

Ishpeming

**Area
Historical
Society &
Museum**

WINTER 2020

Edited by
Karen Kasper

Website

Thanks to the efforts of one of our volunteers, David Larsen, we now have a website! It has long been a wish of ours, but this summer became a reality. Visit our website at www.ishpeminghistory.org. It's still a work in progress, but there are past newsletters online, as well as a timeline and more. The best part of the website is we now have the ability to accept memberships, renewals or donations of any kind. without the hassle of finding a stamp and envelope. Our history books and excess yearbooks will be available for purchase through the website in the future.

Volunteers are always needed

We often get questions about being open on more days during the summer. Currently we have enough volunteers to cover our four shifts on Thursdays and Fridays, but we could be open more days with more volunteers. We very much appreciate our current volunteers they are the lifeblood of our museum.

Several of our volunteers are here during the summertime and we love having summer volunteers as that is when we need them the most. If you come up to this area for the summer consider volunteering at the museum. Volunteers do not have to be Ishpeming natives. Training is provided.

We are looking for someone who would be willing to transcribe old newspaper articles. This is a job that could be done at home.

Museum Changes

We always want to know what our visitors think about the museum. We received several suggestions this past summer. One of our big changes is that each summer we will have a 'focus display' that will change from year to year. This past summer we had Native American artifacts loaned to us by Danny Garceau and Judy Conrad. Next summer we will have artifacts from Bethany Lutheran Church as the church is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

If you have a collection of interesting artifacts that you would consider putting on loan, please let us know.

Ishpeming Area Historical Society Board

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Ishpeming Trade Tokens

By James Compton

In John Bartlow Martin's fine book *Call it North Country*, Peter Moore, the Silver Lake Dam watchman, came into Ishpeming periodically for a drink. Martin writes "...he always visited George Voelker's saloon and George Thoney's saloon-he always called it 'visiting his friends'-and sometimes he would go into the place run by two Finns, Henry Manley and Alec Anderson..." Almost nothing exists now from these Ishpeming establishments. Some small items do remain though: Trade tokens.

Trade tokens were most popular around 1890 to 1940 and were utilized extensively in Ishpeming by many businesses. These tokens served various purposes in their establishments. We will talk further about these uses, but first, a description of trade tokens.

Older historical trade tokens, or "good fors" as many collectors like to call them, are metal (usually brass or aluminum) and quite coin-like. On the front of the token is a business or proprietor name (see photo). The back of the token usually contains the words "Good for _____ in Trade or Merchandise." The blank space held many different items such as 5¢, 10¢, 25¢ etc. or a product the business sold like cigar, drink or meal. The businesses that most often issued tokens were saloons, mercantile stores, billiard parlors, bowling alleys, drug stores or hotels along with many more. These tokens also came in many different sizes and shapes including round, octagonal, square or oval. There were three components of a token's usage: a substitute for money, for business advertising and promotion or for gambling.

A token could be used as money. Certainly, when a token had the business or proprietor's name on the front and good for money or an item on the back, it would be accepted at that business. So, in this case the token acted as a form of currency that could buy merchandise or another item at the establishment. Today, gift cards serve close to this same function.

Secondly, the token advertised and promoted a business. No matter how you obtained a token, the obvious choice of where to use it would be the business listed on the front. If you took your F. Braastad & Co. or A. W. Myers token to their store where they sold all types of groceries, meats, furniture, clothing, dry goods and hardware, you would probably do additional shopping. This way, it enticed you into the store where you would likely spend more of your money.

Thirdly, a business would attract you through their doors by the allure of winning money or products by gambling via a slot machine. A significant percentage of trade tokens were the size of a nickel and made of brass, the standard size and material for slot machines popular at that time (see advertisement). While some slot machines paid out in chewing gum or cigars, there were many machines that paid out in nickels or more 5¢ tokens. This difference is important. Slot machines that paid out in gum or cigars could be argued were for "amusement only." However, machines that paid out in nickels or 5¢ tokens, were certainly in violation of federal and state law. Several articles in the *Iron Ore*, the Ishpeming newspaper during this time, describe raids and proclamations by local officials ordering removal of the machines. So, some enforcement folks attempted to rid the city of illegal slot machines. But like liquor during prohibition, it seems these "illegal" machines kept reappearing to be used and tolerated by many in the community. Willing patrons could feed tokens into the slot machines often tucked behind the counter or in back rooms, attracted by the chance of a big payout.

