Early History of Wakefield, Michigan

Written, compiled and/or extracted from various sources by Bruce K. Cox

Before the city of Wakefield was founded in late 1884 this area was known as the Sunday Lake district. When the first surveyors came through in 1847-48 they noted the lake and drew up a survey map on which it was called "Iron Lake." It was not known as Sunday Lake until sometime later, and is first mentioned as such on a map published in 1864.

George Fay, Frank Brotherton, Charles E. Wright, Cornelius Gillis, George M. Wakefield, and others were among the early mineral explorers in this district, as early as 1879-80. Their pioneering development work led to the establishment of the **BROTHERTON** and **SUNDAY LAKE** iron mines by the mid-1880s.

These mines, for such they can now legitimately be called, are about one mile east of Sunday Lake, and were first explored by George Fay, for himself and others, in 1881. Finding nothing of positive value, he surrendered his option, and was succeeded by Neil Gillis, who did some work with like result the following year. In 1883, Moore & Vaughn took the option, and after finding the ore transferred all their right, title and interest to the Agogeebic Iron Co., of which George M. Wakefield, Esq., of Oshkosh, is the moving spirit.—Alfred P. Swineford, Michigan Commissioner of Mineral Statistics, 1884.

When the first explorers came to the area, Sunday Lake was completely surrounded by a dense virgin forest that grew right up to the shoreline. The few men employed at the first explorations built crude log cabins to live in. Supplies were carried in along a path that ran from the west shore of Lake Gogebic, about fifteen miles to the east.

The Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western railroad company has its track laid to town 46, range 44 [near present Marenisco], and the right-of-way is cut out to Capt. Harrington's camp on Sec. 10, 47, 45, or to a point not far from Sunday Lake, which is in that town and range. The company has a force of over 1,500 men at work, and it is expected that the track will be laid to the Montreal river by August 1st."—Ashland Press, 5 July 1884.

"It is rumored that another hamlet will be platted at Wakefield station."— Ashland Press, 29 November 1884.

The first settlement occurred in September 1884 near railroad Siding 339, about a mile west of the present townsite. It was called Wakefield station. A few railroad workers brought in their families and built temporary shacks to live in. The first settler was named Luke Sweet.

The Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western tracks reached Ashland, Wisconsin in June, 1885, "at which point the company is constructing very fine ore docks, where the

ore will be handled in the same manner as at Marquette and Escanaba. The topography of the country is very favorable for the construction of the road and there is a down-grade from the [Gogebic] range to Ashland. Great credit should be given to Mr. George M. Wakefield, of Oshkosh, and Mr. N. D. Moore, of Ashland, who, with characteristic enterprise and push, explored this country several years ago, when it was a wilderness, and who have been mainly instrumental in attracting capital to it and developing it."— *Iron Trade Review*, March 1885.

"The village of Wakefield (16, 47-45) will be platted this spring."—Ashland Press, 6 June 1885.

The spur track to section 10 is all graded and ready for the rails, which will be laid this week. The side track now located at Wakefield station will be taken up and laid at the junction of the spur with the main line, about a mile east. Mr. Wakefield states that he is about to lay out a townsite [village of Fink] on section 10."—Ontonagon Herald, 10 October 1885.

Albert E. Cowles and Edward W. Sparrow, on November 18, 1885, sold the eighty acre parcel of land [on which Wakefield was built] to Alfred L. Cary of Milwaukee. Cary was connected with the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railway Company that had extended its line from Watersmeet to Wakefield in 1884.

E. H. Rummel of Sheboygan, Wisconsin was engaged by Cary to survey and plat the area as a village... The plat was approved July 8, 1886 by the then Auditor General of Michigan, H. R. Pratt.

Lots were sold for \$125 to \$175 but advanced quickly after original sale to from \$250 to \$1,000. First sale of a lot was made to A. L. Cool, being Lot No. 1, Block No. 1. [In 1957 the] lot was owned by Jacob Gouza who live[d] at 35 Aschermann street.

Wakefield's first building was erected by Herman Nunnemacher of Milwaukee and occupied by Day Brothers as a saloon. The first store was built and occupied by Hayward, Wescott and Murray, dealers in general merchandise, camp and miners' supplies. The first dwelling was built by R. A. Harris, jewelers and Justice of the Peace.

It may be of interest to note that within the present city limits of Wakefield is an incorporated village that is older than Wakefield itself. Now [in 1957] part of the Sunday Lake Iron Company property is the once thriving village of Fink. Incorporation papers for Fink, which was platted by George M. Wakefield, Edward Aschermann, Henry Fink, Lyman and Corliss, were approved December 11, 1885, seven months before the Village of Wakefield plat was approved.—Joseph Gill, in The Wakefield News, 10 May 1957.

The post office was established in Wakefield on June 12, 1886. James W. Bedell served as postmaster. The late historian Joseph Gill wrote, "Early Wakefield seethed with activity. Every incoming train brought its quota of job seekers, mining engineers and

tradesmen. By August of 1886, there were nearly fifty buildings in use, but few of them were homes. Almost everybody lived in tents that year. The mines prospered."

The new town of Wakefield, near Sunday Lake, is just now having a general building boom and if it continues a few months will see there a large and populous village. About twenty-five or thirty business buildings are in course of erection, and several firms have already commenced to do business. If any considerable number of the explorations in the country surrounding Sunday lake should result in the opening up of new mines the town of Wakefield will naturally become the base of operations and consequently a town of no little business importance.—Gogebic Iron Tribune, 19 June 1886.

During the summer of 1886, Alfred L. Cary of Milwaukee, proprietor of the east half of section 16, T47N, R45W, had his holdings surveyed and platted and the lots offered for sale. The new town was named in honor of George M. Wakefield of Milwaukee, prominent land owner in the area. It was incorporated as a village in 1887 and as a city in 1920.—Joseph Gill, in The Wakefield News, 19 May 1960.

