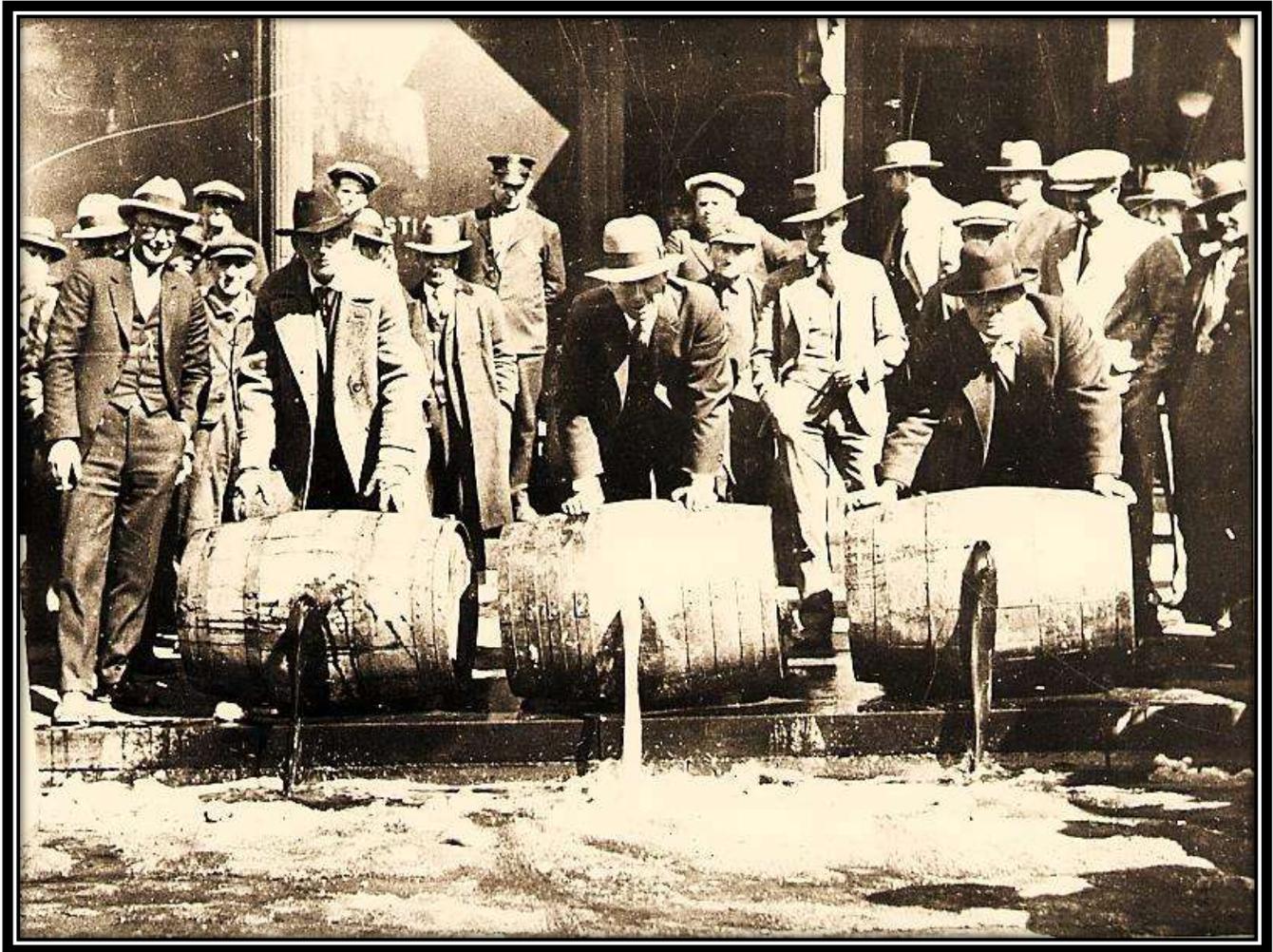


MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



*Fourteen barrels of wine were confiscated in a raid at the home of **Frank Porenta**, West A Street, in September, 1927. On Tuesday, April 17, 1928, at 9:30 a.m. the Iron Mountain Police Force, assisted by members of the Michigan State Police Department, “poured” the wine down the gutter on the 200 block of East Ludington Street in front of the police station. The three men assisting in the “pouring” of the barrels in this photograph were, left to right, **John C. Eslick**, **Police Chief Peter Carlevato** and **Lawrence D. Tucker**, then a cub reporter for The Iron Mountain News. It was said that over 850 gallons of wine were poured into the street that day. During the Twenties, raids by federal, state and local agents were frequent in an attempt to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment throughout Dickinson County. [Dick Ferris/Gene Derwinski]*

[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for

easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

black letters to facilitate finding information.]

The 32nd installment of Menominee Range Memories, a series of articles by William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation historian, now available on the Dickinson County Library's website, is titled "The Last Years of the Prohibition Era (1926-1933)."

The sudden and mysterious resignation of **Sheriff Frank Cleveland** on **May 22, 1926**, following the big clean-up campaign, was the beginning of a variety of accusations regarding his conduct as sheriff.

His son, **Lloyd Cleveland**, was appointed to serve out the remainder of **Frank Cleveland's** term at the time of the latter's resignation. On **July 3, 1926**, just six weeks later, the new sheriff and two of his deputies, **Albert Freeman** and **Leonard Young**, were arrested, being charged with intimidating a government witness in the **Tony Bianchetti** case.

During the race for prosecuting attorney in the fall of 1926, **Daniel J. O'Hara**, challenging the incumbent, **Ray E. MacAllister**, made many accusations regarding the former sheriff's conduct while holding that position, and also questioned the competency of the younger **Cleveland's** ability to fill that post.

