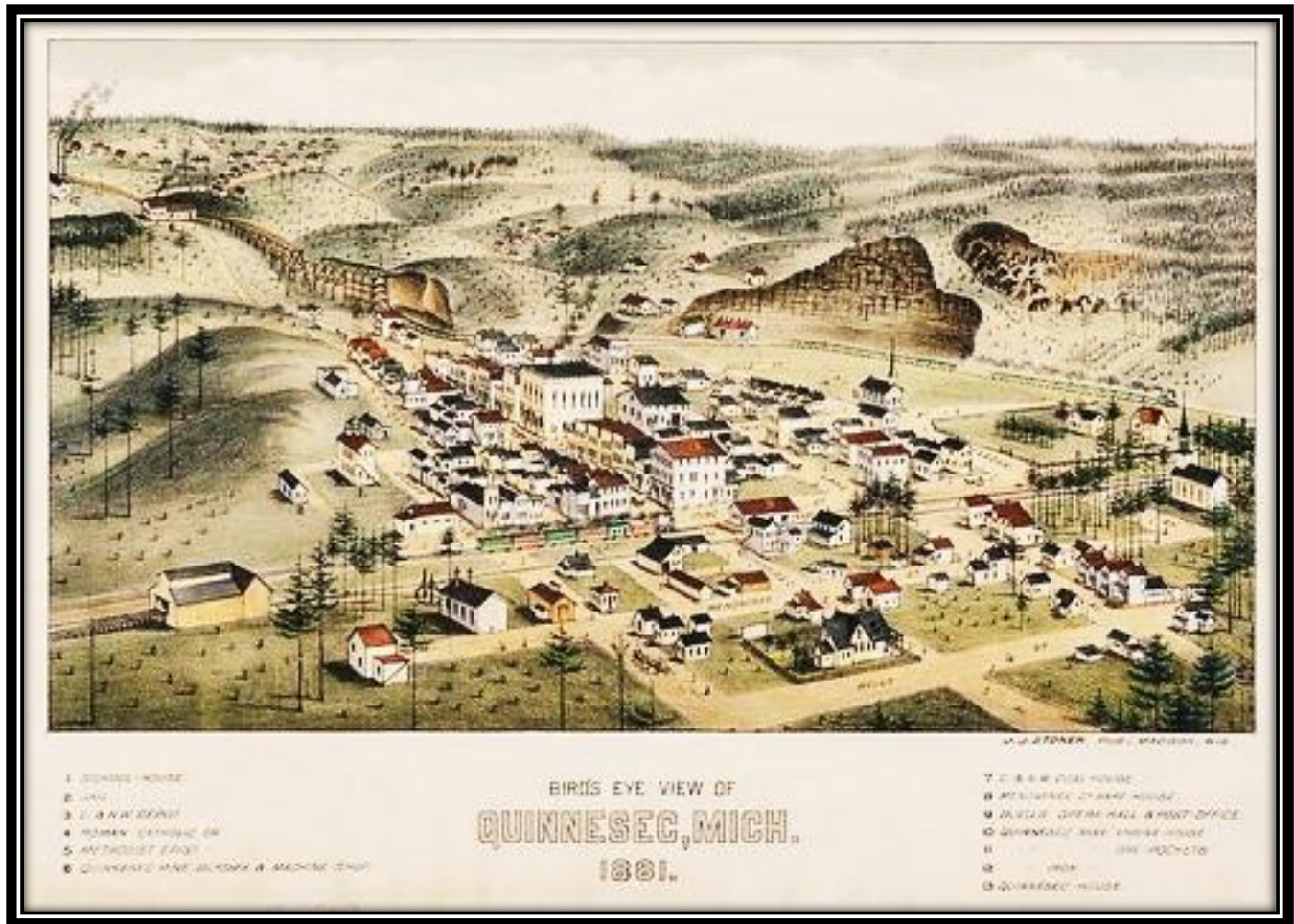


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By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



This lithograph identified as “**Bird’s Eye View of Quinnesec, Mich. 1881**” published by J.J. Stoner, Madison, Wisconsin, shows **Buell’s Opera Hall & Post Office** (Number 9), the large, two-story building slightly to the west of center on the **northeast corner of Quinnesec Avenue and Paint Street**. [eBay]

[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 92nd 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 “Opera Houses – Buell’s Opera House, Quinnesec, 1879-1925.”

Platted **March 8, 1877**, by **John Lane Buell** (1835-1917) on the NE ¼ of NE ¼ of Section 3, T39N of R30W, the name **Quinnesec** was derived from the Chippewa **Be-kwe-ne-sec Se-je-won** which means **Smoky Falls**, referring to the fine spray or mist caused by the falling water dashing against the rocks of the two nearby waterfalls on the Menominee River.

A post office was established **September 25, 1877**, with **Roscoe G. Brown** serving as Quinnesec’s first postmaster.

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The following contemporary newspaper articles document the construction of Buell's Opera House. Some of these items appeared in regional newspaper columns, sometimes excerpted from area newspapers.

The Menominee Range was the first newspaper on the Menominee Iron Range and was first published in Quinnesec, then moved to Norway, and finally was located in Iron Mountain.

Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan, located on Lake Michigan, was the shipping port for iron ore from the Menominee Iron Range, and carried columns from the "Range."

The following item appeared in the **August 8, 1879** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*:

OUR NEIGHBORS.

[Marinette Eagle.]

—**Mr. Buell** has decided to **erect a handsome brick building at Quinnesec** a few doors north of the post office, the lower story of which will be used for a **bank**. It will be in charge of a gentleman experienced in the business. The upper story will be used for an **Odd Fellows Hall**.

In the **September 27, 1879** edition of *The Iron Port* progress in the development of Quinnesec included the two-story brick building which became Buell's Opera House was reported as follows:

"RANGE" ITEMS.

QUINNESEC, Sept. 24.

—**Quinnesec** is improving rapidly. **Hon. J.L. Buell** is going to build a **large two-story building on a prominent corner of the main street**. It will be 50x90 on the ground, divided into two rooms below, one of which will be a store and the other a

bank, with a hall overhead. Mr. Buell has offered to give four lots and \$500 to the **Catholic church** to build an educational institution. The **Sisters of Charity** are soliciting additional subscriptions, and are very successful. The first building will be brick, to cost \$4,000 or \$5,000. The **railroad from here west** will be commenced this week. The contract of grading five miles was let to **Mr. Conro**, of the **Menominee Mining Co.** It will open up four or five new mines, and business here will be red-hot while it is building.

Further progress at Quinnesec was noted in the **October 11, 1879** edition of *The Iron Port*, as follows:

"Range" Items.

—**Quinnesec** is growing lively and business prospects are decidedly good. Numerous **dwellings** are going up, and the foundations of the **opera house** are laid. A \$1,500 **school house** will soon be erected; bonds are being issued for that purpose. The cutting out of the **railroad extension** will probably be completed next week, and grading will be commenced immediately.

In the **October 25, 1879** edition of *The Iron Port*, more progress in Quinnesec was reported as follows:

WE made a short visit to "the range" this week, but found little to remark that is not already known to our readers. Quinnesec grows, and must grow, as long as Menominee ores are in demand at present prices. The hotel enlargement is so far completed as to be in use, the opera house building begins to show above ground, Barclay is in his new stable, and a dozen new houses are up and occupied. Every man, boy and animal is busy, and

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others are constantly arriving. The woods are full of explorers, and all are hopeful and happy

The first edition of ***The Menominee Range*** was published on Wednesday, **March 19, 1879**, in Quinnesec, Menominee County, Michigan, and ran through **May 14, 1891**. The name was changed to ***The Iron Range*** on **May 21, 1891**, due to the formation of Dickinson County. At its inception, **John Lane Buell** was publisher and **William J. Penberthy** was editor.

Carl L. Wendel became editor in the **spring of 1881** and remained in that position until **July 1, 1882**, when *The Menominee Range* office moved to Norway, Menominee County, Michigan, with **H.S. Swift** serving as editor.

H.S. Swift and **Robert P. Tuten** served as editors of *The Menominee Range* from **January 1, 1884** through **July 1, 1884**, when Tuten became the sole editor. By that time publication was in Iron Mountain, Menominee County, Michigan.

The following item from the **December 20, 1879** edition of *The Iron Port* documents the headquarters of *The Menominee Range* in **Buell's opera house**:

[Menominee Range.]

