

The County Historian

News from the Ontonagon County Historical Society

Dean Juntunen, Editor

NOTE: If you want an article published in the newsletter, send it to Dean Juntunen, 11425 Aspen Lane, Mass City, MI 49948, or e-mail it to deanjunt@jamadots.com.



MUSEUM NEWS

Our Museum and Gift Shop are currently open five days per week, Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. through the fall color season.

We had another very busy summer and Labor Day. Thanks go to everyone who made it happen.

Looking forward, we have our traditional Hometown Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 5th this year. Please plan to bring baked goods, as always.

Like the past couple of years, we will hold Old-fashioned Fridays between Thanksgiving and Christmas, keeping the museum and gift shop open until 9:00 p.m. on Friday nights.

At our annual meeting, we renewed or elected board seats for 4 of 12 boardmembers -- Incumbents Doug Anderson, Doreen Parker, and Josie Olson and they will serve another 3

years. Bob Lind had been an enthusiastic board member for 11 years, and he chose to not run again. He will be sorely missed. Filling his vacant seat, we welcome Bill Fischer.

Last, John Arnold is a doctoral student at MTU who is working on a digital Geographic Information System to make a collection of Copper Country mining maps online. He will be scanning pertinent maps from our collection to add to their database.

ANOTHER SHIP HAS SAILED

We had been fully funded by the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission for another Summer History Internship Program.

We started with five stars this summer, Justin Lundberg, Brandon Store, Tyler Dean, Dustin Brand, and Jacob Rader. Jacob was not able to complete the program. The interns enjoyed working on various projects for OCHS, learning a lot of local



SHIP crew at the Adventure Mine in Greenland. L to R, Jacob Rader, Tyler Dean, Coriane Penegor, Justin Lundberg, and Brandon Store. Ms. Penegor was our assistant museum manager this summer, and she worked a lot with the SHIP interns.

history, helping with Lighthouse Tours, and doing field trips to local sites of historical significance. The SHIP has been a wonderful thing for the Interns and for OCHS.

Our SHIP interns are paid \$1,000 for their summer efforts.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Bruce Johanson

Dear History Buffs:

It has been a wild and busy summer. We had four SHIP interns on duty from mid June through Labor Day, and we managed to get many things done. The four boys cleaned the lighthouse weekly, removed most of the foam insulation from our fish tug, and in July repainted the Information Center. We also accomplished a small landscaping project at the lighthouse, and each of our young gentlemen managed to finish their research papers, which you will be reading in future issues of this newsletter.

The Labor Festival weekend brought a few dollars into our treasury, with over \$1100 for the bake sale alone! This year, we also had numerous requests for lighthouse tours during the Maxwell Street sales day. All in all, we have been busy, right up to the present.

We are also breaking in a new assistant manager, Tammy Jousma, and have employed part time help for the weekends (Anna Fuller and Tiffany Store, former SHIP Interns). We are now closed on Sundays and Mondays except by appointment, and just last Sunday (Sept. 27th) we had a couple from Bainbridge Island, Washington, who had flown into Green Bay and then drove up

here on a Sunday to take a lighthouse tour. Evidently the word is getting around that we have something unique to offer the public. As this is written, it is the last day of September and the demand for lighthouse tours is still going strong.

The Village of Ontonagon has accepted the bid of a local contractor to repair the roofs on the Wilson and Keranen fish houses on Rose Island and that means we will be about the business of setting up our fishing museum in the next year and arranging to move our fish tug, the Sheryl-Dennis into position to set up as a display to memorialize Ontonagon's fishing industry.

Finally, your Board of Directors has a new face, William Fischer, who replaces Bob Lind who has served on the Board for several years. Dr. Lind plans to continue as a lighthouse guide and we certainly want to thank him for his years on the Board, and his enthusiasm for our work as a historical society.

Your Board also chose the officers for the coming year: Doreen Parker, Treasurer; Dean Juntunen, Secretary; Josie Olson, Vice-President; and Bruce Johanson, President. All of your officers are proud to serve the organization and appreciate your support.

We could not function without our staff of volunteers to whom we all owe so very much. The gals who man the greeter's desk; our volunteer gardeners who tend to our flower boxes and planters; our capable office staff; our newsletter editor and contributors; and all who contribute to our bake sale or organize our special events such as our open house.

