

THE WHISTLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IRONWOOD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 44 No. 2
WINTER 2014-15

THE JUDY GARLAND AND IRONWOOD CONNECTION



The father of Judy Garland, famous movie star, began his theatrical work in Ironwood. He will be remembered by many Ironwood residents as Frank A. Gumm, who lived here in 1911 and 1912. At that time he was employed as an office clerk by the Oliver Mining Company and sang evenings at the Temple and Rialto

Theaters. Before he left he was managing the Temple Theater. (*Ironwood Daily Globe*, Nov. 3, 1939).

The *Ironwood Times* of May 9, 1945 brought more details of the father/daughter entertainers. Ironwooders who can look back as far as 32 years to remember when the Temple Theater was in its prime, got out the old photo albums to look for pictures of their old-time and all-time favorite tenor singer of the illustrated slide days in the town show house, a person by the name of Frank Gumm. It so happens that Frank Gumm is the father of Judy Gumm, better known as Judy Garland, formerly of Grand Rapids, MN. Last week Judy was appearing here in the Movie, *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

A quick bio search tells us that Judy Garland was born Frances Ethel Gumm in Grand Rapids, MN, June 10, 1922 and died June 22, 1969. Her father, Francis Advent (Frank) Gumm, was born Mar. 20, 1886 and died Nov. 17, 1935. Her mother, Ethel Marion, was born Nov. 17, 1893 and died Jan. 5, 1953.

Let's continue the local story about Frank from the May 9, 1945 *Ironwood Times*—"We talked with one of the old timers about Frank Gumm and we were informed that he was a single man in those days. He came to Ironwood with a troupe of vaudeville actors, and he made such a hit with his pleasing tenor voice,

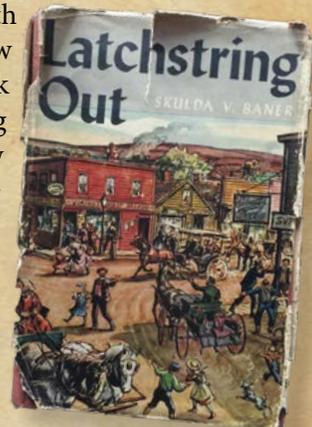
cont'd. on page 2

CHRISTMAS IN IRONWOOD AS DESCRIBED BY SKULDA V. BANER IN "LATCHSTRING OUT"

BY IAHS PRESIDENT - GARY HARRINGTON

The setting—Early 1900s Swedish community near Vaughn and Suffolk Streets in Ironwood (Iron Valley in the book). The narrator—Eight or nine year old Stumpastina

"I began to think about Christmas again, sitting there against my father's arm. And somehow, now, the thought wasn't a sharp point to wince away from. I thought of the tree with the brown-wrapped bundles we would open tomorrow, that was nearly today. I thought of Christmas dinner, that Magnus and the new hired gild Emma would share with us—Swedish as the blue and yellow flag itself—lutfisk, rice in creamy milk with cinnamon and sugar crusting it, the jellied veal sylta, the red glow of the lingonberries festive as the red satin on a holly wreath, and the sausage and meats simmered in the big iron kettle we would doppa our bread into because that was the way you did at Christmas. I thought of the Julgubbe, who would really be my father in false face with whiskers. I didn't know whether to giggle or weep, that I should know. I thought of the long dance we would make in and out and back and forth among the showcases and tables and chairs, through the store, after Christmas presents tomorrow, my father and my mother, Magnus and Emma, with me at the head and as many behind that might come in to visit and say Go' Jul! I let my thinking slip guard. I thought of the small red house beside the tall red house, on the tomt far across the ocean, where my other grandmother, who was Anna von Braun, would be sitting thinking her silent Go' Jul to Gustaf, would never hear it except silently in her mind."



