



From Cut-over to Clover *By Olivia Ernst*

REBRANDING THE UPPER PENINSULA



When loggers departed the Upper Peninsula for the woods of the far west, they left behind miles of barren fields riddled with stumps. But a Menominee newspaper editor named Roger Andrews saw the cleared acreage as an opportunity for the U.P. to reinvent itself as an agricultural environment. With the cooperation of like-minded businessmen and civic leaders, the peninsula was reconceived as “Cloverland.”



At the turn of the 20th century, Michigan’s Upper Peninsula faced a serious problem. Its famous forests had been felled by loggers who—after stripping the land of this natural resource—moved west to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and beyond. All that was left behind was cut-over land: fields of stumps surrounded by clover, “planted” by teams of horses that had hauled hay to the lumber camps.

With the loss of this prime industry came a loss in population. Many townships, like McMillan in Ontonagon County, saw their numbers cut in half between 1900 and 1910. It was obvious that the region needed to change to survive. But change into what?

Andrews Takes Up the Cause

The effort to diversify the Upper Peninsula economy found its leader in Roger Andrews, a businessman and publisher of the *Menominee Herald-Leader*. In 1904, Andrews established the *Northwestern Farmer*, an

agricultural magazine that advertised the availability of U.P. land alongside articles proclaiming the advantages of the peninsula’s growing climate. The magazine claimed that there was “no more productive land to be found anywhere for root crops” and heralded the benefits of clover for dairy producers. Area mining companies contributed by offering acreage for sale at unusually low rates, with the only condition being that farmers had to sell back any remaining wood found on the property. The railroad companies followed suit, hoping to encourage settlers who would use their lines to ship agricultural products. Even private landowners like Marquette’s J.M. Longyear got into the act, selling more than 250,000 acres to willing settlers.

Andrews’ passion for the U.P. also came through in his eloquent speeches. “No matter where the first Garden of Eden was located,” he once said, “the present one is in the Upper Peninsula.” He proved to be extremely good at promoting the region. But the job was too big for just one person.

In February 1911,



Left: After the lumbermen left, the landscape of the U.P. was little more than stumps. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. Above: Publisher Roger Andrews led a peninsula-wide campaign to bring farmers to the region. Courtesy of the Menominee County Historical Society. Facing page: Andrews’ *Clover-Land* magazine was an early forum for his promotional efforts. Courtesy of the Peter White Public Library.

Andrews took the additional step of gathering like-minded businessmen and civic leaders to form the Upper Peninsula Development Bureau (UPDB). UPDB—funded primarily by county boards, banks, and businesses such as Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company, Calumet & Hecla Mining Company, and Wisconsin Land and Lumber Company—was described as “an institution designed to contribute towards and assist in every way possible the growth, progress and development of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan...and to reach out for greater expansion by attracting individuals and organizations from without.”

Though based in Marquette, the bureau included representation from all parts of the U.P. Among its early members were Thomas Wyman, a forestry expert who eventually went on to become the mayor of Munising, and John Doelle, superintendent of Houghton schools. The first secretary-manager of the bureau, Charles Mott, is the man most frequently credited with coining the brand name for the region: “Cloverland.” The term was first used in UPDB’s inaugural agricultural campaign, launched in 1912.

Building the Brand

Residents of the U.P. quickly embraced the new brand. A Cloverland feed store was founded and Clover-Land candy was consumed. The bureau even put out a Cloverland



songbook, advising people to “holler out” the songs if they could not carry a tune. One can almost imagine the lyrics to No. 38 drifting out of a rural meeting hall:

“Cloverland, Cloverland, she’s the
 Whole land of Northern Michigan;
 We love her rocks and rills,
 Her woods and hills,
 Her forests and her lakes so grand.



The Cloverland brand name was adopted by a number of U.P. businesses, including this feed store. Courtesy of UpNorth Memories. Below: Visitors flocked to see new U.P. state parks, such as Palms Book with its Kitch-iti-kipi Spring attraction. Courtesy of Cardcow.com.

She's a bear, she's a bear, we declare
 She is fair beyond compare;
 In going over this land of clover
 We are glad to live in Clover, Cloverland."

A major leap forward in UPDB's branding effort came in 1915, when the state highway department approved renaming a stretch of road between Ironwood and Iron River the "Cloverland Trail." (The name—which was accompanied by a green cloverleaf symbol on signage—was later applied to all highways in the Upper Peninsula.)

Then, in 1916, Andrews consolidated the *Northwestern Farmer* with several similar publications and created the first edition of *Clover-Land* magazine.

