

# MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 9: THE NEW YORK FARM IN NORWAY TOWNSHIP

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



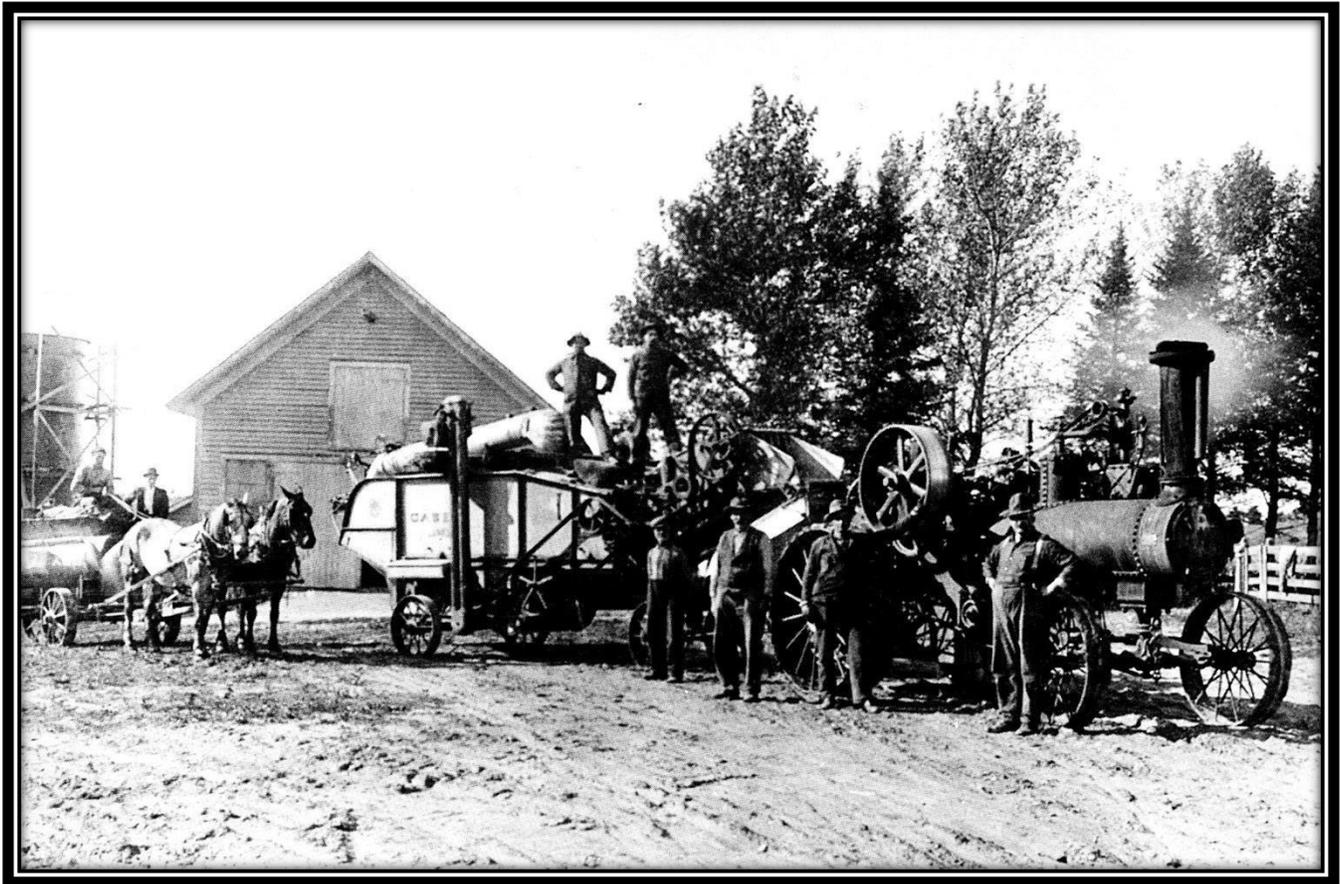
This early 1900's view shows the New York Farm's superintendent's residence and some of the barns and warehouses. *[Vulcan Centennial Book]*