To summarize, trade tokens from Ishpeming businesses, like the ones listed below, functioned as currency, advertising and promotion, and even gambling pieces. Here is a list of all known Ishpeming businesses that issued tokens:

Anderson & Manley, 214 S. 1st; Bank Street Billiard Hall; J.H. Billings (Billing Hotel, J.H. Billing, prop-'27 Gaz), 121 E. Cleveland; A. Bjurman Soft Drink Parlor, 120 E. Canda; F. Braastad & Co., 308 Cleveland ; Jos. Clairmont Billiard Parlor, 110 E. Cleveland; Martin A. Clevon, 219 Cleveland

Elks Club; B.P.O.E. 477 ; Ishpeming Elks Lodge #447; Empire Billiards & Bowling and Base-Ball Headquarters, 202 W. Division; Empire Billiard Parlor L.E. Geelan, Proprietor; August Enblom, 106 N 2nd in 1901 and 112 N 1st in 1903 ; John F. Gylling Billiard Parlor (may have been where Jackson's Hardware is now); Ishpeming Creamery Co.; Ishpeming-Negaunee Hospital for use in radios; N. Jacob Billiard Parlor; S. Johnson & Co. Store, 201 N. 2nd; Gust Johnsons Confectionery ; D. Kindstrand

Lake Superior Produce Co. ; M. Lofberg Clothing Store, 123 E. Division; A. Maunula, 111 S. 1st & later 201 E. Division; I. Meelhuus, Bar; H.H. Mildon Billiard Parlor; L.C.C. Moose Lodge Ishpeming Lodge No. 1532 Loyal Order Of Moose ; John Mugfur & Son, 211 S. Main ; Ed. P. Murray, 119 S. Main; A.W. Meyers Mercantile Company, 101 W. Division; James Pillow Billiards. East Division in 1893; Ralph's Place 300 W. Division; Scoop's Place 203 South Main; R. Timonen ; Louis Toutloff, 110 S. Main. Louis Toutloff ran a saloon until prohibition. During prohibition, he changed his business to a pharmacy. ; M.B. Toutloff, 110 S. Main. I believe this is Louis's father.; Twin Cities Motor Coach Company; George Voelker, 102 S. Main. John Voelker's father. This saloon is credited for being the inspiration for characters found in John's book *Danny and the Boys*; J.J. Voelker, 206 S. Main. John Voelker's uncle;

If you have questions, additions, corrections to this article or would just like to discuss trade tokens, feel free to email me at comptjames@gmail.com or call/text at (906)251-0995. In addition to being a collector of trade tokens from the Upper Peninsula, I help contribute to and update a reference book of all known trade tokens from Michigan. If you know of any tokens from businesses not listed here, I would very much like to hear from you in order to document the token's information and keep the book current. Thanks for reading.

Resources:

Cunningham, Paul A., *Michigan Trade Tokens*. Tecumseh, Michigan: Michigan Exonomia Publishers, 1987

Martin, John Bartlow, *Call it North Country*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf Publisher, 1944

Clark, Charles F., Detroit, *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory*. Compiled and Published by C.F. Clark, 1863 to present.

Newspaper: *The Iron Ore*, Ishpeming, Michigan, Various Articles from 1893-1906



100 Years Ago

Fire Department Officers Named

The Ishpeming fire department held its annual meeting Saturday evening and elected officers for the coming year. There was no opposition to any of the candidates and all those who served during the year just closed were re-elected. They are:

Chief—John Lacey

First assistant chief—William H. Trembath

Second assistant chief—John Murphy

Secretary—Thomas Malloney

Treasurer—James F. Mullins

A meeting of hose, hook and ladder companies No. 1 will be held this evening at 7:30 o'clock, when a report will be submitted on the department's annual ball, held Thanksgiving eve in the Ishpeming theater.

The Ishpeming fire department is one of the city's best handled organizations. The members get along well and there is seldom any friction among the. As a volunteer organization it would be hard to find one as efficient anywhere in the country.

The department is well handled financially. It has not had a depleted treasury in many years. The city council contributes \$200 annually to each company. The net receipts from the department's annual ball, which always shows a good profit, are used for improvements or other good work. The department maintains two funds, a general and a sick fund, while each company has its own treasury. During the war period the department invested \$500 in Liberty bonds, and there are still good sized balances in each of the funds.

When the members of the department go to an upper peninsula tournament, or when they want to enjoy some other pastime, the expenses are always borne out of the funds on hand.

