



Original Masthead Illustration by Will Bradley

**Ishpeming Area Historical Society • Newsletter • Summer 2022**

## SUMMER EVENTS

**Home Tour • Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Ishpeming Cemetery Tours  
July 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Historic Main Street Tour  
June 28<sup>th</sup>, Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>**

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- Ray Leverton Interview
- *Anatomy of a Murder, Part 1, Before Publication*

## Ishpeming Historic Places and Garden Tour (Home Tour Fundraiser)

We are very happy to announce the return of our Historic Places and Garden tour (Home Tour) this summer on Sunday, June 26, Noon to 4:00 p.m. during Ishpeming's Hematite History Week. Featured will be the following:

- **The Historic Thomas Home** located at 749 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This historic Victorian shingle style home, built in 1888, is loaded with period woodwork and original light fixtures. There is also an amazing addition on the rear containing a modern kitchen but with old, salvaged components. Please note there will be ongoing water/sewer/road work on Empire Street near this home which might make parking difficult. If you visit the nearby Lerlie Garden located at 725. N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, you could walk the short distance to the Thomas historic home.
- **The Historic Argall Home** located at 818 Maurice Street. This tidy home, built in 1937, has just been fully redone in a somewhat more open and modern style while retaining the overall historical feel of the original. This historic home has been in the same family since the day it was built!
- **The Lerlie Garden** located at 725 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (corner of 1<sup>st</sup> St. and Arch St.). This amazing space backs right up to a massive stone "mountain", making it a quiet and unique garden right in the historic residential part of our community.
- **The Matherne Garden** located at 602 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (corner of North St. and 3<sup>rd</sup> St.). This small, charming garden, curated by a retired NMU English professor, poet, author and native of Louisiana is sure to be interesting!



*Three Son's of Ishpeming*

## Historical Society Board

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Email: [ishphistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:ishphistoricalsociety@gmail.com)



*Thomas Home*



*Argall Home*



- **The Historic Braastad-Gossard Building** located downtown at 308 Cleveland Avenue. This historic building which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places will feature tours, as well as refreshments in conjunction with our event. In addition, the Ishpeming Area Historical Society Museum, located on the third floor (can be reached by elevator), will be open during the hours of the tour. Stop by and consider becoming a volunteer and/or a member!
- **The Three Sons of Ishpeming Monument and the Ishpeming War Memorial** located in the Ishpeming Heritage Plaza on Hematite Drive near the U.S. Post Office. Volunteers will be present to share information about both monuments. The “Sons of Ishpeming” monument commemorates:
  - Glenn T. Seaborg, winner of many awards including a share of the 1951 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his discoveries in the chemistry of the transuranium elements.
  - John D. Voelker, Marquette County prosecutor, Michigan Supreme Court Justice, Best-Selling

author of “Anatomy of a Murder”, and as John would likely say, most importantly, an avid fly fisherman.

- Clarence L. “Kelly” Johnson, American Aeronautical and Systems Engineer. Winner of many awards including the Wright Brothers Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Johnson earned the reputation as one of the most talented and prolific aircraft design engineers in the history of aviation.

Tickets are a suggested donation of \$10 and can be purchased in advance approximately one week before the event from the Main Street Antique Mall in Ishpeming or at any of the venues on the day of the event. The brochure provided as the ticket will describe the tour along with a map to the event locations. For photos of the historic places and gardens, and additional information please see the event post on our Facebook page. Please be aware that face masks may be required in some indoor spaces. Also, in case of rain, shoes may be required to be removed, IAHS will have a limited number of hospital booties available.



## Ishpeming Cemetery Tour

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society will again be hosting its very popular evening cemetery tours in July. Join us for one of our 2022 Ishpeming Cemetery tours, featuring a new group of interesting Ishpeming citizens, and hosted by Ishpeming historian Karen Kasper. Learn about:

This year's cemetery tour will kick off on Friday, July 1 at 3:00 p.m. during Ishpeming's Hematite History Week. This is followed by tours starting at 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. The tours will last approximately one hour. We will meet in the front of the cemetery at the sexton's office and there

will be a suggested donation of \$10. Children aged 12 and under are free of charge. All proceeds from the tour will go to benefit the Ishpeming Area Historical Society. This is a walking tour and in case of inclement weather, the tour will be canceled.



*Eben Fiske will be included on this years cemetery tour*



## Ishpeming Historic Main Street Tour

Ishpeming historian Karen Kasper will again be hosting tours of historic Main Street. First held last year, Karen has discovered more interesting information about the historic buildings on Main Street. If you missed last summer's tour, don't miss attending the tour this year as Karen will be moving to a different section of historic Ishpeming in 2023. Many of Main Street's historic buildings will be included, and learn about the disastrous fire of 1874 that claimed much of the downtown.

This year's historic Main Street tour kicks off on Tuesday, June 28 at 6:30 p.m. during Ishpeming's Hematite History Week. The tours then resume every Tuesday in August starting at 6:30 p.m. The dates include August 2nd, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. We will meet in the parking lot on Main Street across from the Ishpeming City Hall. There will be a suggested donation of \$10 for the tour with children 12 and under free of charge. All proceeds from the tour will go to benefit the Ishpeming Area Historical Society. This is a walking tour and in case of inclement weather, the tour will be canceled.

