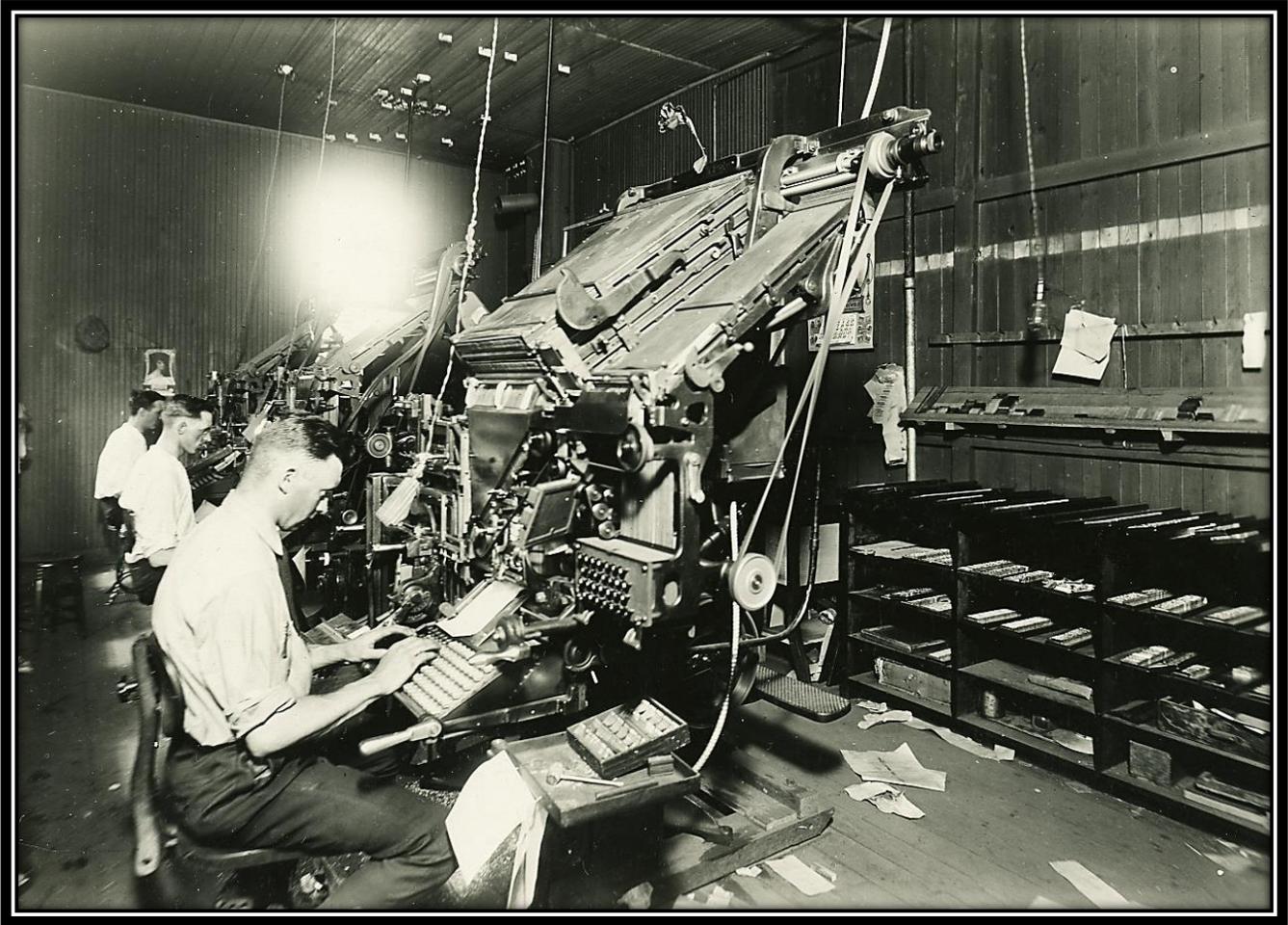


MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 23: The Role of Newspapers in Documenting Early History – Part 3

