



Photo: *American Lumberman*, 1899

William B. Mershon; Michigan's Iconic Sportsman and Conservationist

The William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited is pleased to announce that Dr. Robert E. Kohrman, retired Central Michigan University Professor of Chemistry and former Dean of the College of Science and Technology, will speak at the Saginaw Club on Thursday, May 23, 2019. The evening social event will begin with cocktails at 5:30, followed by dinner at 6:30 and Dr. Kohrman's presentation thereafter.

Dr. Kohrman is the author of several papers on the early history of grayling and trout fishing in Michigan and has extensively researched the life and times of William B. Mershon. Professor Kohrman's presentation entitled "William B. Mershon: Michigan's Iconic Sportsman and Conservationist" will focus on the ways in which Mershon's pursuit of fish and game nurtured his conservation ethic and, ultimately, his persistent advocacy for natural resource protection.

Dr. Kohrman's talk will describe Mershon's early use of railroads for his many sporting activities which allowed he and his friends to travel far and wide in pursuit of fish and game. A review of the early history of the Pere Marquette Club (Kinne Creek Club), established in 1892, reveals that this club was one of the first sportsmen's clubs in upper Michigan and was founded primarily by residents of Saginaw. The famous writer, Emerson Hough, described Kinne Creek as having a fishery superior to that found at Castalia (Ohio) or Caledonia (New York).

Mershon claimed he learned to be a good fly fisherman at Kinne Creek, and he also appreciated the camaraderie found there with his fellow members of the "Saginaw Crowd." However, after the turn of the century, he increasingly focused on other Michigan trout waters such as the North Branch of the Au Sable River where he ultimately built his own High Bank Lodge. There he was able to establish, for a few years only, the first "flies only" waters in the State of Michigan.

Mershon gained an appreciation for conservation while trout fishing in Michigan; but the Michigan Sportsmen's Association, formed in 1875, was the catalyst that shaped Mershon's initial views on protecting Michigan's fish and game. This organization was the first state-wide conservation group in Michigan and also provided the framework and impetus for Mershon's leadership in advancing conservation issues.

Please make plans to join us on Thursday, May 23, 2019 to learn more about William B. Mershon and the ways in which his sporting life influenced early coldwater conservation in Michigan.

**Featured Speaker:
Dr. Robert E. Kohrman**

Dr. Kohrman is Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Central Michigan University and a former Dean of the College of Science and Technology. He is currently a Member of the Board of Directors of the Clarke Historical Library at CMU.

At the Clarke Historical Library, Dr. Kohrman has been instrumental in the development of its 3,000-plus volume Angling Library, arguably the strongest collection of fly fishing books in the Midwest and home to the Reed Draper Collection of Angling Books.

Dr. Kohrman has authored numerous articles in *The American Flyfisher*, *Michigan Historical Review* and *Michigan Trout*, detailing early angling history in Michigan. His article published in the Winter 2013 issue of *The American Fly Fisher*, entitled "In Search of the Michigan Grayling, Part II: Thaddeus Norris and the Au Sable River Boat," details the earliest version of these boats which still ply the Au Sable and Manistee rivers. His research was extensive and includes documentation of the scale model of the Fitzhugh Au Sable river boat which he inspected at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Fitzhugh's boat was originally displayed at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and then at the 1880 International Fishery Exposition in Berlin. Dr. Kohrman speaks often on early angling history and has curated the exhibit "The Michigan Angler: An Early History of Sport Fishing" at the Clarke Historical Library.

John Fierst, Clarke Librarian, relates "Dr. Kohrman shares two things in common with the early writers of American angling books: a love of the sport of fly fishing and a love of the literature that has grown up around it."

Dr. Kohrman is retired and lives in Mt. Pleasant where he spends a great deal of time sharing his talents and expertise as a volunteer at the Clarke Historical Library. He enjoys fishing streams in Michigan and on the north shore of Lake Superior and is an avid collector of nineteenth-century sporting periodicals.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS TO THE THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019 DINNER AT THE SAGINAW CLUB:

Go to: <https://squareup.com/store/wbmershontu>

Click on "SHOP" at top of the page.

Click on "William B Mershon Dinner"

Click on the white "Wm" button.

Select an option for your entree (Chicken, Halibut, Pork Chop)

Select ticket quantity.

Select "Add to Cart"

If a second dinner choice is desired, click on "Continue Shopping" and repeat.

When all dinner choices are complete, click on "Checkout"

Fill in Payment information and complete the transaction.