The Cotterill Sisters – Besse, Florence and Alice – were a famous musical group with roots in Iron Mountain. Besse, the oldest, played the piano; Florence, the middle sister, played the violin and was an accomplished vocalist; and Alice played traps (drums), the marimba and did dramatic reading. The Cotterill Sisters played throughout the United States and abroad. They entertained at exclusive hotels in California and Florida during the winter months. This publicity shot dates from the early 1920s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

The Cotterill Sisters were the famous concert trio from the 1920s through the early 1950s whose home address was 619 East F Street in Iron Mountain and whose work took them to leading cities of the United States and abroad.

The trio was composed of Miss Besse, pianist; Miss Florence, violinist and an accomplished vocalist; and Miss Alice, who played traps (drums), the marimba and did dramatic reading.

The three girls were daughters of David and Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill. Their father, David Cotterill, was born May 29, 1862, in Russel, Michigan, a son of Peter and Elizabeth Cotterill, both born in England. He was an engineer on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway.

His parents were residing in Greenbush, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, when the 1880 U.S. Census was taken. Peter Cotterill was born in about 1832 and Elizabeth was born in about 1838.

Their mother, Sarah Angeline McIntyre, was born in September, 1870, in Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, a daughter of Thomas and Bridget (McNamara) McNamara.

According to Sarah’s obituary, after her father’s death, her mother, Bridget, married James McNamara, and the family moved...
shortly thereafter to Quinnesec, where the McNamaras conducted the first hotel in that community. According to the obituary account there was no railroad or highway to Iron Mountain at that time, and the journey was made by ox-team. The railroad reached Quinnesec in late October, 1877, and Iron Mountain’s railroad depot opened in mid-July 1880. If the story is accurate, the MacNamara’s would have arrived in Quinnesec between late 1877 and 1880.

Later Sarah went to Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan, to live with her grandmother, Mrs. Lambert Brown. She attended St. Joseph’s convent there. After completing her studies, she was employed, for a time by the Escanaba Press.

Sarah then obtained work at The Current in the Norway, published by James B. Knight, and resided with the Knight family. The Current began publication February 7, 1885. Knight began his tenure as editor and manager of the newspaper in the fall of 1885, and purchased the newspaper from A.C. Cook, the original publisher and proprietor, in September, 1886.

David Cotterill, of Iron Mountain, Menominee County, Michigan, married Sarah Angeline McIntyre on December 21, 1889, in Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, as recorded in Sarah’s obituary. Another source stated that David Cotterill and Sarah Angeline McIntyre were married in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, on December 21, 1890.

Their oldest daughter, Besse E., was born September 11, 1891, in Iron Mountain, then a part of Menominee County, Michigan.

In the 1892 Iron Mountain city directory David Cotterill, an engineer on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, lived at 1201 Vulcan Street, and his brother, Frank Cotterill, a fireman on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, boarded at David Cotterill’s residence.

David, Sarah and Bessie Cotterill appeared on the 1894 State of Michigan Census, living in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County.

Florence Mary, David and Sarah’s second daughter, was born August 24, 1894, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan.

By 1896 the David Cotterill family was living in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. In December, 1896, David was listed as living in Chicago when he attended the funeral of his brother, John Henry Cotterill, in Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan.

Alice Margaret Cotterill, David and Sarah’s third and youngest daughter, was born December 14, 1900, according to her obituary, but on the 1900 U.S. Federal Census she was listed as 3 years old and born in November, 1897, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

In the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, the David Cottrill [sic – Cotterill] family was listed as living in Precinct 17 of Chicago Ward 13, Cook County, Illinois.

David was listed as the married head of the household, age 37, born in November, 1863 in Wisconsin and married for ten years in about 1890. Both of his parents were born in England.

Sarah Cottrill [sic – Cotterill], his 30-year-old wife, born in September 1870 in Wisconsin and married for ten years in about 1890, was the mother of three living children. Both of her parents were born in Ireland.
Bessie Cottrill [sic – Besse Cotterill], their 9-year-old daughter, was born in September 1891 in Michigan. Both of her parents were born in Wisconsin.

Florence Cottrill [sic – Cotterill], their 6-year-old daughter, was born in June [sic] 1894 in Michigan. Both of her parents were born in Wisconsin.

Alice Cottrill [sic – Cotterill], their 3-year-old daughter, was born in November 1897 in Illinois. Both of her parents were born in Wisconsin.

An item in the August 29, 1907 edition of the Iron Mountain Press noted Mrs. David Cotterill and children, of Chicago, were visiting relatives in Iron Mountain.

David Cotterill died October 1, 1907 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, aged 45. He was buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan.

Taken May 9, 1908, according to the notation in Besse Cotterill’s scrapbook, this photograph probably shows sisters Alice and Florence Cotterill. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Apparently the Cotterill Sisters continued their education in Chicago for some time, attending parochial schools there.

At some point, Besse attended and graduated from St. Mary’s Academy in O’Neill, Holt County, Nebraska. She also graduated from the Chicago Musical College and later the Otis Art School of Los Angeles, California.

At Chicago she also took a post graduate course as the youngest pupil of Emil Liebling (1851-1914), a German-American pianist and composer, who was then the only living pupil of Franz Liszt (1811-1886). Besse played a duet with Emil Liebling at Kimball Hall on May 17, 1909.

Liszt, widely considered to be the greatest pianist of all time, was a prolific 19th-century Hungarian composer, virtuoso pianist, conductor, music teacher, arranger, organist, philanthropist, author, nationalist and a Franciscan tertiary.

Liebling served as visiting director of piano at the Frances Shimer Academy in Mount Carroll, Illinois, from 1904 to 1913. The position involved visiting the school several times per year to perform a concert and inspect student progress. He also held a similar position at Milwaukee-Downer College in Wisconsin.

