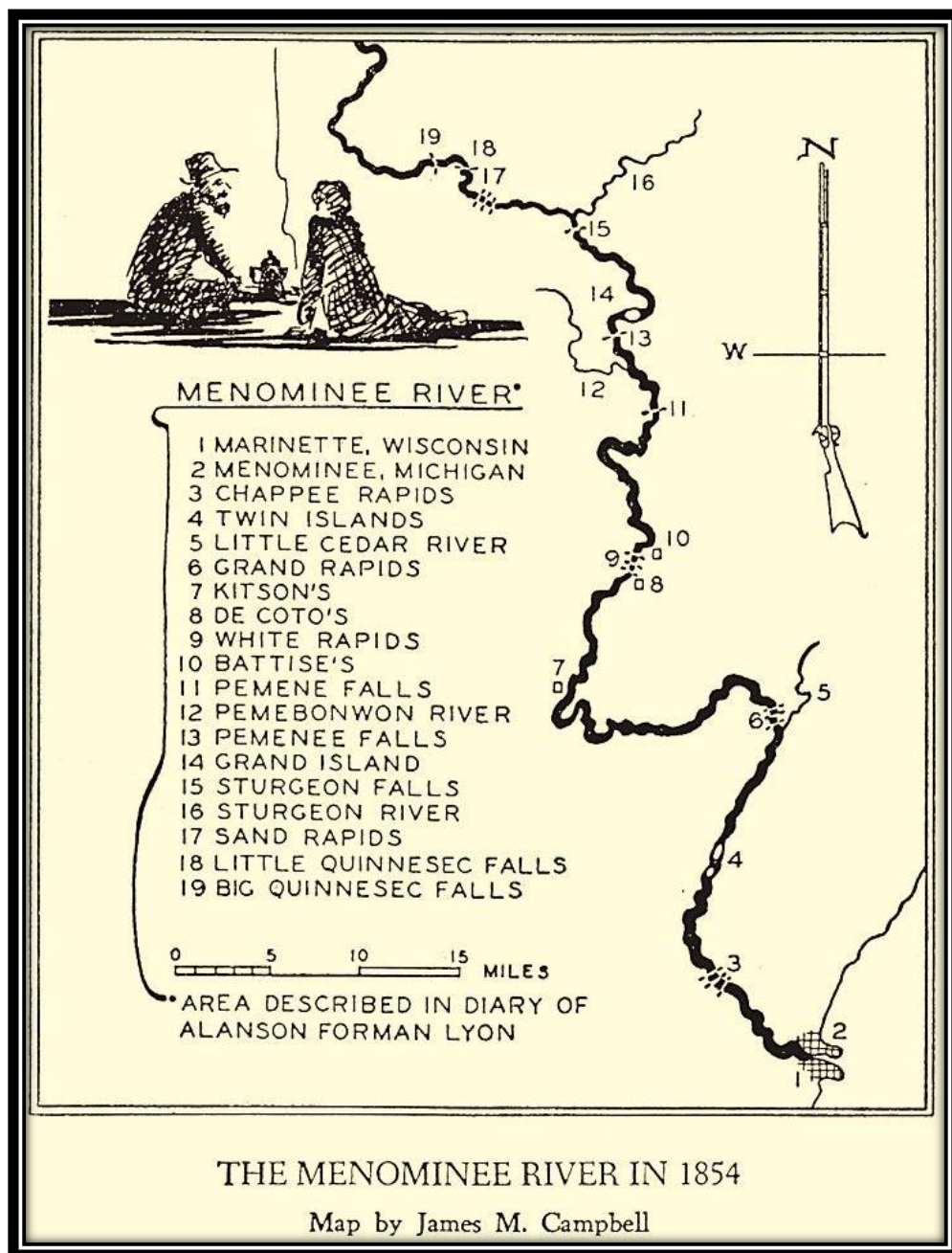


MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 6: EARLY TRADING POSTS AND HALF-WAY HOUSES FROM MENOMINEE NORTH

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



Several early trading posts and stopping places are indicated on this map, including (3) Chappee Rapids, (7) Kitson's [John G. Kittson], (8) De Coto's [Joseph De Coto] and (10) Battise's [possibly Baptiste Premeau]. This map, published in *Michigan History*, Volume 47, Number 4 (December, 1963), accompanied an article containing excerpts from Alanson Forman Lyon's diary entitled "A Trip Up the Menominee River in 1854." [Michigan History]

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Trading posts were the first vestiges of civilization in the frontier area of the Upper Peninsula and northeastern Wisconsin. The Menominee River was the principal waterway and route to follow northward from Lake Michigan.

