

MENOMINEE RANGE HISTORY – FIRES – IRON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

[Compiled and Transcribed by William John Cummings]

ALPHA

ATKINSON

BEECHWOOD

CASPIAN

CRYSTAL FALLS

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Marinette County, Wisconsin, Volume III, Number 21 [Saturday, May 19, 1883], page 4, column 3

Fire at the Falls.

Violent forest fires raged around Crystal Falls, on Thursday, and would have done great damage had it not been for the united exertions of the entire populace. As it was, the hot breath of the flames fanned the cheeks of the citizens for some time, but no buildings were destroyed.

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume V, Number 38 [Saturday, September 19, 1885], page 8, columns 1-2

A BIG BLAZE.

**CRYSTAL FALLS SCORCHED TO THE
TUNE OF \$20,000 – OTHER NOTES.**
[Special Correspondence.]

At about 3 o'clock on Monday morning last, a fire was discovered in the upper story of the vacant building, formerly occupied by Bishop & Runkel, as a general store. The fire, when first seen, was of small compass, but a good breeze which was at the time blowing from the southwest, [sic] fanned and increased the flames to an alarming magnitude, in an incredible short space of time and that, together with the absence of any reasonable means of fighting fire, allowed the flames to spread rapidly. Before any resistance could be made, the building mentioned was completely enveloped and the store buildings adjoining were in a blaze. It was thought that at this point the fire could be checked, but it proved impossible and the vacant hotel building, owned by J.K. Stack, of Escanaba, readily succumbed to the inevitable. This latter building lasted only a few minutes and then the

WILD, SEETHING MASS OF FLAMES gobbled up Hugh McGlinchy's [sic – McGlinchy's] saloon and dwelling as though by magic and in turn attached the large building of J.B. Dufresne [sic – DuFresne] used by him as a tonsorial parlor and residence, and also the dwelling house adjoining and which was the property of C. Parent, of Iron Mountain. During the progress of the fire on Superior Avenue, it had also branched from the point beginning and seized onto the Green Bay House, owned by Richard Dawson and it too vanished, as though under a magicians wand. There being a space of sixty or seventy feet between DuFresne's building and LaChappelle's restaurant, the fire was, by energetic fighting, stopped at that point. Although the wind was blowing from the southwest and almost directly from the Lockwood House, that structure was badly damaged and will have to receive a new coat of siding and new windows, the old ones having had the glass cracked by the

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heat and the sash were seriously charred.

The heat from the DuFresne building also

DID CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE

to the front of Doucet Opera Hall, on the opposite side of the street. The citizens turned out and rendered all the assistance in their power, but it availed but little, as the village possesses no implements with which fire can be successfully fought. Lizzie Anderson, the cook at the Lockwood House, demonstrated the fact that a woman can toe the mark in an emergency, she having worked in a manner which would elicit applause from a member of Chicago's fire brigade. As near as we can ascertain, the losses and insurance on the several properties are as follows:

Names.	Loss.	Insurance.
A.A. Austrian, et. al.	\$3,000	\$8,000
Hugh McGlinchy,	2,000	750
J.B. DuFresne,	2,000	1,000
Richard Dawson,	2,200	775
Lockwood House,	<u>750</u>	<u>Covered</u>
Total,	\$9,950	\$9,625

Losses of Stack and Parent not estimated and amount of insurance unknown.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

Last Monday morning about three o'clock, a fire broke out in the center of the roof of a large store building owned by Geo. Runkel, formerly of this place. The building was unoccupied. Austrian and Newmans' *[sic - Neuman's]* store burned next. Nothing was saved. The Adams House owned by J.K. Stack, of Escanaba, and unoccupied, was the next to succumb to the fire fiend and from that Hugh McGlinchy's saloon caught fire and it was not many minutes before J.B. DuFresne's large building was in flames and also a dwelling house, occupied by two families and owned by a resident of Iron River. From Runkle's *[sic]* store two barns caught and

WERE SOON IN FLAMES

and the Green Bay House, owned by R. Dawson, was soon burned to the ground. The loss is estimated at \$20,000. The insurance will only cover part of the loss. The Lockwood House and V. Carr's house were in great danger and were probably saved by the untiring efforts of Wm. Dewitt, a stranger here and lieutenant of a fire company in Cleveland. A few of the men here worked very hard but the larger number distinguished themselves by doing nothing. Pardee, how's the banjo? Messrs. Thouin, Vandandxigue and Doucett buildings were in danger. The windows were nearly all broken,

MINOR MENTION.

