

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 87: DOWNTOWN IRON MOUNTAIN – 101-115 EAST B STREET

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



The evergreen arch which crosses Iron Mountain's **East B Street** near the Chicago & North-Western Railway tracks in this historic photograph, looking west, was erected for the celebration of Dickinson County's formation held on Saturday, **June 13, 1891**. The day before, the six-year-old son of **William H. Hancock**, who was watching workmen erect the arch, was run down while attempting to escape from a speeding delivery wagon. The **Milwaukee & Northern Railway Depot** is on the left, the **Commercial Hotel** is in the center and **Charles E. Parent's** house can be seen toward the end of the south side of the 100 block of West B Street. The two-story building at the right within the arch was called the **McKinney Flats**, located on Carpenter Avenue, and contained a number of stores. The building to the right of the arch is the **Central House**, located at **106 East B Street**, later **110 East B Street**. [Mr. and Mrs. Ken Pavey]

[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.]

The 87th 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 "Downtown Iron Mountain – 101-115 East B Street."

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The numbering system is from west to east, so 101 East B Street would be nearest the railroad tracks.

History of 101: An item in the *School Record*, Volume 10, Number 6 [February 1910], pages 21-24, the Iron Mountain school newspaper, noted the following:

EARLY IRON MOUNTAIN.

When Captain Wicks [Jno. Thomas “John” Wicks (1851-1909)] and his men came here [1879], there was a roving band of Indians encamped nearby. The nearest building inhabited was occupied by explorers about half way to Quinnesec. A deserted log shack, formerly occupied by lumbermen, stood near the present C.M. & St. Paul station.

The **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad depot** was located at **101 East B Street**.

Originally, the **Milwaukee & Northern Railroad** was built from Quinnesec to Iron Mountain in **1886**, and a station was established with **J.M. Clifford** acting as agent. The Milwaukee & Northern Railroad Company was incorporated on **June 5, 1880**.

In the **early 1890s** four passenger trains arrived and departed daily on their tracks. The **Milwaukee & Northern Railway** depot, **J.M. Clifford**, agent and alderman in the Fifth Ward, was located at this address on the southeast corner of East B Street and Merritt Avenue in **1892-1894**.

In **1895** **Dr. Joseph Addison Crowell** (1854-1938), the health officer, condemned the well at the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot and pronounced the water poisonous. Several cases of typhoid fever were attributed to the use of water from this well.

FIRE: On Tuesday night, **June 18, 1901**, the **St. Paul Depot** was badly gutted by fire, supposedly caused by spontaneous combustion. The estimated loss on building

and contents was \$3,500. The article in the **June 20, 1901** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* noted: *The fire company performed splendid work, but it is a question whether the members are not deserving of public censure for saving the old shack from total destruction.*

The **July 4, 1901** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* stated that the railroad company had not authorized a new depot as a result of the blaze, *but thanks to the efforts of Agent Gardinier the rebuilt structure is to be modernized to a certain extent.*

The plans adopted call for the entire remodeling of the interior. The north end is to be fitted up for a ladies’ waiting room neatly furnished. Next comes the ticket office and next a waiting room for men. Adjoining will be the baggage room, with the delivery entrance on the west side of the building. The remainder of the building will be utilized for freight purposes.

The proposed changes will certainly be a great accommodation to the patrons, but what Iron Mountain deserves at the hands of the company is a handsome depot similar to that of the North-Western road.

There was no listing for this address in **1902-1903** in the street index, but in the Classified Business Directory the **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway** depot was now the name of the building located at this address, as it was in **1907-1908** with **Gust F. Gensch** [Gustav F. Gensch (1876-1924)], serving as the station agent.

The **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway depot** was still listed at this address in **1913** with **M.J. Schenk** serving as agent at both the freight and passenger depots for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway and the **Wisconsin & Michigan Railway**.

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There were no other addresses on the south side of the 100 block of East B Street

from **1892-1894 to 1913**.



The line of early automobiles processing east on Iron Mountain's **B Street** in this postcard view may have been en route to the first annual hill climbing contest sponsored by the **Menominee Range Automobile Club** on **September 2, 1907**. The course was up East B Street from Stephenson Avenue to **Superintendent Elwin F. Brown's** [**Elwin Fayette Brown** (1861-1947)] house at the **Pewabic Mine**. Buildings visible on the south side of the street from left to right included the **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot**, the **Commercial Hotel**, operated by brothers **Claude H. Milliman** and **Frank M. Milliman** [**Frank Merrit Milliman** (1879-1956)] and the residences of **Andrew Swanson** [**Andrew Peter Swanson** (1870-1940)] (115), **Fred C. Parmelee** [**Freeland Eland "Fred" Parmelee** (1864-1947)] (119) and **J.T. Mason** (126).
[William J. Cummings]

The following article from the September 5, 1907 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, under the headline **AUTOMOBILE CONTESTS: Splendid Time Made by the Davidson and Crowell Machines** documents the race pictured in the above postcard view:

The first annual hill-climbing contests of the Menominee Range automobile club were held on Pewabic hill last Monday

afternoon. The races were exciting and were viewed by several thousand people.

Machines were here from Escanaba, Green Bay, Menominee, Marinette, Norway, Vulcan and Sagola.

The first contest, for runabouts, was won by Armstrong, of Vulcan, Rauer, of Norway, second. The time of the winner was three minutes and one and a half seconds. Rauer's time was three minutes and thirty-nine seconds.

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*In the two-cylinder car contest, there were seven entries, and was won by **Hellberg**, of **Norway**. The time of the several machines follows:*

Bjorkman – 1 min. 58 seconds.
Janson – 3m. 33.2 seconds.
John Flanagan - 2m. 16.4 seconds.
Eisele – 2m. 24.5 seconds.
Dr. B.W. Jones – 2m. 23 seconds.
Hellberg – 1m. 56.7 seconds.
Dr. Lockart – 2m. 40.6 seconds.