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



Albert P. Miller (front) was a Linotype machine operator at The Iron Mountain News, pictured here in about 1922. The two men in the background are unidentified. The time and effort required to manually compose the text led to several efforts in the 19th century to produce mechanical typesetting. By the end of the 19th century, several methods had been devised whereby an operator working a keyboard or other devices could produce the desired text. Most of the successful systems involved the in-house casting of the type to be used, hence are termed "hot metal" typesetting. The Linotype machine, invented in 1884, used a keyboard to assemble the casting matrices, and cast an entire line of type at a time (hence its name). The Iron Mountain News began operations using "hot type" letterpress printing presses and manual typewriters. The operators typed the copy written by the reporters and "slugs" of type – literally a line of type – were automatically cast and dropped into columns. Occasionally lines fell into the columns out of order and were printed that way. The lead was melted and reused with each edition of the newspaper. The Iron Mountain News switched to "cold type" or an offset printing press on March 9, 1975. The Iron Mountain printing presses were dismantled when the Powers Printing Company facility began operations in July 1977. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

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[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]

Editors often campaigned for social and health issues in need of attention, such as the following article from the **October 29, 1887** of Norway's *The Current*:

The epidemic of typhoid fever which has infested Iron Mountain for some time seems to be somewhat under control, and it is hoped the crisis has been passed. The sanitary condition of the town is fearful, and if it is not soon corrected much injury to the business interests of the town will accrue.

Concern for lack of sanitation and the spread of disease continued, as the editor admonished Iron Mountain's health officer to take action in the **April 4, 1889** edition of *The Menominee Range*:

YES; there is no denying it. While the main thoroughfares of Iron Mountain are bad enough, the majority of the back alleyways are most atrociously dirty. Somebody ought to be around stirring things up, and we presume it is the health officer, who, however, has no sinecure in making people believe that cleanliness is next to godliness, and that it is about the best preventive against insidious and fatal disease that has yet been discovered.

Further concern in this regard reappeared seven weeks later in the **May 16, 1889** edition of *The Menominee Range* under the headline "A Look at the Alleys":

Last Monday the [sic] Marshal Catlin, Street Commissioner Stevens, Aldermen O'Connell and Graham, and the writer hereof, took a walk through the alley back of Stephenson avenue. We saw old broken stoves, cord wood, old wagons and sleighs, tin cans by the million and manure heaps scattered along the alley from one end to

the other, and to make it still more uninviting, sloughs of mire had been formed every few feet by the slops that had been thrown out from the houses. In fact the alley is used for the deposit of every conceivable thing that should be carted to the dumping ground, besides being made the storage place for wagons, carts, sleds, and everything else that the owners have no immediate use for. If a horse should run away through that alley, he would be fortunate if he got through alive, [as] it is hardly possible that he would pull a carriage along the alley without leaving it a wreck on some pile of rubbish. In case of a fire where it would be necessary to run through there with a hose cart, its progress would be delayed by the obstructions in the way, or it would be mired in some slough hole. As might be expected a look at the back yards along that alley is not a pleasant spectacle. We shall not attempt to describe their appearance, but the street commissioner and health officer, with the aid and support of the city council, will see that there is a different state of affairs there very soon. It cannot be cleaned up too soon nor too thoroughly.

Being politically correct regarding race and nationality was often not observed, as shown by the following example regarding an early Chinese resident which appeared in the **June 6, 1889** edition of *The Menominee Range*:

Sing Kee, Iron Mountain's almond-eyed shirt manipulator, has been endeavoring to purchase the outfit and good will of Miller Bros.' Steam laundry, at Florence.

A follow-up item two weeks later in the **June 20, 1889** edition of *The Menominee Range* further exhibits this insensitivity, as follows:

IRON MOUNTAIN can now boast of a Chinese steam laundry – the only one of

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*its kind in this part of the country. The fixtures have just been put in by **Sing Kee, the Hughitt street washee-washee.***

The Italian population also was mentioned in unflattering terms in the local press in the early years.