## Ray Leverton Oral History Interview

*Interview took place just before Halloween,  
October 2021*

*by Susan Boback*



Ray Leverton was born September 9, 1929 in Ishpeming, Michigan. Ray liked to say 09-09-29. He was the only boy born to Albert Richard Leverton and Alice Hazel Beebe Leverton, and is a brother to Rosemary.

His father was a salesman for Hostess Company, and his mother worked at Corneliuson's Bakery. His dad's nickname was "Fat Leverton" though he was just the opposite.

Because Ray's early years of growing up occurred during the Depression, he feels he learned the value of life in general and what matters.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the president in 1934 when Ray started school, and in Ray's mind stands out the most to him.

When Ray was a child, he enjoyed sports – basketball, baseball and football. As an adult, Ray noted that he always attended Ishpeming High School basketball games as well. And during the winter months as a child, every day after school, he and his friend Phil Johnson would go sledding on John Pete's Hill. This is the hill on Fifth Street between Vine and Empire. I asked Ray how they kept safe, sledding down the hill when it ran into another street. He looked at me funny and said, "someone watched." Ray told me that no one knows why it's called John Pete's Hill, which has been an ongoing discussion among Ishpeming residents for many years.

At the young age of six, Ray made a decision that would affect his life for the next ten or more years. He recalls coming home from Sunday School at the Methodist Church and telling his mother, "No more." He was not going to go back because the teacher "bawled" him out in front of the class. His mother was troubled by Ray's refusal to go back, and asked her friend Dorothy (Carter) Velin what she should do. Dorothy was a member of the Grace Episcopal church, and took Ray along to church with her. Dorothy sang in the choir, so Ray sang in the choir and attended church there until he graduated and was drafted.

Ray played the trombone and was a member of the Ishpeming City band for 55 years, and with much pride in his voice and his smile, he said, "I was good!" In 1947 he graduated from Ishpeming High School and soon after entered the U.S. Army where he served for two years in Japan during the Korean War. I asked him what it was like to be in the service during war time, being so young. He replied, "there was no time for fear."

When Ray returned to Ishpeming after his discharge, he married Betty Jean Lundstrom of Negaunee, who was the love of his life. Ray noted that Betty was Lutheran, so Ray became Lutheran at the time of their marriage. Betty and Ray were blessed with three children: Steven, David and Karen. Steven passed away at the young age of 58.

Ray's working years were spent in the field of accounting. In addition, Ray spent 34 years at the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame & Museum as a volunteer. Ray worked alongside Wesley Wentela, who Ray de-



scribed as the salt of the earth. Ray said that, Burton Boyum, one of the founding members of the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame, was one of the people that most influenced his life. It was during the time that Ray was the curator there, where I came to be employed, that I got to know Ray, who was my boss. Several years back, Ray and Wes were honored by the Retired Senior Volunteer Program – RSVP – of Marquette County, for the most volunteer hours. But the Ski Hall of Fame (as it is known locally) isn't the only place that Ray has volunteered. He noted that he was an active member of Kiwanis, the Ishpeming Elks, Ishpeming and Negaunee City bands, and Ishpeming Area Historical Society.

Ray was a major fundraiser for the Ishpeming Carnegie Library remodel and elevator project. He didn't tell me that, but you couldn't live in Ishpeming and not know of his involvement and passion for this project.

When asked about his travels, Ray told me that he's never been on a cruise, but that he had traveled to Hawaii, and to Japan, while serving in the Army.

Ray and I chatted a lot that afternoon. He insisted I help myself to the bowl of mini chocolate bars even though I did try to resist. We laughed and thoroughly enjoyed reminiscing about activities that occurred while we worked together at the Ski Hall of Fame, like the time a bat was in the museum and I hid out in the library with the door shut till they could assure me it was removed (Proof was in a paper bag). Or the time that the Hall of Fame weekend was at the end of September and one of the national board members got snowed in on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September. My most often spoke about memory (even though I did promise not to tell it again) was Ray's timing for dictating a letter. With his office being in the back of the museum, and mine being in the front near the lobby area, I didn't see Ray much but he could summon me by phone. And it never failed that Ray would get inspired at 4:55 p.m. on a Friday afternoon. The phone would buzz at my desk, and he would say to me, "Sue? could you come back here so I could dictate a letter?" I might not want to do it with it being Friday afternoon, but I'd take my tablet and sit by his desk while his inspiration was put into words.

Being Ray Leverton's secretary in the late 1990's was a pleasure and an honor. I came to respect him and appreciate him more after I left that job and while he continued his ongoing volunteerism in our town. I'd have to say that Ishpeming just wouldn't be what it is today without the donation of time and care of community from Ray Leverton.

Ray would like to tell the next generations of Hematites: "go to school; work hard and learn all that you can because its FREE to you!"