*In the four-cylinder car contest there were three entries, and it was won by **Bonnie Crowell**. The time follows:*

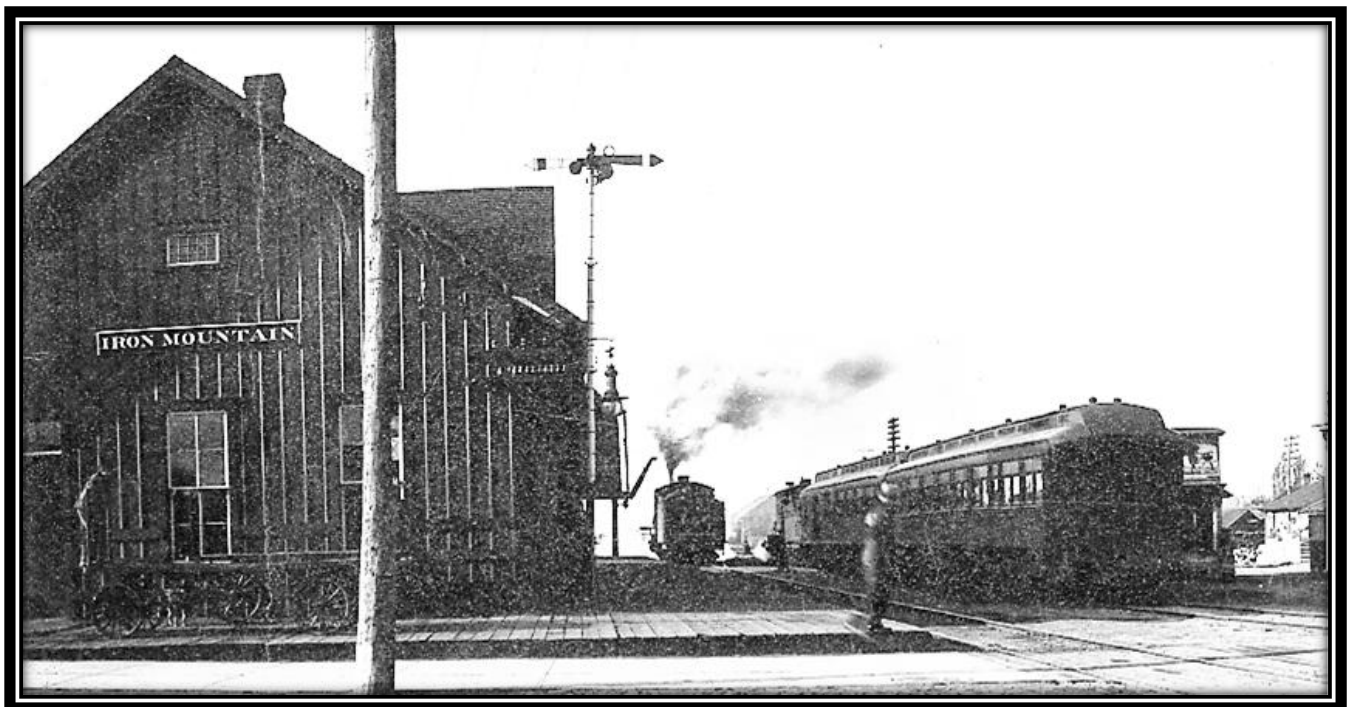
Crowell – 1m. 49.7 seconds.
Davidson – 1m. 56.4 seconds.
Fish – 2m. 38 seconds.

The free-for-all was the most exciting of all the contests and was won by the car

*captained by **Ward Davidson** by the faction of a second, **Bonnie Crowell** being second. Following we give entries and time:*

Davidson – 1m. 43 seconds.
Crowell – 1m. 43.4 seconds.
Bjorkman – 1 m. 58 seconds.
Lockart – 2m. 40.2 seconds.
Hellberg – 2m. 6.4 seconds.
Oliver – 2m. 34 seconds.

The course was from Stephenson avenue to the home of E.F. Brown. The distance is approximately 5,000 feet and the raise of the hill 257 feet. When we consider these figures it will be seen that the speed of the Crowell and Davidson machines was remarkable. Both machines were operated by boys less than seventeen years of age.



The original **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Depot**, located on the **south side of the 100 block of East B Street**, was replaced in **1914**. This detail of a long postcard photograph dates from **about 1910**. Note the water tank for filling steam engine boilers at the south end of the depot. The camera is facing south. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

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The following article appeared in the **August 13, 1914** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* under the headline: **MANY IMPROVEMENTS: St. Paul Railroad is Spending Much Money in the Vicinity** detailed the changes made or about to be made by the company:

*The old frame building that has served as a **passenger and freight depot for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road** ever since the building of the **Milwaukee & Northern road**, some twenty-nine years ago [1885], is about to be removed south to **D street**, where, in the future, it will be used exclusively as a freight warehouse. The antiquated round-house and the equally antiquated watering tank will be wrecked. The old coal storage will meet the same*

*fate. A new and modern round-house and coal elevator will be erected at a point near the **Wisconsin & Michigan junction**, one on each side of the main line. No water tank will be built, as the engines will be supplied with water from several stand-pipes located between rails on the main line south of B street. As soon as the buildings are removed considerable filling will be done preparatory to parking [making a park area which became known as **St. Paul Park**] the entire block **between B and C streets and River and Merritt avenues**. When the entire scheme is perfected the appearance of our city will be improved a hundred per cent. And The Press feels that it is entitled no small share of the credit for the improvement.*



This postcard view, dating from **about 1950-1960**, shows the north end of the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) Passenger Depot** with the 20' x 30' pavilion extension with the sign "Iron Mountain" on the roof. The pavilion floor, the platform and the steps into the depot were constructed of cement. The platform extended from East B Street south to East D Street. This structure still stood in **2025**. [William J. Cummings]

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The first consignment of brick for the erection of the new **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Passenger Depot** was received in **mid-February 1914**. The estimated cost of the new station was \$25,000. The station was “to be a solid brick building with a slate roof and fire-proof in every particular.” The main building was designed at 27 x 100 feet on the foundations with an extension on the east side 4 x 15 feet in size for toilet rooms. The general waiting room and the smoking room were 24 x 26 feet, while the ticket office between the two was 14 x 14 feet in size. There was an arched passageway between the general waiting room and the smoking room. A separate building, 20 x 26 feet, for express, baggage, the steam heating plant and coal storage was located to the south of the station, connected by a pavilion. A water tank is also visible at the right. This postcard is postmarked **August 8, 1920**. [William J. Cummings]

History of Brick Depot: Finally, on **February 5, 1914**, the Iron Mountain Press was able to announce that the *first consignment of brick for the new Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road passenger station has been received here. That looks like business.*

The company is soliciting bids from local building contractors, steam fitters and plumbers for erection work. That looks like business.