*—The **Range** will be in its new quarters in the **opera house**, and be enlarged, within a couple of weeks, D.V.*

The opening of **Buell's Opera House** was celebrated by a **ball** on **December 30, 1879**. The following item appeared in the **December 20, 1879** edition of *The Iron Port*:

*THE new opera house at Quinnesec will be opened by a **ball** on the 30th. Mr.*

***Buell** is doing this himself, which is guarantee sufficient that it will be thoroughly done. Invitations will be issued, and the attendance confined strictly to invited persons. Guests from abroad will be guests in all that the word implies. The occasion is sure to be a grand one.*

The following week, in its **January 3, 1880** edition, *The Iron Port* reported on the ball as follows:

*THE imperative call of duty (not to mention the chronic impecuniosity of a country printer) forbade our attendance upon the **opening festivity at the opera house at Quinnesec** on Tuesday evening. We learn, however, that notwithstanding our enforced absence, the affair was a success from every point of view. Over one hundred couples are said to have been present, and nothing to have been wanting that could contribute to the enjoyment of the occasion. We congratulate our Quinnesec friends on their luck, their pluck and their prospects. May the sun of their fortune never suffer an eclipse.*

In its **February 7, 1880** edition, *The Iron Port* noted that **Buell**, while in Chicago, purchased a new press for *The Menominee Range*, as follows:

JOHN McKENNA and **John L. Buell** returned from a trip to Chicago, on Sunday. It is said that Mr. Buell, while in Chicago, purchased a **Prouty press** for the **Range**.

More details on early seating accommodations at Buell's Opera House were contained in the following humorous item published in the **May 22, 1880** edition of *The Iron Port*:

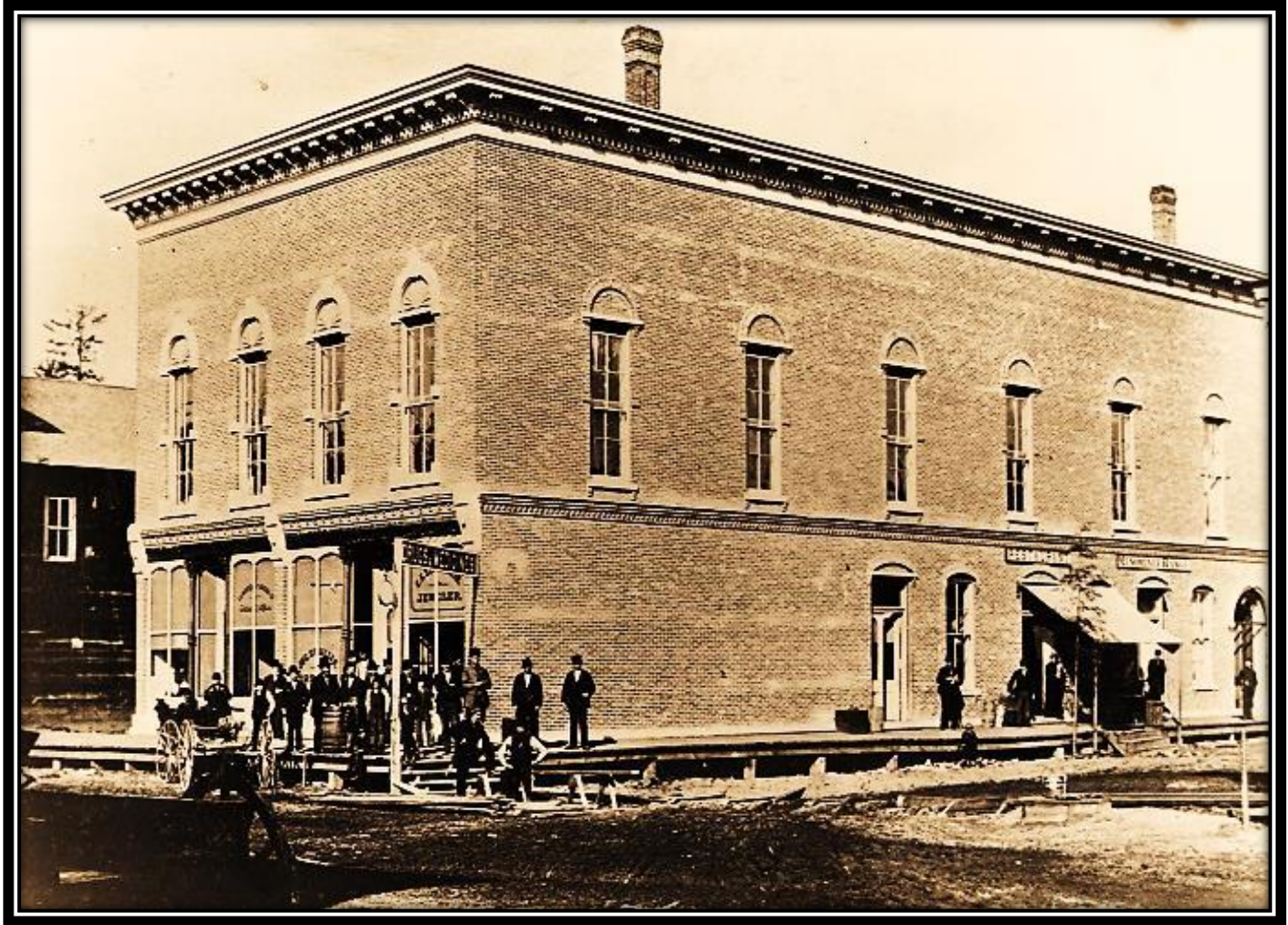
Range Items.

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*–The **Quinnesec opera house** will seat 800 people, and the folks thereabouts are fond of amusement, knowing which, we asked **Forbes** why he did not go there with his show. He replied that he had not learned how to seat an audience on **beer***

***kegs. Clifford** has tumbled for it – small kegs, eighths, 50 cents; quarters, reserved, 75 cents; half barrels, proscenium boxes as it were, \$1 – but he was accustomed to chairs and feared he wouldn't succeed with the **Quinnesec** seats.*