D.A. Graham, of Florence, was in town during the week, making arrangements to put in a harness shop here for the winter season. Mr. Graham has had a like business established here during the past three winters and has repaired mountains of harness for the lumbering firms in this section. R.P. Hollow[,], the old reliable Dick, will have charge as heretofore.

The silver bearing rock which was mentioned in the last issue of the NEWS is without a doubt a valuable discovery. F.G. Clark has samples of this and another sample taken from the Merrit mine near Randolph, Wis., which are as similar as two peas. Skeptics are cordially invited to call at his office and examine them.

O.O. Welch and family camped near Swan lake last week and entertained a number of their friends. Among the visitors, *[sic]* were R.P. Tuten and wife, of Iron Mountain, Miss Fannie Carr, K.S. Buck and Messrs. McAlpine, DeWitt and Wetzell, of Cleveland.

One of our prominent Sabbath school teachers was absent last Sabbath. It looks very much as though the trip was premeditated, but perhaps she can give a very satisfactory explanation.

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J.F. Shafer, once a chief of the Chicagons[,] was in town several days during the week. J.F. don't [*sic – doesn't*] let age attack his pleasant phiz [*sic – physiognomy – the face or countenance, especially when considered as an index to character*] and is just as jolly as them make 'em.

C.T. Roberts and wife, Mrs. Harry Roberts and children, Miss Mollie Bartell, A. Austrian, Frank Scadden and H. Hunaman camped near Swan lake last week.

Capt. R.S. Waters, that genial, whole-souled superintendent of the Stambaugh mine[,] visited with his family and friends at this place, last Sunday and Monday.

K.S. Buck and family left for Iron Mountain this week where they will reside for some time. Their friends exceedingly regret their departure.

R.H.H. Wetzel and Wm. Dewitt, of Cleveland, Ohio, who have been here hunting for several days, returned to their homes on Monday.

Hugh McLaughlin, of the Iron Mountain insurance firm of McLaughlin & DeVere, was in town on Tuesday.

Lew Tyler returned from Kenosha on Tuesday, where he has been visiting friends and relatives.

The NEWS is on sale at J.L. Kimball & Co.'s drug store, where subscriptions will also be received.

Miss Edith Teller, of Iron Mountain, spent several days of last week, [*sic*] with Mrs. K.S. Buck.

Mrs. Wells, of St. Charles, Ill., is visiting at the residence of her sister[,] Mrs. W.R. Jackson.

W.J. Spencer, the well-known Iron Mountain dentist[,] was in town this week.

J.E. Bower spent several days at the Lake House and says he killed a deer.

Dr. McAlpine, of Cleveland, Ohio, is the guest of O.O. Welch and wife.

E.O. Marsh was in town last Monday, on his way to the woods.

The NEWS will be found on sale at J.E. Bower's drug store.

Frank Winstrand is painting his house on Third street.

Herman Heineman, of Detroit, spent the week here.

J.F. Shafer, of Iron Mountain[,] was in town this week.

D.L. Bush was in town this week.

The Current, Norway, Menominee County, Michigan, Volume I, Number 33 [Saturday, September 19, 1885], page 1, column 3

A BIG BLAZE.

The village of Crystal Falls was visited early Monday morning [September 14, 1885] by a disastrous fire, which destroyed property to the amount of twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. The fire broke out in the vacant store building formerly occupied by Runkel, Hollister & Co., and spread very rapidly to several adjoining buildings, destroying, in addition to the structure in which it originated, the store occupied by Neuman & Austrian, with their stock, the saloon of Hugh McGlinchey [*sic – McGlinchy*], a vacant building owned by J.K. Stack, of Escanaba, John Dufresne's barber shop, and a dwelling house owned by Louis Lamprey. The Lockwood House and the buildings of Solomon Thorin, Wm. Ducett [*sic – Doucett*] and Nick Lachapelle were only saved by hard work. Losses and insurance are as follows: Neuman and Austrian, on stock, loss \$12,000; insurance \$8,000. Hugh McGlinchey, on building, loss, \$1,000, insurance \$750. J.H. Stack, on building, loss \$1,500; insurance \$800; on furniture, loss \$500; insurance, \$200. On Lamprey building, loss \$500, no

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insurance. The fire is generally believed to have been incendiary.

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume VII, Number 7 [Saturday, February 12, 1887], page 8, column 1

Crystal Falls Cullings. (Special Correspondence.)

Crystal Falls, it seems, has to stand her portion of the fire. What have we done?