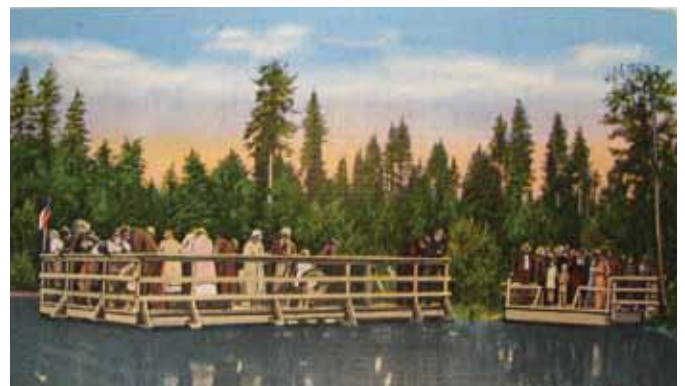
Clover-Land initially "advised cutover farmers on agricultural prospects and techniques." And its success as a promotional medium was palpable. Between 1900 and 1920, the number of U.P. farms nearly doubled, from 6,100 to over 12,000, and some municipalities saw their population quadruple. But the promotion of farming was relatively short-lived, in part because it became increasingly apparent to newcomers that growing conditions were not as ideal as promised. Even Henry Ford, a frequent visitor with his camping friends Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone, opined that "agriculture would never be as successful in the Upper Peninsula as it is elsewhere."

Turning Toward Tourism

In the early 1920s, the development of the automobile—Henry Ford's and others—as well as car ferries that could transport drivers across the Straits of Mackinac brought a whole new kind of visitor to the peninsula: the tourist.

In response, Andrews' magazine—which, at its apex, reached more than 300,000 readers between Sault Ste. Marie and Minneapolis—shifted its editorial focus to focus on this audience.

And the rest of the UPDB followed Andrews' lead. They also began to question the viability of the "Cloverland" brand, which some members considered too focused



on agriculture. Seeking a new brand name for the peninsula that would accurately describe its scenic and recreational advantages, the bureau turned to poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for inspiration. In 1927, the term “Hiawathaland” began to appear in UPDB’s publications, and the *Clover-Land* magazine came to an end.

Introducing “Hiawathaland”

Hiawathaland was promoted as offering visitors a more authentic wilderness experience than nearby Wisconsin, Minnesota, or Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. And the public responded enthusiastically to the pitch. One measure of this can be found in state-park attendance, which rose from 220,000 in the early 1920s to 9 million by 1930—due in part to the establishment of seven new parks in the U.P. In 1927, Clyde L. Newnom’s book, “Michigan’s Thirty-Seven

Million Acres of Diamonds,” claimed that, if properly appraised, the U.P. would be found to be “one of the most valuable ten and a half million acres of land on this continent”—a value derived chiefly from the “sheer beauty and recreational assets” available there.