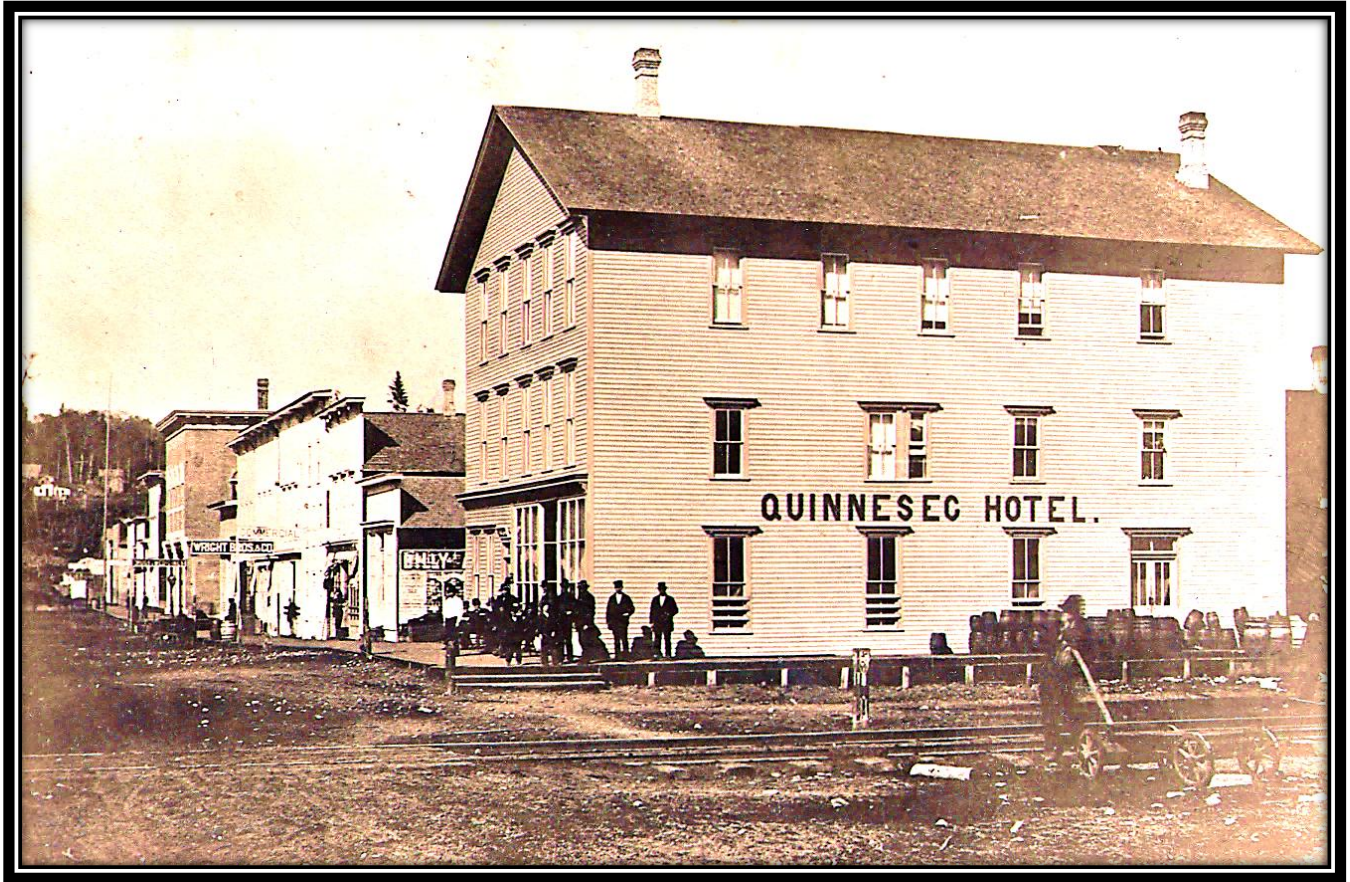


John Lane Buell's opera house in **Quinnesec**, considered one of the finest in the Upper Peninsula, was located on the **northeast corner of Quinnesec Avenue and Paint Street** (now U.S. 2). The opera house opened to the public Tuesday, **December 30, 1879**, and served as the social and cultural center of the village for many years. The second story contained a large dance floor and auditorium with a stage. In this photograph, probably taken in the **summer of 1880**, a sign in the left store front window notes the **Menominee Mining Company general offices** were located within. In the window to the left of the right store front is the sign for **Joseph Schaller, druggist**, while the sign for **Charles E. Steller's jewelry shop** appears in the right window of this same store front. Under the awning on the side is a restaurant, and next-door is the office of **The Menominee Range**, the county's first newspaper. This photograph dates no later than the **spring of 1881** when the newspaper was

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moved to **Norway**. The opera house burned to the ground on **August 23, 1925**. [Alice (Massie) Riekkola]



Dating about **1880-1881**, this view of the east side of **Quinnesec Avenue** looking north in **Quinnesec, Menominee County, (later Dickinson County), Michigan**, encompasses the area between **Pine Street** on the south and **Brule Street** and beyond on the north. The **Chicago & North-Western Railway** tracks are in the foreground. The **Quinnesec Hotel** was managed by **A. Clement** around this time. A bit farther up the street is the **Commercial Dining Hall** which was run by **W.W. Felch**. **Wright Brothers**, a general store run by **Jason K. and Anson W. Wright**, is just up the block. The two-story brick building on the north side of **Paint Street** is **Buell's Opera House**. [Alice (Massie) Riekkola]

The **Bank of Quinnesec** was housed in **Buell's Opera House**, as documented in the following item from the **June 12, 1880** edition of *The Iron Port*:

—H.J. Bebeau is president and A.J. Cronkhite cashier of the Bank of Quinnesec. Bank offices in the Buell opera house.

Range Items.

A reception and entertainment of the **Institute of Mining Engineers** was held in

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Buell's Opera House in **late August 1880**, and was reported in the **September 4**, 1880 edition of *The Iron Port* as follows:

Range Items.

–The reception and entertainment of the members of the **Institute of Mining Engineers**, at **Quinnesec**, was a neat thing – as neat as anything we have seen in many a day. The **opera house** had been decorated in their honor, and tables set with what was modestly called a lunch, but which was really a banquet. After a time for attention to the toilet, the guests were escorted thither and seated, and were welcomed in a short address (he knew they were hungry) by **John L. Buell** (we might call him “Hon.” or “Esq.,” but prefer the plainer phrase), to which, after full justice to the viands, the president of the institute, Mr. **Wm. P. Shinn**, of St. Louis, replied in a happy vein, and called upon Mr. **Charles Ridgely**, of Springfield, Ill., whose fluent and witty speech was just the thing for the occasion. The ladies of the party, or such of them as desired, were then taken to the **lower Quinnesec fall** [sic – Falls], while the gentlemen visited the group of mines embracing the **Keel Ridge, Ludington and Cornell**. At the Cornell mine one of the engineer party said, “I have seen some iron mining, but never before iron mined with pick and shovel only.”

The **Bank of Quinnesec**, located in **Buell's Opera House** since **mid-June 1880**, as well as banks in **Norway**, Menominee County, Michigan, and **Florence**, Marinette County (later Florence County), Wisconsin, suddenly closed as the bank president suddenly departed the area, as documented in the **October 16, 1880** edition of *The Iron Port*, as follows:

Range Items.

–We heard, just before going to press last week, that the **banks of Quinnesec, Norway and Florence had closed and the banker, A.J. Cronkhite, levanted**, but so vaguely and upon such slender authority that we did not use the information. It was true, though, and now everybody says: “Of course. Didn't he play the same game at **Neenah** [Winnebago County, Wisconsin]?”

The announcement of a “grand ball” to be held on **New Year's Eve** at **Buell's Opera House** appeared in the **November 20, 1880** edition of *The Iron Port*, as follows:

Range Items.

–**John L. Buell**, the live man of Quinnesec, will celebrate the new year, the republican [sic] triumph, the continued prosperity of **Quinnesec**, and everything else you please, by a **grand ball** at his **Opera house on New Year's eve**. He will give the ball -- the guests being at no expense, except such as they choose to incur for refreshments, etc. John L. does things well when he undertakes.

Improvements were being made to the stage at **Buell's Opera House**, as noted in the **January 15, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port* and the **February 5, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News*, published in Florence, Marinette County, Wisconsin, as follow respectively:

Range Items.

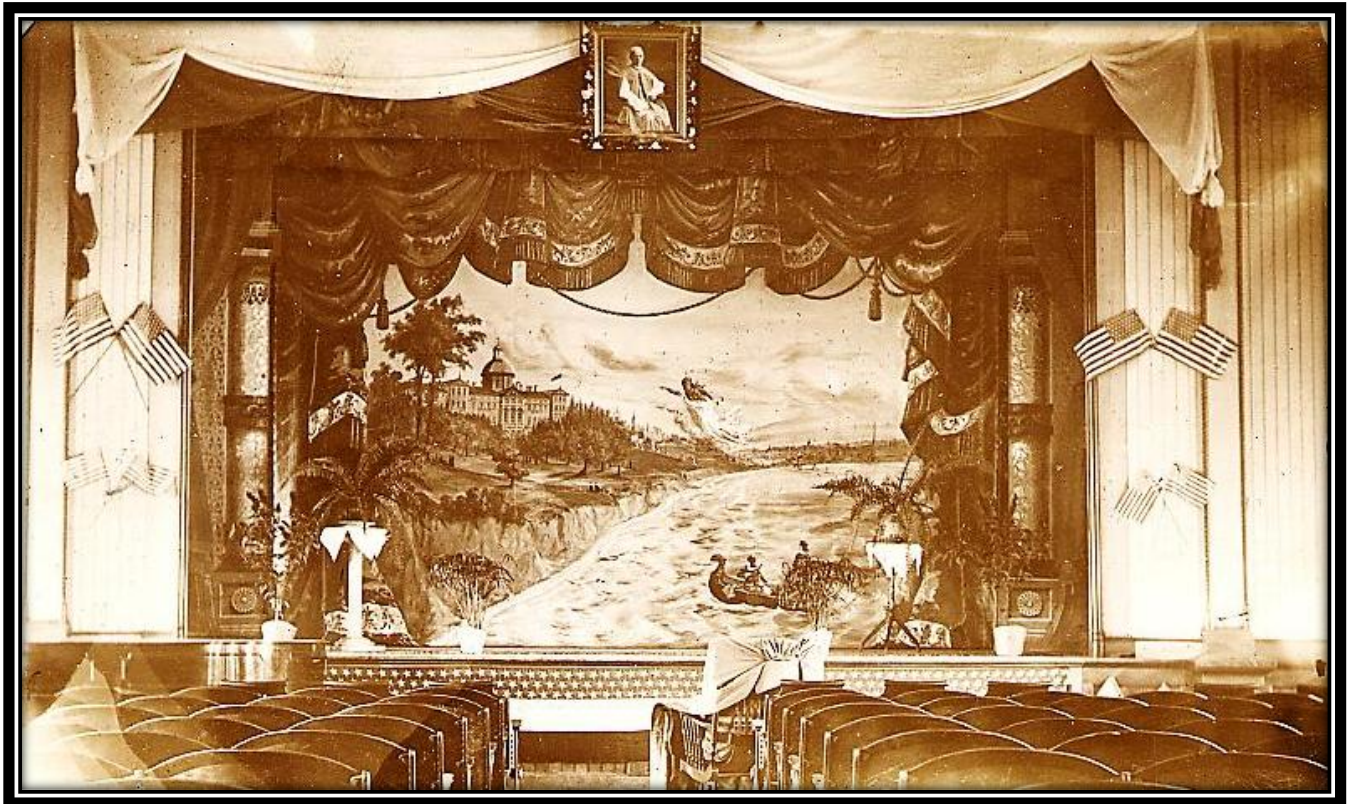
–Mr. **Buell**, so says the Range, has procured drop-curtain, scenery and seats for the **opera house**, which is now the finest room for exhibitions in the region.