Florence graduated from Chicago’s John Marshall High School which had opened in 1895. Florence started her musical education at the Chicago Musical
College as a violinist and vocalist, under the tutelage of Frank Winter.

Alice also studied music, art and elocution in Chicago.

Besse, at the piano and Florence with her violin were young musicians when this photograph was taken in October, 1909. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Following completion of study at Chicago Musical College, Florence went to Omaha, Nebraska, where she was associated with the Community Chautauqua program.

Chautauqua was an adult education movement in the United States, highly popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Chautauqua assemblies expanded and spread throughout rural America until the mid-1920s. The Chautauqua brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists of the day.

The name itself comes from a resort community in New York State where in 1875, a summer program of lectures, sermons, and music attracted such enthusiastic audiences that within a few years similar programs for the public in other parts of the country.

The popularity of the Chautauqua movement can be attributed in part to the social and geographic isolation of American farming and ranching communities. People in such areas would naturally be hungry for education, culture and entertainment, and the Chautauqua Movement was a timely response to that need in the late 19th century and early 20th century.
The Cotterill Sisters – Alice, Besse and Florence – bundled up for the winter in O’Neill, Nebraska, in 1911, according to Besse’s scrapbook. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

An undated newspaper clipping included in the Cotterill Sisters’ memorabilia at the Menominee Range Historical Museum’s archives noted that “O.T. Brennan and Miss Florence M. Cotterill were united in holy bonds of wedlock by Rev. Father O’Sullivan in the presence of a number of relatives and friends in this city.”

Unfortunately the first few words of the clipping were missing, so the location of the wedding cannot be verified. The marriage would probably have taken place before 1918.

After the ceremony the wedding party was taken to the home of the bride’s mother, Mrs. Sarah Cotterill, where a splendid wedding breakfast was served. [The marriage of Sarah (McIntyre) Cotterill and Jeremiah “Jerry” McLean, occurred in 1918.]

The happy couple were [sic – was] escorted to the Northwestern depot by about fifty of their friends who were careful that the automobile was properly decorated with placards and other things to apprise the people of what had just happened. They finally reached the depot in safety in spite of their friends and boarded the 10:05 train for a wedding trip which will include several cities of the east, when they will return and go to housekeeping here.

The bride is an accomplished young lady and a musician of rare distinction, being one of the Cotterill Sister’s Orchestra. She has been a resident for a
little over a year, but has made a wide acquaintance and friends with all.
The groom is the oldest son of Col. Neil Brennan and widely known and liked. A young man of excellent habits, good businnesss [sic – business] ability and a genial disposition.
Searching for this wedding date on Family Search was unsuccessful, and there was no further mention of this marriage.

Cotterill Sisters – Florence, Alice and Besse – bicycled at an unrecorded location in 1912. Note the elaborate bows in their hair. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

About eleven years after David Cotterill’s death, Sarah (McIntyre) Cotterill married Jeremiah “Jerry” McLean, a well-known conductor on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway. In Jerry’s obituary, the marriage date of 1918 was included. Again, attempts to document the wedding date have been unsuccessful.
The Cotterill Sisters began their musical career as young women in O’Neill, Holt County, Nebraska, scoring a distinct success in their first public appearance. They began making appearances throughout Nebraska and accepted an engagement with the Redpath Chatauqua Circuit in New York, playing principal cities along the East Coast. Returning to Spread Eagle, during the summer, they performed in Chicago and at leading California hotels.
The above early promotional postcard was used by the Cotterill Sisters as they began performing in O’Neill, Nebraska. Florence is pictured with her violin and Besse may be the sister in the oval frame. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

The following three photographs of Florence Cotterill were promotional shots taken by Phelps, a photographer in O’Neill, Nebraska. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

In a book titled *Men I Have Met*, now in the archives of the Menominee Range Historical Museum, Besse Cotterill dutifully recorded men she had met in the teens and early 1920s. An inscription in the front is dated March, 1919, Chicago.

Among the earliest entries were the result of places the Cotterill Sisters played, including the manager of the opera house in Atkinson, Nebraska, in October, 1910.

Men from the following Nebraska towns, where the Cotterill Sisters began their musical career, were noted: Ainsworth, Atkinson, Bassett, Long Pine, Omaha, O’Neill, Stanton, Stuart and Valentine.

California entries were prevalent in the early 1920s, including Long Beach.
An entry from Chicago, Illinois, included Emil Leibling with the notation: *finished my post graduate course under him – keen, jolly – nickname for me “Buttons.”*

On the same page with a date of January, 1922, at the Associated Players Studio, Hollywood, California, were entries for Douglas Fairbanks and Charles Chaplin.

Besse’s comment for Fairbanks was: *Famous Movie Star – husband of Mary Pickford – important type. For Chaplin, she wrote: World’s foremost movie comedian – cultured – low speaking voice – rather timid.*

The Cotterill Sisters had their picture taken with these two famed Hollywood personalities and later used the photograph on one of their business cards.

Besse Cotterill and Charlie Chaplin at the Associated Players Studio, Hollywood, California, in January, 1922.

An article in the February 14, 1920 edition of Iron Mountain’s The Daily tribune Gazette, under the headline “COTTERILL SISTERS OF THIS CITY SCORE GREAT SUCCESSES IN CALIFORNIA”, noted:

Word has been received at this office from the Cotterill Sisters of this city, famous musicians, who are now at Los Angeles, California, stating that they recently returned to Los Angeles from the famous Mission Inn at Riverside, California, where they have been giving programs, in Spanish costumes, in the Spanish open-court dining room for ten days. On the evening of February 5 the Cotterill Sisters played at the Beverly Hills hotel for a dinner party, attended by the well-known authoress, Mrs. Mary Roberts Rinehart and the noted author Gouverneur Morris.