The New York Farm had a large herd of milk cows, and made butter and cheese which was sold to various stores in the Vulcan area. *[Vulcan Centennial Book]*

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**The New York Farm, owned by the New York Lumber Company, was established at the junction of the Menominee River and the Sturgeon River in 1866. The farm supplied food for the logging camps and feed for the horses used at the camps in the area north and east of Vulcan. The Menominee River Lumber Company later purchased the New York Farm property. This early steam-powered engine was probably used in threshing at the New York Farm. [Vulcan Centennial Book]**

The New York Lumber Company opened mills in Marinette, Wisconsin, in 1858 and 1859. They were logging at points along the Menominee River and the Sturgeon River. In 1866 the Company established the New York Farm at the junction of these two rivers.

The farm was operated to supply food for the logging camps and feed for the horses used at the camps in the area and north and east of Vulcan, as well as a suitable place where the horses used in the logging camps could spend the summer

without making the long trip to the Marinette-Menominee area.

The farm consisted of about 2,000 acres, and included a big farm house to lodge the foreman and about twenty-five men. There were also about six big barns for cows, horses and sheep plus numerous other buildings, such as a creamery and a blacksmith shop.

The farm's big herd of milk cows produced milk which was churned into butter and made into cheese which was sold to the various stores in the area. In

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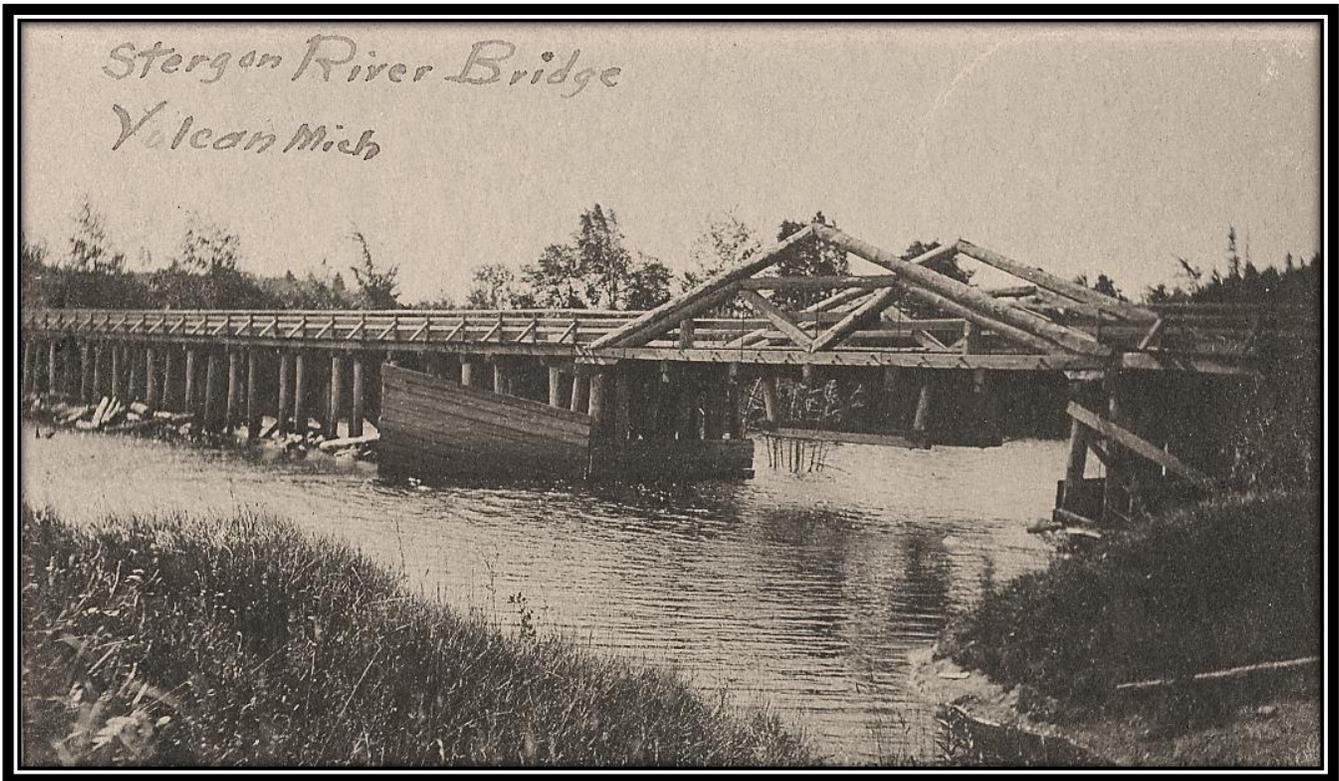
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addition to producing feed for the horses, the farm produced a variety of vegetables to supply the camps.