A couple of articles covering two debates by these candidates provided insight into the alleged graft, hijacking, assaults and other questionable practices conducted by **Frank Cleveland** during his term as **Dickinson County Sheriff**.

On **September 5, 1926**, **Sheriff Lloyd Cleveland** was arrested on a bench warrant issued by Judge Fred Raymond of

the federal court at **Sault Ste. Marie**, on additional unspecified charges.

In the second debate, **O'Hara** was critical of the endorsement of **MacAllister** by the **Law & Order League**. The Law & Order League had endorsed **Frank Cleveland** for sheriff four years earlier.

The **Law & Order League**, founded in the late 1880s after a series of violent labor strikes, enjoyed a revival during World War I. The League defined lynching as a problem of social disorder, advocating better law enforcement as a solution. Better law enforcement referred both to law enforcement action to prevent lynching, as well as increased effectiveness of law enforcement and court systems more generally.

O'Hara, calling the League members "fanatics," objected to their assuming to "dictate or advise the 'intelligent voters' of the county upon the candidate or candidates who may be best fitted for the respective county jobs."

MacAllister stated he had "not solicited a single organization in this county for an endorsement of any kind," adding he felt the League was "made up of a lot of good people."

On **September 14, 1926**, the incumbent, **Ray E. MacAllister**, won the election by 266 votes, receiving 3,962 votes to **O'Hara's** 3,696 votes.

An alcohol-related event resulting in the death of three Iron Mountain men in their twenties shocked the community in 1927. The complete story was related in three articles published in *The Iron Mountain News*.

Under the headline "**Poison Liquor Kills 3 Here: Iron Mountain Men Dead from Drinking Iron River Alcohol: Arthur**

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

LaFreniere, Hugh Darrow and Harris England Are Victims; First Refuses to Tell Where Rum Was Obtained,” the following article appeared in the **April 19, 1927** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*:

Three Iron Mountain young men are dead as the result of drinking poisoned alcohol purchased last week in Iron River.

The dead are:

Arthur LaFreniere, 27, son of **Mr. and Mrs. Louis LaFreniere**, 205 West Hughitt street.