Petition for the Formation of Wakefield Township. To the Board of Supervisors of the County of Ontonagon:

We the undersigned freeholders of the township of Bessemer, in the county of Ontonagon hereby respectfully pray that the following described territory, to wit; Townships 47 N. R. 43 W; 47 N. R. 44 W; 47 N. R 45 W., excepting sections 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36; 48 N. R. 43 W; 48 N. R. 44 W. and 48 N. R. 45 W. may be detached from the said township of Bessemer and erected and organized into a new township to be called and known as the township of Wakefield in the county aforesaid. And your petitioners herewith present a map of all the townships to be affected by the division prayed for, showing the proposed alteration of said township.

A. J. Hayward M. Wescott
Mike Day Pat Day
Pat Madden C. F. Gay
James Raizon Wm. Frank
Wm. McGrath A. M. Tollefson
R. A. Harris John McDonald

Dated August ninth, A. D. 1886.

H. D. Miner A. C. Smith John Hom John Tobin

On November 22, 1887, Wakefield petitioned for incorporation as a village and was granted the right to become such shortly after.

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"The first school in what is now Wakefield Township was typical of pioneer days. It was established about 1885 in a railroad section-house at Siding 339, located on Little Black River, about a mile west of the Wakefield railroad station. It was during the time the Lake Shore Railway, later known as the Chicago & Northwestern, was being built and before the discovery of ore or the platting of the townsite of Wakefield. A trainman, William Burke, who had been a former teacher, was prevailed upon to teach the children.

"The next school was held in a tent on the shores of Sunday lake, and Mrs. James W. Bedell was the teacher. As the cold weather came on the school was moved to Leonard's Hall, now owned by Andrew F. Olson [today owned by Mr. Oberg], and later to the Kluck Building, later known as the Schilka Building.

"The first schoolhouse to be built in Wakefield was a four room building erected in 1887 on Aschermann Street. About 1905 an addition was added and the building otherwise improved. It was used until about 1910 when the first high school was erected. This building was later remodeled and used as a teacherage and was known as the Halcyon Club. It was dismantled in 1933.

"The next schoolhouse to be built was the Pike School erected in about 1896. It was a large two story frame building located on the old road at the Pike location about 300 feet northeast of Sunday lake. This School was closed and sold on July 28, 1902 for \$160 to John Kuivinen. Mr. Kuivinen sold the building to the People's Cooperative Store Company who wanted to use it as a warehouse. A contract to move it to a site back of the Peoples Cooperative Store was given to Mr. John Hill. As it was in the winter, Mr. Hill decided to move the building across the ice on Sunday Lake, as that was the shortest distance to its destination. The first day the building was moved to about the half way point on the lake. The next morning when Mr. Hill returned to resume moving operations, he found the building had sunk through the ice and was resting on the bottom of the lake. It was impossible to raise it onto the ice again and since he could not complete his contract he paid for the building. Sometime later he sold it to Thomas Ashlund. When the lake opened up in the spring Mr. Ashlund raised the building onto a raft of logs, floated it to the foot of Sunday Lake street, then moved it to the northwest corner lot at the intersection of Sunday Lake and Putnam streets where it was remodeled into a dwelling house. Several years later the first floor was remodeled, used as a blacksmith shop and later as a garage and storage room for automobiles.

"The first school in the Fink location was erected about 1897. It became overcrowded and in October 1900 a contract was let for the construction of a schoolhouse in Brotherton location. By the end of the school year 1902 a new building, the Central School, was completed, and both the Fink and Brotherton schools were closed. The buildings were advertised for sale and the Fink school was sold to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church and moved to its present site on Bedell Avenue, where it was remodeled and used as a church. The Brotherton School was sold to Victor Ritnen and was remodeled into a dwelling house."—From "A Brief History of the Wakefield Schools," by Eugene Maki.

An account of the early settlement of Wakefield written in 1913 referred to James W. Bedell, one of the first settlers:

"When Mr. Bedell came to the settlement in February, 1885, he found three mines opened the preceding year, namely the Brotherton, Sunday Lake and Iron Chief, in the order named. No shipments were made until 1885. Everybody lived in a log hut, there being no other buildings even for offices. The population numbered 300 miners and the necessary office force and cooks—all men; there not being a single family household until 1886.

"Mr. and Mrs. Bedell have given from their memory the following list of early settlers; probably others have faded from their memory since the long lapse to 1913. There are always pioneers who do not remain long and hence do not become afterwards identified with the place.

"First comes to mind, Mike J. Tallon, captain of the Iron Chief; Wells Smith, superintendent of the Sunday Lake mine and one of its lessees; a Mr. Pengilly, captain of the Brotherton, for which gentleman a station is named in the Minnesota iron county. Captain Cavender of the Iron Chief and Crown Point, still lives in Wakefield; the first storekeepers were Marion Wescott and partner; G. W. White & Co., hardware merchants; John P. Rossman, meat market, still living in Duluth as a real estate man.

"The first two buildings were put up in the spring of 1885 by Nunnemacher and Benjamin. One of these was rented to A. J. Hayward and Marion Wescott as a general store. The flourishing country east of Hayward, Wisconsin, bears the name of Mr. Hayward, which enterprising gentleman emigrated to Seattle. Marion Wescott brought his family with him from Shawano, Wis. His four children were among the first to come to the new settlement, which at this time promised to be the best part of the Gogebic range.

"The first teacher in Wakefield was a young lady from Antigo, Wis., whose name, Mr. Bedell thinks, was Davis. The next was a Miss Thompson from Berlin, Wis. The first school building was the old frame that stood, until torn down, on the lot back of the present Hotel Wakefield. The second building for school use was of one-room, a frame, put up for the purpose in 1887, and used until the erection of the present old school building, which now stands on the hillside entirely unused. Until the building of the magnificent brick structure [McDonald School] in 1909, as noted elsewhere, this and the long two-story building on the main street, used for some of the primary grades, were the only school houses in the village limits.

"Andrew Schindler had the first hotel in the place, built by him in 1885 or 1886, and conducted until 1896; it is now being used as the Star Theater and occasional vaudeville and moving pictures.