Owners of warehouses and other buildings on the company property between

B and D streets have been notified to vacate – sixty days’ notice having been given. More business.

The new station, estimated to cost about \$25,000, “considerably more than the first estimate,” was to be a solid brick building with a slate roof and fire-proof in every particular. The main building was designed at 27 x 100 feet on the foundations with an extension on the east side 4 x 15 feet in size for toilet rooms.

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Taken **January 3, 1925**, this interior view of the **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad ticket office** in Iron Mountain shows ticket agent **Robert J. Baldrice** [Robert Joseph Baldrice (1897-1947)]. The general waiting room and the smoking room each measured 24 x 26 feet, while the ticket office between the two was 14 x 14 feet. An arched passageway connected the general waiting room and the smoking room. The station agent's office was in the middle of the building, and a freight room was on the other end. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

A pavilion facing B Street, 20 x 30 feet in size, made the total length of station and pavilion 130 feet. The general waiting room and the smoking room were 24 x 26 feet, while the ticket office between the two was 14 x 14 feet in size. There was an arched passageway between the general waiting room and smoking room.

A separate building, 20 x 26 feet, for express, baggage, the steam heating plant

and coal storage was located to the south of the station, connected by a pavilion.

The pavilion floor, platform and steps into the depot was constructed of cement. The platform extended from B Street south to D Street.

The land to the east of the station which had been occupied by warehouses and team tracks was to be turned into a park. As soon as the buildings were removed

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considerable filling was done preparatory to converting the entire block between B Street and C Street and River Avenue and Merritt Avenue into a park which was known as **St. Paul Park**.

Plans also included a new roundhouse, coal hoist and storage and water tank. The old station was moved two blocks south, facing on D Street, and converted into a freight depot and warehouse. There was also some rearrangement of tracks. All this brought the total for the project, including the new depot, to an expenditure of considerably more than \$50,000.

The old roundhouse, coal warehouse and water tank were torn down. The new

roundhouse, coal warehouse and water tank were erected about one mile south, at a point near the **Wisconsin & Michigan** junction.

The roundhouse was a long, narrow structure, 176 feet long and 25 feet wide, and was erected on the east side of the track.

The coal hoist and storage were built directly opposite the roundhouse, on the west side of the main line, with the water tank in the same locality.

Passenger engines were to “take water” from standpipes while at the passenger station.



This view shows the south end and west side of the **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Passenger Depot**. The general waiting room was located at the north end of the building, followed by the ticket office where the projection is visible and then the smoking waiting room was next. Note the three large baggage carts. This photograph probably dates to the **early 1930s**, as the **Braumart Theatre**, which opened **April 21, 1925** at **104-108 East B Street**, is visible, as well as the coal storage silos of the **Service & Supply Company** in business by **1935** on the far left. The land east (right) of the depot between B Street, C Street and River Avenue and Merritt Avenue was converted into **St. Paul Park**. This building still stood in **2025**.

Although the address was listed as the east side of South Merritt Avenue between West B Street and West C Street in **1925**,

the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Depot with **James R. Peebles** serving as agent, still stands – vacant – at this location

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in 2024. **The Milwaukee Road** was the new name for this railway in the **1935** city directory, with James R. Peebles still serving as agent for the passenger depot listed at **101 East B Street**.

History of St. Paul Park: St. Paul Park was the area south of the 600 block of South Stephenson Avenue and east of the **Milwaukee, Chicago & St. Paul Railway depot** where the **Dickinson County Chamber of Commerce** and the **Michigan Welcome Center** are located today [2025].

An article in the **June 28, 1921** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* reported that the arrangements upon which Mayor **Joseph B. Eslick** (1866-1925) had been working for the past five years to ensure that Iron Mountain would have a downtown park were being finalized and needed the city council's approval.

Under contract with the city, the "open space east of the St. Paul passenger station could only be used for park purposes as long as the passenger station remained where it was located at that time." [The St. Paul passenger station remains at this location today – 2025.] No spur track could be laid across the ground, nor could the ground be otherwise utilized.

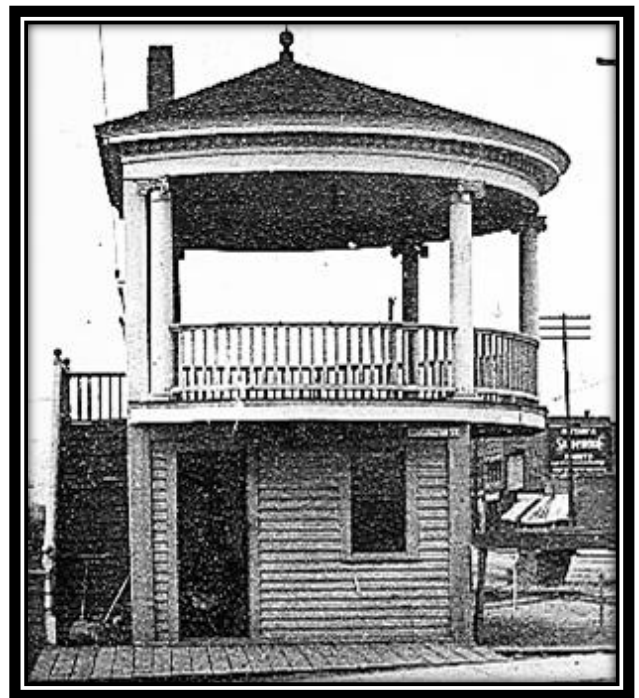
Under Mayor Eslick's plan, the city would "take over the upkeep of this plat, install water and lights, lay out pathways, plant trees, place benches, and build a bandstand." The Milwaukee, Chicago & St. Paul Railway officials had agreed to the proposal.