The farm employed about twenty-five men during the summer. Among the key men who worked on the farm in the summer and in the woods in the winter were the early Vulcan residents including Dan Hart, Cirie Calliari, John Giesen, John Brenner, John Ries, Mike McQueen and Pat Crowley.

A warehouse erected at the Vulcan depot kept supplies brought in by rail. Supply teams consisting of four mules hauled these supplies from the warehouse and the farm to the various camps.

These camps usually employed from sixty to a hundred men during the logging season, which lasted from September to April.



Postmarked September 17, 1909, this postcard view shows the Sturgeon River Bridge near Vulcan. In 1890 the Menominee Land & Lumber Company built a wooden wagon bridge across the Sturgeon River. This photograph may show the original bridge which was replaced in 1908 by a steel bridge. [William J. Cummings]

Thomas Rice, the first manager of the farm, was the first permanent white settler in what is now Norway Township. In 1880 Rice bought the acreage that became the Rice farm from the Menominee River Lumber Company which had acquired the

properties of the New York Lumber Company.

On February 4, 1910, William J. Turner purchased a portion of the New York Farm property consisting of over 700 acres from the Menominee River Lumber Company for

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about \$15,000. Some 300 acres were already cleared and "ready for the plow," according to an article in February 10, 1910 edition of the *Iron Mountain Press*.

According to an article appearing in the *Iron Mountain Press* the week before, the farm, the property of the Menominee River Lumber Company, was developed under the direction of the late Jesse Spalding, the Chicago millionaire, who spent his summers at the farm. The farm was one of the largest in the Upper Peninsula and was splendidly equipped with buildings, including a first-class creamery.

Included in the purchase were the large superintendent's residence, several cottages for the help, a creamery, and many barns, shops and storehouses.

According to the newspaper article Turner intended to engage in the cattle and sheep business on an extensive scale.

Interestingly, on March 17, 1910, the Dickinson County Board of Poor Commissioners, instructed by the Dickinson County Board of Commissioners, purchased 115 acres of cleared land from William J. Turner, a portion of the New York Farm land he had purchased a month earlier. According to the *Iron Mountain Press*, the deal included "a farm house large enough to accommodate forty people, several barns, numerous warehouses, [a] root house with basement, an excellent creamery and a large orchard."

The lands, located along the Sturgeon River, were purchased for \$12,000. According to the article, the buildings were said to have cost nearly double that sum.

The cost for the support of the poor in Dickinson County each year exceeded \$25,000 at the time. According to figures compiled by Supervisor Thompson, the amount could be reduced a third, or a half, and the farm would soon pay for itself.

The newspaper announced that Joseph Tauscheck, of Iron Mountain, a practical farmer and good manager, had been appointed superintendent of the Dickinson County Poor Farm in its June 23, 1910 edition.

On March 2, 1917 a fire which supposedly started in a defective chimney in the main building's kitchen at about noon resulted in the destruction of the main building, hospital, ice house and root house, entailing a loss to Dickinson County of probably \$15,000, with \$9,800 insurance.

Due to a frozen hydrant, there was no ready water supply, and a bucket brigade was pressed into service. All that was saved was a small amount of furniture.

The residents were taken out safely and taken to Norway, where they were cared for at the old and new Penn hospitals.

A new facility was eventually established on the south side of U.S. 2 between Iron Mountain and Quinnesec which later became the Freeman Convalescent Home.