"H. D. Miner put up the second hotel the same year. This hotel was burned in the fire of June, 1909. Novakoski's hotel now stands on the adjoining lot. Novakoski's dwelling, as well as the boarding house of John Ohman, was also destroyed by the same fire.

"The big Perry House, opposite the depot, was used a first class hotel for a few months. This was also built in 1886. It has since been rented to a number of families. Leslie J. Perry, one of the early proprietors of the *Ironwood News Record*, and a newspaper man well known in Wisconsin, where he conducted papers at Waupaca and other places, was the owner of the Perry House and lived in the hotel a short time, afterwards trading the property for the Mikado mine, two miles west of the village. Mr. Perry and his associates did not operate his mine so successfully as have his successors.

"As for fires, Wakefield had one in 1887 which destroyed nearly the whole place. The cause was similar to that of the great fire of Chicago on Oct. 9, 1871. The Variety Theater, in charge of Mr. Mike O'Brien, was the starting place of the fire, and the cause was a pet trick monkey which Mr. O'Brien had left chained Christmas night inside the theater. Outsiders observed through the window the monkey, who had broken his chain, attempt to pick up and carry a burning lamp, which he upset and thus set fire to the interior of the building and thus caused his own destruction and that of a tame bear in the rear of the building; also the following places of business; the post office, Hayward & Wescott's general store, the Hayward, Wescott and Murray Bank, five saloons, Fishback & Tobin's grocery and Mittenthal's clothing store. All these buildings were occupied upstairs by people, all of whom escaped."—By William Massingham, published in *Ironwood News Record*, 17 April 1920.

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Population figures for the village of Wakefield, found in old Polk Directories, U. S. Census records, and other sources:

1887	300
1888	2,320
1891	1,000
1893	. 700
1897	. 407
1901	1,191
1903	1,000
1905	1,500
1907	1,500
1909	1,300
1910	700
1920	4,151
1930	3,677
1940	3,591
1950	3,367
1960	3,231

The first religious services held in Wakefield were held by that useful and well-beloved missionary who organized the first Sunday schools and Protestant churches on the Gogebic range, the Rev. D. S. Banks. This early missionary of '85, is eulogized in our account of the early days of Ironwood and Bessemer. His meetings in Wakefield were held in the dining room of the Miracle restaurant and boarding house.—William Massingham.

On October 25, 1890, the First Lutheran [Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church] congregation was organized in the temperance meeting house with the Rev. Kaarlo Tolonen of Ishpeming conducting the first meeting and writing the first minutes of the meeting. Rev. Tolonen had served as a missionary in Africa for 8 years, coming to America in 1888, and was one of the founding fathers of the Suomi Synod on March 25, 1890.

The beginning of the congregation was small indeed. Listed among the charter members were many of the temperance society. The congregation had no church building of its own, no pastor, and no money. Elected as first officers were: Chairman Henry Mottonen; Secretary Johan Pesola, later replaced by Elias Hakola; Church Council members: Leander Peterson, John Reini, Johan Nisula, Gust Saarinen; Kustaa Pesola, who was replaced by Jacob Harri. It was decided at the first meeting of the congregation to pay the pastor \$15 per month and for ministerial acts as follows: Marriage \$5, Baptisms \$2 and Funerals \$2.

On May 24, 1891, the congregation elected the following officers: Chairman, John Haapoja; Secretary, Isak Keski; Treasurer, John Kamppinen. Church council members: John Niemi, Matti Lahti, Leander Peterson, Herman Koski. The first delegate to the Suomi Synod Church Convention of June 2, 1891, was Johan Petajaniemi. The congregation was incorporated on May 18, 1891, and affiliated with the Suomi-Synod on June 2, 1891.

The annual meeting of April 24, 1892 elected the following officers: Chairman, Leander Peterson; Secretary, Esau Anderson; Treasurer, Juho Kamppinen. Church Council: Jacob Haukkamaki, Gust Anderson, Jaakko Ulvila, Erik Mottonen. The Council was authorized at this meeting to seek out a cemetery. Wakefield had no cemetery and up until 1905, bodies were interred in the Bessemer cemetery.

The congregation did not have a resident pastor until 1913. Previous to this time the pastor lived at Ironwood and served congregations and people in the following communities: Iron Belt, Brantwood, Phelps, Marengo, Gile, Hurley, Meadeville, Montreal, Oulu, Clifford, all in Wisconsin, plus the congregations of Ironwood, Bessemer, Wakefield, as well as Stambaugh and Crystal Falls.

The first pastor to arrive in Ironwood who served the congregation was Pastor Juhani Wilhelmi Eloheimo, who arrived in January 1891 from Calumet, Michigan. The life of this first pastor was so illustrious among the pioneer Finns that it deserves lengthier explanation...

Minutes of the church for the years of 1891 and 1892 are in Eloheimo's own hand writing and are preserved in the parish archives. The group of people that he organized in 1892 in Wakefield joined the Finnish National Church in 1896, and is today [1965] the Bethany Lutheran Church.

The congregation at its meeting on October 8, 1899 decided to build a church. The contract for the building was given to Jacob Knuuttila for \$300. Knuuttila was from Vahakyro, Finland. 1900 was a busy year for the congregation as the new church was being built. Following its completion it had to be furnished. Fifteen pews were ordered by Pastor Tanner. Gust Johnson volunteered to pay for the kneelers and each of the following volunteered to pay for a pew: Thomas Hill, Matti Lahti, Matti Waataja, Juho Juoppila, Erik Nikula, Kusti Johnson, Isak Ranta, Elias Lemplin, Jacob Ulvila, John Kuivinen, Herman Liimakka, John Wiiki. On August 6, 1905, the congregation unanimously decided to increase the size of the church. The rear wall was pushed out and a balcony added. The bell tower was increased in height. Serving on the building committee were: Matti Lahti, Sakari Karling, Esa Anderson, Jacob Harri, John Kuivinen, Elias Lemplin, and J. Setamaki. In 1911 a rock foundation was made under the church and additional room became available for Sunday school.—From Diamond Jubilee, 1890-1965, First Lutheran Church; much of this history was written by Rev. Rudolph Kemppainen.