The article pointed out that under this proposal "the city would be provided with a delightful park almost in the center of the business district, and with a bandstand where concerts could be given or lectures delivered without causing the congestion of traffic which occurs at the present site."

The bandstand pictured here was then located on the northwest corner of the

intersection of South Stephenson Avenue and East Ludington Street, across from the First National Bank, known as the Wood Block. The article noted that this bandstand was too high for proper carrying of sound.

The bandstand pictured also served as the police station on the lower level. **Charles A. Lundgren** served as chief of police in 1913. The bandstand was later moved to **St. Paul Park**, on the west side of the 600 block of South Stephenson Avenue near the **St. Paul Depot**.



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The **April 8, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* reported the city council had awarded a contract for beautifying the grounds at the **St. Paul Park** the previous evening to **A.A. Gordon**, landscape expert of the **Jewel Nursery Company**, of Lake City, Minnesota, at a price of \$200. Work was to begin in late May or early June, providing weather conditions were favorable. The city was to furnish the “top covering of the surface” which would be “filled with six inches of loam.”

The three bids submitted for the construction of a comfort station (public restrooms) to be built by the city were rejected due to cost. An Iron Mountain architect maintained the structure should not cost more than \$6,000, but the bids were: **Fred DeRoche and Sons**, **Fred and Ray**, of Iron Mountain, \$14,400; **Leaf & Abrahamson**, \$10,604; and **Phelps-Drake Company, Inc.**, of Minneapolis, which had a branch office in Iron Mountain, \$12,000. Several changes were made to the plans and specifications and the project would be re-advertised.

Information regarding the revised plans was contained in an article in the **April 11, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News*. The original plans were for a building 32 feet by 24 feet, but the new dimensions would be smaller, and the quality of the fixtures which involved a large portion of the total cost would also be reduced. The new structure would be “fire-proof and sufficiently large.”

A contract between the City of Iron Mountain and the **Chamber of Commerce Band** for fifteen band concerts was announced in the **April 18, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News*. The series was to begin early in June at St. Paul Park. The concerts were held on Sunday.

KKK Cross-Burning Incidents:

One of three reported incidents attributed to **Ku Klux Klan** activities occurred at **St. Paul Park** on **Christmas Eve, 1924**, according to a brief report in the **December 26, 1924** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* as follows:

While worshippers were on their way to midnight church services Christmas eve a fiery cross, emblem of the Ku Klux Klan, was ignited at the St. Paul depot park. The cross was seen by few persons, however, for shortly after it began blazing a party of persons in a car drove over it and knocked it down.

An earlier incident occurred on Saturday evening, **August 23, 1924**, when a large burning cross about fifteen feet high with a cross arm six feet long was seen blazing at the southwest summit of Millie Hill. The cross arm had been wrapped with burlap and wire, the burlap soaked in oil so it would burn more easily.

An article in the August 25, 1924 edition of the *Iron Mountain News* noted that a “few of the more adventurous drove to the top of Ludington street and climbed the hill to examine the cross, which they found to be a spruce tree stripped of its branches and implanted into the ground to hold it firmly. A heavy rope an inch and a half in diameter and which presumably had been used to drag the cross to the spot had been left at the scene, indicating that the job had been hurriedly done and a quick get-away was found necessary. After burning a few minutes the cross arm fell from the tree and destroyed the effect of the symbol. The light could be seen on the hill, however, for more than an hour before it finally died out.”

This article also stated the cross burning “followed a ceremony at which it is claimed 150 candidates were initiated into the secrets of klanism. The ritual, it was said, was carried out at a point about a quarter of

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a mile east of the fiery cross in the woods on top of the hill.”

A “well-known Iron Mountain business man” spoke with a representative of the newspaper the day the article appeared, and, according to the report “virtually admitted he was a klansman and declared that organization work had been going on since last spring, following the expose of a big real estate scheme to import hundreds of negroes into the district.”

The businessman, who refused to have his identity revealed, “asserted that the klan membership here was now about 800, including the class initiated Saturday evening.” The informant stated that “preparations for the ceremony were carried out quietly and no one was aware that it was going on,” adding “the klansmen were attired in their full regalia of white robes and conical hoods.”

All kinds of rumors regarding the Ku Klux Klan’s involvement in the community were rampant and undocumented following this first incident. One incident reported in the article stated another meeting was held on Millie Hill on Sunday night and “several white robed figures were seen descending to the northern slope but investigation revealed that as far as could be determined a group of boys were attempting to re-light the cross while one or two were running about with shirts over their heads in imitation of the klan’s dress.”

The newspaper article also noted that “a klansman two weeks ago declared the local membership was only 75,” giving rise to the credibility of the figure of 800 local members provided by the informant first quoted in regard to the incident.