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HON. JOHN L. BUELL, is fitting up his **Opera House**, at Quinnesec, in the most approved style. The stage, including the green room, will be 18x45 feet. The entire stage scenery is being made in Chicago

and the drop curtain will represent a magnificent view of the Lower Quinnesec Falls. This painting, as we are informed, will be well worth the price of an ordinary admission ticket.



This postcard view, postmarked Quinnesec, Mich, **Oct. 14, 1911**, was taken by an amateur photographer and sent to **Miss A. Hoheisel** in **Norway**. The photographer was her boyfriend, later her husband. The view is thought to be the **auditorium of Buell's Opera House**, showing the painted backdrop. While a newspaper item from the **February 5, 1881** edition of *The Florence Mining News* stated the scene depicted was the Lower Quinnesec Falls another item from **March 12, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port* states the scene was "St. Goar, A Rhine scene." [Sankt Goar is a town on the west bank of the Middle Rhine in the Rhein-Hunsrück-Kreis (district) in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. In 1245, Count Diether V of Katzenelnbogen built the castle, Burg Rheinfels. After expansions, it was the largest fortress in the Middle Rhine Valley between Koblenz and Mainz.] A photograph of Pope Pius X, who served in that capacity from 1881 to 1914, appears above the stage. Note the crossed American flags on the pilasters on either side of the stage. [William J. Cummings]

The following item regarding a benefit masquerade ball appeared in the **February 19, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port*:

Range Items.

—We hear that the **masquerade** at **Buell's opera house**, for the benefit of the

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hospital, was a financial success, netting some \$250.

In the **March 12, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port* drop curtains for the **Norway Opera House** and **Buell's Opera House** were described as follows:

Range Items.

–**O'Callaghan** has the lake of Killarney on the drop curtain at his **opera house. Buell's** at Quinnesec, has *St. Goar, A Rhine scene*. Both houses are now in order for the summer.

A month later, in the **April 16, 1881** edition of *The Iron Port*, **Buell's Opera House** was praised, as follows:

Range Items.

–**Buell's opera house** makes us ashamed of the place we, at Escanaba, have to occupy to see a play or listen to a concert. Light, airy, easy of access, having a seating capacity of six hundred, a sixteen-foot stage and nine beautiful scenes, it is a credit to the place and a monument to the public spirit of the proprietor.

In the **December 23, 1882** edition of *The Iron Port*, the editor promoted **Buell's annual New Year's reception**, as follows

Range Items.

–**Hon. John L. Buell** will give his annual New Years' [sic] reception at his opera house at Quinnesec on Friday, **December 29**. To any reader who may be so fortunate as to receive an invitation we have but one word to offer: go. There's always a good time when John L. "spreads himself."

An unusual entertainment, a **23-mile "go-as-you-please match,"** was held

January 3, 1883 at **Buell's Opera House** and was described in the **January 4, 1883** edition of *The Iron Port* as follows:

Range Items.

– "Quarter less twain," a volunteer correspondent from Quinnesec, gives us the following item: A **go-as-you-please match**, distance 23 miles, between **W.S. Dunham** of **Iron Mountain**, and one **Blackwood** of the same place, came off on the evening of **Jan. 3**, at **Buell's opera house**. Both men were well backed with money and the match was closely contested as may be judged by the time – three hours and fifty five minutes – Dunham winning although Blackwood was the favorite in the betting until near the close. Another match, **May Marshall** and Norway's unknown for ten miles, fair feel and toe, was advertised, but the unknown failed to materialize. Dunham and Blackwood will probably try it again, many of the backers of the latter being still confident that he can get away with "the lightning jerker" in a go-as-you-please match.

John Lane Buell's mineral interests probably resulted in setting up a **laboratory in the opera house block** to test metals, as indicated in the following entry published in the **April 28, 1883** edition of *The Florence Mining News*:

A **LABORATORY** is being fitted up in the **Opera House** block, at Quinnesec, by Mr. **Buell**, who has secured the most improved apparatus for testing iron, gold, silver, and lead ores.

A grand entertainment and dance at "Buell's opera hall" was announced in the **March 28, 1885** edition of Norway's *The Current*, as follows:

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Entertainment and Ball.

A **grand entertainment and dance**, participated in by **Quinnesec, Norway and Iron Mountain talent**, will take place on the evening of **Easter Tuesday**, at **Buell's opera hall**. The following programme will be rendered at the entertainment:

Chorus – **Misses Wicks, Congdon and Hawley, Messrs. Wicks, Jones, James, Keyes and Spencer.**

Vocal Solo – **S. McKenna.**

Recitation – **N. Corbet.**

Instrumental Solo – **Mrs. Schuldes.**

Vocal Solo – **Mrs. Wright.**

Recitation – **Miss McLelland.**

Violin Solo – **Prof. Radinsky.**

Vocal – **Mrs. Kimball.**

Recitation – **Miss McKenna.**

Chorus – **Misses Wicks, Congdon and Hawley, Messrs. Wicks, Jones, James, Keyes and Spencer.**

The following are the ball committees:

Arrangements – **J. McKenna, H. McLaughlin, J.H. Gee.**

Floor Managers – **J.D. Jones, E.H. Lieberthal, Richard Sampson, E. Fisher.**

Reception Committee – **H. DeVere, J. O'Callaghan, F. Trudell.**

Music will be furnished by [the] **Escanaba band.**

Tickets \$1 per couple, children 10 cents.
Doors open at 7:30 P.M. Concert commences at 8 o'clock sharp.

In the **October 31, 1885** edition of Norway's *The Current*, the establishment of a roller-skating rink at **Buell's Opera House** was announced as follows:

QUINNESEC'S QUOTUM.

Buell's opera house will be opened as a **roller skating rink** each Friday evening in [the] future, commencing **Nov. 6th**. The

Knight Brothers have the enterprise in hand.

...

Take your girls to the **roller rink** next Friday evening.

In the **November 14, 1885** edition of Norway's *The Current*, the opening of the roller rink was documented as follows:

QUINNESEC'S QUOTUM.

Notwithstanding the horrible state of the weather last Friday night the attendance at the **opening of the roller rink** was large. The rink will have a large patronage this winter.

A month later *The Current* noted in its **December 12, 1885** edition that the roller rink remained popular, as follows:

Quite a crowd of our young people visited **Knight Brothers' roller rink at Quinnesec** last night. It is so long since Quinnesec has furnished any evidence of life that we are disposed to encourage it.

Temperance Society meetings at **Buell's Opera House** were noted in the **December 12, 1885** edition of *The Current*, as follows:

QUINNESEC'S QUOTUM.

A **Temperance society** has been lately organized in this place which will hold weekly meetings at the **opera house**. Reform is necessary.

Continued patronage of the **roller rink** at **Buell's Opera House** was again noted in the **January 16, 1886** edition of *The Current*, as follows:

There were 25 couples last Friday night from **Iron Mountain**, who attended the

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roller rink. Mr. rink man, bring some more skates next Friday. This is no one-horse town.

Interest in the **roller rink at Buell's Opera House** had grown to such an extent that the hours were extended, as announced below in the **February 27, 1886** edition of *The Current*:

NOTICE!

*To meet the popular demand, the **Roller Rink at Quinnesec** will be opened on Wednesday and Saturday evenings of each week, instead of Friday evening, as heretofore. Every effort will be made to please our patrons.*

KNIGHT BROS.