In the spring of 1886 and only two years after the first settlers came to Wakefield, Father Hennessy arrived in the neighboring town of Bessemer to look after the spiritual needs of the people there and to do mission work in Ramsay, Wakefield, Marenisco and at the Mikado mine.

Several priests followed Father Hennessy with Father Joseph P. Kunes finally established as a resident pastor in Bessemer, February 3, 1889. At that time Catholic services were held in Wakefield about once each month with Mass being offered either in the A. F. Olson building [then Leonard's Hall], the John Kluck residence or the school house. When no mission services were held in Wakefield the faithful walked to Bessemer to attend Mass. The first Wakefield infant to receive the Sacrament of Baptism was John Michael Conlan, born February 4, 1887, the son of J. P. and Margaret Conlan. Sponsors were Michael Tallon and Mary Fitzgerald. The officiating priest was the Rev. John Henn.

With the growth of the town it was soon obvious that a church in Wakefield was a possibility. Encouraged by Father Kunes, the idea of building a church rapidly took shape. As in all such pioneer work, the struggle was a hard one for a mere handful of

faithful members, but, in the summer of 1891, with the acquisition of Lot 1, Block 10, which was donated by Frank Clemens, the work of building a church was begun on that site and what seemed an impossibility was now becoming a fact.

Prominent Catholic contributors to the building program were: Frank Whydotski, Peter Carr, James Raizon, Patrick Meers, John Coyle, George Simmons, Luke Sweet, Michael Kowaleski, Jacob Martinkoski, Michael Lasinski, and Andrew Schindler. Michael Lasinski and Luke Sweet were also trustees of this new church. Interested non-Catholics also made substantial contributions to this venture and among them were William Vincent, Louis Goldberg, Jones and Wescott, R. Chamberlain, George White, and Borham & Neidhold. Completed in 1892, the first Catholic church in Wakefield was dedicated in honor of St. Joseph. It faced south whereas the present church faces east.

In this new church the main altar was donated by Mrs. Luke Sweet. Other women who figured in the work of the parish at that time, particularly in the teaching of catechism, were Miss Helen Thompson, Miss Mary Sweet and Miss Agnes McGinley.

Following Father Kunes, Father Anthony Hodnek took over the work of the parish on November 3, 1895 remaining for three years, leaving in June, 1898, for a visit with his parents in Europe. He took passage on the ill-fated Steamer LaBourgogne and perished when it went down on July 4, 1898.

Old church records note that the first weddings in the new church were those of Victoria Martinkoski to Anton Budjick and Catherine Sweet to Thomas Desonia; that the first Polish choir was directed by Mr. Maza; that for three years Frank Kanieski and Sam Martinkoski were altar boys and that in 1900 the church was struck by lightning with little damage being done.

On St. Patrick's Day in 1909, a disastrous fire destroyed the church. Firemen struggling to save the burning building were forced to restrain Father Walloch in his heroic attempt to enter the church and save the Blessed Sacrament. In the meantime, however, Jay Tobin, then a young man in the parish, gained entrance to the burning church through a rear window and rescued the ciborium from the tabernacle.

The laying of the corner stone [for the new church] took place on July 18, 1909, with the Most Rev. Frederick Eis officiating. Though the church was completed on October 23, 1909, the interior remained unfinished for three years during which time Mass was celebrated in the basement... The [completed] church was solemnly dedicated by the Most Rev. Bishop Frederick Eis in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 1, 1913.—Part of a history by Joseph Gill and Mary MacDonald, published 30 August 1953.

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The first village officials of Wakefield, in 1887:

Duncan MacVichie, President

R. A. Harris, Clerk

F. W. Heath, Treasurer

J. M. Sullivan, Marshal

Walter Goodland, Attorney

Louis M. Goldberg, Fire Warden

Wakefield Village officers as recorded in the old Village Record Book, 1890-1895:

1890: Julius H. Eddy, President

Jerry Holland, Clerk

George W. White, Treasurer

Andrew Schindler, Marshal & Fire Warden

J. C. Harris, Trustee

Richard Bawden, Trustee

Thomas McGregor, Trustee

J. J. Anderson, Trustee

John McLeod, Trustee

1891: Julius H. Eddy, President

Jerry Holland, Clerk

George W. White, Treasurer

Thomas McGregor, Marshal

E. S. Jones, Assessor

Ted Hawley, Pound Master

Ed Cantin, Street Commissioner

R. D. Blackburn, Trustee

John C. Harris, Trustee

Charles Neidhold, Trustee

Marion Wescott, Trustee

John McLeod, Trustee

1892: John McLeod, President (elected March 1st)

Marion Wescott, President (from July 12th)

James W. Bedell, Clerk

George W. White, Treasurer

Charles Anderson, Marshal

E. S. Jones, Assessor

Ed Cantin, Street Commissioner

James Semmens, Pound Master

Julius H. Eddy, Trustee

Richard Bawden, Trustee

R. D. Blacksburn, Trustee

1893: Marion Wescott, President

James W. Bedell, Clerk

Ed Cantin, Fire Warden

Julius H. Eddy, Health Officer

F. C. Chamberlin, Attorney Richard Bawden, Trustee

J. C. Harris, Trustee

R. D. Blackburn, Trustee

James Trezona, Trustee Alex S. Johns, Trustee

1894: Charles Trezona, President

Thomas Mellow, Clerk

Andrew Schindler, Treasurer Charles Anderson, Marshal Edward Cantin, Fire Warden Matthew Riley, Attorney James Trezona, Trustee

James Tobin, Trustee

John C. Harris, Trustee

Luke Sweet, Trustee (appointed after Harris moved away)

