

Original Masthead Illustration by Will Bradley

Ishpeming Area Historical Society • Newsletter • Summer 2023

SUMMER EVENTS

- **Historic Tour - Sunday, June 25th**
 - **Anatomy of a Murder on the Big Screen Thursday, June 29th**
 - **Ishpeming Cemetery Tours Kick off June 30th, & Tuesday evenings in July & August**

Ishpeming Historic Places Fundraiser Tour

We are proud to announce that the 2023 Ishpeming Historic Places Tour (Home Tour) will feature The Mather (formally The Mather Inn) and Bethel Lutheran Church. The Tour will take place on Sunday, June 25, Noon to 4:00 p.m.



- **The Mather (formally The Mather Inn)** is located at 107 E. Canda St., Ishpeming. If you have never toured The Mather Inn, or wish to enjoy a return visit, don't miss this opportunity. Learn about the history of this historic building and tour some "behind the scenes" places in The Mather. The stately Mather Inn, designed and built in a Georgian-style first opened its doors to the public on January 16, 1932. It was preceded by two other hotels on the same site. First came the Barnum House in 1875, which was destroyed by fire in 1879, then the Nelson House was built and opened in 1880. The Nelson House long served travelers to the bustling Iron Mining community of Ishpeming until it also

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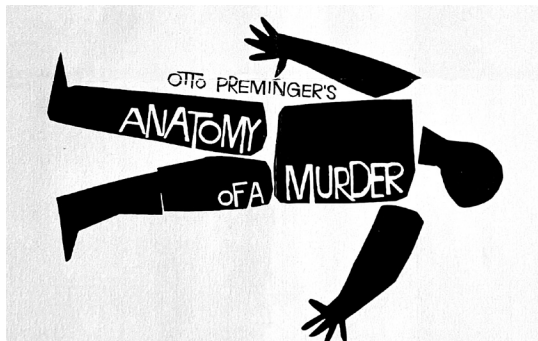
was consumed by fire on August 25, 1928. By June 1930, the lack of a "respectable" place for travelers to stay while conducting business in Ishpeming, spurred the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company and William G. Mather to plan, design, and provide the majority of the funds to build The Mather Inn. The Inn provided clean, comfortable lodging and elegant, wholesome meals to its guests until it fell on hard times and closed in the early 1980's.

- **The Bethel Lutheran Church** which is located at 333 E. Ridge St., Ishpeming (a short walk from The Mather) will offer light refreshments. Located at the corner of Third and Ridge streets, Bethel Lutheran Church has witnessed the many changes in our community and the world since its founding in 1887. Join us for a walk-through tour and a short presentation of its history.



Ishpeming Historic Places Tour (Home Tour) Tickets are a suggested \$10 donation to the society, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. Advance tickets will be available by mid-June at the Main Street Antique Mall in Ishpeming. Tickets may also be obtained on the day of the event at The Mather and at the Bethel Lutheran Church. Proceeds from this event will benefit the Ishpeming Area Historical Society. For more information call the Main Street Antique Mall at (906) 486-8680, or check the Ishpeming Area Historical Society Facebook page.

A Big Screen Showing of Anatomy of a Murder



The Ishpeming Area Historical Society presents A **Big Screen Showing** of the classic 1959 film 'Anatomy of a Murder' on the anniversary of the preview of the movie and on the anniversary of John D. Voelker's (Robert Traver) birthday in 1903. The film, which was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, was filmed entirely on location in Marquette County. The screening of 'Anatomy of a Murder' will be on **Thursday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the beautiful W. C. Peterson Auditorium, Ishpeming High School, 319 E. Division Street.** Enter the auditorium at the Pearl Street entrance, look for the "Auditorium" sign on the school where Third street ends at Pearl Street. Parking lots are available on Pearl and Division Streets. **Admission is free of charge;** donations will be accepted to help defray the license and venue fees. For more information call the Main Street Antique Mall at (906) 486-8680.



Anatomy of a Murder Cast & Crew

Ishpeming Cemetery Tour



The Ishpeming Area Historical Society will again host its popular Ishpeming cemetery tour with a new group of interesting citizens, including Frederick Braastad, John W. Jochim and A. A. Anderson. Tour will be hosted by Ishpeming historian, Karen Kasper. The tour will kick off on Friday, June 30, at 3:00 p.m. and will begin at the sexton's office. This is a walking tour and will last about an hour. In case of inclement weather, the tour will be canceled. The suggested donation is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students 12-17, and children under 12 are free. All proceeds from the tour will benefit the Ishpeming Area Historical Society. The 2023 Ishpeming Cemetery tour will continue on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. through July and August, starting July 11. For more information call the Main Street Antique Mall at (906) 486-8680.

From Murder to Madness

By David Lee White, IAHS Board Member

Sixth in a series concerning Robert Traver's (John D. Voelker) books

"Tomorrow is the big day! Perhaps it is also the time for a little poetry, however bad . . ."

'Twas the night before fishing

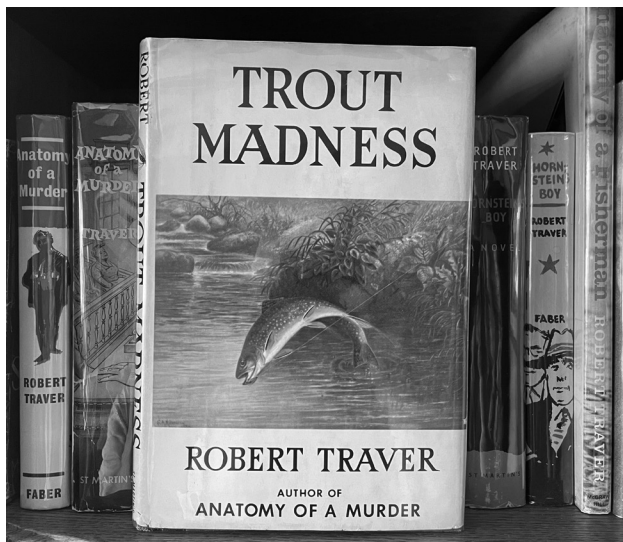
When all through the house

Lay Dad's scattered fishing gear

As though strewn by a souse . . .