Hugh Darrow, 26, boarder at the residence of **Mrs. A. Klagstad**, 225 East Hughitt street.

Harris England, 26, son of **Mr. and Mrs. Silas England**, 1009 Prospect avenue.

Two of the fatalities are the result of a drinking party, which had its start at Iron River Wednesday night, according to a statement by **LaFreniere** before his death. **England**, however, was not on that party, but is believed to have joined **LaFreniere** and **Darrow** some time Saturday night.

Darrow Died Last Night

Darrow died at about 8 o'clock last night in **General hospital**, after hours of acute suffering. **LaFreniere** died at 9:30 o'clock this morning at his home, surrounded by members of his family. He, too, had suffered acutely, although maintaining until a few hours before his death that he was all right.

England lay in bed at his home this morning, breathing heavily and apparently in a serious condition after a night of utmost torture. He talked but little and with

difficulty. He complained of the “darkness” and asked relatives to “turn on the light.” Death came at 1:35 o'clock this afternoon.

LaFreniere and **Darrow** caught the 5 o'clock bus Wednesday afternoon for **Iron River**. **Darrow** was at work up to a short time previous, **LaFreniere** waiting for him.

Nothing more was seen or heard of them until late Saturday afternoon when they returned, making the trip with **Ed. Izzo**, of **Iron Mountain**. **LaFreniere** went to his home and relatives said he looked ill then, but did not complain.

“They were both sober when they came over from **Iron River** with me,” **Izzo** said today. “I didn't see any liquor on either one of them, and neither complained of being sick.

“I brought them into town and dropped them off. I did not see either one of them after that.”

Told Mother of Drinking

Mrs. LaFreniere asked her son what made him look so ill. He admitted that he had been drinking on the previous Thursday, but said no more about it.

Darrow, meanwhile, went to his rooming house. He complained of not feeling well and sat about the house, seemingly ill at ease. Sunday he felt no better and grew steadily worse until about 7 o'clock last night when he was removed to **General hospital**. He died in less than an hour after reaching there.

LaFreniere, meanwhile, attended a dance at **the Nightingale** Saturday night, returning early in the morning. Sunday his condition became apparent to his relatives.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*He seemed dazed, they said, and when they questioned him about what he had to drink at **Iron River** and where he got it he refused to say.*

*Mr. **LaFreniere**, father of the boy, questioned **Arthur** persistently. “Where have you been – what did you drink,” he asked him again and again.*

“Oh, I’ve been all over, Dad.” was his only reply.

Collapsed at Dance

*Sunday night he went out again, this time to the **Pine Gardens dancing pavilion**. There he is said to have become suddenly ill and to have collapsed on the floor. He revived and a short time later went home. All day yesterday, relatives said, he complained persistently and finally went to bed. Last night he was violently ill and a doctor was called. He said he was growing blind, and as the night progressed this condition became more aggravated.*

*This morning he recognized the **Rev. Fr. H.A. Beauchene**, but shortly thereafter lapsed into unconsciousness, from which he did not recover.*

***England**, according to his father, must have met **LaFreniere** some time Saturday night. The first intimation that the young man was ill came early Sunday morning, when the father heard moans coming from his son’s room. He investigated and found **Harris** suffering intently. A physician was called.*

III Two Days

*Young **England** was violently ill all day Sunday and yesterday. His condition grew*

worse last night and he vomited at frequent intervals.

This morning he was in severe distress and pain. He said the room was “dark.” “Turn on the lights,” he repeated, when relatives asked him how he felt.

***Police Officer Rene Romanelli**, calling at the home at about 10:30 o’clock this morning with a representative of The News, was admitted to the room.*

*“What did you have, Harris?” **Romanelli** asked.*

“Alcohol,” came the whispered answer.

“Where did you get it?”

*“**Art** ---,” and the answer came with an effort.*

*“Who is that with you?” **England** asked.*

***Romanelli** answered evasively.*

“Let me see him,” came from the patient.