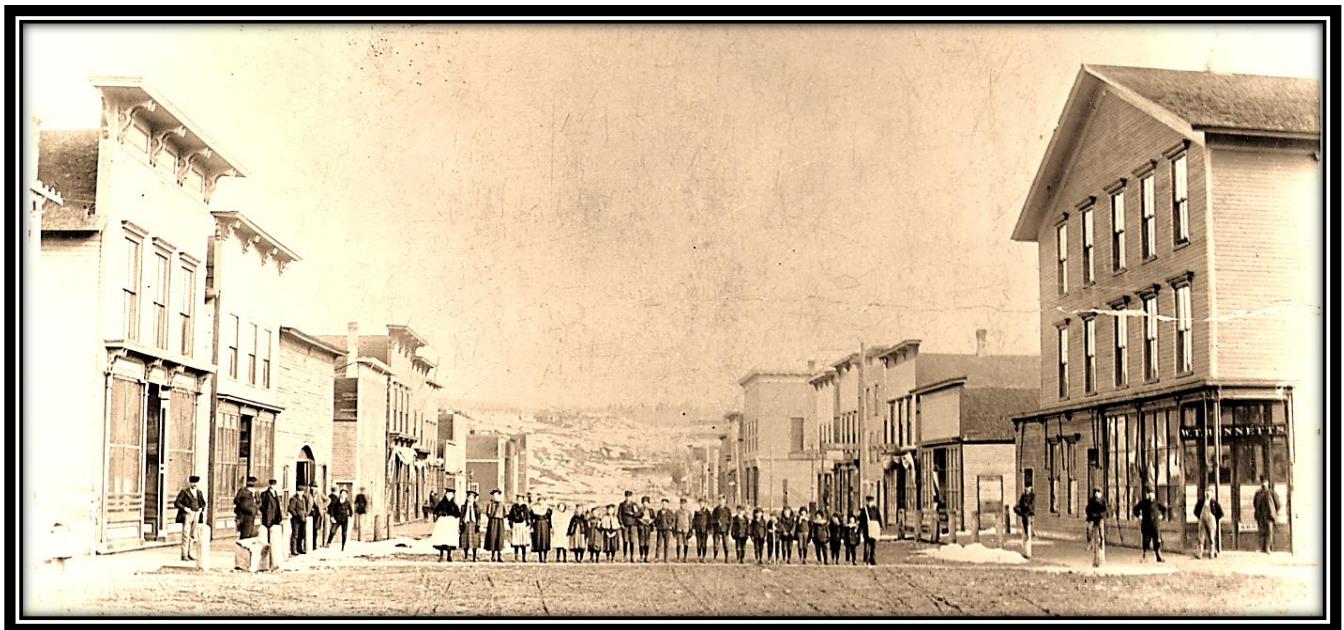
Twenty months later the following announcement was published in the

October 29, 1887 edition of *The Current* regarding the **roller rink at Buell's Opera House**:

*—We learn that a **roller rink** will be opened at **Quinnesec** to-night [sic – tonight], and that a **bus will be run** for this place [Norway] to accommodate those who still hanker for a wrestle with the tricky little wheels.*

The Current, Norway, Menominee County, Michigan, Volume III, Number 39 [Saturday, October 29, 1887], page 1, column 2

*—We learn that the attendance at the **Quinnesec skating rink** on Saturday evening last, [sic] was very good considering the fact that the craze has somewhat abated.*



This view of **Quinnesec's business district** was taken from **Pine Street** looking north on **Quinnesec Avenue** after the turn of the century and before the great fire of **May 18, 1906**. Buildings on the west side (left) were owned by **Thomas McKenna**, saloon; **James Malone**, saloon; **John Marsch**, livery; Mrs. **P. Smith**, residence; **Patrick McKenna**, two saloons; **John McKenna**, store; **Charles Paquette**, barber shop; and **Robert Hancock**. Buildings on the

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east side (right) were owned by **John Lane Buell**, hotel; **W.L. St. Dennis**, post office and store; **John Crane**, saloon and the **Menominee Range Telephone Company Exchange**; **Matt Bryngelson**, saloon; and **Anson Wright**, store. All buildings in this block south of **Paint Street** were destroyed in the 1906 fire. Buell's Opera House is visible on the east side of the street (large two-story brick building behind the group of children standing in the street). *[John Alquist/Breitung Township]*



This view of **Quinnesec's business district** was taken in **about 1903**. The photographer was standing at **Pine Street** looking north on **Quinnesec Avenue**. **Buell's Opera House**, the two-story brick building at the left, was located at the **northeast corner of Quinnesec Avenue and Paint Street** (now U.S. 2). All of the buildings south of Paint Street burned in the fire of **May 18, 1906**, with losses in excess of \$75,000 suffered throughout the village. Buildings pictured above which burned in the fire located on the west side (left) of **Quinnesec Avenue** were **Thomas McKenna's saloon**, **James Malone's saloon**, **John Marsch's livery stable**, **Mrs. P. Smith's home**, **Mrs. Patrick McKenna's store and saloon**, a store belonging to the estate of **Mrs. John McKenna**, **Charles Paquette's barbershop** and **J.H. McKenna's store**. On the east side (right) of **Quinnesec Avenue** were two stores owned by **Mrs. John St. Denis**, **John Crane's vacant saloon**, **Matt Bryngelson's vacant saloons** (two buildings on one lot), the **Wright Brothers' vacant store** and two vacant lots at the corner. The first sign at the right reads **Miss L. (Luella) St. Denis & Co.** Luella St. Denis was the postmistress and ran a small stationery and confectionery store in conjunction. The second sign identifies **The Club**, which must have been a **saloon in John Crane's building**. Note the hitching posts in front of the buildings and the board sidewalks. *[John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

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The notice of a "Chancery Sale in the **December 13, 1900** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* noted: Chancery Sale [John L. Buell and Ruth B. Buell – opera house to be sold at public auction in Quinnesec – need to copy article – page 8, column 5

CHANCERY SALE.

*In pursuance and by virtue of a decree of the Circuit Court of the County of Dickinson, State of Michigan, in Chancery, made and entered on the **30th day of October, 1900**, in a certain cause therein pending wherein the **Standard Savings and Loan Association of Detroit, Michigan**, is complainant and **John L. Buell and Ruth B. Buell** are Defendants, notice is hereby given that I shall sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, at the front entrance to the Court House, in the City of Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, (that being the building in which the Circuit Court for this County of Dickinson is held) on **Saturday, the fifth day of January, 1901**, at twelve o'clock noon, local time, all the following described property situated in the Village of Quinnesec, County of Dickinson, State of Michigan, to wit: **One two story brick veneered building opera house in upper story, size of building 100 feet long by 44 feet wide; building on east end and north side has eight inch walls, iron shutters on windows and doors; Together with lots numbered twenty [sic – Twenty] (20), Twenty-one (21), and Twenty Twenty-two (22) in block seven (7).** All iron ore upon or under said premises is excepted from the effect of this mortgage, it having been previously included in a mining lease made to Cundy Iorn company, dated Oct. 1st, 1896; the*

above described property being in the recorded plat of the Village of Quinnesec.

Dated Iron Mountain, Mich., Nov. 19th, 1900.

*DONALD CAMERON,
Circuit Court Commissioner,
Dickinson County, Michigan.
BARBOUR & REXFORD,
Solicitors for complainant,
Detroit, Michigan.*

Following the chancery sale of Buell's Opera House and the three lots, fewer activities were recorded at this site.

In the **November 3, 1904** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, the following item appeared:

QUINNESEC ITEMS.

*The **social dance** at **Buell's opera house** last Thursday night was well attended. Music was furnished by the **Quinnesec orchestra**.*

In the **December 1, 1904** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* the following two items were published:

QUINNESEC ITEMS.

*The **social and supper** at **Buell's opera house** last Thursday evening given by the **I.O.G.T.** was largely attended and a success both socially and financially.*

...

***Col. John L. Buell** received notice last Sunday that he had been allowed a **pension** of ten dollars per month on the age basis, [on] account of service as first-lieutenant in the United States regular army during the **civil war**. Col. Buell is seventy*

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years old and next year his pension will be increased to twelve dollars per month.

In the **February 16, 1905** edition of *The Iron Mountain Press* a detailed report of the masquerade ball held at **Buell's Opera House** on Friday, **February 10, 1905** was printed, as follows:

QUINNESEC ITEMS.

The **masquerade ball** given by **Beaudette's orchestra** of this village at **Buell's opera house**, last Friday evening, was a huge success, both socially and financially. **Beaudette's orchestra** furnished very satisfactory music for the occasion. **Quinnesec** has long boasted of a **first class dance hall**, and now that they have good music right in town, it is to be hoped that there will be more dances here in the future. After the grand march at twelve o'clock, everyone went over to the **town-hall**, where an excellent supper was served. All who attended say they spent a very pleasant evening. Over seventy-five couples being present, Miss **Eveline Massie** was awarded the honor of having the best ladies' [sic – lady's] costume, **Victor Legault** the best gent's costume; and **Wm. Tippet** the best comic costume.

