

# Ishpeming

Area  
Historical  
Society &  
Museum

SUMMER 2019

Edited by  
Karen Kasper

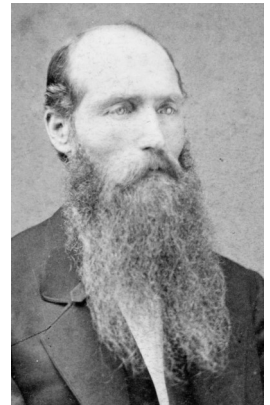
## Cemetery Tour

During 2019's Cemetery Tour, learn about the gentleman on the right and how he and his son transformed the city. Also featured are Julius Ropes, John Penglase and others, including several WWI veterans.

This year's cemetery tour kicks off during the fourth of July holiday with tours at 3 pm on July 3rd, 5th and 6th. After that, there will be tours every Tuesday evening during July and August.

The tours on July 30<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup> will be lawn chair and wheel chair friendly as they will be more of a lecture style tour. In addition, there will also be evening tours on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> for those people who can't make it on Tuesdays. All evening tours begin at 6:30 pm.

As always, the tour is cancelled if there is inclement weather. We will meet in the front of the cemetery at the sexton's office and there will be a \$5 charge for the tour, which will go to benefit the Ishpeming Area Historical Society. Groups can be accommodated with private tours, just leave a message on our Facebook page. (The picture is courtesy of the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives.)



## Places and Spaces Tour

The Historic Places and Interesting Spaces returns to the last Sunday of June with a banner line-up in 2019. The tour will be held from 12-5 on Sunday, June 30th and will feature homes at 200 Hill St. and 117W. Ridge St. In addition, the United Presbyterian Church, 112 E. Euclid is celebrating their 145th anniversary and will feature tours of the sanctuary, organ music and refreshments in the basement. Cliff's Cottage will also be featured. Both the church and Cliff's Cottage were built in 1891. The church was built by E.E. Grip & Co. and the cottage was designed by D. Frederick Charlton, noted Marquette architect.

There is limited parking by the cottage, so only those with handicapped stickers will be allowed to park in the driveway, all others will need to park along the street and walk up. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased from Main Street Antiques before the event or at any of the venues on the day of the event.



### Ishpeming Area Historical Society Board

President— David Aeh  
Vice President— Karen Kasper  
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Firby and vacant

## The Great Fire of 1874

It was a word all residents of Ishpeming in that day and age feared. On Sunday evening, April 19, 1874, it came, a hoarse shout of 'Fire!', followed by the piercing shriek of steam whistles.

As residents poured outside, a quick glance at the skyline showed the dark, heavy plume of smoke coming from the downtown area.

In the five years since Robert Nelson platted and sold the downtown lots, a commercial district had sprung up. There was some argument about the first building erected, but everyone agreed that the second building to go up was a saloon. In the inaugural issue of the Iron Home, published just three days before the fire, they estimated a monthly mercantile business of about \$90,000 per month, the equivalent of almost 2 million dollars in today's market. The stores were mainly built from wood and each butted up against their neighbor, with no wasted space between them. Wood was easily obtained, relatively inexpensive and the buildings went up quick. But wood was also highly flammable.

In minutes, the fire department had retrieved their fire apparatus from a building that stood where city hall is now and wheeled it over to the 200 block of Main Street, outside of Neely & Eddy's hardware store, where the fire originated. They hooked the apparatus up to the Holly system installed some time before that, but to everyone's dismay, the water did not come out. Either the pipes were still frozen, or a cap had been left off in another part of the system. By the time the water started working, the fire had gained too much headway to be stopped.

Chaos reigned. Merchants and tenants alike were rushing around, trying to remove as much as could be carried outside. Unfortunately, some of the goods carried outside ended up being taken by others, and merchants lost their items to thieves as well as to the fire. The Baptist church (probably the Swedish Baptist church, which used to be on the corner where the Mining Journal office is now.) was pressed into service as a place to store goods as well as house some of the residents who lost their apartments due to the fire.

After about two hours, during which time the sun had set, Main Street, between Division and Pine Streets was a solid mass of flames. It was feared that most of the city would be burned. A telegraph was sent to Negaunee, asking for assistance. The Negaunee firemen promptly set out with their steam fire engine, but soon after they set out, a fire was discovered in Negaunee and the firemen were called back. When they tried to turn the fire engine around, it got stuck and so they were forced to abandon it and fight the fire by other means.