## Anatomy of a Murder (Part One, Before Publication)

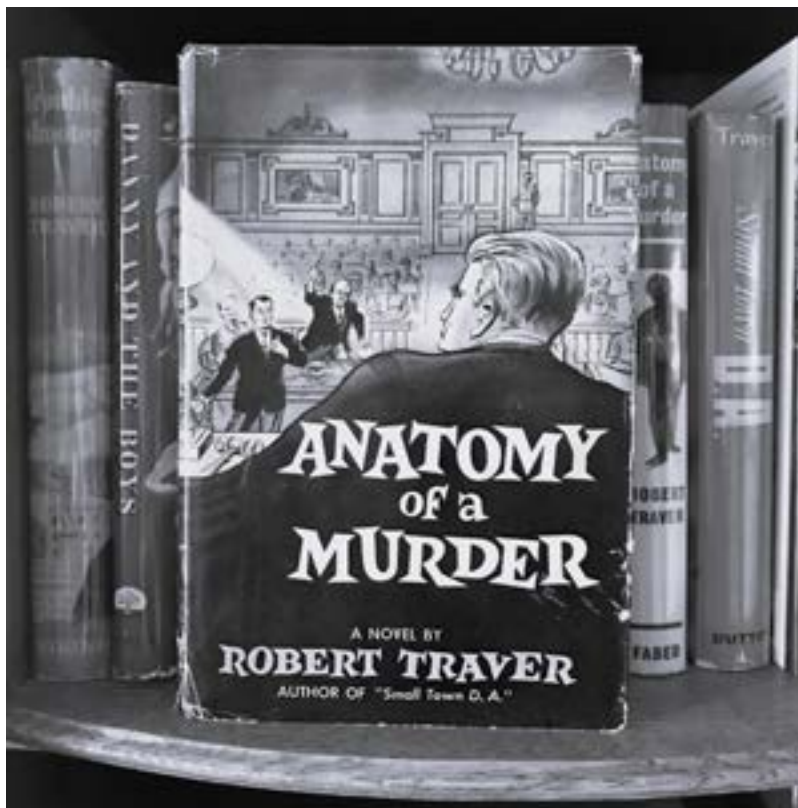
Fourth in a series concerning Robert Traver's  
(John Voelker) books

By David Lee White, IAHS Board Member

Soon after John Donaldson Voelker successfully defended Lt. Coleman A. Peterson in September, 1952, for the murder of Maurice (Mike) Chenoweth at the Lumberjack Tavern in Big Bay, Michigan, he began thinking that a novel based upon his trial experience would make a great story, a story that might sell. While John's first two published books had received relatively good reviews in the press, they both had small print runs, didn't go beyond a second or third printing, and were disappointing in what he referred to as his "swag". He soon began the process of writing what would be his first published novel by writing notes from the trial and mapping out possible scenarios.

1953 began with John running his private law practice on the second floor of the Woolworth Building, downtown Ishpeming, trying to convince a publisher to take on his third book, eventually published as Small Town D.A. At the beginning of 1953 John was also looking forward to the beginning of Trout season, and writing his first book regarding his passion, what John referred to as his "*incurable disease.*" In a letter dated April 24, 1953, to Mr. Lynn Carrick of the publishing company, J. B. Lippincott, John wrote "*I have a dark confession to make. I am a trout fisherman, and I have the sickness bad. This winter I have been leisurely writing a book about the disease, tentatively called Trout Madness, and I have completed about twelve chapters. As I now see it I have about five or six to go. Would you like to see what I have done?*" John would finish the first draft of Trout Madness in late May 1953. The manuscript would pass through several publisher's hands, be revised several times, and would languish unpublished for another seven years.

In a telegram dated August 19, 1953, John's editor at E. P. Dutton, Sherman Baker, informed him that Dutton's editorial board had decided to publish John's third book, Small Town D. A., sometime in 1954. Through the remaining months of 1953 and into 1954, John worked tirelessly with Sherman Baker trimming down and getting the book in shape for publication. John first broached the idea of writing what would become his first published novel to Sherman Baker in a letter dated August 31, 1953. In the last paragraph of this letter John wrote: "*I am not actually writing anything right now, but the pot is 'simpering' on the stove and will, I hope, come to a slow boil after trout rods are laid away and the partridge are finally wintered down....I am slowly discovering that writing is indeed a solitary way, a path that must be followed alone; that, as in the act of dying, nobody can ever really help you. At any rate I am so encouraged by your faith and confidence in me that I think I will be in 'heat' one of these days. Perhaps I can then find the hardihood to write you more about the thing I have in mind. It could be big.*" John again mentioned his idea for his next book to Sherman in a letter dated September 9, 1953: "*Your friendly inter-*



est in what I may write next seems to have stimulated me. I lately find myself blocking out the main characters while shaving, making cryptic little notes, beginning to see a small gleam of light at the end of a long empty corridor. Fishing ends this Sunday and then maybe I go to work. The thing is so big it kind of scares me." On January 6, 1954, John wrote to Sherman and told him: "I have started writing the novel, which moves slowly as I grope my way."

