



Hiding out in Wisconsin

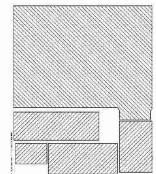
Badger State was a popular refuge from the law in the '20s and '30s

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Members of the U.S. temperance movement believed that eliminating the demon alcohol would cure society of many ills. It would solidify family life, get people back to work, and make society more respectable. Little did they suspect that Prohibition would create effects quite the opposite.

Banning the sale, manufacture and transportation of alcohol from 1920 to 1933 did not cure Americans' thirst for it. In effect, Prohibition forced the supply chain underground. With liquor no longer legally available, gangsters stepped

The upstairs rooms at Little Bohemia Lodge in Manitowish Waters are riddled with bullet holes from hours of machine gun fire by the FBI.



Please see **GANGSTERS, 7L**

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Bank robber and escape artist John Dillinger, who terrorized the Upper Midwest in the early 1930s, hid out in the wilds of northern Wisconsin, in to fulfill the public's craving.

Chicago was well-known as a gangster city, with mob figures such as Al Capone, Baby Face Nelson, "Polack Joe" Saltis and others. When pressure from the law got hot in Chicago, some gangsters found remote, wooded northern Wisconsin the perfect place to hide out.

Scattered throughout the North Woods are the old haunts of the Capone brothers Al and Ralph, Saltis, Nelson and John Dillinger.

A recent road trip took me back to the remnants of that time when the Roaring '20s, followed by the Great Depression, accentuated the "sin" in Wisconsin. A tour of these historical places is a great way to see the state and learn about an era that affected the development of many small towns of the North Woods.

Among the most well-known stops along the way:

Little Bohemia Lodge in Manitowish Waters: Once a resort where the FBI botched a shootout with John Dillinger's gang and Baby Face Nelson, and recently immortalized by the movie "Public Enemies" with Johnny Depp, it's now a restaurant still called Little Bohemia. The rooms where Dillinger stayed have been turned into a little museum and left mainly as they were, with bullet holes intact.

Dillman's Bay Resort in Lac du Flambeau: Cabin No. 5 is where Baby Face Nelson holed up after the shoot-

out at Little Bohemia, holding an Ojibwe couple hostage for three days.

Minocqua still has several places once allegedly frequented by gangsters, including **Norwood Pines Supper Club**, which had gambling and a brothel upstairs. BJ's Sportshop on U.S. Highway 51 used to house "Trixies," the most famous whorehouse in the North Woods. The Belle Isle Sports Bar and Grill had a direct line to Arlington Race Track near Chicago. Bosacki's Boat House restaurant also was a popular hangout for the Chicago mob.

Couderay: Al Capone's home on Cranberry Lake was privately operated and open to the public but closed in 2009. Capone used to fly alcohol in from Canada and unload it at his dock. Not far away at Barker's Lake Lodge near Winter, Saltis built a log lodge with cabins for his friends and fellow gangsters. Saltis was a mob boss from Chicago who operated speakeasies. The resort is still open for business and has a nine-hole golf course built by Saltis.

READ MORE

Little Bohemia:
www.littlebohemia.com/HISTORY.html

Gangster sites in Wisconsin:
www.travelwisconsin.com/Gangster-Tour.aspx

Chasing Gangsters in Wisconsin: bit.ly/uROBdZ

Gangster Getaways in the North Woods: <http://bit.ly/sVwVZs>

Garmisch USA near Cable: Was built as a lodge by wealthy Chicago businessman Jacob Loeb, who hired the famous attorney Clarence Darrow to represent his teenage nephew after the youth killed another young boy for the thrill. Garmisch still has the beautiful old lodge and now has many cabins as well.

Hurley, Hayward and hell made up what locals called the Devil's Triangle: They were rough logging towns that became notorious for their speakeasies and brothels during Prohibition and were often frequented by the likes of Capone and his cronies. Brothels and bars lined Silver St. in Hurley, where many establishments had tunnels connecting each other, and one allegedly ran under the Montreal River into Michigan.

One block of Silver St. still houses strip clubs.

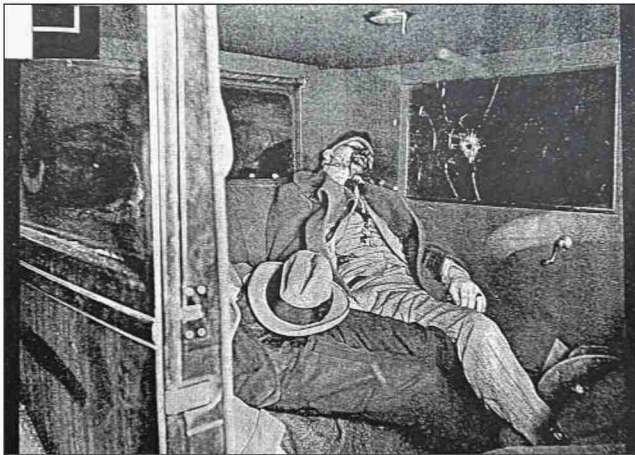
What is now Dawn's Never Inn has the rooms of an old brothel upstairs where Al Capone used to stay.

Mercer: Located on Highway 51 between Hurley and Minocqua, Mercer was the longtime home of Al Capone's older brother Ralph, who ran a couple of taverns. Mitch Babic, now in his 90s, was a fishing and hunting guide for the rich and famous and chronicled Mercer's history over his lifetime with photographs. He knew Ralph well and claims to have been at Little Bohemia on the night of the shootout with Dillinger as a teenager.