(from "The First Day," Trout Madness, by John D. Voelker)

After a long struggle of nearly six years, John D. Voelker managed to publish his second book, Danny and the Boys, on March 26, 1951. Soon after, he began contemplating the type of book he should write next. John mused on this subject in his private journal entry for July 20, 1951 "All spring and summer I have dabbled with the notion of writing another D. A. book, a sort of sequel to "Troubleshooter", one that I had tentatively called 'Confessions of an ex-D. A.' But the idea does not grip me or even excite me a little, and I have finally realized that the only reason I thought of writing it



was simply to do another book and make some money. I do not want to sound artsy, but that is a hell of a dismal reason for writing any book; too damn many books are written to massage the author's ego and his bank account; such a book can only have the kiss of death upon it and be nothing but the hollow verbal thumping's of a literary hack. (This writing sounds quite enough like that, my friend.)"

(July 20, 1951 Journal entry continued) "Yesterday, for the first time, the thought came to me to write a book on trout fishing, a book in which the fish were to the fishing what the onion is to onion soup; a damned important ingredient but far from everything. The idea rather excites me and I have done a draft of a forward that sets the tone of the book I might want to write. It is still too early to say. In it I could pile all my woods' lore, such as it is, and my 'reflections on the water' and the ways of men. Perhaps I would start off with the old story from Story magazine, Fishermen at Night. Perhaps - - Perhaps."

In a letter to Mr. Lynn Carrick of J. B. Lippincott Company, dated April 24, 1953, John wrote: "I have a dark confession to make. I am a trout fisherman, and I have the sickness bad. This winter I have been leisurely writing a book about the disease, tentatively called Trout Madness, and I have completed about twelve chapters. As I now see it I have about five or six to go. Would you like to see what I've done?" Carrick asked to see the twelve chapters so John sent them off for his consideration.

John decided to risk "the kiss of death" by writing another D. A. book, Small Town D. A. While working to get his third book published, John started writing trout stories, a task that gave him joy. John finished 21 chapters of Trout Madness on May 27, 1953. J. B. Lippincott Company wrote John on June 5, 1953 and informed him that the anglers among their staff liked the stories and thought they were well written, but that

"books on fishing seldom make any money for anyone except the printer." Lippincott returned the manuscript, as did The Atlantic Press in July, 1953. John then sent the manuscript to eight more publishers between July 1953 and February 1955, with the manuscript landing back on his desk with a rejection each time. John's trout fishing manuscript gathered dust until his editor, Sherman Baker of St. Martin's Press expressed interest. On May 6, 1958, John wrote Sherman "I enclose the typed manuscript of the fishing yarns, Trout Madness. In the madness accompanying moving I can't find anything, including the original of this script, so I am obliged to send a copy."

Late April 1960 found John and Grace Voelker enjoying several weeks in Italy with Joseph and Agnes Welch (Joseph Welch played Judge Weaver in the film Anatomy of a Murder and Agnes had a role as one of the jurors). The foursome had arrived at Haifa, Israel at the end of March as the guests of Otto Preminger where they visited the set of Otto's new movie "Exodus" and toured the Jewish state, moving on to Naples, Italy on April 19. Tiring of travel and fearing they might constrict the activities of the Voelkers, the Welch's cut short their planned European tour and April 29 found the Welch's back home in Boston. The Voelker's continued to tour Italy with plans to move on to France and Switzerland with a return to New York by the end of May. In mid-May, a couple days before the Voelkers had plans to leave Paris for the port city of Le Harve to catch their passenger ship for home, John found out that their luxurious hotel accommodations at the Hotel



Joseph and Agnes Welch met at Ishpeming Train Station by Otto Preminger



George V required cash when checking out. In order to pay his bill, John had to visit his publisher (Calmann-Levy) in Paris to request an advance on royalties in the amount of 10,000 francs.

At long last, John's dog-eared manuscript written about his passion for fly fishing, *Trout Madness*, was about to be published. John's editor at St. Martin's Press, Sherman Baker, convinced his superiors that it would make for a good book, and with the success of *Anatomy of a Murder*, it should sell if they did a good job with the advertising. Before the Voelker's left on their 1960 overseas excursion, John had worked with Sherman on the final edits to the manuscript. In a letter dated April 27, 1960, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. John D. Voelker in Venice, Italy, Sherman informed John "Have wrangled the trout picture which you wished from Orvis (for the dust jacket) and we are going to have a very handsome book about June 10." The painting that graces the front cover of the dust wrapper for *Trout Madness* and used with the permission of Charles F. Orvis Company, was painted in 1874 by S. A. Kilbourne for a series "Game Fishes of the United States" and published in 1879 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

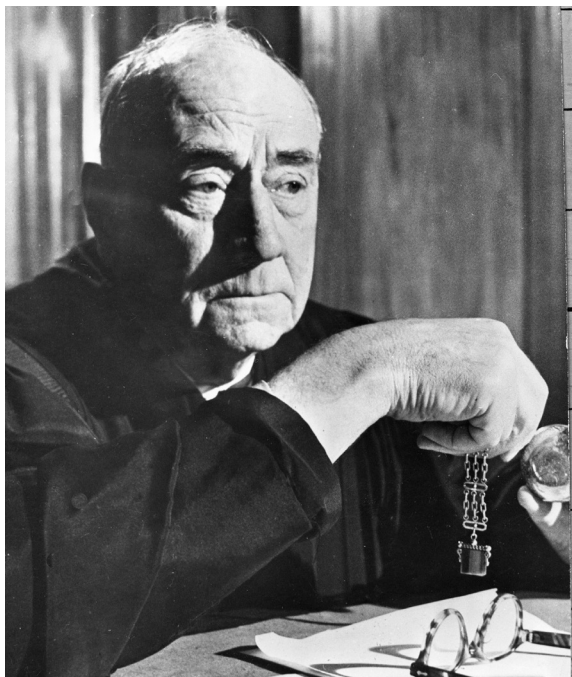
St. Martin's Press sold secondary serial rights for chapters from *Trout Madness* for publication in popular magazines, including *Saturday Evening Post*, *True*, *Outdoor Life* and *Esquire*. The idea was to reach "untold millions of readers. We hope to persuade a per-

centage of these that this is the Christmas gift book for everyone who has ever looked longingly in Abercrombie and Fitch's windows." *Trout Madness* was slated for publication and release to the public on August 21, 1960.