In the *Centennial History of Menominee County* by the Hon. Eleazer Stillman Ingalls, published in 1876, mention is made of a number of individuals who traded with the Indians along the Menominee River.

Louis Chappieu/Chappee

Trading Post at Chappee's Rapids on the Menominee River

According to Ingalls, "The first white man who came to Menominee to stay was Chappee [*Louis Chappieu or Chappee, an Indian trader and French Canadian voyageur*], who came here [*Menominee*] as an agent for the [*British-*] American Fur Company and established a [*trading*] post in 1796 [*on the Wisconsin side of the Menominee River*].

"At that time many thousand Indians visited the Menominee river every season, while at the north and about the headquarters of the river, and towards Lake Superior, the Chippewas had numerous villages which were accessible by birch canoes. There was an abundance of beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, martin and fishers, bear, deer, and less valuable game, throughout the country, and this post became an important trading point.

"Chappee was a French-Canadian voyageur, with sufficient education to keep what books were necessary for an Indian trading post, and was apparently the right man for the place. He was stirring and active, and had sufficient courage and nerve for any emergency that might arise. He had a large number of men, picked up from that class of Canadian voyageurs who preferred a life in the solitude of the forests

to a home with civilization, and his post sometimes presented the appearance of a well garrisoned fort, and at other times he was left almost solitary and alone to defend it if hostile Indians approached.

"His post was solidly built of logs with palisades made of heavy timbers set in the ground around it."

Chappee built his first trading post on the Wisconsin side of the Menominee River, carrying on his trade with the Indians for many years, until dispossessed by William Farnsworth and Charles Brush, who wanted the site for a sawmill.

After being dispossessed of his property, Chappee crossed the Menominee River and built a new trading post near the foot of Chappee's Rapids – which were named after him – about five miles up the river from the village of Menominee. He surrounded this post with palisades in the same manner as he did the first one, and remained there trading with the Indians until he died in 1852.

According to Ingalls, "Chappee took to himself a squaw, with whom he lived, and raised children, as was the custom with the traders in those days, but to whom he was never married."

The first recorded inhabitants of the Menominee River Basin were a small Algonquin tribe known as "the wild rice people." Journals of seventeenth and early eighteenth century explorers describe a tribe of forty to eighty men living in a single village at the mouth of the Menominee River. By the early 1820's, the Menominee numbered about 500 men, and were scattered throughout a dozen villages in Wisconsin. Between 1670 and the early 1800's, various explorers, fur traders and missionaries visited the area as they passed by on the water routes of Green Bay and the Menominee River.

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The first known white settler on the Menominee River was Stanislaus “Louis” Chappieu, Chappu, or Chappee, a French-Canadian fur trader who operated a log trading post at the site of Marinette, Wisconsin, between 1794 and 1824.

Chappee, born in 1766 in Canada, established a trading post on the Wisconsin side of the mouth of the Menominee River in about 1794. [Later the Menominee River Manufacturing Company office, opposite Queen Marinette’s house, occupied this site.] Chappee traded with the Indians for furs for many years, eventually becoming an agent for John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company.

In about 1822 another fur trader, William Farnsworth, arrived at the mouth of the Menominee River. The following year John Jacobs, also a fur trader, moved to the area with his wife, Marie Antoinette Chevalier.

Marie, born in 1793 at Post Lake, Langlade County, Wisconsin, was the daughter of Bertrand Chevalier, a British trader of French Canadian ancestry, who was involved with an early trading post in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Her mother was Lucy, the daughter of a Menominee chief named Wauba-Shish (Great Marten).

When Marie’s father moved his family to Green Bay in 1800, he went into partnership with John Jacobs, who later married Marie, and they had three children together. When the fur trading business slumped during the War of 1812, Jacobs started a school.

