

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



This extremely early and unidentified photograph, although badly faded and spotted, may record a crew from the railroad gang which cut, graded and then laid the tracks from Powers to the new iron mines during the spring, summer and fall of 1877. The photograph could also depict early miners working at the Breen Mine or the Breitung Mine (later the Vulcan Mine) as preparations were being made to ship ore once the rails were in place. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]

First *The Escanaba Tribune* and then Marquette's *The Mining Journal* began publishing letters submitted by

correspondents connected with the Menominee Range Railway branch line of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, using the pseudonyms "**Racketty**" and "**Wolverine**" respectively, to document the progress being made between Powers Station, then referred to as "42," and the new iron fields. The number 42 signified

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

that the Menominee Range Railway branch began 42 miles from Menominee.

“**Racketty**” **Clark** apparently ran a hotel at “42” when he wrote letters to *The Escanaba Tribune* (later *The Iron Port*) from that point. By mid-August, 1880, a “Range Item” entry identified his surname, as by then he was working in Quinnesec’s *The Menominee Range* newspaper office under Editor **William J. Penberthy**.

The actual identity of “**Wolverine**” has not been determined to date.

These contemporary accounts provide some of the most interesting and significant documentation of the early development of the Menominee Iron Range and provide a flavor of the life and times of those involved.

Racketty’s first letter, under the headline “Correspondence from Sec. ‘42’,” appeared in the **May 12, 1877** edition of *The Escanaba Tribune*. Portions of the column follow:

*We have planted ourself [sic – ourselves] in this place with the intention of studying Railroadology. **Chipe [sic – Clark, Lipe] & Co.**,] who have the grading from the **Breen mine** to the **Quinnesec**, have about 275 men including sub-contractors. **D.L. Wells & Co.**,] who are building the south end, have upwards of 200 men in grade, about one-half of which are on construction train. The company have [sic – has] also about 100 men on timber bridging and ties.*

We understand that the track laying on this end will soon be resumed. There is at present about four and one half miles of track down and we believe the remainder will be put down at the rate of about one-half mile per day.

Among familiar faces we notice **E.R. [sic – E.P.] Parks** of Escanaba, also our old time (literary antagonist) *Special of Ford River*, who is at present with the Engineer

corps, and wears the boss pair of stoga boots.

*Racketty is at present in the hotel business and does all the coarse hand writing. **CE. Lipe [sic – Clark, Lipe] & Co.** have raised wages from \$1.25 to \$1.40 per day and board from \$3.50 to \$4.00 per week.*

Marquette’s *The Mining Journal* for **May 12, 1877**, contained two items pertaining to the Menominee Iron Range as follows:

*FROM a letter received by us we learn that the work at the **Breen mine**, on the Menominee range, is progressing favorably. The quantity and quality of the ore which is being developed surpasses the most hopeful expectations of the company, and mining operations will be prosecuted as rapidly as the means of transportation will warrant. It is the intention of the company to mine and ship 25,000 or 30,000 tons this season, if no untoward circumstances arise to interfere with their calculations.*

THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD. – *We are informed, by parties interested in the matter, that there is probability that this road will be continued this season to the Menominee river. This will be done if the parties owning mineral lands on the line of the proposed extension manifest enough interest in the matter to give the company suitable encouragement as to the development of the properties which are known to be rich in mineral [sic – minerals].*

It would be a matter of considerable economy to the company to build the road now on the completion of the present contract, while the men and materials are on the spot, and while wages are low. We trust that the interested parties will arouse themselves on this subject.

Racketty’s second letter, dated **May 17, 1877**, appeared under the headline “Our

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Correspondence from the Menominee Range Railway” in the May 19, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune*, portions of which follow:

MR. EDITOR. – We have for some time been trying to collect our scattered thoughts, with a view to enlightening you as to the progress of railroad business, and other matters connected with this place, but have just returned from a short stroll, with the conviction that we have not been rewarded in a measure to compensate us for our untiring efforts, for, although the construction of the Menominee Range railroad is being pushed with the usual vigor, yet the general hard times have not changed one particle, and good whisky cannot be procured for less than ten cents per glass. We are a temperance man ourself [sic – ourselves], but as we take an interest in the welfare of our fellow citizens, it is their sad condition that we consider so deplorable.

Several car loads of iron rail are shipped up the road every morning, and everything looks favorable for the completion of the road somewhat sooner than has been anticipated. All that will be lacking to make this place a city at the completion of the road, [sic] will be a blast furnace and saloon, but we think the latter-named institution is at present kept on the European plan somewhere in this vicinity.

It has been hinted to us that a certain pounder or compounder of medicines hereabouts is selling forty rod, and we would caution the gent, least the broad and untiring hand of Michigan law lays its vice-like grip upon his carcass.

We have as yet had no rain in this locality this month, and if the heavens do not soon open and pour upon us their refreshing element, we have little doubt but that the coming season will be a sickly one

in this place, as the land surrounding us is composed principally of cedar swamps, and spruce and tamarack bogs.

In my hurry, I had almost forgot to mention that we have been surrounded by fire for nearly a week and it is still holding on to the dry earth in some parts of surrounding country.

Two weeks later, in its **May 26, 1877** edition, *The Mining Journal* noted:

JOHN N. ARMSTRONG has received the appointment of mining captain of the **Breitung mine** on the Menominee range, and left for that locality last Saturday accompanied by his family. Capt. Armstrong has had a large experience among the mines and minerals of Lake Superior, and we predict for him a successful career in his new field of operations.

Racketty’s next letter from **Section 42**, written on **May 23, 1877**, appeared in the June 2, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* with the following information:

A severe, if not fatal accident occurred on the new line on Saturday of last week. Michael O. Connell [sic – O’Connell], while working on a cut some three or four miles up the road, was seriously injured by the sudden caving of the bank, which threw him against a car track with such force that his collar bone was broken and his head cut in a frightful manner, besides giving him serious internal injuries.

On Sunday, the 20th, our townspeople were called upon to witness the first wedding on the new line. The contracting parties were Mr. Warren L. Benjamin and Miss Clara M. Essington, both of this place. Rev. N. Green, of Escanaba, was called upon to officiate, and we give him credit for doing the work in good style. Previous to the marriage ceremony, Mr. Green delivered a short but very interesting

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

discourse. The bride and groom tarried until Tuesday, and then left to seek fortune in some more congenial clime. We wish them much happiness in their doubled-up condition.

The people are on the lookout for Bruin [a bear], as he has been of late making very earnest demonstrations of war upon their pig pens.

The new road has up to date seven and one-half miles of rail.

*The Mining Journal reported the following in its **June 2, 1877** edition:*

*SOME 300 men are now employed on the western end of the Menominee range rail way, and the contractors expect to increase this force to 500 shortly. It is expected to have the grade completed to the **Quinnesec mine** before August 1st, and the proprietors of that mine visited the location last Monday and selected the route for the sidings to tap the openings. Everything is being made in readiness for the shipment of ore as soon as the track is laid.*

*AT the **Breen mine**, on the Menominee range, work is progressing satisfactorily. Some 300 tons of fair ore are now in stock. Stripping is still in progress, and since our last letter from that section about 225 feet more of the vein has been uncovered. The company are [sic – is] building some substantial houses on the location for the accommodation of their men, and for offices and a store.*

*Racketty's next letter, written from **Section 42** on **June 5, 1877**, appeared in the June 9, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:*

*Everything in our surroundings seems of late to have put on a lively appearance. Railroading business is in full bloom, and Messrs. **Wells & Co.**, [sic] are now running three construction trains on the new line.*

*Our little village of **Powers** is beginning to look up rapidly, and if we understand correctly, a post office will soon be established here; this latter-named institution will be a great convenience, as there is considerable amount of mail for this place, daily. Our nearest post office is at **Spaulding [sic – Spalding] Station**, distant one mile. The petition to the department calls for Miss **Carrie Brooks**, as post mistress [sic – postmistress].*

The new tank just completed, and which is intended to supply both lines, is an ornament to the road.

Morris H. Kelly**, Esq., late of Escanaba, presides behind the counter at the fine store of **Wells & Co.

***Mr. Cheney**, the general manager of the **Breen mine**, made us a call a few days since; he reports business very brisk at the Breen.*

We have been favored with a light fall of rain of late, but not quite enough to satisfy our appetite for moisture.

***Michael O'Connell**, the man who was injured up the line some two weeks since, has returned, and is mending rapidly.*

***Asa Dodge**, the old pioneer boot and shoe builder, of Escanaba, is in our village, and has his hands busily employed.*

*Under the headline "Letter from the Menominee Range Mines," Wolverine submitted his first correspondence, written on **June 1, 1877** at the **Breitung Mine** (later the **Vulcan Mine**) which appeared in the June 9, 1877 edition of *The Mining Journal* as follows:*

*The railway is completed to within three miles of the **Breen mine**; the contractor expects to have it in and considerably west of that point by the fourth of July. The grading on the western end is approaching completion rapidly, and will be ready for the iron as soon as the contractor is ready to*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

lay it. The working force has been heavily increased.

At the **Breen mine** the mining company is ready to ship ore on the first train that arrives there. Their docks and pockets are all completed and partially filled with ore. The docks will hold one thousand tons, and

the captain tells me he has things so arranged that he could load and send off three train loads of ore a day. They have stripped and left exposed ore enough to employ a large gang of miners all summer to take out, and are still stripping.



