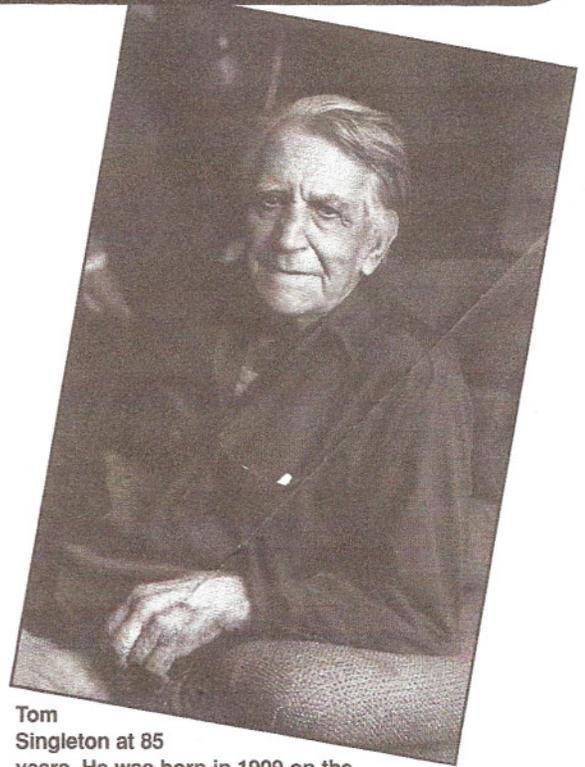


The Lighthouse Kids of Crisp Point



The lighthouse kids. From left – Tom (with slingshot), Roy, Charlie and Jack. Photo taken at the Two Harbor Light Station. The Singletons moved to the Two Harbor Station when Tom was seven. All the brothers, except Jack, are still alive. Roy is the oldest at 87 years.



Tom Singleton at 85 years. He was born in 1909 on the day his father joined the Lighthouse Service. Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of Charles Brill.

An Interview with Tom Singleton By Charles Brill

"I wish them damn boys of yours would drown and get it over with... we're tired of pullin' them out of the lake."

—Captain Hickey, U.S. Life-Saving Station, Two-Hearted River

Joseph Noah Singleton joined the United States Lighthouse Service October 22, 1909. The same day his wife, Martha Elizabeth, gave birth to his second son, Tom. During 30 years of service, Joseph Singleton would be promoted from First Assistant to Keeper and serve as Keeper at Charity Island, Two Harbors and Crisp Point. His four sons—Roy, Tom, Charlie and Jack—would be tagged the "Lighthouse Kids" by schoolmates.

Tom Singleton is a man who projects the image of a patriarch. His six-foot frame seems to unfold to a greater height when he stands. Large hands, a nose that has been broken three times and hard eyes that suggest a man that could not be bullied. By today's standards, much of what Tom Singleton did as a young man would be considered illegal or reckless. Proud and independent, he walked away from the 10th grade on the first day of school and signed on to the 600-foot ore carrier *Roberts* as a coal-passer.

His exploits as a trapper, hunter, fisherman and guide are well known in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. A 90-year-old resident from Paradise advised, "If a fella can't tell you a story about Tom Singleton, he's not a native."

Singleton began his journey as a "Lighthouse Kid" on Lake Huron's Charity Island. The lighthouse on the northwest side of the small, wooded island marks a dangerous shoal bank at the entrance to Saginaw Bay. The island is 12 miles from Caseville Harbor, and the Singleton family's only contact to the mainland was by sailboat.

Singleton recalled one sail with humorous detail. "I was real young, but I'll never forget the day Dad threw Aunt Johanna overboard. It was a Sunday, and Mother and Aunt Johanna were all dressed-up and sittin' in the stern. It was hot and windless, and Dad at the tiller. He's watchin' the sails. Catch a little wind here, a little there.