Mention of a celebration of the raising of a **newly-erected flagpole near Buell's Opera House** was reported in the **June 6, 1918** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, as follows:

QUINNESEC NEWS NOTES

The **raising of "Old Glory"** at **Quinnesec** took place last Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Many people witnessed the Stars and Stripes fly from the **newly erected flag pole near the opera house**. As the school

*children and the audience sang the "Star Spangled Banner," the large flag was slowly raised. Next the **newly organized Boy Scouts** gave a drill and saluted the flag. They did fine with the little preparation they have had. The speaker of the occasion was **Judge John O'Hara**. He gave a splendid patriotic address, which was appreciated by every listener. **Clement Sullivan** recited the poem entitled, [sic] "The Blue and the Gray." The service closed with the school children and audience singing "America" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning." The spirit of Breitung township is still living.*

On **August 20-21, 1925**, **Buell's Opera House** was destroyed by a fire of suspicious origin. The following article appeared in the Friday, **August 21, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*:

Suspect Arson In Fire That Destroys Quinnesec Building

Third Blaze Within Month Destroys Buell Structure; Iron Mountain Department Summoned

*The hand of a "firebug" is suspected in the destruction by fire last night of the **Buell building** in **Quinnesec**, a struction [sic – structure] about which clung more or less romantic traditions of the ore boom of 1879 in the Quinnesec district.*

Discovered by workmen returning shortly after 11 p.m. from the Ford plant in

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Iron Mountain, the fire had already gained such headway that saving the building was out of the question.

The blaze which burst forth in the front from the ground level to the roof, [sic] worked havoc with the electric wires, putting out of commission the electric pump that provides the community water supply. Water was then obtained from a storage tank.

Iron Mountain Department Aids.

Iron Mountain fire department No. 2 worked until about 3 o'clock this morning directing its efforts chiefly to saving the surrounding buildings which were menaced by sparks, flying torches and falling wires.

A telephone pole within radius of the flames was burned to cinders and stood a smouldering [sic – smoldering] torch menacing the fire fighters until an early hour this morning when telephone linemen cut it off at the base.

A second pole affected by the flames leaned far over and hung dragging the net work [sic – network] of wire above with its weight. Repair men were working to set it right this morning.

Telephone service between Iron Mountain and Escanaba was cut off while the lines in the fire zone were unapproachable. Service was resumed about an hour after repair crews were able to work in the damaged section.

Third Fire In Month.

The brick building, situated on the through highway between Iron Mountain and Norway, is the third within a month in Quinnesec to burst into flames, the fire in each instance occuring [sic – occurring] about the same time late in the evening.

*The other two buildings in which fire broke out are the old abandoned school house [Pioneer School], long unoccupied and practically a ruin, and the old abandoned school house, long unoccupied and practically a ruin, and [sic – lines repeated] the old **John McKenna** residence, also deserted.*

*The store building which today was still smouldering [sic – smoldering], was fully occupied until two days ago when a soft drink parlor, of which **Roy Beauchamp**, of Quinnesec, was the proprietor, was padlocked by federal officers. By padlock proceedings the portion of the building occupied by the soft drink place was to be closed for one year and the building itself was under injunction prohibiting its sale.*

Dance Hall On Second Floor.

*A dance hall comprised the second story and in the rear of the structure were the real estate offices of the **McKenna Brothers, Parnell and Ed.***

*A star sedan owned by **Roy Beauchamp** and a big Studebaker owned by **Leo Brasspfenniaks** [sic – Brasspennicks] parked in the rear of the structure were removed without damage.*

The fire is thought to have originated behind the bar in the soft drink place, though no definite grounds for this belief have been shown.

*The owner, **George Meehan**, of Iron Mountain, who purchased the place at a cost of about \$8000 [sic – \$8,000] a year and a half ago, had not been informed of the destruction of the building until after 0 o'clock this morning. The loss was covered with about \$8000 [sic – \$8,000] insurance.*

Built in 1879.

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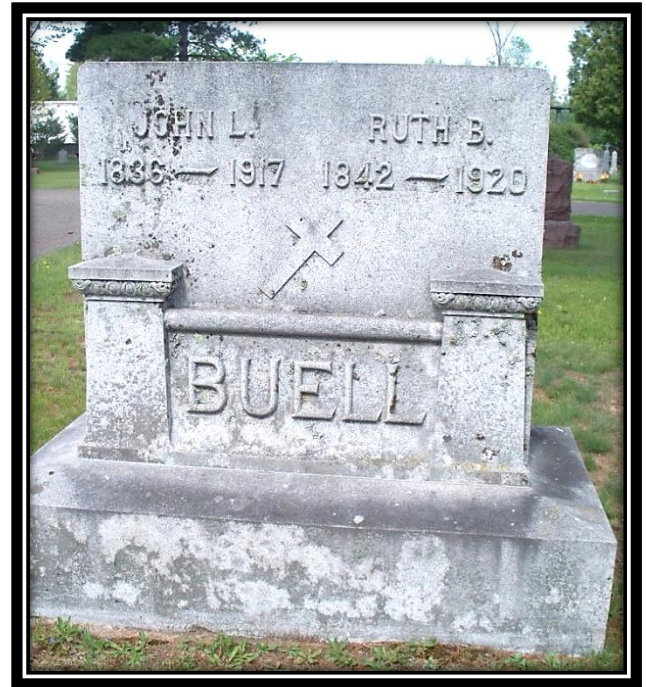
The building was erected in **1879** by **John L. Buell**, according to an old settler of the district. This was at the time of the boom in Quinnesec and Norway when the **Cundy mine** was opened.

For about five years saloons, dance halls and drug stores flourished and prospered, he declared, after which the prosperity died and since that time has never been a paying property.

It was pointed out by persons grouped about the smouldering [sic – smoldering] ruins that of the few business places in the little community, the building, though the largest was the one which could be destroyed with least loss or crippling of trade.

[NOTE: George T. “Reddy” Meehan (1874-1948) was involved in numerous illicit liquor operations during the Prohibition Era. He was married to Julia B. “Dolly” (St. George) Meehan (1888-1967), who was a well-known “madam” in the Iron Mountain area. More information on the Meehans is contained in *“Soiled Doves” of the Eastern Menominee Range: A History of Prostitution from “Old Man” Mudge’s Stockade in Florence, Wisconsin, in the 1880s to Iron Mountain’s Midway Brothels in the 1920s*”, pages 123-128 and 181-186]

JOHN LANE BUELL
(1835-1917)
and
RUTH BELLE (LUDLOW)
BUELL (1842-1920)



John Lane Buell, founder of Quinnesec, Michigan, and his wife, **Ruth Belle (Ludlow) Buell**, are buried in Iron Mountain Cemetery Park.

John Lane Buell, son of **George Pearson Buell, Sr.** (1801-1862) and **Ann (Lane) Buell** (1809-1844), was born **October 12, 1835**, in Lawrenceburg, Dearborn County, Indiana. He died **January 30, 1917**, in Quinnesec, Dickinson County, Michigan.

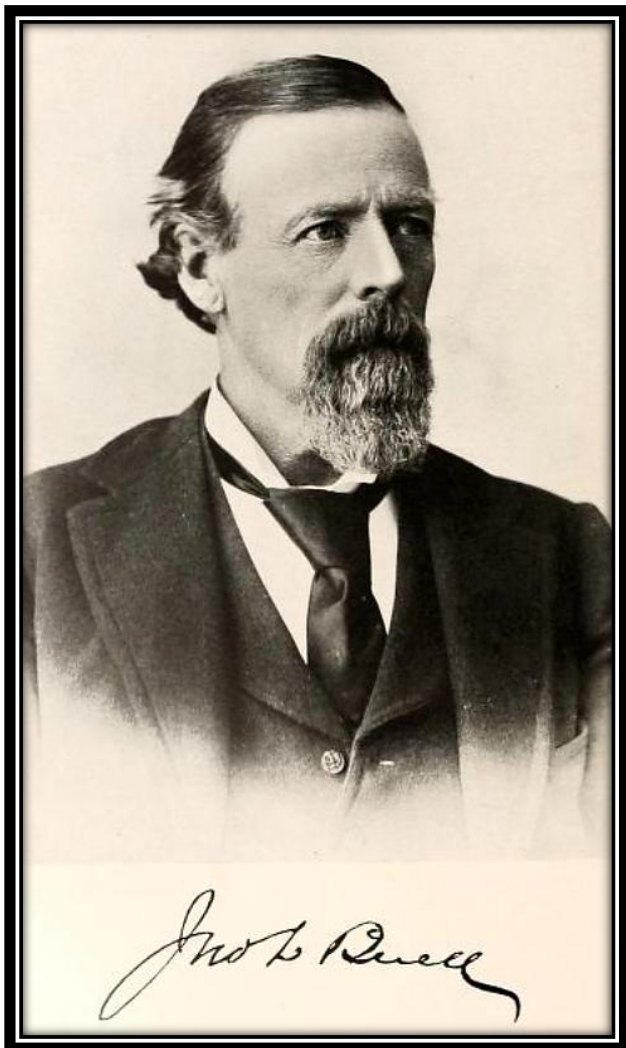
Ruth Belle (Ludlow) Buell, daughter of **Stephen D. Ludlow** (1778-1855) and **LeeAnn (Beall) Ludlow** (1808-1879), was born **August 22, 1842**, in Lawrenceburg, Dearborn County, Indiana. She died **May 21, 1920**, in Quinnesec, Dickinson County, Michigan.