Through the coming months we will continue to hold our monthly membership meetings, an activity that has kept our organization alive and vital. If anyone has a special interest in a program to be presented, or a suggestion as to where we should hold our meetings, don't hesitate to make yourself heard.

We are always mindful that our history belongs to the local area and we are only the temporary custodians of this heritage. The most challenging part of our mission is to build in the community an appreciation of the specialness of our area. We still have people in the local area who have never visited the museum or are unaware of Ontonagon County's colorful past.

Finally, thank you one and all for the privilege of serving as the President of your Ontonagon County Historical Society. Together, we have come a long way in the last few years, and our work continues into the future.

Bruce H. Johanson,
President OCHS

LIGHTHOUSE NEWS



Lighthouse Tours are still going through the fall color season, after which we will winterize the building.

Dean Juntunen has completed his payments on sponsorship of the brick outhouse. If you are interested in being a lighthouse philanthropist, too, we still have the following rooms or structures available for sponsorship.

32 Spiral Steps	\$300 ea
Oil House	\$3,000
Master Bedroom	\$5,000
1st-flr 1890's kitchen	\$6,000
West Parlor	\$6,000



UPCOMING DINNER MEETINGS

ALL DINNERS AT 6:30 pm

October 15, Thursday -- Cane Court

(Ken Raisanen Responsible)

State Police Trooper Jerry Mazurek will give a presentation on illegal drugs in the Western UP.

November 19, Thursday -- Cane Court

(Jerry Koski responsible)

Program to be announced. A presentation from Michigan Tech's A. E. Seaman Minerological Museum is a possibility.

December 17, Thursday -- Cane Court

(Josie Olson responsible)

Josie Olson will give a presentation on Christmas -- perhaps on historical Christmases in Rockland, or perhaps on historical Christmas toys.



The Lady in Pink is our new Museum and Gift Shop worker, Tammy Jousma. Come on down to the museum and say hello.

January 21, Thursday --
Location to be announced
 (Doreen Parker responsible)

Dean Juntunen will present a digital slide show on kayaking, including local rivers and Lake Superior. This is different from his program on the Waters of the Western UP, given several years ago.

PAST PROGRAMS

June:
 (Dave Bishop responsible)

Mike Pflaum, superintendent of the Keweenaw National Historical Park, gave a presentation on next year's centennial celebration for the National Park Service. Our country's first National Park was Yellowstone, chartered in 1872; however, the National Park Service was not formed until August 25, 1916.

July:
 (Diane Penegor responsible)

Graham Jaenig gave a presentation on the significance of Copper Country history to the National Scene.

August:
 (Bruce Johanson responsible)

Bruce Johanson gave a presentation on the Ontonagon Fire of 1896. The presentation was based on the writings of Charlie Willman, founder of the Ontonagon County Historical Society.

September:
 (Dean Juntunen responsible)

Bruce Johanson gave a presentation on the history of some of the musical instruments that we have in our museum. Musical demonstrations were included, with help from Doreen Parker, Eric Hopper, and Paige Blake.

Editor's Note:

The following is a short paper by one of our SHIP interns from the summer of 2014.

MURDERS OF ONTONAGON COUNTY

By Zacc Ray

I've been interested in things that are macabre since I was young. It started out with R. L. Stine's "GooseBumps" series and slowly progressed to horror movies and crime shows. These things are probably some of the biggest influences on what I read and write, and also a possible reason for why I chose local murders as my topic. As Mr. Johanson, President of the Ontonagon County Historical Society, put it in his book *Murder and Mayhem*, which will be referenced to frequently, the cases I will be discussing are mostly from points in history in which time works as a "cushion" so that no loved ones possibly hold grudges for these stories being told.

By chronological order, the first case would be the murder of Molly Beveridge in early November, 1889. The undisputed part of this heinous act is that Mrs. Beveridge was killed by a shot to the head. The confusion in this matter arises when Jack McDonald, who had been sharing a small two-bedroom homestead with the newlywed Beveridges as well as James Redpath and his lady friend Maggie Flaherty (whom sustained severe injuries during the incident), confessed to the crime stating, "I musta done

it," despite not remembering a thing (According to Johanson, 1997).