In 1823 John and Marie Jacobs moved to the settlement which became known as Marinette, the town later being plotted by their son John B. Jacobs in 1855.

Jacobs went into partnership with William Farnsworth at a trading post established by the American Fur Company. Within a few years Marie’s husband John

Jacobs went to Canada on a trading trip and never returned. Marie married Farnsworth. They were the parents of two sons and a daughter.

By 1831 Farnsworth left the area to settle in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Marie remained and developed the trading post into a large trading center. An influential Métis woman, she was known for her business sense, fairness and influence in the region, having ties to both the Menominee Indian and European communities. [The Métis people are Indigenous North Americans of mixed race. Métis are recognized by the government of Canada as one of the official Aboriginal peoples.] She came to be known as “Queen Marinette.”

After her death in 1865, Queen Marinette was buried in Allouez. In 1987 her descendants had her reinterred in a sarcophagus at the Forest Home Mausoleum in Marinette. Her original tombstone is on display at the museum on Stephenson Island in Marinette.

Within a few years of Farnsworth’s arrival at the mouth of the Menominee River, he had usurped Chappee’s position as the area’s fur trader, forcibly ejecting Chappee from his trading post with the help of nearby Menominee Indians. Farnsworth had won favor with the Indians when he interceded after Chappee had three Menominee braves jailed at Fort Howard after a fight in which Chappee’s thumb was bitten off. Farnsworth was able to obtain their release. In gratitude the tribe gave Farnsworth a land grant which included Chappee’s trading post.

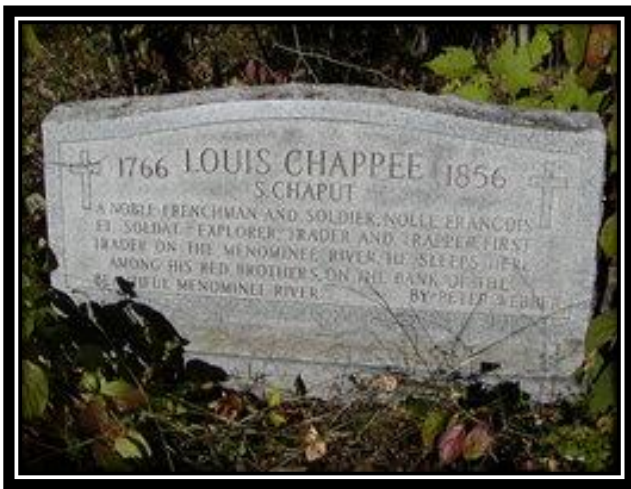
Chappee moved five miles upriver and established a trading post at what is still called Chappee’s Rapids. Chappee died and was buried there in 1856. A Wisconsin historical marker exists on this site on

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County Road 581 near Wallace, Menominee County, Michigan.

A monument on his grave site reads: Louis Chappee, 1766-1856 – S. Chaput, a noble Frenchman and soldier, explorer trader and trapper on the Menominee River. He sleeps here among us his red brothers, on the bank of the beautiful Menominee River.



John G. Kittson's Trading Post Wausaukee Bend above Grand Rapids on the Menominee River

John G. Kittson was the next white man to take up permanent residence in the Menominee area, arriving in 1826 as a clerk for the American Fur Company under Chappee. He was the son of a British officer who was or had been stationed in Canada, according to Ingalls.

Kittson, described as a “very intelligent and stirring man,” was actively engaged in the fur trade or in farming all of his life. He cleared and opened the first farms in Menominee County, one at Wausaukee Bend above Grand Rapids and the other at Chappee's Rapids, near the old trading post, where he resided for many years prior to the “great woods fire” [*Peshtigo Fire*] in October, 1871. He died in 1872.

Kittson “had great influence over the Indians and was at all times a friend to their interests,” according to Ingalls.

“The Indians always spoke of Mr. Kittson as ‘the writer,’ a name they gave him on account of his doing all the writing for them in their various transactions with the Government.”

John George Kittson was born January 12, 1812, in Sorel, Pierre-De Saurel Regional County Municipality, Quebec, Canada. Kittson was the son of a British Army officer who had immigrated to Canada and settled near Montreal.