This postcard view of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway train station at Powers dates from about 1910-1915. Racketty's letter of June 5, 1877 noted, "The new tank just completed, and which is intended to supply both lines, is an ornament to the road." Perhaps this water tank replaced the 1877 tank to provide water for the steam engines pulling the trains of ore cars to Escanaba. [Alan Loftis, Internet]

There has been a new town site laid out and it is called "**Waucedah**." About half a mile from the mine the company are [sic – is] building a number of quite neat cottages at the **Breen location**. The **railway bridge across the Sturgeon river** is nearly

completed – its whole length being nearly 500 feet.

At the **Breitung mine** things are indeed active, both mining and railroad building; I also ought to say fishing, for finer trout I never saw taken in any part of the country,

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

weighing from one-half up to three pounds. Other fish are equally abundant. But this is digressing.

*The head-quarters of the three mines – the **Breen**, **Breitung** and **Quinnesec** – are located at the **Breitung mine**, and it really is a lovely spot, overlooking a beautiful lake. Also at the **Breitung** they are ready to take out ore; they have a large tract stripped, the ore laying only about from twelve to eighteen inches below the surface; it is of first quality. There is being put into the bed a tunnel one hundred feet long; they also have a stope finished from which they will take ore, and would be ready for shipping, but their dock and pockets are not completed yet. But there is a large force of men at work on them, and everything will be ready as soon as the railroad is ready.*

The gentlemen who constitute the company made their first visit the fore part of this week, and expressed themselves as highly pleased and perfectly satisfied with the manner in which everything was conducted, and highly complimented the superintendent for the successful manner in which he had carried out their plans.

*The **Quinnesec** has not been opened, but will be as soon as the railroad is advanced far enough.*

*The weather is dry and excessively warm, and vegetation is suffering severely. The woods are all on fire, being the second time this season. Mr. **Joseph Benton**'s log shanty was burned yesterday, leaving them all out doors; damages are light compared to the extent of the fire. The fire is abating slightly at this writing.*

*Wolverine's second letter, written **June 6, 1877** from **Breitung** (later **Vulcan**), appeared with the first letter, as follows:*

The grading of the railroad is being carried on night and day, showing the

intention of the contractors to complete it in the quickest possible time. Large gangs of men are at work.

*The captain of the **Breen mine** and party visited the **Breitung** last Sunday, going on horseback. They are still stripping there; also stocking it. Their first blast occurred there last week, having struck rock they could not remove without the aid of explosives, as heretofore.*

*At the **Breitung** the work on the dock and pockets is being pushed to its utmost capacity, and at the end of every day you can see that big work has been done. This past week there has been found a bed of hard ore beneath the stripping, surpassing anything on Lake Superior in quality, and the Capt. thinks his mine is going to be the "biggest thing" in the whole country. It far surpasses their most sanguine expectations.*

The dock and pockets will be ready to receive ore week after next, when work will be lively. We are anticipating big times for our little place as soon as the railroad is finished. Weather has been a little chilly the few days past, but warmer now. Gardens are all planted; health of the location good; no rain as yet; we need it very badly.

*Racketty's next letter, written from **Section 42** on **June 13, 1877**, appeared in the June 16, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* and included the following news:*

Circumstances will not permit us to write up much of the doings in this locality the present week. With a cold in our cranium, and corns on our gunboats, we are severely distressed.

It has been raining almost incessantly since our last writing, and calked boots are getting quite numerous here.

*The **saw mill at Spaulding** [sic – **Spalding**] is in full blast, and **Mr. Murphy**,*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

the superintendent of said milling business, has caused a new side track to be built from the main track to the mill, which will greatly improve their facilities for getting their lumber to the main track, as it has heretofore been conveyed on wagons, a distance of nearly one-fourth mile.

*The work on the new road is progressing finely, and we understand that more iron will be laid immediately. Fresh hands for the new road are arriving daily, and the force of **Wells & Co.**, [sic] now exceeds 600 men.*

*On Tuesday of this week, a man named **Richard Jones** had his foot crushed in a serious manner by the violent slacking of one of the construction trains. We would suggest that the engineer fraternity be a little cautious in the future. **Peter Reegan**, a man in the employ of **Wells & Co.**, had his leg broke by the caving of a bank.*

*P.S. Since writing the above, I have received intelligence that a man named **Dennis McCarthy**,] working on the upper end of the road, was killed, on the 14th, by the caving of a bank on the work.*

*A letter to the editor written by an unidentified Marquette resident identified only by the initials **C.E.W.** on **June 15, 1877**, was published in *The Mining Journal* under the headline "The Menominee Range" on June 16, 1877, as follows:*

*Taking an early start from Menominee, we expected to reach section 34, town 40, range 18, the next night, but in this we were doomed to be disappointed, for on trying to cross the **Menominee river**, about one mile below **Bad Water village**, our horses came very near being drowned, which detained us until the following morning, when we had to finish the remainder of our journey, of some twelve miles on foot.*

Throughout the Menominee district, in almost every direction, the woods were on

fire, and the blackened cinders and ashes could be seen scattered here and there even when the fire was miles away. It must be very discouraging to the lumbermen whose mills are running on short time or are idle for want of the very logs that were then burning in the "roll-ways."

*Arriving at our destination the first care was to get something to eat, for hunger was too tame a word to express the condition of our empty larders. After having done ample justice to the bounteous repast served by our genial host, **Monsieur Tobin**, and created in his mind grave doubts of an immediate famine, we began to look around.*

The location consists of two long buildings and a couple of tents sufficient to accommodate a dozen or more men.

*The mine owned by the **Commonwealth Iron Co.**, is located on the summit of a broad ridge in the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 34, town 40, range 18, and is about 150 feet above the general level of the country in this vicinity. The vein of ore is uncovered from 75 to 100 feet in the direction of its "strike" and measures across the strike 36 feet. The ore is a first class, fine, steely, specular variety and is very uniform in quality. The elevation of the mine will afford it a natural drainage for a long time after active mining begins. The stripping – a sandy-loam and sand – will average at present about nine feet. The cost of opening this mine will be comparatively very small.*

*At the **Quinnesec mine**, the present terminus of the **Menominee Range railroad**, but very little has been done this season. The location consists of one good log house, besides two or three other larger buildings in the course of construction, intended for hotels. It is the purpose,*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

however, of those interested to soon commence mining operations here.

Following the line of the half-finished railroad we come to the **Breitung**, and are

welcomed by our old friend **Capt. Jack Armstrong**, who takes no little pardonable pride in showing strangers his mine.



This extremely early and unidentified photograph, although badly faded and spotted, may record a crew from the railroad gang which cut, graded and then laid the tracks from Powers to the new iron mines during the spring, summer and fall of 1877. By June 1, 1877, the railroad was within three miles of the Breen Mine in Waucedah, and a wooden railway bridge with long, high approaches stretching nearly 500 feet was nearing completion. A portion of one of these approaches could be pictured in the background at the upper left of this photograph. The somber men appear well-equipped with shovels, sledge hammers and pick-like hammers used to drive railroad spikes. Note the child in the lower right, perhaps sitting on his father's knee. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*They are making active preparations here to be ready to ship ore as soon as the railroad is completed thus far. Their deposit of ore is located on the face of a high ridge, and the drainage is good. The ore, a blue hematite, is about identical with the **Quinnesec**.*

The formation has nearly an east and west trend and dips to the south. The ore contains just enough magnetic to attract the needle and afford a purplish red powder when pulverized. The bed of ore is quite well defined, and in places measures 50 feet in thickness. They have quite a large amount of ore in sight, and with a little more work can ship fifty or more tons per day. The hanging wall of the vein is a jasper and lean hard ore. It appears probable, that as they mine downwards, they will find more or less of hard specular ore.

At present they are driving a tunnel which will intersect the ore in about seventy feet at a point about fifty feet below the surface. This will give a fine strip of ore, almost at the very start.

*Reluctantly bidding our friend a last good-bye, we resumed our tramp along the line to the **Breen mine**. The grading on the road-bed was much more advanced than west of the **Breitung mine**.*

*Across the **Sturgeon river**, the Railroad Co. have nearly completed a very fine wooden bridge, with long high approaches on the east side. The grades are very light, not exceeding 34 feet to the mile, and the curves are not sharper than four degrees.*

*At the **Breen** we found **Captain Schwartz** in charge, and even as busy as at the **Breitung mine**. The showing of ore here is good, and promises well. It is very similar to the **Breitung** ore, and the formation there dips to the south. It is more than probable that all these mines are on*

*the same range. Mr. **Louis** [sic – **Lewis**] **Whitehead** has charge of the **Breen**, **Breitung** and **Quinnesec** mines, and no doubt will gladly welcome the first train of cars at the **Quinnesec**, so that his now tedious tramps will be no longer necessary.*

*Some seven to eight miles of track is laid, and the prospect is that the cars will be running to the **Breen** by the first of August, which will save the “old times” pull through the swamp on the winter supply road. The **Breen mine** is only 20 feet higher than the track at **Spaulding** [sic – **Spalding**], and the present line of railroad does not vary from an air line at any point more than one thousand feet.*

*Wolverine provided additional items of interest in a letter from **Spaulding** [sic – **Spalding**], dated **June 16, 1877**, the following week in *The Mining Journal's* June 23, 1877 issue as follows:*

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – *The track laying has begun again, after having been delayed some time with a rock cut, and will be laid into the **Breen mine** at once.*

*A man by the name of **Anthony Dougherty** was killed in the R.R. cut above the **Breen mine**, one day this week. He was smothered to death by the caving in of a bank of sand, burying him about ten feet beneath it. Also an **Indian** (name not known), had his arm badly cut with an ax in the hands of a companion; it was accidental.*

*The **Breen mine** has stripping 150 feet in length, and from 30 feet to 75 feet in breadth. They are constantly uncovering more ore.*

***Capt. Schwartz** has just returned to the **Breen**, bringing his family with him. **Capt. Armstrong**, of the **Breitung mine**, has lately moved his family into the district; it is a big undertaking for a lady; the mode of*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

conveying into the mine is quite of the backwoods order.