*The reporter went close to the bed. **England** looked at him. The reporter asked a question or two but the young man did not answer. He was visibly exhausted. At that moment **Dr. S.E. Cruse** and **Dr. G. Fredrickson** arrived and the room was cleared of relatives and others.*

*Shortly before noon **England** lapsed into unconsciousness and at 1:35 o’clock this afternoon he died.*

Darrow Uncommunicative.

***Darrow**, according to boarders at the **Klegstad** home, did not say at any time where he got the liquor or what it was. Neither did he openly complain until a short time before he was taken to the hospital.*

*Relatives of **LaFreniere**, gathered about the deathbed this morning, were*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*prostrated. The situation at the **England** home was similar as **Harris**, brokenly and with apparent effort, tried to whisper his story.*

***Darrow**, according to friends and boarders at the **Klagstad** home, is an orphan. Several brothers and sisters are said to reside at **LaValle, Wis.** One brother, **Newton**, advised by wire this morning that he is on his way here to take charge of the body.*

***Darrow** had been employed at the **Ford plant** for the past four years, working most of that time on a shaping machine.*

Investigation Started

*City and county authorities began today a spirited investigation into the tragedy. Several theories have been advanced, but the stories of **LaFreniere** and **Darrow** have centered the investigation about **Iron River**. **LaFreniere** said they stayed at the **Iron Inn**.*

*Police recall having seen **LaFreniere** about the city early Saturday evening. He was apparently all right then, they said.*

***Coroner Frank Buchanan** today took charge of the body of **Darrow** and said that an autopsy would be held this afternoon to determine the actual cause of death.*

*Besides his parents, **Arther LaFreniere** is survived by three sisters, **Malvina, Agnes** and **Alice**, all of **Iron Mountain**. Funeral arrangements have not been completed.*

*Further investigation into the alcohol-related deaths of the three young Iron Mountain Men resulted in the following story published in the **April 20, 1927** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* under the*

headline “Poison Liquor Is Traced to City: Synthetic Gin Caused Death of Three Men: Others Drank Same Stuff But Are Not in Danger: Had Three Bottles: Fourth Person Violently Ill After Few Swallows”:

*The source of the poisoned liquor which caused the death of three young men within 24 hours was today definitely traced to **Iron Mountain**.*

*Contrary to an ante-mortem statement made by one of the victims, **Art LaFreniere**, which indicated to investigators that the liquor had been obtained in **Iron River**, it has been conclusively learned that three bottles of synthetic gin purchased in **Iron Mountain** Saturday night brought tragedy to three homes.*

*The inquiry being conducted by **Prosecuting Attorney Ray E. MacAllister** and **Sheriff Rudolph Freeman** today was well in hand, with all of the salient features determined and only a few minor details remaining to be checked.*

Want Airtight Case.

*However, before giving out any names **Prosecutor MacAllister** declared he first desired to make the case so airtight that there would be no danger of its collapsing once the officials move to punish the person or persons guilty of furnishing the liquor.*

*It was learned that several young men had partaken of the same liquor which brought death to **LaFreniere, Harris England** and **Hugh Darrow** and that one of*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

them, **Claude Eade**, of **Waucedah**, became violently ill, but is now recovering.

Detected False Taste

Eade detected a false taste in the gin and after taking a few drinks from then on when the bottle came his way he held it only to his lips, but did not swallow. To this discrimination and wisdom he owes his life for the slight amount of liquor that he did consume caused him later to stumble off the road on his way home and lie practically unconscious for two hours.

Eade was in great physical distress and spent Sunday at the home of his brother here. Monday morning he decided to return to his own home in **Waucedah** and felt that if he walked the air and exercise would brace him up. He had proceeded only as far as the point on **South Stephenson avenue** where the **Chapin mine air pipe line** crosses the road when he was seized with blindness. He staggered to the side of the road and collapsed, remaining in that condition for about two hours. When he finally recovered his senses he required an extra half hour of rest before his vision returned sufficiently for him to continue on his way.