An extremely intelligent man with the temperament and strength to adapt well to pioneer life, Kittson arrived in the Marinette-Menominee area in 1826 as a representative for the American Fur Company. He located a trading post at Wausaukee Bend on the Menominee River. As well as being a beautiful area, the site was also on a main Indian trail which led from central Wisconsin to a natural ford across the Menominee River at Wausaukee, and continued north to the Lake Superior region.

Kittson played a prominent role in general matters from the time he arrived in the area until his death.

Agriculture in Marinette County began when Kittson, the fourth white man to locate on the Menominee River, cleared and worked the first farm in the county, located at the site of his first trading post at Wausaukee Bend.

Another farm at Chappee Rapids, near the old trading post where he resided for many years before the great Peshtigo fire of October 8, 1871, was also established just above the trading post of Stanislaus Chappu [Louis Chappee/Chaput], the first known white settler in the area. On this farm Kittson taught the Menominee Indians

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improved ways of farming and ran a very hospitable halfway house. He established an Indian cemetery on part of his farm, and his friend Chappu was buried there.

Kittson's second farm, located at the Ox-bow of the Menominee River at the Wausaukee flats area opposite the mouth of the Wausaukee River, also was a trading post to serve the Indian settlement. He built a large, two-story log house and a huge two-story log barn which accommodated horses at one end and cows at the other with a threshing floor in the center and a haymow on the second floor covering the entire area.

About a quarter of a mile downriver from his farm house Kittson built an octagonal two-story log-hewed pelt storage house. The structure was erected over a huge basement which had walls lined with logs. The roof was covered with blue clay from the river which, when dried by the hot summer sun, became impregnable to water and the heat of the sun. The pelts were stored in the basement and first floor. The second floor was filled with ice in the later winter and early spring to preserve the pelts in good condition until they could be taken down to the American Fur Company office at Green Bay after the ice melted on the Menominee River.

He had great influence over the Indians, and was at all times a friend, looking out for their best interests. The Indians always spoke of John Kittson as "The Writer," a name he received because he would do all the writing for them in various transactions with the government.

In the 1860's, with the decline of the fur trade, Kittson returned to live at the smaller farm at Chappee Rapids, Marinette County, Wisconsin, where he died April 18, 1872. His death was attributed to exhaustion and exposure while fighting the Peshtigo Fire of

October 8, 1871. He was the husband of Margaret Hua-Ka-Wau-Bie Kittson, and the father of Elizabeth Dashner.

In 1881, his wife, Margaret Hua-Ka-Wau-Bie Kittson, and son, Robert, sold the Ox-Bow farm to Albert Beach. This farm was later owned by Peter Webber.

Joseph De Coto White Rapids

Joseph De Coto came to the Menominee area in 1832, and was living at White Rapids in 1876 when Ingalls wrote his book. A French Canadian, De Coto spoke limited English. Baptiste Premeau and Charles McLeod also arrived in the Menominee area in 1832 and were still living in Menominee in 1876.

The following two entries may refer the Joseph De Coto who was living in White Rapids in 1876:

In the 1840 U.S. Census a man named Joseph Decoteau was listed as living in Brown County, Wisconsin Territory.

In the *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Wisconsin* and the United States Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861-1865 data base on Family Search, Joseph Decota, also known as Joseph De Coto, was listed as a Union private serving in Company I, Third Regiment, Wisconsin Cavalry

Patrick Mullen's Trading Post Mouth of the Sturgeon River

According to the land records in the Dickinson County Court House, Patrick Mullen obtained a warranty deed dated April 21, 1869, from Eleazer S. Ingalls, of Menominee, for the S ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 22, T39N of R29W for \$400.00. Mullen ran a trading post in this area, according to early accounts. He leased the land to Larry Dashneau on October 15, 1869, for three years. Evidently this lease

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didn't last, as Mullen mortgaged the property to Ely Wright on January 3, 1870, for \$988.48, substantiating the fact that Eli/Ely Wright was linked to the land indicated. A second mortgage between Mullen and Wright for the same land for \$167.97 was dated March 23, 1871. However, the records also show Mullen selling the land to Jesse Spalding for \$2,500.00 on April 4, 1871.