The stripping is still going on and the ore is abundant. **Superintendent Whitehead** is making every effort to have docks and pockets ready to receive ore by the time the cars are ready to run to the mine, and judging from the way the work is being pushed, they will be completed in due time.

The weather so far this month has been quite moist. Last night, June 15, there was a heavy shower of rain and hail, accompanied with severe lightning and thunder, and also a fierce wind.

This continuous rain retards work on the R.R. and in the mines, but the lumber men are happy. They tell me they will be able to clear all the streams of lumber, which is a godsend to the mill men at the mouth of the Menominee river.

The location of a postoffice at **Waucedah** has been delayed until after the R.R. is completed. It would be a difficult matter to furnish mail there with the present facilities.

They are crowding the ore onto the docks at the **Breen**, as the road is being pushed rapidly to that point. The rock cut that has delayed them so long is finally finished.

The **Quinnesec mine** is being surveyed with a view to ascertain the best point for opening it.

Wolverine's letter from **Spaulding [sic – Spalding]** dated **June 25, 1877** was published in *The Mining Journal's* June 30, 1877 issue as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – The weather was quite cold the latter part of last week, but this week opens very warm and pleasant, and there are indications of rain.

Last Tuesday, the 19th of June, was pay day at the **Breen and Breitung mines**, and the railroad men got their pay a day or two

before. There was quite a loud old time, and had there been a saloon here things would have been pretty generally stirred up.

The tunnel at the **Breitung** was finished on the 22d, striking a fine bed of ore. The tunnel is 75 feet long.

A Frenchman by the name of **Felix Surprise [sic – Surprise]**, who was working on the rail road about five miles east of the **Breitung mine**, while peeling cedar bark on the morning of the 20th to cover a shanty, cut a fearful gash in his arm just above the elbow. He was carrying his ax on his shoulder through thick underbrush, his toe caught and he fell, and the ax slipped down on his arm, and it being very sharp nothing but the bone of the arm stopped it. **Dr. Belknap**, the mining surgeon, sewed the wound together and otherwise dressed it, and sent him home to Wisconsin.

A man working at the **Breitung mine** cut his hand quite severely with an ax, which will lay him up for a few days. His name is **Lego [sic – Legault]**.

We recently received a visit from **Mr. Conrad**, of **Saginaw mine** fame. He is looking after some iron land interests about twenty miles west of this location.

The **Railroad store**, belonging to parties from Chicago, has been sold to other parties from Chicago, and is going to be moved toward the western terminus of the road.

The docks and pockets at the **Breitung** are finished, and they will begin to shove ore into them at once with the full force.

It is rumored that the track will be completed to the **Breen** this week.

Racketty's letter from **Section 42**, dated **July 5, 1877**, appeared in *The Escanaba Tribune's* July 7, 1877 edition as follows:

After a lapse of two weeks we proceed to enlighten you with the news of the week.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

On Friday last, **Joseph Goetz**, a laborer in the employ of **Wells & Co.**, was somewhat injured by the falling of a bank on the new road; he was taken to **camp No. 1**, and **Dr. Fortier**, of Menominee, was summoned, who pronounced the man out of danger. Goetz was sent to his home near Green Bay, the following Sunday. The iron is laid within a short distance of the **Breen mine**, on the new line.

Sheriff Ruprecht, of Menominee county, was in this place a few days since hunting **illicit liquor dealers**; they say that Joe had fifty dollars for the person that would point out the guilty parties, but it appears that his labors were not crowned with success.

The glorious 4th passed by us with nothing in the way of excitement except some six or half dozen exhibitions of fistic exercise, after which the wounded were, with few exceptions, carried off the field dead – i.e. dead drunk – and, indeed, your humble correspondent, Racketty, had instruments of various makes (principally Old Rye seven shooters), placed in unpleasant proximity to his smeller, but as he has long since shook the gang, he of course retreated in good order.

One of the enthusiastic citizens succeeded in getting away with a pint of kerosene oil, property of Mr. **Duncan McMillan**; we would propose that he now proceed to light himself.

As our time is short, and confusion great, we will proceed to stop.

Wolverine's letter was published in *The Mining Journal's* **July 7, 1877** issue as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – A great many of the workmen in the mines and on the railroad are going away to spend the fourth of July; there will a few stay and work.

The cars run very close to the **Breen mine** now, within a mile and a half, and they will be detained there about two weeks on account of a cut through a hill not being finished; their men left them, so they had to stop work, or it would have been all ready for the iron.

The **boarding camps** all along the western division will be moved up in a few days, the bed of the road being so nearly finished up to the western terminus.

Ore is being rushed on to the docks and into the pockets at both the **Breitung and Breen mines** at a rapid rate. The ore that comes out of the tunnel at the **Breitung mine** is very fine, entirely unmixed with rock of any description. The ore at the **Breen** is about the same quality, but is not as convenient for mining as it is on the lower ground.

The company will probably put in a large stock of general merchandise at the **Breitung** to supply all their miners as soon as the railroad men move out of their store.

The boys bring in beautiful strings of trout every day; the opportunities for catching them are as fine as I ever saw, and not far off, either. There is a little lake [**Lake Hanbury**] a few rods from the location at the **Breitung**, which is filled with all kinds of fish that usually inhabit such lakes. The shooting this fall is going to be first-class.

No births, deaths or marriages.

Racketty's letter from **Section 42**, dated **July 12, 1877**, was published in the July 14, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:

The glorious Fourth has come and gone, the jug has been buried, and once more peace and quietude reign supreme in **42**. You may think the above expression wholly uncalled for, but had you been at this place on the Fourth, you would have

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

remarked without hesitation, "Why is this thus?"

Last Wednesday, that glorious one hundred and first anniversary of our national independence, when every loyal citizen of this enlightened country should have been offering a tribute of respect to the star spangled banner, the boys at **42** were whooping it up lively. The day was occupied in the usual manner, and in the evening a fair display of fire works [sic – fireworks], together with the firing of an anvil, and a genuine dynamite explosion, after which the people were addressed by Mr. **J. Ronan**, of this place, who made some very appropriate remarks. He was followed by Hon. **Garry Forrest**, who hails from the south of Ireland, and is recruiting his health in this place.

The post office at **Powers** of which we made mention in a previous number, has been decided on, and Miss **Carrie Roberts** of this place has been appointed post mistress [sic – postmistress], with the necessary bonds signed and approved; this will be a great convenience to the citizens of this place.

Two gentlemen from **Negaunee**, [sic] were in this village last week, who stated their intention of building a drug store at the **Breen mine**.

John Skogel, an employee with **Wells & Co.**, was run over by one of the construction trains, and almost instantly killed, on Tuesday of this week. It appears that Skogel attempted to jump off the cars, while in motion, and struck against some obstruction, which threw him under the train. The deceased is of Swedish origin, and has a brother lying ill at **Menominee**.

The **Breen mine** can now be reached by rail from this place.

Wolverine's letter from **Spalding**, dated **July 10, 1877**, appeared in the July 14,

1877 issue of *The Mining Journal* as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – The fourth of July passed off very quietly. On the east end of the road the men all laid off and had a general spree, also the men at the **Breen mine** did not work, but every thing [sic – everything] was quiet; they indulged in a picnic which was a very pleasant affair.

We can say now that the rail-road [sic – railroad] is at the **Breen**, a thing which has been looked for with a great deal of anxiety, and the grading is nearly completed between there and the **Sturgeon river**, so they can push the iron laying right ahead if they choose to; but instead of that I think they will make that headquarters for a time and ballast up what they have laid, as the bridge across the Sturgeon river will delay them some time.

The fourth at the **Breitung mine** was spent by the men working as usual, also on the railroad the same; but in the evening there was a large bonfire and a small show of fireworks, and the stars and stripes were flung to the breeze for the first time in this part of the country, creating a great deal of excitement in consequence, and the firing of guns and singing of national airs.

One of the bosses on the railroad, **Mr. Chapman** was his name, I believe, had his shoulder dislocated while on duty. It was soon adjusted by **Dr. Belknap**, the mining surgeon, and he is doing well at present.

They have got to increase their pocket capacity for ore at the mines, especially at the **Breitung**, where they are taking out now one hundred tons Per [sic – per] day, and as soon as they increase their force, which they are going to do soon, the amount of ore taken out will be increased proportionately.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*Buildings are beginning to go up pretty fast now, but they can't complete them for the want of lumber for which they have to wait from below, by railroad. Not having lumber has put us back here in building very much, but the cars being at the **Breen** they can haul it on wagons. **Supt. Whitehead** is expecting a number of gentlemen who constitute the company here to-day [sic – today], and he is going to the **Breen** with horses and saddles to show them the way in, that being our only means of getting over unless we foot it.*

Racketty's letter from **Powers**, dated **July 19, 1877**, was published in the July 21, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:

The present week being pay week on the road has been one of unusual excitement in this place.