Still Feels Effects

Eade still feels the effects of the poison, but is not considered in danger and with the exception of a slight discomfiture of the stomach is in no distress. He has slept for 20 out of the past 24 hours and his memory from the time that he began to drink the liquor until the present moment is confused.

A fifth man who had some of the liquor reported no ill effects, but is now shaky over his narrow escape.

Autopsies were performed yesterday afternoon upon the bodies of **England** and **Darrow** and parts of the stomach and intestines were sent last night to **Ann Arbor** for examination by the state chemist. This is being done to furnish the basis for an official certificate declaring death due to poison alcohol.

This afternoon inquests were opened by both **Coroners J.B. Erickson** and **Frank Buchanan**. Erickson has the body of **England** and Buchanan has those of **LaFreniere** and **Darrow**. The two juries viewed the bodies and the inquests were then adjourned until later, when all of the details of the unfortunate occurrence may be presented.

Part of Liquor Found.

So successful has been the official investigation that part of the poisonous liquor has been found, a residue being discovered in two of the bottles. The liquor was partly diluted by rain water, but it is believed this will not affect the analysis. It was also sent to the state chemist.

Piece by piece, the story of the fatal Saturday night party has been obtained and dovetailed until now the officials are confident they know practically all of what went on.

The liquor which the three victims drank had denatured alcohol as its base. To this was added the flavoring ingredients that are part of a recipe for making synthetic gin.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Saturday afternoon **Darrow** and **LaFreniere** returned from **Iron River**, where they had done considerable drinking. They met again Saturday evening and were accompanied by three other companions, one of them **Eade**, and the other two a **Ford plant** employee and a resident of **Granite Bluff**.

Had Three Bottles.

One bottle of the gin was obtained from the bootlegging establishment and this was consumed within a fairly short time. The five men planned to attend the dance at **the Nightingale pavilion** and decided to take two more bottles of the gin with them.

LaFreniere and an unnamed companion are believed to have returned to the bootlegger's place for the liquor, and it is known that one of the bottles was paid for.

The party then went to the **Nightingale** in a car owned by the **Granite Bluff** man.

It was at the **Nightingale** that fate included **England** among the victims. He was already at the pavilion and **LaFreniere** met him there. **LaFreniere** is thought to have offered the liquor to **England**.

Several others are also believed to have been called out of the pavilion from time to time for a nip from the flasks, but the quantity they drank was so small that they suffered only slight inconvenience.

Before the evening was over, however, **England** and the five members in the **LaFreniere-Darrow** party were in pain and were almost overwhelmingly sleepy.

From there on most of the story has been told. **Darrow**, **LaFreniere** and

England were in pain Sunday and their condition grew steadily worse. The climax to the tragedy came when **Darrow** died Monday evening, **LaFreniere** passed away yesterday morning and **England** succumbed yesterday afternoon.

District Is Aroused

The tragedy has aroused the city and created tremendous interest throughout the district. It has focused public attention upon the ever present evil of bootleg poison and the demand for justice is heard on all sides.

"No stone will be left unturned to bring this investigation to a successful conclusion," **Prosecutor MacAllister** asserted today. "We are quite satisfied with its progress thus far, but before making public much of the information we have on hand we must be prepared to back it up with convincing and unassailable proof. From evidence we now have we are certain of obtaining this and I am confident that the entire story will be known soon and that we will be able to point out the person or persons who placed this poison in the hands of its unfortunate victims."

More than a dozen witnesses have already contributed statements from which the officials have woven the web of the story of what occurred. The establishment where it is declared the liquor was sold has been under constant surveillance.

Authorities are devoting their entire time to investigation and promise no let up until their case is complete.