Patrick Mullen was born in New York State and married Lucy King, a native American and a sister of Tom King, on May 5, 1870, in Menominee, Menominee County, Michigan. Lucy was born in Michigan, according to the marriage record.

Mullen's trading post was located near the New York Farm at the mouth of the Sturgeon River, probably on the Wisconsin side of the Menominee River. Patrick lived there with his wife, Lucy, and traded with the Indians.

Mullen was accidentally killed near Hamilton Lakes in Breen Township May 14, 1878, by a Menominee River Railroad train, and was buried in an Indian burial ground on land he owned across the river from the New York Farm. The railroad company provided his coffin and sent Mullen's body to its final resting place.

Mullen and Lucy had at least two children, William and Alice. Both parents died when the children were quite young, and the children were placed in an orphanage, according to information contained in William's obituary.

William was born in about 1871. When William was 18 years old, he returned to the New York Farm area, working for the Menominee River Lumber Company and later for various logging camps in the area. He was last employed at the St. Onge Logging Company. William, about 83 and single, was found dead of natural causes in

his home near Norway on January 3, 1954. He had no close family members and was buried in the Norway Township Cemetery.

Alice was born March 1, 1875, in Michigan. In 1880, Alice Mullen, 5, was listed on the U.S. Census as living with her uncle, John Mullen, in Lyndon, Washtenaw County, Michigan. This would seem to indicate that her mother had died shortly after her father. It would also indicate that at least Alice was not placed in an orphanage.

Alice Mullen married Gustave F. Moranz on June 1, 1897, in Port Huron, St. Clair County, Michigan. Gustave, son of John and Augusta (Lipke) Moranz, was born October 30, 1875, in Germany.

According to Norway's *The Current*, daughter Alice Mullen, of Chicago, was inquiring about her father's death and burial place on September 25, 1908.

Gustave F. and Alice (Mullen) Moranz had at least two children. Daughter, Alice, was born July 28, 1903, in Michigan, and died August 18, 1915, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Daughter Mabel Frances was baptized February 22, 1914, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Alice died December 23, 1920, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, and is buried in St. Boniface Cemetery.

Paul Miller

Miller's Ferry and Miller's Halfway House Badwater (Menominee River)

Paul Miller established a "ferry" service on Section 13, Town 40 North of Range 31 West on the old State Road near Badwater which operated in the latter half of the 1870's to help people cross the Menominee River at this point.

John Lyle King mentioned Miller's Ferry in his book *Trouting on the Brule River, or Lawyers' Summer-Wayfaring in the Northern Wilderness*, published in 1879,

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describing in detail trips made in the late summer of 1875 and 1877.

In the account of the 1877 trip, the author writes:

“Two miles below was Badwater Crossing, a ferry established the previous year [1876] for the road to the logging camp near Brule falls. This road marks an inroad of civilization, and pioneers the advance of man into the domain of nature.

“At the crossing is a pine-log cabin, with pretensions to be classed as an inn, judging from the legend ‘Montreal Badwater House’ imprinted on a splint or shake over the main door. It stands on a high smooth bluff, in a handsome situation, at the convex point of a curve in the river. It has several apartments.

“There was a garden with familiar potato vines, beets and cabbage. Paul Miller is the Boniface [*innkeeper*], and because there was a bright-eyed, comely woman to mistress it, the household was all snug, neat and tidy, and had an appearance of home comfort.”

In October, 1877, when John Munro Longyear, surveyor and landlooker from Marquette County, and Henry St. Arnauld traveled to the Crystal Falls District to examine fire damage to timber on the Lake Superior Ship Canal Railway and Iron County lands, Longyear crossed at Miller’s Ferry, as noted in his reminiscences which state that the two men followed “the new tote road built by the lumbermen to Miller’s Ferry on the Menominee River where the Northwestern Railroad bridge now stands, in section 13-40-31.”

Many contemporary accounts mention stopping at Miller’s Ferry or Miller’s Half-way House.

In his journal recording a trip up the Menominee River in 1879, George

Frederick Seibert, pioneer Iron Mountain druggist, wrote the following:

“...Started at 6:30 and have so far a very rough road. Dinner at Miller’s today. Expect to reach camp tonight if we have good luck. Partridge drumming all around. Walked nine miles this morning and are now at Paul Miller’s on the banks of the Menominee...The roads are fair, but nothing extra. Several very steep hills to climb and two or three swamps to cross.