Through the process of putting Small Town D. A. in order for publication, John and Sherman developed a close friendship, a friendship that would last well into the future. It came as a shock to John when Sherman told him in February 1954 that after seven and a half years, he and E. P. Dutton would be parting ways in March. Grudgingly, John worked with other editors at Dutton until Small Town D. A. was published on July 29, 1954. John and Sherman exchanged personal letters after Sherman left Dutton, Sherman answering questions and providing advice concerning edits to Small Town D. A., and John offering to be a sounding board related to prospective new employers and bucking Sherman up at this "particularly low time" in his life. On April 28, 1954, John wrote a personal letter to Sherman which was filled with banter, wisecracks, and pleasantry. John wrote: "Good news it is I send you. Last Saturday, the first day, Hank, Al, and I went out and filled out with 30 spanking native brook trout, all on flies, all full of guile and fight. We rushed them home and the girls put on the griddles, and we ate and bragged and toasted each other far into the night." Then John added: "My own novel is in a dead stall – instead I'm running for congress (honest Injun) and if I don't look out, I might even make it." John put his new novel on the back burner as he campaigned for the congressional seat, an election he lost in the primary in August. Between campaigning,

trout fishing, and "defending drunk drivers in court," John had no time to continue writing his new novel in 1954. In a letter dated August 27, 1954, John pledged to Sherman to forsake politics, now and forever more, and take up writing the novel again during the coming winter.

Not yet finding a job as an editor, in November 1954, Sherman took a job with H. Wolff Book Manufacturing Company in New York as a designer. Coincidentally...or maybe not, in a little over three years, H. Wolff Book Manufacturing Company would print the trade edition and a BOMC edition of John's new novel. On February 25, 1955, John wrote Sherman, and among other news, informed Sherman that he had taken up writing the novel again "a complicated pistol of a thing." Then on April 27, 1955, John wrote Sherman a letter filled with regret and anger concerning the book business and the poor sales of Small Town D. A. John wrote: "At any rate these thoughts and others have recently assailed me and have just about caused me to abandon the novel I started (again) around New Year's. What's the goddam use? Who cares? Who gives a \_\_\_\_\_. (Insert favorite Saxon word)." In reply to John's letter, written on May 22, 1955, after a trip abroad, Sherman commiserated with John about the book business but also relayed a hopeful

tone, one of confidence that he (Sherman) would again land a job as an editor and "...go to work again and try to find the great American book and keep the worst drivell off my employers list – if I am given the chance." On July 11, 1955, Sherman wrote John with good news: "Things have moved very rapidly for me since I returned from abroad. I know you will be pleased to learn that I am now editor of St. Martin's Press, which is the American publishing house of Macmillan & Co., London, one of the world's largest publishers." Sherman then wrote: "In your last letter you suggest that you had gotten fed up with your new novel, but I hope that by this time you have gotten over your depression and will salvage some time from the important business of trout fishing to finish the first draft. Perhaps at that stage I can be of some help to you." In John's return letter dated July 14, 1955, along with congratulating his friend on his new position, he informed Sherman that "Again I have taken up the novel, slowly, slowly, and it may be that this winter, out of sheer boredom, I will try to pin down two percent of my dream on paper."

In a reply to a query from Sherman, dated November 10, 1955, regarding progress on the new novel, John wrote "Since I last wrote you one of my oldest and dearest friends died: Raymond Friend, a Chicago lawyer whom I met when I posed briefly on LaSalle Street during the early thirties. He was not only a delightful companion but one I could really talk to. But I see there is no use even trying to speak of let alone describe a friendship of 25 years." John went on to say that Raymond's death stalled his writing for a couple weeks, but that he was slowly getting back to it. In a little more than 2 years when John's new novel is eventually published, he dedicated the novel "to my friend Raymond."

Through the winter, and by late March 1956, John finished the first draft of Anatomy of a Murder. As E. P. Dutton & Company, publisher of his last book, Small Town D. A., had first option on publication of his new novel, John wrote them on April 2, 1956 *"This past week I finished the writing of a massive novel called Anatomy of a Murder. Some weeks ago, my stenographer (Donna A. Snider) began typing the earlier chapters in final draft and the poor girl has now done about 25 chapters. I may add that her grim job isn't half done, as the book runs to 65 chapters divided into three parts of 5 (Before the Fact), 30 (Before the Trial), and 30 (Trial) chapters. Even at that I have had to telescope, compress, and pare the narrative to the bone in what I think was my losing attempt to keep it from outweighing Andersonville."* On April 9, 1956, E. P. Dutton representative John Howell replied to John's letter and asked him to send along the manuscript for review when ready.

On April 10, 1956, John and Sherman Baker coincidentally penned letters to each other, Sherman wrote *"Dear John, something has been vaguely wrong with me the last few weeks and one of the contributing factors is that I have not heard from you for months."* John wrote: *"Dear Sherman, I have just finished the writing of a massive novel and Donna is typing it up in final to pelt at Dutton, which has (and will doubtless exercise) first refusal. Sometimes I think it may be good, but then, alas, a writer toward his work is like a deceived husband: he is frequently the last person to realize the true state of affairs. Anyway, I think I may have breathed a little life into at least one character, and it ain't me."* John then wrote: *"How have you wintered? Do you still like your job? Do you realize its less than three weeks till trout fishing?"*

On April 16, 1956, John mailed the first two parts, 35 chapters and 254 manuscript pages, weighing about 4 pounds to editor Harry Shaw at E. P. Dutton and Company. John warned Mr. Shaw that the novel was very long, and that the last 30 chapters were *"every bit as long as what I now send you."* A couple weeks later, before John sent the remaining 30 chapters, he asked Mr. Shaw for *"an early and timely rejection if you should recoil in horror from the thought of having to read the rest."* If E. P. Dutton was not interested in publishing the book, John wanted to submit the entire manuscript to the Harper's Prize Novel Contest, submissions for which were due June 1<sup>st</sup>. On May 11, 1956, Harry Shaw wrote John a rejection letter and made an effort to let him down easy. Mr. Shaw told John that three Dutton editors had now read the first two parts. They thought that John wrote well and amusingly, *"but we frankly feel that you have seriously overwritten, and we are doubtful that the story can sustain what we think is too bulky a development."* Mr. Shaw went on to label John's lengthy comments on law as, *"sermons"*, which they believed made the novel hard to read. Mr. Shaw concluded by saying they were returning the manuscript so John could submit it to the Harper contest, and that if Harper's did not take the book, and if John heavily edited the novel, they would be glad to take another look.