In a letter written to Joseph N. Welch dated May 25, 1960, John informed Joe that he and Grace had arrived back on U.S. soil "At precisely 8:05 last Saturday (May 21) morning..." John went on to describe himself and the process of disembarking the ocean liner "...a gaunt homesick spectre wearing dark glasses and a pained expression escaped from the baggage hold of the S. S. Flandre into a panting taxicab, thus in one swoop circumventing process servers, customs inspectors, and the usual tedium of disembarking." John and Grace then met his publisher (Ian Mackenzie) and editor (Sherman Baker), and along with the Voelker Pontiac convertible, traveled up the Hudson to the Baker home for the night. The next morning the Voelkers visited with Traver relatives through his mother Annie Traver in Rhinebeck, New York where they "left at 1:05 with all manner of ancient Traver loot, including a ladder-back chair George Washington is supposed to have sat in. We crossed the Hudson and got on the through-way, hoping to make Buffalo before we collapsed." Instead, John and Grace took turns driving and pushed on to a motel near Sarnia, Ontario. "Next morning, we were up at daybreak and landed home at 6:00 pm Monday night." In an apology for not writing a longer letter, John wrote "The mail is piled high as an elephant's eye so I'll write no more now more than to say that yesterday I ignored everything and fled to my fishing." John ended the letter with a bit of humor "Grace and I arrived home with about twenty dollars and three Italian cigars. I always say it pays to plan."

Sherman Baker received a letter dated July 7, 1960 from noted Texas author of the American West, American folklorist, and newspaper columnist, J. Frank Dobie. Dobie had received a copy of *Trout Madness* to review and started the letter with "I'll make an honest confession to you. Robert Traver's *Mad Troutness* – you and he call it *Trout Madness* if you want to – is the only book on fishing that I have read since Sir Isaac Walton about fifty-two years ago. Thank you both. Mr. Traver ranks bass and crappie in the same category as shrimp, but a great deal in this world depends on latitude. As far as I know, there are no trout in Texas. That is a grave defect, but we have to make out with what we have. As Aubrey said in introducing his wife, 'A poor thing, but mine own.' Our gamest fish in these parts is the shrimp-like bass."

In a letter dated July 8, 1960, Sherman Baker informed John "Two books -- two book clubs, albeit the new one is a small affair in comparison – *Outdoor Life*



*Judge Weaver in Anatomy of a Murder
played by Joseph Welch*

Book Club for November, \$3,750. We are making them a separate set of plates, and the corrections in pages 97 and 67 will have to be made.” It is assumed that the \$3,750 was a payment for the privilege of using Trout Madness for the book club’s November 1960 selection, and that the book club would be paying St. Martin’s Press and John Voelker a royalty on the copies sold.

Working together on the filming of Anatomy of a Murder, personal letters exchanged, touring Israel and Italy together, and sharing an interest in their legal professions, John D. Voelker and Joseph N. Welch became close in a very short time. This closeness was characterized in a reply to a fan letter Joseph Welch received from a Mrs. Glenn Ward Dresbach of Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The fan letter had arrived when the Welch’s and the Voelkers were overseas. After returning home, Joseph explained the reason for the delay in his reply, and then went on to explain his relationship with the Voelkers. “I say this to you, since it gives me a chance to say that he (John Voelker) is now one of my close friends and a man to whom I am deeply attached. This is not to neglect his gracious wife, but the bond between Judge Voelker and me is not easily duplicated.” For this reason, it is without doubt that John and Grace were saddened when they received a letter dated September 21, 1960 from Joseph Welch’s secretary that, after Joseph

had been admitted to the hospital on September 8 for a “coronary insufficiency”, he had suffered a coronary attack on September 16. Then came the telegram from Agnes Welch dated October 6, 1960 with four words that must have left the Voelkers heartbroken “Joe died this morning”.

At the time of his death, Joseph N. Welch would have been 70 years old on his next birthday, October 22, 1960. A Boston Attorney and Harvard Law School graduate, Welch became nationally prominent during the 1954 televised Army-McCarthy hearings when he was Army chief counsel and took Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin to task with his sharp questioning. On the 30th day of the hearing on June 9, 1954, Senator McCarthy attacked a young lawyer in Welch’s firm who had once been a member of a progressive organization, the National Lawyers Guild, and accused him of aiding the Communist Party. Joseph Welch interrupted McCarthy and stated “Senator, may we not drop this? We know he belonged to the Lawyers Guild.... Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. You’ve done enough. Have you no sense of decency, Sir? At long last have you left no sense of decency?” It has been surmised that Welch’s questioning of McCarthy during the hearings turned the tide of public and press opinion against McCarthy, leading to McCarthy being censured in the U.S. Senate for bringing “the Senate into dishonor and dispute.” It is likely that Joe’s notoriety from the television coverage of the McCarthy hearings brought him to the attention of Otto Preminger when the director of the 1959 film, Anatomy of a Murder, was looking to bring authenticity to the important role of Judge Weaver, a role that brought Joseph N. Welch a nomination for the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor – Motion Picture, in his first and only acting performance. When asked why he accepted the acting role he answered “It looked like that was the only way I’d ever get to be a judge.”



John received a telegram at 12:04 pm on Monday, August 22, 1960 that read: “We are all raising a glass to our favorite author today and that is quite a few glasses. Trout Madness knows no closing day. Best from all at St. Martins. Unsigned.”