The third incident received brief mention in the **May 11, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* as follows:

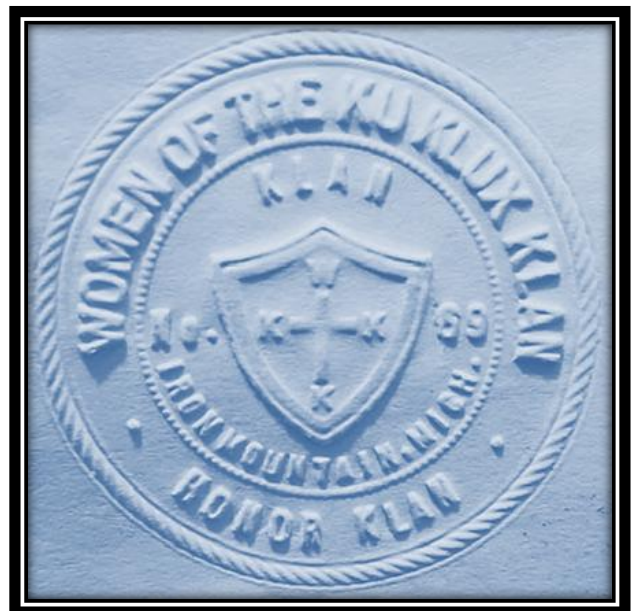
Six robed Klansmen accompanied by about 18 other men, also supposedly

*Klansmen, burned a fiery cross in the cleared land back of the new **Nightingale** dance hall on Saturday evening. The flames attracted some attention but the Klansmen soon disappeared.*



The Nightingale was a popular dance hall located at **Badwater**, as was another popular dance resort of the “Roaring Twenties” called **Pine Gardens**.

The only physical documentation of the Klan’s local existence to date is a seal used by the “**Women of the Ku Klux Klan Honor Klan No. 69, Iron Mountain, Mich.**” which is shown below. This artifact was donated to the Menominee Range Historical Museum by the City of Kingsford in the late summer of 1925.



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History of the Milwaukee Road's Chippewa Passenger Train Run from Chicago to Ontonagon:

The Milwaukee Road introduced the *Chippewa* on Thursday, **May 27, 1937**, after an inspection tour of the new rolling stock for residents along the route. The new train featured streamlined coach equipment and a 6-hour running time, two hours faster than previous services. Its original northern terminus was **Iron Mountain, Michigan**, 291 miles north of Chicago in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The trains operated daily, carrying number 21 northbound and 14 southbound. The northern terminus was extended twice: first to **Channing** on **October 18, 1937** and then finally in **March 1938** to **Ontonagon**, on the southern shore of Lake Superior.



This original snapshot shows the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) Steam Locomotive Chippewa No. 177** with the 4-6-2 wheel configuration and dates from the **1930s**. The location is unknown but is not local. [William J. Cummings]

On Thursday, **May 27, 1937**, service on the *Chippewa*, the **Milwaukee Road's "crack speed liner"** between **Ontonagon** and **Chicago**, began. A crowd of more

than 12,000 persons greeted the *Chippewa's* arrival, according to an article in the **May 27, 1938** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* celebrating the first

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anniversary of the route. Some 7,000 persons also went through the train's coaches on the Chippewa's maiden voyage.

The first anniversary of the Chippewa's arrival in Iron Mountain was celebrated by presenting the passengers with "birthday cakes and button hole bouquets." **Fred N. Hicks**, passenger traffic manager, noted that "public response to the introduction of the Chippewa service and air conditioned equipment" had been encouraging. Hicks anticipated "heavy travel on the train to the upper peninsula resort territory" that summer.

Much of the *Chippewa's* equipment came second-hand from its more famous cousin. The original *Chippewa* operated with two coaches, a railway post office (RPO), dining car and parlor car. As part of equipment reshuffling in **late 1948** the *Chippewa* received the "Beaver Tail" parlors made famous by the original *Hiawatha*. These cars were removed in 1951 along with the full dining car.

Between Chicago and Milwaukee motive power was provided by Class A 4-4-2 steam locomotives and by the Class F3 Pacifics on routes farther north.



Crowds gathered at the **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad depot** as a passenger train arrived. This photograph possibly documents either the first arrival of the Milwaukee Road's Chippewa on May 27, 1937, or the first anniversary of this express train service a year later. The camera is facing north. The Braumart Theatre is visible in the upper right. [Unknown Source]

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The **Chippewa Club**, 106 North Carpenter Avenue, Iron Mountain, the former home of the Oliver Mining Company Superintendent **Otto Conrad Davidson** (1857-1943) and **Charlotte Sophia (Dickinson) Davidson** (1869-1957), was founded in **1945** as a private club for businessmen locally. The club was named for the **Chippewa**, the famed high-speed Milwaukee Road passenger train providing service from Chicago to Ontonagon. This photograph probably dates to the **mid-1940s** when the Chippewa Club was formed. The Chippewa Club still exists as a private dining club. *[William J. Cummings]*

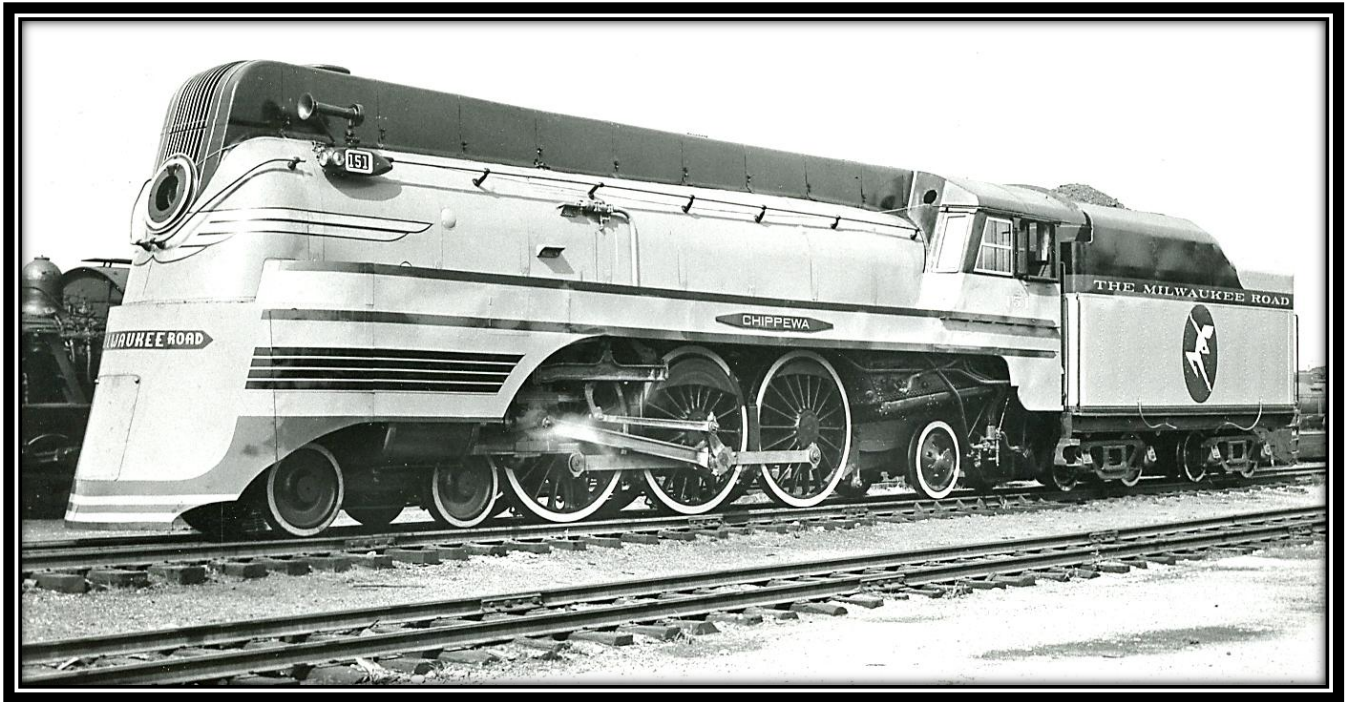
Dieselization came in **1950** with Erie-builts from Fairbanks-Morse. Later diesels included EMD E7s, EMD FP7s and finally EMD GP9s. The train received newer equipment in **1948**, including third-generation Beaver Tail parlors.