In the **May 12, 1927** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, the verdict of the coroner's jury on the death of the three **Iron**

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Mountain young men was revealed as follows under the headline “**Story of Liquor Death’s Told to Coroner’s Jury: Verdict That Three Young Men Died from Wood Alcohol**”:

*The official investigation into the recent deaths of **Harris England**, **Art LaFreniere** and **Hugh Darrow** came to an end late yesterday afternoon when a coroner’s jury returned verdicts that each had been the victim of poisonous alcohol.*

*The jury went no further than that, but the testimony of witnesses, particularly those believed to have partaken of the same lethal liquor, indicated that the bottles were supplied by **LaFreniere**, whose death makes him no longer accountable.*

*The inquest was held at the **Buchanan & Villemur funeral home**, **South Carpenter avenue**. **Coroner Frank Buchanan** had charge of the cases of **Darrow** and **LaFreniere** and **Coroner J.B. Erickson** had the **England** case. The one jury returned the three verdicts. It was composed of **J.C. Eslick**, **Thomas Rowell**, **G. Johnson**, **Urban Rahoi**, **Sam Krause** and **Fred Caviani**.*

Companions Tell Stories

*The most complete stories of the ill-fated Saturday night party were told by three of the young men, **Torvo Wertanen**, **Steve Lachine** and **Claude Eade**, who accompanied **LaFreniere** and **Darrow** to the **Nightingale dance pavilion**. Their testimony cleared up the manner to which **LaFreniere** and **Darrow** drank the poison.*

*The inquest, however, did not reveal how **Harris England** was given the liquor*

*that caused his death. One witness who might have been able to furnish some information based on **England’s** own statements was unable to be present, but it was said later by **Prosecuting Attorney Ray E. MacAllister** that there is strong foundation for the belief that **England** procured his drinks on the following Sunday afternoon.*

Alcohol Was Stolen

*Testimony also indicated that the poison alcohol was stolen from an oil station located near **George “Reddy” Meehan’s resort at Twin Falls**. The oil station was not in use at the time and, according to the witnesses, the theft was originated by **Meehan’s bartender, Andy Anderson**, who has since disappeared.*

*Summed up, the testimony of **Eade**, **Wertanen** and **Lachine** was as follows:*

*Saturday evening **Eade**, **Wertanen**, **LaFreniere** and **Darrow** met down town. There was a bottle in the crowd and some drinks were taken in the **Recreation bowling alleys**. The four wanted to attend the dance at the **Nightingale**, but had no manner of conveyance. They walked up the street and stopped at the **North Western station**.*

*It was while standing here, according to one of the witnesses, that **LaFreniere** said he was “broke” and wanted to know if one of the boys would buy a quart of liquor from him for \$2. **Wertanen** said he agreed and accompanied **LaFreniere** down the street, the other two remaining at the depot.*

Waited Near Hotel

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Wertanen said that when they reached the **Harding hotel**, next to which, on **West Hughitt street**, is located the **LaFreniere** home, **LaFreniere** told him to wait there. He watched **LaFreniere** turn into a yard, **Wertanen** said, and waited about 20 minutes before his companion came back with two quarts.

They returned to the **North Western depot** by walking east on **Hughitt street**, **Wertanen** said, and on the way he gave **LaFreniere** \$2 for one of the quarts. The liquid in one of the bottles was of a brownish color and that in the other was clear.

Back at the depot the boys noticed **Lachine** and called him over. At their request, he said, he agreed to take them to the **Nightingale**. On the way they stopped near the **Chapin mine machine shops** and the bottles were passed. Again at the **Nightingale** they drove down the road about 200 yards and drank some more, finishing one of the bottles. When they returned to the **Nightingale** the remaining bottle was hidden under a boat, where, at intervals, it was tapped not only by some of those in the party, but by others.

Two of the witnesses testified to meeting **Harris England** at the door of the **Nightingale**, but said they knew nothing of his taking any drinks during the evening.