The surviving documentation for the printing history of the St. Martin’s Press editions of Trout Madness is somewhat incomplete. The author of this article could not nail down a figure for the first edition print run, however it is believed the number of copies for the first edition printing was large, as the majority of the St. Martin’s Press editions found currently are of the first edition. The publication date for the first edition was August 21, 1960. The first edition has the retail price of \$4.95 on the front dust wrapper flap, and the copyright page lacks any printing statement. All five printings have in large print “Author of Anatomy of a Murder” at the bottom of the dust wrapper front panel under the author’s name. St. Martin’s Press ordered 3,500 copies of the second printing bound in late September 1960 and 5,600 copies bound of the third printing in late October 1960. The third printing has the statement “Second and Third Printings, October 1960” on the copyright page, and both printings have the retail price of \$4.95 on the front dust wrapper flap. “Third Printing” is printing opposite the \$4.95 price on the dust wrapper front flap, it is unknown if the second printing was noted in the same manner on the dust wrapper flap and on the copyright page.

On April 21, 1970, 1,500 copies of the fourth printing of Trout Madness were ordered by St. Martin’s Press, along with 2,000 dust wrappers. The dust wrapper top front flap states “Fourth Printing”, followed by a “\$6.50” retail price. The copyright page states “Fourth Printing.” The top edge of the text block is stained green (the top edge of the text block of the first edition, second and third printings was not stained).

On January 5, 1973, 1,500 copies of the fifth printing of Trout Madness were ordered by St. Martin’s Press, along with 1,700 dust wrappers. The price on the dust wrapper front flap was changed to \$6.95. The dust wrapper front flap does not state “Fifth Printing.” As



John D. Voelker

with the fourth printing, the top edge of the text block is stained green, and a “Fifth Printing” statement was not added to the copyright page.

Trout Madness and John D. Voelker proved the naysaying publishers wrong. St. Martin’s Press went through five printings and the fishing dissertation has been since reprinted in hardcover and paperback, and is readily available today. As Elizabeth Delene writes in her thesis titled “John Donaldson Voelker, Life’s Influences on a Man’s Writing Career (1997),” “Trout Madness proved to be a success story. It was well received by the public and voted one of the fifteen best fishing books ever written by Trout Unlimited’s Trout magazine.”

In 1964 Trout Madness was also the name given to a 14-minute fishing documentary which was written (with John’s help) and produced by John’s friend and playwright, Elihu Winer. Winer was also the author of “Anatomy of a Murder, A Court Drama in Three Acts.” John stars and narrates the film and guides you on a typical day of fishing in the Upper Peninsula while dispensing wisdom and angling lore. This documentary is available on YouTube, I highly recommend it.

The IAHS 2023/2024 Winter Newsletter will have the next installment in the series concerning Robert Traver’s (John D. Voelker) books, the political novel, Hornstein’s Boy.

A History of Bethel Lutheran Church of Ishpeming

By Bud Hart, IAHS Board Member



Bethel's First Church

A perfect storm was at work, the world politic of the late 1800's was at play, laying the embryo for the founding of Bethel Lutheran Church in Ishpeming in 1887. In Finland, then a Duchy of Russia, threats from the Russian Czar to force Russian as the official language and a threatened revolution, combined with high unemployment and little land to cultivate, was balanced against the need for possible jobs in mining, forestry, and construction in the United States. Little or no English language skills were required in these trades and, many women who immigrated to the United States found employment as maids. American recruiting agents expedited the hiring process, directing workers to employment in the Upper Peninsula and Minnesota Iron Ranges. There the Finns, among other nationalities, found a familiar climate and geography. Naturally, a cultural bond of language and history led to the founding of Finnish communities. As the predominate religion of Finland was Lutheran, most Finnish immigrants joined the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church (one of many a forerunner to the ELCA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, of which Bethel is a member).

As ideal as the Finnish pilgrimage now sounds to us, the 1880's Iron Range was a documented time of lawlessness, where young women, lured to the Upper Peninsula by promises of respectable employment with fair wages, instead were brutally held near lumber camps, unable to refuse the whims of equally brutal men. In this environment, Heikki Huotari, a Finnish immigrant living in Ishpeming, held a meeting at his home in the Cleveland location calling for the formation, and the building of a Lutheran Church. A committee was formed to raise funds for the estimated construction cost of \$2000. The Articles of Incorporation were entered with the State of Michigan on February 1, 1887. Construction began on May 1 and was finished in August 1887, at a total cost of \$1,175. In 1888 the first organ was purchased and installed at a cost of \$55.

Spittoons were incorporated in the building plan. Before the August 26, 1887 dedication of the new church, a funeral for two miners (Hemming Pietila and Tobias Numminen) was conducted on August 12th. Pastor Hoikka from Republic, served as a visiting pastor and fulfilled the need for the short term, but still, a full time Pastor was needed. Congregant Nels Majhannu made a trip to Finland where he met Pastor K. L. Tolonen and spoke with him about coming to Ishpeming. Pastor Tolonen had served as a missionary in Africa and as a mission speaker among the Churches in Finland. A call was offered and accepted and with his wife, Alalice (who became the church organist), they arrived on October 26, 1888, preaching the following Sunday. Pastor