[Gouverneur Morris IV (1876–1953) was an American author of pulp novels and short stories during the early-twentieth century. Several of his works were adapted into films, including the famous Lon Chaney, Sr. film The Penalty (1920).]

These musical artists appeared before the Los Angeles Rotary club early in November and played for the Optimist club on Jan. 10 at their big Americanization meeting. They were also engaged for the special New Year’s dinner and ball given in honor of the Harvard and Oregon football teams by the Tournament of Roses committee at the Maryland hotel at Pasadena, California.

The Rotary club of Los Angeles in speaking of the talented Cotterill Sisters said: “No finer musical organization has come before the Rotary club of Los Angeles for many a day.”

This excellent musical organization has scored pronounced successes wherever they have appeared and are known far and wide for the great concerts they give. Iron Mountain and all of Cloverland are proud of them.

The Beverly Hills Hotel, one of the world’s best-known hotels, is located on
Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills, California. It is closely associated with Hollywood film stars, rock stars and celebrities. The Beverly Hills Hotel was established in May 1912, before the city's existence. The original hotel was designed by Pasadena architect Elmer Grey, in the Mediterranean Revival style. During the 1930s, The Beverly Hills Hotel became increasingly popular with Hollywood film stars. Pictured here in 1925.

The Mission Inn, now known as The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, is an historic landmark hotel in downtown Riverside, California. Although a composite of many architectural styles, it is generally considered the largest Mission Revival Style building in the United States. In 1909 Carrie Jacobs-Bond wrote the lyrics for her famous song "A Perfect Day" while staying in the Mission Inn. For many years the Mission Inn's carillon played "A Perfect Day" as the last tune each evening. Carrie Jacobs Bond, wife of Dr. Frank Bond, her childhood sweetheart, lived with her husband in Iron River for seven years. Her husband died of injuries from a fall, and Carrie left Iron River for Chicago in 1895. She became a composer and singer of note, earning more money writing songs than any woman of her day. Perhaps her most famous song – “I Love You Truly” – was written in memory of her dead husband in the 1890s. She composed some 200 songs, including “A Perfect Day.” She died in her home in Hollywood December 28, 1946.

The Cotterill Sisters – Alice Margaret, Besse E. and Florence Mary – posed for this publicity shot in the 1920s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]
China and then thru Europe and back to America.

Los Angeles papers have given the Cotterill Sisters considerable and most favorable publicity.

On their way out to the coast these talented musicians stopped in the larger cities and played before Rotary clubs.

The Cotterill Sisters – Florence, Alice and Besse – posed for this publicity shot in the 1920s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Another article in the March 11, 1920 edition of Iron Mountain’s The Daily tribune Gazette, under the headline “COTTERILL SISTERS, THIS CITY, TO MAKE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD”, reported:

The Cotterill Sisters of this city, the popular young musicians, who filled many concert engagements in California this winter, write that they expect to leave soon on a trip around the world. They will go from San Francisco to points in Japan and

This 1920s business card advertised the Cotterill Sisters – Musical Artists. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Under the headline “SISTERS PLAYING IN GOLDEN STATE: Iron Mountain Well Advertised in California, Says Miss Cotterill”, in the May 27, 1922 edition of The Iron Mountain News, the following article appeared:

The Cotterill Sisters, internationally known musicians, whose home is in Iron Mountain, are at present filling a contract at the Hotel Maryland, Pasadena, Calif., according to word received here today from Miss Bessie [sic – Besse] Cotterill. Incidentally, she added, Iron Mountain is receiving a large amount of publicity in California papers so that the city is becoming well known.
Part of Miss Cotterill’s letter follows:

“We are playing a concert each evening in the salon and on Saturday evenings for dancing parties held in the Garden Court, where the guests dance on a splendid outdoor floor. Our orchestra is augmented on dance evenings by Eugene Conklin, saxophonist, and Roy Butin, banjoist of [RCA] Victor record fame.

“During our sojourn in Pasadena we are living in one of the Maryland bungalows. William McAdoo, (former secretary of the treasury and director general of railroads) and his wife and two little girls are our neighbors, having the next bungalow.

“We will return to Long Beach the latter part of June to fill a summer engagement – the seaside for the summer is wonderful.

“We always boost Iron Mountain and the papers mention it very often – so it is well advertised in California.”

The following article appeared in the December 14, 1922 edition of The Iron Mountain News under the headline “Fame Fails To Dim Cotterill Sisters’ Love For Home Town: They’re Always Known as Being From Iron Mountain or Cloverland”:

To entertain the highest, even royalty, to meet the highest, to be on intimate terms with them – that is the almost daily experience of the Misses Florence, Bess [sic – Besse] and Alice Cotterill, known nationally as the Cotterill sisters, musicians of wide spread fame.

But the ability to meet on equal terms those who direct the destinies of nations, who have fortunes in their grasp or who are regarded as the pre-eminent leaders in their particular line, can be accomplished by daily contact with these personages and then it ceases to be an accomplishment. However, if at the same time there exists a strong love for the old home town, old home ties and old friends who have never appeared in the limelight, then that is something to be proud of.

That is what has been accomplished by the Cotterills. Unaffected by the prominent position they occupy and by the virtual tons and tons of publicity showered upon them, they retain a feeling of love for Iron Mountain and Cloverland that is still unimpaired.

They’re From Cloverland.

Pictures of the trio have been printed in every important paper in California and in practically all instances the reading matter has referred to the sisters as coming from Iron Mountain or Cloverland. And why? Simply because they told the reporter who interviewed them that this was their home, not New York, Chicago, San Francisco or some other large community.

And in advertisements, pictures of the sisters always appear in a cloverleaf, such

The Hotel Maryland was located in Pasadena, California from the early 1900s until it was demolished in 1934.
as the photograph accompanying this article, and on the stem the word Cloverland is synonymous with the term Cotterill sisters.

