

The South Manitou Story

by Gerald E Crowner

A memoir of a young Coast Guardsman's first tour of duty as a surfman on South Manitou Island. Sometimes hilarious, sometimes heart-rending, Crowner's charming mix of narratives and poetry is pure entertainment.

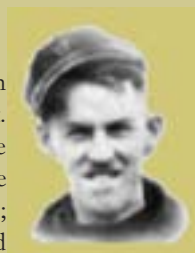
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gerald Crowner was born in 1905 at Hart, a small town near the shores of “the Big Lake” on Michigan’s west coast. His Grandfather was a U.S. Lifesaving Service Surfman at the Pentwater Station, just a few miles to the north. It was a time when the Great Lakes were still teeming with maritime traffic; a time when boys still daydreamed about going to sea and loitered around the waterfront, watching the big boats and worshipping the men who crewed them. True to the code, when missing, “the Crowner boy” could usually be found hanging around the Station in Pentwater.

In 1915, the Lifesaving Service became the U.S. Coast Guard. In 1920 – at age 15 – Gerry Crowner began his career with the Coast Guard, working summers as a “temporary Surfman.” A couple of years later, the family moved south to Grand Haven, an important harbor town which eventually became known as “Coast Guard City, U.S.A.” After graduating from High School and sampling a few other career opportunities, he impulsively and hastily enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1928 between Christmas and New Years Day, to capture the only opening available in the District – “island duty” at South Manitou Island. Thus began a life-long love affair with South Manitou.

His affection for the island and the people he knew there is reflected in these memoirs, which he put to paper just seven years before his death.

Gerald Crowner passed away during the Spring of 1989.



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Personal Memoir