"Suddenly sitting there, I knew about Christmas. I knew why you stayed empty no matter how much lutfisk with cream sauce and hard cooked eggs chopped into it you put inside you.

cont'd. on page 2



If you have historic photos of the Ironwood area and would like to share them with IAHS, please email to ironwoodhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or call 906-932-0287.

Judy Garland - cont'd. from page 1

that Manager Kelly of the Temple Theatre made him a financial proposition that was top money. Kelly was able to make such a splendid offer as he operated theatres in Ironwood and Bessemer in Michigan, Hurley and Ashland in Wisconsin, and they were all called Temple Theatres."



FRANK & ETHEL GUMM - 1914

appearance at the Temple Theater in Bessemer, which meant an

Latchstring Out - cont'd. from page 1

I knew why your ears kept listening and your mind kept waiting. Christmas was a giggle that crowded the lump in your throat. Christmas was your Grandmother Anna over in Sweden, waiting for nothing, and your Grandmother Katrina here in Iron Valley, sewing buttons on pants for a doll. Christmas was Lyda's organ music and the choir's singing that never quite met, and it was the silent darkness outside that the hot little tongues of the candles could reach for but never reach. Christmas was an ancient Lo, where a rose e'er blooming caroled down centuries of streets, and it was a gay, saucy. Now it is Christmas again, now it is Christmas

extra street car ride of seven miles." The informant assessed Gumm as being about 5 feet, 8 inches tall, with a weight not over 140 pounds. He dressed in an ordinary manner, but wore a white collar and a white shirt, which was something in those days. His suit was dark and his cap of a light shade.

"The Ironwood folks who were acquainted with Frank Gumm never knew just what became of him, until Judy Gumm Garland became a movie star. In Ironwood the old-timers say that Judy Garland looks like her father, and that she certainly acquired her beautiful singing voice from him. Oliver Surprenant, the present manager of the Ironwood Theatre, came to Ironwood in 1914, and he got his start at the temple Theatre. He knows full well that every time Judy Garland is scheduled to appear here in a movie, that he will have a house filled to capacity, for you see, Ironwood sort of claims Judy Garland, even though it is hard to explain just how and why!" (Ironwood Times May 9, 1945)

again, let it be Christmas again till it be Easter! Long-danced around a Christmas tree. Christmas was everything you could hold in your two hands. And Christmas was nothing you could hold in your two hands."

NOTE: Skulda Baner was the daughter of JGR Baner (widower of Tilda), who in 1938 lived at 218 E. Vaughn St., and was a Swedish poet and writer of Indian legends. He was Gustav in the book, the father of Stumpastina. In 1938 Skulda and her sister, Nanna, were employed in office work in Marquette.

AARRE LAHTI - FINNISH ARTIST MADE HIS MARK ON GOGEBIC RANGE



AARRE LAHTI MURAL IN LUTHER L. WRIGHT HIGH SCHOOL 19

Visit the Memorial Building, walk upstairs, enter the former Ironwood Women's Club room, and look to the right. There you will see a painting by Aarre Lahti that portrays so many of the recipients of the Women's Club's generosity, among which were education, music, health, Scouts, and more. What do we know about this important person? His obituary reveals much.

Aarre Kotivalo Lahti, 84, of Miami, formerly of Ann Arbor, Professor Emeritus of Design at the University of Michigan, died Thursday, Jan. 21, 1993, at his winter home in Miami. Mr. Lahti was born April 27, 1908 in Helsinki, Finland, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Lahti. While attending the School of Art of the Art Institute of Chicago, he met his wife, the Irma Salo, also a student. They were married in 1945.

He graduated with a fellowship which culminated in an exhibition of his paintings in Paris at the Salo d'Automne. After opening a gallery of fine art and photography in Ironwood, he became the designer and supervisor of the Upper Peninsula WPA Arts and Crafts project. He went to the University of Michigan as an instructor of design in 1941 and taught for 32 years.