Between **1950** and **1952** a Doodlebug replaced conventional equipment between Channing and Ontonagon.

As the **Chicago & Northwestern Railway** was dropping service, the **Milwaukee Road** began advertising its "once-each-way-per-day" through passenger service between Chicago and Ontonagon, Michigan, on the southbound "**Hiawatha**" and the northbound "**Chippewa**" as seen in an advertisement on the **September 14, 1949** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*.

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This original 5"x7" photograph shows the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) Chippewa 151 Steam Locomotive**. Note the 4-6-2 wheel configuration and the Art Deco styling, dating from **about 1940**. [William J. Cummings]



This photograph, dated **August 1, 1942**, shows the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) Chippewa Steam Locomotive**. Note the 4-6-2 wheel configuration and the Art Deco styling. [Paul Hartline, Courtesy of Robert Wanner, *You Know You're From Iron Mountain When...*]

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The railroad had submitted evidence that it lost \$68,897 on the run in **1951** and that it averaged only 8.8 passengers per trip. It was faced with spending \$170,000 for a relief gasoline hauler if it continued the run. After that the train was downgraded as the Milwaukee Road's passenger service contracted.

The trains, Numbers 14 and 21, were the last legs of the **Chippewa-Hiawatha Route** from Chicago.

An article in the **November 28, 1953** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* announced the cancellation of the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad's** two-trains-a-day service between Channing and Ontonagon had been considered the previous day by the Michigan State Supreme Court in Lansing.

The Supreme Court overruled the decision of the State Public Service Commission, upheld by the Ingham County Circuit Court, that the railroad had to continue to operate over the 93-mile stretch.

The Supreme Court maintained that the public had abandoned use of the route, rather than the railroad.

Conceding the cancellation would "inconvenience a few," the Supreme Court said that was no reason why the railroad should continue to suffer such tremendous losses.

The final run was made on Sunday, **December 27, 1953**. Milwaukee Road passenger train service had been available between Channing and Ontonagon since **1937**.

Parlor service ended north of Milwaukee in **1956**. In **April 1957** the train's name reverted to the *Chippewa*. Despite public support for the service, the Milwaukee Road discontinued the train altogether on **February 2, 1960**.

The *Chippewa-Hiawatha*

By Adam Burns

[Last revised January 30, 2024]

The Milwaukee Road drew immediate acclaim and national media when it inaugurated the original *Hiawatha* streamliner on May 29, 1935.

Not only did the train offer virtually any on-board accommodation one could expect of a regional train, but it was also blazing fast, clipping along at more than 100 mph and averaging 80 mph. The *Hiawatha* was uniquely Milwaukee Road, and its success prompted the company to launch an entire fleet.

All were in service by 1940 and included the *North Woods Hiawatha* (also referred to as the *Hiawatha-North Woods Service Service*), *Midwest Hiawatha* and *Hiawatha*, and *Chippewa-Hiawatha* (originally known as the *Chippewa*).

These secondary trains offered amenities closely aligned with the original *Hiawatha* flagship, but their less populated corridors made them more susceptible to the automobile. As a result, all had either been canceled or lost their name by 1960.

When streamliner frenzy took hold in early 1934, introduced to the nation through Union Pacific's *M-10000* and Burlington Zephyr 9900 passenger rail travel was forever changed.

After both roads successfully demonstrated not only the trains' capabilities but also their draw on the public others soon scrambled to put their own versions in service. (After all, who had ever seen a colorful, speeding steel tube before?)

The Milwaukee Road was slow to do so, lagging behind rivals Chicago & North Western and Burlington, but when

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By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

the *Hiawatha* went on display during the spring of 1935 it was something to behold.

History

The train's styling was done by industrial designer Otto Kuhler from the speedy 4-4-2 Atlantics to the "Beaver Tail" parlor-observation. Its livery was an intricate and classy mix of maroon, grey, and orange with a winged shield draped across the locomotive's nose.

Not surprisingly, the *Hiawatha's* quick schedule and exquisite accommodations saw it regularly sell out, averaging 758 daily passengers through March of 1937. Net earnings were also strong, coming in at \$2.49 per mile once operating costs were subtracted according to Brian Solomon and John Gruber's book, "*The Milwaukee Road's Hiawathas*."



An advertisement depicts a third-generation Beaver Tail car on the rear of the *Midwest Hiawatha* in the 1940s. The *Chippewa* received these cars in 1948.