*The latest excitement is a **stabbing affray** between **two natives of Poland**, the same taking place at camp 4 on the new road. One of the parties received a severe knife cut on the right side, almost directly under the armpit; he was sent to camp and his wound dressed, and is now in fair shape to recover. The perpetrator of this foul deed has since escaped. The name of the injured man is **Joe Blitskie**, and it is said the deed was done without provocation on his part.*

Work on the new road is still rushing.

*Our new postoffice [sic – post office] is doing a fair business under the supervision of postmistress [sic – Postmistress] **Brooks**. And now we are beginning to feel like a business community.*

Wolverine's next letter appeared in the **July 28, 1877** edition of *The Mining Journal* as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – *They are making extensive improvements at the **Breen** now, since the cars have brought*

*them lumber; their houses are rapidly approaching completion, and it looks really like a town. The docks are being largely added to, and **Supt. Whitehead** has just given them a plan of pockets to build, which everyone thinks surpasses in strength any they ever saw.*

*Railroad iron has given out, and has caused a cessation in track laying, which is probably just as well, as the bridge over the **Sturgeon river** is yet unfinished, and there is about a week's grading before they can get to the river; but all on the west side of the stream is ready for the iron up to three miles west of the **Breitung**, and the workmen have all moved to the western end, and will have that part all ready for the iron long before they are ready to lay it.*

Captain Armstrong has made extensive additions to his ore dock at the **Breitung** so that its capacity for holding ore, including the pockets, is several thousand tons. The ore continues just as fine as at first. The captain is going to increase the facilities for working by putting in two or three more stopes. Also, after a while, he will run in another tunnel to strike the bed of ore farther east, giving him a very extensive face to work upon.

There is just north of the mine a beautiful ledge of Potsdam sandstone, which comes out in large blocks, and some time may richly pay for quarrying. It makes a fine, rich building stone.

Dr. N.P. Hulst, of Milwaukee, has been here for some time, making preparations to strip the **Quinnesec mine**. He is home now, but will be back soon and commence the work of stripping. I understand it's a very extensive piece of work, requiring a great deal of energy and perseverance, of all [sic – all of] which the doctor possesses a great abundance.

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

No exciting news from this quarter this week.

Wolverine's next letter appeared in the **August 4, 1877** edition of *The Mining Journal* as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – *The spur at the **Breen mine** is finally laid, so now as soon as the balance of the road is in condition they will begin to ship ore.*

*All supplies come up as far as the **Breen**, and passengers can ride up if they are at the depot when the train leaves every morning; but there are no regular trains on the road as yet, and probably will not be until the work is accepted by the engineers.*

The eastern end is in very fine condition, even better than the old road.

*The new houses at the **Breen** are now about completed; one or two of them are receiving their occupants, and a more tasty [sic – tasteful], convenient and well-constructed house I never saw put up by any company. They are first-class in every particular, with nice front yards and large roomy garden spots in the rear; **Supt. Whitehead** has not left a thing undone that should be done to make them perfect in comfort and convenience.*

***Mr. Hagerman**, president of the company, from Milwaukee, and **A.C. Brown**, one of the stockholders, were here last week and expressed themselves highly delighted with the manner in which everything was being carried on; also with the future prospects of the mine. They are both gentlemen who are glad to see their employes [sic – employees] comfortable and doing well. They visited all three of the mines, but in consequence of the railroad difficulties outside they hastened home. Their intention was to spend a number of days up here.*

*They selected a town site while here, and, I believe, settled on "**Vulcan**" as the*

*name of both town and mine, and work is to begin at once on the new town site. Chopping and clearing off, preparatory to building the town, has already begun. It will overlook the lake [**Lake Hanbury**], and will be much nearer the mine than the present location.*

*They are going to commence work at the **Quinnesec** at once. **Dr. N.P. Hulst**, of Milwaukee, who is also a stockholder, will be in charge of operations.*

The weather still continues excessively warm with now and then a shower, but that don't [sic – doesn't] seem to cool the atmosphere altogether.

*A child belonging to **Mr. Thos. Rice**, of the **New York farm**, was severely burned last Saturday about the neck and shoulders. I believe the doctor thinks the child will recover.*

No news of startling character; all quiet on the Menominee.

Racketty's **August 7, 1877** letter from **Powers** appeared in *The Escanaba Tribune's* August 11, 1877 edition as follows:

We have of late been taking a short holiday in the iron district, and although we do not feel exactly competent to give a fair description of what we beheld on our tramp, still we will endeavor to do justice to the country surrounding us.

*Your correspondent started on the 6 A.M. construction train and arrived at the **Breen mines** [sic – mine,] a distance of about 13 miles, at 7 o'clock and thence on foot to headquarters of **C. Lipe & Co.**, about 6 miles further up the grade.*

*We did not tarry long here, learning that there was a heap of brook trout to be had for the catching, in **Pine Creek**, we went and did considerable fishing, but no catching before sunset.*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*As we, like veteran sportsmen[,] took no grub along, we dined on wood buck and wild pigeon, and after a night of warfare with gnats and mosquitos, retraced our steps to the **Breitung**. This mine is located in a beautiful spot, and from what we saw of it, appeared to be doing a smashing business.*

*After leaving the mine, we proceeded to take in **Lake Hamburg** [sic - Hanbury], situate [sic – situated] about one quarter of a mile from the mine. This little lake is a marvel of beauty, being about one mile long and one-half mile wide, having no visible outlet. It is perfectly alive with large bass and pickerel, which can be seen at a depth of 30 feet, in its transparent waters.*

On the opposite shore from the mine and railroad grade, [sic] are huge boulders of rock which rise some 45 or 50 feet above the level of the water; these rocks are seemingly one compact mass, but are of various colors. On a close examination of this country, we observed a quarry, or bed, of splendid American marble, and another of variegated slate, either of which would pay some enterprising man to examine.

*The work on the railroad is still on the move, and without doubt but little time will be taken to complete the same. The bridge over the **Sturgeon river**, [sic] is seemingly a grand affair, and we opine that it will eclipse anything of its kind, on the **C. & N.W. R'y**, between Marquette and Chicago.*

*On Saturday of last week a man named **Larson** was run over by one of the construction trains, and had his knees badly crushed. The accident was caused by the man's carelessness in jumping from the train while under motion.*

We report weather in this part, very fine.

The following information regarding the Menominee Iron Range appeared in the

August 18, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune*:

*The probability now is, that the **Menominee Range Railroad** will be extended twenty miles further west. The deposits of iron seem to be full as good on the other side of the **Menominee river**, as on this, and in the case of the **Commonwealth mine**, it is supposed to be better.*

*A singular fact is noticeable along the line of the **C. & N.W. R'y**. Where the original pine, cedar and hemlock forest has been burned off, the ground is now covered with a dense growth of poplar. The question is, where does the seed come from? If this transformation of the pine districts keep [sic – keeps] on, it will not be long before an evergreen tree will become a rarity in sections that was [sic – were] previously covered with them. In our own locality, tracts of burnt pine lands are growing up with oak, poplar, and similar trees.*

*It is proposed to call the new paper to be started at **Quinnesec**, "**The Iron Center**." That name will be very appropriate, as the town will be about in the center of the iron ranges, on both sides of the river.*

*Should everything prove as favorable as is anticipated on the range, **Quinnesec** must from its proximity to the magnificent water powers close by, make in the future a manufacturing town of importance. The diversified natural resources in the vicinity will induce the establishment of manufactories other than iron.*

An addition item reprinted from the *Menominee Herald* in the **August 18, 1877** edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* noted:

*The **Menominee Mining Company** has taken a lease of the forty acres adjoining the **Breen mine** on the east, and has*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*decided to commence explorations upon it immediately. The property belongs to **Judge Ingalls** and the **Breen Brothers**, and undoubtedly contains the same formation and mineral deposits which are found on the Breen Mine.*

*The **Menominee Mining Co.**, [sic] is very anxious to get an ore train out from the **Breen Mine**, and preparations are being made to effect this as soon as possible, certainly before the close of next week.*

*Racketty's **August 22, 1877** letter from **Powers** also appeared in the August 25, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:*

*Notwithstanding the drawbacks of the outside world and the pullbacks of its feminine citizens, our little hamlet is lively beyond imagination, and the daily arrival of ore shipments from the **Breen mine** serve to heighten our enthusiasm.*

*One of the engines (No. 83,) working on the construction, was considerably used up by being thrown off the track above the **Breen mine**, on Saturday last; she was towed into **Escanaba**, and another engine (No[.] 135,) brought to replace the damaged one.*

*The **saw mill at Spalding** has suspended operations, owing to the low water and scarcity of logs.*

*The directors of the **C. & N.W. R'y** took a trip up the new road on Tuesday last.*

Our surroundings were visited by a copious fall of rain Tuesday night.