Iron Mountain is not unappreciative of the Cotterills. In fact, the Rotary club, at its meeting Tuesday, appointed a committee to draw up a resolution of appreciation and send it to the sisters. This committee, composed of M.J. Fox, M.E. Richards and Tom Gander, did its work yesterday and today the resolution, accompanied by a large box of candy and a larger bouquet of flowers, will be presented to the trio.

Leaving For Coast.

Tonight the Cotterills, who have been visiting their mother, Mrs. J. McLean, will leave for Pasadena, Calif., where they will fill a winter engagement at the Hotel Raymond. They will conclude this contract in May and then intend to go to Hawaii. Next summer they will return to Iron Mountain.

“Do you ever intend to give up Iron Mountain as your home town?” they were asked.

“Absolutely not,” was the answering chorus. “You know,” explained one of them, “whenever we go into a hotel we register our address as Iron Mountain. Our ads always speak of Cloverland and many times persons have asked us, ‘What is this Cloverland?’ Of course, they are given an explanation. We never intend to drop this title and wherever we are we’ll be the Cotterill sisters from Iron Mountain, Michigan.”

The Cotterills, each one of whom is an accomplished musician, have played in the east and the west. Last season they were at Pasadena and have played at all the principal cities in California. Governors, princes and movie stars have listened to and praised their music and California would like to claim the trio as its own. Charles Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks are to them “Charlie” and “Doug”, they say how-do-you-do to this governor or that business monarch. And with equal cordiality the salutation is returned.
scores of small cottages in connection which rent for the small sum of $7,500 a season, the season being four months long. The sisters will have one of these cottages – but it is included in their contract.

**Girl’s [sic – Girls’] Orchestra.**

In playing for dances the sisters have two extra musicians and the orchestra is known as the “All Star Five.” This season they hope to organize a girls’ orchestra of 10 or 15 pieces, probably the first of its size in the country.

The Cotterills are also known as the “Rotary Girls.” During previous trips to the coast they have stopped off at various cities and entertained the Rotary clubs, hence this sobriquet. The Iron Mountain organization is their “home” club.

Iron Mountain had several opportunities during the summer of hearing the sisters and well appreciates their ability. In addition to the piano, violin, xylophone and other instruments, they amuse with songs and recitations. They have received several flattering offers to go on big time vaudeville circuits but have so far refused them, preferring to stay off the stage.

They have attained a reputation for being refined, neat and well appearing, presenting programs that please the most fastidious. They intend to maintain this standard for their organization as well as keep after their names the words Iron Mountain and Cloverland!

**The Rotary Resolution**

Whereas the Cotterill sisters who have been spending several weeks with their parents in this city, are about to leave on an extended musical engagement to the Pacific coast;

And whereas they have by numerous appearances before Rotary clubs in the United States become known as “The Rotary Girls”;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Rotary club, of this city, their home club, extend to them its appreciation for their splendid character, talents and achievements, and the best wishes of the club for a prosperous journey and safe return, and that in extending this appreciation the club feels that it is but echoing the sentiment of the people of this city as well as the pride that all Cloverland takes in their achievements.

The Raymond Hotel located in South Pasadena, California, was the first major resort hotel of the San Gabriel Valley which, for the most part, served as a winter residence for wealthy easterners. It was built by Walter Raymond of Raymond & Whitcomb Travel Agency of Boston, Massachusetts. The hotel was built atop Bacon Hill which lies between Pasadena and South Pasadena and was renamed Raymond Hill with the opening of the hotel in 1886. The original hotel, a grand and unequivocal Victorian edifice was burned to the ground in 1895. A 300-room hotel with private baths for
each room was erected in 1901, equally replacing the first hotel in grandeur. The hotel was foreclosed following the Great Depression and was razed for commercial development in 1934. The Cotterill Sisters played here in late 1923 and early 1924.

The Cotterill Sisters – Besse, Florence and Alice – posed with an automobile at Long Beach, California, in the early 1920s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Under the headline “RADIO PUBLICITY RECEIVED BY CITY: Cotterills Continue to Advertise Iron Mountain On Coast”, in the September 25, 1924 edition of The Iron Mountain News, the following article appeared:

Although Iron Mountain does not possess a broadcasting station, it nevertheless has become known to a large portion of radioland through the efforts of the Cotterill sisters, the trio of musicians whose home is here and who have gained considerable renown on the West Coast.

The sisters, Bess [sic – Besse], Florence and Alice, are now spending their annual vacation in Iron Mountain, visiting their mother who resides here. They will return next month to Los Angeles.

Several radio programs have been given by the trio and their home town, Iron Mountain, has been mentioned by the announcer in introducing the various numbers. The sisters advertise themselves as being from “Cloverland,” a reproduction of a three-leaf clover with a picture of one of them in each of the leaves being a trade mark.

Get Favorable Review.

Their radio efforts have brought them thousands of applause cards. In reviewing one of their radio programs, Claire Forbes Crane, critic on the Los Angeles Times, wrote:

“Everyone takes delight in an artist who not only sounds well to the ear but is attractive to the eye as well. It was too bad last evening that the radio family could not have seen as well as heard the talented Cotterill Sisters, trio, presented through the courtesy of the Westlake Mary Louise. The trio consists of three charming young sisters, the Misses Bess [sic – Besse], Florence and Alice Cotterill.

“Miss Bess [sic – Besse] Cotterill, the pianist, is a pupil of Emil Liebling, and from what we heard last night, a credit to this great teacher. The second sister, Miss Florence, is both violinist and an accomplished vocalist, while the third sister, Alice, plays the drums, xylophone and marimba phone.

“This array of talent in one family aroused much enthusiastic comment from the audience last evening. Their program
showed much sympathetic understanding of the large number of persons in radioland who like to listen to the familiar melodies which lie on the borderland between the ballad and classic type of composition.