1895: Edward Neidhold, President

George Strough, Clerk

Anton Ringsmuth, Treasurer

Ed Cantin, Assessor

Thomas Desonia, Trustee

Pat Meers, Trustee

Luke Sweet, Trustee

Vincent Williams, Trustee

James Tobin, Trustee

Wakefield Township and Village Officers, elected every year in April, as recorded in old books once kept at the Gogebic County Courthouse:

1894: Township Officers:

Charles Trezona, Supervisor

Asa F. Stannard, Clerk

Louis M. Goldberg, Treasurer

John Wescott, School Inspector

Thomas Edwards. Justice of the Peace

Alexander Johns, Justice of the Peace

Edward Cantin, Highway Commissioner

John B. Thomas, Drain Commissioner

Andrew Swan, Constable

Charles Anderson, Constable Ralph Jones, Constable Jacob Holden, Constable Richard Bawden, Board of Review Andrew Schindler, Board of Review

1895: Township Officers:

James Trezona, Supervisor
Asa F. Stannard, Clerk
Anton Ringsmuth, Treasurer
Thomas Edwards, School Inspector
Thomas Ashlund, Highway Commissioner
John B. Thomas, Drain Commissioner
Thomas Desonia, Overseer of Highways

1896: Township Officers:

James Trezona, Supervisor Asa F. Stannard, Clerk Anton Ringsmuth, Treasurer Thomas Ashlund, Highway Commissioner

1897: Township Officers:

Thomas Ashlund, Supervisor
A. F. Stannard, Clerk
Charles Neidhold, Treasurer
Thomas Edwards, School Inspector
David Bullen, Justice of the Peace
Alexander S. Johns, Highway Commissioner
Charles Anderson, Constable
Leander Peterson, Constable
John R. Brown, Constable (Thomaston)
Adam Selsemeyer, Constable
Richard Bawden, Board of Review
John B. Thomas, Overseer of Highways

Village Officers:

Edward Cantin, President Thomas Mellow, Clerk James Tobin, Treasurer Charles Anderson, Trustee Thomas Ashlund, Trustee John Hester, Trustee August Fritz, Trustee

1898: Township Officers:

Thomas Ashlund, Supervisor
Joseph Mitchell, Clerk
Charles C. Neidhold, Treasurer
August M. Gondal, School Inspector
Stephen A. Prince, Board of Education
Thomas Mellow, Justice of the Peace
Thomas Edwards, Justice of the Peace
Alex S. Johns, Highway Commissioner
Charles Anderson, Constable
John Kuivinen, Constable
Patrick Gorman, Constable (Thomaston)
Wm. Apitz, Constable
Julius H. Eddy, Board of Review
Asa F. Stannard, Board of Review
John Haapoja, Overseer of Highways

Village Officers:

Andrew Schindler, President James Tobin, Clerk Anton Ringsmuth, Treasurer John Connor, Assessor

1899: Township Officers:

Richard Martin, Supervisor
James M. Bedell, Clerk
Edward F. Neidhold, Treasurer
William J. Lavers, School Inspector
James Tobin, Justice of the Peace
Thomas Ashlund, Highway Commissioner
Moses Goldberg, Constable
Charles Anderson, Constable
John Kuivinen, Constable
Richard Hagerty, Constable
James Trezona, Board of Review
Thomas Cavender, Board of Education

Village Officers:

Edward Cantin, President Thomas Mellow, Clerk Anton Ringsmuth, Treasurer John Connor, Assessor Andrew Schindler, Trustee John Hester, Trustee Charles Anderson, Trustee

1900: Township Officers:

Ed Neidhold, Supervisor
Anton Ringsmuth, Clerk
Thomas Desonia, Treasurer
Richard Martin, School Inspector
W. J. Lavers, Justice of the Peace
John Hill, Highway Commissioner
John Collins, Constable
A. S. Johns, Board of Review
A. M. Gondal, Board of Education

Village Officers:

James W. Bedell, President Thomas Mellow, Clerk Thomas Ashlund, Treasurer August Fritz, Trustee Charles Neidhold, Trustee Patrick Meers, Trustee William P. Smith, Assessor

1901: Township Officers:

Ned B. Roscorla, Supervisor
Anton Ringsmuth, Clerk
Ed Neidhold, Treasurer
John A. Johnson, School Inspector
Jerome Shaylor, School Inspector
John Kuivinen, Board of Education
Wm. J. Lavers, Justice of the Peace
David Bullen, Justice of the Peace
Alex S. Johns, Highway Commissioner
Peter Carr, Constable
Herman Musshaw, Constable
John Collins, Constable
Pat Gorman, Constable
James Trezona, Board of Review
Matt Lahti, Overseer of Highways

Village Officers:

James W. Bedell, President Thomas Mellow, Clerk Thomas Ashlund, Treasurer Charles Anderson, Trustee Martin Zawaski, Trustee Thomas Edwards, Trustee Edward F. Neidhold, Assessor

1902: Township Officers:

Ned B. Roscorla, Supervisor

Anton Ringsmuth, Clerk

Ernest Olson, Treasurer

James W. Bedell, School Inspector

Thomas Desonia, Board of Education

Thomas Mellow, Justice of the Peace

Jacob Setula, Highway Commissioner

Dennis Roberts, Constable

John Collins, Constable

Joseph W. Webb, Board of Review

William J. Truscott, Board of Review

John Suomi, Overseer of Highways

Village Officers:

James W. Bedell, President

Thomas Mellow, Clerk

Charles Neidhold, Treasurer

James Tobin, Trustee

Mike Kowaleski, Trustee

Thomas Mellow, Trustee

Edward Neidhold, Assessor

Wakefield became a city in 1920, and the following is a list of Wakefield mayors since that time:

Alvin L. Rummel 1920-25

Arthur M. Gilbert 1926-28

Yarl H. Hanson 1929-31

Joseph P. Cloon 1931-37

Lee G. Wilson 1937-46

Joseph P. Cloon 1946-49

John H. Kent 1949-53

James H. Trebilcock 1953-54

Elmer Lusa 1954

Andrew E. Lake 1954

Joseph Patyk 1955

John H. Kent 1955-57

Adolph C. Bugni 1957-58

Elmer Hill 1958-62

Roy W. Johns 1962-63

Emil Movrich 1963-64

Walter R. Nunimaker 1964

Robert J. Linn 1965-66

Ward Zuidmulder 1966-67

Eugene R. Maki 1967-68

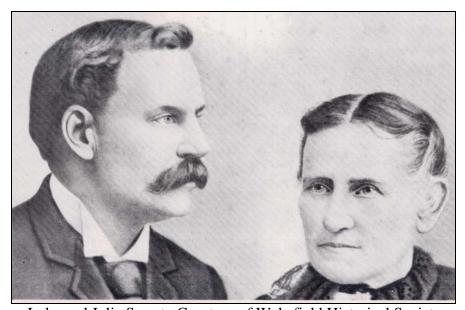
Roy W. Johns 1968-69

Pioneer Settlers

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The following information is taken from *Pioneers of Wakefield, Michigan, 1884-1900*, by Bruce K. Cox.

Luke Sweet was born May 1848 in Canada of English and Irish ancestry and moved to the United States in 1854, becoming a naturalized citizen. He was married about 1872 to Julia Henessey, a daughter of Joseph and Mary Henessey (some sources say Mrs. Sweet's maidename was Haslett), who was born 6 June 1847 in Ireland and died 3 October 1904. She came to America in 1857. The Luke Sweet family was the first to settle in what later became Wakefield. Mr. Sweet was foreman of the Milwaukee & Western Railway crew and settled at siding 339 on 23 September 1884. He apparently died sometime between 1900 and 1904, before his wife. Mrs. Sweet was buried in Sheboygan (or Greenbush), Wisconsin, the old family home. The Sweets had two daughters and an adopted son.



Luke and Julia Sweet. Courtesy of Wakefield Historical Society.

Mr. and Mrs. Franklyn were the second family to settle in what became Wakefield. They came from Eland Junction, Wisconsin to Siding 339 on <u>2 October 1884</u>. Mr. Franklyn was in charge of the railroad water tank.

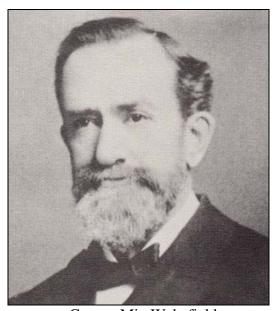
Thomas Cavender, born 10 June 1857, Boston, Massachusetts of Irish ancestry and died 17 November 1918 at Bessemer, probably of influenza. Mr. Cavender was married about 1880 to Ella O'Connor, born July 1863, County Cork, Ireland, and died in 1902. They settled in Wakefield on 4 October 1884. Mr. Cavender was employed as a mine captain by the Crown Point and other mines and mineral explorations, and worked as a fireman and stationary engineer. He was also involved in the Washburn gold mine in the late 1880s. The Cavenders are buried in the Catholic section of the Bessemer cemetery and raised a large family of eight children.

Thomas Hill, originally surnamed Maenpaa, was born in Finland 5 March 1859, a son of Thomas Maenpaa, and immigrated to America in 1882, settling in Canada for a few years before relocating to Michigan. Mr. Hill was a servant to Rev. O. M. Hohentall of Lapua Parish in Finland before emigrating from Kuortane. He was the first settler of Finnish origin to settle in what became Wakefield, on 5 October 1884. Mr. Hill was a charter member of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church when it was established in Wakefield in 1890. He was on the church council and served as treasurer and Sunday school teacher. His wife came here in 1891 from Karstula, Finland. Mr. Hill worked in the mines and owned twenty shares in the Wakefield Store Company when it was formed in April 1899. He was married on 31 July 1892 to Matilda Johanna Mottonen, who was born 3 November 1863 in Finland and died 30 July 1959 in the Fairhaven Rest Home at Middleboro, Massachusetts. She came to Wakefield and settled here before her marriage. They moved to Kingston, Minnesota in 1902 and lived on a farm before returning to Wakefield a few years later. In later years she resided in Kuivinen Location. Mr. Hill died in Wakefield on 26 May 1911 of tuberculosis. The Hills had three children.

Other early settlers in Wakefield included the Kluck, Ashlund, Gondal, Olmstead, Ringsmuth, Schmier, Schupp, Schindler, Bruno, Ozzello, Running, Ahlquist, Hester, Regal, Selsemeyer, Strough, Anderson, Autio, Bawden, Bedell, Bergstrom, Bowler, Bullen, Byrne, Carr, Chamberlain, DelFavero, Fletcher, Fritz, Geroux, Goldberg, Goodland, Grigg, Haapoja, Hakola, Harju, Hood, Johnson, Kent, Lahti, Martinkowsky, Miller, Neidhold, Mitchell, Perucca, Pesola, Randall, Richards, Ronn, Rossman, Rummel, Schramm, Stannard, Thomas, Tobin, Trebilcock, Trudgeon, Ulvila, and Woodward families. Altogether over 1,100 families have been traced back who settled in Wakefield before 1901.

- E. M. Boyer was a real estate dealer. He owned the property on the southwest corner of Sunday Lake and Pierce streets in 1886-87. He may be the Ernest Boyer who was married to Mary Casmer; Mr. and Mrs. Boyer were the parents of the first child born in Wakefield:
- 1. Wakefield Boyer, born 12 August 1886. "The first child born in Wakefield was a boy born to Mr. and Mrs. Boyer on Thursday morning. All doing well."--Gogebic Iron Tribune.
- 2. Eva Boyer, born about 1899, Wakefield, and married 15 August 1922, Wakefield, Hershel Ross, who was born about 1893.

George Mix Wakefield, born 6 February 1839, Henderson, Jefferson county, New York, a son of James Patterson Wakefield and Hannah B. Hall, had the townsite of Wakefield platted in May 1886; the general location was already being referred to as "Wakefield" as early as the fall of 1884. His parents moved their family to Waukesha county, Wisconsin in October 1844. Mr. Wakefield became interested in logging and real estate and acquired vast tracts of land in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan in the 1870s and 1880s. In company with various other capitalists he built sawmills and logged the pine forests of the area, and later became involved in mineral exploration. He was one of the parties who held interests in the mineral rights to the Sunday Lake mine, as well as a few nearby properties.



