



# NEWSLETTER

IXL Historical Museum • October, 2004

## Preserving Hermansville's History



### Museum Projects

Naser Oil Company of Powers has offered us one of the last old train depots in the area. This depot was originally at Wilson, but now is situated in Powers and is the last remaining depot in Menominee County. We have also been offered a donation of \$1,000 to help with moving this building to Hermansville. Upon checking it appears that this move will cost approx. \$10,000 or \$12,000. We feel that this



would be a most valuable addition to our complex and, also, it would be tragic to lose this piece of history.

In addition, we have again applied to the Hannahville Indian Community for a grant to build a pavilion to house and display the large amount of machinery that is stored at various places throughout the community. We did receive a \$5,000 grant last fall for this project, but much more is needed. The site work has been completed and we are hoping to receive more funding to continue with this project next summer.

We are hoping that you would like to help with these projects. Whatever you can do will be very much appreciated. Thank you.

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### Hermansville History...

The Hermansville First National Bank was built in 1921.

## Bum Town Section House

Behind every little steam train that thought he could there was a section crew to keep things repaired so it would. The section crews stored their handcar and other equipment in a section house and it is through this window that we will take a little peek at a life of life from days gone by.

The particular section house we have in mind is a new exhibit here at the IXL Museum. It was built in the year 1885 when the Soo Line Railroad first laid track in the Hermansville area. It has been in use for over 100 years at its original location on the East end of Second Street, more commonly referred to as "Bum Town".

The area took its nickname from the fact that the section house served as an overnight rest stop and shelter for a whole



generation of homeless travelers called hobos or bums.

These men bummed rides on freight trains all over the country in search of adventure or a new place to restart their life with just a few personal things in a pack sack, often begging or even stealing a meal wherever they could find it.

Unlike a good hotel, the little section house didn't have a guest register, but the hobos recorded their passing by carving their initials and other designs on the building wall. Such things as: L.A. Slim, M.P.L.S.Kid, Lonely Speck, and others, along with dates and sometimes the day of the week. These carvings ranged from plain stick styled initials to elaborate block letters to intricately designed symbols. The variation in carvings can probably be attributed to the fact that many of these hobos, just like many of today's homeless, were very well educated, just down on their luck. Then, as now, they took life one day at a time, in many out of the way places like the little Bum Town section house.

Pete Lynch

## Museum Guides

A guide is a person whose job it is to show you places and things that are new to you. Here at the IXL Museum there is a whole crew of dedicated people who stand ready to help you relive the days when pine was king and the Wisconsin Land and Lumber Company was a dominant force in Menominee County, the United States, and yes, even the world as the tongue and groove technology in hardwood flooring developed by C.J.L. Meyer came to set the standards of the industry.

It took a lot of people and a lot of coordination to run a company the magnitude of Wisconsin Land and Lumber Co. That is what you will be learning about as the guides take you back to the time

when the screech of the saws and the sounds of the mill whistle dominated the lives of the workmen and their families.

The Company was the dominant force in the workers and their families lives. There was the job, of course, the company store where you shopped and the company house you lived in. This was all paid for with company script that was only negotiable in the company town. The workdays were long and hard and left little time for anything but work and sleep. But for most of the workers it provided them with a degree of security that they never experienced before.

The guides will also provide you with insight into the daily life of the office

workers as well as the people who supervised and owned the company as they provided the daily decisions and solutions to problems for day to day operations.

So, won't you and your friends join us as we relive those days of yesteryear every day here at the IXL Museum. There is fun and things of interest for people of all ages. There are even books and other mementoes that you can purchase so that you may bring a piece of history home with you to remind you of your trip back in time.

Come on - we'll be waiting by the front door for you.

Pete Lynch

## Hermansville History Tidbit

*From Daily Herald Leader: September 10, 1904*

EDWIN P. RADFORD There is probably not a better known man in Menominee county than Edwin P. Radford of Hermansville, for he has been instrumental in more ways than one in developing this section of the county and converting it from a wilderness into what is now termed "The Garden Spot of Michigan."

Mr. Radford was born at Fond du Lac, Wis., February 15, 1851, and received his education in the schools of that city, graduating from

the high school in 1868. After leaving school he joined a railway engineering party and helped build a part of what is now the Michigan Central railway, and from 1871 to 1875 was engaged in the surveys of the Milwaukee & Northern. Now a part of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road. In 1873 he was in camp with a party of railway engineers on the spot where the city of Iron Mountain now stands—at that time a wilderness. In 1874 to 1879 Mr. Radford was engaged by the United States government in a survey for the flowage around Lake Winnebago and the upper Fox River and in

typographical survey of the lowstone river in Montana. 1879 to 1881 he was engaged in locating the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road from Green Bay to Iron Mountain. In 1881 Mr. Radford moved to Hermansville, his present home, and has been connected with the Wisconsin Land & Lumber company since that time. He was justice of the peace and a member of the township board of Stephenson township from 1882 to 1890, when the township of Meyer was organized, and has been supervisor of that township since that time, a part of the time as chairman of the county board.

## A Glimpse of the Past



The Third Store Building built in 1892 was occupied by the Wisconsin Land & Lumber Company store until Dec. 29, 1917 when it burnt. It was located where the bank currently sits.



Bowling alley and pool tables provided entertainment to the townspeople. Located in the lower level of the Com-



Ice road sprinkler sleigh with Andy McGinnis. Sleighs hauled and sprinkled tanks of water over the roads to ease the hauling of log loads. One team of 20 men would pack the snow before water was sprinkled on the road.



The Second School House and Hermansville Bicycle Club. This picture was taken around 1897.



The "Lower Saloon" in Hermansville was operated by August Koehn and it was on Linden street south of C&NW tracks and near where the VVA Museum is today. It had Menominee River Brewing Company beer on tap. Picture about 1905.



Hermansville Train Depot.

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Preserving Hermansville's history with the help and generous support of people like you!

## Hermansville Update

### STEWART MANUFACTURING EXPANDS TO HERMANVILLE....

The former Less Brown Chair facility is coming back to life under the ownership of Gregory R. Stewart.

The 66,000 square foot buildings were purchased from the First National Bank of Norway. Stewart immediately put \$600,000 into remodeling the complex in downtown Hermansville. He intends to put another \$400,000 into the structure, including a much needed paint job, by the time renovations are complete.

"We've done basic landscaping, but the main thrust this summer was the offices and work area," said Stewart.

Stewart, who has brought the former PS Manufacturing back to life after he purchased that Spalding business in January 2003, was an executive with EMP in Escanaba before he went out on his own.

The Hermansville site has seven employees on three shifts at this time. More will be added.

### NEW BUSINESS IN TOWN....

Jason Arnold has done a wonderful job renovating the old gas station on the corner of Main and Third Street in Hermansville. The building will be home to an Auto Repair business.

### NEW OWNERSHIP AND EXPANSION....

Darin and Vicki Bertollini are the new owners of the Luft's Advertiser business. They have purchased the old Christensen Building Supply building with plans to expand the printing capabilities of the business.

### HERMANVILLE BUSINESS EXPANDS....

Mediapro Development Corporation, owned by Brian and Mark Whitens, has expanded with the addition of 2 new employees. Mediapro plans to greatly expand its business in the direction of website development, printing and graphic design.

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