McDonald's trial was held in Marquette where he was found guilty when Redpath testified to having removed the murder weapon, a Winchester rifle, from McDonald's hands at the scene of the crime. He was sentenced to serve time at Marquette State Prison where he spent five years until new evidence surfaced and he was released. The new evidence turned out to be testimony from Redpath's former lady friend Maggie Flaherty, now Maggie Peterson, who pointed the blame towards Mr. Redpath and Mr. Beveridge.

Maggie's testimony led to the arrest of both James Redpath and Duncan Beveridge, both on counts of murder, though Mrs. Peterson claims Redpath was only an accomplice in the crime and that Beveridge was the man behind it all.

The next case is my personal favorite and was first told to me by Bruce Johanson himself: the murder of Deputy Sheriff George Davidson. On November 21st, 1893 Deputy Davidson was told of a disturbance involving Alex Enos who owned the local brothel. Apparently one of the young women in his employ had attempted to flee with one of the customers when he caught up to her at the train station and brought her back at gun point. Davidson recruited a couple of railroad workers, railroad engineer Pat O'Brien, and fireman McCarthy to help along his way to Enos' place (According to Johanson, 1997).

As the ragtag group arrived on the scene, Alex was busy firing drunkenly into the ceiling to

frighten the women upstairs. After several minutes of talking, Davidson convinced Enos to give up the rifle and took out his hand cuffs, which startled Alex, causing him to pull a small revolver, seemingly out of nowhere on the deputy. Davidson's last words were "Pat, take the revolver," as Enos twisted his wrist and shot him with the murder weapon, which now resides in the Ontonagon County Historical Society Museum. (Johanson, 1997)

In the end, Davidson's death was decided an accident due to Enos' intoxication and therefore lack of "premeditation." Alex Enos was however found guilty of manslaughter and was also sent to Marquette State Prison. While imprisoned, Enos did, however, paint a somewhat iconic painting of the Ontonagon County Court House as it appeared in 1894. This beautiful oil painting now also resides in the OCHS Museum on display.

The last case I'd like to discuss did not appear in *Murder and Mayhem* as it actually happened much more recently than either of the other murders. The murder of Eugene Knickerbocker took place in 1985. The story as I've heard it from Mr. Johanson as well as in a short article in an edition of *The Ontonagon Herald* is that Eugene, whilst having been a trained killer in WWII, was an all-around good man and the only man Johanson knew who could pick an engine block up with his hands and drop it into place. Eugene had a wife and an 18-year old son named David, and was by all accounts a good father and husband.

The couple decided to go on a short trip, leaving their son home

alone. Now, much like other teens in his situation, David threw a party without his parent’s consent. Upon returning home, the Knickerbockers found the place a wreck and Eugene immediately sought out his son, and began to bark at the young man something fierce. David retreated upstairs and when he returned he brought a shot gun with him.

David shot his mother and father and Eugene later died of his injuries while his wife was hospitalized. While in his cell awaiting trial, David’s grandmother wished to visit him, and according to Mr. Johanson, a woman who was rather religious and set in her ways, and rather than have her fury set down upon him, David Knickerbocker hung himself with a sheet in his cell. Though by the logic of “premeditation” which was applied to the second case, could one really call Eugene Knickerbocker’s death a murder when you take into account his state of mind at the time of the incident?

As much as any historian, young researcher, or modern day psychologist might like, we may not always find the motive or what drove certain individuals to commit these acts, but there is always more we can learn from each and every case and our area’s history in general, both the lighter more family-friendly events of days gone by and the much grimmer side that lies exactly parallel to it. While my researching skills are somewhat lacking, my interesting summer with the Ontonagon County Historical Society draws closer and closer to an end and I will miss the staff and the wonderful

times I had here, notably the educational field trips we took and the lessons our curator and Historical Society President, Bruce Johanson, gave my fellow interns and me.

Editor’s Note:

The following is a short paper by one of our SHIP interns from this past summer of 2015.

THE BUILDING OF THE COPPER RANGE RAILROAD

By Tyler Dean

In the fall of 1889 Mr. C. A. Wright, who was the general manager of the Mineral Range Railroad, got some fellow business men together to talk about running a railroad from Houghton up to Watersmeet.