Another disastrous conflagration occurred in our village about noon last Sunday. The buildings occupied by the Diamond Drill and Charles Henry and the barn and carriage house of Dr. Kimball were totally destroyed and the drug store of J.L. Kimball & Son narrowly escaped a similar fate. The fire originated from some unknown cause in the building occupied by Charles Henry. Mr. Henry was engaged in his shop, preparing a coffin for a lumberman who was killed in the woods by a falling tree Saturday, when he saw the flames just breaking through the roof, with considerable headway. The alarm was given and a valiant effort was made to quench the fiery monster, but the building was soon in ashes. Most of the stock was saved. The building was valued at \$1,700, and was insured for about \$450. The office of the Diamond Drill, published by Claude M. Atkinson, was also devoured by the insatiate fiend. The stock, machinery and type were nearly all saved, however, with but little damage. The building was valued at \$500. The barn and carriage house of Dr. Kimball were also consumed, there being no insurance on either structure. The drug store of Dr. J.K. Kimball & Son was damaged to the extent of \$100 or more but was fully insured. It was a very close call for this building. By the liberal application

of snow and a meager supply of water from neighboring wells, the fire was kept somewhat in check until teams returned from the river with water, after the arrival of which the flames were soon extinguished. Dr. Kimball's household furniture, which was fully insured, was removed, but was badly injured by rough handling. The stock and fixtures of the drug store were greatly damaged, owing to the haste incident to their removal. It is estimated that the loss will reach \$1500, the insurance on the stock and fixtures having expired shortly before the fire. It is very fortunate that the fire was extinguished before it extended further.

IRON RIVER

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume III, Number 28 [Saturday, July 7, 1883], page 5, column 1

Iron River Ripples.

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[SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.]

On Sunday last the people of Iron River had to turn out *en masse* to fight the fire-fiend, which from Saturday till Sunday night made strenuous though futile efforts to invade and annihilate the fair town. J.B. Weimer, on whose farm the fire originated, fought it valiantly all night, and in the morning, the church bell having been tolled, he was relieved by an anxious and willing crowd. Three teams were employed during the greater part of the day, bringing water to the scene of the conflict and all the pumps in town were kept incessantly working. Besides the main fire at Weimer's farm, another of less magnitude raged on the

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southeast side of the town which, early in the morning, laid in ashes Morrison & Hudson's old slaughter house, and threatened to make the lumber yard another victim. Both fires, however, were extinguished towards evening, the gale which blew so boisterously having subsided.

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume V, Number 27 [Saturday, July 4, 1885], page 1, columns 5-6

IRON RIVER FIRE.

THE BRIGHT TOWN VISITED TO THE TUNE OF \$40,000.

McDonald, MacKinnon, Boyington, Innes, Bies, Lalley, Penberthy and Others Burned out by an Early Morning Blaze last Saturday – One of the Largest Fires that has ever Visited a Range Town – An Absence of Wind and Hard Work Saves the Town – Very Little Insurance to Cover the Big Loss – Fortunes of a Life Time Swept Away in a Single Hour – Iron River Ripples.

On Saturday morning last, at shortly before three o'clock, the bright town of Iron River, at the terminus of the Menominee Range branch of the C. & N.-W. R.R., 27 miles northwest from Florence, was visited by a disastrous conflagration, which destroyed five of the principal business blocks and wrought damage to the extent of nearly \$40,000, with very little insurance to counteract the effect of the great loss. The

appended table gives as near as could be procured, the loss and insurance in detail:

[LOSS AND INSURANCE TABLE; DIAGRAM OF DISTRICT BURNED]

The fire was discovered at shortly before three o'clock, in the stairway between Lalley's saloon and Penberthy's drug store, leading to the living apartments of Alex. McKinnon. Owing to the crude methods of fighting fire, nothing being obtainable but buckets, and the dryness of everything, the flames spread with lightning rapidity, although there was no wind. Brave men worked like heroes and

EQUALLY BRAVE WOMEN

Passed buckets of water and assisted in hastily removing effects. The demon, mad in its destructiveness, soon laid in ashes the three buildings on the north side of Main street, owned by MacKinnon Bros., and James Innes and occupied by J.S. Penberthy's drug store, Martin Lalley's saloon, John McDonald's large general store, Innes' Opera Hall, the Knights of Labor, MacKinnon Bros., business office, W.J. Brown's insurance office, James Innes' justice office and A. MacKinnon's residence. The flames then, in their hungry fury leaped across the wide street and devoured Martin Bies' property, in which he kept a saloon and A.J. Boyington's magnificent hotel,

ONE OF THE LARGEST,

best-appointed and best kept houses on the Range. All of this was done in a remarkably short time, but it took more to discourage the heroes that were giving battle. The bucket brigade worked like tigers at bay and another squad wet carpets and used them most effectually, thereby saving after a hard battle, Ammerman's drug store, Noonan's building and Lengren's building. It was a hot time, but it found every man at his post. Had there

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been wind, nothing could have saved the entire town. As it was the loss was severe. Stambaugh responded nobly and a business man of Iron River writes as follows to this paper.