Gradually the fire beast was subdued. Snow had not left roofs and back and side premises, which slowed the fire down and some buildings in the path of the fire were torn down to try and stop its spread. By about 11 pm, the fire had slowed considerably and finally stopped.

One fatality occurred. Fannie Matthews was taken with convulsions due to the excitement of the fire and died from fright. The Matthews family also lost their home. A Mr. Haspel fell off a building and was severely injured. Fire marshal McNamara dived from another building but landed in a creek and was not seriously injured. Frank Wilson slipped from Donohue's building, was able to catch the eaves of the roof and had to be rescued by a ladder.

In addition, John Hanrahan shot his pistol off, striking Frank Rodenkirk in the foot and John Herrington in the chest. Mayor Wadsworth chased Hanrahan down and the miscreant spent time in the jail at Marquette.

The entire block bounded by Main, Pearl, Pine and Division streets was destroyed as well as the east side of Main street to the alleyway. About half of the block on the west side of

Main and north of Pearl was also destroyed. Most of the occupants of the buildings had little or no fire insurance as the wooden structures were deemed a serious risk and fire insurance was very expensive. The loss was estimated at about \$150,000 (over 3 million dollars in today's economy)

By the next day, residents were already out cleaning up. Merchants were looking for temporary quarters to resume business.

Charles Kirkwood constructed a small building on the rear of his lot. Girzikowsky & Co rented a recently vacated store on the corner of First and Pearl Streets and the city recorder secured an office in Mildon's building near the banks. Other businesses either erected temporary buildings or found other premises to rent.

It took the Common Council less than 10 days to set fire limits. "An ordinance prescribing fire limits was adopted. The ordinance provides that in the area bounded by First, Front, Pearl and Division streets, one story frame buildings to stand no longer than one year may be erected; also that two story frame buildings may be erected, provided they are bricked up within six months from the time they are ready for occupancy. No other frame structures can be erected within the prescribed limits, and after the expiration of two years no frame buildings whatever can be put up." (Mining Journal, May 2, 1874)

A petition was also presented asking the Common Council to purchase a steam fire engine for the use of the city. The then current fire apparatus relied on the firemen to increase the water pressure.

Gradually, life returned to normal. A financial panic started in 1873 slowed the recovery, as the mines were not working at full capacity. Those merchants who could afford it, went to Chicago or elsewhere to purchase new goods. Some left the area. John Hanrahan had his day in court and was sentenced to four months in a house of corrections. The fire eventually faded from memory.

## **Anatomy of a Murder anniversary**

Sixty years ago the film "Anatomy of a Murder" was filmed in Marquette County, including scenes in Ishpeming. It was an exciting time for our town and this summer we want to pay special tribute to this event. We have some new items in our Anatomy of Murder display, including a hard cover book on the making of the film. In addition, we have our memories book, which has written memories from Ishpeming residents about the time when the film industry came to town. If you have a memory of the filming, please be sure to come into our museum this summer to add your recollections to our book. If you live away from Ishpeming, you can email them to us and we will print the memories out and include them with the book.

In addition to our exhibit, the Beaumier Upper Peninsula Heritage Center will feature its traveling exhibit on the movie this summer. The exhibit opens on June 15th at the Heritage Center, which is located in Gries Hall on the campus of Northern Michigan University. The exhibition gallery is open Monday through Saturday from 10-4.

There will be a showing of the movie on July 1st at 1 pm at the Marquette County Courthouse, where much of the filming took place. The movie showing is sponsored by the Beaumier Center.

## **100 Years Ago**

### **Sousa's Band was Big Treat Famous Bandmaster and Men Greeted by Capacity Audience**

Lieutenant John Phillip Sousa must have felt highly complimented Sunday evening when he mounted his rostrum, baton in hand, and looked upon the capacity audience that confronted him in the Ishpeming Theater. Every seat was sold and a number were seated on the stage. There was at least 2,000 persons outside, filling the alley and crowding the walk adjoining the theater. There were so many automobile parties that cars were parked from two to three blocks distant from the play house.