K. L. Tolonen

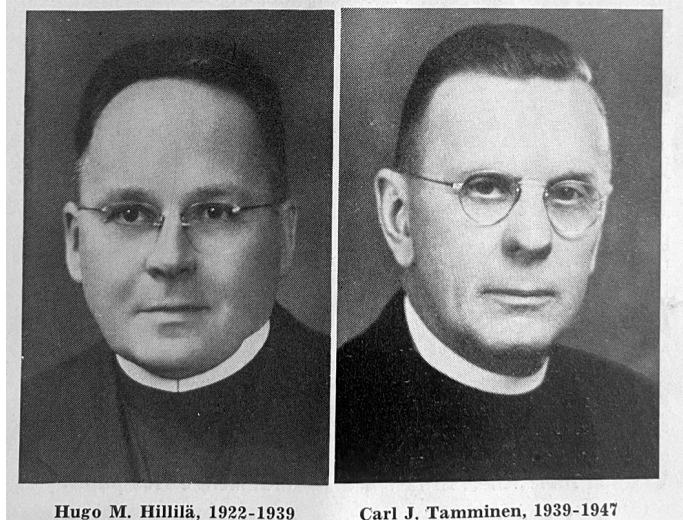
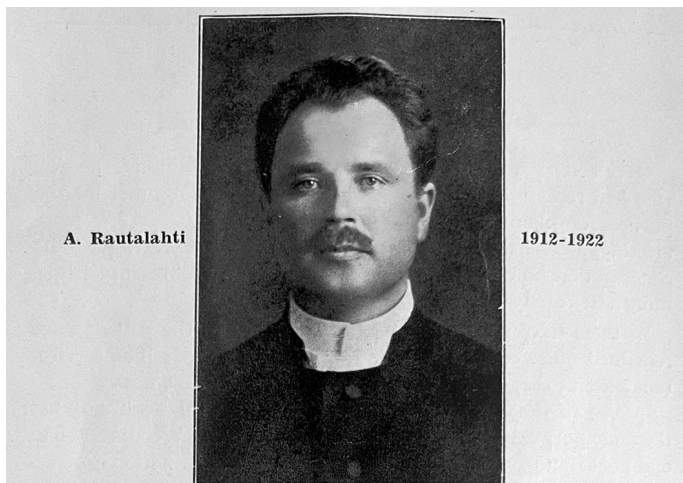
1888-1902



J. K. Lammi, 1903-1908



A. Savola, 1908-1912



bin Savola was elected to replace Pastor Lammi on the third ballot and served until 1912 when he returned to Finland. During his tenure the Maple Street parsonage was purchased for \$2000 and women were given the right to vote in congregational elections and the Finnish Christian Youth Society was formed in Ishpeming. Pastor Alvar Rautalahti replaced Paster Savola and served until 1922 when Pastor Hugo Hillila was elected as his replacement.

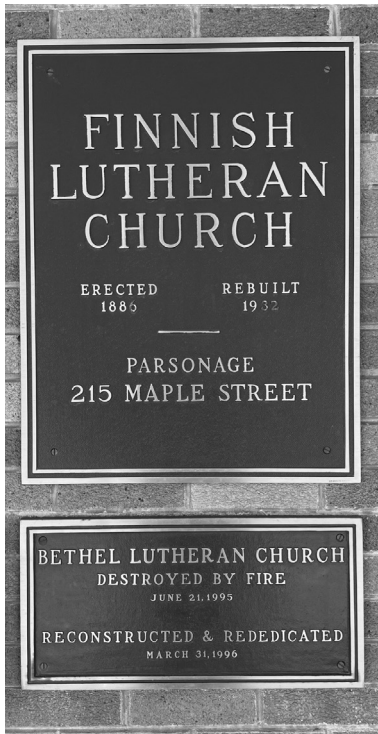
In 1918 the influenza epidemic and World War 1 resulted in the discontinuation of Sunday School. There was a recognition of service members in the war (41 military and 1 Red Cross Nurse) with the purchase of a flag bearing 41 blue and one red star. As prohibition was in effect, wine was unavailable for purchase, so grape juice was used for communion. Concern was voiced in the church council that some members were attending anti-Christian meetings (Communist meetings) and this was contrary to church teachings. Another action of the council was to drop from membership those who married non-members or non-Finns. At the same time fund raising took place to support Lutherans in Europe devastated by WW1 through the American Lutheran Council which raised and provided \$100,000 to their brethren in Finland.

Important changes began in 1925 when Pastor Hillila requested permission, which was granted from the congregation, to hold English spoken services once monthly. At the same time, permission was given to start English language Sunday School classes and the Christian Youth Society was addressed in English once monthly.

Tolonen served several congregations including those in Winthrop (National Mine), Republic and Champion. Serving for more than 13 years, Pastor Tolonen became ill and passed away from pneumonia on April 6, 1902, and is buried in the Ishpeming Cemetery. Alalice eventually returned to Finland.

Pastor Lammi, a native of Finland, was called and elected to replace Pastor Tolonen on the fourth ballot. The Republic congregation disagreed with the call and separated from the Ishpeming parish. Reported to have health issues, a fragile constitution, a nervous disposition, and poorly tolerating stress, Pastor Lammi took summer leaves of absence. Having been a member of the Finnish Temperance Society, Pastor Lammi allowed the local Waino Temperance Society to meet at the church. In fact, a tavern owner was dropped from church membership although his family was allowed to remain. In 1908, Pastor Lammi died of pneumonia. Missionary Al-





During the great depression which began in 1929, hardship was caused when the Peninsula Bank froze church funds. The church survived this difficult period with salary reductions, volunteer services and contributions based on ability to pay. In 1932, the official name of the church was changed to Bethel Lutheran Church of Ishpeming. By 1936, the economy had improved, and salaries were upwardly adjusted. Property was purchased on the west side of the church and a pipe organ fund was established as well as a retirement fund for the Pastor.

During WW2, a congregant, Onni Oja died as a prisoner of war while being held by the Japanese and a white alter bible was gifted in his memory. Aid was sent to Finland totaling \$5,180 between 1940 and 1950. News and letters were sent to servicemen from the congregation. During the war, construction projects were on hold due to lack of materials, but the post-war boom resulted in improvements to the Church and Parsonage. In addition, a Memorial Fund was established, a telephone was installed,

and radio broadcasts began in both Finn and English. Although English was now the predominate language there remained one English and one Finnish language service on Sundays. Minutes of the church were recorded in English.

In 1962 Bethany and Bethel boards discussed coordinated building programs and/or merger but nothing came of this. There did begin a joint Vacation Bible School with Trinity and Bethany churches. In 1964, the library, education wing and fellowship hall were built.



In 1995, lightning struck the church steeple and resulted in a fire that destroyed the main sanctuary with ancillary water and smoke damage throughout the church. Interim services were held at St. Pius Catholic Church in West Ishpeming effectively maintaining and preventing Bethel's congregation from dispersing to other churches. The present church was rededicated in March 1996.

Bethel has a long history of giving to those in need recognizing the Church is not a 'stand-alone' entity but exists for the greater good of God's mission. It is a welcoming, Evangelical church inviting all to worship. It has stood witness to immigrant sufferings, World Wars, economic hardships, and secular shifts away from religion. It continues with baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals, worship, and support for the community. Now, as in the brave days of the initial formation meeting held in the Cleveland location based on a hope and a prayer, Bethel remains a cornerstone of the greater Ishpeming community.