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Milwaukee Road 4-6-2 #151 (F-1) is seen here with the “Chippewa” just off the train shed at the Everett Street Station in Milwaukee, Wisconsin circa 1950.

Realizing it was sitting on a gold mine the Milwaukee Road wasted little time adding other *Hiawathas* to its fleet, as soon as the equipment could be put into service. (This was originally in the form of hand-me-downs as new cars were built or acquired for the *Hiawatha*.)

The first to launch was the *North Woods Hiawatha* between New Lisbon and Minocqua, Wisconsin, on April 1, 1937, and then the *Chippewa* on May 28, 1937 between Chicago and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. (The *Midwest Hiawatha* began on December 11, 1940.)

According to the railroad it was, “continuing its campaign to stimulate rail travel through the introduction of high

speed passenger service in air-conditioned coaches in territory previously served principally by local trains.” The *Chippewa*’s service coverage was a stepped process, involving additional stops over the course of a year.

When it first began the *Chippewa* served Chicago and Iron Mountain, Michigan, (via Green Bay, Wisconsin) but was soon extended to Channing by October.

Finally, the following March (1938) service was pushed to Ontonagon along the shores of Lake Superior, the Milwaukee’s furthest reach into the Wolverine State. When rail travel was still the way to get around summer vacationers

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often used trains to relax in the U.P. and the Milwaukee competed against the

Chicago & North Western for this passenger traffic.



A nice profile photo of Milwaukee Road 4-6-2 #152 (F-1) circa 1940s at Milwaukee.

The *Chippewa* was powered by Class F-3-a 4-6-2s. These locomotives were streamlined shrouding that closely resembled their 4-4-2 and 4-6-4 brethren with a similar livery of grey, maroon, and orange. The work was done, of course, at the fabled shops in Milwaukee and improved upon over the years.

At first the locomotives showcased only streamlined touches but by 1941 they were completely sheathed in steel including “Chippewa” nameplates on the running boards and the sprinting Indian logo on the tender.

Only two Pacifics in all received these elegant touches, #151 and #152. Just like

the Atlantics and Hudsons, both 4-6-2s were quite capable at zipping their train up to 100 mph.

One must keep in mind that unlike other railroads the Milwaukee was as much concerned with the incredibly fast speeds of their trains as they were with provided first-class service.

According to Jim Scribbins’ book, “*The Hiawatha Story*,” the company had initially chosen steam power on its streamliners for a number of reasons:

- It was best suited to pull the full-size streamlined cars.
- Had flexibility as a non-articulated trainset (when the concept was

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introduced such single-unit, streamlined diesels were not yet in wide-scale production).

- Existing facilities were already available.
- Proper proportions (as the railroad saw it) among the locomotives and cars.

Steam offered full-horsepower at top speed, was 25% cheaper than diesels, and the steam locomotive design was meant to provide improved grade-crossing protection for crews and passengers.



This photograph, dated **August 1, 1942**, shows the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) Chippewa Steam Locomotive**. Note the 4-6-2 wheel configuration and the Art Deco styling. [Paul Hartline, *Courtesy of Robert Wanner, You Know You're From Iron Mountain When...*]

The *Chippewa* was listed as trains #14 (southbound) and #21 (northbound). During its first ten years of service a parlor and buffet-diner were offered between Channing and Chicago while three, through reclining-seat coaches ran the entire route.

In 1948 the train officially joined the *Hiawatha* fleet becoming the *Chippewa-Hiawatha*. According to Tom Murray's, "The Milwaukee Road," upgrades included an RPO-express, three former *Olympian Hiawatha* reclining-seat coaches, a 1948 diner, and a 1938 "Beaver Tail" parlor car.

Interestingly, the Pacifics remained primary power for only two more years and the *Chippewa* witnessed a brief career between receiving this new equipment and

the first changes/cutbacks. In 1950 diesels arrived in the form of Electro-Motive E7As and FP7s while in December of that year through service was truncated no further south than Milwaukee.

Final Years

As the public began abandoning trains for the open highway vacation trains like the *Chippewa-Hiawatha* were the first to feel the effects. (The C&NW's trains fared no better.)

During January of 1954 service was further reduced between only Milwaukee and Channing. Finally, the train made its final run on February 6, 1960, as the last secondary *Hiawatha* still in service when it was discontinued. (The former *North*

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Woods Hiawatha lost its name in 1956 but carried on via its train numbers until 1970.)

Perhaps more than most other roads, as Mr. Solomon and Mr. Gruber note, the Milwaukee invested incredible amounts of time, money, and energy into operating its *Hiawathas* in an effort to provide top-level, high-speed service. As a result, when traffic began its incessant decline the company pulled the plug on all but its most important corridors to reduce costs.

The numbering system is from west to east, so 101 East B Street would be nearest to the railroad tracks.

History of 101: There was no listing for 101 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

History of 103: There was no listing for 103 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

History of 105: There was no listing for 105 East B Street from **1946 through 1963**.

From **1964 through 1974** the **Professional Building** was located at this address. The building's owner, **Donnell R. Mitchell** [Donnell R. "Mitch" Mitchell (1924-2003)], operated the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain**, a reporting agency, and the **Iron Mountain Service Bureau**, a collection agency. **Dr. Daniel D. DeLangis** [Daniel David DeLangis (1913-1989)], an optometrist, and **Dr. Donald J. Jacobs**, a physician, also had their offices in this building.

The occupants of this address remained the same from **1975 through 1981** except for **Dr. Robert L. Baker**, optometrist, who replaced **Dr. DeLangis**.

In **1982** **Donnell R. Mitchell** was listed as president of the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain, Inc.**, offering credit reports and collections – "no collection, no charge." **Dr. Donald J. Jacobs** still had his office at this location.

In **1984** the office of **Peninsula Home Health Care**, **Mrs. Cynthia A. Nyquist**,

administrator, and **Mrs. Nancy V. Rousseau** (1931-xxxx), health care director, was added, but this business was not listed here in **1985**.

