

Collection name: R. E. Wilson Collection

Collection number: REWC-1 / 2005.002 & 2007.001

Dates: 1857-1916

Quantity: 2 legal boxes; 1 oversized flat box

Provenance note: Donated by Grace Howe (niece-in-law to Etta Stewart & R.E. Wilson; she was married [later divorced] to his wife's nephew Herbert M. Howe, son of Etta's sister Maude)

Biographical & Historical Information: [Obituary] Richard Ernest Wilson: Death came Friday night to Richard Ernest Wilson, retired fire chief, following an illness of 18 months. "Ernie" Wilson was born July 27, 1874 in Canada and came to Alpena when six months old. He had resided here continuously since.

He was a member of Trinity Episcopal church, Eagles and Hopper Lodge Masons.

Chief Wilson's marriage to Etta Stewart took place Sept. 29, 1909.

Surviving are his wife, a sister, Mrs. Alex Thompson, Los Angeles; three brothers, Fred, St. Petersburg, Fla., George, Flint, and Dr. J. H. Wilson, Ewen. Russell A. Morrison of Cleveland and Gordon Morrison of Galesburg made their home with the Wilsons for a number of years.

The body is as the Wachterhauser funeral home. Service will be Monday at 2 at Trinity Episcopal church, the Rev. Walter Fry officiating. Internment will be in Evergreen Cemetery.

Chief Wilson joined the fire department in 1906 as a driver when the department operated horse drawn vehicles. In 1914 he was appointed chief, succeeding the late Victor Westrope. The department during his term grew from a few regular men augmented by volunteers to a department composed of 22 regular employees with complete mechanized equipment and two engine houses.

It was on his recommendation in 1915 that the Municipal Council made the department a full-time, full-pay proposition. The machine shop during his term as chief was greatly enlarged and modernized. Fire truck repair work was handled at the shop, and firemen made use of its facilities for the casting of street signs.

April 25, 1928 the chief was critically injured when two of the department's trucks collided at the intersection of Second-av and Chisholm-st. He received fractures of the skull, nose, right cheek bone, right jaw in two places, and of a vertebra.

He was hospitalized at Ann Arbor for a long period and spent a long period of convalescence.

His hobby was collecting curios, many of them relics of early Alpena. The collection was housed on the second floor of the fire station on Third-av for a number of years and on his retirement was moved to the building at 125 River over which the Wilsons resided.

Scope & Content: Historical photographs of the Alpena Area: Alpena Fire Department; courthouse; lumber mills; businesses; Herron Gold Mine; Sporting House (prostitution) ledger.

Access: Open to research.

Preferred Citation: **item, folder, box,** R.E. Wilson Collection, Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library.

Contents:

R. E. Wilson Collection

REWC-1

Box 1:

Folders

1. Alpena Fire Department (photographs)
2. Alpena Fire Department Record Book (1914-1916)
3. Alpena County Courthouse (photographs)
4. Biographical - Wilson, R. E.
5. Churchill House (1893) (photographs)
6. City Water Works (photographs)
7. Downtown / Street Scenes (photographs)

8. Excelsior Mill (photographs)
9. Fires (photographs)
10. Fletcher Paper Company (photographs)
11. Highway Commission Board Book (1857-1873)
12. Huron Portland Cement Plant & Quarry (photographs)
13. Lumbering / Logging (photographs)
14. Notation Book (1892)

Box 2:*Folders*

1. People, group (photographs)
2. People, individual (photographs)
3. Residential (photographs)
4. Saloons License Book (1893)
5. Schools, buildings (photographs)
6. Schools, students-teachers (photographs)
7. Standard Oil Company (photographs)
8. Street & Sidewalk Report Book No. 5 (1892-1894, 1911)
9. Vessels (photographs)
10. Weather Bureau (photographs)

Box 3: Oversized Flat*Folders*

1. "Art Work of Lake Huron Shore" Pt. 12
2. Herron Gold Mine Groundbreaking
3. Herron Gold Mine Groundbreaking
4. Company B, 33rd Regiment, Alpena, MI (1898)
5. Company B, 33rd Regiment, Alpena, MI (1898)
6. Fire Engine & Crew in front of station
7. Island Mill Lumber Co., "The last big train of logs into Alpena."
8. Island Mill Lumber Co., "Boomage ground before dam was built."
9. Island Mill Lumber Co., "Boomage ground before dam was built." (same image)
10. Gebhardt, Morrow & Co. Planing Mill
11. Sporting House ledger (1891) [Closed until 1/1/2021]

Box 4: Oversized Flat

1. "Record of Sporting House Names" 1891-1921 (book)