John replied to the rejection on May 14, 1956. John thanked Mr. Shaw for the time they had spent considering



ANATOMY OF A MURDER by Robert Traver. \$4.50. Publication Jan. 6, 1958. The author first used the pen name of Robert Traver in 1943 for his book, Troubleshooter, when he was Prosecuting Attorney of Marquette County, Michigan. He is now a justice of the Supreme Court of Michigan.

### **"Anatomy of a Murder" Promo**

the manuscript, and the hoped for, timely return. John went on to say, *"I was fearful that your reaction would be about what it was, but I have no stomach for tinkering with it now."* John went on to say that if he accumulated enough letters of rejection to make a bonfire, he could *"do my cutting by their eerie light."* John ended the letter with a summation for Shaw's benefit *"Anyway, Paul Biegler gets the guy off and the Lieutenant skips out without paying. Parnell goes on the wagon and he and Paul become law partners. It only took me thirty long chapters to do all this."*

Due to a mailing error on E. P. Dutton's part, John did not get the partial manuscript back until May 28. John and Donna worked on the manuscript all day to get it off airmail to Harper's who received it before the June 1 deadline. Not only did the manuscript not win any prizes, on June 26, 1956, John received a rejection letter from Harper's that stated in part *"It is not for us, I'm afraid. The story as a whole seems to us overlong and unwieldy, the characterization not as strong as it might be."* In a letter from Sherman Baker on July 9, 1956, Sherman bristled at *"the stupidity of Harper & Bros."* and encouraged John to send the manuscript on to him at St. Martin's Press. Sherman assured John that *"our friendship will survive any decision made on the book."* John wrote back on July 11 that the day before Sherman's letter arrived, he had *"Donna bale up the murder opus and send it*



**Supreme Court Jurist**

off to Little, Brown.” John then told Sherman not to worry, that as soon as Little, Brown recoiled in horror at the manuscript, he would send it to his attention at St. Martin’s Press.

On August 15, 1956, John received a long letter from Alexander Williams, Associate Editor at Little, Brown & Company. Mr. Williams told John in part: “*At its best it is an extraordinarily interesting look behind the scenes in the defense of a murder trial, most authentic sounding. But, sir, it is immensely too long.*” Mr. Williams suggested that there was “*a lot of extraneous detail*” and that John needed to cut the novel approximately in half to be considered. Suggested cuts included “*politics – running for congress and what have you*”, and “*you could cut out almost all of the trout fishing*”. In conclusion Mr. Williams sent the manuscript back to John via collect express and “*If you want to do the pretty drastic cutting I have indicated, I will give the book the best pitch I can.*”

On August 17, 1956, John wrote to Sherman Baker at St. Martin’s Press, included a copy of the letter from Little, Brown & Co., asked Sherman what he thought, and told him that he would like Sherman’s opinion about the manuscript before he started any cutting. Sherman wrote back on August 20, he advised John that he had a decision to make, do the cutting and re-submit to Little, Brown, or submit the manuscript to St. Martin’s Press and he would tell John “*... what I think of it after I have given it a through reading.*” John replied to Sherman on August 23, 1956, and in part said: “*I find myself torn between loyalty to you and my desire to possibly place my book with one of the country’s oldest*

*and best publishers. Loyalty wins out, sir, and I dump my ton of manuscript unceremoniously on your lap.*” John wrote to Alexander Williams at Little, Brown and carefully explained that Sherman Baker at St. Martin’s Press now had the manuscript and that he would keep Little, Brown & Co. in the loop if St. Martin’s rejected it. By mid-September, Sherman Baker was sending John suggested edits and let him know that St. Martin’s Press was enthusiastic about the prospects for the new novel.

Sherman shipped the manuscript back along with suggested edits, and John began to work on the necessary revisions and trimming. Finding the revision process difficult, John reached out to Sherman who was on a business trip to the west coast, and asked if there would be any way they could meet face to face on his way back so Sherman could give him some direction and advice on the editing process. Sherman made arraignments to take a break from the west coast trip and fly into Sault Ste. Marie during the first week of October. John and Grace drove over to meet him so they could discuss and make a plan for the revisions. On October 18, 1956, John shipped the manuscript with all the edits and cuts back to Sherman at the St. Martin’s Press offices. John told Sherman in the letter that he had boiled down the initial 5 chapters titled “*Before the Fact*” to one background chapter and inserted it in as chapter two of the pretrial section. He also radically cut down the pretrial section. Acting on a suggestion from Sherman, John also injected some love interest scenes between Mary Pilant and Paul Biegler. John ended the letter with a postscript: “*I send this by registered mail as it is now my only completely revised copy...*”

