

HOUSEMOVING COMPLETED

(from Ashland Press by Chick Sheridan)

With the transport of three "sea-going" homes across three miles of Lake Superior to this historic village on Madeline Island safely completed, the most interesting and dramatic housemoving operation in this region's history is drawing to a close. The homes are now on the beach here awaiting the last lap of their journey, in a day or so, to new sites in the woods east of the golf course.

The drama began with disaster last March when the first of a quartet of houses at Port Superior marina was moved across the ice toward Madeline Island. About a mile short of its destination the house went through thin ice and the six-wheel-drive tractor that was towing it plunged to the bottom, along with a heavy towing frame of steel beams and two very heavy dollies.

After hanging in the ice almost totally submerged for over two weeks, the house was sunk to the bottom ninety feet below. Efforts to raise the truck and towing frame through the ice were unsuccessful and were abandoned until the ice was gone. In May, the house was raised from the bottom by a large crane on Skipper Ed Erickson's LCT "Outer Island" and towed to shallow water at Bayfield. The tractor and the towing frame were also lifted and taken to Bayfield and then to Minneapolis for re-conditioning. When efforts were made to move the house to a pier, it began to break up and was finally salvaged in pieces.

The bizarre mishap and the salvage efforts received nationwide publicity by television and newspapers and even appeared in European papers.

Three houses remained at Port Superior to be moved to Madeline Island. They were built several years ago by Post Industries for display homes and rental. Bought by Northern State Bank of Ashland in a foreclosure sale, they were sold by the bank to John Alberg and Paul Huber of the Twin Cities, who planned to move them to the Island for placement on sites in the woods east of the golf course.

Dale Movers of Minneapolis still held the moving contract and Harry Nelson, La Pointe contractor, took the job of getting the house across the water. Using the same six-wheel drive tractor that went through the ice in March and lay on the bottom until May, Dale Movers pulled the houses, one at a time, out of the woods near Highway 13 and towed them one-quarter mile to the Port Superior marina, where each was pushed on to Nelson's large steel barge. They were then towed by Nelson's diesel tug, "Eclipse" to the island and put off on the beach at the village, where they are now awaiting the final lap.

The moving job on land was supervised by Lyle Phine, foreman for Dale Movers, and the water transport by Arnold, Ronald and Wayne Nelson, sons of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Nelson, La Pointe.