Felt Weak and Dizzy

The witnesses testified that **LaFreniere** exhibited evidences of the liquor he had taken, and **Eade** and **Wertanen** told of feeling drowsy, weak and ill at ease before the evening was over. **Lachine** declared

he took only one drink during the evening and not liking the taste of the liquor refused to swallow any more.

Lachine said that he exclaimed to **LaFreniere**, when he took his one drink at the **North Western depot**:

“That stuff don’t [sic] taste very good to me. Where are you getting it?”

“We’ve got a patch of our own,” **LaFreniere** was said to have replied.

When they stopped at the **Chapin machine shop** for more drinks, **Lachine** said that he “tipped the bottle up to my mouth, but I made damn sure there wasn’t anything coming through.”

Wertanen said he was also suspicious of the liquor and asked **LaFreniere**, “Are you sure this won’t kill a fellow?”

“You don’t know good liquor when you taste it,” **LaFreniere** replied.

“Slimy, Sickening Taste”

The witnesses described the liquor as having a “slimy, sickening taste” and an odor “like the **Ford chemical plant**.”

The five men returned from the **Nightingale** at midnight and went to the **Coney Island lunch**. Later they separated and went home.

Eade, who was the only one to feel any serious effects from the liquor, with the exception of the three victims, told how he slept practically all of the next 24 hours, and on Monday morning decided to walk to **Waucedah**, his home, but collapsed on the road near **Kiel [sic – Keel] ridge**. He lay in a ditch for two hours and a half and eventually revived sufficiently to continue on his way, eventually, with the aid of rides

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

given him by motorists, reaching **Waucedah**. **Eade** said he was seized with periods of blindness.

Asked whether he had tasted any other liquor besides that taken on the Saturday night party, **Eade** replied with some emphasis:

“I haven’t taken any yet.”

Darrow died on Monday evening, **LaFreniere** on Tuesday morning and **England** on Tuesday afternoon.

Other witnesses who testified were **Joe Pogornick**, who said he had one drink of the liquor outside of the **Nightingale**, and **Drs. Carrig and Fredrickson**, who tended **Darrow** and **England**. **Dr. George Belhumeur** tended **LaFreniere** and his affidavit was presented to show that death was caused by wood alcohol. **Dr. Fredrickson** also testified to receiving a message from the state analyst stating that **England’s** death was also due to wood alcohol.

Had Liquor On Bus.

Alvin Oswald, who accompanied **Darrow** and **LaFreniere** when they went to **Iron River** the previous afternoon, told of drinking a considerable amount of liquor with them on the way up. **Darrow** gave him some juniper berries to eat, he said, declaring they were used in making the gin.

Eade met **Darrow** and **LaFreniere** in **Iron River** and returned with them Saturday afternoon, rejoining them in the evening.

Sheriff Rudolph Freeman told of conducting the raid at the **LaFreniere** home during which a half ounce of wood alcohol was found in a jug. He also told of being

present at a conversation in the prosecutor’s office when **Archie Gribble**, of **Wisconsin**, told of accompanying **LaFreniere** on the night about 13 gallons of wood alcohol was stolen from the oil station.

He said that after a dance he and **LaFreniere** had gone to **Meehan’s resort**, where they met **Andy Anderson**. **Meehan** closed the place, it was testified, and **Anderson**, having some grudge against his employer, offered to put **Gribble** and **LaFreniere** “next to a proposition” to make some money.

According to the sheriff, **Gribble** related how **Anderson** broke into the oil station and how they loaded several five-gallon cans and a five-gallon jug of alcohol into **Gribble’s** car. **Gribble** said he became alarmed and when they reached **Iron Mountain** managed to get rid of **Anderson**. **LaFreniere**, however, insisted on saving the alcohol, **Gribble** is said to have declared, but later told **Gribble** he had destroyed it.

Gribble’s story was also repeated by **Ed Lindquist**, deputy sheriff, who conversed with him.

Watched House.

Deputy Sheriff Victor Lundin and **Dan Southworth** told of watching the **LaFreniere** home on Tuesday night, following the deaths, and of seeing two young men remove a five-gallon jug from the cellar and another from the woodshed, and also two cases of bottles.