Just back from another west coast business trip, Sherman wrote John on November 1, 1956, to let him know that the manuscript had safely arrived and was waiting for him when he returned to the office. After several more readings and weeks of writing down editing suggestions, Sherman called John on Thursday, December 20, 1956, to let him know that St. Martin’s Press had accepted Anatomy of a Murder for publication. John sent Sherman a telegram on Friday, December 21 that read “*You have made our Christmas radiant. Please return the baby for changing. Merry Christmas, Santa. John.*” A day later, John received a call that Michigan Governor G. Mennen Williams had appointed him to fill a vacancy on the Michigan Supreme Court that would last 3 months. In a letter dated December 27, 1956, Sherman outlined the proposed royalty terms, 10% to 5,000 copies sold, 12½% to 10,000, and 15% thereafter with the usual 50-50 split on secondary rights. St Martin’s planned to publish late summer or early fall 1957. In the fall of 1956, John had suggested to Sherman he would not need an advance against royalties, Sherman let him know that if he changed his mind a modest advance could be arranged. John replied with a request for a \$500 advance. John headed to Lansing on January 2, 1957 to begin his new occupation as Justice Voelker.

There was still plenty of “*polishing*” to do on the manuscript. After a month in Lansing, John was back in Ishpeming on January 30. John and his assistant Donna Snider went to work and “*toiled*” over the Anatomy of a Murder manuscript and returned it to Sherman Baker on February



8, 1957. Justice Voelker was very busy, he told Sherman *"I have ten opinions to write and the politicians downstate are clamoring for me to come down and campaign for the election (for a full term as Justice) on April 1."* John received, signed and returned the contract for Anatomy of a Murder, whereupon, on February 21, 1957, St. Martin's mailed out John's advance against royalties for \$500. On March 29, 1957, three days before John's election, Sherman wrote him a letter of optimism and confidence in St. Martin's soon-to-be author *"Just to let you know that we are thinking of you and are sure it will come to pass. All the things that are in your book, honesty and integrity and faith in human beings are in you."* There were three open seats on the Michigan Supreme Court up for grabs. John's statewide vote total was third highest and John would fill a vacancy that would expire on December 31, 1959.

On April 18, 1957, John received a letter from Sherman Baker with good, and bad news. The good news was that Sherman had been made Vice President of the New York office of St. Martin's Press. Now for the bad news. Anatomy of a Murder, with all the cuts, was still too long, totaling about 550 pages, which would require a much higher than average price tag. Sherman went on to say *"Now if this length was artistically right, I would say to hell with the price and the length. But it's not John. You are jeopardizing a truly good book by repetition and unnecessary detail. Now we must face up to it, Thomas Wolfe. I am no Maxwell Perkins, though God knows I have tried to be, for I admired him and all he stood for, and I have felt from the first that the terrific impact of this novel has been deadened under the compulsion to include everything as it really happened. You do not give the reader any credit for imagination."*

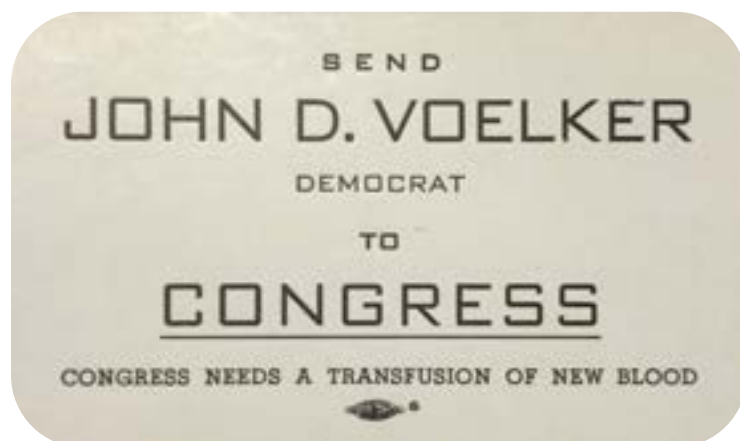
John replied to Sherman on April 22, 1957. Along with congratulating his friend on his promotion, he stated that regarding further cuts in the manuscript *"Frankly, it depresses me boundlessly."* John went on to let Sherman know that he had no time to work on the manuscript *"...I am so far behind in my court work that it would be almost immoral for me to steal any further large amount of time on work of my own."* John concluded the letter by asking if Sherman, or others at St. Martin's that have read the manuscript *"could go through the script and write me in detail – verse and page – concerning these areas where cutting appears desirable."* If St. Martin's was unwilling or unable to act on his editing suggestion, John offered two suggestions, publish the book as it is as a paperback, or publish the book as it is and he would forgo all royalties until the sale hits 10,000 copies.