*Under the headline "Breen Mine Ore," the following article was published in the **August 25, 1877** edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:*

*The first train of iron ore from the **Breen mine** on the Menominee Range, arrived here Aug. 17th, since then one train a day has been sent in – **The Schr. [Schooner] Our Son**, [sic] took the first vessel load,*

*consigned to **Andrew Hitchcock & Co., Cleveland**. This ore is to be thoroughly tested there and we think the yield of iron will be equal to expectations.*

Other iron mines will follow as the road is extended and the prospect is, [sic] that the small stream which has commenced to pour in from that range, will be increased indefinitely.

*As **Escanaba** is the only outlet by water, for the ore of this mineral district, it is very likely that this port will soon regain her former prestige and a few years of business, is bound to produce a marked change in our surroundings.*

*Wolverine's letter appeared in the **August 25, 1877** edition of *The Mining Journal* as follows:*

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – *At the **Breen mine** it is beginning to look more like heavy work, as they have just finished putting up an immense derrick with which they can lower and raise a loaded car and place it on the track for transportation. New houses are being finished and occupied by new families. Everything is already [sic – ready] for shipping ore as soon as the railroad company will receive it. The side track and loops are all finished.*

*There were several car loads of iron pushed upon the **Breen mine** side track the other day, preparatory to laying track again. There are about fifteen miles of road bed finished for the iron now, and all will be done in a month, probably.*

*A man by the name of **Barney Collum** was killed in one of the cuts the other night by a stump rolling upon him.*

*Everything looks very prosperous at the **Breitung**. To-day [sic – Today] is pay day [sic – payday] at both mines. The men receive their pay and go at once to work, showing that they appreciate the idea of laying up their wages these hard times.*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

The weather continues very warm with an occasional shower of rain. There is a general good state of health.

A great many deer are making their appearance in this locality, which will make fine sport for sportsmen.

*LATER – The shipping of ore began at the **Breen** on the 16th, when **Capt. Schwartz** had seventeen cars loaded, 50 cars on the 18th, and 50 cars on the 20th.*

*Mr. **John R. Wood**, of **Ishpeming**, paid us a visit to-day [sic – today]; he is on his way to the **Commonwealth mine**.*

Scarcely a day passes without a great number of men passing up the line; most of them are after work, but some are looking for a place to locate in business. Such are the men we want.

*They are still laying iron, and it will be but a short time before the track will reach the **Breitung**.*

***Supt. Whitehead** is pushing the work at the **Breitung mine** very energetically, as well as at the **Breen**, and both mines look very promising. Improvements at both localities are constantly being made, and each place begins to look quite town like.*

A great many hunters are coming in now, mostly from Chicago, and game is plenty [sic — plentiful].

*Mr. **A.C. Brown** brought a party of ladies with him the other day over the wagon road. They were nieces of his and his daughter. They expressed themselves highly delighted with the trip. We were glad to see them – wish some more would come.*

*On **August 28, 1877**, Racketty submitted a bit of poetry about the Menominee Range Railway, written in **Powers**, to *The Escanaba Tribune* which appeared in its September 1, 1877 issue as follows:*

*Did you ever shake hands with the pick or the spade,
And work on the muddy railway grade;
If not, take a trip to the **Menominee Range**,
And you will soon undergo a remarkable change.*

*You must pull off your fancy tie, collar and shirt,
And make up your mind to go shoveling dirt;
You're sure of a job, and you'll get all your pay,
Which comes up in full, ten shillings per day;
And this we call good, considering the times,
For 'tis hard nowadays to turn up the dimes.
At **Powers Junction** begins the new line,
Which extends to a point called the **Quinnesec mine**.*

*Along the route are several prominent stations,
Populated by representatives from most all the nations;
But suffice to say, they're a fine lot of men;
To describe all their merits would wear out our pen.*

*One thing of importance we forget to mention,
Which we're sure will attract your people's attention;
'Tis the deer, and other desirable game,
Of every describable nature and name.*

*And although quite a secret, we must let you know,
That the streams which through our forests do gracefully flow,
Are filled with the angler's delight i.e. the brook trout,
Which would sharpen your appetite without any doubt.*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*So clean up your gun, and collar your devil.
Also your fishing rod, fly hook and swivel,
And make us a visit, it won't hurt you a
particle
And we'll be well paid for writing this article.*

In the **September 1, 1877** edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* under the headline "On The Menominee Range" the following items were published:

*The new town of **Powers** is lively as usual, and everybody seems to be busy. We noticed quite a number of signs of those necessary adjuncts of civilization, – saloons, – scattered all through the place since our last visit, and are told that about pay day, they sometimes produce scenes that are altogether too lively. The churches and schoolhouses [sic – school houses] that are to be, [sic] have not yet appeared. The store of **D.L. Wells & Co.**, [sic] is doing an active business, and the clerks are kept busy all day, and seemingly part of the night.*

*Mr. **S.H. Selden**, chief engineer, and his corps, are actively engaged on the railroad work, and judging from appearances, have not much idle time on their hands.*

*The main boarding house for the men, – **camp one**, – is kept by **Mr. Essington**. He has now about 90 men, although the number is sometimes increased to more than 100. The bill of fare is excellent, and from the way in which the viands disappear at each meal, is unquestionably relished by the men. Viewed as a first-class watering place, the accommodations would not be considered tiptop, but for a hungry man just out of the woods, the cuisine, superintended by Mr. E. and his estimable lady, are just the thing.*

We had some little opportunity of examining some of the farming land in the vicinity, and were very much pleased with

*the quality of the soil, and growth of the timber. Of course, from the newness of the country, it is impossible that the soil could have been thoroughly tested, but wherever farms have been made along the line of the supply roads to the various lumber camps, the result has been attended with gratifying results. – Three and a half miles from here, Mr. **Barney Bromsted** has a young farm that he purchased three years ago from one of the lumbering firms. At that time, some 15 acres had been cleared. This year he will raise from 60 acres now in cultivation, a surplus above his own requirements, [sic] of about \$1200. His crops consist principally of oats, potatoes, buckwheat, hay, and turnips. He is well satisfied, and says that any year he cannot clear \$1000 from his place, he will sell it. The work is done principally by himself, besides a good deal of labor thrown in on the road. There is an immense quantity of land just as good as Mr. Bromsted's around here, waiting for a settler to come and make himself independent in a few years.*

*At the newly-fledged town of **Waucedah**, we found everything lively, and the citizens jubilant and enthusiastic over their prospects. Several new buildings are going up, in addition to those already built.*

*The **Breen mine** is now shipping ore regularly, and enlarged and extended their operations lately. They have erected a large derrick, and now handle the ore with more ease. Explorations for ore are to be commenced immediately east of the present mine location. The indications are good, and it is quite likely that the same formation extends in that direction. The chain of the **Hamilton Lakes** in the vicinity are beautiful little sheets of water, and as they with the connecting streams of water are generally filled with the finny tribe, they are becoming favorite resorts for those*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

piscatorily [sic] inclined. Mr. Selden's family are enjoying here a pleasant season of camping out.

*The **Breitung mine** is opening splendidly under the superintendency of **Capt. Whitehead**. This mine is located in a hill which rises up between two and three hundred feet in the highest part. The arrangements for handling the ore are excellent, and when all the plans are completed, it can be worked very economically. The ore is a dark blue hematite and the best will yield somewhere in the neighborhood of 65 per cent of iron.*

A tunnel 75 feet in length has been driven into the face of the hill, to the vein on the second level, which will be about 50 feet above the railroad track, exposing a 75 feet [sic] face of ore. At present a series of pockets will receive it, when finished, and from them it will be run into cars alongside. Just now they are dumping in stock piles, and have on hand 2500 tons of first-class and 1000 tons of second-class ore.

*Several hewed log buildings are going up for the accommodation of the men. This mine is beautifully located. At a distance of less than a quarter of a mile, directly in front, is **Lake Hamburg [sic – Lake Hanbury]**, – the most beautiful little sheet of water, about a mile in length and a quarter of a mile in width.*

The formation of the lake is somewhat singular. On the north side the ground gradually comes down to the edge, and for a distance of perhaps 200 feet the water is quite shallow, and the bottom covered with clear white sand. It then commences to deepen very fast until the south shore is reached, where the rocks rise abruptly, in some places 50 feet high, and a hill behind, probably rising fully as much more. The strata, which seems [sic – seem] to be of a ferruginess [sic – ferruginous] character,

are tilted up from the lake at an angle of about 45 degrees.

The water is very deep and clear, and in some spots the rocks descend sheer into it, to a great depth. The deepest part is about 100 feet. The fishing is reported to be excellent. As a brisk northwest wind was blowing at the time we were there, we did not have an opportunity of substantiating the assertion.

It is certainly a gem of a lakelet, and is admirably framed by the rising hills around it, all fringed with the green of the virgin forests of pine and other woods, and must eventually add much to the pleasure of the dwellers of the future town.