Witnesses also testified to seeing **LaFreniere** at **Pine Gardens** on Sunday

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

evening in an intoxicated condition. **Angelo Manniflor** told of taking LaFreniere to Pine Gardens and of having one drink with him.

Al LaFreniere testified to having received reports that **Darrow** and **LaFreniere** had been “hijacking” liquor and that perhaps someone had “planted” poison for them.

The inquest will probably conclude all official investigation into the tragedy. In view of the evidence, officials believe there is nothing else to uncover and that the three deaths must be written down as a misfortune, for whose responsibility there is no one to be punished.

The following article appeared in the **April 17, 1928** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* under the headline “**Barrels of It, Rich, Rare and Red, in Sewer: Police Finally Destroy Evidence Taken in Raid**”:

Attended by considerable ceremony, while a motion picture camera recorded the event, members of the **Iron Mountain city police force**, at 9:30 o'clock this morning, sent a rich stream of mixed red and white wine gurgling down the gutter of **Ludington street** to the sewer below, destroying the 14 barrels of wine taken in a raid last September in the home of **Frank Porenta, West A street**.

Members of the state police department, headed by **Lieutenant Engle**, assisted in what to many of the spectators seemed like an alarmingly painful duty.

Within a moment or two after the “bung” had been battered from the first of the huge containers, a good-sized audience gathered

to witness the ceremony. **J.C. Eslick**, as master of ceremonies, ushered the barrels into the street and even took a hand at the pouring party. Almost an hour was required to complete the task and long before it had ended the vicinity of **Ludington street** reeked with the pungent odor of wine – some good and some bad, according to the fate of each barrel during the long period of storage in the heated quarters of the justice court.

Later the empties were loaded on a truck and hauled away, the crowd gazing almost too longingly on the narrowing stream of nectar as it coursed to the waiting sewer.

Pictures of the sorrowful ceremony are to be shown at the **Braumart theatre** tonight.

Under the headline “**Pour Thousand Gallons of Rum, Wine in Sewer: Spectators Look On in Sorrow As Barrels Are Emptied**,” the following item appeared in the **May 19, 1931** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*:

Residents of the district south of the **Ford plant**, near the main highway to **Aurora, Wis.**, in fact, and to be exact, along that area traversed by the aromatic **Sewer creek**, halted in their work, or play, shortly before noon today, and stood to windward. They pressed their noses to the breeze. They held their heads high.

For into that district flowed a conglomerate “highball,” made up of some 988 gallons of wine, with a mere dash of moonshine, no more than 150 gallons, for flavoring.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 32: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE LAST YEARS OF THE PROHIBITION ERA (1926-1933)

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

And all that provided sniffing enough for all.

It was field day at the county jail, with state and county officers combining in the task of destroying more than 1100 gallons of accumulated evidence – wine and whiskey – taken in several raids previous to the last term of circuit court here.

The officers thought it was fun. To the few onlookers – in no way associated with the law – it was far from a joke, for, kept in the cool cellar of the jail, most of the stuff had ample time to improve its vintage.

Master of Ceremonies.

*State Trooper **George Bath** was the “bung-starter” for the occasion, while **Sergeant Hayden** and **Sheriff Freeman** looked on. Other officers and deputies stood about, while a little to the rear was a detail of county prisoners, drafted to assist with the barrels and kegs. They, too, seemed not to appreciate the joke.*

Throughout the jail building, and for a considerable area around, the pungent odor of whiskey and wine wafted out, reaching the nostrils of the county employees in the courthouse. Some worked on, appearing not to mind. Others held to their tasks, too – but beads of perspiration stood out on their bristled brows.

*It was almost noon before **Trooper Bath** called it a day. When he had finished only the empties remained, while the generous pools of liquor, spilled out on the floor in the pouring, were all that was left of what to many would have been a comfortable fortune.*