John and Ruth were married on **December 31, 1863**, in Lawrenceburg, Dearborn County, Indiana.

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The biographical sketch which appeared in John Lane Buell's obituary in the **February 1, 1917** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* was originally published in *A History of the Northern Peninsula of Michigan and Its People, Its Mining, Lumber and Agricultural Industries* by Alvah L. Sawyer, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, **1911**, in Volume III, pages 1383-1386 plus the photograph with facsimile signature below. The obituary follows.



A PIONEER PASSES

VENERABLE JOHN LANE BUELL DIED AT QUINNESEC LAST TUESDAY.

**He Discovered the First Mine on the
Menominee Range and Was the Founder
of Quinnesec.**

John Lane Buell, a pioneer and highly respected resident of the Menominee range, died at his home in Quinnesec, [sic] last Tuesday morning, after a lingering illness, aged eighty-one years, three months and eighteen days.

John Lane Buell was a pioneer explorer of the Menominee range and founder of Quinnesec. He was a son of **George P. Buell**, and was born **October 12th, 1835**, in Lawrenceburg, Dearborn county, Indiana. His paternal grandfather, **Salmon A. Buell**, the son of a revolutionary soldier, was born and reared in Burlington, Vermont. The father, George P. Buell, was born in 1801, in Scipio, N.Y.; married to **Ann Lane**, to whom were born **Salmon A., George P., John Lane**, (subject of this sketch), **Joana, Ann and Julius**.

Having completed his early studies in the public schools at Lawrenceburg, John Lane Buell took a scientific course at the **Norwich Military Institute in Norwich, Indiana** [sic – Vermont]. Going to **Kansas** in **1857**, he spent a year in **Leavenworth**, and on **October 20th, 1858**, was one of a small band of venturesome youths that started overland to **Colorado**, being the first to make the trip from that place.

On **December 20th, 1858**, the company arrived at **Cherry Creek**, the site of the

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present city of **Denver**. In **1859**, Mr. Buell surveyed and platted the present city of **Boulder**, and in **1859 and 1860** worked in **Central City, Colorado**. He engaged in mining in **Leadville** for six months in **1860**, and at the **Pine Altos mine** in **New Mexico** for a time in the same year. In the **spring of 1861**, Mr. Buell started for the Gulf of Mexico, going via El Paso and San Antonio to **Fort Davis**. By this time Texas had seceded and **General Triggs** had surrendered the federal troops. Traveling by night in order to escape capture, Mr. Buell finally reached the gulf and secured passage on a vessel used in transporting paroled soldiers and on **May 2nd, 1861**, landed in **New York**.

He entered the commissary department as clerk and in **August, 1861**, was appointed **second lieutenant in the Fourth United States Infantry**, stationed at **Fort Columbus, New York**. Subsequently given charge of the North Carolina and Maryland prisoners, having the charge of **Mason and Slidell**. [sic] He took them to **Fort Warren, Boston**, from where they were released and put aboard a British man of war.

Mr. Buell then went to **Washington** where he was appointed regimental quartermaster and commissary. During **McClellan's** advance he had charge of the baggage and supply train of the **Third Brigade**. After again joining his command he took part in the **battle of Bull Run**, and at **Antietam** had charge of the second company of skirmishers. His father being ill, Mr. Buell resigned from the army after the battle of Antietam and returned home to **Lawrenceburg, Indiana**. He subsequently

served as aid-de-camp to **General John Lore**, who operated against the forces of **John Morgan**, the daring rebel leader. Entering **Harvard College** in **1863**, Mr. Buell studied law for six months, afterwards returning to **Lawrenceburg** where he engaged in farming until **August, 1866**.

At that time, on account of ill health, Mr. Buell decided to try an entire change of climate. He came to **Menominee, Michigan**, and in **1867** put the machinery into the **Jones mill** on the bay shore, operating the mill for two years, in the meantime carrying on general farming, publishing the **Menominee Journal**, and as opportunity occurred, practicing law.

In **1871** Mr. Buell paid his first visit to the **Menominee range**, and on his second visit in **May, 1873**, commenced exploring and laid bare the first merchantable ore ever discovered on the range, finding it in the southeast quarter, township thirty-nine north, range thirty, and naming it the **Quinnesec mine**.

The same year Mr. Buell took up a homestead claim, and in **1876 platted the village of Quinnesec**, which was the terminus of the Chicago & North-Western railway from **1877 to 1880**. Since coming to the upper peninsula Mr. Buell has been deeply interested in everything pertaining to its development and advancement, and has been prominent and influential in public affairs. Elected to the **state legislature** in **1872**, he became an active member of that body, and had the distinction of introducing the first ten-hour labor bill ever submitted to the legislature. He also also [sic] introduced the first log lien bill. In **1876** Mr. Buell built the **first wagon road made**

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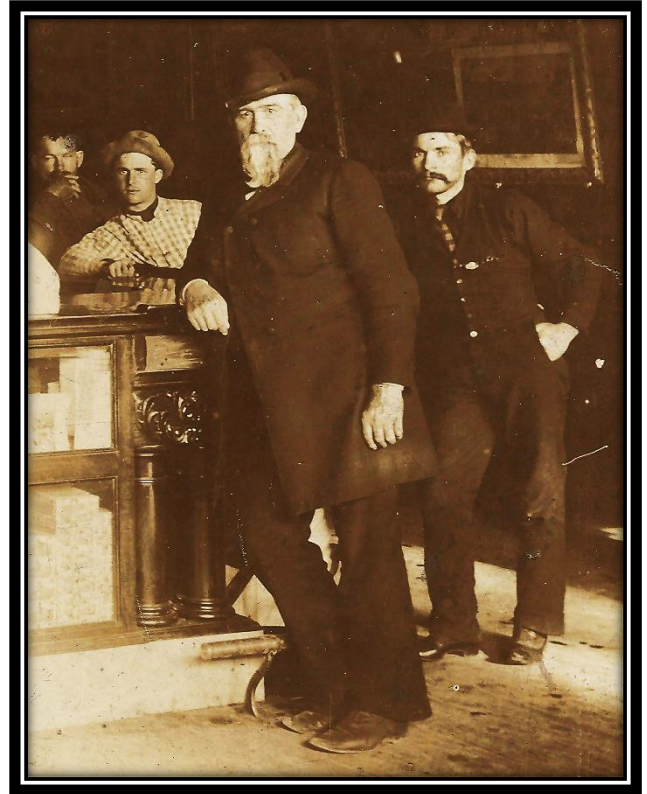
between Twin Falls and the New York farm, and superintended the construction of the iron bridges at Twin Falls and at Iron Mountain.

On **December 31st, 1863**, Mr. Buell married **Ruth B. Ludlow**, who was born of **Stephen Ludlow**. Her grandfather, **John Ludlow**, came to the Northwest Territory in **1810**, locating in what was afterwards **Hamilton county**, and served as first sheriff of that county. Her father, **Stephen Ludlow**, was born **May 5th, 1790**, in **Morris county, New Jersey**, and was subsequently a pioneer settler of **Lawrenceberg** [sic – Lawrenceburg], **Indiana**. In **1820** he was one of the commissioners appointed by the legislature to select four sections of land granted by the United States as a site for the capital, which in **June, 1820**, was located at **Indianapolis**. At seventy years of age Mr. Ludlow accepted the position of assistant United States surveyor, and was active in that work until his death at a venerable age at Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

The funeral services [for John Lane Buell] will be held at the **Quinnesec Catholic church** at 10 o'clock to-morrow [sic – tomorrow] (Friday) morning, **Rev. James Corcoran** officiating. The interment will be at cemetery park.