*At the mine we met Mr. **Wm. Ross**, who was formerly in the **railroad company's store** in this town. Mr. **E.P. Shine**, reporter for the **Detroit Free Press**, is also rusticated [sic] there.*

*The railroad track is completed to **Sturgeon River**, about two miles this side of the **Breitung mine**, and the grading and bridges are almost finished as far as **Quinnesec**.*

*An article on Escanaba's future prosperity appeared in the **September 1, 1877** issue of *The Escanaba Tribune*, reprinted from the *Negaunee Iron Herald*:*

*The effects of the interruption to the general business of the country seems to have reached this place with considerable force, – one of the immediate causes of the unusual local stagnation being the recent heavy reduction made by the **railroad company** in the working forces employed in the shops, and about the yards and ore docks. This, however[,] can only be temporary.*

*No town on the peninsula has a more flattering prospect for future prosperity than has **Escanaba**. Besides having one of the best harbors known to inland navigation*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

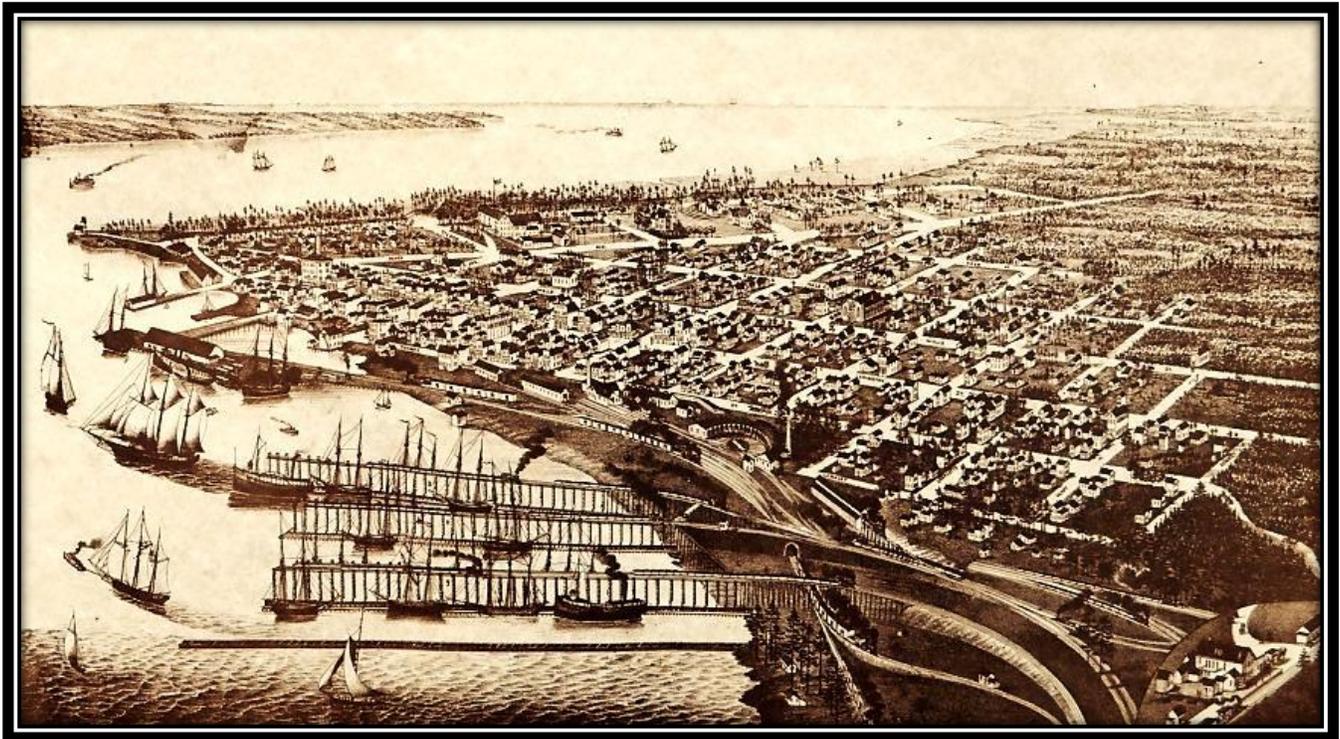
By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

[sic – navigation], *it has extensive and valuable fisheries, and an agricultural interest that is yearly growing in importance.*

*During the past two or three years the adaptability of its climate and soil to the production of most of the cereals has been conclusively demonstrated, and only the absence of milling privileges now prevents their production in a considerable degree. We understand that an effort is now being made looking to the establishment of a small **flouring mill** in the vicinity of **Flat Rock** where an excellent water privilege is afforded. Should the project succeed, it will*

have a magical effect upon the farming interests and a substantial element of prosperity to the place.

*The development of the **Menominee Iron Range** is gradually increasing the shipping interests, and with the return of better prices in the iron market a large volume of trade will be diverted to this port. There are also heavy lumbering interests only awaiting a recovery from the depression in this important branch, when its development will contribute as much as any other one thing to the growth and prosperity of the place.*



This 1881 bird's-eye view of Escanaba, Michigan, by J.J. Stoner, of Madison, Wisconsin, was lithographed by Beck & Pauli. Note the early ore docks and schooner ships in the harbor. [Library of Congress]

On the whole we see nothing discouraging in the present outlook of the place. Besides the interests mentioned

above, there are many well established details of thrift – all in the hands of good men – who have faith in the stability and

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

ultimate success. Among these may be mentioned such as **J.F. Oliver, W.J. Wallace, Louis Schram, Myers Ephraim Schiller & Atkins, John K. Stack, E. Gaynor, the Royces,** and many others, in whose hands the commercial affairs of the town are sure to be properly conducted. These parties have taken a lively interest in the place by liberal investments, are good business men, and evince a disposition to maintain the general welfare of the town.

The citizens of Escanaba certainly command the resources of commercial greatness in a large degree, and can well afford to await the time of the complete development which is sure to come, and is very likely near at hand.

Wolverine's next letter appeared in the **September 1, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal* as follows:

THE MENOMINEE RANGE. – The railroad will be completed to the **Breitung mine** in about two weeks, if no serious delays occur. The bridge over the **Sturgeon river** is nearly finished, and the grading is progressing steadily.

The shipments from the **Breen mine** to this date comprise 200 cars, or about 1,200 tons – not quite half the ore which had previously been mined. Outsiders visiting us, particularly those acquainted with iron ores, are quite agreeably surprised to find the Menominee range ores so rich and pure. Experts pronounce them equal to any of the same class of ores found in the Marquette district.

At the **Breitung** work is progressing favorably, though operations have been somewhat retarded by the delay in laying the railroad track to this point. Still, the men find enough to do in building and finishing houses for the winter, and it is confidently expected that the road will be finished in time to ship all the ore contracted for this

season's delivery. It is doubtful, however, if shipments will be made through the winter by rail to the Wisconsin furnaces, though there has been considerable talk to that effect.

A laughable occurrence took place here the other morning. Our gentlemanly clerk "went out a hunting" for deer, and was not long in coming upon a large herd. Singling out one of them, he banged away, and put eighteen buckshot into its neck, which was broken. Fearing it was not dead, and that it might start up and get away, he drew his revolver and put six pistol balls into his head, when, notwithstanding it did not stir, he ran up and, clubbing his gun, beat it over the head until he was fully satisfied it was quite dead – though he did not come to that conclusion until he had broken his gun. He then came home and reported, and sent out some men to bring his trophy into camp. We all agreed that he couldn't have killed that deer any deader if he'd had a whole pack of artillery along with him.

Deer are more than plenty.

Racketty's weekly letter, written in **Powers** on **September 6, 1877**, appeared in the September 8, 1877 edition of *The Escanaba Tribune* as follows:

The business prowess of our little village is evidently on the decline. The contractors (**Wells & Co.**) are moving their forces up the line, and undoubtedly the future rush of business will follow the laboring class. It is impossible to say where your correspondent will locate at, but without a doubt, will turn up in some remote part of the country at no far distant day, but as (this is thus,) we must give the place its just dues, and we are confident that as a **farming country**, it cannot be excelled on the upper peninsula.

Of course some of your readers may think the above assertion a little loud, but as

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

we are not financially interested, we are ready to substantiate our remark at any time, provided some of your readers will take the trouble to call on us. Mr. Bromsted is at present unearthing potatoes at a rapid rate, and we are in receipt of some of the vegetable product of his farm, which defy competition, unless the farmer locates in his vicinity.

That delicacy, called venison, has been suffering greatly in this vicinity, within a few weeks past, and the various hunters along the line are now disposing of venison saddles at 4c per pound, and throw in the hide at that.

A genuine black tail deer was shot eight miles up the line, one day last week. This, we believe, is the first of this species ever captured on the upper peninsula. How he ever got so far north, [sic] will probably forever remain a mystery.

The rail on the new road is laid to the Breitung mine, and just now those who admire scenery sublime, [sic] are to be accommodated without the difficulties attending the weary pedestrian.

Under the headline "Mining and Furnace News," the following information appeared in the **September 22, 1877** edition on *The Escanaba Tribune*:

The immense richness of the Menominee iron range is developing quite rapidly, and fully answering all the brilliant expectations that were augured for it at the commencement. But for the continued depression in the iron market, it would develop [sic – develop] still more rapidly; already there is a prospect of a speedy extension of the railroad, across the Menominee river, to the extremely rich Commonwealth deposit, and matters are looking toward another arrangement, whereby another branch will be extended, [sic] through the continuation of deposits,

between this and the west end of the Marquette range.

Several well defined and extensive bodies of ore are in the hands of parties who will probably make no effort at mining them, [sic] until the tone of the market improves. This is probably just as well, for although the mining of ore in this region, except under very favorable circumstances, can hardly be classed as remunerative, yet, the amount mined and shipped appears to suffer no diminution, but on the contrary, is increasing. But as business in some localities is resuming some of its former activity, owners of mines are taking a little more cheerful view of things than they did two months ago.