Reveal Artistry.

“The four Indian love lyrics, the ‘Evening Star,’ from ‘Tannhauser,’ MacDowell’s ‘To a Wild Rose,’ and several Spanish numbers were given by the Cotterill Trio with a smoothness of ensemble and unmarred tonal beauty borne of long hours of practice and harmonious living.

Florence Cotterill sang a group of four English ballads, including ‘How Long Ago,’ ‘Carry Me Back to Old Virginia,’ and ‘A Bit of Irish.’ She has a delightful ballad voice and last evening her crisp diction carried to the farthest corner to which radio penetrates.

Alice Cotterill, who is an accomplished reader, gave three pianologues, accompanied by her sister, Besse [sic – Besse]. A pianologue is a difficult thing to broadcast because the balance between the instrument and the speaking voice must be perfectly maintained throughout, regardless of mood or inflection. This feat was performed successfully last night.

Going to Chicago.

“The first two numbers were ‘Not Understood,’ and ‘Foolish Question.’ The third selection brought back memories of all who had known and loved Daddy Silverwood. It was the familiar ‘I Want My Flowers Now.’ Mr. Silverwood was very fond of Miss Cotterill’s rendition of it and gave her the first autographed copy of it.

The Cotterill Sisters are going to Chicago to fulfill a professional engagement but will be back at the Mary Louise in November.”
Sarah (McIntyre) Cotterill McLean lived with her three daughters following the death of her husband, Jeremiah “Jerry” McLean, in November, 1930. She accompanied the Cotterill Sisters on their engagements in popular resort centers.

Between engagements, over a period of years, the Cotterill Sisters returned regularly to Iron Mountain.

The Cotterill Sisters opened the Novelty Nook Studio in Iron Mountain in 1931. The studio was a combination of gift shop that dealt in imported art wares, gifts and interior decorations and a studio where Miss Bessie, assisted by her sisters, taught all forms of art craft work. Miss Bessie studied sculpturing at Otis Art Institution in Los Angeles under the well-known California pastel artist, Harry Linder; and other branches of art including oils, tapestries, water colors, pottery, at Chicago Art Institute.

Harry Linder, born in Finland on Oct. 13, 1886, moved to southern California in 1917, settling in Long Beach where he established a gallery which exhibited the works of local artists. He died in Los Angeles on July 28, 1931.

Besse Cotterill exhibited her bust sculpture of young boy in the 1930s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]
The Cotterill Sisters spent several seasons in California’s leading hotels, including Raymond Hotel and the Hotel Maryland in Pasadena, California, the Coronado Beach Hotel, Coronado Beach, California, and exclusive hotels in Palm Beach, Florida, and in Bermuda.

The Cotterill Sisters and an unidentified man enjoyed the prolific lilies and the water in Hamilton, Bermuda. G. Allen Fraser sent the photos and may be the man in the photographs. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

The Cotterill Sisters – Besse, Florence and Alice – in 1930s or 1940s [Menominee Range Historical Museum]
The Cotterill Sisters – Alice, Florence, mother Sarah McLean and Besse – at North End Hotel, Ocean Grove, New Jersey [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

The Cotterill Sisters – Florence, Alice and Besse – with mother Sarah McLean seated on lawn chair [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

On April 9, 1945, Sarah McLean, mother of the Cotterill Sisters, died suddenly at Mount Dora, Lake County, Florida.

Mrs. McLean had not been ill, and death came suddenly in the morning hours, according to her daughters, who were with her in the cottage they occupied at the resort center. The family was packed and ready to leave Florida for Iron Mountain at the time of her death.

Funeral services were conducted on April 14, 1945, at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Escanaba, and Mrs. McLean was buried in Lakeview Cemetery.

Her daughters arrived in Iron Mountain the evening after the funeral and spent the summer at their residence at 619 East F Street.


The demand for their services increased steadily throughout their career, and they traveled throughout the United States and Europe, seeing new places, meeting new people and building an outstanding reputation.

Author Mary Roberts Rinehard said of the Cotterill Sisters: “If you appreciate the
finer things of life you will find joy in the music of the Cotterill Sisters. They play your favorite operas, tuneful ballads, and have a repertoire of music that is as beautiful as it is unusual – and executed by real musicians.”

The Cotterill Sisters – Alice, Florence and Besse – in the 1940s or early 1950s [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

The popular trio toured the United States for many years, playing concert music at exclusive hotels and winter and summer resorts. Famous for their concert and after-dinner music, the Cotterill sisters played long engagements at hotels and resorts in Florida, New Jersey, New York, California, Bermuda, Arizona and other states. Most of their winter engagements were in Florida.

On September 21, 1954, Besse Cotterill, who had been ailing for the previous year, died at the Dickinson County Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain.

Florence and Alice retired from playing professionally following Besse’s death and continued residing in their home at 619 East F Street.

Florence was employed at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Iron Mountain, retiring in 1966. She died on August 8, 1972, following an illness of the previous year.

My Thoughts In Rhyme, a booklet of Alice’s poetry, was published in 1975 as a joint effort by the Iron Mountain-Kingsford Rotary Club and the Menominee Range Historical Foundation. Earlier proceeds from the sale of her poems over the years went to the Rotarians.

Alice died on November 20, 1986 in the Hyland Nursing Home following a long illness.

All three Cotterill sisters were buried on the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery in Escanaba.

COTTERILL FAMILY

Peter Cotterill
Paternal Grandfather of the Cotterill Sisters

Born: about 1832 in England
Died: January 6, 1911
Buried

Elizabeth Abbey
Paternal Grandmother of the Cotterill Sisters

Born about 1838 in England
Peter and Elizabeth (Abbey) Cotrill [sic – Cotterill] were residing in Greenbush, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, when the 1860 U.S. Census was taken. They were the parents of two children: Christopher, 3; and John H. Both children were born in Wisconsin.