John Lacey has served as the department's chief for a longer period of years than any man. Members would protest his resignation if tendered as they have always found him their friend and a man who is always considerate and generous. If a vote were taken in the upper peninsula today to determine who is the most popular fireman, there isn't any doubt but that 'Jack' Lacey would be on top.

(Mining Journal, December 1, 1919)

Merchants Unable To Get Clothing

Merchants dealing in men's and women's clothing, and furnishings are disheartened because they are unable to get all the merchandise they need to supply the demands of their patrons. It was hard to get certain lines of merchandise during the war, but conditions then were nothing to what they are now, according to local merchants, who frankly admit that they are in a bad plight.

"Suits and overcoats are almost off the market," said one Negaunee dealer yesterday. "I never imagined conditions would get to the point where the biggest manufacturers in the United States cannot fill even twenty-five percent of the orders they are receiving. When conditions were normal it was no trick to get 100 overcoats in a shipment, or more if they were needed, but today the dealer who can get a half a dozen at a time is lucky. We have letters, and lots of

them, from the wholesalers and manufacturers telling us of their troubles and how it is impossible to fill our orders.

Conditions are growing worse, due to the labor troubles, which are affecting practically all manufacturers. The people employed in the woolen mills are not working steadily, and it is a question when they will get down to real business again. A few years ago they used to put in sixty hours a week, but forty-four hours is all that many of them put in now. The mills are simply swamped with orders. Even with their help kept steadily at work, they could not begin to fill orders, as the demand is far in excess of the supply. Many foreign orders, at fancy prices, are being taken care of, in addition to the home trade, which is bigger today than ever before.

"We are losing sales every day, in fact almost every hour. People want the goods and they will pay the prices asked for them, but it is an utter impossibility to get them. All stocks of merchandise in our lines are low and they will be further reduced before they are replenished to the extent that an increase can be shown on our shelves and counters.

"Commercial travelers are not nearly as plentiful now as they were before the war, and those who do come offer little encouragement for an improvement in the near future. Some of them predict that present conditions will continue for two or three years. They believe it will take a long time to adjust the labor troubles. The foreign element in the eastern manufacturing centers, seem easily led into strike muddles and once they get into them, it is no easy task to get the straightened out."

(Mining Journal, November 1, 1919)

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.

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

Murray Morris Duncan

Murray Duncan, who preferred to use MM Duncan, was born in Washington DC on the 10th of May, 1858. His father, the Reverend Thomas Duncan, was a clergyman in the Episcopalian church.

Duncan graduated from Lehigh University with degrees in mining engineering and analytical chemistry in 1880. He held several mining related positions prior to 1897, when he was employed by the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company as a mining agent for the Ishpeming mines. In 1908 he was chosen as a director of CCI, succeeding Peter White. He was appointed vice president and general manager of the mines in 1916 a position he held until he resigned some months before his death.

During his tenure at CCI, he was a member of the library board and on the public works board for over 20 years, He was a director of the Miners National Bank since 1900 and its president for many years. During WW1 he served on several boards and in 1918 was appointed chairman of sub-district #5 of the resources and conversion section of the war industries board. He was also chairman of the county war preparedness board.

He took an active part in mining societies, especially the Lake Superior Mining Institute and served as its president in 1907-1908. One of his areas of concern was workman's compensation and his presidential address on the subject was later followed by state legislation.

He was a member of Grace Episcopal Church and a Mason.

"The history of the development of the Lake Superior mining region is interesting, not only on account of the wealth of metal furnished for the use of mankind, but also on account of the personality of the leaders, among whom Mr. Duncan was one of the foremost, in carrying out that work. He was distinguished by persistent energy, attention to details, business ability and broad-mindedness, and fortunate in the wise selection of assistants to carry out the operations of development and mining. Through his daily contact with business men and with his sympathetic attitude toward employees and fellow townsmen, he has made and kept a great number of sincere friends." (Iron Ore, December 22, 1928)

Duncan died on December 17, 1928 and was buried in California.

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.)

Visit our website at www.ishpeminghistory.org or:

Mail completed form and payment to:

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The Winter 2020 newsletter is sponsored in part by Globe Printing.

Historically Speaking

The Mining Journal's Saturday issue now has an article from the Ishpeming Historical Society on the second Saturday of the month. Past articles have talked about the Packers game in October of 1919 and the American Legion. We are trying to get permission to post the articles on our website, but we do already post the newspaper articles that are quoted.