In a return letter dated April 24, 1957, Sherman, knowing that John was snowed under with his Justice work, made the following offer *"I will take three days and send you a list of detailed notes of the proposed cuts – and in many cases indicate what bridges are needed, I will give you my wording and you can modify, etc."* If this did not work, Sherman would then take John's offer to forego his royalties on X number of copies. It took Sherman longer than planned to complete the list of the detailed notes of the proposed cuts, he had them done by Mid May. On May 17, in a telegram, Sherman suggested that he fly up to Ishpeming

so they could work together for 2-3 days cutting and firming up the manuscript. John replied that he and Grace would be delighted to have Sherman as their guest, but it had to be *"before June second, when Lansing claims me."* Sherman replied on May 23 saying that he hoped to be in Ishpeming on Tuesday, May 28. On June 5, Sherman wrote to Grace, thanking her for all her help, and *"...having a fine long drink for me after a hard day's slicing away at the Anatomy table, and all the delicious meals you prepared."* Sherman then said he would write John in a few days about the book. *"Anatomy of a Murder is now at the printer's and I hope, clacking away on the machines. With any luck we shall have galleys about July 1."* The galleys arrived in Ishpeming on June 26, 1957, with a proposed publication date of September 15, 1957.

In response to Sherman Baker's request for names and addresses of people to send review copies of *"Anatomy"*, John wrote a four-page letter which was dated July 17, 1957. John hand wrote all of his letters and had Donna Snyder type them up before mailing. In a paragraph near the end of the letter John wrote *"More will follow when Donna gets back from playing cowboy, drat her bow-legged six-shootin' hide. I can't find or do nuthin when that dame ain't around. My office looks like a paper-laden bomb had exploded in it."* The postscript reads: *"He isn't the only one who will be glad to have Donna back. Gad, what a long-winded old goat. I'm going home and mix myself a triple snort after dragging through this! GTV"* (Grace Taylor Voelker).

John learned during the first week of August that Anatomy of a Murder was chosen as a reserve Book-of-the-Month Club selection. BOMC agreed to pay John and St. Martin's Press a minimum of \$40,000 to be paid one month after their initial distribution of the book. In the agreement, St. Martin's Press had to agree that no copies of the book could be remaindered for one year after the distribution date and no paper bound reprints could be published within 18 months of the distribution date. On August 15, 1957, John returned the original typescript, the galleys, and the page proofs with many corrected errors to Sherman Baker. John was quite excited about the BOMC selection and asked Sherman to let him know as soon as the contract with the BOMC was signed so he could announce the fact to the world. John was planning on a trip to New York after the current term of the Michigan Supreme Court was over on October 19 and asked



Sherman for another advance to fund the trip. He felt a need to meet with Sherman and others including the president of the BOMC, and also with E. P. Dutton concerning another printing of Small Town D. A. In a letter to Sherman dated August 19, 1957, the last paragraph reads: *“Grace is quitting her job and may – though this is dubious – join me on my New York trek. In any case Polly Biegler and his dago cigars will be there, rarin’ to bring Manhattan home in his pocket.”*

In a letter to Sherman dated August 22, 1957, John asked him about an advance from the payment from BOMC. He told Sherman that his daughter Elizabeth was to be married at Christmas, and *“her parents are vaguely wondering what they are going to use for money. Not only would I like it this year, then, for tax purposes, but so that the guests at Honey Bee’s wedding can take the traditional bath in something more than two-dollar champagne.”* Sherman answered John in a letter dated August 27, 1957, he told him that the previously requested advance of a “grand” would be no problem and that they would send it out as soon as their treasurer returned from vacation. Concerning the advance from BOMC, Sherman told John that they would not receive the 40 grand advance until December, but that he would run the request up the ladder, and that he was sure St. Martin’s could send the payment in time so that *“Honey Bee’s guests will be sipping, or gulping, the finest Heidseick.”* Sherman also discussed the desired possibility of dropping the price of Anatomy of a Murder from the proposed price of \$4.95, to \$4.50, this being financially possible due to the BOMC selection. They were waiting to make the decision until BOMC announced their month of publication. During a phone call from Ian MacKenzie of St. Martin’s Press on September 19, 1957, John found out that Anatomy of a Murder would be the January 1958 selection of The Book-of-the-Month Club, and that club members would pay the reduced price of \$3.95 for the novel. BOMC would begin distribution to their members on December 21, 1957. St. Martin’s planned to set January 6, 1958 as the publication date for the trade edition.

A news clipping from an October 1957 issue of The Detroit News announced that the film rights for Anatomy of a Murder had been sold to Eliot Hyman and Ray Stark for a sum reported to be in the neighborhood of \$150,000, plus 5% of gross receipts. The news clipping also announced that the story would also be made into a Broadway Play by John Van Druten.

In a letter dated December 3, 1957, Sherman Baker of St. Martin’s Press informed John that *“By the end of next week we will have 20,000 Anatomy of a Murder in print, of which we will eventually give away close to 1,000 copies – review copies, reading copies for store buyers, reading copies for opinion makers, etc. We are already thinking about another printing. Reprints can be made in two weeks but three weeks is the normal time and we are trying to anticipate our rate of sale for the first few weeks in January – a rather difficult thing to do.”* In this same letter Sherman discusses several typos in the text that John sent to St. Martins in hopes of correcting them. Sherman sounds like they intend on correcting the typos before the next printing, but alas, a check of the

third trade printing (“Third Printing” is stated on the front flap of the dust wrapper) still has the typos, so ultimately, there may be no definite way to differentiate between the first edition and the second and third printings in the book itself. This is confirmed in a letter from Diane Wheeler-Nicholson at St. Martin’s Press dated December 16, 1957 *“The corrections have gone off to the printers today and the ball has started rolling for the third printing and this is only the beginning, I am sure.”* In a letter dated December 4, 1957, John informs Jacek Galazka of St. Martin’s Press that he has received the shipment of 50 copies of Anatomy of a Murder. The letter ends with *“At your leisure please send me 25 more. All my friends seem to be impoverished deadbeats.”*