The Mather Inn - Part 1 – Beginnings

By Karen Kasper, IAHS Vice President

It was agreed that Ishpeming was in need of a new hotel after The Nelson House was consumed by fire in August 1928. Landscape Architect Warren Manning started the ball rolling for the new hotel in mid-June 1930 when he sent a letter and a small blueprint to local Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. (CCI) General Manager S. R. (Stuart Rhett) Elliott and William G. Mather (CCI President) with ideas for the new hotel and proposed park site. It is not known if he was asked to do the blueprint or just did it on his own, but it did start the process. He also billed CCI for the blueprint.

By the middle of July, the ball was rolling, although probably not as fast as anyone wanted. S. R. Elliott wrote a letter to Mather and had this to say. "I discussed this subject with you, emphasizing the fact that the City of Ishpeming should have a hotel and that on account of the close, friendly relationship between our Company and the people of Ishpeming, I was strongly of the opinion that the Company should take an active part in this hotel project and try to bring it to a successful conclusion. You agreed with me and said you were entirely in sympathy with this matter." (Letter, July 16, 1930)

A nice hotel in Ishpeming would greatly benefit CCI, giving them a place for visiting executives to stay. With the burning of the Nelson House, and even before that, there wasn't a decent place to stay in either Ishpeming or Negaunee, which left Marquette as the closest alternative.

Elliott first contacted H. L. Stevens & Company who specialized in building hotels and often managing them. They had recently completed a hotel in Marquette, the



William G. Mather, headed the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company for 50 years from 1890 through 1940

Northland Hotel, now the Landmark Inn. On the same day he wrote to Mather, he also sent a letter to the Company headquarters, located in Chicago.

"About two years ago I met you in Ishpeming and discussed our hotel project with you. This matter is now crystallizing rapidly and I think it is quite probable that if the cost is not too excessive that the funds can be provided for the construction of a hotel of about fifty rooms in Ishpeming. You will recall that we looked at a number of sites. The one which is the most available is



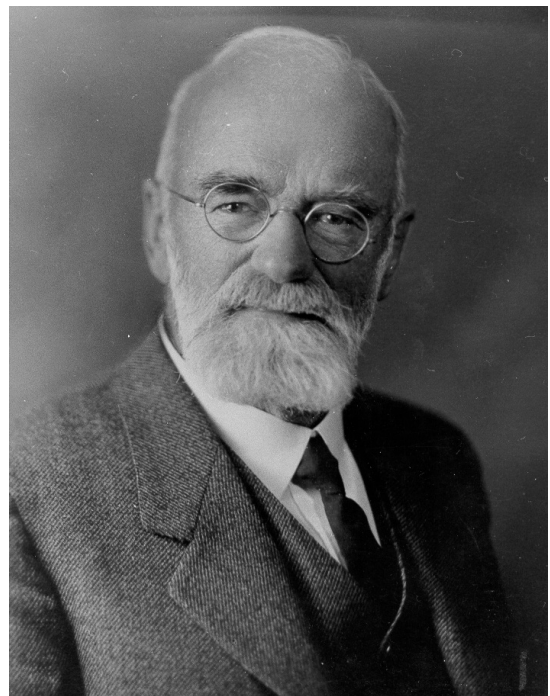
the old hotel site. In order to get this project started and to get something definite to put before the President of our company, I must have some general information.” (Letter, July 16th, 1930)

H. L. Stevens & Company did send some sketches to Elliott, who sent them to Mather. Unfortunately, Mather did not like them. He sent a telegram to Elliott which read, “Picture of hotel makes me think it will look too large in comparison with adjoining buildings. Could it not be lower and perhaps of greater area and still contain sufficient rooms with an appearance more like a roadside or country hotel in New England.” (Telegram, July 31, 1930)

Elliott sent a letter to Mather, responding to the criticisms. “When I submitted the plans to you it was, of course, done in a tentative way as there were a number of criticisms which could be made. The elevation is particularly attractive and I am sorry you think it is too citified for a place like Ishpeming. Please realize that Ishpeming will have to compete to a certain extent with two modern hotels in Marquette and I was very much in hope that we could have a hotel which was very attractive in appearance.” (Letter, August 2, 1930)

Mather’s response came several days later. “It is my thought that we could have an elevation which would compete very satisfactorily with the two modern ho-

tels in Marquette; in other words, be more attractive, but not as conventional as the plan suggested. I feel the same way with regard to furnishings. I do not think the new Marquette hotel is designed or furnished in good taste.” (Letter, August 4, 1930)



Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect

Mather had definite ideas about the appearance of the proposed hotel and since CCI would be paying the lion's share of the money for building the new hotel, Mather was the one who made the decisions.

Elliott decided it was time to call a general meeting to talk about the proposed new hotel and gauge the support of Ishpeming's citizens. While CCI was willing to put up much of the money needed, the citizens of the town needed to support the hotel as well. The meeting would be on the 12th of August in the American Legion club rooms. A representative from H. L. Stevens & Company was asked to be present.

The meeting was a huge success. After the meeting, Elliott wrote to Mather, "I am delighted to tell you that the proposition to have a new hotel in Ishpeming has met with a very enthusiastic reception. A large committee was organized and up to the present time there has been actually pledged \$35,000.

When I discussed this matter with you and stressed the necessity for a hotel, you told me that you were sympathetic with the idea and that I could go ahead and try to get something concrete. In order to do this, I wrote to you and told you it was necessary for me to appear before a general meeting of the citizens and lay the general plans before them. This met with your approval. At this meeting I did not definitely say that if the citizens raised \$40,000 that the companies would finance the remainder of the cost. I, however, had to say that it was my opinion that they would do so.