George Mix Wakefield.

Mr. Wakefield moved to Milwaukee in 1879 and established a real estate business, dealing in timber and mineral lands in Michigan, Wisconsin, Texas, and Alaska. He was secretary-treasurer of the Ontonagon River Improvement and Boom Company, organised in 1880. They made it possible to float logs out to Lake Superior and built a sawmill on an island near the mouth of the Ontonagon River, in Ontonagon.

The G. M. Wakefield Mineral Land Company was formed in Milwaukee 18 September 1899 for the purpose of dealing in mineral lands, timber, agricultural lands, and real estate. George M. Wakefield, his wife and their son Vernon T. Wakefield were the stockholders, with a capital stock of \$50,000 divided into 500 shares. Most of the land held was in Township 47 North, between Wakefield and Lake Gogebic. Mr. Wakefield was also a major stockholder in the Beacon, Continental, Cosmos, International, and Summit mineral land companies.

The Wakefield ancestry is traced back to John Wakefield, who was born about 1614, probably in Gravesend, County Kent, England, and immigrated to Virginia aboard the "America" in June 1635, along with his brothers Richard Wakefield and Thomas Wakefield. John Wakefield eventually settled at Marthas Vineyard, Massachusetts.

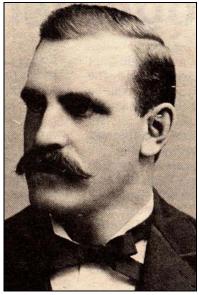
George Wakefield's ancestors resided in Massachusetts until the mid-19th century, when his great grandfather, Thomas Wakefield, moved to New Hampshire. George Mix Wakefield married, 27 January 1862, Eleanor F. Vedder. He died in 1903 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The Wakefields had children:

- 1. Vernon Townsend Wakefield, born 6 April 1863, Nepenskum, Winnebago county, Wisconsin and died in 1944. He married, 9 October 1886, Anna D. Harshaw of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Mr. Wakefield came to the Gogebic Range in the 1880s to supervise mineral explorations on his father's mineral lands. They had children: Vernon T. Wakefield, Jr. (1888-1892), Lois Wakefield, and Henry Dorr Wakefield (1894-1955).
- 2. James Patterson Wakefield, born 18 August 1864 and married, 31 December 1884, Jennie M. Roberts.
- 3. Arthur Albert Wakefield, born 2 April 1866 and married, 30 April 1881, Gertrude Russell.
- 4. Cyrus Hemenway Wakefield, born 27 February 1868 and died in 1901. He married, 3 January 1889, Gertrude Parker.
- 5. Eliza May Wakefield, born 17 May 1870 and died 21 April 1882.
- 6. George Mix Wakefield, Jr., born 2 April 1872.
- 7. Grace Wakefield, born 6 May 1874 and married 12 December 1894, Catesby W. Taylor.
- 8. Luella Wakefield, born 27 January 1879 and married Mr. King. She was still living in 1957.
- 9. Thomas Wakefield, born 21 November 1880 and died in 1931.

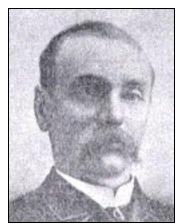
This history and genealogy of the Wakefield family may be found in the book, Wakefield Memorial, Comprising an Historical, Genealogical and Biographical Register of the Name and Family of Wakefield, by Homer Wakefield, M.D., 1897.

Henry M. Fink died 17 January 1925 in Milwaukee. He was a United States Marshal in Milwaukee and was connected with the Summit Exploring, Mining and Manufacturing Company and was one of the fee-owners in the Sunday Lake and Iron Chief mines. Mr. Fink paid a visit to the Gogebic Range in late May 1883, after which he told a reporter for the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, "I concluded to ignore the hardships incident to a journey on foot through a dense and unbroken forest for a distance of nearly 100 miles, and convince myself from personal observation of the truth or falsity of the reports which have recently been published respecting that district." At that time the journey was made by tug boat from Ashland to the mouth of the Montreal river, then into the forest along the Portage trail. A village was platted and laid out near the old Sunday Lake mine in 1886 and named after him. He was married to a woman named Rosa. Mr. Fink was called "one of the first residents of Wakefield" in his obituary, and he "made frequent visits to the city" until a few years before his death. He died a week after he was struck by a streetcar while crossing the street in front of his home.

Duncan MacVichie was an early resident of Wakefield. He was born 20 September 1857, in Lancaster, Glengarry Co., Ontario, Canada, a son of Peter MacVichie and Margaret MacGregor, natives of Scotland. He graduated from a college course in mining in Wisconsin in 1880 and worked for Moore, Benjamin & Co., directing the development of the Sunday Lake and Iron Chief mines. His first wife died on 16 February 1889 in Ironwood, while they were residents of Wakefield. He was married again, on 12 August 1891 in Ironwood to Belle T. Corning of Portage, Wisconsin, a sister-in-law of Luther L. Wright of Ironwood. She died 27 March 1900 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mr. MacVichie served as the first village president of Wakefield in 1887. In July 1897 he moved to Utah where he worked for the Golden Gate mine at Mercur, the Bingham Consolidated Mines and Smelting Co., Bingham Copper Belt Railroad, Nevada Copper Belt Railroad, railroads of the Deep Creek district, and the Utah Coal and Coke Co., National Copper Bank, and Bankers Trust Co. He also had cattle ranching interests in Lewis and Clark counties. He married his third wife, Pearl Davenport, at Helena, Montana on 28 October 1903; she died 4 August 1941, Berkeley, California. Mr. MacVichie died 18 January 1941, Salt Lake City. Much of this information provided courtesy of Andrew **Lockhart, a Wright family relation.** Mr. MacVichie had two daughters.