The Ishpeming theater crowded to the doors is a compliment to any production, on a warm summer night it is more than a compliment—it is a splendid testimonial. Sousa and his band are being greeted by just such audiences everywhere they have appeared this season. This is one attraction that will get through the warm months with flying colors, as music lovers and patriotic citizens everywhere that the famous musician and his band appear are anxious to show their appreciation of his wonderful work.

And the greatest of American bandsmen deserved all he got. Folks know him, know his music, know every last detail of the graceful calisthenics by which he blends his wide assortment of wood, wind and brass into American music. His was an audience of just plain folks last evening; folks who are happy to confess to a tremor up and down the spine every time they hear a slide trombone.

### **Played Old Sousa Standby**

They played the old Sousa standby with the usual fanfares and gusto and it seemed as if the trim master of the baton was never in better form. After all, it is the typical, universally known Sousa marches that the folks like best. They never tire of hearing "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Manhattan Beach," "Sabres and Spurs." and their kindred.

But there is no intention of speaking lightly of the Sousa compositions known perhaps for their greater fineness. Mr. Sousa did a good job when he set Colonel McCrea's "In Flanders Fields" to music and Miss Mary Baker sang it well. It is perhaps too much to say that the song will supersede the great poem in the hearts of Americans, but it will be widely sung.

No Sousa program is complete without some of his delicious drollery set to music. Such was "Showing Off Before Company," the number that commenced the second half of the program. The musicians came onto the stage singly and in small groups and each party, as it entered, played its own little piece. The harp started the procession and the piccolos, clarinets, oboes, bassoons, bass horns, French horns, trombones and everything else in category. It was whimsical, well done and amusing.

(Mining Journal, June 23, 1919)

## **Important People in Ishpeming's history** **(You've probably never heard of)**

### **Frank P. Mills Sr.**

Frank Mills was born in Yates County, NY in 1827. In 1858 when Robert Nelson came to Ishpeming, he travelled with Nelson and became his assistant when Nelson assumed charge of the Cleveland property. He left after three years, going to Marquette to be a merchant, but when his first wife died in 1864, he returned to Ishpeming and took charge of the Cleveland properties. He disliked paperwork and in 1867, company officials appointed a clerk to help him, enabling Mills to focus on mining operations. His family lived in a house so close to one of the pits that when the mine blasted, which back then happened four times a day, his wife and children (he remarried) had to go to the basement for safety. In 1871 a new house was built for him which was further away from the pits.

Under Mills supervision, several more mines were opened, including the Larry Gent pit, the Furde pit, and the School House mine. He also oversaw the first shaft sunk on the Larry Gent pit and remained in charge of the Cleveland properties.

During his time in Ishpeming, he served as Ishpeming's first mayor in 1873. Mills was an outstanding mining superintendent and retired from the company in the 1880s. After his retirement in 1885, while prospecting north of Ishpeming, Mills found a deposit of sugar quartz that contained gold. He resigned his position with the Cleveland Mines and formed a company to mine the gold. Unfortunately, there wasn't much gold and by 1888 work was stopped on the mine. He died on July 7, 1910 in Colorado.

### **Wahlman & Grip, Contractors and Builders**

(From a 1886 City Directory)

The business conducted by Messrs Wahlman & Grip is by far the most extensive of all firms of contractors and builders in the Upper Peninsula. Both the gentlemen comprising the firm have been residents of Ishpeming for a number of years, Mr. John Wahlman coming to the city in 1869 and his partner Mr. J. F. Grip, ten years later.

Their partnership dates from 1880 and their business has steadily increased from the outset, until, at the present time, they employ upwards of two hundred men, and average at all seasons at least seventy five. Examples of their work may be seen throughout this section, and from them may be cited the new State Prison building at Marquette, the contract for which they secured in the face of competition from Chicago and Detroit, the new and elegant High School building (this may have been Grammar School) at Ishpeming and dwellings amounting in value to some \$40,000 at Lake Linden.

Mr. Grip is an experienced superintendent of buildings, and gives his personal supervision to all work entrusted to them. As will be seen from examples of their work just mentioned, they are prepared to undertake the construction and furnishing of buildings of any nature. Their business is one of the most important in the county and of great value to the city they make their headquarters.