[NOTE: John Lane Buell's siblings were: Major Soloman A. Buell (1827-1914); Mary L. (Buell) Howes (1830-1858); Brevet Brigadier General George Pearson Buell (1833-1883); Almeria J. Buell (1837-1920); Sister Ann Cecilia. Mother Superior [Jennie Buell] (1840-

1922); 1st Lieutenant Julius Octavius Buell (1842-1862).]



John Lane Buell (center, leaning against the bar) posed for the photographer at **Little Joe's Tavern** in Iron Mountain with some friends in about **1900-1910**. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Ruth Belle (Ludlow) Buell died at her home in Quinnesec on **May 21, 1920**. Her obituary appeared in the **May 27, 1920** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*, as follows:

Mrs. Buell Is Dead.

Mrs. Ruth Buell, relict [widow] of the late John L. Buell, died last Friday noon at the family home in Quinnesec after a short illness.

Mrs. Buell about six weeks ago returned from Lawrenceberg [sic – Lawrenceburg],

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Indiana, where she had spent the winter months with relatives, and was taken ill a few days later.

Mrs. Buel [sic – Buell] was about seventy-eight years of age and a native of Indiana. With Mr. Buell, she came to the upper peninsula about fifty years ago, first residing at Menominee, and forty-five years ago removing to Quinnesec, where she had resided ever since.

*She is survived by two brothers, **Homer and Stephen [Ludlow]**, and two nephews, **Percy and Frank Ludlow**, and a niece, Miss **Laura Ludlow**, of Lawrenceburg.*

*The funeral was held on Tuesday from St. Mary's church at Quinnesec, with **Rev. John Mockler** in charge of the services, with interment at Cemetery Park.*

Mrs. Buell was a notable figure in the history of Quinnesec. Her acts of substantial charity were many and she was ever thoughtful of the welfare of her neighbors. During the past several years Mrs. Buell has lead [sic – led] a retired life.

Quinnesec Historian John Alquist provided some additional information in his notes, as follows:

John L. Buell's home was across the tracks from the Catholic Church. When Mrs. Buell died her relations from Indiana came up and emptied the house. They had a large bonfire in back and burned everything they could. They had no interest in saving manuscripts or pictures. A few pictures and **John Buell's dairy** were given previously to **Irene Mingesz** who was a housekeeper for the **Buells**.



Sometime after John Lane Buell's death in 1917, **Ruth Belle (Ludlow) Buell** posed in her yard in Quinnesec next to the house she shared with her husband. She was wearing her widow's weeds, now a part of the collection at the Menominee Range Historical Museum. The Museum also has a veneered walnut parlor table with a drawer and a lower shelf on display in the parlor and a Victorian wire outdoor garden settee which belonged to the Buells. These items were donated by Irene Catherine (Mitchell) Paveglio Mingesz (1896-1989), who worked for the Buells when a young woman. [Menominee Range Historical Foundation]

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In the **August 5, 1920** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* the following article appeared regarding the acquisition of the **Buell home** as a possible site for a **county hospital for the poor**.

Option Buell Home.

*The county poor commissioners have instructed **Prosecuting Attorney Knight** to secure an option upon the residence property of the late **John L. Buell** at Quinnesec, and will recommend that the same be purchased for county hospital purposes. The board of supervisors will meet on Tuesday, the 24th, when some action will be taken. The state board of corrections has decided that the building at present used for a county hospital is unsuited for the purposes and has ordered the supervisors to provide new quarters*

forthwith. An agent of the state board will attend the next meeting of the supervisors and he will be consulted relative to the Buell property.

A brief article in the **September 2, 1920** edition of the *Iron Mountain Press* announced the sale of the **Buell property**, as follows

Buell Place Sold.

*The Buell place at Quinnesec, which the county anticipated purchasing for a hospital, has been sold to **Joseph Mongrain**. The place contains seven acres, a large twelve-room residence and fine barn. Mr. Mongrain's deal includes the furniture in the home and all the tools, etc., and the consideration was \$6,500.*

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PLACE OF DEATH			STATE OF MICHIGAN	
County <u>Dickinson</u>			Department of State—Division of Vital Statistics	
Township <u>Quinn</u>	Village <u>Quinn</u>		City <u>Quinn</u>	
TOWNSHIP			VILLAGE	
CITY			WARD	
FULL NAME <u>John Lane Buell</u>			REGISTERED NO. <u>8</u>	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
SEX <u>Male</u>	COLOR OR RACE <u>W</u>	EDUCATION <u>Married</u>	DATE OF DEATH <u>Jan 30, 1917</u>	
DATE OF BIRTH <u>Oct 12, 1838</u>			I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Jan</u> , 1916, to <u>July</u> , 1916,	
AGE <u>78</u> yrs. <u>3</u> mos. <u>18</u> ds.			that I last saw him alive on <u>July</u> , 1916,	
OCCUPATION <u>Retired</u>			and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>8 A.M.</u>	
BIRTHPLACE <u>Indiana</u>			The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:	
NAME OF FATHER <u>L.C. Buell</u>			<u>Tumor in Larynx</u>	
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER <u>Indiana</u>			Contributory (Specimens) <u>2</u> yrs. <u>6</u> mos. <u>0</u> ds.	
MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Anna Lane</u>			(Signed) <u>G.H. Boyce</u> M.D.	
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER <u>Indiana</u>			Address <u>Iron Mountain Mich</u>	
THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE			State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES, state (1) MANNER OF INJURY; and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL.	
Informant <u>Mr. John L. Buell</u>			LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS OR RECENT RESIDENTS)	
Address <u>Quinn Mich</u>			At place of death <u>yr.</u> <u>mo.</u> <u>ds.</u> In the State <u>yr.</u> <u>mo.</u> <u>ds.</u>	
Filed <u>Feb 5</u> 1917 <u>Robt Brown</u>			Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death	
			Former or usual residence	
			PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Iron Mountain</u>	
			DATE OF BURIAL <u>Feb 2, 1917</u>	
			UNDERTAKER <u>Local Undertaker</u>	
			ADDRESS <u>Iron Mountain Mich</u>	

John Lane Buell's Death Certificate – January 30, 1917
Cause of Death: Tumor in Larynx

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1. PLACE OF DEATH County <u>Dickinson</u> Township <u>Breitung</u> Village <u>Quinnesec</u> City _____ (No. _____ St. _____ Ward _____)			STATE OF MICHIGAN Department of State—Division of Vital Statistics			9
2. FULL NAME <u>Ruth Belle Buell</u>			CERTIFICATE OF DEATH Registered No. <u>3</u>			
(a) Residence No. _____ St., Ward _____ (Usual place of abode.) Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds. How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH			
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS 3 SEX <u>Female</u> 4 Color or Race <u>Wht</u> 5 Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced (WRITE the word.) <u>Widow</u> 6a If married, (widowed, or divorced) HUSBAND of (or) WIFE of <u>John J. Buell</u> 7 DATE OF BIRTH (Month, day and year) <u>Aug 22 - 1842</u> 8 AGE Years <u>77</u> Months <u>8</u> Days <u>29</u> If LESS than 1 day, hrs. OR min.			16 DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year) <u>May 21 1920</u> 17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Apr 16</u> , 19 <u>20</u> , to <u>May 21</u> , 19 <u>20</u> , that I last saw him alive on _____, 19____, and that death occurred on the date stated above at <u>12:00</u> p.m. The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: <u>Cerebral Hemorrhage</u> <u>Arterio sclerosis</u>			
9 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work <u>Housewife</u> (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) (c) Name of employer			18 Where was disease contracted If not at place of death? Did an operation precede death? <u>No</u> Date of _____ Was there an autopsy? <u>No</u> What test confirmed diagnosis? (Signed) <u>J. F. G. G. G.</u> M. D. May 21st, 1920, Address <u>Quinnesec Mich</u>			
10 NAME OF FATHER <u>Ludlow</u> 11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (city or town) (State or country) <u>Don't know</u> 12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Don't know</u> 13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) (state or country) <u>Don't know</u>			19. PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL Date of Burial <u>5/25 1920</u> Address <u>Iron Mt.</u>			
14 Informant <u>Miss Mary Rice</u> (Address) <u>Quinnesec Mich</u> 15 Filed <u>5/24 1920</u> <u>Robert Brown</u> Registrar.			20. UNDERTAKER <u>J. A. Bryant</u> <u>Iron Mt.</u>			

Ruth Belle (Ludlow) Buell's Death Certificate – May 21, 1920
Cause of Death: Cerebral Hemorrhage and Arterio sclerosis