Duncan MacVichie.



Robinson D. Pike. Courtesy Bayfield Historical Society.

Robinson Derling Pike was born 13 April 1838 at Meadville, Corcoran County, Pennsylvania, and died aboard a train on the way to Chicago in March 1906. He married, 28 January 1886, Eva L. Johnson.

Mr. Pike came to Bayfield, Wisconsin with his parents, Elisha and Elizabeth Pike, in October 1855, from Toledo, Ohio. The Pike family settled on what came to be called Pikes Creek and built a sawmill there. Mr. Pike enlisted in the army during the War Between the States and served in the 27th Michigan Volunteer Infantry and was transferred to the 1st Cavalry. He returned to Bayfield in 1866 and went into the lumber business, operating the R. D. Pike Lumber Company. Mr. Pike was known as Captain Pike because of his war service, and was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Loyal Legion, and two Masonic lodges. Capt. Pike took over the former Alpha iron exploration on the north shore of Sunday Lake in 1889 and developed the Pike mine, shipping ore in 1899-1910.

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Wakefield Area Iron Mines

The following vignettes are from *Headframes and Mine Shafts of the Gogebic Range*, *Volume 2, Bessemer-Ramsay-Wakefield*, by Bruce K. Cox.

MIKADO

Captain John Lester did pioneering work on the **MIKADO** in 1886. Development occurred off and on for several years, until the first ore was shipped in 1895. The mine is credited with shipping over one million tons from 1895 to 1917. Shipments from 1919 to 1952 were sent under the **PLYMOUTH** name. The **MIKADO** mine was located on the northwest end of the open pit, in Verona location.

PILGRIM

Explorations began on this location in the spring of 1886 under Captain Harry Letcher. Nothing was shipped until 1919-27, when the **PILGRIM** made shipments of twenty-two thousand tons. The **PILGRIM** was located just east of the **MIKADO**.

PLYMOUTH

The **PLYMOUTH** open pit mine operated just to the west of the **WAKEFIELD**, but the **PLYMOUTH** was entirely an open pit operation, with the possible exception of a small amount of ore taken out of the No. 3 shaft as it was being sunk. It began shipping in 1916 and closed on 6 November 1952, having shipped almost seventeen million tons.

WAKEFIELD

Drill exploration began on the **WAKEFIELD** property in July 1912, and two shafts were down by the following summer. The first ore shipment was made on 15 October 1913. The **WAKEFIELD** soon became an open pit mine, shipping a total of almost fourteen million gross tons from 1913 to 1954.

CITY OF CHICAGO

Exploration began in the latter part of 1886 at this location on the north shore of Sunday lake. The **SPARTA** operated on the same location in 1888 and the **CITY OF CHICAGO** returned in 1896, eventually producing shipments of almost one hundred thousand tons of ore between 1896-1915. It was also called the **SOUTH CHICAGO** in 1915.

SPARTA

The former **CITY OF CHICAGO** exploration became the **SPARTA** in 1888. It was developed and shipped almost ten thousand tons from 1891 to 1895.

ALPHA

In the summer of 1886 the Alpha Iron Mining Company sank a shaft near the north shore of Sunday lake. By 1890 this location was taken over by the **PIKE** mine.

PIKE

Captain Robinson D. Pike (1838-1906) of Bayfield, Wisconsin took over the former **ALPHA** option in 1889. Ten years later the **PIKE** made its first shipment, with total shipments of over one hundred five thousand tons from 1899 to 1910. In 1927 the **PIKE** became part of the **SUNDAY LAKE GROUP**.

BROTHERTON

Frank H. Brotherton began mineral explorations near Sunday lake in the summer of 1883. The first iron ore was shipped from the mine in 1886, with total shipments amounting to two million six hundred ninety thousand tons by the time the mine closed in 1923.

SUNDAY LAKE

This location was first explored in 1881 by George Fay. Development picked up by 1884, and the first iron shipment left port at Ashland on 19 November 1885. The **SUNDAY LAKE** mine later encompassed all of Section 10 and the former **BROTHERTON** mine. Over seventeen million gross tons of ore went out from 1885 to 1961. The mine closed on 16 February 1961.

IRON CHIEF

Development of the **IRON CHIEF** mine began in 1884 under the Fink Mining Company. It was originally called the **ASCHERMANN** for Edward Aschermann (1834-1904) of Appleton, Wisconsin. The mine shipped about twelve thousand tons of iron ore in 1886 and 1887.

CASTILE

Captain Pentecost Mitchell (1861-1933) discovered iron ore on this location in 1886. The **CASTILE** began producing in 1906 and shipped almost nine hundred thousand tons of ore by the time it closed in 1923.

METEOR

The **METEOR** started as an exploration in 1890, called the **NORTON**. It was developed into a mine by 1900 and operated until 1904, shipping one hundred thirty-two thousand tons between 1899 and 1904. Over six million tons of stockpile ore went under the name **NORTH MIKADO**.

COMET

Captain Pentecost Mitchell found ore here, and an exploration called the **ECLIPSE** was developed from 1886 to 1890. The **COMET** began in 1890, making its first ore shipment in August. The **COMET** was shut down in 1893, reopening in 1900 and operating until 1902 as part of the **METEOR** mine. It is credited with shipments of eighty-nine thousand tons in 1890-93.

MORGAN

The **MORGAN** mine east of Wakefield was developed in 1918-23 and made its first ore shipment on 30 January 1923. It operated until 1925 and shipped over fifty-eight thousand tons.

VICAR

The easternmost productive mine on the Gogebic Range covered most of Section 12, east of Wakefield. This location was once called the **JONES & LAUGHLIN** exploration and included the old **PHOENIX** exploration that dated back to 1887. The **VICAR** shipped about one hundred two thousand tons in 1950-51.

The above history has been provided courtesy of Bruce K. Cox, Agogeebic Press, 408A Sunday Lake St. / P.O. Box 131, Wakefield, Michigan 49968. For books on Gogebic Range history, check this website: www.gogebicbooks.com.

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