THANKS TO STAMBAUGH.

Editor MINING NEWS:

We wish to thank the Stambaugh people through your valuable columns, for timely aid in suppressing the fire at this place. We feel that we can not [*sic – cannot*] say too much in their praise. They worked nobly and stood by their work like men, and I might add women, for some of them, with Iron River ladies, were seen handing buckets of water to the men on the ladders. We will not mention names, fearing we will not do them all justice, as all are entitled to great praise. We will not forget them in the future.

Almost all succeeded in saving a portion of their stock. John McDonald saved about half of his, J.S. Penberthy saved considerable and Andy Boyington saved some. Mr. Boyington's loss, as will be seen by above table, is by far the most severe. He is a hard-working, popular, accommodating gentleman, who left an arm on a Southern battle field [*sic – battlefield*], defending his country's hearth-stones and made all that he lost in a single hour, with his remaining arm. His friends hear of his loss with the greatest regret, but Mr. Boyington is not the man to be cast down by the reverses of fate. Others also lost heavily and they have the sympathy of their neighbors here and elsewhere. Almost all have resumed business with characteristic American energy, in some shape or other. The Boyington House is now conducted in an old Norwegian boarding house, to the rear of his former splendid hostelry and it is hoped all of his old patrons will find him there. The people of Iron River have more than the usual share of courage, fortitude and perseverance. They have fought

adversity ever since the town was founded and they meet each new enemy as bravely as ever. That they may win the fight in the end is the wish of the MINING NEWS.

IRON RIVER RIPPLES.

Frank Camins, the sturdy, hard-working blacksmith, was badly hurt while heroically fighting fire last Saturday morning. His friends hope to soon see him around again.

The MINING NEWS, ever enterprising, despatched [*sic – dispatched*] a special correspondent to the scene of the great fire.

The fire is supposed to have been of incendiary origin and many are the motives rehearsed.

The new saw mills are rapidly nearing completion. They will add some life to our town.

Boyington, MacKinnon and McDonald have announced their intention to rebuild at once.

Expert safe openers and insurance adjusters have been plentiful in town during the week.

J.M. Thorn was an outsider who witnessed the fearful fire.

The Iron River Co.'s saw mill will be closed July 1.

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume VI, Number 48 [Saturday, November 27, 1886], page 1, column 6

FIRE AT IRON RIVER.

A DESTRUCTIVE BLAZE ON FRIDAY MORNING WREAKS CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE.

About 6:30 o'clock Friday morning a fire was discovered in the warehouse of the Menominee River Lumber Co., at Iron River. No one saw it until the flames had

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made good headway and before they could be checked the warehouse and valuable contents of feed and supplies were destroyed and also an adjoining building used as a beer and ice house by John Simon, agent for the Pn. Best Brewing Co. With hard work the fire was here checked and the other buildings near, which were in imminent danger, saved. The loss is not known at this writing, but was probably covered by insurance.

MASTODON MINE

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume III, Number 31 [Saturday, August 4, 1883], page 1, column 6

FIRE.

On Monday evening last the large general store of Leopold & Newman's, at the Mastodon mine, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss is estimated to reach at least \$5,000 and the stock was insured for \$3,300 in Chicago companies. The fire originated at about 11 o'clock at night from the explosion of a kerosene lamp in the cellar and spread so rapidly after discovery, that it was impossible to save anything. The store was owned by Asa F. Leopold, of Chicago, and Louis Newman. The NEWS heartily sympathize *[sic – sympathizes]* with the unfortunates. The conflagration occurred just as business was becoming very lively at Mastodon and the loss will not be confined to merely what was destroyed. The firm will resume as soon as possible.

The Current, Norway, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume VII, Number 34 [Saturday, September 26, 1891], page 1, columns 4-5

Ramblings.

The store of P.E. Roberts at the Mastodon mine, *[sic]* burned to the ground with all its contents, Saturday noon. The adjoining building used as a residence by Mr. Samuel Speare, manager of the store, was also burned, but most of the furniture was saved. We did not learn the estimated loss.

PALATKA

STAMBAUGH

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume III, Number 28 [Saturday, July 7, 1883], page 5, column 1

Iron River Ripples.

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[SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.]

Hicks' house of ill-repute, at Stambaugh, has been destroyed by fire.

The Florence Mining News, Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Volume VI, Number 31 [Saturday, July 31, 1886], page 4, column 2

A BAD BLAZE.