The stacked headline in the **April 4, 1889** edition of **Iron Mountain's The Menominee Range** exemplified this and read as follows:

BELLA ITALIA AND THE KNIFE. – Forty Dagos Break up the Furniture in a Saloon, Stab the Landlady, and Then Have a General Cutting Match. A lengthy article provides the details.

Recording another incident from **Iron Mountain's North Side** in its **August 15, 1889** edition under the headline "**Their Last Fight**", **The Menominee Range** reporter documented swift justice by the sheriff:

*A crowd of Italians were encouraging a **dog fight** between **Jedda's saloon** and **Desautel's shoemaker's shop** last Friday evening, when **Marshal Catlin** stepped into the crowd and told them to separate the dogs. No, they wouldn't separate them, they wanted to see them fight. "All right," says the marshal, "I'll separate them," and he pulled out his revolver and banged away. The dogs quit fighting right off.*

References to the small number of African American residents was often derogatory, as evidenced in the following article about a darky "ranch" [house of ill repute] in the **July 23, 1891** edition of **Iron Mountain's The Iron Range**:

*A RUMPUS occurred at the **darkey ranch on Merrit avenue** on Friday night. Thursday evening two of the women belonging to the gang went out and did not return until morning. One of the women is married and when the pair returned home the husband swore out a warrant and had his wife's companion arrested on the*

charge of being a prostitute and having led his wife astray. A trial ensued and the wench was sentenced to sixty days in the county jail, where she now is. In the meantime the negro got drunk and thrashed his "better half" for having been out all night, and the convicted woman to get revenge had the darkey arrested for wife-beating. Another trial took place and Mr. Nigger was found guilty and received a penalty of thirty days at Menominee in the county jail. He was taken down on Saturday evening but before going made the remark that he could make things lively "roun' dat house" when he returned.

Just as in today's news, items relating to a wide variety of crime appeared with frequency. The following alphabetical listing represents categories in the local history crime file: adultery, animal cruelty, armed robbery, assault, assault and battery, assault with intent to do great bodily harm, attempted murder, bastardy, blackmail, bombing, breaking and entering, burglary, disorderly conduct, driving an unlicensed vehicle, drunk and disorderly, drunken driving, forgery, gambling, murder, peddling without a license, practicing medicine without a license, property damage, prostitution, rape, runaways, shoplifting, theft, vagrancy, wife beating and wife desertion

Prostitution was not tolerated, and newspaper editors often published the names of the "ladies" and their "clients" in some reports.

The following article appeared in the **April 18, 1885** edition of **Norway's The Current**:

*The proprietor of the **den of ill-shame**, commonly known as "the lake," has, like the Arab, folded his tent and stolen away. The shebang was closed this week, the furniture, soiled doves [prostitutes] and all being shipped to Marinette. This is the*

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result of efforts being made by the authorities to clean out all such institutions that exist in the county. Let the good work so well begun be permitted to perambulate to the bitter end.

Another article regarding prostitution appeared in the **June 8, 1889** edition of **Iron Mountain's *The Menominee Range***, under the headline "**Soiled Doves Caged,**" as excerpted from **Norway's *The Current***:

*For some time past the soiled doves belonging to the resort across the Menominee, in Wisconsin, have made Rome howl in this village, and always until Wednesday have they eluded the grasp of the officers. A carriage containing a bevy of these unfortunates rolled into town on the afternoon of that day, and the liquor they drank and the obscene language they used freely, caused two of the party to be arrested by **Officer Truscott**. They were jailed. Late in the night a hanger-on of the resort who attempted to furnish liquor to a bird through the window of the lock-up, was caught in the act, and was given time to escape. In the morning they were brought up for a hearing and both pleaded guilty. **Josie Miller** came before Justice Hay and was assessed \$21 or 30 days and **Annie Seymour** appeared in **Judge Patenaude's court** and was given \$20 or 20 days in jail. Neither having the required cash to pay the fine, [they] were returned to the lock-up. Later in the day the amounts were paid and they were allowed to go. –*The Current**