Please bear in mind that there are no rich people in Ishpeming and that the merchants are not in any financial position to do better than they already have done. "(Letter, September 6, 1930)

By this time, another factor was looming regarding hotel financing. The local high school burned on August 28, 1930, and rebuilding that structure was of great importance to the town. The money to build the school would come from bonds. S. R. Elliott and others at CCI felt the best way to finance the hotel was through issuing stock.

Word had spread about the proposed new hotel and several other architectural firms sent letters soliciting business. The United States was suffering through a Depression, and everyone was scrambling for business. Despite two rounds of H. L. Stevens & Company sending sketches, Mather was still not satisfied with them.

"I have had a talk today with Mr. Manning. We both think that our Ishpeming hotel should be of the type which might be called an 'Inn,' rather than a 'hotel,' the idea being that a 'hotel' is more pretentious than an 'inn.'

We wish that this Ishpeming inn should, if practicable,

have a different aspect from the average mining country hotel, because we think it can be made more attractive and distinctive than the Northland Hotel at Marquette. Mr. Manning suggests that we get an architect friend of his in Boston, by the name of Ritchie, whom he recommends for this style of work, to make a sketch of the exterior in conformity with the location, full description of which Mr. Manning can give him, accompanied by an explanation of the surrounding buildings and the character of the town and of the patronage." (Letter, Mather to Elliott, September 19, 1930)

Elliott was quick to reply to Mather. "I was mighty glad to receive your letter of the 19th and note that before long Mr. Manning would come to Ishpeming with Mr. Ritchie, an architect from Boston. I am quite sure that while Mr. Manning and Mr. Ritchie are here, we will be able to thrash out some scheme which will not only be acceptable to you but to the citizens of Ishpeming. I agree with you absolutely that the inn type of building would be preferable to the ordinary hotel type.

In order for the Ishpeming hotel to be successful and make money, it must be distinctive in character, attractive and modern in every respect. It will have to compete with modern hotels in Marquette. The consensus of opinion is that it should contain not less than fifty rooms." (Letter, September 22, 1930)

Elliott was also able to report on the stock subscription drive progress. A total of 332 subscribers pledged to purchase \$50,700 worth of stock. Almost half of the subscribers pledged to purchase only one share of stock, which was priced at \$50. Today, that same share of stock would cost \$902, so it was a significant amount of money.

"In the Northland there were twenty contributors while in Ishpeming our total at the present time is 332. This means that the citizens of Ishpeming will support the hotel and take a keen personal interest in it. "(Letter, September 22, 1930)

On the 14th of October, Elliott sent James Ritchie, the prospective architect, two copies of the blueprints for the concrete head frames at the Cliffs Shaft mine. Why he did this is not known, but the response from Ritchie was good.

"I thank you very much for the two prints of the concrete head frames. You would have been very much interested, I am sure, to have heard the favorable comments from the men in our drafting room. The general impression was very favorable, and they were particularly impressed with the fact that the Company was willing to spend money for the beautification of a structure that is purely for utility purposes." (Letter, October 22, 1930)

On November 1, a contract was submitted to Mather from Manning's offices. The total bill for both architectural and landscaping services was set at \$9,000, with \$3,000 of that money going to Manning. In a letter to Mather, Elliott criticized the amount Manning was receiving. "It is my opinion that Mr. Manning's compensation should not be over \$2,000 at the outside. It stands to reason that Mr. Ritchie is doing a whole lot more work in preparing these plans and specifications than Mr. Manning would do on the grounds." (Letter, November 7, 1930)

Mather's response was concise and to the point. "The fee of \$9,000 to be paid to both Ritchie and Manning is 6 per cent on \$150,000 and this is not inconsistent with architect's fees. It seems to me that the question is really between Ritchie and Manning, and I am a little surprised that Ritchie should have been willing to let Manning have so large a proportion." (Letter, November 12, 1930)

Ritchie completed the sketches and sent them by American Express on the 13th of November. Manning was to take the duplicates to Cleveland for presenting to Mather.

"Plans indicate forty-seven rooms, twenty-eight with bath or shower, and nineteen without. Approximately sixty percent of rooms with bath.

On the ground floor we went back to the idea of a two-story portico similar to the Inn at Shaker Heights (Ohio), so much admired by Mr. and Mrs. Mather, and similar to the Woodland Golf Club designed by us, of which you saw photographs while I was in Ishpeming." (Letter, November 13, 1930)

By signing the contract with Ritchie, an important milestone in the building of the hotel was reached. Once there was a definite design, bids could be requested and the important question of how much the building would cost would be answered. Fundraising was still an ongoing concern.

S. R. Elliott sent a letter to C. B. Randall of Inland Steel. Randall was a former resident of Ishpeming and Inland Steel was in the process of sinking a shaft in the Greenwood (Ishpeming) area in hopes of finding ore.

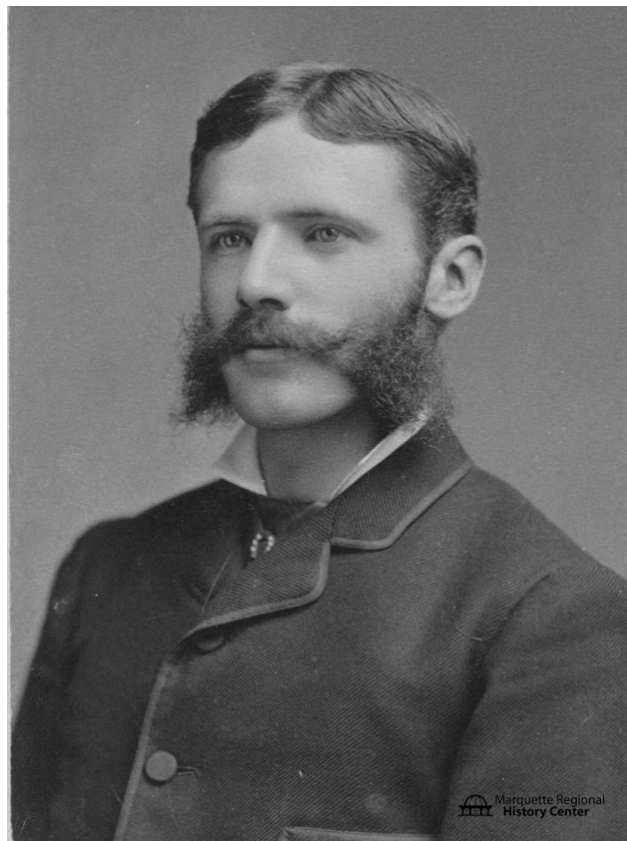
"You are so familiar with conditions in Ishpeming that I hardly think it would be necessary for me to do more than give you some bare facts. I am very familiar, as you are, with conditions in all of the various mining towns in the Lake Superior region and I am quite sure that you will agree with me that conditions in Ishpeming are very much better than they are in any other town. What I mean is simply that our people here are accustomed to good government, they realize that they have to carry their share of the burden and therefore there is