At the meeting they formed the Northern Michigan Railroad Company. They started laying track as soon as possible and had this line done by the spring of 1890. Soon their funding ran out, and the panic of 1893 and other causes contributed to delay the project even further. Later Mr. Wright talked to the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad about getting funded to continue

the railroad in 1896, but this company would not help them.

Later Mr. Wright finally bought some more land and found someone who was very interested in the project and was willing to give him a lot of money to keep it going. Then a war started to break out with Spain and the government had appropriated a \$50,000,000 war fund, so they could never finish the railroad and Mr. Wright returned to Hancock.

In March of 1899, business men bought out the Northern Michigan Railroad Company and they organized the Copper Range Company Which then owned and controlled the lands.

When the Copper Range Railroad Company started in 1898, it already had some competition with the Mineral Range which had started in 1873 and ran from Hancock to Calumet. This railroad was used for passengers and merchandise but mostly for running the copper up to the stamping mills.

When the Copper Range started building, they needed to get across Portage Lake to Calumet, but the Mineral Range had already had a bridge going across, and the Mineral Range was looking at making another bridge for

passengers. So they came to a deal that if the Copper Range would pay for half the bridge they could use it, and finally extended their railroad to Calumet.



One of the main reasons for the Copper Range Railroad was to serve the Copper Country. Their plan was to run a line from the Keweenaw Point down through Keweenaw, Houghton, and Ontonagon counties, following the mineral belt. The only mine south of the Keweenaw was the Adventure, which didn't find copper that often, but when it did there was a lot of it. The only problem was transporting it out. So the Copper Range wanted to head that way to get to the large copper producing mine.

The area between Houghton and Mass was mostly wilderness for 38 of the 42 miles when the Copper Range Railroad was built. The person they picked for the chief engineer position was critical. After a while, on November 1, 1898, Thomas Appleton was named chief engineer. He had also worked on many railroads before.

The Copper Range is a low range of rugged and rocky mountains, and its slopes are cut by deep ravines in many places. To run a railroad through there would be a challenge, and it was, and they had to do many trial lines. Most of this was done in the winter before the spot for the road was determined.

After a while of consideration the spot for the line was picked, though due to the harsh winters they couldn't really see the land until the snow melted in the spring. The location was finally selected when spring came.

April 3, 1899 they went to Chicago to get supplies so they could set up camps and start work at once. When they got back on April 12 winter had already set in again and they could not start work until May 2.

The first thing to do was to chop out all the trees and blow out the stumps in order to clear ground for the graders. The first intention for the wood was to save it, but without any way to get it to Houghton the easiest way to get rid of it was to burn it. This work was not completed until September. Around this same time they went to Houghton to get 25,000 yards of rock and as much earth and loose rock as they could. They took out sixty-thousand yards of earth, sand and gravel between the old Atlantic stamp mill and Cole's Creek. They finished the grading in November 1899, now focused on bridges and other small things.

Track laying began at the Houghton end on September 26, 1899. They also started some in Mass but that was stopped at the Firesteel River Bridge. They got the steel from the Illinois Steel Company. It weighed 75 pounds to the yard, 118 tons to the mile, and in the entire 41 miles of track there were 5,000 tons of steel.

One of the difficulties was getting supplies over impassable roads to the hundreds of men and horses at the camps. They would have boats bring the supplies up to the Baltic mine, only eight miles from Houghton, and then have it teamed over for distribution.

The most difficult parts were between Houghton and Messer, with all the ravines and hills with the engineers trying to keep the grade under two per cent.

The line crossed many streams mostly near the mouth so no large bridges were required. The three branches of the Firesteel were crossed and they made three steel bridges to cross them being 65, 75, and 85 feet high. There were also

two wooden bridges both 85 feet high, but would later be filled in with earth embankments. The area along the Firesteel was filled with outcrops and a lot of quicksand. Much dynamiting was required to remove the out crops and they filled in the quick sand with gravel.

They purchased engines to start testing out the track, then started to send the train to Winona to service the trappers, miners, and woodsmen of the South Range District.

The Copper Range Railroad Company had completed its main line from Mass City to Houghton, Michigan, on December 27, 1899, although the road did not leave the contractor's hands until about July 1, 1900. Since that date the road ran regular passenger and freight trains to service the Copper Range.