MENOMINEE RANGE. – *The work of getting out ore still continues at the Breen mine. A new shaft is being sunk to test the quality of ore below the water level. Should much water be encountered, pumping apparatus of sufficient capacity to keep it clear, [sic] will be inserted. It is not very likely, [sic] that much more ore will be shipped this season.*

The work of stripping at the Quinnesec has commenced under charge of Dr. Hulst. It is not the intention to get out much ore this fall, but everything will be placed in shape for a vigorous development of this fine body of ore early in the spring. The railroad will probably reach there this week.

The following article appeared in the **September 22, 1877** edition of *Marquette's The Mining Journal*:

We learn that work has been commenced at the Quinnesalk [sic – Quinnesec] mine, a contract having been let to a Milwaukee party. It is the intention to ship a cargo of the ore before the close of the season. The grading of the west end of the railroad has been completed, and the

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

track will be laid into the mine before many days.

The following two items appeared in the **September 29, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal*:

AN interest in 3,000 acres of well selected iron lands, in the Menominee Range, and adjacent to mines now being opened, for sale at a bargain. For further information apply to or address the editor of the MINING JOURNAL.

MAJ. T.B. BROOKS and **Prof. Pumpelly** have returned from their examination of the **Menominee Range**, and speak highly of its prospects. They say the **Commonwealth mine**, on the Wisconsin side of the river, gives promise of ultimately becoming one of the best mines in the country, the deposit being apparently very large and the ore of the best quality.

In its **October 6, 1877** issue, the newspaper formerly called *The Escanaba Tribune* announced its name had been changed to *The Iron Port*, as Escanaba "will be the only outlet, except by rail, of the vast iron deposits of the **Menominee Range**, and are the partial outlet of the long developed **Marquette deposits**."

Additional Menominee Iron Range mining news appeared in the **October 6, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal* as follows:

*THE Menominee Herald says that the prospect for the extension of the railroad to the **Commonwealth mine** in Wisconsin, [sic] is every day growing brighter. If the deposit of ore is nearly as extensive as reported, and we see no reason to doubt its being so, the building of a railroad to it will be a question of short time only.*

*The same paper records the fact that an order has been received for 4,000 tons more of the **Breen** ore, from the same*

parties to whom the first shipment were made. This is the best evidence that could be had of the good quality of the ore, unless it turns out that it is being sold at figures below the market rates – which is very often done by parties trying to introduce a new ore, however unexceptionable its quality.

MENOMINEE RANGE. – Our correspondent writes us that the iron is laid to within two miles of the **Quinnesec mine**. A report received from the furnace owners who took the first cargoes of **Breen** ore is very satisfactory, the more especially as it was accompanied by an order for all the ore of the same kind that can be mined and shipped the present season. As a consequence the mine force has been increased, and from twenty-five to thirty cars are being shipped daily.

*The name of the **Breitung mine** has been changed to **Vulcan**, which will also be the name of the new post-office, which has been applied for. The spur at the **Vulcan** is being pushed vigorously, the company being desirous of shipping all the ore possible before the close of navigation.*

*A big show is being made at the **Quinnesec**, and mining will soon begin, in order to have a cargo ready by the time the road is finished to the mine.*

A crude map, showing the route of the railroad from Escanaba to Commonwealth, Wisconsin, was reproduced above the following article which appeared in the **October 13, 1877** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*:

*THE above profile will show something of the direction of the railroad, through what is called the **Menominee Iron Range**, from **Escanaba**, the port of of [sic] outlet, westwardly across the **Menominee river**, to the **Commonwealth mine**, in the State of*

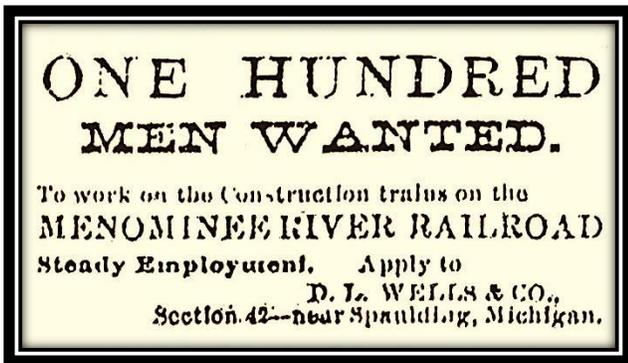
MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Wisconsin. The stars indicate the mines that are at present opened along the line. There are other deposits the future value of which time will develop.

*At present the railroad is only finished as far as the **Quinnesec mine**, but the probability is that it will be completed as far as the **Commonwealth** next season. It will be observed that the line runs nearly due west almost to the river, and from there diverges in a northwesterly direction, to the farthest mine. As mineral deposits do not terminate there, this road may be extended indefinitely still further west, at no very distant day.*

*At the Junction at **Powers** this mineral range has a communication by the **C. & N.W. R'y.** with the towns at the mouth of the **Menominee River** and with the cities farther south. As the iron trade revives and the demand for ore increases, the output from this range by way of Escanaba must be enormous, emphatically entitling it to the name of the Iron Port.*



Contractor D.L. Wells placed the above advertisement in the **October 20, 1877** edition of *The Iron Port*, as the building of the Menominee River Railroad continued westward.

The week after the advertisement for "One Hundred Men Wanted" appeared, the

following article was published in the **October 27, 1877** edition of Escanaba's *The Iron Port*:

*THE contractors of the **Menominee River Railroad**, Messrs. **D.L. WELLS & CO.**, are, according to the terms of their contract, to have it completed by the 1st of November next. They are using every exertion to finish their contract by the specified time and have lately made large additions to their working force in order to do so. Ground for the side track and depot, has been laid out at the town of **Waucedah**, where the **Breen mine** is located. The side track will also soon be laid at **Vulcan**, near the **Vulcan mine**. Ground has already been selected at **Quinnesec** for the round-house, and, as soon as contractors turn the road over to the company, its erection will be commenced. Rumor has it that the extension to the **Commonwealth** will be commenced this fall, but so far nothing has been definitely determined in regard to the matter; although we should not be surprised if such was the case.*

The following mining items also appeared in the **October 27, 1877** edition of *The Iron Port*:

***Mining Items.** The great **Republic iron mine** will ship this season over 100,000 gross tons of ore. This is by far the largest out-put of any mine in the **Marquette range**; and we doubt very much whether it can be equalled [sic – equaled] in amount and quality by any other mine in the world.*

*Stripping is progressing rapidly at the **Quinnesec iron mine** and the quality and quantity uncovered exceeds the most sanguine expectations of the owners. As the season is so far advanced, no preparations will be made for shipping this fall. Stock piles will be accumulated during the winter and everything got ready for a vigorous campaign in the Spring.*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

The opening up of iron deposits on the Menominee range is but in its infancy and nothing has been done, but at a few points along the line of the railroad; except on the extraordinary out-crop of the Commonwealth. Should the demand for

iron increase largely, the future development of new mines in this region will astonish everybody, except those intimately conversant with that section of the country.



Posing for the photographer in front of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Depot at Quinnesec in about 1908 were (left to right) Oscar Swanson, father of K.O. Swanson; O.B. Pegg, station agent; Herman Gotslieben, telegraph operator; Bill Dickson, car clerk; and Art Larson, freight. In late October, 1877, the Menominee River Railroad, a branch of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, reached Quinnesec. Shipping from the Quinnesec Mine commenced shortly thereafter. The Chicago & Northwestern Railway Depot was built on the east side of Quinnesec Avenue. A spur track was later built to Niagara at the east end of town and another spur track was built to the Cundy Mine when it opened in 1896. The original depot burned in 1906 during the Quinnesec fire which destroyed the business district. The depot pictured above was its replacement which was torn down in 1960. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]

The following item, reprinted by Marquette's *The Mining Journal* from *The Menominee Herald* in its **October 27, 1877**

edition verifies that the Menominee Range Railroad had reached Quinnesec:

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*WE learn from the Menominee Herald that the iron was laid on the bridge across the river, near the **Quinnesec mine**, last Monday, and that trains are now running through to the end of the track.*

Racketty wrote his last letter from **Powers**, published in the November 3, 1877 edition of **The Iron Port**, on **October 30, 1877**, as follows:

***J.M. ESSINGTON**, of this place, shot on Saturday last, a **buck** which weighed, when dressed, three hundred pounds.*

*Several of the **Menominee River** lumber companies are sending men to the woods, by the new road, almost daily.*

The completion of the new R.R. line, commencing at this place is near at hand and the contractors have put on an extra force, which will no doubt end operations by Nov. 5th.

Several Chicago gents are hunting in this locality and, from the noise which they make while tramping through the brush, we should judge that they were more accustomed to the Nicholson pavement, of Chicago, than the haunts of the deer in northern Michigan.

***P.C. MURPHY**, the gentlemanly conductor who had the misfortune to lose one of his legs on the new road, some time since, was removed to **Escanaba** on Saturday last. The best wishes of the citizens of this place are with him; and we sincerely hope that the day is not far distant, when he will fully recover the physical strength of by-gone days.*

*We imagine that the day is not far distant when "Racketty's" little contributions to the IRON PORT will come from the head waters of the **Sturgeon River**, as we are contemplating a month's sojourn in that direction ere long. We will notify ye Editor in due time, that he may enlarge his paper; for it is our intention to write up about*

sixteen feet of nonsense, every week or two at least. But we would have it distinctly understood that we are not going to try to immortalize our name; as that idea has proved a failure with too many of our calibre [sic – caliber] during the past two or three years.