In **1986** and **1987** **Jerome L. Hollingsworth**, attorney, had his law office at this address, but was not listed here in **1988**. Other occupants remained the same.

From **1989 through 1993** the office of **Shearson Lehman Hutton**, operated by **John R. Curran**, vice-president and financial consultant, was located here, together with the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain** and the office of **Dr. Donald J. Jacobs**.

The occupants remained the same in **1994**, but **John R. Curran** was listed as vice-president of **Smith Barney Shearson**.

In **1995** the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain, Inc.**, **Donnell R. Mitchell**, president, and **Dr. Donald J. Jacobs**, physician, remained at this location. In **1996** **Dr. James C. Flood**, physician, also had an office at 105 East B Street, but was only listed as a physician at Dickinson Memorial Hospital in **1997**. **Dr. James C. Flood**, physician, was again listed here in **1998**.

In **1998** the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain, Inc.**, operated at this address with **Don Turner**, president, and **Dan O'Connell**, vice-president.

In **1999** **Don Turner** was still listed as president of the **Credit Bureau of Iron Mountain**. **Fred Mitchell** was also listed at 105 East B Street, but there were no other listings.

In **2000** **Don Turner** was listed as president of **Credit Services**. **Pedals & Poles** was also located here, but no owner was listed.

History of 107: There was no listing for 107 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

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History of 109: There was no listing for 109 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

History of 111: There was no listing for 111 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

History of 113: There was no listing for 113 East B Street from **1946 through 2000**.

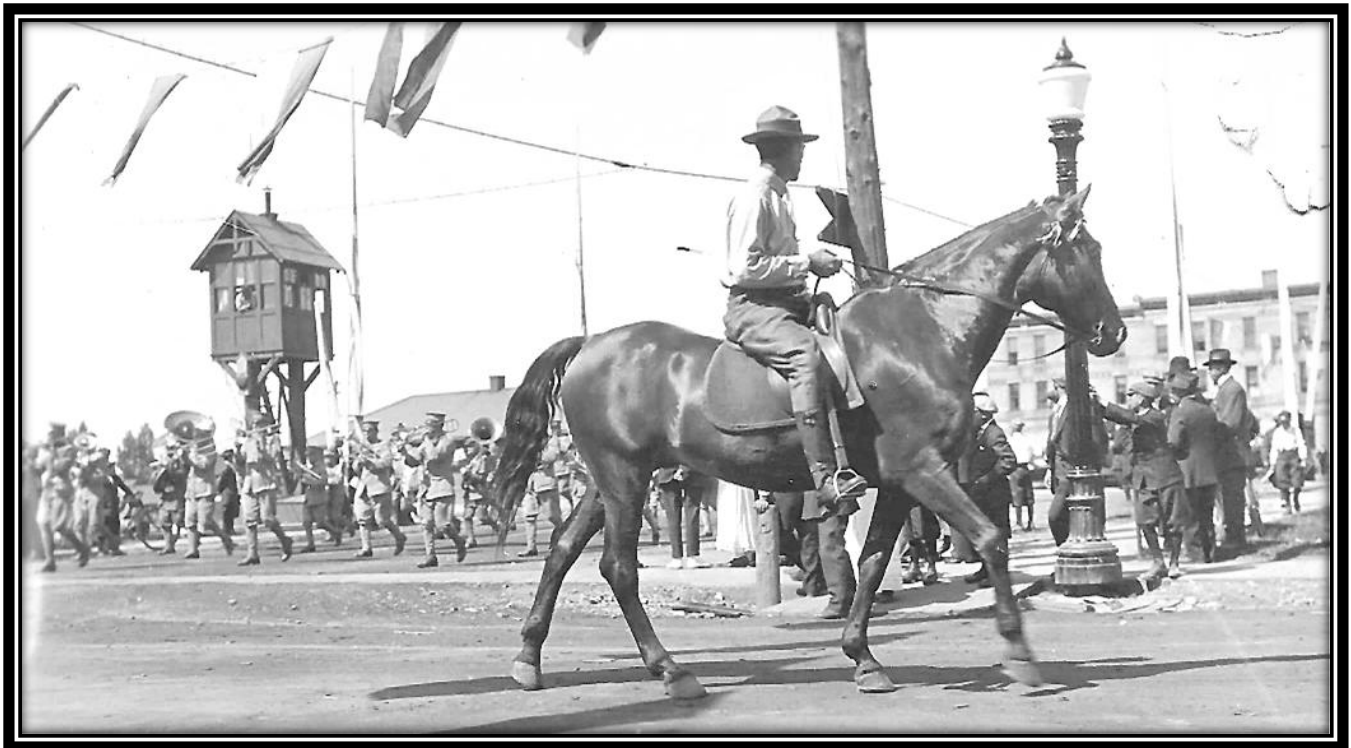
History of 115: There was no entry for this address in **1892-1894, 1902-1903, 1907-1908, 1913** or **1925**.

An article in the **May 12, 1925** edition of the *Iron Mountain News* noted that five bids were received for the revised **comfort station**, the contract being awarded by the city council to the Phelps-Drake Company

for \$8,000. Work on the construction of the new comfort station to be erected at **St. Paul Park** on B Street was under way by **May 16, 1925**, with July 4 given as a completion date. The building was a brick structure with the basement floor for the use of men and the ladies' restroom on the ground floor.

In **1935** the **Public Comfort Station** was located here and continued to be listed at this address in the **1939, 1941-1942** and **1946** city directories.

There was no listing for 115 East B Street from **1959 through 2000**.



Fourth of July Parade **1915** showing **Frank M. Milliman** (1879-1956), marshal of the day, riding "**Roy**" at the **northwest corner of South Stephenson Avenue and East B Street** with the Iron Mountain City Band at the corner. The railroad signal house stood in **St. Paul Park** along the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad tracks. The **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Station** rooftop is visible between the signal house and the horse. The **Milliman Hotel** is visible at the far right. Note the ornate streetlight at the corner. [*Menominee Range Historical Museum*]