Mr. Lahti also worked with the Engineering Research Institute and the Marketing Research Department of the Ford Motor Company. In 1957, he presented his paper, *The Gas Turbine Family Car* at the 75th anniversary of the Society of Automotive

Engineers. A Rackman Grant was presented to him in 1957 to make a comparative study of American and Finnish designer motivation.

In 1961, he received a second grant, enabling him to travel to Cape Dorset, Baffin Island, to work for the administration with the Eskimos

on bathing and shelter problems. Professor Lahti's views on industrial design education were published in "Industrial Design" magazine and he was a regular contributor to "School Shop."



AARRE LAHTI IN MEMORIAL BUILDING - WOMEN'S CLUB ROOM

He was a member of the Industrial Design Institute, the Industrial Design Education Assn., the Industrial Designers Society of America, and the American Association of University Professors.

Survivors include his wife, Irma; two sons, Alekis of Whitmore Lake, MI, and Ahde of Los Angeles, CA, and five grandchildren.

SHOPPING AT THE DEPOT'S MUSEUM STORE

The Depot's Museum Store offers visitors a unique shopping experience. It carries a collection of books and gifts curated just for you. Plus feel good knowing your purchase helps the Depot Museum Store bring exciting learning experiences to everyone!

On sale are local authored books including:

- Matt Liesch's - *Ironwood, Hurley and the Gogebic Range*
- Roy Ekrose's - *America's Gogebic Range*
- A complete line of Bruce Cox books, covering mining and many other local topics
- Charles Surpercynski's - *Soaring With the Eagles: The Copper Peak Story*
- Amy Vanoooyen's books with a local UP flavor

Check out the DVDs, train whistles, vintage postcards, local historical photos and T-shirts. Commemorative Platform Bricks are a great way to preserve your family heritage in Ironwood. (See enclosed Platform Project order form.)

VOLUNTEERING AT THE DEPOT MUSEUM - We are always on the lookout for dynamic and curious people who want to be a part of the Depot Team.

Spark the interest of visitors to the Depot by participating as a seasonal volunteer.

- New Roof - Fundraiser, grants, or other ideas
- Cataloging of archival holdings
- IAHS Board Secretary
- New website
- Newsletter articles
- Additional museum Guides
- Help with defraying heating costs



CAN YOU HELP?

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS!

Contact IAHS at 906-932-0287 or email ironwoodhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

We'll listen if you have ideas for growth initiatives. Purchasing engraved bricks and visiting our gift shop are avenues of giving always open to you.

Contributions in any amount are welcome and appreciated.

The Ironwood Area Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, so the full amount of your donation is tax-deductible.

Photo Credits: Ironwood Area Historical Society, John DeMario, Gary Harrington and Sandy Sharp

Newsletter Design: SHARP GRAPHIC DESIGN

BRINGING YOU FACE TO FACE WITH HISTORY



Would you like to receive the IAHS newsletters via email?
Just send us an email and you will be added to our mailing list.
EMAIL: ironwoodhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

DEPOT MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP

MEMORIAL DAY - LABOR DAY: OPEN MON-SAT NOON - 4 PM
WINTER HOURS: VARY, PLEASE CALL AHEAD
TELEPHONE: 906-932-0287



150 N LOWELL ST
P O BOX 553
IRONWOOD MI 49938

Return Address Requested

CAN YOU REMEMBER IRONWOOD WHEN...?

- Maple wood for sale - will be delivered to any part of Ironwood for \$1.50 per cord? (Dec. 21, 1895)
 - Walker's Cash Grocery was in business?
 - Sidney Hirsh ran a clothing store on Aurora Street?
- The section men of the C&NW RR and Wis Central RR in Ironwood and Hurley went on strike when informed that their pay had been cut from \$1.75 to \$1.25 per day? (1903)
 - The managers of all the mines of the Michigan Copper District announced that the 8 hour work day for all underground employees would go into effect December 1, 1913?



JOHNSON MUSIC STORE 1910



IRONWOOD STORE CO. 1919



EVA WURL 1954

MAKING HISTORY MATTER