

Upper Peninsula Today: 11-16-79. Russell Magnaghi Talking about Chase exhibit & role.

CP: Hi everybody and thank you for joining us for this Friday edition of Upper Michigan Today. The picture that I was just holding was that of Lew Allen Chase and we will be hearing about him and an exhibit at the Marquette County Historical Society with my first guest a research historian with the Department of History at Northern Michigan University, Russell Magnaghi.

CP: Who was Lew Allen Chase?

RM: Lew Allen Chase was a rather interesting individual, he was the Upper Peninsulas first professionally trained historian and he was in..retained to he first went to the Copper Country in 1911 and came to the Marquette area in 1919 and stayed here until his retirement in 1944. He was a professor at Northern Michigan University and deeply involved with the Marquette Historical Society.

CP: Why is there an importance today as we talk about Lew Allen Chase. What is this exhibit that is currently will be on display here?

RM: Well Mr. Chase was a rather fascinating individual. He did many, many things on various levels, he taught at Northern, he really got the Marquette County Historical Society going, and did a tremendous amount of research on local history and in the past he has been kind of forgotten about. Sometimes students of local history will read articles about him but they do not know much about him. They will read articles by him but they don't know much about him, and as I said he was the first real historian to work on the history of the Upper Peninsula.

There are two exhibits, one is at the Marquette County Historical Society which traces his...a portion of his life and the work he did at the Society, and we also have an exhibit at Northern Michigan University in the library covering the Northern things of his career.

CP: All right , the first real historian for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Now that has to be quite an exhibit, you brought some of his scrap book, at least one scrap book but you have a piece of paper there on top Russell what is that?

RM: Okay, this was a rather interesting questionnaire that Mr. Chase developed in the 1920's and it is extremely valuable for researchers today because what he did was develop the questionnaire and then send students out into the community asking questions about a particular individual. The importance or the timing of this was that many of these people were original settlers to the Marquette area and leads a rather complete account for us in this questionnaire about the individual, when they arrived and many cases these people will talk about life in Marquette or a particular industry.

CP: Basically, in this scrap book it's about individuals in this area who either moved to new jobs or retired or even died, there's a number of obituaries here this dates from the early 1900's right up to the 1940's if I remember correctly.

RM: Mr. Chase gathered this series of scrap books there's some sixteen in the entire collection which are at the Marquette County Historical Society they are indexed so you have access to the

information in the scrap book. And what he did was to take out obituaries, loose items there's a whole variety of information to be found in these scrap books and there once again extremely valuable for the researcher who comes down to the society and wants to use them.

CP: Alright, aside from the researcher as yourself, Russell why is it do think important for viewers to remember and dwell on Chase?

RM: Well for the work he did and also an ideal for handicappers cause what I haven't mentioned yet with he's fantastic career in teaching, of writing articles he wrote two books his work as a researcher as an organizer at the Marquette county store society he was also extremely active in rotary and their cripple children program. Mr. Chase had an impediment in his eye sight you could say he was blind and he's certainly a tremendous individual in terms of his independence and his tremendous drive even with his handicap he went out and did all these things and when you go through his career in detail you find it's a fantastic career and yet he had this handicap he was consistently plagued with it but he completely conquered the handicap and when you read about him you just find he's extremely faucet and then the other importance of Lew Allen Chase is that he was so involved in local history he captured so much of it via the historical society, via the things he did at Northern, papers that he presented, he was involved with the development of the old Keweenaw Historical Society, which is now has developed into the Houghton County Historical Society. But he was involved in that he developed or tried to develop historical societies throughout the Upper Peninsula but he was just extremely active he's part of the Upper Peninsula.

CP: He died I understand in 1957.

RM: He passed away in '57. He retired in 1944 from Northern and then lived out in California for ten years.

CP: So we shall remember Lew Allen Chase, and if anyone is interested they can visit the exhibits at either the Marquette County Historical Society or at the library at Northern Michigan University. Thank you very much Russell for joining us today we'll be back with the news and weather next as are program continues.