The long awaited “swag” John had been waiting for from St. Martin’s Press, arrived with a letter from Jacek Galazka dated December 9, 1957. The check was for \$20,000 and presumptively, was John’s share of the Book-of-the-Month Club down payment. John replied on December 11, 1957 with *“Before I leave the ground entirely and soar into the wild blue yonder, I must say: it came, I saw – and fainted.”* Another item of “swag” arrived on Christmas Day 1957 in the form of a special leather-bound copy of Anatomy of a Murder from Sherman Baker at St. Martin’s Press. The following day, John wrote Sherman in part *“...I personally was most deeply touched by that exquisite leather-bound copy of ‘our book.’ It arrived by express yesterday morning while I was opening my Christmas loot, and when I clawed my way into it, I dropped all the rest of my swag and walked around all misty-eyed and chokey, saying ‘look what they did for me at St. Martin’s’.”*

In the January 6, 1958 issue of the New York Times, Orville Prescott, the venerable book reviewer, published a long and glowing review of Anatomy of a Murder. The first paragraph reads *“In a few days thousands of delighted readers are going to be telling their friends what fun it is to read ‘Anatomy of a Murder’ by Robert Traver, a racy and rousing novel about a murder trial. Incidentally, this is the current selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. And I am going to make a pest of myself repeating I told you so. I am going to say: Where were you in August 1954? That’s when Mr. Traver’s irresistibly engaging ‘Small Town D.A.’ was published. Ignorance is no excuse. About that book’s charms I cheered myself hoarse in The New York Times. For that matter why didn’t you – or anybody else to speak of – read Mr. Traver’s first book, ‘Troubleshooter’? It is wonderful too, although nobody believed me when I said so thirteen years ago. Does a man have to hit a book club jackpot to get any attention? The answer is no, but it helps.”*

The first trade edition of Anatomy of a Murder was published by St. Martin’s Press on January 6, 1958. In a letter to Sherman Baker dated January 20, 1958, John informed Sherman *“Grace avidly hangs over the reviews and best seller lists like an anxious mother watching a fever chart. I hadn’t realized I’d married a tigress. She loves the favorable reviewers and hates the others. She has now abruptly abandoned (the idea of) the new kitchen for a new house.....”*

Part Two, Anatomy of a Murder, After Publication will be in the next IAHS newsletter, Winter 2022-2023.

### Volunteers needed at the Museum

Would you like to spend a pleasant afternoon surrounded by Ishpeming history? Do you have a few hours to spare, not necessarily every week, but even once a month during the summer? If so, please contact us and volunteer as a host at the Ishpeming Area Historical Museum. Anyone interested in helping to preserve the history of our town is welcome. We offer training for those interested in becoming a volunteer. If you are interested, please contact David Aeh at the Main Street Antique Mall, 121 South Main Street, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849. Phone 906-486-8680.

### Please become a member or renew your membership

While we do several fundraisers throughout the year, our memberships are the backbone of the historical society. Through yearly and lifetime memberships, we keep the doors open. We pay for insurance and memberships in organizations such as the Historical Society of Michigan, the Greater Ishpeming Chamber of Commerce and more. We pay for our newsletter and the flyers to help us publicize our events. Those yearly memberships keep us going and they are important to us.

If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. Annual membership is just \$10 per year for an individual. We also have business and family memberships. If you are a member, please renew your membership on a yearly basis. Every membership helps us in our mission of preserving the history of Ishpeming and making it available to everyone. Our membership application is included in this newsletter.

**Our newsletter is sponsored in part by  
Globe Printing and our members.**

*Thank You!*

## Become a member: Ishpeming Area Historical Society

The Ishpeming Area Historical Society is a 501(c)3 Michigan Non-Profit Organization. Our mission is to promote and encourage a better appreciation for and a sustained interest in the history of the Ishpeming area. Your membership allows us to carry out this mission. (We send out newsletters in the winter and summer)

#### Yearly membership (Renewable January 1st)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Student (high school-College)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation _____   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Non-Profit Business             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Business               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Lifetime Individual or Family, | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Lifetime Business     |

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Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

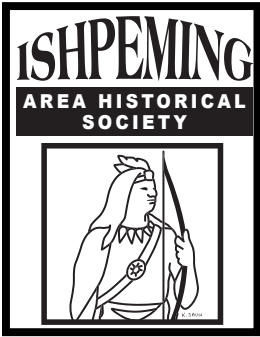
In memory/honor of (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

*I do NOT wish my name to be used in any publicity or on a membership plaque.*

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Is this address my/our year-round address? If not, what months do I/we reside here? \_\_\_\_\_

**Visit our website at [www.ishpeminghistory.org](http://www.ishpeminghistory.org) or: Mail completed form and payment to:  
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*Lumberjack Tavern, Big Bay*  
*Site of Maurice Chenoweth's Murder (Anatomy of a Murder)*