Exploring Pictured Rocks—West Half
A backpacker’s & spelunker’s backcountry guide to the trails, campsites, beaches, overviews, old growth, waterfalls, caves, shipwrecks, & history of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (PIRO)
Lake Superior :: Alger County :: Munising, Michigan
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Beyond the fictional, pine-studded, 50-mile-long Ossawinamakee River are located.

It is along the Ossawinamakee watershed that Thorpe, on a summer-long, solo scouting trip to find Upper Peninsula timber lands worthy of cutting, meets and befriends an Indian called Injun Charlie, who teaches him the ways of the woods, and Wallace Carpenter, whose investment leads to a partnership: the Thorpe and Carpenter lumbering company. After legally purchasing vast tracts of pineland from the state, which the M & D firm had been illegally stripping of timber, Thorpe and his firm enter into a prolonged struggle to log their newly-acquired land.

At the book's midpoint, a heroine named Hilda is introduced and the ensuing love affair between her and Thorpe dominates the narrative from then on. Despite skullcaps such as explosions, sabotage, stock market manipulation, and assaults—the M & D never succeeds in permanently disrupting Thorpe's Ossawinamakee River logging operations or in financially ruining him.

The Blazed Trail was a classic Horatio Alger, rags-to-riches hero story with a storybook ending: Thorpe finally marries his estranged lover, Hilda.

White, who worked lumber camps and frequently the Upper Peninsula—at the time, a relatively untouched wilderness—fought his way to the top of Michigan's rough-and-tumble lumbering business. The novel offers a classic and unerringly-authentic description of the bustling lumbering business—including the colorful, wild, violent, and dangerous life of the Muskie—Mountain Man of the state's great pine forests. White also did a bit of muckraking when he exposed the widespread corruption in the business, especially the wholesale-thievery—illegal cutting—of vast tracts of remote, government-owned pinelands.

Critics faulted the book for its lack of a well-developed plot, claiming much of what transpired was the result of luck or coincidence, the novel's logical, cause-and-effect succession of events. White was also criticized for failing to fully develop either of the novel's female characters, Hilda and Helen.

The Blazed Trail was a best seller, the Nestor Film Company—which built the first real movie studio in what was to become known as Hollywood, California—developed it into a silent, black-and-white movie in 1910. Starring in the movie was David Horsley, The Blazed Trail starred William H. Clifford.

In his 1995 book entitled, Visualizing Pictured Rocks—Part II, The Iron Region, U.S. Geologists J. W. Foster and W. J. Burt explained how the Ojibwa with “a full palette of strong colors”: “ocher, calcimine, verdant landscapes or artist, those vague similitudes, in as if rudely dabbed in by the face of the cliff has actually spent working in a northern-Michigan lumber camp in 1901. Short on free time, he rose at four o’clock sharp each morning and wrote until eight, when he started work. In the book, White makes reference to several Upper Peninsula place-names: Pictured Rocks; the village of Munising; Shingleston, probably a reference to Shingleton; the Munising Furnace Company’s “dust hill” near Munising Bay; and the South Shore Railroad, which connected the region to the ports of Mackinac. The title of the book may have well have been borrowed from the newspaper column—The Blazed Trail—that traced the rim of Beaver Basin, connect-