Peter and Elizabeth (Abbey) Coterill [sic – Cotterill] were listed as residing in Wisconsin, when the 1870 U.S. Census was taken. They were the parents of five children: Christopher, 12; John Henry, 10; Mary H., 8; David, 5; and Sarah, 2. All five children were born in Wisconsin.

Peter and Elizabeth (Abbey) Cotterill residing in Greenbush, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, when the 1880 U.S. Census was taken. Peter Cotterill was born in about 1832 and Elizabeth was born in about 1838.

On November 11, 1888, Sarah A. Cotterill, daughter of Peter and Elizabeth (Abbey) Cotterill, married James Morris Bricker, son of John and Fanny (Barber) Bricker, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

William Nathaniel Catterill [sic – Cotterill], son of Peter and Elizabeth (Abbey) Catterill [sic – Cotterill], married Maru Guse, daughter of Friedrick and Elizabeth (Reichert) Guse...

Elizabeth Cotrell [sic – Cotterill] was the beneficiary of Peter Cotrell [sic – Coterill]'s Army pension.

David Cotterill
Father of the Cotterill Sisters
MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 38: THE ROARING TWENTIES – THE COTTERILL SISTERS, IRON MOUNTAIN’S FAMOUS MUSICAL TRIO

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Died December 17, 1896 in Escanaba, Delta County, Wisconsin
Buried in Section 13, Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

John Henry Cotterill, son of Peter and Elizabeth Cotterill, born in 1859, died December 17, 1896, in Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan. He was an engineer on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company.

Unidentified New Clipping with No Date
Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

With a suddenness that startled and shocked the entire community came the sad announcement of the death of John Cotterill at 6:00 o’clock yesterday morning.
Saturday evening Mr. Cotterill was confined to his bed. He knew that the end had come, knew that the heart trouble form which he had suffered for some four or five years was nearing the close of its swift and merciless career and that he had not long to live. He met the end bravely and with great fortitude. At five minutes before six o’clock yesterday morning his spirit passed into the other world.

It was about five years ago when he first noticed symptoms of heart trouble. Since that time he had consulted with some of the most prominent physicians in the country and everything which medical science could do was done for him, all to no avail. About two years ago he was informed of his condition and told that he had not long to live.

John Henry Cotterill was born thirty seven years ago near Glen Beulah, Wis. About fifteen years ago he came to Escanaba and several years afterward
obtained a position as a locomotive engineer with the C. & N.W. R'y company, which position he has held since that time. He was one of the company's most capable and trustworthy employes and a great favorite with all the railroad men throughout the peninsula, where he was widely known.

On January 1, 1883, he was united in marriage with Miss Emma V. Valentine, of this city. Few men have more friends and fewer enemies that had big, genial, kind-hearted John Cotterill.

About two years ago he was elected as a member of the board of education, and was at the time of his death a member of the county board of commissioners. In both those positions he has represented his constituents in a very efficient and worthy manner.

Funeral services will be held Saturday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from the Presbyterian church. The Masonic fraternity of which Mr. Cotterill was a member will have charge of the exercises, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers of which he was also a member, will attend in a body.

The relatives from outside who will probably attend the funeral are: Frank Cotterill, of Oshkosh, Dave Cotterill, of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Hervel Valentine, of Appleton, and Mrs. Hicks, of Green Bay.

Emily J. (Valentine) Cotterill
Wife of John Henry Cotterill

Born in 1861
Died in 1932
Buried in Section 13, Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

Michael McIntyre
Grandfather of Sarah Angeline McIntyre, the Mother of the Cotterill Sisters

Born in 1812 in Ireland
Died February 2, 1899 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois
Buried in Plot 139 St, James Cemetery, Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Chicago Daily Tribune, February 3, 1899: McIntyre – At his residence 4348 Indiana av, Michael McIntyre, aged 87 years of pneumonia. Funeral Saturday Feb 4 at Kenosha via 8:30 train C&NW Ry. Cleveland (O) and Kenosha (Wis)
Bridget (Philbin) McIntyre
Grandmother of Sarah Angeline McIntyre, the Mother of the Cotterill Sisters

Born in 1830 in Ireland
Died October 27, 1895 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois
Buried in Plot 139 St, James Cemetery, Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Elizabeth F. McIntyre
Daughter of Michael and Bridget (Philbin) McIntyre and Sister of Sarah Angeline McIntyre, the Mother of the Cotterill Sisters

Born in 1852 (1856) in Wisconsin
Died May 7, 1920 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois
Buried in Plot 139 St, James Cemetery, Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Cook County, Illinois, Deaths 1878-1922: Elizabeth F. McIntyre died May 7, 1920, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, at the age of 64. She was born in Wisconsin in 1856. Her father was Michael McIntyre, born Ireland, and her mother was Bridget Philbin, born in Ireland. She was retired and resided at 45 ½ East Walton Place, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. She was buried in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on May 10, 1920.

Thomas McIntyre
Father of Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill McLean

Born September, 1870, in Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin
Died April 9, 1945, in Mount Dora, Lake County, Florida
Buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

Bridget (Philbin) McNamara
Mother of Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill McLean

Born September, 1870, in Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin
Died April 9, 1945, in Mount Dora, Lake County, Florida
Buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

Katie McIntyre, daughter of Thomas and Bridget (McNamara) McIntyre, married Joseph Benjamin Eslick, son of James and Elizabeth (Dyer) Eslick, on March 26, 1888, in Marinette, Marinette County, Wisconsin.
Mary McIntyre, 23 [born in 1865 in Wisconsin], daughter of Thomas and Bridget (McNamara) McIntyre, married William H. Scott, 24 [born in 1864, in Chicago, Illinois], son of William and Catherine (Hagerty) Scott, on April 11, 1888, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan.

Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill McLean
Wife of David Cotterill and Wife of Jeremiah “Jerry” McLean
Mother of the Cotterill Sisters

Born September, 1870, in Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin
Died April 9, 1945, in Mount Dora, Lake County, Florida
Buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

Sarah (McIntyre) Cotterill-McLean posed in the driver’s seat, probably in the late 1930s or early 1940s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]
Sarah (McIntyre) Cotterill-McLean posed in an evening gown near a large planter, probably in the late 1930s or early 1940s. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Services For Mrs. McLean
At Escanaba

Funeral services for Mrs. Sarah McLean, mother of the Misses Bess, Florence and Alice Cotterill, talented and widely-known musicians, and who died suddenly early Monday morning, April 9, at Mt. Dora, Fla., were conducted at 10 Saturday morning at St. Patrick’s church, in Escanaba, by the Rev. Fr. Norbert Freiburger. Burial was in Lakeview cemetery.

The Misses Cotterill arrived here Saturday night, after attending the ceremony, and will spend the summer at their residence, 619 East F.

Mrs. McLean, her daughters said today, had not been ill, and death came suddenly in the morning hours. Her daughters were with her in the cottage they occupied at the resort center.

Mrs. McLean was born in Kenosha, Wis., a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John [sic – Thomas] McIntyre. After her father’s, death her mother was married to James McNamara, and the family moved shortly thereafter to Quinnesec, where the McNamaras conducted the first hotel in that community. There was then no railroad or highway to Iron Mountain, and the journey was made in earliest days by ox--team.

Worked In Norway

Some time later Mrs. McLean went to Escanaba to live with her grandmother, Mrs. Lambert Brown. She attended St. Joseph’s convent there, and after completing her studies was employed, for a time, by the Escanaba Press. She then obtained work at the Norway Current,
published by the late James Knights [sic – Knight], and resided in Norway with the Knight family.

Mrs. McLean was first married, at Florence, Wis., to David Cotterill. About eight years after his death, she married Jerry McLean, former well known conductor for the North Western railroad, who died here many years ago.

Since Mr. McLean’s death, his widow had lived with her three daughters, who are widely known as a musical trio and have played winter engagements at many popular resort centers in the east and south. Mrs. McLean traveled with her daughters on these engagements, and returned here, every summer, to live with them. The mother and daughters were packed and ready to leave Florida for Iron Mountain, last week, when Mrs. McLean was stricken.

[Sarah Angeline McIntyre, daughter of Thomas and Bridget (McNamara) McIntyre, was born in September, 1870, in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Her father was born in Wisconsin and her mother was born in Ireland.]

**Jeremiah “Jerry” McLean**
Second Husband of Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill and Step-Father of the Cotterill Sisters

Born March 5, 1864, in Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin
Died November 18, 1930, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan
Buried in Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan

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**VETERAN RAIL ENGINEER DIES AT HOME HERE**

Jeremiah McLean Passes Away Suddenly This Morning

Jeremiah (Jerry) McLean, aged 66 years, and known throughout the district for his long association as an engineer with the Chicago and North Western railway, died at 11:45 o’clock this morning at his home, 619 East F street, following a lingering illness of the last year with heart trouble.

Mr. McLean had spent much of the time during the past year in and about his home. Although failing in health during that time, he had not complained of any acute illness, and his condition was not believed critical.
This morning he arose at about 10 o’clock, and, after greeting members of the family, went into the bathroom to shave. He returned to his room and mentioned to Mrs. McLean that he needed new razor blades. Then he said: “I believe I will put on my dressing gown, and just sit around awhile.”

He sat upon the bed a moment and fell back. Mrs. McLean was with him when he died. At home also at the time were Mr. McLean’s step-daughters, the Misses Besse [sic – Besse], Alice and Florence Cotterill.

Born In 1864.

Mr. McLean was born March 4, 1864, at Neenah, Wis. He attended the public schools of that city, and the family then moved to Iron Mountain. Starting with the Chicago and North Western as a youth, he worked up rapidly, and soon enjoyed the distinction of being the youngest engineer on the road. He continued as an engineer for 44 years, and was pensioned September 1, 1929.

He was married in 1918 to Mrs. Sarah Cotterill, the culmination of a romance in his youth. There are three daughters by Mrs. McLean’s former marriage, the Misses Besse [sic – Besse], Alice and Florence Cotterill.

There are two brothers, John McLean, of California, and Ed, of Milwaukee, and one sister, Mrs. John Trotter, of Escanaba.

Mr. McLean was associated with much of the earliest railroading history of this region, being the first engineer to bring a train into this district. He was widely known all along the line of the North Western railroads’ northern division, and particularly in this district. He attended St. Mary’s church in the city.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed.

The Iron Mountain News, Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, Volume 10, Number 188 [Wednesday, November 19, 1930], page 2, column 3

JEREMIAH McLEAN

Funeral services for Jeremiah McLean, age 66, who died at 11:45 o’clock yesterday morning at his home, 619 East F street, will be held at 8:30 o’clock tomorrow morning, at the home, and at 9 o’clock at St. Mary’s church, the Rev. Fr. P.N. Fillion officiating. The body will be taken to Escanaba, where interment will be made in Lake View cemetery.

[Jeremiah McLean, son of Dennis E. McLean (1833-1872) and Mary Garvey McLean (1834-1914), was born March 5, 1864, in Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin. He is the second husband of Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill.]

Jerry McLean was living in Ward 3-4 of Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan, according to the 1900 U.S. Federal Census. He was listed as a 36-year-old single white male, born in March, 1864, in Wisconsin. He was a roomer in the household of Agnes Ferrier. Both of his parents were born in Ireland.

Besse E. Cotterill
First and Oldest Daughter of David and Sarah Angelina (McIntyre) Cotterill
Miss Besse Cotterill Dies Suddenly At Hospital Here

Miss Besse Cotterill, of 619 East F street, member of the widely-known Cotterill Sisters instrumental concert trio, died suddenly at 2 a.m. today in the Dickinson County Memorial hospital.