In the **November 3, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal*, the arrival of the tracks to Quinnesec was again verified as follows:

MENOMINEE RANGE ITEMS. – *The iron has finally been laid as far as the **Quinnesec**, and trains running through on time. Shipments from the mine will soon be commenced.*

*Shipments from the **Breen mine** average fifteen to twenty-five cars per day.*

*Shipments from the **Vulcan mine** will be commenced about Monday next, and will consist of nearly a hundred cars per day. The ore on the docks – about 5,000 tons – has all been sold, and a market for as much more secured.*

The spur was finished Friday last. The dwellings and other buildings are nearly all completed, and everything arranged for the winter's campaign.

The following article, submitted to the editor of *The Mining Journal* by "**P.D.**," also appeared in the **November 3, 1877** edition, as follows:

A TRIP TO THE MENOMINEE RANGE. – *Having just returned from a trip to the Menominee iron range, I herewith enclose you a brief outline of my experience in that important, but yet undeveloped region.*

*Arriving at **Forty-Two**, or "**Powers**," as it is now called, I found everything in a flourishing condition. The place is laid out for a town, but the only buildings there as yet are a post-office and several boarding houses. The boarding houses are all full to overflowing.*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

Leaving there next morning, I arrived at the **Quinnesec** during a heavy rain. At this place four buildings are going up, and are so much needed that they are being filled with merchandise while yet in an unfinished state. While here I called on **John McKenna**, of course, who is running a drug store at this place. John seems to be doing well, and is glad to see a Lake Superior man at any time.

I then went over to **Dickey Brothers'** place, which is a mile and a half distant. The Dickey Brothers have kept an **Indian trading post** at this place for the last six years, and while there I examined some most magnificent furs procured from Indians and trappers.

The next place I arrived at was on a section of the Menominee river called **Bad Water**, 10 miles from the **Quinnesec mine**. Here, in company with **Mr. Keyser**, of Menasha, Wis., I stopped over night at the house of a man named **Miller**, and in justice to Mr. Miller, must say that he keeps one of the best and neatest houses in the state of Michigan.

I crossed the river at 7 o'clock next morning, (Sunday), on my way to the **Commonwealth mine**. I arrived there at 11 o'clock a.m. and found my way to the house of **John Tobin**. I found Tobin at home, and took dinner with him, after which we sat down together and had a smoke.

After taking a short rest we started for the mine, which is half a mile distant from Tobin's house. There I found a stripping or opening of a vein of blue steel ore 162 feet wide, and 25 feet deep as far as developed. The **Commonwealth company** has a range of four miles from east to west on the line of this vein, with several test pits a mile and a half distant, showing in places a good sample of magnetic ore. From my limited experience I should judge by the looks of

this mine that it is an immensely rich find, and will some time turn out to be a sort of bonanza to the owners. While at this mine I was the recipient of many kind favors from **Mr. Tobin**, to whose courtesy and kindness every visitor in this region will testify.

The **Quinnesec mine** is doing a large amount of work, and are preparing for extensive mining operations next spring.

At the **Breen mine** they are taking out from 10 to 15 car loads of ore per day. The captain says that as soon as they get their shaft in good working order, he calculates to ship 120 cars of ore per day. **P.D.**

The following information appeared in the **November 10, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal*:

The **Breitung mine**, on the Menominee range, made its first shipment of ore Friday of last week. It was consigned to the Bangor furnace.

The iron region of Menominee is now coming into quite prominent notice, and will, ere another six months, be a prominent iron mining eldorado [sic – El Dorado]. It has been quite thoroughly explored as a whole, and is known to be rich in mineral wealth, while there are now several valuable mines in course of development and operation. Since the partial completion of the **Menominee Range railroad**, capitalists interested in the region have renewed their grip, and everything now looks favorable towards a complete development of the new region.

In the **November 17, 1877** edition of Marquette's *The Mining Journal* the first accounting of shipments of iron ore from the Menominee Iron Range through Escanaba were reported as follows:

IT will be seen by our tables that up to the 14th inst. [of this month] there had been shipped from the **Breen** and **Vulcan mines**, in the Menominee range, about

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

7,000 tons of ore, which is a good showing, considering the short time these mines have been supplied with transportation facilities. All our advices from that region are of the most encouraging character, and it now looks as if the mines being opened will be able to supply all the soft ores there is likely to be any demand for next year. The Menominee hematites are exceedingly rich in metallic iron, and all that is now needed to give that region great prominence is the discovery of hard ore of merchantable quality and in proportionate quantity.

ESCANABA. – The following table shows the ore shipments from Escanaba up to and including Wednesday, November 14th:

Vulcan.....	1,868
Breen.....	4,992

The following article, reprinted from *The Menominee Herald* in *The Mining Journal* on **December 22, 1877**, talks about extending the **Menominee Range Railroad** to the **Commonwealth Mine**:

*The following well considered article from the Menominee Herald commends itself to the attention of those who are interested in the development of the new iron fields of the Menominee range. While there can be no objection to the extension of the line to the **Commonwealth**, or any other new mine, it cannot be expected that any part of the grant of swamp lands shall be applied to the building of a line which shall not have for its main object the development of mineral interests within our own state. Let the line be run to the Menominee river, as the Herald suggests, through the iron belt west of the **Quinnesec**, and the object of the grant will have been at least partially attained. Any attempt to divert it from such a course should meet with the united and persistent*

opposition of the people of the upper peninsula and of the state authorities. The Herald's article is as follows:

*The route to be adopted in the proposed extension of the **Menominee River railroad**, [sic] is a matter of so much importance not only to the people of this and Delta counties, but the state at large, that we cannot forbear calling public attention, for the second time, to the subject. We have no reason to suppose that either the railroad authorities or the **Commonwealth mine** interest are prejudiced against the extension from the present terminus by a line which shall skirt the south side, the iron formations in 40 30 and 40 31, west of the **Quinnesec**. On the contrary it is the impression that this route is favorably regarded by both of these interests. But as there are rumors to the effect that there is a possibility of the extension commencing at a point on the present completed line, two miles east of **Quinnesec**, and running thence regardless of all intervening interests, northwesterly to the **Commonwealth**, we are going to invite the attention of our readers to some of the important reasons why such a step would be inexpedient and unsatisfactory.*

*The state swamp lands of the **counties of Delta and Menominee**, which apply on the grant to the **Menominee River railroad company**, were, in the year '73, excepted from the **Marquette and Mackinaw grant**, for the specific purpose of applying them, at a future day, to the aid of a railroad through the **Menominee range**. The act approved, April 3, 1875, conforming to this purpose, donated seven sections per mile of these lands to this road, and specially required that the road should run "as far west and south as section 34 40 30, and from thence to the **Michigamme river**." It is not fair to suppose the petition embodying the above*

MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 16: BUILDING THE MENOMINEE RANGE RAILROAD FROM POWERS TO QUINNESEC IN 1877

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian

*limitation, which was so generally signed in this and Delta counties, had for its sole purpose the mine of **Quinnesec**. It would have been made to reach a point four miles further west, had not its originators believed that the formation of the country. If not the good sense of the railroad projectors, would continue the line a sufficient distance westerly to embrace the **Iron Mountain, Walpole** and **Edward's** interests on section 31 and 32 of the same town.*

*This is leaving out the important interests on the same latitude in the adjoining town of 31. However this may be, a proper construction of the language of the act locates the main line of the road as far south and west as section 34-40-30, and in no sense does it provide for a "direct" route to any iron location in the state of **Wisconsin**. **Michigan** has not pledged her swamp lands to the attainment of any such purpose. There is not, and cannot be any question, in a business point of view, as to the expediency of this road running to the **Commonwealth mine**, or rather to so establish its main line, destined for the **Michigamme river**, as to provide a connection with that important location. But there are grave reasons, founded upon the subsidy extended it, and connected with the revenues of this county and the state, why the iron locations on this side of the river should not be "left out in the cold," in the attainment of that point.*

Many persons in this community have the impression that iron properties are not subject to taxation for town and county purposes. This is not the case. The specific tax of one cent per each ton of ore is in lieu only of state taxes. The mining property at its true cash value is as subject

*to town and county listing as any other property, and it is not far in the future when the iron locations of the **Lower Menominee Range** will contribute as much to our local revenues as any other class of property, provided always, that they are not "left out in the cold." It becomes the duty, then, of every taxpayer to interest himself in this extension, and direct his influence to the selection of a route which shall develop in the highest degree the resources of **Menominee county** and the revenues of the state. There are men of information and influence in all parts of the state interested in our range. They should not fail to observe closely the progress of this enterprise.*

*If it was an effective argument in '75 in obtaining the grant for the road, that the specifix [sic - specific] tax accruing to the state from the ore raised would ultimately counterbalance the value of the lands donated, it is no less effective to-day; and the great promise which the range now presents for an inexhaustible supply of ore gives good color to the proposition. The state officers who hold these lands in trust for the accomplishment of this enterprise, will undoubtedly see that the object of the grant is not sacrificed to develop interests in the state of **Wisconsin**. We are particular to state that at this writing we have only the rumors floating about that it is the purpose to diverge from the Lower Range at a point east of **Quinnesec**, and cross the river at **Twin Falls**. We trust the railroad authorities do not contemplate such a step. It would surely invite serious opposition from more than one source.*