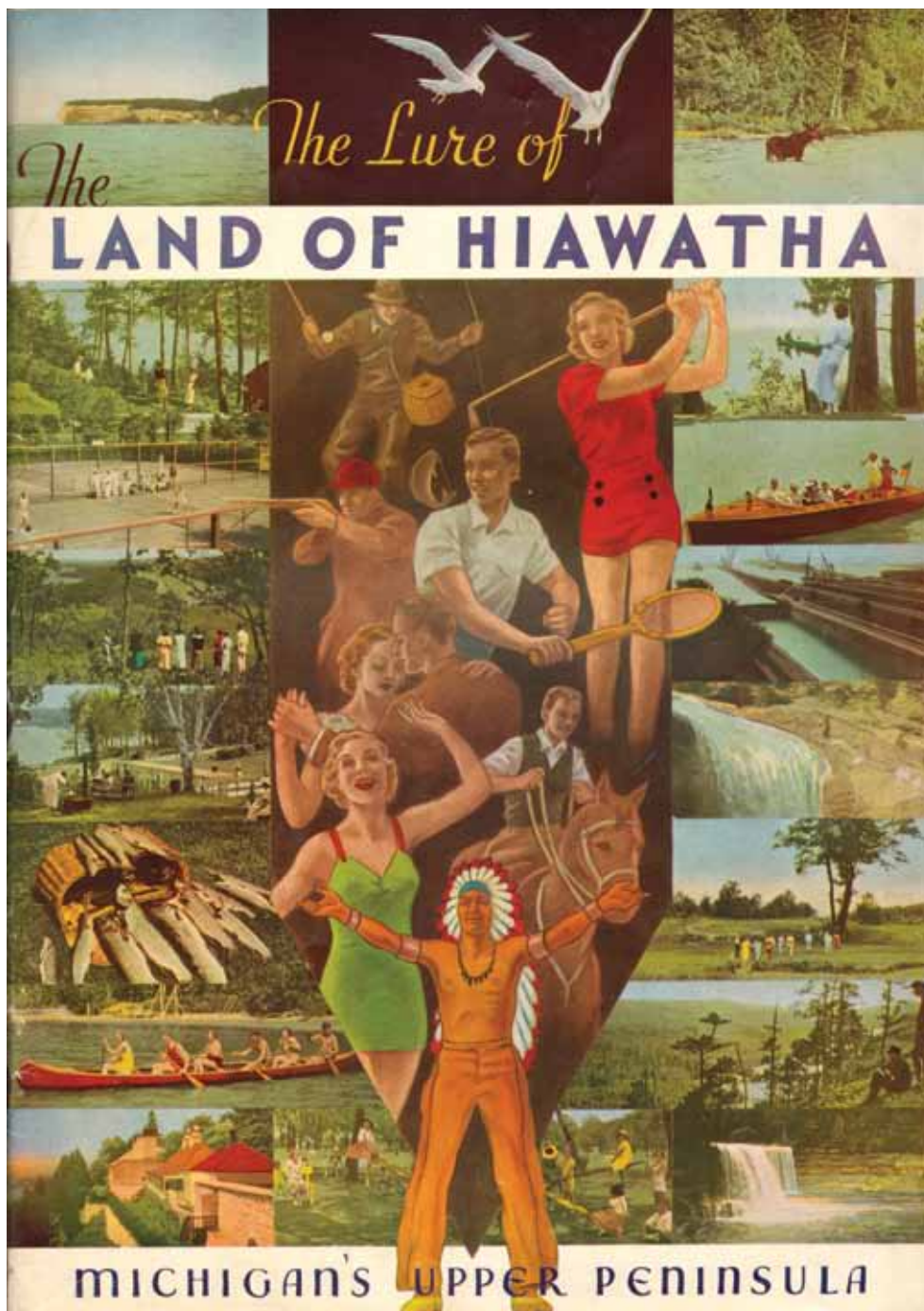
In the 1930s, UPDB took to the road to promote the region at outdoor shows in Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Chicago as well as the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair. It also developed and distributed “The Lure Book of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula,” which detailed the region’s considerable appeal.

Tourism, and spending on tourism promotion, dipped during the war years, due to rationing of important resources such as gasoline.

In the early 1950s, the bureau assumed a new purpose—this time, as a result of the “Engineering Study of the



A 1925 “lure book” published by the Upper Peninsula Development Bureau provided readers with a city-by-city description of what they’d find up north. From the Christine Byron/Thomas Wilson Collection.



UPDB's 1936 lure book featured the group's new campaign theme: "Hiawathaland." From the Byron/Wilson Collection.

Sault Ste. Maries.

To address these challenges, the bureau proceeded to form an internal "Industrial Division," headed by Gerald Johnson. In 1959, he traveled around the peninsula, encouraging communities to increase their advertising and establish airline connections in order to attract more manufacturing jobs to the area. A lack of willing investors stymied his efforts. So UPDB returned to doing what it knew best: promoting the U.P.'s 16,000 square miles of "sheer beauty and recreational assets."

Today, the Upper Peninsula Development Bureau goes by a different name: the Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association (UPTRA). And it has relocated to Iron Mountain. But UPTRA's mission statement would still sound familiar to the organization's founders: "Through our marketing efforts and information that we provide the consumer, we allow people to plan an outstanding vacation to one of our country's great natural regions."

Vestiges of the once-famous Cloverland nickname can still be found in today's Upper Peninsula. A half dozen businesses in Ironwood still use the term in their names, as does the stretch of U.S. 2 that passes through town. In mid-peninsula Escanaba, a cleaning service by that name exists. To the east, the Cloverland Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Dafer, reflects its roots. And, sometimes, if one stops in a clearing of the Hiawatha National Forest on a warm summer day, the scent of clover can still be detected, lingering in the air.

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Economic Resources of the Michigan U.P.," spearheaded by the Upper Peninsula Advisory Committee of the Michigan Economic Development Commission. UPDB was recognized in the study as being "the logical nucleus" for the development of industry in the U.P. The study also recommended that it begin a serious effort to promote the construction of a bridge spanning the Straits of Mackinac as well as an American/Canadian crossing between the two