## **Volunteers are always needed**

Every newsletter includes a plea for volunteers. As a small museum, we don't have the budget to hire anyone to run our place, so we rely on our volunteers, a small group of people who are interested in preserving the history of our town. But the jobs that need filling always seem to be more than the number of people willing to fill them.

We will be open two days a week in the summer, Thursdays and Fridays from 10-4, if we have enough volunteers. Four three hour shifts a week, yet some summers that seems like an impossible task to fill. We have one shift that has a rotating group of people, which means everyone on that shift only needs to do one shift a month. But for the other three shifts, we have one person working for three months straight. With no one to fill in for doctors appointments, vacations or illness.

Artifacts need to be classified and information entered into a database. It would be good for us as an organization to have some new faces at our board of directors meetings. Our museum could use someone to keep help us our exhibits fresh and updated.

Consider becoming a volunteer. Board meetings happen in the evening, so would be perfect for someone who works. We do offer training for those interested in becoming docents. We also need a couple of volunteers with vehicles who could distribute flyers for us when we have events. If you are interested, please leave us a message on our Facebook page.

## **Please become a member**

While we do several fundraisers throughout the year, our memberships are the backbone of the historical society. Through yearly and lifetime memberships, we keep the doors open. We pay for insurance and memberships in organizations such as the Historical Society of Michigan, the Greater Ishpeming Chamber of Commerce and more. We pay for our newsletter and the flyers to help us publicize our events. Those yearly memberships keep us going and they are important to us.

If you are not a member, consider becoming one. It costs just \$10 per year. We also have business and family memberships. If you are a member, please renew your membership on a yearly basis. Every membership helps us in our mission of preserving the history of Ishpeming and making it available to everyone.

## **Website coming**

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society is finally getting a website! It is something we have wanted for awhile, but it is finally becoming a reality. Our web address, when the site goes live, will be: [www.ishpeminghistory.org](http://www.ishpeminghistory.org). We will be able to accept memberships and donations online and it will feature news and information about our society. Watch our Facebook page to find out when the site goes live.

# Become a member

## Ishpeming Area Historical Society

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society is a 501(c)3 Michigan Non-Profit Organization  
Our mission is to promote and encourage a better appreciation for and a sustained interest  
in the history of the Ishpeming area. Your membership allows us to carry out this mission.

Yearly membership (Renewable January 1st)

\$5 Student (high school-College)

\$10 Individual

\$20 Family (One household)

\$25 Non Profit Business

\$35 Business

\$200 Lifetime Individual or Family,  \$250 Lifetime Business

Additional donation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory/honor of (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

*I do NOT wish my name to be used in any publicity or on a membership plaque.*

Is this a  New Membership  Renewal Membership

Is this address my/our year round address? If not, what months do I/we reside here?

\_\_\_\_\_

(We send out newsletters in the spring and fall.)

Mail completed form and payment to:

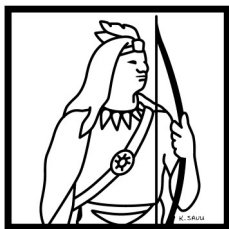
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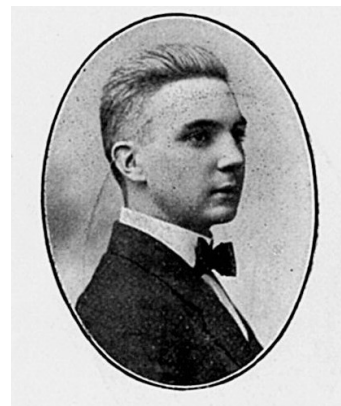
**ISHPEMING**  
**AREA HISTORICAL**  
**SOCIETY**



The Spring 2018 newsletter is sponsored in part by **Globe Printing.**

We would like to recognize our lifetime business members:

**Marquette County Pawn & Estate Sales**  
**Iron Range Agency**  
**Rotary Club of Ishpeming/Negaunee**  
**Pioneer Kiwanis of Ishpeming**  
**The Mather Inn, Inc.**  
**Gauthier Insurance**  
**Kiwanis Club of Ishpeming**  
**Eagles Club Auxiliary of Negaunee**  
**Marquette County Chapter of the Paisano Club**



**Paul Cooley, a 1914 graduate of Ishpeming High School, who was killed in World War One and is one of the people featured on our 2019 cemetery tour.**