The following article appeared in the **April 23, 1891** edition of **Iron Mountain's *The Menominee Range***, regarding a "ranch" [house of ill repute] the corner of Brown Street and Merritt Avenue with prejudice against the Italians evident:

*On Saturday night the **Giocomelli ranch** on the corner of **Brown street and Merritt avenue** was raided very successfully, the officers capturing three*

*inmates for their trouble. The girls were lodged in jail but secured bail for their appearance before a justice and on Monday two [members] of the party were arraigned in **Justice Bergeron's** court. The other had jumped her bail but it is quite probable that she will be brought to justice. As a result of the investigation one pleaded guilty to the charge and was fined \$20 and costs, while the other was discharged on account of not having found any evidence against her character. There are several other places of a similar nature conducted in this city by Italians and the police should make an effort to exterminate them.*

Journalists were often very clever in wording their accounts, such as this example regarding drunkenness from the **May 16, 1889** edition of ***The Menominee Range***:

*TWO drunks sobered up in the cooler last Monday night. One was **Sure Thing Maloney** and the other was so modest he declined to give his name to the officers. Sure Thing was sent to Menominee for 20 days Tuesday. [Iron Mountain was still a part of Menominee County, and the jail was located in Menominee, the county seat.]*

The following are examples of stacked headlines dealing with various crimes:

Iron Mountain's *The Range-Tribune*, June 20, 1896: A Dastardly Outrage. – Dynamiters Attempt to Blow up the Residence of Capt. Goldsworthy.

Iron Mountain Press, July 21, 1898: A Poor Little Widow – Would Drown Self and Children. A desperate young mother who lost her husband was driven to contemplate murdering her children and drowning herself in Crystal Lake due to poverty, but the community came forward to assist her.

Iron Mountain Press, December 1, 1904: Foul Murder at Waucedah. – Albert Nowship Found Dead in His Log Cabin Near Waucedah.

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***Iron Mountain Press*, December 22, 1904:** Murder Charged – Donald Tellier Accused of the Killing of Albert Nowship Sunday, November 27. – Disappears Suddenly. – Was Last Seen Morning of Crime at Nowship Cabin – Board of Supervisors Authorize a Reward \$300 for Apprehension.

***Iron Mountain Press*, May 12, 1910:** Brute Man Shot – A Much-Abused Loretto Woman Plants Bullet in Hubby. – Shot Him in the Thigh After Several Poundings at His Hands and a Threat to Take Her Life.

***Iron Mountain Press*, August 11, 1910:** Boy Is Shot Dead – Five-Year-Old Johnny Murphy Killed by a Playmate at Channing.

***Iron Mountain Press*, August 18, 1910:** Channing Killing – Johnnie Murphy Accidentally Killed by the Steele Boy. – Testimony of the Boys Before Coroner Reveals a Shocking condition of Youthful Minds.

***Iron Mountain Press*, November 16, 1911:** Man Runs A-Muck – Domenic Ochetti Attacks Dr. Cruise with a Knife. – Stabs Physician in the Arm and Later Stabs His Wife – Declared His Intention to Kill Doctor.

***Iron Mountain Press*, July 19, 1912:** Dynamiters Again – Home of Mayor Hammond Seat of the Third Attack – Dynamite Attached to a Long Pole Exploded Against North Wing; No Clue to Dynamiters.

***The Iron Mountain News*, November 17, 1922:** Miner Held for Blasting Chapin Air Line – ‘Eternal Triangle’ Leads to Arrest of Louis Turbessi on Charges of Blowing Up Pipe – Warning Note to Oliver Officials Written By Betrayed Woman, Is Claim of Authorities Who Were on Case For Over a Year.