David Palmer points to bullets he found in a log wall while expanding a cabin.

David Palmer holds an anchor from "Polack Joe" Saltis' party barge at Historic Barker Lake Lodge near Winter.



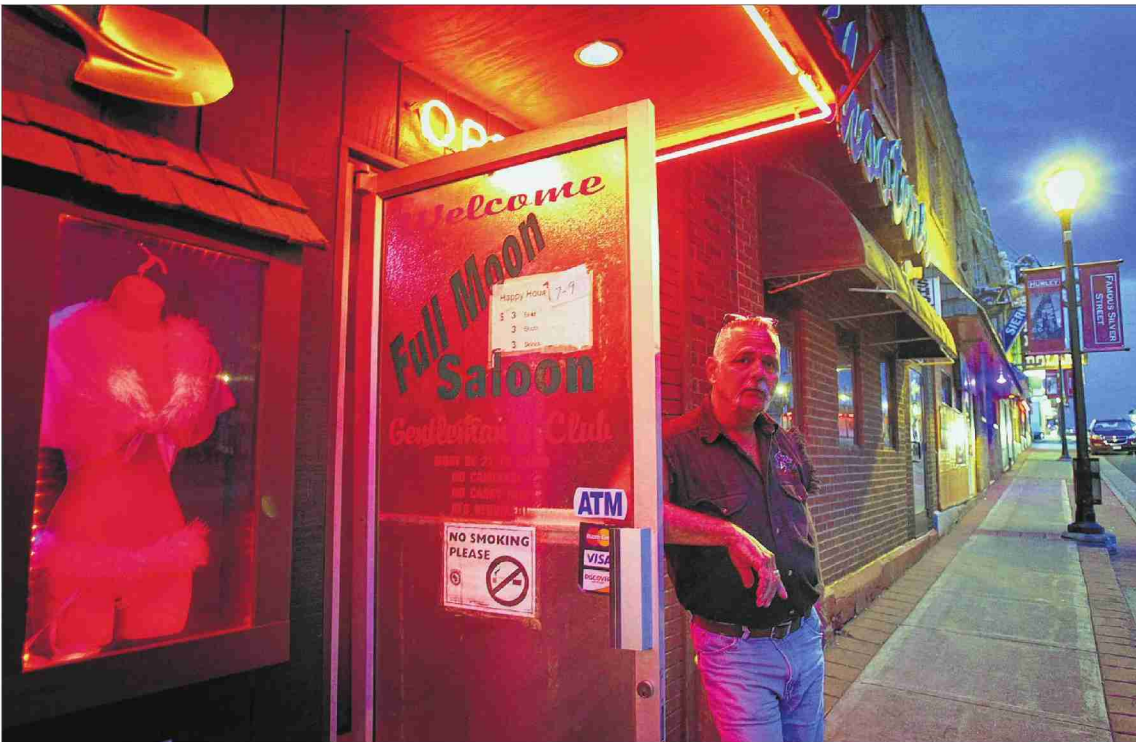
An old magazine article shows the dead bodies of "Dynamite Joe" Brooks and Edward Harmening, members of the Ralph Sheldon gang, after a shooting attributed to Frank McFarlane and "Polack Joe" Saltis.



Mitch Babic, now in his 90s, remembers the days when Ralph Capone lived in Mercer and operated a couple of taverns there in the 1940s after serving a prison term for tax evasion. Ralph Capone, although connected with his brother, was a well-respected resident of the small town for over 40 years.



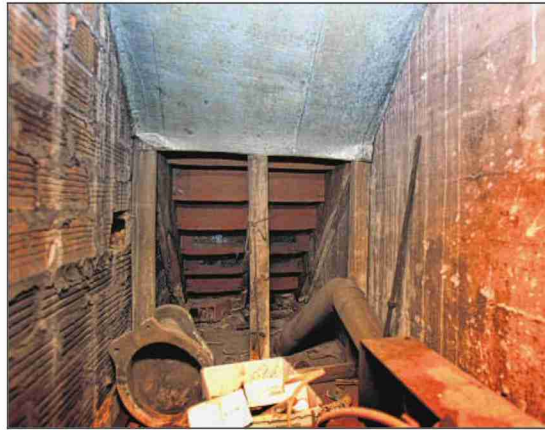
Dennis Howard relaxes with a book upstairs in the old lodge at his resort, Garmisch USA, on Namekagon Lake east of Cable. The 1927 resort was built by wealthy Chicago businessman Jacob Loeb after an infamous thrill-killing trial for his nephew Richard Loeb.



Jim Holden is a bartender at the Full Moon Saloon on Silver St. in Harley, where a brothel and a speakeasy used to operate.



A shooting slit looks out from a secret room at Dawn's Never Inn, formerly Santini's Hotel.



A secret room at the old Santini's Hotel in Hurley was a guard post for gangsters on the lookout for the law.



A portrait decorates a former brothel at the old Santini's Hotel, which is now Dawn's Never Inn.

For more photos, see jsonline.com/photos



Little Bohemia Lodge in Manito-wish Waters near Star Lake is per-haps the best known of the gang-ster hideaways in Wisconsin's North Woods. It was the location of a bloody shootout between FBI forces and John Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson and their gang. The botched raid by the FBI ended with Dillinger and Nelson's es-cape and the lodge riddled with bullet holes.



Lester Gillis, better known as Baby Face Nelson, hid out in Cabin No. 5 at Dillman's Bay Re-sort.