Miss Cotterill, ailing for the past year, suffered a relapse at her home yesterday and was taken to the hospital, where her condition became critical.

Born in Iron Mountain, Miss Cotterill was educated in parochial schools in Chicago and graduated from St. Mary’s Academy, of O’Neill, Neb. She also graduated from Otis Art School of Los Angeles, Calif., and the Chicago Musical college. At Chicago she also took a post graduate course as the youngest pupil of Emiel Leibling, then the only living pupil of Franz Liszt, world famous pianist.

An accomplished sculptor and oil painter, Miss Cotterill at one time conducted an art studio in Iron Mountain.

Pianist For Trio

Miss Cotterill was the pianist for the popular trio that for many years toured the United States, playing concert music at exclusive hotels and winter and summer resorts. Her sisters, the Misses Alice and Florence, who survive her, completed the trio.

Famous for their concert and after-dinner music, the Cotterill sisters played long engagements at hotels and resorts in Florida, New Jersey, New York, California, Bermuda, Arizona and other states. Most of their winter engagements were in Florida.

Friends may call at the Buchanan-Villemur-Tondin Funeral home starting at 7 tonight. Monsignor A.C. Pelissier will recite the rosary at 8 tomorrow night at the funeral home.

Services will be held at 8:45 Thursday morning at the funeral home and at 9 at SS Mary and Joseph church. The remains will be taken to Escanaba for interment at the Lakeview cemetery.

[Besse Cotterill, daughter of David and Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill, was born September 11, 1891, in Iron Mountain, Menominee [later Dickinson] County, Michigan.]
In Loving Memory Of

Besse Cotterill

Died September 21, 1954

PRAYER.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord! and let perpetual light shine upon her. Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on her. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for her. St. Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for her.

May she rest in peace.

F. Kaster Co., Green Bay, Wis.

Besse Cotterill, Iron Mountain, May, 1912
[Menominee Range Historical Museum]
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Cotterill Sister (Besse – ?) with diamonds in ring [Menominee Range Historical Museum]

Besse Cotterill in an evening gown, seated on piano bench, circa 1915-1920 [Menominee Range Historical Museum]
Miss Cotterill was born in Iron Mountain, and as a child moved with her family to Chicago, where she attended school and graduated from John Marshall High School. She started her musical education at the Chicago Musical College as a violinist and vocalist, under the tutelage of Frank Winter.

Following completion of study at Chicago Musical College, Miss Cotterill went to Omaha, Neb., where she was associated with the Community Chatuaqua program. She later started playing engagements in Pasadena, Calif., Phoenix, Ariz., Bermuda, Los Angeles, Havana, Cuba, New York City, and St. Petersburg, Fla.

She retired from playing professionally in 1954, at which time she returned to Iron Mountain and had made her home here since. She was employed at the VA Hospital here, retiring in 1966.

She leaves a sister, Alice of Iron Mountain, and other relatives in the area.

Friends may call at the Tondin-Ross Funeral Home from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday. Liturgical prayers will be recited at 8:15 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home.

Services will be held at 9:10 Friday morning at the funeral home and at 9:30 at SS Mary and Joseph Church. Rev. Fr. Raymond J. Zeugner will offer the Mass of the Resurrection.

Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery in Escanaba.

[Florence Mary Cotterill, daughter of David and Sarah Angeline (McIntyre) Cotterill, was born August 24, 1894, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan.]
“We have loved her during life, let us not abandon her until we have conducted her by our prayers into the house of the Lord.” St. Ambrose

In Loving Memory of

Florence Mary Cotterill
Died: August 8, 1972

Fr. Raymond J. Zeugner
Prayer
Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the soul of Thy servant FLORENCE that being dead to this world, she may live to Thee, and whatever sins she may have committed in this life through human frailty, do Thou, of Thy most merciful goodness, forgive. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord Amen.
Merciful Jesus, grant her eternal rest!

TONDIN—ROSS
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

Florence Cotterill, October, 1912
[Menominee Range Historical Museum]
Alice Margaret Cotterill
Third and Youngest Daughter of David and Sarah Angelina (McIntyre) Cotterill

Born December 14, 1900, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan. [Alice Margaret Cotterill, David and Sarah’s third and youngest daughter, was born December 14, 1900, according to her obituary, but on the 1900 U.S. Federal Census she was listed as 3 years old and born in November, 1897, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.]

Died November 20, 1986, in Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan
Buried in Block 34, Lot 5 of Lakeview Cemetery, Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan
Alice Cotterill

IRON MOUNTAIN — Alice Cotterill, 85, of Iron Mountain, died Thursday, November 20, 1986, at the Hyland Nursing Home, following a long illness.

Miss Cotterill was born Dec. 14, 1900 in Chicago. She was preceded in death by her father, Dave Cotterill, her mother, Sara McLean Cotterill, in 1945, and two sisters, Besse Cotterill and Florence Cotterill.

She and her sisters had long musical careers, studying extensively in music, art and elocution in Chicago. They were known as the Cotterill Sisters and played many musical engagements years ago in Los Angeles and California, St. Petersburg, Fla., Bermuda and New York City. The Cotterill Sisters were well known and traveled extensively. They also conducted and taught art and operated a gift shop in Iron Mountain for a few years.

Miss Cotterill had her poetry published and proceeds from the sale of her poems went to the Rotarians. Although she traveled extensively, Miss Cotterill made Iron Mountain her home most of her lifetime.

Visitation will be from 9 to 10 a.m. Friday at the Tondin-Ross and Freeman Funeral Home. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday at SS Mary and Joseph Church. Fr. James Donnelly will offer the Mass of Christian Burial. Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery in Escanaba.