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Total Destruction of the Stambaugh House, at Stambaugh, Mich. – Loss Ten Thousand Dollars – About Half Insured – A Defective Flue Gets in its

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Work – Particulars and Details of the Fire by Eye Witnesses – Fine Cut of the Burned Building.

On Saturday evening last, at about 8:30 o'clock occurred the destruction of the Stambaugh House, at Stambaugh, Mich., one of the very finest hotels in this section of the country. The fire originated from a defective flue and obtained such a start before discovery that extinguishing it was an impossibility. The building and most of the furniture were owned by the Iron River Co., operators of the Iron River mine, at Stambaugh. The loss is placed at \$10,000, with \$4,000 insurance on building and \$1,200 on furniture. R.B. Barclay, lessee of the hotel, who had but recently taken charge, lost about \$600, with no insurance. The company has not yet decided whether to rebuild. The hotel was opened three years ago and was a large house, well furnished and well kept. The particulars and details of the fire are given as follows by the special correspondent of the MINING NEWS at Stambaugh.

At about half past eight in the evening of July 24, the Stambaugh House was seen to be on fire. The fire was first discovered in the roof, around a chimney and had then made good headway and although the citizens responded promptly to the alarm, they were unable to subdue the fire, and so devoted their energy mostly to saving the contents and the adjoining buildings. The house of L. McQuown was in considerable danger, but was saved by prompt work. Rather senseless work was done by some in removing doors, windows, etc. which caused Mr. McQuown considerable loss. The building owned by C.E. Brunelle, of Chicago, was badly scorched. It was kept well wet down by the occupants and others, especially by some citizens of Iron River,

several of whom worked well and deserve thanks. To some others there was not so much reason for being thanked. R.B. Barclay, the lessee of the Stambaugh House, lost considerable on which there was no insurance, including seven tons of hay. The hotel building was owned by the Iron River Company and was insured for \$4,200. The loss is about \$10,000. There was an insurance of \$1,200 on the furniture, considerable of which was saved. Mr. Barclay has moved into the Hannon House and will soon be ready to receive guests, so that the hungry and thirsty traveler need not fear to come to Stambaugh. The telephone which was saved from the Stambaugh House, is being put into the Hannon House for Mr. Barclay's use. Miss Carrie Bishop and Miss Armstrong, of Menominee, were at the Stambaugh House when it burned. They have been taken care of by some of Stambaugh's ladies. Others were glad to find quarters almost any where [*sic – anywhere*] Saturday night. The Stambaugh House was doing a fine business. The fire was very unfortunate at this time and it is uncertain at this writing whether the hotel will be rebuilt.

The special correspondent of the MINING NEWS at Iron River, has this to say of the fire: "A very disastrous fire occurred at the village of Stambaugh, last Saturday evening at about 8:30 o'clock, by which the Stambaugh House, the only first class hotel in the village, was reduced to ashes, causing a great loss to the proprietor, Robert Barclay, and much more the Iron River Co., who were the owners of the building and a portion of the furniture. The building is said to have cost in the neighborhood of \$10,000, upon which there was an insurance of \$4,200. Considerable damage was done to the greatest part of the furniture in its removal from the building. Bob Barclay had but removed into the

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house a short time ago as lessee and was just about getting into shape for active operation, when he was turned out so unexpectedly, which was very unwelcome news to many, owing to his popularity with the public. In fact there was a regular rush to the house. A greater crowd never having been there before than on the day it was reduced to ashes. Immediately on the loss of the Stambaugh House, Mr. J.N. Porter, the gentlemanly superintendent of the Iron River Co., who is never caught asleep, when any emergency arises, took steps and bought out the Hannon building for a hotel into which Mr. Barclay removed and which place he will have in first class running order before this is in print. The present place commands a more beautiful view of the adjoining village, of Iron River and the surrounding country, than could be had at the old stand and taking everything into consideration, the present location will eventually be more satisfactory than the old one with the slight difference of a couple of small rooms. The traveling public will be well attended to, as if nothing had happened. L. McQuown's residence on the south, was more or less damaged and the Brunelle building on the north narrowly escaped. The thanks of the owner of this building are due to Paddy Vail, a saloon keeper, of Iron River, for his heroic fight with water and wet blankets, on the roof. Many others bravely done *[sic – did]* their part of the work, but Paddy takes the broom. No particular effort was made to check the progress of the flames, as everything was so dry and water so scarce, and fire engines were out of the question. It is evident that both villages could afford one steam fire engine between them and should have one."

[There is a nice two-column cut of the Stambaugh House mid-way through this article, extending to the second column.]