no tendency towards radicalism or extravagance in city expenditures. For many years Ishpeming has suffered due to the fact that it did not have a decent hotel and during the past two years, as you know, it has not had a hotel." (Letter, December 5, 1930)

Randall's letter in return came several days later. "Although we have the friendliest of feelings for yourself personally and for the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, he feels that it would going a little bit strong for the people of Ishpeming to look to our Company for a contribution of this sort at the present time.

We have never before had any contact with the Marquette Range, and our operation there at the present time is strictly of a development character. We may or may not have a mine, and it will be two or three years before that fact will be ascertained." (Letter, December 10, 1930)

John S. Mennie, who supervised all construction projects for CCI, including The Mather Inn, went to Marquette to show the plans to D. Frederick Charlton, a Marquette architect. Charlton had in fact designed buildings for CCI before and both Elliott and Mather felt his input would be valuable. There were a number of good suggestions regarding the hotel, which were sent on to Ritchie. In addition, Charlton discovered an error in the drawings. "I first want to call your attention to an error which appears in those drawings, by



William G. Mather, younger years

which the building above the main floor shows three feet narrower than it actually has to be to carry up the walls from the first floor.

Mr. Charlton does not like the gable shown on the northwest corner and the rear elevation. This brings a valley down immediately behind the large chimney and will undoubtedly mean just a place to gather snow to a great depth. I fully agree with him on this point and if it can be so arranged as to avoid this valley, we think it should be done,” (Letter, December 8, 1930)

In a progress report Elliott sent to Mather, he reported he had sent letters to Inland Steel, Jones & Laughlin and also to a Mr. Salsich (Oliver Mining Company/US Steel)

“I have a reply from Mr. Shepherd (Jones & Laughlin Steel Co.) in which he says he has referred the entire matter to Mr. Mark Elliott, their General Superintendent, and within a short time he would take the matter up with me. I am awfully afraid that the Oliver, who are Invariable so terribly slow about everything, will keep us waiting quite a while.” (Letter, December 18, 1930) Elliott’s words about Oliver Mining Company proved to be prophetic as the Oliver Mining Company contribution was the last one to be received.

In January William Mather suggested to Elliott that he send letters to both Pickands (Samuel) Mather & Company and M. A. Hanna Company asking for contributions. “It is quite possible that they (Pickands Mather & Co.) might feel without obligation to do anything for Ishpeming. However, even a small amount in the stock of the hotel would be encouraging, and I think they might come forward.” (Letter, January 9, 1931)

At the end of January, the first of the corporate contributions came in from Jones & Laughlin Steel Co. “I am glad to say that I have been authorized to tell you that the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, or its designate, will make a subscription of \$5,000 to the capital stock of the proposed hotel. This amount, I understand, will cover 100 shares of the capital stock at par value of \$50 per share.” (Letter, January 19, 1931)

In February, Mather wrote to Elliott, “I have just heard from Mr. Dalton that Pickands Mather & Co. will take \$5,000 worth of stock and pay for it whenever we call for it.” (Letter, February, 17, 1931)

In the same letter Mather indicated that CCI would go as high as \$100,000 and William Mather himself would go as high as \$50,000 making a total thus far of \$210,000. He also added, “If you don’t get enough from the Oliver Company to complete the necessary amount, I will underwrite it personally up to \$25,000.” (Letter, February 17, 1931)

“The Cleveland office has telegraphed me that Mr.



Mather has a letter from you dated February 27th in which you say you have written to Mr. Salsich authorizing the Oliver Iron Mining Company to make a subscription of \$10,000 to the stock in the proposed hotel in Ishpeming.” (Letter, Elliott to US Steel, March 11, 1931)

Elliott wrote to Mather, “On Saturday the 7th I learned from the Cleveland office that the Oliver Iron Mining Company had consented to subscribe for \$10,000 of stock in the Ishpeming hotel. We therefore called a general meeting on Monday, the 9th, to perfect a permanent organization.

The meeting was largely attended. The people of Ishpeming are most grateful to you and the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company for making it possible for Ishpeming to have a hotel. On every side I hear the highest praise for both you and the Company.” (Letter, March 14, 1931)

The Mather Inn – Part 2 – Beginnings, will appear in the IAHS Winter 2023-24 newsletter.

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Volunteers needed at the Museum

Would you like to spend a pleasant afternoon surrounded by Ishpeming history? Do you have a few hours to spare, not necessarily every week, but even once a month during the summer? If so, please contact us and volunteer as a host at the Ishpeming Area Historical Museum. Anyone interested in helping to preserve the history of our town is welcome. We offer training for those interested in becoming a volunteer. If you are interested, please contact David Aeh at the Main Street Antique Mall, 121 South Main Street, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849. Phone 906-486-8680.

Please become a member or renew your membership

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, please consider becoming one. Annual membership is just \$10 per year for an individual. 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. Our membership application is included in this newsletter.

**Our newsletter is sponsored in part by
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Thank You!

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. (We send out newsletters in the winter and summer)

Yearly membership (Renewable January 1st)

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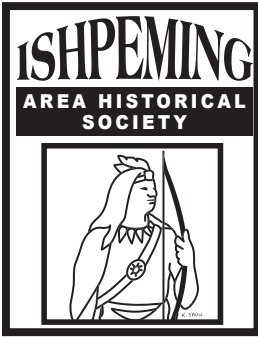
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