“We found very good accommodations at Millers, who seem to be a very nice family. Everything was kept just as neat as could be; Miller, his wife, and a man were the only ones here. Miller and his wife, I think, are French. They talk French anyway, and must be French as they are about the only ones to keep things neat under the most difficult circumstances.

“Tried fishing here but did not get a bite. Millers have a boat which I used to get across the river. We have had dinner and are going to raft our supplies across this afternoon. We got here (Jim and I walking) at least two hours ahead of the team. Miller is the one Dr. Cyr used to go out with on his fall hunting trips.”

On the return trip Seibert noted on May 23: “...At twenty minutes to nine, we had made the Bad Water crossing. A loud hello drew Paul Miller across the river with his canoe and we were in a few minutes landed on the Michigan side of the Menominee River. This place is by the road about twenty-five miles, but by taking the crosscut we saved about fifteen miles.

“After resting at Paul Miller’s for twenty minutes and smoking a pipe of peace we started for Dickey’s, fifteen miles distant, where we arrived at one o’clock.”

[James and William Dickey had two trading posts – one on the northwestern

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part of Lake Antoine and the other near Quinnesec.]

According to *The Florence Mining News* in February and March, 1886, Paul Miller was working as a trapper and guide.

In the March 6, 1886 edition the following was reported: "Fred John, of Spread Eagle fame, was in town last Saturday. Fred's hair has grown long in the solitudes of the forest, where he is spending the winter trapping with Paul Miller, of Badwater. They have traps on the Pine, Popple and Menominee and have harvested quite a catch of furs, including ten beavers, two otters, seventy-five minks, twenty-five martins and some other pelts. Fred says the snow has been too deep for a good trapping season."

In the 1870 U.S. Census, Paul Miller, a 39-year-old white married man born in about 1830-1831 in Prussia, was listed as living with his 39-year-old wife Gertrude, born in about 1830-1831 in Prussia, and their six children (Catherine, 12; Ellen, 11; Ann, 9; Jacob, 6; Christian, 4; and Anton, 2, all born in Michigan) in Ishpeming Township, Marquette County, Michigan.

In the 1870 U.S. Census, Paul Miller, a 37-year-old white man born in about 1832-1833 in Canada, was listed as living in the household of And [Andrew – ?] Mereman in the Township of Marinette, Oconto County, Wisconsin.

Charles La Salle's Trading Post Junction of the Pine and Popple Rivers

In the July 23, 1881 edition of *The Florence Mining News*, mention was made that Charles La Salle had kept a trading post at the junction of the Pine and the Popple from "time immemorial."

The following two U.S. Census entries for a Charles La Salle might by this same individual:

Charles La Salle, a 46-year-old white, widowed teamster, was listed as a member of the household of John Thebert in the U.S. Census for Marinette, Marinette County, Wisconsin. His birthplace was listed as Connecticut.

In the 1900 U.S. Census for the Township of Florence, Florence County, Wisconsin, Charles La Salle, a 67-year-old white, widowed man born in Vermont, was listed as the head of a household containing four children, all born in Wisconsin, as follows: a son, John P. La Salle, 18; and three daughters, Ollie O., 16, Alice, 14, and Jessie B., 9.

Ned Phillips' Halfway House Popple River

Mention was made of Ned Phillips, keeper of a half-way house on the Popple, in the March 6, 1886 issue of *The Florence Mining News*. Phillips had come in to Florence "with a catch of furs, among which was a large wolf, the fourth he has poisoned this winter. The bounty is ten dollars. Phillips has been doing well with his traps this winter."

W.C. Jefferies Halfway House Popple River

The June 5, 1886 edition of *The Florence Mining News* noted that W.C. Jefferies was "refitting and refurnishing the camp known as Phillips' half-way house, on the Popple." Jefferies planned to "keep a good lodging place for travelers and make a specialty of entertaining hunting parties." The reporter noted that "as the hunting in that vicinity is particularly good and the travel considerable, Mr. Jefferies will probably do quite well."