became a town the same year. Eagle Harbor was also started at this time on the strength of mines opening in this vicinity. Ontononogon was started in 1843 and has become one of the most populous and important places on the lake. Marquette, now the most flourishing town on the lake was commenced in 1849, although a settlement had been made at Carp River a few years earlier. In less than 10 years she is employing hundreds of sail vessels, has a railroad, and is growing in the very times of pressures and panics. Superior was commenced in 1853 and up to the time of the panic, was a miracle of progress.
In 1840 half a dozen little schooners were amply sufficient to carry on the business of the great trading monopolies, and the two or three hundred white inhabitants of Lake Superior, had now increased to many thousand people, engaged in every branch of industry; mining, farming, trading, manufacturing, preaching, teaching, doctoring and lawering; with churches, schools and courthouses; with lyceum's and libraries; emigrants from nearly all corners of the globe; with resources so far developed that they may well be considered inexhaustible, with the healthiest claim on the globe and no longer the wild savages to make them afraid, for on this onward march of the restless Caucasian race, the red monarch of the wood and waters, almost without a murmur retreats farther and farther towards the setting sun.

Their day is o’er
Their fires are out from shore to shore,
No more for them the wild deer bounds
Their plough is on their hunting grounds,
The pale man’s axe rings through their woods,
The pale man's sails skim o’er their floods
Their pleasant springs are dry;
The children look by power oppressed,
Beyond the mountains of the West,
Their children go to die.

We have thus glanced rapidly over some of the leading incidents of the discovery in settlement of Lake Superior, we have given you a short history of the past, imperfect and incomplete certainly but to show how wealth and resources may lie undeveloped for centuries; the object which first attracted attention are in reality the least important. The thousands of savage conversions early Jesuits underwent so much are nearly gone, what remained present are anything but an encouraging field for influence of Christianity; in the fur trade which was considered a source of such great importance that nobility encouraged.

Is it now hardly worth notice the cargoes of copper and iron, and agriculture neglected as it has been is of even more importance than the business which at one time was the envy of the commercial world. Comparing what has been with what is, may not be pardon predicting the future such as our hearts desire, or even greater than any of us have anticipated very such things that have happened in the last 20 years blaming not the next 20, witnessing equal progress? Why not the iron horse shrieking your populous cities, hundreds of docks being crowded by thousands of vessels, our markets overflowing with produce from the surrounding country, our inhabitants numbered by tens and tens of thousands, our schoolhouses become colleges, our churches, cathedrals, our dwellings, palaces, our cities renowned not only for the rapid growth and commercial prosperity; but the integrity of their people, their institutions of learning and benevolence. Enterprise in order; these things all may be.

We are strong in the faith and we believe they will be, and in future years when none of the oldest have since gathered to talk over the times, when the Lake Superior region contained a few hundred people, they will look back to these as the good old times, and congratulate each other and as their lot should have been cast in this healthful and prosperous section, where they enjoyed so much comfort and so many blessings; for happiness is not so often found in the possession of wealth, luxuries, power as with those would've felt some privations, suffered some hardships, and overcome by many difficulties.”

[1] In the Bayfield County Press Saturday, December 1, 1900 is offered the obituary of Judge McCloud which states, "he died at the home of Mr. B.A. Brown, on a Wednesday night, after an illness of three weeks. Judge McCloud has made Bass Island his home for a number of years. In his younger days he was very prominent at Washington, District of Columbia, and in this section of the country for many years. He was one of the earliest settlers in Northern Wisconsin. During his early days here he was in Judge and in the hardware business.”

The Washburn Times in writing of Judge McCloud in the November 14th, 1899 issue states, "Perhaps very few people know who Judge McCloud is, whose life is slowly ebbing away. Thirty-five years ago he was one of the most prominent men in Northern Wisconsin, and was one of the first district attorneys of LaPointe County. LaPointe County was then pretty much of everything in Northern Wisconsin. Later he held other county offices and was for a long time County Judge. Now he is a very old man, and has for many years lived alone on Bass Island, near Bayfield, holding the titles, it is said, for certain property holders, who have furnished him with provisions about
once a week. Here the old man lives a hermit life, shut off from the outside world, and all alone on the little island. Very few boats stop over at Bass Island. But occasionally a private yacht or sail boat goes to the place. Two or three times the writer has visited the place and met the venerable old Judge. He is a feeble old man, and has long been in his second childhood. His sight is almost gone, yet he has managed to do his own cooking and take care of his own house. The old man has an organ and a cat - his only companions. Upon the approach of visitors the cat takes to the woods, and to all appearances is almost wild, except to the caresses of the feeble old man. The Judge imagines he is quite a composer, and delights to play original selections on the dilapidated old organ for his friends or visitors. The poor old man is in his dotage and when death comes to him it will no doubt be a welcome visitor. He is one of last of the old men, who in the early days was prominent in the affairs of Northern Wisconsin." [End]