***The Iron Mountain News*, July 20, 1923:** Machines, Boards Seized in Raids –

Sheriff’s Department Makes Haul at Norway And Channing.

***Iron Mountain News*, April 29, 1925:** “Peeper” Sent to County Jail – Police Net Captures Man After Complaints Are Received.

The U.S. Senate proposed the Eighteenth Amendment on December 18, 1917. Upon being approved by a 36th state on January 16, 1919, the amendment was ratified as a part of the Constitution. By the terms of the amendment, the country went dry one year later, on January 17, 1920. Prohibition ended with the ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment, which repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, on December 5, 1933.

The following is a listing of stacked headlines which provide a sampling of longer articles regarding prohibition in our area, listed chronologically. There are many additional smaller articles. Unless otherwise indicated, the stories appeared in *The Iron Mountain News*.

***Iron Mountain Press*, April 1, 1920:** Capture Still Near Ralph – Federal Official Arrests Andrew Frank in West Branch Town.

***Iron Mountain Press*, September 16, 1920:** Raid Norway Resorts. – Federal Agents Capture Several Violators in Neighboring City.

December 19, 1922: Spread Eagle Woman Fined – Mrs. Tempier Pays \$350 For Manufacture and Sale of Moonshine.

September 20, 1923: Sheriff Destroys Moonshine Stills – Cleveland and Deputy Visit Foster City Territory.

April 10, 1924: Iron Mountain Bootlegger Given Three-Year Term – Francisinni Held Guilty of Rum Sale – Peter and Joseph Merzлак Have 10 Days to Pay \$200 Each – Goulette Jailed – Fourth Local Man Must Serve Four Months in House of Correction.

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January 21, 1925: Seven Arrested On Charge Of Liquor Law Violations – Evidence Gathered by Police; Victims to Appear In Federal Court.

January 26, 1925: Record Set by Liquor Seizure – Raid Saturday Netted Big Still, 226 Gallons of Moonshine.

February 11, 1925: Nineteen Arrested in County Rum Clean-Up – Padlock on 13 Places to be Asked Court – Score of Federal Agents Swoop Down On Alleged Violators – Many From City – Officers Time Arrival For Changing Shifts Of Bartenders.

February 20, 1925: Record Rum Haul Made in Federal Raid Here – Sponge Squad Net Captures 5 Last Night – Single Seizure Greatest in History of Upper Peninsula – Grove in Charge – Declares Enforcement Of Volstead Law In City Is Joke.

March 25, 1925: Nineteen Taken, Four Sought In Liquor Clean-Up – Warrants Are Issued After Quiet Inquiry – Prosecuting Attorney Directs Mop-up, Gathers Evidence – ‘Surprise Party’ – MacAllister Warns That More Clean-ups Will Follow.

April 13, 1925: Week-End Vice Clean-Up Made In Florence County – “LittleHurley” Again Among Places Raided; Going After Undesirables, Says Sells.

June 15, 1926: Swan Swanson Again Held On Liquor Charge – Assert He Is Old Offender; Caught at Hardwood.

April 19, 1927: Poison Liquor Kills 3 Here – Iron Mountain Men Dead From Drinking Iron River Alcohol – Arthur LaFreniere, Hugh Darrow and Harris England Are Victims; First Refuses To Tell Where Rum Was Obtained

April 20, 1927: 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.

April 29, 1927: Destroy Giant Whisky Layout In Florence Co. – 600-Gallon Still Dynamited; Was Too Large to Carry.

May 19, 1931: Pour Thousand Gallons Of Rum, Wine In Sewer – Spectators Look On In Sorrow As Barrels Are Emptied.

Fortunately, early volumes of many Menominee Iron Range newspapers have survived and been microfilmed, including those mentioned above. The Dickinson County Library has a substantial microfilm collection of newspapers from Dickinson County, Iron County, Delta County, Marquette County, Menominee County, Houghton County and Florence County, Wisconsin. They are there so patrons can “Read All About It!”